

**Stylisation of identities in online discourses related to *The Spear*
on Sowetan LIVE**

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ABSTRACT

STYLISATION OF IDENTITIES IN ONLINE DISCOURSES RELATED TO *THE SPEAR* ON SOWETAN LIVE

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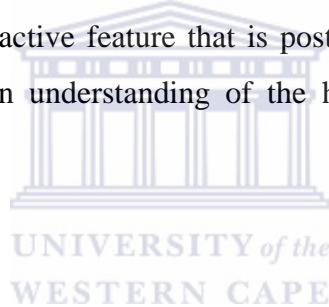
This study focuses on a story featured on Sowetan LIVE, one of South Africa's online newspapers. The flexibility of the mode in which the newspaper is produced, enables users to comment on its articles as they are published. The online newspaper was preferred due to its socio-political history and the huge South African audience it seems to attract. This study looks at one particular story which appeared on Sowetan LIVE and generated much interest in South Africa. The story is about a painting depicting President Jacob Zuma with his genitals exposed, termed *The Spear* by Brett Murray. This painting triggered a high volume of comments and engagement among South Africans on the Sowetan LIVE website, making it a valuable resource of online discourse. Therefore, this study explored comments in response to the two articles published on the Sowetan LIVE namely, "*ANC takes battle of The Spear to court*" and "*Will Zuma's spear stay up?*" which when combined, 'generated' 1358 comments. This study particularly investigates the identities that emerged from the discourses found in the data and analyses the type of linguistic practices evident in the comments. In this regard, the main objective of the study is not only to determine how users style their social identities, but also their 'linguistic' ones during online interactions.

In terms of social identities, the findings illustrate a distinction between traditional and modern identities 'represented' by Jacob Zuma and Brett Murray, respectively. However, although a distinction is evident, contradictions exist among the respective identities which feed back into the notion of identity as performative and fluid. In this way, the study reveals that the identities emanating from these discourses provide a glance at South Africa's intricate identity 'battle', a 'battle' which is no longer solely based on race or collective identity, but more on the creation of new identities and perceptions based on traditional ones or a complete divorce of traditional identities.

With regards to linguistic identity, the findings indicate that hybrid linguistic practices are a norm among the participants. This is because all participants employ netspeak features such

as phonetic spellings, letter / number homophones and creative use of punctuation / capitalisation for emphasis or stress. Interestingly, although netspeak is evident from the findings common in online linguistic practices, this study has found that the use of such features is not random. This is so because participants tend to strategically fuse these features into the linguistic practices as a means to avoid censorship. This fusion and, ultimately, censorship avoidance strategies, rely on the re-purposing of semiotic resources. In this vein, the most used censorship avoidance strategies in the study are discussed and analysed in terms of context and the discourses that inform them. Furthermore, upon analysing the usernames and avatars selected by participants as part of identity construction, the findings demonstrate that these are used as an extension of the participants' identities.

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the South African youth's identity and their perception of identity itself is in flux – 'norms' are constantly being re-invented. In essence, this study adds to an understanding of how historical material is re-purposed through an exploration of an online interactive feature that is posting of comments on an article of interest. It also contributes to an understanding of the hybrid nature of online linguistic practices.



DECLARATION

I declare that *Stylisation of identities in online discourses related to The Spear on Sowetan LIVE* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Lorato Mokwena

November 2014

Signed:



Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late little sister, Oratile Leandri Mokwena. Thank you for being my hero!



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To my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I never would have made it without You. At times when I had lost all hope and with no one left to run to, You remained my pillar of strength. I can truly testify that Your strength is perfect. Thank You for Your mercy, grace and endless blessings.

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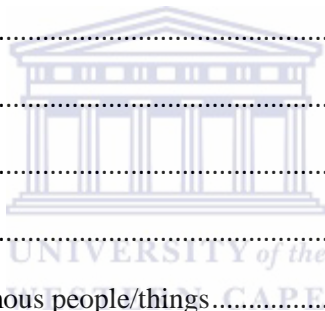


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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study entitled: stylisation of identities in online discourses related to *The Spear* on Sowetan LIVE. The study examines the linguistic practices in the comments on two Sowetan LIVE articles in relation to the highly controversial painting, *The Spear*: “ANC takes battle of The Spear to court” and “Will Zuma’s spear stay up”. Additionally, the study will explore the discourses embedded in these comments that illustrate the stylisation of (South) African identities. Therefore, this chapter provides a brief background on Soweto, South African print and online newspapers, Sowetan LIVE, and Jacob Zuma. Furthermore,



the chapter outlines the rationale of the study as well as the specific objectives, hypotheses, research questions and the chapter outline.

1.1.1 The History of Soweto

According to Mandy (1984:173), “the name Soweto is an acronym for the South-Western Townships.” According to the official Soweto site, the establishment of Soweto is directly linked to the discovery of gold in 1885 as people; mostly Africans flocked to the city in search for employment. In addition, the creation of Soweto was a consequence of the removal of non-whites from urban areas. As stated by Mandy (1984:174), “in 1922 the Government Nature Affairs Commission observed that blacks were not by nature town dwellers and that their presence in towns created hygienic, economic and social problems of a considerable magnitude.” In the same year, the Stallard Commission suggested that blacks only be permitted into urban settings to assist the White man with labour and should depart immediately after rendering his services as urban areas were created by whites, for whites only (Mandy, 1984). Currently, according to the website South African Venues, Soweto has a population of over 2 million. According to Bonner and Segal (1998:31), Soweto came to be in the following order: In 1904, Klipspruit was created as the first African location, while Orlando East was created in 1932 to ensure that the central city became a White’s only area and to put an end to inter-racial slums in the city. In 1944, Jabavu

come to existence, followed by Moroka in 1948 – both were slums and Moroka was known as ‘Johannesburg’s shame’ due to the disturbing conditions people lived under. In 1954, Mofolo was born followed by Meadowlands, Dube and Diepkloof in 1955. In 1956, Soweto grew tremendously with the establishment of Molapo, Moletsane, Tladi, Dhlamini, Chiawelo, Zondi, Phiri, Mapetla, Jabulani and Naledi. The last stretch of growth occurred in 1958 with the birth of Emdeni, Senoane and Zola.

Regardless of the harsh circumstances Soweto residents were subjected to, they found ways to create a sense of belonging amongst each other, a way to support each other. They did so by creating stokvels, engaging in entertaining activities such as going to shebeens and watching soccer, particularly the Soweto Derby, which pitted the two Soweto soccer giants, Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs against each other to this day, and attending parties and weddings (Bonner & Segal, 1998). As stated by Bonner and Segal (1998:61) “the shebeens or ‘speakeasies’ provided havens from the harsh realities of daily life”. However, this sense of unity was soon wrecked by ethnic zoning. Ethnic zoning was enforced upon Soweto residents by the apartheid government which resulted in Soweto residents forcefully residing in houses and townships as dictated by their ethnicity. In addition, it was compulsory for children to attend schools of their ethnic origin (Bonner & Segal, 1998). Thus, Naledi, Mapetla, Tladi, Moletsane and Phiri were set aside for the Sotho- and Tswana-speaking people. Chiawelo was for the Tsonga- and Venda-speaking people while Dlamini, Senoane, Zola, Zondi, Jabulani, Emdeni and White City were for the Zulu and Xhosa Nguni-speakers” (Bonner & Segal, 1998:43). Soweto residents were aware of this ‘divide and conquer strategy’. As stated by one of the residents: “We did not know that one was this and the other was that. We were happy. We were a unit. But now, uh-uh. I think the government discovered that when we were one group, we danced to the same music but if they divided us they were able to control us” (cited in Bonner & Segal, 1998:44).

In terms of language practices in Soweto, Ntshangase (2002) states that in addition to the use of some standard African languages in Soweto, there was also another an emergent form of language that cut across the linguistic, political and ethnic divide which was forcefully created by the apartheid state (Ntshangase, 2002:407). This language is called *Iscamtho* which is derived from the Zulu word *ukuqamanda* which means to talk volubly (Ntshangase, 2002). According to Ntshangase (2002:407), “Iscamtho has strong leanings toward Zulu and Sotho: both of these influence the lexical base of Iscamtho even though there are social and

linguistic differences between them”. Furthermore, Iscamtho is said to constitute a significant marker of urban identity, particularly a Soweto one. In addition, Ntshangase (2002:407) argues that “iscamtho is a language that is used through another language – it has its own defining features, however it has no structure of its own since it relies heavily on the language structures of the languages from which it operates”.

Nonetheless, not everyone in Soweto uses *Iscamtho* to communicate. The language is generally said to be spoken by young males who were born there or who have resided long enough to have acquired its habits. Conversely, the females, adults of both sexes as well as new residents and hostel dwellers are not considered a perfect example of speakers of this language (Ntshangase, 2002).

According to Slabbert and Finlayson (2002), due to the ethnic diversity in townships, its residents desired not only their independence as individuals but also on their interdependence on others. At the same time, they also wanted ways in which they could rebel against “the restrictive laws and practices of apartheid” and one of the ways their desire was actualised was through language use. As stated by Slabbert and Finlayson (2002:237) “the strategy of switching codes is most often used as a form of accommodation rather than alienation.” In this vein, in the absence of a dominant language, people have had to learn each other’s languages in the townships. Thus, within these melting pots, no particular language has become dominant. Therefore, this is one of the unique linguistic aspects of townships in general - no single lingua franca has developed that serves the entire population, although one may still find in certain townships a regionally predominant language such as Zulu in Soweto (Slabbert & Finlayson, 2002).

From the description of Soweto, the township is portrayed as a residential area populated by mostly black people who have a sense of community and belonging. Although residents are from various parts of the country or world and therefore share various ethnic backgrounds, they consciously employ linguistic accommodation strategies such code-switching and *iscamtho* to cut across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

It is from this township SOWETO that the newspaper, Sowetan took its name. Based on the title of the publication and initial audience, it can be assumed that the content was tailored to appeal to Soweto residents and their circumstances. As stated earlier, upon its establishment the newspaper was only distributed to Soweto once every week. In this sense, Sowetan LIVE

(more specifically the blogging/comment section) appears to be a representation of Soweto and its people in that the majority of the bloggers/commenters, that is, participants, are black. The bloggers from part of different ethnic groups yet they share a common strategy on how to ensure linguistic and cultural hybridity which entails inclusiveness on the website.

1.1.2 South African Print, Online Newspapers and Sowetan LIVE

According to Media Club South Africa (online), South Africa has 23 daily and 15 weekly major urban newspapers, and most of them are published in English. In addition, 14.5 million South Africans buy the urban dailies while community newspapers enjoy a circulation of 5.5 million. Most of these newspapers have an online version of the printed product, notable among them include the Sowetan LIVE, Independent Online, and The Mail and Guardian.

1.1.3 A brief background of the Sowetan Tabloid

The Sowetan, which is the printed version of Sowetan LIVE, is a South African daily newspaper that is published in English. It takes the format of a tabloid and it is aimed at an English literate Black readership. It was established in 1981 as a liberation struggle newspaper and filled the void left by the Post, which was deregistered by the apartheid government. Initially, the Sowetan was a weekly free sheet which was distributed in the Soweto Township of South Africa. According to Hadland, Louw, Sesanti and Wasserman (2008:172):

the Sowetan styled itself as a paper that articulated the opinions of the Black intelligentsia, as it was both psychologically and politically necessary, implicitly or explicitly, to rebut the White supremacist idea of blacks as stupid primitives, and one way of doing this was to engage at the level of ideas.

Furthermore, according to the Centre for Civil Society (2014), Sowetan was a struggle newspaper in its early days and it represented the lives and viewpoints of Black people under the yoke of apartheid. In this vein, the Sowetan, the oppressed people as well as the struggle were seen to be as one. It is in light of this that the Sowetan was a unique paper (Centre for Civil Society, 2014) – anyone who wanted an understanding of what Black people thought or were doing had to read The Sowetan. In addition, following the elections in 1994 and the achievement of political freedom accompanied by the ‘improvement’ of the lives of Black people, the Sowetan managed to adapt to this current scenario and the content of the

newspaper was equally improved in order to match the aspirations of the people in the new South Africa (Centre for Civil Society,2014). Clearly, the paper played a critical role in the liberation struggle during apartheid. This perhaps gives it the prominence it enjoys in present day South Africa.

According to Sowetan LIVE ¹Rate Card (2011), Sowetan LIVE, “the digital home of Sowetan” was launched in July 2010. The majority of Sowetan LIVE readers are male, standing at 61% and majority of these readers are aged between 25 – 34 years old. In terms of academic qualifications, 58% of the readers have a diploma, university degree or a postgraduate qualification; 58% of Sowetan LIVE readers speak Zulu, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xhosa, Xitshonga, Tshivhenda and Ndebele as a first language. With regard to demographics, 73.44% of Sowetan LIVE readers are black, 19.98% are white, 4.76% are coloured and 1,82% are Indian (Sowetan LIVE Rate Card, 2011). Based on this background, Sowetan is portrayed as a newspaper that has established itself as the mouthpiece of black people’s issues, more specifically, as a platform for black intellectuals to engage and reflect on critical matters that affect blacks and the country as a whole.

1.1.4 Jacob Zuma and *The Spear*

Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma is the current president of the Republic of South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC). According to the Mail and Guardian (2005), Zuma joined the ANC at the age of 17 in 1959 and, in 1962, he became a member of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation). In 1963, he was arrested with fellow *Umkhonto we Sizwe* recruits and then sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on Robben Island. After his release in 1973, he assisted in the re-establishment of ANC structures in the then Natal province. Due to the banning of the ANC by the apartheid government then, he left South Africa in 1976 and only officially returned in 1990 after the ban on the ANC was lifted. During that period, he became a member of the ANC national executive committee, the head of underground structures and then chief of the ANC intelligence department in Zambia. In 1991, Zuma was elected Deputy Secretary General of the ANC and in 1994, he was elected the national chairperson for the ANC and chairperson of the ANC for the Kwazulu-Natal province. In 1997, Zuma was elected as the deputy president of the ANC and in 1999; he was appointed

¹ A Rate Card is a document published by a media outlet that contains information such as prices for advertising, readers’ demographics, policies and so forth.

Executive Deputy President of South Africa. In 2009, he was elected the third democratic president of South Africa.

However, Zuma's political career has faced many challenges, ranging from private to public. For example, in 2001, corruption charges were laid against him regarding the 1999 arms deal controversy but these charges were eventually dropped due to insufficient evidence (Mail & Guardian, 2005). In 2005, the arms-deal saga re-surfaced after Zuma's financial advisor, Shabir Shaik, was convicted of corruption for taking a bribe in connection with the arms deal. In December 2005, Zuma was charged with raping his daughter's friend, the child of a fellow comrade. Although he was found not guilty, he is still heavily criticised for knowingly engaging in sexual intercourse with an HIV-positive woman without protection, especially since he is the leader of the country with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world (AIDS Foundation of South Africa, 2014). Besides his legal anguishes, Zuma is also known for being a polygamist (as permitted by his Zulu culture). Presently, Zuma has four wives and 23 children. In 2010, Zuma shocked the country by confirming that he had an extra-marital relationship, as well as conceived a lovechild with Sonono Khoza (41), daughter of soccer mogul and his long-term friend, Irvin Khoza.

In May 2012, Brett Murray, a Cape Town-based South African artist, displayed a painting dubbed *The Spear* at Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg. This artwork depicts Jacob Zuma with his genitals exposed. It is understood that the inspiration for the painting was drawn from the Victor Ivanov poster *Lenin Lived, Lenin is Alive, Lenin Will Live*. On the 22nd of May 2012, the painting was defaced. This controversial painting sparked numerous reactions including a defamation suit against Brett Murray by the ANC and an ANC-led march to the Goodman Gallery on the 29th of May 2012. It is the controversy surrounding this painting as reported on online media that this study focuses on. In particular, the study focuses on the discourses as expressed in comments on the story.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Spear caused a stir not only among the ANC and the Zuma household, but in South Africa as a whole. The controversy brought about by *The Spear* is noted in the two articles that this study focuses on, which attracted a combined 1358 comments from users. This is a clear indication that the painting struck a nerve and prompted South Africans to voice their perceptions. Within these perceptions/comments are embedded the discourses, attitudes and

identities that form part of the South African society. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to conduct a multi-semiotic analysis of the two articles in order to explore the stylisation of gendered, traditional, modern and hybrid identities in the contributors' discourses. Specifically, this study intends to show how language is truly a social practice and how it continuously changes based on lived moments in our socio-historical context.

1.3 Rationale

Online newspaper sites are one of the various modern media through which people are encouraged to share their thoughts on particular stories. In addition, unlike the orthodox manner of responding to newspaper articles by writing a letter to the editor, in online publications, the participants are granted the opportunity to create a username and upload profile pictures and other images and interact in real time. By analysing how language and other semiotic resources are used on Sowetan LIVE, this study aims to explore how the participants are using this platform to create multiple identities instead of accepting the identity the newspaper wishes to ascribe to them. By exploring how these participants use Sowetan LIVE to style their identities, this study will contribute to the "discussion of online news audiences' use of interactive features" which Chung (2008: 663) states are "almost completely absent in the literature".

A youth is described as anyone between the ages of 14 and 35 (National Youth Policy, South Africa, 2009). As stated earlier, most of Sowetan LIVE readers are between the ages of 25 and 34, yet there is little known about their media consumption practices. According to Strelitz (2005:56), "the area of media consumption by youth is under-researched worldwide. In particular, there is a paucity of theoretically informed qualitative research on youth and their media consumption practices." Strelitz (2005:56) cites Mkhasibe who states that there is "a general lack of knowledge about South African youth". Consequently, this study inevitably contributes to literature about the youth, and more specifically their linguistic practices and the implications of such practices on identities. In addition, by analysing the language practices of Sowetan LIVE readers, this study establishes whether, in fact, there is a "deliberate effort on the part of some speakers, particularly the youth, to distance themselves from the standard" and whether the use of language evident in the comments on Sowetan LIVE qualify as "innovative strategies for harmonising resources from different languages to build a pan-ethnic, urban identity" (Makoni, Smitherman, Ball & Spears, 2003:138).

Moreover, by analysing the linguistic practices of the participants, this study will contribute knowledge towards the *disinvention* project. This project, as advanced by Makoni (2003), is aimed at disinventing African languages which were ‘invented’ by missionaries and colonialists for their own convenience. Aptly stated: “the major objective of *disinvention* is to undo history, or at the very least, to contain it by disinventing languages so that when they are reconstructed they correspond more closely to actual linguistic boundaries” (Makoni, Smitherman, Ball and Spears, 2003:148). Thus, following the idea of *disinvention*, the current study recognises that since languages are socially constructed, they can also be socially reconstructed and deconstructed. In light of this, Makoni (2003:148) adds that “South African media are likely to prove to be one of the most powerful agents through which *disinvention* takes place”. It is for this reason that Sowetan LIVE as a site of study was chosen, given the fact that it is representative of the South African media, including the political, economic and socio-historical contexts surrounding it.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore how the linguistic practices used on the Sowetan LIVE site, in particular, discourses which accompanied the two articles on *The Spear*, challenge traditional, subjective concepts such as language, spelling, language competency and so forth, as well as to explore the types of identities that emerge from these discourses and their implications.

1.5 Specific Objectives

- To investigate urban hybrids and argots (vernaculars) as *linguae francae* and social practice in online “conversations” on Sowetan LIVE website.
- To analyse the linguistic practices of the bloggers/commenters as a way to determine how they contribute towards the *disinvention* project, that is, the question of what we think language is and decentring the “standard” language.
- To explore how development in media technologies (such as the use of keyboards, textese and new computer literacies) have impacted on the reconstitution of language.
- To find out what the identities that emerge from the text inform us about the perceptions of the South African youth on language and culture.
- To explore the interconnection between the traditional and modern identity options through the lens of comments on *The Spear*.

1.6 Research Questions

- How are urban hybrids and vernaculars used as *linguae francae* and social practice in online “conversations” on Sowetan LIVE?
- Do the linguistic practices of the commenters feed into the *disinvention* project, that is, the question of what we think language is and decentring the “standard” language?
- Has the development in media technologies influenced the reconstitution of language?
- What do the identities that emerge from the text tell us about the perceptions of the South African youth are on language and culture?
- Is there an interconnection between traditional and modern identity options as observed through the lens comments on *The Spear*?

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter One provides the background to the study by focusing on the history of Soweto from which Sowetan LIVE is derived. It also presents a brief history of newspapers and online media before looking at Jacob Zuma and *The Spear*.

Chapter Two opens with factual information on *Hail to the Thief* and *The Spear*. The rest of the literature review is divided into the following sections: Language and Identity in South Africa, Tradition and Modernity, Masculinity, Racism and the South African governance system.

Chapter Three outlines the Theoretical and Analytic framework that this study is situated in.

Chapter Four provides the Methodology which is informed by a qualitative research design. This chapter provides details on the population and sample, data collection and analysis methods and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five focuses on an analysis on the stylisation, construction and reconstitution of (South) African identities guided by the discourses that arose from the data.

Chapter Six discusses the *disinvention* and reconstitution of language based on the analysis of the linguistic practices by drawing on concepts such as resemiotisation, semiotic remediation, languaging and so forth.

Chapter Seven elicits the conclusions from the above-mentioned analyses.



CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and discusses literature related to the study. It commences with a brief factual background on *Hail to the Thief* exhibition and *The Spear* in a bid to contextualise the study. The rest of the literature is categorised according to the following four sections: (1) language and identity in (South) Africa; (2) Masculinity, which includes literature on Black Bodies and science, (3) Racism and lastly (4) the South African governance system.

2.2 *Hail to the Thief*

Although *The Spear* was ‘strategically’ singled out and unfortunately decontextualised, it forms part of a series of art pieces exhibited by the artist, Brett Murray, titled *Hail to the Thief II*, during May 2012 at Goodman Gallery. According to the Goodman Gallery’s website, *Hail to the Thief II*’s “body of satirical work continues his (Murray’s) acerbic attacks on abuses of power, corruption and political dumbness seen in his 2010 Cape Town show *Hail to the Thief*”.

Hail to the Thief (an umbrella term for both exhibitions) “uses the populist imagery and language currently in fashion with the present powers to mock and goad” (Jolly, 2010). Additionally, Jolly (2010) argues that “Murray’s bronzes, etchings, paintings and silk-screens form part of a vitriolic and succinct disapproval of bad governance and are his attempts to humorously expose the lack of morals and greed within the ruling elite.”

At its core, the *Hail to the Thief* exhibition is a comment on corruption among the star-studded firmament of our current leaders (Jolly, 2010). “By invoking Soviet kitsch, bling and memorabilia it provides a chic, sharp criticism of the powers that be, all stylistically colour-coded in revolutionary red and Black, with lots and lots of gold” (Jolly, 2010:x). Interestingly, these ‘revolutionary’ colours, that is, red, black and gold, are the colours represented in the flags of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Furthermore, the Soviet Union flag was predominantly red with the iconic gold sickle and hammer emblem - an emblem that SACP also have on their flag.

2.2.1 *The Spear*

Murray's decision to name such a controversial painting *The Spear* is not coincidental. *The Spear* has significant symbolic meaning to the ANC. Below is a brief discussion.

2.2.1.1 *The Spear and the African National Congress*

A spear paired with a shield form part of the ANC's logo. In this vein, according to the ANC's website, *The Spear* and shield represent the early wars of resistance to colonial rule, the aimed struggle of the ANC's former armed wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, and the ANC's ongoing struggle against racial privilege and oppression.

2.2.1.2 *The Spear and Umkhonto we Sizwe*

As stated on the ANC's website, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) was the ANC's former armed resistance movement. The logo of this organisation was a warrior holding an assegai (long spear) with a shield and appears to be in battle. According to Sithole (2009), on 16 December 1838, the Zulu army, under the leadership of King Dingane ka Senzangakhona, engaged in an aggressive battle against the Boers who were trespassing on their land near the Ncome River. This battle, also known as the battle of Blood River, was won by the Boers and they went on to celebrate this day as victory over the Zulu's.

The ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), however, promoted counter commemorations of Ncome and quoted 16 December as a historic incident on the liberation highlights, and more specifically when encouraging protests against white domination (Sithole, 2009). It is in this regard that "the Ncome episode thus symbolised a turning point in which a new generation of militant cadres picked up their spears and died fighting Boer colonialism" (Sithole, 2009:323). On 16 December 1961, the ANC launched its armed wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) and according to Sithole (2009:323), "the first MK combatants to launch operations testified in interviews in the late 1990's that they saw themselves as seizing the spears (imikhonto) of their fallen Zulu comrades to free modern South Africa".

2.3 Language and Identity in (South) Africa

2.3.1 Language and Ethnicity

In South Africa, there is a strong link between ethnicity and identity and this link can be attributed to the apartheid area. For example, in South Africa, it is common for people to directly link the names of ethnic groups, that is, Xhosa, Ndebele, Setswana, and so on, to particular indigenous languages. According to Makoni (2003:14), the perceptions about language and ethnicity in the South African Constitution are based on “boxed” notions of language and ethnicity that can be traced back to the eighteenth-century German Romanticists who “treated territory, constructions of race and conceptualisations of language as identical and indivisible”. Moreover, according to German Romanticism, “language and identity/ethnicity were indistinguishable, with language considered to be the most powerful index of social identity” (Makoni, 2003:140). Based on this, it is normally (wrongfully) assumed that if you speak Xhosa, you form part of the Xhosa ethnic group, for example, amaXhosa speak Xhosa. This link also extends to geographic locations, for example, if you are from the North West of South Africa, it is assumed that you are able to speak Setswana and consequently form part of that ethnic group. As stated by Cameron (2001:161), “language using is among the social practices through which people assert their identities – who they are or take themselves to be – and distinguish themselves from others, who different”. Additionally, Nelson Mandela argues that ²“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart.” Once again Mandela’s quote emphasises the crucial link between one’s mother tongue and identity – it provides a sense of belonging.

According to Bekker, Dodds and Khosa (2001:141), language played the central role in the (apartheid government’s) conceptualisation of Bantu or black “nations” and “Black South Africans were identified and categorised in terms of so-called language groups”. Prah (2007) provides a picture of the homelands and the languages spoken in them: Transkei and Ciskei was pre-dominantly Xhosa; Bophuthatswana was home to Tswana speaking black South Africans; Venda was reserved for Venda speaking individuals; Kwazulu for Zulu speakers and KwaNdebele for black South African Ndebele speakers. Today, after almost 18 years of democracy, such divides among languages and ethnic groups still exist within the nine

² Quote available from:

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/n/nelsonmand121685.html>

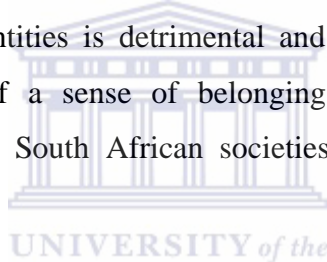
provinces of South Africa. In this case, apartheid helped to enforce and prescribe particular racial and language-based identities. These are what Bekker *et al.* (2001: 149) call “given” identities. Such identities are often based on stereotypes. For instance, in Cape Town, attributes such as a light complexion, fluency in Afrikaans and natural silky hair, are often associated with a “coloured” person which is not always the case.

2.3.2 Identity Construction and Power

Mamdani (2001) writes about the construction of political identities. He argues that political identities are a direct consequence of the history of state formation, for example, colonialism, apartheid and post-apartheid in the South African context. Considering that politics is about power, that is, who is in control of decision making, resources, policies and so forth, and based on who holds the power, a country’s political identities will be structured accordingly. Mamdani (2001:22) continues to argue that “the organisation of power not only defines the parameters of the political community, telling us who is included and who is left out, it also differentiates the bounded political community internally.” This is supported by Ferris, Peck and Banda (2014), who argue that the history of South Africa (politically motivated groupings and categorisation) serves as an example of how power played a significant role in the identity options people could occupy. These distinctions are made by acknowledging different kinds of identities in law. Thus, “it is identities so acknowledged in law – and thus legally enforced – that form the basis of different political identities” (Mamdani, 2005:22). The consequence of these constructions and the starting point of the struggle is that “legally inscribed and legally enforced, these identities shape our relationship to the state and to one another through the state”. South Africa serves as a good example for the implementation of Mamdani’s theory of the construction of political identities: upon the colonisation of South Africa, the colonisers (the power bearers at the time) decided who was included (i.e. civilised), and those who were excluded (non-civilised) and rights were granted based on this differentiation. During apartheid, the National Party (NP) legalised the notion of different races/identities, that is, white, black, coloured and Indian. Various Acts and Laws were enforced to ensure the separate and unequal ‘development’ of these identities. Even though the current state is attempting to distance itself from political identities by promoting the ‘Rainbow Nation’, post-apartheid South Africa largely inherited the identities of apartheid South Africa (black, coloured, white, and Indian), in that the organisation of power has changed but the legally inscribed and enforcement of political identities, for instance, Black

Economic Empowerment, Boeremag, continue to shape the relation between various political identities.

According to Mamdani (2001) every state form creates political identities through two political markers, namely race and ethnicity, characterised by the use of direct and indirect rule. Mamdani (2001:23) states that “direct rule tends to generate race-based political identities, Black and White. Indirect rule, in contrast, tends to mitigate the (Black-White) dialectic by fracturing the race consciousness of natives into multiple and separate ethnic consciousness”. The use of direct and indirect rule forms part of South Africa’s history: the division according to races was not effective as a single racialised mass (for example, blacks) remained united as a race. The introduction of indirect rule thus slices a single race according to ethnicities, for instance, Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana and so forth. Thus, although one is black based on her ethnic identity, for example, Tswana, one might not associate herself with a black Xhosa due to possible ethnic clashes. Evidently, the use of direct and indirect rule in the construction of political identities is detrimental and oppressive, especially to blacks, irrespective of the provision of a sense of belonging. The negative effects of these constructions are still visible in South African societies that continue to be fragmented according to race and ethnicity.



Similar to Mamdani’s arguments regarding political identities and power, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:21) also explore the relationship between identity and power. They distinguish between three identities: Imposed, Assumed and Negotiable. Imposed identities refer to those identities individuals do not have the ability to challenge at a particular point in time. Negotiable identities refer to identity options individuals or groups can argue against whereas Assumed identities refer to identities that individuals are at ease with and find it undesirable to contest. Furthermore, Blommaert (2005) states that people’s identities are based on the signs they produce. In other words, identity is semiotic. Thus when we make an act of identity we are also saying something about ourselves. For Blommaert, this means that identity is not static - it is performed in acts of interaction. Thus, Blommaert’s (2005) view is similar to Butler’s notion of performativity of identity. Blommaert (2005:205) further states that “people don’t have an identity, but that identities are constructed in practices that produce, enact or perform identity - identity is identification, an outcome of socially conditioned semiotic work”. In addition, Blommaert (2005) argues that the meaning and

categorisations of the signs given off as identity signals is a dialogical practice – “in order for an identity to be established, it has to be recognised by others” (Blommaert, 2005:205).

In analysing how identities are shaped, produced and negotiated, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) adopt the ‘positioning theory’ as suggested by Davies and Harre (1990) and Harre and van Langenhove (1999). According to Davies and Harre (1990:48), as cited in Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:20), positioning “is the process by which selves are located in conversation as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines, informed by particular discourses.” Interactive positioning refers to when one individual locates another individual and reflective positioning describes the process where one locates oneself in a conversation (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) comment on how different pieces of various identities, genders and races can break away (fragmentation) and form new hybrid identities and linguistic repertoires. According to Bhabha (1990), cited in Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:16), this hybridity is considered the ‘third space’ which “enables the appearance of new and alternative identity options.” In addition, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) state that linguistic innovation could also be a way to negotiate one’s identity and the creation of this ‘third space’.

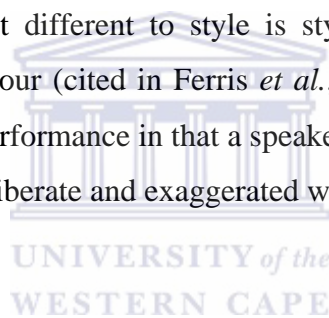
2.3.3 Style

A strong link exists between style and identity. As argued by Ferris, Peck and Banda (2014: 414), “more recently the notion of style has been used in the study of identities where style is seen as an active process involving the crafting of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements in particular recognisable ways”. Fairclough (2003: 26) adds that style can be described as a “way of using language as a resource for self-identifying”. Van Leeuwen (2005), in agreement with Fairclough (2003), describes style as the manner in which people use semiotic resources to perform ‘genres’ and to express their identities and values in doing so. Consequently, one’s manner of self-identification alters depending on the linguistic resources one draws on. Moreover, one’s manner of self-identifying is partially personal as it is influenced by one’s background, that is, gender, race, class, age, financial status and so forth. Hence, Coupland (2007:3) argues that “rather than viewing language style in structural sociolinguistic terms, an understanding of language style as a social practice” grants us a better chance of articulating the lived social world of meaning-making through language (cited in Pennycook, 2007:122).

Moreover, Fairclough (2003:162) argues that styles are actualised in a variety of linguistic features. Firstly, styles are realised through phonological features, that is, pronunciation, intonation, stress and rhythm. Secondly, style can be actualised through vocabulary and metaphor. Style also involves interplay between language and body-language, meaning that style has a verbal and non-verbal aspect.

According to van Leeuwen (2005) there are three types of styles: individual style, social style and lifestyle. Individual style focuses on individual difference and this kind of style is about doing it your way. Social styles are constructed by social factors outside our control such as one's gender, class and age. For example, at the age of four, a toddler is expected to act in a certain way socially, for example, attend pre-school, play with toys and so forth. Lastly, lifestyle is a combination of social and individual style – being dressed is a social style but the individual decides what to wear.

Another term closely related yet different to style is stylisation. According to Coupland (2004), style is a form of behaviour (cited in Ferris *et al.*, 2014: 416) while stylisation is a deliberate, conscious, strategic performance in that a speaker may draw on a particular way of speaking or behaving in quite deliberate and exaggerated way for some desired effect” (Ferris *et al.*, 2014: 415).



2.3.4 Tradition and Modernity

The South African identity and consequently the identity of its citizens has been shaped by various changes in societal norms, especially tradition and modernity. Although tradition and modernity are both models of social change and ultimately whose existence practically relies on the other, i.e. modernity was born from tradition, these two models continue to be sharply polarised with ‘clear’ distinctions meant to maintain permanent dichotomy (Eisenstadt, 1973).

A tradition is defined as “a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). In simple terms then, a traditional society repeats specific norms and beliefs as preordained by generations before them and to a certain extent, these unquestioned repetitive practices have sentimental value as they ultimately define them as a society. As stated by Giddens (1990:105), “tradition is routine. But it is routine which is intrinsically meaningful, rather than merely empty habit for habit’s sake.”

In terms of societal attributes, “traditional societies were depicted as static, with little differentiation or specialisation, a predominance of mechanical division of labour, a low level of urbanisation and literacy and a strong agrarian basis as its main focus on population” (Eisenstadt, 1973:10). Politically, traditional societies were “depicted as based on traditional elites ruling by some mandate of Heaven” (Eisenstadt, 1973:10). Eisenstadt (1973) adds that traditional societies were conceived as tied by the cultural horizons set by its tradition and therefore limited freedom was available.

Giddens (1990:1) defines modernity as the “the modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence”. Modern life to a large extent replaced traditional types of social order. For Giddens (1990), the transformations evoked and followed by modernity can be experienced on both an extensional and intensional level – extensionally, modernity led to the creation of forms of social interconnection which is worldwide. Intensionally, modernity has transformed some of our most intimate and personal features of our everyday existence.

Eisenstadt (1973:10) points out that in terms of societal characteristics, “modern societies were seen as possessing a very high level of differentiation, a high degree of organic division of labour specialisation, urbanisation, literacy and exposure to mass media and imbued with a continuous drive toward progress.” In the political realm, modern societies are based on wide participation of the masses, who did not accept traditional legitimation of the rulers and held these rulers accountable in terms of secular values of justice, freedom and efficiency.

A link exists between modernity and colonialism - when Western colonisers infiltrated colonies, they introduced ‘civilisation’ (modern ways of being) to the uncivilised (traditionalists). Mamdani (2001:24) argues that “from the outset, modern Western colonialism presented itself as a civilising project – the Western colonial project was no less than to wipe clean the civilisational slate as to introduce Western norms through Western law; modernisation would have to be Westernisation”.

However, Giddens (1990) argues that the division between tradition and modernity is not always that cut and dry as there continues to be traces of tradition in our modern life. He aptly states that “there are continuities between the traditional and the modern, and neither is

cut of whole cloth; it is well known how misleading it can be to contrast these two in too gross a fashion” (Giddens, 1990:4).

2.4 Masculinity

2.4.1. Definition of Masculinity

The need to comprehend the notion of masculinity is critical to this study. Below follows an exploration of the current definition and characteristics associated with masculinity; masculinity in South African; and the link between masculinity and sex.

The concept of masculinity and attributes typically associated with being ‘masculine’ are highly contested considering the various aspects that continue to re-shape masculinity itself. According to the Oxford Online Dictionary, masculinity can be defined as the “possession of the qualities associated with men”. For Horwitz and White (1987), stereotypical qualities associated with masculinity involve dominance, assertiveness, and independence. Morrel (2001:4), argues that men who uphold this stereotypically view of masculinity predominantly think that “women are nags, that women’s place is in the home or that women are to be heard, not seen”. According to Horwitz and White (1987), men who subscribe to this perception of masculinity stand a higher chance of being aggressive, will act out, and display antisocial behaviours. Based on the traits and behaviour associated with masculinity, masculinity has mostly been perceived negatively (Sweetman, 1997). In this case, men – whether they subscribed to this notion of masculinity or not – were always considered negatively. Men were the abusers, oppressors and the patriarchs (Reid & Walker, 2005); women, on the other hand, were considered victims who were helpless against this surge of dominance and power. From this viewpoint, it is evident that masculinity was perceived as a rigid concept and that all men acted and thought in the same manner.

Research based on men and masculinity has increased over the years and new theories that challenge this monolithic view of masculinity have since come forth. Critical to this paradigm shift in thinking was an article by Connell and Lee (1985) which introduced the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’. According to Ouzgane and Morrell (2005:4), “hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity that was dominant in society, established the cultural ideal for what it was to be a man, silenced other masculinities, and combated alternative visions of masculinity”. This form of conceptualisation became important as it showed that there is more than one type of masculinity, rejecting the idea that all men are the same. Such

work has enabled the shift from the concept of ‘masculinity’ in its singular form to the concept of ‘masculinities’ (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005).

2.4.2 Masculinity in South Africa

Due to South Africa’s ever-changing political, social and economic context, perceptions and constructions of masculinity in this country continues to fluctuate. According to Reid and Walker (2005), various scholars have emphasised the impact of colonialism and apartheid on men and the study of masculinity. Morrel (2001) argues that masculinity and violence have been paired together in South African history (cf. Reid & Walker, 2005). Morrel (2001) further suggests that the link between masculinity and violence was shaped by two pivotal experiences in the twentieth century, namely the workplace (specifically mining) and rural life. Rural life justified an extreme male-dominated system at all levels including chieftaincy and gendered division of household labour, while this male-domination ‘tendency’ was extended in African urban life where mostly the same men worked in mines.

The premise that colonialism and apartheid shaped masculinities of the past implies that South Africa’s transition into a democratic country wittingly or unwittingly unsettled and challenged existing masculinities. In a bid to create a non-racial and non-discriminatory South Africa and redress the inequalities of previous regimes, government policies and laws were established that especially affected masculinity and gender relations (Reid & Walker, 2005). The Constitution is at the forefront of this as it states that one of the values South Africa is founded on is non-sexism and that everyone in South Africa is equal and no individual should be discriminated against (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Furthermore, following the first democratic election, the ANC-led government created the Government of National Unity which resulted in 25% of the new parliament members being women. The ANC also used its parliamentary strength to head a strong gender campaign and in years to follow, the following organisations were established: Special Standing Committee on Women and the Women’s Empowerment Unit in parliament, as well as the Commission on Gender Equality (Morrel, 2001).

It was not merely the change in policies and laws that resulted in the instability in masculinity but also the change in leadership, specifically presidents. According to Morrel, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012), President Mandela signified a “new masculinity”. As stated by Morrel *et al.*, (2012:17), “his public representation challenged much of the violent and authoritarian

behaviours and attitudes associated with apartheid's White male politician, some elements within the liberation movement and the patriarchal, traditional African masculinities of Bantustan leaders." So although Mandela was educated, a celebrated freedom fighter and part of the royal family, he advocated for a more egalitarian masculinity in South Africa (Morrel *et al.* 2012). However, although Mandela was dearly revered and respected, his envisioned type of masculinity hardly found popular support among citizens as back then, the country was still extremely divided.

In 1999, President Mbeki took the reins and partially advanced part of Mandela's gender equity programme. Mbeki, however, was perceived as "aloof, dictatorial and bullying" (Morrel *et al.*, 2012: 17), which resulted in not only his personal support decreasing but also the new masculinity Mandela tried to advance. After Mbeki, a need existed for a leader who would understand the plight of the "ordinary man" – an everyday South African man whose perception was not clouded or diluted by education and understood challenges such as a 'broken' home, poverty and lack of formal education. This led to the appointment of President Zuma whose background did not include education or elitism – "he epitomised a rejection of a more thoughtful, egalitarian masculinities, rather asserting in the name of "tradition", a masculinity that was heterosexist, patriarchal, implicitly violent and that glorified ideas of male sexual entitlement, notably polygamy and conspicuous sexual success with women" (Morrel *et al.*, 2012: 17).

Due to the constant changes in perceptions on masculinity, South African men have reacted differently to such developments. According to Morrel (2001), these responses can be grouped into three categories namely: reactive or defensive, accommodating and responsive, or progressive. In the first category, that is, reactive, men respond by challenging these developments and attempt to reverse these changes in order to be dominant again. Examples of these defensive strategies included the establishment the South African Association of Men (SSAM) – an organisation aimed at 'rescuing' the white middle male after government was 'taken over' by black men and affirmative action was strongly implemented in the business sector (Morrel, 2001). Another example of a defensive strategy is the shocking increase in rape which various theorists have concluded is related to the assertion of dominance by men over women.

In the second strategy, men who responded by accommodating the changes did not entirely reject the 'old' masculinity but have explored 'new' ways of being (Morrel, 2001). An

example of this is traditional circumcision were older men coach initiates about the ideal manhood based on traits such as being responsible, respectful and wise – although older men might still transfer some of their traditional African masculinity, new ways of being are advocated for.

The last category is progressive responses, that is, for men who have completely emancipated themselves from ‘old’ masculinities (Morel, 2001). An example of this is the gay movement which was once on the periphery during apartheid but recently became vocal and visible, demanding acceptance not only of homosexuals but of a construction of masculinity.

Although Connel’s concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ encouraged and promoted the existence of various masculinities, Morrel *et al.*, (2012) proposes an extension of this concept to accommodate the South African context. They argue that in South Africa, there is a “Black urban, rural African and White hegemony, representing three different ideals of male behaviour, three different groups of men, and three different sets of gendered practice”. This means that within the black urban, rural African and white communities exist a dominant masculinity that is widely accepted and therefore oppresses other forms of masculinities.

2.4.2 Masculinity and Sex

Judging from the perspective that black men are unable to control their sexual urges and passions, that is, hypersexual, it comes as no surprise that theorists have observed a significant link between masculinity and sex. According to Ratele (2011), sex is an undeniable theme that controls the discourse of dominant masculinity. Ratele (2011:399) further argues that practically everywhere, “manliness is closely associated with our sexual partner(s), the sexual appeal of our partner(s), the size of penises, the claims men make about their sexual stamina, whether they can maintain a healthy erection and how virile they are.” Ratele’s perspective is also shared by Plummer (2005:178), who argues that male sexuality is seen as “powerful, natural, driven, it is uncontrollable, it is penis centred; it seeks to achieve orgasm whenever it can”.

Ratele (2011) deepens this argument by highlighting that research has shown that men who enthusiastically adhere to the aggressive structure of masculine heterosexuality relate with women in order to ‘fuck’ them. “It is not about making love. It is about possessing. The more women a man possesses (‘fucks’) and the more sought-after he appears in the eyes of other men, the more a ‘man’ he is” (Ratele, 2011:402). Moreover, Langa (2014) argues that based

on the positive appraisal of men who have multiple sexual partners, the construction of masculinity has become extremely phallogocentric. One strong link between masculinity and sex is that men create various arguments to constantly have sex and indulge their 'penises'. Some of these reasons include: (1) the perception that having several female partners is a characteristic of "African culture hence people should be free to practice their cultural norms; (2) The belief that sex with several partners can be compared to enjoying a varied diet – a man cannot be expected to eat the same plate of food every day; (3) The last reason is rooted in biology with men justifying their high level of sexual intercourse with their innate greater sexual need than women (Langa, 2014:22).

More intricate than the link between sex and masculinity, is the overwhelming association between the penis and masculinity (as pointed to earlier). According to Plummer (2005:176):

not only is the penis a man's source of sexual pleasure but it is also an enormously potent symbol. Engorged and erect, it is a sign of male power, assertion and achievement, a gun to conquer the world. But flaccid, it is also a sign of weakness, less active, no stamina, and no control. It cannot perform like a man.

Langa (2014) supports Plummer's view about the centrality of the penis with regards to masculinity. According to Langa (2014), to a large extent, a male's power in many African societies is based on a functional and active penis. An erected penis is supposedly the most important thing in men's lives – based on the strict obedience of erect penises, one would think the penis is the body and not a part of it (Langa, 2014).

In as much as masculinity is strongly related to the penis, the size of the penis plays a crucial role in determining the 'realness' of your manhood. Kilmartin (2000:215-216) observes that "Real men are ... described as having huge penises. ... In fact, the penis is sometimes described as 'his manhood'" (cited in Lever, Fredick & Peplau, 2006:129). Based on this perspective, it is logical why men might constantly be concerned about whether their penis is 'huge' enough and envious of those perceived to be bigger than his as such men are allegedly more of a man than he is. Penis envy is thus a reality most men experience – be it receiving the envy or being envious. Penis envy also refers to anxiety about penis size and size anxiety is very prominent among men (Nicholson, 1999). Nicholson (1999:450) argues that "size anxiety is inevitable in male-envious culture, where comparing competing, measurement, display and quantification are obsessive. This pre-occupation is not merely an anxiety, in fact, but a kind of doctrine".

This notion on penis envy thus explains why the Anglo-American culture during slavery had a love-hate relationship with the black man's penis. This is supported by Foster (2011:450) who argues that "Anglo-American culture long held a fascination with the penises of Black men and projected both desire and jealousy upon an objectified and disembodied Black phallus". Although the scientific research about the black man's anatomy was aimed at discrediting the humanness of the black man, adversely the research discredited the white males' level of manhood due to black men possessing bigger penises in comparison to their white counterparts. Consequently, irrespective of the dehumanising and cruel treatment blacks received at the hands of white men (e.g. slavery and apartheid), when it comes down to the crux of the matter for men with regards to their masculinity, manhood and sexuality, black men emerge as victorious.

2.4.3 Black bodies and 'Science'

In its simplest form, *The Spear* is a painting of a black man with his genitals exposed. As stated earlier, *The Spear* strongly resembles a Lenin painting – the critical difference is that with Lenin, his white man genitals are not exposed in the original painting. The question thus begs: Why would Zuma's version of the painting contain exposed genitals, is it pure sensationalism or is Murray conveying a deeper message? Below follows a discussion of the history of black bodies and the respective stigma attached to it.

The pre-occupation with black bodies extends, recognisably, from the eighteenth century by European scientists. According to Saint-Aubin (2002), eighteenth century science aimed to illustrate natural law by creating biological differences between different bodies and consequently using this natural law to explain differences between races and the civilised and the primitive. The underlying purpose of this 'scientific' project was not to describe different races or gender but rather as a means of social and political control. Black men and white women were targeted as they threatened white men with enfranchisement and consequently needed to be belittled (Saint-Aubin, 2002). This led to conclusions that "women and Black males had narrow, childlike skulls; both were innately impulsive, emotional and imitative. European women shared the ape-like jutting jaw of the lower races, while the males of the lower races had prominent bellies similar to those of Caucasian women who had born many children" (Saint-Aubin, 2002:24). Based on this description, it is evident that there was a conscious attempt to describe the white women and black men as weak, immature imitators incapable of being in power and hence needed to be controlled.

With the increased call for slavery to end in the 1830's - a call implicitly suggesting that blacks were humans deserving of certain human rights, slaveholders and anti-abolitionists were compelled to depend on 'scientific' theorising to prove that blacks were sub-humans (Saint-Aubin, 2002). Consequently, nineteenth century science aimed to demonstrate permanent racial lines separating black and white (Saint-Aubin, 2002) to uphold slavery and to enforce and extend white dominance. According to Saint-Aubin (2002), following research from physicians and scientists in the late nineteenth century, a general consensus existed about the different anatomy of black men. In one publication titled "The Negro Problem from the Physician's Point of View", the black male anatomy is described as "coarse, rude and asymmetrical. His hands and feet in particular identified him as a closer relative to the ape than to the European" (cited in Saint-Aubin, 2002: 33). Perceptions such as these enabled the beneficiaries of slavery to validate their ill-treatment of black people because based on this scientific reasoning, the anatomy of the black' man did not conform to the white standard and therefore they were automatically inferior. The theorising and perception of black men being closer to lower animals expanded into the sex anatomy of black males. One such theory is that of Dr Eugene Talbot whose research concluded the following: (1) In comparison to the Caucasian body, black male bodies matured quicker, implying that black boys experienced and engaged upon their sexual urges earlier; (2) The black man's mentally development stopped after puberty (Saint-Aubin, 2002) and as he reached sexual maturity faster than what his mental capability developed, he becomes a slave to this sexual urges; and (3) a contestation existed between body and reproductive organs (i.e. only one could grow and develop but not both simultaneously or equally) and with the black man, their reproductive organs came out victorious (Saint-Aubin, 2002). On account of these conclusions, the black man's worst enemy would be his uncontrollable sexual urges and he would surrender as he had limited mental ability. As black men were considered merely as sex obsessed creatures, a medical doctor, Dr Murrel concluded that black men had no morals and if instances occurred where a hint of morality could be detected, i.e. not responding to sexual impulses, it ought be considered merely as "a matter of convenience" or perhaps there was "a lack of desire or opportunity" to act on these sexually urges. Evidently, this suggested that: (1) the expression of sexual needs were perceived in a negative light; (2) black men were perceived as knowing nothing else other than sex, i.e. that was all they were good for and that they failed in achieving anything else. Therefore, it should come as no shock that Zuma keeps having affairs and accumulating more wives for that is all a black man is good for: sex. The mental capabilities to lead a country are not within Zuma's biological make up.

Another aspect of the black male anatomy that intrigued physicians was the black man's penis and its size. As this distinct feature was not shared by their white counterparts, this feature became associated with the black man's ape-like anatomy (Saint-Aubin, 2002).

2.5 Racism

Prejudice, discrimination and more particularly, racism, are undeniable characteristics of South Africa's history – from the Boer (South African) war, apartheid and to today's democratic South Africa. Apartheid is undoubtedly the era in pre-democratic South Africa whose legacy continues to haunt the country and part of this legacy is racism. According to Bryd (2011:1008), racism can be defined as “a multilevel system of oppression based on the social categories of races whereby the [perceived] superordinate group subordinates members of other racial groups using overt and covert methods among the individuals, institutions, organisations and patterns of interactions in society”.

During the apartheid era, racism in South Africa was institutionalised and legalised – various acts were established to ensure the segregated ‘development’ of various races. However, these acts and their implementation were solely beneficial for whites (superordinate group) and consequently oppressed subordinate groups (African, coloured and Indian). Although apartheid as a system was abolished twenty years ago, the beliefs of racial superiority/inferiority, the negative emotions associated with being oppressed or the oppressor and the endless memories (positive or negative) still linger among those who experienced the effects of this system. Racially motivated behaviour and thinking now takes the form of what is termed ‘new forms of racism’. This is succinctly put by Virtanen and Huddy (1998:311) who state that racism has evolved – from old “fashioned” or blatant racism to a new racism that is more “subtle, covert and gentler” (Bryd, 2011:1005).

2.5.1 The New Racism

According to Virtanen and Huddy (1998), there is confusion and lack of agreement about the precise definition of new racism and how it does or does not relate to old-fashioned racism. Irrespective of this dilemma, symbolic racism has emerged as a popular form of new/modern racism. Virtanen and Huddy (1998:312) define symbolic racism as “the resistance of Whites to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional White values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethics, obedience and discipline.” According to Bryd (2011:1011), the basic argument of symbolic racism is that: (1) racial

discrimination does not significantly impact the lives of black people [apartheid]; (2) black people are pushing their demands too much and too quickly; (3) such demands are unfair to whites; and (4) these demands are undeserved.

Another well-known form of covert racism is colour-blind racism as coined by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. According to Bonilla-Silva (2006:2), colour-blind racism is when “Whites rationalise minorities’ contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena and Blacks’ imputed cultural limitations”. Bryd (2011) argues that what’s distinct about colour-blind racism is the paradox of whites advocating support for racial equality while they might simultaneously and involuntarily support the continuing racial inequality and discrimination in society. According to Bryd (2011:1009), colour-blind racism contains four frames: (1) abstract liberalism; (2) naturalisation; (3) cultural racism; and (4) minimisation. Abstract liberalism uses political and economic liberalism to explain race related issues i.e. advocating for non-interference of government in terms of economic policies and the preservation of individual freedom and individual progress based on merit (Bryd, 2011). According to Bryd (2011), naturalisation argues that racial distinctions occur ‘naturally’ in societies and the need to have homogenous associations/networks is also ‘natural’ – it just happens that way. Cultural racism is based on victim blaming by identifying cultural aspects of blacks’ lives that appear ‘inferior’ to the white normative culture (Bryd, 2011). Lastly, minimisation emphasises that racism no longer plays a crucial role in influencing people’s lives (Bryd, 2011) – simply put, it does not happen because it is not supposed to happen.

2.6 South African Governance System

The criticism of Jacob Zuma launched via *The Spear* also indirectly attacks the African National Congress and ultimately SA’s political system. Although South Africa has a multiparty political system, the dominance of one party, that is, the ANC is undeniable. This reality of having a dominant party in a multiparty country has provoked endless debates regarding its implications for South Africa’s young democracy and ultimately the future of the country.

According to Southall (2005), the perception of the ANC as a dominant party stems from the obvious fact of its overwhelming popular majority and its evident strength at the polls. Giliomee (1998:128) suggest three criteria for identifying a dominant party: (1) electoral

dominance for a prolonged and uninterrupted period; (2) Dominance in the formation of government; and (3) Dominance in determining the public agenda.

Various arguments have been advanced against the 'existence' of a dominant party. According to Selfe (2004), dominant parties present the following challenges: (1) prolonged and unchallenged concentration of power leads to the abuse of power; (2) The presence of opposition parties as 'alternative governments' is the best means of keeping governments honest; (3) When one party holds an overwhelming majority and possibility of change is minimal, the ruling party no longer has to account for its failures and the slide to a one-party state begins; (4) Party dominance, which undermines parliament, renders the ruling party unaccountable (cited in Southall, 2005:64). Additionally, Southall (1998) argues that the challenge posed by a dominant party is the fact that it contradicts the notion of democracy as the exchange of power is crucial in the theory of democracy.

On the other hand, the dominance of one party is a necessity sometimes. Giliomee (1998:132) argues that "South Africa needs a dominant party to preserve stability, consolidate democracy, spur socioeconomic development, narrow class cleavages and contain populist pressures". Critics of the ANC as a dominant party hypothesis argue that: (1) Arguments about the dominant party essentially question what has been democratically decided and this partially suggests racism; (2) Electoral dominance does not imply that South Africa is undemocratic as citizens have a right to vote for the opposition; (3) The necessity for an exchange of power cannot be used as a basic test for democracy as the ANC cannot be blamed for its popularity; (4) The ANC governance is monitored by various constitutional institutions that support democracy and challenge and expose the ANC when relative; (5) The continued dwelling about the ANC as a dominant party, which undermines minority protections and interests, work against the notion of a common South African nationhood (Southall, 2005:65).

The response from the ANC leadership with regards to the hypothesis that the ANC is a dominant party varies. According to Southall (2005:62), in 2004, Thabo Mbeki, former ANC and South African president, responded that "the concept of party dominance was inherently conservative, and that even where it was not deployed directly in the interests of the DA, it served as a cover for white interests which have an inherent distrust of black governance, and which were suggesting, at base, that the ANC was "anti-democratic". However, in 2008, the current president of the ANC and South Africa, Jacob Zuma, publicly proclaimed that the

ANC would rule “until Jesus comes back” (Mail & Guardian, 2014) and early in 2014, Zuma shared the same sentiment as he told ANC supporters during a door-to-door campaign that “we (ANC) will continue to run this government forever and ever. Whether they [detractors] like it or not” (Mail & Guardian, 2014). For the president of a democratic country and a man who fought and sacrificed significantly for South Africa’s liberation to utter such words, the statement would be seen as rather pompous and undemocratic. It serves as an indication that the ANC and its members consider themselves and their party invincible and this could ultimately be seen as a threat to South Africa’s democracy.

2.6.1 Service Delivery

Service delivery is a major issue for the South African government especially since an increasing number of South Africans are becoming vocal about the rate and quality of service delivery. *The Spear* indirectly speaks to concerns about service delivery; this is so because for services to be provided, a corruption-free, transparent and accountable government is needed.

According to Fox and Meyer (1995), service delivery encompasses the provision of public activities that seek to benefit or adds to the satisfaction of citizens. Service delivery can either be the provision of tangible public goods and intangible services (cited in Akinboade, Mokwena & Kinpack, 2013:461). In South Africa, local government is tasked with the responsibility of delivering basic services as they are hierarchically closest to their communities. Their responsibilities include the provision of services such as “water, sanitation, local roads, storm water drainage, refuse collection and electricity” (The White Paper on Local Government, 1998).

Nengwekhulu (2009:349) points out that the government has achieved a lot in reducing housing, classroom and water supply pile-ups. Additionally, the number of school and tertiary enrolments for the historically disadvantaged South Africans has increased and the establishment of clinics in areas that never had any has equally gone up. Nengwekhulu (2009) also highlights that South Africa’s economy has been growing by 3% and there’s been an increase in electricity supply as well as the provision of portable piped water and refuse removal.

Although the government’s achievements are indeed commendable, the government continues to face major service delivery challenges. Their inability to provide quality services

to the most deserving (that is, most marginalised and impoverished) and within a realistic timeframe can be related to the scourge in service delivery protests in South Africa. According to Municipal IQ (2014), a total of 781 major service delivery protests have been recorded since 2004 with the highest number being 173 in 2012. According to Jain and Karamoko (2011:31), the four main services protesters complain about are: (1) Housing, (2) Electricity; (3) Water and (4) Sanitation. Although three out of these four services are directly related to local government as they are mandated by law to deliver them, provisional and national government can also partially be held responsible for inadequate service delivery. According to the Constitution of South Africa (1996:1267-1268), “the (three) spheres of government are distinctive, inter-related and inter-dependent” and “all spheres of government must secure the well-being of the people of the Republic”. Based on their interrelatedness and collective responsibility to protect and ensure the well-being of South Africans, inadequate service delivery is a South African government problem. Therefore it is crucial that they “inform and consult one another on matters of common interest” (Constitution, 1996:1268) such as service delivery.

Nengwekhulu (2009) provides a holistic analysis of the challenges that the South African government (local, provincial, national) faces in terms of service delivery. Nengwekhulu (2009) points to the challenge of skills shortages in the public service as the first stumbling block. He argues that the shortage of skills results in not only the non-delivery of services but the delivery of poor services as well. The second challenge he notes is bureaucratic work ethic. Nengwekhulu (2009:353) states that although the government has gone to great lengths to ensure public service is more person-centred and ‘people-friendly’, “public service is still characterised by official impersonality without a humane face which creates a mechanical interaction between officials and the public and results in the inability to understand and appreciate citizen’s needs”. The third challenge cited is poor supervision and performance management and monitoring of public service officials. The fourth challenge is the growing indiscipline evident in the public service. Indiscipline and insubordination are hardly reported or dealt with. The fifth challenge is growing political interference by political principals (political heads) who are placed in charge of departments but no boundaries are established in terms of their power and responsibilities (Nengwekhulu, 2009). Furthermore, Nengwekhulu (2009) cites the impact of the capitalist economic system on public service delivery. In a capitalist country, the government can only but do so much for the public as “government’s socio-economic policies are conditioned by the logic of capitalism thus some of the demands

for public services cannot be met by the state and its institutions because the laws of capitalism make no room for the provision of such services” (Nengwekhulu, 2009:358). The seventh and last challenge advanced by Nengwekhulu (2009) is the skewed recruitment selection and appointment culture. This includes the appointment of individuals based on party-political, racial, ethnic or personal relationships instead of basing such appointments on merit.

2.6.2 Good Governance, Service Delivery and Corruption

A crucial link exists between good governance, service delivery and corruption: The more corrupt a government or a department is, the higher the likelihood that the delivery and quality of services will be compromised. According to Fitzgerald *et al.* (1997, cited in Pillay, 2004:586), governance can be described as “working and listening to citizens in order to manage the public’s resources and respond to the needs and expectations of citizens as individuals, interest groups, and society as a whole”. This definition emphasises a critical point about governance, that is, the need to constantly consult citizens as this promotes transparency and accountability since a government cannot purely respond to its needs.

The lack of consultation, openness and accountability serves a breeding ground for corruption - a factor that threatens to become a major obstruction in South Africa’s path towards sustainable development (Pillay, 2004). According to Pillay (2004: 59) “corruption fundamentally runs contrary to accountability and the rule of law because it undermines governance, diminishes public trust in the credibility of the state, and threatens the ethics of government and society”. To exemplify how corruption impacts on service delivery in South Africa, Peter Allwright, from Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs (a renowned South African law firm) claims that “financial misconduct in the public service cost taxpayers R346-million in 2009/2010, 87 percent of which was never recovered (Louw, 2013). In 2011/2012, financial misconduct in the public service reached a staggering amount of R930-million”. Although criminal proceedings were introduced against the minority of these cases, at best the most common punishment was a final written warning, with only 19% discharged from the public service with the majority of perpetrators remaining in their positions (Louw, 2013). Numerous studies indicate the extent to which needy and impoverished South Africans are disadvantaged due to the misuse of public funds. A study by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) on Corruption and Social Grants reveals that in 1996 about R1.5 billion was lost annually through corruption and maladministration in the delivery of social grants.

Additionally, in 1999, the Department of Social Development estimated that it was losing close to 10 percent of its R20-billion budget to the social grant fund (Louw, 2013).

2.7 Summary

The literature review began with a factual background on the *Hail to the Thief* exhibition and *The Spear*, not only as a painting in this exhibition but as a significant symbol in South African history. The literature was divided into four sections. The first section focused on language and identity in (South) Africa and explored the link between identity and language and how language played a crucial role in re-enforcing racial and ethnic identities during apartheid. It went on to look at the relationship between identity (political and social) and power and how style is employed for identification purposes. Lastly, this section explored the identity markers associated with traditional and modern identities.

The second section about masculinity explored the highly controversial concept of masculinity and more specifically, masculinity in South Africa and how due to constant change in state formations, national leadership (presidents) and laws led to a crisis in masculinity. Furthermore, covered in this section is the significant link between masculinity and sex and how the masculinity of black men was influenced by the eighteenth to nineteenth century 'science' and their treatment and conceptualisation of black male bodies.

The third section on racism explored the history of racism in South Africa especially during apartheid and also discusses the emergence of a new type of racism namely, symbolic racism. The last section on the South African governance system discussed the current government system in South Africa and the dominance of the ANC. Additionally, this chapter looked at the current challenges faced by the South African government, such as inadequate service delivery and corruption which ultimately impacts on good governance. The following chapter discusses the Theoretical and Analytical framework of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical and Analytic Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical and analytic framework that underpins the current study. Analytically, this study is informed by theories of globalisation and how it impacts culture, language and assumedly communication. One definite consequence of globalisation on language and communication is the increased level of hybrid linguistic practices. Consequently, this chapter explores theories related to the definition and description of these hybrid linguistic practices, for example, polylingual languaging. As this study focuses on an online platform, this chapter also explores theories related to online linguistic practices. Theoretically, this study is informed by theories of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), discourse analysis (thematic analysis, content analysis and computer mediated discourse analysis). For this reason, this chapter will briefly outline these theories and their main characteristics.

3.2 Globalisation

The occurrence of globalisation and its undeniable consequences for culture and consequently, language, continues to prompt for constant analysis of how language is used in new ways. The analysis also entails a focus on the implications that the new ways of language use hold for theorising about language itself. Globalisation as a concept is not unique to social sciences or linguistics and therefore various definitions exist for this social phenomenon. However, according to Pieterse (1994: 161), “the most common interpretations of globalisation are the idea that the world is becoming more uniform and standardised, through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronisation emanating from the West and that globalisation is tied up with modernity”. Based on this definition, it is evident that globalisation became synonymous with ‘worldwide’ homogenous behaviour as dictated and prescribed by Western culture. This premature assumption of the consequences of globalisation resulted in most linguists taking a negative stance against globalisation. According to Jacquemet (2005:260), until recently the majority of scholars have been hesitant to engage with globalisation theory and when they did, “the dominant discourse has privileged the dystopic pole (i.e. perceiving globalisation as antagonistic and asymmetrical),

thus depicting the worst possible scenario: linguistic imperialism, endangered languages, language loss and language death”.

On a more progressive note, Rubdy and Alsagoff (2014:2) highlight the necessity of engaging with globalisation especially based on the characteristics of globalisation that impact language and culture in society, which among others include: (1) Development of worldwide modes of transport and communication which resulted in the increased flow of various resources globally (capital, people, goods, images and ideas); (2) Increased connectivity brought by technological advances and the incomparable speed at which events and messages travel; (3) Intensification of worldwide social relations, i.e. the happenings in one part of the globe affect other communities irrespective of geographical distance; (4) The heightened blurred boundaries between global and local. On account of these characteristics and various other factors, Rubdy and Alsagoff (2014:2) argue that instead of adopting a ‘doom and gloom’ perspective towards globalisation, it is pivotal to recognise that “the social transformation triggered by globalisation calls for the profound changes in the way both language and culture have been conceptualised”.

3.3 Glocalisation and Hybridity

It can be easily assumed that global (Western) trends have engulfed every single part of the globe, judging by the association of globalisation with ‘cultural’ colonisation and the world being a ‘global village’. However, this assumption is flawed as there continues to be resistance and re-negotiation in terms of what global trends to infuse or avoid in the local experiences. As Rubdy and Alsagoff (2014:5) argue, “there is sufficient counterevidence to show that the entire world is not being swamped by Western cultural imperialism”. The rejection of absolute consumption of Western culture is supported by a school of thought whose main argument advocates for the agency, creativity and free-will of locals. This particular school of thought, according to Kumaravadivelu (2008: 44), believes that “cultural transmission is a two way process in which cultures in contact shape and reshape each other directly or indirectly” (cited in Rubdy and Alsagoff, 2014:4). Due to this two-way process, Kumaravadivelu (2008: 38) argues that “the two forces are in fact much like two sides of the same coin, with both homogenisation and heterogenisation operating in tandem and plunging the world in a creative as well as chaotic tension” (cited in Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014:4). This co-existence of both these sides has been termed ‘glocalisation’ which can be described as

“the global being brought in conjunction with the local, and the local is modified to accommodate the global” (Kumaravadivelu (2008:45), cited in Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014:4).

Due to the constant tension in the harmonisation of global and local, hybridity serves as a manner in which the tension is resolved (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014). From a cultural perspective, according to Rowe and Scheclling (1991:231), hybridisation is defined as “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (cited in Pieterse, 1994:165). Cultural hybridity can be associated with deterritorialisation. According to Jacquemet (2005:262), “deterritorialisation remains a powerful metaphor for representing globalisation’s central social fact: the dissolution of supposedly ‘natural’ link between place/territory and cultural practices, experiences and identities”.

Globalisation also resulted in increased hybridity within linguistic practices which prompted the necessary revision of existing concepts. From a linguistic perspective, “hybridity is a code for creativity and is used to describe not merely innovations in terms of linguistic features but increasingly the dynamics of mixed genres, styles, practices and discourses that make up the complex linguistic repertoires of people today” (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014: 8). Based on generalised perspectives that language is neither a static nor countable entity and the constant need to review how it is used, various scholars have conceptualised novel theories to explain this increased diversity in linguistic practices as multilingualism no longer accurately describes current, hybridised linguistic practices.

Rudby and Alsagoff (2014) outline the various concepts that have been suggested to describe the increased hybridity in linguistic practices. One such term is translanguaging, which refers to “the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages (Rudby & Alsagoff, 2014:6). Other concepts proposed include transidiomatic practices, polylingual languaging and metrolingualism. Below follows a brief discussion of these concepts.

3.4 Transidiomatic practices

One of the most notable characteristics of modernity/globalisation is the continuous creation of sophisticated technologies which rapidly increases human mobility (e.g. airplanes) and communication (e.g. e-mails, online social networks, cellular phones). Through these means, “people confront new rules and resources for the construction of social identity and cultural

belonging” (Jacquemet, 2005:262). According to these constant shifts and re-adjustments (deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation), transidiomatic practices describe “the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in the range of communicative channels, both local and distant” (Jacquemet, 2005: 264-265). Therefore, transidiomatic practices “are the results of the co-presence of multilingual talk (exercised by de/reterritorialised speakers) and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes” (Jacquemet, 2005:265).

3.5 Polylingual Linguaging

The concept of polylingualism is based on the argument that upon engagement, language users use language features, instead of a specific language to communicate. Polylingualism is characterised by “language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims as best they can, regardless of how well they know the involved languages; this entails that the language users may know and use the fact that some of the features are perceived by some speakers as not belonging together” (Jorgensen, 2008:163). Jorgensen (2008:169) further argues that “polylingual behaviour can be analysed more directly as combinations of features than as combinations of languages” – a direct shift away from multilingual behaviour which emphasises the combination of various languages. Consequently, the move from the enumeration of languages to the identification of features explains why polylingualism argues for the use of language features in general and not any particular languages. Linguaging is the term coined to describe polylingual behaviour; individuals who use features of language to achieve their communicative aims are called ‘linguagers’.

3.6 Metrolingualism

Metrolingualism strongly draws on Maher’s (2005) conception of metroethnicity. According to Maher (2005: 83), metroethnicity is “a reconstruction of ethnicity: a hybridised “street” ethnicity deployed by a crosssection of people with ethnic or mainstream backgrounds who are oriented towards cultural hybridity, cultural/ethnic tolerance and a multicultural lifestyle in friendships, music, the arts, eating and dress” (cited in Pennycook, 2010: 245). Quite frankly, Maher (2005:83) states that “metrolingualism is skeptical of heroic ethnicity and bored with sentimentalism about ethnic language” (cited in Pennycook, 2010:245).

Therefore,

“metrolingualism describes the ways in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language. It does not assume connections between language, culture, ethnicity, nationality or geography, but rather seeks to explore how such relations are produced, resisted, defied or rearranged - its focus is not on language systems but on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction” (Pennycook, 2010:245).

By breaking free from pre-conceived associations and focusing on the ‘here and now’ w.r.t. linguistic practices, “metrolingualism poses a challenge to ‘the orthodoxy of language loyalty’ and may enable people to disassociate legitimised links between language, ethnicity and nation state” (Pennycook, 2010:246).

Even though metrolingualism focuses on hybridity (cultural and linguistic) and refuses to assume any links between language, ethnicity or culture, it unavoidably rubs against existing identity markers (Pennycook, 2010). Therefore, Pennycook (2010: 244) argues that “in talking of metrolingualism, we also intend to address the ways in which any struggle around new language, culture and identity inevitably confronts the fixed traditions of place and being”. Due to this clash, Pennycook (2010) emphasises the interdependence of fluidity and fixity in terms of metrolingualism – the pre-existing fuels the novel practices and the comprehension of the new is related to the former. Consequently, Pennycook (2010: 252) concludes that “metrolingualism, therefore, can be conceived as the paradoxical practice and space where fixity, discreteness, fluidity, hybridity, locality and globality coexist and co-constitute each other”. Based on metrolingualism providing the space for the mixture and assimilation of various principles, “metrolingualism is centrally concerned with language ideologies, practices, resources and repertoires” – this ultimately locates metrolingualism as a way of describing linguistic practices evoked by specific user ideologies and locations.

3.7 Resemiotisation

There has been an undoubtable increase in the multi-modal texts and the heightened interest in analysing how various modes in texts are strategically aligned to deliver messages. One of the concepts theorised to analyse multi-modal texts is resemitisation. According to Iedema (2003:41), “resemitisation is about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next”. Iedema (2003, 2010) emphasises that resemitisation focuses on intersemiotic shifts and the displacement that

occurs, e.g. the shift from text to talk to pictures to concrete buildings. Iedema (2003:41) links resemiotisation to recontextualisation – a constant “constructing of reality as it traverses and exploits a range of realizations and practices”. Therefore, Iedema (2003, 2010) argues that resemiotisation should not only be considered as an explanation of multimodal texts but also how the act of resemiotisation ultimately changes our reality and introduces a different context or practice. Iedema (2003:142) argues that resemiotisation “addresses the principle and the possibility of social change itself through the re-organisation of social space as it evokes the creation ‘new realities’”.

3.8 Semiotic Remediation Practices

Another analytical framework useful in conducting multi-modal analysis is remediation. According to Prior and Hengst (2010:1), the notion refers to “taking up semiotic remediation as practice draws attention to ‘the diverse ways that humans’ and nonhumans’ semiotic performances (historical or /imagined) are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity”. Prior, Hengst, Roozen, and Shipka (2006) argue that although numerous other theoretical frameworks such as recontextualisation (Linell, 1998), resemiotisation (Iedema, 2003) encompasses key aspects of remediation, the addition of “practice” with regards to remediation emphasises a crucial point – “the critical importance of attending to both discourse (in concrete, historical acts and across extended trajectories) and sociogenesis (the people- and society-making dimensions of activity” (Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka, 2006:740). Therefore Prior and Hengst (2010:2) argue that “semiotic remediation as practice then is fundamental to understanding the work of culture as well as communication; it calls on us to attend to the diverse ways that semiotic performances are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity”.

According to Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka (2006:761), their approach to remediation strongly draws on Voloshinov’s (1973) argument that “signs are historical, that they are re-used and remade in use”. Consequently, “remediation points to ways that activity is (re)mediated – not mediated anew in each act – through taking up the materials at hand, putting them to present use, and thereby producing altered conditions for future action” (Prior and Hengst, 2010:1). Based on the emphasis on reusing existing materials and therefore altering - not completely transforming the activity, remediation is also referred to as ‘repurposing’ (Prior and Hengst, 2010).

Prior and Hengst (2010:11) argue that a theory is necessary to determine and govern what constitutes a *re-* and argue that a “*re-* must emerge from some mix of indexical, iconic, and/or tropic mappings between events or between entities”. From this argument, it is evident that the *re-* in remediation is more than a simple repetition – the *re-* is highlighting the connection and continuation between different signs and activities.

3.9 Language as a local and social practice

Pennycook (2010) extensively advances the notion of language as a local practice. Pennycook (2010) challenges the common assumption that language is a pre-existing product that speakers use. According to Pennycook (2010:8), “language is a product of social action, not a tool to be used.” Language(s) thus get produced by practices which Pennycook (2010) describes as activities that are repeated and thus become a norm. However, this norm is not fixed – if the practices change so will this norm. The linguistic practices on online sites such as Sowetan LIVE continuously change and norms are constantly re-established. For instance, ‘hahaha’ or ‘kikiki’ are laughter sounds not normally included in written communication. However, it has now become common practice to find such expressions in written text. This is an example of how languages are produced through certain practices but through repeated use, it becomes a language of choice in text messages and online “discussions”. We cannot argue and say that these words are incorrect or that they are not part of the Standard English – they are correct within this context and within this context, they are the standard. As stated by Canagarajah (2007:94 cited in Pennycook 2010: 9), “language is not so much located in the mind of the speaker as it is a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors.” Miller and Goodnow (1995:7) define practice as “actions that are repeated, shared with others in a social group, and invested with normative expectations and with meanings or significances that go beyond the immediate goals of the actions”. This definition of practice corresponds with Pennycook’s (2010) notion of language as a practice – it highlights that the use of language is not arbitrary. Repeated actions become habitual and the meanings are shared amongst users and these linguistic practices are embedded in various discourses.

As part of his language as a local practice theory, Pennycook (2010) also writes about locality and / or localisation. According to Pennycook (2010), local refers to the way language is used locally and “the local is always defined in relation to something else regional, national, global, universal, modern, new from elsewhere” (Pennycook, 2010:4). Moreover, Pennycook

(2010) states that we can never truly understand a language if we separate it from its speakers, histories, cultures, places and ideologies and the same applies to the comments on Sowetan LIVE and the language usage. In order for us to fully comprehend the motivation behind the manner in which language is used in this context, we have to grasp the ideologies held by the participants, the cultures and histories that craft these individuals and the places and spaces they find themselves in. If we label the option of allowing readers to comment as just another advantage of the internet, we run the risk of losing out on critical information on how these readers have found a space where they express how and what they are.

In *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) also argue that we need to disinvent our perceptions of language, more particularly African languages as the image of African languages is “firmly located in Western linguistic and cultural suppositions” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007:27). Makoni (2003) adds that the process of identifying and inventing African languages by the missionaries was aimed at restricting verbal interactions between the Europeans and Africans. In addition, by constructing African languages according to their standards, the missionaries ensured that Africans had minimal interactions with the colonial world (Makoni, 2003). According to Makoni (2003:142), “the major objective of missionary linguistics was to comprehend African cosmology in the missionaries’ own terms, and only terms that could facilitate that process were included in the vernacular language”.

Furthermore, Makoni (2003:141) states that “the missionaries created languages which were describable as mutually exclusive boxes as opposed to interconnected patterns”. Consequently, the promotion of African languages as separate entities is a fable and does not provide a true reflection of how languages are used on the ground. As argued by Makoni (2003:143), “In African urban centers the “mixed” forms are themselves the linguistic norm, the starting point in the process of language socialisation for most people, and at times the only version of language for everyday encounters. Most people only encounter the “unmixed” speech as part of the formal process of education”.

3.10 Online Media and Communication

The media, and ultimately the way in which people communicate, have dramatically changed. The establishment of faster and instant communication methods has resulted in the ‘re-invention’ of even established communication methods such as the newspapers. Below

follows a discussion of the evolution of newspapers and one key feature to the study, namely interactivity.

3.10.1 Online Newspapers

In recent years, the number of print newspapers that also publish an online version have increased immensely (Boczkowski, 1999). According to a 1997 NewsLink survey, there are 3622 online newspapers worldwide (as cited in Boczkowski, 1999:102). Various authors have warned that the establishment of online newspapers will eventually lead to the end of the printed version. However, according to Peng, Tham and Xiaoming (1999:60), “the current development of web newspapers is underlined by newspaper publishers’ desire to turn the Internet into an opportunity to help reverse the trend in declining readership rather than a threat to the print newspaper”.

Peng *et al.* (1999) conducted a survey by e-mailing questionnaires to the publishers or online editors of all online US daily newspapers to explore their reasons for publishing on the web. The results indicated that, amongst other reasons, online publishing is advantageous because: (1) It is a way of gaining more readers; (2) it is used to “generate income through (online) advertising”, and (3) to use the online version to promote their print product (Peng *et al.*, 1999:56 – 57). In addition, computer mediated communication grants online newspapers the opportunity to provide many new services that the traditional hardcopy newspaper cannot, such as “online archives of past stories, hyperlinks to web-based information databases and chat facilities and e-mail contacts between readers and editors” (Peng *et al.* 1999:58). Chung (2008) adds that the provision of online news allows consumers to play an active role in their news consumption experiences as they have more control and an increased sense of ownership over what news they consume, how and when.

3.10.2 Interactivity

According to Boczkowski and Mitchelsein (2011), interactivity has always been seen as a fundamental aspect of new media. Online newspapers and online social networks offer a variety of interactive features, such as commenting on articles or updating a status on Facebook or Twitter. For Chung (2008) the interactive quality of the Internet played a role in the fame of online newspapers. In addition, Chung (2008) argues that interactivity contests the conventional one-way movement of news as audiences are now provided with greater freedom, not only to determine what they consider newsworthy or not, but also to respond to

what they read through various channels. In terms of the advantages of interactivity, Chung (2008:660) states that “the benefits of interactivity are satisfaction, motivation, sense of fun, cognition and learning”.

Scholars generally distinguish between two types of interactivity: media interactivity and human interactivity (Boczkowski & Mitchelsein, 2011). The former, also known as “user-to-user-system interactivity”, is interactive communication between users and technology that is based on the nature of the technology itself and what the technology allows users to do (Chung, 2008: 660). Human interactivity, also known as “user-to-user”, is communication between two or more users that takes place through a communication channel (Chung, 2008:660). Both types will be explored for this study, in an online newspaper site, the Sowetan LIVE.

By understanding interactivity and the freedom and control it grants the news reader and writers alike, it allows the study to explore how the South African youth takes advantage of this opportunity to express their points of view on issues relating to traditional and modern cultures, as well as the (re)construction and stylisation of language and identities.

3.11 Computer Mediated Communication

Various theorists have written about computer mediated communication (henceforth CMC), but this study focuses on Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic’s (2004) perspective on CMC. According to Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:15), “computer mediated communication essentially refers to any human communication achieved through, or with the help of, computer technology”. A key characteristic of CMC is its focus on human interpersonal communication on, through and about the internet and the web (Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic, 2004). Computer mediated communication as a theory is a combination of three intricate concepts, that is: *computer*, *mediated* and *communication* as numerous definitions and perspectives exist on these concepts. Below follows a brief discussion on how Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004) conceptualise these three respective concepts and simultaneously frame this study’s approach towards CMC.

3.11.1 Communication

An accurate and holistic definition of human communication continues to elude theorists and scholars due to constant changes related to communication. Nevertheless, Thurlow, Lengel

and Tomic (2004:17-18) characterise communication as dynamic, transactional, multifunctional and multimodal. These characteristics are interrelated – communication normally happens between individuals (transactional), however, communication extends beyond merely sender, message and receiver as all communication happens within a context which heightens the dynamics. Similarly, communication can be achieved by drawing on different modes (multimodal) which therefore multiples the function of communication. Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:18) argue that a similarity shared by all four characteristics is that they are “central to understanding how communication works and how it’s used to express our identities, to establish and maintain relationships, and eventually to build communities – three of the most important themes in CMC”.

3.11.2 Mediated

Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:18) state that “mediation is simply the process or means by which something is transmitted”. Therefore, human communication is transmitted through interactions with other individuals using various different verbal and nonverbal modes. Communication is always contextual and consequently scholars usually identify several layers of contextual variables which influence – or mediate – communication. These fall into three main categories:

- Psychological, e.g. our perceptions, mental maps, and prototypes;
- Social, e.g. our relationships, stereotypes, and individual experiences;
- Cultural, e.g. the myths and ideologies of whole societies of people (Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic, 2004:19).

With regards to CMC, another more material layer of mediation is added namely, technological mediation.

3.11.3 Computer

Although almost everything in our modern society is somehow related to the computer, the focus for Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:20) “is computing technology which more explicitly facilitates human communication and prioritise relational communication and to deprioritise communication activity”. Instead of concentrating on the storage, manipulation and retrieval of data (informatics), this perspective on CMC “focuses on the ways people make conversation, build communities and construct identities through, and by means of,

new communication technologies – or what might more accurately be described as technologies for communication” (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004:20).

3.12 Netspeak

Many terms have been suggested to describe the linguistic practices evident in cyberspace. These include “weblish, netlingo, e-talk, tech-speak, wired-style, geek-speak and netspeak” (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004: 118). Other terms include “netlish, internet language, cyberspeak, electronic discourse, electronic language, interactive written discourse and computer-mediated communication” (Crystal, 2001:17). Undoubtedly, the creation of an accurate term to capture the variety of online linguistic practices appears daunting, especially due to the fluidity of such practices. More recently, Herring (2012) suggested the concept e-grammar to describe “the set of features that characterise the grammar of electronic language” (Herring, 2012:1). So far the concept most accepted and used, is netspeak. According to Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004), the usefulness of the term ‘netspeak’ is in its inclusion of both language and discourse – not only do we evaluate how people speak/write on the net but we are interested in what they do with the language, the manner in which language is used for relationship building and ultimately the construction of identities through language. Crystal (2001:17) argues that as a term, “‘netspeak’ is functional enough, as long as we remember that ‘speak’ here involves writing as well as talking, and that any ‘speak’ suffix also has a receptive element, including ‘listening and reading’”.

Irrespective of the umbrella term used to collectively identify online linguistic practices, at ground level, the type of online linguistic practices identified by various theorists are mostly similar. Herring (2012) distinguishes between the type of online linguistic practices according to typography, orthography, morphology and syntax. A brief discussion of the first two categories follows as they are most relevant to this study.

According to Herring (2012:2), “typography in text-based CMC refers primarily to the use of non-alphabetic keyboard symbols such as numbers, punctuation and special symbols”. Additionally, “it includes non-standard capitalisation (including ALL CAPS, lack of initial capitalisation, alternating uPper and lOwEr case and ‘camel case’) as well as emoticons or sequences of keyboard characters that prototypically imitate facial expressions” such as :) for a smile (Herring, 2012:2). Other typographic features of CMC include repeated punctuation, substitution of numbers or letters for words or parts of words and leetspeak (some or all

letters of a word being replaced by non-alphabetic symbols based on graphic resemblance), for instance s3x for sex.

In terms of orthography, (Herring, 2012:2) argues that nonstandard orthography is typically perceived as the defining characteristic of computer-mediated language as e-communication often demonstrates spelling practices indicative of loosened orthographic norms. Herring (2012:2) states that there is a noticeable overlap between nonstandard typography and nonstandard orthography in CMC and the two often co-occur. “Nonstandard orthography includes abbreviation (acronyms, clippings, vowel omissions (pls instead of please); phonetically-motivated letter substitutions; and spellings that imitate casual or dialectal pronunciations; eye dialect and spellings that represent prosody or nonlinguistic sounds such as laughter” (Herring, 2012:3).

Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:125) state the following as the most common typographic strategies used in netspeak: letter homophones; acronyms; creative use of punctuation; capitalisation or other symbols for emphasis and stress; onomatopoeic and/or stylised spellings; keyboard-generated emoticons or smileys; direct requests, interactional indicators and coloured text and emotes.

Schmitz (2001: 2170 – 2171) argues that the computer as a writing-machine changes the nature of writing at four levels: (1) monologic (computer-writing enables flexible composition techniques and a less disciplined’ and ‘uninhibited’ writing; (2) dialogic (new writing styles emerging in sites of public, anonymous participation, a ‘playful anarchy’ of hybrid, spoken/written patterns); (3) non-linear (hypertext as a new principle of information structure); and (4) interactive (collaborative writing and the fuzzy distinction between author and reader) (cited in Androutsopoulos, 2011:148).

3.13 Systemic Functional Linguistics

According to Eggins (2004), Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is based on the fundamental work of a social semiotic linguist, Michael Halliday. Eggins (2004:2) contends that SFL is “increasingly recognised as a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource”. This perspective is shared and amplified by Webster (2009:1) who argues that SFL has become the “theory of choice (in more ways than one) for those interested in achieving an ‘applicable’ description leading to an understanding of the enabling power of language”. Eggins (2004:21) continues

that SFL's uniqueness is that it is more than theory – “it seeks to develop both a theory about language as social process and an analytical methodology which permits the detailed and systematic description of language patterns”. Webster (2009) remarks on this distinct feature by elaborating on Halliday's perspective on theory and description. Webster (2009:1) argues that “for Halliday, the underlying quest has always been about description rather than theory. He (Halliday) maintains that it is not so much new theories but new descriptions that will enable us to engage more effectively with language”. In addition, Eggins (2004:3) points out that systemic linguists advance four main theoretical claims about language, as follows:

(1) Language use is *functional*; (2) that its function is to *make meanings*; (3) that these *meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context* in which they are exchanged, and (4) that the process of using language is a *semiotic* process, a process of making meanings by choosing. Below follows a brief discussion on each of these four theoretical claims:

3.12.1 Language use is functional

According to Eggins (2004:3), the perspective that language use is purposeful behaviour serves to illustrate a basic premise of systemic linguistics – any use of language is motivated by a purpose. In order to determine what people do with language, that is, what function language serves, functional linguistics analyzes real examples of language use – authentic speech and writing of people interacting in naturally-occurring social contexts (Eggins, 2004).

3.12.2 Function of language: Meaning-Making

Eggins (2004) contends that, based on the notion that language is functional, systemicists suggest that people interact (verbally and non-verbally) in order to create meaning. Therefore “the general function of language is a semantic one” (Eggins, 2004:3). This view is reinforced by Halliday (2009:60) who argues that SFL locates language among semiotic systems – systems of meaning. Additionally, Halliday (2009:60) states that language has the further attribute of being a semogenic system: a system that creates meanings. This implies that language's meaning potential is not fixed (unlike the system of traffic signals) – “the meaning potential of a language is open ended as new meanings can be, and often are being, created” (Halliday, 2009:60). According to Webster (2009:5), “a semantic system is organised into three main functional components, or “metafunctions”. The three components are: ideational, including logical and experiential; interpersonal; and textual”.

3.12.3 Language use is contextual

Context is crucial to SFL, as without a context, language use is arbitrary and ultimately not functional. As argued by Eggins (2004:9), “our ability to deduce context from text, to predict when and how language use will vary, and the ambiguity of language removed from its context, provide evidence that in asking functional questions about language we must focus not just on language, but on language use in context”. SFL highlights three key aspects about situations that influence and determine language use (Eggins, 2004). According to Eggins (2004: 9) these three dimensions are: (1) Mode (amount of feedback and role of language); (2) tenor (role relations of power and solidarity) and (3) field (topic or focus of the activity). Eggins (2004:9) argues that “these dimensions are used to explain our intuitive understanding that we will not use language in the same way to write as to speak (mode variation), to talk to our boss as to talk to our lover (tenor variation) and to talk about linguistics as to talk about jogging (field variation)”.

3.12.4 Language as semiotics

The system of language has various signs (semiotics) that one can draw on to communicate. As language is contextual, the selection of signs for communicative purpose must be appropriate and relevant to the context. As stated by Eggins (2004: 9), “this semiotic interpretation of the system of language allows us to consider the appropriacy or inappropriacy of different linguistic choices in relation to their contexts of use and to view language as a resource which we use by choosing to make meanings in contexts”.

3.13 Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006:6), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich detail)”. Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013:400) state that thematic analysis (TA) has been “introduced as a qualitative descriptive method that provides core skills to researchers for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis”. Braun and Clarke (2006) add that thematic analysis should be distinguished from other analytic methods such as thematic discourse analysis, thematic decomposition analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and ground theory. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that although the above-mentioned methods also aim to describe patterns across qualitative data, thematic analysis “does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge” of

(some) of these methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006:9). Based on this, one of the advantages of “thematic analysis is its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 4) as it offers a more accessible form of analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:9).

3.13.1 Six phases in conducting thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a 6-phase step-by-step guide in conducting a thematic analysis. Below follows a summary of these 6 steps.

3.13.1.1 Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

Essentially, this initial phase revolves around the researcher becoming immersed in the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:16), “immersion usually involves repeated reading of the data and reading the data in an active way – searching for meanings, patterns and so on”. During this familiarising phase, Braun and Clarke (2006) advise jotting down initial ideas for coding.

3.13.1.2 Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Following the researcher in-depth acquaintance with the data is the production of initial codes from the data. According to Boyatzis (1998:63), as cited in Braun and Clarke (2006:18), “codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon”. Braun and Clarke (2006) acknowledge numerous ways for generating codes but state that the most important aspect during this phase is to ensure that all the data is coded and collated.

3.13.1.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

This phase signifies the start of identifying themes from the codes generated in the previous phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest the use of visual representations (tables, mind-maps) to assist in sorting the different codes into themes. At the end of this phase, the researcher will have a “collection of candidate themes, and sub-themes and all extracts of data that have been coded in relation to them” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:20).

3.13.1.4 Phase 4: Reviewing themes

During this phase the researcher refines the set of candidate themes and sub-themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), throughout this refinement stage, the researcher will notice that certain candidate themes are not really themes and that other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes. At the end of this phase, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue researchers ought to have a fair idea of the different themes and the overall story they tell about the data.

3.13.1.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase consists of the researcher defining and refining themes that will be presented for analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006:22) explain “define and refine as identifying the essence of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures”.

3.13.1.6 Phase 6: Producing the report

The last stage is the final analysis and write-up of the report. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:23), “the task of the write-up of a thematic analysis is to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis”. Braun and Clarke (2006:23) argue that the researcher’s write-up must be “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and it must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data” (through data extracts).

3.14 Content Analysis

According to Vaismoradi *et al.*, (2013:400), “content analysis is a systematic coding and categorising approach used for exploring large amounts of textual information unobtrusively to determine trends and patterns of words used, their frequency, their relationships, and the structures and discourses of communication”. Berg (2001:240) states that “in content analysis researchers examine artifacts of social communication and typically, these are written documents or transcriptions of recorded verbal communications”. According to Berg (2001), currently the biggest contention around content analysis is whether to apply it qualitatively or quantitatively. Berg (2001) makes reference to various arguments either in support of or against a qualitative or quantitative application. For example, Berg (2001) highlights that

Berelson (1959) suggests that content analysis is objective, systematic and quantitative. On the other hand, Sellitiz *et al.*, proposes that “heavy quantitative content analysis results in a somewhat arbitrary limitation in the field by excluding all accounts of communications that are not in the form of numbers as well as those that may lose meaning if reduced to a numeric form (for example, photographs)” (Berg, 2001:241).

Various theorists have suggested a blend between the quantitative and qualitative analysis in terms of content analysis (Berg, 2011). For instance, Berg (2001:242) argues that content analysis can be effective quantitatively - that “counts” of textual elements provide a means for identifying, organising, indexing, and retrieving data. Qualitatively, the analysis of the data once organised according to certain content elements should involve consideration of the literal words in the text being analysed, including the manner in which these words have been offered to enable researchers to examine ideological mind-sets, themes, topics, symbols, and similar phenomena, while grounding such examinations to the data (Berg, 2001:242).

Berg (2001) points out that the most important advantage of content analysis is its unobtrusive nature. Another advantage of content analysis is that it may be used non-reactively – no interviews need to be conducted, no completion of lengthy questionnaires and there is no need for controlled settings such as laboratories. A collection of sources such as newspaper articles or public addresses is sufficient to conduct analytic studies (Berg, 2001). An additional benefit of content analysis is that it is cost-effect (Berg, 2001).

3.15 Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis

According to Herring (2004) the term “computer-mediated discourse analysis” (henceforth CMDA) was initially conceptualised in 1995 as during the mid-1990s, there was an increase in computer mediated communication (CMC) due to the popularisation of the internet. Defined broadly, CMDA is “any analysis of online behaviour that is grounded in empirical, textual observations” (Herring, 2004:2). Herring (2004:3) argues that “CMDA applies to four levels of language, ranging from the smallest to largest linguistic unit of analysis: 1) structure, 2) meaning, 3) interaction and 4) social behaviour.”

Herring (2004) argues that CMDA is best perceived as an approach, instead of a “theory” or a single “method”. According to Herring (2004:4), the “CMDA approach allows diverse theories about discourse and computer mediated communication to be entertained and tested and provides a set of methods from which the researcher selects those best suited to her data

and research questions”. The theoretical assumptions of CMDA are embedded in those of linguistic discourse analysis (Herring, 2004). First is the assumption that discourse exhibits recurrent patterns (Herring, 2004:4). Secondly, it is assumed that discourse involves speaker choices which are not always linguistic (Herring, 2004:4). Herring (2004:4) contends that over and above these two assumptions about discourse, CMDA adds a third assumption about online communication: “computer-mediated discourse may be, but it is not inevitably, shaped by the technological features of computer-mediated communication systems”. According to Herring (2004:4) the basic methodology of CMDA is language-focused content analysis - either qualitative or quantitative.

3.16 Summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical and analytic framework for the analysis of the data presented in chapters five and six. Due to the countless angles linguistic practices can be analysed from, it was pivotal to provide the framework, that is, the set of analytical assumptions and values that underpin this study. By focusing on the influence of globalisation on language and how global ‘products’ are appropriated locally, this study’s theoretical premise is that of language as a fluid practice. In providing a brief overview of the most used terms in describing hybrid linguistic practices and describing key features of CMC and Netspeak, this study locates its interest in ‘alternative’ ways in which language and other language related terms such as grammar, competency and spelling are being re-conceptualised.

The theoretical framework is grounded in SFL elements so primarily, language, irrespective of form (hybrid or non-standard), is considered functional and context based. The large data corpus necessitated the use of the quantitative feature of content analysis to count the frequency of certain words/topics – some of which ultimately resulted into themes after conducting thematic analysis. CMDA is essential to the study as the computer as a medium also inevitably adds to the type of discourses.

The following chapter discusses the Research Design and Methodology of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the research design and methodology that underpins the study. In particular, details are provided about the selected research design, sampling type and population, data collection and analysis methods and the ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Design

A qualitative approach was used in this study. According to Flick (2007:3), “qualitative research is used as an umbrella term for a series of approaches to research in the social sciences. These are also known as hermeneutic, reconstructive or interpretive approaches”. Holloway and Wheeler (2010:7) state that the “interpretive model and descriptive research centres on the way in which human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it”. Therefore, “qualitative approaches are used to explore the behaviour, perspectives, feelings and experiences of people and what lies at the core of their lives” (Holloway & Wheeler (2010:3).

According to Strelitz (2005:62), “qualitative studies start from the assumption that in studying humans we are examining a creative process whereby people produce and maintain forms of life and society and systems of meaning and value. This creative activity is grounded in the ability to build cultural forms from symbols that express this will to live and assert meaning”. *The Spear* and its portrayal of Zuma, as an individual and the president of the country, implicates the reality of South Africans and therefore this qualitative study was aimed at understanding participants’ perspectives and feelings regarding the painting. Additionally, the study aimed to explore how participants interacted with online media particularly, Sowetan LIVE and how this interaction altered their linguistic behaviour.

Flick *et al.* (2004:8) highlight numerous characteristics of qualitative research. Of significance to this study, is the assertion that: (1) qualitative research is predominantly text-based; (2) a spectrum of methods belonging to different approaches may be used to answer different research questions; (3) attention is given to the perspective of the participants; (4) context is critical and (5) empathetic understanding instead of ‘cause and effect’ is valued as

the output of qualitative research. Although this study focuses on different modes, the main mode used for analysis purposes is text and, as will become evident in the data analysis methods, different approaches were drawn. The basic premise of the study is to gain an understanding of how the readers of Sowetan LIVE identify themselves and others through the type of linguistic (verbal and non-verbal) practices in relation to *The Spear*.

4.3 Population and Sample

Herring (2004:11) argues that sampling when conducting CMDA is rarely done randomly as random sampling comprises context which is critical in interpreting discourse analysis results. In CMDA, data samples tend to be motivated. Herring (2004:11) suggests six (6) CMDA data sampling techniques namely: (1) random; (2) theme; (3) time; (4) by phenomenon; (5) by individual or group and (6) convenience. This study used thematic data sampling as well group sampling – the two articles and their comments revolved around *The Spear* (theme) and specifically comments from the Sowetan LIVE readers/participants (groups). According to Herring (2004:11), thematic sampling offers the advantage of topical coherence and a data set free of irrelevant messages.

The population of this study was individuals who posted comments in response to the two selected articles. The majority of the participants in this study were black and are South African citizens. Additionally, the readership of Sowetan LIVE is mainly males. However, this does not imply that female views are not fairly represented in these comments or study. The age of the participants range from 25 – 34 (Sowetan Live Rate Card, 2011). The fact that the participants' age still qualify them as 'youth' grants the study leave to explore how the youth engages with online media and analyse their computer mediated communication.

4.4 Data Collection Technique

Observation was used as a data collection tool for this study. Mann and Stewart (2000:84) cite Foster (1996) who argues that observational work holds the following advantages: (1) information about human behaviour can be recorded directly without reliance on retrospective accounts; (2) observers may view the familiar as strange, noting features of the environment/behaviour that participants may not be able to see; (3) patterns and regularities in the environment may be observed and analysed over time and (4) observation provides access to not easily accessible individuals to researchers e.g. busy, deviant or expresses hostility towards participation in research. There are various observational techniques

available including participant's observation, but the researcher's presence was concealed from the participants for this particular study.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:210) identified four areas of observational interest, including the type of observational interest of this study, namely linguistic behaviour (what is said and how) (cited in Mann & Stewart, 2000: 85). Jones (1999b:13) argues that in terms of observing linguistic behaviour, “the internet is a research setting par excellence, practically irresistible in its availability” (cited in Mann & Stewart, 2000:85). In addition to it being an enticing research setting, the internet also affords researchers the opportunity to “observe non-verbal and extralinguistic behaviour exhibited in emoticons and paralinguistic and non-linguistic cues such as electronic paralanguage” (Mann & Stewart, 2000:85).

According to Mann and Stewart (2000: 85), part of the qualitative approach includes qualitative researchers' inclinations to focus on 'natural' instead of contrived research settings in order to attain *verstehen*/empathic understanding. These 'natural' settings are typically referred to as a 'field' which Schwandt (1997) argues is the “site where social action takes place whether the researcher is there or not” (cited in Mann & Stewart, 2000:85).

4.5 Data collection procedure

The data for this research project was collected from the comments section on Sowetan LIVE of the two articles, that is, “ANC takes battle of *The Spear* to court” and “Will Zuma's *spear stay up*”. For this study, 64 pages (from both articles) of screenshots with approximately five comments each were downloaded. Getto and Silva (2012) cite screen-shot capturing as one of the data collection methods for Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SFMDA). According to Getto and Silva (2012:91), screen-shot capturing allows researchers to collect two specific modes namely textual and graphic / visual. The downloaded screenshot comments were pasted on two Microsoft Word documents – Text 1 (comments from “ANC takes battle of *The Spear* to court”) and Text 2 (comments from “Will Zuma's *spear stay up*?”). The data corpus (entire data collected for this study) was 1358 comments with each comment serving as a data item.

The data from the two articles were collected from 21 – 22 May 2012 as these dates are significant in the extremely short 'existence' of *The Spear*: On 21 May, the ANC announced their decision about approaching the High Court for an interdict against the Goodman Gallery and City Press – prior to this date there existed only threats. May 22nd is deemed significant

as it marks the day *The Spear* was defaced and therefore its popularity and the controversy surrounding it decreased.

4.5 Data Analysis

As indicated before, the data corpus consisted of 1358 comments which was a substantial amount of data. In a bid to become familiar with the large number of data and achieve total immersion in the data, the researcher used content analysis. Content analysis was also used to count the frequency of specific codes/topics, which ultimately contributed to the creation of themes. Following the researcher's familiarisation with the data and quantitative indication of which topics were discussed most or least in relation to the newspaper articles, themes were identified. Upon the finalisation of themes, CMDA was used to analyse the discourses for the emerging themes.

Taking into consideration all the recommendations regarding both multimodal analysis and elements of SFL, a combined approach of these two methods was used to analyse the comments on the two articles. A linguistic analysis from a SFL perspective was conducted in order to determine how language was used to stylise identities. Through multimodal discourse analysis, this proposed study explored the multisemiotic texts on the Sowetan LIVE website and analysed how the combination of different modes i.e. words, images and videos, are utilised for meaning making.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Although the internet is considered "the most comprehensive electronic archive of written material representing our world and peoples' opinions, concerns and desires" (Eysenbach & Till, (2001:1103), online research continues to pose considerable novel ethical challenges (Elgesem, 2002). One of the fundamental issues surrounding internet-Based Research (IBR) is the conundrum around what constitutes 'public' and 'private' spaces as this distinction implicates informed consent, privacy and confidentiality (Eysenbach & Till, 2001; Convery & Cox, 2012). Eysenbach and Till (2001) argue that in order to determine whether informed consent is necessary, research must establish if the communication is private or public. Mann and Stewart (2000) comment that in order to establish the necessity for informed consent, most commentators differentiate between data collected from private or semi-private sources (e.g. email or 'closed' chat rooms) and data sourced through open access fora (e.g. newsgroups and bulletin boards). According to Mann and Stewart (2000:46), most

qualitative researchers would strive to receive informed consent for the former as communication in the latter are public acts – deliberately intended for public consumption. This perspective is shared by Eysenbach and Till (2001:1104), who argue that researchers “may conduct research in public places or use publicly available information about individuals (such as naturalistic observations in public places and analysis of public records or archival research) without obtaining consent”. Based on this perspective, the researcher refrained from acquiring informed consent as Sowetan LIVE is a public newspaper and the comments are accessible and visible to the public.

In terms of protecting the participants’ privacy, Convery and Cox (2012:52) argue that “if the research focuses on publicly accessible archives or environments intended by their authors/members to be public or performative, then there may be fewer obligations to protect individual privacy”. Additionally, the terms and conditions that all participants of Sowetan LIVE must accept before submitting their request to register to comment, state that the “use of this Web Site and the Web Site Content is entirely at Your (participant’s) own risk” (<http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/?filter=terms>). By consenting to this, the participants “indemnify the Owner against any loss, liability, expense, claim, penalty or damage, whether direct, indirect, special or consequential, arising from Your Use of or reliance on this Web Site or the Web Site Content, or any actions or transactions resulting therefrom, even if the Owner has been advised of the possibility of such loss, liability, expense, claim, penalty or damages” (<http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/?filter=terms>).

The privacy of the participants is increased by Sowetan LIVE as participants must create usernames (instead of their real names) when they register on the site and selected avatars as a profile pictures. The newspaper also provides a variety of avatars from which participants can select accordingly instead of uploading their authentic pictures. This also adds to anonymity and confidentiality.

4.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology of this study. As the study is of a qualitative design, the methods of use that were defined and explained, aimed to elicit and demonstrate the participants’ perspective. Therefore, the combination of the three analyses - content analysis, thematic analysis and computer discourse analysis - was used to ensure all

aspects of the comments were adequately analysed. The data collection method was linguistic observation and the use of screenshots to ‘download’ the material from the website.



CHAPTER FIVE

Stylisation, Construction and Reconstitution of (South) African Identities

5.1 Introduction

The discourses emanating from the comments draw a distinction between two opposing yet interrelated ideologies, namely: Jacob Zuma representing tradition perceptions versus Brett Murray who serves as a representative of modernity/unconventional identities. Therefore, this chapter aims to discuss these polarised yet connected sides by firstly analysing the symbolic meaning in the recontextualised semiotic material in the painting (*The Emperor's New Clothes, Naked Truth*) and its title (*The Spear – Powerful yet Harmful*). Secondly, a closer look at the identities of Zuma that Murray provides, gives insight into the constant reconstruction and disinvention of identities. Thirdly, the chapter highlights and analyses the various discourses related to the respective sides and consequently contradictions and blurriness that exist, which attest to the fluidity and complexities of identities (resulting from the interplay and interdependence of traditional and modern identities).

5.2 Semiotic Remediation and Identity

Murray employs semiotic remediation by drawing on existing signs to evoke debates about the current South African identity. According to Prior and Hengst (2010:1), semiotic remediation highlights “the diverse ways that human and nonhumans semiotic performances (historical or imagined) are re-represented and reused across modes, media and chains of activity”. Firstly, Murray draws on the numerous public discussions and debates surrounding Zuma’s behaviour and re-purposes these by creating *The Spear*. By re-using and repurposing the various conversations about Zuma including his marital and extra-marital activities, leadership style, attributes and unethical/dodgy behaviour, to create a painting, Murray practices a typical resemiotisation feature namely delinguistification. According to Habermas (1987), delinguistification describes the process of expressing typical linguistic actions into non-linguistic ones (cited in Iedema, 2010). Secondly, Murray draws on a very controversial symbol, the penis. Murray portrays Zuma as fully clothed with exposed genitals. Being in public with one’s fly open can be related to nakedness, manhood, vulnerability, embarrassment, negligence and foolishness. Thirdly, by referring to Zuma’s penis as *The Spear*, Murray re-uses a symbol very integral to the ANC’s and South African identity.

Fourthly, Murray draws on Zuma's face as a symbol – a face mostly associated with South Africa and the African National Congress. Fifthly and lastly, by publicly exposing and embarrassing the president – the man who rules South Africa, Murray appropriates himself as the brave boy in the tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and re-uses this tale to describe current day South Africa.

5.2.1 The Emperor's New Clothes

In order to explain how the above-mentioned tale has been remediated by Murray through *The Spear*, a brief summary of the tale is necessary. *The Emperor's New Clothes* is a Danish fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen that was published in 1837. The tale tells the story of a vain Emperor who was extremely obsessed with clothes to the extent that he changed outfits hourly to show them off to others. As word spread of the Emperor's habits, two scoundrels plotted a scheme in a bid to exploit the Emperor's vanity. They disguised themselves as two tailors who allegedly invented an exceptional method to weave a cloth so light and fine that it appears invisible. In fact, anyone who could actually see this 'magic' cloth would be deemed too stupid and incompetent to appreciate its quality. In his true vain fashion, the Emperor was so impressed by this invention; he paid the scoundrels to immediately start weaving a new suit for him from this invisible fabric. The Emperor was pleasantly pleased with himself as he managed to kill two birds with one stone: (1) acquiring a new suit and (2) discovering which of his subjects were incompetent and stupid.

As time progressed, the Emperor instructed the prime minister (a man known for his wisdom) to check in with the scoundrels. The prime minister found the two scoundrels hard at work, weaving away and out of fear of being considered incompetent or stupid, commented on the beauty of the garment (although he literally didn't see anything) and honoured their request for more money. After the scoundrels completed the fabric, they went to the palace to take the Emperor's measurements and simultaneously cut and sew the suit. The fabric was presented to the Emperor and even he could not see or feel anything but was delighted as it proved his competence. Following the completion of the garment, the scoundrels convinced the Emperor to take off his old clothes and put on his new beautiful clothes – this of course meant the Emperor was naked. The prime minister approached the Emperor and informed him that the community heard about this magnificent fabric and would love to witness his beautiful new suit. A ceremonial parade for the Emperor was arranged and although the people saw the Emperor was naked, no one dared say anything as they refused to be labelled

stupid or incompetent so they all commented on the beauty of the garment. A child who could only but believe what his eyes showed him proclaimed: “The Emperor is naked”. Although his father quickly silenced and reprimanded him, bystanders heard the boy and eventually after people kept repeating it to each other, everyone cried: “The boy is right! The Emperor is naked! It’s true!” (<http://deoxy.org/emperors.htm>).

This tale rings true in South Africa today. Zuma has been reported to have indulged in extra-marital affairs, has many wives and he even impregnated his friend’s daughter. The implication of the media reports is that he struggles to control his sexual appetite but he and his followers turn a blind eye to it. Despite his shaky reputation, ANC officials managed to persuade 2000 ANC supporters that Zuma was clothed in glory by organising a march. According to Bauer (2012), the march with 2000 ANC supporters was led by Gwede Mantashe (Secretary: ANC’s National Executive Committee – NEC), Tony Yengeni and Blade Nzimande who are both additional members of the ANC’s NEC. No one was brave enough to speak the visible truth about Zuma due to fear of rejection because as the popular ANC saying goes, “It is cold outside of the ANC”. Therefore, key ANC members continue to turn a blind eye in order to remain in the inner circles, unfortunately, at the cost of their reputation and most critically, to the demise of the country and its citizens. As evident in the following comment, some reason why Zuma should be pardoned based on his position.

Zuma is the president of the country whether we like it or not and he should be treated likewise.

However, this unconditional pardon and ignorance was contested by Murray when he exhibited *The Spear*. Murray, not intimidated by the fear of being labelled unfaithful or “³counter-revolutionary”, exposed Zuma’s nakedness and vulnerabilities. Participants on Sowetan LIVE also called the president’s behaviour into question:

If Mr President keeps his trousers zipped and behaves like states man, there will be no painting. But no our president goes around with open zip, engaging in unprotected sex with young hiv positive daughter of his comrade against her will.

³ “The term “counter-revolution” has become a euphemism in the ANC for anybody who does not think and act the way those in power do. From the opposition, to judges, the media, and even in their own ranks, the counter-revolutionary label is used to brand those who swim against the tide. It is also a weapon to cause alarm about some or other invisible threat to the party” (Munusamy, 2013).

Critical in this comment, is the assertion that Zuma's behaviour resulted into this crude exposure and embarrassment by Murray. Another participant argues that: *If Zuma didn't have such a reputation for using his bits so much, the painting would be unfair...but the fact of the matter is obvious to those who can see...*

By proclaiming that “but the fact of the matter is obvious to those who can see”, the participant affirms that Zuma's weaknesses is only visible to those who are willing to look past his glorified political past and power – the beautiful cloth that assumedly magically covers his nakedness.

Zuma's pose in the painting oozes of confidence, pride, power and delight and apparently, he is unaware of his nakedness hence he gloats. On the other hand, Zuma might be aware of his weaknesses but consciously decides to look the other way as evident in his pose. Therefore, although the crowd/country might be up in arms shouting about the troubles South Africa is facing, the leaders of our government and the president can decide to ignore these cries and continue striding along naively. Zuma's ignorance is similar to that of the Emperor who prioritised vanity and the ANC's NEC comparable to the Emperor's officials who kerbed their criticism and wisdom to save face. The focal point of the painting and the participants' comments highlight a link between Zuma, the man, and Zuma, the president. Unfortunately, being a public figure – more especially one that assumedly advocates cohesion and equality, the lines between private and public life are blurred as one's life is always up for scrutiny. Therefore Zuma's private life has an impact on his role as president, especially if there are conflicting principles / actions in his private life that undermine his professional responsibility. This blurriness of the two identities indicates the fluidity of identity and the realisation that identities cannot be neatly boxed separately.

5.4 Who is naked: Zuma or South Africa?

There is contestation about the actual meaning/intention of this painting. At face value, *The Spear* comes across as an attack on Zuma as it exposes his weaknesses. As noted by a participant:

the painting depicts what the president is, he is an insult and degrades woman, you will have to agree that the painting is spot on then.

The perception that the painting calls his character into question is shared by Zuma. In Zuma's application to the court to have the painting removed from the gallery, in the affidavit he states that:

the portrait depicts me in a manner that suggests that I am a philanderer, a womaniser and one with no respect.

Additionally, Zuma argues that: *(the painting) is an undignified depiction of my personality and seeks to create doubt about my personality in the eyes of my fellow citizens, family and children* (News24, 2012).

However, as the discourses emanating from the data will indicate, the artwork carries a deeper meaning in the text, the argument shifts from Zuma, and somehow *The Spear* significantly reveals current South Africa's problems. For Brett Murray, *The Spear* has a far broader meaning and serves a dual purpose: "It was a work of protest or resistance art, and a satirical piece – it is a metaphor for power, greed and patriarchy" (News24, 2012). In explaining the motivation behind his exhibition, Murray states that "from my perspective as an artist, I felt a sense of betrayal, where heroes of the struggle now appeared to be corrupt, power-hungry and greedy..." Although the interpretation of *The Spear* is bound to differ from individual to individual, in choosing the president of South Africa instead of another 'struggle hero' to be the face of such a critical painting, Murray evokes critical discussions about our leadership and the direction of our country. As argued by Murray: "Art can provoke debates however unsettling they be" (News24, 2012). Taking into account the diverse signs Murray draws on (discussed above) and the discourses that emanate from them, it can be concluded that he is protesting the current order of the country and 'stripping' South Africa, including Zuma, naked to enable and promote thought-provoking debates and actions.

5.2.3 *The Spear* – Powerful yet Dangerous

In dubbing the painting, *The Spear*, Murray draws on the history of the ANC and Zuma to create the painting and in so doing re-purposes and challenges the identity of the ANC and Zuma. *The Spear* illustrates Zuma in a pose reminiscent of Vladimir Lenin who was a renowned Russian politician and political theorist. Zuma is thus re-created as Lenin, and in the process re-fashions the ANC as a party that is apparently powerful but fails to notice their own vulnerability. Perhaps, this intertextual reference is drawn due to strong relations that existed between the ANC and the Soviet Union during the decades of the anti-apartheid

struggle. According to Filatova (2011), from 1961 – 1991, the USSR provided *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (ANC's underground military wing) with arms, ammunition and equipment. The ANC cadres and leadership also received military training from the USSR. According to Garth Strachan, a communist and MK veteran, in the 1980's, "there was a pro-Soviet hysteria amidst the ANC"; Lenin was a household name among the leadership of the ANC and SACP, as well as the older generation, the Soviet Union was a model for a future South Africa – the South Africa after the ANC's victory (Filatova, 2011).

Based on the history between the ANC and the Soviet Union, at face value, it becomes evident why Murray drew on Lenin's pose in relation to Zuma and more specifically the ANC. However, a deeper analysis reveals that by portraying Zuma in Lenin's renowned pose, Murray implies that Zuma, and more broadly, the ANC, share Lenin's political stance – Lenin and, consequently, the Soviet Union's values, continue to live on and are practised in the ANC. Lenin was a Russian revolutionist, political activist and politician who strongly advocated for a communist state in which the wealth of the country is shared equally among all in comparison to wealth being shared by a minority while the majority, that is, the working class, suffers. Therefore, Murray acknowledges and applauds the ANC's contribution towards fighting for a free and just South Africa.

However, the ANC did not only inherit positive values from Lenin and the Soviet Union. According to Vladimir Shubin, a key contact of the ANC and SACP at the Central Committee of the Communist, "the relationship between the USSR and South Africa, especially with the ANC and its allies, had a profound though contradictory influence on developments in South Africa. One has to admit that certain aspects of Soviet society such as leader-worship, dogmatism, lack of broad discussions before taking crucial decisions, limitations in inner-party democracy were not the best features to emulate" (Filatova, 2011). Consequently, it can be argued that in showing Zuma's genitals, amongst other reasons, Murray highlights the ANC's vulnerabilities to themselves and fellow South Africans.

Additionally, by naming the painting '*The Spear*', Murray appropriates the discourse related to the symbolic meaning of *The Spear* as an identity marker and simultaneously challenges this identity. *The Spear* was used as a weapon by Zulu warriors in battles against the British in a bid to prevent British invasion. Consequently, *The Spear* serves as a symbol of power and battle / struggle. In naming its armed wing, 'Spear of the nation', evidently the ANC proclaimed their willingness to fight for South Africa's freedom. This 'promise' of selfless

sacrifice for the struggle is appropriated by the ANC through the party's flag which contains a picture of a shield and spear. Furthermore, until today, *The Spear* is an important symbol of the Zulu ethnic group and is proudly paraded at important Zulu events like weddings and reed dances.

As noted above, *The Spear* is a weapon. Just like any weapon/tool, it is powerful and useful but it can ultimately be rendered useless due to wear and tear and negligent use. In selecting the shield and spear as symbols that form part of the ANC's flag, the following reasons are quoted: "to represent the early wars of resistance to colonial rule, the armed struggle of the ANC's former armed wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, and the ANC's ongoing struggle against racial privilege and oppression" (Official ANC website). Besides serving a historical symbol, it can be argued that almost 20 years into democracy, *The Spear* as a weapon is inadequate to use in combat against current South African challenges. As a developing country, strategies that include grooming accountable and responsible leadership, ensuring economic growth and sustainability and increasing skills among citizens through education, should be employed in the struggle. Murray highlights these pitfalls by exposing Zuma's genitals and appropriating the symbolic meaning associated with this, that is, the nakedness, vulnerability and shame. Additionally, in a more literal sense, titling the painting '*The Spear*' can be related to a penis. From a side view, a circumcised penis resembles the shape and formation of the head of a spear. Based on this analogy, Zuma's penis can also be considered a weapon – a weapon that creates life yet can be used very carelessly and bear consequences for both the owner and the country he governs.

Besides still representing and practising the values of the Soviet Union, Zuma and Lenin share a more personal characteristic, that is, reckless sexual behaviour. For decades, Lenin's death was attributed to his declining health after suffering three strokes. However, recent developments reveal that Lenin died due to syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection he allegedly contracted by engaging in unprotected sex with a prostitute. This medical fact was profoundly hidden from the public as Lenin feared the potential negative impact on his reputation (Britten, 2009). Similarly, in 2006, Zuma stood trial for allegedly raping a HIV-positive woman and indirectly implied in his statement that he showered immediately after the sexual encounter to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS. Moreover, Zuma has indulged in at least one recorded extra-marital affair with Sonono Khoza whom he also impregnated, apart

from his wives and 21 children. Evidently, Zuma does not always engage in protected sexual intercourse, which leaves him at risk to contract sexually transmitted infections.

The exploration of the symbolic meaning of the title of the painting and main 'attraction' of the painting, that is, Zuma's exposed genitals, enables a comprehension of the nuances and implicit views that underlie the painting. The complexity of this painting is undeniable yet at the very core, it ultimately boils down to a clash between traditional and modern identities, more particularly a clash between the old and new South Africa. Consequently, the rest of the chapter discusses the discourses related to the traditional and modern identities, respectively. The traditional perspective represents Zuma, while the modern perspective represents Murray. It is essential to note that some contradictions exist within the respective perspectives, which again highlight the intricacy not only of this painting but of the South African identity.

5.5 Jacob Zuma – Traditional Identity

Zuma presents himself as a man deeply rooted in his Zulu culture as he proudly practises polygamy. He sometimes appears in public in traditional Zulu attire and has had several traditional Zulu weddings. With Africa's colonial past and apartheid suppressing the expression of African culture and identity, most would be delighted to have an African president that passionately expresses and celebrates his African identity. During his rape trial, in explaining why he engaged in unprotected sex knowing he had no condoms and that his sexual partner was HIV positive, Zuma argued that in Zulu culture, leaving a woman in a state of sexual arousal was unheard of (Sesanti, 2008). Evidently, Zuma is a man who practises his culture rigidly especially when it benefits him, for instance, acquiring more wives and justifying irresponsible sexual behaviour.

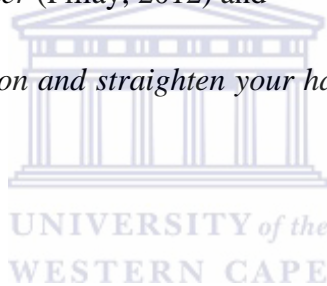
On the other hand, Zuma also draws on identity markers associated with modernity to construct his identity, more specifically his professional, presidential identity to fit into the 'Westernised' perception of a successful, powerful man. He dresses up in stylish suits, had a Westernised White wedding reception for his sixth wedding and he is entitled to first class treatment, which includes residing in luxurious homes, airtight VIP security and exclusive transportation. Zuma's constant shift from the traditional to the modern identity exemplifies the performativity of identity. As argued by Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004:105), "all identity performance; all identity is multiple and dynamic. We shift our identities from

moment to moment throughout any day, depending on what it is we're doing and who it is we're doing it with".

Evidently, in order to adhere to social stereotypes associated with being a president, Zuma has to draw on these modern identity markers – he adheres to the saying, “when in Rome, act like the Romans”. However, the president can be compared someone who is wearing a mask: When the mask is on, it is necessary that the individual acts in a particular manner but once taken off, Zuma remains who he was before he became the president, a polygamist, a Zulu man who is strongly rooted in his traditional ways irrespective of this professional mask. Zuma's traditionalist view is confirmed in the following statements made by him on different occasions:

I know that people today think being single is nice. It's actually not right. That's a distortion. You've got to have kids. Kids are important to a woman because they actually give an extra training to a woman, to be a mother (Pillay, 2012) and

even if you apply any kind of lotion and straighten your hair, you will never be White (Hans & Moolla, 2012).



The latter statement formed part of the controversial address during which Zuma perceived the *practice of having a dog as a pet and caring for it like a human being 'Un-African' and part of the White culture* (Hans & Moolla, 2012). Based on such bold statements, it is clear that underneath all the political correctness often required from politicians, Zuma as an individual unapologetically conforms to a patriarchal, traditional African identity.

Below follows a discussion of the discourses associated with Zuma which predominately symbolise a traditionalist perspective. Irrespective of the category (traditional vs modern) under which the discourses are allocated, there are numerous examples in these discourses where contradictions occur and this ultimately contributes to the push and pull between these oppositions and the intricate nature of identities.

5.5.1 Othering

Othering as a discourse in the text is based on race and tradition. According to Lister (2004:101), othering is a “process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is

drawn “us” and them – between the more and less powerful and through which social distance is established and maintained” (cited in Jensen, 2011:65). A participant on the Sowetan LIVE website states that:

the fact is that all African cultures teach respect especially to the elders. The African-wannabes does not have culture or traditions thus they always wish to destroy what Africans hold dearest to their lives...

Drawing from this comment, othering in this case is based on ‘tradition’, that is, which group has established traditional practices and which has not. The possession of these traditional practices that include respect is thus used as the line that distinguishes us and them – whoever has traditional practices is more powerful for they can proudly be dubbed ‘Africans’ which in this case is black South Africans. Judging from the use of the term “African-wannabes” and the knowledge of African culture, the commenter classifies him/herself as an African and simultaneously draws a distinction between the Other and the Self. According to Riggins (1997:1), “the Other is used to refer to all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different” – in this case, the other is the ‘African-wannabe’: the one who does not, unlike the African, have traditional practices and is therefore perceived as different from the African. Based on the fact that Murray transgresses African traditional ‘rules’ due to this lack of association with it, “Murray is the Other. By referring to tradition as something ‘Africans hold dearest to their lives’”, the participant affirms Giddens’ (1990) argument that although tradition is routine, it is meaningful as these practices provide guidance. Moreover, embedded in the participant’s comment is ethnocentrism which is defined as “seeing one’s own group (the in-group) as virtuous and superior, one’s own standards of value as universal, and out-groups as contemptible and inferior” (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006:926).

Othering is mostly perceived negatively as it typically can result in issues of inferiority and superiority, but othering can be considered positively as it can facilitate a process of self-identification. Riggins (1997:4) argues that “for a person to develop a self-identity, he or she must generate discourses of both difference and similarity and must reject and embrace specific identities”. Based on this, identifying similarities and differences between individuals can provide others with a point of reference – a sense of belonging, a sense of confidence in one’s epistemology. Riggins’ (1997) positive stance on othering as a conduit for self-identification is evident in the following comment:

But the underlying factor in all cultures is respect of other human beings though varying in degrees. The Africans do not mind if they see the breasts of a woman. It is not a big issue but the White people make it a big deal. The White people don't mind the genitalia that much but with the Africans it can start serious fight.

Based on this comment, it also becomes evident that besides othering providing self-identification opportunities, it also assists in determining behaviour boundaries associated with each 'group' irrespective of how stereotypical these distinctions might be. In addition, by drawing a comparison between Africans and white people, the participant unwittingly implies that white people are not African. Interestingly, although othering includes identifying similarities between groups, none of the participants mentioned similarities in their comments. This implies that as (South) Africans, we are obsessed with difference rather than similarities and this mentality filters into our behaviour and influences how we interact with individuals we consider different from us.

5.5.2 The exhibition of Black bodies

By portraying Zuma with his genitals exposed and exhibiting this painting at the Goodman gallery, Murray evokes amusement and mockery and appropriates slavery and colonial practices and discourses to construct the identity of black bodies. A participant notes that:

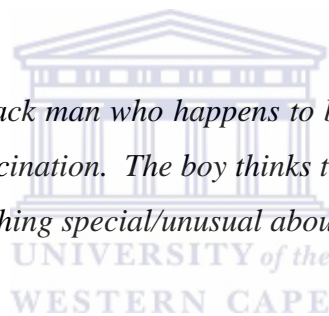
it is a matter of historical fact that White People have always been fascinated with black peoples private parts. White people took Sakie Plattie/Bartman (to Europe to display her because she had very big hips – they found that fascinating. White people also call the Coloured and the Koi related people as Hottentots – because they have a rather large clitoris – so they say...

N.B: the insertion of full stops into words is discussed more extensively in the following chapter.

As correctly stated by the participant, Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman was a slave who was exhibited at “freak shows” in London and Paris aimed at entertaining the audience with what Europeans classified as ‘unusual physical features’ (Davie, 2012). She had large buttocks and genitals and although these are relatively normal physical features for Khoisan women, they were portrayed as ‘strange’ by Europeans in the 1800s whose main objective during that period was to ‘scientifically’ prove their superiority against blacks who were deemed as inferior and oversexed (Davie, 2012). Just like slaves used to be exhibited for plantation masters to purchase, just like Baartman’s body was exhibited to entertain and belittle, Zuma’s penis is being exhibited and will be sold to the highest bidder.

Besides exhibiting Zuma’s penis for mockery and amusement, Murray’s portrayal of Zuma’s penis might stem from interest mixed with envy – envy about the attractiveness of Zuma’s spear. A participant comments that:

“Today, a White boy draws a Black man who happens to be a president of the Country with his penis hanging out – out of fascination. The boy thinks that because a Blackman has many wives – that means there is something special/unusual about his penis.”



Based on Ratele’s (2011) argument that manhood is associated with one’s sexual partners, the size of penises, claims by men about their sexual energy and the maintenance of a healthy erection, it is unsurprising that Murray would be intimidated by Zuma. As a man, Murray has every reason to be fascinated by what his fellow male counterpart has achieved as men are generally competitive in nature. For example, at 71, Zuma has four wives – three of which are half his age, suggesting younger women still find him romantically and sexually appealing. He is fertile as seen from the 20 children; his youngest child is only three years old, which warrants a continuation of the Zuma name. He is living the life most traditional African men can only dream of. Judging from the Ratele’s (2011) assertion of the characteristics associated with manhood, Zuma is confidently ranked higher than Murray. Ratele also implies that as a white man who previously enjoyed a superior status, enjoying the benefits of being of the ‘superior race’, the power this black man possesses seems upsetting to Murray.

One can easily assume that Zuma is bound to have the ‘perfect’ life due to his status as president and consequently owns South Africa’s ‘golden penis’, but Zuma’s reputation precedes his presidency. Before he became president in 2009, Zuma had been married four times, including marriages to a nurse and a member of the South African Parliament; has numerous children, including two with a successful Pietermaritzburg businesswoman; and he had to pay lobola for his then fiancées, Bongekile and Thobeka. Evidently, Zuma has been a favourite among women for a long period and continues to be, a feature Murray apparently associates with his penis.

Additionally, in exposing Zuma’s genitals, Murray might indirectly be trying to establish the uniqueness of Zuma’s penis – what is it about his penis that makes younger women marry him and consequently have unprotected sex with him? Consequently, Murray is not only fascinated with Zuma’s penis but he could potentially be envious of Zuma’s penis too. Based on research conducted during the 19th century proving that black men had larger penises, and a recent study, which found that continentally, men in Africa (a continent whose majority race is black) have the largest penises (Timeslive, 2013). As a white man, Murray might be feeling inferior to Zuma, especially since penis size is an indication of the realness of one’s manhood, as argued by Kilmartin (2000, cited in Lever, Frederick & Peplau, 2006). Murray’s jealousy would confirm Nicholson’s (1999) assertion that penis envy and the pre-occupation with penis size is inescapable in the male culture, which is dominated by competitiveness.

According to Saint-Aubin (2002), Aristotle believed that black men were hypersexual and that the “African male was ape-like, if not true ape; he shared the ape’s wild wanton sexual appetites, activities, and preferences”. The aim of this obsession as stated earlier was to prove that black people were ‘strange’ and did not fulfil the standard of a white body which ‘justified’ the inhuman treatment of blacks as they were considered sub-human. By exhibiting Zuma’s exposed penis, Murray, wittingly or not, dehumanises Zuma as only animals walk around with their genitals exposed. Consequently, Murray thus appropriates the slavery discourse that perceived blacks as less than human.

According to Saint-Aubin (2002), from their initial contact with dark-skinned people, Europeans have always been preoccupied about the sexuality of black men, more specifically the size of their penises. By assuming that Zuma’s penis is large and thick and portraying it as such without actual ‘proof’ of how Zuma’s penis looks, Murray draws on what is known as the ‘Mandingo theory’. For context purposes, in the 1975 film titled ‘Mandingo’, an African

male slave, Mede from Mandingo, was bought for fighting other slaves and breed chattel, as according to the film, a Mandingo was considered the most suitable for these purposes (Shimizu, 1999). Besides being a sex slave, Mede's plantation master's wife manipulated him into having sex with her, an act which ultimately resulted in his gruesome murder. A more loose definition of 'Mandingo' is a black male with a huge penis (Urban Dictionary).

Murray constructs Zuma's identity by drawing on the 'Mandingo' theory and the stereotypes associated with it. Zuma, just like Mede, is very fertile, considering that he has 20 children. Due to his physical vitality, Mede had sex with any given slave to produce more chattels which portrayed him as oversexed and a baby-making machine. Similarly, Zuma has four wives to satisfy his sexual desires which implies he has an extensive sexual appetite and based on his out-of-wedlock children, would "sleep with anything in a skirt" – even the child of a family friend young enough to be his daughter who allegedly pursued him. Based on these comparisons, regardless of the status a black man holds – slave or president of a country - he is still enslaved by his 'natural' obsession for sex and ultimately is mainly good for sex and producing off-spring, something Zuma has not failed in doing. Murray's construction of Zuma is consistent with the nineteenth century scientists' construction of black men as a slave to his sexual urges (Saint-Aubin, 2002).

However, Zuma's political / professional history serves as an example that this 'sex-obsessed, baby-making, mentally inferior weak black man' is a myth. As a black man, Zuma served as the ANC's Head of Underground Structures (*Umkhonto we Sizwe*) and the Chief of ANC's Intelligence Department in Lusaka (South African History Online). Additionally, he took over from late President Mandela as the facilitator in the Burundi peace process and consequently briefed the United Nations Security Council on this process (South African History Online). Today, he holds one of the most prestigious positions in the world – a president from the modest beginnings of the 'uneducated' child of a domestic worker and policeman. Obviously, in order to complete the necessary tasks outlined in the above positions requires complex abilities and Zuma has proven (by matter of being appointed in these jobs) that he is more than a sex-obsessed black man. He is more than his penis.

Furthermore, based on his portrayal of Zuma's penis, Murray evokes conversations among participants about Zuma's penis size as it appears on the painting. Upon enquiries of how big the penis is, a participant responded that it is the size of an elephant. An adult elephant has the largest penis among mammals or any other land animal, at 1.8m on average. In comparing

Zuma's penis to that of an adult elephant, the commenter feeds in to the discussion of African males and their allegedly large penises and the association between black men and animals.

5.5.3 Circumcision and Manhood

In the painting, Murray portrays Zuma with a circumcised penis and based on the assumed link between circumcision and manhood and the fact that Zulu men do not practise traditional circumcision anymore, Murray's satire evokes discussion and challenges about the construction of manhood in South Africa and brings to the fore an age-old question: 'What makes a man?'. For centuries now, male circumcision has been considered a cultural ritual boys must undergo in order to be perceived as men and in South Africa, this ritual is still practised by among the Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana people. Zulu, the ethnic group Zuma belongs to, stopped practising this ritual during Shaka's reign, as Shaka prioritised practising to become a warrior over spending time in the mountains 'becoming a man'. After an announcement by the Zulu king, King Goodwill Zwelithini, to re-introduce circumcision among Zulus, panic arose, especially due to the heightened circumcision related deaths and the HIV infection risk this traditional method poses (Smith, 2010). Concerned health practitioners working closely with Xhosas encouraged Zulus rather to undergo medical circumcision based on the number of health concerns reported in the Eastern Cape related to traditional circumcision, which included rotting penises, blood poisoning and death due to dehydration (Smith, 2010).

Due to the assumed link between traditional circumcision and becoming a man, medical circumcision is normally frowned upon as it lacks the stamina in terms of surviving in the bush/mountain and the critical life and manhood lessons shared by older men. Based on the assumption that the Zulus stopped circumcision in the 1800's, obviously Zuma did not undergo traditional circumcision and therefore, based on the above-mentioned association, he might not be considered a man by men from other ethnic groups. Irrespective of the dangers associated with traditional circumcision and the obvious fact that manhood isn't tangible or visible, i.e. non-existent of foreskin, the stereotypical link between manhood and traditional circumcision continues. As argued by a 19-year-old Xhosa initiate:

To us Xhosas, circumcision is what makes you a man. All my friends are doing it. Without it you are *inkwenkwe* – a boy – and you are not allowed to mix with men. Hospital circumcision does not count. You are not a man unless you have survived what I went through. No man can

be a leader without it. To me, now, President Jacob Zuma is a boy because he is an uncircumcised Zulu (Smith, 2010).

Judging from his reckless sexual and inappropriate behaviour, that is, corruption and rape charges and unsavoury alliances such as with the Guptas, one can argue that Zuma indeed does not display typical characteristics South African men should associate with. However, undergoing circumcision does not mean you will be a respectable man – some of these ‘men’ can and probably do commit adultery, various crimes, neglect and abort their offspring and so forth. Additionally, by definition, a man is an adult human male and in South Africa, males and females are legally considered adults when they turn eighteen years old. Consequently, Zuma has been considered a man for 53 years, irrespective of whether he had his foreskin removed or not. Clearly, various perspectives exist on the qualities associated with being a man and these conflicting sides serve as a further indication of the complexity surrounding the power of established traditional norms and their ability to either discriminate and belittle or promote proud, pompous and ignorant behaviour.

5.5.4 Racism

Racism emerges very strongly as an identity marker in the text used for this study and is mainly linked to the apartheid discourse. Apartheid was used as a strategy by the Afrikaner political party, the National Party, to ensure that whites’ had control over the economic and social system of South Africa while promoting racial segregation (South African History Online). The execution of apartheid and the implementation of its laws resulted in the suffering, humiliation and death of non-whites, especially blacks. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the reality of a white man (Murray) portraying a black man (Zuma) with his genitals exposed evoked feelings of racial discrimination. As stated by Braude (2012:63), “Murray was insufficiently attuned to the way his politically satirical representation of Zuma employs a visual language highly evocative of racist presentations and treatments of black male bodies”. Murray’s lack of awareness or ignorance about South Africa being a “country with a long and shameful history of publicly putting its black males in a state of undress led to the reopening of old and painful wounds” (Siyanda Mhlongo, cited in Braude (2002:63). An example of this state of undress comes from the apartheid era when black men had to “strip naked in public and like cattle – walk through a dipping tank filled with disinfectant in order for city officials to decide if they were healthy enough to live and work in the city” (Siyanda Mhlongo, cited in Braude (2002:63). From this perspective, *The Spear* appears as a

black versus white issue and provoked reactions from participants such as *the main problem in this country is White people and their racism*.

A second discourse linked to racism and apartheid is politics and serves as an example of how South Africa's political history continues to inform perceptions, actions and reactions. A participant argues that:

Well, I'm planning to paint Zille with her private parts exposed. I hope no White people will complain to my freedom of expression.

Helen Zille is the leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), a political party whose initial aim was to represent the views of ethnic minority groups in South Africa (white, coloured and Indian) out of "fear of being excluded in a country that showed signs of increasing Africanisation" (Southern, 2011:285). Currently, the DA is the official opposition party to the ANC - the ruling party, perceived to mainly represent blacks. Although the DA now claims to represent all racial groups in South Africa, "the majority of its parliamentary representatives and leadership at national level are white and is considered as the party that wants to bring back apartheid" (Southern, 2011:290). Based on this, it comes as no surprise that the participant draws a link between Zille and white people – Murray is white so he must be pro Zille, like it is assumed blacks are pro Zuma, so the rationale behind the participant's words seems to be that as blacks, we must also strike back because an injury to one is an injury to all.

The sharp distinction between white and all the other races in South Africa in this comment supports Mamdani's (2001) argument that each type of state formation creates political identities. In the case of apartheid, the state strongly relied on and used race as a political marker – these apartheid racial identities (black, white, Indian, and coloured) were enshrined legally and based on your allocated identity, unequal respective powers and rights were granted accordingly. This comment validates Mamdani's claim that the construction of political identities shapes our relation to one another, because more than an allocation of a political identity comes the construction of racial prejudices and stereotypes. Due to the mistrust, violence and cruel behaviour between blacks and whites during apartheid, a

behaviour the state allowed, racial divisions are entrenched into the South Africa society. Apartheid as a state formation shaped and continues to shape how blacks, white, Indians and coloureds relate to each other and the current government.

The second comment hints at how being racist or racism tends to be associated with individuals of white descent. As stated by a participant:

this painting is racist...I blame Jan van Riebeeck, Jan Smuts, Hendrik Verwoerd, Paul Kruger, DF Malan, PW Both for this.

Jan van Riebeeck, a European, docked his ship in the Cape of Good Hope to set up a refreshment point that was used by VOC ships en route to the Far East (South African History Online). The indigenous population who owned the land on which van Riebeeck carried out his project were the Khoikhoi and the San. This population unfortunately had no written culture or written title deeds, which resulted in van Riebeeck denying them the right to ownership of the land and recognition of their way of life (South African History Online).

Jan Smuts, Hendrik Verwoerd, Paul Kruger, DF Malan and P Botha all shared the vision of expanding the Afrikaner domination in pre-democratic South Africa. Hendrik Verwoerd and DF Malan are considered the architects of apartheid, by implementing a strategy that ensured whites controlled South Africa's economic and social system by advancing racial segregation (South African History Online). Apartheid, just like colonisation, consisted of forced, violent, inhuman and illegal trespassing and consumption of resources that never belonged to Europeans, British or Dutch. Therefore, it comes as second nature to black people to see the painting as a racist attack by a white person, as for centuries now that has been the norm.

Due to the construction of political identities and the unending and complex racial division in South Africa, a different, non-racial political identity was proposed for all South Africans, i.e. the Rainbow Nation. The comments below are in reaction to this:

until whit_e people learn that we are not to be forced to live life the way they want us to do, until whit_e people know their place in this revolutionary country, we have not achieved the total democracy. Nelson Mandela sold us to the pales...

The Rainbow Nation concept forms part of nation building in post-apartheid South Africa and the “rainbow metaphor projects the image of different racial, ethnic and cultural groups being united and living in harmony” (Bornman, 2006: 384). According to Coetzee and Wood (1993), nation building and unity was crucial as “colonisation and apartheid has left South Africa even more divided than inherent differences as it accentuated racial, ethnic and class differences as set groups against other groups; not only Black against White but also Black against Black, Coloured against Indian so forth” (cited in Bornman, 2006:387). Based on the comments, the Rainbow Nation is an ideal which has not actualised yet. Blacks are blamed for buying into Mandela’s vision of a non-racial South Africa in which black and white people civilly co-exist. Again, whites are associated with being racist as they are forceful as they want us (blacks) to:

live the way they want us to”. In addition, from these comments it is apparent that because “*White people don’t know their place in this revolutionary country and continue discriminating (against) us with impunity*”, total democracy has not been achieved. Evidently, freedom means more to black South Africans than voting and not being called a ‘kaffir’.

...we (Blacks) are our worst enemies when we continue clinging to fallacies of a non-racial South Africa and we cannot make some whItes to love us, period. There is a new scourge of racism that is upon us, racist hide themselves under liberalism and rights and their are continuing discriminating us with impunity.

The Spear and, in fact, the core of the *Hail to the Thief* exhibition, can be considered as an act of new racism. New racism is a civilised replacement for blatant racism and is “more indirect, more subtle, more procedural, more ostensibly non-racial” (Sniderman *et al.*, 1991:423). Murray draws on two types of new racism, namely symbolic racism and colour-blind racism. The former, as stated by Virtanen and Huddy (1998), refer to whites’ perceptions / feelings that blacks violate white values such as individualism and self-reliance, work ethics and

obedience. *The Spear* serves as a clear example of this perception, thus Murray criticises Zuma and ultimately blacks for their inability to control their sexual urges and misusing state funds and for inadequate service delivery (obedience). Additionally, Murray questions Zuma's work ethics and more specifically, his ability to lead a country based on his (black's) lack of obedience. Therefore, implicitly, Murray postulates whites as better individuals and leaders for the country.

Colour-blind racism is based on the convenient ignorance of the existence of racism and the attribution of racism to non-racial aspects such as market dynamic, natural occurring phenomena and cultural limitations (Bryd, 2011). As outlined in Chapter 3, this type of racism contains four frames, but the two evident in *The Spear* is minimization and cultural racism. Minimisation is the denial that racism affects people, basically that racism does not exist. Upon being questioned about his intention behind the painting or exhibition, Murray proudly proclaimed that "I am not a racist" (News24, 2012), which would imply racism played no role whatsoever in his exhibition. Yet, a closer look at *The Spear* and the exhibition contradicts Murray's minimisation of his racism.

As part of his *Hail to the Thief* exhibition, Murray has two paintings where arguably blacks are portrayed as animals: The first one dubbed "One party state" portrays a monkey holding his penis like one would while masturbating. South Africa is rumoured to be evolving into a one party state due to the dominance of the ANC (as discussed in Chapter 3) so essentially the state is the ANC, a predominantly black party and based on this, Murray appears to portray the ANC as 'masturbating monkeys'. The second one titled "The Party vs The People" illustrates two monkeys (one big, one small) apparently having anal sex with the big monkey (the state) penetrating the small monkey (the people). The entire exhibition is centred on the ANC so naturally, one can assume they are the (political) party Murray refers to and the people are South Africans, once again, the majority of which are black and said to be ANC supporters. In this light, Murray thus portrays the ANC as a big bully who is busy 'victimising' the very people it is supposed to serve (blacks). For someone who claims he is not racist, Murray clearly does draw on deep-rooted racist discourses, that is, the comparison of blacks to animals and the obsession with sex in his portrayal of blacks. With *The Spear*, Murray was finally bold and gutsy enough to put a face to his 'obsession' with blacks, sex, animals and their alleged connection.

The second aspect evident of colour-blind racism in *The Spear* is cultural racism which, according to Bryd (2011), is racism based on victim blaming, when whites identify cultural aspects of blacks' lives seemingly deemed informative to white culture. In short, cultural racism is fuelled by proclamations such as "that's just the way they are". A closer analysis of *The Spear* shows how blacks (once victims of colonisation and apartheid) are blamed for being sexually obsessed, 'immoral' and not possessing sufficient leadership and intellectual capacity to govern the country and whites disassociate themselves from being co-authors of such mentality. During colonialism, Africans were enslaved and mentally 'hypnotised' to believe their worth revolved around re-production and being the 'help'. Apartheid continued this mental oppression by creating laws and acts that prohibited blacks from getting quality education (Bantu Education and the Extension of University Act). Through this system, they oppressed most blacks economically, psychological and socially. How then can the victims be blamed for still carrying this burden of oppression and sometimes acting in accordance to this deeply rooted mental slavery? How then can Murray insensitively and unapologetically publish *The Spear* and consider it protest art against struggle heroes when struggle heroes only came into existence to fight against white-constructed apartheid? Consequently, by not acknowledging the role whites played in apartheid and its lingering consequences on the victim, Murray feeds into colour-blind racism.

However, although racism is clearly part of the South African context, the majority of participants argue that *The Spear* is not racially motivated and that the discussion around *The Spear* was fabricated to be about racism. For example, one of the participants states that:

Gwede and his cronies knew there aint nothing to this painting so the best root to go was to cry RACE...that's the only tool their have in their vocabulary.

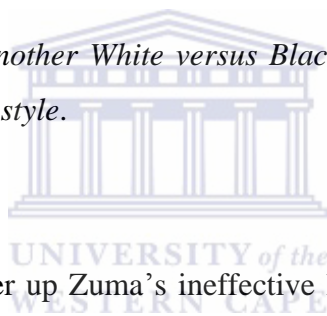
Yes, I agree, but let us discuss it when it is relevant and not make any issues a racial one...else it will lose its meaning...it fact I think it already has for many people.

These two statements highlight a very important shift in racism: Due to its 'overuse', the term 'racism' has lost its impact and the feelings (anger, disgust, fear) associated with it are not triggered upon the mention of the word anymore. Furthermore, it becomes evident that racism is associated with white people. It is racist of white Murray to exhibit a painting of

Zuma, but ⁴Ayanda Mabulu, who portrayed Zuma with genitals exposed twice, is not racist because he is black. This perception that only whites can be racist was extensively portrayed by the former president of the ANCYL, Julius Malema, who publicly claimed that whites had ‘white tendencies’ and were racist.

Apart from having lost its impact, racism is also being used as the easy way out –any criticism from a white person which seeks to question the government and its leaders, runs the risk of being termed ‘racist’ irrespective of its validity and truth. The ‘Racism’ card is easy, hoping to still play on whatever feelings blacks and whites (guilt, fear, anger, resentment, hatred, disgust) hold bottled up against each other and consequently unconsciously remind the two opposing sides why they can’t be united. This view is supported by a participant who claims that:

The ANC has turned this into another White versus Black issue.....when it’s a issue about Zuma as a president’s leadership style.



Evidently, racism is used to cover up Zuma’s ineffective leadership style – an old, existing problem (racism) is used to ‘justify’ a recent problem (Zuma’s leadership style) instead of finding effective solutions for both.

Although *The Spear* might be a product of new racism and evokes anger and resentment, the painting can be considered a scapegoat. Additionally, the argument that the painting was purely motivated by racism and the lack of critical evaluation also serves a scapegoating strategy. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, a scapegoat is “a person who is blamed for the wrongdoings, mistakes or faults of others”. The scapegoat theory by Allport (1958) is an important theory in exploring prejudice. According to Allport (1958:244), scapegoating includes projection, that is, “in other people we see the fear, anger, lust that reside primarily in ourselves. It is not we ourselves who are responsible for our misfortunes, but other people”. In arguing that Brett Murray is racist and disrespectful, racism can be used as a way of escaping / avoiding other issues (irresponsible sexual behaviour, greed, ineffective

⁴ Additional information regarding Ayanda Mabulu’s paintings and the analysis in relation to the *Spear* follows later on in the chapter.

leadership) that emulate from *The Spear*. Brett Murray could have simultaneously also used the painting as a scapegoat to highlight his disrespect for Jacob Zuma.

According to Zawadzki (1948:129), “blaming others for one’s own failures has a double advantage: it opens the safety valve for the pent-up aggressiveness and save face. To achieve this double purpose it is necessary to make up some semblance of a “proof” of the guilt on the part of the innocent victims”. This double advantage is evident in both situations: The government fails to provide adequate services to South Africans but shifts the blame to racism and have the history of apartheid as proof. In the same breath, Brett Murray disagrees with Jacob Zuma’s sexual life so he publishes a painting to illustrate his ‘aggressiveness’ but has enough proof (Zuma’s recorded extra marital affairs and children out of wedlock) to make Jacob Zuma feel guilty.

5.6 Murray – Modernity Identity

Murray is a white South African artist born during the apartheid struggle and is not naïve, the implication of his skin colour has in the formation of his identity. As argued by Murray:

I am a White, middle-class cultural hybrid. This was and is my comfortable and uncomfortable inheritance. The political and social force beyond the confines of my family formed a system which protected and infringed on me, empowered and disempowered me, promoted and denied me (South African History Online).

Based on this statement, it is clear that personally, Murray is caught in the dichotomy of what being white represents – pre- and post-democratic South Africa. Additionally, his statement encapsulates the challenges with identity formation especially in a country where race and class were, and to some certain extent, still are strong determinants of identity in South Africa.

From a professional point of view, Murray’s controversial artwork testifies to his personal curiosity and perception of South African identities and the discourses that inform them. According to Artbio (1998), “Murray’s work addresses the wars of the cultures, the clash between Afro- and Euro-centrism, the old and the new South Africas, often using easily recognisable media images with the addition of a subversive and bitterly funny twist”. Draper (online) supports this perspective and states that Murray questions the notion of what it means to be African from an ideological sense including, what it means to be white and

South African. Moreover, the concept of multiple identities is a prominent theme in Murray's work (Draper, online).

Murray's urge and necessity to constantly re-define and deconstruct African identities, situates him as a modernist – an individual who provokes novel discussions about issues and topics that are considered cast in stone. As argued by Murray: “with my work I hope to critically entertain. Through satirical and tragic reflections on South Africa, I hope to shift people's perspectives and change people's minds, indulgent, arrogant and pretentious as this might sound” (Artbio, 1998). This is supported by Draper (online) when she states that “he [Murray] attempts to unite South Africans through a shared uncertainty and an acknowledgement of the cultural ambiguity that underpins South African society”.

Based on the conflicting perspectives and the respective discourses and experiences that inform these, it comes as no surprise that the clash between Murray and Zuma would result in critical discussions about African identities. Below follows a discussion and analysis of the discourses associated with Brett Murray and once again, the contradictions evident within some of the discourses.

5.6.1 Service delivery

Jacob Zuma is known for his relentless fight against apartheid and is a well-respected comrade in the African National Congress. From a young age, he devoted his life to politics – formed part of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, went into exile, returned to South Africa and together with other influential leaders ensured that all South Africans attained political freedom and that all South Africans were treated ‘equally’, regardless of their skin colour. After 20 years of democracy, the country is truly “a better place to live in than it was in 1994” (State of the Nation Address, 2014). However, its government spheres are being haunted by inadequate service delivery, prompted by issues such as corruption and maladministration (as discussed in the Chapter 3).

By exposing Zuma's genitals, Murray highlights a social cancer among (South) African politicians and leaders, that is, corruption. As mentioned by Murray, referring to his motives behind *The Spear*:

From my perspective as an artist, I felt a sense of betrayal, where heroes of the struggle now appeared to be corrupt, power-hungry and greedy, or where ideals that many had died or made sacrifices for were abandoned on the altar of expedience.

Contrary to popular belief, corruption is not merely about the squandering of public financial resources:

Corruption consists of the subordination of public interests to private aims involving a violation of the norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequence suffered by the public” (Alatas, 1968:12, cited in Ndikumana, 2006).

According to Pillay (2004), corruption appears to be one of the stumbling blocks in South Africa’s path to sustainable development. In this case, Zuma has been linked to various corruption projects, that is, the arms deal saga that undermines the welfare of the public. Additionally, having four wives and 21 children bears a strenuous financial burden on the country as his wives will receive presidential spousal support and his children need to be supported financially as well.

Based on Alatas’s assertion that corruption involves the subordination of public interest, the ANC – more specifically, their reaction towards *The Spear* can be regarded as corrupt. An apparent attack on the president’s persona is not of public interest – it is a personal matter to be addressed by Zuma. Galvanising support for a march for a personal matter does not serve the interest of the public. The following comment serves as an indication that certain participants are saddened and angered by the ANC’s response.

I don’t understand why the ANC is involved in it, it’s a personal attack to Zuma not the ANC. They have enough problems to worry about e.g. Youth, Unemployment, Poverty etc.

Judging from the above comment, confusion exists among these participants about why the ANC is fighting Zuma’s personal battles, but not appearing to be championing more important things. Among the ANC’ and Zuma’s initial responses to the publishing of *The*

Spear, both parties acknowledged that the painting is about Jacob Zuma, the individual. Upon learning about *The Spear*, the ANC took legal action against Murray and the Goodman Gallery because, according to ANC spokesman, Jackson Mthembu: “It is the ANC’s view that the image and the dignity of our president as both president of the ANC, president of the republic and as a human being has been dented...” and “...that this distasteful depiction of the president has violated his individual right to dignity...”. Based on the reasoning in Zuma’s affidavit, it is obvious that he considers *The Spear* to be about him. As stated by Zuma, “in particular, the portrait depicts me in a manner that suggests that I am a philanderer, a womaniser and one with no respect”. (News24, May 2012). Zuma adds that:

it is clear in the eyes of those viewing the portrait that it seeks to depict me in a bad, undignified and degrading manner...in terms of the theme of the exhibition, my portrait is meant to convey a message that I am an abuser of power, corrupt and suffer political ineptness” (News24, May 2012).

Unmistakeably, the ANC and Zuma agree the essence of *The Spear* revolves around Zuma as an individual. Why then go through such great lengths to protect his ‘dignity’? What about the dignity of those South Africans who still use the bucket system for sanitation, do not have access to clean water and housing? Presumably, as the ruling political party of the country, the ANC is failing to deliver services and solve social problems faced by citizens. These citizens are well within their rights to question the ANC as the ANC promised to ensure “a better life for all”. This is seen in the following statement from a participant:

So the fight of the penis continues “sigh”, if only they spent so much energy on defending the kids who are raped every second, this country would be so much better but I guess Msholozzi’s penis is much more important.

Besides highlighting the prioritising of Zuma’s private affairs by the ANC and its supporters and the lack of the prompt delivery of basic services, this comment raises a critical point, namely the government’s inability to implement its policies. In 1997, the ANC led government introduced the concept of ‘Batho Pele’, a strategy adopted to transform service delivery by always putting the people (citizens) first. “Batho Pele is an initiative to get public servants to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement” (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003:8). The Batho Pele strategy was employed three years after the ANC became the first democratic ruling party. Fifteen years on and South Africans still complain about service delivery – evidently, the

people are not being put first. Based on the outcry from the ANC about the painting and their strong convictions about how the artist imposed on Zuma's right to dignity, the right to dignity of millions living in poverty and being terrorised by criminals is of less importance. According to the Batho Pele Handbook (2003:25), "Batho Pele acknowledges the fundamental vulnerability of the human condition, which unites the end-user with the service provider in their mutual quest for recognition, which can only be achieved through respect for the other's dignity as a person". As stated above, in order for Batho Pele to actualise, the dignity of the ordinary person needs to be embraced and considered.' According to *Oxford Online Dictionary*, dignity can be defined as being worthy of honour or respect. Judging from the dissatisfaction highlighted by participants about the government's effort in adequately serving citizens as outlined by the Batho Pele principle, one can conclude that the government does not regard its citizens as worthy of respect.

Batho Pele resonates closely with Ubuntu, more specifically one of the core values of Ubuntu namely, communalism. According to Kamwangamalu (1999), "communalism is a value according to which the interest of the individual is subordinate to that of the group". The ANC rallied all South Africans to march to the court on the day of the hearing to show their disgust and disapproval of the painting to protect one person. The painting is not related to South Africans or the ANC – it is solely about Zuma and his weaknesses. As stated by a participant:

and now ANC wants everyone to march against this painting, for someone who thinks with this D!ck!!! piss off Mantashe & Mthembu...why must we keep on defending the indefensive???

Based on this comment and the ANC's request, it is clear that the ANC does not put the larger group's needs before the individual's needs. Human and physical resources would rather be spent on ensuring Zuma's reputation is saved than for crucial issues such as undelivered textbooks, staggering unemployment and crime figures and a weakening economy. In relation to Ubuntu, is the African practice termed *ukusizelana*. According to Sesanti (2008), *ukusizelana* is a belief in African culture that one does not desert a human being during trying times, but instead assist and embrace them. Based on the comment about 'defending the indefensive', it is clear that supporting another human being during hardships has a limit: if the individual does not learn from their mistakes then s/he deserves to face the consequences of his / her actions.

To strengthen the participants' perceptions that the government wastes its time and resources on insignificant issues, it is necessary to explore which other issues made news headlines the same time as the release of *The Spear* but received minimal attention (at that time if ever). The heightened awareness about the existence of *The Spear* occurred during the week of 17 May 2012. During that week on the 15th of May, the North Gauteng High Court heard an urgent application presented by Section 27, Hanyani Thomo Secondary School and Tondani Lydia Masiphephethu related to the failure by the DBE and the LDE to secure and deliver textbooks to schools across Limpopo for the first half of the 2012 academic year (Veriava, 2013). This court application came after the Department of Basic Education already missed two deadlines for delivering the textbooks. On the 22nd of May, the ANC announced that they are seeking a court interdict against the Goodman Gallery and Brett Murray. On the 27th of May, the *Sunday Times* published a front page story dubbed "Suffer the children" with a picture showing a school in Limpopo (Selowe Primary) where learners are being schooled under a tree – each grade had a designated tree which served as a classroom (Govender, 2012). Two days after that, 29 May, the ANC and 2000 ANC supporters marched to the Goodman Gallery to protest against *The Spear* (Bauer, 2012). The failure by the ANC government to invest the same amount of effort and zeal into addressing Grade 10 learners who were without textbooks for six months and solving the Selowe Primary School crisis (after claiming they would), justifies the participants' notion that the ANC government acts carelessly (if it acts at all) to urgent, social problems.

The ANC is also accused of turning the publishing of the painting into a racial issue (as explained in the Racism section above). This argument is supported by the fact that the ANC never took legal action against Ayanda Mabulu, a black artist who has published two paintings with Jacob Zuma's private parts exposed. The first painting dubbed *Ngcono ihlwempu kunesibhanxo sesityebi* (Zulu translation: Better poor than a rich puppet), portrayed Zuma naked with a crutch around his penis. This painting also featured various international leaders such as Desmond Tutu, Barack Obama, Pope Benedict XVI and Robert Mugabe, yet there was no noticeable outcry. His second painting, titled *Umshini Wam*, portrayed Zuma dressed in his traditional Zulu attire, with his right leg raised and his penis and buttocks slightly exposed. The exhibition of *Umshini Wam* (My Rifle') followed only a mere three months (August 2012) after the exhibition of *The Spear* in May, 2012. Upon *Umshini Wam*'s exhibition, the spokesperson of the ANC, Keith Khoza, stated that "the ANC condemns the

painting in the strongest terms and that the party was considering taking action” (Bauer, 2012). Needless to say, this threat to take ‘action’ never became a reality.

This inconsistency was noticed and questioned by participants on the Sowetan LIVE comments pages:

why did they (ANC) never take Ayanda Mabulu to court” and “I actually think that Ayanda’s work is far more hard hitting and relevant. He is a talented (if somewhat angry) young man and that passion comes out clearly in his work. The whole issue is that no issue has ever been made about Ayanda’s work. Why? Possibly because it cannot be racialised to set us against each other for the ANC’s benefit?

From these comments, it is evident that the ANC is not consistent or fair – they pull the race card when it suits them and the interests they are trying to advance. So essentially the ANC is busy playing emotion politics by turning *The Spear* into white vs black issue, the ANC relies on the emotions of the past and what whites put black people through during apartheid to rally support for the party from blacks. Ultimately, by using the racism card at their convenience in an attempt to cover up Zuma’s weaknesses, the ANC leaders do not only damages their reputation as a political party, but also diminishes the progress of this country and its people.

Not only is the ANC government selective in whose dignity and rights they protect or not, their selective nature includes whose art will be found offensive or not. As stated earlier, Mabulu and Murray both portrayed Zuma naked; in fact, Mabulu did so twice and was never legally ‘reprimanded’ for it. Murray’s and Mabulu’s motivation for these paintings are significantly similar and seek to question and challenge the current leadership. So which criteria was used for determining legal action? When questioned about the reasons behind the painting *Ngcono ihlwempu kunesibhanxo sesityebi*, Mabulu argues that Zuma’s penis supported by a crutch is a metaphor for the perception that Zuma’s sexual escapades are out of control; the crutch implies he needs help to overcome the issue (Worldart, 2012).

In defence to *Umshini Wam*, Mabulu stated that “I respect the ANC liberation elders”. “They worked for the interests of the people. [But the ANC of today] is filled with greed and the lust of capitalism. You are reacting defensively; you are saying you are being attacked. I’m not attacking you; I’m respectfully asking a question” (Bauer, 2012). Murray stated that “*The Spear* has a far broader meaning...it is a metaphor for power, greed and patriarchy hence it’s a work of protest or resistance art, and a satirical piece” (News24, 2012). Moreover, the ANC was unimpressed by Murray using the ANC logo without their permission - One of Murray’s paintings at the exhibition was the ANC logo with the inscription ‘FOR SALE’ on it (Nkomo, 2012). Mabulu’s *Umshini Wam* has the ANC logo with a red question mark printed on it...Did he obtain permission from the ANC? Based on the ANC’s inconsistency in portraying Zuma as a victim, their discrimination also victimises Murray.

A participant argues that:

The complete over reaction to this painting has polarised the nation more...



The comment notes a crucial aspect with regards to government and service delivery, that is, a reaction, if there’s a lack of service delivery and citizens complain there’s an obvious expectation that the government would react and seek applicable solutions. However, based on the increase in strikes and marches recently, clearly the government is failing to react timeously and even accordingly, if at all. Service delivery issues appear to get little to no reactions while petty issues such as *The Spear* get an immediate reaction, attention and solutions to such a large extent that resources that are being ploughed into it far supersede its value and its consequences on national development. Based on the complete ‘under’ reaction from government officials, it’s therefore unsurprising that the neglected and marginalised citizens ‘over’ react through illegal and violence-driven marches and strikes. Consequently, we have the governing party blowing small things out of proportion while disgruntled citizens blow up critical national issues, implying that citizens are left to fend for themselves.

5.6.2 Changing African values

5.6.2.1 Respect

According to Cattell (1993), respect for elders (often meaning males who are not necessarily old), old people, aging parents and ancestors is an African value held in high esteem. Cattell's (1993) argument is echoed in the following comment:

It is not African to disrespect another person especially the one as old as your father.

Zuma is a 71-year-old man and according to societal norms, he is an elder. According to Cattell (1993: 14), "the more senior a person is, in years of kinship status, the more respect that person should receive from the juniors" (Cattell, 1993:14). As the following comments will indicate, this compulsory, ideal elderly respect is not granted to Zuma and therefore Cattell's (1993) argument is discredited. In actual fact, Zuma is criticised for considering himself worthy of respect. As stated by a participant: "*If Zuma wants to be respected, then he must start respecting himself first*". Based on this comment, it is apparent that respect from others is preceded by self-respect and self-respect involves conducting one in a manner that is dignified and exudes integrity. Zuma has been involved in various acts that do not exclaim a high level of self-respect – he's an elderly man that has extra-marital affairs and illegitimate children, unprotected sex with a HIV-positive woman and once faced 783 counts of corruption.

Another participant argues that:

U r mad!! There are elders who sodomise & rape toddlers. The community burns them. IF ur behaviour, is like Zuma, where I come from we don't give u that much respect----formicating with random women whilst u r married.

This comment brings to attention two issues. Firstly, respect for elders is now behaviour based. Secondly, even though individuals are considered as elders, it is not assumed that they will lead and guide accordingly. Obioha and T'soeunyane (2012) conducted research in Lesotho to explore the relevance of the elderly in our current globalised world with an ever-changing family structure. According to Popenoe (1995, cited in Obioha and T'soeunyane, 2012:258):

Traditionally, the elderly were respected for their wise advises and were trusted not to lead the society astray, which the younger leaders were believed would do. The elderly were also trusted for this role because they were believed never to deviate against the societal norms, and elderly state could there for in this case be regarded as prestigious.

The participant's comment indicates that there's been a shift in the role of elders in our societies and Popenoe's (1995) argument might be losing relevance. If present day elders are raping toddlers then evidently they cannot be trusted to lead our societies, for they destroy the very societal values and norms they ought to protect. Therefore, Zuma, as an elder cannot be trusted to guide our country because his risky sexual behaviour and alleged criminal associations should not form part of our moral fibre. His behaviour as an elder cannot be considered wise which attests saying to Tom Wilson's proverbial saying that "wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes age just shows up all by itself".

Evidently, respecting elders and other individuals is now conditional – respect is now based on appropriate behaviour and is not automated by age, which disproves Cattell's statement that 'unconditional' respect for the elderly is still a vital African value. This finding is supported by Oppong (2006:664), who indicates that "increasingly, old age per se no longer commands respect. Respect in old age is increasingly viewed as something that must be earned". However, the views expressed in this text are inconsistent with the claim that respect is given to adults who are successful in life and often success is measured by the amount of money one has (Oppong, 2006). Zuma, as a president earns a substantial amount of money including various fringe benefits in his role as president of South Africa. His well-known wealth has no impact on the level of respect participants give him – it is purely based on his behaviour. A participant argues that:

so what nelson mandela was never depicted Thabo was never depicted because of their good moral conduct keeping one wife as a state president this picture shows exactly who he is and nothing else.

In the comment above, the participant reasons that former presidents, that is, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, never had such embarrassing paintings published of them as their public

behaviour earned them the necessary respect from South Africans. On the other hand, Zuma's behaviour inspires such demeaning paintwork about him irrespective of how successful he is.

In African societies, respect is also shown in knowing one's 'place' that when to talk and most importantly, what you are permitted to talk about and to whom. Sex, more specifically, conversations about sexual matters are considered as a no-go zone between adults and children. As stated by Kayonde (1986:51, cited in Familusi, 2011):

In traditional Africa, it is certainly not easy to talk about sex. This is probably because it is not customary to do so. Most African parents never talk about sex relation to their children. As far as they are concerned this is not a realm considered completely a taboo.

Based on this awkwardness regarding sexual matters, one would expect commenters to avoid this awkward topic as Zuma as an elder. Conversely, commenters engage in an explicit conversation regarding Zuma's penis size and sexual behaviour. A participant states that:

Zuma should be happy that in the imagination of arists, he aint got a small willy ☺. Another participant enquires about the size of Zuma's penis: "Anyhow, to those who saw it...how big is it?"

Although the participants are not directly referring to the president's real size but his imagined penis on the painting, such discussions are tricky and can be regarded as triggers permitting public dialogues about an elder's penis size.

In addition to triggering conversations about Zuma's penis size, suggestive comments are made about his condom use.

Atleast if JZ was wearing a Choice or Lover's Plus condom, none of this would've spiralled out of control...Nx.

According to Obioha and T'soeunyane (2012:254), one of the roles of an elder is "concerned with protection of the younger members of their families and society against immoral behaviours". The comment above discredits Obioha and T'soeuyane's (2012) assertion that elders aim to guard younger individuals against immoral behaviour. In actual fact, Zuma as an elder threatens the wellbeing of the youth by not leading an exemplary life. This comment highlights various manners in which Zuma promotes immoral behaviour. Firstly, it draws on the fact that Zuma engages in unprotected sex, which is evident in the large numbers of

children he has and that he admittedly had sex with a HIV/AIDS positive woman without a condom. Due to Zuma's irresponsible sexual behaviour, things have literally spiralled out of control: he has 21 children, and engages in extra-marital affairs, thus the country disrespects him as a president and a man and this is vindicated by actions such as the creation of *The Spear*. Secondly, the comment touches on Zuma's responsibility to practise what he preaches and also to be that 'responsible' South African citizen he frequently calls on South Africans to be. In his 2009 speech, Zuma announced progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS by announcing new treatment processes. During this speech, Zuma reminded the audience and South Africa at large that the new and increased treatment options aren't a replacement for safe sex. As stated by Zuma "...it does not mean that people do not have to practice safer sex. It does not mean that people should not use condoms consistently and correctly during every sexual encounter" (The Presidency). During the same speech, Zuma placed individual responsibility on every South African to ensure they take the necessary steps to avoid HIV/AIDS infection by not exposing themselves to risky situations. Clearly, Zuma is aware that unprotected sex heightens one's chances of contracting the HI-virus, but why doesn't he lead by example as an elder?

According to Obioha and T'soeunyane (2012: 253), elders play a significant role in the socialisation: "elders are responsible for teaching the younger generation 'the proper ways' of behaving, the good virtuous persons they have to be in the future, the kind of credibility, integrity, value, honor and responsibility they should develop". The fact that a younger individual had to 'remind' Zuma about the use of contraceptives, that is, proper sexual behaviour, indicates that elders are not exempted from undignified behaviour. Additionally, the participant's suggestive comment serves as an example that teaching and learning is reciprocal, the youth can also teach elders something or remind them of lost values and *vice versa*.

By suggesting certain condom brands, that is, *Choice* or *Lover's Plus*, the participant aims to highlight how easily Zuma could have prevented the consequences of his extensive sexual desires. *Choice* is the free condom brand supplied by the government. *Lover's Plus* condoms are priced very reasonably, to allow affordable access to preventative measures without the stigma of using a 'free' condom and providing users with more design options, i.e. flavoured and studded condoms. The participant does not question Zuma's sexual drive – he/she is merely trying to indicate the increased level of access to condoms and the different,

affordable designs available and that at the very least, Zuma should have considered these options like he expects the rest of the country to do.

In the second comment about Zuma's condom use, the participant uses euphemism, irony and sarcasm:

Zuma is a fine upstanding man. Y did the artist not showing him upstanding with a condom on as a massage to the youthless masses???

Referring to Zuma as an upstanding man might be used in an ironic manner. Firstly, it might refer to his status in society, he is a respectable man. Secondly, being an upstanding man can refer to the fact that his sexual health is intact as he does not struggle with erections. Based on the fact that he is an upstanding man with a fully functional penis, the artist should have rather portrayed an erected penis with a condom on to promote responsible and safe sexual behaviour as suggested by the commenter. Obviously, this is not the message Zuma portrays, hence the irony and sarcasm in the comment.

The second comment refers to "youthless masses" suggesting we are living in communities in which the youth is non-existent. Taking the context of the comment into account, our youth is failing to exist and be active citizens due to lack of role-models who advocate exemplary behaviour, more specifically in terms of sexual behaviour. Consequently, the youth engage in risky sexual encounters and contract HIV and STIs. Due to this behaviour, HIV/AIDS continues to be the biggest cause of death among the African youth and this justifies why we have 'youthless' masses.

5.6.2.2 Polygamy

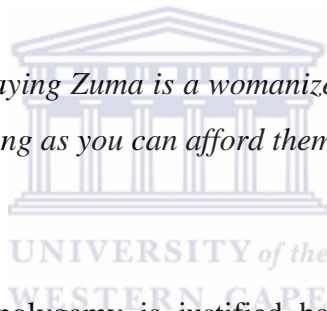
In most traditional African cultures, a man is permitted to have numerous wives. According to Labeodan, polygamy "raises the social status of the family concerned. It also increases corporate existence. Polygamy is a source of labour and an economic asset" (cited in Familusi, 2011). Additionally, Oshitelu (n.d) claims that traditionally, the practice of polygamy aimed to cater to the sexual needs of men and decreasing the chances of promiscuity and prostitution (cited in Familusi, 2011). The perception of men as polygamists is echoed by Ghana's former president, Kwame Nkrumah, who states that: "However unconventional and unsatisfactory this way of life may appear to those who are confirmed

monogamists, and without in any way trying to defend my own sex, it is a frequently accepted fact that man is naturally polygamous” (MsAfropolitan, 2013).

As stated above, polygamy was allowed in order to prevent men from being promiscuous and having sexual relations with sex workers. This strategy, however, has proven unsuccessful with Jacob Zuma as he continues to engage in extra-marital affairs regardless of having four wives able to attend to his sexual needs. Evidently, Zuma continues to be promiscuous regardless of his polygamist status. His behaviour thus qualifies him as a philandering polygamist.

However, due to the link between tradition and polygamy, the boundary between practising one’s tradition and pure irresponsible sexual behaviour can get blurry. This confusion is evident in the following comment:

What are you all guys mean by saying Zuma is a womanizer??coz its not against our culture to marry more than one wife as long as you can afford them.



By the participant stating that polygamy is justified based on one’s financial situation, polygamy is associated with wealth, superiority and ultimately ‘glamour’. By using the term ‘afford’, wives are portrayed as goods readily available for those who have the means. This perception is supported by Moller and Welsh (1985), who state that contrary to popular belief that polygamy is widely practised, it entirely depends on the status and wealth of the husband. Consequently, polygamy is a privilege and not a norm reserved for wealthy individuals who wish to mark their high position in society (Moller & Welsh, 1985). Based on this, Zuma is thus justified in wanting to showcase his riches and solidify this high standing in cultural hierarchies.

Although Zuma has every right to be a polygamist, such rights come with responsibility and limitations, and polygamy is no different. There is a clear line between a polygamist and an adulterer – by engaging in sex with women other than his wives, Zuma can be declared an adulterer. The following comments illustrate the clear difference between practising polygamy and being an adulterer:

Sure, its within Jacob rights to marry multiple women. But remember, he had 'runins' with a few women he wasn't married to, Khosa's daughter got impregnated by Jacob and they are not married" and

"Don't promote promiscuity under the guise of culture. Culture dictates that you marry a woman first then make babies with them, you don't impregnate a lot of women and later marry them whilst still having countless other illegitimate kids with other women.

According to the *Oxford Online Dictionary*, adultery is defined as “voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse”, and polygamy is “the practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time”. Based on this definition and the participants’ arguments, it’s clear that Zuma not only practises polygamy, but he is also an adulterer as he has engaged in several extra-marital affairs.

Furthermore, as a staunch traditional Zulu man, one would imagine that Zuma bears cognisance that his Zulu culture does not condone adultery. According to Mutwa (1998:631), in Zululand, all adulterers, perverts and rapists, were given an ant-death. This simply consisted of opening an anthill and the condemned man was spread naked over it with his hands and feet pegged to the ground and honey spread on his belly (cited in Sesanti, 2008:373). Based on this, Zuma deserves to perish at the hands of ants as adultery is considered a deadly transgression, but the non-applicability of this rule to Zuma indicates again how he strategically manages to draw on both traditional and modern discourses in constructing his identity.

Although polygamy is part of the African culture, its relevance needs to be reviewed especially on a continent that has the highest rates of HIV/AIDS infections. Engaging in unprotected sex with various partners in order to have a large family is risky. As argued by Fumilusi (2011), “If culture is a way of life, it must not be destructive. The various cultural practices on sex that are possible ways of spreading or contracting HIV/AIDS should be revisited. When necessary the risky aspects should be discarded”. In the same breath, although polygamy is a traditional practice and consequently shapes our lives, traditional

practices should not be self-defeating, and Zuma's manner of practising polygamy is life-threatening and irresponsible.

5.6.3 Homosociality

According to Flood (2008:341), "homosociality refers to social bonds between persons of the same sex and more broadly, to same-sex-focused social relations". In addition, Flood (2008:341) states that men's lives are highly organised by relations between men. Based on this disposition, the assumption can be made that men, especially Africans (i.e. black men) would be offended by *The Spear* as it is interpreted as an insult to men. The following comment illustrates this:

I was expecting every man whether Black or White to condemn this cause its not only an insult to zuma but all men...but just becoz SA is still divided ppl use their hearts, colour and anger to judge the pres forgetting that this trash of a painting exposes all men.

Individuals who share a bond are governed by particular values and norms. Consequently, the participant assumed that due to the bond men share, this painting would be condemned by all men as they could probably identify with the humiliation associated with one's genitals being exposed publicly. Additionally, the participant's outcry is further justified by the sad realisation that Zuma was exposed by another man, an individual who is supposed to understand Zuma's viewpoint as they apparently share a social bond. According to Flood (2008:341), "men attempt to improve their position in masculine social hierarchies by using markers of manhood such as occupational achievement, wealth, power and status, physical prowess and sexual achievement". Based on these markers, Zuma ought to be among the highest levels in the masculine social hierarchy: he is the head of state, most powerful man in parliament and South Africa, he is wealthy and considering his indulgence in various extra-marital affairs and four wives to fulfil his sexual needs, he scores relatively high for sexual achievement.

According to Flood (2008:341), "males seek the approval of other males both identifying with and competing against them". The exhibition of the painting serves as an example of this

competitive nature: on the one hand, that the artist applaud Zuma for being an incredibly powerful man by comparing him to the powerful African weapon; on the other hand, the artist exposes Zuma's weakness in administrating the country and his inability to resist sexual temptations. The 'spear' can be harmful as it induces pain and leaves scars if not handled correctly. So while Murray identifies with Zuma as a powerful man, he challenges and exposes his weakest points. Although Zuma is higher ranked in the masculine social hierarchies, through *The Spear*, Murray questions whether Zuma is deserving of this high ranking and ultimately questions the criteria, that is, markers of manhood which is used to determine masculine hierarchies.

According to Flood (2008:4), "male homosociality plays a crucial role in many contexts in perpetuating gender inequalities and the dominance of particular hegemonic masculinities". However, by publishing *The Spear*, Murray challenged this hegemonic masculinity, informed by homosocial bonds by highlighting dissatisfaction with the status quo view of masculinity, more specifically Zuma's portrayal of masculinity. As argued by Morrel (2012: 17), Zuma, as the head of the country, unapologetically advocates for masculinity that is "heterosexist, patriarchal, implicitly violent and that glorified ideas of male sexual entitlement, notably polygamy and conspicuous sexual success with women". Although not all men share Zuma's perception of masculinity, he is the president and indirectly his perception of masculinity may affect South African laws and policies, strategic decisions and events. A current example of this patriarchal disposition is the Zuma-led ANC decision (after the 2014 elections) to only deploy one female as premier in the Northern Cape and give the rest of the seven premier positions in the seven ANC led provinces to men. It is this type of masculinity that Murray challenges and ultimately disassociates himself from.

This disapproval of certain masculine markers displayed by Zuma and consequently the association with him, are also echoed by a participant who argues:

LOL, you are clutching at straws my brother, the painting speaks of Zuma and Zuma alone...There are so many sexual connotations when it comes to Zuma, I am surprised you'd even make it about Black people.

Based on the marginalisation of Zuma and his type of masculinity, evidently, there appears to be an alternative notion of what masculinity means. This shift in mind-set is highlighted by what is termed crisis in masculinity” by scholars in the fields of gender and sexuality (Morrel, 2012). According to Frosh *et al.* (2002:1, cited in Walker 2005:161), this crisis is embedded in the instability and uncertainty over a social role and identity, sexuality, work and personal relationships. Walker (2005) comments that South Africa’s contemporary crisis of masculinity and male sexuality came about from the transition from apartheid to democracy (especially gender transformation), the adoption of the Constitution and the increased public awareness of a human rights culture.

According to Morrel (2001), in attempting to comprehend the “crisis in masculinity”, the concept of the “New Man” emerged. This comment from a participant indicates the fluidity of masculinity and how masculinity is transforming: *A person is a reflection of his character – I also changed my womanising ways, its just childish.* Whereas having multiple sexual partners once qualified one as a man, in these times, it qualifies one as being childish – the manhood markers mentioned by Flood (2008) are changing.

According to Morrel (2001), the New Man defines “men who do not subscribe to stereotyped ideas such as that all women are nags, that women’s place was in home, or that women should look nice but say little”. New men were in favour of women’s liberation, looked after the children, supported women in their desire to develop careers and were sensitive and introspective people”. It is the New Man who challenges promiscuity and lack of respect for women, who argues that:

YES!! If u father a child with another woman whils u r married, U r a Womaniser PERIOD!
(from participant).

It is from this New Man that men stand for the truth regardless of brotherhood as in the following comment from a participant:

If a man steals someone, does he get angry if you tell other people he is a thief? Jacob is a philanderer and a womanizer, the painting echoes the sentiment.

These comments support Morrel's (2011) claim that certain South Africans are accommodative of the changes occurring in masculinity. Based on these comments, the participants do not entirely reject the old view of masculinity (at least not in these comments) but do advocate for new ways of being – they advocate for men to be responsible and faithful in their marriages and challenge and crucify the glorifying of immoral deeds such as having multiple sex partners.

The sharp contestation about what constitutes being a man in South Africa supports Morrel's (2011) argument that in South Africa, three hegemonic masculinities, Black urban, rural Africa and white hegemony, exist. In this case, the Sowetan LIVE readers (mostly black men, aged 35+ and predominantly Gauteng based) present the black urban hegemonic masculinity. The rural Africa is presented by Zuma (traditionalist, home based in a rural village) and the white hegemonic masculinity by Murray. It goes without saying that different groups are bound to have their respective notions of what masculinity entails, as socialisation and values and norms tend to differ. Irrespective of this, it is clear that the stereotypical perception of masculinity is quickly becoming outdated, as men are disassociating themselves from troublesome links such as “dominance”, “assertiveness”, “abusers”, and “patriarchs”.

5.7 Deracialisation versus Racialisation

A ‘race’ continuum exists in the text, to a certain extent, *The Spear* and the comments that follow are irrelevant to race. However, in order to understand the discursive identities, race has to be taken into account. According to McIlwain (2013), with deracialisation, no attention is called to race and consequently particular racial prejudices are limited – we are all human beings. So whether you are black or white, it is evident that Zuma's administration is not adequately delivering services to South Africans. Regardless of one's race, logic dictates that polygamy is related to unprotected sex which heightens the infection risk of HIV/AIDS.

However, racialisation is crucial in understanding the various racial perspectives regarding *The Spear*: the issue has to be racialised and emphasis must be placed on the racial difference (McIlwain, 2013). It is only in being black that one assumedly understands the

pain and humiliation of discrimination. Only a white person presumably undermines the value of respect in African culture. Only a white man would be obsessed with the private parts of a black man.

Although the above distinctions and assumptions are not necessarily accurate, by deracialising or racialising, participants have a voice that backs up their argument. Additionally, in some cases for instance, both deracialising and racialising is employed.

5.8 Defacing of *The Spear*: More than pure vandalism

The Spear was defaced on the 22 May 2013 by two men. Although at first glance, this act was perceived as criminal and barbaric, a closer look at the perpetrators and their motives expand our understanding of identities and complexities.

The painting was defaced by a taxi driver, Louis Mabokela and a businessman, Barend le Grange. The manner in which Mabokela and le Grange defaced the painting, their selected resources and respective motives are not arbitrary. These continue to expose the complexities and contradictions in identity formation. According to Bauer (2012), le Grange admitted to painting a red X over the genital and facial area of the art piece and claims that his act of defacing the painting symbolised a spoilt ballot paper – “The first X was against ANC-led government who I believe are going the wrong direction and the second X was against people making a mockery of our president”.

A ballot paper is normally used to vote and according to voting rules and regulation, voters’ have a right to refuse to reveal which party they voted for. An ‘X’ indicates one’s selection of a respective candidate. Le Grange appropriates this idea but alters the meaning. His vote is not a secret. He is anti-ANC and instead of using the X to select his preferred candidate, the X in this case indicates disapproval. However, although he is anti-ANC, he disapproves of what he considers to be “mocking the president” and draws a distinction between Zuma, the individual (president) and Zuma, the leader of the ANC, and it is the latter role which he criticises.

The appropriation of a spoilt ballot paper carries deeper meaning than Murray publicly announcing his disapproval of the ANC. Equating his defacement of the painting to a spoilt ballot has both a literal and figurative implication: the painting is literally spoilt – covering it in paint resulted in the erosion of the piece of art. Figuratively speaking, spoilt ballots are

acknowledged, counted but are generally ignored which is most likely the fate of le Grange's bold act – numerous newspaper articles will be published and some discussions will follow but his act just forms part of statistics. He will be famous for defacing *The Spear* but he ultimately is just one of many South Africans who question the government and needs them to be accountable, but are ignored just like spoilt ballot papers.

Mabokela smeared the surface of the painting with black paint and although the smearing was done randomly, the colour of the paint he used is symbolic. The colour black normally represents darkness, dirt and 'evil' in comparison to white which is considered the purer, cleaner colour. In using black paint to smear the painting, Mabokela ensured that Zuma's face and genitals are hidden, figuratively, he hid Zuma's scandals and the controversial incidents associated with him. Black being a non-transparent colour, Mabokela figuratively blocked the transparency Murray was hoping to create.

Normally, committing a crime is perceived negatively and the alleged perpetrators tend to be engulfed by shame, fear and regret. However, this is not the case with Mabokela and le Grange, as they are proud that they committed this crime. Le Grange claims the painting was causing unnecessary racial tensions which could result in civil war (Knoetze & Maphumulo, 2012) and based on his concern for 'the people', he decided to deface the painting. In justifying his criminal offence, Mabokela claims the painting was an insult to Zuma as he is a parent. According to Knoetze and Maphumulo (2012), Mabokela stated that he was proud of smearing the artwork with paint and "felt free because the president is covered already". Based on these justifications, it is evident that instead of a criminal offence, this incident is considered a self-sacrificing act – le Grange did it for South Africans and Mabokela for Zuma's dignity. This self-sacrificing act was acknowledged and appreciated by fellow South Africans at the perpetrators' first court appearance where onlookers thanked them for defacing the portrait. Therefore, although crime is generally negative, depending on the intention and the assumed consequences on others, crime can be reinvented to be positive.

5.9 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter illustrated how the publishing of *The Spear* ignited conversations and in this case, resulted in a clash between traditional and modern identities. Ultimately, this clash fuelled discourses that speak to the deconstructing and dis-invention of various aspects of African identities - discourses filled with contradictions and nuances that testify to

the notion that identities are fluid and ultimately performative. Additionally, the contradictions evident in the two identities illustrate the interdependence between tradition and modernity and how inseparable the two are.

The underlying theme of this chapter, and at the heart of all this conflicting discourses and identities, is how the youth is challenging and interrogating traditional norms and values. A mental shift is occurring among the Sowetan LIVE youth. This youth is challenging the government and their commitment to the country and its citizens instead of blindly supporting the ANC based on their struggle history. Furthermore, this youth is distancing itself from perceptions of ‘manhood’ solely based on circumcision, financial status or promiscuity, but includes attributes such as being responsible, respectful and faithful. This youth argues against the tradition of ‘unconditional’ respect and recognises that respect is earned irrespective of age, gender and status, and that negative criticism about one black person’s behaviour is not an attack on the entire black race or necessarily racist.



CHAPTER SIX

Disinvention and reconstitution of languages

6.1 Introduction

Languages, just like race, are invented concepts. As argued by Makoni and Pennycook (2007:2), “these (African) languages were identified, delimited and mapped, the way their relationships were interpreted, and even the ways they were described in grammars and dictionaries were all heavily influenced by an ideology of racial and national essences”. Consequently, if African linguistics is to be progressive, it is imperative that it disassociates with the Western framings of language, that is, enumeration of languages and perceiving languages as abstract and static. This disassociation entails a disinvention project and, according to Makoni and Mashiri (2007:82), “the starting point for a disinvention project should be the mixtures (as evident in urban languages) rather than the indigenous languages, and the ability of Africans to draw upon linguistic material from different social/linguistic systems to communicate”. In fact, drawing upon various linguistic material from linguistic systems was standard African social and linguistic behaviour in pre-colonial Africa. Therefore, “mixing is socially embedded in African historical and contemporary social experiences and uses of language” (Makoni & Mashiri, 2007:82). This means that hybridisation of linguistic resources is not necessarily a new phenomenon in Africa. This disinvention project is not only limited to the linguistic practices but includes the reconstitution of even cultural and religious resources.

Grounded on this rationale, this chapter aims to analyse and discuss how the urban languages used by Sowetan LIVE users fuel this disinvention project, and then reinventing them in internet discourses.

6.2 Hybridity

According to Howard (2008), mass media has often been severely criticised for mostly serving the interests of institutions instead of local communities. Additionally, Howard (2008:492) argues that even participatory websites encourage user participation; these technologies are generally “produced, maintained and funded by the institutions”. Sowetan LIVE serves as valediction of Howard’s argument. Even though the website encourages user participation through enabling the posting of comments, the respective guidelines (that is,

strictly [Standard] English, no vulgar, no personal attacks) and censoring of ‘unacceptable’ language continues to serve the interest of the newspaper more than that of its readers. Due to this friction between institutional protocol and user participation, Sowetan LIVE (un)intentionally becomes an “arena where other registers of cultures encounter, interrogate and contest one another in new and unexpected ways” (Appadurai & Breckenridge, 1995:5). Sowetan LIVE becomes a zone of contestation – a place where “national, mass and folk culture provides both mill and grist for one another” (Appadurai & Breckenridge, 1995:5). Therefore, due to the clash of diverse ideologies and perspectives, hybridity is inevitable.

As stated in Chapter 3, instead of the predicted gloomy consequences of globalisation (language death, dominance of ‘Standard’ English, Westernisation), it has occasionally increased hybrid linguistic practices and most importantly, prompted the critical review of existing terms such as multilingualism, language and code-switching –terms which are failing to adequately describe current day linguistic practices. Instead of being the exception, hybridity is now the norm and is defined most adequately by Rubdy and Alsagoff (2014: 8) as “a code for creativity and is used to describe not merely innovations in terms of linguistic features but increasingly the dynamics of mixed genres, styles, practices and discourses that make up the complex linguistic repertoires of people today”. The rest of the chapter illustrates various examples and ‘types’ of hybrid linguistic practices and illustrate how Sowetan LIVE serves as a zone of contestation.

6.3 Urban Languages

The South African constitution grants eleven (11) languages the privilege of formal status in South Africa, meaning these languages are to be used in official institutions such as government, schools, media and so forth. The acknowledgment of more ‘indigenous’ languages as formal languages aim at recognising the diverse South African traditions and to confer equal status to South African languages. Based on this argument, languages that do not enjoy or meet the criteria of official endorsement are marginalised and their contribution to the South African tradition is diminished.

South Africa, as is the case with most countries, is influenced by globalisation and urbanisation with increased mobility of human beings, cultures, ideas and languages. Therefore, the superficial division of languages neglects to take into account how current day South African linguistic practices draw on and are influenced by various linguistic resources.

A discussion of the comments below analyses how various linguistic forms and symbolic signs are drawn for communication purposes.

1. *Shame my President but u yekela ku thanda skirt na wena....* [Shame my president but when will you stop loving skirts]

In this example, the participant not only draws on various language systems and their grammatical rules (English and Zulu), but also on cultural symbols to bring a point across. Although the statement is a combination of two languages - *Shame my President but* (English) *u yekela ku thanda skirt na wena* (Zulu and some English), it is noticeable how the grammatical rules from both languages are intertwined. The English term, **but** is accurately used as a linking word that indicates contrast even though the contrast is expressed in Zulu. The insertion of **u** transforms the statement to a question and the presence of **na** makes it specifically a tag question. *Na* is an informal slang word used to seek clarity or confirmation about something as one would do with the tail of a tag question. The use of *na* is similar to that of *né*, which is an ‘informal’ manner of asking for confirmation especially in spoken discourse and is used mostly by Afrikaans speakers. For instance, “you locked the door, né?”

A skirt is a cultural symbol associated with women as it a garment normally worn by women. In this instance, it is re-purposed and skirt refers to women. This cultural reference ties in with idioms such as “skirt chaser” and “would jump at anything in a skirt” which all refer to a man who loves sex and pursuing women.

2. *Zuma xi randza fakafaka.* [Zuma loves putting it in.]

This comment exemplifies the multiple meanings of words and how different linguistic resources are drawn on in meaning-creating. When translated, the comment implies that Zuma loves fucking. In most Bantu languages, the word “faka” means to insert something. Based on the allegation that Zuma is a womaniser, assumedly Zuma loves ‘inserting his penis

into vaginas’. Additionally, the word “faka” sounds similar to ‘fuck’ and in this context, “faka” could be used as a euphemism to avoid censorship. Therefore, in using “faka” emerges an intelligent dance between toning down on vulgarity and being explicit about the ‘physical action’ - “faka” still explicitly describes the how intercourse occurs (the constant insertion of a penis) but without the vulgarised stigma attached to the term ‘fuck’.

3. *All I’m saying is, yenza kwabanye ongathanda kwenziwe kuwe* [All I’m saying is, do unto others as you want others to do unto you.]

This statement exemplifies the combination of various religious and cultural backgrounds and values. The principle outlined in the comment is known by Christians as the Golden Rule and forms part of the Sermon on the Mount as preached by Jesus. The Buddhist belief “Karma” relates to this principle as it affirms that what goes around, comes around, i.e. if you do good, good things will happen to you and *vice versa*.

Modern day culture has become increasingly individualistic. Based on such an individualistic culture, the message can be intended for either or both Zuma and Murray. For years now, Zuma has come under fire in the media for his extra-marital affairs and criminal activities including the arms deal, rape case, the ‘Gupta Gate’ and more recently, the Nkandla scandal. Based on the karma principle, following his deceitful ways, it is only fitting that he tastes some of his own medicine in the form of a humiliating and distasteful painting.

Murray received a great amount of media exposure due to the controversy surrounding the painting. He literally became an instant celebrity. Although only he knows the true intention of his painting, that is, good or bad, karma will catch up with him.

4. *Ek is cool net die drama maak naar Zuma could have embraced this picture instead...*

This statement not only contains a hybrid use of Afrikaans and English but it contains words that have been re-purposed (Prior & Hengst, 2010). According to Standard English, the word

‘cool’ refers to a fairly low temperature – not too hot and not too cold (Free Online Dictionary). However, ‘cool’ no longer serves only as a temperature indication but can now also be used to refer to someone’s wellbeing which is the case in the statement, i.e. participant is doing fine. In addition, referring to something or someone as ‘cool’ illustrates that the individual or object is interesting or fun.

Similarly, the word ‘naar’ is an Afrikaans adjective that has been re-purposed from its original medical context to that of everyday use. When someone is ‘naar’, the individual is nauseous, which could imply a biological condition that might require medical attention. However, the participant is not physically ill but the drama surrounding Zuma and *The Spear* makes her feel uneasy and figuratively speaking, “sick to her stomach” as she feels the drama is unnecessary.

The concept of ‘drama’ is also appropriated and used to indicate the participant’s perception about the reactions surrounding *The Spear*. The term drama is commonly used in association with theatrical performances, television, radio or cinema but not real life as drama is orchestrated to draw the audience’s attention and ‘keep them glued to the screen’. By referring to Zuma’s reaction as drama, the participant suggests that the reaction is pretentious, a performance exaggerated to keep the audience entertained and therefore it sickens her. Gutierrez, BaquedanoLpez and Tejeda (1999) argue that “hybridity can be perceived as the collusion of histories, epistemologies and cultural and linguistic practices” and the aforementioned comments serve as examples as their communicative purposes derive from various sources.

As mentioned afore, hybridity is common in participatory web and it brings to attention the complex interdependence between the vernacular and institutional. The use of the concept of vernacular is borrowed from Howard (2008), who describes vernacular as a non-institutional discourse alternative to the dominant discourse / language (institutional). In this case, English is institutional as it is the language of use made mandatory by the institution, that is, Sowetan LIVE, and therefore all other alternative languages are non-institutional as they are not endorsed by the respective authorities.

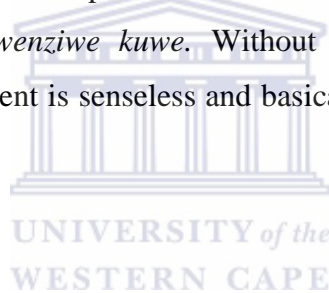
Irrespective of the seemingly polarised sides, Howard (2008:498) contends that “though not directly subordinate by being part of an institutional structure, the vernacular is structurally secondary because it relies on an institution from which to separate itself”. Howard’s

argument of interdependence is evident in the following comments – although vernacular is not completely considered inferior, one way or the other it draws on English structurally for communication purposes.

The structure of the following comments serve as an indication of the dialectical relationship between non-institutional discourses (vernacular) and English – without the reliance and understanding of both these language systems, the intended messages captured in these comments would be (partially) lost to the receiver.

All I'm saying is, yenza kwabanye ongathanda kwenziwe kuwe.

The core meaning of this comment is captured in the latter part, which is written in Zulu, i.e. *yenza kwabanye ongathanda kwenziwe kuwe*. Without the comprehension of what the vernacular part means, the comment is senseless and basically boils down to ‘All I’m saying is’.



Zuma o rata Nnyo go feta anything in the world. [Zuma loves vagina more than anything in the world.]

Similar to the previous example, the participant’s point is strategically allocated within the part of the comment expressed in Setswana. Directly translated, the comment states that ‘Zuma loves ‘pussy’ (vagina) more than anything in the world’ and although the participant could have easily used English, it wouldn’t have the same ‘punch’ as English tends to numb expression in an attempt to be polite. ‘Nnyo’ is perceived an extremely vulgar word and although it’s an alternative word for vagina, in reality is considered ‘lower’ than a vagina – a ‘nnyo’ is just unsophisticated and loose.

wa repa. wa jola. corruption. We don't have a president. U thanda sex. [He rapes. He has extra-marital affairs. Corruption. We don't have a president. He loves sex.]

Unlike the previous examples, this comment contains key English words which partially explain the point the participant makes. In piecing these words together, that is, 'corruption', 'We don't have a president', 'sex', a logical conclusion could be that due to engaging in sex and corruption, the president isn't considered fit enough to lead the country. Conversely, it is more than just sex but the accusation of rape ('wa repa') and continuous extra-marital affairs ('wa jola') that justifies his love of sex ('u thanda sex') and ultimately his lack of leadership skills. In the same way that 'nnyo' cannot be accurately described in English, neither can 'jola' – to 'jola' is perceived negatively in most South African communities as the act is normally done secretly. Additionally, the word 'jola' directly implies the occurrence of sexual intercourse or some form of physical engagement while 'extra-marital affair' remains suggestive and thus 'jola' just like 'nnyo' hits home quicker with the intended impact.

The structure of the afore-mentioned comments suggest that although English plays a role in facilitating understanding and 'equality' among commenters, when it is used interchangeably with non-institutional languages, certain messages are best articulated in vernacular or slang – words / expressions that are used in South African communities in response to local issues such as *The Spear*. Although this online platform restricts participants by insisting that comments be posted in English, participants are challenging this provision and appropriating the space by incorporating local languages and or idioms / words which add to the localisation of online platforms incorrectly assumed to be purely English.

Gutierrez, BaquedanoLpez and Tejada (1999) argue that hybridity and diversity serve as the building blocks of Third Spaces. These third spaces serve as platforms where new identities can be formed; an alternative identity which could be the combination of two polar sides. Gutierrez *et al.*, (1999) claim that hybridity serves as a breeding ground for third spaces, and is validated as the comment section of Sowetan LIVE serves as an example of a third space, a platform which serves as a third alternative from either vernacular or English; a space where the hybridity is the norm and selected as the alternative identity in an attempt to dissociate with the rigidity typically imposed by respective vernaculars and English.

6.4 Peripheral Normativity

Unapologetically, Standard English is used by many as criteria to determine individuals' English proficiency, and based on this rating, their position in Kachru's circles of Englishes (1985). Blommaert, Muyliaert, Huysmans and Dyers (2005) argue that societies characterised by inequality result in the production of different ways of life based on various rules, norms and opportunities. However, the complexity of such societies and the respective norms of each 'group' are undermined by homogenising, a tendency to make certain customs and norms the 'centre' (normally those of the middle class) and classify the rest as peripheries (Blommaert *et al.*, 2005). Blommaert *et al.*, (2005) argue that this division proves troublesome as it is perceived that failure to meet the norms of the centre results in immediate downward mobility and being marginalised. In a bid to normalise peripheral norms, Blommaert *et al.*, (2005) argue for the recognition of peripheral normativity which is described as "a normativity that relates to the sociology of the periphery" instead of the sociology of the centre.

South Africa is a country marked by various inequalities due to its socio-political history and current reality and therefore the country is stratified based on different norms. In obligating the use of only English in posting a comment, Sowetan LIVE superficially creates a 'centre' and marginalises other language systems. The comments in the following discussion below contain numerous grammatical errors and although this places them in the periphery in comparison to Standard English, this variety of English and language practices reflects their context – these language practices are their normal practices.

1. *if I was having power I was going to mobilise all the people who are against this and go there straight to destroy it*

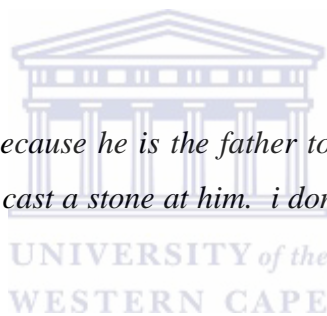
The comment above borrows the structure of a conditional sentence but instead of using either first, second or third conditional, the participant combines all three. The use of all three at once is ungrammatical as the three conditions respectively are of a contradicting nature, that is, the condition in first conditional is open – it is still possible hence the condition will be in the present tense. In contrast, the nature of the condition in second conditional is improbable while the nature of the condition in third conditional is unreal and therefore the

condition is expressed in the past tense. By using the verbs ‘was’ and ‘having’ (have) together, there is no clear distinction between the types of conditions.

In isiZulu, *if I was having power* can loosely be translated to *ukuba benginawo amandla*. From a native speaker and thinker’s point of view, the desire to have power is in the present – the individual wants power to do something with it now. Consequently, when translating his expression into English, the verb ‘having’ is selected as it represents an action that is currently occurring in comparison to ‘had’ – a verb typically associated with the past for instance “I had breakfast” and the need to have power is currently continuous.

In English, the word ‘straight’ indicates direction; however, in this case, it serves as an indication of a high level of intensity in meaning or doing. By declaring that he/she would go straight to the museum and destroy the painting, the participant seeks to emphasise his/her sheer sincerity and dedication to cause significant damage to the painting.

2. *I feel sorry for the president because he is the father to his children those who feels that they are not sinners let them first cast a stone at him. - i dont know where tribalism get in this issue*



The comment above exemplifies how direct translation from the periphery to conform to centre norms may result in the loss and misjudgements of periphery nuances. The clause ‘*because he is the father to his children*’ is not usual in Standard English as by referring to someone as a ‘father’, he presumably has children. Consequently, this duplication of information can easily be considered irrelevant and ungrammatical. However, the duplication can be regarded as emphasis meant to highlight the fact that Zuma is a father and consequently he deserves respect as it is shameful for parents to be exposed in front of their children. In order to understand the emphasis on fatherhood, it is necessary to remember how children are valuable especially among Africans, as they continue the family’s legacy and are the pride and joy of the family. Moreover, the emphasis on fatherhood is related to the prestige and responsibility associated with the role as you were partially responsible for creating a human being. Consequently, it is apparent how saying ‘he is the father to his children’ is influenced by cultural background associated with the topic.

According to English norms, it is the duplication of information that is normal in relation to various South African languages. For instance, in Xhosa one would state: *Ngutata wabantwana bakhe* which literally translates to *he is the father of his children*. In Afrikaans, it is not unfamiliar to hear *Hy is die pa van die kinders* which means *He is the father of the children*. In both examples, duplication occurs: the word *ngutata* means he is a father which suggests that he has children but yet *wabantwana bakhe* forms part of the sentence. Similarly, *hy is die pa* signals the individual has children and yet, therefore *van die kinders* (of the children) is irrelevant. Based on these examples, the justification behind the duplication of information is noticeable and therefore, according to peripheral norms and its societal environment, the structure of the sentence is accurate.

Lastly, the statement *because he is the father to his children* contains the incorrect use of a preposition, in the place of ‘to’ ought to be ‘of’ to indicate belonging, relation or a connection. However, ‘to’ is used to denote a possession in peripheral norms, not actually relationship, i.e. the children literally belong to him. Consider the question “whose children are those?” in the following languages: *Ke bana ba ga mang* (Setswana) and *Ngabantwa bakabani abo* (Xhosa) – the word *ba* in both questions literally implies possession, i.e. who do these children belong to and not explicitly relation. Based on this, the use of the preposition ‘to’ is thus contextually accurate.

The last sentence of the above comment: *i dont know where tribalism get in this issue* also needs to be contextualised according to peripheral norms. The verb choice, ‘get’ in the sentence, *i dont know where tribalism get in this issue* is not completely compatible in comparison to an alternative verb such as ‘feature’. However, looking at the direct translation of that sentence in isiZulu, *angiyazi* (I don’t know) *ukuthi* (how) *isitu* (tribalism) *singenaphi* (enters) *la* (here), the verb choice is ‘justified’ as the translation drew on a non-English grammatical system.

Based on an orthodox view of language competency, the use of English as demonstrated in the comments above warrants the participants being classified as lacking proficiency in English. However, with this shift away from viewing language as a bounded entity, it is pivotal to also review what we consider as language competency. Canagarajah (2008) argues that “if we want to retain a notion such as competence, it refers not so much to the mastery of a grammar or sociolinguistic system, as to the strategic capacity to use diverse semiotic items across integrated media and modalities since languages are always mixed, hybrid and

drawing on multiple resources” (Pennycook, 2010:129). Therefore, based on the fact that these participants were able to strategically use the semiotic resources in their coffers, they can be deemed as competent.

Moreover, the diversion from Standard English should thus not be seen as defective but as participants merely “following the grammar patterns of their everyday language” (Turner, 2010:44). The examples quoted above and various sections of this chapter are authentic instances of how individuals use everyday language without pretence or prescription. If language is defined as “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way” (Oxford Dictionary), then surely the allegedly ‘incorrect’ English is a language too – communication occurs and although the grammar deviates from the norm, the structure of the words are increasingly becoming conventional. Therefore, by unapologetically using language as determined by their daily encounters and constantly inventing new vocabulary/word structures, these participants bring into question the rigidity of language and the perception of standard vs. periphery English.

Furthermore, Makoni and Pennycook (2010) argue that “it is important to study what people do with English, their Englishing, that is, their investments, desires and performances in English”. Although the comment guidelines restrict users to only post comments in English, it is evident that participants used ‘their’ English – whether it is deemed correct or not and it is critical that we understand their understanding and use of English, for it is more complex than just mastering a grammatical system. The comprehension of ‘their Englishing’ ultimately assists in the reconstitution of English and the notion of language and enables us to welcome and appreciate language users’ agency.

6.5 Interactive written discourse

Traditionally, writing and speaking as communicative strategies were considered different. Although both are crucial in acquiring literacy, various differences (cognitive, stylistic, functional etc.) continue to polarise the two communicative strategies. As stated by Smith (1978:80), “it should not be surprising or anomalous that differences exist between spoken and written language; they are generally used for quite different purposes and addressed to quite different audiences” (cited in Akinnaso, 1982:119).

Although the boundaries between writing and speaking appear obvious, in the examples below these boundaries appear blurred as the statements include performances normally associated with oral communication, i.e. sighing, yawning, clapping hands and laughing. According to Androutsopoulos (2011) this occurrence is normal in computer mediated communication (CMC) such as SoweTan LIVE as “CMC can be conceptualised as a blend or hybrid of written and spoken aspects of language” and as “talk then is the driving force behind much of the digital writing” (Turner, 2010:43).

This paradigm shift, that is, blurriness between writing and speaking, is noted by Turner (2010:43) who states that “writing in these (online) venues blends elements of written discourse with those of the spoken word, and what the terms netspeak and textspeak share conceptually is an attention to the oral nature of the language used in these spaces”.

The comments discussed below serve as examples of colloquialisation. According to Hundt and Mair (1999:221), colloquialisation can be defined as “a narrowing of the gap between spoken and written norms” (cited in Iosef, 2013:4). By stipulating reactions that are typically associated with the spoken form into written text, the commenters defuse the myth of written texts as abstract for the inclusion of these reactions, making the written text more interactive and ‘alive’. Additionally, the hybrid nature of these examples enables us to have a holistic understanding of the intended meaning of the text, including a comprehension of the discourses encapsulated in these comments.

1. *So the fight of the penis continues *sigh**

The inclusion of a performance, that is, sighing in the comment, indicates that the fight of a penis is disappointing, worrying and saddening as there are more pressing issues to fight for—critical issues that deserve and need the amount of racket an exposed penis is receiving.

2. *Are you people still discussing Zooma’s penis? *yawns**

This comment is a rhetorical question as it is obvious that the discussion about *The Spear* was ongoing. By adding ‘yawns’ to the comment, the participant suggests the thought that this

discussion is ongoing, is boring and tiring. Consequently, the participant doesn't consider Zuma's penis worthy of a lengthy discussion.

3. “*clap calap clap* the clowns have come to town...

In the third example, the ANC Women's League, Cosatu's Gender Committee and SACP Women's League's outcry over *The Spear* is considered a circus show with these organisations as clowns ready to entertain the audience. Clowns are characters associated with jokes, magic tricks and general silliness as indicated by their performance attire i.e. colourful hair, oversized shoes and clothes. By claiming these organisations are clowns, the participant implies that they are here to perform, make the country laugh and return to their respective corners. The clapping in the comment is thus acknowledgement and appreciation for the show but it is meant sarcastically as we shouldn't be celebrating the mediocrity displayed by South African leaders.

Consequently, these organisations cannot be taken seriously. In addition, clowns normally put paint on their faces as a disguise and to appear more colourful. In comparing these organisations to clowns, the participant implies they can't be trusted as their true identities are hidden and consequently so are their real motives and intentions. Lastly, clowns are fictitious characters – they are just normal human beings who must dress up in a specific manner to be classified as clowns. Similarly, the SACP history shows no record of a women's league so it can be considered fictional – just more human beings dressed up in a show to entertain/fool the audience.

The continued blurriness between written and spoken language in this text thus supports Fandrych (2007) who proposes that we start considering media/channels as a scale: spoken – electronic –written and not as an individual medium (cited in Sanchez-Stockhammer, 2011). Androutsopoulos (2011) argues that the main dimensions of innovation in digital written language can be categorised into three themes namely, orality, compensation and economy, and the comments discussed validate the first two themes. According to Androutsopoulos (2011:149), “conceptual orality includes all aspects reminiscent of casual spoken language in written” and “semiotics of compensation, includes any attempt to compensate for the absence of facial expressions or intonation patterns by standardised means of keyboard and typeface. Compensation devices include emoticons, abbreviations that signify various types of

laughter, simulations of expressive prosody by iteration of letters and punctuation” (Androutsopoulos, 2011:149). Conceptual orality is evident in the comments, because although they are written, they contain spoken features – things that normally were only physically and literally done through face-to-face interactions, such as laughing and clapping hands. Semiotics of compensation are drawn upon when participants actually include laughter indicators such as “hahaha” to compensate for the inability to not do it physically.

Additional performance indicators “clap clap clap”, “yawns” and “kikikikiki” are examples of what Thibault (1997) describes as linguistification. Linguistification describes the process of the “prelinguistic becoming linguistic, the transition of more or less subconscious imagery into linguistic representation” (Thibault, 1997:77, cited in Iedema, 2010:142). Ordinarily, when engaging in conversations (verbal/non-verbal) with others, the awareness of actions/feelings such as laughter, excitement and boredom is minimal. However, by articulating these actions linguistically and fusing them into text, participants allow others access into their thought processes. Moreover, these performance indicators also serve as contextualisation cues as they add to the understanding and meaning of the comments.

6.6 Fluidity

Hybridity in the text is also evident in the fluidity w.r.t. to the meaning of specific terms. Although these words and terms take on different meanings, they continue to be influenced and embedded in their original meaning. In a bid to conceptualise this constant pull between ‘old’ and ‘new’, Connell and Gibson (2003:17) propose the terms ‘fixity’ and ‘fluidity’ to “reflect more dynamic ways of describing and understanding processes that move across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations” (cited in Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). The examples that follow serve to indicate that although they no longer only hold their conventional orthodox meanings, the creation of the ‘new’ meaning drew on the initial symbolic meanings of the terms – on the fixed terms and consequently resulted in the meaning being more fluid.

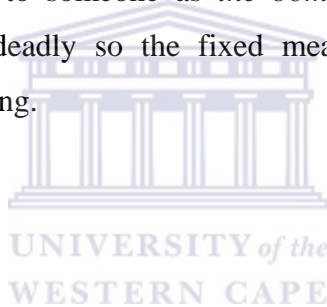
LOL

Before the emergence of social networks, *LOL* was widely recognised as the abbreviation of *Lots of love* –this was its fixed meaning. Among online social networks, *LOL* is known as an

abbreviation that stands for *Laugh out Loud* and indicates laughter, therefore the meaning of this abbreviation has been expanded and therefore become fluid. However, the creation of the extended meaning of LOL, i.e. Laugh out Loud, drew on the manner in which Lots of love was abbreviated, that is, initialism. This comes as no surprise as Laugh Out Loud (LOL) was one of the first abbreviations on online networks and thus had to draw on existing ways of abbreviating such as initialism.

bomb

The word *bomb* is associated with a powerful, chemical device, however in this text ‘bomb’ refers to an individual who is considered to be amazing and/or who did something awesome. Generally, a bomb has negative connotations, i.e. deadly and destructive – a bomb’s power is thrilling yet lethal. In referring to someone as *the bomb*, the person or their actions is perceived as thrilling but not deadly so the fixed meaning of bomb is re-adjusted to encompass a more positive meaning.



guys

Traditionally, *guys* referred to males and females were referred to as ‘girls’. However, *guys* is currently being used as a generic term to refer to both males and females and even entered in the Oxford Dictionary as a term that refers to either sex. The expansion of the meaning can be attributed to not only vocabulary growth but the unending fluidity in terms of gender and the need to be an inclusive and non–sexist and non-discriminatory society.

please

It’s okay for the man to romance and impregnate at warp speed but making satirical comment on this predilection is an insult? Please.

The word *please* is an indication of politeness and is generally accompanied by a request, for example, “please pass me the sugar”. Therefore, it is deemed odd to use *please* without any prior request. However, based on the comment stated above and the context in which *please* is used, it is evident that *please* has adopted a more fluid meaning. In this case, instead of forming part of a politeness strategy, *please* is used as a sarcastic caution to another participant. The participant uses *please* to alert someone to be more critical in their thinking and it serves as an indication of the speaker’s irritation and or disagreement. Irrespective of this new fluid meaning, the participant still draws on the symbolic meaning of *please* i.e. indication of politeness so essential the speaker politely yet sarcastically cautioned his/her interlocutor.

bosso

The South African slang word derives from the term *boss* and traditionally a boss is presumed to be the grumpy, strict, pompous and most senior individual within a professional environment. Consequently, the word has negative connotations. However, in recent years the term has attracted some positive attributes. A boss is now anyone who has noteworthy achievements. *Boss* is also a term given to objects that are considered ‘cool’, innovative and relevant. The word *bosso* in this context was used in the catchy phrase *bosso ke mang* (Who is the boss) and even then, a boss is an individual who achieves the seemingly impossible, like consuming water but urinating Red Bull (as per the lyrics of the song). Once again, it’s evident that the re-invented meaning of *boss* drew on this fixed notion of what a boss originally represents.

candilicious

The ‘suffix’ *-licious* is derived from the word *delicious* and, according to the Oxford Dictionary, *-licious* is part of “forming adjectives denoting someone or something delightful or extremely attractive”. Additionally, according to the urban dictionary, *-licious* is placed at the end of a word and it now usually has sexual connotations - it is meant to imply that the thing or person is voluptuous, sexy or ‘juicy’. In this example, it is noticeable how a

morpheme i.e. *-licious* was ‘transformed’ into a word/adjective added to a noun to indicate the attractiveness of the noun (object or person) and their increased edibility.

The above stated phrases serve as examples of resemiotisation and how indeed meaning is fluid and “shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next” (Iedema, 2003:41). For instance, referring to someone or something as a “bomb” in a war-ridden country most likely wouldn’t be flattering as it was in this context. Consequently, in these words / phrases being resemiotised and ultimately having complementary meanings, Iedema’s claim that resemiotisation “evokes the creation of new realities” (Iedema, 2003:142) is validated as words / phrases are context-laden: the fluctuation of words and therefore its meaning influences how it’s used in social spaces.

6.7 Nonstandard typography and orthography

According to Androutsopoulos (2011), certain authors observed that networked writing (writing carried out on digital technologies that enable exchange among individuals and groups) divorces itself from the traditional sociolinguistic assumption which is that spelling is the most non-changing level of the linguistic structure. More specifically, some of these observations have focused on the conformity or deviation from orthographic norms (Androutsopoulos, 2011). This conformity/deviation dichotomy is evident in the comments below and therefore classified as ‘non-standard orthography’ due to their ‘alternative’ grammatical structure.

These examples of non-standard orthography equate to what Androutsopoulos termed vernacular literacies. According to Androutsopoulos (2010:206), “vernacular literacy practices are linguistic practices that are not part of educational or professional institutions but are relatively free from institutional control, rooted in everyday practices, serving every day and drawing on vernacular knowledge”.

The following examples illustrate vernacular literacies: no strict censorship measures from Sowetan LIVE, these types of linguistic practices are a norm on the comments page, yet not in schools or work places and participants draw on their ‘mother’ tongues.

6.7.1 Phonetic Spellings

According to Bieswanger (2007:5), “phonetic spellings are shorter than the original word they represent and go back to the pronunciation of the respective word. These spellings contain at least one character that is not part of the standard spelling of the word in question”. The following serve as examples:

<dat>, <n>, <non>, <ɹ>, <neva>,<u> for <that>, <and>, <none>, <are>.

As online platforms limit the number of characters participants can use, using shortenings enable participants to still communicate effectively while adhering to the space limitations.

6.7.2 Creative use of punctuation/Capitalisation or other symbols for emphasis or stress

The following serve as examples of how participants used various symbols to emphasise certain points, to express extreme shock and urgently seek clarity. As this is non-verbal communication, participants have to employ creative strategies to still express reactions.

<waaaay>, <ne????>, <YES!!>, <WHAT!!!!!!> for <way>, <ne>, <yes>, <what>.

6.7.3 Letter/number homophones

<4getin>, <b@lls>, <d!ck>, <sper.m> <@ss>, <1d10t> for <forgetting>, <balls>, <dick>, <sperm>.

The former two categories validate Herring’s (2012) argument that nonstandard typography and nonstandard orthography tend to overlap in most cases. As evident in the aforementioned examples, by including non-alphabetical keyboard symbols into words, the spelling automatically is altered and therefore affected.

6.7.4 Misspellings and typos

The following are examples of the misspellings evident in the text:

<thye>, <achiving>, <lough>, <incompetant>, for <they>, <achieving>, <laugh>, <incompetent>.

According to Varnhagent *et al.*, (2010), these misspellings and typos are to be expected and typical of computer mediated communication. Varnhagent *et al.*, (2010) argue that typing

quickly can lead to errors and some of these errors become so common that they might become new language words themselves.

6.7.5 Unconventional spellings/ Neologisms

According to Herring (2012:4), this category, i.e. novel word formation, is not generally common in text-based CMC. Some examples include the following:

<nah>, <yep> for <no>, <yes>

This non-standard typography and orthography should however be contextualised and not quickly dismissed as faulty as the spelling and ultimately the style of writing is related to particular communication technologies and their functions and purpose. As stated earlier, one of the main dimensions of innovation in digital written language, according to Androutsopoulos (2011:149), is linguistic economy which “includes any strategy of shortening the message form. This theme is most clearly predicated on technology effects, attributed to the necessity of speed in synchronous exchanges, to financial considerations or to the constraints on the size of message”.

This notion is supported by Varnhagen, McFall, Pugh, Routledge, Sumida-MacDonald, and Kwong (2010:720), who state that “as a possible attempt to speed up the communicative exchange in online conversations, communicators have developed short cuts for expressing words, phrases, and emotions as well as textual and graphical pragmatic devices”.

Androutsopoulos (2011) argues that instead of producing completely new forms of spelling, online linguistic practices are challenging and de-constructing the myth of ‘correct spelling’. Androutsopoulos (2011:152) argues that “the impact of the internet is not so much that it produced specific new forms of respelling – on the contrary, the techniques themselves were in use before – but that it introduced “a looser, more permeable sense of what counts as spelling. Spelling is becoming a deployment of choices from a range of options...It is a matter of appropriacy and identity rather than a matter of rectitude and uniformity”.

Androutsopoulos’s claim that spelling, and therefore linguistic practices, are based on the selection of a range of options is validated in the examples listed above. Additionally, the adopting and implementing of various features exemplifies Jorgensen’s theory of

polylingualism (the use of whatever linguistic features are at one's disposal for communication purposes) and qualifies these participants as language users.

6.8 Non-standard orthography: Difference within Sameness

Although non-standard orthography 'transgresses' the grammatical rules of a given language which is in this case English, non-standard orthography stems from standard orthography. Consequently, due to non-standard orthography's dependency on established spelling conventions, non-standard orthography, to some extent, will remain constricted by these standardised conventions. For instance, although one uses <devisi0n> instead of division, <waaaay> instead of way and <bl@ck> to replace black, due to existing knowledge of English and its spelling and grammar conventions, a reader is able to automatically 'slot' in the standardised word. As argued by Kress (2000: x), "spelling is that bit of linguistic practice where issues of authority, of control, of conformity can be most sharply focused. Spelling is the domain par excellence – no matter how tiny it may seem – where the politics of conformity can be sheeted home" (cited in Sebba, 2009: 32). Therefore, although online linguistic practices appear different, actually, the newness was created by re-purposing existing signs – these semiotic resources already existed and through semiotic remediation, the reality of certain resources were simply extended.

However, as evident in the type of linguistic practices discussed above, the established spelling conventions do not discourage participants from actively creating and engaging with non-standard orthography. Sowetan LIVE readers and commenters have made a conscious decision to voice their perspective and taken agency to ensure this happens even to the extent of using non-standard orthography. In this sense, orthography can be viewed as a social practice instead of a pre-determined set of spelling rules. According to Sebba (2009:31), to consider orthography as a social practice involves considering it "a widespread and recurrent activity which involves members of a community in making meaningful choices, albeit from a constrained set of possibilities". Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) introduce the concept of 'focusing.' to explain how non-standard orthography still has a standard. According to Sebba (2009:46), "a 'focused' system is one relatively lacking in variability, but it is not necessarily a standardised system".

In other words, non-standard orthography as a focussed system will lack variety due to the standard system it stems from, but non-standard orthography will not become a standardised

system which implies new forms of orthography is welcomed. Ultimately, by considering non-standard orthography as social practice within a ‘focused’ system, language users can continue exercising agency in terms of linguistic practices without the pressure to conform to a standard. This in turn adds to the partial *disinvention* of language and linguistic practices that are considered ‘acceptable’.

6.9 Censorship avoidance strategies

Due to imposed institutionalised censoring, that is, the prohibition of certain taboo words, the Sowetan LIVE community had to re-invent their language practices to avoid censorship. The avoidance of strategies is necessary as taboo words such as white, black, sex, penis and more vulgar words are not permitted in comments as stipulated by the administrators. Strategies to avoid censorship include using numbers (“s3x”, b1atch), symbols (r@pe) and onomatopoeia (EFF OFF) instead fuck off. This invention is supported by Allan (2006:2) who argues that “taboo and the constant censoring of language motivate language change by promoting the creation of highly inventive and often playful new expressions, or new meanings for old expressions, causing existing vocabulary to be abandoned”. The avoidance of censorship and the use of certain taboo words is inevitable in this instance as the discussion of the topic at hand, i.e. exposure of Zuma’s genitals by a white artist, would be senseless without the mention of related words such as race, sex, penis and so forth. In addition to avoiding censorship, this linguistic strategy can be considered slang used for secrecy (Mattiello, 2005). It is a secret among commenters that certain words must be spelled in a particular way in order to avoid censorship.

There are various signs/symbols that have been re-used in the text mainly to avoid censorship. According to Prior and Hengst (2010:1), semiotic remediation highlights “the diverse ways that human and nonhumans semiotic performances (historical or imagined) are re-represented and reused across modes, media and chains of activity”. Below follows censorship strategies (alternative/localised terms, use of numbers and signs, nicknames and vernacular) used by participants and of how various existing signs are re-purposed to avoid censorship – not only institutionalised censorship but the censorship as dictated by societal norms and values. The contribution of societal norms and values in analysing remediation is pivotal as Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka (2006) argue that semiotic remediation encompasses the people and their activities.

6.9.1 Alternative/Localised terms

As indicated before, black South Africans are not brought up to talk about sex openly as it is considered taboo, so the invention of nicknames enabled them to engage in sexually-related conversations. Additionally, the explicit mentioning of the names of private parts is also categorised by the site administration as taboo. Consequently, readers reused slang words such as 4 5, gongoloza, (penis) Nnyo, kuku and punani (vagina) and dingus (general slang term for private parts among some Afrikaans speakers) when referring to private parts. These terms are remediated because participants drew on existing material (i.e. letters and vernacular terms) and just used them for a different purpose in a different context. Interestingly, the term ‘keyhole’ is also used to refer to a vagina, however, unlike the other euphemisms which appear arbitrary; a ‘keyhole’ represents the average woman’s vaginal opening. According to Mattiello (2005) the creation or appropriation of existing words (in this case) that make it easier to talk about sex, slang is used for mitigation: euphemisms such as ‘keyhole’ are used to lessen the gravity of taboo words.

6.9.2 Use of numbers and punctuation

Traditionally, numerical symbols were mostly used in texts independently to denote quantities and indicate time periods and weren’t used as letters contained in a word. However, due the communication style of online networks i.e. swift and brief, numerical symbols are re-used to shorten texts. For instance, using 2 instead of ‘too/to’, 4 instead of ‘for’ and ‘every1’ as a replacement for everyone. Similarly, grammatical symbols are re-purposed in the text through being included in words in a bid to use taboo words. Examples include, ‘cr@p’, ‘d!ck’, ‘s3x’ and ‘whi_te’. Another censorship strategy involves using more than one grammatical symbol in a taboo word while contextual and grammatical cues allow fellow readers to decipher the actual word. For instance, the word for the code (d@#%) is ‘dick’ and this can be deduced from the length and context in which the taboo word was used namely: “I think this Brett guy is gay, y was he imagining the d@#% of the president...”

Moreover, numerical symbols are re-purposed as the letters they share graphic characteristics with in order to avoid censorship, as evident in the following words: ‘fag0tt’ (fagott) and ‘b1atch’ (bitch). Here it is noticed how censorship avoidance strategies can fulfil two roles namely, to conceal the offensive, taboo words, but also to dampen the terms’ vulgarised nature. An example of such an instance is “r.a.c.i.s.t wh!te p.i.n.k b1atch” – not only do the

various punctuation marks ‘hide’ offensive words but they ‘lighten’ the impact of such offensive terms. In broadening the meaning associated with these letters and numbers and how they can be used, resemiotisation also occurs. As stated by Iedema (2003), resemiotisation is about completely changing the meaning of the semiotic sign but introducing the possibility of a new reality and the letters and numbers serve as a good example – their meaning and original use doesn’t change, i.e. 1 remains an sign denoting a specific quantity but in this context, an alternative reality is evoked.

6.9.3 Nicknames

Within the text also exists the appropriation of nicknames in reference to certain individuals and this not only highlights language users’ agency but intention to localise their linguistic spaces. In the text, Zuma is referred to as “Shower Head”. Since Zuma’s rape trial and his assertion that he took a shower after having sex to decrease his chances of contracting HIV/AIDS, most of Zuma’s visual representations by cartoon artists have a shower head on top on his head. The shower head is a symbol of mockery as many felt that his claim was very ill-informed and irresponsible. The creation of a visual image following a linguistic articulation represents Zuma is an example of delinguistification which entails “linguistic meanings being reframed nonlinguistically” (Habermas, 1987, cited in Iedema, 2010:142). Another celebrity nickname used frequently is ‘Juju’, referring to Julius Malema. The nickname ‘Juju’ might stem from a repetition of the first two letters in his name. Additionally, Julius Malema is a proud fan of the soccer team, Orlando Pirates, which is also called ‘Bhakajuju’ as mentioned afore. Therefore based on his love for ‘Bhakajuju’, his nickname might be derived from the team’s nickname or *vice versa* considering the influential individual and politician Julius Malema is.

6.9.4 Vernacular

Another censorship strategy, as evident in the comments below, is the use of vernacular in order to disguise the vulgarity and sexually explicitness of specific comments.. Below follows the examples:

“*BA MO TSWERE DITSWARO*” means holding someone by their private parts (holding someone by the balls) or having a strong hold over an individual. Contextually it implies that by publishing the painting, Murray has Zuma by the balls as he hit Zuma where it hurts the most (irresponsible, risky public sex life) and holding him accountable for his actions.

“*MAYBE O BA JA MATANYOLA*” was a response from a commenter after a fellow commenter enquired about what attracts Mthembu, Manamela and Blade to Zuma. The phrase means to ‘lick balls’ implying that Zuma performs oral sex on these three gentlemen to keep them happy and on his side. Apart from insinuating that Zuma is bi-sexual, the commenter draws attention to the fact that officials within the ANC would go to great lengths to shield each other even unorthodox measures such as oral sexual intercourse.

“*O kare nkabe ba mo dirile le mosela*” translated to English reads: They should have made him a tail. The commenter is referring to Zuma and is suggesting that the artist should have painted Zuma with a tail on. In suggesting this, it is evident that the commenter considers Zuma an animal as only they can grow tails. Seeing as Murray already has his sexual organs hanging outside, he might as well complete the animal’s picture by giving Zuma a tail.

Moreover, in a bid to conceal vulgarity, mitigation is used and, according to Mattiello (2005), mitigation is slang that is used for mitigation that is phonetically similar to the taboo word.

The undeniable effort by participants to employ various censorship avoidance strategies can be linked to Howard’s (2008:498) theory of intentionality and agency. According to Howard (2008:498), intentionality refers to “the volitional power of the mind to be about, represent, or stand for things”. The second term, agency, is defined as “the means or capacity to assert influence or power” (Howard, 2008:498). The participants’ conscious effort to ensure their comment isn’t censored and that they get their message across indicates a high level of intentionality. Additionally, the participants’ agency is visible in their quest to assert their own influence over the type of linguistic practices on the Sowetan LIVE’s comment site and their power in deciding what is considered taboo or offensive. With regards to these communication technologies, Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004) suggest the usefulness of differentiating between what technologies are designed to do and what people actually do with them. Undoubtedly, in enabling their readers to comment on articles, Sowetan LIVE aimed to create a platform where its audience could have discussions about the content explicitly related to the article and foster critical engagement about societal issues in a ‘civilised’ manner. However, this isn’t always the case as evident by numerous personal attacks, insults, jokes, and the creation of ‘online friendships’ and the discussion of irrelevant content. Therefore, Thurlow, Lengel and Comic (2004:26) argue that irrespective of the intended goals and intentions of communication technologies by designers, “ordinary people

inevitably make their own decisions about whether they want to use the technology, and, more importantly, how they want to use it based on their own needs and values”.

6.10 Usernames and Identity

Based on the afore-mentioned notion that written text continues to increasingly exhibit spoken attributes, it should therefore come as no surprise that participants would attempt to inform the audience more about their personhood through usernames. Usernames therefore partially inform us a participant’s attributes – attributes normally observed and discussed during a face-to-face interaction. As argued by Bechar-Israeli (1996: x), in online interactions “nicknames (usernames) serve as a critical means of presenting ourselves. They are the only initial way of saying who we are, in literally one word or one expression”.

Furthermore, according to Fairclough (2003), a link exists between style and identification as style is the discursive aspect of identity – one’s identity partially depends on how one writes and speaks. In this instance, usernames serve as a form of identification. Although usernames are meant to protect the offline identity of readers, in the selection and creation of their usernames, readers still manage to style their identities and the discourses embedded in them (cited in Cornetto & Nowak, 2006:379). Strauss (1969), who interviewed people who altered their names, claims that “a name chosen by a person is more strongly linked to his or her identity than the name chosen for him or her by another person” (Bechar-Israeli, 1996: x).

Bechar-Israeli (1996) conducted a study analysing nicknames in a popular electronic environment namely, internet Relay Chat and compiled a list of the types of nicknames. The categories mentioned below from Bechar-Israeli (1996) correlate with the type of usernames found in this study.

6.10.1 Sex related usernames

The usernames in this category either carry sexual innuendos or are explicitly sexual. Examples include: “MsKinkyakaKamaSutra”, “CAKE”, “Wozanami” (Come with me), “Deepstick-C”, “Naked”, “nkotekapeleketatile” (Fuck me quickly. I am in a hurry) and “Chilli’s”. Although some of the usernames are vague and might require specific linguistic competence, e.g. slang, all of the usernames indicate how the individuals perceive themselves sexually and their sexual preferences. For instance, MsKinkyakaKamaSutra reveals that the commentator takes interest in being explorative (sexually) hence the reference to Kama Sutra,

which is an Indian text that contains various sex positions – from ordinary to rare. “CAKE” is the English translation of “KUKU” which refers to a vagina. Additionally, CAKE can be a synonym for “biscuit” or “cookie” which is slang for a vagina. Stick in “Deepstick” is used to refer to a penis and use of deep thus implies that the individual considers his penis long and thick enough for deep penetration.

6.10.2 Self-related names

This category contains two subcategories relating to the self – the perception of the “self” related to the value one’s comment holds and the perception of the “self” in terms of looks and personality. Usernames which indicate the assumed worth of participants’ comments include “truthhurt”, “MorenawaPolelo” and “PleaseGetReal”. These usernames imply that the individuals behind these usernames assume that their comments are the truth and real. Additionally, based on the use of the word “hurt” and “please” the first and third usernames mentioned above, insinuate that knowing the truth and being realistic is difficult but necessary. The loose translation of the second example is “God/King of Speech” – a god is deity who is considered to be powerful and reigns over a specific domain. The owner of this username thus considers his comments to carry more weight in comparison to other comments as he perceives himself as the king of the comment section.

In this category, usernames alluding to individuals’ self-images are divided into two groups: physical and personality. Examples of usernames part of the latter group include: “Ngiyaphapha” (I am forward), “joyful”, “diva7” and “WordofGod”. Examples of usernames that describe commenters physically include “Whiteafrican1”, “fcukwacutemtswana” (fuck this girl is cute), “sphalaphala” (extremely beautiful woman), “mhlupeki” (A poor person), “Rattex-cannot-be-blocked” (Rattex is a poison used to kill rats) and “xhosagirl”. Based on these names, it is evident that even though we are unfamiliar with the participants’ personal details, we have a clear understanding of how these individuals perceive themselves. Additionally, the username “Rattex-cannot-be-blocked” not only indicates that the user considers him/herself poison but it provides us with a context to the chosen username: the individual might have seriously violated the guidelines and was consequently blocked from commenting. In accomplishing to register as a user again, the commenter vengefully mocks the newspaper administration by implying how unstoppable he/she is.

6.10.3 Usernames named after famous people/things

Examples of usernames that include the mention of famous/well known individuals and organisations are:

<The-Rothschilds>, <JUBJUB>, <ZUMAMUSTGO>, <sh!tFaceSamsung>, <MissBhakajuju>, <NDA>.

<JUBJUB> is a South African hip hop artist who was recently convicted and sentenced for killing four children while drag racing on a public road. The ‘Zuma’ referred to in <ZUMAMUSTGO> is Jacob Zuma, current president of South Africa, with ‘Bhakajuju’ in <MissBhakajuju> referring to one of South Africa biggest and oldest soccer clubs, Orlando Pirates. <NDA> refers to National Development Agency – an institution which provides funding to communities for the implementation of community-driven programmes aimed towards fighting poverty. ‘Samsung’ in <sh!tFaceSamsung> is an electronics company and <Rothschilds> is one of the world’s largest independent financial advisory groups and the Rothschilds family is one of the richest families in the world.

6.10.4 Usernames related to inanimate objects of different kinds

Below follows examples of usernames that are linked to objects:

<Sugaar>, <Chillis>, <CAKE>.

The usernames in this category appropriates the names of arbitrary objects which in this case is sugar <Sugaar>, high quality marijuana/dagga <kuch>, chillies <chillis> and cake. Although these usernames appear random and unrelated to identities, the meanings associated to the referent align the usernames to discourses which ultimately allure us to the type of identification associated to the username. Although sugar is commonly recognised as a sweetening substance, the word is also used to denote affection/attraction. For instance, “give me some sugar” implies showing someone some love/affection by either kissing or hugging the individual. Sugar also refers to a physically attractive woman and cocaine, as it closely resembles this drug.

‘Chillis’ is the shortened name of chilli peppers, a spicy vegetable that is usually added to food for flavour. In selecting it as a username, the person might be comparing her/himself to characteristics associated with chilli which include heat, flavour, spicy. For example, if the

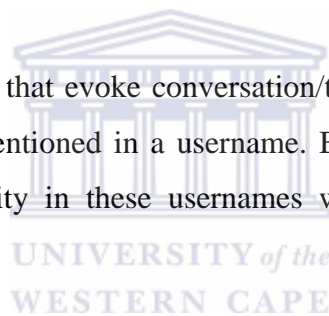
person considers her/himself extremely physically attractive, one is considered ‘hot’ and this can be linked to the heat experienced from eating chillies.

The eating of cake has come to be associated with celebratory events such as birthday, weddings, and so on. The categorising of cake as a dessert implies that it’s a special indulgency not necessary but definitely welcomed and enjoyed. Consequently, ‘cake’ is perceived as a treat and associated with joy. This username thus potentially denotes the individual as a happy individual who takes pleasure in treating herself or someone who simply enjoys cake.

According to Bechar-Israeli (1996), certain nicknames can fall under two or more categories and ‘Chillis’, “ZUMAMUSTGO’ and ‘Cake’ are indicative of this as is evident by their appearance in more than one category due to their fluid meaning.

6.10.5 Provocative usernames

Provoactive usernames are those that evoke conversation/thought due to the intricate nature of a topic/individual/situation mentioned in a username. Below follows a discussion of the apparent and potential complexity in these usernames which qualifies them as ‘touchy’ usernames.



<ZUMAMUSTGO>

As stated earlier, the ‘Zuma’ referred to in the username <ZUMAMUSTGO> is President Jacob Zuma and the username is suggesting that Zuma be released from his position or that he should resign. This view can assumedly be related to a lack of confidence in Zuma’s leadership due to his unending questionable behaviour and the escalating domestic problems under this reign. The username is provocative as this perception isn’t generaliseable as strong pro-Zuma supporters exist. Additionally, some of Zuma’s assumed flaws are related to his tradition – another provocative topic which usually results in insults, discrimination and stereotyping. Zuma’s performance as a president is also very political i.e. he was deployed by the ANC and to a great extent must carry out the mandate of the ANC. Consequently, the two actors are inseparable – if Zuma goes, the ANC must too as they entrusted him with this responsibility and a change in the leading political party opens up more complex issues including apartheid, voter attitudes/perceptions and so forth. Ultimately, Zuma not being president involves more than just him.

<Whiteafrican1>

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the perception of who is African dates right back to the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and continues to be a daunting topic. The participant could have easily just referred to him/herself as ‘african’ however by asserting that he is white and African, the participant makes a bold statement about his/her identity as whites are not considered as Africans by some people in South Africa. Consequently, he/she wittingly provokes questions about whether being African is about geography, i.e. place of origin, or about the association with African values and norms.

<maneater>

Individuals are expected to behave in a specific manner especially in accordance with their socialisation and one of the core values most societies teach their girls is to be respectable and dignified women – women who respect their bodies, shy away from promiscuity and ultimately getting married and raising a respectable family. However, certain women turn out to be man-eaters – women who figuratively use men for whatever gain (sexual, financial etc.) and abruptly disassociate themselves from the man upon achievement of their goal. They eat and chew the men and later spit them out, sometimes leaving these men disorientated, heartbroken and impoverished. Due to the stigma attached to ‘man-eaters’ as loose, broken women without self-respect, by choosing this particular username, the participant sets herself up for criticism about her sense of morality and cultural values and norms.

6.10.6 ‘Localised’ usernames

A category evident in this study, although not noted by Bechar-Israeli (1996), is ‘localised usernames’, which implies that the username is based on something that is local, and its comprehension is dependent on one’s level of local knowledge and history. The following usernames serves as examples of this.

<Ngqondongqondo>

Within each culture or society, various terms are used to describe a clever / intelligent individual, for instance ‘nerd’, ‘bookworm’ and so forth. In the Xhosa culture, one such word is “ngqondo ngqondo” which literally means brain and referring to an individual as such

implies he/she is clever. Inherently, the absence of the necessary linguistic and cultural background could result in the misunderstanding of this username and its potential impact on how the participant perceives him/herself intellectually.

<Ngiyaphapha>

In this example, the term 'phapha' describes a forward, crude and interfering individual and by the inclusion of the term as a username serves as a polite 'warning' to fellow participants. The potential behaviour to be associated with this participant is implied in the username itself and without knowledge of the meaning of 'phapha'; certain users might consider the participant's comments rude and unnecessary.

<tumzangwana>

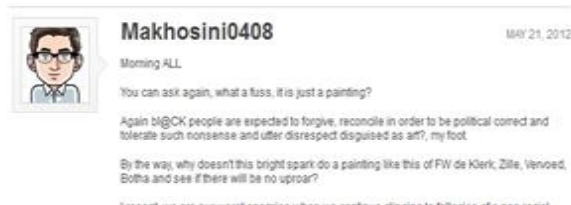
Unless one has the necessary localised knowledge, it would be difficult to interpret the name and gender of this participant. 'Itumeleng' is a unisex name, however with regards to nicknames, males are normally just referred to as 'Tumza'. The addition of 'ngwana' implies the participant's sex is female, as 'ngwana' is a slang word used to refer to girls. Additionally, 'ngwana' serves as an example of semiotic remediation as originally it meant baby/young child.

6.11 Negotiated Identity: Usernames and Avatars

To a large extent, a link continues to exist between identity and race (physical appearance) in South Africa and this can partially be attributed to the connection between personal names and race/ethnicity and religion. For instance, the surname 'Van der Merwe' is likely to be associated to a white or coloured person, the name 'Abdul' is a typical Muslim name and Naledi a name associated with a Tswana / Sotho / Pedi woman rather than Xhosa / Zulu. Be that as it may be, online platforms such as Sowetan LIVE grant participants an opportunity to negotiate their own identities through the creation of usernames and selecting of profile pictures (avatars). Although participants have the option of using their name and surname e.g. <jackhouston>, most participants prefer to create usernames which indicate not only an extension of themselves, but using the online newspaper site as a third space where hybrid identities emerge.

The following examples indicate the incoherent match between physical appearances i.e. skin colour/race and usernames and the disinvention of standardised identities.

1) Makhosini0408



The first participant's username is <Makhosini0408> and thus suggests that the participant is black/African. However, the selected avatar doesn't resemble physical attributes commonly associated with a black person. Based on this combination, the participant makes it challenging to be categorised according to a specific race or gender resulting in the disinvention of the link between race and personal name and insisting on the re-structuring of identities as fluid and hybrid.

2) mhlupheki



In this instance, the non-selection of an avatar could indicate either the participant's refusal to style his/her identity based on the given avatars. This could be due to the stereotypical physical characteristics suggested by the various avatars and/or the participant's desire for racial/neutrality and just be considered human. Additionally, upon taking the username into consideration, this username and avatar combination appears complex and philosophical and presents more than a 'non-conformist'. The word 'mhlupheki' translates to 'a poor individual' so in not selecting an avatar, the participant might argue that poverty knows no master and has no face – everyone can be poor or have a deficit of physical, emotional, psychological and financial wealth.

3) JUBJUB



Although a username might be appropriated from a well-known artist's stage name, it might be re-contextualised and take on a different meaning. As stated earlier, <JUBJUB> is the nickname of a male hip hop rapper who according to physical attributes is considered black/African and his signature hairstyle is cornrows. If it was the participant's wish to completely appropriate 'Jub Jub', she would have selected a more 'manly' avatar with physical attributes relatable to him. However, the participant consciously selects an avatar representative of a female – a white woman at that, which further distances the username from the avatar. Ultimately, the participant destabilises the notion of gendered personal names and blurs the boundaries between male and female identities.

6.11.1 Framing: More than just combination of semiotic resources

The combination of avatars, usernames and comments on the online newspaper site might appear coincidental, however, further analysis results in the understanding of the cohesiveness of these semiotic resources and consequently the meanings embedded in such combinations. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) introduce the notion of 'framing' in analysing how different modes are framed together – the level to which these resources are either disconnected or connected (van Leeuwen, 2005). Below follows a discussion and analysis of the framing of the semiotic resources mentioned and the potential meanings to be derived.

Example



6.11.2 Separation

Van Leeuwen (2010: 13) describes separation as “two or more elements being separated by empty space”. It is evident that there is an empty space between the avatar, the username and the comment. Van Leeuwen (2010: 13) argues that the empty white space could serve as an indication that the particular elements “should be seen as similar in some respects and different in others”. Based on this argument, the white space in this example aims to draw a clear difference between their various modes, i.e. picture and text. However, at the end of each comment is a line which separates from each other which results in the elements being boxed in together and this can also indicate similarity. Additionally, even though the avatar is isolated, around it is a squared ‘speech bubble’ with an arrow directed towards the username and text indicating further similarity between the various elements as a speech bubble indicates a specific individual’s thoughts or words.

6.11.3 Rhyme

According to Van Leeuwen (2010: 13), rhyme in visuals is achieved when “two elements, although separate, have a quality in common - what that quality is depends on the common feature...” The most common feature that the avatar and text share is the white background - white as a colour, signals neutrality, purity and innocence. With such a neutral background, participants are invited to fill it with ‘colour’ in accordance to their desire, i.e. selecting one’s desired avatar and posting a comment that reflects your opinion. Additionally, the white background symbolises the colour of an average page and by writing a comment on it, the participants are literally “putting it in black and white”.

6.11.4 Contrast

Contrast in visuals are realised when “two elements differ in terms of a quality” (Van Leeuwen, 2010:13). There is clear contrast between the avatar and the text – the avatar is in colour while the text is just black letters. Based on the purpose of avatars, it’s sensible that they are in colour as they are representatives of physical identification.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) discuss the system of the gaze with regards to pictures and the importance of the gaze in establishing rapport with the audience. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), the respective gaze in images either demand or offer – “if a person represented in an image looks at the viewer, the image realises a ‘demand’ - the gaze

demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary reaction with him or her”. Conversely, the lack of such a look ‘offers’ the pictured participant as impersonal and merely information distributors. The majority of avatars selected by participants have images that make eye contact with the audience which results in the perception that the audience and participant are engaging in a conversation where the participant shares his/her opinion on a selected matter.

There continues to be a shift away from this rigid ‘mono-modal’ perception of communication which results in the isolation of semiotic resources. In breaking away from this ‘either or’ mentality, and using other modes including text for meaning-making, participants and ultimately the multimodal layout of the online newspaper site contributes to synchronic semiotics. According to Van Leeuwen (2010:26), “a synchronic description is a description of a state of affairs as it is at a given moment...” This synchronic description is important as it constantly evaluates the here and now and how best to incorporate existing and new semiotic resources to avoid the reliable, conventional and ‘convenient’ resources. In doing so, we can truly explore phrases such “a picture speaks a thousand words”.

6.12 Summary

This chapter discussed the types of linguistic practices evident in the comments on the Sowetan LIVE website. Based on the analysis in the chapter, it was found that the increased level of semiotic re-mediation and re-semiotisation concedes that language is not a fixed system. The grammatical structure of various comments challenged the notion of ‘Standard English’ by showing how English is used in different contexts and importance of understanding people’s ‘Englishing’. This chapter serves as an example of Coupland’s theory of de-standardisation which he defines as “a type of value levelling that washes out status meanings formerly linked to “standard” and “non-standard” varieties” (Coupland, 2009:44 cited in Androutsopoulos, 2011: 155-6). The typical prestige associated with Standard English is waning and the standard might now be determined by practice and context, instead of country.

This chapter continued to analyse multimodal resources and how the semiotic resources evident on the Sowetan LIVE comment site cohesively contribute to meaning-making. This chapter focused on how new technologies and popular culture continue to influence the change in linguistic practices and the necessity for theories that account for current linguistic

practices – not only by comparing these to existing theories but creating space for new thoughts. In doing so, this chapter is aligned to Halliday’s perception of language, which argues that “the grammar of a language is not a code, not a set of rules for producing correct sentences but a resource for making meanings” (cited in Kress, 2010:3).



CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The previous analysis chapters discussed the contestation of identities (socio-cultural and linguistic) as evoked by conversations regarding *The Spear*. Superficially, *The Spear* appears as yet another conversational painting depicting Zuma in an unsavoury manner. However, layer by layer, *The Spear* reveals itself as a symbolic representation of current day South Africa, a country with a proud history of overcoming hardships, but whose vulnerabilities are crippling it and its magic cloth fails to adequately masquerade its nakedness. South Africa is also presented as a country whose youth consciously draw on various resources to style and consequently re-invent and reconstitute cultural and linguistic practices.

7.2 Objectives revisited

In order to illustrate the stylisation of identities by participants, the study's initial objectives are revisited below.

7.2.1 To investigate how participants employ urban hybrids and argots (vernaculars) as *linguae francae* and social practice in online “conversations” on the Sowetan LIVE website and contribute towards the *disinvention* project

The participants on Sowetan LIVE hail from diverse ethnic, language and racial backgrounds, therefore the reliance on one language or a specific variety would be impractical. Although as per instruction in the comments guidelines that comments should be written in English (the standardised variety) based on the assumption it would serve as a *lingua franca*, this is not the case. Instead of employing Standard English as a *lingua franca*, the language used by participants is of a hybrid nature, drawing from various languages including slang and idioms from their mother tongues.

Therefore, the hybrid linguistic practices of the youth of Sowetan LIVE indeed add to the *disinvention* project by illustrating that in practice, African languages are not neatly separated and static as portrayed by the South African Constitution, for instance. In using hybrid and non-standard varieties, the Sowetan LIVE participants break free from identities imposed on them by the colonial, apartheid and democratic South African government and demonstrate

that the “pure” languages concept is a mere fallacy and the ‘impure’ languages are actually the norm. In the process they reconstitute and reinvent cultural practices and language.

7.2.2 To explore how development in media technologies (such as use of keyboards, textese and new computer literacies) have impacted on the reconstitution of language.

The data illustrates that the increased use of the computer as a “writing-machine” has mostly influenced the typography and orthography of the English language structure. The most noticeable change in the visual appearance of language influenced by the computer is the inclusion of numbers, punctuation and special symbols into words. This finding is not surprising as this is intentionally done in this context as a censorship avoidance strategy.

In terms of orthography, the data indicates that participants mostly used shortenings such as phonetic spellings and letter/number homophones. There is not an overwhelming amount of evidence of unintended misspellings or spelling errors in the data and it can be concluded that the unintended spelling errors can be attributed to the fast typing. Therefore, the intentional diversion of standard spelling conventions also relates to the need to avoid censorship. The data also contains other typical netspeak feature such as capitalisation for emphasis or stress, inclusion of performance indicators/vocalisations and onomatopoeic spellings.

The development of media technologies therefore calls for the establishment of new orthography that accommodates novel technologic inventions and computer literacies that acknowledge the diverse and fluid use of the computer.

7.2.3 To explore what the division between the traditional and modern identity options that emerge from the text inform us about the perceptions of the South African youth on language and culture.

By intentionally using various censorship strategies simultaneously and breaking the rules, these participants illustrate their agency and power in deciding how they use language. It is worth noting that the youth in this study incorporate their everyday linguistic practices, such as vernacular slang, into this online environment. In doing so, they alter the platform to be representative of their daily linguistic practices instead of simply conforming.

In terms of the division between traditional and modern identity, it is noticeable that the youth disassociate themselves with both identities and instead create an alternative identity.

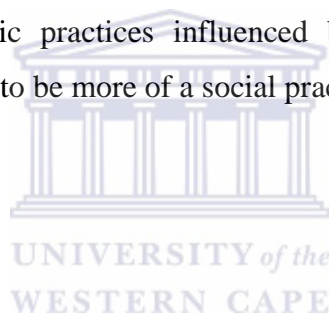
This secular identity disinvents the link between traditional norms and behaviour but also the perception of global consumption by localising a global product i.e. internet/internet discourse.

7.3 Limitations of study and Future Research

The study was based on online linguistic practices and although South Africa is a relatively developed country, access to the internet is costly, determined by the availability of network coverage and therefore not accessible to all. A suggestion for future research would be analysing the linguistic practices of youth without internet access.

7.4 Conclusion

In this study, Sowetan LIVE provided a platform for analysing how a global product (online newspaper) is localised to suit the purposes of the South African youth. Additionally, as illustrated by the fluid linguistic practices influenced by the invention of new media technologies, language continues to be more of a social practice than a bounded system.



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