

Behaviour problems in primary schools in Mamelodi: an ecological construction

By

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY MOTHER-IN-LAW, ELIZABETH JOHANNA TIMM
1922 – 2006**

DECLARATION

I declare that BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAMELODI: AN ECOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Mrs. V.M Timm

Date

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this dissertation is to explore contextually relevant ideas through conversation around behaviour problems, specifically bullying, experienced in primary schools situated in the township of Mamelodi. The study explores the relationship around bullying between the members of the school staff involved with the children, the children identified as manifesting bullying behaviour, their families and any relevant community system or individuals as identified by the research participants themselves through conversation. It focuses on providing a description of experiences around bullying behaviour facing the participants by exploring their own perspectives and meanings around their situation and any possible solutions that they may offer. The focus is of an exploratory and descriptive nature to provide a basis for an intervention that is contextually relevant to this community by acknowledging these locally constructed discourses.

An ecological approach within a postmodern social constructionist theoretical backdrop is chosen for this study. It is an approach that emphasises the importance of context and the social constructionist influence emphasises the importance of language. Three primary schools in the Mamelodi Township were approached to participate. One ecological case study from one of the three schools is used in the analysis to explore the aims of this research. Data was gathered through semi-structured open-ended interviews. Discourse analysis is used to construct the various discourses emerging from the conversations resulting from the interviews. Through the discourse analysis the various meanings, experience or understanding around bullying are constructed. The interaction of these various discourses and influence that they have on each other are also considered. The possible influence of background discourses of the wider community and society are included. These discourses are presented not as truths but as a plausible a construction of an ecology of bullying grounded in background and events. Using theses discourses some of the possible implications for a contextually and locally relevant intervention programme and further ideas for research are suggested. As the study focuses on contextual relevance, arguments around indigenous psychology, cross cultural research and the role of interpreters are also considered.

KEY TERMS

Ecological, postmodern, social constructionism, discourse analysis, bullying, Mamelodi, primary schools, interpreters, indigenous psychology, community.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO AND CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a society, which has been exposed to a social system discouraging diversity, uniqueness, and contact amongst differing groups. This is the context within which practitioners of the discipline of psychology in this country work (Shuda, 1992). Auerswald (1990 as cited in Shuda, 1992, p. xiii), engaging in the Biennial International Conference of the South African Institute of Marital and Family Therapy held in 1990, commenting on this context, states that we have a 'relationship hunger'. In 2007 we still face the effects of the abovementioned social system and subsequent rapid social change. Old social and value systems have become obsolete, whilst new ones have not yet developed. Vast numbers of our people are still facing lack of economic and other resources and this can possibly be linked to the spiralling violence and crime we now experience (Hickson & Mokhobo, 1992). These vast, impoverished areas leave many contexts and problems largely unexplored by research. Our context in South Africa is unique to us. We struggle to find a way forward to work with our previously segregated differences to make the discipline of psychology relevant for our unique problems, background and tumultuous social change. The following chapter introduces the context of this research through literature, newspaper articles and excerpts from my research journal. Discussing the aims, design and theoretical approach to the study provides a context of the research process itself.

1.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The focus of this dissertation is to explore contextually relevant ideas through conversation around behaviour problems, specifically bullying, experienced in primary schools situated in the township of Mamelodi.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

My interest in community work started in 2005 whilst completing my Master's degree through the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus. The university is situated in the context of the township itself where the students were required to do practical work in the Itsoseng Clinic, which was situated on the university campus and fell under the Psychology Department. This specific research question emerged from my own awareness of school behaviour problems through the media and my practical experience of it on the site of the Itsoseng Clinic. The research question and chosen approach to its exploration was further emphasised and given focus through my interaction with the already existing research and literature in the area of behaviour problems in schools. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) claim that it is clear from research that learner discipline is an acute problem in South Africa. Confirming this, Pienaar (2003) claims that it is felt that discipline has collapsed in many South African schools. This highlights a need for research on behaviour problems, such as bullying, in South African schools and specifically in the township of Mamelodi. According to Wolhuter and Steyn (2003), a lot of research on learner discipline has been carried out overseas and, as a result, local studies draw on this overseas literature. My own literature search to date has not uncovered any research on this topic within the Mamelodi Township. Furthermore, a need to use an approach that would focus on the meanings around the problem, as experienced by those directly involved, is emphasised (Bakker, 1999; Eskell-Blokland, 2007).

As a way of bringing focus to the study, the specific behaviour problem of bullying is chosen for exploration. The term bullying is defined according to Nesor, Ovens, van der Merwe, Morodi, Ladikos and Prinsloo (2004) as behaviour that comprises repeated and intentionally hurtful acts, using words or other kinds of behaviour, perpetrated by children (those who bully) against other children (those who are bullied).

For the purposes of this study, the term ecology is loosely described as the relationships that interlink people around a problem (Cole, 1991). In this study, all of the following

ecological elements are, at the outset, assumed to be interlinked around ‘bullying’: the teachers at the schools concerned, the children defined as exhibiting bullying behaviour, the families of these children and the children’s peers. In keeping with the ecological approach (Cole, 1991), the participants themselves in dialogue with each other and myself, during the research process, construct the problem system, i.e. those interlinked around the problem.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to contribute to an ecological description or construction of behaviour problems, specifically bullying, in primary schools situated in the Mamelodi Township. It focuses on providing a description of experiences around bullying behaviour facing the participants by exploring their own perspectives and meanings around their situation and experience and any possible solutions that they may offer. As stated by Bakker (1999) the search for a relevant psychology in Africa calls for hearing its silenced voices. The voices of the children within this South African township and the people most involved in their lives have not yet been heard.

The study explores the relationship around bullying between the members of school staff involved with the children, the children identified as manifesting this behaviour, their families and any other relevant community system or individuals as identified by the research participants themselves through conversation. This facilitates the sharing of the ideas of the participants around their own situation and experience. Sarason (1996, as cited in Visser, 2005) claims that the way in which a change process is received and sustained depends largely on how it is conceptualised by those involved. Kelly (1986) argues that a community based research style will produce results that are relevant to the contexts and this will facilitate the joining of research and practice. This, according to Kelly (1986), is the meaning of ecological perspective and validity. This study attempts to provide contextual knowledge that may act as a basis for a locally relevant intervention programme as it explores the ideas of the participants within the context.

Due to social transformation, South African psychologists are working towards building a relevant profession for local contexts (Bakker, 1999). Eskell–Blokland (2007) claims that conversation within these local township contexts is a more useful guide to practice than university texts containing mainstream psychology theories. Echoing these ideas with reference to research, Polkinghorne (1992) points to studies that show that psychotherapists rarely find research that is relevant to practice, as practice is ever changing and context-bound. This study attempts to contribute to a relevant body of research necessary to build a locally relevant profession.

From a more general theoretical perspective, in thinking about the system into which the therapist has to intervene, psychological theory has considered a broad context but corresponding therapeutic techniques have not yet been developed (Aponte, 1990). The ecological approach to this study, along with its emphasis on contextual relevance, aims to form a basis for an intervention programme that is both relevant and broad, one in which locally relevant meanings around the interface of individuals, school community and the wider community are considered.

Within the limited scope of this dissertation, the focus is of an exploratory and descriptive nature. The study provides an analysis of one ecological case study to act as a pilot case for further research.

1.5 THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY

1.5.1 My Personal Understanding and Choice of Approach

An ecological approach within a postmodern, social constructionist theoretical backdrop is the specific approach chosen for this study. For me, this means that I come from an approach that recognises multiple points of view and multiple realities, all of which are equally valid (Burr, 1995) although in social interaction, some viewpoints are given more credence than others (Shotter, 1993). It is an approach, which emphasises the importance of context and the social constructionist influence emphasises the importance of language. More specifically, what we experience as reality is constructed through

relational conversations. These everyday conversations are influenced by the wider conversations that we experience in society and in our culture (Shotter, 1993). The ecological influence emphasises the importance of relationship between the many people who are involved in a situation, problem or constructed reality through their conversations with or about each other in relation to it. This ecological constructionist approach is created in interaction with the literature of social constructionist and postmodern authors such as Burr (1995), Shotter (1993), Potter and Wetherell (1987) and this study is therefore written and conducted around the assumptions contained within these texts. It was also influenced by conversations with my supervisor (Dr. L.M. Eskell-Blokland). All of these conversations, with literature and supervisor, are in response to my study's specific context and aims. These theories constitute an approach as opposed to a rigorous method.

As the researcher, forming part of this research process and context, it is important that you know my personal position as to why I choose to work in this way (Steier, 1991). Here are my personal choices for this approach. I was recently asked by a colleague why I chose this paradigm to work in and because I was asked in what seemed to me to be outside of an academic setting, in addition to the personal way in which the question was worded, I gave a more personal response to the choice I had made, instead of talking in terms of stated aims and other research narratives. I explained that I experience this approach as emphasising relationship and interaction and in this way it leads me to the participants and the participant's experience. My 'understanding' of the situation is then based on interaction with the participant and not primarily through interaction with theories in textbooks. I said that these approaches that speak of reality constructed in language excite me and seem full of hope. For me, the beauty in postmodernism lies in that it is inclusive of any theory or approach that seems to fit, or make sense, in a given context, according to those living in and constructing the context. The difference lies in not what is done, but the way in which it is done, and how it is talked about, which to me unlocks unlimited possibilities for working and moving forward in any situation.

As it is an approach not a method, I situate this research theoretically by describing the assumptions and guiding principles, according to my understanding, of Burr (1995) and Shotter (1993) that underlie this research journey. More in depth conversations and academic discourses around this approach are storied in chapter four of this dissertation.

1.5.2 Some Assumptions on which Postmodernism and Social Constructionist Research are Based

The way we see the world and knowledge is culturally and historically contextual (Burr, 1995). Knowledge is not derived from discovering the world and its true nature but it is constructed through social relations between people (Burr, 1995). In social constructionist studies, the emphasis is on the continuous communicative activity between the people engaged in the study. The world is no longer seen as a stable reality but vague and unstable and open to further specification through the aforementioned communicative activities (Shotter, 1993). There is, therefore, the acceptance of multiple socially constructed perspectives or realities (Burr, 1995). Descriptions of the world in language invite certain kinds of action. Thus, constructed knowledge and social action occur together (Burr, 1995). The approach challenges us to take neither what we consider as knowledge nor the way in which we see the world for granted (Burr, 1995).

1.5.3 Reflexivity

Any account of people's language use is itself constructed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). To account for this, this study is self-referential in that it examines my own role in the investigation of the topic. This is achieved through keeping a journal of my experience of the research process and questions I ask in the interviews. Throughout the dissertation, I write in the first person. This is a way of allowing self-reflection into the research activities and methodology by including my own constructing process in the text. The 'I' is understood as a 'relational I' in that it differs throughout the research process, depending on the different relationships and subsequent conversations in which I engage (Steier, 1991). Furthermore, my own dialogue in conversation with the participants forms part of the analysis.

1. 6 DESCRIPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH SETTING AND CONTEXT

1.6.1 Mamelodi

The township of Mamelodi forms part of the Metropolitan Municipality of Tshwane. It was established in 1953 by the Apartheid government (Mamelodi mesh, n.d.). Townships are areas that were designated by said government as residential areas for the black population of South Africa. The residents were forced to live in these areas and were separated from traditional ways of life. As a result, the townships have developed their own culture, which is a mixture of traditional and urban ways of life (Eskell-Blokland, 2007). The residents consist of various different language groups such as Tswana, Sotho and Zulu and they are in different phases of transition from traditionalism to urbanism (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). Due to the history of the Apartheid system of government in South Africa, being black and having low socio-economic status are likely to coincide (Mackintosh, 1992). The inhabitants of Mamelodi are thus generally of low economic status. There is a diverse set of living conditions in Mamelodi ranging from well-built brick houses to small informal dwellings made out of sheet metal (Mamelodi mesh, n.d.). The resources available to Mamelodi in terms of health care facilities and social institutions are limited (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001). There is a shortage of black mental health professionals (Mackintosh, 1992). This lack of community resources affects the schools as well. Learning problems are common but there are no remedial facilities and the classrooms contain too many children for those with problems to get the individual attention that they need (Lifschitz, Kgoadi & Van Niekerk, 1992).

1.6.2 Excerpt from my Research Journal Describing Mamelodi

24/5/2007 I have travelled the streets of Mamelodi for three and a half years now. Once unfamiliar and frightening in light of the prevailing discourses of township crime and violence, the scene is now familiar and my relaxing attitude evident in my ever increasing engagement with this community. The entrance to the township, on the Mamelodi East side, is lined with tiny zinc shacks. They are packed closely together. The streets are dry and

dusty. The lack of paving on the sidewalks is all the more evident today as the winter wind whips up the red-brown dust. Goats and chickens wonder around scratching and nibbling in the powdery earth. The sky is clear blue and the winter weather icy. Further in, the small cement brick houses stand closely side-by-side and line the potholed roads. Some houses are well cared for with neat gardens, attractive fencing and ornate doors that seem to stand in contrast to the poverty of their surroundings. Indicative of my increasing engagement, I am becoming ever curious as to what life is like behind these facades.

I think of Auerswald's (1992) admonition or challenge to South African practitioners to get out where family life happens, into the neighbourhoods and communities in which people live. Therapy cannot really be successful without the engaging of the people in their homes and communities. The children and families I will be interviewing are from these small houses and shacks. It is behind the cement bricks and zinc walls that family life happens in Mamelodi. I appreciate that Auerswald has devoted a large part of his life to the underprivileged of American society, but as I look through the dust and grey tin maze, I wonder if he knows exactly what it is that he is asking of me.

1.6.3 Behind the Façade

7/07/ 2007 As I return to different chapters in this dissertation while documenting my research process, I have ventured further into the township and behind the brick facades where family life happens. The first house I entered belonged to the family that was the most easily engaged in the research process.

The family of three, a mother, a boy of twelve and a girl of four, are a close, yet isolated, family unit. The house has two dogs of an unspecified breed roaming in its dusty yard. This mother has shown great commitment to the process of therapy with her son. The house is surrounded by fencing and a fairly large

garden. Inside the house, it is more spacious than I expect. The door opens into a large kitchen area behind which are three spacious bedrooms and a fairly large, furnished dining room. The finishings of the house are however rudimentary: the floors and walls are cement finished; the bedrooms contain just a simple bed. The mother explains that there is still a lot to do in the house but the late grandmother, who was living with them and helping with the children, was also helping with renovations to the house. The emotional loss of this grandmother, evident in therapy sessions, is physically and financially echoed in the half finished house. The mother points to the tin roof that is not covered by ceiling boards, to an unfitted sink and other household items lodged in its rafters. She explains that these materials are to finish the house but that she cannot manage to continue with the renovations on her single income. The bedrooms are strewn with washing that this working mother has not yet been able to attend to. She apologises for the state of the house, as she has not yet had time to tidy it.

1.6.4 The Community Resources

Resources Within Mamelodi

As already mentioned above, resources in Mamelodi are scarce (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001). Kgoadi (Lifschitz et al., 1992) writing of her struggle with this lack states:

We, as a therapy team, sometimes encounter problems with regard to where to refer clients, as there is a scarcity of community resources.

It is not good enough for us just to identify the problem and to do nothing about it. We get stuck due to the insufficiency of community resources

(p. 137).

Kgoadi wrote this in a publication in 1992. From my experience in 2007, the situation is much the same. The psychological services are still sadly lacking with regard to the number of people for which it caters. My experience of this is documented in my journal dated 08/06/2007.

Khanya

I chose to do this research during my internship year where I worked in a clinic attached to the University of Pretoria situated on the Mamelodi campus. Originally I planned to work with only one school, but as the initial school did not engage in the study, I chose to work with three in case this experience was repeated. Working with three schools increases the need for referral resources. At the end of my internship year, the clinic that I worked from was suspended so I looked for alternative referral resources for the many children in need of psychological services. I met with a psychologist working for the Health Department who told me that she was the only psychologist in the area. She has since resigned. She seemed to have a large caseload and she also did not do scholastic assessments so sorely needed for the many children with learning problems who require assessment-based, appropriate intervention. I knew of Stanza Clinic (a centre that catered for adult clients seeking psychological services), Agape (a clinic affiliated to the University of South Africa and open on Wednesdays only) and Tsegofatsong (a school for children with special needs). Social workers are available in Stanza and at the Mamelodi Day Hospital but all seem overworked. The psychologist that I met with told me of a new family centre called Khanya so I explored this avenue further.

Excerpt from journal

With no street names or numbers my interpreter and I weave through the dusty dirt roads, small houses, tin shops and chickens and eventually, almost accidentally, find the place tucked away amongst them. Initially, we contemplate parking and walking around to find the wendy house, the facility from which they work, but decide this is actually not a safe place so I park in a crèche facility which happens to be the correct spot. My guide had faithfully directed me by recognising the given landmarks of tin shops and dusty roads that all look much the same to me. The psychologist we find there is not happy with the premises and she is currently looking for new a new place. The wendy house is neat and equipped with boardroom furniture, but the facilities are sadly lacking for the many clients they have. It seems that Khanya are an informal group of psychologists and social workers relying on certain gatekeepers who

help them to be accepted in the community. They have had resistance from the schools in their efforts to make their services available. There is not only a scarcity of psychological services in the township but the ones that are available are not as yet integrated into the community as a resource. In this part of the township, the helping profession really seems to be struggling to emerge.

Lifschitz et al. (1992) when writing of their work at Agape, with specific reference to forming networks in the community, state:

An example of this process began with the realisation that the availability of psychotherapy for the community in Mamelodi needed to be promoted as most of these people had never heard of 'psychotherapy' (although most of them are familiar with the concept of healing) (p.134).

1.7 SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

The context of this study can be said to be 'third-world' in that it is underdeveloped and underprivileged (Eskell-Blokland, 2007). South African schools face the challenges associated with promoting a learning process for all learners, including those previously disadvantaged. At present, there are positive factors facilitating this process, but there are also difficulties (Department of Education, 2001 as cited in Lazarus, 2006). These difficulties include issues related to individual curriculum, the school organisation, the family, the community and broader social factors. The education department currently addresses these difficulties through the biopsychosocial theoretical approach. This approach is theoretically holistic, incorporating the physical, psychological, social, environmental and spiritual (Department of Education, 2000 as cited in Lazarus, 2006).

The structural network of the education system includes the 'education support services,' the term used in South Africa to refer to various health, social and learning support services provided to educational institutions. There are different levels at which these services are provided. Support to the schools and other education institutions are provided through the district and institutional level support team structures. The district

teams consist of health workers such as psychologists, counsellors, therapists, nurses and doctors. The institutional level teams consist of local educators and can also include learner representatives, parents and other community members concerned with educational barriers. Learning support and life skills usually coordinate these local support teams (Lazarus, 2006). The education department aims to develop and strengthen the support structures and to implement a holistic, integrated and community-based approach (The Department of Education, 2005 as cited in Lazarus, 2006).

The difficulty in implementing a community-based approach is due to integrating the different professions involved. Power relations are not always equal and different forms of knowledge have to be integrated. At present, the South Africa health system comprises three parallel systems of health services. These three systems include the Western medical system, along with services such as alternative and natural health approaches, and African traditional healing. African traditional healing is still currently in the process of becoming officially recognised by both government and public sectors. The Western approach is still dominant (Lazarus, 2006).

Table of education support services in South Africa

| Government level | Key support functions |
|--|---|
| National department of education | Providing national policy and a broad framework for support. |
| Nine provincial departments of education | Coordinating implementation of national framework of support in relation to provincial needs. |
| District based support teams (including special/resource school staff) | Providing integrated support to schools and other education institutions to support the development of effective teaching and learning. |
| Institutional level support teams | Identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the local school context. |

(Lazarus, 2006, p. 522).

1.7.1 Mamelodi and Other Township Schools

To provide examples of conversations describing the conditions and experiences in some township schools, I utilise excerpts from an article in the Star (Serrao, 2007) entitled ‘At Delrado Primary education is secondary in life’. The article describes the context of children living in the economically disadvantaged area of Eldorado Park, where social conditions are much like they are in Mamelodi:

It’s a sorry sight. Instead of bright buildings and busy playgrounds where children can play and learn, Delrado Primary School in Eldorado Park is falling apart. The paint that was put on the walls 32 years ago when the school opened, is fading, the plaster on the walls is falling off, the gutters are nothing but rust and almost every single window is broken.

If children weren't running around on the dusty sand it would be hard to tell that this was a school.

But the school’s principal and community leaders are determined to make sure Delrado does not die.

With the help of sponsors and volunteers, they hope to get the school into a shining example of what can happen when a community works together.

The principal offers up the following:

“Our learners come from a disadvantaged community and many parents just aren't interested in their children. The school fees are R30 a month or R330 a year and if we get 30% of those fees we are lucky. Parents are unemployed or single.

“Some guardians are grandparents and some children are on their own. Learners often come to school hungry, and they are being told that ‘education is secondary in life’, said Singh (the principal). He described

how one 12-year-old girl had been missing for two weeks and when they spoke to her mother, she had no idea where her child was.

“they grow up in negativity, and that is being brought into the school,' he said.

“... we want our community involved and have built a food garden, so we can feed our children and if there is anything left over we will sell it to parents.

“ ‘Before you can teach a child, A B C, that child needs to be fed and kept warm,' he said. Singh has tried to find ways to get parents interested in the school. He has asked the community to donate old clothes and books so that he can sell them to parents for R1 just to get them to the school, so they can collect their children's reports.

“Parents don't even come for that. Many don't even know if their children have passed on to a new grade,' he said.

“ ‘... I've become a glorified delivery man, not a principal,' he said.”
(Serrao, 2007)

Phillips (1992) notes that certain problematic family dynamics are maintained by the social, political and economic context. The history of Apartheid and economic exploitation has combined to produce a massive disruption in social relations amongst working class black South Africans. It is the family unit that has had to bear the brunt of this hardship and struggle (Campbell, 1992).

The schools I am working with in this study are not in such a state of disrepair as the one described in the newspaper. Although not freshly painted and often dingy in places, the windows are still in tact, as are the gutters. The children, for the most part, are neatly

dressed in their school uniforms. One school is fairly newly built in attractive face brick with fresh paint that gives a bright, airy feeling. All schools seem to lack facilities such as computers and I wonder, if they were supplied, how long they would remain within the school building, as the area is known for high levels of crime. The one thing that strikes me about Mamelodi and the school surroundings is the lack of grass and trees. Some schools have small, young trees. The new school and one of the government schools has small flower beds adorning the main entrance, but the luxurious green leafy canopies and rolling lawns of more affluent South African suburbs are absent, both in the school grounds and in the streets of the township as a whole.

1.7.2 My Impression of a Mamelodi School

17/7/2007

The schools reopened yesterday after a long period of closure due to the strikes and subsequent recess. Recently, driving through the township accompanied by an American visitor, her comment to me was, 'What a barren place'. Sitting in the grassless playground with its dusty earth feeding a few small trees, Mamelodi does indeed look like a barren place. Looking beyond the schoolyard fence, the little houses that line this perimeter can be seen. The waist high walls and fences border the small plots of neatly swept dust on which these houses stand. Brightly coloured windowpanes, along with the swept earth surrounding them, suggest pride in ownership, industry and life. With this closer look, the township then starts to look less barren and starts living.

The school itself is not run down; the long, flat redbrick building is in fairly good repair. Along with the flat red-brown tin roof, everything seems to merge into the red earth and looks rather dull. The barbed wire fencing above the entrances hints at the crime and violence in which this and every community in South Africa is inundated. As I wait for the teacher to come, the children stream out for break in brightly coloured uniforms. They stand in contrast to the bleak surrounds in both movement and colour. Once again, Mamelodi comes alive. Some stand talking, others play structured and orderly games involving

skipping ropes and patterned jumping in the dust. Others, more exuberant, run, chase and hit each other in some invented game. This scene is familiar to all of us: children in a playground. Yet the shouting voices are of a different timbre and language that are alien to me. This school is typical of the three participating in this study.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This study documents part of my experience and process in the Mamelodi Township that I felt was most relevant and coherent. Its discourses are presented in a language that will be understood by the research and academic community. The process involved my own struggle to see traditional research discourses differently, while still providing rigour and academic justification within a framework new to me and new in its application to this context and area of study. The reader's journey through the following pages will include engaging discourses on indigenous psychology found in chapter two; general discourses around the theory of behaviour problems, specifically bullying, found in chapter three; a construction of the research narrative found in chapter four; the conversations and reflections between the participants and myself around their experience of bullying, found in chapter five; and finally chapter six concludes this particular conversation with a summary of the discourses and some thoughts on continuing the conversations and interactions around relevant intervention. The following chapter engages in argumentation around indigenous psychology.

CHAPTER 2

ARGUMENTATION AROUND INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The socio-political background of South African research comprises racial segregation, oppression of the majority, and the exploitation of labour. As a result South Africa was a country racially divided with most whites living in first world industrialised conditions dominated by western thought, and most blacks living in third world non-industrialised conditions of poverty, oppression, exploitation (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001) and mostly dominated by indigenous thought. A western worldview dominated the country while the voices of the mostly indigenous population were marginalised. Since the end of the 1970's, some psychologists have advocated an indigenous approach in non-western societies (Hwang, 2004). They feel that research findings, based on western epistemologies that were introduced during colonial era, might not be relevant to local indigenous people (Moscovici, 1972 as cited in Hwang, 2004) and could be seen as cultural imperialism and colonialism (Ho, 1988 as cited in Hwang, 2004). Opposing this argumentation is the view that the development of local indigenous psychologies will lead to numerous psychologies, which will counter the development of a unified science of psychology. It is argued that some of the ideas behind promoting indigenous psychology can create feelings of inadequacy in psychologists working with different ethnic groups (Bakker, 1999; Nell, 1990). A possible solution is proffered by some writers to combine the two approaches (Holdstock, 1981; Poortinga, 1999 as cited in Hwang, 2004), constructing both an awareness and accommodation of individual differences and local context against a background of commonness. The different voices in argumentation around these ideas are found in this chapter along with a brief discussion and introduction to the interpreters involved in this study and their role and influence in its construction. The context of this study is largely unexplored by research and this chapter explores some of the implications for research around working cross-culturally within this context. Excerpts of conversations with interpreters in this chapter comment upon or illustrate certain ideas. The following definitions are used throughout

this chapter. Viewpoints based on African knowledge are referred to as Afrocentric, while the western viewpoints are referred to as Eurocentric. Afrocentric views differ depending on the region of origin and aspects of them can be found in non-African cultures. Eurocentric views are used to refer to western theories that developed from within a modernist, western scientific framework (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

2.2 ARGUMENTATION AROUND INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

2.2.1 Call for Indigenous Psychology

Moghaddam (1987) uses the discourse of economic development with which to divide the professional output and subsequent influence of psychology into three different worlds or categories. Within this discourse he looks on a global level at the different abilities of the three categories to influence the construction of psychological discourses within the profession. Firstly, there is the dominant first world psychology consisting basically of the United States of America. The second world consists of other industrialised countries such as Britain and Russia. The third world consists of developing countries such as Nigeria and Asian countries. The boundaries between the categories are fuzzy as there are overlaps such as India, which is economically both a first and a third world country (Moghaddam, 1987) much the same as South Africa. The differences between the three worlds are seen as being due to the inequalities of material resources such as research laboratories, the number of academic professional psychologists and publication outlets, all of which impact upon academic output. United States has the most resources across the different areas. Many theories have their roots in European sources but are still brought to fruition in the United States. There is a question as to whether the dominant psychological discourses emanating mainly from the United States are relevant for other contexts, such as the second world and third world countries. This power balance has been challenged by influential elements within the second world field of psychology and this according to Moghaddam (1987) has caused a crisis in social psychology. Third world and second world psychology has focussed mainly on social psychology as the behaviour of the population is affected by socio-economic factors. In terms of content, European or second world psychology has a greater emphasis on co-

operation, conflict, conformity, social psychology of the psychology experiment, philosophy of science and criticisms of science and racial and ethnic issues (Fisch & Daniel, 1982 as cited in Moghaddam, 1987), so with regards to content second world psychology has developed an identity of its own, but it is still using American research techniques or methods to explore this content (Tajfel, 1978 as cited in Moghaddam, 1987). The sphere of influence of the second world psychology is mainly over that of second and third world psychology. The third world or developing countries such as Nigeria, and the Asian countries are seen to have little influence on current discourses, their capacity to produce psychological knowledge still being low (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1985 as cited in Moghaddam, 1987). Part of the reason for that, according to Moghaddam and Taylor (1985 as cited in Moghaddam, 1987), is a tendency for the psychological centres that have been established within third world societies to work parallel with, rather than to co-operate with, the local community contexts and professionals. The centres established are modelled mainly on prestigious centres found in the first and second world contexts and the links they have are formed with them.

Even though there is a growing sensitivity towards this imbalance of influence within the profession, it is difficult to realign it. There is however an increased awareness of this imbalance and awareness that psychology as a profession needs to play a role in the social development of third world countries. There is also an increased awareness among psychologists for the need of relevant and appropriate psychological theory and intervention and appropriate training, with regard to third world psychologists (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986b as cited in Moghaddam, 1987). Moghaddam's construction of first, second and third world contexts within this economic discourse are different to those found in other literature. The categories most often used are first world, which describes industrialised, western thought-dominated countries, referring usually to America and Western Europe, second world usually referring to the Soviet Union and East European countries and third world referring to developing non-industrialised countries dominated by indigenous knowledge (Nell, 1990).

In a third world context there is the coexistence of a modern sector and a traditional sector of society. The modern sector is more affluent, urban dwelling, literate and influenced by western culture and in contrast, the population of the traditional sector tends to be poor and traditional in their lifestyle. It is difficult for psychologists to apply their skills in the traditional sector, as they are not trained for the task (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986b as cited in Moghaddam, 1987). According to Holdstock (1981), South African universities have been teaching psychology as if South Africa belongs to the first world while in fact it belongs to both first and third world, and more so third world. The discipline of psychology arrived during colonisation and uses mostly Eurocentric theories and methods, neglecting or excluding Afrocentric folk knowledge and local issues. African thought and folk psychology differs from the thoughts and ideas in western thought and psychology (Nsamenang, 1995). Literacy, impersonality, universality, a wide range of available beliefs and attitudes characterise western society. Lack of socio-economic development, prevalent in third world countries, brings about instability and accompanying socio-psychological problems that require attention. Psychology, which is applied to many areas of concern such as education, mental health, crime and industry, has not addressed the areas of social change and lack of development found in third world countries. The third world is characterised by instability; rapid change; problems of violence; divided identities; inter-group tensions; sub-national entities based on linguistic, ethnic or regional considerations; or counteracting environmental factors such as the prevalence of overcrowding and migration. In order to be relevant in this third world context, theories need to explore the relationship between social psychological processes and certain kinds of social systems and social change. Western research methodology is based on mathematics and precision, which is of little relevance to these social psychological phenomena. Western psychology focuses on the micro-social, concentrating mostly on personal characteristics in social process as opposed to socio-structural factors. The analysis of human problems is often considered in a fragmented way and thereby claimed by some (Sinha, 1984) to miss their complexity. These methods are limited when applied to the social psychological phenomena facing third world countries described above. Social problems such as those found in third world countries need frameworks of organisation, synthesis and integration (Indian Council of

Social Science Research, 1973 as cited in Sinha, 1984). Research into social change has to deal with macro- as well as micro-processes within research design (Sinha, 1984). Economic growth with the overall improvements in the quality of life is the focus of development and it is with regard to this goal that psychology can play a role. The nature of socio-economic change involves what Sinha (1984) refers to as “temporal compression” (Sinha, 1984, p. 19) in which change happens within a short space of time, affecting social structure, institutions, families, attitudes and value systems. This can lead to psychological stress (Ganguli, 1968 as cited in Sinha, 1984). Psychology can be used to explore and facilitate factors conducive to desirable changes while helping to minimise the psychological costs of this development (Sinha, 1984).

2.2.2 The Call for an Integrated Framework

Some writers (Nsamenang, 1995; Sinha, 1984) blame the limited extent of psychology’s influence in third world countries on the express use of western psychologies. Most Africans have not heard of psychology (Eze, 1991 as cited in Nsamenang, 1995). This situation is echoed in Mamelodi (Lifschitz et al., 1992) and could be due to the marginalisation of psychology in Africa because of its disjointed, elementary services. In response to this thinking, the bottom up approach for building paradigms (Kim, 2000 as cited in Hwang, 2004) is advocated where research is carried out within the cultural context. This approach is criticised by Poortinga (1999 as cited in Hwang, 2004) as leading to the development of multiple psychologies, which would contradict the requirements of developing a unified science. The question is raised as to how many local psychologies would have to be developed (Hwang, 2004). Most authors recommend constructing both an awareness and accommodation of individual differences and local context against a background of commonness (Nsamenang, 1995; Poortinga, 1999 as cited in Hwang, 2004; Holdstock, 1981). David Ho (1998 as cited in Hwang, 2004), a supporter of indigenous psychology for Asia, warns that the import of western research paradigms and findings directly and non-critically into non-western countries may lead to western ethnocentrism. However, he also warns that if every culture develops its own psychology, another kind of ethnocentrism may arise in which psychological difference is overemphasised. Whitehead (1962 as cited in Anderson &

Goolishian, 1986) states that a clash in doctrines is an opportunity and not a problem. Bakker (1999) likewise argues that creating a dichotomy between Western and African perspectives of psychology are not always useful as this is a simplification of the problem.

Nell (1990) criticises those who call for a third world psychology, such as Moghaddam (1987) and Holdstock (1981), stating that a commonality across these theorists is that the call for an indigenous psychology is thin in content and he believes that what they are actually doing is adapting mainstream psychology to the requirements of a specific field of research. Nell (1990) claims that Moghaddam (1987) does not develop an adequate set of operational definitions of relevance or coherent research agendas that would result in the development of an indigenous psychology. He claims that Holdstock (1981) offers a useful analysis of the weaknesses in South African psychology and suggestions as to how this might be addressed, but he also does not provide a new formulation for indigenous psychology. Using Matarazzo's (1987 as cited in Nell, 1990) content analysis of psychology courses in universities in the United States, Nell (1990) shows that the discipline's content has not varied since its inception in 1878. Meier (1986, as cited in Nell, 1990, p.136) argues that current psychology content provides a 'generic applied core' upon which specialist skills can be built. Based on this, Nell (1990) argues that psychology's history seems to have been to work towards a unitary science that accounts for individual and social behaviour and suggests that instead of referring to relevance and ethno-psychological content (the psychology of races or peoples), psychologists should consider the discipline's application to specific problems. This excerpt from a conversation with an interpreter commenting on the work in this study illustrates that these issues are still pertinent today in the Mamelodi context:

Interpreter 1: Another thing we have to connect the Western culture with the African culture because psychology and stuff it's more Western... so it kind of like introduces a new thing to them.

2.2.3 Argumentation around Working Cross-Culturally

Nell (1990) answers Holdstock's (1981) paper entitled, 'Psychology in South Africa belongs to the colonial era. Arrogance or ignorance?' claiming that the ignorance is of the philosophical and colonial implications of the development of an indigenous psychology and that the arrogance is believing that a new and more efficient psychology can be developed by being attuned to local beliefs and needs. Nell (1990) claims that ethnopsychology encourages psychologists to become fluent in the vernacular and indigenous customs and beliefs of the people that they working with if they are to be helpful. He feels this can disempower practitioners who might believe that they have nothing to offer when working cross-culturally. The same can be said of the view that psychology is irrelevant to Africa and the third world (Berger & Lazarus, 1987 as cited in Nell, 1990).

Similar criticism of researchers by ethnopsychology comes from feminists and minority groups. They claim that researchers misunderstand the groups of people that they write about but whose experience they do not share (Anglin, 1996). In answer to this Anglin (1996) makes the claim that on social issues in general, researchers are a part of the society in which these issues are constructed. As such they contribute to, challenge or ignore these issues. In ignoring them they are contributing to their continuation. We need to address the theories and practices within psychology to see in what way they create, challenge or disable the social issues faced in our country.

With regard to cross-cultural issues in research, Lifschitz et al. (1992) claim that no two people have exactly the same culture, even if they are of the same ethnic group, so practitioners have to be sensitive to the personal culture of their clients. Through this perspective, every interaction is seen as cross-cultural. This avoids the reification of culture. The key is for the practitioner to be sensitive to the meaning and function of culturally normative behaviour (Lifschitz et al., 1992). It is also possible to identify with more than one cultural group such as ethnic and religious groups (Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001). Hermans and Kempen (1998 as cited in Hwang, 2004) propose a concept of moving culture as culture is continually changing over time, especially in light

of globalisation. Hybridity refers to the effect of globalisation, and that there are traces of other cultures that exist in every culture (Hybridity, n.d.). This questions whether any one culture can now be considered homogenous as inter-cultural communications are frequent and the whole world is being considered a global village (Hermans & Kempen, 1998 as cited in Hwang, 2004). These views (Anglin, 1996; Hermans & Kempen 1998 as cited in Hwang, 2004; Lifschitz et al., 1992; Lifschitz & Oosthuizen, 2001) open up the possibility for psychology practitioners to work with a diverse population. Lifschitz and Oosthuizen (2001) agreeing with Nell (1990), state that the development of a third world psychology is not necessary if an ecological approach is used in which difference is constructed through shared humanity.

2.3 THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

The African worldview displays diversity (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished), which is mirrored in African ecology, ethnic and linguistic composition (Nsamenang, 1995). Diop (1996 as cited in Nsamenang, 1995) claims that amongst the diversity there is a cultural similarity across African peoples. This is due to similar patterns of ecology; adaptations; common social struggle experiences; and the diffusion of similar cultural traits through contact with other cultures and acculturation. Globalisation has also had a large impact on traditional philosophies (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished). Other influences such as Islam and Christianity have been integrated with indigenous ideas (Bakker & Snyders, 1999). While keeping the above in mind, the following section briefly looks at some of the components of a traditional African view that could influence the Mamelodi context. This Afrocentric worldview includes a holistic, spiritual unity, communalism or collectivism and self-knowledge (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

2.3.1 A Holistic Approach

The African worldview is an integrated, holistic approach to knowledge and life with little separation between different aspects, contrasting with Western views where there is a tendency to compartmentalise. From the African traditional perspective, everything is

seen as interrelated: God, ancestors, humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects are all connected and interdependent (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

2.3.2 Persons in Community

In a traditional African society, social relationships permeate all aspects of life. People exist in relationship and, as such, individual personality is seen to change as people interact through relationship with others (Schutte, 1994). Most African writers see the African personality as consisting of an interaction between a sense of self, created through social bonds, and a sense of self as a conscious being. There are therefore many selves created through relationship with others. Self and world are reciprocally united and interrelated (Schutte, 1994). This contrasts with earlier and mainstream psychologists who defined personality as a set of internal traits. Cultural and critical psychologists see the self as a social construction, which corresponds with the traditional African view of the self and behaviour being understood in context with others (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

In the traditional African view, both a sense of self through social bonds and a sense of self as a conscious being develop around ideas of social selfhood, ancestral selfhood and spiritual selfhood. These are three integrated aspects of life that are central to traditional African thought. The social self is seen as influenced by the ancestral and spiritual selves, and vice versa. The ancestors are referred to as the “living dead”. For a period of time after death, people continue to play an important role in the lives of individuals and community. After a period of time living as an ancestor, the person moves on to the spiritual world (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished). The living form a hierarchy with spiritual beings and the spiritual beings play a primary role in determining behaviour (Mbiti, 1971 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999).

2.3.3 Community

The African concept of community is embodied in customs and there is interdependence between society and individuals (Schutte, 1994). Rites of passage indicate transition from one life stage to another. As people are seen as relational, rites of passage are seen as community as opposed to individual occasions (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished). There

is more emphasis on the group than the individual and more on solidarity than individual need (Schutte, 1994). Persons make decisions based on community needs rather than individual requirements. Africans seem to see themselves not as isolated individuals but as integrated parts of a whole. This could account for African people providing for the extended family as opposed to just the nuclear. Due to this worldview it is important to maintain harmony with the community (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished). In short, the traditional African worldview emphasises context, relationships and community (Mbiti, 1971 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999).

In traditional African thought the interrelated perspective of life and the importance of community are evident in the way in which concepts are constructed through community. For example sickness, disease or any misfortune is caused by the ill will and subsequent action of one person or spirit towards another, usually initiated through witchcraft (Mbiti, 1971 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999). Healing also occurs through and for the community and is a religious process (Sogolo, 1993 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999). Intelligence is likewise constructed through community and seen in terms of social skills and relationships, demonstrated through responsibility, obedience, helpfulness, and taking initiative (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

2.3.4 Ways of Knowing

The way we know is also linked to our culture. Traditional African sources of knowledge include the lived experience and the religious (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished). Knowledge is passed on through generations by oral tradition. Ritual art and symbolism also transmit knowledge (Bakker & Snyders, 1999). Herbalists and diviners are held as experts in all aspects of individual and community life such as healing and interpersonal problems and they manage interventions (Mbiti, 1971 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999). In contrast to western positivist, scientific worldviews in which words represent, explain or predict reality, the traditional African worldview includes magical beliefs where words are seen to represent reality. This is reflected in rituals where a spoken curse becomes reality and a child grows up to reflect the meaning of their name (Eskell-Blokland, unpublished).

2.3.5 The Changing Face of Townships

According to Campbell (1992), referring to her research on working class people in a Kwa Zulu Natal (then Natal) township, intergenerational relationships in township families have changed due to wider social factors. Apartheid and economic exploitation has disrupted social relationships amongst working class black South Africans. Policies associated with Apartheid such as forced removal, and those governing migrant labour and influx control, are examples of laws and practices that undermined black family life.

In the conversations held in Campbell's (1992) research with the working class people, there is an awareness of the decline of respect between generations, which is the basis of traditional African social relations. There is a breakdown in parental authority and a transformation of traditional power relations in the family, which are based on age and gender. There is a decline of power in the adults in the family, particularly the men. Traditionally, adult males created material wealth and resources in the community and in the family but now it is difficult for many working class males to provide even the basic needs of the family members. The decline of the power of adult men is seen as being due to the economic pressures of family life, dramatic social change occurring at rates at which the older generation are unwilling, or unable, to assimilate and the growing assertiveness of youth in the township. In addition to adult men not being able to provide materially for their families, traditional power relations based on age are also challenged through social change as more and more it is the youth as opposed to adult males making political decisions in the townships (Campbell, 1992).

According to Campbell (1992), another important dimension of changing power relations between the younger and older generation is that families are no longer an agent of socialisation of the youth. Traditionally, the older generation is seen to have valued life skills to offer the younger generation. Due to rapid social change, parents now no longer have the skills and experience to advise the younger generation. Many young people during the time of this research (Campbell, 1992) turn to other socialising agents such as

peer groups and popular community youth organisations. Sometimes these socialising agents contradict parents' values and ideas.

In a traditionally patriarchal community, women are often not given the same respect and influence as men. They are disempowered by the background voice of patriarchy within the families. However, there is an increase in female-headed households and, not surprisingly, claims of difficulty in disciplining their teenage sons. The roots of these family problems are social and economic in nature and practitioners need, according to Campbell (1992), to change the focus of analysis from the family to the community. This involves intervention through policy and looking at the effects of social conditions on families and finding ways in which policy can strengthen the family.

Presently (2007) in Mamelodi, the mixing of different cultural influences on traditional African thought can be seen in the following excerpts from conversations between the interpreter and me. The conflict between western and indigenous thought is again noted. The conversation was borne out of wondering why spiritual aspects did not come into the conversations with some of the children and their families in this study. The letter V indicates my initial question and the interpreter's responses are indicated by the title: Interpreter 1.

V: The people that we spoke to, do you think they would bring the ancestors into this kind of situation?

Interpreter 1: Looking at the way life is there in Mamelodi, I think not, really unless like for example if there's a grandfather living with them and they tell him this kind of a situation then he can relate it to ancestors but to them themselves I don't think they can relate it to ancestors because the life here is more western...not this generation.

Interpreter 1: ...some of the people are westernised, some are still believing in that thing [ancestors], more especially those who go to church they no longer believe to ancestors or those things but there are people who still look at these

ancestors so it will depend on the background of the family...some are westernised but they still believe in ancestors....

Interpreter 1: Sangomas, izinyanga they're no longer helping from the perspective that most of the izinyanga they are witches so it pushes them [the people in the community] away from that to now understanding psychology. How can I be helped...The izinyanga they are not trustworthy anymore...even the good ones you cannot see them so I can rather say that it depresses the African culture and boost the Western.

2.4 THE INTERPRETERS IN THIS STUDY

South Africa has eleven official languages and a large percentage of people in South Africa are excluded from psychological intervention (including research) based on language (Swartz & Gibson, 2001). This is due to a shortage of professionals across language groups. As researchers or therapists and participants or clients sometimes have a poor understanding of each other's languages, interpreters are used to overcome this obstacle to communication (Eskell-Blokland, Bakker, Louw, Ruane & Viljoen, 2007; Viljoen, 2005). Some of the participants in this study, two of whom are used in the analysis, are not able to speak English well enough for us to be able to communicate in this language without the assistance of an interpreter. Two interpreters therefore participate in this study. This section on the interpreters is included to give them visibility (Temple & Edwards, 2002) in keeping with methodological reflexivity, which is part of social constructionist research (Steier, 1991). It further acknowledges the impact that the interpreters have on the study. The interpreters bring their own assumptions and concerns to the study influencing its construction and this should be made explicit (Temple & Edwards, 2002). According to Irvine et al. (2007), the role of the interpreter, their characteristics and cultural factors, need to be considered in multi-linguistic research. I held conversations with both of my interpreters around their experience. Their opinions and perspectives in this section comment on and contribute to the argumentation of the other voices I hear on this topic of interpretation. Both of them

are trained as interpreters by the Psychology Department of the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi campus. They both had a year's experience working as interpreters in the Itsoseng Clinic on the university campus. They were both living in Mamelodi at the time of this study and had been doing so for at least three years. I feel that they are therefore familiar with the context and culture of the township. Both had completed three years of study in psychology and are therefore familiar with theory around both research and counselling. I consider their command of the English language as competent; their tertiary education was conducted in this language. One of the interpreter's home languages is Zulu, the other Sotho and as such they correspond to the languages of the participants in this study. Some argue that the social characteristics of the interpreters should also correspond to, or match, those of the participants (Temple & Edwards, 2002). While I do not agree that the characteristics such as gender of interpreters and participants should necessarily match, the possible implications of difference should be considered. For instance, one member of the ecology is a grandmother and it is not seen as appropriate within African culture for a young black person to discuss the problems of an older person. However, in this case discussing problems around a child makes the practice acceptable and my presence as an older person further justifies the interview. The other person with whom the interpreter works is a young boy of eleven years. As such these interpreters are thought to match the participants with whom they work in that their characteristics are acceptable to the participants in the context. The following excerpts from conversations with one of the interpreters illustrate the complexities of the ideas around relationships and social hierarchies and the complex interaction around these issues impacting on the conversation between us all:

Interpreter 1: With adults it's more easy to communicate with them [as opposed to children] but the problem is do they trust me as an interpreter? Because sometimes they have to reveal information and I am younger than them as I told you...the culture...age is more important. I would prefer an older person to be interpreted by an older person unless we are not talking about them you are talking about their kids then that works.

Interpreter 1: It depends who you telling but for example I can tell my feelings to a professional or to a sangoma, someone with authority, someone with a position somewhere. It's simpler to tell a white person because there is a perspective about white people [that they are educated].

Viljoen (2005), describing the process of MA students working with B. Psych. student interpreters in this same campus environment, describes the frustration of the MA students, as they feel left out of long exchanges between the interpreter and client. The B. Psych. interpreters experience frustration, as they do not always have the proper terms in their indigenous languages for direct translations and single word descriptions of feelings. The interpreters in this study also experience a similar frustration to that of the B. Psych. students described by Viljoen (2005) in that the words for feelings are fewer in indigenous language when compared with that of the English language. The meaning of feeling words in indigenous language is gleaned more from context as opposed to a large repertoire of single words and this probably accounts for the long exchanges between client and interpreter. This situation is illustrated by the following quotes from conversations with the interpreters of this study:

Interpreter 2: ...especially feeling words, our language, our vernacular is not that elaborate...it's not good in terms of expressing feelings in words, for instance you have the same word for sad and the same word you would use it if want to say someone is unhappy and it also connotes anger...it will have to do with the context... It takes long if you have to explain to the person. If I have to say that "does this make you feel sad?" and I have to translate that into my vernacular it's going to take long.

Interpretation is not an easy process and requires many skills on the part of the interpreters (Viljoen, 2005) and, in my experience, above all, a good working relationship between therapist or researcher and the interpreter. The following excerpt expresses the difficulty of this process and the importance of contextualisation to the interpreter, a perspective that is perhaps influenced by the traditional African worldview:

Interpreter 2: As an interpreter you have to put in much effort to try to contextualise what's happening.

As language is a complex representational system, a one-to-one translation of the text is not possible, translation being rather a negotiation (Eco, 2003 as cited in Viljoen, 2005). This negotiation happens through the social interaction, the conversational flow between therapist or researcher, interpreter and client or participant:

Interpreter 1: What I have experienced with interpreting is that when you interpret you don't have to translate everything into Zulu or Sotho but you can make the person understand... What is important is the understanding not the translation of the words... I think that the relationship is important, the relationship between you, me and them.

Using ideas from Gadamer (1975 as cited in Viljoen, 2005) and Outhwaite (1985 as cited in Viljoen, 2005), Viljoen (2005) constructs interpretation as a hermeneutic activity that transforms translation from an activity changing word for word from one language into another, to a process of meaning construction through social interaction between participants. Each participant's meaning of language combines together to co-construct understanding. According to Viljoen (2005), it can never be assumed that after the social interaction participants leave with identical shared meanings around conversations. Using this framework, translation is transformed from trying to uncover the accurate truth of what is being said to an immediate learning process. In the following excerpt, it seems that this negotiated understanding, through a learning process, is described:

Interpreter 1: I think for the first time it's more difficult but if the person knows you then you start relating then they start to respond and they start to trust you... It depends whether you know the person well or you beginning to understand the person. If I didn't know you well I wouldn't be able to

express whatever you are saying to the client... There is a certain way of communication people use so I have to learn that communication.

This same negotiated process over the meaning of words occurs even between people of the same language. It can therefore not be assumed that a common first language creates a perfect context for understanding (Viljoen, 2005). According to Lifschitz (Lifschitz et al., 1992), therapy or research conceptualised in this way sees language as a social event in which meanings are constructed and realities created by those who are in conversation with each other. Once language is seen in this way practitioners can work with people from different language groups if there is a common language or translator, irrespective of the participants' mother tongues (Lifschitz et al., 1992). According to Viljoen (2005), acknowledging that language is a stumbling block may be a liberating experience as meaning is then carefully constructed around the words to compensate for lack of understanding. What is also evident from the following excerpt is that in Mamelodi, social integration is constructing a local vernacular that contains a mixture of different languages:

Interpreter 2: We are not using pure Sotho. It's Sotho that's a mixture of Zulu and Tswana and Pedi, so it's a combination. You know in Pretoria you find a lot of people so it's a mixture of everything.

Whatever is said is an attempt to explain ideas that we either maintain or change. Language can connect us or separate us (Le Roux, 1992). The interpretation of the interview is the interface between different identity and knowledge claims. There is no separation between different groups as negotiations construct identity and knowledge (Temple & Edwards, 2002). The interview becomes a contact zone where previously separate cultures and different groups can come together and establish relations. Perhaps through this process the relationship hunger spoken of by Aureswald (1992) can begin to be satisfied.

Interpreter 2: Like with [one of the children] some of our conversations were sort of deep... we got you know information that was not just on the surface.

Interpreter 1: Now I can interpret to whoever, as long as I start a relationship with them.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Considering the limited psychological services in South African townships (Eskell-Blokland et al., 2007; Lifschitz et al., 1992), coupled with the low profile of the profession amongst those living there (Lifschitz et al., 1992), it would seem that the profession of psychology is not integrated into, or meeting the needs of, our local townships in a relevant way. Coupled with this, South Africa's social problems of poverty, crime, unemployment, illiteracy and rapid social change, impact on the psychological wellbeing of our population, and the profession has not yet addressed problems of a social nature (Sinha, 1984). It seems that the profession in this country has to be adapted to this unique combination of local and social needs, and that it has not as yet impacted on any wide scale. Most writers advocate the development of an indigenous psychology against a background of commonness (Holdstock, 1991; Hwang, 2004). Considering local metaphors and worldviews by incorporating them into the already existing framework of psychology can provide an epistemological structure for the profession to become relevant at a local level, whilst at the same time providing a background of commonness with the potential to unite the previously segregated differences of culture, language and ethnicity. It seems to me that theories of social constructionism do attain such a combination of differences against a background of 'commonness' as they focus on the universal uniqueness of people, which is our use of language. We all communicate but communication can be unique to cultures and as well as individuals. Theories of language thus marry our uniqueness in communication to a background of universal language use. Approaches above, described by local voices such as Viljoen (2005), Bakker and Snyders (1999), Oosthuizen and Lifschitz (2001) and Lifschitz et al. (1992), seem to provide a place from which this process has already begun. Working in the context of the Mamelodi Township necessitates the consideration

of issues around indigenous psychology, and working cross-culturally and multi-linguistically.

In this chapter, literature around the issues concerning the context of the study was considered. In the following chapter conversations around the topic of bullying are considered.

CHAPTER 3

CONVERSATIONS AROUND BULLYING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews some of the literature around the topic of bullying. A lot of the research on learner discipline in general, and bullying specifically, has been carried out overseas and, as a result, local studies draw on overseas literature (Wolhuter & Steyn, 2003). Due to this, conversations from overseas literature are found in this chapter. Available South African literature is also utilised. According to Olweus (1995), it is only since the early 1970's, that bullying became the object of research and this was mainly confined to Scandinavia. In the 1980's and early 1990's, the research of bullying spread to other countries such as Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States (Olweus, 1995). Little research in the area of bullying has been carried out in South Africa (Smit, 2003). Due to the lack of specific literature on bullying in South African township primary schools, the context of behaviour problems is discussed in general and across ages. This also helps to provide a context for the specific focus of bullying. I did not find any literature on this topic in the context of Mamelodi or any studies combining social constructionist and ecological approaches.

3.2. SITUATING THE PROBLEM

The Talk Radio 702 8.30am news bulletin aired on 31/10/2006 reported on a local conference held at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in the wake of an increasing spate of school violence spreading across South Africa. The spokesperson, Dorothy Khoza states:

We have more than 200 schools [participating] – model C schools, township schools, indicating that the problem of violence in schools is getting out of control and indicating that they [educators] are overwhelmed.

Conversations in literature echo the statements prominent in South Africa's current news bulletins. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) claim that from research it is clear that learner discipline is an acute problem in South Africa. Confirming this concern, Pienaar (2003) claims that it is felt that discipline has collapsed in many South African schools.

3.3 DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

Bullying is not always easy to define (Martin, 2005) as no single definition covers all the aspects of bullying (Aluedse, 2006). According to Smit (2003) and Olweus (1995; 2003), bullying is when a learner intentionally exposes another learner, repeatedly over a period of time, to negative experiences such as physical injury or discomfort. According to Olweus (2003), bullying comprises: intended harm; imbalance of power; it is often organised and systematic; it can be repetitive or random; and the victim experiences hurt, which can take the form of physical or psychological hurt (Olweus, 2003). As noted, in these definitions bullying can take many forms, which can include physical, emotional or sexual abuse of another (Neser et al., 2004). It can also take the form of indirect or subtle bullying (Olweus, 1995; 2003), which includes non-verbal threatening, intimidating glances, threats, teasing, and taunting. This form of bullying is more common than physical bullying but still causes harm to those who experience it. Sometimes individuals carry out bullying, other times it is carried out by groups. The term bullying is used to describe a wide range of behaviours (Martin, 2005). This can make the behaviour difficult to identify and address.

3.4 WHERE IT OCCURS

Bullying in schools can happen anywhere but it usually occurs in places where there is a lack of adult supervision, such as in the toilets, corridors or in the playground (Futrell, 1996; Smit, 2003). Alternatively, acts of violence are also likely to occur amongst large crowds where such acts may go unnoticed (Futrell, 1996). It is possible that the places where bullying occurs accentuates the difficulty of its observation and intervention into its occurrence.

3.5 DISCOURSES OF BULLYING

The discourses around behaviour problems in general are many and varied, focusing on different aspects that are sometimes contradictory. Behaviour problems, such as violence in schools, have been associated with the following: poverty; performing poorly in school; lack of social skills; hopelessness with regards to attaining employment (Noddings, 1996); influence of movies and other media (Derksen & Strasburger, 1996; Maree, 2005; Noddings, 1996); certain kinds of parenting; lack of parental supervision at home; gang membership or peer pressure (Derksen & Strasburger, 1996; Futrell, 1996); involvement with drugs and alcohol (Futrell, 1996; Stewart, 2004); child abuse and family violence (Haugaard & Feerick, 1996); and a decline in the morals of society in general (Noddings, 1996). According to the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher (1993 as cited in Futrell, 1996), violence is more likely to occur when the quality of education is poor. Also, when expectations of certain pupils is less than that of their classmates, they can become frustrated, which can then be expressed through anger and violence (Futrell, 1996). Slee (1995 as cited in Stewart, 2004) cites inappropriate curricula, which do not reflect the scholars' needs as contributing to general disciplinary problems. Cope (2002 as cited in Stewart, 2004) states that the different sets of values and attitudes of teachers, compared to those of scholars, further exacerbate the problem. Teachers, for example, may have a love of learning compared to the scholars who become bored in the school setting. Stewart (2004) points to the starkly contrasting lifestyle scholars experience outside of the school context compared to lifestyle within it. All of the above are proffered as possible reasons for behaviour problems manifesting in the school setting.

Based on a survey of overseas literature and research, Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) attempt to categorise some of the many causes or determinants or correlates of disciplinary problems in scholars. Perhaps motivated by the variety such as that mentioned above, they define five categories. Firstly, teacher related factors include teacher competence, comprising: effective knowledge of the subject, good presentation of the lesson, good classroom techniques and group management skills. Secondly, child related factors

comprise the developmental stage of the child, which is related to the incidence of behaviour problems that manifest. Thirdly, school related factors comprise developing a positive atmosphere, developing a sense of community and shared values, the physical appearance of the school premises, class size, management style to promote collective teacher responsibility, content and delivery of school curriculum and the fostering of positive relationships with parents. Fourthly, parent and family related factors comprise parental example and/or guidance, parental school involvement, and family stress such as marital problems, financial difficulties, poverty or poor housing which have all been associated with behaviour problems. Those in the lower economic strata are reported to be at a greater risk for behaviour problems as they are exposed to the added stressors of poor housing and poverty. Lastly, society related factors include excessive television watching and video games which again were raised as a concern, and if that society is in a state of flux (Wolhuter & Steyn, 2003). Futrell (1996), using the example that children spend hours absorbing acts of violence in the media, in our homes, and in the community, claims that they are the products of the culture and society that we have created. Much of what is occurring in schools is a symptom of what is occurring in society. He claims that America cannot afford to ignore the self destructive behaviours, negative attitudes and violence in the schools because of the implications it, in turn, has for larger society.

With regard specifically to bullying, the findings are just as varied. The bullying role in early primary school leads to rejection from peers as opposed to popularity. Even though peers respond negatively to the aggressive behaviour of those who bully, it does not seem to affect this role. In contrast to this context, when children reach secondary school, those who bully are more accepted (Schäfer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke, & Schulz, 2005). Early primary school environment does, therefore, not encourage bullying behaviour, while the secondary school environment does (Rigby & Slee, 1988 as cited in Schäfer, et al., 2005). Rigby and Slee (1988 as cited in Stewart 2004) indicate that bullying in Australian schools is worse in the age categories 8-13 years. Rigby (2001 as cited in Stewart, 2004) claims that many school bullies continue on to become bullies in the workplace, which indicates that the children exhibiting these behavioural traits may maintain them throughout their lifespan. The consistency of bullying behaviour across

time is confirmed by a study in Germany carried out by Schäfer, et al. (2005) indicating that having the role of bully in primary schools predicted the risk of having the same role in secondary school. According to Olweus (1995), there is evidence that bullying is consistent over time unless intervention occurs.

Bullying behaviour is more prominent amongst boys than girls and boys are also more often the victims of bullying. Bullying does occur among girls as well though they typically use more indirect and subtle ways of bullying. Additionally, reported trends indicate that boys bully girls and older students bully younger students (Olweus, 1995; 2003). According to Martin (2005), those who are bullied are often targeted because they seem different – they may be small, have learning difficulties or be overly sensitive. According to Pellegrini (2002), class size is related to bullying, the larger the class, the more prominent bullying behaviour becomes.

Challenging these and other voices in the field of bullying, Olweus (1995, 2003) claims class size or school size bears no relation to bullying. Neither does competition for grades, failure in school, or difference in appearance. All of these assumptions around bullying are said to be myths that are not backed by empirical evidence (Olweus, 1995). Olweus (1995) instead claims that personality characteristics in combination with physical strength, in the case of boys, are linked to the development of bullying. Also, teacher attitudes, behaviour and routines play a major role in determining how the problem of bullying is manifest in the classroom. Despite the many and sometimes contradictory research findings, some authors (Harris & Petrie, 2003; Olweus, 1995) however construct a composite picture of those who bully and those who are bullied.

3.6 CHARACTERISTICS IN LITERATURE DESCRIBING THOSE WHO BULLY AND THOSE WHO ARE BULLIED

The characteristics of bullies are often constructed alongside characteristics of children who are bullied, usually defined as victims, in the literature. Children who are bullied fall into two different categories of either passive or pro-active (Harris & Petrie, 2003).

Passive children who are bullied are often constructed as anxious and insecure compared to their peers. They are of low self-esteem and often sensitive and quiet. If they are boys they are likely to be physically weaker than their peers. These children are defined as passive or submissive, exhibiting a typical anxious and submissive reaction pattern (Olweus, 1995; Harris & Petrie, 2003). Follow up studies by Olweus (1995) on children who are bullied found them at twenty three years to be prone to depression and of lower self-esteem when compared to their peers who were not bullied.

Children in the pro-active category are less common than those found in the passive category. These children tend to be more active and assertive and more confident than those found in the passive category. They are still anxious, but are more reactive emotionally. They tend to tease and annoy their classmates until they retaliate. They will fight back but are ineffectual. These children may also have a learning disability, lack social skills or they may be insensitive to their peers (Harris & Petrie, 2003).

On the other hand, children who bully tend to be aggressive towards both their peers and adults. They are constructed as having a need to dominate and are characterised by impulsivity. They are described as having little empathy towards those they bully. They are likely to be physically stronger than boys in general and especially the children they bully (Harris & Petrie, 2003; Olweus, 1995). In contrast to the theory that suggests that bullying behaviour compensates for a low self-esteem and anxiety, Olweus' (1995) studies have found these children to be lower in anxiety and insecurity or average with regards to these characteristics when compared with their peers. Olweus (1995) identified four child-rearing factors that are important in the development of the characteristics of what he refers to as an aggressive reaction pattern. The attitude of the primary caregivers towards the child in early years is characterised by: indifference; lack of warmth and involvement; permissiveness for aggressive behaviour by the child; inadequate limit setting and use of power, such as physical punishment, in disciplinary techniques. Olweus (1995) claims, that the possible interrelated psychological characteristics underlying bullying behaviour are a strong need for power, dominance and control. Possible family conditions that develop a certain degree of hostility towards the

environment may also lead children to inflict injury and suffering upon others. Bullying behaviour is also instrumental in attaining certain commodities such as money. In many situations bullying can be rewarded with prestige amongst peers. With regard to psychological characteristics, Olweus (1995) claims that bullying can also be seen as part of a generally antisocial behaviour pattern. To support this claim, Olweus (1995) found that in follow up studies 35% to 40% of boys characterised as bullies in Grades 6-9 had been convicted of at least three registered crimes by the age of 24. This was compared with only 10% of boys not classified as bullies. In contrast to this, other theories such as ecological approaches, see bullying behaviour as related to context and therefore subject to change (Auerswald, 1992; Rhodes & Tracy, 1974a as cited in Rhodes, 1996).

3.7 CONSTRUCTED THEORIES AROUND BULLYING

3.7.1 DSM IV Construction of Bullying

The DSM IV, a nomenclature of mental disorders, is written from a disease-centred paradigm of the medical model. This views 'mental disorders' (Castillo, 1997, p.7) in terms of brain pathology within those exhibiting the disorders. However, the DSM IV also displays a shift from this paradigm in that described categories of disorders are no longer constructed as discrete separate entities without overlap between them and social and cultural effects are also included in descriptions and explanations. The descriptions by Kaplan and Sadock (Sadock & Sadock, 2003) of various behavioural categories found in the DSM IV take into account biological, social and psychological components. Behaviour and the understanding of it are constructed around these components. The psychological components refer to psychodynamic and personality functioning.

There are two categories in the DSM IV into which a child or adolescent exhibiting bullying behaviour may fit. Childhood or adolescent antisocial behaviour is defined as engaging in isolated antisocial acts as opposed to a pattern of antisocial behaviour. Within this category, antisocial behaviour can occur due to mental disorder though also in its absence. The social environment of such children is described as containing many risk factors including harsh and physically abusive parenting, parental criminality and

low adult supervision. The child exhibits tendencies towards impulsive and hyperactive behaviour. Antisocial behaviour is associated with low IQ and academic failure. Reported psychological factors involved are related to poor parenting in which the child experiences low self-esteem and unconscious anger. As the children are not set any limits by their parents, their consciences are said to be 'deficient' (Sadock & Sadock, 2003, p. 1292) due to not being able to internalise parental prohibitions, which account for the formation of superego or conscience. This explanation is justified by citing the consistent finding of child abuse in people who perform repeated acts of violence. From this perspective, treatment would involve determining any psychiatric disorders such as depression, bipolar 1 disorder or psychotic disorder. The treatment of antisocial behaviour usually involves behaviour management in a controlled environment, where behaviour is modified according to positive reinforcement to establish pro-social behaviours.

The second category involving children who bully is conduct disorder. This definition refers to children with a repetitive pattern of at least three specifically defined antisocial behaviours over a consistent period of six months. The antisocial pattern is an enduring behaviour that develops over time and is characterised by aggression and violation of the rights of others. As with childhood or adolescent antisocial behaviour, it is also associated with low socio-economic status and harsh punitive parenting, family discord, lack of parental supervision and lack of social skills. It occurs, along with other defined disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression and learning disorders. The specific behaviour required for diagnosis of conduct disorder is bullying, threatening or intimidating others and staying out late at night, despite parental probation. This behaviour begins before thirteen years of age. The behaviour is not explained in terms of any one account as there are many psychosocial factors contributing to its development. A variety of treatments is suggested as helpful in containing the behaviour, for example a structured, supportive environment with consistent rules and expected consequences. When a family is abusive or chaotic, the child is sometimes removed, so that he or she can benefit from a structured, consistent environment. The school setting can use behavioural techniques to promote acceptable behaviour and discourage

antisocial behaviour. Sometimes medication is used to help control the behaviour (Sadock & Sadock, 2003).

3.7.2 The Theory of Reciprocal Altruism

Pellegrini (2002) relates school size to the prevalence of bullying. It is suggested that youngsters are less likely to be aggressive if they are familiar with, and in close physical proximity to, their peers as emotional closeness can be facilitated by close physical proximity (Hartup, 1996 as cited in Pellegrini 2002). According to Pellegrini (2002), the suggestion that familiarity and closeness of peers facilitates minimising aggression and maximising cooperation is consistent with the theory of reciprocal altruism. This theory claims that the use of aggression and cooperation between individuals is determined by the costs and benefits to each participant using either of the two strategies. Aggressive or cooperative behaviour elicits a similar response from a peer. Aggression is costly to both parties and has fewer benefits, relative to the costs. Cooperation on the other hand has fewer costs and greater benefits to both parties. The idea behind reciprocal altruism only works if the group meets repeatedly across time. If they do not meet repeatedly there is a low likelihood that any aggression they exhibit will be reciprocated and cooperation will be costly to somebody who is not a member of a stable group as it is unlikely that others will reciprocate. According to Pellegrini (2002), this theory explains the reported connection between school size and bullying.

3.7.3 Ecological Thought

According to Auerswald (1992), humans react to threatening conditions in their environments. When conditions that foster these reactions exist continuously, the reactions are also likely to be continuous. When the conditions that elicit the reactions disappear, the reactions likewise can be expected to disappear (Auerswald, 1992). According to Auerswald (1992), rage and affection, both reactive responses, are complementary and within a given moment of reaction, one of these two responses dominates. In the absence of the rage reaction, the appearance and growth of affectionate love is possible. From this theoretical perspective, there is no objective entity such as rage, and there is no objective entity such as a stored pool of rage. People experiencing

the conditions of continuing social injustice and deprivation are continuously reacting with rage and will no longer react if these conditions disappear. Ecological thought facilitates seeing the world as a set of interchanging networks. Through this thinking, child deviance can be seen as preservation of a human ecology as opposed to sick children disturbing their schools and society. Child deviance is an open evolving human ecology that is subject to change (Rhodes & Tracy, 1974a as cited in Rhodes, 1996).

Disciplinary concerns around learners have been around for a long time. The kinds of concerns change along with the social problems facing learners, their families and schools and the way schools see these problems. At the beginning of the 20th century, social problems in America were industrialisation, overcrowding, insufficient infrastructure, disease, malnutrition, lack of basic health care, discontent, crime and little chance of economic advancement within the generally impoverished neighbourhoods (Danforth & Smith, 2005). The context of this study, the South African township of Mamelodi, reflects similar social conditions to those of the American impoverished neighbourhoods described by Danforth and Smith (2005).

Aponte (1990) attributes the high rate of family breakdown, family violence, street violence, sexual abuse of children, runaway youngsters, homeless individuals and families, and substance abuse, i.e. social problems in general in America, not to an accumulation of isolated tragedies, but to the breakdown of the values and structure of the communities and American society as a whole. The effects of this breakdown are seen at all levels of society but he claims that the poor are particularly vulnerable. Observations can be made of a society that is losing the cohesiveness of family and community life. South Africa is undergoing intense social change with new political systems, transformation of government and the cultural integration of a previously segregated society. These changes induce significant psychological effects (Eskell-Blokland, 2007) and add to the dynamics of the context of this particular study. The Mamelodi Township community is in transition. The implication of such a transition, according to Hickson and Kriegler (1991), is that traditional structures and meanings are

no longer relevant and new meanings and structures have not as yet developed. This leaves young people without clear guidelines, which can result in high-risk behaviour.

Aponte (1990) claims, that the poor are dependent on the condition of social structure. A breakdown in this structure leaves them to their own devices with no coherent national policy that reflects understanding of the social conditions crippling them. He also highlights the lack of therapeutic approaches that incorporate dealings with community institutions into the conceptual framework and the interventional approach of ongoing therapy (Aponte, 1990). The world of research and practice need to be brought together (Brion-Meisels & Selman, 1996) in such a way so as to provide knowledge that will facilitate the incorporation of community institutions into intervention programmes. Aponte (1990) claims that any therapeutic model that integrates the community into its treatment approach must incorporate that environment as part of what it assesses to facilitate understanding of a family problem. The environment must also be part of the field into which therapy intervenes. This includes every part of the community that contributes to the family's problems and those parts that may be utilised as resources (Aponte, 1990). Any change process requires commitment from individuals, families, schools and communities. The research and therapeutic methodologies used must include working with families, communities and schools (Futrell, 1996). Relating this more specifically to this present study, Gilligan (1982 as cited in Brion-Meisels & Selman, 1996) claims we must listen carefully for, and give power to, the diverse voices that make up the entire school community.

Specifically referring to the South African situation in this regard, it is felt by some that the combination of the banning of corporal punishment and the introduction of outcomes-based education which introduced extensive group work, led to a situation where discipline collapsed in many South African schools (Pienaar, 2003). Current methods of discipline appear inadequate to deal with the predicament (Maree, 2005; Pienaar, 2003). Maree (2005), writing specifically on bullying in South African schools, writes the article from the perspective that this current school situation is seen as embedded within the broader picture of spiralling violence within South Africa. Maree

(2005) states that since the abolition of Apartheid spiralling levels of crime have dominated South African society, as have rising teenage suicide rates, bullying and other forms of abuse. Many parents are missing or engaged in long working hours and low paying employment. Educational skills are low amongst many sectors of the population, which results in little interest in emotional, social, academic and intellectual pursuits. Indeed Maree (2005) states that bullying is prevalent throughout South African society, in the family, in tertiary institutions and in the workplace. The after effects of bullying can be severe, possibly lasting into adult life and sometimes never fully dissipating. There seems to be no encompassing strategy in place to deal with this problem.

3.8 SOME INTERVENTIONS

3.8.1 The Whole-School Approach

Pellegrini (2002) claims that reported results of intervention programmes generally indicate difficulty in reducing bullying. He cites the whole-school approach used in Sheffield, England as an exemplary intervention programme. Whole-school approaches focus largely on raising the awareness of bullying amongst pupils, teachers, parents and supervisors (Reid, Monsen & Rivers, 2004). In this approach, a wide scope has been used in an effort to maximise the success of intervention programmes around bullying. It is a school-based programme, but also has peer, family and community components in its implementation.

The studies upon which this intervention is based are drawn mainly from Norway and England. Naturalistic studies of bullying and victimisation seem to indicate that school attitudes and perceptions of bullying are related to its frequency. Pellegrini (2002) summarises the main findings of this research. Some teachers do not see bullying as a problem and they do not discourage it unless it involves direct physical or verbal aggression (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998 as cited in Pellegrini, 2002). Some perceive bullying as part of growing up, and believe that children should learn to deal with harassment on their own (Smith & Brian, 2000 as cited in Pellegrini, 2002). This can discourage children from reporting their experience of the problem to teachers.

Information on sexual harassment in schools in the United States (American Association of University of Women, 1993 as cited in Pellegrini, 2002) indicate that adults in high school environments can encourage a culture of victimisation either implicitly, by tolerating it, or directly, by perpetrating it. Pellegrini's (2002) work shows that it is not so much that the teachers tolerate or model bullying but that they are unaware of it. There is a lack of awareness in teachers of indirect forms of bullying, predominantly used by females (Reid et al., 2004). According to Reid et al. (2004), this finding should encourage training schemes that enable teachers to identify the subtleties of bullying behaviour to improve their skills in detecting bullying and raising pupil awareness. Based on these findings, changing the attitude of teachers towards bullying is an important first step in reducing the problem. With regard to peers, Hartup (1996 as cited in Pellegrini, 2002) has identified that friendships and the size of affiliated peer groups inhibit victimisation and bullying. Affiliation with a large number of peers can minimise being victimised as victimising people with friends may result in a loss of status or retaliation. During the developmental phase of adolescence, peer relations are particularly important. Lack of social skills contributes to being victimised and it is possible that social skills training for children to make friends could be a protective factor against bullying (Aluedse, 2006; Boulton et al. 1994 as cited in Pellegrini 2002; Reid et al., 2004).

The first component of the whole-school approach is to identify a need for policy around bullying. This need is established by documenting specific cases of bullying and the effects of this on teachers, individual students and staff members. This makes the problem of bullying public and the need known. All parties are involved in the policymaking as each one has a unique perspective on the problem. Educators are sometimes reluctant to engage parents and students as equals in policy development but this collaboration is necessary for successful intervention. Having more people involved is also helpful in managing the large amount of work required in policy development, implementation and evaluation. Once the policy is developed, all parties need to understand the nature of bullying. Once the policy is established, it needs to be distributed through the community so that everybody is aware of the policy to be

implemented (Pelligrini, 2002). Training is established in the schools so that staff can assist in implementing the programmes and be educated as to why bullying needs to be stopped (Garrett, 2003 as cited in Aluedse, 2006). These service providers can then use these skills to prevent violence, involve parents in parenting skills training, and they can provide social skills training for the children (Aluedse, 2006).

School bullying can be reduced but the process is an arduous one (Pelligrini, 2002). Aggression seems to be a consistent behaviour, resistant to change. Whole-school policies are effective intervention strategies to minimise bullying but their implementation is difficult. Pelligrini (2002) identifies the following common components of successful programmes:

- The whole process should be inclusive. Reluctance to include all parties should be overcome.
- Leadership is important in successful programme implementation. There must always be one or more individuals willing to take a leadership role. Leaders are necessary in order to manage the multiple tasks and groups involved in the process.

Pellegrini (2002) advocates that the whole-school policy must be established, monitored and evaluated if intervention is to be successful. Research (Whitney, Rivers, Smith & Sharp, 1994 as cited in Reid et al., 2004) has shown that the result of the implementation of whole-school programmes is that children become much more likely to report bullying. However, the following should be considered when implementing such a programme: Psychological theory emphasises the fundamental role of bystanders in the continuation of bullying in schools. Despite this, schools target those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who are bullied, but not school children as a whole (Rivers & Soutter, 1996 as cited in Reid et al., 2004). These programmes also seem to focus more on those who are bullied than on those who engage in bullying behaviour themselves. However, the idea behind whole-school intervention is to be inclusive of everyone. Rivers and Soutter (cited in Reid et al., 2004) claim that when someone is defined as a victim or a bully, the context of behaviour should be considered, as these

roles tend to be a response to circumstances and not personality traits. Psychological theory has also revealed the negative effects of implementing bullying sanctions and this should be considered when designing whole-school practices (Reid et al., 2004).

3.8.2 Ecosystemic Intervention

Tyler and Jones (2002) use an ecosystemic approach for intervention with chronic behaviour problems in British schools in Leicestershire. Central to many eco-systemic interventions is the process of reframing. Teachers are asked a series of questions to facilitate reflection on the situation involving children with chronic behaviour problems in terms of events, their feelings and responses. Tyler and Jones (2002, p. 30) pose the following questions:

- 1 Describe what happens in the problem situation in specific terms. Who does what? When do they do it? Who else is involved?
 - 2 How do you usually respond to the behaviour, and what is the usual result?
 - 3 What is your current explanation of why the person behaves this way?
 - 4 What positive alternative explanations might there be for this behaviour?
 - 5 Based on one of these positive alternatives, how could you respond differently from the way you have responded previously?
 - 6 What was the result of your reframing? Was it successful? If so, what were the changes that took place? If not, how might you see this result to inform your next reframing?
- (p.30)

Central to the reframing process is question four, where teachers are required to find positive explanations for the behaviour. The teachers' perceptions and explanations of the negative behaviour are not criticised or challenged as they may be valid but they still do not bring about change in the situation. It takes time for the teachers to master positively reframing the situation as negative framing of problems is usually entrenched. It took the teachers in this study (Tyler & Jones, 2002) two to three days to come up with positive alternatives. The teachers need to find positive alternatives that they can actually

believe. The pupils also find positive alternative explanations unusual at first, but the positive alternative communication often initiates a change in the situation.

The teachers in this study (Tyler & Jones, 2002) were initially resistant to this approach, as it seemed to be counter-intuitive to them, but attitudes slowly changed as positive results were noted. The teachers were willing to initially implement the approach because of the following reported reasons (Tyler & Jones, 2002, p. 32):

- The techniques were structured into stages that are easy to follow.
- Teachers wanted to try the approach before rejecting it.
- Teachers felt that they had nothing to lose, given the chronic nature of the problems being encountered.

In this study (Tyler & Jones, 2002), teachers were informed of the methods and theory behind ecosystemic interventions through four monthly conferences. Focus groups that gave teachers an opportunity to discuss progress and to ask questions were also held. The schools were visited between conferences to offer support and discuss particular problem situations and any theoretical questions. What the teachers found helpful in the approach was that it gave them an opportunity to discuss the process in a supportive setting. It gave them a structure to manage the situation, and they also found the success of interventions they experienced encouraging. Teachers also reported that they felt that there was not an expectation of immediate success. The ecosystemic approach emphasised the relationship between behaviour and reframing as opposed to holding the teacher or the child responsible for the behaviour. The approach encouraged self-reflection, and a different way of seeing things. After using the approach, teachers reported feeling less stressed and an improvement in their health. The ecosystemic approach was seen as giving control and confidence to the children in the process of changing their behaviour. Many teachers reported a positive ripple effect across the whole ecosystem of the classroom.

The difficulties encountered in the implementation of this intervention (Tyler & Jones, 2002) were that some teachers initially felt that the ecosystemic approach was not new,

and identified it with positive reinforcement of negative behaviours. Teachers felt that the concepts were initially difficult to understand even after successful implementation but most were impressed with the way that the approach successfully dealt with behaviour problems. Most teachers felt that the ecosystemic approach would not be suitable for all teachers, only those who were more adventurous and prepared to use something different and challenging (Tyler & Jones, 2002). In this particular report (Tyler & Jones, 2002) no case studies using children who bullied were reported.

With the ecosystemic approach, the focus of change is on the adult's response and this is not based on the condition that the child must also change. From this perspective, change in the adult's behaviour should automatically bring about a corresponding change in the system. The teacher's role is not to tell the child how to make the change but to give the child the opportunity to change.

3.8.3 The Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme

This programme is based on the work and research of Olweus and has been developed over a twenty-year period (Olweus, 2003). It is built on a limited set of key principles, which developed from Olweus' (2003) research on the development and modification of problem behaviour, particularly aggressive behaviour. The key principles are as follows: It is important to try to create an environment characterised by warmth, positive interests and involvement from adults, while simultaneously imposing firm limits on unacceptable behaviour. When limits and rules are violated, non-hostile, non-physical sanctions should be applied consistently. To apply these principles, a certain degree of monitoring of learners is necessary both in and out of school. Adults at home and at school should act as authority figures. The implementation of the programme is mainly based on the utilisation of the existing social environment namely, teachers, school personnel, students and parents. No mental health professionals play a major role in restructuring the social environment. School psychologists, counsellors and social workers play an important role in planning and coordinating the teachers who counsel and the parents. They also handle the serious cases (Olweus, 1995; 2003)

According to Olweus (1995), the implementation of this programme works well in a variety of cultural conditions including ethnic diversity. The results of the implementation of this programme suggest that it is possible to reduce bullying behaviour if an appropriate programme is introduced. Other advantages of this programme are that it can be implemented with relatively simple means and without major costs. It consists primarily of changing attitudes, behaviour, and routines of school life.

The general principles upon which the programme is based are translated into a number of specific measures, which are implemented at different levels of the school environment, such as the classroom and individual learner. Listed below are the core components of an intervention programme that are considered to be most important by Olweus (1995) as based on statistical analysis of intervention outcomes.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme

General Prerequisite

Awareness and involvement on the part of adults

Measures at the school level

Administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim questionnaire (filled out anonymously by students)

Formation of a bullying prevention, coordinating committee

Training of staff and time for discussion groups

Effective supervision during recess and lunch periods

Measures at the class level

Classroom and school rules about bullying

Regular classroom meetings

Meetings with students' parents

Measures at the individual level

Individual meetings with students who bully

Individual meetings with those who have been bullied

Meetings with parents of students involved

Development of individual intervention plans

Olweus (1995, p.199; 2003, p.17).

The implementation of The Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme has led to marked reductions in bullying of 50% or more across both genders after an 8 to 20 month time period. As well as a reduction in bullying, reductions in general antisocial behaviour, such as fighting, vandalism, drunkenness and truancy, are also reported (Olweus, 2003). There is a reported improvement in the social climate of the classroom generally, such as an improvement in discipline, more positive social relationships, more positive attitude of students towards schoolwork and the school, and an increase in student satisfaction with school life. The programme is also preventative in nature.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The varied findings around the topic of behaviour problems in schools is possibly due, in part, to the differing definitions of the issue that endeavour to describe a wide range of related behaviours. As this study is written from a social constructionist and ecological approach, the conversations with the members of the ecology and the subsequent analysis are not based on the above review of different voices in argumentation around the topic of bullying. However, this theoretical approach influences the choice of theories and intervention programmes reviewed as they mostly favour this construction. The purpose of the conversations in chapter five is to construct the participants' own meaning and experience around bullying. However, some of the theories in the literature reviewed in this chapter are found in chapter six as a preliminary way of joining theory with the meanings constructed from the conversations in chapter five. Chapter four describes the way in which the research narrative of this study is constructed, its design, methods of gathering and analysing the conversations between the members of the ecology of bullying and me.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH NARRATIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Theories provide a framework, a way to see the world using certain assumptions (Linclon & Guba, 1985). This chapter contains my introduction to the assumptions and conversations around the theoretical approach to this study. The methodology arises from the theory and describes the practical way in which the study is carried out (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 1999). After the theoretical discussion, the methodology describing the research design, data gathering, and means of analysis are detailed. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research and ethical issues are discussed.

An ecological construction is the theoretical approach chosen for this study. It is a postmodern theory combining social constructionist and ecological approaches. In the following paragraphs, I describe my understanding of these approaches and how they fit this study by integrating chosen excerpts from the referenced texts. The postmodern approach is discussed, then social constructionism with its emphasis on language and finally the specific approach for this study, an ecological construction. As stated, ecological construction is a combination of social constructionism and ecological approach, which perceives social behaviour as constructing a system or network of relationships through language. The specific theories of language used to analyse the data gathered are also discussed. The authors and excerpts are chosen because they spoke to me specifically as being relevant to myself and the context and process of this study at this point in time. As such, they form part of this constructed research narrative.

4.2 POSTMODERN DISCOURSES

Postmodernism questions the fundamental assumptions underlying modernism such as a search for truth and understanding the true nature of reality (Kvale, 1996). It rejects absolute knowledge while accepting diverse knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1992). There is no recognition of a universal system of knowledge, thus grand theories or metanarratives

are rejected. There is an acceptance of multiple theories that emphasise different context-dependant ways of life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). There is a move away from formalised knowledge systems towards narrative knowledge found in storytelling (Lyotard, 1984). With the rejection of universal knowledge, local knowledge and context becomes important (Kvale, 1996). Knowledge is now based on small, local narrative units that together construct the values of a community (Polkinghorne, 1988) or the aforementioned context-dependent ways of life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Realities are organized and maintained through language in the form of narratives (Freedman & Combs, 1996). There exists no coherent postmodern philosophy but rather different thinkers focus on the different aspects of the postmodern approach (Kvale, 1992). Postmodernism accepts fragmentation, multiple truths and perspectival social reality (Kvale, 1996).

This celebration of diversity and fragmented theoretical condition allows postmodernism to theoretically accommodate a multicultural context as it allows for epistemological flexibility, which, according to Eskell-Blokland (2007), is required for the context of Mamelodi. Mamelodi is a context in which traditions, beliefs, language and customs are not homogenous and, on top of this, the township faces challenges associated with the rapidly changing socio-cultural contexts in South Africa. Eskell-Blokland (2007) claims that if people work within such a multi-cultural context using a fixed epistemology, they will be paradigmatically closed to that which lies outside of their framework. She therefore advocates using a flexible epistemology from which to operate when conducting research in these areas (Eskell-Blokland, 2007). Postmodernism appears to provide such a flexible epistemological framework. Gergen (1992) depicts postmodernism as opening up new areas of study and he emphasises its use for the development of practical and contextual understanding. These new areas of study and contextual emphases are useful for researching unexplored contexts, such as Mamelodi, to avoid imposing theoretical frameworks that do not fit the specific context and therefore limit understanding.

In reading Kvale, (1996) I see that social constructionism is a postmodern theory. Knowledge within the postmodern framework is seen as constructed, not something to be

discovered (Kvale, 1996). In consulting Spivey (1997), I understand that this postmodern assumption is the main focus of social constructionism. Social constructionism connects large bodies of work that run through much of the theoretical literature concerning discourse (Spivey, 1997). Social constructionist research is concerned with the patterns of social meanings found in language, rather than the technical aspects of language use and its structure. The social world is seen as a kind of language, a system of meanings and practices, which constructs reality. This includes words, conversations, actions, physical buildings or visual images.

Different kinds of social constructionist research focuses on different aspects of this social world (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 1999). This research focuses mainly on conversations held between the participants and me. It also includes the effects that society's background discourses could have on the discourses constructed in the conversations and also the influences these conversational discourses could have on actions. The definition of discourse as defined in this study is used as broad patterns of talk or systems of statements operating within these conversations (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999, p. 328). Language is the vehicle through which reality is constructed, each language doing this in its own way. Knowledge becomes narrative, embodied in stories communicated through language (Kvale, 1996). Knowledge is seen as a conversation between two or more people about a topic that is of interest (Kvale, 1996). The construction of knowledge and understanding of our world is therefore a social process rooted in language (Burr, 1995; Steier, 1991). This emphasis on language shifts focus from objective reality and the individual subject. There is no longer a distinctive self, describing an objective reality which language represents. The individual is replaced by the relationship as the locus of knowledge (Kvale, 1996). Instead, there is now an emphasis on knowledge as inter-relational and structural, interwoven in connected networks. Knowledge exists neither inside people nor outside of them. It exists in the relationship between people and the world (Kvale, 1996; Burr, 1995). Knowledge is not something people have but something they do together (Burr, 1995). As Shotter (1996) explains, "Truth is not born, nor is it to be found inside the head of an

individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth in the process of their dialogic interaction” (Shotter, 1996, p.2).

An ecological approach within a postmodern, constructionist theoretical structure is the specific approach chosen for this study. An ecological approach is guided by conversations with the context and in this way the approach informs a local sense of helping (Eskell-Blokland, 2007).

4.2.1 An Ecological Construction

The first departure from modernism in psychology emerged when systems theory entered the domain of the discipline. From here developed the ecosystemic or ecological approach, which emphasises ecology, relationship, whole systems, interrelation and context (Bakker, 1999). Systems theory provided a metaphor allowing people to talk about the process in which they connect in patterns transcending the focus on individuals (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The treatment perspective is a multi-level, one focussed on the context of interaction amongst individuals and their environment (Perkel, 1988). The individual is seen as part of many different systems including family, community and culture. These different sub-systems interact functioning as a whole (Bakker, 1999; Bakker & Snyders, 1999). The exploring of ecology allows for the discussions of human behaviour in context. This helps to construct a more congruent perspective of local communities and epistemologies in specific contexts, which facilitates a helping process that is both relevant and appropriate locally (Eskell-Blokland, 2007). It is therefore in keeping with the postmodern ideal of being contextually sensitive (Capra, 1997). The Ecological view is seen as fitting with the African view that individuals and sub-groups in a community all influence each other maintaining a cohesive whole (Bakker & Snyders, 1999).

Recently, the theoretical emphasis has shifted from systems concepts to textual analogies and the construction of human interactions through language (Bakker, 1999). Initially systems theory focused on the concepts of role and structure – layered hierarchical structures in which each layer is influenced by the one above it. This implies that the

problem in one system is related to the system above it. Every problem is perceived within a context of interdependent systems, which includes the individual's psyche, the families, and the community to which these individuals and families belong (Anderson & Goolishian, 1986). From this web of systemic interrelations elements are chosen from various levels that will facilitate appropriate intervention for a specific case (Perkel, 1988).

Ecology is moving away from a study of roles and structure and the relations between them to an ecology of ideas and the interaction of these ideas which are constructed through language. Social behaviour is seen as a force, which through language constructs the networks of relationships that comprise a system (Anderson & Goolishian, 1986).

Viljoen says:

There's not a fixed system out there. The system comes into being as we describe it. Outside of our description we cannot assume that there are other elements at play (G.A. Viljoen, personal communication, November 16, 2006).

The system is defined as anyone in dialogue about the problem, defining it, and sometimes offering solutions. The system is formed by a conversation about the problem (Cole, 1991). This moves us beyond systems theory, which could limit ability to think about the flow of ideas within a cultural context (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Linking these ideas to my specific study in conversation with my supervisor she stated:

When you interview the child it is the child's worldview and when you interview the parent there is the parent's worldview. Remember there is no objective reality out there. What you have are descriptions and social constructions describing a system (L.M. Eskill-Blokland, personal communication, November 14, 2006).

In keeping with the postmodern, social constructionism theoretical approach of this study, the theoretical point of departure is an ecological construction of behaviour problems, specifically bullying in the school community in Mamelodi.

4.3 THEORIES ON THE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE

4.3.1 Shotter's Rhetorical-Responsive Form of Social Constructionism

An ecology can in part be said to consist of various voices in conversation and social interaction around a certain topic, in this case bullying in the schools. The boundaries around the ecology are imaginary and, in this study, placed there by myself for the practical reason of having to limit the exploration of it. The interconnected influences of various voices and conversations within an ecology are endless in possibility as are the possible interpretations of these conversations and possible points of focus. Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999) say it is never easy to demarcate a discourse from its context as discourses are interrelated and changing and the boundaries between the two are difficult to identify. Through conversation in social interaction, an ecology of ideas is constructed. What then do I as a researcher do to engage with these conversations and facilitate exploration of what the various interacting voices constructively say around school bullying? According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999), social constructionism sees human experience as constructed through language, so language should be the object of study. In more empirical research, language is the unit of analysis (Neuman, 1997). The following theories based on Shotter, Bakhtin and Billig (Shotter, 1993) will be used to analyse the conversations gathered in this study to construct the ecology of ideas around bullying along with ideas from Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999) and Potter and Wetherell (1987).

The single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human existence is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests

his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium (Shotter, 1996, p.1).

Shotter (1993) describes what he calls the rhetorical-responsive form of social constructionism. His views present a social constructionist approach that emphasises social relationships as being constructed through conversations in language and as such the theory fits with an ecological constructionist approach. Foucault (1970 as cited in Shotter, 1993) says that objects or anything that we speak about are constructed through the very act of speaking. Language is not descriptive, it is constructive (Shotter, 1993); it tells us how to see the world, and what to see in it (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The meaning of words is not seen as fixed or precise, or found in the word itself, but rather carried in the context. Meaning is therefore always changing. As such the meaning of words is negotiated between people in conversation or, as is happening now, between the reader and the text (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

4.3.2 The Function of Language

Influenced by the ideas of Bakhtin, Shotter (1993) sees language as responsive in that it occurs as a reply to others within a conversational flow. Influenced by Billig (Shotter 1993), language is seen as rhetorical in that it moves people to perceive things in a certain way. Language is thus constructed as a collection of arguments put forward in response to others to justify a position or certain meanings and gain recognition. Through this process of language and conversational exchange, social relationships and social 'reality' are constructed and meanings are negotiated. Shotter (1993) calls this process of various voices struggling for recognition through dialogue and everyday conversation, argumentation. Often only one side of an opposition or argument is explicitly mentioned in the texts. Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999) refer to this presentation of different sides of argumentation as binary oppositions by As meaning is constructed in interaction it is seen as being social interaction as well as constructing it (Gergen, 1985 as cited in Bakker & Snyders, 1999). The function of language is formative and shaping and it comes up against resistance, through argumentation, as it performs this shaping. Words are used like tools or instruments and through conversation they draw our attention to

aspects of our lives that would otherwise go unnoticed (Shotter, 1993). All the words we utter function to make crucial differences at crucial times (Shotter, 1993). The concept of rhetoric, response and language as tools are in the analysis of this study (Shotter, 1993).

4.3.3 Knowledge and Power

As a postmodern approach Shotter (1993) presents his ideas claiming no ascent to a single systematic view. Theoretical assumptions, as other conversations, are perceived as an inclusion of multi-voiced conversations in a process of argumentation in dialogue around a topic. The voices present different sides or approaches to a topic. The voices that win the argumentation are able, for the moment, to change the way things are perceived and talked about. As social relations are constructed through conversation, those who win the argumentation have the opportunity to construct new social relations (Shotter, 1993). Foucault sees language as the instrument of power; people have power in society in so far as they are able to contribute to the various discourses (Burr, 1995), patterns of speaking (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999), or conversations that shape society. According to Foucault, knowledge and power are linked (Shotter, 1995). Power is said to belong to discourses in that they determine what kind of knowledge is seen as truth, so those who control the discourses, those who win the argumentation, also control knowledge (Burr, 1995). The concept of argumentation and resulting power to influence actions and perceptions are used in the analysis of this study.

4.3.4 The Turbulent Flow of Social Activity

According to Shotter, social activity is a 'large turbulent flow' (Shotter, 1993, p. 41) consisting primarily of two sorts of constructive language activity. There is 'ordered and self-reproducing activity' (Mills, 1940 as cited in Shotter, 1993, p.40). People construct between them 'organised settings into which they direct further action' (Shotter, 1993, p.40). This constructs seeing the world from an 'orderly systematic discourse' (Shotter, 1993, p.40). According to Burr (1995), Foucault states that power does not reside in a specific group of people; it is something that is exercised through these systematic discourses. The nature of knowledge and power is unstable as any discourse can be changed at any time (Burr, 1995). This is made possible because the meaning of

language is ambiguous and through argumentation these ordered discourses are themselves open to being contested and therefore subject to change (Shotter, 1993).

The second type of social activity is found at the edge or in the background of this orderly conduct with the disorder and chaos created by the ambiguous nature of language and this is where the possibility for change occurs. Social reality is thus seen as being vague, uncertain and fragmented. How we construct the ambiguity helps to define us in relation to others, which is why meanings are often contested. With the ambiguity of language, new meanings can be constructed through negotiation as we clamour for our own meanings to be recognised and thus given influence (Shotter, 1993). According to Bakhtin (1986 as cited in Shotter, 1996), an utterance is link a in a chain of communication, a response to what came before it. Between these responses, there are gaps identified by a change in speakers. It is in these gaps that change can occur. In the gaps people create something new but the creation always comes from what is given before. What is given however is changed into something different, giving the opportunity for new meanings (Shotter; 1996). The concept of structured discourses, utterance and the gaps between them – where change can occur – are used in the analysis of this study.

4.3.5 Background Conversations

Influenced by the writings of Foucault, Shotter (1993) emphasises that everyday interaction and conversational exchange is influenced by socio-historical and socio-cultural background, constructing our views of reality and the ways in which we talk about it. This background thereby contributes to the construction of our daily social relations and in this way influences our lives (Shotter, 1993). In Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al's (1999, p.337) words at a macro-level there are other discourses with which the text (transcribed speech) dialogues. According to Gergen (1985 as cited in Burr, 1995), all knowledge, including psychological knowledge is socially specific, influenced by the historical and cultural. Therefore these realms should be introduced into research if we are to understand psychological and social life (Burr, 1995). In the specific society or culture from which we come there are conversations about how we are

to be as people. In day-to-day conversation we draw upon this background, which contains a body of already available meanings and it is from this background, according to Shotter (1993), that we negotiate new meanings with each other through our conversations. Within this conversational background, we experience ourselves our world, and our language. These background conversations are a joint knowledge held together with others from within a particular culture or society (Shotter, 1993). What we have in common is a shared set of speech genres (Shotter, 1996). We internalise these dominant narratives, or structured discourses, believing that they describe us accurately (Freedman & Combs, 1996). For Shotter (1993), this process of ‘internalisation’ of how we are to be as a person in society does not create an internal process but exists in language. The inner reflections of the mind being constructed by the same processes as any other ‘reality’ which is through language negotiated between people (Shotter, 1996). The concept of background conversations is used in the analysis of this study.

4.3.6 The Third Kind of Knowledge

According to Shotter (1993), we cannot grasp the nature of this knowledge constructed from this conversational background. Shotter calls the above process ‘sensing’ or a ‘third kind of knowledge’ and it relates to social identity. It is a practical knowledge, not a theoretical knowledge or skill. Although a shared knowledge, due to the ambiguity of language, it can never be fully shared and these meanings and the way we construct ourselves is always subject to change (Shotter, 1993). Billig (1987 as cited in Shotter, 1993) emphasises that topics are dilemmatic in that they always present two sides even within the same culture so our selves are never closed or finalised and background or structured discourses are always subject to change. The other sides of the topics, or the alternative descriptions of selves, can always be brought to the fore in a different context or in the gaps between responses in conversations.

The background conversations, or ‘internalised’ conversations, act as a common sensing against which we judge ideas and actions for their compatibility with these background conversations. Through this ‘sensing’ people influence each other in their being, not just intellectually. In this way, anything we do or say is dependant on the acceptance of

society. According to Heshusius and Ballard (1996), theories of language do not account for inner mind-body, mind-emotion connectedness as a way of knowing that exists outside of language. There is a need to include mind-body and mind-emotion in ways of knowing and in theories of language or discourse (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996). This way of constructing the process of internalisation as a linguistic process, subjectively experienced by us as a ‘sensing’ or ‘third kind of knowledge,’ may be useful as a way of epistemologically connecting mind-body and mind-emotion into these theories.

According to Shotter (1993), social constructions come about in a two-way socio-historical flow. From this background described above, we act towards some particular aspect. The actions are then evaluated according to their compatibility against this background and we then act back to modify this background, further influencing its structure. In this conversational process, we construct and re-construct this background, which in turn constructs and re-constructs us. In this way people are ‘rooted’ (Shotter, 1993 p. 29) in background as we use its linguistic resources. Thereby our world is structured but because of the ambiguous and changing nature of language the process is never finalised and always developing. In our day-to-day lives we are not aware of either this process of construction or its consequences. However, any view or attempt to describe this process in words is by the nature of this same theory contested; any description of the process is seen as forming part of the argumentation of voices spoken of above (Shotter, 1993). In other words, the theory is reflexive, applying itself back onto its own constructions. People interact with one another to construct, modify and maintain what they and society hold to be true, real, and meaningful (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 27). White (1989 as cited in Freedman & Combs, 1996) states that we construct our individual life stories in relation to the dominant narratives in the society from which we come. Society’s dominant discourses prescribe preferred ways of being. We look for the influence of these dominant narratives, background conversations, in the personal narratives of individuals. At the same time we realise that this is our interpretation or construction of this influence (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

4.3.7 Joint Action

As we engage in argumentation against the above background conversations and as we coordinate ourselves with others and respond to what they do, we construct the dynamic, interpersonal process of construction called 'joint action' (Burr, 1995). This joint action creates a situation between people that does not belong to either of them (Shotter, 1993). People judge and correct each other and themselves with regards to their actions against what they see their reality to be. People can have a sense of belonging to a group only if others respond seriously to what they do and say. That is, if they are included in the construction of their reality and not excluded from it in some way. Only then will people feel that the reality in which they live is as much theirs as anyone else's. If all are allowed to participate, we can construct our realities and ourselves in the process. This participation will not result in total harmony but we will be able to participate and realise ourselves (Shotter, 1993). Auerswald (1992) talks of ecological thinking as a way of creating a 'harmonious global community of differences' (Auerswald, 1992, p.31). In the interaction between them, people unknowingly create restraints and enablements, privileges, entitlements, obligations, sanctions – in short, an ethos (Shotter, 1993). Ways of speaking, particular worldviews relate to action (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999). Within the social constructionist point of view, it is important to look at wider cultural and contextual stories as they shape our lives by contributing to holding us together or keeping us apart (Mair, 1988 as cited in Freedmen and Combs, 1996).

4.3.8 Polyphony and the Unfinalisable Self

Social constructionism defines our nature as always emerging and never fixed. Mikhail Bakhtin (n.d.) refers to this as the 'unfinalisable self'. Individual people can never be completely finalised, understood or labelled. A person can always change. We cannot escape that every person is influenced by others, their voices are intertwined and consequently no voice can be said to be isolated (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d.). According to the social constructionist approach, personality is, as any other construction, said to exist between people, not within them. In this way it is possible to have many selves as we emerge in interaction in context (Burr, 1995; Kvale, 1992). No one self is seen as being the true identity, we just have preferred identities in different contexts. As we interact we

work to construct different experiences of the self and then we work to bring about a preferred self in a given context (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The constructive nature of language creates a fragmented, shifting and changing identity (Burr, 1995).

Polyphony, many voices, is related to the concept of the unfinalisable self. It is this unfinalisability of individuals that creates true polyphony. A concept introduced by Bakhtin, it refers to a diversity of voices or points of view (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d.). Bakhtin claims that even within the speech of one individual or within the writing of single author, many voices can be heard (Bakhtin, 1984 as cited in Shotter, 1993). As such, identity is described by Bakhtin as not belonging to the individual but shared.

Bakhtin describes a polyphonic style novel as a carnival. Carnival being “the concept where many distinct individual voices, are heard, flourish and interact together” (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d. p.5). Each individual character is defined yet the voices of the others are heard, each one exerting influence on the other. As such, no identity is seen as independent (Polyphony, n.d.). A polyphonic novel can be defined as a diversity of social speeches and voices that are artistically organised (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d.; Yazdanpour, n.d.). The authoring of the diversity of the voices alone is inadequate; there must also be artistic organisation. Diversity on its own leads to confusion whereas artistic organisation on its own leads to art for art’s sake, both have to occur together within the novel (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d.). In this way, the conflicting views and different characters develop and, through the descriptions, the narrator also merges with the characters and views he is describing (Polyphony, n.d.).

4.3.9 Imagination

Shotter (1993) creates the concept of the imaginary to construct a category placed between real and fictitious. It seems to reflect Bakhtin’s concept of artistic organisation. Shotter (1993) uses this construct to talk about the emergence of social constructions. Imaginary entities exist in the sense that they exert influence on people’s lives. They are incomplete however, as they are open to change. If we try to complete the construction, we can be trapped into a particular way of seeing reality. The concept of the imaginary

helps us to try to grasp the social world in action and its transitional and possible nature. The imaginary has however to be grounded in what Smith (1974 as cited in Shotter, 1993, p. 93) calls a ‘rhetoric fact’, i.e. it is grounded in background and events so that it can be perceived as possible and not just fictional.

The ideas discussed above constructed through Shotter’s (Shotter, 1993) rhetorical responsive form of social constructionism, i.e. rhetoric, argumentation, responsiveness, background voices and sensing, and Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony (Mikhail Bakhtin, n.d.) will be utilised as tools to structure the polyphony of diverse voices in argumentation around the experience of bullying in the schools of Mamelodi. This will form an ecological construction of the experience. The method constructed around these metaphors is found under the section on analysis in this chapter.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY DISCOURSES

The following section explains how the practical research was carried out based on the preceding theoretical discussion.

4.4.1 Design

The sampling technique used is that of purposive sampling (Durrheim & Painter, 1999) as it depends on the availability of the participants, their willingness to participate and the case used is considered by the context to be typical of children who bully. Three primary schools in the Mamelodi Township were approached to participate. One ecological case study from one of the three schools is used in the analysis to explore the aims of this research. The data collection however was carried out across five case studies, from across the three schools, in order to protect the identity of the participants involved, i.e. the origin of the case study eventually used is not identified, neither is the specific school from which it comes. The children described as bullies were identified and referred to me by the primary schools. They were identified by the teachers as the children who exhibit bullying behaviour in the classroom or in the school context. The participants in each ecological case include the families of the children exhibiting bullying, the children

themselves, the teachers and the principal, and possibly the children's peers and any others identified as being involved with the problem system as identified by the participants themselves. During the interview process, the parents and children were asked who they considered to be involved with their situation and who else they would include in the interviews or helping process (see Appendices one-four). In this way relevant ecological case studies were built up according to the perceptions of the participants themselves. The principal and other key figures in the school were interviewed, as they are gatekeepers in the school and involved with the problem of bullying in the school. As such they give access to the school and form an important part of the school's ecology of bullying. I chose to interview two figures prominent in the media on the topic of this research at the time of this study (2007). They were also chosen because of their extensive experience either in teaching and or working with bullying and its effects in the schools. One of these people is a manager of Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and the other a union negotiator, chief director of NAPTOSA, the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa. Although involved with the schools, each functions outside of the school system itself and so presents a wider focus as to the schools' position in society and the overall issues concerning bullying compared to the members of the ecology within one school setting. As a result of these wider perspectives, the conversations with these two members of the ecology construct some of societies' background conversations and social discourses around bullying in the schools. Using one of the ecological case studies, a contribution to an ecological description of bullying in the Mamelodi Township is constructed in the following chapter.

4.5 DATA GATHERING

Data was gathered through interviews. The interviews were semi-structured (Kelly, 1999) but open-ended (Kvale, 1996) allowing the voice of the participants to be heard (Kvale, 1996). One to two interviews lasting approximately fifty minutes each were held with each member of the ecology. The interviews enable the questioning of the participants on the same issues and allow flexibility to probe for further exploration of the

topic when necessary (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). They are not used as an instrument to get to the truth behind the experiences of bullying but as a natural conversational exchange around the topic. My questions are seen as active and constructive (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The interviews in this study are the construction site of ‘knowledge’ (Kvale, 1996). After the necessary permission was attained the interview was taped. In these interviews the people tell stories of their ideas and experience around bullying (Kvale, 1996).

4.6 ANALYSIS

There is no theory of metalanguage that is outside of day-to-day communication to explain the study of language. There is no external reality or theory outside of language as everything is verbally described (Rorty, 1979). The nature of discourse analysis is subjective and interpretive, analysing and constructing discourses whilst at the same time the theory itself is constructed through language. There is also no delineated step-by-step method of analysis to be followed (Burr, 1995). Discourse analysis is an approach, not a method and what is found in the texts about analysis are tools (Shotter, 1993) or tricks (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999, p. 331) used to bring structure to what Shotter (1993) conceptualises as ‘the process of the movement of chaos to order at work’ (Shotter, 1993, p. 179). The analysis found in the next chapter uses the metaphors described below to construct the various discourses from the interviews held with the participants around bullying. The metaphors that we use to organise our work influences what we see. These metaphors can detract from presenting reality as ever-changing and constructed (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The analysis must be read with this in mind.

This study is exploratory and is looking at the ‘stuckness’ (Eskell-Blokland, 2007) of the members of an ecology of bullying. Therefore I am interested in the various discourses of meanings, experience or understanding of bullying constructed in the ‘ordered and self-reproducing activity’, that people construct between them and into which they direct further action (Shotter, 1993, p.40). I am also interested in the interaction of the various voices and effects that the discourses have on each other. The ‘tools’ found in Shotter’s

(1993, p.179) rhetorical-responsive version of social constructionism are used as metaphors to construct the polyphony of voices in interaction and as my focus is also on what the discourses are saying, some ‘tricks’ from Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999, p.131) and Potter and Wetherell (1987) are also used. In this study, language is seen according to Bakhtin’s sense, not as a system of grammatical categories but as a system of ideologies; a worldview (Holquist, 1981).

Firstly the taped interviews were transcribed into text (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). On a ‘micro-level’ (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999, p. 337) the conversations between the individual members of the ecology and me are explored for discourses constructed in the interaction between us.

The ‘trick’ of looking at metaphors, terms, phrases and patterns of language use is used to help construct the discourses (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Words are used like tools or instruments and through conversation they draw our attention to aspects of our lives that we would otherwise not notice (Shotter, 1993). The ‘trick’ of looking for human subjects in the discourses is also used (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999). Using this trick the members of the ecology are constructed.

The concept of utterance (Bahktin. 1986 as cited in Shotter, 1993) is used in the analysis of this study. Utterances are linked in a conversational flow about a specific topic, in this case bullying (Mikhail Bahktin, n.d.). It is produced in response to other utterances and identified by a change in speaking subjects. Utterances are themselves responses and they open up gaps in the conversation into which others can respond. As an utterance is constructed as a response it is conceptualised in terms of an answer in the form of an affirmation, a disagreement, elaboration, application and so on (Shotter, 1993; Shotter, 1996). The dialogue will in places be analysed using the utterance as a response between the participants and me. Responses to any other voice noted in the conversational flow will also be sought. The focus of this study will be the response in the form of the written text but response can also be an action or even silence (Shotter, 1996).

The tool of Billig's rhetoric analysis (Burr, 1995; Shotter, 1993) looks at how the texts use language to justify their accounts. These accounts are always in a context of argumentation (Shotter, 1993) so a presented position stands against another account. In other words what is said and what is not said is looked at. This is similar to the process of looking for binary oppositions spoken of by Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (1999). Often only one side of an opposition or argument is explicitly mentioned in the texts. What we have is a set of two or more sided topics from which come two or more sides of an argument. This will construct the arguments and conflicting ideas around bullying using the dialogue from the individual interviews (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999).

The discourses will be analysed according to the effects they produce. What texts do and their function is the focus of discourse analysis. How does the opposition, metaphor, way of speaking, particular kind of worldview relate to action? What are the effects of describing subjects in a particular way (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999)? In Shotter's (1993) words, what do the arguments and responses 'enable' and what do they 'restrain'? How does it provide the opportunity for certain actions and limit others? How these discourses restrain or enable certain actions for the members of the ecology of bullying will be constructed as they respond to the dialogic interaction (Shotter, 1996).

All of this analysis is subjective and interpreted (Burr, 1995) according to Shotter's (1993) concept of sensing (my own sensing and that of the other members of the ecology). Heshusius and Ballard (1996) claim an "embodied knowledge" and Shotter (1993) claims a "third kind of knowledge" in our lives and therefore also in our research as well. Heshusius and Ballard (1996) say that it is time to identify and claim these experiences.

At a macro-level (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999, p.337) there are other discourses with which the text dialogues. In this study, the texts from my individual interviews dialogue with the other discourses within the ecology of bullying and other background conversations. The many different texts are considered in order to see how discourses

possibly interact and relate to other discourses (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999). Discourses refer to one another and provide context for each other and sometimes get their shared meaning from a historical and social context (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999). Discourses at a macro-level (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999) develop over time whereas at a micro-level they develop over a short period of time. In this study I look across all of my individual interviews and through constructing the discourses as response (Shotter, 1993) or rhetoric (Shotter, 1993) and by looking at the various patterns and variations across the discourses and members of the ecology, I construct how the different discourses or voices in the ecology of bullying interact. Bakhtin (Yazdanpour, n.d.) claims that ideas are not absolute but intertwined and interdependent exerting both a direct and indirect influence on each other. Using these metaphors, I describe what the voices enable and what they restrain, how they influence and respond to each other and what the different arguments are saying. In this way the polyphony (Polyphony, n.d.) of voices within the ecology is constructed, the conflicting voices are developed and merge with my own (Polyphony, n.d.) as I use the above approach, tools, tricks and metaphors to construct and organise them. The descriptions are backed by grounding them in events, texts or background circumstances (Shotter, 1993).

The above steps occurred simultaneously as I read and re-read the various texts using the above approach, tricks and tools. Each time I read a text, a new nuance would come to light or a different aspect would be emphasised. I would complete one interview and then return at a later stage to re-read it. In this way different levels or layers of analysis are achieved by moving from the micro-level (interaction in the individual interviews) to the macro-level (interaction between different interviews and background voices) and back again in a continuous circle. As new interviews are analysed, different links to the previous ones are constructed.

4.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

Postmodern approaches to research claim that reality can be understood and analysed in diverse ways and reaching alternative accounts reflect the wealth and range of materials and the range of interpretations of the different readers. The truth-value of the research is

not indicated but rather a validation that emerges by the sharing of one's views and conclusions in a way that makes sense for the community of researchers (Kvale, 1996).

Postmodern approaches are characterised by heterogeneity of knowledge and contextuality is important. Knowledge attained within one context cannot automatically be transferred or compared with knowledge from other contexts (Kvale, 1996). The method chosen for this study is designed to reflect the multiple perspectives of the local context and this then limits the generalisability of the results and thus caution will have to be exercised when using the discourses in this study as a basis for an intervention programme. However it provides the necessary contextualized and locally relevant information, the knowledge created being valid and legitimate for the context from where it originated (Bakker, 1999). The ecological approach also compensates for this by providing a basis for including many perspectives.

Within a postmodern context, knowledge is a social construction of reality. The emphasis is on conversation with, and interaction with, the social world. The interview, the method of data gathering being used in this study, is based on conversation and interaction with the context. Validity defined within this framework, questions whether or not the method used investigates what it is intended to investigate (Kvale, 1996). The design used has been chosen for its sensitivity to context and local meanings in keeping with the aims of the study. It is therefore felt that the design achieves validity as defined by Kvale (1996).

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed consent means knowing consent, requiring that the individual or his or her legal representative can knowingly choose to participate in the study (Walters, 1997) and has the right to withdraw at any time (Kvale, 1996). Accomplishing this requires that a full explanation of the study must be given to the participant in a language that is understandable to him or her (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). Informed consent in this study was obtained from the specific schools involved, the parents of the children, the

education department and the children themselves. As English is the second language of the participants, interpreters were utilised throughout the study so that the participants understood the process through their own language at all times. The psychology department of the Pretoria University, Mamelodi Campus, trained the interpreters. They have previous experience of being interpreters as they worked in this role for one year in the Itsoseng Clinic. They live in Mamelodi and so are familiar with the context. All written correspondence, including the consent form, was translated into the relevant local languages (see Appendices five-seven).

Any limitation regarding confidentiality was fully discussed with the participants (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). The participants' names are changed as a way of achieving confidentiality (Kvale, 1996). The design, using five case studies from different schools, minimises the risk of identifying the participants in the local context of the school as well as the identity of the specific school eventually used in the study. In other words more participants were used than was required for the study and the specific participants, which are eventually presented, are not revealed. An abridged version of the findings, in the form of a feedback session, will be presented to the school. No personal or identifying information regarding the participants will be given.

Although the main focus of the interviews in this study is explorative, Steier (1991) states that research can be seen as an intervention, as the questions we ask in trying to understand creates the possibility for change. Stories told by the participants during the process can provide a way to describe, analyse and explain experiences in their own way. This is empowering for those whose voices have not often been heard (Anglin, 1996). If further therapeutic intervention is deemed necessary, it is offered through alternative counselling facilities in the area, such as Khanya. Other benefits to the participants included giving the children scholastic assessments to screen for learning problems as these often accompany behaviour problems (Hester, 2002). These assessments can be utilised to identify any possible learning problems and this information can be used as a basis for appropriate intervention. The assessments do not form part of the research but

were given separately as a way of interacting ethically with the participants with regards to providing benefits in relation to the research question.

In conclusion, Kvale (1996) states that the integrity of the researcher and his or her honesty and fairness, knowledge and experience are decisive factors in the ethics of research. They need the sensitivity to identify ethical issues and the responsibility to commit to appropriate action with regards to these issues (Kvale, 1996). The role of the researcher in this way is most important when using a contextual ethical theoretical framework (Kvale, 1996) in which the ethics are collaboratively negotiated throughout the research process. In this study the ethics are negotiated between the participants and me on an ongoing basis during interaction in the context. Postmodernism challenges the idea of a single objective truth and emphasises multiple understandings and realities. This should not lead to extreme relativism, where oppressive ideologies are accepted. The aim of postmodernism should be seen as encouraging hidden voices and liberating understanding from the positivist notion of a single truth (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001).

Although I cannot fully comprehend how the world is me and I am the world I understand that all is connected, and all is one. I know that what I do and what I say is important and makes a difference in the world; and so I must be careful how I say it as I help make it exist (Rhodes, 1996, p. 76).

4.9 CONCLUSION

The above conversations and metaphors will be used to structure and guide the analytical process found in chapter five. They are not presented as an agreed upon, step-by-step method but as structuring metaphors for the chaotic, ambiguous turbulent flow of the conversational social activity that made up this research process. The analysis and subsequent conclusions are not presented as truths but as convincing arguments to persuade you, the reader, that the following ecological construction of bullying is

possible. The following chapter constructs the polyphony of voices making up an ecology of bullying.

CHAPTER 5
A POLYPHONY OF VOICES: AN ECOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION
OF BULLYING
THE STORY OF KGOSANA - THE LITTLE PRINCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the story and my interpretation of the ecology of bullying around Kgosana (which in English is translated as ‘Prince’ – not his real name), an eleven-year-old boy living and going to school in Mamelodi. Like the character that he is named after in the book entitled ‘The Little Prince’ (de Saint-Exupery, 1944) Kgosana sometimes presents to others around him as though he also comes from another planet, as the character in the book, yet his story, as that of his counterpart, presents possible allegories or structured discourses (Shotter, 1993) of the human condition facing so many children in his position. Some of the elements in his story are familiar to everyone’s experience as we live and interact with those around us. The tools and tricks used to structure the flow of conversation and construct the discourses in this chapter are found in chapter four. The conversations and the analysis thereof are presented concurrently so as to avoid unnecessary repetition. The utterances found in the conversational flow are used as “data” to construct the various discourses and different voices of argumentation around Kgosana’s bullying. The discourses are varied and interacting throughout the turbulent flow of social interaction that is conversation (Shotter, 1993). Due to the interaction of the discourses, it is impossible to isolate individual discourses so main discourses are constructed in the text via the main headings and the interaction of other intertwined discourses are constructed through the use of smaller headings or identified in the flow of the written text. This is another way of bringing structure to the turbulent flow of conversation and it is a way of constructing the pattern of discourse across the conversations. Although I can see many more, the discourses I construct are the ones that stand out for me. Someone else would find different discourses of interest and importance. This is how the utilised sections of text are chosen. A large part of the text is used in sequence. Sections seen as significant in constructing a specific discourse are

edited but retained within the sequence in which they occurred. In parts a flow of conversation is retained to show the utterances as response. Where sections of the text or the flow are edited, this has been indicated by a series of dots so as to provide transparency of the analytic process to you, the reader. This analysis is a way of bringing structure, order and voice to the conflicting, confirming and turbulent flow at different levels of analysis (Shotter, 1993). The following interpretation is presented as a plausible construction or understanding of some of the voices of argumentation around Kgosana bullying.

Discourse analysts are often criticised for not acknowledging their own influence in interviews and the construction of discourse (Sherrard, 1991 as cited in Burr, 1995). In parts of this analysis, my influence is introduced by using Bakhtin's concepts of response and utterance to analyse interaction between the participants and myself. Discourse analysis is also criticised for not including enough of the text to establish context for the reader. In this study large portions of the text are included helping to provide this context. This methodology along with the exploratory nature of the research, requiring larger samples of text (Coyle, 1995), results in a lengthy analysis.

5.2 SETTING THE SCENE: 'KGOSANA'S CONTEXT'

I arrive at the house and am welcomed by a young man engaged in sweeping the dust around the house. As I find out later from my supervisor (Dr. L.M. Eskill-Blokland), this is to keep snakes and evil spirits out and away from the house. I weave my way through the small spaces and passages that separate these houses and notice that the walls and fences serving as boundaries are only waist high. This contrasts with the space and high walls of the more affluent neighbourhoods of South Africa and gives me a sense of unfamiliarity. I enter the house and am struck by the size of this house in comparison to the number of its occupants: four adults, two children and a small baby live within its tiny confines, which are compartmentalised into three tiny bedrooms, a kitchen and a lounge. The house is neatly furnished

and equipped with a television. When I arrive it is full of young adolescents who are ushered out as our interview begins. This is home to Kgosana. It is here that he plays, eats, sleeps and occasionally does his homework within one of the tiny bedrooms.

5.2.1 Kgosana's First Interview

Kgosana is a pleasant looking child with a winning smile. He is dressed in fashionable clothes and wears earrings in both ears. He is eleven-years-old. He has a confident and charming manner, alert and responsive as he talks easily around his problems and other topics of conversation. Over the course of interviews and assessments, Kgosana was intermittent in his attendance. I would often have to call his mother to make sure that he would come. He would then arrive for a session or sometimes two in a row and then the pattern would repeat. When he did arrive for his sessions he was lively, talkative, co-operative and engaging. This is his story – the story of the different voices and opinions interacting around and constructing Kgosana's bullying behaviour.

5.2.2 Introduction to Kgosana's Ecology

Kgosana lives with his maternal grandparents, aunt, older uncle and younger uncle. He has a reported close relationship with his mother who is currently living close by with her partner and Kgosana's younger half-sister and half-brother. Kgosana sees his mother almost every day. His father lives with another partner in a different area in Pretoria and Kgosana seems currently to have little contact with him. Kgosana attends a local school in the Mamelodi East area.

5.3 A POLYPHONY OF VOICES

What I have experienced so far in working ecologically (term explained in chapter one and four) is that each system that I work within is only partly engaged and in a very fragmented, uneven way. In Kgosana's case his mother, aunt and grandmother are engaged with him and with this process to varying degrees of intensity. Three of his teachers willingly agreed to interviews. Kgosana's grandfather has been invited to

participate but has so far declined. Significant males in Kgosana's ecology are not engaged in this research process due to their own choice or their distant location and their voices are therefore silent. I decided, due to time constraints, to work with the part of the system that was engaged.

5.3.1 The Wider Background Voices of Society and Community

5.3.1.1 *Conversations with the union negotiator, chief director of the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA). 'Community as relationship'*

The function of NAPTOSA is to protect and enhance the conditions of service of educators, to represent or defend them and supervise professional development services of their members. I constructed the director as part of the ecology as he has many years of teaching experience and has had a lot of experience regarding how bullying and other forms of violence in the schools affect the school system. As he deals with many schools his perspective on the situation is wider than the other members of this ecology and he thus provides a background of wider social discourses. He was in the media discussing this topic at the time of the writing of this thesis (2007). The director has a stutter and this is evident in the text. The letter D is used to indicate the director's utterances. The letter V is used to indicate when I am speaking in this conversation and across all conversations in the study.

- *Discourse around community*

The discourse of community and the schools

D: **...in the past you've had this community-based schools. In fact the legislative frame, frame of the South African school's act is based on that model...**

This discourse constructs schools in the past as part of the community. This is achieved by the phrase: **"...community based schools..."** particularly the word **"based"**. The word **"based"** gives a sense of foundation. The discourse constructs this **"model"** (community based schools) as integrated into South African society. This is constructed

by the phrase: **“In fact the legislative frame, frame of the South African schools act is based on that model...”** The **“model”** is so part of society that even legislation is **“based”** on it. In this discourse the interconnectedness of the system is constructed. Schools are community **“based”** and legislation is **“based”** on **“community based schools”**. The repetition of the word **“based”** constructs this interconnected, foundational flow. The word **“model”** suggests a blueprint upon which all schools are based. In Shotter’s (1993) language, the community-based school was part of the society’s structured discourses. This discourse of the **‘community based school’** is expounded by the following example.

D: ...when I started as a teacher, you were expected to **at least visit each of your children’s homes to familiarise yourself with their personal circumstances. ... But at least if you know where the child comes from and there’s a problem, you, you, you can visualize, what the, ahh, causes might have been...That is also lost, it’s gone.**

The above example justifies how this community based model impacted the schools: **“... at least if you know where the child comes from and there’s a problem, you, you, you can visualize, what the, ahh, causes might have been...”** The words **“familiarise”**, **“personal circumstances”** and **“know”** constructs a discourse of familiarity or community between child and teacher leading to the action of being able to **“...visualise, what the, ahh, causes [of the problem] might have been.”** This discourse constructs community as relationship, knowing and familiarity. Community in this sense now seems lost to our society and this discourse is constructed by the words, **“lost”** and **“gone.”**

- *Old structured discourses and the emergence of new discourses*

D: **...but the practical experience is not that** [of schools being based on a community model]. Your, your schools are **servicing distant communities**, and **when you deal with disciplinary issues ahh that obviously impacts on, on, on teaching in the classroom. It’s very difficult to make contact with parents**

sometimes. It's, it's hard to, to deal with the problems immediately and effectively.

The above text constructs a discourse of dissonance existing now between the legislation and the practical experience of schools in this country. This discourse is constructed by the phrase: “...**but the practical experience is not that.**” The practical experience now is that: “**Your, your schools are servicing distant communities...**” The practical experience no longer fits the structured discourses of society found within legislation. Although South African legislation is no longer based on the practical experience of schools, the discourse of interconnection between schools and the community is continued in this text by connecting the disciplinary problems back to the community and the school's altered position in relation to the community. This is constructed by the following phrases: “**Your, your schools are servicing distant communities...**” and “...**that obviously impacts on, on, on teaching in the classroom.**” This discourse is justified and expounded by the following examples and explanation of how this impacts on the school community: “**It's very difficult to make contact with parents sometimes. It's, it's hard to, to deal with the problems immediately and effectively.**” There is now no contact between parents and teachers; no relationship. The ‘discourse of disengagement’ with parents and distant communities, results in losing the effectiveness and immediacy of discipline.

The ‘discourse of disengagement of parents’ constructed by the phrase: “**It's very difficult to make contact with parents...**” is intertwined in this main discourse of ‘old structured discourses and the emergence of new discourses’ and it is repeated across the discourses found in conversations with other members of the ecology namely the support learning coordinator (see p. 102), the principal (see p. 96) and the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation (see p. 91). The main discourse continues in the following text, which is a response to a question around the possibility of rekindling community spirit by again zoning schools for specific areas:

D: In Freedom of association ...we're in a democratic society, people can move around...the feeder areas that we had in the past would not be applicable.

The zoning of schools is possibly associated with the old Apartheid discourses and restriction of movement: **“...the feeder areas that we had in the past would not be applicable.”** We have now, in South Africa, moved to a different structured discourse of democracy and freedom of movement: **“...we’re in a democratic society, people can move around...”** **“Freedom of association”** is not compatible with **“the feeder areas”**, but one of the consequences of change in discourse to freedom of movement is that the community constructed as relationship discourse is **“lost”** and **“gone.”**

Discourse of Difference

D: ...children come from, from different areas, different cultures, uh, different social backgrounds we put them all in, that’s S.A., we put them all into this melting pot, but if you don’t have a structure that can accommodate all of them...its major problems...we have for the past ten years, we’ve, we’ve brought in new legislation, new policies...yet we have not even tested the success...”

The old discourses of society no longer fit the current practical situation of people of **“difference”** now mixing with each other. The discourse of difference now placed together is constructed by the phrase: **“...children come from, from different areas, different cultures, uh, different social backgrounds we put them all in, that’s S.A., we put them all into this melting pot...”** and the repetition of the word **“difference.”** The previous discourses of school zoning do not accommodate this coming together of **“...different areas, different cultures, uh, different social backgrounds...”**, but it seems as though we have not as yet developed enough new discourses to accommodate this new practical situation which is constructed by the phrase: **“...but if you don’t have a structure that can accommodate all of them...”** Even schools accommodating children from the same geographical area such as those in Mamelodi seem to experience this coming together of difference. This is noted in the conversation with the principal (see p. 93) and this is expounded in chapter six. Our society seems to be in the process of developing new discourses to structure the new social changes experienced but they are

not as yet optimally developed. This discourse is constructed using the phrase: “...we have for the past ten years we’ve, we’ve brought in new legislation, new policies...yet we have not even tested the success...”

Disciplinary discourses

D: **Corporal punishment was annulled...But nothing practically has been put in place. Teachers even have not been, have not been exposed to, other methods of, of control... But there’s no practical training on how to deal with uh those situations.**

Even in discourses around discipline methods, old (structured) disciplinary discourses have been “abolished” and “...nothing practical has been put in [its] place”, no new discourses have as yet been developed. This text brings in the discourse of the need for training in alternative methods to corporal punishment. The ‘discourse of a need for training as a possible solution’ is constructed in the phrases: “...not been exposed to, other methods of, of control...”, and “...there’s no practical training on how to deal with uh, those situations.” A ‘discourse of a need for training’ is seen intertwined with the discourses constructed in conversations with the support learning co-coordinator (see pp.103-105) and the principal (see p. 98). This ‘discourse of needing new disciplinary methods’ is seen intertwined with the discourse found in the conversations with the principal (see pp. 94-96). This is expounded in chapter six.

• *Discourse around parents and teachers*

Teacher’s loss of profile in the community

V: ...teachers are finding it very difficult to engage the parents...Do you have any ideas or perspective on, on what that, that is about?

I noted that sometimes during this conversation I also stuttered even though usually I do not stutter.

D: **...the profile of educators has dropped tremendously...that people don’t deem educators that worthy any more,... Teachers are still central to schooling and teaching,...we need to re-establish that. That when teachers**

bring problems to the attention of parents, uh, it should be dealt with, uh, very, very clearly, and the, the input from both parties should be should be taken into account. There's a, there's a **disregard, generally**, ahh especially in your **township schools**, of the educators.

The problem of the loss of profile of teachers within the community in this discourse is constructed by the following phrases: **“...the profile of educators has dropped tremendously ...; people don't deem educators that worthy anymore, there's a disregard, generally...”**, especially the words **“dropped tremendously”** [not] **“worthy”** and **“disregard.”** As a response to my question this discourse links disengagement of parents to this loss of teacher profile. It also links this problem specifically to **“township schools.”** Disengagement or lack of contact is linked to disciplinary problems in the above text with the director of NAPTOA (see pp. 80-81) and in conversations with the principal (see p. 98). This is expounded in chapter six.

Spontaneously a **‘discourse of a possible solution’** to this problem is constructed by the phrase: **“I think we need...”** and the text then constructs the **“re-establishment”** of **“the importance”** of **“teachers to schooling and teaching”**, as this solution. An emphasis of the importance of teachers to schooling is constructed by the phrase: **“Teachers are still central.”** An example of how this **“importance”** should be **re-established** is constructed in the phrase: **“...when teachers bring problems to the attention of parents, uh, it should be dealt with, uh, very, very clearly.”** The teachers' importance should be acknowledged by parents by way of dealing **“very” (repeated for emphasis) “clearly”** with problems brought by teachers. The solution discourse continues with the construction of communication or co-operation between parents and teachers: **“the input from both parties should be should be taken into account.”** The phrase: **“input from both parties”** especially constructs this discourse as a further means of solution. This ‘discourse of communication and co-operation’ as a solution to the problem is similar to the one found in the conversation with the principal (see pp. 98-99). This is expounded in chapter six.

V: ...how do you think the profile of the teachers could be lifted?

D: Once again, it's, it's, it's, **it's a community thing**. If, if you're if you dealing with a, with a, with a teacher living in the community, **parents knows about the person**, uh, they, they **respect the person for, for the person is**, then **then there's a relationship**.

In this discourse the problem of the teacher's profile is again constructed by the school's placement in relation to community. In this discourse, community is again constructed as involving relationship. Respect is constructed as relationship: "**...respect the person for, for the person then there's a relationship...**" The words "**know**", "**relationship**", "**community**" and "**respect**" again construct this discourse of community as relationship. The 'discourse of community' is connected to the 'discourse of teacher's loss of profile' constructed within the conversations with the principal (see pp. 97-98).

- *Discourse on discipline*

D: **...But there are other problems, you've got class sizes**, uh, which are problematic. Umm, realistically speaking if you look at **Gauteng being the richest province, you have the worst pupil/teacher ratio...** the actual class size in many schools, **are still about 40...** the **primary problem is that teachers have been employed to teach - but teachers have got so many other responsibilities already added to their workload...** the **amount of paper [work]...** they supposed to be **part of the whole social and cultural set up...** involved in **extra-curricular activities...** there's talk about, ah, **appointing classroom assistants...** if you spend all your energy in really focussing on what needs to be done in the, in the classroom during teaching time - **most of your discipline disciplinary problems disappear...** The report from the HSRC... said one of the problems, major problems in the education is the **crowding out of teaching time**.

This discourse constructs large class sizes and overwork of teachers as related to disciplinary issues. This discourse is constructed by the phrases "**...But there are other**

problems, you've got class sizes..."; "...Gauteng being the richest province, you have the worst pupil/teacher ratio..." The discourse is justified by providing the class size as **"still about 40."** 'A discourse of possible solutions' runs intertwined in this discourse on discipline: **"appointing classroom assistants"** is constructed as a possible solution.

The discourse of **"crowding out of teaching time"**, is constructed by this phrase and the phrases: **"...primary problem is that teachers have been employed to teach - but teachers have got so many other responsibilities already added to their workload..."** The discourse is justified by examples of some of the different discourses of what the workload entails: **"...amount of paper [work]..."** **"...[being] part of the whole social and cultural set up."** It is also justified by stating its presence in reputable research **"...The report from the HSRC..."**

5.3.1.2 Conversations with the manager of the Youth Department of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation: 'South Africa's voice of violence'.

The Centre for Violence and Reconciliation has recently held conferences around the general problem of violence in the schools, and as a result, the organisation has been fairly high profile in the media (2007). The manager of the youth department runs workshops and programmes in the schools regarding the problem of bullying and violence. As such she has a lot of experience regarding bullying in schools and for this reason I constructed her as part of this ecology. As she deals with 40 schools as opposed to one school she has a wider experience and perspective compared with the rest of the members of the ecology who work in just one school. This wider perspective provides broader social discourses or background voices behind the problem of bullying in the schools. In the following conversation the letters Ma indicates the manager's utterances.

- *Discourse around community*

Communities and the schools

Ma: **...schools don't exist in isolation. Schools are part of communities; are part of the broader S.A. The history of this country is wrought with violence and**

violence is institutionalized in the **schools** themselves and **other institutions**; with **the police**, be it **business** ...all those institutions **wrought with violence**.

The manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation places the schools in the wider context of our violent “**South African society**.” The strength of the discourse of violence in South Africa is constructed by repeating the phrase: “**wrought with violence**”. The word “**wrought**” particularly emphasises the strength of this discourse. The pervasive nature of this violence is constructed by referring to its “**long history**” and its “**institutionalised**” nature. This discourse provides the ‘background voice’ (Shotter, 1993) to the schools that are constructed as being influenced by this using the phrase: “**...schools don’t exist in isolation.**”

Society’s message and the language of violence

Ma: **Sending one particular message, that if you have a problem, violence is the quickest and most effective solution to your problem.... Those messages get to families, get to communities and I have not seen, so far, an effective strategy that counteracts that. Even if people still say, “violence is wrong” – but the language and the relationships are based on violent tendencies. Even in Zulu we talk about a “game”, in terms of there’s a “target”... We talk about “beating up”. So for me violence is part of everyday life. We think that way and therefore it becomes difficult to separate it. One has to be really conscious and it takes a longer time to practise other skills.**

The discourse of society sending “**messages**” of “**violence**” is constructed by the repetition of those two words. The message that society is sending is constructed as: “**...violence is the quickest and most effective solution to your problem...**” This discourse is justified by examples of these messages found in language. The background voices of violence in society are constructed as pervasive. The word “**based**” constructs a sense that “**language**” and “**relationships**” in this country have their foundations in violence. The pervasiveness of violence is further constructed by the following phrases: “**...messages get to families, get to communities...**”; “**...part of everyday life...**”;

“We think that way and therefore it becomes difficult to separate it...” It constructs our thinking and cannot be separated from us except by “**being really conscious and it takes a longer time to practise other skills**”. The power of the messages of violence is constructed by the phrase: “...**I have not seen, so far, an effective strategy that counteracts that...**” The struggle against violence has so far been ineffective. The voice against this powerful discourse of violence within this argumentation is constructed by the use of the word “**strategy**”, indicating a planned struggle against it and the phrase: “**Even if people still say, violence is wrong – but...**”. Presently any alternative discourse is overpowered by the powerful background voices of violence with their “**long history**” and “**institutionalised**” nature. The voice against violence does not seem to be well constructed as it provides the message that “**violence is wrong**”, but has not as yet constructed an articulated alternative. This ‘discourse of violence’ is intertwined with violence related discourses noted in conversations with the principal (see p. 93) and Kgosana’s grandmother (see pp. 123-124). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Old structured discourses and the emergence of new discourses*

The need for a better strategy

Ma: I think that maybe it will be **important that this be prioritised by the government, by all institutions that we need to come with a better strategy...** There is a school in Actonville... There were, I think two, boys were fighting [and] another and the father of the other went to the school and stabbed the two boys with a knife and [on] Tuesday and there was a plan that there would be a revenge attack [by] the communities - it was spreading into communities and the police came with vicious dogs....yes, there is a problem - but the response to the problem [of violence] it is invalid.

The need for co-ordination in creating “**better strategy**” is constructed in the phrase: “...**by the government, by all institutions...**” The need for a different approach to break the cycle of violence described in the example is constructed by the phrase: “...**that we need to come with a better strategy...**” The word “**Strategy**” suggests that this co-ordinated alternative needs to be planned and organised. The importance and

urgency to address this issue is constructed using the words “**important**” and “**prioritised**”. The need for an alternative discourse is constructed but the alternative voice has no form. The details of this “**better strategy**” have not yet been constructed.

The example justifies the discourses of needing a better strategy by constructing the escalation of violence spreading from the children to the parent to the communities to the police - each layer reacting within the ‘structured discourse’ (Shotter, 1993) of violence. This is an example of how the pervasive ‘structured discourse’ (Shotter, 1993) of violence in South African society is affecting our actions from the schools and into the wider community.

Discourse of co-ordination and need for continuation and sustainability in new strategies

Ma: ...a joined and **coordinated effort - it goes a long way-** be it **in prevention or treatment of violence**. We in the past... years have been running **violence prevention workshops in Soweto** to more than 40 schools with teachers and learners... **But...whilst you are still there – you see progress... but once you leave, it goes back. For me, it’s all the pressures, all societal influence.**

The current struggle against violence is recognised and this is constructed in the phrase: “... **co-ordinated effort – it goes a long way...**” and this is justified by the example of her own involvement in these strategies “**But**” it’s not sustained. The background voices of violence “**all the pressures, all societal influence**” are constructed as stronger than the intervention “**prevention workshops**” that are constructed as not sustainable by the phrase: “... **once you leave, it goes back.**”

Ma: [Intervention] **shouldn’t be a short-term thing because violence is long-term – it’s got a very long history. If it’s longish ...you offer support until the behaviour becomes part of the character of that child...**[So the alternative voice to violence] **It’s sustained and gets louder and louder rather than fainter and fainter. The only way to sustain it is for us to push the government to come up with policies to integrate this kind of work in the**

schools otherwise we must keep on doing this work forever and we will not see much, we will not see much. We will feel like we are adding with the few kids that we touch, but the majority of the kids in the country will still lose out because it's not part of policy in the country. I think it has to be part of the policy.

The strategy of intervention to construct a different voice to violence has to match the strength of this already structured discourse of our society. This is constructed by the phrases: “[Intervention] **shouldn't be a short-term thing because violence is long-term – it's got a very long history. If it's longish ...you offer support until the behaviour becomes part of the character of that child...**” The discourse of the need for the support of the alternative discourse to violence is constructed in the phrase: “**It's sustained and gets louder and louder rather than fainter and fainter.**” A blending of the two perspectives of intervention; working in the micro environment of the schools along with intervention focused on the wider level of governmental policies is constructed. The way to sustain the faint voice or a different discourse against violence is constructed in the phrase: “**The only way to sustain it is for us to push the government to come up with policies to integrate this kind of work in the schools...**” The effect of not integrating interventions through government policy is constructed through this phrase: “**... otherwise we must keep on doing this work forever and we will not see much, we will not see much**”. The last words construct emphasis by repetition. The way to sustain the alternative voice to violence is constructed by the phrases: “**I think it has to be part of the policy**”; “**... push the government to come up with policies...**” The struggle against violence needs to become as much part of the structured discourses of society as the discourse of violence if it is to have a widespread effect on action otherwise: “**We will feel like we are adding with the few kids that we touch, but the majority of the kids in the country will still lose out because it's not part of policy in the country**”. Part of the ‘Discourse of Solution’ is developing this new voice, the voice providing alternatives to violence.

- *Discourse around parents and teachers*

Disengagement

V: Have you had any experience with how the families and teachers view each other?

Ma: **Most of the time I have found that sometimes teachers tend to behave like they know it all –therefore [they are] not giving the parents room to share their experiences...Therefore parents I have found in most schools that I have worked with, parents whose kids are problematic avoid school. They don't come. You can make calls and you can make whatever. They rarely come to school...**

There is a discourse of a lack of communication between parents and teachers constructed by the phrases: “...**teachers tend to behave like they know it all...not giving the parents room to share their experiences...**” The discourse of lack of communication is particularly constructed by the phrase: “...**not giving the parents room to share their experiences...**” The word “**therefore**” links lack of communication to the ‘discourse of disengagement’ of parents not coming to school constructed by the phrases: “...**parents whose kids are problematic avoid school. They don't come you can make calls and you can make whatever. They rarely come to school...**” The ‘discourse of disengagement’ between parents and the schools is noted in the conversations with the principal (see p. 96), the support learning co-ordinator (see p. 102) and intertwined in conversations with the manager of NAPTOSA (see pp. 80-82). This is expounded in chapter six.

Discourse of blame

Ma: ...they tend as well to **blame** parents and parents **blame** [the teachers] - there is this “**blame game**” that happens ... you know there's that “**blame game**” that goes on and on and on ... **I think it's more about their own fears as well. About them being judged that they can't bring up their kids in a proper way...**

Relationships between parents and teachers are constructed as a discourse of blame. This discourse is constructed by the repetition of the word “**blame**” and the repetition of the phrase “**blame game**”. The stuckness of this discourse is constructed through the repetitive phrase: “... goes on and on and on...”

Another possible reason for the parents not coming to school is constructed by the phrase: “... I think it’s more about their own fears as well. About them being judged that they can’t bring up their kids in a proper way...” This fear could be related to the discourse of blame constructed in the discourse of relationships between teachers and parents. The discourse of blame is encountered across different members of the ecology. This is expounded in chapter six.

Part of the discourse of violence

Ma: “**They [teachers] are part of the community they are part of S.A., they also believe in violence...I don’t think some of them do it intentionally but they are a product of this country.**”

The voice of violence is part of the structured discourse in S.A. This is constructed by the following phrases referring to the teachers: “**They [teachers] are part of the community they are part of S.A., they also believe in violence...I don’t think some of them do it intentionally but they are a product of this country.**”

5.3.2 Voices of the School Ecology

5.3.2.1 Conversations with the principal of Kgosana’s school: ‘The voice of responsibility’.

The principal is constructed as a member of the ecology because he is a gatekeeper of the school and his ideas and experience of bullying in his school are relevant to the ecology. The letter P indicates his utterances.

- *Discourse around community*

The discourse of poverty and violence affecting the schools

P: ...I also have little ones **from the other side from the informal settlement... not having anything to eat at home, being alone at home ... No supervision ... drink ... the provision that mom can do, is to sjambok the little one into silence. I don't know as to whether my little ones also that are here don't go through the very same.**

The interrelatedness of the school and community is again noted in this conversation as it was in the conversations with the director of NAPTOSA (see pp. 79-81) and the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation (see pp. 86-88). This is expounded in chapter six. The wider discourse of societal violence, poverty and social issues affecting school children is constructed by the following phrases describing the issues: “... **not having anything to eat at home, being alone at home ... No supervision ... drink ...**” A ‘discourse of violence’ enters the school setting in the form of the homes, from which some of these children come, where provision is constructed by the phrase: “... **the provision that mom can do, is to sjambok the little one into silence.**” The ‘discourse of social change’ introducing difference is also intertwined with the ‘discourse around community’ in this conversation. Difference in the social strata that these Mamelodi children come from is constructed in the phrase: “... **from the other side...**”, when referring to the children “... **from the informal settlement...**” The possibility of exposure to the discourse of violence runs through all strata of society: “**I don't know as to whether my little ones also that are here don't go through the very same.**” This ‘discourse of difference’ is also constructed in the conversations with the director of NAPTOSA (see p. 82). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Old structured discourses and the emergence of new discourses*

The ‘**discourse of social change**’ is seen in the following passages:

P: **We're no longer in the township, in an African township, we no longer deal with an ordinary parent... Even if he or she comes from an informal settlement, look, there are 'informal education' that's going on the other side. They are**

informed, they know what their rights are, they know... They know that their child has the right to come to school...the right not to be corporally punished. They know that the child has to be spoken to like any other child...So immediately you do anything that is opposite to what they know, they confront, they do come...this parents know where to go, what to do.

A discourse of social change is constructed by the phrases: **“We’re no longer in the township, in an African township, we no longer deal with an ordinary parent...”** The discourse of change is constructed by the repetition of the words **“no longer”**. The difference is again constructed by referring to the **“township”** as a **“township”** [no longer] and then as [no longer] **“African”**. The words used to describe the context are the same but somehow they are **“no longer”** the same, the familiar terms almost disguise the process of change so that unless we make this explicit we will not recognise it as change. There is the suggestion in this discourse of loss of identity and an **“education”** into a different social era. The phrase, **“...no longer...an ordinary parent...”** again constructs a loss of familiarity. This is no longer the **“ordinary parent”** we are used to as they have been **‘educated’** into something different, new societal discourses. The different knowledge now acquired is constructed by the repetition of the word **“know”** and a list of examples of what they do know follows in the text. The ‘discourse of discord between parents and teachers’ is noted and the interaction is constructed as confrontational with the phrase: **“they confront, they do come.”** The discourse of difference between the informal settlement and the rest of the township is constructed by the word **“even”** if he or she comes from an informal settlement. The new educational discourses happening there are also seen as different and this is constructed by the words **“informal education”** that’s going **“on the other side”**. The phrase: **“other side”** again constructs difference.

Discourses on discipline

V: Do you think that the disciplinary measures that the school is allowed to implement are sufficient?

P: ...it's **within this community**...Any person else comes late in the morning or doesn't do his or her work, **will be given work to scrub a classroom.**" Now the parent comes to school to say: "**This little one is not a labourer, and as of now, I require, I demand** not even require or request **I demand a letter of apology from you,...you can't make my child do that.**" **Look corporal punishment is out, you want to be proactive, as well as initiative...You've got to find something in its place.** To me, scrubbing the classroom is not child labour...they practise that at home, **unless if he's saying to me that this little one is not doing it, or whether he is seeing it as humiliation for the little one. But he didn't explain...**the majority of moms will tell you: "this is my child, **apply corporal punishment, I will be responsible.**"

The 'discourse of cleaning as a discipline' is constructed by the phrase: "... **will be given work to scrub a classroom**". This is a common disciplinary practise in the schools "**within this community**" (Mamelodi township). The reported discourse of resistance to this particular practice of discipline by the parents could be because of its possible connection to the former wider Apartheid discourse where black South Africans were expected to fulfil the role of labourers. Again the wider social discourses interact with the school discourses. This is suggested by the phrase: "**This little one is not a labourer...**" It seems that the parents are fine with other kinds of discipline, which perhaps fits their worldview better: "... **apply corporal punishment, I will be responsible.**" Interaction between parents and teachers seems to be constructed as confrontational rather than communicative. This confrontational discourse is constructed by the following phrase: "...**I demanded a letter of apology from you'...**" and the repetition of the word "**demand**". The phrase: "**But he didn't explain...**" constructs a discourse of 'lack of communication' and has the effect of leaving the principal guessing as to why the parent does not agree with the punishment. The discourse leading to guessing is constructed by the following phrases: "... **unless if he's saying to me that little one is not doing it, or whether he is seeing it as humiliation for the little one.**"

There is a discourse of disregard for the authority structures or structured discourses of school discipline intertwined within this discourse of discipline. The teachers discipline the child for not complying with authoritative structures but the reported response to this is that the parent counteracts the teacher. This is constructed by the phrases: “... **you can’t make my child do that.**” The parent then “**demands**” a “**letter of apology**” from the teacher. The parent is also constructed as disregarding the laws set by the policies governing discipline in schools and requests that the principal does the same. This is constructed by the phrase: “... **apply corporal punishment, I will be responsible.**” The old discourses of punishment are no longer applicable in discipline and this is constructed by the phrase: “**Look corporal punishment is out...**” The principal tries to find new disciplinary methods constructed by the phrase: “**You’ve got to find something in its place**”. A discourse of pro-activity is also noted in the face of finding new discourses, this is constructed by the phrase: “... **you want to be proactive, as well as initiative...**” The ‘discourses of discipline’ is intertwined with social change. This is noted in the conversations with the director of NAPTOSA (see pp. 80-83).

- *Discourse around parents and teachers*

Disengagement

P: You want to tell parents, you invite parents to come to school. **Half the time, only ten percent will come into school.**

V: It’s hard to engage the parents?

P: **Very hard, very hard.** You ask **why you can’t come?** “**I’m at work**”.

The repetition of the words “**very hard**” emphasises the difficulty of engaging the parents with the school. In this reported response to the school invitation, work commitments (“**I’m at work**”) are used to justify non-involvement from the parent’s side.

The ‘discourse disengagement’ with parents is seen in the conversations with the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation (see p. 91), the support learning

co-ordinator (see p. 102) and the director of NAPTOSA (see pp.80-81). This is expounded in chapter six.

Teacher's loss of profile in the community

V: ...it's almost like the profession in a way has lost respect in the community, the teaching profession...?

P: Ja, ja there might be quite a number of reasons for that, **we're also partly to blame because of not having that respect from the community for instance...** Look **our behaviour at times it is not right**, our behaviour as teachers at times **it isn't right...but if you're going to make this obvious to the parents**, that you are able to **drink at any time at any place, anywhere** and **speak as if you are not a professional...but surely you cannot go, especially in the township...this place is frequented by the so called learners, students, anyone to see...**

In response to my probing question the principal responds by linking the loss of respect to the teachers behaviour. There is a discourse of responsibility running through the discourse of loss of respect in the community constructed by the phrase: “... **we're also partly to blame because of not having that respect from the community for instance...**” The discourse of teacher responsibility for losing respect in the community is justified by providing examples as to what has led to the loss of respect in the community. The behaviour of some teachers is constructed as “**not right**” by the repetition of this phrase and the phrase “**isn't right**”. Examples of the “**not right**” behaviour are constructed by the listing of the following phrases: “...**drink at any time at any place, anywhere, speak as if you are not a professional...**” This behaviour is constructed as visible in the community: “... **but if you're going to make this obvious to the parents...especially in the township...this place is frequented by the so-called learners, students, anyone to see...**” The behaviour happens “**for anyone to see**” and “**frequented**” constructs the high profile of this behaviour which leads to the community losing respect for the teachers. The ‘discourse of teacher's loss of profile in the

community' is also found in the conversation with the director of NAPTOSA (see p 83-84).

- *Discourse of suggested solutions*

Establishing links and training

P: ... It's a question of us getting links like yourself. We have a link as well with Tshegofatsong we are saying to ourselves, we are not trained into doing certain things...

The discourse of forming links as a solution to the problem is established by the repetition of the word “**links**” and justified by examples of these links. The discourse of the need for training is constructed in the phrase: “**... we are not trained into doing certain things...**” The discourse of the need for training could push towards empowerment but it could also lead to educators not fully acknowledging the knowledge and capabilities that they do have. The discourse of the need for training is intertwined with the discourses in conversations with the director of NAPTOSA (see p. 83) and the support learning coordinator (see pp. 103-104). This is expounded in chapter six.

Communication and co-operation

P: We have started a teacher-parent assistance program, we've started that. Because we notice if we are not going to do things as well ourselves... we might not succeed...we still have a problem with parents. That's why we're forming this body in the school.... If some, if some of our parents could just take that when we say, your little one has a problem. Come; let's talk to you about your child's problem...

The discourse of pro-activity is constructed by the phrase: “**... if we are not going to do things as well ourselves... we might not succeed ...**” and this results in the action: “**We have started a teacher parent assistance program...**” The programme is also based on the discourse of problems with parents constructed by the phrases: “**...we still have a problem with parents. That's why we're forming this body in the school...** ” The

discourse of co-operation as a solution is constructed by the phrase: “... **if some of our parents could just take that when we say...**” and communication constructed by the phrase: “**Come, let’s talk...**” The discourse of communication as a solution is noted in the conversations with the director of NAPTOSA (see p.84). This is noted in chapter six.

5.3.2.2 Conversations with the school support learning co-ordinator: ‘Discourse of knowledge and expertise’

When I first met the principal of the school, he brought this teacher into the conversation constructing her as a member of the ecology. This teacher’s position in the school is that of support learning co-ordinator. The school has a committee with a representative teacher from each grade. If any teacher has a problem he or she brings it to the representative who will in turn bring it to the committee. The problem is then discussed to see if the committee members can help the teacher. In other words its function is supportive for the teachers. As this teacher says, “So that you are not alone”. Kgosana’s school, has eight grades. There are three classes in each grade, two in grade seven and approximately 40 children in each class. This teacher is not in direct contact with Kgosana but she interacts with other children who are constructed as bullies. Through the committee she has heard of Kgosana and referred him to me. She forms part of the ecology of bullying within this school structure and as such forms part of the background voices of Kgosana’s immediate ecology at the school. Her discourses and experiences refer to children other than Kgosana. The letter T indicates her utterances.

- *Discourses on strengths in dealing with the child constructed as bullying*

Discourse of understanding and inclusion

T: [The child who bullies] **telling the mother that if I can I will go back to my former class teacher who understands me...**Because I was starting to **understand** him... Maybe **I was speaking to learners as my own children** and I am going to **tell them the wrong thing and thereafter we are laughing, laughing then it’s over.. I don’t name students** saying they are this and this and this...**Not for him alone but for all the learners...understanding**, just that

understanding brings most of the learners towards you...I can work with any child.

“**Understanding**” is constructed as “... **brings the learners towards you...**” facilitating a relationship. Repetition of the word “**understanding**” emphasises its importance in this teacher’s constructed way of dealing with the children. As a way of justifying this importance she uses understanding as the child’s reported reason for wanting to return to her class, “... **telling the mother that if I can I will go back to my former class teacher who understands me...**”

The teacher does not “**name**” [label] children. The phrase: “...**Not for him alone but for all the learners**” constructs a ‘**discourse of inclusion**’ which constructs a binary opposition to labelling. The phrases: “... **I was speaking to learners as my own children...**”, “... **I can work with any child**”, seem to construct a discourse of acceptance, “... **tell them the wrong thing thereafter we are laughing, laughing, then its over...**” , “... **tell them the wrong thing...**”, seem to construct a ‘**discourse of advice giving**’, repeated below in the ‘**disciplinary discourses**’ of this conversation. This teacher does not hold grudges or take matters personally, this is constructed by the phrase: “...**then it’s over.**” This ‘discourse of not taking the behaviour of children personally’, inclusion, understanding and not labelling is seen in the conversations with Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see p. 116). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Discourse on weaknesses in dealing with the child constructed as bullying*

V: With this child (referring to a specific child) what would you say your weaknesses were in dealing with him? What sort of things didn’t work well?

T: Then **taking him out of the class, naming**, promising him that I’m going to kill [meaning beat] you. **He does not take any threats.**

In response to my probing question, the current disciplinary discourses of coercive punishments, threats are constructed using the phrases: “... **taking him out of the class, naming... He does not take any threats...**” and according to this teacher these practices

have no effect on the children in terms of changing the behaviour of children constructed as bullying.

- *Argumentation around the children*

Discourses and background conversations around children constructed as bullies

T: [This] is a child, who is cared for by a single parent...and the money is not enough and even at home, [the mother] is left alone. The mother, the granny to the child died last year...There is a problem...when the mother is at work she knocks off at 11 o'clock...[The child] at 10 or 11 is taking care of this younger sister...Just imagine a grade four child, taking care of a younger sister of maybe five or four years...Yes from two o'clock onwards they are alone at home. He must see to it that the child has eaten; they bath, they sleep.

Listening to the story of one of these children's lives I pick out the familiar themes almost in the same style in which the teacher lists the outcomes of her disciplinary measures noted below. To summarise my construction of the teacher's understanding of the issues related to bullying, I begin confidently rattling off some of the background voices of researchers within my profession that are echoed in the conversation between us.

V: ...you seem to think that perhaps the loss has something to do with it and the fact that he is on his own and has too much responsibility, and he is on his own unsupervised for all those long hours. Is there anything else in your understanding, or its not, this not how you see it? [In response to a grunt and facial expressions that seem to contradict this].

My confidence in the current discourses of my profession is noted despite my awareness that overseas findings do not translate directly to South Africa. The discourse of knowledge and expertise is found in my own constructions.

T: No... .I do not think that it is related because it is for now that they are alone...
Before the mother was not working the granny was at home...Yes, this
responsibility thing is not the cause of everything, it's not.

V: You have not seen a change in his behaviour [over the course of time]?

T: No because the class teacher is always informing me that this learner is always
doing this and this...

These children do seem to have some of the aspects of the backgrounds and ecologies
spoken of in the research findings. This particular child was born into a single parent
home (Van Der Hoven, 1995). Individual children are very different as is their situation.
As the focus of research in the psychology profession has been on pathology as opposed
to health (Holdstock, 1981), we do not know how many non-bullies experience these
same life circumstances. I easily believe the authoritative voices of my own 'knowledge'
and 'learning' despite what I thought was a keen awareness of the need for different
contextual knowledge. Here the influence of the discourse of knowledge in my own
profession still influences my way of constructing. This child's behaviour has remained
consistent throughout the loss of his grandmother and the loss of supervision. In the gap
between this teacher and me, something new is created.

- *Disciplinary discourses*

- Disengagement of parents*

V: ...what kind of disciplinary measures and actions do you take inside the school?

T: We try **talking...**, they don't **listen**; we **report to the principal...call in the
parents...parents are not coming...**; we **take that to the principal. Most of
the time...**parents with the problematic learners the **parents don't turn up.**

The way in which this teacher talks about the disciplinary process indicates a negative
expectation of how the process will unfold. It seems as if this teacher has almost given
up with the situation as she lists the expected negative response to the measures used.
The teacher's "**talking**" used as a disciplinary method seems to construct advice as it is
something to which the children have to "**listen**", but they don't listen.

Constructing change in the child

T: To **reason** with the child and **try to show the correct way...change the attitude of the child...change attitude of the child towards the school and towards the educator.**

It seems as if the situation is constructed from the “**school’s**” and “**educator’s**” perspective. Through the conversations on discipline, a discourse of advice-giving seems to run through the disciplinary approach with the emphasis on change being initiated in the child. The child has to be one to change. The phrases “... **to reason...**”; “... **show the correct way...**”; “... **change the attitude of the child...**” all suggest advice giving. This emphasis seems to be on instruction as leading to change in the child. The discourse of seeing the child as the one in need of change could restrict the actions of the teacher. If the teacher could see herself as changing her response to the child, this could open up new avenues for bringing difference to the situation. A ‘discourse of constructing change in the child’ is noted in conversations with Kgosana’s class teacher (see p. 110).

- *A discourse of possible solution*

Discourse of training and knowledge

T: I have been **trained** as a **lay counsellor**...I **went for a course**,...then I was **trained as a debriefer**...

This response followed from the general question: “What is your official position in the school” within her professional role this teacher constructs herself as trained and qualified using the repetition of the word “**trained**” and “**course.**” Examples of the roles that she can fulfil, “**lay counsellor**” and “**debriefer**”, as a result of training are used to justify the construction of a trained professional.

Later on in the conversational flow a ‘discourse of solution’ is intertwined with the ‘discourse of knowledge’ when this exploratory question is put to the teacher:

V: Do you have any ideas on what sort of things would help this child?

T: ...a **professional** somebody...that person is **trained** – **he/she knows how to deal with this kind of children, maybe.**

The professional is constructed as someone who is “**trained**” and “**knows.**” This again brings in the discourse of the importance of knowledge and, as a response to my question, is linked to the discourse of solutions. The word **maybe** here shows the element of uncertainty. The **professional** may be able to help but she is not sure.

V: What kind of things would help you in dealing with him?

T: If **maybe** I can be **equipped with more knowledge**...if **maybe** I can get a **bursary** or what to go to **school, maybe**...if I can get the **funds**... If **maybe** I can **get more knowledge** then I am willing to **re-do**, to **study** whatever to just get more **knowledge**.

‘**More knowledge**’ is constructed as the tentative solution to the problem. Knowledge for the teacher is defined as that which you get from “**school**” and “**studying**” and “**re-doing**”, using the discourses prevalent within the background voices of the education system as a whole, ‘knowledge imparted from studying’ is offered as a possible answer. I see the word “**re-doing**” as signifying more than just the teacher re-doing her courses; I see it on a wider level as re-doing in the sense of returning to the ordered background discourses prevalent in the education system. She also sees herself as lacking the resources, “**funds**” and “**bursaries,**” to get this knowledge and this discourse could be disempowering.

The discourse of knowledge, experts and training comes into play again. This time, the teacher sees herself as lacking in expertise when dealing with these children. Within this same “**knowledge**” discourse, the teacher presents two sides of herself. When she presents herself within her professional role, she constructs herself as trained and qualified but, within this role when interacting with this specific group of children, she sees herself as lacking in this necessary knowledge. The knowledgeable expert seems to disappear as the self in need of knowledge comes to the fore. Although I see this

discourse as motivating, this teacher into attaining more training and developing herself, I wonder if it may disempower her in dealing with these children and using the vast amount of experience and training that she already has. The repetition of the word “**maybe**” throughout this conversational flow constructs her uncertainty with regard to this specific topic of concern. The above text constructs a discourse that indicates the importance of knowledge and training that was also intertwined in conversations with the principal (see p. 98), the class teacher (see pp. 110-111) and the director of NAPTOSA (see p. 83). This is expounded in chapter six.

V: And workshops in the schools might help?

Here, I was thinking in terms of a relevant intervention based on the teacher’s construction of the situation.

T: **Yes! Yes!**

Workshops could be used in an intervention programme. This format would be acceptable to teachers but through them, new knowledge could be presented. In this conversational flow, something new is created in the gap between us.

5.3.2.3 Conversations with Kgosana’s class teacher: ‘It depends on his mood’.

Kgosana’s class teacher is brought into the ecology by conversations with the support learning co-ordinator as it was she, (the class teacher) who referred Kgosana to the committee. As Kgosana’s class teacher, she spends most of the day with him. She forms an important part of Kgosana’s ecology during school hours. As such, her constructions of him and his behaviour form an important part of the ecology of bullying. All the members interviewed from now on have direct contact with Kgosana. The letters CT indicate her utterances.

- *The bad Kgosana*

V: ...just generally, how do you experience him? How do you find him?

CT: His **very bully** and sometimes **not co-operative**...Most of the time, outside. You find a child coming back to me ...Kgosana did this, Kgosana... things like that.

The question leads to the response of a problem discourse around Kgosana's behaviour even though the question is general. Kgosana's problem behaviour is constructed by the terms "**very bully**" and "**not co-operative**". This discourse is justified by an example. The details of constructed description of the actual behaviour are missing. The next response acts as a probe to gain more detail of the construction of the behaviour.

V: ... It's peers basically?

CT: Yes **it's peers**, the one that I know of, I think it's **his uncle**... **it involve hitting**... when **I ask him why**... **he didn't have any answer for me, look at me and kept quiet**.

In response to the probe, the discourse of the problem behaviour is further constructed by the phrases: "**it's peers and his uncle**" constructing who the behaviour is directed towards and the phrase: "**it involve hitting**" constructing the content of the behaviour. Kgosana's '**discourse of silence**' in reaction to the teacher's question "**why...**" is constructed in the phrases: "**he didn't have any answer for me, look at me and kept quiet**". Kgosana's '**discourse of silence**' is constructed in the conversations with his mother (see p. 133) and his favourite teacher (see p. 119). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Discourse of the good Kgosana*

V: Is there any time when he is a bit better than other times?

CT: **Whenever you request somebody to clean the chalkboard**... he'll volunteer to do that. Then **I have to usually pack my books on the table**... **he'll be the first one to pack those books** into the cupboard. Then I'll leave him and ask him: "why do you do that?" "No, **I feel like doing that today**..."

V: **Does that happen on a particular day**, when he has a good day or...?

CT: I think he's done that **when he is in a good mood**.

V: So there is **nothing you can actually see, no pattern that you can see** in that?

CT: Yes.

My questions try to construct connection of behaviour to context. The response constructs a description of the actual behaviour constructed by the phrases: **“Whenever you request somebody to clean the chalk board...”** and **“... he’ll be the first one to pack those books...”** The questions in this flow continue the attempt of constructing the context around the behaviour: **“Does that happen on a particular day...?”** and detail **“... nothing you can actually see, no pattern that you can see...”** The details of the situation and possible connections to what is happening in the environment or in the interaction are not part of the discourse. Kgosana’s behaviour is attributed to his mood. This discourse is created by the phrase: **“I think he’s done that when he is in a good mood.”** The reported discourse of Kgosana himself also attributes his behaviours to mood: **“I feel like doing that today”**. This discourse attributing Kgosana’s behaviour to his mood discourages seeing the complexities of interaction with Kgosana and the context around his behaviour.

In this conversational flow the questions I ask are worded in such a way that they reflect the discourses of the teacher: **“... nothing you can actually see, no pattern that you can see...”** If the question was worded differently such as ‘can you see any other patterns, besides his moods, that affect his behaviour?’ it could have been possible to construct links to the behaviour, other than Kgosana’s moods, a discourse that is not present in this conversation. The absence of this discourse can possibly prevent Kgosana’s behaviour from being related to anything else other than his internal mood state and also prevent any possible intervention in interaction or context that may change that behaviour. The ‘discourse of Kgosana’s behaviour depending on mood’ is also seen in conversations with his grandmother (see p. 127).

V: What’s happening during the day that you can see that’s causing his mood to change?

CT: ... When ... you give him a sum to do, and when he gets it correct **I just surprise him, ‘oh today you are so good.’ Then he’ll be happy for that day.**

V: **So he likes praise and that’s what makes him happy** for the day, if he’s done something...?

CT: **Ja sometimes, some days not always...** he will **just look at you, just look outside and then look at you.**

My response attempts to construct a connection between the events in the environment to the behaviour: “**So he likes praise and that’s what makes him happy?**” The connection is acknowledged but the words “**sometimes, some days**” deconstruct the connection as a pattern and returns to the discourse of the behaviour being unpredictable. The phrases: “**just look**” and “**then look**” are repeated and again construct a non-responsive action within this discourse and others. The description of the positive discourse is short, returning to a negative discourse almost immediately. Difficulty in constructing a ‘discourse of the good Kgosana’ is seen in conversations with his mother (see p. 134) and grandmother (see p.126). This is discussed in chapter six.

- *Discourse of strengths in dealing with Kgosana*

Communication

V: What are your strengths in dealing with him?

CT: The way we **communicate** sometimes. But sometimes we communicate in a negative way... It **depends on his mood.**

Communication is seen as the vehicle through which the negative and positive discourses happen and this is constructed by the above phrase and the repetition of the word “**communicate.**” The discourse of strength is short and a return to the negative discourse happens almost immediately. The discourse again places the way in which the communication goes as “**depending on**” Kgosana’s “**mood**” rather than on the content or process of communication. Again this detracts from looking at interaction and context as possibly contributing to Kgosana’s behaviour.

- *Discourses around discipline*

V: What have you tried...?

CT: ... sometimes to **give him some tasks to do...** being **part of a group that is sweeping**, the **next thing Kgosana is not there** he's **gone... gone**. Like **yesterday what I did**, he was among the group, that were busy with a other project... then I requested him on this table to clear those plastics, which he did not... **“You’re going to sweep the floor”**. **He said to me “He won’t come.”**

The ‘discourse of cleaning as a discipline’ is constructed by the phrases: **“give him some tasks to do”** and **“part of a group that is sweeping.”** This is repeated as a way of disciplining in the conversations with the principal (see pp. 94-95). **Kgosana’s** reaction to the discipline is constructed by the phrases: **“Kgosana is not there...”** he’s **“gone... gone.”** **He said to me “he won’t come...”** This constructs Kgosana as resistant to discipline, especially the repetition of the word **“gone”** and **“he won’t come.”** The discourse is then justified by an example: **“... and like yesterday what I did, he was...”**

CT: ..I usually [tell]... Kgosana... **go outside and think thoroughly what you want in life...because you doing this always...** I [once] said to him: **“Go out and until you change your grades.”** Then **he went to [a teacher] and ask her to come and apologise** on his behalf... Then I said **“No, I’ll take Kgosana let him come in into the class.”** But **[the change] lasted for a week... he went back to the behaviour.**

Another form of discipline is constructed by the phrase: **“... go outside and think thoroughly what you want in life...”** This type of discipline is used often; this is constructed by the word **“usually.”** The second example of when this form of discipline was used is constructed as more severe action by the phrase: **“... until you change your grades.”** Kgosana is sent outside permanently. Kgosana’s reaction to this discipline is constructed as different compared to the less severe punishment by the phrase: **“... he went to [a teacher] and ask her to come and apologise...”** and the phrase: **“... [the change] lasted for a week”** constructs a change in behaviour but this change was not

permanent and this is constructed by the phrase: “... **he went back to the behaviour.**” These ‘discourses of constructed patterned actions’ is seen in the conversation with Kgosana’s mother (see p. 134). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Discourse of Kgosana’s silence*

CT: ...**after reopening he is so quiet, for the past week,** he’s been quiet cause I remember on Monday and Tuesday, **the whole day he slept in class...**Then after break, I went to... and **I find him sleeping in the back.**

V: What is your explanation for that?

CT: **I don’t know, ’cos he doesn’t open up to me...**

V: And that’s more like a negative quiet than a positive quiet?

CT: Ja, it’s a negative one. When I look at him, **it’s just a matter of saying: “Don’t talk to me, don’t do anything to me.”** Then **he just sleep in class,** and he’ll be quiet for the day.

A discourse of Kgosana as non-interactive is constructed by the phrases: “**after reopening he is so quiet**”; “**he slept in class**”; “**I find him sleeping in the back.**”

The teacher’s interpretation of Kgosana’s discourse of silence is constructed by the phrase: “**it’s just a matter of saying: “Don’t talk to me, don’t do anything to me”**”. It is constructed as an unwillingness to interact in the phrase: “**Don’t talk to me**” and protective in the phrase: “**don’t do anything to me.**” ‘The discourse of the undefined problem’: “**I don’t know...**” is intertwined in this discourse. This discourse is seen in conversations with Kgosana’s mother (see p. 133) and aunt (see p. 137). This is expounded in chapter six.

- *Discourse of possible solutions*

- *Discourse of knowledge*

V: ... What do you think would help him?

CT: I think **if he can get a professional,** who **he can come and open up to him or her,** who can **state what his problems are.**

The ‘discourse of knowledge’ is repeated here as with the conversations with the support learning co-ordinator (see p. 103). This discourse is constructed by the phrases: “... **if he can get a professional...**” who can “... **state what his problems are.**” The professional is someone who has the knowledge to “**state**” what Kgosana’s problems are. The problems are seen as belonging to Kgosana and this is constructed by the words: “**his problem**”. This discourse detracts from linking the problem to the immediate context in which it occurs and it does not encourage looking at the interaction of different members of the ecology around the problem. As in the conversation with the support learning co-ordinator (see p. 103), the emphasis for the need to change is placed on Kgosana constructing a ‘discourse of constructing change in the child’.

The ‘discourse of openness’ as a solution is constructed by the phrase: “... **who he can come and open up to him or her...**” and is put forward as a way of being helpful to Kgosana. This is the binary opposition to what is currently happening between Kgosana and his teacher as constructed by the phrase: “**I don’t know, ’cos he doesn’t open up to me...**” found under section on the discourse of silence. The ‘discourse of openness’ as a solution is seen in conversations with Kgosana’s mother (see pp. 135-136) and is similar to a ‘discourse of being open about feelings’ seen in the conversations with his favourite teacher (see pp. 118-119).

- *Argumentation around Kgosana’s behaviour*

The problem defined

V: How do you understand this behaviour?

CT: ...**I don’t know what to say about that...**

Here the discourse of ‘**the undefined problem**’ is constructed by the phrase: “**I don’t know what to say about that**”. My response to this discourse of ‘**the undefined problem**’ tries to focus on specific aspects that could possibly construct a discourse around defining the problem:

V: And you have spoken to him about his behaviour? what sort of things do you say to him...?

CT: [Speaking to the mother]...**Then I ask her, ‘why are you not staying with [him]. Maybe [he] needs you, then you are far away.’...it’s hard for me to say...Because I sometimes have this feeling, if I’m next to him, he won’t perform the way he wants because I think I’m a bit noisy and I’m also making him afraid** with ‘Kgosana, do this, Kgosana.’

This discourse constructs connection between Kgosana and those around him, first with his mother, constructed by the phrase: “**Then I ask her, ‘why are you not staying with [him]. Maybe [he] needs you, then you are far away’**” and then with the teacher herself: “**if I’m next to him, he won’t perform the way he wants because I think I’m a bit noisy and I’m also making him afraid.**” The discourse of the mother’s behaviour as connected to Kgosana in a negative way and could be constructed as blame. This discourse of blame maybe related to the discourse “**Is it me?**” found in her conversation. The discourse of silence is also noted with this teacher around Kgosana and this is constructed by the phrase: “**it’s hard for me to say.**”

5.3.2.4 Conversations with Kgosana’s favourite teacher: ‘Discourse of acceptance, understanding and love’

This teacher is constructed as a member of the ecology as Kgosana brought her into the conversations. He constructs her as his favourite teacher. She is a life orientation teacher and, as such, has dealings with both Kgosana and other children who bully. She is an important part of the ecology of bullying in the school and in Kgosana’s immediate ecology. The letters FT indicate her utterances.

- *The good Kgosana*

V: With Kgosana, can you tell me about him generally?

FT: He is **a wonderful boy... when I am with him, we connect. I understand him.** For these learners to behave well, **just love them, make them feel important Accept them, I love them, I show them that I love them, I show them that**

they are unique... they are individuals and I **accept** that **they have different backgrounds**. So Kgosana, I take him as he is, **I don't compare** him... **I don't compare** my learners... and I try to **understand the child...** but **basically, I love them**.

This is the only member of the ecology to open the conversation with a positive discourse around Kgosana constructed by the phrase: “He is **a wonderful boy.**” A ‘**discourse of acceptance of the child, understanding and showing love**’ runs throughout her conversation. This discourse is constructed by noting the repetition of the words, “**understand**”, “**accept**” and “**love**”.

I start by asking specifically about Kgosana but this teacher weaves back to children in general. This is constructed by the phrase: “**I show them that they are unique**”. This seems to indicate that FT does not categorise Kgosana separately from the other children. She sees “**them**” as individuals but does not categorise them into separate groups of those that behave and those that do not.

The ‘discourse of understanding’ is repeated here as being important in reaching children. This same ‘discourse of understanding’ was intertwined in conversation with the support learning co-ordinator (see pp. 99-100) and noted in conversation with Kgosana’s aunt (see p. 141). The ‘discourse of perceiving children as being individuals’ is constructed by the words “**individuals**”, “**unique**”, “**different**” backgrounds and the repetition of the phrase: “**I don't compare.**” The interactions of these discourses are expounded in chapter six.

FT’s discourses sometimes hold together ‘binary oppositions’ (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 1999) or different sides of argumentation. This pattern was noted throughout the conversation. In this case FT does not label or categorise the children perceiving “**them**” and acting towards “**them**” as though they are an indistinguishable group. However, this group consists of “**individuals**” that cannot be ‘compared’.

- *Discourse of understanding, interaction and love*

“I put them nearer to me”

V: Does this take a lot of energy from you or is this just part of your interaction with him?

FT: **It’s part of my interaction, not only with Kgosana but with all of my learners... Not money, not sweets... just to touch you... You don’t have to be a far away person, just a teacher... I put them nearer to me. The touching... So I touch them. We make... signs... we touch each other... we talk to each other. I call him sometimes or any the other learner and say, what’s wrong...?**

Here FT seems to use ordinary positive social interaction to form relationships with the children: “...**make... signs...we touch each other... we talk to each other.**” This interaction comes naturally to her and so it is easily sustained. The phrase, “... **all of my learners....**” constructs belonging through the word “**my**” and again includes “**all**” the children as one group. The continued pattern of using the word “**we**” constructs relationship.

Repetition of the word **touch**, an action used to “...**put them nearer to me**” emphasises the importance of creating closeness in this way between her and the children. This discourse is similar to the ‘discourse of understanding’, “**bringing the children towards you**” found in the conversations with the support learning coordinator, whose voice seems to confirm that of FT (see pp. 99-100).

- *The bad Kgosana*

“He is just a child”

V: What do you find most difficult about Kgosana?

FT: You know, **maybe you can say I’m trying to buy your face** or what.

He is just a child...I just take him as a child...To me Kgosana is a child...I manage to correct it, his behaviour. Really I don't want to be special, I don't want to be, don't want to be the person, THE person but his behaviour for me is not bad – is not bad.

FT constructs Kgosana “**as just a child**” by the repetition of this phrase and constructed through this discourse “... **his behaviour for me is not bad...**” This is emphasised by the repetition of the phrase “**not bad**”. She justifies this account by assuring me that she is not just trying to look good: “**Really I don’t want to be special...**” which is emphasised by repeating different variations of this phrase. The discourse, “**He is just a child**” seems to lead to, “**I manage to correct it**” [his behaviour]. The discourse is also noted in conversations with the aunt (see p. 139).

The argumentation presented by FT so far had presented a positive picture of Kgosana and the discourse of the difficult problem child had disappeared. In the following questioning I was looking for what was not yet said.

V: [Is he]...not easier at some times and more difficult at other times?

FT: **As I have said, and am still saying, that he is a child. When I am out of the class I would find him doing his things; ... I would reprimand him and say, “Kgosana, I told you not to do that and I told you that you are not special.” All of these learners in my class they are special so don't stand up and move around the class...it is when I am out of the classroom and that is the behaviour of any other child... [No], I won't take that as a behavioural problem...I just tell myself that he is a child, and he is not like the others...but I don't think that it's disturbing for me because he doesn't do that whilst I'm in class. Whilst I am in class with him he sits still, and do whatever he's supposed to do...I don't label...in my mind in there is no thing that tells me that Kgosana has a problem, it doesn't register like that...I don't take it personally you see, it doesn't bother me that much because I don't take it personally.**

In my response to my probing for a different argumentation, FT continues to insist that she does not find Kgosana a problem. She again constructs Kgosana as a child using the following phrases: “**As I have said and I am still saying...that is the behaviour of any other child...I won't take that as a behavioural problem...**” She justifies her position by giving examples of some of Kgosana’s behaviour that would possibly be labelled as

problematic by another teacher. Through the discourses of “... **he is a child.**” and individuality, “... **he is not like the others...**” FT constructs Kgosana’s behaviour so that “... **in my mind in there is no thing that tells me that Kgosana has a problem, it doesn't register like that...**” The binary opposites within FT’s discourses are clearly apparent within this conversational flow: “... **that is the behaviour of any other child...**” constructs Kgosana as a child as any other child, and the discourse of individuality, “... **he is not like the others...**” exist side by side, seemingly performing the same function in that they justify Kgosana’s behaviour as acceptable both as a member of the group and as an individual. A ‘discourse of not taking the behaviour of children personally’ is constructed by the repetition of the phrase: “... **I don’t take it personally...**” linked to the phrase “... **it doesn’t bother me that much...**” FT responded to my question describing the more difficult side of Kgosana’s behaviour but constructed it differently through the discourse of “**he is a child**” resisting labelling him as a problem or difficult.

- *Discourse on discipline*

FT: ...**I discipline them because... I just show them that I love them** and then I don't have a problem in discipline .

V: What kind of discipline methods do you use with him [Kgosana]? Or is it necessary to use any with him?

FT: I really don't discipline **my learners with a certain kind of discipline. Shouting, yelling, reprimanding...** [Kgosana] **wasn’t that severe, he is not severe** in my lessons.

I resume the conversation by again referring specifically to Kgosana as my interest lies with this child. Again, FT’s response widens my perspective, including him with all other learners due to her ‘**discourse of inclusion.**’ This is constructed by the phrase, “...**my learners...**” as opposed to referring to Kgosana specifically.

The word “**my learners**” used by FT seems to construct a sense of relationship and belonging. The discourse of “**love**” again runs through this discourse of discipline

alongside using the words “**Shouting, yelling, reprimanding...**” FT is able again to hold, what seems like to me on a sensing level, two seemingly opposite discourses together. The effect on me is that I find FT’s discourse more believable or ‘real’. She is not this ethereal being walking around exuding love. She loves them but she also yells at them. These disciplinary discourses seem to result in Kgosana “**not being that severe**” in this teacher’s class. She repeats this phrase for emphasis.

- *Binary oppositions*

FT: ...**I am not that strict... in fact I enjoy them if they misbehave... they jump on tables and run around and push I sometimes enjoy that... they do behave even though they are naughty... I don’t have much problem...** I just tell myself that they are **children** you see.

The permissive discourse is constructed through the phrases: “... **I am not that strict...**” “... **in fact I enjoy them if they misbehave...**” and “**I sometimes enjoy that.**” In this permissive discourse the existence of binary opposites exist side-by-side constructed through the phrase: “... **they do behave even though they are naughty.**” It seems through this discourse of holding together of what could be constructed as opposing argumentation, FT allows different behaviours at different times in her classroom and interaction. The resulting action is that the children are allowed to be “**children**”: “... **they jump on tables and run around and push...**” in the learning experience and in this wider societal ‘discourse of being children’ they are also “**learners**” that at times “... **sits still, and do whatever he’s supposed to do.**” It seems to lead FT to constructing the phrase: “... **I don’t have much problem...**”

- *Wider social discourse affecting the school*

Again in this conversation, the wider social discourses of the community impact on this school ecology constructed by the phrase: “**because of the strike, I have only known Kgosana for four months as a learner**”.

- *Discourse of possible solutions*

“I am an LO (Life orientation) teacher”

FT: ... I am an **L.O. teacher** maybe **that is why I can connect to them... sometimes, not every time, I would ask them, “how are you feeling today?”** So they would **tell me their feelings for the day...** in our **spare time** you see.

The support learning co-ordinator is also a L.O. teacher and was also identified as one of the children’s favourite teachers. It could be that there is a resource of teachers in this category whose expertise or natural leanings and subject content leads them to talk around the children’s feelings. This facilitates a connection. FT constructs a ‘discourse of being open about feelings’, constructed by the phrase, **“tell me their feelings for the day”**, as possibly facilitating a connection with the children: **“that is why I connect to them.”** Even with this discourse of talking about feelings as facilitating connection, these conversations are still constructed as delegated to **“spare time”** in the education system. Even in L.O. lessons, feelings are spoken about **“... sometimes, not every time...”**

Discourse of Communication

FT: **Love, just love, that is what [Kgosana] wants...if they notice that you don’t love them they rebel against you and if you show that you care, you love them and you know they can do better they try to please you...They try to make you happy because you say that they can make you happy, you tell them that they can make you happy.**

Here FT constructs again the discourse of **“love”** as a solution constructed by the phrase: **“Love, just love that is what [Kgosana] wants...”** There is a ‘discourse of communicating expectations to the children brings about those expectations’. This is constructed by the phrase: **“... They try to make you happy because you say that they can make you happy you tell them...”** The words **“Say”** and **“tell”** construct the discourse that telling someone, the discourse itself, creates the behaviour: **“... They try to make you happy...”** The word **“because”** directly constructs the link between telling

and the subsequent behaviour. This discourse is found in conversation with Kgosana's aunt (see p. 141). FT's response to my questioning about Kgosana again repeats the pattern of taking me to children in general by using the words **“they”** and **“them.”**

- *Discourse of Kgosana's silence*

FT: ... there is **no time when Kgosana would tell me [about his feelings], he didn't come out with anything like [anything bothering him].**

There is a 'discourse of silence' in connection with feelings noted across conversations here with his favourite teacher, his class teacher (see p. 110) and even with his mother (see p. 133). Kgosana does not talk about how he feels. This discourse is constructed in the above text by the phrases: **“... no time when Kgosana would tell me [about his feelings], he didn't come out with anything like [anything bothering him].”** There does not seem to be a discourse of the encouragement of talking about feelings (as presented in the text above) within the education system and this could possibly encourage Kgosana's silence. Kgosana's mother (see p. 133) and class teacher (see p. 111) also find it difficult to talk around these problems, repeating a 'discourse of silence' by the 'discourse of the undefined problem.'

5.3.3 Voices of the Family Ecology

5.3.3.1 Conversations with Kgosana: “I get blamed”

Kgosana was referred to me by the support learning co-ordinator as a child who bullies other children. His views and understanding of his own experiences are central to the exploration of this ecology. As Kgosana is Sotho speaking, the discourses are accounts of what he says are as given by the interpreter with whom I worked. The interpreter's utterances are indicated by the letter I.

- *Family discord*

V: Tell us about your family, the people that you live with...

I: ...**the other uncle bothers him and then he hits him, then the grandfather gets angry at [Kgosana].**

Kgosana starts the description of his family that he is living with by relating a problem. The questions asked of him up until this point had all been general and open ended, yet he begins immediately with the description of a problem when asked about his family. The problem discourse is constructed by the phrases: “... **the other uncle bothers him and then he hits him, then the grandfather gets angry at [Kgosana].**” Positive descriptions of the family are not given. This discourse could hold Kgosana’s family in a negative description for him keeping the negativity experienced between them as a ‘structured discourse’ (Shotter, 1993).

- *Discourses of blame and reaction*

I: ... his **problem** at school is that **he gets blamed a lot. Something happens and he gets blamed for it...** When I play soccer **they say “come on let’s fight”** and I say “I don’t want to fight with you” ... **the principal is going to fire me if I fight.** He says that **he tells the teachers but they don’t do anything.**

The other children are constructed as active in initiating the fights. Kgosana constructs himself as reacting to the action of other children using the phrases: “...**they say ‘come on let’s fight’...**” and in the discourse above this one: “... **the other uncle bothers him...**” They approach him and request a fight and he refuses and tells the teachers. The details are not given as to what starts the fights: “**Something happens...**” and the pursuing interaction is also not detailed. The discourse of seeing his behaviour as reactionary may stop Kgosana taking responsibility for his own actions in the situation. Not focusing on the details of the fighting may prevent awareness of the process of interaction around the aggression. The phrase: “... **the principal is going to fire me if I fight.**” constructs Kgosana’s awareness of the consequences of his actions.

Discourse on blame and friends

I: He says **a friend is not a right person**. They **do things together** and then **they call someone and tell them what you did**.

The discourse of being blamed is intertwined with Kgosana's discourse on friends constructed by the phrase: "... **they call someone and tell them what you did.**"

Discourse on blame and career choice

I: ... and I want to be a lawyer... I like **to protect other people from being exploited**.

On listening to this taped conversation a different interpreter gave the following interpretation of the above phrase: "I want to fight for other people who are arrested and **protect them from judges.**" Even in Kgosana's choice of profession, a discourse of possible reaction to blame is constructed using the words he "**protects**" others from "**judges**"/"**being exploited.**" This is a possible indication of how strong and pervasive his feelings are with regard to being blamed. Using these words and phrases, Kgosana's discourse of blame could be constructed as leading to a feeling of being judged or exploited by others.

• *Discourse of passivity of teachers*

I: He says that **he tells the teachers but they don't do anything**.

V: Why do you think they do nothing?

I: **He doesn't know.**

The discourse of the teachers as passive is constructed in the phrase: "...**he tells the teachers but they don't do anything.**" The discourse of disconnection or lack of communication and lack of knowledge of the teacher's position is evident here and constructed using the phrase: "**He doesn't know.**" I wonder if the need for knowledge, noted in the 'Discourse of training and knowledge' in the support learning co-ordinator's conversations (see pp. 103-104), contributed to this reported action or inaction. This

discourse of passivity may prevent Kgosana from approaching them to intervene, preferring to continue to act on his own. It is possible that these discourses, forming part of the background voices in this ecology, influence each other perpetuating this ordered discourse of passivity. The action created seems to result in inaction on the teacher's behalf and lack of communication between teachers and children.

- *Presenting well*

The above discourse of being reactive towards others aggressive or initiating behaviour could also overlap with presenting well, as could the discourse of Kgosana constructing himself as telling passive teachers about his problem. The '**discourse of reaction**' is also intertwined with the '**discourse of blame.**' It is possible that these discourses are a reaction to or interact with '**the discourse of blame**' as Kgosana possibly feels that he must present well to others to avoid this blame.

V: Do you have friends?

I: No friends...

V: How do you see a friend? What would a friend be and what would he do with you?

I: He says **a friend is not a right person**. They **do things together** and then **they call someone and tell them what you did**.

V: ... Does he have friends like that?

I: Not now, he used to have them but now **he plays games in the stores**.

Kgosana did not bring his friends into the ecology at any point in time. He justifies that he no longer has friends by providing a convincing alternative as to how he occupies his time now constructed by the phrase: "**... he plays games in the stores.**" Since this conversation, I have met some of Kgosana's friends at his home. Kgosana seems to somehow have heard the discourses found in conversations with his mother, grandmother and aunt that friends are a bad influence and this is constructed by the phrase: "**... a friend is not a right person.**" These voices form part of the background conversations to Kgosana's position. He could be responding to this discourse of friends by appeasing

it and presenting well. Kgosana's own discourse of blame also seems to influence this discourse on friends, as the phrase: "... **they call someone and tell them what you did**" seems to construct the friends as blaming him. Continuing to find a different side to the argumentation I respond:

V: What does he do at break times?

I: ... **goes back to class and sometimes does homework or class work.**

Kgosana is not reported as being conscientious. It is one of the schools complaints about him; his mother also complains about him not being interested in his schoolwork: "...**and not doing his work well at school.**" Yet Kgosana constructs himself as conscientious with the phrase: "... **goes back to class and sometimes does homework or class work.**" Again, it seems almost as though Kgosana is responding to these discourses in his ecology. The pattern of presenting well could prevent Kgosana from negotiating a preferred way of being for himself within his school and other contexts. Presenting well could be influencing his credibility in the eyes of others. According to his mother (see p. 135) there is a 'discourse of [Kgosana's] pretending' running through the ecology which seems similar to presenting well. When I look at the times in my own interaction when I find it difficult to believe him, it occurs when he was presenting well.

5.3.3.2 Conversations with Kgosana's maternal grandmother: 'The bad child and the good child'

This member of the ecology is constructed as part of the ecology because Kgosana's mother brought into the conversations and she is the person Kgosana lives with. Most of the time, Kgosana's grandmother's English was sufficient during the interview, but when she battled, the interpreter did help her. Kgosana's grandmother's utterances are indicated by the letter G, the interpreter by the letter I.

- *The bad Kgosana*

The defining moment

Family discord G: Last year, **he was naughty because he steal, they take the other CDs...and the man says he's going to kill them** [Kgosana friends]. So I took Kgosana to...(Father's suburb)...this year, I say to **the mother** we must go fetch the child.

Kgosana lives with this maternal grandmother and has done so since birth, except for last year when he lived with his father and paternal grandmother after the above incident occurred. He returned to Mamelodi at the beginning of this year. Kgosana's grandmother opened the description of Kgosana by relaying this incident, "... **he was naughty because he steal, they take the other CDs.**" Immediately at the opening of the conversation Kgosana is constructed as a bad child by the preceding phrase. This incident seems to be either a starting point or a turning point in the discourse of 'the bad Kgosana.' The justification given for him being sent to his father is that of safety and is constructed by the phrase: "... **the man says he's going to kill them.**" Kgosana's mother (see p. 129) and aunt (see p. 137) all construct this incident as 'a defining moment' in Kgosana's behaviour in their conversations. The 'discourse of violence' is noted here in Kgosana's general life experience through the response of the adult from whom he stole.

- *Discourse of distance running throughout*

G: ... [he] **can't listen, he know nothing, he is a slow learner and the books is always wrong... My other child... always help [him] and [she] is also complaining...The one that is complaining is the teachers...**

The negative discourse surrounding Kgosana is constructed by the phrases: "...**can't listen, he know nothing, he is a slow learner and the books is always wrong...**" Reports of others complaints from different people seem to be given as justification as to the negative accounts of Kgosana. "**My other child...is also complaining...**" "**The one**

that is complaining is the teachers.” This form of justification is noted as a pattern across the conversation.

G: I even go and fetch **the mother** and say **your child** is doing this and this...

“**The mother**” or Kgosana’s mother are the phrases often used by the grandmother to refer to her daughter. Only once during the conversation is she referred to as “**my child.**” The grandmother consistently refers to all the other children as “**my child**”. This seems to create distance between the grandmother and this daughter. The binary opposition to distance is constructed with the use of the word “**my**” which constructs relationship, a sense of belonging and attachment. The use of the words “**the mother**” and “**your child**” constructs the link between Kgosana and his mother whilst distancing them both from the grandmother.

Discord in other family relationships

V: He never stayed with his dad until last year?

G: No, he never stayed with him because **his mother was always fighting with [the father]** until he leaves...

I: **The [paternal] grandmother doesn't like [Kgosana] and [Kgosana's] mother.**

There is a ‘discourse of family discord’ running throughout the conversations across this ecology. It is also evident in conversations with Kgosana (see pp. 119-120) his mother (see pp. 130-131) and his aunt (see p. 140). In this text it is constructed by the phrases: “**[Kgosana's] mother was always fighting with [the father]**” and “**The [paternal] grandmother doesn't like [Kgosana] and [Kgosana's] mother.**”

• *The good child, bad child discourse*

G: **[He] doesn't know anything every year, they just push him up, they just push him.** Even **that child of mine... he is better, than him...** He is [born] 98 and he is in grade three but **he is cleverer than [Kgosana]...** Yes my **child is better,**

than [Kgosana]... Yes that one he is clever, **my child he is doing everything...**
But **my child is better than** Kgosana, **very.**

In the text the grandmother constructs contrasts between the two children Kgosana (the bad child) and “**my child**” Kgosana’s uncle (the good child). Kgosana is constructed as the bad child using the phrase “[**he**] **doesn't know anything every year, they just push him up, they just push him...**” The last phrase is repeated for emphasis. Kgosana’s uncle is presented as the good child, constructed by the phrases: “... **that child of mine he is better than him; my child he is doing everything...**” The discourse is constructed by the repetition of these phrases. The discourse of comparison between the two children is constructed by the repeated phrase: “... **better than [Kgosana].**” These discourses seem to prevent seeing anything bad in the one child or anything good in the other. It serves to hold them in this fixed state of definition and probably interaction. I would think that the outcome related to this discourse could be to blame Kgosana for everything and this is how he seems to experience his situation. A pattern of returning to the negative discourse around Kgosana is noted throughout the conversation.

The discourse of the good Kgosana

V: ... What is **good** about him? What sort of things **do you enjoy** about Kgosana?

G: **He like to play soccer.**

V: So he is **good** at playing soccer?

G: Yes he is playing soccer.

The good side of Kgosana is constructed as something he likes to do, “**He like to play soccer**” not as an attribute that he has. The word “**good**” is left out of his grandmother’s utterances.

In response to the above flow of conversation, I try to construct a discourse of positive aspects within the relationship between Kgosana and his grandmother.

V: And when he is with you, when is he nice to you, when is it happy between you?

G: When he says: “**Grandma, I do something wrong**” and he is answering me .

The relationship is constructed as positive when Kgosana is accepting the negative discourse of himself as doing something wrong. This discourse is constructed by the phrase: “**Grandma, I do something wrong.**”

V: ... **When does he listen?** ...

G: If you say he must go to the shops sometimes he goes, **but if he do not want to go**, he say to me I am not going [laughs]. **It depends on how he feels.**

Kgosana’s behaviour is constructed as depending on his mood using the phrase: “**It depends on how he feels.**” This discourse inhibits seeing any responsibility for interpersonal relationships or context as having any effect on Kgosana’s behaviour. The details of context and interaction are not constructed. The ‘discourse of Kgosana’s behaviour as being dependent on mood’ is constructed in conversations with Kgosana’s grandmother (see p. 127) and class teacher (see p. 108). The account of the ‘discourse of the good Kgosana’ is short compared to the spontaneous, lengthy ‘discourse of the bad Kgosana’ and it occurs spontaneously throughout the conversation. Returning to the pattern of the negative discourse is noted in conversations with Kgosana’s mother (see p. 134) and class teacher (see pp. 106-108).

- *The silent voice of the grandfather: An absence of supportive adult male relationships*

V: How does he get on with his grandfather?

G: He is **shouting him** ...Yes and **he doesn’t listen him**. The grandfather, **my husband**, is not working so... Yes **he has gone to work on Saturdays but during the day he is at home.**

The relationship between Kgosana and his grandfather is constructed as negative using the phrases: “**shouting him**” and “**he doesn’t listen him.**” Work was constructed as the reason for Kgosana’s grandfather not coming to the session using the phrase: “**he has gone to work on Saturdays but during the day he is at home.**” To date, the

grandfather has still not come. When I went to the house, the grandfather remained in the bedroom and closed the door. There seems to be an absence of positive adult male relationships in Kgosana's life.

- *Discourses on discipline*

V: If he does something wrong what do you do?

G: The **grandfather is shouting**, even me and **I tell myself that I'm going to kill [beat] him** but then he runs away and he's going to come late... **he runs away and he says "go away"...** He **runs way and come back late...** I don't know if you can make Kgosana to be better to the class, I don't know because **even the teacher is complaining** .

The discourses of punishment seem to involve shouting and threats of beating, neither reportedly effective in changing Kgosana's behaviour. This is constructed by the phrases: "**Grandfather is shouting**, even me" and "**I tell myself that I'm going to kill [beat] him**". Again the grandmother changes the topic to Kgosana's negative behaviour and justifies this discourse by adding other voices of complaint using the phrase: "**even the teacher is complaining.**" The constant focus on Kgosana's negative behaviour prevents any focus on interaction between family members and other people's contribution to the situation, or possible precipitating events that may contribute to Kgosana's behaviour. Threats of being beaten seem to result in Kgosana's actions: "**he runs away and he says 'go away'... runs way and come back late...**"

- *Argumentation around Kgosana*

'It's the friends'

V: And what do you think? Why do you think he is naughty?

G: I think that that **it's the friends...** Then [Kgosana's grandfather] finds him **in the street with his friends**, they are busy playing there... But at school again they have **other naughty children in the class**, yes.

The discourse of friends being responsible for Kgosana's behaviour is constructed by the phrases: "... **it's the friends...**"; "... **in the street with his friends...**" and "... **other naughty children in the class...**" The 'discourse of the friends being responsible for the behaviour' of Kgosana again deflects from any issues occurring between the members of the family ecology. The need to separate Kgosana and his friends is also noted in conversations with Kgosana's aunt (see p. 137) and this also suggests blame.

5.3.3.3 *Conversations with Kgosana's mother: 'Is it me'?*

Kgosana's mother is constructed as part of the ecology because Kgosana brings her into the conversations often and constructs her as the person closest to him. She has a lot of contact with Kgosana and as such, is an important member of his ecology. The letter M indicates her utterances.

- *Discourse of the bad Kgosana*

The defining moment

M: they took things... It's like when I took him to (his father's suburb) and like when they broke up to that shack, it's all those things.

V: That's when it started?

M: Ja

Each family member I spoke to included this incident in his or her accounts of Kgosana (the aunt p. 137; the grandmother p. 123). Both Kgosana's mother and aunt seem to see this as some kind of defining moment for Kgosana, or at least a turning point where the situation became worse. It seems that the above event is significant as a benchmark in the discourse of Kgosana's behaviour being constructed as a problem.

Kgosana's defence

M: He said it's not him, it's his friends...But sometimes as time goes he says, "I am sorry for doing that, it's not me; you see, it's just that we were naughty by doing that."

Using the phrases: “... **it’s not me it’s my friends...**”; “... **it’s not me, we were naughty...**” Kgosana shifts the responsibility for the situation from himself “**its not me**” to his “**friends**” or being “**naughty.**”

- *Argumentation around “Kgosana’s problem”*

Family discord

M: [The grandparents] **shout at [Kgosana]; they are boys the two of them [Kgosana and his uncle] and you know how boys play;...they started to shout at him [Kgosana] and they swear...** my mother started to **shout at him** and **my Father starting doing all those things...** “**When I play with my Uncle they start calling me names and...if I am not playing with him they started to say you don’t like that one.**” ... **my Father** because **what he is doing it’s not right... I mean they are both children... they both naughty... both of you...** But... **it seems like they are pressurizing my son to that you see...**

... they come out on top of [Kgosana]. They talk so many things. They talk so many things, that’s his problem. When I’m asking him “Kgosana, what is your problem, if it’s me, if it’s me tell me I can correct that, I’m your parent. I can correct that if I’m wrong to you, you see if you don’t like me one thing about me.”

The negative ‘discourse of the bad Kgosana’, noted in the interview with his grandmother (see p. 124), could possibly be influencing this reported discourse by Kgosana’s mother, i.e. that of him always being blamed by his grandparents. This discourse of always being in the wrong is constructed by the phrases: “**When I play with my Uncle they start calling me names... if I am not playing with him they started to say you don’t like that one.**” This discourse influences the grandparent’s reported actions towards Kgosana, constructed by the repetition of the word “**shout**” and the words “**swear**” and “**calling me names.**” ‘The discourse of blame’ runs through this discourse of argumentation. The mother’s discourse around the grandparents’ reported actions constructs Kgosana as being blamed for what is wrong: “... **they come out on top of**

[Kgosana]’. This same discourse however also constructs blame on the grandparents by the phrase “... **it’s not right...**” This pattern of blame is found in the conversations with the manager of the Centre of Violence and Reconciliation (see pp. 91-92) and Kgosana (see pp.120-121). This reported discourse of blame by the grandparents is constructed as Kgosana’s problem: “... **they talk so many things, that’s his problem.**” Directly after this, a new side of the argumentation as to what Kgosana’s “problem” might be begins and then runs throughout the conversation. It is intertwined with various other discourses and that is the discourse of Kgosana’s mother’s question as to whether she is to blame. This is constructed by the phrases: “... **what is your problem, if it’s me, if it’s me tell me I can correct that I’m your parent. I can correct that if I’m wrong to you, you see if you don’t like me one thing about me.**” Kgosana’s mother seems to be willing on this level to look at her own possible contribution to Kgosana’s “**problem**”. This is constructed by the words “**Is it me?**” and a willingness to “**correct**” this is constructed.

Kgosana’s mother’s alternative to the grandparents reported discourse: “They are both children.”

The discourse constructed by the phrases: “... **you know how boys play; I mean they are both children...**” is similar to the ‘discourse he is just a child’, constructed by Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see pp.114-115) and his aunt (see p. 139). The words “**boys,**” “**children,**” “**how boys play,**” constructs the naughty behaviour as part of childhood and part of being a boy. It is a normalising discourse. The actions related to this discourse would probably result in treating the children in the same manner as opposed to, “... **it seems like they are pressurizing my son to that you see...**” It constructs the two children as sharing the blame and constructs them as being in the same category. “**They**” are “**both**” naughty; “**they are both children**”; “**they are boys the two of them,**”; “**you know how boys play?**”; “**both of you**”. The discourses also offer a possible alternative to the construction of the discourse of Kgosana’s grandparents. A similar discourse was constructed in conversations with Kgosana’s aunt “...**and also their children are naughty...**” and favourite teacher “...**that is the behaviour of any other child...**”

The father as Kgosana's problem

M: ... **if Kgosana is violent or angry he takes all those things from him [his father].**

This side of the argumentation constructs Kgosana's problem as his father: "**... he takes all those things from him.**"

"I'm not a bad mother"

M: ... **I am trying all my best. I am not a bad mother or a bad parent to him.**

Speaking in the negative, i.e. "**... I am not a bad mother...**" as opposed to "I am a good mother", constructs a sense that she was answering an accusation that she is a bad mother although the topic had not been brought up. It is possible that the 'discourse of blame,' noted across the ecology discussed in chapter six, forms a background voice that has the effect on this mother of denying that she is a bad mother and making it difficult for her to voice her suspicions of her own behaviour being linked to that of Kgosana's. Perhaps she feels that what she says might be defined by this wider discourse.

Responding to the sensing of this discourse:

V: Do you feel people are sort of thinking you are a bad mom and...?

M: **Yes, I think that every day – I think that... But it's not like that there are so many children that are growing up and apart from their mother** and they have good behaviour and **they are well behaved you see... It's just not that.**

M seems to justify to herself why "**... it's not like that...**" by emphasising the "**many children**" in Kgosana's position "**... growing up and apart from their mother...**", "**... they are well behaved you see...**" The phrases, **good behaviour, well behaved** are repeated for emphasis. Kgosana's mother continues to speak in the negative throughout this discourse:

M: **But I don't feel like I am abandoning him...**

M: ... **I don't think he feels like I am neglecting him...**

- *The undefined problem*

M: ... I say, “Kgosana **what is your problem? What is your problem? Just tell me what is really your problem.**” He won't talk, he will tell you, “Me, I don't have any problem.”... **I don't know what is really his problem. I know a child is naughty, but his naughtiness is, I don't know what kind it is...**

After presenting the different sides of the argumentation of the possibilities of what is contributing to Kgosana's problem, the discourse of the undefined problem is constructed. Kgosana's mother has a number of ideas but she does not really 'know' his problem. This discourse is constructed by the repetition of the phrase: “**What is your problem?**”; “**... what is really his problem?**”; and “**... I don't know...**” and the phrase, “**... but his naughtiness is I don't know what kind it is...**” This text constructs the 'discourse of Kgosana's naughtiness as being different to that of other children'; this is constructed by the phrase: “**I know a child is naughty, but his naughtiness is...**” This constructs Kgosana differently to how he is constructed in the discourse presented, as an alternative to the way his grandparents see him. It constructs his mother's confusion as to the meaning behind his behaviour.

This discourse could possibly discourage this mother as she wants to “**correct that**” (see p. 130) but she does not really know what to correct. She looks to Kgosana for the answer to this as all her questions in the reported flow of conversation are directed at him. Kgosana has no answers and repeats the 'discourse of silence', constructed by the phrases: “**He won't talk, he will tell you ... 'Me, I don't have any problem.'**”

V: So it's only been for about a year that he has been like this?

M: Yes, it has not been for long.

V: **And nothing happened? You don't know what happened to change the behaviour?**

M: No, I don't know.

V: And suddenly at 10 [years it] just started?

M: **To be angry, ja, and not doing his work well at school.**

In this conversational flow, I try to define more clearly this undefined problem, attempting to link its occurrence to some event in Kgosana's life. The mother retains the discourse of the undefined problem by repeating the phrase: "**I don't know.**" The same silence around the problem noted in Kgosana's answers is repeated with the mother. The discourse of "... **I don't know what is his problem...**" from Kgosana's mother and "**Me, I don't have any problem.**" from Kgosana leaves the problem unspoken, undefined and also unanswerable. My wording of the question reflecting not knowing: "**and nothing happened, you don't know what happened to change the behaviour?**" could have encouraged the continuation of this discourse. Wording the question differently thereby focusing on change, i.e. "What changed around this time?" could have focused the flow of conversation into a different direction and constructed a clearer definition of the problem.

- *The discourse of the good Kgosana*

V: What do you enjoy about him? What are his strong points?

M: **For me, he doesn't have any strong points** because...**he repeats doing it again and again...**[He] apologise **but then he repeats it again...**

Although my question attempts to construct the 'discourse of the good Kgosana', his mother continues to construct the 'discourse of the bad Kgosana' with her responses. As in the conversations with the grandmother (see pp.126-127) and his class teacher (see pp.106-107), Kgosana's mother struggles to find a positive discourse about Kgosana, which can possibly contribute to him being held in negative interaction. This difficulty is constructed in the phrase: "**For me, he doesn't have any strong points...**" The phrase, "**...he repeats doing it again.**" describes the structured 'discourses of constructed patterned actions' in which Kgosana and his mother are stuck. The ongoing situation is constructed by the words "**repeat**" and "**again**". I persist in trying to construct the good Kgosana:

V: **And before, what were the nice things about him?**

M: **He will listen when you talk and he will never do it, but now I don't know.**

The construction of the good behaviour is very short, it is constructed by the phrase: “**He will listen when you talk and he will never do it...**” It is also constructed as something in the past. It is immediately followed by a negative discourse once again: “... **but now I don't know.**” The difficulty in constructing the discourse of ‘the Good Kgosana’ is also evidence of the stuckness of the negative ‘discourse of the bad Kgosana’. The phrase: “**he went back to the behaviour**” is noted in conversation with Kgosana’s class teacher (see p. 109) and constructs this same patterned reaction described above by his mother.

- *Presenting well: ‘He pretends’*

This ‘discourse of pretending’ seems to be something similar to the ‘discourse of presenting well’ during my interaction with Kgosana (see p.122).

M: ...at school they say **he beats another children** and then when they talk to him **he pretends like he is listening but at the end of the day he is going to do the same thing.** It’s like **at home when they telling him, “don’t do this”, he’s going to just for those hours just to say, “Okay fine, I’m just going to pretend like I’m not doing it.”**

The discourse is constructed by the repetition of the word “**pretend**” and is justified by giving examples across contexts. It seems to lead to Kgosana losing credibility in the ecology. The ‘stuckness’ of the interaction between Kgosana across the different contexts is constructed. It stops Kgosana from negotiating a preferred self across these contexts and holds him in the structured discourses around his behaviour of pretending.

- *Discourse of possible solution*

M: **If he will be open and tell you what is affecting him he will be fine ... If he can be open and tell everything that is bothering him he will be fine... Maybe it's me and he doesn't want to tell me that it's me.**

Kgosana's mother believes that being open will help Kgosana and this discourse is constructed by the repetition of the words “**open**” and “**tell**”. This is the binary opposition to what is happening in the discourse of the undefined problem where no one is naming the problem. The discourse of “... **is it me...**” is seen intertwined with this discourse as a possible reason for Kgosana's silence on the issue: “**Maybe it's me and he doesn't want to tell me that it's me.**” Being open is constructed as a solution by being linked to the repeated phrase ‘he will be fine.’

5.3.3.4 Conversations with Kgosana's aunt: 'They just take him as a bad child'

Kgosana's aunt is constructed as a member of the ecology through conversations with Kgosana. She is constructed as his favourite family member that he is currently living with. She is also constructed as being involved with Kgosana on a day-to-day basis at home by Kgosana's grandmother. She shares a room with Kgosana and her baby son and she helps Kgosana with his homework. The letter A indicates her utterances.

- *Discourse of the bad Kgosana*

A: **He sometimes say doing things that are bad and sometimes he's is good... Sometimes** it is just that **maybe if maybe** he has done something like **maybe** when he has thrown something on the floor or doing anything. If you tell him to wipe it off he doesn't want to. **Why, I don't know?**

Kgosana's behaviour is constructed as inconsistent with the phrase “**sometimes good**” and “**sometimes bad**” and the repetition of the words “**sometimes**” and “**maybe**”. The discourse of the bad behaviour is justified with an example in this text but not the good behaviour. The phrase: “**Why, I don't know?**” constructs the ‘discourse of the

undefined problem' as seen in conversations with Kgosana's mother (see p.133) and class teacher (see p.111). Kgosana's behaviour being inexplicable and not understandable, possibly gives power to this structured discourse of Kgosana.

Defining moment

Trying to construct a discourse of knowing around Kgosana's behaviour, I start this particular part of the conversational flow with the following question:

V: When did you see the problems start?

A: **Last year...because they were separated, him and his friends; they did something wrong so they separated them, separated them...**and take him to (Father's suburb)

In this flow of conversations with Kgosana's aunt, the incident where "... **they did something wrong...**", when Kgosana was subsequently sent to (Father's suburb), seems to be constructed as the incident that defined the moment of change in discourse around Kgosana's behaviour. This is seen as evident in the conversations with his mother (see p.129) and his grandmother (see p. 124). In this conversation with the aunt, the move to (Father's suburb) is constructed as separating Kgosana from his fiends by the repetition of the word "**separated,**" the subjects from whom Kgosana is separated is constructed in the next phrase: "**because they were separated, him and his friends**". The construction of friends within this discourse could have possibly influenced Kgosana's conversations around friends where he constructed them with the phrase: "**Friends are not a good thing**".

• *Discourse of the good Kgosana*

V: And what sort of things do you enjoy about him? What do you see as Kgosana's strengths?

A: ... **he is understanding, I can talk to him... he likes dancing, having fun... sometimes you know kids at the street, they just make swear at him doing bad things and that makes him angry. He fights back... if he comes home to tell my parents or us they don't believe him cos they think he's he is naughty.**

V: Do you believe him? Do you think things are happening that are making him angry?

A: ... other children they just do things **they just take him as a bad child.** Then **maybe sometimes they are told by their parents, ‘don’t play with Kgosana, he is naughty’ and also their children are naughty.**

The discourse of ‘the good Kgosana’s’ is constructed through the phrases: “... **he is understanding, I can talk to him...**” The phrase: “... **he likes dancing, having fun...**” constructs the discourse of being fun loving. It is easy for this aunt, as with Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see pp.112-113), to access a positive construction of Kgosana. In this conversation, a ‘discourse of reaction’ Kgosana’s behaviour is constructed as a reaction to others by the phrase: “... **sometimes you know kids at the street they just make swear at him doing bad things and that makes him angry.**” The word “**and**” links Kgosana’s anger as a reaction to the behaviour of the others. The phrase, “**He fights back**” further constructs Kgosana’s behaviour as a reaction. The word “**back**” suggests that Kgosana did not initiate this interaction. This ‘discourse of reaction’ is intertwined in the conversations with Kgosana (see p.120). There is a discourse of not being believed constructed by the phrase: “... **and then and if he comes home to tell my parents or us they don’t believe him cos they think he’s he is naughty.**” It is linked to the discourse of the bad Kgosana by the word “**cos**”. The discourse of the bad Kgosana is constructed by the phrase “**they think he’s he is naughty**”.

The phrase “**they don’t believe him**” constructs a different side to the argumentation around Kgosana to what the aunt holds. Responding to the word “**they**” in the above discourse, my following responsive question tries to access another possible side to the argumentation around Kgosana’s behaviour – the side that sees him as reacting and a side that believes him. This difference is then further constructed by the phrase: “... **they just take him as a bad child.**” It is justified by a possible explanation as to the origins of this discourse constructed by the phrase: “... **maybe sometimes they are told by their parents don’t play with Kgosana he is naughty**”. The repetition of the word “**they**” throughout the text constructs the aunt as holding another side to this argumentation.

There are people such as this aunt and Kgosana's favourite teacher (see p 112) who see him differently and do not interpret all his behaviour through the discourse - "... **they just take him as a bad child.**" The phrase: "... **and also their children are naughty.**" constructs the discourse of Kgosana as being like the other children, particularly the word "**also**" includes "**other children**" with Kgosana as "**naughty.**" This discourse of Kgosana being included with the other children is similar to the discourse found in the conversations with Kgosana's favourite teacher "...**that is the behaviour of any other child...**" and is compatible with the discourse that constructs Kgosana as "**just a child**" (see pp.114-115). It is also found in the conversation with Kgosana's mother in the discourse "**they are both children**"(see p. 131).

- *Argumentation around Kgosana's behaviour*

The problem defined

V: How do you understand his naughtiness...

A: I think **he is just a child...**People in the family...**They think he is very naughty and a bad child...****Sometimes they do swear at him, saying bad things at him and he doesn't like it. That's why he is back chatting...**

The discourse of not knowing slowly recedes as through the flow of conversations, through utterance and response, questions and answers and the conversational interaction constructs the interaction between Kgosana and others. The conversational flow also constructs another side of argumentation as to the possible reasons for, and influences upon, his behaviour. Kgosana's behaviour is seen as being interpreted through a structured discourse: "**They think he is very naughty and a bad child...**" Kgosana's behaviour is also constructed as a reaction by the phrase: "**That's why he is back chatting...**" to the actions of others: "**they do swear at him, saying bad things.**" Kgosana's aunt constructs his naughtiness through the 'discourse of he is just a child,' constructed by the phrase: "**I think he is just a child.**" This discourse is repeated in conversations with Kgosana's favourite teacher (see pp. 114-115).

- *Family discord*

V: Is the tension between him and the other family members getting worse?

A: Ai, they don't get along... not at all... When he was a child but right now they don't.

V: When did you notice the change in the way they got on?

A: **They change since last year - since last year they don't... They see him if maybe Kgosana, if maybe like say maybe you are in prison... like if you come back home then everybody sees you as the same person, they won't notice a change or anything so I think everyone sees him like that... They don't say anything good about him, they just say bad things.**

The change in the relationships between Kgosana and his grandparents is constructed by the phrase: **"They change since last year - since last year they don't [get on]..."** Later in the conversation, Kgosana's time away in (Father's suburb) is likened to **"... maybe you are in prison..."** Kgosana is constructed as still held captive by this way of seeing him: **"... like if you come back home then everybody sees you as the same person, they won't notice a change or anything so I think everyone sees him like that..."** Later on, the way people talk about him is again constructed as being stuck in a structured discourse of describing Kgosana as bad: **"They don't say anything good about him, they just say bad things."**

The discourse of how Kgosana's grandparents interact with him is justified by an example.

A: ... his grandparents say sometimes remind him of what he does say **'you failing, you stupid in learning', like that and that's when he gets angry.**

The reported discourse around the grandparents is that Kgosana's scholastic problems are constructed as insults: **"... 'you failing, you stupid in learning' like that and that's when he gets angry."** The latter part of the phrase constructs a connection between the insults and Kgosana's reactionary anger **"and that's when he gets angry."**

- *Discourse of possible solution*

Discourse of understanding

A: ... he just **needs time, understanding, they need to understand him...** They mustn't always shout at him, backchat him or telling him that he fails, that he is a bad child, cause these things happened... **They should not remind him all the things he's done...** [or] **he will continue doing all those bad things .**

What would help Kgosana is constructed by the following words and phrases: “... **time, understanding...**”, emphasised by repetition of the word “**understanding**”. “**They should not remind him all the things he's done...**” - the discourse of reminding him is constructed as keeping his behaviour within its description: “**he will continue doing all those bad things.**” It is justified by examples. The discourse itself constructs the behaviour. This is similar to the discourse found in Kgosana's favourite teacher (p 118) under ‘discourse of communication’.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the various voices and argumentation around Kgosana's bullying behaviour. The metaphors, ticks and tools found in chapter four are used to construct the various discourses, thereby bringing structure and order to the turbulent flow of conversations. These discourses are presented as a plausible construction of an ecology of bullying, grounded in background and events. Chapter six summarises these discourses and looks at their interaction by considering the patterns across the discourses, how they agree or disagree. Some of the possible implications for an intervention programme and further research are suggested.

CHAPTER 6

THE JOINING OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE: DISCUSSION AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in chapter one, the aim of this study is to contribute to an ecological description or construction of behaviour problems, specifically bullying, in primary schools situated in the Mamelodi Township. As such, it focuses on providing a description of the experience of bullying behaviour facing the participants by exploring their own perspectives and meanings around their situation and any possible solutions that they may offer. This is achieved in the last chapter by using the methodology described in chapter four. Chapter six summarises the main discourses of the previous chapter. I do this by looking at the patterns and recurrent discourses across the ten members of this constructed ecology. In this way, the main experiences, perspectives and meanings around the topic are summarised as they stand out for me.

The study explores the relationships around bullying between the members of the ecology. This is achieved by constructing the way in which the discourses seem to agree, disagree or answer each other. The possible actions that the discourses can result in are included, as well as possible, preliminary suggestions for the construction of an ecological intervention and further research. One way of building an intervention, which is contextually relevant to this community, is to include these locally constructed discourses.

An aim of this study is to provide a basis, through using an ecological approach, for an intervention programme that is both relevant and broad, one in which locally relevant meanings of the interface between the individuals, the school community and the wider community are considered (Nsamenang & Dawes, 1998 as cited in Bakker, 1999). This chapter makes this interface explicit as based on the conversations within this study.

6.2 DISCOURSES AROUND COMMUNITY

6.2.1 The Background Voices of Community

The director of NAPTOSA and the manager of the Youth Department of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation both place schools as part of the wider community. This discourse is constructed by the director's phrase: **"this community based schools"** and the manager's phrases: **"schools don't exist in isolation. Schools are part of communities..."**

This influence of community on the local school ecology is illustrated in the following discourses: the discourse of poverty and social issues affecting the schoolchildren is constructed by the principal in the following phrases describing the issues: **"not having anything to eat at home, being alone at home"; "No supervision"; "drink."** The wider discourse of the nationwide public service strikes also affects the school and this is evident in the conversations with Kgosana's favourite teacher: **"because of the strike, I have only known Kgosana for four months as a learner."**

The manager of the Youth Department of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation places the schools in the wider context of our violent **"South African society"** and the **"messages of violence"** sent by society. The wider discourse of societal violence enters the local school ecology through the homes from which some of these children come. This is constructed in the conversation with the principal, describing a child from the informal settlement, by the phrase: **"sjambok the little one into silence... [that's] the provision that mom can do."** The possibility of exposure to the discourse of violence runs through all strata of society and brings it into the local school ecology, **"I don't know as to whether my little ones also that are here don't go through the very same."** (the principal, p. 93). The teachers are also constructed as part of these wider discourses, experiencing and perpetuating them, **"they are part of the community they are part of S.A., they also believe in violence... I don't think some of them do it intentionally but they are a product of this country."** (the manager of the Violence and Reconciliation Committee, p.92). The discourse of violence could possibly influence

the preference of corporal punishment as a method of discipline noted by the principal (see, p. 95).

In the family ecology, the message of violence is also noted: **“the man says he's going to kill them.”** [Kgosana and his friends] (the grandmother, p. 123). The children who bully are part of this violent discourse, experiencing it first hand and hearing its message: **“[violent] messages get to families, get to communities...”; “[they are] part of everyday life...”** (the manager of the Commission for Violence and Reconciliation p.87).

6.2.2 Implications for Intervention

Any intervention programme based on these discourses should address, or at least acknowledge, these wider societal discourses. The conversations with the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation emphasises the need for a wide intervention programme or **“strategies”** (see p. 87), **“by the government, by all institutions.”**; **“The only way to sustain it [work in the small environment of the schools] is for us to push the government to come up with policies to integrate this kind of work in the schools.”** If the interventions are made part of the policy and wider interventions, they will become part of the structured discourses of society. The effect of not integrating interventions through government policy is constructed through this phrase: **“otherwise we must keep on doing this work forever and we will not see much.”** (the manager, p. 90). There is a possibility that research in this area can help to focus the attention of government on the necessity of developing this kind of policy. There seems to be an absence of details of what this needed **“strategy”** actually consists of. Many family therapy authors acknowledge the impact of these background voices in the form of ‘larger systems’ (Elizur & Minuchin, 1989; Landau-Stanton, 1982 as cited in Le Roux, 1992, p. 43). Le Roux (1992) claims that attempts to transform them can be overwhelming. In attempting to engage these background voices or ‘larger systems’ in treatment programmes, he suggests seeing them as comprising individuals as it is with specific people as opposed to large systems that we work (Le Roux, 1992, p. 43).

6.2.3 Strength of the Structured Discourse of Violence

The power and pervasiveness of the discourse of violence is constructed by such phrases as: **“I have not seen so far an effective strategy that counteracts that...”**; **“The history of this country is wrought with violence and violence is institutionalised in the schools themselves and other institutions...”** (The manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, p. 87). The implication of intervention is that it has to be aimed at all the same levels at which the structured discourse of violence operates. Bullying in the schools is just one manifestation of this wider discourse. Intervention has to be a co-ordinated effort involving policy and it has to be **“long term”** to match the history of this voice and its institutionalised nature. If the alternative voice to violence is not supported so that it can become a structured discourse itself, then it will not sustain change on a significant level (manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, p. 89). This alternative voice to violence needs to be developed and articulated with details as to what it entails.

6.3 SOCIETY’S OLD AND NEW STRUCTURED DISCOURSES

Social change has happened at such a rate in South Africa that old structured discourses no longer fit the new practical experience – they have become obsolete and been deconstructed.

The community-based schools, founded on the policy of area zoning associated with the former Apartheid regime, have been abolished to accommodate the new discourse of freedom of movement associated with democracy (director of NAPTOSA, p. 81). This new discourse impacts on discipline in the schools where now, due to geographical distance, there is no longer contact between parents and teachers and community constructed as relationships has disappeared. This lack of contact or relationship impacts the schools, as disciplining children becomes a time-consuming process because it takes time to contact the parents (director of NAPTOSA, p. 80).

6.3.1 Discourse of Difference

Due to the freedom of movement, people of different racial, language and socio-economic groups are now mixing with each other but we do not have the “**structures**” director of NAPTOSA, p. 82) to cope with this. Even schools accommodating children from the same geographical area, such as those in Mamelodi, seem to experience this coming together of difference (principal, see p. 93). The school to which this principal refers has two main language groups: Zulu and Sotho. Our society seems to be in the process of developing new discourses to structure the new social changes, but they are not as yet optimally developed (director of NAPTOSA, p. 82). Mixing differences without the structures to accommodate it, can also contribute to the loss of community as a set of relationships.

A discourse of social change is constructed in the conversations with the principal by the phrases: “**We’re no longer in the township, in an African township, we no longer deal with an ordinary parent...**” There is the suggestion in this discourse of loss of identity and an “**education**” (see p. 93) into a different social era. This change again seems to lead to a discourse of discord between parents and teachers, “**they confront, they do come.**”

6.3.2 Social Change Discourses are Often Intertwined with Discipline

The discourse of discipline is intertwined in this discourse of social change (principal, p. 95; director of NAPTOSA, p. 83). The new discipline policy in schools has abolished corporal punishment (principal, p. 95; director of NAPTOSA, p. 83). No new discourses have as yet been developed regarding alternative disciplinary methods (principal, p. 95; director of NAPTOSA, p. 83). Again, the alternative disciplinary voice is not yet articulated. The practice in the township of disciplining with cleaning work (principal, p. 95; class teacher, p. 109) as an alternative seems to be causing conflict between the teachers and parents (principal, see p. 94). This practice is possibly associated with old Apartheid discourses, which could account for the resistance. Resistance to the authoritative structures in the education system is noted in the conversations with the principal (p. 95). The children challenge the teachers and the parents challenge the

teachers' discipline and ultimately the policies of the education system, as parents urge the principal to go against the current policies on discipline by suggesting the continued practise of corporal punishment.

6.3.3 Implications for Treatment

Alternative methods and voices need to be developed and articulated through training of teachers in alternative disciplinary methods (director of NAPTOSA, p. 83). Communication between parents and teachers is also essential (principal, p. 98). Community, as relationship based on communication between parents and teachers, as opposed to geographical area and homogeneity, needs to be established so that these alternative discourses can be constructed and developed through negotiation. There is a need for further exploratory research into what is needed and what kind of new interventions, legislation or policies are working so that these alternatives can be developed, defined and thereby given a voice. We need to know what the successful “**structures**” that accommodate difference look like (director of NAPTOSA, p. 82). Part of the ‘**Discourse of Solution**’ is developing and articulating this new voice. Le Roux (1992) claims that consistent collaboration between different ‘systems’ is a way of developing therapeutic communities (Le Roux, 1992, p. 43). He suggests that while working ‘systemically,’ a wide angled lens should be used and specific goals defined (Le Roux, 1992, p. 43) i.e. the voice of intervention should be articulated. Participatory action research, based on the voices of the members of the ecology concerned, could be used to implement specific structures and interventions. Due to the nature of participatory action research methodology (Uzzell, 1995), the interventions would be assessed and changed during the research process according to what worked in the context and what did not. This could help define more specifically an alternative voice of workable interventions.

6.4 BAD CHILD, GOOD CHILD DISCOURSE

There are discourses across the ecology that construct Kgosana as being a bad or a naughty child. There are five members of this ecology who have direct contact with

Kgosana. The discourse of the ‘bad Kgosana’ initiated the conversations with Kgosana’s mother (p. 129); his grandmother (pp. 123-124); his class teacher (pp. 105-106); and his aunt (pp. 136-137). This negative discourse seems stuck and repetitive in that most members of the ecology return to it continuously, describing Kgosana through this structured discourse (the mother, p. 134; the grandmother, p. 127; class teacher, pp. 106-108). The only person who initiates the conversation with a positive discourse around him is Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see p. 112).

The discourse of the ‘good Kgosana’ is constructed in response to my questions as to his strengths or good points. Kgosana’s aunt and favourite teacher are the only members of the ecology who found it easy to construct a positive discourse around him. Within both of their conversations, the discourse of: **“just a child”** (the aunt, p. 139; favourite teacher pp. 114-115) is constructed. Through the construction of Kgosana as **“just a child”** his favourite teacher describes: **“his behaviour is not bad”** (see p. 114).

Kgosana’s mother struggles to find a discourse constructing his positive behaviour but she includes a discourse similar to that of ‘just a child’ and through this discourse, Kgosana’s behaviour is constructed as more acceptable. This discourse in her conversations is constructed by the phrases: **“you know how boys play”**; **“I mean they are both children”**. The words **“boys”**, **“children”**, **“how boys play”** construct naughty behaviour as part of childhood and part of being a boy. The actions related to this discourse would probably result in treating children in the same manner. Kgosana’s aunt also constructs him as equivalent to the other children: **“and also their children are naughty.”** This discourse is repeated in conversation with Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see p. 137). A pattern that is repeated in the conversational flow between this teacher and I is that although I ask specifically about Kgosana, this teacher always reverts the conversation back to children in general (favourite teacher p. 113). These discourses are normalising. **“As I have said and I am still saying... that is the behaviour of any other child... I won’t take that as a behavioural problem.”** The other side of the argumentation, the discourse of the ‘bad Kgosana’, is constructed by his aunt as perpetuating Kgosana’s negative behaviour: **“They should not remind him all the**

things he's done...if you do it to him he will continue doing all those bad things."

The discourse itself perpetuates Kgosana's negative behaviour.

6.4.1 Defining Moment of Kgosana's Problem

Kgosana's behaviour seems to be constructed by his family as problematic since an incident in which he and his friends stole a CD from a shack. This seems to be a defining moment for Kgosana as the pattern of citing this incident is noted across all interviewed family members in the ecology (the mother, p. 129; the aunt, p. 137; the grandmother, p. 123). It resulted in him being sent away for a year to live with his father.

Kgosana's aunt likens his time away to: **"maybe you are in prison..."** Kgosana is constructed as still held captive by this way of seeing him: **"like if you come back home then everybody sees you as the same person, they won't notice a change."** This discourse could be helping to maintain the stuck patterns of Kgosana's behaviour constructed by his mother in the phrase, **"he repeats doing it again and again"** and his class teacher, But it [change] **lasted for a week,...he went back to the behaviour.**

6.4.2 Implications for Intervention

The different sides of argumentation seem to affect how Kgosana's behaviour is interpreted or constructed. According to the conversations with the aunt, the negative discourse encourages Kgosana to continue behaving as the discourse describes (see p. 141). This discourse of 'discourse constructing the behaviour' is also noted in conversations with Kgosana's favourite teacher (see p, 118). Kgosana's behaviour is stuck in repetitive patterns and cycles that return him to the behaviour constructed as negative by this ecology. The discourses describing him return to the same cyclical patterns reflected in his behaviour. Narrative therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996) could be used with individuals and families to help construct alternative discourses of these children. Some form of narrative intervention could also be used in the school setting that would encourage the system to construct these children differently. The intervention could take the form of encouraging the strengths in the child, thereby constructing an opportunity to develop alternative patterns of behaviour and accompanying alternative

discourses to describe them. This approach is in keeping with Landau-Stanton (1982 as cited in Le Roux, 1992), who advocates using the perceptions of all participants in intervention (members of the ecology), ascertaining who is accountable for what and focussing on the strengths of those involved. Identities are also formed through stories (McAdams, 1985 as cited in Howard, 1991). Narrative approaches to understanding are becoming ever more popular in several areas of psychology. Human thinking is treated as story elaboration, and this offers numerous implications for psychological theory, research and practice. The development of identity is seen as life story construction and pathology as a problematic life story. Psychotherapy repairs life stories (Rorty, 1979).

6.5 DISCOURSE ON STRENGTHS IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN CONSTRUCTED AS BULLYING

This discourse is constructed by using the discourses across the ecology that seems to be helpful in interacting with children constructed as bullying. As well as taking the discourses directly under the sections entitled as strengths, they are taken from across the conversations where helpful discourses are intertwined with others.

The ‘discourse of understanding’ is constructed as being important in reaching the children who bully and children in general (support learning co-ordinator, pp. 99-100; Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 114). Understanding is constructed as a discourse of solution for Kgosana in conversations with his aunt (the aunt; p. 140).

Both the support learning co-ordinator and Kgosana’s favourite teacher place importance on relationship: **“just that understanding brings most of the learners towards you”** (support learning co-ordinator, p. 99). **“Touch”** is an action used to **“put them nearer to me”** (Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 114). The ‘discourse of perceiving children as individuals’ seems to impact positively on relationships between these children and their teachers and this is noted in conversations with Kgosana’s favourite teacher (see p. 115). The discourse of **“just a child”** seems to go along with these discourses in facilitating positive interaction or interpretation around Kgosana’s behaviour (Kgosana’s aunt, p. 139).

and favourite teacher, p. 114). The discourse of inclusion is noted in those constructing these children positively, **“Not for him alone but for all the learners...I can work with any child.”** (Support learning co-ordinator, pp. 99-100). **“It’s part of my interaction not only with Kgosana but with all of my learners...”** (Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 114). This discourse is compatible with not labelling students, the support learning teacher does not **“name”** [label] students. Kgosana’s favourite teacher states, **“I don’t label him because in my mind in there is no thing that tells me that Kgosana has a problem...”** The discourse of not taking it personally is also constructed as a strength, **“it doesn’t bother me that much because I don’t take it personally.”** (Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 115). This discourse is echoed in conversations with the support learning co-ordinator, (see p. 99), **“Tell them the wrong thing and thereafter we are laughing, laughing then it’s over.”** Kgosana’s class teacher (see p. 108) cites communication as a strength, **“The way we communicate sometimes.”**

Kgosana’s favourite teacher constructs a permissive discourse through the phrases: **“I am not that strict... in fact I enjoy them if they misbehave.”** In this permissive discourse, binary oppositions exist side by side, constructed through the phrase: **“Yes, they do behave even though they are naughty”**. This pattern seems unique to this teacher and is repeated throughout the conversation (see p. 117). It seems, through this discourse of holding together what could be constructed as opposing argumentation, that different behaviours and interactions at different times are allowed and accepted in her classroom.

6.5.1 Implications for Intervention

In this ecology, the same people construct positive discourses. It seems there is almost a split between those who see Kgosana positively and those who see him negatively. It is possible that the positive discourses interact with each other, forming a worldview of these children and constructing positive interaction. In the school ecology, the teachers who manifest a pattern of positive discourse around these children are both Life orientation teachers, i.e. Kgosana’s favourite teacher and the support learning co-ordinator. These teachers could be a natural resource within the school setting, both in their worldview and in the subject that they teach: **“You know what, because I am an**

L.O. teacher maybe that is why I can connect to them.” If certain interventions were interwoven into the Life orientation curriculum, it could be an effective way of sustaining intervention on an ongoing basis without overburdening the teachers. The above discourses are the ones that seem useful in dealing with these children and, through them, the child’s behaviour is constructed as **“not that bad”** (Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 114) and **“Whatever he does wrong, I manage to correct it”** (Kgosana’s favourite teacher, p. 114). Thinking in terms of binary oppositions, Howard (1991), speaking from a narrative perspective, says that depending on the situation and objectives at any point in time, we may draw on a number of disparate storylines to make sense of a situation. Being able to consider issues from a number of different perspectives, illustrates skill in cognitive flexibility. This teacher, using different perspectives to view these children, illustrates a cognitive flexibility that enables her to deal with them positively. Perhaps using a technique, such as that described Tyler and Jones (2002), involving reframing could assist in developing this kind of thinking.

6.6 THE DISCOURSE OF BLAME

The discourse of blame runs throughout this ecology of bullying. Teachers blame parents (manager of the Centre for violence and Reconciliation, p. 91; Kgosana’s class teacher, p. 112), parents blame teachers (manager of the Centre for violence and Reconciliation, p. 91). The child constructed as a bully is blamed (Kgosana, p. 120; Kgosana’s mother, p. 130). The mother is blamed (the mother, p. 132; the class teacher, p. 112). There is a discourse of blame between Kgosana and his grandparents (Kgosana, p. 120; Kgosana’s mother, p. 131). There is a discourse of blame around peers, Kgosana’s friends being cited as a bad influence (Kgosana, p. 122; Kgosana’s grandmother, p. 129; Kgosana’s aunt, p. 137). The blame game between parents and teachers, spoken of by the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation (see p. 91), seems to happen across the ecology of bullying and not only between parents and teachers.

It is possible that this discourse of blame forms a background voice, possibly having the effect on Kgosana’s mother of answering accusations in the form of denials: **“I am not a**

bad mother”, as opposed to saying “I am a good mother.” It may make it difficult for her to voice her suspicions of her own behaviour as being linked to that of Kgosana’s in case she is defined as a bad mother by this wider discourse of blame. It may also make it difficult for Kgosana’s class teacher to voice that, **“if I’m next to him, he won’t perform the way he wants because I think I’m a bit noisy and I’m also making him afraid.”** in case she is blamed. It may contribute to the disengagement of parents from the school ecology (manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, pp. 91-92) and lack of communication between parents and teachers (manager of the Centre for violence and Reconciliation, p. 91). Even in Kgosana’s choice of profession, a discourse of possible reaction to blame is noted in the phrases and words: **“protects”** others from **“judges/being exploited”**. This is a possible indication of how strong and pervasive his feelings are with regard to being blamed.

6.6.1 Suggestions for Intervention

Communication is offered by the principal as a means of addressing the problem between parents and teachers and in so doing, to perhaps address the ‘discourse of blame’: **“Come, let’s talk.”** (see p. 98). Family therapy can be used as a means of facilitating communication around the discourse of blame for family members.

6.7 DISCOURSE OF REACTION

Kgosana constructs other children as the initiators of the fights. Kgosana constructs himself as reacting to the action of other children using the phrases: **“...they say, ‘come on let’s fight...’”**; **“The other uncle bothers him”**. The details and context of what starts the fights are not given: **“Something happens”** and the pursuing interaction is also not detailed. Not focusing on the details of the fighting may prevent awareness of the process of interaction around the aggression. It can also prevent Kgosana from taking responsibility for his own behaviour. Kgosana’s aunt also constructs him as reacting to the actions of other children and his grandparents (Kgosana’s aunt, p. 138).

6.7.1 Suggestions for Intervention

Individual therapy could be used to increase Kgosana's sense of responsibility for his own actions and to examine the context around what is happening when fighting so that he can identify his own trigger points. Family therapy could be used to examine what is happening in the context and interaction when Kgosana reacts aggressively, so as to facilitate awareness of all family members around their contribution to the interaction. This could also possibly help to bring change to the discourse of blame.

6.8 PRESENTING WELL: 'HE PRETENDS'

This discourse of pretending or presenting well is seen as a pattern across the conversations about Kgosana (the mother, p. 135; Kgosana see p. 122). It seems as though Kgosana hears some of the discourses surrounding him and tries to appease them. He is not reported as being conscientious (the mother, p. 134) yet, in his conversations with me, Kgosana constructs himself as conscientious, **"he goes back to class [during break] and sometimes does homework or class work"**. Kgosana seems to somehow have heard the discourses found in conversations with his grandmother (see p. 128) and aunt (see p. 137) that friends are a bad influence and he seems to try to appease this discourse by the phrase, **"a friend is not a right person."** This could stop Kgosana from negotiating a preferred self across these contexts and could hold him in the structured discourses around his behaviour of pretending. This focus could be influencing his credibility in the eyes of others. There is a discourse running through the ecology of not believing Kgosana. When I look at the times this happens in my own interaction with him, it occurs when he is presenting well (see p. 122).

6.8.1 Implications for Intervention

Individual and family therapy could be used to construct a negotiated and preferred way of being for Kgosana without having to resort to presenting well.

6.9 UNDEFINED PROBLEM

The details around bullying and possible connections to what is happening in the environment or in the interaction between members of this ecology that constructs bullying behaviour are missing:

“...but his naughtiness is, I don’t know what kind it is...” (Kgosana’s mother).

V: How do you understand this behaviour?

...I don’t know what to say about that... (Kgosana’s class teacher)

Kgosana does not construct details around what starts the fights, **“Something happens”** and the pursuing interaction is also not detailed.

Kgosana’s aunt did also not initially construct any details around the situation...**“Why, I don’t know?”**

6.9.1 Implications for Intervention

Not focusing on the details of the situation around bullying may prevent awareness of the process of interaction or context around the bullying. During the conversational flow, more of the details were constructed. Therapy could be used to construct a clearer discourse around what is happening around the bullying behaviour.

6.10 THE DISCOURSE OF SILENCE

There is a discourse of silence around the problem of bullying that possibly interacts with the discourse of **‘the undefined problem,’** described above. Kgosana is silent around his problem, as is his mother, some of his teachers and significant male family members.

Kgosana’s discourse of silence is constructed in the conversations with his mother, favourite teacher and class teacher.

“He won’t talk he will tell you, ‘Me, I don’t have any problem’” (Kgosana’s mother).

The class teacher says: **“he didn’t have any answer for me, look at me and kept quiet”** and **“I don’t know, ’cos he doesn’t open up to me...”**(Kgosana’s class teacher).

Kgosana’s favourite teacher says, **“there is no time when Kgosana would tell me”**.

There is also the silent voice of significant male members of the ecology, namely Kgosana’s father and grandfather (see p. 127).

The class teacher finds it difficult to talk around the issue when talking to Kgosana, **“And, you know, it’s hard for me to say”**

6.10.1 Discourse of Possible Solution

A solution offered to Kgosana is that he be open. Again, as with most of these discourses, no alternative voice around this is developed. Under the discourse of the **‘undefined problem’**, there is no alternative role model for Kgosana to follow as no one in the ecology seems comfortable or knows how to talk around the situation. Yet openness is still constructed as a solution:

“If he will be open and tell you what is affecting him he will be fine.” (Kgosana’s mother, p. 136). Kgosana’s class teacher says, **“I think if he can get a professional, who he can come and open up to him or her, who can state what his problems are”**. Kgosana’s favourite teacher also constructs openness as a solution and a way of facilitating connection: **“that is why I can connect to them to that extent because when I start a lesson sometimes, not every time, I would ask them, ‘how are you feeling today?’ So they would tell me their feelings for the day.”** Even then these conversations are still constructed as delegated to **“spare time”** in the education system. Even in L.O. lessons, the curriculum dictates that feelings are spoken about **“sometimes, not every time.”**

6.10.2 Implications for Intervention

During the flow of conversation, a discourse around the situation, meanings, understandings and feelings is constructed (the aunt, pp. 139-140; the class teacher, pp.

111-112). Therapy could be used to facilitate openness around these issues. The Life orientation curriculum could be used on a more regular basis for conversations around the issues of bullying and feelings in general to normalise a more open approach. I wonder if the limited capacity of indigenous language to express feeling, discussed in chapter three, is related to, or contributes to, the silence of the ecology around feelings.

6.11 ARGUMENTATION AROUND KGOSANA

Through conversation across the ecology, the following argumentation is constructed as to the possible issues around bullying behaviour.

A discourse in conversations with the support learning co-ordinator questions the issues noted in research literature as to their causative role in bullying behaviour (see pp. 101-102). The child discussed in the conversation remained consistent in his bullying behaviour throughout the loss of his grandmother and the loss of supervision. His behaviour remained the same even when he was supervised. However, some of the aspects reported in research to be associated with bullying seem to have been present since his birth (Van Der Hoven, 1995). As the focus of research in the psychology profession has been on pathology as opposed to health (Holdstock, 1981) we do not know how many non-bullies experience these same life circumstances.

Kgosana's biological father's aggression is considered as a causative factor for Kgosana's own aggressive behaviour (the mother, p. 132). Kgosana's mother questions whether she herself has any effect on his behaviour (the mother, pp. 130-131). The class teacher also wonders whether the mother's separation from Kgosana is possibly related to Kgosana's behaviour (class teacher, p. 112). The role of people reminding him of what he has done in the past, the negative discourses around Kgosana, are put forward as an explanation for his continued negative behaviour (the aunt, p. 141). Kgosana's class teacher wonders whether **"I make him afraid so he doesn't perform."**

Kgosana's grandmother (see p. 128) and aunt (see p. 137) construct the discourse of friends influencing Kgosana's behaviour.

The reported discourse of blame around Kgosana by the grandparents is constructed as Kgosana's problem: **"they talk so many things, that's his problem"** (Kgosana's mother p. 129).

There is a tendency for those who struggle with Kgosana's behaviour to construct it, and situations around it, as depending on his mood. Kgosana's class teacher constructs this discourse by the phrase: **"I think he's done that when he is in a good mood."** The reported discourse of Kgosana himself also attributes his behaviours to mood: **"I feel like doing that today."** Kgosana's grandmother repeats these discourses, **"It depends on how he feels."**

6.11.1 Implications for Intervention

There are many possibilities and interacting discourses contributing to, and interacting with, the ecology of bullying. The issues will be different for the ecology around different children. What seems important for intervention is that structures are created that allow for the open discussion and construction of the issues for each child and those connected to him or her for the family (probably in the form of therapy) and the teachers in the school setting (as yet no such formal structure seems to exist). This discourse around Kgosana's mood seems to detract from constructing interaction or context as having any influence on Kgosana's behaviour, which is constructed as unpredictable and not influenced by outside events.

6.12 THE DISCOURSE OF DISCIPLINE

The disciplinary methods used are mainly talking to the children and shouting at them. The grandmother, (p. 128); the support learning co-ordinator, (p. 102) and Kgosana's favourite teacher, (p. 116) use these methods. Talking to the children in the school ecology seems to involve advice giving (support learning co-ordinator, p. 102). The

perspective of the situation is presented from the educators' position and change is expected on the part of the child: **“change the attitude of the child towards the school and towards the educator”** (the support learning co-ordinator). The class teacher's disciplinary methods include sending children out of the classroom and making them clean (Class teacher, p. 109). The principal reports that cleaning the classroom is a form of discipline used in the community (see p. 95). Disciplinary effectiveness is possibly affected by the crowding out of teaching time and class size. The teachers are employed to teach but because of being overloaded with other commitments, teaching is sometimes not prioritised. If teaching is given priority, disciplinary problems usually disappear as bullying usually happens outside of supervision (Director of NAPTOSA, pp. 85-86).

The current disciplinary discourses of coercive punishments and threats such as: **“taking him out of the class, naming... He does not take any threats”** or advice-giving found in 'disciplinary discourse (support learning co-ordinator, p. 102), seem to have no effect on the children in terms of changing the behaviour of those constructed as bullying. The only person in the ecology, who reports managing to correct behaviour, is Kgosana's favourite teacher (see p. 113). She uses the same methods as everyone else in the ecology but it is interpreted through her dominant discourse which is that of love (Favourite teacher, p. 116). This teacher also emphasises relationship, **“We talk to each other... signs...we touch each other.”**

FT: That's even my way of disciplining them, **I discipline them because... I just show them that I love them** and then I don't have a problem in discipline.

6.12.1 The Implications for Intervention

This emphasis in the ecology on discipline seems to be to give instruction that leads to change in the child. This discourse could restrict the actions of the teacher in seeing the child as being the one in which change must occur. If the teacher saw herself as being able to change her behaviour, or the way in which she relates to the child, the relationship could be used as a way of introducing change in the situation. It could also give the

teachers a sense of having more control. Again, intervention programmes such as those described by Tyler and Jones (2002) advocate such an approach.

Training is constructed as an important discourse in the school ecology and should therefore be used in intervention to introduce an alternative discourse of punishment (director of NAPTOSA p. 83). Positions should be created for assistants to alleviate workload (director of NAPTOSA p. 85).

6.13 DISCOURSE OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

There is a discourse of the importance of training and knowledge running through conversations with the principal (see p. 98) and the support learning co-ordinator (see pp. 103-105) Kgosana's class teacher (see pp. 110-111). In the solution discourse within conversation with the support learning co-ordinator (see p. 104), more knowledge is constructed as the tentative answer to the problem of dealing with children who bully. Knowledge for the support learning co-ordinator is defined as that which you get from "school" and "studying" and "re-doing." I see the word "re-doing" as suggesting a return to the ordered background discourses prevalent in the education system for solving problems. This discourse of knowledge encourages the teacher's development but it can also prevent the teachers from using their own resources and could in some cases lead to a discourse of passivity with these children noted in Kgosana's conversations: "...**he tells the teachers but they don't do anything.**"

6.13.1 Implications for Intervention

Based on these intertwined discourses of knowledge as solution, a possible way of stepping into the gap to create or construct change could be to base an intervention in the form of a workshop or conference. This approach would be seen as relevant from the teachers' perspective, but some of the content could introduce ways of dealing with new situations. Training workshops that empower teachers with skills could encourage them to see themselves as able to deal with children who bully.

6.14 PROFILE OF THE TEACHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

The discourse in the conversations with the director of NAPTOSA relates the school disciplinary problems to the loss of profile of the educator. This is related to the disengagement of parents (Director of NAPTOSA, pp. 80-81). Disciplinary problems are related to the disengagement of parents as members of the school ecology. Parents are called in to discuss the situation with discipline problems but they rarely come (principal, p. 96; the support learning co-ordinator, p. 102 and the manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, p. 91). The discourse of community is also brought into the conversations with the principal, in connection to the profile of the teachers. However, in this discourse, the teacher's loss of profile is related to their behaviour and constructed in the phrase: **"Our behaviour, at times, it is not right."** It seems as though even when the geographic community is conserved, as in Mamelodi, the construction of community as a set of relationships is lost (principal, see p. 97).

6.14.1 Suggestions for Intervention

A way of retaining community as a web of relationships, even though the schools are no longer geographically or socially homogenous, could help. A discourse of communication is constructed by the principal (see p. 98) and the Director of NAPTOSA (see pp. 83-84) as a way of bringing about interaction between parents and teachers, thereby both engaging the parents in the disciplinary problems and lifting the profile of the teachers. The principal is trying to establish a parent teacher body to achieve this kind of interaction (see p. 98). Based on these discourses of communication and relationship structures, like this parent teacher association envisaged by this principal, could be implemented in schools. Stanton and Landau-Stanton (1988; 1986, cited in Le Roux, 1991 p. 44) claim that 'expansive' approaches like this can prevent therapeutic stagnation. Arranging network sessions can be a collaborative way of utilising the resources of the ecology. The director of NAPTOSA (see pp. 83-84) suggests communication as a possible solution to loss of relationship between teachers and parents. The principal also constructs the discourse of communication and co-operation as solutions to disciplinary problems in the schools and, in this conversation, constructed

it by the phrases: **“If some of our parents could just take that when we say...”**; **“Come, let’s talk”**. Communication is also constructed as a solution by the phrase: **“Come, let’s talk to you about your child’s problem...”** Perhaps a programme that facilitates communication and relationship between parents and teachers that is based on a re-framed discourse may be helpful. The programme could be based on communicating around problems that do not belong to specific parents and their children and this may engage parents more easily, i.e. use the discourse suggested by the principal: **“let’s talk to you about your child’s problem...”** but possibly re-frame the behaviour as belonging to the system as opposed to individuals. Perhaps if these programmes are framed as collaborative networks, focusing on the strengths of all involved (Stanton and Landau-Stanton, 1988; 1986, cited in Le Roux, 1991), as opposed to the problems, it might facilitate engagement by changing the discourse of blame.

6.15 FAMILY DISCORD

There is a discourse of family fighting running throughout the conversations across the family ecology. There is discord between Kgosana and his grandparents (the mother, pp. 130-131; the aunt, p. 140). There is discord between Kgosana and his younger uncle (the mother, pp. 130-131; Kgosana, pp. 119-120). There is fighting between Kgosana’s mother and biological father, Kgosana’s paternal grandmother and Kgosana’s mother and Kgosana and his paternal grandmother (the maternal grandmother, p. 125). Throughout the conversation with Kgosana’s grandmother, a discourse of distance is noted between Kgosana’s mother and grandmother and Kgosana and his grandmother (see p. 124).

6.15.1 Implications for Treatment

Family therapy could be used to address discord in families.

6.16 CONCLUSION

An ecological approach widens perspective on the situation around bullying as more and more voices are heard within the ecology. The Manager of the Centre for Violence and

Reconciliation brings a wider perspective to intervention because of her wider involvement across different schools, as does the Director of NAPTOA. The manager's strategies move from the small school environment to wider interventions, including many organisations and government policy. Due to the strength of the discourse of violence in South Africa, it seems that strategies need to be directed at all these levels of the ecology where violence is an influence. **"A co-ordinated effort"** (manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation) would be a way of achieving such a multi-layered strategy. The co-ordinated inclusion of many voices would help to recreate community as relationship through the forming of community therapeutic networks (Le Roux, 1991) and this approach would also develop and strengthen an alternative voice to our current situation. Intervention at wider levels does not negate interventions in the micro-environment or one-on-one interventions. Based on the above conversations with the ecology of bullying, school interventions, family interventions and one-on-one interventions could also be included when dealing with the problems around bullying. According to Bakker and Snyders, (1999) the diffuse theoretical framework of ecosystemic thinking should not detract from local and individual emphasis. However, if this is the only level at which we intervene, while ignoring policy, we will succeed only in individual schools, with individual families and children (Manager of the Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, p. 190).

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS/PRINCIPAL

Question 1: What can you tell me about X?

Question 2: How long have you known him/her?

Question 3: What do you find most difficult about his/her behaviour and how would you describe it?

Question 4: When did this behaviour start?

Question 5 : What sort of things have you tried to improve the situation?

Question 6: How does he/she respond to these interventions?

Question 7: What do you enjoy about your interaction with X?

Question 8: When is X's behaviour easier for you to handle?

Question 9: Who do you talk to about X's behaviour?

Question 10: Who helps you with X's behaviour?

Question 11: What kind of interaction do you have with X's family?

Question 12: How would you describe as X's weaknesses?

Question 13: What would you describe as X's strengths?

Question 14: What would you describe as your strengths and weaknesses when dealing with X?

Question 15: What do you think would help X?

Question 16: What do you think would help you in dealing with X?

Question 16: How do you understand X's behaviour?

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS

Question 1: What can you tell me about X?

Question 2: Describe his early years for me.

Question 3: What do you find most difficult about his/her behaviour and how would you describe it?

Question 4: When did this behaviour start?

Question 5 : What sort of things have you tried to improve the situation?

Question 6: How does he/she respond to these interventions?

Question 7: What do you enjoy about your interaction with X?

Question 8: When is X's behaviour easier for you to handle?

Question 9: Who do you talk to about X's behaviour?

Question 10: Who helps you with X's behaviour?

Question 11: What kind of interaction do you have with X's school and teachers?

Question 12: How would you describe as X's weaknesses?

Question 13: What would you describe as X's strengths?

Question 14: What would you describe as your strengths and weaknesses when dealing with X?

Question 15: What do you think would help X?

Question 16: What do you think would help you in dealing with X?

Question 17: How do you understand X's behaviour at home and at school?

Question 18: Who else would you like to invite to these interview sessions?

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILD DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Question 1: How would you describe yourself?

Question 2: Tell me about your family.

Question 3: Tell me about your teachers.

Question 4: Tell me about your friends.

Question 5: How would you describe your school?

Question 6: Do you experience problems at school?

Question 7: Who talks to you or tells you about these problems?

Question 8: Who do you talk to about these problems?

Question 9: How do you understand these problems?

Question 10: What would you like to see different at school?

Question 11: What do you like about yourself?

Question 12: What would you like to see different about yourself?

Question 13: What do you think would help you to change these things?

Question 14: Which friend would you invite, if any, to these interviews?

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILD'S PEERS

Question 1: How would you describe yourself?

Question 2: Tell me about your family.

Question 3: Tell me about your teachers.

Question 4: Tell me about your friends.

Question 5: How would you describe your school?

Question 6: Do you experience problems at school?

Question 7: How do you understand these problems?

Question 8: Tell me about the relationship between you and X?

Question 9: What do you enjoy about this relationship?

Question 10: What would you like to see different in the relationship?

Question 11: What do you think would help you to change these things?

APPENDIX 5A

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS (ENGLISH)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

Title of study: Behaviour problems in primary schools in Mamelodi: An ecological construction.

Purpose of the study: This study aims to contribute to a description of behaviour problems, in several primary schools situated in the Mamelodi Township. It will focus on providing a description of problem behaviour as experienced by the participants, the children described as engaged in problem behaviour and those affected by it or dealing with it. The described experiences will be gathered so that they may be used in future to establish context relevant interventions.

- Role of the participant:** The participants will be asked to share their experiences and concerns around behaviour problems by participating in a number of interviews. It is estimated that approximately two or three interviews with the researcher and a trained interpreter lasting approximately fifty minutes will be required.
- Information:** The experiences shared during the interviews will be used as a basis for a masters thesis in psychology.
- Benefits:** The benefits to the community will be that the shared experiences can be used to establish interventions that the community itself find useful. The schools will be presented with a shortened version of the findings of the research in form of a feedback session that will present only relevant and useful information for dealing with behaviour problems. The benefits for the children and the parents are as follows: The children involved will be given a full scholastic assessment to screen for any learning problems. The information from this can be used by educators to help address any problems found. Parenting skills will be offered to parents to help with the management of disciplinary difficulties. The children and families will be referred for further counselling if necessary. All services offered at the Itsoseng clinic including the scholastic assessments will be given free of charge.
- Researcher:** All information will be treated confidentially. I will do my utmost to protect the identity of those involved in the study. Three schools are involved in the study which will minimise the risk of identifying the participants in the local context of the school as well as any specific school. More

participants will be used than is required for the final dissertation and which participants are eventually presented in the text will not be revealed. The real names of participants will not be used. Participation is on a completely voluntary basis and the participants can withdraw from the study at any time. If they do withdraw all records will be destroyed. My cell phone number will be given to the participants so that they may contact me regarding the study for the duration of the research process.

NAME:

.....
.....

SIGNED:.....

.....

RESEARCHER

DATE

NAME:

.....
.....

SIGNED:.....

.....

PARTICIPANT

DATE

I, hereby freely give
permission/do not give

permission for the researcher to use an audio tape recorder.

Name: _____

The witness's

name: _____

(Block letters please)

Signature: _____

The witness's

signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5B

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS (TSWANA)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

Setlhogo sa thuto: Mathata a maitsholo mo dikolong tsa (primary) Mamelodi: An ecological construction

Morero wa thuto e: Maikalelo a thuto e ke go ntsha tshaloso ya mathata a maitsholo , mo dikolong tse mmalwa tse di farologaneng tsa lekeishene la Mamelodi. E tla nna tebang le go tlamela setshwantsho sa matsholo a a sa batlegeng, ao a temogelwang ke batseakarolo le bao baba amegang.

Karolo ya batsayakarolo: Batsayakarolo ba tla kopiwa go bua/buisana ka mathata a kileng a ba

aparela mo di potsisong tse mmalwa tsa mathata a maitsholo. Dipotsisiso (interviews) di tla fitlha ko tse pedi go ya go tse tharo le mosekaseki (researcher) ga mmogo le toloki (trained interpreter) go tla dirisiwa metsotso e e masoma a matlhano.

Tshedimosetso: Diphitlhelelo tsotlhe tsa dipotsisiso di tla dirisiwa jaaka thuto mo (basis for a masters thesis in psychology).

Meputso (Benefits): Meputso go baagi (community): Diphitlhelelo tse baagi ba abetseng ka tsona di tla (establish interventions) simolola/tlhama sekgala se se tla bontshang mosola wa baagi ka bosona. Dikolo di tla abelwa (shortened version of the findings of the research in form of feedback session) ee tla abelang fela ba ba maleba le go dirisa mosola wa go sekasekana le mathata a maitsholo/mekgwa. Meputso ya batsadi le bana ka tatelano: Bana ba ba tsayang karolo ba tla abelwa/fiwa (scholastic assessment) e e tletseng le go bontshiwa (screen) mathata a dithuto a mang le a mang. Kitsophatlhalatso e, e tla dirisiwa ke barutabana go thusa ka mathata a dithuto a mang le a mang a a fitlhelang ke bana. (Parental skills) di tla abelwa batsadi go thusa ka tsamaiso ya go sekasekana le boima jwa maitsholo aa tsepameng. Bana le ba malapa a bona ba romelwa go ya (counselling) ga go tlhokagala. Ditirelo tsotlhe di tla abelwa/fiwa mahala kwa Itsoseng Clinic go tsenyeletsa le (scholastic assessment) di tla fiwa sesolo felo.

Mosekasiki (Researcher): Tshedimosetso yotlhe e, etla nna khupamarama (treated confidentially) Ke tla dira ka bojotlhe go sireletsa tlaalo (identity) ya batsaakarolo mo thutong e. Mo dikolong tse tharo tse di tla bong di tsaya karolo tekeletso (risk) ya tlaalo e tla nna

bobotlana (minimised). Maina a nnete a batsaakarolo a ka se dirisiwe. Thuto e, o e tse na ka go ithaopa batsayakarolo ba ka ikgogela kwa morago (withdraw) nako ngwe le ngwe. Ga ba ikgogela kwa morago, dikgatiso tsotlhe tse di dirisitsweng di tla sengwa gore ba sireletsege. Dinomoro tsame tsa mogala wa letsogo di tla nna teng fa thuto e, e ntse e tswela pele, gore batsayakarolo ba kgone go ikopantsha lena ka mogala mabapi le thuto e.

LEINA:

.....
.....

TSHAENO:.....

.....

MOSEKASIKI

LETLHA

LEINA:

.....
.....

TSHAENO:.....

.....

MOTSAAKAROLO

LETLHA

Nna,..... ke naya tetla / ga ke nee tetla ya
mosekasiki

go dirisa theipi ya seyalemoya se se gatisiwang (audio tape recorder).

Tshaeno (Signature):.....

Letlha:.....(date)

Paki e tshwanela ke go nna teng fa go tlatsiwa lokwalo la tetelelo:

Leina la Paki:.....(Dirisa Ditlhaka tse kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Paki:.....(Witness's signature)

Letlha:.....

APPENDIX 5C

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS (NORTHERN SOTHO)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



University of Pretoria

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria, R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

FOROMO/ LENGWALO LA BATŠEYAKAROLO BA BAGOLO

Leina la thuto:

Mathata a maitshwaro mo dikolong tša primary mo Mamelodi: An ecological construction.

Maikemišetso a thuto:

Thuto ye ke ya go bontšha bothata bja maitshwaro mo dikolong tša primary lekeišeneng la Mamelodi. Gape thuto ye e tlile go lebišwa gagolo mo mathateng a a bonweng ke batšeya-karolo le bana bao ba amegago go yona. Tsebo yeo etlo hwetšwago e tliło dirišwa gape mo mengwageng yeo esa tlogo ge gona le tlokego ya yona.

- Mošomo wa Motšeyakarolo:** Batšeyakarolo ba tlilo go kgopelwa gore ba bolele ka maitemogelo a bona gape le ka mathata ao ba gahlaneng lewona. Go lekantšhitšwe batho bababedi goiša go babararo bao batlilego gobotšišwa dipotšišo ke mofatišiši le mohlatholli wa maleme. Batlile go dula metsotso e masometlhano.
- Tsebo:** Maitemogelo ao atlilego gohwetšwa a tlile go šomišwa mo dithutong tša (Thesis in Psychology).
- Meputso:** Meputso yeo etlilo hwetšwago ke ya gore setšhaba se tla šomiša maitemogelo a, ge ba kgahlana le mathata ao mo nakong yengwe. Dikolo di tla fiwa maitemogelo ao atlo hwetšwago mo dithutong tše. Bana bao batšeyago karolo batlile go fiwa (Full Scholastic assessment) Thuto yeo e ka šomišwa ke barutiši ge ba kgahlana le mathata a swanago le ona a. Bana le malapa ao batšwago go ona batla thušwa ka dikeletšo ge gona le thlokego. Kamoka mešomo yeo etlilo dirwago kua Itsoseng Clinic ke ya mphiwafela.
- Mofatišiši:** Kamoka tšeo ditlilego go utullwa ke batšeya karolo etlo ba dikhupamarama. Ke tla nepišiša gore batšeya karolo ba se tsebjwe ke motho. Dikolo ke tše tharo fela tšeo ditlago go tšeya karolo gomme seo setla thuša gore batšeya karolo ba se tsebjwe. Batšeya karolo etlile go ba babantšhi fela maina a kase utullwe. Batšeya karolo ba dira seo ka goikgafa ga bona gomme ge ba nyaka go fetola megopolo ba dumelletšwe, ge ba sesa nyaka go tšeya karolo, gomme tšohle tšeo dihweditšwego go bona ditla lahlwa. Mogala wa founu yaka, ya lethekeg o tla fiwa batšeya karolo gomme

ba ka nteletša nako yennngwe le yennngwe ge dithuto tše di
sa tšwella pele.

NAME:

.....
.....

SIGNED:.....

.....

RESEARCHER

DATE

NAME:

.....
.....

SIGNED:.....

.....

PARTICIPANT

DATE

Nna,.....Ke dumela/ ke gana

go neya mofatišiši go diriša segatiši sa mantšu (tape recorder).

Tshaeno (Signature):.....

Lehla (Date).....

Paki e swanetše go ba gona ge go saenwa foromo ye.

Leina la Paki.....(Šomiša Dihlaka tše kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Paki.....

Lehla (Date).....

APPENDIX 6A

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512
Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

CONSENT FORM

I,, parent/guardian

of.....hereby freely give permission for my

child/children to take part in this study. I also give permission for

other family members

siblings

friends

teachers

to be interviewed regarding their experience with my child.

Parent/guardian's name: _____ (Block letters please)

Parent/guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

I,, parent/guardian

of.....hereby freely give permission/do not give

permission for the researcher to use an audio/video tape recorder.

Parent/guardian's name: _____ (Block letters please)

Parent/guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name: _____(Block letters please)

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

The witness must please be present during the completion of this consent document:

The Witness's name: _____(Block letters please)

The Witness's signature: _____

Date: _____

***Thank you for taking the time
to fill in and sign the consent document.***

APPENDIX 6B

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (TSWANA)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



University of Pretoria

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

FOROMO YA TETLELELO (CONSENT FORM)

Nna,.....motsadi /motlhokomedi wa ga

..... ngwana ke mo lokolola ka go moletlelela go
tsaya karalo

mo thutong e.

Leina la motsadi/ motlhokomedu:.....(Dirisa Ditlhaka tse kgolo)

Tshaeno ya motsadi/motlokomedu:.....(signature)

Letlha:.....

Nna,.....,motsadi / motlhokomedu wa ga

..... ke naya tetla / ga ke nee tetla ya mosekasiki go

dirisa theipi ya seyalemoya se se gatsiwang (audio tape recorder).

Leina la motsadi / motlhokomedu:.....(Dirisa Ditlhaka tse kgolo)

Tshaeno ya motsadi/motlhokomedu:.....(signature)

Leina la Mosekasiki(Reasearcher):.....(Dirisa
Ditlhaka tse kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Mosekasiki:.....(signature)

Letlha:.....(date)

Paki e tshwanela ke go nna teng fa go tlatsiwa lokwalo la tetlelelo:

Leina la Paki:.....(Dirisa Ditlhaka tse kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Paki:.....(Witness's signature)

Letlha:.....

***Ke leboga thata fa lo tsere nako ya go buisa lotlakala lo loa kitsophatthalatso le
go tlatsa le ga saena tokomane e ya tetlelelo.***

APPENDIX 6C

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (NORTHERN SOTHO)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date:

FOROMO YA TUMELLANO

Nna,.....motswadi/mohlokamedi

wa.....ke dumella ngwana/bana go tšeya

Karolo mo thutong ye. Gape ke fa tetla ya:

babang ba lelapa

bokgaitsemi

ditsala

barutabana

go botsiswa tebang le maitemogelo a bone ka ngwana wa me.

Leina la Motswadi/ Mohlokomedi.....Šomiša Dihlaka tše kgolo

Tshaeno Ya Motswadi/Mohlokomedi.....

Lehla (Date).....

Nna,.....Motswadi/ Mohlokomedi

Wa.....Ke dumela/ ke gana

go neya mofatišiši go diriša segatiši sa mantšu (tape recorder)/ setshwantsho (video recorder).

Leina la Motswadi/ Mohlokomedi..... Šomiša Dihlaka tše kgolo

Tshaeno Ya Motswadi/Mohlokomedi.....

Lehla (Date).....

Leina la Mofatišiši..... (Šomiša Dihlaka tše kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Mofatišiši.....

Lehla (Date).....

Paki e swanetše go ba gona ge go saenwa foromo ye.

Leina la Paki.....(Šomiša Dihlaka tše kgolo)

Tshaeno ya Paki.....

Lehla (Date).....

APPENDIX 7A

LETTER TO PARENTS (ENGLISH)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date: 7 April 2007

Dear Parent

Re: Help with Behaviour Problems

I am a research psychologist and a counselling psychology intern registered with the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus. In response to the nationwide disciplinary problems confronting our South African community I am conducting research in the primary schools in the Mamelodi Township as to how to help those confronted with this problem.

The research will include talking to the teachers, parents, and children struggling with discipline problems. These people will be contacted telephonically by myself in the near future to invite them to participate in the research. The participants will be invited to the Itsoseng Clinic at the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus to share their difficulties and experiences with disciplinary problems.

The benefits for the children and the parents are as follows: The children involved will be given a full scholastic assessment free of charge to screen for any learning problems. The information obtained can then be used by educators to help the child with any difficulties. Parenting skills will be offered to parents to help with the management of disciplinary difficulties. The children and families will be referred for further counselling if necessary. All services offered at the Itsoseng clinic will be given free of charge. All information will be treated confidentially and participation is on a completely voluntary basis.

Yours sincerely

Vicky Timm

**(Research Psychologist and
Counselling Psychology Intern)**

APPENDIX 7B

LETTER TO PARENTS (TSWANA)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

Fax: (012) 842- 3633



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X1311 Silverton 0127,
Pretoria,R.S.A.

<http://www.up.ac.za>

MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date: 7 Moranang 2007

Go Batsadi

Thuso ya mathata a Boitswaro

Ke mosekasiki (Research Psychologist) le mobuisane (Counselling Psychology) o o kwadisitsweng le Yunibesithi ya Tshwane kwa Mamelodi. Ke araba ka maitsholo a a tsepameng le mathata a a lebaganeng le setshaba sa mo Afrika Borwa. Ke seka seka mo dikolong tsa primary tse di kwa Mamelodi Township tse di aparetsweng ke mathatha a (Behaviour Problems).

Tshekatsheko e e tla tsenya go buisana le barutabana le batsadi ga mmogo le baithuti ba ba gogang buima jwa maitsholo sentle a a tsepameng. E tlare ka nako e e tlang ka bo ke ba letsetsa mogala ke ba laletsa go tla go tsaya karolo mo tshekatshekong e.

Batsayakarolo ba tla laletswa go tla kwa Itsoseng Clinic e e leng kwa Yunibesithing ya Tshwane kwa Mmamelodi Campus go bua ka maima le dithulanyo tsa mathata a boitsholo sentle.

Meputso ya bana le batsadi e tla nna ka tatelano e: Bana ba ba tla tsayang karolo ba tla newa (Scholastic assessment) ya mahala le go bontshiwa dithuto tsa mathata a mang le a mang. Kitsophatlalatso e e tla fiwa barutabana gore ba thuse bana ka mathata a mang le a mang. (Parental skills) di tla fiwa go batswadi go thusa ka tsamaiso ya go sekasekana le mathata a maitsholo a a tsepameng. Bana le malapa a bone ba tla romelwa go ya (counselling) ga go tlhokagala. Di tirelo tsoatlhe tse di fiwang kwa Itsoseng Clinic di tla fiwa sesolo fela. Kitso ka batseyakarolo e tla fitlha le ditirelo tsa batseyakarolo gadi lefwe.

Wa gago

Vicky Timm

**(Research Psychologist &
Counselling Psychology Intern)**

APPENDIX 7C

LETTER TO PARENTS (NORTHERN SOTHO)

Tel: (012) 842- 3512

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MAMELODI CAMPUS

Date: 7 Moranang 2007

Motswadi Yo a Rategago

Thušo ya mathata a Boitshwaro

Ke mofatišiši wa thlaloganyo (Research psychologist) ebile gape ke moithuta mošomong yo a ngwadišitšego le Yunibesithi Ya Tshwane kua Mamelodi. Ka lebaka la mathata a a tšwelelago pele malebana le go kgalengwa ga bana mo setšhabeng sa Afrika borwa, ke nyakišiša tharollo ya bjona bothata bjo mo dikolong tša primary lekeišeneng la Mamelodi gore ke thuše bao ba lebanego le bjona bothata bja go kgalema bana.

Ge ke fatišiša ke tlile goboledišana le barutiši, batswadi, le bana bao ba thulanago le bothata bjo bja gokgalengwa. Kamoka gabona batho ba, ke tlilo go ba leletša mogala ke ba bitša go tlilo tšea karolo mo phatišišong ye. Batšeya karolo batla bitšwa gape go tla mo Itsoseng Clinic mo Yunibesithing Ya Tshwane gore batlo abelana le batho babangwe ba lebanego le bothata bjo.

Seo batšeya karolo ba tlogo se hwetša morago ga phatišišo ye ke: Bana batla fiwa (Scholastic Assessment) ya mphiwafela. Tsebo yeo tlilo hwetšwago mo phatišišong ye e tlo diriršwa ke barutiši. Batswadi bona batla newa thušo ya tsebo ya gogodiša bana baba nago le bothata bja go kgalengwa. Kamoka ga batšeya karolo ba tla fiwa (counselling) gego tlhokagala. Dilo kamoka tše ditlilo go bolelwa ke batšeya karolo etlo ba dikhupamarama.

Wa gago

Vicky Timm
**(Research Psychologist &
Counselling Psychology Intern)**