

Language practices and language change among transnational migrants to South Africa, 1990-2020: a survey

Práticas de língua e mudança linguística entre migrantes transnacionais para a África do Sul, 1990-2020: uma pesquisa

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Abstract: This paper reviews research on language use among transnational migrants to South Africa since 1990, taking this as a convenient starting point as the year of the first official announcement of the renouncement of apartheid, leading to its legal dismantling in 1994. Whereas South Africa had previously encouraged European migration to the country, limited migration from Asia (mainly from Taiwan) and a controlled circular migration of mining workers from neighbouring countries of Southern Africa, it now experienced a greater scale of global flows from other parts of the world that had not been permitted during apartheid. The result has been an even greater increase in the diversity of languages in local communities. This paper provides an overview of the main concerns and emphases of researchers covering new migrations from Asia and the rest of Africa to South Africa.

Keywords: Language and identity; Language as social and economic capital; Language adaptation; Migration and language

Resumo: Este artigo revisa pesquisas sobre o uso da língua entre migrantes transnacionais da África do Sul desde 1990, tomando isso como um ponto de partida conveniente como o ano do primeiro anúncio oficial da renúncia ao apartheid, levando ao seu desmantelamento legal em 1994. Considerando que a África do Sul havia incentivado a migração europeia para o país, a migração limitada da Ásia (principalmente de Taiwan) e uma migração circular controlada de trabalhadores de mineração de países vizinhos da África do Sul, ela então experimentou uma escala maior de fluxos globais de outras partes do mundo que não eram permitidos durante o apartheid. O resultado foi um aumento ainda maior na diversidade de línguas nas comunidades locais. Este artigo fornece uma visão geral das principais preocupações e ênfases dos pesquisadores ao cobrirem novas migrações da Ásia e do resto da África para a África do Sul.



Keywords: Língua e identidade; Língua como capital social e econômico; Adaptação linguística; Migração e Linguagem

1 Introduction

In keeping with global trends, South Africa has experienced migration from many parts of the world and at all social levels since 1990. The Forced Migration in Southern Africa program (FMSP) estimated the foreign documented and undocumented migrant population, at between 1.6 and 2 million, or 3-4% of the total population in the first decade of the new millennium (MCKINNEY; SOUDIEN 2010). Most research has focused on non-elite African and Asian immigrants, mainly as a consequence of xenophobia being directed at these groups. Thus, while South Africa attracts skilled professionals from African countries, little has been written about them. One exception comes from Hurst (2014, 2017), on the role of English in enhancing the mobility and opportunities for academics from other African countries in South Africa, while creating dilemmas *vis a vis* their home languages. Most of the research uses national, ethnic and/or linguistic categories as the unit of analysis. These categories prove somewhat inescapable (though more fluid) even in the new sociolinguistics of globalisation, which disavows the monolithic approach to ‘named’ or ‘bounded’ languages and turns its lens to smaller-scale linguistic repertoires (BLOMMAERT, 2010). We therefore first review literature on language practices in these categories focusing on new African and Asian migration. We then look briefly at the language challenges for migrant children although intergenerational language shift, particularly among new migrants from the African continent, has not yet been studied. To conclude, we highlight some of the cross-cutting themes, emerging from these studies and discuss current theoretical and methodological approaches in this research with some brief suggestions for future investigation.

2 Inter-Africa emigration

There is a considerable body of literature on migration, xenophobia and the plight of migrants from African countries living in post-1994 South Africa - see Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) publications, Crush and Tevera (2010), Idemudia,

Williams and Wyatt (2013). Language is not a major focus in this generally rights-based literature on migration. However, several articles have addressed the issue of ‘linguistic rights’ for migrants from a language planning and policy perspective - see McKinney and Soudien (2010); Orman (2012); Reitzes and Crawhall (1997). However, ~~and~~ Orman (2012) argues that the empirical basis for language differences having a central role in perpetuating social inequality for migrants is not strong. He concludes that social inequality in the case of migrants is unlikely to be solved through language planning measures.

As most literature has looked at African migration in terms of key territories from which new migration has been prominent, we look at research that has focused on Southern and West African migrants.

2.1 Southern African migrants

Immigration from southern African countries is common and many countries share languages with South Africa. Zimbabwe is the country from which a majority of new African migrants originate on account of political and economic instability since the 1990s and the greater attractions of the South African economy. As a result, the Zimbabwean migrant experience has been one of the main areas of study since 1990. Three major sociolinguistic themes emerge from Zimbabwean migration research: language and identity, language as social and economic capital and language adaptation.

A number of studies focus on how language is used to identify Zimbabweans and profile them as outsiders. Language plays a central role in revealing or concealing a Zimbabwean identity. Chekero and Morreira (2020), Hungwe (2012) and Sibiza (2013a, 2013b) analyse how Zimbabwean migrants to South Africa try to pass as South African to overcome the potential threats of being deported if undocumented and to avoid incidents of xenophobia. Chekero and Morreira (2020) describe how the police use language as a means to identify migrants from Zimbabwe in Giyani, a town close to the Zimbabwean border where many Zimbabweans reside either temporarily or permanently. The authors report how migrants often dress up in traditional Tsonga dress to pass as Tsonga so that police don’t test their language abilities at roadblocks.

Sibiza's (2013a, 2013b) work follows similar themes of identification, passing and concealment. He analyses language use among isiNdebele and Shona-speaking Zimbabwean migrants in three Johannesburg neighbourhoods. Since language is used as an identity marker to profile people, migrants avoid or try to use related local languages such as isiZulu in such a way as to pass for South Africans. Speakers of isiNdebele (Northern Ndebele), an Nguni language related to isiZulu, isiXhosa, Southern Ndebele and Siswati (spoken in South Africa), manage this more easily than speakers of Shona which is more distantly related to South Africa's indigenous languages (RWODZI, 2011).

Sibiza (2013b) also examines how Zimbabwean migrants use language to negotiate new social and economic opportunities. Zimbabweans are perceived to have a good command of English, thanks to the quality of schools and the emphasis on English there. As Rwodzi (2011) and Sibiza (2013b) note, this opens up improved employment opportunities in South Africa. The Migrant Rights Monitoring Project survey also reports that Zimbabweans have a perceived advantage when it comes to employment because of their ability to speak English. However, this perception does not seem to translate into employment as they also constitute the largest group of unemployed among African migrants (MOSALA, 2008). Nevertheless, Zimbabweans perceive themselves to be at some advantage in workplace situations (SIBIZA, 2013b).

Sibiza (2013b) demonstrates that migrants deploy language as a form of capital differently across different domains based on the power relations in these different contexts. The value of different linguistic varieties shifts depending on the power relations, structure and context. Zimbabweans must negotiate the different indexical orders pertaining to language that vary across different social situations. As a distancing mechanism, South Africans sometimes deliberately use words and phrases from other languages such as Afrikaans or Sesotho that Zimbabweans will not understand (HUNGWE, 2012).

A further theme emerges from the study of Zimbabwean migrants relating to inter-country mobility. Hungwe (2012) shows that the new identity formations apply in the context of South Africa and as returning migrants into Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, returning Zimbabweans or transmigrants who maintain ties in both countries actively promote this cross-border identity. Use of certain linguistic features of urban Zulu which the author refers to as a mixture of Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa is indexical of this

transmigratory status and earns the person the term *injiva*. Hungwe's (2012) descriptions suggest that migrants use this mixed language as a status marker. Their language is thus viewed as neither Shona nor isiNdebele, the two main languages of Zimbabwe. Depending on economic contributions by returning migrants they may be negatively evaluated and labelled as *umadliwa* 'the one who has eaten'. In both contexts, Hungwe notes how migrants manage these stigmatized or 'spoilt identities' (GOFFMAN, 1963) through concealment, defiance or irony.

A similar phenomenon has been noted by Onwukwe who monitored the language use of Nigerians returning to Igbo-land after the xenophobic attacks by South Africans on African migrants in 2018. He found that returnees were keen to enhance their status as long-distance travellers by using snippets of isiZulu (these were sometimes unwittingly ungrammatical – see MESTHRIE; NCHANG; ONWUKWE, 2020).

2.2 West African countries

Vigouroux (1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009) has contributed most of the research on immigrants from West Africa. For basic figures on migrants from these areas, Vigouroux (2008) draws on Bouillon (1996, 1998) who estimates that West African migrants number about 50 000 in South Africa. According to Vigouroux (2008), there are about 2000 in Cape Town, though our impression is that this number has since risen considerably. The majority comes from the DRC. Other countries of origin are: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, and Togo.

Vigouroux examines language choice and attitudes using the concept of 'territoriality.' She stresses that identity is interactional and co-constructed by participants. She suggests that space is also socially constructed and conceives of space more broadly as not only physical area, but one including "lived practices, and a system of relations, all bearing symbolic meaning" (2005, p. 239). These complementary dimensions of space influence language practice especially in multilingual settings.

Vigouroux (2005, p. 241) draws a further distinction between territoriality as "what people do to shape, protect, and defend what they claim to be their domain of action" as against territorialization and deterritorialization which denote "actions taken by social beings in order to (re)define their territory or space". She uses these concepts to

explain language choice and social affiliation. For example, Angolans and Congolese who speak Lingala create a symbolic territory of urban life with certain values that unite them in terms of the living spaces they share. She also suggests (2005, p. 249) that within multilingual interactions choosing one linguistic code over another shared one can be analyzed as a claim to this symbolic territory.

Code choice thus demonstrates a negotiated alignment of participants' stances and identities. Vigouroux (2005, p. 253-4) makes the important point that the dynamics of human interaction in these contexts involves a recognition of speakers simultaneous "insiderness or outsiderness", and that this defines the relative values of the different codes in speakers' language repertoires. The concept of territoriality can thus explain the relation between language and social space. In particular, it offers a dynamic and interactional frame for understanding how different layers of context are interrelated and how they influence and shape each other.

Vigouroux (2008) has examined local notions of 'Francophone identity' among migrants in Cape Town. She demonstrates that their notion is different from the institutional hegemonic ideology of "Francophone" that imagines a French-speaking transnational community based on shared language and common values. The identity of local migrants is primarily shaped by how they experience and situate themselves in relation to Black South Africans and other Francophones in the local socio-political context rather than on speaking French. Socialization patterns are primarily based on ethnic and then national identities followed by religion and income-producing activities. Language choices reveal that English is the preferred lingua franca rather than French, unless migrants have a common African language that will serve instead. Migrants are often not competent in French either. Longer-term migrants in South Africa may use English and sometimes French to demonstrate achievement and rootedness in South Africa to newer migrants. A Francophone identity has, however, only emerged as a consequence of migrants' experiences in South Africa. The new Francophone identity is a response to alienation and is also set up in opposition to a South African black identity, from which they wish to distinguish themselves. Consequently, they construct a Francophone identity that draws on the symbolic capital associated with French as having a higher status in what Blommaert (2005) has called the 'transnational hierarchy' of languages.

Related to the notion of identity distinction, Vigouroux (2009) reports that ‘francophone black migrants’ are also slow to learn local languages such as Afrikaans and isiXhosa because of their reluctance to identify with these groups and the perceived lack of instrumentality of these languages. This view is corroborated by Langene (2020) in relation especially to local Bantu languages. In a study of a large market situated in the center of Cape Town called Greenmarket Square, where traditional African items are sold mainly to tourists, he finds that traders are slightly more positive about Afrikaans, even perceiving it to be lexically closer to French than the Bantu languages are. In contrast, Nigerians and Zimbabweans report that their inability to speak isiZulu in Durban and Johannesburg areas compounds their alienation as migrants - de Kadt and Ige (2005) and Sibiza (2013a). Greenmarket Square has also been a site of research for Dyers and Wankah (2010), who examined nonverbal and spoken miscommunication in transitory exchanges among tourists, African migrants and locals within the context of market trading (again in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town). In another study (DYERS; WANKAH, 2012) they focus on the social meanings attached to the use of different languages in interactions between African migrants and local traders exploring the underlying racial ideologies of both groups. They describe how local traders and migrants perceive the use of different languages by one another as a means to assert superiority and power.

Dyers (2018) also looks closely at how migration has brought together multilingual and diverse linguistic repertoires in permanent settings. While most of her longitudinal work focuses on internal (rural to urban) migration, there is some attention to the role of international African migrants in this new diversity. She describes how migrants are able to continue using their own languages among themselves. They primarily make use of English when communicating with locals but have learned basic transactional language in Afrikaans and isiXhosa as part of their economic activities. Signage on shops run by transnational migrants is usually in local languages and may include traditional religious languages such as Arabic that appeals to and aligns Muslim immigrants with local Muslims. It appears that although English is the lingua franca between transnational migrants and locals, migrants often draw on signage and symbols that foreground the community’s common African identity. These observations reveal

some of the roles of different languages in the multilingual practices and visual linguistic landscape in local communities where migrants have settled.

Studies of migrants from Cameroon and the DRC constitute the majority of studies on migrants from West Africa.

2.2.1 Cameroon

In respect of Cameroonian immigrants in Cape Town, Mai (2006) studied the use of, and attitudes towards English, French, Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), Cameroonian indigenous languages and Frankanglais (sic). She investigated whether identities had shifted in the new context, concluding that Cameroonians demonstrate some adaptation to their new environment by learning or attempting to learn South African languages. However, language use among Cameroonians, attitudes and identities still largely mirror that of the situation in Cameroon. They speak Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) in everyday domains, English in formal contexts and code switch between English, French, CPE and Cameroonian vernaculars. Mai (2006) finds that Frankanglais is not used but it would seem she has not characterized it correctly as a youth language. Although CPE is often used in Cameroon, it has low status and speakers are indifferent to their indigenous languages, attaching more importance to the official languages of Cameroon, English and French. In Cameroon, English evokes a group identity that has become a symbol of solidarity against perceived French linguistic and socio-political dominance. Cameroonian indigenous languages do not have high instrumental status and are relegated to the domestic rather than public sphere. This tension between French and English and the limited use of Cameroonian languages continues in the Cape Town context. However, French has lost some value in this new context (MAI, 2006; NCHANG, 2018). Vigouroux (2005) reports that 'Francophone Black Africans' initially believed that French would enhance employment prospects in South Africa but gradually discovered that competence in French was largely irrelevant in accessing work opportunities.

Umana (2018) also finds that Nigerian Pidgin (which is closely related to CPE as part of a broader West African Creole in fact) remains in use among Nigerian migrants. She finds a slight upswing in the fortunes of Nigerian Pidgin, since it has become stronger

in the Cape Town diaspora among migrants, including highly educated ones, than had they remained in Nigeria - see Blommaert's (2010) notion of 'upscaling').

Nchang's (2018) research confirms Mai's conclusions with further insights on xenophobia as an impediment to the acquisition of local languages of Cape Town. While frequently occurring greetings like *môre*, *molo* and *good morning* and slogans like *Amandla!* 'power to the people' are easily picked up, more advanced conversational skills are hard to come by with a lack of sufficient and sustained interactions with locals. Nchang has emphasized the importance of digital communication in fostering a degree of trans-nationalism not possible before. She examined a death ceremony or wake known in Cameroon by the Pidgin term *Krai-Die* (literally 'cry-die') and a birth ceremony known as *born-house*. Long before the COVID pandemic migrants were using *Facebook* or similar affordances of the electronic era to enable a near-simultaneous commemoration or celebration via speeches, song and prayer in several languages of Cameroonian, South African and international provenance.

2.2.2 *Democratic Republic of Congo*

Kamuangu (2006) examined language choice among immigrant families from the DRC in Johannesburg. He found that issues of safety and the prejudice of locals shape language choice in public spaces for DRC migrants, who believe that speaking their languages in public signals too obviously a foreign identity. Vigouroux (2009) reports a similar finding for migrants from the DRC living in Cape Town. However, migrants' perceptions may be incorrect if, as anecdotal evidence suggests, other forms of profiling are used rather than linguistic features. In our work in Johannesburg townships, Zimbabweans are the only group of migrants (aside from older groups of Lesotho, Botswana and Eswatini citizens) that townships dwellers cannot identify as foreign by their physical features. Every other group of migrants, Nigerian, Cameroonian, Ghanaian, Mozambican, Somalian, etc. are easily and almost always accurately categorized by black South Africans on account of recognizably different facial and physical features. Langene (2020) confirms the spread of the DRC language, Lingala as a language of "in-house" business in parts of Cape Town, as first suggested by Vigouroux (2009). He also notes the survival of an in-group youth language, Langila, based on the latter.

3 Asia to South Africa migrants

In this section we briefly cover research on new migration from south Asia and China.

3.1 South Asian migration

South and south-east Asian migrations to South Africa are prominent via slavery from the “East Indies” (Coastal India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka) to the Cape in the 17th and 18th C, via indenture from India to Natal in the 19th and early 20th C. These formed long lasting communities which have survived as firmly South African residents and have been reasonably well studied sociolinguistically (see MESTHRIE, 1992; DAVIDS, 2011; PRABHAKARAN, 1991; DESAI, 1997). As such they will not be covered in this post 1990 survey. However, they are relevant to this study insofar as they allow new migrants from in and around their home countries a slightly different trajectory from the *tabular rasa* situations described above for Zimbabwe, DRC and Cameroonian new migrants. In other words, while retaining some sense of distinctiveness, new migrants from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh find in South Africa’s earlier established Indian communities a ready-made cultural and ethnic resource base and a means of further integration into wider South African life.

Hence the interactions of new migrants from South Asia post-1994 with their South African counterparts is of particular sociolinguistic interest. Prabhakaran (1997) reports that new Telugu migrants assimilate to South Africa Telugu practices, even if it means downward mobility in terms of strict social stratifications of Andhra Pradesh state where most migrants originated from. Elaborate social levels of differentiation from the country of origin lose their salience in the new social context, since the new migrants are in a tiny minority compared to the older Indian communities. Thus a caste and status-based sociolinguistic order gives way to some extent to a class-based sociolinguistic and diasporic repertoire. Features of the language that mark different levels of social stratification no longer signal these meanings or stratifications. First-generation Telugu speaking new migrants are, or become, bilingual in Telugu and English and their children speak mainly English, often influenced by the local forms of South African Indian English.

Govender (2012) explores the language attitudes and behaviours of a Sri Lankan post-apartheid migrant family. Although she points to speaker identity including ethnic, religious, gender and national in shaping these attitudes and behaviours, processes of relating within different domains provide a more nuanced explanation of family members' use of their linguistic resources. Two important points emerge from her work. The first is the need to re-examine the consequences for language change and shift in a world where migrants have digital access to linguistic contexts they no longer physically inhabit. The second is theorizing attitudes within an interactional framework. She suggests that research on language attitudes and general reportage about language use needs to account empirically for the relation between researcher and researched.

Overall, it is clear that older Indian communities of South Africa form an invaluable resource for new migrants from South Asia. Whether the new migrants can play a reverse role in countering the ongoing language shifts in older Indian communities in South Africa is a more complex matter. Mesthrie (in press) suggests that this is more feasible for Gujarati than other languages, because its speakers have maintained stronger links with India in the past. Hence elder members especially are in a position to interact in Gujarati with new migrants. Even with Gujarati, however, intergenerational transmission to children and maintenance into adulthood does not prove easy.

3.2 New Chinese immigration

Chinese migration to South Africa has historically been on a smaller scale than India and the "East Indies" (See PARK; CHEN, 2009 for an overview). As in the rest of Africa a strong commercial and migrant presence can now be felt with South Africa having the largest Chinese immigrant population on the continent (PARK; CHEN, 2009). Although Chinese immigration is not new, immigration was kept to a minimum under apartheid with only Taiwanese industrialists permitted to live and work in South Africa from the 1970s. After 1990 there was an increase in immigration from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but in 1998, the new government severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan in favour of relations with mainland China (PRC). A substantial number of Taiwanese left, and the most recent immigrants have come from the People's Republic of China (PARK; CHEN, 2009).

Park and Chen (2009) distinguish between Chinese immigrants in South Africa with extensive business interests from affluent provinces in China who are involved in mining, manufacturing and real estate and immigrants who are small traders and peasants from poorer areas in China. Although little is known about the language contact and practices among more affluent Chinese entrepreneurs with international business connections, there are several studies of language practices among new poorer immigrants, mostly involved in retail, who run small businesses in both urban areas and rural towns across South Africa.

Thompson (2018; 2019) and Thompson and Anthonissen (2019) discuss the communication (or - more often - minimal communication) in business and trading contexts in the local Chinatowns (i.e. large Chinese shopping complexes) in Cape Town. Overwhelmingly, the stores are managed by Chinese traders who employ shop assistants of African migrant origin – bringing together a double migrant theme, with a degree of symbiosis. In a multilingual Cape Town environment where Mandarin is not known or understood, creative forms of language use emerge in these grassroots multilingual workplaces. In this world gesture, sign and posture have their role to play between Chinese shop owners and customers. English emerges as the most common means of communication between shop assistants and customers.

Deumert and Mabandla (2013; 2015) describe language and migration in relation to the new diaspora of Chinese in rural contexts – that of the Eastern Cape and Free State provinces respectively. The authors claim the Chinese in the Eastern Cape are a noticeably more diverse and divided grouping in terms of languages and places of origin compared to the more cohesive earlier Chinese diasporas in South Africa. The authors stress that the consequences of globalisation can be found even in this rural setting. They find that English is important as a lingua franca but does not override a desire to learn at least some isiXhosa. The acquisition of English is in fact shaped by local isiXhosa practices, including learning polite forms of address (e.g. *sisi* ‘sister’ and *bhuthi* ‘brother’) taken from isiXhosa. Language brokers cum shop-assistants with a knowledge of isiXhosa and English are used when all else fails. Signage also draws on different languages reflecting this multilingual environment.

Park and Chen’s (2009) survey shows that Chinese immigrants operate small retail businesses of various types in almost every town in the Free State. Some immigrants,

mainly from Taiwan, have been in South Africa for several decades while newer immigrants are mainly peasants from villages and towns in Fijuan Province in mainland China. Almost all immigrants have family connections across South Africa or come from the same regions. A key issue for new immigrants is their lack of English, which strains customer and labour relations, contributes to social isolation and also disadvantages immigrants when accessing services such as healthcare (PARK; CHEN, 2009). Overall, Deumert and Mabandla do not find strong evidence for a cohesive new Eastern Cape Chinese community. Other studies show that familial connections among Chinese immigrants are common across South Africa, despite little acceptance by and cohesion with local communities. Familial, common origins and also ethnic differences (eg. Taiwanese vs mainland China) may facilitate some integration of individuals, but not to the extent of the Indian diaspora that have much larger and more settled communities. In keeping with themes stressed in new superdiversity research (e.g., VERTOVEC, 2007b) fragmentation rather than unity defines many migrant economic and social experiences.

4 Children of immigrants

Although the period of new migration now spans thirty years, little has been written about the children of migrants. One area that has received some attention is the barriers migrant children face in accessing schools and learning. The Southern African Migration Programme notes that Zimbabwean children entering Grades 1 to 3 are faced with having to learn through a local African language and this situation may continue into high school. Zimbabweans perceive their children to struggle and be at a disadvantage. This document also reports that children may have to undergo language admission tests and that 12 percent of migrant children aged 7-15 do not go to school in comparison with the national South African percentage of only 4.5%.

Investigation of migrant children's experience is minimal and mainly in the form of micro-level investigative case studies (KERFOOT; TATAH, 2017; CHAMANGA, 2016). Kerfoot and Tatah (2017) studied the language practices and experiences of twelve Cameroonian students aged 10 to 14 in public schools in Cape Town observing and recording their social interactions. Reporting on a case study of a female Duala-speaking student educated originally in French, Kerfoot and Tatah (2017) show how limited

linguistic resources appear to have constrained the learner's ability to negotiate self-representation among her peers in and outside of the classroom. They document the complex process of how this 13-year-old Cameroonian student attempts to construct new social and academic identities, but is prevented from doing so by being discursively construed as 'other' linguistically and academically with the erasure of her linguistic and academic competencies that are not valued in her school environments.

Chamanga (2016) also reports on the social pressure immigrant children face. She describes how a youth born in Zimbabwe and brought up in Cape Town had to make radical changes to his linguistic repertoire and identity. Chamanga shows that in order to gain acceptance by adolescent males the youth had to integrate fully into their use of isiXhosa, and the identity that goes with it. To this extent he voluntarily changed his name from a typical Shona one to an isiXhosa one, and insisted on it even in his home. In this instance Chamanga demonstrates initial "peer fear" more than "peer pressure", leading to eventual acceptance as part of the group of young males.

Although both these studies are informative of migrant children's experiences, more studies of generational change, language maintenance or shift and change among children of new migrants are a desideratum for the future.

5 Conclusion: Theoretical and Methodological issues

From the literature reviewed, there appear to be two main approaches to studying the issues of language and migration. The first examines the role of language, language choice in negotiating social relations and opportunities in the South African sociopolitical context. Much of the current work on in-migration to South Africa from other African countries focuses on the politics of language and identity as it pertains to levels of social cohesion or exclusion in different South African social contexts. The main perspective on language is its perceived role in identity profiling and as a symbolic resource in identity making and social affiliation. This work is based largely on self-report data and there is in fact very little interactional data to back up these claims (exceptions are KERFOOT; TATAH, 2017; THOMPSON, 2019). Given the gap between empirically grounded interactional data and self-report interpretations of social experiences, the role that language or the impact that it has on some aspects of social life for migrants may be

overstated. There is a double gap here: South African researchers are unfamiliar with most of the African languages of migrants, while researchers from other African countries have little familiarity with South African languages apart from English, especially if they themselves have not been long in the country.

A common theme for future studies to explore, however, is that while ethnicity is assumed to be the key signifier and social divider around which migrants organize themselves, the use of national, ethnic or linguistic identity as a fundamental organizing principle may be less useful with the growing complexity of migrant populations in complex environments. The intra and inter-relationships within and across migrant groups and the forging of alliances around social connections or divisions other than ethnic identity might yield greater explanatory power for language choice, language change or shift among speakers in the current context. Vertovec (2007a, p. 970) calls for a “Moving beyond an ethno-focal understanding and adopting a multi-dimensional approach (including country of origin, migration channel and legal status, consequent social profiles, spatial distribution, transnational practices and local policy responses)”. He argues that this will lead to a better appreciation of the highly differential composition, social location and trajectories of various immigrant groups today”.

Another factor gaining in prominence is digital connectivity and its impact on language practices and maintenance or shift in migrant populations. Vertovec (2007a, p. 968) makes the point that “we could portray the transnational turn in the anthropology of migration as a change in ‘direction’ by way of shifting analysis from groups in specific localities to groups and their activities as they engage cross-border, multi-local processes and practices. The direction of analysis, so to speak, moved from ‘here’ to ‘here-and-there.’”. This has been illustrated in the Cameroonian work of Nchang cited above.

In conclusion we stress the need for continued closer studies of language in migration amidst a rapidly changing local and global linguasphere. While the focus has of necessity been on first generation migrants since 1990, we will have much to learn as sociolinguists from the choices and practices of the second and ensuing generations.

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Contribution

Rajend Mesthrie: Conceptualization, Fouding acquisition, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & edition; **Heather Brookes:** Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & edition.

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