

## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

#### 1. Nature of the problem

The focus of investigation of this research project is two residential areas that resort under the Tshwane Metropolitan Council's jurisdiction (formerly known as the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area), namely Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. This study seeks to gain insight into the sociolinguistic realities of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville - including language use, knowledge, behaviour, status and attitudes. The general aims of the research project are the following:

- to provide a sociolinguistic profile of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, with specific attention focused on the multilingual character of the areas in question;
- to provide local decision-makers with information that might aid the language planning process; and
- to provide a future basis for comparison to identify the occurrence of potential sociolinguistic change.

The main reason for choosing Mamelodi and Atteridgeville is a very practical one. The researcher works and studies in Pretoria and therefore has first-hand knowledge of the geographical layout of Tshwane, and has access to various networks existing of local role-players, researchers, formal institutions and informal contacts, as well as unlimited access to information resources. In addition, the close proximity of the areas also excludes extensive travelling costs.

The planning and implementation of a local language policy cannot occur in isolation, and it is therefore necessary to set the background against which language-related decisions are made. It will be argued that challenges faced by the South African government are inseparably linked to matters evolving around the role of language in governance, education, economy and development.

At this stage, it becomes necessary to explain what exactly is meant when referring to language planning within the context of this research project. The following definition given by Grin (1996:31) will suffice:

Language planning is a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to solve language problems with a view to increasing welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under its jurisdiction.

Secondly, Robinson (1996:13) describes language policies as follows:

Language policies are language planning decisions, generally most evident at national level, and affect language use through the society, either actually or potentially. Both status planning and corpus planning (Cooper 1989) affect the choice of language for development communication. Status planning leads to decisions about the allocation of codes to societal functions, and corpus planning may precede or result from such decisions. The formulation and implementation of language policy is status planning by the state.

Since the basic point of departure is that language problems need to be solved in order to increase welfare, language planning should play a pivotal role in the development of disadvantaged communities. The institution of the new democratically elected government in South Africa initiated a process of drastically transforming the lives of South Africans. The new government initiated, and is promoting the development of democracy in a country with a history of colonial rule over centuries. The oppression of the black population most clearly manifested itself in the apartheid politics of the National Party who ruled the Republic of South Africa from 1948, up to the first democratic elections in 1994.

The new democratically elected government thus faces the immense task of leading the nation through a process of transformation that should as its goal promote a feeling of national unity by initiating political, economic and social reform in all domains of public life. Policy decisions are to be implemented throughout the political spectrum, including the areas of central, provincial and local governance.

The government's programme of social reconstruction and development can only succeed if their intentions can be communicated to the nation. Government decisions should be transparent and accessible to the people whose lives it seeks to transform. On the other hand, a democratically elected government should also consult the general public with regard to

the implementation of policies that have an influence on their daily lives. It becomes clear that the process of communication is of the utmost importance in this regard. Obviously, no communication can take place without using language, and in a multilingual environment the question that arises is how to address the issue of successfully communicating with the nation.

At this stage, it is clear that the government faces a two-way challenge. Firstly, the government needs to bring about transformation in all domains of public life by bringing about political, economic and social changes. The choice of language use in those domains, for instance in education, economy and government administration, will determine the success of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). In addition, the government needs to implement and support projects designed to develop previously disadvantaged communities. It is specifically in this regard that language should play a central part. Democratic two-way communication will ensure that the population in question will be able to participate in the development process and gain access to knowledge and skills.

Both of the above mentioned challenges, the first being related to the use of language in the process of governance, and the second being related to the use of language in implementing and supporting development projects, imply that language planning and the implementation of language policies (on local and central governance levels), directly influence the process of reconstruction and development of the country.

### 1.1 Language and governance

African governments experience quite a few problems concerning the planning and implementation of language policies and in general they are being accused of ignoring the basic communication needs of underdeveloped populations. This is a problem that the South African government should avoid.

In this regard, the government has already given formal recognition to 11 languages in this country by entrenching language status and rights in the constitution. Individual multilingualism is promoted by creating tolerance and respect amongst speakers of different languages. Cross-cultural communication-skills are promoted that should enhance a feeling of national inclusiveness and loyalty. Theoretically this implies that speakers of different languages share the same language rights in all domains of

public life, for example in education. At this stage, it is not quite clear how the government is planning to practically implement these constitutionally entrenched rights.

It has recently become clear that problems are being experienced with regard to the progress of the practical implementation of policies in the public domains of education, economy and government administration. The following section will discuss current observations and insights with regard to the status of the implementation of language policies in the government's ongoing quest of reconstructing and developing the country and its resources, thereby highlighting areas of national concern that also need to be addressed on local government level.

### 1.1.2 Analysis of the problem

#### (a) Education

The SAIRR's (South African Institute of Race Relations) *South Africa Survey 1995/96*, (if not specified otherwise), reveals the following disconcerting evidence of the educational realities inherited by the newly elected government:

#### Number of pupils

<b>1994</b>	<b>11 832 066 pupils:</b>
	Africans 81%
	whites 8,6%
	coloureds 7,9%
	Indians 2,4% (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

#### Number of schools

<b>1994</b>	<b>26 182 schools (excluding special and private):</b>
	464 for Indians
	1 971 for coloureds
	2 208 for whites
	21 539 for blacks (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

#### Number of higher educational institutions

<b>1994</b>	124 technical colleges
	105 teacher training colleges
	15 technikons
	21 universities (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

- 1998** 21 universities, 352,739 enrolled students  
15 technikons, 195,194 enrolled students (SA Yearbook 2000/2001)
- 1990-'95** The number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by universities increased by 29%
- 1990-'95** The number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by technikons increased by 74%
- 1990-'95** Total awards obtained by Africans increased by 82%, while total awards to whites increased by 2% (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98)

#### Pass-rates

- 1992** Overall matric pass rate was 56% (Africans 44%; coloured pupils 86%; Indians 96% and whites 98%)
- 1993** Pass rate for Africans was 39%
- 1994** Pass-rate for Africans was 49%
- 1995** Overall matriculation pass-rate was 55,25%, with 15,6% obtaining university exemption (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)
- 1996** Overall matriculation pass-rate was 55%, with 16% obtaining university exemption
- 1997** Overall matriculation pass-rate was 47%, with 12% obtaining university exemption (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98)

#### Teacher qualifications

- 1984** 87,2% of the teachers in KwaZulu primary schools had a qualification of Std. 8 or lower, and 7,85% Std. 10
- 1986** 56,1% of all primary and secondary school teachers in former DET schools did not have a Std. 10 qualification
- 1992** 14% of teachers at DET schools did not have a teaching diploma, and 57% were underqualified
- 1994** 64,2% were qualified, 28,6% underqualified and 7,2% unqualified. (Black teachers: 54,5% qualified; 35,4% under-qualified and 10,2% unqualified). Of the unqualified teachers 99,9% were black (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)
- 1996** All nine provinces had pupil/teacher ratios of below the official target of 40 and 35 to primary and secondary schools respectively

**1997** Most maths and science teachers were not qualified to teach these subjects, with over a third of maths teachers, over 45% of general science teachers, and almost 40% of physical science teachers had less than two years experience teaching their subjects (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98)

#### Literacy

**1991** The National Manpower Commission (NMC) said that 35% of the EAP (Economically Active Population) of SA (excluding the former "independent" homelands) had reached only standard 4 or lower, and was therefore functionally illiterate

**1993** According to the Development Bank of SA 46% of the African population (excluding the "homelands") was illiterate (coloured population: 34%, 16% Indians and 1% whites)

The NMC estimated that if the "independent homelands" were included up to 66% of the total population was illiterate

The Department of Education and Training (DET) said that large proportions of African pupils who obtained their standard 10 certificates were not fully literate and were consequently neither adequately prepared for the labour market nor to be trained thoroughly

**1994** Information on literacy levels is unclear, with some sources maintaining that 80% of the black population is illiterate at a Std. 5 level, and 40% of the whites. Other sources state that 87,8% of the people of Gauteng (largely urban) were considered literate, 81% in the Western Cape, 73,3% in KwaZulu/ Natal and 64,8% in the Northern Province

According to the National Literacy Co-operation about 15 million people were functionally illiterate

Of the adult population of nearly 26 million, 29% of adults were illiterate (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

**1995/96** Most provinces spent less than 1% of their overall education budget on adult education

**1997** The Department of Education said in April that it wanted to increase the number of people in basic adult

education programmes to more than 1 million by 2001  
(SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98)

Levels of education  
**1991**

Table 1.1 Levels of education in 1991 (by race in millions)

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
No education, under 6 years	3,5	0,4	0,12	0,43	4,53
No education, 6-18 years	1,1	0,11	0,02	0,09	1,4
No education, over 18 years	2,7	0,22	0,04	0,03	3,0
Grades 1-3	2,5	0,33	0,07	0,02	3,1
Grades 4-12	11,1	2,07	0,68	3,4	17,26
Diploma, but without matric	0,015	0,01	0,003	0,05	0,72
Post-matric qualification	0,02	0,06	0,04	0,78	1,09
Unspecified	0,04	0,04	0,02	0,09	0,58

(Source: SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

Table 1.2 Level of education of EAP (Economically Active Population) in 1991 (in millions)

None	1 824 000	15,7%
Grade 1 - 6:	2 293 000	19,7%
Grade 7 - 11:	4 705 000	40,5%
Grade 12:	1 831 000	15,8%
Diplomas and degrees:	971	8,4%

(Source: SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

**1994** Approximately 5 million South Africans (about 3,5 million black adults) above the age of 40 years had no education

1,7 million had some form of post-matriculation training.  
1% had degrees (SAIRR's SA Survey 1996/97)

**1997** In April, some 12.5 million adults still lacked a sound basic education, i.e. they had less than grade 7 education (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98)

The question that arises is what progress has been made by the newly elected democratic government with regard to addressing the obvious problems that exist in the educational system. Because the implementation of a sound language-in-education-policy obviously is of the utmost importance with regard to the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme, attention is now given to more recent

developments.

Webb (1998a:page reference unavailable) remarks that:

[ ... ] the SAIRR's [South African Institute for Race Relations] *South Africa Survey 1995/6* summarises the position as follows: 'Prof. Bengu announced in November 1995 that a new language policy would be implemented in schools from 1996, which would aim to 'promote multilingualism and remove all forms of linguistic discrimination'. Matric pupils would no longer be required to pass both English and Afrikaans to obtain their senior certificate. A discussion document detailing the new language policy, published in November 1995, made the following recommendations:

- at least two languages of instruction should be offered from grade 1, one of which should be the home language of a 'significant' number of pupils
- one language only should be taken into account for promotion from grade 1 to standard 1 (grade 3) which should be the home language, where possible
- a second language would become compulsory from standard 1 (grade 3). From standard 2/grade 4 one language only would be taken into account for promotion
- two languages would have to be passed from standard 5 (grade 7) to Matric (grade 12), of which one should be one of the 11 official languages and one should also be the pupils home language (the language of instruction was not necessarily the pupil's home language); and pupils would be encouraged to take a third language from standard 2 (grade 4).

Webb (1998a:page reference unavailable) further states the following:

[...] the ANC welcomed the proposals because they would 'lay the basis for the development of African languages'.

It therefore seems as if the government has recognised an underlying problem in the domain of education, namely the underdeveloped status of the African languages.

In their reaction SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers' Union) said that the new language policy promised to create a 'framework of

multilingual models for schools' and would pay particular attention to the necessity of developing appropriate syllabi for previously disadvantaged African languages. In this regard, Webb (1998a:page reference unavailable) stresses the fact teachers would have to be trained in order to cope with the realities of the country's multicultural and multilingual classrooms. This is of the utmost importance if literacy- and education-related problems are to be successfully addressed.

Since 1995, the language policy has been slightly adapted, increasingly supporting the notion of a multilingual model for schools. By 2000, the Department of Education stipulated that pupils have a right to be taught in the language of their choice and stated that they must inform the school which language they wish to be taught in when applying for admission. Schools, in turn, are expected to take their requests into account and to be seen to be working towards multilingualism. According to the policy:

- only official languages may be used for instruction;
- from grade three onwards, all pupils have to study the language they are taught in and at least one other approved language;
- language may not be used as a barrier to admission;
- governing bodies must stipulate how their schools are promoting multilingualism; and
- failing a language will result in failing a grade.

English ceased to be a compulsory subject for passing the grade 12 examinations from the beginning of 1998 (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98).

In theory, the above-mentioned policy supports multilingualism, but in practice a few barriers could be encountered, such as the fact that the new curriculum has not yet fully been developed to an implementational level. The reasons for the delay seem to be of a complex nature.

The government should firstly support its policies by implementing specialised teacher training programmes, especially focusing on the challenge that multilingual and multicultural education holds. At this stage there of course still exists a lack of educational material in African languages, due to the fact that educational material was produced mostly in English and Afrikaans during the former government's reign. The new government has not yet taken active steps in addressing this very serious

problem. The status and development of the African languages are therefore still neglected.

Another argument being raised, is that the process of generating educational material in African languages, or to translate existing educational material into African languages, is too expensive, and this issue will be dealt with in detail at a later stage. Coincidentally, in terms of the government's medium term expenditure framework (MTEF), which sets out three-year spending plans for national and provincial governments, the MTEF envisaged that spending on education as a proportion of the total budget would drop from 22,8% in 1998/99 to 21,8% in 2000/2001. Similarly, as a proportion of total GDP, education spending would drop from 7% to 6,5% over the same period (SAIRR's SA Survey 1997/98). This disconcerting state of affairs might contribute to the possibility that even less educational material is generated or translated into African languages.

There are also some practical considerations that might hinder a pupil's constitutional right to receive tuition in the language of his/her choice, a very practical example being the fact that the policy does not compel schools to offer more than one medium of instruction. The policy merely recommends that governing bodies stipulate how multilingualism could be promoted by offering additional languages as subjects, or by other means.

Another contradictory state of affairs is the fact that English ceased to be a compulsory subject for passing the grade 12 examinations from the beginning of 1998, although tertiary institutions mostly offer their courses in either English or Afrikaans. At this stage it seems apparent that the controversial issue of language in education still remains to be effectively addressed by the government.

#### (b) Economy

Given the multilingual nature of the South African society, the government will also have to promote multi-directional communication in the economic sector to ensure that all citizens have equal access to information and technical knowledge and training. Multi-directional communication presupposes meaningful interpersonal communication, and that will only become possible if language-related issues within the economic sector are addressed. Management and workers need to fully comprehend each other's needs to promote a feeling of shared responsibility and mutual trust.

The role of language in development has been widely debated and this issue will be discussed in detail at a later stage. It becomes clear, however, that a new language policy that embraces the sharing of knowledge, resources, and skills should be gradually implemented in the economic sector. At this stage, the general attitude towards the implementation of language policies in the economic sector can be characterised as one of deep-rooted fear and resistance towards any drastic changes. Reservations in this regard include the feeling that drastic changes may have a detrimental influence on economic growth, the viewpoint that English should remain the language of formal economic activity, and that the use of the African languages would increase expenditure. It is the task of the government to address those reservations that stand in the way of change by promoting a feeling of shared responsibility and good-will amongst its citizens. This can only be achieved by addressing those fears in a process that should include the recognition of existing skills and expertise and by creating a positive environment in which existing knowledge can be shared on a mutually beneficial basis.

The following information with regard to macro-economic indicators, such as economic growth rate, fixed investments, business and consumer confidence and per capita income reflecting economic health after the new government had been elected, was gathered from *A Socio-economic Atlas of South Africa* (HSRC 1996), unless stated otherwise:

#### Economic Growth

##### **1960-1990's**

The growth rate dropped from an average of over 6% in the first half of the 1960's to zero growth in the first four years of the previous decade, during which time the country experienced its worst recession this century. While the population is growing at 2,5% per annum, per capita income has been declining since the early eighties.

##### **1997-1999**

During the course of 1997 and the first half of 1998, the growth in total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) slowed down and subsequently turned negative in the third quarter of 1998, but recovered slightly during the fourth quarter of 1998 and throughout 1999 (Source: South African Yearbook 2000/2001).

## Declining fixed investment

### **1981-1994**

The total value of gross domestic fixed investment (GDFI) in 1981 was approximately R69 billion and this declined to R45 billion in 1993, indicating a decrease of almost 35%. When GDFI is expressed as a proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP), the fraction decreases from over 30% in 1981 to less than 19% in 1993. Initial estimates for 1994 however indicated that the downward trend had been reversed and in the first three quarters of 1994 GDFI actually increased at an annualised rate of 3,6%.

## Business and consumer confidence

### **1988-1994**

Low and declining levels of confidence were a major contributor to the recession of the early 1990's. The South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) Business Confidence Index slumped from a high of 107 in 1988 to a low of 90,6 in 1993, while the HSRC Consumer Confidence Index reached a low in October 1992. In 1994 both indices have rebounded and herald a strong recovery in the economy.

### **1991-1999**

Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) fell from 15,3% in 1991 to 5,2% in 1999, the lowest level since August 1968. The steady decline of CPI during the nineties has been the result of sound monetary and fiscal policies and the opening of the economy to international trade and capital flows (South African Yearbook 2000/2001).

### **1998-1999**

By contrast, the overall producer price inflation accelerated from 3,5% in 1998 to 5,8% in 1999. This increase is mainly the result of higher import prices owing to the depreciation of the Rand and increases in international crude oil prices (South African Yearbook 2000/2001).

## Faltering productivity

### **1960-1980's**

In the first half of the 1960's an investment level of 21% generated growth of over 6%, yet in the

second half of the 1980's a similar level of investment was associated with just 1,5% growth. This trend is explained partly in terms of declining productivity.

The SAIRR (In: South African Survey 1996/97) reveals the following economic trends:

#### Remuneration trends

- 1993** The South African Reserve Bank said that the increase in the average nominal remuneration per worker was 10%.
- 1994** 12% increase of remuneration per worker.
- 1995** It dropped to 9%. This was the first single-digit increase in nominal remuneration per worker since 1972.

#### Overall income trends

- 1993-1995** The Reserve Bank said that real disposable income per head in 1995 was lower than it had been in 1971. Real disposable income per head had increased by only 2,5% since the second half of 1993, after dropping some 12% between 1989 and 1993.

#### Rich/poor income disparities

- 1996** South Africa has one of the largest income disparities in the world. The poorest 40% of households in SA earned only 9% of the country's income, while the richest 20% earned 19 times more than the poorest 20%.

#### Differing trends by race

- 1985-1994** The Bureau of Market Research (BMR) said that in the ten years from 1985-1994, the personal disposable income of Africans increased by more than 35%, while that of Asians and coloured people increased by some 24%. In the same period, that of whites dropped by nearly 3%.

#### Income levels

- 1995** According to the Central Statistical Services (CSS), some 36% of employed workers earned less than R1 000 a month. The single largest proportion of African and coloured employed workers (46% each) earned less

than R1 000 a month. Some 12% of Asians and 5% of white employed workers earned less than R1 000 a month. The single largest proportion of white employed workers (31%) earned between R4 000 and R7 999 a month, while 18% of Asian, 5% of coloured and 4% of African employed workers were in that income category.

### Productivity

**1993-1994** Multifactor productivity in the private economy (i.e. capital and labour productivity combined) increased by 3% between 1993 and 1994. It dropped by an average of 0,1% per year between 1970 and 1994. This was the result of labour productivity increasing by only 1,1% a year, while capital productivity dropped. In 1994 there was a 4% increase in labour productivity and an increase of 2% in capital productivity.

### Unemployment

**1994** The South Africa Foundation said that unemployment was South Africa's biggest challenge, affecting between 40% and 45% of the population. The foundation estimated that the unemployment rate would increase from 32% in 1994 to 40,4% in 2004, unless firm policy action was taken. Only one out of every 30 new entrants to the labour market had found a job in the formal sector of the economy between 1981 and 1994.

**1995** Some 87% of all the unemployed were African. Coloured people accounted for 8% of the unemployed, whites for 3% and Asian for 1%. The highest rate of unemployment was among African women (47%) and the lowest was among white men (4%).

The macro-economic trends discussed above, generally indicate that the government needs to exhibit serious commitment with regard to the overall economic development of the country.

It is, however, necessary to point out the danger of regarding economic development as a notion that merely reflects materialistic aspects with actual financial figures, without taking the potential of developing human resources into account. A government should actively support the

development of its potential human resources, because it is directly linked to the economic development of the country.

This aspect receives attention in the HSRC's *Socio-economic Atlas of South Africa* where the following is stated in this regard (1996:120-121):

The [RDP] programme recognises that human development and economic development are two sides of the same coin, and neither can progress independently of the other. Stemming from this philosophy is that the vast disparities in living standards and human development in South Africa have played an important role in inhibiting economic progress.

The link between growth and equity has been brought to the fore by the economic miracles performed by the eight high performing Asian economies (HPAE's).[ ... ] The RDP embodies much of the East Asian economic philosophy and aims to bring about high levels of labour-using economic growth, while at the same time investing in the development of disadvantaged people, thus enabling them to contribute to and partake in the growth process.

It is in this regard that language can play an important role in economic development, when and if the importance of language-related issues is being promoted and supported by the government.

(c) Government administration

It is especially in this domain that government can prove their commitment to the citizens of the country by implementing language policies that would ensure that all citizens could effectively participate in the political life of the country.

Webb (2002:154) says "Participation in the political life of the state implies that citizens are involved in one of four ways, viz. in (i) decision making (at the local levels), in (ii) being consulted about issues that concern them, in (iii) being kept informed by politicians, and (iv) in being able communicate their views to the political leaders".

Webb (2002:154) further points out the following aspects with regard to the current status of the transformation process in the civil service:

The present *de facto* language set-up does not really allow for satisfactory citizen participation in the political life of the country.

First of all, the language of political debate in the country is only English, which means that 80% or more of the South African population cannot follow the arguments, evaluate the views of politicians or hope to influence their political decisions in any way.

Secondly, effective communication between the citizens and the state administration is not satisfactory, since the major language of state administration (English) is not sufficiently known by the majority of the country's population, with less than 20% of the speakers of the marginalised languages having any significant communicative competence in it.

Clearly, a language policy will have to be evolved and implemented meaningfully, which will give a far bigger role to the autochthonous languages in all public domains, such as the political debate, state administration, the security services, health services, the legal system, the media, the communication industry, etc.

The Constitution (Source: official Government website) at this point in time states that the national governments must use not less than four languages for official work and that these languages must be selected from the four categories of official languages on a rotational basis. The categories of languages are: the Nguni languages; the Sotho languages; Venda/Tsonga; and Afrikaans/English. Provincial governments may use any particular official languages taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned, but the national and each provincial government must use at least two official languages. Governments at provincial and local levels as well as institutions that perform public functions are subject to the policy provisions of the proposed South African Languages Bill. Webb (2002:59) points out that in spite of these provisions, there is a marked move toward unilingualism in the public sector. In most government departments the medium of communication is English, and this trend is also visible in official publications and documents of national importance.

This problem also exists in the rest of Africa, as described by Mackey (Robinson 1996:5):

The real communication needs of minority language groups in Africa may be less visible because of the desire of the elites to demonstrate their mastery of international languages and to gain maximum advantage of such competence on their own and their country's behalf. A picture of widespread use of English, Portuguese, or French may be projected which is far from the daily reality of the mass of the population, particularly in rural areas. 'In much of Africa, some 90% of the people have no knowledge of the official language of their country, even though it is presumed to be the vehicle of communication between the government and its citizens (Mackey 1985:5).

Attention will at a later stage be directed to problems regarding government decision-making and policy implementation, as it has been observed in the rest of Africa. Chapter 4 will indicate that the high status of English is one of the factors that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council will have to address in the formulation and implementation of a local language policy.

## 1.2 Language and development projects

### 1.2.1 The need for government intervention in the implementation of the RDP

As pointed out in section 1., the second challenge that the government needs to address is the question of democratic communication with regard to projects aimed at developing disadvantaged communities. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) initiated by the government has the task of transforming the society at large by improving the living standards of the majority of the population and by reducing inequality.

It has already been noted in section 1.1.2(b) that the RDP recognises the fact that human development and economic development are two sides of the same coin, and that the RDP embodies much of the East Asian economic philosophy. In *A Socio-Economic Atlas of South Africa* (1996:120-121), the following remark was made in this regard:

These countries [ the eight high performing Asian economies ] have been characterised by spectacular economic growth and low and declining levels of inequality. Investment in human development has

been a key to their success, and their governments have adopted a 'principle of shared growth' promising that as the economy expanded all groups will benefit. Various mechanisms have been used to achieve this, and include land reform, agricultural pricing policies, wealth sharing, public housing programmes and programmes to encourage small and medium-size enterprises.

The South African government has already proven its ongoing commitment towards the development of disadvantaged communities and has established numerous projects designed to improve living standards in those communities, for instance housing and adult education programmes, by providing communities with water and electricity, by improving or building schools, sport facilities, community centres, etc. A characteristic of the government's development projects, however, is that outside contractors are supplied with funds to complete the project by using the local workforce. Little consideration is given to facilitate self-sustained development in the communities by encouraging and supporting the gaining of knowledge and skills, which would, in its turn, aid the development of the region. Participation by the community is largely generated by means of the job opportunities that the specific projects create. That, in itself, is not a disadvantage, but it merely places the emphasis on financial gain without promoting a feeling of shared responsibility and self-reliance. The implicit knowledge and skills that can be obtained from participation in development projects go to waste because of the way in which development projects are executed. Local languages could play a crucial role towards creating a feeling of ownership and pride, which in turn would encourage community participation in development projects. In formulating and implementing a local language policy, it is thus imperative that the role of language in development is acknowledged and that steps are taken to ensure that the local languages are utilised to their fullest potential. The following section will focus the attention on the role of language in development in more detail.

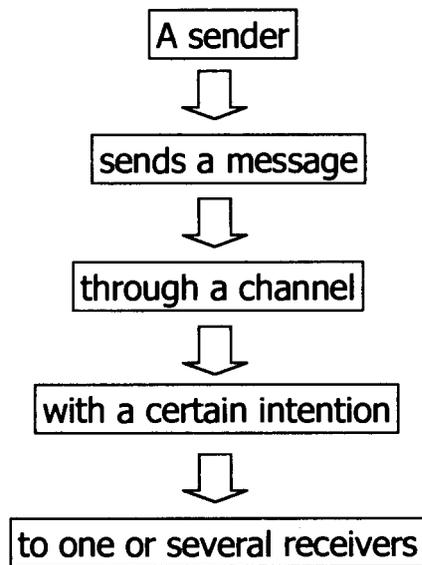
### 1.2.2 The role of development communication in the implementation of the RDP

Government, in its quest of developing the nation, needs to set the tone for local governments to follow suit, therefore it becomes necessary to investigate specific needs of underdeveloped populations that are to be addressed in the implementation of the RDP.

(a) Development communication

The reason why development projects are only partially successful, is often because it has not been designed to fulfil the more general developmental needs of the communities in question. Hedebro (1982:107) introduces another facet to the notion of development, in which communication supports development. He comments on the following basic communication model:

Figure 1.1 Basic communication model



Hedebro (1982:107) says that if in such [development] programmes the receivers were better able to influence the sender(s), the outcome would surely be better. Lack of influence on the part of the receivers is a problem of a far greater generality, however. A commonly recognised fault in many development efforts in the Third World is precisely the fact that the receivers of assistance have been given little chance to actively participate in the decision-making processes preceding and during the project. The notion **development communication**, however, is specialised field of study, and it would be advisable to compare Robinson (1996) in this regard.

The basic point of departure is that it becomes clear that two-way communication is an essential part of any development process aimed at bettering the living standards of disadvantaged communities, because it

generates participation by community members and enhances a feeling of ownership and self-reliance. Participation should be regarded as a part of liberation. Generally speaking, participation requires that people be given an opportunity to speak their minds. If developers make use of the local languages, the local population can gain knowledge and skills that in turn will increase their understanding of their environment and give them the opportunity to exert control over it. As a result, their motivation to participate in development projects will increase.

(b) Local languages as part of development communication

It is critical that the government should be made conscious of the advantages that two-way communication holds for development. The government can be an important role-player in initiating projects that empower communities to become active participants in the development process. By equipping the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises with business knowledge and skills in their own languages, they will be able to successfully manage their businesses and contribute to further job-creation in their communities. This also holds true for the development of labour skills, for instance in the building profession. It is thus essential that the government prove its commitment towards the development of disadvantaged communities by investing in projects that would provide those communities with the knowledge and skills they need to actively participate in their own development.

It is in this regard that the use of local languages are considered to be the most effective way in which to convey the knowledge and skills that those communities are in need of. Besides initiating development projects, the government has to remove obstacles that pose as barriers in the two-way communication process. As pointed out in section 1.1.2(c), the present language set-up does not really allow for satisfactory citizen participation in the political life of the country, not even to mention participation in development projects, because of the government's insistence on using English in their communication with the population, although less than 20% of the speakers of marginalised languages have any significant communicative competence in it. The MarkData Report (2002:8) conducted on behalf of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), confirms this finding. It states that 19% of the 2,169 respondents surveyed nationally indicated that they seldom understand statements and speeches made by Ministers in Government, Councillors in municipalities

In developing a local language policy, the Tshwane Metropolitan Council thus needs to establish the extent of language competence in order to develop and implement a language policy that allows two-way communication. Chapters 4 and 5 will address this issue in more detail.

The development of disadvantaged communities does not, of course, need to be the sole responsibility of the government alone. The private sector, local governments and the communities also need to get actively involved in the process. By funding, for instance, projects that would provide small and medium-sized business owners with the knowledge and skills to successfully manage their businesses, the private sector and local governments could largely contribute to the upliftment of local economies. The use of local languages in such projects is of course essential to maximise the benefits.

### 1.2.3 Reasons for the lack of community participation in their own development

In section 1.2.2., community participation was identified as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of development projects. In summary, the following factors negatively influence the participation-rate of communities with regard to development projects:

- the government's insistence on using English;
- the disadvantaged communities' general lack of proficiency in English;
- lack of insight on the government's behalf in the role of languages in development projects;
- the non-use of local African languages;
- the government's lack of commitment towards the implementation of development projects aimed at participation and self-reliance; and
- lack of input by the private sector and local governments.

## **2. Addressing the identified problems**

The sections above argued that challenges faced by the South African government are inseparably linked to matters evolving around the role of language in governance, education, economy and development. Areas of improvement were identified in the process. In order to address nationally experienced language-related problems, information is required to establish what the actual linguistic needs of the local populations are. Informed decision-making is obviously essential for the successful implementation of policies that would have an effect on the daily lives of the populations in question.

National concerns are thus ideally to be addressed on local government level by means of effective policy formulation and implementation. This research project seeks to explain how the gathering of relevant information could assist a local government in the formulation and implementation of a responsible language policy. Information derived from such a study could firstly be used in the decision-making process with regard to the development of a local language policy and the implementation thereof. The information gathered could in addition contribute to the notion of development communication by supplying the planners of development projects with a profile of linguistic knowledge and behaviour within the disadvantaged communities they seek to empower. It would furthermore supply the private sector with much needed background information on the linguistic needs of their workforce.

## **3. How relevant information will be gathered**

This research project calls for an extensive literature study on the nature of the relationship between government, the policy-making process and local policy implementation at grass-roots level, as well as investigation into the nature of development communication. Local and international trends and experiences with regard to language planning and policy implementation need to be investigated. Secondly, empirically supported evidence on the linguistic realities of the two areas mentioned, needs to be provided. This will be done by gathering information through the use of a scientifically developed questionnaire. Thirdly, recommendations need to be made which will benefit the local government with regard to the decision-making process and the implementation of an informed development-orientated language policy.

#### **4. Framework outline**

Chapter 2 deals with the broader theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between government, language planning, policy implementation and development communication, and focuses attention on related research and insights gained locally and in other parts of the world.

Chapter 3 consists of a discussion of the methodological approach to this research project. At the outset of any scientific inquiry, decisions about what data to collect, how to collect it and where to collect it will depend on the purpose they are to serve. Having recognised existing problems, the kind of data that should shed further light on them will be defined.

Chapter 4 is a detailed discussion of the research results obtained.

Chapter 5 concludes the study with an in depth analysis of the implications of the results of this research project for the Tshwane Metropolitan Council with regard to the present nature of language planning and language policy implementation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL APPROACH**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

As pointed out in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 deals with the broader theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between government, language planning, and policy implementation and focuses attention on relevant research and insights gained locally and in other parts of the world.

This chapter will furthermore comment on economic factors related to language planning and policies and focus on the practical implementation of language policies in the public domain of education. The planning and implementation of a local language policy, however, cannot occur in isolation. It is therefore necessary to set the background against which language-related decisions are made and to draw from other governments' experiences in this regard. Current observations and insights with regard to the general status of the implementation of language policies in the South African government's ongoing quest for reconstructing and developing the country and its resources will be discussed.

This investigation calls for extensive literature study on the nature of the relationship between the government, the policy-making process and local policy implementation. Local and international trends and experiences with regard to language planning and policy implementation need to be investigated.

#### **2.2 Language Planning and Policy**

##### **2.2.1 Background**

As a government in Africa sets out to implement a new language policy, it is immediately confronted with two rather conflicting realities, one being the multilingual nature of the state, and the other the historical colonial heritage. The existing tension between multilingualism and the colonial legacy will be discussed in detail in the following section, hence the following definition of multilingualism as a linguistic environment becomes relevant. Grin and Vaillancourt (1997:49) define multilingualism as follows:

First, multilingualism is defined as the coexistence of  $n$  languages (as opposed to  $m$ ) in a particular policy, where  $n > m$ .

[ ... ] Second, we shall assume that each situation defines a linguistic environment. The concept of linguistic environment is a theoretical construct used for analytical purposes. It subsumes in an extensive (but obviously not exhaustive) fashion all the relevant information about the status, in the broadest sense of the word, of the various languages present in a given policy at a certain time. This includes the number of speakers, the individual proficiency levels in the various languages, the domains of use of each language by different types of actors (individuals, corporations, state, civil society organisations), their attitudes towards the languages considered, etc. Corpus data, insofar as they impact on language status, are also relevant to the characterisation of linguistic environments.

To further illustrate the notion of multilingualism in practice, Bamgbose (1991:2) points out that countries with large populations understandably also have a large number of languages. For example, Kenya has a population of 20.6 million (and has 35 languages), Sudan 21.55 million (133 languages), Tanzania 22.49 million (113 languages), Zaire 29.93 million (206 languages), Ethiopia 43.35 million (92 languages), and Nigeria 95.19 million (400 languages). But even countries with small populations also have many languages. For example Cameroon 9.87 million (and 183 languages, Ghana 13.5 million (57 languages), Cote d'Ivoire 9.81 million (58 languages), Congo 1.74 million (31 languages) and Angola 8.75 million (29 languages).

Colonialisation, ethnic rivalry and the low status of the indigenous languages are common to most African states. It is therefore interesting to note how other African countries have handled the question of a national language: Abdulaziz and Sow (Webb 1998b:121) provide the following statistics:

Thirteen African states have not designated any language as national (including: Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa), three have designated an ex-colonial language as national language (including Botswana) and 28 have chosen indigenous languages as national languages, including: Angola with 6, Burkina Faso with 10, Ghana (9), Kenya (1), Nigeria (12, of which three,

Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, are also official), Zaire (10) and Zambia (7).

Regarding a multilingual environment and a government's approach in dealing with such a reality, Laitin (1992:63) says that in a highly multilingual society, language policies that recognise all groups put heavy constraints on a young state. He continues by saying that it is little wonder that in the early years of independence, despite the commitment of many nationalist movements in promoting national languages, the new governments' policies are built on inertia. He points out that as language planning comes into better focus, however, the desire for the promotion of indigenous languages is countered by pressures from representatives of the state to have a standard language for official communication throughout the country. States have an interest in standardisation and perhaps also in passing off the cost of changes onto their subjects.

Chapter 1 of the South African Constitution (Source: official Government website), states that South Africa elected 11 official languages, and in recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages. National, provincial and local governments are thus compelled to promote the use of indigenous languages, despite possible counter-pressures such as the desire for a single language for official communication or economic constraints. Multilingualism is firmly entrenched in the South African Constitution, and the question that arises is not **if** multilingualism is the desirable option, but **how** to develop and implement effective language policies - despite the demands that multilingualism imposes on a modern government.

A survey of the literature proved that multilingualism as such does not necessarily have only negative implications. Bamgbose (1991:2-3) points out the following in this regard:

Because of the problems associated with it, multilingualism is often seen as a liability, and the popular attitude is to associate it with 'the curse of Babel', but multilingualism is not without its positive aspects. Since a language is an embodiment of a culture, the existence of several languages means the cultural enrichment of a country. [ ... ] Indeed, in the African situation, a person who speaks several languages is to be regarded as a better integrated citizen than one

who is only proficient in one language, even if that language happens to be the country's official language.

When the second aspect, namely the colonial legacy, is brought into the equation, matters become even more complicated. South Africa with its colonial history and legacy of Apartheid is no exception to the rule. Bamgbose (1991:5) states that the colonial legacy is a recurrent factor in the language policies of African governments. In practically all fields (education, communication, administration, politics and development), the question has always been whether or not it is desirable or even possible to break away from the existing practice of using colonial languages, and if so at what cost. He concludes by saying that this constant pull between retention and change constitutes the major point of departure as well as a dilemma for language policy-makers.

Other sociolinguists support this notion. Webb (1998b:122) says that for instance, no African state has included either language nor culture as a priority in any five-year development plan, and Sow and Abdulaziz (Webb 1998b:122) write that: 'Even political leaders as clear-sighted as President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana were reluctant to promote what they felt to be (the) vast number of 'backward' languages [...] Those political leaders could not yet visualise Africans speaking and making themselves understood in languages other than English, French or Arabic!'

One of the reasons for this situation is the legacy of colonisation in Africa - Sow and Abdulaziz (Webb 1998(b):122) point out in this regard that '[...] the authentic values of the past [...] were being decried, ridiculed and debased in the face of new values imported by the European civilisations. [...] The new ambitions of the colonised subjects took the form of wanting to live like the colonialists, dress like them, eat and drink like them, speak and be housed like them, and laugh and get angry like them, in short to have the same religious, moral and cultural yardsticks'.

The 'backward' status attached to indigenous languages is the most important challenge to be addressed in a national or local government's efforts directed at developing and implementing a language policy. Chapter 5 will discuss active steps that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council could take to address the asymmetrical power-relations between former colonial languages and indigenous languages.

Following from the introductory discussion regarding multilingualism and the legacy of colonialism, it has become clear that two more factors have

emerged, namely the demands that multilingual environments impose on modern governments, and the consequential attitudes of the governments and its citizens towards addressing this complex issue.

At this stage it becomes necessary to point out that multilingualism as such does not alone pose the greatest challenge, but rather the attitudes that underlie and dictate the usage of different languages. After all, as Bamgbose (1991:15-16) points out, it is not language that divides but the attitude of the speakers and the sentiments and symbolism attached to the language. He continues by saying that some of the real causes of divisiveness in African countries have nothing to do with language. They include exploitation of ethnicity by the elites in order to gain political or economic advantage, the problem of sharing scarce resources with the inevitable competition (e.g. for jobs, positions, facilities, etc.), uneven development, and sometimes external instigation based on nationalistic, ideological or religious motives. This research project, for example, revealed that underlying attitudes are based upon the respondents' perceptions regarding, for example, the functionality of certain languages in the local job market. Although respondents do not necessarily deem Afrikaans as a language that commands respect, they do recognise that knowledge of Afrikaans is a desirable commodity in the local career domain. Chapter 4 will discuss this issue in more detail.

Ethnolinguistic attitudes could furthermore be exploited to the extent that it could spark violent conflict. An example of this phenomenon is discussed by Laitin (1992:52), who says that revival movements of 'dead' languages, led by intellectuals who have never spoken that language (for example, in the Basque country in Spain) use that sense of guilt and betrayal to political advantage. People can be mobilised to support terrorism, secession, or federalism in the name of language revival, in large part because of the psychological power of the sense of rootlessness that language loss imposes upon its speakers and their descendants.

Language attitudes thus also need to be investigated as part of a language policy directed at empowerment, development and nation-building. Laitin (1992:9) focuses the attention on the assumed relationship between a government's language policy and the notion of nation-building by saying that what most analyses of nation-building ignored is that the rulers may have a greater need to construct states (that is, to establish effective social control over a bounded territory) than to build nations. They may therefore have interests at odds with societal groups. The South African

Constitution, however, equates state construction with nation-building, in the sense that the 11 official languages cannot be ignored in the process of national or local governance. National and provincial governments must, by legislative and other measures, regulate and monitor their use of official languages. They must furthermore elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages.

The only way in which the Tshwane Metropolitan Council could adhere to the above-mentioned stipulations would be by changing existing practices that favour the use of ex-colonial languages, in this case English. In this regard, Laitin (1992:xi-xii) highlights one aspect of nation building, namely the attempt by states to influence the language repertoires of their citizens. He defines a language repertoire as the set of languages that a citizen must know in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in his or her own country. The language repertoire of an entire citizenry consists in the set of languages that the model citizen must know in order to play an active role in family, society, economy, and policy.

In a government's attempts to influence the language repertoire of its citizens, the concept of language rationalisation emerges. According to Laitin (1992:2), rulers have an interest in language rationalisation, defined as the territorial specification of a common language for purposes of efficient administration and rule. He explains that the sociological implication is that a citizen needs to have a facility in a single language in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in the territory.

Here an investigation into the nature of language rationalisation policies and the consequences thereof needs to be undertaken. Laitin (1992:10) describes language-rationalisation policies as policies usually entailing the specification of a domain of language use (e.g. appeals-court cases or church sermons) and a requirement that the language chosen by the ruler be employed within that domain. When rulers have established power over several territorially distinct speech communities, they are easily able to induce some members of these communities to become bilingual, so as to translate documents from the language of the speech community to the language of the ruler. To the extent that political rule is stable, more and more members of the newly incorporated speech community will find it useful to learn the language of the ruling elite. He concludes by saying that language rationalisation is successful when there is a sufficient number

of bilinguals among linguistically distinct communities so that the business of rule can be transacted in a single language.

Laitin (1992:60) introduces two possible outcomes of language rationalisation concerning social mobility and language in Africa today. First, as elite closure becomes institutionalised, social groups with less access to elite languages may mobilise politically to seek general changes in societal language policies that would be more egalitarian. Second, as 'structural adjustment' takes its toll, the expected value of speaking European languages will continue to decrease.

Language rationalisation promoting the use of a single language is not suited to the South African scenario, since the Constitution makes provision for the equitable treatment of all official languages. Rationalisation in South Africa would entail replacing the use of an ex-colonial language (English) with a single indigenous language that would become the new language of the ruling elite. On local government level, it would for example imply that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council would have to use Afrikaans (with a speaker distribution of 39.21%) or Northern Sotho (with a speaker distribution of 24.3%) for governance purposes, to the detriment of the other dominant languages of the area (Source: Statistics SA's official website). The South African Constitution propagates richness in linguistic diversity and acceptance of minority languages, as opposed to the solution of promoting a single language by rationalisation.

Some other aspects need to be introduced into the language policy debate at this stage, namely the nationalist versus nationist notion, and the status quo, radical, or gradualist approaches towards language planning and policy implementation.

According to Bamgbose (1991:19-26) a number of factors have to be considered in deciding which language or languages should be adopted as a country's national and/or official language. The most important among these factors are: (i) nationalism versus nationism, (ii) vertical integration, (iii) acceptability, (iv) population, (v) language development status.

- (i) According to Fishman (1968a), all nations have to apportion attention and resources between 'the claims of authenticity' on the one hand and the 'claims of efficiency' on the other. Claims of authenticity correspond to the quest for nationalism, while the claims of efficiency correspond to nationism. [ ... ] Admittedly, reconciling the claims of

nationalism and nationism will not be an easy matter. [ ... ] The likelihood seems to be that a LWC (Language of Wider Communication) can only continue to be used for nationalism as a transitional measure, while plans are pursued to achieve true national integration through an indigenous language/s.

- (ii) It appears that there are only two possible roads to vertical integration, and both are bound to involve massive investment in education. The first is to adopt the policy of spreading the language of the elites. [ ... ] The other is to build on a base of a language/s already widely spoken. Although there are costs involved, this task seems more feasible. The logic of vertical integration therefore points to the adoption of one or more indigenous languages.
- (iii) In order to function as a truly national symbol, a language has to be acceptable to the different components of the country. [ ... ] While it is true that a LWC does not belong to any ethnic group, it does not follow that it is therefore neutral and acceptable. [ ... ] What is important is not to promote the language by itself as a symbol of unity, but to link it with other values and considerations.
- (iv) In determining the choice of a national language, population is usually an important factor. [ ... ] Languages like Swahili in Tanzania or Krio in Sierra Leone were natively spoken by minorities. Today, Swahili has become a widespread lingua franca and a national language, while Krio is rapidly spreading as a lingua franca and, in all probability, will emerge in the future as Sierra Leone's national language. For a minority language to become a national language, it must have acquired a majority of speakers, thereby ceasing, in effect, to be a minority language. The majority model appears to be the only feasible model in contemporary policy formulation, unless a LWC is selected on the grounds that it already serves as an official language.
- (v) It is a well-known fact that languages are at different stages of development. While some have had a long literary tradition, others are just being reduced to writing.

Bamgbose (1991:31-33) takes this debate on the national language question even further by identifying three possible approaches, namely the status quo, radical or gradualist approach. The status quo approach is that

which tends in the direction of nationalism where it is argued that any language that can make it possible to attain goals in the shortest possible time is welcome. The radical approach tends in the direction of nationalism where a decision should be made in favour of a national language and immediate steps taken to develop and spread its use in a wide range of domains. The gradualist approach tries to achieve a compromise between the nationalist consideration of having an indigenous language for authenticity and the nationalist requirement for a language for running the country in an efficient manner. The logic of the situation in most African countries leaves one with no other choice but the gradualist approach. If properly implemented, it will avoid unnecessary disruption and upheaval, while ultimately ensuring that the desired nationalist goal is attained. The danger with the approach is that it may become a cover for the status quo approach.

If argued along these lines, it seems as if the gradualist approach is indeed already followed in the South African context. Nationalist claims in terms of effective governance are being met as a transitional measure - in this case by using mainly English and a few indigenous languages to a lesser extent, although there is a move towards meeting the nationalist claims of authenticity by acknowledging the importance of elevating the status and advancing the use of the other official languages. Chapter 5 focuses on proposals the Tshwane Metropolitan Council should consider in developing and implementing a language policy that meets with both these requirements.

Following the theoretical discussion on multilingualism, the colonial legacy, nation-building, language repertoire, nationalism versus nationism, and three possible language policy approaches, it now becomes necessary to investigate more practical considerations in the implementation of a language policy. The following section will therefore focus on insights gained from investigating the path that other countries have chosen with regard to the implementation of language policies.

### 2.2.2 Multilingualism and language policy implementation

The next section supports the idea that multilingualism is the norm, rather than the exception to the rule, in both the developed and developing countries. What differs, however, is the manner in which the multiplicity of languages is dealt with when it comes to the implementation of language policies. Laitin (1992:11) says that in the world of real states, there are no

examples of the complete elimination of societal multilingualism. In fact, given the need for international communication, in few countries of the world in the twenty-first century will a monolingual repertoire be sufficient for most elites. More countries with rationalised language outcomes will follow the path of Sweden and the Netherlands. Although rationalisation in Swedish and Dutch has been fully successful, most educated citizens speak at least English and German, besides the official languages of state business. He concludes by saying that with countries that are rationalised, multilingualism persists. Certain minority groups, for example, retain their languages despite changes in the rest of the society; immigrant groups characteristically retain the language of their home area for some generations; and dialects diverge within a single language, yielding de facto multilingualism even when members of each speech community claim to speak the same language (e.g. black American English).

A further survey of the literature showed that the above mentioned also holds true for the African continent, and Laitin (1992:70) mentions that research from Ghana and Zambia demonstrates that multilingualism is the norm throughout Africa, with many Africans having facility in three or four languages. The social fact of African multilingualism has had an important impact on society as well. Languages are resources that can be sociologically exploited. He continues by stating the obvious advantages of multilingualism:

Speaking three languages allows many Africans to travel widely, seek diverse employment opportunities, and to settle in areas outside their home region without great difficulty. Also, as we shall see, multilingual repertoires allow an individual to show solidarity with or keep distance from an interlocutor; to show elite status or to hide it; to identify oneself with the locality, or with the region, or with the country, or to show oneself as a cosmopolitan (Laitin 1992:70).

With some of the apparent advantages of multilingualism being pointed out above, it is however interesting to note that African countries still choose a foreign ex-colonial language as the lingua franca. Laitin (1992:63-64) formulates an interesting observation regarding the nature of nation-building as follows:

[ ... ] for most newly independent African countries, the only language that could apparently serve as a lingua franca was the language of colonial domination. Nation building for Nigeria,

Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Zaire meant defining the nation - at least in its language component - in foreign terms. How could the cultivation of English in Nigeria, or French in Senegal, be called 'nation building'?

Laitin (1992:95) supports the above-mentioned argument by saying he has observed English or French used as the standard language in government offices in Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal. One can surmise that the spectre of the masses able to penetrate the reserve for those educated in colonial settings upsets many African civil servants. He stresses that they would be glad to emphasise the difficulty of developing African languages, in order to maintain the status quo.

Although English in South Africa might in future still retain its status as lingua franca, it is of the utmost importance that English is not used as a language separating the masses from the ruling elite. It is, however, not propagated that the nation be denied access to English, or to deny the benefits of competence in English - but the low status of the indigenous languages needs to be addressed in order to ascertain equal access to knowledge and skills that were previously denied to people by means of direct or indirect linguistic discrimination.

Laitin (1992:113) says that it often happens that, although individuals vote for the promotion of a national language (showing diffuse support for it), they in their personal lives act in a way that subverts the vote. In many cases they enrol their children in schools where access to the former colonial language is ensured and, at the same time, demand equal favour for their vernacular.

Laitin (1992:80) points out another aspect that seems to support the use of an ex-colonial language:

There is evidence that in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, some Africans families rely exclusively on French, and it could be considered as a first language, or 'mother tongue', to the children of those households. But through most of Africa, speaking English or French well is more like owning a Mercedes Benz - it gives you a European cachet, but it cannot turn you into a European. European languages are a consumption item, or perhaps more an investment item, but Africans in most settings have not adopted the social and cultural identity of being native speakers of French or English.

The research results that will be discussed in Chapter 4 indicate that the above-mentioned observation also holds true within the South African context, namely the fact that English is regarded very highly by non-mother-tongue speakers of English in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi. In order for the local government to address the existing imbalance - for example the fact that respondents feel that knowledge of English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, ensures entry into the local job market - it is essential that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council takes active steps to elevate the status of the indigenous languages - thereby creating a demand for competence in those languages. The greater the need, the more people will acquire it, and the more status will be attached to it. Section 2.4 will shed light on the economic value of languages.

Given the above-mentioned discussion regarding the use of an ex-colonial language, the question arises whether it is impossible to successfully rationalise indigenous languages. Laitin (1992:107) goes on to explain that although strategically powerful interest in support of maintaining colonial languages as official media of discourse might exist, it does not imply that there will be no examples of successful state rationalisation in indigenous languages. In some African countries, such as Somalia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Tanzania, rationalisation is likely to succeed.

According to Laitin (1992:107) there are two consequential considerations for state rationalisation to succeed, namely:

[ ... ] First, there needs to be a single indigenous language which serves as a focal point, so that there are no other languages that can compete with it as obvious choices for official status. Second, the political elite must exert revolutionary pressure on the civil service so that it complies with indigenisation decrees.

It was already pointed out that the stipulations of the South African Constitution exclude the possibility of state rationalisation supporting the use of a single indigenous language. Even if the above criteria were to be met, there is the question of how far a government is willing to actively invest in the actual development of a state rationalisation policy supporting the use of an indigenous language. Laitin (1992:112) says the following in this regard:

Many African languages, used by missionaries, colonial governments, and international organisations, are sufficiently developed for easy

incorporation in technical domains. The promotion of these languages is a quite popular political stance, in general. But when the policy begins to get specific, coming down to actually choosing which vernacular will be promoted, or relying upon it to teach chemistry or mathematics, or demanding that government forms be filled out in it, the general support gives way to specific objections.

A survey of the literature thus revealed that strategically powerful interests in supporting the use of an ex-colonial language, i.e. maintaining elite status; accompanied by the low status of indigenous languages; and finally objections to the high expenditure inherent to the decision to invest in the development of an indigenous language - seem to act as barriers in the process of formulating and implementing a language policy supporting the radical approach outlined by Bamgbose. What we can deduce from the above-mentioned observations, is that in theory, on a political level, it might be desirable to promote the notion of multilingualism with promises leaning towards the radical approach outlined by Bamgbose, while in reality the status quo approach seems to be followed when it comes to actively addressing the issue.

It was argued in section 2.2.1 that it seems as if South Africa is opting for the last resort - the gradualist approach, of which the characteristics are also to be found in Laitin's so-called 3±1 language outcome. With Laitin claiming that rationalisation will not be the African norm, he propagates the 3±1 language outcome that he describes as follows:

[ ... ] the 3±1 language outcome will be both prevalent and stable in many African states. This is an outcome in which citizens seeking occupational mobility and middle-class urban opportunities will need to have facility in 3±1 languages. This repertoire includes their vernacular (their primary language), which will also be the language in which they receive their elementary education. The repertoire also includes an African lingua franca, usually promoted by a class of nationalist politicians. This language is useful for extralocal communication and is often taught as a compulsory subject in public school.

[ ... ] the language of colonial contact, serving not only as a means of international communication but as a key to business and technical communication within the country, is also an essential part of the citizen's repertoire. If the citizen's vernacular is the same as

the lingua franca, he or she only needs to learn two (i.e., 3-1) languages; if the citizen's vernacular is distinct from the vernacular taught in the region of residence, he or she must then learn four (i.e., 3+1) languages (Laitin 1992:18).

Laitin (1992:159) raises the following argument in favour of the 3±1 language outcome:

The 3±1 language program is one that holds the promise, for some African countries, of allowing them to acknowledge their African heritage without suffering the penalty of technological backwardness.

Having thus identified the various factors and theoretical possibilities underlying the implementation of language planning policies up to this point, the implications of putting it into practice within the South African context will be extensively discussed in Chapter 5 where the basic principles of Laitin's 3±1 language program are reflected in the proposals put forward towards formulating and implementing a language policy for the Tshwane Metropolitan Council.

### **2.3 Local languages and development**

The ultimate purpose of the whole debate surrounding language planning and policy implementation in a multilingual African state is not merely to arrive at a theoretical linguistic solution, but rather to meet the developmental needs of its people. Robinson says the following in this regard:

At the heart of the development process is relationships, the cultural context, the parameters of communication. Language is one such parameter, an obvious one, though not the only one. It is a parameter which both reflects other social realities and structures them. At the end of the day Africa faces more pressing problems than its language, but that must not be an excuse for ignoring their role and effect in the development process. Wherever people are put at the centre of the development process, issues of language will always be close to the surface - good communication requires it (1996:4).

In strengthening the importance of language in development, Robinson (1996:48-49) points out that there is an interesting parallel to be drawn from the development concepts of 'core' and 'periphery'. The core (or centre) is where the power resides (and usually also the resources), the periphery (or margins) refers to powerless groups. A parallel exists with the relationships between languages and those who speak them. If language is seen as action and behaviour, then the importance of examining behaviour in all languages in development communication is underlined. He emphasises that the point, however, is not whether languages should or should not be maintained or ultimately survive, but whether communication needs exist now which require the use of the people's language if they are to participate in their own development or respond to intervention.

Local languages are thus central in a multilingual approach. According to Robinson (1996:263) particular attention must be given to the local language if it is to serve the purposes of development communication. Only ongoing commitment to local linguistic and cultural realities - and to the people whose identity they represent - will enable the local language to find its appropriate place in a multilingual communication strategy.

## **2.4 Language and economy**

### **2.4.1 Background**

It is unavoidable to arrive at a point where the potential costs implicated in the implementation of a language policy have to be considered. At this stage it thus becomes necessary to investigate the extent to which language and economy rely on each another.

The fact that the two are closely related, already becomes evident in Grin's definition of **language planning** (1996:31):

Language planning is a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to solve language problems with a view to increasing welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under its jurisdiction.

The above-mentioned definition emphasises the fact that language planning is not merely an exercise focused on arriving at a linguistic solution. It is a cognitive, deliberate process of comparing alternatives and of selecting a policy that is formulated to meet the linguistic and developmental needs of the population it seeks to empower by democratising access to skills and knowledge, which in turn would ascertain equal participation in a national or local economy. If argued along these lines, it becomes clear that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, in formulating a local language policy, should investigate their use of language in the process of governance, and seek to implement a language policy that addresses the developmental needs of the population under its jurisdiction.

To proceed a step further, the notion of the **economics of language** can be introduced. Grin and Vaillancourt (1997:43) define the economics of language as the study of the relationship between linguistic and economic variables; in addition, it includes the study of language-related issues where economic variables have little or no part, but which can nevertheless be examined with the concepts and methods of neo-classical economics. These concepts and methods involved the management of available resources for language planning purposes include reference to capital expenditure; analysis of profits (benefits) and losses (costs); and assessing the market value of languages. It should, however, be noted that these terms are not only applicable to calculable financial costs and benefits related to the language planning process itself, e.g. possible translation or publishing costs, but they also involve the willingness of policy-makers to incur costs in the process of developing human resources and empowering people through language-related investments - which in turn becomes a benefit. Investing in multilingualism, for example, implies initial costs, but there are long-term benefits to be derived.

Grin and Vaillancourt (1997:48-49) clarify the issues at stake as follows:

From an economic standpoint, the first question to address is how far multilingualism is, indeed, a resource (because it may generate both costs and benefits), and then how multilingualism affects society's 'welfare' - or well-being.

The economic approach to the value of multilingualism and the determination of some optimal level of multilingualism does not claim to provide ready-made answers to policy problems. Nevertheless,

economics addresses issues often ignored in more standard perspectives on language problems and can serve as an ingredient, amongst many others, in the selection and design of language policies.

The question that arises, is how exactly can economics provide guidelines in formulating language policy. Grin (1996:30) says in this regard that economics can prove useful in two different ways: first, in understanding language-related processes, whether these are seen as influencing, or influenced by, economic ones; second, when selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating language policies.

Another issue that needs to be introduced is the perception held by decision-makers that to adopt a multilingual approach would place a heavy financial constraint on a government. This argument, amongst others, might well have provided the impetus to some African governments to cut back on linguistic costs by maintaining the use of ex-colonial languages for official governance purposes, since the act of investing in indigenous languages is perceived to engender additional costs. Jernudd (1971:272) confirms this when saying that tendencies towards centralisation and agglomeration of languages are strong in developing countries, and that this also leads to a certain amount of elimination of linguistic heterogeneity (or an interpretation into political circumstance of factual difference).

It might thus seem plausible to decision-makers to invest in a sole language, rather than in multiple languages, but the question is what would the hidden costs be when opting for a single language in a multilingual state. Coulmas (1992:118) says in this regard that multilingual countries, which in their structure and operations take into account the multilingualism of the population, are often forced to bear higher language-related expenditures than are incurred by monolingual countries, but the latter do not use language free of charge either. As a matter of fact, some monolingual countries go to extraordinary extents for language-related tasks, be it in order to make a large part of their population proficient in other languages, as in the case of the Netherlands, or in order to promote their own national language in other countries, as in the case of France.

Numerous arguments in favour of centralisation have been offered, relying on the premise that linguistically diverse countries are synonymous with economic underdevelopment. Laitin (1992:53) argues that although correlation analysis involving all countries of the world suggests that there

is a positive statistical relationship between societies with diverse speech communities and low levels of economic development, the data are not so clear. First, the multinational correlations are not strong, and language diversity rarely explains more than a quarter of the variance on any of the dependent variables. Second, many countries with impressive economic performance, such as Switzerland, Belgium, and Canada are linguistically diverse. Third, and more important, the cross-sectional studies reporting these correlations do not demonstrate links. Fourth, these studies ignore a standard intervening variable, the age of a country.

Bamgbose (1991:36-37) is aware of the general inclination to centralise, but offers another valid argument. He says that linguistically heterogeneous states are said to be characterised by low or very low per capita GNP and are usually economically underdeveloped, while linguistically homogeneous states have a high or medium per capita GNP and are relatively economically well-developed. All the countries in Africa, with the exception of South Africa, belong to the category of low or very low per capita GNP; and these, however, include not only the linguistically homogeneous Arab countries of North Africa, but also homogeneous black countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Madagascar. Clearly, the evidence he provides suggests that there may be other variables at work.

In concluding the argument in favour of a multilingual approach towards language policy and planning, one can only agree with Laitin (1992:53-55) who points out that a survey of African data, based on socio-economic indicators from forty African countries, cannot demonstrate a statistical relationship between language diversity and economic growth. We can therefore arrive at the conclusion that language diversity and economic growth in Africa are unrelated. He concludes by saying that the call for the elimination of language diversity to foster socio-economic development is therefore clearly based on faith, not science. This view, that expertise, systematic learning, and science can be fully developed through use of a non-indigenous language, is equally based on faith.

The South African Constitution fully embraces multilingualism, unity-in-diversity, and propagates ethnolinguistic tolerance. The South African Government thereby indicated their commitment to the notion that languages are to be regarded as resources in the socio-economic development of the nation. In practice, this entails that a local government, such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, who is already compelled to elevate the status and advance the use of local indigenous

languages, should formulate a language policy that gives recognition to the role of languages in socio-economic development.

#### 2.4.2 The economics of language in practice

Having established that economic and linguistic processes bear upon each other, the investigation will be focused on where economics can make its most valuable contributions to the study of language issues.

Lo Bianco (1996:21) makes the following contribution in aid of establishing the extent to which language and economy bear upon one another:

Essentially human resource development is the primary field of interest to the relation between languages and the economy. As the economy itself moves away from raw materials and primary produce, away from a 'dig it up, grow it, put it on a big ship and take it to Korea' sort of economy, to one which stresses the elaborate transformation of these raw materials into high value added ones, and also through services, tourism and education.

The human interactions involved in taking primary produce or commodities to South Korea in large ships would be very few. You would have one government agent talking to another government agent or corporate sector representatives talking to another, negotiating contracts in English. The ultimate consumer was an anonymous figure to the seller. In service or small industry based economies consumers, the actual potential customers, are vitally important.

Among the wealthiest countries in the world there are many that are resource-poor. These economies depend on a different sort of base, one that involves high information content in all their products, research, development, manipulation of knowledge, financial transactions. This is the tertiary level of the economy. The classically poor country is the one that has raw materials or primary produce alone, has never developed its people, and depends on a single market destination for its goods.

Form the above-mentioned, it is clear that a government would be well-advised to invest in the development of its people to enable them to actively contribute to the economic development of the country. South

Africa could be described as a developing country that needs to further the economic advancement of its citizens. The economy is industrialised to the extent that it, for example, has a healthy world-class import and export market. It could be argued that regarding the output it does not to a great extent rely on high information content in terms of linguistic knowledge. Export contracts, for example, would already have been negotiated and the workers are merely involved in the manufacturing process and preparing the products for distribution.

On the other hand it could be argued that any business investing in local indigenous languages by utilising them as tools to enhance communication on vertical and horizontal levels within the company structure, and to train workers in their own languages, would contribute to a positive working environment. Open, transparent communication and the democratisation of skills and knowledge would create a feeling of ownership, pride, self-confidence and empowerment that should result in increased productivity within the business.

The economy is furthermore characterised by a strong informal sector, for example self-employed vendors trying to earn a living in a very competitive economic environment. Should a local government support a multilingual approach, for example towards equipping entrepreneurs and potential job-creators with business skills in their own languages, it would result in empowered individuals skilled in business principles who would be able to venture into successful SMME's (Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises) and who could actively contribute to the local economy by in turn providing more job opportunities.

South African businesses and local governments could therefore actively participate in the economic empowerment of the previously disadvantaged by investing in the utilisation of indigenous languages as tools to equip employees and potential entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge that would in turn contribute to national economic growth.

Having established the extent to which language and economics are interrelated, it can be assumed that language engenders costs. Coulmas (1992:91) says this is particularly evident in officially multilingual countries that pursue an institutionalised language policy. Such a policy, he feels, has economic aspects with regard to both to costs and benefits. In referring to Africa, he quotes Djité who points out that the formulation of a

rational language policy in a multilingual nation is in itself an economic issue and should have as high a priority as other economic issues.

Since the formulation of a language policy in a multilingual nation is an economic issue, deliberations regarding language expenditure often revolve around the calculation of costs. It should be noted that the notion of language as an economic resource or commodity does not merely involve financial calculations and material costs. As a point of departure, however, and to illustrate how decision-makers tend to calculate the expenditure involved in language planning, the notion of the *economic profile of a language* that Coulmas (1992:89) introduced, indicates how he values languages in economic terms and shows the extent to which they could be regarded as commodities. It should, however, be noted that apart from proving to what extent languages could be considered as having an economic value in terms of investments made towards its formal utilisation, the characteristics of his economic profile may in the South African situation have little application-value besides indicating the extent to which the previous government directed measurable expenditure and investments towards maintaining the use of English and Afrikaans within the economic domain. It only emphasises the preferential status of those languages, and by implication might justify the status quo where indigenous languages are not regarded as worthy of investment and development.

The economic profile of a language, according to Coulmas (1992:89) thus encompasses:

- the communicative range of a language as expressed in the demographic strength of the community using it as (a) a first and (b) a second/foreign language;
- the level of development of the functional potential of a language as a societal means of production and the opportunities for its employment;
- the total amount of investment that has been made in a language, where lexical recording, the density of the network of bilingual dictionaries relating it to other languages, the translation flow into and out of it, and the level of electronic processibility can serve as partial indicators;
- the demand for a language as a commodity on the international market of foreign languages and the size of the industry it supports, as well as the shares of national GNP's which are spent worldwide for its acquisition; and

- the balance on the current account of a language for its speech community.

Although thus not totally applicable to the South African scenario, the characteristics of Coulmas' economic profile of languages could have advantages in the sense that it focuses the attention on the direction that local decision-makers should follow when addressing the question of the economic development of indigenous languages. Besides financial calculations, there are other aspects that should be inherent to an economic profile of languages. There are hidden benefits in investing in local indigenous languages. Although not directly calculable in terms of expenditure, it would contribute to the empowerment of speakers of indigenous languages, establish a sense of ownership and pride, and contribute towards nation-building. Chapter 5 will indicate how the Tshwane Metropolitan Council could empower speakers of local indigenous languages to participate in the local economy.

Regarding the underdeveloped segment of the economy, local governments need to conduct language audits of the areas under their jurisdiction in order to identify which languages are used in economic activity, thus establish which languages should be regarded as commodities in the internal market of indigenous languages. This research project serves as an example of the kind of information local decision-makers, in this case the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, needs to gather in order to develop a local language policy that recognises the value of the under-utilised indigenous languages.

A survey of the literature thus strengthened the argument that local languages need to be invested in actively in order to increase the economic potential of speakers of those languages. Investing in certain languages implies costs, and governing bodies need to calculate how much they are willing to invest in the economic empowerment of local languages, and what the cost would be if they decided not to do so.

Stanton, Aislabie and Lee (1992:415) argue that a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce, for example, can create communication and co-ordination problems within an enterprise causing adverse consequences for productivity and competitiveness while the incidence of these costs may deter the employment of a multicultural workforce.

Supporters of the argument that multilingual, multicultural enterprises may experience language-related problems, furthermore say that in the labour market even purely manual job-opportunities are affected by language skills. Coulmas (1992:66) refers to a study of Southeast Asian immigrants in Canada by Starr and Roberts who discovered a positive correlation between income and proficiency in English (and to a lesser extent, French). He says that insufficient knowledge of the language of the country, or, more precisely, the labour market where one wishes to earn a living, drastically reduces one's competitiveness. And conversely, control of ample linguistic resources may yield a profit.

Coulmas (1992:91) concludes this argument by saying that it thus does not seem unreasonable to expect that people who possess language skills that are in demand in economic growth sectors will be comparatively favoured over people without these skills. He says the latter may require a greater share of educational resources or temporary privileges to off-set their linguistic inability; if they are unsuccessful in their demands, they will be held back in economic advancement (although, by their own effort, they would be likely to attempt acquiring the key language unless constrained by circumstances or lack of insight or both; or, alternatively, to increase their political pressure for compensation, etc.).

The above-mentioned arguments against a multilingual approach in the workplace only emphasises the importance of democratising knowledge and skills within the local South African business environment. The linguistically disadvantaged - those not proficient in English and Afrikaans - were previously held back by their linguistic inability that simultaneously reduced their competitiveness. The multilingual nature of the country was in the meantime recognised and is protected by the Constitution, therefore businesses negating the value of local indigenous languages as tools to enhance communication and to empower workers with skills using their own languages are acting in an unconstitutional manner. Linguistic inability acts as a barrier to economic advancement and empowerment. Local businesses and governments alike need to realise that they have a responsibility in addressing the problems associated with linguistic discrimination. The future benefits of investing in languages may far outweigh the short-term expenditure. Given the multilingual nature of our own labour market, it follows that languages presently underrepresented in the labour market should be identified and invested in if the current socio-economic problems are to be addressed.

Another example of positive effects that a linguistically diverse population could have on an economy is found in the emergence of niche-markets. Lo Bianco (1996:22-23) explains that in the midst of a rapidly globalising economy (one which may produce a seamless net of economy in which the nation state is of lessened significance in the conduct of economic policy), there is the role of niche markets. In a seamless or linked economy competitive advantage accrues to those able to locate, or create, niches, i.e. those segments of the economy which give a distinctive advantage and in which it is possible to command clear competitive advantage, either because of privileged information, skill, capacity, cost regimes or some other factor. Cultural production, or more simply, the competitive utilisation of cultural knowledge, assists in niche marketing and niche products. He concludes by saying that South Africa may, like Australia, have a special potential in certain markets because of its ability to combine population resources, extraordinary attractive tourism offerings, generally good infrastructure and mineral wealth.

Examples of competitive utilisation of cultural knowledge finding expression in the indigenous languages of South Africa, include theatre productions and music shows reflecting the cultural wealth and diversity to be found in the African oral tradition, as well as in African song, rhythm and dance. Tour-operators introducing tourists to previously disadvantaged areas such as the so-called townships with their vibrant, multicultural, multilingual characteristics also created lucrative business opportunities to the advantage of local communities.

Now that it has been established that linguistic and economic factors bear upon each other, and that languages should be regarded as economic resources, it is necessary to arrive at a stage where the costs of implementing alternative language planning policies need to be identified.

#### 2.4.3 Language as a resource - the cost-benefit calculation

Thorburn (1971:255) points out that language planning should be founded on a systematic forecast of consequences of alternatives. According to Thorburn's (1971:56) *cost-benefit analysis*, calculation can start once a problem is stated and some likely alternative solutions have been proposed. One would want to compare the economic consequences of proposed alternatives, which is the object of cost-benefit analysis. The calculation aims at giving a true picture of the probable consequences - not at bringing about or supporting a decision that has already been made.

Jernudd (1971:267) introduces the advantages of a cost-benefit analysis in order to reach an efficient decision. He explains that the problems of reaching efficient and productive decisions may often have to be solved by 'residual' techniques: a quantification is made according to the productivity-technique. The decision-maker estimates efficiency in terms of the resulting cost-benefit gap - a cost gap (i.e. a negative gap) measures how much the decision-maker at least would have to be willing to pay to go ahead with this alternative.

Given the multilingual nature of the South African population at this point in time, the government's resources, and the allocation thereof, should be brought into the equation. In other words, the economic decisions a government - such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council - is confronted with, could be compared with similar considerations on a micro-level.

Thorburn (1971:256-257) explains that an ordinary economic calculation for a firm starts with the cost of wages, materials, and the like, which is compared later with the prices received when the products are sold. In such a calculation, it is comparatively simple to state what the input and output are, as well as what they are worth in monetary terms. A cost-benefit calculation in public administration, however, differs considerably from the above pattern. The frame of the calculation is much wider and more diffuse, the essential reason being that the output of large public projects, such as road building, flood regulation, and hospital building, are not paid for at a fixed price at a fixed time. Instead, the output affects the economy of a society through a chain of consequences taking place over a long period of time. Medical care, for example, results in cures of various degrees. The time it takes to cure and the degree of cure will influence the number of working days in production later. That is an economic effect. The degree of cure will also influence the degree of sickness in the future and, hence, the cost of medical care to society.

The basic idea behind Thorburn's cost-benefit calculation is that the language behaviour of groups of people is a national resource in the same way as technical skills or number of workers. Language is an instrument to achieve certain results and is, therefore, to be looked upon as a resource. The cost-benefit calculation therefore implies that decision-makers systematically try to:

- identify;
- quantify; and

- evaluate

all essential consequences that would arise if one were to choose planning alternative A instead of planning alternative B.

A cost-benefit calculation thus ought to assemble all relevant scientific knowledge pertaining to the problem in question (description and relations), which ought to be presented to the politicians in an impartial and clear way. How to weigh the advantages and disadvantages and to judge the uncertainties is up to the politician. In Thorburn's opinion, such a cost-benefit analysis can be extremely valuable in language planning.

The most important aspect that yet again emerges from the discussion above, besides the apparent advantages of a cost-benefit analysis, is the notion of regarding languages as resources, or in economic terms, as commodities. The above-mentioned discussion of Thorburn's cost-benefit analysis emphasises that a government in the process of formulating a language policy would have to be totally committed to the task at hand. The Tshwane Metropolitan Council will have to invest a lot of time and effort in assessing how the outcome of their language planning decisions could achieve optimal results - in this case the socio-economic empowerment of disadvantaged communities.

Jernudd (1971:268) is of the opinion that the most inclusive point of view is the government's, and that techniques of cost-benefit analysis were developed primarily to cope with governmental (and government subunits) problems of decision-making, particularly, investment. This cost-benefit approach is in principle a transfer of business management methods to the government sphere, exploring, necessarily, differences of government management from private management. He points out that an important difference is evidently the role of elected representatives of the people, which is to have public administration decision-makers not act on grounds of personal success goals alone but in accordance with public policy. He concludes by saying that with a nation being on the receiving end of such a decision-making process, it follows that a responsible government has the huge task of making the correct choices in this regard. The official language decision would hardly benefit the society unless most people apply it in appropriate situations.

Given the above cautions and uncertainties regarding the decision-making process, it yet again should be emphasised that a government needs to be totally dedicated to the idea of bringing about changes that would

positively influence the lives of its charges, who ultimately entrusted the government they had elected with this responsibility.

A survey of relevant literature thus established that:

- languages should be regarded as commodities within a linguistic market;
- they have a certain market value;
- decision-makers need to assess how much they are willing to invest in certain languages (costs); and
- calculate what their return on investment would be (benefits).

Coulmas (1992:138) also compares the economic decisions a government is confronted with, with similar considerations on a micro-level to illustrate the above-mentioned point:

The acquisition of some languages [ by an economic agent ] is more cost-efficient than that of others, depending on the purpose of its employment for company internal communication, the company's communication with its environment, with the market, or as part of a product. To invest into a language as human capital or as a commodity requires funds, on a smaller or larger scale. Whether or not it makes any economic sense at all to invest into a given language for one purpose or another is the question of costs and benefits.

Along the same lines, Grin and Vaillancourt (1997:46-47) focus the attention on various factors that influence the language used in the workplace. These factors include the language contents of goods and services produced, the language of the various markets, the language of production factors (particularly technology and the workforce), and the language of the owners or senior management. They arrive at the following conclusion:

Businesses and firms will offer goods and services in a given language when it is profitable to do so, which depends on factors like economics of scale, market size and translation costs.

It can be assumed that a government that is in the process of assessing language-related expenditure would come to the same conclusion. Financial decisions made by businesses, however, rely on the attainment of

short or long-term goals. A business might have to decide whether the long-term benefits in, for example, the act of replacing outdated technology warrants the expenditure. In terms of language planning expenditure, a local government intimidated by the immediate costs of investing in under-utilised regional languages might lose sight of the obvious long-term benefits, i.e. the economic development of its disadvantaged citizens.

Since a local government, such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, as well as businesses and firms, will thus offer goods and services in a given language when it is *profitable* to do so, attention needs to be directed to the process whereby language acquires a *market value* and could be regarded as a *commodity*. Coulmas (1992:80) mentions one characteristic of the commodity language, namely that its value increases by every speaker who acquires it, or, whom it acquires. This is much like the snowball effect with popular stocks that are appreciated because they gain value, which they do because they are being appreciated. He concludes by saying that the more people learn a language, the more useful it becomes, and the more useful it is, the more people want to learn it. To provide people with the impetus to acquire language knowledge and skills, local governments should thus commit themselves to elevate the status of indigenous languages, thereby increasing their market value.

A local government, such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, has the opportunity and responsibility to address the biased supply and demand perception towards the indigenous, economically underrepresented languages. This could be done by actively supporting the notion of investing in multiple languages to generate maximum wealth within the linguistic domain, and by doing so, to indicate their willingness to bring about changes that could ensure the general well-being of the population.

A cost-benefit calculation is thus used to assist in the selection between alternative approaches. It becomes necessary to establish what the notions of linguistic **costs** and **benefits** entail, since costs and benefits should not only be narrowly defined as calculable - or even predictable - profits or losses on a balance sheet. Lo Bianco (1996:19) regards this in the following light:

[...] But what costs are we talking about here? The economic cost of producing documents in four or five languages, or fifteen or thirty, against the human cost of industrial accidents, death, injury and

ultimately, the economic costs of litigation that follow. In some cases it is possible to demonstrate that the direct costs of multilingual communication compared to the direct costs of monolingual communication in particular workplaces and other settings reveal that in fact monolingualism is more expensive than utilising more effective multilingual communication.

As Lo Bianco by implication pointed out above, economic decisions more often than not focus on direct financial costs and benefits, such as translation costs - as opposed to the potential of incurring indirect costs, and even benefits. When regarding languages as economic resources, it is therefore necessary to acknowledge that some costs and benefits are obvious in financial terms, but there are more obscure costs and benefits that need to be considered in such a calculation. Coulmas (1992:89) confirms that not all language-caused expenditures are recognised and accounted for as such. There are overt and hidden language costs. He mentions, for example, that a telephone conversation takes twice as long as it should because of a civil servant's insufficient proficiency in a language he can be expected to know, the avoidable additional costs thus engendered are very hard to relate to language where they show up, namely on the telephone bill.

Conversely, the above-mentioned obscure cost associated with insufficient proficiency in a language outside the monolingual civil servant's linguistic reach, could well under different circumstances be a benefit in the sense that a multilingual civil servant would be able to immediately comprehend and respond. Multilingual civil servants in the South African context would thus be a benefit.

To fully comprehend the manner in which languages manifest themselves as resources, besides the more obscure benefits identified in acknowledging the value of previously underrepresented languages and thereby contributing to the economic empowerment of the previously disadvantaged - as pointed out in par. 2.4.2 - we yet again need to consider the direct financial cost and benefits. Coulmas (1992:79) says in this regard that to look at languages as commodities is warranted inasmuch as acquiring them as foreign languages [ or acquiring proficiency in under-utilised indigenous languages ] usually causes costs, both on the individual and the social level. He mentions that this is the economic basis of an entire industry: publishers, printing shops, language schools, recording studios for audio-visual materials, language-education software producers,

etc. He concludes by saying that evidently, only a few select languages can support such an industry, namely those for which there is a large-scale demand, the economically valuable languages. From this he derives yet another important indicator of the economic value of a language: the number of professionals it affords a living.

Inasmuch as the act of investing in languages thus engenders costs, the fact that languages are considered as the economic basis of entire industries thus actually imply an inherent benefit – namely in providing job opportunities. The underestimated economic value of indigenous languages should therefore not only be narrowly defined in terms of existing supply and demand structures. Should decision-makers, such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, acknowledge and actively support the benefits of investing in economically underrepresented languages, demand in terms of linguistic output would be increased and that, in turn, would increase output in terms of supply. In practical terms this means that the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, in terms of internal governance and external communication, will have to increase language related expenditure by investing in the translation and publication of documents in local indigenous languages. Such an active step would create a demand for translators and interpreters, while increased publishing and printing demands would generate more job opportunities.

Coulmas (1992:77) illustrates this notion by using translation as an example. Where languages are considered as social resources, translation is to be understood as a long-term investment in the interest of maintaining or increasing their value. Since every translation into a language adds value to it, the totality of all translations into a language can be viewed as an indicator of its value. The Japanese are used as an example. They are both willing and able to apply considerable expenditures in order to make scientific insights and literary works first published in other languages accessible in their own language, and in this way continuously adapt their language to the most recent functional requirements.

Coulmas (1992:77-78) furthermore points out that when taking translations and dictionaries into account, the *market value* of a language is determined in relation to that of others - that is the exchange value a certain language has as a commodity. He argues that to guarantee unrestricted intertranslatability for a language by means of standardisation and continuous terminology innovation is in the best interest of the national economy that relies on it, and to ensure standardisation of those languages

and to encourage their learning and teaching would increase their under-utilised value. As was pointed out, language related expenditure would increase in the short term, but there are long-term benefits to be derived.

Coulmas (1992:69) goes on to argue that inasmuch as such activities bring on costs, promoting and maintaining a cultivated norm can also be considered an investment and that languages are capital investment projects in a literal rather than a metaphorical sense.

This section established the notion that languages should be regarded as economic resources by governments committed to bring about social change. Since the previous South African government had invested mainly in Afrikaans and English, speakers of indigenous languages wanting to become economically active and competitive were forced to acquire language proficiency in those languages. If a local government, such as the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, thus wants to implement a language policy that would increase the market value of indigenous languages, it follows that it would hardly benefit the population unless most people apply it in appropriate situations. Chapter 5 will discuss this matter regarding the current status of the local indigenous languages in more detail.

It was furthermore argued that the notion of languages as economic resources should not only be narrowly defined in financial terms, but should also recognise that investment in those languages have long-term benefits in terms of economic empowerment, a sense of ownership, pride, nation-building and even increased productivity. The argument favouring the notion of recognising indigenous languages as economic resources - and investing in the advancement of those languages in South Africa, is strengthened by the following observation:

The underdevelopment of the languages of the Third World countries is an indication and part of their [ the countries' ] economic underdevelopment (Coulmas 1992:50-51).

## **2.5 Language and Education**

### **2.5.1 Background**

This section will focus on the use of language in education, being an intrinsic prerequisite for national and local development. Various insights

from Africa and abroad will be discussed, and the emphasis will be on local education and how it could gain from a multilingual approach focusing on initial mother-tongue instruction. It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to formulate language-in-education policies, and as indicated in Chapter 1, par. 1.1.2, illiteracy is clearly a problem that needs to be addressed. Although thus not formally within the jurisdiction of the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, educational needs are not to be separated from developmental needs. Local governments have to be aware of the linguistic needs of the population they seek to empower and develop, and where necessary be willing to actively contribute - for example by means of initiating or supporting adult literacy programmes that favour the use of local indigenous languages.

Bamgbose (1991:43-44) emphasises that national development should not merely be regarded as socio-economic development, but rather as total human development. He argues that national development, even if narrowly conceived in terms of socio-economic goals, has relevance for language, particularly in terms of such agents of development as literacy and communication. This argument may be taken further by insisting that national development cannot be limited in scope to socio-economic development. A wider and more satisfactory conception of national development is that which sees it as total human development. In this model of development, he places the emphasis on a full realisation of the human potential and maximum utilisation of the nation's resources for the benefit of all. It follows that the role of language in education has an important role in this process.

Bamgbose (1991:38-39) goes on to point out that the main objective would be the eradication of illiteracy. He supports this by saying that the UNESCO review of literacy in the world since the 1965 Teheran Conference draws the firm conclusion that illiteracy has a close correlation with poverty. As usual, Africa is in the least favourable situation. It seems clear, then, that Africa's socio-economic underdevelopment problem cannot be solved without improved literacy. He argues that the solution to the literacy problem in Africa must entail paying more attention to indigenous languages as an effective means of eradicating illiteracy.

A survey of the literature revealed that the use of indigenous languages in eradicating illiteracy is a somewhat contentious notion. Webb (1998a:152-153) in this regard says that Fishman (1968b) claims an apparently strong correlation between economic growth and a sociolinguistic trend from

heterogeneous (several languages) to homogeneous (few languages) language situations, as a concomitant of modernisation. The latter assumed correlation has been discussed at length, and has been shown as invalid in the previous section, along with the argument that a nation aspiring for efficient use of resources and for self-definition should attempt to rationalise its linguistic resources in order to eliminate such heterogeneity that hinders communication and identification.

Webb (1998a:152-153) emphasises the need to re-evaluate traditional conceptions in this regard when saying that it is generally accepted that language acquisition (language teaching, language learning) has a central place in language planning, and that this is particularly true for a society in transition. South Africa has a unique opportunity to make its language learning programmes (at all levels) part of the reconstruction of South African society and the promotion of new values and norms, new attitudes and convictions, new visions for a new country.

According to Webb (2002:205), the role of language learning in the transformation of public life is a direct function of the intimate relationship between language and the socio-cultural order in a country. Language is both reflective and constitutive of the socio-cultural reality of which it is part. He goes on to quote scholars such as Halliday, Kramsch and Searle in this regard. The most important observations to be derived from Halliday are:

- a child learning language is at the same time learning other things through language, the construal of reality is inseparable from the construal of the semantic system in which the reality is encoded;
- in the development of the child as a social being, language has a central role;
- language is the main channel through which the patterns of living are transmitted to him, through which he learns to act as a member of a society and to adopt its culture; its modes of thought and action, its beliefs and its values;
- language arises in the life of individuals through an ongoing exchange of meanings with significant others;
- a child creates his mother-tongue in interaction with people who constitute his meaning group - in this sense language is a product of the social process;
- when people talk to one another they do not only exchange information, they act out the social structure, affirming their own

status's and roles, and establishing and transmitting the shared systems of value and knowledge (via the social meaning of language forms); and

- language does not only express the social system; it symbolises the social system actively representing metaphorically in its patterns of variation the variation that characterises human culture.

Kramsch (Webb 2002:205) is as direct about the relationship between language learning and the socio-cultural reality in which it is imbedded: language acquisition is the acquisition of the unspoken ideological substratum of the educational system, the community, the peer group, and the family.

Searle (Webb 2002:205), again, emphasises language activity as a purposeful, value-laden human activity. What one hears, interprets or understands is a product of one's social and cultural worlds, performed within the restrictions of the interpretative strategies, points of departure and conventions of the community. Language use is dynamic, full of commitment and assumed obligations.

Having established the relationship between socio-cultural identity and language, and the fact that language plays a central role in the development of the child as a social being, it follows that responsible language planning in South Africa, with its motto of unity in diversity, should acknowledge this relationship and that language study should play a significant role in contributing to the transformation of South African society.

It is, however, not only the issue of **language learning** that poses problems, but also the issue of **learning through language** (teaching), and the consequential choice of a medium of instruction that creates difficulties of its own. This warrants further investigation.

Bamgbose (1991:69-80) draws attention to seven constraints that could be recognised in the debate surrounding the choice of languages in education. They are the historical, the sociolinguistic, the sociocultural, the economic, the pedagogic, and the political constraints. These constraints could be summarised as follows:

- the overall effect of the **historical constraint** is that African countries remain prisoners of the colonial past because the

established educational practices are so overwhelming that it becomes virtually impossible to break away from them;

- the **sociolinguistic constraint** concerns language status, size of speakers and state of language development. No matter how defined, a language accorded the status of official or national language must have a prominent place in education much higher than the role given to other languages. A language with a long literary tradition has an advantage over one that does not;
- the **sociocultural constraint** is usually linked with the desire to ensure that a people's culture that a language represents is not ignored in the educational process. It means that at some point in the course of a child's education, he must have an opportunity of learning his own language or learning in it;
- the **economic argument** when used against mother-tongue education tends to ignore the important role of education in development which should be concerned with the liberation of the human potential for the welfare of the community;
- a major constraint in the choice of language in education has been the **theoretical** one based on the problems of learning and cognitive development. The recommendation of the UNESCO Meeting of Experts (which took place in Paris in 1951) was that on educational grounds, they recommend that the use of the mother-tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible - this recommendation reinforced the practice of early mother-tongue education in several countries and was used to support its introduction where it did not formerly exist;
- the **pedagogic constraint** concerns the fact that any educational language policy requires for its effectiveness the availability of teachers. In the case of mother-tongue education, such teachers must either be mother-tongue speakers or have considerable competence in the language/s they are required to teach; and
- the **political constraint** manifests itself in several ways. There is a general attitude by governments that language policy matters are sensitive, hence governments generally find it more convenient to pay lip-service to such goals and then quietly carry on with a LWC medium.

The above-mentioned constraints clearly manifest themselves when investigating obstacles in the teaching of African languages and the use of African languages as media of instruction.

Bamgbose (1991:92-94) identifies four obstacles in the teaching of African languages, namely the low standard of examination, inadequate materials, inadequate teacher preparation, and the low prestige of African languages. These obstacles need to be addressed locally in order for language-in-education policies to be successfully implemented. He describes them as follows:

The teaching of African languages in secondary schools is generally beset by problems connected with the curriculum, materials, time allocation, teacher preparation, and prestige. The curriculum for the secondary school course in many African languages is based on an original pattern designed for foreign learners of such languages as evidenced in the old Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or the London General Certificate of Education examination [ ... ] It is not unknown for candidates to pass the examination by merely studying such (previous) papers or even in some cases for a non-native speaker to learn enough about the language to be able to pass the examination without much difficulty. The result is that the Ordinary Level paper in African languages is seen as a soft option.

Materials available for the teaching of African languages in secondary schools have largely been dominated by old-fashioned grammar-translation texts based on traditional grammar. [ ... ] In many instances, African languages fare badly in terms of the time allocated on the timetable. There is the added disadvantage that the periods allocated tend to be in the afternoon, when it is quite hot and the pupils are not very alert.

One of the weakest points in the teaching of African languages is in the area of teacher preparation. In the past, it was believed that any native speaker of the language who happened to be a teacher in the school could teach his language. [...] Educational authorities are now gradually realising that teaching an African language is a specialist assignment in much the same way as the teaching of Physics or English.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle in the teaching of African languages in secondary schools is the low prestige attached to it. Teachers of such languages are not much sought after and quite often students do not consider them as proficient teachers of other subjects. [ ... ] As long as African languages are not required for

specific purposes, such as appointment to the administrative cadre of the Civil Service or admission to the Arts programme of Colleges of Education, the question of low prestige will continue to affect the conditions and prospects of their teaching (Bamgbose 1991:92-94).

The above-mentioned obstacles clearly confirm the responsibility of a local government to address the low status of indigenous languages by creating the need for its utilisation. Once the need for its utilisation is created, it is essential that the Department of Education in turn recognises the necessity of a local language-in-education policy that would meet the linguistic needs of the local population.

An investigation into the pattern of the use of African languages as media of instruction (Bamgbose 1991:84) revealed that the medium of instruction in the former English colonies was usually the mother-tongue or a language of the immediate community in the first three years of primary education, with English being taught as a subject and later becoming the medium of instruction from the fourth year. This pattern has survived unchanged in many of these countries, and in some a change has even occurred in the direction of the elimination of the use of African languages as media of instruction. The major innovation that took place in the post-independence period was a move in the direction of extending the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction beyond the third year of primary school.

Given these serious obstacles in the teaching in African languages, it follows that there is reason for grave concern regarding adult literacy. Adult literacy had always been associated with mother-tongue education. Bamgbose (1991:95) explains the necessity of using mother-tongue in adult education by saying that this is primarily because of the large numbers of the illiterate population and the virtual impossibility of providing literacy teaching in anything but the adult's first language. He goes on to say that adult literacy was originally conceived as a process of learning to read, write and count. Because of the serious problem of underdevelopment, and the need to justify expenditure on adult literacy, a new concept of literacy was evolved by UNESCO in 1960, linking literacy learning to a learner's work situation and his environment. The assumption is that if a person sees the prospects of his economic interests being enhanced by literacy, he will be more inclined to pay serious attention to it.

A survey of the literature thus showed that mother-tongue education is an essential part of adult literacy, although the content of the curriculum may

be a contentious matter. At this stage this notion is in general being neglected, as the focus tends to fall on the use of an ex-colonial Language of Wider Communication (LWC) for this purpose.

Bamgbose (1991:101), however, focuses the attention on an interesting development regarding mother-tongue education. He says the following in this regard:

The paradox of mother-tongue education in many African countries is that while it is negligible at primary level, it seems to flourish at university level. If any changes are to be expected, judging by current experience, they are likely to be induced from the top of the educational system rather than from below.

In a broader sense, decisions regarding the medium of instruction could be taken by the individual, depending on the merits of choosing one language above the other. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, some languages are perceived to have a higher status in the labour market. Zulu or Afrikaans-speaking parents may for instance decide to send their children to English schools because they perceive knowledge of English to be beneficial in terms of their children's general education and future careers.

Jernudd (1971:269) says in this regard that individuals have opportunities of learning languages in school or of paying for additional language teaching later. Their choice is presumably governed to a considerable extent by income expectations and by their valuation of the timing benefits. If they did not learn now, then they would be able to work and earn an income (or enjoy leisure) - which during learning is postponed but perhaps becomes increased later, even in terms of present value. The individual may also take intangibles into explicit account, for example, family or religious tradition requiring an extra language skill.

Further investigation into the matter of preferred medium of instruction revealed that the decision to focus on English as sole medium of instruction in some African countries was based upon the results of research projects, such as the Iganga experiment in Uganda. Bamgbose (1991:69-80) describes this project as follows:

[...] there was the Iganga experiment in Uganda in which two classes were taught Geography, one in English and the other in a mother-tongue, with the result that the class taught in English

performed better. [ ... ] This was to have a profound influence on the educational language policy of a few African countries. Apart from Kenya, Zambia also adopted the policy; and even the then administration of Northern Nigeria opted for the 'Straight-for-English' policy. [ .. ] The change of policy from a mother-tongue medium to an English medium in some of the countries concerned, is further reinforced by the interest of foreign donors in the spread of the teaching of English, which they most willingly supported through the donation of teaching materials, training of teachers, and supply of expatriate teachers and consultants.

Bamgbose (1991:69-81) however, points out that other research projects contradicted the outcome of the Iganga experiment. He argues that contrary to expectation, long periods of English teaching have often not resulted in greater mastery. In a test of competence, administered together with a questionnaire, to selected schools in Uganda, it was found that, in spite of concentration on English teaching and its use as a medium of instruction, no significant differences were recorded between reading competence in English and in indigenous language. In fact, the entire study showed that the teacher factor was more important than length of English teaching or even materials. He concludes by saying that children whose knowledge of English is inadequate furthermore have to cope with learning other subjects in English. This results in equally poor performance in those subjects as well.

According to Bamgbose (1991:85-86), another research project that contradicted the outcome of the Iganga experiment was the Six Year Primary Project in Nigeria that was started in 1970 and came to the conclusion that teaching through the mother-tongue facilitated more meaningful learning than teaching through English.

Bamgbose (1991:85-86) summarises the Six Year Primary Project in the following manner:

One innovation which has become famous in the literature on bilingual education is the Six Year Primary Project in Yoruba, one of the three major languages in Nigeria. The practice of making every primary teacher teach all subjects in English appeared to work fairly well when classes were small and supervision more effective. In the new situation of overcrowded classes, the resulting inadequacies were entirely predictable. Besides, since primary education was

terminal for most children, and the drop-out rate was as high as 40%, the question arose whether it was not better to concentrate on the kind of training that would ensure the acquisition of some knowledge, at least in one language.

The immediate motivation of the Six Year Primary Project was a desire to improve the teaching of English. [ ... ] The objective of the Six Year Primary Project was to compare the traditional system of mixed media with a new system in which Yoruba was used as a medium of instruction for the full six years of primary education. The experiment began in 1970 at a rural school in Ile-Ife (St Stephen's School) with two experimental classes and one control group. The experimental classes were taught all subjects in Yoruba, except for English that was taught by a specialist teacher of English. The control group was taught in Yoruba for three years and later in English.

All the groups were systematically evaluated from 1976-1978 [ and ] although the influence of the new materials and curriculum is clearly in evidence in this project, over and above this is the superior performance of the experimental groups which could only have been due to the use of Yoruba as medium of instruction.

The lesson to be learnt from the Six Year Primary Project is that where a language is dominant, mother-tongue education involving the use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction for the entire primary education can be achieved without sacrificing proficiency in a LWC, in this case English, which is taught as a subject throughout primary education. In order to achieve this result, attitudes to both languages have to be positive.

The results of the Six Year Primary Project, namely that teaching through the mother-tongue facilitated more meaningful learning than teaching through English, as well as evidence that the teacher-factor was more important than the length of English teaching or even materials, clearly have important implications for the development of a language-in-education policy within the South African context. Mother-tongue education and teacher competence thus are to be regarded as priorities, despite the fact that there might be strong social forces supporting the use of English as sole medium of instruction.

## 2.5.2 Language-in-education policies in Europe

A further survey of the literature revealed that it is not only in Africa that the choice of a medium of instruction causes problems. The Netherlands, for example, consists of a very diverse linguistic and cultural community, and the focus is on acquiring proficiency in Dutch, rather than on maintaining the use of the mother-tongues of the indigenous minorities.

Broeder and Extra (1994:54-55) shed light on the cultural and linguistic diversity in the Netherlands in the following manner:

In the Netherlands, Dutch is the language with the largest number of native speakers and the most public functions. For many inhabitants of the Netherlands, however, Dutch is not the language of their primary socialisation process. A large number of both indigenous and non-indigenous minority languages are acquired and maintained over time. Indigenous minority language varieties have a regional base and are commonly referred to as dialects. The only regional variety with an official language status in the Netherlands is Frisian, spoken by more than 60% of the 600,000 inhabitants of the northern province of Friesland. Non-indigenous minority language varieties have been introduced from abroad as immigrant languages. Even before the Second World War, languages like Chinese, Italian and Polish were the home languages of relatively small ethnic communities in the Netherlands. After Indonesia became independent in 1949, 280,000 Dutch people were repatriated to the Netherlands, including 12,000 Moluccans. Between 1965 and 1973, more than 200,000 contract workers arrived from Mediterranean countries. In addition to this, a growing number of Antilleans and Surinamese arrived from previous Dutch colonies in the Caribbean. Finally, the number of political refugees from all over the world showed a steady increase.

Broeder and Extra (1994:68) explain with regards to the limited use of minority home languages as media of instruction in the Netherlands, that although the Ministry of Education in 1993 showed sympathy with a report recommending Home Language Instruction (HLI), the proposed extensions of HLI target groups is as yet restricted to Chinese, Antillean and Surinamese children. Broeder and Extra point out that there is a top-down focus of majority groups (e.g. national or local education authorities, school boards or principals, and majority language teachers) on the acquisition of

Dutch as a second language, most commonly in combination with a rather negative attitude towards first language maintenance over time. On the other hand, there is a bottom-up focus of minority groups (e.g. ethnic minority organisations or parents, and ethnic minority language teachers) on first language learning and maintenance over time. Broeder and Extra say that it is a common Dutch attitude that ethnic minority families should give up their home language and should switch to Dutch, and that ethnic minority children should spend all their energy on second language learning rather than first language maintenance. In this conception, multilingualism is seen as a problem, not a resource.

Broeder and Extra (1994:69-70) are of the opinion that the key to understanding the Dutch attitude towards speakers of minority languages, should be sought in the attitude of many Dutch people in the Netherlands and abroad towards their own language and culture. They quote a study entitled *Het Nederlandse onbehagen* undertaken by Pleij in 1991, that argued that a major characteristic of Dutch identity seems to be the denial of such an identity, in combination with a widely observed lack of cultural self-awareness. A magnifying effect of this attitude can be observed in the attitude towards the language of origin of many Dutch people abroad. Successive population census data in the USA, Canada and Australia have shown that Dutch immigrants in each of these countries are at the top of the list of those ethnic communities who give up their home language to a large extent within one generation, and shift to English. At least in the context of these English dominant immigration countries, the language of origin is apparently not conceived of by many Dutch people as a core-value of cultural identity. They conclude by saying it does not seem to be a senseless claim that the observed attitude of many Dutch people, in the Netherlands and abroad, towards their own language and culture is mirrored in the attitude towards the languages and cultures of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands.

Should the diminished self-reported status of indigenous languages in terms of functional benefits in South Africa not be addressed (as will be discussed in Chapter 4), we might arrive at a point where language is not regarded as a core-value of cultural identity, which in turn, might lead to language death and cultural alienation. It therefore is important that a government, in implementing language policies, should avoid strengthening a potential lack of cultural self-awareness by propagating the use of a sole language as medium of instruction. An extreme example of this phenomenon would be that English becomes the sole medium of

instruction throughout South Africa, to the detriment of other indigenous languages.

Inevitably one arrives at a stage where the above-mentioned deliberations regarding language planning in education need to be put into practice. Bamgbose (1991:64) says that three major questions are involved in the role of language in education: what language? for what purpose? and at which level? Language may be used for three purposes in education: literacy, subject of study, and medium of instruction.

Bamgbose (1991:90) says that to implement changes in education is, however, a tedious and time-consuming exercise, and it rarely happens that governments advance beyond the experimental stage, or even the stage of implementing proposals. He concludes by saying that the slowness of progress is, however, underlined by the large number of countries that still keep to an ex-colonial LWC medium, the few countries (such as Kenya, Zaire and Zambia) that have moved in the opposite direction from a mother-tongue medium to a LWC medium, and finally the innovations (such as the Six Year Primary Project) which have remained at the experimental stage for a long time, with little prospect of becoming a permanent practice.

The cost-implications of supporting multiple languages as media of instruction are furthermore constantly offered as an objection. Lo Bianco (1996:38) uses the following example in this regard, again emphasising the fact that language and economy bear upon each other:

In education it is relevant to consider the better effects of initial instruction in the mother tongue, [...] the achievement rates of Aboriginal children are demonstrably improved when taught on the basis of their first language. I include this matter under the rubric of economics because I think that it is important that we don't close the economy off from human life, and in all the industries referred to earlier we are seeing human relationships and economy coming together.

Following this theoretical investigation into the debate on which languages should be used as languages of instruction, and looking into practical examples of countries that have considered the available options and have implemented some of them (albeit to a varying degree regarding the number of languages to be used), it follows that if multilingual skills and

languages were to be regarded as resources – as was argued in section 2.4 - language-in-education policies should reflect this notion. The Tshwane Metropolitan Council, for example, has the responsibility to elevate the status and advance the use of local indigenous languages, but all the efforts could come to nothing if low standards of examination, inadequate materials, inadequate teacher preparation, and the low prestige of African languages are not addressed by the Department of Education.

## **2.6 Language planning and policy in South Africa**

Having focused the attention on the broader theoretical approaches regarding language planning, language policy, and the implementation of those policies by governments by highlighting research and insights gained locally and in other parts of the world, the current status of language planning within the South African context will be discussed. Since Chapter 5 focuses on developing a local language policy for the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, it is necessary to align the process of local language planning to the broader language-political situation on national and provincial level.

### **2.6.1 A linguistic profile of South Africa**

South Africa possesses a large number of languages, of which eleven are declared as official at national level. These eleven languages are Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga/Shangaan, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Webb (2002:72) points out that these languages overlap demographically and geographically (though there are focal points); they are almost all also spoken in neighbouring states; and they are embedded in the politics of the country. He furthermore emphasises that it is difficult to be precise about the number and identity of the languages of South Africa. Counting languages is a difficult task, for many reasons, such as when is a variety a 'dialect' and when a 'language?', and the version provided of the country's sociolinguistic profile in this chapter can therefore not be seen as definitive.

The sociolinguistic profile of South Africa provided here is sourced from Webb's monograph (2002:72), and his remarks also hold true for this research project. He says that the provision of a sociolinguistic profile is biased in its almost exclusive focus on the official languages. He argues that the reason for this bias is that the speakers of these languages

constitute 99% of the county's total population. The same argument holds true for the exclusive focus on official languages in the research project.

Table 2.1 Speaker statistics by home language for the 11 official languages (1996 census)

	NO.	%		NO.	%
<b>ZULU</b>	9,200,144	22.9	<b>SOTHO</b>	3,104,197	7.7
<b>XHOSA</b>	7,196,118	17.9	<b>TSONGA</b>	1,756,105	4.4
<b>AFRIKAANS</b>	5,811,547	14.4	<b>SWAZI</b>	1,013,193	2.5
<b>PEDI</b>	3,695,846	9.2	<b>VENDA</b>	876,409	2.2
<b>ENGLISH</b>	3,457,467	8.6	<b>NDEBELE</b>	586,961	1.5
<b>TSWANA</b>	3,301,774	8.2			

Source: Census in brief, 1998:10

According to Webb (2002:68), the official languages of the country can furthermore be divided into two major language families. Firstly, there are the indigenous languages, namely the Nguni languages (Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi and Ndebele), the Sotho languages (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Tswana), and Tsonga/Shangaan and Venda, both of which are members of the south-eastern Bantu family, but are classified as neither Nguni or Sotho, standing alone, as it were. The second major language family is the Germanic grouping - Afrikaans and English.

Webb (2002:67) says that according to the Government-appointed LANGTAG Committee (Language Plan Task Group)'s Report, in addition to the eleven official languages, about 70 more languages are used in the country. These include five Khoi and San languages, three indigenous languages (Northern Ndebele, which is not included under 'Ndebele' in the Constitution, Phuthi and Lobedu), 38 indigenous languages spoken by immigrants, migrant labourers and refugees from neighbouring countries, five Indian languages, four Chinese languages, two Eurasian languages, 14 European languages, five religious languages, sign languages, and a variety of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems (AAC systems).

## 2.6.2 The status and progress of language planning and policy implementation in South Africa

This section will focus on the direction, nature and extent of language planning and policy implementation in South Africa. Since the proposed South African Languages Bill has not been released for public comment and cannot be quoted in full, this section relies heavily on insights and

comments from private sources as reported by Webb. He (2002:58-59) describes the events preceding the formulation of the proposed South African Languages Bill as follows:

At the end of 1995, the Government appointed an ad hoc committee to prepare a report on the framework within which a future comprehensive national language policy could be developed. This committee, generally called LANGTAG (Language Plan Task Group), involved the direct participation through a network of sub-committees of about 50 language specialists (linguists, language planners, and language practitioners such as translators, interpreters, lexicographers and terminologists) and dealt with language equity, language development, language as an economic resource, language in education, literacy, language in the public service, heritage languages, sign languages and augmentative communication systems, and language services (in particular translation, interpreting and term-creation). In the course of its work, a number of workshops were held across the country, and the pre-final version of the report was debated at a national conference lasting two days. The final report was presented to the Government in August 1996, and accepted by the Cabinet soon afterwards.

Following the completion of the LANGTAG Report, the task of language policy development was given to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the department which is formally responsible for language service provision and language planning. Over the past four years, this department has been drafting a language policy and plan, and has presented its proposals at a number of workshops.

At the end of March, 2000, DACST arranged a workshop during which a committee specially appointed to prepare a comprehensive national language policy for South Africa presented its proposal. Their proposal was accepted and subsequently formulated as the South African Languages Bill, which has since been presented to the Cabinet for consideration. According to private sources, the Cabinet has requested a further refinement of the bill. The proposed bill has not been released for public comment, and so cannot be quoted in full. Its main proposals can be summarised as follows:

- (a) the national government must use not less than four languages for official work
- (b) these languages must be selected from each of the four categories of official languages on a rotational basis
- (c) the categories of languages are: the Nguni languages (Ndebele, Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu); the Sotho languages (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Tswana); Venda/Tsonga; and Afrikaans/English
- (d) governments at provincial and local levels as well as institutions which perform public functions are subject to the policy provisions of the bill
- (e) the policy is applicable for legislative, executive and judicial functions
- (f) language units have to be established for each department of the national government and each province, which have to implement and monitor policy implementation, conduct language surveys and audits in order to assess existing language policies and practices and to inform the public about the policy, and
- (g) regulations concerning a language code of conduct for public officials have to be produced

The bill also makes provision for intergovernmental co-ordination regarding language policies, legislation and actions relating to the promotion of multilingualism (Webb 2002:58-59).

The proposed bill thus entrenches the notion of multilingualism and compels the national and local governments to assess their existing language policies. It furthermore makes provision for the monitoring of policy implementation.

### 2.6.3 Implications of the proposed South African Languages Bill

Webb (2002:114) says that notwithstanding some impressive achievements, which include their courageous decision to recognise eleven languages as official (reaffirmed in the final Constitution of 1996), the LANGTAG process and the establishment of the Pan South African Language Board, the Government's record in language policy formulation and planning is not very encouraging.

Despite the fact that multilingualism is entrenched in the proposed South African Languages Bill, there is disconcerting evidence of a move to extend the existing preferential treatment of English. This is evident from proposals put forward by parliamentarians, parastatals and the private sector.

According to Webb (2002:114-115) there are a number of general signs that official public life is gradually becoming more unilingual/English. He mentions the following proposals put forward by parliamentarians:

- the proposal in 1998 (since abandoned) by the Speaker of Parliament and the Leader of the Council of Provinces that English be the main language of all forms of parliamentary reporting;
- the proposal by the Portfolio Committee for Defence that English be the only language of the South African National Defence Force (February, 1998); and
- the serious discussion of using only English as the language of record in the court (February, 1998).

Webb (2002:114) further points out decisions made by parastatal bodies, for example:

- the decision by the Post Office to use only English for internal business (April 1998);
- the telecommunication firm Telkom's similar decision in May 1998, the strong bias towards English in the programmes of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's television section; and
- the decision in 2000 by South African Airways to use only English on its international flights.

The private sector, Webb concludes, also made similar decisions:

- the Landbank (now called the Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa) decided in 1997 that English would be its official language, despite the fact that the majority of its staff members were Afrikaans-speaking, and that 80% of its clients were also Afrikaans-speaking;
- the Council of Real Estate Agents made a similar decision in 1997;
- the ABSA banking group (which was and still is primarily Afrikaans) decided in 1997 to use English as language of internal business;
- the editorial board of De Rebus, the official journal of the Society of Lawyers decided in 1997 to switch to English; and
- the official journal of nurses, Nursing World, to use only English as official language in 1997.

A significant discrepancy between the Constitutional language stipulations and actual language practice seems to be emerging in South Africa. On the one hand, use of the indigenous languages are to be promoted on the basis of their equality, on the other hand politicians and the private sector

alike seem to favour a scenario where the use of English receives preferential treatment. Government was officially made aware of this discrepancy. Webb (2002:115-116) points out that the preliminary LANGTAG Report [1996:154-157] even discussed the 'invisibility of the marginalised languages' (in this context the indigenous languages) and thus the denial of access and equity to the speakers of those languages. He goes on to argue that there are a number of reasons for South Africa's (increasing) monolingualism. These include:

- a global tendency towards assimilation and homogenisation;
- the view that a policy of multilingualism will lead to unnecessary translation and interpreting costs;
- the belief that multilingualism will result in ineffective administration;
- the likelihood that most politicians and public administrators are not politically committed to a policy of pluralism; and
- the (unacknowledged) desire to retain the privileges which a knowledge of English guarantees for the benefit of the already privileged.

Against the background that multilingualism should be regarded as an economic resource although its implementation will engender costs - the benefits far outweigh the initial expenditure, as was established in section 2.4; the fact that learners will benefit from mother-tongue instruction - as argued in section 2.5; and finally the fact that the proposed South African Languages Bill compels national and local governments to promote the use of the marginalised indigenous languages, it seems fair to assume that the above-mentioned reasons for turning the proverbial blind eye to increasing monolingualism favouring English are based on emotional, rather than rational deliberations.

Webb (2002:115) concludes by saying that the Government has, of course, expressed concern about increasing monolingualism. But, he says, their concern is not very convincing, as is apparent from the statement by the minister responsible for language policy in April 1998 [ The Citizen, 14 April 1998, p.6 ], i.e., the (former) Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, namely that the official status of languages should not be confused with the use of these languages, and although 11 languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably, this does not mean that they must all be used.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus attention on factors to be considered in the choice and design of a research instrument, on the nature of the data being gathered and on statistical procedures implemented to obtain, validate, and interpret the data. Since the data that was gathered, was sociolinguistic in nature, attention firstly needs to be directed to the methodology of sociolinguistic research in general. More specific detail regarding the history and nature of language attitude research will also be investigated. The chapter will include reference to the design of the specific research instrument employed in this research project (see Addendum A), and discuss how it was applied in the field.

##### 3.1.1 Specific sociolinguistic aims

Besides the general aims of this research project identified in Chapter 1, this study seeks to investigate the following sociolinguistic occurrences:

- language distribution in the areas, more specifically the languages identified by the inhabitants themselves in terms of geographical, demographical and functional usage;
- language proficiency and the occurrence of individual and societal multilingualism;
- linguistic behaviour in terms of language choice and preference
- the instrumental and symbolic significance of the languages used in everyday life in those areas;
- ethnolinguistic identity and the potential for language shift; and
- the perceived status of the respective languages used in those areas.

Since language attitude is one of the sociolinguistic occurrences investigated in this research project, it now becomes necessary to measure the above-mentioned aims against the background of general language attitude studies and related issues regarding research methodology.

With regard to language attitude studies, Baker (1992:29) points out that language attitude is an umbrella term, under which resides a

variety of specific attitudes. For example, research has variously focused on:

- attitude to language variation, dialect and speech style;
- attitude to learning a new language;
- attitude to a specific minority language (e.g. Irish);
- attitude to language groups, communities and minorities;
- attitude to language lessons;
- attitude to the use of a specific language;
- attitude of parents to language learning; and
- attitude to language preference.

Regarding local studies concerning language attitudes, Webb (1992:434-435) reports that a reasonable number of language attitude studies have indeed been performed on South African languages, but he stresses that it is still not possible to speak about this topic with much confidence since the work has a number of shortcomings. Some of these are:

- (a) that the African languages have not been studied extensively, most of the work being on Afrikaans and English;
- (b) that much of the work is rather dated, having been performed 15 years ago. Given the volatile situation in the country, attitudes could have changed quite clearly, especially towards Afrikaans and English;
- (c) that much of the information comes from highly selected groups, and may therefore not represent the language attitudes of the community in general;
- (d) that the research results are not really comparable either because of the methods used (for example questionnaires as against the matched guise technique) or because of the respondents who were used (nation-wide vs. university students, or Whites vs. Blacks); and
- (e) that it is not always clear whether the research managed to elicit information on language attitudes as such (rather than language opinions), what the attitude object was in a particular case, or whether the role of the situational context was always kept in mind.

This research project will address those shortcomings in the following manner:

- (a) indigenous languages and their speakers are the focal point of this study, particularly in their everyday application and the status of those languages;

- (b) the fieldwork was conducted in 1998 - a period that was marked by increasing political stability. The initial uncertainty experienced after the 1994-elections had abided. It is therefore safe to assume that the emotionality surrounding the so-called colonial (English) and oppressive (Afrikaans) languages would have lessened to some extent;
- (c) this research project focuses on a specified geographical location that enables verification and comparison. The respondents were scientifically selected to represent the population of those areas - this issue will be addressed in more detail at a later stage;
- (d) no other study of this nature had been conducted, thus the concern regarding comparison against other research results is not valid at this stage. The aim of this research project is not to compare linguistic groups with one another, but to provide a linguistic profile of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville - areas that represent the majority of Tshwane's (previously known as the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council's) inhabitants; and
- (e) the nature of language attitudes will be investigated in the following section, where concepts such as *attitude* and *opinion*, and their relevance to this study, will be discussed. No single language attitude object has been identified. The research instrument was designed to generate as much data as possible without categorising beforehand. This left the researcher with unbiased results from which scientifically based deductions about language attitudes could be made. The aim is thus to provide a linguistic profile, not to test preconceived hypotheses about language attitudes. The profile will furthermore include reference to situational domains and language preferences.

Since this research project evolves around sociolinguistics and language attitudes, it is important to supply the theoretical background that led to the development of this specialised field of study. The following section will focus on the history of sociolinguistics and language attitude studies.

### **3.2 Sociolinguistic and language attitude history**

Wolck (1986:35) supplies us with the following background information regarding the history and development of sociolinguistics and language attitude studies:

Throughout most of its history, the science of linguistics has considered only 'objective' data, i.e. written records and spoken

utterances offered either spontaneously or gathered through direct, controlled elicitation, as useful source material worthy of analysis and interpretation. The so-called native informant was, ideally, also the naïve informant whose sole function it was to produce utterances *in* the language under investigation. Statements *about* the language, were, at best, tolerated yet seldom encouraged or elicited. It was one of the major innovations and a great accomplishment of the newly developing inter-discipline of sociolinguistics in the 60's to have given respondents' reactions and attitudes to language their proper place as important subjective data side by side with traditional 'objective' data as a more complete basis for our analysis and understanding of the structure and development of human language. William Labov (1966) was one of the first linguists to complement his objective analysis of linguistic variation with speakers' subjective reaction measurements. Language attitude studies proper, however, were brought to prominence by social psychologists, with Wallace Lambert and his Canadian colleagues playing a leading role (1960 and 1966). For most linguists, this was the first introduction to attitude studies in general.

Wolck (1986:36) continues by saying that the relevance of attitude studies has by now become well accepted and established in linguistic research. It is still most obvious as a useful if not necessary complement to other methods of description and analysis. In determining, e.g. language policy, especially educational policy involving language, it is now standard procedure to check out the target population's expectations and desires before making any final plans or major decisions. The problem of language norms or standards, which often arises in the context of language planning and language teaching policies, seems to be irresolvable by mere linguistic or grammatical analysis alone. Particularly in societies into which European languages have been transplanted during the colonial period and where new varieties, often quite distinct from the European model, have since developed, this question is troublesome to educators and language teachers. This question may, in fact, already be one of those where attitude tests could have a final word in deciding the issue.

Wolck (1986:37-38) points out the difficulties regarding the nature of attitude studies as follows:

I would like to mention one rather simple, though frequent misunderstanding or false expectation concerning attitude studies, and one very complicated issue. The first is the popular

confusion of the purpose of attitude studies with the bringing about of attitude change. Suffice it to say that to change or manipulate attitudes three phases of study need to be completed: An existing attitude or set of attitudes has to be identified and described; a different (perhaps more desirable) set of attitudes has to be defined, and a process or procedure outlined to effect the change from the former to the latter. Most attitude studies confine themselves to the first task, i.e. the identification, description and interpretation of attitudes [ ... ]. The second issue [ ... ] is the age-old question of the nature of attitudes.

This research project certainly fits the description of Wolck's first task, as it is not devised to change existing attitudes, but rather to identify and describe them in order to compile a linguistic profile. Once the profile had been completed and problems have been identified, it is the responsibility of decision-makers and language planners to address attitudes that might negatively impact on the society in question.

Since the linguistic profile consists of both basic facts and figures, as well as deductions about language attitudes, it is necessary to define what is understood when discussing language attitudes. Use of the term **attitude** alone generally forces a researcher into entering a semantic minefield - there are probably as many interpretations for this somewhat elusive term as there are researchers, as Wolck pointed out above.

Baker's (1992:10-11) explanation of the term **attitude** will suffice for the purpose of this study:

Attitude is a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour. We all explain behaviour by reference to relatively stable and enduring dispositions in people. Those who spend time by themselves and shun gregariousness may be called shy. Someone who believes in prayer and dislikes profanities may be said to have a favourable attitude to religion. Clearly an attitude to something is not like height, weight or church attendance that can be directly observed and accurately measured. In comparison, attitudes cannot be directly observed. A person's thoughts, processing system and feelings are hidden. Therefore attitudes are latent, inferred from the direction and persistence of external behaviour. Attitudes are a convenient and efficient way of explaining consistent patterns in behaviour. Attitudes often manage to summarise, explain and predict behaviour. Knowing someone's attitude to alcohol, for

example, may sum up likely behaviour in a range of contexts over time.

A number of sociolinguists attempted to define the term **language attitude**, and for the purposes of this discussion, the following definitions are quoted and commented on:

[ ... ] The importance and center-stage relevance of attitude to a network of disciplines has exposed it to language studies. Jurgen (1979:414) notes that 'Language attitudes are taken to be those feelings and subjective manifestations which the individual has towards his own native language as well as towards other contact languages. Language attitudes may or may not be openly manifested [ ... ] (Ioratim-Uba 1995:40).

Ioratim-Uba hereby stresses the fact that subjective feelings enter the equation, and that language attitudes are not necessarily overtly expressed. He goes on by quoting Baker on this issue, with specific mention of the fact that attitudes contain an affective ingredient, although it may not necessarily dictate covert behaviour:

There exists also the danger of confusing language attitudes with such similar terms as 'opinion' and 'motives'. Attempting distinctions between these terms on the one hand and attitudes on the other, Baker (1992:14-15) observes that opinion refers to overt belief without affective reaction. But attitudes contain affective reactions. Opinions are verbalisable, attitudes are not. Regarding surveys, opinion surveys tend to locate community or group preferences, providing indicators of population viewpoints. Attitude surveys focus more on the relationship of attitudes to a variety of other variables, seeking also, to understand human functioning. Both attitudes and motives, Baker notes, may deal with covert pointers to the way latent behaviour emerges, but not exactly in the externalisation of behaviour itself. While motives require impetus, attitudes do not. Motives are goal specific but attitudes are subject specific (Ioratim-Uba 1995:40).

The above-mentioned emphasises the fact that having a certain attitude about something does not imply that the person in question will act in line with that attitude. It might well be possible that s/he acts in a manner totally contradictive to the attitude in question, e.g. Afrikaans-speaking parents on the one hand stating that the use of Afrikaans must be promoted at all cost, while on the other they enroll their children at schools that offer English as medium of instruction.

Fasold (1984:148) says the following about language attitudes:

Language attitudes are distinguished from other attitudes by the fact that they are precisely about language. Some language studies are strictly limited to attitudes toward language itself. [ ... ] Most often, however, the definition of language attitude is broadened to include attitudes towards speakers of a particular language or dialect. An even further broadening of the definition allows all sorts of behaviour concerning language to be treated, including attitudes toward language maintenance and planning efforts [ ... ].

This study then focuses on linguistic behavioural patterns and preferences and touches on attitudes towards the use of other languages in terms of their importance or status as perceived by the residents of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville.

Now that the term **language attitude** has been described more closely, attention will be focused on the internal factors that play a role in the formation of an attitude towards a specific language. Webb (1992:433) quotes Bugarski in this regard:

Language attitudes are essentially social attitudes, or more precisely, linguistic reflections of deep-seated and often only semiconscious sociopsychological perceptions of a territorial, ethnic or social group by speakers representing other groups, and the forces shaping the attitudes are obviously indicators of intergroup relations in a society, as well as indices of potential conflicts in a community.

This research project will indicate whether such intergroup relations do exist in terms of linguistic preferences and ethnicity, or whether such forces are in fact weakening and leaning towards assimilation of a more homogenous linguistic culture where preference is given to the use of specific languages that are perceived to be more functional in their instrumental value.

At this point, another factor that links with the above-mentioned question of potential ethnolinguistic change needs to be considered, namely the question of language loyalty.

Brenzinger's (1990:107) discussion regarding language loyalty relies on Weinreich's definition of this term in formulating his ideas on language loyalty, which is also relevant to this research project:

[ ... ] language loyalty [ ... ] would designate the state of mind in which the language [ ... ], as an intact entity, and in contrast to other languages, assumes a high position in a scale of values, a position in need of being defined.

Brenzinger (1990:107-108) elaborates on this idea by saying that language loyalty is an attitude towards one's own language and becomes prominent in a situation of language contact. Speakers might for example feel the need to defend their languages. The notion of 'defense' implies that speakers experience their language as being threatened in one way or the other. He says that we need to concentrate on situations of language conflict, in which language loyalty arises in response to social pressure in order to resist dominant groups. In such cases, language loyalty is the important force for ensuring the continual transmission of minority languages to the next generation. Language loyalty is then the crucial test for the survival of minority languages.

He concludes by saying that there are some obvious problems in dealing with language loyalty, namely that it is not a measurable parameter, it changes considerably in different contexts and it is basically an individual attitude towards a language, especially for two reasons: the fear of losing one's language and pride in one's own ethnic history. Language loyalty implies in such cases an attempt to resist assimilation and to retain a separate ethnic identity.

This research project will be able to indicate whether assimilation is regarded as a threat to the existing multilingual nature of the communities under investigation, and by implication whether there are indeed signs of linguistic shift towards the use of other languages. The results might also be indicative of the survival chances of African languages in an urbanised setting such as the Tshwane area.

This chapter set out to describe the general and more specific aims of this study against the background of other language attitude studies, and defined some terms that are of relevance to this research project. The following section will highlight methodological considerations that need to be taken into account when setting out to design and implement a scientifically sound research instrument.

### **3.3 Methods of language attitude research**

Various methods exist to determine attitudes about language. Fasold (1984:149) says the following in this regard:

Methods for determining attitudes about language can be either direct or indirect. A totally direct method would require subjects to respond to a questionnaire or interview questions that simply ask their opinions about one or another language. A totally indirect method would be designed to keep the subject from knowing that her language attitudes were being investigated.

Some of these methods that need to be considered as potential research instruments in determining language attitudes include the "matched guise" technique, semantic differential scales, questionnaires, interviews and observation. Each of these methods will be discussed in the following section.

#### **3.3.1 The "matched guise" technique**

Fasold (1984:150) describes the "matched guise" technique as follows:

Fully bilingual speakers are requested to read the same text in two different languages. The two texts (being read by the same reader, but in two different languages) are recorded. The audiotape is edited in such a manner that it seems as if two different speakers actually read the text in two different languages (the same speaker will thus not read the translated text directly after the original one). This causes the respondent to forget the voice quality of the respective speakers and prevents them to react on individual voice quality. The respondents are thus lead to believe that they have listened to twice as many speakers than they in actual fact have listened to.

The respondents are then requested to judge the speakers in terms of certain characteristics such as intelligence, socio-economic class and temperament. This could be described as a direct method since the respondents are explicitly asked to comment on the characteristics of the respective speakers. It could, however, also be described as indirect, since they are requested to comment on the speakers, not on the languages, and they are not aware that the same speakers are involved. The researcher hereby gains information on the respondents' language attitudes, since all the other factors are being controlled.

### 3.3.2 Semantic differential-scale

Fasold (1984:150) notes that this method is often used along with the "matched guise" technique. It entails a scale that indicates direct opposites with a number of underlined spaces in between. If the audiotaped speaker sounds extremely unfriendly, a mark is placed directly beside the word unfriendly. The reverse occurs when the speaker is judged to sound very friendly. The interpretation involves the researcher coding the scale, e.g. unfriendly = 1, and friendly = 7. A number of respondents may for example place their marks at 4, which would indicate a neutral disposition regarding the relevant characteristic. After all the respondents' data had been analysed, the researcher is able to interpret it.

### 3.3.3 Questionnaires

Smit (1985:155) defines the term questionnaire as an instrument through which a person reports about himself, in other words answering a number of questions about his/her current and previous habits, feelings, and attitudes.

Fasold (1984:152) says that questionnaires can have one of two types of questions: *open* or *closed*. Open questions give the respondent maximum freedom to present her views, but also allow her to stray from the subject and are very difficult to score. In an open-question questionnaire, respondents may be asked: 'Describe your reactions to this speaker' after they have heard a taped sample. In a closed-question, the respondent is given a particular format to use in recording responses. Apart from the semantic differential, other closed-question formats involve yes-no answers, multiple choice, or ranking schemes. Closed questions are much easier for respondents to deal with and are easy to score, but they force respondents to answer in the researcher's terms instead of their own. Perhaps the ideal compromise is to conduct pilot research with open questions and to use the results to construct a closed-question questionnaire.

A questionnaire was developed as research instrument to serve the purposes of this specific study (see Addendum A). It, however, consists of both open and closed questions to minimise the above-mentioned disadvantages of using only one type of question and to maximise the above-mentioned advantages of both types by employing the use of both open and closed questions. This issue will be dealt with in detail at a later stage.

Gibbons points out the advantages of a questionnaire:

[ ... ] The usefulness of questionnaires in any kind of social survey is that they produce data of a comparable nature from a large number of individuals; such data becomes comparable as the questions and the range of responses becomes more standardised (Robinson 1996:76).

#### 3.3.4 Interviews

As this study involves both open- and closed questions, it also possesses characteristics of an interview.

Robinson (1996:71-72) describes the difference between an interview and a questionnaire as follows:

Interviews are often contrasted with questionnaires in the way in which they permit the collection of information and in the kind of information they provide. The main difference between the two is the open-ended nature of the questions which may be put in an interview, but which is more difficult to incorporate into a structured questionnaire.

[ ... ] The wide-ranging information of an open-ended interview provides clues to questions for later questionnaires and to statements to be used in attitude scaling.

Fasold (1984:152) points out some advantages and disadvantages regarding interviews. He explains that interviews are like open-question questionnaires without the questionnaire. A fieldworker would personally ask attitude questions and record the responses in written (or tape recorded) form as the subject responds orally. The burden of recording open questions is removed from the subject, making it easier to elicit open responses, and the interviewer can guide the conversation if the subject tends to stray from the point. The major disadvantage in interviewing is that it is extremely time-consuming and expensive. It takes a fieldworker longer to conduct one interview than to administer 50 or 100 questionnaires in a group session.

#### 3.3.5 Observation

Fasold (1984:152) defines observation as follows:

Observation refers to the recording of people's activities by the researcher as he watches them.

Observation is considered to be the best technique to gather naturalistic data, as in the case of psychological, anthropological, or ethnographical studies. Behaviourists, for example, would use observation techniques for their case studies. They would observe a subject's conduct and deduce from those observations what the subject's attitude would be. Disadvantages of this method of gathering data include that the process is time-consuming and results might be difficult to validate due to possible subjective interpretation inherent to the process of deducing attitudes from behaviour.

### **3.4 Statistics**

#### **3.4.1 Statistical approach**

Researchers in general are confronted with various options to be considered regarding the statistical approach they choose to follow. The sociolinguistic domain is no exception, and issues vary from as wide a range as formulating hypotheses, the nature of the data to be collected, how to collect the data, and finally how to interpret the results.

Robinson (1996:53) says the following in this regard:

At the outset of any scientific inquiry, decisions about what data to collect will depend on the purpose they are to serve; having sought to define a problem, we seek to define the kind of data which should shed further light on it and test the initial hypothesis about it.

Regarding the initial hypothesis mentioned above, it should again be noted that the purpose of this research project was to draw up a profile of the sociolinguistic realities of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, thus the approach varied somewhat from more traditional approaches. No hypotheses were formulated in advance as the research set out to gather as much data as possible. After interpretation of the data had taken place, certain generalisations were formulated that were subjected to statistical tests in order to comment on the linguistic realities of the areas in question. The basic statistical point of departure, however, does not deviate from general statistical considerations and therefore needs to be investigated more thoroughly.

A survey of the literature regarding to the history of statistical approaches within the sociolinguistic domain, reveals that there is an ongoing debate about the role of statistical methods. Robinson (1996:64) points out that the debate is frequently formulated in terms of the qualitative/quantitative contrast though more recently quantitative methods have been set against what are called holistic approaches. In the sociolinguistics of the Labovian school a statistical approach is well established as a basic tool, particularly where instances of certain phonetic realisations are counted. Such an approach is said to become more problematic when topics such as code switching are examined, since the question of what to count becomes rather complex and involves interpretation before any numbers are generated.

Robinson (1996:64) says that the analysis of language use in its social context moved away from statistical methods towards anthropological and ethnographic methods. Sociolinguists commonly use anthropological techniques such as observation and interviews. These have resulted in deductive conclusions largely without statistical evidence.

Gibbons highlights some of the advantages which statistical analysis could bring to the sociolinguistic domain:

Since ethnographic data analysis is essentially discursive there are no quantifiable empirical data as evidence of correspondence between linguistic and social elements. ... However, numerical data analysis does permit replication and the resolution of conflicts over interpretations of data, while in many cases ethnographic analysis does not. Ethnographic analyses, because of their discursive nature, also render very difficult comparison between different sets of data – in the case of sociolinguistics, comparisons between speech communities (Robinson 1996:65).

The above-mentioned issues clearly manifest themselves in the following debate surrounding quantitative versus qualitative approaches. Since these issues had to be considered with regard to the methodological approach chosen in this research project, it is important to highlight the main issues involved in this debate.

#### 3.4.2 Quantitative versus qualitative

In the process of considering more general differences between the two approaches, a few obvious advantages and disadvantages are revealed.

The quantitative approach ensures to a great extent that the data that has been gathered, can be controlled, analysed and verified by means of statistical procedures. A disadvantage is that structural limitations are imposed on the way in which respondents can react to questions in a questionnaire (an example of a quantitative research instrument). End-results may thus not reflect reality as effectively as in the case of open-ended interviews.

Another advantage of the quantitative approach is that a large number of respondents can be involved by the quick distribution and effective gathering of completed questionnaires. It also ensures clear answers, whereas interviews, being the most common qualitative measuring instrument, leaves room for potential subjective interpretation, bias, and personality factors that might have an influence on the results. Personal interviews are more time-consuming, especially in the training of fieldworkers, and the practical implication might be that fewer respondents can be involved in the study, especially when working within a given timeframe.

An advantage of the qualitative approach is that the interviewer can gather more detailed information as that would have been possible in the case of a rigidly structured questionnaire.

Cross discusses the advantages of the quantitative approach:

Numbers clearly separate data from interpretation: it is not hard to argue that published statistics have been wrongly interpreted or that a different reading is just as possible. On the other hand, it can be difficult or impossible to argue a qualitative interpretation. It is probably still true that a batch of numbers, collected in a way that has been discussed and explained, is more open to attack or defence than a proposition with its roots in an individual reading of experience - especially someone else's experience (Hugo 1990:28).

Hugo (1990:28) continues by saying that if the results are open to informed criticism, it is probably safe to let numbers generate insight on a level complementary to that of experience. In the case where the researcher's personal experience does not answer the question(s) he wants to ask, a sound numerical analysis is worth trying.

He concludes with the following:

In this sense, numbers may still be more objective: when experience is not enough, they can offer a new angle based on measurable external factors. Objectivity can be pursued even if it can't be captured, and where it can be legitimately claimed, precision is a virtue. Ideally, numerical studies should pretend to do less than qualitative studies - they offer less, but that less can therefore be more focused and precise (1990:28).

The above-mentioned section revealed the complex nature of the debate surrounding the choice of a research instrument. With regard to this research project, a variety of complementary data collection methods were employed in order to obtain a wide range of information that could be subjected to statistical testing.

In the previous section emphasis was placed on terminology relevant to this study and a general discussion on methodological approaches took place. Attention will now be focused on the design and implementation of the specific research instrument that was developed for the purposes of this research project.

### **3.5 The research instrument**

The methodological approach to this research project can be described as a triangular approach, or more precisely, a process of inter-methodological cross-validation. Inter-methodological cross-validation is defined by Mouton and Marais (1992:92-93) as one of the methods used to decrease the accumulative effect of interference on variables - thereby promoting the validity of the research results. The triangular approach manifested itself through a process where the gathering, analysis, and verification of the research results took place against (1) the background of extensive literature study (Chapter 2), as well as the implementation of both (2) quantitative (interpretation and analysis of numerical data) and (3) qualitative methods (questionnaire format resembling a structured interview).

If the advantages of the quantitative and qualitative approaches highlighted in the previous section are taken into account, the reason for favouring inter-methodological cross-validation as point of departure for the research methodology of this research project becomes clear.

The aim of the research instrument was to generate numbers that could be quantified, analysed, verified and interpreted. The numbers that were generated were the result of both open and closed questions as

they had been formulated in the questionnaire. Fasold (1984:85-91) formulates this notion in the following manner:

In brief, statistics provides the researcher with a way of finding out what his observations mean, using numbers.

In order to generate, quantify and interpret numbers by means of a research instrument, it is necessary to fully comprehend the following fundamental aspects: Population, sample, variables, and quantification. In the following section each aspect will be discussed against the background of the study in question.

Sankoff says that the need for good data imposes on the researcher three different kinds of decision to make about sampling procedures. These are as follows:

- to define the sampling universe. That is, to delineate, at least roughly, the boundaries of the group or community in which one is interested. An adequate sample frame, which investigates group members, may then be sought;
- to assess the relevant dimensions of variation within the community – this involves constructing stratification for the sample. Thus, we must ask whether ethnic group, gender, or social class of speaker might affect the kind of language used. Most studies so far have shown that to a very great extent they do, as does situational context; and
- the sample size needs to be fixed (Milroy 1987:21).

The first decision mentioned above implies the definition of the population under investigation, as well as selecting a sample that should represent the population in question. These issues will be discussed once the decision regarding sample size was addressed:

### 3.5.1 Sample size

At this stage, it needs to be pointed out that this research project can only represent an example of the kind of information that should be considered when engaging in the process of language planning and policy formulation. It could also provide a basis for projections and comparison as far as the sociolinguistic profiles of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi are concerned. Similar language audits need to be undertaken on the other areas under the jurisdiction of the Tshwane Metropolitan Council in order to arrive at a complete sociolinguistic profile of the whole area. This research project was undertaken with a

small sample size of 300 respondents. Prof. Hendrik Stoker of the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria was consulted in this regard and it was decided that a minimum of 150 respondents from Mamelodi and Atteridgeville respectively would have to be interviewed in order to formulate and test hypotheses that might emanate from the data. This research project was furthermore undertaken with minimal financial resources, and within a limited time-frame.

In this light, and although the utmost care had been taken in terms of statistical representativeness and accuracy, this research project should be regarded as an investigative pilot project, the direction of which might hopefully be followed by decision-makers in the language planning arena.

In determining the size of the sample group, a few practical limitations had to be considered. All sociolinguistic research projects conducted in Africa are confronted with similar considerations. Robinson (1996:75) says the following with regard to a sociolinguistic study conducted in rural Cameroon:

In developing questionnaires in the social sciences it is frequently assumed that a large number of people will be surveyed (100's) and that trials will take place with 30-60 people. This is impossible in rural Cameroon since it would presuppose people who are literate, could fill in their own questionnaire, could respond quickly and easily to written or oral questions, could understand and accept the scientific motivation of the researcher, and who were open and answered straightforwardly.

As this research project focuses on previously disadvantaged areas, the above-mentioned assumptions would be proven entirely false within the context of this study. It is, for example, fair to assume that the population in question would in fact reflect varying degrees of literacy, and that submitting written questionnaires was out of the question. Fieldworkers had to be trained to deal with the above-mentioned limitations - this issue will be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

To further substantiate the decision made in consultation with Prof. Stoker regarding the sample size of 300, the following comments from Sankoff (Milroy 1987:21) might shed further light on the subject: Sankoff notes, as do many linguists, that large samples tend not to be as necessary for linguistic surveys as for other surveys. This is apparently because linguistic behaviour is more homogenous than many

types of behaviour studied by surveys – such as, for example, dietary or television programme preferences.

Sankoff says the following about sample size:

[ ... ] the literature, as well as our own experience, would suggest that even for quite complex communities samples of more than about 150 individuals tend to be redundant, bringing increasing data-handling problems with diminishing analytical returns. It is crucial, however, that the sample be well chosen, and representative of all social subsections about which one wishes to generalise (Milroy 1987:21).

Representativeness of the population is an issue that depends on sampling procedures. The following section addresses the first decision mentioned in the process of generating good data, namely defining and selecting a sample from a given population.

### 3.5.2 Population

The population represents the group of people that the researcher is interested in (or more specifically, a set of numerical values associated with this group). The population under investigation in this study is the inhabitants of the so-called "townships" Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, two urbanised areas respectively situated towards the east and the west of Pretoria that form part of the Tshwane area. The reasons for focusing on the Pretoria area can be motivated as follows:

- Pretoria's status as administrative capital of the country. In this sense it is being regarded as a national and international focal point, especially in the light of an ongoing debate that might see the relocation of parliament offices from Cape Town to Pretoria.
- From a historical point of view, Pretoria has a rich sociocultural past that can be traced from its founding, right through the apartheid-era up to the democratic elections in 1994, and finally the present.
- The linguistic character of Pretoria can be described as heterogeneous. This allows for dynamic interaction at all levels of community life.
- Practical considerations include that the researcher is studying at the University of Pretoria and had previously been employed by both the Afrikaans Department of the University of Pretoria as well as the Centre For Research in the Politics of Language (CentRePoL). These factors ensured direct access to relevant

information, academic departments, public institutions, and expertise. The costs inherent to such a research project had been minimalised to a great extent by easy access to the above-mentioned resources.

### 3.5.3 Sampling procedure

Having identified the population under investigation as the inhabitants of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, it is obvious that, due to practical limitations such as costs, a given timeframe etc., it would be impossible to study the whole population by means of interviewing each individual. These factors warranted the selection of a sample group.

A sample exists of a small group of people that represent the population and that could be thoroughly investigated. In order for this projection to be successful, the sample should represent a micro-cosmos of the population as a whole. To ensure that the sample represents the population of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville as a whole, a random sampling technique was used.

Smit (1985:178-183) says that according to the theory of random sampling each element, member, or unit of the population should have an equal chance of being coincidentally included in the sample group. Each element has an equal chance to be either included or excluded in the (random) sample group - this implies that the probability of selection is known.

With regard to the sample selection of this study, the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics guided and supervised the sampling procedure. The sampling procedure entailed the following:

- Computer-generated maps were obtained from the Tshwane municipality's IT Department. These maps indicate the general layout of the two areas in terms of all the main roads and streets. All developed stands are numbered.
- These maps, however, do not distinguish between residential and commercially developed stands. For the purpose of this study, formal and informal residential stands needed to be identified. Aerial photographs supplied by the Tshwane municipality's Cartography Unit solved this problem. These photographs were linked together to form a visual picture of the two respective areas that indicates where the residential areas are situated. The corresponding stands were marked on the above-mentioned computer-generated maps.

- All these stands were manually counted, and according to the density of the residential areas, every  $n$  stand was marked to arrive at a total of 150 households in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville respectively. Based on the principles of a stratified random sampling as discussed by George W. Snedecor and William G. Cochran (1967:11), a random sample of each neighbourhood was drawn with a size proportional to the number of households in that neighbourhood. Overall, each household still had an equal chance to be selected, but the sample was constructed to contain a specified number from every neighbourhood. The advantage is that the sample is spread more uniformly over the whole area, retaining the principal of randomness within each neighbourhood.
- Having selected the households, the person to be interviewed within that household had to be identified. To cater for varying household sizes, a sampling protocol developed by Professor H. Stoker from the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria was followed to select the specific person in the household to be interviewed.

#### 3.5.4 Variables

The first and third decisions in the process of generating good data, namely the sample size and sampling procedure, have been addressed at this stage. The second decision mentioned is the assessment of the relevant dimensions of variation within the community. Thus, it must be asked, for example, whether ethnic group, gender, or social class of speaker might affect linguistic preference.

Dimensions of variation (or variables) within a community are either dependent, or independent. Characterising variables as dependent or independent depends on each individual research study. In this case, the following independent variables were identified: Age, gender, home language, education, employment status and residential status. The purpose of the study was to establish to what extent the independent variables (personal data) mentioned above have an influence on dependent variables. Dependent variables in this study could be characterised as the languages spoken in the areas under investigation, language competence, the situational contexts these languages are used in, and the perceived status of the respective languages.

The researcher was therefore interested in dependent variables, since surmises that had been formulated after the data had been decoded was tested to establish whether independent variables indeed had an influence upon dependent variables. The data thus sought to establish

within this particular sociolinguistic context whether personal characteristics such as age, education, etc. (independent variables) could be related to dependent variables such as language preference, status of the respective languages, and language competence; and if relative importance may be attached to these links in terms of language attitudes.

In this discussion on variables, attention was focused on the nature of variables. The more specific aims of the study were narrowed down further, namely to investigate potential links between dependent and independent variables in order to arrive at certain conclusions regarding language attitudes. In the following section the choice of dependent and independent variables for the purposes of this particular study will be discussed and measured against the background of similar language attitude surveys.

#### 3.5.4.1 Independent variables

In discussing independent variables that were selected for the purposes of this study, attention will be focused on previous research conducted on attitudes towards the Welsh language in Wales where the population is exposed to a bilingual situation where both English and Welsh (the latter being the home language of the respondents) are used in everyday life.

Baker, in investigating the origin of language attitudes, implies that independent variables can be regarded as determinants of language when he says the following with regard to the Welsh study:

[ ... ] research [ ... ] may illuminate the determinants of attitude to a language. [ ... ] No model, or even lists of factors that may make up attitude to a language has appeared to have been drawn up. Therefore this section starts with a list of possible ingredients located separately by previous Welsh research. It then concludes by suggesting how those ingredients may be combined into an overall model that seeks to predict attitude favourability or unfavourability (1989:41).

Since the following independent variables, or determinants to language attitudes, bear relevance to this research project, they will be commented on in the following section:

(a) Age

Baker (1989:41) states that one consistent finding from research on attitudes to the Welsh language is that positive attitudes decline with age. He says in this regard that W.R. Jones (1949,1950), Sharp et al. (1973) and E.P. Jones (1982) all found an inverse relationship – as age goes up, favourability of attitude comes down.

Age of the respondents was therefore selected as one of the independent variables in this research project to try and establish, for example, whether age is a determinant of a positive disposition towards preference to the English language as opposed to other indigenous languages.

(b) Gender

In this regard, Baker (1989:42) mentions that W.R. Jones (1949,1950), Sharp et al. (1973) and P. Jones (1982) all found that girls had more favourable attitudes to Welsh than boys. He says that it is unlikely that the difference is biological or maturational. The reasons for the difference are presumably located in the socio-cultural behaviours of the two genders, and in the kind of individual differences that may exist at any point in history between girls and boys.

This research project, for example, will indicate whether male and female respondents express a difference in attitude toward the perceived status of the respective languages.

(c) Level of education

Another question that was raised in this study is whether the level of education has an influence on language preference. Do illiterate respondents differ in their attitude toward, for example, what the medium of instruction should be in primary and secondary schools? Could the level of education therefore be regarded as a determinant for language attitude?

A related issue is the question of language preference and language ability. Baker (1989:43) says that there is considerable evidence that ability in a language and attitude to that language are linked. Does favourable attitude lead to enhanced achievement? Or does greater attainment and proficiency suggest that attitudes positively affect achievement? Attitudes and achievement may be both the cause and effect of each other. He concludes by saying that in a cyclical, spiral

relationship, one builds on the other – in an upward or downward relationship.

This assumption will also be tested. For example - does it mean that if a respondent is highly proficient in reading, understanding and speaking a specific language, such as Northern Sotho, that s/he would automatically perceive the status of Northern Sotho to be higher in its instrumental function as medium of instruction than, for example, English or Afrikaans?

(d) Home language

Since the notion "mother-tongue" is somewhat problematic in the previously disadvantaged areas under investigation, the term *home language* was decided on to indicate the language the respondent grew up with. Many children that grew up in so-called townships or rural areas were not brought up by their biological mothers. More often than not they were left in the care of relatives or friends while the mothers were working, for example, as a full-time domestic servants in affluent neighbourhoods, or the mothers found other employment in the cities in order to raise money for their families. According to tradition, especially in rural areas, children are also often brought up to speak the language of their biological fathers. The term home language was therefore adopted to indicate the language by means of which initial cognitive development occurred, i.e. the language the respondent grew up with.

Home language is being regarded as an independent variable in this research project, and it was investigated in terms of language preference and status in order to establish whether respondents' attitudes were more favourable toward their home languages than toward other languages.

(e) Residential status

Another independent variable was the respondents' residential status, i.e. how long they have been living in Mamelodi or Atteridgeville. Only permanent residents qualified for the purposes of this study. Questions to be answered included, for example, whether the duration of a respondent's residence in the area has an influence on his/her language preferences, and whether they perceive the languages spoken in those areas to have a higher status than other indigenous languages of the country.

(f) Religion

Baker (1989:45) says that E.P. Jones's (1981) research found that attitude to Welsh, in particular a decline in a positive attitude to Welsh over the ages 10 to 13, was mostly linked to resistance to participate in various cultural activities such as the attendance of Welsh religious services, reading in Welsh etc.

The respondents in this research project were also asked what their religious affiliation is (as an independent variable) and they were asked to indicate the languages that are used during church services (to establish whether a link exists between religious denomination and the use of specific languages).

At this stage, six independent variables have been identified that bear relevance to this study, namely age, gender, education, home language, residential status and religion. The data gathered for the purposes of this research project thus sought to establish whether the above-mentioned personal characteristics (independent variables) could be related to dependent variables such as language preference, status of the respective languages, and language competence; and if relative importance may be attached to these links in terms of language attitudes. The attention will now be directed to the dependent variables.

#### 3.5.4.2 Dependent variables

As mentioned above, the data sought to establish within this particular sociolinguistic context whether independent variables as discussed in the section above could be related to dependent variables.

In referring to the social functions of language, Ammon (1989:15-16) touches on what would be referred to as dependent variables for the purposes of this study. Dependent variables were investigated within certain situational contexts, such as language preference within the family unit, amongst friends, at the church, etc. Ammon says the following in this regard:

[ ... ] each language fills a number of social functions. These are the ones which concern us here. [ ... ] the function of a language is what it is used for – not its potential, but its use.

Some functions are, of course, more important than others – important, that is, language-wise. If a language is used in an

activity that must go on for several hours each day – radio broadcasting, schooling, buying and selling, it uses more language than one that takes up less than an hour a week of most people’s time – activities like church services, for example. It is evident that the domains of language use cannot, as some have done, be given equal weight.

On the operational criterion of amount of use, we can divide language functions into three categories: work functions, leisure functions and service functions, each of which must be further divided into domains like school, church, office and the like (1989:15).

The following section will focus attention on the above-mentioned three social functions identified by Ammon, and comment on the extent to which these social functions have been investigated in this study.

(a) Work functions

Ammon (1989:15) says that the importance of a function depends: i) on the difference between compulsory (necessary) activities and optional ones, and ii) on the duration of these activities. That is why some of the most important language functions reside in the work domain, work here defined broadly as what people – not just wage earners – do for a living. This includes students, housewives and even job seekers.

These necessary activities differ from such optional activities as attending church, sports, watching television, listening to the radio, attending clubs and social functions and the like. Since such activities are optional, the choice of activity may determine the language used, and vice versa. In multilingual societies, a person may have to work in one language but may select a leisure activity which allows one to relax in the language of the home rather than in that of the work place.

Ammon concludes by saying that in work-orientated societies the working language tends to build up status above that of the home language. If one cannot work in one’s home language, that language will lack the status of a work language. No matter what the linguistic status or potential of the home language, through lack of use as a language of work and lack of development it will eventually be seen as unfit to be used as a language of work.

One of the questions in the questionnaire establishes what the respondents do for a living. We can accept that respondents employed in the formal sector, as well as students, are exposed to English and Afrikaans at the workplace or at an educational institution. The reason for exposure to English and Afrikaans is that they are historically the languages that business and education are conducted in, and it was necessary to establish whether this reality has any influence on language preference.

(b) Leisure functions

Ammon (1989:16) says the following in this regard:

Whether any single leisure function takes as much time as the language of work may depend on the structure of the society. The affluent society tends to provide more leisure time; but so do the most primitive (sic) societies. The weighting of any leisure function must depend on the type of society in which it operates. In multilingual societies the language of leisure is often different from the language of work.

As stated above, it can be accepted that in most cases the respondents are confronted with other languages in the workplace, and the study thus also investigates which languages are used socially. In terms of language preference, for example the preferred medium of instruction, it is important to indicate whether the work function has more weight than the leisure function within multilingual societies such as Mamelodi and Atteridgeville.

(c) Service functions

Ammon (1989:16) regards services from the point of view of the recipient; for the supplier, service may be considered as work. Consumer activities include such functions as shopping, paying bills, attending community meetings, church services and the like. He points out that although these activities may be important in themselves, they may use up far less language time than do daily leisure activities. Filling out income tax returns may be important, even indispensable, but the frequency and exposure to a language may be minimal compared to watching television for a few hours every evening.

Although these service functions take up less language time, their importance should not be underestimated. Data gathered by means of the questionnaire will thus also reveal which languages are, for

example, used in church (as opposed to the independent variable regarding religious affiliation), while attending community meetings, or conducting necessary consumer activities such as shopping or visiting a hospital/clinic.

At this stage the dimensions of variation (or variables) within the community under investigation have been identified and characterised as being either dependent, or independent. Attention will now be focused on data handling techniques and the methods used to interpret the data gathered by the research instrument.

### 3.5.5 Data handling and interpretation

In a previous section, the considerations regarding the choice of a statistical approach was discussed, and it was said that issues vary from as wide a range as formulating hypotheses (in this case deducing hypotheses to be tested), the nature of the data to be collected (dependent and independent variables), how to collect the data (the questionnaire), and finally how to interpret the results. Saville-Troike makes the following observation:

Research design must allow an openness to categories and modes of thought and behaviour which may not have been anticipated by the investigator (Robinson 1996:59).

The specific research instrument developed for the purposes of this research project was designed to generate data that allowed openness in its interpretation.

This section thus concerns itself with the issue of interpreting the results after data collection had taken place. Fasold (1984:90-91) says the following in this regard:

When the characteristics of a population, or its sample, have been appropriately measured, we are interested in aspects of the distribution of the scores. By distribution, we simply mean how many members of the population or sample group, got each of the scores up and down the scale.

In order to interpret the data, it has to be presented in a manageable format that represents the distribution of the scores. Sceptics may argue that reducing attitudes to numerical values is not acceptable or desirable, but in agreement with Robinson the following argument is offered:

[ ... ] the point of many statistical procedures is to reduce a variable under study, or a relationship between variables to a single number or to a range of comparable numbers. To do this requires, to a greater or lesser degree, a simplification of the issues so that they can become either a yes/no, a 0/1 type of response, or a point on a countable scale. How far is it possible to encapsulate language choice, attitudes to languages, [ and ] relationships between these [ ... ] factors in such reduced and countable form? All of the variables depend also on other elements, and both variables and other elements are all functions of human behaviour and relationships (1996:65-66).

For the purposes of this research project, answers given by respondents were coded as follows: The questionnaires were formatted according to criteria specified by the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria (see Addendum A). The format required an empty block in the right hand margin of the page beside each question that had to be filled in by the researcher according to the answer the fieldworker had recorded in the space provided on the questionnaire whilst conducting the interview. A value of "1" was recorded by the researcher if the fieldworker indicated "Afrikaans", or "2" for English, and "3" for Zulu, etc. This process is repeated for each questionnaire. Since the questionnaire includes questions based upon the semantic differential scale that also uses numerical values, the researcher had to ensure that the numerical values generated by the two scales were not confused and incorrectly interpreted.

The data were thus coded to represent nominal values, except for such predetermined scales as age groups and educational levels. Relationships between dependent and independent variables identified in a previous section were investigated in order to discover significant patterns of language preference, status and instrumental value.

After the answers given by respondents were coded as described in the above-mentioned section, the data that had been collected were statistically analysed in order to establish the distribution of the scores. Based upon the distribution and interpretation of the scores, the researcher formulated certain hypotheses that were subjected to statistical tests in order to establish whether those hypotheses were true. This process is in line with what Robinson (1996:66) describes as the more common situation in the social sciences where the above-mentioned inter-relationship between two or more categorisations [or variables] is examined. He continues by saying that it is needed to determine not simply whether a statistical relationship holds between

attributes, but also what the strength of that relationship is. Many problems concerning relationships between attributes can be dealt with by the chi-square test.

Where relevant, chi-square testing and correlation were done by the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics. This approach taken with regard to formulating hypotheses resembles the use of techniques developed and applied by John Tukey's exploratory statistics. Milroy (1987:138) says in this regard that researchers have noted that many data-handling techniques depend upon assumptions, which are hardly ever met in the social and behaviour sciences. Data are often dirty, containing errors and gaps, and sociolinguistic data have similar characteristics. The problem has arisen in the social sciences because classical statistics were originally developed to meet the requirements of the natural sciences and reflect a deductive style of hypothesis development, which is not suitable for exploring dirty data in the context of amorphous and incomplete theories. It was to fill this need that John Tukey developed his *exploratory* statistics.

Milroy (1987:138) explains that the general purpose of exploratory statistics is, as the name suggests, helping investigators to take a good look at patterns in data and to search around for ideas about the form these patterns take. The techniques are quick and simple to use and learn, intuitive and visually appealing, and resistant to errors and flukes. One feature of Tukey's techniques is the degree of insight they give into the data. By displaying numbers in a simple and visually revealing way such as, for example, the graph/table hybrid known as 'stem and leaf', it is possible to see obvious patterns quickly and focus harder on more puzzling aspects of the data. Exploratory statistics might reasonably be described as highly systematised common sense.

After hypotheses were formulated, they had to be tested or confirmed. Milroy (1987:139) says the following in this regard:

Having used exploratory techniques to 'ransack' the data, the idea is then to generate hypotheses which can be tested using *confirmatory* statistics. These correspond to the data-analysis tools of classical statistics described in most statistics textbooks, but are recommended by Tukey for use only when an *explicit hypothesis* has been formulated. This will emerge from extensive application of a range of exploratory techniques, and such a procedure is particularly important prior to using one of the computer packages designed for confirmatory statistics.

Exploratory techniques are extremely well fitted to sociolinguistic research. Since sociolinguistics is full of incomplete theories and unanswered questions, it is often more important to find ways of thoroughly searching the data for different types of patterns than to generate hypotheses which might well be premature.

As described above, the data collected for this research project were ransacked by employing exploratory techniques to generate hypotheses that were subjected to confirmatory statistic procedures in order to test or confirm them. Since this research project aims to provide a linguistic profile of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, a lot of figures and percentages derived from the basic data were also provided.

As a final thought in this regard, the researcher agrees with Robinson (1996:66) who says that in a study where a large number of parameters must be considered, such statistical procedures, and the evidence they produce, do not stand alone. They are to be seen as complementary to the insights which more anthropological techniques, such as structured interviews in this particular case, generate. He concludes by saying that statistics provide one more way of understanding a sociolinguistic situation and may not be regarded, at least in this kind of study, as the pillars of irrefutable proof on which the argument stands.

Now that all aspects surrounding the development of the research instrument and the interpretation of the data had been discussed, attention will be directed towards the manner in which the questionnaire developed for this study was handled in the field.

### **3.6 Fieldwork**

At this stage the data collection method has been identified as a questionnaire that exists of both closed- and open-ended questions, thus combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches of which the advantages and disadvantages have been discussed. It has been established that the open-ended questions resemble characteristics of the structured interview. Robinson (1996:60) says the following in this regard:

If we adopt a range of different and complementary data collection methods whose scope is defined by the research objectives, we will still need to take into account the general and

practical limits imposed by the particular context in which the research is to be conducted (1996:60).

Robinson (1996:60) mentions the following general and practical limitations:

- accessibility of the area;
- the time available for fieldwork;
- the availability of assistants; and
- the level of education of the population.

The following sections will indicate how these considerations were addressed in terms of this particular research project.

### 3.6.1 Accessibility of the area

The areas under investigation were identified as Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, two so-called townships respectively situated towards the east and west of the Tshwane area. Since these areas are in general deemed to be rather inaccessible to outsiders, it was decided that fieldworkers would be sourced from within the respective areas.

The fact that the fieldworkers were sourced from within those areas had a few advantages. Firstly, the fieldworkers were allocated households in close proximity to where they themselves reside which limited travelling expenses. Since a specific inhabitant of a household had to be selected in line with the sampling protocol discussed earlier, it could happen that the specific individual that was to be interviewed, was not at home at the time of the fieldworker's arrival at that household. This necessitated fieldworkers to return to that household to conduct their interviews - in some cases at night. The fact that the fieldworkers reside in the areas in question made return visits easier, less expensive, and less time-consuming.

### 3.6.2 The availability of assistants

Robinson (1996:73) points out that there are two constraints that need to be considered in selecting fieldworkers, namely:

[ ... ] the central question is - who will actually carry out the interview? It is preferable that the interviewer be a member of the in-group [ ... ] because of two constraints. The first is [ ... ] the danger of undue influence by the outside researcher on linguistic data. [ ... ] The second constraint is, obviously, the

need for fluency in the language so that the interaction of the interview can be sustained. The interviewer, insider or outsider, needs to be aware also of the danger of setting up asymmetrical power relationships between him/herself and the interviewee, whether intentionally or as a result of questioning techniques which are too direct.

In addressing the above-mentioned constraints, it was decided that fieldworkers were to be sourced from Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. Fieldworkers who originate from those areas are familiar with the customs and languages of the residents, thus they would not be regarded as total outsiders. This fact limited the potential of being treated with distrust or being regarded as culturally biased. As Muriel Saville-Troike (1982:128) points out, the formulation of culturally appropriate questions is of the utmost importance, and this includes knowing what it is appropriate or inappropriate to ask about, why, and in what way. It could be expected that fieldworkers who reside in the areas under investigation would be sensitive to dealing with the above-mentioned issues.

Some practical considerations resulted in the decision that students from the University of Pretoria were to be involved in the research project. Involving students had the following advantages: Firstly, contact with fieldworkers could occur at a venue familiar to the researcher and fieldworkers, namely the campus of the University of Pretoria. The Department of Afrikaans provided a venue for the meetings that were scheduled in advance.

The fact that these students were already employed and trained as fieldworkers was another advantage in the sense that they were selected from a student organisation called SASVO (Southern African Student Volunteers) who is involved in local voluntary aid projects under the auspices of the United Nations. They therefore were familiar with establishing a working relationship with members of the various communities their upliftment-projects were aimed at, a factor that indirectly proved helpful in gaining the co-operation of respondents in the sense that the fieldworkers were experienced in overcoming initial suspicion on the part of the respondent in terms of the research objectives. It can furthermore be assumed that students in general are familiar with the academic environment and that they had theoretical exposure to research protocol.

### 3.6.3 Time available for fieldwork

Since the fieldworkers were all students, it was decided to schedule the fieldwork for the end of the academic year. Training took place towards the end of October 1998 after the students had completed their exams. Five fieldworkers were sourced from Mamelodi and Atteridgeville respectively, and each fieldworker had been allocated a total of 30 households in accordance with the sampling protocol.

Four weeks were allowed to interview the selected respondents within the households, with progress report meetings scheduled in between. The respondents reported that the length of interviews varied between 30 and 60 minutes, depending on the level of respondent-participation. The fieldworkers found it more practical to visit the allocated households in the evening when most of the inhabitants of the household were home from work or other activities.

The fieldwork was completed towards the end of November 1998, allowing the researcher to encode the questionnaires and submit it to the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics at the beginning of the academic year in January 1999. After capturing the coded numerical values representing the answers into a statistical software programme designed for the purpose, the raw data printouts were made available for calculation and interpretation. Statistical testing of hypotheses was conducted by the Department of Statistics.

The raw data, besides presenting the researcher with actual counts (for instance how many of the respondents have secondary education), posed numerous interpretational (sociolinguistic) possibilities that had to be identified and reported on. Where relevant, hypotheses had to be formulated and tested for statistical significance. In the instance of cells being too small for statistical testing, those cells had to be redefined and resubmitted for statistical testing.

### 3.6.4 Fieldworker training

As was mentioned above, fieldworker training took place towards the end of October 1998 after the students had completed their exams. The fieldworkers attended three sessions. The first session focused on the theoretical background against which the research project was structured, followed by a session dealing with questionnaire design and interview methodology.

As pre-testing of a control group is of the utmost importance to establish whether the respondents who represent the sample group would interpret the questions correctly, the final session involved fieldworkers reporting back on questionnaires that they had to complete by interviewing three family members or friends. As a result of the pre-testing, the content of the questionnaire was finalised after some questions had been rephrased in order to avoid interpretational uncertainty.

The following section deals with general considerations regarding fieldworker training and the nature of interviews.

Saville-Troike (1982:125) says the following with regard to the nature of open or closed ethnographic interviews, which are also applicable to sociolinguistic interviews:

The essence of the ethnographic interview is that it is open ended, and carries as few preconceptions with it as possible, or at least constantly attempts to discover possible sources of bias and minimise their effect.

In order to remove possible sources of fieldworker and respondent bias, fieldworkers were informed about the general and specific aims of the research project in order to understand what kind of information the individual questions were directed at. With regard to the respondents, fieldworkers were trained to inform the respondents that the questions directed at them were asked in order to form a picture of linguistic habits and the extent to which the various languages are used in the areas under investigation.

In order to explain the research protocol followed with regard to the selection of an individual from the household, fieldworkers were instructed to inform the inhabitants of the household that the selected respondent's input would represent the insights of a certain age- and/or gender group. Respondents and others present at the time thus saw the process as one where the fieldworker needed that specific respondent's help in compiling a linguistic profile.

Fieldworkers reported that in many cases the interviews were regarded with much interest by other people present. Fieldworkers were trained only to concentrate on the selected respondent and to note only his/her responses. This indicated to others present that the fieldworker was only interested in that particular individual's responses.

Should the specific individual selected by the sampling protocol not be available, the fieldworker was instructed to arrange a follow-up meeting. If the individual was out of town, ill, or unwilling to participate, the fieldworker would still be able to comply with the sampling protocol by subtracting one individual from the total number of inhabitants and selecting another respondent.

Saville-Troike (1982:128) comments that fieldworkers need to develop sensitivity to signs of acceptance, discomfort, resentment, or sarcasm. Such sensitivity relates to informant reliability and the appropriateness of questions, and whether an interview should be terminated.

A particular fieldworker, for example, was confronted with a respondent that was under the influence of alcohol, and another meeting was arranged after the fieldworker had excused herself under the pretence of not having enough questionnaires in her possession at the time.

Saville-Troike (1982:129) identified two kinds of respondent bias. She says that some respondents will answer questions in the way they feel will most please the interviewer (the 'courtesy bias'), while others will consider it great sport to 'put on' outsiders (the 'sucker bias'). The above-mentioned fieldworker was trained to be on the lookout for signs of bias, and she dealt with the situation accordingly by not taking the risk of jeopardising the research results.

Saville-Troike (1982:129) also points out that in some speech communities, respondents will be concerned about possible 'after effects' of talking (either social or supernatural), and these must be given particularly serious consideration. With regard to this research project, fieldworkers were instructed to emphasise the fact that responses would be anonymous and confidential, that there were no correct or incorrect answers, and that the researcher was merely interested in learning more about linguistic habits and preferences as expressed by the residents of the respective areas.

Fieldworkers were also trained to deflect attention from respondents' attitudes, which, by implication, were revealed all the more clearly. In administering open-ended questions, fieldworkers were instructed to record the initial answers and solicit further comment if the respondents were willing to discuss their answers in more detail. Robinson (1996:77) says that more generally, some research suggests that a greater degree of interaction in the interview situation may enhance the possibility of ensuring standardised interpretations of survey questions.

In general, the questionnaire was developed in such a manner that the questions were formulated to be transparent, unambiguous, neutral and not influencing the respondent's answer in any way, and fieldworkers were trained to handle the questionnaire accordingly.

Another aspect that needed to be considered was the level of education of the population. Robinson (1996:77) refers to the Linguistic Minorities Project in England in this regard. He says the following:

The Linguistic Minorities Project was faced with administering questionnaires to people whose educational and literacy levels were low. [They found that] it had become clear that word-for-word consistency of spoken reproduction of the written texts on the part of the interviewer was less possible, and perhaps less important, than we originally believed. Experience had shown that the most effective of the interviewers found it impossibly unnatural to read out the questions exactly as printed, and that a better rapport with respondents was achieved when discretion was used in varying details of the wording to suit the setting of the interaction.

With regard to this study, interviews were conducted in a language not native to the respondents, namely English. Fieldworkers reported that a brief explanation of some of the questions was necessary on occasion. As had been pointed out previously, the research instrument was a questionnaire that dictated the order of the questions, although in its application it resembled a structured interview.

In general, fieldworkers reported no difference between the responsiveness to the questionnaire between gender groups, age groups, or those possessing differing degrees of education. According to Robinson (1996:82), if all respondents respond with equal facility it seems to be a positive feature of questionnaire design and testing.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

As pointed out in Chapter 1, this study seeks to gain insight in the sociolinguistic realities of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville - including language use, knowledge, behaviour, status and attitudes. Chapter 2 provided the conceptual framework against which this study was undertaken, and dealt with the broader theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between government, language planning

policies, and policy implementation and focused attention on research and insights gained locally and in other parts of the world.

Chapter 3 focused attention on factors to be considered in the choice and design of a research instrument, on the nature of the data being gathered, on statistical procedures implemented to obtain, validate, and interpret the data, as well as a discussion of the application of the research instrument in the field.

Chapter 1 thus identified what was being investigated, Chapter 2 explained why it is necessary, and Chapter 3 pointed out how the relevant data were gathered. Chapter 4 will provide a sociolinguistic profile of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville by revealing the results of the research project.