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Hierarchies and coloniality: students' language ideologies and attitudes in Cape Town

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on the ideologies surrounding language that are produced by a cohort of students in their first year at a South African university, in order to investigate how dominant power-discourses are reproduced. An assignment asking students to relate their language histories reveals strong language ideologies relating to South Africa's official, and not-so-official, languages. These ideologies are surfaced through a form of critical discourse analysis, undertaken using NVivo software. The paper argues that the students' ideologies are influenced by discourses such as language hierarchies and what Mignolo (2005) calls 'coloniality'. Language attitudes on the other hand, reflect students' strong identification with their home languages, and the effects of English dominance are felt at various levels.*
Keywords: *Language, attitudes, students, effects of English dominance.*
Résumé : *Cet article se concentre sur les idéologies entourant la langue qui sont produites par une cohorte d'étudiants en première année dans une université sud-africaine, afin d'étudier comment les discours de pouvoir dominants sont reproduits. Un devoir demandant aux étudiants de raconter leurs histoires linguistiques révèle de fortes idéologies linguistiques relatives aux langues officielles et non officielles de l'Afrique du Sud. Ces idéologies sont mises en évidence à travers une forme d'analyse critique du discours, réalisée à l'aide du logiciel NVivo. L'article soutient que les idéologies des étudiants sont influencées par des discours tels que les hiérarchies linguistiques et ce que Mignolo (2005) appelle la « colonialité ». Les attitudes linguistiques, quant à elles, reflètent une forte identification des élèves à leur langue maternelle, et les effets de la dominance de l'anglais se font sentir à différents niveaux affectifs.*
Mots clés : *Langue, attitudes, étudiants, effets de la dominance anglaise.*

1. Introduction

The medium of instruction in South Africa's education system has been subject to ongoing debate since the end of apartheid. On the one hand, the current emphasis on English is attributed to its status internationally and in business, and parents and students often profess a marked preference for English medium institutions due to these factors. However, in South Africa, this preference exists in the absence of any real choices. While dual medium is encouraged in early school grades, by high school the vast majority of

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South Africa's schools are English medium, and South Africa's universities all use English as either the main medium of instruction, or alongside Afrikaans as dual medium. In addition, debates around 'standard varieties' of languages in South Africa have recently become influenced by sociolinguistic theories which suggest that the notion of national monolingualism and the existence of bounded, homogenous languages, are ideological constructs arising from processes of European nation-state building and colonization, and that these models need to be reassessed.

This is particularly pertinent in African nations where standardization was often imposed, and colonialism led to the privileging of particular (often European) languages. Calls for the reconceptualization of languages as 'repertoires' or 'resources' are accompanied by calls for the recognition of non-standard forms such as urban vernaculars (cf. Makoni & Pennycook, 2005). In terms of medium of instruction, recent developments in universities around South Africa reflect a pedagogical push towards the inclusion of African languages in curricula, and the recognition of the language resources which our often highly multilingual students bring with them.

This article seeks to understand how colonial discourses are reproduced through the circulation of language ideologies, and how this contributes to the maintenance of the status quo in medium of instruction debates. The article argues that while ideologies contribute to discourses which reproduce the power inequalities of the past, policy makers should be responding to calls for change.

2. Discourse and ideology

The objects of the analysis in this article are language 'ideologies', which are understood here to emerge from 'discourses', in the Foucauldian sense of the term. In Foucault (1976: 49), discourses are 'practices which form the objects of which they speak'. Discourse is often assumed to manifest at the level of talk or text, but in Foucault, discourse is actually the practice which arises from, and at the same time reflexively constructs, the way that society collaboratively describes a particular concept or phenomenon.

Discourses are produced through texts of all kinds – stories, statements, and representations – so it is possible to identify underlying discourses through an analysis of texts. Discourses, furthermore, are embedded in power structures (to put it differently, in Foucault, power is a flow which circulates in society and has particular discursive side-effects), and it is possible to interpret texts in the light of social and political contexts, to understand how power-discourse is at play. Foucault himself undertook analyses, through texts, of discourses such as sexuality, and criminality, in what he called 'archaeologies'. This involved analyzing the historical construction of the particular version of sexuality or criminality that we now consider to be the 'truth', and on which we base our societal practices (such as the practices associated with correctional and psychiatric institutions).

Sites common for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are the 'big discourses' - societal discourses, bound up with flows of power, such as class, gender, and race (and involving the superiority of one privileged class, gender or race). In discourse analysis, class, race and gender are discursive constructs rather than objective facts. There are many levels at which to analyse discourse, and an analysis of contemporary texts, while not exposing the historical construction of discourses, can highlight the ways in which a

particular phenomenon is currently being talked about, and from that work it is possible to interpret texts through the lens of concepts such as power, dominance, hegemony and ideology (Van Dijk, 2001).

According to Irvine and Gal (2000: 35), language ideologies are 'the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events and activities that were significant to them'. Ideologies about language often impact on social practices such as language policy, so they do have material effects, but they can be differentiated from discourses because while discourse operates at the level of practice and flows of power, language ideologies operate at the level of ideas and are consequently analysable in texts. As Dyers and Abongdia (2014: 6) explain:

Ideologies about language are of course not about language alone, but reflect issues of social and personal identity (which includes social status) and are reflected in actual linguistic practice – how people talk, what they say about languages, the language choices they make for themselves and their children, and what they regard as essential languages for both survival and advancement in terms of employment opportunities and social standing.

In the analysis in this article, I distinguish between language ideologies and language attitudes along the lines proposed by Dyers and Abongdia (2010: 123) who argue that they differ in only one area: Ideologies are constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group: i.e. they are rooted in the socio-economic power and vested interests of dominant groups.

Ideologies are 'the overarching framework within which more personal attitudes are formed' so ideology is closer to the level of discourse, while attitudes are held by individuals and 'relate more to the construction of people's individual and even group identities' (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014:16) and the relation to power-discourse is less clear.

3. Language ideologies in South Africa

South Africa is a highly multilingual country with an overtly multilingual national language framework which recognizes eleven official languages. These languages include nine African languages (Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu), English and Afrikaans. According to the 2011 census data, the main languages spoken as a 'home language' are isiZulu (22.7% of the population), isiXhosa (16%), Afrikaans (13.5%), English (9.6%), Setswana (8%) and Sesotho at (7.6%). However, many people do not necessarily use the 'standard' variety of these languages, and may speak a dialect, sociolect, urban vernacular, rural form, or mixed version of one or a combination of these languages, and may use different repertoires in different domains. In terms of education policy, while many schools have a dual-medium policy in the first 3 grades, by grade 4 the majority of South African schools are English medium, although in actual classroom practice, code-switching and non-standard varieties are also used.

While this article uses the official languages as the basis for the analysis, it subscribes to recent theory in sociolinguistics that emphasizes language as practice and rejects the 'monolingual norm'. However, in ideological terms, the practice of labeling languages as distinct and bounded entities continues.

A number of authors have written about language ideologies and attitudes in South Africa. For example, Makoe and McKinney (2014) focus on South African schools in their study of linguistic ideologies, where they argue that the post-apartheid Language in Education Policy (LiEP) has done little to shift language attitudes in terms of 'what counts as linguistic competence and capital'. They consider how 'Language ideologies and the discursive operation of power' leads to the continued dominance of English in South African education. English (specifically, 'the particular ethnolinguistic repertoire of WSAE [White South African English], which has accrued the invisible prestige of whiteness' (Makoe & McKinney, 2014: 669) is seen to be highly valued in educational contexts, and proficiency in English is conflated with intelligence, while the reverse is true of African languages and Afrikaans.

Kamwangamalu (2007) considers how English has been assigned with multiple identities in South Africa. He argues that 'besides its identity as a global language and as we-code and they-code in the sense of Gumperz (1982), in South Africa English carries other identities: it is an ideological we-code, a pragmatic we-code and a naturalized we-code' (Kamwangamalu, 2007: 263). He furthermore considers the 'consequences for the indigenous African languages' of the status of English. These include noticeable shift from African languages to English, student migrations from township to suburban schools (cf Hurst, forthcoming), and unilingualization by the state.

Oliver (2014) looks at the construction of language attitudes through an analysis of news article comments relating to the language in education policy and the introduction of compulsory Zulu at a South African university. He finds that despite ongoing promotion of multilingualism and African languages, contradictory and negative language attitudes towards African languages exist, and they are perceived to lack social and economic importance. The importance of English is affirmed in his data, where the following trends in attitudes towards English in South Africa were identified:

- English as lingua franca
- English as unifying force
- English as the language of business
- Knowledge of English opens up employment opportunities (Oliver, 2014: 488)

He furthermore argues that the news article comments show how language is used for social categorization, including racial categorization, and that there is 'a trisection of English speakers, Afrikaans speakers and African languages speakers' (Oliver, 2014: 495).

Dyers (2000) studied language attitudes held by students at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, and considers patterns of change in language attitudes and use revealed by a longitudinal study of a group of Xhosa speakers. She highlights that while the respondents 'clearly valued Xhosa', English emerged as the 'dominant, but not dominating' language (Dyers, 2000: 194). She also identified a continued rejection of Afrikaans. Regarding other 'BSALs' ('Black South African Languages' in her terminology), she suggests that the students did not hold strong opinions regarding policy.

Dyers and Abongdia (2014) compare two universities, one in Cameroon and one in South Africa, in order to trace how continued influence of powerful linguistic ideologies

leads to continued dominance of colonial languages and the marginalization of indigenous languages in both countries. Investigating the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, they state that 'At UWC, English is indisputably regarded as the most important language, with Afrikaans and isiXhosa playing supporting roles' (Dyers & Abongdia 2014: 17). This is a result of pervasive ideologies which also impact on 'subordinate groups':

> …it can also be seen how subordinate groups, on whom such ideologies are imposed, gradually start to accept these ideologies as "normal" patterns of behaviour. The use of English as MOI and also as an official language is a good example in the case of South Africa while English and French occupy the same position in Cameroon. However, it is important to note that subordinate groups also have their own ideologies and may develop counter-discourses to the ideologies of the powerful. An example of how ideologies are espoused or contested can be seen in the Soweto uprisings of 1976 in South Africa, when school children rose up against the imposition of Afrikaans (seen as "the language of the oppressor" ...). (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014:7)

Bangeni and Kapp (2007) focus on the University of Cape Town and explore the language attitudes of 15 'black' undergraduate students. They discover different attitudes emerging according to 'class' background between middle class and working class students. According to them, students from working class, 'ethnically homogenous schools enter the institution with a strong desire to preserve their home languages and home identities'. English is denotative of 'whiteness' for these students. But as they progress through university, 'institutional discourses become more dominant in students' lives', leading to 'dual affiliation to English (and the cultural capital it represents) and to their home identities'.

Similarly, Morreira (2012) conducts a study with 'black' students at the University of Cape Town, which suggests that the students in her sample have a commitment to bringing up their children as bilingual in English and an African language, that they utilise code-switching rather than shifting to English, and maintain an 'ethnic' identity based on their home language. This suggests that counter-discourses involving multi- or translingual practice may be emerging in the face of English language dominance. At present, however, this does not translate into medium of instruction policy in higher education institutions.

4. Methodology

The assignment analysed in this article was a description of the 'language history' of students taking the course 'Working with Texts in Humanities' in 2013 and 2014, a 'foundation' course on the extended degree programme in the Humanities faculty at the University of Cape Town. In total, 163 number of students took the course during the two years. Of those students, 85 gave consent for the research. The students on the course are nearly all (with only two exceptions) students who are undertaking the extended degree, which means their undergraduate degree is spread over four years rather than the standard three, and they take two additional foundation courses. The extended degree, in keeping

with many educational interventions in post apartheid South Africa, is supported by government funding and intended as a method of redress for past discrimination. For this reason, students are drawn from populations who were previously discriminated against, particularly in educational institutions, and these groups are categorized 'racially', so the majority of students in this study would be categorized as 'black', 'coloured', or 'Indian'. Two 'white' students also took the course as an elective in 2013.

The extended degree is restricted to South African students, who come from all provinces of the country; however, the majority of students are from the Western Cape where UCT is situated. The dominant languages in the Western Cape are Afrikaans, Xhosa, and English (see Table 1).

Table 1. Main languages in the Western Cape Province (Census 2011)

Language	***Number of speakers***	***Percentage of Western Cape population***
Afrikaans	2820643	49.70%
isiXhosa	1403233	24.72%
English	1149049	20.25%

To undertake the analysis, the language history data was entered into NVivo qualitative analysis software. A search was performed for each of the South African official languages, along with 'multilingualism' and the township variety 'tsotsitaal'. The search identified incidences of these words throughout all the student submissions, and extracted these incidences including the surrounding text (approximately ten words either side of the search term) to provide a 'limited context'. This resulted in a list of short excerpts from the texts for each language, but these excerpts were not necessarily full grammatical sentences, as will be seen in the examples below.

Table 2. Number of excerpts per language

Language	**Number of excerpts**
English	1025
Xhosa	446
Afrikaans	418
Zulu	134
Sotho	116
Tswana	27
Multilingual	27
Pedi	19
Tsotsitaal	17
Venda	7
Swati	4
Tsonga	4
Ndebele	2

Each excerpt therefore indicates one 'mention' of the language within the set of student assignments. As table 2 indicates, English is mentioned the most. This is because it is the one language all the students have in common – they have to pass English at high school level to get in to UCT, UCT is an English medium university, and the assignment was written in English. Equal mentions of Xhosa and Afrikaans reflect the majority presence of those two languages in the Western Cape.

These excerpts were then coded by hand for language ideologies and attitudes. The themes or codings were allowed to emerge from the data, rather than identifying ideologies prior to the analysis and then looking for evidence of them. In each case, keywords that kept surfacing were taken to indicate a particular ideology or attitude regarding the language under consideration. In the analysis, the theme name indicates the keywords, and some example sentences are included in each case. I also discuss possible contextual factors, influences and interpretations.

5. Analysis

In this analysis, the three dominant languages in the Western Cape, Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English, which received the most mentions in the texts, are each analysed in a separate subsection. The remaining official South African languages are discussed in the subsequent section, while mixed language and multilingualism are considered in the final section.

5.1. Xhosa

Theme 1: Love, pride, identity

was an English medium school. I developed my love for Xhosa and a strong dislike for Afrikaans as it was hard
home language. I've always felt pride in saying that I'm Xhosa, even though speaking it has become harder and harder over
days of their lives and that made me a proudly Xhosa speaking child since from my birth. Xhosa language was the first language that I spoke as it
so I was code switching but mostly and best speaking Xhosa. My mother only wanted Xhosa under her roof scared that we would lose our identity
were kind of like training that helped me to speak Xhosa fluently and built deep love and the pride of my.

Many Xhosa-speaking respondents spoke of pride and love for their home language. The Xhosa language is often conflated with the 'culture', as in the second example, where the student speaks of 'pride in saying that I'm Xhosa' and then moves to describing difficulties in the language without making a distinction between 'being' Xhosa, and speaking the language. It is also linked to identity, as in the fourth example where the student links speaking Xhosa to a Xhosa identity. Students often used pairs such as 'my Xhosa' and 'our Xhosa' to signal this relationship. This is in line with the findings of Dyers and Abongdia (2014) who found that

> … such discourses were frequently signalled in the data by particular lexical items with strong emotional content e.g. this English, my Xhosa... (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014: 11)

This indicates a language attitude rather than an ideology and may relate to understandings within Xhosa society of the relationship between language and personhood.

Theme 2: Language loss, mixing

the agenda in many occasions, the dominancy of English undermined Xhosa language as I used to find myself communicating with other
because they thought that the youth were losing themselves because Xhosa had now been diluted with the English language and culture
Most of my friends speak English, even my foreign and Xhosa friends speak English. At home my family mixes Xhosa with English most of the time, the world around me
primary now i had to mix a little bit my Xhosa with English as it was the First additional language. It
part of me felt that I was drifting away from Xhosa. I found myself more exposed to English as a medium
with English dominating 9/10 in all studies we did. IsiXhosa at these both schools was only taught as a language

This theme picked up on feelings of loss relating to Xhosa, although the word 'loss' was not always used. Students referred to Xhosa being 'undermined' as in the first example above, the 'dilution' of Xhosa as in the second example, or a process of 'drifting' away from Xhosa, as in the fifth example. They also described how Xhosa became 'mixed' with English, which was seen as undermining Xhosa. The ideology of English dominance in South Africa links to what Mignolo (2005), drawing on the Foucauldian concept of discourse, describes as coloniality, or the 'colonial matrix of power' (Mignolo, 2005: 10). Coloniality, he explains, refers to the 'oppressive and imperial bent of modern European ideals projected to, and enacted in, the non-European world' (Mignolo, 2009: 39). Coloniality, in Mignolo, is constitutive of modernity, and paints a history of Europe at the centre of the 'development' of humankind. This subjection and denial of all but European knowledges and languages has resulted in the 'colonial wound', 'the fact that regions and people around the world have been classified as underdeveloped economically and mentally' in the current version of modernity (Mignolo, 2009: 3). In this formulation, English is positioned as a superior language in terms of its uses and domains, while Xhosa is undermined.

Theme 3: Home language, first language, mother tongue

The terms 'first language', 'home language' and 'mother tongue' have particular inflections in South Africa where a person's 'first language' usually refers to their main language, while this may be different from the one used at home and by their family (their 'home language'), and different again from the language of their mother (their 'mother

tongue'). Students in the data used these terms in sometimes interesting ways to describe the role that Xhosa plays in their lives.

The first language I heard was Xhosa, as a result of both my parents being Xhosa speaking people.Later on I heard English, this being the
my home language because when I got home I spoke Xhosa with my parents.
The first language I first heard was my home language xhosa as a baby because it was the first language that
history has been dominated by my home language, which is, Xhosa. I grew up in a Xhosa family, Xhosa community, so the first words i could utter out of
language which was the first one i ever heard was Xhosa which is my mother tongue meaning i heard it from
Xhosa as my mother language hasn't faded yet because I learnt

There are ideologies tied up in the idea of 'mother tongue'. Dyers and Abongdia (2014: 6) identify five main language ideologies, one of which is 'The mother-tongue ideology […] the belief that speakers only have one mother-tongue'. This is problematic in multilingual contexts where a child's parent may speak two or more languages, use a wide array of resources from their repertoire, and/or speak a second language in the home. Furthermore, the notion of 'mother' as the main caregiver is not always consistent with children's experiences, and some children may speak their father's language, or the language of another caregiver, rather than the one used by their mother. Some students' refusal to use this term in the data implies a push-back against notions of monolingualism and simplistic conceptualisations of the family unit. This leads to the use of alternative terms such as 'home language', 'dominant language', and 'first language'. In the first example the phrase refers to the first language the student was exposed to, rather than to their current main language. In this sense it becomes a replacement for 'mother tongue'. However, the role of mothers was particularly highlighted in the language histories as can be seen in the last two examples.

Theme 4: Struggle, disadvantage

In the Western Cape Xhosa is often learned as an additional language by English and Afrikaans speakers in schools. Additional language speakers of Xhosa described their struggle with learning the language, although in general, attitudes towards Xhosa were positive (the first example below). In addition, Xhosa home language speakers spoke of their struggles with Xhosa as they lost proficiency in the language, particularly in reading and writing skills, due to the English medium in schools (the second and third examples). They also described how having Xhosa as a first language became a 'disadvantage' for them in their education (the last two examples).

year I was there, I took the time to learn Xhosa whereby I struggled to get the pronunciation of words correct
had never officially had any training in reading and writing Xhosa resulted in me being a joke to my cousins' everytime my aunt would write us a letter in Xhosa because I sounded like a 3 year old learning how

could never forget my roots and my language. However my Xhosa writing skills have become horrible because of lack of practice
there was no other race. The language was used was Xhosa throughout the day that was one of the disadvantages we
me. My friends and I at school we were using isiXhosa on our daily conversations, it was again another disadvantage for

The perception of Xhosa as a disadvantage is troubling, as it recalls the concept of coloniality and the notion that only European languages are valued in contemporary modernity. It also suggests that African language speakers experience material effects when they transition in to the English medium (Hurst, forthcoming). This translates into the migration towards English-speaking suburban schools from township schools which Kamwangamalu (2007) identified. Dyers (2000: v) suggests that studies have shown that 'while academics and teachers tend to agree that increased use of African languages in education is beneficial for learners, the general public perception is that increased mother-tongue education is inferior education'.

5.2. Afrikaans

The ideologies surrounding Afrikaans are the most negative in the analysis. This may relate partly to the troubled history of Afrikaans, its relation to the apartheid state, and ambiguity surrounding the status of varieties of Afrikaans spoken by the 'coloured' population in South Africa.

Theme 1. 'Kombuis' Afrikaans, colloquial, 'coloured'

between themselves and elders in a very colloquial form of Afrikaans, known on the Cape Flats as "Kombuis Afrikaans". Despite the language used among one another, my parents encouraged
in Bo-Kaap, so the first language I heard was Afrikaans. The Afrikaans spoken amongst coloureds in Bo-Kaap was not the same
area is predominantly spoken with a mixture of English and Afrikaans, "Kombuis Afrikaans". I was not exposed to this 'language' for very long
Colored accent and my knowledge and use of the colloquial Afrikaans and slang I speak at home makes my Afrikaans sound really awful in comparison.
was probably because my parents spoke a derived form of Afrikaans. To most it actually seems unrefined; it was actually nicknamed
family grew up in an area called Bonteheuwhel where "kombuis" Afrikaans is mostly spoken – a mixture of English and Afrikaans words and mostly slang. Even though he was exposed to
high school I started using what was known as Kaapse Afrikaans and mixing it with my English dialect. I also started
I also learnt that the Capetonian Afrikaans was different to the Afrikaans I had learnt growing up, Cape Town Afrikaans wasn't pure, it had a lot jargon and English words

Ideologies relating to varieties of Afrikaans seen as 'colloquial', 'derived', and full of 'jargon' and 'slang' emerged strongly from the data. This relates to two of the language ideologies identified by Dyers and Abongdia (2014:6) as the 'language hierarchy ideology' and the 'ideology of language purism':

- The language hierarchy ideology influences the division and labelling of languages. Languages can be categorised as "languages", "dialects", "patois", etc. with "languages" enjoying the highest status. Some languages also enjoy a higher status than others when they are labelled as "national languages" or "official languages";
- The ideology of language purism influences stipulations on what constitutes "good" and "bad" language usage and often appears in times of rapid social change. (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014:6)

Several examples above mention the term 'Kombuis Afrikaans' which means 'Kitchen Afrikaans', as well as 'Kaapse Afrikaans' or 'Cape Town Afrikaans'. This labeling refers to the variety of Afrikaans spoken by people classified under apartheid conventions in the racial category of 'coloured', the majority of whom speak Afrikaans and live in the Western Cape, the province where Cape Town is located. The second and fourth examples mention the relationship between this variety and the 'coloured' population group. In the third example, the student indicates their attitude towards the variety and its place in a language hierarchy by putting 'language' in inverted commas. In the fourth example, the student self-condemns their Afrikaans as sounding 'really awful'. We can see here the effects of the ideology of language purism, the belief that the 'correct' form of Afrikaans is that spoken by 'white' Afrikaners, and that any forms that deviate are 'awful', 'unrefined', not 'pure' (as stated in the last example).

Theme 2. English dominance, Afrikaans loss

speak it. Even though my parents encouraged both English and Afrikaans, English was the dominant language in my life. In university
I have lost part of Afrikaans due to the fact that I am not practicing it
I learnt to read and write in both English and Afrikaans but I always preferred English because it was the most
A-symbol every year (until my last year that is). Afrikaans had become an afterthought as well. There was actually a
parents as well as the rest of my family are Afrikaans speaking. However, my mother tongue is English. My parents decided

The dominance of English over Afrikaans emerged clearly in the analysis. In the case of Afrikaans, the majority of our students who are first language Afrikaans speakers are actually bilingual speakers of English. Within this group, English has become more dominant partly due to domains of use, for example in educational institutions as in the first example, but also through both preference, and parental choice. A number of students coming from Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds described how their parents made a

conscious effort to speak English to them at home, even though they used Afrikaans with one another (as in the final example above).

Theme 3: Despise, enforced, apartheid

a part of me at the time that believed that Afrikaans should not have been taught in schools because it was
classified as "Cape Coloured" and in the years of Apartheid Afrikaans was a dominant language, resulting in my certain family members
where colonialism brought forth the language we know of as Afrikaans which is a combination of Dutch and English. Afrikaans was enforced into English medium schools due to the apartheid
I obtained good marks at it, I have to say Afrikaans was like a nightmare for me and I detested it

Out of all the official languages, Afrikaans was the only language referred to using strong terms such as 'despise', and 'detest'. At the same time, several students make references to its role during the apartheid era and the attempts to enforce it as the medium of instruction in schools, which resulted in the 1976 Soweto uprising and a number of deaths and casualties arising from the subsequent riots. The ideological positioning of Afrikaans is still intimately connected to this history, and this may explain some of the very negative attitudes expressed.

Theme 4: Love; pride, culture

On the other hand, Afrikaans speakers' attitudes towards their language can also be very positive. Similarly, to Xhosa, students expressed love and pride in the language. Its uniqueness is highlighted in the first example, whilst the fourth and sixth examples both describe the language as 'beautiful'. It is also linked to culture by a number of students. It is not clear from these examples which form of Afrikaans students are describing – the 'standard', or the variety used by Cape Town's coloured communities.

learnt over the years and I pride myself in speaking Afrikaans as it is spoken nowhere else but only in South
I have come to accept Afrikaans as a part of my being and culture but I
English and Afrikaans are beautiful languages in both spoken word and written text
and as much as I love English I also love Afrikaans and I'm therefore looking forward to getting my degree in
I am extremely proud to be able to communicate in Afrikaans as I believe that Afrikaans still has its place in society as a beautiful but

5.3. English

Dyers (2000: iv) outlines some of the main attitudes (or ideologies) present in South Africa regarding the English language:

> …its status as the major world language; its provision of access to almost all sources of knowledge and entertainment; its dominant role in the world of work; its role as the language of the struggle against apartheid in contrast to the role of Afrikaans as the language of oppression, and so on.

Many of these ideologies are present in this data as shown in the following examples.

Theme 1. English dominance, only English, English medium

my family would speak to me in. I only spoke English when I was growing up because my family only ever
to school I was only using one language which was English. I spoke English with everyone I knew.
finished high school at Oaklands High. All these schools were English dominated although some of them were situated in Afrikaans areas
writing which I started in pre-school was done in English only throughout my academic career. There was definitely a major
out of so many applicants. Here again I am speaking English as UCT is an English medium university.
At the age of nine years, English had become my only means of communication. At this age

These examples show that for many of the students, English achieved dominance in their repertoires early in life. Some students came from English only backgrounds, while others found English dominating through the educational institutions.

Theme 2. English global, international, universal

to the university opened my eyes to the importance of English. I've now been exposed to people from worldwide and English has proven to be the global language.
To sum up, English is the best, most versatile and universal medium of communication
it would be mine too, but it is not. Because English is a universal language and most of the schools in
mother tongue. My parents knew in the near future that English will become the dominant and universal language.
say that I love my home language even more than English Language. I take English as a language that joins me with the global village
English is the international language and everyone is kind of forced

One ideology regarding English that clearly surfaced in the data was the role of English as a 'global language'. It is seen as universal, and at the same time, the final example shows how the student feels 'forced' to accommodate English due to this role. This ideology connected to English has previously been mentioned by authors such as Dyers (2000) and Kamwangamalu (2007).

Theme 3: Utility, convenience, communication

Ideologies relating to the role that English plays in the world of work came through in the data, along with a sense of English as a convenient 'utility' or 'tool' for communication in everyday life. English is seen to confer confidence, and is seen as important for success. Students also mentioned the role of English in communication across diversity, for example, in the university where many different language speakers were present, English operates as a kind of lingua franca.

There were a number of striking metaphors used by students in regards to the utility of English, such as English putting 'bread on the table'; English as the 'daily bread' of universities; English as a 'weapon'; and English 'opening doors'.

very significant part in every industry I have been to. English has helped me to put bread on the table, shaped
most of the people who played with me also spoke English so I felt it was always convenient that I knew
In applying for jobs, English and Afrikaans have been more convenient to know than Kinyarwanda
started to change when I was in high school where English was taken as an important tool of life almost in
is why it is so important for me to know English better in cases where I have to communicate with other
good for me being understood by someone, this is because English has helped me to develop some additional skills of communication
to be able to deal with the tertiary pressure as English is the daily bread of the Tertiary institutions. English is the best weapon that we can use in order
As I am very grateful to be able to use English in all kinds of way because it has opened doors
truth about our countries past. Another reason why I appreciate English is that it has given me the confidence on many

Theme 4 : Love, literature

passion because I love how you can describe things in English and the way it can be used so creatively, but
in eighth grade that I first discovered my love for English. My love for literature was brought on by my favourite
expand to knowledge of other cultural traditions and languages. Overall, English is my primary language and I do love it. It's
a few words here and there. I always loved the English language was specially drawn to the literature part of it
I enjoyed and still enjoy learning in English especially the literature part of English. The one thing I can admit to is how I

As in the cases of Xhosa and Afrikaans, students also professed love for English. In many cases, this appeared to relate to English literature specifically, and the access to

creative writing that comes with knowledge of the language. This may relate to the English Literature major offered at UCT, which several of the students were registered for.

Theme 5: Struggle, challenge

However, some students also exhibited attitudes towards English that saw it as a challenge or a struggle. The sixth example here describes how the student felt her/his intelligence being undermined by difficulties with the English language, once again recalling the colonial wound, and the notion that modernity classifies some people and regions as mentally 'underdeveloped' (Mignolo, 2009: 3). The colonial wound can also have emotional effects - students who experienced difficulties with English often described affective consequences such as feeling 'scared' or 'upset'.

When I reached high school English became a nightmare. Now it became tough and it only
to be scared I will pronounce the words wrong. With English you always scared that you going to pronounce the words
was somewhat multi lingual. At primary school I struggled with English as I felt that I had neglected it as I
I went to school I could speak both Xhosa and English, but as I'm coming from a poor background my English was not that good but as time went on I
others but I do not use Afrikaans that much now. English can sometimes be a bit of struggle at times but
just made me to undermine my intelligence as I speak English language poor. In most places, local languages like IsiXhosa are
very bad in my first year, speaking and writing in English became harder and this made me very upset at times

5.4. Other South African languages

The other official South African languages received less attention in the assignment, presumably because there were fewer first language speakers of these languages in the course. Other than Zulu, which occupies a very prominent place nationally as the largest home language, these languages also tend to be less individualized in public discourses. While students may mention Xhosa specifically, even if they do not speak it, because of its status in the Western Cape and its presence (however limited) at UCT, languages such as Ndebele, Tsonga and Venda were not singled out in the same way. They also have a smaller proportion of speakers nationally.

The attitudes that did emerge included the sense that languages such as Pedi, Sotho and Tswana were often 'mixed' with English or other languages in students' daily lives, and that speakers only had partial 'fluency' in these languages, what Blommaert (2010) would describe as 'truncated repertoires' (see next section). Yet they retained status as 'home' languages even when students did not speak them fluently. Zulu was referred to as a language used with friends, while Sotho emerged in the data as a language used primarily with family.

5.5. Mixed and township languages

Multilingualism is referred to generally positively in the data. Words that students used to relate to multilingualism include 'benefits', 'success', 'clever', 'best thing ever', 'love', 'proud', and 'country'. One the other hand, as in the first example below, students refer to 'poor' or 'partial' multilingualism.

> had no language that I spoke the best because my multilingualism was very poor; in Johannesburg I partly spoke Xhosa with
>
> same for Afrikaans and Setswana. I love languages and our multilingual country. I am confident in both my mother tongue and

As mentioned previously, sociolinguistics is shifting away from the idea of homogenized language units and monolingualism as the norm, towards a recognition that people often have access to a range of languages, a partial knowledge of many, and a receptive knowledge of others. Blommaert (2010: 103) argues that 'No one knows all of a language. That counts for our so-called mother tongues and, of course, also for the other 'languages' we acquire in our life time'. He develops the idea of a 'truncated repertoire', which involve 'truncated complexes of resources often derived from a variety of languages, and with considerable differences in the level of development of particular resources' some of which are well developed and others very partial (Blommaert, 2010: 106). Some of the students appear to have developed repertoires of this nature due to their high levels of multilingualism, particularly noticeable in students who have lived in Gauteng townships.

> way of communication and this where i also mastered my Tsotsi taal, mainly because there many of black township students who were well advanced in the Tsotsi taal slang. So it was pretty Cool. I must say
>
> few. The one language I grew love for was definitely Tsotsitaal because it included many interesting and rare terms like 'gawula'

Another product of South Africa's townships, 'tsotsitaal', a stylized register used mainly by young men when performing a 'streetwise' identity (Mesthrie & Hurst, 2013), was identified by a number of students as a part of their repertoire. The terms they used to refer to it included 'mixed up', as it is seen as a 'mixture' of South Africa's languages; 'prison', as it is seen to emanate from prison slang; 'dangerous' because of its connection to criminal activity; and 'for survival' because of the streetwise identity it confers.

A number of respondents also referred to it using words like 'quality', 'advanced', 'mastered' in reference to their skills in tsotsitaal, which can confer status in peer groups (Brookes, *forthcoming*). It is also described in terms of an in-group language using words such as 'love', and describing how it is used 'amongst ourselves' in the 'black township'. Tsotsitaal can be seen as a 'decolonial' code, as it resists the discipline of standardisation, and reverses language hierarchies in the street and township contexts where it is used. Many of the language strategies of youth, including language mixing, alternation, and the use of codes and slang, can be seen as a challenge to language ideologies such as purity, standardisation, and language hierarchies.

6. Conclusion

The ideology of English dominance in South Africa is undoubtedly linked to the discourse that Mignolo (2005) describes as coloniality, or the 'colonial matrix of power' (Mignolo, 2005: 10). English still remains the cornerstone of the education system, placing European knowledge and language at the centre of 'development'.

While students seem to be pushing back in many ways against this dominance, particularly in terms of their relationship to African languages (in this data, the sentiment expressed for Xhosa in particular), tsotsitaal, and the ways they blend English with their other language resources, local languages are still seen as inferior in terms of their utility, limited in their domains and economic significance.

Pervasive ideologies persist in students' experiences, such as the ideologies regarding language hierarchies, the inferiority of 'Kombuis Afrikaans', and notions of language purity. These ideologies emerge from discourses that serve particular hegemonic power structures in society, and help to maintain a status quo regarding the medium of instruction in South African education, the hegemony of English and the monolingual norm.

Attempts to challenge these discourses are met with arguments regarding the preference of parents and other caregivers for English in their children's education; and the preference of the students themselves for the English language medium at university, due to its global status and relationship to employability. Yet as we can see, these are beliefs or ideologies operating at the level of ideas, which emanate from the very discourses that should be challenged. As Makoe and McKinney (2014: 670) argue:

> …for some of these linguistic imbalances to be addressed, it will be crucial for policymakers (and relevant stakeholders) to critically interrogate deeply entrenched historical ideologies that seem to persist in our language policies today.
>
> Educational policy needs to be developed, which is less influenced by ideology and discourse, and more influenced by actual language practices and the resources that our students hold.

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