

THE FEASIBILITY OF NORTHERN SOTHO AS A LANGUAGE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN THE LIMPOPO AND GAUTENG PROVINCES

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**THE FEASIBILITY OF NORTHERN SOTHO
AS A LANGUAGE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
IN THE LIMPOPO AND GAUTENG PROVINCES**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Pinkie Phaahla, declare that '**The Feasibility of Northern Sotho as a Language of Commerce and Industry in the Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces**' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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P Phaahla

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ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this study are to investigate the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry and to determine the extent to which the environment favours the use of Northern Sotho as a language of marketing, advertising, business and acquiring entrepreneurial skills.

The investigation is characterised by a two-pronged approach to data collection: a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews. A wealth of data was produced by these means. The data from the first phase were captured and decoded in categories set out in frequency tables. The categories were reduced to thematic constructs. Data from the second phase were captured and encoded in transcripts that were later decoded and reduced to themes, categories and sub-categories.

The identified themes are consolidated as follows:

- The exclusive hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as a communication barrier to non-native speakers of these languages in commerce and industry
- Socio-economic background of respondents
- Existence of language policies for workers in commerce and industry
- Dispositions of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages towards the prospective development and use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry
- Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology for the purposes of commerce and industry.

The question here is: How does one determine feasibility? Before this issue could be addressed another important and sensitive matter had to be considered: to determine whether native speakers of Northern Sotho and the other South African languages are favourably disposed towards the prospective development and use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. A negligible percentage of respondents expressed negative sentiments in this regard (cf. outcomes of focus group interviews). A distinct majority (64,7%) of respondents who filled in questionnaires was not favourably disposed but a significant minority (35,3%) was positive. However, it should be noted that the questionnaire was not

designed to reveal explicit allegiances; hence responses in this regard are somewhat open to interpretation.

The first step towards determining the feasibility of developing and using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry was to determine the current situation in this regard. English and Afrikaans were naturally found to be dominant in commerce and industry while Northern Sotho was used among friends and colleagues in informal situations. Only 3% of the respondents to the questionnaire survey indicated that they used Northern Sotho for transactional purposes in commercial and industrial settings, while 46,8% reported using a smattering of Northern Sotho in a variety of situations.

The second step was to determine the effects that could be expected on the current hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry. Most respondents reported that a lack of proficiency in English prevented them from performing well in their jobs in commerce and industry and some reported that it had been a significant impediment to their efforts to secure employment. In most instances they had no option but to use English to interact with potential employers because it was the only language in common use in commercial and industrial settings.

The third step was to determine whether the respondents were proficient in Northern Sotho. It transpired that 68% of them had no command of the language while some reported that they were still learning it. This could be the contingent of 17,8% referred to above since 50,2% reported that they never use Northern Sotho for purposes relating to commerce and industry.

The fourth step was to look for a model of language acquisition that would suit the communication needs of anyone who wished to acquire a command of Northern Sotho for use in commerce and industry. Models have been discussed and one has been recommended.

The researcher also conducted a survey to establish the extent to which language policy documents exist in commerce and industry. The results of the questionnaire survey revealed that 42 of the 201 respondents are familiar with the language policy or language practice of the company at their place of work.

This was in contrast to all the respondents (in the focus group interviews) who seemed to be unaware of the existence of such policies at their places of work. The need to develop and extend targeted/dedicated lexicographic and terminological resources for the use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry was also identified.

OPSOMMING

Die hoofdoelstellings van hierdie studie is om die uitvoerbaarheid van die gebruik van Noord-Sotho as 'n taal van handel en nywerheid te ondersoek en om vas te stel in watter mate dié omgewing dit toelaat dat Noord-Sotho as 'n taal vir bemerking, reklame, handel en die verwerwing van entrepreneursvaardighede gebruik word.

Die ondersoek het 'n tweeledige benadering tot die insameling van data gevolg. Data is ingesamel deur middel van 'n vraelysopname en fokusgroeponderhoude. Hierdie metodes het 'n enorme hoeveelheid data opgelewer. Die data uit die eerste fase is vasgelê en in kategorieë geënkodeer wat met behulp van frekwensietabelle uiteengesit is. Hierdie kategorieë is dan tot tematiese konstruksie gereduseer. Die data uit die tweede en derde fase is vasgelê en geënkodeer in transkripsies. Dit is later deur die navorser gedekodeer en tot temas, kategorieë en sub-kategorieë gereduseer. Die temas is soos volg uitgesonder:

- Die uitsluitlike oorheersende gebruik van Engels of Afrikaans as kommunikasiehindernis vir nie-moedertaalsprekers van hierdie tale in die handel en nywerheid
- Die sosio-ekonomiese agtergrond van die respondente
- Die beskikbaarheid van taalbeleid vir werknemers in die handel en nywerheid
- Die persepsies van moedertaalsprekers van Noord-Sotho en ander tale teenoor die voorgenome ontwikkeling en gebruik van Noord-Sotho as 'n handelstaal
- Die uitvoerbaarheid van die ontwikkeling van 'n leksikografie en terminologie vir Noord-Sotho vir gebruik in die handel en nywerheid.

Die vraag is: Hoe bepaal 'n mens uitvoerbaarheid? Voordat die vraag beantwoord kon word, moes 'n ander belangrike en sensitiewe kwessie eers aangespreek word, naamlik om vas te stel of moedertaalsprekers van Noord-Sotho en die ander Suid-Afrikaanse tale 'n positiewe houding toon teenoor die

voorgenome ontwikkeling en gebruik van Noord-Sotho as 'n handels- en nywerheidstaal. 'n Klein persentasie van die respondente het 'n negatiewe houding getoon tydens die fokusgroeponderhoude. 'n Duidelike meerheid (64,7%) respondente wat vraelyste ingevul het, was nie gunstig ingestel teenoor die ontwikkeling en gebruik van Noord-Sotho, nie terwyl 'n beduidende minderheid (35,3%) 'n positiewe houding getoon het. Dit moet egter beklemtoon word dat die vraelys nie ontwerp was om eksplisiete neigings te ontbloot nie, en gevolglik is antwoorde in hierdie opsig ietwat oop vir interpretasie.

Om 'n antwoord te verskaf op die vraag of dit uitvoerbaar is om Noord-Sotho as 'n taal vir handel en nywerheid te gebruik, is daar as 'n eerste stap vasgestel wat die huidige situasie is in terme van taalgebruik in die handel en nywerheid. Die bevindinge toon dat Engels en Afrikaans dominant is. Noord-Sotho word hoofsaaklik in informele en sosiale kontekste tussen vriende en kollegas gebruik. Slegs 3% van die respondente in die vraelysopname het aangedui dat hulle Noord-Sotho as 'n taal vir handel en nywerheid gebruik, en 46,8% het aangedui dat hulle 'n bietjie Noord-Sotho in verskillende situasies gebruik.

Die tweede stap was om die uitwerking van die oorheersende gebruik van Engels of Afrikaans as handelstaal te bepaal. Die meeste respondente het erken dat 'n gebrek aan Engelse taalvaardigheid hulle verhoed om goed te presteer in hulle werkplek in die handel en nywerheid. Sommige het gesê dat dit hulle benadeel het in hulle soeke na werk. In die meeste gevalle het hulle nie keuse as om Engels teenoor hulle potensiële werkgewers te gebruik nie, aangesien dit die enigste gemmenskaplike gebruikstaal in die handel en industrewêreld is.

Die derde stap was om vas te stel of die respondente vaardig is in Noord-Sotho. Die bevindinge toon dat 68% van die respondente aangedui het dat hulle nie die taal kan praat nie, terwyl sommige aangedui het dat hulle nog besig is om dit aan te leer. Dit kan beteken dat 17,8% van die respondente waarna hierbo verwys word, dié is wat nog besig is om die taal aan te leer, aangesien 50,2% van die respondente aangedui het dat hulle Noord-Sotho hoegenaamd nie in die handel en nywerheid gebruik nie.

Die vierde stap was om 'n model te soek wat geskik sou wees vir die kommunikatiewe behoeftes van enigiemand wat Noord-Sotho sou wou aanleer om in die handel en nywerheid te gebruik. Modelle is ondersoek en 'n model is aanbeveel.

Die navorser het ook die beskikbaarheid van taalbeleide in die handel en nywerheid ondersoek. Die resultate van die navorsingsvraelyste het getoon dat 42 uit die 201 respondente bekend is met die taalbeleid of taalpraktyk in hulle werksplek. Dit was in teenstelling met die ander respondente in die fokusgroeponderhoude wat skynbaar onbewus was van sulke taalbeleide in hulle werksplek. Die behoefte om bepaalde Noord-Sotho leksikografiese en terminologiese bronne te ontwikkel en uit te brei vir gebruik in die handel en nywerheid, is ook geïdentifiseer.

CHAPTER 1

OUTLINE AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Language stands at the nexus of the individual, his/her cultural heritage and society (MacMillan, 1998:17). Sapir in MacMillan (1998:17) suggests that this interrelationship is best understood through emphasis on the symbolic impact of language on group life. Sapir argues that 'the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiarly potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language'.

MacMillan (1998:18) points out that language has profound psychological significance for the individual member of a group. Language is an ever-present badge of membership, reinforced in the subtleties of linguistic styles. One would expect its significance to increase as the boundaries between languages become more distinct. The process of using language to express group solidarity involves evolution and maintenance of both group and individual identities. Therefore, language is attended by an emotional intensity and an irreducible, unique quality that signify its status as one of the 'primordial bonds' of group identity. Language is critical in defining individual identity, culture and community membership.

A voluminous literature has emerged on various aspects of human rights with special emphasis on the epistemological grounding of human rights. Arguments concerning human rights, however, must still be couched within a framework of discourse about rights (MacMillan, 1998:18).

MacDonald (1970 in MacMillan 1998:18) suggests a good model for such discourse in asserting that the justification of human rights is 'much more like the defence of his client by a good counsel'. MacMillan (1998:18) explains that the defence of human rights involves the process of persuasion, of giving reasons why something ought to be treated as a human right. The analogy suggests that

one needs to be bound to existing laws on human rights as embodied in the Constitution or in case law. A human right is, in essence, a claim that is advanced against individuals or institutions for particular liberties, goods or services. To have a right to something is, normally, to be entitled to receive or possess or enjoy it, and to do so without having to seek prior consent. It is legitimate mainly because the claim concerns something to which the claimant is naturally entitled. Human rights are conceivable as a claim although they are not necessarily definable as such but have to be claimed and established in the political arena. In virtue of their legitimacy, rights impose certain duties on those who are bound to recognise the claims.

As noted by Feinberg (1973 in MacMillan, 1998:17) therefore, it follows that 'legal rights' are indispensably valuable possessions without which the world would suffer an immense moral impoverishment.

For MacMillan (1998:17) language rights automatically qualify as human rights in virtue of the right to fulfillment of human needs and wants such as language services, religious worship, and adequate income, on which grounds unfortunately, the door is open to a host of specious claims.

Cranston (1967 in MacMillan, 1998:17) defines a human right as:

a 'universal moral right', something which all men everywhere, at all times, ought to have, something of which no one may be deprived without a grave affront to justice; something which is owed to every human simply because he is human.

Since the new political dispensation of 1994, ten indigenous¹ languages, English spoken in South Africa and Sign Language have been rendered official in terms of the Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996). Since the democratic election of 1994, people in South Africa, have been grappling with the issue among others, of the

¹ Indigenous languages: Languages of exclusively African origin in South Africa. In this context it refers to African languages and includes Afrikaans unless specified otherwise.

financial costs of using more than one official language in commerce and industry but without giving due weight to the fact that South Africa is a multilingual country except to say that using several official languages in parallel would be contingent on practicality and expense. It now seems that after 1994 most higher education institutions, parastatals, statutory bodies and some industries, irrespective of what their language policies prescribed, actually shifted from bilingualism towards monolingualism.

Equality of language rights in South Africa is guaranteed by the fact that these rights fall under individual human rights which ensure equality for all and equal treatment for all who wish to exercise their right. Alexander (2000:10) maintains that unless the practical assertion of language rights extends to the use of the indigenous African languages in all walks of life the real empowerment of black South Africans will remain in the realm of mere rhetoric.

MarkData was commissioned by PanSALB to conduct a national survey on language use and the issues arising from the lack of provision for a multilingual situation in South Africa. The findings resulting from the survey were as follows (PanSALB, 2000):

- South Africans have a high level of commitment to their home language and language of identity. This is evident in their views on language policy, on language use in education, and their choice of language in the media, where that choice exists.
- The extent to which indigenous African languages are accommodated in the bureaucracy, civil society and in economic circles has only an approximate bearing on the degree of concern about language policy.
- A central concern is that major institutional structures and processes are unresponsive to the interest and commitment displayed by the people of South Africa towards their languages. The radio caters significantly for, and is supported by a significant indigenous African listenership while the print media, communication initiated by politicians and language policy in schools are among the more prominent examples of failure to accommodate the language preferences of millions of South Africans.

Against this backdrop, the following situation is apposite:

It has become evident that the advent of television and radio and the need to bridge the digital divide pose a significant challenge to indigenous African languages, for instance in that Northern Sotho television presenters are confronted with new concepts, scenarios and objects that they have to make sense of and are required to name, qualify and describe in Northern Sotho, first of all by translating them from English or Afrikaans into Northern Sotho. Various strategies are used for this purpose:

- Sometimes the easy route is taken by translating the text of English and/or Afrikaans commercials and economic reports literally (transliteration). This results in distortion and misinterpretation (e.g. cultural dissonance).
- Random word coinage is also beginning to take its toll. The same object is named differently on different occasions on television (major standardisation backlog).
- In some instances words are borrowed from other languages, and this leads to a paranormal phonological structure of words, with the result, for example, that an advertisement may lose its originality and its meaning.
- Conventional vocabulary is suddenly used with new meanings on television.

All this causes confusion and misunderstanding. Hence, most speakers of Northern Sotho prefer to listen to and watch English programmes.

There is a need for creative copywriting, a systematic process of standardised coinage that is controlled and managed by linguists and specialised language practitioners.

It would be ideal if television advertising could be generated directly from and in an African language instead of being translated from English (as a source language) into an African language (which is the target language).

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this study is to determine the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a communication medium for business people – either among themselves when dealing with their clients and suppliers, or between themselves and their business counterparts, colleagues and subordinates when conducting their day-to-day business. In addition, the study wants to evaluate Northern Sotho as a linguistic resource or economic value rather than a ‘nice-to-have’ in commerce and industry. Thus the main objectives of the study are:

- to investigate the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry in the Limpopo and Gauteng provinces (and in other areas where Northern Sotho is spoken);
- to explore and describe the disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and the speakers of other languages towards the prospect of using the language in commerce and industry;
- to determine the need and feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of marketing, advertising and business and as a language for acquiring entrepreneurial skills (functional elaboration);
- to investigate the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a resource for economic development;
- to determine whether and to what extent language policies exist in commerce and industry; and
- to determine whether commerce and industry can provide a setting which is conducive to construing multilingualism, cultural pluralism and diversity.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Webb (1999:110) maintains that a crucial (non-negotiable) requirement for the construction of a multilingual state administration (in this context commerce and industry) in South Africa is the extensive use of the African languages. However, various objections are generally raised to the use of these languages in government functions. Three of these are that:

- indigenous African languages do not have the status (prestige) that they require to be used for higher functions;
- they lack the necessary technical terms and registers in the administrative domain; and
- civil servants have not been trained in the use of indigenous African languages for administrative purposes.

Besides the above assertions, a complaint lodged by PanSALB is that it has become evident from its interaction with organisations involved in developing language policies that a policy of English monolingualism is generally being followed in practice. This is occurring despite preambles in policy documents advocating a commitment to multilingualism. PanSALB therefore recognises the need for policy development and has developed a set of general guidelines on language planning and policy development. These include a blueprint for a document that directs PanSALB's position on language planning and policy development. These guidelines serve as a standard reference for institutions seeking advice and information on language planning and policy development (PanSALB, [n.d.]).

Besides those mentioned above that have prompted this study, there are several other challenges:

- The first is the non-use of Northern Sotho for higher functions such as commerce and industry, since the effective use of a language depends on the appropriate development of that language.
- Secondly, Northern Sotho lacks systematic terminology development for the purposes of commerce and industry. This means that Northern Sotho is not used effectively, or sometimes not at all, as a formal language of commerce and industry.
- Thirdly, Northern Sotho is almost totally lacking in linguistic resources that its native speakers use to converse or communicate about business matters, thus rendering those without equivalent resources in English or Afrikaans

virtually mute in this key area of discourse (those who can tend to resort to codeswitching between Northern Sotho and English).

- Fourthly, challenges are posed by language policies in commerce and industry. Most of these sectors advocate the exclusive use of English for their communication and businesses. Some do not have language policies at all to regulate language use in the workplace. Hence, English and Afrikaans play a hegemonic² role at the expense of Northern Sotho and other indigenous African languages in these settings.

Therefore, in a nutshell the purpose of this study is to:

- determine whether mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho (and other languages) would have a positive attitude towards the use of their home language as a language of commerce and industry;
- determine the extent to which the environment enables the use of Northern Sotho as a language of marketing, advertising, business and acquiring entrepreneurial skills, as well as a language of commerce and industry (e.g. functional elaboration);
- investigate the need to develop *corpus* vocabularies and terminologies for commerce and industry;
- explore the prospects of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology, to establish a jargon or language register to be used in commerce and industry;
- establish whether the hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans hampers performance in commerce and industry and whether it can hinder the efforts of non-speakers of these languages to secure employment.

² Definition: 'Hegemony' refers to the position of power from which a dominant class or culture exercises political or other forms of control for which legitimacy is gained by persuading people to accept its particular worldview (Clare & Hamilton, 2003).

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question for this study is:

Is it feasible for Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry?

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design has been used to answer the research question. The investigation is characterised by a two-pronged approach to data collection: a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews. Although the research design is qualitative rather than quantitative in character, some variables have been easy to cast in quantifiable terms. The theoretical intricacies that inform this chosen research design are outlined below.

1.5.1 The qualitative-quantitative-survey continuum

Table 1.1 reflects the qualitative-quantitative continuum as set out by Krathwohl (1993:30):

Table 1.1: Survey research added to the qualitative-quantitative continuum (Krathwohl, 1993:30)

Qualitative	Quantitative	
Description	Survey research	Validation
↓	↓	↓
Case studies		Experiment
Exploration for explanation	Either or both	Validation of explanation
Typically as close to natural situation as possible	Rarely laboratory situation	Often a laboratory situation
Verbal description	Either or both	Measurement and statistics
Unstructured and spontaneous data collection	Questionnaires carefully planned	Structured and carefully planned data collection
	Interviews may be structured or not	

Qualitative research, which is positioned on the left of the qualitative-quantitative-survey continuum (as reflected in Table 1.1), provides descriptions of a case, a group, a situation or an event, in what is often called a case study. Qualitative researchers begin their observations with a target of interest but are open to whatever is of significance if it emerges and will therefore change their data collection accordingly. They work in natural situations and seek explanations that provide the best understanding of what is observed (Krathwohl, 1993:361).

Quantitative research, which is positioned on the right of the qualitative-quantitative-survey continuum (as reflected in Table 1.1), is reported as numerical data concerning whatever is measured. Because the measures must usually be constructed before the study begins, such studies normally validate one or more hypotheses that specify the variables of interest and the relationship between them (Krathwohl, 1993:30).

Some methods span the continuum and can be classified as either qualitative or quantitative (depending on the configuration). Survey research is such a method, and it introduces a middle column into the continuum (Krathwohl, 1993:30).

1.5.2 Survey research

Survey research is at a true swing point in the continuum. It can be either quantitative as when one of the big polling organisations does pre-election questionnaire studies of a political campaign; or qualitative as when a narrative interview is used. Krathwohl (1993:17) refers to the research by Hoffmann Riem (1984) who used the narrative interview of which the first part or main part consists of a story told by the narrator without interruption by the researcher. The second part consists of questions carefully phrased by the researcher in response to information already presented by the interviewee. A qualitative approach usually provides a careful rationale for the people selected for study (Krathwohl, 1993:30).

Purposive sampling is used in this instance, in order to select a specific group of respondents. The data collection techniques are applied in phases:

- In the first phase a representative sample was drawn from the targeted population. Then, using a randomising grid technique, 300 questionnaires were sent to a carefully selected group of professionals working in different industries. Telephone interviews were administered by MarkData to ensure safe return of the questionnaires. 201 of the 300 questionnaires were returned.
- In the second phase focus group interviews were conducted with another selected group (cf. paragraph 1.6.2.2)

Despite the questionnaire strategy that has been used, the study undertaken is primarily qualitative in character.

1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Patton (1990:37) defines a paradigm as a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, which includes meta-theoretical, theoretical and methodological assumptions such as those discussed below.

1.6.1 Assumptions

The study is undertaken with reference to key assumptions specified by the researcher with reference to homogeneity of variance in a quantitative approach:

- The first assumption is that it is feasible for Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry.
- The second assumption is that it is feasible for Northern Sotho to acquire the status needed to be used in higher functions.
- The third assumption is that Northern Sotho is an economic resource for the development and advancement of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages in South Africa.

- The fourth assumption is that the hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry is experienced as a communication barrier by non-speakers of English or Afrikaans.

Language plays an important role as a vehicle for communication and as a medium through which people acquire socio-economic status and empowerment. In the South African context the conception is an utopia, especially since we are living in a multilingual and multicultural society. Limpopo Province (cf. Map of South Africa: 274), which is one of the geographic locations for the variables chosen for this study, is not at all a monolingual province as generally perceived, but consists of different ethnolinguistic groups. As De Klerk (1996:9) aptly puts it:

No ethnic group is neatly defined, and language boundaries are notoriously fluid, with groups overlapping rather than dividing neatly.

In the same vein Chick (2002 in Mesthrie, 2002:263) observes that since there are no ethnic boundaries, what he terms pan-ethnic divisions is justified:

I nevertheless decided on such labelling for a number of reasons: First because it is on the basis of pan-ethnicity or race that groups in South Africa were segregated; then because it would be relatively easy for research assistants to identify such ethnicity without having to ask potentially embarrassing questions; then because researchers such as Erickson and Schultz (1981) have found evidence to show that sociolinguistic diversity patterns along pan-ethnic lines; and finally because, however regrettable, these identity labels still seem applicable to South Africans.

The population of Limpopo Province comprises of speakers of Northern Sotho, Venda, Tsonga and Ndebele, Afrikaans (mainly coloureds and whites) and English (whites and Indians). Geographically the Province embraces three former Bantu homelands: Leboa, Venda and Gazankulu as well as some parts of Kwa-Ndebele. Besides the problem of multilingualism in Limpopo Province, Northern Sotho has dialects that are a bone of contention at present. Dialect in this context

refers to a 'cognate variety' of the standard language. For example, Sepedi, which for decades was the standard language spoken in former Leboa Bantustan and has been known as a language of the Bapedi from Sekhukhuniland, is now regarded as a dialect just to appease a group of Northern Sothos who insist that they are not Sepedi-speaking. Is it perhaps the perception that the acknowledgement of close kinship with the so called 'Sepedi' would result in 'loss of face'?

1.6.2 Description of the methodology

As stated in the preceding paragraphs, this study has been undertaken in two phases. The quantitative method is used to establish the following:

- § Who beside mother-tongue speakers are speaking Northern Sotho in commerce and industry?
- § How frequently do they speak Northern Sotho, and with whom?
- § What is their proficiency level in the language?

The qualitative method is important because it provides an opportunity to solicit the opinions, feelings and attitude of participants. The methodological strategies undertaken in this study are:

- § a questionnaire survey
- § focus group interviews

1.6.2.1 First phase: questionnaire survey

MarkData was commissioned by the researcher to conduct the questionnaire survey which has been undertaken as the major and primary component of the regular syndicated survey of MarkData, called the Omnibus. It is based on a multi-stage, stratified, probability sample of 201 carefully selected respondents, using a randomising grid technique. The chosen respondents are professionals working in different industries, and some are running their own businesses. Krathwohl (1993:31) notes that:

A research is a creative act that cannot and should not be fixed into firm categories. Researchers should creatively combine elements of methods in any way that makes the best sense for the study they want to do.

This is what the researcher is trying to achieve in the present study.

1.6.2.2 Second phase: Focus group interviews

Nine focus group interviews were conducted with 60 consenting and solicited respondents. The focus groups were categorised as follows:

- Six groups made up a total of 39 Northern Sotho speaking students enrolled with the erstwhile Technikon SA (now Unisa) for BTech degrees or National Diplomas in Business, Commerce, Credit Management, Marketing, Entrepreneurial and Small Business Management as well as Office Management and Technology. The interviews were conducted on the premises of Unisa's Florida campus and at Edupark in Polokwane.
- One interview was conducted at the Auckland Park campus of the University of Johannesburg with a group of five full-time students of that institution, who are mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and are enrolled for business oriented courses. These students intend to follow careers that are consistent with their academic pursuits.
- Two interviews were conducted with eight ANC and eight APLA ex-combatants who speak a variety of African languages and were struggling to find jobs. A total of 60 people participated in the focus group interviews.

1.7 SCOPE AND PARAMETERS OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to demonstrate the significance of the research, to which end it comprises the following:

- Introduction
- Motivation
- Aims and objectives
- The problem statement
- The research question
- The qualitative-survey-quantitative continuum
- Survey research
- Paradigmatic perspective
- Assumptions
- Research methodology
- Scope and parameters of the research

Chapter 2 contains the literature survey in which the theoretical underpinnings of the study are established. The aims of the literature survey are as follows (Creswell, 1994:21):

- To share the results of other closely related studies with the reader.
- To provide a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of this study with those of other studies.
- Language planning is the main focus of this present study and concepts dealing with language planning are discussed in detail.

Chapter 3 contains the research design, the paradigm and the description of the methods used in the research. Techniques of data gathering are also explicated. Copies of the questionnaire distributed to a carefully selected group of people working in different sectors of commerce and industry have been captured.

A questionnaire consisting of 21 closed-ended items based on the literature study is discussed. The information gathered from the questionnaire is tabulated, and the data are broken down into thematic constructs. Information and data from the focus group interviews are also encoded into transcripts. The transcripts are decoded and reduced to themes, categories and sub-categories.

In Chapter 4 the information gathered from the questionnaires and the transcripts derived from focus interviews are analysed and interpreted according to the constructed themes, categories and sub-categories.

In Chapter 5, the findings from the questionnaire survey and the transcripts are discussed and compared with the literature study. Differences and similarities arising from both methods of the research design are discussed.

Chapter 6 contains the summary, conclusion, recommendations and a reflection on the research design as a whole.

1.8 SUMMARY

The aims and objectives of this study are set forth in the present chapter. The problem statement is prompted by the lack of use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The research design used to answer the research question is qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual, and a two-pronged approach is adopted to data collection.

A qualitative orientation is introduced to facilitate the study. The importance of researching the role of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry is reviewed. The salient argument is that Northern Sotho should be promoted as an economic resource in the development and advancement of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho in South Africa, and that Northern Sotho can and should be enabled to play an important role as a language of commerce and industry.

Language rights in South Africa are also discussed from the viewpoint that they are protected by the Constitution as a basic human right.

The argument advanced is that the parallel use of several official languages is quite feasible and affordable, provided that the national and regional language planning policies are well-designed and implemented.

Language planners, policy makers and those charged with the practical realities of language development and the implementation of the language policies have to devise and bring about a conducive environment in which Northern Sotho (and all the official South African languages) can grow and become streamlined, sophisticated instruments of the higher functions in commerce and industry.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study is to investigate the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The question is: 'What does feasibility mean?' According to Barnhart and Barnhart (1992:779), feasibility is the desirability and practicability of adopting a plan or system. In this context feasibility implies the degree to which something can be carried out or achieved.

A denotative meaning of 'desirable' derived from desirability is: 'worth having or wishing for something', which is an appropriate concept underpinning this study. The researcher wants to determine whether mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and speakers of the other South African languages have a strong desire to promote the use of their language in commerce and industry. 'Practicability' in this study means the extent to which the researcher can determine whether the environment in which the use of Northern Sotho is envisaged would function as an enabler.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight, distinguish and compare theories and concepts linked to the central theme of the research, namely the feasibility of using Northern Sotho in commerce and industry. This study deals mainly with the acquisition of a new register for use in commerce and industry. Language acquisition as a form of elaboration and codification falls within the domain of language planning. Thus, language planning concepts are discussed.

The sociolinguistic approach informing this research is outlined here and key concepts are defined.

Further, the theoretical intricacies of language are explored as an important component of economics, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Examples will be drawn from the theoretical investigations done in other countries and relating it to the South African situation.

Linguistic diversity is discussed in relation to 'the speech community', and the latter concept is defined. The communicative needs of the chosen group (mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and speakers of other languages) are discussed and analysed. An outline of a model designed by Munby (1978:33), which relates to the communicative needs of anyone who would want to learn Northern Sotho for use in commerce and industry, is discussed.

The attitudes of Northern Sotho speakers and of speakers of other languages towards Northern Sotho will be examined, determined and discussed.

2.2 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In view of the unprecedented globalisation wave sweeping the world today, the sophistication of local black languages should be significantly stepped up from their normal range of mundane discourse to an economic discourse so that mother-tongue speakers can take charge of their languages and compete locally in terms of being generally innovative and competent in the domain of business, assuming that a new-found confidence will expand their language use and make knowledge readily accessible for trade and business purposes. Knowledge production is inaccessible to most indigenous people in South Africa but accessible to a few who are proficient in English. The use of indigenous languages will enable these ordinary people to grasp economic concepts and demonstrate what they have mastered intellectually in a language that they are familiar with.

This study will be couched in a sociolinguistics framework to put it in perspective. Relevant concepts that form part of the reference framework of this study is mapped out, discussed, and analysed.

The key concepts are:

- The definition of sociolinguistics and its orientation
 - § the 'speech community'
 - § purposive domain
 - § sociocultural orientation and competence
 - § language and context
- Language Planning: An Overview
 - § status planning
 - § corpus planning
 - § acquisition planning
- Phases in Language Planning
 - § fact-finding phase
 - § planning phase
 - § implementation phase
 - § evaluation phase
- Language Planning in South Africa
 - § development of Northern Sotho
 - § integrating Northern Sotho in the workplace
 - § language acquisition as treated in this study
 - § designing a model: parameters and process
- Language Attitudes: and Research Perspective
 - § past investigations into language attitudes
- Orientation of Language Planning
 - § current language situation in South Africa
- The Economics of Languages
 - § an analytical framework
 - § language as an economic resource
 - § typology of language functions in the industrial setting
 - § language and economic development
- Corpus development: economics and commercial terminologies
 - § lexical modernisation
 - § creation of registers for special purposes

2.2.1 The sociolinguistic orientation

Some researchers hold that no two speakers in any conversation in any language use exactly the same code to communicate their thoughts, regardless of the frequency of social contact between them. This study is not concerned with varieties of language use, nor with language contact, but with the economic concepts that a particular group of people intend to transmit in a particular language and setting.

Schiffrin (1994:134) provides an interesting characterisation of language:

Language and context co-constitute one another: language contextualises and is contextualised, such that language does not just function "in" context, language also forms and provides context. One particular context is social interaction. Language, culture, and society are grounded in interaction: they stand in a reflexive relationship with the self, the other, and the self-other relationship, and it is out of these mutually constitutive relationships that discourse is created.

Schiffrin further notes that language and context are obviously coextensive in the sense that form and content are one. For example, social interaction proceeds from and subsists in language, and discourse proceeds from interaction or interarticulation between the related elements, namely language, culture and society.

This sets the parameters for the sociolinguistic contextualisation of this study.

2.2.2 What is sociolinguistics?

Wolfson (1989:1) describes sociolinguistics as the study of the interplay of linguistic, social and cultural factors in human communication. Wolfson (1989:15) equates sociolinguistics with pragmatics and contends that pragmatics is similar to sociolinguistics in the sense that sociolinguistics is the study of 'language in use' — a concept that is central to this study, with specific reference to the use of

Northern Sotho by mother-tongue speakers and speakers of other languages in occupational settings in commerce and industry.

Trudgill (1983:33) perceives sociolinguistics as the linguistics of language as a social and cultural phenomenon. Similarly, Hudson (1980:4) defines sociolinguistics as 'the study of language in relation to society', implying that sociolinguistics is part of the study of language as a social concern in a particular community. Gumperz (1972:15) takes a different view of sociolinguistics in that he regards it as a concept that is diametrically opposed to social theory.

However, in this study the focus on language use, as reflected in all the quoted definitions of sociolinguistics, extends beyond the limit of social interaction to language use in higher functions and settings, namely in commerce and industry. In such settings it will encourage communication across diverse cultures, for example in speech settings and in work-related interaction.

This brings us to another sociological concept that is important to this study, namely the 'speech community' that uses a particular language.

2.2.3 The 'speech community' in the workplace

A 'speech community' is a group of people who use a particular language and certain rules of social conduct that are demonstrated and formalised into distinct parlances. The concept of a 'speech community' will be explored and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Numerous definitions have been proposed, but the differences between them are negligible. Hymes (1974:51) differentiates the concept with reference to characteristics that he considers definitive for sociolinguistics:

- ways of speaking
- fluency of speakers
- speech situation
- speech event

- speech act
- components of speech
- rules of speaking and
- functions of speech

Montgomery (1986:134) gives the same definition but includes reference to the 'speech community' who use the language conceived and adds the following characteristics to the list provided by Hymes (1974:51):

- reactions and attitudes towards language, and
- social bonds (as discussed in this study).

Montgomery (1986:134) states that in 'speech communities' members of the group tend to be linked by some form of social organisation, and that it is difficult to find cases where all the above conditions are fulfilled simultaneously. He notes that researchers consider British people in Britain to be a British speech community, but that a surprising diversity of linguistic practice and attitudes to language, including totally different languages ranging from Creole forms and regional variants of English to situational varieties, was found in the study. He goes on to say that it is difficult to disentangle linguistic practice from the wider social processes in which they are embedded and warns that the term 'speech community' is therefore something of a misnomer in the particular context.

Unlike Montgomery (1986:134), Saville-Troike (1996:357) observes that it is very unlikely that any particular member of a complex community would be able to produce the full range of the community's repertoire of language utterances. Different subgroups within the community may understand and use different subsets of its available codes, with the result that individuals may belong to several discrete or overlapping speech communities at the same time, just as they may participate in a variety of social settings. The set of social and communicative rules used by individuals is part of the strategy of communication.

On the other hand Labov (1972:248, in Bonvillain, 1997:3) contends that a 'speech community' cannot be regarded as a group of speakers who all use the same forms; instead Labov defines a 'speech community' in terms of shared values and not in terms of shared verbal behaviour. According to this view Labov views a 'speech community' as people belonging to the same 'speech community' or target language that use a single stylistic variety of that language to suit all communication contexts and communicative intentions. This runs counter to the intention of the present study since the researcher wishes to propagate a particular style of language use and for a specific purpose. Speech communities employ speech varieties that form part of a linguistic system that derives from a shared set of social norms. For example, Northern Sotho will act as the binding force of the related speech community. The group will share the language and the rules for its use as part of its repertoire.

Again, the researcher holds the same view as Fasold (1990:40) that a speech community is simply 'the group to which a particular ethnographic description applies'. What all these definitions have in common is that a 'speech community' must share at least the rules for speaking. Among all the linguists mentioned so far only Saville-Troike (1996:359) mentions overlapping speech communities. Working environments have other forms of speech communities. In this context a 'speech community' is the target group of the study and is an open-ended construct.

The above definitions of a 'speech community' are an approximation of the researcher's perspective which is not cast in stone but merely a convenient designation for a group of the assumed mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and other native speakers of other languages who use the language (Northern Sotho in this context) solely for interaction and functions in commerce and industry. Some linguists refer to such groups of people as 'speech networks' (Bonvillain, 1997:2).

In this study, the Northern Sotho group is envisaged to consist of more than a speech network because they share the same vision in business enterprises.

They share ideas, plans, problems, solutions to problems, strategies, and they are coworkers in the same setting, namely in commerce and industry.

2.2.4 Purposive domain

According to Munby (1978:20) this term, which is central to this study, refers to the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is required as an *a priori* determinant according to the Communication Needs for a Purpose (CNP).

Fishman (1971 in Munby, 1978:20) uses the term 'domain' for a macro-level sociolinguistic category which is not exactly the same as the referent of 'purposive domain', namely a higher-order sociocultural category from which particular activities derive.

The theory of purposive domain relates to this study. As indicated, the researcher seeks to investigate a specific group of people who use Northern Sotho for a specific purpose, for example occupations in commerce and industry. This might be a target language that relates to their occupation. What the group has in common is that they share a working space or their occupations are located in commerce and industry. They may live in the same province, and they generally speak a variety of languages, including Northern Sotho.

2.2.5 Sociocultural orientation and competence

A sociocultural orientation focuses on the social functions of language and is exemplified by a learner-centred approach. For the purpose of this study the researcher is only interested in the communicative modalities of speech utterances and the relationship between the speaker and his/her interlocutors, as well as written correspondence such as internal memorandums, e-mail messages and newsletters couched in Northern Sotho at the workplace.

The theoretical framework for this study subsumes a sociocultural orientation within the socio-economic orientation. Unlike other studies, this study does not

focus on the compilation of syllabuses or on learners' competencies, but on adults who interact for a specific purpose in a common setting, namely commerce and industry, as employers, employees, business partners and clients who communicate in Northern Sotho at a relatively specialized level of linguistic proficiency.

The contextual or environmental factors that prevail in commerce and industry may act as barriers to effective communication for people who do not speak English or Afrikaans. These people may not be familiar with all the concepts used in commerce and industry but may not experience the same problems when these concepts are conveyed to them in their mother tongue. But a certain amount of functional knowledge of the relevant domain in commerce and industry is needed to interact with others in their everyday repertoire.

Hymes (1972 in Munby, 1978:35) observes that any given member of a community has both knowledge of and a capability in every aspect of the communicative systems available to him/her. He explains that communication systems are divisible into four components or subsystems: the speaker-hearer's grammatical (formally possible), psycholinguistic (implementationally feasible), sociocultural (contextually appropriate) and *de facto* (actually occurring) knowledge and command or active repertoire.

This study will hinge on the use of only one of Hymes's categories, namely *performance* which he defines in concert with Munby (1978:35) as actual use and actual events, with certain reminders and provisos. Here, the performance of a person is not identical with a behavioural record or with the imperfect or partial realisation of individual competence. It takes into account the interaction between personal competence, others' competence and the cybernetic and emergent properties of events themselves. The goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to show how the systematically possible, the feasible and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actual cultural behaviour.

However, Saville-Troike (1996:357) holds that a speaker's communicative competence includes the ability to identify the alternatives and the rules for appropriate choice from among the alternatives.

2.2.6 Language and context

Like other forms of social activity, language needs to be appropriate to the speaker using it. According to Trudgill (1983:101) linguistic varieties used in different situations and for different purposes by a particular community of speakers can be called that linguistic community's 'verbal repertoire', a concept, that is directly relevant to the object of this study which is to investigate the feasibility for a particular speech community of using a particular register in commerce and industry.

Munby (1978:23) speaks of 'contextual appropriacy'. Knowledge of the target language, in the sense of knowing to what extent something in that language is systematically possible, may not be sufficient for effective communication. In the argument about the 'variety of language' Munby (1978:23) postulates that 'diplomatic English' is not a variety of English, but the English required by diplomats for specific diplomatic purposes. However, Trudgill (1983:101) perceives a register as a particular kind of language that is produced by people in a particular social setting in which the language is used regardless of occupation, profession or topic. Registers are characterised *inter alia* by vocabulary difference, either by the use of particular words or by the use of words in a particular sense.

In this study 'contextual appropriacy' refers to knowledge of the target language for a specific purpose. This would be knowledge of Northern Sotho for use in higher functions in commerce and industry. To be more specific, it would be Northern Sotho for business.

Language planning concepts are discussed to put this study in perspective.

2.3 LANGUAGE PLANNING: AN OVERVIEW

As noted by Kaplan et al. (2000:136) language policy and planning emerged in the 1950s as a serious discipline or science that was perceived as having the capacity to solve a wide variety of social and economic problems. The Eurocentric views of national linguistic models did not take account of problems faced by the newly emergent situations of the developing nations in the world. These models were based on the following premises:

- § The 'one nation one language' myth would provide a sufficient unitary foundation for the newly emergent polities.
- § The assimilationist principles in force in Eurocentric polities during the previous century would apply equally to these emergent polities.
- § The notion of a 'national language' would be pivotal to defining a language and declaring it a legal or *de jure*³ entity and it would suffice for and be amply accommodated by linguistically heterogeneous populations.
- § A linguistically accurate description of the 'chosen' language would facilitate the solution of social, economic, and political problems.
- § A language would be defined as a self-contained entity that proceeds from and serves human beings who use the language without specific reference to any of the other languages and linguistic resources present in its proximity.
- § The identity of a language would be clearly distinct from that of geographic proximity; hence it would be a defining feature of a specific geopolitical entity.

It has been found in practice that these intellectually defined assumptions are highly unrealistic and by no means consistent with the developmental needs of particular communities. Some newly emergent polities found that they had to designate, *de jure*, a whole range of languages as 'national' or 'official'. Some found that instead of solving social and political problems the designation created whole ranges of new ones (e.g. how to 'modernise' the chosen language to

³ *de jure*: in law, judged according to the law

connect with global reality – which is also a thorny issue in the South African situation). Some countries adopted languages of wider communication (e.g. English, French, Portuguese), while others chose an indigenous language (e.g. Bahasa in Indonesia/ Malaysia, Filipino, and Swahili) or – in the case of multiple language choices – some combination of the two alternatives (e.g. India and South Africa).

Some of the language planning paradigms from which the above issues emerged tends to hinge on a perception of language as a tool and planning as a rational process, with an objectively best solution for perfecting the tool. Kaplan et al. (2000:137) view language planning as a contemporary, inherently complex process with many tangible and intangible factors entering into consideration in the process and ideological underpinnings of the planning. Haugen (1968:673) the putative originator of the concept defines it as: '...an activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community'.

Many linguists regard Haugen's definition as restrictive since it casts the process of language planning and policy in the mould of a process that is confined to 'corpus planning'. In other words, language planning is restricted to standardisation, which is only one of its components. This position only obtains in rare instances where a speech community has one national language. This kind of planning is consistent with the ideals of normative linguists who lead language planners to the realm of the past where egalitarian relativism prevails. In contrast to Haugen's view, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 61) list the following elements as the primary goals in the traditional language planning processes:

- purity
- viability
- standardising
- overarching coverage
- modernity

Kaplan and Baldauf's view is echoed by Mühlhäusler (2000:306) who circumvents or skirts what he calls a conventional approach to language planning by describing what ecological language planning is and how its aims are centred on diversity rather than standardisation. He observes that the process of language planning requires community involvement rather than specialist management. In this case language planning is seen as an integral part of a large range of natural and cultural ecological factors. It is focused on the question of maintaining a maximum diversity of languages by seeking to identify ecological factors that sustain linguistic diversity. Most linguists seem to shun this kind of language planning, which is focused on unexceptional elements, such as problem-solving.

As mentioned by Kaplan et al. (2000:136), language planning that begins with the identification of a problem, and with a particular aim of identifying concrete areas of society where planned use of language resources is required is naturally centred on problem-solving (although in many third-world countries the method has not been used successfully). The problem-solving strategies involved subsist in best practices or what Rubin and Jernudd (1971b:xvi in Cooper 1989:30) term the optimal, most efficient, most valuable means of solving a problem (e.g. language choice – the need to decide which language or variety will be used for sectors such as polity, medium of instruction, mass communication and legislature). The main object of this kind of language planning is framed in terms of solving language and communication problems rather than attempting to influence language behaviour of a particular community (Cooper 1989:34).

Incongruent to Haugen's definition of language planning, Cooper's (1989:45) formulation is more inclusive and aimed at a deliberate effort to influence people's behaviour with respect to acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their codes. Cooper's definition differs from others expressed by Fishman (1983 and Rubin and Jernudd 1977 in Cooper 1989:45) in that it questions the rationale behind the concepts of 'evolution and modernisation' and the monopoly of the state to do language planning because he regards it as a prescriptive, top-down process which should be participatory. All stakeholders (i.e. the planners and all affected by the planning) according to him should be involved, and not only a

select few, as is the case in South Africa. Cooper believes that language planning is grounded in the understanding of a plan based on a multilingual rather than a monolingual approach, and that its object should be to influence or change the language behaviour of either an entire speech community or a sub-group within that community, to which end complex social change may be required. The reference by Rubin and Jernudd (1971b:xvi in Cooper 1989:30) to language planning as a deliberate language change; that is, changes in the systems of the language code or speaking rules, proceeds from the view that language planning amounts to status planning, a concept that will be discussed later in this chapter (cf. Karam 1974:105, Weistein 1980:55 and Das Gupta 1973:157 in Cooper 1989:30 who refer to language planning as changes in language functions, language use or language resources). The concept of language planning implies a large and relatively undifferentiated target speech community and three components:

- § status planning
- § corpus planning
- § acquisition planning

2.3.1 Status planning

Status planning proceeds by way of government decisions regarding language policy and implementation, including which language(s) will be used for official purposes and education. According to Kloss (1969 in Cooper 1989:32) the object of status planning is for a national government to first recognise the importance or position of one language in relation to others, and secondly, to allocate that language to specified functions (i.e. functional domains). Essentially, status planning refers to deliberate efforts to allocate the functions of languages and literacies within a speech community. It is concerned with status choices, making a particular language or variety an 'official language', 'national language' etc. In most cases it means elevating a language or dialect to a prestige variety, which may be at the expense of the competing dialects.

The process involves improving the role a language plays in the community according to its official status within that community. This is the process that took place in 1996 when the eleven languages spoken in South Africa, including sign language, were accorded official status as mentioned in Chapter 1. Before 1996 English and Afrikaans were the only two official languages and recognition of the indigenous African languages of South Africa, beyond their vernacular⁴ status had not been envisaged even though they were widely taught and used as media of instruction in primary schools.

Status planning is part and parcel of creating a new writing system since a writing system can only be developed after a suitable dialect is chosen as the standard. Decision making in status planning in South Africa involves negotiations, compromises, trade-offs and bargaining, in other words the entire usual political process that normally takes place whereby political authorities arrive at the final resolution.

A component of status planning is to ensure that a language is used in meetings and gatherings, and most importantly, that the people involved in the planning consider ways to integrate the language into government services that are in indirect contact with community members. This could include the languages on informational pamphlets, letters and forms, a practice that has not picked up momentum in South Africa. Unfortunately, implementation of these positive government policies and strategies in South Africa seems to be a distant and fading prospect.

A further policy initiative that can be entertained in this regard is that of using the relevant language in higher education, in government, and in the media. The internet and community radio stations that broadcast in indigenous languages can be a useful means of achieving such a policy initiative. The idea of using community radio initiatives has already taken off in South Africa and has been running smoothly for some time now. Lack of research concerning its effectiveness is problem.

⁴ Language spoken by common populace who are not necessarily literate. In this context it means a non-official language.

Finally a policy initiative can be adopted to promote the teaching of a language in both public and private schools and to implement immersion by aggressively implementing multilingual education in South Africa, which is the declared intention of the current Minister of Education. The second component of language planning is 'corpus planning'.

2.3.2 Corpus planning

Corpus planning takes place in a socio-political context. It is not enough to have only linguists or language specialists as planners since whatever language development they propose (from spelling rules to lexical expansion) has to pass the acid test of implementation and acceptance by the target group. This type of planning is difficult and often (according to Fishman 1974:117) conducted within a system of changing and divided loyalties, convictions, interests, values and outlooks. That is, corpus planners will always have to contend with the issues of modernity versus traditionalism (or authenticity versus indigenisation). Corpus planning includes the process of standardisation, (i.e. codification – developing a written system for a language) and elaboration. Mühlhäusler (2000:306) questions the validity of this procedure, observing that traditional corpus planning focuses on norms for single-language systems while ecological language planning questions the validity of casting different ways of speaking in the mould of a single language and therefore, the need for standardisation. It also makes no distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic categories. This study propagates the use of Northern Sotho for higher functions and that hinges on the careful control and management of the process of corpus planning.

Another component of corpus planning is elaboration, which is the creation of new terms in order to meet the scientific, educational and technical demands on a language. Compiling dictionaries – also called lexicography, is one method of developing and standardising languages in South Africa, and this activity falls within the mandate of PanSALB, which has identified and established bodies or committees to deal with the process.

This process of language planning consists of planned changes in the nature of the language itself, which might include:

- § creating and standardising vocabularies; and where necessary,
- § creating a writing system for the language if necessary (not required for Northern Sotho).

Note that not only linguistic, but also cultural, political and economic factors should be considered in corpus planning.

2.3.3 Acquisition planning

This type of planning is aimed at increasing the number of speakers of a language, writers, readers and/or listeners. The point here is that acquisition planning can be designed to make the language concerned easily accessible to non-speakers, which is critical for this study, as are the overt and covert goals of the planning and the methods employed to expand the vocabulary and establish the styles and usage pattern of languages. The pursuit of these goals is intended to enhance communication between various language groups.

Cooper (1989:159) distinguishes the following three types of acquisition planning derived from the general/overall language planning goals and the methods employed to attain them:

- § Acquisition as a second or third language
- § Reacquisition of a language by raising it from the status of vernacular to that of official language
- § Language maintenance as an effort to halt the decline and disappearance of a language.

The first two of the above-mentioned types of acquisition of a second or third language and reacquisition of a vernacularised language are important issues for this study which concerns the introduction and development of new registers in

Northern Sotho for specific purposes (NSSP, cf. par. 2.4.3) in commerce and industry.

Immersion of an additive multilingualism (meaning that more than three languages can coexist, with a separation of language functions) is an important aspect of this study, together with the discussion below of Munby's CPN model which is important for the social acquisition and reacquisition of language (cf. par. 2.4.3).

2.3.4 Phases in language planning

The first part of the planning cycle is focused on constellations of issues that can be synthesised into a language plan (Kaplan et al. 2000:137). As noted by Bamgbose (1989:24), decision making is an essential aspect of language planning, which affects three types of issues: policy and implementation, higher and lower-level, rational and arbitrary. But before decisions can be made the first phase has to concentrate on the question: 'Who does what for whom, and why, in language planning?'

Bamgbose (1989:31) presents a model comprising what he calls 'four directions in language planning', namely fact finding, policy formulation, evaluation and implementation. Haugen (1983 in Mutasa 2003:31) differentiates four phases, namely selection, codification, elaboration and implementation (which subsumes evaluation). Fishman (1979 in Mutasa 2003:31) differentiates the same phases but separates evaluation from implementation as a fifth phase. The important issue at play here is that language planning initiatives should involve setting goals, objectives and strategies, implementing goals, and evaluating the goals as well as a process to assess whether the goals have been achieved by monitoring progress, success stories, and non-performance with the aid of appropriate tools and instruments (e.g. scorecards or checklists).

2.3.4.1 Fact-finding phase

In the first phase of language planning a distinction must be made between overt and covert (ostensible and actual) goals specifically formed to solve problems (Bamgbose 1989:28; Haugen 1966:52 in Cooper 1989:34). The preplanning phase is important for gathering information that will impact on the plan, which is why it includes a feasibility study that can take the form of language audits or surveys to determine the actual use of local languages. Data collection includes attitudinal, demographic and situational statistics that will inform a fair and just language plan.

2.3.4.2 The planning phase in language planning

This is termed the policy formulation phase, which involves setting goals, objectives and strategies to change the way a language is used in the community by government or a body authorised by government. What it means is that language planning initiatives and processes may be carried out by a variety of government departments and agencies, academics, committees, associations and individuals. This is basically what is happening with regard to language planning in South Africa.

Kaplan et al. (2000:136) cautions that planning has to widen its field of enquiry, moving beyond emerging nations as the key sites in language planning, and recognising that language problems and issues apply not only to developing nations, but equally to the issues implicit in modernising languages and polities. Hence language planning activities should move from a macro-level (national and supra-national) to a micro- level (local), in multinational corporations and among varieties of service providers, and in even smaller contexts.

2.3.4.3 Implementation phase

Whereas language policy articulates what is to be done, language planning refers to the actual process of achieving language planning aims. This could involve the following: ensuring that the chosen language is used for the functions assigned to it by allocating the necessary resources for the promotion of languages, and by providing capacity to facilitate the implementation of the functions.

The spheres within which policy decisions are implemented could be the educational system, legal spheres such as courts of law, parliamentary proceedings and legal documentation (cf. par. 3.2.1), news media (newspapers etc.), the economic sphere, the health sector and public places.

However, the success of the implementation process depends on the target group. If they refuse to learn the designated official language or the new prescribed spelling rules according to plan, then that part of policy will remain a decision on paper. Hence it is important that language planners gain the unqualified support of the target group in order to ensure successful implementation of language policies.

Critical issues for language planning in South Africa include the following: There is no consumer information with regard to marketing law, nor are there systematic guidelines for private companies concerning the use of official languages.

2.3.4.4 The evaluation phase

This last phase in language planning, takes place when policy makers determine how well their policy has been implemented by taking stock of the impact of putting their policy decision into practice. At this stage policy makers determine whether the plan is coming to fruition as intended. The key to gauging the success of the plan is to determine the attitudinal response of the target population.

2.3.5 Language planning in South Africa

Language planning in South Africa (cf. Ruiz 1984:10) proceeds from the premise that a language is a resource and policy statements are used to preserve, manage and develop languages through cooperative efforts of political, educational, economic and linguistic authorities. South Africa has now adopted a new language policy of official multilingualism (cf. Chapter 1). The South African National Language Policy is regarded as the most advanced language policy in the world. The indigenous African languages have been rehabilitated from their vernacular to being official status, mainly to redress issues that were neglected in the past such as language equity, language as a resource, literacy, language as a medium of instruction, language in the public service, heritage languages, sign language and language development. The policy stance is based on persuasion, encouragement and incentives rather than coercion in the highly sensitive area of language practices and language usage.

The Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) was established by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to advise the Minister on language matters through the agency of the LANGTAG Committee (est. Dec, '95). In South Africa, for example, multilingualism and the entrenchment of eleven official languages are seen as irreducible conditions for political participation and cultural pluralism. Thus, in practice the indigenous African languages as 'official' languages are effectively official in name only (i.e. by official declaration) because they are actually not being used for higher functions (e.g. state administration, commerce and industry). An official language is normally expected to serve as a medium of communication and medium of instruction across language boundaries within a state, and must live up to its official status, to which end it must receive appropriate support from government. The indigenous African languages, in South Africa are not defined as languages that the government uses as a medium for its day-to-day activities or for national symbolic purposes as expected of official languages. The South African situation is a paradigm shift in language planning practice and theory since it does not follow the norm.

Before 1994 language planning issues were a bone of contention in South Africa. In view of the catastrophic events of June 16, 1976, South African language planning must be distinctly and demonstrably progressive, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people of South Africa. This is why all eleven main languages spoken in South Africa were accorded official status. Unfortunately the following problems emerged in the process:

- § how to adjust the educational system to deal with the newly declared linguistic reality;
- § how to create a corpus of material in the newly declared 'official' languages for their elaboration;
- § how to adapt, develop and use some of these languages in the domains of science and technology and for wider communication (in this study for commerce and industry).

Achievement of the targets that the Language Policy document sets for the government is subject to periodic audits (e.g. government publications to be issued in the language/s of the target audience), and by the year 2005 any of the eleven official languages will be used as required in all legislative activities, including Hansard publications, as a matter of right, provided that in the case of provincial legislatures regional circumstances will determine the language/s to be used. According to Reagan (2004:5) the Language Policy document is one of several policy documents that were developed to counter the effect of predominant use of English. Unfortunately, the envisaged targets have yet to be realised.

A major concern in South Africa is the proliferation of random coinages discussed in Chapter 1. The official status given to indigenous African languages was no doubt well-intentioned, but no appreciable effort has been made to ensure that these languages take their rightful place as official languages. The decision was not followed by active cultivation of these languages, to which end a fully inclusive mechanism and systematic process would be required to fast-track and facilitate their development. It seems that the hold-up is blamed on a lack of sound language planning theory (cf. Edwards 1985:89), but the problem is more

likely to be a lack of resolve to implement the planning. In South Africa the emphasis of language planning is on the 'policy' rather than the 'cultivation' approach. As noted by Neustupný (1970) in Wright (2004:183), a 'policy' approach is concerned with larger, and more general matters such as national and regional languages, while the 'cultivation approach' addresses issues such as lexical development, appropriateness of linguistic registers for specialised functions, language education (i.e. teaching/acquisition) issues, identification and easing of constraints on the development of language competence, and so on. Wright (2004:183) reports that cultivation planning is typical of modern industrial societies while Lo Bianco (2005:109) notes that Dante used a combination of 'policy' and 'cultivation' approaches which profoundly influenced evolutionary language changes in fourteenth-century Italy. However, urbanisation, progressive aggregation of populations into larger groupings with distinct identities, and the globalisation of economies have led to a decline in the vitality of many languages and to pluralisation within and across communication systems. Reduced language vitality tended to undermine any sense of national identity. The only advantage is that Dante engaged in the language planning of esteem and eloquence (Joseph 1987 in Lo Bianco, 2005:109) whereby he recognised 'eloquence' as a capital that symbolises transfers into a discourse of social authority. This is one of the moves that South African language planners can consider in their endeavour.

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN SOTHO

Language planning for Northern Sotho has to undergo a reversed process of the language shift from what Fishman (1991:xii in Cooper and Spolsky 1991:30) refers to as level (1) usage, which is informal intergenerational usage at home, in family and immediate neighbourhood context, to level (2) usage in domains such as the outside of ethnolinguistic influences, as languages of education, the workplace, the mass media and the language of governmental services. Fishman points out very poignantly that without sufficiently safeguarding level (1), trying to control level (2) would be equivalent to constantly blowing air into a punctured tyre.

Haugen (1997:348) advises that the way forward for 'underdeveloped' languages (such as Northern Sotho and other indigenous African languages of South Africa) to become adequate instruments for a modern nation is to overcome problems of codification and elaboration. 'Codification' is defined as minimal variation in form and 'elaboration' as maximal variation in function (Haugen, 1997:350). A fully developed language in context with its social group is complex and inclusive, as are its functional domains. It must answer to the needs of a variety of communities, classes, occupations and interest groups. It must meet the basic test of adequacy and possess devices such as making new words from its own resources or borrowing from other languages. Writing, which enables virtually unlimited storage and distribution of vocabulary, is the technological device enabling a standard modern language to meet the needs of every speciality devised by its users. There are no limits to the elaboration of a language unless man intervenes in the process. Haugen (1997:350) lists four aspects of the language development process, namely:

- (1) selection of norm
- (2) codification of form
- (3) elaboration of function
- (4) acceptance by the community

These are crucial features or stages of language development which are prominent in the present study. The following initiatives are indicated if the language functions of Northern Sotho are to be expanded for use in wider domains in the workplace

2.4.1 Integrating Northern Sotho in the workplace

The use of Northern Sotho can be encouraged by beginning on a small scale with community business and other workplaces that are conducive to the development of the language. This process will involve literacy training for workers so that they can understand the language in context, translating documents and creating opportunities for people to use Northern Sotho and undergo a process adapted from Munby's model (1978:20; cf. Figure 2.1 in this

chapter). Perhaps Northern Sotho should be dedicated for use for the first 10 to 15 minutes at the beginning of the staff meetings. Employers can assist with language classes for employees who want to increase their ability to speak and/or write Northern Sotho, and if translation is required. Someone in organization should monitor and periodically review the progress that has been made. A sample chart with all the details should be drawn.

2.4.2 Language acquisition in the context of this study

Most provinces in South Africa are populated by speakers of at least three official languages, with the result that language acquisition is integral to language planning with a view to enabling everybody to gain a sufficient command of the three languages that are current in the relevant province.

Acquisition planning can be designed to make the language concerned easily accessible to non-speakers, which is critical for this study and for those who can speak the language as L₁ and L₂. What is important for this type of planning is the formulation of goals (overt and covert) and the methods employed to expand the vocabulary and correct styles and patterns of language usage. Goals should be formulated that are conducive to enhance communication between various language groups. The need to explore the communicative needs of the recipient speech community will be discussed later. The object of the study, as indicated, is to determine whether it is feasible to develop Northern Sotho so that it can be used for higher functions in commerce and industry.

2.4.3 Designing a model: parameters and process

Since a project of this nature has never been undertaken for Northern Sotho before, a model is clearly needed that will take account of all potentially significant variables, and the identified variables or criteria must be applied systematically to achieve an appropriate specification. The purpose of the model devised by Munby (1978:2), and adapted for this purpose, is to enable the acquisition of an appropriate Northern Sotho register for use in commerce and industry.

Munby (1978:3) recognises the social function of language and in this regard refers in particular to a performer-centred approach, a 'performer' being a member of the group in question who is interested in knowing, recognising and acknowledging a language (i.e. Northern Sotho) and whose economic activities are conducted entirely in that language, in other words he/she uses Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

In addressing the question: 'developing a language for whom and for what purpose?' this study has first to investigate the communication requirements of speakers of Northern Sotho for commerce and industry, to which end the empirical method is used that has been chosen for this study.

Secondly, attainment of the stated objectives of the study and the communication objectives of the indicated speech community must be ascertained and discussed. In order to conceptualise the stated objectives, the researcher, will simply espouse and utilise the model devised by Munby (1978:20) as shown in Figure 2.1.

While this model is not entirely conducive to the object of the study, it does cover most of the relevant parameters, such as the communication needs of the respondents, the prospective operating environment of the language and interaction between the speakers and their interlocutors as well as the 'purposive domain'. In this study 'target level of command' is referred to as 'linguistic proficiency in Northern Sotho'. The model uses 'ESP' which will be replaced by 'Northern Sotho for a specific purpose', which will be referred to as 'NSSP'. For the purpose of this study 'dialect' will be excluded from the discussion.

The theoretical framework under discussion displays specification of communication requirements or needs prior to the selection of speech functions or communication acts. The 'Northern Sotho for specific purposes' model adapted here will be applied to deal with specific respondents for whom Northern Sotho is their home language (L1) or their second (L2) or third (L3) language. Categories of communication needs become dependent variables in relation to the communication objectives (Munby 1978:20).

Communication needs according to Munby's model (1978:20) are categorised according to communication objectives which cascade down to communicative skills, linguistic and non-verbal knowledge, and contextual knowledge (cf. figure 2.1). As indicated above, suitable L1, L2 and L3 respondents will be referred to in this study. The discussion is illustrated in Figure 2.1 as a parameter map:

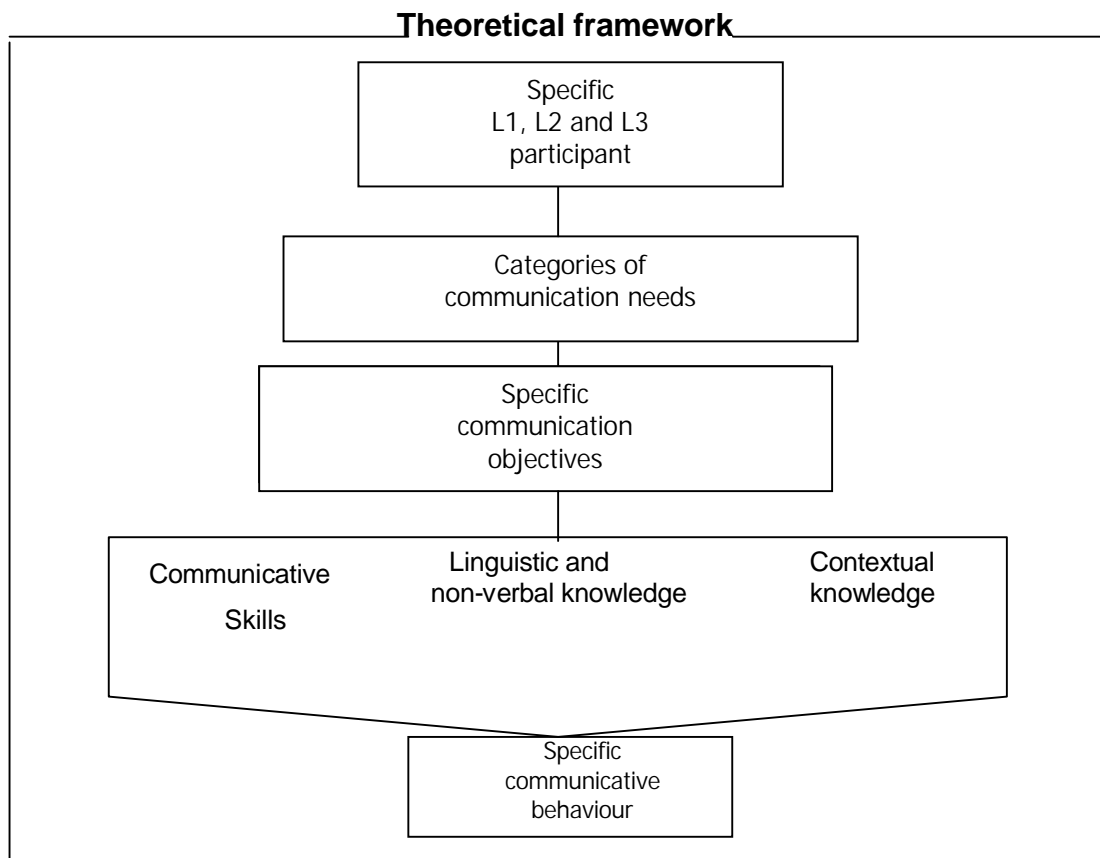


Figure 2.1: Parameter map (Adapted from Munby, 1978:20)

The first constituent of the theoretical framework, intended for the purpose of this study, will extend beyond sociocultural orientation to include the socio-economic orientation as indicated in the following pages.

The model for communicative needs designed by Munby (1978:33) is called the Communicative Needs Processor (CPN). When using the CPN model, one has to take into account the variables that affect communication needs by organising the variables as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other.

The parameters for the communication needs that Munby is referring to in this model have been established in the empirical data of this study. To clarify the framework and the premise from which this study operates, the researcher will draw on Munby's (1978:33) model which explains the processes and parameters involved in the planning and development of a model for language acquisition. Figure 2.2 illustrates Munby's (1978:33) model.

Communication Needs Processor

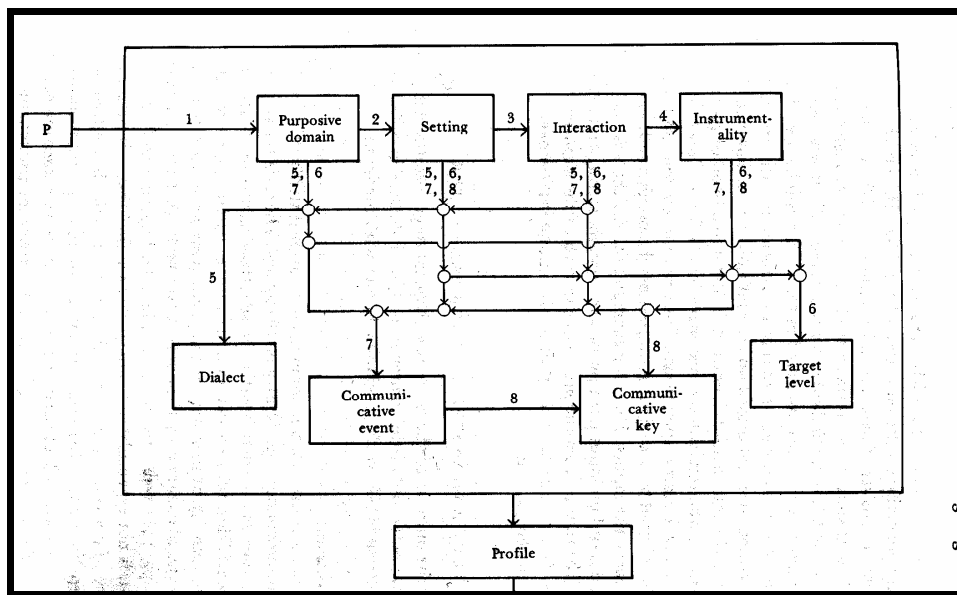


Figure 2.2: Communication Needs Processor (Munby 1978:33)

Munby (1978:33) points out that there are two kinds of parameters: the first falls within the area that processes non-linguistic data and the second within the area that provides the data in the first place or, phrased differently, constraints (*a posteriori*) that depend on input from another set of constraints (*a priori*) before they can become operational. The *a priori* parameters are 'purposive domain', 'setting', 'interaction' and 'instrumentality'.

(The 'purposive domain' has been discussed in section 2.2.4.) The *a posteriori* parameters are 'dialect', 'target level', 'communicative event' and 'communicative key'. 'Dialect' will not be used as a parameter in this study.

Munby (1978:33) illustrates how this model works by first explaining the different parameters. He defines the word 'participants' (indicated by the letter P in figure 2.2) as an input consisting of a minimum amount of potentially relevant information regarding identity and language. He aptly explains what is meant by 'identity' and 'language' in this context:

The data relating to identity tells us the respondent's age, sex, nationality and place of residence ... The data concerning language identifies the respondent's target language and the extent, if any, of his command of it, his mother tongue, and any other languages that he knows, including the extent of such command.

The first parameter is called 'purposive domain' and Munby (1978:34) describes it as follows:

In this parameter, one first establishes the type of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) involved and then specifies the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is required.

For this study the target language will be Northern Sotho for Specific Purposes (NSSP) which is a register for prospective use in commerce and industry. Language registers differ from one occupation to another. For example, if the target language is meant to integrate the language into government services that are in direct contact with community members, for the benefit of service delivery in municipal areas (e.g. information pamphlets, letters and forms), a particular register should be developed to record this kind of information. Accordingly, Munby (1978:34) advocates in his model that after the type of target language has been identified, a suitable term should be coined to indicate the nature of the higher-order sociocultural constraint that will identify the communication purpose of this target language which is termed 'purposive domain' (cf. par. 2.2.4).

The occupational purpose will be determined as a case in point. The implication is that it will be important that the people who will be using the language understand concepts such as 'the market is bullish' in order to use them in their

languages for a particular occupation or profession. It is this register which Munby (1978:34) terms 'purposive domain'. Hence, the respondents selected for the study were required to have a qualification in commerce (e.g. Economics, Accounting or Marketing, etc.). The respondents were commercial students who are either studying or working in the business environment. The 'domain' in this case is the workplace.

As indicated above, registers or jargons are characterised *inter alia* by vocabulary difference, either by the use of particular words or by the use of words in a particular sense. In some workplaces the purpose might be to use the target language in lower functions of social interaction. The profile of the speech community will be different.

The second parameter is 'setting'. Munby (1978:60) regards 'setting' as the situational variable that refers to time and place of communication, that is, the physical circumstances in which the language will be used. Munby explicate that the spatial and temporal aspects of the physical setting in which the target language is required for use in this context is a place of work, and that psychosocial settings are the various environments in which the target language is to be used. The domains for this study are the workplace in commerce and industry; hence this parameter is appropriate for the present study.

The third parameter is 'interaction'. Munby (1978:35) describes 'interaction' as the variable where one identifies those with whom the respondent has to communicate in the target language and predicts the relationship that may be expected between the respondent and his/her interlocutors. Here one first has to state the respondent's position, that is, the position the respondent comprehends in a particular role through the purposive domain, in which case it will be different people with whom the respondent will interact in the target language. In other words, this parameter has to do with role-set identity interpreted in terms of the size of participation, age group, sex, nationality of its members and social relationships, as well as role relationships. In this study neither the extent of participation in a speech community, nor its age group, sex, nationality, social relationships or role relationships will be an issue. The greater the participation

the better, especially, if the participants will be interacting with colleagues or prospective clients in business.

The fourth parameter is 'instrumentality' (Munby 1978:36), which deals with 'language functions' that entail organising people and getting tasks performed successfully. Language usage can either be channelled orally or in written texts such as emails, memos, newsletters, etc. This is an important parameter since it encourages respondents to interact with others whilst performing their duties and activities.

The fifth of the *a posteriori* parameters is 'dialect', which Munby (1978:36) describes as the regional variety of a language. For this study, the dimension that is given prominence is whether the language spoken is regional or non-regional. The first concern here is a spoken language that will be understood by everyone irrespective of which part of the province they come from. As mentioned above, the parameter concerning speech dialect is an area that has no relevance to the present discussion.

The sixth parameter is 'target level' by which Munby (1978:37) refers to the respondent's level of command. He cautions that, at this stage of implementing the model the system of the target-level specification has been devised and should not be confused with the specification of the particular behaviour for which the target language is required.

The seventh parameter is the 'communicative event'. According to Munby (1978:37) this event is concerned with what the respondent has to do, either productively or receptively. It first identifies communicative events that result from the interaction of relevant inputs deriving from prior identification of the respondent's purposive domain, physical setting, role-set and instrumentality requirements. The events systematically arrived at are macro-activities, such as 'waiter serving customers in a restaurant' or 'student participating in a seminar at university'.

In the case of the envisaged adapted model this parameter will involve inter alia instructions given by a manager to employees in an industrial setting or a client seeking information in a bank, or a client who wants to operate the 'response keys' of an ATM machine (e.g. Absa's language guidelines for the expansion of financial vocabularies to enable customers to operate multilingual ATM machines).

The eighth parameter is the 'communicative key' which concerns how activities are done (the 'what'). Here Munby (1978:38) speaks of attitudinal constraints. This parameter is regarded as crucial for the present research in which a model adapted from Munby's Communicative Needs Processor (CPN) is applied for use in Northern Sotho for Specific Purpose (NSSP). The following parameters will be recapitulated:

- § 1. 'purposive domain'
- § 2. 'setting'
- § 3. 'interaction'
- § 4. 'instrumentality'
- § 5. 'target level'
- § 6. 'communicative event'
- § 7. 'communicative key'

Note that the most crucial and sensitive issue in acquiring knowledge of Northern Sotho for use in commerce and industry was to establish first whether mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and speakers of other languages have a positive attitude towards Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. Hence the following discussion.

2.5 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Language attitudes are complex psychological phenomena which involve knowledge and feelings as well as behaviour, and are sensitive to situational factors such as the salience of language in a situation.

2.5.1 Definition

McGroaty (1996:5) describes 'attitude' in this context as follows:

Attitude has cognitive, affective, and conative components (i.e. it involves beliefs, emotional reactions, and behavioural tendencies related to the object of the attitude) and it consists, in broad terms, of an underlying psychological predisposition to act or evaluate behaviour in a certain way.

Edwards (1994:23) also defines attitude as a disposition consisting of three elements:

The concept attitude is a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects. This disposition is often taken to comprise three components: feeling (affective element), thoughts (cognitive element) and, following upon these, predispositions to act in a certain way (behavioural elements).

McGroaty (1996:5, referring to Oppenheim, 1966) also states that attitudes are reinforced by beliefs and emotional reactions, as well as behavioural tendencies.

Nwaila (1987:16, referred to by McGroaty 1996:5) puts it simply as a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner in response to certain stimuli. In similar vein, Oppenheim (1966 in McGroaty 1996:5) mentions that attitude is linked to a person's values and beliefs and that it promotes or discourages the choices made in the realm of activity, whether academic or informal. In her definition of 'language attitudes', McGroaty (1996:5) draws on the

works of Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) and links 'attitude' and 'motivation' as two important components in her frame of reference. Edwards (1985:146) views language attitudes as reactions regulated by people's perceptions of speech communities. He claims that language attitudes are linked to views of identity.

In this study, focus group interviews are used to establish whether mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and speakers of other languages have a positive attitude towards the prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

2.5.2 Past investigations into language attitudes

In 1960 Lambert et al. (in Edwards 1985:147) introduced the 'matched-guise technique' as a way of assessing language attitudes. The study, which was conducted among English and French speakers in Montreal, revealed that the English speakers were more positive towards their mother tongue than the French speakers who preferred English.

Prah (1995:70) conducted research among black adults and black university students in Africa, and concluded that the use of European languages is seen as a colonial legacy. There is also an awareness of the extent to which the colonial period reduced the status of African languages in comparison to the colonial languages. He surmises that these students would welcome the use of their mother tongue in their studies.

Gamede (1996:04) conducted research among high school pupils in South Africa. Her sample was drawn from Model C schools and former black high schools, and her aim was to determine how high school pupils who spoke an African language perceived their language. It is clear from the investigation by Gamede (1996:105) that the pupils did not experience their mother tongue as a means to empower them in an economic environment. Although some of the pupils expressed positive sentiments about their mother tongue and felt obliged to be loyal to it, they did not put these views into practice. What emerges from Gamede's

(1996:106) findings is that the problem of language attitudes is a 'Catch 22' situation. It is a very complicated issue. Nevertheless, most linguists caution that although attitudes are abstract and can be observed only in people's behaviour, it should be borne in mind that sometimes behaviour can be inconsistent with attitude.

In this study, the ontological body of knowledge encroaches on the practicality of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The above processes are guided by some of the main aims of the study, which are to determine the need to use Northern Sotho as a language of marketing, advertising and business, as a language for acquiring entrepreneurial skills, and as a language of commerce and industry. The discussion brings us to another topical issue, namely the orientation of language planning.

2.6 ORIENTATIONS OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

Section 6 of the Constitution provides the primary legal and constitutional framework for multilingualism, the use of the official languages and the promotion of respect and tolerance for South Africa's linguistic diversity. Among other things, it establishes the following norms:

- All official languages must enjoy 'parity of esteem' and be treated equitably.
- Government must take legislative and other measures to regulate and monitor the use of official languages.
- The status and use of indigenous languages must be enhanced.

The latter requirement is discussed in this study.

Ruiz (1984:16) presents a framework for interpreting language planning and policy issues, based on orientations to language which he defines as 'a complex of dispositions toward ... languages and their role in society. These dispositions may be largely unconscious and pre-rational because they are at the most fundamental level of arguments about language'. He notes the importance of

making these dispositions evident in discussions of language planning and policy by identifying them in existing policies and proposals, or by advocating for new ones.

The point of departure is that Ruiz (1984:16) distinguishes three orientations:

- language-as-problem
- language-as-right
- language-as-resource.

Within each of these three orientations two further orientations can be distinguished, namely 'language as sentimental attachment', and 'language-as-means'. The last two orientations will not be discussed here.

2.6.1 Language-as-problem

The orientation of language-as-problem is associated with issues of development and modernisation in national contexts where questions of literacy, code-selection, standardisation, and orthography need to be sorted out (Ruiz, 1984: 17). An assumption that is basic to the language-as-problem orientation in some circles is that multilingualism leads to national divisions while English monolingualism may insure national unity. The language-as-problem orientation reflects other deeply rooted attitudes besides language-based beliefs and values that are reflected in the unresolved tensions related to South African society's inability to come to terms with its ever growing diversity.

In the context of South Africa, viewing language as a problem connects education with other social 'problems' such as unemployment and low educational achievement of indigenous black people, and is often viewed as a cause of social problems. In other words, languages other than English and Afrikaans were viewed as problems to be overcome; indigenous black students were seen as deficient in the cultural and linguistic resources necessary to succeed in school. Thus, correcting the language problems and redressing the ills of the past are seen as ways of solving the related social problems. Besides social problems, the

maintenance of a low-status first language is attended by intellectual limitations, linguistic deficiency judged by the absence of English, provincialism and irrationalism.

2.6.2 Language-as-right

The perception that language 'rights' are about the redress of past wrongs has had negative effects on efforts to gain broad public support for the teaching and maintenance of languages other than English in most countries, notably the USA (Ricento, 2005:349). Ruiz (1984:27) notes on one hand that while a resource orientation in language planning is not without its problems, a 'fuller development of a resource-oriented approach to language planning could help to reshape attitudes about language and language groups'. Ricento (2005:356) on the other hand views the language-as-resource orientation as not ascribing lower status to heritage languages but giving marginal recognition to essentially unquantifiable resources associated with languages (e.g. psychological, cultural, affiliation, aesthetic, and historical aspects).

In light of the above Ruiz (Ruiz, 1984:27) contends that a language-as-resource orientation is an alternative to a language-rights approach; hence an emerging polity such as South Africa has adopted both orientations in its language planning strategy so that the two orientations can complement each other and it regards the legal context as essential to language development (Ministerial Committee report: DoE, 2003:17. The language-as-resource orientation will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.7 WHAT IS THE CURRENT LANGUAGE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA?

In South Africa English currently occupies the *de jure* status of national and international language of commerce and industry, with Afrikaans following in its wake. With such *de facto* dominance, the unassailable position of English commands respect and power.

The 2006 mid-year population is estimated at approximately 47,4 million (cf. mid-year population estimates, South Africa: 2006 P0302). The 2001 census states that there are 44,8 million people living in South Africa and speak an estimated 25 languages. The same census revealed that Afrikaans and English are widely spoken in all provinces. Although English is generally understood across the country, it ranks only fifth as a home language. Other unofficial European languages spoken in South Africa are the six immigrant languages:

Dutch (7.89%), French (4.26%), German (27.05%), Greek (11.28%), Italian (11.15%) and Portuguese (38.36%).

The communities speaking the languages that occur in South Africa tend to be geographically localised, that is, South Africa is typified by languages of limited diffusion. A breakdown of numbers of speakers according to the census of 2001 places Zulu first with 9,2 million L1 speakers in 1996, increasing to 10,7 million in 2001 (i.e. 22,9% of the population spoke it in 1996, increasing to 23,8% in 2001). This was followed by Xhosa, spoken by 7,2 million in 1996 and 7,9 million in 2001 (i.e. 17,9% in 1996 and 17,6% in 2001). Afrikaans was third at 5,8 million in 1996, increasing to 6,0 million in 2001. Then came Northern Sotho, fourth at 9,2% of L1 speakers overall in 1996, which grew to 9,4% (4,208 980) by 2001. The lowest number of L1 speakers was recorded for Ndebele, which was spoken by 587 000 in 1996, increasing to 712 000 by 2001. The nine official indigenous African languages were spoken as home languages by 76,5% of the population at the time of Census '96, increasing to 77,9% at the time of Census 2001. Afrikaans and English together were spoken as home languages by 23,1% of the population in 1996, decreasing to 21,5% by 2001. The percentage of Afrikaans speakers decreased from 14,4% in 1996 to 13,3% in 2001, while that of English speakers decreased from 8,6% in 1996 to 8,2% in 2001. Almost a quarter of the

total population reported Zulu as their home language. The above figures can be interpreted in a table. Table 2.1 reflects home languages within population groups in % as follows:

TABLE 2.1: HOME LANGUAGES WITHIN POPULATION GROUPS IN %.

Home language	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	TOTAL
Afrikaans	0,7	79,5	1,7	59,1	13,3
English	0,5	18,9	93,8	39,3	8,2
IsiNdebele	0,2	0,0	0,3	0,1	1,6
IsiXhosa	22,3	0,3	0,1	0,1	17,6
IsiZulu	30,1	0,3	0,2	0,1	23,8
Northern Sotho	11,9	0,1	0,0	0,0	9,4
Sesotho	10,0	0,2	0,0	0,0	7,9
Setswana	10,3	0,4	0,0	0,1	8,2
SiSwati	3,4	0,1	0,0	0,0	2,7
Tshivenda	2,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,3
Xitsonga	5,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	4,4
Other	0,3	0,2	3,8	1,1	0,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

(The figures are derived from the *People of South Africa Population Census* report No. 03-02-11 2001).

In Limpopo, while more than half the people (52,1%) speak Northern Sotho (Sepedi/Sesotho sa leboa) as their first/home language, a relatively large proportion speak Tsonga (22,4%) and Venda (15,9%) while in Gauteng L1 speakers of Northern Sotho constitute 10,7% of the total population.

The indigenous African languages of South Africa comprise four distinct groups made up as follows: the Nguni languages (Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, and Swati); the Sotho languages (Northern Sotho, South Sotho and Tswana); and finally Venda and Tsonga. The Nguni group is the largest with about 18 million speakers, followed by the Sotho group with a little over 10 million speakers, the Tsonga group with almost 2 million speakers, and the Venda with nearly a million speakers. Whites constitute 10,9%, Coloureds constitutes 8,9% (these are

people of mixed race); Asians (2.%) and unspecified/other estimated at 0.9%. (The figures are derived from the *People of South Africa Population Census* report No. 03-02-11 2001).

2.8. THE ECONOMICS OF LANGUAGES

2.8.1 Preamble

The term 'economics of languages' was coined 15 years ago by Marchak (1965, in Vaillancourt, 2002:9) in the presentation of his thesis. He postulated that over time the most efficient languages would survive and that their efficiency would be rated according to the amount of time it takes to transmit information in a given language. Interestingly, Marchak (1965, in Vaillancourt, 2002:9) describes the economics of languages as 'a fledgling branch of the dismal science'.

According to Grin (2003:01) 'the economics of languages' is, grounded in the discipline of economics. It displays a strong interdisciplinary orientation, which places it on the fringes of mainstream economics. It concerns the ways in which linguistic and economic processes influence one another. It is also well placed to contribute to the evaluation of public policies regarding language because it offers analytical tools for the systematic identification and measurement of the advantages and drawbacks of policy alternatives.

South Africa is currently occupying a precarious position within a framework of globalisation and internationalisation where cultural and linguistic pluralism prevail. There is divergence between South Africa's multilingual language policy on the one hand, and its language practices on the other. The language policy promotes multilingualism, or what Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996: 429) term an 'ecology-of-language paradigm', while the language practices promote monolingualism in English or what linguists may term the 'diffusion-of-English paradigm'. With regard to language practices in commerce and industry, education, the media and other higher domains it remains true that in South Africa the diffusion-of-English paradigm is gaining momentum in virtually all of the country's institutions even though there are snippets of improvement here and

there. Heugh (2000:466) blames this situation on global societies and the knowledge economy which is being built upon an information highway infrastructure. She argues that the hegemony of the Western free-market economy is such that it influences the economies of developing countries. Western economies tend to be characterised by linguisticism which accords privileged status to English, and a lesser position to other languages. Western aid packages to the developing world have impacted, and continue to impact, on the implementation of language policy.

It is important to look at international trends in language policy and their relation to political ideology and free-enterprise economics to assess the implications of implementing new language policy options for business in South Africa.

Gellner (1983 in Edwards 1985:91) asks the global society to consider how important language is, compared to other social factors. Backing this view, Lambertson (2002:14), who is more concerned about the 'language divide' in global society, asks whether language is a matter fit to be explored as a part of economics.

In this study, an empirical orientation is used to determine the current language situation in Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces.

2.8.2 An analytical framework

What is the future of the indigenous languages in an increasingly globalised world? Is there a move toward the use of a single language for global communication, or are there ways of managing language diversity at the international level? Can a balance be struck between the global need to communicate and the maintenance of local and regional identities and cultures? What is the role of education, of language rights, of language equality in this volatile global linguistic mix? With the view to answer the above questions the researcher investigated the feasibility of using a regional language of limited diffusion (LLD) such as North Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

Sectors where organic financial growth depends on the speakers of African languages (e.g. financial institutions) function primarily in English. Lack of terminology and funding, as stated previously, are cited as the cause of non-use of the indigenous African languages in South Africa (cf. par. 5.11). According to SAIRR (1998:40), 75% of black South Africans are not proficient enough in English to use that language as an effective instrument of economic activity. It would seem economically sensible for banks and other financial institutions to implement multilingualism in their everyday activities and accommodate regional languages. According to J. de Jager (personal communication, August 11, 2006) a profile of people who were banking in South Africa in 2002 is reflected in Figure 2.3 as follows:

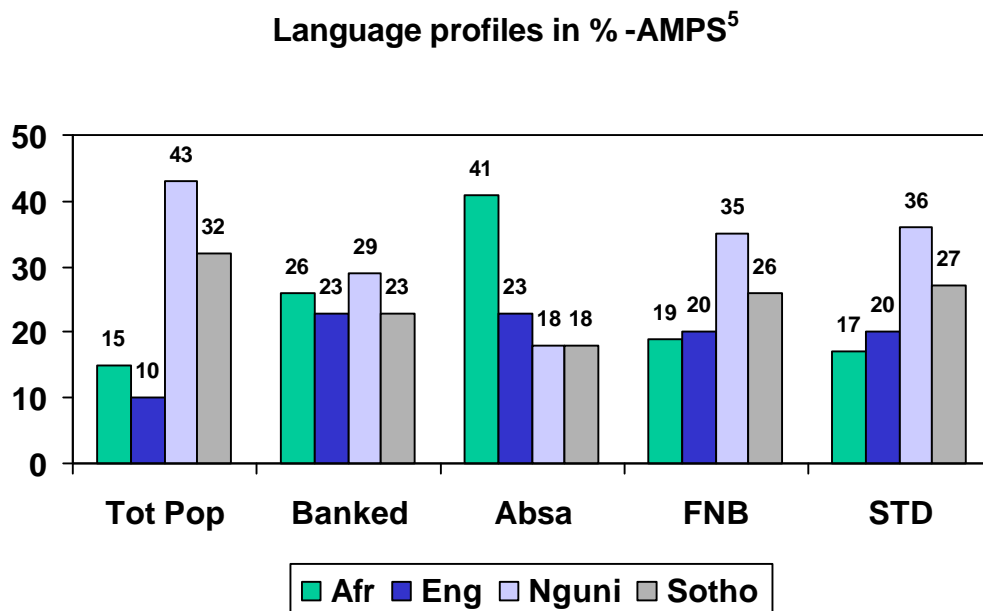


Figure 2.3: Language profiles of people who banked with the major South African banks in 2002 (Absa's Archives, Marketing Mix of 1/3/2002).

The first group of bar-graphs indicators above (from the left) shows the total population in SA (viz. 2002 figures); the second shows the percentage of South Africans who were banking then. The third to the fifth group indicate language

⁵ Research sources: Absa Archives, Dr Piet Snyman, Renee Roux of Absa Marketing with Strategic Diagnostics, Millward Brown Impact, Medishop Feb 2002, AMPS research, March, April and May 2002, Marketing Mix of 1/3/2002, Interviews with language specialist in Nedbank, Standard Bank and FNB.

profiles of South Africans who were banking in 2002 at different banks (viz. Absa, First National Bank and Standard Bank). Obviously the picture has changed dramatically since then, but of all these banks only Absa is accommodating all the South African official languages in their quest to provide a better client service. According to J. de Jager (personal communication, August 11, 2006) Absa employs multilingualism in its ATM machines. Figure 2.4 reflects raw data on languages used in ATM machines by Absa's customers.

Absa's national multilingual language usage on ATM machines

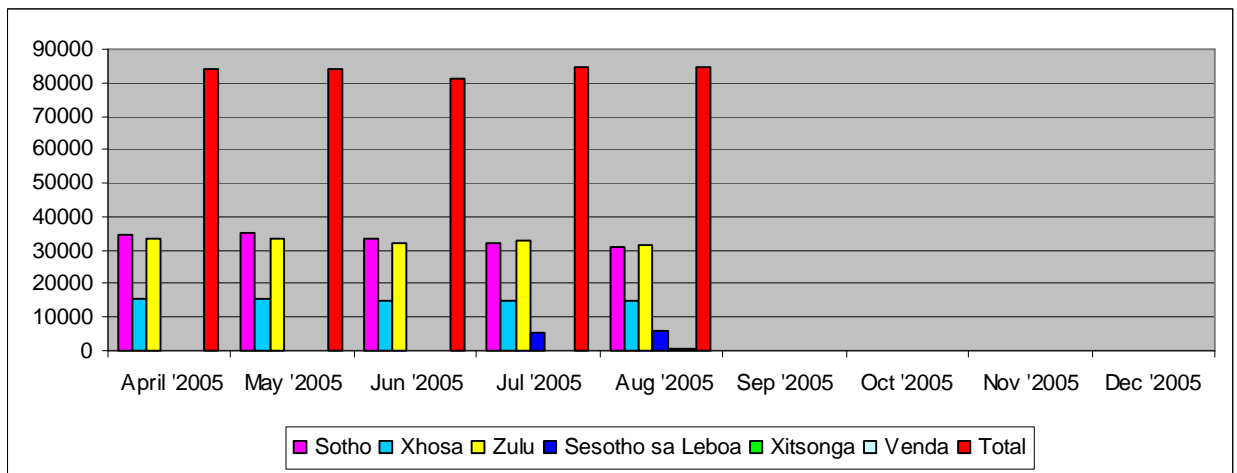


Figure 2.4: Absa's national multilingual language usage on ATM machines in 2005

A snippet of Sesotho sa Leboa⁶ appeared in July and August 2005. There is some doubt about the accuracy of these figures, but they serve as an indication that +_ 5,000 Northern Sotho speakers use their language where the choice exists. A notion expressed by PanSALB's findings earlier in Chapter 1.

MarkData was commissioned by PanSALB to conduct a survey of languages used by unemployed adults for survival and job-seeking activities. The results are reflected in the following chart (PanSALB, 2000):

⁶ Sesotho sa Leboa is Northern Sotho.

Language and the informal economy %

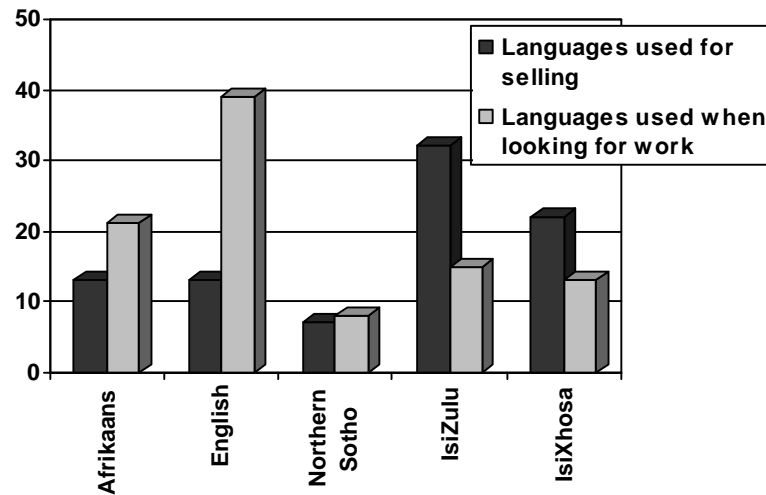


Figure 2.5: Language and the informal economy (in %) (PanSALB, 2000:73)

English and IsiZulu rate high as languages used for both activities. Less than 10% use Northern Sotho for both activities.

Coulmas (1992:22 in Strauss et al. 1996:3) cautions that unless we understand the economics of language we cannot understand the development of the linguistic map of the world. On the other hand, a proper understanding of economic development is dependent upon recognising language as an economic factor. According to Grin (1994:26, in Strauss et al. 1996:3) major recent trends in studying the economics of language include the study of:

- the effects of language on income;
- the role of economic factors in language learning by immigrants;
- patterns of language maintenance and spread in multilingual societies or between trading partners;
- the protection and promotion of minority languages;
- the place of economic considerations in the selection and design of language policies;
- language use in the workplace;
- market equilibrium for language-specific goods and services.

All of the above are relevant to this study. In South Africa the languages that need protection and elaboration of functions are the indigenous languages. The role of economic factors in language learning will pertain to the indigenous people of South Africa, and not to immigrants as indicated by Grin (1994:26 in Strauss et al. 1996:3). This statement has obvious implications for the Northern Sotho speech community in the present context.

Grin (1994:39 in Strauss et al., 1996:4) advocates that in future more should be done to employ concepts from environmental economics and to apply cost-benefit analyses to language planning. Economists in the USA have therefore used mainly three analogies to come to grips with language (Grin, 1994:34 in Strauss et al., 1996:4):

- language and communication cost
- investment in language
- language use for consumption

According to Ozolins (2003:67) economic approaches to language are at odds with the field of language policy/language planning as a result of deficiencies in the literature of both fields. He attributes this misfit to a number of reasons, including the following:

- § Economic illiteracy has prevented the recognition of benefits that can flow in some language professional fields (e.g. interpreting).
- § Economic considerations dominate the rationale for particular language programmes, but these programmes struggle to realise their economic claims (e.g. programmes promoting the study of using language for economic purposes).
- § Issues concerning the use of language for economic purpose arise in international affairs (e.g. international organisations and the regulation of trade).
- § Using a language other than the home language to communicate is automatically equated with economic disadvantage and analysed accordingly (e.g. cost-benefit analyses of multilingualism and

majority/minority languages).

On the other hand Grin (1994:34 in Strauss et al. 1996:3) states that people who want to do business with one another need to be able to communicate on an appropriate level of competence in the same language. An emphasis on language as both a communication tool and a means of exchange has suggested to some economists that there is an analogy between language and money.

One area where economic benefits have often not been recognised has been that of interpreting, particularly in its commonest form, which is liaison interpreting in situations of contact with indigenous or deaf communities, where language minorities' persons and the institutions that serve them need a means of communication. Social systems around the world have acknowledged the need for language services, but what is regarded as an adequate service differs widely, and such services have often developed haphazardly. Where governments have assumed a leading role in language planning activities (e.g. South Africa) the onus to provide such language services should lie with or rest on government or/and its agencies.

In conclusion, the results of most studies show a positive correlation between language and socio-economic background, particularly in South Africa (cf. Chapters 4 & 5) today, which is an issue Coulmas (1992:22 in Strauss et al. 1996:3) observes in closing his argument that a language is a bankable asset and an economic factor.

According to Strauss et al. (1996:3) language and ethnicity issues are gaining renewed prominence around the world today and require academics' and economists' attention. He observes further that it is understandable that more and more economists and language scholars are paying close attention to the economics of language in their analyses and policy recommendations. Language development is critically influenced by interaction of human societies with their economic environments and vice versa.

2.8.3 Language as an economic resource

Viewing language as a resource or as an economic resource underlines the importance to the nation of conserving and developing all its linguistic resources. According Ricento (2005:363) 'language-as-resource' orientation is connected to particular dominant socio-political agendas, namely national security, trade, and law enforcement. He further asserts that these agendas presupposed to benefit the nation as a whole, yet the most nations are not neutral with regard to the interests of all languages or groups.

In South Africa however, we are in the fortunate position that the view of language as a resource is embraced by the government and is instituted in the National Language Policy Framework. But the orientation does not accord with the perceptions of especially ethnolinguistic groups in South Africa. Black people in South Africa assume that business is indissolubly linked to the English language. It is this perhaps unwitting dichotomizing of English (as a preferred national and international language in commerce and industry) that has circumscribed the viable roles and domains for other languages (at least for the past century) as sub-national, 'ethnic', 'primordial', and secondary other (i.e. local, ethnic, marginal) languages which have tended to undermine the efficacy and scope of the 'language-as-resource' orientation. If languages function in particular ways in particular communities, they are in fact resources and should be recognised as such by those communities. Academics and language planners should not conveniently regard them as resources only when they can serve particular disciplinary or state interests, and otherwise ignore or suppress them, whether overtly or covertly. This raises the important question of; resources for whom and for what purpose? These are the key elements which require exposition in a fuller accounting of the language-as-resource orientation.

The value of a language and its community of speakers depends on its projected relative value in a particular sector of economic or military activity, rather than on the locally determined interests of the communities themselves. Mainstream economic models of supply and demand fail to consider the role of state planners (or analysts and planners funded by the state) whose interventions in the

planning process distort the 'market' in the direction determined by state interests, which change over time. Ricento (2005:349) argues that this means that the geopolitical importance of a language determines its relative market worth as a 'resource'. As noted by Grin (2006: 83) there are six forms of market failure that occur where enabling provision for linguistic diversity is concerned, which is sufficient reason for state intervention in language planning and policy.

However, Ozolins (2003:73) notes with disapprobation that some economists seem to be carried away by their theorising. He cites Choi (2002 in Ozolins 2003:73) who uses modelling to show that trade restrictions imposed by any country are a clear impediment to the adoption of a universal language. While he admits that such a hypothesis would be difficult to test empirically, Choi confidently assumes that a monolingual trading regime would be the most economically efficient. Not unexpectedly, English is proposed as the best candidate for such a universal language.

The ideas mooted by Lo Bianco (1996:5) above are idealistic and serve as an inspiration to secure the survival of languages such as Northern Sotho. Although a shift in economic power may be in progress, English seems to be gaining wider currency and becoming part of the power equation, particularly now that countries like China and India are showing a decided preference for English. The combined populations of these countries is 2.5 billion, and that represents a third of the world's population, to which must be added the 400 million of the predominantly English population of the USA. Global media are overwhelmingly English. The highest, most sophisticated discourse in the widest range of registers has been developed, and is still developing, in English. English feeds into burgeoning communication technologies in the 21st century. One of the natural consequences of the ever-expanding roles for English is that it had increasingly appropriated various centres for itself and some linguists argue that, and it can therefore no longer be seen solely as epitomising older versions of English dominance.

Strauss (1997:23) concurs with Lo Bianco (1996:5) by maintaining that the exclusive use of English in business must make room for the parallel use of indigenous African languages. As a first step he suggests the use of interpreters.

as well as urgent national, regional, sectoral and company-specific language audits to be held by corporate and public sectors to determine the need for the use of indigenous and foreign languages in trade and industry. Although Ozolins (2003:67) has reservations about the preconceived notion that there is an automatic causal link between foreign language skills and improved economic performance, he warns that few studies have been able to establish beyond doubt whether the link actually exists.

The researcher concurs wholeheartedly with the assertion of Strauss (1997:23) as reflected above, and in fact these convictions represent the main thrust behind the present study.

With regard to the daunting challenge indicated above, note that Coulmas (1992, in Strauss, 1997:7) argues that language serves as an economic resource mainly in the sense that common, shared or link languages are assets. He notes further that:

The simultaneous emergence of market economies and common languages in 16th-century Reformation Europe was not a mere coincidence. The standardisation and cultivation of European vernaculars were influenced by economic development and, in turn, facilitated such development by widening the range of communication. These common languages constituted a significant economic advantage by meeting all the communicative needs of society, thus facilitating social mobility and political participation. Their application over a wide geographic area and the overcoming of social class barriers made possible a tightly woven social fabric, and they achieved both greater integration and differentiation.

According to Ozolins (2003:67) there seem to be contradictions in the European example between an unlimited multilingualism for representational purposes (all countries in the EU having their languages recognised as official) yet a restriction on any country making specific provisions and rules for its own language. Most of the basis for such trade interventions derives from assumptions of free trade and

free markets (some also arise from assertions of human rights interests that we do not have space to look at here). Ozolins (2003:69) warns further that we should be very careful about accepting arguments for the inevitability of adopting global languages or for being unable to defend local languages (out of respect for a supposed 'free market') if the spread of global languages is indeed supported by coercion – economic, legal or otherwise (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995: 44).

The need to shift the social-base use of Northern Sotho to an economic-base usage requires that we first look at language functions in commerce and industry settings, which is a critical component of this study.

2.9 TYPOLOGY OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS IN THE INDUSTRIAL SETTING

Halliday (1973:99) argues that one should first distinguish between language 'use' and language 'function'. Language has an infinite set of uses. In essence this means that it is simply not possible to conceive of a model or typology for understanding language use. However, a finite set of language functions can be identified and described. Halliday (1973:99) calls these language functions 'macro-functions' that are 'general to all (possible) uses ... through which the meaning potential associated with them is encoded into grammatical structures'. Macro-functions of language can also be conceived of as functional components of the grammar of a language and, as such, are generally recognised in different functional theories of language.

On one hand Reagan (1986:43) identifies seven distinct language functions that take place in an industrial setting. These are:

- § the explanative,
- § informative,
- § directive or regulative,
- § interrogative,
- § evaluative,
- § negotiative and ritualistic or phatic language functions.

The function of a text may serve to inform its audience, can give a directive, or may be used to convey emphatic language functions. On the factory floor, for example, a supervisor may explain or give directives about procedures and processes of the firm by using an appropriate register to address his or her audience.

On the other hand Webb (1999:110) identifies the basic functions of language, as follows:

- *the communicative function*: conveying or obtaining information;
- *the cognitive function*: memorising, analysing, reasoning, decision-making (not the focus of this study);
- *the instrumental function*: organising people, getting tasks performed successfully;
- *the participatory function*: allowing people to interact and to establish social or institutional groups, developing a group spirit;
- *the separatist function*: differentiating social groups from one another (not the focus of this study); and
- *the symbolic function*: allowing the construction and expression of identity.

Given its sociolinguistic underpinnings the object of this study is not to concentrate only on the macro functions of language use but on the communicative function which is concerned with conveying or gathering information. Then there is the instrumental function which involves the organisation of people and getting tasks performed successfully; as well as the participatory function which allows people to interact and establish social or institutional groups; and finally there is a persuasive language for developing a group spirit and ubuntu principles. For this type of exercise you need words that will persuade your audience to listen to or read what you have to say. Marketing gimmicks are used to attract audiences or readers.

Actually, as indicated, the focus in this study is language use that extends beyond the limit of social interaction, to higher functions and settings in

commerce and industry. Webb (1999:110) points out that the two aspects of verbal communication that are directly relevant to economic activity, namely conveying or obtaining information, must be kept in mind. He argues further that:

The first step is that a simple 'knowledge of language' is not enough to be able to participate meaningfully in economic life. One also has to know 'the discourse' of the field, that is, one needs to be 'economically literate'. In the case of economic activity it means that one must be fully acquainted with concepts and the terms that refer to these concepts such as 'profit and loss', 'budget investment', 'balance sheet', 'income statements', 'debtors', 'creditors', and so on.

It is important that the Northern Sotho speech community concerned here thoroughly internalise an economic discourse in Northern Sotho so that they will be at ease with it in conveying and transmitting economic reasoning and concepts for specific purposes (e.g. in conversation and in written communication and reasoning).

2.9.1 Language and economic development

Webb (1999:175) considers that the major reason why language can be considered a factor in retarded economic development is that it can act as a barrier. This is especially the case if the dominant or only language of economic participation is foreign to the economically active population of a country. This is the position with English in South Africa. Kruger (1987) holds a similar view and contends that this state of affairs leads to low productivity and ineffective performance in commerce and industry. Webb and Kruger's view is contradicted by O'Brien (1979:83 in Coulmas, 1992:120) who holds that a multiplicity of languages is an obstacle to trade and mobility of labour, technology and information in general, and that language boundaries impede economic integration and the improvement of the standard of living it is expected to bring about. In Third World countries, especially, multilingualism slows down modernisation. Kruger and Webb's view is certainly correct for South Africa. The introduction of Northern Sotho for specific purposes may therefore be a solution

to the problem. Coulmas (1992:22 in Webb, 1999:178) qualifies the argument advanced by O'Brien (1979:83 in Coulmas, 1992:120) by asserting that although the dissemination of basic knowledge is not made altogether impossible by a multiplicity of languages, it is certainly delayed, hence the use of a single language would in fact be more appropriate. In contrast, Tisdell (2002:261) points out that in order to solve Australia's language dilemma the federal government, has made every effort to convince Australian voters in business and industry that competence in a second or third language other than English is beneficial to the Australian economy and to the international image of Australians, particularly in the Asia-Pacific area.

The above initiative could be ideal for South Africa in a quest to develop its indigenous African languages of South Africa especially the indigenous languages spoken in and beyond the borders of South Africa. According to Prah (1997:21), development is often conceptualised largely in economic categories. He argues that while economic indices are a good measure of development, they do not tell the whole story. If and when development takes place in a society, its effects radiate into all areas of social existence. Development is ultimately cultural advancement in the sense that culture as a notion embraces the results of human creative activity, both material and non-material. What the culture concept does for our understanding of the idea of development is that it demonstrates the interconnectedness of all dimensions of human existence.

2.10 CORPUS DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMICS AND COMMERCIAL TERMINOLOGIES FOR USE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

In South Africa language development has two objectives: to develop standard orthography and spelling systems, and to modernise vocabulary and create new registers for particular purposes. Corpus planning in this context has to take place in a socio-economic context. This means that corpus planning cannot be left to linguists and language planners alone because changes in spelling rules or lexical expansion, for example, need the approval of the 'target group'. Planning becomes difficult if it excludes the target group and other concerned stakeholders, and if it concentrates instead on the socio-political type of planning, in which case it is often conducted within a tension system of changing and conflicted loyalties, convictions, interests, values and outlooks Fishman (1974:117). That is, corpus planners will always have to deal with modernity versus traditionalism (or authenticity versus indigenisation). The modernisation of vocabulary and the creation of new registers for particular purposes are a case in point for this study. In Northern Sotho there is still so much to be done.

2.10.1 Lexical modernisation

Lexical modernisation is a process of compiling dictionaries, glossaries and specialist terminologies that are much needed to modernise Northern Sotho in the present context. The Final Report of the Language Plan Task Group dated 8 August 1996 recommends that:

In developing the vocabulary needed for the expansion of functions possible in the new language dispensation, allow the use of loan words; recognise and promote the words already in use among speakers of the language rather than artificially create words from the words and morphemes existing in the language.

According to Cluver (1992:44), lexical modernisation is a process of mapping out planned creation of new terms or the semantic adaptation of new words. Part of language modernisation could be to rename new concepts in a new language

into which concepts have been borrowed. This is necessary when language modernisation occurs too fast for natural naming processes to function — a problem that is intrinsic in Northern Sotho and that has been considered in the conceptualization of this study in the previous chapter.

2.10.2 Creation of registers for special purposes

As indicated at every turn now, the aim of this study is to investigate the feasibility of developing *corpus* vocabularies and terminologies for commerce and industry, and to explore the prospects of developing the Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology as a jargon used in commerce and industry; therefore, the prospects for and principles of creating a register for use in commerce and industry are critical for this study. Language modernisation also encompasses development of registers and styles for various domains or fields. In this study, the domain envisaged is the workplace in commerce and industry.

2.11 SUMMARY

The theoretical framework has been discussed. This chapter is based on a sociolinguistic approach to communication, and it forms the basis of the study. The current language situation in South Africa has been discussed and analysed.

Language attitudes and research pertaining to the research done on language attitudes all over the world have been discussed and compared with the situation in South Africa. Arguments about language 'rights' vis-à-vis language-as-resource orientations have been discussed. Ruiz (1984:27), among others, believes that the language-as-resource orientation is an alternative to language-rights orientation. Fortunately in South Africa, both orientations have been embodied in the National Language Policy Framework.

A theoretical view on the typology of language function in an industrial setting has been discussed. A model by Munby (1978:20) is adapted with selected parameters that are appropriate for use in Northern Sotho in order to establish the communicative needs of anyone who would want to learn Northern Sotho for

a specific purpose and use in commerce and industry, has been fully explicated and discussed.

The role played by the language planning process in the creation and implementation of a national policy is discussed and analysed. The question: 'who does what for whom and why in processes of language planning initiatives?' is also discussed.

The three components of language planning are discussed. The orientation of language planning and its components is also discussed. Language development, specifically Northern Sotho, is briefly considered.

The theory underpinning the feasibility of corpus development as part of language planning is discussed with special reference to a South African context. Theories pertaining to language and lexical modernisation are discussed and analysed. It is emphasised throughout this chapter that the object is to advocate Northern Sotho as a language that can be used in parallel with other languages in commerce and industry, especially in Limpopo and Gauteng, where data were collected.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND OPERATIONALISATION OF FIELD WORK

3.1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Kuhn (1977 in Pajares 1998:127) argues that:

During scientific revolutions, scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. Familiar objects are seen in a different light and joined by unfamiliar ones as well. Scientists see new things when looking at old objects. In a sense, after a revolution, scientists are responding to a different world.

In another paragraph, Kuhn (1977 in Pajares 1998:129) questions scientific knowledge further as follows:

Why does a paradigm shift in view occur? Genius? Flashes of intuition? Sure. Because different scientists interpret their observations differently? No. Observations are themselves nearly always different. Observations are conducted within a paradigmatic framework, so the interpretative enterprise can only articulate a paradigm, not correct it. Because of factors embedded in the nature of human perception and retinal impression? No doubt, but our knowledge is simply not yet advanced enough on this matter. Changes in definitional conventions? No. Because the existing paradigm fails to fit? Always. Because of a change in the relation between the scientist's manipulations and the paradigm or between the manipulations and their concrete results? You bet. It is hard to make nature fit a paradigm.

Kuhn questions the tendency of some scientists who try and fit research into a box. He asks why we do research and maintains that the results of the research

should add to the scope and precision with which a paradigm can be applied. The way to obtain results usually remains very much in doubt - this is the challenge of the puzzle. Solving the puzzle can be fun, and expert puzzle-solvers make a very nice living. To qualify as a puzzle (as a genuine research question), a problem must be characterised by more than the assured solution, but at the same time solutions should be consistent with paradigmatic assumptions. Despite the fact that novelty is not sought and that accepted belief is generally not challenged, the scientific enterprise can and does bring about unexpected results. Kuhn adds that the new theory is taught in tandem with its application to a concrete range of phenomena.

The rather brusque definition of research given by Emory and Cooper (1991:15) as 'a systematic inquiry aimed at providing information to solve problems' differs significantly from that of Kuhn who views research as a process that is not concerned with discovering the unknown, but rather 'a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education'. Many scientists reject this ironic comment and argue that research involves breaching new frontiers of scientific knowledge and rigour as well as gaining new insights in research.

The purpose of the present study is two-fold:

- to explore and describe the disposition of speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages in business towards the prospect of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry in Limpopo and Gauteng.
- to establish the need to develop a lexicography and terminology for Northern Sotho that would equip the language suitably for its elaboration and use as a communication medium in commerce and industry.

The researcher uses a qualitative research method to describe, interpret and reconstruct the subjectively meaningful world of the L₁ (native) speakers of Northern Sotho and others who participated in the study.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Lourens (1996:116) notes that a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design is used to answer the research question. Qualitative research is used to investigate the nature of social phenomena by taking account of the features, nature and character of phenomena such as interrelationships, situations, groupings, problems and the similarities, differences and relationships between components of such phenomena.

Krathwohl (1993:82) describes 'exploration' as follows:

poking around where others haven't, trying something to see what happens, bringing fresh eyes to old situations — discover new situations and relationships to understand.

Krathwohl (1993:83) continues by saying that 'exploration' precedes 'description', which captures findings so that one can fit them with explanations and then test or validate the explanations.

The phenomenological method used in qualitative research involves an endeavour to understand the subjective and cognitive perspectives of respondents who have had the lived experiences that informed the perspectives. The goal of using this method is to provide a systematic description of the entire unfolding of the lived experience and thereby capture the meaning of the experiences for whoever participated in them (Kvale, 1983:184; Omery, 1984:50).

Leedy (1993:139) argues that:

... all research methodology rests upon a bedrock axiom: the nature of the data and the problem for the research dictates the research methodology ... If the data is verbal, the methodology is qualitative, if it is numerical, the methodology is quantitative. There is of course, an alternative to this strict dichotomy. It consists of a hybrid variation ... under the designation of triangulation.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the above explanation.

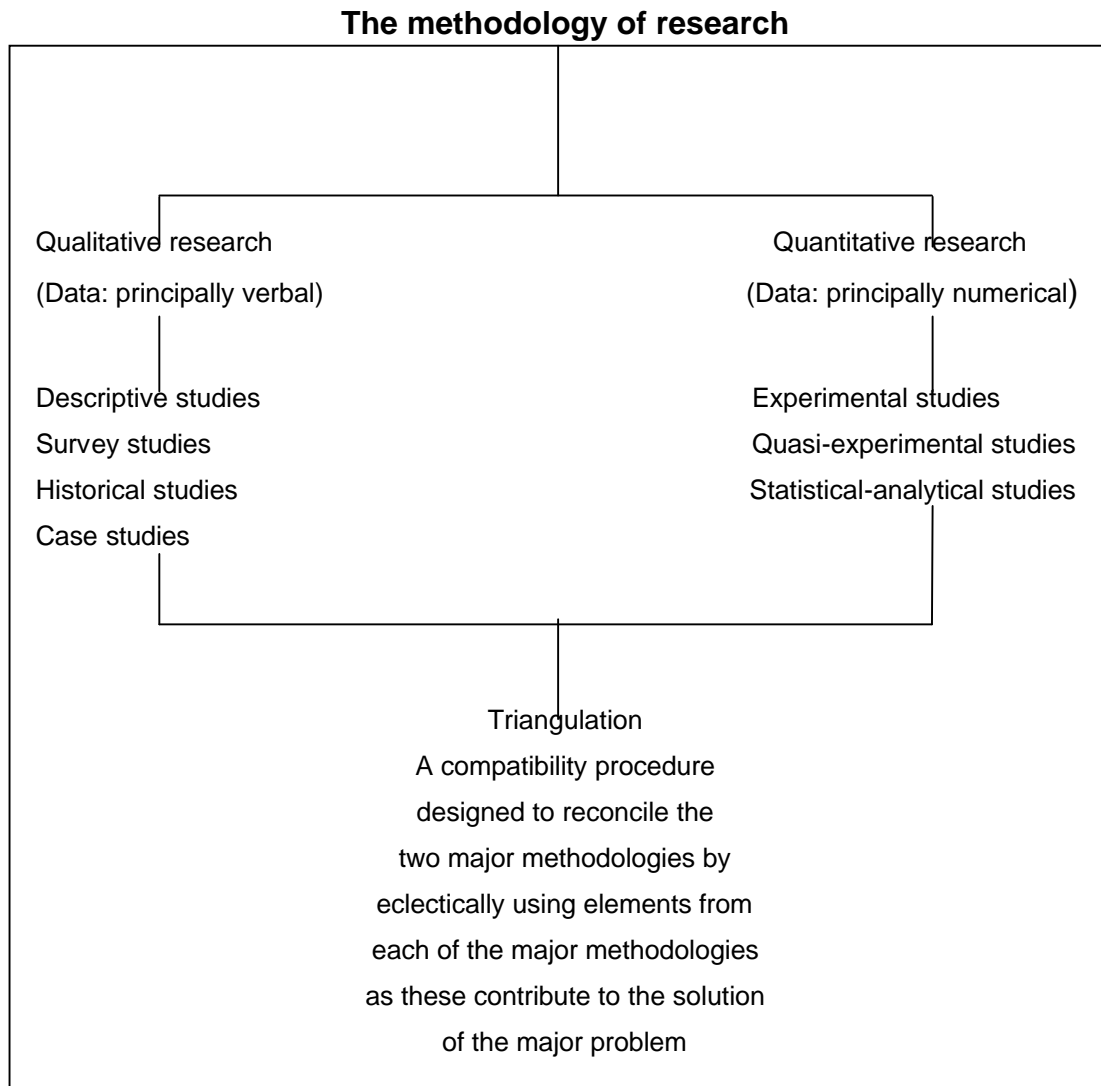


Figure 3.1: The research methodology (Leedy, 1993:145)

3.2.1 Research design

There are many conflicting arguments about the meaning of research design. Selltitz et al. (1965:50 in Mouton et al. 1988:32) define it as the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that is calculated to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy of procedure. They emphasise further that the words 'research design' imply their literal meaning: design and plan.

Maxwell (1996:4 in Lourens 1996:116) concurs with Selltiz et al. (1965:50 in Mouton et al. 1988:32) by describing a research design as 'a plan or protocol for carrying out or accomplishing something (esp. a scientific experiment)' and rejects the view out of hand that a research design is rarely repeated from one study to another.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design is used to answer the research question. This research strategy involved in-depth interviews with selected students and managers working in different sectors of commerce and industry. The process was used for the express purpose of discovering respondents' general disposition regarding the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

3.2.2 Paradigm choice

Kuhn (1977:119-148 in Pajares 1998:127) holds that the choice of a succeeding paradigm can never be unequivocally settled by logic and experiment alone. The values and tastes of the scientific and relevant community, scientist bias, and the aesthetic appeal of the paradigm are all factors in the decision-making process.

However, according to Miller et al. (1992:08), the selection of a paradigm is important in scientific investigation, as it forms a frame of reference for the particular investigation:

A paradigm represents a patterned set of assumptions regarding reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology), and the particular ways for knowing about that reality (methodology).

The assumptions referred to in Miller et al. (1992:08) determine how one engages with and comes to understand the world. It is up to each researcher to decide which assumptions are acceptable and appropriate for the topic of interest, as the methods used by the researcher have to be consistent with the selected paradigm.

As noted by Taylor and Bogdan (1984:2), two major theoretical perspectives are dominant in the social sciences:

1. The positivist perspective is concerned with the external facts or causes of social phenomena rather than people's subjective state.
2. The phenomenological perspective is concerned with and committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's own perspective. The important reality is what people perceive it to be.

The phenomenological perspective is chosen as frame of reference for this study. There are conflicting 'accents' in the methodological discourse of phenomenology. The aim of this method is somewhat eclectic in that the object of mainstream phenomenological methodology is to illuminate, as human phenomena, the feelings that people experience. For example, black people tend to experience white's behaviour when they negotiate business transactions (e.g. in shop) as creating a distant and hostile atmosphere which makes them feel uneasy, whereas whites make no particular emotional investment in the process and merely getting on with the task at hand.

3.2.3 A qualitative research paradigm is adopted

A qualitative approach is adopted in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation and to determine the disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho as well as others towards the prospective use of the language in a business environment, a scheme which they may find as conceptually incomprehensible and unsympathetic if not cold and forbidding ('a kind of mysterious black box').

The study is very complex and poses a number of threats to the findings:

- § Firstly, the researcher concludes from observations made informally at a wedding feast in Limpopo province that people who want to do business are far more interested in making money than in what language the other party to the transaction is speaking.

- § Secondly, another threat is the migration of people from other parts of Africa into South Africa. Besides an inbound migration many South Africans have been moving ground from one province to the other. Consequently no province in South Africa has a homogeneous or stable population, especially as far as Black South Africans are concerned. Since the repeal of the Influx Control (Act – 1992) most speech communities in South Africa have been multicultural and multilingual. There has been considerable movement of groups of speakers of one language from one region to the other. The 'speech community' targeted notionally for this study has become blurred. Migration always has a direct or indirect influence on speech communities, and the participants in this study are no exception. Setting plays an important role in qualitative research and its significance. This type of influence on speech communities is described by Haugen (1972:325) as 'language ecologies', which he defines as the study of interactions between any given language and its 'environment', the underlying premise being that a language does not exist in isolation from its environment, where 'environment' means the 'society that uses [a language] as one of its codes'.
- § Thirdly, the indigenous African languages have been nominally elevated from vernacular to official status without considering a process that will fast-track a systematic corpus planning model so that they can perform their elaborative and wider functions in all sectors (especially in commerce and industry).
- § The fourth perceived threat is the lack of a national language in the South African dispensation. This is the language of identity – that is, the language for the nation that everybody can identify themselves with. There is the ideology that language is an instrument for citizenship. While some scholars argue in favour of a single national language to enhance unity as mentioned earlier others are opposed to such a notion.

3.2.4 Characteristics of qualitative research

In the broadest sense 'qualitative research' produces descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Taylor & Bogdan 1984:5).

Bogdan and Bilken (1982:27–30) note five characteristics of qualitative research, although all of them are not always or equally present in everyday settings:

Qualitative research:

- § draws data directly from a natural setting, while the researcher is the key instrument (the operating assumption being that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs);
- § is descriptive and the significance of an act, gesture or word cannot be captured if it is divorced from its context while researchers who make use of it tend to analyse data inductively and do not search out data to prove or invalidate hypotheses based on preconceived notions.

In this study the research strategy involves in-depth focus group interviews with selected students and business people from Limpopo and Gauteng, and questionnaires were sent to 300 respondents to gain an overview of respondents' salient reasons for and against using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

3.3 POPULATION

As noted by Best and Khan (1993:13), a population is any group of persons who share one or more characteristics in which the researcher is interested. The respondent population (subject) may comprise some or all of the members of the relevant group.

The respondent population for this study was made up as follows:

- Persons selected had featured in the magazine *Enterprise*, which publishes a list of aspiring black entrepreneurs and other black people who 'have achieved success' in business. Most of the respondents were black managerial employees in industry. A few white managers were also roped in.
- Respondents were also recruited from students enrolled with the University of Johannesburg and the erstwhile Technikon SA (now Unisa) for business programmes such as Marketing, Technology, Office Management, Human Resources and Public Relations, etc.
- ANC and APLA ex-combatants who speak a variety of indigenous African languages who were also interviewed to shed further light on the situation under review.

3.4 SAMPLING

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Business people and managers in commerce and industry were selected for the first phase. Selected sampled students were invited to participate voluntarily in the focus group interviews, at dates and times that would suit their schedules. Their permission was solicited to use an audiotape recorder during interviews (telephonic and face-to-face) to record data for analysis. The researcher used facilitative communication to encourage respondents to share their perceptions regarding the main reasons why native Northern Sotho speakers and other language speakers would be disposed for and against using Northern Sotho in commerce and industry.

After picking the initial sample and drawing some conclusions from the group, the researcher tested the robustness of the conclusions by deliberately selecting persons whose actions contradict the conclusions. The researcher deliberately roped in ANC and APLA ex-combatants' participation in the interviews. This group did not fit the profile of the original respondents but were solicited in order to test the qualitative robustness of the research. The researcher exercised the prerogative to deliberately select respondents whose actions might contradict the conclusions drawn from the research, or who might be deviant in their views. The

idea was that testing would strengthen the logic of the method. When done properly such a method could prove to be a stringent ground for the findings.

The ANC and APLA ex-combatant's group like the other groups also indicated that they are adversely affected by language practices. The above action by the researcher was informed by Krathwohl's (1993:324) theory that purposive sampling goes beyond a normal sampling.

The rationale and power of purposeful sampling was situated in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Sliep, 1995:44). The researcher was able to ascertain problem areas more accurately and in more detail by focusing in depth on a small number of carefully selected information-rich cases that had shed light on the issues of the study with particular reference to the validity of the underlying assumptions (cf. Chapter 5 for findings).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

A two-pronged approach to data collection was adopted in this study. Although the research design is qualitative rather than quantitative in character, some variables were readily expressed in quantifiable terms.

As noted by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:97), mixed-method studies combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single or a multiphase study involving triangulation techniques. Mixed methods of data collection include in-depth individual phenomenological interviews, focus group discussions, and a literature review. Triangulation is necessary for comprehensiveness and in-depth understanding of the study (Babbie, 1975:45).

This study was undertaken in two phases:

3.5.1 First phase: questionnaire survey

The procedure was as follows:

- 300 questionnaires were posted to respondents and followed up with telephonic interviews. Only 201 questionnaires were returned.
- Data were captured in cross-tables and reduced to frequency tables.
- A literature review covering a range of concepts concerning the study was undertaken.
- The research problem was approached from different perspectives (e.g interdisciplinary) and various findings were synthesised.

3.5.2 Second phase: focus group interviews

The procedure in this phase was as follows:

- Face-to-face focus group interviews were conducted.
- Interviews were arranged in respondents' respective regions.

Nine focus group interviews were conducted. The focus groups were organised as follows:

- Six groups consisting of six to seven Northern Sotho students each from the erstwhile Technikon SA (now Unisa), who were enrolled for a degree or diploma in business, commerce, credit management, marketing, entrepreneurial and small business management as well as office management and technology.
- One group of five Northern Sotho students from the University of Johannesburg who were enrolled for BCom and BCom (Accounting) and BCom (Law) degrees.
- Two groups consisting of eight ANC and APLA ex-combatants each. They spoke a variety of African languages. These respondents were not working at the time and were struggling to find jobs.

A question addressed to all focus groups was: 'Do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry?'

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data were subjected to descriptive analysis. Data from the questionnaires were captured and reduced to frequency tables that were analysed and interpreted in graphs. Finally, data from the transcripts were reduced to themes, categories and sub-categories.

3.7 DATA VERIFICATION

Data verification requires that the researcher ensures internal validity of the data analysis results. Validity in this context refers to the establishment of guidelines for distinguishing accounts that are credible from those that are not. After the interviews had been transcribed, in this study, the researcher ensured that the collected data were ordered by arranging them (Tesch, 1990:138) into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units (Patton, 1990:144). Grounded Theory Techniques (Tesch, 1990:138) of analysing qualitative interview data were used. Data from both phases were sorted into themes, categories and sub-categories. The researcher used a variety of strategies and techniques to ensure that the findings of the study were trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985:120) call the concept of ensuring credibility of data, the trustworthiness of data. To ensure trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba propose a model which is based on four criteria, namely, truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. To facilitate an explanation of how these strategies were applied the researcher will order her explanation according to the four strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:120).

3.7.1 Truth-value

At first there is a matter of credibility that establishes truth-value. Truth-value is the strategy that demonstrates the researchers' confidence in the truth of the findings based on the research design, context and participants (informants).

Within the scientific paradigm, truth value (also called 'internal validity') depends on the degree of isomorphism between the study data and the phenomena to which they relate. There is one reality, and information is internally valid if it describes that reality and facilitates its control and manipulation. The naturalistic inquirer, however, deals with multiple realities, and in the area of behavioural studies, these realities exist in the minds of people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:120).

In a nutshell, truth value establishes whether the researcher has ascertained confidence in the credibility of the findings of the study, and the researcher is justifiably confident of the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants and context (Lincoln Guba, 1985:120). According to Sliep (1995:44) the question is: 'How well has internal validity of the study been established and how valid were the 'instruments' used as a measure of the phenomenon under study?'

Gathering of data through the questionnaire and the focus group interviews enabled the researcher to compare the information received and to make judgment on the likelihood of the information being the truth.

3.7.2 Applicability

Secondly, there is the issue of transferability that establishes applicability. Applicability subsists in the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts and perspectives relating to groups. It is predicated on the possibility of extrapolating from findings to larger populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:120).

However, as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985:124) there are two approaches to applicability in qualitative research. First, the strength of qualitative research orientations lies in naturalistic settings with few controlling variables, and not in generalisation which is precluded because every research situation has unrepeatable defining characteristics. Transferability is more apt as the standard against which applicability of qualitative data should be assessed. Research meets this standard when findings correspond with contexts outside the study

situation. The two contexts are determined by the level of similarity between them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1985:124) argue further that the researcher does not necessarily have to transfer findings to other settings, but should present adequate descriptive data by adopting a qualitative approach to allow other people to make a comparison, if necessary. However, transferability, or the application of the findings to another setting or context, was not the main aim of the study, as it was a contextual study. The main method to enhance transferability though, was in-depth descriptions of the research process. The participants consisted of a diverse group of speakers of Northern Sotho and other official languages. It is important to appreciate in this context that the information generated from the questionnaire consisted of individuals' perceptions rather than factual data, thus precluding replicability because not every set of responses can be expressed in numerical terms, therefore such responses cannot be subjected to statistical manipulation, which is why the researcher augmented the quantitative approach with a qualitative approach.

3.7.3 Consistency

Consistency is a reasonable criterion for any investigation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:120) the concept of 'auditability' is used in the scientific paradigm to measure consistency and is regarded as a more appropriate naturalistic approach. Auditability requires simply that the work of one evaluator (or team) be tested for consistency by a second evaluator or team. After examining the work of the first, the second team can conclude: 'Yes, given that perspective and those data, I would probably have reached the same conclusion'. It must be conceded that the consistency of a naturalistic study is more difficult to establish than that of a scientific study. Nevertheless, the methods available for establishing consistency in naturalistic studies, while perhaps not so elegant as their scientific counterparts, give to naturalistic studies at least the minimum level of consistency required to produce trustworthy data.

Patton (1990:43) notes that consistency is assessed in terms of the extent to which similar or comparable research findings will eventuate if the investigation is reproduced with the same subjects in a similar context.

The above explanations refer to the question of whether the findings would be consistent if the study were replicated with the same participants or in the similar context. The technique of using triangulation in this study ensured that findings are legitimate and the methods were duly tested. The researcher maintains that the findings are consistent. If another study were to be undertaken with similar objectives, the research would yield similar outcomes.

3.7.4 Neutrality

The issue of neutrality, commonly called 'objectivity' in the scientific paradigm, is probably the thorniest one that can be raised in respect of naturalistic investigation. Lincoln and Guba (1985:124) ask:

how an inquiry can be objective if it simply 'emerges' and has no careful controls laid down *a priori*; as well as the observations to be made or the data to be recorded are not specified in advance; and on the admission of its practitioners, there exist multiple realities capable of being plumbed to different depths at different times by different investigators.

Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Krefting, 1991:216) regard neutrality as the extent to which findings emanate exclusively from the respondents and the conditions of the research, and not from other predispositions. Objectivity is decisive for quantitative research in that it is determined according to whether a proper distance between researcher and subjects is maintained to diminish bias.

In qualitative research, however, a decrease in the distance between researcher and subject increases the value of the findings. The emphasis on neutrality in qualitative research is shifted from the researcher to the data, so that the neutrality of the data is considered rather than that of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Krefting, 1991:217).

The above three authors propose that conformability should be the standard of neutrality. Conformability is achieved when truth-value and relevance of data are established. Conformability was a common denominator for this study from start to the end.

3.8 Triangulation

Another technique used to ensure credibility is triangulation – both of data sources and of theory. Data sources included the questionnaire and focus group interviews. Triangulation is one of the two useful techniques for establishing structural corroboration. It was used in this study by combining different methods of data collection: the researcher compared the responses obtained through the questionnaire with the verbal responses obtained in the face-to-face interviews, and then corroborated the responses.

Denzin (1971:177 in Lincoln & Guba, 1985:124) puts it as follows:

Triangulation forces the observer to combine multiple data sources, research methods, and theoretical schemes in the inspection and analysis of behavioural specimens. It forces him to situationally check the validity of his causal propositions. ... It forces him to temporarily specify the character of his hypothesis. ... It directs the observer to compare the subject's theories of behaviour with his emerging theoretical scheme. ... The naturalist must have an intimate familiarity with all his data sources so he can judge which ones to discount, which ones to treat as negative cases, which ones to build into his representative cases.

The purposive sampling used in this study was directed at ensuring data validity through triangulation, which consisted of using more than one source to confirm data, confirming observations reported by different observers, and confirming information gained from various data collection methods (Krathwohl, 1993:121). As noted by Mathison (1988 in Krathwohl:122) triangulation is intended to provide support for a finding.

3.9 OPERATIONALISATION OF FIELDWORK

As indicated in this chapter, the research design was implemented in two phases.

First a quantitative approach was adopted. The researcher developed a questionnaire that was handed over to MarkData who were commissioned to check, verify and examine whether the questions were properly constructed by the researcher, and to make 300 copies of the questionnaire. The sample selected for the study was huge, so the researcher consented to MarkData sending out the questionnaires and conducting 201 telephone interviews with the respondents on her behalf after she had received a grant from her employer, the erstwhile Technikon SA (now Unisa).

The questions were taken directly from the questionnaire. The questionnaires were coded into data that were encoded and subsumed under categories that were arrayed into frequency tables. Cross-tabulations and a technical report were submitted to the researcher. The assistance of STATCON at the University of Johannesburg was solicited. Then the data captured by MarkData were reduced to frequency tables that were converted into cross-tables that made sense to the researcher.

In the second phase interviews were conducted with three groups of students (cf. pars, 1.6.2.2 & 3.5.2) from three different communities. They were:

- § former Technikon SA students
- § former RAU students
- § ANC and APLA ex-combatants

- **Former Technikon SA students**

Students enrolled for studies related to commerce and industries were selected. The respondents were already engaged in employment that is consistent with their academic pursuits. Their home language is Northern Sotho.

- **Former RAU students**

These students were full-time commercial students who intend to follow careers that were consistent with their academic pursuits. Their home language is Northern Sotho aspiring to work in the industries associated with their studies. These students reported that they had not studied Northern Sotho at high school, since they went to Model C and private schools. Northern Sotho was not one of the subjects taught at these schools.

- **ANC and APLA ex-combatants**

Two purposively sampled focus groups were made up of the ANC and APLA ex-combatants whose home language was not necessarily Northern Sotho, as they spoke a variety of African languages. At the time of the interviews they were struggling to find employment. These were men and women in their late 30s to 50s.

An audiotape recorder was used in all interviews with the consent of the respondents who participated voluntarily. Data were captured in transcripts and then coded and decoded and reduced to themes, categories and sub-categories.

3.10 THE DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The design of the empirical investigation is a structured questionnaire, consisting of 21 closed-ended items (see Annexures A to D). Annexure C contains a map of South Africa, and Annexure D the original questionnaire compiled by the researcher. The original copy is included with this text. MarkData reworked the questions, and they were reduced to cross-tables. STATCON used SPSS to reduce the data to frequency tables, and the questions are reflected in the frequency tables. The discussion of the questions follows after the frequency tables.

The questions were designed by the researcher to determine the perceptions of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and speakers of other languages

regarding the use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry; and to ascertain the shortcomings of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

The questions were designed around the following thematic constructs:

- Socio-economic background of respondents
- Language use in commerce and industry
- Level of linguistic proficiency in Northern Sotho
- The use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry
- Prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

3.11 RESPONDENTS

201 respondents returned their questionnaires: 40,8% were from blacks, 49,8% from whites, 4% from coloureds and 5,5% from Indians. Of these respondents, 161 lived in Gauteng and 40 in Limpopo. Their average ages were between 35 and 44. Their levels of education were as follows:

- 9,5% had a National Senior Certificate.
- 30,8% had a National Diploma.
- 25,9% had a BTech or bachelor's degree.
- 13,4% had an honours or equivalent degree.
- 16,4% had a master's degree.
- 3% had a PhD degree.

Thus 89,5% had a tertiary qualification; and only two respondents had qualifications lower than Grade 12 at 0.5% each.

The profile of the respondents was delineated according to gender, occupation and age. The researcher chose respondents with varied profiles on purpose. Their occupations reflected above-average socio-economic status and potential influence in that 94,5% of them are directors, managers, general managers and company executives. In fact, 35,3% had been managers for over ten years by 2003 and had become policy makers. They were therefore in a position to

suggest or recommend (in consultation with other stakeholders) the language they would prefer to use in commerce and industry since such policy decisions also affect employees in the lower echelons of organisations.

3.12 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE FREQUENCY TABLES

Biographical questions were included among the 21 items of the questionnaire. Some of the selected questions are discussed. The discussion does not follow a traditional sequential model as defined by Maxwell (1996:4 referred to in Lourens, 1996:116). He argues that the model may be appropriate for quantitative research but certainly lacks relevance to the logic and process of qualitative research, in which each design component may need to be reconsidered or modified in response to new developments or changes in some other component. Moreover, in a qualitative study: 'the research design should be a reflective process operating through every stage of a project'. He affirms that activities of collecting and analysing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions, and identifying and eliminating validity threats usually occur more or less simultaneously and interactively. He emphasises that research design does not begin from a fixed point or proceed through a determinate sequence of steps; it recognises and responds to the importance of interconnections and interactions among the different design components. However, he warns against the possibility that the design components may 'swirl around' in an undefined space without doing justice to some particularly important connections between components.

The above description of qualitative research reflects the *modus operandi* required for this study. The process of conceptualising and discussion and analysis of the questions does not follow chronologically. Some of the questions from the questionnaire are discussed in pairs, mainly because they had certain elements in common. Hence, the order in which the questions from the questionnaire are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 has to do with their relationship to one another and their commonality. This strategy is used to avoid repetition. For example, Question 17(b) is used to probe the responses to Question 21(a), and these two questions are therefore discussed as a pair.

Question 1 is aimed at establishing the socio-economic background of the respondents and their salient attitudes towards their home language. As noted, the group who answered the questionnaire mostly had tertiary qualifications and,

presumably, a fairly good command of English. Therefore, they may not necessarily have shared a perceived need to use their home language alongside English in commerce and industry. Table 3.1 reflects the occupations of these respondents.

Table 3.1: Occupation distribution of respondents

Question 1: Present occupation					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
	Teacher/lecturer	7	3,5%	3,5%	3,5%
	Engineer/computer engineer/architect	8	4%	4%	7,5%
	Human resource/public relations/admin.	87	43,3%	43,3%	50,7%
	Lawyer/accountant/economist	12	6%	6%	56,7%
	Nurse/social worker/pastor	1	0,5%	0,5%	57,2%
	Own business	3	1,5%	1,5%	58,7%
	Sales and marketing	4	2%	2%	60,7%
	Director/manager/general manager/CEO	68	33,8%	33,8%	94,5%
	Journalist/editor	11	5,5%	5,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 3 is aimed at establishing the ratio between males and females in these industries. The results are reflected in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Gender ratio of respondents

Question 3: Gender					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
	Male	129	64,2%	64,2%	64,2%
	Female	72	35,8%	35,8%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Questions 10 and 11 are aimed at establishing to what extent the respondents use the 11 official languages at work and in a variety of settings. Question 10 requires respondents to indicate how often they use any of the 11 languages to conduct business. Table 3.3 reveals which languages they use most frequently.

Table 3.3: Usage of official languages in business and other contexts

Question 10						
		Very regularly	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	Total
q10a Indicate the frequency with which you use Afrikaans to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	43	41	83	34	201
	%	21,4%	20,4%	41,3%	16,9%	100%
q10e Indicate the frequency with which you use English to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	182	16	3		201
	%	90,5%	8%	1,5%		100%
q10p Indicate the frequency with which you use isiNdebele to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	7	15	37	142	201
	%	3,5%	7,5%	18,4%	70,6%	100%
q10t Indicate the frequency with which you use siSwati to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	7	17	34	143	201
	%	3,5%	8,5%	16,9%	71,1%	100%
q10s Indicate the frequency with which you use isiXhosa to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	6	20	43	132	201
	%	3%	10%	21,4%	65,7%	100%
q10z Indicate the frequency with which you use isiZulu to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	10	25	45	121	201
	%	5%	12,4%	22,4%	60,2%	100%
q10g Indicate the frequency with which you use Sepedi to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	5	9	34	153	201
	%	2,5%	4,5%	16,9%	76,1%	100%
q10sw Indicate the frequency with which you use Sesotho to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count		3	18	180	201
	%		1,5%	9%	89,6%	100%
q10v Indicate the frequency with which you use Setswana to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	5	8	22	166	201
	%	2,5%	4%	10,9%	82,6%	100%
q10ts Indicate the frequency with which you use Tshivenda to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	3	5	24	169	201
	%	1,5%	2,5%	11,9%	84,1%	100%
q10nd Indicate the frequency with which you use XiTsonga to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	2	4	13	182	201
	%	1%	2%	6,5%	90,5%	100%

English and Afrikaans are obviously used more extensively than the other nine official languages and sign language. Even after twelve years of democracy the *status quo* in commerce and industry has not changed.

Question 2 is aimed at establishing the distribution of respondents across a range of occupational contexts. The results are reflected in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Range of occupational contexts in which respondents are employed

Question 2: What kind of occupation are you involved in?				
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Education	10	5%	5%	5%
Commerce/ wholesale/ retail/ repair of motor vehicles	28	13,9%	13,9%	18,9%
Manufacturing	7	3,5%	3,5%	22,4%
Marketing	4	2%	2%	24,4%
Finance/insurance/real estate/business services	48	23,9%	23,9%	48,3%
Health	6	3	3	51,2
Building/construction	8	4%	4%	55,2%
Agriculture/hunting/forestry/fishing	7	3,5%	3,5%	58,7%
Mining and quarrying	4	2%	2%	60,7%
Electricity, gas and water supply	7	3,5%	3,5%	64,2%
Transport/storage and communication	28	13,9%	13,9%	78,1%
Community/social and personal services	44	21,9%	21,9%	100%
Total	201	100%	100%	

There seems to be no correlation between Question 2 above and Question 11(a). These questions are aimed at detecting links between specific languages and occupational sectors if the assumption is made that all occupational sectors had been adequately and equally transformed. Table 3.5 reflects that English and Afrikaans are the dominant languages currently used in commerce and industry:

Table 3.5: Frequency of language usage in commerce and industry

Question 11a: Which one of the languages in Question (10) above do you use most frequently in commerce and industry (written or oral)?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
	1 Afrikaans	24	11,9%	11,9%	11,9%
	2 English	172	85,6%	85,6%	97,5%
	6 IsiZulu	1	0,5%	0,5%	98%
	7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)	1	0,5%	0,5%	98,5%
	9 Setswana	1	0,5%	0,5%	99%
	1, 2	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
	1, 2, 6	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

The fact that black South Africans in top management positions still prefer English to local African languages does not bode well for the development of the indigenous African languages. The reasons for black South Africans' language preference is that they associate English with power and success because it provides access to an unparalleled range of knowledge sources and intelligence and is an important language of commerce and industry.

Only one respondent indicated that he/she uses Northern Sotho in commerce and industry. According to Table 3.5 the usage of all the sampled indigenous African languages stands at the same low to vestigial a figure of 0,5%. Most of the respondents ticked English as the language they use most.

The purpose of Question 11(b) is to follow up on Question 11(a) in order to determine the main reasons for the highest frequency of usage indicated for a particular language. The responses obtained have been reduced to frequency tables. The results are reflected in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Reasons for pre-eminence of a particular language in commerce and industry

Question 11b: Why do you use (language in Question 11a) most often?									
	8. Language of product	7. Language of clients	6. Policy / Business language / International language	5. Practical or multicultural / All speak and understand	4. Language of company	3. Mother-tongue	2. Language of area	1. Use different languages in different settings	TOTALS =
1 Afrikaans	6	4		1	1	3	10		25
2 English	7	16	47	51	41	5	2	1	170
6 IsiZulu				1					1
7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)	1								1
9 Setswana	1	1							2
1, 2								1	1
1, 2, 6		1							1
TOTAL=	15	22	47	53	42	8	12	2	201

English has a high rating in most of the scores, especially as a language understood by many. It is a prominent choice as a vehicle of policy announcement and a company medium of communication. It is noteworthy that ten respondents indicated Afrikaans as the language of the area, but only one respondent reported that it is the language of the company in category 4 as opposed to 41 who indicated English in the same category. Only one respondent indicated Northern Sotho as a language of product.

The purpose of Question 12(b) reflected on the frequency table numbered 3.7 is to determine respondents' least frequent usage of languages under investigation, as well as the reasons for the low usage.

Table 3.7: Reasons for least usage of certain languages in commerce and industry

Question 12(b): Why do you use (language in Question 12a) least frequently?									
	8. No clients with that language	7. Usage infrequent	6. Not used in business / Not that often	5. Few speakers in business	4. Few speakers in area	3. No/good command language/better command of another language	2. Usage is social	1. Afrikaans or English dominant language	TOTALS =
1 Afrikaans		4	11	13	10	4	1	16	59
2 English					1	1		2	4
3 IsiNdebele	2	1	1	1	4	2			11
4 SiSwati	3			2	1	2		1	9
5 IsiXhosa	1	2	1	2	4	1		1	11
6 IsiZulu	1	1	3	2	1	3		3	14
7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)			2	2	4	2			10
8 Sesotho					4			3	7
9 Setswana		1		2	2			1	6
10 Tshivenda	1		1	1	3			1	7
11 XiTsonga	1			1	2				4
12 European								4	4

It is noteworthy that least frequent use of Afrikaans is reported by only 4 respondents, and only one person reports no English speakers in his/her area. Speakers of Northern Sotho attribute the infrequent use of their language to the low number of Northern Sotho speakers in the area and the fact that the language is not officially recognised and promoted in the company.

Question 20 (cf. Table 3.8) is aimed at identifying sectors or groups that maintains that the usage of Northern Sotho as a language of business should be increased. Note that over a third (37,8%) of respondents (more than double the next highest response to any other item) felt that no increased usage was required in any sector. To this should be added the zero response to the category

'HR, PR/HR practices' which seems anomalous, given that this is where multilingualism is needed in view of the customer orientation of the sector.

Table 3.8: Groups of people among whom Northern Sotho usage in business should increase

Question 20: Which one of the following groups of people do you believe should use Northern Sotho as a business language more frequently?		
	Count	Percentage
1. Broadcasters, journalists, etc.	10	5%
2. Professors, lectures, teachers, students, pupils	34	16,9%
3. Government employees/personnel	3	1,5%
4. HR, PR/HR practices	0	0
5. People in industry	2	1%
6. Other (specify)	2	1%
7. None	76	37,8%
1, 3, 5	2	1%
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	19	9,5%
1, 2, 3	7	3,5%
1, 2, 3, 4	10	5%
1, 2	21	10,4%
2, 3	3	1,5%
2, 3, 4, 5	2	1%
2, 5	3	1,5%
3, 4	2	1%
1, 3	1	0,5%
2, 3, 4	1	0,5%
1, 2, 5	1	0,5%
1, 2, 3, 5	2	1%

Sentiment in favour of promoting Northern Sotho in the education sector is recorded by the second highest number of responses to items on the questionnaire, which seems to imply that this significant segment does not perceive Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry, while the rest do perceive it in that role, but perhaps for informal purposes only.

Question 17(a) is aimed at establishing whether the respondents studied Northern Sotho during or after their schooling years. The responses are reflected in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Respondents who studied Northern Sotho at school

Question 17 (a): Have you ever studied Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	50	24,9%
No	151	75,1%

Question 17 (a) is used to probe the responses to Question 14 (cf. below). Question 17 is aimed at determining whether regular use of the language will be effectively promoted by academic teaching or by other informal means. It is interesting to note that 49,8% and 50,2% of respondents reported 'little' or no use of Northern Sotho while only 3% reported moderate and higher usage (cf. Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Frequency of individual usage of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry

Question 14: Express as a percentage your average Northern Sotho usage in commerce and industry in general.					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Moderately or more	6	3%	3%	3%
	Little	94	46,8%	46,8%	49,8%
	Never	101	50,2%	50,2%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

The negligible usage reported by 49,8% seems disproportionate compared to the 24,9% of respondents who reported that they studied Northern Sotho (cf. Table 3.9).

Question 13 is used to probe the responses to Question 14 by determining the contexts in which moderate or more usage of Northern Sotho takes place (cf. the 3% in Table 3.10) in commerce and industry. The respondents are allowed to choose more than one answer, and this is why the raw figures exceed the given sample of 201. The results are reflected in Table 3.11:

Table 3.11: Areas where Northern Sotho is used

Question 13: Where do you use Northern Sotho?	
	Totals
In meetings in commerce and industry	17
Only socially	39
In business spheres	16
In informal settings with peers or colleagues	27
I hardly use it / Never	114
Frequently – friends and colleagues	35
With customers	35

Note 43.28% (cf. p. 122) indicating active workplace usage which seems disproportionately high in light of 9% reporting that Northern Sotho is their home language, and 24,9% indicating that they had school tuition in Northern Sotho (cf. Table 3.9).

Question 7 is used to determine distribution of respondents' home languages. One respondent indicated Northern Sotho and Zulu as parallel home languages, and another indicated three parallel home languages, which is quite rare and may have a complex explanation, except to say that it is probably a function of the typical diversity of African cultures and societies (cf. Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Distribution of respondents' home languages

Question 7: What is your home language (mother tongue)? (Choose only one.)					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
	1 Afrikaans	64	31,8%	31,8%	31,8%
	2 English	47	23,4%	23,4%	55,2%
	3 IsiNdebele	2	1%	1%	56,2%
	4 SiSwati	1	0,5%	0,5%	56,7%
	5 IsiXhosa	14	7%	7%	63,7%
	6 IsiZulu	10	5%	5%	68,7%
	7 Northern Sotho	18	9%	9%	77,6%
	8 Sesotho	2	1%	1%	78,6%
	9 Setswana	19	9,5%	9,5%	88,1%
	10 Tshivenda	4	2%	2%	90%
	11 Xitsonga	7	3,5%	3,5%	93,5%
	12 European	7	3,5%	3,5%	97%
	13 Other African	1	0,5%	0,5%	97,5%
	14 Indian	2	1%	1%	98,5%
	1, 2	1	0,5%	0,5%	99%
	6, 7	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
	6, 8, 9	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 21(a) is aimed at gauging the respondents' attitudes towards Northern Sotho by asking whether they would consider reading a business newspaper published in Northern Sotho. The responses are reflected in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13: Likelihood of respondents reading a newspaper published in Northern Sotho

Question 21a: Would you read a business newspaper published in Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	40	19,9%
No	161	80,1%

Affirmatives (19,9%) came in lower than reported in Northern Sotho tuition of 24,9% (cf. Table 3.9), but disproportionately higher than reported home language speakers (cf. Table 3.12).

Question 17(b) is intended to probe reasons for not reading a (business) newspaper in Northern Sotho (e.g. lack of interest or proficiency as a result of inadequate formal knowledge or a sense of inadequacy/lack of self-confidence) caused by an alienating business culture. This question is a follow-up on Question 17(a). The results are reflected in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14: High-level proficiency in Northern Sotho

Question 17 (b) Up to which level did you study Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
- Std 5	7	13,5
Std 6–7	11	21,2
Std 8–9	17	32,7
Std 10	9	17,3
Graduate/postgraduate	3	5,8
Short Course	5	9,6

Question 21(b) is aimed at establishing respondents' reasons for not reading a newspaper in Northern Sotho. Question 21(b) is a follow-up on Question 21(a), and there is a correlation between the two. The responses are reflected in Table 3.15.

Table 3.15: Reasons for low prospective readership of a newspaper published in Northern Sotho

Question 21(b): Why would you not read a Northern Sotho newspaper?		
	Count	Percentage
Can't speak it/still learning/difficult	120	80%
Prefer English/Afrikaans/Zulu etc.	16	10,7%
Do not read newspapers	1	0,7%
English is business language / Majority English	3	2%
Would if could understand	2	1,3%
No newspaper	8	5,3%

Lack of proficiency rather than unwillingness seems to be the overriding reason why a newspaper in Northern Sotho will not be read, particularly since the responses to Questions 17 and 21(a) reveal a positive attitude (cf. Table 3.13).

Question 16(a) is aimed at establishing the extent to which Northern Sotho is being used in written communication. Of the respondents, 3% answered 'yes' and 97% 'no'. The results are reflected in Table 3.16:

Table 3.16: Use of Northern Sotho in workplace-related correspondence (official and business)

Question 16 a: Do you write your correspondence (e.g. memorandums and circulars) in Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	6	3%
No	195	97%

Question 19 is aimed at establishing respondents' disposition (for or against) regarding the prospect of developing Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The results are reflected in Table 3.17.

Table 3.17: Importance of developing Northern Sotho as a business language

Question 19: Do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho as a business language?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	71	35,3%
No	130	64,7%

A decisive majority (64,7%) recorded a negative response and 35,3% were positive.

3.13 VALIDITY OF TRIANGULATION

The theory and purpose of triangulation are discussed at the beginning of this chapter. An independent qualitative approach to data collection was adopted to verify, authenticate and amplify the findings of the survey in the first phase of the research by means of focus group interviews.

3.13.1 Transcribing the interviews

This was the first step in the analysis of the interview data (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:103). Information captured on audiotape was transcribed verbatim with as little editing as possible to increase readability without changing the character of the respondents' comments, even if they used poor grammar or appeared confused at times.

Steward and Shamdasani (1990:104) advise that the researcher supplements the script with additional observational data obtained from interviewees in the form of non-verbal cues, gestures and behavioural responses. Such additional notes were kept by the researcher.

3.13.2 Generating themes, categories and sub-categories

After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher ensured that the collected data were rearranged (Tesch 1990:138) to organise the available information into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units (Patton 1990:144). These categories vary between phrases, sentences and long exchanges between individual respondents (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990:105).

The researcher identified salient themes, recurring ideas or language patterns or beliefs that link people and settings together. Category generalisation involves noting regularities in the setting or people chosen for participation in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1994:114).

Grounded Theory Techniques (Tesch, 1990:138) of analysing qualitative interview data were used in this study and data were reduced to sub-categories, categories and themes which revolve around the following constructs:

- Socio-economic background of respondents
- Exclusive use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a communication barrier in commerce and industry
- Existence of language policies in commerce and industry
- Language function: the use of Northern Sotho for higher functions (i.e. elaboration of Northern Sotho usage)
- The importance of developing Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

The information given in this study provides an overview or general profile of the respondents who participated in the focus group interviews, with particular reference to salient issues concerning the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The main themes emerging from the analysis are presented in Table 3.18.

Table 3.18: Summary of themes, categories and sub-categories

Themes	Categories and sub-categories
1.1. Exclusive use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a communication barrier in commerce and industry	1.1.1 Acknowledgement and preference of English as the primary language of commerce and industry (positive and negative perceptions) 1.1.2 Lack of English proficiency as a disadvantage in finding a job
2. Socio-economic background of respondents	2.1 Proficiency in English is regarded as an index of educational level
3. Existence of language policies in commerce and industry	3.1 Awareness of policy documents in the workplace in commerce and industry
4. Disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho as well as others regarding the prospect of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry	4.1 Prospects for Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry 4.1.1 The use of Northern Sotho as a regional language in commerce and industry 4.1.2 The informal and formal use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry 4.1.3 Dispositions regarding the reading of Northern Sotho (business) newspapers 4.1.4 The language used when sending messages by e-mail and SMS 4.1.5 The function of Northern Sotho as a language for higher functions in commerce and industry
5. Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology	5.1 Development of Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

3.14 SUMMARY

This research design involved a sample of 261 randomly selected respondents. 201 responded in the 1st phase of the study, and focus group interviews were conducted in the second phase. At this stage 44 interviewees were mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho.

Semi-structured focus group interviews were used to complement the questionnaire results. People speaking different languages were selected. Northern Sotho is not a stand-alone language and cannot therefore function in a silo, so to speak, but is used interchangeably with the other ten official languages. It is important, therefore, to determine the dispositions of people speaking

Northern Sotho and speakers of other languages in the designated research areas about the prospect of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

Questions that needed further attention were asked in the face-to-face interviews. Questions pertaining to attitude and perception are best asked in focus group interviews. These are principles that guided the research under review. The argument that the interviewer may try to 'lead respondents down the primrose path' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:44) is not necessarily valid, since most people provide fairly honest answers in focus group interviews. An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they rarely probe deeply enough to cause respondents to lie to the interviewer.

A description of the empirical investigation has been provided in this chapter. The research methods have been explained and discussed. This chapter is a blueprint of the research design as a whole.

The first phase of the questionnaire survey has been discussed. Questions chosen randomly from the questionnaire have been outlined according to their functional structure in the value chain and had been reduced to frequency tables and cross-tabulations. Reasons for posing questions had been outlined and discussed. The data from the focus group interviews have been transcribed and delineated into main themes. The themes have been reduced to categories and sub-categories. The course of the research has been briefly discussed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter follows the tabular presentations outlined in Chapter 3 and deals with the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the first and second phases of this study. Byrne (2002:20) defines 'analysis' as breaking something up into its constituent parts and explaining the whole in terms of the properties of the parts.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the following thematic constructs:

- Phase 1: The questionnaire survey (a quantitative approach)
 - Socio-economic background of respondents
 - Languages currently used in commerce and industry
 - Level of linguistic proficiency in Northern Sotho
 - The use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry
 - Prospects for using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

- Phase 2: The focus-group interviews (a qualitative approach)
 - Socio-economic background of respondents
 - Exclusive use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a communication barrier in commerce and industry
 - Existence of language policies in places of employment in commerce and industry
 - Disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and of speakers of other languages regarding the prospect of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

- Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

The thematic constructs in Phase 2 represent the main objective of the research, namely to determine the feasibility of developing Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

4.2 PHASE 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

4.2.1 Socio-economic background of respondents

Respondents' socio-economic background is decisive for their perceived need for a language that is sufficiently developed for effective use in commerce and industry. The selected sample in this study represents a class of people who are distinctly successful in their careers in commerce and industry. Table 4.2 on page 113 indicates that English is the home language of only 2,49% of the respondents, which means it is a second or third language for the rest, who have all beaten the odds by succeeding in their various fields. The fact that 97.51% of responses indicated allegiance to a home language does not guarantee that speakers attribute real value to the putative home language. Most African people associate English with success, and they value it as a language of power and socio-economic status.

Table 4.1 (cf. p.112) presents data about respondents' indicating low- to high-frequency use of official languages in commerce and industry:

It seems anomalous or incongruous that for English no value appears under 'never' whilst Tsonga scores the highest at 90,5% which obviously means minimal to low-frequency usage in this domain of commerce and industry, whereas for Northern Sotho the figure given under 'very regularly' is 2,5% and that under 'never' is 76,1%. These statistics can be read off from Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Usage of official languages in commerce and industry (frequency)

	Very regularly	Regularly	Sometimes	Never
1 Afrikaans	21,4%	20,4%	41,3%	16,9%
2 English	90,5%	8%	1,5%	
3 IsiNdebele	3,5%	7,5%	18,4%	70,6%
4 SiSwati	3,5%	8,5%	16,9%	71,1%
5 IsiXhosa	3%	10%	21,4%	65,7%
6 IsiZulu	5%	12,4%	22,4%	60,2%
7 Northern Sotho	2,5%	4,5%	16,9%	76,1%
8 Sesotho		1,5%	9%	89,6%
9 Setswana	2,5%	4%	10,9%	82,6%
10 Tshivenda	1,5%	2,5%	11,9%	84,1%
11 XiTsonga	1%	2%	6,5%	90,5%

A high value is reflected for Zulu under 'very regularly' while other indigenous languages scored 5%, strangely followed by Ndebele and Swati at 3,5% each. Note that the corresponding number for Xhosa is 3% while a zero value is recorded for Sesotho. Northern Sotho and Setswana each scored 2,5% in the same category of languages used 'very regularly' internally and externally in commerce and industry (cf. Table 4.1). English users in this category amounted to 90,5% while the corresponding figure for Afrikaans is 21,4%. 16,9% report occasional use of Northern Sotho, in contrast with 76,1% who never use it. These tabulated values translate into the graph in Figure 4.1.

Usage of official languages in business

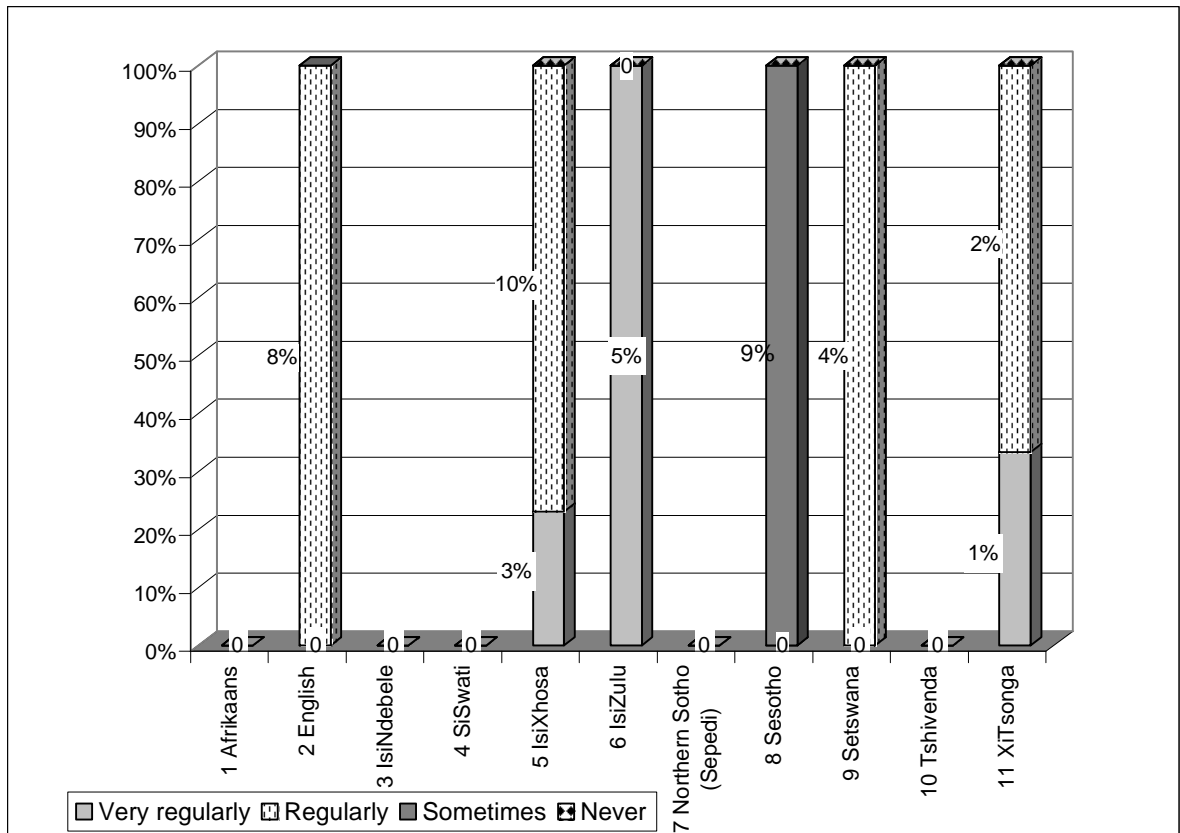


Figure 4.1: Usage of official languages in business

Only 8% of respondents reported using English 'regularly', which is to be expected since 90,5% opted for 'very regularly'. The corresponding figures in this category are 4.5% for Northern Sotho, 10% for Xhosa and 12% for Zulu.

Table 4.2 indicates that at 84.58% English is by far the dominant language in commerce and industry, but whereas only 2,49% of respondents professed to be native English speakers here, their proportion is given as 23,4% in Table 3.12. Nevertheless, in either case the figure is placed far below the usage figure. The reason given for this general preference for English (cf. Table 4.2 below) is that it is the language they understand best since it is practical and multicultural, and that everyone speaks it.

Table 4.2: Reasons for pre-eminence of a particular language in commerce and industry

	8. Language of the product	7. Language of clients	6. Policy / Business language/ International	5. Practical or multicultural / all speak and understand	4. Language of company	3. Mother-tongue	2. Language of area	1. Use different languages in different settings	Total	Total in%
1 Afrikaans	6	4		1	1	3	10		25	17,41
2 English	7	16	47	51	41	5	2	1	170	84,58
6 IsiZulu				1					1	0,5
7 Northern Sotho	1								1	0,5
9 Setswana	1	1							2	1,0
1, 2								1	1	0,5
1, 2, 6		1							1	0,5
TOTAL:	15	22	47	53	42		12	2	201	100

According to Table 4.2 the respondents indicating top priority for English amount to 23.38% (47) of the total while top priority for English and (or) Afrikaans is reported by 20.90% (42), thus leaving 44.28% who are unaware of company language policy and only two respondents who indicated that they use different languages in different settings. This is a reliable index of the respondents' knowledge or language proficiency.

Only 21% indicated that they use English because it is the language of their clients. Respondents were allowed to choose only one answer to Question 11(b) as their reasons for using a particular language (cf. Table 3.6 in Chapter 3). Hence it seems that some could not make up their mind. This is evident from the choices they made when ticking responses (e.g. none of the indigenous languages speakers chose an African Language as their mother tongue).

The above data is presented graphically as follows:

Languages used more often for particular purposes

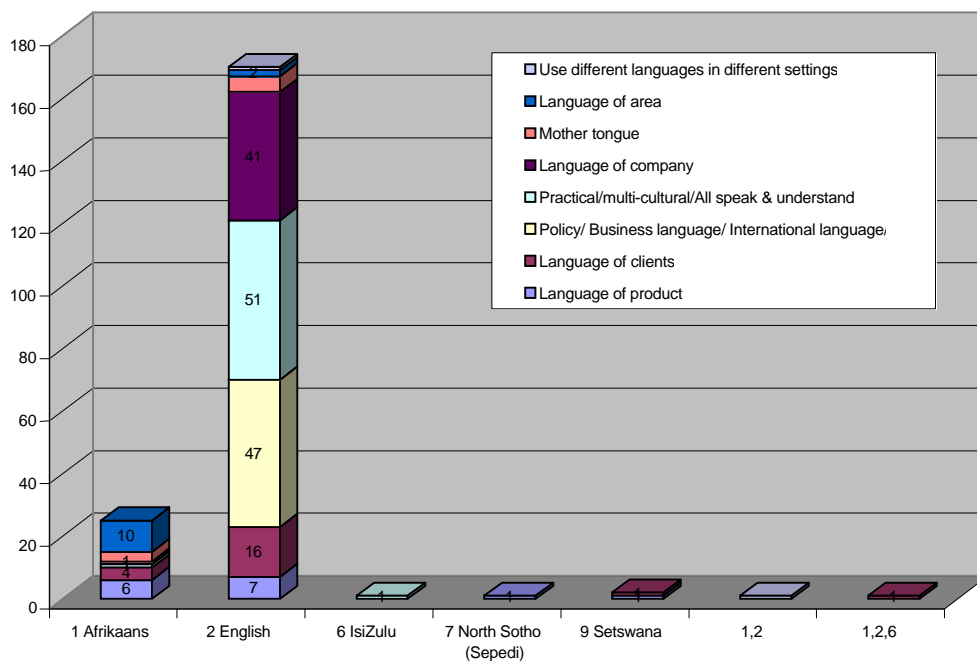


Figure 4.2: Languages used more often for particular purposes (raw data)

4.2.2 Languages currently used in commerce and industry

As indicated above, the object of Question 11(a) is to determine which language respondents use most frequently in commerce and industry. The results are given in Table 3.5 in Chapter 3 and are repeated here in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Spread of languages currently used in commerce and industry

Languages	Frequency	Percentage
1. Afrikaans	24	11,9
2. English	172	85,6
6. IsiZulu	1	0,5
7. Northern Sotho	1	0,5
9. Setswana	1	0,5
1, 2	1	0,5
1, 2, 6	1	0,5
Total	201	100

Table 4.3 above reveals that only five languages are currently used in commerce and industry in Gauteng and Limpopo. It is strange that a popular language such as South Sotho does not feature much in the Gauteng region.

The respondents indicated that five official languages are actively spoken, formally or informally, in places of employment in commerce and industry. English and Afrikaans are most prevalent. English occupies the *de jure* status as both a national and international language in commerce and industry.

Reasons given for least frequent usage of particular languages are reflected in Figure 4.3.

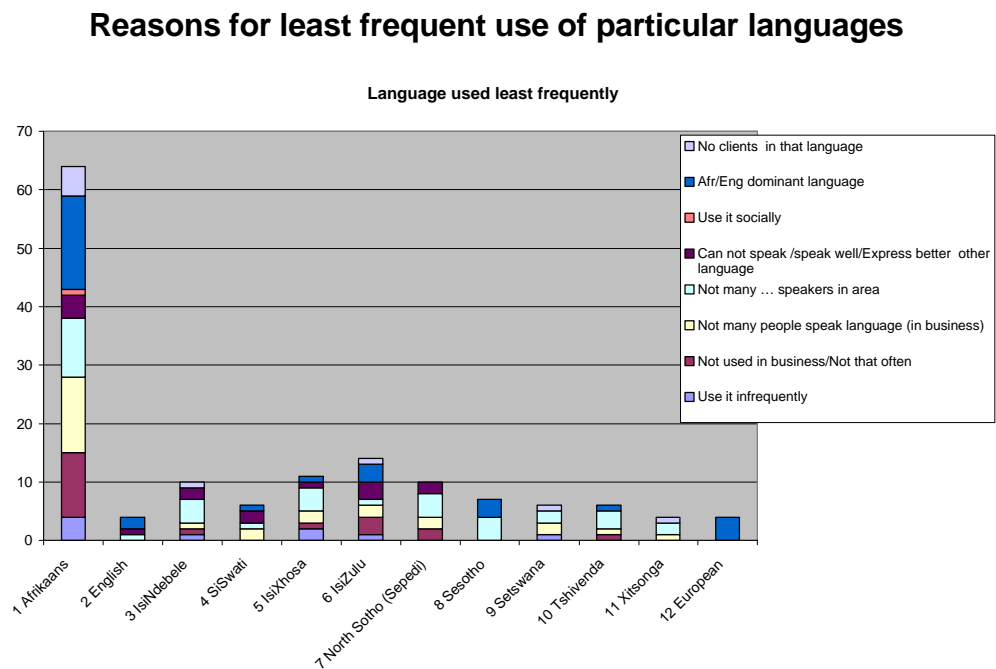


Figure 4.3: Reasons for least frequent use of particular languages (raw data)

Least frequent use of Afrikaans is reported by 29,4% and of English by 2%. The group concerned obviously work for organisations where Afrikaans is most prevalent. Only 4.98% of respondents report Northern Sotho as their least frequently used language. However, this is contradictory since most respondents ticked Afrikaans as the language they use least frequently. 6.97% of these

respondents report that they use Zulu least frequently. Nevertheless the usage frequency is higher for Zulu than for Northern Sotho, especially in Gauteng Province.

Table 4.4 gives reasons for least frequent use of particular languages as raw data which are expressed in Table 4.4 as percentages.

Table 4.4: Reasons for least usage of particular languages

	8.No clients with that language	7.Use it infrequently	6.Not used in business / Not that often	5.Not many people speak language (in business)	4.Not many speakers in the area	3.Cannot speak it ospeak it well / Express better in other language	2.Use it socially	1.Afrikaans or English dominant language	Totals	Totals in%
1. Afrikaans		4	11	13	10	4	1	16	59	29.4
2. English					1	1		2	4	2.0
3. IsiNdebele	2	1	1	1	4	2			11	5.47
4. SiSwati	3			2	1	2		1	9	4.48
5. IsiXhosa	1	2	1	2	4	1		1	12	5.97
6. IsiZulu	1	1	3	2	1	3		3	14	6.97
7. Northern Sotho			2	2	4	2			10	4.98
8. Sesotho					4			3	7	3.48
9. Setswana		1		2	2				5	2.49
10. Tshivenda	1		1	1	3			1	7	3.48
11. XiTsonga	1			1	2				4	1.99
12. European								4	4	1.99

As indicated in Table 4.4, only 4.98% of respondents (10) reported Northern Sotho as their least frequently used language. Note that 45% reported that they have no command of the language. Furthermore zero usage was reported for Northern Sotho because according to respondents no clients speak the language.

4.2.3 Level of linguistic proficiency in Northern Sotho

As Webb (1999:22) notes a high degree of linguistic or ethnic intolerance is expressed in South Africa as extreme stigmatisation and stereotyping of particular language communities, probably mainly as a result of the country's history of segregation. It is therefore hardly surprising that 45% of respondents reported that they cannot speak Northern Sotho (cf. Table 4.4).

Until 1960 a similar situation prevailed in Australia in that a policy of monolingualism (English only) was enforced by government, with the result that it became a matter of economic survival for the country's inhabitants to use the English language proficiently, and that English speakers became increasingly intolerant towards Aboriginal and foreign language speakers (Tisdell, 2002:259).

This issue, noted by Webb (1999:22), is what the respondents enrolled with the University of Johannesburg referred to in their focus group interviews (cf. p.138).

4.2.4 The use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry

According to Figure 4.4 below the data for personal usage of Northern Sotho in places of employment in commerce and industry are as follows: 50,2% reported no usage, 46,8% very low frequency, but 3% moderate or higher frequency, which is interesting because it proves the existence of demand for a language other than English and/or Afrikaans in commerce and industry. The results are presented graphically in Figure 4.4.

Use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry

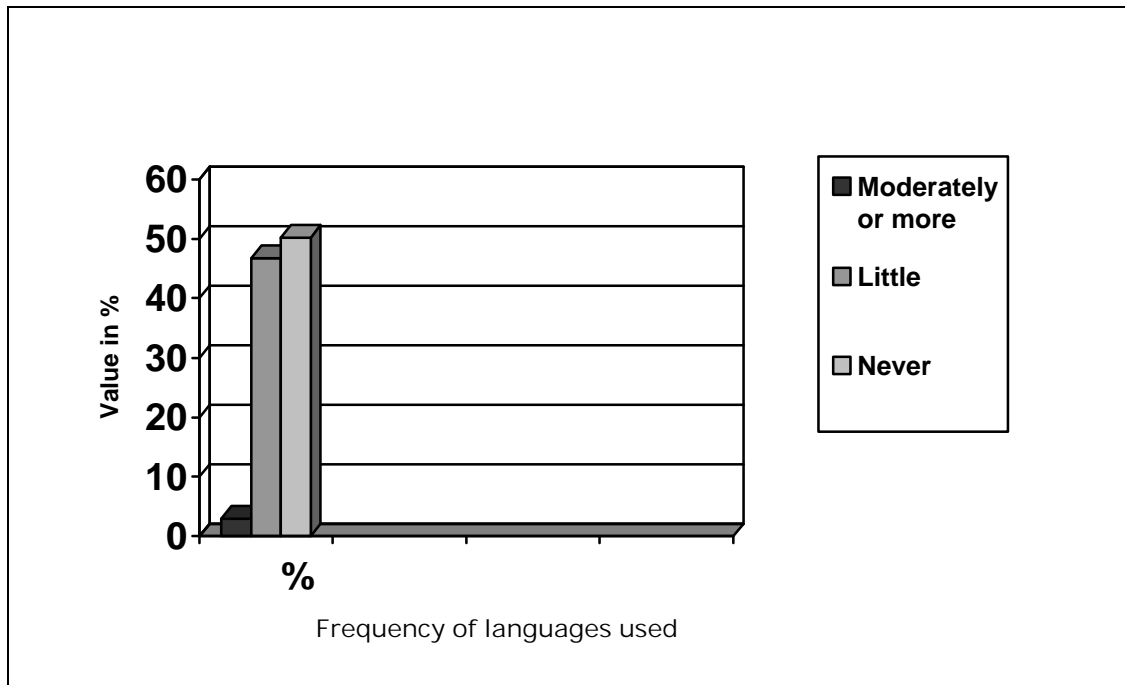


Figure 4.4: Use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry

The following reasons are given in Figure 4.5 below for the moderate to higher frequency of Northern Sotho usage.

20% reported that their clients spoke English. Their use of Northern Sotho in the workplace depended on the language needs of their clients. However, 13% of respondents reported Northern Sotho as their main language at work. This response is understandable since they live in Limpopo Province where Northern Sotho is prevalent and it is consistent with business requirements in any case. 68% reported hardly any use of Northern Sotho at work. Figure 4.5 indicates reason for using Northern Sotho in commerce and industry as follows:

Reasons for using Northern Sotho (raw data) at work

(n = 196)

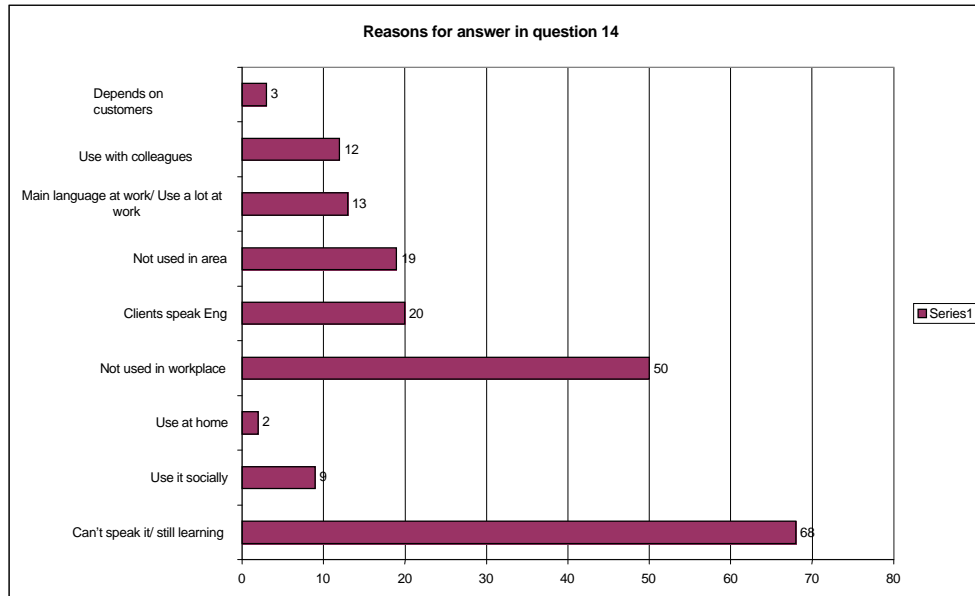


Figure 4.5: Reasons for using Northern Sotho (raw data) at work

The reasons why 3% of respondents use Northern Sotho are listed as follows:

- § 13 indicated that Northern Sotho is the main language at their workplace, and that they use it frequently.
- § 12 indicated that they use it with colleagues.
- § 9 respondents reported that they use it socially.
- § 2 respondents reported home use.

Σ = **36 which equals 18.37%**.

The figures above are interesting. The 16.92% (excluding home usage) may include respondents who reported rare usage of Northern Sotho at work (cf. Figure 4.4). The overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they did not use Northern Sotho at work for the following reasons:

- § 34,69% (68) — still learning the language and cannot speak it
- § 25.51% (50) — the language is not used at work
- § 1.02% (20) — clients speak English (cf. Table 4.2)

Respondents reported the following contexts in which Northern Sotho is used (presented graphically in figure 4.5).

- § in meetings - 8.46% (17)
- § general business activities - 7.96% (16)
- § interaction with customers - 17.41% (35)
- § conversation with friends and colleagues - 17.41% (35)
- § in social settings - 19.40% (39)

Naturally, social settings may include interaction with friends and colleagues. The 43.28% reporting active workplace usage is far beyond expectation. The low to vestigial frequency reported by 56,72% is rather close to the 50,2% under 'never' in Figure 4.6.

Workplace-related and other contexts in which Northern Sotho is used (raw data)

(n = 277)

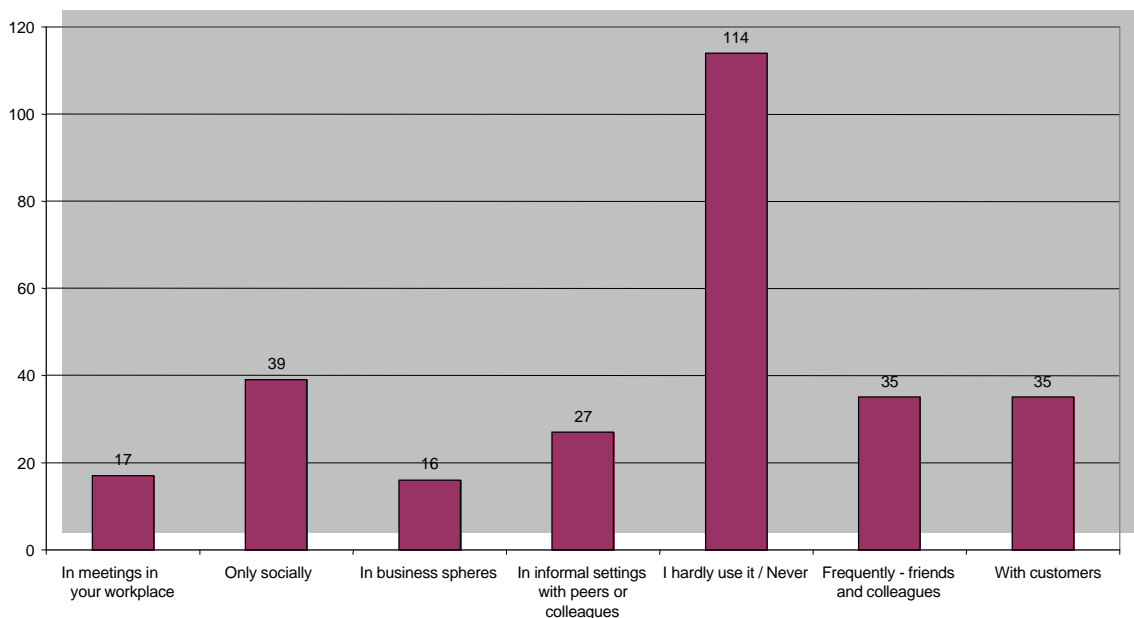


Figure 4.6: Workplace-related and other contexts in which Northern Sotho is used (raw data)

Figure 4.7 (cf. p.123) reflects the comparative proportions in which a representative spread of languages in South Africa are used in family and general social contexts.

Afrikaans and English are almost equal at 30% and 32,1% respectively, followed by Northern Sotho at 7.3% and Swati and Ndebele at 0.5% and 1.0% respectively. The figures for Swati and Ndebele are significantly lower than the 3,5% recorded previously for both languages. The 4.0% reflected for Zulu is down from the 5% reflected in Table 4.1.

The above results are presented graphically in Figure 4.7.

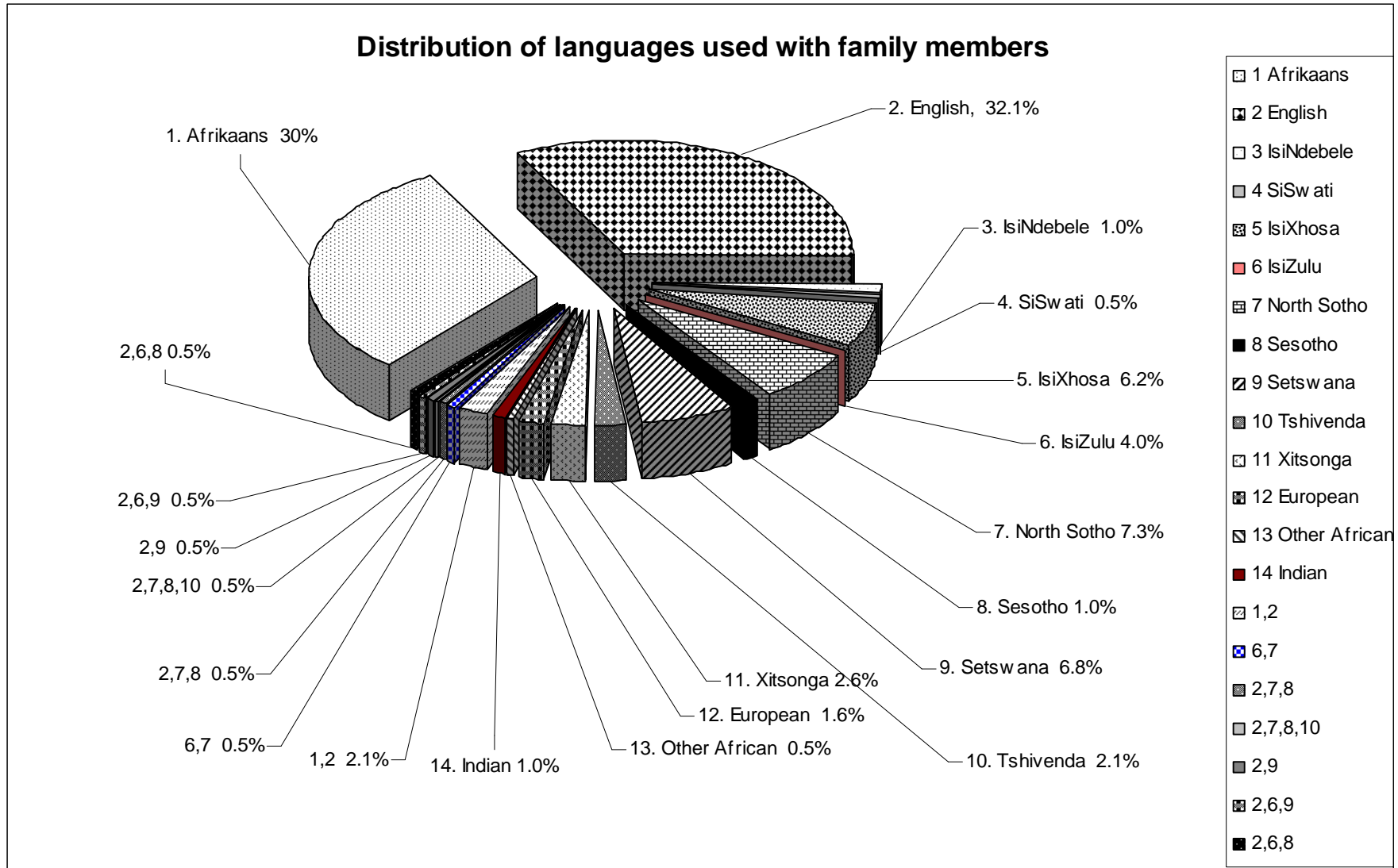


Figure 4.7: Distribution of languages used with family members

The 32,1% shown for English in the pie-chart above is obviously consistent with class language usage as reflected in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 reflects the classification of language used as a function of race and socio-economic class in South Africa.

Table 4.5: Relationships between race, class and language in present-day South Africa (adapted from Webb 1999:13)

Class	Blacks	Indians	Coloureds	Afrikaans-speaking	Other non-English-speaking whites
Higher	English	English	English	Afrikaans or English	English
Middle	English or home language	English	English or Afrikaans	Afrikaans	English
Working class	Home language	Home language or English.	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	Home language or English

Language use for all race groups in South Africa is class-related. Upper echelons all use English while lower echelons use languages related to racial origin (cf. Table 4.5 above). According to the class structure, blacks, Indians, Afrikaans-speaking coloureds and other non-English-speaking whites exhibit the everyday language behaviours and patterns reflected in Table 4.5.

Since television and radio are the most popular media sources of information and entertainment in many households it has been interesting to establish the viewing and listening habits of the group of respondents included in this study.

Question 18 is aimed at establishing whether respondents watch television in general. Affirmatives amounted to 76,6% while the rest were non-viewers. The results are presented graphically in Figure 4.8.

Comparative proportions of viewers and non-viewers of TV

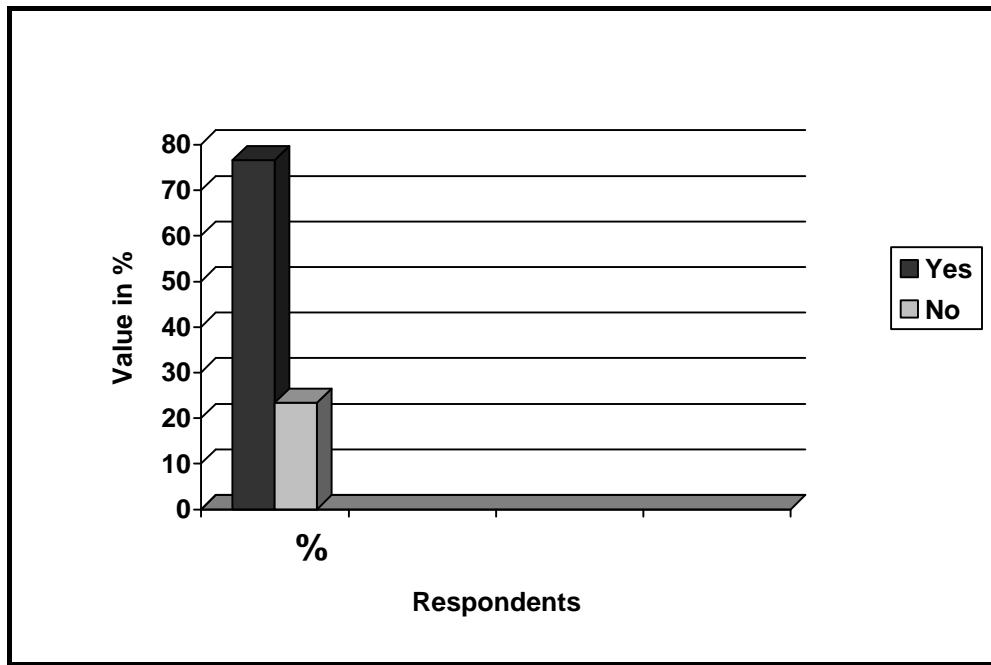


Figure 4.8: Comparative proportions of viewers and non-viewers of TV

Question 18(b) is aimed at determining respondents' viewing behaviour. Unfortunately no Northern Sotho programmes dedicated to Northern Sotho viewers were available during the research period, except the news. There were scattered snatches of Northern Sotho dialogue in 'soopies' such as *Muvhango*, *Isidingo*, *Generations*, *Scandal* and *Backstage* on e-TV. These programmes are mainly in English with a little Northern Sotho here and there. 61% of respondents indicated that they did not watch Northern Sotho programmes, while 54% reported that they did watch the Northern Sotho news and 32% Northern Sotho dramas. This is encouraging indeed. The results are presented graphically in Figure 4.9.

Northern Sotho TV programmes that the respondents watch

($n = 172$)

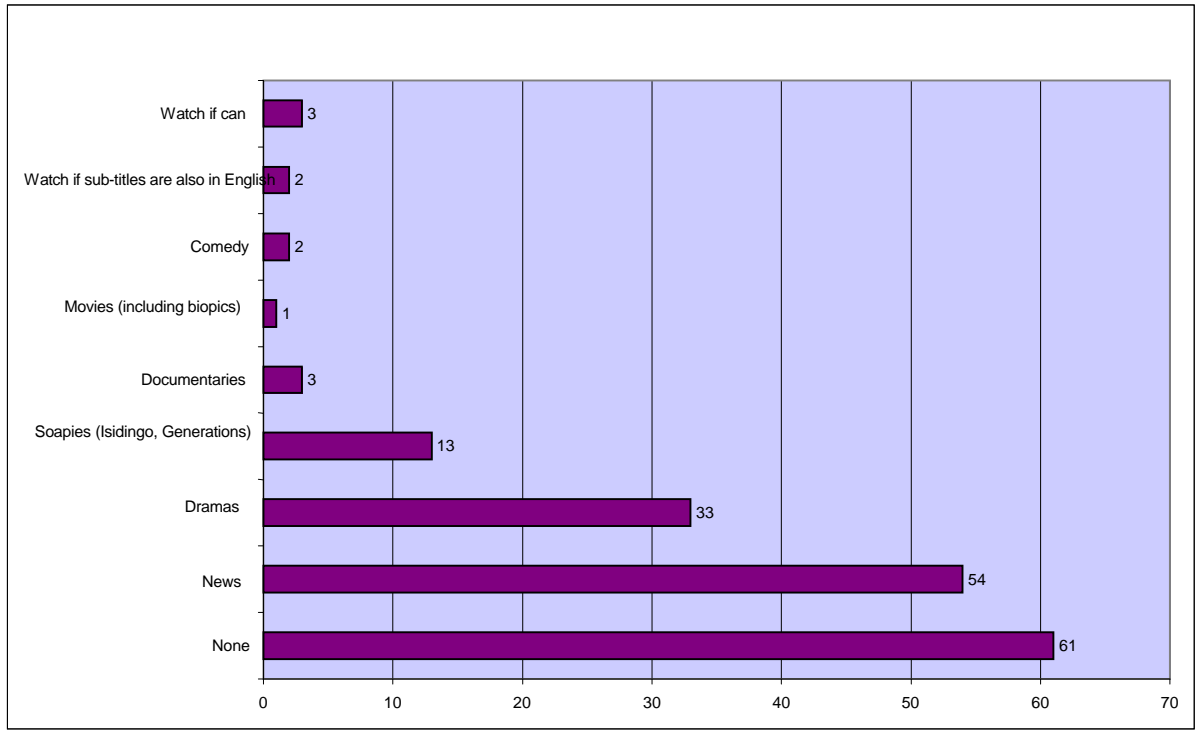


Figure 4.9: Northern Sotho TV programmes viewed by respondents

The viewership of Northern Sotho dramas (32%) seems inconsistent with 3% who reported that they use Northern Sotho moderately or more (Figure 4.4), which seems to indicate a contingent of non-mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho who watch Northern Sotho programmes.

Question 21(a) is aimed at establishing whether respondents would read a business or other newspaper published in Northern Sotho, and the results are given in Table 3.13 in Chapter 3. Affirmative answers amounted to 19,9% and disclaimers to 80,1%. The results are presented graphically in Figure 4.10.

Potential readership of Northern Sotho newspaper

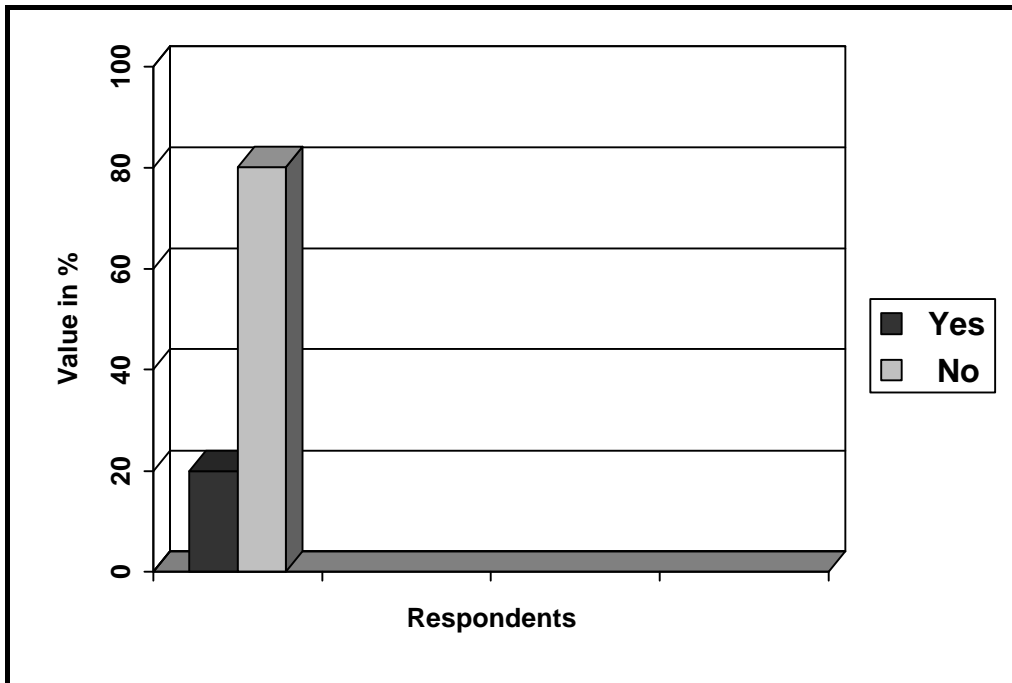


Figure 4.10: Potential readership of Northern Sotho newspaper

These results are understandable since most respondents do not have a working knowledge of Northern Sotho. As noted by Reagan (2002:420), the central problem faced by South Africans in responding to the very real fact of language diversity is the understandably close link in the minds of many South Africans between ethnicity and race. It is natural to expect that people whose home language is not Northern Sotho may not be proficient in that language. Most indigenous black Africans in urban areas speak more than one indigenous language.

However, these results do not imply that Northern Sotho people do not read newspapers published in Northern Sotho. A survey conducted by MarkData for PanSALB (PanSALB, 2000) reveals that native speakers of African languages are receptive to magazines and newspapers directed at them even though some are published in English. A preference for *Ilanga*, a Zulu newspaper, is expressed by 42% of the respondents included in the PanSALB study. The survey therefore indicates a clear need for newspapers published in indigenous African

languages. *Seipone* is a tabloid size newspaper that publishes in Northern Sotho, Venda and Tsonga and is distributed throughout Limpopo. The newspaper is based in Polokwane.

The MDDA (The Media Development and Diversity Agency) has taken the initiative in Limpopo Province by producing the newspaper. This organization was established through legislation as a partnership between government and the big media organisations to create an enabling environment for media development and diversity in South Africa, through providing financial and other support to community and small commercial media projects. No research has been conducted to establish how *Seipone* is being received and to determine its future viability.

Question 21(b) is a follow-up on Question 21(a) and is aimed at establishing why respondents are unlikely to read a Northern Sotho newspaper. Is it that they cannot speak the language, that they are still learning it, or perhaps that they feel that it would be difficult to read? The results are reflected in Table 3.15 in Chapter 3 and are presented graphically in Figure 4.11.

Reasons why a Northern Sotho newspaper may/would not be read

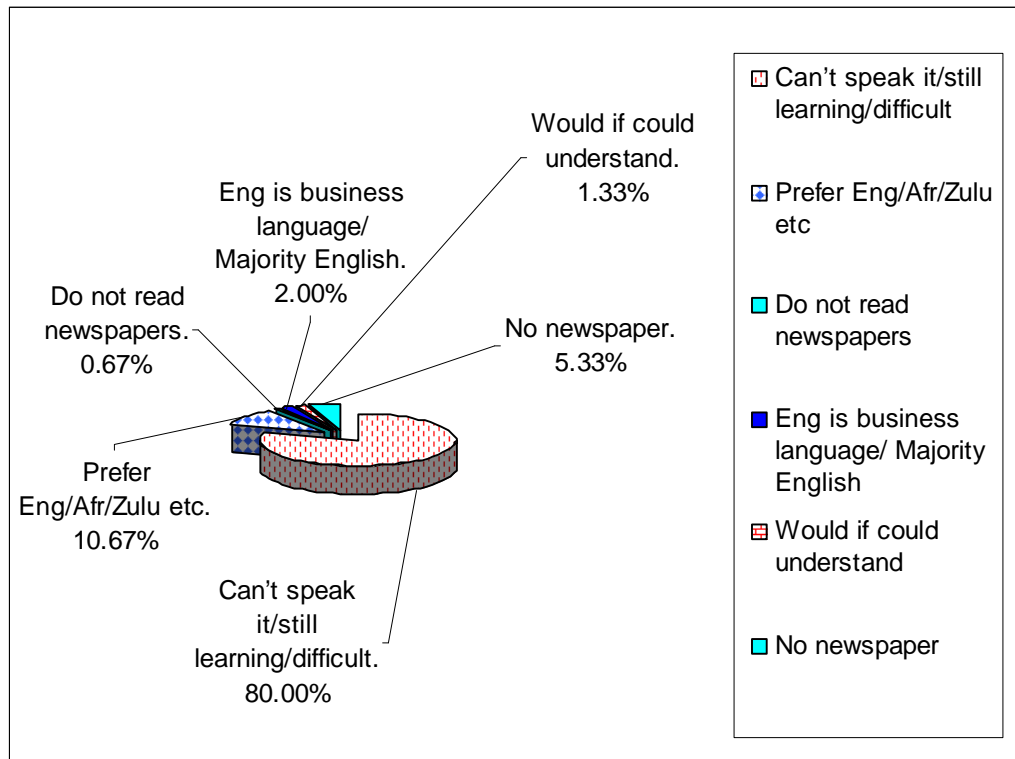


Figure 4.11: Reasons for low prospective readership of a newspaper published in Northern Sotho

The results indicate that the main problem is neither attitude nor ethnicity, but respondents' inadequate command of Northern Sotho. They are not averse to the use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry. Only 10,7% (16) indicated that they prefer another language.

The disadvantage of closed-ended questions is that they preclude the possibility of probing responses. All questionnaires are structured instruments that are completed anonymously, which makes it difficult to gain clarity on some issues. This became evident when respondents were asked to select the most appropriate of three possibilities. Respondents tend to rely on a clear choice between right and wrong because of a psychic dependency — they have a mental habit of looking for a cue. In other words, they are not mentally equipped to deal with 'grey areas' of uncertainty that require autonomous reasoning and a decision based on balance of probability.

As reflected in Figure 4.9, 1,3% of respondents indicated that they would read a Northern Sotho newspaper if they could understand the language. This response is contrary to the reasons given by the majority of respondents because it is attributable to the questionnaire design.

4.2.5 Prospects for the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

The fact that 46,8% of respondents reported marginal use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry (cf. Figure 4.2) shows that there is room for another language besides English and Afrikaans in commerce and industry.

Question 16 is aimed at establishing the extent to which Northern Sotho is used in written communication, and the results are reflected in Table 3.16 in Chapter 3. Only 3% of responses were affirmative. The rest were negative.

Question 19 is aimed at establishing whether respondents are in favour of developing Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry, and the results are reflected in Table 3.17 in Chapter 3. Most answers (64,7%) were negative, but a significant minority (35,3%) were positive. The latter figure is higher than the 32% who reported that they watched the Northern Sotho dramas, and disproportionately higher than the 9% who reported that Northern Sotho was their home language.

Any language is an invaluable repository of human experience, joys, sorrows and unique perceptions of the world. People have an inalienable right to own, preserve and defend this natural heritage (MacMillan, 1998:17).

The results reflected in Table 3.17 do not come as a surprise. This study confirms the natural tendency that different speech communities hold different views on the prospective fortunes of languages other than their own. The negative response to Question 19 may be at odds with the respondents' real views, since the members of the questionnaire survey group speak a variety of home languages and represent a variety of ideologies. It stands to reason that the

respondents would not necessarily pledge allegiance to a language other than their own.

As noted by Guba and Lincoln (1981:120), questionnaires are impersonal and impose a significant curb on response range. In this study, Question 19 cannot be pursued to probe attendant matters such as undeclared or covert reasons behind responses.

4.3 Phase 2: Qualitative analysis and interpretation

The purpose of the questionnaire survey in Phase 1, among others, is to determine the extent to which all official languages are used in commerce and industry. The aims of the focus-group interviews are:

- to investigate whether the current hegemonic status of English and Afrikaans in commerce and industry is experienced as a communication barrier by non-speakers of English or Afrikaans; and
- to determine mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho's disposition about the prospects of that language to gain currency in commerce and industry.

As indicated (cf. section 3.7), nine focus group interviews were conducted. The transcripts of these interviews are provided in **Annexure B**. The researcher has done some editing of the transcripts to enhance readability in cases where respondents used poor grammar that may confuse the reader. However, the researcher has been careful to preserve the original character of respondents' comments.

The first theme emerging from the transcripts is as follows:

4.3.1 Theme 1: THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF ENGLISH OR AFRIKAANS EXPERIENCED AS A COMMUNICATION BARRIER IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The theme and its categories and subcategories are reflected in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: The exclusive use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a communication barrier in commerce and industry

Themes	Categories and sub-categories
1. Exclusive use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a communication barrier in commerce and industry.	1.1 Acknowledgement and preference of English as the primary language of industry (positive and negative perceptions). 1.2 Lack of English proficiency as a disadvantage in securing employment.

The researcher sought to determine respondents' views regarding the overriding use of English or Afrikaans as opposed to the addition of Northern Sotho as a communication medium in commerce and industry.

Category 1.1: Acknowledgement and preference of English as the primary language of commerce and industry (positive and negative perceptions)

Some respondents acknowledged and reacted positively to the proposition of accepting or adopting English as the preferential language of commerce and industry in South Africa. These respondents regard English as an international or world language by which they can gain access to international business and interact with foreign countries like China. Those who argue in favour of English maintain that people studying towards business qualifications are not being equipped to work in South African businesses only, but also to be marketable in overseas sectors of commerce and industry. They do not regard the use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry as a worthwhile objective and express their views as follows:

The only medium that we can interact with the world is English.

I think we cannot use ... ah ... Northern Sotho as a language of economics and commerce because commercially and economically it is not just a national issue but an international issue in terms where, like, we have to interact with foreign countries. It would be, like, to a disadvantage for a China to learn Sotho when he comes to any negotiations or when conducting meetings in terms of, like, with business people.

.... I do not think that is important to use Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry because most people who are in particular engaged in commerce and industry have an ambition to go internationally with whatever qualifications they obtained.

Grin (2006:77) and Ricento (2005:355) warn that socio-economic interests are defined, typically, within the rational choice framework, which posits that individuals make choices on the basis of their own self-interest. In this calculus, language is simply treated as another variable which can be chosen or discarded based on the speaker's assessment of relative (and optimal) value (e.g. English is worth more than, say, Northern Sotho, so a rational individual would opt to choose English).

Some respondents perceive the exclusive use of English or Afrikaans in commerce and industry as a barrier to their performance in these domains. Some indicated that they had no choice in the matter but were compelled to use English or Afrikaans only. These respondents expressed their views as follows:

... sometimes you have no choice but speak English, especially at work ...

... I passed my matric [National Senior Certificate] in 1994, but straight talk I did not know how to write a letter in English just to ... express what I wanted to say. It was so difficult for me to write a letter in English.

... I am working with an Afrikaans-speaking person in my office. Sometimes when she ... we write letters I am typing letters and she just like say please type this for me. It is difficult for me because I took for one letter maybe 20 minutes to type the letter because I did not know what

does that sentence mean, so even the mistakes sometimes is going to be there. Then we have to come back and rectify mistakes but if it is in English it is simple for me to type.

Cobarrubias and Fishman (1985:31) argue that multilingual experts in the civil service, industry and business and in the military are better placed than their monolingual colleagues to succeed and do their jobs efficiently. They can communicate better and with more people, they can serve more people, and they can sell to more people.

In similar vein, Webb (1999:42) argues that if knowledge of the indigenous languages were required for certain appointments (including promotions), black South Africans would certainly have more positive employment and promotion opportunities. This would contribute towards the redistribution of income, and the economic value which is a bone of contention at present would be added to these languages.

Webb (1999:4) states that the role of language in 'under-developedness' can be demonstrated in the following crucial domains:

- Failure to democratise knowledge and skills
- Low productivity and ineffective performance in commerce and industry
- Stunted social development through restricted access to rights and opportunities
- Political immaturity exemplified by deception, discrimination and exploitation, lack of national unity, conflict as a corollary of social divisions
- The possibility of linguistic and cultural alienation

What Webb (1999) describes as 'under-developedness' is what respondents enrolled with the University of Johannesburg referred to in their focus group interviews by reporting that they were only treated with respect if other students do not know that they came from Limpopo, because knowledge of their background earns disrespect and association with 'under-developedness' and

backwardness. These perceptions are stereotypes in the minds of people who had never been to most parts of the Limpopo Province.

Webb (1999:4) finds that the concept of 'under-developedness' highly controversial, since people generally tend to evaluate development either in material terms only (per capita income, gross domestic product) or from the perspective of their own beliefs, attitudes, norms and values (e.g. ethnocentrically). People tend to regard someone who is materially poor but at peace with his/her individuality as undeveloped, and someone who is materially rich but riven with stress and anxiety as highly developed. Different yardsticks are required for different contexts: because there are different kinds of development, for example economic, educational political development; and beside the very concept of and discourse on 'development' is western by definition and is therefore approached and perceived from a 'western' perspective. The need for such an approach, though contestable, can be substantiated on the grounds that South Africans seem to have internalised industrialisation, technologisation and modernisation generally as desirable goals that they equate with the highest degree of development. It therefore seems reasonable to measure South Africans' degree of 'developedness' by the same standards they set for themselves (i.e. South Africans, perhaps more particularly the Black communities, are in a sense hoist by their own petard). Some critics hold a view that these issues are contentious and not axiomatic.

It is clear from the above that the respondents in this study associate Northern Sotho with backwardness and underdevelopment. They are impervious to the benefits that Northern Sotho can have for their well-being.

Category 1.2: Lack of proficiency at English as a disadvantage in securing employment

Most respondents in all interviews acknowledged that a lack of proficiency in English hindered their efforts at achievement and at expressing themselves well in meetings and interviews. The respondents expressed their views as follows:

... we have quite a number of people who are blocked [do not succeed] in their interviews because they come to companies interviews and they use English and ... we do not need English to get a position ...

... when you go into an interview because you do not know English you do not give whatever you are supposed to give, but you have got skills. Like people who are selling in the streets: they have got skills and when they want to acquire loans they don't get them because they do not know English.

... I would love to be interviewed by a person who knows Xhosa because I can express myself more in my own language.

These responses are not surprising. The current *status* of English or Afrikaans as virtually exclusive languages of commerce and industry is a worrying factor since it lends substance to the fears expressed in a recent report on poverty and inequality (SAIRR, 1998:40). The report states that language barriers can retard economic development, especially if the majority of the economically active citizens of a country lack a basic proficiency in the dominant or only language of economic life.

After evaluating and assessing a group of unemployed adult learners involved in an Ikhwelo Project Basel (2004:370) found that English was used as the medium of instruction to teach entrepreneurship and micro-business skills to a group of adult learners. The writer holds that language and cultural behaviours are often a hidden obstacle to learning for second-language speakers. About the use of English as a medium of instruction she concluded that individual learners needed good communication skills in order to play an active role in society and participate constructively in the country's economy. Given South Africa's current high unemployment level, education must help learners to think like entrepreneurs and to debate economic issues. It is difficult, however, to think and debate in a language that learners only hear or use in the classroom. The results of the project revealed that at six Ikhwelo centres educators acknowledged that learners had had difficulty understanding the content of theoretical classes and felt that

mother-tongue instruction would have improved learners' results. Both groups of researchers were of the opinion that fluency in English was not a prerequisite for enabling unemployed adults to establish sustainable micro-business ventures in rural areas where English is seldom encountered or required. Wright (2004:177) observes that some South African communities who live in deep rural areas where a traditional language-in-ethno-culture, refuses to accept the fact that these communities are not insulated from important aspects of modernity. The report (SAIRR, 1998:40) also states that there is a significant correlation between poverty and a lack of education. This leads to the second theme.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic background of respondents

The theme and its category are reflected in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Socio-economic background of respondents

Theme	Category
2. Socio-economic background of respondents.	2.1. Proficiency in English is regarded as an index of educational level.

Category 2.1: Proficiency in English is regarded as an index of educational level

Respondents' backgrounds and level of education determine their attitudes towards indigenous African languages and towards Northern Sotho. Generally negative attitudes towards indigenous African languages are the basic reason for their unpopularity in that they are associated with backwardness, lack of education, poverty, illiteracy and inferiority, and this can be seen in the negative feelings expressed towards Northern Sotho (Sepedi):

... because should I feel like being doing business in Sepedi, now people will see me as being primitive or somewhat uneducated.

Sentiments about Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry vary between positive and negative depending on people's confidence about speaking the language and, therefore, their ability and willingness to overcome the negative bias acquired towards Northern Sotho in the process of gaining high-level proficiency in English, particularly since respondents who have been exposed to English from an early age do not feel the need to use their home language in commerce and industry or in any economic activity. This is in contrast to the respondents who attended school under the former Department of Education and Training and have not continued their studies — they are less confident. The following is an example:

I think is a matter of learning those certain terms or words or jargons that are used, and taking those words and using them everyday like simple English or they can be used simpler. Because the international intellectual capacity of somebody who is, like, studying economics or commerce is valid [capable] enough for that person to understand basic English.

The respondents enrolled with the University of Johannesburg expressed dismay at the tendency of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho to cast off their language discourteously. Naturally most of these respondents came from Limpopo Province with Northern Sotho as their home language. They had also received their schooling at private and Model C schools where they had been exposed to English from an early age. They had just returned from a long summer vacation when the focus group interviews were conducted and reported that by relinquishing their language they were bowing to pressure exerted by peers from other ethnic groups who considered them backward and underdeveloped per definition because of their provenance, and therefore told them that they couldn't be from Polokwane because of their sophisticated appearance, thus exerting pressure on them to keep up these appearances. They blamed themselves for being too easily intimidated into relinquishing their language, and they worry about losing their identity if nothing is done to reverse the situation.

This group was strongly in favour of using Northern Sotho in parallel with English in commerce and industry and reported that they were communicating with their friends in Northern Sotho, but when they were put to the test and their performance was challenged, they would not use Northern Sotho. The following statement exemplifies the disposition and general sentiments of these respondents about Northern Sotho:

And if we go on ... doing things like put everything in English, things will end up all in English. This is not what we want. We want to see our cultures prevailing; we want to see our languages go on. And for these languages to go on, they should be put in every sector of our lives. We should see these languages everywhere.

This leads to the third theme.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Existence of language policies in commerce and industry

The theme and its category are reflected in Table 4.8:

Table 4.8: Existence of language policies in the workplace in commerce and industry

Theme	Category
3. Existence of language policies in commerce and industry	3.1 Awareness of language policy documents in the workplace in commerce and industry

Most small business enterprises do not have language policies. PanSALB (2000) lists the following institutions, government departments and public companies or organisations that have submitted language policy documents:

Table 4.9: Language policy development (PanSALB, [n.d.]

Organisation	Title of policy or Act	Date of policy
Land Bank	Land Bank Language Policy	6 Aug. 1997
Office of the Premier of the Province of the Western Cape	Western Cape Provincial Languages Act	Act 13 of 1998
Department of Land Affairs	Language Policy of the Department of Land Affairs	May 1999
Department of Housing	Draft Language Policy of the Department of Housing	Sep. 1999
ISCOR	Draft Language Policy	March 2000
Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology	Final Draft South African Languages Bill	17 May 2000
Metro rail	Language Policy of Metro rail	1 June 2000
Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology	Final Draft National Language Policy and Plan	5 June 2000
Mine Workers Union	Multilingualism in the workplace	July 2000
Western Cape Language Committee	Draft Language Policy for the Western Cape	Aug. 2000
Office of the Public Service Commission	Draft Language Policy	Sep. 2000
Mining Qualifications Authority	Proposed Language Policy for the Mining and Minerals Sector	20 Oct. 2000
Greater Johannesburg Unicity	Draft Proposed Language Policy	28 May 2001
Public Works	Towards an acceptable Language Policy	May 2001
PU for CHE	Language Policy of the Vaal Triangle Campus, PU for CHE: Guidelines for the implementation of the Language Policy proposals	June 2001
Department of Defence	Restricted Draft Language Policy for the Department of Defence	4 Sep. 2001

According to the above list (Table 4.9) language policy initiatives are fairly widespread in South Africa, but the fact is that they tend to promote monolingualism which seems to be gaining a distinct foothold in some sectors. Monolingualism is reminiscent of the definition of 'official language' given by

Fasold (1984:72 in Webb 1999:109), and in the case of South Africa it seems as if English would qualify as such, although the rights of the other eleven languages have been entrenched in the Constitution.

According to PanSALB (2000), organisations such as ARMSCOR, Telkom, the SABC, the Reserve Bank and the Department of Home Affairs endorse the use of regional official languages in their policy documents where regional offices exist.

A good example of progress made by Government in dealing with language issues is the Language Policy launched on 21 February 2005 by the MEC for Cultural Affairs, Sport and Recreation and the Language Committee of the Western Cape Provincial Government. It is envisaged that the implementation of policy will give further expression to the creation of a home for all in the Western Cape by ensuring the equal status and use of the three official languages - Afrikaans, English and Xhosa — and by providing for the development and promotion of other national official languages, South African Sign Language and the Khoen and San languages.

The Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM), among others, has conducted its own language audits among the communities where it provides a service, and its regional policy development is based on the data that they collected in the process of these initiatives.

In the Western Cape no municipality has given attention to the formulation of a written language policy to date. Existing language policy documents are simply statements declaring either Afrikaans or English as the official working language of the municipality.

According to J. de Jager (personal communication, August 11 2006) Absa does not have a formal language policy document but has drawn up a set of flexible guidelines which are designed to ensure that its vision, mission and values are represented in the area of language use within the financial services business.

Category 3.1: Awareness of policy document in the workplace in commerce and industry

It is important for this study to ascertain whether respondents are aware of a language policy document in their places of work or whether any formal decision has been taken by management on how to deal with language issues in their business.

It is evident from the focus group interviews that most respondents are not aware of language policies in their places of work or have no knowledge of any language policy document in commerce and industry. Respondents report that they have never seen or heard of such documents at their places of work. For example:

I am a secretary at the Limpopo Legislature. I do not know of any language policy. I should think so, but I do not know of any.

I am not sure if there is a language policy at work, but we do have every language in the country but with correspondence that we get from the management staff and the department we use English.

It is startling and strange that a place like the Limpopo Legislature would not have a regional language policy document or even guidelines. The lack of knowledge of language policy documents can be attributed to a lack of effective communication models in commerce and industry.

Reagan (1986:116) refers to a study undertaken in a factory set-up. The findings reveal that language is not one of the principal barriers to communication, despite a highly diverse work force. Nor do environmental barriers to communication, such as noise, seem to present special problems. Rather, human barriers (notably individual attitudes and behaviours) and socio-structural barriers (concerned primarily with structural and institutionalised racism in South African society prior to 1994) appear to be causing the greatest communication problems in the workplace.

The fourth theme identified by the researcher was to determine that mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho's disposition and sentiments regarding the prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The notion is based on PanSALB's (1998) language policies guideline. The relevant passage reads as follows:

This orientation is consistent with the principle of *interdependence*, where different communities or languages are seen to coexist interdependently. The value of each language and its speech community is acknowledged as part of the whole. Language as a resource includes the notion of language as a right. The view that each language is a resource to the nation carries with it the notion of the instrumental use of languages or *functional multilingualism*.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho regarding the prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

Respondents have expressed mixed feelings about the question whether respondents are for or against the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry alongside other languages. The theme and its category and sub-categories are reflected in Table 4.10:

Table 4.10: Disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho regarding prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

Theme	Category and subcategories
4. Disposition of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho regarding prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry	4.1 Prospects for Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry 4.1.1 The use of Northern Sotho as a regional language in commerce and industry 4.1.2 The informal and formal use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry 4.1.3 Likelihood that Northern Sotho (business) newspapers will be read by Northern Sotho speakers 4.1.4 The language used by respondents when sending messages by e-mail and SMS 4.1.5 Prospects for the usage of Northern Sotho as a language for higher functions in commerce and industry.

Respondents maintain that it would be 'a good thing' if Northern Sotho were used in all sectors of commerce and industry. They feel that there is no material obstacle to prevent Northern Sotho from being used on par with English in any context and that the language can and should be developed accordingly. They expressed their views in this regard as follows:

... it would be a good thing for all the sectors to allow us to express ourselves ... with our own mother-tongue. So, it is very important to learn and express those values.

Yes, I should think so because we have got so many illiterate people and people need to, like, when they go to the banks know what is happening. If you tell them about time shares, shares and anything else, they need to understand what is happening when it is going up, the do's and the don'ts. If ever you just say the do's and the don'ts and never explain in their languages, they will never understand.

Yes, we can use it. There is no problem with that because if we can do it in English why can't we do it in our mother tongue because these languages ke di thola mo tseleng ka Afrikaans ba re so ka English ba re so? But if it is there ka Sepedi I think it is going to be simple. Like other people it takes time for them to understand. I think if it is in Sepedi it's going to be simple for them.

In similar vein, Webb (1999:110) states that the African languages will attain the required status if they are actually used for higher functions.

Category 4.1: Prospects for the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

Most of the respondents were excited about the possibility that Northern Sotho might become established as a language of commerce and industry. They maintained that if English could be used, why not Northern Sotho. They were highly positive towards Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The respondents expressed their views as follows:

That would be great. In all the communication that we have now, we have Afrikaans and English. If we can do something that can say, OK, if you prefer do this subject in English, go to the left-hand side part of this document, and if you prefer Sepedi, go to the right-hand side. Because it is easier doing things in your own language than doing it in any other languages. That where our understanding is. Right now I am speaking in English but I speak Sepedi so I have to translate, but if I was not translating I would be speaking things as perfect as nobody could have a problem with what I am saying.

There is no problem with other languages [African languages]. It is not that they cannot be used in the business industry. They can be used and be understood well as long as they are put in black and white.

I think every language that is used in our country should be given a platform in any place of work. Everybody talks their own language, even teach other people that in Sepedi this refers to that when compared to English ...

Not everyone was very keen about the idea. One of the respondents pointed out his concern about the money and time that may be spent in trying to level the playing field. He voiced his concern as follows:

In a nutshell I do not think it is necessary because we already came too far with our ... with English as a language of economics and commerce, but then we would rather move forward economically than trying to translate English to other languages like Sotho.

Sub-category 4.1.1: The use of Northern Sotho as a regional language in commerce and industry

Some respondents supported the regional use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry.

PanSALB (1998) suggests that communities should insist on the use of indigenous languages in the performance of high-level public functions, subject to checks and balances that would increase their prestige and ensure rigorous maintenance of standards, at least at local and regional levels of economic activity; and that the usefulness of these languages in exploiting indigenous knowledge systems should also be explored. One respondent endorses this view:

Yes, I think it is important to use Northern Sotho in the working environment more especially in the business sectors but I think specifically in Limpopo where northern people are ... Northern Sotho-speaking people are mostly situated. Because if you are going to use Northern Sotho in the working environment ... You need to see if you have more Northern Sotho-

speaking people because if you will be having Afrikaans, Tswana and Zulu, you need to find another alternative language.

In contrast, some respondents warn that Northern Sotho and other local indigenous African languages should not be overemphasised at the expense of English. The following is an example of this response:

Well, among ourselves as South Africans we should use our home languages — Tswana, Xhosa and all these languages — if we are communicating among ourselves, but we must not overemphasise other African languages at the expense of the international language. We must always bear in mind that we are part of the world.

Sub-category 4.1.2: The informal or formal use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry

Some respondents indicated that they use Northern Sotho in formal settings, such as union gatherings, and informally with colleagues, friends or management in commerce and industry. Other respondents reported that they used Northern Sotho in their everyday interaction with speakers of Northern Sotho. Some did not support the idea of using Northern Sotho formally in commerce and industry on the grounds that in meetings, for example, it would be unfair to speakers of other languages who do not understand Northern Sotho, and that they would prefer meeting procedure to be handled in English, which is normally used for higher functions such as formal business meetings where a specially evolved jargon is current. The cost of producing an equivalent jargon in Northern Sotho would be prohibitive, they feel. The following quotes attest these sentiments:

Formally in the sense that you will be in a meeting and one needs to express her-/himself, like, let's say the union is having a meeting. Union ... in a union meeting everybody is there, so people want to express themselves and they want to understand what the union is busy addressing.

Usually [we use Northern Sotho] in social [settings] ... because we would be with our ethnic groups.

I think informally we can use Sotho as far as it can go in terms of, like, informally, like, if you were my business associate and your mother-tongue is Sotho and my mother-tongue is Sotho, we can always buy [speak] informally, but not in terms of meetings where procedures and rules are followed. Because in business there are jargons that are used by everybody who is in that particular business field. ... So I think I would be extra mile to go for people to turn those jargons into Sotho words ...

These responses also correlate with the type of respondents' occupations. The SABC seems to be following an interim policy of accommodating all official languages in addition to the formal language of official communication and business. Their policy is expressed as follows:

The SABC has a mandate in terms of the Broadcasting Act [No 4. of 1999] to broadcast in all the official languages - but this cannot mean that all languages will get equal time on the SABC's TV channels. This would be impractical and unaffordable.

Although this policy statement is hailed as progressive in some quarters it is also cause for concern. The SABC's argument that using some of the 11 official languages simultaneously (i.e. in parallel) will be contingent on practicality and expense sounds familiar. This view is endorsed in the contention by Ozolins (2003:67) that there is a gap between economic approaches to language of different sectors of the public. He asserts that generally, efforts to improve services tend to be derailed by ignorance and ineptitude where economists are concerned, such provision are inclined to justify inaction on flimsy pretext (often costs). He gives an example of a link between language and economics by pointing out that if a medical procedure cannot be carried out, or if it has to be repeated because of a communication failure, then there must be a quantifiable cost involved, given that the cost of the procedure is quantifiable. Indeed it seems

logical to assume that the cost implications of miscommunication must be exponentially greater than the cost of proceeding correctly the first time.

Webb (1999:10) concurs with Ozolins (2003:67) and emphasises that although it is not the only factor in this regard *language* is obviously the most critical instrument of communication, and therefore by extension, of attaining of economic development objectives. However, this insight does not seem to be shared by the central decision-making authority, possibly because language is such an integral part of human existence that people are not generally aware of its practical economic significance. Where language is experienced as 'a problem' in the formal (i.e. official or business) sector, it is generally only related to workers' ability to write reports. Thus the role of language is reduced to being no more than a vehicle or simple receptacle for the literal conveyance of information, whereas in fact it performs many more functions, and it is essential to keep these functions in mind in order to fully appreciate the role of language in economic life.

Sub-category 4.1.3: Dispositions regarding the reading of Northern Sotho (business) newspapers

Some respondents indicated that they would prefer a Northern Sotho newspaper to a variety of others, including an English newspaper, because it would be easier to read. One respondent put it as follows:

... myself I can choose my Northern Sotho just because I can read the story and understand it simpler. But in English, just because English is not my mother language, sometimes I can take the English one and find out that there are some words that you cannot understand. But if I pick a Northern Sotho paper I can understand better.

A response to the contrary came from another respondent:

... I can prefer the one in English. Since, like, most of times the thing that I see like at church you find that even at church these days they read Bible ya Sekgowa [English].

This stated preference is somewhat at odds with the facts, however, because the respondents who were enrolled with the University of Johannesburg are not reading Northern Sotho as fluently as they used to, which means their command of the language needs to be brushed up with learning programmes at the university.

Sub-category 4.1.4: E-mail and SMS language

It was necessary to determine which language was used spontaneously to communicate by e-mail and SMS. Respondents who attended Model C schools and private schools reported that they discovered that English lent itself better to the purpose instead of their mother tongue. They would only send an SMS message reading *e tla* or *ke a tla* in Northern Sotho to invite friends over or inform. These sentences are naturally short and SMSs are charged by the number of words used.

Most respondents reported that they used English to talk to friends and colleagues, by SMS or e-mail, except if they knew that the correspondent understood Northern Sotho. The respondents expressed their views as follows:

Yes, I think we have been programmed that machinery goes hand in hand with English.

I use English. Even SMS with cell phones.

Normally we prefer English in most of the things.

We use English because of what, like, I am telling you it's an international thing. It goes with evolution, do you understand? But of course if it is more informally based. I can always say Mrs. Phaasha ke a tla, like, I am coming. Ke a tla is more, like, informal but you get the message on what I am I convey.

... I just think going according to SMS and e-mail we use to e-mail in English but if I know going you understand language ya ka but ... maybe on the work institution, like, you send maybe six people an e-mail, you cannot send six people an e-mail in Sepedi while o sa tsebe maybe ke batho bararo ba tsebago Sepedi it's a problem. But o ka senda SMS in Sepedi knowing that you are sending it to a person yo a tsebang Sepedi.

Besides facilitating communicative efficiency, the impression gained from these interviews is that English serves as a means of signaling ethnic neutrality and therefore tolerance as it is not associated with a specific black ethnic group. Thus, speaking English in inter-ethnic interactions would bring about a closer rapport between interactants, as opposed to dissociation if participants insisted upon speaking their ethnic languages.

The respondents enrolled with the University of Johannesburg are patently biased in favour of using Northern Sotho.

Sub-category 4.1.5: The use of Northern Sotho as a language for higher functions in commerce and industry

Webb (1999:110) rejects the notion that African languages do not lend themselves to higher functions for lack of technical terms and registers. He reports there is no reason at all why the African languages cannot attain the status required to perform high public functions, or why the necessary technical registers cannot be developed quickly.

On the issue of Northern Sotho being elevated to the level of sophistication required to perform high public functions, respondents expressed their views as follows:

Anywhere ... it would be a good thing for all the sectors to allow us to express ourselves ... with our own mother tongue. So, it is very important to learn and express those values.

Yah, I think it is important. I think we should be able to use our languages.

The fifth theme is an attempt to answer the research question by establishing whether it is feasible to develop Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology. This is a process of codification, which means that a written system is developed for, in this case, Northern Sotho parlances and elaboration of the Northern Sotho register for use in its sphere of influence. The elaboration of a language involves the creation of new terms in order to meet the scientific, educational and technical demands on a language. One method to develop and standardise all the languages in South Africa is by compiling dictionaries – also called lexicography.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

The theme and its category are reflected in Table 4.11:

Table 4.11: Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

Theme	Category
5. Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology	5.1 Development of Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

Category 5.1: Development of Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology

Most of the respondents are in favour of the idea of developing Northern Sotho terminologies and orthographies for higher functions such as commerce and industry. They suggest that Northern Sotho should borrow words from English and use them as loan words instead of reinventing the wheel. The respondents expressed their views as follows:

In Sepedi we have these called maadingwa [loaned words]. We use those things like 'inflation'. We do not like it as it is, like, we say inflesheni.

Yah, the whole thing that this thing never existed and because of the apartheid system so we can't come to those words like 'reporate'. It can't be something related to ... that we can come up with in our language ... there is no way that you can find difficulties in ... we can only find difficulties in translating from English to Sepedi. But if we write it in Sepedi, it would be in Sepedi word that we know this is this ... ke tšhelete ...

I think we should be able to use our languages.

According to Webb (1999:10) African languages will be technicalised if they are actually used in technical contexts and for technical purposes. This presupposes that a language can only become a technical language if it creates its own indigenous terms. However, no modern language has become technicalised in this way. All languages simply borrow terms from languages that have the required technical terms. Webb (1999:10) therefore asks why the African languages cannot borrow technical terms from English.

Webb (1999:10) also argues that no professional person is ever trained to perform his/her profession in a particular language. He/she is trained professionally, and such training presupposes acquiring the discourse of the field, that is the technical terms and registers, including 'ways of speaking and

interpreting'. Having acquired these skills, professionals are able to perform their duties as employees in whatever language is needed.

4.4 SUMMARY

The notion that languages are tied to communities, and that communities may provide 'benefits' that are not easily reduced to quantifiable 'goods' with market-determined value, is not factored in most types of rational choice models.

Speakers of black indigenous African languages believe that their languages are inherently lacking in the capacity to serve as media of communication for higher learning purposes, economic activity, social mobility or any other serious public business. Their only use, they suggest, is as instruments of personal social interaction and cultural expression.

Some of the empirical data of the broad research had been analysed and interpreted in this chapter. The thematic constructs from both the survey questionnaire and the transcripts have been systematised and treated in outline under various categories and subcategories.

The findings revealed that English and Afrikaans were naturally found to be dominant in commerce and industry while Northern Sotho was used among friends and colleagues in informal situations. Only 3% of the respondents to the questionnaire survey indicated that they used Northern Sotho for transactional purposes in commercial and industrial settings, while 46,8% reported using a smattering of Northern Sotho in a variety of situations.

The question whether native speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages are favourably disposed towards the prospective development and the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry was determined. A negligible percentage of respondents expressed negative sentiments in this regard (cf. outcomes of focus group interviews). A distinct majority (64, 7%) of respondents who filled in questionnaires were not favourably disposed but a significant minority (35, 3%) were positive.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings derived from data collected by applying the chosen methods (quantitative data from the first phase and qualitative data from the second phase) will be consolidated and compared to establish their validity.

The outcomes of the emergent thematic constructs from the questionnaire survey were compared with those of the focus group interviews to establish similarities and differences. This process enhanced the trustworthiness of the results.

The research findings will be outlined according to the themes that have emerged from both the questionnaire survey and the transcripts.

5.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

The questionnaire survey and the focus group interviews revealed similar and dissimilar thematic constructs. The two groups consist of different types of respondents who were selected on purpose.

5.2.1 Results of the questionnaire survey

The respondents involved in the questionnaire survey are a privileged group. Most of them have a reasonable standard of education and occupy senior positions in their workplace. It stands to reason that a group with such a profile would prefer the language they regard as socio-economically dominant, namely English. A report by PanSALB (2000) states that better educated groups are less inclined to use their own (native) language, regardless of the language use within their organisations.

Language preferences in all multilingual countries tend to be hierarchical in that the languages spoken by the most prestigious group or groups naturally tend to share the socio-economic status of their speakers, just as those spoken by lower classes are rated accordingly.

Heugh (1995:331) asserts that this hierarchic situation remains constant although official policy accords equal status to the whole range of official languages. In practice no effective strategy is implemented to ensure that the policy becomes part of the real day-to-day dispensation in South Africa (i.e. that the playing field is levelled, so to speak), which means that in reality the policy is a paper tiger.

Heugh (1995:331) argues that if English were given preferential status, the other languages would obviously be relegated to a subordinate status. She warns that unless the necessary planning mechanism is put in place English could be dissimilated into 'an overarching framework', and in that context language rights (in South Africa) would be regarded as a passive right in a liberal human rights framework (cf. Chapter 2, par. 2.3.5).

5.2.1.1 Findings 1

The results of the first phase indicate that English is the preferred language to which is accorded a privileged position and status by all indigenous African language speakers.

Heugh (2002:450) attributes this preference to historical factors. For example, until 1977 students speaking indigenous African languages believed (correctly) that their access to English, particularly as a medium for higher communicative functions, was being deliberately restricted by the authorities, so they focused all their efforts on that problem to the exclusion of all other language issues in the belief that they were promoting their own best interests, whereas they were effectively collaborating with the larger (global) political and economic pursuits of the West. This is not to say, however, that they did not benefit by improving their command of English.

5.2.2 Results of focus group interviews

The focus group interviews revealed that the interviewees now realise that the focus of past efforts to assert their language rights unconsciously harmed the interests of their home languages and that a concerted effort is now required to develop the neglected languages to a level on par with the more dominant languages. Respondents who were exposed to English from an early age are not perturbed by the fact that their home languages are not being used in commerce and industry. These interviewees have stated that English comes to them spontaneously in their interaction with others. By contrast, some have to translate their thoughts mentally from their home language into English before they can utter anything in English. Here is a case in point (quote from focus group interviews):

... it is easier doing things in your own language than doing it in any other languages. That's where our understanding is. Right now I am speaking in English but I speak Sepedi so I have to translate, but if I was not translating I would be speaking things as perfect as nobody could have a problem with.

5.2.2.1 Findings 2

The University of Johannesburg students involved in the focus group interviews can be described as a privileged group. Their parents are from the middle class. The erstwhile Technikon SA interviewees, on the other hand, consist of a different socio-economic group. Some of them seem well-off, while others seem to be underprivileged and have to study and work at the same time. The group of ANC and APLA ex-combatants consists of unemployed people who are struggling to get jobs and depend on handouts for their livelihood.

Different groups have different perceptions regarding the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. Some respondents display a pronounced negative attitude towards the prospects of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry, while others feel compelled to pledge

allegiance to their home language. These respondents are strongly in favour of the suggestion that their home language should be used in commerce and industry (noted in Chapter 4), especially the University of Johannesburg group, which feels disadvantaged because their home language is not used on campus.

Chiswick and Miller (2002:199) point out that there is a correlation in endogeneity between language and earnings. Their study found that fluency in the dominant language determines earnings, especially among immigrants in Australia.

Vaillancourt (2002:10) attempts to answer the question: 'What is language to economics?' He says that economists follow three different approaches in analysing language:

- The first approach is to emphasise the ethnic aspect of language.
- The second is to emphasise that language is human capital that can produce rewards similar to other types of knowledge, such as education. This approach focuses on differences in skills as an indicator of differences in socio-economic status between language groups that exclude ethnicity, particularly that of the mother tongue.
- The third approach is to treat a person's home language as both an ethnic attribute and a type of knowledge, while other languages are viewed as knowledge only.

Vaillancourt (2002:13) argues that when economists examine the determinants of the language used in a given workplace they concentrate on the characteristics of the firms (business enterprises); they implicitly assume that at least in industrial societies individuals have little power in determining the language of the workplace. Hence, Breton and Mieszkowski (1975 in Vaillancourt 2002:13) point to the language of the market place or the language of external communication as the main determinant of the language used for internal (work) communication.

Vaillancourt (1980 in Vaillancourt 2002:14) puts forward a framework that transforms the demand for language skills in the workplace. He argues that the owners of the firms (capitalists for private firms, voters for public employers)

prefer using their own language. However, business enterprises are constrained by factors such as the language of the market place, the language used to operate production technology, and the language skills of the work force (constraints also pointed out by Breton and Mieszkowski, 1975.) The interaction between the entrepreneur's language preference and constraints such as employees' lack of proficiency in that language makes one language, or a combination, the profit-maximising solution for the firm.

Vaillancourt (2002:15) argues that the use of language in consumption activities and at work can now yield useful predictions in terms of the return to languages in a bilingual labour market.

In conclusion, it is clear from the results of the questionnaire survey and focus group interviews that social status and level of education tend to dictate language dominance. In South Africa, English is the most prominent language by far in commerce and industry at present.

5.3 EXCLUSIVE USE OF ENGLISH OR AFRIKAANS EXPERIENCED AS A COMMUNICATION BARRIER BY NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF THESE LANGUAGES IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Questions relating to perceptions are usually best asked in face-to-face interviews or in the open-ended questions of a questionnaire. The question 'Does the exclusive use of English and Afrikaans in commerce and industry hamper your performance at your place of work?' was not asked in the questionnaire. Hence, responses are from the focus group interviews only.

5.3.1 Results of the focus group interviews

Some of the interviewees were vocal about the exclusive use of English or Afrikaans. They asserted that it inhibited their learning and performance in the workplace. One of the respondents expressed her frustration when having to type documents written in Afrikaans only at her place of work:

Yes, I take long [to type]. It's like other documents will come in Afrikaans only and others will come in English and Afrikaans, and there you will need to find an interpreter [for the Afrikaans].

If you look at the ... like she said, the language that she used at school, we were taught Biology and it was not Biology that we were taught in English but we were taught in Sepedi and it was not difficult for us to understand because we are using Sepedi at home. So it easy for us to understand but the problem comes with interpreting. If we were to learn in Sepedi, we would be having a lot of doctors around here because, you know, in Sesotho you do not have to think it you do not have to write it down to ask for help what does this mean. You do not have to have a dictionary, you know, this is that and you do not need an explanation.

5.3.1.1 Findings 3

Although some respondents feel disadvantaged by the exclusive use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry, some are not convinced that the alternative suggested by fellow-interviewees is a solution to the problem. They are still convinced that English should be the language of commerce and industry.

Webb (1999:18) warns that the dominance of English as the language of choice in commerce and industry stems from the overestimation of the language, and this overemphasis of English at the cost of home language development could lead to:

- retarded or restricted educational development, through the use of a language that is generally not known well enough as a language of learning and teaching;
- blocked access to economic opportunity, and lower productivity and efficiency in commerce and industry;
- blocked access to political participation;

- the possibility of discrimination and manipulation; and
- a possible threat to the country's linguistic diversity.

Webb (1999:18) recommends that serious attention be given to restoring the balance of power between English and the other South African languages.

5.4 LACK OF ALTERNATIVES TO ENGLISH AND AFRIKAANS USAGE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The imposition by management of language policies propagating the exclusive use of English as the language of commerce and industry limits the right of employees to use the language they prefer. Although some of the respondents in this study prefer English as the language of commerce and industry, they also perceive it negatively because they do not have much choice in the matter. Management, language policies and decisions taken unilaterally in commerce and industry do not give them the opportunity to opt for their language of preference. This situation tends to advantage speakers of English or Afrikaans.

5.5 LACK OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH AS AN OBSTACLE TO SECURING EMPLOYMENT

5.5.1 Results of the focus group interviews

The ANC and APLA ex-combatants are grown men and women in their late 30s to 50s. Most of them do not have a Grade 12 certificate but can speak seven or more of the languages spoken on the African continent, such as Portuguese, Swahili, French, Spanish and others.

This group feels disadvantaged in job interviews for not being allowed to answer questions in their home language. When the group were asked whether they feel that using English in interviews hurt their chances of getting jobs they applied for, they responded unanimously in the affirmative. One of the respondents became quite emotional when explaining how he failed a job interview even though he knew exactly how to operate the machines. He argues that the skill of speaking

English should not be the only skill employers should look for during interviews. He maintains that he would have needed his hands to perform his duties, not English language skills.

According to the *National Sociolinguistics Survey* (PanSALB, 2000:62), a large proportion of people who have been involved in job interviews conducted in English feel mildly or seriously disadvantaged because of communication difficulties. This is similar to the notion expressed by the focus group interviewees.

One of the University of Johannesburg group of respondents reported that in an interview a relative of hers was asked the question: 'what makes you tick?' The relative could not respond because she did not understand the expression.

5.5.1.1 Findings 4

A lack of English proficiency is a disadvantage in finding jobs, and it blocks access to economic opportunity. It also holds back productivity and lowers efficiency in commerce and industry. It is clear from the literature review that there is a correlation in endogeneity between language and earnings. Other factors raised by the respondents in the focus group interviews are the following:

- Firstly, they complain that their English is rudimentary, to say the least. This poor standard is particularly evident in respondents who completed their Grade 12 in former DET schools.
- Secondly, they complain about the interference of their home language orientation with their communication processes in other languages. Some respondents have indicated that English is difficult because they think in their mother tongue and then have to translate their thoughts into English. This leads to information getting lost and being misinterpreted.

5.6 LANGUAGES CURRENTLY USED IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

5.6.1 Findings 5

Most official languages in South Africa are spoken formally or informally to a greater or lesser extent in commerce and industry. English remains the dominant language in most industrial sectors. The speech habits of different groups depend largely on the environment in which they find themselves.

It is reported in the *National Sociolinguistics Survey* (PanSALB, 2000) that less educated people are more inclined to feel frustrated or resentful when they can't use their home language at work and in the public sector. Languages other than English and Afrikaans are not really accommodated in commerce and industry. It is reported further that English is particularly evident as a language of choice in banks and trade union interfaces, compared to the other official languages (e.g. Northern Sotho which is almost non-existent in trade unions and in banks).

5.7 NORTHERN SOTHO IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

As noted in previous chapters, at least a modicum of Northern Sotho is used in commerce and industry.

5.7.1 Results of the questionnaire survey

The 56,72 % of respondents indicated that they hardly use Northern Sotho at all, but 43,28 % reported that they use it in situations such as the following (percentages indicate frequencies):

- 8,46 % use it in meetings in commerce and industry;
- 19,4% use it socially;
- 7,96% use it in business spheres;
- 13,43% use it in informal settings with peers or colleagues;
- 17,41% use it frequently with friends and colleagues; and

- 17,41% use it with customers.

This is a positive indication that a language other than English may be accommodated in some sectors in commerce and industry (e.g. Northern Sotho in meetings, in business activities and with customers). Policies should therefore accommodate it as a language of commerce and industry.

5.7.2 Results of the focus group interviews

It is evident from the focus group interviews that Northern Sotho is primarily used in informal conversations.

5.7.2.1 Findings 6

At least 43,28% of respondents from the first phase of the research reported that they use Northern Sotho formally or informally in commerce and industry. In the case of the focus group interviews, the proportion or frequency of the formal or informal usage of other languages cannot be quantified in percentages as can be done with the questionnaire results from which it is clear that respondents living in some parts of Limpopo Province tend to use Northern Sotho more frequently than those living outside the sphere of influence of the Northern Sotho language. Limpopo Province is still somehow linguistically homogeneous.

5.8 LANGUAGE USAGE CHARACTERISING INFORMAL COMMUNICATION WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

5.8.1 Results of the questionnaire survey

The results reveal that respondents do use Northern Sotho in their everyday interaction with colleagues and friends in commerce and industry. Usage is reported as follows:

- 19,4% use it for social purposes only;
- 13,43% use it in informal settings with peers or colleagues; and

- 17,41% use it frequently with friends and colleagues.

5.8.1.1 Findings 7

The above results imply that of the 43,28% of respondents who reported that in the first phase of the research they used Northern Sotho in commerce and industry, 9,45% reported usage with friends and colleagues. The latter figure corresponds almost exactly with that of the group of respondents who indicated Northern Sotho as their home language.

5.8.2 Results of the focus group interviews

It is evident from the focus group interviews that indigenous African languages are used in parallel to communicate with friends and colleagues. One of the respondents expressed it as follows:

Well, among ourselves as South Africans we should use our home languages — Tswana, Xhosa and all these languages — if we are communicating among ourselves

5.9 LANGUAGE USAGE CHARACTERISING, EMPLOYEES COMMUNICATION WITH SUPERIORS IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

As indicated already, English is the main language used in formal settings. The sentiments of one of the respondents are expressed as follows:

My own language, Sepedi, unless I am communicating with my station commissioner because he is a white person and even my commanders are white, so I use English.

According to the *National Sociolinguistics Survey* (PanSALB, 2000) proficiency in English seldom exceeds 30% among speakers of the indigenous African languages. This unfortunate situation bespeaks a quandary in language teaching which is dominated by the perception that English is the language of power and

should therefore have preferential status while most of the people in South Africa have limited access to it.

As indicated in the previous chapters, a language is the central instrument of communication; it should be obvious that language is central to attaining the objectives of economic development in a country.

5.9.1 Findings 8

Afrikaans and English are still overempowered whereas the autochthonous languages are still marginalised to a certain degree.

5.10 LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY OF NORTHERN SOTHO USAGE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

According to Webb (1999:30), it is difficult to provide accurate information on the number of people who are said to 'know a language' or who profess to know it, since 'knowing a language' can cover such a wide span, for example from being able to interact with someone on a very elementary level, to being able to read or write a language, to being able to follow a text such as national news, to knowing what is appropriate speech behaviour, etcetera.

A study called 'Critical mass', commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, crudely measured the percentage of adults' level of comprehension on three competency levels as demonstrated in using a particular language (Van Vuuren & Maree 1994 in Webb 1999:42). The percentages for Northern Sotho and Zulu are given in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Differentiated language proficiency (Van Vuuren & Maree, 1994, in Webb, 1999:42)

	Afrikaans	English	Northern Sotho	Zulu
No understanding	41%	31%	52%	35%
Up to basic level	25%	2%	1%	2%
Up to intermediate level	12%	21%	2%	13%
Up to complex level	21%	47%	44%	49%

Although the linguistic test used in this investigation yielded the above values other linguists dismissed the results as superficial. According to Webb (1999:43), it is highly unlikely that 47% of the total population of South Africa can use their English skills for any meaningful task beyond 'BICS' (basic interactional skills), such as higher educational development ('CALP': Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and for access to the higher domains of life.

Table 5.1 reveals that 2% of respondents professed to know Northern Sotho up to intermediate level and 44% up to a complex level.

5.10.1 Results of the questionnaire survey

The figure of 52% of respondents in the 'Critical mass' study (Table 5.1) who reported that they did not understand Northern Sotho is higher than the 45% of respondents in this study who report that they cannot speak the language (noted in Chapter 4, section 4.2.3). The results of this study therefore show an improvement and change of attitude among South Africans.

5.10.1.1 Findings 9

The results of the questionnaire survey reveal that there is a poorly developed ability among South Africans to communicate inter-ethnically on specialised areas or domains. Webb (1999:21) attributes this to the following factors:

- There is no national *lingua franca* (c.f. Chapter 3 par.3.2.3). The Constitution does not designate any languages to be developed as *de facto* or a 'national language' in South Africa.
- There is an underdeveloped multilingualism. Most non-black citizens have knowledge of Afrikaans and English only and are therefore incapable of communicating with members of the black communities in an African language.
- There is no training in inter-ethnic communication skills in school language learning programmes.

Linguistic or ethnic intolerance runs high in the country, with extreme stigmatisation and stereotyping of the different language communities. Ethnic intolerance is mirrored in race-directed terms. Examples are as follows (Webb, 1999:22):

- Northern Sotho speakers often use derogatory names such as 'letšhakane', 'Letswetla', 'Lepono' and Mokgatla to refer to Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Nguni-speaking people and a Tswana-speaking woman living in urban areas respectively.
- African foreigners from north of the Limpopo are negatively referred to as 'Lekwerekwere'. The name does not apply to Sothos from Lesotho, Batswanas from Botswana and Swazis from Swaziland, but rather to Namibians, Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Tanzanians and to anyone coming from beyond the Limpopo and Zambezi Rivers.
- Afrikaans-speaking whites are called 'Boers', or 'Boere' which has a pejorative meaning for some but evokes fierce pride in others.
- English-speaking South Africans are negatively referred to as 'the English'.

- Black South Africans are negatively referred to as 'kaffirs' (a word publicly banned by ex-President Mandela).
- Indians are negatively referred to as 'coolies'.
- Coloured people are negatively referred to as 'boesmans' (Bushmen) and 'hotnot' (from 'Hottentot', a name formerly used to describe the descendants of the Khoe).
- Even terms such as 'Bantu', 'Khoi' and 'San' have negative connotations, and it has been pointed out that 'san' is a Khoe word which formerly meant 'tramp', 'rascal', 'vagabond' or 'forager'.

Webb (1999:22) explains that naming (or labelling) seems to be an instrument in the exercise of power. Those who regard themselves as better than the people they despise would not easily learn the language of the despised. This needs to be dealt with, for example in public education programmes.

Inter-ethnic communication among South Africans is hampered by the problem of politicised languages and asymmetric power relations. This manifests itself in many ways, for example in (Webb, 1999:23):

- unevenness in knowledge of the country's languages;
- strong sense of cultural identity especially associated with Afrikaans;
- negative socio-political perception of Afrikaans in many communities;
- extremely positive socio-political perception of English;
- generally negative socio-educational perception of indigenous African languages (perceptions are changing a bit these days there is a sudden demand to study the languages by non-African languages speakers); and
- a strong coercion towards linguistic 'purism' in Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Tswana as well as other languages.

By contrast, respondents involved in this study display a positive attitude towards learning each other's language. They even propagate this positive sentiment, expressed by one of them as follows:

OK ... learn and to know those languages ... I do not know Tshivenda and I do not know Shangaan ... we need to develop and learn those official languages. ... Let us learn our 11 official languages.

5.11 Language policies adopted by organisation in commerce and industry

Decisions about language policies in commerce and industry seem to follow a top-down approach. Most private sectors that practised bilingualism before 1994 have shifted towards a tendency to promote monolingualism. Some parastatal bodies have made the following decisions (Webb, 1999:107):

- The Post Office decided to use only English for internal business, with English as the language of meetings, for the minutes of meetings, memoranda, notices, letters and even for advertisements of employment opportunities (April 1998).
- The monopolistic telecommunications firm, Telkom, made a similar decision in May 1998.
- The strong bias towards English is evident in the programmes of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's television section.
- South African Airways decided to use English on its internal flights.

Similar decisions were made in the private sector (Webb, 1999:107):

- The Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa (formerly called the Land Bank) decided in 1997 that English would be its official language, despite the fact that most of its staff members were Afrikaans-speaking, and that 80% of its clients were also Afrikaans-speaking.
- The Council of Real Estate Agents made a similar decision in 1997.
- Even though Absa's position has changed since 2002, this banking group decided in 1997 to use English as its language of internal business although it was, and still is, primarily Afrikaans (cf. figure 2.) The latter view concurs with what van Schouenburg (2005:35) says about a lack of support for

functional multilingualism espoused by financial institutions in South Africa. She warns that this kind of behaviour benefits neither the institutions, nor their clients.

- The editorial board of *De Rebus*, the official journal of the Society of Lawyers, switched to English. Although in *De Rebus'* guidelines for submitting articles for publication welcomes contributions in any of the 11 official languages of South Africa, especially from the law practitioners
- The official journal of nurses, *Nursing World*, decided to use English as their official language in 1997.

Webb (1999:174) cautions against a tendency towards monolingualism and cites a recent report on poverty and inequality. It is noted in the report (SAIRR, 1998:40) that although English is the general means of communication in conducting economic activity at international and national levels, only 30% of the population at large, but mainly members of the upper socio-economic classes, know it. Nationally, 75% of black South Africans are not proficient enough in English to use it effectively as a communication medium for economic activity.

5.11.1 Findings 10

The results of the questionnaire survey revealed that 42 respondents are familiar with the language policy or language of the company in their place of work in commerce and industry. This is in contrast to all the respondents who seem unaware of the existence of such policies at in their places of employment in commerce and industry (cf. Category 3.1 in Chapter 4).

This is another sign of a communication problem in commerce and industry that is occurring in South Africa. People in senior positions are normally informed about what is happening in the company, but this is not always the case with employees on the lower rungs of the company.

5.12 RESPONDENTS' DISPOSITIONS REGARDING THE PROPECT OF NORTHERN SOTHO USAGE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

5.12.1 Prospects for using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry

5.12.2 Results of the questionnaire survey

The results (as given in Chapter 4, section 4.2.5) reveal that 64,7% of respondents do not support the idea that Northern Sotho should be developed as a language of commerce and industry, while 35,3% do.

5.12.3 Results of the focus group interviews

The results reveal an overall positive perception among respondents who feel that Northern Sotho should be developed as a language of commerce and industry. The most positive group are the University of Johannesburg respondents and some of the ANC and APLA ex-combatants. The latter express strong resentment about not being allowed to use their home language in job interviews because they feel that it jeopardises their chances of success. The ex-Technikon SA respondents are mainly working people, and some of them do not support the idea because they consider it impracticable, possibly because of a habitual mindset that persists among the older generation that indigenous black languages are inherently unsuitable for development to higher levels of expression.

5.12.3.1 Findings 11

The general response to the concept of developing Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry reveals that in the main respondents are favourably disposed towards it (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2.5). The results of the questionnaire survey reveal that only 35,3% of respondents are in favour of the idea, while 64,7% are against it. In contrast, the responses obtained in the focus group interviews are overwhelmingly positive (as revealed in Chapter 4).

5.13 THE USE OF NORTHERN SOTHO AS A REGIONAL LANGUAGE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

5.13.1 Findings 12

The response to the question whether Northern Sotho should be used as a regional language in Limpopo Province and other areas where Northern Sotho is spoken reveals that most respondents feel strongly that Northern Sotho should be used in commerce and industry, at least regionally, but also in some parts of Mpumalanga and Gauteng where mother-tongue speakers reside. The question was only asked during focus group interviews.

5.14 Respondents' attitude towards reading business-oriented newspapers published in Northern Sotho

5.14.1 Results of the questionnaire survey

5.14.1.1 Findings 13

As indicated in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3, 19,9% of respondents were prepared and able to read a business newspaper published in Northern Sotho, while 80,1% noted the opposite, namely that they lacked the proficiency to read the language or were still learning the language, which some regarded as difficult.

5.14.2 Results of the focus group interviews

5.14.2.1 Findings 14

Respondents sent mixed and conflicting messages when asked during focus group interviews which newspaper they would single out among a variety of newspapers published in Northern Sotho, English and Afrikaans.

The responses of the University of Johannesburg interviewees reveal that their first choice would be a Northern Sotho newspaper, but since their reading proficiency in Northern Sotho has dwindled over the years, they would be forced

to take the English one. They reported that they would be gratified if Northern Sotho were included in their learning programmes at the university.

5.15 Northern Sotho used for higher public functions in commerce and industry

A number of different ways of discussing and analysing the functions performed by a language have been suggested by Jakobson (1960) cited by Webb (1999:110). He divides language functions into six categories: the referential, emotive, conative, metalinguistic, phatic and poetic, while Malinowski (1966 in Webb 1999:110) limits the classification to two categories: the scientific and the magical.

Halliday (1973:99) argues that we must first distinguish between language use and language function. Language has an infinite set of uses, which means, in essence, that it is simply not possible to conceive of a model or typology for understanding language use. However, we can identify and describe a finite set of language functions, which he calls 'macro-functions'. These are 'general to all possible uses ... through which the meaning potential associated with them is encoded into grammatical structures'. Macro-functions of language can also be conceived of as functional components of the grammar of a language, and as such are generally recognised in different functional theories of language. Three distinct macro-functions of language can be identified in this model: interpersonal, ideational and textual. The interpersonal function is, basically, the 'grammar of personal participation'. It is concerned with the role of the speaker in a given speech situation. It is both interpersonal and interactive in that it entails the speaker's 'personal commitment (to) and interaction with others'.

According to Halliday (1973:99) the ideational function is concerned with the expression of experience, including both the processes within and beyond the self. This requires, of course, that the ideational function be understood to have two facets, the experiential and the analytic, since 'the phenomena of the external world and those of consciousness — and the logical relations between them' are both encompassed under its rubric.

The central concern of this study is the prospect of using Northern Sotho for higher public functions in commerce and industry. The people who are supposed to perform such higher functions in commerce and industry should be proficient in the language and also literate in economics and commerce.

Webb (1999:110) warns that 'knowledge of language' is simply not enough for effective participation in economic life. One also has to know 'the discourse' of the relevant discipline, that is, one needs to be 'economically literate', that is, fully acquainted with concepts (and the terms which refer to these concepts) such as 'profit and loss', 'budget investment', 'balance sheet', 'income statements', 'debtors', 'creditors', and so on.

With regard to discourse conventions in verbal communication it stands to reason that different sociocultural rules for speaking, for example with regard to who may speak about what, to whom, when and how. This becomes evident, for example, where black people have to 'compete' with white people in verbal interaction in western contexts, for example in post-graduate training courses. Whereas white students participate freely in classroom discussions, it is often very difficult to get black students involved. This could well be true in the economic sphere (i.e. world of work) too, for example in communication between manager and worker, employer and employee, contractor and contractee, and so on (Webb, 1999:110).

Not enough empirical research has been done on the effect of language on economic activity. However, the following are some of the research findings on this topic:

- Language impacts on earnings, particularly in terms of the level of language skills and the nature of these skills, whether they are oral or written, active or passive (Grin, 1994:24 in Webb, 1999:110).
- Public spending has a positive effect on minority language promotion regarding output and income as well as employment (Grin, 1996:24 in Webb, 1999:110).

- Economic inequalities can be language-based (Grin, 1994:27 in Webb, 1999:110).

5.15.1 Findings 15

Most respondents indicated that it would suit them well if Northern Sotho could be used for higher functions. One of the respondents expressed this sentiment as follows:

If we can have a Constitution in Sepedi, why can't we have a business journal published in Sepedi because languages are languages?

5.16 FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING NORTHERN SOTHO LEXICOGRAPHY AND TERMINOLOGY

Terminology development in the indigenous African languages is a direct result of development or changes in domains other than languages. The sociocultural, economic and political contexts in which these languages are used have changed radically over the past years. The use of Northern Sotho for higher functions has compelled it to transform, as indicated in Chapter 1.

Suddenly the indigenous African languages have access to the entire South African society, communities and economic activities in which they were never used before. The question is: What approach should be adopted for the corpus development of Northern Sotho? The approach that should be followed for the development of Northern Sotho should be neither puristic nor anti-puristic, but apuristic. The apuristic approach is informed by the prevailing realities in the context in which the language is used. It has been established by other linguists that puristic indigenous methods are slow, and that it takes time for such terms to be disseminated to the target users (Madiba, 2000: 320).

Loan words can be incorporated into the target language with minimum modification. However, where loan words are adaptable to the linguistic structure

of the target language it is advisable to incorporate them with modification wherever possible. One of the respondents makes the following point:

In Sepedi we have these so-called maadingwa [loaned words]. We use those things [words] like 'inflation'. We do not like them as they are, like, we say inflesheni.

Prah (1997:21) argues that no language is inherently incapable of rendering scientific and technological ideas. Where languages are poor or devoid of a modern scientific and technological lexicon, it is only because no effort has been put into providing that particular language with such requisites.

Msimang (1997 in Prah 1997:21) states that modernisation or technical development of the African languages is both possible and desirable.

Some aspects of the linguistic adaptation of Northern Sotho may cause problems, for example its standardisation. At present there is tension between the accepted standard forms and the non-standardised dialects, such as Lobedu and Tlokwa. These dialects were never recognised by the previous language boards as standardised languages. In such cases a situation of language-internal conflict arises.

Besides all these dialectical problems Northern Sotho needs social and linguistic adaptation. There is no material reason, however, why it cannot be used immediately for the purposes of state administration as a start. Given its increasing use in this particular context, Northern Sotho will gradually acquire the necessary prestige, sophistication and technical adequacy required for effective public administration and commerce and industry.

5.16.1 Findings 16

The results of the focus group interviews reveal that there is unqualified approbation for the prospect of developing terminology and lexicography for Northern Sotho. However, some respondents felt that, instead of wasting time and money translating English financial and economics documents into Northern

Sotho and other languages, we should concentrate on alleviating poverty. One of the respondents expressed this sentiment as follows:

In a nutshell, I do not think it is necessary because we already came too far with our ... with English as a language of economics and commerce, but then we would rather move forward economically than trying to translate English to other languages like Sotho.

The time we are using to convert languages we can come with the strategy to eradicate poverty or there are more important things than maybe trying to translate languages because there are many.

This sentiment is also expressed in the *National Sociolinguistics Survey* (PanSALB, 2000:113) where it is noted that 50% of interviewees are in favour of government spending on priorities other than language issues. However, it does state that mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho, amongst others, feel that language issues should be the government's priority.

5.17 SUMMARY

It is evident from the findings that most of the respondents acknowledge and relate to the language problem. The majority indicated that they want their language to be modernised so that it can be used for higher functions.

As pointed out by Webb (1999:110), it is clear that Northern Sotho will attain the required status if it is actually used in high functions, that is, provided the necessary political will is mustered (expressed in government policy and consistent, expeditious and constructive implementation).

Heugh (2002:450) states that a language has an important role to play in the economic life of a society, but the question is: What is the 'policy' approach that is most conducive to achieving that role in society? Is it better for economic development that one language be used throughout the sector and that attempts

be made to ensure that all respondents are proficient in that one language, or is a multilingual approach advisable?

Skeptics in South Africa view the above - mentioned approach (e.g. lack of systematic implementation of our language policy) of devolution of no less than nine indigenous languages to official status as looking like either an expression of unbelievably naive optimism or a manifestation of unbelievably crude, political opportunism.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an overview of the research with specific reference to the background and general rationale, and certain salient conclusions that can be drawn from the research. Suggestions for further research are also made.

6.2 SUMMARY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the feasibility of using Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. To answer the research question, the following aims are formulated:

- To identify elements of the environment that are conducive or otherwise enablers for using Northern Sotho as a language of marketing, advertising, business and acquiring entrepreneurial skills, as well as a language of commerce and industry.
- To investigate the feasibility of developing *corpus* vocabularies and terminologies for commerce and industry.
- To explore the prospects of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology as discourse register for commerce and industry.
- To establish whether the hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans can hamper performance in commerce and industry and whether it can be a barrier for non-speakers of English or Afrikaans in securing employment.

The investigation has followed a two-pronged approach to data collection. Data has been collected by means of a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews. These methods have yielded a wealth of data. The data from the first phase were captured and encoded into categories that were arrayed in frequency tables. The categories were then reduced to thematic constructs. Data from the

second phase were captured and encoded into transcripts that were later decoded by the researcher and consolidated into themes, categories and sub-categories.

The identified themes are the following:

- The exclusive hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans experienced as a barrier to communication in commerce and industry
- Socio-economic background of respondents
- Existence of language policies in the workplace in commerce and industry
- Dispositions of mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages regarding Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry
- Feasibility of developing Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology.

The question here is: How does one determine feasibility? Before answering the question, a crucial and sensitive issue first had to be determined, that is, whether mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho and other languages were favourably disposed towards the elevation of Northern Sotho to a language of commerce and industry so that it can take its place among other languages in this regard. The issue is informed and guided by one of PanSALB's principles on language policy guidelines (PanSALB, 1998):

This orientation is consistent with the principle of *interdependence*, where different communities/languages are seen to coexist interdependently. The value of each language and its speech community is acknowledged as part of the whole. Language as a resource includes the notion of language as a right. The view that each language is a resource to the nation carries with it the notion of the instrumental use of languages or *functional multilingualism*.

The researcher has therefore not excluded respondents from other language groups, involved in from the focus group interviews and the questionnaire survey. Focus group respondents are mostly mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho.

The results of the questionnaire survey are supplemented by the focus group interviews and the observation strategies. Although English has emerged as the preferred language, most respondents are positive towards Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry.

The first step to determining the feasibility of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry was to establish the current practical language distribution in commerce and industry. The findings show that English and Afrikaans are dominant. Northern Sotho is primarily spoken in informal and social settings among friends and colleagues. Only 3% of the respondents participating in the questionnaire survey use Northern Sotho as a language of business and commerce, and 46,8% of respondents use a little Northern Sotho in different settings.

The second step was to explore and determine the effects of the hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry. Most respondents indicated that a lack of proficiency in English effectively detracted from their performance in the workplace. Some reported that it inhibited their efforts to find employment since English usage is universal in commerce and industry.

Lamberton (2002:16) alludes to the above findings and warns that language is an essential component of information and the learning processes. He asserts that language is a skill rather than knowledge, that it is a key ingredient of human capital, and that a second language is a bankable asset. He postulates further that language affects job qualifications can enhances or detracts efforts to find employment (i.e. job qualifications tend to be appraised higher or lower according to linguistic ability). It also has a determining effect on cultural identity and the efficacy of communication in business, of international trade and tourism, of negotiations and settlement processes and of political activity. In addition it plays a major role in conflict between nations.

The above issue (i.e. the effects of the hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry) was raised by the focus group

respondents (cf. Table 4.6; category 1.2 and par 5.5.1); in fact one of them became quite emotional when explaining how he failed a job interview conducted in English even though he knew exactly how to operate the machines in the employment he was trying to secure.

The third step was to establish whether the respondents were proficient in Northern Sotho. The findings revealed that 68% of respondents reported that they cannot speak the language, while some reported that they were still learning it. This may mean that 17,8% of respondents above are the ones who are still learning the language, since 50,2% reported that they never use Northern Sotho at all in commerce and industry.

The fourth step was to seek a basic tool that could serve to identify the communication needs of anyone who wishes to acquire a command of Northern Sotho for use in commerce and industry. These communicative needs include first-, second- and third-language speakers who would have to be familiar with the new terminology to be used in a particular context.

The learning area encompasses economics and commerce in a commercial and industrial setting. Hence a tool devised by Munby (1978:20) and termed, the Communicative Needs Processor (CPN) discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.1. A distinction between the uses of language and functions of a language is discussed in the same chapter.

Reagan (1986:11) states that there are two general kinds, communicative and classificatory use of 'special language'. This study is concerned with the communicative use of language, which refers to people's use of language to convey information about their knowledge and experience of reality to each other.

In this study the CPN model has been interpreted in order to apply it to the use of Northern Sotho for a 'specific purpose'.

Reagan (1986:11) identifies seven distinctive functions (cf. par. 2.9) and notes that they can be seen as operating in two distinct, albeit related and overlapping

spheres: the work-related and the social. These are not discussed since they are studies on their own.

Halliday (1973:32) considers from a pragmatic perspective that we must first distinguish between language 'use' and language 'function' (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.9) and Chapter 5, section 5.4.6). He applies his theoretical model to actual situations by breaking down the language along the lines of the instrumental, regulatory and interactional functions. What is happening here is that the ideational and interpersonal macro-functions are divided into more specific categories in order to understand a discourse in commerce and industry. This is exactly the sort of pragmatic division that will be necessary to devise a model for understanding the functions of language in industry or in the workplace. Halliday's model is reflected in Figure 6.1:

The function of language in industry

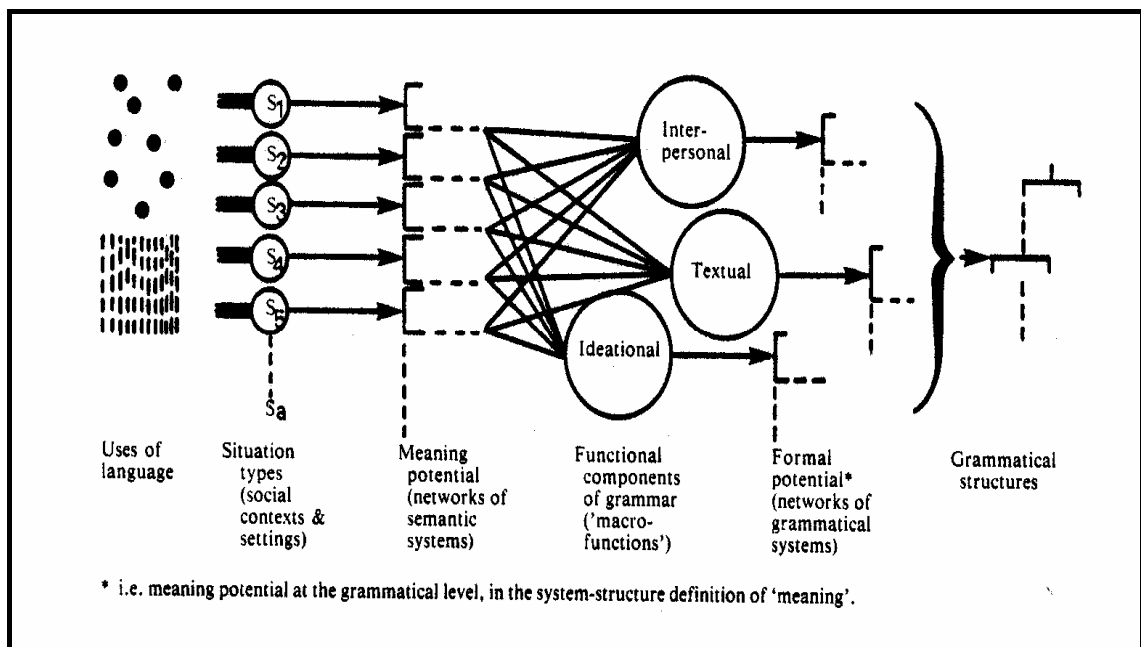


Figure 6.1: A typology for understanding and classifying the function of language in industry (Reagan, 1986:43)

The above model will not be described in detail here since it is self-explanatory.

After constructing ideal models for communicative use and language functions in commerce and industry the extent had to be determined to which the environment could be conducive to the use of Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. The researcher had to determine whether language policies existed in commerce and industry. Research findings from the questionnaire survey reveal that 21% (i.e. 42; cf. Table 3.6) respondents knew that English was the language of the company, which meant that they were aware of company policy or practices. In the focus group interviews, however, all the respondents indicated that they were not aware of language policies in their places of work.

Another important environmental factor is ethnicity. No respondents were prejudiced against Northern Sotho as a language of commerce and industry. According to Reagan (2002:420), the main problem faced by South Africa in responding to language diversity is the understandably close link in the minds of many South Africans between ethnicity and apartheid. It is a fact that 'ethnicity' is a problem in South Africa due to our history, which explains why 68% of respondents reported complete ignorance of Northern Sotho. Cultural ethnicity only becomes problematic if it is transformed into economic and political ethnicity for the benefit of one group's members at the expense of outsiders.

Closely related to the concept of ethnicity is that of ethnic or group rights, which will almost certainly include recognition of language rights. Although the term 'group rights' is again a highly politicised and very controversial one in the South African context, it is not without merit. As Degenaar (1987:246) argues in respect of the apartheid regime:

The South African government has interpreted the concept of group rights over a long period of time to the advantage of whites. Yet such distortions of the concept of group rights in favour of group privilege should not invalidate the concept. One should rather introduce the principle of justice, to help evaluate the applications of the concept of group rights.

The question of rights, specifically language rights, is central to the development of language policies and will have to be resolved if language policy in South Africa is to play a positive role in the emergence of a more just and humane society. The Constitution explicitly recognises and protects both linguistic and cultural rights, although important questions remain about the nature and limits of such rights. What has yet to be clarified in this regard is how such rights are to be understood and how, in actual practice, they are to be protected. These are significant questions that are far from unique to South Africa (cf. recent discussions on language rights as the international arena by Coulombe, 1993 and Prinsloo et al. 1993).

The fifth step was to establish whether it was feasible to develop Northern Sotho lexicography and terminology for commerce and industry. Prospective developments of terminology and lexicography are huge studies on their own. The question is 'How does one go about it?'

6.2.1 Terminology development

Creating vocabularies, new terminologies and lexicographies and the process of functional elaboration and codification and writing systems are pivotal to achieving the main aim of this study.

Madiba (2000:322) identifies the following term-formation strategies for the modernisation of Venda: borrowing, semantic shift, derivation, compounding, paraphrasing, and compression strategies such as initialism, acronyms and clipping. He recommends that terminology development be institutionalized, and that a model be used as devised by scholars such as Picht and Draskau (1985 in Madiba, 2000:322). The above strategies may also be adopted for the modernisation of Northern Sotho.

6.2.1.1 Terminology projects as part of this study that have been developed

The Terminology Coordination Sub-directorate, under the auspices of the DAC is involved in several projects, namely:

- § The development of terminology for the Economic and Management Sciences for the foundation and intermediate phases (i.e. grades 1 to 6). The aim is to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to adapt, participate and survive in an economically complex society.
- § Development of terminology in the fields of HIV/AIDS and Human Economics, Management and Social Sciences.
- § Involved with Human Language Technologies (HLT): Finalising the HLT National Strategy, which outlines broad policy direction and coordination strategies for HLT industry in South Africa

PRAESA: Terminology Development Unit

This project involves searching for scientific concepts and terms in African Languages; this means coining and borrowing from English mainly and other languages, appropriateness in description and definition of terms, looking at level and user-friendliness of terms in target language(s).

6.2.2 Lexicography development

After terminologies have been developed dictionaries need to explain the new-found words arrayed in specific categories. The following list reflects progress made so far in respect of the corpus development in Northern Sotho is as follows:

- 'Norms and Regulations for the Establishment of a National Lexicography Unit for Northern Sotho' have been compiled.
- A presentation entitled 'Compilation of a Monolingual Dictionary for Northern Sotho' was done by Prof. R.H. Gouws.

- Much lexicographical research (Metalexicographic) has evolved around the Dictionary Project.
- *SeDiPro*- that is, the Sesotho sa leboa Dictionary Project (Northern Sotho/Sepedi) in which the lexicographic treatment is corpus based.
- In-depth research into the problematic aspects of lemmatisation in Northern Sotho has been done, as well as word frequency studies.
- The Dictionary Project: A monolingual dictionary has been compiled by the Northern Sotho NLU.
- Besides collaborative initiatives undertaken jointly by academics in some institutions and Microsoft to produce spellcheckers in Northern Sotho and other African languages. One such project was concluded in 2005.

Marivate, the CEO of PanSALB, said (cf. Benton, S., 2005) that producing comprehensive monolingual dictionaries is a key aim of PanSALB's national lexicography units and therefore also an ambition for her department, but she added that by 2050 multilingual dictionaries for the indigenous languages will have doubled in size.

As noted in previous chapters and above, Webb (1999:110) asserts that the South African indigenous black languages will be technicalised once they are actually used in technical contexts and for technical purposes. He says the argument that a language can only become really technicalised if it creates its own indigenous terms is ill-conceived. It is general practice for all languages to simply borrow terms from languages that have the required technical terms. Formerly same terms were borrowed from Greek and Latin, and then transliterated. There is no reason why the African languages cannot borrow technical terms from English. (A preoccupation with creating 'indigenous' terms is probably politically inspired, either because of an obsession with 'purity', with proving the superiority of a language, or with keeping particular languages out of positions).

Aspects of the linguistic adaptation of the African languages may present problems, such as their full standardisation. At present there are signs of tension

between the accepted standard forms and the non-standardised dialects, especially in Northern Sotho.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations pertaining to matters discussed or findings of the research are set out in the following paragraphs:

6.3.1 Recommendation 1: The development of Northern Sotho for use in commerce and industry

The need to develop and extend targeted/dedicated lexicographic and terminological resources and a jargon used in commerce and industry as well as creating a register for use in commerce and industry are critical for this study.

Although it is true that Northern Sotho needs status and linguistic adaptation, there is no reason in principle why it cannot be used effectively for state administration (as a workplace) and commerce and industry. Given its increasing use in these particular contexts, it will gradually acquire the necessary status and technical adequacy. Indeed, its use will lead to more effective public administration and commerce and industry will follow suit.

6.3.2 Recommendation 2: Language policies in commerce and industry

Language policies in multilingual industrial settings should be explicitly thought out and clearly defined and articulated. The process of developing a language policy in an industrial setting should be inclusive, and all stakeholders or their representatives, such as employees, union members and management, should be involved in this process. The following language policy initiatives should be undertaken for Northern Sotho in particular:

- Commerce and industry should conduct audits on language use.
- Needs and preferences of employees should be determined to establish how many people speak Northern Sotho.

- If a substantial number of people speak Northern Sotho, a language unit should be set up and a language ombudsperson be appointed to manage language issues and concerns in every organisation in South Africa. This practice should commence with bigger companies.
- A language plan should be drawn up.
- Time frames and action plans should be put in place.
- Strategies of how language planning in commerce and industry will be implemented should be put in place (corpus planning and acquisition of (a) new language(s)).

Reagan (2002:419) asserts that as long as language planning and language policy formulation are seen as a top-down activity, removed from those whose lives it affects most closely, and perceived as an activity only for those with specialised expertise, it will most probably continue to be generally ineffective. The above issue has already been raised by Fishman (1974:117) as discussed in Chapter 3 (cf. par. 2.3.2).

Reagan (2002:419) suggests that what is needed, instead, are language policies devised in consultation with, and with the support and involvement of, those they are intended to serve. This, in turn, requires that ethnic, cultural and linguistic rights, whether conceived in individual or group terms, will of necessity have to be protected, as will the political, social, educational and economic rights of all South Africans. Tollefson (1991:167) and Kloss (1978:10) argue that the foundation for rights is power, and that a constant struggle is necessary to sustain language rights.

In a study of *Language policy in South Africa*, Kloss (1978:10) observes that when based on careful language planning, language policy is more than a mere appurtenance of racial policy or of any other aspect of the struggle for human rights, and may acquire, if properly implemented, a dignity of its own.

6.3.2.1 Underlying principles of language policy development and planning

South Africa will be best served by a functional multilingual, democratic, ecological language policy. Mühlhäusler (1996:323) notes that an ecological language policy contributes constructively to the ecology of all languages so that all language groups can communicate without neglecting any of the languages used, and that the object of ecological language policy must be to create a sustainable environment in which all languages can thrive (instead of only one or two 'powerful' ones). The implementation of ecological language policy consists in realising long-term goals incorporated under language planning.

According to Reagan (2002:419), the fundamental principles of language policy development are the following:

- Functional multilingualism
- Language preference(s), use and proficiency of the target audience. These need to be determined and should form the foundation for the language policy
- Social justice and equal access to public services, resources and programmes
- Broad acceptance of linguistic diversity
- Recognition of language rights
- Regular evaluation and revision (in the short, medium and long term)

Kerr (1976 in Reagan, 2002:420) suggests four 'tests' that a good public policy must pass. These four tests, and the fundamental questions that they seek to raise, are as follows:

- *The desirability test.* Does the community regard the goal of the policy desirable?
- *The justness test.* Is the policy just and fair? That is, does it dispense equally fair and decent treatment to all under its sway?
- *The effectiveness test.* Is the policy effective? Does it achieve its objectives?

- *The tolerability test.* Is the policy resource-sensitive? Is it viable in the context in which it is to be implemented? These four 'tests' are a useful means of evaluating language policies and may serve as a working model for analysing different language planning processes, thus providing a series of questions that can be used to evaluate a range of language policy options.

As far as this study is concerned corpus planning processes for South Africa should include:

- a systematic elaboration and cultivation of new terms in Northern Sotho
- propagation of the use of Northern Sotho in commerce and industry
- immersion and education with particular emphasis on the multilingual principles
- use of Northern Sotho in the work environment
- government services to be offered in Northern Sotho, especially in its sphere of influence
- development of Northern Sotho as a medium of instruction in higher education, so that this sector will feed into the workplace (e.g. media, government and commerce and industry).

If an equitable functional multilingualism is to be achieved that will benefit everybody adequately and equally, then adequate precautionary measures should be built in a multilingual policy and adopted to deal with the possibility that people may be rendered semi-lingual as a result of vocabulary deficits and may therefore have a limited capacity to effectively use the language concerned.

6.3.2.2 The economic value of languages

According to Webb (1999:190), sociolinguists often argue in favour of multilingual language policies on the basis of the 'resource value' of languages, that is, the value these languages will or can add to people's lives. However, Grin (1997:48-49 in Webb, 1999:190) and Vaillancourt (2002:9) point out that the notion of a

'linguistic resource value' is often used metaphorically, in referring to the cultural or religious value of a language.

However, in a discussion of the utilisation of languages for economic development, the term 'economic or market value of a language' should be used. Perhaps the notions 'economic value' and 'market value' should be differentiated as references to general economic value in the former and more specific economic value in the latter case (Webb, 1999:190).

The economic value of a language would then refer to the functional potential of a language as a societal means of production. To determine this value of a language one would have to consider its role in promoting effectiveness, efficiency and productivity in the workplace (Webb, 1999:190).

As indicated, the market value of a language is more specifically its exchange value as a commodity, its 'price', the 'demand' for it and the available 'supply' (Grin, 1997 in Webb, 1999:190). To determine the market value of a language, therefore one would ask the following questions (Webb, 1999:190):

- What would employers be willing to pay a person with knowledge of a particular language, that is, what jobs can be obtained with a knowledge of the language (Its employment value)?
- How necessary is knowledge of a language as means of selling goods or products and services?
- What profit can be made by using it (in the market place)?

It is obviously important in the context of the stance taken in this chapter to determine the economic and the market value of the South African languages individually.

6.3.3 Recommendation 3: The development of terminology and lexicography

According to Webb (1999), no professional person is ever trained to perform his/her profession in a particular language. He/she is trained professionally, and such training presupposes acquiring the discourse of the field, that is, the technical terms and registers (including 'ways of speaking and interpreting'). Having acquired these skills, professionals are able to perform their occupational duties in whatever language is needed.

In resorting to borrowing for term formation, terminologists should be aware of the types of borrowing, loan words and loan translations that may be used in the language. The choice in using any of these strategies depends on both linguistic and extralinguistic factors. For example, the Northern Sotho linguistic structure is conducive to borrowing, that is, loaned terms are readily adapted to the linguistic structure of the language. Further decisions should be made about selecting the source language and loaned words. According to Madiba (2000:322) and Webb (1999:190) the English morphophonological structure is not compatible with that of the indigenous African languages and they suggest that English may serve as the main source of borrowing. Indigenous African languages have been borrowing terms from English and Afrikaans for years now, therefore they play an important role in this regard and also vice versa.

In developing the vocabulary needed for the expansion of functions in the new language dispensation, allow the use of loan-words; rather than create words artificially from the words and morphemes existing in the language, recognise and promote the words already in use among speakers of the language.

This approach is deemed necessary for two reasons. In the first place, if the old 'purist' approach is adopted again, it will be a waste of money - people do not adopt words just because an authority says they should. Secondly, if the approved corpus is unfamiliar, native speakers of the language will not wish to study it at school, and speakers of other languages will be unwilling to study it formally, as they will know that it will not be useful for communication with native speakers.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are a few areas in which it is clear that further research may be conducted as part of the 'Language in the labour situation' project. These areas, in the order in which they can be addressed, are as follows:

- Research into the development, implementation and effectiveness of various types of initiatives to improve communication in the industrial setting
- Empirical studies to investigate the functions performed by language in industry
- The effect of language use and attitudes towards languages on communication in the workplace
- The effect of language on economic activity
- Communication processes in industry
- The modernisation of Northern Sotho

6.5 CONCLUSION

Native speakers of African languages believe their languages are inherently lacking in the capacity to serve as media of communication for the purpose of higher learning, economic activity, social mobility or any other serious public business. Their only use, they suggest, is as instruments of low-key personal social interaction (e.g. idle conversation to pass the time) and cultural expression.

Language planning activities that are designed to limit the hegemony of English and Afrikaans should discourage the perception among South Africans in commerce and industry that the 'monolingual habitus' of English or Afrikaans is best suited for business. There are a number of serious problems with regard to a monolingual approach in South Africa. As stated previously, South Africans' knowledge of English, especially in the lower socio-economic strata, does not equip them adequately to function and perform optimally in commerce and industry, or to participate effectively in economic activity. For example, it is matter

for conjecture whether ordinary indigenous people will be able to understand and respond appropriately to the purport of tender documents.

Webb (1999:179) and Ozolins (2003:67) are in resonance with regard to the exclusive hegemonic use of English in commerce and industry. Both have the same opinion that the exclusive use of English can be very costly, both directly and indirectly. The direct costs involve the money, time and energy that will have to be put into upgrading the general knowledge of English. The indirect costs involve losses due to misunderstanding, accidents, cost implications of miscommunication which are exponentially greater than the cost of proceeding correctly the first time round. However, Ozolins (2003:73) notes with disapprobation that some economists reduce the role of language to being no more than a vehicle or simple receptacle for the literal conveyance of information, whereas in fact it performs many more functions, and it is essential to keep these functions in mind in order to fully appreciate the role of language in economic life.

It noted in earlier chapters that more should be done to employ concepts from environmental economics and apply cost-benefit analyses to language planning. Languages are often embedded in the power relations of a country. South Africa is a good example of this phenomenon: Speakers of non-standard English and non-speakers of English have no power and therefore cannot become profitably involved in a globally controlled economic system. The role of language and culture in development, including economic development should not be underestimated.

According to Heugh (2000:467) the functional use of the African languages will never be fully realised until their potential in economic terms is revealed. No proponent of multilingualism or local languages has ever suggested jettisoning either the use of an international language or an international curriculum from the education or economic systems of Africa. However, a reconceptualisation or recovery of what works well in Africa in terms of the following needs should be integrated into both the education and economic systems that provide access to the outside world. The needs are (Heugh, 2000):

- effective channels of communication;
- useful knowledge; and
- well-established activities in small local as well as regional economies.

Strauss et al. (1996:9) argues that the value of a language correlates directly with its functional appreciation by the relevant community. He argues further that a language is not only of economic value to those who speak it but considered a right, especially when people perceive it as being closely linked to their (threatened) identity and experience an intense sentimental attachment to the language. The cultural value of a language may maintain it under adverse economic and political conditions.

Heugh (2002:470) points out that language policy and planning activities cannot be separated from the full spectrum of economic activities and their links to all the related areas of knowledge and expertise. Therefore, if governments do not have the capacity to link the various knowledge domains and activities it should be done through smaller projects initiated by civil society. The fact that the South African government has not produced a clear definition of and commitment to a new language policy despite arguably the most enabling language constitution in the world is sufficient warning to language planners and service providers elsewhere in Africa not to expect legislative provision alone to ensure a just language dispensation.

South Africa will be best served by a functional multilingual, democratic, ecological language policy. It was also noted earlier that an ecological language policy contributes constructively to the ecology of all languages so that all language groups can communicate without neglecting any of the languages used. It is reported further that an ecological language policy must create a sustainable environment in which all languages can thrive (instead of only one or two 'powerful' ones). The implementation of an ecological language policy requires long-term goals and language planning.

Having done this study, the researcher feels strongly that it is feasible for Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry. The

hegemonic use of English or Afrikaans as languages of commerce and industry is a barrier to non-mother tongue users of these languages. Northern Sotho should acquire the status needed to be used in higher functions and is an economic resource in the development and advancement of its mother-tongue speakers in South Africa.

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ANNEXURE A: FREQUENCY TABLES

THE RATIONALE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this study, the quantitative method has served as information gathering tool to establish factors such as the disposition of mother-tongue speakers towards Northern Sotho since Northern Sotho is not a stand-alone. Hence, the target population for this study consisted of a diverse group of individuals. However, it is important to appreciate that the information gathered consists of individuals' perceptions rather than factual data.

A copy of the original questionnaire compiled by the researcher is included as Annexure C. Markdata reworked the questions into cross-tables and STATCON used SPSS to reduce the data into frequency tables. The questions, asked in the questionnaire have been added to the frequency tables. Questions with a zero response were not picked up by the SPSS application, hence an empty block with columns and the results are provided with details by the software for clarification.

The order in which the questions discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 have to do with the fact that they share a common denominator. This strategy makes sense as repetition, and therefore the possibility of confusion is avoided.

Question 1: Present occupation					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Teacher/lecturer	7	3,5%	3,5%	3,5%
	Engineer/computer engineer/architect	8	4%	4%	7,5%
	Human resource/public relations/admin.	87	43,3%	43,3%	50,7%
	Lawyer/accountant/economist	12	6%	6%	56,7%
	Nurse/social worker/pastor	1	0,5%	0,5%	57,2%
	Own business	3	1,5%	1,5%	58,7%
	Sales and marketing	4	2%	2%	60,7%
	Director/manager/general manager/CEO	68	33,8%	33,8%	94,5%
	Journalist/editor	11	5,5%	5,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 2: What kind of occupation are you involved in?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Education	10	5%	5%	5%
	Commerce/ wholesale/ retail/repair of motor vehicles	28	13,9%	13,9%	18,9%
	Manufacturing	7	3,5%	3,5%	22,4%
	Marketing	4	2%	2%	24,4%
	Finance/insurance/real estate/business services	48	23,9%	23,9%	48,3%
	Health	6	3%	3%	51,2%
	Building/construction	8	4%	4%	55,2%
	Agriculture/hunting/forestry /fishing	7	3,5%	3,5%	58,7%
	Mining and quarrying	4	2%	2%	60,7%
	Electricity, gas and water supply	7	3,5%	3,5%	64,2%
	Transport/storage and communication	28	13,9%	13,9%	78,1%
	Community/social and personal services	44	21,9%	21,9%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 3: Gender					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Male	129	64,2%	64,2%	64,2%
	Female	72	35,8%	35,8%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 4: Age group					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	<25	6	3%	3%	3%
	25–34	70	34,8%	34,8%	37,8%
	35–44	76	37,8%	37,8%	75,6%
	45+	49	24,4%	24,4%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

	Question 5a: Years of experience in all managerial positions		Question 5b: Years of experience in your current position as a manager	
	Count	%	Count	%
Up to three years	42	20,9%	89	44,3%
More than three years but less than five years	40	19,9%	51	25,4%
Equal to five years or less than ten years	48	23,9%	31	15,4%
Over ten years	71	30	35,3%	14,9%

Question 6: What is your highest level of education?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	PhD/D Tech	6	3%	3%	3%
	Masters/M Tech	33	16,4%	16,4%	19,4%
	B Honours or equivalent	27	13,4%	13,4%	32,8%
	B Tech/Bachelors Degree	52	25,9%	25,9%	58,7%
	National Diploma	62	30,8%	30,8%	89,6%
	Matric or Grade 12	19	9,5%	9,5%	99%
	Std 9 or lower	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
	None	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 7: What is your home language (mother tongue)? (Choose only one.)					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	1 Afrikaans	64	31,8%	31,8%	31,8%
	2 English	47	23,4%	23,4%	55,2%
	3 IsiNdebele	2	1%	1%	56,2%
	4 SiSwati	1	0,5%	0,5%	56,7%
	5 IsiXhosa	14	7%	7%	63,7%
	6 IsiZulu	10	5%	5%	68,7%
	7 Northern Sotho	18	9%	9%	77,6%
	8 Sesotho	2	1%	1%	78,6%
	9 Setswana	19	9,5%	9,5%	88,1%
	10 Tshivenda	4	2%	2%	90%
	11 Xitsonga	7	3,5%	3,5%	93,5%
	12 European	7	3,5%	3,5%	97%
	13 Other African	1	0,5%	0,5%	97,5%
	14 Indian	2	1%	1%	98,5%
	1, 2	1	0,5%	0,5%	99%
	6, 7	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
	6, 8, 9	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%
Total	201	100%	100%		

Question 8: Which language do you use when speaking to your family and children?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	1 Afrikaans	60	29,9%	29,9%	29,9%
	2 English	64	31,8%	31,8%	61,7%%
	3 IsiNdebele	2	1%	1%	62,7%
	4 SiSwati	1	0,5%	0,5%	63,2%
	5 IsiXhosa	12	6%	6%	69,2%
	6 IsiZulu	8	4%	4%	73,1%
	7 Northern Sotho	14	7%	7%	80,1%
	8 Sesotho	2	1%	1%	81,1%
	9 Setswana	13	6,5%	6,5%	87,6%
	10 Tshivenda	4	2%	2%	89,6%
	11 Xitsonga	5	2,5%	2,5%	92%
	12 European	3	1,5%	1,5%	93,5%
	13 Other African	1	0,5%	0,5%	94%
	14 Indian	2	1%	1%	95%
	1, 2	4	2%	2%	97%
	6, 7	1	0,5%	0,5%	97,5%
	2, 7, 8	1	0,5%	0,5%	98%
	2, 7, 8, 10	1	0,5%	0,5%	98,5%
	2, 9	1	0,5%	0,5%	99%
	2, 6, 9	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
2, 6, 8	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%	
Total	201	100%	100%		

Question 9: Have you received any in-house training in business?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Yes	126%	62,7%	62,7%	62,7%
	No	75%	37,3%	37,3%	100%
	Total	201%	100%	100%	

Question 10						
		Very regularly	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	Total
q10a Indicate the frequency with which you use Afrikaans to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	43	41	83	34	201
	%	21,4%	20,4%	41,3%	16,9%	100%
q10e Indicate the frequency with which you use English to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	182	16	3		201
	%	90,5%	8%	1,5%		100%
q10p Indicate the frequency with which you use IsiNdebele to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	7	15	37	142	201
	%	3,5%	7,5%	18,4%	70,6%	100%
q10t Indicate the frequency with which you use SiSwati to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	7	17	34	143	201
	%	3,5%	8,5%	16,9%	71,1%	100%
q10s Indicate the frequency with which you use isiXhosa to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	6	20	43	132	201
	%	3%	10%	21,4%	65,7%	100%
q10z Indicate the frequency with which you use IsiZulu to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	10	25	45	121	201
	%	5%	12,4%	22,4%	60,2%	100%
q10g Indicate the frequency with which you use Sepedi to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	5	9	34	153	201
	%	2,5%	4,5%	16,9%	76,1%	100%
q10sw Indicate the frequency with which you use Sesotho to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count		3	18	180	201
	%		1,5%	9%	89,6%	100%
q10v Indicate the frequency with which you use Setswana to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	5	8	22	166	201
	%	2,5%	4%	10,9%	82,6%	100%
q10ts Indicate the frequency with which you use Tshivenda to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	3	5	24	169	201
	%	1,5%	2,5%	11,9%	84,1%	100%
q10nd Indicate the frequency with which you use XiTsonga to conduct business (any situation – internally and externally).	Count	2	4	13	182	201
	%	1%	2%	6,5%	90,5%	100%

Question 11a: Which one of the languages in Question 10 above do you use most frequently in commerce and industry (written or oral)?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	1 Afrikaans	24	11,9%	11,9%	11,9%
	2 English	172	85,6%	85,6%	97,5%
	6 IsiZulu	1	0,5%	0,5%	98%
	7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)	1	0,5%	0,5%	98,5%
	9 Setswana	1	0,5%	0,5%	99%
	1, 2	1	0,5%	0,5%	99,5%
	1, 2, 6	1	0,5%	0,5%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 11b: Why do you use (language in Question 11a) most often?								
	Language of product	Language of clients	Policy / Business language / International language	Practical or multicultural / All speak and understand	Language of company	Mother tongue	Language of area	Use different languages in different settings
1 Afrikaans	6	4		1	1	3	10	
2 English	7	16	47	51	41	5	2	1
6 IsiZulu				1				
7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)	1							
9 Setswana	1	1						
1, 2								1
1, 2, 6		1						

Question 12(a): Why do you use (language in Question 11b) least frequently?	
	Totals
Use it infrequently	9
Not used in business/ Not that often	19
Not many people speak language (in business)	26
Not many speakers in area	36
Cannot speak/ speak well/ Express better other language	15
Use it socially	1
Afr/ Eng dominant language	32
No clients in that language	9
Total	201

Question 12(b): Why do you use (language in Question 12a) least frequently?								
	8. No clients with that language	7. Use it infrequently	6. Not used in business / Not that often	5. Not many people speak language (in business)	4. Not many speakers in area	3. Cannot speak it or speak it well / Express better in other language	2. Use it socially	1. Afrikaans or English dominant language
1 Afrikaans		4	11	13	10	4	1	16
2 English					1	1		2
3 IsiNdebele	2	1	1	1	4	2		
4 SiSwati	3			2	1	2		1
5 IsiXhosa	1	2	1	2	4	1		1
6 IsiZulu	1	1	3	2	1	3		3
7 Northern Sotho (Sepedi)			2	2	4	2		
8 Sesotho					4			3
9 Setswana		1		2	2			1
10 Tshivenda	1		1	1	3			1
11 XiTsonga	1			1	2			
12 European								4

Question 13: Where do you use Northern Sotho?	
	Totals
In the meetings in your workplace	17
Only in socially	39
In business spheres	16
In informal settings with peers or colleagues	27
I hardly use it/ Never	114
Frequently – friends and colleagues	35
To customers	35
Total	201

Question 14: Express as a percentage your average Northern Sotho usage in commerce and industry in general.					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Moderately or more	6	3%	3%	3%
	Little	94	46,8%	46,8%	49,8%
	Never	101	50,2%	50,2%	100%
	Total	201	100%	100%	

Question 15: Give reasons for your answer in Question 14.	
	Totals
Can't speak it/ still learning	68
Use it socially	9
Use at home	2
Not used in workplace	50
Clients speak Eng	20
Not used in area	19
Main language at work/ use a lot at work	13
Use with colleagues	12
Depends on customers	3
Total	201

Question 16: Do you write your correspondence e.g. memorandums and circulars, in Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	6	3%
No	195	97%

Question 17a: Have you ever studied Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	50	24,9%
No	151	75,1%

Question 17b: Up to which level did you study Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
- Std 5	7	13,5%
Std 6–7	11	21,2%
Std 8–9	17	32,7%
Std 10	9	17,3%
Graduate/postgraduate	3	5,8%
Course	5	9,6%

Question 18a: Do you watch TV?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	154	76,6%
No	47	23,4%

Question 19: Do you think it is important that Northern Sotho should be developed as a business language?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	71	35,3%
No	130	64,7%

Question 20: Which one of the following groups of people do you believe should use Northern Sotho as a business language more frequently?		
	Count	Percentage
1. Broadcasters, journalists, etc.	10	5%
2. Professors, lectures, teachers, students, pupils	34	16,9%
3. Government employees/personnel	3	1,5%
4. HR, PR/HR practices	0	0
5. People in industry	2	1%
6. Other (specify)	2	1%
7. None	76	37,8%
1, 3, 5	2	1%
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	19	9,5%
1, 2, 3	7	3,5%
1, 2, 3, 4	10	5%
1, 2	21	10,4%
2, 3	3	1,5%
2, 3, 4, 5	2	1%
2, 5	3	1,5%
3, 4	2	1%
1, 3	1	0,5%
2, 3, 4	1	0,5%
1, 2, 5	1	0,5%
1, 2, 3, 5	2	1%

Question 21a: Would you read a business newspaper published in Northern Sotho?		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	40	19,9%
No	161	80,1%

Question 21b: Why would you not read a Northern Sotho newspaper?		
	Count	Percentage
Can't speak it/still learning/difficult	120	80%
Prefer English/Afrikaans/Zulu etc	16	10,7%
Do not read newspapers	1	0,7%
English is business language / Majority English	3	2%
Would if could understand	2	1,3%
No newspaper	8	5,3%

ANNEXURE B: TRANSCRIPTS

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING NORTHERN SOTHO AS A LANGUAGE OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Cassette 1: 17 September 2003

Side 1

Interviewer: Welcome to the focus group interviews of the research project that I am undertaking. Actually the research focus that I am looking at is ... the question that I am supposed to ask all of the participants in the research is: Do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho as a language of economics and commerce in the industry? I will try and clarify that.

Interviewee: Alright.

Interviewer: The question that I would like to ask you is that, do you think it is important for Northern Sotho to be used as a language of industry? By that I mean that it should be used in such a way that we can hold our meetings, interact with each other in formal type of a scenario using Sepedi as a language of communication. I will firstly refer to number 1. Number 1, can you answer that one for us.

Interviewee 1: Yah, I think it is important because if have to look at something like maybe on the common side, there is something that maybe in English very difficult to say but in Northern Sotho you can say it and put it into commercial ... Like maybe in the motor industry or wherever that can ensures that maybe Northern Sotho can be part of the communication via the international and ... international

language like English and Northern Sotho combined together.

Interviewer: You can also speak in Sesotho. The only thing that I want is that so that the person can be able to transcribe what we are saying. It won't be necessary to speak in English.

Interviewee 1: Yah ... yes.

Interviewer: You can talk in Sesotho. And number 2, anything to say?

Interviewee 2: I think we cannot use ... ah ... Northern Sotho as a language of economics and commerce because commercially and economics it is not just a national issue but an international issue in terms where, like, we have to interchange with foreign countries. It would be, like, to a disadvantage for a China to learn Sotho when he comes to any negotiations or when conducting a meetings in terms of, like, with business people. I think informally we can use Sotho as far as it can go in terms of, like, informally, like, if you were my business associate and your mother tongue is Sotho and my mother tongue is Sotho, we can always *bowa* informally, but not in terms of meetings where procedures and rules are followed. Because in business there are jargons that are used by everybody who is in that particular business field. Do you understand? So I think I would be extra mile to go for people to turn those jargons into Sotho words, do you understand?

Interviewer: OK, but number 2, in some instances you find that you try and put across an idea to a group in a meeting. Don't you have a problem where they do not understand what you want to put across or maybe they misunderstand what you

are saying? And later in the meeting they start again and take out your point and raise it as theirs? How do you feel?

Interviewee 2: I think is a matter of learning those certain terms or words or jargons that are used, and taking those words and using them everyday like simple English or they can be used simpler. Because the international intellectual capacity of somebody who is, like, studying economics or commerce is valid enough for that person to understand basic English.

Interviewer: To be able to communicate?

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Interviewer: In view of that, what do you think, number 1?

Interviewee 1: *Ke ne ka nagana gore e ka ba* alright Northern Sotho but *e kaba o re* maybe *e* be a just smaller subject. *O a kwešiša ... e seka ba*, like, maybe *re gona o ... na re le* different cultures and then but, what about people coming from Africa outside and find us communicating in Northern Sotho. But on side of maybe Gauteng Province and then Northern Province, that one can be approved.

Interviewer: Alright, how would you react if management send you a memo written in Northern Sotho or any correspondence or a circular in your workplace?

Interviewee 2: Like I have mentioned since that would be like an internal affair that can be considered on an informal bases, you understand. You know what language I am familiar with. If it is in Sesotho to me or Northern Sotho, like, I can identify the language *e mo memong*, you understand. Unlike if it is

supposed to be an external affair where we are going to involve people ... even internally is still like going to have problems. If *nna* I am not a Northern Sotho-speaking it is going to be a problem. That is why I am saying that on a more informal bases it can be appreciated I understand. Like *wena*, Mrs Phaasha, you know that I can understand Sotho, you can always give, like, a memo and say do this, do you understand? Where I can understand what is written in the memo but in my mind it can still click in an English way, like, I understand it in the English vocabulary you understand.

Interviewer: Uhm!, uhm! (pause). Alright. And the e-mails, how do you correspond to your friends and colleagues if you know that these people understand or know Northern Sotho? What language do you use?

Interviewees 1 & 2: I use English. Even SMS with cell phones.

Interviewer: Yes, cell phones.

Interviewee 2: We use English because of what, like, I am telling you it's an international thing. It goes with evolution, do you understand? But of cause if it is more informally based. I can always say Mrs Phaasha *ke atla*, like, I am coming. *Ke a tla* is more, like, informal but you get the message on what I am I convey. In your mind it can lend you into English that he is coming.

Interviewer: But normally if in any cases if you want to send your friends ...

Interviewee 2: English.

- Interviewer:** What comes to you is just English that comes first?
- Interviewee 2:** It's English.
- Interviewer:** Uhm!
- Interviewee 1:** *Nna*, I just think *ore* according to SMS and e-mail we use to e-mail *ka* English but if I know *ore* you understand language *ya ka* but on the basis of uhm, uhm ... maybe on the work institution, like, you send maybe six people an e-mail, you cannot send six people an e-mail *ka* Sepedi while *o sa tsebe* maybe *ke batho bararo ba tsebaho* Sepedi it's a problem. But *o ka senda* SMS *ka* Sepedi knowing that you are sending it to a person *a tsebang* Sepedi. Normally we prefer English in most of the things.
- Interviewer:** Uhm!, uhm! uhm!
- Interviewee 2:** That is why I put it a question of formally it would be in English but informally we based on Northern Sotho. Like I gave an example *ka mme Phaasha ke tla*. Do you understand because I know that you relate to the language. But if I was to send a message or address you here, both of you, obviously what would pop up in my mind is the minute I see you it would be English because I do not know by your face I cannot judge that you are a Northern Sotho-speaking or he is Shangaan-speaking. So I have to use a language that will accommodate both of you.
- Interviewer:** OK, it makes sense. We have covered most of the stuff but if you are given a newspaper and you have a variety of choice of newspapers to pick and among these papers you

have Northern Sotho, English and let's say Afrikaans, which one would you pick first?

Interviewee 2: Like maybe, OK ...

Interviewer: Perhaps you are in a plane, you are travelling in a business trip and you want to read something ...

Interviewee 1: But in all that newspapers maybe let's give an example, maybe the *Star*, *Sowetan*, *Daily Sun* and whatever you have got the same information but differ in languages, myself I can choose my Northern Sotho just because I can read the story and understand it simpler. But in English, just because English is not my mother language, sometimes I can take the English one and find out that there are some words that you cannot understand. But if I pick a Northern Sotho paper I can understand better.

Interviewer: Alright. Number 2?

Interviewee 2: Myself I think I can prefer the one in English. Since, like, most of times the thing that I see like at church you find that even at church these days they read Bible *ya Sekgowa*. Why do they do this is because *ke* evolution it goes with the times, do you understand? And it goes with the intellectual capacity *ya motho*. For like *Pace* magazine, if it is published in Sesotho it is simply like it has got this signal that made for people who cannot understand English, *o ya understenda?* That is why it is published in Sesotho and it will make people lives simpler and easier, do you understand me? In terms of myself since I do a lot of reading and I think I understand I would prefer *ore ke bale* an English one

- Interviewer:** Alright, thank you, guys.
- Interviewer:** We will continue. The questions are not right or wrong. You will just give your opinion of what you think. And number 3, do you think it is important for a Northern Sotho to be used as a commercial language in industry? What I mean by this is that can we use Northern Sotho in a workplace to conduct meetings, to write our memos and to communicate in a formal ...?
- Interviewee 3:** Yes, I think it is important to use Northern Sotho in the working environment more especially in the business sectors but I think specifically in Limpopo where northern people are ... Northern Sotho-speaking people are mostly situated. Because if you are going to use Northern Sotho in the working environment ... You need to see if you have more Northern Sotho-speaking people because if you will be having Afrikaans, Tswana and Zulu, you need to find another alternative language. You can maybe say we will use Northern Sotho and Zulu, for example.
- Interviewer:** Do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho to be a language of business?
- Interviewee 3:** I think it is important.
- Interviewer:** And then is the language that you are presently using at your place of work inhibiting you from communicating your ideas or putting them across to other people?
- Interviewee 3:** With my colleagues, we are all Northern Sotho-speaking people and we do use Northern Sotho language.
- Interviewer:** In an informal way?

- Interviewee 3:** Yes, in an informal way.
- Interviewer:** But let's say you are in a meeting and you want to put across an idea or put across a point so that ... or maybe you want people to do something, but you find out that when you talk in English they misunderstand what you are trying to say to them?
- Interviewee 3:** It's true, for example, I am also a union representative. So in a meeting sometimes you want to raise a point and you raise it in English and people do not really get what you want and you just see people going on and on debating under the very same point while you did not actually mean that direction. Whereas if you used your own mother language, which is Northern Sotho, then they would have understood better.
- Interviewer:** Alright, you said you speak Northern Sotho regularly at your workplace informally. Do you use e-mail?
- Interviewee 3:** Yes, I use e-mail.
- Interviewer:** And in what language do you use e-mails to send to friends?
- Interviewee 3:** Normally we use English because normally you will find that I am sending to one who speak Tswana or Sepedi, but normally we use English but when we talk then, like, telephonically and face to face we use Northern Sotho.
- Interviewer:** Thank you very much for your time.

Cassette 2: 26 September 2003

Side 1

Interviewer: The questions asked are not right or wrong. You will just give your opinion of what you think about the use of Northern Sotho in the workplace. The first question is: Do you think it is important for a Northern Sotho to be used as a commercial language and in industry?

Interviewee: I think it should be used as one of the official languages ... in the constitution of the country, it should be used as part of the business industry for commercial purposes. Uhm! Uhm! Uhm! Uhm!.

Interviewer: Do you normally use Northern Sotho at your workplace formally or informally? Formally I mean ... meetings ... in English ...

Interviewee: It depends on the people that I am with, formally or informally. If I am with the people who are using Sepedi as a language, I will speak in Sepedi so that we could understand each other so as to make decisions that we all understand. Ours using English ... but if I am with different kind of people I can use English so that we can all understand each other.

Interviewer: Have developed a language policy at work?

Interviewee: I am not sure if there is a language policy at work, but we do have every language in the country but with correspondence that we get from the management staff and the department we use English.

- Interviewer:** For what purpose?
- Interviewee:** For the purpose like if it is a staff meeting talking about issues, say, related to work. If we are people who understand the language, we use that language.
- Interviewer:** When you send e-mails to your friends and colleagues, which language do you use?
- Interviewee:** Normally I use both. I use both languages Sepedi and English, depending on what the issue is.
- Interviewer:** In what industry are you in?
- Interviewee:** I am in the broadcasting industry.
- Interviewer:** OK, I was listening to Radio Thobela when I heard that the African languages in radio have a highest number of listenership compared to other languages. What is that you guys do to achieve this in African languages, and what is it that we do wrong in higher education?
- Interviewee:** You see, broadcasting works on public interest and performing in different languages ... attracted in a way that they all understand what is it that is going on. For instance, if I need to bring in information to people who are speaking IsiNdebele, I will have to use IsiNdebele so that they could understand everything that I say — from a child to a very old person.
- Interviewer:** Do you think that there is less ... we are speaking a little of African languages ... in our tertiary institutions ... students ... what is it that we are not doing that to attracts our African languages speakers?

Interviewee: I think it goes back to the education and academic process. It has been done in one language or two languages, not accommodating other languages, because the old education thing was started by people from other countries than in Africa. Now that we all know that we have official languages if maybe come to a position whereby we get people doing everything in different languages and I think the other thing is that is because we have been speaking English and Afrikaans from grade 1 up to grade 10 instead of using other languages. And that could be the reason why, in the academic field, English is being used as a medium of instruction.

Interviewer: Uhm! uhm! Uhm! Uhm!

Interviewee: There is no problem with other languages. It is not that they are cannot be used in the business industry. They can be used and be understood well as long as they are put in black and white.

Interviewer: What is your answer when I come to this question that says, do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho as a language of business?

Interviewee: Yah, it is important.

Interviewer: On our economic and commercial terms in Sepedi?

Interviewee: That would be great. In all the communication that we have now, we have Afrikaans and English. If we can something that can say, OK, if you prefer do this subject in English, go to the left-hand side part of this document, and if you prefer Sepedi, go to the right-hand side. Because it is easier

doing things in your own language that doing it in any other languages. That where our understanding is. Right now I am speaking in English but I speak Sepedi so I have to translate, but if I was not translating I would be speaking things as perfect as nobody could have a problem with.

Interviewer: How often have you heard ... or in a formal meeting when you try to put across or a statement and found that people repeat what have been discussed already because they do not understand what you have said, but you know deep down that you were trying to say what they are saying now?

Interviewee: Yah, it's in how we have brought up by saying ... if you are in a meeting and someone says this in this language ...

Interviewer: We are talking in English.

Interviewee: English, OK.

Interviewer: The people around, the audience around the table do not understand you, maybe in a meeting someone raises a point that you are trying to make ...

Interviewee: But you see but if that time I was to make it in my own language I would put it clearly so that everybody understand that this is what I mean but because I had to put it in English. I have to put it and translate it, and the way that I am going to translate it would be different from what other people would seem to be.

Interviewer: OK.

Interviewee: But if I put in Sepedi to someone who understands Sepedi, if it is clear to them that I wanted to say this and this is how you can go about it.

Interviewer: Press. On. What about accommodating of other languages?

Interviewee: I think every language that is used in our country should be given a platform in any workplace. Everybody talks their own language, even teach other people that in Sepedi this is refers to this than in English, only I think this is taken from Sepedi to English. Like, for instance, *setolo* in Sepedi in Afrikaans is a *stoe!*. Stool in Sepedi *ke setolo* it is taken away from ... than stool.

Interviewer: Are they still written in English and Afrikaans?

Interviewee: No, they are not ...

Interviewer: Are you working for SABC?

Interviewee: Yes, I am working for SABC

Interviewer: Which side are you ... ?

Interviewee: SABC TV.

Interviewer: Language?

Interviewee: They are all written in English.

Interviewer: They are all written in English?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Uhm!

Interviewee: Not yet, they are all doing it in English. They are not English and Afrikaans anymore. It is only English.

Interviewer: Just English?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Which language are you using?

Interviewee: In case of communication, like, formally, like, in ... to accommodate all languages together, we use English. But if I were to write to someone who speaks Sepedi I'd put in Sepedi.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for coming.

Interviewer: Number 5, can you please elaborate on the use of the English language?

Interviewee: Like our schools because it was difficult to understand English, like, at my school, I passed my matric in 1994, but straight talk I did not know how to write a letter in English just to ... express what I wanted to say. It was so difficult for me to write a letter in English. It's, like, if they want to implement these languages in workplaces, it is going to be helpful because other people they only pass matric and they did not do anything after that. But they are working and it is difficult for them. Like in SAPS we used two languages, English and Afrikaans, and people are normally use Afrikaans and when people come, like, if they want

you to do something, they direct you in Afrikaans and then you need to find somebody who knows Afrikaans to interpret what did he want you to do in English.

Interviewer: Uhm! Uhm! Uhm!

Interviewee: It is so difficult, like, if they use my own language, it is going to be simple for me to do what they want me to do.

Interviewer: Do you know whether you have a language policy in place at your workplace at the SAPS?

Interviewee: I do not know.

Interviewer: You do not know. Do you know what a language policy is?

Interviewee: Maybe, I am not sure.

Interviewer: A language policy would be a sort of a rule which management might have agreed upon. In this case it would be a language that is supposed to be used for communication and for business in the workplace.

Interviewee: Number

Interviewer: Using English or Afrikaans ... some debates about which language are you suppose to use — English or Afrikaans?

Interviewee: Maybe it did not come to our level because, I am telling you now, I am working with an Afrikaans-speaking person in my office. Sometimes when she ... we write letters I am typing letters and she just like say please type this for me. It is difficult for me because I took for one letter maybe 20 minutes to type the letter because I did not know what

does that sentence mean, so even the mistakes sometimes is going to be there. Then we have to come back and rectify mistakes but if it is in English it is simple for me to type.

Interviewer: How long do you take to type maybe ... words?

Interviewee: Maybe 10 minutes.

Interviewer: But when you type in Afrikaans you take longer?

Interviewee: Yes, I take long. It's like other documents will come in Afrikaans only and others will come in English and Afrikaans, and the you will need to find an interpreter.

Interviewer: Letterheads in English or Afrikaans?

Interviewee: It's English and Afrikaans: it says South African Police Service/Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie ...

Interviewer: OK, when communicating with people at work which language do you use?

Interviewee: My own language, Sepedi, unless I am communicating with my station commissioner because he is a white person and even my commanders are white, so I use English.

Interviewer: E-mails, do you have e-mails at work?

Interviewee: No, I do not. We have got e-mails but they are for specific people who do that. We are not even allowed to go in that system to use it. We have specific people who use e-mails and receive them everyday, but if I want to e-mail

something I have to go and ask them. Like, our system is not open for e-mails; it is only Corel and main frame only.

Interviewer: Corel and main frame?

Interviewee: Like, our e-mail is in crime intelligence, so is only those people in crime intelligence who are using that e-mails and everything.

Interviewer: Your business communication, it is written in English and Afrikaans?

Interviewee: Yes, it is English and Afrikaans. It is about who wrote that letter. If you feel, like, you want to use Afrikaans he is going to write a letter in Afrikaans. The letter could say attention Ms Bapela, and the content of the letter is going to be Afrikaans. And you have to phone back and ask what he is saying in the letter, then he will explain. Then I will respond the letter in English but next time again she will use Afrikaans.

Interviewer: Have you ever tried to use Sepedi to reply?

Interviewee: No (laughing), and I always fight with them: please, if you want to communicate with me, can't you please use English because with this Afrikaans I am struggling. She would say yes, but she won't.

Interviewer: Maybe she will do that next time.

Interviewee: Yes, for next time, then after she will go back to Afrikaans.

Interviewer: Alright, the other question is that do you want us to develop Sepedi as a language of commerce and industry?

- Interviewee:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** As a business language?
- Interviewee:** Yes, we can use it. There is no problem with that because if we can do it in English why can't we do it in our mother tongue because these languages *ke de thola mo tseleng ka Afrikaans bare so ka English bare so?* But if it is there *ka Sepedi* I think it is going to be simple. Like other people it takes time for them to understand. I think it is in Sepedi it's going to be simple for them.
- Interviewer:** Uhm! Hm! Uhm!
- Interviewee:** Let me come in, the other thing is ...
- Interviewer:** Yes, number 4?
- Interviewee:** If you look at the ... like she said, the language that she used at school, we were taught Biology and it was not Biology that we were taught in English but we were taught in Sepedi and it was not difficult for us to understand because we are using Sepedi at home. So it easy for us to understand but the problem comes with interpreting. If we were to learn in Sepedi, we would be having a lot of doctors around here because, you know, in Sesotho you do not have to think it you do not have to write it down to ask for help what does this mean. You do not have to have a dictionary, you know, this is this and you do not need explanation.
- Interviewer:** They used to teach ... in Sepedi ... use Sepedi to explain to you?

- Interviewee 5:** Yes, they use Sepedi but when coming to write exams you are going to use English. But it was simple because you knew what does that mean.
- Interviewer:** We do not have these concepts in Sepedi, especially in business and in commerce ... how would you explain these to people ...?
- Interviewee 4:** I think in every language there are ... we know what this means ...
- Interviewer:** Let's say 'reporate'.
- Interviewee:** Reporate?
- Interviewer:** Or 'inflation'.
- Interviewee:** In Sepedi we have these called *maadingwa*. We use those things like 'inflation'. We do not like it as it is, like, we say *inflesheni*.
- Interviewer:** But we want people to understand the concept, the whole idea, which never existed in our languages.
- Interviewee:** Yah, the whole thing that this thing never existed and because of the apartheid system so we can't come to those words like 'reporate'. It can't be something related to ... that we can come up with in our language ... there is no way that you can find difficulties in ... we can only find difficulties in translating from English to Sepedi. But if we write it in Sepedi, it would be in Sepedi word that we know this is this ... *ke tšhelete* ...

- Interviewer:** Alright. Number 5, anything you want to add?
- Interviewee:** I think it won't be any problem because like if you are talking about inflation and if you are going to tell a person who knows Sepedi that inflation is going up and down of economic or something, he or she would understand what is inflation. If you write 'inflation', I think she would understand.
- Interviewer:** Thank you very much.
- Interviewee 4:** If we can have a Constitution in Sepedi why can't we have a business journal ...? I am number 4. If we can have a Constitution in Sepedi, why can't we have a business journal published in Sepedi because languages are languages? If it is t in English, it should be T in every language. And whatever that means. Let's say now we have people who speak Xa language and that language ... before.
- Interviewer:** The Khoi and the San language?
- Interviewee:** Yes, if those people can come up with something written now, why can't we have something written ... something business written in Sepedi? We can have all those things written down as long as we want them in Sepedi.
- Interviewer:** Number?
- Interviewee:** I am number 5, sorry, like my child is attending school at St Mark Private School but now the government took over. My child is doing grade 4 grade 5 but, like, my younger brother he is attending school at home, like, he is doing standard 2 but there is quite different between because my

child she is doing English in every subject. Even at home she speaks English but this one because at home she speaks Sepedi it is difficult, very difficult. If you can compare the child of standard 4 and that one of standard of form 2, it is very much different story. Because ... I do not know what to do, but if Sepedi can be used in schools, if you do Biology in Sepedi, if you do Maths in Sepedi, I do not think there would be any problems. They will pass these subjects in As, I am telling you.

Interviewer: Hhhh.

Interviewee 4: And the other thing, it creates the difference between us because as I am if I take my child to a Model C school to study there, it becomes very difficult for my child to speak in our own language. But if they were taught some subjects in their languages at those Model C schools, we won't have a problem. We could not have a problem of people are calling names ... someone we grow up with could not talk his language because of this.

Interviewer: Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!

Interviewee: They are caught up in ... they always speak everything in English and can you ask yourself who am I because now I turn to be English.

Interviewer: What were you saying about ... parents and child understand each other by speaking their own language?

Interviewee: Yes, by speaking their own language because now if I take my child it's for educational sake. Because we feel that it is important that children go to school, but it is still important

that children know their who they are and that means let them be taught Sepedi if they are ...

Interviewer: And their culture.

Interviewee: And if that is done in black and white and I mean in Sepedi, it would be easier for them to understand what is going on.

Interviewer: Learn ...

Side 2

Interviewee: Yah, that in Sepedi this is that ... because should I feel like being doing business in Sepedi, now people will see me as being primitive or somewhat uneducated. And if we go on ... doing things like put everything in English, things will end up all in English. This is not what we want. We want to see our cultures prevailing; we want to see our languages go on. And for these languages to go on, they should be put in every sector of our lives. We should see these languages everywhere.

Interviewer: Hhm.

Interviewee: If I can take Sepedi business journal to London now ... this is our journal published in Sepedi, they will know what Sepedi is if we tell them this is this. If they can read Chinese language, they cannot have a problem with it.

End of recording

Cassette 3: 2 October 2003

Side 1

Interviewer: What am I going to ask is not a correct answer, or you do not have to give a right or wrong answer. You're just going to give me your opinion of the questions that I am going to ask you. You can talk in any language ...

Interviewee: Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!hhh

Interviewer: OK, thank you. The first question that I would like to ask you is do you think it is important for us to use our African languages as languages of commerce and industries? Do you think it is important, number 12?

Interviewee 12: Yah, I think it is important. I think we should be able to use our languages.

Interviewer: Formally or informally? Are we supposed to use it formally or informally. number 14?

Interviewee 14: Well, ...

Interviewer: Number 16?

Interviewee 14: What do you mean by ... commerce?

Interviewer: When I say in commerce and industry it means not in parastatals and not in government institutions but where people business takes place. It can be huge enterprises or small enterprises or even in ... is that what you want to know? Maybe ... people want to access information in the industry.

Interviewee 9: Well, my view is that, we should use English as a medium in those industries ...

Interviewer: Can you identify your number?

Interviewee: I am number 9. Yah, why I am saying this it is because, as South Africa, we are part of the world now. We are no longer isolated; we are interacting with the world. And the only medium that we can interact with the world is English. Like many other countries, I will give you an example. In Tanzania, they over-emphasised Swahili only to find out that some of the people when they go out in different countries they can't communicate in Swahili. When they are here in South Africa, they can't communicate, they have difficulties. It is good to use one international language. So here in South Africa our international language is English, that is why I am thinking that it good to use English only in trade and industry.

Interviewer: OK, what you are saying is that we should use English only? Because our argument is [not] to abandon English but to use English together with other African languages.

Interviewee 9: Well, among ourselves as South Africans we should our home languages — Tswana, Xhosa and all these languages — if we are communicating among ourselves, but we must not over-emphasise other African languages at the expense of the international language. We must always bear in mind that we are part of the world.

Interviewer: Number 12, I thought I saw your hand?

- Interviewee 12:** What I was going to say is that *u kuthi* ... sometimes you have no choice but speak English, especially at work ...
- Interviewer:** No, would you ... can you identify yourself, sir?
- Interviewee:** We are talking about commerce, I think ... in that even us ... it depends ... translated ... if you speak African languages you have to learn ... I want to ...
- Interviewer:** You want to export?
- Interviewee:** I want to import ... if you are focus on ... our own language ... develop ... our languages we must know them ...
- Interviewer:** If you look at the tendering processes that are taking place right now, if you go there as an individual and you want to tender, they expect you to bring a paper published in English. And how many of you can express themselves very well in English so that they understand what you want to do? Number 18, can you answer that one for us?
- Interviewee 18:** I think we must develop our languages. Referring to number 9 about Tanzania Swahili ... I do not think a China man or ... now coming to this thing of commerce and industry, I have in mind that countries like Korea and Japan, they use their mother languages and today they are giants industries. So I think in South Africa we must develop our languages. And also in science and technology.
- Interviewer:** OK, number 11?
- Interviewee 11:** *Nna* I think our languages must ...

- Interviewer:** Developed?
- Interviewee 11:** Developed. Because we have a quite number of people who are blocked in the interviews because they come to companies interviews and they use English and ... you cannot do ... but because we create perception in English that things are not ... so let us our languages developed and let companies know ... tell companies ... we do not need English to get a position ... because the interviews are done in English ...
- Interviewer:** And number 14, you want to say something?
- Interviewee 14:** ...
- Interviewer:** Number 6?
- Interviewee 6:** You have to see in what environment are you going to operate on ... when you go into an interview because you do not know English you do not give whatever you are supposed to give, but you have got skills. Like people who are selling in the streets: they have got skills and when they want to acquire loans they don't get them because they do not know English but they can be able to provide for the family.
- Interviewer:** Speechless ... do not look at my face ... yes, number ... number 14, you want to say something?
- Interviewee 14:** I just want to emphasise my point that English can be used, yes, as a medium in communication ... You must also look at the fact that what type of business are you going to do and to whom are you going to do your business with. When you decide the industry that you are

going to involve yourself with then you must be taught such a vernacular language.

Interviewer: Number 16?

Interviewee 16: You have to look at the environment in which you are going to operate ... I am going to contribute in the business ... you have to realise ... but actually like myself ...

Interviewer: Just for personal views, what do you do when you send the SMS to your friends? Do you send them in isiZulu or in English? How many of you send SMSs to your friends?

Interviewee: In English.

Interviewer: It does not occur to you that you should send them in isiZulu?

Interviewee: (unclear talking all together ... laughing)

Interviewer: And to families? Or invitations, when you want people to come to your ... do you say to a person who is compiling the invitation cards to write them in isiZulu or in English?

Interviewee: Most of the time people write in English because you will find that amongst people who are invited are speaking different languages so how many cards are you going to make. You will find that maybe you are ... to somebody and ... so most of the people use English.

Interviewer: Your closest family? Your closest family ... isiXhosa what would you do?

Interviewee: I was going to use English ... (unclear)

- Interviewer:** Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!
- Interviewee:** Nowadays people do not write invitations and programmes in English ... they prefer to write in their own language.
- Interviewer:** Who used to do ... when we came from Elaleng we use to write letters in our own languages.
- Interviewee:** And the way they design them when you read the programme is totally ... it's interesting ... talking to you giving you directions ... do this to me and ... my neighbour is talking about me ... talking in Sesotho ... like *o bowa ka nna* ...
- Interviewer:** Number 7?
- Interviewee 7:** OK, *nna ke* number 7, if *mme* is not educated *ha ke mo nwalela lonwalo ke nwala ka Sesotho* ... do you understand?
- Interviewer:** Alright, another question that I want to ask: Is using English in interviews inhibit you in anyway to get a job? *A le paleldisa o kerea mosebetsi?*
- Interviewee:** Yah ... *ko de* interviews.
- Interviewer:** How do you want them, the interviews, to be in future? Number 13, starting from the CV, if you'd like them to allow you to send your CV in your own language or whatever?
- Interviewee:** In other companies ...

Interviewer: Remember in other companies you will find that it is a black person who is a Senior or a Director in Human Resources ... assume that it is the case.

Interviewee: That will allow us ... I would love to be interviewed by a person who knows Xhosa because I can express myself more in my own language. Let's say we apply for the same job and myself and number 14 we and another white boy we have got the same qualifications and let's take ... for example, ... because we have to send our CV and interviews in English ... and procedures in English you will be ... Xhosa-speaking ...

Interviewer: Let me understand you clearly, you are saying that there are companies that are allowing you to do that?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you name one of them?

Interviewee: Khulani Security Services. When you apply for a job they ask you in which language are you comfortable with.

Interviewer: Is it a trend that some the companies is following?

Interviewee: I know about two or three companies that are doing that ...

Interviewer: Number 12, can you introduce yourself?

Interviewee: (unclear) ... *abantu ba mnyama* ...

Interviewer: Number 11, I saw your hand?

Interviewee: If you write your CV in an African language, ... rejected ... CV must be accepted irrespective of language ... (unclear)

Interviewer: Number 14?

Interviewee: But *manje* ... when we send our CVs we try to sell ourselves ... sometimes when you write a CV you write read and steak ... so your CV will tell.

Interviewer: Let us hear from other people. Number 15 is so quiet and number 17 and 18. Number 15?

Interviewee 15: My concern is that. I do not know ... by sitting and listening I can see ... we can use our own languages in everything ... everything in businesses ... (unclear) ...

Interviewer: Let's hear from number 18 or number 17.

Interviewee 17: (unclear)

Interviewer: Number 18?

Interviewee 18: I think I support no ... we must use our own languages ...

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: I think ... official languages ...

Interviewer: 11 official languages and number 12 Sign Language.

Interviewee: OK, ... learn and to know those languages ... I do not know Tshivenda and I do not know Shangaan ... we need to develop and learn those official languages. ... Let us learn our 11 official languages.

Side 2

Interviewer: Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!

Interviewee: In the beginning, number 9 and number 18 mentioned about the use of Swahili ... about their tribal languages combined them into the Swahili ... one common language of all the people of Tanzania in order to communicate among each other. And it went far to countries such as Kenya, Uganda. They also speak Swahili, Zambia, Congo, Burundi Rwanda all the east African countries they are using Swahili as their own international language.

Interviewer: Your point is we should harmonise, if that is what you are saying. It's what you call harmonisation of languages.

Interviewee: Harmonisation of languages, yes.

Interviewer: The north Africans and the west Africans are saying we should harmonise our languages. Do you agree with that type of concept?

Interviewee: Yes, ... in America there are about 120 states that are combined and they only speak in English ... all over Africa we should develop our own African language which will be spoken by all people who are living in Africa. ... even for new generations ... they should know where they come from *ba phuma kuphi* ...

Interviewer: Maybe what you are talking about, sir (is that number 16?), you want them to be taught ... you know the things that our grandparents used to tell us around the fire, stories and oral tradition.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: I think the colleagues here are emphasise the question of let us go out there, let us try to market our languages which is our nation languages. Why are we doing that, we are doing this to save our authentic ... of our country. Even in our country, nationally, we need to recognise the languages that people are speaking, not only saving my own language. Look at French, a French is a well-known language. Even myself I can speak French, Swahili and English. Why not try our own northern languages and make it more marketing strategy in our own languages? We have to recognise our languages ...

Interviewer: Alright, that we should actually develop them so that we can use them anywhere ...

Interviewee: Anywhere ... it would be a good thing for all the sectors to allow us to express ourselves ... expression with our own mother tongue. So, it is very important to learn and express those values.

Interviewer: Alright.

Cassette 4: 6 October 2003

Side 1

Interviewer: Welcome to the focus group interview ... It is the 6th of October 2003. The main question that I am supposed to be asking you today is: Do you think it is important maybe for Northern Sotho to be developed as a language of commerce, as one of the main official languages?

Interviewee: The question ...

Interviewer: The question is: Do you think it important for Northern Sotho to be developed as a language of commerce and industry?

Interviewee: Yes, I should think so because we have got so many illiterate people and people need to, like, when they go to the banks know what is happening. If you tell them about time shares, shares and anything else, they need to understand what is happening when it is going up, the do's and the don'ts. If ever you just say the do's and the don'ts and never explain in their languages, they will never understand.

Interviewer: Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!, at your workplace do you use Northern Sotho?

Interviewee: Partly, yes. Only when we interact but on the phone is mostly in English. Except when persons just want to speak in their own languages.

Interviewer: Do you have a language policy at your place of work?

- Interviewee:** I should think so, but I do not know of any.
- Interviewer:** Can you just maybe fill us in on what are you doing?
Where do you work?
- Interviewee:** I am a secretary at the Limpopo Legislature. I do not know of any language policy.
- Interviewer:** This ... to number 19 ... I mean to number 20. Do you think it is important for Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry?
- Interviewee 20:** I do not think so. I do not think that is important to use Northern Sotho to be used as a language of commerce and industry because most people who are in particular engaged in commerce and industry have an ambition to go internationally with whatever qualifications they obtained. For example, people who want to be certified internal auditors, which is an international recognition issued by the board from the States, they cannot go on in Sesotho whereas they are going to write the very same course in English. I think we should develop these languages in English so that they can be internationally compatible.
- Interviewer:** Number 19?
- Interviewee 19:** If you are going to all international compatible like you are saying, what about those people like the man on the street, how do you explain things to him while you are only focusing on English?
- Interviewer:** Uhm! uhm!uhm! uhm!

Interviewee 20: I think every language ... there is a jargon between a man on the street and any other person. How are we communicating right now with ... other people. Doing subject in English does not mean that you do not know how to communicate with ordinary people. OK, as a professional you would not use English but talking to laypeople you will be concise so that people understand what you are saying

Interviewer: Alright, no ... when working with your colleagues like CAs and accountants in your workplace, if you were to sell to your clients or among yourselves, which language would you prefer to use?

Interviewee: It depends on the language that suits the client. I can use ...

Interviewer: If you want to communicate with colleagues in a meeting or when you want to put across your idea, or your statement or your views don't you realise people repeating the same questions that you have asked before because they did not understand what you have said? ...

Interviewee: A lot of people are ... there are a lot of official languages in this country and we gather together as different people with different languages in companies. And using one language which all of us can understand might be an advantage, but some other people ... like to clear themselves with the languages they understand most which probably their own languages. I think if other people may also understand what you are saying in your own language then it would be fine to express yourself in your language.

Interviewer: OK, given an opportunity to express your opinion and your point of view using your own language?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you agree with that?

Interviewee: I agree with that if it would also suit other people in the meeting.

Interviewer: In the meeting? Assuming that these other people in a meeting are also Northern Sotho-speaking?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee: In that context, like, I am OK with people from different ethnic groups like cleaners ... to want to express themselves in their mother tongue and if one want to say whatever they want to say, it's fine and those who do not understand would say they did not hear what he was saying. Then one has to explain exactly what that person was saying for the sake of progress.

Interviewer: What you guys are saying that you are not against the usage of Sepedi language in the workplace?

Interviewee: Number

Interviewer: But formally or informally?

Interviewee: Formally in the sense that you will be in a meeting and one needs to express her-/himself, like, let's say the union is

having a meeting. Union ... in a union meeting everybody is there, so people want to express themselves and they want to understand what the union is busy addressing.

Interviewer: Alright, the next question. Number 20, how would you react if management send you an e-mail or a memo in Northern Sotho?

Interviewee 20: As long as I understand what it is saying I do not think I can have a problem.

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: I do not think I will have a problem, like, I read it and read it again to understand it better.

Interviewer: This letter is written in Northern Sotho. Can you read it?

Interviewee: Yes, I can read it.

Interviewer: Let's say you have become an entrepreneur and you have ... for services. Which language would you prefer to use? Number 20?

Interviewee 20: It depends on the area where I am. If I am at a place where most people are talking Sotho to those people who are talking Sotho and any other language for people who do not understand because I will try to learn a lot of languages. This country is a very large country with lots of languages, so everywhere you go you have to at least know how to greet and all those things.

Interviewer: OK, number 19?

- Interviewee:** Like he is saying, well as an entrepreneur I would use the language mostly English but when I know that people cannot understand the language, like especially English, then I have to address them in Sepedi or at that layer the person I am serving then that will do. Like he is saying, like I told you before, it's African languages and I am into them like my life.
- Interviewer:** (Laughing) you are tolerating all the African languages ... When interacting with your friends, let's say maybe sending SMS or e-mail, which language comes first?
- Interviewee:** English.
- Interviewer:** If you know that they do understand Sesotho?
- Interviewee:** Yes, I think we have been programmed that machinery goes hand in hand with English. Usually, when one answers the telephone what is the first thing you are going to say, usually is 'Hallo' or 'Hi' or something, you cannot just say 'lekae'.
- Interviewer:** Number 19?
- Interviewee:** English. It's like it's quick. You can even shorten your English, so it's now that you ... you send an e-mail is English.
- Interviewer:** Even in your e-mail ... want to say 'hi, how are you' ...
- Interviewee:** Is the way we were taught, what comes in my mind first ... I think we think Sepedi before we can translate it into English, but when you write is going to be English.

Interviewer: Alright, it's fine. Do you use Northern Sotho regularly at your place of work or in formally occasions or in social events ... ?

Interviewee 20: Usually in social ... because we would be with our ethnic groups.

Interviewer: At the workplace?

Interviewee 20: Not at the workplace, ... at home.

Interviewer: Remember ... we are talking about this at the workplace.

Interviewee 20: At the workplace, yah we do speak Sotho.

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: I speak Sepedi most of the time because it's like one is learning from the other. If I need to speak in my language and then let speak theirs, so in a way I am learning. Exchanging languages, so I stick to Sepedi and they stick to theirs

Interviewer: Alright, ... where you are working, are you aware of any language policy?

Interviewee 20: No, I am not aware.

Interviewer: Or how the language policy can empower you?

Interviewee: I do not know.

Interviewer: OK, number 19?

- Interviewee 19:** The only thing that I know about the Technikon languages ... I said earlier that I do not know of anything or whether is in place or not ...
- Interviewer:** Uhm! uhm! uhm! uhm!
- Interviewee 20:** Maybe it is because I am comfortable with the language that I am using.
- Interviewer:** The language that you are using? You mean English?
- Interviewee:** That is why ... language policy ya ...
- Interviewer:** For you there is no need for a language policy?
- Interviewee:** Yes, there is no need to ...
- Interviewer:** Number 19, ... messages that you receive at work, number 19?
- Interviewee 19:** It is all in English, telephone, fax, anything at the Legislature. There is no Sepedi, Tsonga and Venda along those lines. The Legislature is not even Afrikaans; it's only English on the letterheads.
- Interviewer:** Do you think that we are ... do you think that it is impossible ... number 19?
- Interviewee:** I think on that concept, especially when you are addressing China like Tokyo and all that, because they have one language. Even though they can learn English, they have one and we have 11 official languages, so which one are we going to use specifically to address this business issue? Are we going to use it for Limpopo and we

will find that there are people from here who are there. How are we going to address this issue of South Africans if we are going to say that by having other countries on this ...

Interviewer: Number 20?

Interviewee: I think she has a point. We have 11 official languages and there are some people who only know two, and how are we going to choose only one language that is the South African language that the world can also connect to as well?

Interviewer: We can perhaps harmonise the African languages in Africa if you want to have a common like in the SADC countries. Like Swahili. Swahili is a language that is spoken in most African countries.

Interviewee: I do not think that is a ... it is going to cost time, and the concept, which one is it going to be, the one which is used in these EU, Northern Sotho will be left out and ... Tsonga ...

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: Like, you cannot create the language all of a sudden, like. OK, fine, if you can't use any of the 11 languages which are official here, and OK fine we are creating which is going to be spoken in the whole of Africa which word or from which language are they going because we cannot select South Africa alone from all African countries.

Interviewer: Number 20?

- Interviewee 20:** I think what happened here is that we were colonised and we are left with a dominant language in this country. We should say ... we should not try to actually reverse the process but let's rather focus on the future.
- Interviewer:** Can you please elaborate on that?
- Interviewee:** On the future. The time we are using to convert languages we can come with the strategy to eradicate poverty or there are more important things than maybe trying to translate languages because there are many.
- Interviewer:** We want to develop our own languages so that they can be at the same par as other languages. Do you have any problem with that?
- Interviewee:** Not at this time.
- Interviewer:** Not at all? OK, ... in libraries they use business English ... Sepedi ... that is what I am trying to say ... to use Sepedi in business. But we have business English.
- Interviewee:** I think the entrepreneur ... Sepedi ... English ... there are various factors to consider. We cannot say Business English ... everywhere ...
- Interviewer:** Eh ... elaborate!
- Interviewee:** Nationally and internationally. ... provincial ... we cannot ... Business Sepedi in people at Giyani or Tzaneen we cannot ... Tsonga
- Interviewer:** And those people who are tendering. Most of these people are uneducated. Maybe they need something that they can

read the documents and know what to do, or If they can be allowed to produce their tendering documents in Sepedi so that they might be allowed to submit it in Sepedi. Do you agree with that?

Interviewee: The tender documents which are being advertised should be in the language that the person who is supposed to submit the tender should be reply in that language. If it has been advertised in Sepedi, then it should be replied in Sepedi and then there would be other languages. Probably 11 languages next to each other so that whoever who cannot read English is able to respond to their languages. But if the person did not read and cannot read, then is another issue.

Interviewer: What I am trying to say is that, even if for now the tender is coming out in English because that is what is happening, can these people reply in Sepedi?

Interviewee: I think ... tender documents or tender notices are... I think I saw one written in English on this side and Sepedi on the other side.

Interviewer: Uhm! uhm! uhm! uhm! Number 19?

Interviewee 19: I think if it is in English and you reply in Sepedi you do not know the recipients of those tenders, or is there somebody there who knows the language?

Interviewer: Don't you think is high time they hire a translator of these languages?

Interviewee: No, we are having translators; we do not have to throw them away.

Interviewer: Another question that I wanted to ask is the interview. In which language would you like to be interviewed when looking for a job?

Interviewee 20: English.

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee 20: I think I understand English better than my language, honestly speaking.

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: I think I might be interviewed in any other language ...

Interviewer: Which language do you prefer?

Interviewee: Because I prefer to speak Sepedi during the interview, so it should be Sepedi without adding any English or Afrikaans or anything. It should be pure Sepedi.

Interviewer: OK.

Interviewee 20: I think ... if it is anything that I can understand English plus any other language ... You can also speak Sotho if you think you do not know how to express yourself in English. I think you can speak Sotho.

Interviewer: The question that I want to ask you now is that, what makes you want to speak English?

Side 2

Interviewer: Just to wrap up what you want to say, answering that question that says do you think it is important to develop Northern Sotho as a language of economics and commerce.

Interviewee: In a nutshell I do not think it is necessary because we already came too far with our ... with English as a language of economics and commerce, but then we would rather move forward economically than trying to translate English to other languages like Sotho.

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: In that context after so many deliberations and all, I think it is best to use English and let us focus on going forward. I mean we are going to use Sepedi for this and that and at the ultimate end we might not even have it being spoken. Like, now we are having kids speaking English all over the place. Like, you look at the three-year-old and months-old babies, they are being addressed in English. Parents want their kids to speak certain languages rather than their mother tongues. So, it is becoming difficult to maintain our indigenous languages.

Interviewer: What you guys are saying is that we can't use our languages, leave it for now or for ever?

Interviewee 19: Let us leave it for future generations.

Interviewer: What do you think, number 20?

Interviewee 20: I think for ever.

Interviewer: You think for ever ... have you ever thought about that ... the economic jargon and the commercial jargon?

Interviewee 20: I think there is a ... low population ... coming generation ... because we are developing as a country and as people. By the time we are fully developed there won't be any illiterate people. So, for now I think they are ABET ... so that they communicate to sell and buy goods. I think most of the children right now are at school and they are going to be educated I do not think there is going to be with the coming generation someone will be illiterate.

Interviewer: But why in a place like Technikon SA, they are about to develop a foundation course in English so that students can be able to answer their assignments using English correctly? This shows that there are serious problems in English.

Interviewee 20: It is because in terms of different schools lot of schools in the rural areas they use their own languages somehow to pass information to kids, and then, the next thing is that the child might write in whatever. Even the teachers in rural areas they do not know well English. I m sorry to say that but it is true. You can compare a standard 5 multiracial to a matric rural student. ...

Interviewer: Number 19?

Interviewee 19: I think there is a lack of resources. People do not read. People do not get newspapers. Even if I am one of those underprivileged who is from rural schools, but due to my getting to buy newspaper fortunately for me having had a VCR I learn English from TV. Even now when a person

says you cannot watch cartoons I think that is the best English you can get in the entire world. I think is those lack of facilities, ignorance counts too. You can't be like around Polokwane and not being able to speak English like the way you expect a Sotho-speaking. Ignorance. It is not that they cannot speak English, they do not want to learn.

Interviewer: Do you agree?

Interviewee 20: No, not that ... we do read our languages very much. We know where our languages come from that at this moment, when looking at the very same topic, we are on economic and management science, they can't ... but for us as individuals, knowing our roots, knowing our languages, we have to know our languages.

Interviewer: You know your language, you know your culture. As an individual how are you going to correct what you see... is wrong?

Interviewee 20: How are you going to correct what?

Interviewer: The problem with our languages, or our indigenous knowledge in found in our languages?

Interviewee 19: I think our African writers should stop writing books in English. You read a novel where ... written in English. He is narrating an African story about somebody in Africa but it is written in English and still recognised for that. What about those people who can't read English? How are they going to understand what he has written?

Interviewer: Directed to number 20 ...

- Interviewee 19:** I was just addressing the issue of us having that pride in our culture as we being part of our heritage and maybe speaking Sepedi. But then if ever our African writers are not addressing these issues, then how are we going to communicate?
- Interviewer:** Number 20?
- Interviewee 20:** I think ... what you said about indigenous ... not writing in African languages ... they write in English for international purposes ... for commercial purposes.
- Interviewer:** English, English, English ...
- Interviewee:** If ... I was asked to send a message by hand in a letter to my uncle. I told my father that I am going to write it.
- Interviewer:** In what language?
- Interviewee:** In Sesotho, and I did not know what to write. I wrote it but I struggled.
- Interviewer:** Messages and invitation in our villages are written in Sepedi. If you how to write you are always asked to write such messages. What do you do then, number 20?
- Interviewee 20:** That was when I saw that I was neglecting my language.
- Interviewer:** Of cause ...
- Interviewee:** I went back to grammar, I went back to a story ... and I think they boosted my confidence.
- Interviewer:** Maybe it was a wake-up call.

- Interviewee:** But we must not forget what our languages are. ... There are school where Sesotho is not even taught; is Afrikaans and English and nothing else. So I did not have an option to ...
- Interviewer:** Before this project I did some research to investigate why African students in higher education were performing so poorly compared to other races.
- Interviewee:** I think they don't study hard enough.
- Interviewer:** (Laughing) Do you think it is because others study in their mother tongue?
- Interviewee:** I think they ... the results of the Afrikaans-speaking people is high. I have been at schools with them. They do well. They do not play.
- Interviewer:** At what level?
- Interviewee:** It depends on the level of seriousness. These people are serious in whatever they do. But we have quite a lay-back nature.
- Interviewer:** OK!

Map of South Africa

