

# **Multilingual Environments for Survival:**

The Impact of English on  
Xhosa-Speaking Students  
in Cape Town

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1998 Fulbright Scholar

## Contents

Author's acknowledgements .....	3
Abstract .....	4
<b>1 Language and politics in South Africa .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	5
1.2 The hegemony of English .....	8
1.3 Language and education under apartheid .....	15
1.4 New policy and government implementation .....	16
1.5 Current language dynamics in Cape Town .....	20
1.6 Chapter summary .....	26
<b>2 Community and home language environments .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 The communities of Langa and Khayelitsha .....	27
2.2 Home and school language environments .....	33
2.3 Chapter summary .....	37
<b>3 Language in the classroom and public environment .....</b>	<b>38</b>
3.1 Profiles of Bulumko and Langa High Schools .....	38
3.2 English-language domination in the township school environment .....	38
3.3. Language dynamics in the classroom .....	42
3.4. The language environment of Cape Town's city centre .....	46
3.5. Chapter summary .....	53
<b>4 Languages in Cape Town's media .....</b>	<b>54</b>
4.1 English in the media .....	54
4.2 Newspapers and magazines that students read .....	55
4.3 Languages on television .....	57
4.4 Radio station preferences .....	60
4.5. Language learning through popular culture .....	62
4.6. Chapter summary .....	64
<b>5 Changes within schools, communities and the public environment .....</b>	<b>65</b>
5.1 Critical awareness for the importance of African languages .....	65
5.2 How schools can be developed to teach English and Xhosa .....	67
5.3 Developing African Languages in the public environment .....	68
5.4 Conclusion .....	68
Endnotes .....	72
Bibliography .....	74
Appendices .....	77

## Appendix five

### Radio Stations that Students Listen to

Bush Radio (Xhosa, Afrikaans, English)  
Cape Flats Radio (English)  
Good Hope FM (English and Afrikaans)  
KFM (English)  
Motsweding FM (Tswana and Sotho)  
Radio Ciskei (Xhosa)  
Radio Lesotho (Sotho)  
Radio Metro (English)  
Radio UCT (English)  
Ukhozi FM (multilingual)  
Umhlobo Wenene (Xhosa)  
Zibonele (Xhosa)

Prince of Bel Air  
Roc  
Sinbad's Vibe  
Star Trek  
Take 5  
The Bold and the Beautiful  
Top Billing  
Two Way  
Vibe  
Wipe Out  
X Files

#### **African Language TV Shows**

Cape at Six  
Ezodumo (Zulu)  
Mamepe (Tswana)

#### **Afrikaans Language TV Shows**

Noot vir noot

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## Abstract

This paper describes the impact that English has made in the homes, communities and schools of Xhosa-speaking Grade 10 students in two Cape Town townships. I have investigated the ramifications of apartheid's influx control and education policies, as well as current language and education issues.

Second-language learning difficulties in the formal education system are investigated in the context of the migration patterns of Grade 10 students arriving from the former homelands of Transkei and Ciskei. Migrating Xhosa-speaking students come to Cape Town with the goal of learning English, as they perceive people who don't know English to be 'uneducated'. Because they generally speak very little English, their adaptation to English-language classes in Xhosa-language townships is particularly arduous and they often fail classes repeatedly.

The reasons that Grade 10 students desire English are clear: they long for greater access to the public environment of Cape Town, for communication with the rest of South Africa and for mobility within the international community. The impact of the hegemony of English on their attitudes is detailed in students' essays, class presentations and interviews.

The paper concludes with suggestions of how to raise the status of Xhosa and other African languages to develop schools and public communities into inclusive, accessible environments.

## Appendix four

### Television Shows that Students Watch

#### Multilingual TV Shows

Double Shift (Xhosa and English)  
Ezimtoti (Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, English)  
Felicia Mabuza Suttle Show (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana)  
Generations (English, Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans)  
Isiding (English and Xhosa)  
Jam Alley (Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, English)  
Lisenethini (English, Xhosa, Zulu)  
Mabaleng (Sotho and English)  
Selimathunzi (English, Xhosa, Tswana)  
Studio Mix (English, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana)  
Win and Spin (Afrikaans and English)  
Zama Zama (English, Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans)

#### English Language TV Shows

Ally McBeal  
Best of English Soccer  
Big Bucks Bananza  
Buzz  
Chill Out  
CNN  
Days of Our Lives  
Electric Workshop  
Hazza Weekend Sport Show  
How They Do That  
Inside Into  
Ithuba  
Kideo  
Laduma  
Martin  
News Hour  
Oprah Winfrey  
New York Undercover  
Panasonic Soccer Focus  
Parliament  
People of the South  
Popeye

## Appendix three

### Magazines and Newspapers that Students Read

#### English, Xhosa and Afrikaans Language Magazines

Cosmopolitan:	English
Drama:	English
Drum:	English
Ebony:	English
Fair Lady:	English
Inside:	English
Huis Genoot:	Afrikaans
Juice:	English
Kick-Off:	English
Next:	English and Xhosa
Noi en Nudi:	Afrikaans
Pace:	English
People:	English
Soccer News:	English
Spice:	English
Sports Life:	English
Sports Rap:	English
True Love:	English
TV Talk:	English
World Up:	English
You:	English

#### English, Xhosa and Afrikaans Newspapers

<i>Daily Dispatch:</i>	English
<i>Die Burgber:</i>	Afrikaans
<i>Business News:</i>	English
<i>Cape Argus:</i>	English
<i>Cape Times:</i>	English
<i>City Vision:</i>	English and Xhosa
<i>Nest:</i>	English and Xhosa
<i>Sowetan:</i>	English
<i>Sunday Times:</i>	English

## 1 Language and politics in South Africa

### 1.1 Introduction

‘Do you think English is more important than Xhosa and other African languages?’

My answer to that question is yes. I think English is more important. Firstly everything in this world is in English like education on Television, cheques, movies, receipts, etc. Almost everything is in English in this world. So I don’t see other language’s so important than English.

Secondly there are many languages in this world of ours, and it’s hard for us to study them. If you talk to someone who is not a white in English that person will understand you, besides he/she is not educated. So that is why I put English so important in this world. Last but not least English is a communicating language. I hope or wish everyone to be educated so they can survive in this world of ours. (Noxolo F.)

This essay, written by a Grade 10 student from Bulumko High School in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, testifies to the impact of the hegemony of English and the attitudes that she and her peers have acquired. English as a high-status language is associated with city life, good education, good employment opportunities, middle-class lifestyle and access to the world outside South Africa (McCormick, 1986:288). It is sought after by South Africans, particularly African-language speakers, who perceive their choices in life to be virtually eliminated if they do not learn to speak it well. The public environment in the city of Cape Town promotes English as the language needed to study at tertiary level, to read two of Cape Town’s three daily newspapers (the other newspaper is in Afrikaans), to communicate in offices and with public officials, to shop in stores. Furthermore, as an international language, it has taken on a high status that other languages, such as Afrikaans, do not retain.

In the South African school environment it is essential to know English in order to read textbooks and interact within the classroom, for it is the most widely used medium of instruction<sup>1</sup> and nearly all written materials are provided in English. Students perceive that a “better” education is an education that is taught in English even if it difficult for them to understand.

As long as the African languages are restricted to the lower functions, multilingual education for African people will not be acceptable if it

does not include English, but at the same time we found the comprehension levels of very basic conversational English to be so low as to suggest that monolingual educational communication through the medium of English will deprive the majority of African pupils of effective communication in the classroom. Multilingual education therefore certainly seem to be in touch with the linguistic realities of a large section of our society, but it can only succeed if planning bears in mind the complexities of attitude. (Slabbert, 1994: 7)

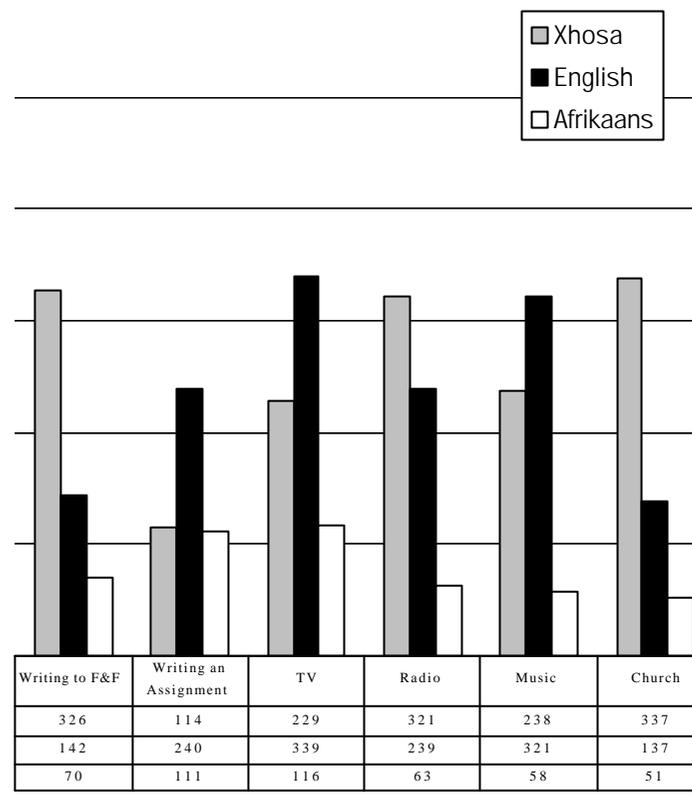
The complexities in attitude are also shaped by the media and visual environment of the communities that students live in. On a more subliminal but equally important level, English is perceived as fun and exciting because of its prominence in popular culture. Thus, acquisition of English is not only necessary, but also something that Grade 10 students desire for its popularity.

The Grade 10 students involved in this project attend Bulumko and Langa High Schools. They range from 15 years of age to 25 years of age, with the majority of students 15 and 16 years old. Nearly all live in the townships of Langa, Gugulethu, New Crossroads, Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Phillipi, Blue Downs and Driftsands. Of the 551 students surveyed, 205 (37 percent) were born in Cape Town. The number of students who have migrated to Cape Town has steadily increased since 1994, and the majority of students who have migrated from the former Transkei and Ciskei homelands have arrived in the last two years. (See Appendix 1 and Table Four.)

Most of the students come from rural areas where access to English is minimal at most. Interviews with these students reveal that they came to the Western Cape, which is more developed than the Eastern Cape, at this stage in their lives to learn English and get a 'better' education. They are mindful of the necessity to write the matriculation exam in two years, and conscious of the job market demands following their matriculation. Unemployment in the Western Cape is the lowest in the country (17.9 percent) compared with a national rate of 34 percent and education levels are the best in the country, with 10.8 percent of the Western Cape's population having received post-school education, compared with the national level of only six percent (*Cape Times*, 1998).

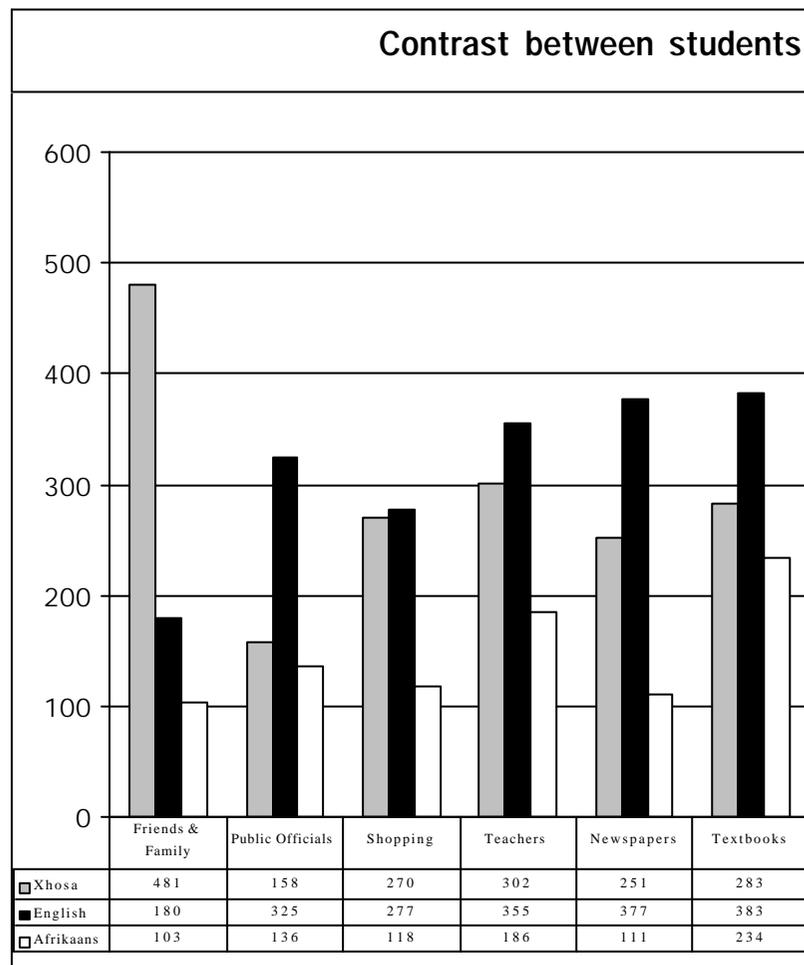
The Western Cape was an ideal place for undertaking this project, because of the language dynamics between English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. This action-research project examines the reasons Grade 10 students migrate and the different language environments in Cape Town, taking into account the impact of English in the wider public environment on home and school environments within townships populated by Xhosa-speakers. Essays from my students portray their level of English and learning abilities within the classroom. I chose to study students at Langa High School in

### using Xhosa, English and Afrikaans



## Appendix two

### What Students Use Xhosa, English and Afrikaans for



Langa, and Bulumko High School in Khayelitsha because of the historical contexts of their communities. During the first two months of my research process I lived in Langa with a family and for ten months I taught four classes of standard 8 students at Bulumko. I was able to observe intimately the linguistic interaction within these environments, determine the students' attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and Xhosa, and understand Xhosa-speaking students' language learning problems when their major subjects are taught in English.

Over the course of the year, I collected data through eight formal interviews with Grade 10 students at both schools (five at Langa and three at Bulumko), essays my students wrote, presentations they gave in class, a questionnaire that 551 Grade 10 students filled out, and informal observation. Much of my field data is in the students' own words and the essays they wrote are quoted verbatim, detailing not only their attitudes towards the three predominant languages in the Western Cape, but also their level of ability with English. Unless otherwise indicated, students were addressing the question, 'Do you think English is more important than Xhosa and other African languages?' when they wrote their essays.

My presence as an English-speaking foreigner may have influenced them both by elevating the status of English and by giving further status to the cultural popularity of Black Americans. As the Grade 10 English teacher at Bulumko, I put a strong emphasis on learning English and was conscious of how this could have impacted their attitudes about the necessity of learning the language. Indeed, one of my students wrote:

At first I can say that Xhosa and other African languages are not important than English especially here in South Africa because here in South Africa we have kinds and kind of people or of tribes so we can't communicate with our home language or our mother's tongue otherwise one can't here one another with that way. The only common language that we can communicate with is English like now Miss Rima I wrote a something like an essay in English and it will be easy for you to understand what I am trying to say but if I have written this essay to you in Xhosa it would have been harder for you to understand. (Fezeka N.)

I learned Xhosa throughout the year, although only minimally. For three months, I studied Xhosa formally to learn the grammatical and phonetic structure so as to better understand the linguistic background my students come from. Studying Xhosa also sensitized me to the difficulties of learning a language so different from my first language.

This study is divided into five chapters: the first gives a historical and theoretical background to the politics of language in South Africa, the second looks at home and community language environments, the third examines

language practices in schools and public environments, the fourth details languages within Cape Town's media, and the fifth chapter contains suggestions on the roles that schools, media and policies need to play in sustaining and promoting African languages in home, school, and public environments.

## 1.2 The hegemony of English

The English language itself has had a varied history as Britain was invaded time and again centuries ago. Latin was the imposed language under the Roman Empire and retained its power as the language of the Church. Old English also became a widely spoken language, followed by Norman-French. Gradually English returned as the predominant language in Britain and became standardized. It was made up of words from Latin, Old Norse, Norman-French, Norman and French (ILEA, 1990:6–8). As the English conquered other lands and settled in places such as North America, the English language held a high status and gradually wiped out indigenous languages. English, now considered a high-status, international language, retains its power as Britain and especially the United States continue to dominate global markets and maintain their military status. The rise and spread of American mass media have also contributed to the status of English as an international language. It is now accepted that worldwide business is conducted in English.

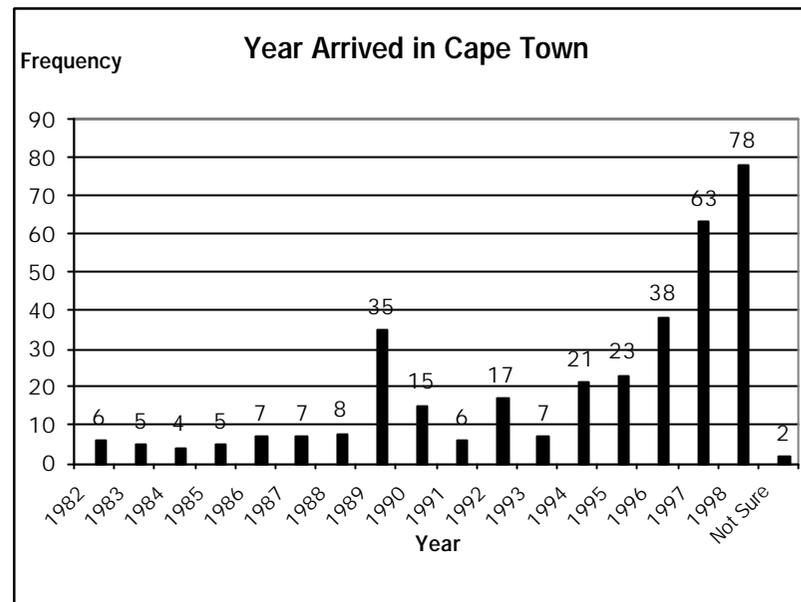
Following the second British occupation of the Cape in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, English was proclaimed the sole official language of the Cape Colony in 1822 (Mesthrie, 1995:133). With the constitution of the Union of South Africa in 1910, English and Dutch were made official languages, with Afrikaans replacing Dutch in 1925. During apartheid, even with Afrikaans and English as the two official languages, English was considered to be the language of higher status because of its economic association with the higher echelons of industry, trade and banking and its international popularity. Presently, English dominates the South African public and school environments, although the majority of the population speaks an African language as their first language and only about nine percent of the population speak English as a first language.

The history of English and its subsequent spread through the process of colonialism is not lost on Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students, who are aware of the language hierarchy established as a result of European colonialism and apartheid. A Bulumko student wrote of other languages that are gradually being wiped out by the spread of English:

I think English is more important than other South African language. Because languages like Xhosa, seSotho, tiNdebele are more difficult and English had been chosen as the world's official language. In any items we buy it is written in it no matter it comes where.

## Appendix one

### Migration Patterns of Students



Mesthrie, Raj. 1995. 'Historical Sketch: English in SA,' *Language in South Africa, The LiCCA Research and Development Programme*. University of Pretoria.

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Xhosa is just the language that is spoken by a few people and few of the other races speak it. Afrikaans had been the language that had been improved but it was the time of Apartheid so it ended in the time of freedom.

When you take your mind in immense years you could see, let's say in history subject the English speaking people were conquering all the continents most special on coastal areas, so English had spread worldwide... In the world Latin was the best language but it happened that its words aren't improving so English had taken over. (Luando N.)

The prominence of English worldwide has had a substantial impact on its status in South Africa. The processes of colonisation inherently placed a higher value on European languages, a status that modern globalization continues to enhance. In every society, the value placed on the lingua franca is intimately connected to the economic sphere in which the inhabitants of the society operate.<sup>2</sup>

Xhosa-speaking Standard 8 students are no less immune to the power English retains not only as an international language, but also as the language needed for economic opportunities. While Xhosa is the language spoken between friends and family, it is seen only as a language of community, and valueless for wider use.

A Standard 8 student from Langa High School said that even if higher education was accessible in Xhosa, he would choose to be educated in English because the public environment of Cape Town demands that he speak English to be hired for a job, because the medium of instruction at Langa High School is English, and because to communicate in the city he must be able to converse in English.

*Interviewer*: If you go to the bank, if you go to Shoprite, if you go to any official building, do you expect to have to speak English?

*M*: Yes.

*Interviewer*: You wouldn't be able to speak Xhosa, you don't think?

*M*: Yes.

*Interviewer*: You would *have* to speak English?

*M*: Yes. (translation) If there is a black person...

*Interviewer*: Then you would be able to speak Xhosa? [nods head] But you don't expect to see a black person there?

*M*: Yes.

*Interviewer*: Do you think that that's what makes you want to learn English? What makes you want to learn English so much?

*M*: (translation): He just said that it's not only for going out and for official things. He feels that here at school he has to be able to speak

English to understand his subjects. And when he passes matric and goes to university, there's no Xhosa. And looking for a job he wont look for a job in Xhosa. So it's imperative.

*Interviewer*: Would you prefer to be able to go to a university where Xhosa is the medium of instruction?

*M*: (translation) No, English. If he goes to look for a job and there would be a Xhosa man interviewing him, then he would go to university [in Xhosa]. If only the future indication is that he would get a job in Xhosa. But because the whole setting is not Xhosa oriented [he doesn't want to go to university in Xhosa].

The public environment that excludes Xhosa is the one these students will encounter on a daily basis upon matriculation, but even currently it affects every aspect of their lives. Students indicate that in their home and school environments, Xhosa is predominantly spoken yet the hegemony of English in the environment outside of the Xhosa-language townships only leads students to value English more.

The dominance of English also changes the linguistic patterns of 'urban Xhosa'. Students mix the languages partly as a natural consequence of language change and also to help them acquire English more rapidly. A student from Bulumko said that all of his friends and family speak Xhosa, but sometimes when he's with friends he tries to intersperse English words with Xhosa ones to help him learn English faster.

Thus, the hegemony of English impacts on not only students' attitudes, their educational and economic chances, but also the linguistic patterns within communities. Where a community has decided to participate as speedily as possible in the technological and other advantages of a wider society, a decision to use English as the medium is likely to be inevitable, and a pressure to introduce it fairly early may well be heavy (Phillipson, 1988:349). In township community members' search for economic survival and opportunities, and following the denigration of African-language speakers during apartheid, it is an obvious trend to acquire the language(s) that will allow the students the most opportunities. Though the youth may value their home language for its ancestral roots, their social practices continue to contribute to its demise.

In South Africa, resisting the apartheid government included resisting the Afrikaans language. However, even though English is also a language of the oppressor, it is seen as the language of emancipation for its power both within and outside of South Africa. Kathleen Heugh writes:

Whereas, elsewhere, a certain amount of resentment against the use of the ex-colonial language (English) has been expressed, the situation has taken an ironic twist in South Africa. The antagonism against the colonial language, English, has manifested itself within

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the current (Afrikaner) rulers, certainly, but these rulers are not seen by the majority as representing their interests. Rather, the government is seen as a mutation of the colonial power. Consequently, the antagonism against English has, to a very large extent, been played down in black politics, and the opposition to the colonial language has been and is currently directed towards Afrikaans in black circles. The irony lies in the emergent attitude toward English as the vehicle for ideologies of freedom and independence. (Heugh, in Alexander, 1995:1)

Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students invariably consider English to be the language of "emancipation", for as well as paving a path for job opportunities, English puts Xhosa-speakers on a more even plane with white South Africans, who might perceive black South Africans to be threatening, or who might simply disregard black South Africans as ignorant and therefore unworthy of employment. As one student wrote:

I think English is important than Xhosa and other African languages. Because if you go to school the teacher they will teach you English and the time goes on and you'll see that English is imported than Xhosa. Me I'm saying English is an imported language in the whole world.

Let say you uneducated now you are going to find a job, and there's a white man/woman in the office and he/she ask you in English what do you want, let say is Xhosa and the white ask what kind of job you want. The Xhosa person said, 'Nokuba unjani,' and the white person didn't understand he/she. And the white person call security to get him/her out. And this Xhosa person and the end he/she didn't get a job because she/he uneducated, she/he didn't know English. That's why I'm say English is more 'important' than Xhosa. (Andile S.)

The emphasis on English in South Africa, especially for Xhosa-speakers who must adapt, reflects a white dominance in the world. English is associated with whites, and throughout this paper, Grade 10 students frequently interrelate race and language in the essays they write. While the desire to speak English does not mean the students desire to be white, it *does* mean that Xhosa-speakers desire the same *opportunities* to which whites historically have had access and from which they continue to benefit. One student, when writing about interracial friendships, connected 'white' with 'English' consistently throughout her essay.

No one can know anything without white person. If black person want a job he/she go to the white person. As black child I know my

parents want to be a friend of white child because I want learn English better than I learn.

I know black people was a slavery at that days because of white people. But we are in freedom I want white people as friend. If we don't want white people we don't know nothing as a student, like English. If we want to know English we have to have a white person as a friend of us. At that days no white teachers in black school and no black child white school, but no teachers and children are in because of freedom.

I don't to want white child who give me a perfect knowledge? And white child want to talk my language because I want to English to. White person has many things that he/she knows that black person. As black, I want white person as my friend. I want to learn many languages. If I don't have white person my future is like person who need his/her parents. If we don't want white people we don't understand anything like English. I think if we no love one another, we'll be a very difficult problem. (Neliswa M.)

As conscious as students are of the white South African environment, they are equally as conscious of the world beyond South African borders. International travel, whether it be for sport, education, business or leisure, is highly desired by Grade 10 students who see English as their proverbial ticket to travelling overseas.

### 1.2.1 English as an international language

As a lingua franca and as an international language, English is considered to be 'the only language that can be useful' by some students who want to communicate outside of the Nguni language family.<sup>3</sup> While the desire to learn English is pragmatic, Njabulo Ndebele notes the impact of imperialism with regards to the role of English.

Indeed, the history of the spread of the English language throughout the world is inseparable from the history of the spread of English and American imperialisms. This fact is more important when we consider the place of English in the formerly colonised multilingual societies. The imposition of English effectively tied those societies to a world imperialist culture which was to impose, almost permanently, severe limitations on those countries' ability to make independent linguistic choices at the moment of independence. We have since heard much about how practically all of those countries ostensibly took the 'pragmatic' decision to choose English as the *lingua franca*. How can we fail to notice that a historically

which more and more "surplus" people were being deported, while those useful to the white economy continued to be forced out with no bargaining power or choice of job'. (Southall, 1982:14)

- 7 'The notorious Section 10 of the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952 limited Africans with a right to live permanently in the urban areas to those who were born there, those who had lived there continuously for fifteen years, and those who had worked continuously for the same employer for ten years. The same year a Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act required all Africans (including those exempted under the passes laws, and women for the first time as well as men) to carry 'reference books' containing their photographs, and information about their places of origin, their employment records, their tax payments, and their encounters with the police. This created the means of ensuring that control over African influx into the towns could be recognised'. (Davenport, 1977:374)
- 8 'The women of Crossroads report being put on trains out of Cape Town to the Transkei. Many, desperate to remain in Cape Town, jumped off the trains at Bellville and walked back to continue their furtive existence in constant fear of arrest. Others tired of the insecurity. They settled in closer settlements and rural townships like Sada and Ilinge, from where members of the household tried to obtain migrant labour. Through relocation to bantustans thousands of people have been forced into farm labour or contract work. Only the lucky few who qualified remained to work in the cities and towns'. (Platzky and Walker, 1985:33)
- 9 'Langa High School acquired a sense of security and permanence at the townships. A Junior Certificate course was introduced for the pupils in the secondary classes at Langa. Then a building was erected for these classes and finally the control of the school was transferred from the interdenominational committee to the Cape Education Department. In 1944 the school had 6 teachers and it offered both an academic and general course. Furthermore in that year, the Cape Education Department agreed to extend the curriculum of the school to the Senior Certificate Level; a decision which meant that in 1945 Cape Town was to have its first high school for Africans'. (Mohamed, 1989:61)
- 10 'The situation in the print media is also stacked against the claimants for power. The Afrikaans language press is...solidly in favour of the National Party government or the far rightwing parties, the Conservatives and Herstigte Nasionale Party. The English language media claims independence but, apart from the government-supporting *Citizen*, is largely oriented to the white English establishment with notable exceptions in the black Press where support is diffused among the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress'. (Louw, 1993:2)

## Endnotes

- 1 See 1.4.2. Language-in-Education Policy
- 2 Neville Alexander wrote: 'In virtually all multilingual countries, the different languages used reflect and represent a hierarchy of dominant and dominated groups based on the inequality of power between first-language speakers of the languages concerned. This leads to the second point, which is that in the struggles for equality and liberty of such societies, the project of changing the status of the disadvantaged language(s) is always integral to the broader socio-economic strategy even if that project is not articulated specifically'. (Alexander, 1995:38)
- 3 The Nguni language family is made up of the following four official South African languages (number of mother-tongue speakers in brackets): Zulu (9 200 144, or 22,9%), Xhosa (7 196 118, or 17,9%), Swati (1 013 193, or 2,5%), and Ndebele (586 961, or 1,1%). Home-language speakers of the four Nguni languages, which are mutually intelligible to a large degree, together account for 44% of the South African population.
- 4 'In 1978, when there were five times as many African children as white children in South Africa, only 12,014 Africans passed the matriculation examination or its equivalent, whereas three times as many whites did so... The government spent ten times as much per capita on white students as on African students, and African classes were more than twice as large as white ones'. (Thompson, 1995:196)
- 5 Most Xhosa-speakers have adopted the western culture as a result of improvement in education, industrialization, technology etc. This has been accompanied by a shift from the original cultural words to words associated with the western civilization... In cases where the Xhosa cultural activities have been replaced by modernised forms, the vocabulary is also of modern origin. For example, terms like "ipati" (a party), ukujiva (to jive) etc. came into existence as a result of the adoption of western culture by Xhosa people'. (Nomlomo, 1993:33)
- 6 'The interest of the whites in urban areas was in ensuring that economically useful Africans remain at hand. Housewives, for example, have protested violently at orders that their African servants of the Bantustans returned to the homeland to which they were officially assigned. The same is true of industry; in fact, with the shift in emphasis during the 1960s from mining to secondary industry, migrant labour was inconvenient for many employers although the mining interests still find the system best for their needs. Basically, the Bantustans...fulfilled their traditional economic function as reservations into

predetermined 'pragmatism' has been transformed, by the metropolitan culture, into an act of choice, on the part of subject cultures, and then praised as the very essence of wisdom? How can we fail to note that the supposed decision-makers were, structurally speaking, captive native functionaries of the colonial imperial powers? In reality, the functionaries merely responded to the call of necessity at a given point in time: the necessity of limited choices. (Ndebele, 1986:3)

The 'limited choices' that Ndebele writes of are not only in South Africa, but also extends into the world beyond her borders. English as the 'international language' was a prime reason black South Africans under apartheid desired English as medium of instruction beyond Afrikaans. Governments under both colonisers were utterly oppressive but the English language was yet seen as a liberating one. One student wrote:

On my opinion English is more 'important' than other languages in South Africa because English is the only language that can be useful to any citizen of another country. Even if you travel around the world the only language that can help you to communicate with others like chinies is English.

When people say that English is the international language, I agree with that. If you can look around in schools there is not another language which is used often like english. Meaning we have to learn it how to talk it and write. The way I look at it for myself, I think there is not bright future for myself without knowing English. (Charlotte R.)

Reasons for wanting English as a lingua franca and as an international language are also because of popular sporting events that take place abroad. At the time the students wrote these essays, the World Cup in France had just begun and heavy emphasis was placed on South African soccer players' ability to communicate in English in a French-speaking country. This further highlighted the importance of English in their minds.

I think it is very important because English is the only international language that is used in the world. Where ever you go somewhere you must have English. Here is South Africa there are not only Xhosa people and the other language like Sesotho, Tswana, Ndebele and Afrikaans. If you talk to the other person that he/she is not your nation also you don't understand his/her language you speak English because both of you, you don't share the same language, like you speak Xhosa and he/she speaks Afrikaans, you both should speak English.

English is my second language but I have to learn, practise and speak it because it will help me when I visit to some where around the world. And in the world there is no other people like me sharing the same language we are different from language speaking. Like the sports players when they got to other country, because they don't share the same language they must speak one language so that every one mustn't get lost while they are speaking in their team or to others. (Khuthala B.)

Thus, English as an international language and as a lingua franca only expands the context of students' desiring English for employment opportunities. Their reasons for wanting to learn English testify to the impact of colonialism owing to the economic power of Britain and America. The denigrating attitudes that develop are a result of colonialism and cultural patterns ensuing from such linguistic domination continuing uncontested.

Students reflect on why they value English above Xhosa and other African languages. The recent apartheid past and increasing globalization support the drive towards English and contribute towards the attitudes of shame that students develop when they don't speak English well.

In my opinion I think english is very important that everybody should try and speak and write it. I think english is more important than Xhosa and other African languages, because Xhosa is 85 % important but English is 100% important. Why I write this, someone would ask, is because I love English so much.

One can speak Xhosa and other African languages in his community, some of them speak this languages in towns. If you had a English in your mind, you can go all over the world. You hear English everyday on TV, so what are you waiting for try to speak as long as you can, no one is going to laugh at you. I mean no one.

You hear white people try to speak Xhosa, and you don't laugh while he/she is making mistakes. And you to up there you can speak English, because English is the no. 1 first language. I think English is very important than Xhosa. For example: You can't speak Xhosa with Bill Clinton president of STATES. You can communicate with him by speaking English.

English is very important, we want black people facing front of the world speaking English pure. Don't give up this language, because it is the only language that can make you famous, I rest my case about this. (Mzoxolo Y.)

'success' in standardized forms, which students desire for pragmatic reasons, but also linguistic equality in the public environment, which they desire for cultural reasons. Democracy in South Africa has promised many new freedoms for all South African citizens, and the foundation for those freedoms has been laid in the 1996 Constitution. In a multilingual society, multilingual environments are necessary. The more useful and accessible African languages are in the public environment, the higher their status will become, and the negative impact of the hegemony of English will be minimized. Only when a commitment towards language inclusiveness is made, when attitudes change and policy manifests, will education and employment become accessible to African-language speakers, and transformation truly will be underway.

However, acknowledging race is not enough. Multilingualism must pre-empt hiring policy.

African languages must play a determining role in the economic and policy decisions made by executives and officials if they are genuinely committed to equal access to society, and the South African constitution lays the groundwork for this to take place.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Teaching English to nearly 200 Xhosa-speaking students living in Cape Town's townships during 1998 provided me with a solid foundation for understanding the magnitude of the barriers they face. My concern throughout the year revolved around not only their linguistic progress, but how their attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and Xhosa were shaped, and how they could be changed as South Africa wrestles through the throes of political transition. Fundamentally important questions underscored this paper: What would it take for these students to live in a society in which they were not constantly adapting to an English-speaking public environment? How can they achieve their dreams of education, financial success and living in safety? How can South Africa become a society for all, and how does South Africa's language policy lay the foundation for that?

Much of classroom discussion this year revolved around what was taking place in students' lives and communities. They often spoke of liberation from the apartheid government. Yet the attitudes they exhibit towards their mother tongue expose a different side to their new 'freedom': they may not be subject to pass laws and living in the homelands, to torture and police raids, but they are still subject to a public environment in which the hegemony of a European language excludes them and leads them to denigrate themselves internally. As Njabulo Ndebele writes:

The much vaunted traditions of English and American democracy have promised an attractive world of 'freedom and opportunity' to all those who enter that world. Yet, many of those who entered, mainly as colonial subjects, soon discovered that the newly promised freedom was premised ultimately on the subjects' unfreedom. The colonial subject had to give up much of what constituted his own sphere of freedom. And so, the very concept of freedom came to be standardized, in the same way the business and technological world were standardized, according to the specifications of imperialist powers. (Ndebele, 1992:5)

Standard English is one of the standardized freedoms Ndebele writes about. Xhosa-speaking Grade 10 students are clearly subjected to the colonialist powers and their struggle for freedom must include not only

## 1.3 Education under apartheid

Before and during apartheid, African languages were suppressed legally, and laws made to curtail the movement and opportunities of African-language speakers became increasingly harsh. Education for Africans was severely affected. In 1948, when the National Party government came to power, moves were made within the education system to entrench an inferior system of education for Africans. Catholic and Protestant church missions were forced to relinquish the schools they had established for Africans and the Bantu Education Commission designed a separate educational system for African-language speakers that was controlled by the central government instead of the provinces. The commission

... [A]lso argued for a different syllabus for Africans, designed to prepare them for their special place in society.... This meant, as [W.W.M.] Eiselen saw it, a greater emphasis on the use of the vernacular medium than was practised in any colonial territory in Africa, so as to anchor the African child in his own culture, combined with basic instruction in both the official languages and special emphasis on manual training, to provide an avenue to employment in the white-controlled economy. (Davenport, 1977:372)

Furthermore, the National Party justified its use of the vernacular in education by substantiating it with a report from UNESCO published in 1953. Along with mother-tongue education, schools for Africans were given substantially less funding. Schools for blacks were in poorer condition, were insufficiently equipped and had fewer textbooks, teachers and classrooms than schools for whites.<sup>4</sup>

It was the language-in-education policy, however, and not the impoverished schools that led to the uprising of high schools students on 16 June, 1976. Students' demands to be taught general subjects in English had been vocalized for two years. The National Party government decreed in 1974 that half of the classes for black students be taught in Afrikaans and the other half be taught in English.

Even after the Department of Bantu Education was renamed the Department of Education and Training (DET) in 1977, mother-tongue instruction was the policy until Standard 6. In 1979 the Education and Training Act was passed and mother-tongue instruction was mandated for the first four years of schools. However, the sudden transition to an English medium of instruction for content subjects when most students did not have an adequate proficiency in English to meet the Standard 3 syllabus (MacDonald, in Heugh, 1995:43) severely curtailed the learning of African-language speakers in the classroom. The curriculum for the Sub A to

Standard 2 students was also at such a low level cognitively that the students had a difficult time when they enrolled in Standard 3.

These obstacles have not been present for speakers of English or Afrikaans. The under-preparedness of students to cope with the demands of the Standard 3 curriculum in English has exacerbated negative perceptions about African languages and their instrumental worth in education...as a result of Bantu Education, resistance has been built up against the notion of mother tongue in education. (Heugh, 1995:43)

Despite the inability of students to understand subject material cognitively, the demand for classes in English by African-language speakers is still high. The National Education Policy Investigation reported that:

The introduction of mother-tongue instruction met with opposition from African communities, because of its association with the new apartheid regime and also because of the relatively low status of the African languages. It was seen as a strategy by the government to prevent African upward mobility and thereby to ensure a perpetual reservoir of cheap labour. (NEPI, 1992:29)

In apartheid South Africa, the links between race, language ability, educational opportunity and economic opportunity were clearly drawn. In post-apartheid South Africa, the issues remain just as poignant as African-language speakers learn through the medium of English, often with little capability for understanding the material and expressing themselves confidently.

## 1.4 New policy and government implementation

With the passing of the 1996 Constitution, eleven languages became official: Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Afrikaans and English. In the Western Cape Province, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa are the most widely spoken languages.

### 1.4.1 The South African Constitution

The Bill of Rights in Chapter Two of the Constitution contains Section 9, which promotes equality of all South African citizens. The state nor individuals may 'unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly' against anyone on the basis of 'race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.'

Section 29(2) states: 'Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the

enormous power because they control *what* information reaches South Africans and because they control *how* information reaches them has also backed away from publishing in Xhosa and other African languages. As Noam Chomsky wrote in reference to the American media:

The media are major corporations, and they share the ideological commitments of the core capitalist elite that controls most of the economy and most of the state as well. And, in fact, if they ever began to deviate from these commitments, they would probably go out of business. Furthermore, for individuals to work their way up into the media system, with rare exceptions they must share these professional interests or they are not going to make it in this system of indoctrination....The whole system of conformity is so overwhelming that, simply allowing that it runs by its own dynamism, there's going to be a very narrow spectrum of opinion expressed, and also a very narrow interpretation of current history that will conform to that of the state propaganda system. (Chomsky, 1979:280)

The 'narrow interpretation of current history that will conform to that of the state propaganda system' will remain particularly narrow partly because of linguistic barriers that are ill-considered and generally disregarded by a mainstream media system that doesn't cater to the Xhosa population *because it has little economic power*. The newspapers, magazines, television shows and radio programmes are all part of a 'whole system of conformity', and Grade 10 students are perfectly willing to conform. They are easily influenced, they lack alternatives, and they are completely clear about what they desire: to escape poverty.

As their drive to be financially successful pushes them towards English, they internalize the popularity of English to an alarming degree. Students say that the more they know English and the more exposure to it they have, the more they prefer to read, write, watch television and listen to the radio in it. The less they understand English, the more they prefer Xhosa.

Thus, exposure to English-language media directly influences their attitudes. Yet there is a whole other domain of their daily living experience that not only *likes* English, but *requires* it, for students have reported that they cannot go into stores, banks, hospitals or government buildings and speak Xhosa. They cannot attend a higher institution without English. It is therefore vitally important for not only the media, but the public sector to make every effort to hire African-language speakers to allow Xhosa-speakers access to the larger public environment.

For African languages to be brought into the public environment demands a commitment on the part of powerful institutions. This commitment has generally been made with regards to race and affirmative action.

made in all of these areas. However, in the immediate time frame, students must have effective bilingual education and the option of writing the matriculation exam in their home language. Most students readily verbalize that they want to write tests in English because of the stigmatism of Xhosa; however, the mistakes that second-language learners make would no doubt be minimized if they were allowed to write the final exam in their first language.

A bilingual school language policy, and bilingual instruction, are essential for teaching English and Xhosa well. Students stated that Xhosa has a low status in their high-school environment because it is not respected in the classroom, and it is not respected in the classroom *because teachers are not required to teach in it*. Thus, if it became mandatory to use both languages while teaching, the status of Xhosa would be elevated and learning would take place to a higher degree.

Township high schools are plagued with a variety of problems: teacher apathy, student apathy, low class attendance, overcrowded classrooms, students from vastly different educational backgrounds, few resources, poor resources, corporal punishment, vandalism, violence and, of course, a language barrier in the classroom. Students are faced with issues that arise directly from poverty and fuelled by exposure to wealth. No South African can dispute the level of crime that is concentrated in these communities and this reality impacts on attitudes that are brought into the classroom. Education is seen as something they must have for 'success'; they equate education firstly with passing and secondly with future income (Hutchings and Voss, 1992:18–20). However, it is obvious that formal education need not be divorced from the world these students inhabit and the challenge is to marry what happens in the classroom with what happens outside of it.

This is true especially in the linguistic domain; whereas English invades the community environment in visual, oral and written form, Xhosa must also *consciously* become a language that is desired in the classroom. English and Xhosa bilingual instruction, dialectic teaching practices and creative classroom activities are the beginnings to effective language teaching, critical thinking skills and coaching students to articulate their opinions and experiences.

### 5.3 Developing African languages in the public environment

English plays an ever-increasing role in township community, home and school linguistic interactions because of its prominence both in the city and media of Cape Town, and it is therefore continuing to achieve a prestige *at the expense of Xhosa*, even though Xhosa is an official language of South Africa.

Although the government is committed on paper and in policy to raising the status of Xhosa, it has not been taken seriously by business, companies and major corporations. The mainstream media, which hold

effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account – (a) equity; (b) practicability; (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.' (The South African Constitution, 1996)

Section 30 states that everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, provided they do not violate the rights of others.

Section 31 recognises and advocates that: 'Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community – (a) to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language.'

Section 32 gives everyone the right to information held by the state.

Clearly, the official language policy, which is entrenched by the Constitution, recognises and elevates the eleven designated languages in South Africa, in educational use and within the home and public environments. Designating a language 'official' or declaring it a 'language of record' gives it the kind of status that will make it more desirable as a subject and medium of instruction than another language not so designated (NEPI, 1992:34).

Despite the new language policy, no specifications as to how it will be implemented are given and English continues to maintain a status above the other ten official languages.

#### 1.4.2 Language-in-education policy

The first post-apartheid language-in-education policy (LiEP) for public schools (1997) takes the Constitution as its point of departure. In brief, the LiEP endorses multilingualism, the building of a non-racial nation, an additive approach to bilingualism in education, and gives individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LoLT, formerly medium of instruction) at their school. The policy aims to promote and develop all the official languages, and to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

The policy marks a deliberate shift away from apartheid-era prescriptions regarding languages of learning and teaching, and languages as subjects. For the first time African languages may be used as LoLTs throughout schooling. Thus English and Afrikaans no longer have most favoured status. It is clearly the intention of the policy to promote education that uses learners' home languages for learning, while at the same time providing access to English.

In practice, however, the absence of a departmental implementation plan has meant that the hegemony of English has gone largely unchallenged. In

general, schools have received very little guidance on why and how an 'additive' policy based on the primacy of the mother tongue should be followed. As a result, schools have felt increased parental pressure to move to English-medium education, despite the many problems inherent in such an approach.

#### 1.4.3 Parliament

As students point out in essays about English as a high-status language, the constitution has not been implemented adequately and therefore, even if policy on paper says otherwise, English continues to have an elevated status. For example, Parliament is held in English and all parliament documentation is published in English.

In the world there are many people blacks and whites. And they were different languages. English is more important in the country because when we go to the parliament we speak English because english is very important than Xhosa language.

If we go to the white people we don't speak Xhosa speak English. Xhosa is a language of blacks and English is a language of whites. When we look at whites the whites not speak Xhosa but if we look the blacks the is speak English. That's why the English is very important than Xhosa. (Noncedo N.)

Another student further emphasized the message that members of Parliament and other government officials convey to South Africans by giving prominence to English:

Even in this government now is the blacks government but they talk English: why talk English but they are black government. Because English is very important. Especial if you a person under government, you must know to talk English like person who work th job of teaching, polise, Neise (nurse) and other job under government. (Nandipha V.)

Students, while acknowledging the necessity of speaking English, clearly do not have the access to the wider society, including the government that promotes their mother tongue on paper. 'Even in Parliament our Pres Mr Mandela is spoken English were its not his mother tongue, that is clear English is the most important language in the whole world' (Ernest H.).

Draft legislation for a national language policy suggests that four official languages should be used on a rotational basis, one from each language grouping, but legislation still had to be passed at the publishing of this report.

learn English. Parents, who are not 'educated', cannot speak English to their children in the homes. If students, particularly those who will later move out of the townships to communities where Xhosa is not the predominant language, do not experience an awareness of the importance of their language, English will replace Xhosa. These students who struggle so intensely to understand their classwork material will want their children to have smoother access to education. This has already happened in families where parents send their children to ex-Model C schools to be taught exclusively in English (De Klerk, 1995:10). In the next generation, English will continue to encroach and will eventually become the first language of black African children.

Thus, critical language awareness and *action* are necessary now. In the words of Paulo Freire:

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within the total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed. (Freire, 1996:62)

How schools and the public environment can be part of developing this process will be explored further.

## 5.2 How schools can be developed to teach English and Xhosa effectively

A commitment on the part of teachers to engage in dialogue and self-reflection is the grounding for language teaching; furthermore, that commitment must include making sure the students understand cognitively and can participate in classroom discussion.

An essential teaching method is the development of materials which enhance students' role in the classroom, and materials that students and educators generate together is one way of developing language skills. Language proficiency is no longer conceptualized in terms of a set of skills but in terms of an ability to read critically between the lines and an ability to articulate one's experience in different domains of society (Agnihotri, 1995:6).

The educational system must begin to play a part in classroom transformation by allowing students to have the choice of which language(s) to write their exams in. Facilities, classroom materials and teacher (re)training are all part of the process to access a quality education and serious effort must be

the impact of media of instruction within the classroom, to understanding derogatory lingo and how it can impact on one's approach to other people. One of the foremost places for this process of questioning to happen is in the classroom, where educators can initiate such ideas and design lessons with critical language theories in mind. Educators cannot just sit back and wait for attitudes to change: they need to help learners to question their attitudes and to gain access to alternative perspectives. Emancipatory discourse is just one of many emancipatory practices. It is a particularly important practice, since language shapes attitudes and meaning and is in turn shaped by them (Janks and Ivanic, 1992: 312).

The language interaction that takes place in the classroom is a result of power structures and how they influence the attitudes that both educators and learners bring to the classroom; this is true regarding medium of instruction, language standards and how information is expressed. In Xhosa-language township classrooms, where the official medium of instruction is English but a majority of the interaction takes place in Xhosa, critical language awareness must begin in examining not just *what students learn* but also *how students learn*. As in the dialogue written and performed by students in class (see Chapter 2), they acknowledge that they are at a disadvantage because of their need for translation. However, instead of critiquing how they can improve their learning, they proceed to denigrate themselves by saying they cannot understand their subjects because they 'don't understand English perfectly'.

As exhibited throughout this paper, Grade 10 students are blatantly aware of the power structures in their society and the role that language plays within those structures. They detailed over and over their desire for employment and educational opportunities, and their desire for information and access to popular media. However, instead of asking how both they and the public environment can transform together, they assume the burden of adapting to that environment. This reflects an attitude of powerlessness that is understandable but not acceptable. In his introduction to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull wrote:

Our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system. To the degree that this happens, we are also becoming submerged in a new 'culture of silence'. (Shaull, 1996:15)

That culture of silence is present in the classrooms of Xhosa-speaking students and it is here that a critical awareness of the importance of Xhosa must be birthed. Why students seek English is completely understandable; how Xhosa is changing with the process of urbanization is more difficult to perceive. The process of urbanization is quite new for many of the students, who have only recently migrated from the rural areas in their ambition to

#### 1.4.4 The language use of public officials

Certainly the linguistic presentations and interactions of African language speaking government officials who rarely, if ever, speak an African language publicly sends a significant message about the low status that African languages have in South Africa. While this is true of nearly every official, from members of Parliament to municipal representatives, it is especially noticed that the erstwhile president himself does not address South Africans in Xhosa. As a Xhosa who is 'the father of our nation', Nelson Mandela is a role model who is greatly admired by Grade 10 students. However, student responses are suggesting that his failure to speak Xhosa publicly both denigrates Xhosa and advances the status of English.

And I have not see Nelson Mandela speak Xhos he speak english every every time I see he talk to T.V. Communities etc. Sow I say english is very important that all the languages in South Africa. All of people in communities we la speak english. (Nandipha T.)

Students' opinions about Mandela speaking publicly range from approval to disapproval. One student reported that he was 'running away from his home language'. (Makhaya L.) Although Louw expects the president to speak in English, 'because he always does', he thinks the president should speak Xhosa. The president is speaking to whites and coloureds, but not to blacks, because many blacks don't know English, he says.

Makhaya's conviction is echoed by other students who convey disappointment that Mandela doesn't speak Xhosa publicly. Another Grade 10 student surmises that Mandela sees himself as very distant from Xhosas and other black people when he speaks English. Though she wants him to speak Xhosa, she doesn't expect him to.

Zukile, a Bulumko student, assumed that Mandela doesn't know Xhosa because he has never heard him speak it.

*Interviewer:* What languages do you expect politicians like President Mandela to speak when they're talking to South Africans?

*Z:* (translation): He must speak English.

*Interviewer:* Why, Zukile?

*Z:* (translation): The reason why he says English is because Mandela doesn't speak Xhosa so as a result Zukile says he doesn't know Xhosa.

*Interviewer:* So Mandela doesn't respect Xhosa?

*Z:* (translation): He wants him to continue using English because he never hears him talking Xhosa.

Although some students disapprove of Mandela's use of English, others affirm it because English is the unofficial lingua franca and they consider it

the responsibility of Xhosa speakers to learn English. If Mandela speaks Xhosa, one student says, 'whites' won't understand him: and 'we should all learn English because if we expect him to speak English and Xhosa it's going to be a difficult task for him. So that's why it's important [for me] to learn English' (Monde). Monde doesn't consider Mandela's language choice to be a marginalization of Xhosa-speakers.

Mandela's language choice both overtly and covertly plays a role in the dynamic of language status in South Africa; his choice to use English publicly is expected, but not approved. It further convinces Xhosa-speakers to pursue English and is a main reason that students feel their community language has little value beyond their homes and township communities.

I think English is more important than other languages. Because you can't find the job if you don't know how to speak English. We must know how to speak English because our teachers teach us in English. And when we write we write in English. English is very important than Xhosa because you can't hear our president speak Xhosa they speak English.

Even on television most time people are speaking English. You can't find a Xhosa film. But I don't create my language because I like my language. But we have to know how to speak English. And I think English is the lucky language in South Africa. Because our president is X black but he's not think about her language its like he's white. (Portia M.)

Politicians' influence directly affects current and emerging language attitudes and practices in Cape Town.

### 1.5 Current language dynamics in Cape Town

Where English penetrates the daily lives of Xhosa-speakers, it is welcomed. The prestige English carries with it can sometimes serve as a social barrier for Grade 10 students who understand it better than others; English-speakers are considered to be more intelligent. For example, in one of my classes, the students who are ostracized are those who speak English comfortably. The pattern of behaviour that results between students who know English and students who do not is a result of colonial language hierarchy.

Statistics on the status of English versus the status of Xhosa reveal that the majority of students regard English as more widely valued, and thus more important, than Xhosa. Students could choose two languages in their responses:

## 5 Changes within schools, communities and the public environment

### 5.1 Critical awareness for the importance of African languages

Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students are oriented towards learning English because of the immense pressure placed upon them by a public environment that operates almost entirely in English. Their reasons for desiring English are pragmatic and yet maintain a status quo that they are forced to conform to.

A critical awareness for the importance of African languages and a manifestation of the 1996 language policy must be the foundation for transforming South Africa into a country that uplifts all languages and cultures. All sectors of public society, from the job market to the educational system to the publishing and broadcasting industry must converge and necessitate the usage of African languages.

The process of expanding African languages into the public domain is one that must be fought for at the grassroots; makers of policy can put intentions onto paper, but unless the demand comes from those that the hegemony of English impairs most, bringing African languages into the public environment will remain a stunted effort. This begins with a critical awareness of power structures and how language and power correlate.

Critical awareness may come from several different sectors. As educators in South Africa begin and continue to work with new classroom syllabi, a critical component of language teaching is placing emphasis upon asking questions about the social conditions that advance English and undermine the African languages. Connecting linguistic practices to power relationships must ground language teaching and other educational practices for all members of society.

A language education focused upon training in language skills, without a critical component, would seem to be failing in its responsibility to learners. People cannot be effective citizens in a democratic society if their education cuts them off from critical consciousness of key elements within their physical or social environment. If we are committed to education establishing resources for citizenship, critical awareness of the language practices of one's speech community is an entitlement. (Fairclough, 1992:6)

Critical awareness comes at many different levels, from examining the hegemony of a dominant language in society, to scrutinizing the language practices that are taking place in one's home and community, to analysing

## 4.6 Chapter summary

The hegemony of English in politics, in education and in the general public environment has been discussed in previous chapters, detailing students' desire to learn English for survival's sake. However, it is in the domain of media that the hegemony of English is primarily influential, for mass communication is the primary avenue for shaping attitudes and relationships. Students reported consistently that they heard English more on television than anywhere else.

Students' reaction to English in the media reflects the basic reason why so many students have recently migrated from rural areas. The longer they are exposed to English, the more they learn it and gradually they come to value it more than Xhosa. Across the domains of magazines and newspapers, television and radio, the divide between what students born in Cape Town preferred (English) and students who have migrated since 1997 preferred (Xhosa) was starkly clear. The one exception was with radio; generally, regardless of where they were born, students prefer Xhosa radio. (See Appendix 2.) This may be a reflection of the accessibility of Xhosa radio; indeed, students generally indicated that they would prefer more popular media in Xhosa. Though they expect to have to use English, they also desire to see their language widely used.

One reason that English is so popular revolves around the students' desire to learn English through the media. The American influence is also a great factor in the attractiveness of English. Finally, students' desire for English supersedes their desire for Xhosa because of its accessibility, although students do not see the two languages as mutually exclusive.

Table 1: What languages students think are most important to learn

	Xhosa		English		Afrikaans		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	137	34%	186	47%	41	10%	36	9%
Arrived in 1997	45	38%	54	46%	17	14%	2	2%
Arrived in 1998	52	36%	71	49%	21	14%	1	1%

- 73% of all students indicate that Xhosa is important.
- 95% of all students indicate that English is important.
- 23% of all students indicate that Afrikaans is important.
- 11% of all students indicate that another language is important.

Table 2, below, reaffirms students' opinions about whether English is more widely valued than Xhosa:

Table 2: Is English more widely valued than Xhosa?

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Born in Cape Town	135	71%	43	23%
Arrived in 1997	47	75%	16	25%
Arrived in 1998	55	71%	16	21%

- 68% of all students said 'Yes'.
- 26% of all students said 'No'.
- 6% of all students did not respond.

That the majority of students believe English has more economic worth than Xhosa is to be expected and has serious ramifications for what takes place in the home. As the government, the business sector, the media and the education system continue to elevate English as a high-status language, and continue to marginalize not only Xhosa but also Afrikaans, the process of English replacing Xhosa in township homes and communities will probably accelerate.

### 1.5.1 Afrikaans after apartheid

While English has most definitely retained its status role, Afrikaans is also considered by Xhosa-speaking standard 8 students to be important for job opportunities. Ayanda N., a Standard 8 student at Bulumko, wrote:

Yes I think (English) is more important in South Africa. Because most of the people speak English. English helps people if they want jobs. English is a part of languages in South Africa. If you got a job the boss is gonna talk to you the English. Some other time at television speak English.

And Afrikaans is important to because at the white school they pass with Afrikaans. If you read Afrikaans you don't understand but if you right you pass. Those two languages is part of languages in South Africa. Some days the black people speak Afrikaans. At the school, jail, work speaks this to languages.

An Xhosa is a part of languages to because is to important to our culture. We can say is not important all we speak Xhosa if we at home. These two languages is important is we go to town or somewhere. If you see people talk these two languages they talk nice. I love this two languages.

In South Africa we are one so we must talk this two languages. We must through our language because Xhosa is a important languages. (Ayanda N.)

This essay clearly delineates the contexts in which Xhosa-speaking students use the three predominant languages of the Western Cape. As all students responded, the writer considers English and Afrikaans to be more important than Xhosa because 'is not important all we speak Xhosa if we at home'. However, he maintains Xhosa is important as a home language, even if English is the language of status, opportunity, the future.

Afrikaans, as the most widely spoken language in the Western Cape and the language of 'coloureds', is valued as a language of economic opportunity. It is the most widely spoken language in the Western Cape. However, because of racial tension between blacks and coloureds that was exacerbated by the apartheid government, Afrikaans generally has a negative connotation and is seen as 'difficult' by Xhosa-speaking Grade 10 students.

Before president Mandela the president Mr Decker look at him, he uses Afrikaner language because we don't know afrikaans is a very difficult languages he supposed to know english because it help him to speak with other people who don't know Afrikaans. (Sindiswa N.)

Under apartheid, the Western Cape was a 'preferred coloured area' and subsequently has one of the highest coloured populations in South Africa. African-language speakers were only allowed to gain employment if the job could not be filled by a coloured. This act was suspended in 1985 (Fast, 1995:33), as a result of international pressure, when droves of African-language speakers were arriving from the Eastern Cape. But until the influx

*M:* English.

*Interviewer:* Are the shows more interesting in English? Is that why?  
*M:* (translation) Yes, because he is trying to speak and to learn English, he is very interested in English shows because he finds similar words that he can refer to so he can ask family members what [the word] means.

Another student reflected on the importance of learning English through television:

My name is Mzoxolo Y. I was born in Khayelitsha in 1983-05-19. I come from the popular family. When I was a kid, I was crazy to be the king. But things change in life, now I wants to be a public relation. My father always told me that don't give up hope on something you wanted to be. When I was a kid at the age of 5 years, there were so many dreams but now I'm a man of std. 8. I don't have lots of dreams. If I can tell you my dreams when I was a kid it would take 2/3 days. My home language is Xhosa. My mother came from klipplat, afrikaans speaking. I know Afrikaans just a little bit. But what I concern about is English. I want to speak english regularly. I watched soaps especially days and bold to learn something each and every day. I like English.

Now that Mzoxolo is 'concerned about' English, his attempts to learn it involve absorbing a media saturated with the language. He, like other students, is aware of the need to practice reading and writing skills and is particularly attracted to magazines and newspapers that have beautiful pictures and can be understood visually. The 'culture of reading' in the townships is, for the most part, limited to magazines and newspapers. Books in both Xhosa and English are infrequently taken out of libraries and students report that they read more magazines and newspapers than books. The magazines and books in English are attractive for their content, and also for their language.

English is not our first language but we have to try to speak English because you can't go anywhere with no English. We have to educate people about how important is English. English is the only important language we can use it to communicate. It's our chance to show the world how can African people speak English, and if someone doesn't have to be ashamed of him/herself. To improve you English you have to read magazine, newspaper, etc. (Xatyiswa L.)

The hegemony of English in the media contributes to the attitudes of shame that students acquire when they don't speak English.

I left gugulethu I come at Khayelitsha a cool place I like khayelitsha it was very cool no troubles but life goes on five years later the were many changes I have new friends the in khayelitsha the sea is not too far I study a lower primary after lower I choose sudy at Bulumko senior sec school

My friends were very unrespected the have now respect to elders. Their form gangster I joining the gangster they give a name Dog pound gangster they robber people every Friday

I was born to be a peace maker

Know I am a trouble maker

But I don't want to do crime

Crime it doesn't pay

I want to be an accountant (Morris N.)

This essay is particularly noteworthy in examining how the message of the medium contributes to the popularity of the language it is delivered in. In the following subchapter, the relationship between media and how students learn English is examined.

#### 4.5 Language learning through popular culture

Examining languages in media is crucial not only in understanding how media shapes attitudes, but also how language learning takes place through visual, print and oral media. Many of the students choose to watch English-language programmes to learn English as well as to enjoy the entertainment. An interview with a Langa High School student revealed her attraction to English-language media was not only for subject content, but also to recognize and learn the meanings of new words. Another interview with a student depicted his process of watching television and then speaking words he has learned with his family. Xhosa news is popular in households in the townships; however, late night movies and popular sitcoms and soap operas are for the most part only in English.

*Interviewer:* Do you ever watch Xhosa television and news, like dramas and news or television?

*M:* The news and sometimes dramas.

*Interviewer:* What shows do you like in Xhosa?

*M:* (translation): There are very few Xhosa shows.

*Interviewer:* What shows do you like in English?

*M:* Generations.

*Interviewer:* Do you watch English shows to learn English?

*M:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What language, English or Xhosa, do you prefer to watch television in?

control laws were abolished in 1986, most African-language speakers were banished to the homelands and Afrikaans was the most widely spoken language in the Western Cape. It continues to be the predominant language in the province and many Afrikaans-speakers are holding onto the language, for Afrikaans is a language that, along with African languages, will continue to be dominated by English unless steps continue to be taken to preserve it.

Because Afrikaans is very important to many National Party supporters as a symbol of identity, it would be very important to them that its current status should be retained. Given the 'new South African' context within which discussion is now taking place, white Afrikaners' wishes are not presented as the major reason for retaining Afrikaans as an official language. Prominence is given to the fact that Afrikaans is a home language for many people across the political and ethnic spectrum and to the fact that Blacks at the lower end of the socio-economic scale use it as a second language more widely [geographically] than English. (NEPI, 1992:36).

#### 1.5.2 English as a lingua franca

The hegemony of English, as I detailed previously, has made some students conclude that English as a lingua franca is leading to the death of Xhosa. Indeed, the impact of English is rarely questioned by most students; it is taken for granted that English is necessary for wider communication. However, the use of English as a lingua franca and the lack of emphasis on Xhosa (and all the other nine official languages) is observed by a few students who worry about the lack of value of their mother tongue. One Bulumko student wrote:

Ever since whites took over South Africa they opened school some blacks were interested in English and some where not because they didn't want to loose their culture. Some people have tried to follow their culturel language Xhosa but the english language seems to be taking over south African languages. There are people who speak English but they are black who Xhosa. (Malusi T.)

As previously stated, English is a generally unquestioned lingua franca because of its status as a widely spoken international language that is used in wider communication, in the media, education, trade, science and technology, research and diplomacy (Young, 1995:64).

#### 1.5.3 Xhosa language communities

The effect of English as a high-status international language is clear – African languages lose status, identity and role, in spite of being spoken as first languages by numbers of people far in excess of those who have

English as a first language (Young, 1995:64). Xhosa is preserved as a language of urban township communities, and English is rarely spoken between Xhosa-speakers within these environments. The majority of residents in Langa and Khayelitsha come from the former Transkei and Ciskei, which are populated by Xhosa-speakers. The following statistics show patterns of language use within students' families:

Table 3: Xhosa spoken within the family

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 514 Students reported that they speak Xhosa within the family.</li> <li>• 27 Students reported that they do not (some students are also Sotho-speakers).</li> <li>• Students reported that if they speak Xhosa with their friends and family, they speak Xhosa at school.</li> <li>• Students reported that if they speak Xhosa with their friends and family, they hear Xhosa where they live.</li> </ul>
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Yet as communities change and evolve, members of those communities will adapt their language patterns to include the status language which they believe will help them to survive economically.

A study done on the difference between rural and urban Xhosa varieties noted the following: that urban Xhosa shows a greater tendency to borrow from English and Afrikaans than does rural Xhosa; that urban Xhosa tends to be more 'innovative' than rural Xhosa, which tends to be 'very conservative'; that urban Xhosa is subject to more rapid change than rural Xhosa, and; that rural Xhosa is characteristic of speakers who have had least exposure to western influences, including Xhosa-speakers who are non-literate (Thipa, 1989:27). For example, the present youth speak of 'parties' instead of 'umtshotsho' (a traditional dance for boys and girls). 'Umtshotsho' is an old-fashioned dance associated with illiteracy.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the language change is a result of the visual environment of the townships, the influence of oral, written and visual media, and having English-medium instruction in schools. In the rural areas, access to English is minimal. A group of student teachers who spent eight weeks in the Lowveld reported that:

The level of pupils' literacy within the classroom and community at large was particularly weak compared with urban standards. English usage is for the most part confined to the classroom, and while it is viewed as the language of economic access it is, however, not used freely within the community on a daily basis. Furthermore, students do not usually have access to television, and popular media is limited to advertisement billboards and the occasional radio. The limited use of English is one of the main reasons for the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) of the pupils. (Watson, 1992:15)

preferred Xhosa music. Again, few students listen to music in Afrikaans: only ten percent indicated they hear music in Afrikaans. (See Appendix 2.)

The most popular radio stations among Grade 10 students are: Umhlobo wenene, Zibonele, Radio Metro, Good Hope FM and KFM, all of which are primary stations in Cape Town. (See Appendix 5.)

A study done by a researcher at the University of Witwatersrand on the high status of English found that African languages were continually denigrated by those who speak them, yet people preferred to listen to African languages on radio.

We found this entanglement of pragmatic and dogmatic attitudes in every sphere of communication, whether it be the choice of language in subject teaching or listener preference in broadcasting.... Radio Metro would be associated with all the status that surrounds English, but at the same time a respondent would admit that he listens to the African language radio stations, because *I don't want to listen with a dictionary*. (Slabbert, 1994:6)

Students indicated that some of their favourite radio stations are those broadcast in the rural areas, where standard Xhosa is used. In the (former) Transkeian community, the Gcaleka variant is the standardized one and is used in formal situations such as schools and the media. The SABC and the Transkei Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) broadcast standard Xhosa on FM and television.

American musicians heard on the radio, including Xhosa-language radio, enhance the popularity of English and English-language music. Gangsta rappers such as Notorious B.I.G., Snoop Doggy Dog and Tupac Shakur are especially well known and influence not only the status of English, but racial relationships and community interactions. Xhosa-speaking students identify with the hardship black American gangsters rhythmically describe and tend to relate to the lyrics that encourages the increasing crime in the township communities. They are fascinated with the east coast-west coast dynamic that American rappers emphasize in their lyrics and are frequently scrawling messages on the blackboards and drawing pictures of gangsta rappers in serious, confrontational poses. When writing an introductory essay, one student wrote:

**'My story as a Trouble'**

I was a little boy come from Queenstown to Cape town at cape town I stay with my family I grow here I see the life is change I like the way life goes on. The were many troubles the were robberied when I come here I was seven years old the music I like rap and I like the person who is famous is Tupac shakur he is live in United States of America in Los Angel the other musician is Snoop Doggy Dog in Cape Town I was stay at gugulethu

The language dynamic between television and radio led one Bulumko student who migrated from the rural areas in January 1998 to conclude that white people (English-speakers) watch television, but do not listen to the radio because she hears Xhosa on the radio but not on television. She wrote:

And we beleove ander [below and under] waits [whites] now so english is very very important in South Africa. *And telesions talk by english is radios only which is talking by Xhosa. Which means waits don't lestrn radio.* Waits don't want to read a xhosa in schools. But blacks are want to read English is skhools. So English is very important than xhosa and other Africa languages in South Africa. (Siyabulela B.)

Despite the SABC's attempt to include African languages on television, the emphasis on English supports the high status of English. This, however, has not wiped out the desire for Xhosa. In every interview I conducted, students said they would prefer more programmes in Xhosa.

#### 4.4 Radio station preferences

As with newspapers, magazines and television, mainstream English-language radio continues to serve the status quo and contribute to the prevailing attitudes that Xhosa-speaking students born in Cape Town experience.

There is ample evidence that the language of radio, as of any mass medium, is deliberate and often planned linguistic behaviour. Like the media institutions themselves, their language must be seen within the context – and as a result of the interaction – of the wider sociopolitical climate, the technical and economic circumstances, and the sociolinguistic structure of the speech community. (Leitner, 1983:50)

Students who were born in Cape Town *and* students who have moved to Cape Town since 1997 prefer to listen to Xhosa.

Table 14: Languages that students prefer to listen to on the radio

	Xhosa		English		Afrikaans	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	95	50%	85	45%	1	1%
Arrived in 1997/1998	102	72%	22	16%	1	1%

Interviews with students found that Xhosa-language radio is highly popular with all Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students. Fifty-eight percent of students reported that they prefer Xhosa-language radio, whereas 43 percent prefer English and eleven percent listen to Afrikaans on the radio. However, students prefer English-language *music* more. Fifty-eight percent said they preferred English-language music, whereas 43 percent said they

Within the townships, students have broad access to visual media *in English* in the form of attractive billboards advertising products such as beer, Coca-Cola, food products, radio stations and refreshments. The only billboards and signs in Xhosa are text-only ones advertising spaza shops, bankteller machines or municipal signs displaying instructions. Although signs and billboards are supposed to be regulated by the Cape Town and Tygerberg municipalities, officials admit that upheaval regarding transition of municipal control (Khayelitsha was only recently transferred to the Tygerberg municipality) has resulted in a lack of control over the visual environment of the townships. City officials have no records as to what signs are displayed or what languages they are displayed in (interview with Manny Satomi, Tygerberg municipality). Students interviewed said that they do not see signs or billboards in Xhosa in their communities and, driving around the townships, it is obvious that popular advertisements are only in English.

Furthermore, students' access to television, radio and print media predominantly in the English language heightens their desire for English. Popular media in English within the township leads to increasing use of English, resulting in language change. These influences also shape the attitudes of students to varying degrees. Some students cling to Xhosa as their cultural language, which is seen as extremely valuable. One student, for instance, noted the emphasis on young children speaking English, and wrote that while she knows English is necessary, she wants Xhosa to be important:

These days people new English at the age of 2 years and under. And now you will never see a black people speak Xhosa. And that is good but not very good because black people now run away from their cultural language. I don't say its wron't to speak English, you can speak it at the right time not every time you wan to speak you speak English. I want us to be proud about our Cultural language. (Nombuyiselo P.)

At the other extreme, however, there are students who regard Xhosa-speakers who don't speak English as 'rubbish':

I think English is important because you can be a doctor if you understand English when you don't understand English you like a piece of Rubbish because English is the most important language in South Africa if you Don't know english I am ashamed of you. (Siyabulela N.)

The influences shaping students' attitudes will be examined in detail as the home, school and community lives of Xhosa-speakers are explored.

## 1.6 Chapter summary

The overt and covert impacts of English on Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students living in the townships of Cape Town are a result of the spread of English that began during colonialism. Students, who see access to a larger world in the English language, desire its power and seek to learn it, even at the cost of their own language. They desire the opportunities that English brings, such as access to the job market, higher education and media.

Because Xhosa is not generally 'useful' or accessible in the public environment, most students develop denigrating attitudes towards it. This attitude is further substantiated by the fact that English is spoken in Parliament and publicly by African-language-speaking politicians.

Afrikaans has retained its undesirable connotation to apartheid and is shunned by Xhosa-speaking students; its demise in the public sector does not severely impact on the daily lives of the students. English has continued to carry a high status in local communities and as students seek to learn it, their language patterns are changing. The status of English has caused further division as hierarchies are created in the classroom and communities because some students speak 'better English' than others. Language practices will continue to be examined in the following chapters.

in Cape Town reported that they prefer to watch English-language television shows. However, students who have moved to Cape Town since 1997 prefer to watch Xhosa-language television shows. The majority of students said they heard English most on television, while few said they heard Xhosa on television. (See Tables 9 and 10.)

Table 13: Languages that students prefer to watch TV in

	Xhosa		English		Afrikaans	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	68	36%	113	60%	2	1%
Arrived in 1997/1998	58	62%	35	38%	0	0%

The three state television channels in South Africa, all of which fall under the South African Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast English on all of the channels and exclusively on SABC 3. SABC 2 shows programmes in English, Afrikaans, the Sotho languages (Southern Sotho, Pedi, Tswana) and Tsonga. SABC 1, which was designated for English and the Nguni languages, includes Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swati. The four bilingual programmes that the station produces include one drama, *Generations*, which began in 1985 and is particularly popular amongst Grade 10 students, is for the most part in English. The channel also shows three sitcoms: *Growing Up*, which is in English and Xhosa and started in about 1993. It also includes two sitcoms which came onto the air in 1998: *Double Shift*, which is in English and Xhosa, and *Streaks*, which is in English, Zulu and Xhosa.

Multilingual programmes are extremely popular among Grade 10 students. The range includes dramas, sports shows and programmes that discuss current events. Shows such as *Jam Alley*, *Zama Zama*, *Studio Mix*, *Selimathunzi*, *Lisenethini* and *Ezimtoti* are broadcast in English, and the Sotho and Nguni languages. English language programmes that are popular among students are: *The Felicia Mabuza Suttle Show*, *Oprah*, *Two Way*, *Panasonic Soccer Focus*, *The X Files*, *The Bold and the Beautiful* and *Days of Our Lives*. (See Appendix 4 for a complete listing of television shows that students watch.)

News programmes are watched extensively in South Africa. On SABC 1, Xhosa and Zulu are broadcast on alternate nights; there are no news programmes in Ndebele or Swati. Although the news anchors speak in either Xhosa or Zulu, often interviews in English are not translated or subtitled and thus some Nguni-language news hours are bilingual. Presenters introducing forthcoming programmes speak in English and one Nguni language. They present in all Nguni languages throughout the week and alternate between the four.

American programming. Neil Postman writes of the imperial nature of television, indeed, of American imperialism through visual media:

Every age has its own special forms of imperialism. And so does each conqueror. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the British mastered the art, their method of invasion was to send their navy, then their army, then their administrators, and finally their educational system. The Americans now do it differently. We send our television shows. The method has much to recommend it. Neither armies nor navies clash by night; the invasion occurs without loss of life and without much resistance. It is also both pleasurable and quick. (Postman, 1988:103)

The widespread use of English through television has only been adjusted slightly with the introduction of African languages on television, and a gradual influx of American television programmes into South Africa further increases English-language hegemony. During apartheid, all television programmes were in English and Afrikaans; indigenous African languages were not broadcast. In the early 1990s, when widespread reform policies were being discussed, committees assigned to television reforms decided that the language of the national television service would be English (though less than 10 percent of South Africans speak English as their mother tongue). Linguistic representation would be used as budgets permitted and audiences justified (Collins, 1993:95). Postman writes about the different ways in which visual media competes and compares with print media:

Many of the items in newspapers and magazines are not, in a strict sense, demanded by a majority of readers. They are there because some readers *might* be interested or because the editors think their readers *should* be interested. On commercial television, 'might' and 'should' are not the relevant words...What this means is that a newspaper or magazine can challenge its audience in a way that television cannot. Print media have the luxury of suggesting or inviting interest, whereas television must always concern itself with conforming to existing interests. (Postman, 1988:79)

Although television news broadcast by the SABC is extremely popular in South Africa, the general emphasis on sitcoms and soap operas reflects the SABC's concentration on providing entertainment rather than information (Collins, 1988:81). The overwhelming use of English, therefore, reflects a general attitude that the 'existing interests' are indeed in English, and the African-language-speaking majority must therefore adjust their interests if they have not already. Xhosa-speaking high school students who were born

## 2 Community and home language environments

### 2.1 The communities of Langa and Khayelitsha

At the time of publication, Langa, which means 'sun' in Xhosa, celebrated its 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary as an official township. It is Cape Town's oldest black township, has comparably more infrastructure than the other black townships in Cape Town, and has not undergone the rapid expansion that other townships have. Many of the homes in Langa are government-subsidized cement-block two room homes, and some are individually owned structures approaching middle class standards. In appearance, most homeowners and occupants of Langa have access and means to employment that recent migrants do not.

Eleven kilometres from the city of Cape Town, Langa is the township closest to the city, which, at first glance, provides residents with numerous advantages. It is closer to employment; transportation is fairly accessible and Langa residents often send their children to ex-House of Assembly and ex-House of Representative schools, where they perceive the quality of education to be higher than in ex-Department of Education and Training schools in the townships. However, it is also adjacent to the city's main sewerage works (Museumwa, 1993:33).

Historically, residents of Langa have been unified in their struggle to gain rights and governing power within the community<sup>5</sup>. Langa's original inhabitants were residents of Ndabeni, a location started in 1902. In 1927, the inhabitants of Ndabeni were forced off the land when the government desired to develop commercial infrastructure. The building of Langa had begun in 1924, when the Urban Areas Act came into effect. Residents of Ndabeni were relocated to Langa against their agreement; they protested primarily because there was only one primary school in Langa. It was to be ten years before a secondary school (Langa) was built.

Langa residents were outspoken against the city of Cape Town. The majority of inhabitants were men, as women were generally confined to the Transkei and Ciskei because of influx control laws, and a lack of employment opportunities in the city. A petty bourgeois class existed, consisting of teachers, court interpreters, clerks, ministers of religion, nurses and businessmen. The local political leadership was derived from this class. While class division existed in Langa, the same classes of people shared common grievances which related to living conditions and a shared oppression as one race made possible the growth of an organic sense of unity in community struggle (Museumwa, 1993:32).

As residents of Langa became increasingly politicized, class distinctions dissolved and the tightly knit community stood as an example of a unified stance against harsh laws enacted by the city officials. Langa continues to be a tightly knit community, as a relatively small township with a comparatively low crime rate.

Khayelitsha, by contrast, is the most recent and most extensive of Cape Town's black townships. It is the second largest township in South Africa; the population is estimated to be about 700 000 (*Cape Argus*, 1998). It was established in the early eighties as a permanent housing site by the National Party government, which had strict policies on influx control and movement within urban areas. Khayelitsha, which means 'new home' in Xhosa, has expanded haphazardly from the original nine kilometers long and two and a half kilometers wide spread of land that lies south-east on the Cape Flats, about two kilometers from a coloured township, Mitchell's Plain. It now occupies 28 kilometers of land about 35 kilometers from the city of Cape Town.

Originally, Khayelitsha was designed into four 'towns' with four 'villages' each. In 1985, it was intended to be a resettlement camp for residents of the Old Crossroads squatter camp and was later opened up to people living in shacks in Langa, Gugulethu and Nyanga. Large areas of fairly uniform types of development now exist, ranging from site and service areas to core housing, and middle-income developer-built housing (Awotana et al, 1995:3-4). The development in each area largely depends upon the population density and income range.

The original residents in Site C were given one water tap and one toilet bucket per ten households. In certain areas, facilities gradually improved. In 1990 there was an estimated population of 500,000 people living in Khayelitsha in accommodation ranging from construction-built, four-room houses to metal and cardboard shacks clustered close together. Today there are considerably more people: practically every open space between constructed houses is occupied by shack dwellings (Mpoyiya and Prinsloo, 1996:178). Certain vacant sites reserved for higher-income groups have never been occupied and have been closed off to squatters. They now lie empty, unlike the formerly open spaces near site and service areas, which are now overcrowded with shacks.

Unemployment is high and has increased in the last few years with the growing influx of job seekers coming primarily from the Eastern Cape. Most men work in the construction industry or as taxi drivers and most women sew clothes or work as domestic servants. Informal jobs such as hawking vegetables, meat and cool drinks are a common form of self-employment and the development of spaza shops and shebeens has expanded.

*Daily Dispatch*. The one Afrikaans-language newspaper in Cape Town, *Die Burger*, is read even less than English- and Xhosa-language newspapers. A Xhosa and English bilingual newspaper, *City Vision*, and a community newspaper, *Khayelitsha* are read more frequently by the students. These publications are more accessible and interesting for students interested in community news and events. (See Appendix 3 for a complete listing of publications read by students.)

Students prefer magazines to newspapers. The most popular English-language magazines read by Grade 10 students are those which focus on relationships and sports. Magazines such as *Pace*, *True Love*, *You*, *Spice*, *People*, *Fair Lady*, *Cosmopolitan* are popular among females, while sports magazines such as *Kick-Off*, *Soccer News*, *Sports Rap* and *Sport Life* are popular among Grade 10 males.

*Bona* is published in four different language editions, i.e. English, Zulu, Xhosa and Sesotho (the latter divided between Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Tswana) (Fourie and Claassen, 1995:339). They generally publish news and feature articles about current events, social issues, trends and styles. Both *Bona* and *Drum* are particularly popular magazines among Grade 10 students.

*Drum* is a monthly magazine which reflects in an interesting way the language dichotomies of South Africa: its articles are in various black languages, but the advertisements are in English – a clear indication of black preference when it comes to the market place...the most successful black publications are published in English and not in the indigenous language of blacks. (Fourie and Claassen, 1995:339)

The last statement of Fourie and Claassen's research, however, must be qualified as it is clear that few publications are in African languages and where there are similar types of magazines in the African languages, students who have recently come from the rural areas have indicated that they prefer Xhosa.

### 4.3 Languages on television

Television has a strong influence on the students profiled in this paper. It is an extremely popular medium in South Africa and students reported hearing English more on television than anywhere else. Soap operas and dramas are amongst the more popular genres, and sports programmes are often the highlight of social activities.

The United States was the first country to introduce television on a mass scale. Although television sets were not produced until after World War II, television broadcasting began at the end of the 1930s. The National Party, fearful of the influence television would have, refused to allow television in South Africa until 1975. The last few years have seen substantial increase in

political balances in the country; English-speaking South Africans owned the majority of newspapers and represented an ‘independent’ view and the Afrikaans-language press represented the apartheid government’s agenda.<sup>10</sup>

Post apartheid, the power issues surrounding language in the press impact on the attitudes of Xhosa-speaking teenagers, whose interest in fashion, relationships and sports magazines leaves them little choice with regard to what languages they read in. English and Afrikaans are the two languages in which they can read such publications and 71 percent of students born in Cape Town report that they prefer to read in English while only 23 percent born in Cape Town report that they prefer to read in Xhosa; the preference for English-language popular-culture reading materials falls in line with the wishes they expressed for educational materials. The following table details what languages students prefer to read in:

Table 12: Languages that students prefer to read in

	Xhosa		English		Afrikaans	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	43	23%	134	71%	3	2%
Arrived in 1997/1998	71	50%	60	43%	1	1%

Students who have moved to Cape Town since 1997 reported that they prefer to read in Xhosa, while students born in Cape Town prefer to read in English.

A study done in 1987 and 1988 reports that African-language newspapers are nearly as popular as English-language newspapers that target an African audience (Fourie and Claassen, 1995:339). Of the 551 students surveyed, 45 percent said they prefer to read Xhosa-language newspapers, while 64 percent said they prefer to read English-language newspapers. Only 20 percent said they read Afrikaans-language newspapers. (See Appendix 2.)

Generally, students prefer to read what they can access, financially and linguistically. Cape Town’s two daily English-language newspapers, the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus* are infrequently read by Grade 10 Xhosa-speaking students for a variety of reasons: cost, lack of access, lack of interest and the language barrier. When students do read newspapers, they prefer the *Cape Argus*, Cape Town’s afternoon newspaper, which generally prints shorter articles and targets a mass audience. As a local newspaper, the *Cape Argus* covers events that have typically been oriented towards the coloured community. In September 1996 it was relaunched with the intention of marketing towards a black audience.

The *Cape Times*, which traditionally has catered to an intellectual audience, is also read infrequently by students, as are English-language national newspapers such as *Business News*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sowetan* and *The*

### 2.1.1 The former homelands: Transkei and Ciskei

In the 1960s and 1970s, black South Africans were moved to bantustans and further forced into an even more rigid system of migrant labour. Of the ten bantustans created by the apartheid government, four (Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda) became ‘independent’ and residents were no longer officially South Africans. The Transkei and Ciskei were the two homelands designated for ‘Xhosas’ when the apartheid government employed the ‘divide and rule’ scheme to separate different ethnic groups and maintain control over them. Transkei was the first bantustan to become independent in 1976, and Ciskei followed in 1981. Located in what is now the Eastern Cape, the Transkei and Ciskei were the closest homelands to the Western Cape.

The main groupings of Xhosa-speaking people are the Ngqika of the Ciskei and the Gcaleka of the Transkei (Nomlomo, 1993:77). Poverty in the homelands drove Xhosa-speakers to Cape Town seeking employment. They arrived in massive numbers and faced expulsion, legalized by the influx control laws (this will be covered in the next sub-chapter). The dense population and lack of employment in the Transkei and Ciskei were largely ignored by the apartheid government; indeed, the government organized such conditions. The National Party simply wanted to maintain a migrant labour force to support the white economy.<sup>6</sup>

The system of migrant labour had split up families and intensified the already atrocious conditions in which residents of the homelands live to this day. Residents of the homelands were often malnourished and starving; maize and sorghum, the two crops farmed most in the bantustans, did not yield enough. Rich farmland was often claimed by the government or white farmers, and families that farmed the land for generations were removed. An estimated 14 million Africans were removed under the apartheid government’s bantustans policy and Group Areas Act (Southall, 1982:28). The forced removals, lack of employment, migrant labour and poor harvests created a lifestyle for Africans that consisted of subsistence living at the bare minimum. One of my students commented on the difference between urban and rural lifestyles by comparing the amount of money that was not ‘wasted’ in Transkei.

My name is Mtobeli. I came from Transkei at the rural areas. There at Transkei my family lived there long ago. And my family love to stay at rural areas because there are lots of things they done there and there is no waste of money. But now it is so borred to live in rural areas. Where my family came from they do not buy food they made by theirselves. Then they have cattles for milk maize for millies. There were not working on towns they work for it theirselves. Thern when they have children and childrens come to Cape Town for jobs and school. That’s where my family came from. (Mtobeli N.)

All families that have migrated from the Transkei and Ciskei are motivated by the same reasons that as Mtobeli's family. They are forced into a system that necessitates employment in the urban areas for survival.

### 2.1.2 The impact of influx-control laws

There was massive migration from the rural areas to urban areas in South Africa before the scrapping of the influx-control laws in 1986; the elimination of the pass laws had little effect on the in-migration of Africans from the Eastern Cape. Conditions forced Africans off farms and out of the overcrowded reserves and formal townships; the laws had been rendered ineffective long before 1986 (Fast, 1995:36). Cape Town and other South African cities had already expanded rapidly as informal settlements and townships became overpopulated with people seeking jobs and students seeking access to a 'better' education system. More than 700 000 Africans lived in Cape Town after 1988; the population had risen 109 percent (Fast, 1995:36).

The brutal history of influx-control laws gives context to the conditions that black South Africans in urban areas currently abide in.<sup>7</sup> First under English rule and then under Afrikaner governing, black South Africans were systematically restricted from living and working in certain areas of South Africa. Strict laws were developed to rid South Africa of 'the unproductive, the unemployed, the disabled and those too young to work' (Platzky and Walker, 1985:xxii).

The system of influx control, which directly correlated with the creation of homelands, was first legitimated by the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937 and increasingly so in 1952, when the law was amended. The influx-control law system was especially brutal in the Western Cape region, which was seen as a bastion for white South Africans who were determined to keep black Africans out. The Western Cape was a 'Coloured Preference Area' and jobs were only given to Africans if they could not be justifiably given to a coloured first. This act was suspended in 1985, which eased some of the pressure blacks faced as 'illegals' (Fast, 1995:32). Under influx control, many Xhosa-speakers were forcibly removed from the Western Cape and sent back to Transkei and Ciskei.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the students were born around the time when influx control laws were disregarded and families moved to Cape Town 'illegally', hence the high number (36 percent) of students in this study who were born in Cape Town. Statistics indicate that 347 of the students (62 percent) were born outside of Cape Town. Of those students, 268 (77 percent) are from Transkei and Ciskei; others come from cities in the Eastern Cape such as Queenstown, Port Elizabeth and East London; 12 of the students come from Johannesburg. (See Table 4.)

to South Africa in 1975 and was strictly controlled; the South African Broadcasting Corporation was used by Afrikaner Nationalists to attack the English language and cultural values. Since the early 1990s, both the National Party and the African National Congress have publicly supported a free press.

Large conglomerates dominate the South African print media. In 1994, Cape Town's two daily English-language newspapers were bought by Independent Newspapers. The monopolies, which make decisions for profit, shape their economics, politics and ideology with entertainment and consumerism as their main objectives. This is achieved by employing the mass media to produce and spread 'mass culture' (Korobeinikov, 1981:55). While this can be in a negative sense, the media can also be instrumental in shaping positive social change. Ex-President Nelson Mandela, in early 1992, pointed out the role of corporations in helping to reduce inequalities and said that meaningful steps must be taken for all South Africans to have access to the media (De Beer and Steyn, 1993:218).

Language is fundamental in gaining access to the media. All forms of mass media in South Africa maintain the hegemony of English; Afrikaans, Xhosa and other African languages are used minimally in comparison. Radio, the first medium to serve a mass public and the most important mass medium in South Africa (Collins, 1988:80), is the only medium that Xhosa-speaking students report listening to more in Xhosa than in English and still most of the students report listening to more English-language stations than Xhosa-language ones. (See Appendix 2.)

Less than half of South Africa's population is literate and fewer than 40 percent of South Africans have access to electricity. Thus neither newspapers nor television have been able to achieve the penetration of radio into the homes and lives of all South Africans (Collins, 1988:80).

Of the 551 students surveyed, six percent did not respond to the questionnaire. Of the 94 percent who answered, those who were born in Cape Town prefer English-language media, but students who have migrated from the rural areas since 1997 prefer Xhosa-language media. As forthcoming statistics will show, this divide showed in all domains of popular media: newspapers, magazines, television and radio.

## 4.2 Newspapers and magazines that students read

The connection between language and power is most obvious in the South African print press, where but for a few African-language community publications, all of the newspapers in the country are in English and Afrikaans. (See Appendix 3.) There are no African-language daily newspapers, and there are few mainstream magazines that publish in African languages. Historically, the languages used in the media represented the

## 4 Languages within Cape Town's media

### 4.1 English in the media

The role that popular media plays in shaping language values and attitudes can be seen not only in the actions and mannerisms of teenagers today, but also in their language use. The adolescent period is generally marked by rebellion against parental norms and search for identification with peers rather than adults, and media plays an important part in that process of socialisation (Carroll et al, 1997:166). Essays by and interviews with students detail the impact that television, newspapers and magazines, and radio have in their lives; consistently, students report that they hear English most on television and that their cultural values are shaped by the media.

Ideas are spread within the mass media with the objective of stimulating certain emotions (Korobeinikov, 1981:54), and Grade 10 students are a receptive audience for popular media. Many of their opinions about news, fashion, music, sports and relationships are shaped by information delivered in the form of entertainment. *Nearly all of this entertainment is in English.* The influence of South African and American sitcoms, movies and above all, music, perpetuate the status of English overtly and subliminally.

Ideally, the use of language must be responsive to the expected political requirements of media impartiality and balance (Leitner, 1983:54). However, the interplay of languages in Cape Town media contradict this idea, for English overwhelmingly dominates the print, oral and visual media in Cape Town and nationally, despite South Africa's eleven official language policy. Indeed, the majority of magazines and newspapers read, and television shows watched by students are in English. English is the language of business, Parliament, and government documents, and the mainstream media not only allow the agendas of news to be bent in accordance with state demands and criteria of utility, they also accept the presuppositions of the state without question (Herman, 1992:5).

Historically, the National Party government used the media for its own purposes and developed a close relationship with the Afrikaans press, which became an inextricable part of South Africa's politics (De Beer and Steyn, 1993:204). This, however, did not hold true with the English-language 'liberal' press or the alternative press, and legislation was passed to curb the presses, including the Afrikaans-language press. For three decades of National Party rule, all media was chained by the government (De Beer and Steyn, 1993:210).

Press control in South Africa was established as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the state had control over newspapers as well as the selection and presentation of news events in the press. Until De Klerk took office in 1989, media censorship prevailed (De Beer and Steyn, 1993:210). Television only came

Of the 347 born outside of Cape Town, 223 (64 percent) have arrived since 1994; of those students, 179 (51 percent) have arrived since 1996. Of the 179 students who have arrived since 1996, 63 of the students came in 1997 and 78 came in 1998. (See Appendix 1.) The following table shows the ten main places where students were born:

Table 4: Where students were born

Eastern Cape		Western Cape		Other	
Transkei	213	Cape Town	205	Johannesburg	12
Ciskei	40	Worcester	3	Natal	2
Queenstown	15				
East London	12				
Port Elizabeth	11				
King William's Town	5				
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>296</b>		<b>208</b>		<b>14</b>

#### 2.1.3 Reasons for coming to Cape Town

The primary reason why students migrate to Cape Town is to learn English. The following statistics reveal that students who have migrated recently regard people who don't speak English as 'uneducated', while students who were born in Cape Town disagree:

Table 5: Do students think people who don't know English are 'uneducated'?

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Born in Cape Town	40	21%	138	73%
Arrived in 1997	15	24%	46	73%
Arrived in 1998	27	35%	43	55%

- 25% of all students said 'Yes'.
- 69% of all students said 'No'.
- 6% of all students did not respond.

Students believe that in an English-dominated school environment, they will learn English faster. As one student who migrated in December 1996 said, 'English is used in Transkei from Standard 2, but the way it is used in Transkei is not the same as they way they use it in Cape Town' (interview with Zukile). The linguistic environments differ vastly and code-switching between English and Xhosa is uncommon in Transkei.

A Bulumko Grade 10 student who migrated to Cape Town in 1996 from the former Transkei to attend classes in English said she is repeating Grade 10 this year. Although she has lived in Khayelitsha for two years, she has minimal English skills and a difficult time understanding English-medium instruction. Nonetheless, she prefers to be taught in English.

*Interviewer:* Is that why you came to Cape Town, to learn English?

*Z:* (translation) Education-wise, here in Cape Town, it's better than in the Transkei. Like there, most of the subjects are taught in Xhosa and sometimes they mix, but mostly they use Xhosa. Here, they in fact use English. As a result, [our] English is getting better.

*Interviewer:* So you did come to learn English?

*Z:* (translation) And also, for better teaching and also for a better education.

Like most students who have come in the last few years, Busisiwe, another Grade 10 student, left her family in the rural areas to live in Cape Town with extended family. Often students live with friends if they have no extended family to stay with. Busisiwe writes:

My name is Busisiwe. I come from Encobo. At home I leave my mother and sister. I left my home because I want more education. I live with my sister, brother and law-sister. We are the happy family because we take life as it comes. We don't force life. We spend more time talking about better education and what life is? At Cape Town there were many violences people can kill another because of money. Taxi violence and robbers are many. Small children were raped they don't have safe.

Despite the crime and overcrowding in Cape Town townships, especially Khayelitsha, a study done on families who live in Khayelitsha cites their reasons for moving: mainly, poverty and hunger; secondly, desiring educational opportunities.

There was considerable residential movement of Africans in Greater Cape Town during the 1980s, which consisted of movement within the urban area and in-migration from rural areas. Most of the rural migration was from the Transkei, where high unemployment and low salaries continued to push people to the city. (Fast, 1995:36)

The massive migration and subsequent overcrowding also impact the schools, where huge classes and a lack of facilities further hinder access to quality education.

education institutions require English, students uphold English as the foremost language to learn.

### 3.5 Chapter summary

The two high schools profiled, Bulumko and Langa, reflect the communities they are situated in; Langa is the oldest high school for black Africans while Bulumko is amongst the most recently built high schools. Both are attended by Xhosa-speakers who regard English as a language more widely respected than Xhosa. Within the classrooms, students say that English has a higher status and that teachers sometimes do not translate because they are not required to; English is the only official medium of instruction at both secondary schools. However, the majority of teaching within the classrooms *is* in both Xhosa and English. Students have an extremely difficult time coping with the reading materials and tests and as a result the failure rate is high.

Students reveal mixed feelings about the status of Xhosa; the demands of secondary level education, higher education, the job market and the public environment of Cape Town (banks, stores, hospitals and official buildings) are clearly foremost in their minds as they muse the issue. English is 'everywhere' as one student pointed out, and another student argued that it is 'foolish' to want to speak Xhosa in Cape Town.

While the hegemony of English dramatically impacts on attitudes, what is more worrisome is the level of inaccessibility of the urban environment to the pragmatic needs of African-language speakers. They need English to communicate in stores, banks and hospitals. High unemployment is a constant threat to economic stability, and competitive (and costly) higher education often makes further study impossible. As the forthcoming chapter will show, the desire for English not only pertains to the job market and education, but to the media as well.

Students' needs for English are clear and pragmatic. Education and employment are seen as the goals and the means are not questioned, as long as they can reach the opportunities their parents have been denied.

### 3.4.3 Higher education opportunities

Attending an institution of higher education is of utmost importance to some of the students, who wish to 'perfect' their English. Prestigious universities, such as the University of Cape Town, require incoming students whose first language is not English to take a written exam attesting to their proficiency in the language. This adds to the pressure to learn English fluently by Grade 12. A student wrote:

...English is the first language at our school. If we don't have an English we are not going anywhere. The people of old days they don't know English because they don't go to school and they know their African language. Xhosa is my language and I love it because I'm black. English I want to know because when I finish my matric I want to go to university to know English. If you go to white person you don't know English who is going to guide you to English? Black people don't understand that English is good. (Neliswa M.)

Another student further explained:

In universities they use to talk English because their teacher's talk English so you are not going to university without English. So it is very important to now English in these days. (Phikolomzi N.)

Even if students were able to attend universities with Xhosa-medium instruction, they are conscious of a public environment that does not support their language and that employers would not hire them unless they spoke English. Anything less than English means that one has no real future. The students think that inevitably the manager will always be a 'white man'.

English is an important language in Xhosa because if I want work in Bank I must talk English no Xhosa because Manager is a white man. Before I take (it) I will do your Interview this interview I will talk English because I talk about whiteman.

Me Pam Blackman but Xhosa is not important language because you want a problem when you want work you must talk English just because me in my home I talk Xhosa to these parents outside I talk English because you must go in America you must do talk English because Xhosa you must not know. (Qhajana B.)

Using African languages as media of instruction is being considered by language planners and education officials. However, because most higher

## 2.2 The home and school language environments of Grade 10 students

As the home language of Grade 10 students, Xhosa is the language spoken amongst family, friends and other first-language Xhosa-speakers. Eighty-seven percent of students report that they speak Xhosa with friends and family and 59 percent say that they use Xhosa to write to friends and family. (See Appendix 2.) Many Langa and Khayelitsha residents, especially the elders, do not speak English or Afrikaans and although television is a strong influence within the household, conversations are held in Xhosa. Illiteracy in the rural areas is high because people have had little chance for formal education.

Students' attitudes towards speaking their home language vary; while some value it as their home language and believe in its importance, other students consider themselves to be disadvantaged because Xhosa is limited to the home and community. A student who values his mother tongue wrote the following essay:

English is the very important language around the World. If you can't speak English there is no way you can communicate with other people who are from different Places. Yes, it's good to know 'Xhosa' because it is your home language. There are those people who say Xhosa is also important. Yes, I can agree with them but also where can you get a job but you don't know how to speak English? You can have many certificates of Xhosa but if you don't know English I can say you are nothing in the world. Because there is no way to be known around the world.

I don't say people must not like Xhosa because you can do nothing without it. To say more about English English is very important because Xhosa is learned by English why is it so but Xhosa is important. I do not say we must not speak Xhosa because you cannot have work with it. It is your language you have to speak and you must be proud of your language. (Macebo P.)

Macebo's opinions of Xhosa reflect that he values languages for their practical use. 'Yes it's good to know "Xhosa" because it is your home language', is a sentiment expressed by many of the students, who communicate only in Xhosa when they are among other Xhosa-speakers. Interviews with students confirm that they rarely, if ever, speak a language besides Xhosa if the other person knows Xhosa. However, Macebo perceives English to be important, as stated earlier in this paper, 'because Xhosa is learned by English why is it so'. In other words, Xhosa-speakers learn through the medium of English in school. His argument is most clear with the words: 'I do not say we must not speak Xhosa because you cannot have

work with it'. Clearly, the pragmatic uses of English make it a 'very important' language. And yet, he affirms that Xhosa-speakers must be proud of their home language.

Relocation to an urban environment has profound effects on how the mother tongue evolves. Language change is natural and expected; however, a status language replacing a home language because of its practical uses in the public environment raises serious questions about the survival of the home language. Interviews with students reveal that the phenomenon of English replacing Xhosa within the home is entirely likely in the future if families, wishing to 'educate' the children, begin to speak English instead of Xhosa.

A skit written by a group of Grade 10 students on the issue of whether or not racially separate schools can be equal reveals the students' thoughts on language dynamics in education and their desires for speaking English in the home:

P1: Hi.

P2: Hi.

P1: Kunjani?

P2: What do you mean Kunjani? I mean I can't speak Xhosa.

P1: What do you mean you can't speak Xhosa?

P2: Because I'm in white school. In white school we don't compare English. We don't use English and Xhosa, we don't use Xhosa with English.

P3: Why you talk like that, because you're black? You have to speak Xhosa with him.

P4: You blacks you must not speak English during Xhosa period.

P2: I don't see that problem, speaking Xhosa with someone.

P5: In blacks [schools] we learn English in Xhosa

P1: That's why you don't have perfect English.

P2: If you blacks are participating in class, like doing project or assignment, the thing is not separated, you can be right.

P1: In our schools, we don't have playing grounds. In your schools you have swimming pools and tennis courts.

P3: If the black students can change their behaviour, especially at school hours, they can be same like us.

P4: What about drug, say at white schools?

P1: There's no drug beside our schools.

P6: When you're black you need someone to translate your history, you geography and all your other subjects.

P2: That's because you don't understand English perfectly.

P6: So some teacher when he teach his subject or her subjects he must try to explain us the English because we don't know.

apartheid showed that roughly 4.6 million of South African's 40.5 million people are unemployed and that 2.3 million are black women compared with 1.8 million black men and 43 000 white women (*Cape Argus*, 1998).

A similar estimate of unemployment was reported by the *Cape Times*, which said that a third of the population is unemployed and of those who have jobs, more than a quarter earn less than R500 per month. African women have the highest rate of unemployment (52 percent) and form the largest group of unskilled workers. Sixty-two percent of South Africans earn less than R1 501 a month (*Cape Times*, 1998). Living in township environments where these statistics are everyday life for most inhabitants, Xhosa-speaking students will do all they can to meet the 'prerequisite for employment'.

As you can see today there are few people in South Africa who don't know English. English is an important language because it is good for us when we want to work, I don't say it is good for blacks to speak English and forget about their own language, but to speak English at work. There is no black person who can give you a job because they don't have enough money, so the white person cannot understand Xhosa anymore so you suppose to speak English, let's make an example. If I am a lawyer I must know English and I would go around the country so If I don't know English there is nowhere I can go. The white people they don't want to know Xhosa and I understand them because it's difficult for them, but we as blacks we suppose to know and speak English because at the end of the day It will help all of us, don't say I can't speak English because white don't want to speak Xhosa, you must just do it for your own sake. English is a good language to me, because I know that it can help me to be the person I want to be. (Siziwe N.)

Another student wrote:

...if you understand Xhosa only you have not found jobs. Xhosa is not too much important than English. You cannot only Xhosa. Xhosa is not too important so well.

...Xhosa you can speak at your home and with your friend. If you speak with the Whites you speak English and English is important than Xhosa. The peoples that have not understand English have difficult life in South Africa.

And if you understand Xhosa you have not found job you have found only if you understand English that's why English is too much important. There is no need of people must read Xhosa more especially blacks because they understand Xhosa. The important thing is to the blacks must read English. (Mzukisi N.)

### 3.4.2 Employment requirements

As previously stated, the need for employment is the overriding reason that Grade 10 students place such high value on English. The brutal history of apartheid continues to underscore this need, as students are daily reminded of chronic unemployment in townships filled with recently emigrated residents who are unable to find jobs. Education in English is the 'key to life and the key to success' (Busisiwe M.). High unemployment levels in these townships directly impact on students' desire for education.

...You often find people who are unemployed sitting around with nothing to do. Many families are struggling because of the unemployment. It is one of the incurable diseases in our country and it is growing higher and higher instead of decreasing. This high rate of unemployment leads people into making crime in trying to get money to buy food. Some of the kids leave schools. There are being forced by the situation to go work for a living. Some parents are trying to find jobs but it's impossible to get a job while the millions of people are without jobs. The R.D.P. doesn't seem to be working because more and more are without jobs instead of getting jobs.

The outcome of this unemployment is that people do crime because they have nothing to eat. That is why I think crime is caused by unemployment. (Feziwe S.)

An article in *Bua!*, a magazine published by the National Language Project, reported the fears that every Xhosa-speaking student internalizes concerning English and employment.

After all, if Kel Sheppey, one of the National Training Board (NTB)'s researchers, is correct, the formal sector, in the immediate future will only be able to offer employment to about 25 % of the potential workforce and this percentage might shrink even further. And since between 20 and 25% of people can already speak English fairly proficiently then clearly it is this 20–25% which will be employable in the formal sector. Sheppey's analysis of the National Training Board Research is that the business sector views English as **the** language of business *and that fluency in English is a prerequisite for employment.* (Heugh, 1996:17)

Grade 10 students are under no illusions about the brutally competitive job market that they will face in a couple of years, an arena that some of them are already confronting as part-time workers and hawkers after school. In 1995, 1.7 million people in South Africa were classified as self-employed, including domestic workers and the entire informal sector (*Mail and Guardian*, 1998). The first census to be undertaken since the end of

P2: That is why your English is not perfect, because you need someone to translate it. *I mean, if at your mother, your father your parents or your sisters can talk English in your homes then your English will be perfect.*

P6: *No, our parents are not educated. Because on their times there's no right education.*

P3: Black students they rush to get home before school hours that's why you don't learn English.

P1: That's why we do that, because sometimes the teacher doesn't come to class to teach us and we stay there the whole period, no one to teach us.

P2: And so on...

This skit (author's italics) illuminates several different themes, some of which touch on some of the general problems within schools in black townships, and also significantly, the problems with language in black township schools, such as needing someone to translate material within the class. What is of critical urgency is the importance that students place on language when answering the question: 'Can racially separate schools be equal?' Their obvious answer is 'no', because students' 'English is not perfect'. Not having advanced enough English proficiency causes several barriers, mainly that the students do not understand their subjects. However, they perceive that 'perfect' English and a good education cannot be obtained if Xhosa is spoken in the classroom and furthermore, students can only have 'perfect' English if their families speak it within the home.

However, they don't devalue Xhosa. They clearly think that Xhosa is a language a black person should speak: 'Why you talk like that, because you're black? You have to speak Xhosa with him.' Furthermore, they consider it to be an offence *not* to speak Xhosa and hold a perception that blacks in 'white' schools speak English so well that they either lose Xhosa as their mother tongue or think they're above other Xhosa-speakers. But they also recognize that Xhosa, as a 'black' language, only goes so far. Because the medium of instruction in schools is English, and because gaining employment demands that these students speak English, these students want to speak 'perfect' English in their homes to help their chances in school and the workplace.

Indeed, it is the immediate, daily struggle that Xhosa-speaking students, especially those who have recently migrated, face in the classroom that predetermines their favouring English over Xhosa. One student wrote:

English is a common language even in black school the teachers use more english than xhosa, if you don't know english you can be in a very serious problem.

In South Africa people want to use English for communicating. For example they mix Xhosa and English. I prefer parents must be used to teach their kids English so that they can learn to speak English at the early age so that when they speak with white they can speak through without having a problem. So English is more important than Xhosa and other languages in Africa, people must learn to speak English all the times. (Linda D.)

The notion of being 'educated' for Xhosa-speaking students generally means 'knowing English', and as a result, the emphasis in schools is not on learning to think or analyse, but learning English. Zikhona, a Grade 10 student who arrived in Cape Town in January 1998, said she must learn English so she won't be *ngamaqaba* (uneducated). The perception students retain after leaving the school environment every day is that coping in English-medium classes is extraordinarily difficult and to learn 'perfect' English, they must have help elsewhere: in the home.

The mixture of Xhosa with English within the home, school and community environment is occurring rapidly as a result of the need for English.

Rural people migrate to cities and towns mainly in search of jobs. Occasionally they go back to their rural homes. Such migration and urbanisation have profound consequences for language use and language change. (Thipa, 1989:26)

This language change is, in many cases, a replacing of Xhosa with English. An interview by Gerda de Klerk with teachers who speak various languages explored the language dynamics within Xhosa-language homes. A Xhosa-speaking teacher said:

Even at home (the children who go to white or coloured schools) speak English, if their parents are qualified; no Xhosa at all with the result that they forget their language... Another teacher who works with me was worried that we are losing our language, the standard of Xhosa is going down. I said no, it's because of western civilization, we are getting more civilized. (De Klerk, 1995:10)

While community relations remain strong, traditions will be sustained and consequently, the traditional language will be spoken. Language change does not necessarily mean that Xhosa will be replaced entirely. However, as generations of Xhosa-speakers are educated in English-medium schools and acquire English as their second language, they will have greater ability to gain financial means to relocate to communities where Xhosa is not the dominant language and the community language influence is not as present. As the interviews with Xhosa-speaking teachers show, English will flourish, and in many cases, will become the first language of forthcoming genera-

Another student described the situation she faces in the public environment:

...English is so important when you go to town and you want to ask something to white you must speak English so that they can hear you and if you go and come with someone who do not know Xhosa you can talk to her in English so English is important more than Xhosa, and if you want to buy something in shop let say there no Xhosa people in that shop you must speak English so that they can answer you, and other thing if you have white teacher and you want to ask something you must speak English so that they can answer you.

Another thing is that if you have white friend or if you go with your mother to her work and you must speak English because she didn't hear you when you speak Xhosa, and if you are in hotel and leave table with Zulu people you must talk English so that they can hear you, or if you want to read in Cape Technikon so you apply you must apply in English so that why you must know English and that's why English is so important than other languages. (Noxolo G.)

The hegemony of English affects not only the students' access to stores, banks and education, but also health care. Medical practitioners were not required to speak an African language during apartheid so that if Xhosa-speakers did not speak English adequately, the health care that Xhosa-speakers had access to was severely curtailed. The following essay gives some indication as to why learning English 'is good for black people':

Sometimes many people in the hospital speak English and there are few doctors speaking English. In that case the English is good for the Black people. If you know the English you know everything. English is very much important especially in Blacks because when you go to other countries we must know the words. English is very much important because when they read papers in English we (I) learn more information. Few years ago the Black people they did not go to school because of their culture and they stay at home and there is no schools, hospital, shops etc because there is no builder, doctors in the country. If you are sick you stay at home and go to the which doctor to earn medicine and they did not go to hospital because you don't understand. (Lindelwa N.)

In the rural areas which were formerly bantustans, there is little infrastructure, and there are few schools and few hospitals. Furthermore, as this student has written, if there was access to health care, many Xhosa-speakers could not communicate with the health workers, thus limiting Xhosa-speakers to using traditional healers and traditional medicine.

The one student who wants to speak an African language in an environment which is dominated by English is 'foolish' – and furthermore, this attitude is echoed by the majority of his classmates. However, why it is 'foolish' is taken for granted: the economy is controlled by English-speakers who determine job requirements and is controlled internationally by imperialist countries who have made it an 'international language'. In Cape Town, students may shun Afrikaans but they desire English for its widespread use, including being able to use it for communication in the public sector. Fifty-eight percent of students report that they speak English with public officials, while only 28 percent use Xhosa and 24 percent use Afrikaans to communicate with public officials. (See Appendix 2.)

Because the majority of clerks in banks and stores are not African-language speakers, students expect to converse in English for official business and shopping purposes. A study done on the shopping preferences of Khayelitsha residents shows that 91 percent of residents shop at big shopping centres, 69 percent shop at Cape Town City Centre, 77 percent shop at Mitchell's Plain Town Centre and 40 percent in Claremont and Wynberg (Barnes, 1998:30). Ninety-six percent shop at Khayelitsha's Sanlam Centre (where they can expect to speak Xhosa). The following essays by students reveal the extent to which communication in English is essential while performing activities such as shopping and banking.

One day I was in town in the bank there was a guy who wanted to open an account he only knew Xhosa the person that was on the teller she was speaking English but this guy when the person was talking with he doesn't understand English because he only knew Xhosa this guy asked me to talk for him.

The person that was working in the bank asked me to tell what this man wanted I told her that he wanted to open an account she asked me that this man had all his details like I.D. book I asked the man in Xhosa he said yes he took them out and we started signing them a help because I like to help people.

The other day when we got finished he gave me R20,00 I said know I can't take it because I am a scout he started asking me what is that I told him all I know he said he will buy me something I asked him what is that he said a bag of pens I said thank I can't take them. He goes on his way I do with my way too. People must try to help each other if they don't know how to speak.

People said to hand wash each other [a direct translation of a Xhosa proverb about helping one another], it doesn't matter what his colour. (Xolani G.)

tions. An interview with a student at Bulumko revealed that she intends for English to be the first language of her children, whether she marries someone whose first language is English or whether her husband is Xhosa-speaking. 'I want my children to speak English as their first language so they won't be shy like us', she said, referring to her classmates.

Because the majority of township inhabitants grew up in rural areas and have limited English abilities, Xhosa is maintained as the language of the home and community. As formal education *in English* is sought after, English will likely supersede Xhosa in the home and community environment.

The rapid spread of English is not without its *costs*. Those who fail in the quest for the alchemy of English see their life chances reduced. Those who become proficient in the alien language may sacrifice the language of their parents and their own culture in the process. (Phillipson, 1988:342)

## 2.3 Chapter summary

The communities of Langa and Khayelitsha, with their varied histories, represent two examples of Xhosa-language townships undergoing rapid transition in a changing South Africa. The public environment of the townships is similar to the home environments, in which Xhosa is the predominant language spoken. The mass migration of Xhosa-speakers from the bantustans formerly known as Transkei and Ciskei, now located in the Eastern Cape Province, has resulted in wide disparities between students who speak conversational English and students who speak minimally. More than half of the students involved in this study were born in the rural areas and more than half of those students migrated in 1997 and 1998. The recent migration is a result of apartheid policies and influx-control laws; because of draconian laws instituted under apartheid, many Xhosa-speakers entered Cape Town 'illegally' – most had been relegated to the rural areas.

Grade 10 students have come to Cape Town to take classes in English, which they regard as 'better education'. Their attitudes towards their mother tongue vary; because Xhosa is their first language and traditionally spoken in the home, students feel hindered in an English-language education system. Yet they desire it because they must cope with English beyond the perimeters of the townships. While discussing racially separated schools in Cape Town and the necessity of English in the classroom, students showed a desire to speak English in the home as they pondered ways of overcoming their perceived language 'deficiencies'. Thus, language change is occurring as they seek to incorporate English into Xhosa and in the future, some students have indicated that they intend to teach their children English as a first language.

### 3 Language in the classroom and public environment

#### 3.1 Profiles of Langa and Bulumko High Schools

In a variety of ways, Bulumko and Langa High Schools represent the histories of the communities they exist in. Langa High, which was the first secondary school for Africans in Cape Town, was started in 1937, ten years after the township of Langa was created. Bulumko, which was established in 1990 in Khayelitsha, did not have its own building until 1993.

Langa High School officially opened the doors of its current building on 6 March, 1943; it had taken six years to procure a building from the city.<sup>9</sup> Before long, massive overcrowding at Langa High School was a serious problem. The average number of classes at African schools ranged between 60 and 90 (Mohamed, 1989:67). Students had opportunities for field trips and cultural activities and an inter-schools debating team was started. The principal at the time encouraged a Student Representative Council and leadership in other areas. The school continued to expand to its present day structure and now has 1 633 students and 45 teachers.

Bulumko High School, which was established in 1990, has a much shorter history. Victor Mboleka, the current principal of Bulumko, was an acting principal when he was asked by the Department of Education to start a secondary school because of the shortage in Khayelitsha. Mboleka and a few of his colleagues established Bulumko and for two years, thirteen teachers taught about 600 students in Standard 6 and 7 (Grade 8 and 9) classes at a Khayelitsha primary school in the afternoons. The school then moved to Woodstock, where Standard 6, 7, 8 and 9 classes were held at Zonnebloem Public Primary. In the second half of 1993 the school's current building was finished being built and the students moved in. In 1994, Standard 10 classes were held at the school.

Presently there are 39 teachers and 1 368 students enrolled. Bulumko has the second highest matric pass rate (73 percent) in Khayelitsha and is known as one of the best schools in the township.

Language dynamics at both schools are similar; the student body is composed entirely of African-language speakers and most interaction on school grounds takes place in Xhosa. Both schools employ a few teachers who are non-Xhosa-speaking and the principal of Langa High School does not speak Xhosa.

#### 3.2 English-language domination in the township school environment

The status of English is certainly upheld in the urban school environment, as it is sought after and used as a medium of instruction in classes. Al-

Table 11: Where students hear English most (n = 551)

	TV		Town		School		Music		Home	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	171	44%	84	22%	64	16%	58	15%	12	3%
Arrived in 1997	41	37%	25	23%	25	23%	16	14%	4	4%
Arrived in 1998	57	40%	26	18%	36	25%	20	14%	5	3%

- 49% of all students said they heard English most on TV.
- 25% of all students said they heard English most in town.
- 23% of all students said they heard English most in school.
- 17% of all students said they heard English most in music.
- 4% of all students said they heard English most where they live.

As previously stated, the public environment in Cape Town also demands that students speak Xhosa to communicate with officials: in banks, stores and hospitals; for employment opportunities, and; for higher education opportunities. (See Appendix 2.)

##### 3.4.1 Communication in banks, stores, hospitals and with officials

Despite efforts on the part of city officials to make signs and directions trilingual, Grade 10 students said that their language is generally excluded on signs and billboards and they do not expect to use it in any formal capacity in the city.

Following is an excerpt from a debate presented in the English class by four students who argued the topic of who controls South Africa: wealthy whites who own businesses or a black government recently come to power.

P1: I don't think that whites are still controlling South Africa, because whites are controlling South Africa economically, not politically.

P3: They control South Africa no matter they are controlling economically or politically. They are controlling South Africa no matter what they are doing. You make me crazy!

P2: I see that the whites still control South Africa because in many stores we still have white managers so we don't have many black people in the jobs, we have white managers.

P4: But there are many blacks. And the president is a black. If you can see the blacks, who is the president? He is a black man.

P3: Listen here, listen here. You see, *the most important language is the English. Everywhere we talk English. Why we cannot talk Xhosa?*

P4: *You want to talk Xhosa in Cape Town?*

P2: *You foolish.*

the classroom stand to advance more quickly than those who are exposed solely to Xhosa and then abruptly switch to English (Heugh, 1995:43). Another Grade 10 student who was taught both in the rural areas and in Cape Town wrote this essay at the beginning of the Grade 10 school year:

My name is Thozama. I was given this name by my grandmother, it means respect like someone who doesn't talk too much who is respectful. I was born here in the cape. I attend my primary in Trankai standard 1 & 2. In 1992 I came back to attend std. 3, 4 & 5 I never went back.

Now we are a family of five. My mother father, two brothers. My mother was not working for about 6 months and it was very hard she had to borrow money and had debts, my father was in Transkei that time. Now they are both working. I live in J section we next to a tavern so it not very nice, there's lot of noise almost everyday and people who drink the have guns people are being killed. I have seen a dead person too. It's not a dirty place but there is lot of violence. My mother has hopes for me she wants me to go to Fort hare university and she is convinced that I'm going to pass my matric because I've been doing well since primary I've never failed. She is working hard to give me education something she didn't have.

The wide disparity reflected in these two essays reveals a common trend found in urban classrooms. Thozama, who has done extremely well academically, has progressed more rapidly than Siyabulela, whose vocabulary and oral comprehension skills in English have improved more slowly throughout the year. One possible explanation for the different levels of language proficiency is Thozama's foundation in Xhosa at an early age and her later exposure to English in the classroom and the public environment.

### 3.4 The language environment of Cape Town's city centre

Students have acknowledged repeatedly that they do not expect to speak or hear Xhosa while they are in the city of Cape Town because the environment was created and is controlled by English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Only four percent of students who were born in Cape Town said they heard Xhosa in the city, while 17 percent of those who have moved here since 1997 said they heard it in the city. (See Table 12.) By contrast, 22 percent of those who were born in Cape Town said that they heard English in the city, 41 percent of those who moved to Cape Town since 1997 said they heard English in the city. Students rarely hear English where they live; only six percent of all 551 students reported hearing English in their communities. Students chose two out of five answers when responding to the question of where they hear English most (Table 11).

though school assemblies and announcements are in Xhosa at Bulumko, and at both high school students take Xhosa and Afrikaans as subjects, all of the major subjects are taught in English. For many of the students, this erects a high learning barrier.

Despite many of the students' obvious learning difficulties in English, 65 percent of 551 students surveyed said they did not want their classes to be taught in Xhosa, while 29 percent said they did. Similar numbers indicate that the students prefer to have all of their learning materials in English: 58 percent said they did not want their textbooks in Xhosa while only 34 percent said they did. Sixty-three percent of all students said they did not want to write their exams in Xhosa and 29 percent said they did. The following tables show the opinions of students who were born in Cape Town and those who have migrated since 1997.

Table 6: Do students want to be taught important subjects, like Maths, Accounting and History, in Xhosa?

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Born in Cape Town	53	28%	127	67%
Arrived in 1997	16	25%	45	71%
Arrived in 1998	24	31%	45	58%

Table 7: Do students prefer to have textbooks in Xhosa?

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Born in Cape Town	63	33%	112	59%
Arrived in 1997	22	36%	39	63%
Arrived in 1998	18	23%	50	64%

Table 8: Do students prefer to write tests and exams in Xhosa?

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Born in Cape Town	46	24%	131	69%
Arrived in 1997	17	27%	44	70%
Arrived in 1998	15	19%	52	67%

Interviews with students indicate why they prefer to learn through the medium of English.

*Interviewer:* Do you think you learn better in your first language?

*M:* (translation) He said yeah, because it's his language so he learns easier.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that people who learn in their first language learn better than people who don't learn in their first language? Do people who speak English as their first language learn better than you do because Xhosa is your first language?

*M:* (translation) They both think that the white kids have an advantage there because they are taught in English, which is their first language, but 'M' also said that because English is made important, it is also important to learn in English.

*Interviewer:* And then just one last question. Do you think that people who do not know English are uneducated, *ngamaqaba*?

*M:* No.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that English is valued more than Xhosa?

*M:* (translation) Because of having to find jobs in English, English becomes important, because of that.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that Xhosa should be more valued?

*M:* (translation) Yes, because people usually tend to think that if you don't know English you're uneducated, *ngamaqaba*. He thinks that if Xhosa is valued more than those people who don't know English will also feel valued because they know Xhosa and Xhosa is used and has more worth, then there wouldn't be people who are called *ngamaqaba*. Because maybe their circumstances made them not to be educated.

Because of the status English holds, these students perceive education in English, instead of Xhosa, to be synonymous with the 'better' education that English- and Afrikaans- speaking students are receiving.

English is very more important than Xhosa and other African languages in Africa. Because of its important it every body's second language, but not to white people for them its their first language. If you can go to other countries you can here the they are their own language. But also english as well. You can't go no were if you don't know English because in our school we learn English. Our mothers and father work for white people they talk English.

If you don't know English you don't know nothing...We must learn about English. If you know how to talk and write in xhosa there is nothing more because in Xhosa you go nowhere without English. English is very-very important because our little sisters today go to white school because they want to learn more with English.  
(Fundiswa J.)

Another student wrote:

overcoming the constraints imposed on classroom communication are less readily available (Ellis, 1992:241).

Their level of comprehension and ability to write in English depends upon the exposure they have had to English throughout their schooling. Students' preferences with writing in English or Xhosa depend on their level of language ability, which often depends upon when they arrived in Cape Town. The following table shows statistics on students' writing preferences:

Table 10: Languages that students prefer to write in

	Xhosa		English		Afrikaans	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	54	29%	124	66%	4	2%
Arrived in 1997/1998	82	58%	50	35%	0	0%

Because many students were educated in the Eastern Cape with little exposure to English, they cannot compete academically with Cape Town-born students in classes where exposure to English is greater.

### 3.3.1 Language difficulties within the classroom

There is a vast difference in English language speaking ability between students who were born in Cape Town and students who have migrated from the rural areas. In one of my classes, ten students out of fifty-two arrived from the rural areas in the Eastern Cape in 1998. Although education in Xhosa in the rural areas certainly helps their cognitive abilities to develop, students say that schools there fail to equip them with language skills that help them to get jobs and attend higher education in South Africa's urban environment. An introductory essay from one student who came in 1998 reflects his level of English:

My name is Siyabulela. I was born in 1979 at Transkei. I am a boy. My family stay at Transkei, my brother work at Gauteng and He was born in 1970. My sister makes a motor at Pretoria. Here I am stay with my parents. I am a soccer at school I started in 1986 at Engcobo (In the Eastern Cape). My father work at garage my mother at Hospital she is a nurse. I am in Std. 8 at Bulumko High school in Khayelitsha. We are a family of five.

Siyabulela has had little instruction in English during the course of his education and thus has difficulty coping in township classes. Like many recent migrants who were educated in the Eastern Cape, with little exposure to English, he cannot compete academically with students who were born in Cape Town and have been taught in classes where English is often used. Students who have both Xhosa and English language instruction in

I think as we are the students we must know English and other languages. And you can't get a job in whites or Afrikaners without English, and you can't be a teacher, singer, director, president etc without English. English is very important in South Africa. The children at school they want to learn languages.

You can't teach a Biology, History, Geography, English ect about your language inschool like Xhosa, Sutho, Afrikaans, etc. Because English is more important in Education. We must learn language more expecially English.

But I don't say other languages are not right at all in South Africa are right, and I don't sa throw out your language Because English.  
(Zanele S.)

The argument that African languages do not have the vocabulary to relay technical and scientific terms has long been used in language-planning discussions about using African languages as media of instruction. However, the counter-argument articulated is that terms can be developed in African languages the same way they were developed in English (Groenewald, 1995:382).

Within the classroom, code-mixing during instructional time reveals that Xhosa has borrowed many words from English. This is not unusual in most situations in Africa. A report published by NEPI found that:

In post-colonial Africa many children respond to the demands of learning in English, French or Portuguese by relying on rote-learning, unstructured guessing and code-mixing. (In the sense in which it is used here, code-mixing refers to language mixing within a sentence, as distinct from alternation of longer 'chunks' of utterances which are in different languages). What happens typically is that children do not develop oral and written skills in the second language by the time they leave school and are therefore not able to use it to advance themselves after they leave school. (NEPI, 1992:49)

The borrowing of English words and adapting them to Xhosa spelling and pronunciation allows business economics, history, geography, biology, physics and other major subjects to be taught predominantly in Xhosa so that the students readily understand the information they are absorbing. In the classroom, but for the Xhosa and Afrikaans language classes, all writing is done in English. This severely impacts on students' abilities to express themselves in writing (which is evident by the level of ability in the essays published here) and also hinders the oral communication that takes place. English-medium instruction, while sought after, limits the interaction and creativity that is essential in the process of learning. English is a foreign medium for both teacher and student (in most cases), yet the resources for

I think english is very important than Chos because if you find the job you will go to the shop, in the shop you will speak english there not xhosa cause its not a black person. An now in this days you will not see black people speaking Xhosa you will see that they mix english and xhosa, xhosa is only speaking in rural areas.

English is more important than xhosa because if you are at school the teachers at school teeth with english not xhosa. Some children go to the coloured school to learn some more english and other subjects. There their teachers teach them with english. You will not see in Coloured school the teachers teaching children with xhosa even blacks. They teach with english. Even in their homes they speak english not Xhosa. That is why I say English is better than xhosa. (Nomawabo S.)

English retains status in the classroom in part because it is the school's official medium of instruction. Apart from the larger spectrum of job opportunities, access to the public environment, popular media and English as an international language, the immediate day-to-day circumstances within the school environment determine that English is necessary to learn lessons.

First of all, my opinions are that English is very important than Xhosa and other African languages because English is the first language of South Africa.

And also in schools we use English in our Subjects like History, Geography etc. If you want a job you must know how to speak English, because where ever you go there's English. Let's say you come from a schools (High School) where there's no one speak it and there's no teachers who teach it at your school, and now you have decided that you want to go to school where there's English, It can be difficult for you to go to that school, because maybe you are looking for University, the thing that they going to ask you is that were do you come from or which High School are you coming from, So you going to shut you mouth and don't response to the question, and they can't take you inn. For your said, because your going to study Biology and other languages, in English and you sport you only know maybe Tswana, there's no teacher who teach Biology in Tswana. So you must learn English for you sake because it's going to help you at the end of the day when you looking for Jobs, Schools (white) in other school they interview the person before they take the person in, and they interview the person in English.

So its good for the person to learn English more than Xhosa and other languages. But I'm not saying that you must not know [tradition language] for Mother tongue. (Ncebakazi N.)

As English continues to dominate the urban high-school environment, students will continue to believe that they are gaining a 'better' education. However, after a year of teaching I came to understand that the main barrier to students' learning and cognitive development is language: all of their subject material is in English, exams are in English and English is the official medium of instruction; therefore teachers are not required to teach in Xhosa.

### 3.3 Language dynamics in the classroom

As a non-Xhosa-speaking teacher, classroom discussion with me was in English. Only towards the end of the year did I begin to understand conversations and questions directed at me in Xhosa. It is in fact rare for Xhosa-speaking teachers to communicate solely in English with Xhosa-speaking students. For the most part, classroom instruction and all informal conversation take place in Xhosa. A Langa High School student, who attended an ex-House of Assembly school for several years, said he came to Langa High School to learn Xhosa better, because he felt that he was losing his first language. The student, who is fluent in English, says he doesn't want to be taught in English, because he knows English better than Xhosa. He says he is speaking Xhosa more easily now because he is taught in Xhosa at Langa High School. As my subsequent interviews depicted, this student's desires are the exception.

Having observed Grade 10 English classes at Langa High School, I noted the continuous code-switching between English and Xhosa during the class periods and particularly that explanations were in Xhosa. Class notes were written on the board in English but nearly all of the teaching was in Xhosa. Informal interaction between students was in Xhosa, as was informal interaction with teachers. Likewise, at Bulumko the majority of classroom interaction was in Xhosa. However, students whose English is minimal said that often the teachers do not code-switch in the class (they speak only in English), and that Xhosa is not respected in the classroom.

*Zi:* (translation): When the teacher is teaching in English, let's say he's teaching history, they will ask the teacher the question or they will tell the teacher that they don't understand and the teacher will explain in English and then they will tell the teacher they don't understand, the teacher should explain in Xhosa, and the teacher most of the time will ignore them, and tell them they should practice their English.

*Interviewer:* So Xhosa is not respected in the classroom?

*A:* (translation): Yeah, it's not respected in class. As a result, they don't want to ask, even if they don't understand.

*Zu:* (translation) Sometimes they do explain in Xhosa, when they feel like, otherwise, most of the time they use English.

Despite their difficulties learning in English, all three students present at this interview said they prefer to learn in English because they wouldn't learn the language otherwise. Language respect within the classroom has much to do with the development of attitudes towards Xhosa and English. Though Xhosa is widely spoken, English is clearly favoured. When filling out the questionnaire, students were told to pick two areas in which they heard Xhosa most. They reported hearing *Xhosa* most where they live and in school, and ranked music third on the list. They reported that they hear *English* most on television, in town, and ranked school third on their list. There was little difference in their responses depending on whether they were born in Cape Town or whether they arrived in Cape Town in 1997 or 1998. The responses of all 551 students are calculated at the bottom.

Table 9: Where students hear Xhosa most

	Home		School		Music		TV		Town	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Born in Cape Town	164	43%	123	32%	51	13%	30	8%	14	4%
Arrived in 1997	48	42%	41	36%	12	10%	5	4%	9	8%
Arrived in 1998	51	35%	42	29%	26	18%	13	9%	13	9%

- 77% of all students said they hear Xhosa most where they live.
- 62% of all students said they hear Xhosa most in school.
- 25% of all students said they hear Xhosa most in music.
- 16% of all students said they hear Xhosa most on TV.
- 11% of all students said they hear Xhosa most in town.

Of the 551 students surveyed, 54 percent say that they speak with their teachers in Xhosa and 64 percent say they speak with their teachers in English. Afrikaans is only spoken in the Afrikaans subject period. (See Appendix 2.) Because nearly all of the students live in Xhosa-language townships, they hear English and Afrikaans through the mass media but rarely have the opportunity to speak it outside of school. Hence, another reason why students think English medium instruction is more useful is because they are provided with the chance to use it and interact.

I think English is more important than Xhosa and other African languages in South Africa. Because we learn at schools and we want to know languages like English. Because if you are a student you must know English, Because English is going to help you when you want to work. If you are working in your office ect you must know languages especially English. English is very important.