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***Negotiation of Identities and Language  
Practices among Cameroonian  
Immigrants in Cape Town***

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
Philosophiae in the Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape**

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**Negotiation of Identities and Language Practices among Cameroonian Immigrants in Cape Town**

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Francophone

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Hybridity

Translocality



**Abstract**

***Negotiation of Identities and Language Practices among Cameroonian  
Immigrants in Cape Town.***

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PhD Thesis, Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape.**

This thesis is an exploration of the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political settings in which identities are negotiated and performed among Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. Focusing on language as localized practices and different interaction regimes, the thesis investigates how Cameroonian immigrants maintain and reconfigure the Anglophone/Francophone identity options in novel and hybrid ways. In addition, the study examines how ideologies favouring different languages are reproduced and challenged in translocal and transnational discourses.

Guided by the poststructuralist theories the thesis explores the stance that reality is socially constructed, based on symbolic and material structural limitations that are challenged and maintained in interaction. That is, whatever we do or believe in, is supported by some historical or cultural frames of meanings in our lived world, which often gives room to some manoeuvre to do things in a new way.

The study adopts a multiplex interpretive approach to data collection. This entails a qualitative sociolinguistic approach where interviews, discussion and observations at different socio-economic places namely; meetings, workplaces, homes, restaurants, drinking spots and many sites from all over Cape Town, were explored.

The study suggests that Cameroonians have a multiplicity of identity options, which are manifested and negotiated performatively through language, dress code, song, food, business, and other practices that comprise their lifestyles. These identities are translocal and transnational in nature, and tend to blend South African, Cameroonian, and even American traits. It is also suggests that the different identity options which they manifest are highly mobile, enabling Cameroonians to fit into South African social structures as well as the

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Cameroonian ways of doing things. Additionally, the multiplicity of identities that Cameroonians manifest, blur the fault-line between Anglophone/Francophone identities.

It is evident from the study that hybridity and the reconstruction practices are not only confined to languages. Hybridity also extends to discourse orders especially in terms of how meetings are conducted. The Cameroonian meetings captured through the activities of Mifi Association and CANOWACAT are characterised by 'disorder of discourse' in which both formal and informal versions of English and French are used separately or as amalgams alongside CPE and their national languages, not only in side talks, but also when contributing to the meeting proceedings.

Ultimately, the study concludes that Cameroonians are social actors making up an indispensable part of the social interaction in the Cape Town Diaspora. Just as they influence the languages, the entrepreneurial practices, and spaces in which they interact, the Cameroonian immigrants are also transformed.

The major contribution of the study is that it adds to the recent debates about the nature of multilingualism and identities in late modern society. It emphasises that languages and identities are fluid, complex, and unstable. The distinction or boundaries between the various languages in multilingual practices are also not as clear-cut. This leads to a reframing of voice and actor hood as meaning is constructed across translocal and transnational contexts and domains in a networked world transformed by the mobility of endless flows of information, goods, ideas, and people. Thus, the study contributes to those arguing for a paradigm shift in sociolinguistic theory in which language is not a property of groups, nor is it an autonomous and bounded system fixed in time and space. Thus, identities, languages and the spaces of interaction are not fixed systems; identities, languages, and spaces are dynamic and in a state of flux. This in turn questions the notions of multilingualism and language itself, as well as the veracity of concepts such as code-switching, speech community, language variation, as the search for a sociolinguistic framework that can deal with phenomena predicated by motion, instability, and uncertainty, continues.

Date: May 2011

**Declaration**

I declare that *Negotiation of Identities and Language Practices among Cameroonian Immigrants in Cape Town* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Magdaline Mbong Mai

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Dedication**

In loving memory of my late dad, Pa Nuth Thomas Mai, you were an example worth emulating. With determination, you taught, empowered, and encouraged my quest to drink education to its lees. For all the innumerable lessons and for being a brilliant father, I devote this work to you.



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To my children, Sarah Muh-Ngolela Mba, and Milcah Kengne Mba, I appreciate you for understanding and for the fun. To you I dedicate this thesis.

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Meh (fondly known as Bishop), and Ndze-la-ah Gilbert (alias Fon Echekiye). My sister-in-law, Seigné Lydie Mafor of blessed memory, was the fastest and most efficient typist ever, and did a great job in the course of this project. Thank you and May you rest in peace.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Sociolinguistic Practices in Cameroon and South Africa: Setting the Scene**

#### **1.0 Introduction and Background**

This chapter explores the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political settings in which Cape identities are negotiated among Cameroonian immigrants. The research begins with a description of language practices within postcolonial Cameroon, revealing that typical multilingualism existed in pre-colonial Cameroon. This brief account of language practices continues by focusing on the socio-historic-political situation of the surrogate space, Cape Town. The fluidity and contradictions in these accounts are gradually developed into a research problem – that of conflict between two imported identities, Francophone (French speaking) and Anglophone (English speaking) among Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. The multifarious nature of these issues motivated and captured my interest. The research problem is stated and the aims, objectives, and assumptions of the study are presented, followed by the research questions and rationale for the investigation. The chapter ends with an outline of the methodology and overview of the study.

#### **1.1 Contextualising the Study**

One of the most critical aspects of the sociolinguistic situation in Cameroon is the so-called Anglophone/Francophone conflict. Because of the defeat of the Germans in 1916, the division of the country between the French and British in 1919, the Anglophone/Francophone debate has come to define Cameroonians' sociolinguistic and even ethnic affiliations (cf.; Anchimbe 2006, 2005a, 2005b, Awasom 2004, Echu 2004). Some researchers have argued that Cameroonians have relinquished their African mother tongues to identify themselves as Anglophones or Francophones. For instance, erudite literature (Anchimbe 2005b, Echu 2003a, Alobwed'Epie 1993)

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continually shows that there really is such a boundary as the one between Anglophone and Francophone constructs; thus reifying the problem.

Although the Anglophone/Francophone debate has dominated the literature, it is noteworthy that before colonialism, some indigenous languages had already gained considerable prestige in Cameroon. Bamum, for example, as indicated by Echu (2004 and Echu 2003b), was standardised by Sultan Njoya who used the language for teaching his subjects. In addition, there was also Fulfulde, used since the 17th century for the dissemination of Islam in all three Northern provinces, namely the Adamawa province, the North province, and the Extreme North province. Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE henceforth) has since the 17<sup>th</sup> century played the role of common language as far as trade, labour and economic transactions were concerned and even served as a language of Islam in the north of the country (Crystal 1987).

Since the 'discovery' of Cameroon by the Portuguese in 1472, to its annexation by the Germans in 1884, and then its partition between the British and the French in 1919, Cameroon has faced a variety of conflicting language policies. In spite of the fact that each of the colonial masters had to promote their respective languages (namely German, French, and English), the missionaries recognised and appreciated the dense multilingual phenomenon they encountered. As such, they continued to propagate Christianity and educate Cameroonians through the indigenous languages. This is especially true of the German colonial period, when the German missionaries and the American Presbyterian missionaries always preferred indigenous languages such as Basaa, Bulu, Duala, Ewondo and Mungaka for evangelistic and teaching purposes. Such a preference for indigenous languages was possible, firstly, because of the undeveloped status of German public schools and, secondly, because the missionaries had a strong hold on the school system (cf. Echu 2004). From this, one can imagine the potential conflict between the colonisers and the missionaries and, hence, between Western languages and indigenous languages.

According to Echu (2004), after the defeat of Germany in 1916, Cameroon was partitioned between the British and the French, who came with their own linguistic

cultural baggage, thus sowing the seed for future strife and division among the Cameroonians (cf. Awasom 2004:103; Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997:219). These two powers strove to eradicate the prestige of the indigenous languages implanted by the missionaries, but even with this common motive, there were some differences concerning the implementation of their policies. While the territories under the British mandate, which embraced the multilingual lifestyle, witnessed the use of some indigenous languages, like Bafut, Duala, Kenyang, and Mungaka (among others) alongside English, the French in their part of the territory, aimed at transforming Cameroonians into Frenchmen and women. The French gave little or no room to indigenous languages (Awasom 2004). As a result, the traditional culture of socialisation and community life in the French territories diminished.

Echu (2004) elaborates on the above, conveying the fact that Cameroonians, instead of espousing just one of the colonial languages as official as was mostly done in other postcolonial nations, had to battle with two of these at the dawn of their independence (reunification or full independence) in 20 May 1972. These two opposing languages and cultural systems consisted, on the one hand, of the French system in East Cameroon (or French-speaking Cameroon, i.e. Francophone Cameroon) and, on the other hand, the British Indirect Rule in the Southern Cameroons (or English-speaking Cameroon, i.e. Anglophone Cameroon). Under French rule, one way of executing French assimilation was to ostracise everything, especially languages that did not reflect the French culture, while another way was for the state to assume exclusive responsibility for the education of its subjects. In contrast, the British used local rulers to implement their policies and they left education in the hands of the private and religious sectors.

### **1.2. Cameroon Pidgin English: Its Origin, Functions, and Development**

Scholars today generally refer to Pidgin English spoken in Cameroon as Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), although, Ayafor (2006:192) and Echu (2003a:4) contend this language has been variously termed “Cameroon Creole”, “Wes-Kos”, “West African

Pidgin English”, “Cameroon Pidgin (CamP)”, and “Kamtok”. Other non-scholarly appellations such as “bush English,” “bad English” and “broken English” have also been used to describe this language. Todd (1990:1) corroborates this, accentuating its numerous names, from inferior, haphazard, and bastardised versions of older and longer languages to broken English. The latter appellations have been based on the widespread belief that Pidgin English, be it of the Cameroonian variety or other existing varieties such as Nigerian Pidgin English and Ghanaian Pidgin English, are simplified forms of English used mostly by non-educated people in some of the former British colonies of West Africa (cf. Echu 2003a).

Echu (2003a:4) traces the origin of CPE back to the 18th century when English traders and missionaries first landed on the coast of West Africa. Pidgin English was developed to guarantee effective communication in the area of trade and evangelization. After the abolition of slave trade at the beginning of the 19th century, the language continued to expand all over the coastal region. Some newly freed slaves who settled in Fernando Po, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and later moved to the Cameroonian coastal town of Victoria, (the present day Limbe) used this language. Some contexts of forced labour such as road and railway constructions also served as a fertile ground for the development of CPE because these sites brought together people from diversified ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In such a context, CPE was the only language suitable to facilitate communication. Following this, CPE was the language used throughout the German colonial period from 1884 to 1916 in spite of all the German’s attempts to crush it (Echu 2003a:4).

### **1.2.1 Franglais: A New Sociolinguistic Phenomenon in Cameroon**

Young (2007) compares CPE to a recent sociolinguistic phenomenon namely, Franglais, sometimes also called Camfranglais or Francamglais. Franglais as purported by Kouega (2003) is a composite (hybrid) language developed by Cameroon secondary pupils to codify communication among themselves to the exclusion of non-members. This renders their language mysterious while also



reinforcing incomprehensibility. These pupils use various techniques of word formation including borrowing, coinage, shortening, affixation, inversion, idiomatic formation to reduplication among others. With such linguistic behaviour, Cameroonian youngsters have refused to be either Anglophone or Francophone. This is similar to Heller's (2007) observation that some young people in contemporary France also resist being labelled either Catalan or Francophone.

According to Young (2007) the term *Franglais*, first coined in 1989, describes a new language that is developing in Cameroon. *Franglais*, which is a mixture of English, French and Creole (or CPE) is mostly visible in urban towns like Douala and Yaoundé. This language involves the transference of English items into French – including code-mixing or intrasentential code switching (that is the change from one language to the other in a single utterance) and code-switching (which is more or less the subconscious change into another language) by bilinguals (Wardhaugh 1992:106-107). In Cameroon this is cause for concern by teachers who claim that it affects the level of students' performance in the official languages (Young 2007). Canagarajah (2001) however argues that “code switching and linguistic negotiation [for example *Franglais*] is in conformity with the hybrid cultural ethos long established [...] and [...] also serves to construct hybrid postcolonial subjectivities in [...] community contexts” (2001:194). Accordingly, the strategic usage of several languages among Cameroonians seems to be much more than just code-switching (see Chapter 2 for details). Similar to the case of South Africa as reported by Hacksley *et al.* (2007), the speech-behaviour that one typically witnesses when Cameroonians are left to their own linguistic devices, especially in the urban environments, is characterised by fluidity, interconnection, multi-competent, and easy transcendence, of notional linguistic boundaries. This becomes particularly true of informal domains, but as this study shows, even in formal CANOWACAT and Mifi Association meetings.

### **1.3 Linguistic Behaviour in Post-Colonial Cameroon**

Despite assimilation policies and conscious efforts to impose a European culture and language on Cameroonians, it is an oversimplification to characterise Cameroonians

in binary terms as either English or French. In this study, I show that such classification oversimplifies the sociolinguistic make-up as well as the range of the linguistic repertoire of Cameroonians. This is particularly true of Cameroonians living in the Diaspora. The argument to be made in this study is that Cameroonians do not only affiliate to French and English, but also to CPE, Franglais, the various indigenous languages, and the languages in the Diaspora. This is demonstrated later in this study among Cameroonians living in Cape Town.

### **1.4 A Brief Sociolinguistic Account of Postcolonial South Africa**

South Africa is often lauded for its multilingual language policies which serve to validate the languages of its people. South Africa, like Cameroon, consists of an ethnically mixed population. In addition to her apartheid past, the present economic, socio-historic, and sometimes-political implications of language becomes an extremely emotive issue in South Africa (De Klerk 2002; Thorpe 2002). Due to economic and socio-political unrest in some African countries, Africans, including many Cameroonians, have made South Africa their home. The new arrivals have brought with them their languages and a 'mix' of cultures into the Rainbow Nation, as South Africa is sometimes called. Their languages are not captured in census data and are often nondescriptly pooled together as 'Other' or unclassified languages on official documentation.

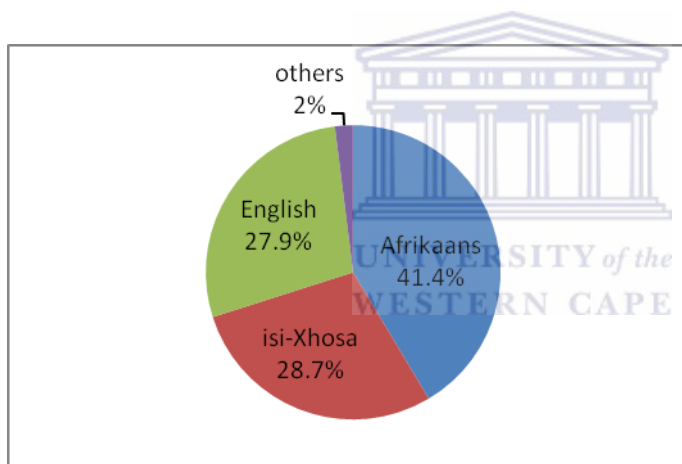
As a way of correcting the injustices imposed by the apartheid regime, the new South African Constitution (unlike that of most other African nations) recognises the benefits of multilingualism and thus acknowledges eleven official languages. These include nine indigenous African languages, namely tshiVenda, isiNdebele, sePedi, seSotho, siSwati, xiTsonga, Setswana, isiXhosa, and isiZulu, in addition to the two former official languages, Afrikaans and English (Thorpe 2002). Among these indigenous languages, isi-Zulu is numerically the largest according to the 2001 census where 23.8% of the South African population considered isiZulu as their mother tongue.

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In the Gauteng province, the industrial hub of South Africa, around Johannesburg, isiZulu is also the most spoken language since immigrants from Zululand have lived and worked in and around Johannesburg for the past century. This is followed by isiXhosa at 17.6%, Afrikaans at 13.3%, Sepedi beats English when it stands at 9.4%, while English is at 8.2, and the census data continues in this sliding manner with Xitsonga at 4.4%.

However, in South Africa, the languages one hears most frequently will depend on where one is in the country. Within Cape Town, following the 2001 census figures (in Dyers 2009), for example, Afrikaans becomes numerically larger, at 41.4%, followed by isiXhosa at 28.7% (though more than 83% of South Africans in the Eastern Cape speak this language) and, English at 27.9%. These statistics could be represented thus:



**Figure 1.1:** Distribution of languages in Cape Town, Western Cape - adapted from the 2001 census

What is revealed in the above pie chart is limited to census figures of 2001 and thus obscures other languages not ‘officially’ designated. Besides Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, the figures fail to reveal whether the speakers use two or all of the three languages (Banda 2010). In addition, the languages of the 2% of the population of Cape Town who speak other languages remain unspecified. As Hacksley et al. (2007:1) note, multilingualism in South Africa, “is far more fluid and extraordinary [...]” than these figures can reveal. There is no doubt that Cape Town is more heterogeneous with a wider linguistic repertoire than the above statistics reveal. Consequently, there are dangers involved with insufficient attention to the statistics of other languages spoken by foreigners (e.g. Congolese, Cameroonians and

Zimbabweans) as well as local language varieties (for example Kaapse Afrikaans/English, and isiPondo and isiBhaca, which are local varieties of isiXhosa). Furthermore, insufficient attention to languages spoken in communities could obscure a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the nature and extent of multilingualism in society. This study then seeks to shed light on the nature of multilingualism and hybrid use of language among Cameroonians in Cape Town.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

Evidently, attempts to assimilate Cameroonians into French and English culture are obscured by the enduring multilingual nature of their sociolinguistic territory both in Cameroon and in the surrogate Cape Town.

There are many languages in Cameroon and many identity options, which in turn have given (although without being “officially” recognized), and continue to give rise to fluid and hybrid identities. This fluidity becomes more piquant when the Afrikaans and isiXhosa identity options are added to the already complex multilingual situation of the Cameroonian immigrants. In addition, the Cameroonian immigrants are neither only English nor only French speaking. Though previous studies oversimplify the situation, the people still speak other languages. Above all, the fact that Anglophones and the Francophones meet and mix, makes the divide even less clear. To emphasise such complexity, Bird (2001:8-9) draws attention to the heterogeneous make-up of Cameroon, asserting that

Cameroon [...] has the singular character of being the one spot on the black continent where all African people meet: here, we meet the Bantu, who claim kinship with peoples as far as South as the Cape, you have the Sudanese people, we have the Fulani whose kinsfolk are found as far West as Senegal and Mauritania, you have Hamito-Semitic people like the Shua Arabs, you have the Pygmies of the equatorial jungle. Thus it is in Cameroon that the African confusion of Tongues is worst confronted (Bird 2001:8-9).

Characteristically, multilingualism in many European countries and the United States of America is influenced by the influx of immigrants. However, as stated in the above quotation, this phenomenon becomes complex in Cameroon, where multilingualism is embedded in the many and sometimes, very diverse, ‘indigenous’ (national) languages. As a result, there are many indigenous language identity options at the disposal of Cameroonians. This situation is even more complex in the Diaspora, given the sociolinguistic make-up of a place like Cape Town with Afrikaans and isiXhosa linguistic identity options, added to the mix.

Bird’s comment about “the African confusion of Tongues” suggests that the heterogeneous linguistic situation does not facilitate communication. This is grossly exaggerated. These indigenous languages, which are seemingly many, but also sometimes greatly unrelated, do not constitute a major problem. Prah (1998) and his colleagues (see Banda 2002, 2008; Capo 2002, 2010) have shown through their work on the standardisation of African languages writing systems that the tower of Babel argument, in which Africans speak to each other in a myriad of undecipherable languages, is a myth. The Cameroonians in Cameroon (and therefore also immigrants who come from there) have developed ways to accommodate and respect each other’s linguistic choices. Echu expands on this, stating that Cameroonians in the midst of diverse languages at their disposal always know which language to use with whom in any given situation, without necessarily resorting to translation (Echu 2003b). Therefore, the heterogeneous linguistic situation in which Cameroonian immigrants find themselves is no cause for concern (Echu 2003b; 2003c). Of interest, are the linguistic performative identity options available to Cameroonians in the Cape Town Diaspora.

### **1.6 Aims and Objectives**

Primarily, I endeavour to appraise the manifestation of negotiated performative hybrid identities and the place of CPE and Franglais in the process of reconstructing and reconfiguring new identities among the Cameroonian immigrants in the multilingual context of Cape Town. In turn, I explore the Anglophone/Francophone divide and the various identity options that have been shaped by their experience, and influenced by

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both the physical and socio-political, cultural and economic conditions of Cameroonian immigrants. In this way, I investigate issues related to Cameroon immigrants' identity tenets, namely, language crossing, position and position taking, territoriality, and the construction of self and others in the era of globalisation. The specific objectives are:

- i) To explore the manifestation of different identity options at the disposal of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town;
- ii) To explore the different identity options, including hybrid identities, available to Cameroonians and the implication of such hybrid identities for Cape Town identities;
- iii) To determine the influence (if at all) of the Afrikaans ('coloured') and isiXhosa (African/black) additional identity options on the reconstruction of Anglophone/Francophone identity options in Cape Town;
- iv) To estimate the place of Cameroonian official languages (English and French), of CPE and of Franglais in the process of negotiating Cape identities;
- v) To explore the impact of post-colonial identities in the contexts of migration and minoritisation.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

Based on the above objectives, this thesis addressed the following research questions:

- i) What impact does the Anglophone/Francophone divide have on the (re)construction of the Cameroonian immigrants' identity options in Cape Town?
- ii) What other identity options are available to Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town and what is the role they play in (re)constituting and (re)constructing the Anglophone/Francophone identity option?

### **1.8 Rationale**

Firstly, this study is significant in that it seeks to explore the hybrid identities available to Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town and to assess how these immigrants reconfigure and reconstruct the Anglophone/Francophone identity options (in an attempt to recognise previously ignored identities) in new and hybrid ways. In this sense, the thesis challenges the simplistic Anglophone/Francophone binaries assumed by other scholars (Anchimbe 2010, 2005b, Awasom 2004, Echu 2004, 2003a, Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997, Alobwed'Epie 1993).

Secondly, the study takes into account the notion of multilingualism/language as localized social practice, which offers an alternative take on language use and identities in which crossing (Rampton 1995), habitus, and the use of centre/periphery norms are seen a localized social practice. Thus, the *raison d'être* of this study is not to access the currency of crossing, habitus, positioning, polycentricity, and the notion of territoriality but rather to offer alternative arguments about the nature of multilingualism and multiculturalism in which the use of multiple languages and hybrid identities are the norm rather than the exception.

Thirdly, research on Cameroonian immigrants in multilingual contexts has only previously focused on the supposed Francophones from all over Africa (Vigouroux 2008, 2005). It would therefore be interesting to investigate the prevalence of hybrid identities among Cameroonian immigrants from various economic, socio-political, and cultural conditions.

The fourth motivation stems from my immersion in the linguistic practices of Cameroonian immigrants. As a Cameroonian myself, who is supposed to be 'Anglophone', although I was brought up in a French-speaking province and attended a French-speaking primary school and university, I had often mistaken some 'Francophones' for 'Anglophone' and vice versa. From this perspective, I wondered how Cameroonians identified themselves within Cape Town and I was inspired to investigate their identity options.

Lastly, the outcome of this study might be instrumental in gaining more insight into the Cameroonian Anglophone/Francophone conflict and its materialisation in Cape Town.

### **1.9 Limitations**

Visible in the study is the fact that a Cameroonian immigrant in Cape Town can belong, and attend meetings of more than two “ethnic” (linguistic) groups. This has resulted in my inability to obtain an accurate count of Cameroonian immigrants present in Cape Town. This has particularly affected my ability to state who is an Anglophone and who is a Francophone. In any case, as I argue in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 it should not be assumed a priori that Anglophones and Francophones are distinct groups.

Interviews were mostly conducted at the homes and jobsites of the participants. Some of these sites, as have been indicated in the study, were market places, including shebeens with customers coming in and out, music and movies on, cell phones switched on and vehicles moving. This constituted a major source of disruption and sometimes resulted in incomplete interview sessions.

With these gaps and others indicated within the context of the study, I cannot claim to have provided a fully comprehensive picture describing all the features and practices behind the social-cultural systems of Cameroonian immigrants within Cape Town in this current study. However, my research gives some insight into the complexities of these socio-cultural systems.

### **1.10 Methodology**

The research is a multi-sited ethnography. It is a holistic description and interpretation of the data, bearing solely on qualitative procedures and analysis.



In this present scholarly work based on the notion of ‘performative identities’ and drawing on poststructuralist approaches, the notion of translocality has been investigated, and a description of development of notions identity negotiation and hybridity analysed. This constitutes a large part of the research owing to the nature of the research questions considered.

Due to the fact that research on this theme has not only been vast but sometimes imbalanced and contradictory literature within the context of global homogenisation and heterogenisation, this study tends to be rather descriptive than critical. The study, it is hoped, is a starting point which aims to provide a point of departure for more critical studies on transformation in Cape Town, where the immigrant culture is not always necessarily absorbed by the host country. Thus, the study will consist of a dual approach of both the theoretical and empirical enquiry.

Moreover, there was a need for purposeful sampling, targeting only those Cameroonians that had been identified by other Cameroonians as responsible, knowledgeable, and willing. Considering that issues such as identity options and choice of language, specifically the choice of using either English or French and being Anglophone or Francophone, are not only complex but also very delicate (Anchimbe 2005 and Heller 1999), it became necessary to rely on participants identified as knowledgeable by other participants.

### **1.10.1 Context and description of subjects**

Among Cameroonian immigrants that live in Cape Town, some are refugees, while others are in search of higher standards of living and tend to join the world of commerce as business people (among others as managers, waiters, hawkers, and cyber café or shebeen owners). Yet others come as highly skilled professionals, for example medical doctors, while still others proceed to the movie industry as actors or attendants, and so on. Consequently, one finds Cameroonian immigrants in almost

every sphere of life in Cape Town. The meeting of the Cameroon North Westerners' Association (CANOWACAT) alone boasts of over a hundred and fifty registered members, which is not even a third of the North Westerner population present in Cape Town as some prefer to identify with other meeting groups. In an attempt to get an accurate figure of the total number of Cameroonians present in Cape Town I visited a few meeting groups in Cape Town. These included:

1. The Cameroonian community in Parow
2. The Cameroonian community in Woodstock (commonly referred to as Oye Oye)
3. The Cameroonian community in Bellville (referred to as the Cameroon Rainbow Association in South Africa (CRABSA))
4. The Cameroon Students' Association at UCT
5. The Amala Group, a business group in Bellville, also found in Parow, Brooklyn, and other suburbs, with its base in Sea Point
6. The Pynning Family meeting (PIFAM)
7. The Mifi Association
8. The Momo meeting and other groups.

It is important to note that some of the meeting groups simply consist of a group of friends or people with common interests, others of people from the same linguistic group, and some of people in a specific neighbourhood within Cape Town. Also important is the fact that all Cameroonians in Cape Town belong to the Cameroonian Association. Despite these many visits, it was still not possible to obtain an accurate figure of Cameroonian immigrants possibly present in Cape Town, since one Cameroonian could be registered in more than two different meeting groups.

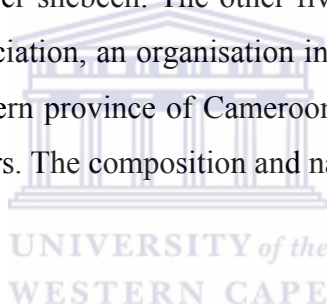
### **1.10.2 Data Collection Techniques and Procedures**

In this section, the research procedure and techniques used in the study are highlighted. These are further elaborated in Chapter 5. Because the linguistic structures I intend to explore are subject to descriptive analysis, I have employed

qualitative techniques accompanied by copious note taking to enhance the credibility and validity of this study. The data collection strategies and procedures included interviews and observations.

Interviews and Focus Group Discussions consisted of forty key informant interviews, lasting at least forty-five minutes to an hour, and four focus group discussions, for at least an hour and-a-half with three participant observation sessions lasting at least two and-a-half hours.

Participant observation in this study occurred ten times at two different social gatherings. Five participant observation sessions were based on the Cameroon North Westerners Association (CANOWACAT), one of the oldest groups and which meets fortnightly at the Salt River shebeen. The other five participant observation sessions focused on the Mifi Association, an organisation initiated for Cameroonians from the Mifi division in the Western province of Cameroon with its main aim being to swell the finances of its members. The composition and nature of these groups are described in detail in Chapter 5.



### **1.10.3 Data Analysis**

Since this is a descriptive interpretive study, I adopt post-structuralist approaches to analysis, while drawing on the paradigm of *translocality* (Heller 2007, Peter 2006). These approaches analyse discourse not only in multilingual contexts but also in multiplex interpretive sites (Heller 2007; Modan 2007; Richards 2003). The focus is on positioning and language as localized social practice (Pennycook 2010; Heller 2007) with the aim to explore how participants' orientation to issues of identity could play a vital role in enhancing an understanding of the relationships between the performative nature of the self and fragmented social structure, and between power and the role of individuals in the reconstruction of identities and the (re)creation of social order (Widdicombe 1998). Related research consulted for this study shall include the notions of space and territoriality and power relations as propounded by

Shi-Xu (2007), Blommaert et al. (2006; 2004), Vigouroux (2005), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), and Appadurai (1996).

### **1.11 An Outline of Chapters**

Chapter 1 of this thesis is the introduction. This firstly consists of a review of issues leading to the research problem as oriented by informed literature. Next is the statement of the problem followed by the research aims and objectives, the research questions, assumptions, delimitation, rationale, and a brief summary of the methodology. The chapter ends with an overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a framework for discussion by reviewing literature on the socio-political, cultural, and historical conditions of Cameroonian immigrants in order to motivate the analytical perspectives adopted in the study. The chapter ends with an overview of globalisation and introduces the analytical framework.

Chapter 3 represents how dominant homogenous discourses can further complicate the notion of identity. This is done by means of comparing and contrasting identity from both homogenous and heterogeneous perspectives while shaping the reader's mind towards the poststructuralist perspectives. The chapter ends with the view of multilingualism as a social practice. Owing to the rather complex and broad nature of the concept of identity, the conceptual and analytical frameworks extends to Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 shows how the conceptual and the analytical frameworks are intertwined. Like the second and third chapters, Chapter 4 is also part of the literature review. This chapter, however, presents the analytical framework, starting from bounded theoretical paradigms and progressing to the notion of performative identities, where identities are mobile.

Chapter 5 consists of a detailed presentation of the methodological framework. Here, the research design, sampling, and sample selection techniques, multiplex interpretive data sources, data collection procedures, data processing, and the transcription key are presented, each accompanied by a motivation for the choice made and its appropriateness in the study.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 consist of a presentation of the findings and discussion of the study. Here data is analysed, validated or invalidated and interpreted in relation to literature. Chapter 6 is an analysis of findings based on a thematic underpinning from themes arising from the data. It specifically deals with ways in which Cameroonians reconstruct their Anglophone and Francophone identity options within the Cape Town context as well as how they impact on the identities of South Africans in Cape Town.

In Chapter 7, analyses based on thematic underpinnings of themes arising from data are continued. There is no rigid demarcation between Chapters 6 and 7, although the latter focuses mostly on the transformation of immigrants and transformation of spaces. The fluid natures of discourses on identity necessitate yet another chapter.

Chapter 8 is an estimation of how homogenous discourses are reconfigured to suite hybrid and practical debates on performative identities and increasing deterritorialisation of political identities.

Chapter 9 draws the study together by verifying the research objectives and examining the implications of the study for some theories as reviewed in the study, as well as the general contribution to knowledge. This therefore serves as the overall conclusion of the study.

### **1.12 Summary**

The chapter looked at the background to the study, aims and objectives, research problem and research question. It sketched the research methodology, limitations and contextualisation of the study in both Cameroon and South African social contexts. In

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the process, I also highlighted the negotiated and performative nature of identities. In addition, I grounded the study into language/multilingualism as a localised social practice.



## **Chapter 2: The Sociolinguistic Situation in Cameroon**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The chapter starts with a brief exploration of the so-called Anglophone problem in Cameroon. This is followed by a discussion of the origin and role of the pidgins, CPE and *Franglais*, and an overview of globalisation, not neglecting the impact of all these on Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. Thereafter follows a brief history of the introduction of imported identities (from Europe) to Cameroon describing closely how complex, and conflicting issues of identity could be among Cameroonians, including immigrants in the Cape Diaspora.

### **2.1 The Anglophone Problem**

The history of the Anglophone problem has many divergent versions with two major accounts that both trace their origin to 1961, although from different angles. According to Konings and Nyamnjoh (1997), the seed to the Anglophone problem was sown in 1961 when the political elites of the two Cameroons reached consensus in support of a federal republic. From then on there has been political unrest with obnoxious attempts at secession (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997). Awasom (2004) also identifies the root cause of this problem as originating in 1961 even though he relates it to Germany's defeat in WWII. With the defeat of Germany, her territory, Cameroon, was partitioned between Britain and France – a source for future strife.

Postcolonial Cameroon thus remains a product of nation-states with two European languages, English and French, serving as the icon of identification for Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon respectively. In the case of Cameroon, the words 'Anglophone' and 'Francophone' can be very emotive in certain settings, as they tend to bring to mind allusions to the notions of 'stranger' versus 'host'. Take for instance the Anglophones who were formerly ruled as part of Nigeria and came out economically, educationally, and politically paralysed, only to join their Francophone

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counterparts in a union where they were again outnumbered. In this union, being Anglophone was associated with speaking English, with bad behaviour, and other negatives. Nonetheless, none of these negative labels has tainted Anglophone desire to survive as a distinct group (Alobwed'Epie 1993:56).

Elaborating on this, Awasom (2004:93) alludes to Le Vine who allegorically referred to the Southern Cameroons (or Anglophone Cameroon) as the “bride” (by the 1960s, a time when the role of the woman was very insignificant) thus implying that the Republic of Cameroon (La République or Francophone Cameroon) was the “bridegroom”. This relationship of the strong and the weak aptly fits into the Cameroonian situation, where the Republic of Cameroon has immeasurably greater resources, higher levels of both social and economic development, a surface area ten times larger and a population four times more than that of their partners in the Southern Cameroons (Anglophone Cameroon). As the map below indicates, Awasom’s concern about the region of the Southern Cameroons and available facilities is no exaggeration.



**Figure 2.1:** Map of Cameroon showing the sections of Southern Cameroons and La République du Cameroun (<http://mapsof.net/cameroon/static-maps/png/southern-cameroons>)



In nation-states in which linguistic minorities were created, most minority groups carry around an institutional or ideological baggage that can sustain itself long after the life support system has been turned off. In other words, linguistic minorities have long searched for those instances which give them a glimmer of hope for freedom and self-determination (Heller 1999:15). This means that linguistic minorities engage in ideological struggles over most central values and these struggles represent not just what it is to adhere to linguistic fixity or to be monolingual, but also the very nature of the reproduction of power (Heller 1999). According to Echu (2003b:11), the Anglophones, in their position, instead found refuge in the use of English as a means of in-group solidarity and cultural identity. However, although they have based their claims on the logic of linguistic identity, it has become contradictory for Anglophones to reproduce themselves out of the logic of linguistic nationality. This means the Anglophone who used English as an icon of unity and shared aims in an environment they deemed hostile to them, also came to recognise the value of learning other languages in order to gain access to the same education, workplace opportunities, and socio-economic positions as the Francophone. As such, the Anglophones use language as a symbolic multilingual resource (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:12) that helps them get access to government institutions and exercise power. Widdicombe (1998:195) affirms this claim, asserting that speakers appeal implicitly or explicitly to normative knowledge in constructing and reconstructing identities. Putting it differently, it could be estimated that it is very prevalent in the globalised world for ‘multilingual speakers [to] move around in multidimensional social spaces and that each act of speaking or silence may constitute for them an act of identity’ (Heller 2007:8).

With the current trends of globalisation, therefore, the term ‘Anglophone’ is sometimes itself contradictory, for it could be used to denote both the inferior and superior ‘stranger’. This means the word ‘Anglophone’ has now assumed new dimensions, and no longer has derogative appellations such as “*les Bamenda*” the Bamendas and “*les gens de Fru Ndi*” (the people of Fru Ndi) for example. Bamenda is an English-speaking town in the North West province of Cameroon and the name

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Bamenda is used to refer to all English-speaking Cameroonians, including those from the South West province. *Les gens de Fru Ndi* is another term used by Francophones to describe Anglophones. Fru Ndi was an Anglophone from the North West province and not only the leader of the first political party – the Social Democratic Fund (SDF), in the Republic of Cameroon – but also the one who stood in opposition to the ruling government. (Notice that even when Anglophones joined in union with Francophones, the name Republic of Cameroon was still maintained). Ironically, some Francophones who admired Fru Ndi's daring courage, joined his party and claimed that , "Fru Ndi is a real Anglophone, a rock, an iron" (Alobwed'Epie 1993:56), (note that all translations are mine). It remains the objective of this study to decipher how such appellations, contradictions, and hybrid identity options (i.e. Anglophone/Francophone) persist in Cape Town.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:3) believe that language and literacy are sometimes used to marginalise particular individuals and groups. In this regard, Echu (2003b:10-11) argues that Francophones' dominance in Cameroon is not only reflected in population difference but also in their control of top positions in administration, education, and the media. Echu (2004) observes that Anglophones recently have had to openly challenge the unfair policy of official bilingualism and the continuous domination by Francophones.

In an All Anglophone Conference (in Buea 1993), Anglophones publicly expressed their view that the entire nation is obliged by the Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation (CRTV) to watch a match in France when it is shown live. But this is never the case when there is any sporting encounter in England or involving an English team. As if this is not enough all movies and programmes originally made in English, always have to be translated and shown only in their French versions. Furthermore, the broadcast time on CRTV is unevenly divided, Francophones still being favoured. "In the end Anglophones who share equally the burden of financing [...] get far less than ¼ of the services provided by this public utility" (Echu 2003b:11). This unfair implementation of the policy of official language bilingualism has created a sense of insecurity among the Anglophones. Following rumours of the

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government's creation of regions to annex Anglophones in the 1990s, this fear was solidified. As a result, the Anglophones have remained very jealous about maintaining their geographical territory within Cameroon (cf. Echu 2003b) – a jealousy which has been so deeply-rooted that it has engendered secessionist tendencies.

The Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) plays a vital role in soliciting international support for the Anglophone cause. In addition, the SCNC has a duty to ensure an unconditional breakaway of Anglophones from the Francophones and to form an independent Southern Cameroon State.

Guided by the principles of the SCNC, it is obvious that Anglophones feel they are marginalised, cheated, and even colonised. For these reasons, Anglophones believe the Southern Cameroons territory is still not free, in spite of the independence it has obtained from Britain (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997). They argue that the two Cameroons had separate independence with an imposed national day on 20 May 1972. As such, Anglophones insist that national unity is felt, not imposed. Secession is another complicated issue involving the past and affecting the present conditions of Cameroonian immigrants. Concerns are raised regarding the fact that Cameroonians, with two different cultures and historic (colonial) backgrounds – the French-speaking and the English-speaking – should be attempting to live in unity. However, this Anglophone problem and the role of the SCNC are not confined to Cameroon. The Cameroon immigrants in Cape Town carry the baggage with them and its manifestations come in several and divergent facets. In Cape Town, it is common to hear some Cameroonian immigrants questioning why the so-called national day, 20 May, is being celebrated in the Diaspora.

Given such circumstances, some Anglophones in Cameroon have been agitating for autonomy in their territories. These, according to Awasom (2004), have been in the form of sending petitions to the UK, protesting the annexation of Anglophones by Francophones, the seizure of the Buea radio station (on the night of 30 December 1999 by armed members of the SCNC) to broadcast a tape of proclamation of

independence, and so on. Apart from being a source of strife, colonialism is thought to have brought with it new identity options.

### **2.2 The Origin of Pidgins and their Influence**

According to Anchimbe (2007:8), colonialism brought with it a (new) mixture of cultures, languages, and identities. Anchimbe classifies the emergence and/or consolidation of pidgins and creoles as the second linguistic outcome of colonialism besides English and French. Through contact with some freed slaves, traders and missionaries, pidgins came into being and with this, another identity option. Pidgins were further developed during the colonial era where they facilitated communication between colonisers and slaves, especially in the plantations, and with German soldiers (Todd 1990:3).

Notwithstanding, pidgins and creoles have largely been ignored by linguists who regard them as marginal in terms of the circumstances of their origin. The origin of pidgins and creoles has often been explained by inherent ignorance, indolence and inferiority, rather than by historical and social conditions. In addition, linguists (cf. Echu 2004; Holms 1992; Wardhaugh 1992; Todd 1990; Romaine 1988) have identified the attitudes of those who speak one of the languages from which these pidgins are derived as tending to be discouraging. This encourages disdain toward pidgins.

This negative attitude towards pidgins and their speakers is what Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:15) refer to as 'misrecognition' – the belief that only the official variety is legitimate. This study aims to determine whether their historic conditions and their present socio-political circumstances as shall be disclosed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 will bring about misrecognition among Cameroonian immigrants. Consider the case of Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), for example. Its influence is felt across the whole of Cameroon, where it is beginning to influence other languages, especially French (Echu 2006; 2003a; 2003b). An exploration of the influence of CPE becomes interesting in the multilingual contexts of Cape Town.

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According to Todd (1990:1), pidgins are found everywhere on the continent where they have existed since the Middle Ages. Holms 1992 and Romaine 1998 establish that pidgins originate from situations where people speaking mutually unintelligible languages come into contact. To Wardhaugh (1992:55), however, pidgins have existed since time immemorial, although people knew very little about them. Wardhaugh believes that the history of the study of such languages date only a few decades back because of the conditions of their use.

Pidgins, according to Anchimbe (2007) and Wardhaugh (1992), have often been regarded as having little intrinsic value. Anchimbe blames the conditions of their origin, their definitions, and negative attitudes of linguists for the disregard of pidgins. In conjunction with this, Wardhaugh argues that it is due to their lack of linguistic features, such as articles, the copula, and grammatical inflections, that pidgins are seen as uninteresting linguistic phenomena. In agreement, Todd (1990:1) states that during the initial stages of contact, communication in a pidgin is often limited to transactions where detailed exchange of ideas is not required and when vocabulary drawn entirely from one language suffices. This makes the syntactic structure of pidgins less complex and flexible than the languages coming in contact. For example, the French phrase “*les deux grands journaux*” has four clear plural markers in the written form and three in spoken form. In English, “the two big newspapers” exhibit less redundancy where plurality is marked only by the numeral and the noun ending. While languages (like English and French), for instance, are more redundant, pidgins tend to be less redundant, marking plurality by the numeral only. More examples in Table 2.1 below substantiate the above.

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**Table 2.1:** Illustration of CPE as a less redundant language. Adapted from Todd (1990).

| French            | English        | Tok Pisin     | Kamtok<br>[CPE] |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>je vais</i>    | I go           | <i>mi</i>     | <i>a</i>        |
| <i>tu vas</i>     | you go         | <i>yu</i>     | <i>Yu</i>       |
| <i>il/elle va</i> | he/she/it goes | <i>em</i>     | <i>[ye]</i>     |
| <i>Nous</i>       | we go          | <i>yumi</i>   | <i>wi</i>       |
| <i>allons</i>     |                |               |                 |
| <i>Vous allez</i> | [you go]       | <i>mipela</i> | <i>wuna</i>     |
| <i>ils/elles</i>  | they go        | <i>yupela</i> |                 |
| <i>vont</i>       |                | <i>ol</i>     |                 |

Table 2.1 further exemplifies the rate and differences in terms of redundancy between English and pidgins. The previous example “the two big newspapers” becomes *di tu big pepa* in CPE. The same simplistic structure applies to Tok Pisin, the pidgin English of Papua New Guinea. To add to this grammatical redundancy, Todd (1990) highlights the fact that pidgins have fewer verbal inflections than French and English. The above table again provides ample support for this claim, as the verb meaning ‘go’ changes at certain points in both English and French while staying constant in the pidgins. The English he/she/ or goes, for instance, is simply expressed as *ye go* in CPE.

Closely linked to the phenomenon of pidgins is that of creoles. Most scholars, including Todd (1990) and Wardhaugh (1992), agree that pidgins and creoles differ from each other in significant ways and define these phenomena in various ways, claiming that creoles develop from pidgins. A pidgin, for instance, is said to be nobody’s language, while a creole belongs to a certain group of people. This distinction, however, is sociological rather than linguistic. What is worthy of note here is that CPE, like most pidgins, is not confined to any particular region or class, and any specific semantic field. Furthermore, even in cases where it is not the mother tongue:

Pidgin is a vehicle for song, witticism, oral literature, liturgical writings and sermons as well as being the most frequently heard language in the area. In all these functions, it is parallel to Krio, the English Creole of Sierra Leone, a mother tongue of over two hundred thousand speakers around Freetown. (Todd 1990:4).

Still, the recent change of attitude and serious attention directed towards pidgins, owing to linguists' realisation of the interesting characteristics of pidgins that seem to bear on languages both 'full-fledged' and marginal (Todd 1990), seems to have had no impact on Cameroonian immigrants.

### **2.3 Cameroon Pidgin English: Its Origin, Functions, and Development**

As was mentioned in the first chapter, scholars today generally refer to the pidgin English spoken in Cameroon as Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE). However, according to Ayafor (2006:192) and Echu (2003a:4), this language has been variously termed: Cameroon Creole, Wes-Kos, West African Pidgin English, Cameroon Pidgin (CamP), and Kamtok. Other non-scholarly appellations such as "bush English", "bad English" and "broken English" have equally been used to describe this language. Todd (1990:1) corroborates this accentuating its numerous descriptions, ranging from "inferior" and "haphazard" to "bastardised" and "broken" versions of older and longer languages.

In spite of this, Echu (2003a:4) as stated in Chapter 1, believes CPE was used back in the 17th century when English traders and missionaries first landed on the coast of West Africa. Pidgin English was developed to guarantee effective communication in the area of trade and evangelisation. After the abolition of the slave trade at the beginning of the 19th century, the language continued to expand all over the coastal region. It was used by some of the newly freed slaves who settled in Fernando Po, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and later moved to the Cameroonian coastal town of Victoria (the present day Limbe). Here they worked for the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC – a German agro-industrial complex). Some contexts of forced labour, such as road and railway constructions, also served as a fertile ground for the

development of CPE, because these sites brought together people from diversified ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In such a context CPE was the only language suitable for facilitating communication. Following this, CPE was the language used throughout the German colonial period from 1884 to 1916, in spite of all the German attempts to crush it (Echu 2003a:4).

### **2. 3. 1 The Influence CPE**

According to Kouega (2008), CPE in Cameroon has been in active use for over 500 years. Kouega believes this language started during the slave trade era (cf. Echu 2003a; Romaine 1992; Todd 1990), lived through the resistance of the German colonial period from 1884 to 1914, and is surviving today despite the post-colonial sabotage, imprecise language policy, and negligence of the Cameroonian Constitution (cf. Myers-Scotton 2006; Anchimbe 2005; Echu 2004; Echu 2003a; 2003b). Kouega further claims that originally CPE was improvised in the plantations, and that it is thanks to the plantations that this language reached people's homes, churches, social gatherings, and other domains of public life (cf. Anchimbe 2007).

In comparing French to CPE, Echu (2003a:5) and Todd (1990:4) stipulates that CPE is one of the most widely used languages of communication, although it (CPE) remains without prestige among Cameroonians (cf. Anchimbe 2007; Ayafor 2006). Echu (2003a) goes on to state that there are four different varieties of CPE, namely, the grasslands variety spoken in the North West province, the Bororo variety spoken by the Bororo, the coastal variety spoken in the South West province and the Francophone variety spoken by the Francophones. Those who can speak neither an indigenous language nor any of the official languages always find a way out with CPE (cf. Bobda 2006). Echu emphasises the presences of CPE loan words in Cameroonian French and identifies this as a recognition of the important communication and cultural role that CPE plays as a lingua franca in Cameroon (Echu 2003a and 2003b). Given this role, played without difficulty, Echu (2004) puts forward that CPE be perceived as a fully fledged language and recommends that it should be standardised. The cost of standardising CPE, according to Echu (2004), should be no cause for



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concern, because there already exist some written documents in this language, implying minimal cost. In spite of all these advantages, (Bobda 2006) points out that CPE remains scorned at in official milieu, educational institutions, and formal settings

Apart from CPE, which plays the role of lingua franca and draws together speakers from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds in Cameroon, and among Cameroonians elsewhere, there is also French. Chia (1990), however, refers to the French spoken by Cameroonians as Cameroon Pidgin French. Echu (2006) refutes this, and proposes instead that it be called Cameroon Popular French (CPF), given that pidgin French is not really a pidgin language in its own right. He argues that CPF is a type of French spoken widely in the country by school dropouts or those who have never had the opportunity to learn French in a formal school setting (Echu 2006:1). CPF is in fact used by politicians even across the radio stations and CRTV.

From this perspective, Echu (2006) declares that the multilingual situation in Cameroon is itself a suitable terrain for pidginisation processes to happen. Consequently, CPF and Franglais texts (discussed in the next section) reveal multiple influences from various languages such as English, CPE and indigenous languages. Moreover, Echu (2006:12) points out that CPF and Franglais “express the extent to which linguistic vitality, cultural dynamism, and language contact may give rise to new forms of expression.” If Echu (2006) is right, then there is a need to look carefully at his previous point about standardising CPE, and allowing linguistic justice to prevail (Bailey 2007; Heller 2007; Moyer 2007; Blackledge 2004; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

Cameroonians continue to exercise their linguistic rights in a time of globalisation where many languages come into contact. This situation of language contact, according to Echu (2006), promotes pidginisation and sustains multilingualism as a dispensation.

This notwithstanding, monolingual policy makers continually impose policies that are influenced by “long term material and subtler ideological considerations” (Canagarajah 2001:192). A case in point is the logic of nation-states, brought about by

the colonisers and sustained by the post-colonial political agencies and nationalist regimes in local contexts. These result in the profound linguistic and cultural hybridity and heterogeneous cultural values embedded in the African community being overlooked (cf. Canagarajah 2001:192, Appadurai 1996:42).

### **2.4 Franglais: A New Sociolinguistic Phenomenon in Cameroon**

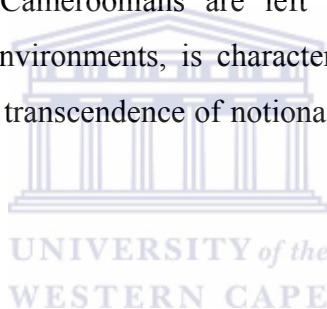
Young (2007) compares CPE to a recent sociolinguistic phenomenon – Franglais. Franglais, as purported by Kouega (2003), is a composite (hybrid) language developed by Cameroon secondary school pupils to codify communication among themselves to the exclusion of non-members. As such, their language is rendered mysterious, while also reinforcing incomprehensibility. These pupils use various techniques of word formation ranging, among others, from borrowing, coinage, shortening, affixation, inversion, and idiomatic formation to reduplication. Though there exist trends to show identities are ascribed, these Cameroonian youngsters have refused to be either Anglophone or Francophone.

In this regard Heller (2007) puts forward that most people are not willing to participate in the game of categorisation nor agree on what identity to construct or how to construct it. For example, agreement on who counts as Catalan or Francophone becomes difficult, especially in areas long associated with ethnic minority movements. It is therefore justified to view identities as being ‘performed’ rather than ‘ascribed’ (cf. Banda 2010; Agha 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Widdicombe 1998; Bourdieu, 1994; 1993).

According to Young (2007), the term “Camfranglais” was coined in 1989 to describe a new language that was developing in Cameroon, and what is now known as Franglais. Franglais is a mixture of English, French and Creole that is mostly found in urban towns like Douala and Yaoundé. This language involves the transfer of English items into French – including codemixing, or intrasentential code switching (that is, the change from one language to the other in a single utterance), and code switching

(which is more or less the subconscious changing over from one language to another) by bilinguals (Wardhaugh 1992:106-107). Although in Cameroon this is cause for concern among teachers, who claim that it affects the level of students' performance in the official languages (Young 2007), Canagarajah (2001) contradicts such an observation. Instead, he purports: "code switching and linguistic negotiation [for example, Frananglais] is in keeping with the hybrid cultural ethos long established [...] and it also serves to construct hybrid postcolonial subjectivities in both classroom and community contexts" (2001:194).

However, the strategic use of several languages among Cameroonians seems to entail much more than just code switching (see Chapter 6 for details). Similarly, to the case reported by Hacksley et al. (2007) in South Africa, the speech behaviour that we typically witness when Cameroonians are left to their own linguistic devices, especially in the urban environments, is characterised by interconnection, fluidity, multi-competent and easy transcendence of notional linguistic boundaries particularly in informal domains.



### **2.4.1 The Influence of Frananglais**

Every attempt to maintain fixity where there is in fact fluidity and flexibility is failing in the era of globalisation and post modernity and giving way instead to what Hacksley et al. (2007) call "multiple code switching" and what Higgins (2009) calls "amalgam systems".

From this perspective, a look at the concept of legitimate language is vital. According to Heller (2001:382-383), the concept of legitimate language shows ways in which the "manipulation of French and English is used [...] to advance the interests of [F]rancophones and [A]nglophones occupying a variety of social positions" and this process unfolds more interestingly in educational and political contexts. This corroborates the notion of discourse variously understood as "delimited tissues of meaning" (Widdicombe 1998:200).

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In spite of this, Anchimbe (2007:10) deduces that other mixed languages (social codes) have emerged in the postcolonial era to cater for the linguistic identity needs of specific groups of speakers, for instance, Franglais in Cameroon, Sheng in Kenya, and Urban Wolof in Senegal. These mixed codes have as a common characteristic the habit of cutting out portions of ex-colonial language(s) and combining them with other languages to create a code that suits the values of its speakers and thus making its speakers a distinct entity within the bigger linguistic group(s). This perhaps is also visible in South Africa where the intellectual elites and popular television series such as *Isidingo* and *Generations* neither identify with a single rural area or the deep African variety. As stipulates by Hacksley et al. (2007) these series and intellectual elites, instead choose to succumb to urbanised technologically sophisticated means of communicating with speakers of several indigenous languages.

Franglais, as rightly gauged by Anchimbe (2007), is the onset of a new linguistic phenomenon with another great influence on the Cameroon linguistic situation. This phenomenon involves the transfer of English, CPE and items from indigenous languages into French by means of both code mixing and code switching. As earlier defined, code mixing is the change from one language to the other in a single utterance by the same speaker and code switching is the production of conversation for interactional purposes which also involves two languages and that can neither be classified as a conventional language A nor B by its bilingual speakers (Auer 2007:326; Wardhaugh 1992:106-107). Phenomena such as code switching and code mixing are not officially recognised (Ndayipfukamiye 2001:105) yet, it is unavoidable among the youth. Franglais thus becomes a cause for concern to teachers in Cameroon as they claim it (like CPE) affects the level of students' performance in the official languages (Young 2007), thereby portraying schools as fertile grounds for the reproduction of traditionally dominant homogenous notions.

This notwithstanding, Franglais clearly downplays the monolingual ideology of equating language to a particular social class, nation, and ethnic group. It shows how youngsters in Cameroon negotiate and challenge existing identities in order to accept

or create and sustain new identity options (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2007:7-8). Echu succinctly puts it thus:

In recent years, another pidginized variety known as Camfranglais [or Franglais] has cropped up in urban centres among the young active population. Created as a language in its own right through a mixture of French, English and indigenous languages [and CPE], it is used as a secret code for intragroup communication while remaining virtually incomprehensible to non-speakers. [...], Camfranglais is used for a wide range of subjects such as love, food and entertainment, family affairs, school life, day-to-day issues and sports discussions. Linguistically, it is characterized by the excessive simplification of morphological, lexical and grammatical structures [...], as well as the extensive use of neologisms [...]. (Echu 2006:12).

In addition to this, Chumbow et al. (2000:52) establish that Franglais which was created by school dropouts soon became the language of marginal populations, such as delinquents, petty criminals, drug dealers and, most interestingly, university students. In sum, while people of various ethnic, social, and linguistic backgrounds use CPF, Franglais is used by young city dwellers namely students, the unemployed, hawkers, and so on as a means of creating and consolidating intragroup awareness. The important distinction between CPF and Franglais is visible in the fact that the former is natural and closer to standard French while the latter is artificial and somehow limited to an age group ranging from 15 to 25 years. According to Echu (2006), CPF is situated between a jargon and a stable pidgin while Franglais is essentially slang language. Although CPF and Franglais are oral varieties employed for informal interaction, both are sometimes written. Such is the case when used by humorists to create fun, by writers in creative works, by researchers and youths for entertainment or seeking advice on the internet (see appendix A for an extract in Franglais). In such instances, the written text is simply a reflection of the oral text and because its orthography, like that of CPE, is also not standardised, there exists great discrepancy in spelling.

Furthermore, Echu asserts that the pidginisation process in CPF could be described as being involuntary, while that in Franglais is voluntary (Echu, 2006:10; Chia, 1990:122). In spite of these differences the pidginisation strategies adopted by the speakers of these two varieties of French (CPF and Franglais) are in many ways

similar. For instance, the pidginisation processes in both instances reveal simplification of lexical and morphological structures, a lack of rigidity in the application of grammatical rules, approximations, an absence of concord, extensive borrowing from CPE, indigenous language calques, and so forth (Echu 2006).

As has been mentioned, some Franglais and CPF utterances borrow from CPE. The usage of words such as *tok* “talk” or “say”, *wa* “wife” or “woman/girl” in general, and *haus* “house” all have English as base. To take one more example in CPF, the compound noun *bayam-sellam*, referring to a small foodstuff retailer in urban centres, is derived from the English verbs “buy” and “sell”. Finally, CPF (like Franglais) is used as an example to show strong and marked reproduction in the repetition of morphological and lexical items. For example, *doucement doucement* (“very slowly” or “very gently”) involves repetition which usually emphasises the intensity of an action and expresses argumentative values and constitutes an inherent feature of the indigenous contact languages (See Echu 2006:3-5 for details).

### **2.5 The Influence of Indigenous languages**

Borrowing as has been observed above is a problem to language loyalists. This stems from the idea that borrowing can eventually give way to shifts into the dominant language or spoil mastery of the official language(s) and at worst, “kill” them. However, it is worth noting that English itself has adopted thousands of words from other languages.

The process of standardisation proved a key aspect in the building of nation-states and went hand in hand with the imposition of fixed norms for formal purposes where, in fact, there was a flux of language diversity among users. According to Hackley et al. (2007), standard language forms were first set down and codified in the early nineteenth century by missionaries who had settled in rural districts. Further standardisation that took place (for example in South Africa during the apartheid era under the auspices of the South African Language Board) proved to be the most instrumental part of the “separatist” ideology.

From this perspective, Hacksley et al. (2007:4) maintain “the construct “indigenous language” is an arbitrary division of a natural continuum, resulting historically from a colonial, Eurocentric attempt to capture and “standardise” these languages in the early nineteenth century.” As earlier said, one characteristic of the language contact situation in Cameroon is linguistic borrowing. The borrowing process here is expressed in different ways involving borrowings from the official languages to the indigenous languages, from the official languages to CPE, from CPE to the official languages, from indigenous languages to official languages, and so on. Lexical borrowing has always been, and continues to be, one of the main sources of enrichment for languages. Echu (2003c) asserts borrowing is the process through which the lexical inventory of a language is enriched by means of bringing in new elements into a language, instead of the sole dependence on existing elements (2003c).

Thus, a linguistic reality pertaining to a particular language is employed by another to fill a vacuum, usually of a meta-linguistic nature. More often than not, the cultural reality or idea expressed in language A is non-existent in language B, to the extent that while speaking language B, we are bound to transfer such a reality or idea onto the recipient language. Borrowing is therefore seen as a deliberate, systematic, and collective process, found not only in bilingual and multilingual communities, but also in monolingual communities. Such culture-based borrowings are grouped into the following areas: gastronomy (local cuisine), traditional titles, dance/music, and socio-cultural institutions, practices, objects, and concepts. Such borrowing is apparent in the recurrent indigenous language loans observed in English and French usage in Cameroon.

Borrowing becomes justified where the loans are related to concepts or realities that sometimes cannot be expressed otherwise in English and French. Where such realities are non-existent in the foreign-language society, it is difficult to express them appropriately without having recourse to lexical items from indigenous languages. This explains the massive presence of terms pertaining to indigenous language terms

which are not translatable into English and French. For example, traditional titles such as *ardo*, *fon* or *lamido* express a cultural specificity, though some may argue that one can refer to them by using words such as “chief” or “king”. But such representations might sometimes tend to be over-simplistic and grossly erroneous in terms of the worldview of the indigenous people. Given the nature of the power wielded, its conceptualisation, and domain of influence, Echu points out that resorting to titles as used in the local scenery, is indispensable (Echu 2003c:12). He further asserts that by trying to avoid the indigenous language terms, language users run the risk of adopting near target language (TL) equivalents or translations. To validate this point, Echu refers to the French *bâton de manioc* (or *bobolo* that is, the cassava finely worked loose, tied with some traditional leaves in tiny amounts, and boiled) as used in Ferdinand Oyono’s *Une vie de boy* published in 1956. He maintains some of these translations are not only confusing and grossly misleading but can sometimes be very hilarious. To clarify this point, Echu (2003c) points to John Reeds’s translation of the novel *Une vie de boy* (that is *Houseboy* (1966)) into English which is both hilarious and out of place in some instances specifically, where John Reeds renders *bâton de manioc* as “cassava stick” in his text (*Houseboy* (1966)) (Echu 2003c:7). Thus, concepts such as *fai* (a traditional title from Lamso the language of the Nso tribe), *maguida* (name given to a Muslim of Northern origin, from the Fulfulde/Hausa language), *mola* (meaning “friend” or “brother”, from the Bakweri language), *ni* (traditional title used for an elderly male person), and *nyango* (from the Bantu grassfields language of the North West Province) tend to have different meanings depending on the context of use and/or person being addressed. *Mola*, *ni*, and *fai* for instance tend to convey intimacy or respect depending on the discourse situation. Cameroonian speakers of English and French use these forms of address in varying situations to suit various purposes which, when replaced by English “Sir/Madam” and the French “Monsieur/Madame”, often appear to be too distant in some contexts (Echu 2003c:7-8).

It can be said, therefore, that lexical items of indigenous language origin cut across linguistic communities. The same word or concept can be used in different languages, though with varying pronunciations and spellings. The word *fon*, for example, is



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generally used in the grassfields region of the North West province to refer to a “traditional ruler”. This same word in Mungaka is spelled *mfon*, *fo* in Mankon and *foh* in Akum. Other Bantu languages such as Kenyang and Bafaw respectively use *nfor* and *nfon*. Similarly, the word *mafo* used in the Bamiléké region, is *mafor* in the Bantu languages of the North West province, all of these forms referring to a “queen mother”. The title given to the father of twins, *tagne*, and the mother of twins, *manyi*, from the Bamiléké region is used in several other Cameroonian Bantu languages with just different spellings.

It would be interesting to investigate such transfer of indigenous language items in Cape Town. It is however important to again note that in the absence of Cameroon English and Cameroon French as well as CPE glossaries, there is often no standardised orthographic form for the lexical items used. Consequently, spellings adopted by language users and researchers vary enormously, not only when one goes from one language to another but even within the same language; for examples, *maguida/magida* and *njangui/njangi*. Such differences in spelling might depend on whether the term is used in an English or French context, while in other cases it is determined by what the language user chooses to adopt. While it is generally noted that English texts prefer to adopt *njangi* and *magida* and the French texts *njangui* and *maguida*, such preferences turn out to be more or less phonologically based and could be used interchangeably.

One sticking fact is that all Cameroonian languages have been relegated to the background since the 1960s. One reason accounting for this relegation is the state fears of revolt from other Cameroonians whose languages were not chosen. This suppressed the proposal for teaching six indigenous languages in the state universities and schools (Chumbow 1996). Similarly, Echu (2003c) propounds that Cameroon adopted a neutral policy of official bilingualism (English and French) at reunification on 1 October 1961 in order to avoid language conflict and unwarranted financial expenditure. It is therefore not surprising that at a meeting of the National Council for Cultural Affairs, held between 18 and 22 December 1974, the term “national language” was unanimously adopted “for all Cameroonian indigenous languages as a

measure of equating the status of the indigenous languages to the official languages” (2003c:4).

This makes the indigenous languages (‘national languages’ henceforth) to stand for national identity, and thus the expression of a national culture. In other words, cultural concepts are shared at the national level through the two official languages. This according to Echu (2003c:4) means that at a given time, those concepts or notions mentioned above cease to be considered simply from an ethnic perspective, since ‘[t]hey go beyond the ethnic level to represent national culture’. This is the case of different foods and dishes, for example *eru*, *ndole*, and so forth, that have now assumed the status of a Cameroonian national culture shared by everyone. This study aims to verify this important consideration.

In this light, Anchimbe (2007:14) infers that the wide score of oral indigenous languages, the ex-colonial languages, and the extensive spread of pidgins and creoles make “postcolonial spaces” (that is regions that were once under colonial rule). The expression “postcolonial spaces” is also used to cover all aspects of societal and individual behaviour that were restructured following colonial heritages (in Chapters 6, 7 and 8). It also includes delicate entities whose patterns of interaction need to be studied using internal rather than external frameworks. As Hacksley et al. (2007:4) would put it, “[I]anguage issues are increasingly being re-evaluated in the light of ‘Africanist perspectives’”. Anchimbe (2007) goes on to propose four (postcolonial) community-based approaches to help improve understanding of linguistic identity in postcolonial spaces. These include the notions of identity opportunism, or fluctuation and linguabridity; identity alignment; cultural cannibalism as critical theory of hybridism; and the 3+1 multilingual policy model of Bokamba (Anchimbe 2007). However, although these notions are relevant for the understanding of speakers’ situational choices of identity and language, they remain outside the scope of this study.

In all, Echu cautions that a complete integration of the national language item into the official languages can only be more meaningful where the morphological and semantic structure of the item in question is well understood. To clarify this point of

view, Echu infers it would be normal for the user of English to know that *bikutsi* comes from three words: *bi* which means “we”, *kut* which means “beat” and *si* meaning “the earth”. Thus *bikutsi* means “we beat the earth” in Ewondo and by the same token, *makossa* means “I dance” in Duala. Faced with such a dense multilingualism and translocal influences within Cameroon, it remains a key interest to explore what happens to Cameroonians in the era of globalisation within transmigration contexts in a multilingual Cape Town.

### **2.6 The Influence of Globalisation: Translocal Insights**

The contemporary transnational world presents the state as a negotiator in the repatriation of difference in various forms including slogans, signs, forms of goods, people, and styles. This is increasingly manifested in schools and other state/official institutions. This claim justifies the Cameroonians’ attitudes towards CPE, for they have been, and are continually being, prohibited to speak this language – usually within school premises and sometimes at home. In this respect, Appadurai deduces that:



[t]he globalisation culture is not the same as its homogeni[s]ation, but, globalisation involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenisation armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise and fundamentalism in which the state plays an increasingly delicate role: too much openness to global flows, and nation-states is threatened by revolts, [...]. (Appadurai 1996:42).

The above epitomises the banal expression of “the global in the local” in a fast-changing world. These only increase tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions and above all foster symbolic domination (Heller 2007; 1999; Canagarajah 2001; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Whether this is so among Cameroonian immigrants in their new space still has to be ascertained.

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It is therefore not uncommon to hear people speak of a global world nowadays. Building on this aspect, with availability of a set of factors such as language, communication, and technology, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identify the growing dominance of English as a supranational language. In a similar manner, Anchimbe (2005a) points out that the age of globalisation and the projection of America in the limelight of technology and commerce plays a great role in the promulgation of English as a world language. Anchimbe does not see English only as a language but as that which permits social actors to sail round the world. Further expanding on this, Anchimbe (2005a) argues the English-medium educational system has gained popularity from its attached prestige – as determined by the American pop culture, industrialisation, and opportunity. In Cameroon, the internationalisation of English and its benefits in employment, interpersonal interaction and cross-cultural integration are now obvious. Cameroonians have now realised that the official bilingualism which was decreed in 1961 was a total failure. Francophones have come to realise they are no longer the dominant and prestigious group, as they find themselves ill-equipped and unqualified to benefit from a wide-range of opportunities offered by English through the Commonwealth and globalisation. Francophones' derogatory name-calling and stereotyping of the Anglophone as "backward" has now seemed to abate.

It follows then that most Cameroonian parents have rushed to register their children in English-medium schools. The children, in turn, have adopted Anglophone-like behaviour since they are brought up in the same environment as Anglophone children, where they are subjected to the same moral lessons, held down to the same behavioural code according to Anglophone culture – reflected in the wearing of uniforms and short hair at school. As a result, Francophone children pride themselves as Anglophones and bilinguals, thus pointing to the fact that they also find in English an identity that puts them in a privileged position. Such situations make clearer nuanced identities in contexts where language no longer only acts as a marker of identity but also as a site of empowerment, among other things (Pavelenko and Blackledge 2004). These dynamics or reconstruction of self become clearer if one

considers the ambiguity, hybridity and dynamic use of terms such as “positioning”, “position-taking” and “habitus” that will be reviewed in the next chapter.

### **2.7 Transnational Influences: An Overview**

According to Bird (2001:7), the European powers which penetrated Cameroon came not just with new ideas but with a new cultural baggage. As has been mentioned elsewhere, the colonialist came with the notion of “nation-states” which created new identities. These new identities came because of new languages and cultures which were implanted by the colonisers.

Given such a multilingual context, the choice for a particular variety or form of a language is problematic in as much as it is socially and politically embedded. That is, decision to choose one language and one language variety over the others is usually shaped by conflicting language ideologies. The shifts in language ideologies and multiplicity of identities available nowadays have been particularly visible with the increase in transnational migration, the explosion in media technologies and globalisation manifested in recent socio-political and socio-economic trends (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

Furthermore, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:2) establish that a closer look at the concepts of language and identity in contexts of transnationalisation shows exactly how complex these concepts could be. For instance, the authors refer to the former Baltic States that had to learn Russian after the Second World War and how the Russian Diaspora is now compelled to learn Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian in order to be considered legal citizens of the Baltic countries. These authors identify in this example one of the strategies embedded in the use of language as a means to appropriate minority and immigrant populations. This, according to Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) seems to stir a major concern for most researchers and as a matter of coincidence, is the centre of this thesis. Anglophones in Cameroon as revealed in scholarly reviews, claim they are being discriminated against because they are the

minority group, while Francophones in Cape Town on the other hand, lament that they are the minority immigrant group and thus discriminated against.

While appreciating the richness of language (thanks to linguistic interpretations such as the poststructuralist approaches, which reveal much of the covert patterning of a text in that they show why it means what it does), Webster, nevertheless, regrets the fact that the methods of linguistic analysis have not yet done full justice to the nature of language use (Webster 2007:329-333). He relates the fact that linguists have made it a habit to always separate systems from processes. This tendency of studying the system in isolation is concretised with reference to Saussure (in Webster 2007), who identifies speech acts and writing as the outward manifestation of process. But this method of studying the product – the text – in ways that make it impossible to conceive it could ever have been generated by any system has hardly heightened appreciation, since a text can only be understood by referring to the system that engendered it. This claim compares with Fairclough (1992:1) who maintains that linguists have not given enough attention to the important social aspects of language, and most importantly, to aspects of the relationship between language and power. Both Webster and Fairclough identify the need for a critical step in order to bring justice to linguistic analysis and emphasise the role of linguistics in the cause for a just society. This, they suggest, can be attained by trying to raise the general level of community discussion (cf. Webster 2007:329; Fairclough 1992:1-3; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:2).

Following from the above, the term *translocality*, which informs the poststructuralist approaches, is denoted. Translocality refers to connectivity, and most importantly, to the fact that today's locals are often closely connected. The media is regarded as the major factor that facilitates and enforces such connections. It closely relates to how Pennycook (2010:4) describes the local, not by juxtaposing it with the concept of "global", but by looking at the local "as the grounded in the particular". That is, locality is seen to be "much more than being in a location" (2010: 14). Put differently, the idea of globalisation is understood not necessarily in terms of the global affecting the local, but also from the perspective of "local movements being made global." That

is, the ways of thinking about the local are not embedded only in time and place but, also in relation to region, nation, the universe, the global, the modern and the new from elsewhere. This implies that the local still matters, although mostly in relation to other locals. Commenting on this concept, (Peter 2006) uses the term translocality, positing that, this makes it possible for some cultures to enter into other specific cultures and to connect these other cultures to yet others. He further stipulates that translocality should also be seen as that which denotes a specific understanding of culture. 'Culture' in this case is defined as

[...] outward-looking, exogenous, focused on hybridity, translation and identification. Within the context of the new media this view translates into a conception where both territoriality ('we here now in our place') and de-territoriality ('they there beyond the bounds of our locale') are reference points for communication, meaning making and identification. (Peter 2006:3-4).

Heller (2007:2), in turn, succinctly expresses this idiom when she states that the use of these approaches (poststructuralist and that of translocality) are indispensable because they consider languages in multilingual settings as a set of resources that circulate in an unequal manner within social networks and discursive spaces. Based on these concepts, meanings (languages) and values are said to be socially constructed within the constraints of social organisational processes under precise historical settings (cf. Bourdieu 1994:268). Understanding the term "network" as used herein presupposes an understanding of "neighbourhood", both term being applicable within a community. That is, terms such as "social network" and "neighbourhoods" generally fit into what Appadurai calls "ethnoscape," as will be seen later on.

A "neighbourhood", as Modan (2007) defines it, is generally recognised within a specific geographical demarcation whereas a "community" is connected through social networks. That is to say, a community is defined through its social networks, where a person can be a member of a geographical community without actually living in the geographical terrain. Similarly, a person can live in a neighbourhood without being part of the community (Modan, 2007:326). This distinction becomes crucial, because this research may reveal that not all social actors accept the practices or

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constructs assigned to them as indigenes of this or that linguistic group or province, country, and so on. In fact, another linguistic group, country, or province may offer networks that are more attractive. This makes it imperative to uncover any transmigratory and translocal trends of cultural flows in Cape Town.

Therefore, different languages in multilingual contexts serve as resources upon which speakers draw to signal “self” (the social actor who can take many forms) and the “other” (with “otherisation” referring to the exclusion of people, especially migrants in their new territories). The term “territoriality” (or “de-territoriality”) as used by Vigourox (2005) again signals how social agents use language to negotiate different identity options at their disposal and attribute different identities to others. To ascertain the complexity and fluidity of identities, Blommaert (2005:207) declares that “[this] is the reason why I become a ‘discourse’ analyst among historians, an ‘anthropologist’ among linguists, and a ‘linguist’ among ‘anthropologists’” This brings to the fore the transdisciplinary nature of the study, where, thanks to translocality, a range of social and linguistic theories come into dialogue, thus “allowing analysis of the linguistic practices of bilingual speakers to be situated in their social, cultural and historical contexts” (Blackledge 2008:298). To better grasp this aspect of translocality, an understanding of “representational spaces” (or “representation of spaces”) and “spaces of representation” is needed.

According to Lefebvre, there is no absolute space. Space “must be grasped in two different ways: as the absolute (apparent) within the relative (real)” (1984:231), for if it were absolute, it would not be fragmented and hence there would be no contradictions in space. Lefebvre further explains this stating that “[p]re-existing space underpins not only durable spatial arrangements but also representational spaces and their attendant imagery and mythic narratives” or “cultural models”. He also goes on to declare that “[k]nowledge falls into a trap when it makes representation of space the basis for the study of life, for in doing so, it reduces the lived experiences” (1984:230). This therefore means that locality (or ‘near order’) and ‘far order’ (that of the state) have long ceased to coincide, and so they are either telescoped into one another or simply clash. For this reason, conflict between the representational spaces



and the systems they cover, particularly between the imaginary realm and imagery of nature, becomes uncommon.

This being the case, the currency of concepts such as crossing and territoriality shall be evaluated against socio-cultural and historic fluidity of multilingual contexts in Africa. According to Banda and Omondi (2007), language and spatial ownership are neither easily quantifiable nor fit neatly into a pre-designed patchwork in multilingual contexts. Closely related to this is Wodak's (2001:3) attempt to describe social processes and structures within which individuals or groups as social and historical subjects create meanings in their interactions with text (spoken or written). As such, she identifies three processes in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) namely: "the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology" all of which expressly connote poststructuralist approaches.

However, legitimisations of power relations are not always clearly articulated. Fairclough (2001) establishes that the use of language is ideological – a medium of domination and a social force serving to legitimise relations of organised power. This again corresponds to CDA. However, the study leans on the analytical perspective discourse and more generally, semiosis (including "visual language"), thus, equating to the poststructuralist approaches to Discourse Analysis while overlooking the critical aspect. Following from this, poststructuralist approaches (and Discourse Analysis) become imperative as they make possible the analysis of both the opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, and power control manifested in language. Even more interesting is the fact that the focus of Discourse Analysis, like that of poststructuralist approaches, is not on purely academic and theoretical problems (Wodak 2001:2), because it analyses social problems too. Discourse Analysis is used in this study "as one element or 'moment' of the material social process [...] which gives rise to ways of analysing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social processes" (Fairclough 2001:122). In a nutshell, Discourse Analysis is used as a method which is in a dialogical relationship with other social theories and methods, thus making it a transdisciplinary framework that co-engages on particular aspects of social progress. In other words, it is open to

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the theoretical reasoning of others and is ready to internalise them in ways which can transform them and vice versa.

It is therefore not surprising that this study would frequently draw insights from fields such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, geography, and the like. This is in conformity with the viewpoint that research based on case studies of translocations policy analysis draws inspiration “from a broad range of disciplines including the social sciences, humanities and law studies [where] such studies address the complex interactions between migration and social change in the contemporary [world] and track the various processes of social transformation [...]” (www. G:\Translocations). Here, translocations seem to attract the researcher’s contributions from the social sciences, humanities, and law studies. Moreover, NGOs, community and other groups from civil society who address the complex interactions between migration and social change in relation to migration are also echoed in the study. The focus is primarily on topics such as state and racism, integration and social inclusion/exclusion, human rights and citizenship, transnationalism, social relations, social identities, Diaspora, consciousness, cultural values, semiosis, means of productivity, and citizenship (Fairclough 2001).

The topics listed above, according to (Appadurai 1996:33-35), include the national and international mediascapes (where the suffix “scape” represents fluid and irregular shapes of landscapes). Landscapes here refer to “shapes that characterise international capital as deeply as they do international clothing style.” This, in other words, refers to the distribution of electronic capabilities both to produce and to disseminate information through newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film production studios now available throughout the world. Thus, there are many and diverse images of the world created by the media. As a result, the narrative-based or image-centred strips of reality produced by private or state interest offer much to those who experience and transform or are transformed by the narratives. Such transformation is made possible by elements such as characters, plots, and textual forms from which scripts of imagined lives, including imaginations of the residents and those of people living in other places. These images involve many complicated inflections which depend on their mode that is, documentary or entertainment, their hardware; that is,

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electronic or pre-electronic and, above all, their audiences, who could be local, national, or transnational. (See Chapters 6, 7, and 8). This brings to mind the theme of migration which plays an integral role in the development of this thesis. Before that, however, a further exploration of facets of globalisation (what Appadurai calls ‘disjunctive relationships’) is needed.

Appadurai refers to disjunctive relationships between nations and states where national and international mediascapes are exploited by nation-states to pacify separatists of all ideas of difference. He believes the contemporary nation-state does so:

[...] by exercising taxonomic control over difference by creating various kinds of international spectacle to domesticate difference, and by seducing small groups with the fantasy of self display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage. [...]. At another level, this disjunctive relationship is deeply entangled with the global disjunctures [where] ideas of nationhood appear to be steadily increasing in scale and regularly crossing existing state boundaries, sometimes, as with the Kurds, because previous identities stretched across vast national spaces or, as with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the dormant threads of a transnational diaspora have been activated to ignite the micropolitics of a nation-state. (Appadurai 1996:39-40).

This could be the case with the influence of SCNC both within Cameroon and the Diaspora Cape Town. Blommaert et al. (2004:8-9) in relation to such situations, infer that hierarchical relations between scales (where “scales” stand for the idea that spaces are ordered and organised in relation to one another, layered and stratified with processes belonging to one scale entering the processes of another) are never neutral. Scales are described as unpredictable when there is, for example, a conflict between local and transnational (globalisation) pressures on government, with no certainty whether the transnational movements will prevail. In this light, scales are seen as extensions of the notion of trajectories (Vigorous 2005; Blommaert et al. 2004) or as on-going movements (globalisation).

Considering the conditions above, Appadurai (1996:33-35) further postulates that the current global economy deals with elementary disjunctures between culture, economy and politics, which consists of mediascapes seen above, and ethnoscapes; that is, the

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landscape of people who constitute the shifting world in which we live. This includes tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and so on. Another major disjuncture is technoscapes; that is, the global configuration which is also ever fluid with facts of mechanical, and information technology (high and low technology) all of which now move at high speeds to penetrate previously impermeable boundaries. Finally, he talks of “financescape,” which refers to the disposition of global capital that has now become an even more mysterious, rapid and a difficult landscape to follow than before, since currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations are now moving hegemonies with great speed and profound implications even in the smallest difference in percentages.

Although this study has got little to do with visual language, the role of verbal language and its serious commitment in theorisation of social practices emerges as an important factor in an effective analysis and in maintaining social communications. This study mostly considers spoken texts (products) in relation to systems (structures) in an attempt to give a full account of the discourse practices of Anglophones and Francophones as they strive to reconstruct and reconstitute the various identity options available to them. According to Fairclough (2001), politics and social life are in close relation to CDA. He defines CDA as (1) a form of critical social science, which is envisaged as geared towards illuminating the problems which people are confronted with, (2) particular forms of social life, and (3) contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming these problems (2001:125). These problems confront those that could be called “losers” in an identified form of social life; and may be directed towards the poor, the underprivileged, and the socially excluded. Because social problems are infinite, CDA has no other option but to choose some aspects of social life that are regarded as “problems.” This is exemplified by the current study which identifies a problem in the implementation of official language bilingualism in Cameroon, because it brings about an unequal distribution of English and French, thus leading to conflict between Anglophones and Francophones while blurring other identity options. This subtly addresses those in the position of commanding both symbolic and material capital (wealth and power). The above situation is appealing similarly to the struggles of the

SCNC discussed earlier. It specifically considers the central feature of global cultures today – that is, aspects of homogeneity, and the role of nation-states as politics of a mutual effort of sameness and difference. Such politics involves cannibalising one another in order “to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular” (Appadurai 1996:43). This situation also encloses the minority and immigrant populations. The study examined the influence of homogenisation and nation-states in relation to new Cape identities to determine whether Cameroonian immigrants always accept their Anglophone/Francophones identities.

### **2.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I set out to review the historic background that shaped the Cameroonians’ identity options and likely to influence linguistic choices in Cape Town. I have discussed the introduction of foreign identities to Cameroon, the existence of many national identities and the creation of new fused identities while showing their relevance in translocal and transnational contexts. That is, I have looked at the sociolinguistic situation in Cameroon and have highlighted the circumstances provoking the Anglophone problem and secessionist tendencies. This section terminated with a brief exploration of translocal and transnational views on transformation in a bid to estimate language practices and the manner of identification among Cameroonian immigrants. This was necessary for a firm grasp of the fluidity and hybridity of language in multilingual contexts. The various themes reviewed throughout this chapter thus provide insights about how specific notions and terms are employed in the study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Towards Language as Localised Social Practice**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I shall examine the notion of cultural glocalisation, homogenisation, and globalisation in the construction of the self and the other. I put side-by-side varied and contradictory notions to determine the essence of homogeneity and heterogeneity in postmodern African sociolinguistics. This means all theories in this chapter are just evaluated to show how I use Pennycook (2010) and Heller's (2007) ideas of language as localised social practice. That is, rather than using those traditional identities (see Chapter 4, sections 4.1 to 4.2.2) I look at this aspect from a performative or multimodal/multisemiotic perspective (see chapter 4, sections 4.3 to 4.6). Also with the issue of space, I mainly examine Appadurai's (1996) idea to show the nature of space as dynamic rather than fixed and permanent. For this reason, I closely examine the notion of neighbourhoods, arguing that the global transforms the local in as much as it is itself being transformed by the local. In other words, we live in a historical era wherein the local and the global are co-implicated in complex and unexpected ways (cf. Shi-Xu 2007). Such analysis will necessarily include the evaluation of notions such as linguistic pecking orders, position, and position-taking, and habitus. Notions of scales, place, and territoriality in the construction of different identities in multilingual and multicultural contexts also become important.

#### **3.1 Territory and 'Space' versus Migration and 'Self'**

There is no absolute space, for while society maybe radically modified or resemiotised it never disappears completely. Besides, as society and space are being modified, they, in turn, modify social actors. According to Lefebvre, it is common to find conflict between representational spaces and the symbolic systems they encompass. For example,

[...] urban space today appears in two lights: on the one hand it is replete with places which are holy or damned, devoted to the male principle or to the female, rich in fantasies or phantasmagorias; on the other hand it is rational, state-dominated and bureaucratic, momentarily degraded and obscured by traffic of every kind, including the traffic of information. It must therefore be grasped in two different ways: as the absolute (apparent) within the relative (real). (Lefebvre 1984:231).

This means that if space were absolute, it would not be fragmented and, hence, there would be no contradictions in space. Lefebvre further explains this by stating that '[p]re-existing space underpins not only durable spatial arrangements but also representational spaces and their attendant imagery and mythic narratives or "cultural models"' (1984:230). Lefebvre (1984:230). then goes on to declare that "[k]nowledge falls into a trap when it makes representation of space the basis for the study of "life", for in doing so, it reduces the lived experiences" (1984:230). This means that locality and the state no longer coincide but constantly shape and reshape each other. This being the case, the currency of concepts such as crossing and territoriality shall be evaluated against socio-cultural and historic fluidity of multilingual contexts in Cape Town (Africa). Heller (2007) and Banda and Omondi (2009) argue that language and spatial ownership are neither easily quantifiable nor fit neatly into a pre-designed patchwork in multilingual contexts. Therefore conflict between the representational spaces and the systems they cover, particularly between the imaginary realm and imagery of nature, becomes uncommon. Thus, in the postmodern world, the constant change, fluctuations and fragmentation of places, spaces, artefacts, and identities, together with rapid mobility, is said to be in a state of translocality what Peter (2006) has described as, a state to re-connect sociological and geographical terms with the felt and imagined reality of "translocal workers", or persons living in a liminal state.

Linking this to the South African situation and among Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town would mean languages are not static. That is, social actors in Cape Town (South Africa) refuse to remain in their nineteenth-century or (later) apartheid boxes. This is true of urban speech often characterised by inter-linguistic borrowings, neologisms, and the growth of mixed urban codes such as Tsotsitaal (a combination of the grammar of a base language, which could be Afrikaans or Zulu, with a diverse,

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and often revolutionary vocabulary from different languages) as propounded by Hacksley et al. (2007) and Deumert et al. (2005).

The globalised new economy, in this same manner, is characterised by transformations in language and identity, thus presenting immigrants as a challenge to the hegemonic linguistic construction of nation-states (Moyer 2007). The immigrants are also seen as those social actors who are fast transnationalising. In this respect, I look at globalisation as a process changing the landscape of the world in three major ways: the shrinking of space, the shrinking of time and the disappearance of borders. This enables me to examine the impact of globalisation from three perspectives, namely cultural homogenisation, cultural heterogenisation and ‘glocalisation’. According to Kumaravadivelu (2009), cultural globalisation refers to the way in which people, cultures, ideas and artefacts have been growing in unprecedented ways with technology (i.e. internet, cable television, and so on) making possible the idea of a global culture, but all these trends only tend to promote Western ideals of capitalism. Conversely, ‘glocalisation’ expresses some interchange between cultures. It is the process whereby a weaker culture absorbs influences that naturally fit into it and can enrich it, while resisting those things that are truly alien from a “stronger culture”. It clearly denounces the idea of a global culture, which stipulates that all the people of the earth would lose their culture someday to enjoy one supreme culture. Localisers (cultural heterogeneity) thus suggest that local cultural identity be revitalised, because of the perceived threats from processes of globalisation. That is, they (the localisers) reject the supposed cultural dominance of the West over the rest of the world and suggest that “reverse colonisation” is taking place. Given that the issues addressed in postcolonial and post-apartheid migration literature are quite diverse, I concentrate mostly on issues around identity, homogenisation, and heterogeneity, which directly relate to the social cohesion and fragmentation and inclusion or exclusion among Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town.

As with the definition of ‘identity’ (see Chapter 4), there is no single definition for ‘migration’ that could easily be relevant in all contexts. Migration is said to involve a change of residence, accompanied by boundary crossing from one area to another.



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According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), migration refers to the spatial movement of people at various times of their lives for various reasons. This means migration involves relocation within a geographical space often characterised by a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. Therefore, migration takes into account simple events in the life cycle of individuals, including movement from one place to another. As such, distance covered or borders crossed qualify one as a local, national, regional, or international migrant (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999).

Migration, as defined by Vigouroux (2005:243), refers to a change of both physical and geographical space. She highlights the fact that not all cases of geographical relocation are termed 'migration' and substantiates this by citing the case of a person who moves from Chicago to Atlanta. Migration (including immigration or emigration) to Vigouroux actually necessitates crossing national borders as have been defined by international laws. She once more substantiates this by citing the case of a Togolese in France. But this distinction turns out to be rather socially constructed, because a German in France, for instance, is not considered a migrant, whereas a South African moving from the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape (all within South Africa) is considered a migrant. This is because the term 'migration' for close to a century now has been used to designate certain kinds of people associated with a low social class and little formal education, usually from less industrialised countries (cf. Deumert et al. 2005).

Such social classification is again visible when Vigouroux goes on to describe space and racial organisation during the apartheid regime. The town centre, she says, was not only a geographic centre but also a point of reference wherein 'others' were negatively identified as 'non-whites'. Vigouroux uses a topographic metaphor when she refers to the 'centre' as that space which was allocated to the people classified as whites, while the periphery (townships in this case) was a centrifugal movement, allocated to the 'non-whites'. "Since the townships could not integrate every 'non-White', they too became centres in their own right with the increasing development of squatter camps around them" (Vigouroux 2005:247). Today, this has gone beyond the mere development of squatter camps and linguistic or racist exclusion to the cruel treatment and brutal killing of Blacks from other African countries. From this, three

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important issues are worthy of note. First, is the notion of ‘insider’ versus ‘outsider’, which has become relatively fluid nowadays, as the immigrants in the era of globalisation transform the host country while he/she becomes equally transformed. Secondly, the intolerance of black immigrants by black South Africans in the townships accentuates exclusion, and lastly, the resurfacing of divisive notions such as ‘centres’ with whites as owners and ‘peripheries’ where Blacks rule.

The global study of a global world, and hence a global culture, is of particular interest in this dissertation and is embodied in the belief that global processes can only take shape in particular locations (cf. Blommaert 2006). The Cameroonian immigrants who come from a sophisticatedly multilingual background (Anchimbe 2007; 2005; Kouega 2005; Echu 2006; 2004; 2003a; 2003b; 2003c) and who have been ‘spatially’ displaced become an exciting sampling population to determine such global processes in the multilingual context of Cape Town.

The minority Cameroonian migrants in Cape Town who identify themselves and are identified in various ways, beginning with the terms ‘refugees’, ‘asylum seekers’, and ‘students’ to ‘mere adventurers’ do not constitute part of the politically integrated society (or the inclusive ‘we’). They are the ‘others’ whose mobility across national boundaries is closely related to (or corresponds with) the needs of the domestic labour market (in the new ‘territory’ or ‘space’). Some of these migrants from Cameroon undertake technical and specialised jobs with good salaries, while others get involved in low-skilled, high risk and poorly paid jobs and yet others simply set up their own enterprises and, as such, are generally referred to as ‘commercial immigrants’. Thus, immigrants could be said to bring with them new identities and to be continually negotiating new ones in their new postcolonial spaces (cf. Anchimbe 2005).

Vigouroux (2005:241) notes the relevance of ‘space’ in multilingual settings and linguistic issues when she refers to geographers and sociologists who consider the spatial and social to be indispensable. She further refers to Marxists geographers of the 1970s who argued that space was socially constructed and later in the 1980s, that society itself was spatially constructed. Vigouroux applauds these theorists for their

insight into the multilayered nature of space. Blommaert et al. (2004) concur with this view proclaiming that all spaces are not equal.

Not all spaces are equal as we all know. A move from Kenya to the UK is a move from the periphery of the world to one of its centre, and the ‘peripheral’ resources and features people bring with them in such a move get re-ordered and re-loaded, so to speak, in the ‘central’ economy in which they land. (2004:9).

Further clarifying the notion of space, the concept of scales, is shown as closely related to the notion of space. Scale emphasises the difference between the centre, peripheries, and semi-peripheries. Taking the field of language for instance, relations of inequality, as such, become evident through high prestige attributed to ‘central’ accents of English (for example those from the UK and US) among non-native speakers. On the other hand, low prestige is attributed to linguistically equivalent but peripheral accents such as those from India, Nigeria, and other places. In all, “all spaces stand in some kind of relationship with each other – a relationship of power and value impossible to establish beforehand, but nevertheless real and in need of inquiry” (Blommaert et al. 2004:8-9).

Vigouroux further extends the subject of space in a way that is contrary to Blommaert et al. (2004). She includes ‘territory’ in order to perceive space as a system of relations with symbolic meaning that helps speakers to appropriate the multiplicity of space – this she calls ‘territoriality’. This idea is expressed as follows:

(1) I think of ‘space’ more broadly, as a spatially delimited environment, lived practices, and a system of relations, all bearing symbolic meaning. I assume that individually and together these complementary dimensions of space influence language practice especially in multilingual settings; (2) I also pay attention to the speaker and his/her attempts to maintain, organise, transform and ratify the space he/she lives in. The main point of my reflection is thus the appropriation by speakers of multiple dimensions of their space, a form of ‘spatial behaviour’ [...] which I call ‘territoriality’. (Vigouroux 2005:241).

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The way this concept of space is used, is an indication that it still needs a stronger foundation to be able to stand on its own. The above arguments show how social scientists themselves spearhead the legitimisation and reproduction of dominant social and cultural values. “They construct those whose culture and linguistic resources are different as, instead, having deficient or non-existent resources, and therefore as ‘bad’ or ‘incompetent’”. This means that social categorisation gets reproduced through language (Moyer et al. 2007:144-153); sometimes even by those who claim to champion linguistic and cultural rights.

On a similar note, Agha (2007) draws from references on accents and believes these stereotypes simply construct some as having an accent while others are constructed as those without an accent. Further attention to the exclusion of others comes from Anchimbe (2007) who comments on the issue of native-speakers from the UK or the US. Like Agha, Anchimbe criticises the fact that emphasis is laid on origin and not the linguistic competence of individuals. In collaboration to this, Moyer et al, further propound that “[m]ultilingual practices in monolingual institutional contexts can no longer be considered as exception” (2007:137). They go on to explain that tensions existing in public institutions are a result of diversity brought about by contradictions between democratic commitments to citizenship rights alongside homogeneous restriction still practiced in post modern states.

Views, like those of Moyer et al. (2007) expressed above, clearly suggest a shift in ideologies, with special emphasis on how multilingualism is constructed, understood, and practiced. These views create awareness in the globalised world, wherein migration is no longer perceived as a one-time displacement because of the connectedness between countries and due to developed communication techniques, which make it easier for migrants to maintain contacts with their home country (Moyer et al. 2007:138; Appadurai 1996:42).

Looking at Appadurai’s view on space (what he prefers to call ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘context’), the notions of heterogeneity and multiple selves become apparent. Like Modan (2007) and Richards, (2003) Appadurai asserts that global and local realities

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may differ from context to context and from person to person; that is, a person may signal a certain identity in one context but signal a completely different one in another context. Following from this, Anchimbe observes, multilingualism becomes a much more complex procedure as compared to sheer bilinguals' ability to switch between languages or identities. As Anchimbe rightly puts forth, 'it deals with identity creation' and not "identity concealment" and the adoption of (extra) linguistic and cultural elements shared within one in-group where one finds oneself and where one belongs by virtue of birth and/or educational background (Anchimbe 2007:15-16). Consequently, the construction of identities is a process wherein each generation inscribes onto it, the marks of its time.

Since it is clear that context is produced by those involved in identity creation, research in multiplex interpretive sites becomes an advantage as it exposes the researcher to different contexts with the same (or different) individuals assuming different roles. That is to say, participants tend to use the different languages they can speak to assert different identities once in new contexts, and sometimes in the same contexts. Thus, they promote and sustain hybrid identities. With regards to Cameroonian immigrants, therefore, investigating multilingualism in multiplex sites wherein they mix and mingle with South Africans becomes interesting. Whether South Africans will also use many languages and tend to draw from the several of languages available to them in their day-to-day life is yet to be explored.

Appadurai does not condone the concept of symbolic territory ('de-territorialisation' or 'space') as used by Vigouroux (2005) and by Blommaert et al. (2005). Like Appadurai (1996), Anchimbe (2007) defines 'space' (that is, postcolonial space) as 'regions that were once under colonial rule.' Thus, the word 'space' is used here 'to cover all aspects of societal and individual behaviour that were restructured following colonial heritages' (Anchimbe 2007:1). Accordingly, Appadurai (1996) recognises the complexities of the question of identity and situates it in the de-territorialised contexts when he defines this concept (of de-territorialisation) in terms such as "the image", "the imagined," and "the imaginary," stating

these terms direct us to something critical and new global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined by more concrete purposes and structures), (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organised field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organised practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility [...]. The central problem of today's global interaction is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. (Appadurai 1996:31-32).

In view of the differences between the homogenous literature and heterogeneous literature on the issues of identity, Appadurai recognises that the monolingual-based perspectives have gone far afield with vast empirical facts to bear on their side (see for similar arguments Anchimbe 2007; Shi-Xu, 2007). These homogenous arguments, as circulated by some social scientists, for example, (Blommaert et al., 2005; 2004; Blommaert 2006) usually focus around Americanisation or commoditisation and sometimes around both these aspects. In this thesis, I argue that the monolingual and homogenous biases obscure the connections between the processes of social modernisation (Appadurai 1996) and this according to Hacksley et al. (2007) and Shi-Xu (2007) limits a complete appreciation of the hybrid third-world linguistic landscape.

Following Appadurai's views on globalisation, this study draws from the cultural heterogeneity of the fragmented 'self' (where the same social actor can assume (imagine) and/or be assigned multiple identities in the same or different environments. Only with this option, can I meticulously examine the new (or often neglected) hybrid identities and contradictions involved in negotiating Cape identities. This, in turn, shall depend mostly on the understanding of concepts such as position, habitus and position-taking of the social actor (or the 'fragmented self'). An understanding of these notions will also show how individuals are socially constructed, thus further informing the audiences of the importance of poststructuralist approaches, and how these approaches conceive identity (Heller 2007, Widdicombe 1998, Bourdieu 1994).

Nevertheless, another look at the resurfacing of traditional notions will give a better appreciation of the poststructuralist approaches reviewed in the next chapter.

### **3.2 Scales, Polycentricity, Indexicality and Interactional Regimes in Sociolinguistics**

Collins et al. (2007) indicate that restriction of communicative experiences positions bounded events as the most prominent weakness of interactional analysis. The authors emphasise that globalisation and language contact do not necessarily inhabit different conceptual worlds, as they seem to do at first sight. This is due to the fact that much of the literature on globalising processes focuses on how it engages not only with the enthusiasms and identities of persons, but also as cultural media that are taken up in local circumstances. Moreover, ‘globalisation’ invokes the (whole) world, most commonly with regards to that which it transcends: the nation-state, itself a unit of power and identity of considerable scale and width (though now apparently surpassed by the transnational, globalising movements of peoples, commodities, and cultural media that the very term ‘globalisation’ evokes).

In contrast, language contact, an area of research traditionally concerned with the short-lived and durable effects of contact between speakers of different languages and varieties, is typically associated with the primal scene of communication: the face-to-face exchange. Such exchanges may involve economic transactions, institutional procedure and political processes, but they are thought of as consisting of people talking in a shared situation and so on, all of which involve an ongoing contact with linguistic “strangers”. Collins et al. state that the dichotomy of global scale versus local setting is false, for if we live in a globalised world, we live it through local circumstances, and the terms “global” and “local” are necessarily linked (2007:1). It can be argued instead that scaling and the framing, which turns inert settings into scenes of activity, are key processes in the communicative economy of contemporary social formations (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2007:1).

Blommaert et al. (2005b:213-214) clarify this tautology in an attempt to better represent globalisation when they again call to mind the notion of scaling. To do this, they emphasise power differences (in spaces), which makes room for a dynamic and highly differentiated account of social structure that is flexible and related to interaction through orders of indexicality. This connects the larger social order to micro-interactional processes. According to Blommaert (2006:i), “scales” is a theoretical notion borrowed from geography and World Systems Analysis with two crucial dimensions. The first dimension merges time and space into a complex unit and the second offers “a vertical spatial (or spatiotemporal) metaphor in which stratification – the non-equivalence of scales – is central.” The latter becomes critical here as it introduces power and inequality as key elements of social semiotic processes, thereby integrating these dimensions (now often seen as a theoretical add-on) into the core of sociolinguistic thinking. This implies that several theoretical dimensions of scale focus specifically on how scales as indexical phenomenon are strongly connected to indexicalities of normativity and normalcy. This discussion is followed by a number of illustrative sketches that show how the scaling phenomena (outscaling and scale-jumping) can reformulate several types of sociolinguistic phenomena.

Expanding on this, Blommaert et al. (2005a:203) continue that “the notion of scales deals precisely with the idea that spaces are ordered and organized in relation to one another, stratified and layered, with processes belonging to one scale entering processes at another scale”. They refer, for example, to skin colour and social class backgrounds or a particular regional (peripheral) accent influencing situated interactions, such as media reporting, which might influence how people talk about their life. Another term earlier evoked is ‘polycentricity’ which supposes the existence of many centres. ‘Centres’ in this case refer precisely to those places or spaces characterised by service economies with high profit goods, and high-level accumulation of capital. On the other hand, ‘peripheries’ are areas of abject poverty, depending solely on the centres, and finally, ‘semi-peripheries’ are the parts in between the centres and peripheries and as such enjoy some degrees of high profit with a significant degree of dependence on centres. The notion of polycentricity and



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interactional regimes become imperative in further understanding the superiority of certain spaces in relation to others (as well as the people in the spaces).

In their study of the immigrant neighbourhood of Brugse Poort in the city of Ghent, Belgium, Blommaert et al. (2005:212) define a neighbourhood as having polycentric spaces, with the principal characteristic of each centre being the existence of at least one interactional regime. Here, the term 'interactional regime' stands for behavioural expectations in relation to language and physical conduct.

This neighbourhood, according to Blommaert et al. (2005), consists of historical, spatial, and linguistic density in addition to the metropolitan, national, and international dimensions that inform the neighbourhood. Thus, Blommaert et al. (2005) focus more on localisation in order to describe transnational cultural flows of a local neighbourhood and to explore the 'implosion' of the world into a neighbourhood, or to analyse a daily tangibility that consists of global dimensions (Appadurai 1996; Giddens 1991).

By focusing on localisation and transnational cultural flows to explore how the world disintegrates into a neighbourhood, Blommaert et al. (2005) overlook the possibilities of this neighbourhood transforming the world too. That is to say, they fail to indicate how experiences of actors in this neighbourhood could influence the perception of the world. In this study, I use the Salt River shebeen (meeting venue for the Cameroon North Westerners' Association and other meetings) and the residence of the Mifi president in Goodwood (the Mifi meeting venue) among other neighbourhoods, to investigate how identity options are negotiated within different multilingual contexts in the day-to-day interactions of the Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. This may add insights about how processes of glocalisation, and appropriation, including media interactions (cf. Pennycook 2007), could be useful activities in exploring how a neighbourhood could in turn affect a nation or the world at large.

Though I appreciate the plausibility of the notions of insider and outsider as propounded by Vigouroux (2005), and also agree with Blommaert et al. (2005; 2004) that it could be misleading to define spaces in exclusive non-linguistic social

practices. They also suggest that some spaces (or contexts) and their practices could be superior or inferior to others (Blommaert 2007, Collins et al. 2007, Blommaert et al. 2005; 2004). However, I tend to agree with Agha (2007) and Heller (2007) who stipulate a series of questions that need to be answered in order to resolve such a controversy. They insist that questions such as, who designates one language (or context) as a centre and the other as a periphery? Under what circumstance does this happen? And what benefits does this person(s) get from such classifications? need answers. More specifically, Agha emphasises: “But what is involved in claiming that such cultural values exist at all? For whom do they exist?” (Agha 2007:203). Agha declares that he has observed enormous variation among genres, ranging from the use of names and journalistic depictions of accent responses to playback experiments, with some elicited by linguists while others occur as a natural part of the basics of social life.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is that, to embrace the promulgation of the US, Japan and the UK as centres remain questionable, for they do not attempt to “go beyond a-culturalist, dualistic and binary traditions (of self and the other, person and society, analyst and text, language and culture) to explore human discourses” (Shi-Xu 2007:3-9). By ‘a-culturalist’ here, I refer to the idea of assuming discourses to be the same across human cultures. However, this study is insusceptible to such standard Western ideologies of uniformity as it instead presents heterogenisation and glocalisation of cultures as capable of engendering diverse discourses while respecting and acknowledging culturally different ‘others’.

### **3.2.1 Linguistic Pecking Orders: Reality or Idealism**

Some linguists try to address the reality of multilingualism by using the scalar notion, arguing that this offers new insight into both ideological and political layering of languages in society (cf. Blommaert 2007, Blommaert et al. 2005; 2004). This, in other words, means that the phenomena of mixedness, simultaneity, and hybridity at a more micro level of analysis could be looked at from a different perspective, for example where what is seen as mixed is not “a set of equivalent resources but

hierarchically stratified resources, producing different, scale-sensitive indexicalities and connecting with different speaker roles, degrees of authority, restrictions on participation” (Bailey 2007:258), to name but a few. In this way, they end up treating the ‘social diversity of speech types’ (styles) rather than heteroglossia.

Bakhtin (1981:291) defines heteroglossia as discourse which combines and mixes forms and contents that represent the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions, the differing epochs and the different socio-ideological groups of the past and in the present as well as the future. In agreement with this, Peter (2006) asserts the only semiotic resources often available for self-expression and linguistic stylistic heteroglossia for instance, is the language choice through which the local and translocal can be negotiated. This means that languages offer us “the co-existence, combination, alternation, and juxtaposition of ways of using the communicative and expressive resources” (Peter 2006:3). Therefore, the choice of another language other than the first language (L1) as the means of communication, the choice to mix languages, registers, styles, genres; and the recycling of linguistic and textual elements from other texts explicitly portray the manifestation of heteroglossia (Peter 2006).

However, Blommaert et al. (2005) and Collins et al. (2007) maintain that scales are resources used by speakers to make sense of each other and the activity in which they are engaged. They believe this is always done in integral and often unacknowledged aspects of sociolinguistic contexts and contextualisation, not in situations of interactional co-presence. Adding to this, Blommaert (2007) elaborates the need to complete the discourse analytic toolkit with two ‘seriously useful’ sociolinguistic tools. These tools include orders of indexicality (the systemic patterns of authority, control and evaluation, or inclusion and exclusion of others by the perceived ‘real’) and polycentricity, a key feature of interactional regimes; again projecting the presence of an evaluating authority during one’s interactions with the immediate addressee (Blommaert 2007:115-119). He claims these tools would help observe various linguistic forms and cultural variations that characterise the late modern age. In this piece, Blommaert (2007) posits language as fragmented; thus bringing about a tremendous spectrum of sociolinguistic variation (which now covers macro and

micro-variations, all of which are important in social life). These depart from variations between languages which he describes as code switching ‘to variations playing out small phonetic variables, microscopic style shifts in register.’ This in other words means, ‘language is, in the practice of its occurrence in real situations of use, a repertoire: a culturally sensitive ordered complex of genre, styles, registers with a lot of hybrid forms, and occurring in wide variety of ways, big and small’ (2007:115).

In addition, Blommaert et al. (2005) declare:

Our point is that such processes of dependence and inequality occur not at one level – the world – but also at other, smaller levels. Center-periphery patterns valid at a worldwide scale also occur for instance within a geopolitical region (think of the expanding EU as a case in point), within one state (the urban versus rural areas) and even within cities, towns or neighbourhoods (reflected, often, in real estate prices). They occur in all kinds of symbolic spaces too: Yale University is more *\_central\_* [sic] than the University of Dar es Salaam or the University of Northern Kentucky, while the University of Northern Kentucky is still more *\_central\_* [sic] than that of Dar es Salaam. And this relationship exists both in real terms – Yale is a richer institution than the University of Dar es Salaam or Northern Kentucky – as well as in symbolic terms, a point well established by Pierre Bourdieu. In fact, one could argue that the world is turned into a cultural artefact by organizing it along different hierarchically ordered scales. (Blommaert et al. 2005:202).

The above authors have actually put in a great deal of thinking in their work to “reverse the usual order of thinking about multilingual situations” (Blommaert et al. 2004). With this in mind, the authors state, “multilingualism is not what individuals have or lack, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy”. Thus, this justifies why some highly multilingual individuals, such as a Bulgarian immigrant in Ghent who spoke Bulgarian, Russian and Turkish could be labelled as having no language – because she could not speak Dutch, French or English (Blommaert et al. 2005:210-213). Such labels only reveal linguistic difference and, refuse to cope with difference. However, Branson and Miller (2000) in Pennycook (2010:6) caution against this, saying “[l]et us recognise the culturally specific nature of our own schemes and search for new

modes of analysis that do not fit other languages into a mould but celebrate and build on their epistemological differences”. Thus, who is labelling the Bulgarians as having no language, and why? What is also important here is how the Bulgarians despite being labelled as having no language are able to live a normal life and carry out their daily chores.

The notions of scale, polycentricity, orders of indexicality and interactional regimes add to the sociolinguistic tools (cf. Blommaert 2007). However, there is a need to reconcile the argument about moving beyond homogenous speech communities to sociolinguistic systems in a bid to examine “how they connect and relate to each other”; and the claim that “multilingualism is not what individuals have or lack, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy” (Blommaert 2007:120).

Conversely, Heller is conscious of the obvious fluidity and complexities of identities in multilingual contexts made possible by the ontological positions one takes in interaction, which are not necessarily predetermined. She (2007:14) does not condone the idea of emphasising “processes of social selection [...] interactions and around performances which are evaluated, not as indices of mastery of conventions, but as indices of other kinds of competence” such as (intelligence, work skills, personality).

I tend to agree with Heller (2007:11) who ascertains that “[t]he constant emergence of traces of different languages in the speeches of individual bilinguals goes against the expectation that languages will neatly correspond to separate domains [or ‘boxes’] and stay put [fixed] where they are meant to stay put” (cf. Banda 2010). Moreover, I am in agreement with Heller (2007:2) and Agha (2007) who dispute the notions that treat hierarchies as inherently linguistic. In a nutshell, Heller’s (2007:11) assessment is that “language is but one terrain for the construction of relations of social difference and social inequality as it links the domain of bilingualism to studies of ideology, social practice, and social organisation.”

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In view of that, Agha (2007) and Heller (2007) challenge the recurrence of situated views about language and identity, and question the efficiency of the person(s) assigning which values to which resources, how and why he/she does this and with what consequences (see also, Anchimbe 2007, Canagarajah 2001). These authors declare that the implication of such structural-functional approaches in the educational, legal and health institutions, promote the reproduction of state structures. Following from this, Heller highlights the fact that speakers in such situations often draw on linguistic resources with perverse and unintended consequences, given the situations in which they find themselves. However, this does not mean that speakers suddenly lose their multilingual abilities.

Moreover, understanding linguistic resources as conventionally having certain values connected to certain frames of interpretation is not of great value, since it is always dependent on someone's notion of what counts as ability to control access to both resources, and the definition of their values. To Heller (2007:14-15) the uneven distribution is to be understood not as random, but as a product of the history of politico-economic processes, in order to bring forth the question of the relationship between power, social organisation, and ecology.

In addition to this, Bailey (2007) identifies the monolingual majority of the US and Western Europe as those exercising political and economic power and thus better placed to sustain social boundaries by applying these to ways of speaking (styles) just as they constitute identities through boundary marking. Bailey sums this up as follows:

In the United States, for example, White English monolinguals are the dominant group, both economically and politically. This economic and political dominance is extended, via symbolic domination, to broader standards for social evaluation. Even though the majority of historical immigrants to the US have not been English-speaking, and even though the country is increasingly Latino and non-white, being a monolingual Anglophone, speaking a variety of Standard English, and being White constitutes one as an unmarked American. Highly naturalised categories of race, language and national identity thus merge in the popular mind into an essentialized unity.

[But] [s]ocial change, through migration, can serve to denaturalise and problematize boundaries and essentialized unities. (Bailey 2007:259).

In consideration of the above, Bourdieu remarks the appearance of universality of research in languages in “which certain sociologists, especially Americans, have accustomed us [...] is due only to the imprecision of a vocabulary hardly distinguishable from everyday usage” (1994:268). To be explicit, literature in sociolinguistics which draws on hierarchical social structures confirm Bourdieu’s assertion that such instances make “the most abstract coexist with the most concrete.” As an example, he refers to “a photograph of the president of the Republic playing tennis or an interview with a baker with the most formal analysis of the generative and unifying power of habitus” (a term that I review later). In her turn, Heller (2007:11) speaks of structural-functional analyses or ambiguous affiliations that have persisted over time, and which are continually challenged by the very studies it inspired. Indeed Collins et al. (2006:1) are first to admit that there is no difference between the local and the global, for the global is always experienced in a local circumstance. Similarly, Blommaert et al. (2005:212) postulate that “[h]ierarchical relations between scales are unpredictable when there is a conflict between local and transnational (global) pressures on a government, for instance, it is by no means sure that the transnational influences will prevail”. My argument is that notions such as space (and/or types of place and scale) still need further exploration to be universally applied.

Heller (2007) diverges from most of those studies that treat concepts such as bilingualism, community, identity, and language as natural and bounded phenomena. For example, Heller refutes the idea that ‘space’ be postulated as something which generates indexical meaning. She proposes instead that such phenomena be seen “as heuristic devices which capture some elements of how we organise ourselves, but which have to be understood as social construct (in the definition of which we as researchers participate as much as anyone else [...])” (Heller 2007:13). Agha (2007) and Appadurai (2000) give similar arguments. Moreover, Widdicombe also notes, only by this means is it possible for us to discuss social constructs (and the ontological position we take regarding the nature of the phenomenon under investigation), as well

as possibly investigating some of the fuzziness and complexity that persistently emerge in data (cf. Widdicombe 1998).

### **3.3 Multilingualism/Language as Localised Social Practice**

The question of language and how it is conceptualised, and continues to be conceptualised and perceived has been an ongoing debate which linguists and even non-linguists can no longer overlook. As is evident from the previous section, while some continuously produce and reproduce knowledge that sustain the notion of language as an autonomous system, others have began to contest and offer contrary notions that suggest languages, like the communities of its speakers, are social constructs. I tend to agree with the latter.

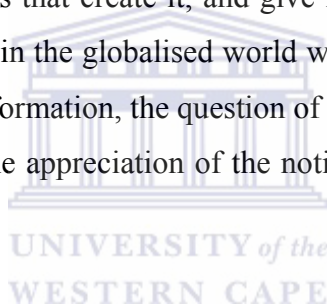
Heller (2007) and Pennycook (2010) are among those contesting the bounded nature and widespread conceptualisation of language as bounded entities. They both believe there is need to shift the current definitions of language away from countable, bounded units of code and community, to a more processual and material approach that characterize “language as a social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action” (Heller 2007:1). In this conceptualisation, language is a way of doing social activities as determined by one’s socio-cultural and historic experiences since it is regarded as a social process always reconstructed in relation to its environment and other factors in this environment (Pennycook 2010, 2007). This, as Pennycook (2007) argues, is because the practices of social actors are not limited to things that they do but extends to include all other activities central to how these social actors organise “social life.”

This is how Pennycook comes up with the notion of language as a localized practice, which in a way echoes Heller’ (2007) multilingualism as social practice. In this light, Pennycook (2010:4) establishes the local to mean the way language is used locally wherein “the local is always defined in relation to something else regional, national, global, universal, modern, new from elsewhere.” Accordingly, language is not to be separated from its speakers’ histories, their cultures and places, and their ideologies if



it has to be understood, and take into consideration all those intricacies that are involved in its being.

Looking back at Pennycook's notions of practice and local, the link between these terms and language and thus, their changeability become unquestionable. This is especially true when one calls to mind the fact that language as local practices invokes more than just "[...] the sociolinguistic truism that people use languages in particular contexts" as this notion (language as a local practice) challenges the traditional and worldview assumption that language is a pre-existing product that speakers use. As he declares, "language is a product of social action, not a tool to be used" (Pennycook 2010:8). What Pennycook is saying is that, language gets produced by practices, which are activities that are repeated, and tend to become a norm. The norm of course is not fixed since practices that create it, and give it substance continually change as well. This view is critical in the globalised world where new economy, migration and the rapid circulation of information, the question of political and social concerns are at the fore and make easy the appreciation of the notion identities as performative (See Chapter 4, section 4.6).



### **3.4 The Complexity of Identity**

#### **3.4.1 The Concept of Self**

In this section, a person's identity is seen as his or her display of, or ascription to, membership of some category. With this in mind, Antaki and Widdicombe (1998:1) put forward that there is no clear-cut point between theories and analysis, a point that is adopted in this study. Analysis in this study begins with the realisation that an individual can be sensibly described in a number of ways or under a multitude of categories.

Therefore, the self relates to the central aim of poststructuralism. According to Widdicombe (1998:200), poststructuralism uses a reformulated concept of identity

and triggers a rethinking of the ontological status of the self while at the same time, showing that knowledge is socially constructed and closely related to those in power.

I take the concept of self to mean how people organise their world into categories and use these categories to conduct daily business. For this study, then, the 'self' helps give greater insight into the concept of identity, which is used not to show what people are, but what they do and how they do it. Moreover, Antaki and Widdicombe (1998:4) declare that a person can be a member of infinite categories with each category implying that that person can have a range of characteristics. This corresponds with Agha's assertion that the notion of identities must be understood by criteria of fractional congruence and not necessarily in "absolute terms". Agha (2007:206) further points out that it is undeniably true that, "the fractional non-identity of messages is itself a measure transformation of social relations across different periods and locales [...]".

The concept of identity can be variously specified, for example as an independent variable accounting for participants' use of particular linguistic or discursive variables, as a means of referring to and making reference about self and others or as a constructed display of group membership, as a rhetorical device, and so on. As mentioned before, I treat identity as an element of context for talk in interaction. This is important because of the unavoidable link between interactions and social order. This therefore suggests that with the addition of any social generalisation, it is still possible to discover discrete particularisations which can challenge or modify the claim made by means of generalisation (McKinlay 2006). Elaborating on this point of view, McKinlay (2006) refer to the contemporary experience of life and selfhood in 'late' or 'high' modernity, arguing that the electronic media have altered the situational geography of modern social life to the extent that the experience of social life is more fluid, uncertain and complex than before, with the self emerging as the focus of interactional experiences (cf. Heller 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Appadurai 1996; Giddens 1991). In all, recordings of lifespan discourse produce correct versions of individual experiences in theories of generalisation, making sense

only when self-positioning in relation to society is achieved through talk (Nussbaum et al. 1993).

### **3.4.2 The Concept of Position and Position-Taking**

Bourdieu states that position is that social space occupied by actors which could include proximity to power, occupation, or education (Bourdieu 1994:261). According to Bourdieu therefore, a position, is more or less the ‘sense of investment’ that each agent applies to itself, either as a sort of necessary locus which beckons those who are made for it (“vocation”) or, by contrast, as an impossible destination, an unacceptable destiny or one that is acceptable only as temporary refuge or a secondary, “accessory position”. Position in this case is closely related to disposition (habitus) (including the social characteristics of posts and the social characteristics of agents who fill them). It tends to show three main categories (1), the modest direction to which social agents orient themselves (2), their daring and disinterestedness, or thirst for profit towards the long term risky investments of journalism and (3), serial theatre, and so on.

Transnational migration, like transcontinental migration, results from different interrelated and interacting political social and economic phenomena, at both national and international level. In South Africa, the position of Cameroonians is doubly felt – both as immigrants and foreigners. This has become even worse with the recent xenophobic attacks on black immigrants to Cape Town.

Position-taking (*prise de position*) refers to choices that actors make to signal their position to one another in symbolic terms. This could include, for example, styles of dress, choice of leisure activities and taste in arts (Bourdieu 1994:261; see also Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:21-101; Fairclough 2001:122-123). In South Africa, as is disclosed in Chapter 6, these have extended to include choices of Cameroonian food, language, and solidarity seen in meetings, for instance, which captivate the

South Africans as well. How these affect new identity options is still to be determined.

Position and position-taking (what Bourdieu calls ‘practices’) are highly interwoven and thus it is very difficult to state where one concept ends and where the other begins. Besides belonging to a position, owning a specific position does not always predetermine position-taking. The term ‘positioning’ could therefore be used both to refer to notions of position and of position-taking. The concept of positioning is vital in poststructuralist approaches as it helps sustain the fact that ideology ‘interpellates’ individuals into particular positions so that they come to have the kinds of identity which are necessary for social practices.

Looking back at the concept of space (as used in this study), positioning helps to portray better a shift from the spatial metaphor as constructed by dominant homogeneous discourses. Heterogeneous discourses call social subjects into place of particular discourses. Here, the new notion of space shifts from the question of “who I am” to “where I am” – a notion very useful for the creation and production of positions rather than taking positioning as a given. In clearer terms: one can belong to or own a particular position, but one can neither own a specific space nor belong to one permanently (Widdicombe 1998:200). In Agha’s (2007:94) words, it would do no good “to think of such presuppositions as a static inventory of things [...]”. Agha continues to say that self-conceptions turn out to be introspective in subjective ways, and that acts of interpersonal communications which help reinforce identity can only be experienced by others if they are performed through perceivable public signs (2007:237).

A simple example could be that of Cameroon under German rule. During this era, Cameroon was spelt and articulated as Kamerun. Following German defeat, the same Kamerun became known as both Southern Cameroons (British section) and La République du Cameroun (French section) under the auspices of the League of Nations from 1919 till 1961. At reunification, pioneered by the United Nations, the two Cameroons became the Federal Republic of Cameroon and later the United

Republic of Cameroon. In recent times, in spite of all Anglophone oppositions, this country has for a second time resumed the name Republic of Cameroon (La République du Cameroun) to refer to the whole territory of Cameroon. This means that multiple, contradictory and overlapping discourses arise from the exercise of power, the production of knowledge, and institutional practices which in turn create different kinds of subjectivities with some temporary and others transitory (Agha 2007). Similarly, the self, which depends on the changing positions taken or resisted during interaction, is in constant flux.

### **3.4.3 The Concept of Habitus**

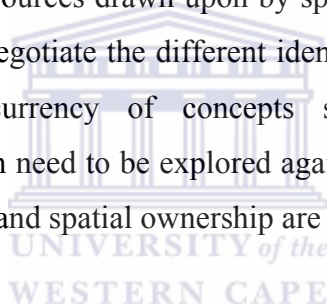
Bourdieu (1994:281) postulates that habitus is “embodied history, internalised as a second nature and so, forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product.” Bourdieu proceeds to give a dualistic view of habitus which

recognises only the self-transparent act of consciousness or the externally determined thing has to give way to real logic of action, which brings two objectifications of history, objectifications in bodies and objectifications in institutions or, which amount to the same thing, two states of capital objectified and incorporated, through which a distance is set up from necessity in its urgencies. (Bourdieu 1994:281).

What Bourdieu means here is that habitus “is a spontaneity without consciousness or will” which is very much opposed to the mechanical necessity of things without a historic background in mechanistic theories. This is very much present in the reflexive freedom of subjects “without inertia” in rationalist theories. In other words, habitus tends to foster experiences likely to defend it, while rejecting information that could call its accumulated information into question (1994:285).

Disposition, or ‘habitus’, presupposes that there is no direct relationship between position and forms of position-taking. That is, “[p]ositions are associated with certain sets of practices.” However, “occupying a position does not cause a person to adopt these practices.” Moreover, “habitus is the site of interplay between structure and practice” (Bourdieu 1994:261). The whole notion of ‘habitus’ as expressed by

Bourdieu subtly involves duality (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:21-101; Fairclough, 2001:122-123). This concept is useful in the consideration of a justifiable perspective for the hybrid identities of the Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. This approach becomes even more interesting because of its dualistic nature which, when associated with the poststructuralist perspectives of fluidity, could render much plausible analysis of language practices, and attitudes in multilingual contexts as embedded in larger socio-political, historical, and economic circumstances. To Heller (2007:2) it is imperative to use the poststructuralist approach, because it regards languages in multilingual settings as a set of resources, which circulate in an unequal manner within social networks and discursive spaces with meanings and values socially constructed within the constraints of social organisational processes under precise historical settings. In this idiom, the different languages in multilingual contexts are said to be resources drawn upon by speakers to signal 'self' and 'other', as well as to signal and negotiate the different identity options at their disposal. This being the case, the currency of concepts such as crossing, territoriality, centre/periphery and so on need to be explored against the Africa's fluid multilingual contexts, where language and spatial ownership are not always easily quantifiable.



### **3.5 Summary**

In this chapter, I set out to review various aspects necessary in providing useful insight into the manner in which new Cape identities are negotiated by Cameroonian immigrants. In other words, I have reviewed notions necessary for a firm grasp on the fluidity and hybridity of language in multilingual contexts. In this regard, I focused on specific concepts, such as self, otherisation, positioning, scale, polycentricity, orders of indexicality and habitus, which are directly linked to styles of identity construction/reconstruction, and contribute to a better appreciation of the analytical underpinnings of the current study. I grounded the review around the notion of multilingualism/language as localized social practice. The importance of these concepts lie in the role they play in making possible the exploration of how Cameroonian immigrants constantly reconstruct their Anglophone/Francophone

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identities in their surrogate space, while at the same time negotiating new Cape identities. This suits the themes of translocality and transnationality in a transforming globe where identities are negotiated, giving rise to hybrid forms. The next chapter is a review of different approaches and their conceptualisation of identity.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Analytical and Theoretical Framework:**

#### **Identities from a Poststructuralist Perspective**

##### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews a number of theoretical approaches to the study of identities in discourses. The approaches range from the traditional sociopsychological and the interactional sociolinguistic approaches, to recent social constructionist alternatives and progressing to the more dynamic poststructuralist and translocality perspectives in which identities are interactive and performative and become economically, socio-politically and historically ingrained (cf. Blackledge 2008:298-299; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:4-27 and Widdicombe 1998:192-206).

##### **4.1 Sociopsychological and Interactional Approaches**

The traditional models have conventionally viewed identities in two broad ways: as bound to social practices and as explaining a range of social phenomena (cf. Agha 2007). With respect to the sociopsychological approaches, there is over-simplification of the concept of identity which is seen to have a one-to-one correlation with language. In other words, the concept is essentialist, because it takes identity to be a property of individuals or society, and realist, because it assumes that there is some kind of correspondence between identity and some aspect of social reality. That is to say, there are real groups that make up structures or nations (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Widdicombe 1998).

Moreover, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue that the sociopsychological paradigm bases its arguments on the theory of ethnolinguistic identity, which assumes that language is a salient marker of ethnic identity and group membership, where the group with weak in-group identification, low in-group validity, open in-group boundaries and whose identification with other groups is strong tends to assimilate the



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second language – the L2. Still with reference to the ethnolinguistic theory, there is the assumption that members of the group whose ethno-linguistic vitality is high, that is, with hard in-group boundaries and strong in-group identification, experience fear of assimilation and low level of L2 proficiency, because the L2 is regarded here as a way of detracting from ethnic identity. This is a monolingual and monocultural bias which is often criticised for its conception “of individuals as members of homogenous, uniform and bounded ethnographic communities and obscures hybrid identities and complex linguistic repertoires of bi- and multilingual living in a contemporary global world” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:5). Gumperz (1982:39) stands in opposition to the abovementioned monolingual view and states “we all know that ethnic identity does not show a one to one relationship to language.” To clarify this point, he refers to the descendants of the North American groups who still “retain their ethnic identity long after their original minority languages are lost”.

According to Widdicombe (1998:192-193), the inter-group paradigm draws on two theories. One of these is role identity theory, which views society as made up of roles and explains how these roles are internalised as identities that people enact and try to live up to. The other theory is social identity theory, which is a more cognitive and derivative self theory (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:4). With reference to the structuralist-functionalist theorists, for example, the sociologist categorises identities into groups such as working class, middle class, upper class, professional, and so on. These, they often regard as related to an independent social structure. This means the theorist’s aim is to indicate the criteria that define class. For anthropologists, to take another example, the concept is used to describe tribes, communities and other collectives that define elements of culture or life style. In general, there are efforts by these researchers to define identities through geographical boundaries, language, and ethnicity, much of which corresponds to the notion of nation-states (cf. Extra 2004, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Heller 1999, Widdicombe 1998). This is true of Cameroon where to be Anglophone or Francophone is sometimes equated to the ability to speak either English or French and to live either in the Southern (former British) Cameroons or East (former French) Cameroon (Anchimbe 2005,

Alobwed'Epie 1993). Such identity boundaries and their impact on Cameroonian immigrants is what this study explores.

Inter-group theory argues that members of linguistic minority communities identify with either a first or second language community but rarely with both (Pavlenko 2004). Again, the monolingual bias apparent in this theory is unintelligible because it seems to constrain other identity options and insists identity must either be one or the other and not both (cf. Banda 2010, Anchimbe 2005, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Heller 1999). The reality is that multilinguals have multiple linguistic performative affiliations. This seems true of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town who sometimes learn to speak English like South Africans in order to be understood and to integrate, while still maintaining their Cameroonian languages (Mai 2007). This is also true in Cameroon where Anglophones have to learn French in order to attend school, especially tertiary institutions (where there is only one English university in the whole Republic) and to get good jobs. Increasingly, this situation is also faced by the Francophones who need to learn English and send their children to English-speaking schools so that they would be able to participate in global interactions (the internet for example), benefit from Commonwealth scholarships, travel abroad, and so on (Anchimbe 2005:12). This substantiates the claim that linguistic minorities are fashionable icons of new hybridity and show a vision of pluralistic pragmatism in which language becomes capital and not emblematic and where the elite need to be pluralistic (Anchimbe 2005:14 and Heller 1999:16-266). In sum, and far from assimilatory tendencies, the minority group Anglophones, for example and as has been illustrated above, can learn the L2 while still maintaining their L1. The same goes for the majority group (Francophones in this case) who learn the minority language not just as lingua franca for the global world but as a professional language as well (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:6).

It is thanks to sociopsychological measures that there have been important pioneering agendas in studies of language contacts between majority and minority groups. Most recently, some researchers of sociopsychology have also acknowledged the importance of power relations in acculturation and have tried to supplement

questionnaires with interviews and even go as far as bringing together inter-group approaches with the social constructionists and poststructuralist views. Nevertheless, sociopsychological approaches still remain over simplistic and reductionist. For instance, their measures and assessments are still grounded within the standard language notion that ignores the full range of people's linguistic repertoires (cf. Anchimbe 2007). In addition, Anchimbe (2006:4-5) argues that pedagogical competence should be pitted against historical origin and general sociolinguistic competence. In essence, assessment relating to formal or standard language features does not tell us about the range of psychosociolinguistic competence of a speaker. Given these methodological and theoretical setbacks, the sociopsychological approach becomes less resourceful in pursuing multifaceted socio-political and socio-economic issues which shape the negotiation of identities in multilingual settings (Heller 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).



### **4.2 Interactional Sociolinguistic Approaches**

#### **4.2.1 Code Switching Perspective**

Widdicombe (1998:196) points out that sociopsychological approaches show that institutionalised patterns of social relations and social structures persist because people internalise cultural norms which shape both their desires and the courses of action they adopt. As a transitional point, focus on interaction, by contrast, allows insight into people's achievement in constructing and maintaining their everyday world, and it shows how social order is possible.

Building on this, sociolinguists are concerned with how people invoke life structures in some social interactions. In other words, interactional sociolinguists view identities as fluid and constructed in social interaction. That is to say, ethnographically orientated interactional sociolinguists show that identities are achieved by invoking discourse identities. This is consistent with institutional identity, by collaboratively constituting them as neutral facilitators with special rights to manage turn-taking and

topical focus in talk by means of their (institutional identity) objectivity towards disputants and so on. As such, based on the famous work of Gumperz (1982), code switching and language choice are the main foci of identity negotiation with code switching regarded as another resource through which speakers express social and rhetorical meanings and index ethnic identities (cf. Li Wei 2008:8; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:8). It has however been claimed that Cameroonian immigrants code switch and use a South African variety of English not to express a sense of belonging but to communicate effectively and for socio-economic purposes (cf. Mai 2007).

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:8) refer to Myers-Scotton (2006) who regards talk as negotiating rights and obligations between speaker and addressee. Following this, speakers are assumed to have a tacit knowledge of indexicality (that is, of marked and unmarked language choices) in a particular interaction. This means the language choice of a particular speaker at any particular moment is triggered by the addressee and the appropriate identity they (speakers) want to portray. If, for example, a speaker makes an unmarked choice, he/she is recognising equality in social distance as the basis for the speech event. But if it is a marked choice, then the speaker is striving to negotiate an uncommon balance in rights and obligations. He/she may want to portray increase social distance, portray anger, or is simply not able to use the unmarked choice. Sociolinguists who argue that identity itself cannot be used to explain 'the study of linguistic practices as it is itself in need of explanation' (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:9), do not favour the use of the concept of identity to explain language choices. Rampton (1995), for example, with special attention to adolescents' and culture, claims identity negotiation is through code crossing.

### **4.2.2 Language Crossing**

Several studies have proven that the term 'Francophone' is used to identify speakers of the French language, and 'Anglophone', to identify speakers of the English language (cf. Anchimbe 2005; Echu 2004; 2003b; Heller 1999 and Alobwed'Epie 1998), yet the policy of official-language bilingualism stipulates that both Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon should speak the two official languages

(in addition to the national languages) as a way to bridge the division and create unity where both French and English belong to Cameroonians. This puts the notion of crossing in certain contexts, especially in multilingual contexts in Africa where the range of codes in use belong to all those that use them (Banda and Bellonojengele 2010) into sharp perspective. In short, given the notion of hybridity in the modern hyper society, where Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:2) identify an increasing range of identity options stemming from the acknowledgement of cultural and linguistic diversity around the world, a verification of the notion of crossing within multilingual contexts of Cape Town, and specifically among Cameroonian immigrants, becomes imperative.

Rampton (1995:280) stipulates that ‘code switching is an in-group phenomenon restricted to those who share the same expectations and rules of interpretations for the use of two languages’. As such, code switching is used by participants in a narration to claim membership and express solidarity with the group, while excluding outsiders. Crossing, on the other hand, focuses on code alteration – a situation wherein people employ a second language of a group in which they are not accepted members. It refers to that situation in which one switches into a language that is not considered to belong to him/her. The peculiarity of this type of switching is that of a distinct sense of movement across social and ethnic boundaries. Because of this, issues of social legitimacy are raised and the participants are expected to negotiate identity by means of challenging, accepting, or creating new identities.

Youths cross for various reasons. For example, they could use ‘language to cross ethnic boundaries in moments when everyday social orders are relaxed’ (Rampton 1995:281). As a sociolinguistic phenomenon, code switching here is crucial in its ability to extend beyond the negative impetus it gives to ‘passing’ and ‘refusal’ (Rampton 1995:288). Passing is one of the practices used to avoid the sensitivity to the experiences brought about by crossing. To avoid drawing attention by using an out-group code, speakers tend to pretend that the out-group code really belongs to them (that is, it is part of their inheritance). Some even claim or actually lie that they are native speakers. An example here is the case of some white and Asian adolescents

who cross into Creole and “also tried to ‘pass’ saying ‘I was born in Jamaica, my grandmother was half-caste and all things like that’” (Rampton 1995:287-288). Here, Rampton effectively downplays the one-on-one relationship of language and identity, thereby confirming Heller’s (2007:2) construct of language as social action, or a social phenomenon popular within the modes of regulations and discursive regimes of our time (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Refusal is another strategy used by crossers to explicitly override all group boundaries with language. It is an extreme case of passing. A good example can be found among Francophones in Canada, where their domination in Anglophone domains can result in conscious resistance to code switching – “a form of refusal which Heller ties to the larger process of ethnic mobilisation” (Heller, 1992 in Rampton 1995:285-288).

In this thesis, the above strategies are explored in relation to the reconstitution and reconstruction of Anglophone/Francophone identity options in a surrogate environment – Cape Town. It is assessed whether Francophones cross and whether Anglophones’ usage of French is resisted and vice versa. Suffice it to say, however, that the notion of crossing exhibits characteristics embedded in in-group concepts and bounded cultures that call for criticism and spur further challenges.

### **4.3 Social Constructionist Approaches**

In differing with interactional sociolinguistic views, social constructionists criticise interactional sociolinguists for discriminatory practices on the part of socially marginalised groups and stress the need for dialogue. The social constructionist approach regards identities as diachronically mutant formations which people constantly negotiate through their interaction with others and this emphasizes the role language plays in the ways in which individuals and groups choose to express, display and accomplish their identities (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

According to Heller (2007:2), constructionists “view language as a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meaning and value, are socially constructed within the conditions of social

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organisational processes, under specific historic conditions”. In this light, hierarchies are seen as social and political rather than inherently linguistic (Heller 2007). This, in essence, is the focus of this study, which investigates how Cameroonian immigrants may at one moment be Francophones, at another Anglophones and, at yet other instances, both or even yet something else – South Africans through the use of isiXhosa or Afrikaans. Following Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:15), and in contrast to Rampton’s notion of crossing, the argument is about how speakers appropriate languages to legitimize, challenge, and negotiate particular identities and also to open new identity options to undermine oppression and subjugation.

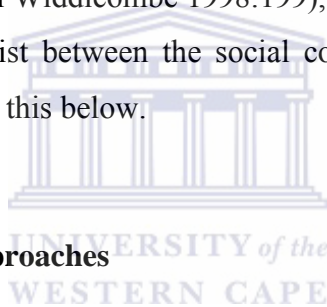
A related argument is that the aim for social constructivism is neither to see what people do with identity nor how identities are mobilised in immediate contexts but to provide general models and principles for interrelationships that take place between individuals and social forms or delineate the symbolic or linguistic constitution of cultural and individual identity. The concern of this paradigm is to replace the unitary self with the idea of a ‘fragmented self’ who is always in flux (see Chapter 3). As such, this paradigm argues that selves are constructed through the multiple discourses or narratives within which they are positioned (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:16-17 and Widdicombe 1998:202). This probably explains why, as this study will demonstrate later, an Anglophone and a Francophone can be the other (that is, either Francophone or Anglophone, respectively; or both), depending on the setting and subject matter. In this way, it will be argued that identities are interactional accomplishments produced and negotiated in discourse (cf. Agha, 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

To properly conceptualise the politics of identity or to create an alternative to the traditional models, social constructionists redefine identity by treating it not just as an analyst’s tool but also as that of the ‘individual’ and the ‘social’, thereby integrating approaches. As such, the concept of identity advocated for here is designed in part to deal with variability and flexibility and shows how even the most obvious identity is a product of negotiation. This perspective is designed to overcome the dualistic views of the traditionalists that, for example, correlate individuals with society and harbour

the idea of an independently existing social structure capable of fixing a particular identity on individuals through socialisation.

In all, the constructionist approaches emphasise multiple ways that social identities are constructed and show how these constructions provide the resource through which individual objectivities and experiences are shaped (cf. Agha 2007). Unlike projecting identities for categorisation purposes or as casual variables related to other phenomena, constructionists show a dynamic correlation of individual-social relations (Widdicombe 1998).

The constructionist view is useful, as it informs poststructuralist approaches to concepts of identity and individual-social relations. However, due to the influence of Foucault and Althusser (in Widdicombe 1998:199), some crucial differences based on aims and specifics do exist between the social constructionist and poststructuralist approaches. I elaborate on this below.



#### **4.4 Poststructuralist Approaches**

##### **4.4.1 Social and Political Construction of Discourses**

Widdicombe (1998:199-200) postulates that poststructuralist approaches bestow a vital role on discourse as “the dominant organising factor and the means through which identities are produced.” The term ‘discourse’ has broader meaning when compared to talk, texts, narratives, or some other linguistic notations that feature in the social constructionist perspective. To the poststructuralists, discourses can be variously interpreted as “delimited tissues of meaning”, as the instantiation of power-knowledge or as ‘ideological’ processes and how they work to produce particular kinds of subjectivities” (Widdicombe 1998:199-200).

The extended denotation of the notion of ‘discourse’ is aimed at accounting for the expanded uses of the reformulated concept of identity, which also helps to displace



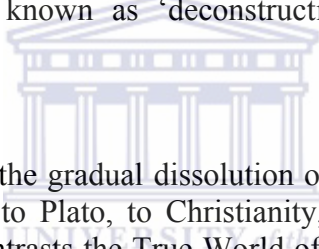
the unitary, isolated, and binary approaches of the traditionalists and to rethink the ontological status of self (the subject). These current approaches, unlike the truth-seeking traditional sciences, claim that knowledge is socially constructed and intimately related to power, thus uncovering the operation of power to liberate the oppressed (Widdicombe 1998:200). Moreover, these approaches recognise the contestability, partiality, sociohistorically shaped, instability, and mutability of ways in which language ideologies and identities are linked to relations of power and political arrangements in communities and societies. This again relates to Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004:7) concern for linguistic justice, which is essential in examining the attitudes of Cameroonian immigrants towards CPE; for in most cases, they very much depend on this language yet always reject it, since they tend to "live out the requirements of the prevailing ideologies" under the illusion that they have freely chosen their way (cf. Widdicombe 1998:200). In this way, they further confirm Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) explanation of how languages are appropriated in the construction and negotiation of particular identities. To an even greater extent they confirm that language choices in multilingual contexts are embedded in larger social political economic and cultural systems (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

Clearly, poststructuralist approaches have been influenced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (in Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Bourdieu 1994) who viewed linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital convertible into economic, cultural and social capital and distributed unequally within any given speech community. Here, Bourdieu points to the official language (or standard variety), which becomes the language of institutions and is hegemonic because both the dominant and subordinate group misrecognise it as a superior language (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Furthermore, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) illustrate power relations and language as part of the processes of social interaction (cf. Heller 2007, 1999). Poststructuralists bring into sharp focus the hybrid, transgendered, and multiracial identities that have been ignored by pointing to the splits and fissures in groupings which until now, have been seen as dichotomous (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). This coincides with Shi-Xu's declaration that "[i]t would be equally erroneous to conceive of the discourse as reducible to singular individuals or institutions". This

presupposes an alternative and/or twin approach to the “historically evolved [...] dominant patterns of speaking, that are being circulated transnationally, or simply globally” (Shi-Xu, 2007:4), thus bringing us to the deconstructionist theory by Jacques Derrida.

### **4.4.2 The Deconstructionist Theory**

A prominent philosopher, Jacques Derrida, purports that the only way to free oneself from “the apparatus of philosophical distinctions which the West inherited from Plato and which has dominated European thought” ever since, is to turn from “preoccupation with the philosophical canon to the development of a technique which could be applied to almost any text, past or contemporary, literary, or philosophical”. Today this technique is known as ‘deconstruction’ (Derrida 1995) and can be summarised thus:



[...] an account of the gradual dissolution of the other-worldly way of thinking common to Plato, to Christianity, and to Kant, the way of thinking which contrasts the True World of Reality with the World of Appearance created by the senses, or matter, or Sin, or the structure of the human understanding. The characteristic expressions of this other-worldliness, this attempt to escape from time and history into eternity, are what deconstructionists often call 'the traditional binary oppositions': true--false, original--derivative, unified--diverse, objective--subjective, and so on. (Rorty 1995:1).

Deconstructionists criticize the fact that metaphysics (that is, onto-theology, or Platonism, or logocentrism and, occasionally, phallogocentrism) is utterly pervasive in Western culture for they see the traditional binary oppositions as “infecting all areas of life and thought, including literature and the criticism of literature” (Derrida 1995). This is not to mean that this opposition should be undermined, but simply that one must be cautious against the fact that the term ‘objective’ for example could mean more than inter-subjective.

For this reason, Derrida acknowledges Heidegger’s initiative to twist free from these oppositions and the accompanying “forms of intellectual and cultural life which they

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structure” (cf. Shi-Xu 2007). However, Derrida believes Heidegger never succeeded in twisting free. Derrida’s comment on Heidegger can be expressed as “he/she would be making a statement in the language he/she repudiates. And such a person would be doing so even if he/she rephrased his/her repudiation in the form of a metaphorical, rather than a literal, use of the terms of that language. This example also relates to someone who, for example, may want to talk about beings. Such a person would be “compelled to spell out” his/her intentions by using this same term. Therefore it is important to try out something very similar, but also very different from what Heidegger attempted to do, for “[a]ny attempt to do *anything* of the sort” as Heidegger had attempted “to do will trip itself up” (Rawlings 1999).

To Derrida, Heidegger’s attempt to express the ineffable was merely the newest and most frantic form of a futile struggle to break out of language by finding words that take their meaning directly from the world, from non-language. Derrida claims such a struggle has been going on since the time of Greek domination, but that it is doomed because language is nothing but differences. In other words, “words have meaning only because of contrast-effects with other words.” In spite of Derrida’s acknowledgment of a linguistic reference to non-language for instance that ‘Red’ “means what it does only by contrast with ‘blue’, ‘green’”, and so on, or that ‘[b]eing’ also means what it does, “by contrast with ‘beings’, ‘Nature’, ‘God’, ‘Humanity’”, and so on, he still insists that words cannot “acquire meaning in the way in which philosophers such as Aristotle have hoped it might”. Derrida believes the futile efforts of such philosophers is because they “assumed the unmediated expression of something non-linguistic (e.g., an emotion, a physical object, an idea, a Platonic Form etc.)” (Rawlings 1999).

Derrida stipulates the logocentric philosophers who hold out this hope of immediacy: ‘Univocity’ as the essence of language have never had to face an opposing philosopher when he states “[n]o philosophy has ever renounced this Aristotelian ideal. This ideal is philosophy.” In spite of this, he goes ahead asserting that “[t]o succeed in twisting free of the logocentric tradition would be to write, and to read, in such a way as to renounce this ideal [...] because using language to do what language

cannot do [is impossible].” Language itself, so to speak, can be relied upon to betray any attempt to transcend it. Effectively, this statement equates the deconstructionist theory to poststructuralist views of reinvention, reconstitution, reconstruction, and resemiotisation (cf. Heller 2007; Appadurai 1996), which are adopted in this study.

At his best as a poststructuralist or post-metaphysical thinker, Derrida constructs terms to describe an age in which “the reality-appearance distinction has entirely lost its hegemony over our thought.” Like Heller (2008), Derrida (1995) postulates that, there’s no absolute truth. In a similar manner, Blackledge (2008) states that “[t]heory formation is not a process which aims to produce a representation of an immutable truth”, but rather “a continued development of tools and resources designed to help us understand the world” (Blackledge 2008:299). From this viewpoint, Derrida invents terms such as *trace*, *archi-écriture*, *supplement*, and so on (which express his affectionate admiration for the ‘proliferating,’ ‘the elusive, the allusive’ and the ever-self-recontextualising,) “designed to mock and displace Heidegger's own terminology such as *Ereignis* and *Lichtung* which express his reverence for the ineffable, the silent, and the enduring.” To Derrida these features are better exemplified in writing than in speech as such, placing him in complete opposition to Plato's (and Heidegger's) preference for the spoken over the written word (Rorty 1995).

Though this is in complete opposition to Heidegger and Plato’s way of reasoning, it appears to make sense in an era wherein the material world is a social creation and where the social being always needs to recreate, modify or negotiate different identity options whenever context, subject and/or subject matter changes (cf. Higgins 2008; Heller 2008; 2007; Blackledge 2008; 2007; Li Wei 2008; Anchimbe 2007). This is verifiable in Cape Town where Cameroonians tend not just to speak more English at their jobsites, CPE or French at social gatherings, and/or a mixture of English, CPE and French (and including Cameroonian national languages) in their social gatherings (and sometimes, jobsites) but actually use such linguistic patterns for writing cell phone and email messages. Yet with the many demands and hyper transformations in the global world, these same Cameroonian immigrants might tend to project themselves only as Anglophones or as Francophone and/or as both. As such, they are

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constantly deconstructing (reconstructing) prescribed identities in favour of newly performed identities.

Derrida's philosophy earned hostile and bitter criticism from other philosophers all over Europe as was the case with Bouveresse in France and Habermas in Germany. The American and British philosophers who have dominated the English-speaking academic world since the Second World War embody the fiercest criticism. As heirs of a tradition which began with the 'verifiable' scientific claims, unlike Heidegger, of the logical positivists, they strongly oppose metaphysics or 'unverifiable' metaphysical, theological and moral claims and thus describe Derrida's work as 'deplorable', 'wicked', 'frivolous' and so on (Sánchez. 2000).

Rorty (1995) reports that Derrida's work has been very much misunderstood and misread. The word 'deconstruction' tends to play a small role in Derrida's writings. This is because Derrida's work was made famous not by fellow philosophers but by literary critics who were looking for new ways of reading texts rather than for a new understanding of intellectual history in English-speaking countries. As such, the term 'deconstruction' in these countries (for example Britain and America) to Derrida's own surprise, became firmly attached to Derrida's philosophical school and not just the new interpretation of the term. 'Deconstruction' therefore came to be used in these countries just as it was used by members of Derrida's school, where the term 'deconstruction' referred "to the way in which the 'accidental' features of a text can be seen as betraying, and subverting its purportedly 'essential' message."

Thus, 'deconstruction' becomes deconstructed for the claim that deconstruction should not have been extended from metaphysics to literature and that it was a mistake to have taken "a legitimate philosophical practice as a model for literary criticism" (Rorty, 1995). Fellow philosophers then began referring to Derrida as a demon, a horrible philosopher and so on. In fact, deconstruction, unlike most critical sciences, incited dread and hysteria from its inception in 1967.

From its inception in the late 1960s in France, deconstruction – a school of philosophy has had an enormous impact on European and American criticism. Most of Derrida's work is in the form of commentaries and expositions which represent complex responses to a range of theoretical and philosophical movements of the 20th century. Most his work thus, deconstructs theories of 'Saussurean and French structuralism', 'Husserlian phenomenology,' and 'Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis' among others (Toronto Press 1991). At this juncture, deconstruction could "be best described as a theory of reading" whose aim is "to undermine the logic of (binary) opposition in texts" (Paul De Man 1996).

This theory could probably represent a favourable outcome to the constant strife between Anglophones and Francophones should they (Anglophones and Francophones) 'twist free' from predetermined identities by means of reconstructing them.

According to Cuddon (1991), the term 'deconstruction' denotes a particular kind of practice in reading and a method of criticism and mode of analytical inquiry. This term is further clarified when he emphasises that deconstruction is not synonymous with 'destruction'. Deconstruction to him is in fact closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself. Etymologically, this means 'to undo' which is a near synonym of 'to de-construct'. Consequently, if, anything is destroyed in a 'deconstructive reading' it is not the text, but the claim to indisputable or universal domination of one culture over all others. Thus, a deconstructive reading is that which investigates the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself (Cuddon 1991). This is tantamount to what researchers like Iedema (2003) call 'resemiotisation', what Higgins (2009) calls 'recontextualisation' and what Appadurai (1996) calls 'translocality'.

### **4.5 Concept of Identity**

The current study therefore adopts the social constructionist and poststructuralist approaches in which identity, like language(s), is at a speaker's disposal as a resource available for use. I argue that identity is not all about what people are but about things

they do, which are embedded in social activities (Blackledge 2008:298; Widdicombe 1998:191). What is important about identities in this work is not only how somebody can be described in a particular way but also how identity is ascribed to self and/or to others. Treating identities as a resource for the participant, is highly distinctive and beneficial in the broader context of social science as mentioned above. Agha echoes a similar view pointing out that

The relevance of identity to social theory lies not in the fact that identity is a unitary phenomenon – a discrete thing – whose characteristics can be described independently of processes of context-bound social action. It is true that our everyday term *identity* is a count noun, which, by the usual Whorfian projection, implies a class of enumerable things. It implies the existence of countable and pluralizable facts of sameness and differences that can become objects of study, and to some, the existence of a ready-made analytical rubric of some kind. Yet we cannot take the term at face value. Identity is useable as an analytical term only if the rubric can be connected back to the processes through which the things it names get formed. To ignore this problem would be like taking the count noun *climate* on face value. After all, much like identities, climates can be foreign, familiar, desirable, hot, variable, sticky, bothersome, and much talked about, but in order to cope with what happens outdoors, we need to understand the processes that give rise to climates. And similarly for identities. (Agha 2007:234).

A look at the work of Bailey (2007:258-259) on the notion of identity further elucidates the above quote. The term ‘identity’ is said to be a function of two subjective processes: “self-ascription”, which is how one defines oneself, and “ascription by others”, which is how others define one. This implies that all individuals, whether consciously or unconsciously, have multiple characteristics and allegiances. Agha in agreement with Bailey elucidates this point of view as follows:

These images can be better troped through further contextualisation to yield composite sketches of self that are fractionally non-congruent with such stereotypic signs as contribute to that sketch. [...] Thus, a man who can effectively speak like a woman, like a military person, like a sports announcer, like a lawyer, a doctor and so on, has a register range of a certain kind. But the actual range of composite sketches performable through contextualisation is even larger since each of these stereotypic figures can be inhabited to different degrees, combined, ironically manipulated, used to tell jokes about enregistered

personae and so on. [...] but what about the case where a single behavioural diacritic receives many construals?

[...] let us consider someone who has a narrow register range, someone who (more or less) speaks the same way. Even this person has many construable identities depending on who is doing the construing. In this case, we are dealing with differences of ascription by others. [...] in people's identification of accents.

[...]... a Liverpool working-class accent will strike a Chicagoan primarily as being British, a Glaswegian as being English, an English southerner as being northern, an English northerner as being Liverpudlian, and a Liverpudlian as being working class. (Agha 2007:250-251).

This again means identities whether performed or not, remain constructed, fluid, and complex; thereby confirming their hybrid nature (cf. Anchimbe 2007, Bailey 2007, Heller 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004 and Widdicombe 1998).

### **4.6 The Notion of Performative Identities**

Bilingualism, when treated as the coexistence of two systems, becomes a critical and highly idealised perspective which, according to Heller (2007: 1), “allows for a better grasp of ways in which language practices are socially and politically embedded.” As such, the focus of bilingualism is shifted away from completely bounded units of code and community to a more processual and material approach which presents ‘language as a social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action.’ This perspective becomes even more suitable in the era of globalisation where new economy, migration and the rapid circulation of information, and the question of political, social and educational concerns are at the fore (Heller 2007:1). It is thanks to these perspectives that the hegemonic view of nation-states could be questioned while simultaneously offering a better account for the way speakers draw on available resources at a time when boundaries are often deliberately played with (Bailey 2007: 259, Heller 2007:2).

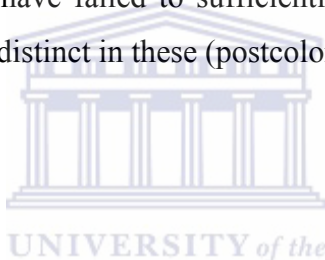
Building on the above, and with particular reference to Stroud and Wee (2007), Banda, (2010:223) argues that the study of identity construction in postcolonial states,



usually considers neither the multilingual realities in such societies nor the fact that languages perform different identities and include a culture of consumerism. On a similar note, Agha, (2007:236) argues that “we can make no sense of emblematic function of ‘things’ without first considering whether their emblematic functions are formulated through text-level or stereotypic principles of indexical effectiveness”. His point here is that a person’s ‘enregistered identities’ depend on the context and topic of conversation (‘text-in-context relations’) “between signs that occur in their actual behaviours” in a particular encounter. Again, Banda (2010), akin to Agha (2007), Heller (2007), Modan (2007), and Widdicombe (1998), recognizes the undeniable reality of the ‘notion of performative identities.’ This coincidentally tends to be a crucial feature in the present study, as it opens the way for arguments enunciating that there exist other identity options apart from those based on ethnic background (Banda 2010:223).

Yet the fact that bilingual talk, notably code switching, code mixing, and so forth has been and, still remains a challenge to linguists’ is clear, as analyses often lead to conclusions that assumptions cannot be taken for granted (Auer 2007:320). Accordingly, Auer argues that bilinguals should not be perceived as having two different language faculties that need to be turned on in this or that context (cf. Heller 2007:2). Such claims, as Auer rightly states, might, however, be applicable among Cameroonian immigrants to whom the use of more than one language in meeting houses, in daily transactions and discourses, and the use of *Franglais* seem to have become part and parcel of their lived experiences (see Chapter 6). This is also true in an era when the use of more than one language in a single utterance – something entailing much more than simple code switching and code mixing (‘fused code’ as Auer (1999) calls it) is increasingly becoming fashionable in urban centres like Johannesburg, and townships like Khayelitsha in Cape Town, where the use of *Tsotsitaal* is widespread (Deumert et al. 2005). The users of such codes, do not decide to use this and that code, they simply combine suitable words or expressions from different languages which they believe better represent the reality, world or action they are communicating.

In this light, much data of code switching can be best described when understood as embedded in interaction. This according to Heller (2007) means that the nature of code switching “is linked to dimensions of the regulation of conversation, the nature of which is best understood by some form of ethnomethodologically inspired conversation analysis”. The importance of this, is to suggest “a rethinking of the grounds of linguistic theory by placing language as the performance of how we think about language generally”; thus, justifying bilinguals’ and multilinguals’ use of language as a linguistic resource to perform different identities (Heller 2007:8). As Agha (2007:250) puts it, an individual’s register range, equips the person with many identities in the sense of “many performable identities” (see sections 2.4. and 3.3.). Such a perspective confirms the European modelled theories of Anchimbe (2007) and Shi-Xu (2007) engendered predominantly from contexts different from those in which they are now being used have failed to sufficiently illustrate patterns of interaction and identification that are distinct in these (postcolonial) contexts.



### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter intended to discuss the various theoretical frameworks that serve as a valuable spine for understanding the analytical lens adopted in this study. To do so, I reviewed different ways of conceptualising identities with the emphasis on usefulness, negotiation, performativity, and social construction. These views agree with proponents of a shift in paradigm (Banda 2010; Higgins 2009; Agha 2007; Pennycook, 2007, Shi-Xu 2007), for they proclaim that identities are context determined and hence fluid and flexible. Guided by the notion of translocality which continually emphasises mutability and the performative role of identities embedded in multiplex interpretive sites, it becomes logically acceptable to corroborate the social creation of identities.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

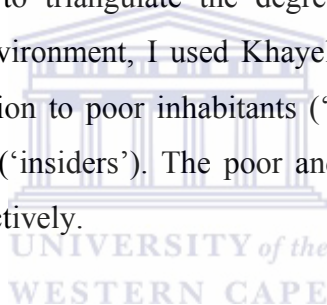
#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted in this study. I first expound the research design and its characteristics while showing the appropriateness of such a design for the current study. Then, I describe the research instruments and their appropriateness. Thereafter, I describe the data collection procedures including the complexities of dealing with active agents as subjects for the current research theme. Next is an explanation of the analytical framework and the procedure adopted for the interpretation of data. Lastly, I discuss gaps in and limitations of the study.

I use a multiplex interpretive qualitative research approach. This is so because the approach adds values to the interpretative naturalistic and analytical perspectives of post structuralism and translocality adopted in the study (Heller 2007, Modan 2007, Widdicombe 1998, Derrida 1995). That is to say, this study, being qualitative, examines things in their natural settings while attempting to make sense of occurrences in terms of the meanings people bring to them in relation to their past and surroundings. As such, I have deployed a wide range of unrelated methods in the hope of getting a firmer grasp on the subject matter at hand (Richards 2003:10). Thus, it becomes essential to employ a multiplex interpretive framework and a multi site data collection option. This guarantees a clear understanding of the way actors with different biographies act in particular circumstances at particular times and in different localities wherein they construct meanings from events and interactions (Richards 2003:38).

This study is guided by ethnographic sociolinguistic models (cf. Heller 2008) with data collected by means of qualitative techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation, all of which are accompanied by copious note to get a holistic picture of the identity options of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape

Town and thus enhance credibility. This is so because the linguistic structures and actions I intend to investigate are subject to descriptive analysis based on an appreciation of the growing recognition of qualitative inquiry and the important role it plays in deepening understanding; thus, I became fully immersed in the data and paid attention to detail (Heller 2008). Such detail revealed the nature of the complexity underlying the negotiation of Cape identities among Cameroonian immigrants. To give the reader a glimpse of the complications involved in this process of identity negotiation, I endeavour to describe some pertinent research sites, namely the Salt River shebeen, Khayelitsha township and the suburb of Table View from which most of the data was gathered. The Salt River shebeen serves as a fertile ground for transforming the social agents and the new locality – Cape Town, because in this place most Cameroonian immigrants almost daily freely meet and mix with South Africans. In an attempt to triangulate the degree of transformation of a former linguistically bounded environment, I used Khayelitsha and Table View. I describe these places later in relation to poor inhabitants (‘outsiders’) cut off from the main city and rich inhabitants (‘insiders’). The poor and the rich occupy productive and attractive localities, respectively.



### **5.1 Research Design**

The study adopted a qualitative research design because the linguistic structures and actions I explored were subjected to descriptive analysis using the data from interviews, focus groups, and participant observation techniques. All these are accompanied by copious notes to enhance the reliability and credibility of the study. Qualitative research is preferred because it clearly shows what happened, why it happened, and how social agents act the way they do. In addition, qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative naturalistic approach to satisfy its subject matter (Richards 2003:11). This makes data interpretation in a naturalistic context possible, with the researcher being able to capture complex holistic narratives from the social actor’s own mouth (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:9). Because I rely heavily on a sociolinguistic ethnography (Heller 2008), qualitative inquiry is deemed

relevant in this study for its ability to render human actors in a natural setting in the context of their everyday lives, while bringing out the tension and rift encountered in trying to subdue divergent communities and populations. This therefore makes possible a clear understanding of the meanings and significance of actions or spatial practices from the perspective of those involved (Richards 2003:10).

### **5.2 Sampling and Sampling Techniques**

Probability-based (random) samples were employed. Based on probability theory, every unit of the population of interest had a non-zero chance of being selected into the sample. Cameroonian immigrants from all age-groups and from all walks of life were identified (in social gatherings, business places, and homes). This type of sampling made room for the use of accurate and reliable data to verify objectives, test hypotheses and to estimate population parameters in an attempt to eliminate bias.

Opportunistic samplings were also used. This type of sampling took advantage of new opportunities while in the field. Most of the unexpected and unforeseen opportunities (usually emanating from informal discussions) brought about new insights even after fieldwork had begun (Patton 1990:2). Such samplings were helpful, because they made it possible for me to follow new leads during the fieldwork. For instance, once in the postgraduate laboratory of the library at the University the Western Cape, a few Cameroonian immigrants met and a discussion, which later resulted into a data collecting session, developed.

### **5.3 Data Collection Strategies and Procedures**

The research for this dissertation consisted of an initial three months of exploratory work followed by thirteen months additional fieldwork. During this time, systemic attempts were made to gain a picture of the daily affairs of Cameroonian immigrants by participating in leisure activities (like soccer matches and general functions), household activities, political activities, and other Cameroonian meetings in Cape

Town that was as complete as possible. Given the level of familiarity with informants, their neighbours, friends, and families soon became used to me and the tape recorder which I carried. As such, a wide range of natural verbal encounters was obtained. Forty key informant interviews (lasting at least 45 minutes to an hour each) and four focus group discussions (of at least an hour and a half each) and ten participant observation sessions (of at least two and a half hours each) have been used in this study. The free and unforced consent of participants was requested before the audio recording of interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation discussions. In addition to the audio recorder, I also used a digital camera which made it possible for me to take photographs during fieldwork. Again, I had to seek permission of the participants before taking photographs. The data collection tools, as mentioned before, included interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations.



### **5.3.1 Interviews**

Richards (2003:47) could not give a better definition of interviews than when he describes them as being like ‘marriage: everybody knows what it is, and an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets’. In-depth interviews – the hallmark of qualitative research, and open-ended interviews – the golden-standard of qualitative methods (cf. Modan 2007; Richards 2003), were equally employed in this study. The recorder was useful for its ability to store information in its most natural form, and in facilitating transcriptions while guaranteeing accuracy at the same time (Coupland et al. 1993:xiii).

Interview questions were formulated in a non-confrontational and a relatively unstructured manner in order to make room for one-on-one discussion; thus making it possible for the researcher to subtly shape and direct discussions and also to allow participants to express themselves directly in their own words where, for example, they had to say why they preferred identifying with either the Anglophones and/or Francophones. In this way, it was possible to monitor their actions and as such, it

enabled the researcher to understand the people's experience in a natural and first-hand manner (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). In addition, there were follow-up interviews that played the vital role of capturing additional data, since not everything could be captured in one session. Finally, I used indirect probes which were more revealing than direct questions, given the sensitivity of the topic of this study. For example, questions such as "do you know anyone who is both Anglophone and Francophone?" were more revealing than, "are Anglophones and Francophones equally identified as Cameroonians?"

What follows is a sample of questions based on the immigrants' social networks: "What kind of people do you usually interact with in Cape Town? Are they people from your home area? Tell us more about the people you know here – friends, colleagues, acquaintances, neighbours.... Are there Diaspora networks (clubs, associations) for people from your home country? If yes, can you tell us about them? (e.g. What kind of people are members? What do you do when you meet? How often do you meet? What is the function of this association? and, is there any specific language used in such networks?) Do you interact with people who are not from your home country? Why, in which language(s)? Do you find it easy or difficult? Which group do you interact with, Anglophones or Francophones?" (See appendix B for details).

### **5.3.2 Key Informant Focus Group Discussions**

The key informant focus group discussions comprised four separate groups; two of which were made up of Anglophones only and two of Francophones only. The essence of this grouping was to avoid any possibility of an argument concerning what language to use among participants. These focus groups discussed questions derived from the hypothesis of this study. I stayed around and acted as moderator when there happened to be any misunderstanding, or to prevent one participant from dominating the others. Discussions based on questions developed from the hypotheses were essential, as they contributed directly to the findings of this survey and endeavoured

to avoid any possible bias based on the researcher's generalisations or prejudice (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). One of the Francophone focus group discussions, which comprised five Francophones, took place in the Maitland soccer field situated on Spencer Road. Another Francophone focus group discussion took place in the Grand Parade market and initially comprised seven Francophones, though others joined later. The first Anglophone focus group took place in a room at the Hector Petersen U-block, a residence of the University of the Western Cape. Another Anglophone focus group was held in the living room of a house situated along Police Street in Maitland where there were three Anglophone participants at the start, later joined by one other participant.

### **5.3.3 Participant Observation**

Participant observations are in many ways like interviews since they take into account the context in which the researcher needs to work in order to build and maintain rapport (Richards 2003:57). According to Gumperz, (1982:40), “[b]asic information on language use comes primarily from observation of actual interaction and opinion expressed in informal conversation.” Participant observation took place ten times in two different social gatherings, with five observation sessions focused on the Cameroon North Westerners Association (CANOWACAT), one of the oldest groups that meet fortnightly at the Salt River shebeen. This group was initiated by a group of Anglophones to help them socialise and relive the Cameroonian way of life by meeting to eat the same food, wearing traditional outfits, saving finances, contributing money or useful items in the group to help the needy, or to celebrate with the fortunate, etc. I preferred this particular meeting, because it is more popular and relatively older than the others. It is also considered the most organised and highly populated meeting of Cameroonians in Cape Town. In addition to this, both Anglophones and Francophones attend this meeting. More information on the functions of CANOWACAT is provided in Chapter 6.



The other five observation sessions centred on the Mifi Association in Cape Town. This group is made up of Francophones from the Mifi division of Cameroon. The Mifi division (whose capital is at Bafoussam), got its name from the Mifi River and has always been referred to as *le Grand* [the great] *Mifi*. Indigenes from this province and the languages they speak are generally referred to as *Bameléké*. Details on the subject of the Mifi are developed in Chapter 6.

I requested permission from the meeting members to record the meeting discussions every time. The recordings enabled me to get access to natural discourse from Cameroonians in Cape Town without distortion. To further enhance credibility and reliability, copious notes were taken as part of participant observation.

### **5.4 Multiplex Interpretive Research Sites**

This dissertation employs the multiplex data collection approach. Data was collected through interviews and discussions in meetings, social gatherings, at the workplaces, homes, restaurants, drinking spots and other recreational venues among which were:

- (a) Mowbray shopping area: opposite Shoprite, Cameroonian hair salons, a barber shop, and a grocery specialising in Cameroonian foodstuff, as well as a Nigerian restaurant where Cameroonians usually congregate.
- (b) Salt River: popular shebeen behind the old Duchess factory shop which is adjacent to Shoe HQ, restaurants which were Nigerian and Cameroonian, cyber cafes, and homes belonging to Cameroonians.
- (c) Maitland and Brooklyn: Cameroonian homes and a popular soccer field beneath Coronation Road.
- (d) Bellville: a bus terminus where Cameroonians have stalls and other areas in Bellville, such as along Voortrekker Road, with one Cameroonian wholesale shop behind the Telkom building; an import-export office adjacent to City Chemist; still within Bellville, another shop, opposite the train station; etc.

- (e) Goodwood: Around the 151 area, in the residence of the Mifi president, which consists of three bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen and which he shares with his family and other Cameroonians.
- (f) The Grand Parade market square: opposite the South African Parliament buildings at the heart of Cape Town where several Cameroonians own business stalls.

However, given the limitation of space in terms of the number of words to be used for this project, I use only Khayelitsha to illustrate translocalisation and glocalisation trends in former black localities, i.e. townships, in Cape Town. While alluding briefly to other townships, I substantiate the reality of a transforming Cape Town. This makes it possible to see how translocations in Cape Town tends to affect South Africa as a whole, and how Cameroonian immigrants are fast becoming transnational in Cape Town.

Unlike Khayelitsha, Table View is used as an example of a 'whites-only area' which is quickly turning translocal too, undoubtedly exposing the ambiguity of a homogeneous language view and of racial groupings (Agha 2007; Heller 2007; Moyer 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004); in other words, the homogenous classification of people according to race and language in groups such as whites, coloureds, and Blacks or English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa (Thorpe 2002).

As mentioned earlier, to investigate how Cameroonian immigrants revive their Cameroonian way of life, which in turn transforms other immigrant groups and the South Africans, I also briefly describe the Salt River shebeen.

### **5.4.1 A Description of Khayelitsha**

Many of the people in townships originally hail from the Eastern Cape. What is interesting here is not only that people moving within the same national borders are also referred to as 'migrants', but that these migrants expect to live in linguistically

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and racially bounded communities as fashioned by the apartheid regime (Deumeurt et al. 2005). However, with the recent increase in transmigration worldwide, the traditional connection between nationality and group membership as defined by the nation-state is being challenged. Relating to this, the categorisation of those who speak the same language as having a shared culture or belonging to one nation is questioned. Authenticating this, Moyer et al (2007:138) put forth that '[m]ultilingual practices in monolingual institutional contexts can no longer be considered as an exception'. This topic therefore becomes interesting in post-apartheid Cape Town.

It becomes quite interesting for visitors of Cape Town to experience a day in the life of the locals in order to learn to interact with the township dwellers as well as get to know how they go about their daily routine and thus learn more about their past, their present, and their future. This interest in their lifestyle is what captivates Cameroonian immigrants such that some now live in the townships too and own their own shebeens within Cape Town.

A prominent characteristic of townships in Cape Town is reflected in their strong contrast to the wealthier suburbs (for example the rich white section of Somerset West and the poor coloured area of Mitchell's Plain) which are economically, culturally, and still racially distributed. This comes from the fact that black (and "coloured") people were not allowed to live in traditionally white areas in the days of apartheid. Instead, they were confined to areas away from the city which lacked necessities such as houses, water, and electricity. This explains the reason for the present day enormous poverty and unemployment rates.

Khayelithsa, which means 'new home' dates from the 1980s and is the largest township in the Western Cape Province, situated less than half an hour's drive from the centre of Cape Town. Most of its residents are predominantly isiXhosa speakers and are also owners of the local spaza shops and shacks which serve as homes to most of them. Other townships include Langa (meaning 'sun'), which is the oldest of Cape Town's black townships, established in 1923. But here, like in all other locations, is a marked presence of Cameroonian immigrants. Gugulethu (meaning 'our pride') is

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also another township and Nyanga (meaning ‘moon’) dates from the 1950s. These townships are dominated by South Africans from the Eastern Cape who were forced in the days of segregation to stay only in areas as defined by ethnicity and skin colour.

Except for the black population in the townships, it has been noted that most residents, (about 55%) of Cape Town are of mixed descents. They are said to speak Afrikaans and are generally referred to as “coloured” (though the epithet “coloured” is for many contentious, as they prefer to be called Khoisan). The segregation rules under apartheid, such as the urban areas Act of 1923, decreed that “coloureds” live in areas separate from the black townships and white areas. Today, 17 years after democracy, over one million ‘coloured’ people live in a region known as the Cape Flats. Though the constitution preaches democracy and equality, the Blacks and the “coloureds” still remain in the areas to which they were formerly assigned, because of a lack of finances and ignorance of their civil rights (Dyers 2009:258).

These conditions of abject poverty have resulted in popular business sectors such as shebeens. Every township has shebeens. A shebeen is a public place where food, soft drinks, and alcohol are sold. They are an alternative to pubs and bars – a version of vibrant heart of the social life of the ‘locals’. In the townships, some anonymous shebeen owners claim alcohol abuse is a contributing factor to violence, assaults, and murder and believe that the elderly patrons should be the only persons to come and enjoy a drink with braai and music in their shebeens. Others argue that they need to earn a living by selling alcohol and shall keep selling to young people of responsible age on condition that they do not drink in the shebeen. And yet, others are of the opinion that selling drinks after school hours, when school children have gone back home and reliance on strict security could reduce the violence of those youngsters who think they can only fit in with their peers after a drink or two, but oftentimes, this ends up in a nasty situation.

In contrast to the situation in South African shebeens, peace and tranquillity reigns in the Cameroonian immigrants’ shebeens. Some South Africans are themselves regular members of the Cameroonian shebeens, which do not entertain young consumers of

alcohol. Due to their collectivist upbringing and solidarity as stipulated by their culture, the Cameroonians are bound to protect not just each other but also each other's offspring. For instance, it is a common practice among Cameroonians to send their children to go spend some weekends with their friends (or relatives) and vice versa. The children would not dare manifest any bad habits in front of any adult family friend, for he/she would discipline them accordingly and a supposed family friend, or relative would be lauded by the parents of the supposed recalcitrant child. The cultivation of drinking habits for most Cameroonian children therefore becomes a mere fantasy (not to mention alcohol *abuse*).

Masasa (meaning 'Sasa's mother' in isiXhosa, also a traditional African way of identifying a parent by naming him/her after a child)) is one of the shebeens to reckon with, as it has won a prize in a guesthouse competition. Masasa's shebeen is situated in 18 Mississippi Way, Graceland, Khayelitsha. Here the owner prepares great traditional *pap*, spicy vegetable relish and a selection of vegetables cooked in the traditional Xhosa way. Masasa is also a specialist in preparing traditional African beer. She can accommodate up to six guests in her comfortable bed and breakfast (B&B) shebeen, and can sometimes rush to Nelly's B&B to organise a joint stay when her shebeen is overcrowded. Another shebeen next to Masasa's is Shirley's shebeen, described as a 'funky little social hot spot'. Drinks in most of these South African shebeens are typically arranged on shelves while in the Cameroonian shebeen, they are kept in a storeroom.

### **5.4.2 A Description of Table View**

Like Khayelitsha, Table View is another research site situated in the city of Cape Town. This city is among the most heavily populated cities in the world in general and South Africa in particular. Cape Town is the provincial capital of the Western Cape, which serves as the legislative capital of the Republic South. Added to its advantageous political position, Cape Town also serves as a tourism port. Thanks to the natural beauty of its location with well-known landmarks such as Cape Point and

Table Mountain, Cape Town is fondly referred to as ‘the Mother City’ also because it is the first city in South Africa.

Table View, in this study, represents a touristic destination within Cape Town, as it is perfectly situated for exploring the Koeberg Nature Reserve and the West Coast of the Cape with its picturesque drives and seasonal wild flowers. Moreover, Table View facilitates access to Canal Walk with its many shops, boutiques, and movie clubs, and it is close to the Rietvlei wetland for keen bird watchers. Unlike the other two research sites mentioned earlier, Table View is a typical example of a previously whites-only area

Because of its good location, Table View like many other pleasant localities was reserved for whites only. From Table View, one can stand to view Table Mountain and Lion’s Head or even take photographs of Table Mountains and, sometimes with a cable car which takes visitors to the top of the mountain.

Given its many touristic sights and fabulous beauty, Cape Town is often seen as a twin to Haifa in Israel or Nice in France. Table View becomes a fascinating area in Cape Town to reside in, as it is situated on the Atlantic coastline. To emphasise these natural advantages, there are three main beaches around Table View. These include Bloubergstrand’s Big Bay, Little Bay, and Dolphin Beach – all with exquisite views.

### **5.4.3 A Description of the Salt River Shebeen**

Shebeens initiated by the local South Africans in the townships have been taken to the central town and the suburbs of Cape Town by the Cameroonian immigrants even in an era when Blacks are no longer prohibited from pubs and bars. These Cameroonian shebeens are not only places for selling food and drinks, but have become places for cultural entertainment, meetings, and socialisation among both Cameroonians immigrants and South Africans.

States have recognised rights previously limited to territorially based populations of persons who speak designated languages and who come from other places. According to Moyo et al. (2007:137-140), migration and the role of language play a great role in the regulation of citizenship, with the consequence of identifying who counts as a qualified citizen. They also refer to linguistic minorities within nation-states like Spain who have received an important degree of recognition. As in Spain, where official documentation of foreigners (for example identity documents) remains largely illegal, in Cape Town, institutionalised exclusion is encouraged. Besides this, most immigrants tend to get the poorly paid, lower scaled jobs which have prompted the rise of new entrepreneurs. Such could be the case in Cape Town with many Cameroonian shebeens.

### **5.5 Data Analysis**

I adopted the poststructuralist approach to discourse analysis because it analyses discourse in multilingual contexts as socially, politically, and historically construed phenomena. Since the methodology is a sociolinguistic ethnography, language choice and linguistic and stylistic heteroglossia, which are key means of translocality, come into play (Peter 2006). That is, I use poststructuralist approaches and notions of translocality to examine the semiotic resources available for self-expression, communication, meaning making and identification by means of which local and translocal identities are negotiated, challenged and maintained. It is thus only due to “the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, [...] circles and so forth” (Bakhtin 1981:291), that I refer to other notions (for example positioning, habitus, polycentricity, heteroglossia, crossing etc.). I do this in order to better describe contradicting discourses (typically mixed forms and contents that represent heteroglossia in this study) and attempt to understand the expressive resources (languages) of the interactants. Heller (2008:14) succinctly expresses the complexity I try to investigate, stating that “the question of linguistic norms is such a terrain for struggles.”

Thus, in order to interpret data in this dissertation, I examined how the participants make use of membership categorisation devices by identifying some central categories. These included Cameroonian immigrants, the South Africans who have become an inseparable part of the Cameroonian immigrants' daily interactions and the Anglophone and Francophone categories. There were also categories of places which included the new surrogate space, Cape Town, with specific attention to former 'Blacks-only' and 'whites-only areas', in an attempt to explore the successes or failures of a one-on-one link between language, ethnicity and identity.

Finally, there were categories of social practices which here included market places, meeting houses, soccer fields and so on. For this reason, the focus was on language crossing, disposition, positioning and position taking, sociolinguistic scales and so on, with an aim to explore how participants' orientation to issues of identity could play a vital role in enhancing understanding of the relationship between self and social structure, power and the role that individuals play in constructing identities and creating social order (Widdicombe 1998:206). In broad terms, the monolingual norms of homogenisation and multilingual norms of heterogenisations have been juxtaposed in an attempt to explore what is happening among Cameroonian immigrants within the multilingual context of Cape Town. Related studies included Modan 2007, Moyer 2007, Vigouroux 2005, Widdicombe 1998, Bourdieu 1994, and Derrida 1995, who have presented methods of interpreting data as have been employed in this study.

### **5.6 Data Processing**

I paid close attention to the participants as they communicated through verbal and non-verbal means, and I recorded some of their activities as the principal source of data. During the process of transcription, I listened to the recorder again and again, carefully transcribing what was said. Thereafter, I listened to the audio recorder again, comparing the transcribed text I saw to the vocal discourse that I heard, looking out for signals I could possibly have been sending. I stopped from time to time to make



some adjustments, such as filling in omissions or wiping out an additional piece of information indicated in the transcript which was not in the recording. Transcripts allow for focused attention on detail, which promoted insights into techniques and contents.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, qualitative techniques of analysis were applied while analysing informants' responses. Data analysis began in the field and remained subject to critical evaluation and examination. The process of transcription was also not done in complete isolation from the analytical process. The data was rationalised through a systematic and logical examination, thereby avoiding prejudice. Even at the early stages, the data gathered was analysed based on the objectives of the study. After transcription, the data was categorised according to commonalities, dissimilarities and contradictions emerging from themes (Richards 2003:81-84), as synthesised in the next three chapters.

Owing to the extensive nature of the study and given that, I am part of both the Anglophone and Francophone social groups; I took special precautions to separate the data from the rest of my life. This I did by determinedly establishing a proper perspective on the data and its place in the research journey, bearing in mind that more is not necessarily better. As Richards (2003:93) rightly puts it, “[t]he thorniest issue in dealing with any data and particularly interview data, is the extent to which our representation of it is also inherently interpretative” Therefore, the categories identified by the respondents are taken as merely points of view and thus the interpretations that these respondents embody are examined as those of a particular individual. Therefore, the process of categorisation and analysis considers the broader contextual issues at this level. It took into account, for example, the idiosyncrasies of both the respondents and the interviewer. Nevertheless, this does not mean downgrading the respondents' voices. Since “the researcher cannot literally ‘be’ the respondent” (Richards 2003:91-93), gaining familiarity within the group of informants was considered an equivalent to a systematic attempt to get a complete picture of their daily linguistic activities (cf. Gumperz 1982). I had to appropriate their words as honestly as possible, while recognising their interpretative act and

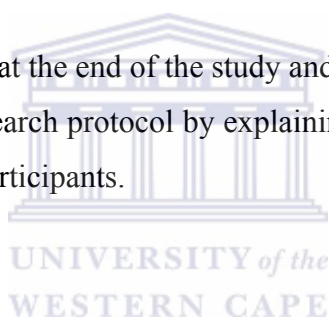
bringing transparency to bear, hence seeking to represent the voices of those who had contributed to my understanding (Richards 2003).

### **5.7 Ethical Considerations**

The participants were interviewed in CPE, French, or English (depending on their choice) and all participants had an absolute right to withdraw at any stage of the study.

This project observed the standards of the American Sociological Research Association namely:

- a) confidentiality
- b) anonymity
- c) providing a report at the end of the study and
- d) observation of research protocol by explaining the purpose of the research and the rights of the participants.



### **5.8 Limitation of the Study**

It is important to note that most participants insisted on responding in English during interview sessions even when they were being interviewed in CPE or French. For example, the second Francophone focus group also had questions in French, and participants were asked to respond in the language they felt more comfortable with and they all started out responding in French, but later on switched to English, claiming that they were in an English-speaking country and so must speak in English. This means that the researcher's attempts to classify some participants as either Anglophones or Francophones was probably met with resistance, a resistance which could also have caused participants who contested such classifications to withhold information. With this in mind, the data thus obtained cannot be considered as an absolute truth.

Issues such as identity options and choice of language, for example the choice of using either English or French and being Anglophone or Francophone, are not only complex but sometimes very delicate, especially when one thinks of the self as a social construction which is created and maintained during interactions (Agha 2007; Heller 2007; Anchimbe 2007; Richards 2003 and Heller 1999). To be precise the three concepts of multilingualism, postcolonialism, and linguistic identity, which I analysed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 are delicate and complicated issues, because they are phenomena that are constantly changing. Consequently, Anchimbe (2007) believes that negotiating identities from the above-mentioned contexts,

[...] form a part of sociological, ethnological, linguistic, political, and anthropological research that stretches to several regions of the world. This is because colonialism and its eventual admixture of languages and peoples did not affect only colonised peoples and regions but also the colonisers: it changed speakers' allegiances to the languages they spoke or were thereafter made to speak; it modified rights of ownership to languages that spread beyond their original national boundaries; and ushered in layers of socio-cultural behavioural patterns whose origins could be traced to the several groups that came into contact (Anchimbe 2007:1).

The above quote signifies complexity and sensitivity in issues concerning identity. This gave reason for purposeful sampling that targeted only a particular group of individuals (those considered as responsible and knowledgeable) who were identified by other Cameroonians during interviews. This was accompanied by opportunistic sampling, where deemed necessary, as stated in section 5.2.

### **5.9 Transcription Key**

This key is used to facilitate the reading of transcripts in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. All names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms and all translations are my own translations. The researcher is the main interviewer. Other subsidiary interviewers are represented by a pseudonym. The faces of participant in photographs have been darkened to further ensure anonymity.

Spellings of CPE may differ from those of other writers since the language has not yet been standardised. The transcription key used for oral conversation in this dissertation follows thus:

**Table 5.1**

| <b>Symbol</b> | <b>Meaning</b>  |
|---------------|---|
| [ ]           | With words inside square brackets indicating transcriber's guess/explanation        |
| (?)           | Inaudible words   |
| (name)        | Used when a name is mentioned   |
| ...           | Overlapping utterance   |
| = =           | Two speakers talking at the same time or interruptions                              |
| //            | Researcher's translations   |
| Italics       | Used when a word or phrase from another language other than English is incorporated |

Adapted from Andrea Mayr (2004: x-xi)

### **5.10 Summary**

I set out to describe the research design and methodology above. I have presented the research design, sampling, and sample selection techniques. I have discussed the sample size and sampling procedures used, pointing out the related challenges and shortcomings and limitations of the study. The research design and methodology are not only limited to questions about the mechanics of identity construction and the discourse strategies people use in creating identities, but also aim to reflect the real-world consequences of identity construction (Modan 2007) in multilingual settings. In producing descriptions on identity construction and their consequences in multilingual settings, I have focused on what appears to be the most salient characteristics among the translocal hosts and transnational immigrants. This facilitated the investigation of

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current trends of transformation and their roles in the negotiation of Cape identities. In the next three chapters, I proceed to analyse data obtained from multilingual settings.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Discoursal Hybridity and Stylisation of Identities in Spatial Practices**

We have operated for so long with the standard tropes of (socio)linguistics in the hope that the idea of language spreading and diversifying into regional varieties will continue to account for linguistic expansion. [...] Language studies are confronted by the growing idea that we need to rethink the ways in which language has been conceptualised. (Higgins 2009:ix).

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter is in line with Banda (1996) and Banda & Oketch (2009), who argue that language and socio-economic structure in Africa have not crystallised into a neat package as it is often portrayed in literature. The theme to be explored in this chapter is also in line with recent work on performative identities (and hybridity) and stylisation of discourse practices (Banda 2010). In this regard, the chapter shows how Cameroonians use the extended linguistic repertoires to perform various translocal and transnational identity options in the Cape Town Diaspora. In the process, the linguistic, ethnic, regional, national, and even the Anglophone and Francophone boundaries are transgressed.

#### **6.1 Orders of Discourse**

One of the noticeable things at the “official” Cameroonian meetings is the apparent “disorder of discourse” – in the sense that they do not fit into the Western orders of discourse where “standard” norms and “pure” linguistic forms are often the preferred codes. Moreover, meeting proceedings do not follow the Western way of “doing business.” Side talks, and sometimes, other members who wish to give their opinion and whatever else as I later show, will mostly continue in CPE, and other national languages or a mixture of English and French. Even though the agenda of

Cameroonian meetings and/or minutes are always written in English or French, depending on whether it is a Cameroon North Westerners' Association in Cape Town (CANOWACAT) or Mifi Association meeting; when it comes to reading or announcement, the agenda is transformed and transliterated into CPE. This in essence results in reconstructing and defamiliarizing the values behind monologic traditions that underpin the Western orders of discourse.

### **6.1.1 Sociolinguistic Practices of CANOWACAT Meeting Members**

As mentioned above, in terms of Western orders of discourse, one expects either Standard English or standard French for example to be the meeting language from beginning to end. However, I will show that Cameroonian meetings do not necessarily follow the Western orders of discourse and that is what I call disorders of discourse. First, I will demonstrate this by showing that Cameroonians speak many languages in a meeting. In addition to this, in the Western meetings, people go straight to the point but in the Cameroonian meetings people start with prayers and other things. Whereas Western meetings always have set norms and people's contributions are judged as being related to the point, in Cameroonian meetings, there is spontaneous multilingualism and some "talk" might appear irrelevant to proceedings from a Western perspective. It will be argued that the latter is critical to building a "caring" socio-cultural bond among Cameroonians. Also, there is a lot of flexibility with regards to time. I am going to show all these things by looking at two meetings. First, I start with CANOWACAT.

Prayer, which is the opening phase of the meeting most of the time, is said in rather antiquated or biblical English as demonstrated below:

#### **Extract 6.1**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Samanta</b> | Thank you lord for making it possible for us to be here today. Grant your travelling mercies to our brothers and sisters who are still on their way and bless our brother (name) who has just left to arrive safely [...] |

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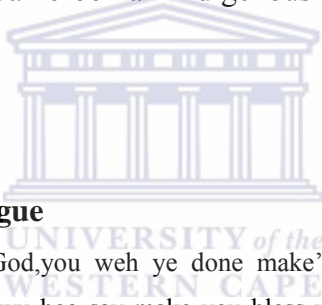
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The prayer above is said in archaic English. That is, the use of ‘Old’ English is obvious in the English version above. This is shown by the use of highly ‘standardized’ biblical forms of English ‘Grant your travelling mercies’. Even by British standards, such English could be deemed outmoded. In other words, the English themselves do not use such English any more. The question then is why is it still used here? It could be argued the legacy of the influences of British colonialism as well as the missionary diction on Cameroonians still finds focus in such meetings.

However, in terms of language use, there is a lot of hybrid code and chat back in Cameroonian meetings which does not usually happen in Western meetings.

Even though extract 6.1 above shows that people start meetings with English, it is not uncommon to start with Cameroonian indigenous languages or with CPE as shown below.

### **Extract 6.2**



| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 2           | <b>Ursula:</b> | Papa God,you weh ye done make'am say make who reach hear today, wu beg say make you bless wa other brother and sister dem for reach here safe. Thank you papa for all good thing dem [...]. /God our father, you who has masterminded our safe journey to this venue, we beg you to equally bless our brothers and sister still on their way and lord, thank you for all blessings [...]/ |

Ursula's prayer and message is similar to that in 6.1 but it is in CPE. Whatever the language used; it is often a formal traditional version full of meaning. The content of the prayers often circulate around safety/protection, guidance, and thanksgiving. The people who happen to lead the prayers often evoke God's presence in their midst, asking him to be the invisible chairperson who guides their every move. The Cameroonian immigrants thank God for protecting them and request that he grants travelling mercies for the latecomers. Alluding to late comers does not necessarily mean that those present were on time. It simply means those coming after prayers should also be showered with blessings just like those that are present. Normally, the



people will come between half an hour to two hours late and then begin to find out if the others had received an SMS reminding them of the meeting.

Even when the meeting starts in English and French, the issues of standard and non-standard do not seem to matter. What is evident from the outset is that interactional regime or the rules governing Cameroonian meetings are not as systematic as suggested in Blommaerts's (2005) orders of indexicality. Blommaert describes "orders of indexicality" as systematically reproduced stratified meanings often called norms or 'rules' of language, like those found in 'standard' forms versus 'non-standard' [forms] (Blommaert 2005:73). However, following Banda (1996) and Banda & Oketch (2009), it can be said that language and socio-economic structure have not crystallised neatly into a package among Cameroonian immigrants. In other words, the choice and form of language used does not necessarily relate to socio-economic status (cf. Vigouroux 2008) of the interactants or the formality of the meeting. In this regard, I tend to agree with researchers who have argued that the idea of standard in sociolinguistics tropes has increasingly proven to be a fallacy (Banda 2010; Canagarajah and Jerskey 2009; Canagarajah 2001; Heller 2008 and 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). The argument is that in multilingual contexts of Africa, people use their linguistic repertoire to perform different identities, often unimpeded by Western restrictions on "formalities" on language usage. Thus, they use their linguistic repertoire to continuously redefine who they are and position themselves and others in various ways. As such, even when they use the "standard" official languages English and French, they do so in a way that reflects their lived experiences and everyday practices that is, using them together with other languages as a singular linguistic or code repertoire (Banda and Bellononjengele 2009). Thus, the Cameroonian immigrants' activities, as Vigouroux (2008:426) puts it, represent 'a reordering of the "order of indexicalities"'. This means, the Cameroonians assign a symbolic value to English and French as these languages alone carry neither a significant value nor help them 'climb the social ladder'(Vigouroux 2008:427). In other words, ability to use only English and/or French provides few or no job opportunities as further explained in section 8.3.2.

Moreover, the Cameroonians discourse practices do not always reflect the binary constructs of Anglophone or Francophone. Not only that, even when the meeting starts in an English or French variation, social stratification according to language or register is still blurred, for the meeting continues in CPE and/or other national languages. It is not uncommon for all meetings and other general announcements to be done in CPE. For instance, Tommy a CANOWACAT member used the following SMS message in CPE to announce pending elections:

### **Extract 6.3**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Tommy:</b>  | Tomorrow na CANOWACAT elections for 4pm oh, no fail for kam vote. Na (name) and (name) them di contest 4 that election [...]/The CANOWACAT elections shall be at 4pm tomorrow. Do not fail to come cast your votes. Those contesting are (name) and (name) [...]. |

On the contrary, sometimes the use of so-called Standard English at such gatherings is frowned upon as snobbish. Very often, some members would show their displeasure in the linguistic choice (English-based codes only) by screaming and disturbing the meeting. In fact, when someone insists on the use of Standard English only, they are ostracised by the people not because they do not actually understand as they claim; but just a matter of social values, which dictate that “Standard” English is for foreigners and show offs who speak “Grammar”. The extract below shows the audience’s response to a contributor at CANOWACAT meeting, who spoke what the audience felt was “foreign” sounding English.

### **Extract 6.4**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 2           | <b>Crowd:</b>  | (?) wu no di hear because say ye di talk na grammar /we do not understand because he is speaking grammar (the word grammar among Cameroonians denotes standard English). |

The kitchen area of the Salt River shebeen which I describe in the next chapter is also used by meeting and/or non-meeting members when the main sitting area is overcrowded. In one such case, meeting members sitting in the kitchen area openly

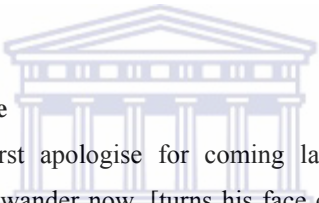
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show their disdain for pure standard forms. They claim they cannot understand a speaker because he uses Standard English. Studies have shown that in urban Africa, people do not just use English or French, but most often use a ‘mix’ of languages. This is also at the centre of the disorders of discourse. (See Banda and Bellononjengele 2010, Banda & Omondi 2008, Higgins 2009, Mc Laughlin 2009). This is the nature of urban language use in Africa as is shown among Cameroonian immigrants in an urban African city – Cape Town.

In another instance, Sammy who is in his late thirties and is supposed to coordinate an American auction sale during a meeting, begins to address the people in ‘standard’ English. He then switched style and expresses regret for his tardiness in CPE combined with an African Americanism “Yoh!”

### **Extract 6.5**



| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Sammy:</b>  | I will first apologise for coming late. Make I try for dress like America-wander now, [turns his face cap in a way that the front is at the back], – I look now like yoh no bi so? /Let me try to dress like an American [...], – Now I resemble a stunning youth, don't I? / |

Yoh is commonly used by Cameroonian immigrants to refer to a trendy youth. The same explanation can be used to explain the compound ‘America-wander’, a CPE word with a similar meaning as *yoh*. In other words, Americanisms have become part of the complex multilingual blend from which Cameroonians also draw their linguistic inspirations. Cameroonians living in Cape Town, thus, tend to exploit their available codes in order to signal hybrid multiple identity affiliations.

Solo who is from the North West province of Cameroon, prefers to identify more with Mifi of the Western Province in Cameroon. Because of this, Solo neither speaks the language of his supposed tribe nor does he know the name of the language he is supposed to speak. He is, however fluent in the Bamiléké ‘dialect’ of Baleng (a linguistic group of the Western province). In addition, he interacts with his parents in English and then uses Franglais and French, or a combination of all, and CPE, with

friends. Since coming to South Africa, he has also added isiXhosa to his linguistic repertoire.

### **Extract 6.6**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 18          | <b>Solo:</b>   | What language ah (laughs)? Actually, I don't know the name of my dialect.     |
| 36          | <b>Solo:</b>   | Yeah, I actually understand a little bit of Baleng, Mifi –Bamiléké from Mifi. |

Solo's linguistic behaviour, like the other immigrants discussed elsewhere, questions the validity of the indexical value of the central role played by language in relation to (ethnic) identity. Even though a member of CANOWACAT by birth, he is happy that people think, he is from the Mifi division. In fact, during the interview, he claimed the Mifi identity too, among others.

It can be said that Cameroonian immigrants' use an amalgam system, that is many languages at once, demonstrates the mobility of multilingualism and multiculturalism across domains and contexts. This Phenomenon of highly multilingual and multicultural dispensation constitutes a way of life in postcolonial communities, and is 'not at all new' (Anchimbe and Janney 2010:1456) as is claimed by Aronin and Singleton (2008). What we see among Cameroonian immigrants is the multilingual dispensation to use more than one code which has been a feature of language use in Africa since the onset of missionaries and colonialists, and some cases even before that (Banda & Bellonjengele 2010; Mc Laughlin 2009, Bird 2001). Even the executive members are not immune to using hybrid language as can be seen below from the President of CANOWACAT:

### **Extract 6.7**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>    | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|-------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>President:</b> | [to Secretary in low voice; I no really know how wu go do with dis kitchen palava]. [to the general assembly] Thank you very much without delay = =; [shouts at the crowd seated in the kitchen] Eh kitchen [because of the noise]. I really want beg for here say, [...] for those way them di disturb [...]na meeting time. [...]. / [to Secretary in CPE] I do not really know what to do with this kitchen issue [then switches to English addressing general assembly] |

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and shouts at those in the kitchen in CPE] Eh kitchen. I really want to beg that for those disturbing, [...] now is meeting time. [...]./

The President begins talking in CPE to the secretary who is seated next to him and then addresses the general assembly in English and switches back to CPE to address those in the kitchen. Thereafter, he continues speaking in CPE.

The Cameroonian identities as seen in Chapter 1, are not only many but hybrid. That is, like in amalgams, their identities consist of a mixture of many languages and cultures. There is no better demonstration in the use of hybridity than in Rico's use of language below:

### Extract 6.8

| Turn | Speaker      | Dialogue  |
|------|--------------|---|
| 1    | <b>Rico:</b> | In South Africa, Cameroonians do attend “crydie, bornhouse [...] but two people out of ten will always use proverbial language. [...] So once in a while we put on these traditional clothes. It makes me feel like I'm back home and I put it on (excited) and I go to dance mbaghalum (a traditional dance of the Nso people in the North West province of Cameroon) or go for official commemoration and things like that. |

Rico combines English with CPE expressions such as *crydie* that is mourning for the deceased, and *bornhouse* that is celebrating new births. He also enjoys dancing *Mbaghalum*, a traditional practice which has no equivalent in English. Obviously, Cameroonian immigrants draw from various languages at their disposal. Before the formal start of their meetings, for example, Cameroonian immigrants will speak any language that they find suitable and this continues in side comments (and participation) during meeting, both from the executive and general assembly.

In essence, Cameroonians draw from existing linguistic resources by moving between languages as a way to enhance meaning making. Rico explains why he uses mixed code thus.

### **Extract 6.9**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Rico:</b>   | You see, sometimes even me when am speaking in English am tempted to use some those words that I think I can better express myself with, those Pidgin words - I find myself using that in English |

Though contradictory to his initial view of CPE as a language that cannot be spoken out of Cameroon and that he does not enjoy speaking CPE, Rico draws from CPE and other Cameroonian expressions to communicate explicitly. As can be seen below, Rico is aware of the value of CPE for effective communication among Cameroonian immigrants:

### **Extract 6.10**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Rico:</b>   | This usually happens when I meet the Cameroon community and sometimes, I feel that I really want to talk English but I feel that the rest of the other people will think that it is like a show which is never a show for me. I'm just educating myself. But I find that in order to make the other people understand, I try to be as low as I can, but I try to also put in some of the pidgin words to make sure that you're talking to a people who will understand... |

The kinds of interactions and discourse practices by Cameroonians do not always reflect the binary constructs of either Anglophone or Francophone. Rico an active executive member of CANOWACAT, remarks that all Cameroonians of both 'Anglophone' and 'Francophone' descent exploit their available linguistic resources to signal their various identities, depending on the circumstances. As can be seen below, Rico believes a Cameroonian can be Anglophone, Francophone, or both depending on the individual and the situation he/she faces.

### **Extract 6.11**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Rico:</b>   | It also depends on the individual, yea and what situation that they are in that they will be able to say I am Anglophone, I am a Francophone. |

Evidently, Cameroonians do not necessarily restrict themselves to a strict structural regime in terms of language use. As social agents, they tend to take control of language. That is, they position themselves in ways that enable them to assert agency and voice. This kind of performance shows that among Cameroonians, the use of multiple codes is the norm, and English and French are part of the code repertoire.

In the same way as an individual is allowed to use an armoury of languages to interact intelligibly, so too is it allowed to have multiple 'tribal' and language affiliations with somewhat distinctive social practices and (meeting) agendas. Again, Rico's words affirm this argument.

### **Extract 6.12**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>     | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|--------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Researcher:</b> | [...] I mean meeting that we wear traditional wears. Do you have them here?   |
|             | <b>Rico:</b>       | Yeah we do have and (?) Cameroonians we have inter-tribal Associations. Like in South Africa, here I belong to CANOWACAT which is the mother association. I also belong to the Nkwain itself and the BFU which is the Banso union. So we have times that we are always advised to put on our traditional attires. This reminds us that – or brings to senses that we are like going to meet a people who have a culture |

Rico above belongs to three different cultural groups, in addition to the Cameroon Association which makes a total of four. The agendas of the different groups may overlap and sometimes appear contradictory. Some groups insist that members wear special uniforms at meetings, while others demand that they wear Cameroonian attire associated with a particular region or ethnic group. An important complication occurred in the Cameroon soccer tournament of 20 May 2008 in the Maitland field in the suburb of Cape Town. (20 May is a public holiday in Cameroon commemorating the reunification of the two Cameroons). A goalkeeper was supposedly a registered member in two 'tribes' or sub-associations within CANOWACAT and both wanted him to play on their side. For the goalkeeper choosing one group means relinquishing membership of the other linguistic group. This would also mean reproducing the socio-cultural structures built around ethnic classification at macro-social levels. The goalkeeper in this condition, decided to play for CANOWACAT. As such, he

successfully downplayed social structures by reminding the other groups of his belongingness to both through the parent association – CANOWACAT.

### **6.2 The Reconstruction of Great Mifi Division**

This section highlights the tension between local and the transnational cultural flows, focusing on the Mifi group, which is the Francophone counterpart of the Anglophone CANOWACAT group. The interaction of members within and across the two groups in Cape Town, depict a localization of Cameroonian lifestyle in Cape Town contexts.

It is interesting to note that the kind of linguistic behaviour found at the CANOWACAT meetings also happens at the Mifi meetings. Elianne, an active Mifi member illustrates this point:

#### **Extract 6.13**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Elianne</b> | Seigneur, Dieu tout-puissant, toi qui nous as permis de nous retrouver dans le cadre de notre rencontre habituel. Que tu sois avec nous tout le long de cette réunion et fait que ceux qui sont encore en chemin arrivent dans de bonnes conditions et que tous ensemble, nous menons à bien l'évolution de notre association./ Lord God almighty who has made it possible that we meet in our usual venue, be with us through out this meeting and make it possible for all those still on their way to arrive safely and that together we contribute positively to the growth of this association. [...]/. |

Like CANOWACAT, the Mifi meetings start in prayer but in French, and usually continue in French mixed with English. Like Samata, however, in the above example, Elianne uses a form of archaic French triggered by the biblical references. This could be seen in the expression “Que tu sois avec nous...,” and “que tous ensemble, nous menons à bien l'évolution...” This form of French could be described as archaic even in France.



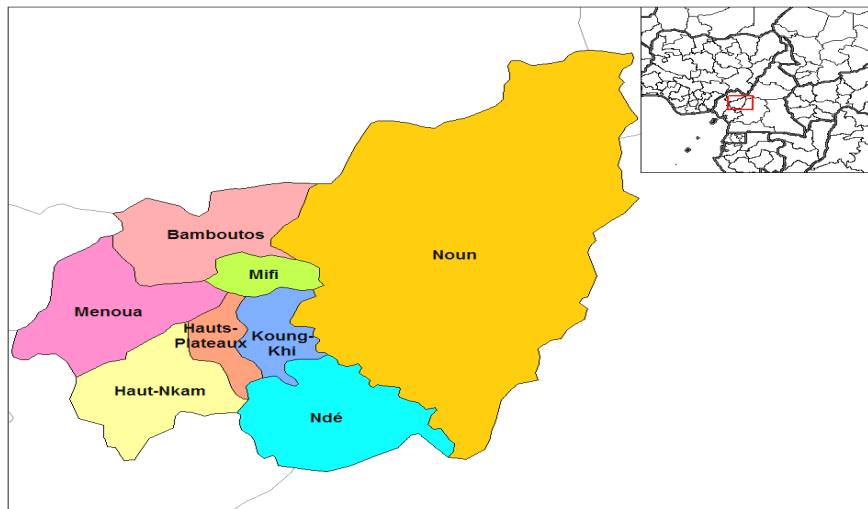
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Just as was seen in CANOWACAT, the Mifi do not always use French. The Mifi division (in the Western province of Cameroon) is actually a neighbour to the North West province. In this light, one notices that all indigenes of the Western province and North West Provinces of Cameroon are referred to as grassfields people. Those of the Western Province and the language varieties in this province are referred to as ‘Bamiléké’ by other Cameroonians and some of the indigenes of this province. Interestingly, most of these people (of the Western Province) do not usually refer to themselves as ‘Bamiléké’. They prefer to specify a linguistic group as a means of identification. This classification into groups still subtly plays a role in the lives of the Cameroonian immigrants too.

The Western province of Cameroon consists of five other divisions, namely Nde, Haut Nkam, Bamoutos, Noun, and Menoua, with their respective capitals being Banganté, Bafang, Mbouda, Foumban and Dschang. In this province, the most widely spoken language is Ngemba.

Today, the former Mifi division, known as the ‘great’ Mifi division, has been divided into three main divisions following a government decision in the early 1990s. These include the following: Haut Plateaux, with Baham as its capital; the Khoung-Khi division, with its capital Bandjoun and (simply) the Mifi division, with its capital still at Bafoussam. Each of these, again have sub-divisions. The new Mifi shown in figure 6.1 below is smaller than the former.



**Figure: 6.1:** A map of the Western province of Cameroon showing how the Great Mifi division transformed into three divisions. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:West\\_Cameroon\\_divisions.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:West_Cameroon_divisions.png)).

Interestingly, the splitting up of the great Mifi division (over ten years ago) has had no effect in Cape Town, since the Mifi Association is still defined in relation to the boundaries of the great Mifi.

The Mifi meeting takes place every Monday, from 20:00 hours till 23:00 or 24:00 hours, in the president's house in the neighbourhood of Goodwood (located in the northern suburbs of Cape Town). It has a constituency of approximately sixty registered members. Most of the members in this meeting are businesspersons and hawkers around Cape Town.

The meeting consists of various segments, starting with *fond de caisse annuel* (annual contributions), and leading up to *vente d'argent* (financial aid). Each segment is designed to perform separate tasks that together constitute the meeting (see detailed segments of the meeting in appendix C).

During the *coup de cœur* (free-will donation) segment, a sacred and important Cameroonian ritual namely incantation, comes into play at one specific moment. At this juncture, the person who is presiding over the meeting randomly chooses someone to perform the task. The incantation rites are performed using any of the many Cameroonian national languages at the speaker's disposal. That any

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Cameroonian language or language blend is used contributes to the disorders of discourse. For instance, during one meeting of the Mifi Association, I observed that a person appointed to carry out the duty of handing over money to a newcomer spoke in Baleseng (one of the national languages spoken in the Western Province of Cameroon). In his discourse, he called upon the ancestors, asking them to bless the money he was handing over to the newcomer. To the newcomer he asked that he uses the money in the same faith that it was given. In other words, the recipient of the money was implored to take it with all their good intentions that he should succeed, set up a little business, and prosper. This same speaker later spoke French and English in the course of this same meeting (as was done before the task of handing over the money). I want to argue that this was not surprising because these languages are not considered to 'belong' to anyone in particular.

It is interesting to note that like in the CANOWACAT, the Mifi congregation also uses linguistic resources independently of the often prescribed or assumed identities of Anglophone, Francophone, Bamenda, Baleseng or whatever else. As such, these categories seem to represent mere social boundaries which really do not have an effect on the interactions of the immigrants in Cape Town.

Similarly, in Mifi like in CANOWACAT, the use of many languages is not a problem. The speaker in the above case first spoke in one of the nine variants of the Bamiléké languages. It was evident from the other observations I made at other meetings that such linguistic behaviour is not planned from the start. It is clear that people speak their own varying national languages (or dialects) without it causing conflict or disruption.

Thus, it can be said that not only is the great Mifi being reconstructed and reconfigured but the different ethnic and national discourses are also being transformed. At the same time, the Anglophone/Francophone discourses are also reconfigured.

Therefore, it can be said that there is no contestation regarding language use at the Mifi meetings as was the case at CANOWACAT meetings. In turn, it can be argued that the social stratification built around the constructs of Anglophone/Francophone or ethnic divisions do not seem apparent. Similarly, the applicability of the concept of crossing which stipulates which language would belong to one group and which for whatever reasons, excludes and categorises other speakers of that language, becomes uncertain. Given such practice specified above, Maja (2009) like Banda and Omondi (2008), Heller (2008), Agha (2007), Shi-Xu (2007), and Appadurai (1996), proposes a new perspective of a world in which the point of departure and arrival are both in a cultural flux, making the search for steady points of references for critical life choices very difficult. This can be said to blur the notion of centres and peripheries.

### **6. 3 Blurring Linguistic and Social Structures in the Diaspora**

As shown above both the Mifi and CANOWACAT, like many Cameroonian-based meeting groups in Cape Town, have various functions and aims. While the Mifi Association represents a division that includes other divisions of the former great Mifi (namely, Haut Plateaux, and Khoung-Khi in the Western Province of Cameroon), CANOWACAT is meant to represent the whole of the North West province of Cameroon. However, I demonstrated that this is only on paper as anybody including South Africans are free to join these organisations. This means in practice these groups are language-based, ethnic-based, or nation-based. They share (post)colonial experiences and multilingualism in processes of identification. Members of the two associations are a blend of the other as they may be members of the two groups at the same time. I now turn to the similarities in the two meetings.

Following the colonial past and the linguistic density in Cameroon (see Chapter 1), the sociolinguistic situation in Cameroonian is characterised by linguistic diversity and hybridity (Echu 2004, Bird 2001). This is expressed in their shared daily linguistic and cultural practices which deviate from strict structural classification, but which in Cameroon often finds a fault line in the Anglophone-Francophone divide. In

other words, often times, the social structuring is not along the numerous African languages, but along the colonial languages, French and English. It is not surprising that most of those I interviewed seem to blame the foreign languages for the assumed and sometimes apparent division and tension among Cameroonians. Sammy's excerpt below demonstrates this.

### Extract 6.14

| Turn | Speaker     | Dialogue  |
|------|-------------|---|
| 1    | Sammy       | [...] you find that our traditions are virtually the same they are very very much alike. You look at the Bamilékés for example; you know the North West traditional regalia   |
| 2    | Interviewer | Yes, the traditional wear.  |
| 3    | Sammy       | You find the Bamiléké people having the same garment as their regalia. You find the Bamiléké people like the Mbouda, Bafoussam having the same traditional dish – <i>achu</i> , the traditional dish in Mankon – or most villages in the North West province, their traditional dish is <i>achu</i> . The way they do their dead celebration. Is the same. firing the guns, and whatever. |

The above extract shows the shared multilingual and multicultural practices among Cameroonian societies. While Anglophones and Francophones are said to have different cultures because of their different colonial experiences (Awasom 2005, Anchimbe 2005, Echu, 2004), data with respect to Sammy (in extract 6.14) emphasises identicalness among Cameroonians through related dialects and cultural practices. Their physical adornments, habitual cuisine like *achu* (see Chapter 7) and ceremonies for the dead such as gun firing are the same across Cameroonian cultural groups. Sammy, as seen below is convinced that it is colonization which is to blame:

### Extract 6.15

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Sammy   | It is only the language that separates us. If we acknowledge the fact that that is the only thing that separates us and that we one people in the struggle, then we will survive. So you'd agree with me that the only thing or the only reason why a South African would consider themselves South African as I consider myself Cameroonian is because we were colonized by France, by |

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Britain and they were colonized by –  
British colonies, the Dutch, or whatever. But I still strongly believe that  
Africans are one ... in their culture.

However, the divisive nature of the colonial languages is mitigated by code-mixing or code blending, especially in the Cape Town Diaspora. As I have noted elsewhere, the use of multiple codes is the norm among Cameroonians. Using multilingualism as resource enables Cameroonians to position themselves in ways that enable them to assert agency and voice. Such voice and agency enables Cameroonians for instance, Victor to transcend ethnic, linguistic, and even national boundaries.

### Extract 6.16

| Turn | Speaker  | Dialogue  |
|------|----------|---|
| 1    | Victor : | You know what we call <i>un peu de tout?</i> (a French expression meaning a bit of everything). I find myself doing – I do this when I mix French and English, and Pidgin |

In other words, when Cameroonians come together, they use the various languages at their disposal to stylize the different identity options available to them (Banda 2009: 6). Like Victor above, Alain is aware of the importance of language blends in helping him to recognise other Cameroonians he has never seen.

### Extract 6.17

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Alain   | [...] en fait pour reconnaître que ça c'est un Camerounais n'est pas, [...] c'est le pidgin. Il talk, il talk, bon je sais que ça c'est un frère. /To know this is a Cameroonian [...] it is pidgin. [here he explicitly uses Franglais to demonstrate how they sometimes speak] he/she talks and talks, well I know this is a brother/ |

In describing how he manages to recognise a Cameroonian he has never seen before, Alain believes it is not so much of the accent that matters as the usage of CPE and Franglais as expressed in 'il talk, il talk'. As Alain speaks, he uses Franglais himself

to demonstrate this. Victor succinctly explains the creativity involved in the use of amalgams and indeed for speaking Franglais thus:

### Extract 6.18

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Victor  | Actually, actually, (?). I think that is [...] this kind of use it as erhh, as erhh, how do I put it, they kind of make it as a jest (jest in among Cameroonians actually means stylish) you know yeah. They want – may be put it in a funny style you know make it erhm attractive, I mean something like that. They want to talk in a nice way, you want to put the French in a – to be creative on your own you know. To say no, I can still talk like this, and this man will understand me [...] but I don't very much adore it. |

Victor, who claims he does not much enjoy speaking Franglais, nevertheless explains how it works and why people use the language. In his opinion, this language exhibits the creativity of the people. Because they are able to draw from several languages, and make language 'attractive' by talking 'in a nice way', they deliberately despise structural (monolingual) norms to communicate effectively.

It is evident from the foregoing that in both associations English and French are used together with other languages in performing social actions and identities. As said earlier, both meetings start with prayers and these prayers are not always only in French and English. Other Cameroonian languages and CPE come to play. This way of using language is not limited to prayer alone. It is applicable to all other meeting practice and activities.

In addition, both associations emphasize the common spirit of humanity. A good example of this can be seen with the *coup de cœur* initiative (meaning the free-will donation), wherein meeting members freely contribute a sum of at least R10 and are altruistically encouraged contributing more wherever possible. Similarly, it has become customary for all CANOWACAT members to contribute anything (in kind or cash) in a show of appreciation or celebration, or to condole with fellow members. In certain meetings, such as that of the Bansa (a linguistic group of the North West province, and thus within, CANOWACAT) an elder has to perform the incantation

rite when handing over money, whereas in the Mifi just anyone can do it regardless of age.

Even though I have shown that the use of language and multilingual performance of both CANOWACAT and Mifi are a dispensation, the social roles these two groups play in Cape Town is not necessarily the same. In contrast to the economically structured approach to meetings in the Mifi (seen above), CANOWACAT meetings are mostly socio-culturally based.

Moreover, it is a norm for CANOWACAT to present the agenda of a previous meeting just after prayers and this is followed by the reading of the minutes (see appendix D). In contrast, the Mifi meeting ends with the reading of previous minutes. While minutes are mostly read in French at Mifi, in CANOWACAT, successive secretaries have been noted for writing down minutes in English and reading them in CPE, in both the general assembly and executive sessions. Thus, there is a re-ordering of discourse here, as the ‘normal’ Western-style discourse order, and use of a ‘pure’, standard language from the start of a meeting until the end is disfigured or reconfigured.

Pierre, a forty-year old registered member of the Mifi Association and an active CANOWACAT member, summarises the social functions played by the two groups thus:

### **Extract 6.19**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | Pièrre:        | They [Anglophones] are more sociable, they’re, – they think about people rather than money but the ‘Francophone’ people most of their things is about money. |

As Pièrre has estimated, CANOWACAT focuses greatly on creating a sense of cultural awareness and sensitivity to the needs and wellbeing of its members. Mifi meetings concentrate more on monetary transactions and rarely entertain issues involving visiting the sick, the bereaved, or newborn babies, if at all. In addition, the



onus is on members of the Mifi Association to bring food and beverages to meeting sessions, without which there would be nothing to eat and drink. Worthy of note is the fact that, the president of Mifi or anyone celebrating a birth, or thanking Mifi for the support it had offered when they arrived in Cape Town and so on, may sometimes volunteer to host.

### **6.4. The Concept of Translocality**

Even though I have been talking about amalgams systems as if there are only Cameroonian languages, in fact, other languages in South Africa come in too. Cameroonians have adopted the local linguistic flavour in their already extended repertoire.

The kind of discourses arising from contact between Cameroonian immigrants and local Capetonians have led to far-reaching ramifications for both the immigrants and the South Africans in contact, as shall be elucidated further on. I draw on Mai (2007) and Vigouroux (2005) to show how it is evident below that the translocations (the shift between territory, identity, and political affiliation) inform popular interactions taking place among (Cameroonian) immigrants in Cape Town.

In exploring linguistic transformation of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town, it seems that transnational trends could sometimes be voluntary or involuntary and are perceived variously by some different trans-migration agents. Perceptions may vary from seeing these trends as normal, as positive, or as negative.

The South African socio-cultural environment variously impacts on the manner in which immigrants construct hybrid identities to suit different purposes within a fusion of interpretive sites. This is clearly evident from a close study of seven male Cameroonian immigrants: Mr Ntuh, a Cameroonian trader in his late fifties, located in Mowbray; Max a middle-aged hawker; three young men: Victor (already introduced above), in his mid twenties at his Woodstock home; Junior; and Alain, both in various

social settings, Greg and Alino – two brothers, the former in his late thirties and the latter, a newcomer in his mid twenties, all in the Dos Santos Residence at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Two women: Adeline in her late twenties, at a hair salon and Bernadine, in her mid thirties, in her Mowbray home.

### **Extract 6.20**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>   | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| <b>1</b>    | <b>Mr. Ntuh:</b> | [to customer]. Thank you very much. Next time eeh, call back   |
| <b>2</b>    | <b>Max:</b>      | It doesn't influence the way I talk really but I know that it will influence even within South Africa. |
| <b>3</b>    | <b>Adeline:</b>  | (To a customer) No I don't have sorry. neé.  |

The three participants above adjusted as demanded by their economic needs. Linguistically, Mr. Ntuh, Max and Adeline have adjusted to the dictates of the Cape Town setting but are not aware of these adjustments, since Max overtly acknowledges '[i]t doesn't influence...' Yet it is clear from the usage of expressions such as *sisi* (cf Mai 2007) from isiXhosa, meaning 'sister', *neé* from the Afrikaans *nè* meaning something like 'isn't that so?'. As in: You are coming, *nè?* in the South African way, that the immigrants are transforming. Such linguistic diversity substantiates the argument that utterances are never expressed uniquely.

My argument is that these immigrants are being transformed linguistically in their workplaces, educational institutions, marketplaces, homes, and so on.

Such linguistic behaviour confirms Appadurai's usage of the term 'translocality' to refer to various processes, namely transnational labour, diasporic community-building, and migration, wherein the locatedness of territorial borders (anchors) of identity and community are problematised by practices that reconstitute communities in locales beyond the boundaries of fixed territory (Appadurai 1996).

Given such translocal situations, I would like to note that some immigrants, like Bernadine and Victor, know that it is imperative to adjust linguistically in every

interpretive site in order to be understood and gain full integration into the new socio-cultural environment in which they find themselves (cf. Vigouroux 2005).

### Extract 6.21

| Turn | Speaker           | Dialogue  |
|------|-------------------|---|
| 1    | <b>Bernadine:</b> | [...] /= =Mmm, yeah of course. Just as it was in Nigeria, in South Africa when you talk purely like the way you had been brought up to talk, the people are unable to understand you one hundred percent and if your aim is to communicate you have to try to make them to understand you and most of the times this influences the way you talk because you want to try and pronounce things the same – in a way that the people will understand you yes.../ |
| 2    | <b>Victor:</b>    | Ehm, it is of importance to learn other people's culture, ehmm other people's language, you know because it helps you to integrate, it helps you to better understand them [...]. (Mai 2007)  |

As discussed above, Cameroonians draw on their various code repertoires to communicate. In this regard, the mixing or usage of amalgam systems has extended to embrace the South African languages and manner of articulation. This can be seen in the fact that 'conscious' participants know how they have adjusted, and if they have not yet been affected, they believe that they will. Greg and Alino validate this statement:

### Extract 6.22

| Turn | Speaker       | Dialogue  |
|------|---------------|---|
| 1    | <b>Greg:</b>  | Yes. I do not speak the way I use to do; [...] they [probably referring to South Africans] can't understand so I need to adjust because I am a French speaker [...] |
| 2    | <b>Alino:</b> | Non. Tu sais que je viens d'arriver ici. Donc si ça doit changer c'est entre temps /No, You know I just arrived here so if it must change, it will be with time/    |

What Greg means is that he does not speak English the way he used to do in Cameroon. In fact, what has happened is that he has picked up South African English phrases and pronunciation which he has added to his repertoire in order to be

understood ‘one hundred percent’. Alino too who has just arrived, is quite aware of the impending transformation. In his case, he knows he would not be an exception to the element of change and specifically, sociolinguistic dynamics. This means transformation in this case is resulting from a movement from one set of socio-structural conditions and discourses to a fundamentally new set of discourses through purposeful and deliberate social interaction on the part of social actors. One more example is that of Alain who explains to his South African girlfriend that she is also African since she is fond of using the expression ‘you people from Africa’, ‘foreigner’ and, ‘makweriweri’.

### Extract 6.23

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Alain:  | J’ai même pris le map la – la carte la tu vois un peu, j’ai dis voici regarde, voici l’Afrique du Sud, voici le Cameroun et (phone rings) [...] Donc tu vois un peu, les Sud Africains ils te, la fille la elle te dit – c’est généralement les filles qui font ça. Elle te dit you foreigner, kwerikweri (?) je dis no my friend hold on. Do you know when your history you are from Africa. Donc je prends le map je dis see here, this is my country Cameroon eeh. Je lui montre mon passeport, je dis see there on the map, eeh, this is Cameroon and this is South Africa eeh. Tu vois un peu on a du discuter comme ça beaucoup de temps, plusieurs fois./I have even taken the map the – the map, you see, I say see, look, this is South Africa, this is cameroon [...] so do you get the hint, the South Africans tell – this girl tells you – this is generally done by the girls. She tells you foreigner, kwerikweri (?) I say no [...] So, I take the map and say see here [...] I show her my passport and say see here on the map eeh [...]. You get the hint? We have had to argue like this many time, several times/. |

Cameroonian immigrants have indeed embarked on linguistic and social-educational adjustment schemes by expressing themselves in ways that their South African friends can understand. Alain displays this when he tries to explain the link between South Africa and Cameroon. He has had to dispute and correct his South African girlfriend who has made it a habit of referring to him and, other black immigrants as ‘you people from Africa’. Alain in this situation resorts to a world map which he uses to edify his girlfriend that South Africa like Cameroon is also in Africa. In the course

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of recounting, what he does, and how he does it, he tries to reproduce the exact encounter with his girlfriend by referring to what he and his girlfriend says/do. As would be expected, he mixes English and French and South African expressions. He particularly uses the South African *eeh* and *map* instead of *carte* (the French word for map, since he has been speaking to a South African girlfriend who speaks English; not French).

My argument relates to how the social actor becomes dynamic and reproduces the self in order to fit into the socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political, and historic schema of the host country. Reasons for such lively reproduction are numerous and necessary as was established from data gathered during interviews, group discussions and observations, and focus group discussions. Victor summarises this dynamic reproduction and maintenance of the self in the Diaspora thus:

### Extract 6.24

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue   |
|------|---------|--|
| 1    | Victor: | People shouldn't limit themselves to a particular region, to a particular culture you know, people should be broad, should think widely. You can stay in any part of this world today with that concept of globalisation and you can integrate. I mean go to learn, I mean enhancing more cultures, more rich languages that can help you in other parts of this world rather than limiting yourself to a language that may be if you leave the particular region it is not going to help you in any other way |

This extract portends a mixing of the global and the local – glocalisation, which I further discuss in the next chapter. All Victor is saying in relation to this is that there is no such thing as a global language or culture. Social agents need to constantly adjust to accommodate the person(s) with whom they are interacting. Thus, the global aspirations are in the local, that is, in the production of locality. (See also, Pennycook 2010).

Thus, I see transformation as a double process. What I really mean is that there is the dissolution and consolidation aspects that influence an alternate set of social relations both at the personal and institutional levels. This means, whether economic, political,

ideological, or cultural, policies, and discourse practices are continually being reconstructed in locality or localized practices (Pennycook 2010).

What Pennycook means is that, how the people use language is like their daily practice. That is, their way of using linguistic repertoires has become a lifestyle among Cameroonians. In other words, they do not speak in a monolingual way.

### **6.5 Summary**

In this chapter, I set out to investigate fluidity and complexity of the notion of identity in relation to how people move across places and not how they exist in them. I use principally the disorders of discourse among Cameroonian immigrants in my attempt to accomplish this task. The linguistic diversity I have shown substantiates the argument that utterances are never expressed uniquely. Every word has its own social history imbued with social *localized* meaning (cf. Higgins 2009, Pennycook 2010). This has been influential in determining who a Cameroonian immigrant is in the Cape Town's socio-political, economic, and socio-cultural space.

I have endeavoured to show how political identity becomes increasingly deterritorialised from the context of territorial boundaries. This I have done firstly, through reconfiguring homogenous concepts; secondly, by showing the porous nature of boundaries, and cultural differentiation; thirdly, through the imperatives of heterogenisation and glocalising conditions, such as linguistic choices, and new sociolinguistic notions namely, hybridity and translocality. The fragmentations of political identities where, for instance, a Cameroonian immigrant identifies with both 'Anglophones' and 'Francophones', and most importantly, the reconstruction of the great Mifi division into three other divisions that have had no impact in the new diasporic space of Cape Town serve as examples of the performative nature, social construction and fluidity of identities. While considering the orders of discourse in Cameroonian meeting houses, I have shown that using many languages is not problematic. Instead, I argued that the possibility "to develop a pluralistic mode of

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thinking where we celebrate different cultures and identities” (Canagarajah 2005:20) through hybrid forms “...is a position of strength, as it is able to withstand the totalising (and essentialising) tendencies of both centre and periphery agencies” (Canagarajah 2001:210).



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Anglophone and Francophone Identities and Translocalisation in the Diaspora**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

Chapter 7 is a critical appraisal of translocation of immigrant Cameroonians in the wake of globalisation, consumerism, and material culture, which have been shown to be typical characteristics of identity *stylisation* processes (Mbembe et al. 2004). In this regard, the chapter explores the new forms of dress, new types of food, menus, entrepreneurial jargon, and diverse cultural practices/processes, which have shaped and re-shaped the “geographical imagination and every-day life experience of Cameroonian immigrants who have their roots in two countries” (Peter 2006). Put differently, this chapter entails looking at new forms of dress, types of food, entrepreneurial jargons, and new cultures etc as localized practices (Pennycook 2010) which are enacted in everyday life.

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#### **7.1. Transformations of Shebeens**

One apparent distinction between the Cameroonian and South African shebeens is location of business premises. Whereas the Cameroonian shebeens are located near the Cape Town central business district (CBD) in Town, the South African shebeens tend to be located on the outskirts, especially in the former apartheid townships. The reason for South African shebeens being in Black townships is historical. Blacks could not own a business in so-called ‘white’ areas. Towns tended to be ‘white’. This means, Blacks were not even allowed to own drinking places even in the Townships (Rogerson and Hart 1986). Cameroonians, on the other hand came to South Africa after the dawn of the new democracy in 1994 and some of them managed to open businesses in spaces previously reserved for whites. Therefore, in analysing discourses on shebeens as spaces of business, it is important to consider the time in the history of the world, and the wider discourses around post apartheid South Africa.



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As Scollon and Scollon (2003: 2) note: “the social meaning of material placement of signs and discourses of our action in the material world” have different meanings as shaped by where (that is “in place”) we are. Thus, emphasising that analysis of shebeens, their activities and where they are situated requires consideration of the time in the history of the world, and the wider discourse each of these indexes. This is what Scollon and Scollon have called analysis in geosemiotics (2003:2).

The other distinction, relates to the social meaning and activities attached to the shebeens. Whereas for South Africans shebeens are mainly used as drinking places, for Cameroonians, shebeens are more than just a drinking place, tavern or bar. Cameroonians use shebeens as spaces of social gathering, small scale and even large scale business discussions, places of ‘good’ [meaning traditional Cameroonian] food and drink and so forth. One such example is the Salt River shebeen in figure 7.1 below.



**Figure 7.1:** The front section outside the Salt River shebeen with three customers and the Shebeen owner’s car parked right in front.

The Salt River shebeen is situated just behind the Duchess Factory shop in Salt River which is found in the southern suburbs of the Cape Town CBD, and is linked to an apartment owned by a ‘coloured’ family. As figure 7.1 portrays, this shebeen is more like a house where people live, and actually serves that purpose too. As one walks through the door where the two men are standing and a woman is seated, there is a bedroom on the right hand. Movement further down the passage leads to a curtain

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which separates the corridor from the sitting room. This space is used for the Cameroon North Westerners' Association in Cape Town (CANOWACAT described in Chapter 5), and other social gatherings such as the *Oye oye*, which was a social group previously meant for Cameroonians living in Salt River but now welcomes people, (even non-Cameroonians) from all over Cape Town. The *Oye oye* meeting functions more like an insurance group and any bereaved member is given R100 000 within 48 hours if he should lose his/her parents or relative, and is expected to receive a crate of beer from each member of the *Oye oye* group within the period of bereavement). The space is sometimes also used for *crydie* /kraidai/ (that is, coming together to condole with a bereaved member or family) and *bornhouse* /bɔ:nhaus/(that is the celebration of newborn babies) sessions, solving problems etc. This same space serves as restaurant for customers on ordinary days, before and after meetings and sometimes during meetings.

Further down the passage, just past the sitting room, is a staircase descending into the kitchen where the drinks are stored in a refrigerator. Most Cameroonian shebeens have no shelves for displaying drinks as is the case with the South African shebeens. Just before the sink in the kitchen, is a door on the right that leads to a small passage outside and then toilets and a bathroom. Below are pictures to better illustrate some more side views of the shebeen.



**Figure 7.2:** Inside the Salt River shebeen before a scheduled CANOWACAT meeting



**Figure 7.3** Kitchen section of the Salt River shebeen, with three Cameroonian men, a South African woman sitting between two of these men, and a Cameroonian woman who cooks and sells food leaning against the refrigerator.

### 7.2 Welcome to Njangui/Ngumba

One of the most visible characteristics of the Cameroonian shebeen, is the translocation and subsequent reconstitution of the traditional *njangui* or *ngumba house*. The *njangui* is a traditional social gathering while the *Ngumba* is a kind of secret society. However, in Cape Town, the *Ngumba* house has itself been modified and repurposed into somewhat of a *njangui* group. Thus the *njangui* and the *ngumba* houses have morphed into a type of social meeting where people meet to discuss, eat, drink, solve problems and so on, and contribute money for one person to take home or for other reasons until all members have had their turn to cook food, bring drinks, and collect money in the group. This means hosting of the social gatherings is rotary. In spite of the apparent hybrid *njangui/ngumba* make up of these social gathering, membership to certain gatherings is sometimes reserved for certain people.

The process of who is to host the next *njangui/ngumba*, (do the cooking, provide beverages, and collect money contributed by others) is similar to the process of determining who becomes a member in a specific *njangui* group. In *njangui* house people contribute an amount of money and handover to one person in the hope to help remodel his/her socio-economic status. This process always restarts after the last

persons' turn on the list. How to determine who starts (hosts) first varies from meeting to meeting. Sometimes, it is 'democratic' through secret balloting with numbers on a piece of paper. If you pick a piece of paper with the number 1 on for instance, then you will be the first to collect the money. Other times, it is determined by who registered first, and other times still, it is determined by simply starting with the last person to have collected money in the previous *njangui* session. Even so, people with pressing financial need may swap their positions with others. In the same way, belonging to a particular *njangui* group may be determined by the first person who gets to know about it, those with a common interest such as traders, students, those living in a particular suburb, for example Parow or Salt River and so on. If only thirty people are needed, then the thirty first person is rejected. In these groups within the shebeen, people meet for various reasons as said earlier, with socialisation being among the most prominent. This kind of usage of shebeens actually gives new meaning to transmodality in a way in that the *njangui/ngumba* gatherings and the shebeens in which they are hosted have come to be reused and repurposed for multiple social functions.

The relative tranquillity in Cameroonian shebeens could be because the Cameroonian society in Cape Town is mostly based on socio-cultural strength rather than socio-economic power relations (cf. Banda & Oketch 2009). This kind of strength allows the owner of any Cameroonian shebeen or any person to have socio-cultural sanction to discipline any young person misbehaving as any elder would in Cameroon. The youngsters are conscious of the fact that it is not only their biological parents who can scold them, for they are answerable to any elder or the business owner and these elders are naturally expected to report any supposed delinquent act, and they usually receive full support from the youngster's parents. These factors have made peace to reign in their (Cameroonian) business milieus and shebeens, and it is this tranquillity which has attracted people from other African countries including Congo, Nigeria, and South Africa during their meeting sessions, functions, and even extends to marriages in some cases.

Of course, South Africans who have become part of this Cameroonian community also tend to transform and do the same things as Cameroonians. For instance, they dance to Cameroonian music, participate in various *njangui* groups, dress like Cameroonians, attend *crydie* and *bornhouse* sessions, and so forth. In a way, some of the meetings in the shebeens function not just as cultural spaces but also as banks. One can even argue that the Cameroonian shebeens are not just culturally oriented but more of just about everything. This means that they can be places for socialisation, solidarity, banks, stress therapy, traditional courts, nightclubs and so on since members readily support each other whenever need arises. Such moments of need and dependence maybe in time of bereavement, sickness and other unforeseen hazards or in celebrations such as graduations, weddings the birth of a child (*bornhouse*) and so on.

What has happened in the Cameroonian shebeens is that they have translocated and fused their *Cameroonianness* into Cape Town and among some Capetonians. Capetonians go there for various reasons and may choose to prioritise some activities over others. To illustrate this, a South African woman, Zuki, who was interested in being a registered member of CANOWACAT had the following to say during one meeting:

### **Extract 7.1**

#### **Turn    Speaker    Dialogue**

- 1        **Zuki:**        ... I have come not as a visitor but to stay and I do not know if you gonna tell me how do I register because I hear you help people when they have a problem – (they are in financial?) when they do need money.

Zuki had come to the CANOWACAT meeting in the Salt River shebeen with other South African women for the same purpose. Zuki and some South Africans think Cameroonians gather purely for financial reasons, but as mentioned before, their reasons for gathering, are not only economically oriented. This is further explained in the extract below when Amadou in his Salt River home, expresses his view on the advantages of Cameroonian gatherings.

### Extract 7.2

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue   |
|------|---------|--|
| 1    | Amadou: | <i>Njangui</i> houses, quarter meetings. All those type of things, then erhh end of year cultural dances that erhh unify the people and make them know that they come from a certain area...they belong to a certain roots |

For Amadou the reasons for gatherings are socio-cultural rather than economic. The meetings also serve as a unifying factor where people meet to relive and stylize their Cameroonian lifestyle. That is to say, the Cameroonians seek to have meetings where they chat, drink, sing, and dance; where they contribute money, to help those in need or to hand over to one particular person (that is *njangui*) and organise some charity ventures. This assertion is further substantiated by Paul at his business place in Parow, in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town. He emphasises the socio-cultural base of Cameroonian meetings below.

### Extract 7.3

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue   |
|------|---------|--|
| 1    | Paul:   | Yeah, you know, like in Parow here the Parow community, all Cameroonians here in Parow. Yeah we have the community meeting, we usually gather every Monday, like yesterday [...] So when we meet there, we can, – you understand, we feel as we are back home in Cameroon. |

This implies the Cameroonian meetings play a socio-cultural role where Cameroonians meet not for economic reasons but to socialise and to relive their Cameroonian cultural lifestyle. This includes among other things a shared ‘Cameroonian’ dress code, singing and dancing.

Food and drinks during most meeting sessions are always provided free of charge in the great majority of Cameroonian meetings. The food and drinks are provided by the person, family, or group of persons who have been assigned or willingly opted to

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entertain at a particular gathering. If a meeting is held in the shebeen as is the case with CANOWACAT and *Oye oye* meetings, the members who wish to stay after each session always have to buy the additional bottles of beer or drink(s) they may wish to have as they dance, chat, and relax. This does not mean that members, who want to drink before the meeting begins, or who want to eat and drink during a meeting, are prohibited from doing so. What is worthy of note here is that the drinks and food that are sold are given to every person who asks, without necessarily asking for payment beforehand. There is mutual trust, which allows the salesperson to rely on his/her customers to pay him/her before they leave. This never happens at South African shebeens, which work on the Western business model where people drink or eat what they have paid for. The chairs, which would have been placed in the middle during the meeting, are usually removed after the meeting and piled up somewhere with only a few placed around the wall to create space for dancing. Below is a picture displaying the ambiance among Cameroonians and South Africans in the Salt River shebeen after a meeting.



**Figure 7.4:** The Salt River shebeen after a meeting. Meeting members and shebeen clients are dancing, drinking, and making conversation.

### 7.3. Translocalisation of Food

Apart from shebeens, placement of shebeens and practices being transformed, food is also being translocated to South Africa.

The consumption of Cameroonian foodstuff and the appreciation of their gastronomy are not reserved to the immigrants as it has become fashionable for both young and elderly South Africans who frequently attend the social gatherings and other Cameroonian meetings, including functions, to eat the traditional Cameroonian meals. When it comes to Cameroonian local gastronomic terms, it is common to hear the South Africans talk of *cornchaff* /kɔ:ntʃa:f/, which consists of maize meal and beans first boiled separately, then washed and fried together with ingredients such as *countryonion* /kʌntrɪənɪən/, *crayfish* /kreɪfɪʃ/ and pepper /pɛpə'r/ for example.

Tumba (a South African woman from Port Elizabeth who is married to a Cameroonian, Fabian, and lives with him in Salt River), for example, cherishes the Cameroonian traditional ingredients. In addition, she not only practices Cameroonian lifestyles such as dress code and CPE language use, she expresses knowledge of the Cameroonian social activities (which of course are closely linked to their culture) in Cape Town and tends to enjoy her new experience. She says when she goes to her birthplace in Port Elizabeth, for example, she takes with her Cameroonian food and recipes to share with her family. This means the Cameroonian influence remains not just in their Cape Town homes, but goes to touch their neighbours, friends, and other significant populations in South Africa, where some participants originated or have at least settled for a while.

Tumba has also learnt to prepare a variety of Cameroonian dishes. The following extracts illustrate this view.

#### Extract 7.4

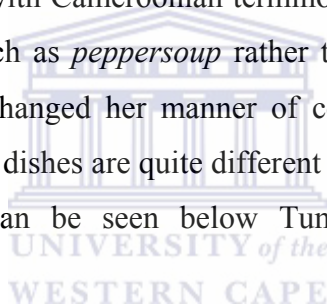
| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Tumba:  | Yea the food is quite different, [with much emphasis] quite |



different, I have actually learnt to cook many dishes like erh, *egussi soup* /su:p/, *peppersoup* /pepərsu:p/ (5secs) cooking many things..., spinach, – those are the things yea like in South Africa they cook spinach but it is quite different from how he [probably referring to her husband] makes his dishes. Like now, when I cook, the dishes are quite different from the way I used to cook and it is quite exciting.

- 2        **Interviewer:**    And do you like the dishes
- 3        **Tumba:**            I love them a lot, I love them a lot, with enough *pepper* /pepə/ because in South Africa, I know many people they are afraid of *pepper* but me [...]. I am used to it already.

Tumba's experience with Cameroonian cuisine has clearly transformed her taste in food. However, her language has also been transformed as can be seen from her English which is loaded with Cameroonian terminology. Thus, her discourse on food is expressed in words such as *peppersoup* rather than the South African equivalent *peri-peri*. She has also changed her manner of cooking to suite the Cameroonian cuisine: 'when I cook, the dishes are quite different from the way I used to cook and it is quite exciting'. As can be seen below Tumba is well aware of her own transformation.



### Extract 7.5

- | Turn | Speaker            | Dialogue   |
|------|--------------------|--|
| 1    | <b>Interviewer</b> | Why do you call it <i>pepper</i> when in South Africa they call it peri-peri   |
| 2    | <b>Tumba</b>       | Because that's how in my husband's language [Probably referring to Cameroonian English or CPE] they use to – they call it. Here, they call it chilli, peri-peri. |

Tumba's experience in the Salt River neighbourhood is not isolated. Gladys of Table View, a former whites-only area in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, also attests to the Cameroonian influence in South Africans' choices of cuisine and consumption. In consideration of her interactions with her brother's girlfriend who is South African, Gladys points out the following:

### Extract 7.6

| Turn | Speaker      | Dialogue   |
|------|--------------|--|
| 1    | Gladys:      | At first, she did not like our food when she comes, she use to go and buy her takeaway come and eat but now, – one day early in the morning I was sitting in my room and then she comes, ‘mammy, I beg for njanga ya’ /mum, kindly give me some prawns [usually dried crushed prawns’/   |
| 2    | Fredy:       | [Laughing] ah ah   |
| 3    | Interviewer: | In Pidgin [laughing]   |
| 4    | Gladys:      | Yes, [Laughing] ... because at first she use to consider that Cameroonian food was so spicy, and you know, she didn’t even like what we ate [...]  |
| 5    | All:         | [Laughing]   |
| 6    | Gladys:      | And what is happening now, she doesn’t cook South African food anymore or even eat South African food again and when their family they visit us – come to visit us and I cook, our food ohoo, they’re so happy when I cook. Because one of them came and stayed with us for one week and then when she went back she use to say ‘oh, sister Gla [a short form for Gladys, with such short forms used to flatter or fondly refer to someone, and ‘sister/mammy’, being a sign of respect for a woman] she is such a wonderful cook, she’ll cook food and you’ll eat until you’ll ask for more.’ |

Thus, both the former mixed/poor and former white/rich neighbourhoods are transforming. Transformation of food is also underscored by the use of Cameroonian terms as seen above, and this has necessitated a great deal of lexical borrowing as can be seen in the use of CPE and words such as ‘*njanga*’ and the expression ‘*ya*’ by the girlfriend to Gladys’s brother.

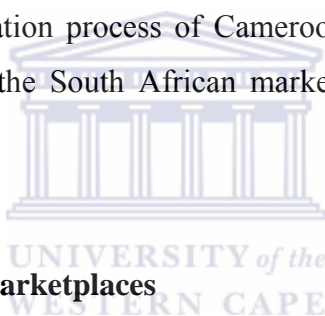
It is noteworthy that most Cameroonian imported food is ‘dried’. This makes it easy for transportation over long distances and also to preserve.

### Extract 7.7

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue   |
|------|---------|--|
| 1    | Gladys: | we may eat their spinach, [...] We have our own vegetables, though they are not fresh, they are dry, like our bitterleaf [/bitərli:f/] |

- is not fresh it's dry = = everything from home is dried mostly
- 2     **Interviewer:** How is it called in English, how do we call bitterleaf in English
- 3     **Gladys:** Mmmh, aha -aa [silence], yea ...
- 4     **Fredy:** Why is it call bitterleaf?
- 5     **Gladys:** yea, bitterleaf because the leaf is bitter
- 6     **Interviewer:** But it has a scientific name and we also call it '*ndole*'
- 7     **Gladys:** Yea '*ndole*', it is popularly known as that, it comes from Duala – the Duala language and now when you just say '*ndole*' anywhere the people will understand. Now it is popularly used in the whole of Cameroon.

The above extract showcases the mobility not only of texts, but also the ingredients and foods across ethnic and national borders. The translocated foodstuff and associated terminology derived from Cameroonian national languages are important ingredients in the localization process of Cameroonian shebeens. Transformation is not limited to shebeens; the South African market places also get the localization treatment.



### **7.4 Transformation of Marketplaces**

Globalisation in recent socio-political and socio-economic trends has often been equated to cultural homogenisation in which the Western way of doing things is imposed on businesses and third-world lifestyles (Banda & Oketch 2009). However, the Cameroonians take the path of localization, that is, a 'mix' of cultural heterogenisation (the rejection of one supposed dominant culture, usually the Western business culture, and the revitalisation of local cultural ways of doing business) and glocalisation (that is, the blending, mixing, and adapting of two or more business practices, one of which is always the local).

#### **7.4.1 Transformation of Menus**

Most menus in the South African shebeens (especially those styled after the wineries) now reflect the multiculturalism of the Southern African palate ranging from spicy

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African peri-peri sauce and Afrikaans farmer's Boer sausage (boerewors) to pub-style fish and chips. The *sosatie* for instance is a delightful and favourite dish for most township dwellers in South Africa. It consists of the following: a cubed leg of lamb which is skewered on sugar cane and marinated for at least twenty-four hours in mango chutney, tamarind, and turmeric marinades (among many other *sosaties*). The *sosaties* are grilled and served with green lentils and yellow rice, accompanied by mango chutney and cucumber-mint yogurt as illustrated below:



**Figure 7.5:** Lamb Sosatie in a South African shebeen (shebeenpub.com/menus/lunch.html9 2007).

Accordingly, it is the culture of South Africans to eat and drink in the township shebeens and this has been extended to the central town where Cameroonians mostly eat food from Cameroon (or South African food that has been prepared in a Cameroonian way). Unlike South Africans who may use glasses or pots to drink from, Cameroonians mostly, prefer to drink directly from their bottles as shown in figure 7.6 below. Their preference notwithstanding, South Africans, when in the midst of Cameroonians, also tend to drink directly from their bottles.



**Figure 7.6:** The spirit of solidarity in the shebeen at Salt River during a CANOWACAT meeting, where they eat *cornchaff* (*umngqusho* in isiXhosa), with secretary's book on top of an empty crate of beer.

In the figure above, the hospitality and togetherness of Cameroonians is at its apogee. One person or family may cook for the whole meeting group. Other members in the meeting (usually females) divide the food from the pot or flask, while yet others (male or female) distribute the food. The food is usually shared out simultaneously with the drinks and the persons distributing the food and drinks usually serve themselves last. Some types of food eaten in these shebeens include *jelofrice* (a kind of rice mixed with spice such as *crayfish*, *peper* and so on), *corncharf* (which is maize and beans boiled separately and then mixed together with some spices, also called *umngqusho* in South Africa and *ndole* (that is the bitterleaf vegetable prepared with peanuts that have been partially boiled and the crust taken off). In addition, other dishes such as *Irish potatoes* are usually served with roasted fish or beans. *Achu* is pounded cocoyam and a kind of *yellowish-soup* made of palm oil, *puf-puf* (made of baking flour), which is similar to what South Africans call *Magwinya*, *eru* and *fufu* or *garri* (*garri* is made from a root plant called cassava), yam (another root plant), and so on are all mostly prepared with hot chilli and are among the most regular set of choices that members use to entertain, or that are always prepared and sold in the shebeen. I shall elaborate on the transformation of South discourse resulting from cultural contact in due course.

The multilingual privilege of Cameroonian immigrants is made noticeable in the shebeen. Although most discourse produced in the shebeen (over 90%) as revealed in data, is usually in CPE, an important aspect to be noted here is that the various provisions eaten in the shebeen are named by a mixture of languages and language forms, thus demonstrating multilingualism and multiculturalism as a dispensation.

### **7.4.2 Transformation of 'Business' Talk and Entrepreneurship**

Business people and entrepreneurs together with the practices they engage in and, make others get involved in, constitute a reconstitution of space. The different "voices" present in a single utterance as well as the bivalent syncretism of language

mixing where multiple meanings are conveyed simultaneously (Higgins 2009). The practice at CANOWACAT is to use two or more languages at once. This means that a single language occurrence could contain two or more voices, and Cameroonians have no doubt become masters at deciphering such multilingual code. Aronin and Singleton (2008) might claim multilingualism is a *new* linguistic dispensation (in Europe?), but this has been the dispensation for Cameroonians for centuries. (See also Chapter 1). In order to promote and publicise his business, the owner of the Salt River shebeen had the following to say during the announcement slot in one of the CANOWACAT meeting sessions:

### **Extract 7.8**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>       | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Shebeen Owner</b> | Good evening. I just want for announce say I done come back. I go renew this place, paint the wall them and then make 'am make ye come back as ye be use to deh. // I just want to announce that I am back, I will renew this place, paint the walls and then make this place to be what it used to be/. |

The shebeen owner had handed over his Salt River Shebeen, home and business to his brother-in-law and moved to a bigger place in Thornton once he became a shareholder in a big company, which was situated in Observatory in the Southern suburbs of the Western Cape opposite the Pick 'n Pay supermarket which is one of the largest supermarkets in South Africa with branches in a number of African countries. Like any other business, often exposed to risks and uncertainty, this company was no exception. This company soon began facing diminishing returns and finally collapsed. As if this was not enough, there was a problem in his family, which led to a divorce. As such, the shebeen owner had to quit his big house and return to live and carry on with the shebeen business where he had always lived and interacted mostly as a bachelor. Hence, the statement 'I am back' could refer to both his presence as the owner of the shebeen and his return to a bachelor life.

Most importantly, the use of English and CPE shows how the entrepreneurs strategically use language as a resource first, to gain recognition as a transnational

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English speaker while using the ‘in-group’ code for easy communication and as a way of life. There is a sense that English and CPE as used by the shebeen owner and other Cameroonians in this study are being used not as differentiated or separate languages but as a single code repertoire (see Banda and Bellonjengele 2010). As Extract 7.8 shows, it is not often possible to differentiate where English or CPE starts or stops.

It might appear odd that someone who has his own business should go and work for someone else. However, this is common business practice among Cameroonians. Most of the time, Cameroonian businesspersons will seek employment in other South African companies while they employ a South African to handle the sales from their shops or stalls. Gladys notes this unique business model when she claims:

### **Extract 7.9**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | Gladys:        | = =, yea yea, they may have these businesses and that, but they look for someone to be taking care of the business and then look for work |

Gladys’ statement in extract 7.9 above is illustrated by Jennifer, a Cameroonian who has her own business, see figure 7.7 below, but moonlights as a security guard for a different firm.



**Figure 7.7:** A representation of Jennifer’s stall at the Golden Arrow bus terminus, Bellville.

Jennifer works as a security guard in the Parow Industria area in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. While she is working as a security guard, there is a South African woman who comes to peddle her wares for her. After work, Jennifer takes a train

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from the Tygerberg station to Bellville where she cross-checks her business possessions and takes them to the stockroom, while the South African saleswoman goes back home. Whenever Jennifer is off duty from her security employment in the Parow Industria area, she is fully engrossed in her business in Bellville where her stall is. In addition to selling the above wares, Jennifer has reserved a section of the stall to be a beauty salon. During one time, I observed Jennifer braiding some customers' hair in her stall, while selling her merchandise and interacting in French with some Congolese workplace neighbours who supply the braids to her clients.

Moreover, I noticed that Cameroonian stalls deal with a wide range of items, unlike the South African shops, which tended to be product specific. However, with localisation, some South Africans in the Bellville bus terminus are beginning to adopt the Cameroonian style of having variety in their stalls. Jennifer's stall (above) has various items, including caps, belts, TV antennas, sunshades, ladies' handbags, school bags, travelling bags, wall clocks, wrist watches, phone chargers, nail files, toys, glue, and so on. The arrangement of merchandise in this stall is quite different from how South Africans in Cape Town often arrange their merchandize.



**Figure 7.8:** A downtown Cape Town market managed by South Africans.

<http://www.travelblog.org/photo.popped/6006>

The market in figure 7.8 depicts a typical stall in Cape Town run by South Africans. Here the arrangement of market items is haphazard and the items consist mostly of clothes. Also, what one sees here are tents to prevent the merchants from direct



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contact with the sun, unlike it is the case with Cameroonian traders who mostly have open air stalls and do not really bother about the sun.

The A2Z shops serve as another example of localisation. Figure 7.7 is a Cameroonian shop found in Bellville and with a wide range of items; thus revealing a better appropriation and appreciation of space. These spaces have now become Cameroonian in nature and character as seen further emphasised in figure 7.9 below.



**Figure 7.9:** A2Z opposite the Bellville train station

The above picture is only the front section of a Cameroonian's cell phone shop opposite the Bellville train station in the Northern suburbs. This same proprietor (commonly referred to as A2Z, named after his shops, owns another shop in Bellville situated behind the Telkom building along Voortrekker Road that specialises in all kinds of bags, musical appliances, furniture and household appliances, and a corporation (that I discuss in the next chapter) situated opposite the First National Bank. The above shop is situated opposite the Bellville train station (Figure 7.9), and as its name rightly suggests, stocks practically every electronic item, cell phone appliance, and so on. In this shop, they do SIM card swapping and have household utensils and Nigerian movies that mostly portray West African settings with Pidgin English (that is pidgin used in Nigerian movies which is mutually intelligible to Cameroonians in the same way as CPE is intelligible to Nigerians) being used in most cases.

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Below is a TV screen showing a Nigerian movie in the A2Z shop. The movie is being played to attract customers.



**Figure 7.10:** Peter Edochie, a famous Nigerian actor on screen in an A2Z shop

It is noteworthy that several languages are heard in the A2Z shop. As noted above, the movie in Figure 7.10 is in Pidgin English. However, sometimes A2Z plays English and Nigerian indigenous language movies. While the movie is playing, it is not uncommon to find the loud speaker placed just outside the main entrance, blaring loud music in isiXhosa, French, English or a Cameroon national language. In addition to this, there is always a salesperson out who speaks isiXhosa to attract customers; meanwhile some of the A2Z staff are Francophones who sometimes speak French among themselves at work. The existence of Nigerian, Cameroonian, and South African references in the A2Z shops show the transformative nature of transnational interactions and business practices in the new South Africa. I elaborate on this in the next chapter when I discuss appropriation of spaces and multilingualism in Cameroonian owned businesses.

Below I develop the argument already implied above, on how Cameroonian identities, however hybrid, are stylized in Cape Town

### 7.5 Stylization of Cameroonian Identities

The Cameroonian identities are inscribed and stylised through food, clothes, languages in their repertoire, and other cultural practices, which they have brought to their new localities. When one transfers cultural artefacts such as food or music, the language and discourses related to them are also translocated to the new environment.

In figure 7.11 below is a South African woman, mother to Nomlomo (initially from the Eastern Cape and now residing in Khayelitsha) who dresses up as a typical Cameroonian woman in the lace material consisting of a blouse, a loincloth and a hair scarf on the occasion of her daughter's birthday.



**Figure 7.11:** A South African woman from Khayelitsha in her daughter's home in Salt River during a birthday party.

When asked about the reason for this choice of dress, Nomlolo has this to say:

#### Extract 7.10

| Turn | Speaker     | Dialogue   |
|------|-------------|--|
| 1    | Nomlolo:    | No, my mother was going for a wedding in Eastern Cape and she wanted something for a change, [...] I said, no, I know somebody from Cameroon who can make something nice for you and the people in Eastern Cape are still phoning me, 'Where was that dress made?' |
| 2    | Interviewer | Do you know the name of the clothes she is putting on ...?   |

- 3        **Nomlolo:**        = = No, I don't know if the Cameroonian clothing have got names, [laughing] I grab what I like.

It is interesting to note from Nomlolo's response that in fact the dress was designed to be worn at a Xhosa traditional wedding in the rural area of the Eastern Cape. This to some extent shows the mobility of traditional regalia across national and ethnic boundaries. That 'the people in Eastern Cape are still phoning me, "Where was that dress made?"' gives credence to those, such as Heller (2007) and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), who argue that cultures or languages are not fixed to communities or countries. In fact, most South Africans attending CANOWACAT tend to wear Cameroonian traditional outfits every Sunday when they come to the meeting.

In this regard, it is informative to note that in naming traditional Cameroonian outfits, indigenous Cameroonian languages rather than French or English, the two official languages, are being used. Figure 7.12 displays three women dressed in various traditional Cameroonian fashions. First, there is the loincloth and top worn by the woman on the left in her Salt River home – typical grassfields attire. Second there are the *boubou* clothes worn by the woman in the middle – usually also made of a loincloth and top with big sleeves usually of three quarters length, common in the Northern and parts of Western provinces (mostly among the Muslims), and have now become popular in the rest of the country. This second photograph was taken opposite the Salt River town hall on the Pynning Family meeting (PIFAM) (a linguistic group in the North West province) women's day party. Last, there is the *kaba* worn by the woman on the right in her Bellville home. This attire, with varying designs, is common in the Littoral province and has become very fashionable in South Africa as in the rest of Cameroon and among all age groups.



**Figure 7.12:** Three South African women dressed in loincloth and top (left), *boubou* (middle), and *kaba* (right).

These three South African women are dressed in various traditional Cameroonian fashions ranging from *two rapa* (which has been modified into just *one rapa* above) to *boubou* and *kaba*. What one notices from figures 7.11 and 7.12 is that South Africans are translocalising and, are transforming the Cameroonian clothes to either suite them or the weather conditions in Cape Town. Nomlolo's mother for instance, has a pullover inside her lace blouse and the woman on the right of figure 7.12 has just one *rapa* instead of two, where the second *rapa* is supposed to be tied over the first including the lower section of her top. As such, these women mix local dress code as shown in figure 7.11 to 7.12 above. What I really mean is that, the women such as Nomlomo's mother portrayed above (figure 7.11 considers the weather hazard such as the blistering wind and all weather showers typical of Cape Town – translocalisation, and the one *rapa* (in 7.12 symbolises smart wear in the modern hasty age – glocalisation. These together, emphasise multiculturalism as a dispensation and reconstitutes the Cameroonian stylisation processes.

## **7.6 Translocalisation and Appreciation of Specialised Cameroonian Terminologies**

Not only clothes, spaces and certain socio-cultural practices but also specialised Cameroon terminology have translocated to South African discourse.

Considering the abovementioned practices and as stated elsewhere, it is clear that in every society social actors employ unique terminologies for talking about the deployment of speech and associated signs in social interaction. Agha (2007:74) states, '[a]ny such vocabulary constitutes an ethnometapragmatic terminology used to typify the form and meaning of behaviours, and to classify persons, identities, group membership, and other facts of social being in relation to behaviour'. This becomes clear when the Western culture, for example, is contrasted to the Cameroonian culture.

Unlike in Western culture where calling someone 'mom' or 'sister' (that is *sisi* in South Africa) when that person is younger than you, or of the same age group as you, or someone who is actually older but not your biological sister, or mother may lead to serious problems, in most African countries, especially among Cameroonians, this appellation is highly valued and means great honour to the person to whom the appellation is directed. What I mean is that the usage and non-usage of specific terms are perceived differently in the West and in Africa. It is therefore not uncommon to hear people fondly referring to their own children or loved ones as 'mum'/'mummy' (*mammy*) or 'dad' (*daddy/papa/pa*). The magic of such designations is also felt among young people referring to their wives, girlfriends, or friends, husbands, or boyfriends as the case maybe. Gladys's sisters-in-law even goes one step further to call Gladys 'sister Gla'. This appellation like other cases of transformation does not only remain in Gladys's home, because neighbours and friends around have quickly become used to them. Such fond attributes are fast becoming a routine among most Cameroonians and their acquaintances around Cape Town. This is again a typical Cameroonian orientated style where younger sisters or brothers and even acquaintances and others who happen to know you, but are younger than you, tend to add the 'prefix' 'sister' or 'brother', 'pa', 'mammy' (and the most popular 'uncle' or 'auntie') to your name (depending on whether the addressee is a female or male), even when they may not be related. A youngster who fails to do this is usually scorned and considered disrespectful. Such acts of using specific honorific markers within specific contexts validate Cameroonians' usage of words such sister, *mammy*,

and many others, to show respect for elders or close friends and loved ones. This is also common among so-called “Coloureds” and Blacks in Cape Town, but not whites who normally follow the Western norms.

Worthy of note is the fact that neighbourhoods in which specific Cameroonian (and South African) terminologies and/or the habit of acting Cameroonian are capable of generating other contexts.

If we suppose the Salt River shebeen to be one neighbourhood (see Chapter 5), we notice that the culture of wearing Cameroonian clothes (as seen in the previous sections), and that of preparing and eating only translocated Cameroonian meals, or of preparing South African food and foodstuff from elsewhere using a Cameroonian method, has reached homes and other localities, not just in Cape Town but in greater South Africa (see extract 7.4 to 7.6). Consequently, the expression ‘a neighbourhood’ does not just refer to a context, but to that which is also capable of engendering contexts and this becomes manifested in the Salt River Shebeen.

Hence, the many types of food often sold or eaten by Cameroonians in Cape Town and South Africans as was seen in section 7.4.1, include roasted fish accompanied with Irish potatoes, bread or *bâtton de manioc* (see Chapter 2) and very hot pepper, *fufu* (a kind of *pap*, but made from the cassava /kə'sa:və/ roots) and *eru* (local variety of wild vegetables scientifically referred to as *gnetum Africana*), and *achu* which is pounded cocoyams (brown seed of a tropical plant that is white inside. This inside section is edible only after being cooked). The soup to accompany this is yellow and made with palm oil. A range of other culinary terms include *jeloffrice* /jelɒfri:tʃə/ (a kind of rice mixed with various spices, *corncharf* (that is, maize mixed with beans after having been boiled separately, *bitterleaf* which is popularly known as *ndole* (scientifically referred to as *ermonia amygdalina*, (see extract 7.7) and can be dried and preserved for a number of months or even years. There is also *Cornfufu* (what is known as *pap* in South Africa), *puf-puf* (which is similar to what South Africans call *magwinya*, and so on, are common foods in the Cameroonian shebeens. Added to these are beans, *peppersoup* /pepə'rsu:p/ (a traditional dish made out of spiced cow

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leg served with either plantains (a kind of foodstuff almost like the banana, but harder and bigger), yam (another root plant) or Irish potatoes.

Besides the shebeens are a few Cameroonian-owned nightclubs in Cape Town in which the use of such specific terminology is re-sounded. Here food and drinking is accompanied with a lot of dancing. Patapata, a Cameroonian nightclub situated at the heart of Cape Town, entertains with music ranging from *makosa* (meaning ‘to dance’, a word derived from the Duala language), *bikutsi* (meaning ‘to beat the earth’, derived from Ewondo), *bensiikin* (meaning ‘to bow in humility’, from the Western province of Cameroon), the *bottle dance* (from the North West Province, named after the instruments used) (Echu 2004). In all Cameroonian functions and nightclubs there is always music from other places that Cameroonians are very familiar with. In Cape Town, however, South African music seems to be the preferred choice in Cameroonian nightclubs. Thus, one hears Kwaito and other South African Township music genres. I elaborate on this in the next chapter.

It is evident that sharing and communal discourse are prized cultural heritage among Cameroonians. Sharing often takes the form of communal living in which two or more Cameroonians (of families) renting a room or house and share the rent cost. Room sharing is an important phenomenon among Cameroonian immigrants. It could be argued that this is due to the high cost of living in Cape Town. Cameroonian immigrants are forced to share houses or rooms with other Cameroonians in an attempt to reduce cost. However, whatever the reason, this has led to a positive bearing on multilingual and multicultural developments, exchanges, and syntheses. Cameroonians from different ethnic, geographical, etc groups live a communal lifestyle, which sometimes defies or blurs the divisions such as the Anglophone/Francophone divide back home. Thus, some of the immigrants claim they have been able to improve on their English and French in this situation.

Lastly, I would like to note that the culture of wearing uniforms (prescribed traditional regalia that may vary from one meeting group to the other) originating from Cameroon, has been instituted by the CANOWACAT meetings which are held



fortnightly. Where it becomes difficult to get a uniform, meeting members are supposed to wear a Cameroonian traditional outfit. In the CANOWACAT meeting it has been decided that traditional clothes be worn every last Sunday of the month. But most South Africans who attend CANOWACAT meetings wear the traditional Cameroonian outfits at every meeting.

### **7.7 Summary**

In this chapter, I set out to describe translocalisation trends among Capetonians and the reconstruction of the Anglophone and Francophone identity options in Cape Town. In doing so, I endeavoured to show that Cameroonian immigrants within Cape Town are both multicultural and multilingual. First, I explored the transformation of shebeens, food culture, menus, marketplaces and entrepreneurial jargons, dress code and specialised Cameroonian terminology. Secondly, I investigated the transformation of other cultural items with specific attention given to former homogenous mixed/poor and white/rich localities now turned heterogeneous. The practice of intermarriage in Cape Town is also highlighted in this process. I have argued that identity reconstitution are often done through food, clothing, the speaking of CPE, meeting attendance, attendance at *crydie* and *bornhouses*, intermarriage with South Africans of all races, room sharing, and so forth. These, impact on those involved and consequently lead to the creation of new flexible translocal social actors who also act Cameroonian and South African (sometimes simultaneously). Thirdly, I examined the transformation of homogenous concepts wherein structures, languages and cultures are shown as mobile. As such, I have validated the custom and multilingualism as a linguistic dispensation. Unlike Aronin and Singleton (2008) I argue that multilingualism is not a *new* linguistic dispensation among Cameroonians as it has been part of their lifestyle for centuries because of the dense linguistic situation in Cameroon in which unrelated languages are spoken within and across geographical areas (see Chapter 1). The onset of colonial languages only added to the already multilingual situation (cf. Banda (2010) for similar arguments). I argued that translocalisation and transnationalisation are intertwined. This point of view I made

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explicit by examining ways in which Cameroonian immigrants relentlessly reconstruct their Anglophone/Francophone identity options in the hybridised contexts of Cape Town. In essence, I discussed the interactional regimes of Cameroonian immigrants vis-à-vis categorisation discourses and their interaction with a readily transforming Capetonian population. In the next chapter, I continue to argue that human activities are not fixed, and endeavour to show the double involvement of both individuals and institutions in reconstituting spaces.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Representation of Space and Spaces of Representation**

[...] we cannot treat human activities as though they were determined by causes in the same way as natural events are. We have to grasp what I would call the double involvement of individuals and institutions: we create society at the same time as we are created by it. (Giddens 1982:13).

#### **8.0 Introduction**

Consumer discourses provide semiotic resources that not only recontextualise both global and local practices but also go a long way in refiguring and reconstructing the patterns of identities among Cameroonians in Cape Town. To show this, I firstly exploit the notion of linguistic performative identities, to demonstrate multiple patterns of language use and identity options (Heller 2007, Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004) among Cape Cameroonians. In turn, I show how language, owing to its performative nature, reproduces and reshapes identities by means of localising both global and translocal cultural resources. Thereafter, I show how Cameroonian immigrants transform various spaces in Cape Town. Finally, I show how in the process of localization (Pennycook 2010, Higgins 2009) of market places and entrepreneurship, among other things, that social practices and social categorisations are not entities located in the minds of social agents, because they are “constantly being reconstructed in a specific locality” (Higgins 2009:xi). This means that one’s presence in a particular territory does not restrict one from partaking in translocal activities which seek to politicise a component of identity which is not ‘of’ the territory from which these activities emanate (Peter 2006). In a nutshell, I use a multimodal/multi-semiotic approach to show how Cameroonians transform language practices and spaces in Cape Town and also how they themselves become transformed in their daily practices.

### 8.1 Multilingualism and Multiculturalism as Linguistic Dispensation

In the late-modern era, the links between language and ethno-linguistic background are not always so strong. New technologies and improvements in rapid transport, and the opening up of transborder ‘markets’, have enabled unprecedented mobility among people. This has also meant that people are not restricted to national, regional, ‘tribal’ or ethnic enclaves, leading to people acquiring multiple identity affiliations. Tumba, a South African, married to Fabian a Cameroonian, admits that she has multiple identities and affiliates to various ethnic groups.

#### Extract 8.1

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Tumba:  | I get to speak too much Xhosa [laughs]; I get to speak Afrikaans and a bit of English. [...] I do speak pidgin because I do feel that I need to speak it just to make my husband feel comfortable at times and for me it is just an additional thing, to learn another language yea, that’s it. |

Tumba affiliates to the Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English identities. But, the fact that she is married to a Cameroonian means she also speaks CPE to associate with Cameroonians, to make her husband ‘feel comfortable’, and to express her linguistic dynamism and willingness to learn more languages. Moreover, Tumba, speaks, eats, drinks, dresses, etc like many Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town. She has adopted and adapted to the ‘Cameroonian’ lifestyle.

The mobility of language across ethnic, national etc structures becomes much clearer when we analyse the spatial and linguistic activities of specific immigrant Cameroonians: Georgette, Victor, Fabian, Sammy, Bibian, Peter, Bernadine, Jacks, Danny, Maxi, and Emmanuel.

Evidently, French had dominated Georgette’s language practices while she was in Cameroon. To Georgette, a hairdresser in Khayelitsha, the French influence shapes the way she constructs her identity in the Diaspora, that is, the socio-cultural history, particularly her French background, influences her identity construction. Her initial

response to a question by someone she recognises as Cameroonian is to respond in French:

### **Extract 8.2**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>    | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|-------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Georgette:</b> | Moi, j'ai connue l'anglais seulement en sixième ... l'anglais n'était pas officiel /Me, I knew English only in form one (Grade 8), English was not official/. |

She also responds to the dual official language in Cameroon and rejects English affiliation: 'English was not official.' Her apparent 'French' identification does not necessarily mean she sees herself as mono-ethnic. If anything, her life is paradoxical and shows a complex hybridity. For a start, she is married to an 'Anglophone' with whom she speaks English; and she attends CANOWACAT meetings where she is heard to speak fluent CPE and English. Moreover, I noticed that she used English only to interact with her customers, most of whom are South African or from English speaking African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana.

What seems to be the case in extract 8.2 is that Georgette flaunts her monolingual/monocultural dispensation in spite of her apparent multilingual and multicultural practices. She is clearly reacting to socio-historical stratification engendered by the education system in Cameroon (or rather, the inefficient policy of official bilingualism) and blames it for her supposed 'incompetence' in English here in Cape Town. Her lack of knowledge about English as an official language (since state ideoscapes seem to represent one Cameroonian official language as more important than other languages) contributes to her refusal to speak English during the interview.

Her 'lack of competence' in English is but superficial. It is the system which seems to tell her where she is competent or not. Anchimbe (2006) shows how some Cameroonian officials refused to speak English because they are 'Francophones'. One would say that this is a typical example of the official bilingualism (and multilingualism) policy in Cameroon which prescribes which of the two languages

one is competent in. It is as if a speaker cannot be proficient in both languages. That is, the system seems to say Francophones are competent in French and not in English, and vice versa. Georgette is competent not only in French, but also in English, which she uses with Ghanaians, Nigerians and her South African customers. Moreover, as can be seen from the extract below, she is competent enough to blend the two languages in such a manner ‘that people can understand me’.

### Extract 8.3

| Turn | Speaker             | Dialogue  |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 1    | <b>Georgette:</b>   | J’ai tellement les amies les ghanéennes – même ici ; mon ami le plus proche c’est un ghanéen. On s’entend. Les Nigériens ... (?). /I really have friends – the Ghanaians. Even here, my closest friend is a Ghanaian, We get along. The Nigerians ... (?) / |
| 2    | <b>Interviewer:</b> | D’accord. Est-ce que qu’il arrive que vous mélangez le français avec l’anglais? /Are there times that you mix French and English ?/   |
| 3    | <b>Georgette:</b>   | Ah, oui, oui. [...] Mais ici (?) parce que je veux mettre l’anglais et après pour que les gens puissent me comprendre /Oh yes, yes, but here because I want to add English and also so that people can understand me/.                                      |

Evidently, Georgette like other Cameroonians (some of whom are discussed below) is able to use multiple languages as social practice for voice and agency. Thus, she uses whatever language in her repertoire to suit particular socio-cultural, economic and political needs (Heller 2003, 2007).

Unlike Georgette, Victor manifestly embraces multilingualism and multiculturalism to express his multiple identities. Victor’s linguistic behaviour gives credence to Echu’s assertion that Cameroonians are aware of which language to use with whom and under what circumstance (Echu 2006; 2003a; 2003b). Consider the following extract:

### Extract 8.4

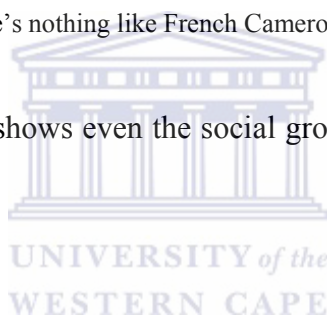
| Turn | Speaker        | Dialogue  |
|------|----------------|---|
| 1    | <b>Victor:</b> | Actually, at times I find myself mixing French and English, I find myself mixing French and Pidgin [Notice that Cameroonians simply say pidgin when referring to CPE] most often, especially when I’m speaking with French people here [‘Francophones’ here in South Africa]. |

Most Cameroonian immigrants like Victor, comfortably mix CPE, French, and English for the sake of successful communication. It is clear that for Victor, CPE is one of the many languages used to stylise the Cameroonian identities. The various languages are the means through which multiple identities are encoded and displayed. In a way, this has led to the blurring of ethnic, tribal, regional, and even Anglophone and Francophone boundaries so evident in Cameroon. To Fabian this has brought about unity-in-diversity among Cameroonians in the Diaspora.

### **Extract 8.5**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Fabian</b>  | There's no line cutting that's saying this is French Cameroon or this is the English side of it. If you're a Cameroonian, you're a Cameroonian.<br>There's nothing like French Cameroonian or English Cameroonian. |

Similarly, Sammy below shows even the social groupings are not based on 'tribal' or regional affiliations.



### **Extract 8.6**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Sammy</b>   | Well, that's (referring to the Cameroon North Westerner's Association-CANOWACAT) just for Anglophones but you find some Francophones who are so interested, who found it so interesting that they decided to join and become active members. Some of them have even decided to identify themselves as North Westerners [Laughing] |

It also seems regional and even 'tribal' affiliations are mobile rather than permanent and fixed as can be seen from Sammy's comment about some Cameroonians changing their social group membership.

## **8.2 Transformation of Homogenous Concepts**

### **8.2.1 The Custom of Using CPE**

The apparent negative attitude towards CPE by speakers is evident in the Diaspora. It is paradoxical that like in Cameroon (see Mai 2007, Ayafor, 2006, Bobda 2006), speakers voice their dislike of CPE but at the same time use it as the language of interaction in the Cape Town Diaspora. For instance, one respondent Bibian (who lives in a shebeen where the CANOWACAT meeting is always held and mostly presided over in CPE), insists on responding to interview questions only in English and vows her six-year-old son (Peter) does not speak CPE. In a way, Bibian's response is a mirror to Georgette's (see extract 8.3 above). I later found out that Peter, who was born in South Africa, speaks CPE fluently – although he would not speak this language to me at first, probably because his mother was present. Interestingly, his mother who expresses resentment for the language also responds to interview questions in CPE at a later stage in the presence of her son. Thus, it is clear that despite her mother's intentions, the son has picked up the CPE from listening to his mother and other Cameroonians who interact in the language.

#### **Extract 8.7**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>      | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|---------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Bibian:</b>      | [To Interviewer]. Ye (referring to her son) don go enter that room for some other people for outside /He has been in the other people's room [probably the 'coloured' neighbours'] out there/ |
| 2           | <b>Interviewer:</b> | Whoside ya pa deh? /where is your dad?/   |
| 3           | <b>Peter:</b>       | [silence]   |
| 4           | <b>Interviewer:</b> | Talk noo. You di fear ya mami? /come-on, speak, are you afraid of your mother?/   |
| 5           | <b>Peter:</b>       | Ye deh witti ye friend dem /He is with his friends./  |

Turn 4 seems to suggest that the mother is aware that her child speaks pidgin. My argument then is that Bibian does not want to be associated with CPE because of long held ideology in Cameroon, which she has carried with her to Cape Town. Research (Mai 2007, Ayafor 2006, Bobda 2006, Dibussi 2006) shows that many parents in Cameroon and in the Diaspora speak CPE but refuse to accept this fact. They then



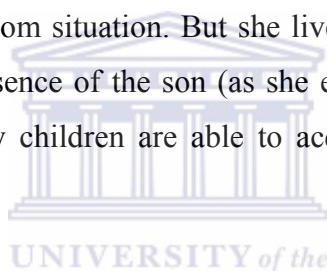
think it belongs to the ‘Other’, that is, the uneducated, those in lower socio-economic conditions, or those speakers of pidgin from other countries, like Nigeria.

However, in this case, Peter to the surprise of his mother, claims his mother taught him CPE.

### **Extract 8.8**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>     | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|--------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Interviewer</b> | Na who teach you pidgin? /Who taught you CPE?/                                  |
| 2           | <b>Peter</b>       | Na ma mammy. /It was my mother/   |
| 3           | <b>Bibian</b>      | (?), (laughing) Which me I teach you pidgin? / Who says I taught you Pidgin? /. |

Bibian’s denial of having taught her son CPE could be because she understands teaching as a pure classroom situation. But she lives in a shebeen and interacts with people in CPE in the presence of the son (as she explicitly did during the interview session). This shows how children are able to acquire languages naturally in such informal settings.



What is noticed here is that CPE belongs to neither a particular age group, class of people or specific territory. Most of the Cameroonian immigrants use it almost everywhere they find themselves together in Cape Town.

In fact, in spite of the efforts to eradicate the language in Cameroon (see Bobda 2006); it has continued to thrive, even in the academic milieu and places such as the university of Buea (UB), an English University in Cameroon. At UB one finds billboards with information such as “Succeed at UB by avoiding [CPE]” or “Commonwealth speaks English, not [CPE]” (Bobda 2006:3). This notwithstanding, students from UB still speak CPE and some graduates from this institution, now in Cape Town continue to speak the language in the Diaspora. This seems to be the case in Cameroonian meetings where there is always an order from the executive or an agreement among meeting members to use English only. Reason for this is often to accommodate non-CPE speakers. Yet, such rules always fail almost immediately after they have been agreed upon as is demonstrated elsewhere.

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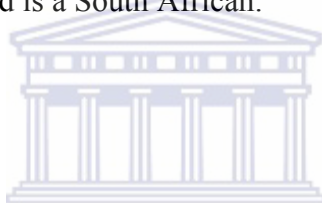
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There is evidence that South Africans who interact with Cameroonians use CPE in certain contexts. This is what Gladys whose brother is married to a South African has to say about her South African sister-in-law:

### **Extract 8.9**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Gladys:</b> | I was shocked one day we were talking and I didn't know she was understanding so she started saying 'I di hear all thin weh una di talk I di hear all thin, all thin' /I hear everything, you are saying, I hear everything, everything/. Now when we talk I no longer need to translate for her. |

In addition, Gladys talked about her brother's son who speaks CPE despite the fact that the mother of this child is a South African.



### **Extract 8.10**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Gladys:</b> | No, that one is a South African and is his second wife and the child speaks CPE very well. |

There is evidence that some South Africans (e.g. Tumba described above) who interact with Cameroonians speak CPE. This shows that languages are not limited to a particular ethnic group, country or skin colour. Thus, CPE in this case cuts across ethnic, national, and international boundaries. Evidently, CPE is now spoken in Cape Town not just by children born to Cameroonian couples but also by those born to South African-Cameroonian (intermarried) couples, despite all efforts to prevent them from learning it. Similarly, as is the case in UB, Cameroon students in Cape Town speak CPE; for example Bernadine, a PhD student at the University of Stellenbosch, says she speaks mostly pidgin, "over 80%", while Danny, an MTN agent in South Africa, strongly believes CPE is 'the official unofficial language in Cameroon' and hence among Cameroonians in the Diaspora, and Alain, a business person, would not despise pidgin.

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Even though Georgette attaches to herself a monolingual label, it is clear from the way she positions herself that the tag doesn't fit her. In the case of Jacks, as shown in the extract below, multiplicities of languages are used in the house which he shares with so-called Anglophones. As a 'Francophone' Jacks is married to a Xhosa with whom he speaks English. Their children sometimes speak Xhosa to their mother and her relatives who come to visit. Jacks speaks some Xhosa, but speaks French and English to the children. The 'Anglophones' who share the house with Jacks prefer to use French while Jacks prefers to speak English to them. As can be seen below Jacks is aware of these various identity options at his disposal.

### **Extract 8.11**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Jacks:</b>  | I don't see myself as Anglophone or Francophone because we are not different from each other [...] and maybe because first of all, we hardly speak English because when I want to speak English, they just jump into French maybe because they want to learn from me and also sometimes likewise I also I like to speak in English because I will like to learn from them you see, we are really helping each other. |

Whereas Fabian and Jacks base their opinions on English and French as the languages used by Cameroonians; Danny, Maxi and Emmanuel go further and include other languages and the various localised forms of English. Danny and Maxi below, like Victor above, are not only aware of the existence and importance of different languages but also of different language varieties and the use of the same words with different meanings among people from different historic backgrounds. Emmanuel also shares similar observations, while emphasising phonetic variations.

### **Extract 8.12**

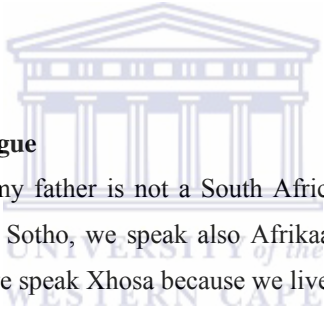
| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Danny:</b>  | They have like their own type of English. They pronounce things differently because of their 'accents' from their own background – their own cultural background. |
| 2           | <b>Maxi:</b>   | 'You "must"'. [...] Yes. It's like compulsory, but to me, it is their   |

own, you know there is British English, there is American English and this English and this erhm – they are different.

- 4 Emmanuel:** There are so many variations in languages especially at the level of erhh (4 seconds) intonation, stress and in the manner of pronunciation. Words are pronounced differently in Cameroon and differently here in South Africa. Most often, the ‘a’ sound is mistaken for the ‘e’ sound, that’s why people can afford to say ‘beck’/bek/ instead of saying ‘back’/bæk/.

The above extract further shows how Cameroonians are also able to undermine the one-on-one connection between a language and a nation-state as they effectively use CPE to cut across international boundaries using it both as an icon of unity and solidarity and simply as a way of life. Similarly, Tumba’s extract below further explains this:

### Extract 8.13



| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue  |
|------|---------|---|
| 1    | Tumba:  | [...] my father is not a South African, he is from Lesotho [...] so we speak Sotho, we speak also Afrikaans because my mother is coloured and we speak Xhosa because we live in a Xhosa area. |

Tumba comes from a mixed and sophisticated background with five siblings who still visit her from Port Elizabeth. Her mother is an Afrikaans speaker and a ‘coloured’, her father, a black Sotho speaker from Lesotho and her childhood locality typically isiXhosa, whereas the school she attended was an English boarding school. However, what Tumba is implying in the extract is that Fabian, her Cameroonian husband and their children can speak all the languages she speaks, including the Cameroonian languages and expressions among which CPE features. Multilingual and multicultural affiliations are rampant among Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town and are evident in their speech styles and multi-ethnic affiliations and interactions.

Having said all this, it is clear that CPE is one of the means used to stylise multiple identity options as well as to blur social structures including ethnic boundaries. As Li Wei (2008:13) notes, it is through language choice that people change the boundaries

in relationships and ethnic group boundaries in their attempt to construct self and others within economic and socio-historical contexts.

In the next section, I show how participants use language to perform different identities.

### **8.3. Transformation of Other Cultural Practices**

#### **8.3.1 Intermarriages between South Africans and Cameroonians**

For most participants, whoever they fall in love with is decided by fate and because companionship is important for their survival, intermarriage becomes imperative. Intermarriages between Cameroonian immigrants and South Africans have become a norm. In her hairdressing saloon, Georgette wants to know why the South Africans (supposedly Blacks, because she works in a black township) are so biased towards the black foreigners and so she always teases the women in her salon.

#### **Extract 8.14**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>    | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|-------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Georgette:</b> | Mais j'aime tellement les poser des questions par exemple quand je les coiffes. Je dis vous aimez toujours sortir avec les gens de chez nous par exemple les camerounais. [...]. D'autres disent, 'oh j'aime les foreigners, ils savent bien comment s'occuper des femmes', je lui dis tu vois, ils nous laissent leur sœurs, ils partent s'occuper de vous./ But I really enjoy teasing them for example when I am plaiting their hair I say 'you always love dating people from my place, Cameroonians for example' [...] and others say 'how, I love foreigners, they know how to cater for women' and I will say to her 'you see, they leave us, their sisters and come to cater for you' |

While some black South African women remain adamant and give reasons to justify their detestation for Black foreigners (cf. Vigouroux 2005, 2008), including Cameroonians, a feeling which has grown to take the form of xenophobia like that which has recently flooded the media in South Africa; others however maintain that

foreigners are more caring and this encourages inter-‘ethnic’/‘racial’ relationships and harmony. Gladys talks about mixed marriages in Cape Town as follows:

### **Extract 8.15**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Fredy:</b>  | There must be a very big Cameroonian population here  |
| 2           | <b>Gladys:</b> | Yea, [...]. Like in the area that we stay I think we have about four Cameroonian families I – they are some in Table view and I don’t even know like Uncle (name) was telling me the other day there is another Cameroonian family he visits, they are his friends and the guy is married to a South African and they have kids, so, I don’t know. [...]. |

Despite the fact that Gladys resides in Table View, she does not seem to know all the Cameroonians involved in mixed marriages. Regarding those Cameroonians involved in mixed marriages with South Africans, Gladys simply refers to their homes as Cameroonian. Those South African women who have children with Cameroonian immigrants know that they would have a monthly allowance. In relation to this, Gladys describes her brother’s wife thus:

### **Extract 8.16**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | Gladys         | Like my brother’s wife she knows every month her phone has to ring, she must receive some money for her child. |

In this case, we see Cameroonian men being portrayed as obligated to pay some monthly sum for the wellbeing of their children. For Gladys a typical traditional Cameroonian man prides himself as head of the family and hence, needs to cater for the whole family even without being told to do so. The notion of being ‘obligated’ by law is a new adaptation by Cameroonian men in Cape Town, who had to do the same thing in Cameroon but ‘naturally’ (that is, by unwritten socio-cultural pressure).

Added to these intermarriages is the aspect of polygamy, which is practiced by Cameroonian and South Africans, since some participants themselves are second

wives or know South Africans who are second wives. The result of such cultural practices is that of sharing the common culture of food, drinks, language and clothing thus, promoting translocalisation, transnationalisation and hence, heterogeneity and glocalisation discussed in the previous chapter. With such practices, especially when children of an intermarried couple get involved, the question of the applicability of, centre/periphery and crossing arises. What I mean is that when a Cameroonian and a South African live together, they tend to use Cameroonian and South Africa linguistic norms and socio-cultural values interchangeably. This makes it difficult for one to determine which language, culture and social value is at the centre. And because the couple wants to feel comfortable and make the other to feel comfortable, they constantly adjust their habits, for instance, the speaking of South African English with CPE terminology thrown in.

### **8.3.2 Evidence of French in a Xhosa-dominated environment**

Even though some Cameroonians have adopted Afrikaans and isiXhosa, they are always being reminded of their status as foreigners, and, excluded in Cape Town (cf. Vigouroux 2008). Yet, one of the defining features they have brought into Cape Town is that it is now as common to hear people speaking CPE and French around these areas as if one was in Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon. Georgette's choice of language during interview sessions, and how she now speaks emphasise this point.

#### **Extract 8.17**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>   | <b>Dialogue</b>  |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| 1           | <b>Georgette</b> | Non cela ne se dit pas chez nous, foreigner [uses an English word], mais chez eux ils disent toujours foreigner. /No, we do not use foreigner at home. They [probably referring to Black South Africans] always say foreigner. |

Although Cameroonian immigrants cohabit with South Africans, Georgette feels some South Africans do not like to interact with Cameroonians. Steffi another respondent expands on this view revealing that his South African girl friend always refers to him in the following manner:

### Extract 8.18

| Turn | Speaker | Dialogue                |
|------|---------|-------------------------|
| 1    | Steffi  | You people from Africa. |

The term ‘African’ usually has a connotative meaning as opposed to the term ‘South African’. Generally some (black) South Africans believe South Africa is different from the rest of Africa and, perceive other black Africans as people in need or desperate. Georgette like Steffi is worried about black South Africans’ attitude towards black Africans from other nations and goes further to say ‘Non cela ne se dit pas chez nous [...]’. What is interesting here is her reconstructionist attitude. She refers to Cameroon (as a whole) as ‘home’ (that is, at home) and not only as Anglophone or Francophone Cameroon.

If multilingualism is claimed to be revealed by the speech practices of a community (Heller 2008; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2008; Anchimbe 2005), then the activities of Cameroonian immigrants represent this claim. In the above extract, there is a clear display of transformation where there is the presence of English and French displayed by one Cameroonian in a former isiXhosa monolect-dominated locality. Although she speaks in French, she still uses English. That is, there is code mixing in her speech which has always been a natural phenomenon for multilingual Cameroonians as seen in the use of ‘foreigner’ instead of *étranger* in her speech. This phenomenon is further expressed thus;

### Extract 8.19

| Turn | Speaker   | Dialogue   |
|------|-----------|--|
| 1    | Georgette | Je n’ai pas tellement écrit [...] je me suis quand même arrêtée au niveau Bac, but [uses an English word] [...] ici, quand on vient d’arriver, c’est dur. [...] Mais je sais que – si par exemple la ou je suis allé m’installer, si tu parviens avec les économies, save money [an English expression], tu peux vraiment bénéficier. [...] Mais c’est quand même difficile ici. C’est difficile. [...] /I have not studied for long [...], I at least stopped at the level of high school, but [...] when one just arrives here; it is difficult [...]. But I know that – for example, where I have settled if you manage your finances well, save money you can benefit. But it, is at least difficult here. It is difficult/. |



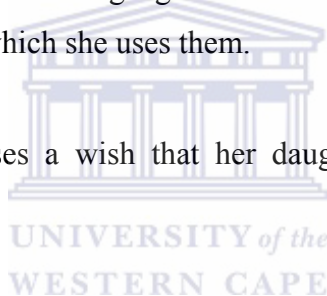
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Georgette believes knowledge in Afrikaans could help her husband who has studied for a long time and still has no job in South Africa. Unlike her husband, she has not studied for long. Even though she has been to high school, she has no advanced senior secondary school certificate.

Although she is aware of the difficulties immigrants face in South Africa, she believes living in the township is less costly and this could enable her “save money”. For this reason, she prides herself for being able to use her hands to earn a living without necessarily going to knock from one office door to the next like her husband does in vain. What is noteworthy here is how Georgette makes use of intrasentential code switching. She moves from one language to the next in a single utterance. Also interesting is the fact that these languages can neither be classified as language A or B following the manner in which she uses them.

Besides this, she expresses a wish that her daughter be competent in Afrikaans, English, and French.



### **Extract 8.20**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>    | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>    | <b>Georgette:</b> | Tu vois un peu. Donc c'est pour ça, moi, automatiquement, je suis venue ici, je savais que non je dois faire tel métier./If by glance - example you go a little, where there are the coloureds, if for example you go looking for the work, if you do not know the Afrikaans if you know English that can go, but if you do not know the Afrikaans, they cannot take you. You see little. Thus it is for that, I, automatically, I came here, I knew that not I have to do such a job/. |

The order of her preference is important here as Afrikaans and English are placed before French. One would have expected French at the top of her preferences given that all her life she has known “only French as official language”, and considered herself as ‘Francophone’. But Georgette justifies her order of preferences saying this is essential for survival in Cape Town. In other words, it is not because she considers her daughter to be a South African or wants her to be considered a South African that

she wishes her to be able to speak any of the South African languages. Her reason as implicitly expressed is for her daughter to communicate and gain access to the job market.

Let us now turn to critically look at how Cameroonians have adapted, adopted, and localised their languages at their disposal in practice. I shall illustrate this argument by looking at how Cameroonian Shop owners in Cape Town have used multilingualism a resource for localization and transformation.

#### **8.4. Multiplicity: A Starting Point for Sociolinguistic Analysis**

Linguists and social scientists alike increasingly perceive linguistic boundaries as fluid and porous in nature (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2008, 20004; Appadurai 2000). Such porous boundaries become visible with individuals continuously reproducing the self. As we saw in the previous chapter, Cameroonian entrepreneurs have modified and adapted their language choices in shops and in the market places to suit the environment in which they find themselves. This is in accordance with translocality (seen in Chapter 6) which disrupts traditional constructions of political identity (for instance Anglophone/Francophone identities) and makes room for novel form(s) of political space(s). In this sense, one can claim that certain spatial extensions (that is, places) such as migratory or global cities (for example Cape Town) are epitomes of translocal practices.

The argument here is that the Cameroonians engage in multilingualism as a social practice to transform themselves, others, and the spaces they have ‘colonised.’ The transformation of Cameroonians and spaces is evident in the kinds of interaction observed in the A2Z shops.



**Figure 8.1:** Outward view of the A2Z Corporation opposite the First National Bank (FNB) in Bellville

It is evident so far that multilingualism and multiculturalism are the dominant dispensation in the interactions of owner, workers, and even consumers. Although the owner of the shop is a ‘Francophone’, the most frequently used language (*lingua franca*) in the shop is English. This same language is mostly used for posters and information placard (as shown above), and those placards indicating to customers where to go for SIM swapping, airtime, and so on are usually in this language. One sometimes finds clothes, kitchen utensils, and samples of newly acquired goods, and a South African woman, often with a microphone, which she uses to attract customers and advertise what is in the shop in isiXhosa outside the A2Z shop opposite the train station. Sometimes she identifies the specific items available using English or a kind of ‘Xhosalised’ English. Such usage of English becomes replaced by Afrikaans or an ‘Afrikaansified’ kind of English in places like Elsies River and Delft (inhabited mostly by “coloureds”), where there are also A2Z shops. But most often, the A2Z shops and the A2Z Corporation will display the three dominant languages of Cape Town as illustrated. The choice of languages used in the shops is appropriate, since it is meant to reach out to the wider populations in Cape Town, thus making linguistic justice to thrive in the local community (cf. Heller 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004, Heller, 1999).

Besides the A2Z shops, there is the A2Z Corporation also owned by a Cameroonian (represented in figure 8.1 above). The A2Z Corporation is situated opposite the First National Bank (FNB) building in Bellville. In this corporation, a variety of business strategies linked to languages in ways similar to those described above, are employed.

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Here information in the shop is displayed in English, Afrikaans and/or isiXhosa – the three most popular languages in Cape Town as shown below.



**Figure 8.2:** A2Z Corporation opposite the FNB with information displayed in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa

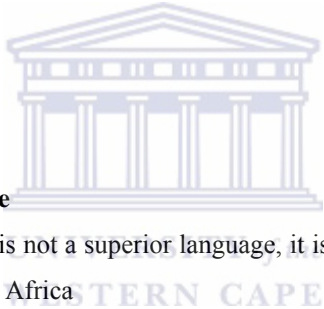
Language preferences in the A2Z Corporation verify the claim that a commitment to progressive social transformation is only given in situations of rapid transnationalism/globalisation (that is, the process of cultural flows across the world) (cf. Heller, 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). In this same light, the A2Z entrepreneur violates every rule that would restrict language to race or ethno-linguistic boundaries. With translocation, a more dynamic view of identity comes into play again. ‘Translocation’ here refers to an intersecting set of perspectives that create landscape [public space] where we choose to situate and it is evaluated in this study through an examination of how Anglophone/Francophone identities are recreated, challenged, reconstructed, and (re)shaped in the Cape Town socio-cultural context. The picture, as shown above, displays information in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The information “No exit” is translated into Afrikaans: Geen Uitgang, and into isiXhosa: Akuphunywa. Still in the same picture is the expression “No Entrance” translated as “Geen Ingang” and “Akungenwa” in Afrikaans and isiXhosa respectively.

One thing noticeable in the A2Z Corporation is the conspicuous absence of CPE and French on posters. The reason for there being no posters in CPE and French could

perhaps be due to the misconception of official language as the only legitimate language in which case Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa are the dominant official languages in the Western Cape. Second, even though Cameroonians and other Africans with French speaking backgrounds frequent the shops, the sales pitch seems to be directed at South Africans.

Therefore, although the A2Z entrepreneur himself (and his employees) may not necessarily identify with Xhosa, the ‘coloured’, or ‘Anglophones’ and English speakers in general (whatever the case may be), he uses the associated mainstream languages of the Western Cape (isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English). Worthy of note here is that the owner of the shop claims that he does not consider English superior to CPE or any other language. It just happens to be the language of convenience for business with the local South African clients. This is clear when a ‘Francophone’ businessperson says:

### **Extract 8.21**



| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b> | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1           | Achèlle        | English is not a superior language, it is because it is the language here in South Africa |

What Achèlle is saying is that people are susceptible to the culture of the environment, the circumstance in which they find themselves, the purpose of their interaction, and the people with whom they are involved in attempt to communicate effectively. In other words, people draw on languages at their disposal to signal not only different identities, but also socio-economic, political, etc reasons. In relation to the concept of translocality, this means putting side-by-side notions of cultural homogenisation, and heterogenisation to assess globalisation.

Homogenisation, heterogenisation have been defined variously although the definition by Lamb (2008) is distinguishable in this study. According to Lamb (2008), it is necessary to understand homogenisation as the imposition of uniform standards that shape the cultural landscape around the world and literature which portrays the world as smothered in Western ideas through Americanisation (see Chapter 3). Also important in the understanding of translocality, are the concepts of heterogenisation,

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and glocalisation. The former refers to cultural localisation and the latter stands for the process of cultural transmission wherein in-contact cultures shape and reshape each other, and reject the supposed supremacy and uniqueness of the Western Culture.

Therefore, the Cameroonian A2Z entrepreneur and some workers who speak French or CPE at work among themselves; and English, isiXhosa and/or Afrikaans to customers and other colleagues, both shape and reshape each other's linguistic repertoire. As Pavlenko and Blackledge rightly assert, minority groups can still maintain high-level ethno-linguistic vitality and at the same time exhibit high levels of linguistic competence in the majority language, without necessarily identifying with speakers of the majority language (2004:5-7). This is because the aim of such linguistic practices is not just integration but, more importantly, communication in order to sell goods and meet the socio-cultural life expectations of the host country. More importantly, among the Cameroonians, the idea is to use language and Cameroonian entrepreneurship to appropriate space and perform multiple identities. As I have shown in Chapter 7, apart from the shebeen business and social activities, Cameroonian business persons also flood the free markets from Green Point Market Square to Muizenberg. Amid shops, several stalls and the presence of numerous hawkers, in Bree in the heart of Cape Town, is a Cameroonian nightclub with a South African sounding name *Patapata*, named after Miriam Makeba's famous song. (Miriam Makeba, fondly known as Mama Africa, is one of the best known and internationally acclaimed musician to have come out of South Africa). Here, popular South African music competes with a variety of Cameroonian music genres ranging from *makosa*, *bikutis* and *besiikin* to *bottledance*, all Cameroonian business terms and genres. The *Makosa* dance gained fame through a Cameroonian songwriter and saxophonist, Manu Dibango's 1972 hit "*Soul Makossa*." The song has been adapted and sampled by many Western musicians such as Michael Jackson and recently by songstress Rihanna.

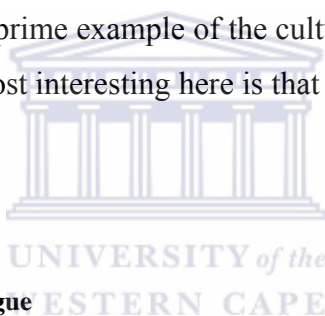
In the wide range of Cameroonian music in Cape Town, Sammy and Amadou still enjoy South African music. Sammy claims that whenever he hears the sound of South African music, even in Cameroonian gatherings, he immediately pairs up with South

Africans or Cameroonians who know local dance styles, in order to display his South African dancing skills.

### Extract 8.22

| Turn | Speaker            | Dialogue   |
|------|--------------------|--|
|      | <b>Interviewer</b> | I learnt you can dance and sing like South Africans.   |
| 1    |                    |  |
| 2    | <b>Sammy:</b>      | (Laughing), Ohoo well dance, yeah, I like it so much [emphatically] I love it. [...] I cannot sit in the meeting when the sound is on. |

Amadou like Sammy is a prime example of the cultural diversity and multiculturalism in Cape Town. What is most interesting here is that he likes South African music sung in African languages.



### Extract 8.23

| Turn | Speaker            | Dialogue   |
|------|--------------------|--|
| 1    | <b>Interviewer</b> | Yeah so the music you listen to, is it the same type that you used to listen to at home?   |
| 2    | <b>Amadou:</b>     | It is South African music. They sing mostly in their own dialect you see. [...] I do admire them and play it in my business place. |

There is a tinge of nostalgia in Amadou's response. It is as if local South African music sang in African languages reminds him of traditional Cameroonian music. Such a wide variety and tastes in music are also displayed in the Cameroonian shebeens and shops in Cape Town. It is therefore not unusual to hear both South African and Cameroonian music in the Cameroonian shebeens and shops in Cape Town. Just like some Cameroonians enjoy South African music, it is also not uncommon to see South African shoppers and people of all races, and ages stop at a Cameroonian shop to enjoy the sound of Cameroonian music. Because the music is interspaced with South Africans employed to speak in isiXhosa or Afrikaans over the loud speakers to attract customers, at times Cameroonians would also stop in amazement and walk into the

shop just to greet and make sure it is actually a Cameroonian shop, because of the music they hear.

### **8.5 Summary**

In this chapter, I set out to describe multiplicity and the construction and reconstruction of the Anglophone and Francophone identity options in Cape Town. It is clear that political identities of Cameroonian immigrants and their South African counterparts are usually transformed through social interaction under globalising conditions. This means identities as conceived in political contexts of territorial nation-states are different from those performative identities within contexts of migration during the era where hyper technology and rapid transport systems merge, and transform cultures and artefacts.

Thus, migration goes hand-in-hand with “spatial practices” (daily activities and discourses, seen in Chapter 7, and two very distinct processes of globalisation namely “representation of space” (how people create spaces) and spaces of representation (spaces that make and shape people, all of which are here shown to be hybrid, rapid and fluid). These practices and processes play a paramount role in the reconstruction of the Cape identities of Cameroonians without overlooking the conventional ascriptions to various tribal groups (for example Duala, Kom, Kuk, Bakossi, Bameka, Ewondo) and former colonial nations like the British and French from which have developed the terms ‘Anglophone’ and ‘Francophone’. With the inevitable processes of transnational flux, and social transformation, identity reconstructions tend to represent (1) multilingualism as a dispensation, (2) the transformation of homogenous concepts (3) the transformation of other cultural items with specific attention given to a former homogenous Xhosa environment gradually becoming heterogeneous. Here, particular attention is directed towards the practice of intermarriage in Cape Town and other practices that trigger mixing and blending of two or more cultures. The continuity of CPE and the presence of French in previous Xhosa speaking areas among others, serve as examples. These, impact on identity reconstitution of both Cameroonians and the South Africans in contact. This leads to the creation of new



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flexible translocal social actors. In other words, while the Cameroonians transform the locals and reshape the spaces through their socio-economic activities and socio-cultural practice, they are also being transformed.

With such complexity and fluidity imbedded in this twofold transformation, there arises a need for an overview of the implications of this study on few theories herein. I highlight these in Chapter 9.



## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Conclusions and Implications of the Study**

#### **9.0 Introduction**

I have situated the conclusion in multilingualism or language as localised practice (Pennycook 2010, Heller 2007) and identities as negotiated and performative (Banda 2010, Agha 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). In this regard, language is not an autonomous system and identities are not fixed and permanent. That is, they are always in a state of flux. For that same reason, it is concluded that the borders between translocality and transnationality are not always as clear-cut as some studies suggest. The chapter ends by determining the implications of the conclusions for a number of theoretical positions.



#### **9.1 A synopsis of Research Objective**

The aim of this study was to explore the manifestation of hybrid identities and the place of CPE and Franglais in the processes of reconstructing and reconfiguration new Cape identities among the Cameroonian immigrants in the multilingual contexts of Cape Town. In this study, I endeavoured to appraise the Anglophone and Francophone divide and the various identity options as have been wrought by experiences, as influenced by both the physical and socio-political, cultural and economic conditions of Cameroonian immigrants. As stated in Chapter 1, I specifically set out to realize five objectives. Below, is a summary of my attempt to realise these objectives.

- (i) Explore the manifestation of different identity options at the disposal of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town

One conclusion is that Cameroonians have a multiplicity of identity options. These are manifested and negotiated performatively through dress code, song, food etc.

These identities are translocal and transnational in nature. They tend to blend South African, Cameroonian, and even American traits. This is in line Pennycook (2010), Heller (2007), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) etc who argue that identities are not fixed. The fact that Cameroonian identity traits are manifested across international borders in the Cape Diaspora suggests the mobility of identities. This in turn blurs translocal and transnational borders as far as identity construction is concerned.

(ii) To explore the different identity options, including hybrid identities, available to Cameroonians and the implication of such hybrid identities for Cape Town identities  
(iii) to determine the influence (if at all) of the Afrikaans ('coloured') and isiXhosa (African/black) additional identity options on the reconstruction of Anglophone/Francophone identity options in Cape Town

During the course of doing the research, I found that objective (ii) and (iii) are related. Given the diversity, multiplicity, and hybridity in language use and identities that are displayed by immigrants, I found considerable similarities between the two objectives as such, I shall evaluate them collectively.

Since the different identity options they manifest are highly mobile, this enables Cameroonians to fit into the South African social structures as well as the Cameroonian ways of doing things. It is not surprising that Cameroonians are able to intermarry with South Africans and also, South Africans are able to attend and are accepted at Cameroonian meetings and other social functions as equals.

Secondly, the multiplicity of identities that Cameroonians manifest, blur the fault-line between Anglophone/Francophone identities, which are prominent in Cameroon (Anchimbe 2005, Alobwed'Epie 1993, Echu 2004, Alobwed'Epie 1993). For this reason, they are able to move between the Anglophone and Francophone identities, which turn leads to a de-accentuation and transformation of the Anglophone and Francophone identities divide. This makes the Anglophone and Francophone divide appear obsolete and inconsequential in the Diaspora. Because of the integrated social networks between Anglophones and Francophones, the study suggests there is

cultural unity and desegregation rather than disintegration among Cameroonian immigrants.

(iv) To estimate the place of Cameroonian official languages (English and French), of CPE and of Franglais in the process of negotiating Cape identities

The study suggests that CPE, English, and French are still very much a part of Cameroonians' identities in Cape Town. It is evident that these languages are the main linguistic means in which Cameroonians perform and negotiate different identities. However, just like in Cameroon, respondents project a negative attitude towards CPE when asked whether they speak it. Yet in practice, they use CPE on its own or as an amalgam (Higgins 2009) with Afrikaans, English, and French. Franglais is not commonly used perhaps for the fact that French is not usually spoken in South Africa. In any case, CPE is already playing the social function that Franglais would normally play.

(v) To explore the impact of post-colonial identities in contexts of migration and minoritisation.

With regard to postcolonial identities, we see that the linguistic repertoire that Cameroonians possess enable them to transform the colonial identities to such an extent that they are able to fit in the new environment and in a way that, instead of being minorities, they tend to blend in with the majority in the Diaspora of Cape Town. For example, since English seems to be the main language in Cape Town, Cameroonians, including Francophones, use English such that they are able to avoid minoritisation. This would be the case if they were to use French or Cameroonian national languages. Having said that, it should not be taken that Cameroonians do not use French or Cameroonian national languages in the Cape Diaspora. As we saw in the previous chapters, these are used in various forms in the homes and at CANOWACAT and Mifi Association meetings. Thus, Cameroonians in the Diaspora are the epitome of multilingual and multicultural dispensations. In fact, and as I alluded to earlier multilingualism as a linguistic dispensation (Aronin and Singleton

2008) is not a new thing to them. The study suggests that Cameroonians have been multilingual even before the onset of colonialism (Echu 2004) and colonialism only added French, English, and German to the multilingual linguistic dispensation (see Banda 2009, 2010 for similar argument). It can be said that they have just translocated it from Cameroon to the Cape Diaspora where in some cases; they have added isiXhosa and Afrikaans to the linguistic dispensation.

Several other conclusions and issues became apparent in the study. It was evident from the study that hybridity and the reconstruction practices are not only confined to languages, but also to discourse orders in terms of how meetings are conducted. The Cameroonian meetings captured through the activities of Mifi Association and CANOWACAT are characterised by 'disorder of discourse'. Cameroonian use both formal and informal versions of English and French separately or as amalgams alongside CPE and their national languages in side talks and even when they add their contributions to the meeting proceedings.

Most captivating are their acts of transforming and transliterating minutes from English or French to CPE and a mixture of French and English. The discourse practices of Mifi Association and CANOWACAT, in which people can use any language or language blends which shows evidence of the tensions in localisation of their practices as they transform meanings and apparent immobile domain-related social structures. As we saw, sometimes using formal or 'standard' language at such meetings was frowned upon as inappropriate and meant to 'show off'. Through their actions, one also sees their ability to override the inflexibility of time in relation to when a meeting starts or ends and how or when prayers are said. Deliberations often started even before the opening prayers and those who came later would be told what had transpired. Similarly, since the meetings took place at shebeens, this ensured that people who stayed around for food or drink, continued with 'discussions' even after the meeting had closed. Even people's dress code to a meeting reflects 'disorderliness' since it is a mixture of the Cameroonian, South African, and Western dress code.

Not only that, Cameroonians seem to have modified the way of doing business. Transformation of business practices included flexible hours of work, open plan layout of shop and with merchandise strewn on the floor and shelves. This evokes the open and mobility of spaces in addition to that of language and identity. By mobility of spaces, I mean the business premises could easily be transformed from selling one kind of merchandise to another within a short time. This also enabled Cameroonian business people sell different kinds of goods at the same time without worrying about being constrained by space.

### **9.2 Implications**

What this study has shown is that Cameroonians as social actors constitute an indispensable part of the social interaction and thus an integral part of meaning-making processes in the Cape Town Diaspora. They influence the languages, the entrepreneurial practices, and spaces in which they interact. In Western discourses, there is often a very clear distinction between what are seen as distinct languages, and also between formal and non-formal language use. The findings and discussion in this study suggests these distinctions are notional rather than absolute (Banda 2010). Pennycook (2010) and Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argue about the “disinvention” of language and for alternative paradigms to multilingualism and what constitutes language itself. The current study suggests that multilingualism and what constitutes language is fluid and unstable. For instance, the multiplicity of languages (including what can be called amalgams) used in CANOWACAT meetings do not support the notion of language as an autonomous system. In fact, it supports Heller’s argument that “the speech of individual bilinguals goes against the expectation that languages will neatly correspond to separate domains, and stay put where they are meant to stay put” (2007:11).

Moreover, considering the mobility and hybridity of identities and language use, it becomes difficult to apply to this study, concepts such as crossing and binary oppositions such as insiders/outsidere, Anglophones/Francophones and centres/peripheries since Cameroonians seem to occupy many spaces. For instance, in

terms of language use, some Cameroonians can be said to ‘own’ what can be said to be standard French or English or national languages together with the non-standard forms in the same space and time. Cameroonians’ language use gives meaning to the idea of language as localized practice (Pennycook 2010), as it belongs to whoever uses it.

Thus, another implication from the study is that there is no clear outsiders and insiders. This is due in part to Cameroonian immigrants’ continued manifestation of hybrid identities in which CPE, French, English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, etc are fundamental components of interaction. As Pennycook (2010:6) puts forward, it is faulty to separate ‘the act of speaking from what is being spoken’. Like Anchimbe (2007), Heller (2007), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) and Widdicombe (1998), this observation of Pennycook (2010) is much like what the findings of this study reveal about the intricate link between people’s lived practices and language usage. Put differently, this means any instance of language use by Cameroonians cannot be separated from its speakers’ ideological, historical and cultural settings. Accordingly, new arguments on appropriation of language, such as crossing, centres, and peripheries, hierarchy in space, and so on, are undermined by the linguistic dispensation shown by Cameroonians in the study. There is abundant evidence of reconstructing cultural identities around CPE, French, English, etc languages, resulting in multiple ownerships in the different domains and spaces in which they are used (cf. Higgins 2009).

Pennycook (2007:49) takes this point even further stating that ‘[s]egregationalist linguistics has constructed language as a separate entity’. To him, language forms an integral part of its environment for it reflects the historical, economic, political, and socio-cultural backdrop of a people and thus, a crucial need for alternative discourses construing the concept of language differently. Like this study suggests, for Pennycook, language use is better understood in its locality and time.

For Vigouroux (2005), space is a spatially delimited environment, lived practices and a system of relations, all bearing symbolic meaning. This when related to her notions

of territoriality and reterritorialisation, suggests that one can own space, and that one is not able to be in two places at a time without deterritorialising physically or symbolically. In other words, space functions at social and symbolic levels. It is marked and designated; and it is there to be appropriated. The study suggests that the notion of space needs to shift from the question of “who I am” to “where I am”. This is in line with Widdicombe (1998:200) who has argued about the need to view space in relation to “where I am”, which he says is useful for the creation and production of positions rather than taking positioning as a given. Looking at the concept of space in this way portrays a shift from the spatial metaphor as constructed by dominant homogeneous discourses. That is, heterogeneous discourses call social subjects into place of particular discourses. Through their social practices, Cameroonian immigrants are constantly reconstructing the so-called Anglophone and Francophone identities, and negotiating the Xhosa and Afrikaans identity options among others. That is why, the notion of identity needs to move beyond “territory” and challenge the notion of space in the tangible sense of “here”, and “there” in order to explain the nature of boundaries both within and across borders in different ways.

Similarly, Pennycook (2010:7) has pointed out that the local can indeed be understood “in relation to a dynamic interpretation of space”. He disputes the fact that space has mostly been treated in fixed, immobile terms while time moves on. Drawing from Lefebvre (1991), he relates space to the circumstances of our practice stating that places and spaces “are themselves constructed and interpreted” just like our words are produced and understood under specific socio-cultural political and historic conditions. For instance, the A2Z shops in Bellville, originally owned by Afrikaners and frequented by Afrikaans speaking customers have been transformed into a Cameroonian enclaves in which French, English, isiXhosa, Lingala, etc languages are spoken. The space does not only have new clientele, but the practices and interactions that take place there are completely different and portend new socio-cultural, political, and historic conditions and meanings.

The concept of identity is complex and fluid among Cameroonians in Cape Town. It is shown to be hybrid and performative rather than related to fixed prescriptive



structures based on French, English or any specific language. Put differently, identity in the study is a function of the role of expression (or materiality) in relation to the investments of the circumstance of the time and space. Thus, as has been implied elsewhere, Cameroonians do not conform to a singular linguistic identity trait. Other than through manipulation of their extensive linguistic repertoire, their identity options are also stylized in dress code, food, music, business models, etc. This study supports those who argue for the delinking of language to (ethnic) identity, and those who argue against looking at identity as “fixed” to some phenomenon or social structure (Heller 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Widdicombe 1998).

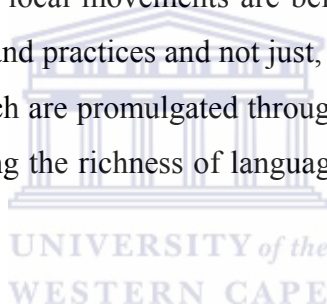
Understandably, the notion of negotiated and performative identities (Banda 2010; Li Wei 2008; Anchimbe 2007; Heller 2007; Agha 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Widdicombe 1998) become a useful response to the issue of “[...] displacing analytical attention from discourse as structured meaning towards practice as material affordance” and hence, an important aspect of resemiotisation (Iedema 2003) or what Pennycook (2010) has called relocalisation.

Thus, the study suggests that there is need to shift from understanding language as a principal maker of ethnonational identity to an understanding of language as a marketable commodity which is distinct from identity itself (cf. Heller 2003). Such identity construction processes are shown to depend on the interlocutors and subject matter. This shows the notion of multiple codes is a social practice, and confirms the complexity and fluidity in language, identity, and space as revealed in this study.

Another aspect of translocality to be considered is the issue of heterogenisation which in this case denotes localization of English and French. From data, it is clear that the English and /or French used are not always the “standard” versions. Also, when it came to discussions among themselves or prompting one another to respond to questions, it was generally done in CPE or a mixture of English French and some Cameroonian national languages. Moreover, when Cameroonians talk about gastronomy, clothes, and music, this is mostly expressed in their languages though the discussion might be in French or in English.

In other words, social actors draw from different linguistic resources at their disposal to meet their daily needs. This means language is more of a social practice than a fixed entity where both English and French, or CPE, and other Cameroonian national languages and official languages in South Africa are skilfully used as multilingual resources not just to communicate but also to better express some localised realities.

On a similar note, Pennycook expresses views on language as a local practice, arguing that language use should encompass an appreciation of the different perspectives of languages use and not by treating language as a structured system with fixed norms and values. He insists any understanding of the local must only be done by “also acknowledging the perspectival heterogeneity of locality” (2010: 4-5). This means looking at ways in which local movements are being made global through localised international movements and practices and not just, in terms of how social actors react to global movements which are promulgated through the media, and institutions. This is an aspect of appreciating the richness of language embedded in the lived practices and translocality.



Such a pattern of studying language use represented in this study, appeals to a method of linguistic analysis that does justice to the nature of localised language use. This in turn, attempts to respond to concerns on linguistic analysis raised in (Pennycook 2010, Webster 2007, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, Fairclough 1992) since it relates systems of language use to processes.

### **9.3 General Conclusion**

Finally, language like culture cannot be understood outside the circumstances of its practice because, it is constantly (re)constructed and negotiated to suite the dynamics of its environments by the interactants.

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Apparent here is the fact that different languages and different cultures become resources used to perform different things as manifested by people who come in contact through business, adventure, dressing, sharing the same cuisine, and so on. Moreover, findings have established a dual transformation in both transnational and translocal contexts where some Cameroonian immigrants adopt South African accents and pronunciations, for instance, and where South Africans attend Cameroonian meetings, eat, and prepare Cameroonian food. Certainly, pervasive sticking to bounded homogenised practices only turns to accentuate otherisation and exclusion, and conformist versions of globalisation (cultural homogeneity) or Americanisation as defined in Chapter 3. Given the influences brought about by discourses of glocalisation and heterogenisation in interactions, it becomes plausible to question the claim that everything comes from the centre.

In addition, by means of localisation, the layout of items in Cameroonian shops is portrayed as completely different to the way this was usually done in typical (and similar) South African businesses. Besides this, in the Cameroonian shops there is usually a South African outside with a microphone making announcements or advertising in isiXhosa and/or Afrikaans with Cameroonian music and/or Nigerian movies being broadcasted in another language.

These transformation practices seem to suggest that new arguments on space ownership contradicts findings which show that globalised immigrants move freely into and out of multi-ethnic and multilingual contexts wherein they are transformed, and in turn, transform these contexts in their quest to reproduce, affirm, contest, or restructure available identities. In such cases, Cameroonians move away from predetermined (structured) meanings and use different languages (material or resources at their disposal) to perform different identities as well as to signal who they are. In turn, they undermine the hierarchies and social structures which are supposed to constrain their socio-economic mobility.

### **9.4 Questions for Future Research**

The tension between the notional and practical experiences of social actors through language and other cultural practices is visible within the African contexts. What I really mean is that if language were to be an autonomous system and identities assumed fixed and permanent, then Cameroonian immigrants will not freely move along with the translocal, transnational and postcolonial identity options. For that same reason, identities will not be in a constant state of flux. Hence, and in relation to the findings, the opposite is the case, where the borders between translocality and transnationality are principally unclear. This inspires the researcher to put forward a number of questions for future research namely,

- i. Is the current definition of language adequate to account for the kind of fluid use of language in multilingual contexts?
- ii. In relation to (i), could multilingualism be seen as countable languages?
- iii. To what extent are notions such as code mixing, code crossing, and polycentricity applicable to the fluid multilingual contexts of Africa?
- iv. Could it be practical to reproduce such a study in other immigrant groups in South Africa or elsewhere in the world?

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## **Appendix A**

Music Français Copied from bonanberi.com on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

# **Koppo : "Si tu vois ma go"**

**(29/02/2008)**

Chanson célèbre du chanteur camerounais qui l'a fait connaître, intitulée "Si tu vois ma go"

Par Koppo

Si tu vois ma ngo, dis lui que je go  
je go chez les watts nous falla les do  
la galère du kamer toi-même tu know  
tu bolo tu bolo mais ou sont les do

mon frère je te jure : je suis fatigué  
j'ai tout fait j'ai tout do pour chasser le ngué  
j'ai wash les voitures: il n'y avait pas moyo  
j'ai toum les chaussures:il n'y avait pas moyo  
le poisson les chenilles: il n'y avait pas moyo?  
Alors j'ai tchat que c'est trop : il faut que je go.

Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
je go chez les watt nous falla les do  
Si tu vois ma go,dis-lui que je go(si tu vois ma go)  
Si tu vois ma nga,dis-lui que pars



La galère du kamèr toi même tu know  
Tu bolo, tu bolo mais ou sont les do  
Le pater, la mater et les mbindi ress  
ont dinaî que je go, mais je go vitesse.  
il ne faut pas qu'ils know que j'ai envie de go  
je veux seulement qu'ils know quand je suis déjà go  
dès que je go, va leur tchat à tous les gars du kwatt  
A toutes les go du kwatt que ça gâte ça gâte

**(Ref)**

Quand tu such la télé tu vois que chez les watt  
est-ce qu'on suffa même du ngué? tout le monde est bath!  
Dès que je tombe là-bas je hole un bolo  
N'importe quel bolo qui peut me gui les do:  
Promener les chiens, moi je vais bolo  
Laver les cadavres, moi je vais bolo  
même épouser les veuves hein! moi je vais bolo  
Fait quoi fait quoi j'aurai les do  
Foumban foumbot je vais go

**(Ref)**

Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
dis-lui qu'il n'y a plus le ponda de lui dire adieu.  
Parce que les go même djoss, c'est le ponda qu'elle loss  
Or c'est le ponda c'est les do: il faut que je go  
Entre les do si je go et le ndolo de ma go  
je tchat le ndolo mais sans les do y a pas ndolo.  
Il nous faut que do, il faut que je go.

Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
dis-lui qu'il n'y a pas pête, je vais jamais la forget

si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
je vais toujours mimba qu'elle a un large débat  
si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que  
je vais toujours te garder la sape: les sacs les sacs  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
On va faire comment? le kamer a les dents...  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
Et tous ceux qui me pleurent, et tous ceux qui me pleurent, à quelle heure?

Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je toum  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je poum  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je lance  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je nyong  
si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je trace  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que c'est fort  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je pem  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je go  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui que je lance  
Si tu vois ma go, dis-lui tout ce que tu veux.

### **A Summary of the Music in English**

Koppo's music in Franglais is titled "if you see my girlfriend" and is apparently addressed to a friend. In his music Koppo talks of how difficult and hard the times are in Cameroon and this explains his decision for fleeing to Europe in search of money. He uses different terminologies namely "go, toum, poum, lance, nyong trace, pem" and so on to express his resolute to flee. He insinuate the difficulty in Cameroon where he has had do all odd jobs including the the washing of cars and selling of insecticides has not been helpful, is common Knowledge to all.

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In spite of this, his parents and siblings still do not want him to leave. But, his friend should tell all those who mourn for him he gone and to all the girls in the neighbourhood, that it has come to the worse.

He believes once in Europe, he will have money no matter what. When one switches on the TV, what one sees is that everyone one in Europe swims in wealth “tout le monde est bath!” and that makes them (in Europe) sparkling or fresh). So, he must go there, even if he will have to take dogs for a walk, wash corpses or even marry an old widow, he will still earn money. Therefore, because hardship in Cameroon is too much, he must go.



## Appendix B

### A Guide to Interview Questions

# Questions Derived from a Survey on Language and Migration in Cape Town

Below is a guideline of interviews used during field work. The interviews cover a period of 2 years survey, from 2006 to 2008 and usually recorded for about 45 minutes to 2 hours. The questions were unstructured and usually prompted by responses from the participants who covered all age groups and came from various walks of life.

## Interview Question Guide

| Topic                                 | Questions Developed   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Coming to South Africa                | Here the issues covered involved respondents' time purpose for coming to South Africa, his/her perceptions and experiences, circumstances involving respondents' arrival in South Africa.   |
| The general background of respondents | Here the focus was on the following issues, where they were born, their life experience here compared to their experience at home, languages learnt and spoken at home, educational background, ethnic affiliation <i>et cetera</i> |
| Being in South Africa                 | Respondents were required to talk about their experiences in South Africa. They were asked about particular difficulties at work /school; even their positive experiences were required   |
| Languages.                            | The main point of interest here was to know if respondents  |

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|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>have learnt any the South African languages, if they had encountered any language problems while in South Africa, the languages they use most commonly in South Africa, the context in which they used them and the person with whom they used the language. Their perception of these languages and if these languages were important to their sense of self (ethnic identity). If they were able to have access to the media (music, newspapers, books films) in their main languages while in Cape Town. To know if they can speak any of three dominant languages (isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English) here in Cape Town. It was also essential to know if they use the languages they have learnt and whether they were confident of themselves when using them. Respondent gave their view of their home languages and also revealed whether knowing other languages was helpful to them or not and if their employers utilised their multilingual competences.</p> |
| <p>Anglophone and Francophone Identities</p>   | <p>The main aim here was to know whether respondents still continue to use language as they did in Cameroon and whether they felt they were Anglophones and Francophones and how this classification was important in the identity manifestation. It was equally important to know whether respondent used languages such as Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), Franglais and other national languages while in Cape Town</p>   |
| <p>Social Networks.</p>                        | <p>Interest here was to know the kind of people migrants Cape Town usually interacted with, daily, weekly or monthly. Respondents also talked about the people they knew (friends, colleagues, acquaintances, neighbours...).</p>   |
| <p>Belonging and linguistics of difference</p> | <p>The aim here was to know if participants felt at home in South Africa and what the term home meant to them. It was also important to know if there were terms they used to refer to other migrants and South Africans, if they had</p>   |

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|         |  |
|---------|--|
|         | encountered some terms that are used by South Africans to refer to them, if they drew lines between different types of international migrants because of their geographical origin or why they came to South |
| Culture | Focus here was to know if respondent felt that there were some practices which set them apart from South Africans, apart from their languages  |



## **Appendix C**

Segments of the Mifi Meeting clearly stipulating how the agenda looks like.

# The Main Segments of the Mifi Meeting Recorded In 2006

After prayers, the first segment of the CANOWACAT is reading of previous minutes and this is usually followed by matters arising from the minutes and so on, and the meeting ends with entertainment as illustrated below.

- 1. Fond de caisse annuel:** Here every member contributes any sum of money suitable for him/her into some sort of a fixed account. This money is all given to the treasurer who is expected to keep it safely away, not necessarily in a bank.
- 2. Fond de caisse malheur (fund raising for the deceased):** Here, money is contributed instantly to help a Mifi member or any Cameroonian who dies in Cape Town. The meeting members are required to give the names of two persons very dear to them. If any of these persons should die back in Cameroon, the meeting draws a sum of R5000.00 to support this person. If the person is in Cape Town, the meeting members would still contribute, but a very little amount and add to that which has been drawn (R.5000.00) from the coffers in order to send the corpse home and help facilitate the trip of those taking the corpse home. However, if it is just any Cameroonian, from another meeting group, Mifi members would contribute R90 to support that meeting group send their corpse home. This is the same case for all meeting groups in Cape Town though they have varying amounts to contribute. Nevertheless, the CANOWACAT has a fixed amount of R.100 for any case of bereavement, be it within or without CANOWACAT.

**3. Deuil et assurance:** Like fond the case malheure, this segment helps reduce the financial burden on the bereaved. It is thus another aspect used to get money into the coffers for the benefit of those who should lose a loved one or fail to meet their weekly dues. For example, if you should fail to contribute to support others in such desparate situations as death, part of the money you had contributed as insurance would be withdrwan and in this case, you have to complete it or your insurance becomes forfeited. This slot of berevement and insurance is specially meant for the newcomers/newmembers. The first three weeks into Mifi is a period of observation. The meeting memers alloee the newe member to attain without any contributions while the investigate to make sure the new member is really of the Mifi region. After this period, the new member pays a registration fee of R50 and an insurance fee of R500.00. On the contrary, at the CANOWACAT meeting, every Cameroonian and, any person from any part of the world could become a member. All what the interested candidate needs to do is pay a registration fee of R200.00 whenever he/she finds it convinient. This registration is renewable every year with a sum of R50. On the other hand, to become a member of the Cameroon association, all one needs to do is show interest and registration for free for all interested members. If a Mifi member who is insured happens to die, the meeting drws R10.000.00 to help return his remains to Cameroon. In the case where a one of the two important members of a meeting member should die, the meeting support the bereaved with a sum os R5.000.00.

**4. Vente de'argent (Money lending):** It is another interesting segment of the Mifi association. Members who are in need of money present themselves at the end of the meeting. The new members are able to borrow R1.500.00 whereas the old members can have as limit R2.500.00. to borrow. For every amount borrowed, there is a 5% interest rate. For instance, if you should get a R2.500.00, you give back R2.625.00. There are these interests which are used tho buy drinks for every meeting session and cover the meetings's expenses.



- 5. The Tontine segment:** This for example entails that meeting member contribute a certain amount of money depending on their financial ability. This money is then handed over to one single person whose name coincides with the date and number in the register. This date and number is usually established by the members and the secretary from the day of registration. The first people to register get the first numbers starting from 1 to the very last person on the secretary's list (or sometimes a specific number, if founding members decide not to exceed that number. For example, the Cameroon rainbow association in Bellville, South Africa (CRABSA) consists of just 15 members, though this restriction is hardly ever applicable). Thus, the first to be registered becomes the first to collect the money contributed as soon as the meeting is operational. The rule is to always contribute the same amount that was contributed to you in return. Everybody who fails to contribute for another person, or happens to come late during a particular meeting session always has to pay a certain sum of money (usually referred to as the fine) The fine to be paid is not evenly distributed as executive members who are expected to be the models are always charge a bit more than others.
- 6. Coup de cœur (free will donation to new comers):** In addition to segments, is the free will donation where meeting member voluntarily give whatever they think is suitable to help any newcomer (s). However, the MIFI association in Cape Town has imposed a compulsory sum of R10 for all members, though; members are allowed to contribute more than this amount. During this segment, it is not uncommon to here some members complaining they have been working all their lives in Cape Town to contribute for new comers. What is more exciting here is that, the sacred and important rituals of the Cameroonians come to play at this moment –incantation. In certain meetings for example the Banso (a linguistic group (commonly known as a tribe or village of the North West Province) meeting in Cape Town, an elderly member is required do perform this activity, just as it is the case in Cameroon. However, the Mifi present in Cape Town randomly chooses anybody to perform the task whether young or old. Below is some data captured during

participant observation when money was being handed to a newcomer in a closed envelope.

- 7. L'ordre du Jour (Meeting agenda):** This turns out to be the last slot of the Mifi meeting. It is here that the secretary reads the minutes of the previous sitting and those interested in borrowing money present themselves. At this very juncture, the “saneur” that is, the person in charge of discipline (which in the Anglophone meetings is usually referred to as chief whip, as the discipline master will do not justices for the functions bestowed on this person) reads the names of noise makers, latercomers, persons oweing the meeting and so on. For every name, he/she indiactes the amount require to be paid by the offender. This amount ranges from R2 to R120 and, if this money is not paid, immediately, then, the executive deducts it from the members' insurance.



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### Appendix D

Minutes of a CANOWACAT Session specifying the agenda and the segments in the meeting.

#### Ordinary Structure of Minutes of the CANOWACAT documented in 2008

After prayers, the first segment of the CANOWACAT meeting usually begins the reading of previous minutes this is followed matter arising from the minutes, and the meetings usually end with entertainment.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <br><b>CAMEROON NORTHWESTERN'S<br/>ASSOCIATION IN CAPE TOWN</b> |   |
| <b>MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING.</b><br>UNIVERSITY of the<br>WESTERN CAPE<br><b>7<sup>th</sup> June 2008 AT THE SALT RIVER SHEBEEN</b> |   |
| <b>Presiding:</b>   | <b>Excuses:</b><br><br>President to be late for meeting |
| <b>Chairperson: (Name)</b>  |   |
| <b>Secretary: (Name)</b>  |   |

| NO | Description   | Action Points |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1  | <u>agenda</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prayers</li></ul> |               |

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|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes</li> <li>• Matters Arising</li> <li>• Other Matters</li> <li>• Introduction/Announcements</li> <li>• Closing Remarks</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> </ul>  | <b>Secretary</b> to draw up agenda   |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>   |
| 2         | <p><b><u>PRAYERS AND WELCOME</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome note from (Name)</li> </ul>  | AP2: <b>Chairperson</b> to appear for prayers and start up meeting               |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>   |
| 3         | <p><b><u>Minutes &amp; Actions points from previous meetings</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes presented by (Name)</li> <li>• Moved by Mr. (Name) &amp; Ms. (Name)</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>   |
| 4.        | <p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. (Name) informed the house that only one member had contacted him with regards to assisting with asylum papers. In the same light, Mr. (Name) pledge to assist all members going to the refugee office in Nyanga with transport.</li> <li>• Mrs (Name) asked to know if papers pledged by Mr. (Name) to assist exco have been received.</li> </ul> | 2X RIM OF PAPER RECEIVED FROM (Name)   |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>   |
| 5.        | <p><b><u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Senator offers a Cheque of R2000</li> <li>• Other finances dealt with by Fin. Sec.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fin. Sec.</b> responsible</li> </ul> |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>   |

|           |  |                         |
|-----------|--|-------------------------|
| <b>6.</b> | <p><b><u>ANY OTHER MATTERS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. (Name), Mr (Name) with input from (Name) presented a feedback on Exco meeting held on May 2008.</li> <li>• In this light Mr (Name) urge members to sponsor categories because time is limited. In same light Mr (Name) proposed that final category be put up to enable members see what they intend to sponsor.</li> <li>• Mr. (Name) to the house talked about his presentation on refugees and immigration in South Africa. The house contributed positively towards this.</li> <li>• The president pleaded with members to assist and contribute towards our sister’s death as Cameroonian. He pleaded with members to always belong to associations, participate and contribute positively.</li> <li>• The president presented working documents to newly installed Exco members (Name and Name). The documents were handed over by Madam (Name).</li> <li>• Ms (Name) informed the house that, some students she had conversed with fail to attend meetings, because of lack of finance as meetings mean too many contributions. In that light the president proposed that all students should pay half price of all contribution after registration.</li> <li>• The General Assembly (GA) reacted to the president’s proposition with criticism. GA ask to know if presidents action is constitutional or found in CANOWACAT BYLAWS. The GA concluded that the House needed to deliberate on the issue.</li> <li>• The social departments urged members entertaining to ensure that dishes are washed before they depart.</li> <li>• In same light Mr (Name) urge members to be responsible and plead with members to stand up each time they wish to make a point as a sign of respect.</li> </ul> |                         |
|           |  | Still to be deliberated |
| <b>NO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action Points</b>    |
| <b>7.</b> | <b><u>ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS</u></b>  |                         |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Senator announce that the 14 horns he had pledged are on their way to South Africa and will inform the house when they arrive.</li> <li>• Mr. (Name) announced that he might need about 100 girls for audition to participate in a TV commercial.</li> <li>• Mr (Name) announce that Ms(Name) who is one of our member is back in SA and was present at the beginning of this session and because the baby was sleeping she had to leave earlier but promised to officially come and present the new baby to the GA.</li> <li>• Information was received stating that the troophys handing ceremony shall not be holding at Prestige club because the Cameroon president confirmed he was never told.</li> <li>• Mr. (Name) proposed that if Cameroon president was never informed he must put up contradictory posters showing new venue rather give informal information.</li> <li>• Mr. (Name) announced that his due date for CANOWACAT visit to charity to the sick and poor was the in June. He urges members to support and bring gifts on time before the 15 June for packaging.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP11: President</b> convened Exco session for 5<sup>th</sup> July</li> </ul> <p><b>AP12: Auction Sales</b> postponed to next session</p> |
|----|--|--|
| NO | Description  | Action Points  |
| 8  | <p><b><u>INTRODUCTION</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Name)</li> <li>• Name)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>ENTERTAINMENT</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms ( Name)</li> <li>• Mr. (Name) and Mr. (Name)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP11:</b></li> </ul> <p>New members were b<br/>welcome with<br/>embrace from two lad</p>   |

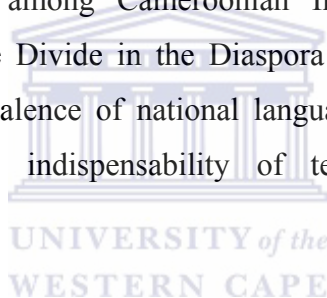
| NO | Description   | Action Points  |
|----|---|--|
| 9  | <p><b><u>CLOSURE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President thanked all for attending.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP12: Chairperson</b> to remind GA of the next meeting date</li> </ul> |

**Appendix E**

**A Usual Speech pattern of Cameroonian Immigrants and Captonian Associates**

# **An Example Derived From A Follow-up Interview Session with Solo**

The table below illustrate how Cameroonian immigrants usually speak. This particular session highlights issue of ethnic languages, amalgam systems or mixing, the popularity of CPE among Cameroonian Immigrants, the blurring on the Anglophone Francophone Divide in the Diaspora and hence their similarities, and finally, the lack of equivalence of national language terminologies in English and French and, hence the indispensability of textual bilingualism and lexical transference.



## **A sample of an Interview Session**

### **INTERVIEW XXII: SOLO**

| <b>Turn</b> | <b>Speaker</b>      | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|-------------|---------------------|---|
| 1           | <b>Interviewer:</b> | So my brother   |
|             | <b>Solo:</b>        | We will start again from zero   |
|             | <b>Interviewer:</b> | Yes. As we were saying I am from UWC, I am doing research. Are we going to do the interview in English, French, and Pidgin? |
|             | <b>Solo:</b>        | I said we could do it in English because we are in South Africa.  |
|             | <b>Interviewer:</b> | (Laughs) Okay so what's your name, where do you come from, where were you born, a bit about your background                 |
|             | <b>Solo:</b>        | : Yeah, my name is (name) I come from Cameroon, from  |

Bamenda

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Solo:** I was actually born in Bamenda, I grew up in Bafoussam, yeah, then my family: my mother, my father they live in Bafoussam

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Solo:** The Western Province of Cameroon.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, a French speaking zone?

**Solo:** That's why I'm bilingual. I studied there then I came here to continue my studies again.

**Interviewer:** Okay in what year were you born?

**Solo:** 1977 January month.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and your village, which one is your village?

**Solo:** It is Nwa, Donga Mantung.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what language do you speak in Nwa?

**Solo:** What language ah (laughs)? Actually, I don't know the name of my dialect.

**Interviewer:** Yes your dialect

**Solo:** I know we speak a dialect but really don't know the name of my dialect

**Interviewer:** You know most dialects they, they just bear the name of the area. Like the Kom dialect is called Kom, the Wum dialect is called Wum and the Bali language is called Bali. It's just Bansa that the people call their dialect Lamso. So is your dialect also called Nwa?

**Solo:** No the problem is that erhh...

**Interviewer:** You have a particular name or you just call it Nwa?

**Solo:** Erhh...

**Interviewer:** Your dialect is it also called Nwa?

**Solo:** Actually, I don't know if it is called Nwa or it is called Kaka you understand. But I know they call us Kaka, but I don't know how the language is called you know. I just grew up speaking the language. I don't know the background of the language, nothing



- about the language
- Interviewer:** Okay. So back in Cameroon, how many languages did you speak? English...
- Solo:** Who?
- Interviewer:** You
- Solo:** I speak English, French and a little bit of Bamiléké
- Interviewer:** Okay, Bamiléké what...
- Solo:** From where? Western Province – a little bit, just a ( )
- Interviewer:** The whole of Western Province... Bamiléké and there are several types of Bamiléké; Bamiléké Bafang, Bamiléké Bagabte, Bamiléké Banjoun and so on.
- Solo:** It's Bamiléké
- Interviewer:** Bamiléké and Bamiléké.. (?)
- Solo:** Yeah, I actually understand a little bit of Baleng, Mifi, Bamiléké from Mifi
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Bamiléké from the Mifi.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Solo:** So in the centre of Bafoussam.
- Interviewer:** okay, okay
- Solo:** Yeah
- Interviewer:** And your dialect? Nwa or is it (inaudibly) Kaka
- Solo:** Actually, my dialect, I can say okay I can say is the dialect from Nwa. The Nwa is a Sub Division. The dialect is called Nwa. Yeah actually as I am studying here, I cannot say that I speak the dialect any more.
- Solo:** I forgot most of the dialect
- Interviewer:** Why?
- Solo:** Because when I left Cameroon I was speaking mostly, I was speaking only French and English. French, English, so the dialect is something that you must be used to with. If you skip may be two to three years you don't speak you forget most of it.

- Interviewer:** Sure
- Solo:** Yeah
- Interviewer:** But I don't think I would forget mine.
- Solo:** No, because you've got someone that...
- Interviewer:** = = I don't speak; never, only on phone.
- Solo:** Errh
- Interviewer:** On phone
- Solo:** Only on phone? That's when I'm talking...
- Interviewer:** = = So why don't you call home and speak your dialect?
- Solo:** I call home but I told you we grew up in a French zone. Most of us we speak only French.
- Interviewer:** And your dad and your mum; don't you talk to them or they speak in the French language also?
- Solo:** I talk to them but I told you that most of us we speak French and English.
- Interviewer:** Okay... and Pidgin English?
- Solo:** you see, I spent mostly more than 6 years outside, but three years in South Africa
- Interviewer:** Okay, and the other three years?
- Solo:** Yeah, I left Cameroon long time I left passed through Congo, through Angola and then I came here
- Interviewer:** Okay. So you can speak Portuguese ( ) Angola
- Solo:** Yeah I speak Portuguese, I speak Portuguese
- Interviewer:** Very well?
- Solo:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You can even write and read
- Solo:** I can read, I cannot write I can read only Portuguese, I cannot write.
- Interviewer:** Okay and Pidgin English?
- Solo:** Yes I speak Pidgin English very well. It is the language that nobody in Cameroon can = =.
- Interviewer:** = = Okay

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- Solo:** = = can forget because to differentiate the Cameroon from other country like Nigeria or a Congolese. The way Nigerians speak pidgin is different from the Cameroonian
- Interviewer:** Pidgin?
- Solo:** Yes. their way of speaking pidgin is different
- Interviewer:** Okay, and in Bafoussam, French speaking area? How do you speak? And do they speak a lot of pidgin?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. They speak a lot of Pidgin there even the (?) -the Francophones, they speak Pidgin
- Interviewer:** Okay, okay.
- Solo:** You see, there is a time that Pidgin will be the mother tongue of Cameroon, of the whole nation, because even at the national team, even at the Cameroon national team.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, the Indomitable Lions.
- Solo:** Yeah. They are speaking it, Pidgin English. So Pidgin English is known everywhere, is spoken in Cameroon.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So do you think in the administrative building also like the ministers...
- Solo:** Have you never heard the president speaking English?
- Interviewer:** Errh, not...
- Solo:** == When the president, let's say - When the president is giving a speech to the Cameroonians, he speaks either French, he speaks French
- Interviewer:** Yeah
- Solo:** But let me tell when he visits areas in Cameroon he speaks English
- Interviewer:** Yeah, and Pidgin English, does he also speak?
- Solo:** Pidgin, what I mean is Pidgin English.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Does the president speak Pidgin?
- Solo:** I am telling you that everybody in Cameroon knows Pidgin English
- Interviewer:** Oho, that's ( ? )

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- Solo:** Can you imagine that even the Francophones who have grown in Douala, Yaounde, they speak Pidgin English? So what about the president?
- Interviewer:** (Laughs) okay, and then Frankanglais, do you know anything about Frankanglais?
- Solo:** That is what we [probably meaning we Francophones] call Pidgin
- Interviewer:** Je vais talk ce que tu m'a tell. No. on va shake. SpeakFrankanglais
- Solo:** Yeah okay that's – its another language that as you know Cameroon -as Cameroon is a being mixed (another person speaking) with erh ( ) the French and the English
- Interviewer:** Yeah
- Solo:** They are trying to create a language that will dominate Cameroon. That language is to show that we are one (3 seconds) you understand, that language that you are talking.
- Interviewer:** Okay, Franglais. What about Pidgin, does Pidgin not show that we are ...
- Solo:** No, Pidgin doesn't sshow that we are one because Pidgin originated only from the Anglophones.
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** The French are learning from us [Anglophones] but that (6 seconds) language that you are talking[that is Franglais]; we [Francopones] are also calling it Pidgin also
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Yes, we are also calling it Pidgin also because you see, we mix a little bit of English and French and we put it together.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Solo:** So, the French language either, you understand, now – so the French they are the ones who even tried to bring that language out [Franglais] because they were trying to speak English but they couldn't speak English very well you see.

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- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Solo:** So that is where the language comes from, the French. They are trying to find a language that they can understand themselves very well with the English without any problem
- Interviewer:** So do you know to speak Franglais?
- Solo:** Erhh, a lot.
- Interviewer:** Can you talk a bit?
- Solo:** Erh
- Interviewer:** Can you speak a bit of it?
- Solo:** Bon, one of them is that lets say if I want to say I'm going I'm going home: je vais go à la maison, tu vois.
- Interviewer:** Yea
- Solo:** I want to eat
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Je veux damer. It's a lot of them you see, it's what differentiates between French and English. It's what we speak when we meet in a an Anglophone and French (?) they are walking
- Interviewer:** Yeah
- Solo:** They mostly speak that language because they will understand themselves.
- Interviewer:** Now tell me your parents are Anglophones and you are born and bred in the Francophone zone; who – where do you belong: are Anglophone, Francophone or what?
- Solo:** Actually I belong to both of the two but mostly I speak French more than English but I studied in English
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Normally, most of the people they call me Bamiléké because my way of behaving doesn't show that I'm an Anglophone
- Interviewer:** Bamiléké, you like money? Bamilékés they love...
- Solo:** Not that Bamilékés like money. No, they like development. They like to grow. People think that they like money, ni, it is because to develop their area

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- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** They say Bamilékés are stingy. No, they are not stingy, they keep it to go and build in their area.
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Yeah you must not work - you will not work and not think of your future. You must think of your future, what you will be...
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Because if you die now, you don't have something of you in your place, then who are you? They will never talk about you in your place. Your history will be finished.
- Interviewer:** : Okay, even, - I'm even surprised to know that you are an Anglophone because I knew I'm coming to see a Francophone because since the last time we took an interview (actually meant an appointment) they told me here is a Francophone guy. I - I took appointment with you.
- Solo:** No, most of them think I am Francophone because I behave like a...
- Interviewer:** Okay Francophone. How do the Francophones behave?
- Solo:** They have their own way of behaving.
- Interviewer:** Like what do they do that the Anglophones do not do?
- Solo:** Look I'm living here mostly with the Anglophones. The Anglophones, there is one difference within the Francophones. The Anglophones they want to know about people's lives
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** You understand
- Interviewer:** Yeah
- Solo:** The Francophones don't take care of people's lives. Yes the Francophones what they have come to do, he's doing what - why you know, when he comes here he knows why he is coming to SA and he's doing what he's come to do, you understand.
- Interviewer:** Yes?
- Solo:** But the Anglophones, they will forget what they're doing but

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they will think of another person, you understand

**Interviewer:** Yes. Okay, is that the only difference?

**Solo:** There are a lot of differences between the Anglophones and the Francophones

**Interviewer:** Okay, what other difference?

**Solo:** The Anglophones, they are proud of themselves, they think they exist. But the Francophones, they are very simple.

**Interviewer:** Okay (laughing)

**Solo:** They don't like – they don't make a lot of noise like the Anglophones, too much noise. Here I am an Anglophone, I can know. The Francophones they are very quiet and they forward, they think you see, they think forward. They think to come back home and build, but the Anglophones what they know when they are here, they need to live in a nice house, you see. Like we are coming to South Africa, the Anglophones the little money they get, they need to fix themselves, they should be clean, well, put clothes ( ) but the Francophones they think back home, what they must do for their families.

**Interviewer:** Okay, but I think that is the reverse. Back home you see the Francophones, they think only about – I mean the Francophones, much about themselves in Cameroon but the Anglophones...

**Solo:** = = Me I never care about the Anglophones in Cameroon because I grow with the Francophones

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Solo:** I know about the Anglophones only here in SA but when I see their behaviour, it is quite different from the Francophones

**Interviewer:** Is that true?

**Solo:** Yeah. I grew my life with the Francophones you see. I grew my life with the Francophones

**Interviewer:** Okay, tell me, is there any difference about the culture here that is, combine the Cameroon and the Anglophones and the Francophone cultures, that is, if you compare it with the South

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- African culture, are there any differences and similarities?
- Solo:** Erhh I can say there are no differences but there are similarities because mostly all of us we are the Bantus.
- Interviewer:** Okay
- Solo:** Yeah, we are the Bamilékés although we are the Anglophones, Francophones. It is only the language that differentiates. So the culture is the same all over
- Interviewer:** Okay, if you compare it to one of South Africa, Cameroon and South Africa, the culture Of South Africa?
- Solo:** No they don't, South Africa they don't actually. I will tell you that they don't have culture here. They just live because they knew that they live. They want to follow the way of the white. How I can see, if the white drinks like this, let me drink like this. They don't think that no our great grandparents were doing it like this you understand
- Interviewer:** Okay (laughs)
- Solo:** Yeah, they follow only the white. So let me tell you that only the blacks here that can differentiate. At least they have a little bit of culture. Just a little bit of their culture is like our culture.
- Interviewer:** What are the bits a bit of things that are here that are that reflect a bit of Cameroon?
- Solo:** Like here, when you want to marry, the Xhosa lady you know you pay "Lobola". They call it "Lobola" but we also – we have (?) Traditional (?) we must pay also to marry a lady.
- Interviewer:** Sure
- Solo:** Like in our place you see
- Interviewer:** Sure
- Solo:** They must kill cows. Like also in our place they kill cows like most of the blacks here, they follow our own way like we, we get circumcised, them also, they get circumcised but the Coloureds are not circumcised you understand. But the only difference, them they have to go to the bush for two months meanwhile we,



they just circumcise us here in the hospital then it is finished. We don't need to celebrate a party to say you have become a man.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Solo:** But in Cameroon from childhood may be six months, you are circumcised already. That is the only difference we have with them.

**Interviewer:** And “born house”, do they also have “born house” here?

**Solo:** Actually, they don't. I have even forgotten about that because (laughs) I even forgot. We have “born house”, they don't have here.

**Interviewer:** Okay and ...

**Solo:** = = And then the – we have things that we call their meetings “*njangui*” houses. Here I don't see “*njangui*” house here. I don't know if it still even exists here in South Africa. And in Cameroon, there is this thing that every end of year the family regroups in Cameroon and discuss, you see. If I want to name them, they are a lot that they don't do. There are some that resemble Cameroon.

**Interviewer:** Cameroon. Okay, “*ngumba*” house “*juju*.” How do you call it in *Bamiléké*, when they wear the masquerade...

**Solo:** = = Ah, its “*juju*.” What - how will they call it again? Actually it's the dancing of “*juju*” that we call. The one that the women they don't see.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, “*nkoh*” or *Kwifor*?

**Solo:** And the 20<sup>th</sup> May, that's and the real “*juju*” dance.

**Interviewer;** Okay, okay, at school?.

**Solo:** Yeah, we used to do that even at the chief's palace

**Interviewer;** Okay but most of those things, they originate from the chief's palace.

**Solo:** Yes, yes mostly in the Western Province. They come from the chief's palace. There it is too much. I don't know if in the North West...

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- Interviewer:** Yes, because you did not grow up there
- Solo:** I don't know. I'm only talking of what is in the western Province
- Interviewer:** I understand you grew up in Bafoussam
- Solo:** I have never been there]. I am only talking of what I have seen with my eyes and I don't know about North West Province
- Interviewer:** Okay and then this thing, how do they call it? I just wanted to know if it exists in South Africa. Erhm, erhm erhm okay lets leave it we will come back to it
- Solo:** What is it? What is it talking about? It talks about what?
- Interviewer:** Let's see lets see lets see. Okay let's leave it. Well come back to it later okay?
- Solo:** Are there more questions or...
- Interviewer:** Okay let's forget about that. Their dresses here do you like the dressing in South Africa and that in Cameroon?
- Solo:** Actually, the Cameroonians, they dress traditionally, the Cameroonians. That is one fact that I said the South Africans want to follow the ways of the white, their way of dressing, their way of eating, their way of drinking, their way of – you see but we, we dress in our traditional wears. We dress the way our great grand parents taught us how to dress. We don't think of the whites or you understand, we dress very simple you understand.
- Interviewer:** What is it about culture about home that you miss here?
- Solo:** There are a lot of them that I cannot say. If I start we will spend the whole day here
- Interviewer:** Just say one, two, and three. Some, a summary of what you miss.
- Solo:** Erhh
- Interviewer:** A summary of what you miss
- Interviewer:** [Someone Talking to Solo in CPE] You done bole?
- Interviewer:** [Silence]
- Interviewer:** [prompting Solo to respond to his friend] Talk
- Solo:** I nova bolo Y. I know know whoside Mohamed go. Mohamed just comeout for here go ye. I no know. I go buy that thing them.

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- Mohamed just comeout for here
- Friend 1:** (?)
- Interviewer:** Talk
- Solo:** I nova boleY. Mohamed, done comeout go ye.
- Friend 1:** (?)
- Solo:** Na Mohamed. Ye comeout go since one o'clock I done kam back, ye no day around.
- Friend 1:** (?)
- Solo:** Erhh, na me and Kayna go and na me and Kayna
- Friend 1:** Kayna kam meet up Mohamed...
- Friend 1:** [To interviewer] You di record?
- Interviewer:** Yes
- Friend 1:** [To interviewer] Erhh, ye no get camara?
- Interviewer:** [Shakes her head in negation]
- Friend 1:** Okay [and leaves].
- Interviewer:** So tell me those things that you miss [almost questioning]
- Solo:** I told you that I miss food, actually [to another, (Friend 2), speaking French]. Pardons viens continue le travail. Pardon sais que ca ne doit pas finir
- Friend 3:** (Name) don kam for here you no di tell ye. ( ? ) you dey for here you no di work
- Solo:** (?)
- Friend 3:** Na how you dull so? You di call (name) you ( )
- Friend 3;** (?)
- Solo:** [Complaining about Friend 2 to Friend 3]. (name) comeout go y.  
[To friend 2] pardon tu connais le probleme, pardon tu...
- Friend 2:** [To Interviewer]. Salue.
- Interviewer:** Bonjour mon frère.
- Friend 2:** [To Interviewer]. Comment tu vas?
- Interviewer:** Je me port bien et toi ?
- Friend 2;** Je me porte bien. Ca fait longtemps. Tu te rappel de moi ?
- Interviewer:** Non?

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**Friend 2:** Ah ! vous oubliez même les frères ?

**Interviewer:** Pardon?

**Solo:** = = vraiment les frères ( ) comment on va les oublier ? Il ne faut pas oublier les frères.

**Friend 2:** Vous oubliez toujours les frères.

**Interviewer:** Non, on n'oublie pas. C'es

**Friend 2?** Une fois on est venu avec (Name) l'université d'UWC

**Interviewer:** Ohoo vous étiez la comme chauffeur ce jour la ?

**Friend 2** Oui.

**Interviewer:** Je m'excuse vraiment. Le nom c'est encore qui ?

**Friend 2:** C'est (Name) le Congolais ( ?) ne me néglige plus

**Interviewer:** (Name, name). Je me rappel maintenant.

**Interviewer:** Okay but in Cameroon is the reverse you know

**Solo:** No

**Interviewer:** J'ai fréquenté à l'université de Dschang mon frère, je te dis ce que j'ai vue

**Interviewer:** J'ai fréquenté avec les Francophones

**Solo:** Donc ça veut dire que au Cameroun les Anglophones sont ouverts

**Interviewer:** les anglophones sont plus ouverts que les francophones au pays

**Solo:** Ici alors le contraire, ici le contraire

**Interviewer:** D'accord d'accord. Vous voulez que le Pidgin devienne aussi langue officiel ?

**Solo:** Pourquoi pas ? Je serai aussi beaucoup contente si le Pidgin devient parce que moi je veux que nous aussi a une langue officiel comme les Congolaise on le Lingala, les Sud Africains ont le Xhosa, Afrikaans – il faut que le Cameroun aie aussi une langue national, pourquoi pas...

**Interviewer:** : Comme le Pidgin. Pourquoi pas le Nwa, le Bali, Le Bansa, Le Lamso, le Wum, le Bamiléké

**Solo:** Je ne veux pas une langue qu'on va prendre et puis les groups

des tribus la vont disent que oh c'est notre langue. Il faut une langue que ça sort d'ailleurs, que personne n'a ça, donc c'est créé, tu comprends ?

**Interviewer:** Oui, comme le Frananglais?

**Solo:** Oui

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Solo:** : Donc une langue créer qui va fait la différence entre le Cameroun et des autres. Quand tu pats dans tous pays en Afrique il y a une langue national mais au Cameroun il n'y a pas. C'est le seul pays qui n'a pas de langue national...

**Interviewer:** Okay et le Ffulde, la langue que les Musulmans parlent ?

**Solo:** Oh absolument c'est n'est que pour les Musilmans et ils prennent une partie du Cameroun. C'est n'est pas tous les tous le Cameroun

**Interviewer:** Tu n'aime pas que ça devient ?

**Solo:** Non parce que c'est n'est pas tout le monde qui est Musilman parce que c'est n'est pas tout le monde qui est Musulman

**Interviewer:** Okay appeal ==

**Solo:** On sait que s'il y a une langue officielle, les Musulmans vont toujours parlez leurs langues part des Musulman. Comme ici, il y a une langue officielle mais les Musulmans parlent une langue officielle, l'Afrikaans, ça ne change rien, tu comprends

**Solo:** Mmmmh

**Interviewer:** Okay

- Solo:** Oui, les Musulman parlent Afrikaans.
- Interviewer:** Mais ici, l'Afrikaans c'est pour les Coloureds, les Zulus, ces tous les gens...
- Solo:** C'est une langue officielle, c'est n'est pas pour les Coloureds, les Zulus (4 seconds). Il y a les Xhosa qui parlent l'Afrikaans plus bien que les Coloureds, il y a les Zulus qui parlent l'Afrikaans, c'est une langue nationale. C'est parce qu'on dit que c'est origine pour eux, Coloureds, c'est n'est pas parce que on dit que c'est pour les Coloureds
- Interviewer:** Moi je pense que si Bali devient aussi, un jour une langue nationale, tout le monde aussi va l'apprendre
- Solo:** Non, pourquoi tu choisi Bali
- Interviewer:** Non, je dis seulement c'est un exemple. Je pouvais aussi dis ==
- Solo:** == Bamiléké
- Interviewer:** == Bamiléké
- Solo:** Non, leur démarche, la manier qu'ils parlent, leur démarche c'est différent de démarche Su Africain. Les Camerounais on un démarche élance, leur démarche c'est différent.
- Interviewer:** Okay différent comment?
- Solo:** Dont la manier que les étrangères marchent, il s'en fou quoi, mais le Sud Africains, la manier que les Sud Africains marchent (5 seconds) la manier que les Sud Africains marchent, ils sont toujours peurs (laughing) ils n'ont pas confiance en eux quant ils sont en train de marcher (laughing)
- Interviewer:** Comment, comment
- Solo:** Mais l'étranger quand il marche, il a confiance, il sait que la ou il est, nom, il sait qu'il n'y a pas les problèmes mais le Sud Africain quand tu vois un Sud Africain, quand il marche même quand tu vois ça vision tu peux lis c'est parce que tu ne fais pas la psychologie au bien ( ) quand je vois les cerveaux je peux lis ce que la personne est en train de penser, je peux lis même quand tu as les problèmes

- Interviewer:** Mais tu es un technicien, comment tu peux lis ?
- Solo:** Non, j'ai fais beaucoup de trucs aux Cameroun. C'est parce que ici j'ai choisi option ingénieur
- Interviewer:** Ok
- Solo:** Même la ou je fréquente, j'ai une bourse de six mois, je vais fais six mois sans payer parce que bon, ma manier même que d'écrire la bas parce que tu vois, ma manier même de faire réfléchir les gens, d'expliquer vraiment c'est différent.
- Interviewer:** Ok
- Solo:** Tu vois, il n'y a rien d'être surprise. Je te dis que j'ai fais beaucoup de chose. Actuellement je fais même deux matières je fais mechanical and electrical engineering en même temps mélangé. (8 seconds) Bon, maintenant, c'est ce que je fais maintenant, electrical and mechanical engineering
- Interviewer:** D'accord (laughs). Tu es intelligent eh
- Solo:** Eh, non, ca dépend de la manier que j'ai grandir. Tu vois, j'ai fréquente deux – je fréquenté à Bafoussam, j'ai fréquenté en Anglais, tu vois un peu
- Interviewer:** Oui?
- Solo:** Mon cerveau est ouvert parce qu'en fréquentant en Anglais, on parlait plutôt le Français quand on sortait de l'école, tu vois un peu. A propos de l'école, c'est l'anglais mais quand on sort hors de l'école c'est le français tu vois un peu. Il fallait réfléchir beaucoup. Ca fait ton cerveau de marcher...
- Interviewer:** C'était quelle école encore?
- Solo:** École, actually, Lycée Bilingue de Bafoussam.
- Interviewer:** Ok. Tu pense que quand tu vas rentre au pays tu vas changer la manière d'exprimer, donc, la manière donc tu parle
- Solo:** Non, pourquoi je vais changer. Ce que ça va étonner les gens, c'est que ma manier de réfléchi va changer parce que maintenant la, j'ai étudié au grand niveau et ...
- Interviewer:** Parce que ici = =

- Solo:** = = ça va beaucoup changer
- Interviewer:** Et tu ne vas pas...
- Solo:** Même moi-même j'ai change parce que je n'étais pas comme ca. Quand mes frères viennent ici, si je ne dis pas que c'est moi il ne peut pas croire
- Interviewer:** Tu as change comment?
- Solo:** Beaucoup même. C'est parce que tu ne sais pas comment j'étais. J'étais mince, du petit corps, très petit même, je n'étais pas comme ca
- Interviewer:** Donc tu aime- la nourriture d'ici te fais grandir quoi ?
- Solo:** (Laughs) c'est n'est pas la nourriture d'ici. C'est parce que ici tu vie en stabilite, tu ne pense pas. Tous c'est n'est pas la nourri...
- Interviewer:** Donc tu
- Solo:** (Responding to greeting from some one in CPE) yeah good afternoon grand. I dey.
- Interviewer:** (Responding to greetings) good afternoon (?) ya name again?
- Solo:** (Laughs and whispers in CPE) Na uncle (Name)
- Interviewer:** Uncle Jimmy, comeout you want hide ya name (laughs) Na how? Okay oh
- Uncle (Name)** I well, okay
- Solo:** Tu sais que quand tu pense, ton cerveau est en train de bouger. Tu perds le sang beaucoup. Tu ne peux pas gagner le poids.
- Interviewer:** Et au Cameroun tu pensais de quoi ?
- Solo:** Au Cameroun, tu vois, la famille est pauvre, tous ca toi-même tu pense comment demain il faut que car même ta famille est un peu évolué mais quand tu viens ici, tu vois une fois la route, tu vois.
- Interviewer:** Donc je voulais vraiment savoir quand tu va rentrer, ta manier de parler, de t'exprimer ne vas pas change ?
- Solo:** Non, je vais parler toujours comme je parle
- Interviewer:** Et ici, tu parle toujours les langues comme le Franglais, l'anglais



- le Française, pidgin ?
- Solo:** Comme je parlais, oui. Quand je rencontre mes frères, mes frères Francophones amies -je parle le Franglais
- Interviewer:** Et le Bamiléké, tu parle toujours ?
- Solo:** Oui, quand je raconte les Bamilékés
- Interviewer:** Tu parle toujours?
- Solo:** Oui
- Interviewer:** Ah donc rien n'a change ? Tu es toujours comme au pays?
- Solo:** Oui je suis tou... ==
- Interviewer:** Et les reunion, tu frequente les reunions d'ici ?
- Solo:** Je fréquente mais quand je ne suis pas occuper puisque souvent je suis trop occupé et je ne fréquente pas.
- Interviewer:** D'accord. Quand tu n'es pas occupe, c'est quelle réunion que tu fréquente ?
- Solo:** On a une réunion ici, Parow Association
- Interviewer:** Toujours - seulement ça?
- Solo:** Oui.
- Interviewer:** D'accord. Tu ne fréquente pas CANOWACAT et Mifi Association?
- Solo:** Non. Tu sais que je n'ai pas le temps et le peu d'argent que je gagne, et les réunions la il faut payer le transport, allez retour et tous ça, et tu sais que j'ai un enfant, je suis marrie. J'ai un enfant. J'ai un enfant avec une Sud Africaine
- Interviewer:** Okay c'est bien ça
- Solo:** Oui et je prends soin de mon enfant. Je n'ai pas le temps de faire ca
- Interviewer:** Et le Nord, er non, le Cameroun Association pour tous les Camerounais – c'est un fois par mois, est-ce que tu y vas ?
- Solo:** Souvent je vais tu comprends. Je t'ai dis que souvent je vais tu comprends. C'est parce que je n'ai pas de temps. Ca dépend de temps
- Interviewer:** Ok

## *Negotiation of Identities and Language Practices*

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- Solo:** Mais tu sais, les habitudes des Camerounais c'est parce qu'ils patent seulement pour aller boire. Ils ne disent rien d'important et c'est ce qui m'énerve
- Interviewer:** Souvent quand tu parts n'est pas, tu mélange, tu change d'une langue a l'autre ?
- Solo:** Oui, je mélange. Quand je vois un frère Anglophone, on se salue en anglais et quand je vois un frère Francophone, on se salue en française
- Interviewer:** Non, je dis - quand je dis mélange n'est pas, donc on est en train de parler française, tu parle française, tu mélange avec l'anglais ?
- Solo:** Oui, je mélange parce que souvent, il y a souvent les Arancophones qui sont dans les réunions Anglophones, quand on parle l'anglais ils ne comprennent pas bien, donc il faut mélanger pour qu'ils comprennent. Ce qu'on dit comment ça va, ce que on est entrain de suivent (?)
- Interviewer:** Okay, merci beaucoup