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DEPT LINGUISTICS

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THESIS TITLE:

 AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE BARRIERS TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN GREENMARKET SQUARE, CAPE TOWN.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR MAGISTER ARTIUM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE.
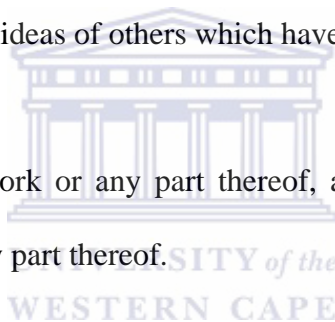

SUPERVISOR: PROF. CHARLYN DYERS

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 19TH AUGUST 2009

DECLARATION

I, Foncha John Wankah certify that this thesis is my own work. I understand what plagiarism is and I have used quotations and references when required to fully acknowledge all the words and ideas of others which have been used in this work.

I have not copied anyone's work or any part thereof, and equally have not permitted anyone to copy my work or any part thereof.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Jane-Francis, A. A., who encouraged me to take up studies after fourteen years in the informal trading, and to my daughter Adangnui Pearl.
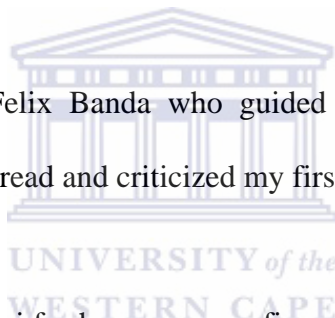
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents.

Chapter 1

Introduction and background

Chapter2

Literature review

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 4

Analysis

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Abstract

Intercultural communication (ICC) is one of the most relevant fields for investigation in post-colonial Africa and post-apartheid South Africa, given the movements between people from African countries and the wide range of attractions, both economic and social, that South Africa holds for people from other African countries. This study reports on intercultural communication in post-democratic South Africa in an era marked by what Appadurai (1990) calls 'flows'. Greenmarket Square in the heart of Cape Town, well known as a hub for informal traders, local people and tourists, was chosen as the site for this study, because of the rich cultural diversity of the role-players.
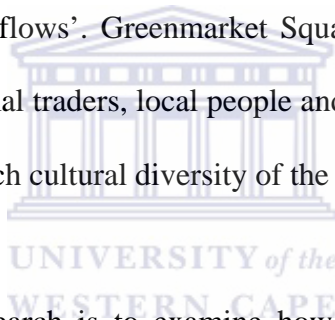
The principal aim of this research is to examine how people from different cultural backgrounds in this particular space of Greenmarket Square communicate with one another, and where the 'intercultural fault-lines' (Olahan, 2000) occur, keeping in mind how ICC could be improved in such a space. My position as a trader in the market placed me in an ideal 'insider' position to do the research. The theory of spatiality (Vigouroux, 2005; Blommaert *et al.* 2005) was used to show how the space of Greenmarket Square affected intercultural communication. Discourse analysis was also applied to the data to show how the various roleplayers were socially constructed by others. Saville-Troike's (1989) ethnography of communicative events was also used to bring out other barriers that were not identified by spatiality and discourse analysis. Aspects like scene, key,

message form and content, the observed rules for interaction and where these rules were broken and to what effect as well as the norms for interpretation were considered during the analysis of this qualitative data.

The analysis showed that spatiality, social constructions of 'the other' and other factors like nonverbal communication and differences between communicative styles in high and low context cultures (LCC/HCC), had a major impact on intercultural communication at Greenmarket Square, frequently leading to complete breakdowns in communication. Many of the traders interviewed acknowledged that they needed to improve their competence in intercultural communication. The study concludes with a number of recommendations on how people can become more "interculturally competent" (Katan, 2004) in a globalized world.
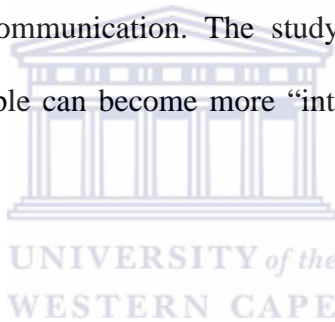
Chapter One

Introduction and Background

1.1 Preamble

Studies in intercultural communication (ICC) are important in every environment where people from different cultural backgrounds interact on a daily basis. It is of utmost importance that these people learn to appreciate and tolerate differences pertaining to language varieties, nonverbal behaviors, attitudes, values, worldviews and customs. If such tolerance is not achieved, intercultural communication is likely to fail, thereby hampering progress and peaceful co-existence.
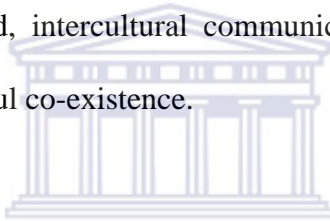
The post-*apartheid* regime in South Africa has been attempting its level best to protect and respect all cultural groupings from different types of abuses (racial, cultural, tribal, linguistic, nationalistic etc) by making the nation a multilingual and a multicultural one at least in theory. This was clearly seen during the xenophobic attacks of June 2008, when the South African government acted against the perpetrators and did its best to protect the foreigners as far as they could (*Cape Times*, 13 May 2008). However, problems continue to exist at the level of intercultural communication, particularly when some South Africans communicate with foreigners from other parts of Africa and the world. The main aim of this thesis is to identify where these problems arise and suggest different ways of overcoming them.

1.2 Introduction

Intercultural communication (ICC) is one of the most relevant fields for investigation in post-colonial Africa and post-apartheid South Africa today, given the possibilities of movement between African countries and the wide range of attractions, both in the economic and social domains (Myers-Scotton, 2006). This study reports on intercultural communication in post-democratic South Africa in an era marked by what Appadurai (1990) calls 'flows' – the flow of people (ethnoscapes), money (financescapes) and ideas (ideoscapes) around the world. Greenmarket Square in Cape Town, well-known as a hub for informal traders, local people and tourists, was chosen as the site for this study because of the rich cultural diversity of its traders as well as its clients. The three aims of this study were:

- to examine how people from different cultural backgrounds in this particular truncated multilingual space communicate with one another (Blommaert (2005),
- where the 'intercultural fault-lines' (Olahan, 2000) occur, and
- how ICC could be improved in this space (Katan 2004).

Theories of spatiality (Blommaert *et al.* 2005) and frames (Goffman 1974) were also applied to Greenmarket Square as a site in terms of how space and personal/ethnic frames shape ICC. My position as a trader in Greenmarket Square placed me in an ideal 'insider' position to do this research.

1.3 The physical context

Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, South Africa, started as a slave market in the 18th century. When the slave trade was abolished in the 19th century, the market became a farmers' market where fruit and vegetables were sold. It later became a flea market in the 1960's that gradually gave way to a market dealing mainly in African arts and craft. With the transformation that the market underwent, there also came a transformation in the nationalities of the traders, and today we find a mixture of traders from South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world plying their wares at Greenmarket Square. The tourists who are the predominant clients of this market come from all over the world. This means that the market is a site of intercultural communication between people from diverse cultural backgrounds with diverse languages as well.

For trading to take place, interaction in a common language is needed and in the case of Greenmarket Square, English is used as a *lingua franca*. On occasions, one can also hear French, Portuguese, Lingala and other South African languages like Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu being used in situations where the traders and the clients have these languages in common. Despite the use of a common language for communication across linguistic boundaries, it has become apparent to me that differences in cultural backgrounds, rather than linguistic differences, create much more serious challenges to communication at Greenmarket Square.

The position of Greenmarket Square in the heart of Cape Town, otherwise known as the "Mother City" of South Africa, is also of relevance to this study. The South African Parliament meets in Cape Town, the legislative headquarters of South Africa. Cape Town also has numerous tourist attractions which make it one of the top ten tourist destinations in the world owing to its natural beauty, incredible bio-diversity, important cultural and historical sites, museums and art galleries.

The South African population of this world-class city is made up of the following ethnic groupings (SA Population Census 2001): the majority group is the mixed-race 'Colored' people who constitute 54% of the population, Xhosa people (24%), and White people (22%). The majority South African language in this city is Afrikaans, spoken by 55% of the population, followed by Xhosa (26%) and English (19%), but many people are completely bilingual in either English and Afrikaans or English and Xhosa, or multilingual in all three languages. A range of urban varieties of these languages are also spoken.

However, in a post-modern era dominated by globalization and the flow of people across the world (Appadurai 1990), we also need to take account of various groupings either moving through Cape Town (e.g. tourists, holiday seekers, short-term residents from other parts of South Africa and Africa) or settled diasporic communities from different countries for whom the city is home. These groups come from all over the world, and the major African groupings are from Nigeria, the Congo, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi and

Somalia. It is therefore clear that in such a city, intercultural communication can become a problem that needs to be addressed. As an informal trader specializing in the sale of African curios, I am particularly affected by these problems that create misunderstanding and misinterpretations between African traders like myself and both local and international customers in Greenmarket Square.

The influx of the African migrants into the city has brought about a lot of cultural diversity, and therefore Cape Town can be referred to as a cosmopolitan city. The concept 'cosmopolitan' is defined as '…a society where people from many different ethnicities, religions and cultures meet and live in close proximity' (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, lends itself perfectly to the study of intercultural communication because of its cosmopolitan nature. With its tourist attractions, its location and its world class standards, Cape Town attracts a huge influx of tourists and holiday makers annually as well as others in search of a better life, like traders, refugees and immigrants from other parts of Africa and the world. At Greenmarket Square, the sale of African curios to tourists and local people has created a lot of job opportunities which continues to attract people from other areas who are in search of a livelihood.

In addition, South Africa provides a complex and intriguing picture of multilingualism due to its broad spectrum of both indigenous and non-indigenous languages and its politically burdened history of *apartheid*, which lasted from 1948 to 1994 (Plüddemann, 1999). During the *apartheid* period, only English and Afrikaans were recognized as official languages. All the other languages were only spoken by the politically powerless

people. These languages included: isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, isiNdeble, seSotho, Setswana, Tsonga, Tshivenda, Sepedi as well as the Indian languages.

On the 8th of May 1996, the Constitutional Assembly of the post-*apartheid* Republic of South Africa adopted a new Constitution which provided for eleven official languages. For each province, there was bound to be at least two official languages with the municipalities taking into account the language usage and preferences of their residents (http://web.uct.ac.za/PRAESA 2005). Thus diversity in cultures and languages is not a new thing in South Africa.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The motivation for this research is the fact that Greenmarket Square is "the world in miniature", in which many people from different cultural, linguistic and ethnic origins meet, interact, communicate and trade. The informal traders and their South African and international clients at Greenmarket Square are from different cultural backgrounds and for this reason problems in interpersonal communication are bound to arise. There have been cases where a tourist might decide to walk away from a stall not because he does not want an item, but because he is avoiding conflict with the trader in question, given the degree of misunderstanding between them. Some traders might say 'yes' to a client without understanding what he is saying, just to avoid conflict. I am therefore interested to see how this miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation arise in this cosmopolitan setting.

Of particular interest will be how clients from different cultural backgrounds are treated. In other words, is there any perceptible difference in the ways traders respond to clients from South Africa, the rest of Africa, and other parts of the world like Europe, America and Asia? And what are the intercultural barriers that exist between traders from different countries, in particular South African traders and those from the rest of Africa? I am also interested in looking at ways in which some role-players in this context effectively overcome these barriers. What can be learned from examples of successful intercultural communication? The main concern here is of course to improve the level of competence among the traders.

1.5 Research Questions

The intercultural context of Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, South Africa, led me to the following research questions:

(1) How does power and social position lead to the construction of stereotypes of particular cultural groupings, i.e. how is 'the other' constructed?

(2) How are cultural identities constructed in this space called Greenmarket Square?

(3) How do the above constructions create barriers in intercultural communication between the traders of Greenmarket Square and their foreign clients, and what specific intercultural barriers can be identified?

(4) How can the traders and the tourists learn to become more interculturally competent?

1.6 Research Assumptions

This thesis is based on a number of assumptions:

- Differences between High Context Cultures (HCC) and Low Context Cultures (LCC) may hinder communication between people (Hall, 1983; Halliday, 1992);
- People's identities and cultural backgrounds may lead to miscommunication; and
- The formation of stereotypes and prejudice also account for miscommunication.
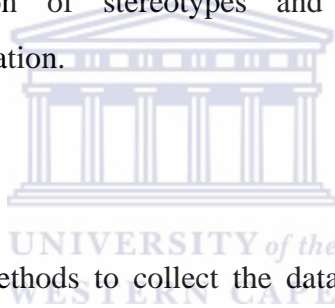
1.7 Methodology

I used qualitative research methods to collect the data because this kind of research method deals with comprehensive human behavior and interaction. Finch (1985:12) defines qualitative research methods as 'qualitative studies which reflect the subjective reality of the people being studied.' In the research design and methodology, I used spatiality, discourse analysis and Saville-Troike's ethnography of communication to analyze the broad range of data that was collected from the diverse speech community of Greenmarket Square. I also observed the ethics of modern research and tried to keep a balance of power between myself and the informants.

I used tools like participant observation (natural occurring conversations), questionnaires, and interviews to collect the data. The site for the fieldwork was Greenmarket Square, in

the heart of Cape Town. The research population consisted of South African traders and tourists, other African traders and tourists from other parts of Africa and tourists from all over Europe, Australia, North and South America and the Middle East. I used informants of both sexes ranging between the ages of 18-60.

1.8 Conclusion

Castles and Miller (1998:22) contend that: "International migration has never been as economically and politically significant as it is today. Never before has international migration seemed so significant to national security and so connected to conflicts and disorder on a global scale." The large number of migrants and immigrants documented and undocumented have raised a number of issues, one of the most prevalent being how to integrate foreigners into a host society. Cultural differences have been highlighted and provoked diverse responses from various segments of the population. International migration has become a transnational revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the globe. In the last decade of the twentieth century, it has become a major issue for more and more countries. Along with this increase in population movements across the globe, a new form of prejudice has emerged leading to ethnocentrism and xenophobia.

This chapter provided a description of Greenmarket Square to show why the research was carried out in this space. Information on South Africa's different languages and those used in Cape Town was also provided, together with the rationale for the study, the research questions and assumptions, and a brief summary of the methodology. The other

four chapters are as follows: Chapter Two, which deals with the literature review and the theoretical framework for this study, Chapter Three, which deals with the research methodology, and Chapter Four which focuses on the analysis of the findings. Finally, Chapter Five presents a summary of the main findings and concludes with some recommendations on how to improve competence in intercultural communication in Greenmarket Square and other workplaces as well.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework for this study is derived from studies on the spaces of multilingualism (Blommaert 2006; Blommaert *et al*. 2005, Vigouroux 2005) as well as the social construction of barriers to intercultural communication (Jandt 2004, Lynn and Lea 2003, Gumperz 1992). This thesis examines how people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicate in the different spaces of multilingualism of Greenmarket Square, and also how communicative barriers between them are socially constructed.
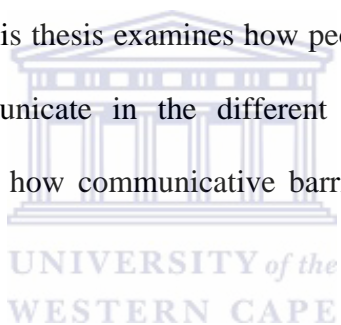
In Greenmarket Square, the notion of space is "…central to the event of vending" (Blommaert 2006:2). That is to say different languages are being used in different ways in a space where intercultural exchange is frequent. According to Blommaert (2005) space is multi-layered, including places of origin, travelling and the transformation of both products and people.

> Drawing on the local conditions and forms of knowledge, different kinds of stories about the product and the people who sell them are invented which lead to certain stereotypes and constructions that become barriers to intercultural communication (Blommaert 2006:2)**.**

Greenmarket Square is a space where different languages are used in different ways - as a common means of communication, or as a type of exclusionary communication (using languages others will not understand with members of your own community of practice). Space here is multi-layered in the sense that when one talks about South Africans in Greenmarket Square, one needs to specify whether one is talking about the South African traders, stall assistants, tourists, black, white, etc., and also to specify where there are barriers to communication among these different groupings. The same would apply to Africans (tourists, asylum seekers, traders, students etc) from other countries.

Slembrouck (2004) and Singh (2006) argue that linguistic and cultural boundaries are not naturally there, but that they are communicatively and socially constructed and cannot be treated as self-contained. They argue that ideology, power and history are all central to the way diversity works depending on how these factors interrelate in specific circumstances.

Spatiality and the way that intercultural barriers are constructed are therefore the basic theoretical lenses through which this study was conducted, and will be discussed in greater detail in sections 2.3 and 2.4. The next section presents an overview of intercultural communication studies, with specific reference to those aspects of relevance to the study.

2.2 What is intercultural communication?

It would be worthwhile to attempt a working definition for intercultural communication before moving to the physical context of the study. Halliday *et al.* (2004:21) define intercultural communication as seeking a deeper meaning in understanding individual peoples' identity, by avoiding perceptions, appreciating complexities and not over generalizing individual instances. They suggest that 'before we communicate with people who are different from ourselves, we need to understand something about how they present themselves as being or belonging to certain groups' (Halliday *et al*. 2004: 21).

Jandt (2004:39) defines intercultural communication as "…face to face communication between people from different cultures" Porter and Samovar (1991:12) support his view by claiming that intercultural communication occurs 'whenever a message producer is a member of one culture and the message receiver is from another.' Jandt (2004:41) further adds that most of us take our cultures for granted until we find ourselves with people from different cultures. He goes further to say that our rules and norms only teach us how to act within our cultures. What these researchers appear to emphasize is the fact that all humans are 'cultural animals' (Saville-Troike 1989:107-180), and are therefore subjective as far as cultures are concerned.

To understand what intercultural communication means, it is necessary to first of all look at the relationship between language (communication) and culture. Chu (1977) observes that every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involves communication. But the connection between culture and language may not be obvious at first. He argues that when people learn their native language, they also unconsciously

learn their cultures, but however, if a person learns another language or grows up speaking more than one language, that person may become aware of the different ways that each language allows its speakers to perceive and describe reality. Fichte (1968) argues that these differences in perceptions constitute differences in culture, and that language more than any other factor, is the greatest determinant of one's culture.

Hofsteede (1991:13) defines culture as 'The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.' Culture is learnt, not inherited; it comes from one's social group and not from one's genes. Culture can then be defined as everything that makes a large group of people (speech community) unique. One's culture is often a central part of one's identity, and membership of a group helps to identify him. Smith (1966) also shares a similar view when he says that culture is a code that we learn and share and to express it, we need communication.

Intercultural communication can therefore be summed up as a discourse between two people with different identities, cultures and or linguistic backgrounds interacting in a multilingual space like that of Greenmarket Square. There are often barriers between the participants in such a communicative event that lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

An interculturally competent person is one who respects others' cultures and has tolerance for any differences between cultures (Belay 1993, and Chen & Starosta, 1996). Jandt (2004:73) is of the same opinion and has identified four skill areas which are necessary for making a person more interculturally competent: a) personal strength, b) communication skills, c) psychological adjustment and d) cultural awareness.

a) Personal strength involves factors like self-concepts which are the ways in which a person views himself as well as the willingness of the individual to openly and appropriately reveal information about himself and his counterparts with little or no anxiety or stress.

b) Communication skills. Jandt (2004) believes that an effective communicator should be able to deal with diverse people in different situations.

c) Psychological adjustment is essential for a person to be able to handle "culture shock", which is often revealed as stress, frustration and alienation in new environments.

d) Cultural awareness concludes by saying that a person needs to understand both the social customs and social systems of an environment before s/he can become interculturally competent.
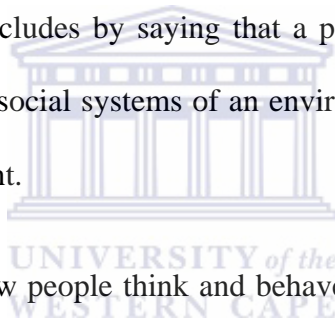
Thus if one can understand how people think and behave, it would then be very easy to interact with these people from different cultural backgrounds (cultural awareness) without any impediments to communication (Katan 2004).

Another very important aspect in the study of intercultural communication is globalization. Myers-Scotton (2006:175-177) says that globalization is the key factor influencing 'communication in the late-modern era in which humanity currently finds itself', for the following reasons:

- Advancement in transport has made it easier for one to move from place to place, thus making the world a 'global village';

- Communication technology has made international communication so much faster and easier; and

- Immigration patterns have made it easier for us to see new faces and hear new languages every day of our lives.

Intercultural communication skills assume an ever larger role in global marketing and sales strategies. Consequently, language programs need to respond to these changes, as future business managers need to acquire effective intercultural competence. The 'one world' market has forced business to 'think global, act local and integrate all the languages that are concerned' (Myers-Scotton 2006:175-177). Effective intercultural communication serves a vital role in that it can forestall miscommunication, prevent misunderstanding and avert mistakes among diverse people from different social and cultural backgrounds, brought together by migration and globalization like the participants in Greenmarket Square.

Globalization is a spatial process in which the institution and geography are central to understanding the social order (Vigouroux 2005:237-256). It has resulted in increased cultural interest, cultural contact, conflict, linguistic diversity and tension. To effectively understand globalization, we need to understand localization. The question that comes to mind is: How does language use contribute to the creation of space? This can only happen through contacts and practices. Contact here implies the encounters between dissimilar entities, and practices the situated environments as immigrants are not multilingual but 'perpetual language learners' (Vigouroux 2005:237-256). Any change in

spatial environment affects our capacity to deploy linguistic resources and skills and imposes requirements on us, which we may fail to meet (Myers-Scotton, 2006:174).

According to Vigouroux & Mufwene (2008), questions about discourse participants should not be asked in static terms, but rather in dynamic terms, which include not only relocation across separate geographical spaces but also ability to move across different micro spaces such as within and between neighborhoods, or within a setting like Greenmarket Square.

2.3 The Theory of Spatiality

The way people use language is strongly influenced by the situation in which they find themselves as space exists before the communicative event takes place. The aim of this study is to see how particular effects are achieved from the text (discourse) among its participants in Greenmarket Square.
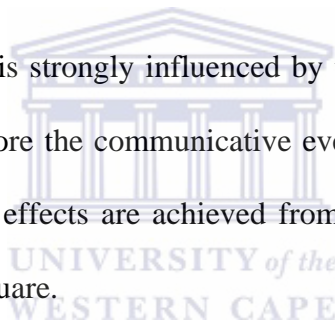
Blommaert *et al.* (2005) say that space is a structural variable through which people can understand spatiality as '…a process whereby individuals, groups and institutions put in material and physical coordinates with social meanings'. Emphasis needs to be laid on how these individuals and communities contextualize space as well as what this context of space tells us about the new environment where we find ourselves. They conclude that space and social meanings have to go side by side to present theoretical tools that allow for a better understanding of spatiality as an indexical process. Blommaert (2006) goes on to say that creating a history around products and people (stereotyping), conceptualizes space in new ways. In a space like Greenmarket Square, its historical background can

have a transforming impact on the locals, traders, clients and buyers as they question the idea of belonging and also of national, cultural and language identities. Participation '…frequently entails questions of group membership and social category affiliation with consequences for how we think about spatial and temporal scales' (Blommaert *et al.* 2005).

In an ethnographic study carried out by Vigouroux (2005:237-256) in Cape Town, she addresses the relevance of space (social, geographic and symbolic) to our understanding of language practices among Francophone African migrants in Cape Town. She explores the relationship between space and language practice through the notion of 'trajectory', which she argues is an interesting point of departure for understanding the constitution of individuals' language repertoire.
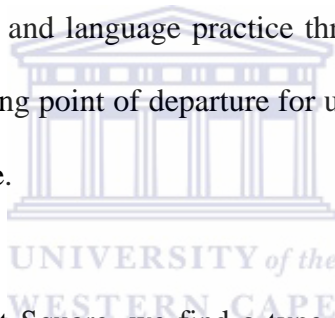
In spaces like the Greenmarket Square, we find a type of domain specialization which Blommaert *et al.* (2005) call *truncated multilingualism:* 'linguistic competencies which are organized topically, on the basis of domains or specific activities' (Blommaert *et al.* 2005:199). The language used in such a space depends on the topic, the participants, the power differential between them, stereotyping, etc. *Truncated multilingualism* allows for a large degree of communication across language boundaries. Dyers (2008) argues that it does not mean all the people are fully competent in all the different languages they use. Instead, their linguistic competencies may vary greatly across different domains. For example, a trader in Greenmarket Square could pick up words, slang or phrases from

some tourists but would be unable to interact in that language when talking to a fellow trader who speaks that same language due to his incompetence in that language.

2.4 Discourse Analysis and the Social Construction of 'Otherness'.

In this study, discourse analysis is used to analyze power relations and the social construction of difference/ 'otherness' in Greenmarket Square. Discourse attempts to explain the relationship between linguistic practice and social structures. Fairclough (1989:26) argues that researchers analyzing discourse need to make a progression from description to interpretation to explanation. Such researchers, when examining the discourses they are confronted with, must draw on social theories in order to reveal the different ideologies underlying these discourses. Such ideologies may also cause 'intercultural fault-lines', leading to a breakdown in intercultural communication (Olahon 2000).
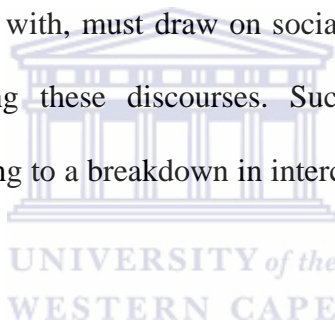
Slembrouck (2004) defines discourse analysis (DA) as being concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence/utterance, and with the interrelatedness between language and society concerned with interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication. He further contends that the constructions of 'positions of interest' can lead to miscommunication among participants in a communicative encounter. Gumperz (1992) argues that the participants in a discourse and how they construe meaning to construct stereotypes and relations also help to shape the social constructions of barriers to ICC.

Foucault (1989) asserts that DA provides higher awareness of the hidden motivation in others and in us in relation to miscommunication. This explains why postmodernists are of the opinion that the world can only be truly interpreted through the actual social surroundings and discourse at a particular time. According to Gumperz (1992) interpretation is a result of contextualization (utterances, statements, oral as well as written texts) which are made to fit a particular context by its participants in the interaction process. We can therefore only understand something because it makes sense in that particular context. It is not only the speaker who offers and generates context but also the participants who are present in the communicative event. But what counts more is the one 'who decodes the message' (utterance) (Gumperz 1992:113). This is probably why Bakhtin (1986:125) refers to discourse as 'responsive understanding' i.e. meaning is contextual and becomes a product of two minds during a communication interaction, which implies that meaning needs to be negotiated by the participants in question.
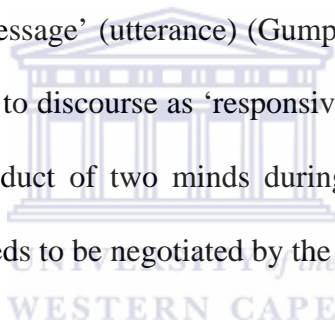
Discourse can also be used to construct 'Otherness'. For example, Lynn and Lea (2003) used discourse analysis to reveal how the British government and media tend to depict asylum seekers to Britain as '…a social, administrative, security and welfare problem'. According to Lynn and Lea (2003:425-452), the Labour Party government of the UK devised stricter laws for asylum seekers in order to exclude them from a UK national identity, thus differentiating between a UK 'self' and 'aliens' – the 'other'. Lynn and Lea (2003:425-452) argue: '…the celebration of the self, is, however innocent it seems, inextricably harnessed to the subjugation of the other'. 'Otherness' in this case tends to arouse ethnocentrism and xenophobia on the part of the local residents.

We see parallels of the UK situation today in the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers from the rest of Africa are treated in South Africa, especially by its National Department of Home Affairs. The South African media also appears to contribute towards a negative perception of foreign Africans. For example, the News at 19h00 on the national television channel SABC 3 of 16 May 2008, depicted most of the victims of xenophobia as either asylum seekers or illegal immigrants, and contended that this was the main reason for the attitudes of the attackers. The *Cape Times* of 13 May 2008 also related an incident where foreigners were attacked just because they were looked upon as the 'other'. The xenophobic attacks in May 12-20, 2008 clearly demonstrated some South Africans' fear of the unknown in 'otherness', which then leads to anxiety, uncertainty, stereotypes and prejudice.
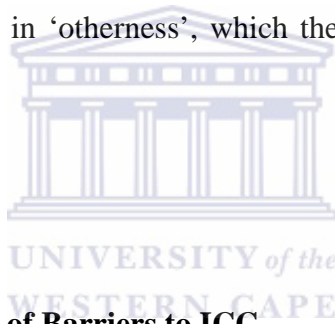
2.4.1 The Social Construction of Barriers to ICC

Apart from revealing how 'Otherness' is discursively constructed; discourse analysis can also reveal how barriers to ICC are constructed socially. A number of these barriers are discussed below, and include: high and low context cultures (HCC/LCC), ethnocentrism, xenophobia, anxiety/uncertainty, stereotype and prejudice, verbal communication, non-verbal language and paralanguage.

2.4.1.1 High and Low Context Cultures (HCC/LCC)

Katan (2004) asserts that when people from High Context Cultures (HCC) and Low Context Cultures (LCC) interact in a discourse, there is usually miscommunication due to their diverse backgrounds. Greenmarket Square is one such area where diverse people from both HCC and LCC meet and interact. HCC is defined as a culture in which most of the information conveyed is in the context of the interaction (Myers-Scotton 2006:182). Hall (1976:70) explains communication in high context cultures as being conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal cues, but 'very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message'. The listener has to rely heavily on working out what the speaker's intentions are. In contrast, speakers from (LCC) make everything explicit through the use of words and phrases (verbal) (Yum 1991). Thus misunderstanding when these two groups meet will not come as a surprise. These people will interpret a communicative event differently due to their diverse cultural backgrounds of either LCC or HCC.

Myers-Scotton (2006) says that HCC clearly distinguishes between an outsider and an insider whereas LCC does not. Thus HCC is collectivist and as such tend to interpret what others say as an expression of the context. In other words they tend to find meaning in factors external to the speaker. On the other hand, LCC pays attention to the literal message in words and phrases that the speaker uses, and tries to spell out everything very clearly. In other words, is individualistic, unlike HCC.

Social constructions and power relations are responsible for the breakdown in communication as a conflict of cultures erupts each time that these people interact in a

discourse. One becomes an outsider on the basis that he comes from a different cultural background where his understanding and interpretations of a communicative event is different. It does not come as a surprise that misunderstanding and miscommunication are a common happening in Greenmarket Square due to the fact that the participants are from different cultural backgrounds of either LCC or HCC (Katan 2004).

Yum (1991:78) narrates an encounter between Americans and Chinese people. The Chinese (HCC) were surprised when the Americans (LCC) asked them what they wanted during a visit as they assumed that the American should have known what they wanted because they had made the appointment. In Chinese culture, it was not necessary to explain the reason for a visit as they do not bother to break the ice before engaging in a conversation, unlike the Americans. South Africans also appear to operate in an HCC because when they communicate with someone, they expect that person to be able to fill the gaps and know what is expected from them.

2.4.1.2 Ethnocentrism

Neuliep (2000:160) defines ethnocentrism as 'the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it'. Cashden (2001:273) argues that ethnocentrism is 'negatively judging the aspects of another culture by the standards of one's own culture'. He goes on to say that it leads to a 'rejection of the riches and knowledge of other cultures, and impedes communication because it excludes other's points of view'. Cohen (1978) asserts that we need to recognize the arbitrary nature of our own cultural behaviors and
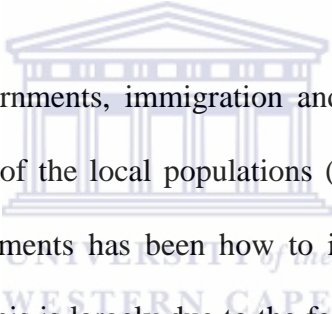
be willing to re-examine them by learning behaviors in other cultures. This is common behavior among the citizens of the USA who often refer to themselves as "Americans", forgetting that there are two Americas (North and South).

Ethnocentrism can practically be defined as judging other peoples' cultures by the standards of one's own culture. In most cases it is perceived as the feeling of superiority of one's own culture (Jandt 2004). In ethnocentrism, one's own culture has a central place in one's way of thinking, and it is taken to be the norm for everything. One thinks of one's culture as normal, right and superior, while different cultures are perceived as abnormal, wrong and inferior (Cashden 2001). There is of course a difference between just respecting your own culture and feeling superior to everyone else's. Neuliep (2000) identifies three categories of ethnocentrism: Low ethnocentrism where a person is insensitive in his/her interaction. When dealing with other cultures, s/he treats them as aliens (otherness); for example, s/he may talk slowly and louder than normal and may also use pejorative expressions for other groups. In moderate ethnocentrism, a person will attempt to minimize contact with out-groups and try to interact with the in-group only as much as possible. The most extreme form is high ethnocentrism or 'cultural nearsightedness' (Jandt 2004), which neglects foreigners (others) and shows insensitivity towards other cultures by using racist jokes, hate and violence.

Ethnocentrism leads to stereotyping and prejudice, poor social relations and eventually to its most extreme form, xenophobia.

2.4.1.3 Xenophobia

Xenophobia is defined as the 'irrational fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, or what is strange or foreign' (Castle and Miller 1998). It is often accompanied by violence and physical abuse. Cultural differences are highlighted and provoke diverse responses from various segments of the population, e.g. in South Africa during the xenophobic attacks of May 2008 (*Cape Times*, May 13, 2008). Naturally, it forms one of the strongest barriers to effective intercultural communication. International migration has become a transnational revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the globe.

Whatever the policies of governments, immigration and migration have led to strong reactions from various sectors of the local populations (Mbeki 2001). One of the most prevalent problems for governments has been how to integrate foreigners into a host society (Lynn and Lea 2003).This is largely due to the fact that immigrants and migrants are seen as a danger to living standards, life-styles and social cohesion, and South Africa has been no exception (Campbell 2003). In a country that is known to have one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, xenophobia is a threat to the democratic principles of human rights and tolerance.

Xenophobic attacks range from name-calling, attacks against the homes and businesses of foreigners and even violent attacks resulting in the death of foreigners (*Cape Argus*, 15 May 2008). Xenophobia stands in jarring contrast to the democratic principles that the new South Africa stands for and to the construction of a post apartheid 'rainbow nation'

(Sinclair, 1998:339). The attacks are completely counter to former SA president, Thabo Mbeki's vision of Africa as a unified continent on a quest to eradicate poverty, human rights abuses and promote sustainable growth and development through regional and continental cooperation and integration (Mbeki 2001).

2.4.1.4 Uncertainty and anxiety

Barna (1977) asserts that anxiety is one of the major barriers to intercultural communication which occurs when one does not know what to expect and so tends to focus on one's feelings, rather than the actual communication transaction. If a trader in Greenmarket Square receives a client who looks wealthy, s/he may be so anxious not to lose a sale that s/he makes common mistakes and behaves in an awkward way. Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) say that uncertainty is due to the inability to explain the other's attitude, behavior or feelings. They refer to anxiety as the feelings of being uneasy, tense, worried or apprehensive.

It therefore makes sense that if someone learns to control his anxiety and uncertainty, he can then be more competent in intercultural communication. Mindfulness of uncertainty and anxiety management can then moderate the outcome of competence (Gudykunst 2002).

> The major premise of this theory is that when strangers first meet, their primary goal is to reduce uncertainty and increase predictability in their own and the other person's behavior…we can proactively reduce uncertainty when we weigh alternative behavioral options prior to interacting with another…retroactively, uncertainty is reduced by attempting to explain behavior after it has been enacted (Neuliep 2000:275).

Neuliep argues that if uncertainty is reduced when we meet a new person from another culture, then the level of miscommunication and misunderstanding will also reduce either before or after the interaction with that individual.

In Greenmarket Square as in many other parts of the world, communication breakdown can possibly be caused by uncertainty and anxiety. For instance, someone who is just coming from a rural area of the Eastern Cape Province to Cape Town for the first time would have communication problems not because s/he is not a South African, but because s/he is not used to the ways of the city. S/he may be anxious because s/he feels that s/he cannot speak the urban dialects of Xhosa or English. The traders and locals tend to believe that their English is too 'bad' to communicate effectively with the tourists whom they believe speak 'perfect' English. Anxiety induces a lack of confidence in most people, and when this occurs, they limit their interactions with others.

2.4.1.5 Assuming similarities instead of differences

Jandt (2004:75) argues that when one assumes similarities between cultures, you can be caught unaware by the differences. The theory where people assume to know how someone is thinking based on the way that they see things, is called 'projected cognitive similarity' (Lachman *et al.* 1995:127). It occurs when one thinks that one knows someone else's perceptions, judgment, attitudes and values because one assumes that others are like one. Lachman *et al* (1995:129) maintain that when it comes to processing information, the 'human mind is analogous to a computer where information is entered,

stored, and retrieved in a sequence of stages.' Although these stages are probably universal, culture influences the specific strategies and styles of processing this information at each stage. With projected cognitive similarity, Runkel (1956:187) says:

> The meaning of any spoken phrase or gesture depends upon the expectations within which it is embedded. It is this framework of potentialities upon which are engraved the expectations of culture and role and the demands of the situation. (Runkel 1956:187)

We notice that our cultures are like a puzzle and what we hear or see becomes the pieces of this puzzle. In other words, our minds have been shaped by our cultures in such a way that we interpret everything based on the different cultures. The traders in Greenmarket Square assume that everyone who comes to the market is versed with their own way of bargaining through haggling, which sometimes lead to miscommunication and misinterpretation.
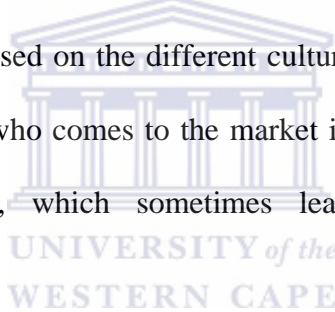
Boucher (1974) portrays the case of a Dane who was visiting New York. As she assumed similarities instead of differences, she had to spend two nights in prison because she was charged with endangering the life of a child. In Copenhagen, it is common to see people leave their children outside in a stroller when entering a restaurant. What she assumed was that New York was similar to Copenhagen and so paid a high price when the police were called in.

Jandt (2004) argues that assuming similarities instead of differences is usually based on the assumption that people are more similar than they actually are. When communicating with people from other cultures, such people are likely to treat the others like 'their

people', and so there is only one acceptable way of behaving, and that way is 'their way'. However, people from different cultures express emotions differently (Boucher, 1974). People who are unaware of these different ways of expressing emotions might think that emotions have been displayed inappropriately just because they are expressed differently in their cultures. This assumption can lead to miscommunication and misinterpretation in most cases. When people focus so much on the differences between cultures, they focus more on the conflict areas which can lead to miscommunication.

2.4.1.6 Stereotype and prejudice

Kay (2006) defines stereotype as what a system believes about someone and how this system determines these beliefs. In most cases, we use this concept to refer to a negative or positive judgment based on any observable or believed group membership. Prejudice is the irrational hatred or suspicion of a particular group, race, religion, or sex (Jandt, 2004:76).

It is possible to observe patterns of stereotype and prejudice in the intercultural communication taking place at Greenmarket Square during interactions among the participants. It is a common belief that the Americans are the most powerful nation economically, politically and socially. It is also believed that someone from Africa is poor, uncivilized and uncultured. These are social constructions, common stereotypes that we get from the media, and these stereotypes tend to shape the way that we look at the world and individuals we encounter.

Neuliep (2000) argues that stereotypes could be positive or negative. Negative stereotypes and prejudice can be very destructive as they can either lead to rivalry or to a defeatist attitude. There are also positive stereotypes and prejudices as can be seen in the fact that the South Africans believe that the informal traders are making a lot of money and as such they are obliged to copy what they do, thereby improving their own lives.

2.4.1.7 Verbal communication

Verbal communication deals with discourse among its participants. People from LCC make extensive use of this kind of communication as meaning to them relies on what is being said directly. Fichte (1968:63) argues that the first original boundaries of a state are beyond doubt their internal boundaries (language boundaries). Many people around the world use their languages as a core component of their identity. It does not come as a surprise that some South Africans reject foreigners on the basis of their inability to speak South African languages. Even if the foreigners learn these languages; their accents will still betray them.

2.4.8 Nonverbal communication

When we talk of nonverbal communication, we imply aspects that are not spoken in words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Nonverbal communication applies to those aspects that accompany speech: gestures, facial expressions mode etc, and which contribute both to the context and contextualization of what is being said. In an HCC society, all these aspects are taken seriously when they refer to the context and contextualization of their

interaction. "Research has shown that cues in the nonverbal 'channels' of communication (how something is said) are often more important than words alone (what is said)." (Zuckerman *et al.* 2005:171). Buck (1984) says that 'some basic nonverbal behaviors seem to be clues as to a person's state of mind because they seem to be 'spoken' internally.' Therefore, if one does not know the rules of a particular culture as far as the nonverbal codes are concerned, one cannot interpret them in the same way as someone from that culture.

Nonverbal communication is the commonest style of communication being used when people from different cultural backgrounds interact in communication. What we notice here is that even the nonverbal codes used in this context are often misunderstood as there are always diverse interpretations of these gestures as a result of the different cultural backgrounds. It is the commonest type of communication that the traders and their diverse customers use in Greenmarket Square when these people do not share a *lingua franca*. Like its verbal counterpart, non-verbal codes are interpreted differently by the different cultures in discourse, and so miscommunication is bound to occur given the diverse nature of those participating in the communicative event.

2.4.9 Paralinguistic Features

'Paralanguage refers to the vocal qualities that usually, though not necessarily, accompanies speech" (Neuliep, 2004:245). The paralinguistic features of communication therefore refer to sounds (verbal) and nonverbal codes. They are non-verbal because they

do not comprise words, but without them, words cannot convey their real meanings (Singh 2006). Singh suggest that paralinguistic features of speech are expressed through:

a). Voice: The clarity, pitch, pleasantness and warmth of a voice can tell us so much about speaker's sex, background education, training and temperament.

b) Proper word stress: Word stress in some languages like English is of crucial importance in the transmission of any intended meaning. Putting emphasis on a particular word in a sentence or utterance can change the whole meaning of the sentence, and unless one is alert to this function of word or sentence stress, one could misinterpret the speaker's utterances.

c). Contextual signals: It should be our constant effort to make sure that the "what" and the "how" of our message are in harmony. As receivers, we need to concentrate on how a message is sent and the meaning of the words. There are several factors that influence the way that something is said, like the context, the language, the time, the place and so on. If one misinterprets these contextual signals, miscommunication can result.

d). Overall impression or message: The way that a person speaks, tells us a lot about him. Knapp & Hall (1992) have pointed out that both the listener and the speaker have certain expectations which may be fulfilled if the message is effective.

People who do not pay attention to these factors can come across as rude, aggressive and unhelpful, leading to breakdowns in communication.
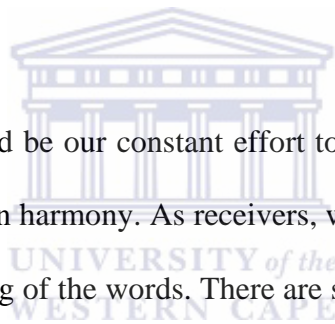
2.5 Conclusion

This chapter surveyed the literature on intercultural communication that is of relevance to this particular study. After first discussing what is meant by intercultural communication, the chapter reviewed theories of spatiality, the social constructions of 'others' and other social barriers to intercultural communication.

Chapter Three

Methodology
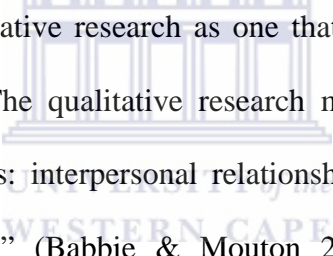
3.1 Introduction

In this study, I made use of qualitative research methods because the nature of this kind of research is exploratory and open-ended: there is a possibility to follow up anything that is not clear. These methods have strengths as well as weaknesses. Although qualitative methodology has always been criticized as being subjective, I deemed it essential for my study because it deals with human behavior and interaction. It would be difficult to understand these two aspects without understanding the framework within which the research population selected for the study interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions. According to Finch (1985:114), qualitative methods can provide theoretically grounded and analytical accounts of 'what happens in reality in ways which statistical methods cannot accomplish. Qualitative studies reflect the subjective reality of the people being studied.'

The objective of this research was to get feedback from informal traders (South African and non-South Africans) on the one hand and the tourists (from Europe, Asia and the USA as well as those from Africa) on the other, on what happens when people from different cultural backgrounds interact in a space like Greenmarket Square, Cape Town. In addition, the study wanted to find out what the different factors are there that lead to breakdowns in intercultural communication in this particular space. How, for example,

does a South African trader treat a tourist from Germany as opposed to a tourist from Africa and Asia? How are traders from other parts of Africa discursively and socially constructed by South Africans shopping in the market? And how do they in turn discursively and socially construct their fellow South African traders? Obtaining such a sensitive data requires particular skills from a researcher:

> The quality of the findings from this type of research is directly dependent upon the skills, experience and sensitivity of the investigator (researcher). The aim is always to give an in-depth description of subjects and measures, what the study assumes to be a static reality in the hope of developing a universal truth (David et al 2006).

Weisman (1980) defines qualitative research as one that examines people's words and actions in descriptive ways. The qualitative research method can also be defined as "concerned with human beings: interpersonal relationship, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings" (Babbie & Mouton 2001:93). According to Leedy (1993:143), the qualitative researcher "…attempts to attain rich, real, deep and valid data from a rational standpoint and the approach is inductive". Leedy adds that this research method deals with collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data by observing what the people say and do about themselves and others. It also refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things.

3.2 Research design and methodology

3.2.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative research method that has been used in this study to collect and analyze the data. Lecompte and Preissle (1993:123) use the term "ethnographic research" as a shorthand rubric for investigations described as 'qualitative' and 'case study' research because they have one thing in common. Both methods deal with comprehending human behaviors, which is exactly what I attempt to do in this study. As Trudgill (1983) puts it:

> The focus of ethnography is speech communities, the way communication is patterned and organized as symbols of communicative events, and the way in which these interact with all other systems of the culture. The primary aim is to collect and analyze data about the way in which social meaning is conveyed (Trudgill 1983:247).

The key element of this approach involves conducting fieldwork and maintaining the cultural aspects of all the informants to understand where there is a breakdown in communication. In this study, taking good notes of communicative events in the market and noting where breakdowns occurred was a pre-requisite. In this manner, a case study on intercultural communication in Greenmarket Square was built up. A broad range of data, providing both general and particular information, was collected from the all the informants involved (tourists and traders).

3.2.2 Discourse Analysis

Constructions of positions are responsible for miscommunication in Greenmarket Square as encounters in discourses ascribe meaning to constructing stereotypes and relations. Discourse analysis therefore allowed me to look at language use 'beyond the sentence boundary' (Gumperz 1992) as well as analyze 'naturally occurring' language use, instead of 'invented examples' (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006:34). Discourse transforms any environment into a social and cultural one (Blommaert 2006). It can be further explained as the way that people make themselves understood through interaction with the others. I captured the discourses between my research participants through their conversational exchanges, and through language use in social contexts with interactions and dialogue between them (Stubbs 1983).

3.2.3 Ethics

Ethical considerations are important concerns in research today. As Babbie and Mouton (2001:143) state: 'Ethical moral in social research demands high research standards and practices. We need to be aware of the potential abuse of power in the research processes. Doing research without obtaining informed consent from the informants, for example, is unethical and may even result in the validity of the results being called to question. Schurich (1995) as cited in Dlomo (2003:46) asserts that critical theorists have emphasized the power play between the researcher and the researched and the need for a

greater balance of power between these two parties. To these theorists, the researched are always in a subordinated position with the researcher being above them.

The work that I have done in this study was informed by the highest possible ethical consideration from its inception. I was guided among others by the guidelines of the Arts Postgraduate Research Board (A.PGB) of the University of the Western Cape. I had to be sensitive to issues of a personal nature as the topic of this thesis itself was challenging to me as researcher and to all my informants as well. Each of the interviewees had to sign a consent form (Appendix VII) that was in conformity with the ethics of this study before participating in the information process. Anonymity was guaranteed and I explained clearly to my informants the reasons why I was collecting the data. They were also made to understand that they could, if interested, get a copy of my findings at the end of my research.

3.2.4 Validity and Reliability of the Data

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. He defines validity as determining whether the research truly measured that which it was intended to measure, or how truthful the results were; that is to say whether the research results provided valid answers to the research questions. This explains why I used a diverse population, taking age, gender and diversity (culture) into consideration. As I dealt with stable measures, the

results were similar, and the high degree of stability showed the reliability of the data. Precision, credibility and transferability provided the bases of evaluating my findings.

The data was obtained via triangulation of research methods – questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. Golafshani (2003) defines triangulation as '…an approach to data analysis that synthesizes data from multiple sources'. Creswell and Miller (2000:126) also define triangulation as 'a validity of procedure where researchers seek for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories.' Triangulation seeks to quickly examine existing data to strengthen interpretations and improve policy and programs based on the available evidence. By examining information collected through different methods from different groups and by different populations as was the case with this research, findings can be corroborated across data sets, reducing the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study. Using multiple methods such as interviews, participant observation and questionnaires, as well as using a peer to collect data, has led this study to a more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities, and has improved the validity and reliability of data collection.

The data that was collected from South African traders and stall assistants could only be authenticated by a second opinion because when I interviewed them, they were subjective as they gave me only the type of information that would please me. When I sent a (peer) South African who was assisting me, the results of the interview she conducted was very different to my own. The South African traders and stall assistants could only be honest to people that they trusted, which also proved the reliability and validity of this research.

3.3 Research site

As was explained in Chapter One, the site for the fieldwork was Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, South Africa. The cosmopolitan nature of this market made it possible for the researcher to meet people from different parts of the world. Greenmarket Square is in the heart of Cape Town, otherwise known as "the Mother City" of South Africa. It is a historic site, which, coupled with the presence of the museum and the old Methodist Church, is a major tourist attraction where a wide range of African curios can be bought.

As far as spatiality is concerned, the market is not well organized and there are no set rules and norms for the distribution of the different sites. At first glance, therefore, many tourists make the mistake of thinking that almost everybody is selling the same items because of the poor organization of this space. Security is also a matter of concern here as there are lots of street kids who come to beg money from the tourists, thereby intimidating them. Most tourists also have to learn about bargaining with the traders in order to obtain a good price for an item. When one gets into the market, one realizes that one can find people representing all the African countries who can speak many different languages.

3.4 Research population

The research population for this study consisted of both traders and tourists/local clients of both genders, whose ages ranged from 18 to 60. They came from different countries

with different cultural backgrounds, and tended to use English as their medium of communication because it is the *lingua franca* of trade in Greenmarket Square.

The complex, multi-layered nature of all the participants made it essential for me to group my research population as follows:

- South Africans: traders, stall assistants, clients/tourists;

- People from other parts of Africa: traders, asylum seekers, economic migrants, tourists etc.;

- People from the rest of the world: holiday makers, tourists, short-term residents etc.

This research was carried out for over a period of 9 months, from October 2007 - June 2008. I made use of a total of 65 people. The questionnaires were answered by 27 traders and 17 tourists. Interviews were conducted with 10 tourists and 10 traders. As a trader in the market, I observed most of my colleagues with their clients, or where they were involved in discourse, to see where there was a breakdown in communication. I also volunteered my services as an interpreter to a visiting Christian Fellowship from West and Central Africa. This gave me an opportunity to meet men and women who were either tourists or traders of Greenmarket Square. There were over 42 members, but I only interviewed 4 tourists there. Nevertheless, I had the opportunity to observe how communication breaks down as a result of gender or age groups.

Age and gender are very important issues in research as far as intercultural communication is concerned because they help to bring out cross-cultural conflicts

between generations and gender (Tannen1999). In this study, younger respondents appeared to be less influenced by cultural differences than their older counterparts who were more conservative. It was observed that the older generation could not change their social construction of what South African should be, as most people held that it has the highest level of crime. Gender was also taken into account, and I tried to have a balance between the genders in my research population to find out if there were differences in intercultural communication depending on the genders of the participants. It appeared that the younger generation can be referred to as the generation of globalization, as they are flexible and ready to adapt to the new cultures where they find themselves.

3.5 Research Design

Different tools from a variety of sources were used in this study in order to obtain rich and comprehensive data. The tools that were used to obtain the findings were firstly more formal questionnaires which both traders and tourists had to respond to individually as well as individual and group interviews. These tools gave me data from the perspectives of the individuals responding to my questions. Secondly, I also made use of recorded interactions between participants (traders interacting with tourists/local clients as well as traders communicating with other traders) and participant observation, which I recorded as field notes in a daily journal. Through the recordings and participant observation, I gathered naturally occurring interactions that took place in the market in order to study how participants actually interacted and constructed positions and representations of each other.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

These are a printed form of data collection instrument which includes questions or statements that informants are expected to answer in most cases anonymously (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). They are similar to interviews with the main difference being that these questionnaires are usually answered in a written form whereas interviews are conducted orally. There are lots of advantages attached to the questionnaires as a tool of data collection among other things. They can be self-administered and can be given to a large group at the same time.

I distributed 35 questionnaires in a day to both tourists and the informal traders. The informants were more comfortable with the questionnaires because they were answered anonymously; as such it was possible for people to give sensitive information easily without fear or favour. The data that was collected through the questionnaires was standard and uniform. The informants could present their own views freely without being influenced by anyone. The major disadvantage was the fact that I could not go back to the informants if they left out any information or if their handwriting was illegible.

I administered different questionnaires to the tourists and the traders respectively (see Appendices IV & V). Structured questions were asked because it was felt that this would help me to get information that I did not envisage at first. I only made use of questions that were directly relevant to my field of study. The responses to the questionnaires helped and guided me to prepare my interview questions. I gave out 27 questionnaires to the traders and 16 to the tourists.

The questions were typed out and spaces were left for the answers to be filled in by both the tourists and the traders. I personally shared out the two sets of questions and asked them to leave out those questions that they could not answer. A group of short-term tourists accommodated me by allowing me to pay them a visit in the Backpackers' Lodge where they lived and through them, I met many more tourists who help to answer the questionnaires. I also visited three other tourists in their hotel rooms and they completed the questionnaires and also allowed me to interview them.

3.5.2 Participant observation

There are two types of observations; participant observation, done by an insider, or observation by an outsider. Such observers can focus on a number of subjects or on the whole group. Observation is usually done without being able to predetermine what will be observed (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). As a trader in Greenmarket Square, I was able to do close participant observation of the barriers to intercultural communication in this setting, with many of the contextual variables present. However, there are also some disadvantages to this method. When the observer is too close to the observed, it can result in a lack of objectivity on the part of the observer, leading to the observer seeing what s/he wants to see instead of what is actually taking place – the so-called 'Observer's paradox' (Labov 1972). And when people know that they are being observed, they could behave differently in the presence of the researcher.

But as an insider, I did not really experience this problem. To my fellow traders and the tourists, I was simply another trader plying my wares and no-one behaved differently in my presence. Nevertheless, to ensure complete objectivity, I made use of a colleague that I will name Ms F, to observe the traders and tourists so that my participant observation could be validated by her. We closely observed the intercultural communication between traders and tourists/local clients as well as between the traders themselves, e.g. the attitude of South African traders, stall assistants and clients towards the traders from the other parts of Africa. The field notes that recorded my participant observation were analyzed through a narrative description of the interactions.

3.5.3 Interviews
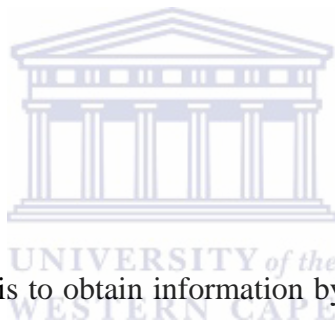
"The purpose of the interview is to obtain information by actually talking to the subject. The interviewer asks questions and the subjects respond either in a face-to-face situation or by telephone." (Seliger & Shohamy 1989:166). They also argue that the interview has the advantage that it gives the interviewee a degree of power and control over the course of the interview; it also gives the interviewer a degree of flexibility, and, most profoundly, this type of interview gives one privileged access to other people's lives.

This study made use of both the open-ended and the semi-structured types of interviews. The open interviews provided the interviewees with a broad freedom of expression and elaboration. More often than not, this was like an informal talk between the interviewer and the interviewee. In such situations, an interviewer can link one question to another,

without a preplanned agenda of what he has to ask. Much of the information that is obtained from such interviews is usually incidental, just as the interview proceeds. This freedom gave me an opportunity to get information that I did not foresee at the beginning. In the 'semi-structured' interviews, I prepared pre-determined core questions in advance from which I was able to explore in-depth information as the interview proceeded. At certain points, I allowed for elaborations both on the questions and the answers.

However, interviews can be biased due to inconsistency of questions, answers and inaccuracy. To prevent this and to make sure that the interview questions were consistent and accurate, I first sent a draft of the questions I administered to my supervisor and then to the Arts Post Graduate Board (A.PGB) at UWC for scrutiny. I tried to present information from the respondents fairly and accurately. To avoid subjectivity on the part of the interviewed, I made the traders understand that they were just helping to answer some questions for my research work. I did not make them understand precisely what I wanted from them because this was going to make them biased (subjective) in order to please me. In such cases, I made the interviews more of a conversation than a question and answer session.

As much as interviews have their advantages, there are also some disadvantages. In most cases, interviews are very costly, time-consuming and in some cases, difficult to administer. I incurred lots of expenses during my interview sessions like having to pay for transport and giving incentives to the interviewees among other expenses. In some cases I negotiated a role to play, like being a member of a fellowship, and often wasted time waiting for people who did not come at all. In a few cases, it was very difficult to

administer the 'semi-structured' interviews. In such cases, I needed to restructure the questions before I could administer them. An interviewer also needs interviewing skills. The interview at a certain stage might introduce elements of subjectivity and personal bias like in the case where the interviewee is responding in a way to please the interviewer.

The bulk of the interviews happened outside Greenmarket Square. I negotiated with the traders and the tourists to allow me to interview them in environments that were more conducive to them. I also arranged with some tourists to meet them either in their hotel rooms (2 tourists) or in their backpackers' lodge (a further 6 tourists) to conduct the interviews. In addition, I joined a Christian Fellowship as their interpreter for three weeks in order to interview a group of West and Central African tourists (missionaries) who had come to South Africa on an evangelical visit.

To gather data from the traders was not as easy as I thought because only a few of them were prepared to be interviewed. I took along a friend who assisted these traders during the interviews in their stalls while they were being interviewed to avoid interruptions by customers. Those who did not want to rely on this assistance from my friend were rescheduled for an interview in the local 'shebeen' (a bar) after work. In most cases, the traders were usually under stress and in need of money from the sales which explains why they were hesitant to answer the interview questions in the market. The only way that I could overcome this was to give them an incentive, buy them a drink, or take them to a coffee shop or buy them a plate of food. These interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

3.5.4 Natural occurring conversations

Stubbs (1983) defines natural conversation as behaviors that may be automatic, unselfconscious and spontaneous, but that are nevertheless deeply organized in ways that are generally unrecognized by users. In most cases, this type of conversations occur naturally without any intervention from the researcher, or the language could be spontaneous in the sense that it is unplanned and which is in response to immediate situational demands. It might therefore be argued that normal conversation is unplanned and that it is relatively unpredictable. Unplanned discourse here refers to talk which is not thought out prior to its expression (Stubbs 1979) and has not been prepared, but points out that much discourse falls somewhere between the two extremes of planned and unplanned.
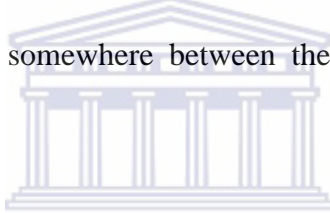
It was impossible for me to ask permission to record such happenings as they were spontaneous and no one was in control. All I did was to take as much notes as I could during the observation which now form part of the data.

3.6 Data analysis

The analysis of the data (participant observation, interviews, recordings from live occurrences and questionnaires combined) is based on Saville-Troike's ethnography of communicative events (1989:107-180) and on discourse analysis as described by Terre Blanche (2006), Slembrouck (2006), Lynn and Lea (2003) and Gumperz (1972). These two kinds of analyses include a critical examination of aspects like scene, key, message

form and content, the observed rules for interaction as well as where these rules are broken, to what effect and the norms of interpretation.

The communicative events gave the interviewer and the interviewed specific roles to play during the interactions. My role in the fellowship was to interpret for the preacher from Nigeria whose accent could not be understood by most of the members. The encounters between the traders and their clients or encounters between traders from different backgrounds also provided me with more communicative events.

The places where the interviews took place were informal settings, either in the Greenmarket Square, in the bar, in the coffee shops or even in the fellowship. Since the participants were either my colleagues (fellow traders), or the tourists, it was therefore important for me to be polite and friendly. I scheduled meetings with them, and as such had to take their e-mails and phone numbers to safeguard the relationship until I had completed the interviews.

All of my informants used either English or French in the interviews and questionnaires (message forms). I also observed that gestures were one of the methods of communication which sometimes caused miscommunication, and they were recorded in my field notes as part of my data.

The fellowship was a more formal setting where some rules were observed by both me and the members. The type of relationship that was established here was just friendship and so it was easy to interview the participants. The only rules that were established here were that they could talk as freely as they chose provided that there were incentives for

the interviewed. In some cases visits were paid to traders in their stalls as friends and this was an opportunity to observe them. The only rule that was established here was that every time a client came, the conversation between us would stop until the client had left.

Following the norms of interpretation, some of the traders thought that they were just talking on a common problem in the market as they could not understand how it could help me in my studies. The others thought that they were doing me a favour, which explains why they had to ask for some form of incentive. In the fellowship, most of the members knew that I was a full-time member acting as an interpreter. The tourists that I met in the backpacker's lodge knew that I was collecting a data for my studies. Some of them even thought that I was getting this information for the SA Department of Tourism to improve on intercultural communication in Greenmarket Square.
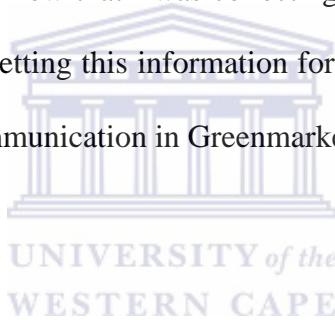
3.7 Limitations

This research was not conducted without problems: some were caused by my own actions and others by factors beyond my control. On the first day, a grievous mistake was made by giving out questionnaires to the traders and asking them to complete these questionnaires at home for collection in two days. On the day of collection, only three copies were ready. The rest of the people gave excuses like 'I forgot it at home', 'I did not do it yet', and 'I completed it already but cannot remember where I kept it' etc. Thus, new copies were printed and redistributed that were completed and handed in immediately. Even then, not all of them have completed the questionnaires.

Some difficulties were encountered with the tourists. They wanted to understand what the research was all about. Some of them were even willing to help but could not because of language barriers. Some of the tourists I encountered were retired senior citizens who were reluctant to talk to people that they did not know. It was difficult even to schedule an interview with them. In such cases, interviews were arranged and conducted immediately in their language of choice.

The greatest problem encountered was that of language which explains why most people either had to answer the questionnaires in their languages, or try to do it in their limited English. Appendices IV and V contain samples of the returned questionnaires. Some of the tourist could not respond to interview questions because of language barriers. There were also instances of miscommunication due to the fact that either the interviewee or the interviewer could not understand what the other was saying, given that they came from different language backgrounds.

As an insider in the market, I went to the field with a lot of assumptions, believing that I knew and could predict the traders' reactions and responses to answer either my questionnaires and interview questions, but this was not the case as those I most relied on refused to answer them. These same people started accusing me of being a spy working for the City of Cape Town and that I was attempting to trap them as illegal immigrants. Everyone nurtures this type of fear when they are out of their country of birth. I was forced to prove to them beyond doubt that I was now a student at UWC, by showing my student card, and revisiting the consent form (appendix V) before some of them could respond to the questions.

3.8 Conclusion

In carrying out this research, I realized that any technique or tool that was used for my data collection had its own effect on the data that was elicited. Efforts were made to assure that all these techniques were valid and reliable for the data. In other words, the information that was collected was consistent and accurate to match the original intentions of this study. Due to the difficulties encountered in the field, existing procedures were either adapted or revised and new ones developed which explains the use of a wide variety of methods.

Chapter four

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected through questionnaires, interviews, naturally occurring events and participant observation. The main focus was to see how communication breaks down when people from different cultural backgrounds interact in a multilingual space like the one in Greenmarket Square. As shown in the theoretical framework as well as in the analysis of the data, several factors contributed to miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation in this space. Central to the breakdown in intercultural communication is how 'the other' is constructed discursively in the data.
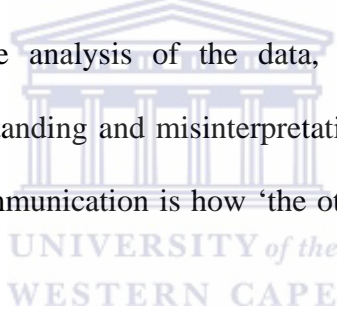
4.2 Data Analysis

As I explained in Chapter Three, the data consisted of responses from two sets of questionnaires (one for traders and one for tourists/clients at Greenmarket Square), interviews with willing participants from both groups, and participant observation of naturally occurring interactions between traders, and between traders and their clients. This data was analyzed by doing discourse analysis of the responses to the questionnaires, transcribed interviews and interactions (Terre Blanche, 2006; Slembrouck, 2004). The interviews were transcribed in such a way that they showed

clearly where and how communication was affected and why. Foucault (1989) asserts that DA provides higher awareness of the hidden motivation in others and in us for any utterance or other forms of non-verbal communication.

Saville-Troike's ethnography of communicative events (1989:107-180) was also applied to part of the data. The latter method of analysis included a critical examination of aspects like scene, key, message form and content, the observed rules for interaction as well as where these rules are broken, to what effect and the norms of interpretation. Chapter Three contains my analysis of scene and key – i.e. where the interaction took place in and around Greenmarket Square. The key refers to the relationship between the ethnographer and the speech community, in this case, the relationship between me and the community of Greenmarket Square. In this chapter, I analyze whether participants follow the observed rules for interaction as well as where these rules were broken. I also considered the effects on the participants of effective intercultural communication as well as effects of offensive intercultural conduct.

In keeping with the theoretical framework for this study as discussed in Chapter Two, the findings are presented firstly in terms of the effect of Greenmarket Square as a space on intercultural encounters. This is followed by a discourse analysis of how 'the other' is socially constructed by the main participants in the study. In order to give a balanced and neutral account of this social construction, I present an analysis of how each of the three major groupings construct the other groups, and discuss the effects of this type of 'othering'. Finally, I presented two other factors that appear to impact on effective intercultural communication among individuals in this space.

The research population emerged as three major groupings:

- South Africans (locals, stall assistants, tourists),

- African foreigners (tourists, asylum seekers, economic migrants, students, etc)

- Tourists from Europe, America, Middle East, Australia who included short term residents, holiday's seekers and tourists.

The results of the interviews are supported by the findings from the questionnaires and participant observation (live occurrences) in the market. Samples of the interviews with both the tourists and the traders can be seen in Appendices I, II and III, while two samples of the returned questionnaires can be seen in appendices IV and V. My personal observations and all natural occurrences were captured in field-notes and form part of the data.
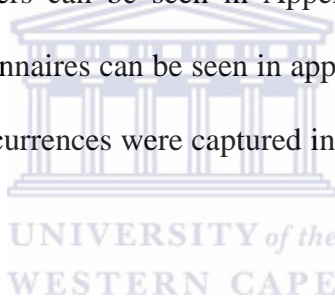
4.3 The Space of Greenmarket Square and how it shapes discourses about others

As with other major world cities, globalization has also had a considerable impact on most South African cities since the advent of democracy in 1994. There has been a 'flow' of people from across the world to South Africa. This has become increasingly visible in Greenmarket Square and Cape Town. The following conversation captures one of the main reasons why Cape Town is a popular destination for people from other African countries:

Interviewer: Where do you come from?

Respondent: From Burundi

I: How do you find it in Cape Town?
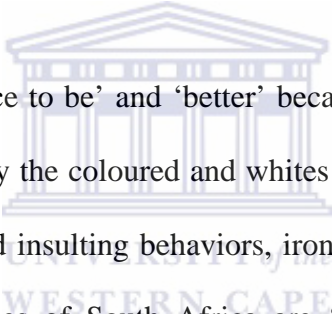
R. Cape Town is a very nice place to be.

I. Are the people here very accommodating?

R. No, but there are few people who are welcoming and accommodative

I. Why did you choose to come to Cape Town?

R. Because Johannesburg is too hostile like Durban and P.E and you cannot find a job there. Cape Town is better because the people do not call you funny names. You meet mostly the coloured and whites and not the black people.

Cape Town is 'a very nice place to be' and 'better' because 'the people do not call you funny names' and it has 'mostly the coloured and whites and not the black people'. This migrant has clearly experienced insulting behaviors, ironically largely from black South Africans. The other major cities of South Africa are 'too hostile'. The conversation captures the reality for many black African migrants to South Africa, for whom the country is an economic and educational magnet in the same way that the USA attracts people from all over the world. It confirms Vigouroux's findings (2005) that black African migrants to South Africa experience many difficulties and harsh living conditions here. The migrants have different reasons for leaving their countries of origin, such as political upheavals, civil war, genocide, religious intolerance, seeking educational opportunities in South Africa, being economic or political asylum seekers etc. The socio-economic and political situation in sub-Saharan Africa also contributes to negative perceptions of Africans.

Encountering hostility, particularly from black South Africans, they move from city to city and finally end up in Cape Town. But when they get here, the reality becomes something else as they are disillusioned by the reality of the job market, schools, commerce, political integration and so on in which their different languages, experiences and levels of education have little advantage over the South Africans. Their different identities now only help to alienate them more.

At Greenmarket Square, we find heterogeneous groupings from several different countries, including a large number of sub-Saharan countries. Many different languages can be heard in this space, although English serves as a *lingua franca*. According to Lefebvre (1974) as cited in Vigouroux (2005**:**237-254) '…every language is located in a space, every discourse says something about space; and every discourse is emitted from space.' Greenmarket Square as a space is a multi-layered and multi-cultured island in a city where the majority population groups (White, Coloured and Black) still largely live in separate housing areas, a remnant of the *apartheid* era.

According to Vigouroux (2005), migrants from other African countries are not politically integrated into the local community irrespective of the fact that some have the legal right to be here or have official refugee status (appendix VII). This is apparent in the following extract from an interview with a Sudanese trader:

Although I have been in South Africa for eight years and have a permanent resident permit with the South African non-citizen I.D., they still call me' illegal immigrant' (amakweri-kweri) just because I am a black person. The Chinese or the American or

someone from Europe who is just coming in today, is either a South African or a tourist, even if they are illegal like most of the Pakistanis.

Foreign black Africans who attempt to work while awaiting proper documentation that allows them to work, study or live in South Africa, find that this is very difficult thing to do. Greenmarket Square is one of the most heavily legislated spaces in Cape Town, and attempting to trade here without appropriate documentation is virtually impossible, as can be seen from the following conversation between a manager of the market and a trader from an African country:

Management: *We cannot allocate you a bay now because you do not have a valid permit. You need to go back to the Department of Home Affairs to get a work permit before we can give you your place in the market. You have been 'prohibited from work and study'.*

Trader: *How do I survive if you revoke my spot? I have been trading in the market here for nine years and now you are chasing me away. Why are you not asking work permit from the other traders?*

Management: *It is not my place to issue you with a valid permit. I take(my orders?) from the Home Affairs. If I do not obey what is on the permit, I will have a problem with the authorities and will lose my job. I am sorry that I cannot help you.*

Another space-related issue is the way that Greenmarket is organized. Foreign traders are often, in my experience, disadvantaged owing to poor organization of the space, a lack of security, and disturbances from street kids among other factors. These traders from other places feel alienated because of their race, as can be seen from the following interview extract:

I. *Why do you have to say that the management does not look after foreigners?*

R. *When the street kids notice that the client is in the shop of a foreigner, they will come to disturb. Sometimes, I think that it is the South African traders who send them to come and disturb or even the managers of the markets so that this could help to chase us in favour of the South African traders. These things do not happen to white traders who are not South Africans. (Trader from Cameroon).*
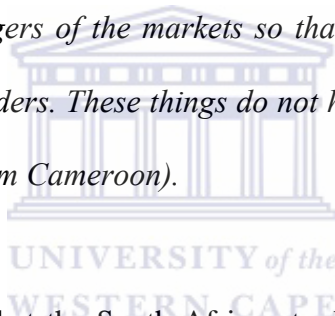
Although this trader believes that the South African traders are behind the disturbances by the street kids, it is worth pointing out that these kids bother all the traders. But because of the way in which the space is organized, this trader believes that foreign Africans are deliberately being victimized.

Apart from experiencing such legal and organizational barriers, migrants can also be incapacitated when they are 'out of place' (Blommaert *et al.* 2005:198). One could find it very difficult to cope with a simple task in a foreign country because one lacks the multilingual resources required for that space, especially if one's own language is not

used there. This is a reality at Greenmarket Square, as is captured in the following extract from an interview:

R: If you get to Greenmarket you will get people from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa, just to name a few. This people, they have got their different cultures, they have got different languages, and things like that you know as long as you are competent in more than one language, there is always this problem of code switching, consciously or unconsciously and what happens is they find it difficult communicating with other people and even though you can speak and communicate properly in English, there is always this problem of English arising that they use and now when they meet the foreigners who also come in from different countries with their own variety of this language, they are supposed to clash because A does not understand B, so what they say I think is true of the market.(Trader from Cameroon).

The different cultural groupings and their perceptions of one another is captured very clearly in above extract, as well as the role of code-switching in excluding or including others. This confirms again how a space like Greenmarket Square is shaped by its different inhabitants. As Vigouroux puts it, "Spatiality and sociality are inseparable because in this case, space is socially constructed and needs to be approached in dynamic terms which is being created, produced, organized and negotiated by its social actors" (2005**:**237-256)**.** Misunderstandings that occur here is not only as a result of participants speaking different languages, but because of the space where these foreigners find themselves. If the Black South Africans can speak English to their fellow white South

Africans and the tourists, they could also communicate with the African foreigners using this *lingua franca* of Greenmarket Square to improve intercultural understanding.

4.4 The Social Construction of 'the other' in Greenmarket Square

By applying discourse analysis to the data, especially the interviews, I was able to analyze the different ways in which each of the three groupings constructed 'the other' socially. I took note of recurrent descriptive phrases or words present in the data, emotionally loaded terms, either strongly negative or positive, and the ways in which certain issues were stressed by the respondents. I also took note of the ways in which answers were constructed – coherently, incoherently, passionately or passively as well as the tone used by the individual respondents.
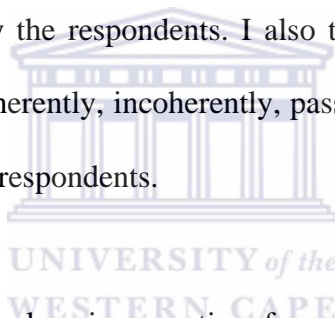
Every communicative event develops in some time frame and some space, and both have effects on what happens and can happen, with space being part of the context. Gumperz (1992) asserts that context does something to people when it comes to communication, which has effects on what people can or cannot do, the value and function of their language repertoires, and their identities that are self-constructed or ascribed to them by others.

4.4.1 The social construction of foreign Africans by South Africans

Lynn and Lea (2003:17), in their article on the social construction of 'aliens' by the UK government, comment on how protecting the 'English way of life'

becomes a rallying point "…for those seeking to maintain clear distinctions between those who belong to the nation and those who threaten the English ways of life" (Lynn & Lea 2003:17). In doing this research, I found a similar argument – protecting the South African way of life - to be very prevalent among my South African respondents.

Those who are perceived to threaten the usual way of life are looked upon as the 'other', but those who are fighting for the *status quo* are viewed as the 'self'. Participant observation also proved that there is always disagreement between these two groups captured through natural conversation where they do not agree. There are always accusations and counter-accusations, leading to the formation of certain stereotypes about the other.
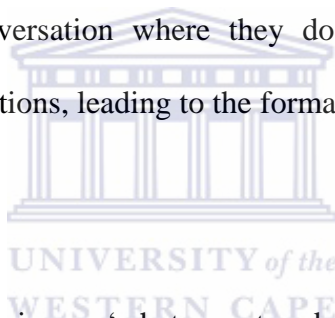
Kay (2006:72) defines stereotyping as 'what a system believes about someone and how this system determines these beliefs'. In most cases, we use this concept to refer to a 'negative or positive judgment based on any observable or believed group membership.' Prejudice is the irrational hatred or suspicion of a particular group, race, religion, or sex (Jandt, 2004:93-102). These are other stumbling blocks to intercultural communication, which lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding between cultures. Social constructions are therefore made on these grounds to ascribe beliefs about people.

One of the stereotypical ways in which the foreign African traders are constructed, it is as users of black magic and 'muti' (magic medicine), as can be seen from the following extract:

S.A. Trader: *The 'keri-kweri' likes to use a lot of 'muti'. If you are selling next to them, you will never get a customer because they drag them to their shops with muti. That is why I do not like them, so they need to go back to their countries.*

By labeling the foreigners '*makweri-kweri*' which means alien, the South Africans imply that these foreigners do not form part of their identity (otherness). This term is used without hesitation by this trader to refer to all the foreign Africans, who, in her opinion are stealing her customers and '*need to go back to their countries*'. '*muti'-(magic medicine)*' which is used twice in this extract also shows the contrast between the self and the other. All the negatives are attributed to the other and give a reason why they do not form part of the South African identity.

Even greetings are used to distinguish the foreigners from the South Africans:

Interviewer: *Are these forms of greetings same or different from the way that you greet in here in South Africa?*

SA Trader: *No they are not the same as **our own**. You need to see for yourself then you will believe me**. They** only use their French and I do not know what they are saying or why they take so long to greet. All these people are **different from us**.*

The manner in which this South African trader refers to the foreign traders shows how sharply she differentiates between *'us'* and *'them'*. South Africans are referred to as *'our own'*, while the foreigners are *'not the same'*, *'differen*t', *'only use French'* and *'take so long to greet'.* Irrespective of the language being used by the foreigners at the time, South Africans usually just refer to it as French. This also illustrates a tendency to lump all the foreign Africans together as one group: '…*all these people are different from us.'*

According to responses from the questionnaires, some black South Africans who visit Greenmarket Square assume that the black foreigners are supposed to speak their local languages (in the case of Cape Town, isiXhosa).

9. *What are some of the things that you do different from them?*

Ans: I do not like the way that the foreigners say 'my brother' because sometimes they are meeting that person for the first time. They do not even want to speak any of our languages as if they are the white people.

It is clear that the respondent does not want the foreigners to be over-familiar by using a term like '*my brother'*, even if the foreigner is simply following what s/he thinks are polite forms of addressing others. I also found the reference to the behaviour of the foreign blacks '*as if they are the white people'* to be a recurrent descriptive phrase. It is as if South African blacks regard any black person who is unable to speak a local language as somehow trying to be more superior to them – an indication, perhaps of their own sense of inferiority? References to '*behaving like white people'* also cropped up regularly in the responses of the foreign Africans (see examples in section 4.4.2).

In Chapter Three, I noted that I was assisted by a South African peer, Mrs. J, to help me to remain as objective as possible as a participant observer. She was invaluable in getting more responses from fellow South Africans, although at times I felt that she also revealed some bias against the foreign black traders. I base this on the fact that she would modify some of my interview questions. For example, my question '*When you greet these people, do you connect well with them?'* was modified by her to include the word 'other', as can be seen in the following interview extract:

*Peer Interviewer: When you greet these **other** people, do you connect well with them?*

SA Trader: It is difficult because they like only their language and are too proud. They think that they are the bosses but they are in the market. They think they are the white people.

The use of the word 'other' already frames and shapes the discourse here, creating an expectation of negativity about the 'other'. In response, the trader appears to expect only subservient behavior from the foreign traders. Any show of pride and dignity on their part is interpreted as behaving like 'the white people' and being 'too proud'. It is almost as if the trader regards such behavior as inappropriate in black people, which is ironic, given that this trader is also a black South African. A strong desire to drive the foreigners away because of what is perceived as an 'incorrect attitude' can be seen in the following extract:

For me, I think they should change their attitudes or be chased away like the Boers. They think that they are big bosses. They do not mind to learn the languages here but they just speak their French. They think that they are better. (South African trader).

Another extremely crude stereotype about foreign Africans, cannibalism, is revealed in the next extract:

Interviewer: Did you ever attend any cultural event that was organized by the foreigners?

Respondent: No, not ever.

Interviewer: Do you think it is similar to the cultural events in your culture?

Respondent: I do not want to attend because I heard from my granny that their food is not good and that they eat human flesh. My granny told me how these people use to come take people to Zimbabwe and then eat them. So if you go to their country, they will eat you.

Ethnocentrism and stereotyping are manifested at their highest level that is manifested by this trader. She only imagines what the foreigners are, based on a stereotype that was handed over to her by her grandmother, without having any evidence for herself. This is reminiscent of what Blommaert (2006:2) says:

> Drawing on the local conditions and forms of knowledge, different kinds of stories about the product and the people who sell them are invented which lead to certain stereotypes and constructions that become barriers to intercultural communication (Blommaert 2006:2).

I have been hearing of such things like the 'muti'. I still doubt if it really exist and whether it really works. I have never tried it before. There is a Senegalese that I saw who brought in a Malian or someone from his country and they hide something under a tree. I think it is the belief that our forefathers had and which makes these people to succeed because they sell better than other traders selling the same stuff. (Trader from DRC.)

In most cases, stereotypes end up misleading people, thus becoming barriers to intercultural communication.

This explains why whenever a person hears the label 'Nigerian', he associates this with such stereotype, and will then misjudge that person. Like one respondent (trader from Kenya) rightly remarked, '… *not all Nigerians are crooks, but there are others who are not Nigerians that do all these things'*.
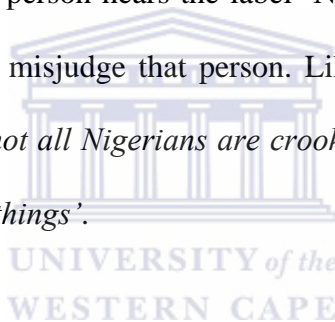
What was surprising about my data was the contrast between two interviews and all 5 questionnaires completed by South African traders. These traders were all positively disposed towards African foreigners. In the extract from an interview below, a white South African trader says that competence in ICC is the way forward, so people do not need to ascribe such negative stereotypes to others.

The first thing you have got to do is to find out their culture, how they interact with one another, see how they think, see how they share their values, and try to absorb their values within the shortest time possible. I would sacrifice sometimes to be with these people just to learn how they interact to know their habits, socio-

economic conditions, the standard of living in their countries, the way they go about living and conducting business…I believe that we must humble ourselves and become one big family. All what is happening is a high form of illiteracy. (White Trader from South Africa).

Although most South African traders feel threatened by foreigners, some of them still look at it as a challenge that can help them to move forward. This is because it renders them multilingual and multi-cultural as captured in the line *'... I would sacrifice sometimes to be with these people just to learn how they interact'*.

Examples from questionnaires included the following responses to question 3 (Appendix IV):

3. *Do you have any African friends*?

Ans 1: *No, I am meeting the other people from Africa, like the people from Congo and Senegal and they treat me nice.*

Ans 2: *These people from Africa are very hardworking and good people to be with because they are not selfish.*

Ans 3: *Yes, they invited me to their party and made me feel like one of them. They are so caring these people from Africa.*

Ans 4: *Yes, I will die for these people when they get attacked because they are not cheats but they earn an honest living which is a good example.*

Ans 5: *A lot of them in the market are my friends and very supportive and kind.*

South Africans refer to foreigners from Africa as '*people from Africa'* as if they themselves are not from Africa which gives the sense of otherness. However,

these respondents tell us that the foreigners *'treat me nice',* are *'... very supportive and kind',* and that *'they are caring these people from Africa'* etc. So we see some degree of positivity towards the foreigners even among black South Africans.

4.4.2 The social construction of South Africans by foreign Africans.

The evidence from both the questionnaires and the interviews revealed that South Africans are socially constructed as hostile, rude, racist and discriminatory by the foreign Africans. A major issue for these foreigners is how the South Africans use language to exclude and confuse them, as can be seen from this extract of an interview:

I. So they sound very difficult for you to understand?

R. I may say that if you do not learn for long time how they talk, you may never understand them. It is not only the accents and pronunciations, but they speak like in parables. You see, the problem is that when they speak, they make a lot of assumptions as if everyone is from their country.

I. What happens when they get cross in such situations? How do they speak when they get emotional?

R. *Oh, they become very arrogant and rude because they would find it difficult now to express themselves in English and would turn to their home languages, just they code*

switch immediately, they mix, they use in, they come in with some slang and words that I even don't understand, immoral and rude words they use on me and things like that. (Trader from Cameroon).

We note here the use of words like *'arrogant'*, *'rude'* (used twice) and *'immoral'*, and we also note the use of the generic *'they'* as if the speaker accuses all South Africans of the same kind of behavior. The trader comments specifically on how South Africans in the market switch to their own languages or informal varieties when they get involved in arguments owing to what the trader sees as their inability to speak English well. But in the next example we note that black South Africans use isiXhosa when addressing any other black person. This confirms the previous respondent's comment that *'they make a lot of assumptions as if everyone is from their country'*:
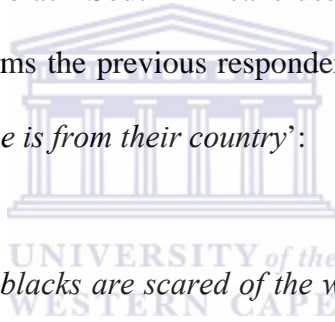
Given that most South African blacks are scared of the whites and or biased, Sometimes the lady selling for me (South African) *becomes rude, and may insult the customer if she does not understand the customer because her English is low. (Trader from Angola).*

The lady who is assisting me in my stall becomes rude and arrogant sometimes because she would find it difficult now to express herself in English, she will turn to her language immediately. She comes in with some slang and words that I don't even understand. It is common that most people believe that the whites speak perfect English.(Trader from Cameroon)

Interviewer: *what difficulties have you encountered in Cape Town?*

Respondent: *Discrimination, the South Africans discriminate against people who are not from here*

Interviewer: *can you please cite some instances where they have discriminated against you?*

Respondent: *They speak to you only in their language. If you have a problem and cannot use their language, they do not care about you. When they meet the tourists, they speak English but if it is a Blackman, they speak only Xhosa. They even call us 'makweri-kweri'.*

Verbal language is enhanced and completed by paralanguage and involves body language, facial expression, intonation, pronunciation, tone of voice, volume, etc. The foreign Africans were at times quite critical about the ways in which South Africans speak, as can be seen from the examples below:
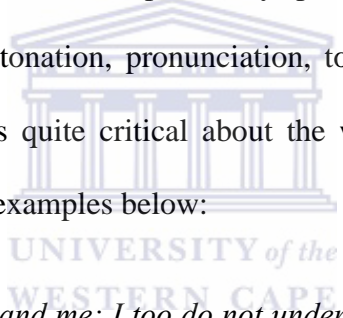
Sometimes they do not understand me; I too do not understand them, because of the way they speak. You will have problems of accent, then the rapidity in speech, I want to say that we say that they rap and nasalize; we don't understand each other and keep on saying sorry, sorry, sorry etc etc. When I look at my neighbours, it is a problem because they also have a language problem." (Trader from Cameroon).

"What you get from their pronunciation seems like they are meaning something else. They will call a [bæg] [bəg]. Also their accents are also a big problem. Most of the time, speaking with them is really fun because they are always trying to pass their communication, what they have in their minds and you are trying to understand. They use their hands even when they are speaking their own language and sometimes we guess

and we understand the right thing. Some time, they speak like it is not English because of accents and tones. (Trader from Zimbabwe).

The diverse nature of language varieties and the various accents of the different role-players in the market are therefore also contributing a lot to misunderstandings.

Owing to the hostile behavior of from the black South African traders in the market, the foreign Africans tend to mix only with one another, as can be seen in the following extract.

Question; *what is it that makes you feel different whenever you talk to people?*

Answer; *When I meet my brother from another country who can speak French, I speak French to him because it is better. I feel at home. These Xhosa people don't like us but they are black people like us. The people from Congo, Gabon, Mali and many West Africans are my brothers because we are treated the same and speak the same language. We cannot go to the 'location' because we will be murdered just because we are foreigners. (Trader from Senegal).*

Despite the solidarity that exists among the foreigners, we understand that they belong to different cultural groups but are only brought together by their shared experiences of suffering in South Africa. Although these different nationals speak different languages, their new environment has forced them now to come together through the use of one colonial language (French). What happens is that each individual wants to have a sense of belonging to a group. Their different repertoires have ended up giving them a new identity as members of this group of 'foreigners' in a hostile country.

In the extract quoted above, we note the stark difference between the ways in which the respondent portrays foreign Africans and Xhosa South Africans. The intimate term '*my brothers,*' is used to refer to foreign Africans from several countries, in whose company the respondent feels '*at home*'. Referring directly to Xhosa South Africans, he remarks that 'they are black people like us' but '*don't like us*'. The 'otherness' of the South Africans who are so unwelcoming as opposed to the foreigners who bond together and support each other, is further brought out in the geographic space '*location*' which is limited only to South Africans both physically and in terms of language use.

Just as South Africans were critical of the way in which foreigners addressed them as '*my brother*', foreigners also had difficulties with the ways in which South Africans expected to be addressed by them, as can be seen in the following extract:

*It was so surprising that an old woman who is fit to be my grandmother expects me to call her by her name, and not mama or auntie as we do in my country. The people here do not have any respect for the elders because this will be a taboo and such a person should be treated like an out cast. On the contrary, the people here call even their own parents by names. (*Trader from Cameroon.)

In some cultures as portrayed by this respondent, it is common to hear people address one another as brother, aunt, sister etc, even if the people are not related. This is a form of respect, common among Africans and Indians, and this speaker is clearly reluctant to address an older person by her name.

Migration has posed many problems around the world, one of the most prevalent being how to integrate foreigners into a host society (Vigouroux 2005, Lynn and Lea 2003). Cultural differences tend to be highlighted and provoke diverse responses from various segments of the population. The most extreme form of ethnocentrism, xenophobia, is very common in South Africa, leading to South Africans being socially constructed as innately xenophobic by foreign black Africans. This is what a Kenyan trader had to say about South Africans:

They do not look at us like human beings. If you tell them that this is what you do in your country, they will tell you that if your country was good as you say, you would not have come here. They do not respect elders and you cannot beat a child when that child does wrong. There are lots of things that we do different from them. Although we may be eating the same kind of food, it is prepared differently but they will behave as if it is something else.

This extract clearly portrays South Africans as cruel, racist, disrespectful and deeply suspicious of foreign Africans, even of the way they prepare food. The grimmest and saddest line is '*They do not look at us like human beings*', which shows just how xenophobic some South Africans have become. Predominantly, one could call the xenophobia in this space *Afro-phobia* because the animosity is not directed at all foreigners (blacks and whites) but at fellow Africans only by other Africans. As a trader in Greenmarket Square, I have observed a high degree of tension between foreign traders from other parts of Africa and South Africans blacks. Most black South Africans often

claim that the foreigners (Africans) cause poverty in South Africa as they are stealing their jobs. This friction clearly creates a barrier to effective intercultural communication, as the two groups are not willing to learn from, or tolerate each other.

I use to employ two ladies and one boy to help me, but now, I prefer to employ a foreigner because these Xhosa people do not want us. We give them jobs but they say that we are stealing their jobs and women. (Trader from Senegal.)

The rivalry between these two groups has clearly affected intercultural relationships at Greenmarket Square. The South Africans (most of whom had a good command of English) used to be employed as stall assistants to the foreign traders but nowadays they seemingly cannot coexist due to *afro-phobia* and ethnocentrism. Even the African tourists who come to the market are scared to interact with the South African traders because these traders are aggressive towards them. A typical example is captured in an extract from a Nigerian tourist who was asked by a black South African trader to speak a local language and not English because she is black: *'... why do you speak English but you are black...'*

A white South African trader has a different opinion altogether which explains why I refer to this as afro-phobia. He thinks that the South Africans have been failed by their government, and not by the foreigners. Their anger should be directed at their government instead. This is what he had to say in an interview:

Xenophobia is an instrument of anger. It's been created by virtue of a broken promise. And the worst thing that a man can do is to fail one another. So I do not see why

particular individuals should decide because of their frustration and anger that they have been denied access. I do not see why they should come down heavy on other individuals.

Participant observation also revealed that ethnocentrism and afro-phobia (xenophobia) are serious barriers to ICC at Greenmarket Square. The number of South African traders in the market appears to have declined since Vigouroux (1999) carried out her research where she observed that the Francophone traders and clients were discriminated against on the basis of their inability to speak either an indigenous language or English. This was the main reason why they employed English-speaking South African as stall assistants, a relationship that is almost non-existent at the moment.
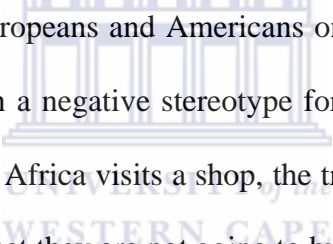
It was hard to find foreign Africans in this space with positive attitudes towards South Africans. Their experiences in this shared space had clearly created and hardened stereotypical views of all South Africans, particularly black South Africans. This was confirmed by all the African tourists that I interviewed or chatted with.

4.4.3 The social construction of tourists and clients by the traders

The traders have different social constructions of tourists from different parts of the world. They tend to believe that tourists from Europe, Australia and America are richer than those from the Middle East and Africa. This belief explains why a trader would

spend more time in discussion with an American tourist than with a Chinese who actually wants to buy something, as I observed on a number of occasions.

We hate the Chinese because we know that when you find the Chinese coming to your store, already there is negative impression, the attitude that this person cannot buy. Once you see the Chinese, Indians, those people from Asia, you should just know that he is not going to buy from you, and if he is buying, he will pay a very low price. When we find people from maybe Germany, Britain and America, we know they are happy and they will buy. (Trader from Cameroon).

A contrast is made between Europeans and Americans on the one hand, and Asians and Africans on the other, based on a negative stereotype formed by the traders. I observed that when a client from Asia or Africa visits a shop, the traders are usually not excited to see him because it is believed that they are not going to buy, or if they will, then it will be at a cheap price. I believe that this is just a stereotype as some of the Asians and Africans sometimes buy more goods than the Europeans and Americans.

This type of response was also elicited in Question 14 of the questionnaire to the traders;

14. *Who are your most preferred customers and why?*

Here are typical answers to this question:

Germans, British, Australians, America, and Europe because they do not bargain much and their language is not a problem, specifically for me.

Ans: Americans, they buy without bargaining

Ans: The most preferred customers are tourists from overseas because they buy my stuff at a good price. Most of the local tourists always like to bargain like the **Chinese and the Indians.**

These preferred customers are described as ones who *'do not bargain'*, unlike the Chinese and Indians, but simply accept the prices given by the traders. In addition, there is no language barrier owing to their use of English, the lingua franca of the market.

In contrast, Question 15 of the questionnaires:

15. *Who are least preferred customers and why?*
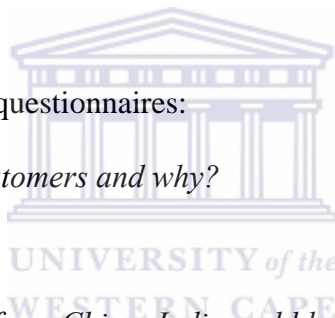
Ans1*: The least preferred are from China, India and black American. They seem to have no money and they bargain a lot.*

Ans2*: Indians and Chinese because they are cheap buyers.*

Ans3*: China and India because they bargain a lot and sometimes, they end up not buying.*

Ans4: *Chinese and Indians because most of them are still poor. Mostly they are underdeveloped.*

When traders use expressions like *'cheap buyers',' they bargain a lot',' they are still poor'*, they are constructing these nationals from non-Western countries in a particular

manner that portrays them as less worthy of their attention than the Western tourists. If this stigma is not done away with, traders will continue to lose sales based on these racist stereotypes and prejudice.

4.4.4   The social construction of the Traders by the Tourists

The data that was collected from the tourists revealed a social construction of the traders as people desperate to sell their goods. In addition, the traders were seen as discriminating against certain types of tourists. For example, a trader, who sees an American coming to his shop when he is already dealing with a local, Asian or African client, would prefer to abandon that customer and pursue the American with desperation, even if the American eventually leaves without buying anything. Some tourists also thought that the traders were very cunning when it came to bartering with them for the price of the goods, as can be seen in the following interview extract:

The prices of the items are a big problem. One could pay four times for the same item if he is not verse with their system. The attitude with which they approach someone also counts, as one might end up buying something that he does not want. We do not have this attitude in the USA (Tourist from USA).

Although this lady looks at the traders as people with good attitudes, she makes us to understand that the attitude here is not genuine as '*one could pay four times for the same item'.* The traders are then looked at as cheats or people who do not know what they are

doing. She does not think that their products have any value '*one might end up buying something that he does not want*'.

The tourists from Europe and America also appear to have certain stereotypes about the African traders, as was revealed by responses to Question 12 of the questionnaire:

12. What are the things that you would like to change if you had it your way?

Ans: *The English that the people speak and the way that they harass customers. They do not answer your questions as you would want them to, but instead, they want you to buy even if you do not know what.*

They tend to look at the traders as bad-mannered, especially '*the way that they harass the customers…*' .
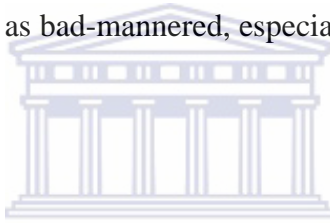
In another interview, a female tourist from the USA constructs the traders as very indirect and rather difficult to communicate with, but nevertheless having good attitudes:

I: *How do you find communication with the traders?*

R: *They do not give direct answers to questions.*

I: *So how did you get along with them?*

R: *Some of them could speak well, but even those who could not speak fluently had a good attitude. It is this attitude that makes people to buy and not what they say. You really need to be very patient before you can get along with them in communication.*

The facial expressions, smiles and other non-verbal aspects helped this lady to understand that these traders have good attitudes. Most of the traders believe that all the tourists

speak better English than them. So whenever a tourist comes into their shops, they are already so anxious that they tend to make too many mistakes during a communicative event.

As regards data emerging from the questionnaires, 13 out of 16 (80%) tourists agreed that the verbal communication and paralanguage of the traders created communication problems. These examples came from the questionnaires:

4. How do you find the local people that you interact with?

Ans: Rude and aggressive in their signs.

5. Do you find any difficulties communicating with the local people?

Ans: From the beginning, I found it difficult, but after a few days, I can say that I am gradually getting use to it.

6. Can you identify any instances of these difficulties?

Ans: Their accents and pronunciations are not same as standard British English

7. Is there anything to say about how the local people communicate?

Ans 1: Usually when the local people communicate, they usually use body language with each other especially if the interaction is across different races (Tourist from Germany).

Ans 2: *They need to repeat several times before you can understand a bit of what they are saying* (Tourist from China).

Accents, facial expressions and the other forms of paralinguistic features that accompany speech are different for every language and can lead to miscommunication. This is because the interpretation of paralinguistic features is based on the context.

As an observer, I noticed that there was another type communication breakdown between the traders and the tourists in Greenmarket Square which occurred because the traders were often too anxious and uncertain about what to expect during a conversation with a client. Barna (1977:337-343) says that anxiety occurs when one does not know what to expect and tends to focus on the feelings that one is going through more than the actual communication transaction. You might find a trader panicking when he addresses his client, as behaviors and attitudes are determined by anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1988: 43). Thus when traders in the market allow anxiety and uncertainty to take control over their attitude and emotions, it becomes barriers to effective intercultural communication.

While tourists from the West generally regarded the local and foreign traders as very polite, welcoming and accommodating because of the way these traders treated them as preferential clients, tourists from other parts of the world were far more negative about the local South African traders, as can be seen from the following responses to the questionnaire:

4. How do you find the local people that you interact with?

Ans 1: They are rude and aggressive. (Chinese)

Ans 2: Wow! Xenophobia, I think it's sad to me. We are supposed to live like brothers but they will tell you 'go to your country'. I think there is a third force in this thing. (Tourist from Nigeria).

5. Do you find any difficulties communicating with these local people?

Ans: Yes, because they laugh at you when you talk. (Tourist from China)

6. Can you identify any instances of such difficulties?

Ans: They try to repeat what you say, accents and pronunciation as if they can speak better English. Their accents are bad. (Tourist from China).

Thus these tourists appear to share some of the social constructions of South Africans that are held by foreign Africans. That is to say, that they are rude, xenophobic and communicate poorly in English. Race is seen as an issue here, with South Africans tending to be far more deferential to white Europeans and Americans than people from other parts of the world.

4.5 Other socially-constructed barriers to intercultural communication in Greenmarket Square

While the social construction of the 'other', together with the particular space of Greenmarket Square, create the most powerful barriers to intercultural communication in this study, two other individual socially-constructed barriers also emerged from my

analysis of the ethnography of communicative events in this space. The two additional barriers are nonverbal communication and contrasts between the ways people from high context cultures (HCC) and low context cultures (LCC) communicate.

As I mentioned in chapter 3.2.1, I used Saville-Troike's (1989) ethnography of communicative events to analyze these two barriers taking account of aspects like scene and key – i.e. where the interaction took place around Greenmarket Square, observed rules of interaction as well as where these rules were broken. I also considered the effects, on the participants of effective intercultural communication as well as effects of offensive intercultural conduct.
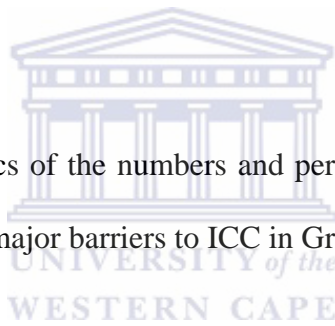
The table below shows statistics of the numbers and percentages of the informants who identified these two factors as major barriers to ICC in Greenmarket Square.

Table 1

	Nonverbal communication	HCC/LCC
No. & % of Traders in interviews	90% 9 out of 10	80% 8 out of 10
No & % of traders in questionnaires	96% 26 out of 27	77% 21 out of 27
No. & % of tourists in interviews	70% 7 out of 10	60 % 6 out of 10
No. & % of tourists in questionnaires	81% 13 out of 16	81% 13 out of 16

4.5 Nonverbal communication

Someone could be fluent in a language but not versed with the rules, beliefs and the norms of that culture. Thus '…speaking a language alone does not qualify someone as a member of that culture as competence in that language does not entail competence in intercultural communication' (Blommaert *et al.* 2005:199). Instead, 'culture influences the specific strategies and styles of processing information in any given language' (Lachman *et al.* 1995:68-79). This applies not only to language, but also to non-verbal communication, which, according to a majority of my respondents, as can be seen in the statistics in the table above, was a major barrier to ICC. The nonverbal form of communication either emphasizes or contradicts what is being said and reveals the speaker's mood and emotions since different cultures interpret non-verbal codes differently (Jandt 2004).

According to the table, 90% (9) of the 10 traders that were interviewed together with 70% (7) of the tourists that were interviewed identified this as a barrier to ICC. It was also identified by 96% (26) of the 27 traders in the returned questionnaires, and 81% (13) of the 16 tourists in the returned questionnaires. Below are extracts from two of the interviews:

Interviewer: *What do you do when you cannot speak someone's language*?

Respondent: *So when there's difficulty communicating someone's language, you use any means to try to get someone to understand what you are saying. Sometimes you use the hands, sometimes you just use one word and sometimes the hand means something else. Like the Chinese people. I did that once with three Chinese, but what they told me was; I was rude and then someone else told me that what I said means to wipe dirt by that sign.* (Congolese Trader.)

This example confirms what Jandt (2004) argues: that when one assumes similarities instead of differences, one could be caught unawares. In other words, one does not have to assume that all other cultures interpret gestures in the same way that one does in one's culture. Therefore we need to be very careful when we use nonverbal codes because they could be interpreted differently by different people and when this occurs, there is miscommunication.

Interviewer: *Did you interact with people who could not speak the same language like you?*

Respondent: *Yes, some people could not speak good English. The most common way of communication was through signs, which sometimes did not mean anything to me or they did not understand me. There are times when you try to tell someone that this item cost something like two hundred in the other shops, you show him two with the fingers and this person can think that you are telling him two hundred and he gonna go.(*Kenyan Trader).

Nonverbal codes here are seen as context based. In other words they are interpreted differently by different cultures, '*the most common way of communication was through signs, which sometimes did not mean anything…*' and so might not prove good enough to solve the problem of two people who do not speak the same language.

Supporting evidences also came from the responses to the following questions of the returned questionnaires from the traders:

11. *Do you understand each other well during communication? Why?*

Ans: *We communicate well with the young ones because they understand English, but it was a bit hard to communicate with the old ones who could speak only in their languages, so we are forced to use gestures but which do not always solve the problem.*

The younger generation is seen as the globalized generation who live in the cities, and who are more competent in ICC than the older generation.

12. *What might be the difficulties involved?*

Ans: *Sometimes, they don't like foreigners and might speak only in their language and that might create a serious problem as you may not be able to understand their gestures. Even the signs that they use are not the same in my country.*

16. *What happens when you do not understand the language of a customer?*

Ans: *Some times you might look at someone to translate, but if it is not possible to see someone, you try to use signs but which they are still not able to understand. It is very difficult to know what to do then.*

There is no universality in the interpretation of gestures and signs because they are culturally based, which explains why signs are not an ideal way to solve miscommunication**.** In most cases, nonverbal communication contradicts what the speaker actually says, depending on the competence of the listener. The worst thing is that unlike verbal communication where one could have a chance to repeat what he said, nonverbal communication is interpreted at its face value and nothing can be done by the speaker to reverse it. Thus miscommunication through nonverbal communication is very difficult to avert among people from different cultural backgrounds like the people in Greenmarket Square.
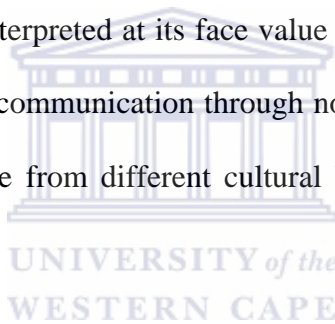
4.5 High and Low Context Cultures (HCC/LCC)

Another major barrier emerging from the data collected in Greenmarket Square occurs when people from High Context Cultures (HCC) have to interact with people from Low Context Cultures (LCC) (Katan, 2004). An outsider to HCC has to take into consideration the setting, the people, and the rules for interaction (message form and context) in order to make sense of the communicative event (Saville-Troike, 1989:172).

The table above shows that a majority of respondents regarded this as a major barrier with 80% of the traders and 60% of the tourists in the interviews, together with 77% of the traders and 81% of the tourists in the returned questionnaires. Here are some examples from the interviews and returned questionnaires:

12. *What are the difficulties involved in Communication?*

Response: *South Africans think we understand their gestures. But it often means something different to us or is completely meaningless. They always talk and leave some gaps for you to fill which is difficult sometimes* (trader from Angola).

This contrast brings in the complex nature of context in a communicative event. South Africa seems to belong to a HCC culture unlike this informant from Angola. The context is further complicated by the diverse nature of interpretation of signs and gestures.

I. So they sound very difficult for you to understand?

R. I may say that if you do not learn for long time how they talk, you may never understand them. It is not only the accents and pronunciations, but they speak like in parables. You see, the problem is that when they speak, they make a lot of assumptions as if everyone is from their country. (Trader from Cameroon)

Due to the fact that this trader does not understand context of the message, she thinks that South Africans '*speak in parables*'.

12. *What are the things that you would like to change if you had it your way?*

Ans: *The English that the people speak and the way that they harass customers. They do not answer your questions as you would want them to, but instead, they want you to buy even if you do not know what they are selling (Tourist from USA).*

The miscommunication that occurs between this American tourist and the traders is a direct result of her belonging to a LCC, and needing matters to be expressed very clearly: '*they will not answer your questions as you would want them to…*'. Here is another example:

I: *So how did you get along with them?*

R: *Some of them could speak well, but even those who could not speak fluently had a good attitude. It is this attitude that makes people to buy and not what they say. You really need to be very patient before you can get along with them in communication (Tourist from Germany) .*

Another tourist from Germany shares this view in a returned questionnaire:

5. *Do you find difficulties communicating with the local people?*

Response: *Even the many gestures that they use, I do not understand as they do not talk explicitly. The traders do not explain well what they say and all they want from you is to buy. They will never answer your question straight.*

This German from a LCC does not understand the traders because his culture requires everything to be explained explicitly, without leaving any gaps. I also observed that most

of the traders prefer the Germans and British tourists because they are from low context cultures. In LCC everything is expressed clearly and directly in words, unlike in HCC (e.g. the cultures of the Chinese, Japanese and South Africans) where the context plays an important role, and where it is taken for granted that people understand a lot already. In my opinion (supported by the qualitative data for this study), it appears that South Africa is a typical example of an HCC country. This is because during a communicative event with most South Africans, they always leave some gaps to be filled in by the listener and if you are not a member (outsider), you will always be confused during a conversation with some South Africans.

4.5 Conclusions

The main findings showed that there could not be a better place than Greenmarket Square for this study, because of the rich cultural diversity of the traders and their clients. Greenmarket Square as a space within a particular city (Cape Town) within a particular country (South Africa) clearly influenced patterns of intercultural communication between traders and tourists from different countries. Particularly disadvantaged in this space are the traders from Africa – disadvantaged by legal barriers, ethnicity, language, culture and the organization of the space.

Secondly, the social construction of the various role-players by one another creates seemingly impermeable barriers to ICC. As the data shows, how we talk about people, the kinds of words we use, indicate our views of their status within the context in which

we operate. The expression of values and attitudes is complicated by context and since different contexts enable the articulation of different sets of values and attitudes and the suppression of others (Lynn and Lea, 2003). There is a great deal of animosity, xenophobia and stereotype in these social constructions, with very few role-players indicating positive social constructions of the others. Overcoming these negative social constructions may require the active participation of all role-players, but these constructions are also influenced by socio-historical and political factors which the population of Greenmarket Square may not be able to influence.

In addition, apart from these major socio-spatial barriers, the ethnography of communicative events also showed that nonverbal communication, as well as problems arising between people from HCC and LCC, was responsible for breakdowns in intercultural communication. Awareness of the problems posed by these two barriers might help to improve ICC among both the traders and their clients in Greenmarket Square. A summary of the main findings and some recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Leedy (1993:99) says that the final part of any study ends with the researcher asking himself the question '*what does it all mean*?' That is to say, the researcher has to interpret all the findings in such a way that it can be understood by all. The study has to make connections with real life situations so that its findings can be applicable to the ordinary man in the streets. This chapter presents a summary of the main findings, the conclusions to be drawn from these findings, and a number of recommendations which might improve ICC at Greenmarket Square.

5.2 The main findings

The analysis of the data that was collected through a triangulation of interviews, questionnaires and participant observation (naturally occurring events), showed that the space of Greenmarket Square and the social construction of 'the other' in this space had a profound effect on intercultural communication between the various participants. In addition, nonverbal communication and membership of either High Context Cultures or Low Context Cultures also created barriers to ICC in this space. Some of these barriers are caused by historical and socio-political factors that are seemingly impossible for the role-players to overcome. Nevertheless, there are also individuals in this space who seem to have a high degree of intercultural competence which allows them to break through

many barriers, and perhaps by studying their behaviors one could make a number of recommendations on how to improve ICC so that Greenmarket Square could become a much more welcoming space to both traders and their clients. Cape Town as a city could also benefit from such a cosmopolitan space that could give the city a much more international identity – one in which people from different cultures can still interact peacefully and to the benefit of all.

5.2.1 A summary of the main barriers to ICC at Greenmarket Square and some conclusions to be drawn from these

As Blommaert *et al.* (2005:198) argue, space can incapacitate people when they move into new environments where their normal linguistic communicative processes and resources may no longer meet their needs. Connecting with others of similar cultures and languages provide a safe space for people in a new environment, which explains why so many of the foreign African traders stick together. But this very behavior alienates them further from the often hostile South African traders, and makes ICC more difficult.

I can only conclude that this particular barrier that will take a long time to eradicate. For many years, South Africa was virtually cut off from Africa and the rest of the world owing to its *apartheid* policies. But becoming part of a globalized world in the late-modern age may very well lead to the country and spaces like Cape Town and Greenmarket Square in particular gaining a much stronger international, more cosmopolitan identity.

It is also clear that the social construction by the various role-players of each group in this space is heavily influenced by stereotypes. Foreign Africans are seen as users of *muti*, cannibalistic, '*behaving like white people*' or, in the case of Nigerians, inherently criminal. They are accused of trying to take work away from South Africans and of stealing their women. The foreign Africans regard South African blacks as discriminatory, rude, racist and hostile, with the major issue being the use of language to confuse and exclude them. This factor has forced foreign Africans to mix only among themselves and also explains why it is difficult to find an African trader or an African tourist with a positive attitude towards black South Africans. Their experiences in this shared space have created a stereotypical view of exclusion (afro-phobia and ethnocentrism).
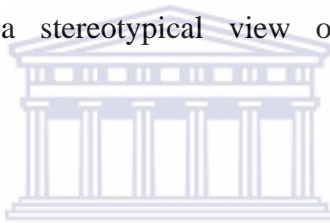
In addition, the traders have different constructions about tourists from different parts of the world. They prefer tourists from the West because they perceive them as wealthier as and less likely to bargain for a better price than tourists from Africa and the East. These social constructions invariably lead to better treatment for Western clients than for others, with some traders even breaking off a discussion with a potential client from the East or Africa to attend to a client from Europe or the USA. In turn, the tourists portray the traders as people who are desperate to sell their goods, but who also discriminate against certain clients. The traders are also seen as cunning, lacking in communicative skills and inclined to harass the tourists.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this social construction of the 'other' is that stereotypes can only be overcome by seeing each other's common humanity, and by people behaving in a dignified manner and treating others with common courtesy. Only when South Africans stop feeling threatened by the presence of foreign Africans, will they stop stereotyping these people. The media also has a role to play. The rest of Africa is often portrayed in extremely negative ways, without any of its positive sides being captured in the media, and this also creates negative perceptions about African people. In turn, those who come into South Africa must at least make an attempt to understand the socio-historical factors that created the ways in which South Africans behave when confronted by 'outsiders'. They should also do their best to win the respect of South Africans, and do nothing to damage the reputations of their countries and cultures.
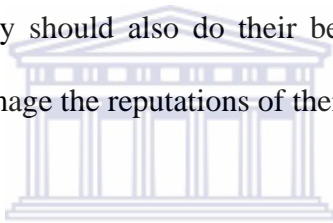
Two other factors, that could perhaps be addressed more readily, were also acknowledged as major barriers to ICC at Greenmarket Square - nonverbal communication, and interactions between HCC/LCC people. When people do not share the same verbal language, they resort to its nonverbal counterpart, where the use of gestures is a common way of communication. Even when people share the same verbal language, they sometimes resort to nonverbal communication unconsciously because it reveals the speaker's mood and emotions which makes it more advantageous than verbal communication. This type of communication is context based and is interpreted differently by different cultures. Communication between members of high and low context cultures (LCC/LCC) also showed up as a major barrier to ICC as the different contexts of the informants impede communication. Usually, communication does not go

as expected because communication is context based and these different interactants are from different cultural backgrounds. The sharp contrast between the complex nature of context in a communicative event accounts for miscommunication.

My conclusion here is that greater intercultural awareness among the different role-players can help to minimize this type of misunderstanding, but people may require some form of intervention in order for them to be sensitized to these issues.

5.3 Recommendations

Much can be done by the management of Greenmarket Square as well as the City of Cape Town to improve its organization and the interaction between those working in or visiting the square. The Square could also be made much more attractive and welcoming, and tour buses should make it a regular stop on their routes. Making the multicultural and multinational nature of the Square a selling point will not only attract tourists, but will also help to increase jobs and lessen the negative stereotypes surrounding many of the role-players.

However, the concern of this thesis is how barriers to intercultural communication in this space can be overcome. Since we are living in a globalized world, I think that it is important to give the traders a form of training on how to deal with their customers because they are bound to meet people from different cultural backgrounds on a daily basis. It would be essential that at a personal level, the role-players can at least attempt to

learn even a few expressions from languages of the others that they interact with in this space. It is not only linguists or educated people who can do this, but every human being. As a first step, it is vital for everyone to cultivate what Canagarajah (2007:233-239) calls 'pragmatic strategies' that can be used to communicate with speakers of other languages and cultures:

1. Speech accommodation (Giles, 1984): This involves adapting one's speech in a face-to-face interaction to accommodate one's interlocutor, i.e. speaking slower, clearer, louder, using different varieties, etc. so that the event could become mutually intelligible.

2. Interpersonal Strategies: Gumperz (1992) & Seidlhofer (2004) argue that for one to be able to get through to others, certain interpersonal strategies might be effective, for example a) repair - using expressions like 'oh sorry' and falling silent when talking simultaneously in a conversation, thereby allowing the other speaker to continue talking uninterrupted; b) rephrasing by explaining something in simpler language to make it clearer to a listener; c) clarifying by either asking for or giving clarification, e.g. '*what do you mean by that*?'; d) gestures; using hand-movement to clarify, emphasize, mime, etc. (but always being aware of gestures being interpreted differently by different cultures); e) being consensus-oriented by trying to reach agreement on issues to lead the conversation to a satisfactory conclusion; and f) being mutually supportive by showing through your face, eyes, body language, tone of voice, volume etc. that you are open to what the other person is saying.

3. Attitudinal resources: By attitudinal resources Higgins (2003) means behaviors like listening patiently while the other person is trying to make a point and showing tolerance to accents, languages and varieties not usually known to you (not simply freezing up and walking away); and using humidity to negotiate differences, i.e. accepting that while you find it difficult to follow the other person, s/he is also finding it hard to cope with your particular way of speaking.

The spirit of 'Ubuntu' (humanness and considerateness) needs to be cultivated by the traders of Greenmarket Square for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence. Everyone is therefore expected to acknowledge, respect, tolerate and accept other cultural values of one another. Dlomo (2003) quotes the well-known Xhosa idiom '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'* which means '*a person is only a person through his interactions with others.'* This can only be achieved through competence in ICC where one needs to be tolerant and above all patient in order to understand and be understood. The spirit of 'Ubuntu' requires every individual to be hospitable, compassionate, fair, and have sound morals towards the others that he interacts with, hence, to live in brotherhood by socializing with the community, fostering brotherhood and above all playing the brother/sister/father/mother relationship towards each other in the community.

Ribbens (1994:94) suggests that "organizations need to develop suitable intercultural awareness courses for their employees." Since this study took place in the Greenmarket Square, an informal trading area, it would be necessary for the City council of Cape Town to arrange a form of training in consultation with the traders, who will have to

make them available for such trainings. "The staff development department needs to work hand in hand with the skills development facilitators to design a course" (Ribbens, 1994:95) in order to help the informal traders cope with the challenges being posed by intercultural communication. Simulations of real life situations should be used to enable the traders to get full benefits of these awareness programs without putting in too much effort because they do not have time in their favour as they trade seven days a week.

At the moment, efforts are being made by some traders at personal levels to learn the cultures and languages of one another, but these efforts are not far-reaching enough. If a course of awareness could be organized, it would go a long way to improve the level of competence in ICC on the part of the traders, and as such, would improve competence towards their clients as well. The involvement of the administrative and the support service sectors into this program will also be of advantage to the traders. It could also be taken further by developing intermediate and advanced ICC skills in English which is the *lingua franca* of the market.

Du Preez (1987:8-15) suggests that each business or organization needs interpreters when there are gatherings of its employees. The traders therefore need to learn conversational strategies that are being used by the various social and cultural groups in the multilingual community of Greenmarket Square. This ties in with the suggestion of one of the respondents in the interviews who says that it is necessary for the traders to learn the different forms of greetings of their customers, which could become an ice breaker each

time that they meet a client from any particular cultural background. If this is achieved, it would be easier to interact with the different clients.

Godsell's (1983) cultural synergy model as cited in Reagan (1986) could be used to overcome barriers to ICC. The model is based on the assumption that culture-specific ways of conducting business and communication need to be valued and recognized. In other words, we do not necessarily need to adopt only western ways and methods but should also take into other languages and cultural practices into consideration. As Du Preez (1987) states, successful communication is as a result of knowing what the other person stands for together with his true values and beliefs.
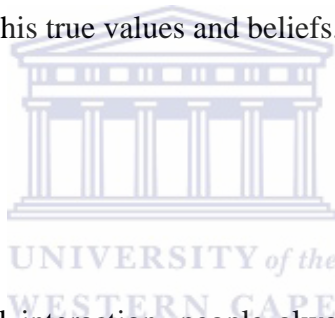
5.4 Conclusion

When it comes to intercultural interaction, people always tend to blame others in the event of a breakdown, instead of trying to identify what they are doing wrong. This study has highlighted the influence of cultures on the perception of 'our world', and the people who live in it. We seem to expect people to do things just 'our way', but when this does not happen, we instead tend to ask the others to change, whereas we should be changing our ideologies, behaviors and attitudes for the benefit of everyone. It is of utmost importance for the traders of Greenmarket Square to develop effective interpersonal and interaction skills in order to reduce barriers to ICC. It is therefore advisable that all the traders undergo a course where they can learn the necessary skills for interpersonal interactions in a multi-racial and multi-cultural space like Greenmarket Square.

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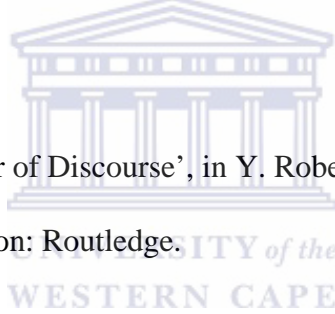
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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Interview questions for the traders and sample answer:

1. Where are you from?

2. And how long have you been an informal trader?

3. Do you have foreign (South African) friends?

4. Can you shed more lights on the way that people greet in your country?

5. Can you please also help to brief me on how other communities greet?

6. Are these forms of greetings same or different from the way that you greet in your community?

7. When you greet these people, do you connect well with them?

8. Did you ever attend any cultural event that was organized by the foreigners (South Africans)?

9. Was it similar to the cultural events in your culture?

10. How did you interact with the people who were present here?

11. Were they friendly?

12. Did you learn anything new from them?

13. Did you ever invite to the cultural event of your own country?

14. What was their attitude and behavior?

15. What was it that was not clear during this event?

16. Is it easy to communicate with these foreigners (South Africans)?

17. If yes, why do you think so?

18. Could you please give some instances of prejudice and stereotypes in the market?

19. What do you really think about them?

20. Comment on ethnocentrism and xenophobia without limiting your scope.

21. What is your opinion?

22. How can it be eradicated?

23. What do you have to say about the effects of globalization on Greenmarket Square in particular and South Africa in general?

24. Can you make a comment on the use of gestures and facial expressions?

25. Do you realize that all the people you meet in the market are using the same signs?

26. And with same meaning?

27. What do you think that the traders need to do to better their conditions in communication with the foreigners and tourists?

28. Do you think that they need a form of training?

29. Do you think that the traders need a form of training so that they could improve on their skills on intercultural communication?

Sample answer from a South African stall assistant:

Interviewer: Where are you from?

Respondent: From P.E

Interviewer: And how long have you been an informal trader?

Respondent: 6 years

Interviewer: Do you have foreign (South African) friends?

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Can you shed more lights on the way that people greet in your country?

Respondent: Uhh! They are very friendly.

Interviewer: Can you please also help to brief me on how other communities greet?

Respondent: When foreigners greet, it is like a fight.

Interviewer: Are these forms of greetings same or different from the way that you greet in your community?

Respondent: No they are not the same as our own. You need to see for yourself then you will believe me. They only use their French and I do not know what they are saying or why they take so long.

Interviewer: When you greet these other people, do you connect well with them?

Respondent: it is difficult because they like only their language and are too proud. They think that they are the bosses but they are in the market. They think they are the white people.

Interviewer: Did you ever attend any cultural event that was organized by the foreigners (South Africans)?

Respondent: No, not ever.

Interviewer: Was it similar to the cultural events in your culture?

I do not want to attend because I hear their food is not good and that they eat human flesh. My granny told me how these people use to come take people to Zimbabwe and then eat them. So if you go to their country, they will eat you.

Interviewer: How did you interact with the people who were present here?

Respondents: they think that they are big bosses and that their French is better than Xhosa and English.

Interviewer: Were they friendly?

Respondent: these people are not good and they treat us as slaves. All they want to know if you made them money. They don't care about you and they pay small.

Interviewer: Did you learn anything new from them?

Respondent: They new thing that I learnt is that the foreigners think that they are the white people or the tourists when you work for them. They make a lot of money from tourist but pay you peanuts. You see, they stay in expensive houses in Sea point because they think that they are big bosses.

Interviewer: Did you ever invite to the cultural event of your own country?

Respondent: No, they will not come to the location.

Interviewer: What was their attitude and behavior?

Respondent: The foreigners are very rude.

Interviewer: What was it that was not clear during this event?

Respondent: Nothing is clear.

Interviewer: Is it easy to communicate with these foreigners (South Africans)?

Respondent: It is not easy because they only like to talk French.

Interviewer: If yes, why do you think so?

They do not want to speak Xhosa although they are black.

Interviewer: Could you please give some instances of prejudice and stereotypes in the market?

Respondent: They say that we do not like them and they use a lot of muti so that the tourists can buy from them. If you take money from my boss, he will know because of muti. They always go to mosque.

Interviewer: What do you really think about them?

Respondent: I think they come here just because they want to take our money to their country. They think they are like white people.

Interviewer: Comment on ethnocentrism and xenophobia without limiting your scope.

Respondent: The foreigners when they come here, they take our jobs and money to their country. When they come here, they are very poor and then after a short time, they go to rent expensive house in Sea Point. They buy new cars and send a lot of money to their families. This is the reason why we do not want them. The foreigners pay you little money if you work for them. They only buy expensive things for their girlfriends but

cannot give money to sent to their families in Transkei. We work for them and they take the money. They are very lazy but will tell you to sell the whole forking day. They need to go back to their countries.

Interviewer: What is your opinion?

Respondent: For me I think they should go back to their country and stop staeling our money and jobs. They are racists like the 'mabeor'.

Interviewer: How can it be eradicated?

Respondent: Only to chase away the foreigners and then we can take over their businesses and jobs and money. They must go back to their countries.

Interviewer: What do you have to say about the effects of globalization on Greenmarket Square in particular and South Africa in general?

Respondent: Too many foreigners come here but the government is not doing anything so we need to chase them or they will take everything away.

Interviewer: Can you make a comment on the use of gestures and facial expressions?

Respondent: It is difficult to communicate with foreigners or tourists because they use a lot of rude signs. They are very rude with signs and sounds.

Interviewer: Do you realize that all the people you meet in the market are using the same signs?

Respondent: The foreigners and the tourists are the same. They use swearing and rude signs because they think that they are better.

 Interviewer: And with same meaning?

Respondent: No, they treat us like animals

Interviewer: What do you think that the traders need to do to better their conditions in communication with the foreigners and tourists?

Respondent: All the foreigners need to learn Xhosa before they come to Cape Town and not only their stupid French because we do not speak that language for the foreigners.

Interviewer: Do you think that they need a form of training?

Respondent: They must learn to speak our language and stop to use rude signs.

Interviewer: Do you think that the traders need a form of training so that they could improve   on their skills on intercultural communication?

Respondent: No, no training because we only go to sell and not to school.

Appendix II

Sample interview from an African trader

Interviewer: Where do you come from?

Respondent: I come from Cameroon.

I. That sounds impressive. Ah, but why did you chose Cape Town out of all the towns that you viewed and passed?

R. Yha, I decided to come to Cape Town because I have been hearing of tourists sites here and things like waterfront, Mandela's Ruben Island. I decided that I wanted to come and see this place.
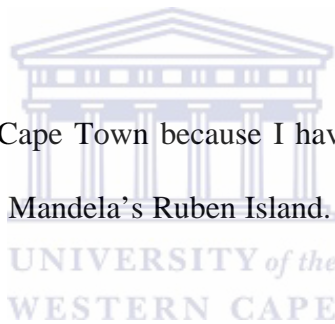
I. So after seeing these places, why did you not leave?

R. Because I was so interested in the business here, and I also realized that it being a tourist centre, I could make Business and lots of profit and money.

I. How do find the people that you interact with here?

R. Well, so far, what I can tell you about the people is that there is an attitude problem, a lot of attitude problem, yes, most of them are friendly no doubt, but a host of them are, I am sorry to say that they are hostile, and some of them are not that friendly, you know, they look at er, strangers, the foreigners here as some sort of a take away, they are

coming to take away their resources, their riches, and everything, so they are not very happy with us, eh so the friendliness is not really the key.

I. What do their forms of greetings look like, when compared to yours?

R. Well, somehow, they greet like us but I know commonly that the greetings here are just "hello, hi" etc you know, which totally different from what happens in my place. In Cameroon, we greet people like that but only if you do not know the person at all, but which is not common. We greet people like "good morning, afternoon, evening" and then the follow-ups which are not done here. We are formal when we greet, but these people are very casual in greetings.
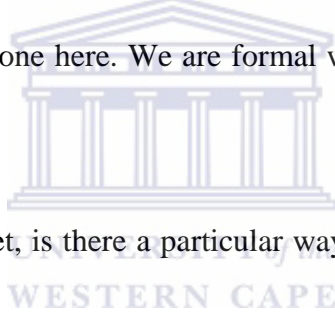
I. So say when you people meet, is there a particular way that you follow to engage in a conversation interaction?

R. Yes, of course, back home, there is always this idea of hierarchy and protocol that needs to be respected. When you come to a gathering, you start greeting from the highest to the lowest. If you are not an important member, you just have to give a general greeting.

I. So you have found out that South Africans greet different from you?

R. Well, not that different because I have not got the opportunity to attend many of their social occasions, but so far I have realized that somehow they do not follow order, there

is a lot of disorder here and things like that, people just want to do things the way they want to, maybe because they think that it is their rights, I do not know.

I. Did you attend any cultural event here?

R. In South Africa?

I. Yes.

R. O.K, so it was unfortunate because I would have actually see what it looks like.

I. Did you ever invite any South African to your cultural events here?

R. Ya, they have been coming to us and uh! I had an occasion in my house, where a good number of them attended, and they really enjoyed themselves, because they danced more than we did some of them were even relaxed to leave the house. They ate and ate and ate and they enjoyed our food, uhm, er, to be honest with you some of them were even asking for the recipe. They also said that they would like to learn our kind of music and some of the girls said that they would love to get married to a Cameroonian so that they could learn the kind of things that we have.

I. So are saying that your menu is different from theirs?

R. Yes of course, we eat African food like the 'bitter leaf', but sometimes, it all depends on the way that we prepare it, eg, we cook rice but the way the South Africans will prepare it is different. We have meals like plantains that they don't have here. We have

got a host of things that they do not have here. There are lots of foodstuffs from West Africa that are not found here.

I. What do you have to say about the attire and the physical appearance? Are they the same as in your country?

R. That sounds quite interesting because I will really want to say it is a big issue here because sometimes when you just see somebody you can, I for one, when I see somebody, I can try to imagine that this person is from this particular country, and let me tell you an interesting story that I think is just too difficult, I was with one Cameroon mama who just came here new and to whom I introduced a Cameroonian sister who has been here for long. When this girl left, the Mama came to me and said "are you sure that she is a Cameroonian"? I said a but she said "no, the way she dresses like that she is like a South African and it sounded funny to me . And why did she make that comment?, because the girl was wearing a tight fitted trousers with all her contours exposed, you know, under clothes thick-lined around her. That's how they dress here, if you go back home you see the way we dress, maybe you put on your trousers, that is true maybe most interesting nobody should see another part of your body. Sometimes when I am in the market, somebody sees me because I am in my African dress; the first question he would ask is "are you from Congo?", if I should say no, "are you from Nigeria?", then they will continue to guess the country that use that attire.

I. O.K, let's switch a little from attire now to the tourists. How is it like communicating with them?

R. I want to say it is fine but, not all of them are easy to communicate with. I bet you that it is a problem as some of them cannot even speak English and in situations like that they speak English that does not go and then the reaction and other things, but when you have other people maybe from Britain, America, Australia they speak fluently.

I. Do you not think that some people from Britain or America could speak English that you will not understand?

R. That is very true because sometimes they do not understand me and I do not understand them.

I. Why?

R. Because the way they speak, you will have problem of accents, and maybe the rapidity in their speech, they 'rap', and so we do not understand each other and sometimes you have to say 'sorry', 'excuse me' and things like that, I beg your pardon'. You are looking for all possible means to communicate with them, I still think that I am better than most of the traders who are learning their English for the first time in the market.

I. That is very impressive, but I will like also to hear what you have to say about gestures, signs the use of calculators. How do you overcome these problems?

R. When you talk of signs, sometimes you are inviting someone to come by using my hands, they do not seem to understand what I am saying, I don't know what she wants but I have to run after that person to tell him to come, then I am taking him by his hand back to my stall and then I use either a calculator or my phone to write down the price, then I

show the object, then I give him the phone or calculator to write what he wants to pay, and that is how to communicate with people who do not talk your language.

I. It looks like a quite interesting exercise?

R. It is but you need to be patient.

I. Why do you think that there are all these problems?

R. I want to think that there are all these problems of communication because the people come from different cultural backgrounds.

I. Do you people in the Market have any beliefs about other traders or tourists?

R. I am sure that you are aware of all these things like a trader in the market. I know that even you John have been experiencing the same things like us. You know that the Chinese do not want to buy, as they do not want to pay good money, so when the Chinese is coming to my stall, I already have a negative attitude that they will not buy well. But sometimes, they can surprise you. That is why we traders are not friendly to the Chinese, Indians, Japanese and all those people with the faces that we just call Chinese. When a British or American is coming to your shop, you are positive that you will make some money. Even when they do not buy, we still respect them more than the Chinese.

I. How can you account for the fact that there are more foreigners in the market than South Africans?

R. Because they are lazy and xenophobic.

I. If I should look around, I can see that most of the assistants are South Africans, how can you say that they are lazy?

R. They do not use initiative nor do they want to learn. This is so because they are jealous of the foreigners.

R. They are full of xenophobia. This is what is happening, you see, I have helped to employ them, I pay them and even tip them whenever we make a good sale. But as you know, it is funny because they do not want to learn. There is a lady whom I met in the market working for a foreigner, who would not think of making an effort to own her own business. They only look at what the foreigners earn but think that this is stealing from them. It is an initiative that they could also learn and prosper in, but they do not want to make the attempt. I wish they could leave their bad thoughts and do something constructive than waiting on their government to build them houses. I will like to tell them that they should have an open mind towards foreigners.

I. Which of your cultures do you think is superior to the other and why?

R. That is challenging to compare two cultures because we are in the city, it is very difficult.

I. What would you say if asked to compare these cities with those of your country?

R. If you look at a few old people, then you can say that their culture is almost the same with our own. These old people are so decent and respectful that makes one to envy them. They behave just like the elders in my country. If I should look at what is happening in

the cities here, and compare with Cameroon, then I can say there is no culture here. My country has got the best culture because you find that they respect elders, dress nicely and not like South Africans. If I may take an example, if you enter the train, you see the old mama standing but the young people will be sitting and not giving those chairs. The ways that children talk to their parents also show lack of respect. Some of them even rape their parents, which are the types of things that you can never find in Cameroon.

I. What do you think is their opinion about this culture of theirs?

R. They think that they have got the best culture in the world.

I. Why do you say so?

R. If I should say that they think they have got the best culture, it is because they are fund of saying that their culture is the best. They even tell you that you have to speak their language, dress like them, and you must do this and that like them, if you are in South Africa, you must do this or that and so you find the idea that they are claiming superiority over everything.

I. If I may ask, do you understand them well when they speak English as easy as the way that you may understand a Congolese?

R. The way they talk my friend, when I just came here, maybe now I understand because I have been here for two years. And then I am forced to learn their ways bur when I just came here, it was a big problem, I don't want to tell a lie because, the English that they speak is a different variety that is a bit far from other varieties. You know we have

different varieties but theirs, they cut things in a way that I find it difficult to understand anything and when I speak and make complete sentences, they don't understand me as well.

I. So they sound very difficult for you to understand?

R. I may say that if you do not learn for long time how they talk, you may never understand them. It is not only the accents and pronunciations, but they speak like in parables. You see, the problem is that when they speak, they make a lot of assumptions as if everyone is from their country.

I. That you understand what they are saying.

R. They expect you to understand and if you don't, it is a problem. You must understand what they are saying.
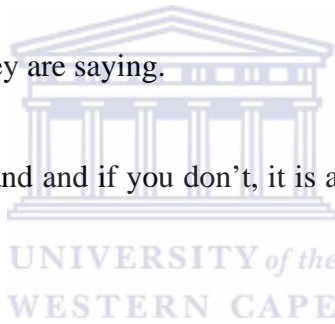
I. Do they treat you as an equal? I am talking like your assistant?

R. Well, I know all of them call me mama, they give me this respect as their boss, and at that level I don't have any problem with them even though sometimes they want to tell you 'its my right, its my country' we fight and I take my position and I say girls, and sometimes I have to fire them for being arrogant and whatever.

I. What happens when they get cross in such situations? How do they speak when they get emotional?

R. Oh, they become very arrogant and rude because they would find it difficult now to express themselves in English and would turn to their home languages, just they code switch immediately, they mix, they use in, they come in with some slang and words that I even don't understand, immoral and rude words they use on me and things like that.

I. O.K lets talk a little much about xenophobia

R. You see xenophobia, I want to say when you talk about xenophobia, it makes me feel very bad because if I look at xenophobia the way it is and what happens here if I get my definition of xenophobia which is the hatred for blacks or foreigners or who so ever and I look at what is happening here I am sorry and want to tell you that was entirely with the actions. I want to say that maybe it is a euphemistic way of putting what they were doing to the people. I would rather call it violence and will like to say people were very very violent. That is why president Mbeki said when he was presenting his speech that they were a group of thieves, violent thieves that are out to rob people of their riches. They are lazy people, you see, I am on the back because you know that is what was really happening, it is not only hatred as the word xenophobia says, it is violence and criminality.

I. What do you think is the root cause of these problems?

R. Eh, I would want to say em, generally, people are saying eh, it is because the foreigners they come here, they work hard, and then they try to look for a way to bring them down and things like that. Abut to me, sincerely I want to tell you deep down I

think that it was some sort of a background movement, maybe I want to say they have got a mind behind this thing.

I. Are you talking about a political influence?

R. Yaa.

I. How do you think that this can be eradicated?

R. It must stop from the top; the government is the only one who can solve this problem and I think if it is the case where they don't want foreigners here, they should, its fine to tighten their home affairs policies so that people don't come to their country. These people are running away from their homes maybe because of violence, then they come here and are killed in a foreign land, I think it is bad. So something needs to be done, maybe just stop people from coming in.
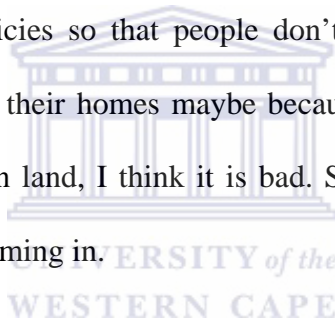
II see we can talk about xenophobia till tomorrow

R. Laughter.

I. But eh, I would like us to talk about most of the grievances in the market. It is assumed that there is miscommunication that has been as a result of the flow of people from all directions, different cultures to meet in the market that is the beginning of the problem which is then worsen by the fact that the Europeans can't even speak English which is the medium of interaction.

I. How do you look at this, is it a true assessment?

R. Yep, that is true because, because if you look at the market per se, it is multicultural, if you get to Greenmarket you will get people from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa, just to name a few. This proper, they have got their different cultures, they have got different languages, and things like that you know as long as you are competent in more than one language, there is always this problem of code switching, consciously or unconsciously and what happens is they find it difficult communicating with other people and even though you can speak and communicate properly in English, there is always this problem of English arising that they use and now when they meet the foreigners who also come in from different countries with their own variety of this language, they are supposed to clash because A does not understand B, so what they say I think is true of the market.

I. There is this issue that has been traveling for long, I don't know how you look at it, race, racial issues, if say for instance, five people were put in a room and they have to speak in turns without you seeing them, and will you be able to identify their race?

R. Yes of course yes.

I. Can it be possible?

R. From their accents, from the way that they talk.

I. And how can that be possible?

R. It is difficult to put it but if I hear a coloured talking, from the accents I will know it is a coloured.

129

I Oh but that is only the South African context.

R. Yaa.

I. But what if they are from say from America will be able to distinguish them?

R. I think I will have a problem at that level

I. Thank you very much for your assistance, it was really nice talking to you.

R. It was all my pleasure and I hope your research will help to solve this problem.

Appendix III

Sample interview From a Chinese tourist

Interviewer: *Where do you come from?*

Respondent: China

I; why did you choose Cape Town as your destination?

R; Because of its beauty.

I; Do you like it here in Cape Town?

R; it is a good place but the people are not accommodating.

I; *How do you find the local people that you interact with?*

R; *They are rude and aggressive.*

I; *Do you find any difficulties communicating with these local people?*

R; *yes, because they laugh at you when you talk.*

I; *Can you identify any instances of such difficulties?*

R; *they try to repeat what you say, accents and pronunciation as if they can speak better English. Their accents are bad.*

I; *Is there anything to say about how the local people communicate?*

R; *The local people use a lot of their language and body communication with each other.*

I; *Have you attended any cultural event?*

R; *No I didn't.*

I; *Would you like to attend one?*

R; *Yes I would like to attend so that I can understand the local people, and then I can communicate with them but I do not have much time to be here.*

I; Did you talk to them about your Chinese culture?

R; yes and they were very interested and want to know more.

I; When you visited the market did you find any difficulties in communicating with the traders?

R; Yes, I find problems such as their accents and they like to speak their local languages

I; What may be some of the things that you would like to change if you had it your way?

R; Teach traders more body language and better pronunciation.

I; what new things did you learn in the market?

R; Local accents and pronunciation.

Appendix IV

Sample interview with American tourist

Question; *where do you come from*

Answer; *from LA in USA.*

Question; why did you choose Cape Town?

Answer; *because I can identify with South Africa more than the other parts of Africa.*

Question; *How do you find the local people that you interact with?*

Answer: *It is difficult to communicate with them because they are not clear.*

Question; *what are some of the things that make the African markets different from those of your country, USA and Europe as you just said above?*

Answer; *the prices of the items are a big problem. One could pay four times for the same item if you are not verse with their system. The attitude with which they approach you also counts as one might end up buying something that he does not want. You do not have this attitude in the USA.*

Question*; could you cite some instances why you were made to buy when it was not your decision?*

Answer; *I tried to find out where a trader gets his stock of goods, but all he did was to convince me with its quality and price that I bought not because I wanted, but because of his attitude.*

Appendix V: Sample of returned questionnaire from a trader

QUESTIONAIRES FOR THE INFORMAL TRADERS

(1)   Where do you come from?
I come from PE in Eastern cape of South Africa

(2)   Why did you choose Cape Town as your destination?
Because it is a city, and I come from the farms to look for better Job and send the money to My family.

(3)   Do you have any South African friends with whom you interact?
No, I am meeting the other People from Africa, like the People from Congo and Senegal but they treat me nice.

(4)   Have you ever invited them to attend any of your cultural events? If yes, which?
Yes, they invited me for their Muslim feast after their fast.

(5)   How did they react to this? What did they say after the event?
They were very accommodating. They made Sure that I was enjoying myself and having fun together with them. They even asked me questions if I enjoyed myself.

(6)   Were you ever invited to attend any of the cultural events?
Yes.

(7)   How did the people present there treat you during this event?
They treat you with respect as if you are one of them. They just spoil you.

(8)   Would you like to attend another of such event? Why?

Yes, because there are lots of things which they are doing that we also do it the same.

(9) What are some of the things that you do different from them?
Dancing Culture and other traditional things. But we also do different things because we come from different Countries.

(10) What did you like most about them?
I like the way they dress during their ceremonies. I also like the way that they respect each other

(11) Do you understand each other well during communication? Why?
we understand each other because we can speak English, which is an international language.

(12) What might be the difficulties involved?
Some of the People will speak Past tense instead of Present tense and it will take long to understand each other. The is also accents and some of the new foreigners do not know to speak English.

(13) If you were in the position of influence, what would you do about this?
If I was in that Position, I will make the foreigners to learn how to speak English.

(14) Who are your most preferred costumers and from which countries? Why?
Those from Germany because they speak good English and they are ready to make business with you

(14) Who are the least preferred and from which countries and why?
The China, India, and Black Americans. They seem to have no Money and they bargain a lot.

(15) What are some of the things you miss about your country?

My mother, my brothers and my family.

(16) What happens when you don't understand a costumer's language? How do you over come this? If I don't understand their language eg French, I can look for someone who is speaking French to translate. Or I can do the business by writing the prices on piece of paper or use signs which is easy to use the hands.

(17) Do you think that traders need some form of training to deal with these costumers? I do not think we need training because we just have to sell. If we go for training we cannot learn all the languages which is not easy. So long as we do business everyday, it is ok.

Appendix V: Sample of returned questionnaire from a tourist

QUESTIONAIRES FOR TOURISTS.

(1) Where do you come from?
I come from Germany.

(2) Why did you choose Cape Town as your destination?
It is a good place to be for holiday with many attractions.

(3) Do you like it here in Cape Town?
Yes, because there are many places to visit like Cape Point

(4) How do you find the local people that you interact with?
They are good people with respect. They have a very good attitude and very accommodating. The only problem with them is that their English is not very clear because of accents so they use signs a lot which is difficult to understand

(5) Do you find any difficulties communicating with these local people?
Sometimes because of the way that they communicate. You need to be very patient before you can get what they are saying. They really need to improve on their accents and pronunciations but they have good attitude

(6) Can you identify any instances of these difficulties if any?
The way that they pronounce makes it very difficult to get what they are saying but their friendly smile makes you to pay attention.

(7) Is there anything to say about how the local people communicate?
They need to go to language centres then they can be better. They are very interesting and they like visitors.

(8) Have you ever attend any cultural activity? How was it?
Not really but I watch some on TV which are interesting

(9) Would you like to attend more of such events? Why?
I would like to attend because I like their dances. I will like to learn how to dance like them.

137

(10) Did you teach them something about your culture? How did they react to it?

They are very good at asking about My Culture and they can spend much time to learn these things

(11) When you visited Greenmarket Square, did you find any problem communicating with the traders? Can you point out any instances of this?

The Problem is just that you do not really understand them well and in some cases, they are forced to write Prices in their books or use calculators.

(12) What are some of the things that you would like to be changed if you had it your way?

To make things easy, I think they should stick their Prices on the items because it is difficult to understand them or they employ people who can explain the things that they sell.

(13) What new things did you learn from the market?

I met people from all over Africa but it was difficult to learn from them because of the Language Problem. But the good Part is that they are very accommodating. The way they receive you will force you to buy even if you don't want to.

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Appendix VI

Consent form

CONSENT FORM
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Date: ………………….
</div>

Dear ………………………………….

Consent form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study which will take place between October 2007 and September 2009. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

The purposes of this study are:
1) to fulfil the course requirement for M.A. degree in Linguistics,

2) to gain insight into the topic: *An Ethnographic Studies of the barriers to Intercultural communication in greenmarket Square, Cape Town*, with the aim of making recommendations that might lead to the improvement of competence in ICC.

I will be using questionnaires, interviews, observations and even natural occurring events amongst others, in order to collect information from you. Based on this information, I will analyse the data and write an article on *the Major Barriers to Intrcultural Communication in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town*

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:
1) Your participation is voluntary.
2) You have the right to withdraw at any stage.
3) Your name will not be used in any records.
4) Interviews will not be video recorded.
5) Personal names or names of places will be given pseudonyms that will be used in all verbal and written records.
6) If you grand permission for audio recordings, no recordings will be used for any purpose other than for this study.

If at any stage you have questions about the study please contact: Foncha John Wankah @ email: 2827458@uwc.ac.za or foncha2008@gmail.com or cell:0838758344/0215916889.

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Are you willing to complete both parts of the questionnaire?   Yes ___ No ___

Are you willing to be interviewed?   Yes ___ No ___

Do you grant permission to be quoted anonymously?   Yes ___ No ___

I as the respondent agree to the above terms

Name: …………………………………………………………………….

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………...

Date: …………………………………………………

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