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The Parow community is viewed as “the others”, described by Swartz (2009) as “historically excluded identity groups” because it has a high population of immigrants. It was thus chosen for its diversity in terms of languages and cultures. Here follows a brief background information sketch of the two primary schools, whose pseudonyms are Beauty and Ethic Primary Schools, respectively. These two schools are both located in Parow.

#### **4.5.1 Beauty Primary School**

Beauty Primary School is located in a very quiet environment, away from main roads. It is found about 18kms from the main road which connects Parow to neighbouring Elsie's Rivier. This primary school opened its doors to the public in the mid-1960s with a total number of sixteen pupils. It was a white-dominated school because this area used to be seen as mostly only "white" during apartheid. During the apartheid regime the medium of instruction in this school was Afrikaans.

After 1994 the school, opened its doors to learners of all cultural backgrounds. The "white" children constitute the highest percentage of about 60%, with "coloured" learners of about 30% and 10% of "black" learners. On the school premises integration of various "races" is encouraged through the activities learners get involved in such as soccer. The school encourages the Foundation Phase learners, both boys and girls to participate in soccer matches so that they can learn important skills such as team work, participation, respect, hand-to-eye co-ordination and ball skills. Cultural activities are run under the guidance of staff members and learners are also offered the opportunity to develop their leadership potential.

#### **4.5.2 Ethic Primary School**

Ethic Primary school was founded in the early 1990s. At the time it was founded, there were 52 teachers and more than 800 learners. The school is located north-east of Parow, close to one of the longest roads in Cape Town, called Voortrekker Road. It is surrounded by big shopping centres and this makes it easy for pupils and teachers to meet and interact with people from different backgrounds.



Initially it was white-dominated with very few "coloured" learners and only "white" teachers. But it has come a long way to accommodate learners from different cultural backgrounds, now catering for about 80% of "white", 25% "coloured" and 5% "black" learners.

The multicultural and multilingual nature of the schools makes it possible for the few immigrant children who attend them to acquire English (L2). As a result some of the immigrant pupils act as language brokers, not just for their family members, but also for some of their immigrant school peers. In so doing they negotiate various identities. The two schools provide a platform for learners to share and express themselves through different languages and cultural activities.

## **4.6 Sampling and sampling techniques**

### **4.6.1 Sampling methods**

A sample is a smaller selection of individuals from the population (Neuman, 2011, p. 240). Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2007, p. 110) and Babbie (2011, p.178) confirm that there are two main methods of sampling, namely, probability and non-probability sampling methods. Probability sampling is also known as random sampling while non-probability sampling, is referred to as purposeful sampling.

In probability sampling members of the research population are chosen at random. Groups are represented in the sample in their true proportions or where unequal probabilities are used, the data is reweighted back to the true proportions. The aim is to produce a statistically representative sample, suitable for hypothesis testing. This often occurs in quantitative research to ensure that the sample group is representative of the entire population. The results may then be generalized to the entire population.

By contrast, qualitative research uses non-probability sampling as it does not aim to produce a statistically representative sample or to draw statistical inference. Indeed, a phenomenon needs to appear once in the sample (Neuman, 2011). Purposive sampling is one technique that is often employed in qualitative investigation. With a purposive non-random sample, the number of people interviewed is less important than the criteria used to select them. The characteristics of individuals are used as the basis of selection, most often chosen to reflect the diversity and breadth of the sample population. However, there are different approaches to purposive sampling some of which focus on different aspects of the sample members. For example, cases are chosen because they are considered more extreme.

## 4.6.2 Types of qualitative sampling

There are three main types of qualitative sampling: purposeful sampling, quota sampling and snowballing sampling (Patton, 2002).

The purposeful sampling is the most common sampling strategy, widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). In purposeful sampling, we sample with a *purpose* in mind. This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced in a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought according to pre-selected criteria based on the research question. For example, the study may be attempting to collect data from lymphoma patients in a particular city or county. The sample size may be predetermined or based on theoretical saturation, which is the point at which the newly collected data no longer provides additional insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Quota sampling by contrast, is a sampling technique whereby participant quotas are preset prior to sampling. Typically, the researcher attempts to gather data from a certain number of participants that meet certain characteristics for example, ones relating to age, sex, class, marital status, HIV status, etc.

Snowball sampling is also known as chain referral sampling (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 116). In this method, the participants refer the researcher to others who may be able to potentially contribute towards or participate in the study. In snowball sampling research, a small number of individuals possessing the characteristics required for a specific study are identified. The selected individuals play an equal part in helping to identify others, and so the circle may become larger (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 116). This method often helps researchers find and recruit participants that may otherwise be hard to reach.

Snowball sampling, however, has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of this sampling method is that there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of specific interest. The disadvantage of this sampling approach is that there is no way of knowing the total size of the overall population in advance. Snowball sampling also lacks definite knowledge as to whether or not the sample is an accurate representative of the target population. The targeting of only a few selected people does not always render it indicative of the actual trends within the result group. Identifying the appropriate person to

conduct the sampling, as well as locating the correct targets is a time consuming process which renders the benefits as only slightly outweighing the costs (Babbie, 2011).

#### **4.7 Selection of participants**

While purposeful sampling is appropriate for a qualitative research study, I opted for the snowball sampling method to select the participants of this study because gaining access to a big group of immigrant learners who were acting as language brokers for their parents was a bit difficult. This was due to the fact that most immigrant learners were at higher education institutions and could not be considered as child language brokers. Moreover, I was aware that not all the immigrant children in Cape Town were language brokers because some immigrant parents did not see the need for language brokering by their children as they maintained the use of their first languages. These parents and their children did not have enough to share with me because they struggled to communicate their thoughts clearly in English.

In addition, I struggled to get children who were willing to share their experiences, probably because of a lack of self-confidence in using English as a second language. I elected to use the snowball sampling method in my study because not all the immigrant children met the selection criteria for the study. The study needed immigrant children who had spent at least two to three years or more in South Africa and who were registered in primary schools. Some were too young (not yet of Grade one age) and did not have enough to share and others were very new in South Africa and could not express themselves freely in English. Also, gaining access to immigrant children registered in the same primary school was difficult. Since it was difficult gaining access to immigrant children registered in the same school, I selected children from Beauty and Ethic Primary Schools.

All five selected immigrant children were from a non-English-speaking background. Three of them are from Congo and were doing Grade one and Grade ten respectively. One is from Cameroon and was in Grade seven, while the last was a Grade eight learner from Burundi. In order to avert the further stress of finding immigrant parents, I approached their parents and teachers to request their participation in the study.

Furthermore, I live in the same neighbourhood as one of the immigrant families who have a seven-year-old girl whom I refer to here as Belleange to protect her identity. The little girl inspired me greatly as I always witnessed her language brokering situations with her mother

at home. She was anxious to perform well at school and she would ask me to assist with her homework as her parents could not help much because of their limited proficiency in English. When I decided to carry out this research, I tried going to the nearby primary schools to find out if I could get immigrant pupils to participate in my research, but I did not succeed. At one point, I decided to use university students as I came across many immigrant students at the higher institutions. But I finally decided to adhere to my initial plan of researching immigrant child language brokers as this area is under-researched, especially in the African context.

Subsequently I asked Belleange's parents to introduce me to other parents of immigrant children. Through them, I got to know three other immigrant families; two from Angola and one from Congo. I was later introduced to a Burundian family and I got myself two Cameroonian families since I am also from Cameroon. In fact, I ended up with nine immigrant pupils who agreed to participate in the study.

However only five finally participated in the interviews and four wrote the personal narratives.

One of the pupils (Grade three) did the first interview and later refused to continue participating because her parents refused. The other five simply withdrew from the study without giving reasons. I could not force them to complete the study because the consent form that was given to their parents stated clearly that their participation in this study was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. Therefore, the main participants of this study were five immigrant pupils attending a primary school in Parow, Cape Town, who spoke Lingala, Swahili, Bassa and Kirundi as home languages. The sample included two males and three females. My intention was to seek greater insight into what male and female immigrant learners thought about being interpreters and translators for their parents and other immigrants in South Africa.

The selection of participants was based on my having access to interviewing immigrant pupils who had spent at least two to three years in South Africa and who were registered in South African primary schools. The rationale was because they would have had more experience to share as language brokers in different domains in the new South African context. I also interviewed immigrant students' parents (three) and two of their teachers. To protect their identity the immigrant children were given the following pseudonyms: Claire, Dieudonne, Belleange, Pierre and Helen.

#### 4.7.1 Learners' personal profiles

For the duration of the data collection period Claire was a sixteen-year-old Grade ten Congolese girl. She was born and raised in Congo, Brazzaville and had moved to South Africa with her parents eight years prior. She could speak and understand Lingala, Swahili, English, French, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. She wished to become a diplomat and find a full-time job in South Africa or elsewhere after finishing her studies. Claire's parents had Lingala and Swahili as their home languages and so she inherited these two languages. She had had French as a medium of instruction in her early school days in Congo before moving to South Africa with her parents.

The second learner, Dieudonne, was a fourteen-year-old male Burundian Grade eight pupil. He was born and raised in Burundi, and had moved to South Africa with his family three years earlier. He spoke and understood Kirundi, Swahili, French and English. He hoped to develop a better proficiency in English to enable him to communicate in South Africa. Dieudonne had Kirundi and Swahili as home languages inherited from his parents. He had had French as a medium of instruction before moving to South Africa with his family.

Belleange was a seven-year-old female Grade one learner. She was born in Congo but moved to South Africa with her parents when she was just three years old. She spoke and understood Swahili, French and English. She worked hard at school and hoped to help her mother and other immigrants who were facing language difficulties in the multicultural South African society. Belleange had Swahili as a home language and her parents used French at home sometimes, so she learnt it as well.

The fourth learner, Pierre, was a thirteen-year-old male Cameroonian Grade seven pupil. He was born and raised in Cameroon, and had moved to South Africa four years earlier. He spoke and understood Bassa, French and English. Pierre was born to Cameroonian-Francophone parents. He had previously been in a French-dominated city. During Pierre's early literacy encounters he was exposed to French and Bassa as his first language. The lingua franca in his school life was French and he was a very competent speaker of this language. At home both French and Bassa were used. Because of emigration to South Africa he was instructed in English as it was the medium of instruction in his school.

Lastly, Helen was a sixteen-year-old female Congolese Grade ten learner. She was born and raised in Angola. She had moved to South Africa with her parents ten years earlier. She spoke

and understood Portuguese, Lingala, French, English, IsiXhosa and some Afrikaans. She hoped to be more confident in English, like her friend and cousin, Claire. Helen was born into a Congolese home with Lingala as a home language and her parents spoke French as well. But she had Portuguese as a medium of instruction as they were in Angola.

As illustrated, the learners in this study came from diverse home language situations. With the exception of Helen and Claire who had Lingala as their home language, they all had different first languages (Swahili, Bassa and Kirundi). In most African countries, kids grow up with two home languages as a result of being the offspring of ‘mixed marriages’, where parents come from different ethnic groups and speak different first languages, as in the case of Belleange, Dieudonne and Claire.

Table 2 summarizes the immigrant pupils' profiles with regard to country of origin, gender, language proficiency and age.

**Table 2: Immigrant children’s profiles**

	<b>Belleange</b>	<b>Dieudonne</b>	<b>Claire</b>	<b>Helen</b>	<b>Piere</b>
<b>Country of origin</b>	Congo	Burundi	Congo	Congo	Cameroon
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
<b>Age</b>	7	12	16	16	13
<b>First language</b>	Swahili	Kirundi	Lingala	Lingala	Bassa
<b>Second language</b>	French	French	French	Portuguese	French

#### 4.7.2 Teachers' personal profiles

As stated earlier, I decided to approach teachers of the immigrant children because it was difficult finding teachers at random to participate in the study. They were three in number, but one decided to withdraw for personal reasons. So only two finally participated in the study and they were given the pseudonyms Candice and Mr. Robin.

At the time of data collection, Candice was a forty-year-old South African woman. She held a teachers' diploma which she had obtained at Hewat Training College. She had been a teacher for fifteen years and had taught a few immigrant children over a period of six years. She spoke Afrikaans and English well. Afrikaans was her home language.

The second teacher was Mr. Robin. He was a thirty-eight-year-old Nigerian man. He held a first degree in Environmental Studies, from Enugu campus, Nigeria and a B.Ed from the University of the Western Cape. He had been a businessman in Nigeria after he graduated but had no job at the time of the research. He had moved to South Africa nine years before, and after having done small business for some time, decided to sponsor himself to obtain the B.Ed degree at the University of the Western Cape. He had been teaching at a primary school for almost three years during the period of data collection. He spoke and understood Ibo, English, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans. His home language was Ibo. He hoped to raise money to further his studies at the University of Western Cape.

What follows in Table 3 are the teachers' personal profiles.

**Table 3: Teachers' profiles**

	<b>Candice</b>	<b>Mr. Robin</b>
<b>Country of origin</b>	South Africa	Nigeria
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Male
<b>Age</b>	40	38
<b>First language</b>	Afrikaans	Ibo
<b>Second language</b>	English	English

From the teachers' profiles in Table 3 the diversity of ethnic groups may be noted. The participants are all from different countries and this influenced their responses in the interviews. The opinions of teachers count when it comes to verifying the implications of language brokering for English teaching and learning, and identity construction in multicultural classrooms. With different responses from the two teachers, I could understand how immigrant children negotiated their identities in English (second language) lessons.

#### **4.7.3 Parents' personal information**

I consulted the parents of immigrant children selected in the study and three of them agreed to participate too. They were given pseudonyms as Madam Bijoux, Mr. Abel and Madam Marina. Madam Bijoux was Claire's mother, Mr. Abel was Dieudonne's father and Madam Marina was Belleange's mother.

During data collection, Madam Bijoux was a forty-year-old Congolese woman. She had moved to South Africa with her family eight years prior to the research study. With the help of her daughter she could communicate with her customers in English and hoped to enlarge her small cosmetic business after finishing her English course. She spoke and understood Swahili, French and a bit of English. Her home language was Swahili.

The second parent, Mr. Abel was a thirty-four-year-old Burundian man. He had moved to South Africa with his family three years earlier and had hoped for a better future by taking an English course alongside a basic counselling course. He used to be a veterinary nurse back in his country and had hoped to take a professional course in future to be able to practise in South Africa. He spoke and understood Kirundi, Swahili and French. His home language was Kirundi.

The third and last parent was Madam Marina. She was a 36-year-old lady at the time of data collection. She was a Congolese woman who moved to South Africa with her family four years prior to the research study. She was a house-keeper and a mother of three children. She was still struggling with English but could express herself in simple sentences she had been taught by her seven-year-old daughter. She spoke and understood Lingala and French. Lingala was her home language.

Table 4 provides a summary of parents' profiles.



**Table 4: Parents' profiles**

	<b>Madam Bijoux</b>	<b>Mr. Abel</b>	<b>Madam Marina</b>
<b>Country of origin</b>	Congo	Burundi	Congo
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Male	Female
<b>Age</b>	40	34	36
<b>First language</b>	Swahili	Kirundi	Lingala
<b>Second language</b>	French	French	French
<b>Child's name</b>	Claire	Dieudonne	Belleange

In total, I had ten participants in the study: five children, two teachers and three parents. Claire, Dieudonne and Helen were friends. Madam Bijoux and Madam Marina were also very good friends. In the following section, the various methods used in data collection are described.

#### **4.8 Data collection methods**

According to Pole & Morrison (2003) and Brewer (2000), methods are the tools for data collection and analysis in the research process. These methods could include interactions such as interviews, questionnaires, observation and other techniques with which information is collected and analyzed. They entail becoming involved in people's activities by carefully observing their actions in order to understand the meaning of their actions and what is meaningful to them (Eisenhart, 2001).

The methods for data collection in this study comprise document analysis, non-participant observations and semi-structured interviews. These methods were activated with immigrant pupils who at a tender age had moved to South Africa with their parents for a variety of reasons. Interviews, observations and immigrant students' personal narratives were used as methods of data collection for triangulation purposes and to ensure triangulation. Chaudron (2003, p. 804) states that triangulation is well recognized as a way of ensuring validity. The data were collected in 2016.

As stated earlier, the aim of data collection was to examine the identity of immigrant children as *language brokers* in South Africa. Central to this study is how the immigrant children coped with the challenges they faced while acting as interpreters and translators for their families and friends in multilingual South Africa. I also investigated the parents' and teachers' understanding and experiences of language brokering by their children.

In the following section, the focus is on how various methods such as non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and personal narratives were used to collect data for the study.

#### **4.8.1 Non-participant observations**

Non-participant observation involves observing participants without actively participating. This option is used to understand a phenomenon by entering the community or social system involved, while remaining separate from the activities being observed (Liu & Maitlis 2010).

The observation process is a three-stage funnel. It begins with descriptive observation, in which researchers carry out broad scope observation to get an overview of the setting; they then move to focused observation, in which they start to pay attention to a narrower portion of the activities that most interest them. Finally, the selected observation 'material' is used to investigate relations amongst the elements that observers have selected as being of greatest interest. Observation should end when theoretical saturation is reached and this occurs when further observations begin to add little or nothing to researchers' understanding. This usually takes a period of days or months, but, depending on the phenomenon in question, sometimes it takes several years (Liu & Maitlis, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, observation aimed at investigating how the immigrant children in two primary schools in Cape Town constructed their multiple identities through language brokering in and out of school. As noted in Chapter one of this study, the observations also aimed at investigating how the immigrant children coped with the challenges they faced while acting as interpreters and translators for their families and friends in South Africa. The main aim was to observe the interaction of other pupils with immigrant learners when facilitating learning. I also wanted to investigate how teachers tried to explain certain difficult and new concepts to learners in the English language and whether they used other learners as a resource in terms of translation or interpretation. In other words, the observation sought to

identify kinds of support available to learners who did not speak the medium of instruction. This helped to shed light on the implications of language brokering for English (second language) teaching and learning and identity construction in multicultural classrooms.

Observation refers to methods of data generation which involve the researcher immersing him/herself in a research setting and observing the different dimensions of that setting (Creswell, 2003: p.186). According to Creswell (2003: p.188) the researcher records in an unstructured or semi-structured way, activities at the research site. The qualitative researcher may also engage in roles, varying from a non-participant to a complete participant. Hence, Robson, (2002) refers to observation as a method which provides rich, contextual data that can take various forms, such as participant and non-participant observations.

Furthermore, observation is a popular method used in almost every form of qualitative research to provide the researcher with first-hand data (Dowling & Brown, 2010; Baker, 1999). There are two types of observations, namely participant and non-participant observations. In the former, the researcher takes part in what is happening. In non-participant observation, the researcher follows the flow of events (Flick, 2009) without being involved in the situation under scrutiny (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). This study made use of the non-participant observation.

The purpose of the reliance on non-participant observation was to gain additional information about the process of translation in which language brokers were engaged. Immigrant children were observed at their homes where they tried to explain to their non-English speaking parents what their teachers had taught them at school. These observations took place for a period of six weeks.

The observations were audio-recorded and the researcher also took notes during and after the observation for data analysis purposes. Non-participant observations were conducted to gain more information on the interactions between the immigrant learners, their peers and other people with whom they communicated out of school that is, the planned and unplanned activities that took place in school during lunch and out of school.

Non-participant observations allowed me to investigate and understand how the immigrant learners in the study interacted with their peers during lunch and outside the school without getting involved in what they were doing. It enabled me to investigate the relationship between the immigrant learners, their peers and other people with whom they communicated on a daily basis. This technique also enabled me to investigate the implications of language

brokering for English learning and identity construction in a multicultural context. Similarly I took note of facial expressions and body language of immigrant pupils during plays and discussions.

Such non-participant observations also helped me to gain more insight into issues that I could not access during the interviews. This was necessary as the participants did not tell me all about the strategies they used in negotiating and constructing their identities through English second language learning and language brokering.

In this study I made use of field notes as a way of capturing the data collected from observations. In the field, I took notes to capture data; and I kept records of what was observed, including formal and informal conversations with participants, and records of interviews. Recordings facilitated gathering useful information that could not be jotted down. Dewalt (2002) describes field notes as both data and analysis, as the notes provide an accurate description of what is observed, while also being the product of the observation process. This means that observations are not data unless they are recorded in field notes.

Thus the documents such as field notes, taken during non-participant observations, gave me more information about the implications of language brokering for English (second language) learning and identity construction by pupils who were raised in a multicultural and multilingual South Africa. I was also able to understand the experiences of immigrant children as language brokers in different domains.

#### **4.8.2 Interviews**

Blommaert (2006) describes interviews as a particular type of ordered conversation formed by questions that the researcher wishes to address to the individuals for discussion. A conversation is a talk between individuals where natural conversational engagement is expected, and not an interrogation (Blommaert, 2006). Similarly, Brinkmann (2014) considers interviews to be an objective method of gaining qualitative features of human experience, talk and intersection.

Interviews are also considered to be an interchange of views between two or more people conversing around a theme of mutual interest (Brinkmann, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, 2009). However, in the field of research, Kvale (2008) and Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) define the research interview as a process where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee that is, between the researcher and the participant.

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), a qualitative interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and raises specific topics raised by the respondents.

Similarly, Byrne (2004, p. 182) contends that the qualitative interview generally refers to in-depth, loosely or semi-structured interviews which are particularly useful for accessing individuals' attitudes and values.

In this way, qualitative research interviews constitute an attempt to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning from peoples' experiences and to uncover their world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). They vary in type and are probably the most widespread technique used for collecting qualitative data (Brinkmann, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Bryman, 2008; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Baker, 1999).

Silverman (2000) identifies three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. It is for this reason that Creswell (2003) describes interviews as involving unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell 2003, p.188).

In structured interviews the researcher comes to the interview with a set of questions and does not deviate from those questions. He/she asks the same questions to all participants. In contrast to this, the semi-structured interview is carefully planned before it is carried out, but the researcher can change the order of questions, omit questions or vary the wording of the questions depending on what happens in the interview. Semi-structured interviews are often preceded by observation, and informal and unstructured interviewing in order to allow researchers to develop a keen understanding the topic of interest necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions (Richards, 2003). The inclusion of open-ended questions provides the opportunity for identifying new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand. In short, the unstructured one is the more conversation-like interview and allows for the greatest flexibility.

Nunan, (1992) claims that semi-structured interviews involve questions which can explore in depth the participants' subjective experiences. Semi-structured interviews can be conducted like everyday conversations and are regarded as an independent research method that can provide information about participants' everyday social interaction (Blommaert, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are generally characterised by an interview guide which can be either an

outline of the topics to be covered or a detailed sequence of questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In both cases, interviews are guided by the interviewees' or participants' responses (Stuckey, 2013) which allow the researcher to probe beyond the interview guide if the flow of the interview talk suggests it (Cousin, 2008). In other words, the researcher can either adapt, alter and/or add other questions to the prepared ones (Cousin, 2008). This allows for flexibility with regard to questions.

Brinkmann (2014) explains that semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge to facilitate dialogues that can be followed by the interviewer. Because of the latitude they offer to the researcher to participate in the construction of knowledge, semi-structured interviews are probably the most widely used type of interview in qualitative research (Brinkmann, 2014; Stuckey, 2013).

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews in order to give the participants enough freedom to express themselves, and to bring out their innermost experiences of using English second language for both academic and social purposes. I created a friendly environment especially during the interviews with immigrant pupils' parents so that they would not feel that they were being interrogated about their children.

However, interviews have limitations as they are sometimes biased in answers and accuracy (Creswell, 2003). This can happen when the interviewer and the interviewee are familiar with each other or when the issue under research is very sensitive. In such cases, the interviewee will fail to give the right information for fear of the unknown. In some cases, the interviewer could be biased in analysing the responses given by the interviewee. The interviewer may formulate a particular impression about an interviewee and carry this impression to the analysis of the data collected. The interviewee too may also give biased responses based on the researcher's attitude or the issue under research (Silverman, 2000).

In the case of the immigrant children used in this study, some were uncomfortable in that they felt that their interviews might be used against them even though they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality in the consent form. In such cases, I reminded them verbally about changing their names and replacing them with pseudonyms that nobody could identify. I even promised them that I would not let anyone know their exact home addresses and families. This was in line with Sieber (1992) who suggests that all identifying characteristics,

such as occupation, city, and ethnic background, should be changed to protect participants' identities.

Also, inaccurate responses can sometimes occur when the interview questions are not written down and do not follow the same order. By this, I mean that the researcher asks the questions randomly which may confuse the respondents. To prevent this confusion, my questions were written down and administered in the same order to all the interviewees. Changes occurred in cases when I needed more information that was not envisaged at the beginning of the research. Thus further questions were posed immediately to probe particular issues.

As noted earlier, I interviewed three parents, two teachers and five immigrant children. In the following discussion I provide a detailed account of how interviews were conducted with the different participants.

#### **4.8.2.1 Learners' interviews**

I started with the immigrant children's interviews from April – July, 2016. These interviews were conducted with two Grade ten learners. There was one immigrant learner from Grade one, Grade seven and Grade eight in two primary schools in Parow, Cape Town, where I did my research. Their ages ranged from seven to sixteen years old.

The semi-structured interviews elicited information relating to the experiences of the selected immigrant children as language brokers in different domains.

I asked probing questions, and in many cases, I asked the same questions in different ways to make it clearer and to get more information from the immigrant learners. I created a relaxed environment and encouraged the respondents to be free to ask questions or to state when the question was not clear.

Questions for the interviews were constructed to cover areas such as the educational background of each immigrant learner, their experience as language brokers and their social interaction. This was in order for me to understand identity construction, as illustrated in Appendix 4. The immigrant children were given full freedom to use either French or English, or even to switch between the two languages so that the deepest and most uninterrupted expression might be forthcoming.

I conducted individual interviews so that I could have sufficient time to probe and gain an understanding of each child's experiences. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes with each learner and where necessary, I gave a break of about 5-10 minutes.

At certain points, I allowed for elaboration, both on the questions and the answers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English for Claire, Belleange and Helen, as they preferred using English. I allowed some of them to use French. For example, Dieudonne and Pierre sometimes responded in French because there were matters they could explain better only in a language in which they were more proficient. In such cases, the interviews were later translated by the researcher.

I was aware of the limitations of expression that would occur during the interviews due to participants' proficiency levels in English as a second language. For example, there were moments when participants could not find the right word to express their thoughts. This allowed the participants to explain the particular events in detail and in different words. It provided me with more information for my analysis.

For ethical considerations, as indicated earlier, I have kept the identity of these participants anonymous by giving them pseudonyms. The pupils' responses were transcribed, and some of them are presented in Chapter 5.

#### **4.8.2.2 Parents' Interviews**

The reasons for the selection of parents are explained in Section 4.6 of this study. The three parents of three of the immigrant children were interviewed so as to understand their views on their children who acted as language brokers for their families in South Africa. They were parents to Claire, Dieudonne and Belleange, respectively. I made personal arrangements and met the three parents in their homes for individual interviews. Parents of the immigrant children were asked to explain their views and experiences of their children as language brokers in South Africa.

During the interviews the parents were given full freedom to use either French or English, or even to switch between the two languages so that the deepest and most uninterrupted expression could be forthcoming. The interviews were done individually with the selected parents. Two of them are from Congo and one is from Burundi. The interviews lasted for approximately 30-45 minutes.



Mr. Abel's and Madam Marina's interviews were conducted in French because they could not express themselves in English clearly. For the purpose of this thesis, their responses were translated into English by the researcher herself. However, Madam Bijoux's interview was conducted in English as she insisted it would help her improve her knowledge in the target language. She insisted on switching on her phone recorder during the interview because she wanted to keep a copy. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended to allow time for comments and to probe for further information. I used the same question guidelines for all three parents. The interviews will be fully presented and analysed in the next chapter (Chapter five).

#### **4.8.2.3 Teachers' interviews**

I used the immigrant children in the study to access their teachers. I had anticipated easy access to the teachers, but three of the five teachers refused to be interviewed. One of them told me he could only assist in identifying the immigrant children in his class, but he was not going to participate in the interview process. To my disappointment, the teachers were difficult to find and so the best I could do was to approach the teachers of selected immigrant children who were willing to be interviewed.

Two of the teachers showed interest in the interview. One was a male and the other a female. The male teacher taught Grade ten while the female teacher was responsible for Grade one. I finally interviewed the two teachers who were teaching English and Life Orientation, to find out what impressions they had about their immigrant learners as language brokers in the classroom. The teachers were asked to explain the implications of language brokering for English second language learning and learners' identity construction.

I experienced challenges in getting personal information regarding qualifications, teaching experience and language background from the teachers because they were concerned that by providing personal information they could easily be identified. I did not find anything particularly wrong with their decision because ethically, they had the right to full confidentiality. This occurred despite my assurance that every piece of information that they provided would be treated confidentially and that their names would not be disclosed (would be kept anonymous). This experience supports the notion that interview participants are human beings with their own set of rights, issues and potential problems which have to be respected (Miller, 2002). I kept the identities of my participants confidential in writing up the research report by using pseudonyms – as indicated earlier.

The teachers' interviews elicited information regarding their understanding and experiences of language brokering by immigrant children. The detailed structure and contents of the interviews are discussed in the next chapter, and the interview guides are attached as shown in Appendix 3.

The pupils' interviews were supplemented by personal narratives which aimed at understanding the in-depth feelings, thoughts and experiences of the immigrant learners. In the section that follows I present the immigrant learners' narratives.

#### **4.8.2.4 Learners' narratives**

According to Creswell (2003) documents for research may be public documents, (for example, newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports), or private documents (for example, personal journals and dairies, letters, emails). Written narratives can also be collected as data in qualitative research. Pavlenko (2002) explains that the telling of life stories in L2 may be a means of empowerment that makes it possible to express new selves and desires previously considered untellable.

Solé, (2007) explains that a personal narrative is a type of discourse which describes one's life events, though it is not just a story about the narrator's personal experience and past events. This implies that by narrating their experiences, narrators implicate themselves and try to identify themselves to others and to themselves. Narrators try to make sense of themselves in light of their various experiences thereby giving their lives more meaning. According to Mishler (1999) a personal narrative is a form of case-centred research. Therefore the immigrant children's narratives align with the case study design of this study, as noted earlier in this chapter.

The narrative form was used in this study because I realized that not all the immigrant children under investigation could actually reveal their true attitudes in the interviews and even in class, because they were not all comfortable or fluent in English. However they could write it reasonably well. Thus I wanted the pupils to express themselves freely, and so I gave them the opportunity to write either in French or English.

These personal narratives were written in the form of essays and they spent two weeks on them. These narratives helped me to identify and interpret their thoughts and feelings –those which might have been left out during the interview and observation sessions. They enabled

me to get more information on the immigrant learners' experiences as language brokers as they negotiated their identities in English.

The immigrant learners' written narratives were relevant in this study as they provided me with the language, feelings and lived experiences of the immigrant learners. They were more reliable as the learners wrote in my absence, and thus the information was unfettered and thoughtful. The learners' narratives allowed for the experiences of the participants to come to the fore (Andrews & Squire, 2008). Their narratives were like a replay of the events as they had happened, an expression of identity, a cultural trace (Squire, 2005). Through these personal narratives, their voices could be heard as they recounted or reflected on their experience of daily life in South Africa.

The other unique characteristic of personal narratives is that the stories that are narrated are not only produced by the narrators, but also shaped by others (Pavlenko, 2002). As Pavlenko emphasizes, the influence of social, cultural and historical conventions on narratives, as well as the relationship between the narrator and the interlocutor must be considered in the analysis. To acknowledge this co-constructed nature of narratives, I was conscious of the possible influence of my language choice, as well as that of my academic background on the interviews and narratives with which the participants provided me.

It is my assumption that my academic background also played a role in shaping their narratives as the five immigrant pupils and I shared a very similar background in that French is a second language to all of us. I could relate to them and I saw myself as one of them. We were non-native English speakers who had moved to South Africa for various reasons. In addition, I made them understand that I was not going to judge them for what they were talking about as I had had similar experiences too.

This reassurance helped the participants to feel more comfortable in sharing their achievements and the challenges they had experienced in South Africa as language brokers for their parents, friends and other immigrants in need. In other words, the stories that the pupils told me in the form of written narratives were representations of their own experiences as language brokers for their families and friends in a multicultural South African context. The immigrant children's written narratives formed a response to the question: "What are the experiences of immigrant children as language brokers in different domains?"

## 4.9 Ethical considerations

The term ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethikos* which itself is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means custom or character (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Ethics is a code of professional conduct and it is guided by the principles governing an individual or a group of professionals. Ethics distinguishes between behaviour that is acceptable or unacceptable. It could also be a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015).

Mouton (2001, p. 238) however, defines ethics as consideration of what is wrong and right when conducting research. What is common in these definitions is the fact that they all refer to a value statement, which is like a constitution with general principles intended to guide behaviour.

Ethical behaviour is an imperative when conducting any kind of social research and there are ethical standards declaring that researchers have the obligation to protect research participants (Ary et al, 2014). Research outcomes may have implications for researchers in the same setting or for people in the future (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). It is for this reason that Cohen et al. (2007) warn social researchers to protect people by preserving their dignity as human beings when conducting research. Therefore issues regarding informed consent (Silverman, 2010), confidentiality and anonymity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) were taken into account in conducting this study.

Informed consent refers to the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in a research process or an investigation, after having been informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions (Diener & Crandall, 1978). It demands that the researcher includes only mature individuals who can make appropriate decisions for themselves. Informed consent promotes the rights of a participant as autonomous beings who have to be treated with justice and respect (Ary et al, 2014). For consent to be given, research participants need clear information about the research before the investigation.

Information about the purpose, the methods and the intended goals of the research was made as clear as possible to enable the participants to make an informed decision to participate in this study (see Appendix 2). I provided detailed information about the advantages and possible dangers participants could encounter once involved in the research and I also gave them to understand that they had the right to voluntarily participate in the research or to

withdraw whenever necessary (Silverman, 2010). All participants reported to have understood the essence of the study and to not find it risky, and none of them withdrew from it. This implies that no participant was compelled to be part of the research and that the information on hand was gathered from participants who were willing to co-operate.

Further, I had to consider issues of confidentiality and anonymity.

Confidentiality and anonymity are crucial in any research project. The fundamental characteristic of confidentiality is that the researcher should not reveal the information provided by participants (Cohen et al., 2007), especially when issues being researched are sensitive. Cohen et al. (2007) posit that participants are likely to be vulnerable when their privacy is violated during data collection or denied after the investigation is completed. In the present research the participants' privacy was protected and no reference to their particular identities was made.

In this study, data collection was conducted strictly in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the foregoing section. Fieldwork was conducted after the researcher had obtained approval from the Western Cape Education Department and from the Western Cape and the University of the Western Cape Senate Research and Ethics Committee. This was crucial as the research entailed working with children who were vulnerable not only as immigrants, but also as young people whose dignity and rights had to be protected. It is for this reason that their parents were asked for their consent (Robson, 2002).

This study also dealt with a vulnerable group of parents who had limited literacy skills and who could not express themselves well in English. The parents were verbally reassured that all the data used in this study would be treated confidentially and kept anonymous so that it could not be identified with them and their children. In addition, they were notified about the purpose of the study, reassuring them about the safety of their children. They were also provided with information about the purpose and process of the study (Denscombe, 2003; Darlington & Scott, 2002).

To maintain anonymity and ensure that individuals' responses were disassociated from them, participants' names were not used (see Appendix 3). The researcher used fictitious names to refer to participants when transcribing information from the different participants. This was in line with Kvale's & Brinkmann's (2009) perspective of ethics. As I reflect on my research journey, I have noted that conducting this study has not been easy, although I have learnt a lot as a researcher. Below I provide a brief account of my research journey.

## 4.10 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process that challenges the researcher to explicitly examine how his or her research agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions have entered into their research (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2001). Blaxter et al. (2001) identify two kinds of reflexivity, personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity involves reflecting upon the ways in which one's own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life, and social identities have shaped the study.

Epistemological reflexivity requires an engagement and reflection concerning how the research question has defined and limited what can be found. In addition, it sheds light on the extent to which the research question has given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It is imperative for qualitative inquiry because it conceptualizes the researcher as an active participant in knowledge (re)production, rather than as a neutral bystander (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This implies that qualitative researchers must take into account their own position in the research setting and situation.

The main objective of reflexivity in qualitative research is to acknowledge and interrogate the constitutive role of the researcher in the research design, data collection, analysis and knowledge production. Reflexivity therefore, requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining outside one's subject matter while conducting research. It enables the researcher to be part of his/her study.

I decided to keep a reflective journal from the beginning of my study to reflect on my research journey. I would write ideas about my topic and how to go about gathering the necessary data, on an almost daily basis. At one point, I almost changed my topic because the first few immigrants I had met and explained my study to discouraged me. Some of them were from Cameroon, the same country of origin with me. Their claim was that it was not going to be easy to find research participants as many would not want to be ridiculed and they would be scared of saying something that may be misinterpreted by South Africans.

I was threatened that most immigrant parents would discourage their children from participating in the study because recounting their experiences as language brokers in various spaces in South Africa could cause them trouble in different social spaces.

Another issue was finding willing schools because I realized the primary schools I had identified were headed by "white" principals and I was told that they would not permit me to investigate them or their teachers. I felt bad and I was stressed about my study as I deemed Parow necessary as site for my investigation. Due to this experience, I wrote in my research journal in bold letters **“I THINK I WILL NEVER GET TO THE END OF THIS PhD PROGRAMME IF I KEEP THIS TOPIC...”**

When I finally got the letter from the WCED permitting me to conduct my research, I presented it to the first primary school I had selected. The principal refused to let me carry out my research, claiming that they already had another researcher in the school. This situation was like a confirmation of what I had been told before concerning the “white principals”. My heart was broken, but I still decided to give it a try. When I tried to explain my work, he told me his secretary was going to contact me after a week. I was very disturbed and almost thought it was because of the topic. But I did not give up. I began to think of changing the topic completely. But when I revisited my journal, I was inspired by the fact that I was also an immigrant who had faced challenges of learning English as a second language. This gave me the courage to continue with the topic, especially as no work had been done on immigrant child language brokers in Cape Town. I then communicated with my journal, imagining and writing down questions that could lead to getting rich data for my study. This was the beginning of my research journey.

I decided to carry on with my topic despite the challenges I had already faced. Following Blaxter et al.’s (2001) definition of personal reflexivity, I tried to use my personal experience to shape my study. When I asked semi-structured questions, I put them in such a way that would generate the answers for the topic under investigation, or would focus the discussion. I asked probing questions whenever the responses were not clear so that I could get better information from the immigrant children.

Epistemologically, even though I knew there were some factors that may not change soon to give immigrant families a better situation, I was impelled to shed light on some disturbing immigration issues concerning their position in the South African community. During and after conducting my study I learnt that it is not always clear whether and how research might change the lives of the researched and, most importantly, whether and how my conclusions and recommendations might alter mindsets. Though instances of racism, inequality and discrimination may be explored, the powerful may become more so and the powerless

continue to be disregarded. I retained my topic and I am proud of the contribution it might have concerning language brokering and immigrant situations globally and particularly in S.A.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a detailed account of the research design, the research methodology applied in data collection and the ethical considerations. The chapter described the research paradigms framing this study, the research setting and participants, the research activities that were carried out to collect reliable and valid data. I used various methods to achieve triangulation of the study and ethical issues were observed to achieve the aims of research.

The next chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter research methodology was presented with regard to design, sampling techniques and instruments used for data collection. This chapter also dealt with issues of validity, reflexivity and reliability. In this chapter I focus on data presentation and analysis. Raw data collected by means of interviews, observations and personal narratives are presented and analyzed.

The key themes that emerge from data analysis are highlighted in categories that align with the research questions and objectives. As a point of departure, I discuss the different conceptualizations of data analysis to illuminate the common trends in my data which are discussed in Section 5.4 of this chapter.

#### 5.2 Data analysis

Knobel & Lankshear (2004) define data analysis as a process of organizing all pieces of information systematically by identifying and interpreting their key features or relationship with regard to themes, concepts and beliefs. This involves preparing spoken data for analysis by putting it down in words and turning it into a written script (a transcript). The process of identifying significant features in data is always informed by a theory and it is directly related to one's research question(s) in order to make sense of the collected data.

Data analysis involves organizing what has been seen, heard and read so that sense can be made of what has been learned (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Kvale (1999) claim that real analysis involves developing the meaning of the interviews, bringing to light the participant's own understanding as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher about the phenomenon. There are various schemata for data analysis in qualitative research, namely, framework analysis, grounded theory, content analysis, discourse analysis and narrative analysis which I briefly describe next (Wengraf, 2001).

Narrative analysis deals with the reformulation of stories which are based on different experiences presented by people in different contexts. Narratives are transcribed experiences. This implies that every interview or observation has a narrative aspect. The qualitative

researcher has to sort out and reflect upon these narratives, enhance them and present them to the reader in a revised manner (Brannen, 2005).

Alternatively Content Analysis is the procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioural data for the purpose of classification, summarization and tabulation. Content Analysis can be done in two different ways, namely in descriptive and interpretative forms. In the descriptive form data is presented by describing it while the interpretive form deals with the meaning of the data (Brannen, 2005). Hence both Content and Narrative analysis involve the same type of coding techniques. However, while Content Analysis may be used with nonverbal material, it deals primarily with verbal material.. Narrative analysis deals only with verbal material, usually stories or accounts of personal experiences (McBride & Mazur, 2010).

As stated earlier, the other method of data analysis is Discourse Analysis. Unlike the Narrative and Content analysis, Discourse Analysis is a method used for analyzing a naturally occurring talk (spoken interaction) as well as all types of written texts. It aims at understanding how people produce and make sense of everyday social life. In other words, it looks at how language is used in everyday situations. For instance, it may be relied on to critique instances when people express themselves in a simple and straightforward way, or vaguely and indirectly. In using Discourse Analysis, the researcher must refer to the content when interpreting the message because the same phenomenon can be described and understood in a number of different ways, depending on the context (McBride & Mazur, 2010).

The Framework Analysis, on the other hand is a variant of the Content Analysis developed by Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer in Britain (UK) in the early 1990s. This form of analysis familiarizes the research with the data as it entails transcribing and reading the data. It also involves identifying themes through the initial coding framework which is developed from prior and emergent issues. It deals with the mapping out and interpretation of data which involves searching for patterns, associations, concepts and explanations in the data (Ezzy, 2002).

Contrasting somewhat is Grounded Theory, an analytic induction which starts with an examination of a single case taken from a 'pre-defined' population, in order to formulate a general statement about a population, concept or hypothesis (Brannen, 2005). The researcher then examines another case to see whether it fits the statement. If it does, a further case is

selected but if it does not fit, two options may be considered: either the statement is changed to fit both cases, or the definition of the population is changed in such a way that the case is no longer a member of the newly defined population. Then another case is selected and the process continues. This method is only for a limited set of analytical problems: those that can be solved with some general overall statement (Egger, Spark & Donovan, 2005).

While there is a close relationship between these analytical frameworks, for the purpose of this study, I adopted the Framework Analysis which sits within a broad family of analytical methods often termed Thematic Analysis. In Thematic Analysis one has to identify commonalities and differences in qualitative data, before focusing on the relationships between the different parts of the data, thereby seeking to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes. One of the advantages of Thematic Analysis is that researchers' interpretations of participants' experiences are transparent (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Qualitative approaches are to a great extent diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003), so Thematic Analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis because it provides core skills that are useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Holloway & Todres (2003, p. 347) identify "thematizing meanings" as one of a few shared generic skills across qualitative analysis. For this reason, Boyatzis (1998) characterizes Thematic Analysis not as a specific method of data analysis but as a tool to use across different methods.

Another advantage of Thematic Analysis is its flexibility as it allows the researcher either to collect all the data and then analyse it or to do data analysis during the collection process (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Thematic Analysis can be understood as a means of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). It helps to organize the data, provides rich detail and is particularly relevant for narrative interviews as the story-teller reports those features of the event that are relevant to his or her perspective on the world. As narrative interviewing and observation are techniques for eliciting stories (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), Thematic Analysis can be helpful in grouping these stories and life events which the narrator provides. Through its theoretical freedom, Thematic Analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool which can potentially provide a rich and detailed account of data. Hence I chose it as the most appropriate analytical tool for my study.

In the following section, I provide an explanation of how I used Thematic Analysis in this study.

### **5.3 Relevance of thematic analysis in this study**

As highlighted earlier, in this study data analysis is informed by the qualitative research design. Henning et al., (2004, p.102) argue that qualitative research data analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships in order to make sense of it. In the case of this study, the data collected by different techniques such as interviews, observations and immigrant children's personal narratives are interwoven in order to give a coherent account of the data or research events. The aim is to uncover emerging trends and to understand the bigger picture by using the data to describe the phenomenon and to attach meaning to the events. Hence Thematic Analysis is an essential method for reporting meaning and for capturing this in the experiences of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis resonates with the research objectives and the data collection methods stated in the previous chapter.

It has been noted however, that data analysis is the most vulnerable aspect of the qualitative research process because in analyzing data researchers are alone with their thoughts, and they play a central role in shaping the research outcome (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). To control this limitation the use of Thematic Analysis in this study was also informed by the "voice-centred relational method" as described by Mauthner & Doucet (1998, p. 1).

The voice-centred relational method deals with exploring individuals' narrative accounts in terms of their relationships with themselves, their relationships with other people around them and their relationships within the broader social and cultural contexts wherein they live (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 9). This method emphasizes human relationships which means the voice of the self ("I") is represented in the account of personal experiences. The voice-centred method was used in this study to project the immigrant children's perceptions, their voices and their understanding of the world or the South African context in which they live. This implies that the immigrant children's voices were represented in their various experiences of language brokering in the South African context.

After collecting the data by using recorded interviews, the data was transcribed as the first step in preparing and organizing the data for analysis (Creswell, 2003). The interviews were transcribed verbatim to avoid losing any valuable data. This aided in preparing data for

analysis and theorizing (Lerner, 2004). For easy access and navigation between the data, the transcribed data was coded.

Coding is the first step in the conceptualization of the data and it is seen as a key process that serves to organize the copious transcripts that were created from the recordings (Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p. 443).

In order to address the research questions stated in the first chapter of this study, data was coded into themes. The codes are useful as they are most often a word or a short phrase that signals an important symbolic, cumulative, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a specific portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). Language-based or visual data means video, audio recordings or written notes. This implies that coding is primarily an interpretive act because once the information has been gathered the researcher then assigns 'a word or a short phrase' to represent sections of the data. Then the researcher examines and categorizes the codes to see what patterns and theories emerge. In this study, these codes made it easier to group elements of the same narrative and subsequently to formulate relevant themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Searching for themes began with collating the coded data which led to a list of different codes identified from the data set as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). I analyzed the interviews alongside the written narratives in order to get an in-depth view of the participants' experiences of language brokering and identity construction through English (L2). I then interrogated the comments in narratives and the responses to semi-structured interview questions so as to compare the participants' experiences. In this way, I was able to make direct comparisons and draw conclusions from the triangulated data. The resultant codes led to the subsequent summary of topics together with the following broad themes that correspond with the research questions:

- 1) Immigrant children as language brokers;
- 2) Parents' experiences of children's language brokering;
- 3) Teachers' views on language brokering.

In the next section I present data that corresponds with each theme. Each theme is discussed under sub-themes or categories as suggested by Henning et al. (2004).

## **5.4 Immigrant children as language brokers**

Under this broad theme– Immigrant Children as Language Brokers – four interrelated sub-themes emerged. These sub-themes emphasize the children’s emotional state as language brokers. They uncover how children perform language brokering in various social domains. Finally, they highlight the hegemony of English (L2) in the language brokering process. Therefore, the main categories that describe how immigrant children performed language brokering are as follows:

- 1) Language brokering as an emotional activity
- 2) Spaces for language brokering
- 3) Schools as sites of language brokering
- 4) English hegemony and language brokering.

These sub-categories are discussed in detail in the following sections. To illuminate the key issues that support each category, excerpts from the raw data are provided, where necessary.

### **5.4.1 Language brokering as an emotional activity**

During the semi-structured interviews immigrant children were asked to explain their experiences as language brokers in different domains. Data collected from interviews showed that four out of five of the immigrant children were conscious of their role in helping their families and friends in South Africa. Data from interviews and personal narratives indicate that four immigrant learners played a significant role as translators across different languages. It should be borne in mind that translation is an aspect of language brokering (Orellana, 2009).

For example, the youngest participant (Belleange) explained that whenever she went to the shops, social gatherings and meetings at school she had to perform the role of language broker. She expressed her feelings as a language broker as follows:

I feel fine helping mama ...then I'll be very happy she understands after.

(Belleange, interview, 20/04/2016)

The foregoing excerpt reflects the child's positive feeling as a language broker. In other words, she finds the experience exciting and so reports positive feelings about her language brokering performance. For instance, she added:

...I also enjoy talking to my siblings in English ... I do it so they can be proud of me... I like being a translator to my family and others who are in need.

The fact that this child uses words and short phrases like "enjoyed" "talking with siblings in English" "being a translator to my family and others...in need" shows that she acknowledges that she belongs to a particular community which lacks certain language skills such as English language competence. Therefore English is treated with high regard, and proficiency in it seems to be a marker of high status. Hence, those who lack proficiency in it are proud of those who have it at their disposal. Language brokering involves communication which is a language skill. So, the more one talks, the more he/she gains speaking skills and confidence to be able to perform better not only as a language broker, but also as an English speaker.

However, in another interview Belleange explained that she was unhappy because she could not help her father due to her lack of understanding of "big English words."

I feel bad not helping papa with his work paper ...I couldn't understand the big English words...

(Belleange, interview, 20/04/2016)

The above excerpt seems to suggest that while Belleange acted as a language broker for her parents, she had a limited vocabulary in English. This could be attributed to her young age and her few years of exposure to English. She was seven years old and she had arrived South Africa only four years prior to the interview.

Literature on child language brokering confirms that young immigrant children like Belleange could serve as language brokers for families and friends. In their study of migrants in the US, Morales & Hanson (2005) found that language brokering starts from one to five years after entering the immigrant country and the child may be as young as eight or nine years old. Language brokering not only enables children to translate information and communicate things to their parents but also aids in developing an understanding of cultural practices and norms (Weisskirch, 2010).

Belleange's proficiency levels in English – which still seemed underdeveloped – could also be explained in relation to Cummin's (1989) Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). As noted earlier in this study, Cummins (1989) states that students' proficiency in reading academic texts, termed Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) lags significantly behind their oral proficiency, termed Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

(BICS). In the case of Belleange, her BICS which takes two to three years to develop (Cummins, 1989) is not a problem since she could communicate orally in English. The problem seemed to be with the CALP which was not yet fully developed as she was still struggling with written texts. She could not help her father with paper work because she did not understand the “*big English words.*”

In the same way, the sixteen-year-old Claire explains how proud she is to be a language broker. She indicates that she does not do language brokering for her family only, but for all immigrants who face difficulties in communicating due to lack of English proficiency:

It is a pleasure for me to help explain things in English to my family members and others and also explain to them what is said in English...I feel honoured when I receive just a “Thank You” after helping people understand what is said...

(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

She indicated how she facilitates communication by acting as a language broker for other immigrants.

Almost every day, I come across immigrants struggling to pass a message through in the little English they know... It’s embarrassing when one feels impotent because one doesn’t know the language. I help translate wherever and whenever I can and I am glad to be of help

(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

The foregoing excerpt shows how immigrant children act as language brokers across space and time in their host country. Claire uses the expressions, “I help translate”, “wherever” and “whenever”, to better explain how this happens. From Claire’s responses to the interview, it can be deduced that home language maintenance is a linguistic asset in multilingual settings. Language brokering may serve as a means of preserving home language competence among children (Tse 1995). Maintenance of the home language appears to be a means of sustaining positive relationships amongst immigrants in a new country. Claire's home language is Lingala which she used everywhere after she had just arrived in South Africa. Her Congolese friend who was born in South Africa and could speak English helped her to understand English by translating information from English to Lingala. She also introduced her to her English-speaking friends from whom she could learn English. Subsequently Claire mastered



English and she started to explain things in English to her mother and other immigrants who were still learning English. This happened at meetings in schools or in other social gatherings.

Claire was motivated by her family and other immigrants she brokered for. She felt very positive about life and her future as she was also recognized by her school authorities as hard working and a good language broker.

In the last excerpt, Claire expresses positive feelings about being a language broker for her family and others. Affirmation by other immigrants motivated her to do better in language brokering for her immigrant community in South Africa.

Belleange's and Claire's positive feelings can be understood in relation to Lave & Wenger's (1991) Community of practice (COP) framework which shows a strong link between the act of learning a second language and the community in which the learning is actually taking place. This concept is a perspective that locates learning in the relationship between the person and the world; at its centre is how the social and the individual constitute each other. Lave & Wenger's (1991) COP framework is included as part of the Poststructural Approach to second language learning identified by Block (2007) and other scholars (Lantolf, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Communities of Practice (COP) by Lave & Wenger (1991; 1998) is a prominent concept in the study of language learning as a social practice. Wenger (2006: p.1) defines Communities of Practice as groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

In this study, firstly, Claire reveals passion in the manner she describes her feelings for example, to be "proud" and to "feel honoured." Secondly, Claire identifies herself as part of a COP where language brokering seems to strengthen her relationship with other immigrants, and it gives her a sense of fulfilment for being of assistance to the immigrant community, as illustrated in the excerpt.

These two children's utterances seem to imply that English is a prestigious language which affords or cultivates high self-esteem in the person who speaks it. This relates to Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) works which draw attention to the importance of power in structuring discourse with interlocutors who hardly share equal speaking rights.

Bourdieu (1991) argues that the value attributed to speech cannot be understood in isolation of the speaker. And the person who speaks cannot be understood as being apart from the larger networks of social relationships, many of which may be unequally structured. Legitimate and illegitimate speakers are distinguished by their right to speak and their power to impose reception (1977, p. 648).

Bourdieu (1991) considers the use of language as a social and political practice in which the value of an utterance and its meaning is determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks. In this case study, Claire is considered as a person of power and high status as she can understand and speak the language of high status in South Africa namely, English. The compliments and appreciation she receives from other immigrants motivates her to learn English. In this way, she can negotiate and construct a new identity through English which is seen as a prestigious language, not only in South Africa but across the globe.

Similarly, Pierre who was thirteen years old during the interviews expressed joy in helping family members and other immigrants. He had this to say:

I lack words to express the joy in me knowing that my mother and siblings can now go to the shops and feel free communicating with anyone now because I always make sure I explain things to them in the best English I know...My mother always says I saved them from embarrassment...

(Pierre, interview, 28/06/2016)

Interestingly, Pierre switched to French to emphasize his good feelings:

*Permettez-moi de vous dire que j'ai une joie immense en moi que les membres de ma famille peuvent mieux communiquer avec tout le monde ici en Afrique du Sud grâce à moi...*

(Pierre, interview, 28/06/2016)

Permit me to tell you that I have an immense joy in me that members of my family can communicate better with everyone here in South Africa thanks to me ...

(Researcher's translation)

In Chapter two of this study the point was raised that learning a dominant language like English may undermine the minority language and culture of the immigrants (Baker, 2003). However, in the case of my study, perceived bilingualism is regarded as an asset. In the foregoing excerpt, Pierre demonstrates pride in L1 which is the French language. He strongly identifies himself with French. For him the positive feedback on the proficiency of English clearly brings out the significance of bilingual competence. Pierre's identification with French reminds me of Makalela's (2014) work, where attention is not only on languages as social constructs but also on the users of these languages who attach their sense of being to these languages and identify with them.

Language systems in Makalela's (2014) study are conceived of as fluid and dynamic constructs of multilingual speakers who utilise these systems to perform their personhood. This implies that speakers choose who they want to be through the language(s) they use. It thus follows that bilingual and bicultural people could be described as having fluid identities, possessing the ability to activate a set of distinct concepts or mental frames, which include the various aspects of their identities (Raguenaud, 2009). An immigrant child who is bilingual, therefore, can choose to be identified with a particular language at a particular time or situation.

In addition, Pierre expressed the willingness to improve his level of English as follows:

I don't intend letting anybody or anything stand on my way of becoming a better English speaker...I will do anything to have the best level of English for a better future...Even if it means asking my dad for permission to have extra classes with my white friend who always comes among the first three in class (Pierre, personal narrative, 01/09/2016).

In this excerpt, Pierre is highly motivated and would want to use other methods to improve his competence in English. Interestingly, he mentions the "white" friend's assistance: an element of English dominance and identity construction is apparent in this reference. Pierre uses English to negotiate and construct his new identity.

Ratele & Laubscher (2010) affirm that in South Africa, race is historically positioned as a pivot on which power is balanced. In modern society whiteness has maintained this weight. This has made it possible to use any trait of whiteness in blacks as a signifier of dominance and a measure of power.

Pierre's refusal to speak local languages, and his opting for English, might also be associated with English dominance or superiority. This may lead to subtractive multilingualism because he might gradually lose Bassa and French as he puts more effort into improving his English. Furthermore, the assistance Pierre expects from his "white" friend places his friend as the "knowledgeable other," scaffolding the less knowledgeable one or newcomer as discussed in relation to one of the concepts under Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory.

Scaffolding may be considered as tutorial behaviour that is contingent, collaborative and interactive (Wood, 1988, p. 96). Behaviour is contingent when an action depends on, (influences and is influenced by other actions. It is collaborative when the outcome is jointly achieved – whether this is a conversation or the solution to a problem. And it is interactive when it includes the activity of two or more people who are mutually engaged.

Pierre taking "extra classes" with his "white" friend is like having a tutorial through which more understanding is gained through interaction. Illuminating this point Donato (1994) explains that scaffolding occurs routinely as learners work together on language learning tasks, and therefore it appears useful to consider the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in a social context. This implies that learners can mutually assist and scaffold each other's performance in the same way that experts scaffold the progress of novices. It suggests that peer interaction might provide language learners with various learning tasks or environments. Through such interaction scaffolded help from peers could facilitate improved performance.

Swain (2000) also supports the importance of a collaborative dialogue and a knowledge-building dialogue, as language use mediates language learning. Swain regards language as a mediating tool and explains how language helps knowledge-building, as shown in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978). Swain (2000) explains the role of language in knowledge-building by showing how language mediates learning in areas such as mathematics, science and history.

In the case of second language learning, it is dialogue that constructs linguistic knowledge and allows performance to outstrip competence. He explains that language learners construct linguistic knowledge and attempt to solve linguistic problems through joint efforts and it is this collaborative performance that moves the learners beyond their current cognitive and linguistic states. This joint effort is referred to as the language learning process. Pierre would like to jointly work with his "white" friend who always "comes among the first three". He

believes that by working with his friend he will eventually perform better in school and learn English.

Helen who was sixteen-years-old expressed similarly strong positive emotions being a language broker. She recounted:

...Eish, there were instances my parents, particularly mama, would not open her mouth until we get back to the house...she may still not be perfect in English now, but I'm proud of the fact that she can talk to people...she says it is thanks to me, her "English translator and saviour"

(Helen, interview, 30/06/2016)

In her personal narrative Helen expresses her desire to learn more so as to be of greater help to her family and other immigrants:

I admire my friend Claire as she is always quick to translate things for others without hesitation...I know how to translate too, but I need to learn more to be fluent and fearless like her...I'm proud of being able to help translate too, especially as I know my parents have sacrificed a lot and would want me to be the best

(Helen, personal narrative, 20/08/2016)

In this excerpt Helen's motivation is further increased by her admiration for her friend, Claire, whom she considers as a better language broker. She uses expressions such as "I admire my friend, Claire", and "I need to be fluent and fearless like her". These illustrate that she has both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English in her new context.

The data presented here clearly indicates that four of the five immigrant children who participated in the study expressed good feelings about fulfilling the role of language broker for their families. Thus the affirmation from family members motivated them to adopt effective strategies for learning English.

MacIntyre (2002) claims that with the exception of studies about language anxiety, emotion has not been given sufficient attention in the literature of language learning (p. 45). Some studies have documented positive effects of language brokering for children, including those that outline the development of strong metalinguistic and interpersonal skills (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991; Valdés, 2003).

The data presented in this study shows that language brokering is a continuous learning process as immigrant children perform brokering acts for their families and peers on a daily basis. In the light of this it is likely that the immigrant children will not only be proud of having competence in English, but will also have increased confidence in using the language (McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Walinchowski, 2001). The fact that her mother uses phrases such as “English translator and saviour” means much; it will give Helen more confidence in herself and motivate her to take on larger tasks beyond the brokering she performs for her fellow immigrant family and peers.

Unlike the other four immigrant children, Dieudonne expressed negative feelings about language brokering. In other words, his emotions were different from the other immigrant children as he explains below:

*Je m'exprime pas bien en Anglais...mon papa aime me demander de traduire un tas des trucs et je l'explique seulement c'est que je connais...mais mon mieux ne jamais suffisant...je préfère ne plus l'expliquer les choses ...je suis fatigué de traduire ce que je ne maîtrise pas...*

(Dieudonné, interview, 06/05/2016)

I do not express myself well in English ... my dad likes to ask me to translate a lot of stuff and I can only explain what I know ... but my best is never enough ... I prefer not to explain it ... I am tired to translate what I do not master  
(Researcher's translation, 30/05/2016)

This excerpt suggests that Dieudonne has limited proficiency in English and also low self-esteem. He lacks confidence in himself as he explained, "I do not express myself well in English". The father of the immigrant child emerges as one who has high expectations of his son and this places the task in a negative light thus causing Dieudonne to view language brokering as a burden.

Interestingly, Dieudonne expressed himself in French. This may be seen in light of protesting or resisting acting as a language broker for his father, or having to learn English – which would compete with French. His consequent negative attitude towards language brokering could negatively affect his motivation to learn English. It could also lead to anxiety that might affect his relationship with his parents.

As discussed in Chapter two, researchers have raised concerns about the negative repercussions of language brokering on the emotional development of youth (e.g., Chao, 2006; Umana-Taylor, 2003). In qualitative studies, descriptive accounts of children like Dieudonne feeling stressed and burdened from language brokering highlight potential risks associated with language brokering. Such accounts include children going to bed well after midnight so as to accommodate both school and family obligations. They may feel anxious about making mistakes during translation and this could lead to their resentment of the stress and responsibility imposed on them by family members (Hall & Sham, 1998; Morales et al., 2012).

Negative feelings about language brokering, such as feeling embarrassed and/or nervous when performing it, have been related to personal acculturation stress and the development of poor self-esteem (Kam, 2011; Weisskirch, 2013). In addition, Umana-Taylor (2003) and Morales & Hanson (2005) suggest that parents' dependence on their children may diminish their authority and this may lead to the reversal of roles referred to earlier. It occurs within the family and negatively affects the parent-child relationship.

In support of this perspective, several studies have found excessive language brokering or a higher demand for language brokering to be associated with greater family conflict, higher levels of family stress and lower levels of parenting effectiveness (Hua & Costigan, 2012; Jones & Trickett, 2005; Kam, 2011; Martinez et al., 2009; Trickett & Jones, 2007). Negative feelings about language brokering are also associated with family-based acculturation stress and more problematic family relationships (Weisskirch, 2007).

Dieudonne's behaviour can be explained in relation to the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) which claims that self-perceptions influence an individual's behaviour, thoughts and actions (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). This insight suggests that Dieudonne seemed to have low self-esteem because he felt he belonged to the minority group of immigrants in South Africa. He wanted to learn English quickly and become a better language broker for his family and other immigrants.

But because the process of language brokering is not easy and requires a certain level of cognitive ability, some children experience negative emotions, as did Dieudonne. Though this may come as a developmental advantage, it may be perceived as a benefit by the child in adolescence only (Love, 2007). McQuillan & Tse (2009, p. 9) are of the view that because of

the added stress and burden with the increased responsibility resulting from language brokering, frustration, resentment and embarrassment may result.

Several studies support this observation, that language brokers experience feelings of frustration, embarrassment, or pressure to translate accurately (DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Love, 2003; McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Ng, 1998; Tse, 1995a; Valenzuela, 1999; Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). Some children may refuse social invites as they might be required by their parents to serve as brokers. Consequently, some researchers argue that using children as translators and interpreters may affect the emotional development of the children negatively. For example, Umaña-Taylor (2003) argues that language brokers take on adult roles during their adolescence and these experiences could have negative implications for their identity development. Others argue that language brokers do not find their experiences helpful or enjoyable, and for the most part do not feel good about translating and interpreting (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). For example, Dieudonne expressed negative feelings as he explained his relationship with his father:

...If it's my father, he would make me feel bad and sometimes I interpret or translate wrongly because I don't want to have problems with him...

In this excerpt, Dieudonne expresses negative feelings about brokering for his father as he fears saying the wrong thing and getting into trouble with him. He would prefer going out with his mother and siblings who did not put pressure on him, although he appreciated the translating he could provide for his mother. Relatively this shows how language brokering may evoke feelings of insecurity and anxiety.

Gender has been addressed in some studies that have explored culture and language brokering, but the findings from those studies are inconclusive. For example, in their study of first and second generation adolescent Latino students, Buriel, Perez, DeMent, Chavez & Moran (1998) found that girls reported language brokering more frequently than boys. Chao (2006) found the same gender difference amongst Mexican and Chinese American adolescent language brokers. Another study also found that the eldest female tends to be the primary language broker for her family (Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). Valenzuela (1999) found a similar trend, reporting that girls participated more than boys in activities that required detailed explanation or translation.

In many immigrant families, girls are viewed as family caretakers and develop a sense of family obligation, which includes language brokering activities (Fuligni, Yip, & Tseng, 2002;



Orellana, 2003; Tseng & Fuligni, 2004). Several other studies have also found that girls were more likely than boys to engage in language brokering (Buriel et al. 1998; Buriel et al. 2006; Chao 2006). De Ment et al. (2005) found that girls reported language brokering for mothers and boys for fathers. Chao (2006) also reported that girls were more likely to translate for mothers, in particular single mothers, although there was variability by cultural group and generational status.

A study with Mexican-American adolescents (12-14 years old) found that boys reported translating more often for their parents than girls (Weisskirch, 2007), while Love & Buriel (2007) found no gender differences in language brokering. The differences may be due to the gendered nature of certain activities in some cultures where girls are viewed as being more apt than boys to explain things in detail.

A few studies have confirmed that the eldest child and girls especially, are most often designated as language brokers in the family (Chao 2001; Morales and Hanson 2005). Since many non-Western immigrant families emphasize rank and position in the families, eldest children tend to assume more responsibilities than their younger counterparts. In addition, linguistically, it is more likely that the eldest child retains facility in the heritage language. Subsequently, younger siblings may develop less capacity in the heritage language and are then less likely to act as language brokers (Stevens and Ishizawa 2007).

However, adolescents' perception of how much they matter to their parents may also influence whether language brokering is perceived as building efficacy or as being burdensome (Wu & Kim 2009). In this study both girls and boys were proud to act as language brokers for anybody, whether female or male the exception was Dieudonne who preferred being a language broker for his mother. This is mostly related to the fact that he was closer to his mother than to his father. He respected both his parents, but seemed to be distant towards his father because the latter was strict with him.

In summary, four key issues emerged from the analyzed data. These include (1) power relations between immigrant children and their parents; the role of language brokering in power reversal (ii) English power or hegemony (iii) language brokering as a stimulator of children's emotions; and (iv) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as an integral part of immigrant children's language identity construction. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter. In the following section I discuss the second theme that emerged from the data.

## 5.4.2 Spaces for language brokering

Research on child language brokering suggests that child brokers from different cultures and languages perform a variety of tasks and take on roles as mediators and decision makers (Downing & Dwyer, 1981; Harris & Sherwood, 1978; McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984, Shannon, 1990). As noted earlier in this study, language brokering involves interpreting and translating between culturally and linguistically different people and it mediates interactions in a variety of situations, including those at home and at school (Tse, 1996; Bolden, 2012). In other words, a broker acts as an intermediary between different participants, between a speaker with better proficiency and a recipient with limited proficiency in the target language.

It involves translation to facilitate communication and understanding between individuals. In the process of mediating and problem-solving, mediators may alter the interpretation for certain outcomes (Gustafsson, Norström & Fioretos, 2013). Language brokering tends to involve a certain level of teaching, including correcting other parties' language usage (Ikeda, 2007). This may lead to a distortion of information as a consequence of the speaker's understanding of the languages, and their ability to move between linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Thus language brokers facilitate communication between two linguistically and/or culturally different parties. Unlike formal interpreters and translators, brokers mediate, rather than merely transmit information (Tse 1996). For Vygotsky (1978), mediation represents the use of tools such as computers, learning activities, direct instructions, which are involved in the process of problem solving and learning. Among these tools, language is the most significant one. It is through language that one expresses information and ideas in different forms (for example, discussions, narrations, and arguments).

In this study, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory forms a premise on which to explain how language is used by immigrant learners who seek to mediate communication between their family members and South Africans who are English-speaking. Language is viewed as a symbolic tool which allows individuals to collaborate with others to shape their world according to their goals. Hence the immigrant children are seen to be performing acts of mediation for their families and other immigrants in various social domains.

### 5.4.3 Medical space

The analyzed data of this study indicate that immigrant children navigate different spaces as language brokers (Crush & Towodzera, 2014). The medical space in particular, seems to be a harsh space for immigrants who cannot speak local languages. This resonates with Crush & Towodzera's (2014) observation.

Claire shares her experience as a language broker in a health facility as follows:

My auntie always takes me to the hospital with her when she needs medical attention because her English isn't good. Whenever the nurses in hospital saw us, they would just assume that we all are lacking something in language... Even when I spoke in English they ignored me... Sometimes I would think it's better to speak the little Afrikaans or IsiXhosa that I learnt from friends around, depending on the nurse we meet. ...It really gets complicated sometimes I'm trying to help my auntie, I have to translate from Afrikaans or IsiXhosa to English and Lingala... I could possibly speak and understand all these languages... I really would like to help as my family has made sacrifices for us to be where we are and they are still doing a lot for us here in South Africa.

(Claire, personal narrative, 06/06/2016)

Language does not only facilitate communication, but also plays the role of a marker of social status and affiliation. So, dialects and accents or lack of both, have close ties with prejudice, and this may have an effect on the development of young learners (Durkin, 2004).

In her personal narrative, Claire translates from Afrikaans or IsiXhosa to English and Lingala. This illuminates an element in the act of crossing borders, where individuals move between languages for identity construction. According to Kamwangamalu (2003) language crossing is concerned with code - switching into languages that an individual is generally not thought to 'belong to'. Rose & van Dulm (2006) affirm that code-switching is a widespread phenomenon in South Africa and they define it as "alteration of language within one conversation, often involving switches within a single speaker turn or a single sentence" (p. 1). In this study, code switching is defined within the in-group space. In other words, it is used to describe immigrant children who experience language crossing in an attempt to gain entrance or acceptance to the in-group. Kamwangamalu (2003) illustrates how expectations

of rules of interpretation for the use of languages are used to determine a participant's claim to membership in a given group. The rules portray power dynamics. For example, the interaction between the nurses and patients with limited proficiency in one another's languages reflects power relations that can be frustrating to those who are less proficient in the target language.

Apart from this obstacle, there is also the issue of harsh words used by medical workers that may make the immigrant patient(s) feel bad. Even though Claire in this study does not translate exactly what has been said, she is also psychologically affected as she uses phrases like "...just assume that we all are lacking something", "they ignored me".

This seems to reflect an aspect of "othering" described by Spivak (1985) as a multidimensional process, in the sense that it touches upon several different forms of social differentiation. Othering as a concept can be associated with intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; 1991) or interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 1989) in feminist theories (Collins, 2000; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Gans, 2008). Wren (2001) concurs that the theory of identity formation inherent in the concept of "othering" assumes that subordinate people are offered, and at the same time relegated to, subject positions as "others" in discourse.

In these processes it is the centre that has the power to describe, and the other is constructed as inferior. The assumption that immigrants are "lacking something" makes immigrant children feel as if they are not accepted in other South African spaces. It also encourages them to work harder to be part of the host community by negotiating and constructing their identities through English language learning.

#### **5.4.4 School playgrounds**

Another interesting observation was that Claire could diffuse the power of English outside the classroom. She would encourage her immigrant peers to speak English even if they were making mistakes. Claire's eagerness to engage in language brokering activities around the school drew the attention of her classmates who became interested in helping immigrant learners to integrate into the South African community through language learning. Some South African learners started to broker for their immigrant classmates to understand lessons taught through the medium of English. Claire encouraged her South African peers to speak to immigrant children in their own home languages such as Afrikaans and IsiXhosa, so that they

could easily learn together. This was one of the strategies to construct new language brokering identities and a means of learning English better and faster.

The immigrant pupils in this case had an opportunity to enrich their language repertoires and to do better language brokering with their families and friends. This implies that although Claire and her immigrant peers were positioned in a particular way within a given discourse, they were able to set up a counter discourse which positioned them in a powerful, rather than marginalized position.

The concepts of 'position' and 'positioning' (Davis & Harré, 1990) have their origins in marketing, where position refers to the communication strategies that allow certain products to be placed in a market among their competitors (Tirado & Gálvez, 2007, p. 20). The concept of positioning was also used in the social sciences to analyze the construction of subjectivity in the area of heterosexual relationships (Tirado & Gálvez, 2007).

Positioning here was explained as relational processes that constitute interaction with other individuals. In this study, as immigrant children make use of English in interaction it becomes apparent that the process of identity construction through positioning does not "reside within the individual but in intersubjective relations of sameness and difference, power and disempowerment" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 607). Thus to interpret multilingual children's positioning requires looking at the day-to-day interactional moments and other practices, and also the wider political discourses in which these practices may be embedded and historically rooted (Maguire, 2005). The day-to-day moments of practice involve different "acts of identity" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). In this case, Claire assumed a kind of power of imposing acceptance into the South African society by engaging in conversations/interactions in English and other local languages.

This implies that language use actively constructs identity. People "do," or perform, identity through discourse. As I examined the interactions of immigrant children in the study, I considered the actual conversations they had had with various people at different spaces. As Claire encouraged her South African peers to use their home languages such as Afrikaans and IsiXhosa to communicate with immigrant learners, she also encouraged her fellow immigrants to learn. The use of language in this case positions the immigrant learners and their South African peers as certain kinds of people. At this point Claire and her peers can state that they belong to a certain social category because the way we use language may be associated with a certain group of people. What can be said at this point is that identity cannot

be fully known because it is a moving target, constantly shifting and evolving and its meaning depends not on internally defined states, but on a lot of external meanings: those of other people, of the context, culture, ideology (Schilling-Estes, 2004).

In relation to this study, immigrant children's identity construction proceeds through diverse perspectives which do not necessarily follow developmental stages. The efforts they make to become members of the South African community are revealed through the various ways they construct their identities. The immigrant children understand who they are and this opens the door to acknowledging themselves as significant human beings who need to impact positively upon their immigrant community.

As a result, Claire played the politics of language, which functions to create and maintain a sense of belonging. To play the politics of language implies that one uses language to integrate into a given community. For example, if using English and local South African languages is the way forward for full membership into the S.A. community, then Claire and fellow immigrant peers are ready to learn so that they can be accepted. In the South African context, lack of proficiency, particularly in English, is a source of prejudice, especially for immigrants who seek for acceptance in their host country (Durkin, 2004). Claire exploited the language resources she was exposed to as a means of integrating into the host community, for example, by learning additional languages such as Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. By learning these languages, she and other immigrant children negotiated and constructed their identities.

The more one 'mixes' English with local languages, the more one is bound to be an accepted member of the new space. This supports the view that identity construction emerges through complex social interactions and is affected by power differentials that place constraints on the kinds of identities language learners can construct (Rajadurai, 2010). Translanguaging thus holds potential for immigrant language brokers by enabling them to move between languages as they adapt to the new environment (Hornberger, & Link, 2012). Makelela (2015) claims that using a large linguistic repertoire which is at the students' disposal is important for identity formation; that is, it affects the choice concerning who one is and who one becomes. Instead of separating the self and the other, translanguaging gives room for both and legitimizes their interrelationship to advance the acquisition of new knowledge.

Other scholars such as Canagarajah (2013), Madiba (2014) and Makalela (2015) claim that language practices involve complex communicative strategies including crossing, code-meshing, polyglot dialogue, plurilingualism etc. The terms crossing, code-meshing, polyglot

dialogue and plurilingualism all refer to having a command of more than one language and being able to switch between the various languages. The only difference is that in addition to this characteristic, code-crossing happens mostly in languages that are stigmatized, languages that are thought not to 'belong'. So these scholars suggest that learners should be encouraged to cross between all known languages in multilingual contexts.

This study reveals that immigrant children such as Claire were ready to use any language that was necessary in the situation(s) they encountered. It appears that such children understand that in order to survive in their new host country, they need to communicate properly by using the different languages they may be able to acquire.

Literature shows that besides the parent-child relationships and feelings that result from language brokering, identity construction is also a critical issue among immigrant children (Orellana, 2009). Love (2007) highlights that clashes might be apparent between the children and the new culture in which the child is immersed. The culture-clash is particularly strong with adolescents who serve as language brokers. In support of this assertion, research into bilingual Latino 5th graders in America has brought to light that children who serve as language brokers might feel caught up between two cultures (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002).

Identity can never be separated from language, and literature shows that identity is constructed through sameness and difference (Hall, 2000). Hall (2000) goes on to state that the same power of promoting difference embodied by language can also serve to exclude others (Hall, 2000). Simultaneously, languages function as "points of identification and attachment and carry the capacity to exclude, to leave out, and to render outside" (Hall, 2000, p. 17). Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005) claim that language changes one's identity and this identity is shaped by different forms in which one uses language. This implies that one's relations and positions in the communities are defined, to a great extent, by the language one uses. Thus even language is not a fixed concept.

### 5.4.5 Residential space

One of the participants in this study – Helen – had lived in a "black" township in Cape Town (Nyanga) and had great fear with regard to what language to use in different spaces. She explained in her interview how she and her family were attacked by South Africans in 2008 when she was only eight years old:

It was our second year in South Africa and my parents could only afford to rent a house at the location as it was cheaper. I was six years old and the school I enrolled in was a Xhosa one...there was an English school, but my parents preferred sending me to the Xhosa one because we were living in their location... most of the time my parents would encourage me to speak IsiXhosa so that I could be identified with the Xhosa kids...they said it was better that way so that they could consider me as one of them...My mother would take me along when she wanted to buy foodstuff because she once expressed herself in the little English she knew and it was not accepted by the black South Africans...

(Helen, interview, 30/06/2016)

This excerpt illustrates an earlier point that although English is viewed as possessing economic power in South Africa, in many places especially townships, those who adopt English as the main medium of communication are perceived as outsiders to the community (Rudwick, 2008). Helen's parents had enrolled her in a Xhosa-speaking school since they were living in a township. This allowed them to negotiate their identity in a Xhosa-speaking community. So because Helen's mother used English there it was not well received.

Helen explained, that her mother expressed herself in English and "it was not accepted by the black South Africans". This is so because this community of South Africans appear to imagine that anyone who identifies him/herself as an English-speaker is projecting an attachment to 'whiteness'. Hence Helen experienced rejection by speaking English in a predominantly Xhosa-speaking area.

It is important to point out that in South Africa, the dynamics of language revolve around a colonial history of dominance, power and class positions, all embodied in the English language (Achebe, 2006; Alexander, 2004). Even if some people can speak English, they are



reluctant to use it because of its association with historical power. The fear of continuous xenophobic attitudes highlighted by Helen's mother in the foregoing excerpt indicates that some people have to distance themselves from English or their home languages as these are both associated with victimization and in the worst cases, physical attacks. The continuous experience of xenophobic attitudes in many ways creates a fear of speaking or being associated with languages that are not South African vernaculars as these languages are always stigmatized.

Helen's experience might be attributed to the forced regime in Cape Town. Dubow (1989) explains that segregation became an important feature of Capetonian society between 1875 and 1902. Over time Africans came to live in various parts of Cape Town's suburbs and on the slopes of Table Mountain. They were living mainly in Horstely Street in District Six and barracks at the docks. Other Africans rented plots, owned homes and settled informally in Windemere (now Kensington) amongst "coloured" and "Asian" people. Africans were perceived as immoral, indecent, dangerous, criminal and a health hazard that threatened the well-being of the city. These stereotypes were reinforced by general debates in scientific racism and a desire to push Africans out of the city to create space for the expansion of "white" suburbs (Swartz, 2009).

Further to this history, Cell (1982) notes that the passing of the Native Reserve Location Act in 1902 gave impetus to the racial segregation of Africans resident in Cape Town. Under the Act portions of land in urban areas were allocated for the settlement of Africans in locations outside areas of "white" settlement. The Act made it compulsory for Africans to live in Ndabeni unless they were registered voters or had received permission to reside outside the location. As a result some Africans who were discriminated against have harboured a hatred for "the white race" and everything else white, including English (Malherbe, 2006). Segregation in South Africa encompassed many different social relationships. This is why some black South Africans expect other black Africans to speak local African languages, irrespective of their place of origin. In this regard, immigrants, both young and old are bound to learn one of the local South African languages to be fully integrated into the South African community, especially in the black townships.

Data reveals that the Home Affairs Department is another popular space where language brokering by immigrant children took place. This is so because most immigrants, both old and young struggle with English or other local South African languages and find it difficult to

communicate with the Home Affairs officers and guards. Claire explained how she served as a language broker for her friend's father and other immigrants at the Home Affairs offices thus:

My friend Dieudonne's father had to go to the Home Affairs to renew his expired paper and I opted to help explain things to the refugee officer ...I told the officer that I was going to interpret and if it was possible for her to go slower and she said yes, that it wasn't a problem...There were many other immigrants from Congo, Cameroon, Rwanda, who asked me the favour to help them also explain things to the refugee officers...I found myself translating from Swahili to French, from English to the different languages I could manage...Even my friend's father only understood later on our way back home that I pleaded on his behalf for the lateness to renew the Asylum paper...I couldn't explain anything to him there because I was helping many other immigrants...

(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

Claire's multilingual skills are a resource to the immigrant community because she is able to plead on behalf of her friend's father and at the same, she brokers for other immigrants from different countries. This sheds light on the power of mediation and multilingualism through language brokering. It is in this light that Garcia (2008) suggests that multilingual learners should be encouraged to reflect and draw on their rich store of language information and skills in order to facilitate the learning of English.

Research indicates that immigrants' communication problems can often be attributed to a lack of understanding of culturally different communicative styles and native speakers' negative preconceptions of English, rather than to English proficiency (BardoviHarlig, 2001; Kasper, 2001; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001).

The Home Affairs Department is one of the most popular domains for language brokering because immigrants normally have to be sure of the status of their various permits as it is not advisable to stay in a country illegally. Immigrants in South Africa come mainly from other African countries with different home languages and most of them do not understand English and other South African languages which are widely used at the Home Affairs offices. Therefore, language brokering is always necessary.

In most cases, immigrant children who have acquired English skills act as language brokers for their parents and other immigrants in need. In the case of miscommunication there could be serious consequences that could include arrest or being repatriated as an illegal immigrant. That explains why in the last excerpt, Claire pleaded with the Home Affairs officer “to go slower” so that she could interpret correctly for the other immigrants.

Furthermore, Claire explained in her personal narrative how she had mediated between some immigrant women and a taxi driver. Her experiences corroborate her interview utterances reported earlier. The following excerpt is extracted from her personal narrative and concerns her role as mediator.

...Two Congolese women and one Cameroonian lady...heard them speak French. I decided to explain to them in French what the taxi driver meant and I also tried explaining to the driver that they didn't understand. He even shouted more and said, 'ay these 'kwerekwere'... I was caught between two angry groups of people and each wanted me to explain to the other what was being said... I tried to bring peace by not using the same angry words that were meant by each group of people

(Claire, personal narrative, 06/06/2016)

In this excerpt Claire offers voluntary assistance by being a language broker for her fellow immigrants. It confirms what the literature says about the strategies immigrant children use in complex language brokering events. Child language brokers often play significant roles that influence the desired outcomes. In other words, they do not remain passive in language brokering situations (Bauer 2010; Hall & Guéry 2010; Shannon 1990) but bring about social understanding through communication, and connect people from diverse backgrounds.

Claire's narrative highlights the understanding that volunteer work, with its symbolism of altruism, provides a sense of social worth and connectedness to one's community. Also, through her contribution she projects the role of voluntary brokering which enhances a sense of belonging and solidarity across differences. She draws upon an alternative discourse of social worth and contribution that challenges the discourses of dependency which would position her as a non-contributory member of the community (Fuller et al. 2008, p. 163).

Fuller, Kernshaw & Pulkingham (2008: 163) argue that volunteer labour provides an arena for demonstrating social worthiness within discourses of active citizenship. In the case of

language brokering, volunteers believe that they are contributing to society by giving something free of cost to others.

Interestingly, Claire ‘tried to bring peace’ by not giving the exact translation of what each party was telling her. She decided to give an interpretation that she found more peaceable so as to solve the problem between two parties that arose due to the language barrier.

This is in keeping with research which shows that language brokers may be selective about the information they translate, especially for their parents (DeMent & Buriel, 1999). For example, a number of children who translated notes from school for their parents often omitted information that was negative (DeMent & Buriel, 1999). Although this may call into question the accuracy of language brokers, we can only speculate that children are omitting this type of information because they do not want to hurt or cause shame to their parents or other immigrants they are helping.

The social exclusion of immigrants in different spaces such as public transport explains the fear that immigrants often have in a new country. Being "othered" through the language one speaks becomes a significant marker of exclusion. The derogatory term “*kwerekwere*” has largely been used to refer to non-South African Africans residing in South Africa (Tafira, 2011). They are singled out for ridicule and abuse by some "black" South Africans (Nixon, 2001).

The term “*Kwerekwere*” is part of the South African history and it is also intertwined with language, making it complex to deduce its origins (Tafira, 2011). In attempting to deconstruct this derogatory term, Khanya (2008), comments that the term originates from the colonial times in South Africa when the Dutch found the local people in South Africa and called them by a Greek name “*varvari*”, a term associated with barbarians. Apart from the barbarism, the term also signified the sound of the click that the Hottentots pronounced and which was strange to the Dutch. This was because “to the Greek ears, they brayed ‘bah bahs’ in unintelligible tongues. In the same way South Africans claim to hear ‘*kwerekwere*’ when migrants open their tongues” (Nixon, 2001, p.30). Therefore, the term “*kwerekwere*” carries connotations both of an uncivilized nature and of the sounds of a foreign language. Francis Nyamnjoh (2006, p. 49) affirms this by stating that, “*kwerekwe*” are individuals who are dark, invasive barbarians or stutterers who must be confined to the fringes.

It is important to note that language, African origin (darkness) and perceived barbarism are all intertwined to exclude people with these perceived traits. The inability to speak local

languages in South Africa not only serves as a signifier of origin but also in some cases, a marker that one is a “*kwerekwere*” (Gordon, 2010) and, therefore, is incapable of articulating local languages that epitomise economic success and power (Nyamjoh, 2010, p. 65).

This makes brokering in the South African context an important strategy for concealing identity in spoken language. It often occurs that parents and other family members who have limited proficiency in local languages require children to mediate for them in spaces where they might be labelled “*kwerekwere*” with all the negative connotations that inhere in this term.

In contemplating this reality Muchiri (2012) explains that after decades of isolation from the rest of the African continent and the world, during apartheid, South Africa finally opened up to the rest of world in 1994. At the dawn of the “new South Africa” in 1994, the country became a home to many outsiders as it offers protection and refuge to people who have suffered unfavourable conditions in their home countries. However, the term ‘foreigner’ in South Africa has usually been attributed only to African and Asian non-nationals. As noted earlier other foreigners, particularly those from the Americas and Europe go unnoticed, as they are often referred to as ‘tourists’. This may be attributed to the fact that South Africans consider immigrants from other African countries as being too African, too black as Valji (2013) puts it.

Claire also writes about another instance of language brokering in the hospital, where her language brokering aimed at “effecting desired outcomes”:

...while waiting for my auntie, there was this Congolese lady who just had her baby...the nurse asked why the baby seemed so thirsty...*did u breastfeed this baby?* ...but the communication wasn't going through as the lady kept stirring at her and talking to herself...Realising she was Congolese, I explained to her ...*elle demande si vous avez allaité le bébé* then the nurse sighed and said...*how long has she been in Mzantsi that one?since you speak the same language, tell her to breastfeed the baby well instead of thinking it's a stomach ache*...I didn't like what she said, but I was tired of all the negative energy, so when the Congolese lady smiled and asked me what the nurse said, I decided just to maintain the fact that she was insisting she breastfeeds the child more...

(Claire, personal narrative, 06/06/2016)

In the last excerpt there are elements of stigmatization, discrimination and othering. The nurse seemed to not accept the fact that her Congolese patient could not speak English or any other South African language to ease communication between them. Hence she asked how long the Congolese woman had spent in South Africa. Referring to her patient as “that one” seems to be an “othering” comment. Claire displayed maturity as she did not convey the negative information to the Congolese woman, but ensured that she was offered assistance. This aligns with the literature which presents children as manipulating or censoring information in an effort to protect their parents from ‘discrimination’ and ‘humiliation’, while ensuring that they received adequate services and support (Orellana, 2009; Valdés et al., 2003).

The analysed data also shows that another social domain in which language brokering takes place more often is the market or shops, where there are people from different cultural backgrounds. In her interview Belleange explained how she used to accompany her mother to do shopping so that she could help with her brokering skills where necessary.

Mama doesn't like going to the shops or the market without me because sometimes even to ask for what she needs, she would not know the word in English...I make things easier for her when I go shopping with her because she would communicate very well through me to others...

(Belleange, interview, 20/04/2016)

This excerpt shows that the parent relies on her daughter as the latter could speak on her behalf. Literature shows how young language brokers like Belleange take on complex and challenging adult-like responsibilities and influence decisions that affect the entire family (Tse, 1995b). In this case, role reversal is a consequence of language brokering. Parent-child relationships can become skewed when children are involved in family decisions where the parents depend on their advice, guidance and ultimately decision-making (Umaña-Taylor, 2003). But in the case of my study, young language brokers state they established stronger and more trusting relationships with their parents through language brokering.

Similarly, in an interview with Pierre, he explained how he had helped his mother communicate easily by translating for her in the shop.

There was this day my mother was hosting dad's colleagues at home and had to do shopping...She asked me to make a list of things she enumerated in

French...I wrote them down in English and gave the list to her, but she insisted we go shopping together because of her level of English...

(Pierre, interview, 28/06/2016)

Apart from the fact that a child language broker can become more mature when brokering for a parent, language brokering enhances the development of higher cognitive abilities, which allows the children to increase their linguistic talents and improve their social and interpersonal skills (DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Halgunseth, 2003; McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Tse, 1995a, 1996a; Walinchowski, 2001). Children often interact in an adult context which requires the use of advanced vocabulary and cognitive abilities (Acoach & Webb, 2004). This can be seen in the foregoing excerpt as Pierre develops writing skills when he makes a list of things to be bought.

Apart from social and other public domains such as hospitals, markets, etc. immigrant children in this study also acted as language brokers for other immigrant children who had communication problems due to low proficiency in English. This occurred inside and outside the school.

#### **5.4.6 Schools as sites of language brokering**

Although brokering in schools has been looked at in the literature, it is still mostly confined to brokering between parents and teachers (Prokopiou, Cline & Crafter, 2013; Cline, 2014). It barely looks at brokering among students and teachers.

In this study there is a concern about the well-being of learners who could not speak English and other local South African languages. This necessitated the intervention of a language broker. The analyzed data shows that immigrant children brokered between teachers and parents, between learners and teachers and also between learners themselves as discussed below.

As discussed in chapter 4, I observed the learners' intervention outside the classrooms. For example, I observed Belleange with her peers as she interacted with two new immigrant children from the same country she hails from namely, the Congo. I observed that she acted as a bodyguard and ambassador to make the life of the new immigrant children easier. Every time she noticed they could not play freely with the other kids because they could not speak their language, she would intervene. She would use Swahili where necessary to explain

things to her immigrant peers. In one instance, I heard her explaining to a fellow immigrant learner that:

“avocado” is the same as the “avocat” and that if the teacher says “shut up” in class, they must not feel bad as it is a normal way of saying “silence”. I smiled at her because she seemed smart for her age. Whenever she walked passed me, she would say “Bonjour, tantine”, meaning “Good morning, Aunty”.

On the playground, I would also hear Belleange sometimes saying a word in Afrikaans or IsiXhosa, depending on who she was addressing. This was reflective of her own neighbourhood where she communicated with South African kids in various mother tongues. This portrayed Belleange as a multicultural and multilingual child with good capabilities as a language broker in different spaces.

Similarly Claire, who was older than Belleange brokered for her peers at school. She described her experience when she arrived in South Africa when she was just eight years old:

...I could only speak and understand Lingala. I met a friend in my class who noticed I didn't understand what the teacher used to say... She also could speak and understand Lingala as her parents were from Congo too. She would explain things the teacher said in Lingala and give me the English words.

(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

From this excerpt, it can be deduced that language is a tool by which to access knowledge in the teaching-learning process. Claire also explained how she acted as a language broker for one of her school friends:

Like in middle school year, one of my friends just came in from Congo and she didn't know any English. She used to be my friend back at home, in Congo, even our parents were friends. But we left them and travelled to South Africa. Now, when she just arrived South Africa, I was better in English. So I had to help her. Like in the first day of school, I helped her see the whole school, see the classes and help her say like how to go to the restroom and the important stuff, like how to get her lunch. When we were going on excursion I insisted on taking the same bus with her, so if she didn't understand anything, I could go and help her. My company could help her learn to communicate with others in South Africa



(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

I also noticed that Dieudonne, though he was in Grade six, used to interact a lot during lunch and after school with Claire who was in Grade ten. He explained to me that Claire used to encourage him to feel free to ask her for explanations each time he had difficulties, whether in school or out of school.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory which is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 is useful for understanding Dieudonne's and Claire's interactions. This theory states that with collaboration and direction, the learner is always able to do more and solve more difficult tasks (Vygotsky, 1978). Claire was able to provide Dieudonne with "scaffolding" to support his learning and understanding of English (L2). In this case, scaffolding, which often occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be considered as a form of tutorial support between Claire and Dieudonne.

Dieudonne displayed low self-esteem. He saw himself as being "less than" his South African schoolmates. This could be understood in terms of language and inferiority complex which could affect one's identity construction. In his narrative he explained how much work he needed to put in so that he could help his immigrant family and friends with confidence.

*...Je reconnais parfaitement mon origine et ce donc nous avons besoin pour être confortable dans notre pays d'accueil. Je ne veux pas tromper mes parents où quelqu'un d'autre, et je ne peux aussi pas confirmer mieux m'exprimer en IsiXhosa, en langue Anglaise, en Afrikaans où être capable de traduire parfaitement à mes parents où à d'autre personnes. De jour en jour, je vois comment les étrangers comme moi même sont traités lorsqu'ils ne parviennent pas à bien s'exprimer en Anglais. Parfois lorsque mon père me demande de lui traduire quelque chose donc moi-même je ne maîtrise pas parfaitement, je fais recours à mon amie qui amise un peu plus de temps dans ce pays. Elle s'exprime mieux en Anglais que moi et comprend parfaitement Swahili, la langue avec laquelle mon papa communique parfaitement*

(Dieudonne, personal narrative, 30/05/2016)

"...I know exactly where I'm coming from and what we need to get comfortable in our host country. I don't want to lie to my own people or any other person. I cannot say I already know IsiXhosa, English language or

Afrikaans to be able to translate perfectly to my father and other people. I see how immigrants are being mocked every day when they cannot speak English well. Sometimes when my father asks for something I cannot help explain very well to him, I call my friend who has been here long before me (she knows English better and understands Swahili in which my father communicates very well). This friend does a better job as a language broker than me...I want to improve first, and then I'll be able to help my family and other immigrants

(Researcher's translation, 29/06/2016)

In this personal narrative, Dieudonne brings out the element of stigmatization of non-English speaking immigrants because of their inability to speak English well. This data clearly shows that English is regarded as the dominant language for communication in the South African context. Its status is acquired at the expense of other languages. The data that follows illustrates the hegemony of English.

#### **5.4.7 English hegemony and language brokering**

As discussed in the second chapter, in scientific publications and academic exchange there is an increasing number of papers expressing concern over the dominance of English (for instance, Ammon 2000; 2006; Flowerdew 2000; 2001; Canagarajah 2002; Carli & Ammon 2007).

In South Africa, speakers of Indigenous African Languages (IALs) consider English to be indispensable for economic emancipation. Despite this, only a small percentage of the population is adequately competent in the language. Moreover, the status of English as a global language and its reputation as the language of socio-economic advancement has been reported by researchers as being an enticing incentive for parents to opt for English for their children (Chetty, 2012). Despite many years of colonial independence and the numerous policies drafted, mother-tongue education remains an ideal undertaking that has not been achieved, and English continues to dominate in formal sectors such as education.

Therefore it is important to look at English dominance in South Africa as this country is a host to a number of immigrants and refugees. The aim is to uncover how English dominates amongst immigrant children and parents who tend to see no social and economic value in their languages in South Africa.

Claire explained how proud she was to be a better language broker for her fellow immigrants who just arrived in South Africa. She proudly stated that she had helped her father consider the idea of going back to school:

There are some immigrant students in my class who still face difficulties in English. I help them most often and we study together after school. We decided to use neither French nor Lingala nor Swahili, but rather to use English everywhere so we can better our level...

(Claire, interview, 24/05/2016)

Language is one of the most important components of culture because through it culture can be defined, shaped and eventually handed down to the next generation (Brothy, 2012). Language is an essential part of being since it is an exclusively human attribute which allows people to communicate and thus distinguishes them from animals.

In this study, immigrant children pay more attention to English because they and other immigrants need to be part of the South African community where English is the dominant language in education. De wet (2002) confirms this fact. He explains that English is considered to be the ruling language in trade, industry and education and that it is seen as being indispensable for economic emancipation (De wet, 2002). That is why Claire, together with other immigrant children in her school decided to learn English at the expense of other home languages so that they could survive in economic domains in South Africa. The fact that Claire and her immigrant friends decided to use English and not French, Lingala or Swahili, attests to English dominance in the country. They decided to learn to use English.

Through learning to use English, they are negotiating and constructing their new identities. Claire and her fellow immigrant peers believe that studying “together” could improve their English proficiency and could help them to be part of the new community; and using “English everywhere” will help them learn faster. In other words, adequate exposure to English will facilitate their English language acquisition.

In a similar vein Pierre explains the importance of English for him and his family in South Africa:

...it is not long since I started speaking English. However I prefer using English all the time, even at home, so that I can be a master and be able to

explain things to my family members, particularly my grandmother who came a year ago...

(Pierre, interview, 28/06/2016)

This excerpt shows Pierre's desire for mastery of English for a particular purpose, which is to help his family members, especially his grandmother. He believes that "using English all the time" will help him improve his English proficiency. Pierre explains why he would prefer making more effort to learn English than other languages:

Being able to speak different languages (Bassa, French and English) make me to change depending on where I am and who I talk to. Although I speak three languages, I put more effort in English because it will permit me help my family member and friends who cannot communicate well in South Africa. In Cameroon I used to speak just Bassa and French

(Pierre, interview, 28/06/2016)

Throughout my observations in and out of school, Pierre played mostly with "coloured and white" classmates. He believed that these children knew English better than his "black" peers (both South African and immigrant). History repeats itself here as the English language is being seen as a language of the "whites" and some "coloured" South Africans only. In the following excerpt, it can be deduced that Pierre regarded English as a "white" language:

In Cameroon, my family is purely Francophone and my parents always say you must follow the dominant group to succeed... I only started taking English serious here in South Africa because my parents said it's the dominant language used everywhere. In school and in my neighbourhood, only the white and some coloured kids use English regularly...the black kids and most immigrant kids use their mother tongues and interact with people from their ethnic groups. My English is better because I interact with the white kids and my father works with mostly whites in the movie industry. So even the gatherings we go to, English is used. When I help my mother or others who don't understand English, I give them the best and I am confident...it's just that sometimes also some of my fellow immigrants and black South Africans think I'm showing off by speaking English and making friends with white kids ...

(Pierre, personal narrative, 01/09/2016)

Again, an aspect of segregation is brought up as Pierre interacts with “white kids” and his father works with “mostly whites in the movie industry”. McBrayer, David & Hickson (2010) claim that the state’s determination to control how South Africa was portrayed and perceived on screen during apartheid extended to the film industry. Ashworth (2004) explains that during this period, film content was closely monitored and resulted in films being described as mostly bland and racist. This notion of white supremacy is still visible in the film industry although most of the films have aided South Africa’s transition because they show that the country is making progress towards integration (Ashworth, 2011). This explains why Pierre emphasizes the fact that his father’s colleagues in the film industry are mostly whites. And because his parents believe the whites speak better English, they prefer their son to associate only with the white kids.

Many parents like Pierre’s, have chosen English as the language of prestige and high status. In other words, the hegemony of English is increasing in post-apartheid South Africa and the rest of the world. This has put enormous pressure – on parents to choose instruction in English for their children, and on schools to provide English language instruction from as early as possible (de Klerk, 2000; Kamwangamalu, 2003; Setati, 2008; Makoe & McKinney, 2014).

Interview data showed that children's language brokering does not only increase the desire to learn English, but potentially also strengthens parental relationships with their children. For example, Belleange was like a friend to her mother. From as young as seven she brokered for her mother and her immigrant peers who needed help. She displayed great maturity in her interaction with her mother.

My mom, she is my best friend. She makes me laugh with her English. I always like to correct her because she encourages me a lot and speaks so well of me. Even though she is my mom, she does not get angry with me when I correct her poor English. Many people have noticed us going to the shops and market together and some call us *friends indeed*

(Belleange, interview, 20/04/2016)

When immigrant children were asked to write their language brokering stories this made them think of events they had experienced. The exercise thus elicited an expression of

identity and cultural trace (Squire, 2005) as the identity of child brokers is influenced by their environment, their parents' own identities and events in their current context. Hence the exercise confirmed that narratives are the most convenient means of gathering information about experiences.

In this study the narrative space allowed immigrant children and their parents to project their voice, to tell their own stories about their experiences. These experiences, also noted in Latinos in the United States of America (Tse, 1995; Weisskirch & Alva, 2002; Orellana, 2003) are sometimes referred to as emergency narratives, in which the voices of the immigrant children and their families are recognized.

The multilingual skills which some immigrant children possess give them access to many spaces not just linguistically but also culturally. These provide acceptance in other language groups making it easier for the children to blend in. However, the immigrant children are also sensitive to the rejection resulting from the use of their home language as well as the use of a colonial language, English. They react by beginning to reject their own home languages. Interestingly, English is also rejected in some spaces. As Helen responds in her interview:

There are some other places that you can't speak English coz if you speak English they will hate you. You can see even the way they look at you, they are not happy, they are not happy with the language because if you are speaking, some they even ignore you...

(Helen, interview, 30/06/2016)

In attempting to mask their identity to blend into those spaces, children serving as brokers are trying to obey rules that govern language to gain acceptance in the host community. Helen explains:

I always change to suit the situation whenever my parents go out...I would speak IsiXhosa as if I was born Xhosa and my parents sometimes wonder how I learnt so well and fast...

(Helen, interview, 30/06/2016)

It appears that official and social spaces like hospitals present children with brokering opportunities as they have to serve as mediators where immigrants struggle to receive

services due to their limited ability to speak local languages. Crush & Towodzera (2014) affirm the need for brokers in these spaces to receive better service.

The story of discrimination affected Helen's life so negatively that years later the fear could still be seen in her. During my observations she could be seen avoiding most of her Congolese classmates who like herself spoke Lingala. Her Congolese friend (Claire) was more open with everyone. On one occasion Claire spoke to her in Lingala, and she quickly pulled her into a corner and said: "wena (you), you don't listen..." Helen seemed to be confused about which language to use as she spoke more IsiXhosa than English while interacting with her South African friends.

It is worth noting that children serving as brokers are provided with an identity of their own by acquiring a new local language. Children language brokers are active participants in this regard and therefore view language brokering as an enhancement of the self. The idea of "whiteness" seems to be one of the elements most resisted in blacks by other blacks in South Africa. It seems that the use of English in conversation with other blacks in social domains is perceived as suggestive of "white superiority, high class or whiteness."

Helen's position was expressed clearly in her personal narrative where she explained that she would use to the fullest the advantage she had as a multilingual and multicultural individual. She explained that she had learnt to be very cautious towards South Africans because she and her family were victimized despite the fact that they tried being peaceful. She went on to say that English language dominance can never be ignored:

...whether we like it or not, the South Africans will always recognise us as foreigners...whether we learn to speak their language or not, it's the same...I understand and speak Portuguese, English, Lingala, French, IsiXhosa and some Afrikaans. It's to my advantage to express myself in all these languages. But I know that English is the most important because it's global...

...I want to use more of English that can help me everywhere in the world. I'm always going to be proud of my African languages, but for me to succeed internationally, I need English language. I am glad to be useful to my fellow immigrants as I can express myself in many languages.

(Helen, personal narrative, 20/08/2016)

It is clear that Helen, like Claire, understands the benefits of multilingualism. She is “proud” of her African languages, but also understands that gaining more proficiency in English will take her to greater heights around the world.

Most immigrant children like Helen are obliged to rescue their immigrant friends and families from humiliation, by offering brokering services whenever and wherever needed. Helen, in her narrative, mentioned one occasion in which she helped her aunt find accommodation. She explained that just because her aunt could not speak a local language, everywhere she called to search for accommodation, she got a negative response. Then there was an IsiXhosa-speaking lady who had a room at her place. Her aunt told her the woman was speaking only IsiXhosa. So Helen decided to speak the woman's local language (IsiXhosa), and once she started with: "Molo (Hello)...Kunjani (How are you?) ...Ndifuna igumbi (I'm looking for a room) ...Enkosi (Thank you) ..." there was a place available for rent. What Claire expressed in her personal narrative could be regarded as a way of embracing language diversity and integration in South Africa.

## **5.5 Parents' experiences of children's language brokering**

In this section I focus on parents' experiences of children as language brokers. As discussed in the previous chapter, during the interviews parents of the immigrant children were asked to explain their views and experiences of their children as language brokers. In answer to this question all three interviewed parents expressed pride in their children who were brokering for them. Two parents said that they would continue to ask their children to be language brokers for them because through that process they could learn English and more about the cultural developments in South Africa. Madam Bijoux expresses her curiosity about the host country's cultural development:

My English isn't so bad like before because I learn from my child everyday...I ask to do home work together with her when her home teacher is helping...I tell myself “this is gonna help me learn also new things about the culture and people of South Africa because my child is going to school and bringing new information every day.” (Madam Bijoux, interview, 28/02/2016)

The same parent (Madam Bijoux) expressed her happiness at having a child who could be her personal language broker at any time. She had become a learner herself as she put it, “I learn



from my child everyday”. She wanted to encourage her daughter, Claire, to be her language broker so that she could gain more confidence and feel comfortable in South Africa.

A similar study by Roche et al. (2014) maintains that language brokering actually has a positive impact on families as the immigrant children gain self-efficacy and feel more confident. The child's responsibility as a language broker is espoused in literature and it is linked to role reversal (Orellana, 2009) as the children mediate for parents or other people. This is a shift in roles as the parents are supposed to play the role of brokers for their children in learning languages in a new country. Instead, parents ask questions from children who perform the brokering task. This positions the child at the adult end of the knowledge continuum, thus reversing the traditional roles of parents and children. Moreover, the child speaks for the parent even in social scenarios (Weisskirch, 2005), thus acquiring power and authority over their parents.

Some parents also expressed pride in their children's multilingual capabilities. For example, Madam Bijoux is proud of her child and has high expectations of her. She expresses herself thus:

My daughter is gonna be a star, you know she can speak Afrikaans, IsiXhosa and English very well. I'm not forgetting our home language Lingala. I'm so proud of her! Even when I speak English to my Congolese sisters and friends, they wonder where and how I learnt that, but all is thanks to my intelligent daughter. Because of her I also know a few things in Afrikaans and IsiXhosa, you know I come across different people every day. It is because her that my husband has decided to go again to school. He says the future is very bright for us here in South Africa because not only our daughter will get a good job, but he also will get a better job than being a security worker

(Madam Bijoux, interview, 28/02/2016)

This excerpt indicates that language brokering is being associated with success in life as Madam Bijoux uses expressions as such “My daughter...(becoming) a star” and displays pride in her daughter's multilingual abilities: “She can speak Afrikaans, IsiXhosa and English”.

Again, multilingualism and language brokering are associated with high levels of intelligence and better socio-economic opportunities, “My intelligent daughter”, “Future is bright”, our

daughter will get a good job”. This aligns with Hall & Sham’s (2007) work with Chinese adolescents in England. Their findings show that for these children the language brokering activities they undertook were not only complex and demanding but made a significant economic contribution to family life.

Madam Bijoux recounts during the interview that teachers requested her permission for her daughter to serve as a language broker:

When other immigrant kids arrived like they did, that they came only knowing Lingala, Swahili or French, the teachers have asked my daughter (Claire) for help so that she can show them the school, teach them how to ask for lunch, help them with their English. Because one time one of her teachers sent us a letter asking us if she could help them and I asked her if she want to do it, I mentioned to her those kids are feeling the same way you did when you started school and that was a motivation for her to help, and if she helps others besides us that is good for her

(Madam Bijoux, interview, 28/02/2016)

Unlike Madam Bijoux, Madam Marina faced more difficulties in English than her friend. She revealed that her daughter (Belleange) used to watch certain English television programmes even while they were still in Congo. Belleange could understand English even if she was not as proficient as children born in an English-speaking country. So from the moment they arrived in South Africa, Madam Marina expected her daughter to play the role of a language broker for her whenever there was a need. Although Madam Marina seemed to be experiencing many challenges in English, she also expresses pride in her daughter:

*Je ne parle toujours pas bien l'anglais, alors je compte vraiment sur ma fille, même si son père dit que ça dérange ses études ... J'ai du mal à communiquer parce que je n'ai jamais fait l'anglais auparavant. À la maison et même ici, je parle Lingala avec des gens à qui je suis habitué ... Mais je sais que de temps à autre, quelques mots de ma fille en anglais vous aideront.*

(Madam Marina, interview, 12/01/2016)

I don't still speak English well, so I really rely on my daughter though her father says it disturbs her studies...I find it difficult to communicate because I have never done English before. At home and even here, I speak Lingala with

people I'm used to... But I know picking a few words from my daughter in English from time to time will help me.

(Researcher's translation, 03/03/2016)

Madam Marina reports her feelings about having her daughter interpret or translate for her:

*Eh bien pour moi, c'est une grande aide, car si elle n'était pas là avec moi, je me sentirais muette, je serai silencieuse dans ce pays ; Ce serait comme avoir une langue et une bouche mais pas capable de parler*

(Madam Marina, interview, 12/01/2016)

Well for me it's a great help because if she wasn't here with me, I would feel mute, I will be muted in this country; it would be like having a tongue and mouth but not able to speak

(Researcher's translation, 03/03/2016)

This excerpt agrees with the literature that claims children 'give voice' to their parents in formal and informal situations where parents are not able to express themselves or they lack the linguistic tools to do so (Bauer, 2013). For example, Bauer's (2013) participant, Rosa (Mexican) described her role as 'caring responsibility' and one in which she derived 'a nice feeling to be able to offer that type of support and help to [her parents] who were quite vulnerable, marginalized and don't have a voice'. In the same way, Belleange's mother, Madam Marina felt that it was because of her daughter that she had a voice: "If she wasn't here...I would feel mute".

An interesting point about Madam Marina's and Madam Bijoux's experiences is the maintenance of home language. Even though they encouraged their children to learn English, they continued to use their home languages with their families and friends. Madam Bijoux says, "I'm not forgetting our home language Lingala" and Madam Marina said, "I speak Lingala with people I'm used to".

Within these interactions parents may hand over power to children who serve as brokers through acculturation. This happens as they try to learn more about the language from the child. Since acculturation is ongoing, immigrant parents may still utilize their children as language brokers, even when the parents' understanding of the new language is sufficient. This could result in redundancy in understanding (Valdés et al. 2003). In this situation,

parents often use language brokering to further their acculturation by verifying and confirming the communication.

According to Weisskirch (2010) the need for acculturation and survival may require of parents that they become innovative and more flexible about family structures in order to guarantee success for the family.

In this study children play a pivotal role in the families as they were the main facilitators of acculturation for their parents and other family members. The safety of the home was used as a place in which to teach parents and siblings about South African cultures and languages as seen in some of the children's interview responses and personal narratives referred to in the previous section.

The immigrant children played a role in reducing their parents' anxieties about learning to speak South African local languages. In this sense, acculturation was facilitated by children in the home environments. However, Mr. Abel felt bad that his son acted as language broker. He said that he would save some money so that he could take extra English classes because sometimes he felt he was over-working his son, Dieudonne. Interestingly, Dieudonne had expressed frustration and stress in brokering for his father. His negative experiences of language brokering are presented in Section 5.4. Dieudonne's father expresses himself as follows:

*Dans mon pays d'origine au Burundi, je communiquais à Kirundi ou au Swahili que je connaissais ... ici en Afrique du Sud, les choses sont différentes. Nous rencontrons parfois d'autres étrangers qui parlent français, mais mon français est très pauvre, vous ne pouvez même pas le comprendre clairement ... mon fils a beaucoup de travail pour me traduire du français au Kirundi, de l'anglais au Kirundi ; c'est trop pour lui. Où je travaille en tant que sécurité, j'ai parfois des problèmes parce que je ne comprends pas l'anglais et même s'ils appellent un autre étranger comme un collègue congolais, je ne communiquerais qu'en swahili, ce qui n'est parfois pas très clair ... Je veux économiser de l'argent et aller de retour à l'école et un jour, je peux également aider d'autres qui sont comme moi*

(M. Abel, interview, 03/03/2016)

In my home country Burundi, I used to communicate either in Kirundi or the little Swahili I knew...Here in South Africa, things are different. We sometimes meet other foreigners who speak French, but my French is very poor, you can't even understand it clearly...my son has a lot of work translating things to me from French to Kirundi, from English to Kirundi; it is too much for him.

Where I work as security, I have problems sometimes because I don't understand English and even if they call another foreigner like a Congolese colleague, I would only communicate in Swahili which is sometimes not very clear ...I want to save some money and go back to school and one day I can also help others who are like me (Researcher's translation, Mr. Abel, 03/05/2016)

The notion of the COP was brought up by Mr. Abel as a means of solidarity to settle in a new country. He referred to a meeting with "other foreigners who speak French". It is not unusual that immigrants who speak a common language tend to group themselves together.

Mr. Abel explained how he witnessed the challenges his son faced as a language broker. He remembered the day they arrived in South Africa when his son was forced to start brokering for him. His son was unprepared for this task. Their luggage did not arrive on time and they were asked to present receipts and explain which flight they had taken and at what time they had arrived. Mr Abel described the difficulty Dieudonne experienced in interpreting for him:

*C'était notre première fois en Afrique du Sud, nos bagages manquaient et nous étions tous deux en difficulté avec l'anglais. je m'attendais à ce que mon fils soit plus intelligent, à interpréter pour nous, mais il ne pouvait pas interpréter ce que les préposés nous disaient, mais il a fait un visage triste, comme frustré, j'ai remarqué qu'il ne pouvait pas interpréter*

(Mr. Abel, interview, 03/03/2016)

It was our first time in South Africa, our luggage was missing and then we were both struggling with English. I expected my son to be smarter, to interpret for us, but he could not interpret what the attendants were telling us, but he made a sad face, like frustrated, I noticed that he was not able to interpret

(Researcher's translation, 25/03/2016)

All three parents encouraged their children to go to school on arrival in South Africa. They felt that educating their children would enable them to adapt easily to South African society and that it would help them to be better prepared for life and get better jobs. Madam Bijoux shares the following:

I know that my children can get a better job here. I know that they can study more here and become better and have a better job than me. The way I see my daughter behaving, I know there is a brighter future ahead for the whole family. (Madam Bijoux, interview, 28/02/2016)

Similarly, Mr. Abel shares his hopes and dreams for his children in the future:

*Mon fils peut avoir l'impression que je suis dur pour lui, mais c'est parce que je sais qu'il a besoin d'un exemple pour ses frères et sœurs. Au début, son anglais n'était pas bon, le pire était pire, mais nous y arrivons. Il vaut la peine de continuer et de lutter contre la langue que l'on ne sait pas, il vaut la peine d'avoir des emplois qui nécessitent beaucoup de force physique et nous fatiguer, il vaut le sacrifice que l'on fait pour être loin de son pays d'origine, de sa maison, les personnes auxquelles on a l'habitude de voir et de parler.*

(M. Abel, interview, 03/03/2016)

My son may feel I'm being hard on him, but it's because I know he needs to set an example for his siblings. At first his English was not good, mine was worst, but we are getting there. It's worth keep going and fight against the language that one does not know, it is worth having jobs that require a lot of physical strength and make us tired, it is worth the sacrifice that one makes to be away from one's home country, one's home, the people one is accustomed to see and talk to.

(Researcher's translation, 03/05/2016)

Madam Marina who was still struggling with English expressed how her daughter (Belleange) would become an important lady, not only among immigrants, but among South

Africans. She states how her success would make more immigrants feel confident about educating their children in South Africa:

*Je veux dire à mon précieux Belleange qu'elle réussira dans cette nouvelle terre, qu'elle nous rendra fière et que les autres enfants immigrés puissent accomplir beaucoup ici, et c'est tout, et je vous félicite parce que vous avez aidé votre les parents, votre mère, et comment vous êtes un modèle pour toute la communauté des immigrants en Afrique du Sud*

(Madam Marina, interview, 12/01/2016)

I want to tell my precious Belleange that she will succeed in this new land, that she will make us proud and for the other immigrant kids that they can accomplish a lot here, then, and that's it, and congratulate you because you have helped your parents, your mother, and how you are a role model for the whole immigrant community in South Africa.

(Researcher's translation, 17/01/2017)

Madam Marina tried to learn English but she was not successful. In her case learning from her daughter suggests that the relinquishing of power by the parent to the child in the learning process is positive as it is recounted with nostalgic laughter and excitement. This association with learning a new language supplants the negative feelings of embarrassment, frustration, or anxiety that usually accompany a lack of proficiency in English. Madam Marina's case illustrates the possibility of replacing these feelings with fond memories of togetherness that strengthen unity among families. This is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the transfer of power by the parents for the survival of the family in host countries. It may actually occur as an acculturation strategy that is beneficial to the family (Weisskirch, 2010; Berry, 2007).

The situations in which the child language broker is asked to translate or interpret vary according to domains (Puig 2002). Each situation may require a particular set of skills that the child broker may develop over time, such as the development of a more refined vocabulary and problem-solving abilities (Halgunseth 2003; Walinchowski 2001). It is apparent that children who broker for their parents engage in adult situations that may enhance their cognitive development. For example, Belleange who was just seven years old

took up a mature role in the life of her family members in South Africa. This role could shape her into a responsible adult in the future.

The high or prestigious status of English is clearly recognized by the immigrant families. English is regarded as an asset for socio-economic advancement as highlighted in all the parents' responses by the use of specific markers of success such as "good job", "brighter future", "role model", etc. The immigrant parents' aspirations correspond with the South African parents' view of English as an important asset in their children's lives (Prah, 2005). South African parents, as represented by a democratically elected school governing body, do have the power to choose the language of instruction in a particular school.

However, research shows that many parents go to great lengths to have English as the sole medium of instruction and this is a trend evident in other parts of Africa too (Benson, 2004; Bunyi, 1999; Busch, 2010; Cummins & Hornberger, 2007; De Klerk, 2002; Holmarsdottir, 2005; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2005; Stroud, 2002; 2003; Woolman & Fleisch, 2006; Wolfaardt, 2005; 2010; Wong-Fillmore, 1991).

English is also seen as the language of political and economic liberation (Lombard, 2007; Maile, 2004; Msila, 2005). Clearly, the basis upon which parents make choices with regard to their children's schooling is not simple, but stems from their political history and knowledge of the past as well as the goals that they aspire towards for their children's future. South Africa is not the only multilingual country in the southern African region, nor are its language-in-education policies uniquely problematic (Nkosana, 2011, Mooko, 2009, Papien, 2007; Prah, 2009, Wolfaardt, 2010). Like other African countries, the lure of English is difficult to resist. High levels of proficiency in English persist as "the distributor of power" (Nkosana, 2011, p.11).

As stated earlier, the power and dominance that is inherent in English is closely linked to the history of South Africa and the politics of language. Thus in situations where immigrants can only communicate with locals through English, these traits of dominance and power imbalance seem to be attached to them by local South Africans. In this regard, data shows that there are role reversals through the language brokering process. Parents, as lifelong learners rely on their children to learn English, which is associated with better life chances and/or opportunities. Through English, parents are given a voice by their children to adapt to a new environment.



## 5.6 Teachers' views on language brokering

Chapter 4 refers to two teachers who were asked about their views on language brokering in multilingual contexts. To this question, both these teachers empathized with their immigrant learners, but had different ways of helping them to adapt to their environment.

For example, Candice understood what her immigrant students were going through, that is, studying in English which was a third or fourth language to most of them. She expresses her limited capacity in being able to help them:

I come from an Afrikaans background and used to think my first language could take me everywhere, but when I had to start studying in English second language, it was difficult. ...so yes, I really imagine how it can be difficult for my immigrant students who are from different countries with different first and second languages in their repertoires.

But what can I do? We are supposed to teach in English and no extra consideration is given to people who do not understand...I cannot change the medium of instruction or ask the institution to hire all kinds of translators from various immigrant countries...they manage to help themselves through peers, relatives who know a little English more than them; they become language brokers for each other

(Candice, interview, 15/04/2016)

This affirmation by Candice about language policy in S.A is echoed by Heugh (1993) who explains that in the Western Cape, teachers in formerly "white" or "coloured" schools who now have Xhosa-speaking or other home language (s) speaking learners in their classes often feel helpless and frustrated in the face of language difficulties encountered by these learners. Heugh (1993) explains that the teachers sometimes argue that it is not their responsibility to deal with these difficulties and learners should either not be admitted to the school or that they should be given special programmes by specialist language teachers. Candice, explains:

Like I said before, the school language policy insists on the use of English as medium of instruction...immigrant children cannot learn by using their home languages...may be if they could organize extra English lessons after school...

(Candice, interview, 26/06/2016)

In the teachers' interviews, light is being shed on aspects of empathy, as in Candice's interview: "I really imagine how it can be difficult..."She uses her own past experience in English classes and remembers how her classmates acted as language brokers for her.

However, Mr. Robin had a slightly different opinion to his South African colleague. He felt obliged to do something for his immigrant students as he was also an immigrant. He studied in English unlike some of his immigrant students who started learning English as a third language before coming to South Africa:

I feel bad when I hear some of my immigrant students complain about learning in English...I have a student whose first language is Swahili, second language is Lingala and third language is French...His father speaks Swahili, mother speaks Lingala and he started school in Kinshasa, where the medium of instruction was French. He moved to South Africa with his parents at ten and had to start studying in English...This is not easy, not even for me as his teacher...The school does not have any special treatment of such cases, but I decided to assign a student whom I considered qualified to help explain things to his fellow immigrant brother...The assigned student is also from Congo, but at least he immigrated to South Africa with his family when he was much younger (three) and so has been studying in Afrikaans, then English. I always encourage them to go everywhere together and successfully had a meeting with their parents so they can interact more out of class...

(Interview, Mr. Robin, 15/04/2016)

This extract reveals the case of a multilingual immigrant student who plays the role of a language broker for his fellow immigrant classmate. It also shows how immigrant children construct their identities in a multicultural South African context. The excerpt also shows the teacher's empathy and understanding of language brokering by immigrant children.

There was a need to know how language brokering could help the children develop cognitively. So the two teachers were asked whether language brokering could help immigrant children's English learning and what cognitive benefits it could yield. Mr. Robin's reply was as follows:

I believe that encouraging immigrant children to perform acts of language brokering for their peers who may be lacking English proficiency in the classroom can bring out a lot...most of these children have rich linguistic backgrounds and could learn if they are given the opportunity, thereby yielding a great cognitive development...

(Mr. Robin, interview, 28/06/2016)

Mr. Robin, together with his colleague Candice, encourage the immigrant learners to develop learning strategies like peer support. The only difference between the two teachers' method of support is that Mr. Robin, knowing the capabilities of his learners, *decided to assign a student* whom he considered *qualified to help explain things to his fellow immigrant brother*. By doing this, Mr. Robin used an alternative strategy to support his immigrant learners. Coyoca & Lee (2009) explain that through repeated language-brokering exchanges, relationships get formed where expectations for brokers and brokees are developed and established. The more proficient immigrant children in this study acted as language brokers for their fellow immigrant peers who had low proficiency in English.

This data and analysis of teachers' views on language brokering, sheds light on the challenge for teachers of immigrant children to learn more about the linguistic tools that the immigrant learners bring to multicultural classrooms. Another challenge is how to support learners' access to learning in an environment that is becoming more diverse through immigration.

If teachers of immigrant learners can acknowledge language wealth brought to the classroom, they can go a long way towards helping to enhance learners' cognitive development. The request to Claire to broker for fellow immigrant children shows the recognition of language brokering as a mediation tool in the classroom. This aligns with Zinn & Rodgers (2012) who claim that immigrant learners bring a rich repertoire into the school setting and so they need to be recognized, appreciated, acknowledged, and seen. In so doing they are encouraging and making place for the language capacities of immigrant learners by means of translanguaging which involves enacting transformational practice in school settings. Translanguaging supports the ability of bilingual students to have multiple identities (García, 2012).

## 5.7 Theoretical explanation of data

South African history is closely intertwined with the dominance of the English and Afrikaans which became economic languages and which were forced on blacks, even in schools during apartheid. In an attempt to salvage their own vernaculars, black South Africans might resist English or Afrikaans in most social domains, especially if these languages are spoken by other black people. At the same time there is resistance to English in the domains to challenge whiteness among the black immigrants speaking English. An immigrant child's ability to translate or speak for the parent in such situations might not ease the resistance or eliminate it totally as English no longer serves as the main language of communication in certain social domains.

Language brokering, in essence serves to equalise people although it can also be stressful when the child is speaking on behalf of the parent. Children who serve as language brokers highlight how they serve more in social space in comparison to others. This brings out the connection between Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Bourdieu's notion of habitus and Spencer's PVEST. The PVEST emphasizes the fact that transition into a new culture is very challenging and it is only through the dominant language that immigrants are able to construct and reconstruct identities. Bourdieu (1977) describes habitus as socialized subjectivity. Vygotsky (1978) talks of mediation as key to all human communication. In a nutshell, these theories emphasize the fact that language is the most important tool in communication or interaction between people.

Interactions are constructed according to intent, and they can be affected by the limits of context and degrees of shared meaning. In other words, language is a social practice. Language is acquired differently depending on the age of the person. For young immigrant children variations in discourse style are not as problematic as they are for teenagers (Erickson, 1986). In the globalized world, knowledge of the differences in socio-cultural discourse assists children in later life.

Since identity and language intersect, both occur through components such as the influence of social interaction, peers and family influence, status, community cohesion, and experiences or prior exposure to differing contexts. All of these factors create an experience that the immigrant children incorporate into their self-identity. Each experience is a moment and each

moment slightly alters their attitude and beliefs concerning their group and individual identity.

Bourdieu (2000) states that social identity is associated with class and gender, and embodied in the habitus. As stated in Chapter 3, Bourdieu defines habitus as a set of durable dispositions, explaining that the schemes of perception, appreciation and action enable individuals to generate appropriate and endlessly renew strategies, but within the limits of the structural constraints of which they are the product (2000, p. 138). He also maintains that class and gender are part of habitus. The term “class” cannot be applied to young immigrant children as they have not yet started working or have not yet become economically active.

So this study refers to status as part of habitus which in turn can refer to political identity, classroom identity, and community peer identity. Immigrant children’s status can change depending on the social community they inhabit at a given time. The habitus also refers to how an individual learns to perceive and act in the world based on previous experiences. The immigrant children in this study had prior exposure to their home countries and this influenced their degree of ethnic affiliation.

Some researchers have stated that habitus is a product of personal and social history (Bourdieu, 2000; Menard-Warwick, 2005). Unlike the theory of indexicality which focusses on linguistic changes within a particular space such as work (Blommaert, 2001), habitus (Bourdieu, 2000) accounts for how social and personal experiences create and alter a person’s context. Developed in a particular context and social position, the habitus can adapt to new contexts and new social positions as a result of the gap between expectations and experience (Collins, 2000, p. 149). For immigrant children the social world is an important component in language maintenance and ethnic identity affiliation and habitus facilitates this. Pahl (2002) observed children in their home, using ethnographic methods. She noted how habitus was inscribed into social practices.

When they experience the social world, human beings internalize its values. It should be noted that for Bourdieu (2000) the social world is neither neutral nor benign rather it is constituted by systems of inequality and domination.

Furthermore, he argues that since interaction between individuals tends to reflect the societal positions of the interlocutors, these interactions will probably both express and reproduce the structures of society (1991). Past habitus, which can also be referred to as historical narrative, is an important dimension of the social contexts of language learning (Canagarajah, 1999).

Goldstein (1997) points out that in order to understand how such forces interact with people's social roles, relationships, and goals, it is necessary to examine the stories of individuals (p.177).

In light of this, my study explores immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context. It tries to understand the experiences of the immigrant children as language brokers for their families and community, without neglecting the views of the parents on using their children as language brokers. The data collected through observation, interview and personal narratives from the immigrant children has shed light on the stories of immigrant families in South Africa.

The data presented in this chapter shows that immigrant children are not trapped in their past. They learn English for survival in South Africa and do not insist on using their mother tongue or other colonial languages. For example, Helen and Claire acquired multilingual skills to help their families and friends who were facing difficulties in communicating in South Africa. They were ready to switch from one language to another at any given time, to make life easier for their fellow immigrants. Unlike Pierre, Helen demonstrated better multilingual skills as she could speak IsiXhosa as well. (Cook, 2002) explains that multilingualism is the natural potential available to every normal human being rather than an unusual exception. So, given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs (Cook, 2002, p. 23).

Serving as a language broker seems to enhance one's self-esteem as a reflexive individual who interprets the world in relation to things that matter to him/her. This involves deliberating and prioritizing elements of his/her life that are of key concern, such as physical well-being, practical worldly achievements, family happiness, emotional relationships, social self-esteem, political and moral values, and faith (Archer, 2012, pp. 102–111; Taylor 1989, pp. 62–63).

The immigrant children in this study pride themselves on being language brokers for their families and for other members of their community. The fact that their language brokering acts make their families happy, gives them the joy to do more and this seems to enhance their self-esteem.

Data collected through interviews and personal narratives shows that there is a sense of pride instilled through language brokering that ties in with the literature (Love, 2007; Corona, et al., 2011; Morales & Hanson, 2005). The data also resonates with Halgunseth's (2003) view

that the process of mediating between agents in complex and adult-like situations teaches young children social negotiation, and decision-making skills, as well as family responsibility. As a result, immigrant children feel more mature, independent, proud and in possession of higher self-esteem. Such feelings strengthen the trust between the parent and child (e.g., McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Morales et al., 2012). In other words, positive feelings about language brokering can be associated with higher levels of self-esteem and less problematic family relationships (Kam, 2011; Niehaus & Kumpiene, 2014).

Of equivalent intrigue is that the immigrant participants were willing to become better individuals by getting involved in the cultural activities of learning local languages such as IsiXhosa, Afrikaans and English. Learning different languages seemed to assist them to become better language brokers and to help other immigrants whose proficiency in English was limited. The practice could be understood in relation to the three theories namely, the Sociocultural, Poststructural and PVEST that have been discussed in Chapter 3 of this study.

The sociocultural contexts of learning such as families, communities and schools are important sites of social and cultural reproduction. Through acculturation and mediation immigrants try to maintain their cultural backgrounds while at the same time, they adapt to the new cultures to which they are exposed (Weisskirch, 2010). This aligns with Vygotsky's (1981) argument that individuals do not have the means to experience, know and act upon the world directly, but can only do so indirectly through the mediation of the range of psychological tools they have acquired. These psychological tools can be physical in nature for example, written notes, diagrams and also crucially, the interventions of others. They could also constitute the use of language, which is central to Vygotsky's theory.

In essence, the psychological tools represent any means that an individual uses to reason and think (Vygotsky, 1978). So Bourdieu's habitus is an appropriate term to use to describe the set of psychological tools available to the individual (Bourdieu, 1999). As discussed in Chapter 3, habitus refers to a range of engagement, from the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experience.

In the context of this study, immigrant child language brokers seem to use the best they had acquired in English to help themselves and their fellow immigrant families and friends in their new multicultural South African host country. Bourdieu (1990) views linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital convertible into economic, cultural and social capital

that is distributed unequally within any given speech community. He stresses that linguistic exchanges are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or respective groups are realised. The immigrant pupils, therefore, used English which is regarded as the most prestigious language, to broker for their fellow immigrant friends and families.

In South Africa English dominates other languages. So this implies that the immigrant learners identify with the power of speech the dominant language confers on them in their new environment.

This observation ties in with the poststructuralist perspective which states that an individual's identity is not static, but socially constituted and expressed in interactions with others. According to the poststructuralist perspective, second language learners are viewed as actors who perform certain activities. In other words, their identities are viewed as performance (Butler, 1990).

Immigrant children belong to families and to the local communities. On a daily basis, they engage in language brokering where they use their bilingual skills, since they code-switch all the time while translating.

In other words, language brokering is interrelated with other forms of bilingual communication that can co-occur within multilingual contexts (Reynolds & Orellena, 2015).

The negotiation of identity by participants in this study has taken into consideration, not just the school environments, but also the local communities in which the participants functioned on a daily basis. It is during interaction with peers, teachers, parents and others (at the school playgrounds and local environments) that immigrant children may negotiate their identities better, either as being proficient or less proficient individuals when compared to others. The perception of their peers, teachers or other members of their community may also contribute in their negotiation of identities.

According to the data analyzed here it emerges that immigrant children's identities are fluid due to the movement between social groups of different ages. This implies that they continuously negotiate their identities, consciously or unconsciously (Marx, 2002). Hence language brokering is viewed largely as an unconscious act because the immigrant children do not follow a particular language rule (s) while acting as language brokers. Their translation is to facilitate communication, so everything is translated in the simplest way for



people to understand. For instance, the data shows that Belleange, Claire and Helen interacted with many different groups of people in different domains. At home, they interacted with their family members and friends in various languages such as French, Portuguese, Swahili, and Lingala. At school they interacted with South African children speaking English, IsiXhosa, and Afrikaans. They negotiated their identities in each interaction; switching constantly from one language to another as the situation demanded. Hence negotiating identity is situated because the same pupil can negotiate different identities and participate in different contexts.

In relation to this kind of development Myers-Scotton (2006) regards talk as negotiating rights and obligations between the speaker and addressee. This implies that speakers are assumed to have an implicit/ instinctive knowledge of language choices in a particular interaction. In the case of this study, immigrant children had to make choices of the particular language(s) to use when interacting with different groups of people.

In this way, the immigrant learners seemed to navigate easily from one social interaction to the next, thus negotiating and constructing their identities continuously. This movement seems to confirm the fact that identity is not fixed (Norton, 1997, 2000). It is continually changing, depending on the social context or setting.

Block (2007) argues that in the course of migration, one's identity and sense of self are put on the line due to a shift in historical, sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors that shape one's identity. In this way, individuals must reconstruct and redefine themselves as they adapt to their new circumstances. Reconstruction and redefinition of identity often takes place in second language learning contexts (Block, 2007).

Therefore immigrant children adjust or negotiate their identities according to varying social situations. In the context of this study, immigrant children are not trapped in their past because that past changes as they "re-narrate" it from the present (Bourdieu, 1977). Due to the nature of the past that needs to be healed in this case, such as centuries of colonization, continued marginalization, the use of truth-telling and other narratives in peace-building, and the need to "re-story or re-narrate" the past is particularly pronounced. So, immigrants use personal narratives to heal the past and to construct a better future.

From the data presented in this chapter, it is apparent that the environment plays a role in the individual's identity formation. For example, Wenger (2000, p. 239) believes that an individual's identity is a lived experience of belonging (or not belonging). He argues further

that an individual's identity involves deep connections with others through shared histories and experiences, reciprocity, affection and mutual commitments. Wenger's definition is relevant to this study, as language brokering involves second language learning which incorporates constructing new identities. In addition, a person may have other identities based on her/his gender, social class or physical ability.

In light of the above, it can be deduced that immigrant children move steadily from a stage of "ethnic or racial unawareness" to one of "exploration," to a final stage characterized by an achieved sense of racial or ethnic identity (Marcia, 1966; Erickson, 1968). The immigrant children, in trying to fit into their host community, decide to make their presence felt by using language to communicate, even if they make mistakes. Moreover, habitus in conjunction with capital, which goes beyond the notion of material assets to capital that may be social, cultural or symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986), determines the extent to which a participant is able to act in a particular field or "social or institutional arena in which people express and reproduce their dispositions" (Gaventa, 2003, p. 6).

In the case of this study, English represents a kind of capital amongst the users, who in this case are immigrant learners, hence it may determine the degree of power they possess. In any interaction, therefore, the frames of participation are partly determined by the various types of habitus speakers bring. This could be their linguistic and other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Different language varieties then shape the potential social roles open to speakers which constitute different forms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977). The notion of 'linguistic capital' suggests here that one has differential means to operate in a particular field and the linguistic capital has symbolic power. Consequently, immigrant home languages may have little capital in dominant language markets.

The immigrant learners who are first language users and who have access to or control of the more powerful language forms tend to be more successful socially and economically. They can convert their linguistic capital into social, cultural and symbolic capital more successfully than those whose languages are not valued.

Bourdieu's (1991) work on language and symbolic power has demonstrated that language is not simply communication but also a means of flexing symbolic power. Therefore, the extent to which an individual is able to take on new linguistic and other dispositions is a key determinant of interactional success in new spaces. Due to their lack of high proficiency in

English, the immigrant learners are forced to negotiate new identities and create new spaces of possibilities as reflected in the data.

The following points can be noted from the foregoing discussion:

- (a) Child language brokers cross cultural and linguistic borders, thereby constructing multiple identities.
- b) Language brokering seems to enhance children's sense of belonging and it strengthens solidarity among immigrants.
- (c) Language brokering by children enhances the learning of additional languages and has implications for English (L2) learning. It also sharpens the children's social, interpersonal skills, as well as decision-making and problem-solving skills.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Data analysis was informed by the qualitative research design and the research questions found in Chapter one of this study. The participants of the study are from different countries, namely Congo, Cameroon, Burundi, South Africa and Nigeria, with different linguistic backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 7-40 years, showing different levels of reasoning and maturity. The majority of the immigrant children's interviews and personal narratives showed their positive feelings towards language brokering. The parents felt a sense of pride in the children brokers. Parents also expressed positive future aspirations for their children through language brokering.

The analyzed data shows that immigrant language brokers changed identities in various social spaces. Children used their home languages as a resource and portrayed pride in and loyalty towards their own languages. The teachers seemed to negotiate identities with the pupils as they empathized with the immigrant pupils and suggested different strategies to support language brokering.

The final chapter will present and discuss the findings of the study. It will also provide recommendations on the basis of the findings.

## CHAPTER SIX

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

In chapter 5, raw data collected by means of interviews, observations and personal narratives were presented and analyzed. This chapter will summarize and discuss the findings of the study. Based on these findings, the implications of language brokering for language identity construction will be discussed. Finally, recommendations will be made on the basis of the findings.

This study set out to investigate how immigrant children negotiate multiple language identities through language brokering in South Africa. It drew on Sociocultural, Poststructuralist and the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems theories to understand how young immigrant children make use of English (second language) in different domains. It explored what the implications of language brokering are for identity construction in a multilingual South African society.

Central to this study was how these immigrant children coped with the challenges they faced while acting as interpreters and translators for their families and friends in different spaces in South Africa. It investigated how the immigrant children in a primary school in Cape Town constructed their multiple identities through language brokering.

Thus the main aim of this study was to examine the identity of immigrant children as *language brokers* in South Africa.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the central research question that guided this study was: How do immigrant children construct and negotiate identities as language brokers in different spaces in South Africa? This study also addressed the following research sub-questions:

- What are the experiences of immigrant children as language brokers in different spaces?
- What are the parents' views and experiences of their children as language brokers?
- What are the teachers' views of language brokering by immigrant children?
- What are the implications of language brokering for immigrant children's identity construction in a multicultural and multilingual context?

The findings of this research are consistent with the assertion that there has not been much investigation into language brokering and the experiences of immigrant children and families in South Africa. Although trends, patterns and figures of migration have been the focus of research in the past decade in South Africa, the experiences of immigrant children and their families about language brokering have been largely neglected. This has been identified as a gap that needs further exploration.

In the sections that follow I discuss the findings of this study that emanate from the data analysis presented in Chapter 5. These findings are presented in relation to the research questions.

## **6.2 Presentation and Discussion of findings**

From the analyzed data it is apparent that immigrant children who act as language brokers have different experiences. Collectively their experience manifest a vast range of elements which include: role and power reversal, construction of language brokering identities, confident positive attitudes, gender differences in language brokering, aspirations for English competence, mixed feelings and tension between multilingual competence and home language maintenance.

### **6.2.1 Children as language brokers**

#### **6.2.1.1 Language brokering leads to role and power reversal**

The findings of this study suggest that a temporary shift in parent-child roles does compromise traditional values or undermine parental roles. The need to teach parents local languages to ‘equip’ them to protect themselves has close ties with the parents’ flexibility with regard to power. It facilitates the survival and functionality of their families in South Africa. This finding resonates with theories that maintain that language brokering can be viewed as an acculturation strategy that enables families to survive in multilingual spaces (Weisskirch, 2010; Berry, 2007).

Although acculturation is an essential response of immigrant families in multilingual contexts, some researchers assert that the relinquishment of power by the parents results in ‘adulthood’ of the child and ‘infantilization’ of the parent. These elements are encapsulated in the phenomenon of ‘parentification’ (Valenzuela, 1999; Tse & McQuillan, 1996; and Weisskirch & Alva, 2002).

From the immigrant children I interviewed, it is logical to state that language brokering impacted on the traditional family hierarchies. Traditionally, the children have to take guidance from their parents and their lifestyle is determined by their parents. In this sense, the parents still exercise their leadership and authority over the children. The findings indicate that parentification of the children was not affected by their language brokering, rather it remained a functional part of the family dynamics which promoted closer family relationships.

Language brokering makes it particularly evident that the work immigrant children perform in South Africa is not trivial. The immigrant children are not minor players or "peripheral participants" (Wenger, 1998), but are gradually being integrated into cultural practices that adults in their community have mastered. In many ways they are the experts, and their ability to engage successfully with the complex demands of modern life matters for their families' well-being and integration into the South African society.

This is consistent with the studies reported in Chapter 1 which contend that language brokering affects the normal dynamics of the parent-child relationship (Cohen et al., 1999; Love & Buriel, 2007), leading to role reversals in families whereby parents become dependent on their children (Martinez et al., 2009). This is illustrated in the case of a young child (Belleange) being prematurely exposed to adult knowledge in assuming adult roles and responsibilities within her family (Burton, 2007).

Because of the assimilative forces that require the children of immigrants in South Africa to learn English quickly, language shift starts occurring as soon as they begin school. Inside and outside the home, children of immigrants often begin using English exclusively, and this enables them to communicate. Considering the frequent discrimination and stigma associated with speaking a language other than English or other local South African languages, it is understandable that children will prefer to speak the dominant, community language. Immigrant children therefore juggle between languages and cultures as they construct their identities in each given situation.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing scholarship that has found that language brokers interpret and translate in instances oriented toward adult needs and sometimes consider these experiences as something they do to help their family (Doner et al., 2008; Dorner et al., 2007; Orellana et al., 2003; Tse, 1995a, 1995b, 1996b; Valenzuela, 1999; Weisskirch, 2005).

The dependency of the immigrant parents on their child serves as further evidence that both parents' and children's self-esteem was boosted through language brokering.

The powerful position of children serving as language brokers as they translated and mediated for their parents was also investigated in this study. In line with Love (2007), many participants expressed feelings of embarrassment, especially parents who felt that language brokering took away their power as adults. The parents were concerned that brokering in public was a source of embarrassment that undermined their parenthood or adult roles and humiliated them in the eyes of their children.

Language brokering serves as a bridge of communication and understanding between parents and children. In some instances, translating and interpreting may help a child feel more connected to his or her parents. Children may then be seen as their parents' "right hand" because they are required to make, or help make, decisions for the entire family. These activities allow the child to be more informed about different family concerns and to think and behave in a more adult-like manner. At the same time, this type of experience may have negative implications for the parent-child relationship, causing the parents to become dependent on the child.

Yet despite the fact that children are sometimes embarrassed by their parents' inability to communicate in English, this does not seem to undermine other feelings of love and respect that they feel for their parents. The findings of this study seem to suggest that the power-shift in brokering has a greater impact on parents than on the children. Children still considered themselves as minors who were under the guidance of their parents. They focused on teaching the parents and family members local languages needed for their survival in the South African context. This shift in power instilled assertiveness in children as they ensured the survival of the family in a host context.

#### **6.2.1.2 Children display mixed attitudes as language brokers**

The study's findings show that children had both positive and negative attitudes towards language brokering. These findings are consistent with the assertion that both parents and children feel a sense of pride in the language broker. Parents were proud of the fact that their children were forging through a host environment while pursuing their studies as well as teaching English to the whole family.

For the immigrant children, the sense of pride seemed to arise from the knowledge that they had mastered the dominant language used in many formal domains in South Africa. They also seemed to be happy that they could protect and serve their family members with the language skills they had acquired. In addition, children displayed an increased self-confidence as they engaged with the external world.

The children's positive feelings were reaffirmed by the positive relationships fostered through their brokering within the families I interviewed. All family members asserted that their relationships had been developed as a result of the brokering service by children. Regardless of embarrassment and other negative feelings highlighted earlier, the participants actually expressed that language brokering brought them even closer to each other. This happened as some of the participants felt highly motivated as their family members appreciated their language brokering activities. For example, Claire, Helen and Pierre would like to do more for their families and were very motivated to learn English for a better future.

Even though language brokering can largely be viewed as a positive practice, the study's findings also reveal that children language brokers express negative feelings too. Children sometimes feel burdened while they broker for their parents. Some children I interviewed (for instance, Dieudonne) stated that their personal time was strained as they had to cater for the needs of the parents. Child language brokers had to be constant 'travelling companions' with their parents for convenience. This is one of the factors that evoked negative emotions in the children, which they described as "tiring". Despite these negative feelings, the findings indicate that positive reports of language brokering outweighed the negative ones.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that found language brokers feel frustrated, embarrassed, and they experience distress (Jones & Trickett, 2005; Mercado, 2003; Puig, 2002). However, some also felt important because they are trusted by parents and involved in the family's decision-making process (Buriel et al., 2006; Hall & Sham, 1998). Language brokers live between worlds.

The findings indicate that the immigrant children participated in varied and complex activities required in the process of family settlement and mobility in the new country. Their participation helped their parents to reduce the stress and frustration associated with settlement, thus resulting in more effective family functioning (Valenzuela, 1999), which is also about care and caring. Moreover, they also gave their parents a voice and helped them to



solve certain problems associated with immigration. They also developed strategies to protect their parents' dignity and integrity in humiliating and discriminating situations.

### **6.2.1.3 Gender differences in language brokering**

Interestingly, gender differences seemed salient in the language brokering I described in the previous chapter. I noticed that the girls seemed to be more actively involved with language brokering than their male counterparts. This finding corresponds to Haavind's & Andenaes' (1997) finding that girls seemed to operate like caregivers, attending to what needs to be done and simply doing it without being asked. Like Valenzuela (1999), I found that more girls than boys claimed to serve as the "designated translators" for their families. Belleange, Claire and Helen were in many cases voluntarily helping to translate in various spaces for their families and other immigrants.

### **6.2.1.4 Child language brokering occurs in multiple spaces**

The literature highlights contestations and debates with regard to children serving as brokers in more formal spaces; with legislation attempting to deter them from these services, mainly in medical spaces (Morales & Hanson, 2005). The research findings of my study indicate that immigrant children language brokered in multiple spaces including public transport, medical spaces, local communities and schools.

In these spaces, children served as translators or mediators. Interestingly, in some of the spaces English was resisted as a marker of "whiteness" among black people who live in disadvantaged areas. This had a negative effect on immigrants who were torn between "whiteness" and "blackness" with regard to language use. This implies that English is perceived as a language of the oppressor and as a result, immigrants find themselves having fluid identities as they negotiate and construct new language identities.

This resonates with the research by Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014) who state that some spaces in South Africa function to identify who belongs and who does not, while at the same time, excluding those who do not belong. Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014) further explain that language in many spaces has frequently been used in South Africa to perpetuate social exclusion. Schools, medical spaces, and public transport seem to be the most salient spaces of social exclusion where language is used as a marker of identity on the basis of proficiency in the dominant languages of this country.

Thus it has been necessary for the immigrant children to learn these languages faster than their parents (Cline, 2014). Parents and family members who needed to access linguistic spaces became aware of language used to exclude them hence they became more dependent on their children who were able to navigate different languages. As a result, social exclusion in these spaces resulted in many immigrant children adopting the South African identity that ‘masks’ their original identity to keep them safe from any form of attack potentially arising from their original identity. Exclusion also confined immigrants to their homes which served as ‘safe havens’ where they could use their own languages freely.

### **6.2.1.5 Language brokers have better opportunities to learn English as an additional language**

An interesting finding is that all five immigrant children seemed to have acquired some knowledge of English and South African culture, though at different levels. They showed familiarity with their home languages and culture and this was an advantage with regard to language maintenance. Their bilingual and bicultural skills were recognized by others, and they were able to use their bilingual/multilingual skills effectively to mediate communication among different adult immigrants. In this way, language brokering served as a useful resource by which to integrate immigrants with limited English proficiency into the multilingual South African speech community.

From the findings of my study, English is perceived as a prestigious language for academic and communicative purposes. All five immigrant learners in this study expressed the importance of English for academic and communicative purposes and for a better future. All five expressed their need for a better future after learning English which would be a good weapon for them and their families in the host country. Their parents also associated proficiency in English with better life opportunities.

The immigrant learners viewed English as an investment due to its power as a global language. They realized that in order to help their family members and achieve their future dreams, English language was a necessity. This resonates with the poststructuralist view of language learning and identity construction which draws on Bourdieu’s (1977; 1991) works. This view emphasizes the relationship between identity construction and symbolic power. Norton and Van Lier, (2000; 2008) concur that second language learners can invest in the target language in order to acquire a greater range of material and symbolic resources. In this study, it appears that the immigrant learners invested in English (L2) because they realized

that it would make life easier for them and their fellow immigrants in South Africa. This implied their acceptance in the host country and their future aspirations.

The notion of investment in language can be explained through Bourdieu (1977) who states that legitimate and illegitimate speakers are distinguished by the right to speak and the power to impose reception. Bourdieu (1977) considers the use of language as a social and political practice in which an utterance's value and meaning is determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks. This implies that in order to investigate how power relations are implicated in the nature of language learning and how identities are co-constructed by different positions, immigrant learners take up discourses and the positions they receive, based on their social relationships. This resonates with Duff and Uchida (1997) who describe identities and beliefs as being co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an ongoing basis by means of language. Therefore, identities are not static constructs, but multiple, locally negotiated, and constantly in flux (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000, Toohey, 2000).

Wenger (1998) shows that even though power can marginalize the illegitimate, the exertion of power is not limited only to marginalization. He goes on to explain that power exists in every social situation: it is through participation and negotiation of meaning that identities are constructed and reconstructed in many-layered contexts. In this way, participation means interaction with the target group. This is indicative of a learner's goals and investments. It suggests that immigrant learners' engagement with particular languages and cultures in South Africa involves identity construction, and identities are constantly being crafted in the positions learners take up in given local situations.

In relation to the foregoing theory, Norton (2000) illustrates how a person's investment can change and how this change can empower the speaker to make herself/himself heard. This also resonates with the poststructuralist view of investment in language learning whereby the immigrant learners' investment in English (L2) seemed to bring out the relationship between identity, agency, power and access to English. This occurred inside and outside their school, and in their entire local communities.

Due to the prestigious status of English, immigrant learners deemed it necessary to make extra efforts to learn it. They believed that through practising their spoken English they might improve their competence in it, thereby constructing their identities as English (L2) speakers and better language brokers for their immigrant families.

The immigrant children reported positive results such as increased confidence, independence and maturity, acquisition of first and second cultural knowledge, and the establishment of trusting relationships with their parents. This finding is consistent with the works of Downing & Dwyer (1981), McQuillan & Tse (1995) and Shannon (1990). They also report that brokering enhanced their language development, especially their acquisition of English.

Data showed that many children started brokering within one year of their arrival in South Africa. This suggests that English acquisition started early and progressed at a rapid pace. This supports the findings by Pease-Alvarez (1993) who studied language development of 64 eight- to nine-year-old Latino students. She found that despite their limited exposure to English, the predominance of socializing in and out of the home in Spanish, and a strong community commitment to bilingualism, the students were shifting from Spanish to English in usage and proficiency.

The findings of Alvarez's (1993) study revealed that immigrant children believed strongly in the importance of acquiring English, while valuing or maintaining their home language (s). The results of this study suggest that maintaining the L1 does not hinder English (L2) acquisition (Krashen, 1996). Despite the fact that some of the children reported living and learning in L1 -rich environments at home they were able to handle the difficult task of brokering in different situations and contexts. This is consistent with McQuillan's & Tse's (1995) finding that child brokers translated texts in their second language that were far above grade level, e.g. mortgage documents, tax forms, and letters and notes intended for their parents. Likewise, Malakoff & Hakuta (1991) found that bilingual children often translate accurately. This evidence suggests that brokers develop high levels of language proficiency in order to perform interpretation and translation tasks. It could be that the acquisition of English is achieved at a more rapid pace than it is generally believed.

As alluded to earlier four of the participants stated that language brokering had been a positive experience for them. They reported that they could preserve their home language and identity through language brokering since they moved between languages (English and home languages) on a daily basis. In this way they were able to maintain their home languages and ethnic identity due to their multilingual competence. Some of the participants mentioned that language brokering accelerated their learning of English and made them feel free in South African society.

This implies that they have been assimilated into the English speech community and eventually into the South African community.

### **6.3 Parents' views on language brokering**

#### **6.3.1 Language brokering is associated with better life opportunities**

It was found in this study that immigrant parents were concerned about their children's multilingual language learning. They were anxious to maintain the home language and at the same time they wanted their children to learn the dominant host language. In most cases the immigrant parents mentioned that their children were not apt to forget their home language as they often used it to translate for their parents. According to the parents this displayed loyalty and pride of L1 and their culture. All the three immigrant parents in this study wanted better career opportunities, a positive self-image and communication with English speakers for their children. They aligned their children's proficiency in English with excellence, academic intelligence and a better future. The children were able to maintain and develop L1 because of the strong commitment from their parents.

### **6.4 Teachers' views on language brokering**

#### **6.4.1 Lack of linguistic capital**

It was also found that many teachers who come from backgrounds different to those of immigrant learners did not possess the linguistic capital to deal with the language and cultural differences that existed in their classrooms. I found that the two teachers interviewed in this study were caring individuals but were unaware of the deeper, hidden or invisible dimensions of culture, which have a significant influence on their own identity, educators' role, definitions and instructional practices (García & Guerra, 2004).

While Mr. Robin was aware of the difficulties the immigrant children were facing, he could not help them. Candice too was hamstrung because of her lack of cross-cultural awareness and skills, and her uncritical adherence to the language policy requirements. So she could not assist her immigrant learners.

## **6.5 Implications of language brokering for identity construction and English (L2) learning**

Identity construction of immigrant learners mainly relies on their investment, particularly in their English (L2) learning. In this study the immigrant learners' integration into the South African community was mirrored by their differing approaches to or investments in learning English (L2). This attitude revealed that for them the main role of language learning was for acceptance into the host community. They realized that it was through becoming more competent in the target language that they and other immigrants would be accepted into the host community. For this reason, they decided to put more effort in learning English (L2) and other local languages through which they could negotiate new identities.

There are several implications for brokering that are important for teachers and policy makers who seem to be unconcerned about the education of immigrant populations.

Firstly, language brokers are making educational decisions independently which may or may not be in the best interest of the learner. Schools that provide bilingual support services to learners and their families may be able to ease some of the stress and the burden upon language brokers, and thereby increase the chances of their success.

Secondly, immigrant language brokers in the multicultural South African context appear to be acquiring English with speed and efficiency. However, their true levels of proficiency are unlikely to be accurately assessed by using psychometric tests and other assessment tools that are decontextualized or inauthentic. Situated and authentic tasks like those involved in real-life language brokering may yield a more accurate reflection of learners' true abilities. Finding authentic and accurate measures is necessary if learners are to be provided with the appropriate educational assistance.

Lastly, immigrant learners who are called upon to convey information and concepts in a variety of situations gain linguistic, cultural, and world knowledge that teachers may be able to incorporate into learning experiences for all learners. These uniquely well-informed immigrant learners may also be rich sources of insight for educators interested in establishing and improving home-school relations.

As the influx of immigrants continues, many immigrant children will inevitably have to become their families' designated language brokers. As language brokers, these children will be placed in positions and situations where they perform tasks and take on responsibilities

that are beyond their cognitive and language abilities. These immigrant children may not have the skills, knowledge, or sense of maturity to carry out their responsibilities. A number of these children may take the initiative to seek out and acquire the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to help themselves become more competent as language brokers in order to contribute to the success of their families in the host country. In the process of doing so, they will be likely to acquire valuable skills and knowledge that can become beneficial and useful to them in other areas (for example, school achievement and competence in social and cognitive areas of development).

At the same time the demanding and challenging aspects of language brokering might also place some immigrant children at risk of a host of health, personal, and psychological problems. Based on the research by Wu & Kim (2009), it may be that focusing on the role of heritage, cultural orientation and family-related variables as modifiable mediators for intervention may be particularly useful for school psychologists and practitioners who work with immigrant children.

Future research should look into additional potential mechanisms and processes that might facilitate an understanding of why some immigrant children are being negatively affected by the language brokering experience, while others benefit, as such research will lead to finer intervention programs.

Wong-Fillmore (1991) found that early exposure to English leads to first language loss. This implies that the younger children are when they learn English, the greater the effect. However, in this study it is clear that the home and school environments were influential in language development and more specifically, in the maintenance and loss of first and second languages.

In this way the development of children's home language may be associated with family cohesion and intimacy, parental authority and transmission of cultural norms, all of which can lead to healthy adjustment, identification and internalization of the social values of the family (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010).

Immigrant children's work may facilitate families' access to information and resources. It may build bridges between the home and the school, and enhance opportunities for the children and their siblings' language learning and development. This may also help them forge particular kinds of identities for themselves that facilitate their movement into the world of education and work.

The five immigrant language brokers I interviewed and collected personal narratives from commented on how successful they were in protecting both themselves by ‘adopting’ a concealed identity and their family members and parents, by speaking for them in spaces where the latter may otherwise feel embarrassed in their absence, not knowing how to speak English. Consistent with this, Morales & Hanson (2005) indicate how migrant children who serve as language brokers can be viewed as ‘shields’ for their parents and family members by speaking on their behalf. The findings of this study seem to confirm this observation.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

Recommendations pertain to further research on language brokering and its complexities and immigrant families.

### **6.6.1 Research Areas on Language brokering**

Apart from exposing a gap in the research of immigrant family experiences, this study has attempted to make a significant contribution in highlighting the importance of language brokering by children of immigrant families in South Africa. Further research is needed for the following aspects as they are both understudied and important facets of society in the South African context: it is also important to investigate the plight of other immigrants who may be from other parts of the world; and it is important to investigate strategies by which to make South African communities and schools more inclusive, less resistant and more accommodating of other languages spoken on the continent.

Another component of research could focus on language and xenophobia. Xenophobia and language brokering are related in the sense that immigrants in South Africa are sometimes attacked or discriminated against because they are considered as foreigners who cannot speak the local South African languages. In this case, immigrant children who learn the local languages faster than their parents step in as language brokers to rescue their family members from xenophobia and its effects on immigrant families in South Africa.

Further research might also focus on how children and adult immigrants acquire additional languages in a foreign country. There is limited research on language acquisition which focuses on African-language speaking people or learners.

Finally, it is recommended that instead of focusing primarily on the negative outcomes and developmental processes of child language brokers, more work is needed to look at the social and cultural processes of language brokering. This could provide a deeper understanding of



what language brokering means for the children, with regard to their development. It is good to understand how immigrant children learn to become competent and caring members of their families across cultures.

Immigrant children learn in schools while others learn from active involvement in family life and in their communities (Spittler & Bourdillon, 2012). The work immigrant children do as language brokers can reasonably be considered as family care work. Therefore, instead of framing childhood language brokering in terms of ‘adultification’ and ‘parentification’, we need to locate the activity along ‘a continuous care-giving’ service. This will align with what Becker (2007: 40) refers to as a shift from ‘vulnerability’ to an analysis which seeks to explain ‘differences’ in experiences and outcomes ‘between’ young carers within and across families and societies or cultures.

### **6.6.2 Inclusive language pedagogies**

Lack of linguistic and cross-cultural awareness by immigrant learners’ teachers and inflexible language policy practices can negatively influence the learning process. To exclude the languages immigrant learners bring from home in order to focus on the dominant language sometimes diminishes the learning process. Thus difficulties in acquiring the dominant language can impact on academic progress (Benson, 2004).

If a learner’s home language is not the same as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), it could impact on teaching and learning. Language is viewed as the key to learning and the recognition of language and essential human rights are interrelated (Mda, 2004). This explains why language rights feature in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and why the Language-in-Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997) is informed by the views on language captured in the Constitution (Mda, 2004). In this case, if the language, culture, and history of a learner are not acknowledged in the school context, this experience can be dehumanizing.

In this regard, the teachers of immigrant learners are called upon to acknowledge the languages their learners bring to the classrooms so as to ease communication. It is in regard to this that Zinn & Rodgers (2012) suggest that both learners and teachers benefit from acknowledgement of who they are and what they are able to do. By permitting translanguaging in their multilingual classrooms teachers of immigrant learners, would be shedding light on a new awareness amongst other educators and policy makers in S.A.

## 6.7 Conclusion

This study consisted of a small sample which cannot therefore, be generalized. My focus in this study was on how immigrant children coped with the challenges they faced while acting as interpreters and translators for their families and friends in a multicultural and multilingual South African society.

When I started my research journey, I tried to imagine how the immigrant children could possibly negotiate, construct and reconstruct their identities as they find themselves caught between different languages and cultures. The main data sources of this study are the participants' narratives through individual interviews, followed by personal narratives from four immigrant learners and lastly, through observations at school playgrounds.

During the interviews I realized that the participants constructed their interpretation of their experiences with their own perspectives or positions. I was therefore able to understand how the participants perceived and interpreted their personal, familial, and social experiences as active agents while situated in their social environments (Weedon, 1987). I realized that their experiences were interpreted by them within the particular time and space in which they positioned themselves. I realized that during the interviews some of the immigrant learners were selective of what to say and so I decided to ask them for written personal narratives, through which I realized there was more to the information given.

Throughout this study, I realized language brokering, language learning and identity construction are mutually constituted, influencing each other. The participants' stories contained their particular language learning stories. In addition I became aware that language learning for immigrants meant the acquisition of discourses in the South African community. I also realized that language acquisition/learning affects the whole life of immigrant children immensely, as well as that of their families. Through language brokering, immigrant children's identities could be seen as being fluid as they shifted from one language to another.

Also noteworthy is that membership in the host community creates immigrant children's social identities and self-esteem. This implies that immigration policy makers should consider the immigrant children's education and their future in South Africa. These immigrant

children, by acting as language brokers for immigrants and others who may face communication problems due to language barriers in S.A, are also participating in and contributing to the South African economy. The South African immigration policy makers, by considering these children and their work as beneficial to the South African community at large, would make life better for all. The evidence provided by data in this study, demonstrates not only an individual but also a societal vision as powerful motivational forces for change.

This study carries several implications for a fast-growing immigrant child population. There is a need for an investigation into L1 and L2 development in multilingual/multicultural children. This study adds important findings to the early identification of language development and may inform educational policy and teaching strategies for children of immigrants in many ways. Immigrant children should be encouraged to maintain their home languages while learning new languages. Some parents and teachers may think children should give up speaking their languages at home so that they can learn English (Clarke 2006). In this study, parents seemed to understand the maintenance of L1 while learning L2 because in many cases, the immigrant children used their home languages to language broker for their families and other immigrants. The L1 should be seen as a foundation for L2 learning instead of the inaccurate assumptions about language and cognitive development (Baker 2000).



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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher: Ms Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, a PhD student in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on immigrant children's language practices in South African multicultural schools.

**Research title:** Language brokering and identity construction: exploring immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context.

### Research objectives

In this study, I hope to:

1. investigate parents' views on language brokering.
2. examine the relationship between language brokering and identity construction by immigrant children in a multilingual South African context.
3. determine the implications of language brokering for young immigrant children's identity construction.
4. Establish how immigrant children construct their identities in a multicultural and multilingual context.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between identity construction and second language learning through language brokering. Its focus is on how immigrant children respond to and cope with the challenges they encounter while constructing their identities through English (L2), and how they serve as language brokers for their parents. This research is located within identity construction through language brokering. It draws on

Spencer's (1995) framework called Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST), Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural and post structural theories to explore and understand the language brokering experiences of the immigrant children in multilingual South Africa. It will look at ways of defining and describing the relationship between language brokering, second language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context, inside and outside their classrooms.

It is important to know that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The research participants have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from the learners will be kept strictly anonymous and a system of coding will be used to protect the learners' identity.

If at any stage you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details.

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER:



DATE:

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## APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER

### THE Western Cape EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WCED)

The Annums  
97A Alexandra Street  
Parow  
7500

The Research Director  
Western Cape Education Department  
P/B X9114  
Cape Town

Dear Madam,



#### **Re: Permission to conduct research at X School**

My name is **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, a PhD student in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on immigrant children's language practices in South African multicultural schools.

I would like to request your permission to observe Francophone learners and their interaction with their teachers and peers in and out of school. The observations will allow me to understand the language learning process of the learners and how the teachers support them to learn English (L2) in a foreign language environment. They will enable me investigate how the learners, their peers and their teachers interact, how the school is organized and what type of teaching methods teachers use to support language learning.

The research will not interfere in any way with the functioning of the school or with learning in the classroom. In addition, participation will be voluntary and so participants will be free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons should they feel uncomfortable with my research. Their participation

in the study will remain anonymous. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only.

Should you wish to find out more about the research, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor Nomlomo, whose contact details are provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Supervisor: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Contact number: 0786879754

Tel. 021-9592650/2442

Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) or

[kemendequinta@gmail.com](mailto:kemendequinta@gmail.com)

Email: [vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za)



Signature of the researcher: ..... Date:.....

UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE



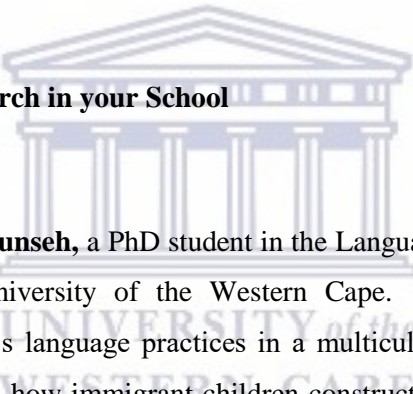
## APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER

### THE PRINCIPAL X PRIMARY SCHOOL

X Primary School,  
Stepping Stone Weg,  
7500  
Parow

Dear Sir,

#### Re: Permission to conduct research in your School



My name is **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, a PhD student in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on Francophone immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context. The aim of this study is to understand how immigrant children construct and negotiate their identities as *language brokers* in South Africa. It will focus on Francophone immigrant primary school children (between the ages of seven to twelve years) in two primary schools in Cape Town and the role they play as interpreters and translators for their families. It will explore the strategies they use to learn English in the classroom and how they construct their identities as language brokers. In other words, it will investigate how Francophone immigrant children negotiate multiple language identities in and out of school.

I would like to request your permission to observe the teachers' and learners' interaction in the English second language classroom. I request you as the Principal of the school and the Intermediate Phase Head of Department to participate in the interviews. I also request your permission to interview the immigrant pupils and their teachers.

The research will not interfere in any way with the functioning of the school or with learning in the classroom. In addition, participation will be voluntary and so participants will be free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons should they feel uncomfortable with my research. Your participation and that of the learners in the study will remain anonymous. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand how immigrant children construct and negotiate their identities as *language brokers* in South Africa.

Should you wish to find out more about the research, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor Nomlomo, whose contact details are provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Supervisor: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Contact number: 0786879754

Tel. 021-9592650/2442

Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) or

[kemendequinta@gmail.com](mailto:kemendequinta@gmail.com)

Email: [ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za)



Signature of the researcher: ..... Date:.....

## APPENDIX 4: PERMISSION LETTER

### THE PARENTS

X Primary School,  
Stepping Stone Weg,  
7500  
Parow

Dear Parents,

#### Re: Permission for your child's participation in a research

My name is **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, a PhD student in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on Francophone immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context. The target group will be Francophone immigrant children from 7-16 years.

I would like to request your permission to sit in your child's English second Language learning class and observe how he/she interacts with his/her teacher and peers. I would also like to observe her/his written activities and interview him/her about their experiences on learning English second Language through language brokering.

The research will not disrupt the class schedules or teaching and learning in the classroom. In addition, participation will be voluntary, so participants will be free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons should they feel uncomfortable with my research. The identity of the learners in the study will remain anonymous. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand how immigrant children construct and negotiate their identities as *language brokers* in South Africa.

Should you wish to find out more about the research, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor Nomlomo, whose contact details are provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Supervisor: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Contact number: 0786879754

Tel. 021-9592650/2442

Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) or

[kemendequinta@gmail.com](mailto:kemendequinta@gmail.com)

Email: [ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za)

Signature of the researcher: ..... Date:.....



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## **French version of parents' letter**

Cher Parents,

### **Re: Autorisation pour la participation de votre enfant dans une recherche.**

Mon nom est **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, une étudiante en doctorat en Faculté de l'éducation à l'Université de Western Cape. Je mène des recherches sur les pratiques langagières des enfants immigrants francophones dans un contexte sud-africain multiculturel. Le groupe cible sera les enfants d'immigrants francophones de 7-16 ans.

Je voudrais demander votre permission pour siéger en classe d'apprentissage de votre enfant et observer comment il / elle interagit avec son professeur et ses camarades de classe. Je tiens également à son / ses activités écrites, observer et les interviewer à propos de leurs expériences sur l'apprentissage de l'anglais.

La recherche ne perturbera pas les horaires de classe ou l'enseignement et l'apprentissage dans la salle de classe. En outre, la participation sera volontaire, afin que les participants soient libres de se retirer à tout moment sans donner de raisons. L'identité des apprenants dans l'étude restera anonyme. Les informations reçues dans le cadre de l'étude seront utilisées à des fins de recherche uniquement. Elles ne seront pas utilisées dans toute plate-forme publique à des fins autres que de comprendre comment les enfants d'immigrés construisent et négocient leurs identités en tant que courtiers de langues en Afrique du Sud.

Si vous souhaitez en savoir plus sur la recherche, vous êtes invités à communiquer avec mon superviseur, professeur Nomlomo, dont les coordonnées figurent ci-dessous.

Chercheuse: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Superviseur: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Numéro de contact: 0786879754

Tel. 021-9592650/2442

Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) ou

kemendequinta@gmail.com

Email: [ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za)

Signature de chercheuse: ..... Date:.....



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## Appendix 5: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE IMMIGRANT LEARNERS

### Participants' Informed Consent form:

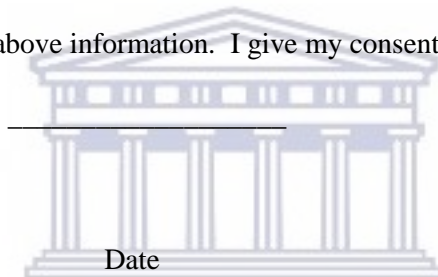
I agree to be part of the study and I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary. If, for any reason, I wish to stop being part of the study, I may do so without having to give an explanation. I understand the intent and purpose of this study.

I am aware that the data will be used for a PhD thesis and a research paper. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the paper's submission. The data gathered in this study are confidential and anonymous with respect to my personal identity, unless I specify or indicate otherwise. In the case of classroom observations and interviews, I have been promised that my personal identity and that of the school will be protected, and that my duties will not be disrupted by the researcher.

I have read and understood the above information. I give my consent to participate in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX 6: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE TEACHERS

Researcher: Ms Quinta KemendeWunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

**Research Title:** Language brokering and identity construction: exploring immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context.

I hereby give consent to the researcher to do observations on immigrant learners from my class during lunch time.

The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the researcher is free to ask me questions concerning immigrant learners in my class and my general feelings about the learners. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my identity. I am promised that my participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.

Teacher's Signature: .....

Date: .....



## APPENDIX 7: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE PARENTS

Researcher: Ms Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

**Research Title:** Language brokering and identity construction: exploring immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context.

My name is **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, a PhD student in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on Francophone immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context. The target group will be Francophone immigrant children from 7-16 years.

I would like to request your permission to sit in your child's English second Language learning class and observe how he/she interacts with his/her teacher and peers. I would also like to observe her/his written activities and interview him/her about their experiences on learning English second Language through language brokering.

The research will not disrupt the class schedules or teaching and learning in the classroom. In addition, participation will be voluntary, so participants will be free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons should they feel uncomfortable with my research. The identity of the learners in the study will remain anonymous. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand how immigrant children construct and negotiate their identities as *language brokers* in South Africa.

Should you wish to find out more about the research, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor Nomlomo, whose contact details are provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Supervisor: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Contact number: 0786879754

Tel. 021-9592650/2442

Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) or

[kemendequinta@gmail.com](mailto:kemendequinta@gmail.com)

Email: [ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za)

Signature of the researcher: ..... Date:.....



## French version of parents' letter

Mon nom est **Quinta Kemende Wunseh**, une étudiante en doctorat en Faculté de l'éducation à l'Université de Western Cape. Je mène des recherches sur les pratiques langagières des enfants immigrants francophones dans un contexte sud-africain multiculturel. Le groupe cible sera les enfants d'immigrants francophones de 7-16 ans.

Je voudrais demander votre permission pour siéger en classe d'apprentissage de votre enfant et observer comment il / elle interagit avec son professeur et ses camarades de classe. Je tiens également à son / ses activités écrites, observer et les interviewer à propos de leurs expériences sur l'apprentissage de l'anglais.

La recherche ne perturbera pas les horaires de classe ou l'enseignement et l'apprentissage dans la salle de classe. En outre, la participation sera volontaire, afin que les participants soient libres de se retirer à tout moment sans donner de raisons. L'identité des apprenants dans l'étude restera anonyme. Les informations reçues dans le cadre de l'étude seront utilisées à des fins de recherche uniquement. Elles ne seront pas utilisées dans toute plate-forme publique à des fins autres que de comprendre comment les enfants d'immigrés construisent et négocient leurs identités en tant que courtiers de langues en Afrique du Sud.

Si vous souhaitez en savoir plus sur la recherche, vous êtes invités à communiquer avec mon superviseur, professeur Nomlomo, dont les coordonnées figurent ci-dessous.

Chercheuse: Ms. Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Superviseur: Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Numéro de contact: 0786879754

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Email: [3315473@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3315473@myuwc.ac.za) ou

[kemendequinta@gmail.com](mailto:kemendequinta@gmail.com)

Email: [ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za)

Signature de chercheuse: ..... Date:.....

## **APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEWS**

### **Interview Schedule: Quinta Kemende Wunseh**

**Study Title: Language brokering and Identity Construction: Exploring immigrant children's language practices in a multicultural South African context.**

#### **1. Interviews with immigrant learners**

- What is your country of origin?
- What language (s) do you use with your parents at home?
- Do you use them at school?
- Who do you normally help in translating or explaining things they do not understand in English?
- How often do you translate or explain things in English?
- What problems do you experience helping your parents/friends/relatives understand English?
- How does the translating/brokering activity help to improve your English reading and writing skills?
- Can you encourage other learners to broker for their families/friends who are learning English as a second language? Why?

#### **2. Interviews with immigrant learners' parents**

- What is your country of origin?
- What language(s) do you use with your family at home?
- How do you communicate with others who do not understand your language(s)?
- What impression do you have about your children or other immigrant children who broker for their families and friends?
- What problems do you experience when your children act as your translators/interpreters?
- What do you think can be done to improve your English second language learning?

### **French version of parents' interviews**

- Quel est votre pays d'origine ?
- Quelle langue (s) utilisez-vous avec votre famille à la maison ?
- Comment communiquez-vous avec les autres qui ne comprennent pas votre langue (s) ?
- Quelle impression avez-vous au sujet de vos enfants ou d'autres enfants d'immigrés qui courtier pour leurs familles et amis ?
- Quels problèmes rencontrez-vous quand vos enfants agissent comme vos traducteurs / interprètes ?
- Que pensez-vous peut être fait pour améliorer votre apprentissage de la deuxième langue anglaise ?

### **3. Interview with immigrant learners' teachers**

#### **1.1 Personal Profile**

1. How many years have you taught English Additional Language?
2. What qualifications do you hold?
3. What are your major subjects?
4. Up to what level have you done English?
5. What is your Home Language?

#### **1.2 Interview Questions**

- What do you understand by language brokering?
- How long have you been teaching Francophone immigrant children?
- How do you support Francophone immigrant children who experience difficulties in learning English as an additional language?
- How comfortable are you teaching English to Francophone immigrant children?
- What sort of activities do you engage your learners in to make sure they are improving in their English second language learning?
- What are some of the challenges you come across teaching immigrant children?
- How do you address these challenges?