# Immigrant language vitality: exploring the language practices of some Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town

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# DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people, has been attributed and has been cited and referenced.

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## Keywords

Migration & Diaspora

Language maintenance

Language shift

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Domains

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# Abstract

This study draws on the conceptual framework of language maintenance and shift to examine the phenomenon of West African migration to post-apartheid South Africa. The study aims to determine how immigrants negotiate language and cultural differences, how attempts to integrate into their new society shape or reshape their identities, the consequences of this attempt at integration on their home languages and ultimately, their placement in their new society. It follows a qualitative research methodological approach for data collection where participants' language use and language choices are observed. Unstructured interviews and participant observation were utilised as tools for data collection. The data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify the themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative data collected. Following an interpretive paradigm, the study was done to record how space, mobility, and anti-immigrant sentiments impact the language choices of immigrants in Cape Town, South Africa.

All South African cities are highly multilingual and multicultural including Cape Town. Although South Africa has eleven official languages (now 12 with the recent addition of sign language), many other languages have made their way into the country because of the flow of immigrants from already highly multilingual and multicultural African countries. Migration studies have shown that Africans migrate with complex, fluid and multi-layered linguistic repertoires which develop into an even more complex one in their new society because of their multilingual backgrounds. Although researchers (Vigouroux, 2008; Wankah, 2009; Mbong, 2008; Orman, 2012; Nchang, 2018) have done some work on West African migration to South Africa, these studies have not extensively documented the impact of Nigerian migrants' language practices or choices on the vitality of their heritage languages in Cape Town.

The present study, therefore, focuses on some Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town by examining the effect of space and identity negotiation in the diaspora on their home languages. It raises the question: what is the fate of immigrant heritage languages such as Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin English in the diaspora in terms of language maintenance and shift? To the researcher's current knowledge, there is no study on language maintenance and shift with regard to Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba in Cape Town. Therefore, there is no evidence suggesting the maintenance or shift of these languages. Based on this, the current research set out to investigate the vitality of said languages in Cape Town. In addition, it is important to monitor and document immigrants' languages in the diaspora. Research such as this potentially

builds on existing works and expands scholarly knowledge in the field of language maintenance and shift as it relates to migrants' heritage languages.

This dissertation explores the vitality of Nigerian immigrants' languages, Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba, within the context of Cape Town. This is done through an exploration of the linguistic practices of selected Nigerian immigrants residing in some areas of Cape Town, South Africa, focusing on the impact of their language use patterns on the maintenance of their home languages or shift from them. The focus on Yoruba and Pidgin reflects the two main languages of Nigeria today; these are languages that I can monitor in migration. Furthermore, while Yoruba has "ethnic" overtones, Pidgin is more widely construed as "Nigerian", hence it is necessary to study both together.

The analysis of data indicates that immigrants' social positioning as both outsiders and insiders in their new society presents certain challenges to the vitality of their heritage languages. On the one hand, they grapple with the desire to maintain their identities as Nigerians but on the other, they risk exclusion and discrimination which can sometimes be life-threatening should they maintain their cultural affiliations and heritage languages. This places them in a difficult position. This study illuminates some of the challenges immigrants face as they negotiate their place in their new societies.

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# Chapter 1
## Background and context of the study

## 1.1. Introduction

Migration remains an integral part of human existence as humans continue to migrate from one place to another, either transnationally or internationally. Migration discourse has been constructed in various ways. As Vigouroux (2008: 230) notes, it may be based on how long an immigrant hopes to "stay in the host country (permanent versus temporary residents), the sending versus receiving countries, the direction of migrants", forced or voluntary migration and individual versus family migration. As mobile subjects, immigrants face the challenge of language differences in their new societies (Zhang, 2010).

The mobility of people, whether forced or voluntary into new societies brings new languages into the terrain and this has implications for the vitality of these new languages. A case of language contact is likely to ensue. The outcome of this could be the two likely possibilities in language contact situations – language shift or maintenance. In a  situation like this, minority languages with fewer speakers often yield to language shift over an extended period of time while the dominant ones with more speakers are able to effect language maintenance. For example, the movement of Nigerian immigrants into post-apartheid South Africa has brought new languages into this terrain. In a society such as Cape Town, such Nigerian languages naturally become minority languages because of the much lower number of speakers and the existence of local languages that are more dominant. Immigrants' heritage languages face the challenge of either language shift over an extended period of time or language maintenance which may be indicated in its continued use among immigrant families and transmission to the next generation. As Kamwangamalu (2013: 35) notes, language shift is likely to occur in a situation where immigrants use more of the dominant language in their new society than their heritage language, at least after a generation.

Nevertheless, a complete language shift may be prolonged as new media now enables virtual communication which affords immigrants the space to continue speaking their home languages (see Nchang, 2018; Umana, 2018). Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town who speak Yoruba may continue to speak the language virtually with their folks back in their home countries. New

technologies and the affordances of social media enable easy and fast communication between immigrants and their families in their home countries. Communicating in one's language has become simply placing a phone call, joining conversations in the comments section of social media like Facebook and Twitter, and texting on WhatsApp. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic even more virtual communication affordances such as Teams, Zoom etc have become a substitute for face-to-face interactions. During the pandemic, people invented innovative ways to maintain connections with friends and family by hosting virtual social events such as birthday parties, wedding anniversaries, wedding ceremonies, funerals and so on. These virtual spaces were also spaces for language use and cultural exchanges. Although virtual affordances create a domain for language use, whether this is enough for language maintenance remains to be established.

Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town have the power to determine what becomes of their heritage languages in the future, thus, gaining an in-depth insight into how they engage with this is essential. To the researcher's current knowledge, the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in migration has not received the needed attention from scholars. These two languages have not been studied from the perspective of language maintenance and shift, specifically within the context of Cape Town. Therefore, there is no evidence suggesting the maintenance or shift of these languages. Based on this, the current research set out to investigate the vitality of said languages in Cape Town. In addition, it is important to monitor and document immigrants' languages in the diaspora. Research such as this potentially builds on existing works and expands scholarly knowledge in the field of language maintenance and shift as it relates to immigrants' heritage languages.

This dissertation explores the vitality of Nigerian immigrants' languages, Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba, within the context of Cape Town where they are minority languages by virtue of having few speakers in comparison to the city's three main languages (isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English). This is done through an examination of the linguistic practices/choices of selected immigrants from Nigeria residing in some areas of Cape Town, South Africa. The focus is on the influence of their language use and patterns of choice on the maintenance of their heritage languages or shift from them. The choice to study Nigerians in Cape Town is motivated by issues of access and practicality. As a Nigerian immigrant living in Cape Town, this study population is more practical and accessible to me than others. At the same time, I am able to bring specialist cultural and sociolinguistic analysis from first-hand experience, amplified by fieldwork.

The focus on Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin reflects the two main languages of Nigeria today and these are languages that I am able to monitor in migration. These languages are also in all likelihood the most common Nigerian languages in Cape Town, although statistics are not easy to come by. Furthermore, while Yoruba has "ethnic" overtones, Pidgin is more widely construed as "Nigerian", hence it is necessary to study both together. My discussion will draw on several sub-fields of sociolinguistics and hopefully contribute to them with this Africa-to-Africa case study. Some of these are language maintenance and shift, multilingualism & language repertoires and language attitudes.

This dissertation also explores the language repertoires of these immigrants with a focus on how family language practices and choices impact intergenerational language transmission and the consequences thereof for language maintenance and shift. The aim is to illuminate how space, migration, and ethnolinguistic tensions like xenophobia may impact the vitality of the immigrants' heritage languages as they negotiate their social positioning in their new society. This research is situated within the contexts of Nigeria and South Africa. This chapter provides a context for the phenomenon under investigation, that is, the vitality of the abovementioned Nigerian languages in Cape Town. It also provides a discussion of the linguistic background of Nigeria and a brief history of their migration patterns. The purpose of this is to offer some insight into the lives of Nigerians as immigrants in Cape Town.

## 1.2. Nigeria: Patterns of migration

As with all humans, Nigerians are not exempted when it comes to mobility. Migration has been a part of Nigeria's history for as long as the country has existed. People moved from one place to another for several reasons within the country. Prior to the popularity of international / African migration, internal migration was (and is still) common in Nigeria. A discussion on this migration pattern provides contextual information on international migration and highlights some of the factors necessitating such internal or external mobilities. As mobile people, rural-rural and rural-urban migration was (and is still) a considerable part of the lives of Nigerians.

Although rural-urban migration has received more attention, Mberu (2005: 145) points out that "urban areas are not the primary destination of migrants from rural areas". According to Mberu's (2005: 142) argument, "when periodic/seasonal movements are excluded, rural-rural migration emerges as the most important type of internal migration in Sub-Saharan Africa,

including Nigeria". According to his study, only 26 percent of migrants from rural areas target urban destinations, while 64 percent have other rural areas as desired destinations. This indicates that internal migration in Nigeria is not always driven by a need to move to urban destinations. People migrate for various reasons such as joining their partners, in the case of the married ones, seeking better employment opportunities, or simply based on the need to explore other parts of Nigeria. Mberu (2005: 150) also reports on the influence of religious factors on rural-rural migration. Christian missionaries often migrate to other rural areas for religious purposes such as establishing a church and introducing people to their belief system.

Consequently, rural-urban migration is also on the rise in Nigeria. As highlighted by de Haas (2006: 5), "there is a massive internal migration due to the large population of the country and extreme economic hardship". The migrants often move to densely populated urban centres like Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Although these are the most desirable locations, "people move back and forth not only between the rural place of origin and urban place of destination but between cities and towns, along the lines that are similarly grounded in kinship and community of origin" (Smith, 2006: 55). Migrants find the urban centres more desirable because of the assumption that it offers more opportunities. For one, these cities are homes to most local and international industries in Nigeria and double as the state capital where the affairs of the states are run.

In terms of demographics, immigrants are in most cases, young people between the ages of 15 to 29 years old (Mberu, 2005). Their youthfulness is advantageous in terms of access to available opportunities. This population has been identified as the productive age and should be the drivers of economic development in rural areas and their movement poses difficulty for development (Shittu et al. 2017). Apart from adolescents, children also make up a huge percentage of internal immigrants. Child trafficking and child labour "in Nigeria are generally described as 'immense' and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation" (de Haas, 2006: 6).

This practice of internal child migration is rooted in traditional practices known as fostering where parents in rural areas send off their children to live with relatives in urban areas. This often happens because of the parent's inability to care for the child due to circumstances such as extreme economic hardship or the death of one or both parents. The rural parent or relative does this because of the perception that the urban centre will offer the children more opportunities than a rural area would (de Haas, 2006).  Also, they trust their relatives to care

for their children. However, this is often not the case in practice since several of these children are overworked and not given access to the 'quality' education that the parents hoped they would receive (de Haas, 2006). Unfortunately, child immigrants face this reality leaving them vulnerable to child traffickers.

Another factor that influences internal migration in Nigeria is educational opportunities, mostly higher education. A study conducted by Okahnkhuele and Opanfunso (2013) examining the causes and consequences of rural-urban migration in the Ogun Waterside local government area of Ogun State, Nigeria from 1999 to 2008 indicated that most of the immigrants from the study area migrated to urban centres to advance their education rather than to search for employment. Smith (2006) believes that this could be driven by the high level of importance attached to education in the western part of Nigeria. His observation bears certain credibility as the people from the western part of Nigeria were part of those that embraced western education during the colonial era. This culture has since been passed on from one generation to the next.

Apart from internal migration, international migration has also been an enormous issue in Nigeria as people continue to move in and out of the country. As with internal migrations, people are motivated by factors such as economic hardships, and mostly the need for a better higher education. The discussion above on internal migration was meant to illuminate similarities between both migration patterns and how internal migration drives international migration among Nigerians with the economic means to migrate overseas. The common denominator with both is that factors such as educational improvements, economic, and political stability that influenced internal migrations, similarly influence international migrations/emigration.

As the giant of Africa in terms of demography, "Nigeria has become increasingly involved in international migration" (de Haas, 2006: 4). Destinations of choice include Europe, the Gulf countries and South Africa. Although this is the case, Adepoju (2003: 5) notes that Nigeria also attracts immigrants from countries within West Africa. Immigrants from countries such as Ghana, Niger and Liberia have found Nigeria a destination of choice. Some South African activists/freedom fighters also found Nigeria as a place of refuge during the apartheid era. Apart from African immigrants, Asian immigrants are also economic immigrants residing in Nigeria. The oil crisis of 1973 which led to a 350% increase in oil revenue and the subsequent boom in

Nigeria's economy would have made Nigeria a desirable destination for African and Asian immigrants (de Haas, 2006: 4).

Nevertheless, in the last two decades, Nigeria's economy has declined because of political instability and continued insecurity. This has greatly influenced migration patterns leading to a shift from less immigration to more emigration as Nigerians now look to other countries for security and economic stability. According to Black et al. (2004:11), Nigeria has witnessed a "reverse migration transition, transforming itself from a net immigration to a net emigration country". In an attempt to escape economic hardship in Nigeria, many Nigerians have immigrated to countries like the United Kingdom for international studies but have not returned. Other destinations include Ghana, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa post-1994, North America and the Gulf states. In fact, Nigerians are said to be living as immigrants in almost all countries around the world.

## 1.3. Migration to South Africa / life as Immigrants in South Africa

The end of Apartheid in 1994 and the transition to democracy made the new South Africa a desirable destination for immigrants. It opened access to "a floodgate of immigrants, eager to partake in Africa's most buoyant economy and a new era" (Adepoju, 2003: 36). Among these immigrants were also Nigerians looking to escape their economic situation in Nigeria for a better one. Because of economic and political instability ravaging their own country, they perceived South Africa as a more viable option as migrating to South Africa seemed less expensive due to the low exchange rates between the currencies of both countries as opposed to the currencies of the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom. In recent times, Nigerians are still migrating to South Africa not just because of economic hardship but also as an attempt to escape the insecurity prevalent in the country. The statistics as of 2017 according to Statistics South Africa indicate that Nigeria comprises 30% of immigrants arriving in South Africa – one of the leading countries in terms of immigrants from other African countries (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This was the most recent statistic as of the writing of this dissertation.

Prior to democracy in South Africa, migration to the country during the apartheid era mainly involved labour movements, with targeted recruitment of workers from the neighbouring Southern region. Prah (1989 cited in Adepoju, 2003: 6) notes that "skilled professionals drawn especially from Ghana, Uganda, and trickles from Nigeria migrated clandestinely to the then

Bantustans – homeland states – in South Africa". The number of Nigerian migrants has increased since the launch of democratic South Africa. Most of them are economic migrants seeking a better opportunity in a country which they consider more stable than their place of origin. Juxtaposed against the 'majority' economic migrants are the professional migrants, who can be found in sectors such as education, health and business. Many Nigerian migrants are international students, chiefly postgraduate students in different fields in universities around South Africa. Although some extend their stay at the completion of their studies, others return to Nigeria or migrate to other countries because of immigration tensions popular in South Africa driven mainly by the discourse around illegal migration.

The discourse around illegal immigrants often perpetuated in the South African media has led to the perception of most or all immigrants from Nigeria being criminals. According to Taran (2000, cited in Adepoju 2003: 6), "migrants are commonly and deliberately associated with crime, trafficking, drugs, disease, AIDs, and other social ills". This association of crime with immigrants translates to animosity towards them, specifically African migrants. Nigerians are greatly affected by this as many of them are accused of engaging in crimes involving drugs, money laundering, human trafficking and sales of illegal items. As highlighted by Taran (2000, cited in Adepoju 2003: 7), "migration is commonly characterized as problematic and threatening, particularly to national identity and security". South Africans perceive Nigerian immigrants as threats to their employability and often accuse them of depriving the locals of job opportunities, housing and access to medical aid. The argument is that South Africa does not have enough resources to cater to its own citizens and immigrants accessing these resources leads to a lack of access to the nationals

The narrative of immigrants as burdening South Africa's economy has led to periodic xenophobic attacks. According to Sichone (2020: 7), "despite having one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, South Africa has acquired a reputation for illiberal, xenophobic and nationalist attitudes and practices in both the state and civil society". Frequent reports about immigration officials and police brutality towards immigrants flood the media but this does not lead to any prevention of these crimes or protection of the rights of immigrants who are often targeted. Sichone (2020: 7) cites an example found in a Cape Town newspaper on "the plight of Nigerians in South Africa" who are required to keep receipts for everything they purchase to avoid being accused of being in possession of stolen items when raided by the police. This is a result of the 'criminal' identity imposed on foreign nationals living in South Africa.

Nigerians have been specifically targeted and accused of being at the forefront of crimes such as human trafficking, sex trafficking, narcotics, and sales of stolen goods (Neocosmos, 2006).

In addition, foreign nationals are also targeted and discriminated against by some South African citizens. Mainstream media seems to be partly responsible for this as their news reports are constantly flooded with negative stories related to foreigners. The negative representation of immigrants in the media subsequently shapes perceptions of South Africans regarding them. This inherently instigates violence against foreigners and a continuous outcry by South African nationals for African migrants to "go back to their countries". According to contemporary research indications, the media not only plays a role in disseminating information to the public but also shapes or reshapes ideologies and discourses, inherently shaping people's behavioural patterns (Smith, 2009). Negative stereotypes presented in the media only serve to reinforce animosity towards immigrants and ultimately, xenophobic violence.

One rationale behind the call for foreigners to leave is that they are responsible for displacing the locals in the labour market. These calls have been amplified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The perception here is that the removal of foreigners will aid in alleviating the economic hardship caused by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it may be true that immigrants are part of the labour market in South Africa, such discourse ignores the fact that they make up only a small percentage. As highlighted by Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh and Singh (2005: 7) foreigners are not only employees but are also employers of labour. According to this Wits University research in inner-city Johannesburg, just 20% of South Africans report having paid someone to do work for them while 34% of migrants surveyed had.

In addition, "even more significantly, more than two-thirds (67%) of those hired by migrants were South Africans" (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, & Singh, 2005: 7). Thus, contrary to the popular perception, foreigners do not deprive the locals of employment but in fact, provide them with one in some cases. A similar study conducted in Durban also identifies a positive economic impact of immigration (Hunter & Skinner 2003). However, the negative impacts continue to be foregrounded instead of the positive in the popular response to South African immigration challenges.

## 1.4. Language background of Nigeria

As with other African countries, Nigeria is home to over 520 indigenous languages (Ogunmodimu, 2015: 156). Apart from these indigenous languages, non-indigenous ones (e.g.,

English, French, Arabic, and Chinese) are also present in the country due to colonialism and migration. Based on this, the linguistic situation in Nigeria can be described as especially complex (Ogunmodimu, 2015: 156). To make sense of the complex language situation in Nigeria, Ogunmodimu (2015: 156) "groups the languages of Nigeria into three different groups: exogenous language (English, French and Arabic), indigenous languages (over 520), and neutral language (Nigerian Pidgin English)". The complex language situation in Nigeria has generated arguments over possible disunity and as such, calls for planning and management to prevent such disunity (Owolabi & Dada, 2012: 1678). The outcome of this planning and management has been the recognition of three languages as major languages and upgraded to national status with English as the official language (Danladi, 2013: 8).

English is regarded as the only language that indexes unity at the official level. Thus, "it has been selected as the official language of Nigeria while indigenous languages such as Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba merely serve the function of the language to conduct business where it is practicable" (Danladi, 2013: 8). As listed by Owolabi & Dada, (2012: 1677) and Danladi (2013: 8), these three languages are Hausa (a dominant language in the Northern region of Nigeria), Yoruba (dominant in the Western region), and Igbo (dominant in the Eastern region) while what remains of the over 520 languages are simply categorized under the blanket of 'minor' languages. This implies that the major languages would be dominant and enjoy a higher prestige while the minor ones carry less prestige.

Regardless of these three indigenous languages of Nigeria having official recognition as national languages, English plays the primary function of an official language of communication in professional domains in Nigeria. Speaking of the dominant role of English in Nigeria, Danladi (2013: 6) notes that "it is now not only a second language but also the language of commerce, education, politics, law and administration of the entire country's affairs, though in different usages and command." Because of this, it is regarded as a key that grants access to employment and education. The ability to speak the language also grants one access to a higher social class. According to Ogunmodimu (2015: 45), "English continues to play important roles in the nation as the language of education, media, religion (especially the Pentecostal Christian faith), and the language of politics, governance and law". The hegemony of English in Nigeria may have some consequences on the vitality of indigenous languages over time.

A major indigenous language such as Yoruba is strong as a spoken and informal language in Nigeria with no immediate endangerment. Nonetheless, its absence in formal education is of concern to some language scholars. In the diaspora, however, it may struggle to survive, as do all African languages, with the possible exception of Kiswahili. Hence this investigation in Cape Town was undertaken. The present study aims to record the state of two Nigerian languages in relation to vitality in the context of Cape Town where they are minority languages. These languages are Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. The next section provides a brief discussion of these languages within Nigeria beginning with the map below which shows the linguistic groups in Nigeria.
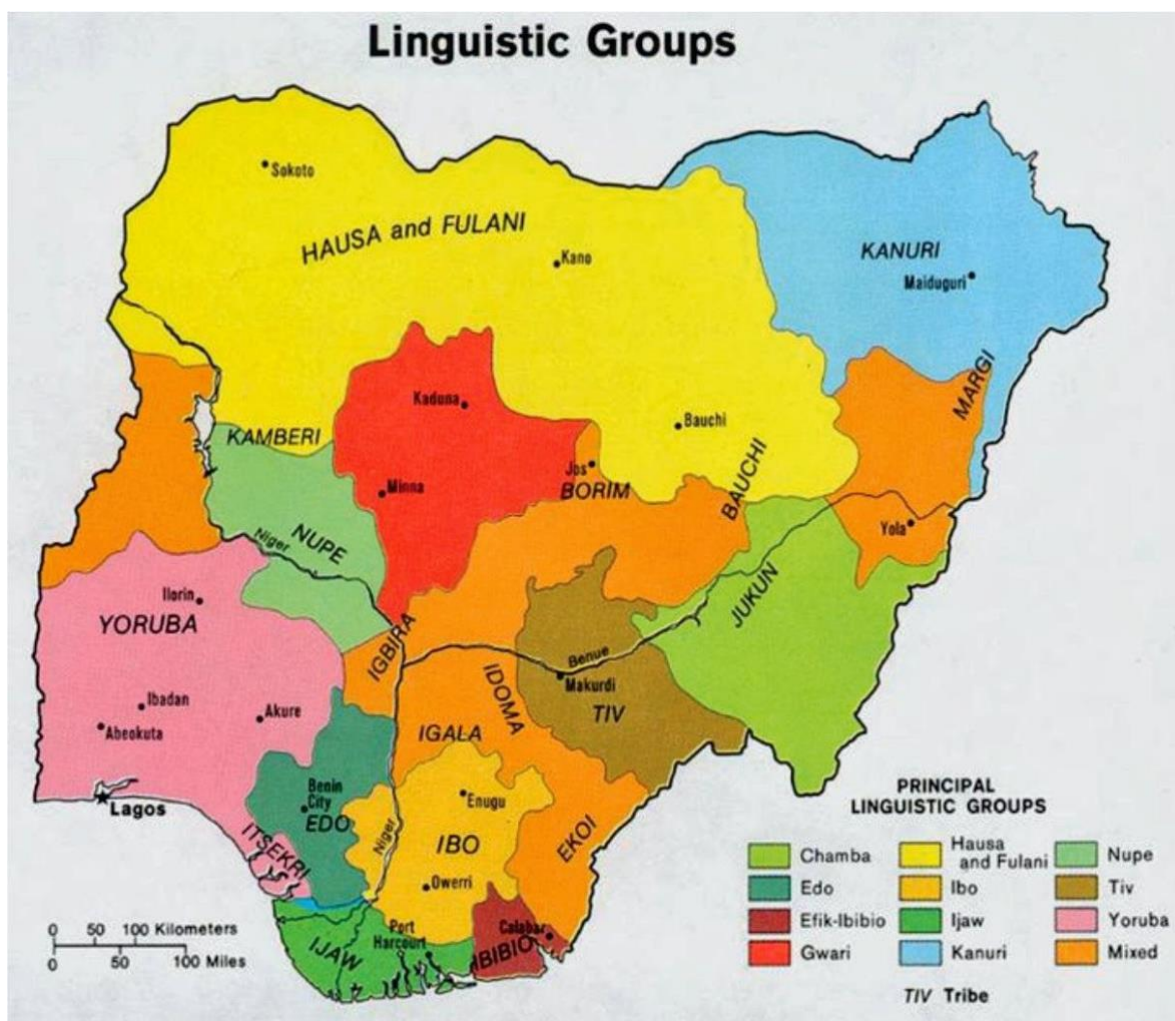


*Figure 1: Linguistic map of Nigeria (source: Danladi 2013: 5)*

One of the languages that form part of this study is Yoruba. As mentioned above, it is one of the major languages of Nigeria spoken in the Southwestern part. According to Banda and

Adetomokun (2015: 34.), "it has many dialects and the dialect at one end of the continuum may not be intelligible to speakers at the other end". The Yoruba people occupy the South-Western part of the country and with a population of about 44.6 million speakers in Nigeria (Ethnologue). According to statistics on Ethnologue, Yoruba has 42.6 million L1 speakers and 2 million L2 speakers. Badejo (2007: 10) also mentions that "there are about forty (40) million Yoruba speakers in Western Nigeria spread over several states". Yoruba is said to be spoken within Nigeria and outside Nigeria by 22 million second-language speakers in other countries of the world (Igboanusi & Peter, 2005: 77; Gimes 2000:202 cited in Dada 2007: 88). It is spoken in Australia by 2,470 people, in Benin by 209,000, in Canada by 9090 speakers, Ivory Coast by 115,000 speakers, in Ghana by 460,00 speakers, Niger has 74,800 speakers, Sierra Leone has 6,300 speakers, Togo has 121,000 speakers, and the United Kingdom has 14,900 speakers (All figures are from Ethnologue).

As one of the major languages in Nigeria following Hausa and Igbo, the language is recognized as "a school subject and offered from primary school to university level mainly in the southern part of the country" (Dada, 2007: 88). It also has a standard orthography. Regarding the vitality of Yoruba, Ethnologue using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) developed by Lewis and Simons (2010 following Fishman 1991), assesses it as stable and safe. The assessment indicates that Yoruba is not facing any sort of endangerment as it "has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community" (Ethnologue).

Nonetheless, some scholars hold the position that language is endangered. Scholars like Fabunmi & Salawu (2007) list five factors which influence the endangerment of Yoruba. The first factor is the attitudes of the elite community. The negative attitude towards Yoruba in members of some communities because of the preference for English could potentially endanger the language. In most cases, some members of the elite community keep Yoruba out of the home domain and prohibit their children from using it as a language of communication (Fabunmi & Salawu, 2007). Secondly, job opportunities and economic policies endanger Yoruba because English is the acceptable language in the Nigerian labour market. Therefore, Yoruba is not viewed as a resource, leading to the choice of English over it. What may be deduced from the above is English is the dominant language among some Yoruba speakers in certain contexts and this may lead to multilingualism or to language shift over a period of time.

Another language which forms part of this study is Nigerian Pidgin. It is a form of pidgin spoken in Nigeria mostly as a lingua franca but is not included in the map above (Umana, 2018). According to Sebba (1997: 14), "pidgins often result from the communication strategy of adults who already have a native command of at least one language". As a language, Nigerian Pidgin is one of the languages that form part of the language repertoire of many Nigerians within the country and in the diaspora and is far from what is described as a pidgin in pidgin and creole literature. Balogun (2012) notes that "it is spoken in Nigeria by several people from different social classes", not just the lower class. As highlighted by Mesthrie (in print), "Pidgin Englishes of Africa have exhibited durability, and should not be mistaken as transient forms, associated with the incomplete mastery of a target language". This durability is evident in Nigerian Pidgin which has metamorphosed into the most common language in many social domains across the country regardless of the negative attitudes towards it by some and is creolising in some cities in Nigeria, specifically the Niger Delta region (Faraclas, 1996, Umana, 2018).

Although pidgins have been described in early scholarship as an imitation of the target language and an early fossilized interlanguage in second language acquisition research based on Schuman's (1978) study, these descriptions are highly flawed as they do not fully represent the definition of pidgins as theorized in pidgin and creole studies. A better description is that "pidgins are examples of partially targeted or non-targeted second-language learning, developing from simpler to more complex systems as communicative requirements become more demanding" (Mühlhausler, 1986: 5). This study adopts a definition along this line and prefers to describe pidgin as languages with "sophisticated innovations rather than an imitation of the target languages" (Umana, 2018: 47). It also acknowledges that there is a significant difference between fossilized interlanguage and pidginization.

Consequently, following the ideology that pidgin is an imitation of a target language, some Nigerians refrain from speaking Nigerian Pidgin regardless of their high level of proficiency in it. Echoing a similar sentiment, Balogun (2012: 90) notes, "Nigerian Pidgin English is a term used to denote an English-based pidgin; a 'marginal' language used among Nigerians to facilitate communication needs in certain interaction contexts". The language's "marginality" is questionable and Balogun was probably considering the negative attitudes held by some Nigerians towards it. Also, it could be a result of the language's acceptability in certain domains like formal domains.

In relation to the history of Nigerian Pidgin, Balogun (2012: 91) states that "in the Nigerian context, colonization is a key historical factor responsible for the emergence of Nigerian Pidgin [… and it can] be historically traced to the trade contact between the British and local people in the seventeenth century". Unlike some pidgins, Nigerian Pidgin has survived the test of time as it is becoming even more popular today. As highlighted by Faraclas (1996: 17) over 20 years ago, "a conservative estimate of the number of people who speak Nigerian Pidgin as a second language would have to exceed 40 million and the number of first language speakers has already surpassed 1 million". Al-Shujairi & Ya' u (2016: 233) notes that "Nigerian Pidgin has developed as the most widely spoken language of interaction among Nigerians and across different ethnic groups who do not share a common language". As a result, it has been adopted by media outlets like print and broadcast media who write and broadcast only in Nigerian Pidgin. Some of these media houses in Nigeria include Wazobia FM, Naija FM and more recently, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) with their pidgin version operating as BBC pidgin.

Nigerian Pidgin is not only popular within Nigeria but in the diaspora too. Buba et. al's (2016) study indicates that Nigerians in Malaysia speak the language frequently even while in a foreign country. A similar study conducted by Umana (2018) on Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town also indicates that Nigerian Pidgin is widely spoken by Nigerians regardless of their attitude towards the use of the language in certain domains. Nigerians in the diaspora perceive the language as a strong marker of their national identity and a language of unity (Umana, 2018: 64). It also notes that some Nigerians who held negative attitudes towards Pidgin have had a change of attitude and now value it quite highly, as a language necessary for interpersonal relations in the diaspora. The study also reported that they speak Nigerian Pidgin alongside other Nigerian languages in their language repertoire. However, it did not seem to be that dominant among the second generation as most of the children showed some understanding of Nigerian Pidgin but with limited proficiency as it is not the dominant language in their repertoire.

## 1.5. Sociolinguistic background of Cape Town

Essential to the understanding of the language practices of Nigerian immigrants is a discussion of the sociolinguistics background of their country of residence. South Africa has been described as "the rainbow" nation because it is marked by diversity. Situated in the Southern region of the African continent, the land mass is about 1.2 million sq. km which makes it about

the same size as Columbia and Niger (South African Yearbook 2010/2011). Like other African countries, it had been subjected to colonisation by Europeans, in this case by both the Dutch (as of the mid 17th century and the English as of the early 19th century). The colonialism of South Africa by different European powers led to the dominance of certain languages over others and their uses in official domain (Dyers & Abongdia 2014: 3). The country is divided into nine provinces and each of these provinces is unique in its governance, culture and languages. As previously noted, this study is situated in Cape Town, the capital of the Western Cape Province.

Information presented in Statistics South Africa (2003) indicates that over 44.8 million people in South Africa speak about 25 languages daily. Of these speakers, a good number (about 80%) have an African language as their home language. The language situation in South Africa as with every African country is complex. As mentioned in Mesthrie (2004: 11) "South Africa has been the meeting ground of speakers of languages belonging to several major families, the chief ones being Khoesan, Niger-Congo, Indo-European and Sign Language". Although it now has 12 official languages (because of the recent addition of sign language to the official languages which occurred during the final stages of this dissertation), many other languages have made their way into the country because of the flow of migrants from already highly multilingual and multicultural African countries.

Until recently, South Africa had 11 official languages which were isiXhosa, isiZulu, Afrikaans, English, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tsonga, Venda, Ndebele, and siSwati. As stated above, sign language has just been recognised as an official language in South Africa. With this recognition, the country now has 12 official languages. These 12 languages are spoken in different regions of South Africa. Of the 11 previously recognised official languages, isiZulu is the biggest language and has about 23% of speakers followed by isiXhosa with 16% of speakers, 13.5% of the population are Afrikaans speakers, 10% English speakers, Sepedi has 9% speakers, Setswana and Sesotho both 8% speakers. Other languages such as Xitsonga, siSwati and TshiVenda and isiNdebele have 4.5%, both 2.5%, 2% of speakers respectively (Mesthrie, 2002).

All South African cities are highly multilingual and multicultural, including Cape Town. The nine provinces of South Africa also have their official languages. Cape Town is an urban city in the Western Cape. Cape Town's official languages are English (20.3%), isiXhosa (24.7%), and Afrikaans (49,7%) (SouthAfricainfo.com; Nchang, 2018: 38). These languages are used in

the province at official levels as the language of business. They are also recognised as languages of education as provided in the language policy of the province. As seen in the figures above, Afrikaans has the most number of speakers in the Western Cape followed by isiXhosa and English.

In addition, Afrikaans is spoken as L1 by about 6,860,000 people in South Africa and 10,300,000 as L2 (Savedra, Rosenberg, & Macedo 2020: 382). According to Savedra, Rosenberg, & Macedo (2020: 38), it "is spoken by the white community (the direct descendants of the European settlers) and the coloured community". Afrikaans played an important role in the political landscape of South Africa's pre-democratic state and as a result, was in competition with English as a dominant language in the country at the time (Dyers & Abongdia 2014: 4). There are three dominant varieties of Afrikaans, depending on where it is spoken in South Africa. The three main varieties are Cape Afrikaans, Orange River Afrikaans, and Eastern Border Afrikaans. Other varieties known as informal or urban varieties also exist alongside the formal ones (cf Dyers 2016). The formal one is described as 'standard' Afrikaans while the informal variety is more of an urban variety popular among the younger generation ((Savedra, Rosenberg, & Macedo 2020: 382).

Varieties of isiXhosa can also be found in Cape Town as a result of the inflow of immigrants from the Eastern Cape province of South Africa to Cape Town (Savedra, Rosenberg, & Macedo 2020: 384). According to the authors, this has increased the number of speakers of isiXhosa; thus, making it a more widely spoken language than English in the province. The language is mainly spoken by the Black community and is acceptable in formal domains including in educational settings. IsiXhosa is the home language of "99.4% black South Africans, 0.6% of coloured, 0.4% of Indians, 0.3% of whites and 1.9% of people who describe themselves as "other"" (Southafricainfo.com).

Although Afrikaans and isiXhosa have more speakers than English as far as home language is concerned, the frequency of use of English is increasing in the public service domain. English is described as "a bridging language in interethnic communication" as it affords South Africans "the linguistic means of socio-economic advancement and facilitates access to government services" (Deumert, Inder, Maitra, 2005: 310). As with the other two languages, English also has different varieties and some of these are Black South African English, White South African English and Indian South African English (cf Mesthrie 1992; 2013; Bowerman, 2013). These different varieties are spoken in Cape Town. Besides these varieties, it is most likely that other

varieties have been brought into Cape Town by migrants who have made the city their home. Therefore, one could possibly find Nigerian English variety, Cameroon English variety, Zimbabwean English Variety and so on in the city.

Apart from these three main languages of Cape Town, other African languages have been brought in by the flow of African immigrants into the city. These languages include French, Portuguese, Nigerian Pidgin, Shona, Igbo, Yoruba, and others. This further adds to the linguistic diversity of Cape Town and the complexity of the language repertoire of speakers, especially immigrants. As indicated by Statistics South Africa (from Mesthrie 2002), below is the proportion of the 11[1] official languages in the country.
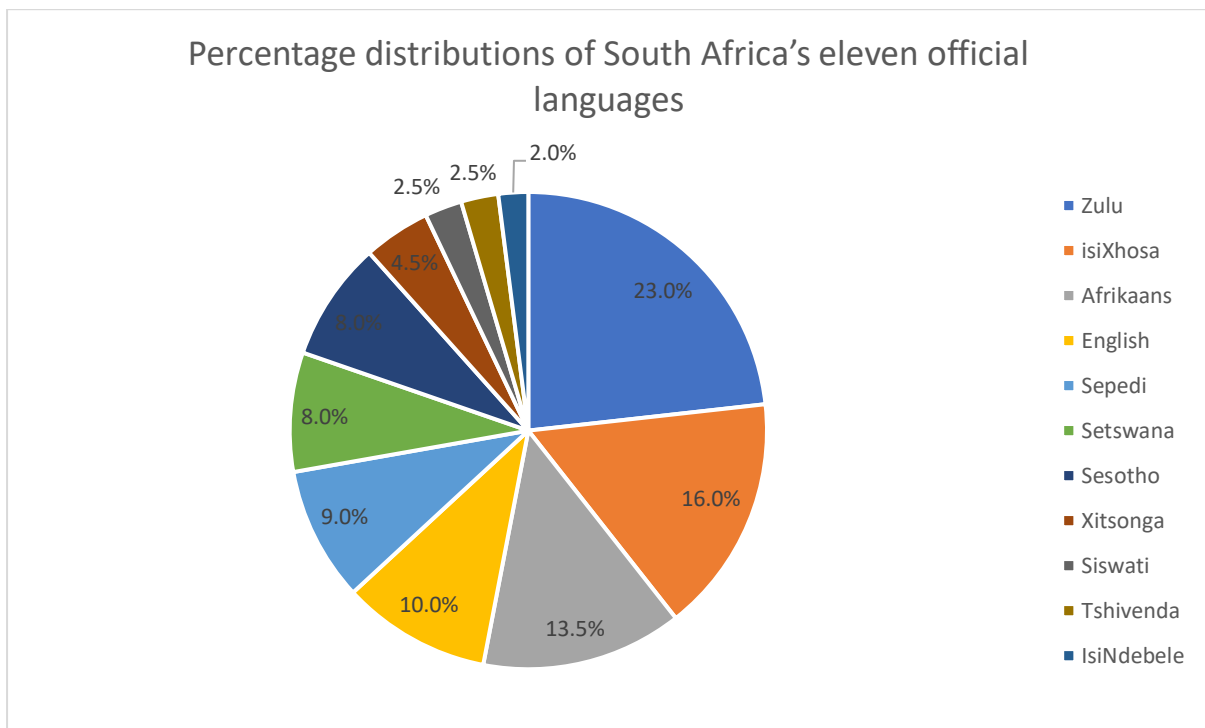


*Figure 2: Percentage distribution of South African official languages*

The figure above provides a summary of the preceding discussion and as seen in the figure, isiZulu appears to be the dominant language of South Africa followed by isiXhosa. English and Afrikaans have a substantial number of speakers too. Immigrant languages may be categorized under the category of 'other' Regardless of the small percentage of speakers of immigrant languages, their presence in Cape Town cannot be overlooked as these languages

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[1] The chart reflects the previous official languages before the recent addition of sign language.

can be heard in public spaces like taxi ranks, train stations and supermarkets; thus, forming part of the linguistic setting of the city. It is for this reason that studying the vitality of immigrant languages is essential.

## 1.6.   Statement of the problem

Participant: *"Even if it is as I am in here and I have a child, if he learns his mother's Afrikaans, whatever, ah he will learn his daddy's pidgin too. He will learn ah ah! My children must learn pidgin" (data sample from Umana, 2018)*

Participant: *"Since a day I no longer recall, Tracy ceased speaking Chinese to us at home. After she was able to speak English, she is used to speaking English all the time. Although we initially worried about her English and her performance at school, we are now worrying about her loss of Chinese" (data sample from Zhang, 2010)*

Both quotations above extracted from Umana's (2018) and Zhang's (2010) studies on immigrant languages indicate that although immigrants tend to learn the dominant language/s in their new society, they also desire to maintain their home languages by continuing to speak and even transferring them to the next generation (of children). Integration or resettlement is a primary factor in immigration and immigrants often need to be resettled in their new society in order to fully participate in the political, social, educational and economic life of their host country (Burns & Roberts, 2010: 409). For Nigerian immigrants in South Africa, this may imply learning/acquiring the local languages of the country and perhaps thereby restricting the use of their heritage languages to certain domains. This poses a challenge to the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages and the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Nigerian community in South Africa.

Language shift as a more common phenomenon than maintenance among immigrant children has been well documented in the literature (Fishman, 1966; Veltman, 1983; Portes & Hao, 1998, Zhang 2010). Nchang (2018) and Umana (2018) have documented cases of immigrants' heritage language maintenance among the older generations in mainly the home and circle of friends' domains due to the affordances of new technology. In addition, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin have been researched in terms of language maintenance and shift to a relative degree within Nigeria by scholars such as Fabunmi & Saluwa (2007) and Dada (2007). Nevertheless, these languages in Cape Town have not been sufficiently documented in terms of language maintenance and shift, even though there is a large Nigerian community in Cape Town.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how Nigerian immigrants negotiate language differences and how attempts to integrate into their new society shape or reshape their linguistic repertoires and language choices within them.

This study is especially interested in the factors that influence heritage language maintenance, shift to the dominant language/s and any innovations that occur in the process of language use. Investigating and documenting the process of heritage language loss (or potential loss) and its effects on immigrant identities will offer insight into how this may be countered to facilitate language maintenance. It will also add value to the lives of immigrants who may feel that language shift impacts their family dynamics and identities negatively like the speakers in the above citations. It will further offer a sense of placement to those who may feel displaced because of language shift leading to identity crisis. Finally, this work should prove beneficial to the broader research community in terms of language vitality outside the normal speech community.

## 1.7.    Research aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to draw on the concept of language maintenance and shift in linguistics to describe the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town. As stated above, these two languages were chosen for reasons of practicality and access. Yoruba is one of the majority languages of Nigeria with more speakers. Also, in terms of migration to South Africa, Yoruba speakers are among the most common immigrants from Nigeria located in Cape Town. In addition, while Yoruba carries ethnic overtones, Nigerian Pidgin is more widely construed as Nigerian, with no ethnic overtones; hence, my decision to study both languages together. I initially set out to study two of the national languages in addition to Nigerian Pidgin but that was simply beyond the scope of this study.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine how migration to Cape Town influences Nigerian immigrants' language choices.
- To determine if the language choices/practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town promote language maintenance or shift.
- To identify and analyse any innovations that may have emerged as speakers engage in different language practices involving the use of different languages in their repertoires.

- To explore how parent-child interactions in the languages lead to language maintenance or shift.

- To explore how participants' language attitudes towards these languages promote language maintenance or language shift.

## 1.8.  Research questions

Based on the aims outlined above, the main question that guides this study is: w*hat factors influence immigrants' heritage language maintenance or shift to the dominant language/s in Cape Town, and what innovations emerge in the process of language use?* To answer this question, the following research sub-questions guided my investigation process:

- How has migrating to Cape Town influenced Nigerian immigrants' linguistic practices or language choices?

- What strategies do Nigerian immigrants use to maintain Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town?

- What new innovations emerge in their linguistic practices involving these languages?

- How does parent-child interaction in the language lead to language maintenance or shift?

- How do participants' language attitudes towards these languages promote language maintenance or language shift?

## 1.9.  Hypothesis

Paulston (1994a:58) states that "minority languages which are in contact with dominant languages within a 'modern nation-state' will maintain their linguistic stability if they encompass the set of behaviours, attitudes and perceptions that are associated with nationalism". Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin have been maintained despite the popularity of English as an economic language in Nigeria. According to Umana (2018), Nigerian Pidgin is not only spoken in Nigeria but is a preferred language of communication among Nigerian immigrants in the diaspora. Although some choose not to speak the language because they want to integrate into their new environment, others still speak it in various domains because they regard it as important to their Nigerian identities. Considering Paulston's and Umana's positions, the following hypothesis will be tested in this dissertation:

- A strong sense of maintaining a Nigerian national identity in Cape Town is the main factor in the maintenance of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin.
- The need to integrate for economic and social reasons may influence the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town, leading to a language shift.

## 1.10. Summary and overview of chapters

The phenomenon of migration which is facilitated by globalization makes language contact a norm in today's societies. As a result of this, languages are commonly found outside of their places of 'origin', thus affording researchers the opportunity to study languages in diaspora - languages associated with relatively recent immigration from a territory acknowledged as being a homeland of origin. This chapter has contextualised the study by discussing the sociohistorical background of Nigeria. It has also provided the background on emigration patterns in Nigeria and migration to South Africa. A brief description of the languages under investigation has also been discussed to provide some context as an understanding of this is essential to the discussion that follows in this dissertation.

To provide a brief breakdown of how this dissertation is organised, chapter one has presented a brief contextualization of migration patterns and a description of the languages under investigation. It has also provided the problem statement of the research, the aim and objectives of the study, and the research questions. In chapter two, the literature related to language maintenance and shift is discussed. Chapter three provides a discussion of the research methods/methodology that guided this study. In chapters four and five, a discussion of the data is presented. The final chapter, six, provides a summary of the study and conclusions drawn based on available data.

# Chapter 2

# Situating the study in the existing literature

## 2.1. Introduction

This chapter contextualises the current study by reviewing previous studies conducted on migration and migrants' language use, the influence of their new societies on their linguistic practices and the effect of this on their heritage languages. The discussion covers concepts such as migration, deterritorialization, language attitudes, language maintenance and shift (Vigoroux, 2005). Studies have been conducted on African immigrants in Cape Town (Vigouroux, 2005; Nchang, 2018; Mbong, 2011) but most of them have been from the approach of language and identity or language attitudes. Also, the study population have mainly been Congolese and Cameroonian immigrants (Vigouroux, 2005; Nchang, 2018; Mbong, 2011; Dyers & Abongdia, 2014) To the researcher's knowledge, Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town have not been extensively studied especially from the perspective of how their language practices or choices influence the vitality of their heritage languages.

One reason for this could be that language vitality is traditionally studied more in relation to the actual speech community, that is, "in situ" cases and not typically in migration. Therefore, the literature in this area is not fully saturated. However, if we follow the contemporary theorising of languages as fluid, dynamic, and mobile (Heugh, 2014) in multilingualism research, a study of the vitality of a language outside its speech community should interest researchers. Also, migration (voluntary or involuntary) contributes to the linguistic makeup of society and maybe language change (Spoksky, 1998).

Immigrants often relocate from a community where their language is a dominant language to another where the language may have fewer speakers, especially in cases of African immigrants migrating to European countries or even other African countries. At this new location, they find that their language becomes disabling because of fewer or unavailable speakers. As a result of this, they develop integration strategies which may impact their heritage languages in relation to language maintenance or shift. The following sections discuss some studies that have been conducted on immigrant languages outside their original speech community – in migration.

## 2.2. Language vitality

As already established in this dissertation, most African countries are highly multilingual and contemporary societies are globalized societies where individuals from diverse cultures coexist. This superdiversity present in contemporary societies implies that the possibility of language contact is inevitable (cf Vertovec 2007). Following Vertovec (2007), Blommaert & Rampton (2011: 1) explain that "super-diversity is characterized by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, but also in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, processes of insertion into the labour and housing markets of the host societies, and so on". As humans move across different spaces through intergroup relations, language contact ensues as well. As a subfield of historical linguistics, language contact is concerned with changes in language because of external influence from other languages (Mesthrie & Leap, 2000: 243). This leads to some languages being more present in some domains than others. The language uses in different domains determines the vitality of languages.

Certain factors influence the prominence of some languages over others, and the popular Catherine Wheel's model of language learning and status change provides a useful depiction (illustrated in figure 3 below). As summarised by Earls (2013), "the component of the model suggests a connection running from competence in a language to its social use and desirability as linguistic capital, to the presence and demand for products in and through the language, to the motivation to learn/use it, which consequently enhances competence, forming a cyclical process or 'wheel'". The more desirable a language is as linguistic/economic capital, the more likely speakers will be motivated to learn and attain competency.

In other words, if a language is perceived as valuable, people will be motivated to learn it to access the economic opportunities it presents especially in the case of immigrants and the dominant language/s in their new society. As the model depicts, "more demand for goods and services in the language leads to more supply of goods and services in the language" (Earls, 2013: 19), ultimately increasing the economic capital of the language and its vitality as indicated by its presence/uses in most domains. The model, however, says little to nothing about why languages perceived as less powerful or less economically viable may still survive.
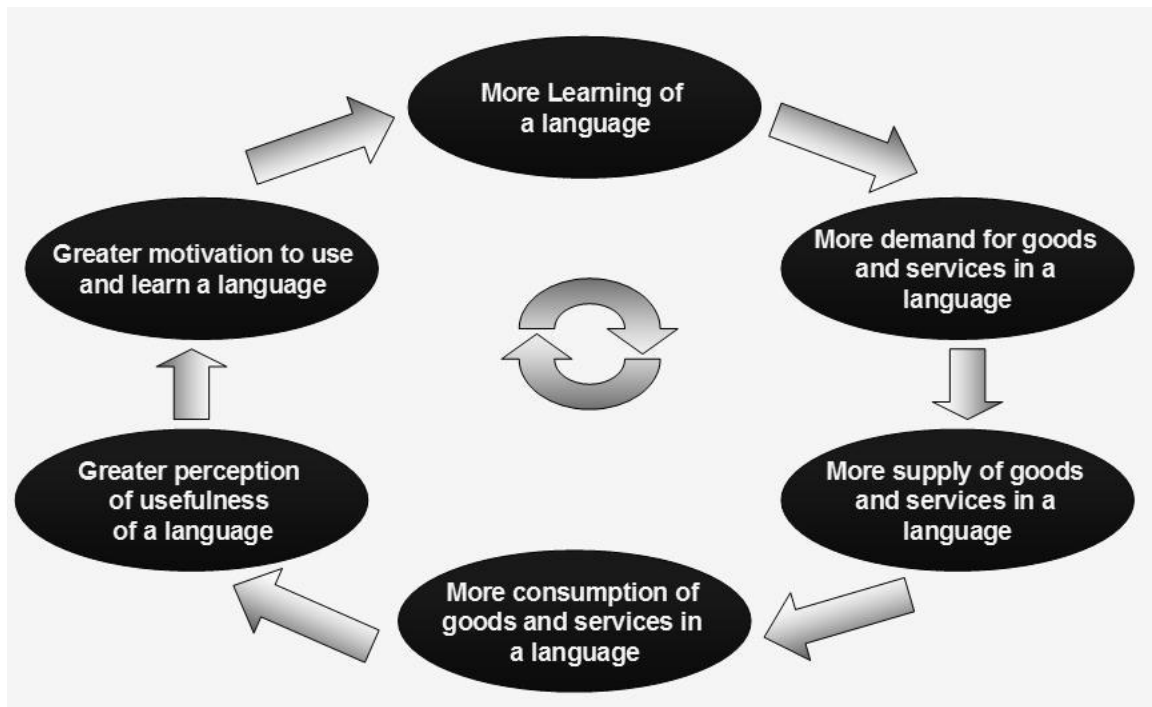
*Figure 3: The Catherine Wheel Model of language learning in socio-economic context – adapted from Strubell 1996*

## 2.3. The outcome of external influence from other languages

Fishman who has conducted extensive research in the field of language maintenance and shift posits that the interest of this field of inquiry is in the relationship between change/stability "and ongoing psychological, social, and cultural processes when contact occurs between people with different languages" (Dagamseh, 2020: 54). In language contact situations, some languages or dialects may replace each other in certain domains of usage and under certain conditions of intergroup relations (Fishman, 1964; Zhang 2010; Dyers, 2008; Dyers and Abongdia, 2014).

Two possibilities exist when language contact occurs: language maintenance or language shift. Language maintenance and language shift have been explained in different ways in the literature. According to Mesthrie & Leap (2000: 245), "language maintenance denotes the continuing use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful language". Put in the context of migration, when immigrants regardless of their duration in the host countries, continue to use their heritage language/s (HL) instead of the dominant language/s over successive generations, this may be described as a case of language maintenance (Fishman 1972 cited in Sevinç, 2016: 82).

Social factors may influence language maintenance. According to Paulson (1994f: 21), "language maintenance can be seen as a social resource by ethnic groups in competition for access to goods and services of a nation". Furthermore, Paulson adds that "language loyalty is not a natural phenomenon but a deliberately chosen strategy for group survival". In other words, "ethnic groups that see learning a dominant language as in the best interest of their children (and where there are opportunities available to learn the dominant language) become bilingual or shift to the dominant language". However, "when these same groups see stigmatization, economic exploitation, and systematic unemployment, they are likely to use the mother tongue as a strategy for social mobilization, and language maintenance becomes the expected outcome" (Paulston, 1994f: 23).

Drawing on the preceding discussion, immigrants may continue to use their heritage language alongside the majority language in their new society depending on the circumstances. Nevertheless, this may not always be the case with second and third-generation immigrants as they tend to use the majority language over the heritage language. This may be described as language shift. Language shift is a case where "one language is replaced by another within a community as the primary means of communication and social exchanges" (Mesthrie & Leap, 2000: 245). A community here may include the social networks of family and a circle of friends.

In addition, language shift may also be described as a process in which speakers of a language gradually give up their language and adopt a more dominant one (Fasold, 1984). As explained by Paulston (1992a:70), "for a shift to take place, access to the dominant language, opportunities to learn it, and motivation to learn it are required". In the case of immigrants, they have access to the dominant language in their new society, the opportunity and the motivation to learn it. This could be the reason most research on language maintenance and shift document language shift as a more common phenomenon than language maintenance (cf. Wong-Fillmore 1991: Portes & Hao, 1998).

Certain factors influence language acquisition and according to Zhang (2010: 44),

> they include "social dominance patterns (such as superiority or equality between the minority-language group and the mainstream-language group), integration strategies (minority-language speakers' willingness to assimilate or preserve their own culture), enclosure (two groups remaining enclosed as units or contacting frequently), size of the

minority language group, intergroup attitudes toward the majority and minority culture, intended length of stay, and cultural congruence between the two language groups, perceived social equality, more willingness to assimilate, low social enclosure and positive attitudes toward the host language"

Most of the factors mentioned above can be linked to the reason immigrants acquire the dominant language in their host country. In most cases, language acquisition occurs because of the need to integrate into their new society.

Further, what is obtainable in most cases of voluntary migration when language contact occurs between dominant and immigrant languages is language shift. The dominant language tends to replace the immigrant languages which become minority languages since the context does not enable the frequent use of such languages in most domains. In other cases, bi/multilingualism may occur instead of language shift. The theorising of language maintenance and shift above describes the traditional understanding of these concepts. In this dissertation, I extend the traditional understanding of language maintenance and shift to show how these concepts can be understood in multilingual settings. These sorts of multilingual settings may potentially promote bi/multilingualism or lead to a change in repertoire in migration. In addition, shifts in patterns of dominance may occur without a complete language shift.

As noted by Saltarelli & Gonzo (1977), the degree of bilingualism varies from one generation to the next. That is, "the first generation is bilingual with a strong dominance of the mother tongue, the second generation is bilingual with a dominance of one language or with a balanced situation, the third generation is bilingual with a dominance of the majority language, and the fourth generation [usually] masters the majority language" (Sevinç, 2016: 82 citing Saltarelli & Gonzo 1977). This may not be clear-cut in all cases as there may be instances where the second and third generation only master the majority language and do not know the heritage language at all.

Thus, over time, language shift or a case of multilingualism where the home language is used alongside the dominant language among the older generation may occur. Another possibility is that the language may take on a hybrid form in the repertoire of the younger generation of immigrants. This point is brought out in Sevinç's (2016) study of language maintenance and shift in three generations of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. The study reports that some of the second-generation immigrants became fluent only in Dutch, the majority, language

because the parents thought knowing this would give the children access to socio-economic opportunities such as better education and employment.

Nevertheless, as highlighted by Mesthrie (2010), languages have been resilient in the face of other dominant languages. The case of Indian languages in South Africa shows that there is often a grey "twilight zone" when languages are used interchangeably to the extent that speakers lose track of which language is which (a famous quote in Ireland: *Sure and isn't it Irish I'm speaking now?,* said by a rural person when asked if he could speak Irish (=Gaelic) (Mesthrie 2010). In the province of Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) one hundred and fifty years after initial migrations, while the languages are now only spoken by the very oldest people only, words from five different languages abound in the "Indian English" of the province. Not only that but large-scale influences of syntax and phonology persist in their use of English.

Zhang's (2010) study of Chinese immigrants in America documents a case of language shift among Chinese immigrants in the United States. The Chinese parents insisted on their children learning and speaking only English because they believed it would grant them the opportunity to attend good colleges and have good jobs thereafter. This led to the children not mastering Mandarin and speaking only English in all domains. This situation describes the challenge that immigrants often face to maintain the heritage language or shift to the majority language to fully integrate into the new society.

As highlighted by Sevinç (2016: 84), the fate of a language is determined by language choice and usage. For example, MacLeod and Stoel-Gammom (2010) state that if bilinguals tend to use one language more than the other, the language that is not used often will become the minority language. Therefore, if immigrants use the majority language more than the heritage language, the heritage language becomes less present in most domains, thereby leading to a possible language shift. As highlighted by Dagamseh (2020: 18), the many challenges immigrants face is related to making a decision on continuing to use their heritage language/s, shifting to the dominant language in the host society, or a case of bilingualism where their heritage language is used alongside the dominant language in their new society.

Several other studies have been conducted on language maintenance and shift in the context of migration. For example, Okamura (1981) investigated the maintenance and development of heritage language among Japanese in the United States. According to the study, the English skill level was related to the education years in the United States. Also, factors such as the child's interest level, language attitudes and the degree of use influenced the competence level

of the child in each language, that is, English and the heritage language. In Morgan (1987), a shift to Spanish instead of maintenance of Haitian Creole or a state of bilingualism with both languages in the Haitian community was recorded.

Also, in another study conducted by Saxena (1995) on language maintenance and shift of Panjabi Hindus in Southall, England, Panjabi, Hindi and English languages were the dominant languages of the repertoire of the community. The study reports a case of bilingualism instead of language shift regardless of the 30 to 40 years of the Panjabi Hindus being a minority community in Britain. The dominance of English has not been enough to impact the vitality of the minority languages in the family domain, at least in the short term, with immigration being a post-1950s phenomenon.

Similarly, Subhan (2007) who investigated the maintenance of heritage language among Bangladeshi immigrants in Toronto reported that language maintenance is not significant within Bangladeshi immigrant families in Toronto. While the parents continue to use heritage languages in interactions in the home domain, children were found to differ in this regard as they used the language mainly on a functional level. Subhan's findings also indicated parents made conscious efforts to transmit sociocultural and religious beliefs to their children. Garcia (2008) who studied language maintenance across three generations of a Cuban American family in the United States found that their decisions to maintain their heritage language was dependent on their unique circumstances. He also found that the ideology they held about the language played a fundamental role in their choices to maintain Spanish or shift to the English language.

What can be deduced from the discussion above is that complex factors influence language maintenance and shift. Zhang (2010: 44) notes "that research mainly follows two lines of argument – opportunity versus motivation". According to the author, the first line of argument concerning opportunity "holds that language shift among the children of immigrants occurs because of a lack of exposure to the heritage language and lack of opportunities to frequently communicate in the language". In most cases, their only contact with the language is in the home domain with their parents. Outside the home domain, the language is not as useful because they speak the majority language.

The motivation argument, on the other hand, posits language shift in children is due to their perception of the heritage language as difficult to learn and lacking actual value in the host country. The result of this is a "lack of motivation to learn the heritage language" (Zhang, 2010:

44). The issue of opportunity here may be linked to challenges with sufficient input on a regular basis. Without the children learning the language or having daily sufficient input, the language is not transferred to the next generation, and this poses a challenge for immigrant language maintenance since intergenerational transmission has been identified as a pivotal factor for language maintenance (Fishman, 1991).

One way that language maintenance among immigrants can be sustained is by metaphorically reducing the distance between immigrants and their home country via modern technologies. Space or distance is reduced through technological advancements made affordable as a result of globalization. Immigrants can maintain contact with their heritage language through phone calls and the media because modern technology affords that possibility (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). For example, watching movies and television shows in these languages may enable transfer and arouse interest in the younger generation. Whether this is enough for language maintenance is debatable.

## 2.4. Theories guiding the study of language maintenance and shift

The phenomenon of language maintenance and shift has been examined by different scholars through the lens of certain theories such as ethnolinguistic vitality, Speech accommodation theory (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), language attitudes (Labov (1966; Lambert, Hondgson, Fillernbaum, and Gardner, 1960).; attitudes theory (Karan 2011) which examines how attitudes influence language maintenance and shift; the theory of domain analysis which relates to the frequency of use of languages in various domains (Fishman 1966) and core value theory which examines the use of ethnic language use and the identities of minority groups (Smolicz, 1981). Although none of these theories has been employed as an analytical framework for my data analysis, some of them such as ethnolinguistic vitality, social network, attitudes, and speech accommodation theories have been a useful lens for this study in relation to framing the broad investigation and interpreting the data. Thus, a brief discussion of these theories is relevant at this point. The following few sections provide a discussion of them.

## 2.4.1. Theory of ethnolinguistic vitality

One theory relevant to language maintenance and shift scholarship is ethnolinguistic vitality. Developed by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) as a theory for understanding the role of language in ethnic group relations, ethnolinguistic vitality draws on Tajfel's (1974) theory of

intergroup relations and Giles' speech accommodation theory. It relates to the degree of active use of a language in its ethnic group/speech community/community of practice. According to Giles et al (1977: 308), the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situation". Based on this premise, they argue that "ethnolinguistic minorities with no group vitality would eventually cease to exist as distinct groups". Whereas "the more vitality a linguistic group has, the more likely it will survive and thrive as a collective entity in an intergroup context".

The focus of the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality is on objective and subjective vitality theory. Giles et al. (1977: 308) propose three variables – status, demographic, and institutional variables. These three variables in combination may facilitate survival for an ethnolinguistic minority as a distinctive group. These three variables consist of a sub-set of variables. Demographic variables have to do with the number of group members and population distribution. Status has to do with "the speech community's prestige, including economic status, social status, sociohistorical status and prestige of its language and culture within its territory and outside its territory" (Dagamseh, 2020: 46). Institutional support factors refer to "the formal and informal representations of the group in the various institutions of a nation, region, and community" (Dagamseh, 2020: 46). Giles et al. (1977: 308) argue that these three types of variables interact to provide the context for understanding the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups.

According to Giles et al (1997: 308), the more vitality a group has the higher its chances of maintaining its language. Whereas a group with less vitality may potentially yield to linguistic assimilation and language shift. The theory of ethnolinguistic vitality provides insight for future scholarship related to language maintenance and shift, language attitudes, intergroup relations, and language choice (Dagamseh, 2020: 46). The perception that ethnic groups have of their language, influences how they behave towards it and their language attitudes as well.

In conclusion, ethnolinguistic vitality is an essential element which facilitates the maintenance of ethnic or community languages. In this study, institutional support does not apply to the heritage languages of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town because their languages are not used or recommended at the institutional level. The same can be said about the status variable because as a minority language in an already multilingual context, the heritage languages of Nigerian immigrants do not enjoy prestige and are not considered prestigious. Nonetheless, the demographic factors may be relevant to the maintenance of the heritage languages of Nigerian

immigrants. A case of expanded repertoires may be expected as these immigrants are likely to use their heritage languages alongside the dominant language of Cape Town. Nigerian immigrants may not be the dominant group in Cape Town but my experience during fieldwork indicated that they are connected in one way or the other through social clubs and shared religious activities. They also socialise in the same places and live close to one another. These settings create spaces for sociocultural exchanges which involve the use of their heritage languages; therefore, possibly promoting language maintenance.

## 2.4.2. Speech accommodation theory

Another theory related to language maintenance and shift and relevant to this dissertation is Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) theory of speech accommodation (SAT). The theory was developed "to explain some of the motivations underlying certain shifts in people's speech styles during social encounters, and some of the social consequences arising from them. More specifically, it originated to elucidate the cognitive and affective processes underlying speech convergence and divergence" (Thakerar et al., 1982: 207 cited in Soliz & Giles, 2014: 7). The central notion of SAT is that communication involves managing interpersonal and intergroup relations and is not merely about exchanging information.

Speech accommodation is described as "the motivation and social implications, which underlie changes in people's speech styles" (Giles et al, 1977:321-324). To reduce or emphasize linguistics or social distance, speakers adjust their speech accordingly. Therefore, "the extent to which individuals shift their speech style toward, or away from, the speech style of those with whom they are communicating, is a means by which social approval or disapproval is communicated" (Giles et al. 1977:321-324). A shift toward the interlocutor's speech style indicates an invitation to the ingroup while a shift away signals disapproval.

Important to this theory are two concepts - convergence and divergence. When speakers adjust their speech to reduce linguistic distance, this is convergence while an adjustment to emphasize linguistic or social distance is described as divergence (Giles et al. 1977:321-324). Elaborating further, "convergence has been defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt their communicative behaviours in such a way as to become more similar to their interlocutor's behaviour" (Soliz & Giles. 2014: 4). In most cases, speakers do this "to seek approval, affiliation, or interpersonal similarity as a manner of reducing social distance" (Soliz & Giles,

2014: 4). Converging speakers tend to be more receptive to their interlocutors as converging improves the effectiveness of communication.

Divergence is the opposite behaviour. In relation to divergence, "a speaker linguistically moves away from the interlocutor's speech to emphasise the linguistic difference" (Soliz & Giles, 2014: 5). In most cases, speakers do this to highlight contrasting group identities (Soliz & Giles, 2014:5). The motive is to maintain their identity. Divergence strategies are employed as identity markers to signal an individual's identity/ies. The plural of identity is used here because this dissertation subscribes to the idea of multiple identities as put forward by Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004). Minority groups interested in maintaining their languages do this through divergence when interacting with speakers of majority languages.

Although divergence and convergences have been theorised as a form of expressing approval or disapproval, Thakerar et al. (1982) extended the function to include not only the affective but the cognitive too. This involves speakers organizing their speech styles based on the requirements of listeners, in order to facilitate or enable effective communication. Thakerar and colleagues' cognitive function only relates to convergence, but Street and Giles (1982) proposed "the idea that divergence can also be enacted in order to facilitate comprehension" (Soliz & Giles, 2014: 9). This implies that accommodation strategies may not always be to emphasize social distance or express approval. The speakers' intent may be to facilitate effective communication that fosters understanding on both sides. For example, a non-English speaker conversing with an English speaker may diverge to signal his/her English knowledge as a warning to the other party about breaking conventions related to English communication. Also, in a reverse situation, a speaker may converge to reduce communication anxiety on the part of the non-English speaker. Another motivating factor for accommodation strategies could be the personalities or social identities of others.

Since its introduction in the 70s by Giles and colleagues, speech accommodation theory has been widely used in sociolinguistics research and expanded where necessary (cf Coupland, 1995; Giles, 2001; Meyerhoff, 1998 Trudgill 1986; Gallois & Giles, 1998). As a result of such elaboration, a reconceptualization that includes all these features seemed essential. Speech accommodation theory is now conceptualized as communication accommodation theory (Coupland et al. 1991).

Communication accommodation theory (hence CAT) is more inclusive as it encompasses all aspects of communication. As highlighted by Siloz & Giles (2014: 6), it "includes an array of

terms of a wide range of linguistic, paralinguistic (pitch, tempo), and nonverbal features (smiling, gazing) representing general levels of accommodative or nonaccommodative behaviours". These features go beyond just aspects of speech. CAT posits that people adjust communication not just through speech to accommodate others in intergroup and interpersonal relations.

Accommodation is described as "the process through which interactants regulate their communication (adopting a particular linguistic code or accent, increasing or decreasing their speech rate, avoiding or increasing eye contact, etc.), in order to appear more like (accommodation) or distinct from each other (non-accommodation, including counter-accommodation through divergent or hostile moves, underaccommodation through maintenance and unempathetic moves, and over-accommodation through oftentimes patronizing or ingratiating moves)" (Siloz & Giles 2014:27). They conclude that "CAT is a theory both of intergroup and interpersonal communication, invoking the dual importance of both factors in predicting and understanding intergroup interactions". An understanding of intergroup interactions is essential to language maintenance and shift.

Communication accommodation theory is applicable to language maintenance and shift because its two tenets, divergence and convergence, may influence maintenance or shift. Speakers may modify their language in the form of learning the language of the other group (minority language speakers learning the majority language). For example, divergence as indicated above implies maintaining speech styles and subsequently identity. This means that a speaker of a minority language does not have to modify his language or adopt the language of speakers outside his/ her speech community. As highlighted above, language maintenance is described as the continued use of a minority language despite the influence of a majority language. As a result, a speech community that maintains linguistic distance, limits outside influences thereby promoting language maintenance.

Speech accommodation theory although relevant to the field of sociolinguistics falls short with regard to evaluation bias. Meanings are not always attributed to behaviours objectively and this poses a problem to the real motivation behind accommodation strategies employed by speakers. For example, it raises the question, do speakers converge or diverge on purpose or is it a subconscious behaviour that is not linked to the emphasis of social distance? Or both – on purpose about some of the more obvious facets of lexicon, but unconscious about deeper elements of the language?

## 2.4.3. Language attitudes

The discussion of language attitudes here is about the theory as an analytical lens for the study of language maintenance and shift while the second discussion is concerned with it as a factor influencing language maintenance and shift. Language attitudes have been an area of interest for sociolinguistics scholars since the 60s when scholars like Labov (1966) Lambert and Gardner (1960) and more recently Dyers (1997 & 2000), Garett (2010) and Umana (2018) applied the concept to the study of sociolinguistics phenomena. Baker (1992: 12) describes language attitude as "personal responses to languages that individuals encounter". These responses may be unconscious and subjective. Three components, "cognitive, affective and readiness for action", drive language attitude (Baker, 1992: 12-13). This ties in with Garrett's (2010) notion that attitudes cannot be directly observed because they are a mental or psychological construct.

Thus, studying language attitude sometimes involves paying attention to inferences speakers make on the basis of the physical appearance of the interlocutors. Attitudes are often manifested in individuals' speech or behaviour towards a language or its speakers. As noted by Dyers (1997: 29), "people may hold positive, negative or neutral attitudes as influenced by ideologies, circumstances, or experiences of the language". Nonetheless, these attitudes are not static as they may change over time depending on changes in experiences.

In relation to language attitudes, Dyers (2000: 17) makes the following distinctions:
- Some attitudes have affective roots, that is, they are related to feelings while others have more rational roots (more realistic, objective reasons).
- Attitudes towards languages and people are different. This means that individuals may hold a positive attitude towards a language while holding a negative attitude towards the speakers and vice versa.
- Patterns of language use often contradict language attitudes.
- People have different reasons for their language choices in particular domains. These choices may not necessarily be related to attitudes.

The distinction above highlights that language attitudes are complex and not always straightforward. In some cases, attitudes may not impact patterns of language use as people may hold negative attitudes towards language but continue to use them regardless.

Two approaches distinguished by psychologists inform studies on attitudes – mentalist and behaviourist approaches. Both approaches hold that attitudes are not acquired from birth but are learned as people socialise from early childhood to puberty (Dagamseh, 2020: 27). The behaviourist approach posits that attitudes can be inferred from behaviours or how individuals respond to social situations (Perloff, 1993). Measuring attitudes involve observing people's responses to various languages during social interaction (Appel & Muysken, 1987). The behaviourist approach views attitude as the only dependent variable that determines the behaviour of individuals (Dagamseh, 2020: 23). The main component of this approach is the affective component of attitude.

The second approach which is the mentalist approach takes a different view from the behaviourist approach and argues that attitudes cannot be directly observed but inferred from the introspection of participants. Thus, scholars of language attitudes can only rely on self-reports from participants regarding their attitudes. McKenzie (2007) notes that most researchers interested in measuring attitudes adopt the mentalist approach. According to Edwards (2002), the three tenets of the mentalist approach are cognitive, affective, and conative (conative may also be described as the directive aspect of language or language of command) elements. That is, what individuals think and believe about language, their feelings and emotions, and how they respond to these thoughts and feelings. Because attitudes are internal, researchers rely on the personal reports of participants to understand language attitudes. This study adopts the mentalists approach for understanding the language attitudes of Nigerian immigrants and how that impacts language maintenance and shift. The next section discusses another theory relevant to language maintenance and shift – domains.

## 2.5.    Domains

The different domains of language use have implications for language maintenance and shift. Therefore, examining the various domains of language use can provide researchers with a broad insight into language maintenance and shift or language vitality (Fishman, 1964, 1971). Since Fishman pioneered the theory of domains of language use, scholars have applied the concept to various studies. Boxer (2002: 4) refers to domain as "a sphere of life in which verbal and non-verbal interactions occur, e.g., work, family, school, circle of friends and wider communication". Dyers (2000: 12) describes it as "certain institutional contexts in which one

language or language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another". It is the sum of settings where language is used in interactions.

In addition, Fishman (1966, 1971) puts forward that different domains of language use determine the vitality of languages, that is, some domains may facilitate the maintenance of a language while it may experience a shift in other domains. For example, immigrants' heritage languages may remain dominant in the home and religious domains but displaced in other domains like school and work. In this study, my reasoning is that the home, religion, and indigenous social gatherings will promote the maintenance of the heritage language of Nigerian immigrants as opposed to work domains.

## 2.6. Factors influencing language maintenance and shift

### 2.6.1. Domains

The discussion of domains in this section is from the angle of the concept as a factor influencing language maintenance and shift. The interest of research in language maintenance and shift is often to examine the domains of language use to determine in which domains minority languages feature frequently as the frequency of use could signal language maintenance (Dagamseh, 2020: 38). A reduction in the domains where minority languages feature and the discontinuation of intergenerational language transmission are indications of a shift to the dominant language by minority groups (Holmes, 2001; Fishman, 1991). Hatoss (2013) argues that including previously ignored domains is necessary for contemporary language maintenance and shift research. These domains include sports, workplace, immigrants' indigenous churches/associations and media (cf Dweik, Nofal, & Qawasmeh, 2014; Aipolo & Holmes, 1990; Hatoss, 2013).

Intergenerational language transmission is a fundamental element of acquisition of the home or family language and of its long-term maintenance, and the home domain is vital for this transmission (Fishman, 1991). According to Fishman (1991: 398), "the heart of the entire intergenerational pursuit" is language use between parents and children in the heritage language (in the case of immigrants). Highlighting the vital role that parents have in transferring their languages to the next generation, Fillmore (2000: 209) states:

> Parents should be encouraged to find time to talk with their children, read to them (if this is a practice in the culture of the home), and teach them things that interest educated members of their group. Families that come from cultures with a rich oral

tradition will have many stories and histories to share with the children. Teachers should encourage them to use these materials and to regard them as equal to written materials that other families might use with their children at home.

This sort of communication pointed out in the citation above is essential for language transfer and by extension language maintenance. According to Dagamseh (2020: 39), "parents are the first ethnic or heritage language contact for second-generation immigrant children and the main source of ethnic language for those children". Therefore, it is vital that they promote communication with the children in the ethnic language. In this study, I focus on intergenerational transmission and language use in the home domain.

### 2.6.2. Language attitudes

Scholars have noted that language attitudes influence language maintenance and shift. As stated by Dagamseh (2020: 39), "a positive attitude towards the language and its culture are an essential ingredient in language maintenance". If individuals hold a positive attitude towards a language, they are more likely to speak it in various domains. All other things being equal, the attitudes that minority groups hold towards their language may affect language maintenance and shift. Dagamseh (2020: 40 following Gile & Powesland 1975) believes that the positive attitudes of minority groups towards their language and culture may motivate the protection and maintenance of their language even in the face of dominant languages.

Another aspect relevant to language maintenance and shift is the attitudes of majority communities towards the language and cultures of minority groups (Dagamseh, 2020: 40; Dörnyei, 2003; Roberts, 2005). This implies that negative attitudes held by majority groups towards the culture or language of minority groups could pose a threat to the maintenance of minority languages (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). Consequently, the presence of negative attitudes among speakers of a language as a result of low prestige associated with said language could lead to language shift. If speakers do not perceive the language as holding any value as opposed to the dominant language, they may shift to the dominant one. In this study, I anticipate that language attitudes would impact the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages. This dissertation is set in the context of migration, thus, a discussion on migration/mobility is necessary as additional background to the current study. The next few sections will provide a discussion on this.

## 2.7. Cape Town as a site for multilingual language practices

The concept of multilingualism is relevant to this research since it is an exploration of the language practices of multilingual immigrants. The research participants also originate from multilingual societies and are living in a multilingual society. The implication of this is complex and multi-layered language practices. Multilingualism was previously theorised based on complete and active proficiency in two or more languages. This description although valid at its time of conceptualization is problematic to the contemporary understanding of multilingualism. Contemporary scholars argue that the notion of "complete mastery" or proficiency is relative (Blommaert, 2010; Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011). Also, it provides a simplistic notion of multilingualism which is more complex, especially in urban centres. As pointed out by Canagarajah & Wurr (2011), the multilingual paradigm does not see communities as homogenous but rather as heterogeneous. They add that the notion of repertoire-building is more promising than "complete equal mastery" of languages.

This dissertation prefers to describe multilingualism as "linguistic resources and repertoires" (Weber and Horner 2012: 3). In other words, following contemporary theorising of multilingualism, it takes the position that language is "a social practice and speakers are social actors and boundaries are produced through social action" (Heller, 2007: 1). This perspective becomes extremely critical, especially in today's globalized multilingual societies where migration and technological advancement leads to interesting mixing and blending of resources available to speakers. This blending practice is more popular in urban centres where immigrants are present. These immigrants are involved in trans-idiomatic practices where interesting patterns of hybridity emerge. Trans-idiomatic practice is described as "the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant" (Jacquemet, 2005: 264-265). An example of this would be a Nigerian in Cape Town who continues to communicate via telephone calls or text messages in his/her home language with family members and friends back in Nigeria.

Multilingual speakers can choose what language to speak with whom in any domain of interaction because of their diverse linguistic repertoires and depending on the linguistic repertoire of their interlocutors as well. As noted above, Fishman (1965, 1968, 1971) pioneered the research on domains of language use. The primary question of his research was who speaks what language and to whom and when? In other words, domains of language use may include

factors such as location, topic, participants, and their social relationships. A change in situation influences a change in language choices, variety, and register. According to Dyers (2008: 16) "as situations change, so do the choices of language, variety, and register". This complexity with language practices in multilinguals has led researchers to the discourse on repertoire rather than language proficiency.

The discussion on linguistic repertoire (Busch 2015) draws on Bakhtin's (1981a) notion of heteroglossia. Heteroglossia may be described as "a combination of a number of dimensions of multidiscursivity, linguistic diversity, and multivoicedness found in any form of living language" (Nchang 2018: 66). Thus, Busch (2015) notes that in language situations, a dialogue of languages occurs either within a single language or between different languages. This dialogue of languages is similar to the phenomenon of language contact with the outcome of expanded repertoires for speakers. As highlighted by Blommaert and Backus (2012: 2), the concept of repertoire has its origins in the work of Gumperz (1972) when the term was first listed as a 'basic sociolinguistic concept'. Gumperz (1986:20-21) defines repertoire as all the linguistic resources (i.e., including both invariant forms and variables) available to members of particular communities. Repertoires are fluid as they change over time. For example, a person may add to his/her linguistic repertoire by acquiring a new language or linguistic resource.

In addition, Busch (2015) notes that repertoire encompasses languages, dialects, styles, registers, codes, and routines that characterize interaction in everyday life. This indicates that it is not limited to language alone. Another definition of language repertoire worthy of note is by Coetzee-Van Rooy (2012: 89) who defines it as "the range of 'languages' known from which multilingual people draw the resources they need to communicate in multilingual societies." In line with this, Blommaert and Backus (2012: 27) posit that "repertoires in a super-diverse world are records of mobility: of movement of people, language resources, social arenas, technologies of learning and learning environments". For Blommaert and Backus (2012: 26), "repertoires are thus indexical biographies, and analysing repertoires amounts to analysing the social and cultural itineraries followed by people, how they manoeuvred and navigated them and how they placed themselves into the various social arenas they inhabited or visited in their lives". Therefore, researchers do not only study the sum of languages that individuals know but how they come to know these languages, the functions they serve, the domains of uses, and attitudes towards them (Thompson, 2018). The linguistic repertoires of

the participants in this study can be described as complex and examining these repertoires provides a perspective on how their language practices or choices impact their heritage language vitality.

Within the context of South Africa, some scholars like Coetzee-Van Rooy (2012), Nchang (2018), and Thompson (2022) have applied the concept of linguistic repertoire to studies on the linguistic practices of immigrants in South Africa. In Thompson's study which examined the communicative practices in China Town, variability in linguistic repertoires did not interfere with communication as participants were still able to communicate successfully using the different languages in their repertoires. Nchang's (2018) study on the linguistic repertoires of Cameroonian immigrants indicates that repertoire expansion was a common phenomenon among the participants mainly because it was essential for accessing socio-economic opportunities in their new society. Similarly, Coetzee-Van Rooy (2012) also highlights the importance of repertoire expansion in multilingual urban South Africa to the improvement of life and integration generally. This dissertation also discusses the linguistic repertoires of Nigerian immigrants with a specific interest in how their repertoire expansion impacts their heritage language vitality.

It is important to mention that space limits the resources individuals may draw on for communicative purposes (Blommaert 2010). Multilingual people have available resources which they can draw from to communicate at any time and in various domains. Cape Town is a multilingual city with the presence of many languages, especially in the urban centres. As a result, the heritage languages of the participants in this study are not only in contact with the indigenous languages of Cape Town but with the languages of other immigrants too. Therefore, making this language contact situation an even more complex one. The presence of one language over the other in certain domains determines the vitality of such language and its chance of being maintained or experiencing a shift. The objective of this dissertation, therefore, is to report on the vitality of Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba in Cape Town and the role of space in promoting language maintenance or shift.

## 2.8. Transnationalism, Deterritorialization and Language

Globalization enables migration, and one outcome of migration is language contact as immigrants encounter local languages present in their new society. This research focuses on immigrant languages and involves immigrants; therefore, a discussion of migration is

necessary. Based on this, this section shall link the concept of transnationalism to migration. Although migration as a concept is often theorised in relation to other issues, this research focuses on that related to globalization and more particularly, language contact.

Migration has been described in different ways by different scholars. One useful description of migration is that it relates to "the movement of people from an origin country to a destination or transit country, which entails a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (Lee, 1966 cited in Thompson 2018: 37). Vigouroux (2005: 243) defines migration as involving "a change of both physical and geographical space". The common factor in both descriptions is that migration involves the movement of people from one location to another. Such change may be not just physical but emotional as well as psychological. Speaking on the impact of migration and language, Kerswill (2006: 19) states that "migration and language interact in a complex, yet transparent way. Chiefly, migration leads to language or dialect contact, and is, indeed, the prime cause of such contact". This has implications for immigrants' heritage languages. In such contact situations, some languages may assume dominant roles while others remain in the shadows as minority languages which may still be spoken but in fewer domains.

Scholars acknowledge the challenge with a comprehensive theory of migration because of its interdisciplinary nature. Following this, Castells (2010: 1566) notes that the attempt to find a theory that captures the description of migration remains unattainable. Echoing a similar sentiment Cross, Gelderblom, Roux and Mafukidze (2006: 104) put forward that "there is no single definition of migration". Based on this shortfall in theory, theories of migration should consider simple life events that occur in the lives of migrants such as the relocation from one place to another.

The implication of this relocation is that immigrant groups often find themselves in a new social and linguistic environment which requires a readjustment, (re)settlement or adaptation (Thompson, 2018: 37). This adaptation may present certain challenges to the uses of their home languages. Their language choices as reflected in their daily language practices could lead to (in extreme cases) either language shift or maintenance of their heritage languages. Language shift is used here to refer to reduced usage of heritage languages in certain domains or discontinued usage while maintenance refers to continued usage of their heritage languages. In other cases, it could lead to an expansion of the language repertoires that is, bi/multilingualism.

In addition, the effect of change in the linguistic environment often implies changes in the linguistic repertoire of immigrants too. This is evident in studies conducted on African migrant

groups in South Africa. For example, in a study conducted on the trajectories and linguistic identities of selected African migrants in Cape Town, Nchang (2018) reports that the new society often influences the linguistic repertoires of immigrant groups as people try to learn the new languages encountered in their host society for integration purposes. This implies multilingualism and not necessarily the loss of their heritage language/s – a change in dominance.

Another study conducted by Mbong (2011) on Cameroon immigrants in Cape Town indicated that most of the immigrants adopted new ways of speaking as their speech contained some linguistic features peculiar to the South African linguistics context. Some adopted accents like the South African English accent where they articulated certain words as South Africans do and incorporate lexical items peculiar to South African English. In another study, Umana (2018) reports that some Nigerian immigrants in the study adopted some features of South African languages and one of the reasons immigrants gave for doing so was their need to access economic opportunities which required some level of proficiency in the local languages.

Some of the reasons people migrate are economic gain, rational choices, and the internal workings of the household (Cross, Gelderblom, Roux & Mafukidze 2006: 104). In other words, family members and sometimes, community members are part of an individual's decision to migrate (Cross et. al. 2006). In cases of migration, language can be a deterrent or an incentive as context permits. Language can translate into economic capital and afford access to opportunities for immigrants (Hurst, 2017:172). A study conducted by Bleakley and Chin (2010) which explored differences in adult English proficiency between migrants from non-English countries revealed that linguistic competence or in this case, English competence played a key role in "explaining disparities in terms of educational attainment, earnings and social outcomes." Many studies on language resources of immigrants seem to indicate a link between proficiency in the majority language of the host communities and access to economic resources (Hurst, 2017: 172). This could explain the motivation to learn the dominant language in their new society either for integrative purposes (to access the ingroup) or for economic access.

In addition to accessing opportunities, most immigrants consider knowing the language as important to their transition or integration. Therefore, as a way of integrating into their new society, they may learn the languages of their new society through formal classroom learning. Alternatively, they may also acquire the language/s in their natural environments through

interactions with the locals. In the case of children, acquisition can happen in the playground, while for adults it could be at social gatherings, at their business places while interacting with their clients or at church gatherings. This new language is then added to their linguistic repertoires and available for use when the need arises. However, learning/acquiring the dominant language in their new society may have a negative impact on the heritage language/s of immigrants as it could lead to reduced use of the languages in certain contexts where they were previously dominant.

Blommaert (2010a) points out that space or context plays a key role in the language use of multilingual speakers as it may be an enabling or disabling factor. Therefore, to a Nigerian immigrant in South Africa who finds himself outside his speech community, space becomes a disabling factor due to fewer speakers of his or her home language. Fewer speakers imply fewer opportunities to speak the language. It becomes even more complex or disabling if such immigrants marry within the local communities of South Africa. This would imply that they speak less of their home language in and out of the home domain. An example of immigrants speaking less of their home languages is highlighted in Zhang's (2010) study of Chinese immigrants in the United States of America. One participant in the study admitted to speaking more English than Mandarin because the dominant language in her workplace where she spent most of her time was English. It may be argued that immigrants may be enabled to speak their languages when they encounter other immigrants who speak the same language.

Nonetheless, the emphasis here is on the frequency of use. Immigrants tend to spend more time with locals than other immigrants who may speak the same language as them. The implication of this is that they are most likely to speak more of the dominant language in their environment than their heritage language, unless in rare cases where they encounter fellow immigrants who speak their languages.

## 2.9. Globalization and sociolinguistics

An important factor which drives migration is globalization. This dissertation draws on the premise already present in research which argues that globalization is both a cause and effect of migration. Globalisation theories (cf. Appelbaum & Robinson, 2005; Rosenberg, 2000; Rosenberg, 2005) provide descriptions of the late-modern integration of cultures, politics, and economics worldwide. Globalization may be defined as "a process through which finance,

investment, production and marketing are increasingly dominated by agents whose vision and actions are not confined by national borders or national interests" (Keller-Herzog & Szabo, 2007: 5). In this study, globalization relates to socio-economic, socio-cultural, and demographic processes that occur within and transcend nations (Kearney, 1995).

As a theory, globalisation is relevant in various academic disciplines, as its implications affect almost all aspects of human lives (Thompson, 2018: 36). This multiplicity of globalization is highlighted in Dewey (2007: 338) as described below,

> "There is a plurality in the impacts of globalisation: on the one hand, free-market trading and economic interconnectedness may have led to increased migration and displacement, but it is the technologies of globalisation that enable the expression and empowerment of displaced communities, allowing dispersed groups to maintain old ancestral/cultural links and create new emerging ones".

As highlighted above, technology is an important element of globalization as is free-market trading. It provides a link for those who may have been displaced through migration as it enables cross-border contact. According to Appadurai (1996), we live in a world of "flows" where humans are constantly migrating from one place to another either internally or externally. The movement or flow of people automatically implies that of languages too. Jacquemet (2005: 260) notes that although globalisation theory places emphasis on cultural flows and migration flows, a study on the global phenomenon of language contact should not be overlooked as these concepts are interrelated. Language contact can be considered as one outcome of migration and cultural flows.

Cultural and migration flows have led to great diversity in human societies today which host a mix of people from different cultures and social backgrounds. Blommaert (2010: 7 drawing on Vertovec, 2007) captures this in his notion of superdiversity — "the complex multilingual repertoires in migrant neighbourhoods which house a diversity of different nationalities, where often several (fragments of) 'migrant' languages are combined". Describing the impact of superdiversity Blommaert and Backus (2012:5-6) state that,

> "superdiversity … forces us to see the new social environments in which we live as characterized by an extremely low degree of pre-supposability in terms of identities, patterns of social and cultural behaviour, social and cultural structure, norms, and expectations. People can no longer be straightforwardly associated with particular

(national, ethnic, sociocultural) groups and identities; their meaning-making practices can no longer be presumed to 'belong' to particular languages and cultures—the empirical field has become extremely complex, and descriptive adequacy has become a challenge for the social sciences as we know them".

Superdiversity describes the complexity exemplified in modern multilingual societies. It "aims to capture the worldwide phenomenon that more people are more mobile than ever before, both physically as immigrants and tourists and virtually as travellers in cyberspaces" (Stroud 2014:15).

Virtual mobility has been enabled by sophisticated technological advancements. Language is no longer localized as immigrants or speakers engage in multiple communicative events both in real and virtual spaces. For example, Nigerian immigrants living in Cape Town can maintain their home language through phone interaction with family members in Nigeria and simultaneously speak English or local South African languages with friends in Cape Town. A close examination of the multidialectal lives of immigrants reveals clearly how the mobility of people leads to an increase in language resources (Blommaert, 2010). The sociolinguistics concept of linguistics repertoire captures this phenomenon.

Globalization is also a sociolinguistic phenomenon as it is an economic one. Thompson (2018: 36), believes "sociolinguistics specifically should be a conceptual focus of globalisation, as people communicate and interact before any other contact takes place, either globally or locally". Communication is the first point of contact with people and in most cases, it often involves language. As pointed out by Thompson (2022: 36), this should make sociolinguistics a conceptual focus of globalisation. This follows the line of reasoning of Jacquemet (2005) that the focus of any discourse on globalization, migration and deterritorialization should be the global phenomenon of language contact because these phenomena are interdependent as are interrelated. Coupland (2003 cited in Thompson 2018: 36) points out that "globalisation is influential in local sociolinguistic events, where traces of global structures and social trends are found in local contexts". These traces of global structures shape interactions and ultimately, language contact with consequences for language maintenance and shift.

## 2.10. Heritage language as an identity index

Language and identity are both interrelated and interdependent concepts. The concept of identity has taken on a new understanding in recent years. Previously, "essentialist notions described it as an innate, fixed, and abstract directly linked to ethnicity" (Ferris, Banda & Peck, 2014: 410). On the other hand, social constructionists argue that it is "an interactional accomplishment produced and negotiated in discourse" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 13). This implies that "identity is fluid, dynamic and multiple as manifested in social interactions and contexts" (Ferris et al, 2014: 412). Pennycook (2010: 125) argues that "identities are not fixed and stable attributes of individuals but are produced through language (and other) practices". Thus, language is linked to identity and the choices that speakers make in relation to language can signal the different identities of an individual; that is, people perform their identities.

The term 'performativity' is used to describe the act of identity performance. Pennycook (2010: 528) defines it "as the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity". Because of the fluid and multi-layered nature of identity, people may choose to perform different identities as available in their identity repertoires. These different layers "include nationality, sex, gender, race, accent, language", and so on (Ferris et al, 2014: 412). As Pennycook, 2004: 6-7 notes "the performative acts are thus processes of "disinventing" and "reinventing" language for the creation of new identities for its speakers". Identity or identity performance is a relevant factor for language maintenance and language shift in immigrant communities. Nigerian immigrants can be said to be performing an aspect of their identity through language by speaking their heritage language. On the other hand, when they do not speak their heritage language, they also perform another aspect of their identity. As highlighted above, identity is multiple and changeable in time as manifested in social interactions.

A prominent theme in the literature on migration research conducted in South Africa is identity. Most of the studies done on African immigrants in South Africa have been on their identity negotiations and their attitudes towards their heritage languages. The issue of personal, cultural, and social identity becomes pertinent because South African communities are highly diverse and multilingual. Most literature on immigrants' attempts to negotiate their identities in a complex setting like Cape Town indicates that although some immigrants are passionate about maintaining their old identities, others have found the need for integration or adaptation useful for their social positioning as immigrants (cf. Umana, 2018, Mbong, 2011, Nchang 2018). This

implies that there is indeed an "old, localised, and sedimented" aspect of identity that can become loosened either by migration/mobility or by forces of globalisation.

In her PhD thesis, Mba (2011) examines the complex ways Cameroon immigrants through their language practices, negotiate their Anglophone/ Francophone identity in their new society. Drawing on findings from the study, she argues that cultural or historical frames influence people's actions or beliefs. She suggests that the new society/context that Cameroonians find themselves in reshapes their perception of their Anglophone/Francophone identities which are mobile, trans-local, and transnational in nature and a combination of South African and Cameroonian resources. Another study conducted by Mbong (2006) on Cameroonians in Cape Town, also found identity was linked to heritage language maintenance among immigrants in Cape Town. In Mbong's study, the participants whose language practices featured significant use of their heritage languages regarded their language as a fundamental part of their identity as Cameroonians.

One aspect of identity (largely national) although valuable to immigrants can subsequently disadvantage them and place them where they experience hostility and prejudices associated with being a member of the outgroup. To avoid this and to access different opportunities, immigrants choose integration and adaptation as survival strategies. This presents challenges to the maintenance of immigrants' heritage languages. Immigrants in most cases, "are often identified by their language, or inability to use the local languages/dialects" (Harris 2002: 170). Some who may have mastered the local languages may still retain accents peculiar to their nationalities which sets them apart from the native speakers. This distinction leads to ethnolinguistics intolerance and xenophobia. The dictionary defines xenophobia as "a hatred or fear of foreigners" (*South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1994 cited in Harris 2002: 170). According to this definition, "xenophobia is characterized by a negative attitude towards foreigners, a dislike, a fear, or a hatred" (Harris 2002: 170). Another definition of Xenophobia is that it is a "dislike of or prejudice towards people, cultures, and customs that are foreign or perceived as foreign" (*OED* updated June 2022).

Although the definition of xenophobia mentions fear or prejudice towards foreigners, the records of its cases in South Africa seem to imply a fear of certain groups of foreigners, that is African migrants only. Harris (2002: 170) notes that this framing of xenophobia as an attitude is misleading because it excludes the consequences of such attitudes, that is, the violence that follows. Xenophobia in South Africa is no about the fear or dislike of foreigners but often lead

to anti-immigrant sentiments which promotes violence towards immigrants. South Africa has recorded more xenophobic attacks on African migrants since this article was published in 2002, and in all cases, violence against African immigrants. Since identity is linked to language, immigrants may feel the need to speak less of their heritage languages in certain domains in order to protect themselves from such attacks. This may pose a challenge to the maintenance of these languages in Cape Town.

## 2.11. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has provided a discussion of the field of language maintenance and shift highlighting certain theories that inform research in this field. The discussion highlights important factors that influence domains of use and attitudes of speakers, with consequences for language maintenance and shift. In relation to domains, the home has been identified as significant in promoting language maintenance. Also, the chapter discusses the importance of parent-child communication in heritage languages in the promotion of language maintenance. The discussion on language attitudes provided insight into the important role attitudes held by speakers of a language plays in the maintenance of or shift from their languages. If speakers hold a positive attitude, it will likely promote language maintenance. Nevertheless, if they hold a negative attitude, then language shift is more likely to occur over time. The same notion is applicable in the case of attitudes held by majority groups towards minority groups. The chapter concludes with a discussion on migration and all the factors relevant to the mobility of people. It also discusses the impact of migration on the heritage language/s of immigrants. The next chapter discusses the methodological approach employed in this study.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

## 3.1. Introduction

Sociolinguistic enquiries are usually conducted using either quantitative or qualitative methods (Brookhart & Durkin, 2003). In some cases, both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed depending on the researcher and research questions. This chapter discusses the research methodology employed for data collection and analysis in this study. The discussion includes a brief description of common methodologies employed in sociolinguistics research and justifies why the chosen approach was suitable for this study. Apart from describing research methodologies, it provides a description of the participants involved in the study, and how and why they were relevant to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. A discussion of the research tools selected for this study is also provided. The chapter concludes with the analytical framework employed in the study and issues related to ethics that were considered during this study.

## 3.2. Analytical framework

This is a descriptive study which draws on an interpretivist paradigm. As noted by Hedberg (2003: 32) the main element in the interpretivist paradigm relates to situating analysis in context, and the focus of this paradigm is on meaning. Interpretivism works on the assumption that social realities are co-constructed as humans interact with the world (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivism research posits that social realities are context-embedded and interpretation of such realities must reflect this. They believe that because social realities are complex and multi-layered, each experience is unique and should be interpreted differently to reflect the various uniqueness (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Following this philosophical position, the analysis for this study has been conducted using thematic analysis.

As a term, thematic analysis has been described in different ways (Merton, 1975; Aronson, 1995; Bruan and Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2011). A good description of thematic analysis is that it involves searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It involves not just the description of data but interpretation as coding occurs, and themes are constructed. One feature that distinguishes this analytical lens from others is its flexibility. As a result, it can be applied "within a wide range of theoretical and

epistemological frameworks as well as a wide range of study questions, designs, and sample sizes" (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 2). Due to the flexibility of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) prefer to describe it as a method rather than a methodology. Although Aronson (1995) believes that thematic analysis falls within the realm of ethnography and Joffe (2011) considers it specifically suited to phenomenology, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is fully capable of being an independent method of analysis. Thematic analysis may be applied to other qualitative methods such as discourse analysis (Watling & Lingard, 2012) and grounded theory (Taylor et al. 2012).

Although some scholars have suggested that thematic analysis is a useful method for qualitative researchers at the beginner stage just getting acquainted with qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Clarke and Braun 2017; Nowell et al. 2019), Kiger and Varpio (2020: 2) argue that "the choice to use thematic analysis should be based on the goals of the research itself, more than the desire to follow an easy-to-follow method of analysis". The research question influences the choice of method and is not necessarily a matter of one method being less challenging than the other. As highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2012), when the research goal is to gain a deep understanding of human experiences, behaviours, feelings or thoughts the suitable method to use is thematic analysis.

In relation to the analysis approach, as pointed out by Braun and Clarke (2012) researchers using thematic analysis as a method may utilise a deductive or inductive approach to their data. In both approaches, themes are derived differently. In the inductive approach, the researcher's data produces the themes (Varpio et. al., 2019). On the other hand, "themes are derived in the deductive approach using a pre-existing framework, theory or the work of other researchers" (Kiger & Vapio, 2020: 3). Researchers may follow either approach depending on the research goals.

This study follows an inductive approach to derive themes. After a careful coding process, relevant themes were identified drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested steps to thematic analysis. To realise the first step (familiarise yourself with the data), I repeatedly read through my data from both interviews and participant observation to ensure I understood the different experiences that my participants shared and how they were related or different. Then I proceeded to the second step which involved generating initial codes from the data set. The next stage involved selecting the relevant themes and subthemes. Following this, I proceeded to review the themes to ensure the data included fully supported the identified themes. The

themes reviewed were then defined and named bearing in mind the importance of such themes to the broader research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## 3.3.  Research Design

Scientific enquiry is about investigating and finding answers that aid in the understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. To achieve this, a research methodology/method is required. The two main ones often utilized by researchers are quantitative and qualitative methodology/methods. The approach adopted in this study for data collection and analysis is qualitative in nature. This approach is relevant because the current study seeks to understand the ways in which certain social variables impact human behaviour. It also seeks to examine interpersonal relationships and engage with the nuances of human feelings and behaviour.

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding human behaviour in relation to interpersonal relationships, personal values and orientations or ideologies. This sort of approach allows the researcher to understand and engage with nuances, depth, and multilayers of human behaviour from a rational and inductive standpoint (Leedy, 1993: 143). According to O'Connor and Gibson, (2003), the aim of qualitative research methods is to provide answers to questions such as 'what', 'how' or 'why' about a phenomenon as opposed to 'how many' or 'how much', which is the aim of quantitative method. It is also a type of approach that allows a researcher to pay detailed attention to features or patterns of behaviour which might not be possible in a large data sample (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005: 9). Qualitative methods may utilise tools such as interviews (structured or semi-structured), participant observation or focused group interactions for data collection.

Although the current study employs a qualitative approach, the researcher acknowledges that a quantitative approach has its own strengths in particular areas of sociolinguistics. Therefore, the quantitative approach will briefly be discussed to adequately justify the choice of the qualitative method. The quantitative research method is interested in numbers and the use of statistical evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses and theories. The method claims objectivity and generalizability (Oakley, 2000: 20). It is interested in volume and describes phenomena from the standpoint of what it considers facts and testable. In fact, scholars have found the quantitative method as a useful research design for conducting studies on language maintenance and shift (see Aipolo and Holmes, 1990).

Nevertheless, one critique of the method relates to its inability to engage with the emotions, and perceptions of research subjects as obtainable with qualitative methods (Chalmers, 1999: 37). The quantitative approach also overlooks the nuances/context of participants/phenomena under investigation. This does not imply that it is less valuable than the qualitative method. Rather, the research question influences the suitability of a methodology. While both methods have dis/advantages, it is best to consider them as context-specific (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 15). If a researcher's interest is in exploring and gaining a deeper understanding of human behaviour, it is only reasonable to employ the qualitative method.

Different methods are utilized in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies for data collection and analysis. Some essential methods in qualitative research include interviews, focused group interactions and observation (Namey and Trotter, 2017). All these tools may be utilised by a researcher based on either the research question or the researcher's preference. Regarding the use of interviews, a researcher may choose to conduct structured interviews where set questions and guides are used or follow a more flexible approach that can easily be improvised during the interview process. In other cases, the interview may simply have no set structure.

All three interview styles have their shortcomings. For instance, the structured interview style may limit the details of the data since participants are restricted. This may lead to the researcher missing important data. With the more flexible approaches of semi-structured and unstructured, too much digression may lead to insufficient data. Nonetheless, like other researchers, I prefer semi-structured interviews as it provides me with the opportunity to explore my participants' realities beyond the guiding questions. For instance, an answer may lead to a follow-up question and answer that has the potential to enrich the data further. Structured interviews restrict this type of opportunity.

This study followed a semi-structured interview with an open-ended questions approach. This was done to give the researcher and participant freedom to access information that structured interview questions may restrict. Following Vygotsky (1987: 236-237), Seidman (2006:7) points out that "every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness." He adds that "individuals' consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people". Semi-structured interviews afford researchers the opportunity to explore and unravel individuals' consciousness through their words. During the

process, participants may divulge information that could turn out to be the nucleus of the study even though it was totally unanticipated – this is the essence of semi-structured interviews.

Another useful tool in qualitative research methodology is observation. Researchers may choose to be external observers or internal observers as part of the community which is often referred to as participant observation. Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999: 2) describe participant observation as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the research setting." The researcher fully immerses himself/herself in the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, participant observation as a research method enables researchers to immerse themselves in the phenomenon under study through daily engagements occurring in natural settings (DeWalt & Dewalt, 2002). This type of setting provides researchers with access to naturally occurring data as events unfold. Some researchers believe that naturally occurring data are more credible than reported experiences. This informed my decision to include participant observation as a research method.

## 3.4. Recruitment of participants

To select the participants for the interviews, I contacted the Nigerians in my social network and from this pool, interested and willing participants were identified. As an international student who has lived for over 10 years in Cape Town, South Africa, I have had various interactions with other Nigerians by receiving service from them, being a mentor to new international students arriving in the city and simply socialising with them at Nigerian events. I utilised this connection and reached out to some of the people in my network. Some who were not interested or could not participate in the study referred me to others they believed would be interested. Those who could not participate because they did not meet the selection criteria (being of Yoruba descent, having children etc) referred me to others and that was how the participant pool was built up.

I contacted all potential participants to arrange a suitable time for both parties. On the agreed date and time, I visited our agreed research site. Before the interview, I iterated the purpose of the research, and their rights as participants and duly obtained permission to record the interview and proceeded when we were ready. Each interview lasted 10 to 30 minutes depending on the participants' time and willingness to respond to my questions. For participants who had a lot to say, the interview lasted longer and shorter for those who did not. They were

asked about the languages they speak at home, with whom and why. My participants' multilingual repertoires were also considered; hence, the interview was conducted in whichever of the three languages the participant preferred (Yoruba, English, and Nigerian Pidgin). Most of them preferred English or Nigerian Pidgin although we sometimes code-switched between the languages that they knew.

I had set questions which began with questions probing biodata then proceeded to questions which were meant to reveal their linguistics profiles. The parent participants were asked about what languages they spoke at home while growing up, the roles these languages played in their lives, the dominant languages in their repertoires and why, how, and when they acquired/learn the language, what value they placed on their home languages, which languages of South Africa they were proficient in and their level of proficiency. Parents were asked which languages they used in communicating with their child/ren. Children were also asked about the languages in their repertoires and the different roles such languages played in their lives.

Although I had this set of questions, they merely served as a guide to drive the interview. I took advantage of the opportunity that such interviews afford and asked supplementary questions where necessary whenever I received a response that was not part of the original question. This provided me with an opportunity to dig deeper and elaborate a response further. For example, I asked one of the child participants about the languages of South Africa she was proficient in, and her answer led me to ask further questions like why she preferred one over the other and why she was doing better in one than the other. This provided me with a deeper understanding of the role of language attitudes in language learning/acquisition. It further sheds light on the impact of space on the language practices of immigrants in Cape Town.

Semi-structured interviews also afford the participants the freedom to express their thoughts more naturally without strictly following a script. The participants in this study were receptive to the nature of the interview and felt comfortable with the process. When asked after the interview about their experiences, they recounted not feeling nervous but relaxed. They added that they felt they were involved in a friendly interaction more than an interview – this is the typical atmosphere most researchers seek as it enables the collection of quality and real data which may be a challenge in reported experiences.

I used participant observation in combination with interviews because I believed it would be important to compare the data collected using both procedures to identify certain nuances if any. I was particularly interested in observing if the responses I received from the interview

corroborated with actions, in the case of those who were interviewed and subsequently observed. For example, research participants in interview settings may omit or exaggerate certain information due to time constraints, interview pressure and so on.

Conversely, in the participant observation context, the case is different as participants in most cases do not feel the same pressure as in interview settings. This was evident during my research period. During my time with my participants, they seemed to have forgotten I was there for fieldwork. This allowed them to act naturally thereby affording me the opportunity to collect natural data as opposed to the interviews where some participants seemed a bit tense during the first few minutes once my recording device was turned on. I acknowledge that participants forgetting my presence and role as a researcher could raise possible ethical concerns. Nevertheless, I did not encounter such problems. I made sure to remind them intermittently that I was still conducting research.

The participant observation process involved observing the linguistic practices of participants and participating in activities that involved language over a 3-month period. My main interest was to determine the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in their everyday language use and how their social positioning as immigrants influenced this. As a result, I observed their patterns of language use, frequency, and domains of use. Frequent usage between parents and children would suggest a potential for maintenance of the languages and less frequent or no use, otherwise. In my observation, I noted how frequently their heritage languages featured in their speech, in what contexts and with whom.

Since the interest of the study was mostly intergenerational transfer and domains of use, I also observed their interactions with the children. I also noted how the children responded to such interactions, that is, in what languages they responded. When they responded with their heritage languages, I was interested in their body language. The point of this was to determine if they spoke the language willing or out of coercion. These are the nuances that qualitative methods afford researchers – the opportunity to look and think beyond what is being said. Also, it allows us to consider what is not being said and how that affects the phenomenon under investigation.

As highlighted above, participant observation allows the research to occur in a more natural setting that interviews may prevent due to the participants being too conscious or nervous. During the observation, my aim was to record more naturally occurring data that involves the linguistic practices of my research population. I spent about 1 to 2 hours every week with some

participants and every two weeks with others. The bulk of the interviews and observations were conducted in the first phase pre -COVID. Although I would have preferred not to, I had no option but to complete the work started and finish the interviews during COVID and proceed with my project bearing in mind that most funding organisations were not flexible with extensions and universities were still charging tuition. With the participants' permission, I conducted a brief physical observation and interviews with 2 families. The other 3 interviews were conducted virtually. These interviews were conducted when restrictions were lifted but COVID-19 protocols were always still observed during the interview.

While at their homes pre-COVID-19, I took part in their leisure activities which included watching movies, assisting with chores, or just randomly conversing about life. I chose the home domain as a study site because it plays a fundamental role in child language learning and socialization. I also visited their business places and as opposed to the home where I was more involved, I was more of an understudy and merely observed while we interacted at intervals. This was mainly because I did not want to interfere with their businesses. The choice to observe them at work was informed by the fact that some of them took their children to their business places. The children offered them assistance at work, as a result, I thought this would be a good opportunity to observe interaction in a different setting. It was also an attempt to observe how they navigate cultural and language differences with their clients at work.

It was important to observe the linguistic practices of my participants in both contexts as I was also interested in their language practices with non-Nigerians. Employing this strategy of different data collection sites/contexts enabled a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. As highlighted by Richards (2003:38), research participants are "unique individuals…actors with different biographies in particular circumstances, at particular times and in different localities where they construct meanings from events and interactions." Different research sites offer variations in the type of data that may be collected. Also, since this study language use and language contact in different domains, observing participants outside the home domain like their places of employment where they interact with non-Nigerians only enriches the data. It further provides a more holistic approach which is essential for understanding human behaviour.

## 3.5.  Data Collection Procedures and Strategies

## 3.5.1. Sampling

Researchers choose their research group/population through a process known as sampling. Sampling is the process of selecting research participants from a given population. The researcher chooses the people, contexts, "events, behaviour, and /or social processes to observe" (TerreBlanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:49). The research questions determine what or who is included or excluded in the sampling process. A primary feature of sampling is representativeness. A sample selected by researchers should represent the population being studied (ibid). However, achieving this may not always be possible in the circumstances of exploratory research. The nature may require selecting a sample that meets a particular need (Bacon-Shone, 2015: 51).

There are different sampling techniques available to researchers. For this study, I used a combination of snowball and convenience sampling to select my participants. Snowball sampling involves building a sample through referrals, that is, each participant recommends other suitable participants. On the other hand, convenience sampling involves selecting a sample based on feasibility and convenience (Namey and Trotter, 2017). I selected participants who were more easily accessible from the Nigerian community in Cape Town. Most of them were people I interact with one way or the other through shared interests at the university campus or receiving services within the community where I live. These initially selected participants recommended others they considered would be interested and available to participate in the study.

Although convenience sampling is criticised by some as not having a place in credible research, it is sometimes the preferred option for a small qualitative study such as this (O'Leary, 2010). Also, the small sample size of this research should not be considered a disadvantage but an opportunity for the researcher to conduct a more thorough exploration of the phenomenon studied. The aim of this research is not generalizability but to provide a detailed description of the experiences of participants involved in this study. As previously highlighted, this is descriptive research and lays no claim to the generalizability of findings obtained from this study. I acknowledge that results from a small sample cannot be generalised, and such is not the goal of qualitative research and this specific study. Qualitative research aims to provide a deeper understanding of human experiences – that is exactly the goal of my research.

## 3.6.  Description of participants

This is a study on Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin use in Cape Town; thus, the participants are Nigerians who speak both Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. The selected sample includes 14 Nigerian families living in the Mowbray, Belville, and Parklands regions of Cape Town. They are both economic and professional migrants who have lived in Cape Town for an average of 5 years. The families are a mix of single parents and double-parent family units (explained below). The initial plan was to include 20 families but due to circumstances beyond my control, this could not be achieved. Out of the 14 families, 9 were included in the extended participant observation while 5 were only interviewed and observed briefly over a two-week period. A total of 5 families which either included both parents and children or single parents and children were interviewed. Personal information regarding the participants' lives before migrating to South Africa was not asked because at the pilot stage of data collection, I found that these questions proved somewhat invasive, and participants seemed uncomfortable with such discussions.

Given that this is a study about heritage language maintenance and shift examined through the changing repertoires of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town, the linguistic practices of parents and children were observed. The parents had to be at least over 35years old to participate in the study. This is because I was more interested in older parents with more experience and older children. The age bracket of parents involved was between 35 to 50 years while the children were between 7 to 19 years. One of the interests of this study was on parent-child interaction to record intergenerational language transmission, therefore, the children had to be of speaking age. Hence, the selection of children from 7 years old.

The children were either born in South Africa or brought along by their parents but have lived in South Africa for at least more than 6 months. The duration of stay for the parents ranged from 6 to 16 years. Out of the 14 families who participated in this study, 7 were single parents, three of these had only 1 child and the remaining four had 2 children. Of course, it is not possible to place any restrictions on family composition in a study such as this, this was totally a coincidence. The remaining 7 families consisted of both parents and children. Three families out of the 7 had 2 children, one had 3, and the remaining three had only 1 child. A total of 44 participants from 14 families consisting of parents and children formed part of this study. Please see the table below for more details.

**Table 1: Composition of families studied**

| Participants | Family setup | Number of children | Ages of children | Sex of children | Birthplace of children |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Family 1 (the Tesla's)** | Single parent | 1 | 7 | M | Cape Town |
| **Family 2 (the Sha's)** | Double parent family unit | 3 | 8, 14, 17 | M, F, F | Cape Town |
| **Family 3 (the AD's)** | Single parent | 2 | 10, 13 | M, F | Cape Town |
| **Family 4 (the Iyi's)** | Single parent | 2 | 15, 18 | F, F | Nigeria |
| **Family 5 (the Owa's)** | Single parent | 2 | 8, 10 | F, F | Nigeria |
| **Family 6 (the Sini's)** | Single Parent | 2 | 15,19 | M, F | Nigeria |
| **Family 7 (the Jaz's)** | Double parent family unit | 1 | 15 | M | Nigeria |
| **Family 8 (the Tiser's)** | Double parent family unit | 1 | 19 | F | Nigeria |
| **Family 9 (the Wum's)** | Double parent family unit | 2 | *7, #9 | M, M | #Nigeria *Cape Town |
| **Family 10 (the Tisha's) Interview** | Single parent | 1 | 16 | F | Nigeria |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Family 11 (the Trace's) Interview** | Single parent family unit | 1 | 8 | M | Cape Town |
| **Family 12 (the Judes) Interview** | Double parent family unit | 1 | 9 | M | South Africa |
| **Family 13 (the Tess') Interview** | Double parent family unit | 2 | 17, 19 | F, F | South Africa |
| **Family 14 (the Yoz's Interview** | Double parent family unit | 2 | 10, 14 | F, F | Nigeria |

*Key: M – Male, F – Female, total number of families – 14, children – 23, parents – 21*

*Double family unit – family comprising of both father and mother*

*Single-family unit – family comprising of only one parent (mother or father)*

As seen in Table 1 above, the families were quite diverse in age and sex. Again, this was merely a coincidence and not intentional orchestrated by the researcher. However, it appears to be a consequence of the snowball sampling technique employed in the study.

## 3.7. Data collection strategies

I obtained the voluntary consent of all the participants involved before proceeding with data collection. Participant observation required observing the participants in their homes and workplaces. The data collection process occurred in two phases; the first phase which involved observation began in December 2019 to February 2020 just before the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, while the second phase which involved interviews and brief observation happened in November 2020 when the restrictions were a little more flexible. I originally also planned to observe participants at social gatherings, however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was impossible. Keeping in mind the privacy of my participants and the pandemic, I arranged with them regarding home visits at a convenient time. The visits only happened on the agreed days

and times. Both the researcher and hosts observed COVID-19 protocols in all cases while collecting data during the second phase. We wore our masks, maintained social distancing, and sanitised our hands. Although I was unable to engage in activities like home chores in the second phase as I had done in the first phase, I was still able to watch television and partake in interactions while at their homes.

I took notes of language activities that occurred with my e-notes device during the observation. Sometimes I did this immediately after I observed something of note. Other times, I recorded when I got a chance to as circumstances did not always permit me to make notes immediately. On my return to my house, I reflected on the encounter and expanded on my notes. The interviews were conducted during the second phase of data collection which happened during COVID-19 restrictions and as a result, not all 5 interviews were audio-recorded. I could only audio record two and this was done using the recording device of my mobile phone. The remaining three occurred virtually.

In addition, participants were sent questions that required written responses via WhatsApp and email. When they got back to me with their responses, I transferred them to my computer for analysis. I sent follow-up questions where necessary and added these responses to the previous ones. Although participants had the freedom to express themselves in whatever language they preferred, they surprisingly preferred Nigerian Pidgin over Yoruba and would merely codeswitch between these languages. However, the children preferred to be interviewed in English. As a result, I had no need for a translator because my basic knowledge of Yoruba was just sufficient and, in most cases, they translated the Yoruba they had incorporated to English.

## 3.8. Data coding procedure

Most of the data were stored in written form apart from the few interviews that were in audio recording form. These audio recordings were transcribed and converted to written form. Bearing in mind Pavlenko's (2007:173) insight that "additions and omissions, pauses, self-corrections, repetitions, slips of the tongue, false starts and restarts, code-switches, requests for help, paralinguistic features, and temporal variation are crucial cues in the analysis of lexical choice problems, in the understanding of speakers' intentions and positioning toward the subject matter", I ensured I did not overlook any of these while transcribing the data. Data from each participant was thoroughly examined to find evidence of language maintenance or shift as evident in their linguistics practices and relevant themes were identified based on patterns observed.

To record evidence of language maintenance or shift, I paid attention to responses that signalled language attitudes, I noted what language was dominant in their repertoires and the domains where they were dominant. I also paid attention to the information in the data that signalled evidence of contact with the local languages dominant in Cape Town. For this, their interactions with the locals and their reports of the local languages they could speak were important. This study was also greatly interested in potential innovations. That is, new ways that speakers are incorporating all the languages in their linguistics repertoires. For example, are the participants incorporating some expressions from the local languages in their home languages? How are they doing this and for what purpose/s? What do these innovations mean for the languages in question? These are some of the questions I kept in mind while reading through the data.

In relation to coding, I used the highlighting system and comments to note things that were of interest to me and important for answering my research questions while reading through the data. I looked out for similar expressions and expressions that signalled a participant's attitude towards the language, and the children's attitude towards learning and speaking the languages of their parents. Some of the questions that informed my coding were, how are parents speaking about their home languages as opposed to the local languages of Cape Town to their children? How do they respond to their children's attempts to speak their home languages as opposed to the local languages? Are they actively attempting to teach the children their heritage languages by speaking these languages to them? What language is dominant in the home domain? What other ways are the children being exposed to their home languages besides parent-child interactions? How are the children responding to their parents' attempts to expose them to their home languages? What language dominates their repertoires and in what domains? Who is part of their social network and how does this contribute to their maintaining or shifting from their home languages?

I considered my coding from the angle of both parents and children because I was cognizant of the fact that although the parents may be attempting to transfer their languages to the children, the children also had a role to play in enabling or disabling this process. Therefore, I kept the following questions in mind during the coding process: if the children are disabling the process, why is this happening and what does this mean for language maintenance/intergenerational transfer in general? The debate in language revitalization literature about why try to revitalize/revive a language if the speakers do not want their languages revitalized informed this line of reasoning. I believe that as researchers, we should

aim to describe and include the experiences of all participants and the children in this study and their experiences are worth considering.

## 3.9. Data analysis process

My data analysis follows a thematic approach as stated above. I used thematic analysis to analyse the interview and participant observation data drawing on relevant concepts related to understanding language vitality such as language attitudes, identity, linguistic repertoire, social network, and so on. Thematic analysis involves thoroughly engaging with data to identify the themes and categories that emerge and providing an interpretation of such themes (TerreBlanche et al., 2006:322-326). Following this, I identified linguistic practices in the family unit that signalled the vitality of the Nigerian language/s present in each family. That is, what languages feature in parent-child communication, parent-parent communication, parent-friends communication, children-children communication, and children-friends communication. Innovations that exist were also identified based on the themes/patterns observed.

In addition, the analysis identified not just themes but similarities and differences in the participants' responses. I was also interested in which of the languages were being maintained and which were under-utilised and what variables played a role in such situations. My research questions guided my analysis. With regards to the first objective of this study (to determine how migration to a new community influences the linguistic practices and social positioning of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town), my interest in the data was linguistic evidence that signalled the reason behind their linguistic choices. That is, the choice to use one language over the other and in what contexts. I specifically looked out for how participants described their experiences in South Africa, the opportunities they have access to, and the role of language in granting or denying access to such opportunities. I applied a similar approach to the rest of my research objectives/questions.

## 3.10. Ethical considerations

Research ethics is an important part of academic research. Bearing in mind the importance of ethical research, I applied for research ethics clearance from the Humanities Faculty of the University of Cape Town and only proceed with my data collection after I received clearance to do so. When I approached participants to be part of the research, I provided a detailed

explanation about it, the aims of the research, and why their participation would be essential. They were also well informed that being part of the study would be totally voluntary. I assured them of their privacy, safety, and protection. They were also guaranteed they would remain anonymous, and the information provided would only be for the purpose of this research and not shared with any other party besides the primary researcher.

The participants were informed of their rights to opt out at any time they felt uncomfortable and their complete right to withdraw the information they provided if they had a change of mind at any point of the process. I also sought their permission to document their linguistics practices and to audio record the ones that were interviewed during my visits. They were also informed of their right to choose not to be recorded. The interview and observation sessions were scheduled based on their preferences. Since the observation included home visits, I took extra care to respect their personal spaces and boundaries. The rights of their children were respected during this research and to the best of my ability, I ensured neither I nor the participants were exposed to COVID-19 during the second phase of the data collection process. Finally, they were given formal written consent forms to sign which signalled formal and willing participation in the study.

## 3.11. Summary of chapter

This chapter provided a breakdown of the research methodology and methods employed in this study. It discussed the data collection strategies, the research tools, and provided a detailed description of participants that formed part of the study. It further discussed the sampling procedure it followed and how data was coded. It concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations that informed the study which indicated that no participant was hurt during this study. The following chapter presents a discussion of research findings and interpretations of such findings.

# Chapter 4

# Changing linguistic repertoires in the Nigerian-Cape Town diaspora of the participants

## 4.1. Introduction

The discussion and analysis of data in this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part is mainly a discussion of the language repertoires of the participants (in the current chapter), while the second part, chapter 5 presents a more detailed discussion drawing on thematic analysis as a lens for the discussion of data. This chapter presents a discussion of findings from the study as represented in the data. I begin my discussion with a description of the linguistic profiles of the participants. The discussion offers a description of how the Nigerian immigrants in this study unravel their multilingual selves through personal reports and their relationship with the languages in their linguistics repertoires as they negotiate and renegotiate their identities and social positionings in their new society. In the re/negotiation of their social positionings and attempts to grapple with being insiders and outsiders, the analysis of data further revealed the attitudes Nigerian immigrants hold towards the different languages in their repertoires. This chapter explores this aspect too. It is vital to iterate here that repertoires serve as a lens to examine the language practices of Nigerian immigrants and the impact thereof on the vitality of their heritage languages.

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, my participants originate from a multilingual country and as immigrants, form part of another multilingual society. The implication of this is a more complex and fluid linguistic repertoire as living in another multilingual society only further expands their repertoires. Vertovec's (2007) concept of superdiversity which denotes "increased diversity not only between immigrant and/or ethnic minority groups but also within them" rightly captures the reality of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town. Being part of a highly multilingual society implies they are presented with potential opportunities to learn additional languages that they encounter as they engage with others either at work, school, church, and social gatherings.

To understand the linguistic profiles of Nigerian immigrants in my study, participants were asked about the languages that formed part of their repertoires across two phases of their lives – back in their home country and now as immigrants in Cape Town. They were also asked about the new languages they have encountered since living in Cape Town and their interests

in learning any of these languages. Participants were asked about the dominant language in their repertoire and the possible reason behind this. They were asked if they preferred any of the languages over others. Lastly, they were asked about the role their heritage languages played in their lives. Since this study draws on the language practices of Nigerian immigrants and the possible influence of this on heritage language maintenance or shift, understanding the linguistic background of the participants was essential to my inquiry. I begin the discussion with a report of the linguistic profiles of the parents first, followed by the profiles of the children.

## 4.2. Linguistic repertoires of participants

The analysis of data reveals that all participants are multilingual and had at least 3 active languages in their repertoires. Most participants or their wards had some level of proficiency in one of the local languages of Cape Town. All the parents are fluent in their heritage language, Yoruba, some have a high level of fluency in Nigerian Pidgin while others do not. Only one parent reported not speaking Nigerian Pidgin despite being able to understand the language. It is in fact important to differentiate between receptive competence (understanding) and speech competence in situations of multilingualism and potential shift. Knowledge of a language may include a good understanding of it when spoken, regardless of proficiency level. Most of the parents and children have a good knowledge of English with only a few having limited proficiency in speaking the language. The table below provides a summary of the linguistic repertoires of Nigerian immigrants that formed part of this study. It provides details of the number of participants, all the languages present in their repertoire, and the most dominant one. My discussion draws on the linguistic repertoires of all the participants which includes all family members. My discussion draws on all participants in the families individually.

**Table 2: Summary of reported linguistic repertoires of participants**

| Participant | **Languages** | Dominant languages |
|---|---|---|
| **Family 1 (the Tesla's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, | English |
| **Family 2 (the Sha's)** | Yoruba, NP, English | English |
| **Family 3 (the AD's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans | Yoruba |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Family 4 (the Iyi's)** | Yoruba, NP, English | English |
| **Family 5 (the Owa's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa | English |
| **Family 6 (the Sini's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, French | English |
| **Family 7 (the Jaz's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa | English and Yoruba |
| **Family 8 (the Tiser's)** | Yoruba, NP, English | English |
| **Family 9 (theWum's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, isiXhosa | Yoruba |
| **Family 10 (the Tisha's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, Afrikaans, Korean | Yoruba |
| **Family 11 (the Trace's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, Afrikaans, Sotho | English |
| **Family 12 (the Jude's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, isiXhosa | Yoruba and NP |
| **Family 13 (the Tess')** | Yoruba, English, Afrikaans | English |
| **Family 14 (the Yoz's)** | Yoruba, NP, English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Hausa, Igbo | Yoruba |

*Key: NP – Nigerian pidgin*

## 4.3. Factors that influence the linguistic repertoires of participants

Certain factors influence the linguistic repertoires of the participants as do other language speakers. Factors such as ethnic affiliations or senses of ethnicity, experience with language/s of the immediate and wider community and language attitudes play a role in the languages speakers choose to speak. It also affects what language/s is the dominant language in their repertoires. For instance, a speaker with an overt positive attitude towards Yoruba with access to a Yoruba community (other Yoruba speakers in his or her new society) even in the diaspora will likely have it as dominant in his/her repertoire. It is common to find most Yoruba speakers in the diaspora continue to speak and maintain Yoruba as the dominant language in their repertoire, especially in places like the United Kingdom and the United States of America where the population of Yoruba-speaking Nigerians is quite high (recall the number of Yoruba

speakers in these countries as mentioned in chapter 1). These factors influencing this heritage language use is discussed in more detail below.

### 4.3.1. Ethnic identity/affiliations

As immigrants in a new society with variations in culture and ethnicity, ethnic identity or affiliation becomes pertinent to their individual identities (Zimmermann 2007). Zimmermann (2007) distinguishes between ethnicity and ethnic identity. The former relates to peoples' origins and the latter is more about "the balance between commitment to, affinity to, or self-identification with the culture, norms, and society of origin and commitment to or self-identification with the host culture and society" (Zimmermann, 2007: 4). Individuals may choose to commit to or associate with either or both their heritage culture and that of the host country.

Immigrants arriving in a new society move along a plane of two axes – a commitment to the country of origin and a commitment to the host country (Zimmermann 2007: 4). Nevertheless, it does not have to be a case of one or the other. According to Zimmermann (2007: 4), "commitments to two different societies can coexist and influence each other in several ways" as suggested by the two-dimensional model. Following Zimmermann (2007), three possibilities exist in relation to ethnic affiliations among immigrants. The first possibility is that an immigrant may strongly identify with his/her ancestral culture and values and may or may not be so much engaged in the culture or values of the host country. The second possibility is that an immigrant who is strongly involved in the cultural values of the host country may or may not totally be committed to his or her ancestral culture and beliefs. Lastly, there may be immigrants who are not committed to either the culture of the host country or their ancestral culture. Whatever the case, these choices may impact the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages in different ways.

The immigrants in this study are also confronted with choices about ethnic affiliations or identity. The choice that they make will likely influence their language practices and by extension, the vitality of their heritage language. As indicated in chapter 3, a total of 44 participants took part in this study. By design, this study focused on the Yoruba community in the diaspora. Therefore, all the participants reported having Yoruba as their heritage language (L1). This is because all participants originate from the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. Nigerian languages have ethnic affiliations in which case, individuals' L1 may be their ethnic

language. Therefore, it is common for the L1 of individuals to be their ethnic language. Responding to my question about heritage language, participants said the following,

> Allie (parent participant from family 14): We are Yoruba and speak Yoruba.

> Jude (parent participant from family 12): Firstly, it's part of my identity as a Yoruba person so, knowing and speaking the language was and is still important to me.

The responses here suggest the link between ethnicity (Yoruba) and language (Yoruba). It further suggests that these participants have made the choice to be affiliated with their ancestral identity, Yoruba as expressed in their choice of language practice as well.

Immigrants may also choose not to display any commitment towards their heritage language based on the value they place on their heritage language in the diaspora. Some of these choices may be influenced by their assimilation or integration needs or personal desire to acquire the dominant language in their new society. Some participants in this study had varying responses from those recorded above in responses to questions related to their ethnic identity.

> Yoz (parent participant family 14): Uhm *na* (it's) part of their heritage so they should know it. But right now, they are in Cape Town. I believe they will still pick up Yoruba later.

> Sini (parent participant from family 6): Yoruba is my language, yes, but the world is a global village and, in this country, now, Yoruba is not really that useful. Let my children speak English and even learn French too. In fact, those languages take you to more places than our African languages. Our African languages are only important in our immediate environment. I cannot really force them to keep speaking Yoruba. I understand English and we communicate in that, they understand Yoruba too and that is enough cultural transfer. Abi what can I say? Languages are important but some languages are more superior and unfortunately, our African languages don't have much to offer beyond the home.

> Owa (parent from family 5): I like speaking my language, but I want my children to learn English because Yoruba is not a language that is that useful here in Cape Town. I am even encouraging them to learn isiXhosa or Afrikaans too because how will they get jobs when they grow up and we still find ourselves here? Knowing our language is good but how far can it take us in a foreign country with all the xenophobia here?" She

further explained that integration is important to her as her identity is too. "My children will decide if to continue speaking Yoruba or not, but I can't force them".

In the excerpt above, Tiser acknowledges his ancestral heritage while subsequently showing commitment to the host country through the choice to learn English, a dominant language in Cape Town. A similar case is seen in the second excerpt from Umi. Due to this participant's perception of how valuable the dominant language in Cape Town is, she chooses to identify more with the culture of the host country through the language as opposed to her ancestral culture. Choices like this influence the linguistic repertoires of immigrants and broadly their heritage language vitality.

## 4.3.2. The role of multilingual societies in diasporic language practices

Most communities in Nigeria are multilingual and this implies that while the ethnic language is important, societal interaction and the educational medium ensure that several languages feature in an individual's repertoire daily. The term diasporic language is used in this dissertation to refer to immigrant languages outside their original speech communities. Internal or micro-level migration is common in Nigeria, therefore, there is ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity in most communities there. For example, a Yoruba-speaking community may include members of Igbo and Hausa ethnic groups which ensures the presence of their languages in the same community.

All the participants in this study reported being brought up as Yoruba-dominant multilinguals. For one participant (Allie – parent from family 14), Yoruba was the first language she acquired because she says:

> I am from Oyo state, and we speak Yoruba within our community. We had *omo* Igbos ('the Igbos') and Hausa people, but Yoruba was more common because *na our place* ('it is our place').

Echoing similar sentiment, Yoz (parent from family 14) said,

> I grew up in a Yoruba town, so Yoruba was spoken everywhere … as my wife said, I am Yoruba, I grew up in a Yoruba town, so the language is part of my identity.

The dominant language and the participant's ethnicity being Yoruba may have influenced the acquisition of it as L1 for these participants. In most African communities, language is linked with ethnicity; therefore, this is not an uncommon phenomenon peculiar to Nigeria.

Participants also mentioned having other languages in their repertoire while in Nigeria. Allie from family 14 (parent) reported picking up some Igbo language from the Igbo people in her community. She says,

> We had Hausa and Igbo people in my community, so we had Hausa and Igbo languages too. I even learn small Igbo from my Igbo friends *but na* ('it's') only *biko* ('please') I remember o.

The participant's exposure to Igbo may have influenced the change in her repertoire, incorporating some elements of Igbo. This is evidence of how exposure to languages in an individual's society may expand one's linguistic repertoire. Apart from Igbo, they also had English and Nigerian Pidgin form part of their linguistics repertoires. They acquired these languages from their immediate environments while in Nigeria. It is essential to mention at this point that not all participants had Nigerian Pidgin in their repertoire regardless of encountering it in some domains like at school. In relation to this, Tesla (parent participant from family) 1 said,

> I learnt English language and Pidgin when I went to school.

This participant's experience mirrors that of the others in the study. Most of the participants reported learning both Nigerian Pidgin and English when they went to school.

Out of all the participants, only one participant (Toya parent participant from family 8) reported not acquiring Nigerian Pidgin in early childhood. She only acquired English early but learned Nigerian Pidgin as an adult. Relating her experience she says,

> I learned Nigerian Pidgin as an adult later but learned English in Primary school in my early life as we Nigerians are forced to in school.

It is common for Nigerians to acquire Nigerian Pidgin at an early stage but there are cases such as this where learning/acquisition[2] only occurs in adulthood. One factor responsible for this is the socioeconomic power assigned to English in Nigeria (Akande and Salami, 2010). This is evident in her statement "… as we Nigerians are forced to in school." Another factor is the

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[2] I acknowledge the distinction between learning and acquisition as used in second language acquisition literature to mean formal and informal language learning. Nonetheless, I use these terms interchangeably in this dissertation to describe the same thing – the process of adding a language to an individual's linguistic repertoire whether formally or informally. Although these are technical terms used to describe classroom contexts and outside classroom contexts, Nigerian Pidgin is not formally taught in classroom contexts. Thus, it is important to note that the term "learning" as used by my participants refers to what is technically understood as acquisition in second language literature.

ideology of language purism prominent in most elite communities of Nigeria which relates to the notion that speaking Nigerian Pidgin "corrupts" or delays the development of standard English (Danladi, 2013, Akande and Salami, 2010). As a result, some parents prevent their children from learning or speaking Nigerian Pidgin. These children are left with the option of learning it in adulthood for social interactions (Umana 2018).

In addition, when people, as with the participants in this study, migrate outside Nigeria to a place like Cape Town which is also a multilingual society, the situation becomes even more complex. Migration is one factor that constantly shapes and reshapes the linguistic repertoires of individuals as the mobility of people directly entails the mobility of languages (Nchang 2018). Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town are exposed to the languages present in their communities. The participants that took part in this study live in urban areas of Cape Town such as Mowbray, Table View/Parklands, and Belville with a high population of African immigrants. Therefore, there is a possibility that they would be exposed to other African languages apart from the local languages of the Western Cape mentioned in the preceding chapter.

The participants reported having languages such as isiXhosa, Afrikaans, French, Sotho, and Korean in their repertoire. Because they live among speakers of these languages, their daily interactions with them involve exposure to their languages. Although French, Sotho, and Korean are not indigenous languages of Cape Town, these participants reported picking up the languages through interactions with friends who were also immigrants in Cape Town. In the case of Korean, the participant reported having a deep interest in languages which leads her to learn new languages. She learned Korean using an online language-learning application. The French-speaking participant reported picking up the language due to her interaction with French-speaking immigrants in Cape Town from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Sotho speaker reported picking up the language from a best friend who is of Sotho origin. Both the parents and children in this study are exposed to both the dominant languages and languages present in Cape Town through work and school and other interactions with people in their social network.

Data from the participant observation revealed participants' speech occasionally featured expressions such as *eish*, *haibo*, *wena*, *nkosi, unjani*, (from isiXhosa) *dankie*, and *asseblief* (from Afrikaans) which are popular simple phrases from isiXhosa and Afrikaans – the dominant languages spoken in Cape Town. One interview question asked whether the

participants could speak the South African local languages. The aim of this was to understand their level of exposure to the local languages and the influence of this on their linguistic repertoire. In response to this, a parent participant (Tisha from family 10) said,

> Well, I can speak *unjani*? ('How are you?') You know my customers are mostly Xhosa and when they speak their language, I tell them I can only speak English. And they'll say, ei you, you must learn (mimics a black SA English accent).

Also, the participant's ward above (Rex) reported exposure to Afrikaans in the school domain as a result of it being one of the languages she has to take as a school subject. Another question asked in the interview related to the level of fluency participants had in the local languages and they gave the following responses:

> Lola (parent from family 7): None, but I know a few words of isiXhosa like *unjani* ('how are you?'), and *masambe* ('let's go').

> Tisha (parent from family 10): *Ehn* I can't say I am fluent in it, but I know a few words because of my clients. Just normal words like *unjani* ('how are you?'), *haibo* (exclamation), *masambe* ('let's go'), *enkosi* ('thank you'), *ekasi* ('township/community')[3], *yebo* ('yes').

> Yoz (parent from family 14): I associate with South Africans, especially the coloureds, so I know a few words like *dankie* ('thank you'), *asseblief* ('please'), *ma broer[4]* ('my friend') but nothing too deep. I also know a few words of isiXhosa like *unjani* ('how are you?'), and *masambe* ('let's go'). *Eish* (exclamation) it's hectic no be small thing! ['it's not an easy task' – Nigerian Pidgin].

The excerpt presented above suggests that Nigerian immigrants have some level of exposure to the local languages of Cape Town such as isiXhosa and Afrikaans. It also suggests that some features of these languages form part of their daily interactions and language practices. Although these local language/s may not be dominant in the linguistic repertoire of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town and their proficiency level seems to be rudimentary, they may be said to still be part of their developing or redeveloping linguistic repertoires. This shows that

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[3] *Ekasi* is a Zulu term used to describe "township", a segregated neighborhood where black people were forced to live under apartheid. It also has other functional meanings such as soul, community, and unity. Black South Africans use the term in a positive way to describe a sense of belonging to a communal family (Fairbanks, 2019 foreignpolicy.com).

[4] Broer – literal meaning is brother but, in this context, it is used as friend.

migration may play a role in shaping the linguistic resources that individuals may access as they move in and out of different spaces.

In addition, the last sentence by Yoz above depicts what happens in language contact situations made possible by migration. This type of language contact leads to hybridity as expressed in the excellent innovation in "*eish it's hectic no be small thing.*" It is interesting how this participant moves between 3 languages, isiXhosa (*eish*), English (*it's hectic*), and Nigerian Pidgin (*no be small thing*) in this single sentence – truly a reflection of the notion of translanguaging (Garcia, 2009). It further emphasizes Blommaert's (2010) notion of multilingual speakers tapping into resources available to them to achieve their communicative aim.

### 4.3.3. Language attitudes

Another factor that influences the language resources available in the repertoire of individuals is the attitudes they hold towards the different languages they encounter. Related to language attitude is the notion of language ideology – "an individual's perception of a language" (Rumsey, 1990: 246). These perceptions are shaped by factors such as value assigned to languages according to hierarchical structures or economic value, standard versus nonstandard language, and so on (Weber & Horner, 2011: 16-22). Ideologies held by individuals as influenced by societal factors shape how they respond to those languages.

Language attitudes may be overt or covert and motivated by integrative and instrumental purposes (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). For instance, an immigrant may hold a positive attitude towards local languages for the sole purpose of integration. It could also be for instrumental purposes like accessing economic opportunities that a knowledge of the language/s may afford. What is important to highlight at this point is that both instrumental and integrative motivations are not mutually exclusive. Both motivations can shape people's attitudes in different ways. According to Spolsky (1969), attitudes held towards a language, negative or positive, impact the proficiency level of second language learners. This argument is tested in this dissertation as picked up in upcoming discussions.

Participants in this study held certain language attitudes shaped by their perception of the value the languages in their society hold in their lives. Although in prolonged contact with certain languages, some of the participants reported not knowing the language. This can be traced from their experiences in their home countries to their experience as immigrants in Cape Town. As mentioned previously, all communities in Nigeria are multilingual and participants reported

having other languages besides their ethnic languages in their communities. Responding to a question concerning the presence of other languages in their community two participants had the following to say,

> Toya (parent from family 8): We had Hausa and Igbo people in my community, so we had Hausa and Igbo languages too. I even learn small Igbo from my Igbo friends but *na only biko I sabi o.* ('It's only *biko* ('please') that I know').

> Tiser (parent from family 8): The same thing with our village but I don't know the language. I spoke Yoruba or pidgin to them[5].

The statements above present two examples of negative and positive attitudes towards a language. Participant 1 (Toya) seemed more responsive toward Igbo and was able to pick up an Igbo expression. Although she could speak only one expression, she indicated that she understood other words but just could not speak. Whereas participant 2 (Tiser) although a resident of the same community did not pick up any Igbo words. This intimates that he had no interest in learning the language. He spoke his language, Yoruba to non-Yoruba speaking people (them) in his community regardless of their level of competence in it. In other cases, he opted for Nigerian Pidgin. This participant's experience suggests that he holds a positive attitude towards Yoruba and a negative attitude towards Igbo. A factor influencing this is most likely his view of Yoruba as more valuable than Igbo in his life since it is the dominant language in his society. The positive attitude towards Yoruba held by this participant seems to suggest a negative attitude towards Igbo, also shaped by his perception of it as a minority language with not much value in his society. In the Yoruba community where they lived, Yoruba would be the dominant language with more economic and social value.

In an interview with a parent participant (Tess from family 13), the following exchange occurred in response to the question about fluency in Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin;

> Tess: They are not fluent in Yoruba. What do you mean by Nigerian Pidgin?

> Researcher: Oh, I mean Pidgin language that we speak in Nigeria.

> Tess: Okay. We don't speak pidgin. Growing up, I personally don't speak it and do not encourage my children to do so as well.

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[5] "Them" here refers to other members of his community that are not Yoruba.

Researcher: That's interesting. Can you explain why, please?

Tess: It is not good English. I don't consider it good English.

In the excerpt above, the participant's question, "what do you mean by Nigerian Pidgin?" if interpreted through the lens of cultural schema embedded in Nigerian English could signal a form of disdain towards Nigerian Pidgin and not necessarily a lack of understanding of what Nigerian Pidgin is. In fact, I argue for this because her next statement, "it's not good English" does indicate her opinion of what Nigerian Pidgin is and an understanding. In addition, the statement "it's not good English" reflects the hegemonic ideology in Nigeria that Nigerian Pidgin is bad English. This perception originates from the notion of Nigerian Pidgin being a "corrupt" form of English as already mentioned above. Further, Nigerian Pidgin is associated with a lower social class. Thus, individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a higher social class or aspire to belong to such social class may refuse to speak Nigerian Pidgin and prevent their children from doing so too. Language attitude is also revealed in the excerpt. The participant's perception of Nigerian Pidgin as "not good English" leads to her discouraging her children from speaking it and not speaking it. This can be considered a negative attitude towards the language.

Umana (2018) mentions that other possible factors producing negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin are the roles of western education and globalisation. 'Good English' is a signifier of western education while 'bad English' - that is Nigerian Pidgin - signifies a lack of it. These ideologies evidently lead to some Nigerians distancing themselves from the language and in the case of the participant above, it became a foreign concept requiring clarity as expressed in her question, "What do you mean by Nigerian Pidgin?" A sharp contrast was however observed when she was asked about the local languages of South Africa. She reported her children having a high level of fluency in Afrikaans. This suggests that she holds a positive attitude towards the local languages of South Africa dominant in Cape Town. Her positive attitude is influenced by her perception of the language as having more socio-economic value in Cape Town than Nigerian Pidgin as she pointed out in further discussion during the interview.

Overall, all participants held positive attitudes towards their heritage language Yoruba. Of the 14 families that participated in this study, only three parents displayed negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin. Attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin were clear-cut and not ambiguous, they were either for or against. Attitudes towards the local languages of South Africa seemed

complex. Although some held negative attitudes towards the indigenous languages of Cape Town, isiXhosa and Afrikaans, this did not lead to not learning them. They still learned and made an effort to incorporate the few words and expressions (that they know) in their daily linguistic practices[6]. In summary, findings from this study indicate that the participants' language attitudes were both positive and negative as shaped by their language attitudes and ideologies.

Language attitudes described above are those of the parents. The next few paragraphs discuss the attitudes held by the children. Describing her experience with the local languages dominant in Cape Town one participant (Rex) said the following:

> I don't like Afrikaans. It's difficult for me to learn. I can't speak Afrikaans, but I read it fluently. But the problem is constructing a sentence, it's difficult for me. I can read very fluently and understand also.

In relation to isiXhosa she added, "No no no, I don't like that one". She expresses a stronger dislike for isiXhosa than Afrikaans but holds a negative attitude towards both languages. Her negative attitude towards Afrikaans may be described in two ways. First, it seems to be influenced by the difficulty she has with learning the language. A second possible influence could be her perception of the language as difficult to learn. Nonetheless, she still seemed to prefer Afrikaans to isiXhosa and overtly expressed dislike for both. Although she is exposed to both languages at school and at home when she interacts with her parent's clients, she seems to be doing better in learning Afrikaans because she has some level of proficiency in reading skills. This iterates my earlier argument that holding a negative attitude towards the local languages of South Africa dominant in Cape Town does not prevent Nigerian immigrants from acquiring/learning the language.

In addition, during one of my visits for the participant observation part of my data collection, one of the participants (Maesey from family 2) said the following,

> *Aunty Happy, I love naija pidgin too much especially when I hear am for music. My cousins dey laugh me too much and dey always try sell me anytime I go Lagos. I don tell them say me I go soon sabi this language that they don't believe I will learn. Ah I can't wait to see the looks on their faces when I reach Naija soon. Them go shock! E*

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[6] More discussion on this is picked up under subsequent subheadings.

*go shock them! Abeg dey speak am with me make I learn as my parents no dey too speak. Them want make I learn Yoruba. That's their biggest concern.*

Aunty Happy, I love Nigerian Pidgin too much especially when I hear it in music. My cousins laugh at me too much and always try to sell ('exclude') me anytime I visit Lagos. I have told them that I will soon know this language that they don't believe I will learn. Ah I can't wait to see the looks on their faces when I reach Nigeria soon. They will be shocked! Please speak Pidgin with me so I can learn because my parents don't really speak much of it. They want me to learn Yoruba. That is their biggest concern.

The participant above expresses an overt positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin as revealed in her enthusiasm to learn the language. Her motivation, as highlighted in the extract above, is mainly to integrate into Lagos when she visits home. She believes knowing the language will prevent her exclusion from social interactions that she has experienced in the past. Nigerian Pidgin holds a strong socio-cultural value for this participant, and this shapes her positive attitude towards it regardless of her parents' attitude and desire for her to learn Yoruba instead.

Another example of a positive attitude towards Nigerian languages is from a child growing up in an English-dominant household. Although the main language of communication between parent and child is English, the child indicates an interest in learning his home language, Yoruba. During our interview, the mother (Trace from family 11) said the following in response to the interview question, "What language do you speak at home and why?"

English. But my son is very interested in learning my home language, Yoruba and recently requested that I start to communicate with him at home in Yoruba language to help him learn. Yes, yesterday he said I should really stop speaking English to him because he wants to be able to speak Yoruba fluently before my sister comes to Cape Town. Also, when my sister does video calls with him, they do Yoruba lessons all through the calls.

In response to the question, "how do you feel about learning your mother's language? The child, Jay said,

I am always excited to learn new words daily in my mum's language. I am most interested in knowing my mum's language because I want to understand everything she

is talking about when she speaks to her friends and sisters. I also want to communicate with her in her language.

As seen in the excerpt above, Trace reported English being the language she speaks at home. However, she added that her son has indicated a strong interest in learning Yoruba, her heritage language. The son also confirmed this as highlighted in his statement above. His motivation seems to be driven by the need to feel more included in the mother's interactions with others and to bond better with the mother and aunt. Based on this, it can be deduced that his attitude towards Yoruba is positive. The children that participated in this study generally held positive attitudes towards Nigerian languages and negative or ambivalent attitudes towards the local languages of Cape Town. Their positive attitudes towards Nigerian languages may be influenced by their need to perform or be affiliated with their Nigerian culture which some of their parents seem to place tremendous value on.

## 4.4. Functions and domains of language use

This section discusses the functions different languages serve in the daily practices of the participants. During the participant observation, one key interest area was in the different ways language was used, in terms of which one was dominant, where it was dominant and why this was the case. Participants were also asked in the interviews following Fishman's (1966) famous wording what languages they spoke, with whom, when and why. Domains of language use and functions assigned to languages determine the frequency of use/dominance. These choices have implications for language maintenance or shift. In the case of immigrants, if their heritage languages have fewer domains of use, this could lead to a possible language shift.

A central observation is that English served as a lingua franca in the repertoire of the participants. It was mostly used to bridge a communication gap with those with whom they shared no other common language. It was the dominant language in places of employment in the cases of those who were observed at work. They used English to communicate with their non-Nigerian clients. Some participants also had English as the dominant language in their homes. Out of the 9 families who formed part of the participant observation data, 6 had English as a dominant language in their households, while Yoruba was the dominant language in 3 families. On the other hand, data from the interviews conducted indicated that 3 families had English as the dominant language at home while 2 had Yoruba. Interesting dynamics emerged in cross-linguistic encounters between families and some of these are discussed below.

### 4.4.1. Parent-child interactions

Multilingual speakers possess the ability to use whatever resource is available at their disposal when they need it depending on the context of interaction. They can draw from their available resources in different domains as required by the communicative situation (Dyers 2009; Blommaert 2010). The participants in this study displayed this in their interactions. Parent-child interactions featured different languages such as English, Nigerian Pidgin, and Yoruba. For those with English as a dominant language at home, this developed out of the need to integrate the children into their new society. Thus, parent-child interactions occurred mostly only in English though parents sometimes spoke their heritage language with one another. The participant reported not growing up in an English-dominant family herself but cites the context of South Africa as a factor influencing her choice of English as a dominant language at home. When asked the reason for her choice of English as the language of communication with her children, Iyi (parent participant from family 4) said,

> Well, English is a global language, but Yoruba is not and as they say, practice makes perfect, so I am trying to perfect our English.

She added that she is trying to make sure that she and her children do not retain Nigerian accents because she really would prefer not to be recognized as a Nigerian when she speaks.

> Abeg, *Happy, I no want wahala for this place wey I dey as you see me so*
>
> ('Happy, please I don't want any problems in this place that I live').
>
> I am trying to stay safe and avoid stigmatization here especially for my children.

From the excerpt above, it is notable that there are two main factors which influence this participant's language choice – her perception of the socio-economic value of English and the need for integration into her new society. For immigrants, knowing the 'global' language grants them access to economic opportunities and Iyi cited above seems to be positioning her children for this through the choice of English as the dominant language at home. According to the participant's statement above, her choice of English is motivated by the need to avoid stigmatization/stereotypes which may be associated with being an immigrant. Immigrants can be identified by their heritage language, while English is a neutral language which makes this a bit difficult. One consequence of such stereotypes can be discrimination or victimization and in severe cases, xenophobic violence which is common in South Africa (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, and Singh, 2004). For this participant, English as opposed to the heritage language is

not only a language of access but also a protective shield. Of course, the outcome of this can only lead to a possible case of language shift instead of maintenance, as the heritage language has clearly encountered a case of downscaling in the context of Cape Town.

Nevertheless, there were a few cases where a switch to Yoruba was observed regardless of English being the dominant language. In one of the families (family 2 – the Sha's) that formed part of the participant observation data, the parent communicated in Yoruba with the nine-year-old son whenever he was being scolded while Nigerian Pidgin was used during interactions that involved play. Both languages seem to hold different values and serve different functions to the speaker. When asked the reason for the switch to Yoruba in communication events such as scolding, the participant said he really did not know how to explain it for me to understand. According to him, it was just a natural thing that he had no control over as his brain and tongue automatically switched to Yoruba whenever he was upset with the child.  This seems to suggest that anger brings to the fore his ancestral affiliation and ethnic identity, Yoruba. This leads him to draw from his multilingual resource to express himself in the most comfortable way. This re-emphasizes the notion that multilinguals are able to perform multiple identities based on the context of language use and as the need arises (Stroud 2001).

In another English-dominant household (family 4 – the Iyi's), most parent-child interactions occurred in English. However, during one of my visits, I observed an encounter where the child was being scolded and the language used was Yoruba. Also, their private conversations occurred in Yoruba. I observed the use of Yoruba for such private conversations on two occasions, one when I was the only guest and the second when another guest was present. For these families, Yoruba can be described as a private language that is synonymous with family bond, a safety deposit box that keeps them, their identities, family culture safe and others out. Yoruba also seems to be prominent as the language of caution and discipline.

In other families where English was not the dominant language of interaction between parent/s and child/ren, Yoruba continued to play a fundamental role in their lives. Describing this important role Mae from family 3, expressed the following sentiments,

> I am happy that my children understand Yoruba because this English *dey tire me and as them sabi speak Yoruba so, e make my life easy I tell you. How I for take talk to them if them no understand my language? Na why I make sure say I speak the language to them when them dey small. So, as them dey learn English and isiXhosa or Afrikaans, them go dey learn Yoruba too*.

[I am happy that my children understand Yoruba because this English can be tiring, and their understanding of Yoruba makes my life easy I tell you. How would I have communicated with them if they did not understand my language? This is why I made sure I spoke the language to them when they were young. So, as they learn English and isiXhosa or Afrikaans, they will learn Yoruba too].

As indicated in the extract above, language can be a resource for disabling or enabling access in certain contexts. To this participant, Yoruba enables interaction with her children and by extension, a close relationship. Her limited knowledge of English does not provide access to the deep and meaningful relationship that Yoruba provides. A similar experience was evident in another family where Yoruba appeared to be a language used for deep conversations. Although English was the dominant language in this home, on one occasion during my visits, I noted the mother communicating with the eldest daughter in Yoruba and the conversation was mainly about her future and her relationship with God.

In another family (family 7 – the Jaz's), a communication between father and child that occurred in Yoruba was during one of their bonding sessions over a football game. That is the only time I observed him speak Yoruba with the son. The mother on the other hand, I noted, mainly used Yoruba to tease him playfully. She used common terms of endearment like *omo dada* ('good child'), *omo mi* ('my child') and *oko mi* ('my husband') frequently in their conversations, mainly during tasks instructions and after the completion of tasks. This act by the mother can also be considered as an expression of affection. Yoruba seems to be the language of affection in this family. It can be concluded that the emotional attachment that Yoruba parents have to their home language continues in its use for affectionate purposes with their children in the diaspora.

Conversely, one family (family 12 – the Jude's) though departed from what is described above. In this family, parent-child interaction can be described as a complex one. The father, Jude, speaks mostly Yoruba to the children while the mother, Lola, addresses the first child mainly in Yoruba but speaks Nigerian Pidgin and a bit of English to the second child. What is even more interesting is that both children have different proficiency levels in the language. The first child's level of proficiency is higher than the second child's, but it appears only the mother acknowledges this. The father's case highlights a preference for Yoruba over other languages as a means of communication. When asked his reason for communicating in Yoruba with the children regardless of their level of proficiency he said,

> Yoruba is my language. I can't go wrong with it. I want to say what is in my mind to my children. They understand and will understand better. For now, we're communicating.

For this participant, his main communication goal is to express himself with ease and Yoruba provides him with that opportunity. The mother's case, on the other hand, can be described as her attempt at acknowledging the children's individual abilities and using her multilingual resources to that effect.

### 4.4.2. Parent-parent interactions

According to the data collected and analysed, all the participants have Yoruba as the primary language of communication between parents. This refers to the participants with both parents in the family. Out of the total number of seven double-parent families, two used English in rare cases and two indicated a mix of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin when the circumstances required. Yoruba was the language of communication between parents even in English-dominant homes with the exception of one family. The implication of this is that the children in these families would have some exposure to Yoruba through their parent's interactions. Whether this is enough for language transfer to occur is a more complex matter, depending on other factors.

One factor responsible for this could be that the couples in this study share a common heritage language and it is expected that such people would communicate in that language. Nevertheless, this does not imply that the parents do not encounter other languages in other domains and these languages could be part of their repertoire. The case of Yoruba reported here is driven by what was deduced from the data which relates to language in the home domain. The selection of participants with a common home language was not done on purpose. Rather it is a common phenomenon in Nigeria for people to marry from the same ethnic group – even more common in the Yoruba ethnic group. Therefore, it should not be surprising this trend continues in the diaspora with all married couples that formed part of this study belonging to the Yoruba group. Although there is a high possibility one could find something that deviates from the norm, the participants I could access happened to be the norm.

### 4.4.3. Parent-friends interaction

This section considers the language of interaction in social groups beyond the family. The social network is one factor that influences language shift or maintenance in Gal's (1979) classic study. In other words, the language dominant in a social group can lead to maintenance

or shift. The frequency of use of a minority language among elders may determine its vitality in the linguistic repertoire of the next generation (Zhang 2010)). This premise influenced my decision to record the language practices of the participants during social interactions.

According to recorded data, participants were part of social groups that included Nigerians and non-Nigerians. However, the general group dynamic comprised mainly of Nigerians. Most of the participants generally associated with fellow Nigerians. During the participant observation period, most of the families I observed had friends that were also Nigerians. Although they associated with people outside their ethnic groups, their close friends were mostly Yoruba. The implication of this is that most of their interactions would involve Yoruba. One aspect that was of interest from my observation data was that Yoruba was the default language among other Yoruba speakers. Nigerian Pidgin was merely used as a lingua franca with other Nigerians who were not Yoruba speakers. One participant reported being a member of a Yoruba church.

> Researcher: What countries do your friends come from?
>
> Tisha: Most of my friends are Yoruba. I have some Igbo and Benin friends too but mostly Yoruba.
>
> Researcher: So, you speak Yoruba with them? I mean the Yoruba ones.
>
> Tisha: Yes, I speak Yoruba and Pidgin with the ones that are not Yoruba.
>
> Researcher: Do you attend Yoruba church?
>
> Tisha: Yes, I attend redeemed
>
> Researcher: What about movies? What kind of movies do you watch?
>
> Tisha: Ehhhh Yes o I watch Yoruba movies well well

As highlighted in the excerpt presented above, Tisha's social group interactions involve the use of Yoruba in most cases and Nigerian Pidgin in some cases. Her choice of entertainment and religious affiliation signals a strong presence of Yoruba in her language practices. Associating with a Yoruba church means she has good exposure to the language because these religious organisations conduct their activities in the Yoruba language. Apart from this, she also has the opportunity to interact in Yoruba with other members of the church who are also Yoruba speakers. Thus, Tisha's language practices or choices may lead to a maintenance of Yoruba in her social network provided it is a closed one.

It was also of interest to note that Yoruba was the language of social interactions even in English-dominant households. The parents interacted with their friends in Yoruba. During my

fieldwork, most of the house guests that visited were Yoruba speakers and thus, Yoruba was the preferred language of interaction. This seems to be expected of people who are 'typical' Yorubas of the first (migrating) generation as one participant (Tisha) phrased it during our interview. Elaborating further on what being a typical Yoruba implied she added,

> Because some of our Yoruba people when they go to a foreign land, instead of them to speak that language to their children, you understand? they'll be speaking English.

Tisha's statement suggests that maintaining Yoruba in an immigrant context qualifies an individual as a typical Yoruba. Most of my participants adhered to this expectation. They only communicated in Nigerian Pidgin or English with non-Yoruba speakers. What does this imply for the vitality of Yoruba in Cape Town?

### 4.4.4. Parent-extended family interactions

Another pattern of communication that was observed and documented was parent-extended family interactions but mainly with the extended families back in the participants' home country, Nigeria. Research has shown that such interactions have a huge role to play in the vitality of immigrant language maintenance. Relevant to this is Jacquemet's (2005) notion of 'transidiomatic practice' which relates to the different ways of speaking and languages adopted by immigrant groups in various communicative situations. This concept has been applied to communication in virtual contexts especially involving transnational communication with immigrants' relatives in their countries of origin. For instance, a language choice for a phone call between an immigrant and relatives back home, and factors influencing such language choice have implications for the heritage language/s of immigrants or transnationals.

The participants in this study also had to make language choices in the language situation described above. Analysis of data from participant observation suggests that conversations with relatives back home involved the use of Yoruba. Interestingly, households that had English as a dominant language used Yoruba when they had to communicate with relatives in Nigeria. In one such English-dominant household (family 4 – the Iyi's), I observed Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin being spoken only on two occasions. The main language in this household was English. Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin seemed to be used occasionally. One occasion was during a phone call conversation between the mother and a relative back in Nigeria where she said to the children, *ewa ki brother mi* ('come and greet my brother'). The children's responses showed they had some understanding of what the mother said. My deduction is that it was a common practice between parents and children in this household; hence, the shared understanding.

One factor responsible for the choice of Yoruba as the language of communication between the participants and their family member/s is the routine arising from shared sociocultural norms. It can also be linked to the high value that Yoruba culture places on the knowledge of Yoruba as it allows speakers to engage in meaningful conversations on a deeper contextual level. As with most African languages, Yoruba requires speakers to rely on shared contextual and cultural knowledge. It is also a sign of respect communicating in the language with fellow Yoruba speakers especially, the elders as one participant highlighted during our interactions.

Another factor could be linked to the fact that Yoruba is one of the national languages of Nigeria. As a result, it is widely recognised and accepted, and attitudes towards the languages are generally positive among speakers. It is common practice to see speakers of a prestigious or dominant language, speak it in various domains. Also, speakers of dominant languages tend to pride themselves in their ability to speak the language and that sometimes likely translates to a frequency of use. First-generation immigrants tend to place value on culture and cultural routines among themselves, but some hold a different orientation related to practicality and economic opportunities regarding their children in the diaspora.

### 4.4.5. Child-parent interactions

Child-parent interactions are a crux of language transmission, especially children's responses to their parents' efforts at language transfer. My main interest was in how willing the children were to acquire their parents' languages. Some questions that guided my inquiry were, are the children willing agents? Are they forced to acquire the languages? Basically, their general disposition towards acquiring their heritage languages regardless of not being in the context of Nigeria where those languages are dominant and what factors influenced these dispositions. Subsequent paragraphs discuss the language practices of the children.

Child-parent interactions did not follow a symmetrical pattern. That is, children did not always respond in the languages the parents used. For example, the fact that a parent uses Yoruba did not imply that the children responded in the same language. In the English-dominant households mentioned above, children unsurprisingly used English in communicating with their parents. This was the pattern of communication between children and parents regardless of the children's proficiency levels in either Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin.

Nevertheless, interesting dynamics emerged in households where Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin were dominant. Most of the children responded to Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in English. In one of the families (family 3 – the AD's), I noted that although the child knew a few Yoruba

words, most of his responses or communication with the mother involved the use of English. He used a few Yoruba words on extremely rare occasions during my observation period. In another family with a similar pattern, the child's reason for responding in English - as he told me - was because he did not feel confident enough speaking Yoruba. He reported being concerned about his level of proficiency.

As a result of this concern, he avoided speaking the language often. As this study has established, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin are minority languages in Cape Town. This implies that the children are likely to encounter the languages in fewer domains (possibly only at home) as opposed to the dominant languages. It also implies that the dominant language in their repertoire would be the dominant languages spoken in Cape Town. Therefore, this could be a factor influencing their preference for English as the language of communication with their parents regardless of their proficiency levels in their heritage languages.

However, some communication between child and parent involving Yoruba did occur. In one of the Yoruba dominant homes (family 9 – the Wum's), the language of communication between mother and child was reciprocal. The child communicated with the mother in Yoruba. Although she has a sophisticated level of proficiency in English, Yoruba was mainly used in communication with the mother. It appears this was mainly to accommodate the mother who was more comfortable conversing in her heritage language than English or Nigerian Pidgin because of her basic level of proficiency in English. In my data from the interviews (family 10 – the Tisha's), a similar case was identified. The interview was conducted in English at the participant's request, but the child served as an interpreter in some cases where it was assumed the parent needed elaboration. The elaboration was done in Yoruba and the parent in turn responded to the interview questions using a mix of Yoruba and English in some cases.

The children's language choices were thus influenced by several factors. One factor is language attitude. Participants who responded to the parents' communication in Yoruba seemed to hold positive attitudes towards it. Such children were enthusiastic about learning and speaking Yoruba. Another factor may be limited proficiency in the language. Some of the participants who responded to their parents in English had limited proficiency in Yoruba. In some cases, they understood the language but could not speak it. This limited knowledge may have led to a lack of confidence; hence, the need to respond in English

### 4.4.6. Child-child/friend interactions

The language/s of interaction between children was also important to this study because these types of interactions would also indicate the frequency of use and how much of their heritage languages were being retained by the children. As previously stated, not all families consisted of more than 1 child. Some families had only 1 child while others had up to 3 children. As a result, interactions between children could not be observed in all families. Therefore, the focus of this discussion will be on the pattern of communication observed between siblings and friends in families with more than one child.

In the English dominant families, the language of communication between children was also mainly English. During my fieldwork in one such home, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin were barely spoken by children. However, I observed an interesting shift during one of my visits. Although most of their general communication involved the use of English, they were observed speaking Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin on two occasions during playtime. Their play with friends also involved the use of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. One reason for this could be because the games they played involved Yoruba cultural plays, in which the children played particular roles. It was interesting how they switched back to English after such games, thus framing English as the dominant language and Yoruba in cultural roles and routines.

The case was different in flexible households with Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin as the language of communication. In one such family (The Jude's), the children spoke English and Yoruba among themselves. In another family (The Tiser's), languages such as Yoruba, English and a few words of isiXhosa featured in communication involving children. In another family (The Wum's from family 9), the children communicate with each other using a mix of Nigerian Pidgin, English, and isiXhosa.

> *Yiza make I show you* and you see the flower
>
> 'Come let me show you the flower'

The above statement was an expression I recorded from one of the children's plays. Their speech also frequently featured common isiXhosa expressions of excitement, shock or surprise like *haibo*, *eish*, *masambe* ('let's go') which must have been acquired from their interactions with their South African classmates or neighbours. These children have acquired basic expressions from isiXhosa, and Nigerian Pidgin, which they incorporate as linguistic resources in their daily interactions involving language. They do not use them productively in the sense of showing knowledge and generalisation of the grammatical morphemes involved (*ma-* 'let us' *-e* verb ending for subjunctive, *hamb-* verb root for 'to go'). The term translanguaging

might well apply here, denoting the incorporation of terms from different antecedent[7] languages (Garcia, 2009). In time, should the children use isiXhosa grammar productively this could lead to regular hybridity or code-switching involving not just a fairly developed English and Pidgin (as above) but also a fairly developed isiXhosa. The current data shows English and Pidgin as matrix languages, into which some phrases indicative of engagement with isiXhosa are incorporated.

### 4.4.7. Child-extended family interaction

The language of communication between children and their extended family was also recorded. The study indicates that the children generally attempted to communicate in Yoruba with their relatives in Nigeria. Even in English-dominant homes, there seemed to be an automatic switch to Yoruba whenever there was a need to communicate with extended family members via cell phone. The children who were not so fluent in Yoruba knew just enough words to respond in such cases. These conversations were often informal greetings that did not require advanced knowledge of Yoruba. As highlighted above, the reason for nevertheless trying to connect via Yoruba is because speaking to elders in their language signals respect and a good upbringing. Therefore, communication with relatives was an important opportunity for parents to showcase their parenting skills and demonstrate that the children have had some exposure to their (ancestral) heritage language. However, it does not seem likely that some of these children use enough Yoruba – even at an elementary level – to ensure generational transfer in Cape Town.

### 4.5. Participants' responses to the local languages of SA

In this section, I discuss the participants' responses to the local languages present in their communities – one of the themes which emerged from my data. My interest was not only in their level of exposure to the languages but also, in their willingness to learn and equally speak these languages in a variety of domains. As highlighted by Blommaert and Backus (2011:2), "in a context of superdiversity, mobile subjects engage with a broad variety of groups, networks and communities, and their language resources are consequently learned through a wide variety of trajectories, tactics and technologies, ranging from fully formal language learning to entirely informal 'encounters' with language." Although people are exposed to language, they also must be motivated and willing to learn it either informally or formally.

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[7] Credit to Rajend Mesthrie for the term, who does not believe the dogma that "languages do not exist".

In the case of immigrants, learning the local language is considered a vital part of integrating into their new society. The importance of knowing the local language is illuminated in some immigration policies which require immigrants to have some knowledge of the language prior to migration. Most countries like Germany, Italy, Canada and so on, require potential immigrants to take a language test as part of the visa requirement. This indicates how fundamental learning or knowing the language is for migration and subsequent integration purposes.

### 4.5.1. Factors influencing participants' responses

Learning or acquiring a new language as an adult is in most cases influenced by different factors. Also, being in an environment where one's language is not sufficient to achieve a communication goal forces an individual into learning the language that will enable him/her to access available resources (Blommaert et al., 2005b). As Blommaert et al (2005b) argue, a language can be a disabling or enabling factor based on the environment a person finds himself. Also, Fasold (1990) notes that for multilinguals, multilingualism is an interactional resource. For instance, a Yoruba speaker who does not have contact with other Yoruba speakers will usually find Yoruba disabling in Italy and vice versa. This motivates such individuals to learn the dominant language in their environments to avoid facing exclusion. I identified these motivations in my study and discuss more on them in subsequent paragraphs.

### 4.5.1.1. Convergence as a survival strategy

As discussed in chapter two, convergence as a concept is an element of communication accommodation theory (CAT) which relates to the way in which speakers adapt their speech to accommodate their interlocutors. Although Giles et. al.'s (1977) speech/communication accommodation theory has mainly been used to describe dialect/accent adaptation and not much reference has been made to it in language maintenance research, I consider it relevant. Based on Soliz & Giles' (2014) description of convergence as a strategy to adapt communication behaviours to those similar to the interlocutors, I argue that this concept can be generalised. Thus, an individual attempting to learn a dominant language of his/her community as an immigrant is equally adapting to accommodate the interlocutor – host. Learning the languages of their interlocutors who would predominantly be South Africans can be considered an adaptation/convergence.

Data from this study indicate that participants espoused different accommodation strategies to accommodate their interlocutors – mainly the locals. Responding to the question about why

English was a language of choice over Nigerian languages, one participant (Iyi from family 4) said her choice was influenced by the fact that those languages are not as useful in Cape Town. She added that she was trying to ensure that she and her children do not retain Nigerian accents because she really would prefer not to be recognized as Nigerian when she speaks. In her words,

> *Abeg, Happy, I no want wahala for this place wey I dey as you see me so* ('Please Happy I don't want problems in this place as you know'). I am trying to stay safe and avoid stigmatization here, especially for my children.

In relation to accent, the Nigerian accent can be distinguished by how a word like Durban [ˈdɜːrbən] is articulated as [ˈdôban] by Nigerians as opposed to South Africans whose speech would feature the former articulation. It is linguistic features such as this that distinguish a Nigerian accent from a South African accent and often make Nigerians stand out as foreigners.

Echoing similar sentiments, other participants had the following to say:

> Owa (parent participant from family 5): I like speaking my language, but I want my children to learn English because Yoruba is not a language that is that useful here in Cape Town. I am even encouraging them to learn isiXhosa or Afrikaans too because how will they get jobs when they grow up and we still find ourselves here? I know our language is good but how far can it take us in a foreign country with all the xenophobia here?

She further explained that integration is as important to her as her identity is too.

> Sini (parent participant from family 6): Yoruba is my language yes, but the world is a global village and, in this country, now, Yoruba is not really that useful. Let my children speak English and even learn French too. In fact, those languages take you to more places than our African languages. Our African languages are only important in our immediate environment. I cannot really force them to keep speaking Yoruba. I understand English and we communicate in that, they understand Yoruba too and that is enough cultural transfer. Abi what can I say? Languages are important but some languages are more superior and unfortunately, our African languages don't have much to offer beyond the home.

> Allie (Parent participant from family 14): Yes o. For now, they are in South Africa, and this is the right time for them [= the children] to learn the local languages here. We understand English, so we will speak English with them and maybe they can teach us

the local South African languages or be our interpreters since we do business with South Africans. They will learn Yoruba later.

Yoz (parent participant from family 14): *Also, you know say we dey stay for location. Knowing the local languages na him be our security. You sef you know as this place be and to be foreigner no be easy work* ('also, you know we live in the townships. Knowing the local language is our security. You know how this place is with regards to foreigners'). You have to mix with them and not isolate yourself because that is what will save you when *wahala* ('problem') starts. *Happy, you know wetin I mean make I no talk too much. Me sef dey put my ear for ground dey learn Afrikaans and that one no mean say I go forget my culture* ('Happy, you understand what I mean so I don't need to explain further. I, too, I have my ears on the ground learning Afrikaans and that does not necessarily imply I will forget my culture'). But we have to survive here with sense.

As evident in the participants' responses presented above, convergence appears to be a survival strategy for these participants. Knowledge of and proficiency in South African languages offers them security. The participant's fear of being stigmatised or marginalised based on her Nigerian accent is not far-fetched as it is a clear marker of identity and foreigners have been known to suffer violent attacks based on their accents/identity (see Harris 2002). Besides the need to avoid extreme cases of xenophobia, there is also a genuine fear of being discriminated against based on accents. For example, accent stigmatization or linguistic profiling, a term coined by John Baugh (2005, 2016) is a real problem that deprives individuals of equitable access to available opportunities.

Also, the discussion in the excerpt above suggests that the value of Yoruba has depreciated in Cape Town in comparison to a global language like English. These participants believe that transferring the language to their children will not necessarily add value to their lives as immigrants in Cape Town. According to their perspectives, languages like English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa prove to be more valuable than Yoruba. For one, knowing these languages will give them access to socio-economic opportunities which such knowledge/skill offers in Cape Town. This places immigrants in the difficult position of choosing between allegiance to their country of origin or their host countries. They are constantly having to negotiate their insider/outsider identities through these language choices. What does this mean for the vitality of their languages in the diaspora? In the case of convergence, evidence points to a likely

scenario of language shift as there seems to be no sufficient motivation to transfer the language to their children based on the accounts of these participants.

### 4.5.1.2. Divergence as a form of national loyalty and counter-survival strategy

Another concept linked to CAT is divergence which is a contrast to convergence. With divergence, individuals typically move away from the speech style or language of others as a way of signalling social distance. Instead of adapting their speech to that of their interlocutors, they maintain theirs, thus not accommodating them. A possible outcome of this strategy would likely be language maintenance. This accommodation strategy is also used to keep people out of a closed social network. Individuals who adopt divergence as a strategy maintain their accent, style of speech, and language regardless of their interlocutors.

Although convergence was mainly the case, some cases of divergence were also recorded. Some participants preferred to maintain their languages and accents in different language contexts. Stating why this was essential, participants had the following to say,

> Tisha (parent participant from family 10): You know when you have children, no matter any country you go, don't forget your language. You understand? You know some countries, riot can start, you understand? Maybe they already get you the mother ['maybe you as the mother has already been captured']. You can use your language to tell your children, *ema salo o* ('run for your life') *e salo Femi. Oti mu mi o* ('run for your life, I have been captured'). I know my God will guide and protect you anywhere you *dey* ('are'), you understand? But if you don't teach them, they'll capture all the family, they're gone.

> Wum (parent participant from family 9): *I really want my children to speak Yoruba and pidgin na why I dey speak the language to them. Ah they must hear am by force o. I no fit get pikin wey no know my language and them be man on top the matter. No, they have to learn it. Na their identity! Na our identity and they must know. Very soon I go send them go niaja make them go stay there small play with other children. That way, them go learn the language quick quick*

> 'That is why I speak the language to them. Ah, they must understand the language by all means. I cannot have a child that does not understand and speak my language and they are men too. It is their identity! It is our identity, and they must know. Very soon

I will send them back to Nigeria to live there for a bit and play with other children. That way, they will learn the language quickly.'

For Tisha above, continuing to speak Yoruba in Cape Town can be considered a form of protection for her and her family from unforeseen danger that they may possibly encounter as immigrants. She implies that not knowing the language in circumstances such as this leaves them in a vulnerable state should they encounter life-threatening situations. For Nigerian immigrants like this, Yoruba can be considered a protective shield and maintaining it is important for their safety and survival as immigrants in a foreign country away from home. The second participant shares a similar sentiment although he leans more towards identity. Identifying as a Nigerian is important to this participant. Therefore, Yoruba is the dominant language in their home and by extension in their linguistic repertoire. The participant regards the language as an important part of his and his family's identities. Therefore, their divergence is a signifier of ethnic loyalty and affiliation with their home country.

## 4.6. Summary of chapter

From the discussion above, it is evident that the language practices and choices of the participants in this study display considerable variation. While most families prefer the use of English over other Nigerian languages, a few others choose to continue with their heritage languages regardless of the perceived discrimination this may cause them. The discussion also points out that the language of communication between participants and their relatives remains the heritage language even in English-dominant households. The reason behind this, as highlighted in the discussion, seems to be cultural relevance or shared cultural beliefs about the importance of Yoruba in family interactions, especially with elderly people.

In addition, the discussion also revealed that some participants resist affiliation to their home country, Nigeria by aligning with South African languages and accents because they believe that these languages are more valuable in their host country and hold more prestige. Although Mufwene (2003: 26) argues that lack of pride in one's language hardly seems to be the only reason for language shift, the data in this study indicates otherwise. As discussed above, parents who held the position that their heritage languages were not as useful in Cape Town expressed no desire to transfer the language to their children. Their lack of desire to transfer the language to their children may be interpreted as a lack of pride in their heritage language. On the hand, those who preferred to be affiliated with their heritage language attributed a sense of pride to being identified as Nigerian. Mufwene's (2003) position may apply in certain contexts and the

case described in this thesis applied to the Nigerian immigrants in this study. An examination of language vitality as discussed above indicates that prestige plays a role in the language choices of some immigrants.

Immigrants in this study hold the ideology that the local languages in their host country would give them access to economic opportunities. It also protects them from possible discrimination and victimization associated with living as immigrants in Cape Town. Most of the participants' households have English as the dominant language of communication between parents and children because it is considered important in their businesses, employment, education and communication in general.

Perceptions such as these support Bourdieu's (1991:14) idea of symbolic and cultural capital which relates to the languages of individuals becoming a cultural capital which may be converted into economic capital. knowledge of South African languages dominant in Cape Town can be converted to economic capital if used by immigrants to access economic opportunities through employment or business growth. These language choices that immigrants have to make have implications for the vitality of their heritage languages. The chapter that follows discusses some of these implications.

# Chapter 5

## The vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin among Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town

## 5.1. Introduction

This study set out to explore the language practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town to determine how their attempt at integration into their new society impacts the vitality of their home languages in the diaspora. This chapter discusses how integration attempts and insider/outsider social positioning influence the language practices of Nigerians in Cape Town and the impact thereof on their home language/s. Analysis of data reveals that factors such as the linguistic complexity of Cape Town, parent-child interaction, and attitudes held towards Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin play essential roles in the vitality of these languages in relation to language shift or maintenance.

This chapter drawing on the themes identified from the data, addresses some of the research questions, how does the social positioning of self as an outsider and insider influence the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages? My analysis of the data considered how the factors already mentioned above lead to the maintenance of immigrants' languages or a shift to the local languages of their new society. It also considered the role of immigrant parents in maintaining their languages through intergenerational language transmission and subsequently, the children's reception of the language transfer. Maintaining a language requires efforts on the parts of the speakers. Speakers of the language need to be active agents in the maintenance of their languages.

As indicated in the methodology chapter, this study followed a qualitative approach drawing on thematic analysis for data analysis. The main aim of qualitative analysis is to unravel the why factors available in a database by providing a dual interpretation of the data from the perspectives of both the participants and the researchers (Wolcott, 1994). The thematic analysis employed in this study followed an inductive approach where themes were derived from the data set. Based on the responses received from participants and patterns observed during the observation phase of the data collection, certain themes were identified. I shall draw on these themes to address the initial research questions of the study which were as follows:

- How does migrating to a new society influence Nigerian immigrants' linguistic practices/choices?

- What strategies do Nigerian immigrants use to maintain Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town?

- What new innovations emerge in their linguistic practices involving these languages?

- How does parent-child interaction in the language lead to language maintenance or shift?

- How do participants' language attitudes contribute to language maintenance or language shift?

As highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006), a researcher utilizing thematic analysis as an analytical framework may apply "both narrative descriptions and representative data extracts (e.g. direct quotations from participants), the analysis should describe the data and provide an argument for why the researcher's explanation richly and fully answers the research question" (Kiger and Varpio, 2020: 8). Following this, the discussion will draw on participants' responses and possible interpretations of such responses. Since this study follows a post-positive approach to data analysis, data analysis will provide evidence for any interpretation generated (Namey and Trotter, 2017: 25). The discussion will attempt to present participants' realities in a manner that reflects possible nuances in the information provided. Some of the data already presented in chapter 4 above may be drawn on for further discussion where necessary.

## 5.2. The influence of a new society on Nigerian immigrants' linguistics practices

The first theme identified from the data that begins my discussion is "the influence of a new society on Nigerian immigrants' linguistic practices or choices". South Africa is a multilingual society and as such, immigrants and their languages being in contact with the different languages of South Africa as they navigate their new society is a norm rather than an unusual occurrence. As shown in chapter 4, immigrants interact with the locals through different activities. As a result, these interactions would possibly have some influence on their linguistic practices. To understand this level of influence, the participants were asked relevant questions in the interview, and during the participant observation, their linguistic practices were observed to identify possible influences. Some of the questions asked in the interview were the following,

- What is your occupation? (Asked to understand their level of engagement with the locals.)

- What languages do you speak at home and with whom?

- What languages do you use to communicate with your wards and why?

- As a parent, do you think it is important for your children to know and speak your language? Why?

- How has living in Cape Town affected your ability to speak your home language? How has it impacted your fluency level in the language?

In addition to this, the linguistic practices of the participants were observed. The language practices of the participants showed similarities and little variation. Domains of language use also influenced language choices. As typical multilinguals, participants moved in and out of different language contact situations. In the home domain, most participants had English as the dominant language of communication. In a few exceptional cases, Yoruba was the dominant language.

In English-dominant homes, the language of communication with children was also English while communication between parents was predominantly in Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin. Some of the explanations the participants provided for having English as a dominant language of communication, especially with the children were linked to the socioeconomic power of English as the language of access in Cape Town. Their geographical space, Cape Town, influences their language choices. The implication of this is that immigrant languages may not be transferred to the next generation since the children may not have enough exposure for adequate transfer and retention to occur. Thus, the maintenance of immigrants' heritage languages may be a challenge.

In the few homes where Yoruba was dominant, the children still conversed more frequently in English. This indicates that although parents are attempting to transfer the language to their children by communicating in it, the children seem to be resisting this possible transfer through their preference for English. This is mainly because their friends are English speakers, and they communicate in the language during play and at school. In addition, some of the children resist because of their proficiency level in the language which leads to a lack of confidence (discussed in the previous chapter).

In the interview data, participants' responses to the questions above showed great similarities. Their responses to the question regarding their occupation indicated that most of the participants in this study were economic immigrants with some level of post-secondary school qualification. These responses are provided below:

Participant 1(Tisha from family 10): I am a fashion designer.

….

Participant 2 (Owa from family 5): Entrepreneur (self-employed)

….

Participant 3 (Tesla from family 1): I am a hairstylist (self-employed)

….

Participant 4 (Sha from family 2): I am a businessman.

….

Participant 5 (AD from family 3): I am a businessman. I have a hardware store and I drive for Uber and Bolt.

….

Allie (from family 14): I also have a diploma from Nigeria, and I am a hairstylist here, but I support my husband's shop too.

As the excerpt above indicates, most of the participants are entrepreneurs who own their individual businesses which include hardware sales, fashion design, hair styling, taxi services, and other service providers. Their nature of businesses allows interaction with different people including South Africans. Thus, they would be exposed to the local and other languages in South Africa. As mentioned above, the aim of this interview question was to understand the participants' level of engagement with the locals. This understanding will reveal how their exposure to local languages through such interactions influences their language practices. Trade exchanges between these participants and their clients are likely to equally lead to language contact where both parties encounter the languages, accents, registers, and cultures of one another. This is reflected in the discussion of subsequent questions.

To further unravel the influence of migration on participants' language practices, they were asked what languages they speak at home and with whom. Again, responses were similar here. The parent participants reported speaking English with their children, and Yoruba among themselves as parents and with friends. While the children reported speaking English among themselves and Nigerian Pidgin or Yoruba in response to the parents when the need arises. I use "in response" here to signal that they do not initiate communication with the parents in

Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin but only respond in these languages when the parents initiate such communications. Responding to the question, which language/s do you use to communicate with your wards and why? some participants had the following to say,

> AD: *Na Yoruba and English we dey speak with them but my children no too hear Yoruba like that. Sometimes we go just mix everything*

> ['We speak Yoruba and English, but my children don't really understand Yoruba. Sometimes we mix all the languages.']

> The mother is trying to teach them Yoruba small, but I think we prefer they learn South African languages for now because they are here. They'll learn our language later.

> ….

> Mae: Yes o. For now, they are in South Africa, and this is the right time for them to learn the local languages here. We understand English so we will speak English with them and maybe they can teach us the local South African languages or be our interpreters since we do business with South Africans. They will learn Yoruba later.

The participants cited above reported having Yoruba as a dominant language in their different houses while growing up in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the case seems to be different in their homes now in Cape Town. It appears that the circumstances in their new society compel them to raise their children differently from how they were raised. Although these participants speak Yoruba to their children, they prefer that the children acquire English and other local languages of South Africa, their new home. One reason given for this was that the children can serve as interpreters to facilitate a smoother transaction between them and their clients.

The knowledge of the languages seems essential for the growth or success of their businesses. This is one example of how migration influences the language practices of immigrants. In this case, English and other South African languages have replaced Yoruba as the dominant language in the home of these immigrants. The participants have also expanded their linguistics repertoires with the addition of these new language resources. This has some consequences for the maintenance of immigrant heritage language/s in Cape Town as such language practices could lead to a shift from Yoruba to English in the next generation – the children.

The case above represents the situation of most of the participants in this study as the same pattern was observed in other families. Out of the 5 families interviewed, 4 reported using

English to communicate with their children. Only 1 participant's experience differed. In this family, Yoruba was the dominant language and the language of communication between parent and child. The extract below is the parent's response to the preceding question,

> Tisha: Yeah, even *sef*[8] me and my daughter we always speak Yoruba. When me and my daughter are speaking the language people are always like *"you them born you here or"*? Were you born here? I say, "no, we come from Nigeria to here". Ehn she did well, she can speak. People always imagine and say, "you're trying *o*[9]". You know why they are surprised? Because some of our Yoruba people when they go to a foreign land, instead of them to speak that language to their children, you understand? they'll be speaking English.

During my brief observation period with this family, I observed a manifestation of her report in the excerpt above. The parent's communication with the child was in Yoruba. Although our interview was in English and Nigerian Pidgin, it was interesting to see the participant switch to mainly Yoruba at every interaction with the child and switch back to English with me. The child speaks English fluently and the mother can communicate in English yet chooses to communicate with the child in Yoruba. As may be deduced in the above extract, she seems proud of the fact that she can communicate with the child in Yoruba, and her criticism of those who choose English reflects her strong position on the importance of continuing to use one's heritage language in the diaspora and transferring it to the next generation (children). To emphasize her position she added,

> Yes, your children are supposed to know your culture.

Culture, in this case, encompasses the language too. The most likely outcome of a case such as that of this participant is the maintenance of Yoruba even beyond the present child's generation.

Another question that was relevant to the understanding of the vitality of immigrant home languages in Cape Town asked in my study was, "As a parent, do you think it is important for your children to know and speak your language?" "Why?" Participants also had similar answers to this question although some of their actions contrasted with their responses. In

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[8] An informal expression used as fillers or emphatic marker added to the statements. It is also used as a tag question. Based on my knowledge as a Nigerian, it has multiple functions. It may be used as filler to fill in words, to express displeasure, or to tease. The word is common in Nigerian Pidgin but also present in Yoruba.
[9] This is commonly used for emphasis.

certain instances, actions did not match what was reported. For instance, there were parents who said they believed it was important for their children to know their languages but gave preference to English over Yoruba as the language of communication in the home domain. The extracts below are some of the responses derived from the question above.

> Tisha (from family 10): Yes, your children are supposed to know your culture. In Yoruba, some other families, like my family we have our tradition. Like one of my friends, she didn't know that in her husband's tradition, you can't cook food with salt for the mother of the baby. If you do that the baby will die. That my friend didn't know, and she was given food with salt. The baby died that night. You see why it's important to know your culture and transfer it to your children.
>
> …..
>
> Trace (from family 11): Yes, I believe it is good for every parent to teach their children their mother tongue, not just my mother tongue, I would love my son to be able to speak as many languages as possible.
>
> …….
>
> Wum (from family 9): Yes, o I really want my child to speak Yoruba o.
>
> ………
>
> Yoz (from family 14): Uhm *na* ('it's') part of their heritage so they should know it. But right now, they are in Cape Town. I believe they will still pick up Yoruba later.

One participant out of all interviewed had no response to the question. As seen in the above extract, all participants said it was important to transfer their home languages to their children. They believed that the language was an important aspect of their culture/ethnic identity which the children should rightfully be exposed to. Nonetheless, only Tisha above was observed actively speaking Yoruba to the child by choosing it as the language of communication at home. This could potentially necessitate language transfer since the child is exposed to the language through such communication. The other participants either used English, Nigerian Pidgin, and Yoruba or just English to communicate with the children. When asked their reason for this, a similar explanation as provided by Yoz was given. They believed Yoruba was not as useful to the children in Cape Town as English. Some stated that the children could always learn their heritage languages as an additional language at a later stage of their lives. In fact, arguing why the children should learn Yoruba later, one participant (Tiser – from family 8) said:

> Well, it's for their safety here and we have Yoruba speakers in Nigeria so they can promote it from there. Those of us outside really cannot do much from here.

This participant seems to think that promoting or maintaining Yoruba in Cape Town is not as feasible because knowing the local languages is essential for security purposes as immigrants. Although the issue of security is not a common theme in immigrants' language vitality literature, it seems to be peculiar to South Africa. It is present in research conducted in South Africa as evident in the works of Nchang (2018), Mbong (2010), Mesthrie, Nchang and Onwukwe (2022). All of these scholars report on the issue of security influencing the language practices of immigrants in their study. A possible factor responsible for this seems to be the frequent xenophobic violence that breaks out frequently in South Africa. Immigrants who accept the understandable position held by Tiser above pay a high price for it – namely the gradual loss of their heritage language and by extension, culture. Perceptions such as this - as the data shows - lead to language practices detracting from the maintenance of heritage languages.

To further understand how participants' language practices impact the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town, a question relating to the influence of mobility on their linguistic practices was asked. Most participants indicated they still maintained a good level of proficiency while a few reported a slight loss in the language due to not using it as frequently as they would if it were a dominant language. The extract below shows some participants' responses to the question, how has living in Cape Town affected your ability to speak your home language?

> Tisha (parent participant from family 10): Never, I can't forget it!
>
> ....
>
> Rex (child participant from family 10): I speak Yoruba very well but sometimes when I am speaking very fast and deep into the conversation because I speak very fast, I mix up the words. But my Yoruba is still quite good.
>
> ....
>
> Tesla (parent participant from family 1): No, it hasn't affected my ability to speak my home language fluently. I am still able to speak it very well.
>
> ....
>
> Tos (parent participant from family 12): *Yoruba ti mo nsu ni Cape Town yi? No o! Affect*

*ke! Iro ni o!*

'This Yoruba that I am speaking in Cape Town? No o, it's a lie o'.

Me and my husband speak Yoruba at home so it's difficult to lose it. Even around Mowbray here, I have other Nigerians that speak Yoruba and pidgin too. We speak at home and with other Nigerians so forgetting it is hard.

….

Jude (parent participant from family 12): *Na true she talk. How I wan take forget my own language*? That cannot happen. *Except say you wan form like some of our brothers say you no be Nigerian. Sha I no judge them. Na them no why them dey hide their identity because na jungle we dey.*

'She is speaking the truth. How will I forget my own language? That cannot happen. Except you want to pretend like some of our brothers that you are not Nigerian. Anyway, I don't judge them. They have their personal reasons for hiding their identity because we are in the jungle'.

….

Tess (parent participant from family 13): I am still fluent.

….

Yoz (parent participant from family 14): You know you can only take me out of home but not take home out of me. I am fully Yoruba and whether I live in the moon o, I can never forget or leave my language. I am still fluent. Me and my wife we speak it at home.

….

Allie (parent participant from family 14): Yes, I am still fluent in the language and haven't forgotten. I have Yoruba friends in Cape Town. I also communicate with my people back home in Yoruba.

As evident in the except presented above, the consensus seems to be that mobility has not had much negative influence on immigrants' knowledge of their heritage languages. Apart from one participant[10] who reported mixing up a few words, most of them have retained a good level of proficiency in Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin regardless of it being a minority language in Cape Town. One factor responsible for this could be because they maintain a strong social network

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[10] To put this in context, this participant is younger compared to the others in the extract above, is a minor in primary school, and probably has more interaction with the locals than others. Although the information provided in the data as an explanation for mixing up words is because of rapid speech, based on the context I have provided, my deduction is that another possible reason could be frequent interaction with the locals and age.

which comprises of fellow Nigerian immigrants. As also indicated above, besides speaking the language among themselves as a family, they speak with their relatives back in their home country too. As a result, the language is being maintained in this domain and through this language practice.

## 5.3. Strategies employed to maintain Nigerian immigrants' heritage languages in Cape Town

Another theme that was identified in this project was the strategies that immigrants employ to maintain their home languages if maintenance occurred. As highlighted by Dyers (2000), some speakers employ certain strategies to maintain their languages in the face of a more dominant language. In this study, participants were not left out in this regard. To explore such strategies, I examined their language practices involving the use of either Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin. I also noted some of the activities they were engaged in that promoted the use of or exposure to these languages to determine how these activities could be strategies for language maintenance. For example, looking for clues that indicated they maintained regular communication with relatives in their home countries, are deeply immersed in the culture regardless of living in a different society, if they prayed in the language, watched television programs in the language, and listened to songs in the language was essential to my inquiry. My interest was in how much of their daily activities revolved around or involved their home languages.

According to participants' personal reports, they all generally engaged in at least one activity that exposes them to their home languages. Some of such activities include attending Nigerian churches, listening to Nigerian music, watching Nigerian movies, attending Nigerian festivities, speaking Yoruba with friends and relatives, and praying in Yoruba. For this section, I will break down the discussion of what the data analysis signals in two ways. First, I discuss the data from the participant observation. The next discussion draws on data from the interviews. The choice to break down the discussion in this manner is to prevent any confusion.

Concerning strategies employed by participants to maintain their home languages in Cape Town as found in the observation data, I noted the following experiences,

> The Wum's (family 9): Conversation with family back home was mainly done in Yoruba. The parent belongs to a strong social network of Nigerians who are Yoruba speakers, therefore, communicate in the language frequently. Entertainment such as music and television shows were also mainly in Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. She attends a Nigerian

church with mainly Yoruba speakers, but Nigerian Pidgin is also present. Church proceedings are officiated in Yoruba, Nigerian Pidgin, and English.

………

The Iyi's (Family 4): Yoruba is used to communicate with extended family back in Nigeria. It is used in parent-parent interaction, and with children. In the parents' social group with friends, they speak Yoruba; therefore, the language is quite salient in their lives. The family was observed watching Nigerian movies with Yoruba as the language. Their music choices included mostly Nigerian music with a mix of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin.

………

The Trace's (family 11): The parent's conversation with family back home involved Yoruba. Yoruba was also the language of interaction with friends. Entertainment that involves music and movies also features Yoruba languages.

……….

The Tu's (family 13): The conversation with family back in Nigeria happened in Yoruba. They speak more English in the home domain. They watched Yoruba movies, played Yoruba games, and listened to Yoruba music. The children also spoke Yoruba with their relatives back home.

…………

The Sha's (family 2): Parents' conversation with family back in Nigeria involved Yoruba. They speak more English in the home domain. The couple speaks Yoruba with each other, irrespective of the presence or absence of the child. They attend a Nigerian church and socialize with mostly Nigerians.

The extracts presented above are representative of the whole data set from the participant observation. The other families not included shared similar experiences to the ones presented above. A common theme emerging from the data as presented in the extract above is that most of these participants maintain a strong Yoruba social network including those in English-dominant homes. Although they prefer to raise their children in English, they are still socio-culturally involved with their home country in one way or the other.

In relation to the interview data, participants were asked certain questions to understand how their experiences affect the vitality of their home languages. Below is an extract from one of such interviews.

Researcher: What countries do your friends come from?

Tisha: Most of my friends are Nigerians and Yoruba. I have some Igbo and Benin friends too but mostly Yoruba.

Researcher: So, you speak Yoruba with them? I mean the Yoruba ones.

Tisha: Yes, I speak Yoruba and Pidgin with the ones that are not Yoruba.

Researcher: Do you attend Yoruba church?

Tisha: Yes, I attend "Redeem"

Researcher: What about movies? What kind of movies do you watch?

Tisha: Ehhhh Yes o! I watch Yoruba movies well well

'Yes, I watch Yoruba movies very well.'

Similar responses were obtained from other participants who were interviewed. As recorded in the participant observation and interview data, participants appeared to be engaging in activities that allow them to continue using their languages. Church spaces and different forms of entertainment enable continued exposure to their heritage languages. When they attend religious activities, they socialize with other Nigerians who speak a similar language/s to them. This allows the use of such languages through various interactions. A key factor influencing this is the fact that most Nigerian immigrants, like other immigrants, tend to live in the same suburbs and are quite close to one another (cf. Vigoroux 2008 on Congolese migrants).

Apart from the above, a popular tradition among immigrants is to form clan/ethnic associations or unions among themselves (Nchang 2018). These associations hold regular meetings to encourage social interactions and a sense of community care in an attempt to reduce the gap between home and their new society. Spaces like this also further facilitate socio-cultural exchange between immigrants which could lead to heritage language maintenance. When they attend social gatherings, watch Nigerian movies, or listen to Nigerian music, this socio-cultural interchange occurs too. Nigerian movie and music industries are the biggest exporters of Nigerian culture and languages; therefore, it is not surprising that participants can maintain

contact with their heritage languages in this way. Also, interactions with family members back in Nigeria, which occur in their heritage languages as evident above, create another space for possible language maintenance.

## 5.4. The role of parent-child interaction in the maintenance or shift of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin

Another theme identified in the data set was the role of parent-child interaction in the maintenance or shift of Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba. Parent-child interactions play an essential role in language maintenance or shift. Intergenerational language transfer is the main way of promoting language maintenance (cf. Fishman 1991; Campbell 2002) and is almost synonymous with it. If immigrant parents speak their heritage languages to their children regardless of being in a different society, there is some possibility that intergenerational transmission would occur (leading to language maintenance) because the children would be exposed to the language and may subsequently acquire it. However, if they choose to communicate with the children in the dominant language of their new society or encourage them to learn these languages, the outcome of this would likely be a language shift (Zhang 2010; Dagamseh 2020). Since this study set out to explore how the language practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town results in the possible maintenance of their home languages or shift, it was important to examine how parent-child interactions could facilitate either language shift or maintenance.

To address the research question relating to the role of parent-child interaction in the maintenance of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town, this section will refer to the discussion in chapter 4 on the language practices of participants, focusing specifically on parent-child interaction patterns. The discussion will illuminate how the language choices that parents make ultimately lead to language maintenance or shift. It will also highlight the important role parent-child interaction plays in intergenerational language transmission. The best way for this transfer to be achieved is through the older generation communicating with the younger generation in said language. Apart from communication, the younger generation can also be exposed to the language through books, cultural plays, television entertainment, and documentaries about their heritage. Activities such as these may arouse a keen interest in the younger generation which could enhance language transfer. But they are less likely to serve as an adequate substitute.

As discussed in chapter 4, the parent-child interaction reported in this study shows interesting dynamics. Some parents prefer to communicate with their children in English while others preferred the use of their home languages such as Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin. According to the discussion in the preceding chapter, domains or contexts of language use influenced language choices. For example, although English was the preferred language of communication in some families, occasional switches to Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin were prominent during verbal interactions that involved scolding, parent-child intimate moments like soccer games, and private interactions that required excluding third parties such as guests.

The discussion also illuminates how perceptions of the value of languages shape the participants' language choices. Other factors such as socio-economic positionings, language attitudes, and cultural/ethnic values also influence the language preference of the parents in this study. Reporting on the reason for English as the language of communication between parent-child Iyi stated:

> English is a global language, but Yoruba is not.

Reflected in this statement is a common Eurocentric perception of English as a language with more economic value than African languages. This notion has been widely accepted by most African countries and evidence of this can be seen in the preference given to English as an official language in most African language policies including Nigeria and South Africa.

Participants' language choices have consequences for the transfer or maintenance of heritage language. In the case of the participant cited above, the children reported reduced knowledge of their heritage language. Both mastered Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Nigeria before migrating to South Africa at ages 9 and 12 respectively. However, after 6 years in South Africa, they seem to be losing a few words of both languages and sometimes forgetting how to construct sentences. The participants mentioned that less frequent use of their heritage languages has affected their proficiency levels in the languages. For this family and other English-dominant families in this study, parent-child interaction giving preference to English over heritage language prevents intergenerational transfer which may result in a shift to English. The experience cited here represents one side of the continuum – parents who prefer English over heritage language use in domestic conversation

On the other side of the continuum, there are families with Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin as the dominant languages in the home domain. The language of communication between parents and child/ren in these homes is Yoruba, Nigerian Pidgin, or a mix of both. Some of the reasons for

this include the attachment and value placed on the heritage languages and the need for effective communication as suggested in the extract below from the responses of participants:

Lola: Yoruba is my language. I can't go wrong with it. I want to say what is in my mind to my children. They understand and will understand better. For now, we're communicating.

….

Jude: *Ah that one go pain me I swear. If my boy no speak Yoruba e go pain me* ['That will hurt me seriously. If my boy doesn't speak Yoruba, it will really hurt me']. Let's pray he learns the language, please.

………

Tisha: If I see like a Yoruba person and we speak, it makes me very happy. Also, when I am speaking with my daughter, you know this Cape Town it's only English we speak too much and *I no too sabi am* ('I don't really know it') but when I am speaking with my daughter, I feel so happy and comfortable.

For Lola, communicating in Yoruba facilitates better understanding and enables effective communication. She is confident and able to express herself without the worry of grammatical errors or lacking the right words to express herself adequately because Yoruba is her first language. This is because her proficiency level in Yoruba is that of a native speaker as opposed to English. The examples cited in the extract above would likely promote language transfer and retention thereby leading to language maintenance. The frequent use of Yoruba as a language of communication may possibly expose the younger generation to it while promoting retention in the older generation. The children of these immigrants can improve their proficiency in Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin as they communicate with their parents.

In addition, most of the child participants of this study are willingly interested in learning/acquiring/retaining their heritage languages the extract presented below suggests:

Jay (child participant from family 11): Always excited learning new words daily of my mum's language. I am most interested in knowing my mum's language because I want to understand everything she is talking about when she speaks to her friends and sisters. I also want to communicate with her in her language.

Responding to the question, why do you think it's important for you to know and speak your home language? A child participant Ru also said the following:

> Rex (child participant from family 10): It's your identity, part of who you are ... but for me, it's important for you to have a cultural language because it's part of your identity, part of who you are, your culture, what you learn being an African. Because every African culture has their own cultural languages and it's part of what makes them a culture. It's really nice to learn yours.

From the responses of the participants (wards) above, there is a suggestion that the children are not being coerced into learning their heritage languages, rather, they seem to genuinely be interested and are enthusiastic too. The first participant's interest seems to be driven by the need to strengthen the bond between mother and child as evident in the statement, "to communicate with her in her language." On the other hand, the second participant, Rex believes the heritage language is a strong part of her cultural identity, "part of who you are" as she phrases it. The two experiences cited in this section represent other experiences present in the data set analysed.

Most of the children in the immigrant heritage language/s dominant households displayed genuine and voluntary interests in their heritage languages regardless of living in a different society and having limited proficiency in the language/s. The data analysis indicates that they have developed different strategies to improve their proficiency or retain the language/s which include, talking to themselves (*So, one thing I do, not only with Yoruba, I speak to myself a lot, like when I am busy with washing the dishes, I speak to myself a lot to try and keep the accent, so I don't forget. It's not only with Yoruba but other languages that I am learning*), watching television series in the language, and reading the lyrics of Nigerian songs. Although speaking to oneself is unusual, according to the participants, these strategies have proved useful as they find their knowledge of the language/s and proficiency level improving. These sorts of language practices ideally lean more toward the support of the maintenance of immigrant languages in the diaspora.

The preceding discussion is an indication of successful language transfer which results from the language of parent-child communication being the heritage language. The outcome of this is inherently language maintenance. When immigrant parents choose their heritage language/s as the dominant language of communication at home with their children, the children are exposed to these languages, and this provides some input for acquisition/learning.

Nevertheless, when the case is different and parents only communicate with the children in English, there would be insufficient input to necessitate language transfer regardless of them (parents) speaking the language among themselves. Therefore, the language of communication in parent-child interaction plays a central role in intergenerational language transmission. In the case of the language choice being English, the outcome would likely be language shift but if the language choice is immigrants' heritage language/s, the expected outcome should be language maintenance provided the dominant language in the child's peer group is not more influential that it interferes with the process.

## 5.5. Language attitudes as a determinant in language maintenance or shift

Another theme identified in the data set was language attitude as a determinant in language maintenance or shift. Attitudes that individuals hold toward a language influence the willingness to acquire or use them. As discussed in chapter 3, attitudes are influenced by preconceived notions about languages. People may hold negative or positive and, in some cases, ambivalent attitudes where individuals do not display clear attitudes and their attitudes do not match their language practices. Dyers (2008) argues that people's language attitudes do not always match their language practices. That is, individuals may hold a negative attitude towards a language but still speak or have it in their linguistic repertoires as seen in my database and discussed above.

Language attitudes can also be considered as fluid as people may change their attitudes based on new information which leads to a change in perception and broadly, attitude. This was evident in a study conducted by Umana (2018), where individuals with previously held negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin reported a change in attitude based on their perceived notions of the value the language holds in the diaspora. Although these individuals held negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin during their stay in Nigeria, as immigrants in Cape Town, it became an important part of their identities and a key to unlocking access to essential social groups – necessitating a change in perception and attitude. This section discusses how the language attitudes of Nigerian immigrants may result in language maintenance or shift.

The participants in this study held positive, negative, or ambivalent attitudes towards both their home languages and the indigenous languages of South Africa dominant in Cape Town. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study which is mainly interested in the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages, only attitudes related to those will be discussed. These various

attitudes were present in the two sets of data (participant observation and interviews). The participants in Yoruba-dominant households generally held positive attitudes towards Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. They loved speaking Yoruba and were pleased to know I had some understanding of the language regardless of not being of the Yoruba ethnic group myself. Some participants expressed a strong desire to transfer the language/s to their children. The extract below shows how one participant (AD) expressed this desire,

> I really want my children to speak Yoruba and *pidgin na why I dey speak the language to them. Ah they must hear am by force o. I no wan get pikin wey no know my language and them be man on top the matter. No, they have to learn it. I dey even think of to send them go Niaja make them go stay there small play with other children. That way, them go learn the language quick quick*

> ['That is why I speak the language to them. Ah, they must understand the language by all means. I don't want to have a child that does not understand and speak my language and they are men too. I am actually considering sending them back to Nigeria to live there for a bit and play with other children. That way, they will learn the language quicker.']

The excerpt presented above is from a discussion that occurred in one participant's home during my participant observation visits. Both parents shared similar sentiments about their wards knowing their heritage languages. This suggests a strong positive attitude towards heritage languages. The same positive attitude was observed in the children too. I asked the children if they wanted to learn Yoruba and Pidgin and they both said yes. The elder (Nunu) one said:

> But I speak it *die die* ['a little'] and I know *eshey gaan* ['thank you'].

Their willingness to learn/acquire their home languages may be considered an indication of a positive attitude towards these languages.

Apart from the family discussed above, there were other families with positive attitudes towards heritage languages. In another Yoruba-dominant home, which formed part of my observation data, the analysis suggests that the participant seemed satisfied with the children's knowledge of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. During my visits, she also communicated with me in Nigerian Pidgin with occasional switches to Yoruba.

> Mae: I am happy that my children understand Yoruba because this *English dey tire me and as them sabi speak Yoruba so, e* make my life easy I tell you.

['.... English is tiring for me and the fact that my children know how to speak and understand Yoruba this way...']

The extract above is a statement by the participant, Mae and it suggests a positive attitude towards Yoruba. To this participant, speaking English is exhausting while speaking Yoruba offers her some relief from that exhaustion so to speak. The ease of communication Yoruba affords influences her positive attitude towards it. She was also observed communicating with the children in Nigerian Pidgin which can also be attributed to holding a positive attitude towards it. Similar positive attitudes were observed in heritage language/s dominant households. This positive attitude towards both languages enables language transmission to the children/next generation. Thus, promoting the maintenance of immigrants' heritage language in Cape Town.

Further, positive attitudes towards immigrants' heritage languages were also evident in the data from the interviews conducted. Participants who reported having Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin as a dominant language of communication generally held positive attitudes. They expressed a desire to transfer the language/s to their children. Recall the parent cited previously who stated he would send the children back to Nigeria to enable them ample exposure to the language in their natural environment. Such is a remarkable example of a positive attitude towards heritage language/s. He seems quite passionate, and a deduction can be made that his passion is driven by a positive attitude towards his heritage language/s. Most participants who preferred Nigerian language/s as dominant language/s of communication generally held positive attitudes towards this language/s.

Another attitude observed in the data can be described as ambivalent. Ambivalent is used here to describe an attitude that borders between positive and negative. That is, individuals who report they speak a language but prefer another. It supports Dyers' (2008) argument about individuals' attitudes not always corresponding to their actions. Ambivalent attitudes held may be on one language but with regards to its uses in different domains. For example, an individual may hold a positive attitude towards Nigerian Pidgin use in social domains but a negative one towards its use in formal domains.

Owa: I like speaking my language, but I want my children to learn English because Yoruba is not a language that is that useful here in Cape Town. I am even encouraging them to learn isiXhosa or Afrikaans too because how will they get jobs when they grow up and we

still find ourselves here? Knowing our language is good but how far can it take us in a foreign country with all the xenophobia here?

The extract above is an example of what may be termed an ambivalent attitude towards a language. On the one hand, the participant reports she loves speaking her heritage language but on the other, she prefers her children to acquire English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa before their heritage language/s. A major factor influencing her ambivalent attitude seems to be a compelling need to integrate into her new society. The participant also believes speaking her heritage language will possibly expose her family to xenophobia.

This participant was not alone in this position. A similar position can be seen in the extract presented below,

> Sini: Yoruba is my language, yes, but the world is a global village and, in this country, now, Yoruba is not really that useful. Let my children speak English and even learn French too. In fact, those languages take you to more places than our African languages. Our African languages are only important in our immediate environment. I cannot really force them to keep speaking Yoruba. I understand English and we communicate in that, they understand Yoruba too and that is enough cultural transfer. Abi what can I say? Languages are important but some languages are more superior and unfortunately, our African languages don't have much to offer beyond the home.

Concerns about possible discrimination/victimization, and access to socio-economic opportunities seem to be preventing some immigrants from being involved in language practices that promote the maintenance of their heritage languages in Cape Town. Participants' perceptions of English as the language of access are rooted in English hegemony. Their ambivalent attitudes which are neither positive nor negative still lead to language shift because loving the language but not using it frequently in most domains can only lead more to language shift than maintenance. Also, not transferring their heritage languages to the children interferes with the process of intergenerational transmission which is essential to language maintenance.

Responding to my question regarding the transfer of their home languages to their child, one of the participants (Trace) said they would love to transfer the language to their child but, over time. They expressed concerns about their home languages not being viable, given their position as immigrants in South Africa. They considered knowledge of Afrikaans and isiXhosa to be a more economically viable alternative and encouraged the child to learn those instead.

Jaz: He says he wants to learn Pidgin but I'd rather he learns Yoruba because Pidgin is not as useful, and I consider it street language.

The mother added she believes Pidgin is a distraction and ruins English.

Lola: Too much Pidgin doesn't allow our people to learn correct English, that is why most of them are struggling with English comprehension.

Although the first participant's response that she would prefer her children learn Yoruba over Nigerian Pidgin suggests a positive attitude towards Yoruba and a negative one towards Nigerian Pidgin, her overall attitude may still be described as ambivalent when considered holistically. The participant's preference for Yoruba is based on the choice between that and Nigerian Pidgin. Nevertheless, learning the local languages of South Africa takes precedence over Yoruba. On the one hand, they would prefer the child learns Yoruba over Nigerian Pidgin, but a better choice would be to learn Afrikaans and isiXhosa over any of the two Nigerian languages. A positive attitude would translate to a desire to transfer it to the next generation alongside the local languages and not a case of one over the other. Hence the description of this attitude as ambivalent.

Some participants held negative attitudes towards their heritage languages. These attitudes were most salient in English-dominant homes. Some examples are presented in the extracts below,

Sini: Yoruba is my language yes but we... the world is a global village and, in this country, now, Yoruba is not really that useful. Let my children speak English and even learn French too. In fact, those languages take you to more places than our African languages. Our African languages are only important in our immediate environment. I cannot really force them to keep speaking Yoruba. I understand English and we communicate in that, they understand Yoruba too and that is enough cultural transfer. Abi what can I say? Languages are important but some languages are more superior and unfortunately, our African languages don't have much to offer beyond the home.

….

Toya: We don't speak Pidgin and don't encourage our daughter to either. I mean, we can speak Pidgin and use it when the need arises, but our first reaction will always be English with people who are not Yoruba and Yoruba with our brothers and sisters. Pidgin is a social language and should remain there for people who need it, but we don't really need it so.

The extracts above reveal negative attitudes towards immigrants' heritage languages. The first participant believes African languages are inferior languages and do not possess any global impact because "our African languages don't have much to offer beyond the home." The participant also believes Yoruba does not offer upward mobility to its speakers as opposed to English or French. This perception of Yoruba as disabling in global spaces influences this participant's attitude towards it. A similar negative attitude can be seen in the second participant's extract. Here the negative attitude is more towards Nigerian Pidgin than Yoruba. As a result of such a negative attitude, the participant refrains from speaking it and discourages the children from speaking Nigerian Pidgin, too, regardless of their level of proficiency in it. According to the participant, Nigerian Pidgin is available in their repertoire for use when the need arises. It is not clear from the data what that 'need' would be as the participant did not elaborate on this.

Again, the perception of Nigerian Pidgin as a social language seems to be shaping this participant's attitude towards it. And this can be linked to the perception of Nigerian Pidgin as a social language that exists among most Nigerians in Nigeria and some in the diaspora. The consequence of such perceptions and accompanying negative attitudes is that individuals may refuse to speak the languages they hold a negative attitude towards – the implication being a threat to the vitality of such languages. Within the context of this study, negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba imply that these languages would likely experience a case of language shift.

## 5.6. Nigerian identity as a determinant/ negotiating the insider/outsider identity

In relation to themes identified in the data set, Nigerian identity as a determinant/insider/outsider identity. Negotiating the insider/outsider identity presents certain consequences to Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town and the vitality of their languages. Maintaining the Nigerian identity which could subsequently lead to heritage language maintenance implies less assimilation in their host country. Chapter 4 (especially 4.5.1.1 -2) provided a detailed discussion of the challenges the ethnic/immigrant identity presents to Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town. This section draws on that discussion but will discuss more on how this insider/outsider identity poses challenges for the maintenance of immigrants' heritage languages or how it enhances it.

Immigrants often require assimilation or integration into their new society to succeed economically, socially, and otherwise. While most make this their goal and make conscious efforts to achieve it, others prefer to maintain their heritage identities while negotiating their immigrant identities. The Nigerian immigrants in this study are not the exception to this rule. There are those who consider the need to integrate as important for their survival in Cape Town and have taken steps towards ensuring this happens. One step as revealed in the data is to learn South African languages/registers/accents. Another strategy some of the participants have adopted is an association with the locals. On the other hand, the immigrants who prefer to diverge or maintain their Nigerian identities, do not make conscious efforts toward acquiring the local languages of South Africa. They speak their heritage languages at home and associate mostly with fellow Nigerian immigrants regardless of the challenges of being considered outsiders.

A common factor that influenced the participants' choice to assimilate as discussed in chapter 4 was related to socioeconomic access. Nigerian immigrants in this study believe that a knowledge of the local languages will give them access to employment and for the entrepreneurs, help maintain client relationships since their clientele include the locals. Another reason given for convergence was protection from discrimination. Extreme cases of discrimination have led to violence against immigrants in South Africa in recent times and this negatively impacts immigrants as they lead their lives in fear. This fear translates to the need to hide or suppress certain aspects of their heritage identities. Some of the immigrants in this study do this by not speaking their home languages or transferring them to their children. A possible consequence of this may be language shift.

Subsequently, some of the participants prefer not to conform but stand out as outsiders. They resist language shift by continuing to use their heritage languages at home with fellow immigrants and with their children as exemplified in the extract below.

> I really want my children to speak Yoruba and *pidgin na why I dey speak the language to them. Ah, they must hear am by force o. I no wan get pikin wey no know my language and them be man on top the matter. No, they have to learn it. I dey even think of to send them go niaja make them go stay there small play with other children. That way, them go learn the language quick quick*

> ['That is why I speak the language to them. Ah, they must understand the language by all means. I don't want to have a child that does not understand and speak my language and

they are men too. I am actually considering sending them back to Nigeria to live there for a bit and play with other children. That way, they will learn the language quicker.']

Although participants like this acknowledge their role as outsiders, they choose to maintain their Nigerian identities because they regard it as an intrinsic part of whom they are as echoed in the participant's statement above. As a result, they promote their culture and by extension their language. These participants are resistant to acquiring local South African languages at the risk of losing their heritage language/s. They believe they are past the age of language learning. Thus, are not motivated to attempt learning or incorporating more of the registers of local languages of Cape Town in their language practices. Most of them seemed satisfied with simply knowing *unjani* and *eish*. They considered anything beyond that simply too much effort for their "old brain" as one participant stated.

While the language practices of the Nigerian immigrants who prioritize assimilation could lead to a language shift, the practices of these ones who prioritize their ethnic affiliation over assimilation subsequently lead to language maintenance. A more ideal situation would have been a case of immigrants not being placed in a position of having to choose between assimilation and maintaining their identities or one not requiring the elimination of the other – a case of both worlds coexisting harmoniously or distinctly.

## 5.7. Innovations in the language practices of Nigerian immigrants

Multilingual societies often enable contact between different languages. In some cases, an outcome could be a new language (a pidgin) or a hybrid form of existing languages which is common among youths in urban spaces. This study set out to explore the possibility of this occurring among Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town. My interest was mainly in how they are incorporating expressions or words of all the languages in their repertoires and the implication of this. Similar language practices have been described as code-switching or translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2017; Blackledge & Creese, 2017). However, my study was not exactly interested in translanguaging as described in the literature. A study by Mesthrie, Nchang and Onwukwe (2022) on Nigerian returnees from South Africa describes interesting language practices that some might consider translanguaging. An example of data from the study is presented below,

 *Weta that i-peni on the table.* 'Bring the pen on the table'

In the extract above, an isiZulu word *i-peni* is deliberately incorporated into the Igbo language of Nigeria to signify the status of "returnee' (Mesthrie, Nchang & Onwukwe, 2022). The speaker is Igbo and lived in South Africa; therefore, would have picked up some isiZulu words. What is less expected is that he uses it with an audience that does not know or recognize the form *i-peni*. This one sentence incorporates lexical items from three different languages. My data for this study also found a few such expressions like the one above. In a conversation between me and one participant (a parent), the expression below was recorded:

*Eish, it's hectic no be small thing!* ['It's serious']

The sentence above is a combination of isiXhosa and Nigerian Pidgin expressions, though the isiXhosa form *eish* is an exclamation, which is easy to integrate as a free form rather than one that requires syntactic integration ("tag switching"). The participant can produce expressions such as this without having an advanced ability in isiXhosa. This may also be considered his attempt to signal his level of integration/assimilation, indicating that he is an insider and an outsider as evident in his use of both Nigerian (Nigerian Pidgin) and South African (isiXhosa) expressions. For a further argument, this single expression represents both worlds that immigrants navigate in their daily encounters as nationals of their home countries and residents in their host countries. However, the level of integration is unlikely to be read as substantial by locals until the switching or translanguaging practices involve a greater degree of isiXhosa lexis and grammar beyond the level of tags and exclamations.

Another example I discuss is from a different family. In this family, I observed the children communicating with each other using a mix of NP, English, and isiXhosa during play and I recorded the expression below by the 9-year-old child.

*Yiza make I show you and you see the flower*

['Come let me show you and you see the flower']

The sentence above is made up of the isiXhosa word *yiza* ('come'), Nigerian Pidgin expression *make I show you* ('let me show you'), and English 'and you see the flower.' Their speech also frequently featured isiXhosa expressions, *"haibo", "eish", and "masambe"*. Children of immigrants who associate with locals through play at home and school are likely to pick up words of the language if not advanced proficiency. Here the use of exclamations (*haibo* and *eish*) is noticeable, but more importantly the use of more complex morphological forms *yi-za* (showing imperative plus verb) and *ma-s-ambe* (from Std isiXhosa *masihambe*), showing

'hortative – 1ˢᵗ person plural pronoun – verb'.  It must be noted that it is uncommon to find many examples of such usage.  It could well be that even *yiza* and *masambe* are used as what are called chunks in the second language acquisition literature rather than fully analysed forms (Ellis, 2003). It is likely that they are indicative of early acquisition of isiXhosa that will develop in time, given the right conditions for interaction and language use.  The multilingual repertoires of children in the database is likely to develop much further in time.

## 5.8. Summary of Chapter and Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion about some of the themes that emerged from the data obtained for this study. The discussion has highlighted that the language practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town are influenced by socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. Some of these factors include economic viability, the need to assimilate into their new society, and their allegiance to their heritage identity. The discussion also revealed that living in a new society also affects their linguistic practices. As multilingual speakers who find themselves in a different multilingual society, they constantly move in and out of different communication contexts that require the use of different languages. For example, when communicating with other Nigerian immigrants, they choose Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin as the language of communication. Whereas this choice shifts to either English or the little words they know of the local languages of South Africa.

In addition, this chapter also draws attention to the fact that the language of communication used by parents with their children plays an important role in the maintenance of their heritage languages. The discussion highlights that some participants prefer to communicate with their children using only English because of their desire to assimilate into their new society. As stated above, this interferes with intergenerational language transmission and the outcome is a possible language shift. Other participants who prefer to use their home languages as the language of communication with their children enable language transfer which may lead to possible language maintenance.

The chapter has also revealed that most of the participants who consider their Nigerian identities fundamental to their existence are the ones actively making efforts to maintain their heritage languages (Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba) in the diaspora. Finally, although the study set out to investigate and report on innovations present in the language practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town, the study did not find enough evidence to prove the existence of

strong cases of innovation but has discussed some peculiar language uses that can be considered rudimentary innovations.

This study set out to explore possible innovations present in the repertoire of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town and found a few expressions learnt from isiXhosa as indicative of repertoire expansion. This expansion currently involves a small amount of hybridity. It is too early to speculate whether such hybridity will develop further and prove stable. It is more likely that in time respondents in this study will be able to increase the isiXhosa part of their repertoires, to enable better integration with local communities.

We may also ask, what is the consequence of such innovations on the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin? In relation to the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages, hybridity could promote language shift as well as a degree of language maintenance. Since a stable multilingual repertoire would contain elements of their heritage languages, the languages would still be maintained, albeit in a different form. It would be interesting to conduct subsequent studies on these participants or other immigrants to investigate if these kinds of expressions are still active parts of their language practices and what they would have metamorphosed into. The next and final chapter will provide a synthesis of data from the study, discuss recommendations, and limitations and provide an overall conclusion of this dissertation.

# Chapter 6
## Discussion and Conclusion

## 6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesis of the main conclusions drawn from the study. It also discusses the implications for future research and some limitations of the study. It will also highlight some of the key issues that the analysis of data has illuminated in relation to existing research. The study set out to examine the linguistic practices of some Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town (those with Yoruba as part of their language repertoire) and how this impacts the vitality of their heritage languages. To understand this, participants were interviewed, and their language practices were observed over a 3-month period. The discussion in this chapter shall begin with a summary of the language practices of Nigerian immigrants as recorded in the data and discussed in chapter 4. It will further summarise what these linguistic practices mean for the vitality of Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba in Cape Town. The following section shall revisit the research aims to establish the extent to which these were addressed. The chapter shall conclude with implications for further research and study limitations.

This study provided a discussion of data in two chapters. The first data discussion chapter provided an overview of the linguistic repertoires of the participants. The discussion explored the languages in the repertoires of Nigerian immigrants from their country of origin to their current country of residence. It highlighted that most of the participants (parents) had Yoruba as their L1 and other languages such as English and Nigerian Pidgin as additional languages (L2). Some participants reported knowing a few expressions in Igbo, a minority language present in their community.

As immigrants in South Africa, some of the participants actively speak their heritage language in different domains such as home, church, and social gatherings. Others (the parent participants) although occasionally speaking their heritage language among themselves, insisted on communicating with their children in English. In some cases, some parents even prevented their children from speaking Nigerian Pidgin or Yoruba. The second data analysis chapter took a deeper look and went beyond describing linguistics repertoires to a more detailed discussion on how the linguistic repertoires influence the language practices of Nigerian immigrants and the implications of this for the vitality of the heritage languages. The following section revisits the aims of the study to establish how these aims were addressed.

## 6.2. Addressing the research aims

As mentioned in chapter 1, the primary aim of this study was to examine the linguistics practices of Nigerian immigrants to determine the vitality of their heritage language in Cape Town; that is if the language is being maintained or experiencing a shift. To achieve this, the following five aims guided the formulation of research questions:

- To determine how migration to a new community influences Nigerian immigrants' language choices.
- To determine if the language choices/practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town promote language maintenance or shift.
- To identify and analyse any innovations that may have emerged as speakers engage in different language practices involving the use of different languages in their repertoires.
- To explore how parent-child interactions in the languages promote language maintenance or shift.
- To explore how participants' language attitudes towards these languages promote language maintenance or language shift.

These aims were addressed in chapters 4 and 5 through a discussion of data.

**Research aims 1 - To determine how migration to a new community influences Nigerian immigrants' language choices.**

This research aim was addressed using the question, how does migrating to a new society influence some Nigerian immigrants' linguistic practices or language choices? The discussion in chapter 4 which describes the linguistic repertoire of Nigerian immigrants addresses this aim. It drew on concepts such as linguistic repertoire, domains of language use and language attitudes to describe how Nigerian immigrants negotiate or renegotiate their social positionings in their new society. The discussion established that Nigerian immigrants originate from a multilingual society and subsequently inhabit another multilingual society as immigrants. Thus, leading to a complex language contact situation. A concept that captures the reality of Nigerian immigrants who form part of this study is Vertovec's (2007) concept of superdiversity which denotes increased diversity not only between immigrant and/or ethnic minority groups but also within them. The discussion also established that some of the families were linguistically diverse as different languages form part of their repertoires. They were able to draw on these resources to fulfil their communicative needs as circumstances required.

Migrating to a new society implied adapting to the new environment by way of integration. For the Nigerian immigrants in this study, this also implied learning a few words of the dominant language/s in their new society in order to incorporate them into their daily language practices. The discussion in chapter 4 showed that most of the participants knew a few words of isiXhosa and Afrikaans even though their proficiency levels were not as high. Some of them knew just enough words to get by or to communicate with their clients, friends, neighbours and others in general. The level of proficiency was higher in the children than in adults (parents). Children had more opportunities to learn/acquire the language/s because they were exposed to them at school and on the playground with friends. In fact, one participant stated she was simply too old to learn the local languages. This seems to support the literature on second language acquisition on the critical period hypothesis which posits that children learn languages better than adults (Lenneberg 1967). While this theory has been widely criticised in the literature, it still holds that the age factor plays an important role in second language acquisition as shown in this study.

Another influence that migrating to a new society had on the linguistic practices or language choices of Nigerian immigrants is that some Nigerian immigrants have restrictions on their heritage languages in the home domain. As a result, they maintain English as a dominant language at home, and some actually prevent their children from speaking their heritage languages such as Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. They communicate with the children in English and encourage them to learn the local languages dominant in Cape Town over their heritage language/s. The discussion of data for this study established that one main factor responsible for this was the economic value attached to the local languages of Cape Town as opposed to their heritage languages. Another factor highlighted in the study for this was the need to protect themselves from discriminatory practices that in extreme cases, lead to xenophobia.

Although some Nigerian immigrants restrict the use of their heritage language in the home domain for factors highlighted above, others continue to speak their heritage languages in the circle of friends, home and church domains. The discussion in chapter 4 indicates that the influence of migration on their language practices is positive rather than negative. These Nigerian immigrants consider their heritage languages an important part of their identities as Nigerians regardless of being immigrants. One participant stated it was important she transfers her heritage language to her child because it could serve as a form of protection against life-

threatening situations that may arise in the foreign land which they inhabited. To this Nigerian immigrant, although she was an insider in Cape Town, she still considered herself and her family outsiders as well. Therefore, the important need to use the language with her child and to ensure it is successfully transferred. A few other participants in this study shared similar sentiments. Another participant believed it was important to transfer his culture to his children and communicating in the heritage language with the children enabled him to express himself in a way that English did not permit.

In summary, it can be concluded from the discussion in chapter 4 that the first research aim has adequately been addressed. In relation to how migrating to a new society influences the linguistic practices or language choices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town, the study has established that this happens in both negative and positive ways. The negative way is that immigrants begin to acquire/learn the dominant language in their new society and use this more frequently in more domains than their heritage languages. This could easily lead to a language shift after a long period of time, especially in the English-dominant homes where Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin are totally restricted. In homes where English is used with the children and Yoruba among parents, the case may be different (discussion picked up in subsequent paragraphs).

On the other hand, the positive way migration has influenced the linguistic practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town is that the need to negotiate their social positionings and maintain their identities as Nigerians strongly motivate and reinforces the desire in some Nigerians to continue speaking their heritage languages and even transferring them to their children. This continued use of heritage language in the face of certain challenges such as discrimination can only promote the maintenance of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in the diaspora. These languages may never become dominant languages in Cape Town, but they will be dominant in the home domain within immigrant communities if more Nigerian immigrants adopt this stance.


**Research aims 2: To determine if the language choices/practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town promote language maintenance or shift**

The second aim that this study set out to address was to determine if the language choices/practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town promote language maintenance or shift. To address this, the study examined the strategies Nigerian immigrants used to maintain

their languages and how their linguistic practices facilitated this. The discussion in chapters 4 and 5 reported some of these strategies. Participants were asked if they attended Yoruba churches, socialised with other immigrants who speak Yoruba or watched entertainment in the languages. The patterns observed in this data support Dyers' (2000) notion that the presence of a dominant language leads to speakers of a less dominant language developing strategies to maintain their language. Discussion of data revealed that Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town develop different strategies to maintain their heritage language as well.

To examine what these strategies were, I observed their linguistic practices involving the use of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. I observed how activities involving the language promoted language maintenance or shift. Discussion in chapters 4 and 5 established that all participants engaged in at least one activity that involved the use of Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin. Participants attended Nigerian churches where activities were conducted in Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. In the church space, they are exposed to the language through the teachings and subsequently through interactions with other members who are predominantly Nigerians. These Nigerians speak Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin thereby enabling them the opportunity to continue speaking their languages. Apart from the church space, they also engaged in entertainment that involved these languages. Entertainment such as movies, and music in Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin further expose Nigerian immigrants to their heritage languages.

In relation to this research aim, it can be concluded that these strategies that Nigerian immigrants use lead to some exposure to the language. This exposure can potentially lead to more frequent use of the language in various domains. It also gives the children (next generation) the opportunity to be exposed to the language and subsequently more acquainted with it. One advantage of this especially for younger children with preliminary or low-level proficiency in the language is that as they become acquainted with the language, their knowledge or proficiency level is likely to increase. The discussion of the data established that some of the children possessed low levels of proficiency in the language and some were lacking in speaking although they understood the languages. One participant (child) recounted not speaking the language because he did not feel confident enough in his speaking skills. Exposure to the language through the strategies outlined above has the potential to improve all of this, and by extension, lead to the maintenance of these Nigerian immigrants' heritage languages.

**Research aims 3: To identify and analyse any innovations that may have emerged as speakers engage in different language practices involving the use of different languages in their repertoires.**

This study set out to identify possible innovations or innovative ways that Nigerian immigrants were using the languages in their repertoires, both Nigerian languages and the local languages of Cape Town. I had hoped to record and analyse an emerging urban mix of languages. My main interest was in how Nigerian immigrants were mixing languages if they did and the implication of this for their heritage languages. The database did not produce a lot of evidence supporting innovations. Nonetheless, I recorded and reported a few interesting ones that I found like; *hectic no be small thing!* ['It's serious'] and *Yiza make I show you and you see the flower* ['Come let me show you and you see the flower']. The first statement was recorded in the speech of an adult participant and the second, a child during play. Both sentences contain expressions from Nigerian Pidgin, English, and isiXhosa expressions.

The study established that although these expressions are indicative of repertoire expansion which currently involves a small amount of hybridity, it is still quite early to speculate if this could develop further and prove stable. A social variable that influences language shift and maintenance as indicated in the literature is the length of residence in the new society (David, Cavallaro, and Colluzzi, 2009). Based on this, there is a high possibility that the isiXhosa part of these participants' repertoire will increase over time as they stay longer in Cape Town. As also already mentioned in this dissertation, this could have two possible implications for the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin – language shift as well as language maintenance to a certain degree. In conclusion, research aims 3 on innovations and possible implications for the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin have been adequately addressed in this study.

**Research aims 4: To explore how parent-child interactions in the languages lead to language maintenance or shift.**

Parent-child interaction is fundamental to language maintenance and shift because it is through such interactions that intergenerational language transmission occurs. As established in this study, intergenerational language transmission promotes language maintenance and discontinuity promotes language shift (Fishman, 1991). Thus, it was important to observe and examine such interactions in this study. The discussion in chapters 4 and 5 shows the different patterns that emerged in the database in relation to parent-child interaction. The study

established that while some parents preferred to communicate with their children in only English, others communicated in their heritage languages.

The study also established that certain factors such as the economic value of English, the perception that the parents hold towards Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba and attitudes held towards these languages influenced participants' choices of the language of communication. For instance, one parent participant held the perception that Nigerian Pidgin was a bad form of English. As a result, restricted the use of the language in the home domain and in communication with the children. Other participants believed that the use of English will grant them economic access. This led to more use of English in communication with the children. In these English-dominant homes, Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin was seldom used in parent-child interactions. A consequence of this pattern of interaction is likely to be language shift as the language is not being transferred to the next generation.

Another pattern that was observed and reported in the study was parent-child interaction that occurred in the heritage languages. Some Nigerian immigrants in the study ensured to communicate in Yoruba or Nigerian Pidgin with the children. The discussion in chapter 5 established that one factor that motivated this was a strong need to maintain their affiliation to their cultural heritage while living as immigrants in South Africa. These parents valued their culture and insisted on transferring the culture and language to their children. They believed that knowledge of their heritage languages could protect the children in dangerous situations where their lives may be at risk.

To summarise, in relation to research aim 4, a study of parent-child interactions reveals that the choice of English as the sole language of communication between parents and children while ignoring heritage languages prevents language transmission thereby leading to possible language shift. On the other hand, the parent participants who paid less attention to the economic value of English and communicated with their children in Yoruba and/or Pidgin enable language transmission which would lead to language maintenance. Parent-child interaction as recorded in this study promotes language maintenance in some families and language shift in others. Therefore, this research aim has been duly addressed.

**Research aims 5: To explore how participants' language attitudes towards these languages promote language maintenance or language shift**

Language attitudes are a complex phenomenon, and it has been established that a positive attitude towards a language is important for language maintenance. According to Holmes (2001: 61), "positive attitudes support efforts to use the minority language in a variety of domains and this helps people resist the pressure from the majority group to switch to their language". The participants in this study held varying attitudes towards the languages in their repertoire including their heritage languages. The discussion highlighted that some held positive attitudes while others held negative attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba.

Positive attitudes were more prominent in heritage language dominant households. In these households, both the parents and children were enthusiastic about learning and speaking their heritage languages. They attached a lot of personal value to these languages. For these participants, the ability to speak their heritage languages was important to their identities as Nigerian immigrants. The parents valued the relationship speaking the language afforded them to foster with their children. Recall the excerpt below from one participant:

> I am happy that my children understand Yoruba because this *English dey tire me and as them sabi speak Yoruba so, e* make my life easy I tell you.
>
> ['.... English is tiring for me and the fact that my children know how to speak and understand Yoruba this way...']

Above is an example of the quality of relationship that speaking Yoruba affords this participant to maintain with her children. It can be deduced that this participant and others in the study who value Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin hold a positive attitude towards these languages; hence, they continue speaking it even with their children in the diaspora. This can only promote the maintenance of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin.

On the other hand, negative attitudes toward Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba were prominent in English-dominant households. Attitudes toward a language may be expressed overtly with a clear expression of dislike towards a language and its speakers. This was reported in the discussion in chapters 4 and 5 where one participant explicitly stated that she believes Nigerian Pidgin is bad English and does not speak nor encourage her children to speak it. Other participants believed that African languages were inferior languages with no economic value. A perception like this leads people to prioritise speaking the languages they believe are more valuable and overlook the less valuable ones. It also indexes negative attitudes toward a language as established in this study. In conclusion, negative attitudes held by some

participants have the potential to promote language shift while positive attitudes may promote language maintenance. Therefore, this study has addressed research aims 5.

In summary, the discussion has addressed all research questions. It has also supported my initial hypothesis that a strong sense of maintaining affiliation to the culture of the home country would influence language maintenance while the need to integrate for socioeconomic reasons would influence possible language shift. The following section will discuss some implications of the findings from this study.

## 6.3. Implications of findings

This study set out to explore how the social positioning of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town influences their language practices and the consequences of this on the vitality of their heritage languages. The discussion of data in chapters 4 and 5 highlights important factors that influence the language practices and choices of Nigerian immigrants and ultimately, the vitality of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town. A major factor highlighted is the need for integration which leads to convergence. Some Nigerian immigrants are compelled to learn the dominant languages of Cape Town or adapt their speech/accents to sound less Nigerian in order to be shielded from the immigration tensions popular in South Africa. Apart from trying to shield themselves, immigrants also converge in an attempt to access economic opportunities since the local languages afford them access to such opportunities.

In relation to the question of Nigerian immigrants' heritage language vitality in Cape Town, the discussion in this dissertation suggests that the language practices and choices of Nigerian immigrants promote language maintenance while subsequently promoting language shift. Although some Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town maintain their heritage languages through their linguistics practices, the language practices of others may promote language shift. Unfortunately, the cost of integration is the loss of immigrants' heritage languages especially if the need for integration is motivated by fear of discrimination or anti-immigration sentiments. This study also illuminates how attempts at integration and the fear of being victims of discrimination force Nigerian immigrants to suppress or hide their identities. This leads to reduced or restricted uses of their heritage languages.

Another factor that influences language shift and maintenance as brought out in this study is language attitudes. Attitudes towards the local languages of Cape Town were positive for some and negative for others. The study indicated that this did not prevent language learning in some

immigrants. This seems to suggest language attitudes do not matter in language acquisition as has been theorised in the literature. It has been understood and put forward by many scholars that attitudes facilitate language learning. Nonetheless, the participants in this study challenge this notion as they engage in language learning regardless of their negative attitudes. This implies that language attitudes are complex and perhaps context specific. Therefore, more consideration should be given to the context of migration in the discussion of language attitudes because there seems to be a difference in how attitudes impact language learning in this context.

My study also challenges the traditional understanding of language use among language speakers. The example of the participant whose strategy to maintain the languages in her repertoire involved speaking to herself is a novel observation in the language endangerment literature. Although odd, this form of communication or language practice should not be overlooked. It may as well qualify as another domain of language use which facilitates language maintenance or acquisition as indicated by the participant's experience.

Another important issue raised in this study is the fact that immigrants' social positioning as both outsiders and insiders in their new society presents certain challenges to the vitality of their heritage languages. On the one hand, they grapple with the desire to maintain their affiliation with their home country, Nigeria but on the other, they risk exclusion and discrimination which can sometimes be life-threatening should they maintain their cultural identities and heritage languages. This places them in an extremely difficult position. As already stated, a more ideal situation would be Nigerian immigrants freely existing as insiders in South Africa without dealing with the dilemma of choosing between assimilation and maintaining their identities – a case of both worlds coexisting harmoniously or even distinctively. This study illuminates some of the challenges Nigerian immigrants face as they negotiate their place in their new society, Cape Town.

## 6.4. Contribution of the study to existing literature

I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation that it is essential to study language vitality in migration as it adds value to the lives of immigrants. Documenting the state of immigrants' heritage languages provides insight into some of the factors influencing language maintenance and shift and how these factors may be addressed. The dissertation has also demonstrated that incorporating interviews and participant observation methods afford researchers the opportunity to collect quality data. This study offers new insight into the understanding of language attitudes which I describe as complex and determined by context. The literature

theorises attitudes as tied to behaviours, but my study provides evidence that attitudes do not always match behaviour as some of the participants in this study demonstrated by learning the local languages of South Africa despite holding negative attitudes towards them.

My study also offers insight into the language practices of Nigerian immigrants in Cape Town and provides the Nigerian community with data regarding the state of Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town. I believe that the information in this dissertation will encourage more research on Nigerian immigrants' language practices and heritage language vitality in Cape Town and the diaspora overall. The study also illuminates the consequences of anti-immigrant sentiments prominent in South Africa on the lives of immigrants who inhabit the republic. It is my hope that the information in this study will necessitate some discussion on possible solutions to the immigration problems in South Africa.

## 6.5. Recommendations for further research

This study was conducted on 14 families with a total of 44 participants. Given the scope of this study and its limitations, the first recommendation I make for future research is to consider a much larger study with more participants. It is my hope that circumstances will be different from the COVID-19 pandemic era and the researcher will be better position to conduct an observation over a longer duration of time than 3 months. Also, with the absence of pandemic restrictions, the researcher will be better positioned to engage more with the participants' language practices and obtain more data.

Another recommendation for future research is that other scholars should consider recording the state of other Nigerian languages present in Cape Town such as Igbo. My current study only focussed on Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. It would be interesting to also record the language practices of Nigerians from the Igbo ethnic group to determine the vitality of their language in the diaspora and if there is any difference between this group of Nigerians and the ones recorded in my study. Thus, a comparative study on this population should be useful to Nigerian cultural and general sociolinguistics research.

One aspect that this study set out to record was innovations. As discussed already, I was only able to record a few expressions indicative of repertoire expansion and possible developing hybridity. I would recommend that future research follows up on this to determine how developed this is and the consequences thereof for the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages. Returning to this is something worth considering for future research. I believe there

is a possibility of these few expressions metamorphosing into a hybrid language. Revisiting this in the future should expand sociolinguistics scholarship.

My study also recorded an unusual language use where a participant reported speaking to herself as a strategy to maintain the languages in her repertoire. This should interest future researchers. I have suggested this as a domain of language use which is relevant to the understanding of language vitality and language practices of speakers. Although this practice deviates from the normal domains of language use common in the literature, it should not be overlooked by future research.

Finally, I would recommend future research on my findings on language attitudes. It would be interesting to investigate if other immigrant communities in Cape Town (or elsewhere) support this finding on attitude not preventing language learning and other possible reasons for this. For years, the understanding of language attitude has been linked to behaviour. It has been theorised that the attitudes individuals hold toward languages influence their success level in second language acquisition. Nevertheless, my data indicates otherwise. Thus, I recommend that future research be conducted on this, especially on immigrants' language practices.

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# Appendix 1: Informed consent form

**Informed Consent Form for study participant**

Project: The vitality of immigrant languages in the diaspora

This informed consent form is for participants in Cape Town who are kindly requested to participate in the research, "Language maintenance and shift: case study of Igbo, Yoruba, and Nigerian Pidgin in Cape Town" (working title).

Name of Researcher: Beauty Umana

Name of Organization: the University of Cape Town

Please note that I have written this Informed Consent Form in two parts:

Part 1: Information Sheet (to get you acquainted with what the study is about)

Part 2: Certificate of Consent (this part requires your signatures if you choose to participate)

I will give you one copy of the full Informed Consent Form

**Part I: Information Sheet**

**Introduction**

My name is Beauty Umana, a PhD candidate at the Department of Linguistics, University of Cape Town. I am researching immigrant language vitality. I will provide you with all the information you need and request you to be part of this research. Please feel free to talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about this project before you decide to be part of it. You can also take your time to decide. There is no rush. Please feel free to take your time and ensure that you are comfortable with taking part in the research. There may be words in this consent form that you do not understand. Please know that you are free to stop me at any time if something is not clear and I will be happy to explain. If any questions come up later, you are also free to ask me.

**Purpose of the research**

The heritage languages of immigrants are important to their existence as it is part of who they are as individuals. Some immigrants are unable to continue to speak their language/s in Cape Town due to fear of discrimination. I want to understand how this problem impacts the lives of immigrants and what solutions can be provided to add value to their lives. I also want to record how their heritage languages may be transforming if they are in any way. Your participation in this research will take us a step closer to finding the answers.

**Type of Research**

For your participation in this research, I will need to interview you for about one hour or observe your activities three times a week over a six-month period. You are free to choose which one you prefer based on what you are comfortable with and your availability.

**Participant Selection**

I have selected you to be part of this research because I believe your experience as a Nigerian immigrant in Cape Town will provide me with useful information. Also, your lived experience will further enrich my understanding of anti-immigration sentiments impact the vitality of immigrants' heritage languages.

Do you fully understand what the research is about? Is it clear why I have requested you participate in this research?

**Voluntary Participation**

Please note that it is voluntary for you to take part in this research. You are free to choose if you would like to participate or not. You are also free to opt out at any point if you no longer feel comfortable. This consent form does not compel you to complete the research. I will not and cannot force you to continue in this research if you feel uncomfortable as we go along and choose to quit.

If you decide not to participate in this research study, do you know your options? Do you know that you do not have to take part in this research study if you do not wish to? Do you have any questions?

**Procedures**

I am requesting your assistance with understanding more about the impact of immigration on heritage language vitality. If you agree to participate, we will chat about your experience as an

immigrant in Cape Town, the languages you speak and in what places you speak them and with whom.

For the interview, I will sit with you in a comfortable and conducive place for you. We can do the interview at your home or wherever you feel comfortable. I acknowledge that discussing your life is a sensitive topic and I completely understand if you feel uncomfortable and do not want to share certain aspects. Please feel free to let me know when you find a question uncomfortable. I want you to know that you do not have to answer all the questions. Only you and I will be present for the duration of the interview. All information you provide is confidential and you can rest assured that the information will not be shared with anyone. If you permit me, I would like to record our chat and that recording will also be confidential and I will be the only one with access to it. The recording will be destroyed after the research process is completed.

For the observation, your daily activity/ies will be observed for a period of 6 months. In these 6 months, I will spend 2/3 hours 3 times a week, observing your activities either at the home, in your gathering with your friends and family, or in any other activity that you prefer. You may go about your regular activity during this period while I observe. You do not have to do anything but may answer a few questions that I may have as I observe you.

**Duration**

This research should last for a period of 2 to 3 years. I will do the fieldwork part of collecting data for 6 months. The data will be analysed and written down over 1 year. Within this 1 year, I may need to follow up with you on some things that may arise. Should you choose to participate in the interview only, I will visit you once for the interview. If you choose to be part of only the observation, I will visit you 3 times a week for 6 months. Should you choose to participate in both observation and interview, I will visit you 3 times a week during the observation week and for the interview, I will conduct a 1-hour interview during another visit.

**Risks**

I acknowledge that the information you will be asked will involve you sharing personal, confidential, and even difficult information and you may not be comfortable with it. Please know that you are not under any obligation to share information you do not want to share. It is totally okay if you do not want to answer any of the questions I ask. If any of the questions affect you personally, please let me know so that I can arrange for any support you may need.

**Benefits**

Your participation in this research will help find a solution to some challenges immigrants in Cape Town and South Africa at large face.

**Confidentiality**

If you choose to participate in this research, you may be asked some questions by others in the community who may notice the research happening. All information you give me will not be shared with anyone. It will be kept private. You will be anonymous to protect your identity.

Are you clear on the procedure I will take to protect your confidentiality? Is there anything you would like me to clarify?

**Sharing the Results**

All the information you share during your participation will not be shared with anyone and your name will not be disclosed at any point. I will share the knowledge I receive from this research with you before it is made publicly available to others. I will share a summary of my findings with you. The findings will also be published so that the public can benefit from the knowledge.

**Part II: Certificate of Consent**

I have been invited to participate in research about the influence of anti-immigration sentiments on immigrants' heritage language vitality.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I was given the chance to ask questions about my concerns and any questions I asked were answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily and without coercion grant my permission to participate in this study.

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

        Day/month/year

**If I cannot read English/minor**:

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely / I as the parent has granted permission for my child to participate in this research freely.

Print name of witness_____          Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness     _____

Date _____

       Day/month/year

**Statement by the researcher/person taking consent**

I have taken some time to read the information sheet to the potential participant. I have also ensured that the participant is fully made aware of the procedures that would be carried out in this research as outlined above.

I confirm that I gave the potential participant the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and I have answered all the questions that were asked clearly and correctly to the best of my ability. I confirm that no form of coercion was used to receive consent from the participant. The individual is in sound mind and gave consent willingly and freely.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent_____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date _____

       Day/month/year

# Appendix 2: Interview guide

Please, indicate your age group:

18-29 □                    30-39 □                    40-49 □

2. Your place of residence:

………………………………………………………………………………………….

3. Your gender: M □   F □

4.Your occupation:

………………………………………………………………………………………….

5. The highest level of education you have completed:

………………………………………………………………………………………….

7. To what generation of South African Nigerian/South Africans with Nigerian roots/Nigerians do you belong?

First (you immigrated to South Africa when you were 18 or older) □

Second (you were brought to South Africa as a child or at least one of your parents immigrated to SA) □

Third (you were born in South Africa, at least one of your grandparents immigrated to SA) □

Fourth (you were born in South Africa, at least one of your great-grandparents immigrated to South Africa) □

Other (please specify what applies in your case in terms of generation and/or territory)………… .....................................................................................................

8. If you belong to the first generation, please indicate how much time have you spent in South Africa…………………………………………………………………………..

> ➢ What languages did you speak at home while you were growing up?
> ➢ What role did these language/s play in your home?
> ➢ What languages do you speak, and which one do you consider your home language/mother tongue/first language?
> ➢ How did your parents get you to speak their language?
> ➢ How important was it for you to learn your home language and why?
> ➢ How has living in Cape Town affected your ability to speak your home language/s? has it affected your fluency in the language?
> ➢ Which of the languages of the Western Cape, that is, Afrikaans or isiXhosa do you speak and how fluent are you?
> ➢ Which language/s do you use to communicate with your wards and why?

- As a parent, do you think it is important for your children to know and speak your language? Why?
- If they choose not to speak your language, how will you respond to this?
- How does migrating to a new society influence Nigerian migrants' linguistic practices?
- How do you ensure you do not forget your language while in Cape Town? Do you read books in the language, pray in it, or maintain communication with relatives back home?
- What new innovations emerge in their linguistic practices involving these languages?
- Please provide a general comment about your language. How valuable is Yoruba and NP to you as an immigrant in Cape Town? Do you think it is important for the languages to be transferred to the younger generation, and why? Should African languages be promoted like European ones? Do you think Yoruba should be taught is schools like English is taught?

**For the children**
- How do you feel about learning the parents' language?
- In what contexts do you speak your home language?
- Do you think it is important for you to know your home language?