

**LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE: A LANGUAGE'S RESPONSE TO THE
FORCES OF CONTACT INDUCED LANGUAGE CHANGE – A COMPARATIVE
CASE STUDY OF THE SPEECH COMMUNITIES OF
STERKSPRUIT (SOUTH AFRICA) AND NGUNGUMBANE (ZIMBABWE)**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the
University of Fort Hare,**

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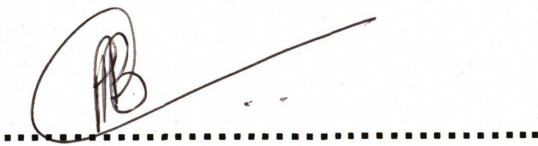
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this study is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'B' followed by a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right. The signature is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

20 | 12 | 06

The date '20 | 12 | 06' is handwritten in black ink, with vertical bars separating the day, month, and year. It is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated

to

Sibongile, Nomatshawekazi, Neoealerato
Damasane

You gave so that I may have.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. C R Botha, for the patient and very supportive motivation he gave me throughout this sometimes painful study. His consistency was encouraging.

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To my family in the Eastern Cape, my sister-in-law a great motivator *Enkosi Zulu! Ndlangamandla! Vumba lempongo!* My brother you have been outstanding, *Enkosi, Mqamulankungu kuvelilanga!* My uncle's prodding for 'the union card' in academia *Enjokweni! Thungo lungagotshwa!*

The times of academic interaction with C Ndebele, O Chabaya and L Zhou stick out in my memory never to be forgotten.

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ABSTRACT

Language maintenance, with a spotlight on the response of a language to forces of contact-induced language change, is the focus of this study. The theoretical considerations of Thomason and Kaufman (1988) on language change inform this research. Languages come into contact when the communities of speakers that use these languages are in social contact. Such contact, in most cases, is the result of migrations or relocations caused by social pressures. The social evolution theory (Croft 2005) posits that, as societies change because of contact, their languages are bound to change. The linguistic outcomes of language contact are the result of non-linguistic human action and choices. This is a qualitative study of the speech communities of Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and Ngungumbane in the Mberengwa district of the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. IsiXhosa is in contact with Sesotho and isiHlubi in South Africa, while isiNdebele is in contact with chiShona. The response of the languages in contact is explored to highlight how the socio-cultural *environment* of a language, together with its political and historical contexts, determines the linguistic outcomes of language change. The data is triangulated from a variety of sources obtained through interviews and participant observations within the respective speech communities. Bilingual behaviour in the form of codeswitching, borrowing and interference is investigated, with the understanding that language is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

Key words: language change, contact-induced language change, language maintenance, language shift, bilingualism, speech community, codeswitching, borrowing and interference.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

When the term isiNguni is mentioned, it conjures up the image of a strong, regimented, patriotic and nation-building group of people who left an indelible mark on the history of Southern and Central Africa. Canonici (1994) defines the abeNguni by their language, which is characterized by the presence of click sounds. He further emphasizes the centrality of cattle in the social life of abeNguni.

Pockets of abeNguni are found in South Western Tanzania, Central and Northern Malawi, North Eastern Zambia, South Western Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and the South African Provinces of the Eastern and Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. In South Western Zimbabwe, one finds isiNdebele, while isiZulu¹ and isiXhosa are found in South Africa and siSwati in both South Africa and Swaziland. There is also a South African variety of isiNdebele formerly referred to in pre-democratic South Africa as 'Transvaal Ndebele'. This study will focus on isiXhosa and isiNdebele (Zimbabwe), and consider the two languages' response to contact with other languages. IsiNguni languages are found in areas where they are in contact with many other Bantu languages. IsiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is in contact with chiShona in the main, alongside Sesotho, SeTswana and tjiKalanga, to mention a few. IsiXhosa is in

¹ The languages are referred to in their full prefix forms as one would see them in official documents such as the South African Constitution, Department of Arts and Culture publications on languages and the Pan South African Languages Board.

contact with Sesotho and isiHlubi. There is, meanwhile, contentious reference to isiHlubi as a variety of isiXhosa (Canonici 1994 and Doke 1954).

History closely links amaZulu with amaNdebele through the eighteenth century northward migration of the Khumalo clan led by Mzilikazi kaMatshobana and the subsequent establishment of uMthwakazi (Matabele State) in South Western Zimbabwe (Cobbing, J. 1988). This link has led to the accepted view that isiNdebele is a dialect of isiZulu, an aspect which this study will investigate in greater detail. Scholars have held it thus, as is evidenced in Canonici (1994), Doke (1954) and Torrend (1891). Educational policy makers in Zimbabwe, for instance, have for some time held the notion of teaching isiNdebele with direct reference to isiZulu with the aim of maintaining linguistic purity. The use of isiZulu in some religious circles in Zimbabwe has been considered more appropriate than the use of isiNdebele.

Scholars like Canonici (1994) and Doke (1954) support the public's view that there is mutual intelligibility between isiNdebele (South Africa) and isiNdebele (Zimbabwe). IsiNdebele speakers of the variety spoken in Mpumalanga are readily exposed to isiZulu. This makes it easier for them to understand an isiNdebele speaker from Zimbabwe without the latter understanding isiNdebele from Mpumalanga. We do then have two isiNdebele languages in the study of isiNguni. Hence the isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) variety, which has not yet received much intellectual attention, is to be given such attention in this study. Canonici (1994) agrees with Guthrie (1967) and Doke (1954) in the classification of isiNguni. He classifies them into two main groups, namely isiZunda and

isiTekela. Under isiZunda one will find isiZulu, isiNdebele (Zimbabwe), isiNdebele (RSA), isiXhosa and chiNgoni (Malawi and Tanzania), while under isiTekela Nguni, one finds siSwati, isiBhaca, and isiPhuthi.

The study envisaged here is further motivated by Carl Meinhof's words in the pursuit to further the scientific understanding of our languages:

...any work done (*in African Languages*) must be done purely in the interest of science; practical considerations do not enter into the question...But when we see the zeal with which science searches ancient graves for the evidence of primeval history, we might fairly expect that this survival from most ancient history of all would excite the greatest interest. (Meinhof, 1915:143)

Here is an encouragement to continuously investigate our languages, especially now that there have been quite a number of developments in the landscape with the onset of democratization in the region, which has allowed for many inter-language relationships. The state the languages are in right now, is not as important as it is to find out how things came to be what they are (Meinhof 1915:145)

1.2 Background of the study

IsiXhosa and isiNdebele are both in continuous contact with other languages, some of which are non-isiNguni. IsiNdebele has been geographically isolated from its closest linguistic relative, isiZulu, for longer than a century. It is the aim of this study to investigate the extent to which its contact with other languages in its language area has an effect on it. On the other hand, the study seeks to

investigate the contact between isiXhosa, isiHlubi and Sesotho in order to outline the effect and type of linguistic outcomes that are possible. Furthermore, the aim is to compare the two contact situations outlined above.

It is this response to contact that has triggered the primary interest in the researcher. This phenomenon will form the main area of investigation in this study. It is envisaged that this study of different responses to language contact will enlighten the general study of sociolinguistic phenomena and give further substance to the theoretical consideration of the operant forces of language change.

While there exists abundant information on the study of isiNguni languages in the areas of phonology and syntax, there seems to be a dearth of studies that focus on language change. Sociolinguistic study is given only cursory attention in the works of language planners and policy makers. This study will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge in this area. The central purpose is to raise appreciation of the fact that languages are subject to change, and more particularly, that those languages which are in continuous contact with other languages are most likely to change. Seeking an answer to the question why some languages change whilst others do not, is this study's purpose.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The history of Southern Africa informs us of how the abeNguni came to be where they are today. The four isiNguni varieties, isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati and isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) show close kinship in terms of phonology, morphology

and syntax. Among the four varieties, speakers enjoy a significant level of mutual intelligibility. IsiZulu, isiXhosa and isiNdebele (Zimbabwe), all three being part of the isiZunda sub-group can pass as being variants of the same language.

SiSwati, which forms part of the Tekela Nguni sub-group, presents a marked departure from the common isiNguni phonology, morphology and syntax. IsiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is spoken by people who can trace their genealogies to amaZulu, abeSotho, abeTswana, amaSwati and amaTsonga (Nyathi, P. 2000:25). A notable feature is that isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is mutually intelligible with isiZulu, isiXhosa and siSwati. Linguists Crystal (1987) and Binkert (2004) will hasten to assert that “mutual intelligibility” presupposes that the two or more varieties belong to a single language. In quoting Guthrie’s (1948) justification of the zonal classification of isiNguni, Kamwangamalu (2001:375) states:

...linguistically there is no reason to treat isiXhosa as distinct from isiZulu, siSwati or isiNdebele; they could easily be regarded as a cluster of dialects of one language.

Kamwangamalu uses the definition of mutual intelligibility to support his assertion. Such a view does overlook pertinent features in determining what a language or a dialect is. For instance, Norwegian and Swedish are mutually independent languages which enjoy a lot of “mutual intelligibility” and so do standard Dutch and standard German in pockets of Europe (Dwyer 2002). In Europe the Scandinavian languages are not referred to as dialects but as languages. The question remains whether it could be said that isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is a dialect of isiZulu purely on the basis of mutual intelligibility?

IsiZulu and isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) have been geographically separated for over a hundred years. Interestingly, the latter has managed to maintain some constructions and words of older isiZulu. Of all the Nguni varieties mentioned above, isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is the only one that does not have, as one of its linguistic neighbours, another Nguni language. This study wishes to establish whether there is any shift to the dominant language which is chiShona. This behavior of isiNdebele demands of this study to tell what the internal factors are that either accelerate or control language change. In the same vein, one finds the contact relationship of isiXhosa and isiHlubi (both isiNguni languages) exhibiting a curiously similar behavior.

This study therefore takes into focus the question of *the factors that affect or determine a language's response to contact induced forces of language change*. The import of this broad question is reflected in Croft's (2000) assertion that a plausible theory of language change must, as it explains language change, deal with the mechanisms that act as forces for both stability and change in language.

A comparative look at isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) and isiNguni language varieties south of the Limpopo River and isiNguni languages north of the Zambezi River, shows a language that seems to have changed at a slower rate when compared to others. Further, isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is in a diglossic relationship (as an L2

variety)² with both chiShona and English: That could be a very strong factor in the analysis of the rate of language change. This study will investigate the causes of this scenario as isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is in contact with many other languages. The outcome will add to the understanding of language maintenance within the larger study of language change. A comparative study will also look at the isiXhosa – isiHlubi language contact scenario which exists in the Eastern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa. This study will establish the extent to which this scenario is a mirror image of the scenario in Zimbabwe.

Many linguistic studies have not dealt with the above stated cases, preferring rather to make reference to isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) as being either the same as isiZulu or worse still, a dialect of the same; while isiHlubi is taken as the same as isiXhosa, or a dialect of the same. This study will deal extensively with the correction of this anomaly in quest of a clearer and more objective definition of the concept of a dialect.

1.4 Purpose of the study

It is the aim and purpose of this study

- To examine the causes for the different rates of language change in isiNguni.
- To investigate the factors that act as forces for both stability and change in isiNguni languages.
- To examine how socio-political factors affect the development of languages.

² The term L1 refers to a higher language while L2 refers to a lower language in relation to the higher language where languages are in a diglossic relationship.

- To explore the varying effects on some isiNguni languages of the languages with which they are in contact.

The extent to which isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) and isiXhosa have undergone change or have remained the same over the years will be established in this study. Furthermore, why these changes take effect or not will also be examined during the course of the study.

1.5 Rationale or justification of the study

Various studies in the field of isiNguni linguistics are available and need to be acknowledged. Among them are studies by Bleek (1862), Torrend (1891), Johnston (1922), Doke (1952) and Bryant (1963), just to mention a few. These scholars' remarkable work in the classification and comparative study of Bantu languages and isiNguni languages in particular, has laid a solid foundation for subsequent research. A later generation of Bantu language theorists building on the works of the above has also arisen and includes Canonici (1994), Poulos (1999), Lanham (1953) and Guthrie (1971).

Evident in both generations of studies, is the handling of isiNguni languages with the unquestioned assumption that isiZulu is the mother of them all. Johnston (1922: 89) makes a bold assertion to the effect that:

...the 'kaffir' dialects grouped under the clan name isiXhosa are sufficiently distinct from isiZulu to be classified as a separate dialect but not as a separate language.

In most of the older texts, isiXhosa (so called 'kaffir') and siSwati (called 'Tekela') are seen as variant forms of isiZulu. Such an assumption presupposes isiZulu as closest to Proto-isiNguni. This study seeks to debunk this mistaken notion.

As recently as 1994, Canonici, in his comparative study of isiNguni languages, takes isiZulu as central to his comparison with isiXhosa and siSwati and selects cognates that emphasize the centrality of isiZulu to isiNguni. He further refers to the two isiNdebele varieties of isiNguni as dialects of isiZulu which, according to him, do not need to be dealt with separately from isiZulu.

There is an apparent shortage of comparative studies that take an objective look at the isiNguni varieties as independent, yet related, languages and this study will assay to contribute to the body of comparative isiNguni studies. IsiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) and siSwati have a lot in common as isiNguni languages, but show significant differences that distinguish one from the other and that elevate them to the status of independent languages. This study will certainly inform the policy formulation and implementation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocols on Education, Culture, Information and Sport, as well as the vision of the African Union pertaining to the recognition of African Languages. Within the different socio-political domains where the delimited languages are found, this study will not only bring to the fore the effects of language contact, but also inform policy formulation and implementation. As the study intends to reveal the rate of language change, the different countries' language policy frameworks will gain significantly.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The isiNguni group of languages is not only comprehensive, but it is also spread over a very large geographical area. This research will only focus on isiXhosa and isiNdebele as found in the Eastern Cape Province and Zimbabwe respectively. The behavior of these two languages in the situations of contact, will provide case studies for the research.

IsiXhosa for example is spoken, to the greatest extent, in the areas covered by the South African provinces of the Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape, as well as in parts of the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. This is a large geographical area that does not make it easy for the researcher to cover in this study. IsiNdebele on the other hand, is also spread over a large area of Southern and Western Zimbabwe as well as the Midlands province.

The area where isiXhosa is in contact with Sesotho and isiHlubi is also vast in the north-western peripheries of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, making the selection of the Herschel/Sterkspruit area ideal for the researcher. The demography of this area will give the researcher exposure to a speech community that exhibits the multilingual competencies that this study is investigating. Further, the area is manageable for the purposes of intensive field work.

In the case of isiNdebele, the area known as Mberengwa makes for interesting study. IsiNdebele is totally surrounded in this area, the dominant language being

chiShona. The Ngungumbane chieftaincy is bordered by major geophysical features to the west and to the east which act as buffers limiting contact between the amaNdebele and the surrounding chiShona speaking communities. This area's linguistic composition is of a fluid, multilingual nature and the speech community is interestingly monolithic. The contact situation is fascinating and hence its selection as an area of focus. Its size proffers itself as manageable from the point of view of a field investigation.

One realizes that, for the study to be comprehensive, one has to investigate not only the structural, but also the functional and social dimensions of language. That is so because "Languages do not change but people change language through their actions" (Croft, 1990:257). This study has to be both linguistic as well as sociolinguistic and thus will be a blend of library research and fieldwork. The latter will include the overt observation of speakers in conversation as well as in structured interviews with mother-tongue speakers of the varieties in selected areas. In view of the widespread nature of the languages under review, the spotlight is on the selected speech communities only.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The study assumes that

- Extensive incidences of codeswitching and borrowing are a common feature of languages in contact.
- The need to preserve a particular ethnic identity is a great motivation for language maintenance.

- Language is not only a combination of systems, but it is also a social tool, which is affected by social considerations.
- The social environment of the speakers of a language will affect the manner or rate of language change.
- Cultural and political considerations have a strong bearing on the way in which a language responds to change.
- A study of language change is neither purely linguistic, nor is it merely sociolinguistic but, essentially, a blend of both.

1.8 Limitations of the study

It is commonly acknowledged that in any investigative assignment of this nature one comes across a number of impediments that can limit or retard the research process. Factors impeding progress of this investigation include the following:

- Unavailability in local libraries of relevant recent publications on the topic.
- Expense of travel and communication to the delimited areas of research. The delimited areas themselves are stretched out, thus considerable cost does come with travel and accommodation.
- Limited people contact time for interviews and observations within the selected speech communities.
- The generally negative perceptions about indigenous African Languages among urbanites.
- Possibly xenophobic attitudes of some in South Africa, the researcher being a foreigner to the Sterkspruit area.

In view of these possible impediments, the researcher took measures to minimize them through the incorporation of a number of culturally sensitive approaches in the research design. The obstacles are not expected to be insurmountable.

1.9 Research methodology

This investigation will be concerned with interpreting the behaviour of a language besieged by external pressures to change as a result of its continuous contact with other languages. This suggests that the suitability of a qualitative research methodology, involves the collection of more detailed and descriptive data from smaller groups of people. This type of research is characterized by the desire to obtain an in-depth understanding of meanings and definitions as presented by the subjects (Wainwright, 1997).

A survey research, as described in Mouton and Marais (1990), will be conducted such that the researcher will not attempt to manipulate variables, but simply describe what exists. The usefulness of this type of research is that it facilitates the generalization of findings by allowing for statistical analysis. Purposive sampling in this regard shall be employed. Informants will be sampled from selected institutions in the speech communities under review. Only literate respondents will be sampled so as to facilitate a guided and informed discussion.

The researcher himself will be the primary agent of data collection. Participant observation will figure prominently. This will enable the researcher's immersion

into the world of the subjects. The observation shall be both overt and covert, with more of the latter than the former. Covert observation is preferred, as it will prevent the informants from providing prepared and implausible utterances for analysis.

In-depth structured interviews, coupled with questionnaires, will be used as research instruments. A questionnaire will be sent to selected educational institutions where the languages under review are taught. Respondents will be selected from amongst teachers as well as from amongst the learners.

Scholarly respondents will be very useful in the discussion of data relevant to the intellectual analysis of isiNguni.

Documentary evidence to be surveyed will include newspaper and magazine articles, in the languages under review, from 1934 to date. Language policy promulgations will be surveyed to establish a socio-political historical survey to complement the general literature.

The data collected will subsequently be collated for analysis, using comparative tables and narratives. The analysis should lead to informed understanding of the internal and external influences of language change.

1.10 Chapter outline

Given the above introductory sections, the study is to be structured as set out in the following paragraphs.

In chapter two the concepts of language and a dialect will be investigated in depth. Further, the chapter will review the existing literature on language change with a detailed review of contact-induced language change outcomes such as codeswitching, borrowing, interference, influence and language maintenance. It is in this section that the theoretical framework on language change will be outlined.

Chapter three is devoted to a case study of a speech community, where isiXhosa is in a language contact situation, namely Sterkspruit. The possible linguistic outcomes of language contact will be outlined together with historical and other sociolinguistic mitigations of language contact. The contact situation in this case study will show response to contact of an isiNguni language which is in contact with a non-isiNguni language and another isiNguni language.

Chapter four reflects a case study of a speech community where isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) is in a language contact situation, namely Mberengwa. The probable linguistic outcomes of language contact will be outlined. The historical and other sociolinguistic mitigations of language contact will also be outlined. The contact situation in this case study seeks to illustrate the response to contact of an isiNguni language which is in contact with a non-isiNguni language.

Chapter five reflects a synthesis of the findings and assesses their contribution to the development of isiXhosa and isiNdebele. The chapter will also provide a comparison of how the two languages, isiXhosa and isiNdebele, deal with their

respective language contact scenarios. The areas of comparison will include investigations as to how each language's historical, political and socio-cultural backgrounds affect the manner in which it responds to language contact. An assessment of Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) theoretical assumptions about contact induced-language change will be provided as also of Croft's (2005) theoretical assumptions about social evolution's impact on contact induced language change.

Chapter six presents conclusions and generalizations emanating from the study concerning the phenomenon of contact-induced language change in the case of isiNguni languages, and advances a number of recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section, a review will be made of related literature on language change, with a specific bias to contact-induced language change. Language change is that area of linguistic research that includes the relationship between language and society and the manner in which language evolves over time and through space. It is also the object of this section to explain phenomena that are associated with languages in contact; such as bilingualism, borrowing and codeswitching. Language will be looked at as an integral part of change in society. The variation of language that leads to varieties and dialects of language will be reviewed in this section. The cause and mechanism of change will be explored, looking at how a language behaves in the face of the forces of change, be they internal or external. A theoretical review of language change will be undertaken in the light of language evolution within the context of contact-induced language change. At the end of this chapter, it should be clear why and how language changes, to enable the researcher to make applicative inferences on change in the selected speech communities.

2.2 Definition of language

Language is a system of vocal and written symbols through which members of a society interact. Language in this study is understood to be the phenomenon

peculiar to humans used in communication. It is because all humans are genetically endowed with the ability to learn and use language, that one may assert that language is human species specific. Language is a cultural system (meaning that it is centered on humans and their life) and individual languages may classify objects, ideas and concepts in completely different fashions. A group of people speaking the same language represent what is known as a speech community. Rules determine the form and function of the said symbols, giving what is acceptable and grammatical in that language.

Thomason (2001:2) cites Trask (1993) when defining rules as being:

any statements expressing a linguistically significant generalization about grammatical facts of a particular language, especially when formulated within the formalism of some particular formal description.

It is these rules that make language a scientific system whose changes and variations can be investigated and studied. The variations that one can see in people exhibit themselves in the languages used within the speech communities. Another peculiarity of this system called "language" is its ability to adapt itself to changes and variation within society. Human nature and form is dynamic and it will be intelligent for one to infer that language will also be dynamic (Aitchison 2001:2). Language is part of society and so, as society changes, so will language. An alteration of any major feature in society is likely to influence some form of change in language.

2.3 Language and Change

Change can be viewed as any one of the following:

- Change as loss.
- Change as a neutral change of state or flux
- Change as degeneration
- Change as progress
- Change as creation from nothing (creation *ex nihilo*)

Mutability is thus a property of the world, although ordinary human beings generally view all linguistic change as a matter of decay. To them it is a case of impurities setting in the language(s). Hock & Joseph (1996) in Aitchison (2002:2) assert that; "Change will somehow reduce not only the purity of language but also our ability to speak and even think clearly." Having understood that language changes, Aitchison (2002:2) says,

A change tends to sneak quietly into a language, like a seed, which enters the soil and germinates unseen. At some point it sprouts to the surface.

No one can appoint the time for language change; it cannot be prescribed it can only be described. Mesthrie *et al* (2000:2) elaborate on how some observers often view language change as the result of sloppiness, laziness and a lack of attention to logic. Therefore, change is seen as detrimental or worse still, a form of decay by some (Aitchison, 2001:2).

2.3.1 The evolutionary approach to language change

Language change or any theory of language change has to try to define what language is. According to Croft (2000), language change is a historical phenomenon. He defines historical linguistics as

...an empirical science (that) must examine real, existing entities, and then construct generalizations about what types are involved, as well as principles and constraints governing the structure and behaviour of those types (Croft 2000:2).

Language therefore, is a historical and empirically real 'thing'. Croft (2000:3) says that a language

...arose at a certain time, in a certain place, spread out over a certain area and persisted over a certain time and will come to an end at a certain place and time, either through extinction or by splitting into two or more daughter languages.

The grammar of a language is the actual knowledge that a specific speaker or speech community has about its language.

The study of language change is of necessity retrospective, since one cannot ever predict a specific change. Hence such a study investigates historical entities in terms of the types in which they present themselves. Croft (2000:2) defines historical entities as existing in a specific place for a specific period. The real entities in linguistics are utterances, which speakers, who have innate knowledge of their language as it is found in their minds (grammar), produce in context. As observed, Croft (2000:2) views language not only as a biologically

specific phenomenon, but also as a social event. He defines an utterance as a string of sounds that is a product of human behaviour in communicative interaction, peculiarly pronounced, grammatically structured and semantically and pragmatically interpreted, in its context.

A collection or population of these utterances in a community of speakers (speech community) represents a language. Croft refers to a speech community as the linguistic equivalent of the population definition of a species as used in the biological sciences. A speech community is a group of speakers who talk to one another, and more critically, are communicatively isolated from speakers in other speech communities. Such a definition is based not only on speaker attitudes, as most social definitions are, but rather it reflects what speakers do or do not do, what they speak or do not speak as well as who they do and do not speak to. Chambers and Trudgill, as cited by Croft (2000:3), explain the language spoken by a speech community as being more '*social*' than purely '*linguistic*.'

Language change therefore, as postulated by Croft (2000), should be clearly identifiable and enumerable. Accordingly, language is not merely a tool for communication among humans, but rather as an integral part of the human dialectic. Defining language as a historical entity enables one to confront the issue of language variation. Croft (2000:3) posits three levels of language variation. The first order of variation is at the individual usage level, notably observed in terms of sound structure, meaning and grammar. The second order of variation is based on the first, now having in addition, a sociolinguistic value in

the speech community. At this level, the meaning of either sound or structure is conveyed, socio-contextually. An utterance is not just taken for the surface meaning that it carries, but rather the communicative value that it has in the context of the society within which it is found. At the third level, variation is seen across languages and across varieties of language. Language change, according to Croft (2000:4), is simply a linguistic variation of a broader scope and, more specifically, as a linguistic variation that proceeds from first-order innovations, to second-order variants, to third-order divergence.

Further, he states "...language change is not a change in a linguistic system...but an evolutionary process in a population." (Croft 2005:15). The implication is that language does not change in the minds of speakers, but it is the speakers themselves who in their innovativeness change language. Put differently, language change involves much more and goes far beyond the morphological and grammatical features one sees; rather, it reflects more of a group of speakers in their totality. Language change, therefore, is not a purely linguistic process, but a sociolinguistic process as well.

Language is a spatio-temporally bounded set of utterances that changes over time; it is not of an ideal, natural thing. An existing language first came into being when its parent language split, due to both linguistic and social factors, and the same language will continue to be until it either splits or becomes extinct. Croft (1990) as quoted in Croft (2000:5) asserts that, "...languages do not change; people change language through their actions." In this statement

the term '*actions*' refers to both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour which will inevitably affect speech patterns in a speech community.

Language change, as suggested by Croft (1990:257), is best understood, as is language itself, as a social phenomenon. A social definition of language therefore helps in the historical analysis of language. Keller (1990) as cited in Croft (2000:4) insists that the "...explanation of language change is based on active individuals, not language structures, processes or collectives." This view espouses the notion that language change is a function of the behaviour of humans. Croft (2000:4) states that language does not change on its own, but people change it because of the environment they are in. By the term 'environment', Croft essentially intends the different languages in contact with the target language.

Change in language is observable as an inherent process, the development of linguistic knowledge in an individual speech community over a period of time (Croft 2000:5). Croft maintains the process of change to be by replication. Replication, he explains, is the creation of a new entity that preserves in large part the structure of its parent entity. Croft argues that a theory of language change ought of necessity to distinguish between two processes of change, namely, innovation (or actuation) and propagation (or diffusion). The two are distinct, although joint processes in language change, making language change a diachronic as well as synchronic phenomenon. Innovation happens in speaker action at a given point in time, whereas propagation occurs over a longer period. Innovation is exemplified in speech acts that entail code

switching, while propagation is exemplified in the cases of syntax borrowing, which takes much longer. 'Internal' language changes are described as innovations that arise in a speech community without the impact of social contact with another community. 'External' changes are innovations that arise as a result of contact with another speech community.

2.3.2 Social evolution and language change

It has been observed thus far that language is intricately related to society and Croft (2005:2) rightfully refers to it as a "social phenomenon" whose central function is interpersonal communication. Language is sensitive to social structure and reflects social processes as it undergoes change; Croft (2005:2) continues to say. He speaks of social evolution as a factor in understanding the phenomenon of contact-induced language change. Just so he posits that the social dialectic has a bearing on how language changes. When there is a cleavage within a society, divergence takes place. When a society splits, the linguistic varieties each new society speaks diverge. Such divergence is caused by the communicative isolation of the societies where we observe the truth of, *"...if you stop talking to them, you'll start talking less like them and more like those you talk to."* As Croft (2005:2) succinctly captures the fact that language is fundamentally social: "HOW YOU TALK DEPENDS ON WHOM YOU TALK WITH." That is so because processes of language change reflect concomitant social processes.

Societies may experience one of two types of fission, the first being the fission of a society into two or more of the same type, as, for example, the Nguni society

during the Mfecane period; the second being the break-up of a society into smaller units of different society types, for example, the break-up of chiefdoms into smaller family units or serfdoms. Social fission, according to Croft (2005:12), will lead to linguistic divergence; yet, if there is communicative interaction between the split communities, society's linguistic cohesion will be retained.

Social contact will result in language contact, which will be reflected by linguistic interference (Croft 2005:14). There are three types of social contact, namely: marriage, trade and political integration. The three types of social contact are also referred to as the three loci of language contact. As to the first locus, the basic principle of language stability and change with respect to marriage can be formulated as, "...who (sic) you talk to depends on who your parents are (descent), and who you marry (alliance)." (Croft 2005: 16). Kinship systems are based on two factors, alliance and descent. Fox, cited by Croft 2005:17, says:

Groups speaking the same language and being alike in other ways, might well exchange wives among themselves - but the connubium stopped at the boundaries of the language territory, or colour or whatever marked off "us" from "them"

Trading patterns predispose societies to a variety of degrees of multilingualism and the emergence of contact languages. The third locus of language contact, political interrelation, also has some linguistic effects. This may occur at any of four levels, namely, segmentary fusion, symbiosis, incorporation and assimilation.

The first level is where societies come together for the purposes of ritual, festival or war and is not permanent. The second obtains where societies are politically independent, yet interdependent. The third level represents political integration into a single unit by conquest, but allowing for a semi-autonomous society segregated from other societies as is the case with feudalistic states. The fourth and last level entails the complete integration and loss of autonomy of the incorporated society. Economic integration may as well as political integration, lead to language shift. Croft (2005:22) notes that not all incorporated or integrated societies accept the new linguistic order and shift to the new language. Some societies will, according to Matras as cited by Croft (2005:28), only borrow functionally necessary vocabulary, because incorporated societies strongly resist assimilation. The evolution of any society, through the processes and dynamics outlined above, will certainly manifest a variation of language that may ultimately lead to language change.

2.3.3 The relevance of the social evolutionary model to the study of language change

This model subscribes to the school of thought that views language as a historical entity, as opposed to its idealisation by the Chomskian school of thought that views linguistic theory as "...concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly." (Chomsky, as cited by Croft 2004:7). As stated earlier, language is defined as a historical and an empirical entity. A grammar of a language, in this definition, is the actual knowledge that a speaker has about his/her language.

Seeing language as a historic entity enables one to capture a basic fact about language variation. Variation is important to this study of language change, as already observed. In positing this model, Croft (2004: 7) states that language change cannot be defined as the change of a linguistic system, but rather as *an evolutionary process in a population*. To say that it is a change of a linguistic system would be to confine linguistic operation to the mind of an individual speaker, yet change does not occur in a speaker's brain only, but goes beyond this to the community that the speaker belongs to. Whilst the operation of language is in the utterances of an individual, for change and replication to take place, those utterances have to be part of a shared interaction in a selected speech community. Using the social evolutionary model, one is able to see that language change occurs in a population by its replication. It also shows variation to be an integral aspect of language. As language is part of society, it will change as much as society changes. Therefore, when there are changes within society, there will be variations within language as well.

2.3.4 Language change and the Universalist theorists.

Nowak and Komarova (2001:288) hold the notion that language is a 'biological trait' the study of which demands a scientific approach. They insist that language gives rise to cultural evolution far beyond what would be possible for non-speaking humans. Studies in historical linguistics, and attempts to reconstruct proto-languages, have provided evidence of a gradual evolutionary process that has shaped (and continues to shape) human language over time (Bickerton, in Nowak and Komarova 2001: 288). In view of the above, one may

say that changes in language can best be understood if one appreciates the fact that linguistic dynamics are part and parcel of wider change in human life. Linguistic changes do not occur apart from the processes that determine human activity and life.

The Leiden school of thought, (Van Driem 2000:1), sees language as a symbolic organism differing from a biological organism in terms of the neuro-anatomy of language and the nature of linguistic meaning. Van Driem (2000:2) says, "We cannot change its lexicon... because language changes, but not because we want it to." Langacker, as cited by Wilkes (1996: 1), in his study of the changes in the isiNdebele varieties spoken in South Africa's Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, sheds more light on this assertion, as he stresses that a living language never holds still, since it is a product of change and continues to change as long as it is spoken. In fact, change in any language is therefore a study of the very nature of language itself. Harris and Campbell (1995:49) say:

The grammar of an adult can change...since the grammar of an adult is best viewed, not as an inflexible complete object, but as an adaptable, constantly growing set of generalizations.

This sentiment defines language change in terms of an individual's innate grammatical development. Accordingly, as the grammar of an individual becomes more and more complex, so does one's communicative competence, which results in utterances that exhibit dynamism. This view fails to consider that a human being is a social animal. Psychological development of language should not be mistaken as language change. Language is not just a

neurologically determined behaviour; it is a social behaviour that is developed through processes involving an individual's social interaction. It is languages, and not speakers, that change. It is speakers, and not languages, that innovate. This raises the question of *how* language changes. De Courtney, as cited by Awedyk (1999:38) says:

Linguistic phenomena are manifestations of social interaction among individuals...any change must originate in some individual soul.

The same scholar (de Courtney) introduced the concept of dynamic stability, the law of resistance to historical change, which will be discussed below in the section concerning the stages of language change.

2.3.5 Language variation and language change

The spread of any one language over a large area, with some historical and anthropological variations will, without fail, result in language variation (Holmes, 1992). Language variation is the development of different forms of the same language as a result of its speakers' exposure to different social and sociolinguistic environments. Any variation in language should therefore be linked to a variation in the society within which that language is spoken. Linguistic forms and languages themselves can change or go extinct, without their speakers having to die, because of the selections speakers make, based on their social values.

isiXhosa, one of the languages under review, is spread over a large province with a diverse populace. The diverse historical and anthropological context of the large amaXhosa population in the Eastern Cape predisposes the isiXhosa language to variation. Groups of people in a select locality, irrespective of the languages they speak, form what is known as a speech community (Crystal. 1987:360). Through the study of a speech community, one can justify or evaluate certain variations within a targeted language. According to Sankoff (2001:4) as well as Thomason and Kaufman (1988:37), isiXhosa will either borrow from, or influence these neighbouring languages so as to result in variations within them and itself.

Linguistic variation precedes language change. Language variation is not necessarily language change, but the two are synchronically related. Speakers of one language may, because of different social environments, differ in the manner they speak that language, as compared with speakers of the same language in another environment. This is known as language variation. Over time, the same language may, because of these variations, develop new forms, a phenomenon which is then realized as language change. In view of the above, language variation is not *per se* language change, but promotes fertile conditions for language change. The very nature of man, as a social and communicative being, lends itself to the many variations and subsequent changes in our languages.

In a situation of bilingualism, in addition to borrowing and codeswitching, one may also find the process of language shift, which in some instances can lead to language death. Language shift is the process whereby one language in a speech community yields to the influence of another in the same speech community and its speakers become assimilated into the dominant culture (Crystal. 1987:360).

The term 'dialect' is at times used interchangeably with the term 'variety' to refer to a systematic distinction within a single language often related to the geographical distribution of its speakers. The distinction is exhibited in different speakers of the same language. Within linguistic circles the term 'dialect' does not carry the negative connotations that the general public usage of the term may have (for instance the term may mean "non-standard" or "sub-standard" speech or worse still, the speech of people from other regions than one's own). In the case of isiHlubi (a language variety spoken in pockets of the Eastern Cape region of South Africa), the term is used to define a non-written linguistic variety (Pahl, 1967:257,263). It has very negative implications for isiHlubi. The fact that isiHlubi is not a written language should not be used to ignore it by deliberately subsuming its development under another language. The definition of a language does not require that it be written. Nevertheless, it is helpful to know that the term 'dialect' is not a natural category, but rather a social construct. According to Dwyer (2002:1), what is called a 'dialect' may not actually be one; it may be viewed as such simply because we all speak one dialect or another. Dialectology is not a primary focus of this study, still, as

generalizations and clarifications are made concerning isiNguni languages, the term 'dialect' does appear frequently and so we need to be clear about the term.

Linguists use the term 'dialect' as a neutral one to describe the systematic linguistic usage of a group of speakers as in a particular region or social class (Rickford 2002:1). The distinction between a language and a dialect is not a natural category, but a human construct only (Dwyer 2002:1). The distinction reflects how humans in different strata of society see it, as a matter of their own perception. What some call a dialect, may not actually be one, but may simply be perceived as one. We all speak one dialect or another.

2.4 Language contact and language change

Jourdan (2001:40-41) says linguistic contact with other groups brings about changes at a faster pace than do internal cultural dynamics. Contact, in her view, leads to language change, but Jahr (1999:131) throws in a word of caution when he says: "While language contact may lead to language change, it is not language change *per se*." Linguistic changes as a result of contact require the knowledge of the sociolinguistic history of speakers, since the history of people and their languages is best understood through their contact history (Jourdan 2001:41). She goes on to say that linguistic and cultural contacts vary along different axes, which may include the following:

- Duration of contact.
- Respective status and political might of the cultural groups in the contact situation.
- Ideologies and space.

These axes allow for voluntary or imposed access to other cultural or linguistic groups.

Duration of contact presupposes that the longer languages are in mutual contact, the more likely it will be that language change is to take place. An example would be the geographic proximity of isiXhosa to Sesotho and isiHlubi; also isiNdebele (Zimbabwe) to tjiKalanga and chiShona. Knowledge and consideration of the duration of contact will assist any researcher in drawing up of conclusions and generalizations about the extent of language change in any group of languages. Thomason and Kaufman (1988:50), as will be shown in detail later in this chapter, concur that it is clear that the degree of contact, ranging from casual contact to very strong cultural pressure, determines the linguistic outcomes of language contact.

The second axis in the study of language change demands one's understanding and appreciation of the effects of policy formulation and implementation on linguistic activity. Any speech community, in principle, will develop as a result of policies promulgated by the powers that be at any time. The axis takes the political context of a speech community to be a function of language change.

The third axis positions the study of language change in terms of the geographical or spatial distribution of the languages in contact, and in terms of the effect of the internal philosophies and worldviews of the speakers of the languages in contact. The spread of a language over space makes it span a

broader social sphere, which may have its own diversities, thereby influencing variations within the language.

Permanent exposure to otherness through contact with neighbouring groups may lead to an exacerbated sense of group identity that is often symbolized by linguistic differences (Jourdan, 2001:42). Clearly then, language contact may lead to language change, but it is not language change itself. Jahr (1999:131) outlines the following phenomena as associated with typical language contact situations:

- Widespread bilingualism.
- Development of a mixed language (pidgin)
- Extensive code switching.
- Different types of loan/borrowing
- Grammatical simplification (simplification + levelling).

The Neo-grammarian paradigm explains historical language contact as based on a "language family tree" concept, according to Jahr (1999: 132). He states that all systematic similarities between different languages are explained by means of sound laws which presuppose that languages have developed from a common source, a 'Proto-language'.

In explaining language change, Sankoff (2004:4) posits the issue of "substratum influence." This demands an analysis of language change by the identification of (a) substratum language(s), whose speakers shifted to the target language in some definite period of time. The structures of both languages (target and

contact languages) ought to be studied. The term "structural convergence," where morphemes, words and phrases of one language undergo rearrangements that appear to make them similar to another neighbouring language, is illustrative.

Language contact results in a multitude of different linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena and mechanisms, which may bring about language change. Direct loans are just one of the many consequences of language change. Some of the changes brought about by language contact can be grammatical change, for instance the usage of different types of loan and changes in phonology.

According to King, (2005:1) theories of language change are only as good as the descriptions on which they are based. Therefore variationist methodology and theory must be employed in contact research, since these provide the tools for tracing the path of language change (King, 2005:1). Variationist theories, she adds, allow sociolinguists to deal with the degree of variability that obtains in minority speech communities. Hence it is important that there be a corroboration of variationist and generative perspectives in investigating the mechanics of language variation and change.

Smith (2002:1) sees language contact as an inevitable phenomenon in today's urban and globalised world. Language contact, in his view, results in multilingualism where different languages in multilingual societies are used in different instances. He investigates this functional differentiation through the analysis of social classes or domains. In stable contact situations,

multilingualism may endure for long periods, but when language contact accompanies social change, one group shifts to the language of another.

Schiffman, as cited by Smith (2002:1), states that where languages in contact are seen to be in competition for linguistic space, a language policy may be openly or covertly implemented to regulate the situation. This is why language status planning must be seen as an attempt to balance the symbolic value of a single indigenous national language against the competing interests of linguistic minorities. Language status policy is complemented by an educational language policy. The latter's aim may either be to assimilate the speakers of a minority language into a dominant language, or to help them maintain their language.

As different societies come into contact with each other, so do their languages. Sankoff (2001: 1) describes such a contact situation as being part of the social fabric of everyday life because of the metropolitan nature of our world today. As the adage goes: *the world is a village*. She further argues that language contact is the historical product of social forces that result in a group of speakers exhibiting bilingual tendencies. Such a socio-geographical situation leads to language contact which results in a particular set of linguistic outcomes. By the term 'linguistic outcomes', one refers to language-based behaviour in a speaker that comes about as a result of language contact. These linguistic outcomes of language contact are determined, largely, by the history of social relations among populations whether religious, economic, political or demographic. The locus of language contact is the "bilingual speaker" and the process of

"interlingual" identification lies at the heart of ensuing language change (Sankoff 2001:19).

Van Coetsen, as cited by Sankoff (2001:6), shows the investigation of language contact as revealing intense language contact situations, where speakers tend to develop ways to equate similar concepts and categories across languages. A feature of language change due to contact is convergence, which takes place when languages in contact become more and more like each other. Such a situation is reflected by Myers-Scotton:

...the influence of one language on another reflects generally asymmetrical socio-political relations between the native speakers of the languages involved. As a process (convergence) it is a mechanism in the progressive outcomes of attrition, language shift, language death and Creole formation and its outcome is a linguistic configuration with all surface morphemes from one language but part of its abstract lexical structure from another language (Myers-Scotton 2002:101)

The study of language contact is a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary one, according to Clyne (2003:2), in which interrelationships hold the key to the understanding of how and why people use language/s the way they do. The interrelationships outlined include those between:

- Language typology and language use;
- Language variation and language change;
- Linguistic synchrony and linguistic diachrony;
- Linguistic, sociolinguistic, demographic and political situations.

Languages in contact are, after all, the result of people in contact and of communities of people of different language backgrounds in contact, hence the diversity of relationships involved. In the same vein, Clyne (2003:2) sees the basic functions of language as:

- The most important medium of human communication;
- A means by which people can identify themselves and others;
- A medium of cognitive and conceptual development;
- An instrument of action.

Linguistic behaviour in relation to languages in contact, is both an expression of multiple identities and a response to multiple identities (Clyne, 2003:2)

2.4.1 Contact-induced language change

Since the initial publications on language contact and language change by such scholars as Labov and Fishman in the sixties, the most outstanding work on the subject is that of Thomason and Kaufman in 1988. Thomason produced another publication in 2001, while another is due for publication soon. No study of language change, especially contact-induced language change, can make do without reference to the contributions of Thomason and Kaufman, the present not excepted.

The main thrust of Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) work is given with the thesis that the sociolinguistic history of speakers is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact. In their work they see linguistic-

structural constraints to be of secondary importance in language change, since it is social factors, in their view, that determine the direction of interference as well as the extent of influence. In chapter 3 of their publication, they distinguish two fundamentally different types of interference, namely borrowing in the context of language maintenance and substrate influence, in the context of language shift.

According to Thomason (2001:3) contact is a source of linguistic change if it is less likely that a given change would have occurred outside a specific contact situation. The implication is clearly, that contact of speech communities predisposes them to linguistic variations as well as to changes. Thomason and Kaufman (1988:215-55) boldly assert that social factors alone determine the linguistic outcomes of language contact. Furthermore, social factors are seen as 'probabilistic' rather than 'deterministic' in the process of language change. This suggests that mere linguistic contact may not necessarily result in language change, but it does increase the chances of language change. Language change should be read as 'contact-induced structural change' that refers to changes in the structure of a language due to language contact.

In defining contact-induced language change, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:37), point out that different parts of linguistic subsystems tend to be transferred from one language to another. They define this phenomenon as borrowing. In most language contact studies, the two common linguistic outcomes investigated are **borrowing** and **codeswitching**.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988:37) define borrowing as:

The incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained, but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features.

The first elements to be borrowed are lexical items such as nouns and verbs. This goes to show that unlike other linguistic levels, lexis is an open system. The incorporation of a non-primordial word causes minimal disturbance in relations existing within the units of the subsystem it entered.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988:37) further argue that words are typically the first things to be borrowed in a language. If there is a strong long-term cultural pressure from the source-language on speakers in the borrowing language speaker group, then structural features may be borrowed as well.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988:38-39) further elucidate the kinds of interference that accompany borrowing as being phonological and syntactic while morphological interference lags behind. Interference through shift or sub-stratum interference, on the other hand, is that type of interference that results from the incidence of imperfect group learning during a process of language shift.

Phonological interference is commonly found along with syntactic interference in cases of moderate to heavy borrowing. According to Thomason and Kaufman, the main factors in borrowing are length of contact time and degree of

bilingualism of the target language speakers. If both languages are equally powerful then structural borrowing is likely to occur.

The *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language* (1987) defines **codeswitching** as a feature of bilingual behaviour where:

A speaker changes (switches) from one language (code) to another in the course of a single conversation.

A code used by a speaker does not become part of the recipient's language in any way at all, but is used as it is. Codeswitching can also be referred to as the alternation between one or more languages, dialects, or language registers in the course of discourse between people who have more than one language in common. A bilingual context is therefore a prerequisite for the occurrence of this phenomenon.

Finlayson (2003) emphasises the fact that, for codeswitching to take place at all, it is imperative that speakers have communicative competence in more than one language. It is important that those who switch from one language to another in a conversation should have a shared knowledge of the use of the languages being switched, in order to make sense of the interaction. Codeswitching, according to her, is a direct function of social attitudes, roles and the need for social mobility of the speakers.

Bonnar (2005:1) delimits two types of code switching that one can find, namely *inter-sentential and intra-sentential code switching*. The first is the speech behaviour where the code switch happens between sentences, while in the case of the latter, the switch happens within a thought. In some instances, switching takes place when speakers change subjects, participants in a conversation change, a change of location occurs or when discussing current events that have a global nature that go beyond the primary language of the speaker. Where code switching occurs on a large scale, there is a higher likelihood of language change. Code switching then, presupposes a much higher degree of borrowing than mere borrowing does.

Further to code switching and borrowing, situations may occur where speakers of languages in contact do neither of the above. A conversation can be fruitful with each speaker using his or her own language. There is mutuality of understanding, which is what Dwyer (2002: 6) describes as mutual intelligibility.

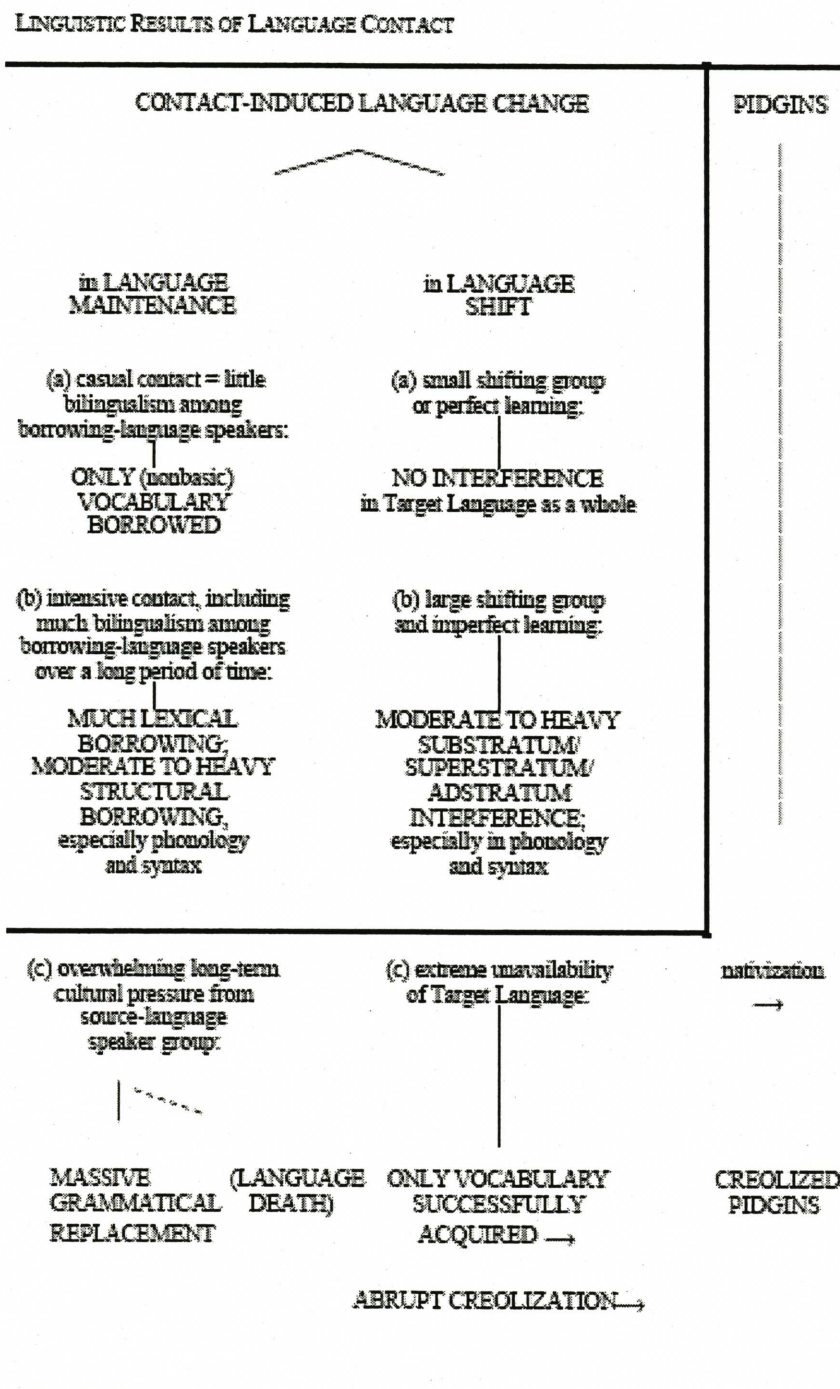
Language maintenance is another feature consistent with contact-induced language change. In many instances a number of factors, which Thomason and Kaufman (1988:68) mention, determine the rate of language change in such a situation. The size of a speaker group determines which one of the languages in contact assumes the position of superordinate or subordinate. A subordinate group will have to be very prestigious for the superordinate one to borrow from it; generally, the reverse is norm. Thomason and Kaufman further state that there is a likelihood of one speaker group exerting an overwhelming cultural

pressure on the other, resulting in one of three of the following linguistic outcomes:

- a) A subordinate population may shift fairly rapidly to the dominant language, abandoning its native language, leading to the sudden death of the abandoned language;
- b) A shift may take place over many generations, in which case the language of the shifting population may undergo the slow attrition process known as language death;
- c) For reasons of stubborn language and cultural loyalty, the pressured group may maintain what it can of its native language, while borrowing such large portions of the dominant language's grammar that they replace all, or at least sizeable portions, of the original grammar.

Thomason and Kaufman's view of the process of language change, in terms of language maintenance and language shift, is clearly reflected in the table overleaf.

Table 1: Linguistic outcomes of language contact (Source: Thomas and Kaufman 1988:50 Table 3)



Language death, mentioned above as the third possible resultant of language contact, is described as "...the process involving the simplification of language forms along with the restriction of language function," (Knab as cited by Thomason and Kaufman 1988:101). Thomason and Kaufman explain it as a loss of domains of (a language's) usage that leads to loss of stylistic resources and ultimately to the loss of grammatical structures as new generations of speakers fail to learn forms their elders never or rarely used.

The authors under review in this subsection often refer to language shift. This phenomenon is seen as a social factor with linguistic implications. Linguistic factors do influence the linguistic outcome of a contact situation, but only secondarily. The main linguistic factors to be considered in predicting the results of language contact are universal markedness and typological distance between corresponding subsystems of languages in contact. Clearly, language change cannot be explained adequately without attention being paid to the corresponding subsystems as referred to above.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it has been argued that contact-induced change may be motivated by both internal and external factors. When languages are in contact, there is a great possibility for them either to acquire or to lose grammatical items. Generally, the literature does point to the fact that the linguistic outcomes of language change are not just a result of some linguistic stimuli, but that they are rather more the result of the sociolinguistic and historical background of the

speech communities in question. The works of Croft, Thomason and Kaufman and other researchers provide an important basis for an investigation of the extent to which social and other non-linguistic factors impact on the evolution of the languages in question.

CHAPTER THREE

ISIXHOSA IN CONTACT WITH ISIHLUBI AND SESOTHO: A CASE STUDY OF THE STERKSPRUIT SPEECH COMMUNITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a sociolinguistic survey of the speech community of Sterkspruit on the north-western boundaries of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. IsiXhosa is the language under focus, with the aim of exploring the nature of language change, because of isiXhosa's contact with two languages, namely Sesotho and isiHlubi³. The chapter will outline the possible linguistic outcomes of language contact, and discuss the historical, political and sociolinguistic factors that affect language contact. IsiXhosa, is particularly in contact with two languages, among many others, namely an isiNguni and a non-isiNguni language.

This chapter seeks to show how a dominant language can, in its quest for language maintenance, exert an influence that may result in language shift in the neighbouring languages. To this end, this chapter will explore factors of contact-induced language change such as borrowing, code switching, influence, interference, and bilingualism. In exploring the above, it will be shown that the

³ In terms of the official language policy of South Africa isiHlubi is not recognised as one of the 11 official languages. However for the purposes of this study isiHlubi will be referred to as a language and arguments will be put forward in favour of the elevation of isiHlubi from that of a mere 'dialect' or a 'language variety' to that of a fully-fledged isiNguni language.

sociolinguistic history of the speakers of any language is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcomes of contact- induced language change.

3.2 Methodology

A pilot study was carried out in the space of two and a half days. The aim was to obtain an understanding of the speech community of the Sterkspruit area through a survey of the speech patterns of speakers in the area. Twenty interviews were conducted with a wide variety of informants. As far as possible, the informants were not removed from their natural environments; discussions were held in general work places, in the office, in a car, in a salon, at home or on the street.

Covert observation took place at the main supermarket, OK Foods, at a car wash, in a bilingual family home, in a salon and at the Sterkspruit Magistrates Court. Small samples were used, as the focus is on the detail and quality of individual responses, rather than on quantity. Each informant was taken to represent a microcosm of a greater experience, the assumption being that a community's attitude to its language will determine how it responds to the forces of language change due to contact with other languages. Recordings were made during covert observation, only one party being made aware of this for ethical reasons. No recordings could be made in court, because of the legal constraints of protecting witnesses, but the Chief Magistrate allowed for note taking during the proceedings of the court sessions.

Documentary evidence used was obtained by courtesy of the Sterkspruit Senior Secondary School learners and staff, who availed themselves during a time when they were writing their mid-year examinations. These were short texts, written by selected pupils and exam scripts made available to the researcher. The written word was considered to be closest to the standard form, owing to the fact that it is not subject to a lot of verbal influence by the speech community. The high school was selected because of its proximity to a high-density residential area.

Church ministers were not available for interviews, because of the weekend schedules. Information on the religious aspects was solicited from ordinary members of the local churches. The researcher attended two church services, one on a Saturday, the other on a Sunday.

Fieldwork notes were made with audio recordings providing a helpful tool for capturing information from the informants. A qualitative methodology was used, the emphasis being on words, rather than numbers. The absence of an extended numerical presentation and analysis is due to the research's emphasis on the critical nature of meaning being more readily accessible from words than from mere quantity. The emphasis on words also helps to bring out and illustrate the notions of "quality" and "essential characteristics" in the information presented (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The presentation of the outcomes of the study will tell the field story of the language scenario that is the making of a description of language use patterns in the Sterkspruit speech community.

Following the pilot study, questionnaires were distributed to select schools focusing on language selection and language use patterns. The informants were students, teachers, and members of the school communities in the various areas. The questionnaires included a vocabulary list to investigate the speech community's lexical preferences. The questions are based on the premise that the lexical level of a language tends to be the first to change in a situation of contact-induced language change.

3.3 Linguistic background of the Eastern Cape Province

The Eastern Cape is one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa, and is home to five of the eleven official languages. Table 2 shows the population distribution of speakers of South African official languages in the province. The dominant languages in this province are isiXhosa, Afrikaans, English and Sesotho (highlighted on the table) as shown by the significant number of persons who are recorded in the Census 2001 figures as home language speakers of these languages. The geographical spread of isiXhosa suggests some linguistic variations.

Prior to 1994, the province's two ethnically defined states (better known as "homelands" or "Bantustans") known as the Transkei and the Ciskei were created. The Transkei was made up of the areas north to north-east of the Kei River. In this area, one can find abaThembu, amaMpondo, amaMpondomise, amaHlubi, amaBomvana and amaBhaca. The second homeland, the Ciskei, was situated to the south and south-west of the province and covered the area where one can find amaMfengu, amaXhosa, amaNgqika, amaNdlambe and

amaHlubi⁴. In the Ciskei, one would find amaHlubi, referred to as amaMfengu, in the environs of Peddie. IsiXhosa was the official language of both homelands.

According to Canonici (1994:5), isiXhosa consists of a cluster of dialects, reflecting the tribal varieties mentioned. Further, Canonici (1994:6) classifies isiBhaca as a Tekela variety, together with SiSwati, while he classifies isiHlubi as a Zunda variety of Southern Natal isiZulu. The two, isiBhaca and isiHlubi, are not, according to Canonici dialects of isiXhosa, yet the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) and the IsiXhosa National Language Board do consider the two as dialects of IsiXhosa. According to Prof. B. M. Mini, who was born in the isiHlubi-speaking village of eZitapile, kwaLudidi, in Matatiele, the three varieties, isiXhosa, isiHlubi, and isiBhaca are closely related, and are spoken by many people interchangeably there. They are mutually intelligible, in her view, just as the Hlonipha language is known within all three varieties (Oral communication, July 2005). Though isiBhaca shows isiTekela characteristics, it has, in Matatiele, acquired such overwhelming isiXhosa features that it is, practically speaking, a 'dialect' of isiXhosa, at the same level as isiHlubi. The teaching of isiXhosa at schools in the isiBhaca-speaking area of eZitapile and all the isiBhaca-speaking areas in and around Lady Frere and Mt Fletcher, contributed to this shift of isiBhaca towards isiXhosa (Mini, 2003). In the present work the term 'dialect,' unless otherwise specified, will be used in parentheses.

⁴ In this work the researcher may at times refer to abeHlubi interchangeably with amaHlubi and this is because of the influence of isiNdebele which uses the /abe-/ prefix form.

Table 2: Population distribution by language in the Eastern Cape

Home language	# Of persons
Afrikaans	600 057
English	232 952
IsiNdebele	4 134
IsiXhosa	5 369 672
IsiZulu	51 434
Sepedi	2 966
Sesotho	152 340
Setswana	1 944
Siswati	5 201
TshiVenda	766
Xitsonga	816
Other	14 482

Source: Statistics South Africa-Census 2001 (2001)

The Eastern Cape Province has, in its hinterland, stretching from the north-west to the north-east, a Sesotho presence. Such local municipalities as Senqu, which are closer to Lesotho, have a significant number of Sesotho mother tongue speakers, which has necessitated Sesotho to be recognized as one of the province's official languages, as well as a taught language in the schools. Settlements may be found where isiXhosa and Sesotho are in close mutual contact, such as in Sterkspruit, Mt Fletcher, and Lady Grey. Associated with this social diversity in the area, is the inevitable linguistic variation of isiXhosa.

3.4 IsiXhosa in the Eastern Cape Province

The spread of any one language over a large geographical area with a heterogeneous composition, will inevitably result in language variation. Language variation is the development of different forms of the same language because of the exposure of its speakers to different social and sociolinguistic environments. IsiXhosa, as the language under review in this chapter, is spread over a large province that has a diverse populace. Whilst many are amaXhosa, their historical and anthropological divergence makes isiXhosa prone to variation. Croft (2000:4) states that language does not change on its own, but that people change it because of the environment in which they are. By environment, Croft is essentially refers to the different languages which are in contact with the target language, in this case isiXhosa. Groups of people in a locality, irrespective of the languages they speak, form a speech community, as pointed out in chapter two above. Through the study of a selected speech community, one can justify or evaluate certain variations within a targeted language. A geographical setting like Sterkspruit has a number of languages that make up its speech community. The majority of the members of this community speak isiXhosa, in the milieu of Sesotho and isiHlubi. According to Thomason and Kaufman (1988:37) isiXhosa will either borrow from or exert influence on these adjacent languages so as in some ways to give rise to variations within it.

Language variation is a function of language change. As discussed earlier, speakers of one language may experience variations in their language because of the different environments in which they are. This can be described as language variation. IsiXhosa as spoken by the people of Alice,⁵ for example, varies considerably from that spoken by people of Sterkspruit. (For instance, in the few days this researcher spent in Sterkspruit, during the first visit, he did not hear the exclamation "*Tyhini*" which is very common among amaXhosa in Alice.) Over time, the same language may, as a result of these variations, develop new forms, a phenomenon that is referred to as language change. This researcher's view is that language variation is not, as such, language change but it does promote favourable conditions for language change.

As different societies are exposed to each other, so are their languages. Sankoff (2001:4) describes such a contact as being part of the social fabric of everyday life, given of the metropolitan nature of the world today. She further argues that language contact is the historical product of social forces that result in a group of speakers exhibiting bilingual tendencies. In the Sterkspruit speech community, isiXhosa speakers find themselves, inevitably, to be bilingual, because of their proximity to Sesotho and isiHlubi. Inter-societal contact, so it would appear, results in language contact which in turn gives rise to a set of linguistic outcomes. The term "linguistic" outcomes, refers to language-based conduct in a speaker that comes about in consequence of language contact. These linguistic outcomes of language contact are determined largely by the history of social

⁵ Alice is a small town situated 60km west of King Williamstown. The University of Fort Hare is in Alice. It is in this town that the orthography of isiXhosa was initially developed. The isiXhosa variety spoken in this area is regarded, by some, as the standard form of the language.

relations among populations whether religious, economic, political or demographic. The locus of language contact is the “bilingual speaker” and the process of “interlingual” identification is at the heart of the ensuing language change (Sankoff 2001:4). IsiHlubi in the Sterkspruit speech community is a language that has not only been in contact with isiXhosa, but has actually been dominated by isiXhosa. IsiXhosa’s established cultural activities tend to strengthen the ethnic coherence of isiHlubi. Despite the fact that isiHlubi is not a written language to date, it is a language that has resisted domination by isiXhosa, thereby saving it from a process of language death. Cultural pressure is very pertinent in the analysis of contact-induced language change.

The term ‘dialect’ is at times used interchangeably with the term ‘variety’ to refer to a systematic distinction within a single language, often related to the geographical distribution of its speakers. The distinction is exhibited in the language usage of different speakers of the same language. IsiHlubi is often considered to be a ‘dialect,’ because it is not a written variety. This usage has a very negative connotation. As already observed, it is good to realise that a ‘dialect’ is not a natural thing, but only a social construct. Most teachers interviewed were of the view that isiHlubi is a dialect of isiXhosa, citing the fact that its linguistic variation with isiXhosa is minimal. The fact that it is not a written language makes it subordinate to isiXhosa, so they argue. In the school curriculum, isiHlubi is neither taught, nor is it used for any educational purposes. An isiHlubi language speaker is exposed to isiXhosa from an early age. While at home, one uses isiHlubi, the continued use of isiXhosa at school tends to crowd in on an individual’s isiHlubi communicative competence.

The Census (2001) results do not refer to isiHlubi, following the constitutional provisions that do not refer to isiHlubi as an official language or even as a language. Further, isiHlubi is not one of the languages targeted by the constitution as in need of development. The PanSALB and IsiXhosa National Language Board view isiHlubi as a dialect of isiXhosa. The isiXhosa Department at the University of Fort Hare holds to the same view (Discussion with Zandisile Saul⁶, 2005). The rationale given, is the absence of a written grammar of the language. Sesotho on the other hand, within the Sterkspruit speech community and elsewhere, is considered a 'language'. A Sesotho speaker does not feel that he/she is in dialectal or competitive position as does the isiHlubi speaker. The competition is different; it is at the level of a diglossic relationship. The two languages, isiXhosa and Sesotho have the constitutional advantage of being designated official languages. An interesting feature in this speech community is the cultural strength of ubuHlubi. AbeHlubi are inherently proud of their traditions and history, and feel that isiXhosa suppresses them.⁷ The territorial advantage of isiHlubi causes the linguistic interference in isiXhosa.

The Eastern Cape Province is what one may call a multilingual province. The South African constitution provides affirmatively for the enlistment of African Languages that suffered subordination during the apartheid era. In line with the National Language Policy Framework of the Republic, the Provincial

⁶ Interview with Mr Z. Saul, an isiXhosa Linguistics lecturer at Fort Hare, and native dweller of kwaGaga village of Alice, June 2005.

⁷ Interview with Mr. P. Siphamla, Senior Court Interpreter, Sterkspruit Magistrates' Court, June 2005.

Government enacts a language policy that respects the languages obtaining in the province. That is why Sesotho, where it has a significant presence as in Sterkspruit, is taught and used as for official purposes in business and government.

3.5 The Sterkspruit community

Sterkspruit consists of a collection of settlements in the north-western part of the Eastern Cape forming Ward 7 of the Senqu Local Municipality. A total of 25 villages make up this governmental area. It is home to almost 9 000 people, with a very large migrant population, mainly from nearby Lesotho. Downtown Sterkspruit serves as a corridor business district for a number of business and professional people who service the area. Business is carried out in this town by people from as far afield as Lesotho and George. In the same ward there are 5 860 people who are registered as speaking isiXhosa as the home language, as compared to 3 050 whose home language is Sesotho (Census 2001). The Census 2001 report does not refer to the presence of isiHlubi speaking people who, although generally referred to as amaXhosa, would prefer to be recognized as amaHlubi, and they are numerous enough so court interpreters at the Magistrates' Court are required to have a sound knowledge of isiHlubi. IsiHlubi is generally referred to as a 'dialect' of isiXhosa. Table 3 shows the delimitation of the villages, according to the main language spoken as home language. There are many villages that have isiHlubi as home language. The term 'home language' refers to a speaker's mother tongue normally used by speakers in their home environment.

Table 3: Distribution of language in Sterkspruit according to villages.

Sesotho speaking	IsiXhosa speaking	IsiHlubi speaking
Mokopane	Vuyizana	Khiba
Mogesu	Ndofela	Nsimekweni
Palmit fontein	Walaza	Kwamanxeba
Thaba lesuba	Ngquba	Sikhixhazana
Morathaba	Mabele	Gibinkonzo
	Mlamli	Blekana
	Orange	Macacuma
		Jozana
		Meyi
		Hlomendlini
		Hlanjwa
		Blue gums

Source: Senior Court Interpreter's Office, Sterkspruit

3.6. Linguistic behaviour: bilingualism and multilingualism.

3.6.1 Introduction

In this section, the study concentrates on the different linguistic choices that typify the speech behaviour of the Sterkspruit speech community. Examples of bilingualism, code switching, interference, and influence, are outlined in this section. Brief comments and summary evaluations of the findings are also provided.

3.6.2 Commonly used languages in Sterkspruit

Within the business area of Sterkspruit there is an unwritten common consent that Sesotho and isiXhosa are the languages of ordinary communication. Any attempt to use another language, such as English, in place of the two, is viewed as snobbish and certainly not local. At the supermarket (O.K. Bazaar) the common languages used were isiXhosa and Sesotho. During this researcher's observation, three hours in all, customers were heard to use the two languages to communicate just as did the till operators. In the hair salons and barber's shops, attendants addressed their clients in either isiXhosa or Sesotho. At the flea markets, situated on the pavements of the town, even Somali and other non-South African traders initially use isiXhosa or Sesotho, before using English for any customer.

The use of English is certainly not common. Those using it are considered 'elitist' and seen as speakers of a foreign tongue, not at home in Sterkspruit.

Most of those interviewed agreed that they would use a language that assists them in their pursuit of profitable business.

IsiXhosa is by far the most widely spoken of the two languages, with approximately six out of every ten speaking it. Most business people nonetheless readily switch from isiXhosa to Sesotho and *vice-versa*. As a result of the corridor nature of the small town, there are many itinerant people only in town en route to or from Lesotho, since the latter has a border gate (Zastron) only 60 km away. Among the youth interviewed and observed, there was no clear evidence of the use of 'Is'camtho/slang' in their communication.

The language used by most, when in town, is either Sesotho or isiXhosa. A different behaviour obtains in the villages, where the language used is the dominant language of the area. In Jozana for example, which is a predominantly isiHlubi area, one may not even hear any Sesotho being spoken, except amongst one or two intermarried families. IsiHlubi and isiXhosa are commonly used. In Mokopane's Naledi village, one is likely to find both isiXhosa and Sesotho being spoken.

3.6.3.1 Bilingualism at the individual and at the family level

Among the people interviewed, widespread bilingualism was observed among the isiXhosa and Sesotho speaking people. A conversation can continue between two speakers, one making use of isiXhosa, while the other responds in Sesotho. The same is commonly found in bilingual families, where the aunt,

grandmother or even uncle is a MoSotho while the rest of the family are amaXhosa. The customary accommodation is to allow the older member of the family to dictate the language to be used at any time. Most bilingual families reveal a peculiar trend. Where the father is umXhosa the home language is isiXhosa despite the fact that the mother may be MoSotho. A different situation prevails in the case where the mother is umXhosa and the father MoSotho; there the children will be more fluent in isiXhosa than Sesotho. The children's linguistic competence in isiXhosa is largely determined by their social aspiration, which tends to make them seek to the status enjoyed by isiXhosa outside their home. Moreover, the social attitudes of the Basotho socialize them so as to prefer the use of isiXhosa.

3.6.3.2 Religion and choice of language.

As to religious practices, code switching is plentiful in both the Pentecostal and Protestant churches. In these churches, which included the Apostolic Faith Mission, Light of the World and the United Methodist Church, the choice of language is wholly dependant on the speaker at any given time. Testimonies may be heard in either of the two languages, isiXhosa or Sesotho. Accommodating as many members as possible in the ministry of the word is of the essence. The hymns and choruses sung are in either isiXhosa or Sesotho.

The syncretistic Holy Church of God in Zion, situated in Nsimekweni (an amaHlubi village), presents an interesting situation. Members of the church interviewed, state that they sing mainly isiZulu songs, with which they are more

comfortable than with isiXhosa songs. They read an isiZulu Bible. The reason given is that they feel closer to isiZulu than to isiXhosa as amaHlubi. The syncretistic churches tend to seek a position closer to one's cultural heritage.

In the Catholic Church most of the parish priests are foreigners who have been trained to deliver mass in isiXhosa; so while the songs may be in either isiXhosa or Sesotho, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is conducted in isiXhosa. Catholic clerics seem to be comfortable with the language most widely spoken in the community where their parishes are found.

From conversations of congregants outside the church services, amaXhosa and Basotho appear to converse readily, each individual using her/his own language. In business areas such as salons, supermarkets and car wash places, the shop stewards or the workers in the establishment select a language as it suits them and bilingualism is fully present. There is no impediment to communication in any of the languages used amongst the local inhabitants.

3.6.3.3 Bilingualism and code switching

From the youth and young adults (20's age group), there is an effort toward accommodation that goes beyond passive bilingualism to active bilingualism. It may be described as an attempt to speak the other's language. Sesotho speakers tend to do this more than others. Among the youth frequent code switching and borrowing occurs; in some instances the Basotho integrate Sesotho structures into their isiXhosa utterances as shown below:

(1) *E ea! Tata hope ndikhathazwa lenyawo.*
(Yes, sir my foot is painful.)

(2) *Hle sisi waka andinayo tu irandi.*
(Please my sister I do not have a rand.)

In the first word string one observes the use of the Sesotho adverbial construction *lenyawo* (loosely translated by *the foot*) instead of the proper isiXhosa construction *lunyawo*. Instead of the usual isiXhosa 'yes' (*Ewe!*) a Sesotho speaker and even quite a number of the isiXhosa speakers will now use *E ea!* Note too the use of *hle* (*please*), which is a direct import from Sesotho. The second utterance is an illustration of common code switching among the speakers in this speech community, while the first utterance shows a mixture of code-switching and linguistic interference. The latter occurs when a second language speaker of isiXhosa uses language structures belonging to the first language in articulating the second. It is different from code switching, which occurs amongst both first and second language speakers.

3.6.3.4 Mother tongue influence

At school we find a different situation. Learners are expected to speak, produce, and present work in standardized isiXhosa, even as they are not mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa. A significant number are isiHlubi mother tongue speakers. IsiHlubi is neither a recognized, nor a written language in South Africa. For official purposes it is considered a 'dialect' of isiXhosa. Those at school find it difficult to articulate the isiXhosa dental nasal stop /*nd*/ which they therefore often substitute with the velar nasal stop /*ng*/. Moreover, the schoolchildren find

the lexical choices very difficult, it is clear from the fact that there is a strong degree of isiHlubi (isiHl.) influence in their work in isiXhosa (isiXh):

(3) UNeliswa **uyakhala** kakhulu. (isiHl.)

(4) UNeliswa **uyalila** kakhulu. (isiXh)

[Neliswa is crying a lot.]

(5) **Isibongo** sam nguMntungwa. (isiHl.)

(6) **Isiduko** sam nguMntungwa. (isiXh.)

[My clan name is Mntungwa.]

(7) **Ngidla** umngqutsho. (isiHl)

(8) **Nditya** umngqusho. (isiXh)

[I am eating samp. (crushed maize)]

(9) **Soze ngikhohlwe** lento angenze yona. (isiHl.)

(10) **Andizukulibala** laa nto andenze yona. (isiXh.)

[I will never forget what he/she did to me.]

Being mother tongue speakers of isiHlubi, the learners interviewed showed that they did not want to learn the Sesotho of their elders. They are too busy learning isiXhosa to bother with another language. Whilst they do not speak Sesotho, the same learners claim to understand it well. This is a clear incidence of passive bilingualism on their part. Despite the isiHlubi interference with the learners' isiXhosa, the learners perform reasonably well in the national language examinations in isiXhosa. This is due, according to a language teacher, to a willingness by examiners to accept isiXhosa from this area as a variant form of the standard.

3.6.3.5 Language choice in the courts of law.

In the magistrate's court, the court interpreter generally identifies the witness' or accused's home language by his/her name and surname. Although the court interpreter's guess is not always accurate, the rate of failure is negligible. There is a similar language use preference here as found elsewhere in the district. Even young, travelling sellers of marijuana (dagga), mostly Sesotho mother tongue speakers, were found to prefer to give their evidence in isiXhosa. On inquiry, it was found that their choice of isiXhosa is mainly to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of interpreters, since the witnesses see themselves to be in an isiXhosa speaking community. AmaHlubi prefer to speak in isiHlubi, especially when presenting evidence in mitigation which has caused the court to make it a prerequisite for interpreters to have a sound knowledge of isiHlubi.

3.6.3.6 Lexical infusions among amaHlubi speakers

Further evidence of bilingualism among amaXhosa and amaHlubi, is the presence of some lexical infusions of isiHlubi that have made their way into the isiXhosa of the speech community of Sterkspruit. Table 4 shows some lexical items that could confuse a non-Sterkspruit isiXhosa speaker. For most second language speakers of isiXhosa in the speech community under focus, these words, and many more, filter into the spoken isiXhosa. Mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa will not use any of these words. There does not seem to be any incidence of borrowing in this regard. It is not strange for one to hear these words in an isiXhosa string of words such as:

- (11) **Mrharamadzele** ngaphaya nanguya engishiya.
[Overtake him from that side he is leaving me behind].

The highlighted word is an isiHlubi word that is comfortably used in a normal isiXhosa sentence without any need for interpretation as it is acceptable and understood in the speech community under review.

IsiHlubi as an isiNguni language has the same grammatical formation /system as isiXhosa. Consequently there is frequent interference by isiHlubi in isiXhosa sentences. In table 4, below, one can observe, in the lexical items selected, the peculiar occurrence of some sounds which are not common in isiXhosa. These include the palatal roll /r/ as seen in words like *ukutshegera*, *ukutshegura* and *ukutsherela*. The sound is not inherent to isiXhosa and it is only realized in borrowed items. Another sound that is borrowed, is the voiced alveolar stop /dz/ as found in the words *ukuqodzoma*, *ukurharamadzela*. The only other isiNguni variety that presents a similar phonological form is SiSwati (*indvodza*- a man, *Ludzidzini*-King Mswati III's home).

Table 4: Lexical comparison of selected items from isiXhosa and isiHlubi.

IsiHlubi term	IsiXhosa equivalent	English
ekhethu	Ekhaya	<i>at home</i>
Ukukhahlula	ukuthethisa rhabaxa	<i>rough speech</i>
Ukudla	ukutya	<i>food / to eat</i>
ukuthaba	ukuvuya	<i>to be happy</i>
ukutshegera	Ukubhaqa	<i>to discover</i>
ukutshegura	Ukucheba	<i>to cut hair/grass</i>
ukukhala	ukulila	<i>to cry</i>
ukutshaka	ukundwendwela	<i>to visit</i>
ukuqodzoma	uku Chopha	<i>to squat</i>
umgrunu	umona	<i>envy/being mean</i>
baninji	Baninzi	<i>they are many</i>
is'phaqa	ldwala	<i>rocky out crop</i>
dlula	gqitha	<i>pass</i>
Ukukhamba	ukuhamba	<i>to go /to walk</i>
ukujula	ukuphosa	<i>to throw</i>
ukurhalamatzela	ukumvelela ngaphambili, ukurhawula	<i>to overtake</i>
Ukumrhama	ukumkhama	<i>to strangulate</i>
Ukutsherela	ukutyibilika	<i>to make a turn/to slip</i>
ukurhadela	Ukuzula	<i>to roam around</i>
Isidlamudlamu	umthi /isihlahla	<i>A tree /a bush</i>
Ukurhuba	Ukubhanxa	<i>to confuse /to speak foolishly</i>
Ukugijima	Ukubaleka	<i>to run</i>

3.7 Social Attitudes and Language behaviour.

3.7.1 Disinterest to learn Sesotho on the part of isiXhosa speakers

Most Basotho interviewed were of the opinion that amaXhosa do not make a satisfactory effort to learn Sesotho. AmaXhosa expect and take for granted that the Basotho will learn isiXhosa since they (the Basotho) are in isiXhosa speaking country. One fluent speaker of isiXhosa explained that, although she was a MoSotho since both her parents were Basotho, she did not find it easy to learn Sesotho as they now lived in an amaXhosa area. She reiterated that amaXhosa did not consider it important to learn Sesotho and that they constantly laughed at her each time they would hear her make utterances in it. Another informant with a MoSotho father and an umXhosa mother, stated that the whole family is more fluent in isiXhosa than in Sesotho. IsiXhosa speaking people seem to have the same attitude towards isiHlubi speakers. An elderly umXhosa lady whose family moved into an amaHlubi speaking village, narrated how her husband would send children who addressed him in isiHlubi away and demanded that they speak isiXhosa or not address him at all. A MoSotho till-operator said she has to be very fluent in isiXhosa, because amaXhosa are not keen to address her in Sesotho, yet they expect her to speak in isiXhosa.

3.7.2 Speech behaviour in the trade and commercial environment

A significant number of Basotho are involved in trade and commerce and find the learning of isiXhosa beneficial to their work. They find learning to speak isiXhosa difficult but very necessary for their survival in business, since isiXhosa speakers outnumber them by far. Six out of every ten flea market or pavement stalls that are manned by South Africans, have a Sesotho speaking person

doing business. In most of the salons visited, the same demographics prevail. In each of these instances, the Sesotho mother tongue speakers were found to be conversing in isiXhosa or making an honest effort to do so. The reverse does not apply, with isiXhosa mother tongue business operators being unwilling to speak anything but isiXhosa.

3.7.3 Identity and ethnic awareness among amaHlubi

AmaHlubi interviewed, were eager to inform the interviewer that they do not see themselves as amaXhosa. They feel isiXhosa was imposed on them by past regimes, as well as by the intolerance of amaXhosa administrators and educationists sent to the district from the inner Eastern Cape. The amaHlubi feel that isiXhosa as an isiNguni language has an advantage over isiHlubi, in that it is a written language. Furthermore amaHlubi had to go inland to isiXhosa speaking areas to obtain a higher education. In these areas their language is often despised and socially defined as a dialect. Equally the homeland system did not help, as it entrenched isiXhosa and subordinated them even more. A retired isiXhosa language teacher of amaHlubi stock, educated at Lovedale, spoke of how, despite being a respected educationist from Lovedale, his isiHlubi accent worked such comments as:

(11)Intetha yale tishala iphilile yona, kodwa ayikho ncam apha esiXhoseni sakwaNtu.

[This teacher's parlance is good, yet it does not measure up to pure isiXhosa speech]

AmaHlubi do not view their language as a dialect of isiXhosa, but rather as a language in its own right. They see themselves more as abeNguni than as

amaXhosa. There is a general attitude also among amaXhosa which suggests that amaHlubi do not speak pure isiXhosa: (12) ...*bayangangaza* a derogatory description of the peculiar manner of speech of the amaHlubi, indicating substitution of the isiXhosa dental stop for the velar stop.

3.7.4 Linguistic purism among amaXhosa

Among amaXhosa there is a strong purist sentiment and a desire to maintain the isiXhosa language and culture as close to the standard as possible. One isiXhosa language teacher interviewed saw no need to design specific strategies for isiXhosa second language learners if they were amaHlubi. She stressed that, as far as she was concerned, they were amaXhosa and had no reason not to learn isiXhosa to the level of competence of a first language speaker. She was joined by others echoing the same sentiments, but adding that second language teaching methods would be best applied to the Basotho. To them the isiXhosa standard is measured by the likes of recognised isiXhosa scholars such as Pahl, Jordan, Mtuze, Satyo, and others. There is great intolerance towards variation. A purist approach is maintained. One teacher defended the purist approach to the teaching of isiXhosa to the amaHlubi by citing that the same amaHlubi performed very well under the same tough conditions and therefore there was no need to slacken conditions for them.

One isiHlubi mother tongue speaker, nonetheless a teacher of isiXhosa, lamented her isiXhosa being *buHlubirha* [with a strong isiHlubi accent]. This speaks of her isiXhosa displaying a noticeably visible interference of isiHlubi.

Another isiXhosa language speaker, married to a MoSotho man, thought that amaHlubi learn isiXhosa better than the original amaXhosa as they are more inspired. She went on to stress the fact that the purity of the language is compromised by the *buSothurha* [strong Sesotho accent] element rather than the *buHlubirha* influence. In all these interviews language maintenance tendencies among the amaXhosa are prominent.

3.7.5 Effect of policy and governance on language behaviour

The South African Constitution (1996:4) guarantees language freedom to every member of the South African society by stating categorically that, "...all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably." The parity of esteem and equitable treatment specifically refers to the selected eleven official languages, but does not extend to those indigenous languages that are not part of the eleven. The Constitution does encourage the development of other indigenous languages as a way of upholding the right of every citizen to use his/her language. No doubt it allows for an appreciably multilingual landscape at the macro level. At the micro level though, as is in the case of Sterkspruit, there exists a hierarchical polyglossic relationship among languages. The dominant language in the area assumes a High Language (L1) position, while any other language(s) take a Low Language (L2) position. In the L2 group of the gloss, there could be languages that figure among the eleven official languages. In Sterkspruit and part of the Senqu Municipality, isiXhosa is L1, by comparison to isiHlubi and Sesotho, which are L2. Within the speech community under study, English and Afrikaans are not viewed as L1 varieties but as languages of wider communication. The parity of esteem and equitable

treatment enshrined in the Constitution is here compromised, unintentionally, by a mere sociolinguistic reality.

The Language in Education Policy as enunciated by the Department of Education in 1997, allows schools to determine their own language policy in consultation with parents and the school community. The same policy gives all learners the right to learn in their mother tongue and demands that the school meet that right where *practical and reasonable*. The terms italicized are open to very subjective interpretation. Responsibility and trust lies with the judgment of the school administration. In the schools visited in Sterkspruit - *Sterkspruit Senior Secondary School* having been the first - the researcher realized that the schools teach both isiXhosa and Sesotho. The two languages are taken as subjects and not as media of instruction. The rationale for teaching isiXhosa instead of isiHlubi, is that traditionally isiXhosa has been taught while examinations still concern isiXhosa not its 'dialects'.

The community does not have a large educated population, as could be found in a bigger urbanized settlement. The ordinary resident of Sterkspruit rarely uses English, except when conversing with a mother tongue speaker of English or a foreigner who is not black. By and large only the indigenous languages are used. According to Makoni, as cited by Ncoko *et al* (2000:24), the promotion of some languages by the South African Constitution creates the linguistic equivalent of Bantustans. Some languages, by virtue of being christened "official" languages, come to predominance over other languages. This leads to

the uncritical assumption, as in the speech community under review, that one language is a dialect of another. A significant number of informants, especially those in the education fraternity, are of the view that isiHlubi is a 'dialect' of isiXhosa, whereas amaHlubi see it as a fully-fledged language that is only in contact with IsiXhosa. They feel isiXhosa was imposed on them by generations of regimes before.

There was no tertiary training institute in the Sterkspruit area for a long time, so most of the higher education was obtained in the south-east, at Lovedale and Fort Hare. This meant greater exposure to isiXhosa, more than to isiHlubi or Sesotho. Those that left the then Cape Colony, found tertiary education in Roma, Lesotho. The educated elite among the blacks who would influence the body politic as well as civic society, was more likely to speak isiXhosa than isiHlubi. Furthermore, according to one aged respondent (a retired teacher), the authorities in Mthatha, who without fail appointed people with a strong allegiance to 'mainland' amaXhosa country, were responsible for the appointment of civil service personnel. Those appointed were mainly mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa.

The Sterkspruit community, as part of the Senqu Municipality, has a historical relationship with the 'mainland' amaXhosa domain. The administrative and political centre of this community has historically been from 'mainland' isiXhosa speaking area, Mthatha to be precise. There is also a strong abaThembu presence in the area, evidenced by the chieftaincies of Hinana and Fakude. The

most prominent amaHlubi chieftaincy is that of Mehlomakhulu, resident in the Nsimekweni village. Among the Basotho, there is the Tlokweg chieftaincy of the BaTlokwa dynasty of the Sotho. Although not very large, there is also a remnant of the Phuthi dynasty, which has been absorbed into other chieftaincies.

There has been a harmonious relationship and good cooperation among the different peoples resulting in a significant number of inter-lingual marriages. It is not uncommon for a MoSotho to marry into the amaXhosa or *vice versa*. Interlingual marriages have been encouraged not only by the close proximity of the ethnic groups, but also by the traditions of trading and commerce between them. History has it that the Thembu readily accepted the abaHlubi and sought to assimilate them as amaMfengu until the time of the frontier wars, when the latter are said to have sold out to the whites. Since then there has been a dislike of one ethnic group by the other.

In religious affairs a similar trend may be discerned due to the presence of Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches, whose training seminaries were not in and around Sterkspruit but in the 'mainland.' Hence the preachers were, and still are, more fluent in isiXhosa than in their mother tongue. It is the syncretistic Zionist and Apostolic churches that did not and still do not send their clergy away for training, as do the mainline churches.

Language is not only a combination of systems, but it is also a social tool, affected by the social considerations its speakers from time to time. IsiXhosa is no exception. There is a strong tendency toward a maintenance of that which is regarded as pure isiXhosa. It is well to note that since there is no pure society or community, the desire for a pure language is itself an exercise in futility. If language is a tool of communication in society, it follows that the different stakeholders in a speech community will affect it.

In strong evidence in the Sterkspruit area, is the effect of the demographic composition and of economic activity. There is, apart from the established retail shops, a great deal of informal commercial activity. There are flea-market stalls and salons, among others, that have a mixture of different language speakers who demand appropriate communication space within the speech community. There are also the shuttling dealers in drugs such as marijuana who ply their trade between Lesotho and other parts of the province. All these make Sterkspruit cosmopolitan. There is therefore, a force that makes for isiXhosa purism and aggressive language maintenance. In the teaching of IsiXhosa, it is possible to determine a standard language that may be viewed as its pure form. This is because the written language is not subject to as speedy and drastic change as is the spoken. The latter is bound to change, because of the existing speech environment that involves a gloss of many other languages.

IsiXhosa has not experienced wholesale transformation due to its contact with Sesotho or isiHlubi. The stronger influence has been in the other direction and

this is attributed to the dominant nature of isiXhosa. Coupled with the purist attitude of the isiXhosa speakers, there is their subordinating view of the other languages. The proximity, linguistically, of isiHlubi to isiXhosa is conducive to the labelling of isiHlubi as a 'dialect' of isiXhosa. On the other hand, amaHlubi see their link to isiXhosa in the fact that they both form part of the isiNguni language group which also shares some traditions such as circumcision. It is common to see abeHlubi attend the rite among the amaXhosa, but the condescending attitude of the latter is seen in their non-attendance of the rite among the abeHlubi. According to Mini, (Oral Communication, 26 July 2005), in other places, like kwaLudidi, the condescension comes from amaHlubi who think that the isiXhosa way of circumcision is not adequate. As a result, amaBhaca who adapt to circumcision do it the isiHlubi way, rather than the isiXhosa way. The amaBhaca prefer the more active, dramatic and colourful nature of the isiHlubi ritual activity from its preparatory stage, right through to the sending away of the *abakhwetha*, to their return and the subsequent festivities.

AmaXhosa are seen as very protective of their language and culture. Interference from the substrate languages is common but it is strongly resisted. It is in the language classroom that one meets this resistance most forcefully. IsiXhosa teachers will not tolerate the common switch to isiHlubi by the latter's mother tongue speakers.

Some times the occurrence of mutual intelligibility is interpreted as indicative of a 'dialect' relationship. As already observed in this chapter, isiHlubi is taken by

some to be a 'dialect' of IsiXhosa even though Canonici (1994) classifies it as a dialect of isiZulu.

A few inferences concerning the IsiXhosa – isiHlubi relationship may be drawn from the Sterkspruit speech community:

- Both are isiNguni languages differentiated by some phonological and lexical variations. IsiHlubi will use the velar nasal stop /ng-/ , where isiXhosa will use the dental nasal stop /nd-/ in the first person concordial formation.
- There are many lexical choices that make isiXhosa different from isiHlubi as shown in Table 3 above.
- Because isiHlubi mother tongue speakers have to learn/study isiXhosa at school, or even have it as a medium of instruction, they assume a relatively high communicative competence that makes them pass as first language isiXhosa speakers. Nevertheless, amaHlubi speak isiXhosa as a second language, and the result is the interference of the former with the latter. This substratum influence causes their isiXhosa to show some variations from the standard.

On closer inspection, isiXhosa in Sterkspruit has an influence on isiHlubi, creating a linguistic variation on isiHlubi as well. In some situations, such a linguistic relationship would have resulted in language shift (Huebner, T. 1987:180), as in the case of the Chinese domination of the Manchus in Beijing. Not so for isiHlubi; amaHlubi still use isiHlubi on a day-to-day basis. What obtains is a language affected by contact-induced language change scenarios.

There is a clear degree of subordination of one language by another due to language policy implementation.

3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to undertake an investigative survey of the Sterkspruit speech community in the northern part of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The focus was on the language contact situation in this community and the manner in which the speech community has responded and is responding to it. The research focused on the following three languages spoken in the area, isiXhosa, isiHlubi and Sesotho. Contact-induced language behaviour was investigated in various socio-cultural environments, including religious settings, commerce and business, educational institutions and the home scene.

A qualitative research methodology was used, involving the use of various observation methods, interviews and questionnaires. Clearly evident is the dominance of isiXhosa. There is also a measure of disregard of the minority languages in the area, as speakers of the larger languages are reluctant to speak in minority languages. The historical socio-political situation in the Sterkspruit area reveals language contact circumstances that are very complex and demand a delicate compromise on the part of the speakers in this speech community. Issues of ethnicity and linguistic tolerance play their part in the choice of language use in this speech community. Qualitative research was

undertaken with the effective use of observation, questionnaires as well as interviews with different subjects in the speech community of Sterkspruit.

The findings as presented in this chapter show the extent of language change that the speech community of Sterkspruit has undergone. Among the findings are the linguistic outcomes of the contact of isiXhosa with isiHlubi and Sesotho respectively, and the sociolinguistic factors influencing them.

Bilingualism and the attendant speech behaviours of code switching, borrowing and influence have been outlined in this chapter, thus showing the extent of language change experienced. It is realized that contact induced language change is to be understood mainly from the bilingual nature of the individual speakers of the languages under review.

The dominance of isiXhosa in the Sterkspruit speech community cannot be overlooked. IsiXhosa occupies an L1 position in the polyglossic relationship of the languages in the area. Sesotho and isiHlubi take the L2 position. It has to be added that isiHlubi, being an isiNguni language, enjoys a closer affinity to isiXhosa than does Sesotho. As a result of the intimate contact between these languages, there is, inevitably, mutual influence among them.

The findings as outlined in this chapter will be further analysed and interpreted more thoroughly in a later chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISINDEBELE IN CONTACT WITH CHISHONA: A CASE STUDY OF THE NGUNGUMBANE SPEECH COMMUNITY IN ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter's focus is on the language contact situation in the Southern African country of Zimbabwe. The focus is specifically on an isiNguni language, isiNdebele, which is in a contact situation with a non-isiNguni language, chiShona. IsiNdebele in Zimbabwe belongs to the Zunda sub-group of the Nguni group of languages, as outlined by Canonici (1994:5). The Zunda sub-group includes the following languages: isiXhosa, isiZulu and isiNdebele as spoken in the Mpumalanga province of the Republic of South Africa. It is well to remember from the outset, that the two isiNdebele varieties are uniquely different. This chapter will concentrate on the isiNdebele variety as spoken in Zimbabwe.

While the greater speech behaviour of the isiNdebele-speaking people in Zimbabwe is the general focus, there will be particular concentration on the speech behaviour of the amaNdebele as found in the community of the Ngungumbane communal lands of the Mberengwa district in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. ChiShona, although it is a Bantu language as classified by Doke, is not one of the isiNguni languages. Also, chiShona is the language spoken by the majority of people in Zimbabwe. The 2002 Census puts chiShona

as the language spoken by a staggering 75% of the Zimbabwean population, isiNdebele being spoken by 20% and the remaining 5% representing the minority languages including tjiKalanga, Sesotho, Nambya and Tonga among others.

It is the aim of this chapter to show how a minority language, totally encapsulated by a dominant language, can maintain its existence. In pursuit of this aim, this chapter will explore factors of contact-induced language change, such as borrowing, code switching, influence, interference and bilingualism.

This investigation should allow us to identify significant examples of the linguistic outcomes of language contact. It will also serve to teach us to observe and understand the effect of socio-political, historical, economic and cultural factors that affect and largely determine language change.

4.2 Methodology

The research was undertaken over a period of three months. The attempt to understand the speech patterns of the speakers in the speech community of Ngungumbane was facilitated by questionnaires sent to schools in the area, with the help of village workers. Another set of questionnaires was administered to a school in the Nkosikazi community of Matabeleland North. This second set of questionnaires sought to gain information about the speech behaviour of isiNdebele speaking people in a geographical location not in close proximity to a chiShona speaking community. The questionnaires sought to determine socio-cultural and historical tendencies that support language maintenance. The

questionnaires included a vocabulary list to investigate the speech community's lexical preferences. The questions were based on the premise that the lexical level of a language tends to be the first to change in a situation of contact-induced language change.

Visits to Ngungumbane were undertaken intermittently due to exorbitant transport costs resulting from fuel shortages in Zimbabwe. Covert observations were made in the following areas and situations: interactions of development workers and villagers at clinics, schools, dip-tanks, and retail outlets. Ngungumbane is a rural settlement with villages and dwellings far apart. Clinics, schools and other public amenities are generally situated at a distance from the people's homes. Interaction and communication takes place at such places as the dip-tank, grinding mill, small shopping centre and at church gatherings.

Interviews and group discussions were held with the following role-players:

- Ngungumbane residents 40 years and older;
- Ngungumbane residents who commute or work elsewhere in Zimbabwe but still maintain their residence in the area, including people born and bred in Ngungumbane, but not ordinarily resident in the area;
- Residents from Negove and Nyamhondo who are chiShona speaking neighbours of the inhabitants of the Ngungumbane area;
- IsiNdebele speaking pupils and teachers in the area;
- Young people up to the age of 30 in the area of Ngungumbane and its surrounding villages.

The researcher did not have an opportunity to undertake visits during weekends, but he did have occasion to speak with some members of the clergy in the area. Other relevant information on religious matters was solicited from the public.

Detailed interviews and discussions were held with traditional leaders as well as political-historians. A specific set of interviews were conducted with historian and author Pathisa Nyathi⁸, who has done extensive research and has published extensively about the area under scrutiny.

Other than in the Sterkspruit speech community discussed in the previous chapter, documentary evidence in the form of learning materials used by schoolchildren was not available here. The current sensitive political atmosphere made it difficult for the researcher to obtain educational materials; and the beaurocracy here was not helpful.

As this is mainly a qualitative research project, the emphasis is on the patterns of speech behaviour manifested and observed, rather than on numbers, so as to highlight the quality of the essential characteristics of speech behaviour in the delimited area.

4.3 The language situation in Zimbabwe

For the purpose of this study, it is be important to provide a brief overview of the language situation in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a multilingual nation although its

⁸ Pathisa Nyathi is a prolific isiNdebele author, historian and cultural preservist resident in the city of Bulawayo. He is also a newspaper columnist on the subject of culture. The researcher interviewed him at length between 12/01/06 and 25/01/06 as well as during the period 26/06/06 and 30/06/06.

diversity is hardly comparable to that of the Republic of South Africa. The languages listed below can be found in Zimbabwe, but exact figures for their speakers could not be obtained, because the political situation does not allow disclosure of demographic details based on ethnicity:

English	Sesotho
chiShona	Hlengwe (Xitsonga/Shangaan)
IsiNdebele	tshiVenda
Tonga	seTswana
TjiKalanga	isiXhosa
Nambya	Nyanja

These languages may be divided into two broad groups, National Languages, and Local Languages. This terminology is specifically adopted to avoid the connotations attached to the terms "minority" and "majority" languages. English, chiShona and isiNdebele have the status of National Languages. National languages are accorded the status of official languages in the Education Act (Zimbabwe 1987:225). The majority of the citizens in the country are speakers of one of these languages. English is most widely used for official, transactional, legal, as well as commercial purposes. Nevertheless it is the mother tongue of only a minority. ChiShona and isiNdebele are the most widely spoken indigenous languages, with chiShona being spoken by about 75% of the population as mother tongue, while isiNdebele is spoken by 20% as mother tongue. The three languages are examinable subjects in primary and secondary school level up to tertiary level. The other languages have the status of Local

Languages. The latter term indicates that their usage is localised in specific geographical settings. Local Languages are used as mother tongues within these definitive areas.

This language situation can be best described as polyglossic. English, due to its nature as a language of wider communication, holds a superior position, above chiShona and isiNdebele. The recent development of chiShona as a language more dominant than isiNdebele, now presents a three level hierarchy of languages as follows:

- ENGLISH --- Official documents, legal activity, major medium of instruction, language of wider communication
- chiSHONA-----The majority of citizens' mother tongue, making it a dominant language. Also, chiShona plays a more functional role in the official sphere than isiNdebele does or can do. It also enjoys more air time in the electronic media, than any other indigenous language.
- isiNDEBELE---Third dominant language, limited geographical influence, third commonly used language, still subordinate to chiShona.

The local languages are only used as a medium of instruction up to the third grade of primary school. A few geographically localised communities use them as mother tongue. These languages have very limited scope within the linguistic communicative sphere of Zimbabwe. The same languages have a radio channel that caters for them specifically: National FM.

The language under investigation, isiNdebele, is in a very precarious position, compounded by the fact that almost all the Local Languages are found in the three administrative provinces where isiNdebele is mother tongue of the majority (i.e. Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Bulawayo Province). By implication anything done for the positive development of Local Languages is seen by some as a ploy to further undermine the growth and development of isiNdebele.

At independence (1980) isiNdebele was the second language of almost all the people of the Midlands Province. Noteworthy was the almost 50/50 split (in the Midlands) of the electoral vote of the general elections of 1980 and 1985 between PF-Zapu and Zanu-PF. PF-ZAPU has for some time been viewed as an amaNdebele party, because of the role played by the late Dr Joshua Nkomo, while Zanu-PF was considered as a Shona party because of its President, Robert Mugabe. To date, the elderly inhabitants of the Midlands Province are still actively bilingual.

Currently though, isiNdebele's position as a second language of the Midlands has been numerically weakened. It is not uncommon to find the youth professing total incompetence in the language. This was precipitated by the internal civil strife and violence from 1981 to 1987, which saw the amaShona pitted against the amaNdebele. The isiNdebele language has remained dominant in select areas of the Midlands Province. These areas have certain common features as

will become clear in this chapter through the study of one such area, Ngungumbane ward in Mberengwa district of the Midlands Province.

4.4 Historical review of isiNdebele in Zimbabwe.

People who trace their origins to the Nguni-speaking people of KwaZulu-Natal, speak isiNdebele. They were part of the Bantu-speaking people's North and North-east migrations, otherwise known as the Mfecane. As previously stated in this study, isiNdebele is one of the five Nguni languages. The uMthwakazi⁹ state, as the Ndebele political organisation was known prior to the advent of colonialism, was located within a 60km radius of the present-day city of Bulawayo. This concentration was caused by this group's preference for loam – red soils good for the tillage of small grain crops. Ndhlovu (2006:313), making reference to Doke (1931), posits that the language isiNdebele has for a long time been seen as uniform and limited to a single geographical area. Ndhlovu suggests that if Doke had made an in-depth study of isiNdebele at the time, there would have been a different geographical orientation and perception of the language today.

According to Nyathi the amaNdebele owe the spread of their language to other areas in Zimbabwe to colonialism. Nyathi (2005:44) explains:

Following colonisation, the Ndebele people suffered land alienation and accompanying evictions more than any other African group in Zimbabwe. People belonging to the same village were scattered and found themselves

⁹ When Mzilikazi Khumalo got to present-day Zimbabwe from Shaka's Zulu Kingdom the political organisation that he established was known as the Ndebele State or in isiNdebele uMthwakazi. The term is still in use today especially in quarters that describe the history of the Ndebele.

belonging to several villages far from their original ancestral homes. For example, the people of Intemba, once under Xukuthwayo Mlotshwa and later Sikhombo Mguni, were relocated to Jambezi (Zambezi escarpment), Entunteni, Matshetsheni and Ntabazinduna.

It was the national instability from 1896 to 1898, followed by the ramifications of World Wars I and II for the colonial governments, which dispersed the amaNdebele. The *Bulawayo Chronicle* of November 15, 1918 reported as follows:

Our Future Farmers
The Fittest Will Always Survive

We want *to do all possible* for the returned soldiers, and if they are settled on the land we must *do all we can* to help and advise them. Young soldiers had left offices and banks. They do not want indoor life again. (Emphasis mine: P Damasane)

Just so, Nyathi reiterates that isiNdebele would not of its own accord have spread very far, considering the sedentary nature of its speakers and their preference of the soils around Bulawayo.

The colonial masters did not trust the amaNdebele after the demise of uMthwakazi, after the “*disappearance*”¹⁰ of King Lobengula, and the subsequent pacification of the isiNdebele Chiefs at the Rhodes-Matopos indaba (1897)¹¹. This group of natives was described as warlike, proud and unteacheable (Nyathi, 26/01/06). The grand plan was to disperse them across Zimbabwe and subject them to strong chiShona or non-isiNguni influence, so as to break their

¹⁰ AmaNdebele hold the view that King Lobengula did not die but that he had mysteriously disappeared at the end of the *Imfazwe* in 1896. To date there is no unequivocal, historical information that suggests the contrary.

¹¹ This was a peace making deal between the amaNdebele chiefs and the British settlers brokered by Cecil John Rhodes. It was held at the Matopos Hills, hence the name (Rhodes-Matopos Indaba)

resistance and make them more amenable to colonial rule. The purpose of this study, as observed earlier, is to determine the extent to which they succeeded in maintaining their language in the face of such threatening factors.

During the later forced dispersal of the amaNdebele during the 1920's and from 1945 to 1954¹², they were resettled either in virgin forestland like the Nkosikazi and Nkayi communal lands in Matabeleland North Province, or among other non-Nguni communities elsewhere in Zimbabwe. In their former areas of occupation, the amaNdebele were not in direct day-to-day linguistic contact with other ethnic groups. Instead they were relocated in the midst of other ethnic groups; in order to have them thoroughly absorbed by the non-Nguni society. This holds good for the amaNdebele of Chief Gwebu in Buhera, the amaNdebele of Gokwe, Silobela and Lower Gweru, as well as the amaNdebele of Chief Ngungumbane of Mberengwa East in the Midlands Province (Nyathi, 2000:101-102).

4.5 The demography and geography of the Ngungumbane speech community

Ngungumbane is situated 460km from Harare, 230km from Bulawayo and 85km from the closest mining town of Zvishavane. The original inhabitants came from the Mzinyathi/Insingo area and were members of the Intunta regimental villages of the last amaNdebele Monarch, King Lobengula. They were resident in the area of present day Mzingwane along the Insiza and Ncema rivers in

¹² These dates refer to the land dispossessions that were nationwide and not solely concentrated on the amaNdebele. It was the outcome of the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act (1930), the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951) and the introduction of the Hut Tax of 1894.

Matabeleland South. The clans that were moved to Ngungumbane during the period included the following: Mkhwananzi, Masuku, Dlodlo, Thebe, Sikhosana, Mathema, Khumalo and Mabhena. (E. Khumalo, interviewed in Magwegwe in Bulawayo: 30/06/06)

These clan names represent the most prominent and ruling class clans in the amaNdebele ethnic group. The group that moved to Ngungumbane is one of the few that were moved with its chief, Chief Alison Ngungumbane Mkhwananzi. He was the son of the founding Chief of the Intunta regiment, Mhabahaba Mkhwananzi, one of Mzilikazi's most trusted and illustrious comrades who had, with him, defied Shaka (Nyathi 2000:100). All the original inhabitants of Ngungumbane communal lands paid strong allegiance to the uMthwakazi nation state, as they all belonged to the regiments of Amnyama, Amakhanda, Godlwayo, Dukada, Yengo, AmaTshetshe and Mzinyathi.¹³ This history binds them together and creates a social demarcation of ethnicity between them and the amaShona of Chief Negove and Chief Nyamhondo, who literally surround them.

According to an elder in the community of Ngungumbane, Edwin Khumalo¹⁴, who was born in the 1940's (he is not sure of the exact date), the cohesion of the amaNdebele people in this area was caused by the leadership of a chief who was very diplomatic towards the surrounding chieftaincies of Negove and

¹³ The named regiments were some of the crack forces that the surviving heroes of the AmaNdebele Imfazwe II of 1896 like Sicwayiza Mabhena belonged to (Nyathi 2000:87). They were therefore very proud and represented the fighting spirit of the Ndebele as well as an important epoch in the history of the amaNdebele.

¹⁴ Edwin Khumalo is a retired police officer born in Ngungumbane and interviewed in his Bulawayo home, 1450 Magwegwe West, on 30/06/06

Nyamhondo. On arrival, Chief Ngungumbane gave Chief Nyamhondo two head of cattle as a symbol of peace between the two chiefs. One was slaughtered for the men at Nyamhondo's court, while the other was the chief's. Boundaries were respected and grazing of livestock was well maintained. During this researcher's stay in the area however, there was tension since the recent governmental resettlement programme had destabilised the relationship and the local government authorities were in the process of resolving a series of border disputes. A few skirmishes had taken place, with some casualties being reported.

A local non-governmental organisation in the area, estimates the population of Ngungumbane to be approximately 10 000 persons, with children and teenagers below 18 years of age constituting 42%. (World Vision-Zimbabwe: NNN Area Development Programme documentation).

The Ngungumbane area is served by two primary schools, Ngungumbane Primary School, run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church and Jena Primary, a community school. There is one high school, Bayayi High School. IsiNdebele is the medium of instruction in Ngungumbane Primary School; it is neither taught nor used in Jena Primary School and is taught as a subject at Bayayi from Form 1 through to Form 4. The area is well serviced by local government institutions such as a clinic, a shopping complex and a thriving market gardening enterprise from the foothills of the Buchwa range of mountains. The railway line that cuts through the settlements brings them into contact with chiShona and Hlengwe (Xitsonga/Shangaan) speaking people from Masvingo and Chiredzi. The

chieftaincies of Chief Negove on the one side and Chief Nyamhondo on the other, envelop the Ngungumbane area, making it a small pocket of isiNdebele speakers covering an area of about 45 square kilometres.

4.6 Social institutions that influence ethnicity and language choice among isiNdebele speakers.

Language choice and ethnicity is determined and at times defined by certain social institutions among the amaNdebele. These include:

4.6.1 The chief

To the amaNdebele, the chief did and still does represent their power and unity. The chieftaincy is the only institution that the amaNdebele, who once had a proud kingdom, are left with. The chief links them to their nationhood. He represents the *l'esprit de corps* of the amaNdebele. In the absence of the King, he remains as the only symbol and custodian of *ubuNdebele*¹⁵ and *isiNdebele*¹⁶. What the chief upholds is seen as representative of the generality of the ethnic group, as he is their role model. (Nyathi, P interview with him 28/01/06)

Every chief in the Ngungumbane dynasty, right up to the current Regent, speaks impeccable isiNdebele and commands great respect among his subjects. The researcher did meet with the late Chief Douglas Ngungumbane, his sons and the current regent at different times prior to this research. The chief is also the community's external relations co-ordinator who keeps check on developments

¹⁵ **UbuNdebele** is the nature and culture of the amaNdebele, their way of life, world view and philosophy of life.

¹⁶ **IsiNdebele** is the language spoken by amaNdebele.

in the area. The chief addresses neighbouring chiefs as “my brother....” and always maintains a good rapport with them, setting the scene for sound relations between the subjects. The Chief is the rallying point of the people; his voice is that of the entire people. This researcher arrived in Ngungumbane when the locals had just rejected an imposed candidate for the forthcoming local government elections, since the Regent had indicated that the candidate was not acceptable.

According to Nyathi (26/01/06), Chief Alison Ngungumbane I, although the original link with the glorious past of the amaNdebele nation, did not achieve the universal acceptance of isiNdebele as a respectable language in the Midlands Province. His son, Douglas Mkhwananzi, who became Chief Ngungumbane II, was a more universally accepted leader, even beyond the immediate community. He was a learned man who had travelled widely in Zimbabwe prior to being made chief. He had worked as a court interpreter. This made him versatile in relations with his chiShona speaking neighbours. The chief was fluent in more than ten Zimbabwean languages, chiShona included. His national leadership qualities in various fora made him a role model for his people. He was the Deputy Chairperson of the Chiefs’ Council, Chairperson of Highlanders Football Club and one-time Vice-President of the Zimbabwe Football Association. As chairperson of Highlanders Football Club he came to be seen as a sustainer of ubuNdebele.

4.6.2 The church.

In the wake of Zimbabwe's political colonisation, various church denominations established their own domains in a religious brand of colonisation. A denomination in a particular area would claim territorial monopoly, and elbowing out competing denominations (Nyathi, 2005:45-46). Ngungumbane is no exception to this phenomenon. The church denomination one attends in Ngungumbane is a good indicator of one's linguistic and ethnic orientation. In the greater Midlands Province, and Mberengwa district in particular, the largest Christian denomination is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ). This is due to the many mission stations they established in this region. In addition they have established health and educational institutions like Masase Mission School and Hospital, Musume Mission School and Hospital, Chegato and Mnene Schools. Most of the local, prominent personalities were educated in these institutions, among them a former Speaker of Parliament, Vice-Chancellor of Midlands State University and the current Provincial Governor. The Presiding Bishop of the ELCZ has always been chiShona speaking¹⁷ and as a result of this perceived ethnic identification the ELCZ has failed to gain a strong following in the Ngungumbane community. Presently the Lutheran Church actually has to rent a classroom for its services; it is perceived to be a "chiShona church" in an isiNdebele speaking area.

Many other churches are painted with the same brush and as a result do not have a significant following within the Ngungumbane community. These include;

¹⁷ There has recently been a "democratisation" of the ELCZ resulting in the creation of a number of Dioceses which has since brought in a few isiNdebele speaking Bishops. This has not yet affected the perceptions in Ngungumbane

Family of God Church whose local pastor hails from Masvingo, a chiShona speaking area. As for the Roman Catholic Church, its closest sister parish is in Zvishavane which is predominantly chiShona speaking, the same holds good for the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa. Ruponeso, Vapostori, Zionist, Chema and Habakkuk, all of which have a chiShona speaking patronage, are the other smaller churches one finds in Ngungumbane. These small churches are syncretistic and conduct their services in chiShona. Even their names are chiShona, which puts paid to any possibility of an isiNdebele speaker attending.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) is the only church that hails from amaNdebele heartland. It is the only religious group that has a physical structure and presence in the area. The presiding Bishops and elders have always been isiNdebele-speaking. Chief Ngungumbane I was a committed Adventist and pulled his whole family along. His subjects then followed him into it. The only primary school that teaches and uses isiNdebele as a medium of instruction and exams in it through to the highest level was built and staffed by the SDA Church. All its teachers and staff came from Bulawayo or Solusi, both isiNdebele-speaking areas. One teacher, who was deployed to the area five years ago, teaching at Bayayi Secondary School which is predominantly chiShona speaking, was later converted to the SDA denomination. When asked why he had taken that decision, his answer was,

(a)...*iSabatha yiyo yodwa itshetshi engingayingena ngoba kukhulunywa kutshunyayelwe ngesiNdebele.*

[...the SDA church is the only one I can attend since they speak and preach in Ndebele.]¹⁸

¹⁸ Interview with S Ndlovu a teacher at Bayayi Secondary School-Ngungumbane 2/8/06

The SDA church is not only regarded as an isiNdebele church in Ngungumbane only, but throughout Zimbabwe (Nyathi 2005:46). The Zambezi Union of the Seventh Day Adventist Church is headquartered in Bulawayo. The University and Theological training Institute of the SDA is in Solusi, 50km west of Bulawayo. This church has, over time, determined the development of the educational and religious life of most people in Ngungumbane. Almost all of the Ngungumbane residents who have made their mark in life are SDA members. They include people like the former Head of the Railways, Eng. A Mabhena, senior Educationist Mr Simela, science educator and author Sifundi Dube, senior lecturers at the National University of Science and Technology like Dr Themba Dlodlo and Mr Ndaba Dlodlo. The latter is also a former Director and Publisher with Longman Zimbabwe.

4.6.3 Highlanders Football Club

This football club currently (October 2006) leads Zimbabwe's Premier Soccer League by over 15 points. Although it does not have many players of pure Nguni stock, its history makes it uniquely Ndebele. It is the only club that is nationally viewed as an amaNdebele club. It was founded in 1936 by the grandsons of the last Ndebele King, Lobengula. This link of the team with the amaNdebele royal family endears it, at times to fanatical extents, to the amaNdebele community. The emblem of the club is an *iwaba*, which was the colour of the hide from which the royal shield was made. Highlanders Football

Club to date is the personification of ubuNdebele. To the amaNdebele, it is the only institution *abasasele layo* (they have left in their custody).

According to amaNdebele historian and author, Pathisa Nyathi, Highlanders Football Club is a cohesive force for the amaNdebele:

...that is where there is *ubuntu babo, iwaba* (royal black and white) shield; spear and knobkerrie are symbolic of ubuNdebele. These are the symbols that the missionary used to perceive the Ndebele as a warlike people. (Interview 26/01/06 at 1715hrs: Bulawayo)

After the demise of their Kingdom (uMthwakazi), the dissolution of their political party ZAPU and the death of their leader Joshua Nkomo, amaNdebele see themselves left with Highlanders Football Club as their only institution. Even in rural Ngungumbane the team has a very large following. This is because the late Chief Ngungumbane II was chairperson of the team for some time. To the locals, the team represents a unifying and rallying point. One of the spectators at an interschool football meet in Ngungumbane attended by this researcher remarked that they sang a Highlanders cheer song because:

(b) "...ivuselela ubuNdebele bakhe!"(it revives his Ndebele-ness)

Schools in the neighbouring chiShona speaking area sang Highlanders songs nonetheless, because it is the most popular team in the area. An attempt by one of the tournament organisers to make the people sing "*Gwekwerere*

*bhora!*¹⁹” was resisted. The Highlanders team plays an important part in bringing social cohesion among the locals, especially in the face of competition or threat of opposition.

This political and social cohesion among amaNdebele lacks diversity and is indicative of behaviour peculiar to social minorities who feel threatened with annihilation and extinction. The tendencies outlined above, tend to be directly linked to the maintenance, not only of ubuNdebele, but also of isiNdebele, as will be shown in greater detail in the next chapter.

4.7 Linguistic behaviour: bilingualism and multilingualism

This section of the study concentrates on the different linguistic choices that characterise the speech behaviour of the Ngungumbane speech community. Examples of bilingualism, code switching, interference and influence pass the review in this section, and brief comments and summary evaluations of the findings made.

4.7.1 Common languages in Ngungumbane

As noted earlier, chiShona and isiNdebele are the most commonly spoken languages in the Midlands province. When one arrives at Ngungumbane, no one needs to be told that this is isiNdebele terrain. IsiNdebele should be language number one there. There is no rebuttal of chiShona, yet it is not seen as the number one language medium of communication.

¹⁹ “Gwekwerere bhora” is a chant of one of Highlanders’ rival teams known as Dynamos.

4.7.2 Bilingualism at the individual and family level

A rather peculiar language choice situation obtains in the area. Among the three chieftaincies, viz. Negove, Nyamhondo and Ngungumbane, language preference and selection is significantly different. The 35 and above age group is actively bilingual in all three chieftaincies. Thus, adults speak with significant communicative competence in both isiNdebele and Shona.

Amongst the younger adults, the 20 to 35 age group, active bilingualism is limited to those who have had significant exposure to both isiNdebele and chiShona. The pre-teenage youth, present differently, showing only limited passive bilingualism or none at all. It is not unusual to find a primary school child from Ngungumbane who does not or cannot speak chiShona, just as a schoolchild of the same age in Nyamhondo does not speak any isiNdebele. Teenagers, show a greater tendency towards passive bilingualism, which may be attributed to inter-school extra-curricular activities.

Among the elderly, bilingual behaviour is well distributed across gender lines. With the young adults, bilingualism is more observable among males, while female youths and teenagers are more reluctant to learn a language that is not their mother tongue.

Marriage across the ethnic divide is very rare among the inhabitants of Ngungumbane. According to elders interviewed, an isiNdebele speaking woman who marries a chiShona speaking man is ridiculed, and even ejected from her society, since she is culturally expected to live mostly in and among

her husband's people. Of significance here is that fact that such an isiNdebele speaking woman still manages to raise her children to be competent speakers of isiNdebele. The chiShona environment has little influence over the language choice of these children.

Most chiShona speaking men of working age and married to Ndebele women, seek employment in areas such as Gweru, Masvingo, and Kwekwe, or in the asbestos mines of Zvishavane and Mashaba; leaving their children in the care of their wives, who then teach their children isiNdebele. Such families display a very high level of active bilingualism within the nuclear family and passive bilingualism in the wider extended family. A person who migrates from Ngungumbane to Nyamhondo or Negove due to marriage, maintains his/her competence in isiNdebele, so creating a pocket of bilingual individuals.

A chiShona speaking woman who marries into a Ngungumbane homestead, instancing a practice never encouraged, must learn isiNdebele at the earliest opportunity. Her children may not and are not given the opportunity to learn chiShona. A few of these mixed families, to escape linguistic persecution and ethnic exclusion, have opted to make residence in the urban areas of Bulawayo. In such instances, the children do make their "pilgrimage" to Ngungumbane regularly, but the chiShona speaking wife does not, save for the compulsory funeral or family religious meeting. Such families are nonetheless actively bilingual.

In Ngungumbane, one also finds covert bilingualism. Due to the fear of possible removal from the wider Mberengwa community, some members have acquired a reasonable knowledge of chiShona. They may not speak it openly, but when sorely pressed, they surprisingly communicate in the most eloquent chiShona. This strategy dates from the time of the Liberation War and the internal upheavals of the early eighties, when to speak in chiShona was the passport to survival.

The socialisation dynamics of this speech community *vis-à-vis* the wider Zimbabwean speech community are significantly driven by ethnicity and not by the need for wider social acceptance. There is little need for an inhabitant of Ngungumbane, it seems, to learn chiShona for the purposes of wider communication, even if the community is situated in a predominantly chiShona speaking area.

Investigations have shown that Chief Ngungumbane's court is addressed in isiNdebele and only when non-isiNdebele speakers must be heard does the court use chiShona. The Chief himself is an active bilingual, although he insists that, in his official capacity, he will address his subjects in isiNdebele.

4.7.3 Socialization and language exposure

As indicated above, there are three educational institutions in Ngungumbane namely, Ngungumbane Primary School, Jena Primary School and Bayayi Secondary School. The latter two are government schools, while the Seventh Day Adventist Church's Zambezi Union runs Ngungumbane Primary School.

Ngungumbane Primary School has a school enrolment of approximately 520 pupils. It is the only school in the area where isiNdebele is both medium of instruction and an examinable subject. All isiNdebele speaking people interviewed attended school there. Up until 1989, the SDA Church selected and appointed the teachers for this particular school (Nyathi, 2000: 141). In most cases the teachers also served as Evangelists, Lay-Preachers and at times, Pastors. The working conditions were strictly Adventist and as a result only Adventists were able to make the grade. Teachers were recruited exclusively from isiNdebele speaking areas, so they have always been isiNdebele speakers up to the present.

As Nyathi observed (2000:102), when the people of Ngungumbane were displaced from their prime land in the Malungwane Mountains of Mzingwane, they were already adherents of the SDA denomination. There was no other Christian denomination in the area when they came to Mberengwa. People had no option but to remain members of the SDA, nor was there another isiNdebele-medium school in the vicinity. Upon completion of their primary education, those who wanted to move on, had to go to either Solusi or Lower Gweru, the only other places with SDA schools.

The fact that they did not have an option but to join the SDA denomination, encouraged the inhabitants of Ngungumbane to keep the isiNdebele language alive. There were non-SDA secondary schools in neighbouring chiefdoms, but the amaNdebele chose to send their children to SDA related institutions in Bulawayo, Lower Gweru and Gweru. The neighbouring schools did not teach,

and still do not teach isiNdebele. There is one secondary school in Ngungumbane, Bayayi, and it only recently began to teach isiNdebele. Only 20-25 students take it, and only five at Ordinary Level (Form 4). When asked where the locals take their children for secondary school education, the answer invariably was that they have to take them to schools in Matabeleland where isiNdebele is taught.

Education, in these circumstances, furthers the purpose of maintaining the speaking of isiNdebele. When the students return and enter into family life, they are encouraged to also send their children for post-primary education outside of Ngungumbane. One of the teachers interviewed said that the village elders did not want the government to upgrade the primary school to a secondary school. Turning Ngungumbane primary school into a secondary school would, in their view, have created a vacuum in early childhood development. The locals further maintained that the religious cohesion and the linkage between the SDA church and the education system, would be disturbed. They feared that their children would no longer have a primary school that uses isiNdebele, and also that the religious element would be lost. That is why the only secondary school in Ngungumbane is Bayayi Secondary School, which is situated closer to the chiShona speaking side.

4.7.4 Sociolinguistic tendencies amongst the permanent residents of Ngungumbane aged 40 and above.

The permanent residents of Ngungumbane aged 40 and above, are mostly isiNdebele speaking by birth, although a few are isiNdebele speaking because

of marriage. They are largely bilingual, since they are also able to speak chiShona fluently and understand it well. Interaction with speakers from the neighbouring villages of Negove and Nyamhondo is not difficult for them. Conversations are marked by a stress on clarity in language. There is seldom code switching to chiShona but code switching to English is more common. Any code switching to chiShona would be reference to some untranslatable phenomenon or issue:

- (c) *Siphelelwa ngamadlelo kodwa **abakurubakuru** abenzilutho.*
[We have a problem with pastures but the **authorities** do nothing.]

The usage of the chiShona word ***abakurubakuru*** communicates the displeasure of the amaNdebele community with the amaShona ruling authorities, since an isiNdebele equivalent could be used. People in the area are mainly educated in the isiNdebele medium primary school of Ngungumbane and proceed to Matabeleland or Lower Gweru for secondary education. This is caused by the SDA influence in the area, as already explained.

Ngungumbane residents aged 40 and above generally require the use of isiNdebele by their children at home. Furthermore, they encourage them not to marry across the language divide, although there is general acceptance of the fact that they will meet up with the amaShona in different fora. They have a strong desire for their language to be kept in what they consider to be its purest state, hence their tendency to detest any mixing and borrowing from other languages. They decry the perceived decadence of the youth's language which,

in their view, has departed from the correct path. If they could have it their way, they would have their children speak differently.

The age group under discussion is very proudly amaNdebele, even if their Christian ideals might call for greater tolerance. The strongly Christian ethos of this community has already been indicated above. It is, however, difficult to reconcile the Christian principle of "loving one's neighbour" with their social isolation from and resistance to the Shona community. The majority seem to be in the *lafa elihle kakhulu* (*cry for the good old days*) nostalgic mode.

It was observed that isiNdebele speaking females are generally more flexible, linguistically, than their male counterparts. There seems to be more outward mobility among the females than there is among the males.

4.7.5 Sociolinguistic tendencies amongst Ngungumbane residents who are employed elsewhere.

Many Ngungumbane residents are employed elsewhere in Zimbabwe, or even in the Republic of South Africa. Residents who are employed nearby, tend to commute to their places of employment such as Zvishavane and Buchwa. Many however, are employed in places further afield, such as in Bulawayo, Gwanda, Gweru and even Harare. They are therefore forced to leave Ngungumbane on a more permanent basis. The majority of these migrants still retain their 'citizenship' of Ngungumbane and continue to see themselves as integrally part of Ngungumbane, although their *diasporan* status would suggest otherwise. They have a strong attachment to their home district. They show their loyalty by

speaking, as far as possible, impeccable isiNdebele. They do not like to use loan words, let alone code switch into chiShona. Many of them, however, have intermarried and therefore exhibit a greater element of linguistic tolerance of chiShona. Such marital unions have given rise to *shielded* bilinguals²⁰. These isiNdebele speakers feel rather embarrassed if they are to be heard speaking chiShona because of their counterparts' resistance to chiShona's dominance.

The children of these families are mostly competent bilinguals, so much so that some of them fit into both amaShona and amaNdebele communities without difficulty. This group is very outgoing in its crusade to encourage bilingualism with a resolute maintenance, though, of ubuNdebele. They regard the two languages as two independent entities that should be allowed to develop and grow without allowing one to affect the other. However, unintentionally, code switching does set in, as in the following examples:

- (d) *Yekela **shaz** kuzalunga. (**shaz** is the shortened form of *shamwari* which is the chiShona word for "friend")*
Do not worry friend, it will be fine.
- (e) *Angisoze ngimbone **saka** kazihambe. (**saka** is a chiShona conjunctive which means "therefore")*
I will not see him, so let him go.
- (f) ***Saka** manje uthi ngithini?*
So what do you want me to do?
- (g) *Awuboni-ke lumsebenzi **bawurongile**. (The term originates from the chiShona verb root *-ronga*: to prepare)*
You see, this event is well arranged.
- (h) *Awuboni manje **sebemkanganisa**. (The term originates from the chiShona verb stem *-kanganisa*: to disturb)*

²⁰ The term "shielded" as used in this particular context, refers to a bilingualism in which the speakers tend to use their second language more covertly than overtly.

You see they are now disturbing him.

- (i) **Yiyo yiyo** nje akukho okutsha. (The term originates from the chiShona expression **ndiyo ndiyo** interpreted loosely as "so, so," used ideophonically to mean a laissez faire situation.)
So so everything is still the same.

Such code switching is largely innocuous since it involves no profoundly chiShona vocabulary, but only clichés.

4.7.6 Sociolinguistic tendencies amongst residents of the Negove and Nyamhondo areas.

The residents of the Negove and Nyamhondo chieftaincies are chiShona speaking neighbours of the residents of Ngungumbane. The first observation to be made is that most of the adults in this group are intensely aware of their neighbouring language, isiNdebele, and therefore they tend to accommodate it. There is a more pronounced bilingual tendency among the female than among the male members of the community. When a chiShona speaking adult realises that the other speaker is not a fluent speaker of chiShona, there tends to be a swift switch to isiNdebele. Alternatively, in the absence of a total switch, there may also be a deliberate selection of codes that serve to accommodate the other speaker.

Members of the younger age group behave quite differently, preferring rather to exhibit typically domineering linguistic tendencies. The youth tend not to be active bilinguals. Furthermore, the youth prefer to respond in chiShona when addressed in isiNdebele. They claim to understand isiNdebele, but profess inability to speak it. Those in primary school are generally ignorant of

isiNdebele. The adults explain this tendency by indicating that attitudes changed during the eighties and the upheavals of those times.

The speech patterns of the inhabitants of these two chieftaincies, young and old, do nonetheless show evidence of contact between chiShona and isiNdebele in the Ngungumbane chiefdom. Code switching and borrowing are very common. This speech behaviour indicates more extensive borrowing by chiShona from isiNdebele than *vice versa*, as in the following chiShona examples:

- (j) *Takura **chikwama** changu uwuye nacho.* (from the isiNdebele noun *isikhwama*: a bag)
Take my bag and bring it along.
- (k) *Mwana uyu **anemunyama**.* (the word is derived from the isiNdebele word for bad luck: *umnyama*)
This child has bad luck / this child is unfortunate.
- (l) *Tinoda **kufunda** isu tisiyei.* (from the isiNdebele verb root *-funda* meaning to learn or study.)
Leave us alone we want to study.
- (m) *Heyi **wena** nyaya yakaoma.* (from *wena* which is the isiNdebele demonstrative, 2nd person)
Come on you, this is a tough issue.
- (n) ***Kanti** hamunzvi here vakomana.* (from *kanti* which is an isiNdebele exclamation)
But friends don't you hear.

Code switching is also commonly encountered when emphasis or ethnicity is intended in chiShona:

- (o) *Ndamuwona kusvera zuro **nemfana** wacho.*
I saw her with the (Ndebele) boy the day before yesterday.

(*umfana* is the isiNdebele noun for “boy”, here used to clarify the ethnicity of the boy. The chiShona noun for boy is *mukomana*.)

- (p) *Varikutaura ndivoNduna vacho?*
Is the current speaker the Ndebele chief?
(The isiNdebele word for “chief” is *induna*, which is used here to emphasise the fact that the chief referred to is umNdebele. The chiShona word for chief is *Mambo* or *Ishe*.)

- (q) *Wena Joy uya pano!*
You Joy (the Ndebele one) come here! (the word *wena* has been explained above (m) the chiShona alternative is *iwe*)

4.7.7 Language preference in religious circles.

As observed already in 4.6.2 the Ngungumbane community has a number of religious denominations. The Seventh Day Adventist church has isiNdebele as the language of their liturgy and worship. Songs and prayers are all conducted in isiNdebele. In Ngungumbane, because the chief is an Adventist, it is a foregone conclusion that most of the subjects will be Adventists as well. Among the Lutherans, chiShona is used. The amaNdebele who choose to be in that denomination, also worship in Shona. The Lutheran church meets at Bayayi School. The syncretistic Apostolic and Zionist churches also use chiShona. AmaNdebele look askance at any of their own who belong to these churches. In some instances, their families may even disown such a person. The Catholic Church, which is relatively small in this community, also uses chiShona. While there are other smaller religious organisations in the community, it was observed that they meet in private homes, rather than in public places and therefore the language used is that of the homes where the church meets.

4.7.8 The Nkosikazi speech community

The Nkosikazi speech community was moved to the current area²¹ from the same location as that of the Ngungumbane inhabitants, the difference being that they were dumped in virgin forestland. One of the aims of the land displacement policies of the colonial authorities in Zimbabwe was to isolate the amaNdebele and not to allow them to regroup. The Nkosikazi group was moved to this place that knew no other human settlements. No other human language was encountered in the area. They are fairly isolated to this day and do not have any immediate neighbours. Whilst their communal language is isiNdebele, it was observed that their linguistic behaviour exhibits speech patterns that show a different form of language maintenance. It is clear for example, that this speech community has not borrowed as extensively from chiShona as did the communities referred to above.

As the Nkosikazi speech community is not exposed to the same linguistic challenges as the Ngungumbane speech community, the researcher realised that the attitudes of these isiNdebele speakers are noteworthy. They still have a strong sense of nationhood and the community is very cohesive. They proudly sense themselves to be closer to the heart of the amaNdebele nation, because this community occupies an area that belonged to the original home of the late Queen of uMthwakazi, Lozikeyi Khumalo, the daughter of Mhazha Dlodlo. She was King Lobengula's chief wife, iNkosikazi. The name "Nkosikazi" refers to the status of Lozikeyi. She was the iNkosikazi; hence the place was named after

²¹ Nkosikazi is located in the Bubi District of Matebeland North, about 140 km north of Bulawayo.

her. This historical connection evokes a desire to vigorously uphold and maintain isiNdebele as purely as may be possible.

The Nkosikazi speech community does seem to have resisted change, even though it is not in such a threatened position as is the Ngungumbane speech community. The internal disturbances of the early eighties, mentioned earlier, had devastating effects in this area. They developed a deep-seated hatred of and dislike for anything "chiShona", and the chiShona language is off limits for the people of Nkosikazi. To them, chiShona is associated with pain and persecution. Their exposure to chiShona has been limited to the presence of a few government officials who come to work in the area, the radio and the contact they make with the closest metropolis, Bulawayo.

The youth and children are not exposed to other languages at school, as is the case with those of Ngungumbane. ChiShona is not a taught subject in any of the schools in the area. This community is keenly alert to keep and maintain isiNdebele in as pure and uncontaminated a form as possible. That explains why, when most of those asked which language they consider closest to isiNdebele, they said it was isiZulu.

Religiously, most influential is the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, formerly the London Missionary Society, which established the first religious and educational institution in Zimbabwe in the year 1876, less than fifty kilometres from the Nkosikazi community. The UCCSA is one of the churches seen to be associated with ubuNdebele and the amaNdebele since the days of

the friendship between the “missionary-cum-explorer” Robert Moffat and the founder of uMthwakazi, King Mzilikazi Khumalo.

The table overleaf shows a comparison between aspects of the Ngungumbane speech community and that of the Nkosikazi community. It also some influence that the proximity of the Ngungumbane speech community to chiShona has on the level of borrowing and adaptation of the lexis.

Table 5: Comparison of lexical cognates in the Ngungumbane and Nkosikazi speech communities.

NGUNGUMBANE COMMUNITY	chiSHONA EQUIVALENT	NKOSIKAZI COMMUNITY	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Angikwanisi	Andikwanisi	Angenelisi	<i>I am unable</i>
Kukwanile	Zvakwana	Kwenele	<i>It is enough</i>
Umthungameli	Mutungamiri	Umkhokheli	<i>A leader</i>
Ngizwa ikhanda	Ndinonzva musoro	Ngitshaywa likhanda	<i>I have a headache</i>
Uzwani (lumntwana)?	Arikunzwei (mwana uyu)?	Ubulawa yini (lumntwana)	<i>What is this child suffering from?</i>
Kungendaba yani?	Nendava yei?	Kubangelwa yini? /Kungani?	<i>Why is it so? / What is the cause?</i>

4.7.9 Common ethnocentric statements among the amaNdebele

There are some statements that the researcher found to be commonly used among amaNdebele and reflect their desire or quest to maintain their

nationhood and language. The statements do not have equivalents in the languages spoken by adjacent communities. Furthermore, these statements, while used in general parlance, carry connotations peculiar to the desire of keeping a language versatile. Each of the statements has a semantic value resonating with a deep-seated, yet salient search for a better self in the isiNdebele speaker.

(r) *Somlandel' uMdala wethu.* We will follow our Elder-
(Joshua Nkomo)

This is a liberation war song lyric that called for conformity in the former PF-ZAPU. It speaks of Joshua Nkomo's extraordinary leadership in uniting the amaNdebele as the leadership of Mzilikazi and Lobengula once did.

(s) *Bosso ngenkani* (Highlanders F C) bosses by force
Ngenkani- By force

This is a popular cheer slogan of Highlanders football team (could be mistaken for battle cries) that seeks to encourage the team, the supporters and the entire Ndebele nation to fight to keep, not only the team, but themselves, under control. The cheer slogan has become a cliché for expressing the "Ndebeleness" of a situation.

(t) *Sinjalo!* This is how we are you cannot change us!

A statement of intransigence, resoluteness and stoic resilience in the face of any onslaught. It is used to adamantly express the amaNdebele's desire to maintain their nature and ethnicity. It is a warning to whoever may try to change the amaNdebele. This statement has been popularised by the television drama of the same name, written by Sihlangu Dlodlo.

(u) *Ongafuniyo kayekele!* Leave us alone if you do not like what/who we are!

This is another of the popular team's (Highlanders F C) stadium slogans. It expresses aloofness and tells the hearer to keep his/her distance from any expression or manifestation of ubuNdebele. A stubborn assertion of who they are in the face of attack, and articulates a desire for autonomy.

(v) *Tshilamoya.* Spirit twister/ one that twists the spirit of the enemy.

This is a motivational statement that seeks to boost the morale of the amaNdebele in the face of an onslaught of any kind. It is meant to show the amaNdebele as fighters who do not retreat.

(w) *Umkhulu l'umsebenzi!* There is a great task at hand!

This statement was coined by a popular protest playwright, Cont Mhlanga, who is the founder and artistic director of Amakhosi Theatre in Bulawayo. It has been popularised by the amaNdebele who use it to give vent to the hardships they undergo as a people. It has become a cliché that carries the meaning of one that is resolved to work hard in life.

(x) *Kozekulunge!* It will finally be sorted out!

On the face of it this is an expression of hope but it is frequently used to express some deep-seated discontent about the state of things. It also carries a meaning that indicates resignation to life in light of the difficulties one is facing. It implies a "wait and see" attitude. It does suggest trust in some unknown 'greater than us' power.

(y) *Kulukhuni kuyitshel!* It is tough as the rock!

An expression indicating the hardship of one's life or experiences at any point in time. While it is an expression that appears to be personal, it has been used widely to show group discontent and is commonly used by the middle aged.

(z) *Akubonwa.* Never, not in a lifetime.

This is a vow and expresses a resolutely conservative resolve. It may be used in a discussion or in any forum where an umNdebele wants to emphasise his or

her opposition to a particular point of view. The statement is also used to oppose another's view, action or opinion.

(aa) *Tshiyana lakho lokhu.* Leave that alone/leave him alone.

This is effectively warns anyone insisting on a route that may lead to a disaster. The warning usually intends the benefit of the community rather than the individual. It is a way to discourage bringing the amaNdebele as a community, not individuals, into disrepute.

(bb) *Ungafa.* Never, not in a lifetime, over my dead body.

It is a statement that is indicative of intransigence and a conservative view of things. The allusion to death highlights the gravely despicable nature of what is opposed.

(cc) *Awukaqalisi* You have not yet set off.

This suggests that what one has set out to do has little or no chance of success. It declares the impossibility of success for actions proposed due to intransigence of the environmental conditions.

(dd) *Inkuz'ifohlile.*

The bull has escaped.

Historically, the election symbol of PF-ZAPU in the 1985 parliamentary elections was the charging bull matador style. It was chosen at the height of the internal disturbances. The escaping bull metaphorically represents those isiNdebele speakers who did not join the unity formation of 22 December 1987.²² It is a statement used to express a different opinion and opposing standpoint. In some instances it may indicate a rebellious attitude.

The above expressions are those of a people frozen in time; a people who find themselves in a situation that is unpalatable, untenable and difficult. These statements are indicative of a conservative mindset. The hope for change is in the resurrection of the past glories of a state that was and is now no more. These abrasive phrases now replace the spear, the assegai and the shield to represent the aggressiveness of the amaNdebele.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the nature of language contact as found in the Ngungumbane chieftaincy within the district of Mberengwa in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. Ngungumbane, an isiNdebele speaking community, is completely surrounded by the two chiShona speaking chieftaincies of Negove and Nyamhondo. The findings as presented in this chapter reveal the extent to which the language in focus has responded to its contact with chiShona. There

²² On this date the two Zimbabwean liberation movements PF-ZAPU under Joshua Nkomo and ZANU-PF came together to sign the historic Unity Accord brokered by the then State President, Rev Canaan Banana. The Accord holds to this date, despite there being discontent in some quarters.

are a number of linguistic, as well as non-linguistic, factors that contribute to the changes isiNdebele has undergone. These factors have been dealt with in this chapter.

This chapter has detailed several linguistic outcomes of language contact. Bilingual behaviour, both passive and active, has been observed in the Ngungumbane speech community and in the adjacent speech communities. Linguistic interference is also present in the case of the chiShona language, suggesting mutual influence between both languages. Incidence of code-switching has also been demonstrated. Language interference and the occurrence of substratum linguistic influence are among the features of interest that this chapter has attended to.

Contact induced language change, as a phenomenon in the speech community under review, has raised some pertinent questions to be addressed in the next chapter.

The investigations undertaken here have clearly shown that there is a very slow change and adoption of chiShona by the isiNdebele speaking group. The geographical and social environment of isiNdebele would have suggested differently. It highlights isiNdebele resilience and resistance to the forces that tend to cause language shift and extinction. It is necessary to seek a different explanation of the causes of this substratum influence. Nonetheless, among the chiShona speakers, one finds a free and open linguistic loaning at the lexical level. ChiShona speakers easily code-switch into both isiNdebele and English.

Observation and discussion as this chapter demonstrates are very apt, and more useful than the mere use of questionnaires and interviews, for effective qualitative research. The next chapter will delve further into the analysis and comparison of the phenomena observed in the speech communities of Ngungumbane and Sterkspruit.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONTACT-INDUCED LANGUAGE CHANGE IN THE RESPECTIVE SPEECH COMMUNITIES OF STERKSPRUIT AND NGUNGUMBANE.

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse and compare the language behaviour of the speech communities of Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane. The unit of analysis for the investigation of the social ecology of language contact is the speech community, which for the purposes of this research has been defined as a geographically identifiable group of people sharing (a) common language(s). The focus is on the factors that affect and determine a language's response to contact-induced forces of language change. The linguistic behaviour of the two communities is compared by paying attention to the following considerations:

- The factors that act as forces for either stability or change;
- The socio-political factors that affect language and how they do so;
- The effects of language contact.

A critical assessment of Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) theoretical assumptions on contact-induced language change will be made, together with Croft's (2005) theoretical assumptions on social evolution's impact on language

and contact induced language change. The researcher's view, throughout, has been that meaning is constructed by people themselves as they interact with their environment. This view is informed by the philosophy of symbolic-interactionism, which emphasises meaning-making among people through their interactions, with a strong emphasis on language.

5.2 Methodology and design

This research is a study based on two speech communities, the Sterkspruit community in the RSA and the Ngungumbane community in Zimbabwe. The main languages under review are isiXhosa and isiNdebele, as the two are spoken in South Africa and in Zimbabwe respectively.

As stated in previous chapters, each of these languages is in contact with another language which has influence on it. There are various linguistic outcomes as a result of this contact. It is the comparison of these linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change that drives this study.

Yin (1984:28) states that the research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and ultimately, to its conclusions. A research design then, adopts a strategy to create the said logical sequence. In this research the strategy adopted was that of a comparative case study of the two speech communities, Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane.

The case study strategy was preferred as the most effective way in which to achieve the objectives of this qualitative research. The case study satisfies the three tenets of the qualitative method which are: describing, understanding and explaining. Further, the case study is a strategy that enabled the researcher to use multiple sources of evidence. Multiple sources of linguistic as well as sociolinguistic evidence have allowed the researcher to triangulate data from various sources in order to verify the linguistic outcomes of language change, as well as to establish divergence in the same.

Of significance, in the use of the case study, has been the understanding that a case study strives towards the investigation of a cultural system of action. It is not a study of abstract linguistic data or grammar keeping it separate from a society; instead, it is an investigation of an interrelated set of activities engaged in by the actors in a social situation. Language is not only a combination of grammatical systems, but it is also a social tool, which is itself affected by the social choices that its speakers make from time to time. It has been observed that language is intricately interwoven with society and Croft (2005:2) rightfully refers to it as a "social phenomenon" whose central function is interpersonal communication. Language is sensitive to social structure and reflects social processes as it undergoes change.

In the cases investigated in this research, the researcher considered not only the voice and perspective of the respective mother-tongue speakers of isiXhosa and isiNdebele, but also that of the relevant groups of actors in the delimited areas. The relevant actors include speakers of isiHlubi and Sesotho for

Sterkspruit and speakers of chiShona for Ngungumbane. The attitudes and manner of interaction between the various groups in the respective areas were considered. Within this paradigm, the argument is that human action is value laden and that one is least likely to understand it apart from diverse human interests and activities. It has been the focus of this research to define how people interact and negotiate within social situations. These social situations are not only defined by the individuals in that social situation, but the individuals are themselves also defined by the same situation. People both constitute and are constituted by their social contexts. It is in this light that the linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change in Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane are investigated as products of human interaction.

The researcher operated on the premise that people are agents who take meaningful and reflective actions which are worth researching. Meaning is not separated from the people who construct it. As people and groups of people interact, they create meaning. The formation of meaning takes place within the context of social evolution. When society changes, the result is a concomitant change in the medium which they use to create meaning, which is language. It is this contextual meaning that the researcher takes a closer look at in the confines of the natural settings of the speech communities of Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane.

Variiegated information of a qualitative nature was obtained through participative interviews, observations and the interpretation of documentary evidence. Interviews provided the researcher with the oral discourse which was later

transformed into texts to be interpreted. The discourse of the interviews and the observations were the 'texts' to be interpreted. The prime sources of data are the words and actions of the speech communities under review and they were arrived at through a combination of looking, listening and enquiring.

The epistemological consideration governing this research is to develop a deeper understanding of the non-linguistic influences on the languages under review, including an understanding of how attitudes, history and ethnicity determine the change of a language. The knowledge sought and derived in the process is largely practical. There is no analysis of the variables between the languages concerned and the social factors involved, because the approach is mainly interpretive, not analytical. The aim is to understand and to explain, without reference to a host of structural and systematic details, whose relevance and meaning may be considered in the cloisters of language laboratories. Thipa (2001: 4-5) argues eloquently for the need to develop a broader perspective to the study and investigation of languages when he says:

...far from concentrating on the notion of **structure** almost exclusively, uses to which language can be put need to be exploited more than is the case now [*including the study of*]...the context of language contact situations... [*and the study of*] the impact of cultural changes on language which lead to linguistic adaptation and change. (Italics and parenthesis mine: P Damasane)

Thipa's call is heeded in this research relative to the three commonly accepted areas of language investigation, viz. the relevance of linguistic structure to language contact situations and the impact of cultural change on language and

linguistic adaptation and change. Of primary importance then, is not the study of structure regardless of the social and historical environment of the languages under review. The sociolinguistic aspects take a more primary focus in this study.

The researcher's objective was to derive meaning from the expressions encountered, by interpreting the utterances from the view of the speakers in the respective speech communities themselves. The linguistic behaviour of each speech community is uncovered through the use of interviews, questionnaires, observation of events and interactions with individuals.

The adoption of an interpretive paradigm is informed by the philosophy of symbolic-interactionism, which emphasises the formulation of meaning among people through their mutual interactions, with a strong emphasis on language. The interpretivist paradigm posits that organisations are socially constructed and exist primarily in the perceptions of people. Language is therefore viewed, in light of this paradigm, as a social rather than a purely linguistic phenomenon. Language change would therefore not merely involve the evolution of the phonology and morphology, the mutation of lexis and syntax or even the transformational generation of new grammatical and semantic forms, as the mentalists would have us believe. Knowledge is practical; it is based on social life interactions and on the meaning of these interactions, as perceived by individuals, rather than on a so-called objective reality. Language is the chief medium of interaction between human beings.

The obtaining social order, in this research, refers to the speech communities under review. All its institutions are legitimate and therefore not problematic. Language is realised in the light of the existing social order and its institutions. The social order is understood to be the cultural thought, philosophy and world view of the people, as well as the religion, ethnicity and political history of the respective speech communities. The researcher in this instance, has been concerned with the interpretations of reality, reflections on social processes and events, as well the organisational culture of the speech communities under review. These three concepts, viz. social reality, social processes and organisational culture, all use language to convey meaning and thought. They are therefore the best indicators of contact-induced language change, as this study shows.

Interpretive epistemologies and methodologies have been used in this research to provide participant meaning and understanding of the characteristics and patterns of linguistic behaviour. Revealing these meanings, which are not given a place in a purely linguistic survey, in a sociolinguistic study such as this one, enables the observer to peer into the belief systems, attitudes, assumptions and ideologies that determine and underlie the linguistic choices and behaviour of the speakers of the respective languages. As has been stated in previous chapters, the purpose of this study is to understand human actions and linguistic phenomena, in addition to the interpretation of linguistic meaning within the social and cultural context of the speech communities under review.

This chapter also explains the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind certain social actions. The reality that is language change is seen as consisting of the respective speech communities' subjective experiences of their world. Additionally, language change is believed to consist of a fluid and variable set of social constructions. The epistemological stance is one that is intersubjective as well as interactional, hence the use of methodologies such as interviewing and participant observation. As there is always the possible overarching presence of inquisitive suspicion and politicised reasoning, the researcher has sought to deconstruct and simplify reality. This is achieved by illustrating how versions of the social world are produced in discourse and by demonstrating how these constructions of reality make certain actions possible, whilst others are made unthinkable.

5.3 Society, language and language change

Earlier in this chapter it has been stated that language is a social phenomenon whose central function is interpersonal communication. It is in light of this that language should be seen as responsive and sensitive to social structure. As the speech communities under review are being investigated, the focus is on the influential relationship between society and language. The theoretical perspectives of the pair, Thomason and Kaufman, together with that of William Croft, have been used extensively in the investigation of language change in the communities under review.

The evolution of society is part of the dynamism of life – society keeps on changing and being changed. The evolution of society is here discussed in as

far as it highlights the social forces that bring about language change. Society is made up of people who talk to each other. The same society can, over time and through space, be subjected to movements as a result of political decisions or choices. Migrations and the mobility of societies can result in fission. The social fission that develops as a result of changes within society, as has been explained above, has an effect on the language spoken by the people concerned.

According to Croft (2005:1), social anthropologists have characterized societies into roughly four broad types by social organisations which are: bands, tribes, chiefdoms and states. These broad types are not static but dynamic; a society may evolve from one type to the other over time and as a result of certain internal and external forces. Social types can be described in the light of historical dialectics. Language change occurs in the broad types explained above. As societies change, the languages spoken by the people may experience either linguistic divergence or interference as a result.

Ngungumbane and Sterkspruit can be described as falling loosely within the tribes and chiefdom categories. These communities are not industrialised areas but are predominantly rural. The villages and dwellings of the people show a lot of social contact that comes about because of any one of the following:

- Marriage
- Trade
- Political integration

The three loci mentioned above, have enabled the researcher to make investigative points of entry into the different communities. There may be limited visible trade in goods, as in a large market place in the communities under review, but the presence of a small metropolis does count. The Sterkspruit business district on the one hand and the town of Zvishavane on the other, present themselves as apt 'boiling pots' for the social evolution that is likely to result in language contact that leads to further language change. In the case of the latter, Zvishavane, there is a significant degree of avoidance and of alienation by the isiNdebele speakers who still, to a large extent, prefer the distant city of Bulawayo to meet their needs. The business district of Sterkspruit provides a more appropriate platform for the practice of bilingual behaviour, which is a primary ingredient of language change. Consequently, one is more likely to accost a bilingual speaker in Sterkspruit than in Zvishavane. Political integration is another of the loci mentioned above which will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

The rural nature of these communities also increases the incidence of extra-linguistic exogamy, which promotes linguistic interference that manifests itself in the following areas of linguistic behaviour:

- Borrowing
- Codeswitching
- Language maintenance

Marriage is thus an important factor, as it is most conducive for the development of the consummate bilingual. The linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change presuppose the existence of bilingual speakers in the speech

community under review. The contact between members of society leads to contact between languages, which manifests in speakers' ability to have communicative competence in more than one language. The two speech communities under review do exhibit individual families which are products of exogamy and in most of these, the issue of attitude towards a particular language based on some political and/or historical consideration, will ordinarily determine the type or level of bilingualism found amongst these families.

The thrust of Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) notion lies in the view that the sociolinguistic history of speakers is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcomes of language contact. Social contact is not merely a determinant of language change, but makes language change more probable. Social contact is a source of language change. It is observed in the study that the changes observed in isiXhosa and isiNdebele tend to be peculiar and specific to the speech communities under review. The loan words that are found in isiXhosa as spoken in Sterkspruit are not ordinarily found in heartland isiXhosa. The same holds for isiNdebele in Ngungumbane, as compared to isiNdebele as it is spoken in Nkosikazi and elsewhere in Zimbabwe. The difference is in the contact scenarios of the respective communities.

Marriage, trade and political influences of social contact enable the researcher to deduce linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change. Investigation of linguistic behaviour is possible within these areas of social activity.

It has been considered that the main factors that affect the rate of borrowing and code switching, are the length of contact time and the degree of bilingualism of the speakers of the respective languages. If the contact time is fleeting and not sustained over a long period of time, the extent of borrowing is nil to minimal. IsiNdebele as spoken in Nkosikazi, characterises this notion when compared to isiNdebele as spoken in Ngungumbane. One cannot make generalisations on the whole language group, but observations made on the specific language community under review will however, have validity. There is therefore, the creation of a language 'variety' within the larger spectrum of that particular language. Language variation is a precursor to language change, although it is not language change by itself. IsiXhosa as spoken in Sterkspruit has unique features that originate from its contact with Sesotho and isiHlubi. It is features like 'hle' (please) from Sesotho and 'ngiyabonga' (thank you) from isiHlubi that make it unique and thus varied from heartland isiXhosa; at the same time isiNdebele terms like 'ukuronga' (to arrange) and 'ukukanya' (to spoil-negatively), which are derived from chiShona, provide the isiNdebele variety of this speech community with a considerable degree of uniqueness.

Language maintenance can be described as the 'stubborn and resilient' response of one language to the imposing presence of another that it is contact with. One can describe a scenario as imposing due to certain prevailing social conditions. In the Sterkspruit area, isiHlubi is in a subordinate relationship to isiXhosa in all respects. IsiHlubi is an isiNguni language which is closely related to isiXhosa. It is under great threat of being displaced and subsumed into isiXhosa. There is nonetheless vigorous resistance, with a determination by the

speakers to maintain both an ethnic and linguistic identity. To them there is more value in seeing themselves as amaHlubi than in viewing themselves as amaXhosa. The social action of ethnic determination results in speech choices that seek to maintain the language in symphony with their ethnic identity. The subordinate language is subsequently maintained. Sesotho's non-isiNguni definition precludes it from relating with isiXhosa structurally and is not under any threat of displacement by the latter.

In the case of isiNdebele it is in a position subordinate to chiShona because of the social status the latter holds. The situation is exaggerated in the speech community of Ngungumbane, where isiNdebele speakers find themselves totally enveloped by chiShona speakers. The stubborn and resilient response that isiNdebele presents in the face of subordination by chiShona, is meant to a large extent to avoid total shift towards language extinction, which Thomason and Kaufman refer to as 'language death' (1988:68). The amaNdebele then use their strong ethnicity to alienate themselves from chiShona. Adherence to the use of isiNdebele for this community, can be likened to a religious duty. They will strive to keep and maintain it at all costs.

5.4 Comparison of the social backgrounds of the respective speech communities.

This section seeks to compare the non-linguistic peculiarities of the respective speech communities under review. It is the view of this researcher that there is resemblance in the manner in which isiXhosa and isiNdebele respond to language change within their specific social and political conditions. The same

languages behave differently in other geographical and social settings within the RSA and Zimbabwe respectively.

In Sterkspruit the language isiXhosa is in direct contact with Sesotho, isiHlubi, English and Afrikaans. The latter two languages do have a bearing on isiXhosa, but in this study the focus has been on the indigenous languages that are the mother-tongues of the majority of the inhabitants of Sterkspruit. Sesotho is one of the official languages of South Africa as well as being the national language of neighbouring Lesotho. IsiHlubi, however, is not one of the main languages identified by the constitution or the Pan South African Languages Board (PanSALB). IsiHlubi is considered by most linguists as a 'dialect' of isiXhosa. There is, notwithstanding, a very close linguistic relationship between isiXhosa and isiHlubi; both are isiNguni languages. According to Canonici (1994:3) a dialect is, "...a variety of a particular language spoken by a group, determined either by geography (regional dialect) or by social status (class dialect)." He further defines the common term 'vernacular' as:

...the form of language learned from one's mother and widely used in the home. It corresponds to the concept of "mother tongue" a form which may be officially recognised, and so it may or may not be written.

That is how isiHlubi is seen from the isiXhosa viewpoint. AmaHlubi themselves in the Sterkspruit area, however, see isiHlubi as a language 'independent' of isiXhosa. The result is a very strong substrate influence of isiHlubi on isiXhosa.

In comparison, the situation in Ngungumbane is largely different. The language isiNdebele is enveloped by a community whose mother-tongue is chiShona. Both languages are recognised as national languages. Further, there exists a diglossic relationship between chiShona and isiNdebele, where chiShona is in a high language (L1) position and isiNdebele is in a low language (L2) position. Power lies within the domain of chiShona. Power in this case refers to political power. The latter renders a status to chiShona that is higher than that of isiNdebele. For all intents and purposes, chiShona occupies a role that enables both political and economic access to an individual.

Besides the fact that both languages are in the Bantu group of languages, there is no close structural relationship between the two. To the contrary, there is a strong ethnic rift and difference which has its genesis in history. The two languages, chiShona and isiNdebele, exert influence on each other nationally and the situation in Ngungumbane is no different.

5.4.1 Ethnicity and language behaviour.

It has been referred to before in this chapter that there is a definite search for ethnic identity in the two communities under review on the part of isiHlubi and isiNdebele speakers respectively. Interestingly, both language groups have a link with isiZulu dating back to the time of the early migrations of the people in the south- east towards the north and the west of this subcontinent. Ethnicity has in these two communities, given rise to attitudes which are largely different from one another. It is these attitudes that are a major factor in language choice and usage.

In Sterkspruit, amaHlubi's ethnic identity is localised within the environs of their villages and more specifically, around their chieftaincies. There is no strong amaHlubi statement made when one is outside one of their villages, instead there is the linguistic interference of isiHlubi with isiXhosa. That is because at school the children learn isiXhosa and not isiHlubi. In the government and other public offices, there is a general acknowledgement of the presence of isiHlubi speakers who are accommodated by the availability of interpreters (during court hearings for example). In other offices, government officials mostly attend to amaHlubi through the medium of isiHlubi.

Notable in Sterkspruit Senior Secondary School also, where isiXhosa is taught as an examinable school subject, there is a deliberate acknowledgement of this language group (isiHlubi) within the isiXhosa lessons, albeit that there is no specific accommodation of isiHlubi speakers as second language learners of isiXhosa. IsiXhosa language teachers do not employ second language teaching approaches or make any concessions to isiHlubi speakers, as they would for Sesotho speakers learning isiXhosa. To the teachers, an isiHlubi mother tongue speaker is as good as an isiXhosa mother tongue speaker. Consequently, isiHlubi mother tongue speakers learn isiXhosa as 1st language learners. Teachers do not distinguish amaHlubi ethnic identity from their linguistic identity. One can say there is no separation of *ubuHlubi* from *isiHlubi*. In this speech community, the language practitioners subsume ubuHlubi and isiHlubi as part of the greater diversity of isiXhosa and ubuXhosa. The amaHlubi themselves believe otherwise.

It was observed in the course of the investigation that Sesotho does not have any ethnic issues similar to those of isiNdebele and isiHlubi. The Basotho do not see themselves as contenders for either isiXhosa linguistic or ethnic space, but exist only as actors within it. Even in their marital relationships, the Basotho are not militant in the maintenance of their language. There is instead a spirit of good neighbourliness that exists.

Among the amaNdebele of Ngungumbane, ethnic identity is clearly at work. Their strained relationship with the chiShona language speakers is testimony to their quest for ethnic identity. The isiNdebele speakers show great interest in their link with the isiNdebele speakers in their heartland. There is constant resistance to the use of any terms and vocabulary that is deemed to be 'not pure isiNdebele'. The instances of minimal codeswitching and borrowing that are found really show that they would rather speak and maintain their language fully at all costs. To the amaNdebele in this speech community, **ubuNdebele** is as important as **isiNdebele**. To them the two are mutually inclusive, and non-negotiable.

It is obvious then, that the search for ethnic identity is an important factor that determines language choice in a speech community. Mere geographical location does not prescribe a particular linguistic behaviour. Mere contact does not imply linguistic variation or change. Language contact only predisposes the respective languages to variation, but the manner of variation and subsequent change is dependent on other factors, one of which is ethnic identity. What language a people uses is a function of, among other things, a people's search for ethnic

identity and self determination. Who a people think they are, or perceive themselves to be, will more likely than not, make them choose whom to speak to, and which language to use. The language a minority group decides to use is often the means for the maintenance of their ethnic identity. What has been identified in this research is that the quest for ethnic identity is marshalled in the struggle to avoid possible language shift or language death.

5.5 Comparison of the political and historical factors affecting Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane

The two communities in question share a common history of colonialism, albeit by different colonial powers. Further, both are now in a dispensation of democratic governance. The history of the Sterkspruit speech community is more directly linked to the migrations of the Nguni during and after the period known in history as the Mfecane. AmaXhosa who are found in Sterkspruit are a mixture of those from abaThembuland as well as amaRharhabeland. AmaHlubi found in the Sterkspruit region came from the area of present day KwaZulu-Natal. The close proximity to Lesotho of this speech community legitimises the presence of a strong Sesotho influence.

The policies enunciated during the apartheid years and earlier, were not friendly to the amaHlubi, as it favoured the unification and standardization of isiXhosa at the expense of isiHlubi. The policy of separate development further ignored the development of isiHlubi as a language in favour of isiXhosa. For the apartheid regime it was easier to deal with one language than to deal with them in all their diversity. It is the view of the mother-tongue speakers of isiHlubi that even the

deployment of civil servants favoured isiXhosa speakers. Training institutions and other academic institutions were mostly established in the isiXhosa areas, indirectly obliging the isiHlubi speakers to become more fluent in isiXhosa than in isiHlubi. The teaching of isiXhosa in schools has had the effect of relegating isiHlubi to a home language, used by children whilst playing their games. The religious history of the Sterkspruit speech community also shows the use of isiXhosa as the dominant language of communication. The local language could not be used because of the fact that it was not reduced to writing. For the local community, isiXhosa became the language of worship, education as well as the language of government.

The post 1994 language policy has introduced a dispensation whereby isiXhosa has been made an official language, with isiHlubi not even being regarded as a local language that needs development. This policy decision exacerbates the societal expectations of amaHlubi. Further, within Sterkspruit isiXhosa becomes the main language of communication that even Sesotho speakers have to use in the arena of trade and commerce. It is imperative for one to speak isiXhosa so as to be given efficient service. As a result, amaHlubi are now fighting a language maintenance battle. Their insistence on using isiHlubi where they can, results in a noticeable interference in their spoken isiXhosa.

Basotho speakers, on the other hand, find themselves having to learn to communicate in isiXhosa, whilst also having a marked influence on isiXhosa. The outcome is a substratum influence on isiXhosa, where a new isiXhosa variety is evolving.

In Ngungumbane a different situation obtains. Unlike amaHlubi who migrated to Sterkspruit during pre-colonial times, amaNdebele only arrived there under painful circumstances during colonial times in the 1920's. It was during the period of forced removals and early land expropriations in colonial Zimbabwe that the amaNdebele of Chief Ngungumbane found themselves living in Mberengwa district of the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. AmaNdebele belong to the wider isiNguni family of languages as stated earlier, which makes their language structurally related to both isiXhosa and isiHlubi.

The purpose of moving them from the area close to the current city of Bulawayo, which was the capital of uMthwakazi, the amaNdebele state as it was known pre-colonially, was not merely to expropriate their land *per se*, but also to bring about the disintegration of the uMthwakazi nation. There has always been a perception among many colonial administrators that amaNdebele were a threat to colonial development. This group was viewed as militant and likely to cause trouble for the colonial government. Social fission was the intended result, whereas cultural 'ossification' and 'mummification'²³ was the response. Moving the Ngungumbane chieftaincy *en block*, and not as individual families or homesteads, had the effect of creating the synergy to continue the legacy of the founding leaders of uMthwakazi. The reference to their glorious past as an elite group of the militant amaNdebele of Mzilikazi, was their *raison d'etre*, so to speak. It was incumbent on them to maintain isiNdebele as their sole identity

²³ The two terms **ossification and mummification** are borrowed from Fanon (1969:34) where he refutes the perception that colonial decisions destroyed cultures. Instead these terms show that at times colonial actions, albeit with negative intentions, had the opposite effect on some communities.

and connection to their nationhood, which was under siege. Within Ngungumbane, governance has always been limited to the traditional leadership, which has helped to maintain the cultural elements of these people intact, and subsequently has furthered their cultural mummification, despite being in a changing environment.

The social system among the amaNdebele traditionally rotated around the chief, which is why the relations with the outside world have been anchored around the chief and the chieftaincy. While the chief in Sterkspruit wields traditional clout, there is no evidence of the influence of the chief in shaping public behaviour, especially with reference to language choice. In Ngungumbane a tradition has been set by the former chiefs to link with the past. The prowess of their forefathers as part of the amaNdebele nation is epitomised in the legacy of the chiefs. The chiefs in turn, embody the pride of their ethnic heritage, which is evidenced in the manner of their governance and culture, both of which are communicated in isiNdebele. To follow the chief is not just to adhere to the law of the land, but to the people of Ngungumbane it represents the ultimate in observing all that is 'ubuNdebele.'

More recently, the isiNdebele speakers of Ngungumbane despite their proud history of conquest have had to face a tragic history of persecution. In the space of just over a century, they have been at both the giving and the receiving end of power. As the uMthwakazi nation, they were the rulers who exercised strongly regimented control over the region because of their military might. Under the colonial powers they were at the receiving end of the destructive racist control of

the British. More recently, the post-colonial disturbances saw them under attack again. Unlike the amaHlubi of Sterkspruit who have no glorious military history, the amaNdebele boast an illustrious one. They still celebrate *ubuqhawe baboyise*²⁴ with active nostalgia. In the more recent past, the same group suffered widespread persecution during the internal post-independence upheavals. These two experiences combined, have had the effect of a collective drive among the amaNdebele to keep their language and culture alive at all costs. In addition, everything that to them represents the pain of the past is shunned, and that includes the use of chiShona. There is little repudiation of English on the other hand, as it is regarded as being the language of wider communication. ChiShona however, is seen as the language of the oppressor and thus a deliberate choice is made not to use it.

This study is based on the assumption that the history and the experiences of a group of speakers in a speech community are a defining factor in their linguistic choices. The past relationship of social groups that are in contact is a determining factor in the groups' linguistic choices. In the case where the past was amicable and cooperative, there will be harmony, which may result in growing bilingualism, as is the case between isiHlubi, isiXhosa and Sesotho in Sterkspruit. There is no history of animosity between the three and therefore, there is no hindrance to exogamous marriages, which results in frequent borrowing and codeswitching. The amaShona-amaNdebele relationship is certainly the opposite. There is a distinct *us* and *them* line drawn between these two peoples. Exogamous unions are shunned. Association at the civic level is

²⁴ The phrase refers to the military heroic acts of the amaNdebele against the Boers and the British during Mzilikazi's travesty to the north.

not encouraged, save for the sole purpose of survival. Linguistic interaction is kept to a minimum, with isiNdebele speakers being concerned to keeping isiNdebele pure.

Another important premise of this study is that language change is possible when there is sufficient and unbridled language contact. In instances where such contact is limited or controlled by such social determinants as culture, politics and history, as here identified, the extent of language change is limited. It appears that how one talks is a function of who one talks to or, in other cases, does not talk to. As observed in the speech communities under review, who one talks to is largely determined by the social and political history of the respective speakers.

5.6 Attitudes and language determinism

In the speech communities under review one finds a deterministic feature in language choice and usage. The language one uses helps to define the world view of the individual, as well as the attitude and disposition one speaker has toward another. Language is a reservoir of the culture of the speaker. Language also carries the culture, which controls human thought and behaviour and sets the boundaries of the world view of its speakers (Mazrui & Mazrui 1998:53).

When an isiXhosa speaker in a Sterkspruit supermarket insists on addressing others in isiXhosa irrespective of the other's home language, a statement is being made. A determination of space is made. *"You are in isiXhosa area!"* is the invisible message for the other speaker. This behaviour gives isiXhosa a

status that the other languages, isiHlubi and Sesotho, do not enjoy. As this occurs in the arena of commerce, business and civic authority, it enhances the position of isiXhosa as compared to other languages in the speech community. IsiXhosa thus emerges as a language of power. A mastery of isiXhosa is then viewed as a mastery of power. The mastery generally gains one ease of entry into the corridors of power. It grants access to the wider world, as it were. This is the reason why isiHlubi mother-tongue speakers, despite their negative attitudes towards isiXhosa, will strive to excel in it. The language has a wider and more significant value to them than mere ethnic pride.

To the isiNdebele speaker though, there is rejection of chiShona with a zeal matching that of the isiHlubi speaker acquiring isiXhosa. Further, to the isiNdebele speaker, acquiring excellent competence in chiShona is taken as giving in to extinction, so there is a general preference for a mere communicative competence, nothing more.

Even though chiShona does enjoy a powerful status, amaNdebele do not feel obliged to excel in it. IsiNdebele to them is still a status symbol. They value its wider isiNguni relationship with isiZulu and feel more internationalised than the speakers of chiShona, whose linguistic area does not stretch any further than neighbouring Mozambique. To the amaNdebele, the value of learning chiShona serves their governmental and bureaucratic purposes, nothing more. Where chiShona will elicit the desired service, it will be used. The maShona on the other hand, do not even consider isiNdebele as a factor of language choice. The younger chiShona speakers generally see no need to speak isiNdebele at

all. The elderly within the community on the other hand, have a more tolerant view, and an accommodative attitude towards isiNdebele usage. Bilingual behaviour among the maShona and amaNdebele is not free, but is rather controlled by certain attitudes informed by history and politics. Language choice is not a linguistic factor but a social factor.

At the family level, there is a natural gravitation in the Sterkspruit area to the early learning or the preferred acquisition of a communicative competence in isiXhosa, even if the mother tongue is not isiXhosa. This is why, amongst families where the mother is an isiXhosa speaker married to a Sesotho speaker, there is a tendency for the family to speak more isiXhosa than Sesotho. The dominance of isiXhosa in the Sterkspruit community gives its speakers an attitude that makes them less unwilling to use other languages. The bilingual behaviour of most amaXhosa is largely passive. The same applies to the isiNdebele speaker in Ngungumbane, the only difference being that isiNdebele does not occupy an equal status in the wider language situation. The attitudes nonetheless are the same and the ethnic pride, as noted earlier in this chapter, is indisputably a very strong driving force. The attitude towards exogamy in Ngungumbane is less accommodative than in Sterkspruit. Nonetheless, where it occurs, there are various forms of bilingual behaviour, as outlined in the previous chapter. Codeswitching and active bilingualism are still determined by where one is, in relation to the actual geographical location of Ngungumbane. IsiNdebele speakers will exercise covert bilingualism, whereas chiShona speakers in Ngungumbane will be active bilinguals. It is also within the latter group that more codeswitching will occur.

The speakers of both isiXhosa and isiNdebele may be described as being, in psycholinguistic terms, coordinate bilingual, as opposed to compound bilingual. Both speech communities do have significant coordinate bilingual features, especially at the family level. Mazrui & Mazrui (1998:54) explain coordinate bilingualism thus:

A coordinate bilingual is said to operate in two (or more) languages somewhat independently of each other. In essence a coordinate bilingual 'controls' two (or more) cultures and two (or more) 'world views' corresponding to the languages in his/her repertoire. Switching from one language to another means crossing cultural and cognitive boundaries to a different mental universe.

There is therefore, a compartmentalisation of the linguistic behaviour of both the isiXhosa and isiNdebele speakers. Both groups of speakers have a condescending attitude towards the other languages in their respective neighbourhoods, which is isiNdebele versus chiShona and isiXhosa versus Sesotho and isiHlubi. The two dominant languages have defined their worlds or domains in an exclusive manner. It has gone beyond the mere choice of language used, to the deliberate determination, as well as definition, of ubuXhosa and ubuNdebele. In terms of Mazrui and Mazrui as quoted above the described attitude, for example in Ngungumbane, goes further to alienate the other (in this case chiShona) so as to maintain one (in this case isiNdebele). The insistent use of the preferred languages separates them as it were from their existential conditions. It is a form of escapism from the reality that they are not in a separate world. In addition, one can say it is resistance to the features

imposed on them by the social contact that has brought them to the current position of language contact.

To the amaNdebele, more than to the amaXhosa, this behaviour of linguistic alienation, as described, is a potent manifestation of this reaction to chiShona dominance. The same can be said of the isiHlubi language maintenance tendencies in the face of isiXhosa domination. There are then, invisible boundaries that are set by the language choices made in these speech communities. Languages are then identity indicators of the self being significantly different from the other, "...denial of self can easily be made public by a switch from one language to the other."(Mazrui & Mazrui 1998:57)

For speakers in the speech communities under review, the choice of language means more than to participate in a mere communicative act. The use of a language identifies the speaker and positions him/her in the face of the other. Where a speaker wants to be placed and who a speaker wants to be identified as, will determine the language used by him/her at any given time.

5.7 Social institutions and linguistic determinism

Within the speech communities under review, one observes that there is a relationship between linguistic choice and the various social institutions present. Proper then, is the definition of linguistic determination as those non-linguistic forces that make a speaker prefer a particular language. The Whorfian view is upheld in this definition, where language is seen as a bank or reservoir of culture that influences the philosophy of life of the speakers who control and use that

language; in addition, it also has the ability to direct, if not predict, their behaviour to some extent. Frantz Fanon (1967:18) crudely puts it as "...a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." There are three social institutions or domains one can identify as playing a crucial role in linguistic determination in the speech communities under review. These social institutions include the church, traditional leadership and the school.

5.7.1 The church.

Religion to the African is not an alien, imported phenomenon but denominationalism is. African traditional religion does not differentiate, but denominationalism as brought to the African through colonialism does. Denominations within Christendom are representative of certain groups of people of similar schools of thought. The older, mainline Catholic and Protestant churches, together with a few Evangelical churches, have for a long time been associated with particular regions. The Reformed Church for example, even when found in Malawi, will always be associated with Afrikaans speaking people. The United Congregational Church in Southern Africa on the other hand, will be associated with the isiNguni speaking group in southern Africa. Indigenous churches like ZCC (Lekganyane's) are more pronounced among those of Sesotho origin and AmaNazaretha (Shembe's) are more pronounced among those of isiNguni speaking speech communities.

The Sterkspruit community is no exception, as illustrated earlier in this study. The traditional churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Pentecostal and

Evangelical all tend to have multilingual services. IsiXhosa and Sesotho are the most common languages used by these denominations. There is a liberal approach regarding the choice of language by congregants but on the main the delivery of the sermon is in isiXhosa. This is due to the fact that most of the ministers were trained in the heartland isiXhosa speaking areas. The deliberate use of isiHlubi is not common from the pulpit or in the church except by congregants in their general informal conversation. One will find isiHlubi used for both worship and the delivery of sermons in the indigenous or syncretistic churches such as Holy Church of God, a Zionist spiritist church. In Ngungumbane, on the contrary, churches are clearly distinguishable by linguistic choice. The Seventh Day Adventist Church is undoubtedly isiNdebele, while the Lutheran Church is chiShona.

Religion is thus a domain of language behaviour which furthers the ethnic identity of a group. The institution of the church in Ngungumbane is a context for defining ubuNdebele and further becomes a factor in the maintenance of the language of isiNdebele. An isiNdebele speaker, who is not ordinarily a church-goer, finds solace in the SDA church because of its linguistic appeal. In the religious domain there is a form of linguistic protectionism. IsiNdebele is sacralised to make it imperative and indicative that God "hears" an isiNdebele prayer. This is done despite the fact that all around Ngungumbane chiShona is spoken and even in the wider religious domain, chiShona dominates. Within the isiNdebele speaking area, the statement, "*UNKulunkulu uyasizwa isiNdebele.*"²⁵

²⁵ Meaning God 'hears' prayers made in isiNdebele. Carries the connotation that, if God hears isiNdebele it then follows that the language and the speakers thereof have the right of existence like any other language.

is made to legitimise the use of the isiNdebele address to God. Being a spiritual people, the language used in holy address will consequently be maintained as far as possible. It is like the recognition Islam has given to Arabic.

5.7.2 Traditional leadership

As described earlier, there is strong adherence to cultural norms within the two speech communities under review. Chieftaincy and the village administrative system still echo the old world. The villagers may be modernised in terms of economic affluence and world view, yet there is still deep seated respect for the traditional system of government. The chief –**induna** (in Ngungumbane), **inkosi** (in Sterkspruit) represents ethnic dignity and identity. Their structures of kraal heads or sub-chiefs called **oosibonda** (Sterkspruit), **osobhuku** (Ngungumbane), **idale/inkundla** (chief's court), together with **imbizo/imikhosi** (general interactive meetings or assemblies) are held in high regard. The villagisation system in Sterkspruit clearly demarcates the linguistic boundaries. These boundaries are not rigid and still permit a lot of exogamy, hence the bilingualism observed in the area. In Ngungumbane there is a difference. The Nyamhondo and Negove chieftaincies are singularly chiShona and clearly distinguishable from the isiNdebele- speaking chieftaincy of Ngungumbane.

From the interviews and observations conducted in the isiNdebele speaking chieftaincy, there is clearly a much stronger institutionalisation of the chieftaincy. To them it is all they have left to remind them of the great amaNdebele nation of uMthwakazi as founded by Mzilikazi. There is therefore a strong allegiance to the chief. He is the incarnation of amaNdebele nationhood and the custodian of

the isiNdebele language. Without him, the language would have been extinct by now. The chief speaks an impeccable isiNdebele to the ordinary subject and thereby presents himself as a role model. When the chief speaks, he resonates the will and the desires of the fathers, both living and gone. So, as long as the amaNdebele have a chief, they see hope for the continued existence of their language. There is therefore a living link between the chief, ubuNdebele and isiNdebele. The domain of the village and of the local chief for abeHlubi as well as for amaNdebele is a determining factor in the maintenance of the respective languages.

5.7.3 The school.

Education is espoused with fervency in both speech communities under review. The school system meets with esteem. In the respective communities under review, languages such as isiXhosa, Sesotho, isiNdebele and chiShona are not only taught as subjects, but are also used as mediums of instruction at the lower levels of learning. In Sterkspruit, isiHlubi is not taught at all, although to some extent its influence is acknowledged. There is no recourse for those who would want to learn isiHlubi beyond what the home front has to offer. On the other hand, those Sesotho speakers who want to major in it can do so, since it is an official language in the RSA.

There is only one school in the Ngungumbane community that teaches isiNdebele and it is a primary school. The local secondary school does not have sufficient facilities to teach isiNdebele. This poses a threat to the development of isiNdebele. The resultant action by isiNdebele language speakers has been to

take their children to other schools in places where isiNdebele is the main language spoken, like Bulawayo and its environs.

The movement of isiNdebele learners to 'safer areas' is a protective step that helps maintain the language in the face of chiShona dominance. The selection of a school in a different location, for the sole purpose of keeping the learner close to an isiNdebele speaking area, as observed in Ngungumbane, shows the deliberate and purposeful determination and maintenance of isiNdebele. The thought patterns and world view of the learners who have been 'saved' from contamination in this manner, leans towards a vigorous and stubborn maintenance of isiNdebele. They may have communicative competence in chiShona, but will always plead ignorance so as not to spoil their ubuNdebele and thereby compromise the purity of isiNdebele.

The domains of language behaviour described above, result in the maintenance of the languages that see themselves under threat of extinction. The actions taken are protective or defensive mechanisms in the face of language change. The result is not a total immunity to external influence, but rather a minimised or controlled rate of change. Borrowing and codeswitching is minimised but not ruled out. While for the meantime, there may not be any significant shift, there is bound to be some degree of change in the future. As long as the languages remain in mutual contact, there will be influence of one on the other.

5.7.4 Highlanders football club as an institution of ubuNdebele

While there are many similarities between the two speech communities as shown above there are some unique features in the Ngungumbane speech community. The chief of this community has been described as the centre of ubuNdebele, besides being the traditional authority of the area. The late chief, whose tenure spanned the colonial period to the times following independence, Chief Douglas Ngungumbane Mkhwananzi, was a much occupied person. Among the things he was involved in was the Highlanders Football Club, in various capacities, including that of Club Chairman.

In elaborating on the concept of domains of language behaviour, Fishman in Pride and Holmes (1972:19) states that they are defined in terms of:

...institutional contexts or socio-ecological co-occurrences. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations that occur in particular multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic, appropriate though they may be for analyses of individual behaviour at the level of face-to-face verbal encounters are related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations.

The domain in which one could fit Highlanders Football Club according to the Fishman list is that of *the playground and the street*. In this domain one realises the language choices that are determined by whom one is playing with. The language one speaks depends on who one is playing with. Amongst Highlanders players and supporters it is categorical that one is playing with amaNdebele and without fail the language of play will have to be isiNdebele. The lack of popularity or even ignorance of such songs as, "*Gwekwerere bhora!*" bears testimony to the defined nature of Highlanders as an accepted domain for

the isiNdebele speaker. This particular song calls the erstwhile rivalry between Dynamos Football Club (representing amaShona) and Highlanders.

Highlanders Football Club within Ngungumbane is a defined social institution that helps define ubuNdebele and, consequently, the maintenance of the isiNdebele language. There is a well nigh fanatic loyalty to the club which is expressed in such statements as, **“Yibosso ngenkani, ongafuniyo kayekele!”** (Highlanders is the boss by force anyone who thinks otherwise must just quit!) The songs and cheer chants are all in isiNdebele. The lyrics of the songs reminisce on the good old days of the glorious uMthwakazi nation state, as well as being protest songs that emphasise the amaNdebele's ethnic identity.

In the absence of a political party (PF-ZAPU) that they could identify with, and a leadership (the King and Joshua Nkomo) the amaNdebele could acknowledge to as theirs, loyalty to Highlanders now represents the unifying centre for the amaNdebele. For the people of Ngungumbane, the fact that the late Chief Ngungumbane was not only an active supporter and Life Member of Highlanders, but also a Member of the Board of Trustees as well as a past Chairperson, is a strong rallying point of ubuNdebele and thus reinforces the sustenance of isiNdebele.

Since only isiNdebele is used when one is in Highlanders activity, be it on or off the field, there is a deliberate maintenance of isiNdebele. Even amaShona who become Highlanders' supporters find themselves speaking in isiNdebele so as to blend in, failing of which they could be ejected from the institution. The club

itself is a strong determinant of language choice within this speech community and in this study the phenomenon is peculiar to the Ngungumbane speech community.

5.8 Analysis of bilingual behaviour

Both speech communities under review exhibit significant presentations of bilingual behaviour. Suffice to mention once again that the bilingual speaker is the focal point in the study of the linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change. The isiNdebele speakers of Ngungumbane may be far removed from their parent group in the environs of Matabeleland, yet they have gone far in maintaining the links with incredible gains for maintenance. The Sesotho and isiHlubi speakers by contrast, do not have the opportunity that the isiNdebele speakers have. They are immersed in isiXhosa and at most times, adapting is easier. The fundamental position for all three subordinate languages in the communities under review is that they are in contact and to a large extent the speakers of these languages are bilingual. The extent of bilingualism may vary from passive to active, overt to covert overall, however, they are bilingual.

The domain that lends itself as a great potential for contact is the family. Exogamous marriages present a basic illustration of the principle of language stability and change which Croft (2005:16) formulates as, "...who you talk to depends on who your parents are (descent), and who you marry (alliance)." Descent and alliance are the basic concepts that underlie the analysis of kinship systems. As the age of ethnic prescriptive tendencies is past, there is greater freedom of choice, which often results in bilingual families. Even amongst the

more resistant isiNdebele-speaking people, exogamy is realised, albeit frowned upon. Where isiNdebele and chiShona speakers come into mutual contact there is a high chance of language change ensuing.

5.8.1 Borrowing and codeswitching

Members of the two speech communities, because of their bilingual tendencies, borrow and code-switch from time to time. In Ngungumbane the elderly speakers of isiNdebele, who were in the area prior to independence, have a high tolerance level toward chiShona. Those who were subjected to the persecution of the post-independence disturbances are least tolerant.

Among isiHlubi speakers there is acceptance of the dominance of isiXhosa, yet with a resilient maintenance of isiHlubi in the family context. Sesotho speakers tend to feel that they are not in their own territory most of the time and therefore will use isiXhosa. The isiXhosa spoken by the Sesotho mother tongue speakers shows a great influence and interference of the mother tongue.

In both communities the elderly speakers are more tolerant and understanding of the contact situation and will go to great extremes to accommodate other speakers. Noticeably, the elderly are the bilingual speakers in the community. In Ngungumbane the elderly amaNdebele women tend to be more actively bilingual, while their men are covertly bilingual. The latter is meant to check the unbridled potential loss of isiNdebele that they fear may be the result of overt bilingual behaviour. On the other hand, it does highlight the significant linguistic mobility and tolerance of the female speakers in the speech community.

IsiHlubi and Sesotho interference in isiXhosa is common and accepted within the Sterkspruit community. The educators accept and accommodate this within their pedagogy. Lexical items are used that have their genesis in isiHlubi and these have come to be accepted as part of the local variety of isiXhosa. IsiXhosa speakers that are not native to Sterkspruit accept the **buHlubirha** (isiHlubi-ness) and **buSothurha** (Sesotho-ness) peculiarities of the isiXhosa spoken in Sterkspruit.

The same cannot be said of the isiNdebele spoken in Ngungumbane. There is an energetic and deliberate attempt by the speakers to articulate a purist type of isiNdebele. This applies mainly to the adult population of speakers above the age of 40. Younger speakers are less sensitive towards the use of chiShona. The intense dislike of chiShona by some speakers manifests itself in a form of coded speech that is in fact a form of borrowing. When an isiNdebele speaker uses the word {**abakurubakuru**}²⁶ within an isiNdebele sentence, it is effectively more than just the chiShona {**vakuruvakuru**} word used. A significant connotation comes with it. The term ceases to be a chiShona word because of the following changes:

- The /-v-/ sound which is a voiced denti-labial in chiShona is changed to the isiNdebele /-b-/ which is a voiced bilabial fricative.

²⁶ This word is derived from the chiShona word **vakuruvakuru** meaning literally the big ones or the authorities as used in string (b) in the previous chapter.

- The use of the prefix /**aba-**/ typifies the word as an isiNdebele word, since in chiShona the pre-prefix (initial vowel) of the noun class prefix is elided.

isiNdebele purists will insist that the word is chiShona, yet the construction is not chiShona, but isiNdebele. Such resistance to change in the language, ironically, is the nemesis that defines the language change that isiNdebele is undergoing, albeit at a very slow and controlled pace.

There is deliberate public avoidance of the use of chiShona among the isiNdebele speaking homesteads as a form of opposition to chiShona dominance. In those homesteads where isiNdebele speaking women have been married to chiShona speaking men, they use isiNdebele freely. The children tend to speak isiNdebele with similar competence as they do chiShona. The latter behaviour is indicative of the resilience of isiNdebele ethnicity.

There is still a clear variation of isiNdebele in the speech community under review, as compared to the speech community of Nkosikazi. This variation implies that the contact isiNdebele has with chiShona in Ngungumbane does effect changes. It is nonetheless very minimal and slow, because of the forces of ethnicity and history that militate against a major language shift.

5.8.2 Length of contact and language change

The contact situation obtaining in Sterkspruit differs significantly from that obtaining in Ngungumbane. The Sesotho, isiXhosa and isiHlubi speakers have

been in contact for much longer than the isiNdebele and chiShona speakers in Ngungumbane. Social contact is a source of linguistic change only if it is clear that it would have been less likely that a given change would have taken place outside a specific contact situation. This research has also brought to the fore that social factors are not merely determinants of the linguistic outcomes of language contact, but they are more probabilistic. A factor that could have a greater bearing on the linguistic outcomes could be the duration of contact, which this section seeks to address.

isiXhosa, Sesotho and isiHlubi had been in mutual contact even before the early colonisation of the Eastern Cape. These languages have therefore been in contact for a period of over two centuries. The duration of their contact has been characterised by a measure of tolerance that has led to significant bilingualism. The contact has been intensive. Despite the reciprocal heavy lexical and phonological borrowing from both isiXhosa speakers and isiHlubi speakers, the ethnic determination of the amaHlubi has enabled the maintenance of isiHlubi. The overwhelming long-term cultural and political pressure from isiXhosa has not brought about a wholesale replacement of isiHlubi by the former. On the contrary, amaHlubi have kept their linguistic identity, choosing rather to effect massive interference on isiXhosa.

By contrast, the isiNdebele – chiShona language contact in Ngungumbane does not pre-date colonialism, but is a direct result of colonialism. The contact period is less than a century. Furthermore, the contact is not very free, but it is controlled by the ethnic determinism that is characteristic of amaNdebele, as

described earlier in this chapter. Bilingualism is not overt, neither is it intense, except in the cases of exogamous relationships of isiNdebele speakers not ordinarily resident in Ngungumbane. The language scenario of the greater Mberengwa community which includes the chieftaincies of Negove, Nyamhondo and Ngungumbane, shows that the duration of contact isiNdebele has had with chiShona was not long enough to exhibit the intricacies of change that obtain in Sterkspruit. If the attitudes of the isiNdebele speakers are sustained as they are, then one can predict a different linguistic outcome, which is likely to be deeper maintenance. Compared with the Nkosikazi area, the Ngungumbane speech community does show similar resistance to change, but the contact with chiShona tempers that resistance.

The drive for language purity, coupled with a strong ethnic pride, is integral to language maintenance. The dominant psycho-social factors within a speech community are pivotal to a language's quest for maintenance. IsiHlubi and isiNdebele share the same quest for maintenance in the face of dominant languages; the difference is in the duration of contact between the respective languages.

Another observation which makes the Ngungumbane language contact situation peculiar when compared to the Sterkspruit one, is the fact that isiHlubi and isiXhosa are related languages, since both are isiNguni. IsiNdebele and chiShona are not related. Sesotho on the other hand is not in the same group as isiXhosa.

The contact situation in the Sterkspruit community has been in existence for a much longer time than in the Ngungumbane community, and isiXhosa has had a sub-stratum influence on both Sesotho and isiHlubi. Contact in this speech community has not had an effect on the maintenance of isiHlubi. The Sesotho language is largely maintained because of the close proximity of the country of Lesotho.

IsiNdebele, like isiHlubi, has a strong inclination towards maintenance. The linguistic non-relatedness of isiNdebele and chiShona, discounting other factors such as history and ethnic considerations, is important in determining the rate of change. The duration of contact, though a poignant factor, is nonetheless overridden by the fact that there is clearly no linguistic motivation for isiNdebele to be subsumed into chiShona.

5.9 Language and culture

Language has been regarded in this study, as elsewhere, as a reservoir of culture which controls human thought and behaviour, also setting the boundaries of the "world view of its users" (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998:53). The two speech communities under review show features indicative of the veracity of this statement. In the Sterkspruit speech community, there is peculiarly no evident selection of language by the speakers of the subordinate language, specifically to maintain its continued use. On the contrary, the Ngungumbane speech community presents such a selection, mainly in the form of clichés, which take the speaker on a reality check that begins to define the speaker's ethnicity and world view.

The choice of particular words or phrases in the Ngungumbane speech community in quest of maintaining the isiNdebele language can be best explained in the words of Edward Sapir, who says:

Human beings are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society... The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same reality. (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998:58)

The common isiNdebele words used have the effect of conformity to a unitary system. The world view being propounded depicts amaNdebele as a conservative and rigid people. Change to them is an option they would oppose, given the chance. The words further show a resilient and strong willed people with a desire to maintain isiNdebele. These common statements are indicative of nostalgia coupled with the mourning of the loss of their being.

The effect of these words on the development and growth of isiNdebele is not positive at all. These words do not give the speakers a forward looking perspective on both themselves and those around them. In the words of Fanon (1969:34) these words define the amaNdebele and more so the language isiNdebele so as to lose appeal. There is a 'cultural mummification' which leads to a 'mummification of individual thinking.' The resultant freezing of a community's thoughts and world view is itself a product of alienation which continues to promote further alienation, thereby restricting the actions and reactions of the subordinate language, in this case isiNdebele.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter the linguistic behaviour of the two speech communities of Sterkspruit, in the Republic of South Africa and Ngungumbane in Zimbabwe have been compared. The different choices they make as speakers in each community interact, are examined in line with sociolinguistic theories of contact induced language change.

A qualitative approach has been used in this research and this chapter demonstrates its effectiveness in the outcomes provided. The interpretive role of the research and the researcher has also been enhanced, showing clearly how the research explains, and interprets the social, political and historical factors that affect the linguistic outcomes of contact induced language change. The language choices made by the speakers in the respective communities have been analysed and compared, in conjunction with the role of the social institutions of the respective speech communities.

The role of bilingualism as the focal point of change in contact-induced language change was dealt with in this chapter in depth. Both the bilingual language speaker and the linguistic outcomes of bilingualism were addressed in considerable depth.

It has been shown in this chapter that social contact is a source of linguistic change. Further, the chapter has shown that the changes identified would have been less likely outside of the respective contact scenarios of Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane. Social contact also creates linguistic variation.

This chapter has also confirmed the Thomason and Kaufman (1988) notion that social factors are the determinants of the linguistic outcomes of language contact. The reality though, as seen from this research, is that social factors are more probabilistic than deterministic factors in analysing the linguistic outcomes of language change.

The assumption, made at the beginning of this study, that extensive codeswitching and borrowing are common behaviours of languages in contact, has been substantiated by this chapter. Codeswitching and borrowing is a characteristic feature of languages in contact.

Further, the need to preserve an ethnic identity is a great motivation for language maintenance. Language is not only a combination of systems (grammar) but it is also a social tool, which is affected by social considerations. It has also been realised in this chapter that a study of language is neither purely linguistic nor is it merely sociolinguistic, it is effectively a blend of both.

The social environment of the speaker of a language will affect the manner or rate of language change. Languages do not just change in isolation, but within certain situations. The social environment is one such factor that controls language change. In addition, cultural and political considerations have a strong bearing on the manner in which a language responds to change.

In this chapter language change has been observed to be an all encompassing phenomenon which is intricately linked with a society's dynamism and its contact with another society has an effect on the rate and nature of language change.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This chapter draws conclusions from the study of a language's response to contact induced forces of language change as carried out in the Sterkspruit (Republic of South Africa) and Ngungumbane (Zimbabwe) speech communities.

6.1 Summary of the study

The aim of the study has been to determine the extent of language change and to examine the causes of the different rates of language change in two isiNguni languages, namely isiXhosa and isiNdebele. The speech community of Sterkspruit in the northern part of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa was selected for the investigation of isiXhosa. For isiNdebele, the Ngungumbane speech community in the Mberengwa district of the Midlands province of Zimbabwe was selected. The predominant language in the Eastern Cape is isiXhosa whilst, in the Mberengwa district of the Midlands province, it is chiShona.

The emphasis in this study was on the effect of contact on the languages under review. IsiXhosa is in contact with Sesotho and isiHlubi in the Sterkspruit area, whereas isiNdebele is in contact with chiShona in the Ngungumbane area. Further, the factors that act as forces for either stability or change in the

languages under review were investigated. Both internal and external factors were investigated.

An investigation into the non-linguistic factors that are an active feature of language development and change was made. Special attention and detailed investigations were made regarding the social, historical and political factors that affect language change. These are factors that were seen to either promote or prohibit the type of language change that manifests itself as a result of languages being in continuous mutual contact.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study with the comparative case study being used as an investigative strategy. The aspects of the qualitative method, which are those of describing, explaining and understanding, were effectively employed, so as to achieve plausible results. The triangulation of both linguistic and sociolinguistic data helped to obtain evidence concerning the linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change. This was achieved through the use of various sources.

An interpretivist paradigm was adopted for this research. The reality to be studied consisted of the people's subjective experiences of the external world, hence the use of interviews and participant observation, which rely to a large extent on a subjective relationship between researcher and subject. Further, social action was seen as the arena within which subjective reasons and meanings could be found. That is why throughout this study, language was

seen as not merely a linguistic phenomenon but as mainly sociolinguistic in nature.

The linguistic outcomes that were detailed were at the lexical level of the languages, isiNdebele and isiXhosa. Bilingualism was the main linguistic behaviour investigated because of the assumption that the bilingual speaker is the focal point in an investigation into the linguistic outcomes of contact-induced language change.

6.2 Findings of the study

In the case of the Sterkspruit speech community, isiHlubi speakers, who have been in contact with isiXhosa for a long time, have always seen isiXhosa as a language imposed on them, consequently making them determined to keep their ethnic identity significantly other than that of amaXhosa. The result has been the successful maintenance of isiHlubi. The linguistic similarity of isiHlubi and isiXhosa did not prove to be a negative factor for the continued maintenance of isiHlubi. There are cultural and linguistic similarities between isiXhosa and isiHlubi, but isiHlubi still succeeds in maintaining itself as a distinct social entity.

The other important role player in this community is isiXhosa. IsiXhosa is the dominant, main role player in the Sterkspruit speech community and its existence is not threatened by the presence of isiHlubi and Sesotho. What is found is substratum influences, leading to the creation of a variant form of isiXhosa which is significantly affected by both isiHlubi and Sesotho.

In the paragraphs above the relationship between isiHlubi, Sesotho and isiXhosa was outlined for the Sterkspruit speech community. It was found that there are marked linguistic and cultural similarities. The situation in the Ngungumbane speech community is vastly different, because here one finds distinct cultural and linguistic dissimilarity between the two groups, i.e. the amaNdebele and the maShona.

The scenario in the Ngungumbane speech community also shows definite indications of language maintenance in the case of isiNdebele that is under strong chiShona domination. However, unlike the isiXhosa – isiHlubi contact relationship, the isiNdebele – chiShona contact situation shows marked cultural and linguistic dissimilarity between them. This feature has resulted in an awareness that enhances a deep self-consciousness which at times, leads to animosity, prejudice and systematic segregation. This is why language maintenance is much stronger in the respective speech communities.

The fact that the Ngungumbane community is smaller, with a unitary ethnic mentality and tight links with its heartland isiNdebele mother tongue speakers, has made the control of ethnic purity and, subsequently, linguistic determination easier to effect. The centrality of their governance system around the chief maintains a cohesion that enables corporate resistance to imminent linguistic change due to chiShona domination.

In both speech communities under review, the feeling of being deliberately suppressed by the dominant languages has strengthened resistance and thus encouraged language maintenance. The social institutions of the church, education and sport play an actively deterministic role in the quest for language maintenance. The religio-societal insulation of the Ngungumbane community, together with a deliberate separatist educational plan for their children, has helped to maintain isiNdebele. The loyalty to Highlanders Football Club as an ethnically cohesive brand is an effective language maintenance factor for isiNdebele.

The political history of a speech community is a determining factor in the creation of positive or negative attitudes within societies in contact. Where a minority has had a negative political past there is the subsequent strong resistance to other languages it is contact with, resulting in the maintenance of its own language. This is true for the Ngungumbane speech community.

Bilingual behaviour has been seen as the feature that makes language change probable in language contact areas like Sterkspruit and Ngungumbane. The extent to which bilingual behaviour such as borrowing, codeswitching and interference is permitted, determines the extent to which the minority language undergoes change. Lack of, or severely controlled, bilingual behaviour, supports language maintenance. Codeswitching into chiShona is not approved of among sectors of the Ngungumbane speech community. This results in the maintenance of a 'less contaminated' isiNdebele language. Linguistic purism is a contributing factor towards language maintenance.

It has also been found in this study that when societies undergo fissions, the language spoken by each of the split parts of the same society are affected. As a result of fissions in societies, contact is made with other societies and subsequently the respective languages come into mutual contact as well. Such contact predisposes the languages concerned to change. The change(s) is (are) realisable in the form of measurable, identifiable, linguistic outcomes.

These linguistic outcomes of language contact are not the result of purely linguistic activities. As observed in this study, the linguistic outcomes are a result of the social, religious, cultural, historical and political factors that determine the language choices speakers make in response to language contact. Mere contact alone does not determine linguistic outcomes, but it does predispose a language to change.

The attitudes one society has towards another that it is in contact with, will determine the extent to which it can affect the other's language or be affected itself by the other. The presence of a dominant language, coupled with an imposing language policy, has tended to develop a strong resistance to bilingual behaviour by the minority languages in the respective speech communities under review. Attitudes and language choices that are an obstacle to the dominance of one language result in the slow to minimal influence of the super-ordinate language on the subordinate language. Instead of a linguistic shift to the dominant language, there has been a calculated intransigence in the subordinate language. Language maintenance is the resultant scenario in the speech communities under review.

6.3 Insights gleaned from the study

Generally, the motivation for bilingual behaviour is the improved social status that is probable or possible in the social setting of language contact. There is the hope for upward social mobility for the bilingual speaker. Since Sesotho speakers realise the need to operate within the predominately isiXhosa community, speaking or codeswitching into isiXhosa for them is paramount for their existence. On the other hand, it is clear that if speakers of one language view the other language either as being imposed on them or as being culturally different from them, bilingual options of code switching are not attractive. The latter describes the situation in Ngungumbane. The bilingual speaker is the locus of language change, where languages are in contact. The findings of this study bring to the fore the fact that in those situations where there is the perceived greater need by a group of speakers to preserve what they see as their unique identity through their language, any negotiations for codeswitching are avoided. Bilingual concessions in such a speech community are not an option. As observed amongst the isiNdebele speakers of Ngungumbane, their need to preserve their ethnic identity affects their openness to chiShona. The result is minimal bilingual behaviour on their part ensuring the strong maintenance of isiNdebele.

Language contact situations are not as simple as they are at times perceived to be. Where there is a diglossic relationship of languages, complexity ensues. The role played by bilingual behaviour such as borrowing, codeswitching, language identity and speakers' attitude to their language, introduce complexity

in the attempt to define the linguistic outcomes expected from language contact. The same bilingual behaviours mentioned above, are instrumental in the promotion of language maintenance. How much one language borrows from the other, codeswitches to the other, will determine the rate of change in the case of the borrowing language.

The significant motives and attitudes of a community in its pursuit to belonging or adapting to a wider community directly shape the community's stance towards the use of a particular titular language. ChiShona, with its position as the language of the perceived "oppressing" group, does not offer sufficient attraction for the amaNdebele to use it in day to day interaction, save when absolutely necessary. The level of bilingualism is thus limited, further limiting the exposure to influence and interference of isiNdebele by chiShona.

For a language to survive, shift and not, eventually, to die, it is necessary for it to be used as widely as possible for communication among community members and especially to be taught to children so as to ensure intergenerational transmission. Intergenerational transmission of a language minimises the possibilities of language shift or language extinction. When a language can still be effectively used by children in the domains of play and school, the maintenance of that language is assured, despite the intensity of language contact. IsiHlubi in the Sterkspruit community will continue to exist for some time to come because there is a large population of isiHlubi speaking children who proudly use it at home, at school and at play. In the same manner isiNdebele will continue to exist, despite the dominance of chiShona.

The combination of religion, ethnic determinism, education and recreational cohesion, make a potent 'cocktail' in the creation of the necessary momentum for language maintenance. These social issues outlined above, may not be viewed as ready to lend themselves to linguistic determinism, yet they are. The fact that these social issues employ language as the medium for their dissemination, positions them very well for the purpose of language maintenance. The effects of the social behaviour make it incumbent on a student of language never to ignore the sociolinguistic factors in the analysis and study of language. Language is surely not purely linguistic but rather more sociolinguistic.

Exogamy is a direct result of societies in contact and it creates a fertile ground for bilingual behaviour. One would have expected that women, in these bilingual families, would be very upwardly mobile in terms of language choice (i.e. they would select the language that is of a higher status than their own). This study has shown that mothers provide protection against language shift and language extinction. Within the domain of the family and home, the mothers' role in language maintenance is significant, since they are also considered as their children's primary teachers.

6.4 Implications and recommendations

6.4.1 This study may have very strong implications for the future study and teaching of isiXhosa and isiNdebele. As for isiXhosa, a first implication relates to dialects and language variation. While it has traditionally been easy to

asses the language on the basis of ethnic differentials of speakers who live either to the west or to the east of the Kei River, it is now incumbent on the language's practitioners to think otherwise. The presence of a variety of ethnic groupings in the Eastern Cape predisposes the language isiXhosa to a lot of variation. The different language groups within the isiXhosa-speaking area should not be simply subsumed as dialects of isiXhosa, but there should rather be studies of the different isiXhosa varieties as a result of the contact isiXhosa has with the respective languages. Therefore, in light of the above, it will be an anomaly to refer to isiHlubi as a dialect of isiXhosa, instead it is better to have the isiXhosa form as spoken in the amaHlubi area referred to as a variant form of standard isiXhosa.

IsiHlubi, like other minority languages, may not occupy a central position in the investigations into language status being undertaken by PanSALB at the moment, but it is in the interest of the multilingual nature of the South African nation that it be given due attention. A deeper investigation of isiHlubi will enable language researchers into isiXhosa to make more informed decisions on its development.

The unique features realised in the isiNdebele speech patterns, as observed in the speech communities of Nkosikazi and Ngungumbane, introduce a possibility for the study of dialects or language variation in isiNdebele. Since isiNdebele is a minority language, it has not been very important for linguists in the language to fully investigate the language variations and dialects of isiNdebele. The

findings of this study make investigations not only a possibility, but necessary, especially for those in the educational, publishing and media sectors.

This study has shown that the language isiNdebele will continue to be stable into the future, but the challenge for it to adapt to its linguistic environment is inescapable. Whilst it can sustain its ethnic determinism, the larger picture of the Zimbabwean linguistic environment makes it incumbent on its speakers to become actively bilingual. Unless the cultural differences between the maShona and the amaNdebele are given less prominence, so as to create more mutual tolerance, the tendency towards the maintenance of isiNdebele will become even stronger.

The presence of both youth and children as active speakers of both isiHlubi and isiNdebele ensures the continued existence of the respective threatened languages into the next generations. Further, their strong ethnocentric attitudes mean that language maintenance is certain to persist.

The response of the isiNdebele speaking children to the ethnocentricity of institutions like Highlanders Football Club and the Seventh Day Adventist church, call for a lot more tolerance whilst, at the same time, the central developmental role these institutions can play in the same communities must be acknowledged. Whilst multilingual policies are being encouraged in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, the call for ethnic self-determinism does not seem to be on the decline, providing even greater scope for language maintenance.

Within the milieu of contact-induced language change and maintenance, the educational sector has a large responsibility. This study recommends that the educational departments of both countries should encourage multilingual tolerance within the school system. IsiXhosa should be taught to isiHlubi mother tongue speakers as a second rather than a first language. It will help develop greater acceptance and tolerance between the speakers of isiXhosa and those of other languages in the speech community.

This study of the two languages of isiNdebele and isiXhosa proved that it is imperative for linguists to acknowledge the relevance of the social domains of religion, civic authority and political authority in the determination of language choice. These domains are part of the internal system of forces that determine a language's response to contact-induced language change. Whatever domain determines what language a speaker speaks at a given time, will inevitably determine the response of a speaker to language contact.

As this study is being concluded, the Highlanders Football Club has clinched the Premier Soccer League title for the 2006 season with three more games in hand. The response of the isiNdebele speaking communities is ecstatic and further cements the centrality of this team to the ethnocentricity of the amaNdebele. It becomes increasingly clear that a permanent exposure to otherness, through contact with neighbouring linguistic groups, may lead to an exacerbated sense of group identity, where anything that can serve the interests of the group will be used.

The recommendations of this study may be summarised as follows:

- An academic recognition of the principle of isiXhosa language variation and an appropriate non-ethnic based definition of the dialects concerned are recommended.
- In the educational field there is a need for cross cultural tolerance and the development of second language teaching methodologies in relevant communities is encouraged.
- The South African Constitution stipulates that there be parity of esteem for the usage of official languages. This study further recommends acknowledgement of other non-official languages like isiHlubi, alongside the official languages.
- There is a need to cultivate a greater sense of tolerance and understanding of the multilingual nature of communities in the light of the strong sentiments that speakers have towards their respective mother tongues.
- There is a need to equip the language boards in Zimbabwe so as to create a consciousness of the rights of minority languages such as isiNdebele. Such boards will be able to assist the government in the formulation of policies that will protect the interests of these disadvantaged languages.
- There should be a deliberate promotion of the use of minority languages (in the two countries) through publications, the electronic and print media, the performing arts, and in public institutions.
- It is recommended that there be a stronger drive towards the intellectualisation of these indigenous languages.

- The academic bias should shift away from the mere study of their linguistic structure to a more relevant and progressive one; that of applied linguistics.

6.4.2 To conclude, it is abundantly clear that maintenance of a language is not just a matter of stubbornly sticking to some utterances in a language. Language maintenance is furthermore, not a simple analysis of language behaviour at the linguistic level. This study has shown that language maintenance is a result of the complexity of the linguistic behaviour peculiar to humans. It is a situation whose complexity is intricately tied to the relationships that are characteristic of humans in contact. Language maintenance is encouraged by the universal tendency of a human being to accentuate her or his individuality, without any negative intentions towards the other. This emphasis of uniqueness even in the situation of contact, fuels the quest for language maintenance. Contact with other humans predisposes one to the influence of the other; it is the same with languages in contact. A response to these external threats often triggers various mechanisms that will either consolidate one's position (maintenance) or accommodate the other's position (shift). In this study it has been made clear that isiHlubi and isiNdebele have opted for the former, albeit with different consequences. Whenever societies come into contact, their languages also do. Languages in contact are subjected to both internal and external forces of change and language maintenance is one such response. Language maintenance, despite having linguistic outcomes, as proven in this study, is not a purely linguistic process but also a sociolinguistic

one. It makes one conclude that language is certainly not a purely linguistic phenomenon but is to a large extent, a sociolinguistic one.

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APPENDIX A – DEFINITION OF TERMS

Grammar

This is an explicit characterization of the structure of a particular language, which includes all the aspects of the language's phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. It is also understood to mean the rules that regulate the function and form of elements in a language. Grammar is also the machinery that gives rise to the unlimited impressibility of human language, an inborn feature in man, the competence of which is gained without training (Nowak and Komarova, 2001:1)

Utterance

It is a particular, actual occurrence of the product of human behavior in communicative interaction, a meaningful string of sounds within a determined context. In this study an utterance will also be handled as an entity that enables the study of language change and variation.

Language

This is a system of vocal and written symbols through which members of a society interact. The term 'system' entails rules that control the form and function of the said symbols, giving what is acceptable and grammatical in that society. A language is also the total population of utterances in a speech community. When used without the direct article, it refers to the phenomenon of communication peculiar to humans and thus not specific to any society.

Dialect or language variety

The two terms are herein used interchangeably to refer to a systematic distinction within a single language, where the distinction is often related to geographical distribution of its speakers. The distinction is exhibited in the verbal communication of the different speakers of that language. The distinction is not only in pronunciation, but in grammar and vocabulary as well. Despite the differences, speakers would still understand each other without problems.

Mutual intelligibility

This is the scenario where speakers of one language generally understand speakers of the other and *vice-versa*. This usually applies to languages that are geographical neighbours.

Language contact

This is seen as the influence of one language over another because of geographical proximity of the relevant speech communities.

Language development

Language development is sometimes also referred to as language growth and describes the ability of a language to expand its vocabulary and to adapt its system to handle new and diverse complex linguistic functions.

Language change

Also known as language evolution. It refers to the dynamism of a language in its form and structure over a period of time. Christiansen and Dale (2004) describe

it as the emergence of sets of morphological, syntactic, phonological and semantic features over time in a particular language.

- Between adult women working together
- _____
Between adult men working together
- _____
When buying something at a local tuck-shop owned by a local person
- _____
When buying something at a shop owned by a foreigner
- _____
In the classroom between teacher and student
- _____
Outside school between teacher and student
- _____
Informally between a government official and other local adults
- _____
At a public meeting attended by local adults
- _____
At a public ceremony such as a wedding or funeral
- _____
In church or other religious gathering
- _____
At a traditional ceremony _____
- What language do adults typically address young children in when giving orders or instructions? _____
- When writing letters other than in English
- _____
When telling stories or other traditional/folk acts.
- _____

11. What language would you prefer your children and/or your grandchildren to speak in? Why is it so?

12. Mention any two other places other than home where you would love to speak in your home language. Why is it so?

13. Do you find yourself using more than one language in a single conversation?

How often does this happen? What causes it in your view?

14. Why would you use the languages you selected in your responses to question 11 above?

QUESTIONNAIRE ON LANGUAGE CONTACT-language practitioners
[Mberengwa-Nqungumbane Communal Lands]

Please respond to the following to the best of your knowledge. Should you meet any difficulties you can seek explanation from me.

1. Name of School

2. Grade of school

3. Which African Languages are offered at your school?

4. Why?

5. What is the ratio of isiNdebele mother tongue speakers to Shona in your class?

6. In the examination classes what are the major problems that you face with respect to second language speakers of isiNdebele?

7. What are the common mistakes of Shona speakers when they speak or write isiNdebele? ***(If the space below is not adequate use extra papers.)***

8. What do you think causes the above?

9. What common mistakes of isiNdebele mother tongues speakers would you ascribe to the influence of Shona?

10. When you are teaching, is it common for a non-mother tongue speaker to switch to another language which is not the medium of instruction?

11. What are the common words that the speakers usually switched to?

12. In comparison to mother tongue speakers of isiNdebele how do the second language speakers perform in the isiNdebele external examinations?

13. What do you think is the cause of the above?

14. How do Shona speakers find the learning of isiNdebele in your School?

15. Do you have instances where learners use more than one language in a sentence? If yes, what languages would they usually switch to?

16. What are the causes of this speech behaviour?

Thank you for your time-ungadinwa lakusasa!

QUESTIONNAIRE ON LANGUAGE CONTACT-language practitioners
[Sterkspruit-Senqu Municipality]

Please respond to the following to the best of your knowledge. Should you meet any difficulties you can seek explanation from me.

17. Name of School

18. Type of school

19. How many pupils in the school speak :isiXhosa
isiHlubi
Sesotho
Afrikaans

20. Which African Languages are offered

21. Why?

22. What is the ratio of isiXhosa mother tongue speakers to Sesotho and isiHlubi in the class that you teach?

23. In the examination classes what are the major problems that you face with respect to second language speakers of isiXhosa?

24. What are the common mistakes of isiHlubi speakers when they speak or write isiXhosa? ***(If the space below is not adequate use extra papers.)***

25. What are the common mistakes of Sesotho speakers when they speak or write isiXhosa? ***(If the space below is not adequate use extra papers.)***

26. What do you think causes the above?

27. What common mistakes of isiXhosa mother tongues speakers would you ascribe to the influence of isiHlubi or Sesotho?

28. When you are teaching, is it common for a non-mother tongue speaker to switch to another language which is not the medium of instruction?

29. What are the common words that the speakers usually switched to?

30. In comparison to mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa how do the second language speakers perform in the isiXhosa external examinations?

31. What do you think is the cause of the above?

32. How do isiHlubi/Sesotho speakers find the learning of isiXhosa in your School?

33. Do you have instances where learners use more than one language in a sentence? If yes, what languages would they usually switch to?

34. What are the causes of this speech behaviour?

Thank you for your time-mayiz'wenethole!

- When buying something at a local spaza shop owned by a local person

- When buying something at a shop/stall/market owned by a foreigner

- In the classroom between teacher and student

- Outside school between teacher and student

- Informally between a government official and other local adults

- At a public meeting attended by local adults

- At a public ceremony such as a wedding or funeral

- In church or other religious gathering

- At a traditional ceremony _____
- What language do adults typically address young children in when giving them orders or instructions. _____
- When writing letters other than in English or Afrikaans

- When telling stories or other traditional/folk acts.

11. What language would you prefer your children and/or your grandchildren to speak in? Why is it so?

12. Mention any two other places other than home where you would love to speak in your home language. Why is it so?

13. Do you find yourself using more than one language in a single conversation?

How often does this happen? What causes it in your view?

14. Why would you use the languages you selected in your responses to question 11 above?

CORE VOCABULARY ANALYSIS

Indicate to the right of the word below what you would use in your mother language.

1. Person –
2. parent
3. builder
4. woman
5. boy
6. maker
7. white person
8. my father
9. my mother
10. my maternal uncle
11. our fathers
12. student
13. my sister
14. man
15. goat
16. axe
17. house
18. elephant
19. hippopotamus
20. famine
21. path
22. health
23. bride
24. river
25. wind
26. shade
27. fire
28. obstruction pile
29. mouth
30. tail
31. law
32. maize
33. work
34. door-way
35. villages
36. tree
37. colour
38. stone
39. voice/word
40. blood
41. ear
42. tooth

43. grand-mother
44. baby
45. country/land
46. lion
47. horse
48. crocodile
49. leopard
50. leaf
51. body
52. cannibal
53. water
54. sun
55. fat/oil
56. young girls
57. head
58. nose
59. lungs
60. eggs
61. brother
62. knee
63. today
64. eye
65. to sleep
66. time
67. power/strength
68. lies
69. saliva
70. clouds
71. hand
72. fool
73. dumb person
74. blind person
75. shoe
76. stomach
77. chest
78. breast
79. vessels/dishes
80. old woman
81. mouse
82. foot
83. field
84. sorghum
85. dog
86. marriageable girl
87. clay
88. mountain
89. grass

90. obstinacy
91. bovine
92. bull
93. ox
94. baboons
95. birds
96. sheep
97. hearts
98. song
99. feather
100. stick
101. nail
102. twig/stick
103. horn
104. rib
105. madman
106. milk
107. love
108. to grind
109. to see
110. to sit
111. speech
112. to drink
113. laziness
114. night
115. hair
116. pain
117. king
118. kingship
119. sleep
120. to marry
121. to speak
122. to open
123. to walk
124. to roast
125. to steal
126. to call
127. to ask
128. be quiet
129. to send
130. be drowsy
131. clay pot
132. be lean
133. to point
134. to rest
135. to laugh
136. food

- 137. to cook
- 138. big
- 139. small
- 140. long
- 141. short
- 142. black
- 143. white
- 144. pretty/nice
- 145. bad/ugly
- 146. red
- 147. green
- 148. heavy
- 149. wide
- 150. many