# Students' perspectives on the language question in South African Higher Education: The expression of marginalized linguistic identities on Rhodes University students' Facebook pages

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in African Language Studies**

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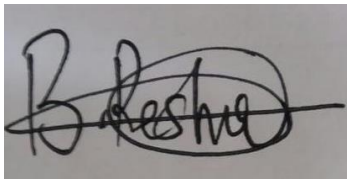
**DECLARATION**

I, Babalwa Resha, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been properly acknowledged. This work has not been submitted previously in its entirety, or in any part, at any other higher education institution for degree purposes. It is being submitted for a Master of Arts Degree in African Languages in the Faculty of Humanities, Rhodes University, South Africa.



……..... …21/02/2019…….

Babalwa Resha Date

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to both the Resha and Matyela families, with special dedications to my two late grandmothers, Nokhaya Nombombosi Resha and Nonkosi Eunice Ngcala who have instilled faith, hope, peace, and love in me. To my late lovely friend, Veronica Daniels, I know how proud you will be of yet another achievement. You will forever be in my heart and may your beautiful soul continue to rest in peace. A very special and a heartfelt dedication to my amazing partner, Venetia Jacobs, thank you so much for your unwavering support, sacrifice and unconditional love. You are one in a million! A warm and lovely dedication to my supportive and loving parents, Sandisile Freddie Resha and Nondumiso Nobanbo Resha. My name says it all I am truly blessed! *Ndiyabulela bazali!*

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I would also like to thank my family for their complete support and love throughout my dissertation experience. God knows I am truly grateful and appreciative of the abundant support you have shown and given to me. All thanks to God *and iiZinyanya* for guidance throughout this whole process.

*Mantande, booDiba abahle, Dlomo, Sopitsho, Yem-Yem, Ngqolomsila, Vel' bambhentsele, baThemb', ndiyabulela ngenkxaso yenu, ndinganilibalanga nani booRhadebe, Mthimkhulu, Ndlebentle zombini. Ngxatsho! Camagu!*

To the entire African Languages Studies Section at Rhodes University, I acknowledge all your support. I thank you! An extended recognition for the Rhodes University Library Staff for their friendly assistance, and to those who directly or indirectly contributed to the achievement of this study, thank you.

*KUWO WONKE LOO MAGXALABA ABANZI, HUNTSU! NDIYABULELA KAKHULU NGENKXASO YENU.*

**ABSTRACT**

The study analyses students' engagement with the language question in South African Higher Education (HE) and their use of African languages on the institutional Facebook pages, namely UCKAR and RHODES SRC, during the student protests of 2015 to early 2017. Extensive use of social media is a salient feature of the protests as indicated by the hashtag prefixes such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. On these platforms, disgruntled students use their multiple languages to interact, establish a sense of belonging and power to challenge different forms of exclusionary institutional culture, including language policies and practices in HE. The research examines and explores students' perspectives on the language question in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the two institutional Facebook pages, and how mother tongue speakers of indigenous African languages use these languages to express their marginalized linguistic identities in HEIs in South Africa.

Theoretically, the study uses the notion of linguistic imperialism to provide a broad context for understanding the language question in South African HE and its significance in transformation. The engagement with the language question on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages is carried out from the lenses of citizen sociolinguistics while the new theory of translanguaging offers the analysis on language usage and alternative ways of addressing linguistic hegemony in educational environments. The translanguaging approach has the capacity to demonstrate multi-layered linguistic practices and reflections on the UCKAR and RHODES pages. It is the interest of the researcher to investigate how students with various linguistic and other backgrounds engage the language question and perform linguistic identities. Language usage on the two Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages and its implications on students' engagement with issues, is used to provide insight towards the implementation of multilingualism in the university.

The study is virtual ethnographic in nature. Virtual ethnography is an online research method that employs ethnographic research to study online social interactions. To analyse data, the study used a textual analysis technique as it looks at any analysis of texts broadly. Critical Discourse Analysis approach was used to analyse language debates. Purposive sampling was also used to select Facebook posts and comments on the language question and those written in African languages, and interviews were conducted with key members of Rhodes University, to bring forth their perspectives on the institution's language policy and to figure out what plans are put into place to engage students in debates on the language question because students are important stakeholders of the university, and at the same time some of these students are also

speakers of indigenous African languages.

In general, the research findings have shown that students as users of languages in HEIs are capable of engendering debates that could be used as solutions to the language question and transformation in the South African HEIs. Thus, this study offers a different approach into engaging with students, their perspective and debates through institutional Facebook pages. In addition, it offers students' perspectives on the curriculum of the university and how the university can go about its transformation. This study provides evidence that the use of indigenous African languages by mother tongue speakers of these languages in institutes of higher learning and their related institutional Facebook pages and social media in general, is an expression of marginalized linguistic identities of these language speakers. Sometimes these identities are multiple, and students use different modalities to express them, hence the notion of translanguaging.

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**ACRONYMS**

#FMF – FeesMustFall

#RMF - RhodesMustFall

ANC - African National Congress

BAC - Black Consciousness Movement

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

CHERTL - Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University

HE – Higher Education

HEIs - Higher Education Institutions

ICTs - Information Communication Technologies

IEB - Independent Election Board

IM- Instant Messaging

LoLT - Language of Learning and Teaching

LOTE- Languages other than English

LPHE - Language Policy for Higher Education

NEUM - Non-European Unity Movement

PAC - Pan Africanist Congress

RU – Rhodes University

SIT - Social Identity Theory

SRC- Student Representative Council

UCKAR- University Currently Known As Rhodes

UCT – University of Cape Town

UKZN – University of KwaZulu Natala

UNISA - University of South Africa

WITS- University of Witwatersrand

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research analyses students' engagement with the language question in South African HE and their use of indigenous African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC institutional Facebook pages during student protests of 2015 to early 2017, with the focus being on the dominance of English and the domination of indigenous African languages in South African HEIs. The focus is also on the expression of marginalized linguistic identities of speakers of indigenous African languages, and how they express these during their engagements with the language question in HE. The purpose of the first chapter is to provide a brief introduction to this research. The chapter gives the background to the study. It therefore states the problem of the study and the motivation for conducting this research. The chapter further presents the aim guiding the study as well its objectives. Finally, it provides an outline of the structure or an exposition of chapters of this study.

## 1.2 THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Extensive use of social media has a become a salient feature of various forms of protests against government and other forms of authority including universities, as indicated by the hashtag prefixes, such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall (#FMF). During recent protests, students used Facebook and Twitter for mobilisation and publicity purposes (Bosch, 2016; Oxlund, 2016; Govender, 2017; Mwaniki, 2018). At Rhodes University (RU), henceforth Rhodes, the UCKAR page was created by students during the 2015 #FMF protests. A clear contestation around name change of the institution as part of transformation is noticeable. The creation of the UCKAR page followed the prohibition of some students' protest posts by fellow students on the Student Representative Council (SRC) page and the insistence on the use of English as the only acceptable posting language. UCKAR page administrators describe the page as a platform "for students of the University Currently Known As Rhodes who refused to be silenced". On this platform, disgruntled students use their multiple languages to interact, to establish a sense of belonging and power in order to challenge different forms of exclusionary institutional culture, including language policies and practices in HE.

During the apartheid era, universities were essentially segregated along racial and linguistic lines, resulting in the so-called black and white universities as well as English and Afrikaans universities (Language Policy in Higher Education, 2002; Bunting, 2006; Du Plessis, 2006; Webb, 2009; Madiba, 2004; 2010, Mkhize & Balfour, 2017). Rhodes University is an example of a historically white, English language institution. Following Ansre (1979) and Phillipson (1992; 1996; 1998), South African universities under the colonial and apartheid regimes could be regarded as 'structures of linguistic imperialism'. Phillipson (1997) regards linguistic imperialism as a theoretical construct for understanding linguistic hierarchies, and the structures and ideologies that establish and sustain such hierarchies. As elaborated in Chapter Three, this includes the transmission of dominant language and culture onto others, which applies to the hegemony of English in HE. As Shannon (1995: 177) notes that "languages themselves achieve the status of dominant or dominated or prestigious or inferior, as a result of the struggles and negotiations that go on between their speakers, just as ideas or programs achieve status in political debates."

Following the demise of apartheid, universities have had to strive for inclusivity and student diversity in order to redress the legacy of overtly exclusive policies and practices of the previous regime. The present study will thus be conducted against the background of the Language Policy in Higher Education (2002), subsequent government and institutional endeavours of implementing the key imperatives of this policy, especially harnessing African languages as resources and transformation tools in the sector, as well as scholarly contestations around the subject. In particular, an engagement with the Rhodes University Language Policy and transforming language practices will be conducted to contextualise this research. According to recent research, about 22 languages are reportedly spoken as mother tongues at Rhodes University, with isiXhosa having the highest number of mother-tongue speakers (Maseko, 2014; Gambushe, 2015; Mawonga, 2015), followed by isiZulu, ChiShona, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho, and others (Kaschula, 2011). However, the linguistic practices that characterise Rhodes Uiversity's academic and administrative activities are yet to match this linguistic diversity (Kaschula et al., 2009; Kaschula & Maseko, 2014 Maseko, 2014; Nudelman, 2015; Mutasa, 2015). English remains the dominant language of academia and university administration, and this is generally the case across the sector (Madiba, 2010; Maseko, 2014; Henao, 2017); with Afrikaans universities looking set to become bilingual English/Afrikaans institutions (Mkhize 2018). As well as suppressing linguistic and cultural plurality, this continuing English hegemony impedes epistemological access, active

participation and success of students who speak Languages other than English (LOTE) (Madiba, 2010; Nkosi, 2014; Nyika, 2015; Heleta, 2016). The marginalisation of Languages other than English (LOTE), specifically African languages, makes the language question an integral component of debates and initiatives on transformation of HE, which students deem to be sluggish, as can be seen on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages.

The language question and the use of African languages on both institutional pages may be seen as an act of citizen sociolinguistics as it involves unprofessional linguists or language planners engaged in what is called language planning from below (Alexander, 1989; 2004; Kamwendo, 2005; Webb, 2009; Du Plessis, 2010). According to Rymes & Leone (2014), who developed the concept, and subsequently Moore (2015) and Svendsen (2018), citizen sociolinguistics constitutes the ways citizens or any individual, more than trained sociolinguists, understand the world of language around them including commenting on speech or the way people use language. The language question in HE has been formalised through government and institutional structures responsible for language policy formulation and implementation. Despite pronouncing commitment towards the intellectualisation of African languages as languages of academia and promoting multilingualism as part of institutional cultures, i.e. using them for administration and other forms of communication within universities, African languages remain marginalised.

At Rhodes University, for instance, this remains the case despite the fact that the language policy was first adopted in 2005 and it was up for a third review in the year 2018. On the academic front, some academics celebrate the progress that universities have made (Madiba, 2010; 2013; Maseko, 2014; Mkhize & Balfour, 2017), while others lament the challenges that have confronted the language question, thereby undermining the successful transformation of language practices to be in sync with linguistic and cultural diversity of South African universities (Madiba, 2004; Govinder et al., 2013; Henao, 2017; Zikode, 2017). Conspicuous in the existing knowledge are the limited, if any, voices of students, especially from previously marginalised backgrounds. It may be argued that the current status quo is a consequence of the enduring structures of linguistic imperialism which do not spare even official language planning processes in post-independent contexts, as they constitute a top-down approach below (Alexander, 1989; 2004). For the present study, the debates on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages provide that perspective from below and the researcher hopes that this may provide some useful insights inspired by citizen sociolinguistics towards language policy issues.

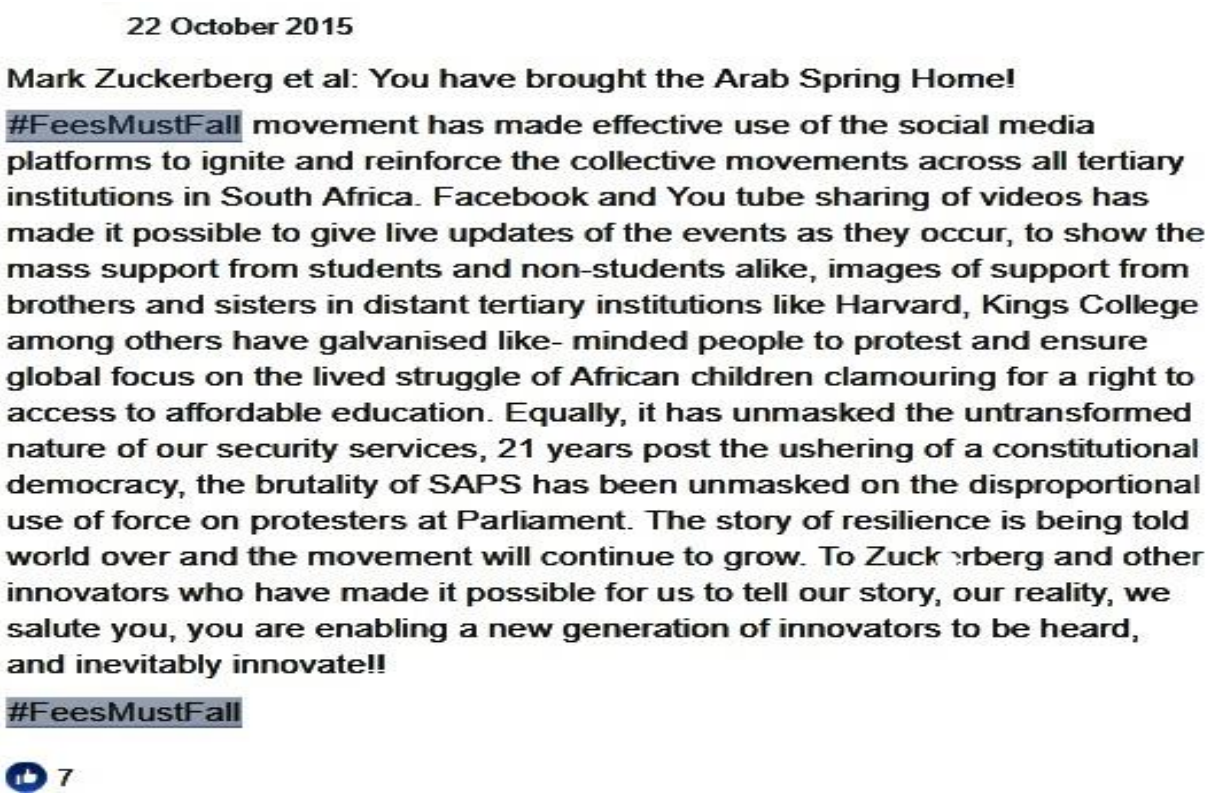
This study thus considers UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages as spaces in which a counter-hegemonic process emerges against the dominance of English, resulting in the expression of marginalised linguistic identities associated with African languages. The nexus between language and identity has been the subject of scholarly engagement in sociolinguistics, sociology and anthropology (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Garuba, 2001; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a; Woolard, 2008; Swanepoel, 2011; Park, 2012; Makoe, 2014). Linguistic identity refers to "the sense of belonging to a community as mediated through symbolic resource of language, or the varying ways in which we come to understand the relationship between our language and ourselves" (Park, 2012: 1080). In this study, linguistic identities would result in students' classification into isiXhosa-speaking, ChiShona-speaking, English-speaking, and so on. However, Park (2012: 1082) observes that, "speakers are always capable of extending and modifying their linguistic repertoire and incorporating multiple languages into more complex articulations of one's sense of identity". Thus, like other forms of identity, linguistic identities are not fixed but fluid, they can be expressed and also contested (Swanepoel, 2011).

In South Africa, the dominance of English does not only manifest itself through its preference and use but also through its teaching as a subject that non-mother-tongue speakers can learn as a Home Language at the school level. As a result, while such students may subscribe to linguistic identities associated with their mother tongues, their positions in the language debate may either submit to or contest English hegemony in the context of linguistic diversity at Rhodes University. Linguistic identity performance, including language choice, is determined by existing practices in specific social domains (Bocock, 1986; Reddy, 2000; Suarez, 2002; Andrews, 2010; Makoe, 2014; Henao, 2017). Existing practices in the social media and in other social contexts, especially in South African HE institutions, make English the language of choice. Within this framework of linguistic imperialism and hegemony, this study hopes to achieve a nuanced understanding of students' complex discussions of the language question.

### 1.2.1 The role of social media in student protests

Student protests were social media driven as stated earlier, and the role social media played in these protests can be seen in how students were able to utilize it through the use of #hashtags and sharing of content while they engaged with one another and the world at large. In the process, there were also posts that were shared by students to applaud the social media

companies and their founders. For instance, on the 22 October 2015, someone posted on the RHODES SRC page and applauded how the #FeesMustFall movement had made effective use of social media platforms to ignite and reinforce collective movements across all tertiary institutions in South Africa.



22 October 2015

Mark Zuckerberg et al: You have brought the Arab Spring Home!

#FeesMustFall movement has made effective use of the social media platforms to ignite and reinforce the collective movements across all tertiary institutions in South Africa. Facebook and You tube sharing of videos has made it possible to give live updates of the events as they occur, to show the mass support from students and non-students alike, images of support from brothers and sisters in distant tertiary institutions like Harvard, Kings College among others have galvanised like- minded people to protest and ensure global focus on the lived struggle of African children clamouring for a right to access to affordable education. Equally, it has unmasked the untransformed nature of our security services, 21 years post the ushering of a constitutional democracy, the brutality of SAPS has been unmasked on the disproportional use of force on protesters at Parliament. The story of resilience is being told world over and the movement will continue to grow. To Zuck :rberg and other innovators who have made it possible for us to tell our story, our reality, we salute you, you are enabling a new generation of innovators to be heard, and inevitably innovate!!

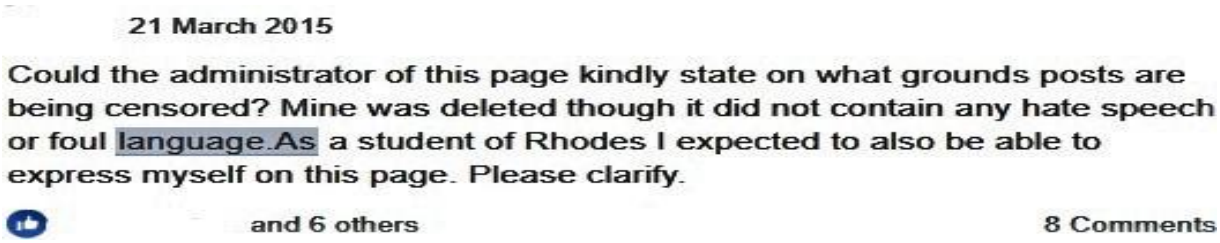
#FeesMustFall

7

The post further explains how Facebook and YouTube have made the sharing of videos possible, to give live updates of the events as they happen, thereby showing mass support from students and non-students nationwide. Furthermore, the post also acclaims and shows words of gratitude to the Facebook co-founding chairman and chief executive officer, Mark Zuckerberg, and other innovators for enabling students to tell their story and their reality. The post had seven likes in total. This post is an example of the significant role that social media plays in student protests.

### 1.2.2 Censorship of students' posts

It is worth noting that prior to the #FeesMustFall protest, students used the RHODES SRC page as a platform for interaction. The UCKAR page was created by students during the 2015 #FMF protests. As noted, the move to using the UCKAR page is a clear contestation around name change of the institution as part of transformation. As observed by the researcher based on students' discussions, the creation of the UCKAR page followed the prohibition of some students' posts by fellow students and administrators on the RHODES SRC page. As will be seen in some of the comments below, the administrator of the RHODES SRC page states that the reason some posts are removed from the page is the amount of times a particular post gets reported to the Facebook team. Some students posted to complain about the censorship practice on the RHODES SRC page:




This post has seven likes and eight comments. One of the comments explains that if the post is reported to the Facebook team and the administrators several times, it automatically gets removed by the system, to which the original poster enquires that how many times is repeatedly (see Appendix E). Consequently, on the same day, the 21st March 2015, a student posted with a complaint that [the student] was blocked and unblocked again from the RHODES SRC page and further pleaded that the kind of censorship not be normalized on the basis of the student's views causing some people discomfort as this denies the student a right to participate on the page:

May this censorship not become normalised. Whether or not my views make some people uncomfortable cannot be used as a basis to deny me a right of participation. We are all students of the university and have equal rights to platforms of engagement provided by the university and various institutions within it. It must not be presented as if some people are here on mercy and others on merit. We are all students here.

The administrator of this page cannot decide to block students simply because they differ with issues raised about and within the institution. It is wrong on very many levels and I strongly implore that you emphasise to your SRC that such an injustice is uncalled for and quiet frankly, unconstitutional. Regressive actions of this nature are always informed by those who hold reactionary. We cannot be held ransom by people's prejudices.

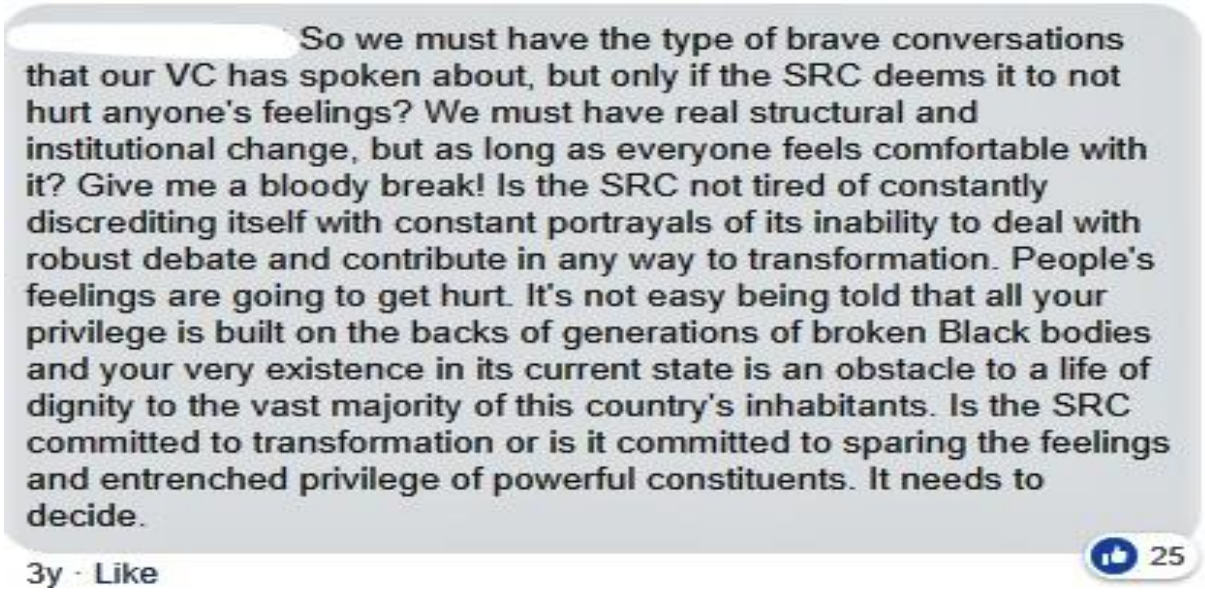
I thank you

46 28 Comments

This post has 46 likes in total, with 28 comments of varying views on this issue. It is clear from the student's post that students cannot post freely on issues that affect them without the SRC monitoring and deleting posts with which they (SRC) disagree.

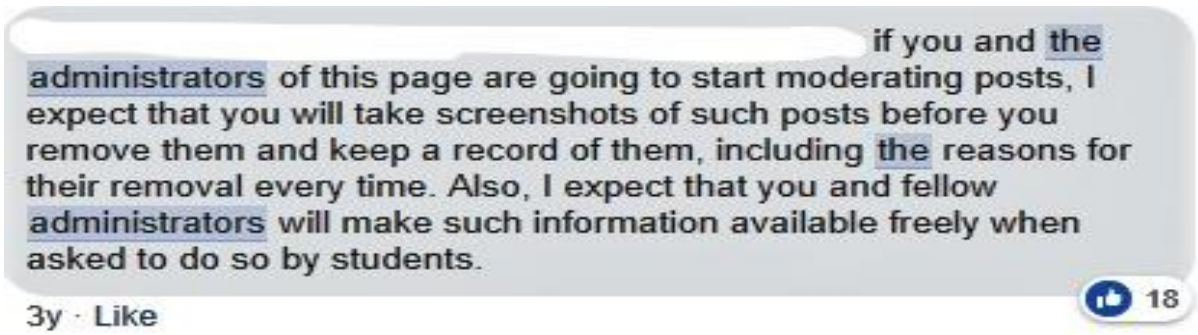
Accordingly, on 2 May 2015 the Rhodes University's SRC former President of that period posted a statement on the RHODES SRC page that stated how the student body is divided. The statement further explains how the use of personal attack on other students who post on the page, by some members of the student body, is prohibited. In the statement, the former Rhodes University's SRC President states that an alternative page has been opened for the subject of the university name change and transformation, and further states other rules and regulations for the two pages (see Appendix F).

Certainly, the statement by the former SRC president with a total of 159 likes, 20 comments and one person shared it, had an unpopular welcome by the student body. A comment with 25 likes which is also against this notion, poses rhetorical questions towards the SRC president's post:

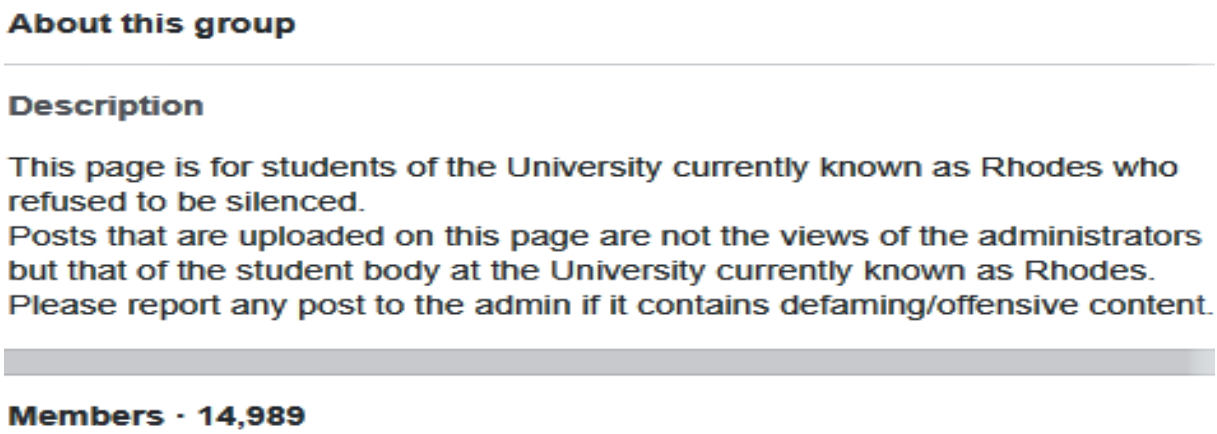



The commentator above suggests that students will continue to have uncomfortable conversations as long as they are not addressed, as they contribute towards transformation.

One of the comments that condemns the statement has 18 likes and notes that if the former SRC president and the administrators of the RHODES SRC Facebook page are going to start moderating posts, they must do so with accountability of doing so to, to the student body:




The outcome of such debates resulted in the creation of the UCKAR Facebook page by some Rhodes University students, as an alternative platform to engage in debates around transformation and decolonization as can be seen from the description of the UCKAR page. At the moment of data collection, the UCKAR page had 14,989 members meaning it consists of both former and current Rhodes University students.




## 1.3 THE STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The study seeks to respond to the following research question: How do students with various linguistic backgrounds, especially speakers of African languages, engage the language question and perform linguistic identities in the context of transformation debates in South African HE on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages?

In the context of the research problem, the study seeks to address the following questions:

- How do users of UCKAR and RHODES pages engage in the language policy and practices at Rhodes University, and perspectives on these pages contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE?
- What is the significance of the use of African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages in relation to the language question and HE transformation in general?
- Does the use of different languages in discussions around the language question by users of UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages indicate or assert any linguistic identities?
- How do students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences as expressed on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages?

In summary, this research therefore seeks to analyse students' engagement with the language question in South African Higher Education (HE) and their use of African languages on the Facebook pages named UCKAR (University Currently Known as Rhodes) and RHODES SRC during student protests. It analyses whether the use of indigenous of African languages, is an

expression of marginalized linguistic identities of speakers of these languages in a multilingual environment or linguistic diverse institution as Rhodes University.
The next section discusses the aim and objectives of the research.

## 1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research analyses students' engagement with the language question and their expression of linguistic identities in the context of transformation debates in South African HE on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To examine how the users of UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages engage the language policy and practices at Rhodes University, and their perspectives on these pages contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE.

2. To determine the significance of the use of African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages in relation to language question and HE transformation in general;

3. To determine how the use of different languages in discussions around the language question by users of the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages indicate or assert any linguistic identities; and

4. To analyse how students' linguistic identities, influence their language preferences as expressed on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages;

## 1.5 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MULTILINGUALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1.5.1 Language Policy for Higher Education (LPHE)

This study is conducted against the background of the Higher Education and Rhodes University Language Policies, as both are important documents to analyse in order to critically engage and examine students' language practices on the UCKAR Facebook page. The Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) recognizes that South Africa is a country of many languages and tongues, and that the country's languages have not always been "working together". Additionally, the policy notes and claims to recognize the linguistic diversity of South African student population with various home and/or primary languages represented in the student body of each institution. Furthermore, the LPHE acknowledges that "language has been and continues to be a barrier to access and success in higher education; both in the sense that African and other languages have not been developed as academic or scientific languages and in so far as the majority of students entering higher education are not fully proficient in English and Afrikaans", (Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education, 2002: 4).

Higher Education recognises the importance of linguistic diversity of or in higher education institutions, however, it also claims to have not yet succeeded in establishing multilingualism in both the day-to-day institutional life and in core activities. The failure to promote multilingualism in the linguistically diverse higher education institutions has resulted in the marginalisation of African languages, and furthermore it hinders the creation of an inclusive institutional environment advancing tolerance and respect for diversity. Frustrations with the slow pace and insignificant impact of formal transformation initiatives in South African higher education prompted nationwide student protests.

To carry out its plans to foster multilingualism, the Ministry of Education requested advice from the Council on Higher Education on the development of an appropriate language policy for higher education. In July 2001, the Council submitted its advice to the Minister, a report entitled "Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education" (Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education, 2001). The Council suggested that, while we recognise the linguistically diverse and multilingual settings and the increasingly hegemonic status of English in business and communication globally, it is as "necessary to establish the

foundations for the use of African languages as Languages of Tuition [as well as communication and administration] at all levels of the system, however long the process of doing so might take", (Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education, 2001: 7). In its Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education document, the Council claims to fail to address the English or Afrikaans colonial bilingual education because "legally their status is no different from the other languages recognised by the Constitution", (Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education, 2001: 8). However, on this language policy framework, the Council explains that as the country is emerging from a culture of colonial bilingual education to the status of the two languages and their role in education is acceptable. The Council further suggested that, rather than referring to the past, it would be more helpful for all concerned to look to the future. Additionally, the Council asserted that in the absence of data at the time of writing the language policy framework, "hasty decisions and polices" were inadvisable and it further suggested that research needs to be conducted to establish what learner groups are responsible for the increase in the use of English, and what has happened to learners who are Afrikaans-speaking (Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education, 2001). In conclusion, the language policy framework by the Council consists of recommendations that are divided into three categories: (i) steps that can be implemented immediately; (ii) measures that can be undertaken in the short term; and (iii) proposals for medium to long term implementation. It is in this context that the next section will discuss Rhodes University Language Policy and its aims and objectives to deal with multilingualism in its institution as recommended in the Language Policy for Higher Education.

### 1.5.2 Rhodes University Language Policy

The study will also be reviewing the Rhodes University Language Policy, its objectives in line with its practice. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that conditions for the development and for the promotion of the equal use and enjoyment of all eleven official languages, must be created [section 3 (1)]. The Rhodes University Language Policy claims to be in line with Section 6 of the Constitution of 1996, with the 2012 use of Official Languages Act, and further with the guidelines laid down by the Council on Higher Education. The policy further claims to be concerned with the development and promotion of respect for all languages used by South Africans, and in particular, with the equitable use of the official provincial languages at Rhodes University. Furthermore, "the policy is committed to the

intellectualisation of African languages and creating the conditions for the use of particularly isiXhosa as a language of learning and eventually also teaching", (Rhodes University Languages Policy, 2014: 2). On its policy statement, Rhodes University declares that the university is committed to give equal esteem to all official languages and developing and promoting all official languages in South Africa; to ensuring that language should not act as a barrier to equity of access, opportunity, and success. The policy statement further proclaims that, it is committed to promoting multilingualism and the intellectualisation of African Languages, and to creating the conditions for the use of particularly isiXhosa as a language of learning and eventually also teaching.

In addition to the policy statement, Rhodes University's Language Policy has goals that it has put into place to achieve. It is stated on the university's language policy that the policy goals of the University are to promote multilingualism and sensitivity in language usage in a way that creates and fosters a supportive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory environment in which all members of the University can feel they belong. Additionally, the policy goals are to promote the intellectualisation of isiXhosa, as part of redressing the previous marginalisation of indigenous languages and also promoting the status of foreign languages. The University commits itself to further "ensuring that while the language of wider communication within the university community is English, translation and interpreting into isiXhosa and Afrikaans is provided for students and staff where necessary and feasible", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 3).

Furthermore, the University maintains its aims to strengthen the status of isiXhosa by promoting its value as a medium of communication among academic and support staff. This goal is in line with the task the University has allocated to the Communications and Marketing Division or Student Representative Council, to be requested "where necessary and feasible use interpreters and translators to make verbal and written presentations regarding certain policies or issues in the University; and explore the use of isiXhosa and Afrikaans on the Rhodes University website" (Rhodes Language Policy, 2014: 7). The University assures that this task will not only be that of the Communications and Marketing Division or Student Representative Council, but the University pledges to have the Human Resources Division devise strategies to encourage members of the university who do not speak isiXhosa to enrol for the short communicative course in isiXhosa offered by the African Languages Studies' Section of the School of Languages; and ensure that advertisements for vacant positions indicate that

competence in more than one official language will be a recommendation. The next section presents the structure of the research dissertation.

## 1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH DISSERTATION

This section outlines the structure of this research dissertation and provides a brief overview of the content of each chapter.

**Chapter One** gives the background to the study. The chapter also presents the statement of the problem, the key aim and the objectives of this study. Finally, the study provides an exposition of chapters.

**Chapter Two** reviews literature appropriate for this research. In the first section the study discusses a comparative sociolinguistic approach on the use of indigenous African languages in different African countries. It further discusses multilingualism in South African universities, and the intellectualisation of indigenous of African languages in HEIs. The second section discusses indigenous African languages and the internet. It further discusses social media and youth and social media and linguistic citizenship. Lastly, the third section discusses social identity, and the subsections discuss linguistic identity and social media and the expression of identity.

**Chapter Three** describes the theoretical framework that is the guide to the study. The chapter first outlines the framework on linguistic imperialism as an approach to English linguistic imperialism, and its dominance or hegemony. The chapter also outlines the citizen sociolinguistic theoretical approach in relationship to the newly developed concept of linguistic citizenship. It finally outlines the notion of translanguaging.

**Chapter Four** discusses the research methodology used in this study. This chapter provides detailed information on methods that were used for the process of data collection and data analysis procedures.

**Chapter Five** presents the findings of the research on the dominance of English in HE in the curriculum, non-academic spaces, and the hierarchy of languages according to geographical areas. In addition, the chapter also focuses on the use of African languages in HEIs and on students' perspectives on this practice.

**Chapter Six** concludes this research dissertation and provides key recommendations for the implementation of multilingualism and mindfulness of linguistic diversity in HEIs.

## 1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter was a presentation of the background and the rationale for this research. This entailed discussing the legislative framework for multilingualism in HE, as the study will be critiquing and conducted against the Language Policy for Higher Education and Rhodes University Language Policy. The chapter further discussed the problem which underlines the research. In addition, it presented the major aim of this research as well as the objectives guiding it. The next chapter reviews literature on different aspects of multilingualism in HE.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first section of this chapter discusses a comparative sociolinguistic approach on the use of indigenous African languages in different African countries, and multilingualism in HEIs in South Africa. The second section discusses the use of indigenous African languages on the internet, as a way of promoting and further developing these languages. The third section reviews literature on social identity theory as an expression of linguistic identity between different groups of languages, and also looks at social media as a platform to express identity.

## 2.2. A COMPARITIVE SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH ON THE USE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN DIFFERENT AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Ngonyani (1995) looked at the language use by speakers of different languages in Tanzania, demonstrating and/or exploring how the different languages are integrated in the country. Ngonyani (1995) further argues that the different languages are integrated in the use by speakers, as if they were only varieties of the same language used in different situations, and as if they were registers. He also discovered that people would use Swahili in cases where they did not share an indigenous African language. This also applies in South Africa, depending in a context. For example, the sentiment of rudeness attached to using English prevails in contexts such as rural areas, whereas the value attached to English also differs according to spaces such as academic contexts and urban areas. In addition, in some of these African countries such as South Africa and Nigeria, depending on the context, it has come to be seen as illiterate or not intelligent enough by not being able to speak the English language let alone have the ability to pronounce or spell words and this is seen in how one is ridiculed in social media once they misspell a word.

Unlike in other African countries where English is seen as a valuable language compared to indigenous African languages, Ngonyani (1995) noted that in Tanzania, Swahili dominated all domains of public communication such as in parliament, in commerce, in churches and mosques, most mass media is in Swahili, and younger people prefer Swahili in all domains of discourse. The author further acknowledges that numerous programs on the radio and columns

in the papers and magazines popularized Swahili as did the terminology coined in the various political campaigns. Therefore, according to Ngonyani (1995: 86) English "did not feature at all as a language of politics in Tanzania after independence". Swahili was the language through which the ideals of self-determination and self-reliance were expressed. This shows how Swahili language speakers take pride in and value in their language, and how measures and structures are put in place to further develop and encourage the use of Swahili in public domains. Ngonyani (1995) further emphasizes that even though there is a very small percentage of the Tanzanian population which belongs to Swahili ethnic community, the overwhelming majority of the people on the mainland belong to different ethnic groups and are not Swahili. But regardless of this and in terms of relations between people of these diverse ethnic communities, the Swahili language was the language for all people. Moreover, Ngonyani further notes that, "much of its support has been through politics and education and it has helped in enhancing a common identity for Tanzanians, forging a solidarity between common people, the peasants and workers, and politicians as well and others such as business and other middle-class people", (Ngonyani, 1995: 87).

The functionality of the Swahili language in Tanzania shows how language does indeed grow when its users value it for all their transactions, and the use of the language has also been encouraged further not only by officials or professionals, but ordinary people have also had an impact as a result there is a national pride and unity through the use of the Swahili language. Ngonyani concurs that, "Swahili has been instrumental in uniting people of different ethnic backgrounds as well as between the educated and the uneducated majority" (Ngonyani, 1995: 87). Lastly, Ngonyani maintains that during the colonization of Africa there was a creation of nationalities with total disregard for the cultures, nations and boundaries that existed before, and the regional imbalances gave some nationalities and languages advantage over others. This imbalance created disunity and a lack of trust among people of different ethnic backgrounds, and language is one of the distinguishing features of the different nationalities.

However, with the developing literature, it is reported that English is the international language used in Higher Education, and Swahili is the widespread national language understood nearly by the entire population (Petzell, 2012). Petzell (*ibid*) reports that regardless of the 128 languages being the mother tongue of the majority of the country, none of these are used by the majority of the country's inhabitants. Moreover, although Swahili is the highly valued national language of the country, English is regarded as the official language and has a high status within Tanzania. This is because English is used as the medium of instruction in HE, and

it is the language of the High Court, diplomacy and foreign trade (Petzell, 2012). This is an indication of the implications of English as a 'universal' or 'standard' language, as a significant change from 20 years ago from Swahili developing in all public communication to English replacing it to all domains.

Garuba (2001) conducted a study on language and identity in Nigeria. According to Garuba (2001), Nigeria has over 400 languages spoken, and of these, three are considered "major languages" while all the others are considered "minor" or "minority" languages. Garuba suggests that it is by Nigerian juridical and constitutional definition that Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo are designated major languages while over 400 others spoken in the country are seen as minority languages. Furthermore, the belief lies in the fact that belonging to a majority language group means having relatively more power and status than belonging to a minority group. However, this power and status, Garuba (2001) suggests, is in the distribution of political and socio-economic gains. In Northern Nigeria, for instance, "where Hausa is the major language, other minority groups are expected to adopt and speak it because of the power and status conferred upon it", (Garuba, 2001: 12). This can be exemplified with the South African case, whereby it is expected of indigenous African languages speakers to adopt and speak the English language because of its hegemony, power, and the status it is given both in official and social spaces.

Garuba (2001) contends that, through a curious collision between missionaries, the differences between local and national identities were glossed over by the creation of standard languages and the deployment of common myths of origin. Furthermore, he maintains that languages that were not mutually comprehensible were declared dialects of a common tongue, and ethnic identity became fixed on the basis of this language. It is further argued that variations in identity on the basis of variations in language were foreclosed, and a national ethno-linguistic identity was imposed. Thus, "National ethnolinguistic identities were therefore constructed to dispel the pull of more authentic local identities and to serve as tools for mobilisation in the contest for political power and the struggle over limited resources", (Garuba, 2001: 7). Garuba (2001) concludes by saying that the language and identity situation in Nigeria is like many other countries and states in other parts of the world, whereby various interest and power groups were actively involved in the construction of standard languages and identities into which various peoples and communities were then boxed.

Alexander (1998) reports on language politics in South Africa. He maintains that, in South Africa, the major social markers of difference, such as colour or race, language, culture, gender, religion and region, as well as class, have at different times played a role either alone or in some combination as determinants of group or social identity. He further suggests that, "as against historical positions, the African National Congress (ANC), the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) as well as the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) somewhat later, in practice pursued a nation-building strategy that was based on the assumption that nations are not necessarily monolingual", (Alexander, 2001: 143). Alexander further asserts that all of these political formations objectively considered language communities to be valid sub-national identities, as they espoused the construction of a national (South African or Azanian) identity and accepted that people would also identify themselves (or be identified as) Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana-speaking etc., and that this was a completely normal phenomenon in any modern industrial state. Even though this was the case, the unfortunate part of it is that none of the vast majority of the South African citizens spoke and speak the language currently or even understand English. The results of these establishments, Alexander suggests, carried onto an "English-only" or an "English mainly" policy, thereby contributing to the hegemony of English in South Africa.

Furthermore, Alexander (2001) observes that in South Africa there was no thought of systematically encouraging and helping people to learn one another's languages on a significant scale. Arguably, this is now slightly different, since while monolingual English speakers remain attached to their own languages and value English, they are also inclined to learn other people's languages especially indigenous African languages due to the transformation period and wanting to be multilingual citizens for better communication capabilities. Regardless of this inclination to learn one another's languages, Alexander is adamant that "there still continues to be tension between the explicit constitutionally enshrined principles of the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa, and the concurrent practical commitment to the hegemonic of English", (Alexander, 2001:144). Alexander suggests that in South Africa today we are faced with a situation that calls for rapid and often dramatic shifts in identity, or in some cases, for the consolidation of inherited identities "African", "Xhosa", "Zimbabwean" from missionaries in the period of colonialism, as these identities are being contested. He further advises that "we have to accept that identities in South Africa today are subject to rapid change, we have to open windows onto one another and we have to get away

from treating any identity as though it is like some irremovable skin without which we would be disfigured" (Alexander, 2001: 151). The next section discusses a historical account that led to demands for the implementation of multilingualism in HEIs in South Africa.

### 2.2.1 Historical accounts of the need of multilingualism in HEIs

Bunting (2006) and subsequently Mkhize (2018) emphasize that South African Higher Education institutions had to be assigned as being for the exclusive use of one of the four race groups, namely: African, Coloured, Indian and White following the 1984 Constitution of South Africa that had established apartheid divisions in education in South Africa. Bunting (2006) further explains that, by the beginning of 1985, a total of 19 Higher Education institutions had been assigned as being 'for the exclusive use of whites', two as being 'for the exclusive use of coloureds', two 'for the exclusive use of Indians', and six as being 'for the exclusive use of Africans'. This resulted in the further classification of South African universities, into historically white universities, historically white Afrikaans-medium universities, historically white English universities, historically Black universities in the Republic of South Africa, and historically Black universities in the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (Bunting 2006).

Historically white universities remained part of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) throughout all the years of apartheid, and according to Bunting (2006) these universities are divided into two distinct sub-groupings: those in which the main medium of communication and instruction was English and those that was Afrikaans medium. Madiba (2010) goes on to explain that the historically white universities were inaccessible to the majority of Black students, and he links the inaccessibility to the government statutory laws which restricted the admission of Black students to these universities, and also because of language admission requirements. This means that, for students to be admitted to these institutions, they were required to be proficient either in English or Afrikaans, depending on whether it was an English or Afrikaans university as previously grouped. The racial and linguistic divisions in South Africa and in South African HEIs resulted in division and categorization of Afrikaans and English universities that are now regarded to as historically Afrikaans-medium universities and historically English-medium universities (Mkhize, 2018).

The first sub-group is the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities and is further reported to consist of six universities, five of which used Afrikaans as the official medium of communication and instruction: the University of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom

University, the University of Pretoria, the Rand Afrikaans University and the University of Stellenbosch (Bunting, 2006). Bunting (2006: 40) notes that the sixth member of the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities, was a dual-medium University of Port Elizabeth, "which had been set up in the early 1960s as a way of bringing conservative white English-speaking students into the government fold and was officially both Afrikaans and English but it was dominated by Afrikaans-speaking executives and governing bodies."

Du Plessis (2006) describes the concept of a historically Afrikaans-medium university to be referring to the apartheid period and to be used currently to differentiate between two types of historically White universities, those that use English as the medium of instruction and those that use Afrikaans. These universities' survival dependent on the government. As stated by Bunting (2006), their financial stability and strength depended on them having good relations with the apartheid government as well as the business sectors with which it had close ties. Additionally, students and staff were not allowed to protest against government policies as well as objections to institutional policies were not accepted. The second sub-group is historically white English universities and it comprised of four historically white English-medium universities: the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal, Rhodes University and the University of the Witwatersrand. Bunting (2006) emphasises that these institutions referred to themselves as the 'liberal universities' because they refused to adopt the apartheid government's view that universities are 'creatures of the state'. This resulted in their unclear relationship with the government during the apartheid years (Bunting, 2006). By law, historically white English universities were institutions for whites only and were not permitted to admit black students, and not to employ black academic staff members. However, this rule changed after the introduction of the 1984 tricameral parliament as these four institutions now strived to bring greater numbers of black students on to their campuses (Bunting, 2006).

The second last category are historically Black universities, in the Republic of South Africa. These universities, according to Bunting (2006) were not established on academic need for institutions as they are now, but on political and instrumental basis. This means that these institutions were instrumental "in the sense of having been set up to train black people who would be useful to the apartheid state, and political in the sense that their existence played a role in the maintenance of the overall apartheid socio-political agenda" (Bunting, 2006).

This resulted in the production of black teacher graduates for the black school systems and black civil servants required by the racially divided civil service of the South African country. These institutionally black universities were contestation tools against the apartheid regime, as a result students always boycotted classes and authorities would respond by closing institutions. Bunting (2006: 46) emphasizes that contestations by students at these universities resulted in new structures such as transformation forums in the 1990s, and gave political powers to students and administrative staff [as they were the people who were mostly affected by apartheid policies in Higher Education], but the level of contestation in these institutions was so high that new governance models and no new administrative systems were put in place. As a result of this, by the year 1994, a significant number of experienced managers and administrators had left these institutions (Bunting, 2006). As can be observed, there are still ongoing battles and struggles in the form of student protests against the authority of HEIs that continue to marginalize African languages' speakers.

Historically black universities were grouped according to the location in which they were situated. Bunting (2006) suggests the last sub-category of historically black universities are institutions in the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei: the University of Transkei, North West University, the University of Venda and the University of Fort Hare. Bunting (2006: 46) emphasises that, "because these 'republics' had been established in a 'homeland of Africans' their universities enrolled mostly African students, many of whom came from the urban areas of the country, i.e. 'white South Africa'. Just like the Black universities mentioned above, Black universities in this area were regarded by government as training institutions for civil servants and school teachers (*ibid.*). The disorder of the early 1990s affected these institutions the same way as the South Africa's historically Black universities. However, Du Plessis (2006) maintains that by 1994 the majority of universities were officially monolingual, and that only three universities were officially bilingual by 1994. Black universities and Indian and coloured universities, on the other hand, were all English medium universities (Du Plessis 2006). Mkhize (2018) notes that although the Black universities shared English as a medium of instruction, they remained divided ethnically, culturally, and linguistically.

In addition, Du Plessis (2006) further maintains that by 2004 the proportion of bilingual universities had increased making it seven out of 22 bilingual institutions. Consequently, the number or size of monolingual English-medium institutions had increased from 21 out of 36 to 15 out of 22 of all South African universities in 2004. Thus, Du Plessis (2006: 100) argues that even though the multilingual South African state "effectively revolutionised the situation

created in 1918 as so far as the monolingual Afrikaans-medium universities are concerned, the multilingual South African state established in 1994 did not necessarily bring about the establishment of 'multilingual' universities where the eleven new official languages were used as media of instruction." The events that took place within these institutions can be equated in contemporary student protests in South African HEIs as students continue to fight the struggle and battle of imbalances that are results of the apartheid era. This suggests, therefore, that as long as there is no racial, social-class, and linguistic inclusivity and so on, in the country's HEIs, there will always be student protests as they seek to get rid of exclusion and marginalisation of African languages and African epistemologies through the marginalization of black experience, issues that this study seeks to explore.

### 2.2.2 Multilingualism in South African HEIs

The imperative to transform South African society from apartheid to democracy meant that institutions such as universities, have had to strive for inclusivity that has resulted in student diversity. Maseko (2014) asserts that language policies published after the attainment of democracy in 1994, which are particularly applicable to HEIs, seek to guard against the use of language to perpetuate the inequalities and inequities of South African society in the past. The main aim of these policies, she explains, is to promote linguistic and cultural diversity in HEIs as well as to prepare students to participate fully in our multilingual society, where multilingual proficiency is important. In line with inclusivity in HEIs, The Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) issued by the Department of Education called upon all universities to formulate a language policy in keeping with the country's constitution, which had identified 11 official languages, and further for the uplifting of the previously disadvantaged African languages. The call to uplift previously disadvantaged African languages was also encouraged by the Minister of Higher Education, Naledi Pandor, in her speech at the Language Policy Implementation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Conference, at the University of South Africa (UNISA), in Pretoria.

Minister Pandor referred to the fact that the South African Constitution declares that all the 11 official languages have equal status, and therefore encouraged that in recognition of the marginalisation of indigenous languages in the past, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (Pandor, 2006). According to the Committee that worked hand in hand with The Minister of Higher Education

(Pandor, 2006) and consequently Mesthrie (2008), the response of several universities to the government initiatives of 2002 and 2003 was to identify the African language that they would undertake to incorporate into a new multilingual dispensation and for initial development as medium of instruction in their institutions. Where the language of choice is a particular regionally dominant language, HEIs in that region should utilise a regional approach. In addition to implementing policies that would facilitate access to knowledge for all students, universities were and still are further required to make provision for the learning of an African language by non-African language speakers (Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2014).

In response to the national calls by the Minister, it was reported by Mesthrie (2008: 26) that "purely Afrikaans-medium universities, such as the University of the Free State and the University of Potchefstroom (the latter now integrated into the University of the North West) confirmed what they had already begun to undertake in the post-apartheid era- a multilingual language policy that offered Afrikaans and English as media of instruction and a local African language (e.g. Sotho at the University of the Free State)." Moreover, Mesthrie (*ibid*.) further asserted that English-medium universities have indicated a commitment to incorporating the dominant local African language more deeply than hitherto (e.g. Sesotho at the University of the Witwatersrand; isiZulu at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; isiXhosa at the University of Cape Town).

However, Kaschula (2013) and Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty (2014) reported that, while 19 of 23 of these universities have their policies published, none have as yet provided the Ministry with a report on the progress of policy implementation. Consequently, Pillay & Yu (2015) suggested that the challenge set out by the Minister of Higher Education in April 2011 that all university students have to learn an African language as a condition for graduating has not been completely taken up by universities in South Africa, with many of the large universities in South Africa taking the language policy issue casually with no real intention to commit to a plan of action. Perhaps, the exceptions may be UKZN, UCT and Rhodes University, the latter of which integrates the study of isiXhosa into a number of professional degrees including Law, Pharmacy, Education and Journalism (Kaschula, 2013; Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2014). Furthermore, Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty suggest that, regardless of universities not having provided the ministry with a report, in the first half of 2013, a Higher Education Ministerial Committee, charged with evaluating language policies for HEIs in South Africa, visited all the tertiary institutions in the country in order to monitor the extent of implementation of their language policies, as well as to assess the attitudes of staff, administrators and students towards

indigenous languages (*ibid.*). As a result of the visit of the Ministerial Committee, "universities are being required to review their language policies as well as how they plan to implement them", Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty (2014: 296). Rhodes University is reviewing its languages for the third time as from the year 2018, and the outcome of the review is yet to be seen.

In some cases, language has not surfaced as a contentious issue (Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town), but in others it appears largely so. As stated by Mkhize (2018) that with the exception of the #AfrikaansMustFall campaign at the University of Pretoria and the #OpenStellenbosch at the University of Stellenbosch, the question of language in addressing the inequities and injustices that subjugate African language-speaking students to epistemic alienation and exclusion remain largely absent. Furthermore, succeeding student protests over the use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction, the Universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch adopted new language policies in 2016. It is reported by Makoni (2016) that in a statement by the Stellenbosch University Council, the new language policy supports multilingualism without excluding students who are not proficient in either Afrikaans or English, and that the two languages would enjoy equal status from the beginning of 2017. Moreover, at the University of Pretoria, English was made the primary medium of instruction and assessment.

Sebolai (2014) states that the need for the mother-tongue to be used in education has been widely acknowledged by policy-makers, curriculum developers and parents, but students' voices are not always heard. However, at Rhodes University and in addition to discussions that loomed after the Language Committee was established in 2011, debates on the language question have been largely on social media. Consequently, many African language-speaking students face language barriers at institutions of HE. The marginalization of LOTE, specifically African languages, made the language question an integral component of debates and initiatives on the sluggishness of transformation of HE. For example, African languages were integral to the call on decolonization of HE during the national student protests of 2015 and 2016.

Mesthrie (2008) outlined what he regards or refers to as significant practical difficulties concerning multilingualism in HE that must be acknowledged:

- The university is not necessarily as localised as its setting. The concerns of the university are often more national than local, and sometimes more global than national. Furthermore, good universities attract students from all over the country, continent and world;

- The call to multilingualism is taking place at a time when resources seem to be shrinking, especially funding for new academic and secretarial posts;
- South Africa is not immune to the global pressures that treat the university as a business place. This cut-throat competitiveness not only runs counter to the spirit of academic enquiry, but also makes it harder to implement transformation policies that respond to local conditions;
- Just when the policy makers have put pressure on universities to promote multilingualism, a number of young people from elite backgrounds are going the other way in wanting unfettered access to English, its associated technologies and the global pleasures it promises;
- The politicians putting pressures on the university to transform linguistically have themselves been noticeably shy in showing the way. Parliament, for all its resources, still pays homage to the hegemonic prestige-cum-instrumentality of English (and, to a lesser extent, to the doggedness of the erstwhile co-official language, Afrikaans);
- The bodies that have been reasonably well funded to promote multilingualism as per the constitution have become bogged down in territorial disputes.

With respect to the practical difficulties concerning multilingualism in HE, many academics especially those who lecture mainstream subjects or courses, wonder whether the push for an African language medium of instruction a bridge may be too far or, at least, a bridge too soon. These relate mainly to the availability of materials in indigenous languages and personnel capable of teaching from them (Mesthrie, 2008). It is not that the languages are incapable of taking on these tasks, as all languages have the potential to develop appropriate registers and intellectual knowledge. However, the hope that terminological development through the appropriate glossaries, word lists, and dictionaries, will solve the problem of inculcating multilingualism, is an optimistic one (Mesthrie, 2008; Madiba, 2010; Nkomo & Madiba, 2011; Kaschula, 2013).

During the apartheid era, the languages of South Africa were not accorded equal status. As stated on the Language Policy for Higher Education (LPHE) report of 2002 and in Madiba (2004), the policy of "separate development" resulted in the privileging of English and Afrikaans as the official languages of the apartheid state and the marginalisation and under-development of African languages. It is further discussed in this policy that the result of this was the struggle of the Afrikaners against British imperialism and the struggle of the black

community against white rule, and this was the aim by the apartheid state to impose Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools that gave rise to the mass struggles of the late 1970s and 1980s. During the apartheid era, several universities also used Afrikaans as the exclusive medium of instruction. Madiba (2010) concurs that, although the democratic change of 1994 revoked the apartheid statutory laws, the language requirement continues to create a barrier for most black students in accessing these institutions. Madiba further emphasises how English tends to marginalize the use of other languages in teaching and learning programmes. However, "following the linguistic diversity of students and staff for whom English is not the first language, the English only policy is no longer adequate or feasible in these universities" (Madiba, 2010: 342). Madiba (2010) further asserts that English comprises a major challenge for the implementation of multilingualism in all universities in South Africa and in university education worldwide. As a result, an absence of commitment results in the violation of the language rights of African-language speaking students and also promotes continued hegemonic assimilationist and segregationist ideologies (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017). Therefore, promotion of multilingualism in HE is aimed at transformation that will bring about change in historical identities of the universities in South Africa, as supported by Mkhize (2018: 14) that "in an educational system that is culturally, linguistically and racially diverse there can be no single knowledge form. Rather, multiple knowledge systems have to be considered" and this cannot be achieved through the use of one language alone. Madiba (2004: 31) concurs that "transformation in South Africa is therefore required in the sense that the legacy of apartheid as reflected in the under-development of the African languages must be eliminated." Furthermore, Madiba (2004); Madiba (2010); Maseko (2014) & Mkhize (2018) state that so far there is no university in South Africa that functions in indigenous African languages as the primary medium of education other than in vocational language disciplines. Thus, the domination English in HE actually contributes to inhibiting transformation and perpetuating inequality and exclusivity.

However, it can be argued that we the introduction of the new translanguaging notion, both academic and non-academic spaces are being taken over by indigenous African languages thereby contributing to transformation, equality and inclusivity. Therefore, translanguaging involves the language usage and alternative ways of addressing linguistic hegemony in educational environments. The concept of 'translangauging' is mostly ascribed to Williams (1994, 1996) followed by Baker (2006) and Garcia (2009), and Hornberger & Link (2012) suggest that the notion of translanguaging refers broadly to how bilingual students

communicate and make meaning by drawing on various modalities from different languages. Heugh, Li, & Song (2017) point out that the notion of translanguaging was originally intended as a theoretical concept, but a descriptive label for a specific language practice. Blackledge & Creese (2017: 27) define translanguaging as the "enactment of language practices that use different features that had previously been previously constrained by different histories, but that now are experienced against each other in speakers' interactions as one new whole." Amongst these histories are linguistic groupings whereby languages were categories allocated to different racial and ethnic groups. However, the translanguaging approach can be suggested to work as a way to challenge our previous conceptual understandings of linguistic identities as tied to languages, as speakers integrate all available codes as a repertoire in their everyday communication. Therefore, it is important to recognize the capacity of multilingual individuals to utilize their linguistic resources to (re)construct different relations and meanings within social contexts and the creative qualities of language mixing. Therefore, "multilingualism plays an essential role in the interchanges between individuals of different origins [and linguistic identities] and makes it possible for people who may not share cultural assumptions or values to (re)negotiate their relations and identities" (Li & Zhu, 2013: 518).

According to Heugh et al. (2017), translanguaging defines the multilingual as someone who is aware of the existence of the political entities of named languages and has the ability to make use of the structural features of some of them that they have acquired. Wei (2011) concurs that translanguaging includes the full range of multilingual language users utilize for purposes that surpass the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationship. Moreover, translanguaging has the capacity to demonstrate how multi-layered social, linguistic and community practices and reflections yield multiplicity in identity construction (Li & Zhu, 2013) which is dynamic and complex. In pedagogical practices, students hear or read a lesson, a passage in a book, or a section of text in one language and develop their work in another. Thus, translanguaging can be seen as "not only as a language practice of multilinguals, but as a pedagogical strategy to foster language and literacy development", (Hornberger & Link, 2012: 242). Additionally, translanguaging includes but broaden language use and language contact among multilinguals. Blackledge & Creese (2017) argue that translanguaging begins from speakers and not language as a code and focuses on real factual observable practices. Blackledge & Creeese add that translanguaging lens proposes that instead of being conflicted on which language to use in a particular social space, people have a linguistic repertoire to

choose linguistic resources to communicate from. Therefore, as a transdisciplinary framework, translanguaging warrants that speakers go beyond traditional academic disciplines and conventional structures consummate of extricating the voices of the marginalized.

In alignment with it as a transdisciplinary approach, Wei (2011; 2017) proclaims that the act of translanguaging is transformative in nature as it creates a social space for the multilingual language by bringing together different elements of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one harmonized and meaningful production and making it into lived experience. Wei (*ibid*) then named this setting a "translanguaging space", and he described it as a space for the act of translanguaging and as well as created through translanguaging. Wei (2011) further explains that this space is created by individuals for themselves and is located in a wider social space and interacts with other spaces created and occupied by other individuals. Wei (2011) elucidates that the resources that individuals use to create their own space involve their own cognitive capacity and personal and experiences, attitudes, values and ideologies that they have acquired through interactions with others under specific socio-historical conditions. This space has also a cultural element as it is a lived space created through everyday multiple social practices, including multilingual practices.

Wei (2011) suggests that the notion of translanguaging space embraces two concepts, namely *creativity* and *criticality* and that these concepts are under-explored features of multilingual practices. Wei (2011) and consequently Blackledge & Creese (2015) define *creativity* as the ability to choose between heeding and breaking the rules and norms of behaviour, including the use of language. It is about challenging boundaries and making something new. *Criticality* refers to the ability to use available evidence to inform considered rules of cultural, social, political, and linguistic phenomena, to question and problematized received wisdom, and to express views adequately through reasoned responses to situations. The two concepts are connected, as boundaries cannot be challenged without a critical orientation and creativity is often an expression of criticality. Therefore, Wei (2011: 1224) professed that "multilingualism by the very nature of the phenomenon is a rich source of creativity and criticality, as it entails tension, conflict, competition, difference, change in a number of spheres, ranging from ideologies, policies and practices to historical and current contexts."

Therefore, individuals can respond to historical and present conditions critically, and deliberately construct and constantly modify their socio-cultural identities and values through social practices such as translanguaging. This is because, they are aware of the existence of the political entities of named languages, have acquired some of their structural features, and have an ability to use those (Heugh et al., 2017). Therefore, the notion of Translanguaging Space has implications for policy and practice. This happens in the case of my study, for instance, where Rhodes University or HE institutions broadly can be Translanguaging Space(s) where students can use the social media space to go between and beyond socially constructed language, policy and educational systems, structures and practices to engage diverse multiple meaning-making systems and subjectivities, to create new arrangements of language, policy and educational practices, and to defy and transform old understandings, practices and structures. In so doing, orders of discourse shift and the voices of the marginalized language groups are represented, relating translanguaging to criticality, critical pedagogy, social justice, and the linguistic human rights agenda.

It has been noted above, that, translanguaging emphasizes the link between traditionally and conventionally understood languages and other human communication systems. As translanguaging space has its own transformative power through its forever changing, new identities, values and practices, on the other hand, Translanguaging Instinct "drives humans to go beyond narrowly defined linguistic cues and transcend culturally defined language boundaries to achieve effective communication", (Heugh et al., 2017: 25). Wei further postulates that, the Translanguaging Instinct highlighted the gaps between meaning, what is connected to forms of the language and other signs, and message, what is actually inferred by hearers and readers, and leaves open spaces for all the other cognitive and semiotic systems that interact with linguistic semiosis to manifest. Just like the Translanguaging Space, Translanguaging Instinct has implications for language learning, and Wei describes some of these implications below:

> *….as people become involved in complex communicative tasks and demanding environments, the natural tendency to combine multiple resources drives them to look for more cues and exploit different resources. They will also learn to use different resources for different purposes, resulting in functional differentiation of different linguistic resources (e.g. accent, writing) and between linguistic and other cognitive*

*and semiotic resources. Crucially, the innate capacity to exploit multiple resources will not be diminished over time; in fact, it is enhanced with experience. (Li, 2017: 25).*

As can be concluded from the description above, exposure and experience play a huge role in effective communication, as the alternation between languages is a common feature of human interaction. Moreover, individuals use multimodalities such as gesture and facial expressions etc. in face-to-face communication, and semiotic, emoticons, memes, and comments in online spaces in concurrence with language to communicate with each other. Therefore, the translanguaging concept is discussed in this study to offer new ways of analyzing language usage and alternative ways of addressing linguistic hegemony in educational environments and to see how students with various linguistic and other backgrounds engage the language question and perform linguistic identities. Language usage both on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages and its implications on students' engagement with issues may provide insights towards the implementation of multilingualism in the university. The next section discusses the intellectualisation of indigenous African languages in HEIs as a response to calls for multilingualism, inclusivity and mindfulness for linguistic diversity.

### 2.2.3 Intellectualisation of indigenous African languages in HEIs

Given the history of African languages in HE, many scholars submit that there have been academic programmes that have been designed in some universities. Mkhize & Balfour (2017) contend that in the University of KwaZulu Natal, Rhodes University, and the University of Cape Town, English remains the primary language for learning, teaching, and research, but within the last seven years isiXhosa and isiZulu have been introduced. However, at Rhodes University, isiXhosa has been introduced in vocational discipline courses, such as isiXhosa for Journalism, isiXhosa for Law, and isiXhosa for Pharmacy. On the other hand, at Stellenbosch University and the University of Pretoria, Afrikaans was historically the primary language of instruction. However, in recent years English has become the primary language of instruction with Afrikaans being supported where demand warrants it (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017).

Mkhize & Balfour (2017) further assert that there has also been a shift to bilingual education with the introduction of isiXhosa into selected programmes at Stellenbosch University. It is a different story at the University of Pretoria, as none of the African languages are given

opportunity to be used in academic activities, and English and Afrikaans are still at the forefront following also the introduction of Afrikaans in the new language policy of the University of Pretoria. The development of Sepedi, as a language that is predominantly spoken in the Pretoria region, is not addressed (Sebolai, 2014). Mkhize & Balfour (2017) emphasize that the teaching and use of African languages in institutions of HE does not only promote multilingualism, but also provides the space for students and academics to access language rights and embrace linguistic diversity with support and confidence. While Mkhize & Balfour stress the importance of learning African languages, they further encourage non-African language speaking students and staff to learn an African language outside the language cluster of the language they already know, as this will help to break down linguistic and identity boundaries (Webb, 2009; Mkhize & Balfour, 2017; Mkhize, 2018). Furthermore, this will help minimise division between different language speakers of the student body of the various South African HEIs.

HEIs have become increasingly multilingual as a result of internationalisation drives, the expectations of transnational students and the effects of colonialism. Therefore, there is a need for multilingual language policies that will cater to the diverse student body of various universities of the country. According to Madiba (2010), the need to promote equity of access in South African Higher Education institutions should be understood against the socio-political history of these institutions, which was characterized by racial and linguistic divisions. Due to a diverse student body, it is important for all HE officials to understand that multilingual practices will occur whether or not they are mandated by lecturers or policy makers, since students will use strategies and literacies that they have developed up to that point to further their education. Even when students' languages are not used for academic purposes, they can still be mobilised to explore and contextualise their academic studies (Hibbert & van der Walt, 2014). However, "English and Afrikaans are acknowledged as languages of research and scholarship in HE at present, but legislative policies applicable to language use and practices in HE makes provision for preventing these languages from being used as a barrier to the access, retention and success of previously disadvantaged people (Maseko, 2014: 28). Therefore, there have been debates that indigenous African languages are seen as critical for the attainment of the language policies. This is because, according to Kaschula (2013), multilingual courses can create meaningful interaction despite perceived stereotyped cultural differences, and intercultural communication and increased social cohesion is then inevitable in this context. Kaschula & Maseko (2014) suggest that effective multilingualism and

intellectualisation of African languages will help in creating both cultural and linguistic social cohesion.

However, some academics such as Foley (2004) and Nyika (2015) wonder whether the push for an African language medium of instruction, may be a dream too far away, or a dream too soon. In coming to this conclusion, they frequently cite practical considerations, well known in many post-colonial, multilingual, developing contexts. These pertain mainly to the availability of materials in indigenous languages and personnel capable of teaching from them (Mesthrie, 2008: 327). Furthermore, Foley (2004: 58) confidently confirms that "from political points of view, it is possible to develop these languages (like any other languages), from a practical perspective, however, the simple truth is that it is not going to happen, definitely not in the short term, and not even in the medium-to long-term." Foley explains that politically, there seems to be no proactive determination on the part of the general population (in marked contrast to Afrikaans) to bring about and sustain the necessary further development and advancement of the indigenous languages, certainly not for HE purposes. From this perspective, he suggests that the home language, or mother tongue, is used for the purposes of creating and expressing a sense of self-identity, of common belonging and of cultural orientation. Linguistically, Foley (2004) argues that the various indigenous African languages are not spoken consistently across the country.

On the other hand, Nyika (2015) argues that the issue of criteria to be used to determine which of the many vernacular languages to select as the medium of instruction at the particular local universities becomes a challenge. Nyika further explains that the use of local African languages as the medium of instruction at specific universities located in particular geographical areas could inadvertently increase the risk of discrimination along ethnic or racial lines because indigenous African languages are generally specific to particular ethnic or racial groups. Therefore, this would add to the risk of ethnic or racial groups considering certain universities at which their local African languages are used as being exclusively 'their universities' – which primarily should enrol their local children – becomes high if educational policy is amended to introduce African languages as the medium of instruction at universities (Nyika, 2015).

Dyers (2000) conducted a study that focused on language use and attitudes among isiXhosa students at the University of the Western Cape. This study looked at patterns of language use and attitudes on a group of isiXhosa students. In the study, it was found that isiXhosa as a language was closely related to students' sense of themselves and the culture and traditions of

the Xhosa people, regardless of students' preference to use English as the main common language in South Africa. The example of the study conducted by Dyers is a portrayal of what Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz talk about when they refer to language behaviour and language choices in multilingual settings, that, "the choice of an individual to behave negatively towards her or his mother tongue i.e. to refuse to use it, is a matter of choice and potentially represents an act of identity", (1982: 72). Here, we see the fluidity and (re) negotiation of linguistic identities, as using an English language by isiXhosa student speakers portrays their ability to speak different languages. This is as supported by Rudwick (2006) that as rational human beings we individually choose which language(s) we allow to play a role in the construction of our [linguistic] identities. Bosch (2009) conducted a similar study on the University of Cape Town's students' use of Facebook. The study found that, despite the multilingual nature of South African society (with 11 official languages) there was very little use of languages other than English on students' walls, regardless of race or home language. Bosch (2009: 192) observes that "all communication was found to be in English, with students (including non-native speakers) considering this the obvious choice of language for the medium." In this case we see the ongoing hegemony of the English language, whereby the use of the language is seen as normative standard.

Moreover, Dalvit & de Klerk (2005) conducted a study to look at the attitudes of isiXhosa – speaking students at the University of Fort Hare towards the use of isiXhosa as language of learning and teaching (LOLT). In their study, there was a widespread concern within the participants' responses that using isiXhosa as LOLT would create tensions with speakers of other African languages. Therefore, this finding suggests that English has less tension between speakers of other languages. However true this may be, especially in the context of Dalvit & de Klerk's study, what the participants fail to decipher is that regardless of English causing minimal tension between African languages speakers, it causes marginalisation from institutions and learning spaces within institutions. Their study also found that English was strongly associated with tertiary education and was considered a marker of the respondents' identity as university students. This is where we see fluidity in the students' linguistic identities and their linguistic identities being complex as noted by Swanepoel (2011). Contrastingly, isiXhosa was considered very important for the isiXhosa students' culture and of the students' identity, and students seemed to believe that isiXhosa had an important role to play in the academic context (Dalvit & de Klerk, 2005). Additionally, there were strong indications that those who engaged in multilingual practices in class and tutorials found it beneficial. Moreover,

the interplay between linguistic identities manifests itself through the use of multiple languages, in this case, and it can be said that it is a result of multilingualism. Hence it is the interest of this study to investigate how students with various linguistic and other backgrounds engage the language question and perform linguistic identities on the chosen online platform.

Furthermore, Sebolai's (2014 research study looked at students' reflections on the use of their mother tongue, Sepedi, to reinforce their understanding of concepts in the Education Studies 1 course at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). Sebolai reports that the reflections expressed in the students' own voices, point to the advantages of using strategies which involves students using their mother tongue to access knowledge in English and/or Afrikaans dominated HE studies. The study found that student participants came from schools where their mother tongue was disrespected and devalued and only spoken by a minority, therefore using Sepedi to discuss highly theoretical Education concepts renewed the respect of participants for their home-language (Sebolai, 2014). This finding shows students lose value in their indigenous languages when they are not used in higher domains, including in HEIs because they believe they are incapable of producing disciplinary and/or academic knowledge.

Sebolai (2014) also found that the participants value bi/multilingual practices as resources for learning, and this finding supports the notion of linguistic diversity as it is found in South African institutions of HE. Final findings were that mother tongue was consciously used to assist participants' comprehension of highly theoretical concepts and using the home-language to debate issues encouraged participants to take part in tutorial discussions. What is evident from this study is that mother-tongue based education increases students' participatory learning and engagement as students feel more confident learning content in English when incorporating their mother tongue. In addition to this, Webb & Kembo-Sure (2000) state that language can also have a symbolic function, it symbolizes identity. However, language cannot be regarded as symbolizing one's identity if its speaker is unable to use it to acquire, obtain and transfer information. However, there is a growing change from young Africans, with popular culture and social media such as Facebook; they engage in humorous stories and share information using these languages as their speech is found to be more entertaining when used in informal conversations compared to when using languages such as English. Salawu (2006: 88) concurs that, "despite the dominance of some languages, these other smaller languages continue to exist and are spoken with relish by their native speakers and used to varying degrees in the media", (Salawu, 2006: 88). Certainly, it is not just English-speakers who are making use of the web. Kaschula (2001) explains that there are many sites in non-English speaking countries that do

make use of English on the web. The next section discusses indigenous African languages and their presence on the Internet, and the role the Internet plays to promote further development of these languages.

## 2.3 INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND THE INTERNET

The emergence and popularisation of digital media has given a new impetus to the development and promotion of African languages. As in the HEIs whereby indigenous African languages are mainly restricted to African languages departments and not seen as major languages of the academy, indigenous languages are represented on the Internet, but not to the same degree as is English. "So far, in Africa, those languages that have been benefitting a lot from the advantages given by the cyberspace are still foreign and international languages, which have been inherited from colonisation, and which were later adopted as African states' official languages", (Djomeni & Sadembouo, 2017: 39). Osborn (2006) notes that a large proportion are sites about African languages, including online dictionaries and instructional pages. Consequently, it is mostly referencing to sites which provide information on these languages (in English) rather than information in indigenous African languages (Wasserman, 2002; Cunliffe & Herring, 2005). Ali (2011) and subsequently Jimma (2017) further note that the lack of online content in languages other than English has limited Internet development in nations where English is not the primary language, and that communities may see the dominance of English as a threat to their local culture and these communities do not understand the English language.

Consequently, Osborn (2006) attributes the lack of use of indigenous African languages on the internet to factors such as status and attitudes towards these languages vis-à-vis languages that are seen as providing more economic opportunity. Another factor, according to Osborn (2006: 89) is that, what appears on the internet about Africa, even concerning indigenous African languages, "has an external audience, and so would logically tend to use languages understood internationally. Also, much of the Internet content with intended local application originates from outside of Africa, where production of content in languages other than English, French or Portuguese is not an easy option." Adding to the discussion about lack of use of indigenous languages on the internet, Warschauer (1995) and subsequently Wasserman (2002) contend that on the Internet specifically, English is also the dominant language and it is regarded as the

language of the internet. Wasserman further emphasizes that English "is the most commonly spoken second language and the lingua franca in the international business, media, scientific and academic world", (Wasserman, 2002: 306). Kaschula (2001) adds that there is also the presumption that if you say something in English it can reach the international community. However, he suggests that it would be incorrect to think that the use of English on the Internet will have to come at the expense of other languages.

Nevertheless, with the new forms of communications such as the internet and more especially social media or networks, it can be argued that indigenous African languages are starting to flourish, and their speakers are starting to recognize their value. These advances in communications have given way to what is referred to as social media, which included web services such as: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and online gaming (Jimma, 2017). With such a global user basis, social media becomes a melting pot of languages used in different manners and for different purposes, and as social media brings people from different countries together, "it is safe to assume that these people will also bring their linguistic and cultural backgrounds with them into the communicational situations", (Jimma, 2017: 11). Kaschula (2001) notes that it is the Internet which has allowed indigenous African languages to mushroom themselves back into contention, and that this is in line with occurrences elsewhere in the world. He further explains that while English is the majority language on the Internet, it only holds 57,4% of the content, and that an estimated 96 million people make use of the Internet to promote their own languages. Therefore, indigenous language speakers are putting these languages into practice by using them to post and share knowledge on the Internet.

Thus, as suggested by Wasserman (2002: 305), it can be maintained that the empowerment of the indigenous African languages through new technologies could serve as a validation of cultural [and linguistic] identities that have either been oppressed during apartheid or marginalized in the public sphere during the post-apartheid era." However, Facebook has also taken an initiative that allows language speakers other than English, to translate its content into these languages. Therefore, Kaschula (2001) suggests that access to the Internet is continually broadening to include speakers of languages other than English, hence empowering these languages as well. Prah (1995) contends that, if development is to take place which provides the masses of South African society cultural and linguistic access into the process, this will have to be done in the cultures and languages of the masses. Wasserman (2002: 317) also adds that on South African websites, (October 2001) a translation project was launched which aims to translate emails, web and desktop tools into all the South African languages, "in an attempt

to make it easier for untutored computer users to gain access to digital technology by providing the basic software to them in their mother tongue." He further explains that the student site "Gal" has also announced that it now provides e-commerce facilities (selling academic books) in isiZulu.

The Department of African Languages, together with its students at Rhodes University, has been involved in the translation of texts and biographies that were written by old isiXhosa intellectuals and authors, and these were published on the isiXhosa Google. To add to the list, there are also dictionary websites, such as the isiZuluNet, and many other dictionaries in African languages. Moreover, in South Africa, the internet has been encouraging new forms of independent study and distance learning by computers. Students have opportunities of teaching English in foreign countries such as South Korea and China while they are based in African states, as long as they have access to the internet. In addition, Rhodes University and other HEIs in South Africa accept Internet submissions (through RUconnected at Rhodes University and Vula at UCT) of work in various African languages, including Afrikaans, isiXhosa, isiZulu, seSotho and Swahili (Kaschula, 2001). There are also South African universities such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) where distance education has been made possible, and where technology such as the Internet plays a major role for them to submit their assignments.

Kaschula (2001) observes that there have been initiatives to attack the hegemony of the English language that he suggests threatens to choke the other languages in South Africa and this is *LitNet*, an Internet journal. Both Kaschula (2001) and Wasserman (2002) acknowledge that although the *LitNet* Internet journal emphasis is on Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English also have a presence. Furthermore, *LitNet* develops these languages by its feature of "news and announcements of a cultural nature, contributions of fiction and poetry, book, theatre and film reviews, scholarly and polemic essays, regular columns, a page devoted to the language debate and a very popular letters page", Wasserman (2002: 311). Wasserman further observed that not only does the *LitNet* website create the opportunity for affirmation or re-iteration of existing cultural identities, but it also sets the platform for the re-imagination of these identities. However, regardless of its display of a rare multilingualism, "the balance is still titled in favour of Afrikaans and English", (Wasserman, 2002: 311). Therefore, access to the Internet is continually broadening to encapsulate speakers of languages other than English, hence empowering these languages as well, and "this is especially true of countries such as Egypt,

Latvia, Turkey and even South Africa where English remains the status language", (Kaschula, 2001: 4).

Cru (2015) conducted a study in Mexico, which is titled "Language revitalisation from the ground up: promoting Yucatec Maya on Facebook". In this study, Cru looks at how social media are being appropriated by Maya speakers as a tool for language advocacy and activism. It was found from this study that apart from using Spanish, some bilingual youths in Yucatán are writing in Maya on Facebook as part of their daily multilingual practices. Furthermore, "Maya was also used on other Internet based media such as wikis, blogs, chat rooms, etc., but Facebook, as noted, is particularly salient because of its widespread use and popularity among young people", (Cru, 2015: 287). Cru further observes that, while linguistic prejudice against the use of Maya on Facebook is sometimes expressed by people who do not understand Maya, positive comments about the presence of this language on Facebook are frequent. Additionally, the visibility of indigenous languages on Facebook has an ideological effect that accrues to its legitimacy from the ground up, rather than from government policies devised within the political framework of the nation-state (Cru, 2015). As is the case in the South African context with the use of the *LitNet* website and social media broadly, according to Cru (2015), Maya is mainly used in its oral form, but also a significant platform for language activism.

Consequently, Djomeni & Sadembouo (2017) observe that even though it is only a few of them, the youth in Cameroon have been active in using their mother tongue content on the Internet since 2010. They further explain that, this can be observed through groups created in common social media where members practise to their best their language using interactive cyberspace which includes: e-mails, chat rooms, forums, discussion boards, etc. Furthermore, it is reported by Djomeni & Sadembouo (2017) that its users make use of virtual keyboards that help them type in their mother tongues to publish adequately written materials in their languages on the internet or web via desktops.

Therefore, given the findings from these various studies, it can be concluded that there is no doubt that the internet and more especially social media, can play a key role in opening up new spaces for the use of indigenous African languages, particularly among the youth, thereby enforcing the language from below approach. The next section focuses on the use of social media by the youth, as a way to revitalize, promote, and further develop indigenous language.

### 2.3.1 Social media and Youth

Social media is the communication and interaction-oriented parts of the Internet, such as blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook, and microblogging sites such as Twitter, as well as the diverse platforms for sharing audio-visual material (e.g. YouTube, Flickr) (Haddon, 2015). Haddon emphasizes that, before the emergence of these recent applications, social and communicative elements of the Internet before Web 2.0 had been used by the youth, for example, instant messaging (IM), email, and chat rooms. Haddon further asserts that the youth had developed the predecessor of some current social and communicative practices via other, older media, including texting, as well as the more general uses of mobile phones. In the discussion of social media communication and interaction among youth, it is worth noting that prior to Web 2.0, mobile phones were being used by young people to exchange audio-visual content (e.g., with Bluetooth) as well as to take and post pictures online (Haddon, 2015). It is in the development of Web 2.0 which is the introduction of the latest technological communication devices, that "young people learned about creatively fashioning and sharing textual messages, as well as the symbolic meanings of those messages through the use of texting and IM" (Haddon, 2015: 1).

Newer forms of social media differ from older, traditional broadcast media such as television and radio, in that they enable peer-to-peer interactive messages, as opposed to unidirectional transmission of one-to-many media content. In doing so, these tools may have the potential to reshape communication patterns among their users by enabling online communication and lowering the barriers to face-to-face interaction (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012). Thus, through social media use, the youth are always in touch with their friends and are able to manage and maintain their relationships. Moreover, online exchanges are reciprocal in nature, and the youth who are involved in social exchanges can enjoy posting, receiving feedback in a form of comments and virtual gifts in the form of emoticons through social media (Huang, 2012. The youth also enjoy freedom of expression because social media enables them to discuss all issues that affect them socially, politically and economically.

Shava & Chinyamurindi (2018) further add that, social media also empowers the youth from an information perspective. Accordingly, the youth who are in search of information are more likely to keep track of current affairs, making them keep up with what is happening in the societies they live in. This is done through trying out various online identities where they have the capacity to demonstrate different identities they possess, and later choose the one that suits

them. For example, one can possess an identity of being a student but at the same time identify with a different linguistic identity (e.g. isiXhosa language) that distinguishes them from other students with different linguistic identities (i.e. ChiShona, English, isiZulu, and Afrikaans etc.), regardless of sharing the student identity with other students.

Additionally, "digital media provide those young people who have access to it an important set of tools to build social and personal identity and to create the on-and offline environments in which they spend their time", (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008: 781). Bennett et al. (2008) further contend that, modern young people enjoy unprecedented levels of freedom to define and manage their self-identities in contrast with earlier generations' experiences with stronger groups (denominational church, labour, class, party) that essentially assigned broad social identities to their members. Lastly, social media enables students to share, among other things, assignments, tutorial questions and solutions. In the process, "they help each other to engage with the course, thereby benefiting from one another's contribution", (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2018: 3).

Bennett et al. (2008) indicates that challenges of influencing the course of nations and addressing global issues may inspire creative solutions from generations of young citizens who have access to digital communication tools. He states two paradigms of youth engagement that contrast young citizens, as either reasonably active and *engaged* or relatively passive and *disengaged.* He further describes that, the *engaged youth* paradigm "implicitly emphasizes generational changes in social identity that have resulted in the growing importance of peer networks and online communities", (Bennett et al., 2008: 780). This paradigm emphasizes the empowerment of youth as expressive individuals and symbolically frees young people to make their own creative choices in online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace etc. The *engaged youth* perspective empowers young people by recognizing personal expression and their capacity to project identities in collective spaces, and the belief is that the future of democracy is in the hands of the young citizens of the so-called digital age (Bennett et al., 2008).

Therefore, in order to expand youth involvement in aspects of public life pertaining to HEIs, governance, the country's politics, language planning and policy, the stakeholders involved in these social structures need to communicate differently with young citizens and/or students. As can be seen, for example, in the South African context, the perceived slow pace and insignificant impact of institutional transformation initiatives in South African HEIs prompted

nationwide student protests. Bennett foregrounds that, "in order for young citizens to feel comfortable engaging in more conventional politics, they need to feel invited to participate on their own terms, and to learn how to use their digital tools to better express their public voices", (Bennett et al., 2008: ). By contrast, the *disengaged youth* paradigm "may acknowledge the rise of more autonomous forms of public expression such as consumer politics, or the occasional protest in MySpace, while keeping the focus on the generational decline in connections to government (e.g., voting patterns) and general civic involvement (e.g., following public affairs in the news) as threats to health of democracy itself", (Bennett et al., 2008:778).

It must be noted that the shift to using social media by youth had different results in youth from different nations, due to different factors. Beside the use of different languages or language choice, one of these is cultural differences in the African and Western societies. According to Ephraim (2013), culture refers to the totality of the life of a people, including the norms, values and systems which make them different from other people. Ephraim emphasises that culture is not static but fluid, it constantly undergoes the process of change, influenced by time and technology. This is what allows new social media technologies to have a great impact positively and negatively on cultures all over the world. Ephraim (2013) observes that social media do not recognize traditional set ups of age, gender or religion. In the African culture, "children were taught to love and appreciate one another; fighting and acts of bullying were greatly prohibited and, in many cases, severely punished", (Ephraim, 2013: 280). There also existed limits in the relationships. Children were also warned to be careful of strangers, especially adults, as this could result in them being abducted by strangers and trafficked which is sometimes still the case in the present-day. In most African cultures, adults, especially village elders, kept information they considered inappropriate for youngsters in proverbs, metaphors and sign language. Nowadays, through the power of social media, African youth are beginning to take control of their global identity (Ekema-Agbaw & Yenika-Agbaw, 2014). They are able to embrace their African identities at the same time as enacting their newly constructed identities from different societal spaces they occupy, such as institutions of higher learning amongst others. Social media has become a reflection of the dominant culture, to which African youth bring a unique reality of their worldview.

Taking a closer look at students' interaction with social media, DeAndrea et al. (2012) argue that having students connect with one another on a social media site prior to their arrival on campus may help students enter college with a more expansive social network than they

otherwise might have had, contributing to bridging social capital. They further argue that, the social network site that was designed in the case of their study, may have functioned to improve the transition to college by helping students socialize to their new environment and establish a sense of connection with their institution. In the study they conducted, which looked whether this particular social media site may affect the intellectual and social lives of students transitioning from high school to college, DeAndrea et al. (2012) found that although the site did not include directives regarding studying habits or specific course-related material, it did enable students to connect with others and thus influenced their perception of the university as a place where they could find the resources they need. For instance, students posted information about the on-campus orientation program that occurs throughout the summer (DeAndrea et al., 2012). Students attending earlier sessions provided information about what to expect and how to get the most out of the event for students attending later sessions. Therefore, what is evident from this study is that this is the kind of peer-to-peer support and information exchange that the social media platform was designed to promote, asthe results revealed (DeAndrea et al., 2012). Thus, it can be concluded from the findings of the study, that social media has really become a day-to-day platform that youth can use in their daily functioning, to interact with issues pertaining to their multiple identities. It is in this context that the following section explores literature reviewed in relation to youth especially student interactions and protests in HEIs, using social media as a platform.

### 2.3.2 Social media and linguistic citizenship

According to Mackey (2016), social media can be a powerful tool to encourage collaboration and political action across difference, especially for young people who are otherwise marginalized when it comes to accessing the tools to exercise human and/or citizenship rights. Therefore, considerable amount of youth is engaging in political life through what is known as ‘participatory politics’ using social media, which is like traditional political activity because they address issues of public concern. Kahne & Middaugh (2012: 52) confirm that, regardless of them happening via social media and “unlike traditional political activity, participatory politics are interactive, peer based, and not guided by traditional institutions like political parties or newspaper editors.” Young people may start a new political group online or engage in issues concerning public life and issues that may affect them, post, comment, tag or share with their peers about a political issue on their social media. Therefore, youth can put out their

own narratives about what is on traditional media and share among their networks, and their comments help shape how their peers think about the information (Kahne & Middaugh, 2012). Additionally, such practices create new opportunities for voice, for agency, and potentially for influence in hopes of transformation as far as public life is concerned. In other words, social media help young people bring about change through digital activism. Consequently, through social media, "youth learn norms for working effectively in groups, acquire digital and leadership skills they can use in the political sphere, and become part of networks through which they often hear about ways to get involved in the broader society", (Kahne & Middaugh, 2012: 54).

Social media reflect mainstream culture. Therefore, the use of language in social media, how people behave online is influenced by what they are experiencing and how they behave in their societies (Ekema-Agbaw & Yenika-Agbaw, 2014). Not only has the internet promoted increased communication and interaction among the youth, but it has also encouraged growing social movements in institutions of Higher Education. The growth of social movements is precipitated by exclusion of youth in discussions and engagements pertaining to institutional culture of HEIs. This exclusion comes at a time when they are most active, and their agency is at its edge. With this comes the recognition by young people, of the powers and potential they possess to shape these institutions and therefore they use social media to enact this power.

According to Iwilade (2013: 1058) one of the ways in which the youth have manipulated the global crisis "has been in the construction of hybrid identities that are playing increasingly important roles in shaping protest cultures within the political process." Iwilade (2013) argues that hybrid identities are often created when youth seize the opportunities provided by a globalised social media space to recreate themselves socially, thus constructing global identities as creative actors and agents, and at the same time embedding those 'new' identities in local youth cultures and realities. The author emphasises that "what emerges from this identity construction process is a hybrid youth that is acutely aware of global discourses of development and democracy and at the same time in touch with the local dimensions of exclusion and disempowerment", (Iwilade, 2013: 1058). Therefore, we can argue that these hybrid identities further motivate resistance not only by boycotting lectures and other academic activities, but they give an opportunity for youth to express their exclusion and/or marginalization. Thus, Iwilade (2013: 1058) observes that, "it is in this context that hybrid identities have underpinned social media-aided protest cultures that have become increasingly violent and effective since 2008."

Linking the literature that I have reviewed above to my research, it can be argued that technology, more specifically social media, has given rise to linguistic citizenship whereby the youth are using it to engage with issues relating to diversity and marginalization that are taking place across HEIs, thereby giving their marginalized voices, agency, and linguistic rights as citizens. In this case, as suggested by both Stroud & Heugh (2004) and Chiatoh (2014), students at Rhodes University engage in linguistic citizenship as their claim to exercise their rights as active citizens to voice to be heard and their multiple identities to be recognized within the university as a linguistically diverse environment. Students in institutions of HEIs in South Africa, and more especially at Rhodes University are using what Williams & Stroud (2015) regard as semiotic means such as the institutional Facebook pages through which as speakers of indigenous African languages express agency, voice, and participation, in an everyday politics of language. Therefore, students as ordinary citizens or unprofessional language practitioners, challenge the system and university language policy of marginalization towards their languages by engaging in debates and using indigenous African languages in the social media sphere and giving new meaning and repurposing to reflect linguistic marginalization and institutional culture that affect them. In addition, this practice could also be regarded as a call out to official recognition of linguistic diversity and multilingualism within Rhodes University and HEIs nationally.

Valenzuela et al. (2012) conducted a study in Chile, South America, looking at social media as basis of youth behaviour. They looked at how social network sites have several affordances for promoting participation, particularly protest behaviour among youth. They further comment that, social network sites function as information platforms that enable users to keep in contact and exchange updates regarding their activities with others that share their interests (Valenzuela et al., 2012). Furthermore, as far as online social movements are concerned, they emphasise that "social network sites emerge as resources that may create the kinds of collective experiences that are necessary conditions for successful movements (Valenzuela et al., 2012: 303). For instance, in the South African context, citizens protest over service delivery or salary increases because it affects residents that share the same experience. Moreover, students especially from working- and middle-class economic backgrounds, engage in movements such as #FeesMustFall because they all cannot afford student fees. Thus, the #FeesMustFall movement becomes their collective struggle.

Consequently, the Chilean context as reported by Valenzuela et al. (2012) combines successful development with high socioeconomic inequality and growing unrest as a result of this. Moreover, they emphasise that the younger citizens have led the social movements against this state of affairs and have taken their calls for a better quality of education and protection of the environment both online and offline (Valenzuela et al., 2012). This study revealed that individuals with higher interest in political affairs as well as those who spent more time reading newspapers and online news were likely to engage in protest (Valenzuela et al., 2012). This comes with no doubt that people who are clued up on current affairs are usually people who spend time reading current news both online and in newspapers. It was also found from the study that, amongst youth grievances was the lack of trust in political institutions, which was at the same time what had motivated protest behaviour (Valenzuela et al., 2012). Valenzuela et al. conclude that their analysis of Facebook uses and protest behaviour among 18 to 29-year olds in Chile "demonstrated that having a Facebook account and using it frequently were positively and significantly related to participation in protests, therefore online interactions can aid offline forms of citizen participation" (Valenzuela et al., 2012: 308). Thus, young people's repeated participation and/or interaction on social media shape their expectations about how communication and interaction should happen in other spheres of life, including in institutions of Higher Education in the context of my study.

In his study, *Crisis opportunity: youth, social media and the renegotiation of power in Africa*, Iwilade (2013) focused on Nigerian and Mozambican contexts. He looked at the use of social media by youth for political protests, namely *The 2012 Mozambique food riots* and *The 2012 Fuel subsidy protests in Nigeria.* Iwilade (2013) argues that in Mozambique as well as in Nigeria, protest discourses not only excluded adults in the sense of the space it appropriated, but also challenged the right of traditional centres of authority to direct the resistance or to negotiate on behalf of society. In other words, "the political discourses about the protests in computer-mediated social networks were generally uncontrolled and subject to the whims of too many interested individuals to be vulnerable to brazen manipulation", (Iwilade, 2013: 1066). It was found from this study that youth-led protests do not merely challenge state policies, but are also attempts to renegotiate the basis of power, dominance and control within the African political economy. This adds emphasis to my argument above, relating to the fact that social media-driven youth protests are also there to challenge authority driven accounts on decisions on a future the institutions of Higher Education should go. In both Mozambique and Nigeria domination in social media public space, rather than participating in protests was the

key advance of youths in challenging state power (Iwilade, 2013). It was concluded from the study that both cases illustrated the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and social media to mobilise protests and aided the youth broaden and dominate protest discourses.

In South Africa, according to Mkhize & Balfour (2017), nowhere are language rights and language ideologies contestations evident in the communities and challenges posed by implementation of multilingual policies, more than in higher educational institutions. Social media played a critical role in the mobilisation of the nationwide university student-led protests in South Africa. These started in 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), followed by #FeesMustFall (#FMF) at University of Witwatersrand (Wits) (Bosch, 2016). One of the results of this activism was the emergence of communication dynamics that were not present prior to the #RMF and #FMF protests. Students used social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to mobilise themselves and express their grievances. Increasingly citizens from class, race, and language backgrounds have become part of protests as a form of participatory politics. The #RMF movement extended to other South African universities with students addressing and expressing grievances concerned with their institutional cultures. At UCT, students' grievances included the issue of outsourcing, while at Stellenbosch the language question was at the forefront with students protesting against Afrikaans as medium of instruction (Govender, 2017; Mwaniki, 2018). Consequently, Rhodes University students called into question the name of the university, as well as the white privilege and institutional culture which continues to marginalize students of colour. According to Govender (2017: 10), the #RMF movement climaxed into the #FMF protests, and "students at almost every university in South Africa brought the academic programme to a standstill as they protested the inaccessibility of tertiary education to students who could not afford it." Therefore, through the use of social media platforms, students were able to capture the protests in video posts, status updates in different universities' Facebook pages, sharing and commenting on each other's posts, acts that gave them national and international support.

Bosch (2016) conducted a case study titled; '*Twitter activism and youth in South Africa: the case of #RhodesMustFall'*, and she argued that social media discussions on Twitter set the plan for public debate in other online and offline spaces including campus workshops and meetings. Furthermore, the author argues that the Twitter platform played a key role in the way the public saw the movement. This study shows that social media does promote participation in protest movements among youth for various reasons, to promote the construction and expression of

group identities and communication tools to exchange information between young people, and also motivate young citizens in politics. It was found from the study that during #RMF movement, social media communication allowed student protesters participate in this movement. Moreover, the study revealed that "members and supporters of #RMF used social media communication for self-representation, self-organisation and interaction with outside dialogue groups such as mainstream media, university administration, and opponents to the campaign, (Bosch, 2016: 226). Additionally, social media also afforded ordinary users and/or citizens the opportunity to use hashtags to generate discussions and to respond to comments (Bosch, 2017). Findings of the study conducted by Bosch stand as evidence that in the South African context, indeed social media-based student protests support the growing narrative of revolution and national political debate.

According to Mwaniki (2018), in the South African context there is enough literature on the #RhodeMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements. However, Mwaniki argues that there is a scarcity of literature in the #AfrikaansMustFall movement, [and other language-related protests]. This is the gap my own study seeks to address as students continue to express their marginalised linguistic identities through social media, in addressing the language question. As documented by Mwaniki (2018) that, changes that have been in play within South African society since the transition to constitutional democracy, proved to be important events that pushed the language question in South Africa's Higher Education as exemplified by the #AfrikaansMustFall movement and with the shift in language policies of previously Afrikaans-medium universities such as University of the Free State, University of Pretoria, University of South Africa and Stellenbosch University (Mwaniki, 2018). This shift has resulted in the #AfrikaansSalBly (AfrikaansWillStay) movement. Mwaniki (2018: 33) concludes that, it can be submitted that "the #movements generally and the language-specific "AfrikaansMustFall movement specifically irrevocably disrupted the terrain of language politics in South Africa's Higher Education." The next section reviews literature on identity to discuss and explore the notion of marginalized linguistic identities are how they are express in HEIs by students.

## 2.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Bazana & Mogotsi (2017) suggest that identity reflects the image (social systems, language, culture, folklores, values, etc.) of a certain group of people. According to Benwell & Stokoe (2006) within Social Identity Theory (SIT), social identity (as opposed to personal identity) is defined by individual identification with a group: a process constituted firstly by a reflexive knowledge of group membership, secondly by an emotional attachment or specific disposition to this belonging. Furthermore, Benwell & Stokoe suggest that social identity theory explores the phenomenon of the 'in-group' and 'out-group' and is based on the view that identities are constituted through a process of difference in a relative or flexible way depended upon the activities in which one is engaged. Therefore, it can be said that identity comes about from choices, whereby people choose which group they identity with in a social context. My study, seeks to explore the interaction between students who are mother tongue speakers of indigenous African languages and those of the English language as it revolves around social groups of languages. The study seeks to explore students' perspective on the language question in HEIs and how they express their marginalized linguistic identities on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC institutional Facebook pages.

### 2.4.1 Linguistic identity

Robinson (1999) suggests that the reason dominant discourses across race, gender, language and other identities intersect, is that when an identity status deviates from a normative standard, it tends to dominate and thus render invisible other equally viable components of a person's identity. Linguistic identity would be the type of language speaker the individual wants to be viewed as, for when individuals show a preference for a language, they intend to enact certain linguistic identities (Andrews, 2010). In addition to this, Andrews maintains that "linguistic identities are acquired through socialization with other individuals who have said identities", thus, "when students speak a language, they make a statement about the kind of person they intend to communicate at that moment through their language preference" (*ibid*. 96).

Itkonen (2009) suggests that language is important to communication, and different modes of language use have an influence, for example, in the representation of identities. Heller (1995: 373) further explains that, language is central to institutional process of symbolic domination

as language practices serve to establish the normality out of abnormality. She goes on to say that "language norms are a key aspect of institutional norms and reveal ideologies which legitimate (or contest) institutional relations of power." Therefore, it is through language practices that we see symbolic domination "including the identification of interactional zones where individuals use language choices to exert, aggravate, or mitigate their power" (Heller. 1995: 374). This means that through language choices, individuals can claim their power and therefore express their linguistic identity in social spaces. Therefore, language varieties are a salient means of establishing or confirming group identity. As members of one group compare to the other group they search for unique characteristics such as language that will distinguish them from other groups. This is supported by Rudwick (2006) that as rational human beings we individually choose which language(s) we allow to play a role in the construction of our identities. A linguistic identity is, therefore "automatically social, because language is the most common medium used in social interaction" Rudwick (2006: 37). It is through the accounts of these authors that I am able to take a stance and propose that the language choices by students on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages could be an illustration of expression of their marginalized linguistic identity and my study seeks to explore this further.

Ndhlovu (2007: 119) suggests that "to be marginalized is to be limited in scope and space, which also involves exclusion, discrimination as well as rejection, omission and isolation", therefore, "when a language is not recognized for a certain function in which space is accorded to other languages within the same linguistic ecology, it is marginalized." In the context of my study, institutional culture marginalized some groups and language was one of the issues. This language-based marginalization would, therefore, be "conceived as a situation in which some members of society are individually or collectively discriminated against or oppressed on the basis of language(s) they speak" (Ndhlovu, 2007: 119). It is also important to mention that, at the centre of student protests were also protests against institutional culture that marginalized black knowledge and experience, and through the notion of linguistic identity, it is the interest of my study to explore the expression of mother tongue speakers of indigenous African languages on the two Rhodes institutional Facebook pages.

### 2.4.2 Social media and the expression of identity

Social media have become important platforms for the expression, (re)negotiation, contestation, and construction of social identities (Seargeant, Tagg, & Ngampramu, 2012). They were used for example, even during the #RMF and #FMF as tools and space to contest power, especially to campaign for support for change, justice, equality and accountability of those in authority. Murphy, Hill, & Dean (2013: 3) define social media as the "collection of websites and web-based systems that allow for mass interaction, conversation, and sharing among members of a network and most social media originated in the 1990s." Other forms of social media, according to Seargant et al. (2014), are purposefully structured around or become associated with shared variables such as nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation, and language. We can say that these variables are usually shared within group pages and personal page platforms and sharing of these can be said to be part of social identity because simply identifying with the group is enough to activate similarity in perceptions and behaviour among group members.

This group identification comes to what Stets & Burke (2000: 119) call 'depersonalization' and these authors maintain that "'depersonalization' does not mean that individuals lose the sense of who they are, rather, they simply identify with a particular group and take on the group's identity." Here we see the influence of social media on identity, through depersonalization and identification with the group's shared variables. Boyd & Ellison (2008) observe that, some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common languages or shared racial, sexual, religious, or national based identities. Social media now enables its users to express their identities online, for example, on their personal profiles and groups they are members of. This then results in the construction and expression of collective identities, thereby fostering individuals to establish communities with a shared identity. For example, based on language, political values, and organizational membership, among others. Barker & Galasinski (2001) assert that identification is understood as an affiliation or emotional tie with an idealized and fantasized object. Furthermore, these two authors contend that identification constitutes an exclusionary matrix by which identification with one form of identity frequently involves the rejection of another. However, as I have observed from social media interactions, identification could constitute identifying with two languages or linguistic identities simultaneously.

According to Seargeant et al. (2014), the performance and/or expression of identity both online and off are expressed through an alignment of one self with different groups, opinion and cultural issues. Seargant et al. further explain that identity performance cannot be discussed in isolation from the communities with which individuals align themselves and the ways in which these communities establish and maintain the relationships that comprise them. These different groups or communities have forms that make the alignment between them and the individual and other group members, and thereby making communication, expression, and identification possible. Amongst other things in identification with a group, we can mention includes the visible display of one's network of followers, the ability to like posts and for this information to be shared amongst the group or community network, the capacity to comment, and the way one can congregate around issues or concepts by using conventions such as the hashtag on both Facebook and Twitter (Seargeant et al., 2014).

Comparison between television and the Internet, as both are mediums of communication, is provided by Seargant et al. (2014: 11) as they observe that "television, as a mass medium, has been a space of influence but by definition, vertical and passive; one to many. Whereas, the internet, a many to many mediums are horizontal, a space of participation, a space of connection." This could be the explanation to the collective or social identities that the internet construct compared to other mediums of communication. On the Internet, information could be one to many, from many to one, and from many to many resulting to individual(s) or groups relating to and identifying with the information and other recipients. This is also because identities are constituted within a system of social relations and there must be a reciprocal recognition of others. In modern societies, much of this "sense of shared identity is communicated through media technologies. These technologies help to transmit shared symbolic forms, a sense of group culture", (Seargant et al., 2014: 11). As online spaces shaped language practices and provided dynamic ways of making meaning, they have also provided new opportunities to construct, represent, and express online identities. As part of the notion of identity in social media, many researchers have used interchangeably what they call 'self-presentation' and/or 'self-representation', as a form of identity construction and expression.

The notion of self-presentation or self-representation, according to Papacharissi (2011), becomes an ever-evolving cycle through which individual identity is presented, compared, adjusted, or defended against a constellation of social, cultural, economic, or political realities. Papacharissi further maintains that it is through technology that the individual links separately and simultaneously with multiple audiences, thereby enabling self-representation, expression,

and negotiation of identity to take place (Papacharissi, 2011). Self-representation or self-presentation, in the context of my study, is a term used for displaying language preference and practises on social media (in this case, Facebook specifically). Language preference on social media is, therefore, a performance and/or presentation of a linguistic identity. It is therefore, through self-presentation that Papacharissi (2011: 304) observes that "social network sites facilitate self-presentation, including text, photographs, and other multimedia capabilities, but the performance is centred on public displays of social connections of friends, which are used to authenticate identity and introduce the self through the reflexive process of fluid association circles." Thus, individual and collective identities are at the same time presented and promoted.

Seargeant et al. (2013) suggest that, of particular reference to sociolinguistics, are two fundamental social dynamics at the heart of social network sites use: the presentation of self (i.e. issues that pivot around notions of identity), and the building and maintenance of networked relationships (i.e. issues relating to concepts of community). People, therefore, actively and repeatedly construct and negotiate their identity (within the constraints afforded by a range of social and individual factors) and present themselves in different ways depending on the particular contextual circumstances in which they are operating. It is under this sort of self-presentation that Seargant et al. (2013: 9) conclude that, "if identities are discursively (and semiotically) constructed and dialogically performed, then nowhere is this more evident than on social media, where people have relative freedom to choose how they wish to present themselves, have the opportunity to address new, diverse and potentially global audiences, and have at their disposal a novel set of resources for doing so." Self-representation in social media is also done through self-disclosure, the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information (thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes), and it is consistent with the image one would like to give (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

With identity representation, also comes the notion of authenticity. According to Woolard (2008), the ideology of authenticity locates the value of a language in its relationship to a particular community, and that which is authentic is viewed as the genuine expression of such a community, or an essential self. Seargeant et al. (2014: 513) state that authenticity is "a factor that is often seen as crucial to identity management across online situations, and it is an extent to which an online persona is seen by interlocutors to relate to the person behind it-as well as the social value placed on this perceived authenticity." Seargant et al. (2014) consider the importance of authenticity as being its provision and enabler for communication. They further assert that communication operates as a sort of contractual transaction, whereby the people

who are involved in communication agree to co-operate with each other in exchanging information, be it interpersonal or ideational. Therefore, "authenticity thus acts as a baseline from which this belief can be built and plays a pivotal role in the way that people interact. As well as expectations of authenticity, performances of identity on social media are further constrained by the perceived nature of online audience" (Seargeant et al., 2014: 520).

Woolard (2008) asserts that, to be considered authentic, a speech variety must be perceived as deeply rooted in social and geographic territory in order to have value. If such social and territorial roots are not visible, a linguistic variety lacks value in this system. This is also because, the very survival of subordinated languages and non-standard varieties as valued resources in local social networks, where a claim to be authentic membership sometimes can be the currency of a life built precariously on social and economic reciprocity (Woolard, 2008). An example of identity authenticity is that portrayed in the study by Darvin (2016) on language use in social media. Darvin (2016: 255) observes that the language used online among Arabs while socially networking varies between Arabic and English, and that Arabic youth justified the use of a local language, and mixed languages and less use of modern standard Arabic to their desire to attract others, "as a matter of habit because it helps them in expressing their ideas and they considered it as a practical method of communication." Therefore, since the use of language is a complex matter, there is also a portion of Arab youth users who customize their language habits on social media according to the social group with whom they are communicating, thereby using language to authenticate their linguistic identity.

With the existing literature reviewed in this chapter, conspicuous in the existing knowledge are the limited, if any, voices of students, especially from previously marginalized linguistic backgrounds. My study seeks to bridge the gap of social media use as a platform that students engage in to express their perspectives on the languages question in HEIs, thereby expressing their marginalized linguistic identities. It is therefore safe to conclude that my study is a first of its own kind, as there is no literature that shows a critical analysis of screenshot and social media posts on language question and marginalization of linguistic identities in HEIs. Thus, my study research is a contribution to the scant literature on the expression on the limited knowledge of marginalized indigenous African languages identities of students in institutions of Higher Education within the sociolinguistics field.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined what historical events led to the call out for multilingualism in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. These calls have resulted in attempts by HEIs to transform these institutions into multilingual and linguistically diverse environments, as outlined by the chapter. Some institutions of higher learning have been suggested to implement the calls by The Minister of Higher Education, where some have not, and some scholars say it is doing so, whereas some say it is an unachievable dream. The chapter also discussed the intellectualisation of indigenous languages and the Internet and explored the use of social media by youth, as a platform to express marginalized linguistic identities of students in South African HEIs. The next Chapter discusses the theoretical framework upon which this study draws.

# CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is framed around three theoretical concepts, which are presented in this chapter. The first section outlines the notion of *linguistic imperialism*, to provide a broad context for understanding the language question in South African Higher Education and its significance in transformation. The second section describes the concept of *citizen sociolinguistics* to understand language through the lens of student language practices on social media, and students' citizenship through the use of language.

## 3.2 LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM FRAMEWORK

As foregrounded by Ansre (1979) and Phillipson (1992; 1996; 1998), South African universities under the colonial and apartheid regimes could be regarded as 'structures of linguistic imperialism'. Phillipson (1997) regards linguistic imperialism as a theoretical construct for understanding linguistic hierarchies, the structures and ideologies that establish and sustain such hierarchies. This includes the transmission of dominant language and culture onto others, which applies to the hegemony of English in HE, as Shannon (1995: 177) notes that "languages themselves achieve the status of dominant or dominated or prestigious or inferior, as a result of the struggles and negotiations that go on between their speakers, just as ideas or programs achieve status in political debates." Additionally, the hierarchy of languages and how language is defined as opposed to how a dialect or a vernacular is defined, can be noticed in the inception of "us versus them", an individual or a collective, self and other. Languages are defined positively or neutrally, as the general, abstract, unspoken norm, whereas dialects, vernaculars are defined negatively, with connotation of some kind of deficiency, commonness, lack of cultivation and civilization, partly as undeveloped or underdeveloped forms of communication, something to be got rid of, to be subsumed under languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Phillipson (1992) attests for two reasons that linguistic imperialism pervades all types of imperialism. The first has to do with form (language as a medium for transforming ideas) as language is the primary medium of communication for links in all fields, while the second deals with content. In addition, linguistic imperialism is also part and parcel of social imperialism as it "relates to the transmission of the norms and behavior of a model

social structure that are imbedded in language and occur whenever English plays a major role in the education system of an underdeveloped country and transmits social values", (Phillipson, 1992: 53).

### 3.2.1 English linguistic imperialism as a subtype of linguicism

Phillipson (1992; 1997) argues that English linguistic imperialism is one example and type of linguicism, and the latter is defined as ideologies (norms, values ascribed to different languages and their speakers), structures (for example, schools, laws and regulations covering linguistic or the position of different languages), and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language. According to Phillipson (1992) linguicism occurs if there is a policy of supporting several languages, and when priority is given in teacher training, curriculum development, and school timetables to one language. In light of this, hegemonic policies, counter in favor of the unchallenged presence of dominant languages in multilingual spaces thereby representing imbalanced allocation of rights, opportunities and obligations and this is what makes them undemocratic. Linguicism has mainly been studied in association with the education of immigrant and indigenous linguistic minorities (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1996 and in relation to the dominance of English as a world language and the role of applied linguists in promoting English (Phillipson 1992). My study focuses on linguicism and indigenous linguistic majorities, and how the English language as a minority language in South Africa, a country with 11 official languages, has a dominant status. Furthermore, the linguicism concept was conceived from Galtung (1971) version of imperialism theory of dominance and power relationship between collectivities. Imperialism can be defined as one way in which "the Center nation has power over the Periphery nation, to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them", (Galtung, 1971: 83). Phillipson describes the relationship between the Centre and Periphery nations within the imperialism theory:

> *The theory operates with a division of the world into a dominant Centre (the powerful western countries and interests) and dominated Peripheries (the underdeveloped countries). There are of power in the Centre and in the Periphery. The Peripheries in*

> *both the Centre and the Periphery are exploited by their respective Centres. Elites in the Centres of both the Centre and Periphery are linked by shared interests within each type of imperialism and, it is claimed here, by language. The norms, whether economic, military, or linguistic, are dictated by the dominant Centre and have been internalized by those in power in the Periphery. In the early colonial phase of imperialism, the elites in the Periphery consisted of the colonizers themselves, whether settlers or administrators. In present–day neo-colonialism, the elites are to a large extend indigenous, but most of them have strong links with the Centre. Many of them have been educated in Centre countries and/or through the medium of the Centre language, the old colonial language. (Phillipson, 1992: 52).*

Galtung (1971) emphasized that imperialism is a system that splits up collectivities and relates some of the parts to each other in relations of harmony of interest, and other parts in relation of disharmony of interest, or conflict of interest. However, as Phillipson (1992) asserts, Galtung's theory does not refer to linguistic imperialism but is a sub-type of what Galtung referred to as *'cultural imperialism'*. Phillips & Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) and later Phillipson (1992) asserted that linguicism refers exclusively to ideologies and structures where language is the means for affecting or maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups that are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues). Phillipson (1992: 55) makes an example of this when he alludes that, "in a school in which the mother tongues of some children, from an immigrant or indigenous minority background, are ignored, this has consequences for their learning." Therefore, the legitimation of linguicism occurs mostly in political discourse on language issues and language discourse, and it takes form to both languages and their speakers as they interact with one another in social spaces.

As observed by Phillipson (1997) linguicism can be intra-lingual and inter-lingual, as it exists among and between speakers of a language, and when a dialect is privileged as a 'standard'. Moreover, Phillipson (*ibid.*) adds that linguicism exists between speakers of different languages in process of resource allocation, of the vindication and vilification in discourse of one language rather than another as unsuited for a range of literate or societal functions, and any of the ubiquitous formulae for stigmatizing, downgrading or invisibilising a language. As is the case with all other types of '–isms' such as sexism, racism, and classism, linguicism also

presents itself consciously and unconsciously on the actions of the actor (Phillipson, 1992). In addition, particular languages maybe regulated on their use, and at the same time resources may be accorded to one language but not others. The allocation of power or a dominant status to languages over others can be seen in how in certain states such as South Africa, power or a dominant status is allocated to the English language over other South African official indigenous languages. From this allocation, the privileging and transmission of a dominant language and culture onto others is evident. This is as asserted by Phillipson (1992) as being a representation of the dominant language, to which desirable characteristics are attributed, for the purpose of inclusion, and the opposite for dominated languages, for purposes of exclusion. As a result of the exclusion of dominated languages, the dominant languages extend at the expense of the dominated languages and there is an unequal division of power and resources. However, Phillipson maintains that "for linguicism also to constitute linguistic imperialism presupposes that the actors in question are supported by an imperialist structure of exploitation of one society or collectivity by another" (Phillipson, 1992: 55). Thus, it is linguistic imperialism if English language is imposed on other South African indigenous languages, and linguicism is in operation.

### 3.3.2 English linguistic imperialism and the hegemony of English

Drawing on Gramsci (1971) hegemony theory, which emphasizes on power relations, Phillipson (1992) states that hegemonic processes transmit the values and norms of dominant groups. Hegemony is defined by some scholars as a set of meanings and values which, as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming (Bocock, 1986; Phillipson, 1992; Reddy, 2000; & Stoddart, 2007). Phillipson (1992: 72) suggests that hegemony refers to dominant ideas that we take for granted, and further emphasizes that "because of the investment in teaching training and publications, and because of acceptance of ideas which legitimate a dominant role of English, this becomes to be accepted as the natural state of affairs rather than a choice which reflects particular interests." Moreover, Shannon (1995) emphasizes that once a language achieves hegemonic status, dominated languages are more easily perceived as inferior and their speakers internalize that slowly. Therefore, the English linguistic hegemony can be understood as referring to explicit and implicit values, beliefs, purposes, and activities, which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language (Phillipson, 1992). Reddy (2000) emphasizes that, in South Africa, and in all other societies, the ideas, practices,

and institutions are a function of the relations of power and where there is a powerful minority controlling the state and the institutions of civil society, the rules, practices, and institutions of the society always favour the interests of the dominant minority. Furthermore, in relation to language practices, the concept of hegemony provides social power relationships between dominant and dominated languages and language groups. In this instance, linguistic hegemony will be perceived as speakers of dominated languages believing in and participate in the marginalization of dominated languages to the dominant, resulting in the dominant language being the only one remaining. Shannon (1995: 177) suggests "where linguistic hegemony is directly supported and promoted through governmental [and private institutions] dominated language groups endure severe punishment for use of their mother tongue." However, where there is an awareness and a raising of consciousness about hegemony, resistance to it can result (Shannon, 1995). Phillipson (1992) suggests what the protesters have in common is a recognition of evidence of linguistic imperialism and dominance, and desire to combat it as the persistent advance of English takes place in the suppression through displacement and replacement of other languages and the overthrow of competing imperialist languages. According to Phillipson (1992: 27) "displacement happens when English takes over in specific domains, whether in computers or entertainment." Replacement can be said to occur when the English language, in specific domains, replaces other languages completely.

In alignment with the linguistic imperialism theoretical framework, the present study is conducted against the background of the Language Policy in Higher Education (2002), and subsequent government and institutional endeavours of implementing the key imperatives of this policy, especially harnessing African languages as resources and transformation tools in the sector, as well as scholarly contestations around the subject. In particular, an engagement with the Rhodes University Language Policy and transforming language practices is conducted to contextualize this research. It can be argued that the current status quo is a consequence of the enduring structures of linguistic imperialism which do not spare even official language planning processes in post-independent contexts, as they constitute a top-down approach below (Alexander, 1989; 2004). Within this framework of linguistic imperialism and hegemony, this study hopes to achieve a nuanced understanding of students' complex discussions of the language question to provide a broad context for understanding the language question in South African HE and its significance in transformation. The following section discusses the citizen sociolinguistic approach to research.

## 3.3 THE CITIZEN SOCIOLINGUISTICS APPROACH

According to Rymes & Leone (2014), who developed the concept, and subsequently Moore (2015) and Svendsen (2018), citizen sociolinguistics constitutes the ways citizens or any individual, more than trained sociolinguists, understand the world of language around them including commenting on talk or the way people use language. Therefore, citizen sociolinguistics is the study of these understandings. As Svendsen (2018) states, citizen sociolinguistics is based on the concept that people are particularly close and inherently interested in language and its use in society. Rymes & Leon (2014) articulate that this new citizen sociolinguistic approach accounts for the fact that individuals have many ways of speaking and their social values are built through participatory networks that go far towards those of traditional sociolinguistic methods. Therefore, there is a need to further develop citizen sociolinguistics to include other sociolinguistic data, "such as data on the ways citizens employ their linguistic resources in social interaction, as well as reflexive ethnographic analyses of the purported 'appropriateness' of various ways of speaking in different contexts to reduce the risk of presenting all languages as dialects as 'equal' by merely revealing the linguistic diversity through a huge amount of data" (Svendsen, 2018: 152).

### 3.3.1 Citizen sociolinguistics as a new approach to sociolinguistics research

As stated in the main section above, citizen sociolinguistics is a newly coined concept, and according to Moore (2015: 5) the main goal of citizen sociolinguistics is to focus on the "circulation and exchange of samples of observed speech and metacommentary upon them as a social activity in its own right, one that is centrally constitutive of non-face-to face online communities." Furthermore, Moore (*ibid.)* asserts that citizen sociolinguistics is located at the interface between the expert discourse of sociolinguistics developed by (and mostly for) academic researchers, and popular discourses about language variation developed by and circulated among ordinary citizens. It tries to uncover the way that terms, concepts, discourse genres, texts, and even people circulate back and forth across that penetrable boundary. It further seeks to develop "new methods of gathering and analyzing the massive amount of freely available data from the internet, which is made easier by the very design and affordances of social media platforms", (Moore, 2015: 5). Therefore, it can be suggested that citizen sociolinguistics allows for the collection of data in social spaces and situations, and from people

that it could have been difficult to access using the traditional sociolinguistics approach, as findings of the former contribute to the same participatory culture that data is collected from.

Svendsen (2018) suggests that in as much as citizen sociolinguistics introduces new ways of gathering and analyzing online data, the '*metacommentaries'* on language and language use in social media constitutes citizen sociolinguistics and is rather an extension of empirical sites for engaging in *'folk linguistics'*. As Lim & Ansaldo (2016) contend, it is perhaps in the language practices on social media platforms that the agency assumed in citizenship is best expressed in the negotiations and renegotiations of the languages and identities of online community. Svendsen (2018) further maintains that, epistemologically, a citizen sociolinguistics research approach transfers authority on who holds *'legitimate'* knowledge about languages. Citizen sociolinguistics is about opening the dialogue between *'the academy'* and *'the citizens'*, and "we recognize citizens as competent contributors to research, and we gain possibilities to explicitly explore language users' contributions to linguistic data, arguments and theory", (Svendsen, 2018: 156).

Moreover, Svendsen (2018) adds that the new concept of citizen sociolinguistics is not only theoretical, as it also brings an understanding to diverse cities, public spaces, neighborhoods, classrooms and workplaces, face-to-face as well as online. By so doing, citizen sociolinguistics is creating understandings of language and its social value in society that will deal with language use within the newly diverse contexts while at the same time, making sense of communication that further engages people in these contexts. Thus, Ryme & Leone (2014) affirm that a relevant sociolinguistics must consider for both the complex communicative repertoire of each individual and for the participatory networks within which that repertoire is pursued and valued. This participatory network then results to a participatory culture that fosters critical repertoire awareness that is a new way of thinking about language and the way it functions in the various contemporary contexts. Svendsen (2018) pleads that an enhanced public critical language awareness might promote linguistic stewardship and involvement of ordinary citizens in the decision-making process about policy issues and strengthen public participation in democratic and policy processes. This is because when engaging citizens, citizen sociolinguistics "potentially creates degrees of repertoire awareness for everyday encounters with diversity", (Ryme & Leone, 2014: 40).

According to Ryme & Leone (2014: 27) there are three reasons for a new citizen sociolinguistics, that is, a sociolinguistics based on public participation: (1) Epistemological reasons which are based on understandings about what is considered to be knowledge and the related issues of authenticity and generalizability; (2) Social Science 2.0 reasons, which address the role of new media in our sociolinguistic pursuits, including issues such as connectivity and a need for a new sociolinguistic methodology that accounts for - and partakes of - the social demands and affordances of massive mobility and connectivity in today's world. Therefore, based on the three reasons for a new citizen sociolinguistics, Svendsen (2018: 140) suggests that the new citizen sociolinguistics has the potential to "provide research experience, stimulate curiosity, further research, public understanding of science and increased (socio) linguistic awareness and knowledge by involving the public in sociolinguistic research and to encourage linguistic stewardship, i.e. in the planning and management of linguistic resources and linguistic diversity at the individual as well as the societal level and particularly in education."

The language question and the use of African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages may be seen as an act of citizen sociolinguistics as it involves unprofessional linguists or language planners engaged in what is called language planning from below (Alexander, 1989; 2004, Kamwendo, 2005; Webb, 2009; Du Plessis, 2010). For the present study, the debate on the two Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages provides that perspective from below and the researcher hopes that this may throw some useful insights inspired by citizen sociolinguistics towards language policy issues.

### 3.3.2 Linguistic citizenship as a part of citizen sociolinguistics

Under the umbrella of citizen sociolinguistics, is the concept of linguistic citizenship which focuses more on marginalized voices, agency and linguistic rights of citizens. According to Stroud (2018) the concept of linguistic citizenship is a Southern and decolonial concept that came up out of the contradictions surrounding programmers and practices of mother tongue and bilingual education in the 1990s in the context of the geopolitical South. Stroud (*ibid.*) further elucidates that the notion of linguistic citizenship was coined out of the desired need for a standpoint that positioned linguistic practices and representations of speakers robustly within their everyday sociopolitical strivings for agency, transformation and participatory citizenship. Therefore, Chiatoh (2014) suggests that in promoting linguistic citizenship in a linguistically diverse environment, there must be a necessity for the recognition of multiple

identities and opportunities as the foundation of active citizenship. This is because, according to Chiatoh (*ibid.*) linguistic citizenship involves acknowledgement of linguistic diversity and of minority language empowerment, as a starting point of a broader and more inclusive material and symbolic representation. In alignment with this, Stroud & Heugh (2004) define linguistic citizenship as the individual claim to exercise the right of citizens to voice, to be heard, and to act upon whichever dimension of a person's linguistic repertoire as may be useful in circumstance or purpose.

From the descriptions of linguistic citizenship that are given above, it can be suggested that linguistic citizenship approach is some form of official recognition of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. This is as explicated by Chiatoh (2014: 81) who claims that, "if linguistic diversity is understood as the presence of more than one language in society, then the exploitation of this diversity in creating real opportunities for 'voice' becomes a major priority." With this major opportunity for the exploitation of diversity, comes a full active participation that tolerates and accommodate differences, more especially linguistic and cultural differences as the foundation for recognition and respect of linguistic rights of citizens on grounds of mainstream and minority language speakers (Chiatoh, 2014). Thus, if we use the lens of linguistic citizenship, then surely it is the communities themselves who decide how to go about enacting the recognition and respect of their linguistic rights. Kamwendo (2005) concurs that, the main point is that the language speakers should take action on and about their languages and must seize spaces and opportunities created by the state in order to promote or develop their languages. The next section provides a summary of the chapter.

## 3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter described and presented the theoretical framework for this study. Notwithstanding, the chapter explained different theories or frameworks such as *linguistic imperialism, citizen sociolinguistics*. The linguistic imperialism theory is a construct for understanding linguistic hierarchies, the structures and ideologies that establish and sustain such hierarchies and it includes the transmission of dominant language and culture onto others. Consequently, the chapter described concepts related to linguistic imperialism, such as linguicism and hegemony. The chapter also outlined theoretical concepts related to the notion of citizen sociolinguistic approach, for example, linguistic citizenship.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides more detail about the research site chosen for data collection. Furthermore, the chapter deals with research design and the methods and research techniques used in the study for the purposes of data collection and data analysis. The chapter discusses the qualitative methods that are going to be used in the research, namely: virtual ethnography, interviews, textual analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Consequently, the chapter analysed the research participants and the sampling procedure the researcher has used. The analysis of the data was based on the language question on the textual data and the debates around it and other themes that emerged from interviews. The themes were analysed using the theoretical framework that has been discussed in Chapter Two. Consequently, the CDA approach was employed, in order to achieve the goals of the research which are to analyse how students with various linguistic backgrounds, especially speakers of African languages, engage with the language question and perform linguistic identities in the context of transformation debates in South African HE with focus on the UCKAR Facebook page. The research examined how students' perspectives on the UCKAR page contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE. Lastly, it sought to examine how language usage on the UCKAR page and its implications on students' engagement with issues may provide insights towards the implementation of multilingualism in the university.

## 3.2 RESEARCH SITES: UCKAR AND RHODES SRC FACEBOOK PAGES

For the purposes of this study, data was collected from a Facebook pages named 'University Currently Known as Rhodes' (UCKAR) and RHODES SRC. The UCKAR Facebook page was created by Rhodes University students during the 2015 #FMF protests. A clear contestation around name change of the institution as part of transformation is noticeable. As observed by the researcher based on students' discussions, the creation of the UCKAR page followed the

prohibition of some students' protest posts by fellow students on the Student Representative Counsel (SRC) page and the insistence of English as the only acceptable posting language. UCKAR page administrators describe the page as a platform "for students of the University Currently Known As Rhodes who refused to be silenced". There are about 22 languages that are reportedly spoken as mother tongues at Rhodes University, with isiXhosa having the highest number of mother-tongue speakers (Maseko, 2014; Gambushe, 2015; Mawonga, 2015), followed by isiZulu, ChiShona, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho, and others (Kaschula, 2011). For purposes of this research, posts that fall between 24 October 2016 and January 2017 that discuss the language question and those written in African languages have been collected. The 2016-2017period was when students' protests heightened and students' discussions on the language question continued to exist on the page, with a focus on the role of language in university transformation.

### 3.3 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

Sampling could be said to be a strategy or a technique that guides how a researcher selects data sources from a large pool. Purposive sampling was used as a tool to collect data. Tongco (2007) and consequently Etikan et al. (2016) define purposive sampling as the deliberate choice of an informant and other sources of data due to their qualities. This technique was used in my study to select Facebook posts and comments on the language question and those written in African languages. This is because "purposive sampling does not allow the researcher to generalize to a population and a researcher samples a sample with his or her research goals in mind" (Bryman, 2012: 416). Posts that are appropriate for the objectives of the study were also collected. As suggested by Patton & Cochran (2002), Palys (2008), and Gentles et al. (2015), samples in qualitative research are usually purposive, and Patton & Cochran (2002) also suggest that it means participants and other sources of data are selected because they are likely to generate useful data for the project. Sampling strategies should therefore always be "determined by the purpose of the research project…and you need to recognise that the people you are selecting will not represent all people in the population, and you cannot make claims about, for instance, the prevalence of views in a community from a qualitative study" (Bricki & Green, 2007: 9). This simply means that for the sake of my study, not all posts on the UCKAR Facebook page were selected but only posts that are on and about the language

question and debates about language were selected. In addition, posts that portray the performance of marginalised linguistic identities were also collected. Other posts had dates because they were original posts, and those that are without dates are usually comments or responses to the original posts and are posts that speak to the objectives of the study. Patton & Cochran (2002) and consequently Gentles et al. (2015) suggest that sample sizes are typically small in qualitative research. Gentles et al. (2015: 1782) further explain that sample sizes are typically small in qualitative research because, "the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research." It can therefore be suggested that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question as my study sought to do.

## 3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.4.1 Qualitative research

This study is qualitative in that it employed qualitative research methods. Marshall (1996) and consequently Patton & Cochran (2002) note that a qualitative research methodology can be used if one wishes to understand the perspectives of participants; or explore the meaning they give to phenomena; or observe a process in depth as they aim to answer questions about the 'what', 'how' or 'why'. This study is qualitative in that it explored and analysed students' perspectives on the language question in South African HE, and how African languages were used on the UCKAR Facebook page during student protests. The qualitative method has helped me as a researcher and my readers or audience understand how students' behaviours and language practices or the use of African languages on the UCKAR page help students express their marginalized linguistic identities. As noted by Bauer et al. (2014), a qualitative researcher also observes and personally witnesses what people are doing, how they deal with themselves, things and other people. The understanding of students' language practices has further provided an insight into students' perspectives, which has enabled development of an understanding of the meaning that they ascribe to their language practices. As described by Sutton & Austin (2015: 226), qualitative research can help researchers to "access the thoughts and feelings of

research participants, which can enable development of an understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences."

In as much as the language question is a national concern in South African HE institutions, it is important to mention that this particular study has used the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages as a case study. Creswell (2003) notes that a qualitative research also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. Here the researcher, "collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data" (Creswell, 2003: 18). In the case of my research, the language question and the expression of marginalized linguistic identities themes have been identified, however, the study analysed further, emerging themes from the debates on language question from the data that were collected. For this study, the researcher examined issues related to linguistic identity marginalisation of students. Therefore, through this case study and in this situation, I sought to find out the meaning of marginalisation of these linguistic identities from students' perspectives on the language question on the page. According to Creswell (2003: 21) this means "identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it developed shared patterns of behaviour over time (i.e., ethnography), and one of the key elements of collecting data is to observe participants' behaviours by participating in their activities."

### 3.4.2 Textual analysis

To analyse data, the study used a textual analysis technique. Textual analysis looks at any analysis of texts broadly. Frey et al. (2000) define textual analysis as a method that researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of recorded or visual message and the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts. McKee (2001) further notes that textual analysis is a methodology, a way of gathering and analysing information in academic research and that when we analyse text we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text. Comments on posts that are positive or critical towards the use of African languages were carefully analysed. In this analysis I aimed to analyse the production, context, and the meaning of posts on the language question debates as they have helped me in the reasonable interpretation of the posts. McKee (2001) emphasises that textual analysis is only one way of approaching media texts to try to understand their

meaning. Bainbridge (2011) defines written texts as books, magazines, newspapers, phone messages and captions for images. Therefore, it can be said that texts are any written form of message or information, and it is through the "textual function of language that speakers are able to produce texts that are understood by listeners, and it is an enabling function connecting discourse to the co-text and con-text in which it occurs" (Sheyholislami, 2001: 1). It can therefore be concluded that, in the context of my study, co-text are the students' posts through language that speak to the use of it to engage to debates around it in the context of language debates and protests on the UCKAR page.

As a methodology or a data gathering process, according to McKee (2011: 1), textual analysis is usually used by researchers who want to "understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live." In the context of my study, I have employed the textual analysis methodology to make sense and to bring insights into how students express their marginalized identities-a performance of who they are and how they fit or seek to fit in the linguistic diversity at Rhodes University amid dominant English monolingualism. Therefore, the analysis of these Facebook posts have provided insights into how other linguistic identities, in the context of English dominance, are embraced and/or performed. Additionally, the textual analysis methodology have helped understand students' perspectives on the burning language question in South African HE. Bauer at al. (2014) observe that, a qualitative textual analysis tries to understand intentions of the author, the text itself, including the analyst, and of the reader or audience from their perspectives. Furthermore, the textual analysis approach was used to analyse both the South African HE and Rhodes University language policies, as both are important texts to examine for language question and practices in South African HE institutions. The two policy documents stand as great examples to what Bauer et al. (2014) talk about when they say that, texts represent values, beliefs, rituals and practices of a community, and a systematic analysis of them gives us important clues about the historical and social conditions of the context within which they are produced as they are both important documents that are representative and stand as a guide to institutional culture and linguistic practices in HE.

Bainbridge (2011) states that there are two types of texts, namely primary texts and secondary texts. The author further explains that primary texts comprise the original information that you begin with, which is the primary object of study. An example of primary texts in the case of my study, were the Facebook posts that were selected from the UCKAR page. These are posts that are the main texts that the study goals were based on, and the main data of the study.

Moreover, the present study was conducted against the background of the Language Policy in Higher Education (2002), subsequent government and institutional endeavours of implementing the key imperatives of this policy, especially harnessing African languages as resources and transformation tools in the sector, as well as scholarly contestations around the subject. In particular, an engagement with the Rhodes University Language Policy and transforming language practices was conducted to contextualise this research. These two policies are an example of what Bainbridge (2011: 227) regards as secondary texts, and "they help us to understand the primary text, or otherwise clarify our analysis of the primary texts." Therefore, the two policies can be regarded to be supplementary texts as they were two texts that were used to further engage with the language question in South African HE institutions, while at the same time critiqued these language policies. Texts, therefore, **"**acquire their meanings by the relationship between texts and the social subjects, writers and the readers, who always operate with various degrees of choice and access to texts and means of interpretation" (Sheyholislami 2001: 13).

### 3.4.3 Interviews

Interviews mirror everyday conversations and the extent to which they are focused on the researcher's needs for data is debatable. In this study, interviews were conducted with key members, members of the language committee of Rhodes University and one student tutor who works well with one of the departments that is involved in multilingual practices within the university. Gill, Steward & Chadwick (2008) explain that the purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters. In my study, interviewing the members of the language committee and the other key members of the university has helped figure out if there is uniformity of thoughts around the language question, given the different linguistic backgrounds and identities of the different members of the committee. The aim of this was to assess the current position of language diversity at Rhodes University which places in context the English linguistic hegemony that is present on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages. Furthermore, it has helped bring forth the perspectives of Rhodes University language committee members and these other stakeholders on the Rhodes University language policy and sought to find out what plans are put into place to engage students on debates of the language question because they are important stakeholders

of the university, as at the same time some of these students are also speakers of LOTE. Therefore, to receive the group's natural responses one needs to consult a group that already exists (Patton & Cochran, 2002). This means in the context of this study, even though the Rhodes University language committee already exists, their members were interviewed individually. Steward & Chadwick (2008: 292) further assert that interviews are also "particularly appropriate for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment." Furthermore, it means that, with interviews participants are given an opportunity to engage with the research topic at hand and express themselves while they give detailed responses, unlike questionnaires and surveys where the form of expression and elaboration is limited.

## 3.5 VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

The study is virtual ethnographic in nature. Virtual ethnography is an online research method that employs ethnographic research to study online social interactions. Ethnography is the study of how people interact in society, their behaviours and perceptions within their social groups, be it teams, organizations, communities and the role of the ethnographer is to observe, document, and analyse these practices, to present them in a new light (Hine, 2000; Murphy, 2008; Garcia et al., 2009, Robinson & Schulz, 2010). I am a member of the UCKAR Facebook page as I am a student at Rhodes University. In as much as I am a researcher, I was already aware of students' debates on the language question on the page. My interest in the study, therefore, grew when I would read student's posts and comments on the language question and the use of different languages. Therefore, as with other case studies, this study is ethnographic, but it is online in that it studied a group of people that share a common culture, language/s and are part of the same student Facebook page even though they are from different parts of the country and/or the world but the page enables them to share an institutional culture. At Rhodes University this institutional culture according to Govender (2017) exists and benefits some and oppresses others, and students have used the protests and their voices online to speak against it.

Traditional ethnographers listen to what people are saying and engage their research participants or informants in conversational exchanges, while at the same time observing how their informants are relating to each other. However, my study employed a cyberethnography

(also referred to as virtual or online ethnography) to collect data, which is used as an ethnography method but in online spaces. Garcia et al. (2009: 58) explain that observation in online research involves watching text and images on a computer screen rather than watching people in offline settings, however, "the technologically mediated environment still provides direct contact with the social worlds the ethnographer is studying, since participants in that setting communicate through online behaviour." The recent student protests and students' use of social media during this period have given rise to qualitative studies such as Valenzuela et al. (2012), Iwilade (2013), Bosch, (2016; 2017), Govender, (2017) and Mwaniki, (2018) on these platforms. Ethnography studies usually try to understand the changes in the group's culture and language practices over time (Dominguez et al. (2007). As emphasised by Sutton & Austin (2015) that, ethnography involves researchers using direct observation to study participants in their "real life" environment, sometimes over extended periods. In the case of my study, student protests and the language question took place in both offline and online spaces, meaning the "real life" offline engagements and debates that happened between students on campus were further engaged with on the UCKAR page. Additionally, students would narrate their encounters with other students and staff members on the language question issues and/or the refusal of being helped by certain staff members due to speaking in LOTE upon requesting for help from administration staff, on the UCKAR Facebook page.

Hine (2000; 2008) suggests that virtual ethnography transfers the ethnographic tradition of the researcher as an embodied research instrument to the social spaces of the Internet. This study involved virtual ethnography fieldwork from 24 October 2016 and January 2017 where the researcher was continuously present on the UCKAR Facebook page during student protests and when the language question debates occurred. The study have used textual analyses and anything beyond texts, for example emoticons and other visuals that could have meaning making impact and that I could deduced qualitative responses from, and lastly, observation or participant experiencer, for example for collection of data. Furthermore, the study sought to understand students' perspectives on the language question in South African HE institutions and hoped to give an insight into the implementation of multilingualism in these institutions.

Garcia et al. (2009) state that the textual data available for participant observation or participant experiencer research include e-mail, chat room interactions, instant messaging, Web sites, and other online environments. In the case of online fieldwork, there is the issue of what it means to be a pure observer or a participant observer in an environment that is neither public nor fully private. However, "simply because a site is not password protected does not mean that

participants in the site consider it a "public space." (Robinson & Schulz, 2011 184). I employed what Garcia et al. (2009: 58) refer to as "participant experiencer" to collect data, and these authors further note that the use of the term "experiencer" instead of observer is helpful because in online groups "there is no opportunity to directly observe the other members of the group by reading and posting messages to the group and many online settings provide the opportunity for the researcher in the form of "lurking". When people are 'lurking' on social media it means that they are hanging out, or are present but do not participate in the interactions, and this is what I have done and continue doing as a member on the UCKAR Facebook page. I have never participated on debates on the language question however I have posted on the page for other personal reasons and have liked some of the posts. As suggested by Garcia et al. (2009), some ethnographers advocate beginning a participant observation or being a participant experiencer on a study of online phenomena by lurking first. It is also important to mention that the group is open to all Rhodes University students and the researcher is also a member of the student body, and as further supported by Garcia et al. (2009) the cyberethnographer should attempt to experience the online site the same way that actual participants routinely experience it. This means that whatever experiences and interactions happen on the page are experienced by me the same way as the actual participant experiencer or student member on the UCKAR page experiences them.

## 3.6 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

The study used a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to analyse language debates on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages. Van Dijk (1995: 24) defines CDA as "a special approach which focuses on the discursive conditions, components and consequences of power abuse by dominant (elite) groups and institutions, and studies discourse and its functions in society and the ways society, and especially forms of inequality, are expressed, represented, legitimated or reproduced in text and talk." Janks (1997) states that CDA comes from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice, and that social practices are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served. This speaks to the racial and linguistic segregation of South African universities during the apartheid era, resulting in the so-called Black and white universities as well as English and Afrikaans universities. As Rhodes University is an example of a historically white, English institution, it was important

to analyse and critique the language question against the background of its language policy, and the South African HE on the racial and linguistic historical contexts. What made CDA suitable for my study, is that CDA aids in the analysis of language-based data and interrogates issues of power and dominance which the researcher seeks to analyse.

Bryman (2012: 538) notes that CDA involves "exploring why some meanings become privileged or taken for granted and others become marginalized." The marginalisation of LOTE, specifically African languages, made the language question an integral component of debates and initiatives on transformation of higher education. On the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages, disgruntled students use their multiple languages to interact, establish a sense of belonging and power to challenge different forms of exclusionary institutional culture, including language policies and practices in HE. Consequently, speakers of the dominating English language and those who support others to post in it, continue to support its use on these two pages and refer to it as a neutral language for all speakers of LOTE. Therefore, in this regard, CDA focuses on how social power is abused, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Bauer et al., 2014) of the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages. Moreover, in textually oriented discourse analysis, CDA has the explicitly political agenda of raising awareness about the ideological frameworks informing language choice, and the way that subjects may be constructed, represented and positioned by discourse, especially in institutional contexts (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) such as universities.

In comparison to a study by van Dijk (1993) which focused more on top down relations of dominance than to bottom-up relations of resistance, compliance and acceptance, my study looked at both top down and bottom-up relations of the expression of linguistic identities and debates around the language question. This study took the bottom-up approach because as van Dijk (1993: 253) notes "academic contributions may be marginal in processes of change, in which especially those who are directly involved, and their acts of resistance, are the really effective change agents." Therefore, through the language from below approach, with the CDA methodology that was employed on this study, I sought to show that "dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear natural and quite acceptable", (van Dijk, 1993: 253). Additionally, this has contributed to CDA that will not solely interpret texts, but to which also explains them (Sheyholislami, 2001). Therefore, the analysis of the screenshots as my data was part of this discourse analysis as language is used by speakers who speak LOTE more especially African languages to speak

against the English hegemony and power, as Ahmadvand (2011: 4) notes that “critical discourse analysts are giving a serious effort to clarify and denaturalize the hidden power relations, ideological processes that exist in linguistic text, and because those who are in power are responsible of the social inequalities.

## 3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter provided and discussed the different research methodologies and procedure for data collection analysis. It looked at virtual ethnography as an online ethnography tool, as the study is also ethnographic in nature. Further, it looked at the research sites, namely the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages and gave a brief description of Rhodes University language diversity and it was established that the highest number of students are African languages speakers. Consequently, the sampling technique, purposive sampling, and the qualitative methods have been explained in detail. The next section will provide the presentation of data that has been collected for this study. I present, discuss and analyse my data thematically in two themes which are 'The dominance of English in HE' and 'The domination of indigenous African languages by English in HE'.

# CHAPTER FIVE: THE DOMINANCE OF ENGLISH IN HE

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

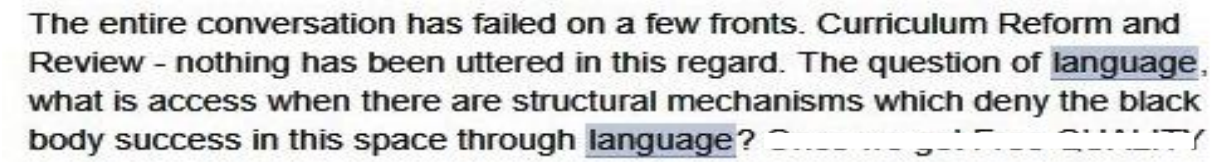
This chapter, present, discuss and analyse the findings of the study. Driven by the objectives of the study, each chapter covers its particular theme. The first theme focuses on 'The dominance of English in HE'. The themes will be presented, discussed and analysed with their sub-themes that are motivated by the objectives of the study, which emerged through the process of data collection. Data is presented, discussed and analysed using the theoretical framework that is outlined in Chapter Three. Moreover, as keywords such as language(s), protest(s), and hashtags such as #FMF and/or #FeesMustFall were mostly used during the period of student protests in 2015 and early 2017, some of these keywords guided the coding and presentation of data. Data for the theme were collected from the 2015 and 2016 student protests period to the beginning of February 2017. This is the period when student protests and debates on English linguistic imperialism and the dominance of the English language and/or the language question, occurred on both the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages.

## 5.2 ENGLISH LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM IN HE

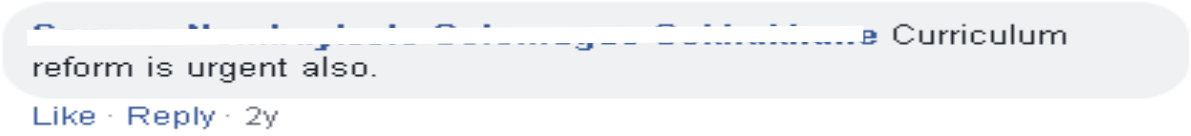
The analysis is based on sub-themes that appeared in the data that shows the dominance of the English language on Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages (UCKAR and RHODES SRC). These are 'The dominance of English in the curriculum', 'The dominance of English in non-academic spaces', and 'The hierarchy of languages according to geographical area'.

### 5.2.1 The dominance of English in the curriculum

Student protests attracted both national and international audiences with people engaging the language question and comparing language use between States or countries. It was prevalent from the data that the students had a problem with the dominance of English in the university curriculum, and they used the institutional Facebook pages to challenge the system that is the structure of this English imperialism:




The issue in the student's post above is the failure of engagements on curriculumn reform and review as there has been ongoing debates on it, and it comes after students have been contesting the English dominance and were calling for introduction of African langauges on the curriculum. What can be drawn from this is that the student notes the domination of the English language that continues to be used in the curriculumn, and denying speakers of African languages access and success in the university curriculum. One student commented on the slow pace of curriculum reform:




It can be noted from the screenshots above that the students are convinced that there is nothing that is being done for African langauges to be used in the university curriculum. Some departments within the university are seemingly contributing to the use of African languages in the curriculum, as noted by the various key members of the university:

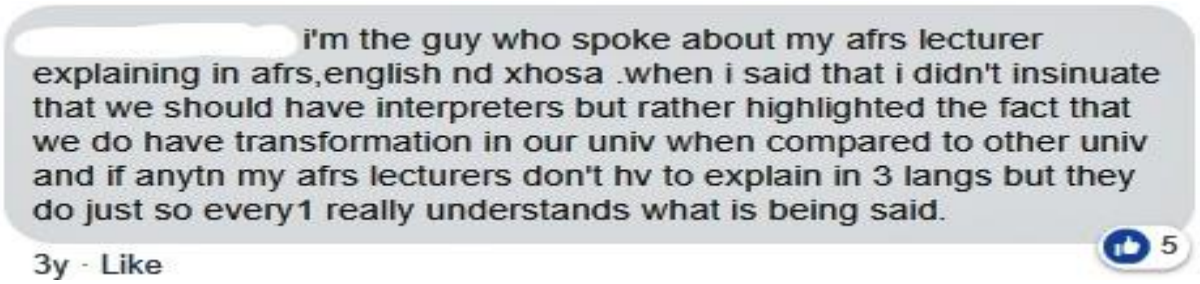
> *"We use languages in our lecture venues, we use different languages within our tutorial groups, and we've got different languages on ruconnected learning platforms.*[1] *So, increasingly, multiple languages are being used, [maybe] you will find that a lecturer will be conscious of the particular concept or of an explanation needs to be provided*

[1] RUconnected - is Rhodes University's online platform that lecturers use to communicate with students via notifications or student emails, that is used to upload lecture slides, assignment, plagiarism links and reading material for various courses within the institution.

*in a language other than that which they are normally using within class and [they will give it in another language]."- A university official*

*"...curriculum reform and review that happens really at departmental level. You can have a university encourage it which I think they are, but in the end it's the individual lecturers and departments who will decide what will be taught and how it will be taught, and what the assessment methods will be and so on."- A university official*

Another student commented that his Afrikaans lecturer uses different languages to explain content in his lectures. The student's comment also suggests that Rhodes University is transformed compared to other universities:




One of the student tutors who works closely with one of the lecturers of the university, supports the notion that departments are supposed to be doing the work as noted by the two key members of the university above, and further notes that some make plans to deal with the linguistically diverse student body within the university:

*"...it has to do with i-departments. It was last year if I'm not mistaken, where [our lecturer] introduced use of these indigenous languages, be it isiXhosa, isiZulu, Shona, Tsonga and all of those wonderful things, where she also pioneered i-translation of i-course outlines. Where she was like, at least you have expertise in isiXhosa so if you can explain in isiXhosa, isiZulu and the Nguni languages, please do that. Write your work in the Nguni language. She also encouraged us to use those languages, translanguaging uyabo."- A student tutor*

Regardless of the views that profess curriculum reform and review having been done or that regard it as an ongoing project within the university, some students had contrasting perspectives on this issue as they believe that the curriculum continue to be English dominated. What came out from the data, was the lack of representation of African languages and epistemologies in the university curriculum, and students contested this using the university Facebook pages. Students regarded the lack of these language on the university curriculum as a suppression of their marginalized African linguistic and cultural identities by the English language and culture:

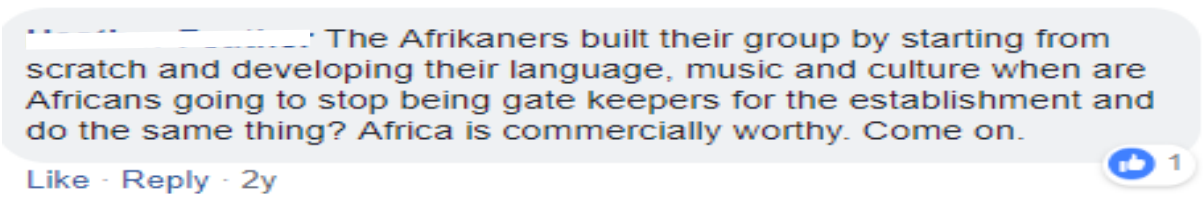
> I am constantly being bombarded by western principles and value in every single one of my subjects. But management 1 has gone overboard. This curriculum or its learning materials were not designed for me. It does not speak to me, It does very little to help me understand how to manage a business in Africa.

It is reported by Wa Thiong'o (2013) that knowledge in Africa is generated using western ways of knowing, and such English is the main vehicle for representing this knowledge in linguistic formats, as currently is the case in South African HEIs. A lecturer at Rhodes University who commented on the student's post, gave an account on how to go about curriculum transformation:

> Of course curriculum transformation is about more than just providing more suitable examples or quoting a few voices from the African context: the curriculum is as much about form as content. As lecturers we have to grapple with these questions in our practice. However, our management (at its various levels) needs to come to the party in terms of providing thought leadership that speaks to how this should be done from a discipline perspective, and lead the charge in their respective spheres of influence.
>
> Like · Reply · 2y 2

The curriculum is based on Western ideologies. This is as alluded to by Pamela Maseko in an interview with Peter Vale, that mother tongue speakers of African languages need to be able to look at a new concept in another language and relate to it to their own experiences, thus helping them to understand, this includes developing texts in African languages (Maseko & Vale, 2016). Therefore, the students will continue to contest the lack of African epistemologies within the curriculum, and thus, contesting the university as a site for the construction of exclusive foreign identities or values (Chiatoh, 2014). In addition, it can be said that the student is contesting the fact that African languages, principles and values are not capable of creating economic and social means of living. Moreover, this can be regarded as marginalization of African epistemologies and ideologies, as according to Chiatoh (2014) it is expected that in multilingual settings, the ideal identities and citizenship are those that respect the multiplicity of languages and values. It is also stipulated in the Rhodes University Language Policy that Academic Faculties, Schools and Departments will be requested to "continuously evaluate the extent to which curriculum and teaching-learning methods are appropriate for those for whom English is an additional language as well as the extent to which they facilitate the students' ability to use English as the language of learning and teaching", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 4).

Therefore, in this case the multiplicity of languages as tools to teach the Management course and the values of the speakers of these languages are being marginalized. This is as asserted by Phillipson (1992) as being a representation of the dominant language, to which desirable characteristics are attributed, for the purpose of inclusion, and the opposite for dominated languages, for purposes of exclusion. Thus, if African languages and epistemologies are not accorded space in the academe or schools, they will continue to be underdeveloped in economic, science and technological domains of the country. Kamwendo (2005) suggests that the key point is that, it is the language speakers themselves who should take action on and about their languages, they must seize spaces and opportunities created by the state to promote or develop their own languages. A student shares the same sentiment as Kamwendo:

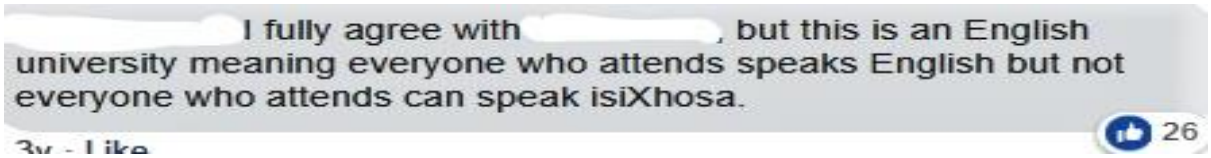


However, a university official responded that there is a lack of political will and funding to promote indigenous African languages in the university curriculum:

> *"It is very doable. There's no political will. In Afrikaans there was political will, and because there was political will, money was found. In South Africa today, there is no political will for these indigenous languages to be made academic languages that's why money has not been found."*- A university official

The curriculum as an education system that the original poster is challenging, can be regarded to as a university hegemonic process that transmits the values and norms of the English language and its culture of the dominant group within the university (Phillipson, 1992). In this regard, on both the basis of a particular language and culture (including its principles and values) the inclusion in the system is choosing the dominant groups and be included in the supposedly economic, cultural and political life of a society and its speakers at the expense of African languages and African epistemologies. Therefore, [this system] may be glorified by [English] mother tongue speakers or complimented by those who are on the receiving end of exploitation on the basis of language and [Western epistemologies].

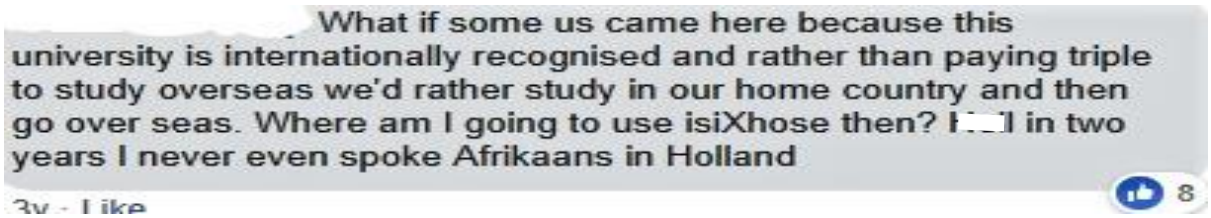
Moreover, posts by students and how they perceive the domination of African languages by English in the university curriculum, stand as evidence to English linguistic imperialism at Rhodes University. For instance, prior to the beginning of the 2015 #FeesMustFall student protests, on 28 February 2015, a student shared a screenshot of a post that was written by a famous radio talk show host and captioned the post "Spread the word" (see Appendix G). In this post, the radio personality applauds a former Rhodes University lecturer, for using isiXhosa phrases during a lecture which then caused an uproar between speakers of indigenous African languages and those of the English language. Among other things, in their reasoning, some of the students view Rhodes University to be an English only university and that everyone speaks English or that it is easy and is the norm for everyone to speak English. Below are some of the perspectives that students posted on the institutional Facebook pages with regard to the domination of African languages by English within the institution:



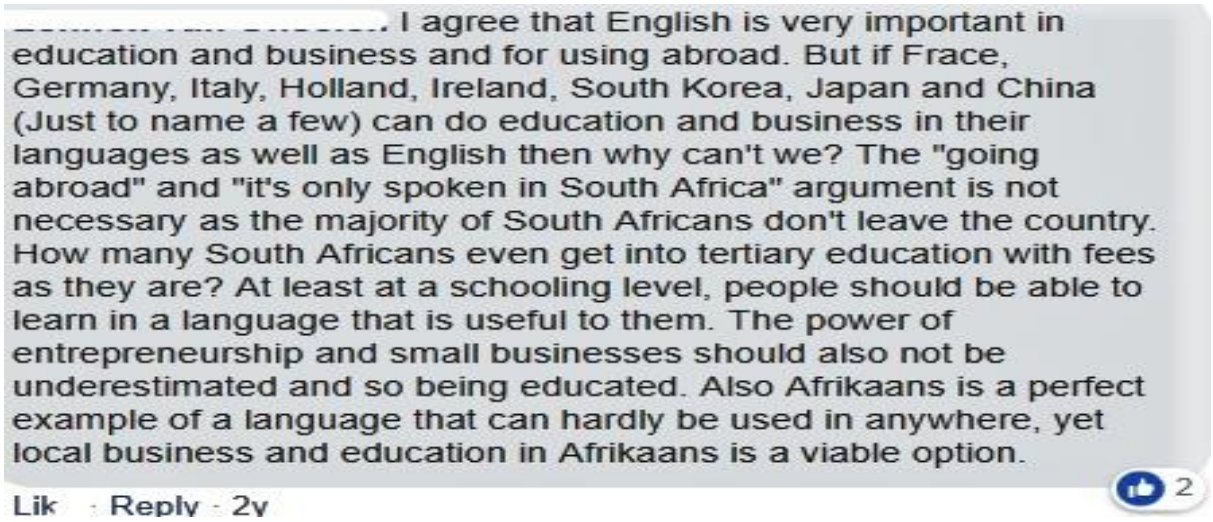

It can be argued that what the student's comment above is suggesting about Rhodes University being an English university, is influenced by what Rhodes University is grouped under as a historically English language in the grouping of South African universities. Additionally, at Rhodes University English remains the primary language for learning, teaching, and research with the introduction of isiXhosa within the last seven years (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017) in vocational language discipline and professional courses such isiXhosa, isiXhosa for Journalism, isiXhosa for Pharmacy, Law and Education. The student's comment goes on to suggest that "not everyone who attends can speak isiXhosa." Irrespective of the student's comment suggesting that not everyone within the university can speak isiXhosa, through its language policy, Rhodes University commits itself to promoting multilingualism and the intellectualisation of African languages (Rhodes University Languages Policy, 2014). Therefore, it can be suggested that the student is wrong to suggest that everybody understands English. The university further commits itself to creating conditions for the use of particularly isiXhosa as a language of learning and eventually also teaching. This shows that the student is not familiar with what the university's language policy commitment to promoting previously disadvantaged indigenous African languages. An assumption can be made from here, that if the student is not aware of the commitment the university makes in its language policy to promote these languages, then the policy is not enforced because every member of the university would know that even though it is "an English university", which it should not be but a historically English university if the policy is anything to go by, African languages can be used for communication purposes within university spaces. However, language policies of South African HE institutions lack timeframes and that impede their implementation. Therefore, it can be suggested that, when conditions for the use of isiXhosa and other African languages within the curriculum are put into practice and not in paper, students will recognise the commitment of the university and the value put by it on these languages.

In addition, isiXhosa and other African languages will not be "othered" as compared to English and students will not continue using statements such as "not everyone who attends can speak isiXhosa" but will try to learn and speak the language as conditions to do so would have been

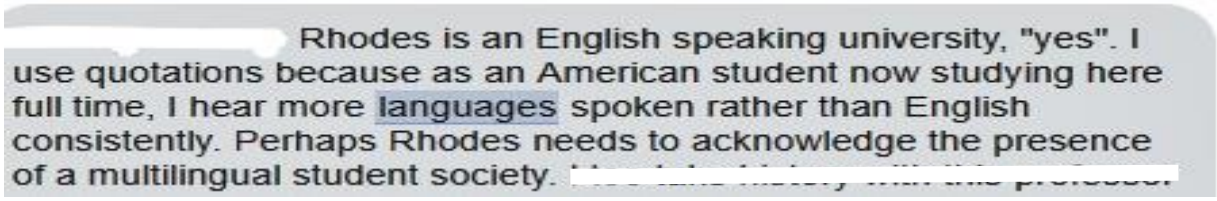
accorded to them. In the student's comment, English linguistic imperialism is noticeable as the student regards Rhodes University as an "English university". Based on the student's comment, this means the institution is a structure that establishes and sustain linguistic hierarchies between isiXhosa, other African languages and English (Phillipson, 1992), thereby positioning the minority English language as the only suitable language for communicating, teaching and learning within the university. Furthermore, as an "English university", its ideas and practices are a function of the relations of power and these sort of rules and practices are carried by the statement "this is an English university". Moreover, a student commented that some of Rhodes University students are in the university because it is internationally recognised:



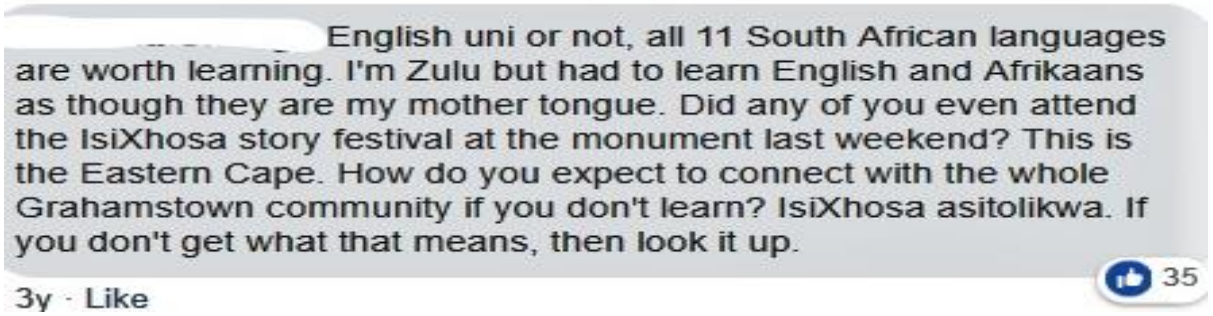

The student's comment also emphasises that it was not necessary for the student to speak the Afrikaans language in Holland. It can therefore be assumed that for this student, multilingualism is nothing without international recognition or one can be recognized internationally if they speak the English language only. However, one student's comment below submits that the countries that some members of the university study to go work in, do education and business in their languages and further questions what is stopping South Africa from doing the same:



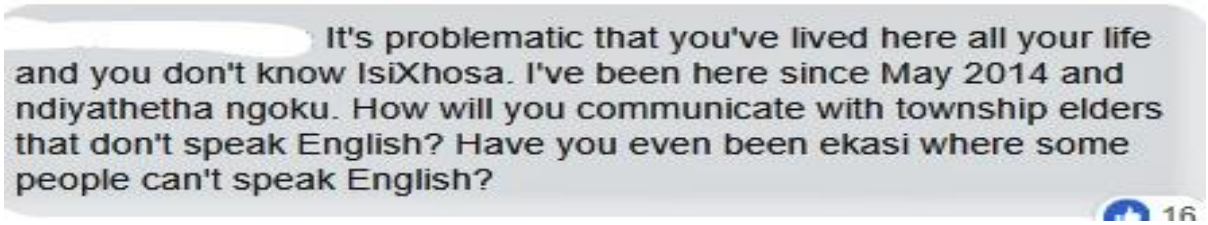

To which a student from an international country commented that she always hears more languages spoken rather than English at Rhodes University:




In acknowledging the presence of a multilingual student body as suggested by the student's comment above, indigenous African languages that are predominant in the university and the province can have the same status as the English language. Furthermore, this will also advantage speakers of indigenous African languages given the opportunity to academic access and success. Another student commented that irrespective whether or not it is an English university, all 11 South African languages are worth learning:



The student's comment above can be regarded as a counter argument to the first comment. This student is countering the assumption that irrespective of Rhodes University being an English university, yet the other 11 South African languages are worth learning. The student further emphasizes that this is the Eastern Cape, meaning that when one is in the Eastern Cape they should attempt to learn and know isiXhosa as it is a language that is predominantly spoken in Grahamstown and the overall Eastern Cape Province. The predominance of the isiXhosa language is also alluded to in the student's comment, through questioning how students expect to connect with the whole Grahamstown community if they do not learn isiXhosa. This is a form of opposition to the status quo and it is what Shannon (1995) refers to, that, when speakers of dominated languages are aware and conscious of the dominance of English, they tend to resist to its status quo. The importance of learning isiXhosa because one is in the Eastern Cape, is noted by the student on the comment below:




This student emphasizes that learning isiXhosa will help students communicate with the elders in the township as students do community engagement and work in school projects with the Grahamstown community, that is predominantly isiXhosa speaking. Therefore, there is a recognition of evidence of English linguistic imperialism and dominance, and desire to combat it as English continues to suppress isiXhosa and the other 10 official South African languages within Rhodes University.

One can argue that the prevalence of English linguistic imperialism in South African HE is due to the English language and its national and international significance. Therefore, both non-speakers and speakers of the English language place value on English because of national and international opportunities, while at the same not considering the opportunities that could be introduced locally and nationally if indigenous African languages could be developed further in all transactional domains of the country. On the other hand, one can adduce the dominance of the English language to fallacious attitudes associated with the language that were instilled

during the apartheid period, as they are based on misleading and prejudicial beliefs about English and/or African languages, beliefs that are a manifestation of linguistic imperialism or hegemony. The perspectives and assumptions about English are further perpetuated by institutions of power and non-speakers and speakers of African languages. As such, they can be regarded to as linguistic imperialism as power or a dominant status is allocated to the English language over other South African official indigenous languages. In this instance, privilege and transmission of the dominant English language and culture onto indigenous African languages is evident. Furthermore, the representation of the dominant English language to which desirable features are attributed, for inclusion, and the opposite for indigenous African languages, for purposes of exclusion (Phillipson, 1992) within the university domains is evident as can be seen above from perspectives of students and those of key members of the university above.

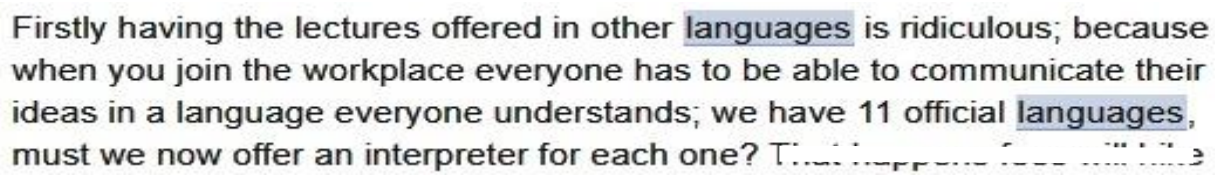
The comments above by the university key members and the student tutor show that there is something that is being done by some departments within the university, to introduce and support multilingualism through the use of African languages in the university curriculum. The tutor's comment shows that to a certain extent, some departments follow the university language policy, as it states that, "Academic Faculties, Schools and Departments will be requested to explore ways in which African languages can be used as resources in meaning making in relation to disciplinary knowledge, for example through compiling multilingual glossaries", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 7). One key member of the university who is a lecturer asserted that some of the university Faculties are involved in multilingualism practices and the compiling of multilingual glossaries:

> *"So, from the Commerce Faculty what we are doing serious curriculum reform and transformation... So, we've started now and is being supported by the university, in the sense that we've chosen some courses those with high failing rates and say why are people failing in these courses, where the very same people are passing in other courses. There have been some glossaries that have been developed that have different languages. Not only in Afrikaans and isiXhosa but many other South African languages and foreign languages as well. So, we have some of those glossaries that we can also use, but the tutors also help* me."

As far as some students are under the impression that the project of curriculum review and reform and transformation have been slow, two of the key members of the university that were interviewed explain why the process is taking time:

> *"I think that it is happening even though it may be quite slow which it needs to be right. If I'm at a sudden change in my course and three quarters of my class fails…, for the people in that class who failed, it's like the end you know. So, in terms of curriculum transformation and change, it needs to be kind of slow…So, we all being, I suppose a little bit cautious."*
>
> *"I think the curriculum design and reform and transformation, both consciousness within the departments, needs the time and vision for people to let it brew and develop. And it needs approval of course, from the powers that are be. But, I am not sure it can work from a bureaucratic point of view, from the top."*

The first comment whereby the key member of the university suggests that curriculum and transformation need to be slow and that the university is being a little bit cautious, it can be suggested that the university is adopting a "playing it safe" strategy or approach to curriculum transformation, including the language question because of the instilled ideas about HE and language of teaching of English being an only 'norm' and 'standard' language for teaching and learning in HE. Moreover, another example of the English linguistic imperialism within the curriculum can be seen from a post that was posted by a student on 21 March 2015 which was discussing transformation issues within the university as a whole (see Appendix H). In addition, the student was against the use of African languages within the curriculum:


Firstly having the lectures offered in other languages is ridiculous; because when you join the workplace everyone has to be able to communicate their ideas in a language everyone understands; we have 11 official languages, must we now offer an interpreter for each one?

In this student's post we see the activity (the choice of English over other 10 South African official languages) of English linguistic imperialism which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language (Phillipson, 1992) within lectures and the curriculum. The

student hopes that the English dominance will carry students over to the workplace, where it is expected that it will still be a dominating language of communication. This was supported by a key member of the university who is a senior academic or professor, and is also has a prominent role as a member of the language committee, who said Rhodes University is an international university:

> *"It's not just a local institution, it's a national institution, it's an international institution. How do our graduates go out into the world and compete for jobs, nationally? How do they go out into the world and compete for jobs, globally? If just say, for example, they did the entire degree in Sotho, what would happen then to a student who has an entire degree only in Sotho? How are they going to be employed, only in a Sotho speaking company? Or in a Sotho speaking area?"*

It can be suggested from the above comment by a key member of the university that some members of the university believe that English is the only language that can compete locally, nationally and internationally. This belief by such academics further suggests that academics who are part of the institutional structure and culture have embraced English and are not ready to change. The institutional cultures and climates of some HEIs is South Africa are also experienced as exclusionary, hurtful and anger-provoking and reminiscent of an oppressive past (Beckmann, 2016). Moreover, the fact that many students are not able to access education in their mother-tongue at formerly English institutions today feel alienated and do not belong in these institutions, leaves a perception that they are still excluded from quality education using their mother tongues. This is because, as Badat (2016: 11) suggests that, "consistent, concerted, comprehensive, diligent, and sustained efforts to change what exists, to forge new inclusive cultures, and build universities that genuinely include all have been either lacking for one or other reason, or have failed to yield results." The increase in protests by university students seeking institutional transformation and decolonisation highlights the functions of inherited racialized power and privilege. This notion is propelled by the fact that English is a 'universal' language, and a language that brings jobs and opportunities (Webb, 2009; Kaschula, 2013), therefore, both speakers and non-speakers of African languages place value in English because of national and international opportunities (Makalela, 2015).

The second assumption by the key university member, is that indigenous African languages can be introduced in the academe through studying a degree in them. The assumption of these languages to be introduced as languages of teaching and learning is possible in the long term, because the introduction of indigenous African languages would be done so that a degree is studied entirely in these languages and also for students to study a degree in multiple languages as the university has a multilingual student body. Therefore, from a senior lecturer and a person who has a prominent role as a member of the language committee, this brings a lot concern and suggests that this senior lecturer also promotes the dominance of English within the university and is not willing to implement transformation within the university curriculum. In addition, it can be suggested that the language committee of the university as an institutional culture is also problematic, as one member of the university is unable to suggest and implement decisions without the consensus of other members of the committee. Therefore, it can be suggested that the task of the language committee has not materialized, is not visible, not participatory and engaging students' voices on the language question within the institution.

Henceforth, linguistic citizenship by students in the form of debating the language question in social media platforms such as the institutional Facebook pages is similar to what Rymes & Leon (2014) regard to as participatory networks. As suggested by Ansaldo & Lim (2018) contend that it is in language practices on social media platforms that the agency assumed in citizenship is best expressed in the negotiations and renegotiations of the languages and identities. As failed by Rhodes University Language Committee, through citizen sociolinguistic, students are able to make sense of communication through engaging one another on social media due to a lack of platform that is not afforded to them by the university or its language committee. Moreover, the hierarchy between languages came out strongly during the interviews that were conducted with key members of the university, where it was highlighted that students' use of indigenous African languages during student protests highlighted languages are ranked due to their status and power as indicated below:

> *"I think it was definitely something that highlighted the inequalities around language…"*
>
> *"But my own students come to me and say to me, we want to be fluent in English. We want to speak in our mother tongue, we wanna learn in our mother tongue. We want an opportunity to express ourselves in our mother tongue. But when we go out into the*

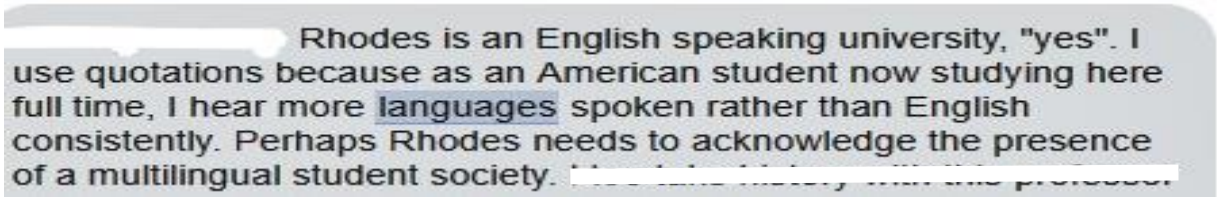
*world and we look for jobs, we want to be fluent in English. We want you to teach us to think and write well in English. That's what they tell me. In other words, we need both. We need a lingua franca. We need a common language, otherwise we are going to alienate people even more"*

The first comment of the discussion confirms that indeed there is a hierarchy of languages that was highlighted during student protests both in the national and international realm. African languages were used and still continue to be used as a form of protest, and this brings into contention the power of African languages as a medium of expression and resistance. Furthermore, it can be suggested that the power of African languages during student protests also highlighted the marginalisation of African languages and linguistic identities of these language speakers. Nevertheless, the second response by a key member of the university, notes that students themselves are the ones who strive to become proficient in the English language as a way to fit into what is considered the "global world". This view, therefore, insinuates that English is "universal" and mother tongues speakers of African languages "are limited', and in order for students and language speakers of indigenous African languages to receive good opportunities they need to have a high proficiency in English. However, English does not always mean international. For instance, when one goes to Germany and stays there, the population of German speakers propels one to learn the language to be able to communicate with German citizens. This is the case with Cuba, based on the country's language policy including the policy on HE high, as the government has made Spanish the official language. Therefore, it could be the case in Africa, that whoever joins a particular institution learns an African language but government institutional structures such as universities need to effect that through policy and practice. As supported by one key member of the university:

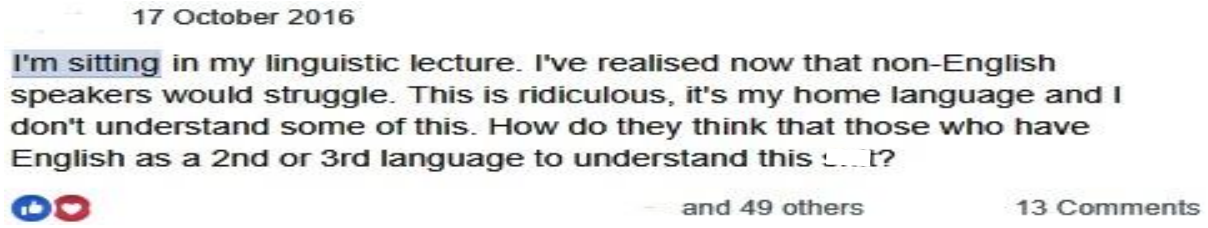
*"If you go to European universities there, everyone is multilingual because is just the accepted thing. And if I want to go and teach at a university in Spain, I would be given like three years to learn Spanish and then I would have to go for it you know. There's none of this like, oh well just because you're English you don't have to learn the other languages. There's no such thing you know. So, I think in a way we've innovated too way too high, to say English is fine. If your English is fine, it's fine you don't need to*

*do anything. No, you should be made to feel like quite handicapped, to be made to feel like you only speak, and you only understand one language."*

This is as also supported by an international student studying at Rhodes University who commented:


Rhodes is an English speaking university, "yes". I use quotations because as an American student now studying here full time, I hear more languages spoken rather than English consistently. Perhaps Rhodes needs to acknowledge the presence of a multilingual student society.

In acknowledging the presence of a multilingual student body as suggested by the student's comment above, indigenous African languages that are predominant in the university and the province can have the same status as the English language. Furthermore, this will also advantage speakers of indigenous African languages the opportunity to academic access and success. Amongst the posts on dominance of the English language in the curriculum, one of them was from a mother tongue speaker of the language and in her post, she shared her concern with the complexity of the curriculum:


17 October 2016

I'm sitting in my linguistic lecture. I've realised now that non-English speakers would struggle. This is ridiculous, it's my home language and I don't understand some of this. How do they think that those who have English as a 2nd or 3rd language to understand this [illegible]?

and 49 others 13 Comments

From the post above, we can see that there is an acknowledgement that non-English speakers who have English as second and/or third language would struggle with content produced in the English language. In addition, the student is being sympathetic to non-mother tongue speakers of English. However, what could be said to be wrong of the student, is for her/him to expect to always understand the content, although she is obviously at an advantage as a first speaker of the English language that is used to teach the content of the course. Other students who have African languages as their primary and/or mother tongue languages, did not appreciate the

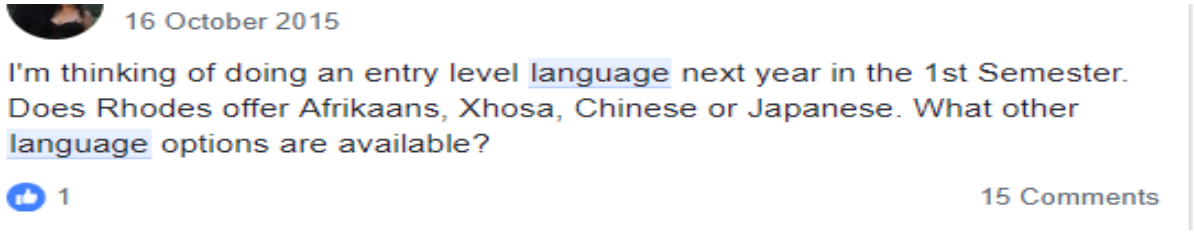
student's sense of solidarity, perhaps as an assertion of African linguistic identities as a way of saying you are not one of us. .

Therefore, in an interview with Vale, Maseko suggests that, one of the reasons why we perpetually undermine African languages and allowing others to undermine them as well, is that we are not engaging with what we know; we are not valuing it and placing it alongside present knowledge (Maseko & Vale, 2016). What we know can be suggested to be the introduction of black epistemologies and indigenous African languages into the curriculum. A true and inclusive HE and diverse institution involves a transformation of the individual student and the student body. Hence, Valencia (1997) and Smit (2012) suggest that a balance between the agency of the student being and the structures bearing on the student is required, as with the deficit thinking "universities serve to recreate the education stratification of societies", (Smit, 2012: 379). Thus, the only way change will come will be if there are practical ways to challenge some of the dominant discourses in institutions of HE in South Africa.

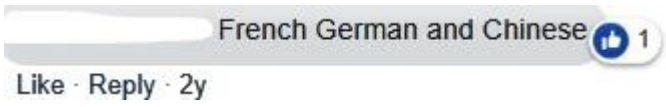
English linguistic imperialism in relation to deficit thinking can be said to be about the suppression of linguistic and cultural plurality. Thus, the persisting English dominance impedes epistemological access, active participation and success of students who speak languages other than English (LOTE) (Madiba, 2010; Nkosi, 2014; Nyika, 2015; Heleta, 2016; Mkhize, 2018). In connection with the institutional culture and in relation to the student's post about curriculum reform and review, Badat (2016: 7) asserts that at the historically white universities, "a deeply embedded culture of whiteness, that has yet to yield to substantive respect for and affirmation of difference and creation of inclusive cultures, has been a major further impediment to change." Moreover, Badat adds that it is arguable whether there has been any significant opening up of spaces for the flowering of epistemologies, ontologies, theories, methodologies, objects, and questions other than those that have long been hegemonic and have exercised dominance over, and perhaps have even suffocated intellectual and scholarly thought and writing. Accordingly, as with any historical white university, at Rhodes University, English language speakers that are from privileged backgrounds, regard the institution as natural, as a place of comfort where they feel very much at home, and are not prone to suffer marginalization and discomfort or be faced with any problems. Because of this, speakers of English flourish through their access and comfort. Whereas, "those who are black and come from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to experience the environments and cultures of the historically white universities as discomforting, alienating, disempowering, and exclusionary" Badat (2016: 10). Therefore, the presence of black students and staff has not automatically translated into genuine

respect for difference, appreciation of diversity, and meaningful social and educational inclusion, whether social, linguistic, cultural, or academic. Thus, it makes sense that speakers of indigenous African languages constantly have to fight a system that continues to marginalize them.

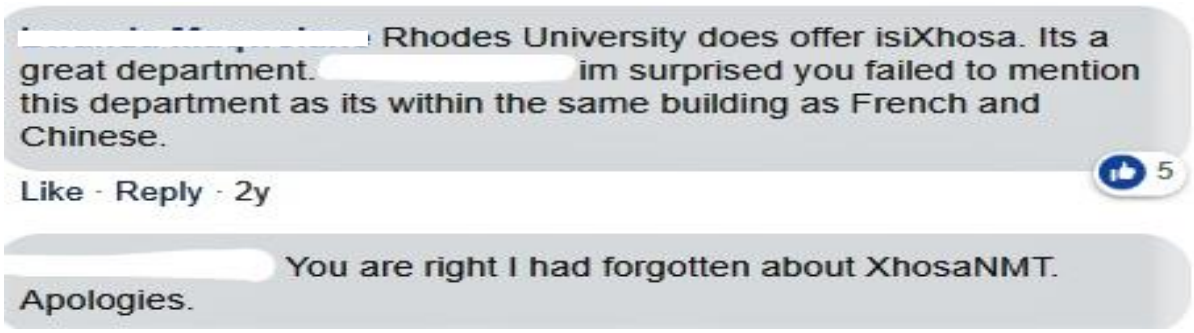
The hierarchy of languages in the case of this study and as shown by the data, pertains to the value put to a particular language over other languages within the University as characterized by perspectives of students from Facebook posts and responses of various university members from interviews. In this context, students regard the use of a language according to the majority of students who understand it and/or a language that is 'universal', 'standard' and a 'norm' within the university. Some students believe there is a hierarchy to how languages are accorded value within the institution, and that African languages are not among the top options available, and that one could choose from as means of communication. This is evident in a discussion that students had on the UCKAR page on 16 October 2015 when they enquired about available language options to an entry level within the university:




Within the responses given, a student suspected that preference was given to languages other than African languages, as portrayed below from a senior University administrator:




Another student was dissatisfied with the response above and by the daze of disregard shown by a Rhodes staff member listing the above foreign languages and not the isiXhosa language as the latter was part of languages listed in the original post:



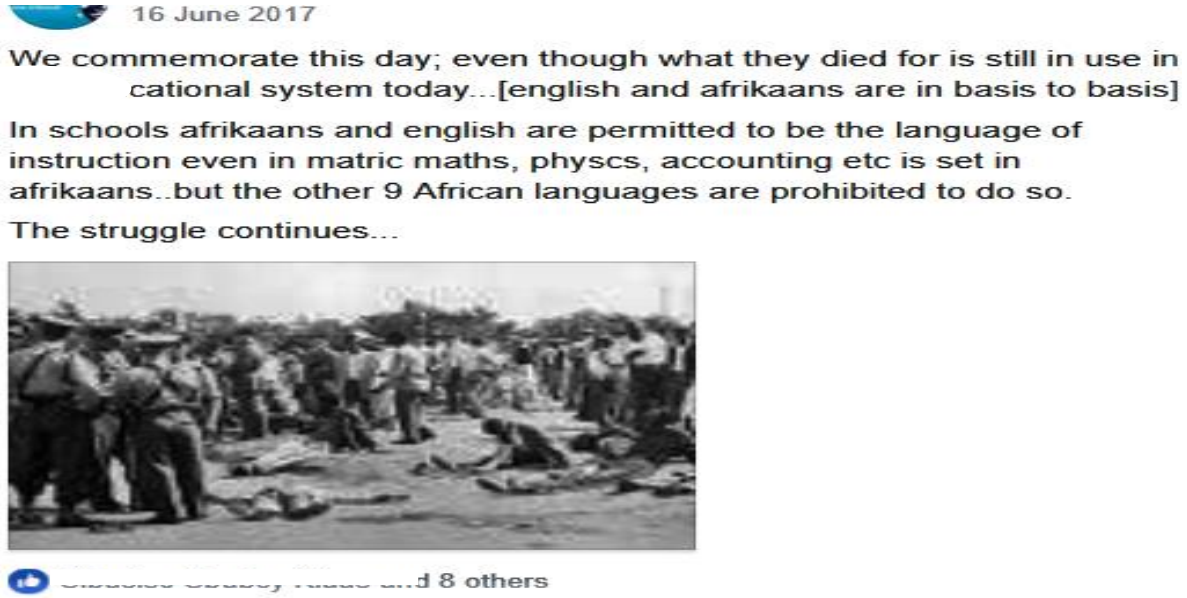

It can be deduced from the comment above that the student is dissatisfied with the university staff member listing French, German and Chinese languages yet they are in the same category as the isiXhosa language. However, as can be noted by the comment above, the university staff member apologises and notes that she had forgotten about isiXhosa Non-Mother Tongue. Nonetheless, the languages listed by the university staff member are languages which are deemed more developed and possess a greater number of speakers in the world. This perpetuates the notion that although isiXhosa is a national language, it is underdeveloped or a developing language and cannot compete alongside the three developed languages. Therefore, this speaks a magnitude of disregard of indigenous African language by a staff member who works in an office which supposedly is one involved with the linguistic demography of the university and provides support to South African languages (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014). This further suggests, instead of support given to African languages, it is rather provided to foreign languages, a practice which further perpetuates linguistic imperialism and the hierarchy of languages within the institution. This also speaks to the recent intention of introducing and formalising the teaching of Mandarin in South African schools at a time when African languages remain under threat of foreign languages, therefore making the Mandarin language the new English in the country.

In addition, the student's comment proposes that isiXhosa should be a primitive choice of language before other international languages. Thus, it can be assumed that, from the comment of the University staff member, there is a perpetuating hierarchy of languages, with foreign languages being positioned as the best options to be studied in university compared to indigenous African languages. Moreover, the student's comment stands as a promotion for isiXhosa language as a second spoken language in South Africa, and a predominant language in the province where Rhodes University is located. The promotion of the isiXhosa language

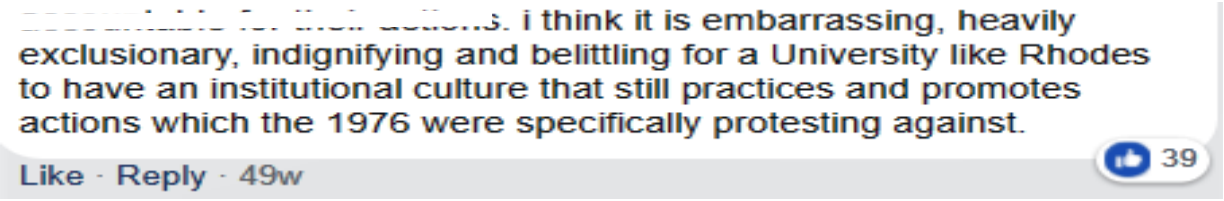
was also supported by a student tutor who was also part of the key members of the University that were interviewed for the study:

> *"IsiXhosa and the other African languages are spoken by 80% of the people in this region. So, whenever you move from one place to another you are also going to look at the demographics and specifically on the language that is used, so, into yokufunda (studying) isiXhosa also helps students to broaden their communication possibilities and potential."*

Amongst students' debate and engagement with the curriculum reform and review, there was a reference to the language question presently at South African HE institutions as similar to that of the Bantu Education system and the 16 June 1976 student protests, whereby speakers of African languages were forced to have the Afrikaans language as a medium of teaching and learning. In these debates, students equated the use of English currently in HE as a repetition of history and that English is taking over the Afrikaans and the other African languages. On 16 June 2017, a student posted a photo of the 1976 student protests as an honour to the 16 June student protest of that year:



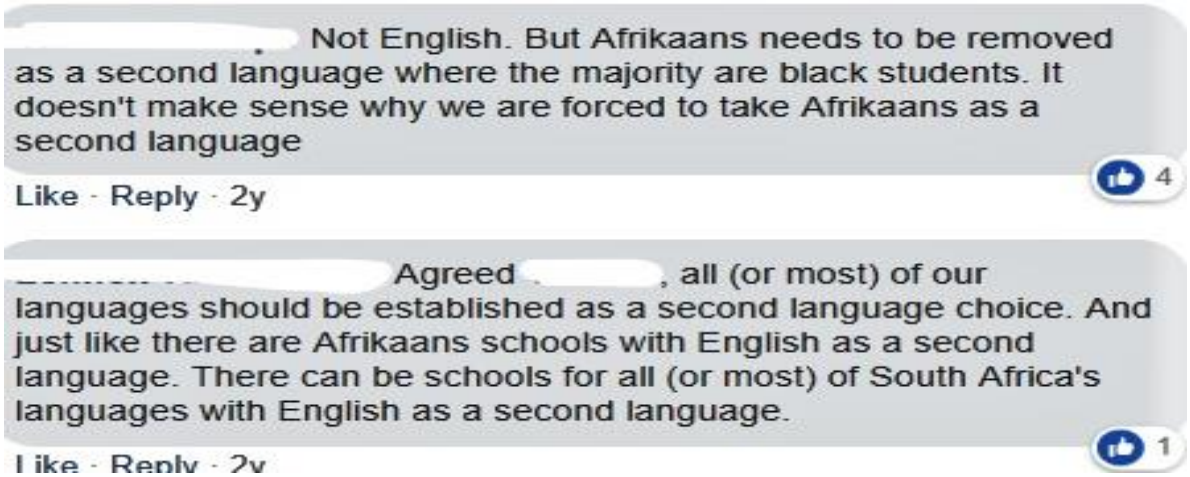
The lack of transformation with the language question in the curriculum in HEIs has sparked controversies with students saying that HE has not fully transformed and has taken a different phase by replacing Afrikaans with English dominance in the education system. When viewing the various posts what is interesting to note is that even though Afrikaans is considered an African language, its language component is largely of European descent and English is a European language. The student's post notes that the other nine African languages are prohibited in the instruction of subjects other than language vocational language disciplines, languages such as maths, physics, accounting and so on. This is highlighted by the student's post as being a continuing struggle, which was also accentuated by language question debates during student protests of 2015 to early 2017, thereby bringing parallels between the two periods of student protests as asserted by the student's comment below:



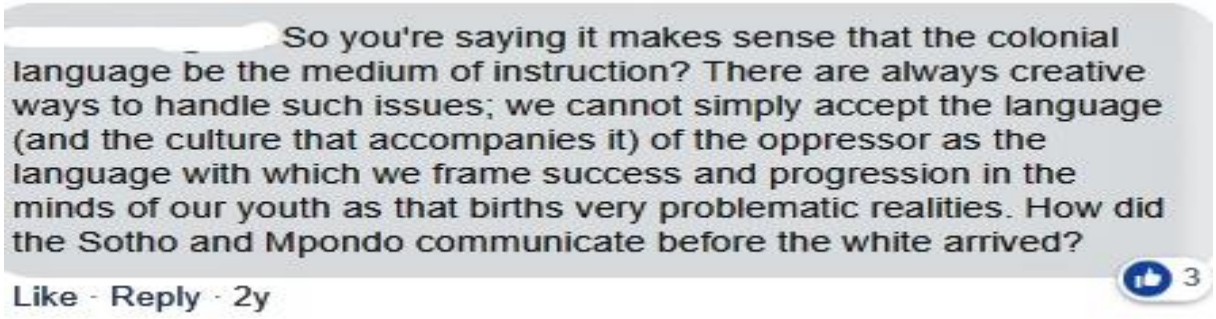

More examples of student protests that mimic that of 16 June 1976 is that of a language policy shift at mainly previously Afrikaans-medium University, such as that of the language protest at Stellenbosch University which was accompanied by the *'Luister'* documentary that was released on YouTube on 20 August 2015.[2] The documentary was about the language question and it included experiences of black students at Stellenbosch University and universally by black people in both English and Afrikaans universities, and around the world. Consequently, the protest that pushed the language struggle is South Africa's HE is the #AfrikaansMustFall movement that disrupted the terrain of language policies in South Africa's HE. The #AfrikaansMustFall movement saw a rise into largely the #Uprising movement at University of Pretoria that continued to protest the language policy and resulted in the Language Task Team of the University proposing a single language policy where English was made the only medium of instruction language, with Sepedi and Afrikaans being used in tutoring. Movements on the language question expanded to other institutions of HE in South Africa, resulting at students at Rhodes University suggesting that Afrikaans be removed as medium of instruction

[2] *Luister* is an Afrikaans word for 'Listen'

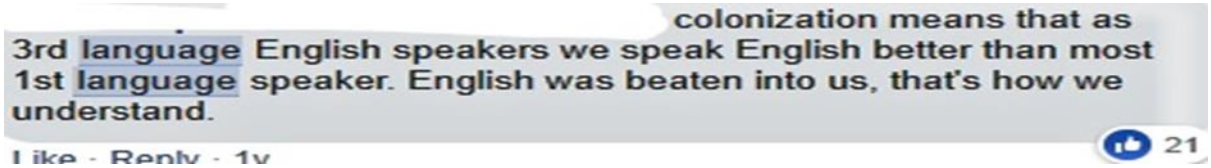
in other universities and schools around South Africa, and as a second language and English be made a second language with African languages as first and primary languages or be used alongside English:



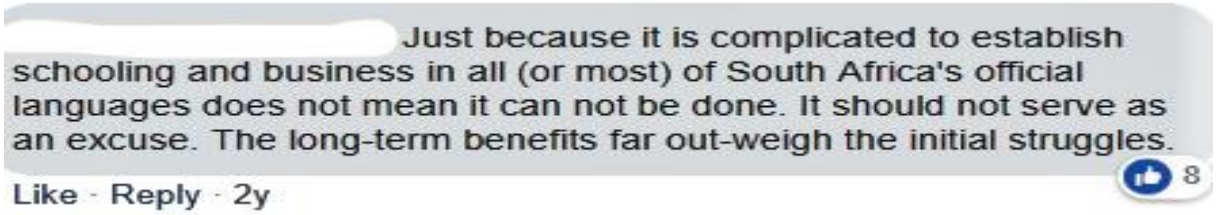

However, one student took a different form and questioned the notion of even using the English language as a medium of instruction alongside the other African languages:

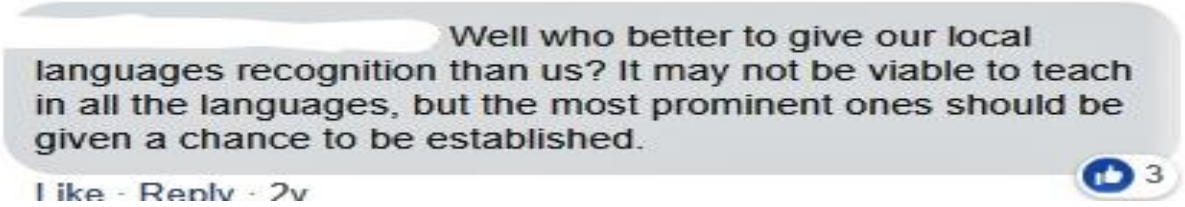



An assumption can be made from this student's post that during colonialism, speakers of African languages were changed when they were convinced that their belief systems and cultures were against Christianity and their languages were not to be used for schooling purposes. The student ties this to the fact that before Black people were colonized, the different speakers of indigenous African languages could communicate using their languages. This is further explained by the student's comment below:




The discussion above came after the 24 October 2015, when a student had shared an article on the RHODES SRC page that stated that Ghana was planning to remove English as a medium of instruction in schools (see Appendix I). This debate sparked interest among Rhodes University students on the RHODES SRC page, as students suggested that South Africa should adopt the same policy:

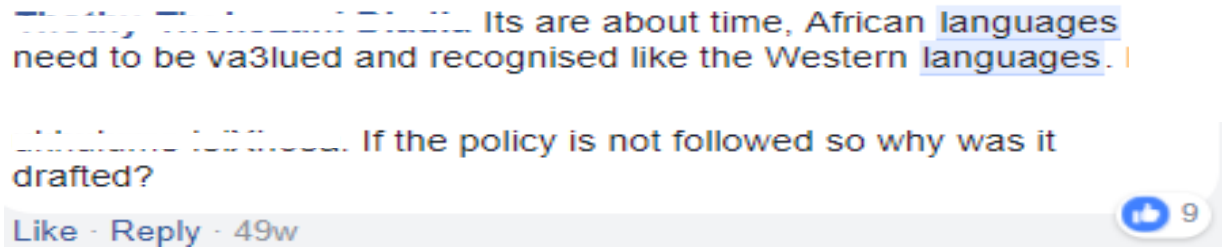


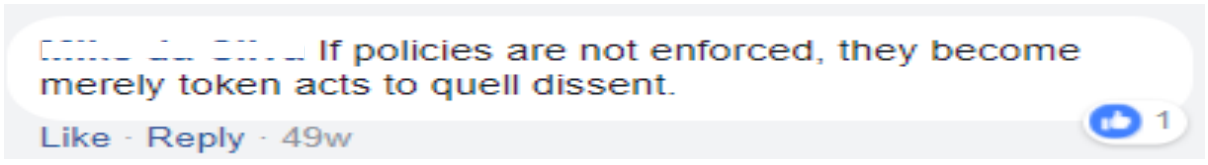

The students' comments above suggest that if Ghana can take steps towards removing English as a medium of instruction in schools, South Africa can do the same as also indicated by a university key member at Rhodes University:

> *"Of course, [the use of African student during time of protests] [it] signals transformation and also just general acceptance of the idea that you can learn, do higher education in languages other than English which I think is fantastic"*

With the approximately126 languages spoken in Tanzania, in February 2015 the Government of Tanzania launched a new education system whereby Swahili became the official medium of instruction from primary to HE. However, the policy in Tanzania is for the use of Swahili as the language of instruction in primary grades and English in higher grades. This is also the case in Botswana whereby both Setswana and English are used as languages of medium of instruction. The same applies to Asian countries that have kept English as a second language, with education and all forms of business thriving through the use of their own languages. These examples are an indication that the move towards transformation starts with the change of English as a medium of instruction or to incorporate African languages into the mainstream subjects or courses in the case of universities, with the possibility to implement language policies that seek to put this practice into place as indicated by the student's comment below:



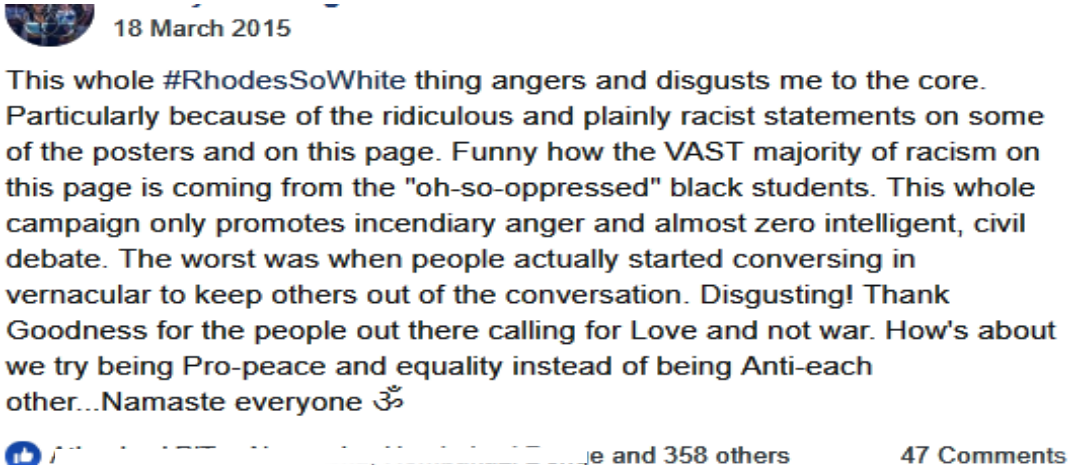

The student further asks if the policy is not followed why it was drafted in the first place. Kaschula & Maseko (2014) assert that one of the main challenges in the development of African languages in HE is at a policy level, and while an admirable policy exists, which, at a glance, should ensure development of African languages and promotion of multilingualism, the policy often lacks a plan of implementation, as well as directives on who should lead or drive its implementation (at both national and institutional level). Therefore, there is a concern of policies being drafted and not being implemented because according to the student's comment above, when a policy encourages the use of isiXhosa within the institution it must be in practice, as observed by the student's comment below, that when policies are not enforced they become tools to suppress protest or opposition against these policies:



The next section discusses data on 'The dominance of English in non-academic spaces', as portrayed in the data from student posts and perspectives on both the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages.

### 5.2.2 The dominance of English in non-academic spaces

The dominance of English in non-academic spaces was also prevalent in students' posts. During the #RhodesSoWhite protest students contested the use of African languages on these pages, while at the same time suggesting that the practice is being exclusionary to non-speakers of these languages:


18 March 2015

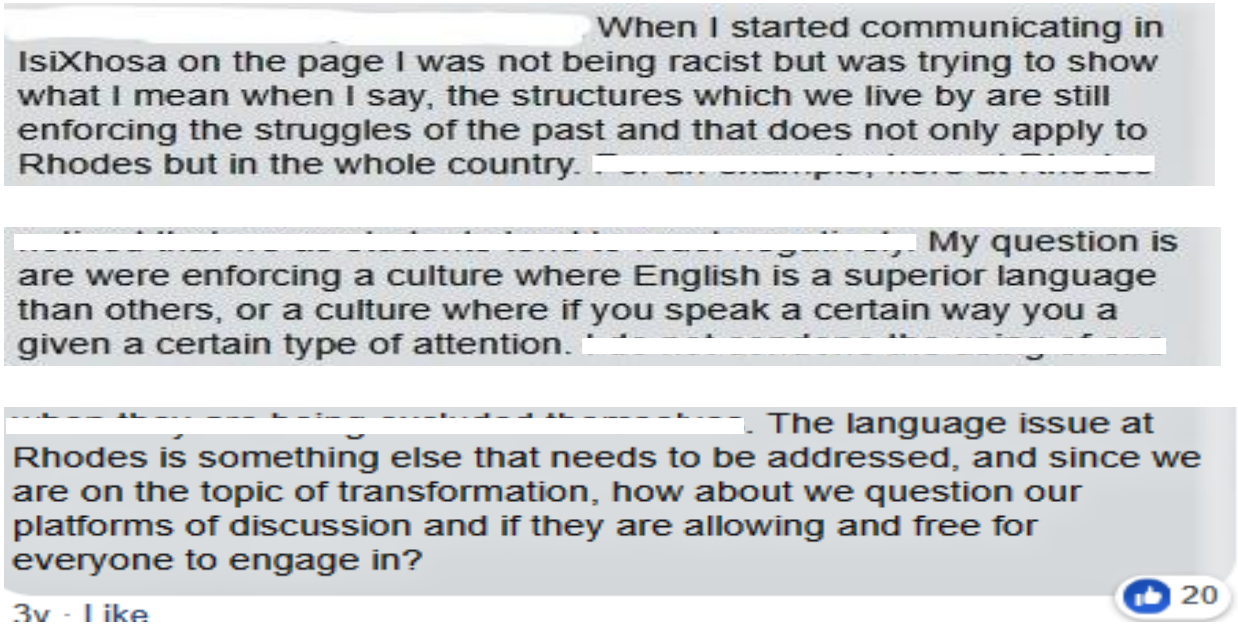
This whole #RhodesSoWhite thing angers and disgusts me to the core. Particularly because of the ridiculous and plainly racist statements on some of the posters and on this page. Funny how the VAST majority of racism on this page is coming from the "oh-so-oppressed" black students. This whole campaign only promotes incendiary anger and almost zero intelligent, civil debate. The worst was when people actually started conversing in vernacular to keep others out of the conversation. Disgusting! Thank Goodness for the people out there calling for Love and not war. How's about we try being Pro-peace and equality instead of being Anti-each other...Namaste everyone 🕉

e and 358 others 47 Comments

With respect to the #RhodesSoWhite campaign or protests that was about racial and institutional marginalization of black students within the institution, the student regards the use of African languages or what he refers to as "vernacular" languages on the RHODES SRC page as disgusting, as he implied it a way to exclude other students from the conversation. The student also insinuated that black people were the ones that were racist by using these languages. It can be suggested that this student's post is perpetuated by English linguistic imperialism that devalues African languages, as the student equates these languages to something unpalatable and useless in social communications. Another suggestion is that the student fails to recognize and regard the English language as exclusionary to speakers of

indigenous African languages, rather he regards it as a unifying force to the different language groups or speakers of African and other languages.

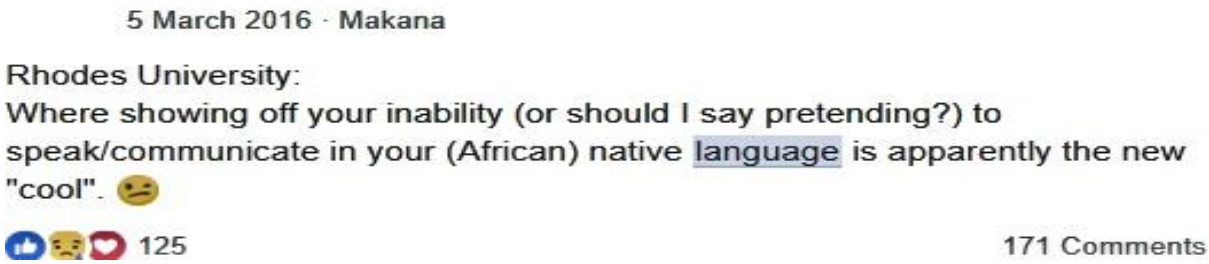
This English linguistic imperialism within the student's post perpetuates what Skutnabb-Kangas & Robertson (1995) regard as languages being defined positively or neutrally, as the general, abstract, unspoken norm, whereas dialects and vernaculars are defined negatively, with connotation of some kind of deficiency, commonness, lack of cultivation and civilization, partly as undeveloped or underdeveloped forms of communication, something to be got rid of, to be subsumed under languages. It can be submitted that the practise by the student, is a hierarchy of languages and it is noticeable given how English is defined and how African languages are defined as "vernacular" thereby incepting the notion of "us versus them", English speakers versus speakers of African languages. However, another student respondent to the original post said she was deliberate about posting in isiXhosa on the page:




The student suggests that Rhodes University is a structure that sustains linguistic hierarchies between English and African languages, as shown by the first screenshot that "the structures which we live by are still enforcing the struggles of the past…" This is also noted by Ansre (1979) and Phillipson (1992; 1996; 1998), that South African universities under the colonial and apartheid regimes could be regarded [and are still regarded] as 'structures of linguistic imperialism'. Furthermore, the comment in the second screenshot questions if the student body

is enforcing a culture where English is a superior language than others. The practice of this can be regarded as the transmission of dominant language and culture onto others, which applies to the hegemony of English in HE, as noted by Shannon (1995) in the previous chapter that languages themselves achieve the status of dominant or dominated, as a result of the struggles and negotiations that go on between their speakers which is what is happening on the Rhodes University Facebook pages. Therefore, as a social imperialism or structure, the institution transmits the norms and behavior that are imbedded in language and these happen through the choice of English as it plays a role and transmits its social values (Phillipson, 1992), in non-academic settings.

The third and last screenshot by the student further suggests that the language question at Rhodes University needs further engagement and address, as language practices on these social media pages continue to marginalize speakers of African languages through the English language as a tool. Therefore, it can be deduced from the three comments that students who are speakers of African languages are engaging in linguistic citizenship, whereby the use the Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages to voice out their marginalized voices, agency and linguistic rights as citizens. In addition, as a speaker of an African language which is isiXhosa, the student commentator is channeling her individual claim to exercise the right of citizens to voice, to be heard (Heugh, Li, & Song 2017), and to act upon an official recognition of linguistic diversity and multilingualism within Rhodes University. In South African HE, students assimilate to the English language that is considered as a norm. Assimilation into the English language happens also when non- English speakers distance themselves from their mother tongue languages and culture, to that of English. This is evident in a post by a student on the RHODES SRC Facebook:



As suggested by this student's post, there seems to be a dominance of the English language and culture within Rhodes University, and the English linguistic imperialism is observable from fellow students as a sign of fitting into the culture of the university, that is being *"cool".* According to Bird & Tapp (2008: 20) the word '*cool' "*…seems the best word to describe that elusive, exclusive quality that makes behaviours and objects so hip, desirable and symbolic of *''being in the know.'*"" It can be presumed from the student's post that for one to be considered as *"cool"* they must not be able to speak in an African 'native' language, as that are desirable traits of popularity. This suggests that the inability to speak an African language when it is your home language equates you to that of being a speaker of an English language, who is unable to speak an indigenous African language, and that is where their 'coolness' comes from. However, the difference here is that speakers of the English language never take pride in their inability to speak English and are never apologetic about it as many of them are either monolingual or bilingual in both English and Afrikaans.

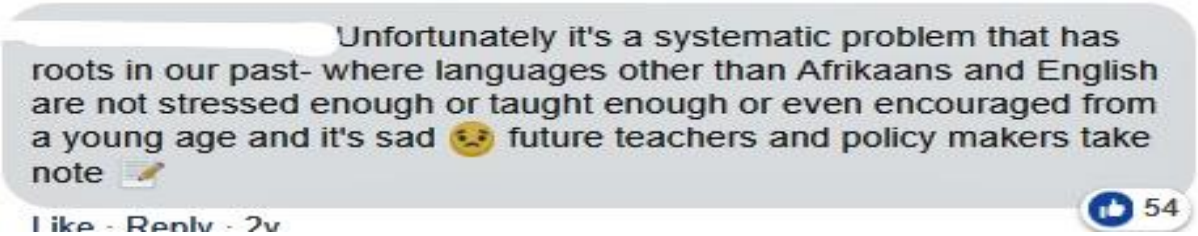
Furthermore, in the peculiar case of an inability to speak indigenous African languages yet they can speak the English language fluently, it can be suggested that speakers of African languages are assimilating into the English language and culture. Historically disadvantaged or marginalized groups have been expected to accept, integrate, and assimilate into institutional cultures of historically English universities. Badat (2016) notes that if there has been inclusion of black students, there has been a simultaneous exclusion of them so that the inclusion has been of a subordinate nature. Badat further accounts that, instead of "dismantling and displacing previous institutional arrangements, norms and practices, and paving the way for genuine inclusion and meaningful participation, the practice, if not the policy, has been one of assimilation", (Badat, 2016: 11). Therefore, based on this student's post, it can be argued that the allocation and transmission of the dominant English language and culture is at play, which then confirms English linguistic imperialism over indigenous African languages within the institution.

Moreover, due to the dominant status of the English language and the exposure to its culture, African languages are easily perceived as inferior and their speakers have internalized this (Shannon, 1995). Furthermore, in the case of the student's post above, the dominance of the English language can be regarded as what Phillipson (1997) refers to as '*intra-lingual linguicism'* between speakers of indigenous African languages, as they privilege the English language as *'standard'*. Additionally, this operates as linguicism because it can be argued that speakers of indigenous African languages who find the inability to speak their native

indigenous African languages are supported by an imperialist structure of exploitation of their languages and cultures. Thus, in this case, as indicated in Chapter Three, it is linguistic imperialism when English language and its culture impose on other indigenous African languages, and linguicism is in operation.

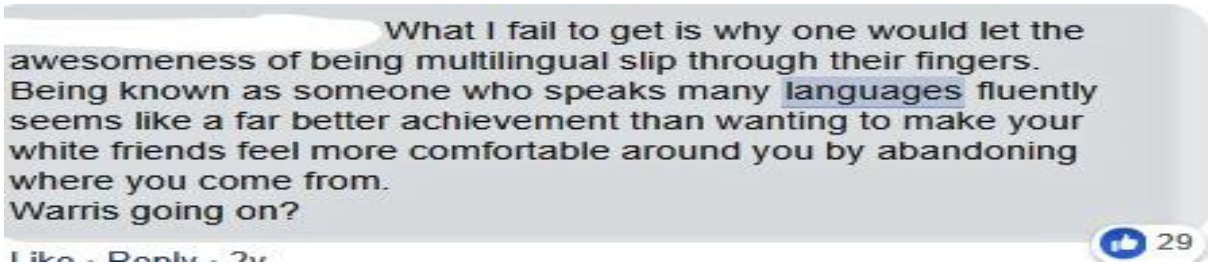
It is important to note that the student does not refer to language speakers only but refers to 'Rhodes University' as a collective, and this is noticeable from the first line in the post which is *"Rhodes University"*. In this regard, there is an acknowledgement that English linguistic imperialism does not happen in isolation from the overall institution. Therefore, the use and mention of the university's name in the first instance, confirms that the university is a *'structure of linguistic imperialism'* and is a structure that sustains this linguistic hierarchy between languages (Ansre, 1979; Phillipson, 1992; 1996; 1998). In addition, this is assertion of linguicism through the university structure and linguistic practices which are used to legitimate, breed, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between indigenous African languages, English and other language speakers, which are defined based on language. This then further confirms what Reddy (2000) alluded to in Chapter Three, that in South Africa and in other societies, practices and institutions are an operation of relations of power that continuously favour the powerful minority which are speakers of the English language, that controls the state and institutions. As indicated by the reactions to the post, it can be suggested that indeed students are in congruent with the student's post, as the post had 125 reactions, with a total of 171 comments that means people were engaging with it. The post also had 112 like reactions, and ten sad face emoticons which indicates that the people who reacted with these felt sad for the students who pretend and use their inability to speak their native indigenous African languages. With the two students who reacted with two hearts, it indicates that they love the message or the content that is contained in the post. English linguistic imperialism is also evident from one of the 171 comments, as one student commented that English is his home language and that his mother speaks six languages and [the student] chose one which is the English language:


In the case of this student, we see that out of all the six languages that his mother speaks, the student chose English as his home language. Therefore, from the student's choice of the English language, two assumptions can be made. The first one could be that the student's choice of the English language could have been made because of the power and status of the language. Secondly, another assumption or suggestion is that the student's choice of English could have been an influence from the schooling system of African countries, whereby learners are expected to learn all their subjects in the English language. This is as observed by the student's comment below:




This comment has 54 likes which indicate that a significant number of students were agreeing with what this student suggests. The student's comment indicates that as this has been a continuing problem of the system, future teachers and policy makers must take note of it. This suggests that the implementation of the existing policy on languages is not in place and for it to be implemented there needs to be engagement from future language policy makers. The

student is seemingly losing hope in the country's education system and is wishful that this generation of students will shape it. One of the comments responding to the original post praised the beauty of multilingualism and how it was a far better achievement:




Alexander (1995) asserts that in many states in the world, citizens or inhabitants speak more than one language as a matter of course, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1998: 13) adds that "multilingualism is thus the norm, monolingualism the exception." Therefore, it can be deduced from the comment by the student and Skutnabb-Kangas's take on multilingualism, that indeed, multilingualism is a great achievement as one is able to communicate with and learn from different language speakers. This is also where the notion of translanguaging becomes important, as instead of being conflicted on which language to use, students have a linguistic repertoire from which to choose linguistic resources to communicate. It can be suggested that by translanguaging, students express their different linguistic identities. The student commentator who admitted that out of the six languages his mother speaks he has chosen English as his home language, in this case, subscribes to a linguistic identity associated with the English language which is his first language.

On 17 August 2016 a student posted on the UCKAR page asking about the consistency of the English language preference and religion during memorial services of deceased members of the university:

I ask this because in the years that I have been in this institution, I have attended two memorial services organised by the University. On both occasions, I could not help but feel like there is a set formula that is followed: English hymns are sung and the scriptures quoted in the sermon are all in English.

Both these families are African and based in the EC. With such an English memorial service that is planned for their loved one, it cannot be hard to conclude that the service does not truly SPEAK to the family and friends of the deceased - and the purpose of the service is to provide some comfort for THEM.

From the post by the student there are two assumptions, the first one being that there is a set formula that is followed whereby English hymns are sung and the scriptures quoted in the sermon are all in English. The second assumption is that with a memorial service being in English, the student concludes that the service does not truly speak to the family of the deceased. However, on its Transformation Report, the university noted that official ceremonies, such as the graduation ceremony, should be conducted in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Nevertheless, from both the Transformation Report and the Rhodes University Language Policy, there is no mention of memorial service ceremonies and how they are or should be conducted as was emphasised with graduation ceremony. It can be assumed that memorial services fall under official ceremonies, and therefore, should also be conducted in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. However, one student notes that the university allows for families to choose how they want to conduct a memorial service for their loved ones:

For my friends' memorial service last term the family was consulted all the way. They decided on everything and my friend's church conducted the service themselves as per family's request. They couldn't attend and we were very involved in the plans. So in my experience I'd say they were very much inclusive of the family and the memorial service was the kind of person my friend was. Peaceful. The onus is also on how the family want it conducted. Sometimes the family is going through the most and they make an effort to consult the friends themselves to check on everything which is what my friend's mom did with us. I guess it varies ke but there are things that can be changed but from my experience it was pretty honorable.

Like · Reply · 2y · Edited 9

From this student's comment and based on the Rhodes Transformation Summit Report, it can be suggested that the student's post is based on a personal assumption and observation, rather than on research done by the student from the university to seek how proceedings of a memorial services are done. Nonetheless, the student's post has a total of 152 reactions of which 126 likes and 26 heart or love reactions. From these reactions it can be suggested that students are oblivious to proceedings of memorial services conducted by the university, irrespective of the information being on fine print on the university Transformation Summit Report. From the students' perspectives on the proceedings of memorial services, two assumptions arise. Firstly, it can be assumed that students do not read or research much hence their assumptions or perspectives on these proceedings are what they see instead of what they have been informed. Secondly, it could also be that students are not aware of documents such as the Transformation Summit Report where this kind of information is contained.

Notwithstanding the language question and other related transformation debates that took place during the student protest periods, these debates are still prominent on Rhodes University campus and on student Facebook pages and are still in no way lacking engagement. For instance, on 15 February 2017, a student posted on the UCKAR page about his experience of using isiXhosa while seeking help in one of the university administration offices (see Appendix J):

The lady lashed out at this point. "I am very tired of people speaking isiXhosa to me, assuming that I'm Xhosa. I don't understand your language. Speak English. Speak English". At this juncture, it became clear to me that

At this juncture, I switched into isiXhosa to explain the actual discrimination and the violence of even having this conversation in English with a white staff member of Rhodes University who has been in an Eastern Cape University for over 20 years, but does not acknowledge or even attempt to recognize isiXhosa as a language of value and communication. I go on "Ndizokuthetha isiXhosa nawe ngoku. Ndikruqukile ukucacisa izinto ezilula njengezi kuwe ngesiNgesi". It is at this point that she goes back to her desk and tells me she has no time for this conversation. I leave the her office feeling deeply hurt and violated for being discriminated against for simply speaking my language.

In the case of the student helper's refusal to help the student in isiXhosa but English, it suggests that the student helper is not aware of the Rhodes University Language Policy. The Rhodes University Language Policy (2014) suggests that, where possible, the Registrar's Division/Communications & Marketing Division will be requested to ensure that official University branding and correspondence with prospective and current students, staff and the public is available on request in at least two of the major provincial languages. Furthermore, the Human Resources Division will where appropriate, pursue staff employment policies and strategies which ensure that successful applicants are ideally multilingual and have the required linguistic abilities, and where necessary, notify selection committees of the need for interpreters. In relation to the university language policy, it can be argued that it is not in practice and that terms of university services and how to help multilingual speakers had not been communicated to her at the time of appointment to the student helper position, as evident in the student helper's response and how she instructs the student to speak English. Therefore, if this was communicated and she was made aware of how to render services to multilingual university students or how to manage the linguistic diversity of the university, the student helper could have requested someone who can speak isiXhosa within the office in question to help the student. This shows the significant value shown by the university towards African languages. In return, the student who also speaks isiXhosa could have asked for someone who speaks isiXhosa, as suggested by the university language policy that where necessary, one should notify where there is a need for interpreters (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014).

In addition, regarding its language policy, Rhodes University states that it supports English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) but it is also committed to simultaneously promoting multilingualism (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014). Additionally, the Rhodes University Language Policy also indicates that the Language of Learning and Teaching, official languages of record and business, and wider communication within the university community will be in English. However, it can be argued that in as much as the University commits to promote multilingualism, this commitment is on paper and not in practice as the English language continues to dominate in all domains of the university. It can also be suggested that the hindrance to fully practice the policy commitment to multilingualism, are the exact limitation clauses such as 'may', 'where practical', 'should', 'where possible' and so on, that encumber the National Language Policy. The limited clauses to the commitment of multilingualism are also evident in the University's language policy, as indicated above.

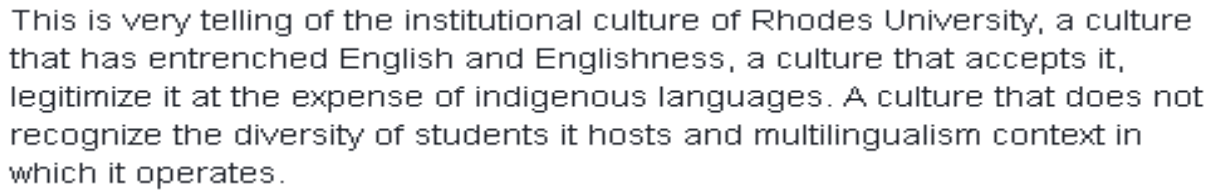
Scholarly literature and research designate that the continuous dominance of the English language in HE in South Africa, is perpetuated by lack of policy implementation. For instance, Bamgbose (1997, Kaschula (2013) and consequently Maseko (2014) suggest that the policy lacks a plan of implementation and '*monitoring'*, as well as directives on who should '*lead or drive its implementation'* at both national and institutional level. Bamgbose (1997) asserts that not only is implementation not taken seriously in South Africa, but there is also what he refers to as *'implementation avoidance'* strategy which consists of policy makers constructing a policy which they have no intention of implementing or know cannot be implemented, resulting the same escape clauses, and leaving implementation strategies unspecified as to modalities, time frame, and measure to ensure compliance. Maseko posits that, "policies and recommendations on implementation are published without any monitor having assessed, through monitoring and evaluation, the non-implementation of previous policies", (Maseko, 2014: 34). Mutasa (2015) proposes that timeframes should specify when and how African languages will be accommodated in the teaching and learning of content subjects as this would serve to linguistic guide for an institution. Rhodes University Languages Policy does not elaborate its commitment to the development of isiXhosa or any other indigenous African language for future use as one of the languages of learning and teaching. This was also noted by a key member of the University when she said during the interviews that, at Rhodes University, a lack of implementation of the language policy is due to shifting of responsibility:

> *"I think there's too much shifting of responsibility at Rhodes, I think people think oh CHERTL is doing it, CHERTL are the people who is supposed to be doing it."*[3]

CHERTL is a research-based centre within the University and amongst its other responsibilities, it is responsible for devising strategies to "attract students from all linguistic groups with sufficient academic potential to succeed, and to place them in appropriate academic programmes within the institution", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 5). Moreover, the second part of the second screenshot can be regarded as the expression of a marginalized isiXhosa linguistic identity, as can be noted that the student switches into the language to explain the marginalization of his linguistic identity. As suggested by the student's

[3]CHERTL- is a Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University.

second comment that for a staff member who has been in the Eastern Cape Province where the isiXhosa language is predominantly spoken, she should have made attempts to learn the language. This is as attributed in the Rhodes University Language Policy that the Human Resources Division will be requested to "devise strategies to encourage members of the University who do not speak isiXhosa to enrol for the short communicative course in isiXhosa offered by the African Language Studies' Section of the School of Languages", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 7). It is evident from the student's post that the student feels out of place and unwelcome at the university as he feels discriminated against when choosing to speak in his mother tongue. The student goes on to say Rhodes University has an imperialistic culture:

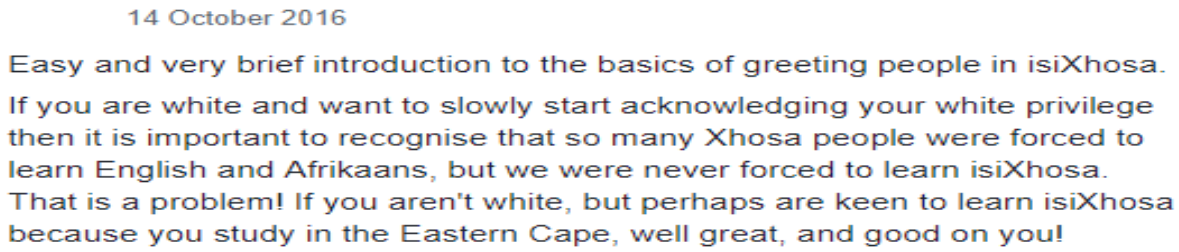



Additionally, the English linguistic imperialism comes up in the screenshot above. We see the transmission of English and culture onto African languages, which applies to the hegemony of English in non-academic spaces as thee office in question, within the university. In addition, the staff member who intervened also showed no mercy as she told the student she did not have time for such a conversation, which suggests that she did not care about the marginalization of the student's linguistic identity which she further marginalizes by not addressing the issue. Therefore, this student's post suggests that Rhodes University and some staff members are against the linguistic and cultural diversity they seek to support as noted in its language policy. The next section discusses data on 'The hierarchy of languages according to geographical area'.

### 5.2.3 The hierarchy of languages according to geographical area

On their posts on institutional Facebook pages, the students showed that the importance of a language and its use is determined by its geographical area and/or region. Therefore, when one occupies or relocates to a region, one is expected to learn, speak and understand the language

that is predominant within that region for communication purposes. A student whose home language is English, and who suggested to be acknowledged his privilege as an English speaker and a white person in a university context posted on the UCKAR Facebook page had this to say:


14 October 2016

Easy and very brief introduction to the basics of greeting people in isiXhosa.

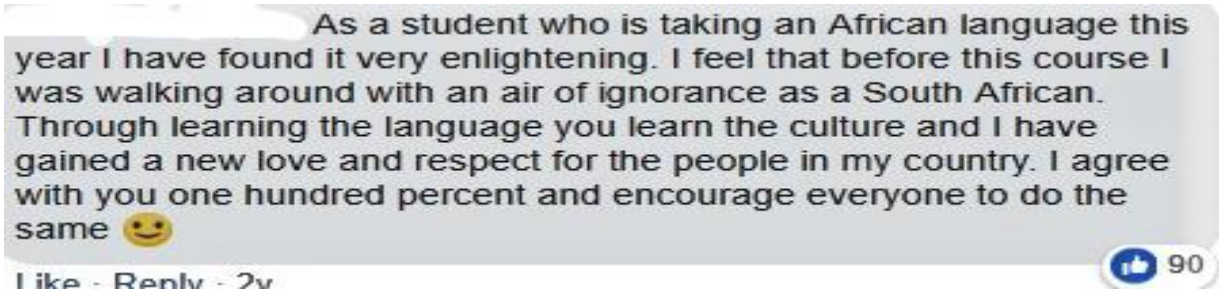
If you are white and want to slowly start acknowledging your white privilege then it is important to recognise that so many Xhosa people were forced to learn English and Afrikaans, but we were never forced to learn isiXhosa. That is a problem! If you aren't white, but perhaps are keen to learn isiXhosa because you study in the Eastern Cape, well great, and good on you!

It is noticeable from the second line that there is reluctance or lack of admission by white and English speaking and those whose home language is English, to acknowledge that they are in a place of privilege and their language dominates others in a multilingual space like Rhodes University. Accordingly, in just like any historical white university, at Rhodes University, English language speakers that are from privileged backgrounds, regard the institution as natural, as a place of comfort where they feel very much at home, and are not prone to suffer marginalization and discomfort or be faced with any problems. Because of this, speakers of English, through their access and comfort flourish. Whereas "those who are black and come from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to experience the environments and cultures of the historically white universities as discomforting, alienating, disempowering, and exclusionary", Badat (2016: 10). Therefore, the excellent presence of black students and staff has not automatically translated into genuine respect for difference, appreciation of diversity, and meaningful social and educational inclusion, whether social, linguistic, cultural, or academic. Thus, it makes sense that speakers of indigenous African languages constantly have to fight a system that continues to marginalize them.

Moreover, the original post by the student (see Appendix K) calls on fellow English and Afrikaans speakers to notice how important it is to recognise that isiXhosa speakers were forced to learn English and Afrikaans, and yet English speakers were not forced to learn indigenous African languages. In paragraph three, the student goes on to emphasize how important it is to learn the isiXhosa language, to acknowledge *'ooMama'* (Mothers) and *'ooTata'* (Fathers) who work hard to prepare food for students, three meals a day. In this

paragraph we can see how applicable the *'ubuntu translanguaging'* is, that is mentioned by Makalela (2015) on his study on *'Translanguaging as a vehicle for epistemic access…'*. Makalela notes that ubuntu is fluid, pervious, vague, but logical system that predates the colonial nation-statism ideology of oneness. Makalela (2015) further asserts that it is this connection that African multilingualism is understood to be a continuation of the persistent social, linguistic and capital resources under the mantra: [*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*] meaning *'I am because you are'*. Therefore, this shows that one language is incomplete without the other. This also stands as a form of translanguaging whereby there is an embracing of linguistic diversity and dismantling of ethno-linguistic divisions' ideologies of the past and creating opportunities for inclusion, which gives freedom to historically marginalized and excluded languages. Furthermore, this affirms the fluid linguistic identities of multilingual speakers. It is also emphasised by the famous quote of Nelson Mandela on the student's post, which reads; *"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart"*, that language is intrinsic to one's identity and ability to learn.

Over and above that, the poster also notes this to be a good opportunity to those who are not white and are keen to learn isiXhosa as they are in the Eastern Cape. The Eastern Cape is the Province where Rhodes University is situated. Agreeing with the student's post above, one student notes how beneficial it has been studying an African language:

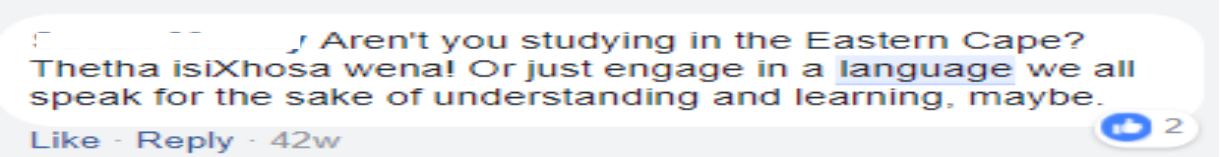



In addition, the Eastern Cape Province, according to *statssa.gov.za* website, has the highest percentage of 82.6% of isiXhosa speakers living in it. Additionally, 76, 6% of all speakers with isiXhosa as home language live within the province. According to recent research, about 22 languages are reportedly spoken as mother tongues at Rhodes University, with isiXhosa having the highest number of mother-tongue speakers (Maseko 2014, Gambushe 2015, Mawonga

2015), followed by isiZulu, ChiShona, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho, and others (Kaschula, 2011).

Thus, it makes sense why the student would encourage fellow students to learn the basics of the isiXhosa language, because of its dominance within the Eastern Cape Province where the university is located. This is as suggested in paragraph four of the student' post (see Appendix L), that, *"We have a social responsibility to transform ourselves, so that others can feel more comfortable and welcomed around us."*

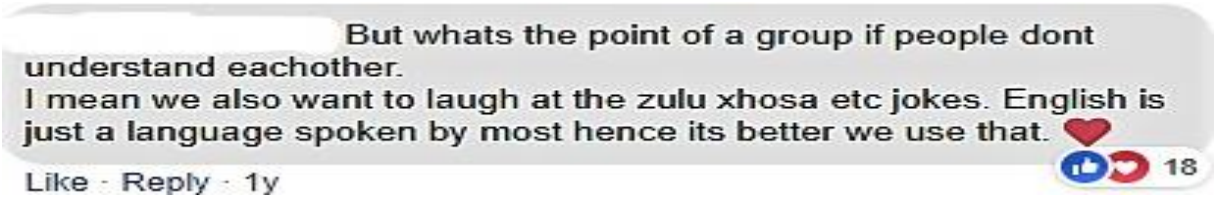
Moreover, another student whose mother tongue is English posted on the UCKAR page to respond about the issue of free education and how the South African can government will not have money for free education, to further acknowledge what she referred to as "pale privilege" and a "historically privileged pale minority". After students that are speakers exchanged their conversation in Sesotho in the comment section, the student poster responded with the comment below:



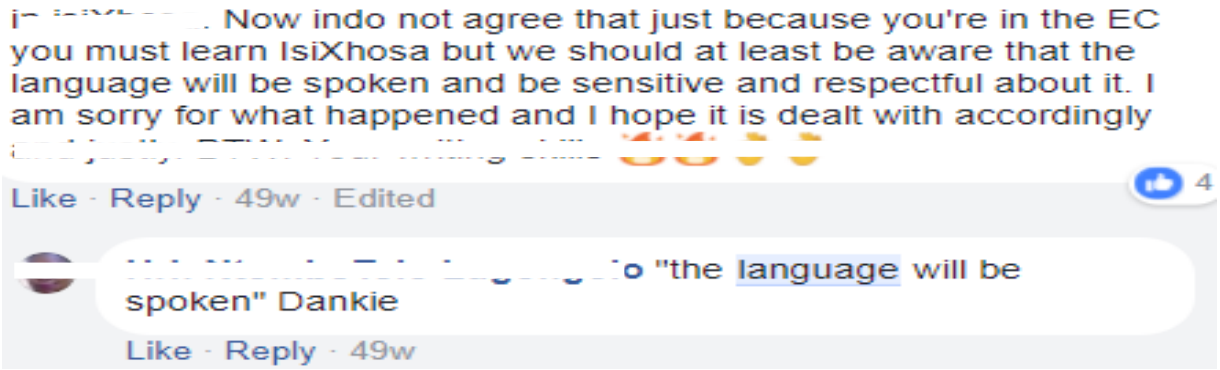

The hierarchy of languages is also apparent from the student's comments above. The student notes that if one studies in the Eastern Cape, one should be able to speak isiXhosa.

In this case, the isiXhosa language is given a high regard or as a first option the students should be using to respond and communicate in, as it is the predominant language out of the other four languages which are spoken in Eastern Cape, namely; English, Sesotho and Afrikaans. In as much as the Sesotho language is a national official and Eastern Provincial language, the student stops the other from using it and request that they use isiXhosa. It can be assumed that the student suggests that the others speak isiXhosa as more emphasis is given to it in the Rhodes University Language Policy. However, as much as Rhodes University commits to promoting multilingualism, the Language policy of the institution is "committed to the intellectualisation of African languages and creating the conditions for the use of particularly isiXhosa as a language of learning and eventually also teaching", (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014: 2). In this regard, we see more regard is given to the use of particularly isiXhosa and not

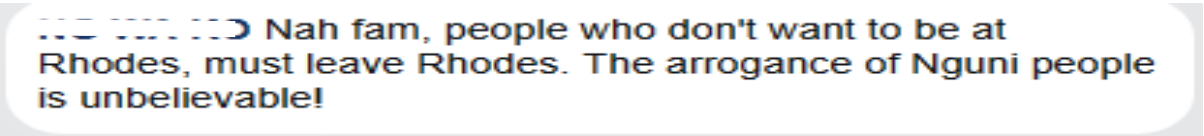
two of the other four national and provincial languages, namely; Sesotho and Afrikaans. Consequently, the student requests that the other students engage them in a language that all students speak for the sake of understanding and learning. In this regard, it can be suggested that this student implies that the student must engage in the English language as it is the only language that is worthy of providing understanding and learning and not the other languages spoken in the Eastern Cape, namely isiXhosa, Afrikaans and Sesotho. From this post, an assertion of linguistic identity is evident, and it can be proposed that the student is asserting or indicating her linguistic identities of the both the isiXhosa and the English language by using both languages to post as shown in the comment. One other student commented that the use of African languages on the page is exclusionary, and English is inclusive:




In this comment there is an assumption that English has the majority of speakers within the university. However, this assumption is not true because isiXhosa has the highest mother tongue speakers at Rhodes University, followed by isiZulu, ChiShona and others (Maseko 2014, Gambushe 2015, Mawonga 2015). However, one student suggested that there was no need to learn isiXhosa because someone studies in the Eastern Cape, but one needs to be mindful of linguistic diversity or of a multilingual student body, and should expect that the language will be spoken because of the region where the university is situated:



In addition, one student suggested that if people do not want to be at Rhodes University which is an English university, they should then consider not to be part of the institution:




This student suggests that Rhodes University is for people whose home language or mother tongue is English, therefore, African language speakers either conform to the English linguistic imperialism or leave for institutions where they will be welcomed or embraced to speak these languages. Phillipson (1992) maintains that because of acceptance of ideas which legitimate a dominant role of English, this becomes to be accepted as the natural state of affairs rather than a choice which reflects particular interests, as shown in the student's comment above. The next section presents data on the use of African languages in HE.

### 5.3 THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN HE

There were more debates around the use of indigenous African languages during the SRC elections and/or a grazzle and student body meetings in the years of student protests, 2015 and 2016. 'A 'grazzle' is a term used by Rhodes University students to refer to the meeting where students present their speeches or manifestos, to be nominated as SRC members. It can be suggested that students were comfortable in campaigning and communicating while expressing their future plans for the student body within the university, in their mother tongues. Whereas other students regarded this as a form of exclusion and would like the University and the Independent Election Board (IEB) to cater for students who are not familiar with mostly isiXhosa, by providing interpreters for those who cannot hear the language:

10 August 2015

With all due respect

IsiXhosa is an official language of the RSA and i acknowledge that fact. My post is directed at the lack of translation from the chair and the IEB at the grazzle today,can you ensure translation at the presidential debate.

Simple common courteous if you want a reason.
Thank you!!!

123 3 Comments

It is noticeable from the student's post that students whose mother tongue is not isiXhosa are against the use of the isiXhosa language with no interpreting. However, there is no interpreting required when students use English in the SRC campaigns. Some speakers of African languages regard interpreting from isiXhosa into English as a way to embrace diversity, as suggested by the isiXhosa speaker on the post below that using isiXhosa or any other language during campaigns is exclusionary and is a form of language barrier:

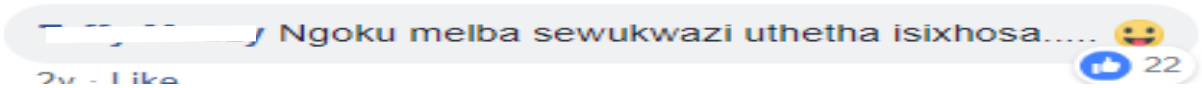
. We embrace diversity and are fighting policies of exclusion and we cannot promote any other form of exclusion, even if this comes in the form of the language barrier.

Sincerely
Umthethi wesiXhosa

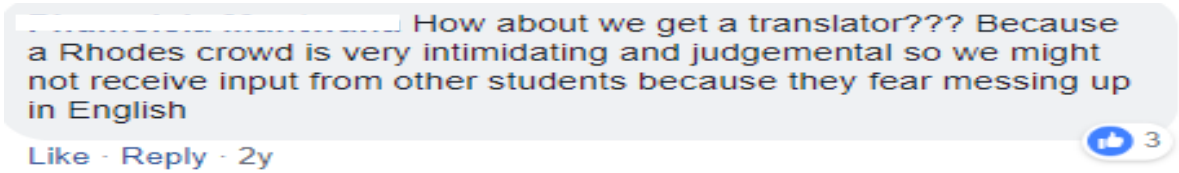
111 10 Comments

It can be suggested that English suppresses linguistic identities of speakers of African languages, as it is regarded as the only language of expression that does not require translation since it is regarded a 'universal' language. In this instance, linguistic hegemony will be perceived as speakers of dominated languages believing in and participating in the marginalization of dominated languages to the dominant, resulting in the dominant language being the only one remaining for the use of SRC campaigns should the university not be able to provide trained interpreters. This marginalization is based on the isiXhosa language, as it is not recognized for its function as a language of expression for its speakers, in a space that is accorded to the English language within the same linguistic environment (Ndhlovu, 2007). Therefore, English is further supported as interpreting services might or may be provided in it in the future, and it is not the case for African languages. This then becomes what Shannon (1995) regards as linguistic hegemony that is directly supported and promoted through governmental [and private institutions such as the university] dominated language groups

endure severe punishment for use of their mother tongue like in the case of campaigns for SRC positions during grazzles. However, a student whose mother tongue is ChiShona commented in isiXhosa and said the student who posted the post above is supposed to know how to speak isiXhosa by now:




From the comment above, it can be suggested that having been in the Eastern Cape Province and specifically at Rhodes University together, the student who posted the original post should know how to speak isiXhosa by now like how the student commentator does. Therefore, it can be deduced that the exposure to the language seeing that Rhodes University is situated in the Eastern Cape, is sufficient enough to speak or at least be familiar with the language, as indicated by the student's comment above. Moreover, students whose mother tongue is isiXhosa also had requests for "translation" [interpretation] services as they believed that the use of isiXhosa is exclusionary to non-language speakers of the language:




As observed by Phillipson (1997) linguicism can be intra-lingual and inter-lingual, as it exists among and between speakers of a language, and when a dialect is privileged as a 'standard'. Moreover, Phillipson (*ibid.*) adds that linguicism exists between speakers of different languages in process of resource allocation, of the vindication and vilification in discourse of one language rather than another as unsuited for a range of literate or societal functions, and any of the ubiquitous formulae for stigmatizing, downgrading or invisibilising a language. Therefore, this type of linguicism can be said to be intra-lingual as the request for translators into the English language is requested by a mother tongue speaker of the isiXhosa language. In addition, the student's comment above suggests that speaking in an African language gives one confidence in their speech rather than speaking in your second additional language which is English, because one can be prone to making mistakes when speaking the English language and people may misunderstand their speech.

As noted in the beginning of this section, what came out from the data set are contestations of use of mother tongue by speakers of African languages when they express themselves in the SRC campaigning events. Students would base the preference of their mother tongue on the fact that it is their inherent right to use it, as it forms part of their identity and would continue the conversation in their mother tongue. One of the key members of the university suggests this practice during student protests, to be acts of protest for the recognition of African languages:

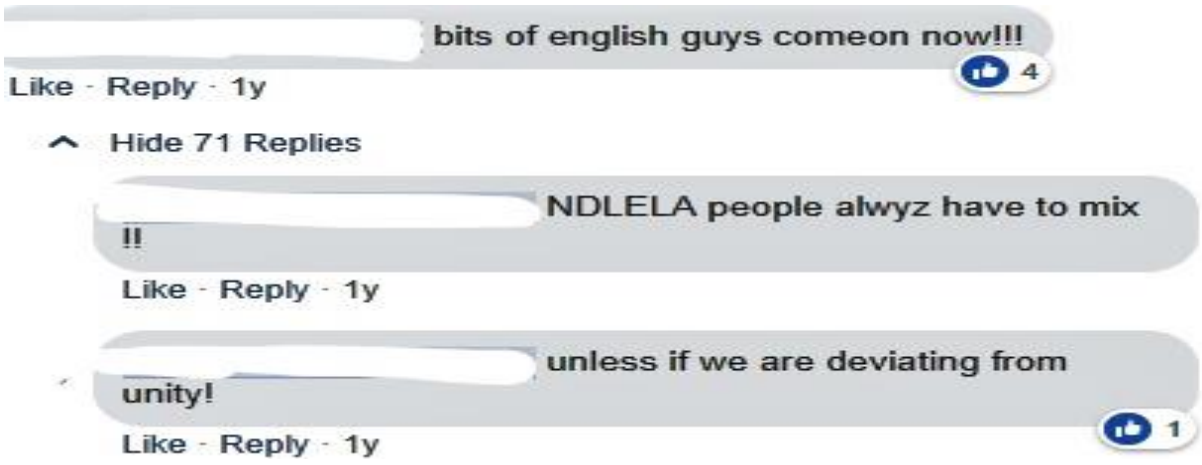
> *"To me, the first stop that enter my mind was that, these languages are being used as acts of protest, because it wasn't even that the students were using these languages in order to be secretive. So, it was mainly acts of protests and sort of solidarity acts of saying I am here and I want to speak this language and it is my language."*

However, this practice was not without engagement as speakers of English and other foreign languages would also continue the conversations in the comment box in these languages:

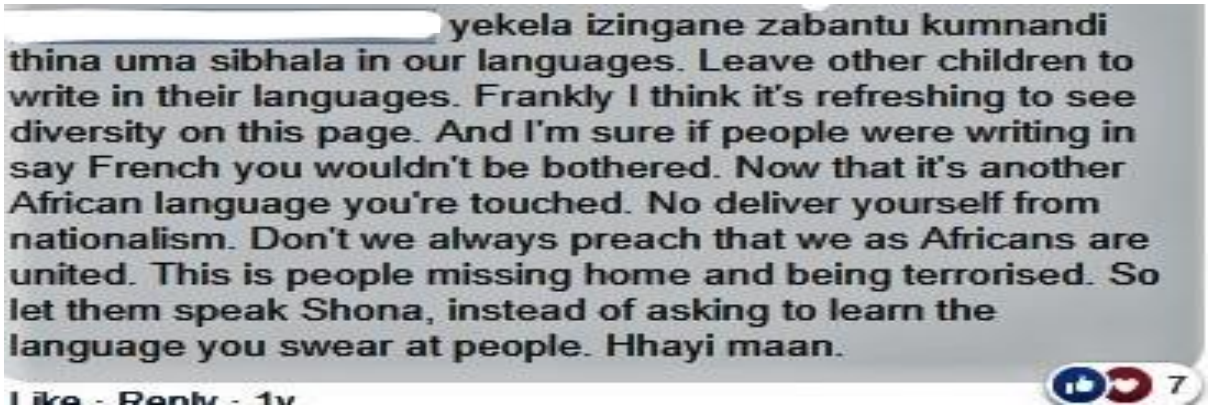

From the comments above we can see that after the English speaker contested the use of isiXhosa, the isiXhosa mother tongue speaker responded in isiXhosa, that she is also unable to speak English. Then the English speaker suggested that they speak in French if the student does not like to speak English, to which she carries on the conversation in the French language. In the examples above, students' linguistic identities are apparent, and it can be suggested that they influence their language preference as the students both insist on responding in their

mother tongue regardless of them not understanding each other. Another important pattern to be noted is that one student insists that they can either speak French or English because the student is fluent in both languages. It can be submitted that this student has two linguistic identities i.e. English and French, and at this instance they both influence her preference to speak these languages. Whereas the student whose mother tongue is isiXhosa wants to continue speaking in isiXhosa as a way of asserting and expressing her isiXhosa linguistic identity.

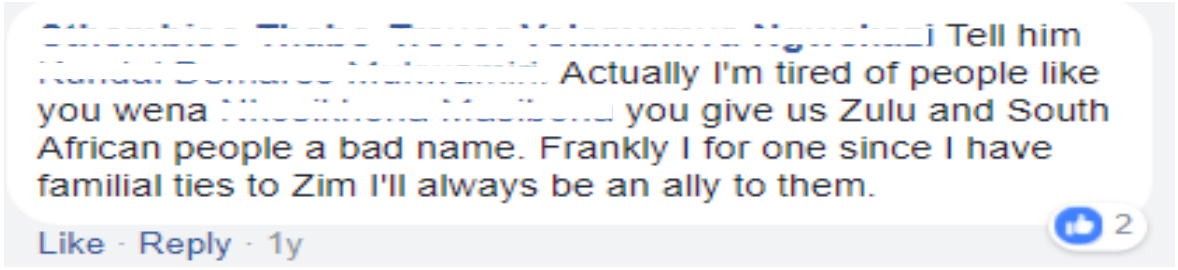
A similar case as above was also prevalent between mother tongue speakers of African languages, where they would contest each other for posting and/or commenting in these languages. A student whose mother tongue is ChiShona posted in the language to contest the two options students were given by the University management about exams, whereby they had to choose to write exams during student protest or to go home on Saturday and the student was saying they do not have money to go home therefore there are no options as they both have downsides. When the conversation carried on in ChiShona, one student whose mother tongue is isiXhosa interrupted and requested that they comment in English or mix languages:




However, one student whose mother tongue is isiZulu commented that this student is being unfair towards mother tongue speakers of ChiShona, because other South African languages are spoken on the page and when this happens to other language speakers, they do not demand translation:




This student added that as someone who has relatives in Zimbabwe he will always defend mother tongue speakers of ChiShona:



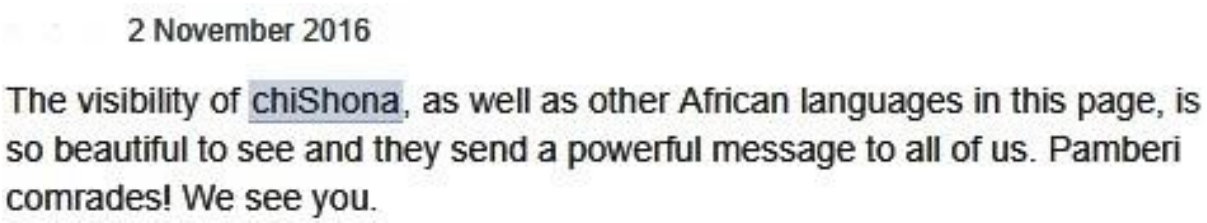

In the comment above it can be deduced that because of the student's familial ties to Zimbabwe, he is asserting his identity as both a Zimbabwean and South African. To this student, being South African and a mother tongue speaker of the isiZulu language has not detached him from his Zimbabwean ties regardless of him not being able to communicate in the ChiShona language.

As shown by students' perspectives on the posts above, it can be deduced that their linguistic identities influence their language preference as being from a Xhosa tribe and being a mother tongue speaker of the isiXhosa language will make him prefer to comment in the language. This trend was also common from responses of key members of the university that were interviewed. These responses showed that students' use of their mother tongue more especially that of indigenous African languages on the institutional Facebook pages, was an assertion of their African or linguistic identities as indicated by responses of the key members of the university:

*"I would say African identity. An assertion of African identity linked to language."*

*"…there is a dominant consensus that the use of indigenous languages by students on these pages are a way of protest, agency to be heard in their languages, an assertion of language and an African identity."*

Therefore, it can be deduced that students used their mother tongue African language to express their linguistic identity within the non-academic spaces of the university. In addition, in using these languages, students hope for a full active participation in African languages without the contestation of their existence in these spaces. As supported by Chiatoh , full active participation also "entails tolerance and accommodation of difference, particularly linguistic and cultural differences, as the foundation for recognition and respect of linguistic rights of citizens on grounds of mainstream and minority language identification", (2017: 83). The need for full active participation using African languages in non-academic spaces was also applauded by another student, and it can be suggested that this stands as a call to multilingualism within the university spheres:


2 November 2016

The visibility of chiShona, as well as other African languages in this page, is so beautiful to see and they send a powerful message to all of us. Pamberi comrades! We see you.

The move towards use of African languages in school and universities will further serve as an advantage as it will allow students to express their linguistic identities while at the same time affording them the opportunity to feel part of the university culture. Furthermore, it will ensure that policies and Rhodes University Language Policy particularly, will be enforced to a point where students do not have questions about the use of African languages within the university as it will be as transparent. The attempts by the university departments and students' use of African languages on social media can be regarded as language planning from below (Alexander, 1989; 2004, Kamwendo, 2005; Webb, 2009; Du Plessis, 2010), as it is both student tutors and lecturers who engage in multilingual and translanguaging practices and not the government. Furthermore, these attempts will result in the implementation of the language

policy as motivated by the National Language Policy for Higher Education, as stipulated in it that each and every institution must have plans put into place to promote multilingualism for the previously disadvantaged indigenous African languages of the country (Language Policy for Higher Education, 2002).

## 5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation of the theme 'The dominance of the English in HE', using Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages, namely UCKAR and RHODES SRC. It did this with the aid of the theoretical framework on English linguistic imperialism, scholarly literature and the engagement with the Rhodes University Language Policy. This chapter aimed to achieve the first and fifth or last objective of the study, that, is 'how UCKAR and RHODES SRC page users engage the language policy and practices at Rhodes University' and 'how students' perspectives on the UCKAR page can contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE'.

The findings showed that the hindrance to fully practice the policy commitment to multilingualism, is the exact limitation of clauses such as 'may', 'where practical', 'should', 'where possible' as observed from Rhodes University Language Policy. The university commitment to promote multilingualism is on paper and not in practice as the English language continues to dominate in all domains of the university. However, posts and comments above by students and key members of the university show that there is something that is being done by some departments within the university, towards multilingualism in the university curriculum. Furthermore, as shown by perspectives of students and key members of Rhodes University, at the same time the institution is a structure that establishes and sustain linguistic hierarchies between isiXhosa and English, thereby positioning the minority English language as the only suitable language for communicating, teaching and learning within the university.

Other perspectives that came out from the study show the imperialism or dominance of the English language in the university curriculum and institutional culture. The analysis allows for the presumption that the university structure and linguistic practices are used to legitimate, breed, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between indigenous African languages, English and other language speakers and mostly defined based on language.

The findings also showed that students engaged in an act of linguistic citizenship as unprofessional language planners, from voicing out the suppression of marginalized African linguistic identities by English as a matter of agency. This further allowed students voice to propose strategies of language planning and policy implementation in South African HE. It can be postulated that the students engaged in a top-down approach below (Alexander, 1989; 2004), thereby dealing with language from below. Consequently, the act of linguistic citizenship elucidated their personal and experiences that they had acquired through interaction with others under socio-historical conditions (Wei, 2017), that were perpetuated by the apartheid period which marginalized African languages, principles and values through the choice of English and Afrikaans as languages of the curriculum. In addition, students portrayed their right as citizens to voice and to be heard using their mother tongue repertoire, an act which can be regarded as an expression of linguistic identities. In this case, it can be argued under the concept and theory of linguistic citizenship that students were enacting the recognition and respect of linguistic rights and identities, as also suggested by responses from key members of the university. Through the assertion of their linguistic identities, towards a promotion of linguistic citizenship in a linguistically diverse environment, students promoted the recognition of multiple identities by using two or more languages in their posts.

The last finding was that students' use of two or more languages in their posts in an act of translanguaging as they were able to communicate and make meaning by drawing on various modalities such as emoticons and likes reactions, and from different languages. This allowed students to use the *creativity* concept as mentioned by Wei (2017) and Creese & Blackledge (2015), whereby they used language preference to break the rules and norms of the English language by contesting it. Therefore, both the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages can be regarded as 'Translanguaging Spaces' as mentioned and explained in Chapter Three. Students used this 'Translanguaging Space' and acted on and about their languages and seized spaces and opportunities created by [social media] to promote or further develop their languages (Kamwendo, 2005), a space they believe is not accorded to them in the curriculum of the university.

# CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research was an analysis of students' perspectives on the language question in South African Higher Education, and how students use indigenous African languages as an expression of their marginalized linguistic identities on two Rhodes University students' Facebook pages, namely UCKAR and RHODES SRC. The analyses of students' perspectives were based on posts and comments that they posted on these pages during the period of 2015 students protests and early 2017. This analysis also took into consideration responses of the key members of the university and one student tutor who was involved in the multilingual projects of one of the departments of the university.

A rationale for the study was the lack of conspicuousness in the existing knowledge and the limited, if any, voices of students especially from previously marginalized backgrounds on one hand, on matters concerning the language question and transformation in HE education. On the other hand, is the lack of use of indigenous African languages on students' Facebook pages, as tools to voice out their marginalization, the agency to use these languages in both the university curriculum and in non-academic spaces of the institution, while at the same time demanding the agency for the recognition of these languages, to regain their power, status and value amongst other things. Noticeable from the existing literature is studies on the use of indigenous African languages in the classroom and academic pedagogies, and not how students engage with the language question on social media.

In this section the findings of the study are discussed in conjunction with the objectives of the study that are as follows:

1. To examine how the users of UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages engage the language policy and practices at Rhodes University, and their perspectives on these pages contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE.

2. To determine the significance of the use of African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages in relation to the language question and HE transformation in general;

3. To determine how the use of different languages in discussions around the language question by users of the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages indicates or asserts any linguistic identities; and
4. To analyse how students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences as expressed on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages.

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study related to the third and fourth objectives, then discusses the first and second objectives. The section below summarizes the key findings of this study, to ascertain the extent to which the objectives of this research were accomplished.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This section summarizes the research findings showing to what extent each objective has been attained. The first objective was achieved through the analyses of students' post or screenshots that spoke to language policy and practices within the university, this also includes debates and events of language use in academic and non-academic practices. In such instances, students professed how the university language policy does not cater to LOTE, both in the curriculum and non-academic spaces such as the institutional administrations and offices. In discussion of the language policy and practices at Rhodes University, in Chapter Five the students highlighted the imperialism of the English language within the university curriculum. It was found from responses of both students and key members of the university, that the university was doing something about the curriculum and that various departments from the university are indeed engaging in multilingual practices.

It was also found that academics generally feel the process towards curriculum reform is a slow one as it takes time to review and reform. However, it was found there is favour towards the English language over others as shown by a university member in Chapter Five, as she suggested foreign languages over isiXhosa which is the only indigenous African language amongst other foreign languages that is offered as an entry level at the university. Another finding was that English was promoted and favoured over indigenous African languages because of its international status, and this was shown by one of the key members of the university who happens to have a prominent position within the Rhodes University Language

Policy development, when she asserted that her students want to learn English to go into the world and look for jobs.

What also came out strong from the findings is that, students related the language policy and practices of the university to that of the 1976 student protests against the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction, as students noted that English has taken the place of Afrikaans in the curriculum.

In addition, another finding was that there is English linguistic imperialism in non-academic spaces of the university. Where students contested the dominance of the English language in spaces such as social media as communication platforms, in the institutional culture students assimilate into the English language and culture, thereby adopting its values and principles while detaching from indigenous African languages, culture and values. From this finding, it was clear that students assimilated to the language that is deemed by the university system to have desirable attributes (Phillipson, 1992), and international relevance and opportunities. It was also found that students were not accorded the opportunity to use African languages in non-academic spaces to seek help in some of the institutional offices as some of the staff members suggested not speaking any of the indigenous African languages, in this case isiXhosa. With respect to this objective, it was found that the dominance of the English language within the university curriculum is promoted by the Rhodes University Language Policy as it suggests that the language of teaching and learning is the English language (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2014). Moreover, in as much as the policy emphasizes provision be allowed for the use of isiXhosa in both academic and non-academic spaces, there are limiting clauses and unclear time frames that hinder or impede the practical use of the language in these spaces. It was also found from the responses by key members of the university that the lack of implementation of isiXhosa and other indigenous African languages in HE was based on the lack of a political will from both the government and South African HEIs.

Based on the students' perspectives, it is clear from their engagement with the language question and HE transformation in general that students can contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HE. This can be done simply by collecting students' posts or screenshots to see kind of issues students discuss in relation to the language question in South African HE, and for the universities in South Africa to use Facebook as a tool to engage students, as it is a platform in which students are more active. It was also found from responses by the key members of the university that students' perspectives on the institutional Facebook

pages can influence the revision of language policy if the HE institutions utilize social media as an effective platform to engage students, as students have views about the language question.

The second objective was to determine the significance of the use of African languages on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages in relation to the language question and HE transformation in general. With respect to this objective, it was found from both students' perspectives and the interview responses by university key members that the significance of the use of African languages on these two institutional Facebook pages was an indication of transformation and assertion of linguistic and African identity. Amongst students' perspectives, there was also a suggestion that if Afrikaans and English were used to a certain extent as medium of instruction and in the curriculum, the same could be done for African languages alongside English. It was also found that African languages were used to further spark debates on the urgency of multilingualism transformation in South African HE, as students claimed the use of these languages, more especially isiXhosa, in non-academic spaces such as social media, as a way of bringing into contestation the exclusiveness of institutional Facebook pages to African languages.

With respect to objective three on determining how different language usage in discussions around the language question by users of the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages indicates or asserts any linguistic identities, it was prevalent from students' perspectives on posts that indeed this is the case. This was predominantly the case in the responses by university key members, as some of them professed that the use of African languages by students in the period of student protests is an expression of linguistic identity. Students are thus claiming the right to exist in a multilingual space where they have the right to use their mother tongue African language. This also confirms the notion of citizen sociolinguistics and/or linguistic citizenship, whereby citizens claim the right to use their indigenous African language in spaces where these languages are not accorded the opportunity to be used. In addition, it also provides the opportunity of language from below, whereby ordinary citizens would offer practical solutions to the use and incorporation of African languages into the mainstream. Given this finding, there is also an assertion of linguistic identities seen through the notion of translanguaging as students use different languages and semiotics hand in hand as an expression of their different linguistic identities. This was prevalent when an isiXhosa language speaker would use both

isiXhosa and English in relaying a message which also speaks to the fourth objective, where students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences.

Objective four is an analysis of how students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences as expressed on the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages. It can be suggested that students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences, and this finding came after the observation of students whose mother tongue for instance was ChiShona and isiXhosa, and who would therefore prefer to post in these languages. This also happened when speakers of African languages were told to speak or comment in English but they would continue the conversation through comments in these African languages. The fourth and fifths objectives looked at how students' linguistic identities influence their language preferences as expressed on both the UCKAR and RHODES SRC Facebook pages, and how students' perspectives on these institutional Facebooks page contribute to language policy and implementation in South African HEIs. The findings showed that students' perspectives on institutional Facebook pages indicated the domination of African languages by English through both academic and non-academic spaces. For example, in their posts, students showed frustration towards the lack of use of indigenous African languages and African epistemologies in the university curriculum and regarded this as the marginalization of their linguistic and cultural identities. In this instance, we see linguistic imperialism as theorized by Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1995), where the English language plays a role in the education system and this language is transmitted in the place of other languages within the South African HE system. Furthermore, Rhodes University being characterised as an English medium university means that English is a dominant language within the University, which causes imbalanced allocation of rights accorded to different languages.

The findings also showed that students engaged in an act of linguistic citizenship as unprofessional language planners, from voicing out the suppression of marginalized African linguistic identities by English, as a matter of agency. This further allowed students voice to propose strategies to language planning and policy implementation in South African HE. It can be postulated that the students engaged in a top-down approach below (Alexander, 1989; 2004), thereby dealing with language from below. Consequently, the act of linguistic citizenship elucidated their personal experiences that they had acquired through interaction with others under socio-historical conditions (Li, 2011). These were perpetuated by the apartheid period

which marginalized African languages, principles and values through the choice of English and Afrikaans as languages of the curriculum. In addition, students portrayed their right as citizens to voice and to be heard using their mother tongue repertoire, an act which can be regarded as an expression of linguistic identity. In this case, it can be argued under the concept and theory of linguistic citizenship that students were enacting the recognition and respect of linguistic rights and identities, as also suggested by responses from the key members of the university. Through the assertion of their linguistic identities, to a promotion of linguistic citizenship in a linguistically diverse environment, students promoted the recognition of multiple identities by using two or more languages in their posts.

The last finding was that students' use of two or more languages in their posts is an act of translanguaging as they were able to communicate and make meaning by drawing on various modalities such as emoticons and likes reactions, and from different languages. This allowed students to use the *creativity* concept as mentioned by Wei (2017) and Creese & Blackledge (2015), whereby they used language preference to break the rules and norms of the English language by contesting it. Therefore, both the UCKAR and RHODES SRC pages can be regarded as 'Translanguaging Spaces' as mentioned and explained in Chapter Three. Students used this 'Translanguaging Space' and acted on and about their languages and seized spaces and opportunities created by [social media] to promote or further develop their languages (Kamwendo, 2005, a space they believe is not accorded to them in the curriculum of the university.

## 6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In spite of the fact that there have been studies exploring language practices, more especially the use of African languages in classroom pedagogies and in higher education curriculum in general, students have been researched as participants of research. One may argue that, noticeable is a direct gap in students' voices and perspectives on the language question, use African languages, and transformation in general. Therefore, this study would be useful for language planners, language policy makers, and language committees of the different South African HEIs, because it provides an insight into the language from below approach through students' perspectives on the language question and transformation of HE in general. This

study has proved and shown that students as users of language in HEIs are capable of coming up with debates that could be used as solutions to the language question and transformation in the South African HEIs. Often at Rhodes University, students have been invited to take part in transformation talks but one can argue that these have been limiting as students are not free to express themselves given a fear of gatekeepers within the talks. As a result of this, students have turned to social media platforms of institutional Facebook pages, as a way to voice out their frustration towards the sluggishness of transformation in these institutions. Thus, this study offers a different approach into engaging with students, their perspective and debates through institutional Facebook pages. In addition, it offers students' perspectives on the curriculum of the university and how the university can go about it.

This research study may possibly be the first study ever to analyse students' engagement with the language question and transformation of HE on social media, consequently exploring perspectives of the university key members on language practices within an institution of higher learning. Additionally, the study was also able to show where universities' language policies are lacking and what impedes their implementation, something that has been studied exhaustively. However, the study bridged the gap of lack of students' voices in language policies and practices in institutions of higher learning and introduced social media as a new domain that students are mainly active on for institutional debates. The study was also a contribution to the notion of English linguistic imperialism and dominance in South African HE, which continues to dominate and further brings into contestation the language question in institutions of higher learning. Lastly, this study provided evidence that the use of indigenous African languages by other tongue speakers of these languages in institutions of higher learning and their institutional Facebook pages and social media in general, is an expression of marginalized linguistic identities of these language speakers and sometimes these identities are multiple, and students use different modalities to express them hence the notion of translanguaging.

In consideration of the limitations of the study to Rhodes University institutional Facebook pages, further research is also needed in other institutional Facebook or social media in general. Another issue that should be investigated should, for instance, look at students' posts on social media in conjunction with interviewing students on language practices and transformation outside of the classroom pedagogy within institutions of higher learning. Moreover, research should be carried out by investigating the awareness of institutional language policies amongst non-academic staff members of the institution, not only key members of the university. This

will point out if the policies are effective or not in non-academic spaces of institutions of higher learning. In addition, it should be made explicit by universities what plans or projects they have carried out for multilingual practices both in the curriculum or academic spaces and non-academic spaces, to avoid students' questioning these. Lastly, clauses as 'may be', 'should', 'where applicable', 'could', and so on, should be avoided in the language policies of universities and there should be provision of practical timeframes to carry out multilingualism projects and plans.

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## APPENDICES

### 6.4 Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Form


**Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee** PO Box 94,
Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa t: +27 (0) 46 603 8055 f: +27 (0) 46 603 8822
e: ethics-committee@ru.ac.za
**www.ru.ac.za/research/research/ethics**

13 June 2018

Babalwa Resha
reshababalwa@gmail.com

Dear Babalwa Resha,

**Re: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS APPLICATION**

***1. The expression and contestation of marginalized linguistic identities on the Rhodes University student Facebook page.***

**Reference number: 10129082**

**Submitted: 4/13/2018**

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) – Human Ethics (HE) sub-committee.

The committee decision is APPROVED.

Ethics approval is valid until 31 December 2018. An annual progress report is required in order to renew approval for the following year.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,

**Prof Jo Dames**
**Chair: Human Ethics sub-committee, RUESC- HE**

Note:

1. The ethics committee cannot grant retrospective ethics clearance.

## 6.5 Appendix B: The research questionnaire

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES • P.O. BOX 94 GRAHAMSTOWN • Tel: 046 603 8304 • Fax: 046 603 8960 • email: d.nkomo@ru.ac.za / pmaseko@uwc.ac.za / g12r1313@campus.ru.ac.za

September 20, 2018

**A questionnaire on individual language practices, experiences and attitudes towards linguistic diversity at Rhodes University.**

1. What is your language of communication with people in your area of work? Is this your language of preference?

2. Are you familiar with the University language policy? If yes, what are the languages that are explicitly stated as the official languages of the institution?

3. What are the languages that are explicitly stated as the official languages of the institution, as far as your knowledge is concerned on the university language policy?

4. Student protests such as #FeesMustFall, #RhodesSoWhite etc. were social media driven. How were you able to follow these protests?

5. In most institutions, including Rhodes University, students with indigenous languages as their primary languages posted comments (on their institutional Facebook pages) in different languages other than the familiar language of the social media (English) to voice issues related to transformation. Did you follow these? Are you aware? In your opinion, what does this signal?

6. A university's language policy addresses major areas of institutional language use, including teaching, research, administration, signage and communication, as well as

transformation of institutional culture. In view of this statement, what should be the university's response to posts in indigenous languages?

7. Do you think the students' use of indigenous languages during the #FMF and other related student protests should influence language policy revision?

8. A student posted in one of the university's Facebook pages, and asked about the question of language and what is access where there are structural mechanisms which deny students with indigenous languages as their primary languages' success at Rhodes University through language. The student's post also claims that the university is not doing enough as nothing has been said about curriculum reform and review. What does the university say about this?

9. From one of the students' posts, a student whose primary language and/or home language is English posted that the content in the curriculum is too abstract for speakers of English, and how much more for second and third language speakers of the language. What do you think of this student's post?

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.**

## 6.6 Appendix C: A letter of permission to conduct research on the UCKAR Facebook page

UCKAR FACEBOOK PAGE PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

July 31, 2018

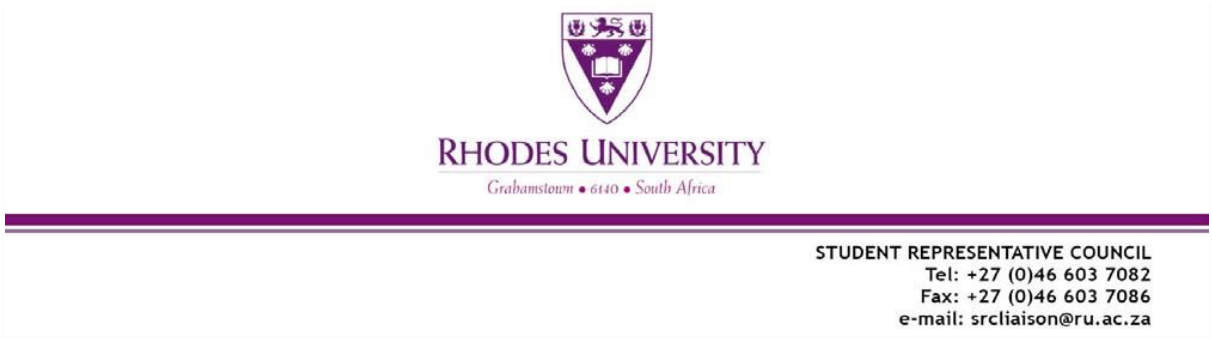
To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this letter is to infom you that I, Lisa Ncalane, the Administrator of the UCKAR Facebook page, have given Babalwa Resha permission to conduct the research titled Thc expression and contestation of marginalized linguistic identities on the Rhodes University student Facebook page, on the UCKAR Facebook page. This also serves as assurance that the researcher has indicated that the collected data will be used for research purposes only, and that data collected (e.g. screenshots) will be anonymized to protect the page users' identities. Both the researcher and I will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ncalane

## 6.7 Appendix D: A letter of permission to conduct research on RHODES SRC Facebook page




Eric Ofei

Student Representative Council

Bantu Steve Biko

Rhodes University

Grahamstown 6139

16 November 2018

**RHODES SRC FACEBOOK PAGE PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I Eric Ernest Ofei, the SRC Advisor and Administrator of the RHODES SRC Facebook page, have given Babalwa Resha permission to conduct the research titled **The expression and contestation of marginalized linguistic identities on the Rhodes University student Facebook page**, on the RHODES SRC Facebook page. This also serves as assurance that the researcher has indicated that the collected data will be used for research purposes only, and that data collected (e.g. screenshots) will be anonymized to protect the page users' identities. Both the researcher and I will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Kind Regards

Eric Ernest Ofei

Student Development and Support Officer

Rhodes University

046 603 7080/082 229 5078

## 6.8 Appendix E:

## 6.9 Appendix F:

2 May 2015 · Grahamstown

I cannot keep quiet as President when the student body is divided. When important issues of Transformation are taking place with insults, personal attacks and uncalled remarks. We have on a number of occasion called for meaningful, positive, critical and constructive debate on issues of Transformation but what has transpired on this page is the opposite.

Members of the student body, I plead with each and everyone of you to exercise the golden rule: "Do to others what you would like to be done unto you". When students send me an inbox, sms or a call phone at 2 in the morning with a broken heart because of comments from this page, to receive notifications from Facebook with reports threatening to close this very page because of the amount of reports it receives on a daily basis I am left with nothing but to resort to the following:

1. A page has been created as a space dedicated to the subject of name change and transformation, where focused and constructive conversation can be had on these matters and where other issues will not distract from them.

2. Continue handing over posts reported to the University's Harassment Officer

3. Assist students who feel like they are being attacked by advising them on how to report people to qualified harassment officers and proctors, so that there can be practical repercussions for harassment and hate speech.

5. Encourage debate on issues pertaining to Transformation and the Name change to a special page, where the Activism & Transformation Councillor will note debates and arguments to be included in his Transformation Strategy Report.

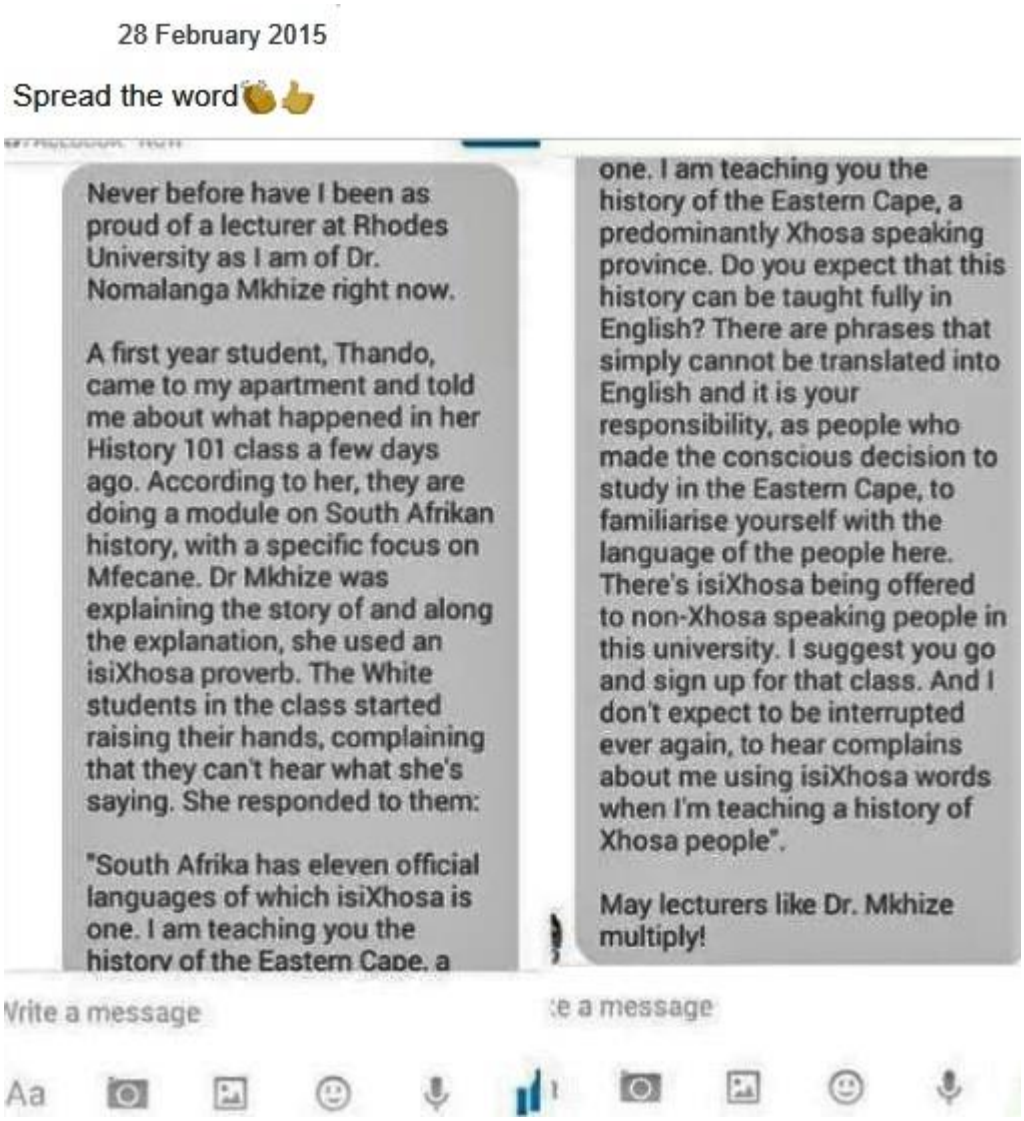
Please see the page description and the link below:

The SRC Activism and Transformation Facebook Page is a platform provided to the students of Rhodes University to channel healthy discussions and debates on contemporary issues facing studentship, society and youth in general, as well as a forum for students to have direct contact with the SRC and other students within the University. Its aim is to be a positive, helpful aid to all students at Rhodes University.
The page is created with what was said in the SRC's statement on transformation, that the SRC is intent on creating spaces that are dedicated to conversations on transformation. This is the social media space dedicated to these conversations. The SRC, including the Activism and Transformation Councillor are serious about transformation and will continue to create these spaces even beyond facebook.

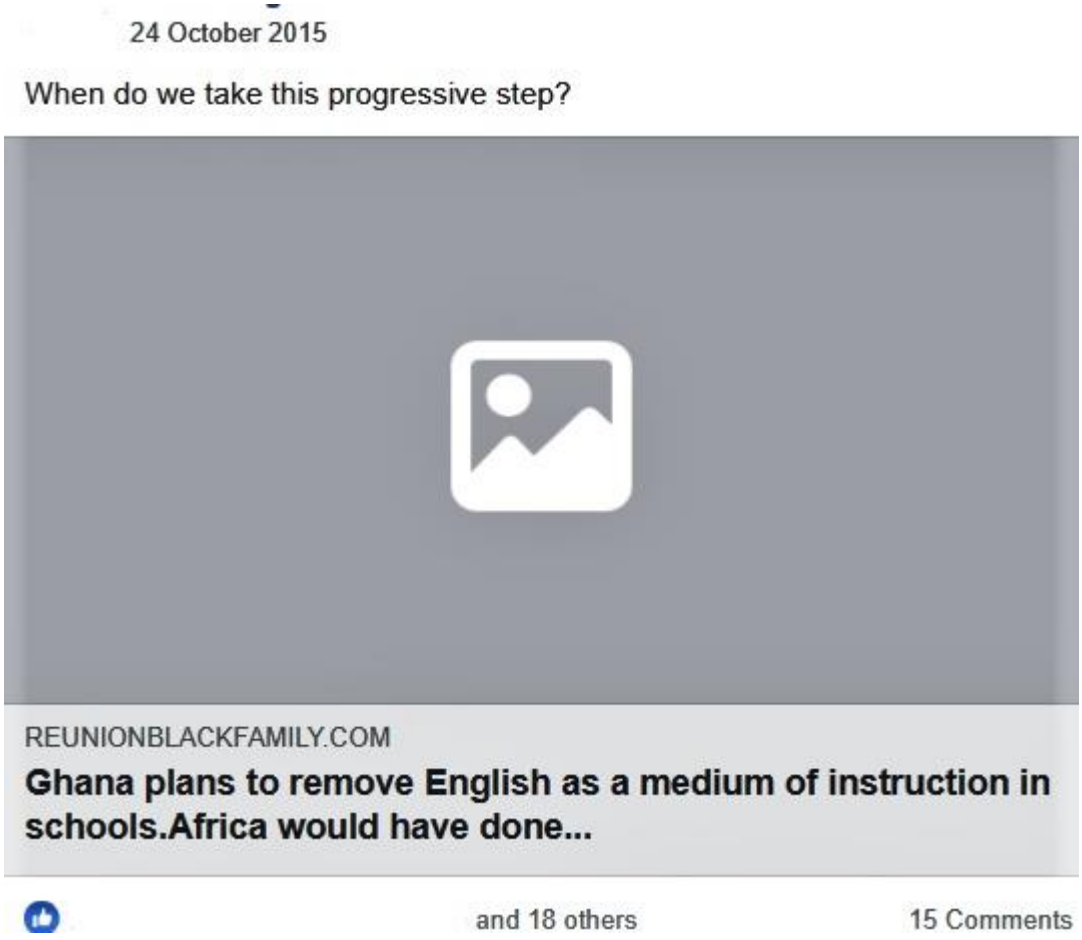
Rhodes SRC: Activism and Transformation

159 20 Comments 1 Share

## 8.7 Appendix G:



## 6.10 Appendix H:



**6.11 Appendix I:**

15 February 2017

Rhodes University discriminated against me for speaking isiXhosa

At around 3pm yesterday, 14 February, I went to the Student Bureau at Rhodes University to ask for proof of registration.

A young woman of color who is a student at this institution received me. As I traditionally do to everyone, I confidently greeted the young lady in isiXhosa- my mother tongue, putting a huge smile on my face as I was having a good day.

"Molo sisi. Bendicela i-proof of..." the lady, visibly impatient, stopped me before I could finish my sentence. "Please speak English" she said. My midday smile shrinked, and I caught my heart almost coming out of my mouth while my brain froze for a second or two .. I was shocked!

In disbelief and dismay to this response, I proceeded to ask her is she understands that she is in the Eastern Cape, where isiXhosa and Afrikaans are the dominant languages spoken by the majority of the population? Rhodes University after all is a university in the Eastern Cape and its common sense for people to understand that it ought to be organically connected to the community which it inhabits, as the former Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University, Dr Salem Badat once remarked.

The lady lashed out at this point. "I am very tired of people speaking isiXhosa to me, assuming that I'm Xhosa. I don't understand your language. Speak English. Speak English". At this juncture, it became clear to me that the lady did not only have a problem with isiXhosa- the language, but it dawned to me that she had a problem with amaXhosa- the people.

A 'coloured' lady who was working on a desk behind her, who is not a student but employed by institution, who has been observing this converstion, jumped into this exchange and commented. "I also don't understand Xhosa mos. You must speak English," she said.
Now I was really getting frustrated by this conversation, and I replied to her, "The funny thing is that I understand your language, Afrikaans, just like any typical Rhini born and bred isiXhosa speaking person," I said, knowing full well that she is also from Rhini not to understand isiXhosa.

As this debate was snowballing, other senior staff members who are isiXhosa speakers said nothing but were in pretense that nothing was happening. The exchange was slowly escalating and it is at this point that a white lady who was working on a desk behind all the other desks, adjacent to the managers officer. She said that the manager, was calling me in her office. Although I was really not in a mood to be debating this matter further, I thought going to the office and resolve this matter quickly would is of best interests to everyone.

"What seems to be a problem," asked, casting an emotionless face. I calmed myself down and told her carefully and in full details of what was happening. I explained to her that I requested a proof of registration from the lady in the front desk using very simple and intelligible code-switch of isiXhosa and English and that the lady got irritated and demanded that I speak only English to her.

"Rhodes University is an English medium institution and so she is right, you need to speak English when you're seeking assistance" says and she looks right in my eyes so severely. She casts her emotionless face again.

I got quiet for a brief moment and I ask her, "Have you read Rhodes University's Language Policy" and she replies, "Yes". I reclined on her desk and I continue asking her, "...so what does the policy say about the use of other two languages, isiXhosa and Afrikaans at Rhodes University?," and she said, "You tell me".

I told her that she is employed by the university and she surely must have familiarized herself with the policy. She insisted I must take her through it. I said okay, I will take the duty to educate her about the policy she's supposed to know as a person who manages a division that deals with students who come from multilingual and various backgrounds all over the world. So I begin to cite to her that Rhodes University recognizes isiXhosa and it seeks to strengthen its status by promoting its value as a medium of communication among academic and support staff. Furthermore, the policy states, that registrars office, the one is managing, to ensure, where possible, that official University branding and correspondence with prospective and current students, staff and the public is available on request in at least two of the major provincial languages.

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winks two times and goes back to her stone-emotionless look again and she says. "If you speak isiXhosa to that lady that is discrimination". I paused for a moment there trying to process these chilling and very ironical words. I smack my lips and my hands start to sew an invisible cloth. I realized that everything I had just explained to her went down the drain like precious water poured into a porous bucket. It simply did

discrimination". I paused for a moment there trying to process these chilling and very ironical words. I smack my lips and my hands start to sew an invisible cloth. I realized that everything I had just explained to her went down the drain, like precious water poured into a porous bucket. It simply did not penetrate through, it just was a complete waste of time.

At this juncture, I switched into isiXhosa to explain the actual discrimination and the violence of even having this conversation in English with a white staff member of Rhodes University who has been in an Eastern Cape University for over 20 years, but does not acknowledge or even attempt to recognize isiXhosa as a language of value and communication. I go on "Ndizokuthetha isiXhosa nawe ngoku. Ndikruqukile ukucacisa izinto ezilula njengezi kuwe ngesiNgesi". It is at this point that she goes back to her desk and tells me she has no time for this conversation. I leave the her office feeling deeply hurt and violated for being discriminated against for simply speaking my language.

I am deeply concerned not only because of the awful treatment I got or how I was discriminated against for simply asking help in code switch of isiXhosa and English. My concern is the lack of sensitivity in everyone who was in that office and how the university treats and responds to people who speak other indigenous languages.

Now imagine a first year who comes from deep rurals, who genuinely cannot ask for help in English but only in isiXhosa, Afrikaans or even Sotho? Or my mother who cannot speak English, whom, I imagine, would one day want to go to ask for something relating to my studies at the [redacted]? What kind of treatment she will get? And what kind of image the university is projecting to the public? and what kind of citizens it wants to produce?

This is very telling of the institutional culture of Rhodes University, a culture that has entrenched English and Englishness, a culture that accepts it, legitimize it at the expense of indigenous languages. A culture that does not recognize the diversity of students it hosts and multilingualism context in which it operates.

This culture is perpetuated in Offices like the one headed by [redacted] Wicks, and is underlined by ignorance, blatant racism and discrimination.

The least that the young lady who initially received me could have done was to refer me to someone who can speak isiXhosa if she was really uncomfortable to assist me when I speak isiXhosa. What I was saying to that lady was intelligible, meaning that she was able to comprehend was I was saying because she eventually printed the proof of registration for me. She was able to interpret what was saying and was clearly aware of what was saying. Her only problem, and so was Ms Wicks and the colored lady, was that I spoke isiXhosa.

338 49 Comments 29 Shares

## 6.12 Appendix J:

14 October 2016

Easy and very brief introduction to the basics of greeting people in isiXhosa.

If you are white and want to slowly start acknowledging your white privilege then it is important to recognise that so many Xhosa people were forced to learn English and Afrikaans, but we were never forced to learn isiXhosa. That is a problem! If you aren't white, but perhaps are keen to learn isiXhosa because you study in the Eastern Cape, well great, and good on you!

Do you feel guilty because you don't know how to greet an isiXhosa speaking person? Well, you should only feel guilty if you have had the opportunity to learn but turned away from it. So here is an opportunity... Don't turn away!

Maybe you want to acknowledge ooMama nooTata that work hard in the kitchen to prepare 3 meals a day for you? Maybe there is a friendly person you see while walking down the street? Remember what Nelson Mandela once said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart".

It really is much easier than you think. All it takes is a bit of heart and compassion. We have a social responsibility to transform ourselves so that others can feel more comfortable and welcomed around us.

If anybody has questions or needs some tips on this topic please let me know. I am intending on doing a few more videos on similar topics relating to isiXhosa. I would really appreciate it if you could let me know whether there is an audience out there for these sort of videos. I really hope there is. There should be.

## 6.13 Appendix K:

17 August 2016

Before I begin, I would like to apologise to anyone who may be triggered by this post. However I still feel like these questions have to be asked.

How does the University go about planning an event as important and as sensitive as a memorial service for a student who has passed away? Is the family consulted in any way? Is the family's religious affiliation taken into consideration, especially in deciding which hymns and scriptures are going to be included in the ceremony?

I ask this because in the years that I have been in this institution, I have attended two memorial services organised by the University. On both occasions, I could not help but feel like there is a set formula that is followed: English hymns are sung and the scriptures quoted in the sermon are all in English.

Both these families are African and based in the EC. With such an English memorial service that is planned for their loved one, it cannot be hard to conclude that the service does not truly SPEAK to the family and friends of the deceased - and the purpose of the service is to provide some comfort for THEM.

Would it truly be too much for the University to consult with the family of the deceased, in terms of the hymns and scriptures to be included in the service? More importantly, is it impossible to arrange (beforehand) for another speaker to translate the sermon into a language of the family's choice? After all, the memorial service is to offer words of condolences and comfort to the grieving family and friends. It makes no sense to me why the service should not fully accommodate them.

153 6 Comments

## 6.14 Appendix L: