

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONSERVING AFRICAN LANGUAGES  
AMONGST YOUTH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**MEDIA STUDIES**

**E.J. MALATJI**

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**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONSERVING AFRICAN LANGUAGES  
AMONGST YOUTH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

**MALATJI EDGAR JULIUS**

THESIS

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

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**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF S.O. MMUSI**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF N.C. LESAME**

**2019**

## DECLARATION

I declare that **The Impact of Social Media in Conserving African Languages amongst Youth in Limpopo Province** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference, and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any institution.

**Full Names: Edgar Julius Malatji**

**Date: 20/03/2019**

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. J. Malatji', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the following late persons:

- ❖ The late my father, Daniel Malatji, who inculcated the values of hard work and fortitude in me;
- ❖ My brother, Rodney “Sparks” Malatji, who passed on during the initial stages of my Masters’ degree in 2011. He taught me a lot about life in general and his spirit leaves on through my achievements;
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC –	African National Congress
API –	Application Programming Interface
ARPANET –	Advanced Research Projects Agency Network
ARPA –	Advanced Research Projects Administration
BBS –	Bulletin Board System
BC –	Before Christ
DM –	Direct Messaging
E-mail –	Electronic-mail
ENCA –	eNews Channel Africa
FNB –	First National Bank
FM –	Frequency Modulation
ICT –	Information and Communication Technology
INTERNET –	Integrated Network
ISP –	Internet Services Provider
IRC –	Internet Relay Chat
JSON –	JavaScript Object Notation
KC –	Kaizer Chiefs
KM –	Kilometres
LLPF –	Limpopo Language Policy Framework
LOL –	Laugh Out Loud
PanSALB –	Pan South African Language Board
RT –	Retweet
NLPF –	National Language Policy Framework
OMG –	Oh! My God
OPW –	Our Perfect Wedding
OP –	Orlando Pirates
SASSA –	South Africa Social Security Agency
SMS –	Short Message Services
SNS –	Social Networking Site
TBT –	Throwback Thursday
U –	You
UNESCO –	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA –	United States of America
WCW –	Woman crush Wednesday
WWW –	World Wide Web
WUD –	What are you doing?
XML –	Extensible Markup Language
YOLO –	You only leave once

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the impact of social media towards conserving African languages, particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Social media are given attention to explore their impact in conserving African languages amongst youth. Youth is a suitable group to focus on as they are the future and are thus expected to carry their African languages and pass them on to succeeding generations. This exercise should be done to ensure that African languages should not face extinction in the future.

Generally, youth are constant users of social media platforms, hence it is cardinal to investigate their language-usage patterns on social media platforms. The majority of the African youth in South Africa use either one or more of the nine (9) indigenous African languages that are official, namely, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. Therefore, one would expect speakers of these indigenous African languages to effectively use them on social media, particularly, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. African language heritage is undoubtedly a valuable resource, however, it needs state resources to develop it further and establish it as a core economic driver on various media platforms.

The study employs exploratory and descriptive designs. These designs are appropriate for this study because it permits data to be collected through observations, focus group interviews and questionnaires. Focus group interviews, observations, and questionnaires were used to collect data. Focus group is a data-collection tool for understanding people's behaviour and attitudes. The researcher moderated three focus groups. One hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed to the participants in this study.

These tools are apt for the data-collection process in this study because they assist to discover factors that influence opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. Social media have great potential to conserve the African languages but the speakers of these languages should play a cardinal role in this process. Majority of the youth do not prefer to use the African languages on social media. Conversations on both *Facebook* and *Twitter* are dominated by English as youth prefer it ahead of Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

In contrast, youth prefer to use the African languages on *WhatsApp* because they know their contacts. However, code-switching is used a lot by youth on social media. Despite the fact that Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga are not mostly used on *Facebook* and *Twitter* they remain relevant and useful amongst their speakers on a daily basis. Nevertheless, there is a need to develop the African languages based social media sites to stimulate their usage on these platforms. Additionally, these languages should be developed to fit the needs of social media.



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

This study focuses on the impact of social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* towards conserving selected African languages, specifically, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. There is a myriad of changes concerning the manner in which people communicate and social media are at the centre of this evolution (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015); (Eluwole, Udo & Ojo, 2014). In the past, African languages have not been given a deserved space that is due to them in traditional mass media such as radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. These forms of media were used to marginalise African languages for many years in South Africa.

Mass media users have not had an opportunity to change the kind of content they consume from the media (Flew, 2008). Technological developments have allowed social media to be channels of communication of choice for many people across the world including Africans. According to Ellison and Boyd (2013), social media allow the development and proliferation of user-generated content, which, therefore, means that people have the latitude to create their own content in their own languages.

African people have the freedom to create their own content on social media that would allow them to accurately represent their identity, indigenous African languages and culture (Warschauer, El Said & Zohry, 2002:2). Over the years, English has been dominant in mass media platforms (Salawu, 2006). Thus, African languages have been overshadowed and marginalised. The constant under usage of African languages has detrimental effects towards their conservation and development. It is a known fact that African languages should be used constantly in order to preserve them for posterity and to avoid linguicide (i.e., the death of a language).

In the interest of this study, social media are given attention to explore their impact towards conserving the selected African languages amongst youth. Youth is a suitable group to focus on as they are the future and are expected to carry their African languages and pass them to succeeding generations. This should be done in order

to ensure that the African languages should not face extinction in the future. Generally, youth are constant users of social media and it is cardinal to investigate their language usage patterns.

Majority of young South Africans use social media to share information concerning their issues of interest (Baragwanath, 2016). Some of them use social media to communicate with friends, relatives, and colleagues while others use it to promote their brands, businesses, culture, and craft (Lesame, Mbatha & Sindane, 2012:5; Kung, Picard & Towse, 2008:69). Uysal (2015:182) and Mawela (2017:117) affirm that social media platforms like *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram* have become an important part of human life, and their use has increased considerably over recent times. According to World Wide Worx (2014:1); Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza (2008:420), *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* are the most popular social networks in South Africa and the whole world.

These social media are studied in this research in an effort to explore their role towards conserving the selected African languages. World Wide Worx (2017:1) further reveals that *Facebook*, as the most popular social networking site, has 14 million users in South Africa, followed by *YouTube* with 8.74 million and *Twitter* with 7.7 million users. According to South Africa Mobile (2017:6), *WhatsApp* is used by 83% of South Africans on their mobile phones, 51% of them use short message service (SMS) followed by *Facebook* at 40%. Antheunis, Schouten, and Kraemer (2014:2) emphasise that social media such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* are deeply rooted in people's daily routines. Most of the South Africans (70%) access the Internet through their phones (South Africa Mobile, 2017:2).

Although *YouTube* is the second most popular social network it is not considered as social media because it is more of a content sharing than social chatting and communicating platform (Boyd & Ellison, 2008:210; Lesame *et al.*, 2012:5). The social media landscape in South Africa indicates that there is an overwhelming number of South Africans who use these sites to communicate, let alone to share information. Social media are rapidly transforming the manner in which people communicate and share information. Social media are playing a pivotal role in disseminating information

amongst individual users across the world (Mawela, 2014:63). A plethora of social media users regularly visit these platforms. Additionally, the larger proportion of these users are youth. With the help of the Internet, social media such as *Twitter*, *Facebook*, blogs, *MySpace*, *WhatsApp* changed the social communication system. Social media are also known as user-generated content platforms where people upload, download and share text, pictures, and videos with ease. However, most Africans have raised concerns about the detrimental effects of social media as they are dominated by western-based, ideas, values and culture. As a result, this may erode African culture and its key features such as language and traditions (Warschauer, El Said & Zohry, 2002; Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:37).

The primary functions of the media, in general, are to inform, educate and entertain the users in the mass communication process (Fourie, 2007). Social media have enhanced and changed the manner in which media function and the general communication systems have been transformed. It is, therefore, imperative to examine how these social media perform towards conserving the selected African languages in Limpopo Province.

According to Baragwanath (2016:364), “Social media is playing an increasingly important role in the lives of South African citizens”. It is, therefore, apparent that the influence of social media have a huge potential to change people’s perceptions regarding language. One should point out that *Twitter* and *Facebook* are some of the main platforms for people all over the world to exchange ideas and perceptions regarding topical issues such as climate change, political disputes, health, fashion, music, and sports (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015:899). For example, the #bringbackourgirls went viral just after the rebel Nigerian group called Boko Haram captured 200 school girls (Vallabhjee, 2014:1).

The other relevant case in point is #jesuischairlie – this tag line also went viral a few days after the attack in a cartoon newsroom in France (Alfred, 2015:1). The other prominent event that was followed by #Notoxenophobia, following the recent outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa. The hashtags were used to galvanise the world about these prominent events that caught global attention (Sithole, 2015:1). Due to

the positive response on social media through the hashtag, the events as aforementioned caught the world's attention and subsequently influenced people's views.

In this case, the speakers of the selected African languages in South Africa regard their home languages and cultural identity irrelevant and inappropriate for social media (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). Thus, African languages could be nullified. Recent studies reveal that many South Africans including the speakers of the selected African languages seldom use their home languages when they communicate through social media (Text100, 2015:3). What is the role of social media in conserving the selected African languages? The answers to this question through scientific research methods would meticulously illustrate whether social media have a negative or positive impact in conserving African languages.

#### 1.1.1 The Dominance of English on the Internet

Globally, political and economic development in the 20th century was largely conducted through the medium of English (De Schryver, 2002:266). In support of this stance, Warschauer, El Said and Zohry (2002:1) posit that "the dominance of English on the Internet in the medium's early years caused great consternation about a possible threat to local languages and culture". This is still the case today. Likewise, modern technologies such as the Internet owe their development to the English language, having been principally developed in America. Internet use has also spread most rapidly in the English-speaking world (Kaschula, 2006:150). According to Lesame, Sindane, Magocha, and Makondo (2012:82), the dominance of English is evident across the world on integrated networks.

They further posited that even though English is the dominant language on the cyberspace that does not make it the effective channel of mass communication. The fact of the matter is that information is only effectively conveyed through mother tongue. Against this background, it is logical for information to be shared in the local languages amongst people who speak the same language (Salawu, 2006; De Schryver, 2002:266).

Kaschula (2006) states that while English is the dominant language on the Internet, perhaps generating up to 80% of traffic, it would seem that this directly correlates to people's Internet access. Access is continually broadening to include speakers of different languages other than English, consequently empowering these languages as well.

African languages, alongside English, will continue to expand, survive and even flourish, while others will not. Certainly, it is not just English-speakers who are making use of the Web. There are many sites in non-English-speaking countries that use English on the Web. This is especially true of countries such as Egypt, Latvia, Turkey and even South Africa, where English remains the language of status and prestige in the industry and education (Kaschula, 2006).

There is also the presumption that if one states a message in English, that message can reach the international community. But one would be wrong to think that the use of English on the Internet has to be at the expense of other languages. This is especially true when one analyses the socio-economic potential that the Internet stands to unleash world-wide (Kaschula, 2006:151).

In order for this communication, or media, to succeed, the technology has to become an elementary culture technique like reading or writing. This, of course, is contingent on literacy, as well as on economic mobility resulting in access to technology such as computers. Given the degree to which the Southern African people have come to grips with mobile phone technology, albeit perhaps in limited form, one could assume that visual literacy skills (which remain limited in Southern Africa) may also be suitable to encouraging Internet usage (Lesame, 2014:337). It would be even more beneficial if these skills were provided in the mother tongue (meaning the African languages), the tongue of conceptualisation and cognition (Kaschula, 2006:151).

### 1.1.2 Landscape of Social Media in South Africa

The current social media landscape in South Africa suggests that many people use social media in particular, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. According to World Wide Worx (2017), social media use in South Africa is exploding, with winners and losers (positively and negatively) in the space. A quarter of all South Africans, i.e.



14 million people use *Facebook*. Ten (10) million of these users access *Facebook* via mobile devices while 1.6 million are using basic feature phones to browse social media. The study further records that 1.4 million South Africans access *Facebook* via their tablets.

On the other hand, picture sharing service *Instagram* has also recorded strong growth in South Africa. *Instagram* doubled its user base from 1.1 million in 2014 to 2.68 million in 2015 (World Wide Worx, 2017). Other major social media such as *LinkedIn* recorded growth while *Mxit* shrank in terms of monthly active users (World Wide Worx, 2017). Webafrica (2014) states that *Facebook* is the most popular social media in South Africa, followed by *YouTube* and *Twitter*. *LinkedIn* has had massive growth of 40% from 2013, up to 3.8 million users, while *Instagram* has seen the biggest percentage increase – from 680 000 in 2016 to 1.1 million users (the most popular hashtag in South Africa is #Cape Town). Only two networks had decreased in numbers from the previous years. *Pinterest* decreased from 910 000 users to 840 000, and *Mxit*, which lost 1.6 million in a year down to 4.9 million.

The sampled social media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*) are briefly encapsulated below:

#### 1.1.2.1 *Facebook*

*Facebook* is the most popular social networking site in South Africa. There are over 14 million users of *Facebook* in South Africa (World Wide Worx, 2017). *Facebook* was founded in 2004 as a private network for Harvard students (*Facebook*, 2017). Following its initial success, it rapidly expanded to other university students. A major attribute of *Facebook's* success is arguably its simple and ordered profiles. As opposed to *MySpace*, *Facebook* restricts profile design through the provision of a uniform interface to all members.

As a result, their interfaces are clear and simple. As *Facebook* profiles have a uniform design, it is easy to find information in other users' profiles, which is not the case on other social networking sites (Leornadi, Huysman & Stenfield, 2013) as well as (Cachia, 2008). In South Africa, *Facebook*, at 14 million, now has more users than

Ukhozi FM, the largest radio station in Africa, has listeners. Increasing by more than two million users since last year, *Facebook's* local growth is only eclipsed by *Twitter*, which has experienced a year-on-year jump of 129% in membership to 5.5 million on the back of greater mobile penetration (World Wide Worx, 2016). This is despite the oft-lamented state of getting online leaps and bounds, and joining the world-wide trend whereby social media are the number one activity online.

According to Cachia (2008), the vast number of plug-ins and platforms that add a fun aspect to *Facebook* are seemingly other important attributes. It is the only social networking site that offers a "Wall". This is an application that allows users to post messages, pictures or videos on one another's walls, which everyone can see. Friends also share places they have travelled through a virtual map, buy animated gifts for their friends, such as plants that grow with time, or simply "poke" around. The word poke indicates a form of greeting, to flirt or to keep in touch. It is one of those activities that may be interpreted differently by users. Similar to other activities, such as "tossing a potato", it has gained a meaning culturally specific to *Facebook* users. *Facebook* keeps track of what users in your network are doing through a centralised newsfeed. The opening of *Facebook's* Application Programming Interface (API), which allows third parties to integrate foreign application, also marks an important historical moment in the success of *Facebook* and online applications in general.

*Facebook* is a popular free social networking Website that allows registered users to create personal profiles, add other users as Website friends, provide status updates, send messages, upload photos, and videos and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. It is the world's largest social networking site, with more than 1.32 billion monthly active users. Users create personal profiles add other users as friends, and exchange messages including status updates. Organisations and brands create pages and *Facebook* users can "like" brands' pages (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:39). *Facebook* is not only popular among individual users as organisations use it more often to connect with their members and followers.

*Facebook* is testing a translation tool that will automatically let posts be displayed in language users prefer (*Facebook*, 2018). The leading social networking site first made

the “multilingual composer” tool available earlier in 2016 for use on pages representing companies, brands, groups, and celebrities through its page service. Page authors and other people on *Facebook* can compose a single post in multiple languages, and the viewers who speak one of those languages will see the post in their preferred language only allowing people to more easily interact with their diverse audience. Half of *Facebook*’s more than 1.5 billion users world-wide speak a language other than English. Factors *Facebook* will use to determine which language to use for posts include, amongst others, localise designated in account settings and which languages users routinely use for their posts.

The social networking site (*Facebook*) plans to use multilingual posts to improve machine translation capabilities with the aim of one day removing language barriers across the social network (*Facebook*, 2018). As far as language preference is concerned on *Facebook*, the Website is currently working on a new system to accommodate more languages. The users of *Facebook* have the latitude to use any language on this social networking domain. The selected African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) are not available on *Facebook*’s language options.

#### 1.1.2.2 *Twitter*

Since its first public release in 2006, *Twitter* has established itself as the leading microblogging platform in most parts of the world (Mawela, 2017:119; Leornadi *et al.*, 2013). Its widespread adoption and integration with other parts of the digital networked media ecosystem have sparked public debate, pop-cultural responses, and academic research alike. Like other “new media”, *Twitter* is both underdetermined and recombinant, making its subject to the interpretative flexibility of the particular social groups involved in developing and appropriating the technology. Thus, there are many different practices of *Twitter* use: a teenager in the suburban United States of America (USA) will tweet differently from a German professional football team, from a British comedian and from a political party in Spain. Still, they all participate in a shared media (Weller, Bruns, Burgess, Mahrt & Puschmann, 2014:3).

With particular functionalities and communicative architecture, it is worthwhile to examine these characteristics and their consequences. Based on these analytical

remarks, it is then argued that *Twitter* contributes to the emergence of a new type of “publicness” personal public (Weller *et al.*, 2014:4). This microblogging Website is popular amongst media companies and public figures such as politician, celebrities, sportsmen, musician etc.

*Twitter* is used by many people and mass media institutions as a news feed Website for important announcements. According to Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon (2010:1), *Twitter* as a microblogging service, has emerged as a new medium in the spotlight through recent happenings, such as an American student jailed in Egypt and the United States of America (USA) Airways plane crash on the Hudson River. *Twitter* users follow others or are followed. Unlike on most online social networking sites, such as *Facebook* or *MySpace*, the relationships of following and being followed need not to follow back. It is worth mentioning that *Twitter*'s dramatic rise has slowed down, although still growing healthily by 20% in the past year to 6.6 million users. The professional network *LinkedIn* has leaped by 40%, to 3.8 million users in South Africa (World Wide Worx, 2015:3). Being a follower on *Twitter* means that the user receives all the messages (called *tweets*) from those the user follows. A common practice of responding to a tweet has evolved into well-defined mark-up culture: RT stands for *retweet*, '@' followed by a user identifier address the user, and '#' followed by a word that represents a hashtag.

This well-defined mark-up vocabulary combined with a strict limit of 280 characters, per posting conveniences users with brevity in expression. In recent times, the 280 characters restriction has been relaxed. Kwak *et al.*, (2010:1) the *retweet* mechanism empowers users to spread information of their choice beyond the reach of the original tweet's followers. A *Twitter* user keeps a brief profile of oneself. The public profile includes the full name, the location, a Web page, a short biography and the number of tweets of the user. The people who follow the user and those that the user follows are also listed. *Twitter* rate limits 20, 000 requests per hour whitelisted.

*Twitter* tracks phrases, words, and hashtags that are most often mentioned and posts them under the title of “trending topics” regularly (*Twitter*, 2017). A hashtag is a convention among *Twitter* users to create and follow a thread of discussion by

prefixing a word with a '#' character. The social bookmarking site *Del.iciou.us* also use the same hashtag convention. *Twitter* shows a list of top ten (10) trending topics of the moment on a right sidebar on every user's homepage by default unless set otherwise.

*Twitter* does not group similar trending topics and, when Michael Jackson died, most of the top 10 trending topics were about him: Michael Jackson, MJ, King of Pop etc. The same thing happened after the passing on of former President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela (Kwak, 2010:1). Although the exact mechanism of how *Twitter* mines the top ten (10) trending topics is not known, the trending topics are a good representation, if not complete, of issues that draw the most attention and have decided to crawl them.

According to Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouane, Watson, and Seymour (2011:6), *Twitter* gained a lot of popularity first because it offered more different options such as microblogging and, secondly, because it was used by some celebrities. Until 2010, there were social media, such as *friend feed* in 2007, which were a feed to consolidate the updates from social media and social networking Websites and was acquired by *Facebook* in 2009. *Pinf Fm* was created in 2008 and was defined as "the auto magic" microblogging and networking Web service that enables users to post to multiple social networks simultaneously.

According to Omofonwan (2012:1), *Twitter* provides many services, it creates the required infrastructure to make sure that tweets that are written by users are transmitted to all the user's followers are conveyed to the user in a well-timed method. This flow of tweets is accessible to the user through numerous different sources, comprised of the major *Twitter* Website constructed around *Twitter*. Tweets are also accessible through the *Twitter* API service in Extensible Markup Language (XML) and JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) formats. *Twitter* also brings out differently-sized examples of the whole set of tweets produced by all *Twitter* users through three public feeds, known as an open timeline, Spritzer, and Garden Hose.

These tweets are the different and increasing amount, while the public timeline and Spritzer feeds are small, with a distinction of numerous orders of magnitude. On the other hand, the Garden Hose feed gives a limited set of approved *Twitter* users with entrance to a much larger flow of tweets to form, but it is still all the tweets created by all the users of *Twitter* (Omofonmwan, 2012:8). This microblogging Website does not have the selected African languages on its language options. However, people are free to use any language when they tweet, comment, retweet etc.

### 1.1.2.3 *WhatsApp*

*WhatsApp* is an instant messaging application that is downloadable from the Integrated Network (Internet) for efficient electronic communication (Ahad & Lim, 2014). *WhatsApp* Messenger is an advanced SMS application for the advancement of affordable communication across distance, time and space. This application is available for any person in the global community (Adelore, 2017:132; Mistar & Embi, 2016). There are specific brands of mobile devices that carry *WhatsApp*. These specific brands are, namely, iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Nokia and Sony, to mention just a few popular ones. *WhatsApp* has many operations, which include text messages, pictures, audio files, videos and Web address links (Gordano, Koch, Mendes, Bergamin, de Souza & Amara, 2015; Yeboah & Ewur, 2014).

According to Moya and Moya (2015:301), *WhatsApp* is a medium that facilitates effective electronic conversations amongst its users. *WhatsApp* is well capacitated to enable its users to send and receive information. The kind of information that *WhatsApp* user could send, receive or share include emoticons, images, voice notes, and Web links let alone text (Alsaleem, 2014; Ngaleka & Uys, 2015). The features of *WhatsApp* do not transform the manner in which people communicate. However, it has revolutionised the electronic communication process in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Montag, Blaszkiewkz, Sariyska, Lachman & Trendafilov, 2015; Suliman, 2014). Despite the fact that *WhatsApp* is an extension of SMS, it is more advanced. Through *WhatsApp*, a user is enabled to communicate with a group of people. Which means, unlike SMS service, *WhatsApp* is not limited to a dialogue between two people only. *WhatsApp* default system is in English. Its users are allowed to use any language.

The next section discusses the research problem.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

This study examines the impact of social media towards conserving African languages amongst youth. There is conspicuous marginalisation of African languages on social media by its speakers. This problem could hinder the conservation of African languages in the future. The social media sites do not recognise the selected African languages and this may adversely affect the use of these languages online. These languages are not part of the language options on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. To this end, social media are somehow not convenient for the usage of African languages. There are eleven (11) official languages in South Africa and nine (9) of them are the indigenous African languages (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996). For this reason, it is cumbersome to see these nine indigenous African languages being less used by its speakers on social media. According to Text100 (2015:3) English is the dominant language that is used on social media and many South Africans, particularly the youth, are influenced by this trend. As much as indigenous people in South Africa use English on a daily basis yet they find it difficult to reflect on their cultures through it as a medium of communication. In other words, the mother tongue is an effective language for communication purposes.

It, therefore, shows the importance of these African languages as far as conserving and promoting culture is concerned (De Klerk & Gough, 1996:55). Language planning and policy advocates believe that one way of developing or preserving the status of a language is to have it spoken and written (Educational Ministerial Committee, 2003). Social media give their respective users latitude to chat in their own languages in an effort to conserve those languages and their respective cultures.

The next section outlines the purpose of the study, objectives, rationale, scope of the study and hypotheses.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

#### 1.3.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of social media in conserving the selected African languages amongst youth in Limpopo Province.

#### 1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- a) To identify the effects of social media on the selected African languages;
- b) To establish the challenges and opportunities of the social media in conserving the selected African languages; and
- c) To analyse the manner in which the youth use different languages in their social media profiles.

#### 1.3.3 Rationale of the study

It is imperative to embark on a study of this nature because African languages in South Africa are not prevalent on social media. If the African communities have to maintain and develop their cultural values, they should use African languages in all spheres of life including on social media to achieve their goal. Many people use social media to communicate let alone to share information. The youth are the most active age group on social media. Previously, the African languages have been marginalised in the main stream media. New media through platforms such as social networking site and social media have been heavily consumed by the speakers of African languages. The other critical question is whether social media are convenient for the usage of African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

The African youth who speak the African languages are expected to preserve them for posterity. The main aim was to examine the impact of social media in conserving African languages. Little has been done in this area of research although there are many studies about social media but there is no single one that addresses the abovementioned problem. Mostly, the youth who speak African languages are engaged on social media on a regular basis yet it is not known whether these new media platforms help them to conserve African languages. Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015:37) argue that Africans have raised concerns regarding the dominance of



western-based ideologies on social media, which thus erodes African ideas, values, and languages. The researcher has interrogated this argument by employing scientific research methods, critical analyses, and theoretical underpinning.

#### 1.3.4 Scope of the Study

This is a relatively broad concept as there are many social media sites in the world. In the interest of this study, the researcher selected three popular social media sites, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. In terms of the African languages, the study focuses on Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. These three African languages are an embodiment of Limpopo's cultural diversity and multilingualism. The participants of the study are youth between the ages of 16 and 34 years who reside in Limpopo Province. The selected geographic region is Limpopo Province, in these specific areas, Thohoyandou, Mankweng, and Tzaneen.

#### 1.3.5 Hypotheses

The following points are the hypotheses for this research:

- a) The lack of frequent usage of African languages on social media suggests they (social media) have a negative impact towards conserving these languages;
- b) The dominance of English on social media has detrimental effects on these languages;
- c) Due to their popularity amongst youth, social media have the potential to help in conserving African languages;
- d) The constant use of African languages by youth on social media could boost their preservation and development; and
- e) The social media systems are not convenient for the use of African languages.

The subsequent section focuses on the role of theory in the study.

### **1.4 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY**

The theoretical framework of the study was based on three theories, namely, African Linguistic Dynamism Theory, the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Practice Theory.

#### 1.4.1 African Linguistic Dynamism Theory

This theory emphasises that the language situation in Africa is basically complex – there are many dynamics between ex-colonial languages, the dominant languages and the minority languages that have brought along certain tendencies to the general profile (Batibo, 2005:26). A number of factors have favoured the expansion or extended use of some languages at the expense of others.

According to Batibo (2005:26); Salawu (2006:88), in some African countries, there is a tendency for ex-colonial languages to work their way down through the social system, thus taking over some of the domains of the dominant languages. In the interest of this study, English, as the dominant language on social media amongst youth, is addressed. This dominance status of English is because of the expansion in education, with more young people having access to education, which is usually provided in the ex-colonial language. The majority of young people want to live a Western lifestyle wherein English is the preferred language. This trend has influenced the manner in which they communicate on social media and, as such, English becomes dominant over their respective first languages. To some extent, this may cause a decline in the usage of African languages in the future as the youth is expected to pass on African languages from generation to generation. In this study, social media are the preferred forms of communication for young people and English is the dominant language in these platforms.

With the growing need to keep abreast of information technology, international information flow, and modern technology, the ex-colonial languages, more especially English, are regarded as vitally important. There is a growing tendency to marginalise the minority languages as many of their roles are taken over by the dominant languages; hence their use becomes restricted to communication at family and village level, and for cultural expression. In most cases, only older people use them on a regular basis as the younger generation tends to use the ex-colonial language or the dominant language. This is a detrimental factor because, if the youth do not use African languages and considering the excessive use of English amongst them, the native African languages will probably diminish in the future.

This theory is appropriate in the scope of this study to examine the impact of social media towards conserving African languages because many young people who are ardent users of social media prefer English over their respective home languages.

#### 1.4.2 The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory affirms that different people use media for various personal reasons (Kaye, 2007:129). Some people use media to escape from their real-life problems while other people use media for the purposes of self-satisfaction, which has a lot to do with adoring characters on television, let alone imitating them. It is known that media users view television characters as their friends or role models pertaining to how they relate to those characters (Fourie, 2007:236). Fourie (ibid.) further articulates that the main questions of this theory are all about: what do people do with the media; and what do they use the media for? Fourie (ibid.) also points out that media provide content that fulfil social companionship.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is relevant in this study because it articulates the usage of media by users. This theory is anchored by two prominent questions, namely, what do people do with media? What do they use media for? (Luo, Chea & Chen, 2011). The answers to these questions relate to the purpose of this study, which is, namely, to expose how youth use their African languages on social media. The assumptions of this theory are used to analyse the findings in Chapter seven.

#### 1.4.3 Practice Theory

This theory encapsulates what people are doing with media and what media do to people. The theory is in line with postmodern and postcolonial paradigms. The other important aspect is that Practice Theory introduces new concepts regarding new media in the new society, with a vested interest in postcolonial methods that put more emphasis on discourse about sociology (Couldry, 2004). The theory is enshrined in the latest media developments that deviate from the traditional media debates about the effects of media, political economy, the ideological nature of media and passive audience (Fourie, 2010:180). The deviation is not limited to the assumption of old mass media/communication theories. The focus is “on the media as practised in life, in society, and in the world, and how the media as a practice and experience” (Fourie,

2010:180). These key concepts are cardinal because they address developing media concepts that are determined by the evolution of media consumption and the latest mass communication dynamics.

Couldry (2004); Fourie (2010:181) further posits that the modern media orientated research should deal with the manner in which media audience are doing with media and the elucidation of media practice or treatment of the people by the media in different circumstances. This argument is important in this study as it complements the main objectives of the topic under investigation. The objectives of this research accentuate that there are different ways regarding what people are doing with social media and what social media are doing with people (Couldry, 2004).

In modern research, there is a need to investigate new media dynamics. One critical aspect concerning the relevance of Practice Theory is that it highlights fundamental questions within the African context. The question is “How do the expansion and infiltration of media in Africa (and other developing regions) affect traditional life and culture”. Within the context of this research, the question can be rephrased thus: How do the expansion and infiltration of social media (particularly *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*) in Africa affect the plight of African languages. The fact is that social media infiltrated Africa from Europe and the US and, as a result, the status quo of African people is affected in one way or the other.

There are other pivotal questions that the Practice Theory attempts to answer. These questions are outlined thus:

- a) What does it mean, or what is it like, to live in a media-saturated world?
- b) What does it mean to live in a society dominated by large-scale media institutions?
- c) What does the concept ‘media’ really mean?
- d) What are the role and the product of media practices in ordering other practices across the social world (Fourie, 2010:181)?

In Chapter seven, the assumptions of Practice Theory are used to analyse the findings of this study.

The next section addresses the significance of the study.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The majority of South African languages are indigenous, as there are nine (9) out of all. Therefore, one would expect the speakers of these African languages to effectively use them on social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. According to Van der Rheede (2004:3), African language heritage is undoubtedly a valuable resource; however, it needs state resources to develop it further and establish it as a core economic driver in the various media platforms. Furthermore, it requires the support of its speakers who will want to buy media products in the African languages. The constant practice of these African languages by their respective native speakers ensures constant existence and preservation of their cultures. “Our language is the expression of our culture and our land” (Queensland Indigenous Advisory, 2006:1).

Mckay (1996) points out that without apt recognition of the indigenous people and their languages, many other programmes will be less effective because this lack of recognition will show that the underlying attitudes of the dominant society have not changed. African people in their respective communities do not take a positive stance towards using their own indigenous languages on their social media accounts. It is, therefore, cardinal to investigate the factors that contribute towards ineffective usage of African languages on the social media and minimum representation of indigenous culture. However, the study tests the existence of those detrimental factors in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

South African indigenous languages are not popular in the dominant sector of the traditional media industry. This statement affirms that ex-colonial languages have overshadowed the African languages, hence their dominance as a medium of instruction in many African countries including South Africa (Wa Thiong’o, 2004:5). Moreover, academically, this study will be used as an additional reference by other Media Studies scholars to undertake further research. It will also boost the existing body of knowledge concerning the role of new media in society by generating new knowledge. Since social media is an emerging subject in media studies, this research will help scholars in this field to conduct further researches about the relationship and

dynamics between social media and African languages. More research problems can be generated from the findings of this study. One other significant aspect is that the speakers of the indigenous African languages will know and understand the importance of conserving and promoting their indigenous African languages and culture through the social media in order to preserve their identity and culture for future generations.

The following section deals with the definition of key terms.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **1.6.1 *Twitter***

*Twitter* is a microblogging application or site that enables its users to communicate information on cyberspace. This microblogging site helps people to share information about their issues of interest (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010:1). To some extent, people use *Twitter* to share and seek information. *Twitter* was formed in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone. The creators of this microblogging site expanded the short messaging service concept, popularly known as “SMS”, to allow colleagues in his company to be in touch with one another. It is not a secret that many *Twitter* users use it to connect with their friends, celebrities and/or popular figures. The users of this microblogging form of social media should follow other users on it to keep in touch with their online activities whenever they are active. If a person wishes to use or to be followed on *Twitter*, he/she should register an account or create a *Twitter* handle to follow all the developments on *Twitter*.

According to Sawyer (2011:5), “the name ‘*Twitter*’ is used to describe a short burst of inconsequential information”. Most of the messages that are generated on *Twitter* may look meaningless. The meaning of the messages on *Twitter* is determined by the audience or its recipients (Jones, 2014:12). In the context of this study, *Twitter* is treated as a form of social media that may allow people to share ideas, information, and aspects of entertainment such as music and movies. In that process, people decide to use a specific language for various reasons. When people post messages or tweets they have their target audience in mind and probably the manner in which their message could be received. In this light, the language that a person becomes a

significant factor because the sender of the message would wish to have his/her message well received and understood by the recipients.

This study, therefore, investigated the impact of *Twitter* in conserving African languages amongst youth. The study attempted to establish the language that the social media (*Twitter*) users prefer when they communicate in this platform. And also to determine the convenience of *Twitter* for usage of African languages. The rationale of the whole argument is that if the speakers of African languages do not use their languages effectively on social media that would have an adverse effect or negative impact on African languages. In contrast, if the *Twitter* users who speak African languages use these languages effectively on this platform that would have a positive impact towards conversing these African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

#### 1.6.2 Social media

Social media are the social network sites, microblogging applications, content sharing platforms and instant messaging sites that people use to connect with one another across boundaries. People use these cyberspace platforms to share information, ideas, personal messages and other related content about one another (Chan-Olmsted, Cho & Lee, 2013:152).

According to Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015:38), “Social media are the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaborations”. Social media allow users to generate, process, share or exchange information and ideas through pictures, words, and videos (Couldry & van Dijk, 2015). These platforms operate within the technological foundations of Web 2.0 that enable the generation and sharing of user-generated content (Sawyer, 2011:4). “Social media surely one of the most complex and problematic objects of our time” (Couldry, 2015:1).

According to Chan-Olmsted, Cho, and Lee (2013), there are a variety of social media with unique and diverse functions:

- a) Social Network Sites (SNSs) are the platforms that give the users the capacity to start their own Web pages and interact with online friends. The typical examples of Social Network Sites are, namely, *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *LinkedIn*, *Bebo* etc.
- b) Weblog or blog is a form of new technology that facilitates content or information sharing activities. *Huffingtonpost.com* and google's *blogspot* popular blogs that are available in the cyberspace.
- c) Micro-blogging are cyberspace platforms available on the Integrated Networks (Internet). This kind of platforms enable its users to post short messages under 280 characters to be viewed by fellow users over a long period of time. The examples of microblogging sites/services are, namely, *Twitter* and *Jaiku*.
- d) Wiki is a tool that is meant for mass communication where people come together in an effort to compile and develop contents for public consumption online. The most popular wiki is *Wikipedia*.

To contextualise social media in this study, the focus is on a social networking site, namely, *Facebook*, which is the most popular in South Africa ahead of *MySpace*, *LinkedIn* and *Bebo*. The other selected social media is an instant messaging application called *WhatsApp*. *WhatsApp* is the most popular instant messaging application in South Africa, coincidentally, it is under the ownership of *Facebook*. Microblogging service *Twitter* is another social media phenomenon that this study focuses on.

Furthermore, over 14 million South Africans use these forms of social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*, and most of these users are young people (youth) between the ages of 16 and 34 years. Since youth are expected to carry the culture and language of a society from one generation to the other. This study investigated the impact of social media (*Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, and *Twitter*) in conserving African languages amongst youth in Limpopo.

### 1.6.3 *Facebook*

*Facebook* is a social network that was established back in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his friends for Harvard students. Initially, this social networking site was founded



to facilitate communication amongst college students but later on it infiltrated high school before attracting huge interest world-wide (Ahn, 2011:1436; Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson & Seymour, 2011:4). Its name originates from a colloquialism for the printed or online directory for students at a number of American Universities. The primary purpose of *Facebook* is to bring people from different backgrounds together. *Facebook* allows its users to start a personal profile where other existing users may be roped in through friend request or by following a specific individual. The users of *Facebook* would exchange messages, automatic notifications, photos and comments whenever they are online. *Facebook* is accessible through the Internet and any person over the age of 13 years may register a profile. Currently, *Facebook* is the most popular social networking site in the world. The messages that people can send one another on *Facebook* may contain text, emojis, pictures, audio clips, and videos.

Each *Facebook* user owns a wall, where people can go through their statuses, comments or what they share with their friends. *Facebook* users have a latitude to select their audience regarding people who are permitted to go through their wall, timeline or statuses. When one accepts a friend request may decide the category for that particular individual, some people may be accepted as close friends, friends, acquaintances etc. *Facebook* users are allowed to withdraw from a friendship without seeking consent from that person. Furthermore, people who use *Facebook* are allowed to block individuals who irritate them or for whatever reason. This social networking site keeps track of a person's history including their previous schools and current employment.

However, users have the liberty to include all necessary information on their profiles. People with a common interest can start a *Facebook* page as a platform to share information or any relevant content needed on that page. Despite the fact that *Facebook* users send friend requests to connect with one another, there is a follow option. This option enables people to keep in touch with their favourite person, more especially when that individual has reached the quota of the permitted number of friends (Sawyer, 2011:4; Boyd & Ellison, 2007:10).

In the context of this study, *Facebook* is selected to examine its impact towards conserving African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga amongst youth. This examination is based on the use of African languages on *Facebook* including its convenience for usage of these languages. *Facebook* as the most popular network in the world is a great platform for social interaction, especially for young people.

#### 1.6.4 African Languages

African languages are channels of communication that are standardised and spoken by native Africans across the continent (Salawu, 2006). An estimated number of African languages is over 2000 languages excluding dialects. According to Heine and Nurse (2000:1), there are four large phyla that are used to explain categories of African languages and their origin. The four large phyla are, namely, Niger-Congo with over 1400 languages, Afrosiasatic with approximately 371 languages, Nilo-Saharan with about 196 languages and Khoisan group has 35 languages.

In the context of this study, the focus is on three African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

These languages are predominantly spoken in Limpopo Province where the majority of their speakers reside. This study examined the impact of social media towards conserving these African languages. The researcher studies the languages to establish whether their speakers, especially youth use these African languages on social media.

#### 1.6.5 Language

Language is a system involving both elements and structures. As in any system, people can define elemental and structural units at many levels, depending on the purpose. At any level, however, the language includes a set of symbols (vocabulary) and the meaningful methods of combining those units (syntax) (Salawu, 2004:3); (Thomason & Kaufman, 2001:1). An indigenous language is a language that is native to a region and spoken by indigenous people but has been reduced to the status of a minority language. This language would be from a linguistically distinct community that

has been settled in the area for many generations. Indigenous languages may not be national languages or may have fallen out of use, because of language deaths (i.e., linguicide) caused by colonisation, wherein the original language is replaced by that of the colonists (Salawu, 2006:55); (Mesthrie, 2002:23).

#### 1.6.6 *WhatsApp*

*WhatsApp* is an instant messaging application that is based on SMS for communication purposes (Anglano, 2014:139). This free messaging application is used for communication purposes by mobile devices and desktops across the world. *WhatsApp* is used by more than 1 billion people in 180 countries. It is available online for Android, iPhone, and Windows phone (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). The users of this application can communicate through text messaging, voice messages, calls, videos, documents, and photos. Despite the fact that there are data charges for using the Internet link, the *WhatsApp* users do not pay for its services. In other words, there are no subscription fees for using the instant messaging application. Many people stay connected with friends and family through *WhatsApp*, and 'group chats' is one of the popular activities online. The users' address book is used to connect them with their contacts who have a similar application (*WhatsApp*, 2018).

The name *WhatsApp* is a pun on the phrase "What is up". The application was formed by Jan Koum and Brian Acton and it joined forces with *Facebook* in 2014. *WhatsApp* allows people to exchange or interact through an Internet connection to evade SMS fees (Anglano, 2014). *WhatsApp*'s most popular feature 'group chat' enables people to connect and interact with a group of people such as friends, colleagues and family and one is able to share information with over 250 people simultaneously (*WhatsApp*, 2018). As far as this research is concerned, *WhatsApp* is selected to examine its impact towards conserving African languages amongst Youth in Limpopo Province. The examination of this study includes the convenience of *WhatsApp* pertaining to the usage of African languages and the attitudes of Youth towards their African languages (Dar, Ahmad, Ramzan, Khan, Ramzan, & Kamal, 2017).

### 1.6.7 Youth

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2015:2122), youth refers to a specific period when an individual is young or “the state of being young”. This noun is used to categorise young people and teenagers ranging between the ages of 10-35 years. Despite the constant change of age group as far as youth is concerned, there is no absolute description of youth across the globe. From the African perspective, youth are persons between the ages of 15-35 years as outlined by the African Youth Charter. In South African, youth is defined as individuals who are over the age of 14 and they should not be older than 35 years.

In Kenya, a person is considered to be youth when he/she is between the ages of 15-30 years. Whilst in Nigeria the bracket age for youth is 18 and 35 years. There is an existing argument concerning the use of “young people” to define youth because this phrase may include adolescents and young children within the bracket age group of 10 to 24 years. It is safe to articulate that youth refers to young, adolescents and children between the ages of 10-35 years. Despite the fact that various countries have their unique definition of youth, the general consensus is that a person could be considered as a youth as long as they not older than 35 years.

In the context of this study, the South African description/definition is suitable. The National Youth Policy in South Africa describes youth as persons within the ages of 14 and 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2015:03). This study focuses on people between the ages of 16 and 34, as the age group that participated in the data collection procedure. The questionnaires (100) were administered with participants who are belonging to the aforementioned age group. The focus groups interviewees were also a true representation of this age group (16 and 34 years). However, most of the participants in this research were between these ages 19-34 years. This age group is selected mainly because they are constantly active on social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. It is, therefore, cardinal to investigate the impact of social media as far as conserving African languages is concerned. This age group is considered to be the future generation that is somehow expected to carry and conserve the African languages for the next generation. In that sense, this should be carried out to ensure that African languages are not extinct.

### 1.6.8 Conserving

This verb means to ensure that something is not damaged nor transformed by other forces (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2015:376). This meaning is relevant within the context of this study because the primary purpose of this verb in the title of this study is the protection of African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga from being damaged or changed by social media. In this research, the word “conserve” is linked with African languages due to the fact that these languages should be protected for future generation by the current one. In the process of conserving something in its current form, one should ensure that there is no amount of damage and change effected on that particular thing.

The key question is: Are these social media platforms damaging or changing the current state of African languages? The answers to this question would determine whether social media have a negative or positive impact on conserving the African languages. It is therefore important for this study to investigate the impact of social media towards preventing or protecting (conserving) African languages from being damaged or changed.

The consequent section outlines the common social media terminology.

## **1.7 DESCRIPTION OF COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA TERMINOLOGY**

Eighteen (18) common social media terminologies are described below:

1.7.1 Chat refers to an informal conversation on social media. This word is common on social media as the users refer to their normal conversations through text as chatting. On *Facebook*, the users chat through *Facebook* messenger. Chatting is a key feature on *WhatsApp* because many people use this instant messaging application for sending one another text messages (Stonebrook & Richard, 2010; Huls, 2012:2).

1.7.2 Text messaging is an act of sending messages on social media. The message usually comprises of alphabetic and numeric characters. This activity takes place when two or more people are involved. The word is derived from Short Message

Services. People use mobile phones, tablets, desktop, laptops, among other devices, when they text one another. In simplest terms, the text is a synonym of writing. However, texting is common among social media users (Kateb & Kalita, 2015:2).

1.7.3 Hashtag, according to Murzintcev and Cheng (2017:2), “a hashtag is a word, a combination of 2-3 words, or an abbreviation”. Hash is also known as a metadata tag that is commonly used on social media activities. The social media users galvanise themselves through hashtags to popularise a particular theme or topic. The effective use of tagging enables social media users to easily locate a topic, message or theme. The number sign or hash character is used to generate a hashtag. In most cases, the number sign is at the beginning of text followed by alphanumeric characters. Hashtag is simply a word or phrase without spacing. The hashtag practice is commonly used on *Twitter* and *Facebook* and it is not limited to a specific language. *WhatsApp* users use hashtag sporadically (Murzintcev & Cheng, 2017:2).

1.7.4 Tweet is a brief message, statement or opinion that *Twitter* users put up for public consumption. In other words, a tweet is a message displayed on *Twitter* from an individual who is registered on this microblogging Website. This kind of message is accessible for all *Twitter* users. Public figures and celebrities send tweets to make an official announcement for public consumption. A tweet is only available on *Twitter*. The users are free to retweet a tweet or to share it with other users. A tweet is not limited to text as users are allowed to attach pictures, videos etc., to accompany their tweets (Kateb & Kalita, 2015:2).

1.7.5 Post means sending or uploading text, photos, videos, audio clips, and other related social media content. This word is used informally by social media users. In most instances, users post status and comment on *Facebook*. The act of posting is also used on *WhatsApp*, more especially on group chats. Despite the fact that people post a lot on *Twitter*, the popular terminology on this microblogging application is a tweet (Kateb & Kalita, 2015:2).

1.7.6 Share refers to an act of distributing a message or any social media content amongst the users. Users share interesting posts or photos with friends and family on

*Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.* *Facebook* and *Twitter* have share options to enable users to easily share information. *WhatsApp* is an instant messaging application that does not have a share option but its users are able to forward each other messages or information (Multisilta & Mildrad, 2009:2).

1.7.7 Users are individuals who use social media. Generally, users have accounts on social media. A user account is a common aspect of social media accompanied with the username for identification purposes (Multisilta & Mildrad, 2009:2; Perrin, 2015:2).

1.7.8 Poke is a jargon that is mostly used by *Facebook* users that means friendly greeting. This act is popular with close friends it is not a good gesture to poke a complete stranger (Berg, Berquam & Christoph, 2007:32).

1.7.9 Comment is a remark or response to any social media post/content or message. Social media users make different comments in response to what has been posted by other users. Users may comment on someone else's *Facebook* status, tweet, video and pictures alike. Even on *WhatsApp*, people post comments by replying to users' status or pictures. The social media users have the latitude to use any language when commenting on the platforms (Hille & Bakker, 2014:563).

1.7.10 Status is a common and regular feature on social media. The social media users put up a statement to reflect what is on their minds at that point. On *Facebook*, the users are asked by the system to write or post their thoughts whenever they log in. *WhatsApp* users have an option to post a status but the system does not necessarily ask them to post their thoughts. The users are not restricted to post a specific number of statuses per day. On *Twitter*, a status is known as a "tweet". A status is the social media user's state of affairs. *Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp* systems do not propel the users to use a specific language when they post a status (Haenschen, 2016:542).

1.7.11 Profile refers to the personal details of the social media users that are available on their accounts. When a user registers with a social networking site he/she is requested to complete an electronic form with his/her details. The details of the profile

usually comprise of a picture, name/username, geographical location, contact details, and biography among others. The user's profile on *Facebook* and *Twitter* are detailed as they include the users' personal interests. A *WhatsApp* profile is brief as the users are not obliged to put biography. Despite the fact that the profile is an obligation for all registered social media users, they are not forced to provide all details. These social media systems have security features to protect the privacy of all users (Krombholz, Merkl & Weippl, 2012:184).

1.7.12 Direct Message is a private text on *Twitter*. *Twitter* users resort to direct messaging (DM) when they want to conceal their conversation from other users (Stonebrook & Richard, 2010). This option is also active on other social media platforms such as *Instagram*.

1.7.13 Follower is an individual user who follows other users on social media. Following one another allow users to remain connected. This feature is common on *Twitter* and *Facebook*. However, mostly users on *Facebook* prefer to send friend requests instead of following one another. The users have a right to follow, unfollow or block each other (Tomlinson, 2017).

1.7.14 Friend is an online companion for social media users. In most cases, *Facebook* user send a friend request to propose friendship amongst themselves. Users have the prerogative to approve or decline the friend requests. In instances where the users have reached the limit of a number of friends, people would resort to following them (Tomlinson, 2017).

1.7.15 Viral is anything that attracts overwhelming attention and popularity from social media users. Generally, a subject goes viral on different social media platforms (Chu, 2011:31).

1.7.16 Trending refers to a popular phrase, word or activity by an individual on social media. A trending subject is more likely to be popular for a specific period. This verb resonates with *Twitter* users but it is also used on other domains (Zhang, Zhao & Xu, 2015:3).



1.7.17 Emojis are icons, symbols, codes and pictures that are meant to represent a specific expression such as laughing, smiling, crying, loving, anger, happiness, etc. The emojis represent body language or non-verbal communication hence other users would post a dancing emoji to express their happiness or any related emotions (Stark & Crawford, 2015:1).

1.7.18 According to Shifman (2013:362), Memes are “defined as small cultural units of transmission, analogous to genes, which are spread from person to person by copying or imitation”. Most of the memes that people share online are meant to poke fun, dramatise a rumour or to merely joke around. Memes are popular on social media, particularly on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*.

## **1.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER TWO**

This chapter captures the background of the study by stating the impact of social towards conserving African languages. The research problem is outlined by indicating that social media can play a critical role in conserving African languages in Limpopo Province. It is believed that English is the most used language on social media in South Africa. The argument of this research is consolidated by the theoretical framework. Moreover, the aim and objectives of the study are explicitly outlined in this chapter, so is the significance of the study.

The succeeding Chapter two is looking at the overview of the key concepts of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the key concepts of the research. It also deals with the overview of social media, and some of the significant features of social networks, such as the Internet and new media.

The next section discusses the overview of new media.

#### **2.2 OVERVIEW OF NEW MEDIA**

According to Flew (2008:2), new media are digital forms of mass communication. In other words, new media and digital media are interwoven. Digital media, which are forms of integrated content that combine sound, text, data and different images, mainly saved in digital types and shared via Integrated Networks namely fibre-optic cables, satellite, and microwave transmission system for effective communication. These forms of media have the attributes of being:

- a) Manipulative: digital information is easily changeable and adaptable at all stages of creation, storage, delivery, and use;
- b) Networkable: digital information can be shared and exchanged between large numbers of users simultaneously, and cross enormous distances;
- c) Dense: very large amounts of digital information can be stored in small physical spaces (e.g., use flash discs) or on network servers;
- d) Compressible: the amount of capacity that digital information takes up on any network can be reduced dramatically through compression and decompressed when needed; and
- e) Impartial: digital information carried across networks is indifferent to what forms it represents, who owns or created them, or how they are used.

### 2.2.1 Historical Background of the Internet

The history of the Integrated Network (Internet) is colourful and has been well documented, and will not be presented in detail. It is significant, nevertheless, to notice that the historical development of the Internet, while building the overall development of laptops, smartphones and other devices for digitally processed information and retrieval, is both a background of systems for the publication, organisation, and distribution of information (Flew, 2008). Primarily, the process of establishing the Internet began in the United States of America as repercussion of the cold war with Russia, it was a priority of the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) founded in 1957 after Russia started the sputnik satellite were propelled by the aspirations of the American scientific community to endure perfection in machinery of communication process with one another to meet the demands of the army. Social media are Internet-based applications for communication, interactivity, entertainment and social cohesion in the global community. In simplest terms, the Internet is the heart beat of social media, because without it the applications are completely nullified (Flew, 2008).

Sisulu (2014:85) posits that the Internet as the most consumed source of information is used by over 2.5 billion users, approximately 70% consume it on a daily basis. In recent times, this Internet has surpassed television as the most consumed in the world. The medium is rapidly growing in the region of 556% since 2000. The reasons for this growth is the excessive spread of electronic devices that help people to access the World Wide Web and the numbers of smartphone users are doubling every year. To this end, 38% of media interaction is predominantly on smartphones. The applications such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* are more effective when accessed through the smartphones (South Africa Mobile, 2017).

#### 2.2.1.1 The Internet and African culture

According to Eluwole, Udo and Ojo (2014:69), the dawn of 1990 saw the emergence of new innovations and trends with direct influence on the manner in which people process and share information in the mass communication process. These modernisations signalled the level of telecommunications and Internet working practised in the world today and, more significantly, conveyed the plan of the so-called integrated-networks and modern day (Warschauer *et al.*, 2002).

Present-day trends in information communication technology and telecommunication sectors illustrate that social media are one of the big five feats of the next half-decade. Certification, offer a brief description for the abbreviation SNS; as the fluctuating terminology of Websites or Web-based services having dedicated lists of users and formed principally for the tenacity of permitting them to construct and share information (Eluwole *et al.*, 2014:70; Mare, 2013).

Warschauer *et al.*, (2002) proclaim that devotees of Internet technology in the world perpetually broadcast its welfares, the dawn of the Internet has been confronted with enormous denunciations. Numerous organisations, government, and religious bodies keep increasing innovations to support the resourceful and appropriate usage of the Internet. Nevertheless, some of these concerted efforts are prosperous at attaining their objectives (Eluwole *et al.*, 2014:70).

According to Eluwole *et al.* (2014:70), as much as technological novelties make myriad of people happy in the world, the user should neither undervalue nor abandon the bearings and encounters linked with them. The transcribed press reports and articles uninterruptedly resonate the unceasing progress of the Internet and social media in developing countries (Heugh, 1999).

Notwithstanding the different positive and negative considerations that the recent Internet media have been exposed to, pundits still orate that social networking and the Internet will not only incorporate the region into a solid community and assist to expand its education and cultural propensities. Moreover, social media and Internet-working theory in relation to the inconsistencies and resemblances in peoples' views concerning them request suitable attention (Baragwanath, 2016).

According to Roycroft and Anantho (2003:66), it is imperative to probe the manner in which technological development controls youth in South Africa; more especially in emerging states that actually have small amount of renowned information concerning the influence of social media and Internet publicity in different age groups from children to youths and adults (Lasame, 2014:336; and Eluwole *et al.*, 2014:70). In this case, the research embarked on addressing the impact of social media (as internet based

applications) towards conserving African languages amongst youth because the latter use these platforms a lot.

### 2.2.2 The Relationship between the integrated network and Social Media

Social media are the second generation of Integrated Networks (Internet). According to Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson, and McKenzie (2008:338) “the second generation of Internet-based application Web 2.0, in which users control communication”. The Internet users are finding the online world accessible and stress-free to use, and they are exploding onto social media sites sharing an estimated 500 million photos and 144 thousand video clips each day. The top nine social media sites worldwide have a shared 3.2 billion users who spend an average of 3.2 hours daily on these sites (Ellison & Boyd, 2013:1).

Apart from Google, which is the largest search engine in the world, there are some of the most visited websites, namely, *YouTube*, the friend site *Facebook*, and the 280 thought sharing site, *Twitter* making social media the Web’s favourite activity. The social media are the most popular Internet-based applications. In most cases, the majority of social media sites possess entertaining activities (unique memes). These memes are shared amongst social media users and some of them are popular across social media platforms (Shifman, 2013:362). Thus, these memes are more likely to go viral, this is an embodiment of outburst in the encouragement and communication of concepts (Sisulu, 2014:85).

*YouTube* was affected with ‘Harlem Shake’ phenomenon and in a short space of time a group of students uploading a video of themselves dancing oddly in a room, there was 12 000 copy-cat video typically following the same basic structure of a masked man dancing alone. In the recent past, *Facebook* and *Twitter* have been the hub of the same light-hearted trends and scientific issues (Gastrow, 2015:704). On a daily basis, the users of popular social media visit the Internet in order to access memorable laughing moments. On the other hand, social media have facilitated the storm of Arab Spring uprising in 2010, many people took part by actively interacting on *Twitter* and *Facebook* (Wolfseld, Segev & Sheafer, 2013:117; and Brym, Godbout, Hoffbauer & Menard, 2014:266). Unlike the manner in which Americans and French revolutions of

1700 used newspapers to interact about the political development (Sisulu, 2014:86). Social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* are Internet-based platforms. This literature illustrates that there are strong links between the Internet and social media. However, in the interest of this study, the issue is the impact of Internet-based applications on African languages. This study, therefore, addresses what the previous scholars, such as Few (2008); Shifman (2013); Thackeray *et al.*, (2008); and Ellison and Boyd (2013), did not cover in their studies. The grey area is the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst youth.

The following section deals with the history of social media to demystify this new media phenomenon.

### **2.3 HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The social media industry started in 1995. Primarily, social media focused on keeping friends and school mates in touch by consolidating their social ties. The *classmates.com* was the first social networking site that gave users a platform for the purpose of dating and friendship. Subsequently, that saw the emergence of more social networking sites that tried to emulate the existing ones (Boyd & Ellison, 2008:214). Most recently, social media put more emphasis on networking function. These social networking sites afford the users sufficient space for presentation and networking with friends (Leornadi *et al.*, 2013:4).

Although social networking sites can seem to be alike, most of them are, in fact, not the same regarding their aim and varieties of users they entice whereas *MySpace* connects users through the “My Space” profile to friends, particularly music artists, *YouTube* links people through video (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Other social networking sites (SNS) are oriented towards professional contacts (*LinkedIn*, *Xing*), photo sharing (*Flickr*, *Badoo*), exclusive communities (a Small World), activism (*Care2*) and health (*Within3*). The purpose of *Friendster* was to allow users to connect with friends both present and past. This new innovation enabled the youth to socialise amongst themselves. There are those who saw this social network sites as an appropriate platform for communicating with family and to start relationships (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; and Cachia, 2008:4).

Even though *MySpace* was initially established as a socialising platform, it gained momentum as a music sharing site. Nevertheless, this social networking site (viz., *MySpace*) was more popular with teenagers who took advantage of it by sharing pictures and other related content with friends (Perrin, 2015). As time went on, *MySpace* revised its approach in an effort to meet the demands of the users, let alone to attract a complete new audience. The application allows users to upload mp3, something which yielded positive outcome. For quite some time, *MySpace* was the only social networking site that gave users consent to share music with fellow users on the platform with restrictions for down loading (Cachia, 2008).

There are key attributes of social networking sites (social media) as outlined by Chachia (2008:3):

a) Presentation of oneself

The basic level of entry in most SNS is the setting up of a 'profile': a personalised page developed by the use in which he/she presents him/herself to peers, through text, photos, music and videos amongst other functionalities. SNS allows users to mobilise and organise their social contacts and profiles in the way they want other members to see them.

b) Externalisation of data

Most SNS allow their members to view the networks of their contacts and also in many cases, to traverse them. The externalisation of networks is possibly one of the first times online users have been able to view their own online social networks and share them with friends and the general public. Some SNS also support applications that allow users to describe the relationship between themselves and other members.

c) New ways for community formation

Though nations of virtual communities have existed since the beginning of online applications, SNS support new ways for people to connect between themselves. Users of these sites may choose to communicate through various digital objects, such as tags and in-built applications within the SNS, such as

the 'visual shelf' application on *Facebook*. Users may join a community of book readers, connecting through books they have liked.

d) Bottom-up activities

Social networking sites provide the ideal platforms through which users with similar values and interests can come together to collaborate effectively and cheaply. For instance, doctors can share and double check rare medical cases on health SNS such as *Within3*.

e) Ease of use

A major attribute of SNS popularity is their simplicity. Anyone with basic Internet skills can create and manage an online SNS presence. Prior to SNS, a user gained online presence by having a personal homepage. The drawbacks were that these homepages are not easy to create and develop, and hosting of the site often incur costs. In contrast, SNS are free of charge and open for anyone to join. Most of them seek registration while others limit membership through an invitation from members who are already members of the site.

f) Reorganisation interest geography

Social networking sites have new points of entry to the Internet: people's personal worlds. Until recently, people spoke of the Internet in metaphors of places (cities, address, and homepages). SNS have shifted such location-based metaphors to personal ones (profiles, blogs, my picture, *MySpace* etc.).

### *Historical development of Social Media*

According to Baruah (2012:3); Mushwana and Bezhuidenhout (2014:63), in most instances, people consider *Facebook* and *Twitter* as the core of social media. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is much broader than that. In the past, people used to rely on both audio and visual to send messages over long distances. The aspects such as smoke signals and beacon fires were the signposts to symbolise day and night in Egypt, China, and Greece. Many people from different cultural backgrounds depended on drums for extending human voice for communication purposes. The use



of horse riders and horse-drawn wagon to send messages was a sign of social media that mushroomed in 550 Before Christ (BC). This form of conveying messages across distance and time was popular in Iran.

The mail that was delivered through horse riders contained government information. The information was delivered in different places. “The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century were a breakthrough period where devices like the Telegraph (1792), telephone and radio (1891) ushered in a new era of the sending and receiving a message over long distances” (Baruah, 2012:3). There was a rapid growth of a number of express messages. The new methods of telegram and letter transportation were launched because of the rapid development of express messages that existed between business, financial, legal offices and banks in big cities. The introduction advanced means of communication such as telephone and radio transformed the mass communication fraternity (Baruah, 2012:4).

The growth and development of the Internet was the main highlight of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Internet for the first time allowed people to exchange messages through the web. The significant sites for interaction and sharing were, namely, *Email*, *ARPANET*, *USENET*, *BBS* (Bulletin Board System), *IRC* (Internet Relay Chat), *Listetsern*, *Blogger*, *Six Degrees*, *LiveJournal* and *Napster* (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

The dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was greeted by the massive growth of social media, namely, *Friendster*, *Fotolog*, *Photobucket*, *Flickr*, *Orkut*, *Facebook*, *Ning*, *Digg*, *Twitter*, *Netlog*, *WhatsApp*, *YouTube* etc. The history of social media is quite deep, as it is encapsulated by Telegraph including the Internet relay chat. Most importantly, social media is still growing. Baragwanath (2016) postulates that in recent times, social media are the pillars of the cyberspace or online landscape. Due to the fact that social network and microblogging sites are regularly transformed and enhanced. Thus, social media will evolve with time (Strandberg, 2013).

### 2.3.1 The Services of Social Media Platforms

According to Boyd and Ellison (2008) and Baruah (2012:4), social media offered its users a whole range of aspects that they can enjoy online. The social media have infiltrated the educational fraternity as a teaching and learning tool. Due to social media, the mass communication process has been transformed. The email had a huge impact on the manner in which people communicate. The new trend of communication is dominated by short messages and the frequency of communication is high. However, people do not have enough time to respond to all messages due to the high level of interaction. Instant messaging has established a new culture of communication because the messages are not long while the nature of the interaction is conversational.

The microblogging site called *Twitter* had changed short messaging service from “person to person” to news feed channels, which enable people to connect whenever they want to post the message affectionately known as “tweet” in this platform (*Twitter*, 2018). Online communication gives people sufficient time and space to keep in touch with the latest developments. *Twitter* provides its users with updates about prominent people and topical issues at that particular time (Gastrow, 2015). “This phenomenon has been referred as social proprioception by Clive Thompson, named after the physical quality of proprioception that tells a creature where its extremities are by the reception of stimuli produced within the organisation” (Baruah, 2012:4). The Internet has created a platform for communication and social interaction. *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* are a new platforms for social interaction, many people in the world use these sites to connect with the outside world. Some people use social media as the hub of entertainment. They provide users opportunities to communicate with their colleagues. Social media facilitate continuous relationship for people who met once but wish to keep in touch with one another, such as friends or colleagues who meet at workshop or conference (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

On the other hand, *YouTube* and *Flickr* are more popular with users who wish to share content uploaded by other user’s content ranging from music, comedy, politics tutorials etc., (Stranberg, 2013:1339). They also accommodate personal preferences to upload their craft without any limitations, popular television and music companies use

*YouTube* to share their shows such as movies, dramas, and music videos to accommodate the audience of popular culture (Mare, 2013:83).

The manner in which people's communication is based on shared interest and that is not limited to verbal commentary but products emanating from copied works base on widespread fragments. The reason users prefer the nature of this content is that they are more likely to have intensive and interesting conversations. To a larger extent, it allows people to revisit the platform in order to follow further comments from their fellow users and the attention given to one's activities is determined by the connections that exist with other people (Baruah, 2012:5).

According to Effing, van Hillergersberg and Huibers (2012:28); Perrin (2015), social media are the social networking sites, blogs, microblogging sites that are dependent upon Integrated Networks to capacitate technological innovations for the purposes of interaction, generation, and sharing of content amongst others. In other words, social media are the fundamentals of web 2.0, which is the extension of web 1.0 for the Internet. Furthermore, social media are not technologically aloof because they are the products of web 2.0.

Web 2.0 is a term that was way in which software developers and end user started to utilise the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform whereby content and application are no longer created and published individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participation and collaborative fashion.

(Effing *et al.*, 2012:28; and Hille & Bakker, 2014)

Consequently, social media as a modern phenomenon is not completely new as far as technology is concerned. The founder of the World Wide Web (WWW) envisaged the social consumption of his product from the beginning of its existence (Haenschen, 2016). Generally, the web was meant for social interaction as part of mass communication systems. It was established to aid and enhance the manner in which people work. Socialisation is the cornerstone of the web. The main concept that elucidated the dissimilarities between old web and social is participation, even though

the fundamental mechanism for communication were part of the advent World Wide Web (Effing *et al.*, 2012:28).

Emanating from this discussion is the reality that social media are more dominant in modern communication systems. Accordingly, they are likely to have a huge impact (both positive and negative) towards conserving African languages.

### 2.3.2 The Difference between Social Media and Social Networks

According to Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, and Seymour (2011:5), it is not easy to define social media because this phenomenon is too complicated. However, social media provide users with dual functionality that enable people to communicate or interact with one another. Does that mean that social media is an instrument of communication, just like any other social network? Do any differences exist between these two concepts?

“Social media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social networking is a tool and a utility for connecting with others” (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:5). The dissimilarities are not restricted to semantics but in the facets and role placed in the sites by their generators, which decide the manner in which they are utilised. Social media are meant to disseminate or share information with the large audience, in contrast, social networking is a process whereby people come together with common interest and consolidate their relationship through society (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; and Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:5).

Additionally, the communication style between the two is different. Certainly, it is not a location but a programme, which may also mean a communication channel to develop a relationship by facilitating the interactions because it allows two-way communication (Huls, 2012)? The other difference between social media and social network is the return on investment (ROI). It is easy to determine ROI on social networks but the same cannot be stated about social media (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:5).

Moreover, timely feedbacks are not the same between the social network and social media. With social media, it is difficult and time-consuming to engage an individual in a conversation, whereas social networks' conversations are simply between the user and his/her friend. Notwithstanding, the fact that social network permits users to write blogs or any form of activity, social media restrict users from manipulating comments (Hille & Bakker, 2014; and Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011:6).

### 2.3.2 What is Social Networking Site?

Boyd and Ellison (2007:11) regard:

Social network sites as Web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bound system, articulate a list of users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The landscape of the connection varies from site to site. In most cases, the term “social network site” is used to define this subject, and the term “social networking site” is widely used in public discussions, subsequently, both terms are equally used (Murzintcev & Cheng, 2017).

The social network offers a good platform for people who want to articulate and publish their social connections. To a large extent, the users of social networking sites are primarily not searching for new people, in some instances, they are interacting with people who are part of the existing network (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:2). To accentuate that social network as a cornerstone of structuring this site, they are popularly known as “social network sites”. The foundation of these social networking sites is conspicuous profiles that show a list of friends who are the fellow users of the sites. The profiles allow a person to represent himself/herself on an online page.

In the process of creating an SNS, a person is asked to complete a form containing questions. As a result, a profile is created through using answers to these questions, they normally encapsulate the age, location, interests and an “about me” segment (Krombholz *et al.*, 2012:184). Normally, the sites propose that users upload a profile picture. In some sites, the users have the latitude to personalise their profiles by adding multimedia content based on their personal preferences. *Facebook* provides users

with an option to add a modules application that decorates the outlook of the profile (Leornadi *et al.*, 2013:4).

The visibility of a profile is dependent upon user direction and is likely to be different from the rest. *Friendster* and *Tribe.net* allow everyone to view the profile the users even if the viewer does not own an account. The users of *MySpace* have the authority to decide whether their profiles are for public consumption or friends only. *Facebook* has taken a different pattern because people who are in the same network are able to go through each other's profiles unless the owner of the profile restricts them from accessing this option. There are specific ways that SNS distinct themselves from each other. The two fundamental ways are, namely, structural variation around visibility and access (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:2).

The users are instructed to identify others within the site in most cases the users would prefer people that they possess some form of a relationship with (Kateb & Kalita, 2015). The nature of relationships varies from site to site, other SNSs use popular jargons including "friends", "contacts" and "fans". Generally, SNS propose a two way for these relationships including friendships. The one-way links are known as "fans" or "followers". Nevertheless, some sites refer to them as friends too. In addition, there is some sort of confusion concerning the term "friends", since the manner in which people connect does not determine friendships and people connect for different reasons (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

According to Multisilta and Milrad (2009), the conspicuous networks of people are the pivotal component on social networking sites. The popular friend list is cross-linked, which therefore means users can access other friends by clicking on the friend's list. The list of friends is accessible to any person as long as they are permitted to view the profile. Nonetheless, there is a level of expectations concerning this option (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:2). Social networking sites have options that enable the users to send direct messages to their friends, both overtly and covertly. The feature that opens up for this option is called "comment", even though different terms are used by other sites for this feature.

Moreover, SNS has a covert messaging option that operates like webmail. The private message and comments are dominant in the activities of various SNS. Social networks sites basically give users an Internet platform for the purposes of communication at a social level amongst people with common interests across distance and time. They facilitate ways to communicate through the Internet, emails and in the modern-day world people use mobile smartphones (Huls, 2012:2).

*MySpace* is one of the well-known social networking sites it started in 2003. The other popular site is *LinkedIn* which was launched in 2003. Apart from *MySpace* and *LinkedIn*, *Facebook* is also one of the most popular social networking sites (Baragwanath, 2016). *Facebook* is growing very fast. *Twitter* is well renowned despite the fact that its key features single it out as a microblogging site. The social networking sites offer users an online platform to generate profiles or personal homepages in an effort to initiate a social network. The profiles that social network users create are in the form of a personalised webpage that consists of personal interest, place of birth, current location, marital status and kind of things preferred (Baruah, 2012:4).

Howard and Park (2013:359) posit that the users have the latitude to customise their profiles according to their personal preferences, for example, video clips, music files or photos displayed on their page. Various social networking sites start differently. *Cyword* started as a Korean discussion phenomenon, *Skyrock* was designed as a French blogging service before it was refashioned as SNS. QQ was initially an instant messaging services in China. While *LunaStorm* began as a community site. There are those SNS, that specialise in photo and video sharing options whereas some are centred on blogging and instant messaging capabilities.

Social networking sites such as *Facebook*, *MySpace* and *Cyword* are mobile orientated sites (Baruah, 2012). Most of the SNSs attempt to focus on a specific audience based on geographical location or linguistic groups. However, this approach does not decide on the constituency of the site. There are those SNSs that were established to accommodate specific linguistic group but only to attract a wide range of groups. For example, although *Orkut* was meant for English users in the US quite interestingly it lured Portuguese speaking audience from Brazil. At times, there are

sites that are created to suit a specific group based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation (Baruah, 2012).

Social networking sites such as *Dogster* for dogs and *Caster* for cats for people who own these pests. Boyd and Ellison (2007:3) hold that, despite the fact that SNSs were meant to be easily accessible by everyone, most of them lure people with similar interests. It is, however, not common to find people using SNS to separate themselves by education level, nationality level, ages, or other pertinent aspects that mainly segregate society. Nonetheless, that was not the main objective of the developers. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007:3), in 1997, the first prominent social network site was established in an effort to allow people to create personal profiles and lists of friends.

In 1998, *SixDegrees.com* enabled its users to search for their friends. The features of this social network were in existence before its inception because the profiles were part of popular dating sites and many other sites. Sites such as *AIM* and *CIP* completed list of the friends even though those friends were noticed by other users. In contrast, *Classmate.com* allowed users to join their school or college and search for their fellow users. However, the users of this site were not allowed to create profiles let alone friends. The first site to integrate these facets was *SixDegrees.com* (Boyd & Ellison 2007:3).

*SixDegrees* gained popularity as socialisation platform whereon people could keep in touch with one another through sending and receiving messages. Although *SixDegrees* attracted a plethora of users it did not sustain its business, subsequently closed in 2001. The founders or pioneers of this social network site posit that their product was ahead of its time (Boyd & Ellison 2007). Despite the fact that people were excessively using the Internet, they did not have a sufficient number of friends who were online. The initial users lamented that interaction was not there because people were not interested in meeting strangers. Between 1997 and 2001, some social network sites started complementing profiles and openly articulated friends. Three social network sites, namely, *Asian Avenue*, *Black Planet* and *Migent* allowed people



to start a personal, professional and dating profiles without requesting consent from anyone (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:3).

LiveJournal followed suit in 1999, by launching a direct network on the pages of the users. The pioneer of this site postulates that the fashioning users post instant messaging buddy lists on *LiveJournal* that allowed users to select friends to keep in touch with their journals and deal with the settings for privacy. *Cyword* was established in 1999 and made use of social network features in 2001 that was independent of other sites. *Cyword* is a virtual world site from Korea. In 2001, a Swedish social network site revised its features to include features such as friends' list guest books and diary (Boyd & Ellison, 2007:4).

In the context of this study, the concept 'social media' is used to refer to all selected sites, which are, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Despite the fact that social media are the umbrella concept for Web 2.0 applications, such as social networking site, the microblogging site, and instant messaging applications, they are known as social media. Thus, there are categories that the selected sites fall under, e.g., *Facebook* is a social networking site, *Twitter* is a microblogging site and *WhatsApp* is an instant messaging application. Nevertheless, these sites overlap to other categories, for example, *Facebook* operationally has both instant messaging and blogging features.

## **2.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER THREE**

This chapter covered the overview of new media with more emphasis on the historical development of the Internet and the background of social media. The discussion about social media addressed the origins of social media including the difference between social media and social networks.

The subsequent chapter deals with language in the South African context.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LANGUAGE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the significant attributes of language in the South African context. The main pillars of the study namely; African languages and relevant policies are discussed to highlight the importance of the selected African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). The background of these languages is also narrated in this chapter.

The following section focuses on language in South Africa.

#### **3.2 LANGUAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Language can exist as a mirror of culture, traceable as a genre in history and cutting across several of dialect, age, sex, gender, and prestige. In addition, language can also function as a vehicle of culture, informing and transmitting traditions and education (Fourie, 1996); (Salawu, 2004). According to Salawu (2004), language is not used only in inter-personal communication but also in the transmission of mass-mediated messages. Language is therefore seen as an integral aspect of the media. The gradual decline of African languages as a medium of instruction in the South African media landscape and the low status these indigenous languages hold is a direct result of the language policies that promoted English and Afrikaans during the apartheid era.

Fourie (1996:91) explicates that:

Language is the most highly developed and frequently used means of communication. As language is as old as human society, people throughout history have attempted to explain how language communication means. The ancient theories of language assumed that language was given to people through divine intervention and that the essence of language was its power to name things.

Prah (2006:3) states that if culture is the main determinant of people's attitudes, tastes and more, language is the cornerstone of culture. It is, therefore, in a language that culture is transmitted, interpreted and configured. Language is also a register of

culture. Historically, the trajectory of a culture can be read in the language and the evolution of its lexicals and morphology. Language is one of the distinctive features that distinguish a human being from animals. Human beings are in effect talkative animals. In this respect, one can also extend the logic of the argument to say that culture is the key distinguishing feature between human beings and the rest of the animal world. Therefore, human beings' ability to create culture marks them off from other animals. Culture raises people above the rest of nature, beyond instinct, and relies on nature for their enlightenment because language is the most important means of human intercourse. It is therefore important to conserve African languages to preserve African culture and values.

The Department of Education, Ministerial Committee (2004), reported that the African continent has over 2 035 indigenous African languages and this total represents nearly one-third of the world's languages. The languages are classified into four major groups: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, and Khoisan. The complex spectrum of the indigenous languages of South Africa is a family of languages comprising an estimated 1 436 languages, which fall in the Niger-Congo group (Kubayi & Madadzhe, 2015:261). African languages, therefore reflect a rich tapestry of cultures that, by definition, particularly in contemporary Africa, strongly suggests that intercultural communication should be one of the central pillars of the development policy in the African Union (Education Ministerial Committee, 2004:7). Since people have rights to their languages, the research interrogates the relevance of this stance based on the impact of social media in conserving African languages.

Beyond the issues of rights, it is important to note that language and literacy are crucial for societal development. A society develops into modernity when its citizens are literate in the languages of the masses. In other words, it is not possible to reach modernity if the languages of literacy and education are only within the intellectual ambit of small minorities. Historically, the leap towards expanded knowledge production and reproduction in societies has only been possible when the languages of societal majorities have been centrally placed (Prah, 2006:4).

People do not see much value in African languages. Authorities seem to be reluctant to ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provisions, assume their rightful role as official communication medium in public affairs, administrative and media domains. No one seems to take African languages seriously. They seem to have nothing to offer except in everyday communication between members of families and informal conversation with friends and colleagues (Van Der Rheede, 2011:3).

According to Nzotta (1979), most developing countries, more especially in Africa, were once under colonial rule for considerable periods. To this end, the colonised countries were dominated not only politically but also socially, economically and culturally by the colonisers (Bamgbose, 2011). One of the most apparent marks of colonialism is the adoption of the languages of the colonising countries as the official and business languages of their respective colonies.

Consequently, most of the African languages were marginalised. Heugh (1999:306), “the role of superimposed international languages has been overestimated in their capacity to serve the interests of the majority on the continent as useful vehicles for communication. These languages serve only the interests of ruling elites”. However, it is important to note that commercial radio stations in the indigenous languages also boast with some of the biggest listenership. *Ukhozi FM* listenership averages 6.6 million and *Umhlobo Wenene FM* averages 4.7 million listeners. These figures indicate that the African languages are important economic drivers and that they provide many opportunities to expand the economic value of such languages (Van Der Rhee, 2004).

It suffices to point out that the languages in pre-colonial Africa were successful modes of communication for meeting the range of societal needs. As the medium of socialisation, African languages coped more than adequately with facilitating communication about all relevant topics, not only internally within integral societies but also across the boundaries internal and external to the respective language communities (Education Ministerial Committee, 2003:7).

Every human society has a language through which its members communicate. In most developing countries, however, communication in African languages has been adversely affected due to colonialism. This fact of history has actually affected the sensibility of the people of the developing countries (Salawu, 2004:12). In recent times, social media have developed into transmitters of mass media messages.

In South Africa's new 1994 Bill of Rights, it is stated that every citizen has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights (*The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1996*). Furthermore, the point is made that; an individual belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language and to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society (Prah, 2006:11).

Prah (2006:12) further expounds that in the new constitution, the nine indigenous African languages that had previously enjoyed official status in the Bantustans were granted formal equality with Afrikaans and English at the national level. Section 6 of *The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, (1996)*, entails that the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu. Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the African languages, the speakers must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages. The usage of modern communication channels by the speakers of the previously marginalised indigenous African languages to promote them is imperative. Thus, social media as the modern communication channels can play an integral role towards conserving and advancing the previously marginalised African languages.

### 3.2.1 The Status of African Languages

According to Bamgbose (2011:2); Nzotta (1979), it is known that colonial powers imposed their respective languages in each territory they governed as the language of administration, commerce, and education. Objectives differ from one colonial power to another, ranging from assimilation into the culture of the occupying power, to selective cultivation of an elite that can relate to the masses in their own culture. In spite of the superficial differences, the outcome is the same as far as language is concerned: the language of the colonial power was dominant and African languages took a secondary position in status and domains of use (Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014).

The elites that emerged from the colonial educational system came to be enamoured of the imported languages even to the detriment of their African languages. Although they were a minority, they wielded a lot of power based on the monopoly of the control of the language of colonial occupation. Even after independence, such languages remained official languages in most countries and any proposal to empower the majority of the population by raising the status of African languages and extending the domains in which they are used failed because of elite closure (Bamgbose, 2011:2).

Bamgbose (2011) pronounces that there is a monopoly of the language of power by the elites and resistance on their part to extend this jealously guarded power to other groups; which bred an “inheritance situation”, i.e., how the policies and practices from the colonial period continue to determine post-colonial policies and practices. The net effect of the colonial legacy is that the dominance of imported languages that began in the colonial period has persisted till today. Proof of this is to be found in the statistics of official languages in Africa. Of the 53 countries, African languages are recognised as official languages in only 10 countries, Arabic in nine, and all the remaining 46 countries have imported languages as official languages as follows: French in 21 countries, English in 19, Portuguese in five (Mkhize & Ndimande, 2014). Additional evidence of the continued dominance of imported languages is the medium of education which remains substantially in these languages, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels.

Another aspect of the colonial legacy is the separation of some of them into arbitrary geographical divisions arising from the artificial borders created as a result of the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. Hitherto identical or related languages came to be divided and this has led to the incidence of cross-border languages of which Africa has a large number. The severity of the partition in some cases can be illustrated by the example of Cameroon, which shares as many as 70 cross-border languages with the neighbouring countries, one of which is Nigeria, with which it shares as many as 45 languages (Bamgbose, 2011:2). The argument is that there is a need to ensure that the previously marginalised African languages are constantly used in the public domain to conserve and promote them for posterity. Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga should be made popular by the speakers of these languages on social media. Social media are the ideal platforms to promote these languages because a myriad of youth spends most of their leisure time active on *Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*.

### 3.2.2 South African Language Policy on Development of African Languages

According to Ngubane (2003:3), “a person’s language is in ways a second skin; a natural possession of every human being, with people, use to express their hopes and ideas, articulate their thoughts and values, explore their experience and customs, and construct their society and the laws that govern it”. It is through language that people function as human beings in an ever-changing world. The right to use the official languages of their choice has therefore been recognised as their Bill of Rights, and the South African Constitution acknowledges that the languages of their own are a resource that should be harnessed (*The Constitution Republic of South Africa, 1996*).

The policy framework also takes cognisance of the fact that the value of languages is determined by their economic, social and political usage. When a language loses its value in these spheres the status of the language diminishes (Salawu, 2006). This policy framework also takes into account that people are faced with the challenge of globalisation and that their African languages should be part of the rapidly expanding technological environment. Hence, it intends to reaffirm the status and use of the African languages of South Africa (Ngubane, 2003:3).

It is known that South Africa is a multilingual nation. A conspicuous feature of multilingualism in South Africa is the fact that the African languages are spoken across provincial borders; shared by speech communities from various provinces. Currently, there is a vigorous awareness of the need to consolidate the efforts to develop the previously marginalised African languages and to promote multilingualism if South Africans are to be emancipated from over-reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages as the dominant languages, official languages of the state (National Language Policy Framework, 2003:5).

The Policy Framework further states that, after almost a decade of democratic dispensation, South Africa has now reached the cardinal point in its history. Many South Africans have to respond to their linguistic and cultural diversity and to the challenges of constitutional multilingualism, hence the introduction of this National Language Policy Framework. The promotion of multilingualism in South Africa requires efforts that do not discount the knowledge that exists in societies where indigenous official languages are important. This will, therefore, facilitate the use and active involvement of communities as participants in the process of language development (NLPF, 2003:11).

#### a) Historical context of National Language Policy

Since the first occupation of South Africa by the Dutch in 1652, through successive periods of British rule, the Union of South Africa, and subsequently the establishment of the Republic of South Africa and the apartheid regime, government language policy and the power elite failed to recognise South Africa's linguistic diversity. This situation was reversed only with the dawn of democracy in 1994 and the Constitutional provisions on official multilingualism. Consequently, in language inequality and the dominance of English and Afrikaans created an unequal relationship between languages and the indigenous African languages (NLPF, 2003:6).

Imperial and apartheid language policies, together with political and socio-economic policies, therefore gave rise to a hierarchy of languages, the inequality of which that reflected the structures of racial and class inequality that characterised South African society. These practices engendered the corollary of the African languages varieties



of the African people and of other marginalised groups, including the deaf and the blind enforcing negative stereotypes of the African languages, which are held not only by English and Afrikaans speakers, but even by many of the speakers of the African languages themselves (NLPF, 2003:6).

#### b) Legislative context of National Language Policy Framework

Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, provides the principal legal framework for multilingualism, the development of the official languages and the promotion of respect and tolerance for South Africa's linguistic diversity. It determines the language rights of citizens, which must be honoured through national language policies. The Constitution accentuates that all official languages must "enjoy parity of esteem" and be treated equitably, thereby enhancing the status and use of African languages, with the government taking "legislative and other measures" to regulate and monitor the use of disadvantaged African languages. Section 6(2) of the Constitution requires mechanisms to be put in place to develop these indigenous languages (NLPF, 200:7-8).

#### c) Limpopo Language Policy Framework

This study focuses on three African languages that are predominately spoken in the Limpopo Province; it is, therefore, pertinent to discuss the Limpopo language policy framework. The discussion of the language policy framework highlights the significance of effective use of social media towards conserving African languages in this province particularly, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda.

The Limpopo language policy framework strives towards equal treatment of all official languages spoken in the Province and that includes promoting previously disadvantaged indigenous languages. The policy, therefore, aimed at consolidating the targets of social solidarity and nation-building. It is stated in the language policy framework that it strives to create comfort in communicating with one another and effective usage of indigenous languages (LLPF, 2011:1).

In Limpopo, the forebears of this policy are the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, as the former MEC Joyce Mashamba points out that "Our diversity in culture is what

makes us unique. Let us strive to promote multilingualism and promote our respective mother tongues for posterity” (LLPF, 2011:1). This stance ignites the importance of every language to its constituencies.

The subsequent section focuses on the historical background of the three African languages.

### **3.3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE THREE AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga are the three selected African languages predominantly spoken in Limpopo Province in this study. The rationale behind these selected languages is based on the fact that they are marginalised on social media. It is, therefore, pertinent and significant to review the history of these African languages because the current status of these languages is influenced by their history. This review highlights the historical background of these languages and their technicalities. Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda are respectively reviewed.

#### **3.3.1 Historical Background of Sepedi**

The Kwintessential (2012) indicates that since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, Sepedi is one of the nine indigenous languages that enjoy official recognition in the first democratic constitution. Over nine percent of South Africa’s population speaks Sepedi and this language is the fourth largest language group. This language is predominantly spoken in Limpopo Province a province that situated at the north end of South Africa. There are a considerable number of Sepedi speakers in Gauteng and Mpumalanga Province.

Sepedi forms part of the “Southern Bantu” group of African languages, which in turn forms part of the larger Niger-Congo language family (Kubayi & Madadzhe, 2015:261). The central subgroup is further subdivided into geographical regions, each designated by a letter. The S-Group covers much of southern Africa and includes the two major dialect continua of South Africa: the Nguni and the Sotho-Tswana language groups. Sepedi forms part of the Sotho-Tswana language group and is therefore closely related to the other major languages in this group particularly, Setswana and Sesotho.

Linguists commonly drop the language prefix when referring to these languages (Kwintessential, 2012).

Sepedi is also commonly known as “Pedi.” This practice is, however, contested and in South Africa, the official use of the prefixes has increased during the post-apartheid period. In many official South African publications, the language is also commonly referred to as “Sesotho sa Leboa.” This literally means “Sepedi” – the name by which it was commonly known in earlier years (Kwintessential, 2012).

As a political unit, the term “Pedi” refers to the people living within the area that was ruled by the Maroteng dynasty during the 18th and 19th century. This period nevertheless saw many fluctuations in the boundaries of this dominion, and following this, the processes of relocation and labour migration scattered its former subjects widely during the 20th century (Kwintessential, 2012).

According to the Kwintessential (2012), suffixes and prefixes are used to modify meaning in sentence construction in this indigenous language. The indigenous languages in South Africa are tonal and Sepedi is not an exception because the sentence structure tends to be governed by the noun. There are six Sepedi dialects, namely, (Kopa) Ndebele Sotho, (Pedi, Tau, Kone), (Tlokwa, Hananwa, Matlala, Moletši, Mamabolo), (Lobedu, Phalaborwa, Kgaga, Dzwabo) Eastern (Pai), and East Central (Pulana, Kutswe). Typical examples of phrases that are used on a daily basis in the language include the following: Thobela (hello); O kae? (How are you?); *Ke gona* (I am fine).

It is not easy to develop this indigenous language mainly because the majority of its speakers are found in a largely rural and relatively poor region. On the other hand, migration to urban areas has grown and Sepedi speaking people living in urban areas are forced to learn other languages. It is, therefore, a fact that Sepedi remains a predominantly spoken language. It is represented on television channels and radio stations; there are only three existing newspapers in the language (Kwintessential, 2012). In the interest of this study, the researcher investigated the impact of social media towards conserving Sepedi amongst youth. The argument is, therefore, centred

on the usage of Sepedi on social media platforms, namely *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. The constant use of Sepedi on social media would ensure that this language is preserved and promoted because the platforms are used by many people. Although English is the popular language amongst youth on social media, there is a decent number of them (youth) who use Sepedi on social media, particularly on *WhatsApp*. The majority of the youth use Sepedi along with English through code-switching. The instant messaging application (*WhatsApp*) allows the users to text in Sepedi because they are familiar with their audience and their preferred language on this platform. Thus, social media have the capacity to play a positive role towards conserving African languages.

### 3.3.2 Historical Background of Xitsonga

According to the Kwintessential (2012), Xitsonga is an indigenous language that is predominantly spoken in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Province, particularly in places such as Giyani, Bushbuckridge, Phalaborwa, Tzaneen, and Malamulele. This language is one of the nine official indigenous languages in the constitution among eleven official languages in South Africa. It also forms part of the “Southern Bantu” group of African languages, that belongs to the larger part of the larger Niger-Congo language family (Kubayi & Madadzhe, 2015:261).

Geographical regions are used to divide central subgroup into further subdivisions by a certain unique letter. Most of the southern African languages are known as S-Group and it includes the five major dialect continua of southern Africa: the Nguni languages; the Sotho-Tswana languages; the Chopi languages; the Shona languages; the Tswa-Ronga languages and the Venda languages. This language is part of the Tswa-Ronga language group; as a result, it has strong links to the other Mozambican languages in this language group (Kwintessential, 2012).

This language has an Nguni influence even though it was isolated from other indigenous languages during apartheid South Africa. The language prefix is dropped by language experts; as a result, this language is called Tsonga instead of Xitsonga. However, there was a debate pertaining to the omission of the prefixes, but since the dawn of democracy, the official use of prefixes has increased. The other names used

for this language are, namely, Shitsonga, Thonga, Tonga, Shangana and Shangaan (Kwintessential, 2012).

This language is used for administration purposes in the Limpopo Province. Like other indigenous languages, Xitsonga speakers are substantially located in remote rural areas. The development of this language is therefore compromised and the speakers are left with no choice but to migrate to bigger cities where they are propelled to learn other predominant languages (Kwintessential, 2012). The Kwintessential (2012) further outlines that pertaining to education this language is only taught as a subject in the primary and high schools respectively. The University of Limpopo offers this language as a course from undergraduate to postgraduate studies. However, this language is not used as a medium of instruction at all the levels of education but there are few primary schools that use Xitsonga as a medium of instruction from Grade 1 to Grade 3.

Despite the fact that this language is a medium of instruction for its speakers in Limpopo's Provincial government's communication purposes, it is also represented on South African television channels and radio stations. Munghana Lonene FM is an SABC radio station that broadcast in this language 24/7. There are migrants speakers of this language from Mozambique due to the geographical proximity of the South African Tsonga territory (Kwintessential, 2012). In the context of this research, the investigation was based on the impact of social media towards conserving Xitsonga amongst youth. The constant use of Xitsonga on social media would ideally help towards conserving and promoting this previously marginalised language. Additionally, the usage of Xitsonga by youth on social media would promote it because there is a myriad of people who are active on these platforms.

However, the youth in this study use Xitsonga along with English on their social media activities. Code-switching necessitates the use of both Xitsonga and English on youth's social media conversations. The detrimental factor is that Xitsonga is not part of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp's* language options. This, therefore, means that this language does not feature prominently on social media. Nevertheless, in terms of language preference, the speakers of Xitsonga use it a lot on *WhatsApp*. Similar to

the argument raised on Sepedi, the users of *WhatsApp* find it easy to use African languages on this instant messaging application because they know their target audience. Thus, social media have the capacity and potential to conserve and promote Xitsonga due to their (social media) popularity amongst youth.

### 3.3.3 Historical Background of Tshivenda

Kwintessential (2012) alludes to the fact that Tshivenda is a language that is predominantly spoken in Limpopo Province, specifically in places such as, Venda, Makhado, Nzhelele, Musina etc. This language is part of the Southern Bantu group African languages, which originates from the larger Niger-Congo language family (Kubayi & Madadzhe, 2015:261). Southern Africa is known as the S-group, there are five dialect continua, namely, the Nguni languages, the Sotho-Tswana languages, the Chopi languages, the Shona languages, the Tswa-Ronga languages and the Venda languages. This language is not directly related to any other Southern African language; as a result, Tshivenda is aloof. However, the speakers of Tshivenda are culturally related to Shona speakers than any other major group.

This practice is, however, contested and in South Africa the official use of the prefixes has increased during the post-apartheid period. The language is also commonly referred to as “Chivenda.”Venda speakers first settled in the Soutpansberg Mountains region. The ruins of their first capital, Dzata's Place, can still be found there. This region is situated in the northernmost reaches of South Africa, just south of Zimbabwe.

(Kwintessential, 2012).

The European missionaries were the first to codify this language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1972, members of the Berlin Missionary Society established the written standard of this language. The Tshipani dialect was the foundation of the standardised language. The first literary works produced were translations of the bible and school readers. In 1954, *Elelwani* was the first modern literary work by T.N. Maumela. The dictionaries, grammar manuals, works on traditional literature, essays, short stories, novels, drama, and poetry were the first literature produced in this language (Kwintessential, 2012).

The apartheid government discrete the language boards and each indigenous language had its own board. The boards were tasked with the responsibility of

developing the indigenous languages. The Venda Language Board was out to standardise the grammar of the language and they also brought up the proper standard for printing and teaching. Nonetheless, the language board was also controlling the issues of publishing. Any form of literature that was politically anti-government was excluded (Kwintessential, 2012).

The Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology holds the responsibility of language policy post 1994. The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established and tasked with the responsibility for language planning. PanSALB is also accountable for facilitating the development of the language. The Tshivenda Lexicography Unit has therefore been put in place and is responsible for developing terminology in the language. It is difficult for this language to be developed in the education system, in other words, the general development of this language is limited. Moreover, the factor that hinders the development of this language is the fact that the majority of its speakers are found in rural areas. The younger generation of Tshivenda speakers is propelled to move to urban areas where they are forced to learn other predominant languages, specifically English (Kwintessential, 2012).

The oral tradition remains stable in the rural areas and has to apply strong influence from prolific writers such as T.N. Maumela, E.S. Madima, T.N. Makuya. The written work is still produced for schools and the culture of reading among Tshivenda speakers is considerably low. The language is taught as a subject at all levels but it is only used as a medium of instruction in certain schools from Grade 1 to Grade 3. The University of Limpopo offers Tshivenda as a module from undergraduate to postgraduate (Kwintessential, 2012). The use of Tshivenda on social media is not prominent but it is used a lot on *WhatsApp*. Nevertheless, Tshivenda is not part of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp's* language options. Ideally, the constant and frequent use of Tshivenda could conserve and promote this language for future generations. Practically, the speakers of this language prefer to use it along with English through code-switching. It is therefore clear that there is minimum use of Tshivenda on *Facebook* and *Twitter* because the users (youth) want their messages to have a large audience across ethnic groups and boundaries.

Manifesting from the historical background discussed in this chapter, there is a conspicuous challenge faced by the African languages in general. As a result, this matter escalated to policy status mediated by National and Provincial Language Policy Frameworks. The literature reviewed postulate that it is not easy to develop the African languages. Accordingly, the African languages have been marginalised by the colonial powers. Since these languages are not rapidly developing to suit contemporary requirements due to the excessive use of technology.

Nevertheless, technology gives the speakers of the previously marginalised African languages an adequate platform to conserve and develop them. Consequently, this study highlighted a grey area concerning the impact of social media (modern technology) towards conserving African languages. The study highlights the challenges and opportunities regarding the use of African languages on social media. To some extent, the findings will divulge the attitude of the speakers (youth) towards their African languages when communicating on social media.

### **3.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER FOUR**

This chapter gave a broad picture of some of the significant attributes of this study. To anchor the main subject of this study which is, namely, African languages, this was given in-depth attention in order to bring the argument closer to language as a concept and the three specified African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The relevant language policies were reviewed pertaining to the development of the previously marginalised African languages. The history and origins of these languages were also discussed in this chapter.

The next chapter focuses on African languages, culture, social media and youth.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **AFRICAN LANGUAGES, CULTURE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to address the context of African languages, culture, social media and youth. The discussion of these concepts would primarily review the relevant knowledge, ideas, and arguments that have been written on this subject matter, and secondarily to contextualise the argument presented.

The next section summarises the African languages and culture.

#### **4.2 THE AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURE**

According to Mesthrine (2002:23); (Lodhi, 1993), an African language is a language that is native to a region and spoken by indigenous people but has been reduced to the status of a minority language. Language and cultural rights are therefore central to all considerations of human rights in the contemporary world (Blommaert, 2008). The UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity affirms that culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs (Prah, 2006).

Moreover, it suggests that culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy. The above understandings also affirm respect for the diversity culture, tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding. These are among the best guarantees of international peace and security. They indicate that people should aspire towards great solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, awareness of the unity of humankind and of the development of intercultural exchanges (Prah, 2006:4).

#### 4.2.1 The Relationship between Culture and Language

The relationship between culture and language is much evident. According to Mahadi and Jafari (2012:231), culture is ordinary. Culture involves values, norms, institutions, and artefacts within a defined group that is passed from generation to generation. Furthermore, the word culture means a whole way of life. If one critically relates to Mahadi and Jafari's (2012) definition, then culture is everything and anything about society. Therefore, it would imply that the language of a particular society partly constitutes what is defined as culture. Language is how human beings communicate as a collective, the world, and society. It is evident that culture and language are inseparable. People use language to communicate and thus, in communicating express their culture. It does hold water to appreciate that language of any society is but ordinary to them. Any language, regardless of its owner, is a great indicator of that society's culture (Chisenga, 2002).

Jiang (2000:328); De Schryver (2002) share the same sentiments by stating that language simultaneously reflects culture, and is influenced and shaped by it. In the broadest sense, it is also the symbolic representation of the people, since it comprises their historical and cultural background, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language, the two are intricately interwoven, therefore one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (Jiang, 2000:330). The mainstay of this study is the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst youth. The speakers of the selected African languages and culture are the consumers of the social media services and it is pivotal to examine the manner in which these media affect them based on the inseparable relationship between language and culture. There is a need to conserve these languages because they are a vehicle in which culture is conveyed and preserved for posterity.

#### 4.2.2 The Relationship between Information Communication Technology (ICT) and African Languages

It is essential to note that social media are products of information and communication technologies (ICT), hence the need to assess the relationship between ICTs and indigenous African languages. The argument in this regard is that social media have

great potential to promote and preserve the selected African languages. One can enunciate this fact because ICT in the form of social media is a colossal part of human life, more especially that of youth. According to Uysal (2015), social media have become a pivotal part of mass communication amongst the youth in the world. Uysal's statement validates that social media are catalysts of human development. This, therefore, means people can resort to ICT whenever there is a need to enhance and promote their norms, values, and beliefs.

Ndebele (2014:122) points out that "the integration of African languages with information and communication technology is essential in promoting and intellectualising African languages". It is important to highlight that this ICT is at the centre stage of modern human life and there is a commendable relationship between ICT applications, such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WeChat, Skype* etc., and exponents of African languages. Social media or Web play a crucial role in allowing the speakers of African languages to communicate in their respective languages (Warschauer *et al.*, 2002).

This act on its own perpetuates the usage of African languages and culture, which is a sign of preserving and promoting these facets. The promotion of these African facets could be seen as a positive mechanism to mitigate current adverse habits concerning minimum use of African languages on Web or social media platforms by Africans (Maseko, Sam, Dalvit, Nosilela & Terzoli, 2010:312). It is important to highlight that the fight for the survival of African languages is not over. The speakers of African languages should appreciate these languages by constantly using them (Salawu, 2006:86). The African languages are no longer dominating in African conversations. Salawu (2006:86); Adegaju (2008) postulate that technological innovations and modernity have contributed towards the lack of African languages in the African conversations.

The fundamental argument is that as technological development and innovations advance in taking centre stage Africans perceive their languages to be inappropriate for these platforms. Social media are part of the technological innovations that are Internet-based and Africans somehow do not think their languages should be used in

these applications (Greenhow, 2011; and Gastrow, 2015). Africans believe that their languages and culture are primitive and ancient. They, therefore, believe their languages and culture are not good enough for conversations taking place on social media. Due to this conviction, there is a conspicuous decline towards the use of African languages in the technologically advanced platforms. The attitude of the Africans towards their own languages has detrimental effects on the conservation of African languages.

#### 4.2.3 The significance of Social Media towards preserving and promoting African culture

The increasing usage and prominence of social media cannot be ruled out. In Africa, social media have a growing population of users and audiences. What needs to be done is to find ways to harness the potentials of social media and use them as channels to transmit and make preservation of the African languages (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:41; and Roycroft & Anantho, 2003).

Here are some of the ways that could see social media playing a role in preserving and promoting African languages.

##### a) Global nature of Social Media

Social media have enhanced more than ever better the opportunity for African countries to make their own socio-cultural statements. Social media can help the African society develop, enrich and preserve its own languages values and enhance that it is conspicuously represented in the emerging global culture. An example of utilising social media for global display of African culture is Nigerian events and Aso-ebi, an *Instagram* account solely dedicated to the display of Nigerian traditional wedding attires made with Ankara, Aso-Oke and different local fabrics. This page has thousands of followers giving them an opportunity to see various styles and appreciate the Nigerian culture and fabrics. From these sites, people replicate the styles for their own use; and in turn sustaining an aspect of the African culture (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015).

Warchauer *et al.*, (2002); and Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015) contend that the use of social media for the display of African styles and dresses has led to the infusion of African materials to make fabulous attire that is displayed on runways and sold around the globe. This will definitely help in preserving and promoting the previously marginalised African languages.

b) Archive for cultural materials

Being a mass medium that is not transient, social media can be an archive for African materials thus enabling the sustenance of the languages and culture. Contents on social media are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and users have the opportunity of viewing previous content on a site any time. This means that social media sites, pages or accounts that are dedicated to African culture displaying videos, poems, literature, drama, music, and images can be stored and accessed anytime, even in many years to come (De Schryver, 2002; and Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015).

c) Creating virtual cultural and ethnic communities

Social media build close interactions among users. They facilitate greater connectedness among users of the same ethnic group; reinforce existing ethnic links and ties. "Internet use also have effects of linking together Web users with the same ethnicity into the tightly knit online community" (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:41).

Africans who use social media can create pages displaying African culture. This would offer users in other parts of the world and Africans raised outside the continent a window to fully appreciate African and its culture, values, and heritage (De Schryver, 2002). Today, there now pages displaying African language. For example, Google, Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. There are specific groups and handles on *Facebook* and *Twitter* that communicate with their members and followers in African languages. This helps to strengthen the languages and keep it alive; and overall, helping to sustain the African culture alongside western culture (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:41).

In online dialogues, individuals can consciously project African cultures. Users can sometimes post comments on *Facebook* wall and other social media in their local languages. Use African idioms, proverbs, tale, and myths that are peculiar to their ethnic group (Warchauer *et al.*, 2002). These build virtual African communities at the same time expressing African culture. The social media thus serve as a channel to display and introduce users to different languages and cultures, as well as sustain these cultural values and strengthen the ties between users of the same cultural group (Heugh, 1999; and Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015).

d) Tapping Social Media's multi-media culture

Social media are multi-media in nature that is, allow for written, graphic, pictorial and video elements to be uploaded and shared. With this feature of social media, plays, images, skits on different aspects of African culture can be portrayed. Examples are drama on family values, a short documentary on preparing an African dish (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:41).

The following section addresses the discourse of new media and social media.

### **4.3 DISCOURSE OF NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

It is logical to describe new media as a phenomenon that established social media networks. It is important to illustrate that social media are prominent features of new media. It is therefore imperative to describe new media before describing social media as a subject matter of this research.

#### **4.3.1 New Media**

Media should be defined as a point of departure. Thus O'shaughnessy and Stadler (2012); O'Shaughnessy, Stadler and Casey (2016) define media as the technologically transformed mass communication systems that disseminate information for commercial purpose. On the other hand, according to Croteau and Hoynes (2000:7); Croteau, Hoynes and Milan (2012:8), the word media is the plural of medium. It is derived from the Latin word *medius*, which means "middle". The communication media are the different technological processes that facilitate communication between

the sender of a message and the receiver. New media are the technological integrations of communication variables that perpetually change the ways of accessing, storing, processing and sharing information. The technological innovations are established through digital convergence whereby the accessibility of traditional media is enhanced and simplified (Mare, 2013; and Manovich, 2001:18). Typical examples of new media are platforms such as mobile television, audio streaming radio and social networking sites (*Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Wechat, Instagram, WhatsApp* and *Mxit*). This study mainly focuses on social media with specific reference to *Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*.

#### 4.3.2 Effects of New Media on the Preservation of Indigenous African Culture

According to Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015:40), culture is the think human Web that binds a community or group as one. It is the little intrinsic aspects, which are common, important and significant to a particular people. Culture has generally been referred to as behaviour, values, shared ideas, and attitudes of people who are bound together by the environment, language and location. Culture is, therefore, necessary for a healthy society. It is usually established from enlightenment and acquired through education, observation, and exposure to the environment (De Schryver, 2002).

African culture relates to the beliefs, customs, traditions, practices, and behaviours of different people in human groups or tribes within the African continent. It is a product of the interaction of the diverse people that inhabit Africa (past and present). Africa has numerous numbers of ethnic cultures; diverse and varying from country to country within the continent (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). In African culture, it is taken that actions speak louder than words. Communication is the bedrock of any culture. Culture and values are passed and kept alive from generation to generation through communication and socialisation. This is enunciated in the cultural transmission function of the mass media (Warchauer *et al.*, 2002).

According to Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015) and Roycroft and Anantho (2003), the media make for the preservation of a culture through its coverage and reporting of people and activities of a particular culture. Thus, helping people of other culture know and appreciate the culture. Regarding ICT and its relation to culture, the impact of ICT

on the Nigerian people has both a positive and a negative thrust. While these technologies have the potential of eroding local cultures even to the point of threatening their extinction, yet they equally provide a podium for global societies and cultures.

The following section deals with the nature of social media.

#### **4.4 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

According to O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011:800), as well as Boyd and Ellison (2008:211), any Website that allows social interaction is considered a social media site, including social networking sites such as *Facebook*, *MySpace* and *Twitter*; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007:1143) and Lesame *et al.*, (2012:5) are of the same view that social media are all about the constant sharing of content, which takes place in the form of interaction between friends, colleagues, and professionals. Social activities such as video sharing, texting, photo-sharing, and chatting are always at the centre stage of the social media platforms. *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Wechat*, *YouTube*, *LinkedIn*, among others, are well-known social media sites in the world and over billions of people visit these sites every day.

Mayfield (2008:35) defines social media as “media that users can easily participate in share and create content for, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual words”. Lesame *et al.* (2012), and Wicks (2012:6) concede that social media platforms have transformed the manner in which people interact. “Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61).

Soffer and Cohen (2015:2) describe social networking site in this way:

Social Networking Sites are personal spaces for online conversations and content sharing based typically on the maintenance and sharing of profiles, whereby individual users can represent themselves to other users through the display of personal information, interests, photographs, social networks, and other matters.



Some Africans see social media polluting African culture and influencing the African youth negatively because of its major western culture content. They lament its impact on the attitude, behaviour, language, and ways of life of Africans. The exploring of new media realities and globalisation are sensed as both a gift and a threat, especially to African culture. The new information media technologies have created new spaces and new contexts for the emerging new virtual and cyber communities wherein amalgamation of varied cultures of different civilisations and races is taking place. African culture is not an exception (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:40).

Social media have become pervasive, impacting the social fabric of society and changing the nature of social relationships. It has revolutionised the way people communicate, interact and socialise. New technologies facilitate and provide flexibility in communicating and sharing of resources. This new approach to consuming and creating information is in particular attractive to youth as a platform and space for activities not possible face-to-face (Al Sharqi, Hashim & Kutbi, 2015:122).

Al-Sharqi *et al.*, (2015: 122) however, state that the excessive use of social media tools by college students has led to the debate over whether or not they have changed the very shape and structure of students' social behaviour and academic practices, thus informing leading educators to redefine their understanding of interpersonal communication and study dynamics. Students use social media for many purposes such as access to information, group discussions, resource sharing, and entertainment. This has generated speculation on their use and related positive and negative implications, in both the short and long terms. As several studies demonstrate, social media interaction could have positive and negative effects on youth.

The subsequent section outlines the importance of social media.

#### **4.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUTH**

According to Wegge, Vandebosch, Eggermont, and Welrave (2015:315), social media have become popular platforms for young people to manage their social relationships and to define their identities. At an age when friends and peer social contacts become

increasingly important, social media sites provide an excellent tool to display one's connections and to communicate with peers (Nilan, Burgess & Hobbs, 2015). Most importantly, the connections have much to do with the sharing of information. Many studies discovered that young people share a great deal of information on social network sites (Baragwanath, 2016) as well as (Steijn & Vedder, 2015:2).

According to Livingstone (2008:393), the explosion in social media platforms such as *MySpace*, *Facebook*, *Bebo*, and *Twitter* is widely regarded as an exciting opportunity, especially for youth. Social media allow middle and high school students to connect with one another on homework and group projects. They use *Facebook* and other sites to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about school work (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011:801). O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) emphasise the importance of social media by indicating that some schools successfully use blogs as teaching tools, which have the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression and creativity.

Social media are important platforms for daily interaction, in particular among youth across the world. Social networking sites users surround themselves with their friends and school relations, allowing them to immediately feel close to any of them (Antheunis, Schouten & Kraemer, 2014:2). Antheunis, Schouten and Kraemer, (2014:2) further allude to that social media sites provide friendship maintenance in this stage of life and the tremendous popularity of the sites among youth. According to O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011:800), "Social media networks offer today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years". O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011:800) further accentuate that social media such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with common interests.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:67), today, almost everything is about social media. Some industry experts claim that if a person does not participate on *Facebook*, *YouTube* and *Twitter* that individual is not fully part of cyberspace anymore. Social media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than being achieved with more traditional

communication tools. Boyd and Ellison (2008:210) point out that social media play a significant role by accommodating diverse audiences, while some of them attract audiences based on common language or shared racial, culture, sexual, religious or nationality based identities.

All scholars cited above affirm that social media are important in contemporary communication systems. People use social media for a whole lot of issues ranging from business, music, politics, current affairs, fashion etc. Despite the fact that they mentioned that social media accommodate the diverse audience, there is no specific focus pertaining to the impact of social media in conserving the African languages. This study addresses this gap to locate both the positive and negative impact of social media in conserving Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The addressing of this lacuna is not limited to social media as it also covers how youth use African languages and or languages on social media, including the convenience of these sites for the usage of these languages.

The next section discusses the use of social media by youth.

#### **4.6 THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY YOUTH**

Antheunis, Schouten, and Kramer (2014:2) point out that many young people use social networking sites as a way of connecting with their friends than communicating; thus merely creating the illusion of friendship. According to Uysal (2015:182), social media sites are a virtual community, which have become an integral part of human life and gained enormous popularity over the years. Social media platforms or social networking sites have been made to promote social interaction in a virtual environment. The users of these popular sites are able to post profile information, communicate with others, send online messages, maintain a public or semi-public profile, join groups, organise events and share photos online (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007:1143).

Soffer and Cohen (2015:2) maintain that young people are motivated to join social networking sites in an effort to maintain strong ties with friends, strengthen ties with new acquaintances and to meet new people online. They further postulate that these

social media platforms offer youth opportunities to establish connections between previously unknown people from different socio-economic backgrounds and even from distant geographic areas (Nilan, *et al.*, 2015).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:62); Livingstone (2008:394), on the moderate level, are content communities (e.g., *YouTube*) and social networking sites (e.g., *Facebook*), which, in addition to text-based communication, enable the sharing of pictures, videos, and other forms of media. On the highest level are virtual games and social worlds, which try to replicate all dimensions of face-to-face interactions in a virtual environment.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:65) indicate that social media, or a set of different applications within the same group, in order to have the largest possible reach. In this case, it is crucial to ensure that one's social media activities are all aligned with each other. Livingstone (2008:394) states that the user's viewpoint, more than ever before, using media means creating as well as receiving, with user control extending far beyond selecting ready-made, mass-produced content. The language of social relationships is being reframed; today, people construct their profile, make it public or private, they comment or message their top friends on their wall, they block or add people to their network and so forth.

However, contrary to the above sentiments, the discourse regarding young people's use of social media is often focused on the dangers it poses. In August 2013, concerns were re-ignited by the suicide of British teenager, Hannah Smith, following abuse she received on the social networking site *Ask.fm*. Former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, responded by declaring that social networking sites that do not address online bullying should be boycotted (Keating & Melis, 2017; and Sen, 2015:2).

With over 98% of students (mostly youth) at a world-class South African university have cell phones and subjective evidence showing that texting is the dominant feature (Rambie, 2011:273). It can be argued that youth have augmented social networking sites interaction via computers with exchanging learning resources on social networking sites enhanced phones. The academic relations built on these sites remain

under-researched in academia. Many studies into SNS have concentrated on connectivity, relation building, and privacy considerations but have not given pre-eminence to the exercise of social power (Greenhow, 2011:139).

A study of 433 undergraduate students at a Midwestern University in the United States of America use of and attitudes towards SNS reports their tendency to be naïve about the potentially negative consequences of access and use of their information by other people. Their findings are insightful for university career and job placement centres that need to advise students on the possible consequences of their Website postings during freshman orientations through student codes of conduct and information technology policies. While study invokes privacy and self-image implications of postings, it does little to illuminate understanding of the impact of these sites on lecturer students' relations in learning context (Keating & Melis, 2017; and Greenhow, 2011).

Social media are online means of interactions among people; involving computer-mediated tools and Internet-based applications that allow people to create, process, share or exchange in information, ideas, pictures, and videos. It is a group of Internet-based applications that were built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Mare, 2013; Keating & Melis, 2017). "Social media are the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaboration" (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015:38).

Social media take on different forms including Internet forums, microblogging, podcasts, social networking, bookmarking, social curation and Web blogging (Gastrow, 2015). Social media are categorised thus because of its interpersonal and user-generated content nature. It is about conversations, community, connecting with the audience and building relationships. It only allows users to hear what people say about them, their preferences and choices, but also enables users to respond and make comments (Greenhow, 2011). Social media embodies features like interactivity, adaptability, portability, and convergence. These features have led to their phenomenal growth and usage.

Social media outlets are not paid for. This is one reason that accounts for large numbers of users on these sites all around the world. Most of these social media are free; users just need to be connected to the Internet and register (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015).

The literature reviewed indicates that youth use social media a lot. The scholars posit that the majority of youth use social media to keep in touch with their friends, colleagues, and classmates. There are those who use social media to share issues of interest such as politics, entertainment, fashion etc. Additionally, there is an emerging trend of usage of social media for educational purposes. Both University and secondary school students/learners use social media to interact with one another about their academic work. Most importantly, youth spend most of their time active online using *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. It is therefore critical for this study to investigate the language used by the youth of Thohoyandou, Tzaneen, and Mankweng on social media including the manner in which they use Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The question is since youth who speak the selected languages are always active on social media, are they using their African languages?

#### **4.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER FIVE**

The key concepts of the study were contextualised in this chapter. The discourse about the relationship between ICTs and indigenous African languages was accentuated as well. This chapter also covered the significance of social media amongst youth. The effects of new media on the conservation of African culture were also addressed.

The next chapter highlights the research design and methodology of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Research paradigm is a cornerstone of any research, a study without an appropriate methodology has nullified its chances of producing credible findings (Creswell, 2014). In this chapter, the focus is on the appropriate research design and methodology. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are relevant in this study to yield credible findings. In terms of the sampling method, non-probability and probability sampling methods were applied. The relevant sampling techniques are outlined. Most importantly, research design as a blueprint of any inquiry is elucidated in this chapter.

The following section focuses on research design.

#### **5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study employed exploratory and descriptive designs within both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms respectively (mixed method). The study explores the impact of social media towards conserving African languages and it also describes the manner in which youth use African languages on these platforms. The exploratory design is aligned to phenomenology which deals with qualitative investigations which address a phenomenon particularly in the field of social sciences (Mason, 2002). Accordingly, this study attempted to explore the impact of social media towards conserving African languages hence a need for this design. The descriptive design is linked with survey design. In this regard, the description of factors that affect the use of African languages on social media amongst youth is imperative in this investigation. Creswell (2014:155) posits that “survey design provides a quantitative numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population”.

The succeeding section elucidates the research methodology of this research.

### **5.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In a study of this nature, both qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other. Qualitative research method always pursues to address the “why” question. On the other hand, quantitative research method targets the “how much” and “how many” questions (Creswell, 2014). This combination helped this study to address the research problem from different angles and that is the beauty of mixed method. The researcher used a mixed method to enhance the depth and credibility of the results. The execution of mix method is encapsulated by the usage of different data collection tools such as field online observations, focus group interviews and questionnaires (Neuman, 2011: 200). This explicates the importance of triangulation in this study. Triangulation is the usage of quantitative and qualitative research methods towards investigating a phenomenon (Hussein, 2009).

According to Patton (2002:41), the qualitative method is all about elucidating properties, values, and attributes of a certain concept as they are, and verbal description is used to accentuate the significant aspects of the research. Bitsch (2005) as well Creswell (1998:15) postulates that qualitative study as an investigation procedure of understanding the social or human problem.

This method is selected in this study to understand the impact of social media on African languages. This investigation represents the social problem in such a way that people need to preserve their identity and language for posterity. The conservation of one’s language is a process, not an event, hence a need to inquire about the impact of social media towards conserving Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. It is therefore important to highlight the qualitative paradigm in addressing the research problem because it allows the researcher to gather information from the speakers of these languages and social media sites.

Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:44); Neuman (2011:201) assert that the quantitative research method depends on calculations, measurements, and scales. Quantitative method is used in this study to anchor the techniques of qualitative paradigm. The researcher employed a questionnaire as a quantitative data collection instrument to answer questions that could not be addressed by the qualitative



techniques, namely, focus group interviews and field online observations. The basic calculations are prevalent in this study, which is a key feature of the quantitative study. The calculations represent the frequency of social media usage amongst the youth and the amount of time spent online. Emanating from these points and due to the fact that the impact of social media in conserving African languages is a new concept, therefore, it is fitting to apply the above-mentioned research methods.

Furthermore, in this section, the researcher deals with population, sampling, research instrument and data collection methods. Additionally, the section addresses qualitative criteria, reliability, and validity.

### 5.3.1 Population and Sampling

There are 63 recognised social media sites in the world (MakeaWebsitehub, 2018). This is a general population of social media sites. However, in this study, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* were sampled through the purposive sampling technique within the non-probability sampling method. This sampling technique was informed by the fact that these social media sites are popular amongst youth in South Africa. The presented statistics in chapter one validate this stance. The participants of the study were also sampled through the purposive sampling technique. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2004:144); Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:106), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling whereby units to be observed are sampled on the basis of a researcher's prerogative about their relevance and prominence thereof.

On the other hand, there are nine indigenous African languages namely IsiZulu, Setswana, SiSwati, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. This is the population which the three African languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) were sampled from in study. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the three languages. The focus was on these languages because the researcher is familiar with their history and status in the media circles. Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga have not been receiving sufficient attention from various media organisations, particularly on the new media. Moreover, the three languages

were sampled because they are predominantly spoken in Limpopo Province where the researcher resides.

De Vos (2005:202); Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005:56) posit that the purposive sampling technique is used wherein a researcher selects a sample for a specific purpose, by going directly to the available subjects. Limpopo Province was selected through purposive sampling technique. The province was sampled from a general population of nine South African provinces, namely, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, Western Cape, and Limpopo Province. Most of the residents in Limpopo Province are speakers of the province's three dominant African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

The youth that took part in this study are between the ages of 16 and 34 years. This youth come from the selected areas in Limpopo Province, namely, Thohoyandou, Tzaneen and Mankweng. These areas were selected through purposive sampling technique. The researcher chose them because the majority of the residents speak Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The researcher was informed by their demographic information. It should be emphasised that these members of the focus group interviews were selected on condition that they are users of the selected social media and are speakers of the above-mentioned languages.

The respondents of 100 questionnaires were sampled through stratified random sampling technique within probability sampling method. Creswell (2014); May (2011); Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006), postulate that stratified random sampling dictates that the characteristics of the population members should be known by the researcher before embarking on random sampling. The characteristics that the researcher was concern about is the age of the participants and their common interest which is social media consumption. To this end, the researcher focused on the attributes of the youth as the age group and to ensure that this sample represents the population. According to Statistics South Africa (2015), the estimated population of youth in Limpopo Province is 2.23 million. The sample of the questionnaire respondents was selected through this technique of probability sampling method. In

this study, a stratified random sampling procedure was also informed by the availability of the participants in the selected areas.

The brief profiles of the demarcation of the study are presented below:

#### 5.3.1.1 Demarcation of the study

##### a) Thohoyandou

This urban area is situated in the Thulamela Municipality within the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Thohoyandou is popularly known as the capital city of the Vhembe District. The inhabitants of this capital city are mostly educated, working class people, most of them use mobile phones to access the Internet. The majority of the youth in Thohoyandou use social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* with regular access to mass media. The area is situated about 149KM, North of Polokwane city the capital of Limpopo Province. Trading is the dominant business in Thohoyandou. The majority of the people in this area speak Tshivenda (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2018).

The key tourists' attractions in these areas are the baobab of 3000 years old, Museum of the Drum and Dzata Ruins, Levubu Tree Park, Mphaphuli Cycad Reserve, Tshakhuma Traditional Village, Thathe Vondo Forest, Tshimbupfe archaeological site, Nwanedi National Park, Tshatshingo Potholes and Thulamela ruins. Thohoyandou is bordered by Makhado in the West, in the East by Punda Maria, Musina at the North, and Elim in the southern parts. It is also next to the Kruger National Park (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2018).

In the context of this study, the youth from Thohoyandou and surrounding areas took part in the study during data collection through focus group interviews and questionnaires.

##### b) Tzaneen

Tzaneen is a small town situated in Tzaneen Municipality within Mopani District of Limpopo Province, north of South Africa. It is the second largest town in Limpopo Province after Polokwane. It is a subtropical paradise with indigenous and exotic

plants including the Boabab trees. There are about 650 000 people who reside in 30KM radius in areas such as Lenyenye, Nkowa Nkowa, Letaba, Duiwelskloof, Magoebaskloof, Maake etc. The town itself has a population of over 30 000. Tzaneen lies at the root of the northern parts of Drakensberg (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2018). The area of Tzaneen is surrounded by forests in the richest subtropical fruit-farming location in South Africa. The inhabitants of this town predominantly speak Xitsonga, English, and Khilobedu (a Sepedi dialect). The most attractive areas in and around this town are, namely, Tzaneen dam (with a plethora of bird species), the valley of the Olifant route, Modjadji Nature Reserve, Tzaneen Museum, Iron Crown Mountain, Ebenazar dam, Groot Letaba river, Magoebaskloof and Debengeni waterfall (SA Places, 2018).

The youth of Tzaneen participated in this research. The Tzaneen people were suitable for this research because they speak Xitsonga, English, and Khilobedu. The sampled population from this area were part of the focus group interviews and questionnaire respondents.

#### c) Mankweng

Mankweng is a township geographically located 27 KM east of Polokwane city in South Africa next to R71. This area is part of Polokwane Municipality within Capricorn District. Mankweng is in the mid-way between Polokwane and Magoebaskloof. Mankweng is home to the University of Limpopo, formerly known as University of the North, Mankweng Hospital and Turfloop nature reserve. The popular areas around Mankweng are namely, Boyne, Turfloop, Makanye, Mentz, Mamotintane, Nobody and Thakgalang. The citizens of this township have access to the Internet and regularly use social media namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* amongst others. The majority of the residents in this township are youth who predominantly speak a whole range of languages particularly Sepedi, English, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda. The area is also known as Sovenga, which is an acronym for Sotho, Venda and Tsonga due to the fact that the majority of its people originate from these three ethnic groups (University of Limpopo, 2018).

In the context of this research, the youth of Mankweng participated during the data collection procedure. Most of them were part of the focus group sessions and respondents for the questionnaires.

The following section explains the research instrument and data collection method of this study.

### 5.3.2 Research Instrument and Data Collection Method

Focus group interviews, field online observations, and questionnaires were used to collect data in this study. A focus group interview is a data collection tool for understanding people's behaviour and attitudes (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014:136; Wisker, 2001:176). The researcher moderated three focus groups. One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered and distributed to the participants in Thohoyandou, Tzaneen, and Mankweng. The qualitative paradigm's focus group interviews are one of the three selected data collection tools to probe the research problem in this study. This tool is apt for the data collection process in this study because it assists in discovering factors that influence opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. In this case, focus group interviews were used to discover factors that lead to the minimum usage of Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga on social media platforms, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. With the consent of the participants, focus group interview sessions were audiotaped and transcribed. All focus groups were verified for accuracy. The data collected from the focus group sessions are presented and analysed through tables in Chapter six.

Field online observation is a type of observation that was employed in this study. This type of observation is suitable for this study because it assisted the researcher to watch people behave in their normal surroundings (Wisker, 2001:178). The researcher observed the language preference and usage in the social media users' online activities by visiting the home pages of *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Wimmer and Dominick (2014:135) affirm that "in the online world, field observation usually means observing text and images on a computer screen". The researcher captured pictures from the three sites during the online observation procedure. The selected pictures are presented and analysed as figures in Chapter six. In order to

examine the key determinants of the use of African languages on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*, users were asked to respond to a number of survey questions.

#### 5.3.2.1 Focus Group Interviews

The study employed the focus group data collection technique to investigate the impact of social media towards conserving African languages amongst youth. The main objective of employing this data collection technique was to explore the behaviour, attitudes and the patterns of language use by youth in Thohoyandou, Tzaneen, and Mankweng.

The focus groups also addressed the perceptions of the subjects concerning the convenience of social media for the use of African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2014:136), a focus group interview “is a research strategy for understanding people’s attitudes and behaviour. Between six and 12 people are interviewed simultaneously, with a moderator leading the respondents in a relatively unstructured discussion about the topic under investigation”.

Wimmer and Dominick (2014:136), as well as Neuman (2011:459), postulate that there are four key facets that anchor focus group interview as a data collection instrument, namely:

- a) Focus groups should consist of handful of participants (6-12 participants).
- b) The participants should have common attributes and a similar understanding of certain aspects of life. For example, the participants may be users of *Facebook* or members of a particular ethnic group. In the context of this study, the participants are the users of *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*.
- c) It should generate qualitative data. It does not establish any technicalities under the qualitative research paradigm. Data collected through a focus group interview are used to promote comprehension and to come up with different perceptions emanating from the focus group interviews that may be unprecedented to the researcher. This can be done when more than four focus group interviews are conducted to attain a suitable sample size.

- d) The discussion of the focus groups is more focused. The questions are addressed in a sequence. Furthermore, the questions may be structured and predetermined. The questions should be structured in such a way that would ensure that the goal of the study is attained. The moderator has the latitude to use a different strategy, especially when the participant come up with relevant information.

These characteristics are in line with the significant feature of focus group interviews technique within the context of this research.

- i. The Advantages of a Focus Group Interview Instrument

Generally, a focus group is one of the most convenient data collection tools within the qualitative research paradigm. Despite the fact that focus group interviews may be an expensive way of collecting data, modern researchers prefer this method of gathering data because it is cost efficient. The investigations or studies in the corporate world, find it expensive to employ focus group interviews as data collection techniques. However, academics use because it is affordable in nature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Depending on the nature of the topic at hand, focus group interviews afford the researcher sufficient data. In some studies, both in public or private research focus groups are not ideal. For instance, in a study that analyses sexual behaviour amongst adults in the rural areas in South Africa, the focus group interviews would not be convenient. It is always difficult for adults to openly talk about their sexual behaviours in the midst of their peers. On the other hand, an investigation that deals with cell phone usage by South African adults in rural areas, focus group interviews would suffice.

As a matter of research principle, the nature of a study determines a suitable data collection method. The proper selection of data collection tools enables the study to yield suitable and credible findings. In that regard, the study would also exhaust the advantages of the tools concerned.

Focus group interviews are flexible in nature and the researcher has a latitude to change the structure and sequence of the questions. The other advantage is that focus group interviews allow the researcher to collect preliminary data to advance other key aspects of the research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014:137). The point that should be highlighted under focus group interviews is that the researcher can collect data quickly without compromising the main objective of the study. The data collection procedure of focus group interviews enables the researcher to make follow-ups on significant aspects of the discussion.

The researcher using focus group interviews has great potential to generate complete responses. The group discussion enables other participants to draw interest from members who are actively sharing their perceptions. Consequently, all participants contribute to the discussion because they are stimulated by the vocal participants or those who have a lot to say. The more the participants take part in the focus group interview sessions, the researcher would have a lot of information to draw inferences from. In this case, the moderator gave the participants the freedom to use their home languages to express their genuine ideas. When people are given the right to express themselves in their home languages, they feel more encouraged to express their views.

It is also important to note that in the focus groups other participants are tempted to respond to remarks from the other members. The discussion that emanates from these remarks or comments allows the moderator to come up with follow up questions. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2014:137), “a skilled moderator also can detect the opinions and attitudes of those who are less expressing the opinions noting facial expression and other nonverbal behaviours while others are speaking”. The moderator should have adequate skill to notice those who are not talking but expressing themselves non-verbally with facial expressions that might suggest that they disagree with one’s comment or opinion.

a) The advantages of focus group interviews for this study

The focus group interview discussions were beneficial for this study. The main purpose of utilising the focus group interview was to explore the impact of social media



(*Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*) towards conserving the African languages amongst youth in Limpopo Province. The researcher appointed three moderators to work with the three groups. Because the study focused on youth and the moderators were also in the same age group as the participants. In all sessions, the participants were actively involved and with the assistance of the researcher, the moderators asked to follow up questions. The focus was on the use of languages on social media including the youth language preference on social media.

The moderators were allocated the groups based on their geographical location, which means those in Tzaneen were recruited by a moderator based in this area. The arrangement was quite beneficial because the moderator would better understand the remarks of those who preferred to speak their home languages. The participants across all three focus groups were intrigued by the topic under investigation. As they were given consent forms to complete and almost all of them responded positively. They agreed to take part in the focus group sessions. The moderators used a recording device to record the sessions and the participants did not have a problem with that arrangement and all recordings were transcribed. Considering their age group, some of the subjects were vocal and shared a lot of views around the topic in all sessions. The quiet participants were stimulated by the vocal expressive members of the group. The stimulation of the discussion enabled the moderators to come up with follow up questions.

The other advantage of focus groups was that the moderators were competent to ensure that they draw responses from the subjects. The participants who spoke less were offered a fair chance to express their opinions in an appropriate manner. Despite the fact that a few participants were dominant during the focus group interview sessions, the moderators managed to deal with that by outlining that there is a need for other members to air their opinions. The moderators had sufficient skill to restructure the questions to allow smooth discussion.

To some extent, the participants were well acquainted because they were indeed staunch users of social media, more especially *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*. The

subjects were clued up about the features and habits that feature prominently in the aforementioned social media applications.

#### b) Disadvantages of focus group interviews

The focus group interviews as data collection tools have their own complications. The disadvantages of the focus group interviews are many and it is important for any researcher to work on the facets of these complications. This tool of collecting data is not absolute in nature nor perfect when it is employed in a study. The focus group interviews are not appropriate, more especially when the researcher expects to generate qualitative data. This method is not useful when the researcher attempts to answer certain questions such as “how many” and/or “how much”. The focus group interview is only limited to generate qualitative data. The questionnaires were employed to answer the “how many” and/or “how much” questions, which validates the choice of mixed method paradigm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

This tool of data collection in any form of research is suitable to answer/address the “why” and “how” questions. The two areas of qualitative research make it suitable for this study. Because this study addressed the “why” question concerning the reasons why youth prefer a specific language over their home language as a medium of instruction on social media. On the other hand, the “how” question is highlighted to investigate the manner in which the youth use their home languages or any language of their choice on social media. It goes to the extent of exploring how convenient are the social media application for those who use African languages.

“A self-appointed group leader who monopolizes the conversation and attempts to impose his or her opinion on other participants dominates some group” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014: 137). This culture of self-appointed leaders in focus group interview sessions inconveniences the whole group. As a result, that may defeat the purpose of the focus group conversations. The moderators should ensure that any form of self-imposed leadership is dealt with in an amicable manner in the interest of all participants. There is a need for the focus group technique to have more than four groups during the data collection procedure.

Failure to have a sufficient number of groups (more than four) would have adverse effects in qualitative research. However, if the groups are less than four in total, the researcher would be compelled to use another data collection instrument. The introduction of the second data collection tool would complement focus group interviews data for the purpose of data quantification. It is ideal for any study to cover more questions in order to generate in-depth findings. The other disadvantage is that unskilled moderators may fail to steer the discussions in the right direction. The moderator who is not skilled may fail to notice the irregularities when the participants are discussing irrelevant topics.

The focus group interviews may deal with a small proportion of the sampled population that may not be a true reflection of the general population drawn from. If the sample is small the results/findings of the study cannot be simplified or generalised in the entire population (Bless *et al.*, 2006:99). In a situation whereby people are hired to use focus group interview in a research, the researchers are seldom satisfied with the data. They are dissatisfied due to the fact that they envisage accurate statistics and percentages. It is unlikely for focus group interviews to generate exact information needed in a study. Nevertheless, when a sufficient number of groups are sampled, focus group interviews may produce exact statistics and percentages.

Despite the fact that this study sampled less than four groups, the participants were always late for the sessions. In most instances, the research assistants had to call the participants on their mobile phones reminding them about the focus group interview sessions. Some of the sessions were postponed due to the unavailability of the participants. The postponement would mean that the sessions were delayed; something that prolonged the data collection procedure.

The other disadvantage was that some participants were not actively taking part in the discussions. The inactivity of some of the participants made it difficult for the discussions to develop further in terms of the opinions output. To some extent, the moderators managed to stimulate the discussion and the non-participating subjects had to share their opinions. Human nature suggests that in a group there are different characters. In a group, one is likely to come across quiet members and vocal ones

respectively. It, therefore, means that the vocal ones are more likely to impose the opinions on the quiet members. To some degree, the vocal members are called self-appointed leaders of the group who try to monopolise and dominate the focus group interview sessions. It is a fact that the self-appointed members are a disadvantage in the focus group interview sessions (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014).

However, the vocal ones may play a cardinal role in anchoring the conversation let alone stimulating the non-participating members of the groups. This is exactly what happened during the focus group interview sessions in this research. Since each focus group interview had four sessions, this arrangement posed another challenge. The challenge was that some participants were absent in some of the sessions. In the first session, some groups had 10 members but in the subsequent meetings, the number plummeted to five members in the last sessions.

The fluctuation factor in attendance had negative effects on the group. For example, in the Mankweng group, the vocal participant did not attend one session. Consequently, the session was dull because the person who normally anchors the conversation was not available. Despite all these difficulties, the moderators, under the tutelage of the researcher, had to deal with some of these challenges in a professional manner. For example, the moderator did not force the non-active members to express ideas during the focus group interview sessions.

## ii. Field Online Observation Instrument

The researcher used field online observation to observe the normal proceedings online as users interact on social media. The main focus of the observation was on the three sampled social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. The researcher used his social media accounts to embark on this procedure. On *Facebook* the researcher observes the interaction through his wall, the *Twitter* handle was used to access tweets from various users. The *WhatsApp* observation was conducted through its application on the mobile smartphone. The observation of this instant messaging application was limited to a group chat. The researcher is a member of a group that had 23 active members. The data collection procedure through this instrument was

completed by capturing some of the online activities. The selected pictures of the observation are analysed in Chapter six.

The field online observation was used to pay attention to the following relevant themes:

- 1) The availability and use of the selected African languages on social media;
- 2) The convenience of social media for the speakers of selected African languages;
- 3) The usage of the selected African languages by youth on social media;
- 4) The youth's language preferences on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*;  
and
- 5) The manner in which youth use African languages on social media.

a) The advantages of the online field observation instrument

This data collection instrument is more convenient and efficient because it is affordable. It stimulates the data collection procedure, more especially when applied effectively (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Furthermore, this technique provides detailed and relevant information because the researcher would work within the parameters of the main themes of the study. One should attest to the fact that this would enable the study to generate critical facts in a proper context. It may supplement other data collection instruments such as questionnaires, and focus group interviews.

b) The advantages of online observation instrument in this study

The above argument affirms that this data collection instrument is not expensive in the application. Indeed, the field observation online was more convenient in this study as the researcher managed to zoom-in the activities on social media platforms, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. The researcher took more time to monitor, observe and analyse different interactions on social media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*). It is easy for one to follow the activities online including going through *Facebook* statuses, comments, videos and images.

iii. Questionnaire

The researcher employed questionnaires to address the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst youth. The close-ended and open-ended

questionnaire was employed in this study. According to May (2011:103), “self-completion questionnaire offers a relatively cheap method of data collection over the personal interview”. The researcher administered 100 questionnaires in three selected areas namely, Thohoyandou, Tzaneen and Mankweng. The participants in Thohoyandou were given 33 questionnaires and they returned 30. In Tzaneen, the researcher distributed 33 questionnaires and they all returned. Mankweng respondents returned 30 questionnaires out of the distributed 34. In total, 93 completed questionnaires were returned.

a) The Advantages of the questionnaire

The questionnaires as a quantitative instrument give the researcher sufficient information for standardisation. The other critical advantage of questionnaires is that they do not drain the researcher in terms of time. In addition, it is cheap to administer questionnaires. The research assistants do not need intensive training to run the distribution and collection procedure of the questionnaires and informed consent forms (Bless *et al.*, 2006:37). These advantages were proven to be beneficial for this study as the researcher ensured that he exhausts all of them.

b) The disadvantages of the questionnaire

There are a few disadvantages of the questionnaire. However, some of these disadvantages have detrimental effects on the data collection procedure. It is somehow sophisticated to interpret respondents' responses. The second disadvantage is that it is difficult to verify that all respondents fathom the questions without complications. Some of the researchers fail to clarify the format of the questionnaire, which is something that may lead to misinterpretation of the questions. Most importantly, some respondents may decide against returning the questionnaire (Bless *et al.*, 2006:137).

Ethically, the respondents have a right to stop taking part in the study during the procedure. In some instances, the nature of the study can lead to bias whereby the participants' responses are clouded by their emotions. Additionally, the participants can complete certain parts of the questionnaire and leave out other questions unanswered altogether (Bless *et al.*, 2006:137; May, 2011:103). In this study, seven

respondents did not return the questionnaires, nevertheless, the researcher used the available data (93 questionnaires out of 100) to address the hypotheses.

The following section addresses the data analysis procedure within the context of this study.

### 5.3.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathered through field online observations were analysed through content analysis. This technique is suitable in the context of this study because there is a need to critically analyse the contents of the three selected social media sites. According to May (2011:209), content analysis is about identifying specific characteristics through studying relevant contents namely, texts, verbal materials, internet content, and books. In this study, the contents that were analysed include the *WhatsApp* group chats text, *Facebook's* comments and *Twitter's* tweets/messages. The analysis of social media content is conducted towards exploring the impact of social media in conserving the three selected African languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). Additionally, the analysis illustrated the extent to which youth use their African languages.

In terms of focus group interviews, thematic analysis was employed in this data analysis procedure. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006:82), "Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon". The themes were based on the three objectives of the study and some of them were generated from the data. The focus group interview sessions were audiotaped and transcribed. The researcher transcribed and captured relevant activities of the field online observation for the purposes of content analysis. The data collected were monitored, recorded and analysed according to the objectives of this study. The theories outlined under theoretical framework were employed to analyse the field data. The data, in this case, were, namely, instant messages, chat room conversations, tweets (retweets, reposts, and mentions), *Facebook* statuses and *WhatsApp's* online messages/comments.

The study also used statistical analysis through computerised software, namely, Microsoft Excel to analyse quantitative data collected through questionnaires. The

statistical analysis concerns the usage of computerised software to analyse survey data (May, 2011:121). The researcher administered 100 questionnaires but seven of them were not returned by the participants. As a result, 93 questionnaires were analysed through tables, graphs and pie charts. The questionnaires were employed to investigate the use of the three selected African languages on social media by youth in Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the questionnaire addressed other relevant aspects such as the convenience of Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga on social media.

The researcher embarked on a continuous in-depth comprehension of the subject matter and refined the analysis of data.

Refinement of the data for thematic analysis procedure:

#### 5.3.3.1 Familiarisation with the Data

In this step, the researcher took sufficient time to study the data in detail, in an effort to ensure that the data were in line with the aim of the study (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:80). Hence, the need for the researcher to familiarise oneself with the data. The focus group interviews were made up of 8-12 members and each group had four sessions. Different questions concerning the impact of social media on African languages were asked during the focus groups sessions. All sessions were audio recorded.

The researcher studied the recordings by transcribing them in detail. However, the themes of the questions asked in the focus group interview sessions were based on the objectives of the study. Subsequently, the researcher familiarised oneself with the collected data, the recordings, in this instance, looking at the four objectives of the study. Nevertheless, some of the themes were developed from the data. Since this study had employed the mixed method research paradigm, this step enabled the researcher to analyse data qualitatively (focus group interviews).

The appropriate familiarisation with data equipped the researcher with basic principles to generate initial codes. The data from the other data collection tool were reviewed and studied. This was undertaken to ensure that the data are relevant within the



context of the study. The contextualisation of the key concepts is pivotal to any study and the first step to pursue this is the familiarisation with the variables.

#### 5.3.3.2 Generating Initial Codes

According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2007:83), these codes are meant to represent the underlying factors, concepts, and symbols of the data. The refinement of data is not facilitated in a vacuum. There is a need for the collected data to pass through a series of checkpoints before one can generate credible findings that can be tested against the existing theory. The generation of initial codes is one of the checkpoints. As one has already alluded to, the relevant collected data instrument was the focus group interviews. The focus group interview data as stated in the first step generated initial codes. Despite the fact that data had initiated codes, the main codes were derived from the objectives of this research. Regardless of the research design in this research, the objectives of the study remain the mainstay of the initial codes. The generation of these initial codes anchored the search for themes because the researcher had executed thematic analysis.

#### 5.3.3.3 Searching for Themes

Thematic analysis is a cornerstone of data analysis in this study and there is a need to embark on a search for suitable themes. This is a colossal step of this procedure. Since the researcher outlined the familiarity with the collected data. The same data were categorised and classified based on a qualitative data collection instrument, namely, a focus group interview. The categorised data enabled the researcher to highlight the initial codes and some of the codes represent the cardinal concepts for the themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:86). As one has already postulated, the refinement of data is not undertaken in a vacuum.

The data should pass through a series of checkpoints before they can generate initial codes and themes respectively. It is mandatory to enunciate the objectives of the study as the guiding themes of the qualitative research paradigm. The following concepts are the objectives of this study, which are also known as the guiding themes:

- a) To identify the effects of social media (particularly *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*) on African languages (namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga);
- b) To determine the challenges and opportunities of social media in conserving the African languages amongst the youth; and
- c) To analyse the manner in which the youth use different languages in their social media profiles.

Despite the aforementioned guiding themes, other themes were generated from the data.

#### 5.3.3.4 Reviewing Themes

The previous step searched for themes for a thematic analysis approach. The guiding themes, which are the objectives of the study, were outlined (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:90; and Braun, Clarke & Terry, 2015). The other themes were generated from the data. The main purpose of this procedure was to explore the impact of social media in conserving African languages (particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) amongst the youth in Limpopo Province. The reviewing procedure did not withhold the fact that *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* have manifested themes through a focus group interview. The reviewing procedure is pivotal to verify the relevant context in which they exist. The researcher has embarked on this procedure in order to revise and confirm the existence of the three objectives of this study.

The three stated objectives are not reviewed in isolation, they are reviewed based on the aim of the research. The explicit understanding is that the research should generate new knowledge through epistemology and deductive reasoning theory. It is therefore in the best interest of the aforementioned aspects to meticulously review and verify the themes. The themes had to be reviewed to strengthen the thematic approach as the appropriate data analysis technique for this study. The reviewed themes had a huge impact on the findings of this research. The succeeding step had accentuated the definition and labelling of the reviewed themes. This is important for this study because the thematic analysis approach was applied.

### 5.3.3.5 Defining and Naming Themes

The thematic analysis approach needs the themes of the concerned research to be clearly spelt out (Braun, Clarke & Terry, 2015; and Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:89). The themes of this study have been explicitly stated hereunder. Initially, the refinement of the collected data addressed the familiarity with the data followed by initial coding. The following themes were generated through the objectives of the study including the data:

- a) Effects of social media on the selected African languages;
- b) Challenges and opportunities of social media towards conserving the selected African languages;
- c) The analysis of the use of the different languages in their social media profiles;
- d) Convenience of *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* for usage of the selected African languages; and
- e) The attitudes and behaviour of the youth towards the specific African languages on social media.

The following section addresses the quality criteria.

### 5.3.4 Qualitative Criteria

#### 5.3.4.1 Credibility

The researcher ensured that the credibility of this academic work is adhered to. The respondents were offered latitude to be the best judges pertaining to whether the findings have been able to highlight their perceptions and for confirmation, validation and approval. The supervisors of this research consistently audited it. It, therefore, means that the stages were verified and validated by outlining suitable interpretation of the gathered data. According to Shenton (2004:64), “credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness”.

#### 5.3.4.2 Dependability

The methods, techniques, and strategies of this research were clearly spelt out. The dependability of this study was anchored by clear elucidation of the manner in which data were gathered, recorded, presented and interpreted. Moreover, each step was

meticulously completed. The full coverage of the specific subject matter in research enables the reader to comprehend the extent to which appropriate research practices have been observed (Shenton, 2004:71).

#### 5.3.4.3 Transferability

Shenton (2004:69) and Anney (2014:277) postulate that transferability is about the level to which the findings of qualitative research can be reassigned to other subject matters or areas of research. It concerns the transferability of the gathered data from a specific subject matter to other contexts. The in-depth and full description of the settings in which the data would have been collected were provided in this research in an effort to maintain transferability. Transferability was maintained through embarking on a discourse with previous or existing literature relevant to this research.

#### 5.3.4.3 Conformability

The findings of this study were based on the perceptions of participants and settings in the form of qualitative data collected through the focus group interviews and field online observations. Conformability is similar to reliability under quantitative research. The existing literature was used as evidence that confirms the findings in an effort to comply with the features of conformability. According to Anney (2014:279), conformability outlines that the findings of the study or research project have adequate potential to be confirmed and validated by other scholars. The researcher discussed the findings of this research with experts and media scholars.

#### 5.3.5 Reliability and Validity

##### 5.3.5.1 Reliability

In the quantitative context, the facets of this study are reliable. Reliability deals with the manner in which the instruments are accurate in a quantitative study (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:156). The quantitative paradigm instruments employed in this study are accurate. To this end, the study used survey design within a quantitative paradigm. Furthermore, questionnaires were employed as a data collection instrument. These instruments are reliable in a quantitative study and they can be effective in various studies. The researcher is ascertained that the test-retest reliability can be applied to measure the accuracy of the instruments used in this study.

### 5.3.5.2 Validity

According to Bless, Higson-Smith, and Kagee (2006:156), validity addresses the verification of the instruments used in the quantitative study. In this study, the researcher has a comprehensive application of the instruments. The survey design was deployed to deal with the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst youth, particularly how frequent the African languages are used on these platforms. The researcher understood the validity of the questionnaire and statistical analysis in the context of this study. Criterion-related validity can be employed to test/measure the validity of the abovementioned instruments to evaluate it based on known valid.

The subsequent section focuses on the ethical considerations of the research.

## **5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### 5.4.1 Permission for the Study

Before collecting data for this study, the researcher sought research approval from the research and ethics committees of the University of Limpopo. This study observed all critical phases of research ethics as outlined by the University. The Research and Ethics Committee approved the study, ethical clearance is attached at the end of the thesis as an appendix.

### 5.4.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All research ethical principles such as anonymity and privacy, amongst others, were adhered to in this study (Bless *et al.*, 2006:142; and Neuman, 2011:457). The research participants had the right to be treated with dignity and honour (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012:75). Their right to remain anonymous, let alone their privacy, were preserved by the researcher during and after data collection procedure. The names and identity numbers of the participants were not disclosed. Since this study used field online observation, focus groups and questionnaires as data collection mechanisms, the rights of participants were respected at all times. The participants were not pressured to take part in this study. Confidentiality as a key ethical principle was respected in this study. With regard to the audio-taped interviews (focus group

interviews), the material was accessed by the researcher and the supervisors. However, the data collected through field online observations reveal the names of social media users.

#### 5.4.3 Informed Consent

According to Bless *et al.*, (2006:142) as well as Hammersley and Traianou (2012:75), “participants have a right to know what the research is about”. The research participants were informed about the nature of the study; the purpose of embarking on it. The researcher also informed the participants that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from taking part in the study. Participants were given Consent Letter and Consent Forms that they were completed before taking part in the data collection procedure. The researcher also received consent from the *WhatsApp* group chat members.

#### 5.4.4 Aftercare of the Participants

The researcher ensured that the participants are not vulnerable to any harm, either physically or psychologically (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012:75; and Bless, *et al.*, 2006:143). Participants who were likely succumb to any emotional stress as the aftermath of their participation in this research were referred to professionals such as a psychologist and social worker for counselling. However, in this study the participants did not need aftercare services from the researcher.

### **5.5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE METHODOLOGY**

The study used employed three data collection instruments, namely questionnaires, focus group interviews and field online observations. The researcher encountered challenges during data collection procedure with questionnaires because seven of them were not returned. Thus, the researcher analysed 93 questionnaires instead of 100. The other challenge with the questionnaire was that some of the questions were left unanswered. To this end, this data collections instrument did not sufficiently yield positive results, however, the researcher managed to work with the returned questions.

Nevertheless, questionnaires remain the efficient data collection instrument within the quantitative research approach. It is cardinal for emerging researchers to embark on research through questionnaires because it provides detailed information needed in relevant research. Three focus groups were moderated in this study. The main challenge with the focus group interviews was that some of the respondents were reluctant to answer the questions. To a larger extent, some respondents could not answer the simplest questions.

The other detrimental factor with the focus groups was that some respondents were absent from the last two sessions. However, the researcher managed to deal with the aforementioned challenges by ensuring that the active respondents provide all answers needed from the focus group interviews procedure. Although focus group interviews have advantages and disadvantages, it remains an effective tool towards producing insightful discussion amongst respondents in social science research. The emerging researchers should ensure that all respondents provide necessary answers during focus group discussions.

It is important to find a strategy to stimulate active participation in the focus group sessions. The other critical factor concerning focus groups interviews is the use of the recording device to capture all answers. This technique of recording enables the researcher to have all responses. In terms of online field observations, the researcher did not encounter challenges because this instrument allows flexibility. The researcher embarked on this procedure by observing youth's use of languages on social media including the convenience of these platforms for the use of African languages. Field online observation provided in-depth information in the context of this research. The emerging scholars would find it convenient to employ this instrument. This is because in the context of new media research where an analysis of users' behaviour through text, pictures, and videos is a standard practice.

## **5.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER SIX**

This chapter highlighted the research design and methodology, and the manner in which they were deployed in this study. The researcher discussed the research design, sampling methods, population and data collection instruments in this chapter.

The ethical considerations of the research were narrated in detail including the fact that the study went through a series of checkpoints before it was accepted as an ethical investigation. A study should not pose any danger to human beings and the environment alike.

The next chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation.



## CHAPTER 6

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses and interprets the data collected through questionnaires, focus group interviews and field online observations. This procedure ensures that the data are comprehensively analysed and interpreted to address the objectives and the hypotheses of the study. It features three categories. The first category features statistical analysis for quantitative data collected through questionnaires. The second category focuses on thematic analysis for qualitative data gathered through focus group interviews. Lastly, the third category features content analysis for qualitative data collected through field online observations.

The statistical analysis puts more emphasis on yielding results to prove or disapprove the hypothesis of this study. This form of analysis strictly focuses on quantitative data collected through questionnaires. On the other hand, the researcher provides key aspects of the study through thematic analysis and content analysis within the qualitative research paradigm. This, therefore, means that the focus of the qualitative analysis is on the aim and objectives of the study concerning the impact of social media (particularly *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*) in conserving African languages amongst youth in Limpopo Province. The researcher used two instruments namely, focus group interviews and field online observations to collect qualitative data.

The subheadings and themes that are presented in this chapter focus on the following objectives of this study:

- a) To identify the effects of social media on African languages;
- b) To establish the challenges and opportunities of the social media in conserving African languages; and
- c) To analyse the manner in which the youth use different languages in their social media profiles.

On the flip side, the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires are analysed by statistical analysis in an effort to address the following hypotheses:

- a) The lack of frequent usage of African languages on social media suggests they (social media) have a negative impact towards conserving these languages;
- b) The dominance of English on social media has detrimental effects on these languages;
- c) Due to their popularity amongst youth, social media have the potential to help in conserving African languages;
- d) The constant use of African languages by youth on social media could boost their preservation and development; and
- e) The social media systems are not convenient for the use of African languages.

The next section focuses on the analysis of questionnaire data.

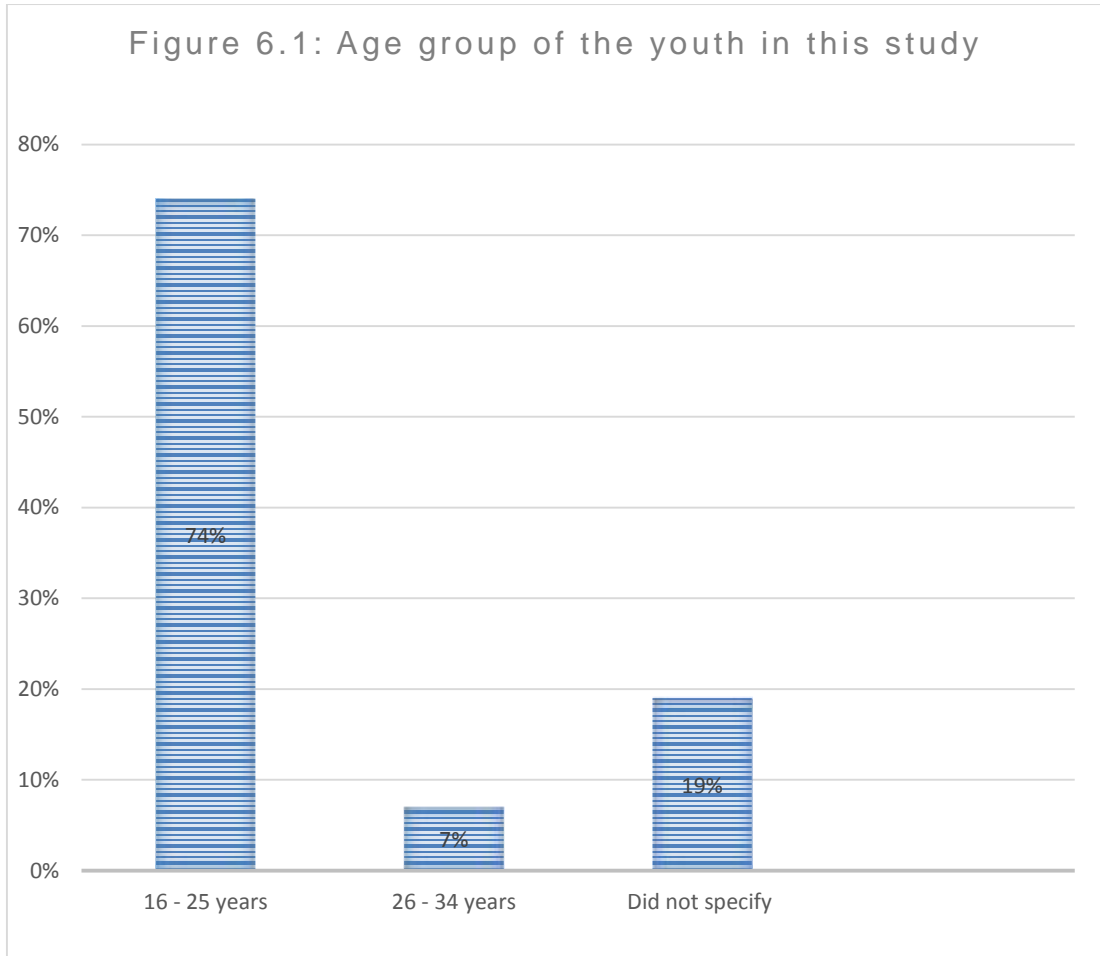
## **6.2 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS: FINDINGS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE DATA**

The demographics of the participants who completed the administered questionnaires are detailed in the next sub-section.

### **6.2.1 Demographics of the Participants**

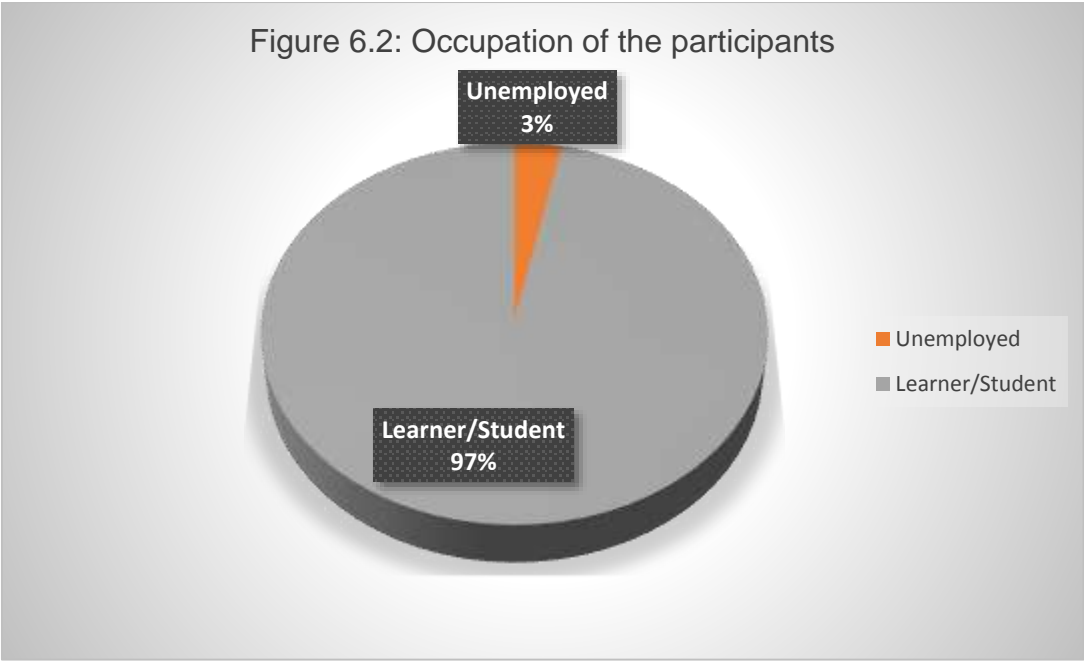
Age group:

Figure 6.1 presents that the majority of the participants in this study were between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. Concerning the participants who were below the age of 18 years, the researcher had to ask permission from their parents and guardians to allow them to participate. There is 74% of those who are between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. Nineteen percent (19%) of the respondents who completed the questionnaires did not specify their age groups. Seven percent (7%) of the respondents are between the ages of 26 and 34. However, all participants in this study are in the age category of youth because they are not over the age of 34 years.



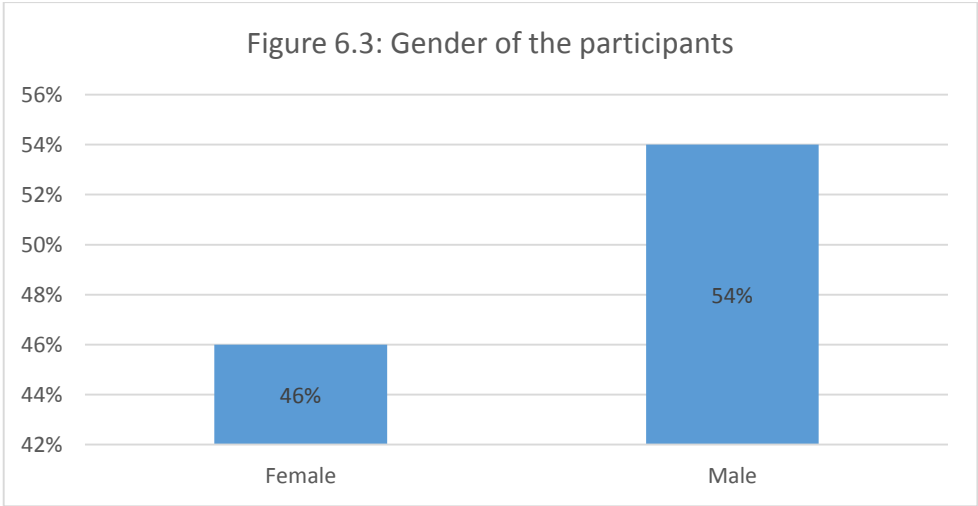
**Occupation:**

An overwhelming majority of the youth who (90%) took part in this study are high school learners and tertiary students respectively. Three respondents specified that they were unemployed. None of them indicated that they are employed.



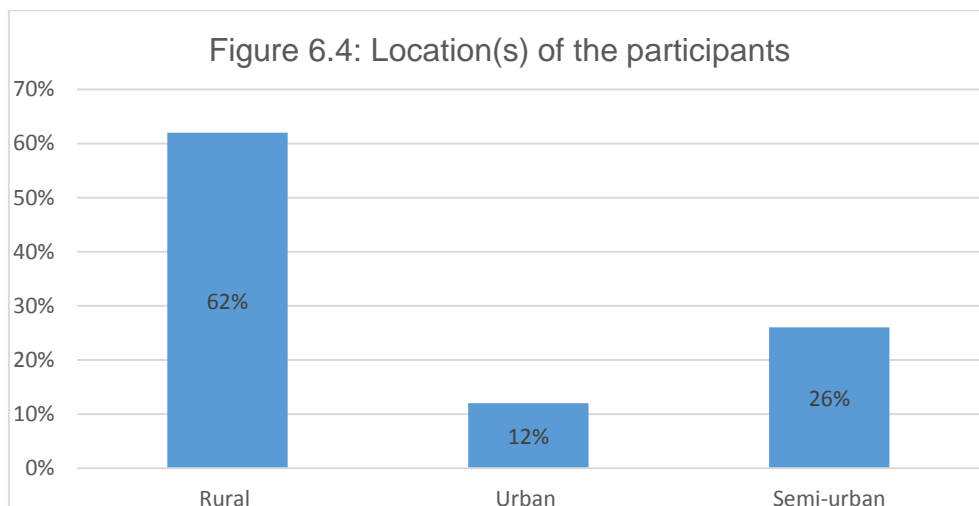
**Gender:**

Figure 6.3 demonstrates that there is no gender parity in the context of the participants in this study. The majority of the participants in this study are males at 54%. On the other hand, there is 46% of female participants.



Location:

Figure 6.4 shows that the majority of the participants in this research are from the rural areas. This sentiment is anchored by a high percentage of 62% of rural dwellers over 12% of those who reside in the urban areas. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the participants are the inhabitants of semi-urban areas.



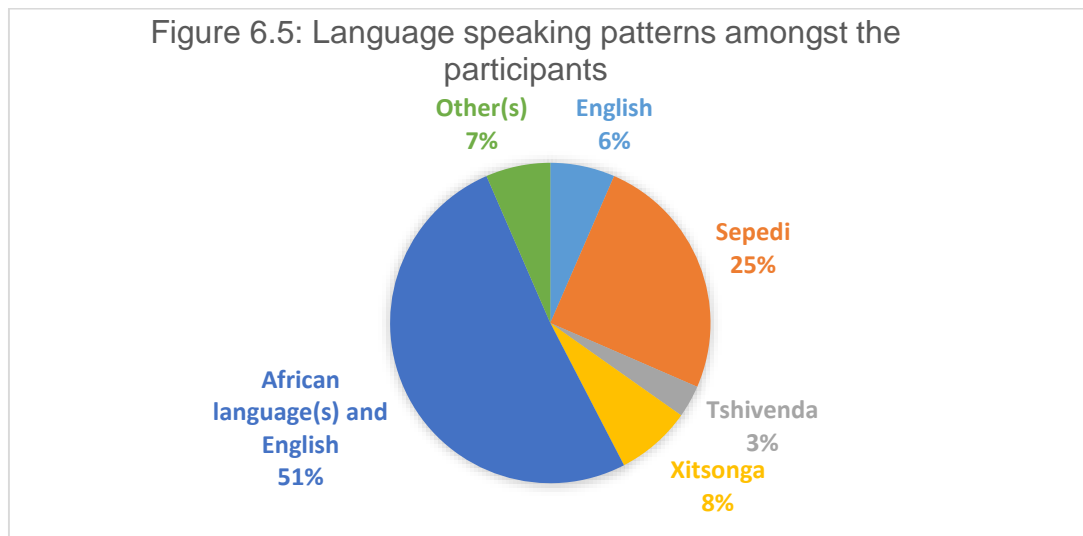
The succeeding section outlines the statistical analysis of data collected through questionnaires.

### 6.2.2 The Language Speaking Patterns amongst the Participants

Figure 6.5 stipulates that outside social media, the majority of the participants speak African languages on a daily basis. Percentages of those who speak the African languages are, namely, Sepedi (25%), Tshivenda (3%) and Xitsonga (8%), which is a total percentage of 36%. The number of participants who speak African languages rockets to 93% including those who use them along with English (51%). It, therefore, suggests that 39% of people prefer to speak their own languages (African languages).

Fifty-one percent (51%) prefer to speak the African languages together with English on a daily basis. Six percent (6%) of the participants speak English on a daily basis, which means the majority of them do not speak this language regularly. There is 7%

of the respondents who speak other African languages, namely, Sesotho, SiSwati, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, and IsiNdebele among others.



### 6.2.3 Social media Users' Preference amongst the Youth

The table below illustrates that the majority of the participants who completed the questionnaires prefer to use both *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*. Forty percent (40%) of the respondents use both *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* as their social media platforms of choice and 36% of the respondents prefer to use *WhatsApp* only without complementing it with other social media sites. *WhatsApp* is the most popular social media platform amongst the youth who participated in this study. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the youth in this study use this instant messaging application and 53% of them use it along with *Facebook* and *Twitter*. There is 8% of the participants that use *Facebook* only.

In total, 60% of the respondents use this social networking site along with *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*. However, there is only 12% of the respondents who use all three popular social media platforms, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. As far as *Twitter* is concerned, there is only one (1%) respondent that uses this microblogging platform. The number increases to 12 including those who use *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* as well. None of the respondents that mentioned the combination of *Facebook* and

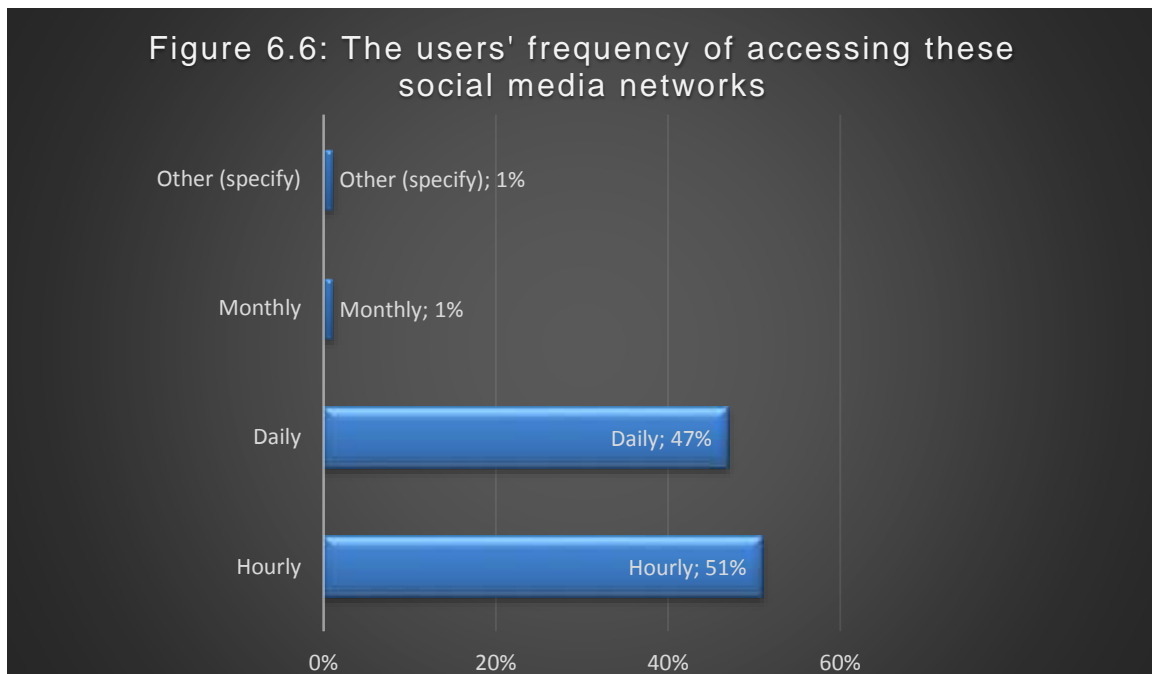
Twitter. To a larger extent, these findings are similar to the focus group interviews findings and global patterns of social media usage.

Table 6.1a: Social media users' preference amongst the youth

Social media	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Facebook (only)	7	8%
Twitter (only)	1	1%
WhatsApp (only)	34	36%
Both (Facebook & WhatsApp)	37	40%
Both (Facebook & Twitter)	0	0%
Both (WhatsApp & Twitter)	1	1%
All of the above (Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp)	11	12%
Other(s)	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

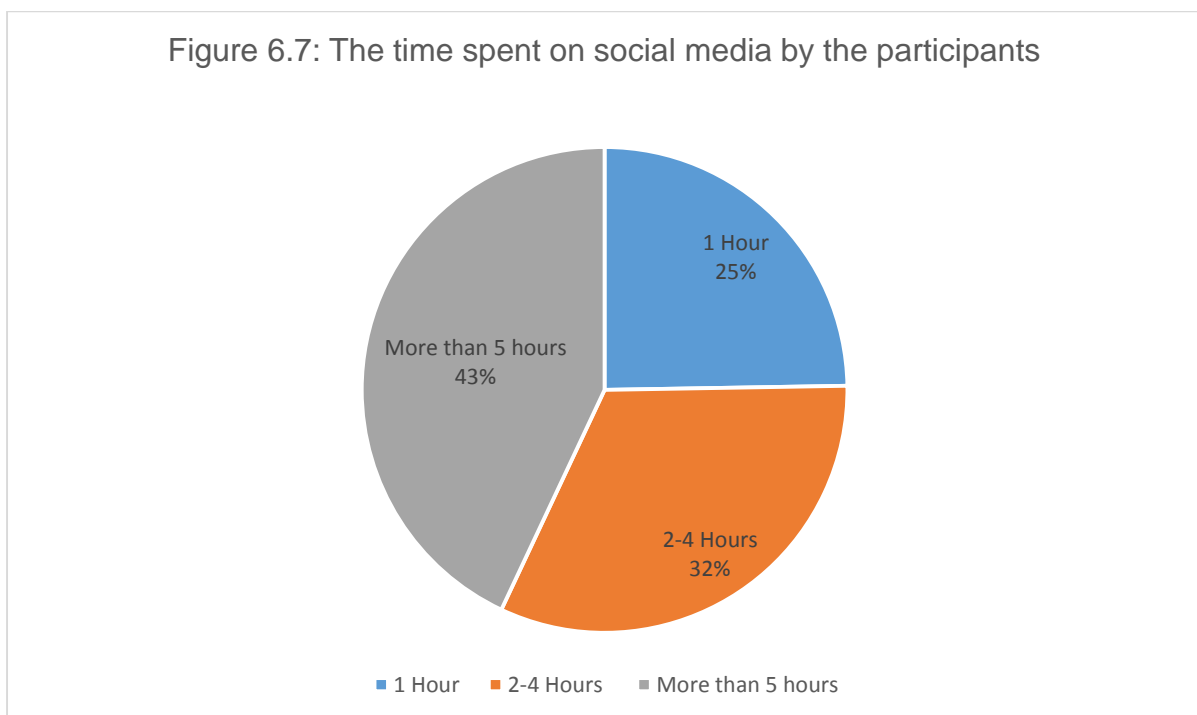
#### 6.2.4 The users' Frequency of accessing these Social media Networks

The majority (51%) of the participants access their social media networks hourly. Forty-seven percent (47%) access their profiles every day and none of them access them weekly. One percent (1%) access the networks once a month. There is only one participant who did not specify their choice.



### 6.2.5 The Amount of Time Spent on Social media

Figure 6.7 illustrates that the majority of youth spend a considerable amount of time active on social media. Forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents spend more than five hours active on social media every day. Out of this percentage, two of them specified that they spend more than seven hours using social media. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the respondents spend approximately two to four hours active on social media platforms on a daily basis. There is 25% of the respondents who indicated that they at least spend an hour on social media every day. It is safe to affirm that the participants are always active on social media.



### 6.2.6 Language Use on Social media amongst Youth

Figure 6.8 shows that the majority of the participants use English whenever they are communicating on social media platforms. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents stated that they use only English as a medium of instruction on their social media profiles. There are only four respondents who mentioned that they only use the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga on their social media profiles. However, 42% of the participants conceded that they use African languages and English in their social media activities at all times.

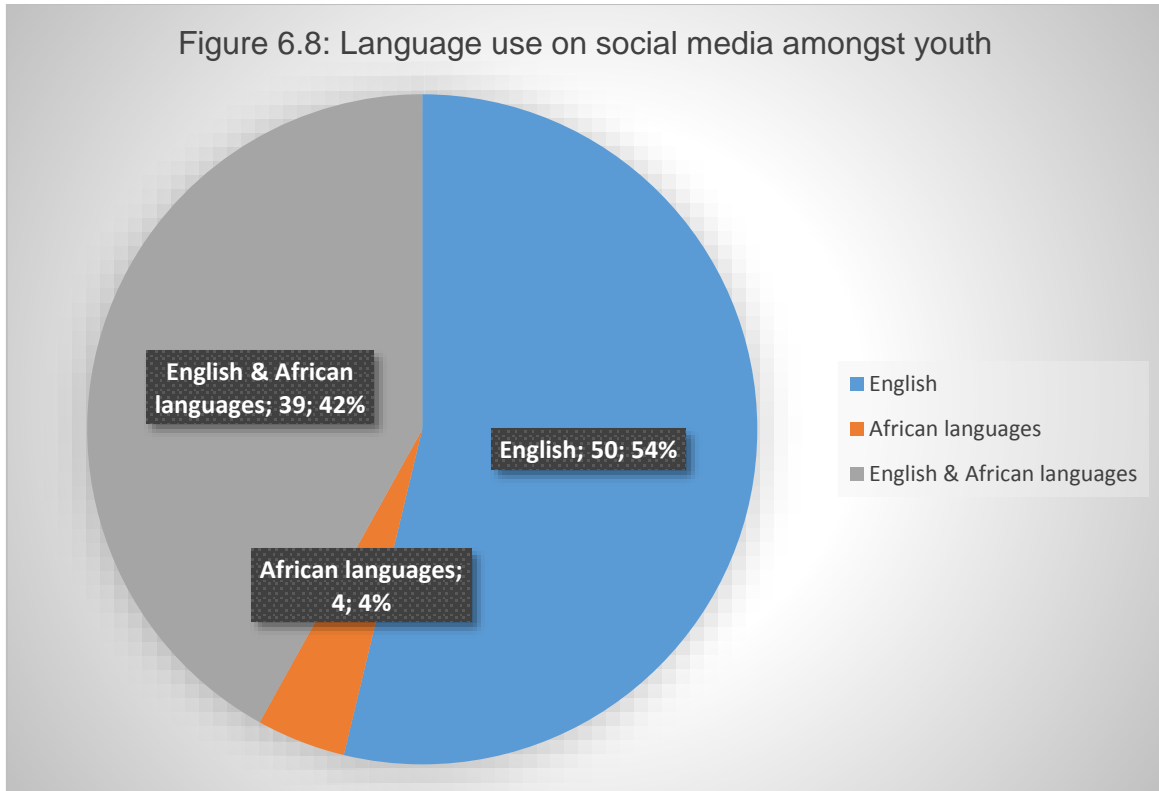


The below findings suggest that English is dominating as a language of choice on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* amongst youth. The participants were also asked to provide reasons for their preference for social media. Fifty-four percent (54%) of those who use English indicated that they prefer the language because it accommodates people from different backgrounds. They further stated that English allows them to shorten words and phrases when they are typing. There are those who believe that English enables them to connect with people from different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the respondents assert that as a medium of instruction many people understand English, hence they prefer it over African languages. They also highlighted that English is simple and it saves time to type using this language. Some of them indicated that it is difficult to type words in African languages because they are too long.

The 42% of the respondents who pointed out that they use African languages and English said the latter enables them to connect with many people across the world without any difficulty. The African languages (particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) are only used because they are their home languages. In addition, they indicated that they use African languages as they know most of the people who speak these languages.

The four participants who revealed that they only use African languages (particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga), indicated that they use them because they are their home languages/mother tongues.

Figure 6.8: Language use on social media amongst youth



### 6.2.7 The Convenience of the African Languages on Social media Platforms

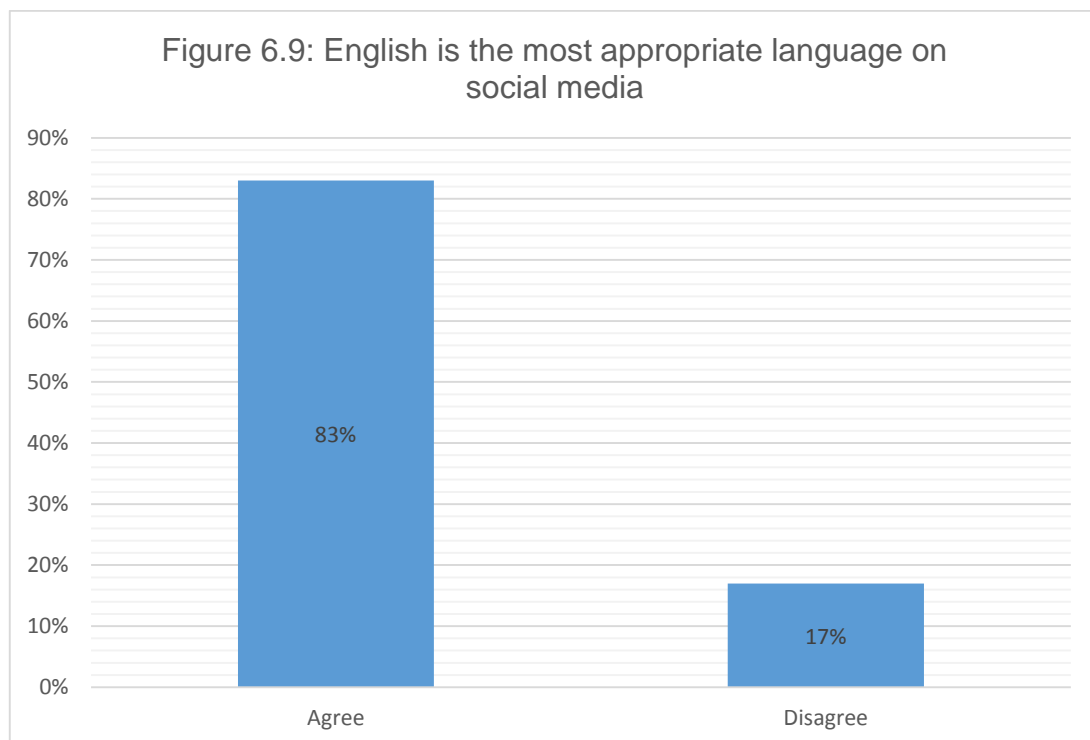
Table 6.2a below shows that the majority of the respondents believe that the African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) are convenient to be used on social media platforms. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents specified that the African languages are convenient for social media. In contrast, 25% of the respondents said that the African languages are not convenient for social media. There is only one (1%) respondent who was not sure about the answer.

Table 6.2a: The convenience of the African languages on Social media platforms

Convenient [YES]	Not convenient [NO]	In between
69 (74%)	23 (25%)	1 (1%)

### 6.2.8 The Status of English on Social media

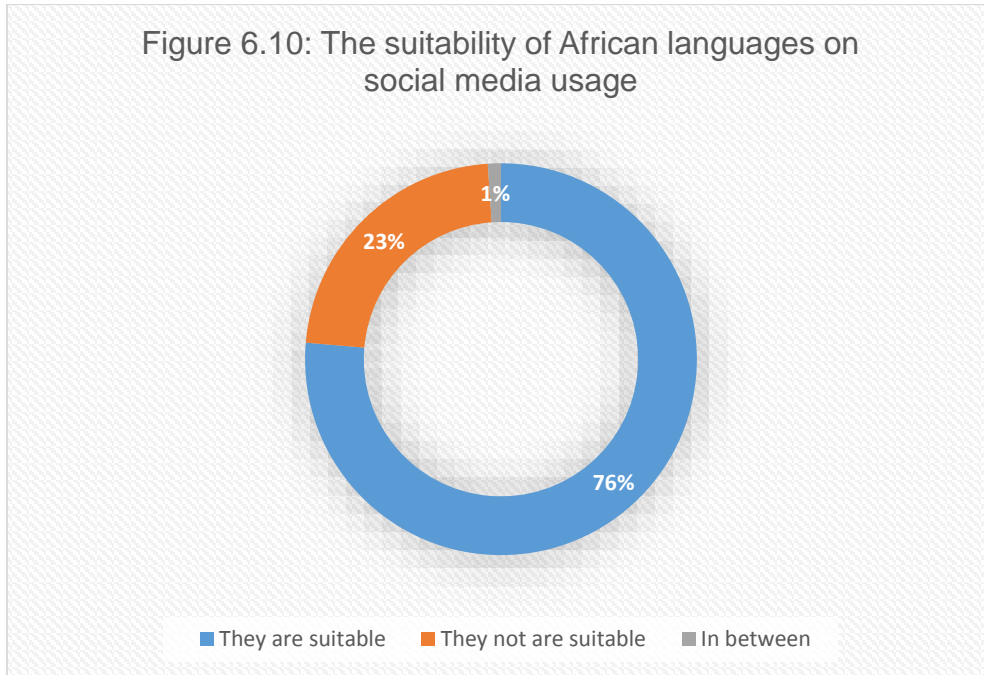
Figure 6.9 stipulates that the majority of the respondents claim that English is the most suitable language for social media usage ahead of the African languages. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents assert that English is the most appropriate language on social media platforms. On the flip side, 17% of the respondents have a contrasting view, they affirm that English is not the most appropriate language on social media platforms.



### 6.2.9 The Suitability of African Languages on Social media

Figure 6.10 illustrates that the majority of social media users (youth) believe that African languages are suitable for social media. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the participants in this research pointed out that the African languages are suitable for social media platforms. In complete contrast, 23% of the respondents stated that African languages are not suitable for social media platforms. One respondent was in between.

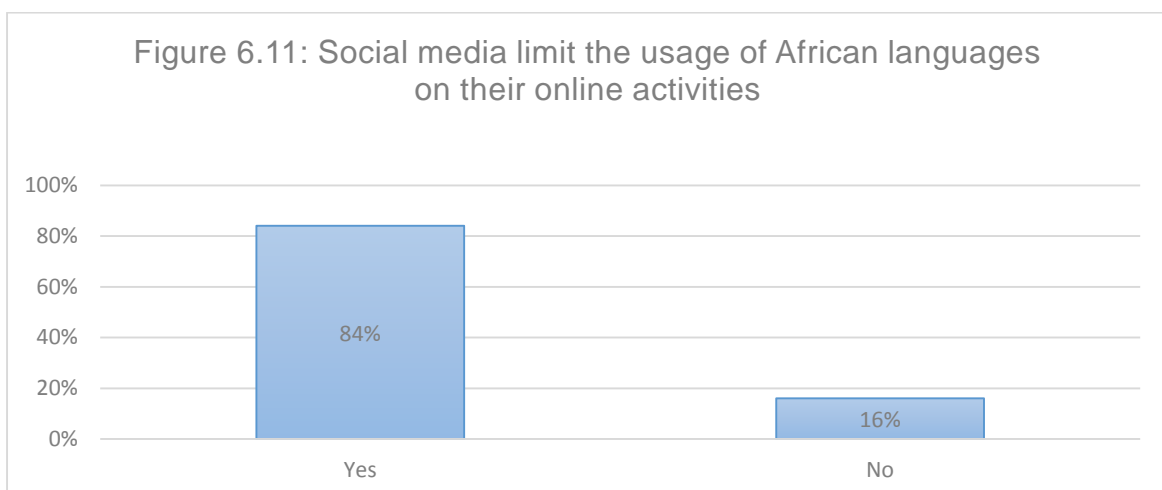
Figure 6.10: The suitability of African languages on social media usage



#### 6.2.10 Social media Limit the Usage of the African Languages

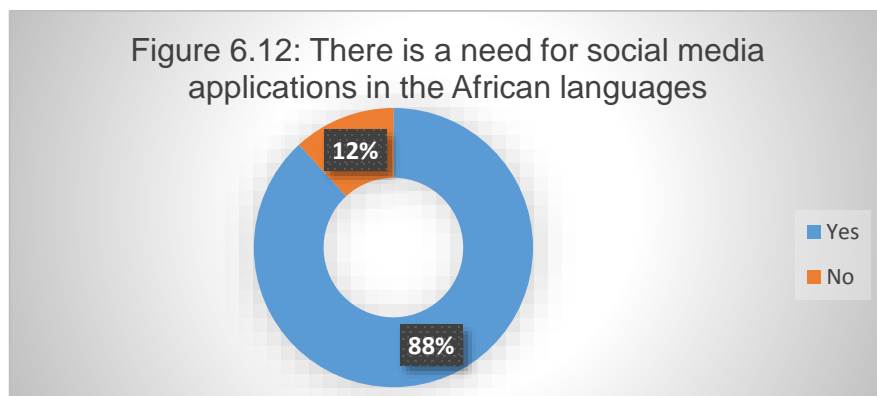
Figure 6.11 illustrates that the majority of the respondents mentioned that social media limit the usage of African languages on their online activities. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the participants believe that social media limit the usage of African languages on online activities. Sixteen percent (16%) of the respondents posit that social media do not limit the usage of African languages on their online activities.

Figure 6.11: Social media limit the usage of African languages on their online activities



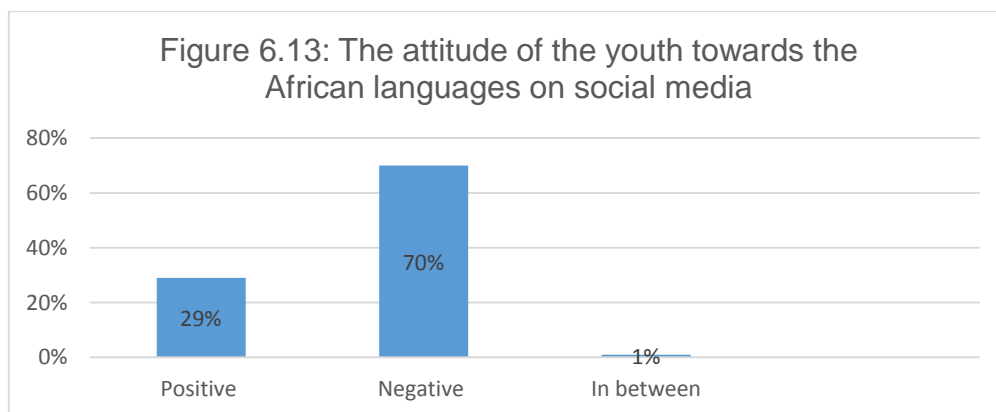
### 6.2.11 The Need for Social media Applications in the African Languages

Figure 6.12 shows that the majority of the youth who participated in this study stated that there is a need for the African languages based social media applications to be established in order to preserve these languages. There is 88% of the participants that unanimously agree that the African languages based social media applications should be established. In contrast, 12% state that there is no need for such social media applications to be established.



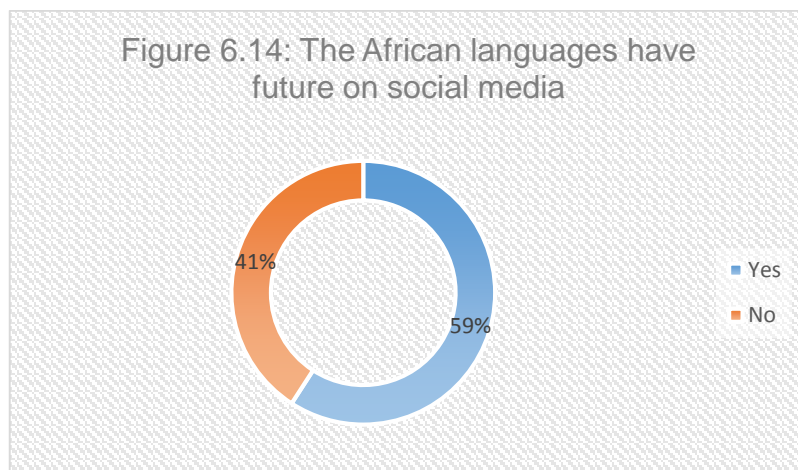
### 6.2.12 The Attitude of the Youth towards the African Languages

Figure 6.13 illustrates that the majority of youth who speak African languages have a negative attitude towards their own languages on social media. As far as a percentage is concerned, 70% of the respondents indicated that they have a negative attitude towards the African languages. On the flip side, 29% of the respondents said that they have a positive attitude towards the African languages on social media. One participant was in between.



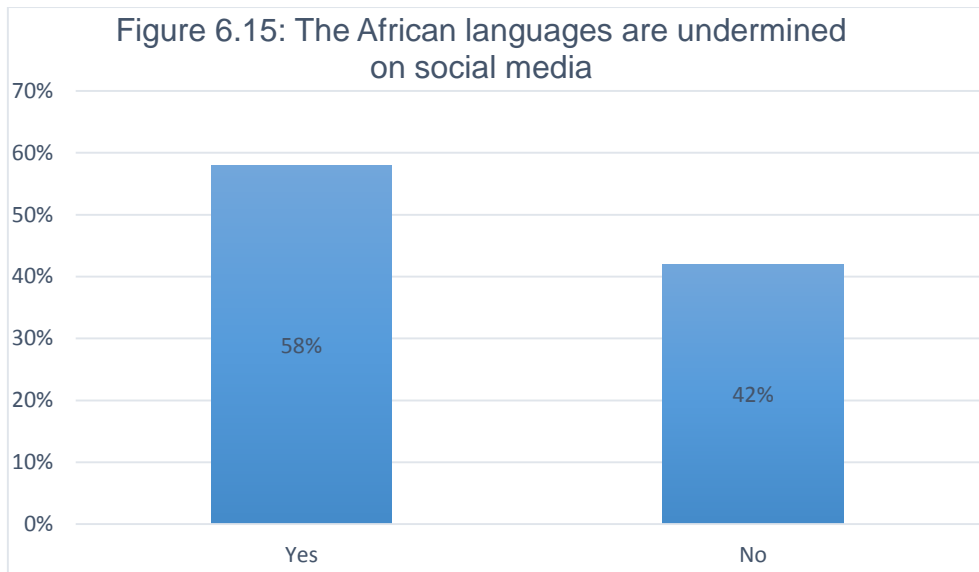
### 6.2.13 The Future of African Languages on Social media

Figure 6.14 demonstrates that the majority of the respondents postulate that the African languages have future in the social media platforms. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents claim that the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga have a bright future in the social media platforms. Forty-one percent (41%) of the respondents indicate that the African languages do not have a future on social media.



### 6.2.14 The African Languages are undermined on Social media

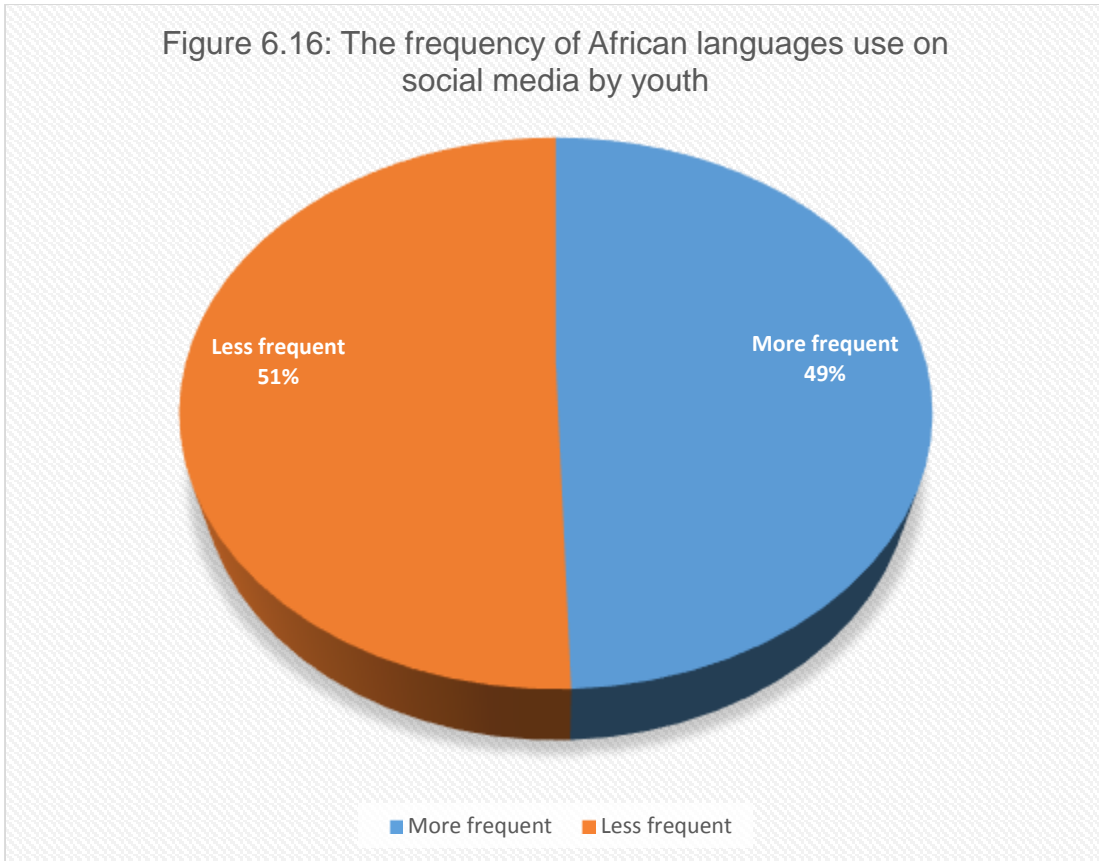
Figure 6.15 illustrates that the majority of the participants suggest that the owners of the social media applications undermine the African languages. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the youth in this study indicated that the owners of the social media platforms take the African languages for granted. Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents indicated that the owners of social media do not undermine the African languages. This assertion is supported by some of the responses from the focus group interviews.



### 6.2.15 The Frequency of African Languages Use on Social media

Figure 6.16 demonstrates that the slight majority of the youth who took part in this research do not frequently use the African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) on their social media accounts. The difference between those who frequently use the African languages and the ones who do not is only 1%. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the respondents do not frequently use the African languages on social media. In contrast, there is 49% of those who indicated that they use African languages more frequently on social media.

Figure 6.16: The frequency of African languages use on social media by youth

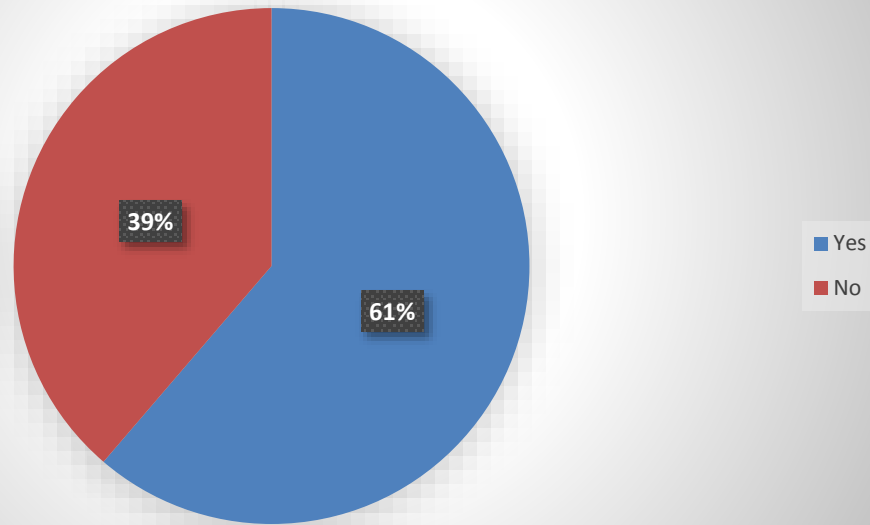


#### 6.2.16 The Convenience of Social media for African Languages

The majority of the participants indicated that social media are convenient for African languages. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the participants highlighted that social media are convenient for the African languages. In contrast, 39% believe that social media are not convenient for African languages.



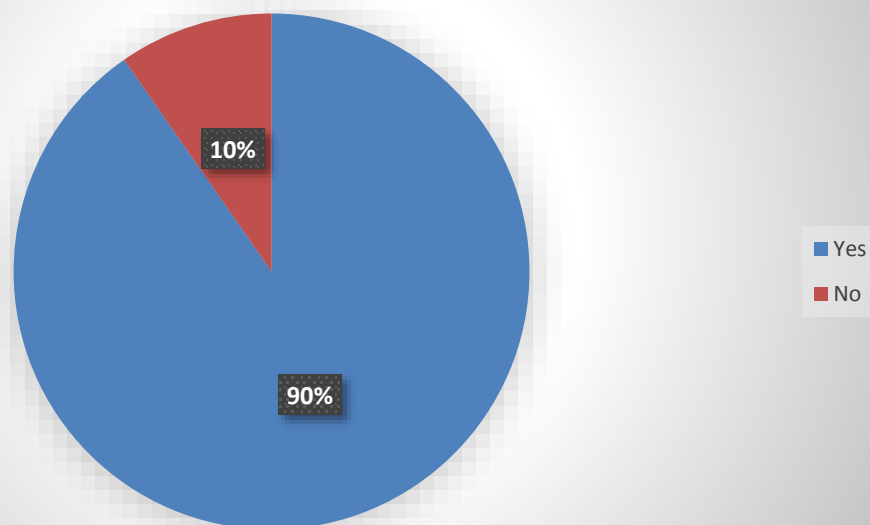
Figure 6.17: The Convenience of Social media for African Languages



### 6.2.17 The lack of Frequent use of African languages on Social media has bad repercussions on these languages

The majority of the youth (90%) in this study pointed out that the lack of frequent use of African languages on social media has bad repercussions on these languages. However, there is 10% of those who believe that this does not have bad repercussions on African languages.

Figure 6.18: The lack of frequent use of African languages on social media has bad repercussions on these languages



### 6.2.18 Pressure to Use English on Social media

Figure 6.19 demonstrates that the majority of the participants are pressurised by the popularity of English to use it on social media platforms ahead of the African languages, particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents admit that they are pressured to use English on social media platforms. Thirty percent (30%) posit that they are not pressured to use English on social media.

The 70% of the participants who feel pressurised to use English over African languages because most of their friends on social media do not speak one common language. There are those who revealed that English is more convenient for social media because their friends do not understand their home languages. Furthermore, they indicated that the majority of their friends do not prefer to use African languages on social media hence they resort to English. For these participants, English is perceived as a language that is understood by many people across the world. Some of them suggested that using English on social media allows them to accommodate everyone including those who do not speak the African languages.

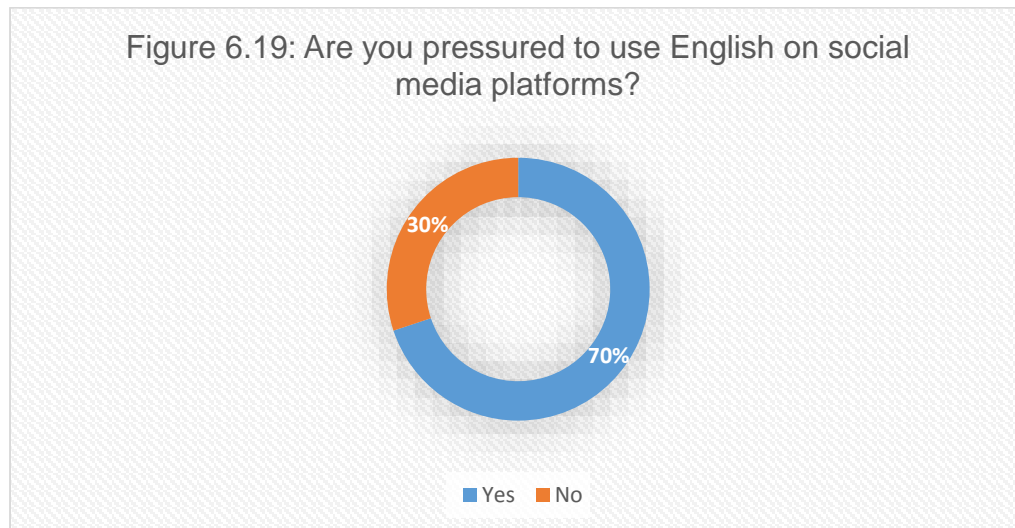
They added that English is conducive for social media because one is allowed to type quickly using autofill, auto-correct, short phrases, and abbreviations. These respondents pointed out that English is the medium of instruction at their schools and that makes it easy for them to use it everywhere including on social media.

There are those participants who are pressurised to use English because some people do not understand their messages when they are conveyed in the African languages. Some participants believe that when they comment in their home languages on social media their peers would take them for granted. There are those who believe that social media were not designed to suit African languages because when they type words in African languages the system underline them. As a result, they are pressurised to use English on their social media accounts.

In contrast, 30% of the respondents pointed out that they are not pressurised to use English over the African languages on social media platforms. Because they prefer to use the African languages ahead of English because these languages are their mother

tongues. They also indicated that most of the people they communicate with speak the same African languages like them. There are those who indicated that there is no pressure at all because the majority of the people they communicate with use African languages.

Some have admitted that they normally communicate with their families and friends; thus there is no need to use English as they all speak one African language. On the other hand, there are those who mentioned that there is no pressure, since their friends understand both English and African languages. Moreover, some participants believe that the manner in which they want to present an issue determines the language to be used at that particular time. In other words, these participants are not pressurised to use English. To some extent, these participants use English as well, more especially when they speak with people from different ethnic groups. Others have indicated that it is a matter of choice to use English and that has nothing to do with pressure. There are those who said that they are not under pressure to use English because are able to switch from it to their African languages whenever they want.

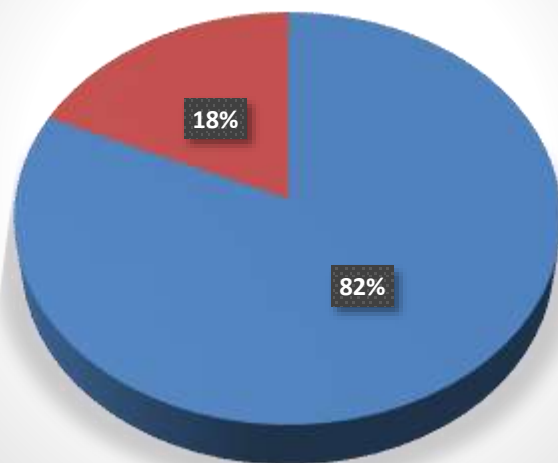


6.2.19 African languages are marginalised on Social media, therefore, this will have a negative effect on these languages

The majority of the participants in this study agree that African languages are marginalised on social media, consequently, these languages will be negatively affected. Eighty-two percent (82%) concur that African languages will be negatively

affected because they are marginalised on social media. They pointed out that the more people use English ahead of the African languages the more the latter are adversely affected. Moreover, they postulate that future generations would not know much about African languages because English is used a lot by young people. On the other hand, 18% of the participants state that the African languages will not be negatively affected by their social media status. They assert that the fact that the African languages are spoken a lot outside social media shows that they will not be adversely affected by social media statistics.

Figure 6.20: African languages are marginalised on social media, therefore, this will have negative effect on these languages



#### 6.2.20 Summary of the Findings from Quantitative Data

The following findings are the summary of statistical analysis presented above and they are tested against the hypotheses of the study in Chapter eight:

- a) In terms of social media users' preference amongst the youth, the study found that the majority of them prefer to use both *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*. There is only one participant who prefers *Twitter*.
- b) The study has discovered that the majority of the participants prefer to use the African languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) and English outside the social media sites.

- c) The study has discovered that the majority of the participants prefer to use English to communicate on social media. However, there is a significant number of those who prefer their African languages and English.
- d) Majority of the participants spend approximately more than five hours on social media daily.
- e) Despite the fact that the majority of the participants prefer to use English to communicate on social media most of them believe that the African languages are convenient on these platforms.
- f) The above finding is supported by this one which suggests that the youth in this study believe that the African languages are suitable for social media.
- g) Although the participants think that African languages are suitable for use on social media, the majority of them do not use these languages more frequently. However, the study also discovered that there is a decent number of those who use African languages more frequently. The difference between those who frequently use African languages on social media and those who do not is only a percent.
- h) The study has discovered that the majority of the youth have a negative attitude towards the African languages on social media.
- i) The youth in this research believe that there is a need for social media applications that operate in the African languages.
- j) The research discovered that majority of the participants postulate that African languages are undermined on social media.
- k) The study has discovered that most of the youth believe that social media limit the usage of African languages.
- l) Despite the abovementioned finding, the majority of the youth suggest that African languages have future on social media.
- m) Although the youth believe that the African languages have future on social media, most of them posit that English is the most appropriate language on social media.
- n) The research discovered that majority of the youth feel pressurised to use English on social media ahead of the African languages.

The following section addresses the thematic analysis of focus group interviews data.

### **6.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS: FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS DATA**

During the data collection procedure, the researcher managed to moderate three focus groups. The purpose of these focus group interview sessions was to investigate the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst the youth of Limpopo Province use. Amongst others, issues that were discussed in the focus group interview sessions include the language used on social media and convenience of social media for the African languages.

The first group (Unit A) comprised of seven participants, the second group (Unit B) had eight members and the third one (Unit C) had 11 interviewees. A total of 26 participants were part of the focus group interviews. The positive aspect about the members of these focus groups was that all participants were well acquainted with *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. As a result, that made them relevant and suitable subjects within the confines of this study. The other critical aspect was that all participants in this research were below the ages of 34 years, which is the cut-off age for youth.

The majority of the focus group interview members were between the ages of 16-34 years. The researcher used the services of three research assistants for the moderation of the focus group interview sessions. Each research assistant was assigned a group to work with and that was administered by the researcher. The three focus groups met five times respectively and each session dealt with a unique set of questions. In simplest terms, the questions and issues discussed during the sessions were not repeated. Due to active participation from some of the members of the focus group interviews (from all three groups) each session took approximately an hour to be completed.

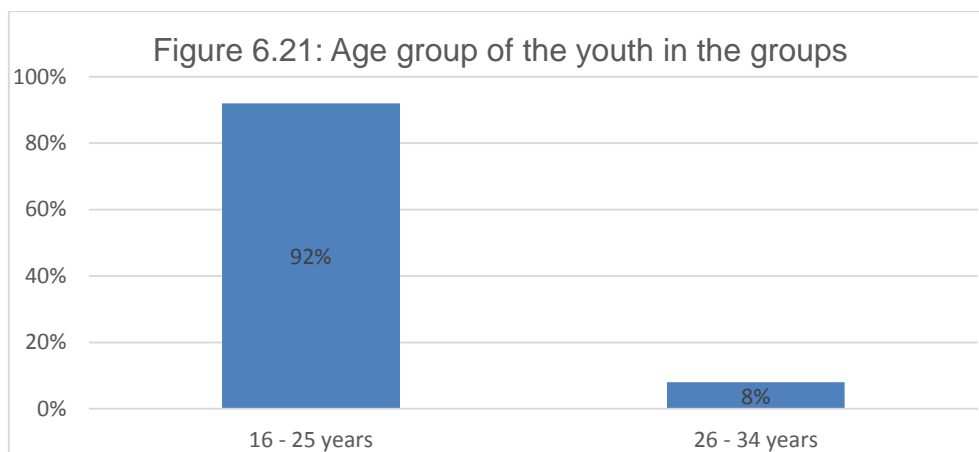
Despite the fact that different sets of questions were prepared per session without duplication from the previous ones, some questions would overlap to other sessions because of prolonged arguments raised by some of the participants. The researcher ensured that all sessions were recorded and filed for transcribing purposes. The questions were further expanded to reach saturation of data. The transcribed discussions are analysed in this chapter.

The demographic details of the focus group participants are outlined in the next subsection.

### 6.3.1 Demographics of the Focus Group Interview Participants

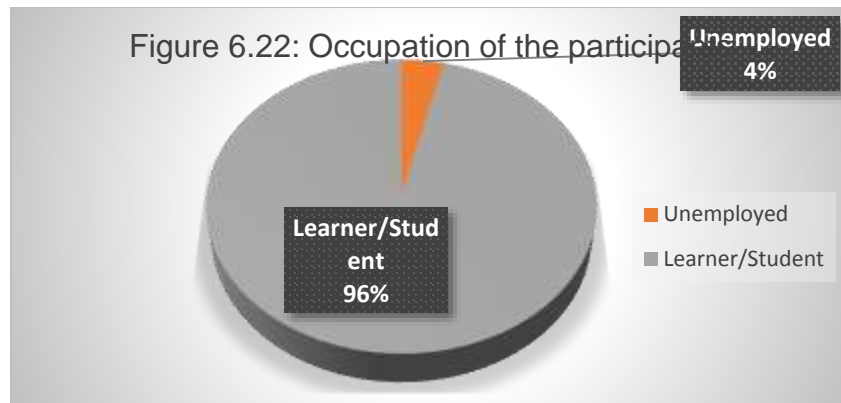
Age group:

Figure 6.21 indicates that the majority of the participants from the focus groups are between the ages of 16 and 25 years. In terms of the groups, in Unit, A all members (seven of them) were between the ages of 16 and 25 years. The eight participants in Unit B are within the same age group (16-25 years). Unit C had only two members who are between the ages of 26-34 years. In total, 24 (92%) members of the groups are in the same age group (16- 34 years) and only two participants are between the ages of 26 and 34 years.



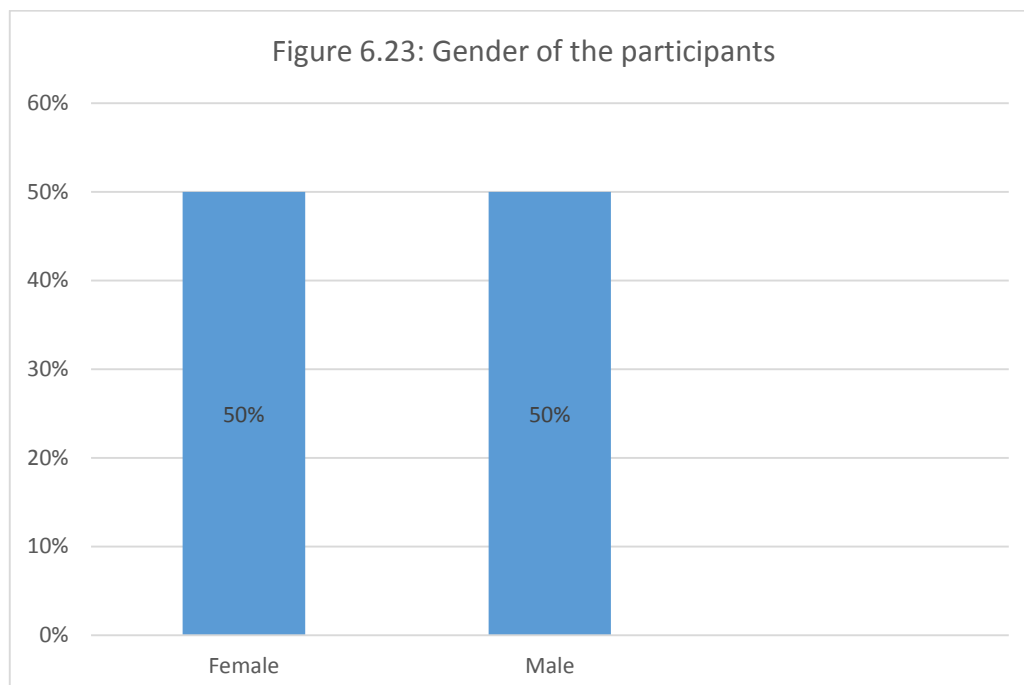
Occupation:

The majority of the youth who participated in the focus group interview sessions are high school learners and tertiary students. A total of 25 participants (90%) are still at school and some of them are tertiary students. All members in Unit A and Unit C, are in the category of learner/students. There is only one participant who is unemployed in Unit B.



### Gender:

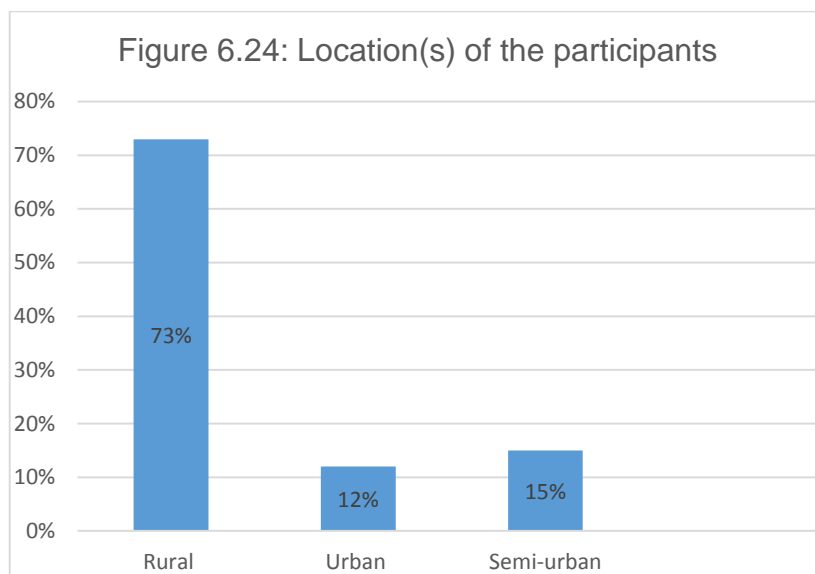
Figure 6.23 demonstrates that there is gender equivalence in the context of the focus group participants in this study. Thirteen (13) male and 13 female participants were part of the focus group sessions. However, the gender parity was not reflected during the sessions as in Unit A, the female (five of them) participants were more than their male (only two) counterparts. Whilst in Unit B, five female participants against three males. Unit C, comprised of eight male participants with only three females.





### Location:

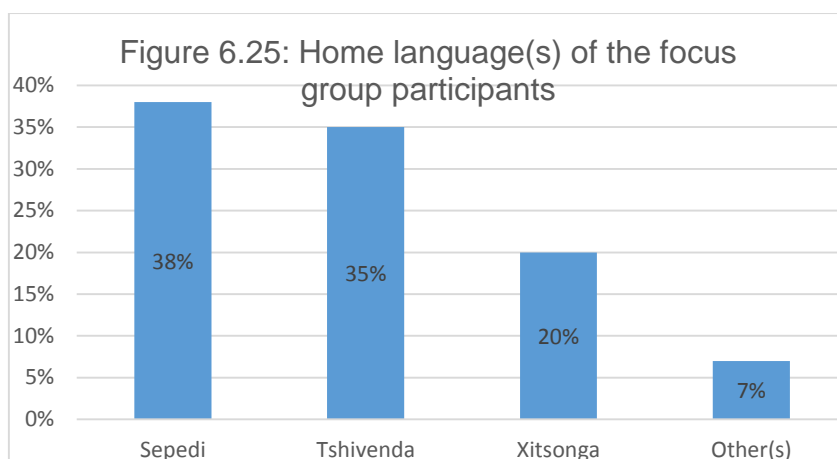
Figure 6.24 indicates that the majority of the focus group interview participants are from rural areas. Out of 26 focus group participants, 19 (73%) of them are from the rural areas, three (12%) are from the urban dwellings. Only four (15%) respondents reside in semi-urban areas. Six participants from Unit A reside in the rural areas and only one is from the urban areas. In Unit B, six respondents come from the rural areas and one apiece from semi-urban and urban dwellings, respectively. From the total of 11 participants in Unit C, seven of them reside in the rural areas, three from semi-urban and one from urban abodes.



### Home language(s) of the focus group participants:

Figure 6.25 indicates that a slight majority of the focus group interviews (38%) of the participants speak Sepedi. There is about 35% of those who speak Tshivenda and 20% speak Xitsonga. Seven percent (7%) of the participants speak other languages such as SiSwati, Setswana, IsiNdebele, and IsiZulu.

The next section presents the focus group discussions transcribed from three focus groups.



The three groups are, namely, Unit A, Unit B and Unit C. The analysis of the transcribed data is outlined in sequence.

### 6.3.1 Unit A: Group 1 (Focus Group Data: Thematic Analysis)

#### Table 6.1: Social media Accounts that Respondents Have

In this table, three respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 stated that he subscribed to two social media, Respondent 2 had three social media networks accounts, while Respondent 3 had four social media network accounts. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 8) did not provide responses.

Theme 1: Number of Social Network Accounts	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes”
Question 1: How many Social media accounts do you have?	1	2
	2	3
	3	4
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

#### Table 6.2: Findings: The Frequency of Social media Usage

In this table, only three respondents provided answers: The three respondents log on their social media accounts more frequent. Respondent 1 spends two hours per week on both *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*. Respondent 2 spend every night on social media. On the other hand Respondent, 3 uses *WhatsApp* on a daily basis. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 8) did not provide answers.

Theme 2: Time Spent on Social	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 2: How often do you log on into your Social media accounts?	1	Two hours per week – ( <i>Facebook &amp; WhatsApp</i> )
	2	Every night
	3	Daily ( <i>WhatsApp</i> )
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.3: Findings: The Amount of Time Spent on Social media per Week**

The respondents state that they spent a lot of time on social media. Respondent 1 stated that he spent only two hours. Respondent 3 mentioned that she spent 150 hours per week on social media. Other interviewees (i.e., Respondents 4 to 7) did not respond to the question.

Theme 5.3:	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 3: How many hours do you spend on your Social media accounts per week?	1	2 hours
	2	No answer
	3	150 to 168 hours per week
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.4: The Most Used Social media Network**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: They mostly use *WhatsApp* more than *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Respondent 1 uses *WhatsApp* because it is easily accessible. Respondent 2 uses *WhatsApp* because it is affordable and Respondents 3 and 4 use *WhatsApp* but they did not provide reasons. Respondent 5 mostly uses *WhatsApp* because of its effectiveness. Respondent 6 mostly uses *WhatsApp* because it is simple, fast and convenient. In complete contrast, Respondent 7 uses *Facebook* because it provides all the necessary information concerning what happens in the world. None of the respondents mentioned *Twitter* and Respondent 8 did not answer.

Theme 4: The most used Social media network	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 4: Which Social media network do you mostly use? And Why?	1	<i>WhatsApp</i> , because it is easily accessible
	2	<i>WhatsApp</i> safe cost and it’s cheaper.
	3	<i>WhatsApp</i>
	4	<i>WhatsApp</i>
	5	<i>WhatsApp</i> because of its effectiveness

	6	I mostly use <i>WhatsApp</i> because it's simple, fast and convenient it's something that you can text now and the recipient will receive the messages unlike <i>Facebook</i> or other media where people restrict their data whereby the recipient will take time trying to login.
	7	I use <i>Facebook</i> because it brings out all the information about what is happening around the world and am interested in knowing what is happening around the world
	8	No answer

**Table 6.5: Access Techniques of Social media amongst Youth**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: They have similar techniques of accessing social media and mobile phones are commonly used. Respondents 1 and 2 access social media through their mobile phones (i.e., cell phones). Respondents 3 and 4 access social media through both mobile phones and computers. Respondents 5, 7 and 8 did not provide answers.

Theme 5: Access techniques of Social media amongst youth	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 5: How do you access your Social media networks?	1	Through cell phone
	2	Cell phone
	3	Cell phone and computer
	4	Phone and computer
	5	No answer
	6	I use my cell phone to access the network but if I don't have data I use the computer and access them
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.6: The Affordability of Social media for the Users**

In this table, four respondents provided answers. They have contrasting views concerning the affordability of accessing social media. Respondents 1 and 2 believe that social media are affordable. Contrary to their view, Respondent 3 points out that it is expensive to access social media because of high data costs. Respondent 4 believes that the whole issue depends on the network service providers as some are expensive and others are cheap. Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8 did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 6: The affordability of Social media for the users</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 6:</b> Do you think it is affordable to access these networks?	1	Yes I think it is affordable
	2	It's affordable
	3	No data is expensive and we use a lot of money
	4	I think it depends on the network that you are using because other networks are expensive and others are cheaper
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.7: The Purpose of Social media**

In this table, four respondents answered the question. Respondents 1, 2, 3 and 4 stated that the main purpose of social media is to communicate. Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8 refrained from answering this question.

<b>Theme 7: The purpose of Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 7:</b> What is the main purpose of the Social media networks?	1	Its main purpose is to communicate with people and get informed about the things that are happening around you and the people who you are socialising with, communication is the key.
	2	With <i>WhatsApp</i> is to keep in contact with the people who are close to me
	3	To connect with everyone regardless of the distance
	4	To enhance and improve communication
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.8: The Outlook of Social media amongst the Youth**

In this table, four respondents provided answers. The respondents postulate that the main purpose of social media is to communicate and to share information. Respondent 1 states that the main purpose of social media is to communicate and get information about developments around the world. Respondent 2 mentions that the purpose of *WhatsApp* is to contact people who are closer to him. Respondent 3 regards the purpose of social media that enables her to connect with people across distance. Respondent 4 posits that social media are meant to enhance communication. Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8 did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 8: The outlook of Social media amongst the youth</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 8:</b> Do you think these Social media networks meet your expectations? And Why?	1	Yes they do and I can even send documents and it makes it easier, I can't only do that on campus
	2	Yes it does because every time I want to communicate with people I do that without any fail
	3	For me, it's not
	4	Yes definitely because they have no boundaries
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.9: The Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

As far as this table is concerned, seven respondents provided answers: There are contrasting responses regarding the language that they normally use on social media. Respondent 1 uses English because of its convenience and he indicates that the use of home language restricts him as he cannot type some of the alphabets in his mother tongue. Respondent 2 indicates that he uses Sepedi because most of the people that he communicates with speak this language. Respondent 3 uses both English and Xitsonga, the former is used with the people who speak the language so is with the latter. Respondent 4 uses Tsotsitaal (Slang) because it is a mixture of languages. Respondent 5 uses English on social media, her assumption is that everyone knows English. Respondent 6 admits that he uses different languages but when he communicates with someone who speaks a different home language he resorts to using English. Respondent 7 uses Sepedi because it is her home language. Respondent 8 abstained from providing a response.

<b>Theme 9: The youth's language preference on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 9:</b> Which language do you normally use in your Social media account(s) and Why?	1	Ok! well I use English because I think it's the only language that is communicable if the word exists because if I use my home language I might not be able to type all the alphabets like 'š' and some people won't even understand
	2	I use Sepedi because most of the people I chat with are Pedis
	3	Xitsonga and English, I use English to those who speak English and for Tsonga people I use Xitsonga
	4	I use Tsotsitaal language because it's simple and it's a mixture of various language
	5	I use English because I think we all know English
	6	I use different languages because there are many factors that affect that such as time language efficiency like when

		I communicate with a Tsonga I only safe time and type in English as a medium of instruction
	7	I use Sepedi because it's my home language and I would like to stick to that hence my friends are Pedis
	8	No answer

**Table 6.10: Convenience of Social media for African Language Speakers**

In this table, four respondents provided answers. The respondents have divided views concerning the convenience of social media for the speakers of African languages. Respondent 1 indicates that the use of social media would yield a negative response from the other users. Respondent 2 argues that the use of the African languages on social media would not stimulate interaction as people seldom read the comments. Respondents 3 and 4 enunciate that the social media are convenient for the speakers of African languages because if people speak one language, e.g., Xitsonga or IsiNdebele they could use that language on *Facebook* to communicate with one another. The other four respondents (viz., Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 10: Convenience of Social media for African language speakers</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 10:</b> Are Social media networks convenient for people who want to use indigenous African languages in their respective accounts? Please give a reason for your answer?	1	You will get only one like because not all the people are Pedis
	2	I don't think it's convenient because people won't even bother to read or comment they will just pass
	3	Yes it is convenient because if let's say all my friends on <i>Facebook</i> are Tsongas then it's convenient to use the language that you all understand
	4	Yes, I was about to say that, if most of the people you socialise with on <i>Facebook</i> are Ndebeles then use IsiNdebele to communicate with them
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.11: The Status of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: The majority of the respondents are not happy with the plight of the African languages on social media. Respondent 1 postulates that it is sad for the African languages since people who should preserve African languages are conducting interviews in English. Respondent 2 points out that he feels sad because the developers of social media speak English and they do not

recognise the African languages. Respondent 3 feels discriminated and Respondent 4 does not care about the stance of the African languages on social media. Respondent 5 indicates that the engineers of the mobiles phones are from abroad, hence the settings are in English and the African words are not recognised. Respondents 6 feels left out because African languages are not recognised on *Facebook*. Respondents 7 and 8 did not provide answers.

Theme 11: The status of African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 11: African languages are literally overshadowed in the cyberspace (particularly on Social media networks), how do you feel about this?	1	I feel sad because the person who is trying to preserve in English it means you don't preserve your language hence you are doing the interviews in English
	2	I feel disappointed because the people who are creating these networks by people who use English as their home language and our languages are not recognised.
	3	I feel discriminated because I feel like I come from another country my language is not recognised
	4	I don't care myself its fine
	5	I really can't say I feel bad or good about that because if you can see the people who did the phones are from abroad that is why the settings are in English that is why when we type some of the words are not recognised so I can say its colonised
	6	I feel disappointed because we are left out even our languages are not there on <i>Facebook</i>
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.12: Special Social media Applications for African Languages**

In this table, only two respondents provided answers: The respondents believe that there is no need to introduce special social media applications for African languages. Respondent 1 states the introduction of special applications for African languages will still marginalise other languages. On the other hand, Respondent 2 argues that there is no need to introduce special social media applications for African languages because the use of Sepedi will limit the audience reach and some people will not understand the messages. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers.



<b>Theme 12: Special Social media applications for African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 12:</b> Based on your personal experience as a Social media user, do you think there is a need for these networks to introduce a special application for indigenous African languages?	1	What I can say is that you must remember that these social networks are international so if you were to put an indigenous language to say I want IsiZulu, Xitsonga or Sepedi to be there it means that you will be as well shutting out other languages out, and restricting yourself
	2	No I don't think it should be changed like she said that it's international thing, imagine am posting something on my <i>Facebook</i> and imagine I have been posting my things using Sepedi language I won't even get hired because the employer will go through my page and get confused and not impressed as well.
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.13: The Impact of Social media on African Languages**

In this table, only three respondents provided answers. The three respondents agree that social media have an adverse impact on the African languages. Respondents 1 and 3 indicate that social media would erode the African languages and negatively affect the manner in which they communicate with the elders. Respondent 2 postulates that speakers of African languages would end up forgetting their languages due to the excessive use of English on social media. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not respond to the question.

<b>Theme 13: The impact of Social media on African language</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 13:</b> What is the impact of the Social media networks on African languages?	1	We end up forgetting ourselves
	2	We end up not knowing our languages because they somehow get washed by English and the Social media
	3	It impacts us in a bad way because even when we communicate with our elders we use the bombastic words and we end up not getting along
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.14: The Role of Social media in Conserving the African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers. Both respondents suggest that social media play a positive role in conserving African languages. Respondent 1 states that social media help speakers of the African languages towards learning other African languages. Respondent 2 mentions that social media help him in reading Sepedi as he follows comedians who post in this African language. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 14: The role of Social media in conserving the African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 14:</b> What is the role of Social media in conserving the African languages?	1	It helps us in learning other languages
	2	The role is that it helps me read the Sepedi language because there are those comedians who write in Sepedi
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.15: Sharing Cultural Information on Social media**

In this table, two respondents provided answers. Both respondents have contrasting views about the sharing of cultural issues on social media. Respondent 1 mentions that he does not share cultural issues on social media. Respondent 2 occasionally shares cultural issues on social media. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) abstained from answering this question.

<b>Theme 15: Sharing cultural information on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 15:</b> How often do you share information/speak about your culture on Social media platforms?	1	I never do that because am simply not used to and I never thought about that
	2	Ok with me I can only share....for example there was a cultural event that took place in my community and whatever that I learned that I post it on the Social media
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.16: Appropriateness of Social media as Platforms to Discuss Cultural Issues**

In this table, two respondents provided answers:

Respondent 3 mentions that she does not share any cultural issues on social media. Whilst Respondent 4 shares pictures of cultural issues on social media. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers to this question.

<b>Theme 16: Appropriateness of Social media as platforms to discuss cultural issues</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 16:</b> Do you think Social media are the appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues?	1	No answer
	2	No answer
	3	I never post anything in relation to my culture I don't know if am being ignorant or what but I don't post and it's against my cultural things there
	4	Myself I do share some pictures of some nice food you can even ask my friends
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.17: Pressure to Use English on Social media**

In this table, four respondents provided answers: Three of them (viz., Respondents 1, 2, and 3) indicate that they are not pressurised to use English on social media. On the flip side, Respondent 4 feels that English is eroding the African languages. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 17: Pressure to use English on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 17:</b> Do you somehow feel pressurised to use English on your Social media platforms?	1	It's fine with me
	2	It's fine with me as well because I upload in English
	3	It's fine with me as well because I upload in English
	4	I feel undermined because English is killing our indigenous languages meaning we are praising English
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.18: The Difficulty of Using African Languages on Social media**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They agree that it is not difficult to use African languages on social media. Respondent 1 postulates that the choice of a language is determined by the target audience. He argues that *Facebook* and *Twitter* are international platforms. He only uses Sepedi with people who understand the language. Respondent 2 does not have a good command of an African language because he did not learn it at school. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) refrained from answering this question.

Theme 18: The difficulty of using African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 18: How difficult is it to use your African/home language to communicate on these Social media platforms?	1	It's not difficult it only depends on the target that you want to reach because <i>Twitter</i> and <i>Facebook</i> are international and if I want the message to be seen by my friends then its fine I can use Sepedi
	2	It's not difficult but the thing is I didn't learn Sepedi in high school so for me it's out of my league
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.19: The Difficulty of Putting the Message across in African Languages on Social media**

In this table, two respondents provided answers:

The respondents mentioned that it is difficult to put the message across in African languages on social media. Respondent 1 points out that it is difficult to type in Tshivenda because of diacritics. Respondent 2 states that it is difficult to send a message in the African languages because they are not recognised on *Facebook*. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) desisted from answering this question.

<b>Theme 19: The difficulty of putting the message across in African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 19:</b> Do you struggle to put the message across in your respective African languages?	1	It's very difficult to type in Venda because we put some diacritics with some of the alphabets like't
	2	It's even difficult for me because as you can see on <i>Facebook</i> normally this Social media you will see that the languages are not recognised and other people who are not the native speakers of the language you are using will not understand
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.20: Convenience of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: Both of them feel annoyed and horrible by the fact the African languages are highlighted in red on *Facebook*. Respondent 1 states that the fact that African languages are not recognised on *Facebook* proves that the system is not programmed in Sepedi. Respondent 2 mentions that it is irritating to see that the text is all red because one has typed in an African language and he blames colonisation. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 20: Convenience of African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 20:</b> When you write your status or comments on <i>Facebook</i> in an African language, the application would underline in red. How do you feel about it?	1	I feel horrible because it shows that it's not programmed in Sepedi its only English
	2	It's annoying because it is even irritating I mean you type and look at what you have typed and everything is underlined in red. And this shows the power of colonisation and our languages are not colonised and most of the languages are not recognised
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer

	8	No answer
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**Table 6.21: The African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: Three respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2 and 3) agree that all their friends on social media are Africans. Follow up question was raised concerning why they use English ahead of African languages when they communicate with fellow Africans. Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 postulate that it is easy to use English on social media and they also suggest that people are somehow forced to use English. Respondent 8 did not answer this question.

<b>Theme 21. The African youth and the use of English on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 21:</b> Generally, your friends on Social media, are they Africans?	1	Yes!
	2	Yes!
	3	Yes! It's easy to type English words.
	4	I think because English is the common tongue that we use on our daily basis
	5	English is the medium of instruction so I think it is easier as well and sometimes it depends on how you speak; normally when you speak your own language you will obviously type your own language
	6	But sometimes you get to increase your vocabulary
	7	But sometimes you are forced to talk and even type in English because not of all of us can understand these indigenous languages so it makes it easier in English
	8	No answer

**Table 6.22: The African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: They have divided views about this matter. Respondent 1 posits that the choice of language used on social media is determined by the audience. Respondent 2 claims that sometimes one is forced to use English to prove his level of literacy to fellow users. Respondent 3 suggests that practice makes perfect. Respondents 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 refrained from providing answers.

<b>Theme 22. The African youth and the use of English on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 21:</b> Which language do you use to communicate with your fellow African Social media users?	1	It depends on who you are talking to
	2	Sometimes you are forced because people will start putting you in that category of illiterate people you see so you are forced
	3	I think practice makes perfect
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.23: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, four respondents provided answers: All of them admit that they code switch when communicating on social media. Respondent 1 points out that code-switching is dependent on the person one is talking to. Respondent 2 employs code switching when he struggles to put the message across in English. Respondent 3 uses code-switching for emphasis. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 8) did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 23 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 23:</b> Do you code switch when you chat on <i>WhatsApp &amp; Facebook</i> /Using both English and your home language? And how often do you do that?	1	It depends on who you are talking to
	2	When English becomes too hard you start code-switching
	3	Sometimes it nice because I want to convey the message as it
	4	Its, also for emphasis
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.24: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: They have different opinions concerning the language used most when code-switching. Respondent 1 declares that he code switches to his home language. Respondent 2 states that he code switches to other languages. Respondent 3 states code switching depends on ones' language proficiency. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 8) did not respond to this question.

Theme 24 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 24: Which language do you use most when code switching?	1	I code switch to my own language. Because it's the language I know the best
	2	I don't always switch to my own language I rather switch to other languages
	3	I think it depends on the languages that you know
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.25: Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: They all stated Tsotsitaal as the third language that they prefer. Respondent 1 uses Tsotsitaal and Afrikaans and Respondent 2 uses Tsotsitaal. Whilst Respondent 3 prefers IsiZulu, Afrikaans, and Tsotsitaal. Five respondents (viz., 4 to 8) did not provide answers.

Theme 25 Youth's language preference on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 25: Apart from English and your home language, which other language do you use on these Social media platforms? Name them please?	1	Tsotsitaal, Afrikaans
	2	Tsotsitaal.
	3	IsiZulu, Afrikaans and Tsotsitaal
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.26: Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Five of them (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6) have first speakers of English on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. These respondents use English to communicate with the speakers of the English language. Respondent 3 does not have such friends. Respondent 4 uses both Sepedi and English to communicate with the speaker of English because the person is willing to learn this African language. Two respondents (viz., Respondents 7 and 8) did not provide responses.



Theme: 26 Youth's language preference on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
<b>Question 26:</b> Do you have first language speakers of English as friends on <i>Facebook</i> , <i>Twitter</i> and <i>WhatsApp</i> ? If yes, which language do you use to communicate with them (first language English?	1	Yes I do have on <i>Facebook</i> and <i>WhatsApp</i> . English
	2	Yes! English obvious because that is the only language that we all understand
	3	I don't have
	4	Yes! English and Sepedi because the person is so much willing to learn my language
	5	Only <i>Facebook</i> and she's a black American
	6	Yes! It's only on <i>WhatsApp</i> yes, when I was at UP they helped me with accommodation. English
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.27: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) concur that *Facebook's* translation option does not provide an accurate translation. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 8) desisted from answering the question.

Theme 27 Convenience of Social media for African language usage	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
<b>Question 27:</b> Are you able to use a translation option on <i>Facebook</i> ?	1	It doesn't translate accurately; you should as well try it
	2	Yes it's there but it doesn't translate the right things
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.28: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They both (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) indicate that the lack of African languages on *Facebook's* language options does not bother them. They decided to ignore it. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 8) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 28 Convenience of Social media for African language usage</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 28:</b> What is your perception concerning the lack of your home language on <i>Facebook’s</i> translation option?	1	Personally I just ended up ignoring it because African languages options are not there so I just ignore it and am not even offended about it
	2	I don’t have a problem with it yet because there are those languages that are recognised internationally so yah! And I don’t wish, As far as I know Sepedi is a very local language and the words are limited so I don’t wish that.
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.29: Undermining of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: The majority (viz., Respondents 1, 3, 4, and 5) are saying the African languages are not undermined on social media. Respondent 2 states that the African languages are undermined on social media. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 6, 7, and 8) did not answer this question.

<b>Theme 29 Undermining of African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 29:</b> Do you think the developers of these applications ( <i>Facebook, Twitter, &amp; WhatsApp</i> ) undermine the African languages? – Why?	1	They are not undermining anything if am a Pedi and I want to develop my own App I cannot use someone’s language but mine so they are not undermining African languages
	2	I think they do because if you can check on <i>WhatsApp</i> , there are Spanish and African languages are not there so they do
	3	Most African countries speak Portuguese, Spanish and other so they are using these languages to market themselves
	4	The problem is if they were to include all the languages in <i>Facebook</i> or <i>WhatsApp</i> it was going to be something like ten gigabytes and we would be able to download such applications
	5	No they are not ...eish I don’t know. I don’t think they are undermining these languages because they are not well-known
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.30: The Effects of Social media on the African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 believes that social media have a good effect on social media because they promote multilingualism. Respondent 2 elucidates that social media have minor effects on the African languages. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 8) refrained from providing responses.

<b>Theme 30 The effects of Social media on the African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 30:</b> What are the effects of the <i>Facebook, Twitter &amp; WhatsApp</i> on the African languages?	1	It promotes the learning of other languages, for instance if we are chatting in a group then someone ask what do you mean by that
	2	It is very rare only 10%
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.31: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They both (i.e., Respondents 2 and 3) agree that social media do not have a good impact towards conserving African languages. They argue that people do not care about grammar. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 31 The role of Social media in conserving African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 31:</b> Do you think these Social media platforms can be used to conserve and develop African languages such as Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga? How?	1	No answer
	2	According to me, they don't conserve because people don't care about the spelling as long as you can understand what the word means, and to some people they will think that it is the right way to write it
	3	No they are not
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.32: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, and 5) believe that the African languages are not progressive because when people seek employment English becomes the main language and they are expected to have a good command of this language. They further argue that kids are sent to

English medium schools. Respondent 4 pronounces that, it all depends on the background of an individual. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 6, 7 and 8) avoided the question.

<b>Theme 32 The role of Social media in conserving African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 32:</b> Since African languages are marginalised on various Social media platforms, do you think this can make the languages to face extinction?	1	This doesn't actually start with the Social media it starts back at home because even our parents they take our siblings to private schools where they learn everything in English and that makes them to be good in English
	2	The problem is Sepedi will never bring the bread on the table because even when you go to the interviews they want your English
	3	Most of the people who stick to African languages they get stuck in Arts and Culture and this shows that indigenous languages does take you anywhere
	4	But I think it depends on where you come from because other people still have those activities and they are succeeding in life unlike the ones from the township
	5	The main reason for us to learn English is for us to think globally because heritage is in those villages and it only appears once a year
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

**Table 6.33: Conservation of the African Languages**

In this table, four respondents provided answers: They have contrasting views concerning the importance of conserving African languages. Respondent 1 states that the use of English promotes the white culture. Respondent 2 postulates that English makes people think globally and it is used in both local and international affairs. Respondent 3 indicates that she does not undermine her African language. On the flip side, Respondent 4 accentuates that times have changed and English is powerful language because important aspects such as religion are conveyed in this language. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 5, 6, 7 and 8) did not provide answers. The next subsection presents Unit B's focus group presentations.

<b>Theme 33 Conservation of the African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 33:</b> How is it important to pass our languages	1	We are killing ourselves because we are promoting the white generation life style
	2	Am not undermining my language but promoting English makes us to think globally and locally, we can be able to debate globally and interact

from generation to generation?	3	I am not undermining my language, because am still respecting my ancestors and do all the cultural rituals
	4	Time is changing so English has power in everything; I can't be sticking onto Sepedi, and off course it's my language but when we look at things like Christianity those things came here through white people and now almost everyone is a Christian
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

### 6.3.2 Unit B: Group 2 (Focus Group Discussion: PART 2: Unit B – Group 2)

**Table 6.34: Social media Accounts that Respondents Have**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 subscribed to one social media site. Respondents 2 and 5 had three social media accounts respectively while Respondent 3 had four social media accounts. Respondent 4 had two social media accounts and Respondents 6 and 7 subscribed to four accounts, respectively. Respondent 8, 9 and 10 did not provide an answer.

Theme 1: Number of Social Network Accounts	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes”
Question 1: How many Social media do you have?	1	1
	2	3
	3	4
	4	2
	5	3
	6	4
	7	4
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.35: The Frequency of Social media Usage**

In this table, only eight respondents provided answers: Almost all respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) indicated that they use social media on a daily basis. Respondent 3 stated that she does not use social media daily. Respondent 9 and 10 did not provide an answer.

Theme 2: Time Spent on Social	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 2: How often do you log on into your Social media accounts?	1	Everyday
	2	Everyday
	3	Not everyday
	4	Everyday
	5	Everyday
	6	Everyday
	7	Everyday

	8	Everyday
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.36: The Amount of Time Spent on Social media per Week**

The respondents stated that they spent a lot of time on social media. Respondent 1 stated that she spent only eleven hours, Respondent 2 mentioned that he spent 20 hours per week on social media. Respondent 3 mentioned that she spent 40 hours, Respondent 4 spent 15 and 16 hours per week is spent by Respondent 5. Respondent 6 spent 29 hours. Respondent 7 spent seven hours, whilst Respondent 8 spent between 20 to 30 hours per week on social media. Respondents 9 and 10 refrained from answering the question.

Theme 5.3: The amount of time spent on Social media per week	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 3: How many hours do you spend on your Social media accounts per week?</b>	1	11
	2	20
	3	40
	4	15
	5	16
	6	29
	7	20
	8	20 – 30
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.37: The Most Used Social media Network**

In this table, eight respondents provided answers: They mostly use *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* more than *Twitter*. Respondents 1, 2, 3 and 9 use *Facebook* because it is interesting. Respondents 4, 5, 6 and 7 use *WhatsApp* because it is affordable and it makes it easy to communicate with friends. Respondent 8 uses both *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*, the former is used for accessing updates and the latter is used to communicate with friends. Respondent 10 did not provide an answer.

Theme 4: The most used Social media network	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 4: Which Social media network do you mostly use? And Why?</b>	1	<i>Facebook</i> , because it is very interesting, you get to know everything like what’s happening around, yah
	2	<i>Facebook</i>
	3	<i>Facebook</i>
	4	<i>WhatsApp</i> just to connect with my friends, I love talking to my friends
	5	<i>WhatsApp</i>

	6	<i>WhatsApp</i> [laughs], cause it's cheaper, first of all, you don't waste most of dat as there, and then, it's easy to communicate with people that you know, rather than on <i>Facebook</i> where you communicate with... when you communicate with somebody... some people that you don't know
	7	<i>WhatsApp</i> because you... ok! there are some things that <i>Facebook</i> doesn't and other Social medias doesn't have as just like having to send voice notes and communicating with friends more frequently
	8	<i>Facebook</i> and <i>WhatsApp</i> , yeah! Because it's where I communicate with my friend, and <i>Facebook</i> is updated, every time you login. <i>Facebook</i> you find something new
	9	<i>Facebook</i> , mhm...it is easy to access
	10	No answer

**Table 6.38: Access Techniques of Social media amongst Youth**

In this table, nine respondents provided answers: They have similar techniques of accessing social media and mobile phones are commonly used. Respondents 1, 2, 8 and 9 access social media through their mobile phones (i.e., cell phones). Respondents 3, 4, 5 and 6 access social media through both mobile phones and computers. Respondent 7 accesses social media through a laptop. Respondent 10 did not respond to this question.

Theme 5: Access techniques of Social media amongst youth	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
Question 5: How do you access your Social media networks?	1	Cell phone
	2	Cell phone
	3	Cell phone and computer
	4	Phone and computer
	5	Cell phone and laptop
	6	Cell phone and computer
	7	Laptop
	8	Cell phone
	9	Cell phone
	10	No answer

**Table 6.39: The Affordability of Social media for the Users**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: They believe that it is affordable to access social media. Respondents 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 believe that social media are affordable. Respondent 2 stated that social media are not affordable because airtime is expensive. Respondents 8, 9 and 10 did not provide responses.

Theme 6: The affordability of Social media for the users	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 6: Do you think it is affordable to access these networks?	1	It is very cheap, so yah, well, it is affordable
	2	No I don't think so, airtime is expensive, and this data don't take much too long, don't take too long, yah.
	3	Yes is very affordable, very affordable
	4	It's affordable
	5	It's affordable but it's also an expense in my pocket
	6	It is affordable because in Vodacom there is a R9 data
	7	It is affordable because some of the time I use my PC, mhm...through the school Wi-Fi, so it is through... using my phone, mhm... just R60 per month for BIS, so I think it is cheap
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.40: The Purpose of Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: The respondents (i.e., Respondents 1 to 7) indicate that the main purpose of social media is to communicate, access the latest updates and entertainment. They prefer to use *WhatsApp* for communication and *Facebook* and *Twitter* for the latest updates and entertainment. Respondents 8, 9 and 10 did not provide answers.

Theme 7: The purpose of Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 7: What is the main purpose of the Social media networks?	1	Mhm... the reason I use <i>Facebook</i> I want to be like stay updated like with what's happening around and then I use <i>WhatsApp</i> just to get connected with people who are close
	2	But the basic purpose of all of them...of all of them is for communication, but <i>WhatsApp</i> and... I mean <i>Facebook</i> and <i>Instagram</i> are for being updated
	3	Just communication
	4	<i>WhatsApp</i> communication, <i>Facebook</i> for being...to be updated with what is happening
	5	<i>WhatsApp</i> is for communication, and <i>Facebook</i> is about reading those things that are not on TV
	6	Er... <i>WhatsApp</i> is for communication <i>Facebook</i> it's updated in <i>Twitter</i> you can find something that you...on...on... <i>Twitter</i> and <i>Facebook</i> it's where you can find what happened around our country cause people always posting...posting
	7	<i>WhatsApp</i> for using communication, <i>Facebook</i> and <i>Twitter</i> , mhm... <i>Facebook</i> mainly for entertainment, <i>Twitter</i> just want to see what is trending, yah
	8	No answer



	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.41: The Outlook of Social media amongst the Youth**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: All of them (i.e., Respondents 1 to 7) affirmed that social media meet their expectations because they provide all important aspects. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 8, 9 and 10) did not answer this question.

<b>Theme 8: The outlook of Social media amongst the youth</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 8:</b> Do you think these Social media networks meet your expectations? And Why?	1	Er... it does meet my expectations because like, I can get what I want like to see what I want to do, so yah, yah
	2	Yah I think they do because every time I access this network I get updated about new things, things I didn't know, so I get satisfied with that
	3	Yes they do, because the basic need for them for me is communication and I do communicate with people through them
	4	Yeah it does because it reach the level of satisfaction which I need I was like expecting from them from it
	5	Yes it does because Social media is forever changing, it makes it easier to communicate with people, every time there's something that they bring out to the table for us to use
	6	Yah it does because every time I use these Social media, er... whatever I want, if I want to send someone a message, the person respond in time and in <i>Facebook</i> if I want to know, like, let's say like, for example there is something happening here, er... then, I could just go there Turfloop Expose, whatever is happening around the campus, yah
	7	Er... I think it does, everything I need is there, providing everything
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.42: The Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: The respondents have different responses regarding the language that they normally use on social media. Respondents 2 and 5 use Sepedi and English, the latter is used to communicate with people who speak different home languages. On the other hand, Respondents 6 and 7 prefer Tshivenda and English, the latter is used in an effort to accommodate the speakers of other African languages. Respondent 3 posited that the choice of a language is determine by the audience. Respondent 4 prefers to use SiSwati and

English, whilst Respondent 1 normally uses English and home language. Respondents 9 and 10 abstained from providing a response.

Theme 9: The youth's language preference on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
<b>Question 9:</b> Which language do you normally use in your Social media account(s)? and Why?	1	Ok uhm... on <i>Facebook</i> I use English because it's a common language and on <i>WhatsApp</i> when I chat with my family I use my home language, when chatting with my family, which is exciting of cause
	2	I use Sepedi and English but mostly I use English because some of the people that I communicate with are of a different language so if I use English we get to understand each other better
	3	Uh... with me it depends on who I am talking to, then most of the time I use English
	4	Uh... on <i>WhatsApp</i> I use SiSwati a lot then English on <i>Facebook</i> because I am able to communicate with somebody who's using different language, which is not mine
	5	I use Sepedi and English on both of my Social media, <i>Facebook</i> and <i>WhatsApp</i>
	6	I use English and Tshivenda but on <i>Facebook</i> most of the time I use English because it's a common language and nowadays people like using it, always using English even if you are talking to a Venda person you'll find that you'll be easy typing... using English, yah because even nowadays English, everyone want to speak English
	7	Tshivenda and English but mostly English cause I try to accommodate everyone because I have mhm...many friends, some are Pedis, Tsongas, so I use English mostly
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.43: Convenience of Social media for African Language Speakers**

In this table, eights respondents provided answers: The respondents (i.e., Respondents 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) have indicated that social media is not convenient for African languages. They argued that social media software makes it difficult for them to type in African languages. The lack of diacritics makes it difficult for those who want to type in Tshivenda. The word prediction is blamed as well because automatically changes a word that was intended to be in Sepedi into English. When one attempts to type in an African language the words are underlined in red and the respondents regard that as an inconvenience. Respondent 2 elucidates that if one decides to switch off word predictions on the mobile phones they can easily use any language. Respondents 9 and 10 did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 10: Convenience of Social media for African language speakers</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 10:</b> Are Social media networks convenient for people who want to use African languages in their respective accounts? Please give a reason for your answer?	1	No, I don't think it's convenient because if I type a word of my language, the word gets converted into an English word
	2	Well yes, because if you switch off your predictions settings on your phone it allows you to type any language you want
	3	No... because when I type my mother tongue, it's simple write that red line under that word and if I use like... continue giving it space it will change it to be in English, so I said no
	4	No it's not convenient, because of what do call it, that these phones have, they detected the word into an English word when you want to use a different language
	5	Er...it's not convenience because if I am typing a word of my language it change it, sometimes it gives you some word like, this language, like some African, but I don't... I don't... it's not...it's not...
	6	Uhm... I think it is not, mhm... I think they are made for English
	7	This is not, this... what...Social media is not like friendly to our like... uhm... indigenous languages. Cause like, it's... it's... it's not easy, like typing, using your home language like, you know, cause it takes long and staff, so in English you just cut words and staff so it's... it is just more easier in English, yah
	8	Some words...some words, in Tshivenda require certain symbols and they are not there in this Social media
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.44: The Status of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: The respondents have contrasting views concerning this matter. Respondents 1, 4 and 6 feel bad about the current status of African languages on social media. They believe that this status would erode the African languages and future generation will not find let alone to speak the languages. Contrary to their views, Respondents 2, 3, 5, and 7 believe that there is nothing wrong with the status of African languages on social media. They argued that English is a medium of instruction and it helps in accommodating people who speak different languages. Respondent 2 asserts that South Africa has eleven official languages and he thinks it is impossible to accommodate all of them in an application. Respondents 8, 9 and 10 did not provide answers.

Theme 11: The status of African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 11: How do you feel about the status of African languages on Social media?	1	Er... it don't feel right cause like the future generation will not know the African languages so it's not a good thing, it makes me feel so bad like we are, mhm... I don't know like what's the word? What's the word? Ah I don't know...yah.
	2	I don't really think it's a problem because English is the medium of instruction or communication so it's better if we use English, it's fine by me
	3	Myself I am ok with it because Africa, not actually Africa but the South Africa is the only country which has 11 official languages, other countries don't have as many languages meaning that they can use one language, one or two languages, just to cover the whole nation, but then when we come to Africa we have multiple languages which cannot really be covered by one App.
	4	Ah is not good, cause the current generation...won't know other African languages, they will only know English, which is bad, they must also know other... other languages
	5	I think is good because the... the use English to communicate, and if they use our languages that means every time you... you would want to use someone's phone the App will be different from what you are used to so you'd find a challenge to access those Apps using a different language
	6	Mhm... I think it is not good at all, because sometimes... at the end you'll find that people they will no... they will no longer having interest in speaking our African languages, because to be honest, some we... we... we have to er...
	7	Er... I think is ok because we are born into our languages so we learn our languages from home where we were born. So on Social media if we use English that does not mean gore we've forgot about our home languages, so I don't see it as a problem
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6:45 Special Social media Applications for African Languages**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: The respondents have different views regarding the need to have special social media applications in African languages. Respondents 1, 4, 5, and 6 believe that there is a need to introduce such applications in an effort to preserve the African languages. They added that the special applications will enable them to learn other African languages. Respondents 2, 3 and 7 state that there is no need for such applications because English is effective and the eleven official languages make it difficult to execute that approach. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 8, 9 and 10) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 12: Special Social media applications for African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 12:</b> Based on your personal experience as a Social media user, do you think there is a need for these networks to introduce a special application for indigenous African languages?	1	Yah like for us not to lose our... our values, there's supposed to be like, there's supposed to be a Social media in our like, African languages so that we can easily communicate with like, everyone, older people, like er... everyone
	2	No I don't think it's necessary, English is fine we can't have 11 Apps in 11 different languages... yah English is fine
	3	I don't think is necessary too because it's going to create separation amongst the youths in general because they are the ones who are using Apps these days
	4	It is necessary so er... it is necessary because we can be able to learn other African languages and cultures and be exposed to that
	5	I think it is necessary as it will help the future generation to know where they come from
	6	Mhm... I think yah it's necessary because at the end you can find that people they know other... other's... other's languages, which is good, yah
	7	Mhm... I didn't get the question. Because with English I will communicate easily
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.46: The Impact of Social media on African Languages**

In this table, only seven respondents provided answers: The majority of the respondents agree that social media have a negative impact on the African languages. Respondents 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 indicate that the social media are eroding the African languages because they mostly mix it with English in an effort to shorten the message. They further claim that mixing English with African languages has detrimental effects on the latter. Respondent 3 mentions that the impact of social media on African languages depends on the users themselves. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 8, 9 and 10) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 13: The impact of Social media on African language</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 13:</b> What is the impact of the Social media on	1	This is er... negative impact because like sometimes like mix our Social media language with our African languages and staff, so like it is just not good cause like we end really like changing everything in our home language like, and staff, it's changing the way

African languages?	2	I think it is a negative impact because mhm... people don't get enough much of a chance to interact in their languages on the Social media networks
	3	I think it, it actually depends on how you use it depending on your use of the Social media or the App like typing on your own language, you can type in your own language but then if you don't type in your home language you actually the one who's shadowing your own home language because you are choosing to use English rather than your own home language while communicating with people who will understand you if you use your home language
	4	Mhm...yes it has negative impact, cause when you are typing you are miXing your mother tongue and English and you are reading that sentence it doesn't make sense anymore if you mix these two languages, so it got the negative impact
	5	It has a negative impact as sometimes we shorten the words that you are supposed to use and you sometimes mix those words with English instead of them alone, it will make you forget where you come from
	6	Mhm... I think it is a negative impact because er... if... if you see on social networks, the way we... we... we... we write, we... we no longer using full words we just cutting it, is destroying us because at the end you find that you are no longer know how to write that word in a full sentence
	7	Myself I think it is a bad impact because mhm... this Social media it's not important to write formal I mean using the... the... the... the formal language, the... the grammar, just write, so I think it is destroying us
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6:47: The Role of Social media in Conserving the African Languages**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 2, 4, 5 and 6) maintained that social media play a negative role in conserving African languages. Respondent 2 emphasises that social media are overshadowing African languages due to excessive use of English. Respondent 3 maintains that the role of social media depends on the manner in which individual users use it. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 7, 6, 8 and 10) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 14: The role of Social media in conserving the African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 14:</b> What is the role of Social media in conserving the African languages?	1	No answer
	2	I think it overshadows our language because you find that about 10% of the people use their languages on the social media networks and 90% use English
	3	Well I can't say it has a positive nor a negative impact cause role, I mean, because it depends on how the person, the user decides on using the App or Social media, whatever it is that they are using, cause if you check in countries like China

		maybe the phones when they are produced they set up in Chinese like the language, but then in South Africa because you can't really set up each phone in 11 different languages, you don't know who's going to buy the phone so you need to set it up in a general language which everyone speaks which is English, and then when they chat, it depends on you on how you want to use it.
	4	It has a negative impact because it simply turn us to western cultures
	5	It is er... a negative impact, cause whatever it is trending on Social media it is for western cultures
	6	I don't think it is playing a crucial role on our languages, mhm... cause we use English mostly don't take our languages serious
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.48: Sharing Cultural Information on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Almost all respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6) indicate that they do not share any cultural issues on social media. Respondent 5 mentions that the matter of sharing cultural issues on social media depends on the topic under discussion. Respondents 7, 8, 9 and 10 abstained from answering this question.

<b>Theme 15: Sharing cultural information on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 15:</b> How often do you share information/speak about your culture on Social media?	1	Uhm... I've never done that before cause like it never got to a point whereby like I'll be sharing like uhm... like cultural things, I don't like, really share things that are like so cultural, yah, and we don't usually talk about culture
	2	Yah I never speak about culture on the social networks, never
	3	Cause in these days never anything compelling me to share any information about my culture, nor do I ever feel the need to share it, I don't at all
	4	I never share anything about my culture and I don't have a reason for that
	5	Er... it depends on what people are talking about on social network if they are talking about er... our cultures, yah, I contribute, I talk about it
	6	I don't remember doing that
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer

	10	No answer
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**Table 6.49: Appropriateness of Social media as Platforms to Discuss Cultural Issues**

In this table, six respondents provided answers:

Respondents 1, 2, 4 and 6 indicate that social media are not appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues. Their reasons are that people do not care about culture on social media, particularly youth. On the other hand, Respondents 3 and 5 affirm that social media are appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues. They argue that social media allow people to discuss a wide range of issues including culture. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 7, 8, 9 and 10) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 16: Appropriateness of Social media as platforms to discuss cultural issues</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 16:</b> Do you think Social media are the appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues?	1	No Social media is not a platform to be discussing our African... cultural issues cause like uhm... people on Social media they don't really care much about a culture so there's no need for you to be sharing like cultural issues with them cause they just not interested
	2	Yah I don't think they are appropriate because nobody really cares about cultures on the Social media, no, yah
	3	I think it's appropriate because social network covers a wide range of people and you can get the message across easier
	4	Uh... nope, cause youngsters no longer care about cultures like our forefathers
	5	I think it's appropriate because in Social media it's where that there is a lot of people then you can share our different views about our cultures so everyone can get because in nowadays to be honest 99,9% of youth they are using Social media, <i>WhatsApp</i> , <i>Facebook</i> , so it's where we can talk about our cultures and know something... and learn something
	6	No mhm... I think Social media are meant for entertainment and there are young people on Social media, not old people, so I don't think is appropriate
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.50: Pressure to Use English on Social media**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Nine of them (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10) indicate that they are pressurised to use English on social media



because most people normally use this language. They further state that English is used to accommodate people who speak different African languages. In contrast, Respondent 8 posits that using English is an obligation and it has nothing to do with pressure.

Theme 17: Pressure to use English on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 17: Do you somehow feel pressurised to use English on your Social media platforms?	1	I feel pressurised to use English because 90% of them use English to communicate with me
	2	Yes most people use English to communicate with me
	3	Yes, I feel pressurised to use English on the Social media network because close to 90% of them use this language, English to communicate with me, so I have to communicate with them using English
	4	Yes I do because, not all of my friend use my mother tongue, they use other languages so I have to use the main language which is English
	5	Yah I do, I do feel pressurised because er... like I said earlier on, majority of my friends on <i>Facebook</i> are... actually they don't speak Venda some of them, some of them speak Sotho and understand we have to use English so that we can understand each other, since some of us cannot understand these other languages like Sotho and Swati
	6	Yes my friend, I do, because most of my friends on Social media they love to use English, as you see nowadays English, people love to talk English or use English when they are busy posting their things
	7	I do feel pressurised because in our Social medias like on <i>Facebook</i> we have a lot of friends who speak different languages, then for us to understand each other we have to use the medium of instruction which is English. So then I am forced to use English because I want everyone on my Social media to understand what I am going to say, so since if I can use my language, then they won't understand, so then, since we have 11 official languages in South Africa then we cannot... I cannot make sure... I cannot use my language so that ever I expect everyone to understand me, but since whatever that I say on Social media I want it to be understood, so I am using English for everyone to understand.
	8	Because first of all, the reason of being in Social media is to interact with people so how can I be pressurised to use English, is the medium language of instruction, if they say anything, so like I understand that those people that I have invited who are my friends in Social medias, we have to understand each other in one level. So if I speak my language they won't understand so I don't feel pressurised, I feel like it's more of an obligation because I have signed up to interact with different people. So I know, I understand that I have to speak in English. I am not pressurised
	9	I feel pressurised to use English because firstly sometimes you can't put some sentences in constant like for EG when I say something, you say the next thing and it's easy to create in your own language and sometimes using your home language, it appears as though maybe you are stupid or you can't interview other people, it's like you are stupid because other people are using English and you are like 'dumelang guys' it seems as if maybe you want attention or you are stupid in a way

	10	I think it's because English is the language that's trending so you want to fit in, so that's put me under pressure because if I don't fit in, I'll be like 'ay we don't talk with that one because she uses the language that we don't understand'. So because you have to fit in and talk with other people you are forced to use a language that all of you will understand and people will also comment on your... on whatever that you posted
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**Table 6.51: The Difficulty of Using African Languages on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: They have contrasting responses concerning the difficulty of using African languages on social media. Respondents 2, 4 and 6 enunciate that it is not difficult at all because they can freely use African languages without any challenge. They emphasise that the usage of African languages is only relevant when communicating with speakers of such languages. Whilst Respondents 1, 3 and 5 believe that it is difficult to use the African languages on social media. They claim that African languages are too long and it takes time to type, and only a few people understand them. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 7 to 10) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 18: The difficulty of using African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 18:</b> How difficult is it to use your African/home language to communicate on these Social media platforms?	1	I use my mother tongue which is SiSwati in social network but for, Oh... reason being, let me make an example, if I use my mother tongue which is SiSwati and write 'kute' someone who is a Zulu he will take it as if I am saying 'it's far' while myself I mean that 'I don't have it', so it causes confusion, so it's simple to use my, you know like, the... English. Yeah it's simple to use English so that you can interact
	2	It's not difficult to use er... my home language on Social media because when I use it I use to those people I want to, when I tell them something is only for those people who I want to hear it. It's not that maybe I am hiding something from others but I want those specific people to hear it, so it's not difficult, I just use it when I want people who understand my language to understand whatever I am saying
	3	Uhm... I think it's difficult because if I write something with my language only few will understand what I am trying to say. So... yah the main aim of me posting on the Social media networks is to inform all my friends about the message that I am trying to convey, so yah I'll have to use English so that all of them can understand
	4	Ok... it's not, especially when something is not going to benefit me, I only communicate, I mean I only use English when the thing is going to benefit me but if I want to post something or I want to write something, yah, er... I write it I write it in my mother tongue it means that since it's not going to benefit me I don't care, you have to understand my mother tongue for you to benefit from what...class... I only use isiNdebele, like specifically isiNdebele unless when I am asking about maybe a time or like... that's going to benefit me alone. Meaning if I want

		to like the whole class to benefit I type in my mother tongue if you don't understand... yah that's your problem
	5	I find it very difficult to use uhm... my mother tongue in Social media because like firstly uhm...eish when in SiSwati it will be like I was trying to say like one thing cause like, you know, in SiSwati you can't like to shorten the words, so in English it's easy like to shorten the words or whatever you want to say, so yah, like if you want to type in SiSwati you have to like, really type in full. Yah, so that's what makes it difficult
	6	It is not really difficult my friend. The reason being because if you are passing the message in Social media platform using our language I think is simple, it's very simple to use your mother tongue to pass a message, even though it's too much, there is a too much words, but I think it's way simple when you are passing a message using your mother tongue
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.52: The Difficulty of Putting the Message across in African Languages on Social media**

In this table, eight respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3 and 8) remark that it is difficult to put the message across in African languages on social media. They further assert that African languages are not understood by many people. Respondents 4, 5, 6 and 7 elucidate that it is not difficult because they use the African languages when communicating with specific people who know such languages. Two respondents (viz., Respondents 9 and 10) refrained from answering this question.

Theme 19: The difficulty of putting the message across in African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<p><b>Question 19:</b> Do you struggle to put the message across in your respective African languages?</p>	1	<p>I have the one, uh... actually to put the message across, isn't it that a home language is a language that you grew up talking and writing, I have one, uhm... Ndebele but I come from a place whereby we speak Setswana, I came to Limpopo, most of my friends are people that I met at church, I can speak Ndebele or I can try to speak Ndebele, but I cannot write it, and then most of the people that I come across at church they speak Swati and Tsonga, so they are from different cultures, so if I have to put something in Tswana it's going to be really difficult for them, I can write Tswana like fluently so, I can write it, but for the message we put across, it's something else, they won't understand a thing that I am saying there. So I'll just post and people will just like, there are some things we do, we just like, we don't even know what the thing says, we just like, for the fact that I really posted they just like. So the message people won't even understand anything I wrote. So I put the message across in my home language. Cause if I write in my language my friends who speak other languages they will find it difficult to understand what I am trying to convey to them, so it is difficult</p>
	2	<p>Yah I do struggle because some of my friends, like let me put an example on <i>Facebook</i>, I am a Swati, not all my friends are Swatis, and if I put status message, in SiSwati, some of them they won't understand it and they won't comment and what matters most is for them to comment and like</p>
	3	<p>Yah it is er... I do, I do struggle to put that message in my language because as a Venda for example if I use Venda people won't understand that especially in writing, and since most of the people, I don't even know if they are Vendas because on <i>Facebook</i> I can even change my name and write that maybe I am 'Davis Dan', English name, you understand? You will never know if the person is an African or what. So for that reason, I think it's very... I mean I find it difficult and I struggle</p>
	4	<p>I don't struggle, because 90% of my friends in a Social media they are Venda, so if I am passing the message I don't think it will be a problem because they will understand, yah, and be through the inbox 'what are you saying my friend' I'll tell you. But if I am using my mother tongue, it can be good because everyone will be covered. I can't punish people with the same language as me because of 10% of the people</p>
	5	<p>I haven't been struggling, remember the intention of me posting in my language, I'll be communicating with specific people so I am sure that people can understand me and I am sure that people can understand my language, so that since they can't understand my language when I write in my language they'll get the message, then it means I am not struggling</p>
	6	<p>I don't know what to say. Uhm... I am not in a position to answer this question do I struggle, I have never struggled because I don't write in my mother tongue, yeah I always write</p>

		with English in <i>Facebook</i> I always write with English. But it depends on Social media like <i>WhatsApp</i> , if I am talking him then I will use the language that we both understand, but I think the most focus now it's on <i>Facebook</i> and putting a status message, I never write with my mother tongue so I have never struggled before
	7	No I don't struggle to put the message across, I use my mother tongue, I don't, then you better ask me, ask me or... yah ask me as we got it
	8	I do struggle, yah I do struggle
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.53: Convenience of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 5, 8 and 10) mention that they feel good about the plight of African languages on social media, particularly on *Facebook*. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9) indicate that there is nothing wrong with the plight of African languages on social media. They contend that social media are programmed in English, hence the underlining of African language text.

<b>Theme 20: Convenience of African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 20:</b> When you write your status or comments on <i>Facebook</i> in an African language, the application would underline in red. How do you feel about it?	1	Ok, yah... I think it feel upset, because you might find that if you type something then there comes that red colour, it means you have typed an error, meaning that they are saying that it's either you didn't use an English word or is a typing error, so this goes to show that our home languages are taken as inferior because laptops, Social medias only allows as... I can say that English is the language that is registered because when you type anything in English it doesn't type those red bluewish red lines but then, the minute you say I don't know... many options will come up and then it means your language is like arg... is not taken seriously
	2	I feel nothing, it doesn't do anything to me, it doesn't do anything to me because I understand that <i>Facebook</i> was programmed in English. So if they were going to programme even in Sepulana, Setswana, they have to programme it even in Swedish language, in Spanish in what what, there are too many languages now we have Bolobedu, they are developing every day, so I think they wouldn't manage to accommodate all the languages, so I understand, I am an understanding person
	3	To be honest I don't feel anything because, my answer is the same as his, because <i>Facebook</i> , ok, approximately all the social networks are invented from outside countries, so then they don't know our languages, then they programme them with languages that spoken, they are popular, where they think most people can use it, like French and Spanish and staff like that, so they won't programme it in my language, so, so then it will be difficult

		because they also don't know that my language exist in this world, so I don't feel anything, I just understand that's how it is, it was not meant for us Africans, it's only meant for them so we like things, that's how it is
	4	I don't feel anything because even if I get angry I am not going to change because my language is not even in a software. But if you check, sometimes if you keep typing 'mabuza', typing 'mabuza', sometimes if you start with 'm' and come with a letter 'a', the word will appear, which means there is no problem even if they are underlining the word. Sometimes this thing it even help us because there's converters, the spelling, even though I am writing a Venda word, yah
	5	Yah I... I... I feel bad about it, because er... after that line, that red line, I just feel like my language is not taken serious, like it's undermined. Since I am part of this world, I must be included in the things of this world, you understand? Because <i>Facebook</i> was not meant for them only, it was meant for everyone, you understand? So that thing is commercial, you need to understand because if it's here in South Africa that means it is there for us for South African here in South Africa, yah
	6	I feel nothing [laughs], because the only thing I see is, because er... there's an error in the thing I typed, so I just feel nothing
	7	The reason is because the Social media was made in English, so my language is not accepted or whatever
	8	Annoyed, I don't get why there should be a red line whenever I am typing something I am sure of. It's annoying
	9	I feel nothing because I know that I am writing the correct thing if it's an error or something I know that the... the... the Internet itself, I mean the Social media itself it does not, it is the one who doesn't understand what I am writing, but I do so I write it
	10	I don't feel good about it because, like, it is disturbing, like those red lines, like they are so disturbing like if I see the red lines I will cancel whatsoever I was trying to write and try to write the right thing, so I find it very disturbing

**Table 6.54: The African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Five respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7) agree that all their friends on social media are Africans and they use English to communicate with them. Respondent 6 declares that he is not sure whether they are Africans or not but he uses English to communicate with them. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 4, 8, 9 and 10) confirm that their social media friends are Africans and they use African languages to share information with them.

<b>Theme 21. The African youth and the use of English on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 21:</b> Generally, your friends on Social media, are they Africans?	1	Yes, they are Africans and the language I use to communicate with them in Social media I use English.
	2	Yes they are African and I use English to communicate with them
	3	Yes they are African and I use English

	4	They are Africans and I use my home language, which is SiSwati
	5	I have got Africans and then I have got also whites, so I use English to communicate with all of them
	6	Er... I'll say I wouldn't know if whether they are Africans or not because everybody can say I am this guy, maybe John Sneak, I am living in America, you understand? And they'll say I speak... you know those things, they write their profile, they say my language is English, you understand? And you find you see a picture there is a white person, while the guy is just like, you understand because I have seen a lot of those guys, I mean on <i>Facebook</i> I have this guy... they say... Brian Coods something like that, but this guy he pretends as if he is a white person but you can see when he is typing that this guy is not a white person, you understand? So then I wouldn't know, so then we use... the language that I use is English to accommodate everyone
	7	Africans and I use English because they speak different languages
	8	They are Africans and I use isiNdebele
	9	I can't say they are Africans because on <i>Facebook</i> some of them they use.... So I can't say they are African most of them, and then the language that I use is both my mother tongue and English
	10	They are Africans and I use IsiZulu to communicate with them

**Table 6.55: African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, nine respondents provided answers: Respondents 1, 2, 6 and 7 use English to communicate with their fellow African social media users. Whilst Respondents 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 use English along with African languages. Respondent 4 did not provide a response.

Theme 22 African youth and the use of English on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
Question 22: Which language do you use to communicate with your fellow African Social media users?	1	English
	2	English
	3	English and SiSwati
	4	No answer
	5	English and Venda
	6	English
	7	English
	8	English and Setswana
	9	English and SiSwati
	10	English and isiNdebele

**Table 6.56: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Almost all respondents (i.e., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10) admit that they code switch when

communicating on social media. They code-switch between English and African languages. Respondent 8 points out that she does not code switch because she uses one language at a time.

Theme 23 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 23:</b> Do you code switch when you chat on <i>WhatsApp</i> & <i>Facebook</i> /Using both English and your home language? And how often do you do that?	1	Yes I do code switch and then, between English and my home language, and then it's something that I do every day, and then the language that I use to code switch is Setswana
	2	Yes, I do, using English and Xitsonga. I mostly use Xitsonga, mix it together with English in my social network
	3	I don't, I don't code switch because if I decide to use English I use English and if I decide to use my home language I use my home language, I don't code switch
	4	I use Venda and English
	5	Yes, I do code switch, using...
	6	Yes I do code switch, the language that I use mostly is Venda and English, but I start with English then with Venda at the end, sometimes I start with Venda then put English somewhere, yah
	7	Yes I do code switch but not often, usually I use SiSwati which is my mother tongue and English, but mostly I start with English and add maybe one or two words in my mother tongue
	8	No, I don't do the code switch, er... I use one language at a time, usually, I use Zulu, if you don't understand you'll ask, if I decide to use English I will use English
	9	Uhm... I do code switch English and Sepedi but mostly I use English, and then maybe put one word in the middle of Sepedi, yah
	10	Uhm... to benefit I do code switch with English, not so very often, not often, er... I'd say 1 over 10

**Table 6.57: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Six respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10) mostly use African languages during code-switching. Their preferred African languages are, namely, Xitsonga, Sepedi, and SiSwati. Respondent 5 uses Afrikaans and Respondents 4, 8 and 9 prefer English.

Theme 24 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 24:</b> Which language do you use most when code switching?	1	Er... I use Swati and Tsonga, and sometimes when I feel like using third language, yah
	2	I use er... Sepedi when I am talking to a Pedi person, only
	3	[clears throat] I don't have a code switching language, I use my mother tongue or English
	4	Er... I don't have any other language I can write or understand except English and Venda. Just those two



	5	Afrikaanse, but I don't use it that much, sometimes when I feel today I want to write something in Afrikaanse, yah, I write it. I can talk Afrikaanse
	6	I only use my home language
	7	Xitsonga, most of the time, I don't really speak Sepulane that much I speak Xitsonga too much
	8	Apart from English and my home language, I use Setswana, Venda, and Afrikaanse, and it's something that I do every day because I am on Social media every day
	9	Uhm... apart from English and my home language, I use Sepedi when I communicate with people around, especially my classmates, because most... since most of them are Pedis so I use Sepedi
	10	I use Xitsonga, Afrikaanse and... Sepedi. Once in a day

**Table 6.58: Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, nine respondents provided answers: Three of them (viz., Respondents 2, 4 and 6) use Sepedi as the third language that they use on Social media. Respondents 3, 5, 8 and 10 prefer Afrikaans as an alternative language. Respondent 1 opts for SiSwati, Respondent 7 uses Sepulana and Respondent 9 did not provide an answer.

<b>Theme 25 Youth's language preference on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 25:</b> Apart from English and your home language, which other language do you use on these Social media platforms? Name them, please?	1	SiSwati
	2	Sepedi
	3	Afrikaans
	4	Sepedi
	5	Afrikaans
	6	Sepedi
	7	Sepulana
	8	Afrikaans
	9	No answer
	10	Afrikaans

**Table 6.59: Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Four of them (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 6 and 8) do not have first speakers of English as friends on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. On the other hand, four respondents (viz., Respondents 5, 7, 9 and 10) have friends who are the first speakers of English on social media. These respondents speak English with them.

<b>Theme 26 Youth's language preference on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 26:</b> Do you have first language speakers of English as friends on <i>Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp</i> ? If yes, which language do you use to communicate with them (first language English)?	1	No, I don't have those friends
	2	No, I don't have those friends
	3	Uhm... I can't say I know if I do have them because as I have said earlier, some of my friends on <i>Facebook</i> they use fake profiles, so I can't tell
	4	Uhm... I don't know if they are there because like you may find that the picture is a white person or the profile says I am English but you may find that the person is not even English. Yah so I don't know if they are there
	5	Yes I do have a friends who speaks English as a first language, obvious I use English to communicate with them
	6	I don't have a friend
	7	Yes I do have a friend who she speak English as her first language so I always use English when I am communicating with her
	8	I don't have a friend who speaks English as a first language
	9	Yes I do have friends who speak English as their first language and I speak English with them
	10	Uhm... I do have friends who speak uhm... English as their first language and I use English to communicate with them

**Table 6.60: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: They all (i.e., Respondents 1 to 10) do not use *Facebook's* translation option because it does not accommodate their languages and some of them decide to ignore it altogether.

<b>Theme 27 Convenience of Social media for African language usage</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 28:</b> Are you able to use a translation option on <i>Facebook</i> ?	1	No, I never use this option
	2	It doesn't accommodate me, so yah that's why I don't use it
	3	I don't use <i>Facebook</i> at all
	4	Uhm... I can't say I am able to use those translation options because I don't use <i>Facebook</i> often. So I don't care about <i>Facebook</i> at all
	5	Myself I don't even know this option, so I have never used it. I only see it written somewhere written translation but I don't take it serious
	6	I don't use it because it doesn't even accommodate my language, so there is no need for me to use it
	7	I don't use it because I once tried to use it but I failed so I don't use it anymore. If I can find someone who will show me how it works then I can start using it

	8	I don't use it, I normally ignore it
	9	Ok, I don't use it at all
	10	Uhm... I tried to use it like once but then like I don't get anywhere with it so like I don't use it

**Table 6.61: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 5 and 6) lament that the lack of the African languages on *Facebook* proves that these languages are less important and are undermined. Respondent 7 posits that the unavailability of the African languages on *Facebook* confirms that they are not spoken by the international community. Respondent 4 is not sure about the issue. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 3, 8, and 10) did not provide answers.

Theme 28 Convenience of Social media for African language usage	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 28:</b> What is your perception concerning the lack of your home language on <i>Facebook's</i> translation option?	1	I take it that my language is not known because it's not one of those options
	2	Uhm... I take it is useless, my language is useless, so it's not there, is not useful when it comes to <i>Facebook</i>
	3	No answer
	4	Ok fine, I also have the answer for this because I am not sure if my language is there or not. So I don't know, I will try to go and try to use that App if I find that my language is not there then I will feel like <i>Facebook</i> was not meant for us
	5	My perception about my... the lack of my home language is that maybe my language is not taken seriously or maybe the people who developed <i>Facebook</i> feel that English will be the only medium of instruction for all of us to understand
	6	Uhm... my home language is not so important to other people, so that's why that they didn't put a translation option
	7	I understand that my language is not internationally spoken so... I understand that it's not internationally spoken so it's fine
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.62: Undermining of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: The majority of the respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 and 10) mention that the African languages are undermined on social media since they are not recognised. Respondents 3, 5 and 7 indicate that the African languages are not undermined on social media. They assert that African

languages are not well known and people have the latitude to register social media in any language.

Theme: 29 Undermining of African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<p><b>Question 29:</b> Do you think the developers of these applications (<i>Facebook, Twitter, &amp; WhatsApp</i>) undermine the African languages? – Why?</p>	1	Yes, they are undermining us because if you see, whatever application they are putting in google, you are using your own money, so they have to include our language so that everyone can be able to use the software, because it is not everyone who speak English
	2	Yah I feel undermined about this because like if, I mean the fact is that not everyone can speak English or French or whatever this other language, so that means if I don't know that simply means I can't use <i>Facebook</i> very well with others, I can't be able to communicate with this people, I can't, because sometimes everything is written in English, let's say for example about the translation thing, it is written like 'see translation', let's say for example I don't understand what it means like 'see translation', so it will be difficult for me to use that language
	3	I don't think the language is undermined because if we will be able to register for <i>Facebook</i> or another social network you will be able to communicate with English, for example, we can't be having accounting being taught in 10 different languages, it's the same as social network, we can't have <i>WhatsApp</i> in different languages like, there's no undermining of languages
	4	They do undermine the languages because the people who are using those Social media they are paying for them, so they just have to put all the languages so that because we are the ones who are paying for them
	5	No, I don't feel like they are undermining the African languages because they don't even know them, some of them they just... they are not undermining them
	6	Uhm... they are undermining our African languages. That's how I feel because, like, because that thing of red lines makes me feel like, eish yah
	7	I for one, I don't feel like they undermine our additional South African languages because those people they are not in Africa, they are overseas, so overseas there I know we have got 11 official languages and none of those languages exist let's say in America, they only use English, and English we can all understand it, for the minute that you are being able to register the account on <i>Facebook</i> , it means that you are able to understand, so I don't think they are undermining, and then we also have that see translation, if you want to use your language, if you want to use you will first have to understand so you go to google it can help you use that see translation then you will use your African languages, so no
	8	I feel like they are not undermining us, I just feel like in the <i>Facebook</i> quarters there are no people who can programme Swati, there are no people who can programme Venda because as we see it on <i>Facebook</i> is just they don't say home when they are programming it, they are not saying home, they use quotes, so there are no intellectuals in the <i>Facebook</i> headquarters who can be able to programme Venda to be

		there in <i>Facebook</i> . So if people feel like they want to see Venda in <i>Facebook</i> , then they should study IT, go to <i>Facebook</i> headquarters, programme it there on <i>Facebook</i> then it will appear there on the boards so they will use
	9	I feel like we are being undermined because <i>Facebook</i> they made it be worldwide and since it's worldwide Africa is part of the world, so if it's worldwide it means they should put African languages there. The issue of IT's and staff, in South Africa we have IT information what-what, computer sciences students, so it means then if <i>Facebook</i> wanted this person they can make their branch in South Africa which will deal with that thing so then we are being undermined because they don't... they think they are superior, we are inferior so the language of them it is superior to us
	10	There is this other language, China languages and this other language er... French is there on <i>Facebook</i> , which means these people are undermining us as Africans, they couldn't even... they didn't even bother to consider us because we are using the money to access <i>Facebook</i> , so this thing must fall

**Table 6.63: The Effects of Social media on the African Languages**

In this table, a couple of respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 believes that social media have a positive effect on social media because they promote multilingualism. Respondent 2 explains that social media have minor effects on African languages. Eight respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 10) refrained from providing responses.

Theme 30 The effects of Social media on the African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 30:</b> What are the effects of the <i>Facebook</i> , <i>Twitter</i> & <i>WhatsApp</i> on the African languages?	1	It promotes the learning of languages, for instance, if we are chatting in a group then someone asks “what do you mean by that?”
	2	It is very 10%
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.64: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: They all (i.e., Respondents 1 to 7) agree that social media can play a critical role towards conserving African languages. They further argue that African languages should be included in the social media's

language options, and Africans should take part in advancing the agenda of conserving African languages. Respondents 8, 9 and 10 did not provide answers.

Theme 31 The role of Social media in conserving African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<p><b>Question 31:</b> Do you think these Social media platforms can be used to conserve and develop African languages such as Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga? How?</p>	1	<p>Yah it can be used to conserve these languages, these African languages, and how, the how part, they have to add our languages on translation whatever, you know, on that see translation as well, and since we have that see translation thing so they have to actually allow us to type in our language without that red line, you understand? Whoever wants to know what the meaning of what maybe I might have typed maybe in Tshivenda should go and see that see the translation, yah.</p>
	2	<p>I think they can conserve our African languages such as Sotho, Tshivenda and so on because if our languages are available in Social medias platform, I think people will be want to participate knowing someone language, but now even if you try to write some words which are in another language maybe Sotho, you can't even understand but if they are not undermining us there, people in Africa will be knowing different languages</p>
	3	<p>We can use Social media, number one we have to take... isn't it that is not a... it has to be planned, so I think the first think we need to do is to start by doing those courses, IT courses and software development and so on, number 3, we as African black kids we have to try and at least use our African languages more than we use English, that way we will be able to conserve because the generation of now we don't even know the home languages we use English mostly, and Social media is broad, is very broad, so I think is one way that we can develop and conserve by typing and posting in our languages, that way we'll to conserve our home languages. Other than that if we use English, we go on and on using English I don't think there will be... in the next generation to come, I don't think there will be any kid who will be doing and speaking this African language because right now even our parents they are taking our siblings to private schools they are doing English as a first language and Afrikaans. So if we as the 21<sup>st</sup> century we don't do something about speaking and posting in our African languages I think like there won't be anyone who will be doing the... will be using our languages</p>
	4	<p>Yah I think that this Social media platforms can be used to conserve and develop our languages by maybe including the option like when registering for <i>Facebook</i> to ask you about your home language and then you choose if Xitsonga, Tshivenda or Sepedi and then that way our languages will be known that there are some people... this number of people speak Sotho, Xitsonga and all that</p>
	5	<p>Yes, we can conserve our languages by using them more often. We tend to use English most of the time, as we can see that this guy can understand in Xitsonga so why don't I use Xitsonga to communicate with him, so if we can try to communicate in those indigenous languages then we can be able to preserve our languages</p>
	6	<p>Yah I think Social media can be used to develop our African languages because like... uhm... she said that Social media is very</p>

		broad and if we tend to use our African languages maybe they will start recognising
	7	Yes, we can use Social media platform to develop our African languages. What I can say it's like to include those African languages on Social media, like on your profile there must be all those African languages which are official in South Africa so that everyone will be able to know all those official languages
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer

**Table 6.65: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Seven of them (viz., Respondents 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10) postulate that the African languages might face extinction due to the excessive usage of English by the speakers of the African languages. On the flip side, Respondents 2, 5 and 7 state that African languages will not be extinct because they are used orally on a daily basis.

<b>Theme 32 The role of Social media in conserving African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 32:</b> Since African languages are marginalised on various Social media platforms, do you think this can make the languages to face extinction?	1	These languages... I mean this issue of <i>Facebook</i> and all the staff can also contribute to the extinction of our African languages in the sense that you have to understand that <i>Facebook</i> is part of life, you understand? We use... we normally use Social media in everything that we do. So for that reason, most of our younger ones will turn to use English in whatever that they will be doing especially on Social media and everything, they will to use English, you understand? So they will end up seeing their own languages as useless to learn that language, you understand? Since everything is being done in English
	2	I don't think this can make languages to be extinct because we use more of English when we communicate on social networks but then when we are on our own we use our languages, so by that way we can still keep our languages
	3	Ok, yes, myself I can say yes, because of our African language... I can say yes, because these African languages, the new generation which is coming won't know it
	4	Yes because younger people use English to communicate and our siblings are taken to private schools so they use the English as their home language, so yah
	5	I think social networks won't contribute to the extinction because we use our language when we talk orally but in writing we don't use it and most of the South Africans who use the indigenous languages are from rural areas where lot people, older people, and staff they are still using these languages, and then you are forced to use your mother tongue language which is the indigenous language
	6	Yah it might die in writing but orally it will be there

	7	It won't face extinction as the same reason he stated that back at home we still use uhm... our mother tongue and even when we communicate we still use our mother tongues and another thing it's still there in the curriculum it's one of the mother tongues, it's one of the compulsory subjects like you have to do when you are in public schools. And most of the children or most of the youngsters in South Africa they study in public schools, so it won't face extinction
	8	Uhm... [laughs] I think this thing it's in the perspective, if a student individually wants to learn the student will learn near the product of public schools, so that thing it's in the mindsets of parents to say that my kid is not learning well there, there are some other kids who do well in the same school in the same class, so people should check with their kids, how their kids, their attitude because there are some kids in the same class learning the same things but who are performing better
	9	I understand the question in a very different format. The thing is that we are talking about us, but there's a generation that's going to follow after us, and the problem with the generation is the 'I know it all' generation' of which most of them they don't even want to talk in their home languages. I have got a brother who's about 16 now, he will be like talking English even when he gets home he speaking in English, he goes to school it's English, Afrikaanse, so and he is always on Social media, so this question is saying as we use English mostly in Social media is there a chance that our languages may be extinct or not. For me I think there is that chance because I think on a scale of 1 to 10, I for one I use <i>WhatsApp</i> and <i>Facebook</i> most of the time, like if there are like 6 hours in a day, 5 hours of my time I am on Social media and I am using English, so there is a chance and if our parents are doing nothing, actually our parents are encouraging this for our languages being extinct because even if our siblings come from school and they are speaking English they entertain that. So there is a chance that our languages, we may speak them but the generation after us may know just a little bit and I don't think their kids will be these languages, they will be speaking English, so there's a possibility, if we don't do something about it, of which we have to, we have to make sure that in Social media we use our language and stop using English. Otherwise, there is a possibility of extinction in our home languages
	10	Yes, I think so because hard-headed people like me, I know my mother tongue but I use... I know I use my mother tongue every time I want to use it, so there are people not all people like me so it does extinct

**Table 6.66: Conservation of the African Languages**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: Almost all respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) concur that it is very important to preserve African languages for future generations. Respondent 7 states that it is not important to conserve the African languages. He further argues that the conservation of African languages would create ethnic divisions. The following subsection deals with the analysis of Unit C's focus group interviews.



Theme 33 Conservation of the African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 33:</b> How is it important to pass our languages from generation to generation?	1	It is very important so that er... the next generation will know their home languages and not forgot... forget it
	2	It's very important to maintain our languages so that the future generation can know more about... yah, our language, our culture
	3	Uhm... it is very important, and then to know our mother tongue... the whole African languages so that they can be able to communicate with the grannies because the grannies they don't know English, and if you come and speak English you will simply confuse them. So you must know your mother tongue so that you can... And uhm... if I remember very well er... she ended in grade 10 if I am not mistaken. Yah...yah... she's not a genius because she can't speak English, so if I come there and speak English she will simply look at me like I am crazy. Yes, I speak maybe SiSwati
	4	Yah I think it is very important in order to avoid the extinction of the African language we need to pass these languages from generation to another generation. And again, to keep our language we have to do that because if I remember, my... my... my parents speak this different Venda that myself sometimes I cannot understand, you understand? I think is that... the English that we are using and another thing coding... code-switching, I think it's also contributing in that fact, you understand?
	5	Er... I think it is very very very very important. Why? Because if we let our African language to extinct, er... it's going to be a big problem because that would not be the dying of language, it can even cause more... er... it... it... it... it can even kill our culture, because if I am a Venda but I want to perform something, my traditional, I can't perform it using English. I have to speak my mother tongue so that my ancestors can understand me
	6	Uhm... I think it's important because I am... as we African people we are those indigenous languages then it means as an African people we believe in ancestors most of us, ok most of an... some of the African people believe in ancestors, then it is impossible for you to communicate with the ancestors with a foreign language, then you have to use those languages. So then the other thing is that we have to keep them so that we can be able to keep our cultures alive so that we can be proud of being Africans. But then if we allow English to take over then everything will die, our language will die then we will be following the western cultures
	7	Mhm... to me to pass our languages I think it's not important [laughs]. Uh... we all have our reasons, what I... what I... what I... my reason is, we live in a comm... maybe let's take it I am going to register in Venda, they will say when I speak er... he's Tsonga, he's Swati... so I think if... for it dying so that we cannot identify each other according to our ethnicities. You see that is Swati that is Pedi, it still happens I heard it yesterday they were still talking about it. So for it to die and for us to rise up in one language that is English it will promote unism and the best of unism gives to great benefits, now we don't have... like if I am applying for a job and the person who's... who's going to hire me er... is a Swati, he or she doesn't like Sepedi so I am doomed. You see, to me is like unism that if we don't pass our languages it will create unism

	8	I think it's of importance for our indigenous languages to be passed on from generation to generation, number 1 isn't it that they say my pride my culture, so like if you cannot take pride in your own culture it means you don't even know who you are and where you come from, and knowing where you come from it determines where you going and the type of person you will be and the type of life you will live. So I may have a kid, since some believe in ancestors and some don't, so I may have a cat of which you might find that they say I have to introduce that kid to the ancestors, how will I do that if maybe my kid or my grandchild don't know that language, how will we go about that? And you find that these things they do exist even though some us we don't believe in them. So for the life that we live at home it's very... it's of importance that we pass these languages from generation to generation. But in the life that we live in now, we live in a generation that whereby most of us we believe in English, we believe that when you are speaking English fluently and writing it you are superior than others and what's not. But it is off importance to take pride in your culture and your language
	9	Uhm... it's very important for us to uhm... keep our indigenous African languages from generation to generation uhm... for us... uhm... to have an identity. Yah... because like... if we tend to use like... uhm...English... we will no longer like know who are we like really
	10	It is very important because... mhm... culturally so, mhm... the things we perform, the rituals we perform and everything we need our indigenous languages, we won't for instance they have said it, you won't be able to consult the ancestors in English and all those things

### 6.3.3 UNIT C: Group 3 (Focus Group Discussion: PART 3: Unit C – Group 3)

**Table 6.67: Social media Accounts that Respondents Have**

In this table, ten respondents provided answers: The majority of the respondents (viz., Respondents 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) are subscribed to four social media sites. Two respondents have three social media accounts. Respondent 11 did not provide an answer.

Theme 1: Number of Social Network Accounts	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes”
Question 1: How many Social media accounts do you have?	1	3
	2	4
	3	4
	4	4
	5	3
	6	4
	7	4
	8	4
	9	4
	10	4
	11	No answer

**Table 6.68: Findings: The Frequency of Social media Usage**

In this table, only eleven respondents provided answers: Almost all respondents (i.e., 10 of them) indicate that they use social media daily. Respondent 2 states that she uses social media three times a week.

Theme 2: Time Spent on Social	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 2: How often do you log on into your Social media accounts?	1	Daily
	2	Maybe 3 times a week
	3	Daily
	4	Daily
	5	Daily
	6	Daily
	7	Daily
	8	Daily
	9	Daily
	10	Daily
	11	Daily

**Table 6.69: The Amount of Time Spent on Social media per Week**

The respondents state that they spend a considerable amount of time on social media. Respondents 1 and 2 spend 12 hours per week and Respondents 9 and 10 both spend 20 hours, respectively. Respondent 3 spend seven hours, Respondent 6 spend 42 hours and Respondent 7 spend only three hours. Respondents 8 and 11 spend 35 and 168 hours per week respectively. Respondent 5 did not respond to the question.

Theme 5.3:	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 3: How many hours do you spend on your Social media accounts per week?	1	12
	2	12
	3	7
	4	72
	5	No answer
	6	42
	7	3
	8	35
	9	20
	10	20
	11	168

**Table 6.70: The Most Used Social media Network**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: Five of them (viz., Respondents 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) mostly use *WhatsApp* because it is cheap and easy. Respondent 1 prefers to use *Twitter* because it provides information and entertainment for her.

<b>Theme 4: The most used Social media network</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 4:</b> Which Social media network do you mostly use? And Why?	1	<i>Twitter</i> , It’s informative, use at hand and it’s entertaining
	2	<i>WhatsApp</i> , Because I can communicate with people from different places at any time
	3	<i>WhatsApp</i> , It’s cheaper and faster
	4	<i>WhatsApp</i> , It’s affordable
	5	<i>WhatsApp</i> . Because we communicate more quickly
	6	<i>WhatsApp</i> , Yes. It’s easy to use than other Social media
	7	I think <i>Facebook</i> because it is expensive and I can afford it
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.71: Access Techniques of Social media amongst Youth**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: They all (i.e., Respondents 1, 2 and 3) use mobile phones to access social media. Other respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 5: Access techniques of Social media amongst youth</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 5:</b> How do you access your Social media networks?	1	Mobile phone, I am using my mobile phone
	2	Mobile phone
	3	Mobile smart phone
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	Answer
	7	Answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.72: The Affordability of Social media for the Users**

In this table, one respondent provided answers: Respondent 1 believes that social media are affordable. Ten respondents (viz., Respondents 2 to 11) did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 6: The affordability of Social media for the users</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 6:</b> Do you think it is affordable to access these networks?	1	Yes, Hence is not one because we have <i>Facebook</i> , we have <i>WhatsApp</i> , we have <i>Instagram</i> . So it's affordable, you can access them all by maybe buying 30 megabytes but then you can never access them all at the same time
	2	No answer
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.73: The Purpose of Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: The respondents (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) claim that the main purpose of social media is to communicate. Respondent 3 posits that the main purpose of social media is to connect people from different places. Some respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 7: The purpose of Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 7:</b> What is the main purpose of Social media networks?	1	To communicate
	2	To communicate
	3	To connect people easier from abroad. To connect the whole global, it makes the whole connecting easier because you can talk to someone in Joburg or outside the country. So it brings er... close connection
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.74: The Outlook of Social media amongst the Youth**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: Respondents 1 and 2 state that social media meet their expectations because they can easily access and share information. Nine respondents (viz., Respondents 3 and 11) did not answer this question.

<b>Theme 8: The outlook of Social media amongst the youth</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 8:</b> Do you think these Social media networks meet your expectations? And Why?	1	I think they do, first of all, in reference of communication, I can get your message easily, I can see you clearly, we can exchange numbers, we exchange things, even audio recording, videos, entertainment, anything abroad, anything that can be seen with a blind eye of the camera from the smart phone can be visualised and exchanged. So in times, we get things, I can hear your voice through the phone, you can send me a song through the phone, you can do anything, so it's easily accessible
	2	And also, we use that... you'd actually find that you kept your way for them to be broadcasted, you already know... You already have the information before even any publication can actually put it out there
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.75: The Youth's Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, nine respondents provided answers: Six of them (viz., Respondents 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9) use English on social media. They indicate that English is more convenient on social media. Respondents 4 and 5 prefer to use Sepedi because they communicate with their parents. Respondents 10 and 11 did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 9: The youth's language preference on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 9:</b> Which language do you normally use in your Social media account(s) and Why?	1	English, Because people that I chat with use other languages, others are Zulus
	2	English, because on the prediction line, when you type any word, an incomplete word, they use to give us those words in full
	3	Mostly English, but when I am typing I able unable to type with English then that is when I will use Sepedi
	4	Sepedi. Because I chat with parents and they never went to school
	5	Sepedi
	6	I use uhm... both Sepedi and English, I'd say I use them both... equally because... uhm... most people

		that I chat with, are Pedis, so I only use English when the person asked in English, but preferably I prefer Sepedi
	7	I use English Because most of the English words are in shorter ways rather than using Sepedi
	8	Uhm... because isn't it the one I use mostly <i>Twitter</i> and it's wisely English
	9	English, Because everybody knows it
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.76: Convenience of Social media for African Language Speakers**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: Respondents 1 and 2 believe that Social media are convenient for speakers of African languages because they can do everything to uplift their languages. In contrast, Respondent 3 mentions that Social media are convenient for English. Eight respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide responses.

<b>Theme 10: Convenience of Social media for African language speakers</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 10:</b> Are Social media networks convenient for people who want to use indigenous African languages in their respective accounts? Please give a reason for your answer?	1	Yes, they are convenient because I am not uhm... told what to say or how to say it and in that instance, I can just speak whatever language or use whatever language I can because I am not regulated by anything
	2	Yes, I am seconding her, yes, I'd say, adding to what she said, it's convenient, er... in terms of uplifting people who... who have... know only one language which is indigenous language, maybe for example if they don't know English and they can speak SiSwati, so it's an advantage for both of you to communicate, because er... you busy promoting that language and you giving him the benefit of influence to like be ok it's fine it's not meant for English only for all of us
	3	Like I said English is convenient
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.77: The Status of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: The respondents (i.e., Respondents 1 to 3) feel bad about the quandary of the African language on social media. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 11: The status of African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<p><b>Question 11:</b> Do you feel African languages are overshadowed in the cyberspace?</p>	1	<p>To me, I'd say it's unfair as much as uh... they not shared and distributed as much as we wish they would be because we literally hear things er... presented in... in uhm... in English most of the time but then luckily in news and radio stations, we have er... languages... different in just languages in our own radio stations. That's why mostly we have community radio stations and international community radio stations. But then besides that er... I'd say it's unfair because it would have been dominant enough if we were using our indigenous languages where we are areal, let's mainly focus on that when using the indigenous language. But then in terms of overshadowing it's very much unfair for us</p>
	2	<p>Yes we are overshadowed is true, but the for the fact that English is the main... you know... the platform of communication, globally, that's why it's so dominant and it's so easier to like keep your habit easier because you get your point across easier. It might be unfair and all, but it's not unfair that you can't use it, you can use it but it's just that uhm...you fall back to the... uhm... general medium being in relation, and then in that instance, I find it it's more financially when you get to speak uhm... or... when they use the...our indigenous African languages in <i>Twitter</i> or when I am using <i>WhatsApp</i>. When you want the information to address quicker, it's easier to just fall back in English and you know, like, 'in class' or 'can't talk' you know, like writing 'I am still busy with something' you see, it's long, so it just makes it easier not that it's unfair, it's just something that we fall to, like it's a reflex or automatic</p>
	3	<p>Myself I feel we are getting lost like, because at the end we are neglecting our culture and adopting others</p>
	4	<p>No answer</p>
	5	<p>No answer</p>
	6	<p>No answer</p>
7	<p>No answer</p>	
8	<p>No answer</p>	
9	<p>No answer</p>	
10	<p>No answer</p>	
11	<p>No answer</p>	



**Table 6.78: Special Social media Applications for African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They both (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) believe that there is a need to introduce special social media applications for African languages. They claim that the introduction of such applications will conserve the African languages and minimise the excessive use of the English language on social media. Nine respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 11) desisted from answering the question.

<b>Theme 12: Special Social media applications for African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 12:</b> Based on your personal experience as a Social media user, do you think there is a need for these networks to introduce a special application for indigenous African languages?	1	Yah I think it's... since then English is dominant but then our mother tongues and indigenous languages are dying er... I think there should be a need for them to introduce it as much as making the cell phones start up with our home languages than, yah because of everything...
	2	Yah they must correct our languages because like what I do when I am typing and staff my smart phone can give you an option like to have the word in the dictionary of the phone. So you'd find that now when I am like typing something and uhm... pardon me, typing something in Xitsonga or SiSwati, it's already there so I just click on that word because it's complete and it's quicker that way
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.79: The Impact of Social media on African Languages**

In this table, only four respondents provided answers: Respondents 1 and 2 suggest that social media play both negative and positive roles towards conserving African languages. They elucidate that social media are positive due to its effectiveness and are negative because of language limitations. Respondent 3 asserts that social media have a positive impact that is only restricted by the dominance of English. Whilst Respondent 4 posits that social media are eroding the African languages. Seven respondents (viz., Respondents 5 to 11) did not provide responses.

Theme 13: The impact of Social media on African language	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 13:</b> What is the impact of Social media networks on African languages?	1	It can be both negative or positive
	2	Well, I'd give it both instances like, it's positive like we've mentioned already, the communication part which is quicker and you get to be... you know... closer to be people in a more open way like, uhm... just having to go meet someone at a very certain point at a certain time and discuss whatever you want to discuss right there and there, wherever you are, the person is far away. It's negative uhm... because... yah, because of the language barrier, basically that's the only negative part I see
	3	I think the impact they have it is good both, I can say in terms of our African languages the problem is only the one thing which is the English, which is dominant, so we tend to lose focus on our indigenous languages or home languages, but concerning the fact that it connects us, it's good, it's fast and everything gets vital other than distributing things like going to meet up at a place with someone face to face but then you have to send one message
	4	It kills our language
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.80: The Role of Social media in Conserving the African Languages**

In this table, only one respondent provided answers: Respondent 1 believes that social media play a positive role in conserving African languages because the users have the latitude to use any language without restrictions. Ten respondents (viz., Respondents 2 to 11) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 14: The role of Social media in conserving the African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 14:</b> What is the role of Social media in conserving the African languages?	1	I think the Social media doesn't restrict you to express your language through it. So it gives us a vital role of saying whatever you want in your own language as much as you please, because I can't say there's a typing error on the prediction word, because each and every word you want to type you can express on the phone, so mainly it's not basically because of the prediction because as much as you put it off you can say anything in your own language. So I think the role is... er... the role of Social media under our African language is we can spread and talk any African language as much as you please
	2	No answer
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.81: Sharing Cultural Information on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Respondents 1 and 7 affirm that they share cultural issues on social media. Respondents 3, 4, 5 and 6 mention that they do not share cultural issues on social media. The other respondents (viz., Respondents 2, 8, 9, 10 and 11) did provide answers.

<b>Theme 15: Sharing cultural information on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 15:</b> How often do you share information/speak about your culture on Social media platforms?	1	Every day, like, I use my language every day, so yah
	2	No answer
	3	Truly speaking I hardly speak about my culture er... and I can't say every day because sometimes I really turn to forget who I am by the time that I am in the media talking English, I usually think I am someone who is in America. Even the words, so it makes me forget who I am most of the time
	4	No
	5	No
	6	No, I don't
	7	We have this thing of 'I am a Swati myself', yah, so it's a daily thing

	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.82: Appropriateness of Social media as Platforms to Discuss Cultural Issues**

In this table, one respondent provided answers: Respondent 1 mentions that social media are appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues. Ten respondents (viz., Respondents 2 to 11) did not provide answers to this question.

<b>Theme 16: Appropriateness of Social media as platforms to discuss cultural issues</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 16:</b> Do you think Social media are the appropriate platforms to discuss cultural issues?	1	I think they should even though we not, because by discussing them through, we usually remind one another that don't forget you are a Pedi and I am also a Pedi, but then in terms of the fact that we're now stereotyped we can no longer do that, but then it will be good if we tried that on our own.
	2	No answer
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.83: Pressure to Use English on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 and 2 posit that they are not pressurised to use English on social media. Respondent 3 states that there is pressure to use English on social media because many people use the language. Eight respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 17: Pressure to use English on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 17: Do you somehow feel pressurised to use English on your Social media platforms?	1	On my side, I don't feel pressurised because as much as I can comment or give er... any word I like on <i>Facebook</i> it's not restricted or what, it's not like when I send a text it would be as wrong, no, as long as I punch something in and send it and it's accepted so the word would be determined by the receiver, so, as for English and Sepedi it's been acceptable I can also use both the languages and sometimes text using English and Sepedi, so there is no pressure for me. I can both be multilingual and use both in a sentence
	2	I don't feel pressurised
	3	There are those which would feel pressure to use English most especially if they've got their <i>Facebookers</i> , their.... Followers or friends uhm... majority are white, like hed has said, he uses English because it's a medium of communication, your <i>Facebook</i> attracts a lot of different races and people with different languages, so at some point, you will be pressurised to use English at the first with that person until you realise that this person speaks this certain language, if you can't speak it, that's when you are going to use English either way, but then yes the pressure is there. Because if we were not pressured at some point, uhm... we wouldn't be using English or we would be communicating in our own language
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.84: The Difficulty of Using African Languages on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Three respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 3 and 6) concur that it is not difficult to use African languages on social media because they use African languages to communicate with people who understand these languages. Respondent 4 declares that it is difficult to use Sepedi on social media. Whilst Respondent 5 argues that English is one language used to connect people from different ethnic groups, hence it is difficult to use Africa languages on social media. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 7 to 11) did not provide responses.

Theme 18: The difficulty of using African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 18:</b> How difficult is it to use your African/home language to communicate on these Social media platforms?	1	It's not difficult. Because most of the people I have on my Social media are the people who understand the language that I write or talk. So when I talk to them in my own language is not that difficult
	2	It's different because sometimes we have different friends like SiSwati speakers and Xitsonga speakers when I speak with Sepedi they are unable to understand what I am talking about
	3	It's not difficult because I speak Sepedi always and many people know Sepedi
	4	Sepedi should be put as one of the difficult languages
	5	I'd say it will depend, in some cases obviously you have to use English in order to accommodate others because we don't live alone. Since I came here I've got Xitsonga speaking friends, I sometimes don't hear anything they say. So, English is the one that connects us because I really need to know what they are saying. So, it puts me under pressure to make sure that I try understanding, as much as I want to learn their language it's also a pressure that they also have their own language which they use, so it also puts me under pressure to know their language, whenever they try to talk to me I'd know what they're talking about, so there's pressure and there's no pressure. So, the main focus on Sepedi speaking I am also told there is no pressure what I know is what they receive and what they exchange with me, so it's just ok. I'd say it will depend on the category of people you are socialising with
	6	That's why I prefer Sepedi speaking people because maybe the Xitsonga, Tshivenda speaking people, sometimes when you talk to them there are some words that are deep, that means I can't talk to them
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.85: The Difficulty of Putting the Message across in African Languages on Social media**

In this table, eight respondents provided answers: Five respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7) admit that they struggle to put the message across in African languages on social media. Respondent 8 states that he does not struggle at all because he can express himself in his home language. Respondents 2 and 3 point out that it depends on the kind of message they want to convey and the manner in which it should be carried out. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 9, 10 and 11) desisted from answering this question.

Theme 19: The difficulty of putting the message across in African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 19: Do you struggle to put the message across in your respective African languages?	1	Yes, that’s a struggle, But don’t you think the struggle having to come back and ask you, why don’t you just put the message across and it being understood?
	2	For me, it depends on what kind of message do I want to put on? What if the thing that I want to say in English it wouldn’t make sense
	3	But then it depends, As much as I said, concerning the fact of struggling, it’s... people... ok, why don’t you struggle your Venda name and surname, putting it there because you are on <i>Facebook</i> , it’s not a struggle, it’s who you are? That’s what I am emphasising, so it won’t be a struggle, whoever who wants to know, so it’s very simple when it’s like that. If people want to get the interpretation of your words or meaning, it’s simple for them to ask because some things they will never know if they don’t ask
	4	No, myself I struggle
	5	Myself I struggle because there are some words that are difficult to translate
	6	I do struggle
	7	I do struggle
	8	I don’t struggle because I can write whatever I want and if you don’t understand you are the one to ask me because you will be the one concerned about it
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.86: Convenience of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, nine respondents provided answers: Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 feel bad about the fact the African languages are highlighted in red on *Facebook*. They further argue that African languages are undermined on social media. Respondents 5 and 7 claim that there is nothing wrong with the red lines because it still accommodates everyone and the mobile phones were manufactured in foreign countries, hence the exclusion of African languages. Respondent 8 states that English should be used as the main language because it is understood by many users. Respondent 9 blames the manufacturers of the mobile phones who decided to exclude the African languages. Respondents 10 and 11 did not provide answers.

Theme 20: Convenience of African languages on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 20:</b> When you write your status or comments on <i>Facebook</i> in an African language, the application would underline in red. How do you feel about it?	1	Bad
	2	For me I feel like it's not being proper, I know technological appliances are meant for English, most of them were just English. So sometimes it's easier for phones because now phones are advanced so you add the word to dictionary, so whenever you type in Sepedi always you just add the word, so you are going to be used to it, the phone is used to those Sepedi languages, so is much simpler when you add the word to dictionary, but then before you were feeling bad before because you wouldn't get options of the words but English you always do. So, it's not nice, it's not enjoyable
	3	I feel it's unfair, for as much as we have an English that started with a phone, and phones are busy being upgraded every time with new software, it can't be easy for us to use our home languages if our phones would allow other languages to be part of the system automatically as much as English is automatically part of the phone's system. So obviously on <i>Facebook</i> , it will underline, it actually happens with any text that is in the phone that is not in English. And then I feel like if phones are developed or manufactured, whatever that makes new phones if phones are being improved every time, they also improve with African languages. We cannot have one language universal and other foreign languages to have in our phones, but when we have these phones in Africa we don't have our languages there represented or us being able to use our languages freely. But anyway, I feel that's unfair if we can't... like besides <i>Facebook</i> , we can't... can we have our phones with our languages already established in those phones so when we go to <i>Facebook</i> anyone should know that already we've got Sepedi there and whatever red thing that we see there we wouldn't even feel intimidated. I think that is the reason why we are forced to learn English
	4	Myself I think it is bad, and it is unfair and we feel undermined because every phone when it comes it has those languages and those languages are counted in the official languages. So, I think they should change that strategy and use another language so we can be accommodated with those languages because when they underline them it means those languages do not dominate at all
	5	Myself at first I thought it was unfair, but now I came into a point where I looked into the situation, these phones are not made in South Africa, so they are made in all those kind of places, so that's why they don't think about putting our languages in there because we are not the only one, er... you might find that people in Madagascar there, they have their own language but it's still not there in the cell phones, so kind of like accepted that
	6	I think they are not taking us serious
	7	It still accommodates everybody
	8	For the portion of all these people, rather we make one language which is understood by everyone, which is going to save things for us, they made English, it's an international standard language and we all understand it
	9	I feel people who made phones didn't include the indigenous languages, even in China there's an indigenous language, in Japan



		there are indigenous languages, everyone who's from Japan speaks Japanese, there are indigenous languages within Japanese, so that Japan language on the phone accommodates all Japanese, so that's how I feel about that
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.87: African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: All respondents (i.e., Respondents 1 to 6) agree that all their friends on social media are Africans. Respondents 7 to 11 did not answer this question.

Theme 21 African youth and the use of English on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)
<b>Question 21:</b> Generally, your friends on Social media, are they Africans?	1	Yes
	2	Yes
	3	Yes
	4	Yes
	5	Yes
	6	Yes
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.88: African Youth and the Use of English on Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: Three respondents (viz., Respondents 2, 3 and 5) indicate that they prefer to use English to communicate with their social media friends. They further point out that the majority of their friends understand English. Respondent 1 prefers to use Sepedi ahead of English because the former is her home language. Respondent 4 prefers both Sepedi and English, the home language is popular on *WhatsApp* and the latter is used on *Facebook*. Respondent 7 mentions that Setswana is used on *WhatsApp* and English is common *Facebook*. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 8, 9, 10 and 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 22 African youth and the use of English on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 22:</b> Which language do you use to communicate with your fellow African Social media users?	1	Sepedi , because I am originated from rural areas
	2	English, because I think when they speak English they think they are smart
	3	English because most of my friends are educated
	4	I use both English and Sepedi as much as I said before, there are those dominant languages on my <i>WhatsApp</i> and <i>Facebook</i> . Er... I can be like 'where are you?' then my friend will reply by ' ke ka gae' so they're both covered, so it's equal for both of them
	5	English
	6	<i>WhatsApp</i> obviously SiSwati, <i>Facebook</i> , English, <i>Twitter</i> , English
	7	<i>WhatsApp</i> , Setswana and English, <i>Facebook</i> , uhm... Setswana and the... yah
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.89: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: Three respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 2 and 3) admit that they code switch when communicating on social media. Eight respondents (viz., Respondents 2 to 11) did not provide responses.

Theme 23 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 23:</b> Do you code switch when you chat on <i>WhatsApp</i> & <i>Facebook</i> /Using both English and your home language? And how often do you do that?	1	Always
	2	Always
	3	Always
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.90: The Usage of Code-Switching by the Youth on Social media**

In this table, three respondents provided answers: Respondents 1 and 2 opine that they mostly use Sepedi when code-switching. Respondents 3 uses both Sepedi and English during code-switching. Eight respondents (viz., Respondents 4 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 24 The usage of code-switching by the youth on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 24:</b> Which language do you use most when code switching?	1	Sepedi
	2	Sepedi
	3	Both of them but then I cannot say the... it's 50/50 for me Sepedi and English
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.91: Youth’s Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, five respondents provided answers: Respondents 3 and 5 use Tsotsitaal. Respondent 1 uses SiSwati and Respondent 2 uses IsiZulu and Tshivenda. On the other hand, Respondent 4 uses IsiZulu and Xitsonga. Six respondents (viz., Respondents 6 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 25 Youth’s language preference on Social media	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 25:</b> Apart from English and your home language, which other language do you use on these Social media platforms? Name them, please?	1	SiSwati
	2	Zulu and Venda
	3	I can say I use Tsotsitaal, so that's the only language I have. So, if it's not that it's English and Sepedi if it's not that it's English and slang
	4	I use Zulu and Xitsonga
	5	I use Tsotsitaal
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.92: Youth’s Language Preference on Social media**

In this table, seven respondents provided answers: Four respondents (viz., Respondents 1, 5, 6, and 7) have first speakers of English on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. In contrast, Respondents 2, 3, and 4 do not have such friends. Respondent 4 uses both Sepedi and English to communicate with the speaker of

English because the person is willing to learn this African language. Four respondents (viz., Respondents 8, 9, 10 and 11) did not provide responses.

<b>Theme: 26 Youth's language preference on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 26:</b> Do you have first language speakers of English as friends on <i>Facebook</i> , <i>Twitter</i> , and <i>WhatsApp</i> ? If yes, which language do you use to communicate with them (first language English?	1	Yes, English
	2	No
	3	No
	4	No. But I have black people who don't know Sepedi
	5	Yes, English
	6	Yes, English
	7	Yes, English
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.93: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Respondents 2, 3, 5 and 6 affirm that they are able to use *Facebook's* translation option. Respondents 1 and 4 are not able to use this translation option. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 7 to 11) desisted from answering the question.

<b>Theme 27 Convenience of Social media for African language usage</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or "vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 27:</b> Are you able to use a translation option on <i>Facebook</i> ?	1	No!
	2	Yes,
	3	myself I can Yes
	4	No!
	5	Yes
	6	Yes, Actually not all cell phones can do that
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.94: Convenience of Social media for African Language Usage**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They both (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) indicate that the lack of African languages on *Facebook's* language options means that *Facebook* must be upgraded to accommodate the African languages. Nine respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 11) did not provide answers.

<b>Theme 28 Convenience of Social media for African language usage</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 28:</b> What is your perception concerning the lack of your home language on <i>Facebook</i> 's translation option?	1	People who are doing <i>Facebook</i> are Whites, what do you expect?
	2	My expectation is that they should upgrade and understand that <i>Facebook</i> connect multilingual people, so they should try to accommodate us in whatever sense that they can as much as they made <i>Facebook</i> for all of us, let it accommodate other languages so as much as you all know it
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.95: Undermining of African Languages on Social media**

In this table, eight respondents provided answers: Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 indicate that the African languages are undermined on social media since they are not recognised. Respondent 5 postulates that the developers of social media are focusing on the market and they want to ensure that many people use their application hence the usage of English. Respondent 8 is in between, his argument is that social media are capacitated to allow its users to use any language, however, to some extent, the African languages will not develop. Three respondents (viz., Respondents 9, 10 and 11) did not provide answers to this question.

<b>Theme 29 Undermining of African languages on Social media</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 29:</b> Do you think the developers of these applications ( <i>Facebook</i> , <i>Twitter</i> , & <i>WhatsApp</i> ) undermine the African languages? – Why?	1	I don't think so
	2	Myself I think that they're undermining our languages
	3	Er... I think they are, of cause. Er... they know that <i>Facebook</i> is a social network that is being used worldwide, they should try to communicate and er... cover all the languages around the world irrespective of where the <i>Facebook</i> is made from, we know that it's made by whites, they should cover out all the languages around the provinces in every country in the world
	4	I think the answer is a yes because these people are there when they make <i>Facebook</i> applications there are options so

		it's not a problem for them to make the option of those indigenous languages so we can choose the ones we want for ourselves not for them to choose for us
	5	Those people are looking at the market if they make <i>Facebook</i> be in Sepedi, how many people are going to use it?
	6	No, if they know our language and we also know their languages. Why don't they force them to also know our languages maybe for <i>Facebook</i> or an application they make it maybe to be in Sepedi, you see that it is going to be attended by a few people
	7	That's why I say I hope as years go by and goes by they try to accommodate us, as much as I see that they have connected us, they didn't reject us, we can type our languages, everything can be done on <i>Facebook</i> through our African languages. The only thing we left with is having options of our African languages, that's it. So, I so wish as time goes technology improves and we have that option
	8	Yes and No. I am against it because like he said, for as much as they allowed our names to be there when we type them in Sepedi and whatever language and it was possible, that means there's a potential of them using our very own languages like the system recognising our languages. At the same time, I am against it because our languages will never improve, they will always be stuck as regional languages they will never be international in anyway. And at the same time, I understand why they made English be the main language because we have got a lot of languages and we are talking about a global application everybody uses. So obviously, they can't take Sepedi and take French's intellect, even if they themselves try to know them (our languages), for us, let's start with us, we don't know all those languages. Yet, if they put them in the system, at some point maybe the system may be clouded it might not even work the way it's supposed to work, so it's a waste of time. So, I say for English it's thumbs up because they are using it, at the same time it's not, because of the reasons that I have said
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.96: The Effects of Social media on the African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: Respondent 1 posits that social media have a positive effect because the respondent is able to learn other African languages. Respondent 2 asserts that social media do not have an effect on her. Nine respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 11) did not provide responses.

Theme 30 The effects of Social media on the African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
Question 30: What are the effects of the Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp on the African languages?	1	Er... I feel like the effects are... meaning how it affects us as communicators, as a Sepedi speaking in prefer that I speak to my people in Sepedi then it affects me in the form of starting to put English for me to accommodate others, in fact will be trying to accommodate other language so others can communicate with me so that I can get friends from even Xitsonga and other multilingual languages so it affects me when I have to put in another language although I have to accept another language and try to understand the meaning
	2	It doesn't have an effect on me. Because they give me a platform and say this is Facebook, you can use it and write whatever language that you want, they didn't say write English. It doesn't have an effect on me because I can still go on Facebook and write in my own language if I want to and they won't come to me and say why did you write in Setswana
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.97: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, six respondents provided answers: Five of them (viz., Respondents 1 to 5) agree that social media can be used to conserve African languages. They further argue that social media have attributes to conserve let alone to develop African languages because speakers of these languages have the liberty to use them without any restrictions. Additionally, these respondents state that there are many social media pages that the speakers of African languages could use to preserve their languages. Respondent 6 mentions that social media cannot accommodate all African languages. Five respondents (viz., Respondents 7 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 31 The role of Social media in conserving African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<p><b>Question 31:</b> Do you think these Social media platforms can be used to conserve and develop African languages such as Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga? How?</p>	1	<p>Uhm... as much as at... we have got pages on <i>Facebook</i>, pages about anything that you want you will find it, as much as we have <i>Instagram</i>, you can actually open a page wherein different indigenous speakers post different words or whatever that they want us to teach us about our languages and then they use <i>Facebook</i> as a platform that they teach about Sepedi culture and Sepedi language or Setswana or Tshivenda. For as much as we will be chatting, our knowledge about our languages will be increasing and will still be preserved around the platform which is created in English have given an example that any person, if you are a Sepedi speaker, even if you are French, er... you open a page, that page will be for French or Sepedi speaking people, with all the terms that are there that you want people to know that the system cannot translate, so it is not a matter of money, because at some point it's like when promoting products we use pages, it does not cost anything, you just go to <i>Facebook</i> and use data and that's it</p>
	2	<p>They could include our indigenous languages in Social media so they can accommodate us</p>
	3	<p>Yes. I think it would, as much as we try to... as much as <i>Facebook</i> has a lot of users, it would improve our language for all of us because it gives us access to the group you want, first of all it gives you an option of where you live, Limpopo, Giyani, so whenever it accommodates that kind of people you'd know which language to talk when speaking to that kind of a person, and that's how it would promote the indigenous language And in that way, we can also see a word in Sepedi and go to the Xitsonga page then write it and find the interpretation, then now you can learn multi-languages</p>
	4	<p>I think that <i>Facebook</i>... you are saying it accommodates about 12 million people, right? We feel undermined because we have a constitution and freedom of expression, and you are saying they are brands, they bring Samsung and we access those Social medias but we end up forgetting our African languages because they have to upgrade the system because at the end we forget who we are I can say we are not restricted on our languages, we can type any language we want, so there are restrictions, we can develop amongst ourselves. Now you have <i>WhatsApp</i>, you come from Mmotong, you speak Sepedi, that's busy dominating when you use <i>WhatsApp</i>, you are on <i>Twitter</i>, you've people they are Sepedi speaking, you are busy speaking Sepedi. That's how we are talking about the development usage of the African languages. For Xitsonga speaking you are busy posting things on <i>Facebook</i>, same applies. So, I say these social networks are improving our languages, and as much as I know the key to this is 'no restriction', nothing can stop you from posting your Xibhelanes the pictures and everything, because if it was explicit that you posted a Xibhelane picture it wouldn't have been agreed for you to do that. But for the fact that we have access to that, it accommodates all of us, same applies to English speaking people, whites also, as much as... we'll say it's a privilege because we've learned their language and it's our first medium of instruction, but then it's also a privilege amongst themselves</p>



		to use it. So, I say we have access for all of it, for Xitsonga speaking, for Sepedi speaking, for everyone we have access
	5	Yes, they can. As much as these people give us a platform to actually express our own languages in our own country and not saying it's wrong to do that. You can actually learn from that, as you actually feel free to post in Sepedi, you post terms that even myself I don't know, and I read them and ask you the meaning and you tell me. So, this platform doesn't need them to upgrade and put Sepedi and others, we can actually use what we have That's why I say it's a brand, they can't say let's make <i>Facebook</i> in Sepedi , it's going to attract a small number of people because it's not many people who speak Sepedi, and it won't go international because it would be focused on one language
	6	No, it can't, because firstly if they look at these African languages they are going to have to leave other foreign languages, so they are also going to complain that their languages also are put in the system individually and I think that will cost on the continent
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.98: The Role of Social media in Conserving African Languages**

In this table, four respondents provided answers: They all (i.e., Respondents 1 to 4) believe that the African languages are not marginalised on social media and therefore there are no chances of them facing extinction. Seven respondents (viz., Respondents 5 to 11) did not answer this question.

<b>Theme 32 The role of Social media in conserving African languages</b>	<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)</b>
<b>Question 32:</b> Since African languages are marginalised on various Social media platforms, do you think this can make the languages to face extinction?	1	Yes, I think they do. I think they are marginalised meaning there is Sepedi, Sepedi can... I can turn Sepedi into three, there is Sepedi from Botlokwa, Sepedi from around here....That is what I wanted to say that we have Sepedi from different places so they won't be extinct
	2	They won't be extinct, what would make them extinct
	3	I am asking for one example, give me one platform that has marginalised African languages. There's none
	4	There's none
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer
	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

**Table 6.99: Conservation of the African Languages**

In this table, two respondents provided answers: They both (i.e., Respondents 1 and 2) assert that it is very important to pass the African languages from one generation to the other. These respondents accentuate that the speakers of African languages should use them regularly in an effort to avoid any chances of extinction. Nine respondents (viz., Respondents 3 to 11) did not provide answers.

Theme 33 Conservation of the African languages	Respondent Number	Participant Responses and/or selected comments from data or “vivo codes)
<b>Question 33:</b> How is it important to pass our languages from generation to generation?		
	1	Simple, when your child is born, because now you have moved from Turf you stay in the suburbs as most people do, when the child is born when you talk to him you no longer use your home language but you use English and they do English as first additional language, so how about wherever that you go you take along your home language, even if your child is three years and is in an English school at least make sure that during the holidays she comes home. Teach a child to speak English only in the streets but then their home language at home. It is important to pass the language to keep it alive, you teach your child your language to keep the roots instilled on your child
	2	It is important having the African language to be passed over from generation to generation because by so doing the language won't die by speaking with anyone closely, I can say whatever tradition that you are in, er... the Sepedi speaking, promote that language make sure you are speaking that language to make it grow wider and wider. So, in that sense, that's how you will be growing the language. Always speak the language and make sure you know the words of the depth because there is language... now it's coming lighter, way back then it was deep so now it's becoming lighter which means there are some words we still don't know
	3	No answer
	4	No answer
	5	No answer
	6	No answer
	7	No answer
	8	No answer

	9	No answer
	10	No answer
	11	No answer

#### 6.3.4 General Analysis of the Focus Group Interview Findings

Focus group interviews were deployed as a data collection tool in this study. The researcher used multiple focus group interviews, which is a total number of three groups. The group interviews were acquired to deduce the opinion, attitude, behaviour, and patterns of the youth (social media users) concerning the manner in which they use African languages to communicate on social media (especially *Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*). This study is conducted to examine the impact of social media (especially *Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp*) towards conserving African languages amongst youth. It is clear that youth delineate the population of this study.

The reasons for focusing on youth only were stated in the previous chapter, research design, and methodology chapter. To this end, the youth were the respondents in all these focus group interviews to ensure that the findings of the process are in line with the objectives of the study. One aspect that is worth mentioning is that all the respondents/participants reside in Limpopo Province. However, they speak different African languages such as Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga and some of them had a good grasp of more than one African language. There are those who speak Tshivenda, Sepedi, and Xitsonga. Some of the respondents had a full understanding of IsiNdebele, IsiZulu, and SiSwati.

The respondents of these focus group interviews were interested to actively participate in the study of this nature. The respondents had a decent understanding of the topic, i.e., the impact of social media (especially *Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp*) in conserving amongst youth. That was proven by the fact they all across the three groups have social media accounts. The first question that was asked during the first session/meeting of the focus groups was how many social media accounts do you have? There are those who have indicated that they only have one social media account. The respondents with many social media accounts have a total number of six and most of them across all the groups have 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

The respondents all agreed that there is a need for the study of this nature to be conducted to see the relevance and impact of new ways of communication towards African languages. As far as social media platforms are concerned, the respondents know all three social media sites sampled for this study, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. However, there are those who indicated that, despite the fact that they use the three social media platforms, they have other accounts on different social media platforms. Such participants stated *Instagram*, *BBM*, *Google plus*, *Word press*, *WeChat* etc. The respondents spend approximately more than five hours on social media per week. There are those who spend more than 72 hours per week. One can safely postulate that all respondents are always active online, more especially on *WhatsApp*.

All the respondents across the groups have *WhatsApp* application and almost all of them have *Facebook* accounts except for the participants who have stated unequivocally that they do not have *Facebook* accounts at all. As for *Twitter*, there are only three participants who said that they own *Twitter* handles across all the three groups. Based on the respondents' preferences, *WhatsApp* is one network that they always use actively. Almost all the respondents indicated that a day does not pass without them using *WhatsApp*. Some have even pointed out that they are always online, including during classes or lectures at school.

As outlined in the analysis of the focus group interviews data, the respondents believe that *WhatsApp* is more convenient for communication purposes and most of them have posited that this instant messaging application is affordable/cheap and easy to use. Few respondents mentioned that *WhatsApp* allows them to communicate with their acquaintances, friends, and family in that process it nullifies any chances of getting messages from strangers. They said that, unlike *Facebook* wherein any person with or without your consent can send you a message, *WhatsApp* enables the user to control the person he/she wants to converse with.

The key findings of the data collected through focus group interviews in an effort to address the objectives of the study are discussed below:

#### 6.3.4.1 Language preference on *Facebook*

The respondents have indicated that they constantly log into social media almost every day. Most of the respondents pointed out that they use *Facebook* to connect with their peers and some have highlighted that *Facebook* helps them to reach out to a large audience. English is the preferred language amongst the youth on *Facebook*. There are a variety of reasons concerning the extent to which respondents use English on their *Facebook* walls. There are those who stated that English as a language enables them to connect with people from various ethnic groups who speak different languages. The respondents argue that English helps them to convey their messages to people who speak different African languages such as Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda.

They have postulated that since there are many people who use *Facebook* from different native languages (African languages) therefore English helps them to communicate effectively as some of them do not speak nor understand other African languages. In some cases, one may find himself in a situation where they need to communicate with a friend who speaks Xitsonga and they do not have a good command of that language. To this end, English becomes a compromise language to allow them to understand one another. It worth noting that some of the respondents believe that English makes it easier for them to pass a message from one person to another.

There are those respondents who believe that English allows them to post statuses, comments and captions that can be seen and understood by people from other countries, regions/or continents, unlike when one decides to post their messages, statuses, comments/or options etc., in their home language. They further indicated that the use of African languages such as Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda limits their audience. Most respondents pointed out that when they type a *Facebook* status in Sepedi or Xitsonga, such comments or statuses receive negative feedback. On *Facebook*, the users may respond to a fellow users' comments or statuses by putting emojis, (a symbol that will represent their reactions), putting a like, sharing it/or by commenting.

*Facebook* users (respondents) always want their posts to receive positive reaction or feedback from their fellow users. The respondents posit that excessive use of English on *Facebook* is a result of a need for active interaction around their posts or what they share on this platform. There are those respondents who highlighted that they are somehow forced to use English because the majority of their friends do not use any other language. They argue that when they try to post a *Facebook* status in their home languages, their target audience does not respond. And if they respond, some will ask them to translate or clarify their messages in English. They have stated that this kind of reaction adversely affects their confidence and as a result, they are forced to use English whenever they wish to post something on *Facebook*.

The respondents postulated that they sometimes resort to communicating using English because they want to be perceived as smart amongst their peers or fellow *Facebook* users. They argue that the constant use of an African language may be seen as an aspect that is tantamount to illiteracy and poor command of the English language. Despite the fact the respondents have highlighted that African languages are fashionable for *Facebook*, there are those who mentioned that English as a preferred language is more convenient, as they can easily type, more especially the fact that English enables them to write/post their comments or statuses using abbreviations, acronyms and or shorter version of the language (short cuts). These abbreviations or shorter version of the English language phrases allow them to communicate their messages faster than when one attempts to put the message across by typing it in full. The majority of *Facebook* users pointed out that it is very important for them to put the message across quickly whenever they are communicating on *Facebook*.

They believe that the abbreviations save time and money. The respondents in this study elucidated that unlike typing their respective statuses or comments in African languages (particularly Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) English is more convenient and effective. They further explained that using African language, or Sepedi for instance, wastes time. They outlined that the use of African languages (particularly Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) is minimum because it takes much of their time when they attempt to convey the message across in these African languages.

Some of the respondents confessed by stating their lack of ability to use their home languages effectively when they write on *Facebook*/or on any social media platform. They indicated that it takes them more time to write their messages in the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga on *Facebook*. It is worth mentioning that some of the respondents do not know how to place symbols when they write in their home languages, this is despite the fact that the majority of the respondents speak African languages at home or when they communicate with their friends. None of the respondents participated in this study are native speakers of English.

In the simplest terms, the respondents took English as a second/third language as it was introduced to them as a teaching and learning language at school from primary to high school. In other words, all respondents who have participated in this study are the native speakers of African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The first languages/mother tongues of the respondents are the African languages. These African languages are predominantly known as home languages. Despite the fact that the respondents are not first speakers of English as they have acquired it as a second/third language from school, they use it (English) regularly whenever they are active on this social network. However, most of the respondents revealed that at times they use their respective African languages to state a point on the *Facebook* wall. They write a message in Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga whenever they struggle to do so in English.

They attested that sometimes they find it difficult to communicate their intended message in English. As a result, they resort to their African languages to ensure that their message is clear and well received by the target audience. At times the respondents would make use of code-switching. Code-switching takes place when a person uses one language in a conversation and along the way they switch to a different language (Poplack, 2001).

The respondents do code-switch for various reasons. There are those who said that they would apply code-switching to accommodate their target audience. Some

respondents or *Facebook* users would code-switch because they do not know a word that should complete the intended phrase/sentence. There are those respondents who would resort to code-switching to use a popular phrase or word in a different language (in African language mostly) when they write their statuses, comments, messages or captions on *Facebook*. The respondents normally code-switch between English and an African language.

There are those who stated that their code-switching would include English and Sepedi. The first speakers of Xitsonga stated that they mostly use English when they code-switch. The native speakers of Tshivenda use English in their code-switching activities. It is worth highlighting that most of the respondents use English as the main language when they code-switch during their conversations on *Facebook*. The code-switching element enunciates the fact that the respondents prefer English over the three African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga when they are actively communicating on *Facebook*. The respondents outlined that there some *Facebook* pages that were established to promote African languages. However, the respondents revealed that they are not active in the *Facebook* pages that advocate for use of the African languages.

#### 6.3.4.2 Language preference on *WhatsApp*

The use of African languages on this instant messaging application is vast and unique. According to respondents of this study, it easy for them to use their African languages on *WhatsApp* than on *Facebook* and *Twitter*. The majority of these respondents revealed that they use their respective African languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda more often on *WhatsApp*. They have pointed out that *WhatsApp* is an ideal platform to communicate messages as compared to *Facebook* and *Twitter* wherein they prefer to use English ahead of the African languages. *WhatsApp* as an instant messaging application allows the users to communicate with their mobile phone contacts. If an individual does not download this application from the Internet they cannot connect with their target audience. Despite the fact that a person can download *WhatsApp*, he/she must have a list of contacts of people who have downloaded this application as well.



Due to this fact, the *WhatsApp* users are those who mostly use mobile-smartphones with specific software such as Microsoft, Android, and Apple. In most cases, *WhatsApp* users communicate with people whom they know very well. Although there are some instances wherein they receive messages from unknown persons, one can ask the anonymous person to reveal their identity. Under normal circumstance, *WhatsApp* users communicate with close contacts. These close contacts can be family members, peers, and acquaintances. The respondents stated that due to the fact that they know their *WhatsApp* contacts it is much easier to use Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. Some of the respondents postulated that *WhatsApp* allows them to use African languages because they are certain that the recipient of the message would not have any problem with understanding it. They chat/communicate with elders or parents on *WhatsApp* hence the need for them to resort to African languages.

Despite the fact that they normally use their home languages, there are few respondents who do not prefer to use their African languages unless they are communicating with someone who does not understand English at all. One of them argued that he cannot use an African language when chatting via this instant messaging application because he does not have a good command of Sepedi, more especially when it comes to writing the language formally.

There are also few of those who pointed out that they hardly use the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda because they find it difficult to type messages on *WhatsApp* conversations or even on group chats in these languages. These respondents mentioned that typing/writing messages in African languages consumes a lot of time as quick and smooth chatting is what they intend to do on *WhatsApp*. They further posited that using or communicating a message in Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda is delaying their conversations as they cannot use abbreviations, acronyms and short cuts.

The abbreviations, acronyms and shorter phrases instead of full and detailed words, phrases and sentences are popular and common on *WhatsApp* or even across other social media platforms. These abbreviations and acronyms are used by many people

on social media. The respondents argued that with English, for instance, it is easier to use abbreviations, acronyms and shorter phrases such as “WUD” for “What are you doing?” “U” for “You”, “Y” for “Why”, “LOL” for “laughing out loud”, “HUD” for “How are you doing?”, “TBT” for “Throwback Thursday”, “YOLO” for “You only leave once” etc. There are many abbreviations, acronyms and shorter phrases that are popular amongst social media users.

The respondents articulated that these abbreviations enable them to quickly type and send their messages without wasting time by writing words, phrases or sentences in full. Their argument is that whenever they try to type or communicate their messages in African languages they battle to do so swiftly and effectively. They accentuated their point by revealing that when they attempt to put their messages across in Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda they are compelled to type all the words, phrases and/or sentences in full. Due to this challenge, the respondents perceive English as a convenient language for *WhatsApp* or any other social media platform.

There are those respondents who indicated that they use more than two languages when communicating on *WhatsApp*. These respondents would use English, Afrikaans, SiSwati, Xitsonga, IsiZulu, Sepedi and Tshivenda. There is a respondent who has a good command of about four languages, namely, IsiZulu, Sepedi, English, and Setswana.

According to this respondent, he is able to use all these languages on *WhatsApp* with his friends and family. He also stated that his choice of a language on *WhatsApp* is dependent upon the person he is chatting to at that particular time. If a person he is chatting to speak/prefers to chat in Sepedi he will chat with him/her in that language. However, he argued that he also makes use of English at times. There are few respondents about three of them who indicated that they *WhatsApp* in different African languages to learn other languages.

The respondents have highlighted that *WhatsApp* makes it easier for them to learn more languages as they know that the person they are communicating with does not speak their home language/mother tongue. As a result, they attempt to use a

language of that particular person with minimum command of that language and the person will help them improve. One of them indicated that he has a friend from Zimbabwe and he is teaching him how to speak Shona through *WhatsApp* chats. The other respondents had stated that he has a friend from Venda and he is trying to learn Tshivenda by chatting with his friend in this language. They have indicated that *WhatsApp* is very helpful as far as promoting and adopting African languages is concerned. The other respondent emphasised the point by stressing that he learns IsiZulu from her friend who is a first speaker of this language.

The respondents in general across the three groups confirmed that code-switching is a common practice for them during their *WhatsApp* activities. Most of them pointed out that they do not put themselves under pressure to use a specific language throughout their activities on *WhatsApp*. They further posited that code-switching allows them to quickly convey their intended message. Some of the respondents have elucidated that when they chat or write a message in English and along the way they struggle to complete it due to lack of vocabulary, consequently they would use a word from their home language.

The respondents highlighted a challenge of using words from African languages when they code-switch from English as the recipient may ask them to clarify that particular word or phrase. They argued that some people do not understand their African languages at all. Those who normally use African languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda have a challenge with their smart phones. They lamented that mobile phones always try to auto-correct their spellings when they chat or type a message in an African language. The spelling prediction set-up does not recognise the words that are typed in Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda.

In contrast, some ardent users of *WhatsApp* argued that the pre-settings of spelling prediction is not a problem at all because the mobile smartphones give the users options to add the African language words in the dictionary available on their smartphones. As much as code-switching is popular with the majority of the respondents who are active on *WhatsApp*, there are those who do not see a need to

use two or more languages when they communicate their messages through the instant messaging application.

They have stated that they prefer to use one language when they chat with friends and family. If they decide to use English, they will use it throughout the conversation and the same approach applies when they use Xitsonga/or Tshivenda. There are few respondents who mentioned that the majority of their contacts/friends use English despite the fact that they are not first speakers of this language.

#### 6.3.4.3 The language use and preference on *Twitter*

*Twitter* is a popular microblogging application that is mainly used as a news feed in social media circles. The respondents have revealed that *Twitter* is not their preferred social media application. Only about three participants who have *Twitter* accounts or what is popularly known as a *Twitter* handle. These three respondents posited that *Twitter* is an ideal platform for accessing news updates. They also indicated that they do not use this blogging site regularly.

In other words, these respondents frequent on *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*, they log into *Twitter* occasionally. There those who reckon that *Twitter* is not meant for ordinary people but for popular figures or celebrities. Due to this fact, they do not see a need for them to have accounts on *Twitter*. Their argument is that *Twitter* is the followers' orientated application. Some of the respondents believe that even if they may try to register accounts on *Twitter*, they do not believe that their profiles would attract followers.

When people decide to post a message on *Twitter* in the form of a tweet, retweet or sharing a tweet they always expect fellow *Twitter* users to like them. The *Twitter* users post messages that target a large audience, unlike *WhatsApp* whereon the user knows the majority of people they are communicating with. One of the respondents from the focus group interviews stated that he does not post tweets or messages on *Twitter*. This respondent revealed that he uses *Twitter* to check news updates from journalists, and from the accounts of news networks. He indicated that all these sources of news update on his *Twitter* handle prefer to communicate their messages in English. The

other respondent mentioned that she prefers to use English on *Twitter* because she wants her posts to be viewed and read by many people across the world. She believes that if she decides to use any other language other than English, her message will not appeal to a larger audience. She further ascertained that the African languages are not available on *Twitter*.

According to this respondent, the African languages limit her messages from reaching a large audience because when one decides to use Sepedi it would mean that her message will be well received and liked by few people, more especially those who speak this language. To this end, she finds it convenient to post all her tweets in English. She anchored the argument by stressing that English is a global language. These three *Twitter* users have concurred that English is a popular language and many people do not prefer to write in full. As already stated under the language use and preference on *WhatsApp*, the usage of the abbreviations, acronyms and short phrases is a common practice on *Twitter*. This is because of the fact that *Twitter* limits the number of characters that a person should type per tweet.

A tweet is allocated only 280 characters, which means that anything above the allocated number of characters would not be published online. The argument is that when one uses the abbreviations, acronyms and short phrases they are therefore able to pass their message clearly within the allocated 280 characters.

A tweet is normally accompanied by a tag (@) and a hashtag (#). A tag is when a sender wants a specific person to receive the tweet directly without going through a chunk of tweets. It, therefore, means that a *Twitter* user is able to manage their target audience. Concerning the use of 280 characters a person is more likely to use abbreviations such as #TBT for throwback Thursday, #WCW for woman crush Wednesday, #OMG for Oh! My God, "DM" for direct messaging, ANC for African National Congress, OP for Orlando Pirates, "OPW" for our perfect wedding. Mostly, these abbreviations are in English, which makes it difficult for the users to come up with abbreviations dubbed from the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda.

The participants in this study lament the fact that trying to post a message in their respective African languages is not convenient on *Twitter* as typing messages and tweets in African languages needs more characters than the allocated 280. Despite the fact that there is a “DM”, which stands for “direct messaging” option on *Twitter*, the respondents in this study did not hint or mention anything about the choice of language through this option. The respondents conceded to the fact that there are people who use African language on *Twitter* but they are not directly linked with them.

There are a number of media organisations that prefer to use the African languages when they post tweets or messages in this platform such as Isolezwe, Munghana Lonene, Thobela FM, Phalaphala FM etc. These organisations run their *Twitter* pages in African languages, namely, IsiZulu, Xitsonga, Sepedi and Tshivenda. Mostly, the followers on these pages interact in the African languages using *Twitter*. The respondents in this study have alluded to the fact that they do not participate nor interact in the aforementioned pages. Amongst the participants of this study, African languages are not frequently used on *Twitter*. Despite the fact that there are few of them who are active on *Twitter*, they are not active for the purposes of communicating their own messages.

The respondents are actively engaged on *Twitter* to follow the latest updates in the world of news. Since most of them use English, the users are also compelled to read the messages in this language. According to all respondents, in this research, generally, there are minimum activities in the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga on *Twitter*. Some of them have elucidated that due to the fact that they do not have friends who are on or using *Twitter*, therefore, they do not see any need for them to be active on this platform.

The subsequent section deals with the content analysis of qualitative data collected through field online observation data.

#### 6.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS: FINDINGS FROM FIELD ONLINE OBSERVATION DATA

This kind of data collection tool deals with the virtual world. It is all about observing the activities of people in their normal setting. “In the online world, field observation usually means observing text and images on a computer screen” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014:135). Through this data collection instrument, the researcher is able to introduce him/herself in the online group. In this procedure, there is a need for the researcher to openly inform the group members about the field observation online research. In simplest terms, the researcher would be expected to participate normally in the activities of the online group just like any other member.

Despite the fact that it is possible to be an active observer of the group, it is also possible to observe without joining the online group. The researcher sought permission from a *WhatsApp* group to embark on the observation. Apart from this *WhatsApp* group, the researcher observed any online activity such as text, pictures, videos and posts on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*. The researcher also took time to monitor, record, and analyse the activities of the group.

Due to the uniqueness of field online observation, it is advisable to use new techniques of data analysis. The common understanding is that the skills or techniques applied in real life observation are applicable under field online observation. This data collection instrument is relevant in this study as it allows the researcher to make use of computer screen, lap-top and smart phone to observe the users’ activities on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. This is in line with investigating the language preference of the users of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* amongst youth in Limpopo Province. It further observed the convenience of social media for the usage of African languages. The crux of the matter is that this procedure complements the other data collected through focus group interviews and questionnaires.

The main question is, namely, which language is mostly preferred by the youth of Limpopo Province on the three social media platforms? This question is anchored by the use of African languages by youth on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Consequently, the questions encapsulate the bone of contention in this study, which

is, namely, the impact of social media in conserving African languages amongst youth. It is therefore explicit that the field online observation instrument helped towards finding credible answers to the aforementioned questions.

Language use is inevitable on social media. The users of *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* use various languages and that was quite evident during the observation procedure. Moreover, there are critical elements of multilingualism in most of the users of social media in particular young people. This data collection instrument was proven to be more reliable because people are always active and relevant facts were accessible. Many people log into *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Through this data collection tool, one could detect that *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* are more popular than *Twitter* amongst the youth of Limpopo Province.

The other advantage of this data collection instrument is that in short-space of time one had observed various elements on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* concerning the use of African languages or any other language. Using both lap top and smartphone during the observation procedure helped the researcher to come up with more facts and information in a short space of time. One would follow *Facebook* posts on the lap top going through many comments and statuses while observing group chats on *WhatsApp*.

The data collection procedure was fruitful because the researcher has managed to collect the necessary information. During the procedure, the activities were complex within the context of the study. The purpose of this procedure was to explore the convenience of social media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*) for speakers of African languages to use their respective languages. And also to explore the use of African languages on social media. There are interesting points or factors that should be narrated in this section.

Firstly, one should note that there are many young people who spend a significant amount of their leisure time on social media platforms. The other significant point is that there are many people who always log into *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* every day. The amount of time spent on social media has serious implications in the context of



this study. Secondly, the use of African languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda on three social media platforms. There are many young people who frequently use African languages on social media.

However, there is a majority of social media users who excessively use English on their accounts on a daily basis. One should emphasise that these people are not the native speakers of English, in fact, they are the native speakers of African languages. Some of these users have a different pattern of using more than one language when they communicate on social media. There are those who prefer to use English and Xitsonga or English and Sepedi/English and Tshivenda. This process is known as code-switching. From what the researcher has observed code-switching takes place when a communicator decides to use two or more languages when conveying the message to the next person (Poplack, 2001). This technique is common on the three social media platforms. The social media users mostly use code-switching through English and an African language. Nevertheless, some social media users in minority code-switch through two or more African languages. A person can use both Sepedi and Xitsonga when communicating on social media or even between Tshivenda and Xitsonga. This pattern demonstrates that there is some decent level of multilingualism that exists on social media.

#### 6.4.1 Content Analysis: Field Online Observation on *Facebook*

*Facebook* as a social networking site is popular amongst youth. In the context of this study, *Facebook* is popular amongst youth. All participants who were sampled for this study have *Facebook* profiles. The researcher has observed that many *Facebook* users are very active in their profiles. They visit them more often. *Facebook* has a uniform look for all profiles of its users. Which therefore means that the sleeves of all users' profiles look the same. The researcher has observed that many young people use *Facebook* to socialise and to communicate with friends and family. The frequent posts that are more central on *Facebook* are personal updates such as daily routines. Most users would prefer to post information about a trip to the stadium or even social events.

To a larger extent, some users would talk about their church sessions. On the other hand, current affairs issues are given profound interest on *Facebook*. Many *Facebook* users would comment in their majority about squabbles in parliament, physical fight between Economic Freedom Fighters members of parliament and National Assembly's security personnel during the 2017's State of the Nation's Address. These prominent events are more likely to feature on various *Facebook* users across different profiles. The prominent event would include natural disasters such as tropical cyclone Dineo that was experienced in Mozambique and some parts of South Africa. Many *Facebook* users shared important information about tropical cyclone Dineo and necessary information about the most affected areas.

The researcher has observed that with or without the seriousness of an issue, some users would poke fun or joke around that matter. The frequent aspect of making fun or ridiculing people from a serious situation is an integral part of *Facebook*. South Africa's former Minister of Social Development, Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, was teased and ridiculed on social media, more especially on *Facebook*. Many users shared all sorts of funny comments about Bathabile Dlamini. Some people went as far as changing her name from Bathabile to Badakwile. All these funny comments emanated amid the controversial SASSA saga that escalated to a national crisis in South Africa.

The SASSA saga was a serious borne of contention mainly because of the fact that it affects the livelihood of more than 17 million South Africans who are the beneficiaries of SASSA grants. One important observation is that *Facebook* users are connected or linked to news agencies' pages on *Facebook*. In the midst of breaking news, news agencies, such as SABC, ENCA, Eye witness news, News24 etc., would put up or post that story on their respective *Facebook* pages.

Upon receiving the news *Facebook* users would share the news with their friends or with their fellow *Facebook* users by liking or sharing the page of that particular news agency. As a result, that would stimulate participation across all *Facebook* users; some people would participate to an extent of reposting that particular news item on their timelines. For example, after the sad news of the passing away of Gospel star, Sfiso Ncwane. The breaking news was posted on various news agencies' *Facebook*

pages and many users commented and shared their comments. It shows that *Facebook* as a social networking site has the capacity to stimulate participation around prominent events.

However, *Facebook* can be misused as some users would unscrupulously fake identity of popular figures in an effort to manipulate or rob innocent people. The researcher has observed that there are individuals who parade themselves as agents for aspiring models or job seekers in general. These people would later kidnap those who are supposed to be their clients, more especially young ladies. The victims of these incidents are likely to be raped, robbed or even get killed. The unfortunate part of this is that the culprits are more likely to get away with their devious acts or murder because they do not use their real names.

The other detrimental aspect, as observed by the researcher, is that some individuals decide to put together a fake *Facebook* account of the popular news agencies. They use these fake accounts to manipulate the public let alone to cast aspersions on public figures or politicians. In recent times (2017, February), a group of people designed fake *Facebook* pages and accounts of the popular news agencies such as SowetanLive, ENCA, Mail, and Guardian etc.

They used these fake pages to discredit some prominent politicians. The former Minister of Finance in South Africa, Mr. Pravin Gordhan was one of the well-known victims of this unfortunate devious act. In summary, *Facebook* like any other social media application can be abused by its users.

#### 6.4.1.1 The convenience of *Facebook* for the speakers of African languages

It is worth noting that *Facebook* site or application does not recognise any of the three African languages (particularly Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda). Based on the field online observation, the stipulated languages that are officially recognised on *Facebook* are, namely, English, Afrikaans, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Deutsch, Italian, Filipino, amongst other languages. The recognised African languages are, namely, Hausa and Kiswahili. Hausa is a Nigerian language and Kiswahili is a Bantu language spoken in the African Great Lakes region and other parts of eastern and South eastern

Africa. This observation indicates that the three languages, namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda, are not available on *Facebook's* language options. The most critical observation is that all languages that are available on *Facebook's* language options make things easier for the speakers of such languages. The speakers of the available languages on *Facebook's* language options get to use their languages with ease because it is well recognised by the website.

The researcher also observed that the only available South African languages are, namely, English and Afrikaans. All indigenous African languages in South Africa are not available on *Facebook's* language options. These languages, namely, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, SiSwati, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga, are not recognised on *Facebook's* language options. This plight exists despite the fact that there are over 14 million *Facebook* users in South Africa. The majority of South African *Facebook* users are the native speakers of the aforementioned African languages.

Although the three African languages and other indigenous African languages are not recognised on *Facebook*, there are those users who use these languages on *Facebook*. The researcher observed that a significant number of *Facebook* users write their statuses, comments, and captions in their respective African languages. Some speakers of African languages are passionate about their native languages. However, the speakers of the African languages are propelled to read the instruction, policies and other *Facebook* features in either English or Afrikaans. These two languages are only South African languages that are officially recognised on *Facebook*.

The conspicuous factor is that when the speakers of African languages type a text in their respective languages, the text of that language is highlighted or underlined in red colour. It is worth noting that when the speakers of the African languages click on the post the text will be posted without a red underline. That would, therefore, allow the text to be seen on the *Facebook* wall or timelines as a normal or convenient language. Be that as it may, when the speakers of the African languages post information in their respective languages, e.g., a post in Sepedi or Xitsonga, *Facebook* shows the

translation option from that particular African language to English. However, the translation option does not translate the text in the three African languages.

Unlike when a person posts information in Danish or Spanish, the translation option would automatically translate this language to English. The speakers of the three African languages do not have this opportunity to see their *Facebook* comments, statuses or captions being translated into English or any other language. Nevertheless, *Facebook* users have an option to activate and deactivate the language translation option. The researcher has also observed that the speakers of the three African languages would randomly write a status or a comment in their respective languages. *Facebook* does not decline or disapprove the use of African languages despite the fact that these languages (i.e., Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda) are not part of its official language options.

The majority of young people who speak the three African languages have their *Facebook* pre-settings in English. From the researcher's observation, one would seldom find users having their pre-settings in Afrikaans or any other language apart from English. The researcher has also detected that *Facebook* users have their language that only exists on social media circles. The young people prefer to shorten the long English sentences.

An observation on *Facebook* activities shows that the short version (abbreviations) of English allow users to communicate or pass the message quickly. The young people prefer to shorten the long English sentences. The users prefer to ask their friends this question – what are you doing? By quickly typing “WUD”. There is a popular remark that is popular amongst the youth on *Facebook*. This remark or expression is popularly known as “LOL!” which stands for “laughing out loud”. These abbreviations are meant to summarise the most common words or phrases that are used daily on social media. The other popular abbreviation that is mostly used on *Facebook* is, namely, “PPL” for people, “OMG” for oh! My God and TBT which stands for Throwback Thursday.

The most critical aspect is that most of these abbreviations are in English. The more *Facebook* users use them, the more they frequently use English as a language of

choice over other languages, including African languages. The researcher has observed that the African languages do not have options for popular abbreviations or shortcuts for phrases. There are developing *Facebook* features that are popular these days. Emojis are the popular features of these developments.

The researcher observed that many young people use emojis to express their feelings. Emojis are icons, symbols, codes and pictures that are meant to represent a specific expression such as laughing, smiling, crying, loving, anger, happiness, etc. The *Facebook* user would prefer to post or comment to status or comments with a heart symbol to express their love for what they see. A smiley emoji with both eyes replaced by a heart symbol to show that they love what they see. This kind of emoji was mostly used when *Facebook* users like a picture posted on their respective profiles. The emojis are complementing the abbreviations.

However, the emojis represent body language or non-verbal communication hence other users would post a dancing emoji to express their happiness and support it with Xitsonga comment. Apart from the emojis memes are more popular on *Facebook*. The majority of the users prefer to send a message by using memes. Despite the fact that the users use the memes to put a serious message across, the majority of them are meant to entertain the audience. Most of the memes on this social networking site are captioned in English. Some people have a different approach of stimulating participation on their posts by a popular African language phrase, e.g., “Bereka mosadi” is popular amongst the users.

This phrase means that women should work for themselves. Such African language phrases accentuate that there are popular phrases that prove that *Facebook* is a conducive platform for the use of such languages. The other common African language phrase is the Xitsonga one that says “Mintirho ya vhulavhula”, which can be loosely translated as the works of an individual speak for itself. The interesting issue is that this phrase is not only used by Xitsonga speaking users. The other speakers of the African languages put more emphasis on the fact that the speakers of these languages have a basic understanding of the other languages. There is a Tshivenda

phrase that is commonly used on *Facebook*, namely, “Xhumela hayani”, which means that people should work to benefit their homes.

The other recent feature that emanates from *Facebook*'s recent developments is the video sharing option. The users of *Facebook* have options to upload and share videos with peers, friends, family, and followers. The observation of the researcher is that youth are very active in the video sharing activities on *Facebook*. In the past, *Facebook* never had a video sharing link, which was previously popular on *YouTube* and on *Facebook*'s sister company called *Instagram*.

*Facebook* users (especially the youth) are always keen to share their videos with their friends, family, followers, and peers. They normally share a video about their night out with friends, watching soccer matches at the stadium, or even their birthday parties' celebrations. In most cases, the users would upload a video on *Facebook* with 70% of the content made by remarks in African languages. That may suggest that despite users' preferences to post their statuses and comments in English predominantly, under their normal surrounding, they speak or communicate in African languages.

Nevertheless, there are those who prefer to share a video that is 100% in English. The aspiring celebrities prefer to upload their videos in English. In the midst of video uploading and sharing, many *Facebook* users in their majority are seen to juggling their African languages and English when they communicate on their platform. The other observation is that *Facebook*'s video sharing option provides users with a massive platform to express their feelings. People upload videos of themselves singing African traditional songs or hymns from their respective churches.

Some of the pictures taken during the online observation procedure are presented below to show the language preference amongst users of *Facebook*.

#### 6.4.1.1.1 The users' language preference on *Facebook*

In this screenshot (Figure 26), there are three users of *Facebook*. The first one wrote his status in Sepedi with few English words. He also wrote his follow up comment in Sepedi. In both statuses, the user did not pay attention to Sepedi grammar because

he made conspicuous errors. The second user wrote her comment in both English and IsiZulu. The user wrote in full IsiZulu and English language without abbreviations and the grammar was decent too.

Figure 6.26: *Facebook* screenshot



In the second *Facebook* screenshot (Figure 27), there is one user who wrote both comments in English. His two statuses are identical. The texts are in full without shortened words, though he made few grammatical mistakes.

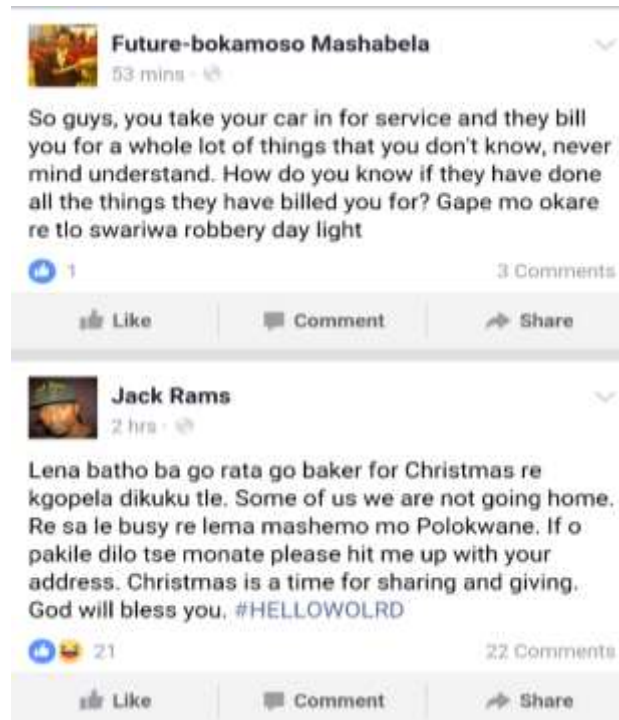


Figure 6.27: Facebook screenshot



In the third *Facebook* screenshot (Figure 28), there are two users' statuses. The first user wrote his status in English, except for the last sentence wherein he code-switched between Sepedi and English. The English part of his message was written without any abbreviations. Sepedi is written in full with few errors. The second user's status is written in both Sepedi and English. The Sepedi part of his message had few mistakes with English the user wrote in full with decent grammar. This user was also code-switching between Sepedi and English.

Figure 6.28: Facebook screenshot



#### 6.4.2 Content Analysis: Field Online Observation Data on *Twitter*

*Twitter* is one social media platform that is popular amongst the youth. In the context of this study, *Twitter* is not that popular. One should postulate that within the parameters of this study *Twitter* is mostly used to share interesting events. The researcher observed that *Twitter* is mostly used by celebrities and news agencies to tweet or post information about the latest news. The popular figures prefer to use *Twitter* when they want to post or make important announcements to the public.

This communication strategy is more efficient considering that it stimulates attention from traditional media workers who have the capacity to make a tweet to go viral in a second. The noticeable element on *Twitter* is that ordinary people who are not popular do not enjoy *Twitter* as a friendly social networking platform. The researcher has learned that the three African languages are not frequently used by people on *Twitter*. *Twitter's* home page does not have any African language options. The available languages on a *Twitter* home page are, namely, English, Turkish, and Danish.

There are people who enjoy using the three African languages on *Twitter*. The users of *Twitter* sporadically tweet and retweet in African languages based on the activities. The researcher observed that *Twitter* users prefer using English over their respective African languages. Many native speakers of the African languages are embarking on *Twitter* activities as followers of prominent figures, more especially celebrities. The other aspect is that the youth would tweet in English in most cases. The limitations in the number of characters on a tweet make things difficult to tweet in their respective African languages.

The *Twitter* application or Website allows users to use only 280 characters on a tweet. The phrases and sentences of the African languages are long as compared to shorter English ones. Accordingly, the speakers of these African languages (viz., Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda) unable to use their own languages. The limitations of the characters, therefore, somehow compel the speakers of the African languages to resort to English as a language of choice in these platforms. English is the only available official South African language on *Twitter's* language options. There is excessive use of abbreviations on *Twitter*.

The majority of the users would prefer to type SA instead of writing it in full as South Africa. This excessive use of abbreviations on *Twitter* is stimulated by the limitations of 280 characters per tweet. English is a preferred language amongst the users on *Twitter*. Apart from English, there are people who prefer using Afrikaans to communicate their messages on *Twitter*. Despite the fact that Afrikaans is officially recognised on *Facebook's* language options, that is not the case on *Twitter*. The crux of the matter is that English as a language is developing to suit the demands of social media platforms, hence it is seen as the language of choice on most of these platforms.

The development of English brought innovations pertaining to the manner in which people use the language on social media. The innovations such as the use of abbreviations and shorter versions of phrases come as a result of the frequent use of English on this platform (*Twitter*). The researcher observed that all *Twitter* features are outlined in English. Subsequently, a considerable number of native speakers of African languages do not identify themselves with *Twitter*. The lack or non-existence of African

languages on *Twitter's* features makes things difficult to attract the speakers of these languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). In the South African context, it is fair to state that *Twitter* has limitations regarding its suitability for the use of African languages.

The issues or stories that have been observed on *Twitter* are mostly accompanied by a hashtag. A hashtag is commonly used on various social media platforms to galvanise the users or the public about topical issues. The researcher has observed that there are some users who would include a hashtag in Xitsonga or Tshivenda. However, the hashtags of this nature are rarely used and most importantly they seldom go viral. There are existing African languages hashtags such as #Bossokemang or #Munghanawahisa. There are some hashtags that may emanate from a song or hymn. The hashtags of this nature may go viral and become popular overnight. In recent times, a popular house song called "Skabhoramoreki" by King Monada enjoyed massive airplay on various radio stations across the country.

Due to the popularity of the song, people started using the title of the song as a hashtag. The popular hashtag was #Skabhoramoreki. As a result, many users on *Twitter* got to use this hashtag and it somehow created a hype around an African language phrase. Nevertheless, English hashtags stand a good chance of going viral as compared to those of the three African languages which may struggle to be at the centre of attention on the social media circles. Abbreviations such as TBT (Throwback Thursday) are more often used as hashtags on *Twitter*, e.g., #TBT. *Twitter* users would randomly post a picture on their handles and sign it off with #TBT to emphasise that the picture reminds them of their past. In recent times, many *Twitter* users came across tweets that are addressing sad stories in society.

During the observation procedure, the researcher discovered the sad tweet about taxi rape, which is about a gang of Johannesburg men who brutally raped a woman in front of her 10-year-old child. The public was terribly shocked by the news, consequently, they started sharing the news including raising awareness and warning the public about the perpetrators. The *Twitter* community started using a hashtag #Taxirape to proliferate the message.

The other thorny issue was that of the university fees-hike protests that were perpetuated through a certain hashtag called #FeesMustFall. The majority of the university students across South African universities expressed their views about university fees. This particular hashtag (#FeeMustFall) went viral to an extent that the media companies started using this hashtag when they report about the protests' development in South Africa universities. The hashtags have overwhelmingly influenced the *Twitter* community to participate in the activities around this matter. The online field observation procedure revealed that *Twitter*, through hashtags, played an integral part towards mitigating the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa. After brutal attacks by Mamelodi residents on foreign nationals, some *Twitter* users started condemning these acts of violence.

The most popular hashtags that were used in an effort to stop xenophobia are #SayNotoXenophobia and #StopXenophobia. Some popular news agencies joined forces with the public by promoting #StopXenophobia on the mass media platforms such as television, newspapers and radio stations. The conspicuous factor under the hashtags is that the most popular hashtags are in English. The researcher has seen that most tweets that address thorny issues are mostly in English. The lack of the African language may affect the convenience of *Twitter* as a conducive platform for the use of the African languages. Traditional radio stations such as Thobela FM, Munghana Lonene and Phalaphala, to say the least, have a good use and promotion of hashtags in the African languages on Thobela FM, they encourage *Twitter* users to send their tweets and comments in Sepedi. They also put a hashtag in Sepedi to encourage the listeners to participate. To stimulate debate and discussion, the radio station ensures that all selected tweets are read on air. The other Limpopo radio station, Munghana Lonene encourages its listeners to tweet and comment in Xitsonga. The strategy offers people an opportunity to express their feeling about important topical issues that affect their lives.

*Twitter* was used by these radio stations to start discussions about the lack of service delivery, fees must fall and violent protests in the country. However, *Twitter* provides a good platform for social debates. The African languages are somehow marginalised under topical issues on *Twitter*. Nevertheless, people or users of this news feed have

the liberty to use any language of their choice. This is exactly what the aforementioned radio stations are doing. *Twitter* capacitates the users to share tweets, pictures, videos and audio clips (including music) with their followers. The memes are prevalent on *Twitter*, the common victims of memes jokes are the celebrities and politicians.

The followers may include friends, family, colleagues, fans, church mates etc. The audience on *Twitter* is wide across cultures, languages, and geographic locations, political and church affiliations. However, the *Twitter* user has a choice to decline or block his followers if one is not happy with their activities. It, therefore, means that *Twitter* users have control over what/how they want to operate on *Twitter*. A *Twitter* user could ensure that all one's followers speak his/her home language. The pictures taken during the field online observation procedure are presented below to show the language preference amongst *Twitter* users.

#### 6.4.2.1 The users' language preference on *Twitter*

The first *Twitter* screenshot (Figure 6.29) consists of three users. All of them tweeted in English. Their messages are written in full with minor mistakes.

Figure 6.29: *Twitter* screenshot



In the second *Twitter* screenshot (Figure 6.30), there are three users. The three users used English in their tweets. Their texts are written in full without abbreviations.

Figure 6.30: *Twitter* screenshot



In the third screenshot (Figure 6.31), there are three users. The first one used both English and Xitsonga. The English part of the text was written in full with a minor error,

the Xitsonga part had one mistake. The second and third users used English. They both wrote their tweets in full English language with a couple of mistakes.

Figure 6.31: *Twitter* screenshot



#### 6.4.3 Content Analysis: Field Online Observation on *WhatsApp*

This instant messaging application is the most used social networking application amongst the participants in this study. The observation procedure proved that many people prefer to use their own African languages on *WhatsApp*. The researcher observed that *WhatsApp* group members share information about football and sport in general. The majority of the members from this group would communicate in African languages, especially Sepedi and Xitsonga.

The members have their unique spellings for African languages, more especially those who speak Sepedi. For instance, the standard Sepedi does not use the letter X at all, the members of the group often replace 'š' with x, for instance, and instead of typing *mošomo* in proper Sepedi, they would type *moxomo*. They also use 'sh' to replace



this letter š. The reason for replacing š is common across all social media for the speakers of African languages. The reasons for the constant replacement of š is not known. Furthermore, the members of the said *WhatsApp* group mostly try to shorten Sepedi. They frequently try to make their message short. This aspect also applies across all social media. The members of the group use short cuts, abbreviations, and acronyms a lot. They shorten almost every word, sentence or phrase including the names of people, football clubs and places. When they text about football, the members would abbreviate the name of the Kaizer Chiefs' former head coach from Stephen Komphela to SK. Even the name Kaizer Chiefs itself is typed as KC in most cases. The users of the group have been code-switching to communicate with one another.

They mostly code-switch between English, Sepedi, and Xitsonga. In most cases, a person types the first phrase of his message in English and conclude that message in Sepedi. Even though code-switching is common in this *WhatsApp* group chat, there are few members who would normally use one language at a time. The practice of using one language at a time is not common in this group. The researcher has observed that the members of the group use the African languages when they are sending a short message.

In most cases, English is used for long messages. The popular *WhatsApp* feature amongst the group members is the emojis. The users from this group prefer to use emojis to respond to a post or message. They use the emojis to react to a post or message. However, it is somehow rare for a person to put the emojis to start a conversation in this group.

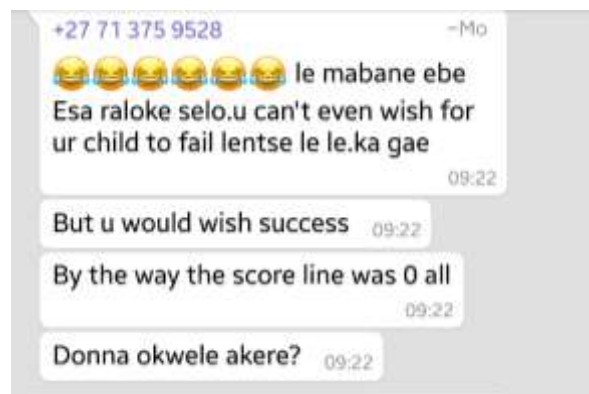
Although English is used a lot in this *WhatsApp* group, the users do not pay attention to grammar. The memes are popular on this instant messaging application. Many users use memes for fun. These memes are always accompanied by a brief caption. Mostly, the captions on these memes are written in English. There are few users who put their captions in the African languages. In other words, the group members get away with sending a grammatically incorrect message. Since the members prefer to share information from other Websites, in particular, news Websites, most of the

content they share is written in English. However, the message presented by one member of this group does not determine the language that other members would use when responding. If a group member sends a text in English, it does not necessarily mean the other members will respond in this language. Sometimes when a person posts a message in Xitsonga, other members may respond in English or Sepedi.

#### 6.4.3.1 The users' language preference on *WhatsApp*

In the first *WhatsApp* screenshot (Figure 6.32) taken from a group chat, the member of the group wrote his three messages in both Sepedi and English. The Sepedi part of his texts was grammatically wrong and he abbreviated few English words.

Figure 6.32: *WhatsApp* group chat screenshot



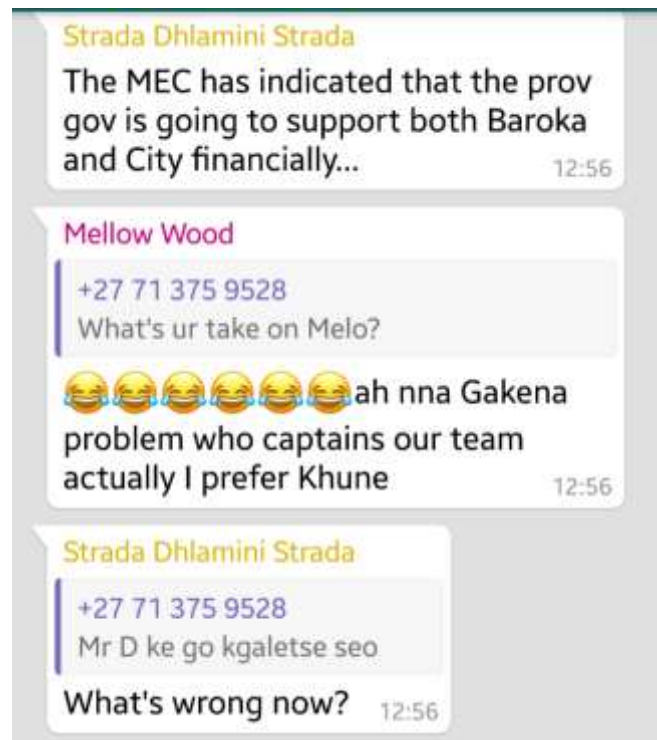
In the second *WhatsApp* screenshot (Figure 6.33), only two users commented. The first member in this screenshot used Sepedi in his first message and his other comments were in English. This member did not write proper Sepedi as he shortened the phrases. Additionally, the user did not follow grammatical prompts of Sepedi. As far as English is concerned the member wrote in full with good grammar. The second member used English in full without grammatical mistakes.

Figure 6.33: *WhatsApp* group chat screenshot



In this third screenshot (Figure 6.34), there are two members who sent messages. The first member in this screenshot used English in two different messages. His first message had a few abbreviated words. The second member used English in his first message and Sepedi in the succeeding one. In the first message, he shortened one word and the Sepedi text was not abbreviated but the grammar was wrong.

Figure 6.34: *WhatsApp* group chat screenshot



## 6.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF FIELD ONLINE OBSERVATION DATA

The following findings are addressing the objectives of this study:

6.5.1 The study has discovered that the majority of youth prefer *Facebook* to communicate. In most cases, the users of this social networking site use it to keep in touch with family and friends.

6.5.2 The study found that *Facebook* does not have the selected African languages on its translation options. Instead, the languages that are recognised on *Facebook* are namely, English, Afrikaans, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Deutsch, Italian and Filipino.

6.5.3. The study further discovered that the users of *Facebook* prefer to code-switch using English and one of the three selected African languages.

6.5.4. The other finding is that some of the users of *Facebook* do not pay attention to grammar when they communicate in the African languages.

6.5.5 Despite the popularity of shortened language on social media, the study has discovered that some of the *Facebook* users prefer to write in full without abbreviations.

6.5.6 The study has revealed that the selected African languages are not popular on *Twitter*. Nevertheless, there are few *Twitter* users who occasionally use African languages.

6.5.7 English is the most used language on *Twitter*. However, some of the *Twitter* users' code-switch using English and an African language.

6.5.8 The speakers of the African languages prefer to use these languages on *WhatsApp*.

6.5.9 The users of *WhatsApp* do not pay attention to English grammar.

6.5.10 The study has discovered that the majority of the users prefer memes on *WhatsApp* and most of the captions are written in English.

6.5.11 Code-switching is used a lot on *WhatsApp*. The *WhatsApp* users use an African language and English when they code-switch.

## **6.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER SEVEN**

This chapter addressed the analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher used tables, charts, graphics and frequencies to analyse quantitative data through statistical analysis. The focus group interviews data were analysed through thematic analysis. The field online observations data were analysed through content analysis. Additionally, the findings emanating from the three data analysis procedures were summarised in this chapter.

The next chapter deals with the theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter elucidates the theoretical underpinning of the study. The chapter focuses on the objectives of the study to assess the substance of the data. The themes that are presented in this chapter were derived from the objectives as outlined in Chapter One. The theoretical framework is the cornerstone of this analysis based on the three theories and the philosophical perspective.

The following section addresses the analysis of the theoretical framework.

#### **7.2 THE ANALYSIS OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section details the analysis of the theoretical framework. The assumptions and assertions of the theories are tested against the findings of this research. As outlined in Chapter One, there are three theories that are part of the analysis, namely, African Linguistic theory, Practice Theory, and the Uses and Gratifications theory. The findings of the study are derived from the objectives of the research which are, namely, (a.) to identify the effects of social media on the African languages; and (b.) to establish the challenges and opportunities of the social media in conserving the African languages amongst the youth.

##### **7.2.1 African Linguistic Dynamism Theory**

The African Linguistic Dynamism Theory encapsulates the complexity of the state of African languages in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Batibo (2005:26), there is a myriad of facets between the colonial languages and the native African languages. This theory assumes that the colonial languages are expanding and constantly used by the Africans over the African languages. Batibo (2005) further postulates that in some African societies, the colonial languages infiltrated the social system and they even assumed the positions of official languages. To this end, the expansion of the colonial languages has detrimental effects on the majority of African languages. This trend has therefore influenced the choice of a language for social media users, more especially the African youth.

In the context of this study, the examination is based on the impact of social media towards conserving African languages. The objectives of this study were focusing on the following aspects;

- a) The effects of social media on the African languages;
- b) The challenges and opportunities of the social media in conserving the African languages; and
- c) The analysis of the manner in which the youth use different languages in their social media profiles.

The researcher applied scientific research methods to address the above-mentioned objectives. The mixed method was employed in this research. The study also outlined the survey and phenomenological research designs as part of the paradigm within both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. As far as data collection was concerned, the researcher used questionnaires to address the research problem from quantitative perspective. Pertaining to qualitative data, the research presented to focus group interviews and field online observation instruments. Three focus groups were conducted and the sessions were audio recorded.

The field online observations were conducted. The researcher used statistical analysis based on computerised software to analyse data collected through questionnaires. The graphs, tables, frequencies and charts were used to statistically analyse the data. The audio-taped focus groups were transcribed. The thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data. The social media pictures were used as part of content analysis to analyse the field online observation data.

In the following discussion, the discoveries of this study are tested against the assumptions of this theory.

a) African Linguistic Dynamism Theory and the effects of Social media on the African languages

This study has discovered that English as a colonial language is being preferred on social media by the youth ahead of the African languages. The charts presented in the previous chapter show clearly that the youth prefer to use English on their online activities on social media platforms. This particular discovery echoes the assumption of this theory that posits that ex-colonial languages are dominating at the expense of the African languages. As a result, the African languages are somehow overlooked by their native speakers in the technological platforms including on social media.

Despite the outcome that indicated that African languages are suitable to be used on social media, the majority of the youth, who are all Africans, do not use these languages on the platforms. Forty-one (41%) of the African youth that do not see the African languages having bright future of featuring prominently on the social media platforms. This aspect therefore accentuates the finding that demonstrates that the speakers of the African languages have negative attitude towards the African languages. These findings suggest that the theory is based on solid rationale. The dominance of colonial languages as a medium of instruction at schools has adverse effects on the state of the African languages that are perpetually marginalised in various platforms. The stance of this theory is supported by the findings of this research.

b) The African Linguistic Dynamism Theory and challenges and opportunities of Social media in conserving the African languages

The Africans who use social media are always active online. They spend approximately 80% of their spare time active on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*. In simplest terms, the youth in this regard engage on most of their conversations online. It is therefore imperative to accentuate that this fact presents the Africans with an opportunity to conserve the African languages. It further postulates that the African languages could be presented on a global stage through social media applications. The findings of this study affirm that there is a small proportion of the youth who use the African languages online.



The challenge is that social media are not convenient for the African languages. The youth believe that using African languages on social media has many disadvantages. This assertion is proven to be correct by the large proportion of the youth who do not constantly use the African languages, particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga on their social media accounts. The youth believe that social media platforms are designed in such a way that somehow limit the usage of African languages. These findings are in line with the conviction of this theory pertaining to the dominance of English in some African countries over indigenous African languages.

### 7.2.2 Practice Theory

Practice Theory holds a view concerning the manner in which people use media and the intentions thereof (Couldry, 2004). The argument pertaining to media consumption patterns has taken a paradigm shift in recent times. The technological innovations came up with new media channels such as social media including microblogging sites, content sharing sites, social networking sites etc. In spite of the fact that the Internet has been in existence for many years, technological innovations are predominantly based on Integrated Networks (Internet).

The pertinent aspect of this theory within the tenets of the study is the latitude that consumers have in the new media landscape. Social media as a form of new media has a direct relationship with society (Fourie, 2010). The contextualisation of the theory is elucidated by the findings of the study. This study applied scientific research paradigms to address its objectives to examine the impact of social media in conserving the African languages.

The mixed method research paradigm was employed to probe the effects of social media on African languages and the opportunities and challenges towards conserving the African languages amongst youth. The findings of the two objectives are critiqued to provide rationale within the context of this research. The analysis is positioned on the following aspects; (a.) The effects of social media on the African languages; and (b.) The challenges and opportunities in conserving African languages.

a) Practice Theory and the effects of Social media on African languages

The discourse around the precolonial media theories focused on the ideologies and power of the media owners. It is, therefore, imperative to engage the assumptions of postcolonial media theories within new media (social media) landscape. The main facet of Practice Theory is on the consumption patterns of the media by the consumers themselves. From the African perspective, the theory also addresses the expansion of media and the experiences.

The relevant factor is that the study discovered that media consumers (youth) reaffirm the colonial languages in their social media engagements. The study discovered that African youth do not use social media to correct the culture of the traditional media. The African youth have a negative attitude towards their own African languages. This discovery indicates that the media consumers decide whether they want to conserve the African languages to eradicate the proliferation of colonial legacy. The colonial system used traditional media to marginalise the African languages and cultures. The study was conducted to investigate the state of the African languages on social media platforms. Through three distinct data collection tools, the researcher discovered that African youth use social media to marginalise the African languages.

The presented findings in the preceding chapter (Chapter 6) illustrates that social media platforms do not play a pivotal role towards conserving the African languages. It is evident that the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga, do not exist in the language options of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*. The study further confirmed that African youth believe that English is the most suitable language for their social media conversations. The consumers of social media spend a larger proportion of their spare time active on various social media platforms.

The significant outcome is that social media platforms do not contribute much towards conserving the African languages. The African youth desert their own languages when they convey messages on social media. *Facebook* is the most

popular social networking site in South Africa with over 14 million users and, from the findings of this study, the African youth prefer to use English on this site over African languages. The social media systems do not recognise the African languages and that has detrimental effects on the languages and influences the attitude of the youth towards their own languages. Although, the majority of the African youth who participated in this research speak African languages outside social media, they side-line them on social media.

b) Practice Theory and challenges and opportunities of Social media in conserving African languages

The Practice Theory enunciates the power of the media users over that of owners. Contrary to this assumption is the challenge of social media that are designed for specific languages and the previously marginalised African languages are still in the same state. The conspicuous aspect is the fact that social media systems do not recognise the text typed in African languages. Another detrimental challenge is that the African languages are not available on the translation options on social media platforms. These significant findings do not echo the assumptions of this theory. They also suggest that social media somehow erode African languages. The opportunities that are presented by the social media in conserving the African languages are such that the African youth could use them to promote African languages.

The findings of the study in this regard demonstrate that the majority of the African youth use their own languages on *WhatsApp* than on *Facebook* and *Twitter*. The constant use of the African languages on this instant messaging application (*WhatsApp*) could conserve the languages and broadcast them outside their native speakers.

The other critical opportunity is that the speakers of the African languages may use the existing structure of social media applications to develop their own platforms. The African languages based social media would play a vital role in conserving the previously marginalised languages. The African languages based on social media could change the Africans' attitude towards their own

languages. Practice Theory supports this assertion as it stands for expansion of new media and its relationship with the society. To some extent, the Practice Theory shares the same sentiments with the findings of this study.

### 7.2.3 The Uses and Gratifications Theory

This theory puts more emphasis on the capacity of the media users who are active towards their preferred media content. The Uses and Gratifications Theory holds an assumption pertaining to the consumption of the Internet that is more pertinent to this study (Fourie, 2007:237). The relevance of this theory is anchored by the personal relation assumption. This assumption postulates the fact that social media users are normally active on these platforms to establish companionship.

This assumption suggests that people use social media to seek for potential friends with common interest. It further posits that people use social media for interaction and personal gratification. There are debates concerning the appropriateness of this theory within new media based studies. The contextualisation of the Uses and Gratifications Theory is significant in this study. Because in the past the attributes of new media and African societies have been deserted.

More often many studies would focus on the universal media consumption patterns without paying close attention to the African identify (language and culture). If African people, more especially the youth, use social media for personal gratifications, then where does that leave their being? The crux of the matter is that the African youth seek gratifications in predominantly westernised media content. Undoubtedly, social media platforms are western-orientated platforms. It is, therefore, evident that the gratifications that the African youth expect to receive from social media represent the key attributes of the western cultural system.

In the context of this study, the investigation was focusing on the effects of social media on the African languages. The other critical aspect that the study looked at, is the challenges and opportunities of social media towards conserving the African languages. These key areas were probed in an effort to address the aim of the research, which is, namely, to examine the impact of social media in conserving

African languages. It is well renowned that social media are at the forefront of the metamorphosis of mass communication. The studies within the South African context affirm that English is dominating in the advanced technological platforms. The analysis thus highlights the main facets of this; (a.) The Uses and Gratifications Theory and the effects of social media on African languages; and (b.) The Uses and Gratifications Theory and the challenges and opportunities of social media.

a) The Uses and Gratifications Theory and the effects of Social media

The findings of this study affirm that the African youth who are social media users seek for friendship and entertainment from the platforms. The African youth have revealed that their conversation on *Facebook* and *Twitter* are conveyed in English in order to reach out to a large audience. They have indicated that the use of African languages may limit their audience and is ineffective in stimulating a response. The conversation on social media are targeting response and positive feedback from fellow users. To this end, the African youth fathom that the African languages do not give them latitude of spreading their messages across boundaries and language divide.

The study has discovered that African youth have a negative attitude towards their own African languages due to the fact that they do not stimulate positive feedback. In other words, the African languages do not consolidate their gratifications from social media. Moreover, the African youth holds a conviction that explicates that English is the most suitable language for their conversation on social media. Their belief is that in order for them to encourage interaction on social media, English is a suitable language. It is evident that the gratification process through the social media platforms has detrimental effects in conserving the African languages (viz., Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is significant as far as social media is concerned because of the personal relation assumption which validates the nature of the platforms. The social media platforms are designed in such a way that does not encourage the African youth to present their true identity through them. Their battle is to fit into the social media culture that, to a larger extent, marginalises the African languages. The social media platforms do not contribute much in conserving African

languages because amongst other factors they do not recognise the African languages let alone the stimulation of their usage.

b) The Uses and Gratifications Theory and the challenges and opportunities of Social media

The findings of the study demonstrate that the gratification process through social media neglects the essence of conserving the African languages. The challenge is that the nature of social media has adversely affected the conservation of the African languages. The observation of the study discovered that the African languages are not available on the translation options on social media. Additionally, social media systems on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* do not stimulate the use of African languages. For instance, when a person attempts to put up a message in the African languages the social media systems auto correct the information as if there is something wrong with the language even if the user is sure about it.

The opportunities are there as well since through the gratification process the African youth have the liberty to use the African languages. That is validated by the findings of this study, which outline that the majority of the African youth use the African languages on *WhatsApp*. Since *WhatsApp* is one of the most popular instant messaging applications in the world that is a positive opportunity for conservation of the languages? There is a small proportion of the African youth who propel the usage of African languages on social media. There are those users who indicated that they use African languages on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* despite the adverse attitude towards the practice. The other critical opportunity is that the current social media system could be used to develop the African-based social media applications.

The following section deals with the philosophical underpinning of the study.

### **7.3 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The focus of this study was based on deductive theory, positivism as epistemology and objectivism as an ontological position (May, 2011). The nature of the relationship between theory and research was reflected by deductive theory. In this study, the researcher worked on the known concept about a specific field and on theoretical

consideration in relation to that field. Entrenched within the rationale of the study are the concepts required to be translated into reasonable entities.

It, therefore, means that the social science researchers should explicitly specify the manner in which data will be collected (Neuman, 2011). The specified data collection tools should have a direct relation to the concepts that make up the envisaged findings of the research. In other words, deduction theory would compel this study to generate new knowledge due to the fact that its reasoning summarises combined facts in such a way that propels acceptance of the conclusions.

### 7.3.1 Afrocentric Philosophy

This research is positioned within an African perspective in location and time that fit African originality concerning the interpretation of information. The impact of social media on African languages cannot be debated in isolation. Hence, the need to discuss and develop this debate from an African perspective. Over the years, most Africans have been the heavy consumers of Western media content. The appropriate question in this regard is: what are the factors that propel Africans to be in this precarious position? The assumption is that the excessive consumption of Western media content has detrimental effects towards the development of African languages and cultures.

According to Asante (2009:1), “Afrocentricity cannot be reconciled to any hegemonic or idealistic philosophy. It is opposed to radical individualism as expressed in the postmodern school.” Within the context of this study, the researcher adopted the aforementioned philosophy including both methods of Afrocentricity, namely, Postmodernist and Afrocentrist. It is cardinal for both methods of Afrocentric philosophy to be advanced in this study. The postmodernist dictates that “Africans” is a vague phenomenon due to the fact that from Cape to Cairo there are different types of Africans let alone across the world.

This view affirms that Africans have the full potential to eradicate any obstacle that hinders socio-economic development. Nevertheless, Africans have not fully taken advantage to capacitate themselves towards preserving their identity and culture.

Thus, Africa absorbs a lot of European and American ideologies at the expense of their own. It, therefore, means that Africans are dependent on their Western counterparts because they have not asserted themselves. Consequently, “the Postmodernist would begin by saying that there is no such thing as Africans” (Asante, 2009:2). This firm stance manifests because there are myriad kinds of Africans and they are not equal.

Contrary to the postmodernist approach, the Afrocentrist highlights that Africans exist as a collective with their differences (Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). Diversity in cultures, languages, and traditions are the key attributes of Africa from an Afrocentrist perspective. Economically, Africa is being marginalised by Western superpowers. Asante (2009:4) accentuates that “the Afrocentrist would look to the questions of location, control of the hegemonic global economy, and marginalisation and power positions as keys to understand the underdevelopment of African people”.

Afrocentricity Asante, (ibid.) is a philosophical method that encourages Africans to bring socio-economic change and transformation in an effort to mitigate instability and underdevelopment. African people should defend and promote their being and identity. There is a need to critically develop ways to narrate African stories from an African perspective. The African stories and issues must not be narrated and interpreted from a Western perspective, Africans should not be marginalised in their own space.

The Afrocentric method views up for a philosophical discourse concerning transformation for Africans. Africans should be at the centre stage of the revolution. What kind of revolutions? This is a suitable question under Postmodernism. Postmodernism emphasises that Africans do not exist in isolation from the global scale. However, Afrocentrist affirms that Africans have been marginalised through centres of power. This method asserts that Africans should envisage their world without westerners. To some extent, Africans should imagine the status quo of their language, preferences of material things and type of religion without any western influence.



Asante (2009:4) states that “Afrocentricity enthrones the centrality of the African, that is, black ideas and values, as expressed in the highest forms of African culture, and activates consciousness as a functional aspect of any revolutionary approach to phenomena”. The rationale is that Africa without any influence from outside its borders is the location for Africans for their own development. Africans would have a latitude to re-affirm their culture, languages, moral values and religion. African languages should be a mainstay of cultural preservation for future generations. Language is a communication channel and any ethnic group has a native language that represents its heritage (Lohdi, 1993). Countries like China managed to move back to their native language after many years of the colonial era. Arguably, some Africans are mostly seen representing the attributes of Western culture and identity. Africans are supposed to take a stance by reclaiming their identity.

### 7.3.2 Contextualisation of Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is a philosophical underlying concept in this study. Afrocentricity advocates that Africans should be agents of transformation. They should act as proponents of social change, as this study explored the impact of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* (social media) in conserving the African languages (particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) amongst youth in Limpopo Province. As already outlined in the background of this thesis in Chapter One, Westerners have been using mass media to promote and inculcate their cultures and languages. Africans have to promote and preserve their languages and cultures as well through the use of mass media, especially new media such as social media. A plethora of media content was made up of attributes of Western cultural identity.

To some extent, some of these aspects still exist today. Many scholars, namely, Salawu (2006); Maseko *et al.*, (2010) as well as Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015), have agreed that colonialists have been using mass media to drive their agenda and ultimately to nullify the cultural identity of African people among other aspects. Despite the fact that there are many media houses in Africa, the majority of them are owned by Westerners from Europe and the United States of America. Most of the media content in South Africa is generated by developers from the aforementioned countries. It is arguable that these owners and creators decide the manner in which they want to

depict and represent the realities of African people. The real-life stories of African people are more often misrepresented by Western creators of media content. In the midst of this discourse, one should consider the influential power of the media.

Since media as the channels of mass communication process have a considerable amount of power, the Africans cannot afford to ignore their capacity. This enormous influence of media is both positive and negative in nature in the eyes of the consumers and creators. The manner in which media content is packaged and conveyed has a huge implication to the public. Many Africans lack knowledge in terms of the interpretation and comprehension of the media content. However, in this study, the focus gazes on the impact of social media towards conserving African languages.

### 7.3.3 Afrocentricity on Social media

In the midst of this philosophical discourse, one should highlight that there are key questions that were asked by Asante (2009). The emphasis of his question encapsulated that Africans should imagine their continent without any influence by Westerners. The three selected social media applications (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*) were developed by Americans (more especially citizens from the United States of America) and the United Kingdom respectively. *Facebook* and *Twitter* were established in the United States of America and *WhatsApp* was brought to life in the Eastern European country called Ukraine.

These social media applications have a myriad of users across the world. *Facebook* has over one billion users in the world, these statistics make it the world's largest social network. *Twitter* has over 310 million monthly users in the entire world. On the other hand, the *WhatsApp* messenger has over a billion users in more than 180 countries (World Wide Worx, 2017). These large numbers demonstrate the overwhelming use and popularity of these social media applications. Once again, some Africans find themselves in a situation whereby they are only reduced to a level of consumers of Western platforms. The major difference between traditional media and social media is that the latter always facilitate user-generated content. In contrast, traditional media provide limited latitude and authority for one to generate own content. One critical

aspect is that social media applications should afford users unlimited authority to generate their own content in their own African languages.

The argument concerning the impact of social media on African languages covers aspects of Afrocentricity. There is a need to consult the Afrocentricity as the basic aspect of African society. The overview of African society would enable Africans to position social media in an effort to conserve African languages. Thus, social media should be seen as a vehicle to drive the sustenance of African languages. They should have a positive impact towards reflecting fundamental attributes of African identity. African languages should not be overshadowed nor eroded by excessive use of colonial languages on social media. For these African languages to survive for the future generation, their speakers should constantly use them in various platforms of mass communication.

Youth should be encouraged to utilise their African languages in different platforms, more especially on social media. The young people who speak African languages are duty bound to ensure that their own languages thrive over colonial languages. The youth should use social media to galvanise their fellow native Africans to represent themselves without consulting with western worldview. The priority should be given to preservation of African languages. The attitude of the speakers of African languages towards their languages is critically important. According to Salawu (2006), Africans have a negative attitude towards their own languages. Salawu's assertion suggests that Africans attitudes towards their own languages help to elevate colonial languages.

The western worldview as far as media are concerned marginalised the African worldview postulated by Molefi Kete Asante. For many years, western concepts have been used as a point of reference to narrate the manner in which media are perceived by African people. The social media concepts are profoundly rooted in western worldview hence western languages are at the forefront of conversations in these platforms. It is also worth noting that popular social media are products of western engineers and they used their own languages to produce them.

This fact has somehow propelled Africans to follow the trends. The fact of the matter is that Africans were confronted with an interesting phenomenon that was already packaged to serve a specific purpose by the westerners. As far as conversations are concerned on social media, English dominates as a preferred language amongst the participants of this study. To this end, social media infiltrated the African community with all attributes attached to it including the languages. Africans did little to question the dominance of English over African languages on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*.

There is nothing wrong with African people using social media on a daily basis but the question is: what is the contribution of social media towards conserving African languages? The answers to this question should inform the African community on the manner in which they should use western manufactured products to conserve their identity (language and culture). The attributes of the African community are at the periphery of social media. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the Africans to ensure that their languages are at the centre of social media conversations.

It has been discovered by African studies that for a language to survive it should be constantly spoken and written (Salawu, 2006; Adegaju, 2008 and Chisenga, 2002). Since the majority of the African youth spend most of their time on social media, there is a need for them to prioritise African language in an effort to preserve them for posterity.

#### **7.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVEN AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER EIGHT**

This chapter addressed the theoretical framework of the study. The researcher used the African linguistic theory, Practice Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory to analyse the findings of this study. Furthermore, it presented the philosophical perspective argument of the study, which encapsulated the Afrocentric philosophy, contextualisation of Afrocentricity, and Afrocentricity on social media.

The next chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is worth noting that this research attempted to examine the impact of social media towards conserving African languages amongst youth. The preceding chapters provided the overview and contextualisation of the aim of this research. The researcher used scientific methods in this inquiry to present credible findings that are needed to boost the existing body of knowledge. This chapter, therefore, carries the summary of the chapters. The delimitations, hypothesis, and discourse of the objectives of this inquiry are outlined together with the recommendations.

The next section outlines a summary of the chapters.

#### **8.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS**

##### **8.2.1 Chapter One**

This chapter titled introduction, encapsulated the background of the study. The importance of the study was outlined by putting emphasis on a need to embark on a study of this nature. Since the African languages are popular on social media (*Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*) the researcher revised the dominance of English on the Internet. Moreover, the chapter outlined the common social media terminologies to give a brief overview of how they are used on these platforms. The chapter also highlighted the key terms of the study and the manner in which they are applied. Among other aspects, this chapter looked at the landscape of social media in South Africa, the purpose of the study, rationale, hypotheses and the role of the theory.

##### **8.2.2 Chapter Two**

Chapter two was the first chapter that reviewed the literature within the context of the study. The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the key concepts such as new media, internet and the relationship between the Internet and social media. This overview highlighted the origins of social media because *Facebook*,

*Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* are Internet-based applications. Furthermore, the history of social media was presented in this chapter.

### 8.2.3 Chapter Three

This was the second literature review chapter. The aim of chapter three was to elucidate the media and language, the status of the African languages particularly Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. In terms of the three selected African languages, this chapter outlined their historical background. Since this study investigated the impact of social media towards conserving African languages, it was, therefore, important to address the history of these languages because it informs their current status and future prospects.

### 8.2.4 Chapter Four

This was the last literature review chapter. It reviewed critical concepts pertaining to the contextualisation of African languages, culture, and the relationship between social media and youth. Firstly, the chapter reviewed the literature about African languages and their link with culture. In the context of this research, it is pivotal to conserve the African languages because they play a huge role in preserving culture. Additionally, the relationship between Information Communication Technology and African languages was presented in this chapter. The chapter also presented the significance of social media towards preserving and promoting African culture. The African languages should be conserved for posterity. Lastly, the importance of social media for youth, and the use of social media by youth were reviewed.

### 8.2.5 Chapter Five

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the research design and methodology. The researcher pointed out exploratory and descriptive designs within quantitative and qualitative research methods. Thus, questionnaires were employed as a data collection instrument for quantitative data. Statistical analysis was used to analyse data collected through questionnaires. On the hand, the focus group interviews and field online observations were employed to collect qualitative data. Additionally, thematic analysis addressed data collected through focus groups interviews and content analysis was used to analyse data collected through field online observations.

Chapter five outlined the qualitative rigour for qualitative research paradigm and reliability and validity for the quantitative research paradigm. The other scientific aspects that were dealt with in this chapter were namely sampling method, refinement of data and ethical considerations.

#### 8.2.6 Chapter Six

This chapter focused on data analysis and interpretation. The researcher used three data analysis techniques to analyse data collected questionnaires, focus group interviews and field online observations. The chapter was divided into three categories. In the first category, statistical analysis was used to analyse data collected through questionnaires. Tables, graphs and charts were used to carry out this procedure. In terms of the second category, the focus group interviews were analysed through thematic analysis. The researcher used tables to separate the transcribed data from analysis of the themes. Lastly, in the third category, the content analysis technique analysed data collected through field online observations. The screenshots were taken from *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* during field online observations were part of the content analysis procedure.

#### 8.2.7 Chapter Seven

Chapter seven dealt with the theoretical framework of this study. The researcher used three theories, namely African linguistic Dynamism, the Uses and Gratification, and Practice Theory to theoretically analyse the findings. The Afrocentric philosophy is engaged in this chapter as a philosophical perspective of the study.

The following section addresses the delimitations of the study.

### **8.3 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The delimitations of this study are summarised below:

8.3.1 The study was delimited to only three selected areas in Limpopo Province namely, Thohoyandou, Tzaneen, and Mankweng, which means other people who do not reside in these areas were not part of the participants. Additionally, the speakers of three languages from other areas were excluded.

8.3.2 The research was also delimited to three selected African languages (Sepedi, Tshivend, and Xitsonga), as a result, the findings of the study do not cover the other languages in South Africa. Languages such as Afrikaans, English, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, Setswana, IsiXhosa, SiSwati and Sesotho were not given attention in this research.

8.3.3 The other delimitation is that the study sampled youth between the ages of 16 and 34 years. The people outside the stated age group did not have an opportunity to take part in this study. The findings of this study do not include people outside the 16 to 34 years age group. The researcher admits that the people outside the above-mentioned age group use social media and some of them speak the three selected languages and their inclusion could have boosted the validity of the findings.

8.3.4 There is some level of delimitations concerning the selected social media, namely, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*, because there are other existing sites that the youth use apart from these three. Even though the sampled sites are very popular amongst youth in Limpopo Province, the study, therefore, did not collect relevant information from the users of other social media sites, particularly *WeChat*, *LinkedIn*, *Google+*, *MySpace*, *Instagram*, *Skype* to mention just a few. The expansion of social media sites could have consolidated the findings of this study.

It is therefore evident that the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the whole province and the entire country.

The following section addresses prove of hypotheses.

## **8.4 PROVE OF HYPOTHESES**

The quantitative findings of the study are used to test the hypotheses below:

8.4.1 The lack of frequent usage of African languages on social media suggests they (social media) have negative impact towards conserving these languages (null-hypothesis). In terms of this hypothesis, the data collected through questionnaires and analysed through statistical analysis approve it in parts. The study discovered that there small margins between those who frequently use African languages on social



media and those who do not. Nevertheless, the quantitative findings of this study do not approve that the lack of frequent usage of African languages on social media suggests they have a negative impact towards conserving these languages. Additionally, the findings show that the majority of the youth prefer to use both African languages and English in and outside social media. The positive aspect of the future of African languages is that the youth still use them a lot.

8.4.2 The dominance of English on social media has detrimental effects on these languages (null-hypothesis). The findings of this study proved that English is dominating on social media as most of the youth prefer to use it. Majority of the youth prefer to use English along with an African language which suggests that the English is not used at the expense of the African languages. Most importantly, the dominance of English on social media does not overshadow the usage of African languages outside these platforms. Contrary to this hypothesis, it is therefore clear that the dominance of English on social media does not have detrimental effects towards conserving African languages.

8.4.3 Due to their popularity amongst youth, social media have the potential to help in conserving African languages (true hypothesis). The findings of this study approve this hypothesis. The study has discovered that the majority of the youth believe that African languages have future on social media. The youth believe that there is also a need for social media applications that operate in the African languages to play a role towards conserving African languages.

8.4.4 The constant use of African languages by youth on social media could boost their preservation and development (true hypothesis). The findings of this study approve this hypothesis as the youth believe in using the African languages on social media despite the fact that they use them along with English. Furthermore, the findings support this hypothesis because the majority of the youth indicate that the African languages are convenient on social media. The only challenge is that the youth suggest that they are pressurised by social media systems to use English.

8.4.5 The social media systems are not convenient for the usage of African languages. The findings of this study approve this hypothesis (true hypothesis). The study discovered that majority of the youth believe that social media limit the usage of African languages. The second finding that supports this argument, reveals that most of the participants think that the African languages are undermined on social media. These are the reasons participants assert that there is a need for social media applications that operate in African languages.

The following section deals with the discourse of the objectives of the study.

## **8.5 DISCOURSE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The discourse below deals with the objectives of the study through qualitative findings:

### 8.5.1 To identify the effects of social media on the selected African languages

The social media have both positive and negative effects on the selected African languages. *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* do not recognise the African languages on their language options. The African languages text on these platforms cannot be translated into any other language. Furthermore, the three social media platforms highlight text typed in the African languages, to some extent it is auto-corrected to English. All instructions on these platforms are in English. Based on the above reasons, it is therefore important to note that social media have effects on the selected African languages. On the other hand, the users of *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* have the latitude to use their African languages. Additionally, there is a room for African languages based on social media platforms. Thus, social media have the potential to positively contribute to conserving the previously marginalised African languages.

### 8.5.2 To establish the challenges and opportunities of the Social media in conserving the African languages amongst the youth

There are opportunities that the speakers of African languages can exploit concerning using social media to conserve these languages (Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga). In their current form, social media give the speakers of the African languages opportunities to use these languages. The advantage of using the African languages on social media is that it can reach out to a large audience across the world. Social

media are used by a myriad of people, therefore, when one text in Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga the likelihood is that many people would see it. The other opportunity is that due to their popularity social media can be used to promote the previously marginalised African languages. However, there are existing challenges that hinder the use of African languages on social media. Social media are programmed in such a way that does not recognise the three selected African languages. The text typed in these languages cannot be translated into any other language. The other challenge is that the users of social media do not feel free to use African languages because the text would be either highlighted in red or auto-corrected to English. As a result, the speakers of the African languages feel propelled to use English.

#### 8.5.3 To analyse the manner in which the youth use different languages in their Social media profiles

The findings of this study show that the majority of the youth prefer to use English in their online engagements. They argued that English is convenient because it allows them to reach out to large audience. Nevertheless, there is a significant number of those who use both an African language and English. Some users pointed out that they equally use both an African language and English through code-switching. In terms of the manner in which youth use different languages, one noted that when they type in the African languages there are grammatical mistakes but their English grammar is generally correct.

The users of *Facebook* who speak the African languages do not always use the shorter version of the English language, although there are those who prefer them. On *WhatsApp*, most of the users prefer to use African languages ahead of English. Nevertheless, the dominance of the African languages on *WhatsApp* is detrimentally affected by the fact that most users do not pay attention to grammar. In contrast, the same users are cautious about grammar when dealing with English. This may therefore suggest that they have a negative attitude towards the African languages. The *Twitter* users prefer to use English a lot on this microblogging site. They prefer to type their text in full and the abbreviations/acronyms are popular features. The African languages seldom feature on *Twitter* content. Apart from the three selected African languages and English, there is an emergence of a language known to the users as

Tsotsitaal. They posited that this is a language used amongst their peers. Moreover, they highlighted that Tsotsitaal is convenient in their online conversations. Generally, there is no specific pattern of language usage on social media because youth have different preferences ranging from code-switching, Tsotsitaal to the dominance of the African languages on *WhatsApp*. Interestingly, the grammar of the African languages is not a priority for the youth who use social media compared to that of English.

The subsequent section deals with the summary of the findings.

## **8.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The findings in this section encapsulate the results of this study as analysed and interpreted in Chapter Six. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are summarised below:

- ❖ This study has discovered that the majority of the youth who speak Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga have a negative attitude towards their own languages. Based on the data collected from questionnaires, field online observations and focus group interviews most of the participants indicated that they hardly use African languages on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. The participants use English as the main language for all their activities on social media over African languages. They prefer English because it is easy to text or post information, unlike African languages that need one to type in full or longer sentences.

The speakers of the African languages do not put enough effort when they use the African languages on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Most of their texts written in the African languages have errors such as grammar and spelling. To a larger extent, these language mistakes are limited to African languages because their English text does not have many mistakes.

There are also those who feel the use of African languages is primitive and ancient and does not enable them to connect with many people from different ethnic groups. The participants, in the main, argue that English allows them to connect with many people across cultural backgrounds and borders. Some of the participants indicate that the use of English is fashionable on social media

and it is good for their outlook. They pointed out that African languages put them at a disadvantage because the usage of these languages limits their audience reach. They rather use English instead of Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga because many people understand it very well.

The participants agreed that English is convenient for social media usage as it allows them to use short phrases and abbreviations/acronyms when they type and that makes communication much quicker and easier. The participants, in their majority, acknowledged the difficulty in typing in the African languages. Some blame the fact that they need to write long sentences because it is not easy to use short phrases in their own languages. However, there are those who alluded to the fact that they use both English and an African language (code-switching). There are those who highlighted that they code switch whenever they find it difficult to write something or lack of vocabulary in English.

- ❖ The majority of the participants indicated that they discuss a whole lot of issues on social media (*Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp*) but they do not think it is appropriate for them to discuss cultural issues. Some of them confirmed that they only address cultural issues on Heritage Day.
- ❖ This research has also discovered that the majority of the youth use African languages mainly on *WhatsApp*. They outlined that African languages are best suited for *WhatsApp* because they know the person they are talking to. Some of them revealed that they use African languages on social media because they normally communicate with their elders who do not have good proficiency in English.
- ❖ The participants in this study prefer to use English on *Facebook*. They said that English is more suited on *Facebook* because they want to reach out to a large audience. The participants state that using African languages namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga would not allow them to connect with many people across the globe. They argue that whenever they post in their own languages on *Facebook*, the majority of the people who come across their messages do not understand them. Their conviction is that African languages

are mostly regional and when they post or comment using these languages many people may not understand them. The understanding of the participants is that English is a universal language and if one needs to reach out to a large audience should use this language.

- ❖ The study discovered that *Twitter* is not popular amongst the youth in this research. There are few of them who mentioned that they use *Twitter*, and English is their preferred language on this microblogging site.
  
- ❖ Social media have a negative impact towards conserving the African languages. The research has discovered that African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga are not recognised on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Through the field online observation instrument, the researcher observed that these African languages are not part of the language options on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Languages such as French, Portuguese, Spanish and English are conspicuously outlined as options on these social media platforms.

The participants also validated this finding by stating that *Facebook's* language translation option does not recognise these African languages. The participants also confirmed that when they try to type words in their African languages the system highlights those words. The participants indicated that they feel undermined to see their African languages not being recognised by the systems of social media. However, the plight of the three selected African languages on social media does not necessarily mean that they are under threat of extinction because the majority of the speakers regularly use these languages outside social media platforms.

- ❖ There are those participants who feel that there is a need for African languages to be introduced in the language options on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. However, some participants posit that there is no need for African languages to be part of the language options because English accommodate many people.

- ❖ Regarding the conservation of the African languages, namely, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga for future generations, the participants agreed that these languages should be conserved.
- ❖ *Tsotsitaal* has emerged as a language that the youth prefer to use on social media together with African languages. They use this language amongst their peers.
- ❖ Furthermore, this study discovered that social media have the potential to be used as vehicles to conserve African languages. The participants revealed that they have the latitude to use any language on social media. They added that speakers of African languages can start their own chat groups on social media wherein they could freely use their own languages. This point is anchored by the fact that the majority of the participants prefer to use African languages on *WhatsApp* because they are addressing someone who may understand their language.

The next section outlines the recommendations of this study.

## **8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research aimed at examining the impact of social media towards conserving the African languages amongst youth. The below recommendations are derived from the general results of the study.

8.7.1 The Development of the African Languages to Fit the Needs of Social media  
 African languages should be developed to fit the needs of social media applications. The African youth have a negative attitude towards their own African languages because they find it difficult to use them on social media. This kind of attitude is caused by the long grammatical elements of the African languages.

The African youth feel discouraged to use the African languages since it takes more time and effort to put up information on social media through these languages. In other words, they feel propelled to use English as it allows them to use abbreviations,

acronyms and short phrases on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*. Contrary to this practice, through ex-colonial language (English) the African languages are perceived as a slow way of communicating messages on social media. Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga do not easily allow the African youth to put up messages through abbreviations, acronyms, and short phrases.

To a large extent, this disadvantage of the African languages discourages the African youth from using them on the social media platforms. Against this background, the state of the African languages should be changed by developing these languages to make them convenient for social media usage. The development of the African languages should include the technological vocabulary for Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. This kind of vocabulary would enable African youth to have a common understanding of their languages' online vocabulary. Generally, the users of social media across the world understand the meaning of "LOL", which is an acronym for "Laughing Out Loud". This acronym is popular because speakers of English developed their language to fit online conversations on social media. Since the social media platforms are seen as dominant channels of communicating thus there is a need to develop the African languages for online suitability.

The development of the African languages may otherwise stimulate their usage on the social media amongst the youth. The speakers, linguists and other relevant experts have the responsibility to ensure that the African languages are developed for effective social media usage. As much as there is a need for African language-based social media applications, the African languages themselves should be developed to stimulate their usage on these platforms. The stimulation of the usage of the African languages would somehow ensure that they are conserved and consolidated for future generations.

#### 8.7.2 The Recognition of Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*

The study has found that the most used social media applications in South Africa, particularly, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* do not recognise the African languages in their systems. Apart from English and Afrikaans the African languages are not even



included in the translation options on the aforementioned social media applications. There are a plethora of people who use these applications and a large proportion of them are Africans who predominantly speak African languages, namely, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, IsiNdebele, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The state of African languages on social media undermines their value let alone the speakers themselves.

The fact of the matter is that the speakers of the African languages use social media and they are immensely contributing towards their growth and sustainability. It is, therefore, cardinal and logical for the owners of these social media applications to introduce the African languages. Since millions of Africans are constantly using social media applications, it is logical for their languages to be incorporated on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp* among others.

### 8.7.3 The Establishment of African Based Social media Applications

The lack of African languages on social media applications suggests that Africans should have their own applications. Social media are the effective channels of communication and, to some extent, African people are propelled to use English instead of African languages. Generally, English is the dominant language on the Internet but that does not necessarily mean is the best way of communicating amongst Africans. The communication process is more effective when the people involved communicate in the mother tongue.

The use of mother tongue enables people to share information easily without any barrier. Since English is spoken by a mere 9.8% of South African population, as a result, the same statistics should be reflected on social media. Over 90% of the respondents who took part in this research pointed out that they regularly speak African languages outside social media. However, 50% of them prefer to use English over the African languages on their social media activities. It is therefore important for these people to continue using the African languages on social media. Consequently, the African languages based social media applications should be established or designed to accommodate the usage of African languages. This kind of social media would easily recognise African languages without autocorrecting their text.

The introduction of the African languages based social media applications would stimulate the participation of more speakers of the African languages because there are many people who are marginalised by language to actively take part on social media. There are people who are not on social media because they have little understanding of English. The establishment of African social media has great potential to change the attitude of the African youth who have a negative attitude towards their own African languages. In other words, the introduction of these applications will have an immense contribution towards conserving and developing the African languages.

#### 8.7.4 Indigenisation of the Research Methods

The execution of the African studies should be complemented by the appropriate research methodologies. Afrocentricity, as elucidated by Molefi Kete Asante, emphasises the necessity to develop African techniques to address African problems. The existing research methods have over the years presented various techniques of addressing research problems from an African perspective. Undoubtedly, the western research paradigms have assisted the African community to address certain research problems in the humanities or social sciences.

The critical point is that not all studies within the humanities need western research methods to address African issues. The studies within the humanities are centred on African people. It is therefore pertinent to ensure that African research methods are introduced to address African problems. The usage of African research methods would stimulate the use of African techniques including the use of the African languages instead of ex-colonial languages.

The engagement of African research problems needs Africans to be at the centre of the investigations. In fact, the investigation of the African researches needs the Africans to be at the forefront with the African research methods. The existing body of knowledge may debate the fact that not all studies in the African scholarship are appropriate for western orientated research paradigms. The need for African research methods to address African problems is reaffirmed by the repositioning of African

education curriculum. The recent developments in some of the South African universities suggest that the curriculum should be based on African philosophies and African worldview.

The next section presents the conclusion.

## **8.8 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, social media platforms have great potential to conserve the African languages and the speakers (i.e., African youth) should play a colossal role in this process. However, at this juncture, these channels of communication (viz., social media) are somehow marginalising the African languages. The critical aspect concerning the use of the African languages on social media is the attitude of the youth towards their own African languages. This study identified a detrimental factor regarding conservation of African languages through social media. The detrimental factor is the negative attitude of the African youth towards their own languages. This adverse attitude makes it difficult for the youth to prioritise the African languages over English.

The most critical aspect is that for any language to be conserved there is a need for it to be used frequently by the speakers. As far as the state of the African languages is concerned on social media, there are many worrisome factors. The speakers (i.e., African youth) of the African languages do not believe in them. The African youth are expected to be responsible with conserving the African languages let alone to use them for future generations.

The African youth are the future and social media are the future channels of communication hence the need for them to propel their own African languages over ex-colonial languages such as English and French. The youth exercise their right to use a language of their choice on social media this aspect emanate from the fact they also use code-switching by mixing the African languages with English. The state of Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* do not necessarily suggest that they are in a quagmire, however, it might hinder their development in a technologically saturated environment.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

<b>Name of Researcher:</b> (MALATJI EDGAR JULIUS)
<b>Title:</b> (THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONSERVING AFRICAN LANGUAGES AMONGST YOUTH IN LIMPOPO)

**Date: 12/03/2015**

#### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

*This questionnaire is a data collection tool for PhD research. The information will be used strictly for this academic research. The rights of the participants will be respected at all times. All the research ethical principles such as anonymity and privacy, amongst others, will be adhered to in this study. The research participants will have the right to be treated with dignity and honour. Their right to remain anonymous, let alone privacy, will be preserved by the researcher during and after data collection procedure. The names and identity numbers of the participants will not be disclosed. You are not going to be pressured to complete this questionnaire. Confidentiality, as a key ethical principle, will be respected in this research. You are kindly requested to be honest towards completing this survey.*

#### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENTATION**

AGE	16 – 25	26 – 34		
GENDER	MALE	FEMALE		
ETHNIC GROUP	AFRICAN	INDIAN	ASIAN	
EDUCATION	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY	
OCCUPATION	STUDENT	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	
LOCATION	RURAL	URBAN	SEMI-URBAN	

#### **HOME LANGUAGE:**

SEPEDI		
TSHIVENDA		
XITSONGA		
OTHER (specify)		

**SECTION B: CLOSE ENDED QUESTIONS**

**Please indicate all your ratings/selections with a cross in the appropriate square under the description which best describes your answer.**

Question 1. Which language(s) do you speak on a daily basis?

Afrikaans	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sepedi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tshivenda	<input type="checkbox"/>
Xitsonga	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sesotho	<input type="checkbox"/>
Setswana	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsiZulu	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsiNdebele	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsiXhosa	<input type="checkbox"/>
SiSwati	<input type="checkbox"/>
If other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 2. Please select your preferred Social media networks  
**(Put a cross next to your preferred social networks)**

<i>Facebook</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Twitter</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>WhatsApp</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Instagram</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WeChat	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Skype</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snapchat	<input type="checkbox"/>
If other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 3. On average, how often do you access/use these Social media networks?

Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Other, specify

Question 4. Approximately, how many hours do you spend on your preferred Social media networks per day?

1 Hour	2 – 4 Hours	More than 5 Hours	Other, specify

Question 6. Which language(s) do you prefer when you are communicating on Social media?

Afrikaans	
English	
Sepedi	
Tshivenda	
Xitsonga	
Sesotho	
Setswana	
IsiZulu	
IsiNdebele	
IsiXhosa	
SiSwati	
If other, please specify	

Question 7. Why do you prefer this specific language?

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**[SA]** = Strongly Agree; **[A]** = Agree; **[D]** = Disagree; **[SD]** = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
Question 8. African languages are not convenient for Social media				
Question 9. English is the most appropriate language for Social media				
Question 10. African languages are not appropriate for Social media				
Question 11. Social media limit the usage of African languages by youth				
Question 12. There is a need to develop Social media apps for African languages				
Question 13. Speakers of the African languages must be blamed for the absence of their languages on Social media				
Question 14. Social media are the future forms of mass communication				

**Please indicate all your ratings with a Yes/No**

	Yes	No
Question 15. African languages have no future on Social media		
Question 16. I understand the possible consequences of the constant use of English on Social media		
Question 17. The engineers of Social media apps undermine African languages		
Question 18. Africans should develop their own Social media apps to accommodate African languages		
Question 19. Translation option on Social media does not accommodate African languages		
Question 20. It is not convenient to use African languages on Social media		
Question 21. Social media apps are not convenient for African languages		

Question 22. Africans have a negative attitude towards their own languages		
Question 23. I constantly use African languages on my Social media accounts		
Question 24. The lack of frequent use of African languages has had repercussions for these languages		

**SECTION C: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**

Question C1. Do you feel pressurised to use English on your Social media accounts over your home language? And Why?

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Question C2. Since African languages are marginalised on various Social media platforms, do you think this can make the languages to decline and subsequently die? Please explain.

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*THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE*



## Appendix B: Interview Guide for Focus Groups

### TITLE: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONSERVING AFRICAN LANGUAGES AMONGST YOUTH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

RESEARCHER: MR EJ MALATJI

I, Edgar Julius Malatji, am a PhD candidate in Media Studies at the University of Limpopo and my research is about the impact of Social media in conserving African languages amongst youth in Limpopo Province. For the purpose of my study, I will be recording the information that am collecting from you for the purpose of transcribing and listening to the information because if I had to write it will distract the communication that I need to have with you. I, therefore, assure you that the information that I will be collecting from you even when I report my findings I will not mention your names, instead, I will use codes. Even in my findings, the information that I will be collecting and recording are confidential, hence I will not disclose the details of the respondents.

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENTATION

<b>AGE</b>	<b>16 – 25</b>	<b>26 – 36</b>		
<b>GENDER</b>	<i>MALE</i>	<i>FEMALE</i>		
<b>ETHNIC GROUP</b>	<i>AFRICAN</i>	<i>INDIAN</i>	<i>ASIAN</i>	
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<i>PRIMARY</i>	<i>SECONDARY</i>	<i>TERTIARY</i>	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<i>STUDENT</i>	<i>EMPLOYED</i>	<i>UNEMPLOYED</i>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<i>RURAL</i>	<i>URBAN</i>	<i>SEMI-URBAN</i>	

#### HOME LANGUAGE:

<b>SEPEDI</b>		
<b>TSHIVENDA</b>		
<b>XITSONGA</b>		
<b>OTHER (specify)</b>		

#### SECTION B: QUESTIONS

Question 1: How many Social media networks accounts do you have?

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Question 2: How often do you log on into your Social media account(s)?

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Question 3: How many hours do you spend on your Social media account(s) per week?

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Question 4: Which Social media network do you mostly use? And Why?

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Question 5: How do you access your Social media networks?

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Question 6: Do you think it is affordable to access these networks?

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Question 7: How do you afford the accessibility of Social media networks?

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Question 8: What is the main purpose of Social media networks?

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Question 9: Do you think these Social media networks meet your expectations? And Why?

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Question 10: Which language do you normally use in your Social media account(s)? And Why?

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Question 11: Which other language do you use? And Why?

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Question 12: Are Social media networks convenient for people who want to use indigenous African languages in their respective accounts? Please give a reason for your answer?

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Question 13: Indigenous African languages are literally overshadowed in the cyberspace (particularly on Social media networks), how do you feel about this?

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Question 14: Based on your personal experience as a Social media user, do you think there is a need for these networks to introduce a special application for indigenous African languages?

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Question 15: What is the impact of Social media networks on indigenous African culture?

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Question 16: What is the role of Social media on the indigenous African languages?

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Question 17: How often do you share information/speak about your culture on Social media platforms?

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Question 18: Do you think Social media are an appropriate platform to discuss cultural issues?

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Question 19: How convenient is it to discuss cultural issues in a different language other than your home language?

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Question 20: Which culture is more dominant in the Social media of your choice?

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Question 21: How familiar are you with that culture?

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Question 22: Which language do the majority of your friends use on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*?

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Question 23: Do you somehow feel pressurised to use English on your Social media platforms?

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Question 24: What puts you under this pressure?

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Question 25: How difficult is it to use your home language to communicate on these Social media platforms?

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Question 26: Do you struggle to put the message across in your respective home languages?

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Question 27: When you write your status or comments on *Facebook* in an African language, the application would underline in red. How do you feel about it?

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Question 28: Generally, your friends on Social media, are they Africans?

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Question 29: Which language do you use to communicate with your fellow African Social media users?

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Question 30: Do you code switch when you chat on *WhatsApp* & *Facebook*/Using both English and your home language? And how often do you do that?

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Question 31: Which language do you use mostly when code switching?

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Question 32: Apart from English and your home language, which other language do you use on these Social media platforms? Name them, please?

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Question 33: How often do you use that third language?

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Question 34: Do you have first language speakers of English as friends on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *WhatsApp*?

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Question 35: If yes, which language do you use to communicate with them (first language English)?

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Question 36: Are you able to use a translation option on *Facebook*?

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Question 37: How often do you use this option?

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Question 38: What is your perception concerning the lack of your home language on *Facebook's* translation option?

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Question 39: Do you think the developers of these applications (*Facebook, Twitter, & WhatsApp...*) undermine the indigenous African languages? – Why?

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Question 40: What are the effects of the *Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp* on the indigenous African languages?

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Question 41: As we are living in a Social media-saturated environment and over 12 million South Africans use *Facebook*. One cannot think about the future mass communication system without including the elements of Social media applications. So, do you think these Social media platforms can be used to conserve and develop African languages such as Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga? How?

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42. Since African languages are marginalised on various Social media platforms, do you think this can make the languages to face extinction?

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*THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH*

## **Appendix C: Informed Consent Form for Participants**

### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **TITLE: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONSERVING AFRICAN LANGUAGES AMONGST YOUTH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Dear prospective research participant.

Date: 12/03/2015

#### **1) INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to participate in this research study undertaken for a Doctoral Study at the University of Limpopo.

Before you agree to take part in this study you should fully understand what is involved.

If you have any questions, which are not fully explained in this leaflet, do not hesitate to ask the researcher.

If you agree to volunteer to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent letter.

#### **2) THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The aim of this research study is to examine the impact of Social media in conserving African languages amongst youth, you have specifically been selected for participation in this research study based on your experience as Social media user.

#### **3) EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED**

A theme of questions will be asked by the researcher and the focus group session will last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Please be advised the researcher will be taping the session. Although the researcher will be taking some notes during the session, it may not be possible to write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments.

#### **4) RISK AND DISCOMFORT INVOLVED**

The research will not involve any physical, emotional, and psychological discomfort.

#### **5) POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY**

Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to share your experiences, which will contribute to effectively using Social media to conserve the African languages.

#### **6) I understand that if I do not want to participate in this study, it will not be held against me.**

#### **7) I may at any time withdraw from this study.**

**8) ETHICAL APPROVAL**

The study adheres to the guidelines of the ethical committee of The University of Limpopo. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher contactable on 0763206201. If you would like to speak to an officer of the University, you may contact Prof N.C Lesame at the Department of Media, Communication and Information Studies.

**9) INFORMATION**

I have read the information contained in the consent and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction, and for any further questions concerning this study, I should contact:

Name of candidate: Mr. EJ Malatji

Contact details of the researcher: email: [edgarmalatji@gmail.com](mailto:edgarmalatji@gmail.com)

**10) CONFIDENTIALITY**

All records obtained whilst in this study will be regarded as confidential. Results will be published or presented in such a fashion that you remain unidentifiable.

**11) Feedback**

If you would like to be invited to a meeting where the findings will be presented or if you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings, please write your e-mail address below or indicate how you would like or receive the summary or to be contacted

.....

**12) CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I hereby wish to take part in this study.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

.....  
**The person obtaining informed consent  
(Full name)**

**Date:**

.....  
**Researcher:**

**Date:**



## Appendix E: Letter from the Editor

Mr MM Mohlake  
University of Limpopo  
Turfloop Campus  
Private Bag x 1106  
Sovenga  
0727

16 February 2018

To Whom It May Concern

### EDITING CONFIRMATION: MR MALATJI EDGAR JULIUS' STUDY

This letter is meant to acknowledge that I, MM Mohlake, as a professional editor, have meticulously edited the main thesis of Mr Malatji Edgar Julius (Student Number 200520481) entitled "The Impact of Social Media in Conserving African Languages amongst Youth in Limpopo Province".

Thus I confirm that the readability of the work in question is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact me.

Regards



**Mosimaneotsile M Mohlake**  
*Freelance Professional Editor*  
(015) 268 2464  
072 1944 452  
<mosimaneotsile.mohlake@ul.ac.za>