

Teachers' Experiences of Teaching an Ancestral Language in a
Multilingual Context: The Case of Telugu in Mauritius

SHAILENDRA YENKANAH

Student number: 218081658

Thesis submitted to the School of Education of the University
of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisor: Prof Ansurie Pillay, Prof Nadaraj Govender &

Dr Nita Rughoonundun-Chellapermal

2023

Declaration

I, Shailendra Yenkanah, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless expressly acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am the author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet unless acknowledged in the thesis and in the References sections.

Signed: **SYenkanah**

As the candidate's Supervisor, I agree/~~do not agree~~ to the submission of this thesis.

Signed: 

Abstract

Since the arrival of indentured immigrants to Mauritius in the 19th century, the teaching of the Telugu language has been present across various levels. Over time, it gained official recognition when it was formally incorporated into the curriculum as an ancestral language during the 1960s. The inclusion of ancestral languages as optional core subjects fulfils linguistic roles such as revitalisation, identity preservation, and cultural maintenance. This stands in contrast to compulsory subjects like English and French, which primarily serve as languages for epistemological development. Teachers teaching Telugu, like other ancestral languages, experience their role as teachers differently. This study delved into the nuances of these experiences. A case study design was employed to investigate and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers instructing Telugu in state secondary schools. Initial data sources, directed at the entire population, allowed me to obtain a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon and subsequently select participants for the subsequent phases. Adopting an interpretive phenomenological approach, I conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants in three distinct settings. The collected data were analysed through the application of a socio-cultural perspective and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This approach and theory provided a framework to comprehend the experiences of a culturally and linguistically minority group of teachers within a multilingual environment. Various constructs and concepts such as 'language power', 'minority languages', 'linguistic identity', 'language preservation', and 'revitalisation' were unpacked and a thematic approach was employed to interpret and analyse the data. The study reveals that Telugu teachers exhibit a strong sense of attachment and belonging to the language of their immigrant forefathers, even though it is largely no longer spoken. Ascribing a distinct role and significance to their profession, these teachers exhibit language loyalty and actively contribute to the preservation of the language. Telugu teachers are actively involved in the revitalisation process, and the existing language policies lead to transformations in identities and experiences of Telugu teachers over time. Telugu teachers mediate the use and study of the language by maintaining a home environment where *Teluguness* is omnipresent. Socio-cultural factors influence the experiences of teachers and the participating Telugu teachers were socially involved and influenced by their engagement in socio-cultural activities in socio-cultural spaces.

Keywords

Ancestral Languages, Telugu, Experiences, Mauritius, Multilingual

Acknowledgements

The journey of pursuing my PhD has been a transformative experience marked by numerous challenges and successes from its inception to its culmination. Thus, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to every individual who has walked alongside me throughout this research endeavour.

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors and co-supervisors: Prof Ansurie Pillay, Prof Nadaraj Govender, and Dr. Nita Rughoonundun-Chellapermal. I am deeply appreciative of their guidance, support, and unwavering patience throughout this journey. Their mentorship and motivating words have been pivotal in steering me towards the completion of this research.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to the UKZN-MIE cohort coordinators, namely Prof Michael Samuel and Dr Hyleen Mariaye, as well as the cohort supervision team, Prof Anya Philips and Prof Dipane Hlalele, who travelled from South Africa to monitor the cohort progress.

To my parents and family members, who have been my educational bedrock since my early years, I am deeply appreciative. Their consistent nurturing of my aspirations and their unwavering encouragement have been driving forces in this academic journey. I am especially grateful to my wife, Varsha, and my daughter, Dyaanam, who accompanied me on this challenging and rewarding PhD journey.

I am very happy to have worked with the six participants in this study, and sincerely thank them for their precious time and for sharing their experiences. I am also so thankful to every participant who participated in the preliminary data collection for this study.

My appreciation extends to Megan for her meticulous assistance in ensuring accurate orthography during the transcription process. I am thankful to my peers who dedicated their time to proofread my work.

A special mention of thanks is reserved for the language editor, Dr Lee-Anne Roux.

I am also thankful to all my teachers, who have been teaching me since childhood.

Lastly, my sincerest gratitude goes to my dear friends who comprehended the significance of my journey and provided unwavering support, motivating me to successfully cross the finish line.

I am thankful for all of your unique contributions!

Table of contents

DECLARATION.....	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VI
LIST OF TABLES.....	XIV
LIST OF FIGURES	XV
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	XVI
CHAPTER 1	1
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 ORIENTATION.....	1
1.2 LANGUAGES IN MAURITIUS	2
1.2.1 Colonial rule – Introduction of European languages.....	2
1.2.2 Slavery and indenture – Introduction of Non-European languages in Mauritius	3
1.2.3 The cases of two post-colonial countries.....	9
1.2.4 Independence, nation building, and the stabilisation of Mauritius.....	10
1.2.5 The complexities and functions of languages in Mauritius	13
1.3 LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS	16
1.3.1 Language education during the colonial period	16
1.3.2 Introduction of Indian languages in teaching	18
1.3.3 Post-independence.....	19
1.3.4 Function of ancestral languages in the curriculum.....	20
1.3.5 The existence of extension schools (Evening schools or Sayantrapubadi)	22
1.4 THE HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF TELUGU IN MAURITIUS	23
1.4.1 Telugu in Mauritius.....	24
1.4.2 Current status of Telugu language in Mauritian society	26
1.4.3 Symbols of Telugu culture in Mauritius	27

1.4.4 Teaching the Telugu language in Mauritius	31
1.4.5 The Telugu teacher	31
1.5 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHER	32
1.6 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	33
1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	33
1.8 AIM & OBJECTIVES	34
1.8.1 Aim.....	34
1.8.2 Objectives	34
1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	34
1.10 CONCLUSION	35
CHAPTER 2.....	36
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	36
2.0 INTRODUCTION	36
2.1 OVERVIEW.....	36
2.2 MULTILINGUALISM.....	37
2.2.1 Multilingualism as a concept.....	37
2.2.2 From an imperialist monolingual Mauritius to a multilingual Mauritius.....	39
2.2.3 Multilingualism – Language attitudes and identity.....	40
2.2.4 Multilingualism – Language cultivation and language policies	42
2.2.5 Multilingualism – Education and curriculum	44
2.3 ANCESTRAL LANGUAGES	45
2.3.1 Unpacking ancestral languages	45
2.3.2 Language dynamics – Evolution of status of languages – From mother tongue to ancestral	49
2.3.3 Language dynamics – From ancestral languages to taught modern languages	50
2.3.4 Idea of representation and reconnection	51
2.4 BEING THE ANCESTRAL LANGUAGE TEACHER – EXPERIENCES	55
2.4.1 Teachers’ experiences	56
2.4.2 Teachers’ motivation of teaching an ancestral language	57
2.4.3 Nationalism – Unity in diversity and multiple identities	58
2.4.4 Telugu teachers’ experience – Engagement and reason of being.....	59
2.5 PROBLEM – GAP IN THE LITERATURE.....	60
2.6 CONCLUSION	61

CHAPTER 3.....	62
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	62
3.0 INTRODUCTION	62
3.1 OVERVIEW	62
3.1.1 <i>Overview of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory</i>	63
3.2 BRONFENBRENNER’S MODEL AS MY THEORETICAL LENS.....	65
3.2.1 <i>Extension of Bronfenbrenner’s model</i>	65
3.3 LANGUAGE SUPREMACY AND THE PLACE OF ‘MINORITY’ LANGUAGE	68
3.3.1 <i>Language power - Language death and language coexistence</i>	68
3.3.2 <i>Minority languages – Definition and usage of the term “minority”</i>	69
3.3.3 <i>Linguistic identity</i>	71
3.4 LANGUAGE PRESERVATION	74
3.4.1 <i>Ecological approach to language preservation</i>	74
3.4.2 <i>Language, culture, and religion – Language preservation and resistance to acculturation</i>	75
3.4.3 <i>Language revitalisation</i>	77
3.4.4 <i>Education as the space to enact revitalisation</i>	78
3.5 THE SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE	79
3.6 CONCLUSION	81
CHAPTER 4.....	82
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	82
4.0 INTRODUCTION	82
4.1 OVERVIEW	82
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	83
4.2.1 <i>Case study</i>	83
4.2.2 <i>An interpretivist research paradigm</i>	85
4.2.3 <i>Research approach – Interpretive phenomenological approach</i>	86
4.3 SAMPLING	88
4.4 DATA GENERATION STRATEGIES	89
4.4.1 <i>Preliminary data generation tool</i>	89
4.4.2 <i>Main data source – Semi-structured interviews</i>	90
4.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	93

4.6 CHALLENGES.....	94
4.7 PILOT STUDY - EXPERIENCE AS A NOVICE RESEARCHER.....	97
4.8 DATA ANALYSIS.....	97
4.9 CONCLUSION	99
CHAPTER 5.....	101
PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE PHENOMENON	101
5.0 INTRODUCTION	101
5.1 OVERVIEW.....	102
5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE EMERGED THEMES	102
5.2.1 <i>Gender and age of participants</i>	102
5.2.2 <i>Educational and professional background</i>	104
5.2.3 <i>Ethno-religious background and ancestral heritage</i>	111
5.2.4 <i>Overview of Telugu teachers' experiences</i>	113
5.2.5 <i>Engagement with Telugu and language use</i>	116
5.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION	120
5.4 IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS FOR NEXT STAGE OF STUDY	124
5.4.1 <i>The determining characteristics</i>	124
5.5 RECAP OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & CONCLUSION	128
CHAPTER 6.....	129
ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH FIRST GENERATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS	129
6.0 INTRODUCTION	129
6.1 ORIENTATION.....	129
6.2 PORTRAIT OF NANDA.....	129
6.2.1 <i>First interview with Nanda</i>	129
6.2.2 <i>Nanda at home</i>	130
6.2.3 <i>Nanda, death ceremony</i>	130
6.3 BECOMING A TELUGU TEACHER IN THE EARLY DAYS.....	131
6.3.1 <i>The evening school in the 1980s – Community agency</i>	131
6.3.2 <i>An interventionist approach to revitalise dying languages</i>	134
6.3.3 <i>The Mahatma Gandhi Institute – Symbol of essentialist intervention</i>	136
6.4 NANDA AS A TELUGU TEACHER	137

6.4.1 Nanda in the educational system	137
6.4.2 An officer implementing policy and enacting agency.....	139
6.4.3 Managerial support to the AL teacher.....	141
6.4.4 Colleagues' perceptions of the Telugu teacher	142
6.4.5 The Telugu teacher-student relationship	143
6.4.6 Nanda and the students' parents.....	144
6.5 THE TELUGU TEACHER AT HOME AND IN THE LOCALITY	145
6.5.1 The home culture – Telugu family members	145
6.5.2 Keeping to one's origin	145
6.5.3 The home language of the Telugu teacher	146
6.5.4 The mandiram (Telugu temple).....	147
6.6 NANDA AS THE PART-TIME PRIEST – THE TELUGU TEACHER BEING THE SOCIAL GURU	150
6.6.1 Becoming the priest.....	150
6.6.2 A Telugu priest in the Mauritian multicultural context	152
6.6.3 The AL teacher being a priest – Ethnoreligious functions of language	152
6.7 CONCLUSION	155
CHAPTER 7.....	156
ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH MID- GENERATION TEACHERS	156
7.0 INTRODUCTION	156
7.1 OVERVIEW	156
7.2 PORTRAIT OF ASHNA, DEVI & JACK.....	157
7.2.1 Ashna	157
7.2.2 Devi.....	158
7.2.3 Jack.....	158
7.3 BECOMING A TELUGU TEACHER.....	159
7.3.1 Gender shift in the profession.....	159
7.3.2 Parental choice – Ashna fulfilling the dream of the mother.....	161
7.3.3 Strong home culture – Local learner and teacher of a foreign language	164
7.4 CHALLENGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AN ANCESTRAL LANGUAGE.....	166
7.4.1 Varying difficulty level of the various ALs	167
7.4.2 Telugu as the scarcity area subject	169
7.4.3 Availability of the subject/options	171

7.4.4 Lack of curriculum resources	174
7.4.5 Lack of support and loneliness	175
7.5 CONTENT TAUGHT FOR AN ANCESTRAL LANGUAGE	175
7.5.1 Teaching Telugu at school.....	176
7.5.2 AL taught in a different setting – Pedagogical approach at the Sayantrapubadi.	179
7.6 BEING THE MINORITY	183
7.6.1 Insecurity about the Telugu teacher’s job	183
7.6.2 Working for the community (Ethnic group).....	185
7.6.3 Cultural and ethnolinguistic identity.....	187
7.7 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE MAINTENANCE, FAR FROM THE NATIVE LAND	189
7.8 CONCLUSION	193
CHAPTER 8.....	194
ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES THROUGH YOUNGER GENERATION TEACHERS	194
8.0 INTRODUCTION	194
8.1 OVERVIEW	194
8.2 PORTRAITS OF SANJHIANA AND KRITI.....	195
8.2.1 First encounter with Sanjhiana	195
8.2.2 Sanjhiana at home	195
8.2.3 Sanjhiana at her baby’s cradling ceremony.....	195
8.2.4 First interview with Kriti	196
8.2.5 Kriti at home.....	196
8.2.6 Kriti celebrating the Venkateshwara Pooja	196
8.3 ANDHRA PRADESH, THE NATIVE LAND.....	197
8.3.1 Access to the native language.....	197
8.3.2 ICCR – Diaspora-access available through the ICCR-cultural exchange.....	203
8.4 ANCESTRAL HERITAGE	208
8.4.1 The community and its practices as a heritage	208
8.4.2 The tongue as an ancestral heritage.....	211
8.4.3 Awareness about assimilation and need for preservation.....	214
8.5 EDUCATION	216
8.5.1 The educational policies leading to becoming the Telugu teacher	216
8.5.2 Role of teacher in maintenance	217

8.5.3 Teacher education	218
8.6. LIVING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES IN MULTILINGUAL LAND	220
8.6.1 The 'Telugu' home environment in multilingual Mauritius	220
8.6.2 Identities manifested through cultural artefacts, dress code, and food.....	222
8.7 GLOBALISATION AS A MODERN TREND FOR REUNIFICATION TO NATIVE INDIA.....	223
8.7.1 The meeting of two worlds.....	223
8.7.2 Adaptability of names	226
8.7.3 Digital world and teaching resources	228
8.8 CONCLUSION	229
CHAPTER 9.....	230
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	230
9.0 INTRODUCTION	230
9.1 OVERVIEW	230
9.2 MAIN FINDINGS.....	231
9.2.1 Telugu teachers demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to their no longer spoken immigrant forefather's language.....	231
9.2.3 The engagement and agency are the result of language loyalty, engineered by policies.....	232
9.2.4 Telugu teachers attribute a special role and importance to their profession	232
9.2.5 Language policies, geopolitics, culture politics, promotion-oriented rights as well as learning experiences lead to transformations in Telugu teacher identities and experiences	233
9.2.6 Telugu teachers mediate the use and study of the language by maintaining a home environment where Teluguness is omnipresent, but Telugu is not the mother tongue...	234
9.2.7 The link between language, culture, ancestry and religion.....	235
9.2.8 Teachers are socially involved and engaged in socio-cultural activities in socio- cultural spaces where their Teluguness is lived, beyond school learners.....	236
9.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS	236
9.3.1 Discussion of findings.....	236
9.3.2 Theorising the findings	243
9.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS	264
9.5 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	265

9.6 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS	266
9.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	266
9.8 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE	267
9.9 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	268
9.10 CONCLUSION	268
REFERENCES.....	270
APPENDIX 1: DATA PRODUCTION PLAN.....	296
APPENDIX 2: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER	298
APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPER APPROVAL.....	299
APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT – INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM	300
APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	302
APPENDIX 6: INFORMED CONSENT FORM - RECORDING.....	314
APPENDIX 7: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- 1	315
APPENDIX 8: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- 2 – AT HOME ...	316
APPENDIX 9: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- 3. AT SOCIAL GATHERING.....	317
APPENDIX 10: LANGUAGE EDITOR’S LETTER.....	318
APPENDIX 11: TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT	319

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Origin and Status of languages in the 1950s

Table 1.2 Number of Candidates sitting for examinations at different levels in different languages

Table 2.1 Public Holidays in Mauritius

Table 4.1 Interview Schedule

Table 5.1 Gender of participants

Table 5.2 The number of teachers in different age groups

Table 5.3 First exposure to Telugu language

Table 5.4 Place started learning Telugu

Table 5.5 Main reasons for choosing Telugu at Primary and Secondary level

Table 5.6 Reasons for becoming a Telugu teacher

Table 5.7 Years of experience as a Telugu teacher in years

Table 9.1 Comparisons of main traits observed across generations

Table 9.2 Unpacking main constructs

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Imperial, Slave and Indenture routes

Figure 1.2. The different states in India and their native languages (Govinden, 2019)

Figure 1.3. Ethnolinguistic groups and languages of Mauritius (Adapted from
Aukle 2015, 10)

Figure 1.4. Summarizing languages in Education in Mauritius

Figure 2.1. Visual Representation of the Study

Figure 3.1. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Guy-Evans, 2020)

Figure 3.2. Constructs of the theoretical framework

Figure 4.1. Data analysis in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009)

Figure 9.1. Visual representation of the results using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

List of Acronyms

AL	Ancestral Languages (for the purposes of this thesis)
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Approach
MBC	Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
MES	Mauritius Examination Syndicate
MGI	Mahatma Gandhi Institute
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
SC	School Certificate
TSU	Telugu Speaking Union

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This introductory chapter presents the contextual background to the current study which explores the experiences of teachers teaching the Telugu language at secondary level in multilingual Mauritius, the main and most populated island of the Republic of Mauritius. The focus of the study is on teachers' experiences, more precisely on teachers who are teaching Telugu, an Ancestral Language (hereinafter AL), in a context where language is problematised in complex ways. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, it is essential to grasp the linguistic landscape of the Republic of Mauritius, particularly on its main and most populated island, where historical, social, and political influences have given rise to intricate complexities.

This chapter sheds light on how the sociolinguistic landscape of Mauritius has evolved due to the migration of people from three continents and how the politics of ethnicity has been a pervasive influence on language policies. Consequently, language instruction now occupies a significant space in the curriculum, with Telugu being one of the Indian diasporic languages taught. The revitalisation process of Telugu within this context is also explored.

1.1 Orientation

This chapter consists of six sections. Section 1.1 orientates the study. Section 1.2 highlights the introduction of different languages in Mauritius, tracing the chronology of historical, social, and political events that have contributed to the country's ethnic diversity and multilingualism. Additionally, this section explores the diverse functions of languages within the Mauritian context. An overview of language in the educational system is presented in section 1.3. In section 1.4, I provide an overview of the Telugu language in Mauritius. The purpose and rationale of the study as well as the objectives and critical questions are presented in section 1.5. In section 1.6, I discuss my positionality as a researcher. The final section concludes the chapter, setting the stage for the next chapter, where a comprehensive review of major research in this field will be undertaken.

1.2 Languages in Mauritius

In this section, which is divided into three parts, I present the historical introduction of languages in Mauritius. Firstly, I provide an overview of the peopling of the island, as Mauritius was uninhabited, and languages have been introduced over time through different waves of migration from various continents. This section explores how languages from different origins were brought to the island. The second part focuses on major political and social developments in the country, including the independence of the country, and the need for nation building. In the third part, I delve into the present-day linguistic situation in Mauritius, which has evolved into a stabilised multilingual space. However, it remains highly dynamic, and decisions regarding one language can significantly impact the whole linguistic system, affecting all other languages.

1.2.1 Colonial rule – Introduction of European languages

Before the 16th Century, Mauritius was uninhabited. However, today, it stands as a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual country. The existence of various languages in Mauritius has been greatly shaped by historical events, and the current linguistic landscape is a direct outcome of the history of its peopling. The first settlers were the Dutch, who accidentally discovered the island on their journey to Asia (Teelock, 2018). Due to its strategic location, it was considered a key asset and was colonised by the Dutch for approximately 100 years, with numerous governors being appointed. However, following the colonisation of South Africa by the Dutch and the numerous hardships they faced, including cyclones, droughts, pest infestations, lack of food, and illnesses, the Dutch made a definitive decision to abandon the island in 1710 (Peerthum, 1989). When the Dutch departed, they left some slaves who originated from Africa and India in the forests of Mauritius (Varma, 2008; Teelock, 2018). As for Dutch language influence, it is limited to names of places and some words in the Kreol repertoires (Varma, 2008; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020).

The first permanent settlers who decided to stay indefinitely were the French colonisers, who arrived in 1715, and they ruled for about another 100 years. They were followed by the British, who ruled from 1810 till the country gained independence in 1968 (Varma, 2008; Teelock, 2018). The presence of the Europeans in the country led to the introduction of European languages, most notably English and French, which have played a significant role throughout the country's history.

During the French colonisation, French became the main accepted language. However, when the British took possession of the island, a tug-of-war for language supremacy ensued, becoming a crucial aspect in the development of the sociolinguistic landscape of the country (Tirvassen, 2014; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Both languages – English and French – have survived through negotiations, and continue to be the two most ‘prestigious’ languages in the linguistic landscape, symbolising status and education (Sauzier-Uchida, 2009; Tirvassen, 2015, 2017; Mahadeo, 2017; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Furthermore, the educational system was anglicised, which is an important feature in the Mauritian sociolinguistic landscape (Tirvassen, 2014). This aspect will be discussed in section 1.3, where I deal with language in education.

1.2.2 Slavery and indenture – Introduction of Non-European languages in Mauritius

Apart from European languages, African and Asian languages were also brought into the country during colonial rule, at various intervals and through diverse processes. The French brought slaves from different parts of Africa, mainly Senegal, Madagascar, Guinea, and Mozambique in the early 1700s (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008). These slaves had their own languages, like Malagasy, Makhuwa, East African Bantu languages, and other southern Africa languages (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008). However, French was the language used and imposed by the colonisers. According to sociolinguists (Faraclas, 2012; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2018), the languages previously spoken by the Africans enslaved on New World and Indian Ocean plantations exerted a strong influence on structures of the European languages they adopted as their vernaculars. Additionally, the colonisers perceived African languages as “primitive”, “instinctive”, in a “natural” state, and considered them to be simpler than the “cultivated” European languages (Mufwene, 2002). The colonisers had to resort to “baby talk” in order to be understood, speaking to the Africans as if they were babies, contributing to the emergence of Kreol (Mufwene, 2002). Along with the slaves, the French brought skilled labourers and administrative officers from India, mainly from the state of Tamil Nadu. This led to the introduction and use of Tamil among a small educated segment of the population (Napal, 1965; Teelock, 2009). During French occupation, the slaves’ languages were marginalised, leading to their extinction (Teelock, 2009; Faraclas, 2012). In the slaves’ attempt to shift to French, the Kreol language was born (Baker & Hookoomsing, 1987; Faraclas, 2012). Kreol is thus a language born in the country through the creolisation process (Baker & Hookoomsing, 1987; Varma, 2008).

In 1810, the British took possession of the island, introducing the English language in the country. However, the French bourgeois planters, who inhabited the island and were more affluent compared to the British colonisers, resisted this change (Varma, 2008; Mahadeo, 2018). French colonisation was so well-established that the French had the power to bargain and impose some of their demands. They ensured that the French language be promoted as a second language, the preferred language of formal culture and polite society on the island (Baker & Hookoomsing, 1987; Tirvassen 2016). The French language was so firmly rooted that it could not be dislodged as a prestigious language even by the long British rule that followed (Miles, 2000). While English and French existed in formal settings, Kreol was used by the descendants of the slaves. However, the landscape would change completely after the abolition of slavery. In preparation for the forthcoming abolition of slavery, the British, who had also colonised India, brought Indian indentured labourers to meet the demand of a workforce needed for sugarcane plantations from the early 1830s (Peerthum, 1989; Teelock, 2018). Over a short period of 15 years, it is estimated that more than 450,000 Indians came to Mauritius. This number constitutes over two-thirds of the total Indian immigrants who left India under this process (Prabhakaran, 1994; Baker & Fon Sing, 2008; Srilata, 2010). The influx of immigrants had a massive impact on both the demography and the linguistic landscape of the country (Teelock, 2018; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020; Murdan, 2021). The peopling of Mauritius is summarised in Figure 1.1.

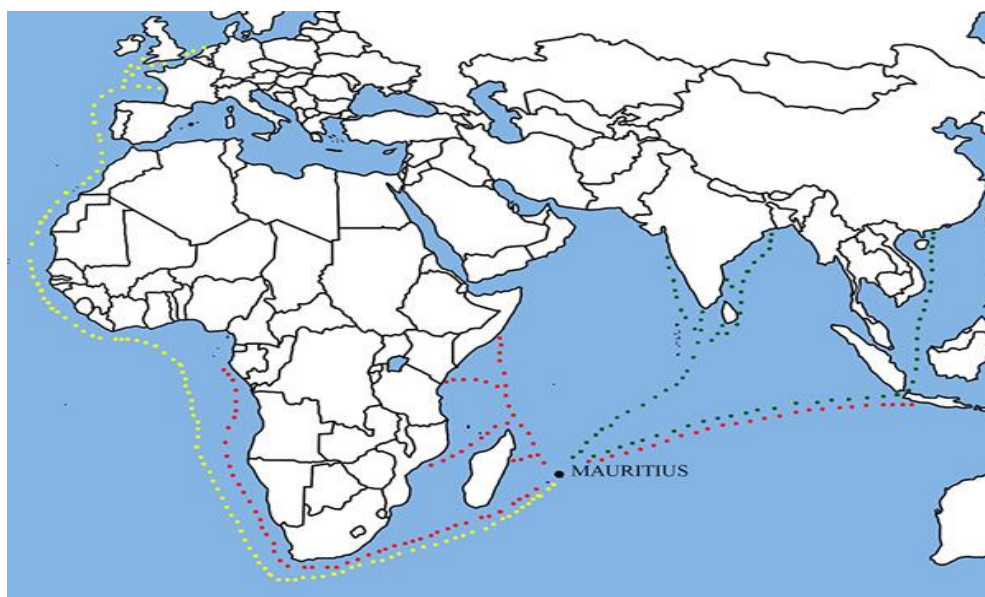


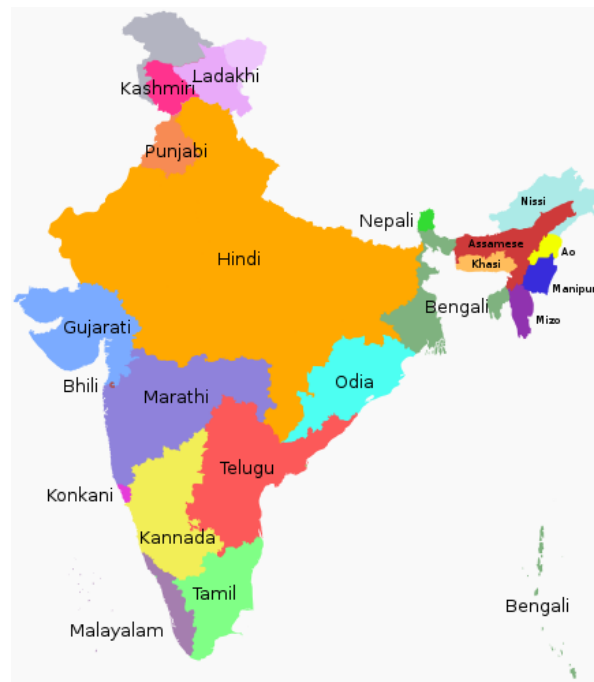
Figure 1.1. Imperial (yellow), slave (red) and indentured (green) arrivals in Mauritius from the later medieval to the early modern period (Vaughan, 2005).

The arrival of Indian immigrants, followed by some merchants and free workers from China, completely changed the sociolinguistic landscape of the island. The Mauritian situation was different to other places that have known the process of indenture. In the Caribbean islands, for example, where islanders have a history of both slavery and indenture, individuals of Indian origin constitute only 20% of the population. Consequently, a hybrid Creole culture in the Caribbean privileges Blackness over Indianness (Mehta, 1995). On the other hand, in Mauritius, people of Indian origin outnumbered the African, mixed-race Creole islanders and White populations, and they have succeeded in preserving their Indian identity and religious traditions. “Theirs has been the story of a greater cultural visibility in the island's demographic make-up during British colonial and post-independence” (Srilata, 2010, p. 3).

As the indentured labourers were brought from different parts in India, as shown in Figure 1.2, many Indian languages were introduced to the country. The majority of the indentured labourers were recruited from the North Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and they set sail from Calcutta (now known as Kolkata). Additionally, some ships also departed from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Figure 1.2 illustrates the various states in India and the languages spoken in each region (Govinden, 2019).



(a)



(b)

Figure 1.2. (a) The different states in India, and (b) the native languages of each region (Govinden, 2019)

Thus, no fewer than 11 regional Indian languages were introduced, including Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Kutchi, Bengali, Odiya, as well as the common and prestigious languages of Hindi and Urdu (Peerthum, 2006; Murdan, 2021). The focus of this study is on one of the languages brought by the immigrants, namely Telugu, originating from Andhra Pradesh, a south-eastern Indian state. The Telugu language and its status in Mauritius are discussed in section 1.4.

Although various Indian languages, Kreol, Hakka Chinese, and Cantonese coexisted, it was English and French – languages of the coloniser – that ruled in official settings. English serves as the formal language, while French enjoyed the status of a privileged second language (Teelock, 2018; Bissoonauth, 2010; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020; Murdan, 2021). Among the Indian languages, Bhojpuri emerged as the predominant vernacular due to the majority of immigrants originating from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where the language was widely spoken (Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), 2018; Murdan, 2021). The other Indian languages were used only among indentured labourers of homogeneous origin, that is, among small groups belonging to the same ethnic group, originating from the same region in India.

During the British colonial period, a series of events led to significant socio-political changes. Notably, the introduction of the electoral system in 1885 marked the first step towards establishing a representative system (Varma, 2013). Amid global anti-colonial movements, the political situation of Mauritius was similarly impacted. In 1948, the Indo-Mauritian¹ and Creole politicians secured victory in the elections against the ruling British government, which meant that there was a shift in power.

In 1948, the Labour Party won the general elections against the conservatives. Eleven of the 19 elected seats were won by Hindus, all of the Labour Party, and at least four others were won by politicians, also from the Labour Party, who were not White large estate owners but Coloured people who expressed their solidarity with the workers, categorised as Creoles in Mauritius.

The linguistic landscape before independence in the 1950s is summarised in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Origin and status of languages in the 1950s

<i>Language</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Continent /Country</i>	<i>Place of Origin</i>	<i>Status before 1950s</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
French	Colonisation	Europe/ France	France	Mother tongue of Franco-Mauritians; Prestigious language for the educated	Prestigious second language; Accepted in most formal spaces; Mother tongue of Franco-Mauritians
English	Colonisation	Europe/ England	England	Used in formal spaces; Medium of instruction; Parliamentary; Mother tongue for the colonial administrators	Used in formal spaces; Medium of instruction; Parliamentary
Kreol	Creolisation	Mauritius	Mauritius	Vernacular/Mother tongue	Vernacular/Mother tongue

¹ Claveyrolas (2017) mentions that the official “Indo-Mauritian” category is misleading as the categorisation cannot be based only on religion. Indo-Mauritians also include the majority of the Muslim community whose ancestors came from India as well as Tamil Catholics who originated from Pondicherry before the arrival of Indian indentured labourers.

Bhojpuri	British Indenture	Asia/India	Bihar/Uttar Pradesh	Vernacular/Mother tongue	Vernacular/Mother tongue
Tamil	British indenture; later immigration (for economic/business purposes)	Asia/India	Tamil Nadu	Ancestral Language/Mother tongue	Ancestral Language
Telugu	British indenture	Asia/India	Andhra Pradesh	Ancestral Language/Mother tongue	Ancestral Language
Marathi	British indenture	Asia/India	Maharashtra	Ancestral Language/Mother tongue	Ancestral Language
Hindi	British indenture	Asia/India	Northern and central states of India	Ancestral Language/Prestigious Indian language	Ancestral Language/Prestigious Indian language
Urdu	British indenture; Trade	Asia/India	Northern states of India	Ancestral Language/Prestigious Indian language	Ancestral Language/Prestigious Indian language
Gujarati	British indenture; Trade	Asia/India	Gujarat	Ancestral Language/Mother tongue	Ancestral Language
Arabic	Language of Quran	Asia	Saudi Arabia	Religious/Ancestral Language	Religious/Ancestral Language
Hakka Chinese; Cantonese; Chinese	Political immigrants	Asia/China	China	Ancestral Language/Mother tongue	Ancestral Language

After the 1950s, Mauritius would undergo drastic changes in its socio-political landscape. Valuing the importance of education, measures were taken by the new government to facilitate access to education (Teelock, 2009; Varma, 2008). Following the independence of many colonised countries, the rise in nationalism and demand for independence was also felt in Mauritius. The development of events and national policies pre-and post-independence

concerning languages has a major role in understanding the phenomenon of AL in Mauritius (Bissoonaath, 2010; Miles, 2000; Sauzier-Uchida, 2007; Murdan, 2021). In order to show that Mauritius is a unique case, I will juxtapose the case of Mauritius with two other post-colonial countries and their language policies. In the following section, I present the cases of Singapore and South Africa.

1.2.3 The cases of two post-colonial countries

Before continuing with the next section that deals with the post-independence development of the linguistic landscape of Mauritius, a concise overview of the situations in two post-colonial countries is provided. These countries have undergone shifts in their language policies and have encouraged linguistic pluralism, encompassing the acknowledgement and fostering of multiple languages coexisting within their societies. This will aid in the comparative analysis and contrast with the Mauritian context, ultimately enhancing the depiction of its uniqueness.

(i) The case of Singapore

Following independence from Britain, Singapore adopted the Bilingual Policy to encourage linguistic pluralism (Chew, 2007; Siemund, 2020). The country desired Singaporeans to be proficient in both English, a choice motivated by the fact that English had historically been the language of the colonial administration, and in their respective ethnic mother tongues, which include Chinese Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999; Lim, 2010). Thus, the Bilingual Policy was implemented to safeguard Asian identities and values, and to promote Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. It also aimed to prevent the erosion of cultural heritage while also promoting English as a global language (Chew, 2007; Lim, 2010). Furthermore, Singapore's Bilingual Policy seeks to enhance understanding amongst the three ethnic groups, which is in line with the effort of nation building (Teo, 2008). The utilisation of four official languages is therefore a deliberate policy element designed to foster racial harmony. Bilingualism further aligns with the perspective that ethnic languages are "carrier[s] of culture" (Teo, 2008, p. 4). The policy thus ensures that all languages are equally prestigious and that the speakers of each language are treated equally (Lim, 2010; Siemund, 2020).

(ii) The case of South Africa

South Africa is another post-colonial country, an African one where language policies have promoted multilingualism (Prabhakaran, 1994; du Plessis, 2018). Prior to colonisation, South Africa already had numerous indigenous native languages. Presently, approximately 35 languages are spoken, with 11 being recognised as official languages. These include Ndebele,

Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, English and Afrikaans (du Plessis, 2018). English, however, is the eleventh official language, and is used more commonly in parliamentary and official settings, though all 11 languages are equal in status. Unofficial languages in South Africa consist of a group of languages that are protected under the Constitution of South Africa. They include South African first nation (San and Khoi) languages, other African languages, and immigrant languages such as Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi, among others (Prabhakaran, 1997). Most South Africans can speak more than one language, and there is very often a diglossia (where two dialects or languages are used by a single language community) between the official and unofficial language forms for speakers of the latter (du Plessis, 2018).

It is to be noted that, as far as the existence of Indian languages in Mauritius and South Africa is concerned, both countries have experienced the phenomenon of indenture (Peerthum, 1989; Prabhakaran, 1991, 1993, 1994; Fisher, 2014). Indentured labourers were brought to both Mauritius and South Africa by the same British Colonial rule, originating from the same regions and for the same purpose. A parallel can be drawn between the two countries regarding the presence of Indian languages (Prabhakaran, 1997). Prabhakaran's (1994) research analyses the ethno-religious development of one of the languages – Telugu – across four of the Telugu diaspora countries. However, in contrast to South Africa, Mauritius had no indigenous population, and the majority of the immigrants came from India. These have led to two different sociolinguistic landscapes. Socio-political and geopolitical decisions as well might have drawn a different path in the case of Mauritius, leading to the preservation of Indian languages (Srilata, 2010). In South Africa, the political situation following the Second World War contributed to the erosion of Indian languages locally. Numerous oppressive laws were enacted, aimed at suppressing the Indian population in the country, which in turn led to the erosion of their languages (Prabhakaran, 1997).

1.2.4 Independence, nation building, and the stabilisation of Mauritius

Post-colonial countries have all faced challenges in implementing language policies (Peerthum, 1989; Fisher, 2014). When Mauritius gained independence in 1968, it was difficult for the new government to take decisions regarding many issues, including languages, due to the complexity of the linguistic landscape. The demography of the Mauritian population in 1968 is depicted in Figure 1.3 below.

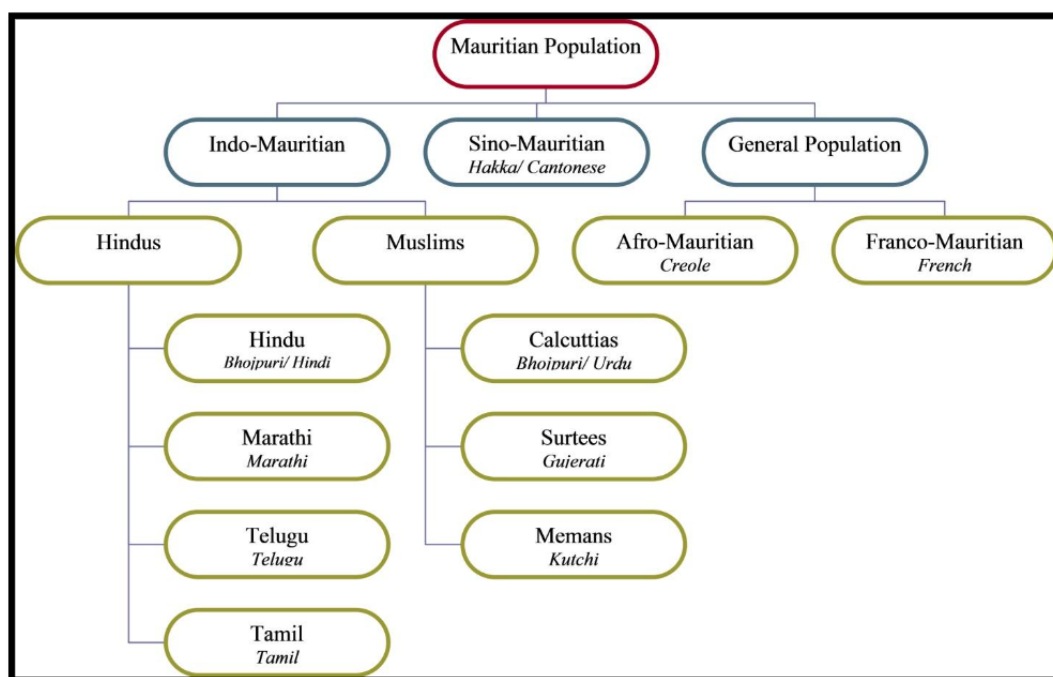


Figure 1.3. Ethnolinguistic groups and languages of Mauritius

(Adapted from Aukle, 2015, p. 10)

Therefore, building a new nation with people from different cultures and speaking different languages was a significant challenge that had sociolinguistic implications (Tirvassen, 2016; Varma, 2008). While promoting the different ethnic groups and their languages would be a sign of unifying the population in diversity under one umbrella, there was also the fear of being unable to satisfy all components of the Mauritian society, leading to communal riots (Eriksen, 2005; Mootoo, 2008). Another reason for the Mauritian government's prioritisation of maintaining all languages was to foster positive internal relations for the newly established Mauritius. This approach also aimed to facilitate economic integration by leveraging the nation's human resources, enabling Mauritius to engage more effectively with the global economy (Varma, 2008; Eriksen, 2005; Tirvassen, 2016; Peghini, 2017). Nevertheless, maintaining a pluralistic and multicultural society introduces complexities. In the Mauritian context, the intricacy surrounding language lies in its strong association with various ethnic groups. The sense of identity and belongingness to a particular culture or ethnic group is strong in this context (Stein, 1986; Eisenlohr, 2004; Bissoonauth, 2010; Eriksen, 2005). It is so strong that it is used for political ends and the quest for power, as pointed out by Sambajee (2010), who affirms that this has been a common practice in many post-colonial countries. Hence,

preserving all these languages under one umbrella posed a challenge for each linguistic group, including French and English. Languages served as ethnic markers, making it unfair to impose or eliminate any single language (Eisenlohr, 2004; Bissoonauth, 2010; Eriksen, 2005).

Rather than imposing bold policies regarding languages that would upset the identity of people from different origins, Mauritius was in favour of promoting a plural society where the identity, background, and language of each community would be respected. The first Prime Minister of the country, Sewoosagur Ramgoolam, even adopted the “Do not Touch” policy, warning subsequent governments to be careful while taking decisions regarding languages, culture, and ethnicity in Mauritius (Auckle, 2012; Peghini, 2017). Eisenlohr (2002, 2018, 2022) asserts that in Mauritius, the recognition, preservation, and cultivation of diasporic ancestral cultures – linked to ethnicity – rely heavily on the state’s support of (imagined) ancestral languages, which, in turn, are tied to major, standardised forms of religion.

However, there have been several issues surrounding languages in Mauritius. For example, Benedict Burton (1962) claimed that Kreol served as a unifying cultural feature in Mauritius, a role it continues to fulfil today. This *lingua franca* merits consideration as a unifying feature due to its widespread usage, with nearly everyone able to speak it. An attempt in 1982 to promote Kreol as a national language met with hostile reactions from very diverse quarters, which made the government realise that it would be safer to adopt a flexible policy giving importance to several languages (Nabasing & Mathur, 1999). Just as it was during the colonial era, the language issue remained a sensitive one, and the unique blend of the Mauritian population made it difficult to adopt a policy. Any discussion about languages, be it the simplest one, threatens the social fabric and harmony of the country.² This reinforces the warning of the first Prime Minister of the country about the “do not touch” concept when referring to linguistic and religious issues.

English was retained as the language of instruction due to its perceived advantages over French or Kreol. Its presumed neutrality and function as a gateway of economic prosperity

² An illustrative instance from the 1990s is the Bank Note issue, which serves to elucidate the significance attributed to languages by different ethnic groups (Miles, 2000). Within the Hindu community, a subset known as the Tamils perceived a threat to their rights when the government introduced new banknotes categorising the Tamil script under the Hindi script. Despite Tamil being an earlier addition to the linguistic landscape than Hindi, a larger proportion of the population was literate in Hindi. Tamilians went on protest for several days forcing the government to remove those new bank notes from circulation and redress the situation by putting the Tamil scripts above the Hindi script as was the case originally. The results were the withdrawal of the bank notes from circulation which cost the government a considerable loss and the governor of the Central Bank had to resign. This incident shows the importance attached to symbols (Miles, 2000; Auckle, 2015; Natchoo, 2020).

(Mahadeo, 2012) made it a preferred choice. French was still maintained in the curriculum and was taught as a compulsory subject. The government, predominantly composed of individuals of Indian descent, adopted measures aimed at promoting Indian culture and language. The formal teaching of Oriental languages,³ Hindi and Urdu in the first instance, and then Tamil, Telugu and Marathi, were introduced and taught as optional languages in the curriculum. Modern Chinese and Arabic were also included over time. However, the two most spoken vernaculars, Kreol and Bhojpuri, were not given importance for they were not considered socially prestigious. Over the years, there were some changes in the linguistic landscape. Firstly, there has been a decrease in Bhojpuri (Stein, 1986; CSO, 2012) from 30% of speakers in 1977 to 7% of speakers in 2012, though these figures are contested by Murdan (2021). Kreol is spoken by over 95% of the population. Yet, it has been subject to much debate and contestation. Despite it being the most spoken vernacular, it was not considered a language. Kreol was not implemented in the curriculum until 2012 when it was introduced as an optional language, just like the Oriental languages (Natchoo, 2020; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2017, 2021). The status of English and French have remained static over time, while there has been much policy debates and discussions regarding ALs and Kreol (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2017). As these concerns mainly focus on the educational arena, they will be discussed in a later section where I focus on languages in education.

1.2.5 The complexities and functions of languages in Mauritius

As previously discussed, all languages that existed in the linguistic landscape in postcolonial Mauritius were maintained. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of how the linguistic situation influences the Mauritian society and grasp the phenomenon under study, it is important to keep in mind the multiple functions of languages as well as the complexities they entail in the linguistic landscape due to the status attributed to them. In this context, each of the languages have different functions, whether at a social or individual level, and the attributed status is a matter of perception, and therefore subjective. The cognitive and communicative functions of languages are perhaps the most apparent. Tirvassen and Ramasawmy (2017, p. 45) have extensively examined the complex sociolinguistic landscape, analysing them in terms of “Formal v/s non-formal and written v/s oral communication”. Kreol is the most spoken

³ In Mauritius, languages referred to as ‘Ancestral Languages’ consist of Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Urdu and Modern Chinese. They are Indian and Chinese diasporic languages taught as optional languages in the education system (Bissoonauth, 2010; MOE, 2006, 2010; Rughoonundun, 2007). The term is used mostly in the educational arena and educational policies promoting teaching of ALs have been critical for the maintenance of these languages in the local landscape.

language in Mauritius while French is used as a language of prestige in the formal milieu. Bhojpuri, though in constant decrease, is spoken mostly by the older generation in rural areas and is not used in written form. However, none of these three vernaculars is the medium of instruction in public schools. French is used only to teach French language while Kreol is used informally to facilitate understanding. English serves as the medium of instruction in educational institutions, and examinations are conducted in English. However, despite its status as a global language, English is not the mother tongue of the population and is not commonly used within the community. It is a language learned at school and used mainly in its written form in official settings.

Furthermore, while languages need not necessarily be assigned an ethnic or religious index, language is used as a boundary to define and categorise ethnicity. This applies particularly to Oriental languages⁴, which serve to acknowledge ancestrality, cultural preservation, and maintaining someone's sense of origin (Bissoonaath, 2010; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2017). These are taught at school, as modern languages. However, their main aim is to preserve an ancestral heritage, and therefore they are not used for communicative purposes and therefore have "passive functions" (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017, p. 43).

As mentioned, languages present in Mauritius are ethnic markers, deeply rooted in the socio-cultural life of the people (Tirvassen, 2009). Essentialist sociolinguists opine that language and ethnicity are interlinked and cannot be neglected as they influence both personal perceptions of an individual as well as the dynamics of society (Fishman, 1972; Eisenlohr, 2012). Most people still put their ethnic identities⁵ before their national identities (Suntoo & Chittoo, 2008). Though a stable multilingual context, belongingness to ethnicity is still omnipresent. It is a fact that the aspect of ethnic identity is present in the Mauritian context at all levels, be it economic, political, or social. The sense of historical consciousness, as Eisenlohr (2004) points out in his study of identification to India in Mauritius, is very high. Eriksen (1990, 1997, 2002) stresses the tension between nationalism and ethnicity in the process of nation building. Each language, apart from English, is symbolic of a particular ethnic community in Mauritius, and has a culture, history, and identity attached to it. Even Kreol,

⁴ 'Oriental language' is the term assigned to ALs in the curriculum. This appellation has kept on changing over time in educational documents. 'Asian language' is also used.

⁵ Ethnic groups in Mauritius, especially those of Indian origin, are identified by the linguistic groups to which they belong. For example, the Telugu people (or Telugus) are those whose ancestors were Telugu speakers. The same applies to Tamil, Marathi, and Gujrathi, etc.

considered a national and a neutral language which everyone speaks, is associated with the Kreol population⁶.

Moreover, Kreol has been introduced in the curriculum, not as a national language, but an optional language, just like other ALs associated with specific ethnicities. This move has helped to fill the void for students of the Kreol community; the impact of language loss in terms of identity has been strongly felt among the descendants of slaves, so much so that Kreol Morisien (KM) has been established as an AL for this ethnic group (Natchoo, 2020). Languages in Mauritius are also diasporic ones as all of them, except the KM, are spoken in other contexts among the native population. Mauritius, due to its economic situation, is highly dependent on its relationship with other countries. Being a member of the Commonwealth, Francophonie, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), it shares a good relationship with many countries. Furthermore, it also forms part of the Indian and Chinese diaspora due to its historical and demographic background.

The fact that Mauritius is a nation of the Indian diaspora holds significant relevance in this study. It is estimated that over a short period of 15 years, more than 450,000 Indians arrived in Mauritius, a number surpassing the existing population at the time (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008). It is also noteworthy that this influx of Indian immigrants to Mauritius constitutes approximately two-thirds of the total number of Indian immigrants who left India for countries like Malaysia, South Africa, Fiji, Singapore, Suriname, and Guyana (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008). As previously mentioned, all these countries have a segment of their population with Indian heritage, and these individuals have been preserving the Indian culture, tradition, and languages to varying degrees. India has taken several measures over time to promote and preserve its people that live in other lands (Srilata, 2010).

The Indian diaspora has evolved and constitutes an important element in the current globalised world. Considered the “mini-India”, Mauritius has always benefited from the measures proposed by India to promote the Indian diaspora (Srilata, 2010; Eisenlohr, 2012; Claveyrolas, 2017). In recent times, India, positioning itself as an economic and cultural superpower, has taken several measures to economically help diasporic countries, to such an extent that the relationship between India and Mauritius has been seen as “over-romanticised” as noted by Lexpress (2017, April 18). The relationship between these two countries is such that an economic superpower like India observed one day of mourning when ex-Prime Minister

⁶ In Mauritius, the Kreol population is the population of African origin, who were brought during the slavery period.

of Mauritius, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, passed away in 2021 as published in India Today (2021, June 4). Mauritius, with 65% of its population being of Indian descent, has always benefited from measures taken by India. These include collaboration on socio-economic development programmes aimed at fostering mutual growth as described in Lexpress (2019, March 23). Every year, about 80 scholarships are allocated to Mauritians who wish to pursue tertiary studies in India (MOE, 2018). It is to be noted that slots are reserved for students wishing to pursue studies in the various Indian languages and Indian music and dance (MOE, 2018). Most of the teachers of Indian languages in Mauritius who have studied in India have benefitted from this scheme. The setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), an educational institution and partner of the Ministry of Education that promoted Oriental languages in the 1970s, is another landmark in the preservation of Indian languages in Mauritius (Peerthum, 1997).

1.3 Languages in Education in Mauritius

Implementing a language policy cannot be carried out efficiently if the language or languages concerned are not taught in the curriculum. This section deals with language teaching in Mauritius from a historical perspective, highlighting how language choice has been politically and socially influenced. It can be noted that at different stages, language in education in the Mauritian context has been heavily dependent on the historical and socio-political landmarks and happenings in the country. Educational institutions constitute a major domain of language use and development in the country. Numerous sociolinguistic studies have been carried out in this space to understand the dynamics at play (Toussaint, 1969; Ramdoyal, 1977; Auleear Owoodally, 2015; Tirvassen, 2017).

1.3.1 Language education during the colonial period

Languages have been taught in Mauritius ever since the French took possession of the island. The existence of the 'Ecole Centrale' (literally 'central schools'), as the only secondary school, was restricted to the elite, that is, to the children of the French, and the medium of instruction was French (Miles, 2000). The children of the slaves were deprived of education and were not educated (Faraclas, 2012). With the British taking possession of the island in 1810, there were attempts to impose languages by both the French and the British. Language supremacy was a significant aspect of colonialism, with both colonisers attempting to impose their languages, culture, and religion (Tirvassen, 2009; Varma, 2008; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020).

Negotiations over language started around 1840 when the British started to anglicise the administration of the colony (Tirvassen, 2009) after decades of language management issues (Tirvassen, 2019; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Within the field of education, an ecclesiastic from the London Missionary Society had started opening schools where both French and English were taught. As the majority of the economic power was in the hands of the French landowners, the British opted for a smooth transition and allowed the French language to be taught so that the children of the landowners could continue learning their customs, religion, and language (Varma, 2008; Mootoo, 2008; Peerthum, 1997). However, when the medium of instruction was changed to English, the French resisted, pushing the British government to adopt a bilingual educational system. Harmony was reached, even though the majority of the population, that is, the descendants of slaves, were not consulted as they did not have any power.

With the aim of promoting French, the French priests opened ‘free day schools’ that served the educational needs of both slaves and individuals born from the union of the French colonisers and the slaves (Bunwaree, 1994). The fact that these missionary schools addressed the needs of the oppressed contributed to their popularity among the majority of slaves, who embraced Roman Catholicism despite British efforts to hinder it. French assumed significance within the educational system, as the Roman Catholic Church garnered substantial support from a segment of the population, and with the backing of the French bourgeoisie, it managed to uphold French alongside English within the educational system (Mootoo, 2008; Varma, 2008). In 1845 it was decreed that English would become the language of the higher courts (Miles, 2000; Varma, 2008). Thus, from the outset, the intensity of sociolinguistic conflicts can be noted.

The arrival of the Indian indentured immigrants had a major impact on the existing system. As the demographic of the country changed, major changes in the existing linguistic landscape were inevitable (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008; Teelock, 2018). However, when it came to formal education, there was no law making schooling compulsory (Varma, 2008; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). The children of the immigrants had no choice other than to attend the missionary schools, dominated by French culture and a curriculum that included the teaching of Christianity, which made it difficult for the children of Indian descent to adapt as they were mostly Hindus (Peerthum, 2007). The latter, however, received informal education within the community and were instructed in their own languages (Baker & Fon Sing, 2008).

Nonetheless, there were several instances where governors, namely Higginson and Phayre, made efforts to facilitate educational access for the benefit of Indian immigrants (Tirvassen, 2016). Higginson, who arrived in Mauritius in 1851 after spending five years in India, was in favour of instructing the Indian immigrants in their vernaculars, which was however very challenging not only because of lack of teachers and resources in the multiple Indian languages, but also because of the opposition of the Catholic Church (Tirvassen, 2016). Higginson was instructed to teach the Indians in French as a means to facilitate their social integration, but he resisted this and found support by the Court of Directors of the India Board (Peerthum, 2007; Tirvassen, 2016). Phayre was another proponent of teaching the Indian in their vernaculars and, after experiencing the same difficulties as Higginson, he came with an idea of opening Indian vernacular schools. Despite numerous practical difficulties, there were five schools using Indian vernaculars when Phayre left Mauritius (Peerthum, 2007; Tirvassen, 2016). Intervention of the British governors in matters concerning languages in the country led to the medium of instruction being anglicised (Tirvassen, 2016).

1.3.2 Introduction of Indian languages in teaching

The process of restructuring the educational system brought some drastic changes as far as languages were concerned. In formal education, students from Standard⁷ 1 to Standard 3 (now Grade 1 to Grade 3) were taught “in any language which in the opinion of the minister would be suitable for the pupils” (Ward, 1941, p. 12). English was maintained as the medium of instruction and all subjects would be taught in English from Grade 4. French was taught as a core subject. Indian languages were not taught at public schools, but there is evidence that there existed specialised schools in Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, and Marathi in the country, most operating in private (Ward, 1941). The leaders of Indian descent during the colonial period made endless demands to introduce Indian languages in the formal curriculum (Ward, 1941). Following an assessment of the linguistic situation, in his report to the governor (The Ward Commission), Ward recommends that Asian languages⁸, which are the Indian languages and Modern Chinese, should not form part of the formal education system, but may be taught. This is supported in the following extract:

⁷ The term “Standard” was used until 2016. Since the introduction of the Nine-Year Schooling Programme in 2017, all classes are referred to as “grades”.

⁸ The term “Asian Language” is used. The term is used to describe the Ancestral Languages, including Telugu.

[T]hough with some reluctance—that neither Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, nor any other Indian language be [...] taught [...] at Government expense, but that these communities provide their own teaching if they want it, as other communities already do (Ward, 1941, p. 17).

Subsequent to the report, an Education Ordinance was promulgated in 1944, followed by a new Education Ordinance Act passed in 1957. The Act continues to regulate the use of languages within the education system to the present day. Thus, English and French, along with any one Indian language, were taught. The teaching of Indian languages in schools was formalised, and language professionals were brought from India to train Indian language teachers at the Teachers' Training School (MGI, 2006). This was a measure of fairness towards non-Christian pupils who represented the large majority. Referred to as 'ancestral languages', they were limited to Hindi and Tamil (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Authorities have since continued this language policy and have also introduced other Indian diasporic languages such as Marathi and Telugu, which had suffered considerable language loss due to their minority status in terms of the demography (Luthmoodoo, 2013).

1.3.3 Post-independence

After its independence from the United Kingdom (UK) in 1968, the Mauritian government was led by an Indo-Mauritian. Changes followed, influencing both the educational system as well as languages. Regarding the language of instruction, English was retained as the medium of instruction. This decision bore consequences for the educational system. The government at that time possibly opted for the safest option, given that no ethnic group was affiliated with English. However, this decision marginalised the status of Kreol, despite it being the prevalent vernacular. Until now, the official transition of the mother tongue of the majority of the Mauritian population into the language of instruction has remained unattainable, even though it is informally employed for teaching purposes.

Alongside English as the official medium of instruction and its inclusion as a subject of study, French is also a core subject. Additionally, students are given the opportunity to learn Oriental languages as optional languages. The agenda was to promote the Indian culture and preserve the linguistic heritage of the Indian immigrants, which was lost in the case of slave languages (Srilata, 2010; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). It must be noted that French and English, since their introduction in the curriculum, have not gone through many reforms compared to Asian languages (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2021). Over the years, the appellation 'Asian' has changed to 'Oriental languages', which are taught as optional languages in the primary sector. These languages, which comprise standardised versions of existing

languages, include Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Modern Chinese (Bissonauth, 2008; Sambajee, 2010; Sauzier-Uchida, 2007; Tirvassen, 2017).

The existence of Oriental languages in the curriculum holds more than pedagogical outcomes because they are directly associated to ethnicity. Two more languages, namely Modern Chinese and Arabic, were also introduced (MOE, 2008). The endeavour to revitalise existing languages, a process spanning the 1960s and 1970s, established an optional taught language curriculum. The primary objective was the preservation of culture. This has played a crucial role in the existence and promotion of ALs in the country (MGI, 2012).

The government went further with the idea of promoting Oriental languages, by proposing the idea of computing Oriental languages for the Certificate of Primary Education⁹ (CPE) examinations on the eve of the 1995 elections. This idea was not welcomed by many segments of the population (Miles, 2000) and contributed to the government losing those elections. This stance was seen as potentially disadvantageous and isolating for individuals of slave descent, as the curriculum did not incorporate their AL (Miles, 2000).

As optional languages in the curriculum have identity functions, having no AL, the Kreol community had to choose Indian languages if they wanted to learn a third language. Thus, following the government's decision to compute Asian languages for examinations, the debate over languages in education took a new dimension. This time, however, the focus shifted away from Indian and other Asian diasporic languages and centred around Kreol Morisien (KM), the only endogenous language of the country. The Kreol community asserted their ownership of KM as a vital symbolic resource, crucial for the restoration of their cultural rights. After a long-fought battle, KM was introduced in 2012 in Grade 1 as an optional language, just like the Oriental languages.

1.3.4 Function of ancestral languages in the curriculum

This section focuses on the function of ALs. While the appellation has often changed from 'Asian languages' to 'Oriental languages', both these terms, often used in the educational arena, are used to refer to ALs, the latter mostly used in Parliament (Bisoonauth, 2008; Hansard, 2010). Today, more than half a century after their formal introduction in the curriculum, while one may argue that these languages are no longer used and are obsolete in

⁹ The Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) is an end of Primary cycle examination (Grade 6) whose results determine a seat in a High School for Secondary education. Results were based on the following subjects: English, French, Mathematics and Environmental Studies. Students also wrote examinations for ALs, but it was not computed for overall results. Computing the ALs would penalise those who did not do an AL.

the curriculum, some believe that they are symbolic of the Mauritian nation and its multilingual population, a heritage that needs to be preserved (Boodoo, 2012; Tirvassen, 2009).

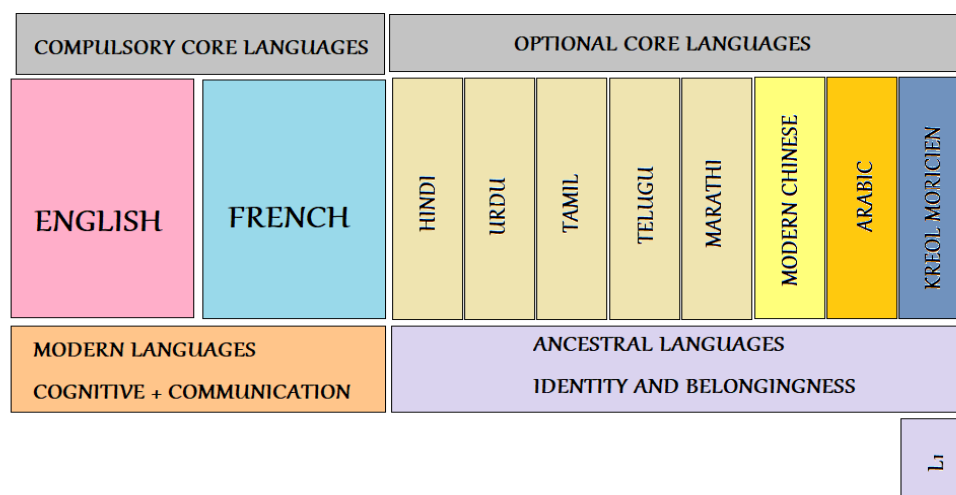


Figure 1.4 Summary of languages in education in Mauritius

While English and French are taught as Modern Languages for communicative and cognitive purposes, ALs are present in the curriculum to acknowledge the sense of identity and belongingness (MGI, 2020; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). However, the curriculum promotes these languages as optional languages, and they are taught and examined as second languages, just like French (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Hence, tension arises between teaching language as a tool for communication and as a cultural component of one's identity. While certain stakeholders, such as the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, which is responsible for setting up examinations, adopts a mechanism to examine the languages as modern languages, other stakeholders like the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), responsible for curriculum development, recognise the cultural and ancestral symbolic value attached to the language. Even at school level, these paradoxes exist in the ways the different languages exist and are taught. Firstly, the number of students opting for each language is highly dependent on the population of the ethnic group, showing that the choice of learning a language is deeply rooted in the ethnic background of the learner. Secondly, the syllabi of the languages aim at bringing forward the culture of the particular groups associated with the language. An example which shows that AL serves to fulfil the function of identity and belongingness is the newly introduced KM language into the curriculum. While it is the mother tongue for the

majority of the population, the ‘Kreol’ ethnic group demonstrates a higher level of belonging and interest in the language in the educational arena (Natchoo, 2020).

Education thus has had and still has a critical role in maintaining and preserving languages in Mauritius, shaping the sociolinguistic profile of the country. While it has helped through various institutions to revitalise some languages, significant resources are still spent on oriental languages, irrespective of the number of learners in each language concerned (MES, 2015). Rughoonundun-Chellapermal (2022) further adds that the teaching of optional languages played a significant role in shaping the linguistic profile of younger generations, with approximately 70% of a students’ cohort learning an Oriental Language or Arabic at primary school level. Even though they do not use it for everyday communicative purposes, this learning experience has shaped their ethnic and linguistic identity (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022).

1.3.5 The existence of extension schools (Evening schools or *Sayantrapubadi*)

Along with the school curriculum, teaching of ALs is also carried out in parallel by socio-cultural institutions, known as “extension schools” or “evening schools” (*Sayantrapubadi* in Telugu). The status and improvement of these schools have been debated several times in the National Assembly. Originating in the early 1900s, these schools were established when the descendants of the immigrants, influenced by Mahatma Gandhi’s emphasis on education during his visit to Mauritius, recognised the importance of educating their children. Thus, socio-cultural organisations opened these schools, which were called *Baitkas* and *Madrassahs*, and were usually held in the evening.

The number of *Baitkas* and *Madrassahs* soon mushroomed, and the number of students learning Oriental languages increased (Hansard, 2010). The teaching was done by benevolent individuals with the aim of preserving the languages of the immigrants in the new linguistic landscape. By 1935, it is estimated that 48 such schools already existed, teaching Hindi, Urdu, and Tamil. Over the years, Telugu, Marathi, and Modern Chinese schools were also established. In 1976, the government realised the importance of these schools in the promotion of languages and in nation building. Thus, in recognising the value of these extension schools, the Ministry of Education agreed to provide their teachers with allowances.

The importance of these extension schools in promoting and preserving languages, culture, and ancestry was highlighted. In 1996, the allowance was increased, and the structure was reinforced. Extension schools were still run by socio-cultural organisations, and teachers

were paid by the Ministry of Education, depending on their qualifications and upon teaching for 12 hours monthly. The Ministry also has officers who visited those schools to ensure their proper running.

A 2010 census revealed the existence of 783 extension schools (Hansard, 2010). Today, the history of these schools is interwoven with the nation's story and its commitment to promoting the richness and diversity of culture and languages in Mauritius. Teaching within these institutions frequently extends beyond language instruction, encompassing cultural education and engagement in socio-cultural activities that lie outside the scope of the official school curriculum. In a Mauritian culture where afternoon private tuition is omnipresent among the majority of students (Gokhool, 2019), these schools often represent free private tuition in the AL learned by the students. The existence of such schools shows the significant importance given to the languages as well as to the socio-political intervention and engineering behind preserving the Indian languages (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022). Payneeandy (2009) in her research 'Society and the condition of the Child in Mauritius', in which she lays emphasis on child-rearing practices in different milieus, points out the popularity of ethnic education in Mauritius among children belonging to the descendants of the Indian immigrants who attend the evening schools.

1.4 The History and Current Status of Telugu in Mauritius

Telugu is a Dravidian¹⁰ language primarily spoken by the Telugu people¹¹ who predominantly reside in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where it is also the official language. It has its own script and stands alongside Hindi and Bengali as one of the few languages with primary official language status in more than one Indian state. Additionally, it is one of the six languages designated as a classical language by the Indian¹² government.

Furthermore, Telugu ranks fourth among the languages with the highest number of native speakers in India, with nearly 82 million speakers (Census of India, 2011), and 15th in the Ethnologue list of languages by number of native speakers (Ethnologue, 2021). Beyond

¹⁰ Dravidian refers to a family of languages spoken by 220 million people, mainly in southern India and north-east Sri Lanka. The Dravidian languages are first attested in the 2nd century BCE as Tamil-Brahmi script. The Dravidian languages with the most speakers are Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, all of which have long literary traditions.

¹¹ Telugu people (or Telugus) are one of the four major and the largest Dravidian ethnolinguistic groups, in terms of population, native to the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

¹² The following languages acceded to the status of classical languages in India: Tamil in 2004, Sanskrit in 2005, Kannada in 2008, Telugu in 2008, Malayalam in 2013, and Odia in 2014.

India, the language exists in diasporic countries like Malaysia, South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and several others. Prabhakaran (1994) focussed on Mauritius, South Africa, Malaysia, and the UK in her research on the maintenance of ethno-religious practices in Telugu diaspora and demonstrated how the Telugu culture and religious practices as well as language are maintained.

In their research on the Telugu diaspora, Bhaskar and Bhatt (2020) elucidate the notion of the old and new diaspora. The initial wave was shaped by the British-introduced system of indentured labour. Descendants of the first stream are now fourth and fifth generation citizens in Mauritius today. The most recent stream of Telugu migration includes the relocation of highly-skilled software engineers, primarily from Hyderabad and Bangalore, to destinations like Europe and the USA. This trend has resulted in Telugu becoming one of the fastest-growing languages in the USA and the UK, where there are large Telugu-speaking communities (Yadla, 2016).

However, right from the outset, before coming to the case of Mauritius, it is to be noted that the definition of the word ‘Telugu’ is not limited to the language. ‘Telugu’ also refers to “a member of a group of people originating from the state of Andhra Pradesh or Telangana” (Prabhakaran, 1991; Merriam-Webster, 2020). Therefore, henceforth, the use of the word ‘Telugu’ will refer to either the language or the people of Telugu origin.

1.4.1 Telugu in Mauritius

The introduction of the Telugu language to Mauritius traces back to the arrival of around 40,000 Telugu Indian immigrants. These immigrants hailed from mainly coastal villages like Koringa, Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, and Kakinada, among others, located within the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. They were brought to Mauritius as part of this migration, as was shown in Figure 1.1 (Prabhakaran, 1994; Bhaskar, 2007; Luthmoodoo, 2013).

When scrutinising the anthropological aspects of languages, particularly Telugu, it becomes apparent that the existing literature and past research have not adequately delved into minority Indian languages such as Telugu, Tamil, and Marathi. These languages have often been regarded as subsets of Indian languages, resulting in a lack of comprehensive exploration of their intricacies and complexities. With the focus of this study being on Telugu, I will point out many aspects that have been ignored or neglected while problematising the different languages and ethnic groups in Mauritius.

Numerous ambiguities are evident in official records and among the Mauritian population concerning the minority Indian ethnic groups. The Tamils, Telugus, Marathis, and Hindi-speaking/Bhojpuri-speaking North Indians share Hinduism as their religious affiliation. Consequently, it is logical for these ethnic groups to be collectively referred to as Hindus. However, Hollup (2000) points out that:

[T]he term 'Hindu', used in the Mauritian context, does not denote religious affiliation, that is, a follower of Hinduism; it refers rather exclusively to an ethnolinguistic group, the Hindi or Bhojpuri-speaking Hindus, descendants of North Indians.... In addition, there are Hindu minorities such as Tamils (7 percent), Telugus (3 percent) and Marathis (2 percent) (Hollup, 2000, p. 224).

On the one hand, there has been a homogenisation process among Hindus for political ends so that the Hindus maintain their majority status of more than 50% of the population. On the other hand, the minority groups have maintained their differences for power distribution and affirming their identity (Hollup, 2000; Claveyrolas, 2017; Ramsoundar, 2018).

Similar to other Indian immigrants, those of Telugu descent also encountered a range of challenges related to adaptation and the formation of their identity within the island (Prabhakaran, 1991; Peerthum, 2010). Many names were distorted as the British immigration officers were not familiar with the Indian names. In many instances, first names and surnames were switched, resulting in the muddling of labourers' identities (Sokappadu, 2016).

Apart from Telugu speakers being a minority on the island, the Telugu people were divided and sent to various sugar estates all over the island following the Divide and Rule policy of the British, leading to the Telugu language being assimilated at a quick rate as Bhojpuri was the dominant Indian vernacular among the indentured labourers (Prabhakaran, 1997; Sokappadu, 2016). Though the Telugu language suffered language assimilation in the context, the descents continued to preserve it in the form of religious songs and religious rituals that were performed occasionally (Prabhakaran, 1994; Bhaskar, 2012; Venkanah & Auleear-Owoodally, 2023).

The Telugu language was transmitted to the next generation through afternoon informal teaching as well as chanting of religious songs (Luthmoodoo, 2013; Sokappadu, 2016). In the 1940s, when Indian languages were given prominence, teaching of the languages started in informal settings and a renewed interest in learning the language began. It is only when people from Mauritius travelled to Andhra Pradesh and learned the language that they were able to introduce formal teaching of Telugu. With the setting up of the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha,

a socio-cultural institution which had the goal of promoting Telugu language and culture founded in 1947, there was a boost in the teaching of the language. People were encouraged by the association to go to India and learn the language so that it could be taught in the community.

1.4.2 Current status of Telugu language in Mauritian society

In the Mauritian context, the term ‘Telugu’, just like ‘Tamil’ and ‘Marathi’, refers to both the language and the ethnic group. Consequently, Telugu exists as an ethnic marker, with the actual use of the language itself being limited. The population identifying with the Telugu ethnolinguistic group significantly outweighs the number of individuals who possess fluency in the language. Therefore, this shows that culture and religion can exist in a context though the language has been accommodated.

Telugu exists mainly at school, where it is taught, and at Telugu temples, where the Telugu community organises prayers and cultural activities. Weekly prayers are held and attended by the Telugu community, creating a platform where the audience has access to the Telugu language (Appadoo, 1990, as cited in Bhat & Bhaskar, 2007; Prabhakaran, 1991; Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2023). People of the Telugu community participate in such activities, despite the fact that most of the middle-aged and young Telugu people can neither read nor write the language (Prabhakaran, 1991; Bhaskar, 2017).

The Telugu language also exists in the form of radio and television programmes on the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) – the national broadcasting channel. Just like for other ‘regional languages’¹³ (Tamil, Telugu, Marathi), there are daily radio programmes, both in the morning and in the afternoon, dedicated to Telugu culture and cinema. This time slot is extended when there are special cultural or religious ceremonies involving the targeted community. There has been a Telugu television channel since 2013 where local and international programmes are telecast (MBC, 2022).

The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage also promotes languages through the organisation of the National Drama Festival, which includes the Telugu language. This event has been an important platform over the years to encourage and promote spoken Telugu (Prabhakaran, 1994; Bhaskar, 2017). In 2003, the Ministry set up the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust, a parastatal body that is financed by the Ministry to promote Telugu culture (MACH, 2022). In 2008, the Ministry also set up the Telugu Speaking Union, another

¹³ The term ‘regional language’ is used in the MBC ACT for languages like Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Gujarati. This term is used for these languages in India where they are regional languages.

parastatal body that is financed by the Ministry to promote written and spoken Telugu among people who have an interest in the language (MACH, 2022).

Other activities where the Telugu culture and language are involved include birth, death, and wedding ceremonies (Prabhakaran, 1994; Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2023).

1.4.3 Symbols of Telugu culture in Mauritius

This section introduces the symbols that define the Telugu community in Mauritius. These symbols exist mainly as religio-cultural celebrations as well as artefacts, attire, music, dance, and cuisine. While many Telugu celebrations in Mauritius are diasporic, that is, introduced, inherited, practiced, and preserved by the immigrants themselves from India, some have been introduced later over time.

A large portion of the Telugus in Mauritius practice Hinduism. There are approximately 90 *mandirams* (Telugu temples) all over the island (MAMS, 2010). However, there are some differences between the customs and traditions of the descendants of the North Indians and the South Indians. Notably, the Telugu people are more ‘Vishnuite’ compared to those who came from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who are ‘Shivaite’. This distinction translates into variations in the significance given to celebrations of gods and goddesses, all of which are from the same religion differs. Thus, in most of the *mandirams*, the incarnations of the Hindu God Lord Vishnu are venerated (MAMS, 2010). Prayers are held daily, but weekly prayers (in most *mandirams* on Fridays) are attended by many Telugus in the village. On that day, along with prayers by the priest (in Sanskrit), *bhajan*s and *kirtan*s (in Telugu) are sung by the devotees (Appadoo, 1990, as cited in Bhat & Bhaskar, 2007; Prabhakaran, 1991, 1994; Sokappadu, 2016; Venkanah & Auleear-Owoodally, 2023).

Many Telugus arrived from the district of Vishakhapatnam and worshipped *Simhadri Appana*, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the presiding deity of Simhachalam, a hill in Visakhapatnam (Ananda Murthi, 1990; Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2016). The customs and traditions of celebrating the Narsimha Pooja, which includes a procession with lit iron torches, is still observed today in *mandirams* as well as among some Telugu families (Sokappadu, 2017; Bhaskar, 2017). Another prayer of significant heritage bequeathed by the ancestors from Andhra Pradesh, particularly those hailing from the town of Bhadrachalam, is the *Ramabhajanam*. Bhadrachalam, a religious town, is believed to be the place where Lord Rama, another incarnation of Lord Vishnu, spent his days in exile, according to Hindu mythology. The *Ramabhajanam* has been celebrated by the immigrants from Andhra Pradesh

and consequently by the whole Telugu community over generations (Appiah, 1993, 2005; Sokappadu, 2016; Bhaskar, 2007). The *Ramabhajanam* is also celebrated among the Telugu diaspora in South Africa as well as among those in Malaysia and the UK (Prabhakaran, 1991, 1994; Sokappadu, 2023; Venkanah & Auleear-Owoodally, 2023). In the year 2018 and 2023, respectively, notable cultural exchange programmes took place, including the *Ramabhajana Mahotsavam* in South Africa, where a group of Mauritian delegates were invited to participate (MTMS, 2023).

Ammoru Panduga is another Telugu festival brought by the immigrants from Andhra Pradesh. It is celebrated in honour of the Hindu goddess Kali to obtain blessings and protection against epidemics and natural calamities (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Prabhakaran, 1991; Bhaskar, 2007; Sokappadu, 2016). The festival, previously organised by the Telugu people gathered in groups, is now organised by the *mandirams* in the different villages. During this occasion, women carry brass pots filled with turmeric water, with a lit lamp resting on top. They partake in a procession around the village, with a man following, carrying a bamboo frame shaped like an arc. This frame is adorned with neem leaves and flowers, adding to the ceremonial display.

Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982) shows how the three above-mentioned are festivals that, though not well known in the island and common only within the Telugu community, help to maintain the cultural identities of the Telugus. Compared to the immigrants from North India who identify themselves with and have reconstructed the concept of pilgrimage to the sacred lake Grand Bassin (Eisenlohr, 2008; Bissoonauth, 2010), the Telugus follow the Dravidian culture, and all the aforementioned festivals mentioned include processions around the village (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2016).

Ugadi marks the beginning of the Hindu calendar, and it is a public holiday in Mauritius attributed to the Telugu community (see Table 2.1). Though the whole Hindu community celebrates the festival, the holiday is dedicated to the Telugu community. Gunnaya Ottoo, a social worker from the Telugu community, went to Andhra Pradesh, India, in the early 1960s with the aim of learning the Telugu language and culture so as to propagate it among the Telugu people in Mauritius. Upon his return, he introduced the festival in Mauritius among the Telugu people. Ugadi has therefore become a major festival for the Telugu community and is celebrated with great fervour at national level (Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2016). Documentation by Prabhakaran (1994) demonstrates that the festival is celebrated just like in Andhra Pradesh.

The Shri Venkateshwara Pooja, a 40 day fast, is another major religious activity observed by the Telugus in Mauritius. Lord Venkateshwara, according to the Hindu mythology, is the modern-day incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and the favourite home deity for Hindus in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The temple is found in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, and is one of the most popular temples, visited by thousands of devotees from every part of India. The Telugus in Andhra Pradesh observe Saturday fasting and perform special prayers for Lord Venkateshwara. Prabhakaran (1994), in her study on the four diasporic countries where the Telugus have settled, demonstrated that, unlike in South Africa and Malaysia, the pattern of fasting and special prayers for Lord Venkateshwara is performed on Fridays in many temples. According to Sokappadu (2017), the 40 days of fasting, which is unique in Mauritius, was introduced during the 1970s. They are observed with great fervour by the Telugu community and the community meets at the mandiram daily for the prayers (Bhaskar, 2007).

The Andhra Day Celebrations by the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha, celebrated on the 1st of November every year, has been of symbolic value since the 1960s. This celebration marks the commemoration of the sacrifices made by linguist Potti Sreeramulu to achieve the separate state of Andhra Pradesh (Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2017). The programme consists of singing the national song for the Andhras in India, followed by singing the Mauritian national anthem, lighting of prayer lamps, singing of traditional Hindu prayers, and various cultural items. While the observance of Andhra Day in Mauritius doesn't carry the same political significance as it does in Andhra Pradesh, it plays a crucial role in nurturing and reinforcing the Telugu identity within the Telugu community in Mauritius as well as maintaining a tie with Andhra Pradesh. For years, the Prime Minister of the country has been attending as Chief Guest. Since the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into the Andhra and Telangana states, just like Andhra Day, Telangana Day is also celebrated on the 2nd of June every year since 2014. Andhra Day in Mauritius serves a dual purpose: to foster and fortify the Telugu identity within the local Telugu community and to sustain the connection with the state of Telangana.

The Telugu Language Day is another celebration, a more academic one, organised by the Telugu Speaking Union and Mahatma Gandhi Institute on the 29th of August every year (MGI, 2020). On that occasion, seminars and workshops are organised for primary and secondary educators, and resource persons from abroad are also invited (MGI, 2020). That day, which is the birthday of Gidugu Ramamurthi, a Telugu linguist, has a linguistic and historical significance for Telugu language and literature. Telugu Language Day is pegged to the birth anniversary of Ramamurthy, since his efforts were what lead to Telugu being recognised as a

standard language (see footnote 13) as he bridged the differences between the written and the spoken language of Telugu (Krishnamurthy, 2009).

The Telugu community in Mauritius adheres to various rites based on ancestral customs and traditions, as documented by Prabhakaran (1991) and Sokappadu (2017). These rituals, known as *samskaras*, are predominantly observed during significant life events such as birth, weddings, and death. During these three milestones, the *samskaras* are conducted by either a priest or elders. The birth rites include a naming ceremony as well as a hair removal ceremony. The rites for a Telugu wedding ceremony in Mauritius are normally completed between two to four days depending on the families. On the demise of a person of Telugu faith, the last rites are performed by a priest, followed by prayers held on the third, eleventh, and fortieth day following the death. Other *samskaras*, like the ‘pre-natal ceremony’ and ‘initiation to learning’, are less common among the Telugus in Mauritius (Sokappadu, 2017).

The Mauritian cuisine is a delightful fusion of various foods from different cultures. The daily eating habits of the Telugu community reflect this hybrid nature, incorporating elements from diverse sources. While maintaining this mixture, there is a preference for some Andhra dishes (Sokappadu, 2017). However, Andhra cuisine is more existent among the Telugus on special occasions like prayers and festivals. During religious ceremonies or wedding ceremonies, the “Telugu seven curries” are cooked along with the *rasam*, *payaasam* (sago), and *appalam*. *Jawa* (rice cooked in milk and sugar) is also a common offering during prayers. Some pickles and *chutneys* that are cooked are also unique, originating from Andhra Pradesh. Cakes and snacks like *ariselu*, *atlu*, *garelu*, *boorelu*, and *bobatlu*, which are cooked on special occasions, mainly religious and cultural ones, also originate from the Andhra culture. Therefore, as far as food pattern is concerned, it can be noted that the traditional foods exist to foreground the Telugu identity on specific occasions linked to culture.

Similar to their approach to food, the Telugu dress code is typically observed during specific occasions and settings, particularly those of a religious or cultural nature. However, Indian traditional outfits are more visible among females rather than males in the public domain. Unmarried Telugu girls normally wear the *bottu* on their forehead, which is a black ornamental dot on the forehead (Sokappadu, 2017). This is common irrespective of the clothes worn. The traditional attire for an unmarried woman includes the *langa odni*, commonly referred to as the half saree. Additionally, flowers are often adorned in the hair as part of the ensemble. The traditional Telugu outfit for married women, on the other hand, is the saree.

They wear vermillion *bottu* and the *mangalasutram*, which is a yellow thread with a golden medal. Married ladies also wear a *mattelu* (ring toe).

1.4.4 Teaching the Telugu language in Mauritius

Telugu language teaching was formally initiated in schools on August 1, 1958 (MOE, 2000). Four teachers were trained, and the Hindi CPE syllabus was translated into Telugu. Books available from India were used as teaching materials. In 1978, a panel was constituted with Telugu language experts from Mauritius and India to design a curriculum for teaching the language from Grade 1 to Grade 11. Textbooks were designed in standard Telugu¹⁴. Teachers were trained and students were encouraged to learn the subject. Over the years, in all major reforms done in the education sector, the teaching and learning of Oriental languages was maintained. Parents also encouraged children to learn the language. The evening and extension schools (see section 1.3.5), are run by socio-cultural groups with the aim of promoting the language. All these measures together have helped shape the status of the language today.

The Mauritius Telugu Maha Sabha (MTMS), previously Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha, the main socio-cultural body militating for Telugu (ethnicity, culture, and language) in Mauritius, has helped to promote the language throughout its existence. Virtually all branches of the MTMS operate evening schools, known as *Sayantrapubadi*, or *patasala* in the South African context, where Telugu is taught. These schools receive enthusiastic support and collaboration from the Telugu Teachers Association. The teaching ends with MTMS conducting Annual Telugu Language Examinations for students of Grade 1 to Grade 11. The younger generation, because they have had access to the formal teaching in the language, know the basics of the language.

1.4.5 The Telugu teacher

At present, Telugu is taught as an optional language in all primary and secondary schools, where there is a demand. There are 140 Telugu primary school teachers and 40 Telugu secondary school teachers. Telugu students account for around 4% of the school population. Telugu is a learnt language, even for the teacher, who does not speak the language at home. Thus, most of the Telugu teachers are:

¹⁴ There was a Telugu language reform in India where Modern Telugu became standardised instead of 'Bookish' Telugu, previously reserved for the educated. However, in Mauritius, the bookish version was taught till 1978 as teaching materials were available only in 'Bookish' Telugu.

Teaching a new language which is not spoken by either pupil or teacher in daily life, teaching mostly through interaction and repetition. A lot of effort is put in by the teacher to make them pronounce the words correctly (Bhaskar, 2012, p. 3).

The spoken and written forms of the Telugu language owe their existence and substantial development to the dedicated efforts of Telugu teachers, who play a pivotal role in nurturing and preserving the language. The two main reasons for this are because, firstly, the scarcity of Telugu teachers has led to individuals proficient in the language securing positions as Telugu educators. Secondly, those not working as Telugu teachers are no longer in contact with the language and forget the basics of the language. Very few people outside the teaching profession are at ease in holding a conversation in Telugu. A noteworthy point here is that linguistically, Telugu, being a Dravidian language (Telugu and Tamil are the two Dravidian languages that exist in the Mauritian context), has its own script and own vocabulary that in no way resembles other Indian languages, except for words borrowed from the Sanskrit language.

1.5 Background of the Researcher

Born in Mauritius, in a family with both parents belonging to the fourth generation of Indian immigrants from Andhra Pradesh, I grew up studying Telugu as an optional language at primary school and continued studying it as one of the main subjects of my Higher School Certificate (HSC). However, Telugu was not spoken at home, and my parents have negligible knowledge of the language which is limited to a few words. I learnt the language at school, like most of my friends from the Telugu community. This allowed me to develop both written and spoken competence in Telugu. Following good results at HSC level (including Telugu), I earned a scholarship to India under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scheme, and I opted for tertiary studies in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, where Telugu is the native language. A degree in Telugu at that time would guarantee a career in teaching Telugu at either primary or secondary level. In Andhra Pradesh, I was exposed to the language and culture, which the Telugu ethnic community tries to replicate in Mauritius. Back in Mauritius after three years, I joined the Ministry of Education as a Telugu teacher at secondary level. I pursued post-graduate studies in Telugu through distance education, and simultaneously enrolled in the Post-Graduate Certificate course in Education, which is a teacher training professional course. Throughout the years, I have been actively engaged in endeavours aimed at fostering the language among students and within the broader community. In addition to promoting the language through socio-cultural activities, I have also had the opportunity to work as a panel

member in writing curriculum materials and other activities, which helped promote the language. Having studied in India, I seize every opportunity that presents itself to visit the country, be it for vacation or academic purposes. I attended the World Telugu Conference, held in Hyderabad, India, in 2017.

Being a Telugu teacher deeply engaged in promoting the Telugu language and conducting research on Telugu teachers has several implications for this study. Furthermore, my insider perspective within this study offers both advantages and limitations, which I extensively discuss in Chapter 4.

1.6 Research Problem

Telugu, included as an optional language in the school curriculum, is one of the Oriental languages taught to preserve the ancestral heritage of particular ethnic groups. This study delves into the experiences of Telugu educators who teach the language in a multilingual curriculum, situated in a context characterised by stabilised multilingualism with varying layers. Telugu teachers exist in the education system due to policies that promote the teaching of the language. However, the role of Telugu teachers differs from that of teachers of another language like English, French, or Kreol, which are taught in heterogeneous settings. Despite the prevalent use of languages such as Kreol, English, or French, even among the Telugu educators, these individuals engage with Oriental languages in aspects of their daily lives such as songs, prayers, online interactions with native speakers, and conversations with colleagues. Moreover, Telugu teachers are active agents in the promotion of the language, and they earn their living through the promotion of their religious, cultural, and linguistic identity. This study aims to illuminate the experiences of these educators within a unique multilingual context.

1.7 Rationale of the Study

Having been myself a student of Telugu in the educational system, a scholar who studied in Andhra Pradesh, the land from where my forefathers hail as indentured labourers, and then a teacher of Telugu in Mauritius, I now embark on a research journey with the goal of understanding the experiences of Telugu teachers. The study will contribute to a deeper comprehension of how my colleagues navigate their roles as Telugu teachers within a setting predominantly characterised by the prevalence of other languages for both everyday communication and educational purposes. The teacher community makes up most of the people who use the language in either spoken or written form in the Mauritian context. Thus, it is not

surprising that only teachers of Telugu dominate all the spaces where the language is used. Therefore, with teachers being an important pillar for the existence of the language in this multilingual country, this research explores how they experience teaching such a language as well as the reasons for those experiences. The study encompasses their living experiences within the multilingual context, including their engagement with the subject, be it at home or in society at large. Understanding the latter will help better conceptualise the existence of an AL and contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic.

1.8 Aim & Objectives

1.8.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to explore ancestral language teachers' experiences.

1.8.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore and gain insight into the Mauritian teachers' experiences of teaching an ancestral language such as Telugu.
2. Comprehend the reasons for their experiences of teaching an ancestral language such as Telugu.
3. Gain an understanding of how teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius.

1.9 Research Questions

The critical questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are Mauritian teachers' experiences of teaching an ancestral language such as Telugu?
2. To what do Mauritian teachers who teach an ancestral language ascribe their experiences of teaching a language such as Telugu?
3. How do teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius?

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the background and context of the study. It discussed the historical, social, and political dimensions of languages in Mauritius, along with the role of language in education. The situation of the Telugu language in Mauritius was also portrayed, and the rationale behind conducting the study was presented. Furthermore, the research objectives and questions were indicated. The subsequent chapter will delve into a literature review, offering additional insights into prior research conducted in this field.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the backdrop to this study. The historical and social contexts of Mauritius were unpacked in detail, providing critical information for the rest of the study. The various socio-historical factors leading to the linguistic landscape and to languages in the curriculum, along with my positionality as the researcher, were also discussed. In order to proceed with this research, it is imperative to look at relevant existing literature to shed further light on this topic. Hence, the current chapter presents the literature review of the study.

2.1 Overview

To facilitate a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, as well as address the existing research gap, the three variables will first be presented separately, and thereafter the link among them, leading to the gap, will be elucidated (Figure 2.1).

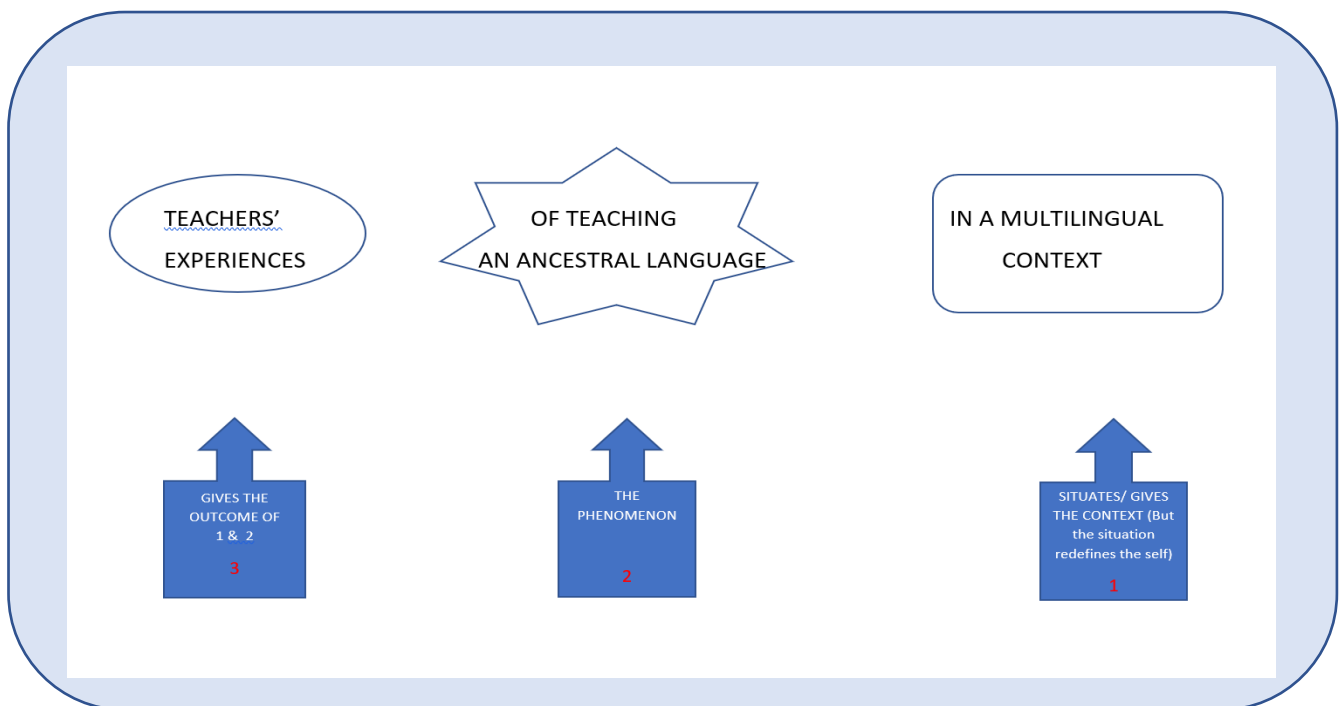


Figure 2.1 Visual Representation of the Study

This literature review chapter consists of seven sections. Following the introduction (section 2.0) and the overview (section 2.1), section 2.2 deals with multilingualism. It highlights multilingualism as a concept, examines language policies in multilingual settings, and focuses on multilingualism in education. The concept of “ancestral language” is discussed in section 2.3, laying emphasis on how it has been defined in the literature in various contexts. The traits and evolution of ALs are also highlighted. Experience and Teachers’ experiences, along with teachers’ experiences of ALs, are discussed in section 2.4. Furthermore, section 2.5 sheds light on the existing gap in the literature and underscores the need for this study. A brief conclusion wraps up the chapter (section 2.6).

2.2 Multilingualism

As discussed in Chapter 1, Mauritius is a unique context, characterised by its own socio-historical features. However, within its unique framework, it grapples with numerous issues of general importance, raising awareness about language in society and language teaching. While many countries in Europe today debate the issue of monolingualism/bilingualism following massive immigration, Mauritius can be said to be a stabilised multilingual context, though the sociolinguistic situation is a complex one (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Existing languages are preserved and taught in the curriculum either as compulsory subjects or as optional modern languages, as discussed in Chapter 1. The next sub-sections will deal with multilingualism as a concept and multilingualism in education, respectively, paying particular attention to ecological linguistic diversity and identity.

2.2.1 Multilingualism as a concept

Across history, multilingualism has existed, with great scholars having excelled in many languages, using Sanskrit and other Indian languages, or Latin and Greek (Francis, 2008), to achieve their scholarly pursuits. Other examples include Spanish and Basque or English, and the coexistence of Norman French and Latin (Francis, 2008). Across global societies, individuals have remained in perpetual motion driven by factors like warfare, marriages, trade, and more. This continuous mobility has engendered a necessity to embrace new languages as a means of effective communication (Fisher, 2014). In modern times, individuals are engaged in rapid and constant movement within a world boasting nearly 7,000 languages and approximately 200 independent countries (Lewis, 2009). As a consequence, multilingualism has become a prevalent phenomenon, emerging due to a myriad of factors.

The presence of so many languages means that speakers of less used languages need to speak more dominant languages in their daily lives in order to communicate with speakers of dominant languages. In some cases, multilinguals may be speakers of a minority indigenous language who need to learn the dominant state language, which could either be a coloniser's language or an indigenous language coexisting within their society. In other cases, multilinguals are immigrants who speak their first language as well as the language of their host countries. In today's global world, there are many cases where languages are learned and spread internationally, and they often open doors for better economic and social opportunities (Hornberger, 2002; Cenoz, 2009; Duarte, 2020).

The concept of multilingualism has evolved over time. In the contemporary world, multilingualism is no longer regarded as an extension of bilingualism or hierarchical mastery of multiple languages (Hornberger, 2002; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Contrasted with the past, multilingualism is no longer confined to geographically close languages or specific border areas and trade routes. Instead, it has evolved into a global phenomenon spanning diverse corners of the world (Cenoz, 2009). Multilingualism is neither associated with specific social strata, professions, or rituals as it is increasingly spread across different social classes, professions, and sociocultural activities. The "new multilingualism" is an approach to multilingualism that acknowledges the sociolinguistic complex discursive practices inherent to multilingual practices. It underscores the notion that these practices cannot be described by the confines of categories of languages in a given context (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Using a complex systems approach, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008, p. 155) explain that individuals' cognitive processes are "inextricably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and social world". Thus, this calls for an understanding from a psycholinguistic as well as a sociolinguistic perspective. The Dynamic Systems Theory based on the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism developed by Herdina and Jessner (2002) allows for this integrative approach.

The coming of social media has also influenced multilingualism both in written and spoken forms of languages (Lei Wei, 2008; Cenoz, 2009; Dewaele, 2014). Multilingualism has been redefined as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (European Commission, 2007, p. 6). This supports my stand on multilingualism, that multilingualism has evolved and is present in all societies across the world. In this study, I will focus on how multilinguals in societies foreground mixed linguistic identities depending on spaces (Said, 2018).

Understanding multilingualism will further help unpack the experiences of the participants of this study who are multilinguals.

2.2.2 From an imperialist monolingual Mauritius to a multilingual Mauritius

The 18th Century was the time of imposition, and language was a means of exerting power. Like many superpowers at that era, the French rulers attempted to impose their culture through language supremacy (Calvet, 2006; Léglise, 2007; Mufwene, 2002; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2005; Oozeerally, 2018; Spivak, 2006). Colonial imperialism has resulted in two broad types of languages: dominating languages and dominated languages (Freeman, 2007; Léglise, 2007). The imposition and expansion of the colonial language has resulted in *glottophagia* (absorbing or replacing minor languages or dialects by major ones) and *linguicide* (extermination of languages) (Spivak, 2006).

The phenomenon, where stronger languages eliminate or lead to the extinction of weaker languages, has been researched and problematised as language loss (Freeman, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2005; Léglise, 2007). Stronger terms such as ‘linguicide’ have also been used to portray the void left after the elimination of languages by killer languages (Calvet, 2006, p. 5). As a common process in colonial countries (Jackson & Hogg, 2012), the languages brought by slaves from different parts of Africa under French rule have been eradicated over time (Faraclas, 2012). However, various linguistic processes have occurred. The interaction between African slaves and French colonisers has resulted in the emergence of the Kreol vernacular. While ‘language transfer’, ‘language replacement’, or ‘language assimilation’ (Kandler, 2017) are common terms used to describe the process where a group of speakers or a whole community shifts to speaking a completely different language, the process of language shift in Mauritius is very particular for it has led to the minting of a new language, superficially similar to the language of the master, so much so that it is seen as a “broken variety” of it, through the survival strategy of “camouflage”, as described by Natchoo (2020). This illustrates how, though the colonisers were fewer in number, their power resulted in the extinction and replacement of the language of the marginalised. There was no room for the coexistence of languages. Along with the languages of the slaves, their identities also faded away (Faraclas, 2012). However, the subaltern who conceal their identities have also experienced a loss of their own sense of self, as language embodies their identity (Eisenlohr, 2008; Natchoo, 2020; Tirvassen, 2016).

Colonial imperialism assumes a distinct form in the context of British rule. Whereas French colonisation allowed no space for language coexistence, the linguistic landscape underwent a transformation during British rule, spurred by the arrival of Indian immigrants. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the French managed to secure an agreement resulting not only in the preservation but also the elevation of French. Alongside European languages like French and English, as well as the locally born Kreol, the nation accommodated speakers of Indian languages including Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu. Hindi and Urdu were also introduced and valued liturgically. This led to a four-part harmony of Mauritian languages: Kreol as the uncontested *lingua franca*; French as the inherited language of social and cultural prestige; English as the language of education, law, public administration; and the panoply of Indian languages mentioned above (Miles, 2000).

Still, in terms of power, it was the dominance of the colonial languages versus the tolerated co-existence of diasporic Asian cultures and languages. As pointed out by Srilata (2010), the effective preservation of traditional Hindu patterns in Mauritius, including their languages, was helped by the British Government's official policy to favour the continuation of religious and social rituals, festivities, and celebrations. The situation was so pronounced that it was dubbed “the overcrowded barracoon” (Naipaul, 1984). This scenario is analogous to the Tower of Babel, where two “Christian/civilised languages” were rescued from total chaos and confusion and brought to order by the hierarchical arrangement between the two groups of languages, and the camouflaging Kreol language, minted by the minoritised slaves, the only *lingua franca* on the island (Faraclas, 2012). Thus, there is an apparent order, that of language dominance. However, it is in reality the Carnival as portrayed by Bakhtin’s theory of the carnival (Edward, 2014), where an inverted state prevails. In this inversion, it is the dominated minoritised language that governs the *lingua franca*. As much as it is a camouflage, Kreol is also a marker for a void and absence of essence (Carmignani, 2006; Natchoo, 2020), as it is the language of those who have lost their identity or roots and who are no longer ‘pure’, as suggested by Natchoo (2020). On the other hand, the descendants of Indians have an identity and are considered ‘pure’, and their language becomes an asset that they feel needs to be preserved “at whatever cost and at whomever’s expense” (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p. 224) in order to avoid the same fate as the descendants of the slaves.

2.2.3 Multilingualism – Language attitudes and identity

Many sociolinguistic studies have focused on language attitudes and identity (Labov, 1969; 1972; Greenfield & Fishman, 1970; Sridhar, 1988, Prabhakaran, 1991, 1993; Yagmur, 2011;

Rasinger, 2012; Beinhoff, 2013; Tirvassen 2016). In a multilingual landscape, each individual or group of people have varying experiences of the different languages existing in the context. Labov (1969, p. 27) observed that “the behaviours of speakers are typically ‘stratified’ and reflect a set of norms, beliefs and subjective attitudes towards not only languages but also particular linguistic features”. Attitudes towards language may be created and reinforced through language ideologies, stereotypes, and general beliefs about language (Garrett, 2010; Tirvassen, 2009). Hence, attitudes are influenced by the opinions of both the in-group and out-group speakers regarding their language. These perspectives can give rise to either positive or negative perceptions among individuals, influencing their inclination to either learn and preserve their language or shift to another, driven by personal or communal motivations (May, 2003; Valdes, 2005; Yadla, 2016; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

Sociolinguists (Fishman, 1964; Milroy, 1980; Bourhis & Sachdev, 1984; Trudgill, 2010) have conducted extensive research on what makes a language attractive or unattractive. They have delved into how attitudes affect language behaviour and have developed study frameworks. These include communication accommodation by Giles et al. (1973), ethnolinguistic vitality by Giles et al. (1977), subjective ethnolinguistic vitality by Bourhis et al. (1981), overt and covert prestige factors by Trudgill (2010), and the social network model by Milroy (1980).

Attitudes towards language are a good indicator of language behaviour, but a generalisation such as positive (favouring maintenance) and negative (causing shift) may be relevant only to a certain extent (May, 2003; Yadla, 2016). However, language behaviour is also influenced by political situations if the active agents have a positive attitude towards promotion of the language or even if the speakers have a positive attitude towards their languages. For example, culture politics in the Mauritian context have always been in favour of maintenance of Indian languages (Bissoonaath, 2010; Srilata, 2010; Claveyrolas, 2017). On the other hand, some Tamil speakers in Sri Lanka feared using their language because of the prevalent conflict between the state and the rebels (Fernandez & Clyne, 2007; Canagarajah, 2008).

Some researchers like Paulston (1994) extend the notion that language serves as a temporary means to an end. Once that objective is achieved, the language loses its significance as an important ethnic symbol. An illustration of this concept can be found in the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh in the 1950s. This event was based on linguistic grounds, prompted

by the emergence of Telugu nationalism. Notably, the Central Government of India unprecedentedly declared Andhra Pradesh as a separate state on linguistic basis.

However, after several decades, socio-economic interests took over and the state was bifurcated in 2014 into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana despite the linguistic affinity of the people of the two Telugu states (Yadla, 2016). Paulston (1994, p. 23) claims that ‘people act in their own best and vested interests’, which shows that the attitudes that people have about their language can change over time, depending on various factors. Understanding the language attitudes may not be useful to generalise the behavioural patterns of a language community; however, language attitudes do provide explanations for situations that arise from the prevailing social, economic, and political changes on a larger as well as an individual level (May, 2003; Tirvassen, 2014; Edwards, 2014. Yadla (2016), in his research on the Telugu linguistic identity among Indian immigrants in London, elucidates how various factors including status and prestige, socio-economic standing, historical elements, demographic dynamics, and geopolitical considerations, facilitated by institutional support, collectively play an important role in shaping attitudes.

2.2.4 Multilingualism – Language cultivation and language policies

A linguistic landscape is highly dependent on language policies, for policies influence all the linguistic behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, folk beliefs, and attitudes towards a language (Spolsky, 2004; Moraru, 2016). Highly dependent on historical, social, economic, and political factors, language policies are constructs that change over time (Fasold, 1984; Spolsky, 2004; Walsh, 2006). Policies also specify the usage of languages in different domains, like education, administration, and media.

Language policies and their supporting strategies are designed to be action-oriented, with a focus on establishing strategic goals for language education and implementing the activities needed to reach those goals. However, not all measures taken reflect reality in practice. Labov (2006, p. 380) states that “the linguistic behaviour of individuals cannot be understood without knowledge of the communities they belong to”. While linguists have adopted this notion, what they have sometimes failed to realise is that linguistic behaviour is also based on socio-political constructs, in that the boundaries of a speech community are social and political, and not only linguistic (Ramasawmy & Tirvassen, 2017). In many cases, socio-political priorities, rather than careful analysis of the educational interests of a country, have

dictated policy, as decision-making about language policies is influenced by the agendas of the most powerful groups in a polity (Spolsky, 2004; Mesthrie, 2006; Srilata, 2010).

Fishman and Garcia (2010, p. 519) point out that “the ability to language and to ethnify is the most important signifying role of human beings ... It is through languaging and ethnifying that people perform their identifying”. This description of ‘ethnifying’ and ‘languaging’ demonstrates ongoing action, suggesting that speakers continually engage in specific languages in order to express specific identities (Kloss, 1977). Along with formulating a practicable language policy, decisions about language policies also aim at maintaining power. It is to be noted however, that it is not necessarily only minority languages that are marginalised.

As discussed in Chapter 1, language policies in Mauritius have for a long time ignored Kreol – which has been marginalised – even though it is the mother tongue of the majority of the population. Therefore, the right to recognise a first language, that is what sociolinguists (Kloss, 1977; May 2015) call ‘tolerance oriented’ language rights’, has been ignored. It is only recently after much struggle by proponents of the language that it has been included in the curriculum, as an optional language. Conversely, while one would think that languages which are on the decline and barely spoken in the same context would be totally marginalised, they have, surprisingly, been preserved, maintained, and promoted (Eisenlohr, 2007; Tirvassen, 2014; Srilata, 2010; Claveyrolas, 2017).

In the South African context, as Prabhakaran (1998) points out, Indian diasporic languages like Telugu have been preserved. The main reason behind their preservation is religion, which is achieved through community cohesion when organising various cultural events. Following changes in post-apartheid political ideologies, there has been a resurgence of activities towards the maintenance of culture and language, especially through cultural organisations (Prabhakaran, 1998; Mesthrie, 2002). Asian languages in Mauritius, such as Telugu, which is the focus of this study, form part of this category of Indian and Chinese diasporic languages that are preserved through government policies, and they enjoy what Kloss (1977) and later May (2015) problematise as ‘promotion-oriented language rights’, whereby the use of the language is encouraged in spaces which include schools. Existing language policies are such that they are even computed for examinations, which encourage students taking those optional languages to have a competitive edge. While some might question the rationale behind undertaking bold and drastic measures, along with substantial investments, to foster languages that possess limited presence, the mere existence of linguistic diversity within

a given context holds profound significance. This diversity itself represents a substantial richness that merits preservation (Eriksen, 2007).

This brings up the question, often asked in policy making, whether multilingualism should be encouraged or not. Spolsky (2006) states that policy makers have shared opinions on multilingualism. Some policy makers, as stated by Spolsky (2006), affirm that multilingualism is not a requirement or even an important independent factor for social, economic, and political equality and justice, as they believe that language expansion must be a ‘natural’ phenomenon. However, Alba (2015) thinks multilingualism is a ‘desired’ process as extending democratic pluralism rather than restricting language policies encourage the participation and development of all segments in a country towards national growth (Spolsky, 2006; Walsh, 2006). This is what is happening in the USA as well as in European countries like England and France. These countries, having witnessed massive immigration, now feel the need to accept the languages and cultures of the immigrants (Fisher, 2014). This idea promotes the participation of all existing language groups, including marginalised minorities.

The Mauritian case is one that underwent this process long ago and has since evolved into a relatively stable multilingual nation. It has promoted religious, cultural, and language diversity, which is not only emblematic of its history, but is also an asset for social and economic purposes. All governments to date have emphasised the multicultural diversity of the island and have implemented measures to strengthen this diversity. One of the primary approaches has been the maintenance of all languages (Eisenlohr, 2007; Varma, 2008; Tirvassen, 2019; Natchoo, 2020).

2.2.5 Multilingualism – Education and curriculum

The language in education policy has been an emblematic space for political statements and society engineering (Spolsky, 2008). The impact of the curriculum on multilingualism is of major significance in many societies (Spolsky, 2008). Mauritius is one such country where a learner is acquainted with no fewer than four languages at school. English serves as the language of instruction; the mother tongue – Kreol – is used informally and to a large extent for explanation; French is a compulsory core subject until the eleventh grade; and an additional language is available as an optional choice.

Thus, the curriculum has a heavy share of language teaching, which is symbolic of the country’s vision to promote multilingualism (Tirvassen, 2015). The situation can be compared to Luxemborg, where Lëtzebuergesch is the national language, mostly used for informal

interaction. French and German serve administrative and legislative purposes, while an array of other languages are associated with migration and globalisation (Purschke, 2020). Through its language policy, Mauritius has adopted a two-pronged social strategy:

Firstly, Western languages are seen and put forward as languages for epistemological access, economic development, and international affairs. While English is the medium of instruction, the two Western languages, English and French, introduced through the colonisation process, are compulsory until Grade 11 (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Students are taught and assessed in these languages, and achieving a passing grade in both subjects is mandatory.

Secondly, ALs, which are Asian/diasporic languages, are seen as languages for identity/ontological purposes (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017; Carmignani, 2006; Colla, 2018; Natchoo, 2020). They have long been taught but not examined, to counterbalance Western influence, preserve multiculturalism and multilingualism, and maintain links with the countries of origin (Hansard, 2010). Thus, teachers of those languages are agents, employed by the Ministry of Education, to preserve the languages. With later reforms, as discussed in Chapter 1, they have been promoted as core optional languages (MOE, 2009). The next section deals with the concept of ALs.

2.3 Ancestral Languages

2.3.1 Unpacking ancestral languages

The term ‘ancestral language’, used commonly in the Mauritian context to refer to a group of languages brought by immigrants, is a contextualised one. However, the concept lacks a universally accepted definition. In historical linguistics, an AL, typically refers to a ‘proto-language’ – that is, the most common ancestor in a particular Stammbaum or ‘family tree’ of genetically related languages (Campbell, 2013). Hence, based on this understanding, the ALs leading to Modern English encompass Medieval English and Old English. Nonetheless, in the context of this study, the term ‘ancestral language’ takes on a distinct conceptualisation.

Natchoo (2020) points out that the expression ‘ancestral language’ in Mauritius derives its meaning from a colonial approach to multilingualism that foregrounds purity, preservation, and clearly delineated linguistic boundaries (Hollup, 2010; Bissoonauth, 2010; Natchoo, 2020). Usage of this term during the British colonial period served as a means of preserving the “ancestral heritage, cultural identity and specificity” of the various diasporic groups that had

relocated to Mauritius, and whose languages – unlike French and English – were neither used in official/administrative contexts, nor made mandatory in schools (Natchoo, 2020, p. 28). The term “ancestral”, as Nirsimloo-Gayan (2007) states, is inadequately defined. It is basically the result of historical and political systems, leading to the “trap of a narrow multiculturalism which solidifies differences” (Nirsimloo-Gayan, 2007, p. 84).

Presently taught as optional modern languages in the Mauritian curriculum, the existence of ALs is much more than optional language subjects taught. The appellation ‘Ancestral Languages’, mostly used in the educational arena, has undergone transformations in policy documents over time. It is now used to refer to Asian languages brought by Indian immigrants, and these are taught from Grade 1. In Mauritius, ALs include Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Modern Chinese. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these languages are taught as modern languages, serving the current purpose of recognising the identities of the descendants of Indian immigrants and preserving their ancestral heritage. The need to preserve ancestral heritage and cultural identity is underscored by the current National Curriculum Framework:

Since 1955, multilingualism is promoted in Mauritius through the emphasis placed on the ancestral languages in formal education and which therefore maintain these languages and the language communities. The seven oriental languages (Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu) are optional subjects offered to pupils as from the first year of primary education [...]. Learning an Asian Language and Arabic is viewed as a means of preserving ancestral heritage, cultural identity and specificity (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2015b, p. 42).

The languages thus have a symbolic value for they represent the heritage of the ancestors who spoke the oriental languages. The choice for opting for these languages is deeply influenced by the ethnic identity and ancestral roots of the learners, which aims to preserve a heritage rather than learning a new language for cognitive or communicative functions (Bissoonauth, 2010; Eisenlohr, 2013; Ramasawmy & Tirvassen, 2017; Natchoo, 2020).

The concept of ‘ancestral language’ (which has been abbreviated AL in this thesis), has been researched in various contexts and has been defined differently depending on several aspects. In some contexts, ALs are indigenous languages used by the past generations, but which are now replaced by dominant languages (Brutt-Griffler, 2005). ALs are languages that have been assimilated by modern languages in a particular context and have achieved the status of endangered or minority languages (Yuksel & Brooks, 2017). Bughwan (1979) explains that

ALs are immigrants' spoken languages that have been forsaken because of existing dominant languages in the environment. Some researchers adopt an anthropological stance and affirm that ALs have identity and cultural functions (Fishman, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Yuksel & Brooks, 2017). Another major characteristic of an AL is that it has a heritage value as the speaking community, usually a minority one, tries to preserve it in a context dominated by other languages (Fishman, 2001; Campbell & Peyton, 1998; May, 2003; Valdes, 2005). All of the above definitions resonate with describing the characteristics of ALs in Mauritius.

In many multilingual contexts, languages in similar situations as ALs have been conceptualised as 'heritage languages'. A 'heritage language' is a language, usually a minority one, learnt by its speakers at home, but never fully developed because of the existence of a dominant language in the context (Fishman, 2001; Campbell & Peyton, 1998; Valdes, 2005; Polinsky & Kagan, 2009). This definition resonates with definitions of ALs. The term "heritage" is often associated with the notions of being 'outdated' or even linked to 'primitivism'. Consequently, the term 'heritage language' implies that such a language can be compared to "a trait or asset gained through birth, such as property or DNA" (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 52).

In some contexts, language is seen as an inheritance, rather than just a tool for communication. This is supported by Mahboob (2020, p. 1) who remarks that "Language is a tool for communication, but not the same as communication. We learn it from our caregivers, parents and ancestors. It has come down across generations". Brutt-Griffler (2005) extends this notion by asserting that possessing proficiency in a language is not a prerequisite for being deemed a Heritage speaker. This idea is also supported by Yadla (2016), who highlights that individuals often shift to more dominant languages for social mobility (May, 2004). Cultural significance is associated, and the label 'heritage' is given to a language based on the social status of its speakers and not its linguistic properties (Brutt-Griffler, 2005; Valdes, 2005; Yadla, 2016). This definition is further supported by Van Deusen-Scholl (2003), who characterises *heritage language learners* as "a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-speakers who may be generations removed, but who may feel culturally connected to a language" (p. 221). The following quote from He (2010) demonstrates this argument.

My home language is Chinese. My parents are from China. They praised me, scolded me, all in Chinese. ... My Chinese is really bad. I can't read and I can only write my

name. But when I think of Chinese, I think of my mom, dad, and home. It is the language of my home, and my heart (p. 3).

Therefore, the term ‘heritage language’ can refer to a language existing in a context, though the persons concerned do not speak or understand it, but they culturally and personally identify with it (Fishman, 2001; Brutt-Griffler, 2005; Kelleher, 2010; He, 2010; Colla, 2018).

In the Mauritian context, the term ‘ancestral’ has long been associated with ‘Asian’ or ‘Oriental’ languages (Bissoonauth, 2010; Harmon, 2017; Natchoo, 2020). The appellation has undergone changes over time in policy documents and in the curriculum since the 1950s, being called “Oriental Languages”, “Asian Languages”, and “optional languages” (MOE, 2015). However, all these terms were used to denote the language brought by the Asian immigrants, having a symbolic value and closely linked to cultural traditions (Varma, 2006; Harmon, 2017; Natchoo, 2020). “Ancestral languages” are the languages that the Indian migrants spoke at the time of their arrival in Mauritius and include Bhojpuri, Hindi, Gujarati, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu (Baker, 1972, pp. 14–18). Today, as discussed in Chapter 1, most of these languages do not function as native languages but as important markers of religious and ethnic identity (Rajah-Carrim, 2005; Sauzier-Uchida, 2008; Hollup, 2010). The evolution of these languages from vernaculars to AL will be presented in detail in a later section. Natchoo (2020) suggests that over time, these ALs have indeed contributed to the preservation of important markers of religious and ethnic identity.

Having discussed the concept of ‘AL’ as contextualised in Mauritius, it is important to highlight the complexities surrounding the concept. While the country has adopted the policy of reviving Asian languages, African languages, which were lost during the colonial period, have not been revitalised, demonstrating how political power has influenced the shaping of the linguistic landscape. On the other hand, French, one of the two colonial languages, happens to be an AL for a small segment of the population who are the descents of the French rulers, but the language has never been categorised as an AL. Instead, as discussed in Chapter 1, French is taught as a compulsory second language in the curriculum. In the case of the Kreol language, however, one wonders how the language, spoken by the majority, does not qualify as an AL, understanding that it has been the language spoken by preceding generations.

In the case of Indian languages, by definition, Bhojpuri is the AL of the majority of the Indian immigrants who came from the state of Bihar, and this language, though still spoken as a vernacular, is an AL (Hollup, 2000). However, being only a vernacular and not having a script, the language is not taught at school. Instead, Urdu and Hindi, standardised and more

prestigious languages, have been cultivated among those descendants (Eisenlohr, 2008). Conversely, it is important to recognise that certain languages, namely Tamil, Telugu, and Marathi, can be identified as ‘genuine ALs’. This designation holds true because the immigrants originating from the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra were native speakers of those languages (Hollup, 2000; Natchoo, 2020). All these Indian languages, having been attributed the status of ALs, have been uplifted in the context. Following the ethnonationalist ideology and reinforcement of the idea of ALs through the curriculum, core initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Education for the reinforcement of AL programmes between 1984 and 1997 through their teaching (Bissoonaath, 2010; Natchoo, 2020). Thus, though many of them are minority languages, their status has been elevated and they have become valued languages, compared to spoken languages such as Kreol or Bhojpuri, for instance.

2.3.2 Language dynamics – Evolution of status of languages – From mother tongue to ancestral

In the absence of a native context, a language used as a mother tongue (L1) by minority immigrants can turn into an AL over generations. The term ‘mother tongue’ refers to the language one identifies with, knows best, or uses the most. The term also refers to one’s first language (L1). However, the difference between these two instances, as pointed by Prabhakaran (1998), is that in the first instance, the speaker culturally identifies with the language, while in the second case, that may not be the case. When no longer spoken, the mother tongue in a small minority group turns into an AL over the next generations. Prabhakaran (1998), in her study on the Telugu language in the South African context, states that the environment plays an important role in the destiny and status of a language. The first generation may try to retain their mother tongue, but, as Bughwan (1979) states:

... faced by stark realities, they have to learn the dominant language of the new environment. As a minority group, they very soon realise that their mother tongue lacks social status in their new life and as a consequence, they neglect their mother tongue to the extent that they do not transfer it to their children (p. 480).

The next generation, therefore, being more exposed to the newly acquired language, shows less mother tongue retention compared to the previous generation. Thus, with each succeeding generation, the proficiency disappears, and the dominant language of the host country is favoured (Bughwan, 1979; Grenoble et al., 1998). This phenomenon, previously problematised by Fishman (1971), has further been detailed by Prabhakaran (1998) with reference to the South

African context. She explains how in the first stage, the immigrant learns the new language (English in the case of South Africa, which can be extended to Bhojpuri, then Kreol in the case of Mauritius) through his/her mother tongue (Telugu). In the initial stage, the second language is used only in a few domains where the mother tongue cannot be used. In the second stage, a larger number of immigrants know more of the acquired language and can therefore speak to each other either in the mother tongue or in the latter. In a further stage, both the mother tongue and the acquired language function independently because at this stage, most of the immigrants are bilingual. In the fourth stage, however, the acquired language displaces the mother tongue (Telugu) from all the domains of communication, and the mother tongue is mediated by the acquired language (Prabhakaran, 1998).

Another social factor contributing to language abandonment is the group's personal ambition to achieve socio-economic success over the preservation of the minority mother tongue (Prabhakaran, 1997; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; May, 2003; Mesthrie, 2006; Tirvassen, 2009; Yadla, 2016). This is indeed the case of Telugu in Mauritius where, with the influence of Bhojpuri and Kreol, the language used among the Telugu speaking community shifted, and soon it turned into an AL, limited to cultural identification as it is no longer the first language. However, Prabhakaran (1998) states that children are generally brought up in the social group to which their parents and immediate family circle belong, and hence, they learn both the speaking styles and religio-cultural habits of that group in which they are born and raised. Their attitudes and subcultural behaviour traits are mostly influenced by the language or languages used. Mesthrie (2006), while unpacking the situation of Indian languages in the South African context, shows how there has been a shift in language, yet the religio-cultural practices are still performed in the absence of the mother tongue. This supports May (2003) who affirms that culture can survive without language.

2.3.3 Language dynamics – From ancestral languages to taught modern languages

It might appear paradoxical for a developing nation to endorse ALs while the global trend is oriented towards modernity and the promotion of languages symbolic of Westernisation and progress. Languages such as English and French, recognised as global languages, are advocated to facilitate global interaction and engagement. ALs, in most cases, are languages that are not used for communication purposes as their functions are “passive” and more directed to cultural purposes and maintaining an ancestral identity. Yet, ALs have been introduced in the Mauritian curriculum as optional languages.

“Language cultivation” or “language status planning” are terms used in educational linguistics that deals with deciding which languages will and will not be used in a particular community. This is because languages are dynamic, and varieties easily develop “on the basis of territorial, social, functional, temporal and other factors” (Spolsky, 2010, p. 251). As discussed, Mauritius is such a case where the government has developed policies to cater for the teaching of all the languages of the immigrants. Juggling between preserving an ancestral heritage, which has no place or purpose to exist on its own, and teaching a modern language, ALs have been readapted in order to survive in the modern society and various policies have been implemented over time to promote these languages under various appellations. Modern languages, taught as global languages, have been dissociated from their roots. Learners only learn the functional language, and little about the culture associated with it (Fishman, 2007). Kramsch (1993) denies this argument by suggesting that language cannot be separated from culture, noting that one without the other is insignificant. As Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p. 11) point out, “[S]tudying a language without being exposed to its culture is like practising swimming without water”. However, in so doing, how efficient is language teaching in Mauritius, especially ALs which are deeply rooted in the living experiences? Thus, it can be noted that despite the term ‘ancestral language’ being used, all languages taught in the curriculum as optional languages are taught and examined as modern languages.

2.3.4 Idea of representation and reconnection

The concept of reconnection, that is aligning with one’s identity (Bardua, 2016), especially cultural identity, is fundamental while discussing ALs. In the context of this study, for instance, as people are living multiple identities, ALs exist in specific spheres, and users of the language foreground their identity and usage of the language when in certain specific settings and at particular times (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). Jayaram (2000) explains that diasporic languages are embedded within politico-economic and socio-cultural experiences, and it is common for the users of the language to foreground their linguistic identities, symbolic of their ancestral roots. As Fishman and Garcia (2010, p. 520) claim, “[L]anguage, as a social construction, is not only an instrument for communication but also a semiotic and symbolic tool”. Thus, language becomes representative of the experiences and social identities of its users, and ALs are the links to ancestral identities.

The community of immigrant Indians strongly identified with their traditions and beliefs, holding on to them tenaciously in order to overcome the oppressive conditions of indenture. The effective preservation of traditional Hindu patterns in Mauritius was also largely

helped by the British Government's official policy to favour the continuation of religious and social rituals, festivities, and celebrations (Srilata, 2010). The people of Mauritius are in a continual process of negotiating their cultural identities, which varies according to the context, individuals, communities, and environments they interact with. The idea of representation and reconnection are omnipresent, and the role of languages is important for notions of ethnic and ancestral representations.

The AL is one of the mediating factors between the past and present. The act of reconnecting with the past has often been depicted as a symbol of purity. As a result, cultural politics have played an important role in cultivating a sense of belongingness to the past and maintaining that connection with the land of origin – India for Indian languages, and China for Modern Chinese (Hollup, 2000; Eisenlohr, 2007; Bissoonauth, 2010; Fishman, 2010). Reconnection to a diasporic land, re-enactment of diasporic traditions, and allegiances to diverse lands of origin (or reinventing Indianness as Claveyrolas [2017] puts it) are issues that cannot be neglected while studying the Mauritian linguistic landscape (Mehta, 1995; Hollup, 2000; Eisenlohr, 2007). An anecdote that creates much controversy among the Mauritian population, according to the newspaper *L'Express* (2018, May 2), is the appellation or term 'Mini-India', used to refer to Mauritius, mainly in the socio-political or diasporic field. On one hand, I would agree that while the country is an independent nation, referring to it as 'Mini-India' only delineates a nation composed of people of different origins. Srilata Ravi (2012) refers to this situation as the 'Indian Ocean imperialism', where India, as an economic superpower, uses its location to control other countries. However, on the other hand, it is important not to disregard that cultural politics have significantly shaped this country, predominantly composed of a population from India, into a 'Mini India' or 'Little India' (Claveyrolas, 2017).

What an outsider would experience in Mauritius in terms of cultural diversity includes to a large extent what would be experienced in India. The re-enactment of diasporic traditions, as described by Eisenlohr (2007), who focusses on the idea of Pilgrimage (Hindu and Muslims), is significant. Even the minority cultures from India like Telugu, Tamil and Marathi celebrate festivals or ethno-religious events in their land of origin with the same fervour (Hollup, 2000; Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust (MTTCT), 2012; Bhaskar, 2015; Watt, 2019). Each ethnic group has been allotted a national public holiday when a cultural or religious activity is celebrated (Table 2.1). It is worth noting that among the 15 public holidays, nine holidays are dedicated to the different ethnic groups that migrated to Mauritius, leaving only

three for national or historical events. However, it is important to acknowledge that most of these holidays are embraced and celebrated by the entire nation, regardless of ethnicity. This inclusive celebration is a positive feature of Mauritius as a multicultural nation (Le Mauricien, 2016). Nevertheless, these continue to reinforce the allegiance to the cultures of the different linguistic/ethnic groups.

Table 2.1 Examples of Public Holidays in Mauritius

National	Ethno-religious holidays and Diaspora	
Abolition of slavery	Thaipooosam Cavadee	Tamil – India
	Maha Shivaratree	North India
	Ugadi	Telugu – India
Independence and Republic Day	Eid Ul Fitr	Muslims – India
	Ganesh Chaturthi	Marathi – India
	Divali	All Hindus – India
Arrival of indentured labourers	Chinese Spring Festival	China
	All Saints Day	Catholic – India; Europe
	Christmas	Christian – India; Europe

The reconnections with India also manifest in the establishment of places of worship mirroring those found in India. Jones (2015) illustrates how the absence of such places causes an identity crisis and sense of loss among immigrants, as seen in the London context. In instances where a particular ‘desired deity’¹⁵ is absent in the temple, a sense of loss is experienced. It is to be noted that in the Mauritian context, ALs exist primarily, apart from in teaching contexts, in religious places (Stein, 1986; Bissoonauth, 2010; Tirvassen, 2009). The idea of building these religious places of worship, itself consists of projecting one’s adherence to a particular ethnic group, each ethnic group having its own temple (Sauzier-Uchida, 2008). It is also to be noted that many statues of several Hindu deities have been built in Mauritius, each representing different places of worship existing in India.

¹⁵ Different people, though from the same ethnoreligious group, pray to different deities, depending on several factors. For example, in Hinduism, the three main deities are Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, and Lord Vishnu.

In terms of radio and television programmes, the high proportion of programmes dedicated to Indian cinematography (Bollywood/Tollywood) cannot be neglected. A huge proportion of the Mauritian population enjoy watching Hindustani movies, a culture in India and a pillar of its economy (Times of India, 2017). Thus, the existence of several markers makes the reconnection process with the place of origin a smooth one (Eisenlohr, 2008). Even India, as a diasporic nation, encourages such reconnecting processes through cultural exchange programmes. One example, fundamental to this study, is the opportunity to study in India through the ICCR scholarships. Many AL teachers of the country are the product of the system of scholarship, especially when tertiary studies in the ALs were not accessible in Mauritius.

Even today, four to five generations after indenture immigration, Mauritians are able to reconnect to places of their origin in terms of language and culture (Bissoonauth, 2010). This is in contrast to other societies that have undergone massive immigration. In many instances, there is a generation and culture gap that builds up, leading to a situation where there is complete culture and language loss, making reconnection impossible (Jayaram, 2000; Fang, 2017). This is pointed out in an article by Cho (2019) who states:

As they get older and start to rediscover their identity, wanting to connect to grandparents or relatives living in their native country, they're unable to speak. That's when the sadness and sense of disconnection comes in (Cho, 2019, p. 120).

Thus, it can be seen how language, the ancestral heritage that has been safeguarded and protected over generations, may be considered a boon in the modern age, where the phenomenon of language and culture loss is more rapid and the consequences more visible.

However, it can be debated that ancestral or heritage languages are also one of the socio-political tools for, in many cases, socio-political priorities and culture politics have dictated policy. Decision-making about language policies is influenced by the agendas of the most powerful groups in a polity (Spolsky, 2004). In the Mauritian context, for example, since the introduction of KM into the curriculum as one of the optional languages in the same category as Oriental languages, there has always been polemics from different quarters (Mahadeo, 2012). Teaching an AL is not only about teaching an additional language to celebrate diversity; culture and politics also play a major role in influencing policies.

India has taken several measures over time to promote and preserve its people that live in other lands (Srilata, 2010). The Indian diaspora has evolved and constitutes an important element in the current globalised world. Considered the 'Mini-India', Mauritius has always

benefited from the measures proposed by India to promote the Indian diaspora (Srilata, 2010; Eisenlohr, 2012; Claveyrolas, 2017). In recent times, India, positioning itself as an economic and cultural superpower, has taken several measures to economically help diasporic countries, to such an extent that the relationship between India and Mauritius has been described as “over-romanticised” by Lexpress (2017, April 18). The relationship between these two countries is such that an economic superpower like India observed one day of mourning when ex-Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, passed away in 2021 as published in India Today (2021, June 4).

Mauritius, a country with 65% of its population being of Indian descent, has always benefited from measures taken by India, including collaboration in socio-economic development programmes as described in Lexpress (2019, March 23). Every year, about 80 scholarships are allocated to Mauritians who wish to pursue tertiary studies in India (MOE, 2018). It is to be noted that slots are reserved for students wishing to pursue studies in the various Indian languages and Indian music and dance (MOE, 2018). Most of the teachers of Indian languages in Mauritius who have studied in India have benefitted from this scheme. The establishment of the MGI, an educational institution and partner of the Ministry of Education to advance oriental languages, during the 1970s, stands as another landmark in the preservation of Indian languages in Mauritius (Peerthum, 1997).

2.4 Being the Ancestral Language Teacher – Experiences

This section deals with the idea of being an AL teacher. Before discussing the experiences of the AL teacher, I present a review of what has been discussed on people’s experiences, focussing on teachers’ experiences in general and subsequently honing in on language teachers’ experiences.

Experience is the process through which people perceive the world around them. This process involves active awareness on the part of the person having the experience, although it is not imperative (Bliss, 2016; Amparo, 2013). Experience is the primary subject of various subfields of philosophy and phenomenology. Dewey’s concept of experience is based on the interaction between the human being and the world. It considers all aspects of human existence, its being in the world, and a methodological point of departure. Experience is a central aspect of this interaction and is thus a communicative, historic, and cultural phenomenon rather than an individual or mental one (Dewey, 1934; Honr, 2012).

2.4.1 Teachers' experiences

Teachers are individuals whose lives are encompassed by their accumulation of beliefs, emotions, attitudes, observations, motivations, and the transformations they undergo over time within the profession (Marton, 1986; Pajares, 1992; Borg, 2006; Putman, 2012). Researchers studying experiences have worked on both personal and professional living experiences of teachers (Pajares, 1992; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Hargreaves, 2001). A teacher is embedded with the content knowledge which forms part of his or her daily life in whatever situation he or she is. Moreover, being a teacher in any specific domain also has social implications as he or she is in constant contact with students, colleagues, and parents both during and outside school hours. Therefore, teaching, being a job that requires applying skills in different situations and in various conditions, makes it a highly emotional profession (Hargreaves, 2001).

Highlighting the relationships between teachers' emotions and their professional practice, Pajares (1992) states that understanding the experiences of teachers encompasses a range of orientations, including psychological, sociological, organisational, physiological, and philosophical perspectives. Understanding these will allow me to know how experiences are constructed and pay attention to all the above orientations while studying experiences. Marton and Booth (1997) describe a way of experiencing something as a "way of discerning from, and relating it to the context". Therefore, the individual is constantly in a process of perceiving, uncovering, and observing based on the context in which he or she is. In other words, experiences encompass an internal relationship between the subject and the world, i.e., the relationship between the teacher and the phenomenon. The internal relationship fully depends on personal predispositions, and it is built over a period of time in a particular context. Experiences therefore exist in layers of socio emotional elements that build the personality, beliefs, and behaviour of the teacher over time.

Phenomenographic studies have helped to analyse teachers' experiences by giving meanings to their attitudes, perceptions, and feelings (Marton, 1986; Hitchcok, 2006, 2015). Teachers are in constant negotiation with emotional relationships with learners, content taught, the teaching environment, and everything related to the subject taught. However, as the content taught differs in nature, teaching experiences are different depending on the nature of subject taught. The experiences of a science teacher, for instance, will inherently differ from those of a language teacher. Experiences also depend on the status of the subject being taught, the targeted students, and how the subject is viewed or used in the system. The next section discusses what researchers have found regarding the experiences of language teachers.

2.4.2 Teachers' motivation of teaching an ancestral language

Language teaching practices are enlightened by beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of the learning process, and the nature of the teaching (Pajares, 1992; Nunan, 2004). Languages have various functions depending on the context in which they are taught. Languages, as discussed in previous sections, are also vehicles of culture, civilisation, and ideas, depending on the context used. Thus, the language teachers' experiences develop gradually, influenced by a combination of both internal factors of the individual, such as motivation and personal interest in the subject, as well as external factors like educational policies (Odden & Carolyn, 2010). A common assertion is that a language teacher's attitude towards a specific target language and the rationale behind selecting that language to teach symbolise the individual's aspirations for the future. These aspirations might encompass endeavours such as fulfilling parental expectations, attaining career advancement rewards, enhancing income, or promoting the language itself (Borg, 2008).

Teachers' emotions, which is one aspect of experiences, are mediated by social structures like ethnic or community background, cultural tools, and identity (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Frenzel, 2014). The status of the language in its local setting and the social aspects attached to the language influence the experiences of teachers. Favourable emotions of teachers highlight and intensify their teaching experiences, whereas negative emotions create dissatisfaction (Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2012). Arguments on the link between language and identity have been promoted within the sociology of ethnicity and nationalism, where a social-constructivist view of ethnic and national identities has long held sway, showing that ethnicity is a largely constructed identity (May, 2003).

Teaching a language could also have deeper motives. For instance, the survival of one's identity or ancestral roots in a particular context is the main motive for heritage or AL teachers (Fishman, 2007; Brutt Griffler, 2008; Colla, 2018). Sociolinguists lay much emphasis on the identity factors and ethnicity related to language teaching (Fishman, 2007). The presence of the AL is usually deeply embedded in the daily lives of teachers of ALs compared to teachers of other languages. Fishman (2007) asserts that the AL teacher demonstrates loyalty to the language, and teaching of the AL is guided by social, cultural, historical, and pedagogical factors (Okemaw, 2019). For example, these factors include proximity to ethno-religious communities, the history and evolution of those communities, or the ways in which teaching has been carried out over generations.

However, the latter perspective has faced opposition from May (2003), who presents an argument concerning the separability of language and identity. May argues that individuals might adopt a different language due to economic or social motivations, suggesting that language and identity are not inseparably linked. For instance, the Sindhis community in Malaysia do not mind shifting to English, as language does not serve as an identity symbol for them (Khemlani-David, 1998). A similar situation has been observed in Mauritius, where many individuals have shifted to French, a language regarded as prestigious and beneficial for social advancement (Tirvassen, 2017). Edwards (1990) supports this perspective, asserting that loyalty to a specific language endures only when economic and social circumstances are conducive to it (May 2006; Tirvassen 2009).

Despite the fact that ALs are taught in settings dominated by other languages and cultures, in most cases, there are elements of homogeneity among teachers and learners of the specific language, e.g., in terms of ethnic and cultural background. These can be in the form of social background, race, ethnicity, or religious background. The teaching environment therefore plays a crucial role in the experiences of the AL teacher (Jolly, 1995; Lacerda et al., 2004; Miller, 2007; Johnson, 2009). This leads to a unique experience and a driving force that may not be present in other language classes. Therefore, through engagement with AL learners, teachers form professional identities, and these are crucial elements of teachers' experiences and teacher development (Danielewicz, 2001).

2.4.3 Nationalism – Unity in diversity and multiple identities

Having shown that AL teachers' experiences are guided by motivations and that they show loyalty to the language they teach (Fishman, 2007), it is pertinent to contemplate the extent to which the teachers of Telugu are motivated by the policies and spirit of nationalism. In this context, teacher agency emerges as a crucial focal point, overshadowing the influence of the structure of the educational policies (Priestley et al., 2015). Following Grosjean's (1984) assertion that people "use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people, one would wonder what is the aim and experience of the AL teacher when teaching an ancestral language" (p. 12). This query also delves into how various teachers of different ALs can effectively collaborate to teach languages that hold deep cultural and linguistic significance, all while striving to foster a harmonious multicultural nation, as encapsulated in the words of the country's first Prime Minister::

It is our belief that if the languages of Mauritius are preserved, it will help preserve the essential cultural values of our different communities. Through the synthesis of these

various cultures alone, we will create a united culture of Mauritius in which we can cooperate (Hansard, 2010, p. 75).

Engaged in the promotion of their respective languages, to what degree and within which contexts do teachers emphasise their identity as a Telugu teacher? Does this involve multiple identity foregrounding, akin to the concepts outlined by Homi Bhabha (1994) and Malouf (2007)? Or does it potentially foster an extreme sense of fanaticism that counters the ideals of nationalism? How do these teachers navigate the delicate balance of fostering unity within diversity?

2.4.4 Telugu teachers' experience – Engagement and reason of being

Despite the fact that no study has been carried out targeting the experiences of Telugu teachers in the Mauritian context specifically, there has been research on the teaching of Telugu in the context, which outlines the situation and the conditions in which teachers of Telugu have been operating. Bhaskar (2017) highlights that Telugu teachers within the Mauritian context operate within a distinct environment. The role and engagement of Telugu teachers with the language transcend the boundaries of their working hours, despite it not being a vernacular employed for cognitive purposes or a language employed for cognitive functions. Most Telugu teachers are socially attached to the language and find themselves engaged in activities (Sokappadu, 2016; Luthmoodoo, 2013; Bhaskar, 2017).

Furthermore, the language persists solely among those who have acquired proficiency through learning it. Many of the elder-generation teachers initially began their teaching journey in extension schools, mainly with the aim of promoting the language and preserving the heritage. Conducting classes under such circumstances tends to emphasise activity-based learning, with the gratification stemming from the personal fulfilment of safeguarding the language's existence (Bhaskar 2017; Luthmoodoo, 2013; Sokappadu, 2016).

However, becoming a Telugu teacher has also presented an avenue for social upward mobility, particularly among the generation that has reaped the benefits of educational policies, completed their studies, and achieved proficiency in Telugu. This proficiency automatically qualifies them to assume the role of a Telugu teacher, allowing them to capitalise on this opportunity. This underscores what May (2003) elucidates as rational choices concerning ethnolinguistic alignment, wherein an individual's decision is primarily influenced by the potential social and material advantages it would offer. This rationale also clarifies the

phenomenon where numerous students opt for ALs, aiming to capitalise on scholarships provided by the Indian government.

Considering that teachers typically acquire the language through formal educational contexts rather than being native speakers, their proficiency levels often fall short of those of Telugu speakers in India. This discrepancy in proficiency can significantly influence their professional experiences (Bhaskar, 2017; Lemarchand-Chauvin & Tardieu, 2018). Teachers, in many cases, are themselves learners of the language constantly upgrading their proficiency formally or informally (Poloogadoo, 2012). This quest of reaching a native standard has been omnipresent since the introduction of the AL in the formal curriculum as a computed subject. Concerns emerged within the Telugu community that students might not attain the required proficiency level, and thus be penalised in the proposed reform compared to other ALs which were considered easier and more accessible, and could thus achieve the academically desired level (Sokappadu, 2000).

Another important aspect highlighted during the investigation of teaching Telugu in Mauritius was the dualities of being a minority language in the curriculum (Bhaskar, 2017; Poloogadoo, 2012). The classroom size is often small, ranging from one to 10 students (Bhaskar, 2017). While some teachers claim that this is very helpful in terms of classroom management by facilitating individualised attention and completing the syllabus, opposing views insist that certain teachers and students, due to their minority status, face discrimination and are not allocated essential resources, such as dedicated classrooms and access to multimedia labs (Poloogadoo, 2012; Sokappadu, 2023).

Additionally, other subjects are often prioritised and, particularly at higher levels, students are encouraged to focus on different disciplines (Sokappadu, 2007). Nevertheless, many studies researching AL and heritage language maintenance have underscored the pivotal role of the teacher as a critical stakeholder (Spolsky, 2019; Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010).

2.5 Problem – Gap in the Literature

The study explores the experiences of teachers who are teaching a subject that is different due to its socio-cultural, socio-political, and functional factors. Existing studies have not focused on the experiences of teachers living and teaching such a language in a context where the language is being taught with the purpose of remembering their origins and remaining true to their culture. Analysing teachers' experiences will facilitate the unravelling of the complexity

of the teaching of languages in an exogenous, multicultural, and multilingual society like Mauritius, the birth of which is embedded in colonisation, slavery, and imported indenture. ALs are also kept vibrant because of the ties with the one-time mother land; without the AL, the community will be orphans of their roots, and will experience the feeling of “loss” and “void”. Unpacking the experiences of teachers teaching such languages will thus help understand teaching experiences from different perspectives.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed relevant and pertinent research conducted in this field to shed light on the topic under study. This helped provide an in-depth understanding of the main variables focused on in this research. Several key insights were illuminated. Multilingualism and language policies in Mauritius, more specifically in the field of education, were extensively explored. The concept of ancestral language and research carried out in this field and the specificity of this phenomenon in the context were analysed. Literature on teachers’ experience was reviewed, emphasising how the experiences of teachers teaching ALs are unique and need to be explored. The next chapter will deal with the theoretical framework that helped frame this study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter delves into the theoretical framework that provides a conceptual lens for the study. Serving as the foundational blueprint, the theoretical framework guides and structures the philosophical, epistemological, and analytical approach adopted in this research. Thus, it plays a pivotal role in shaping the research direction, drawing upon established theories to provide a coherent explanation of various phenomena and relationships. In essence, the theoretical framework acts as the interpretive lens through which the data is analysed. The research is deeply rooted in the realms of sociolinguistics and educational linguistics, encompassing an examination of diverse concepts and constructs. To understand the reasons behind the experiences of AL teachers, a social perspective was adopted, and their experiences were interpreted to answer the research questions. Within this context, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1987) was employed as a lens to interpret the experiences of the Telugu teachers. The main constructs of this model have been juxtaposed with constructs like 'minority languages identity', 'language preservation', and 'sociocultural perspective to languages', to explore and explain the teachers' experiences.

3.1 Overview

Following the introduction (section 3.0) and the overview (section 3.1), section 3.2 introduces Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a framework for this study. Subsequently, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as the theoretical lens for this study is presented in section 3.3. Attention then shifts to the important constructs related to the framework in section 3.4, where dominating and dominated languages are discussed, revealing the intricate coexistence and competition that exists among languages within specific contexts. A subsection portrays how minority language users negotiate the foregrounding of their identity. Section 3.5 deals with approaches to language preservation, while section 3.6 provides a comprehensive discussion on socio-cultural perspectives to languages. Finally, section 3.7 summarises the insights and findings presented in this chapter.

3.1.1 Overview of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1987), initially developed to study a child's development in their environment, has been adopted and extended to different fields of study. Evolving into Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, its scope has expanded to encompass the developmental dynamics of adolescents within their environments. Building upon this foundation, Velez and Soto-Crespo (2017) reconceptualised the theory, emphasising the importance of culture within the different layers, thereby showing its centrality in human development. Subsequently, Navaro and Tudge (2022) further refined the theory to bridge the gap between the physical and virtual ecosystems, with adolescents at the centre.

Figure 3.1 illustrates Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

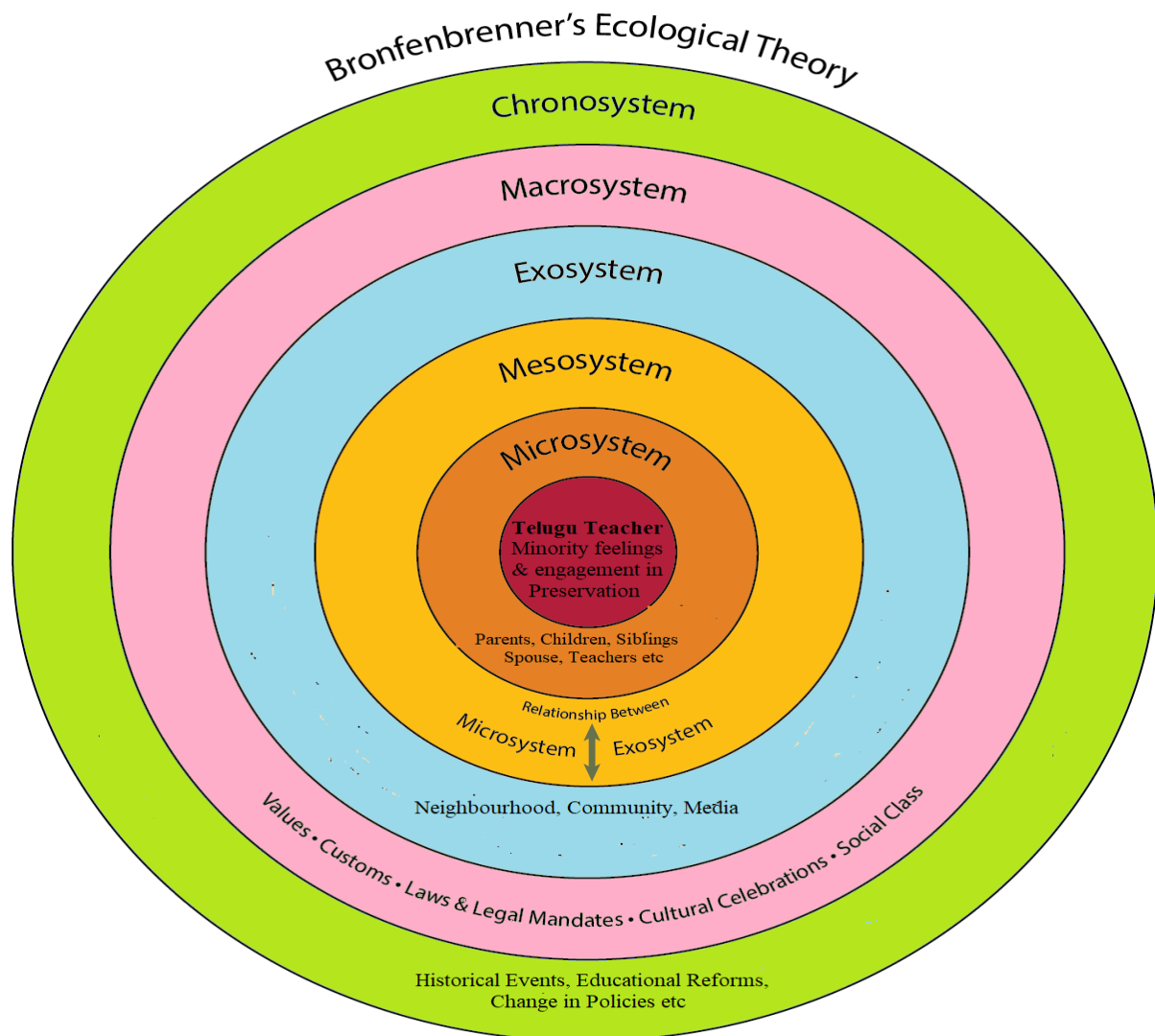


Figure 3.1. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Guy-Evans, 2020)

3.1.1.1 The microsystem

The microsystem is the first level of Bronfenbrenner's theory. It comprises the things that have direct contact with the individual, which in this case is the Telugu teacher, as well as parents, siblings, and teachers. They are the ones who interact with the Telugu teacher in their day-to-day living, influencing their experiences to a great extent. Analysis of the microsystem of the Telugu system will provide insight into and a better understanding of the teachers' experiences.

3.1.1.2 The mesosystem

The mesosystem consists of the relationships between the microsystem and the exosystem. For example, it can be the link between the educational stakeholders like learners' parents and teachers, or the teacher and school management. These interactions are major elements in the lives of the Telugu teachers and, in many instances, they themselves bridge the gap between the two systems. Therefore, the lens adopted for analysis of data will also take into consideration this aspect of the teacher.

3.1.1.3 The exosystem

The exosystem incorporates other formal and informal social structures, which do not themselves contain the individual, but indirectly influence them as they affect one of the microsystems. An example in the case of the current study is the neighbourhood of the Telugu teachers and the existence of the Telugu temples at community level which acts as a platform where the language exists. Another example is the media, where the written and spoken language is visible.

3.1.1.4 The macrosystem

The macrosystem contains those cultural elements that affect the individual and everyone around them. Ethnicity in this case forms part of the macrosystem as the culture that individuals are immersed within, may influence their beliefs and perceptions about events that transpire in life.

3.1.1.5 The chronosystem

The chronosystem consists of all of the environmental changes that occur over one's lifetime which influence development, including major life transitions, and historical events. Examples in this case can be educational policies or educational reforms, which have a major influence in shaping the socio-linguistic landscape.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Model as My Theoretical Lens

3.2.1 Extension of Bronfenbrenner's model

In this study, I have used the different systems of Bronfenbrenner's model to understand a culturally and linguistically minority group of teachers in a multilingual context. Two prominent figures, namely Darling (2007) and Hernandez (2017), have played a pivotal role in shaping my reinterpretation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Hernandez (2017) uses an extension of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development theory as a conceptual tool to understand the behaviour of Latino male learners. In this framework, these learners are placed at the centre, facilitating the examination of the relationships of the various environments in order to gain an understanding of how they influence and shape the latter to engage in continuation school. Their experiences are studied in three different spaces, namely the home environment, the school environment, and the neighbourhood. However, his study focused on the microsystem and the mesosystem only.

According to Darling (2007, p. 268), Bronfenbrenner's framework is not merely "an individual at the center of a series of concentric circles representing microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems". Darling underscores that the essence of Bronfenbrenner's later work lies in its emphasis on the patterns and interrelationships among multiple determinants of development. Additionally, it highlights the dynamic involvement of the developing individual in the process (Darling, 2007). The three features he points out are: 1) the central force in development is the active person, who shapes environments, evokes responses from them, and constantly reacts to them; 2) a fundamental premise of ecological system theory is its phenomenological nature; and 3) the environments differ and are responded to and experienced differently by diverse individuals (Darling, 2007). Therefore, each individual finds "ecological niches" in which distinct processes and outcomes are observed (Darling, 2007).

My study places the teachers at its focal point, recognising that they themselves have been nurtured within environments that have profoundly influenced their experiences, ultimately shaping their identities and contributing to the development of their beliefs and behaviours. This framework is of utmost significance to understanding the link between language and the environment, that is the space in which the Telugu teacher lives, as well as the broader system that controls the policies related to the culture and language. While there is existing research that broadly examines teachers' experiences in terms of job satisfaction

(Baron, 2008), my study is specifically focused on a unique group of educators. These teachers are engaged in instructing a subject that holds personal significance for them, as they have grown up with this language, fostering a deep connection to their cultural roots. Now, as educators, they bear the responsibility of transmitting this language to others, thereby carrying forward their cultural heritage. The latter has been an element omnipresent in the lives of those people whose experiences have been constructed over time, influenced by the environment in which they have been brought up.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which asserts the influence of social environments on human development, unpacks the complexities and layering of the environment in which one grows up in and demonstrates how every facet of one's life is influenced by social factors (Guy-Evans, 2020). In this study, I used the different systems, portrayed in Figure 3.1, to unpack and understand the shaping of the experiences of Telugu teachers in a multilingual space like Mauritius.

3.2.2 Theoretical constructs

Based on the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, I have identified different constructs and concepts that are linked in terms of the environment. At the centre is the Telugu teacher. Adopting a sociocultural stand, I was in a better position to explore the teachers' experiences and understand how they mediate the use and the study of the language. This perspective also suggests that experiences and linguistic identities are not determined by essence or nature, but are derived from and maintained through social interaction (Guy-Evans, 2020). Thus, subjective experiences are dynamic, causing sociocultural concepts and living conditions. Furthermore, the involvement of the teachers in the systems and their attachment to any specific type of human activities are products of social conventions and give meaning to their identities (Fishman, 2007). Figure 3.2 shows the different constructs of the theoretical framework.

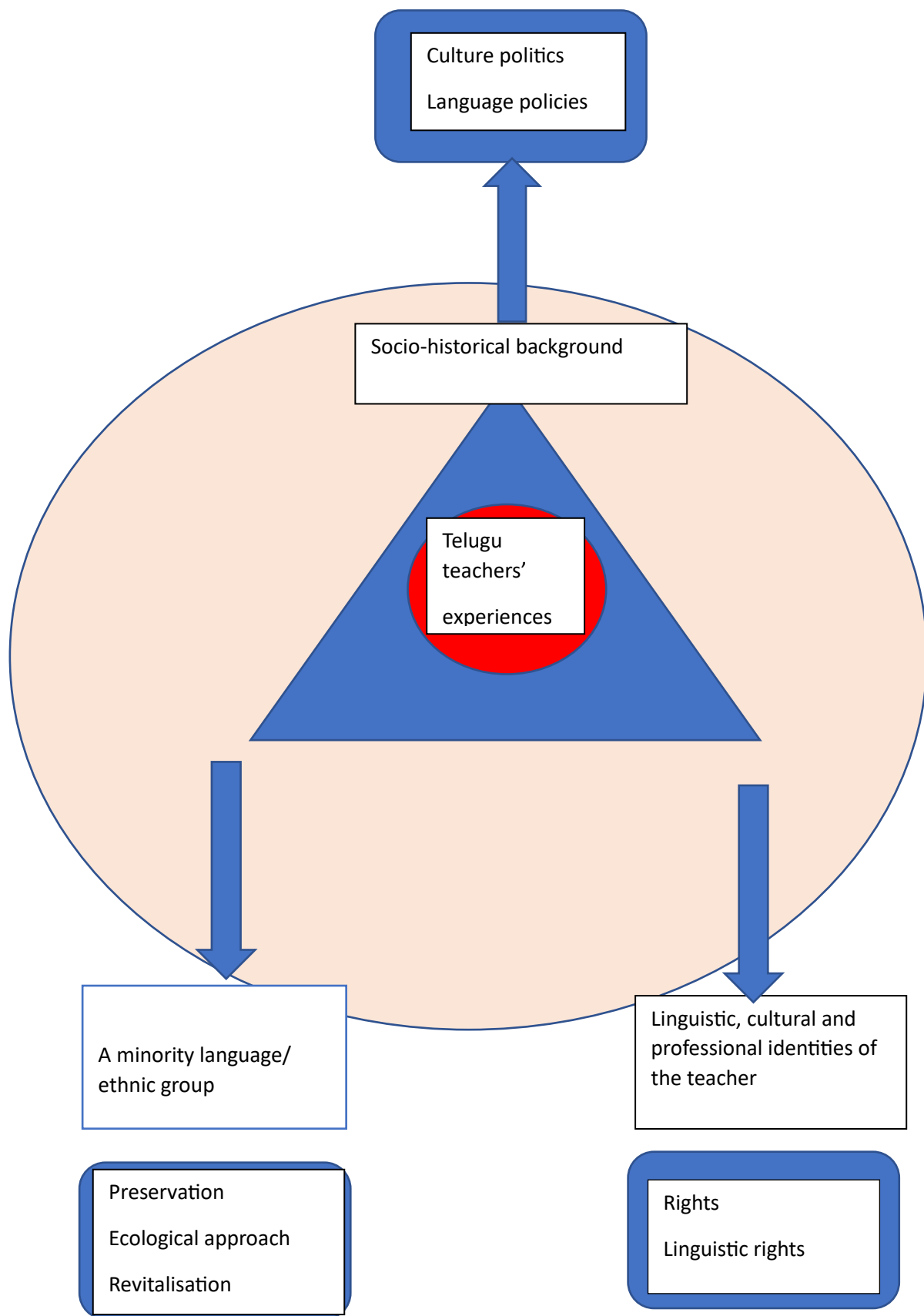


Figure 3.2. Constructs of the theoretical framework

In the following sections, I analyse the different constructs and theories.

3.3 Language supremacy and the place of ‘Minority’ language

3.3.1 Language power - Language death and language coexistence

In Chapter 2, I have already discussed how language is a medium of exerting power. Furthermore, I delved into the intricate linguistic landscape of Mauritius, which has witnessed a myriad of linguistic processes. These include processes like *glottophagia*, language loss, language shift, minting of languages, and the phenomenon of creolisation. These linguistic dynamics have been influenced by processes like colonisation, the experiment of the indenture system, as well as language engineering efforts following independence and nation building. Such influences have repercussions on the status and fate of languages in many contexts, including Mauritius (Sauzier-Uchida, 2008).

While it is true that languages are in constant competition and dominant languages assimilate fewer dominant languages, it is also true that many languages can coexist (Paulston, 1994; Baldauf & Kaplan, 2004; Kamwangamalu, 2008). Multilingualism today is not the addition or count of languages used by people in a context, but their coexistence and usage (Sauzier-Uchida, 2008). In the modern globalised world dominated by exodus, immigrants in many contexts are allowed to keep their languages as many nations are receptive to pluralism. While this phenomenon is in constant rise, Mauritius, through its linguistic landscape, is already an example of what other nations want to implement. There exists a coexistence of languages under one umbrella, as discussed in Chapter 1.

However, maintaining many languages, as observed in the context of Mauritius, is not without its challenges, encompassing both financial and symbolic implications. This aspect has been subject to questioning by several scholars (Tirvassen, 2009; Hansard, 2010; May, 2015), prompting a debate about its feasibility. The practicality of adopting such an approach may pose difficulties for countries aiming to embrace multilingualism, particularly when it pertains to safeguarding 'minority' languages characterised by a smaller number of speakers. One measure alone, exemplified by the operation of extension schools as mentioned in the excerpt below, incurs a contentious expense for the government. In a debate in the parliament, a minister stated the following:

Government has obligated a sum of around Rs52 million annually to assist these schools in the advancement of the ancestral languages. Rs52 million is quite a substantive amount of money (Hansard, 2010 p. 78).

Hence, there arises a significant question regarding whether these languages should be actively preserved or allowed to naturally decline and fade away. Proponents of ecological linguistic diversity, among whom the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stands out, champion language maintenance policies. However, the question remains: why should minority languages be preserved and how far is this feasible? Some go further and conclude that the world must be “saved from its inevitable demise at whatever cost and at whomever’s expense” (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p. 224). In fact, while discussing the concept of multilingualism, many have challenged this particular stand and trend developed in mainstream sociolinguistics (Fishman, 1984; May, 2015; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

In the next two sections, I elaborate on the term “minority” and discuss “linguistic identity” in order to better comprehend the idea of preservation.

3.3.2 Minority languages – Definition and usage of the term “minority”

Whether there is competition among languages in a context or they are stabilised and coexist, one distinction will always be on majority and minority basis (Paulston, 1994; Freeman, 2007; Léglise, 2007). However, within the Mauritian context, the characterisation of a 'minority language' and a 'majority language' is subject to a distinct set of complexities. On one hand, certain sociolinguists classify a language as minority based on the number of speakers who identify with that language. However, it is important to note that a language can hold minority status within a specific context or across multiple coexisting contexts. Paradoxically, a language that might be dominant within one country could concurrently occupy a minority position within another.

Likewise, Telugu is a dominant language in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in India where it is the native language and spoken by over 80 million people (Ethnologue, 2020). However, Telugu transforms into a minority language within particular countries such as Mauritius, Malaysia, South Africa, Kenya, and Fiji. This scenario is mirrored in languages like Tamil and Marathi, both boasting more than 50 million users within India, while simultaneously holding minority language status within the Indian diaspora. Thus, in such contexts, it is rather the ethnic and religious characteristics that build the identity of its users.

Linguistic identity, discussed in detail in the following section, is thus an important concept when discussing language preservation among minorities.

Modern Chinese as an AL for approximately 14,000 inhabitants, is classified as a minority language. This classification, however, does not reflect the language's growing significance. The number of learners engaging with the Chinese language at the primary and secondary levels is on a consistent upward trajectory. This surge can be attributed to both economic motives and China's ascent as a global superpower (MOE, 2015).

Another significant aspect emphasised by Capotorti (2007) is the contextual backdrop where the language is designated as a minority. It is worth highlighting that the aforementioned ALs indeed possess a minority status within the specific milieu of my study, which is situated in Mauritius. In contrast, as elaborated in Chapter 2, language attitudes have a substantial influence on the status a language holds within a given context (Yadla, 2016; Tirvassen, 2019). Furthermore, it is important to mention that the classification of languages like Marathi, Telugu, or Tamil as "minority" within Mauritius is subject to debate. While individuals aligned with these languages perceive themselves as minorities and their numerical representation is indeed minority-level (each garnering around 5% of the population), it is essential to recognise that policies are in place to safeguard their interests. Consequently, it would be inaccurate to presume that they occupy a 'dominated' position. They owe their existence to favourable policies by authorities. Moreover, these languages are a subset of a group of languages (Indian languages) which form part of the majority of the population, and thus in a dominant position.

Language policies in Mauritius have for a long time ignored Kreol, which has been marginalised, even though it is the mother tongue of the majority of the population (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2017). It is only recently after much struggle by proponents of the language that it has been included in the curriculum, as an optional language (Natchoo, 2020; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020). Therefore, the right to recognise a first language, that is what sociolinguists (Kloss, 1977; May 2015) call 'tolerance oriented' language rights', has been ignored, showing a heavy bias of the authorities visible if one compares the AL situation with the Kreol one. The issue of the minority/majority is very visible here, where the language of the majority receives the treatment usually assigned to a minority language and a minority language is given priority over a majority language.

3.3.3 Linguistic identity

Many ethnic groups of the world are identified by the languages they speak such as German, Polish, English, Tamil, or Telugu. However, these labels do not always guarantee proficiency or affiliation to their languages (Yadla, 2016). These labels are also cultural, ethnic, or even political, as much as they are linguistic (Yadla, 2016). In this section, I focus on how linguistic identity, being a major concept in problematising affiliation to languages, has been a matter of debate. Linguistic identity is a social phenomenon fully dependent on the context and time. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Central Government of India unprecedentedly declared Andhra Pradesh a separate state on linguistic basis following representations based on linguistic identity, and then, after several decades, socio-economic interests took over and the state was bifurcated in 2014 into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana despite the linguistic affinity of the people of the two Telugu states (Yadla, 2016). Another example in the Indian context is the opposition to implement India's three language policies in many states, mainly the Dravidian ones (Yadla, 2016), for they believe that speaking other languages, like Hindi, will lead to cultural erosion.

In the context of this study, linguistic identity will also be analysed from the lens of a minority language in a multilingual context. This approach is pertinent due to individuals who align themselves with languages possessing a limited number of speakers, such as Telugu, identifying themselves as members of a 'minority' group. Adopting an essentialist approach, Fishman (2007) observes that linguistic identity is more visible amongst minorities (Fishman, 2000). Hognu (2011) affirms that language is an important component of identity and culture for many groups. Maintaining their distinct identity and culture is usually important to minority group members' self-esteem, which affects the degree of success achieved in the society (Hognu, 2011; Fang, 2017; Colla, 2018). This idea is also supported by Jayaram (2000) who adds that attachment and affiliation to a minority language is more visible in the case of diasporic users existing in minority societies compared to the native users of the language where they are dominant.

Venkanah and Auleear Owoodally (2023) argue that members of the Telugu community use faith practices to maintain, articulate, and publicly display their ethno-religio-linguistic identity and distinctiveness within the larger Hindu community in Mauritius. However, although the concept 'advocacy of minority languages rights' is well established in the field of sociolinguistics and educational linguistics, researchers like Paulston (1994) and May (2006) have challenged the essentialist approach as they believe that language is not an important

feature in defining who the person is and it is a surface characteristic of ethnic identity. May (2003) explains that, according to Brutt-Griffler (2002), retaining one's AL for identity purposes is not the same as living a life delimited by the language and foreclosing the opportunity for mobility by not accepting the dominant language. May (2003) further explains that if language use is merely a surface feature of identity, adopting another language would only affect language use, but not the identity itself. This to some extent explains how cultures have continued to exist despite language assimilation. Furthermore, research in the English Foreign Language (EFL) domain has shown that individual learners dissociate language with its culture (Chomsky, 1965; Khemlani-David, 1998; Senior, 2006).

Post-colonial multilingual countries like Mauritius have, on the one hand, tried to protect the rich culture and values attached to indigenous native languages, considered an asset and identity by the government and, on the other, have been receptive to the dominating language in order to develop economically and socially (Freeman, 2007; Khubchandani, 1997; Léglise, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2005).

Irrespective of adherence to one's AL or language abandonment, it can be said that a language that exists in one's environment plays a role in shaping one's identity, both at an individual level (within the community) and at a national level (contributing to being a multilingual nation) (Fishman, 2000). On the one hand, as Mauritius did not have any indigenous native language as such, the Kreol, spoken by the slaves, has been in existence for many years. It is well-established on the island and spoken by nearly the whole population (CSO, 2022). The language is the unifying factor among Mauritians. This sense of belonging to the language is more visible among those abroad, whereby the language is the common unifying element (Le Mauricien, 2020).

On the other hand, the Indian languages brought by the indentured labourers still exist and are symbolic of their speakers' resistance to colonialism and loyalty to their roots (Eisenlohr, 2007). These languages thus reflect the identities of the immigrants, slaves, and indentured labourers – descendants of the African, Indian, and Chinese people – who endured difficulties after leaving their homelands to settle in a new land (Bissoonauth, 2010). Thus, while the individual has a national identity, he or she also demonstrates an ethnic one (Nirsimooloo-Gayan, 2007). This brings to the fore the multiple identities among people in this context. The majority of Mauritians bear multiple identities, which are negotiated and foregrounded depending on the prevailing context or community (Eisenlohr, 2007). The individual employs varying languages in distinct locations, settings, or interactions with

different people. Even during the period when debates were limited to bilingualism, this idea was supported by Grosjean (1984), who affirmed that people “use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Different aspects of life normally require different languages” (p. 22).

To illustrate this further, Telugu, being the AL of the Telugu community, is used by people of Telugu origin to some extent at religious functions, ethnic gatherings, or inside the Telugu classroom among learners of Telugu or with Telugu teachers (Luthmoodoo, 2013; Sokappadu, 2016). The language may also be used to some extent at home, or in homogenous situations at community level (Sokappadu, 2016). However, the same individual, outside these contexts, may be a totally different personality and use Kreol or French to speak to others or English for written communication. The Telugu speaker, for instance, would not advocate the use of the minority language in the official setting, in the parliament, or by the population, but rather the niche homogenous setting. This enactment of the double identity is a very fluid rather than rigid one, and is present in the day-to-day living experience of the individual (Nirsimloo-Gayan, 2007). This highlights what Amin Malouf (2010, p. 10) states in the opening words of his book, *In the Name of Identity*:

How many times, since I left Lebanon in 1976 to live in France, have people asked me, with the best intentions in the World, whether I felt ‘more French’ or ‘more Lebanese’? And I always give the same answer: ‘Both!’ I say that not in the interests of fairness or balance, but because any other answer would be a lie. What makes me myself rather than anyone else is the very fact that I am poised between two countries, two or three languages and several cultural traditions. It is precisely this that defines my identity. Would I exist more authentically if I cut off a part of myself?.

Thus, it can be noted how multiple identities are lived by an individual. Similarly, according to Homi Bhabha (1994), individuals possess not just one, but multiple identities. Moreover, he asserts that the recognition of these identities is “never the affirmation of a pre-given identity” (p. 64). The latter in his research on post-colonial African identity portrays identity as fluid, relational, and always in flux (Fetson Kalua, 2009). The fluid duality, that is being the Mauritian versus being the Telugu or the Tamilian, is in parallel with the identity drive discussed in Chapter 2. In this context, the Telugu teacher acts as and lives his/her teaching self and experience as a drive, both pushing towards one nation, on one hand, and at the same time pulling away from the nation and towards ancestrality, on the other. This duality emerges as they function as an ‘appointed’ agent tasked with promoting the language. How these

contradictory forces are negotiated and reconciled will be unpacked through the experiences of the teachers.

3.4 Language Preservation

Having discussed how languages have social and psychological worth, I now discuss why preserving a language, especially a minority one, becomes a priority. This extends to both users of the language and to the broader society, encompassing the nation as a whole. Preservation of languages allows the conservation of cultures, which in turn safeguards the community's identification (Fang, 2017; Hongna, 2011; Jayaram, 2010; Oozeerally, 2018; UNESCO, 2018). Linguists have researched language preservation under various lenses and have also discussed means and models of preservation (Fang, 2017; Oozeerally, 2018; UNESCO, 2018). Within the Mauritian context, there are examples of African languages that were eliminated during the colonial period, leaving scars in the sociolinguistic landscape of Mauritius (Moutou, 2009; Teelock, 2009).

While policy makers have had to introduce Kreol in order to fill the void after the loss of African Languages, they continue in their endeavours to preserve all existing languages in order to avoid the same fate. As ALs are taught as optional languages, the impact of dominance or complete assimilation by the prestigious French language or mother tongue Kreol is less. The following sections deal with the various approaches to language preservation with reference to ALs in the Mauritian context. These approaches to language preservation helped in shaping the lens to understanding the experiences of my participants.

3.4.1 Ecological approach to language preservation

The language ecology perspective, first developed by Haugen, “considers the complex web of relationships which exists among the environment, languages and their speakers” (Wendel, 2005, p. 2). Crystal (2003) states that the ecological vision is essential for understanding the phenomenon of language preservation. Researchers further developed this approach by explaining how the language ecology theory pioneered by Haugen is not only a metaphorical statement. From a social perspective, the ‘environment’ consists of the social, economic, and political elements that influence the existence, status, and functions of language (Garner, 2004; Elliason, 2015).

Ecological thinking focuses on looking at systems and their complexities as a whole instead of focusing on separate elements (Garner, 2004; Calvet, 2006; Bahry, 2016). The

language ecology perspective, therefore, promotes the preservation of languages in contexts where they are endangered (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1983; Garner, 1988; Wijayanto, 2005; Wendel, 2005; Elliason, 2015). Linguistically diverse countries are not the ones with most languages but the ones with many languages coexisting (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1983; Fishman, 2002; Gardner 2004; Calvet, 2006; Robinson, 2008; Bahry, 2016). All languages in the ecosystem need to be protected to encourage language diversity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1983; Fishman, 2002; Garner, 2004; Calvet, 2006; Hornberger & Hult, 2008). This preservation or promotion of languages is often achieved through linguistic policies where the languages are taught in the curriculum at different levels.

3.4.2 Language, culture, and religion – Language preservation and resistance to acculturation

Language, culture, and religion are intrinsically interconnected, forming a complex web of influence and interdependence (Fishman, 2007; Balraj & Singh, 2020). Language serves as a powerful tool for the transmission and preservation of cultural and religious beliefs, shaping the identity and worldview of individuals and communities (Balraj & Singh, 2020). Culture, in turn, provides the context and framework through which language is understood, expressed, and enriched, while religion often serves as a guiding force, infusing language and culture with sacred meanings and rituals. Therefore, language is a repository of cultural knowledge, incorporating unique vocabularies, idioms, and metaphors that reflect the religious and cultural perspectives of a particular group. In this sense, language acts as a mirror of culture, providing insights into the beliefs, practices, and worldviews associated with a specific religious tradition.

Religion, on the other hand, exerts a profound influence on language by shaping its structure and usage patterns through religious texts, prayers, and rituals, often conducted in specific languages, connecting individuals to their religious heritage and creating a shared linguistic and cultural experience. Language thus becomes an important marker of religious affiliation, acting as a cohesive force within a religious community and fostering a sense of unity and continuity across generations (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982). The linguistic structures and expressions used within a religious context contribute to the formation of cultural norms and behaviours associated with that religion.

Societies, comprising diverse cultural groups often organised along linguistic lines, commonly experience the phenomenon of acculturation. This occurs due to the presence of dominant cultural groups, be it in terms of numbers, economic influence, or social power. The

dominating groups force other groups to abandon their cultural traditions and adopt that of the dominant culture (Crystal, 2008; Oozeerally, 2018). This is true for many colonial societies, where colonisers forced their slaves to adopt their culture, religion, and language. The phenomenon of acculturation gave birth to an identity crisis among those unfamiliar with their roots, who through the generations forgot their history and culture (Crystal, 2008). Generations that undergo acculturation and assimilation typically retain their original culture's essential elements, resisting the impact of acculturation across successive generations. The erosion of these elements over time results in a significant void (Bataineih, 2009).

Confronting the forces of acculturation and grappling with the detachment from their ancestral culture and homeland, indentured labourers experience a profound challenge. In this context, the resistance and symbolic significance of whatever fragments remain become of paramount importance for certain ethnic groups (Bissoonauth, 2010). Language is one such asset that is desperately preserved as it is symbolic of the heritage of the ancestors that has been bequeathed over generations (Fang, 2017). The descendants of the Indian immigrants in Mauritius have always given considerable importance to the teaching of their languages, be it formally or informally (Bissoonauth, 2010). Therefore, there is an immense cohesion within the group militating over the same goal of preserving an AL.

Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982) highlighted the cohesion between minority socio-ethnic groups in Mauritius in her study. This notion is further underscored by Nirsimloo-Gayan (2007) who demonstrates how ethnic groups are compact. Even within Mauritius, governing bodies such as the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, emphasise keeping the ALs and culture alive by promoting cultural traits. This commitment is manifested through initiatives that promote cultural aspects such as dance, songs, and music, the establishment of cultural centres, and the creation of symbolic places that bolster the cultural identities of distinct groups (Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, 2021).

However, in modern sociolinguistics, many scholars have researched the link between language and culture (Prabhakaran, 1991; May, 2003; Fishman, 2007; Tirvassen, 2009; Mesthrie, 2007; Elmes, 2013). Sociolinguists such as Fishman (2007) have adopted an essentialist approach within mainstream sociolinguistics. They affirm that language and culture are intricately interlinked. May (2003), who has put forth a perspective on the separability of language and culture, elucidates that other social factors, such as class mobility, may be valued in the choice of languages. The Mauritian context has already witnessed this case as many have

shifted to French, considered a prestigious language and one which symbolises social mobility (Tirvassen, 2016).

Mesthrie (2007) further demonstrates how the Indian cultures in the South African context still exist, though the corresponding languages have been assimilated. In fact, some researchers in the field of EFL have demonstrated that culture may not necessarily be a factor in language learning (Chomsky, 1965; Khemlani-David, 1998). Elmes (2013, p. 16) adopts a more balanced opinion to this debate, stating that “While there is no definitive conclusion to exactly how language and culture are related, it is evident through the linguistic choices that people employ that a relationship exists”. He further adds that the relationship may be visible to foreign learners of a language who will find that they are introduced to a culture along with the language (Elmes, 2013). Based on the work of Wardhaugh (2002), Elmes (2013) explains the three claims to the relationship between language and culture: Firstly, the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language perceive the world. Secondly, the language employed by an individual reflects his or her culture and what he or she values. The third claim is that there is no relationship between language and culture.

3.4.3 Language revitalisation

Language revitalisation is an attempt to halt or reverse the decline of a language or to revive an extinct one (Troy & Walsh, 2009). Linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics are fields that have studied minority and endangered language situations, frequently playing a pivotal role in language revitalisation efforts (Tsunoda, 2005). Measures are often carried out by the government, community groups, as well as linguists, through the formulation and implementation of language policies to achieve this end (Spolsky, 2008).

When it comes to maintaining languages, vitality is of key importance. As discussed in the UNESCO Language Vitality Model, nine criteria are taken into consideration to measure whether a language is vital and not threatened with extinction (UNESCO, 2003). These nine indicators, being part of a broader theoretical framework for language vitality, delineate what is necessary to maintain the language. These are: absolute numbers of speakers, intergenerational language transmission, community members’ attitudes towards their own language, shifts in domains of language use, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, type and quality of documentation, response to new domains and media, availability of materials for language education and literacy, and the proportion of speakers within the total population (UNESCO, 2003).

As discussed, in the Mauritian context, ALs have undergone substantial cultural erosion and decline in the number of speakers. In many instances, they are no longer prevalent within specific communities or, in some cases, not spoken at all. This scenario arises due to the presence of majority languages that fulfil cognitive and communicative functions. Thus, the central preoccupation and primary objective of language revitalisation centres around rescuing endangered languages from the brink of extinction within their distinct contexts. This endeavour is not primarily aimed at expanding the language's usage among a larger community. Instead, the overarching goal is to ensure the preservation of the associated culture with the language in that community (Spolsky, 2008; Fang, 2017). Ways of reviving a language include designing a national policy, where all languages are respected and valued and have a role in the language ecology, as discussed previously (Crystal, 2008; Eriksen, 1998; Fang 2017).

However, these endeavours are fraught with intricate complexities, as deliberated by Yogeeswaran (2014) while discussing conceptions on identities in a globalised world. In his social inclusion model, he addresses the challenge of accommodating all existing languages and ethnic minorities, as well as adopting multilingual practices, as a pivotal consideration in the pursuit of establishing nationalism (Yogeeswaran, 2014). Although this has not been the case in Mauritius. The promotion of every existing language has been encouraged for they all have functions that help build and promote the multiculturalism and linguistic diversity of the country (Bissoonauth, 2010; Tirvassen, 2009). Another example of reviving, as Venkanah and Auleear-Owoodally's (2023, p. 3) research demonstrate, is "to revivify and reinvigorate an (imagined) ancestral language (in its oral and written forms) by using a faith practice that has been passed down generations". Therefore, the faith practiced by some communities has been encouraged with the support of socio-cultural and socio-religious organisations. Through its policies, Mauritius has revived many ALs, including Telugu (Bhaskar, 2006; Luthmoodoo, 2013; Sokappadu 2009; Stein, 1986).

3.4.4 Education as the space to enact revitalisation

The 'language in education policy' strategy has been one adopted by the government to teach Western languages as well as promote ALs. As previously discussed, the field of education has served as a medium to strike a balance between imparting languages for epistemological access (global languages) and safeguarding the ontology (mitigating the impact of global languages) inherent in existing ALs embedded with culture. Another reason for the strong will to promote Indian languages lies in the quest for social mobility. A series of language policy decisions aimed at improving the status of Oriental languages were taken by the Prime Minister, Sir

Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, in the 1940s, and continued by Sir Aneerood Jugnauth in the 1990s (Miles 2000). The educational sector was, hence, imparted with the institutional responsibility of settling the identity crisis with regards to ancestral languages (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

In order to implement the promotion of ALs, standardised versions of the different languages existing in Mauritius have been introduced, and teachers have been taught and trained. As discussed in Chapter 1, ALs introduced in the curriculum were even made examinable at a later stage, thus empowering them, despite the fact that many proponents of these languages spoke against ALs being computed for ranking (Sokappadu, 2009). The case of Telugu itself is one such example, where in 1992, the Mauritius Telugu Maha Sabha (MTMS) was against Telugu being examined as an optional language, for it was feared that, being a more difficult subject compared to other ALs and with the lack of adequate resources, students might opt for other ALs and drop Telugu. There was also apprehension that those who opted for the subject might underperform and consequently face disadvantages compared to students who excelled in other ALs (Sokappadu, 2009). Despite the different representations, the state managed to use education as the space to promote ALs, and today, most of the ALs, including Telugu, are ‘alive’ and still being taught because of the measures taken by the state to promote them. Therefore, it is noted that without active language maintenance, language shifts are inevitable in many contexts, and without conscious maintenance, minority languages can disappear in as few as three generations (Fang, 2017).

3.5 The Sociocultural Perspective

Having discussed the identities of the minority and the different preservation constructs, I now argue that languages should not be preserved just because of their role in the language ecosystem but also because of their functions at individual and social levels. ALs in Mauritius, as discussed, are much more than simply language counts in the context, and need to be safeguarded, so that they are not lost. Nothing benefits a country more than to treasure the language and cultures of its various peoples because in doing so, it fosters intergroup understanding and realises greater dividends in the form of originality, creativity, and versatility (Hongna, 2011). It is argued that the existence of any language, be it a minority one or a majority one, is blended in the people and environment in which it exists, and language loss leaves a gap both at individual and environmental level (Calvet, 2006). Replacing one language by another one can fulfil some functions languages have, but not all (Crystal, 2008).

Thus, from a social perspective, Bahry (2016) points out that language, society, and social relations involve human agency and structure, which are determinants in shaping experiences. These are very much present within teachers of the language in the context, who are ambassadors of the language (Bahry, 2016; Borg, 2008).

It is to be noted that in the current linguistic landscape of Mauritius, AL teachers who express a strong sense of belongingness to the language are also ‘paid agents’ by the government, enacting the policies of the country. Understanding languages goes beyond idealised linguistic systems to account more fully for how languages are used in actual circumstances in all their complexities (Agar, 2002). The multiple languages existing in the Mauritian context have diverse functions in different spheres of the society (Bissoonauth, 2010; Eisenlohr, 2008; Tirvassen, 2017). Most of the languages existing in the Mauritian context are taught in formal settings, but outside those formal settings, they also have other attributes to the learners or speakers (Bissoonauth, 2010; Eisenlohr, 2008). For example, while French or Kreol is learnt as a language for communication by an individual, it can also mean more than that for another learner who may identify himself or herself differently with that language (Natchoo, 2020). Teachers teaching Telugu in the Mauritian context, just like those teaching different ALs, operate in a recreated environment where the language exists (Bhaskar, 2006; Poloogadoo, 2015; Sokappadu, 2008).

The importance of context in language teaching has been theorised as socio-cultural perspectives, which emphasise the integrated nature of psychological (individual) and social (environmental) elements in the teaching and learning process (Lantolf, 2006; Mitchell & Miles, 2004; Lacerda et al., 2004; Freeman, 2007). Liddicoat and Crozet (1999) affirm that “language is shaped and framed by culture” (p. 5). ‘*Languaculture*’ is a concept demonstrating that a language includes not only linguistic elements (grammar and vocabulary) but also past knowledge, local and cultural information, habits, experiences, and behaviours (Agar, 2002; Blommaert 2005; Mackerras, 2010). Socio-cultural perspectives point out that content knowledge about language teaching and procedural knowledge are not sufficient (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman, 2002, 2007; Johnson, 2009). Knowledge construction in the participation of specific social activities is essential for AL teaching (Jolly, 1995; Lacerda et al., 2004; Johnson, 2009; Bataineih, 2009). This is supported by the fact that “language acquisition is an emergent consequence of the multi-sensorial embodiment of the information available in ecological adult-infant interaction settings” (Lacerda et al., 2004, p. 2). Crystal (1987) argues that in addition to communicating our ideas, language is used to maintain

comfortable relationships between people. The use of such authentic phrases as “Good morning”, and “Pleased to meet you”, are ritual exchanges of greetings and do not communicate ideas in the usual sense (Elmes, 2013).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory as well as some extensions of the theory. This theoretical framework served as the guiding lens for the study. Additionally, the chapter explored key concepts and constructs, including the paradox of 'minority' languages, linguistic identity, resistance to acculturation, language preservation, education as a tool for language revitalisation and the sociocultural perspective on language preservation. The next chapter of this research unpacks the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

Building on the literature review (Chapter 2) and the establishment of the theoretical framework (Chapter 3), this chapter delves into the intricacies of the research design and methodological approach employed to investigate the experiences of Telugu language teachers in Mauritius. The rationale behind the selection of the research paradigm and approach is elucidated here, highlighting the pivotal role of philosophical foundations in shaping the research design and clarifying the methodologies adopted to enhance the credibility of the findings. The methodological approach designed aims to illuminate the experiences of teachers of Telugu and provided room to interpret and make meaning of the experience of teaching an AL in the multilingual context of Mauritius. In doing so, the three research questions were addresses.

4.1 Overview

This chapter consists of ten sections. Following the introduction (section 4.0) and overview (section 4.1), section 4.2 elaborates on the research design, highlighting the rationale for its selection. Section 4.3 then addresses the intricacies of sampling, while section 4.4 explores the strategies employed for data generation. These strategies encompass multiple phases and diverse tools, including questionnaires, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. The subsequent section focuses on the aspects of trustworthiness and ethical considerations, strategically integrated to bolster the credibility of the study (section 4.5). Moving forward, section 4.6 outlines the methodological challenges encountered during the research journey. Section 4.7 presents the pilot study, and section 4.8 outlines the process of data analysis. A brief conclusion wraps up the chapter (section 4.9).

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Case study

Case study research has played a very important role in the different branches of linguistics, particularly in studies of language teaching, learning, and use (Duff, 2014). The cases, which can be a teacher, speaker or a family, are normally studied in depth in order to provide an understanding of individuals' experiences, issues, insights, developmental pathways or performance within a particular linguistic, social, or educational context (Duff, 2014). Farquar (2015) states that a case study is ideal for research where the research questions are closely connected to the context or situation in which the phenomenon exists. This statement is further supported by Rule and John (2015) who add that a case study allows one to dig deep, look for explanations, and gain insight into the phenomenon through multiple data sources, thus enabling understanding, or to test or extend a theory. A much larger proportion of recently published case studies in sociolinguistics foregrounds personal and affective aspects of experience and learning, without detailed linguistic descriptions. Much of this emerging research examines the changing identities and communities of multilinguals (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Norton, 2013; Duff, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Yin (2003, 2014) categorises case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. An *explanatory* case study is opted for when the research aims to understand why a phenomenon occurs, whereas *exploratory* case studies are used when the aim is to understand how a phenomenon takes place. In contrast, the *descriptive* case study illustrates and describes a phenomenon in the context in which it occurs. Given this classification of case studies, the approach that I have adopted in this study can be characterised as *exploratory*, enabling the expansion of existing understanding as well as pursuit of new knowledge.

Furthermore, case studies illuminate the relationship between theory and practice while researching a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007; Rule & John, 2015). In order to proceed with the case study design, it is imperative to clarify how the particular case I am researching arose.

At the core of a case study is the case itself, which constitutes one or more persons learning or using language/s in such settings as homes, educational institutions, community settings, virtual worlds, and peer groups, in a manner and context that is considered theoretically and descriptively interesting (Duff, 2014). The main goal of case study research is to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this context, the term

"case" encapsulates a specific instance of a phenomenon (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 43) – in this case, the teaching of ALs. This phenomenon is subjected to meticulous examination, contextualised within its unique setting and juxtaposed against the broader backdrop of established theory and prior research.

Case studies are usually presented from the perspective of the researcher, who conducts the research for a particular reason (set out in the objectives), recruits and chooses the participants, selects interview transcripts and observations to include, and decides how best to characterise the individual's situation in writing (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2014). Description, interpretation, and explanations are offered for the observed phenomena as well as implications for pedagogical, programmatic, or policy development and for generating more abstract conceptual insights (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Rule and John (2015) list the following instances of how the construction of a case might arise:

1. Through the deductive theory, which deals with testing a theory through the case study,
2. Through the inductive theory, which deals with generating a theory from the case, and
3. Through the dialogical model, which uses both inductive and deductive theory.

This case is constructed through the dialogical model; on the one hand, there exists various theories dealing with ancestral and heritage language teaching and, on the other hand, as each case is unique in itself and the linguistic case of Mauritius is unique in several dimensions, theories can be generated from the study of this case. Thus, I believe the dialogical model is an appropriate approach for this study. Yin (2009, 2014) explains how a case study explores and analytically explains a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within real life situations. Those situations have temporal characteristics which define their nature as well as geographical parameters which allow boundaries to be drawn to define the case (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers propose that a case can be bounded either by time and place, time and activity, or definition and context (Creswell, 2015; Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013).

Consequently, I needed to delineate the boundaries of the case to facilitate the generation of relevant data. The focal point of investigation is the teaching of an AL within a distinct context – a multilingual environment where language policies and cultural politics hold immense importance. Moreover, the AL in this particular case is a minority one, introduced and existing among a small ethnic group, which is a subset of a majority in the context as explained in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the 'speakers' of the language do not speak the language

in their day-to-day living; instead, they have completely shifted to Kreol, the vernacular of the majority of the population. As a result, the language is only existent in some spaces, mainly educational and religious ones. It holds neither cognitive nor communicative functions among the majority of the speakers, but cultural and identity ones. Nevertheless, endeavours are underway, both at individual and organisational levels, to amplify distinctive identities and assert specific rights for marginalised minorities (Venkanah & Auleear-Owodally, 2023). This intricate landscape engenders a scenario where the teacher is valorising and becomes an agent in preserving a language primarily associated with identity functions. Hence, this case was meticulously defined and situated within a particular context. The roles and functions of the participants in the bounded case have been studied (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). AL teachers work and live in a context where the presence of the language is limited. Moreover, teaching of the AL involves several different psychological, social, and emotional experiences. As discussed in Chapter 2, time, space, and the context are important factors in the shaping of experiences such as satisfaction, joy, pride, affirmation, deception, dissatisfaction, and boredom, among others.

Having bounded the case, exploring case studies will help contribute to theory. Furthermore, findings from such studies often influence educational policies and practices and help practitioners and stakeholders better understand the experiences and issues affecting people in various socio-educational and linguistic settings (Duff, 2014). Attention to individual cases help raise awareness of the complexities associated with multilingualism and language teaching, learning, and use internationally (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2014).

4.2.2 An interpretivist research paradigm

An interpretivist paradigm was adopted for this study. Interpretivists, who believe that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world and that reality is socially constructed, attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest, analysing variables such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings (Hammersley, 2013; Chowdhury, 2014; Pham, 2018). Interpretivism is particularly well-suited for research endeavours that delve into individuals' attitudes towards their environment, especially as advancements in spatial and temporal resolutions continue to expand. Teachers teaching Telugu as an AL in the Mauritian context form part of a category of teachers who are few in numbers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they largely share the homogeneous conditions, teaching challenges, practices, and living experiences of many Oriental language teachers in the country. Unpacking the different experiences accumulated in

this diasporic space and over a bounded period of time can be achieved using the interpretive paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm promotes data generation and interpretation which helped me make meaning of collected data by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information as well as by abstracting patterns (Hammersley, 2013; Chowdhury, 2014). Like their counterparts in the teaching profession, AL teachers display a spectrum of beliefs and behaviours that are rich with insights into their circumstances. These beliefs and behaviours have been shaped by their teaching experiences, work dynamics, and living environment over an extended period of time. Interpreting these cues provides a means to untangle, comprehend, and discern the underlying significance of their beliefs and behaviours.

The interpretivist approach is based on: 1) Relativist ontology, which perceives reality as intersubjectivity, that is based on meanings and understandings at social and experiential levels; and 2) Transactional or subjectivist epistemology, which states that people cannot be separated from their knowledge; there is a clear link between the researcher and the research participant who has been considered as a subject (Charlot, 2017). Both beliefs have been significant to my study, which aimed to explore the experiences of teachers of a particular language in the Mauritian curriculum within their socially constructed realities. Interpreting the experiences of teachers would be a precise way of exploring their lived reality.

In the first instance, it is assumed that reality is the construction of people's beliefs and experiences. The experiences of being a Telugu teacher exist in layers and shape the identity and social existence of the teacher. However, the interpretivist approach, as stated in the second instance, is significantly influenced by the researcher's own beliefs and experiences and his or her perception of reality. In this research, my positionality as a teacher of Telugu was a clear example of the statement of subjectivist epistemology where there is a link between the researcher and the participant. Tirvassen (2019) warns that sociocultural and political aspects of a context influence the researcher as well as the lenses through which phenomenon are researched. The next section deals with the research approach, focusing on the type of data that would be generated.

4.2.3 Research approach – Interpretive phenomenological approach

Compared to a quantitative approach where the researcher seeks factual data, the qualitative approach is most suitable when the research questions deal with the experience, meaning, and perspective of the participants (Hammarberg & Lacey, 2016). All the research questions of this

study seek qualitative data, which were subjective to the participants' personal background, setting, and context. Understanding the participants' points of view, and how these have been developed over time, as well as understanding the reasons behind their responses, have been important elements that could be understood using the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA).

Phenomenology, the study of lived experience (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010; Van Manen, 1997), is a powerful approach for examining "how individuals subjectively experience and give meaning to a particular phenomenon" (Gill, 2014, p. 131). The goal of phenomenology is to fully describe a lived experience through those who have experienced a particular phenomenon and who can communicate it to the outside world. Phenomenology thus helped me in understanding the experience of the subjects that have experienced the phenomenon (Roberts, 2013). According to Brocki and Wearden (2006, p. 88), the IPA holds that "human beings are not passive perceivers of an objective reality, but they come to interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them". Brocki and Wearden (2006) also emphasise the concept of 'self-reflection' within the IPA, in which the researcher assumes that participants seek to interpret their experiences in order to understand them. Therefore, the IPA was highly relevant to my study, especially as the aims were to explore the experiences of the teachers in the context the language taught.

The concept of AL encompasses a constellation of values, emotions, and identity intricately woven into the lives of the participants, playing a pivotal role in shaping them as individuals over time (Colla, 2018). Understanding the teachers' experiences and what lies behind those experiences would consist of unpacking their subjective thoughts and behaviours. The phenomenological method would embolden shifting from concrete descriptions of subjective experience to an interpretation of the experience. However, while using the IPA, I as the researcher, had to accept that "understanding is always from a perspective, always a matter of interpretation" (McLeod, 2001, p. 56), and that giving meaning to an experience is context-sensitive and my participants are an inseparable part of their background (Larkin et al., 2010). Moreover, the IPA sees individuals as embedded in a world of objects, relationships, language, and culture (Smith, 2011). Socio-historical background thus plays an important factor in interpreting results. Therefore, the nature of the existence can be revealed and understood through my involvement in their world (Grbich, 2007; Larkin et al., 2011), which justifies the analysis of individual human experience to understand the lived world.

4.3 Sampling

Sample selection holds utmost significance in qualitative research, exerting a profound influence on the quality of research findings (Gray, 2014). Within the context of this case study, which investigates the experiences of secondary school teachers instructing Telugu, the sample was meticulously comprised of educators fulfilling this role within secondary school settings. The Mauritian secondary educational system consists of State Secondary schools, Mahatma Gandhi Institute Secondary schools, and Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) schools, which collectively employ forty, eight, and one Telugu teachers, respectively. This study focused on teachers within the State Secondary School category.

The experiences of teachers are multilayered and vary from individual to individual. However, since the emphasis is on representing the phenomenon rather than the population (Smith, 2011), qualitative research tends to employ non-probability sampling in the hope that carefully selected respondents will generate robust, rich, and in-depth information (Gray, 2014; Grbich, 2007). In this case study, the home environment and socio-cultural factors have great significance in their day-to-day life. Thus, I realised that I needed to extend my data production to include data aimed at understanding the participants' home environment as well as their behaviour in socio-cultural settings. Therefore, data from a wider variety of sources and perspectives helped deepen the understanding of both the personal and environmental influences on teachers' experiences.

The number of participants is not a major concern; what matters is the relevance and richness of the data they generate (Patton, 2002). The multilayered sources of experiences with the teacher at the centre is reflected in the choice of data generation strategies. That said, there is a general tendency, even in qualitative studies, to look for population representation (Marshall, 1996). Marshall (1996) and Gray (2014) opine that an appropriate sample size of a qualitative study is one that adheres to answering the research questions. Therefore, the research sample included six participants; no less than six people and no greater than nine people (Ellis, 2019). This sample size allowed me to fully immerse myself in the data, without being overwhelmed by its quantity (Ellis, 2019; Roberts, 2013). However, Smith (2011) emphasise that "sampling must be theoretically consistent with the qualitative paradigm in general, and with IPA, this means that samples are selected purposefully" (p. 24).

Purposive sampling allowed me, as the researcher, to access key informants that would shed light on the phenomenon under study (Ellis, 2019). It thus permitted the selection of a

sample that was broadly homogeneous, which is important for capturing the experiences of the teachers, keeping the research questions in mind. However, as it is acknowledged that full homogeneity is not practical given the diversity within most sample populations (Smith, 2011), I allowed myself to choose the participants. This is discussed in Chapter 5.

4.4 Data Generation Strategies

Having embraced the IPA methodology for this case study, the primary choice for data generation was semi-structured interviews. A review of this approach indicated a prevalent trend in IPA data collection, with one-on-one interviews emerging as the widely used method for generating in-depth data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) emphasise that the selection of the method should be guided by the desired attributes, such as fluidity, richness, complexity, naturalism, and in-depth exploration (Richards, 2011). While semi-structured interviews are well-suited, alternative methods such as postal questionnaires, email dialogues, focus groups, and diaries may also yield rich data (see Smith et al., 2011).

Numerous researchers opt not to confine their investigations solely to semi-structured interviews. Employing multiple data sources in case studies is a widespread approach as it yields invaluable information and bolsters data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003; Ellis, 2019). In alignment with these considerations, this study incorporated a questionnaire and a focus group discussion as preliminary data collection tools, facilitating the identification of participants' demographic attributes. In the case of the former, I opted to encompass the entire population of 40 participants, which comprises the whole population of Telugu secondary educators in Mauritius. While total population sampling is infrequently feasible or even attainable, there are instances where it can be achieved, such as in this particular scenario, enabling the acquisition of more precise data (Crossman, 2018). As far as the focus group discussion is concerned, it was held with a limited group of Telugu teachers. The data collection tools are discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.4.1 Preliminary data generation tool

4.4.1.1 Questionnaire

As a first layer data collection tool, a questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was formulated and distributed to all Telugu educators teaching at secondary level. Being a flexible data generation tool, the questionnaire can be administered by the researcher, or it can be self-administered. Marshall (2002, p. 24) states that “questionnaires help to collect information about what people

do, what they have, what they think, know, feel or want”. Therefore, the questionnaire was the most appropriate and practical tool for generating data which would provide insight into various aspects. It contained multiple choice questions, Likert scale questions, as well as open-ended questions. The items were categorised under headings, namely: 1) Demographic details, 2) Acquisition of Telugu, 3) Educational and professional background, 4) Religious and ethnic background, 5) Ancestral heritage, 6) Usage of languages, 7) Experiences being a teacher, and 8) Contact with and use of the language.

4.4.1.2 Focus group discussion

According to Wilson and Derrick (2018), focus group discussions have been used as an efficient tool in qualitative research involving socio-cultural phenomena. They facilitate the attainment of an in-depth understanding of the issues discussed in an open space, enabling participants with diverse perspectives to openly express their viewpoints. The method generally aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population.

In this study, a focus group discussion was employed as an additional data collection tool involving a group of educators. This approach facilitated a forum where participants were empowered to voice their thoughts and engage in conversations with both their peers and the researcher. Discussions encompassed topics covered in the questionnaire as well as those not included. These supplementary insights proved invaluable to the study by aiding participant selection and shedding light on additional aspects to explore during the subsequent semi-structured interviews.

4.4.2 Main data source – Semi-structured interviews

Interviews, being a questioning research tool, facilitate the exploration of individuals' perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and motivations pertaining to specific subjects (Silverman, 2016). This method allows a 'deeper' understanding of the phenomenon. Interviews prove most suitable when limited prior knowledge exists about the subject of study, as in the current scenario, or when detailed insights are required from individual participants (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2005; Silverman, 2016). Within the framework of the phenomenological methodology, semi-structured interviews stand out as a predominant and effective means of data collection. Since the IPA requires researchers to gain access to the first-hand experience of participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Ellis, 2019), the chosen data collection method must give participants sufficient space to describe their experiences at length (Callary et al.,

2015). To address this, I devised an interview schedule encompassing three distinct interviews conducted at different junctures and within diverse settings. Each of these three interviews, conducted in separate spaces, honed in on distinct facets, affording maximum opportunity and freedom to express themselves. The grid below summarises the interview plan.

Table 4.1 Interview Schedule

Participant Pseudonyms	Interview 1		Interview 2	Interview 3	
Sanjhiana	June 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	May 2021	Baby cradling
Jack	June 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	March 2021	Wedding
Ashna	Feb 2021		April 2021	May 2021	Evening school activity
Devi	February 2021		February 2021	February 2021	Language contest
Nanda	February 2021		March 2021	May 2021	Death ceremony
Kriti	April 2021		April 2021	May 2021	Shri Venkateshwara Ceremony

These three interviews were planned and carried out at different spaces (at school, at home, and at a sociocultural event) at regular intervals. Conducting the interviews at target settings helped to gather more exact data as the research deals with the experiences of the teachers, which are not limited to the teaching experience, but much wider spaces as the teacher is the ambassador of the language in different spaces. Thus, the teachers' experiences are not dependent on only the teaching environment.

The first one was planned to be conducted in a setting outside the school – the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 7. Along with building rapport with the participant, this interview aimed at building on the data gathered through the questionnaire to explore the experiences of the participant as a teacher of Telugu. This semi-structured

interview mainly covered aspects like the teacher's journey as a teacher, her/his experiences as a teacher of Telugu and her/his career highlights as a teacher, what it means to be a Telugu teacher, how he/she is perceived by him-/herself and by others. This semi-structured interview was designed to address all three research questions and emerged as the lengthiest among the three data generation methods, spanning approximately one hour.

The second semi-structured interview was conducted at the participant's residence. The lives of AL teachers are profoundly impacted by both linguistically and socially perceived attributes of the language they teach. Conducting the interview at the participant's home facilitated a deeper insight into and understanding of their daily routines within the family and community context. The focus was the home and social environment, where the language stands in the linguistic repertoire of the participant. This environment/space would also help to unpack the circumstances and social aspects that influence the learning and use of the language. Being present as an interviewer at the participants' homes also fostered closer proximity with them, providing an opportunity to gather additional data about their interactions with the language beyond their work-related hours. Data were collected on the participant's typical activities as well as their hobbies, encompassing both professional and personal aspects of their life. The semi-structured interview is found in Appendix 8. The planned time schedule for this interview was approximately 25 minutes.

A third semi-structured interview was conducted when the participant participated in a social gathering or socio-cultural event. These events included a wedding ceremony, a cradling ceremony, a ritual or prayer at home, a death ceremony, and a literary competition. Previous research related to Telugu in the Mauritian social context (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Prabhakaran, 1991; Bhaskar 2017; Sokappadu, 2023) has already highlighted the significance of these ceremonies among the people. As highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2, given that ALs are firmly entrenched in a foreign environment, including the culture and religion of that locale, socio-cultural activities offer a pertinent context (or occasionally a reimagining of the context) within the multifaceted linguistic landscape. These activities offer a space where ALs are foregrounded. This space, where the language is omnipresent, was explored, and the experiences of the Telugu teacher unpacked. The emphasis was placed on cultural artefacts linked to the language, and an exploration was conducted into the extent to which the participant consciously or unconsciously follows customs and traditions that contribute to the language and culture of their ancestral lineage. This examination revealed their agency in safeguarding the heritage bequeathed to them. Emphasis was also laid on how much of the

AL is used and the role of the participant. The planned schedule for this set of interviews was 25 minutes.

All three sets of interviews were audio-recorded, and prior to participation, the participants completed a consent form (Sample in Appendix 4).

4.5 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Before engaging with fieldwork, several measures were taken to ensure that data collection would be carried out in an ethical manner. These include administrative ethical procedures as well as ethical constructs. Shenton (2010) suggests employing Guba's constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to address trustworthiness. This approach ensures that researchers obtain an accurate representation of the case and guarantees that the conclusions drawn stem from collected data rather than biases (Shenton, 2010; Hadi, 2016).

Credibility pertains to the level of trustworthiness of both the data and its analysis, ensuring that the findings align with the actual reality (Hadi, 2016). In interpretive research, like the present study, reality is subjective and shaped by the meanings individuals construct within their social contexts (Hadi, 2016). Consequently, I employed a combination of data collection methods, such as questionnaires to select participants and interviews to formulate representations of their experiences. Clear instructions were given to participants to make sure they respond in a positive way. An informal approach was adopted so enhance rapport and eliminate pressure. Moreover, being a Telugu teacher like them facilitated trust, as were all familiar with me since I was an insider within the research context.

Transferability involves adequately establishing the fieldwork context to ensure that the findings can be utilised and applied to other contexts with similar characteristics (Maxwell, 2002). Globalisation and multiculturalism have led to the prevalence of the phenomenon of ALs in various contexts, particularly in diasporic countries. As a result, throughout the study, careful consideration was given to effectively establishing the specific contextual factors.

Dependability refers to the extent to which findings can be replicated with similar participants in a similar context (Shenton, 2010; Noble & Smith, 2015). Telugu teachers in Mauritius share a common socio-cultural background, which enhances the potential for the

replication of findings. Therefore, in my semi-structured interviews, I made sure to address all the participants with the same consistency.

The last criterion of trustworthiness, which is *confirmability*, aims at establishing to what extent the data collected is the product of the participants involved in the research rather than the biases of the researcher. As I am an insider, being a teacher of Telugu, I have my own experiences and mental set about the various aspects of the job and the system. As a researcher, I needed to verify that the data collected is exactly what the participants meant and not my own perception or bias. In order to address this, I had to go through the transcripts several times at different points in time. Self-reported bias may be seen as an issue during the interview process (Berg & Karlsen, 2012; Solansky, 2010) although the phenomenon is part of the natural lived world. In order to address this issue, the participants were given a copy of their transcripts and requested to validate them.

Taylor and Medina (2013) suggest that trustworthiness can also be ensured by spending sufficient time in the field with the participants and by providing important descriptions so that the readers are able to relate to the research. As discussed, the fact that data were collected in specific targeted places like the participants' homes, cultural places, and social gatherings helped to explore the lived experiences of the Telugu in multiple spaces.

4.6 Challenges

As the research deals with analysing the professional and personal experiences of teachers, which are subjective in nature, there were certain challenges that were faced, which I discuss in this section. Some were already anticipated and therefore preventive measures were planned, while others were unplanned; hence, immediate decisions had to be taken for the smooth advancement of the research. A pilot study was carried at each of the stages of data collection, that is, the preliminary data collection and the semi-structured interview. These helped to identify the drawbacks of the tools as well as their method of administration. The challenges are discussed under the various subheadings below.

Given that this research design involves exploring the private lives of teachers, special attention was devoted to ensuring participant comfort and confidentiality. Participants were assured that data collection, storage, and sensitive issues discussed would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Comprehensive ethical measures were diligently implemented

throughout the research process. The consent forms were signed and a copy of the aims of the research was handed to the participants. A sample of the same can be found in Appendix 4.

Interview scheduling was meticulously tailored to the participants' convenience, and the interviews were conducted in private settings. Ensuring utmost privacy, the conversations between the interviewer and participants remained confidential without any third-party access. For added protection, pseudonyms were employed during transcription and translation to safeguard the participants' identities.

Another anticipated challenge was the IPA as the methodology for the study. While using the IPA, the researcher has to admit that “understanding is always from a perspective, always a matter of interpretation” (McLeod, 2001, p. 56). However, rather than being viewed as a limitation, it can be considered as a strength of IPA as it acknowledges that understanding is always perspective-driven (McLeod, 2001). Giving meaning to an experience is always context-sensitive and that human beings are an inseparable part of the world (Larkin et al., 2010). Therefore, the nature of the existence could be revealed and understood through one's involvement in the world (Grbich, 2007; Larkin et al., 2011), which justified the analysis of individual human experience to understand the lived world. IPA follows Heidegger (1962) in seeing individuals as embedded in a world of objects, relationships, language, and culture (Smith, 2009). Sociohistorical background thus plays an important factor in interpreting results.

Moreover, my positionality and my involvement in the same setting could have been of major significance. There is room for self-reported bias during the interview process (Berg & Karlsen, 2012; Solansky, 2010) although the phenomenon is part of the natural lived world. Being both an insider and an outsider, due to my role as a teacher of Telugu and my involvement in various aspects of the field, could have introduced a potential bias during the interviews. This may have led some participants to withhold certain experiences or provide responses they felt were more aligned with my background. Provisions were made to accommodate such situations, acknowledging that participants might be hesitant to share experiences that could potentially harm their reputation (Larkin et al., 2011).

Another potential limitation, not widely discussed in the literature, is that both audio recording and verbatim transcriptions are unable to convey the subtleties of participants' non-verbal communication. Placing too much emphasis on the reading and re-reading of transcripts can restrict the actual voices of the participants being heard. In order to cater for this, I listened to the recordings at different points in time during the analysis. Moreover, in the case of this

study, the transcripts were translated in English for the ease of the report. To address this issue, the Kreol version was analysed for the purpose of data analysis. The dependency on language to understand an experience may be considered a limitation. However, communicating experiences through language is human; therefore, how people construct meaning from their experience appears a valid way of knowing rather than a limitation, and the interpretations of the experience are inevitably “shaped, limited and enabled by language” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 194).

Regarding the research tools, I did not foresee significant challenges in terms of participants' willingness to engage in the study. Given the relatively small number of Telugu teachers in the country, there is a sense of familiarity among most of them. Additionally, being actively involved in the field and having a personal connection with much of the Telugu population, I anticipated a favourable response rate as far as the questionnaire was concerned.

However, for the focus group, I expected to meet the participants in groups at professional and social gatherings normally held, like seminars, workshops, or competitions. But the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was unforeseen. One challenge that I anticipated was that the participants might go off track while engaging in the discussion with the interviewer and colleagues. I therefore planned to frame a set of guidelines and questions so that the discussion does not go off track. One of the drawbacks regarding this data collection tool was that it was not convenient to gather participants for the focus group.

Regarding the interviews, within the IPA approach where participants are selected based on specific characteristics, I did not anticipate any resistance from participants to engage in the study. However, unexpected challenges arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the interviews were conducted in three distinct settings, arranging appointments at participants' homes or during social gatherings proved to be quite demanding, especially given the infrequent occurrence of such gatherings. Despite these challenges, I meticulously planned and coordinated to ensure participants felt comfortable and at ease. While online interviews could have been an alternative, I believed they might compromise the authenticity of the study, given its strong social and cultural context. Consequently, I opted to wait for a more favourable situation.

4.7 Pilot Study - Experience as a Novice Researcher

Pilot studies were conducted in order to make sure that tools being used are participant friendly. The questionnaires were filled by two pilot participants and the drawbacks were noted. In the case of the semi-structured interview, there were some major issues that I faced as a researcher, and they required major attention.

Firstly, being the insider in the research, I was able to identify myself with all the experiences of the participant. The answers provided by the participants often seemed apparent and transparent to me, which led me to refrain from asking probing questions. This inadvertently resulted in the collection of thin data, which I realised upon reviewing it. Recognising this, I took the necessary step as a researcher to step back and re-evaluate my approach. Moreover, as a novice interviewer, there was always the doubt of whether I was collecting rich data. Was I asking the right questions, was the interviewee making sense of what was being asked, was I in command? These were questions that were recurrent.

Being a novice and relatively young researcher presented its own challenges, particularly in regards to my personal experiences with some significant landmarks of the phenomenon under study. While I possess a strong understanding of the subject matter and the case, there were historical milestones related to the phenomenon that I had not delved into extensively. This gap in my knowledge became apparent as I engaged in the research process. Engaging with participants who had personally experienced historical challenges that I had not lived through presented a unique challenge. My inability to fully grasp and probe those experiences hindered my ability to deeply explore and understand those particular aspects. In order to address this, I had to stop data collection and engage with in-depth reading about the phenomenon. That made me more confident to re-enter the field.

4.8 Data Analysis

An important aspect of data analysis in a qualitative case study is the search for meaning through direct interpretation of what is observed by researchers and what is reported by the participants. Data analysis is “working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003 p. 83).

In this study, data analysis was done at two levels. As the preliminary data source consisted of a questionnaire and a focus group discussion, the data collected was more

descriptive. However, for the semi-structured interviews, which was the main data source, thematic analysis was used.

Thematic analysis is a data analysis method that involves identifying patterns and themes within collected data (Yin, 2006). Renowned for its flexibility, this approach is widely utilised across various methodologies. Given that the goal of this study was to unveil teachers' experiences, I employed thematic analysis to scrutinise the gathered data. The analysis was undertaken through a six-step process, as detailed below (Braun & Clarke, 2012):

1. Becoming familiar with the data

In the initial phase of data analysis, I focused on immersing myself in the collected data. I carefully read through the transcripts multiple times, making notes and annotations at each reading. My insider perspective played a crucial role in allowing me to gain a deep understanding of the interview discussions during this familiarisation process.

2. Generating initial codes

According to Given (2008, p. 85), "Coding consists of identifying potentially interesting events, features, phrases, behaviours, or stages of a process and distinguishing them with labels". Codes were generated, relating to the different arguments in the transcripts. Coding helped to identify, arrange, and systematise the ideas, concepts, and categories uncovered in the data.

3. Searching for themes

Following the coding process, various themes identified were collated across the different interviews. Relevant data were combined and categorised.

4. Reviewing themes

The themes were then sorted and organised to create meaningful coherence. During this process, certain themes were refined, while others were discarded based on their relevance to the research questions.

5. Defining themes

The essence of each theme was captured as the themes were analysed in depth with the arguments from the corresponding literature.

6. Write-up

The write up process consisted of writing an analysis emerging from the different themes. The write up took into consideration the themes, the research questions, and the literature. The arguments were supported with extracts from the transcriptions.

The above steps are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 4.1 below gives an idea of the steps that I adopted for the data analysis process.

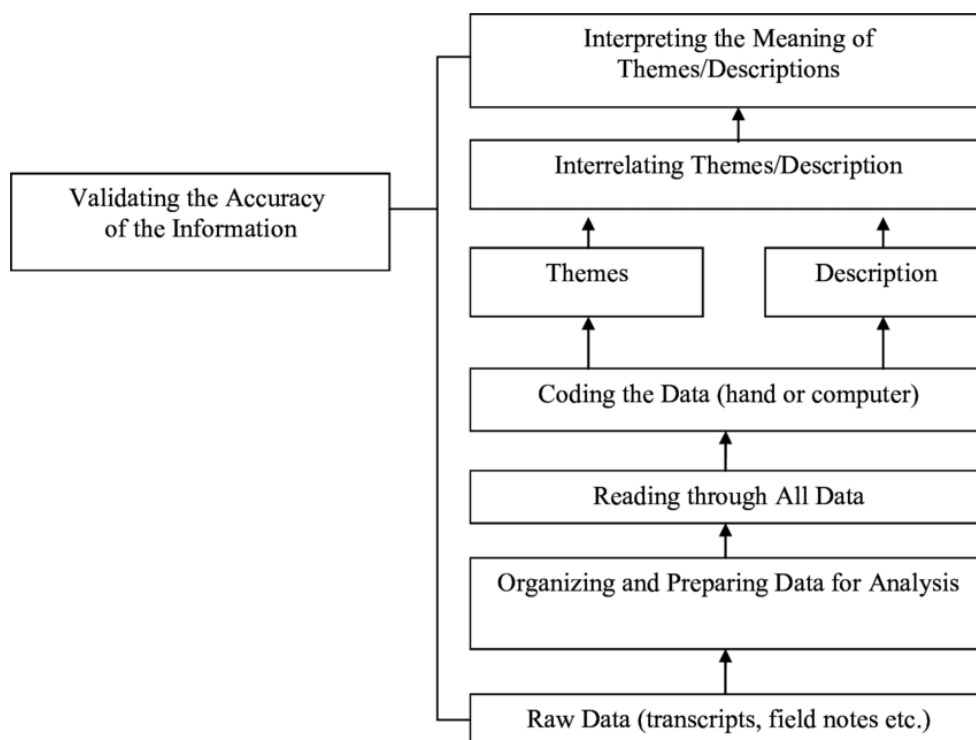


Figure 4.1. Data analysis steps in qualitative research (Source: Creswell, 2009)

Data analysis played a pivotal role in this study, as it enabled the meaningful interpretation of the data collected from the field.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research design and methodological approach employed to investigate the experiences of Telugu language teachers in Mauritius were presented. The rationale behind the chosen research paradigm and approach was outlined, highlighting the significant role of

philosophical underpinnings in shaping the research design. The planned process of data collection and subsequent data analysis were also elucidated. The next chapter deals with a panoramic view of the phenomenon from the data collected from the preliminary sources of data.

CHAPTER 5

PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE PHENOMENON

5.0 Introduction

After presenting and framing the study in the previous chapters, the current chapter discusses the results and insights gathered from two preliminary data sets – one quantitative and the other qualitative. This analysis centres around the data gathered from both a survey conducted through a questionnaire and a subsequent focus group discussion involving respondents who participated in the aforementioned questionnaire. The core emphasis of this investigation lies in scrutinising and interpreting these data sets. This chapter holds significance as it initiates the case study concerning the researched phenomenon. Moreover, it lends weight to the overarching concepts introduced in the introductory chapters and aids in the selection of participants for the more in-depth case studies.

Central to this chapter is the exploration of data derived from a biographical profiling questionnaire targeting the whole population of Telugu language teachers teaching at secondary level in Mauritius – 44 in all. In addition, insights gathered from a group discussion involving eight of these teachers are examined. The questionnaire, made up of close-ended questions, was distributed to the entire population of secondary school educators, with 34 educators – representing 75.5% of the total population – providing their input. This instrument yielded relevant personal information, offering an understanding of the identities of Telugu teachers in Mauritius, their engagement with the language within and beyond the educational context, and their language preferences in various interpersonal interactions.

Complementing this quantitative approach, the focus group discussion, characterised by its communal and open-ended nature, offered an initial broad perspective on the phenomenon – how Telugu language teachers perceive their role and experience their identity within the realm of education, as well as in their domestic and social spheres.

Taken together, these data sets allowed me to choose the participants for the case studies as well as identify avenues to be explored through the primary source of data collection – the one-on-one sets of interviews. In the next section, I present the structure of this chapter.

5.1 Overview

This chapter consists of six parts. After a short introduction (section 5.0) and an overview of the chapter (section 5.1), the information gathered from the questionnaire and the focus group discussion is analysed in sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively. To enable this, the data gathered from the questionnaire were categorised thematically. Five distinct themes emerged from the data: Firstly, the biographical profile of the respondents; secondly, their educational and professional background; thirdly, their ethno-religious background and ancestral heritage; fourthly, their experience as teachers of the Telugu language; and lastly, their engagement with the Telugu culture and their use of the language outside the school where they are officially posted. These themes are expounded upon in the subsequent sections of this chapter. In section 5.4, I meticulously describe the selection of the participants for the next stage of the data collection. Concluding this chapter, section 5.5 summarises the key points discussed.

5.2 Analysis of The Emerged Themes

The raw data acquired from the 34 educators through the questionnaire (see Appendix 5) offered valuable insights into the identity of Telugu teachers in Mauritius, their roles within the educational system, and their language usage within society. The subsequent subsections delve into the findings and ensuing discussions that developed from these insights.

5.2.1 Gender and age of participants

5.2.1.1 Gender

The gender imbalance that is often observed in the teaching profession becomes even more pronounced when considering the teaching of the Telugu language in Mauritius. This is evident from the data presented in Table 5.1, where the national male-to-female teacher ratio stands at 4.5:6.5 (MOE, 2015).

Table 5.1 Gender of participants

Gender		
Male	5	14.7%
Female	29	85.3%

In fact, among the respondents to the questionnaire, a significant majority of 29 out of 34 are females, constituting a notable percentage of 85.3%. This observation aligns with prior research indicating that the teaching profession tends to be predominantly female-dominated (Ullah, 2016). This observation prompted me to make an effort to approximately mirror this gender proportion when selecting the final participants for the study. Furthermore, this situation necessitated an exploration of the motivations that have driven individuals of each gender to engage in the teaching of ancestral languages.

5.2.1.2 Age

Table 5.2 displays the distribution of Telugu teachers across various age groups within State Secondary schools.

Table 5.2 The number of teachers in different age groups

Age of Telugu teachers		
25-30	7	20.5 %
31-35	11	32.3 %
36-40	5	14.7 %
41-45	4	11.7 %
46-50	2	5.8 %
51-55	2	5.8 %
Above 56	3	8.8 %

The analysis of the age categories reveals a predominant presence of young educators within the population of Telugu teachers. Notably, a significant proportion, approximately 53%, of the Telugu teaching force in State Secondary schools falls within the age range of 25 to 35 years, representing a younger generation of educators. Several factors contribute to this trend. Firstly, the surge in demand for the subject during the early 2000s, driven by policy reforms, plays a pivotal role. Since the subject's incorporation into the curriculum, the scarcity of available teachers has consistently posed a challenge. Furthermore, the low academic performance of certain students discouraged them from pursuing careers as Telugu teachers. The availability of qualified teachers in Telugu, previously considered a scarcity area (PSC, 2008), boomed

only during the last 15 years. This meant that the career path of the Telugu educators would give more insight into their experiences, and it was further analysed in the semi-structured interviews.

5.2.2 Educational and professional background

The educational and professional backgrounds of teachers stand as pivotal determinants of their performance and experiences. In the context of my study, delving into the participants' education and career growth becomes imperative. As elucidated in Chapter 1, the acquisition of language skills is intricately interwoven with a multitude of socio-cultural factors, thereby underscoring the significance of this analysis. By the time the third and fourth generation of immigrants of Telugu origin were born in Mauritius, the language was no longer spoken in the country as there had been a considerable language shift to Bhojpuri (Sokappadu, 2008). Very few people from the second generation were able to speak the language as their first or second language (Bhaskar, 2017). In the 1950s, when the teaching of ALs was introduced, the standard Telugu was introduced and taught by trained teachers (Lutmoodoo, 2013).

The following sections conduct a comprehensive analysis of the introduction of the Telugu language to the participants; their qualifications; the institutions where they pursued their secondary and tertiary education; and the teacher training undertaken. The examination also encompasses their years of teaching experience and number of postings they have had. Notably, the educational background and years of teaching experience exert a substantial influence on teachers' experiences when it comes to teaching a language.

5.2.2.1 Introduction to the learning of the Telugu language

This section aims to explore the participants' initial contact with the language and the inception of their language learning journey. The decision to study a language is profoundly shaped by one's exposure to it, whether within the familial environment or within the broader community. My objective was to find out where the participants were exposed to the language, before embarking on learning it. The results are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 First exposure to Telugu language

First Exposure to Telugu language						
No exposure	Home	Temple	Evening classes run by the temple	School	Television/Radio	Other
11	8	3	5	8	2	0
32.4%	23.5%	8.8 %	14.7%	23.5%	5.9%	0%

Upon scrutinising the data, it becomes apparent that 32.4% of the Telugu teachers had not been exposed to the language prior to their schooling. This observation implies that their parents did not communicate in Telugu at home, thereby precluding the participants from acquiring the language within the familial setting. This corroborates existing research within this context (Luthmoodoo, 2013; Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2017). An additional 24% of participants indicate that they were indeed exposed to the language within their home environment. As an AL, Telugu often embeds itself within the home environment, with numerous words and linguistic elements intertwined within daily activities conducted by the participants.

Both the temple and its evening classes contribute to a combined total of 38%, underscoring the significance of sociocultural institutions as vital spaces where the language maintains a presence. I further investigated the place where learning of the language started among the participants. The results are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Initial learning environments of Telugu

Where did you start learning Telugu?				
At home	Temple	Evening classes run by the temple	School	Other
3	2	10	19	0
8.8 %	5.9 %	24.4 %	55.9 %	0.0%

The results in Table 5.4 reveal that 24.4% of the participants started learning Telugu at evening classes run by the temple, and the majority of the population (56%) have started learning the language at school. Evidently, the acquisition of the language predominantly occurs within instructional contexts, as opposed to home or community settings. This observation highlights that Telugu is not merely a vernacular but primarily a subject taught through formal instruction. This assertion is corroborated by the findings, which indicate that a mere 6% commenced their language learning journey at the temple, while 9% started learning Telugu at home. The subject introduced in the taught curriculum is thus of major significance in the maintenance of the language. Most of the teachings were done by priests and scholars at the temple who had learnt the language at the schools run by the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha (Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2010). Additionally, the outcomes underscore the substantial cost associated with incorporating ALs into the curriculum as a strategy for language promotion. The implementation of the ALs in the curriculum as well as the significance of the socio-cultural spaces in the learning of Telugu were explored further during the interviews.

By employing an open-ended question, I sought to ascertain the age at which participants began their Telugu language learning journey. The majority of cases indicate that initiation into the language occurred within the first six years of life. This leads to the inference that the language introduction predominantly takes place within the informal home environment, where children are initially exposed to it. Subsequently, formal language learning transpires within the educational system, where Telugu is introduced as an optional subject starting from Grade 1.

5.2.2.2 Reason for studying Telugu at different levels

The educational system of Mauritius is such that the choice of subjects studied determines the career path. Telugu is taught as an optional language in the curriculum, starting at primary level. Uncovering the motivations that underlie participants' decisions to choose the Telugu language can provide valuable insights into their career experiences, as this choice holds substantial influence over the trajectory of their professional paths. This was carried out through a multiple-choice item and the options included: 1) the language being an interesting one; 2) encouragement from parents to study the language; 3) parents forcing them; 4) others directing them to that class; 5) good results in the subject; and 6) being from that particular community. The participants were allowed to choose more than one option.

Table 5.5 Main reasons for choosing Telugu at Primary and Secondary level

Why did you choose Telugu as an optional language subject at primary school?			Why did you choose Telugu at secondary school?		
The subject was interesting.	8	23.5%	I found the subject interesting.	15	44.1%
My parents encouraged me.	23	67.6%	My parents encouraged me.	25	73.5%
My parents wanted it.	18	53%	My parents wanted it.	13	38.2%
I was directed to that class at school.	5	14.7%	I hail from the Telugu community.	16	47%
I scored good marks.	7	20.5%		0	0.0%
I hail from the Telugu community.	21	61.7%	Other		
	0	0.0%			
Other					

Responses from the questionnaire demonstrate that one of the reasons for the majority of the participants (21) to choose Telugu as a subject was because they hail from the Telugu community. This underscores that opting to learn Telugu as a language is significantly shaped by the ethnic background of the learners. Moreover, the input from the participants reveals that 18 individuals were guided by their parents' desire for them to select the subject, while 23 participants indicated that their parents actively encouraged them to do so. Therefore, parental guidance has a major impact in the choice of ALs. This was explored further in the interviews. It is to be noted that, at initial entry stages, performance results were not a motivating factor, for only 7 participants affirmed choosing Telugu because they performed well.

When considering the decision to opt for Telugu as an optional language at the secondary level, a subtle shift is evident. Approximately 44.1% of the participants indicated that their choice was influenced by their genuine interest in the subject. Nevertheless, parental influence continued to hold significant sway. A considerable 73.5% of the participants indicated that their parents provided encouragement for their choice, and 38.2% affirmed that their parents expressed a preference for them to select the subject. A substantial 47% of the

respondents indicated that their choice to study Telugu at the secondary level was driven by their affiliation with the Telugu community.

The participants' experiences underscore the significance of ethnic background in the phenomenon of AL learning. Notably, parents often advocate for, if not mandate, the study of the language to their children, even if it isn't a language commonly spoken at home. This pattern highlights the potent correlation between ethnicity and the selection of a particular language. This theme was explored further in the interviews.

The fundamental prerequisite to become a secondary-level Telugu teacher is possessing a degree in Telugu, a qualification that all respondents have fulfilled. However, the elder generation entered the system with a diploma and later upgraded to a first degree. Learners of Telugu have the opportunity to complete the degree either locally at the University of Mauritius in collaboration with the MGI or in India. Most of the participants (56%) pursued their studies in Mauritius, with the remaining individuals (44%) having completed their degrees in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Notably, Andhra Pradesh serves as the region of origin for immigrants of Telugu background within India, and it also represents the native home of the Telugu language. Worth mentioning is the fact that all participants who pursued their studies in India have benefited from and become scholars of the ICCR programme. Under the Aid to Africa Scheme and General Cultural Scheme, this programme provides reserved seats specifically for Indian languages (MOE, 2006). Each year, the Ministry selects the top-ranking candidate in Telugu at the Higher School Certificate level, along with a few other candidates who are shortlisted, to fill the Telugu teaching slot (MOE, 2006).

While choosing my participants, I took care to have an equal distribution of both ICCR scholars and participants who have studied locally. Teachers are encouraged to follow a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), which is the teacher training course offered both in-service and pre-service in Mauritius by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). Additional qualifications, whether within the field or outside, vary depending on each teacher's individual choices. Notably, 67.6% of the participants have completed the PGCE, indicating their commitment to advancing within the teaching profession. However, a small number of participants possess an MA degree in Telugu, suggesting that teachers either do not prioritise further studies in the field or are pursuing academic advancement in other areas.

5.2.2.3 *Becoming the Telugu teacher*

This section aims at exploring how the participant became a teacher of Telugu. The motivations behind choosing a specific field exert significant influence on one's experiences and performance in that particular field. With diverse individual preferences, aptitudes, and career goals, it's important to acknowledge that different occupations hold varying societal statuses. In Mauritius, a historically agriculture-based society, there has always been a desire from parents to educate their children and encourage them to pursue white collar jobs. Having a shortage of Telugu teachers in Mauritius after it was introduced and encouraged, it has been an easy way of getting a government job. Concurrently, many individuals also opt for careers that align with their parents' preferences. For some, a strong affection for the language and culture, coupled with the desire to preserve them, drives their choice to enter this field. A set of probable responses was presented in the form of multiple-choice questions. The participants could select more than one response.

Table 5.6 Reasons for becoming a Telugu teacher

How did the participant become a Telugu teacher?		
It has always been my dream since school days	18	52.9 %
I could not find any other job	3	8.8 %
It was the only way I could become a civil servant	2	5.9 %
Having done further studies in Telugu, this was an obvious option	15	44.1 %
I believed it was the most relevant way of preserving the Telugu minority and its culture	21	61.7 %
My parents wanted me to become a Telugu teacher	14	41.1 %

The data presented in Table 5.6 show that for the majority (61.7%), one of the reasons for choosing the profession was because it was the most relevant way for preserving the Telugu minority and its cultural heritage. Additionally, 52.9% indicated that it had been their aspiration since childhood, while 44.1% noted that given their advanced studies in the subject, pursuing a teaching job was an obvious option. Moreover, 41.1% acknowledged that their decision was influenced by parental wishes, underscoring the substantial impact of parental expectations in both learning and teaching the AL. Three participants stated that they chose this profession

because they could not get another job, and two because it was the only way they could become a civil servant. This was investigated further to find out if the national language policies have influenced both the learners and parents directly or indirectly.

5.2.2.4 *Experience as a Telugu teacher*

Various participants have taken up roles as Telugu teachers at different junctures in time. Given the dynamic nature of the sociolinguistic landscape, teachers from distinct generations hold diverse experiences based on their job experience. Examining the experiences of teachers from all categories is essential, as it contributes to a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, the participants' years of experience was an important characteristic for the choice of participants. Table 5.7 below categorises the teachers based on their years of service.

Table 5.7 Years of experience as a Telugu teacher (in years)

Experience as a Telugu teacher (in years)		
0-3	3	8.8%
4-10	15	44.1%
11-18	7	20.5%
19-25	4	11.7%
Above 25	5	14.8%

Among the teachers, 8% have up to three years of experience, 44% have between 4 to 10 years of experience, and 20.5% have taught for a span of 11 to 18 years. Furthermore, 11.7% fall in the band of 19-25 years, and 14.8% have above 25 years of teaching experience. A noteworthy 64.5% of participants boast 4 to 18 years of experience, compared to 26% who have above 19 years of service. This shows that the teaching population is a young one. It also provides insights into the periods during which higher recruitment of Telugu teachers occurred. The outcomes from this section informed my selection of participants for the study, enabling a rough replication of the distribution of years of experience among the chosen participants.

5.2.3 Ethno-religious background and ancestral heritage

Given that the phenomenon of ALs is intricately entwined with ethnicity, religion, and the historical fabric of the nation, as discussed in Chapter 1, gaining an understanding of participants' religious beliefs, ethnicity, and ancestral lineage can provide valuable insights into their experiences. This section delves into participants' religious practices, the language in which their faith is observed, the location of their religious practices, details about their forefathers' occupations, and whether both parents belong to the same ethnic group.

5.2.3.1 Religious faith

All the participants stated that they followed Hinduism, with one participant following both Hinduism and Christianity. Among the participants, 31 out of 34 affirmed active religious practice, while 3 mentioned some level of practice. Regarding the language used for religious faith, most of the participants reported practicing it in multiple languages. However, it is crucial to highlight two noteworthy points. Firstly, the majority of prayers practiced in Hinduism are conducted in Sanskrit, a classical language of India. Consequently, most participants reported practicing their faith in both Sanskrit and Telugu. Secondly, with Mauritius being a multilingual space and Kreol being the mother tongue, it is important to note that some respondents stated that they practice Hinduism in the Kreol language, which is unique to Mauritius.

All the participants mentioned the *Mandiram* (Telugu Temple) as one of the places where they practice the faith. Other religious places include the *Kovil* (Tamil temple) and the *Mandir* (North Indian temple). Venkanah and Auleear-Owoodally's (2023, p.3) research highlights that Telugus "revivify and reinvigorate an (imagined) ancestral language (in its oral and written forms) by using a faith practice that has been passed down generations". The faith practiced by communities in Mauritius have been encouraged through assistance to socio-cultural and socio-religious organisations. Therefore, religious spaces will be further explored in the next stage of the data collection. Another space mentioned where the faith is practiced is at home. One of the five male participants works as a part time priest (see other activities involved in Table 5.14). This is an interesting feature of the study, as in Chapter 1, it was mentioned that AL teachers have been ambassadors of culture and religion over time.

The unanimous affirmation of participants belonging to the Hindu community and the Telugu ethnic group provides insight into the sociolinguistic composition of learners and teachers. This underscores the strong interconnection between the language and the specific

ethnic group. The interviews delve deeper into this sociolinguistic dimension, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of this aspect.

5.2.3.2 Surnames of the participants

Names hold various dimensions of identity, and within the Mauritian context, where people hail from diverse parts of the world, it's important to acknowledge that names often carry meanings in their respective languages of origin. As such, names serve as carriers of ethnic identity, representing a significant aspect of an individual's background. Sokappadu (2013) goes further stating that in the case of Mauritian Telugus, the surname can also lead to the place of origin of the immigrants in Andhra Pradesh. The surnames for all the participants of this study are Telugu words, with a meaning, like for most Hindu names. Sokappadu (1990) affirms that a majority of surnames originating from Andhra Pradesh continue to be Telugu surnames, despite historical instances of swapping between first names and surnames during registration processes during the period of indenture (Sokappadu, 2013). With Telugu surnames still being intact, it also demonstrates how ethnic communities tend to preserve their ancestral identity.

5.2.3.3 Intra-religious weddings

Previous studies by Devi (1982), Prabhakaran (1994), and Sokappadu (2017) on Telugu ethnic identity already demonstrated that individuals from this minority have attempted to preserve the ethnic identity by encouraging their children to get married in the same ethnic community. Results show that 29 out of the 34 participants mentioned that both parents hail from the Telugu community, while 100% have at least one parent from the Telugu community. This confirms research carried out by Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982) showing how ethnic minorities in Mauritius tend to preserve and promote their culture through intra-religious marriage. Expanding along the same line, as elucidated by Prabhakaran (1991), a prevailing tradition in Andhra Pradesh involves arranging marriages among maternal cousins. When this practice is applied in the local context, it equates to unions within the same ethnic group. Consequently, this socio-cultural element perpetuates intra-religious marriages, thereby maintaining a sense of “purity”.

5.2.3.4 Approximate immigration year

Given that immigration through the indenture system constitutes the central focus of the phenomenon under study, comprehending the extent to which participants are cognisant of their ancestors' arrival is pivotal in understanding their experiences. Few participants responded to this item, and most of those who did respond answered 1835. This holds significance as it aligns with the abolition of slavery, a pivotal event that heralded the onset of the indenture

system and the arrival of the initial cohort of labourers from various regions of India. To note, Mauritians of Indian origin can now retrace their roots through a mechanism set by the Civil Status Office and the Indenture Archives at the MGI.

5.2.3.5 Remembrance of deceased grandparents and parents

Given that the notion of ALs arises from the colonial era and these languages serve as symbols of the heritage bequeathed by that period, my objective was to delve into the participants' sense of connection to their forebears. I aimed to ascertain whether participants possess objects, photographs, or partake in events that serve as remembrances of their ancestors, as this is a cultural practice that holds significance. Responses point out that 64.7% of the participants have a photo of their deceased parents or grandparents affixed in their remembrance. I also included a Likert scale to find out to what extent the participants are emotionally attached to their ancestral heritage. Results of the Likert scale, as demonstrated in Table 5.8, show that the participants have a high sense of attachment to their heritage.

Table 5.8 Extent to which the participants are emotionally attached to their heritage

Extent to which the participant is emotionally attached to their heritage (least to most)				
1	2	3	4	5
4	0	9	13	8
11.7%	0%	26.4%	38.2%	23.5%

5.2.4 Overview of Telugu teachers' experiences

In this section, I present an overview of the Telugu teachers' experiences. A list of positive experiences and a list of negative experiences were presented in the questionnaire, and the participants were asked to select the statements. Common motivators and demotivators were presented. The participant could also add his or her own response.

Table 5.9 Showing the factors leading to positive and negative experiences

My positive experiences of teaching Telugu may be ascribed to:			My negative experiences of teaching Telugu may be ascribed to:		
My students score good results	24	70.5	My students score poor marks.	3	8.8
Class size is small	17	50.0	Students are not interested.	22	64.7
I am teaching something different	17	50.0	Class size is small.	12	35.2
I am contributing to the preservation of Telugu language	28	80.0	Parents not showing interest.	22	64.7
I am contributing to the preservation of Telugu culture	25	73.5	Few students choose Telugu at SC & HSC levels.	31	91.1
Parents are very appreciative of my endeavour	10	29.4	School management not supportive.	14	41.1
Any other reason	0	0.0	Any other reason	0	0.0

The results show that the majority of the participants (80%) ascribe their positive experience to the fact that they are contributing to the preservation of the Telugu language. Importantly, this aligns with their responses when asked about their motivations for choosing this profession. Likewise, 73.5% perceive that their contribution extends to the preservation of Telugu culture. This further underscores the evident correlation between the Telugu language and Telugu culture. Moreover, the teachers feel concerned and derive a sense of satisfaction from their role as guardians of the language. A notable 70.5% ascribe their positive experience to the good results of students, while 50% attribute their positive experiences to the fact that they are teaching something different. The same number attributed their positive experience to small class size. In addition, 29.4% indicated that parents of students appreciate their endeavours.

A significant 91.1% of the participants ascribe their negative experiences to the limited number of students opting for the subject at SC and HSC level. Furthermore, 64% attribute their negative experiences to students' lack of interest, mirroring the same percentage for parents' disinterest in their children learning the language. Additionally, 41% stated they are

unhappy because the school management is not supportive. These elements will be explored in depth in the next stage of the study.

5.2.4.1 Level of job satisfaction

In this section, the focus is on the participants' job satisfaction. I collected data using a Likert scale, where participants indicated their level of job satisfaction. Additionally, a multiple-choice question was employed, prompting participants to select statements that contribute to their job satisfaction. Moreover, participants were queried about whether their job garners them respect within the community. The results of the different items are summarised in the tables below.

Table 5.10 Level of job satisfaction

How happy are you with your job? (Rate on scale 1 to 5, with 1 representing the least happiness and 5 maximum happiness)				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	4	12	18

Table 5.11 Whether job earns respect in community

My job earns me a lot of respect in the community		
Yes	No	Cannot answer
32	1	1

Table 5.12 Scope of the Telugu teacher

The job as a Telugu teacher enables the participant to:		
earn a decent salary.	26	76.4%
be an ambassador of the language.	20	58.8%
pass on the knowledge I have gained.	34	100%
Promote and preserve the language and culture.	32	94.1%
Any other	0	0%

The results of the Likert scale, as shown in Table 5.10, demonstrate a high level of job satisfaction among the Telugu teachers. Moreover, 32 out of the 34 participants affirm that their job earns them a lot of respect in the community. The key motivating factors are passing on the knowledge of the language and preserving the language and culture as shown in Table 5.12. It can be noted that 100% of the participants state that the job enables them to pass on knowledge gained, which is one of the important goals of AL teaching as discussed in Chapter 2. The pull factors of being a Telugu teacher are further explored in the semi-structured interviews.

5.2.5 Engagement with Telugu and language use

5.2.5.1 Use of languages in home environment

Research question three of this study was centred on investigating how the teachers mediate between the use and study of the Telugu language. This section is dedicated to uncovering the languages employed by the teachers when communicating with different individuals within their home environment across different generations. The objective was to gauge the extent to which the language is used or has been used in the past, as well as to understand the dynamics of language negotiation among the various generations.

The questions asked and the options provided are indicated in Appendix 5. The results demonstrate that Kreol is the main language used in all spheres. Being by far the most spoken mother tongue in Mauritius, the language also dominates the spaces of the Telugu teachers as they use Kreol to communicate most of the time.

Additionally, 100% of the participants who are married use Kreol to communicate with their spouse. A few also use other languages like English (5), French (9), and Telugu (9). It can

be noted that none of them stated using Bhojpuri, which is a vernacular of Indian origin still used in Mauritius, but an AL to those originating from North India.

Regarding Telugu, it is of considerable significance to delve deeper into the extent to which the language is integrated into their daily lives. This exploration entails examining the specific spheres or contexts in which the language is employed, as well as the circumstances that influence its usage.

When it comes to languages used to communicate with children, 100% of those who have children speak Kreol. An interesting observation is that none of the participants mentioned using Bhojpuri, indicating that the younger generation is no longer being actively encouraged to communicate in that language, in contrast to the widespread use of global European languages such as English and French. A good majority also use Telugu, which could mean an attempt or the agency of transmitting the language in the home environment to the next generation.

Usage of language by the children of the participants to peers was also explored. Again, 100% use Kreol as one of the languages to communicate. Other languages used include English (3), French (9), and Telugu (1). It is to be highlighted that the usage of French among the newer generation is encouraged and on the increase. Only one participant stated that his/her child speaks in Telugu to other friends, demonstrating that the language is not spoken among the younger generation. Bhojpuri is also not spoken.

Exploration of language usage between parents and participants was conducted through item 6.4. The outcomes indicate that, once more, Kreol emerged as a language consistently utilised by all Telugu teachers when communicating with their parents. In contrast, the use of English and French was comparatively less frequent in comparison to their usage among the newer generation. Bhojpuri, the Indian vernacular, was also present among some of the participants (3/34) who belong to the older generation. It is to be noted that Telugu was spoken by the parents of only a few participants (6/34). This shows that, just as discussed in section 5.4, the language has not been inherited by the majority of the teachers, but learned at school or in the temple as the language was still not spoken at home by a majority of the Telugu teachers.

Table 5.13 Overview of the results of the languages spoken in the home environment

Language	Language spoken							
	during childhood				at present			
	by you to grand parents	by parents to you	to parents by you	to your siblings by you	to spouse	by you to your parents	by you to your children	by your children to Friends
Kreol	33	34	34	34	22	34	17	17
%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English	1	6	7	6	5	5	8	3
%	3%	17.6%	20.6%	17.6%	14.7%	14.7%	47%	17.6%
French	1	9	6	5	9	4	12	9
%	3%	26.5%	17.6%	14.7%	53%	11.7%	70.5%	53%
Bhojpuri	9	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	26.5%	8.8%	6%					
Telugu	9	6	4	3	9	4	12	1
%	26.5%	17.6%	11.7%	8.8%	26.5%	11.7%	70.5%	0.06%

The comprehensive examination of language usage, as presented in this grid, reveals several noteworthy characteristics aligned with the language evolution and accommodation process elucidated in Chapter 1. The analysis of languages employed during the participants' childhood provides valuable insights. It becomes apparent that grandparents relied on Indian languages to communicate among their peers. However, an observable trend of dwindling usage of Indian languages over time becomes evident, signifying the shift towards Kreol for day-to-day communication purposes (Stein, 2006). The outcomes showcased in the table carry additional significance, considering that the participants are educators of a specific language, distinct from their mother tongue. The usage of Telugu, even among the Telugu teachers' home environment, is very limited. This is significant as the study also sought to explore the use and learning of an AL in a multilingual context like Mauritius. The usage of the Telugu language in the different spaces by the Telugu teachers was revisited in the next stage of data collection.

5.2.5.2 Spaces where Telugu is used by teachers

While the utilisation of the Telugu language within the community and home environment may be limited, there are certain contexts in which Telugu teachers employ the language outside of the teaching environment. These contexts constitute an integral aspect of their everyday lives, where engagement with the language is occasionally deliberate or inherently woven into their daily routines. In some circumstances, some of the spaces are recreated in the context by external agents. This section aims at exploring the involvement in activities where there is scope to use the language.

Within this section, one of the items sought to ascertain with whom the participants converse in Telugu. A second item aimed to uncover the specific contexts outside the teaching environment where the teacher employs Telugu. Furthermore, a third item delved into the various activities that involve the use of Telugu, in which the teacher is engaged. The items were presented in the form of multiple-choice questions where the respondents could tick more than one option. The results are tabled below:

Table 5.14 Contact and involvement of the participants with the Telugu language

I use Telugu language with		Apart from the Telugu teaching classroom setting, I am in contact with the Telugu language through		In which of these activities related to the Telugu language are you engaged?	
my students.	34	radio programmes.	30	Private tuition	19
my parents.	5	television programmes.	31	Evening Telugu	24
my spouse.	7	social media.	28	classes	
my children.	12	international magazines.	11	Adult Telugu classes	5
colleagues.	13	chatting/calling friends	13	Drama clubs	12
the priest.	20	abroad.		Performing prayers	25
foreign friends		socio-cultural and religious	27	Singing in temple	22
who speak the		functions.		Radio jockey	9
language.	19	internet (browsing).	32	Television host	9
other people.	0	Any other.	0	Member in socio-cultural group	17
				Writer	4
				Literary clubs/unions	5
				Other	

The findings illustrate that the Telugu language sees predominant usage primarily within the Telugu classroom setting with students. Beyond the classroom, opportunities for language use are relatively limited. Although the language isn't commonly spoken with parents, there is an observable upward trend in its usage in this context. This might be attributed to the participants' role as Telugu teachers, affording them the agency to impart and transmit the language to their children, as well as to their spouses. Additionally, the language is now taught wherever there is demand, showing that the younger generation has access to learning the language. The affirmation of 20 participants engaging in conversations with the priest in Telugu underscores the existence of native speakers of the language within the context. Additionally, the acknowledgment of 19 participants using Telugu with foreign friends reveals a strong connection and allegiance to Andhra Pradesh, India. The figures also show that the language exists less at home and more in outer spaces.

It can also be noted that radio and television programmes, which are provided by the National Television and radio, are also common mediums that keep the teachers in contact with the language. Nine of the participants even work as hosts and radio jockeys. Additionally, social media and the Internet serve as crucial platforms that enable teachers to maintain their connection with the language.

Analysing the engagement of the participants in activities related to Telugu outside their work hours shows a high involvement in religio-sociocultural activities. Among the participants, 25 indicated that they use Telugu for prayer purposes, 22 sing in temple, and 17 are members of socio-cultural groups. Additionally, many participants are involved in teaching activities beyond regular school hours. Nineteen give private tuition, 24 teach evening classes, and 5 teach adult classes. Notably, 9 participants work as radio jockeys and television hosts in the Telugu language at the National Broadcasting Corporation. However, it is important to mention that a mere 4 participants are involved in writing, and only 5 form part of literary groups or unions.

Analysis of the questionnaire has thus provided valuable insights about the experiences of the participants. Further insights were obtained through the focus group discussion, which I analyse in the next section.

5.3 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion (see Chapter 4) was held after a workshop organised by the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES) to train prospective examination markers. The focus

group consisted of eight participants. The discussion targeted three main aspects, namely: 1) The Telugu teachers' perception of the Telugu language in schools/Mauritius; 2) Their feeling as a teacher of Telugu; and 3) their perspectives on the objectives of teaching Telugu. This discussion facilitated the collection of preliminary data concerning the phenomenon, as well as insights into the experiences of Telugu teachers. The insights gathered during this discussion proved instrumental in equipping me for the subsequent phases of the study. The transcript of the focus group discussion can be found in Appendix 11.

During the discussion regarding their perspective on the teaching of the Telugu language in schools, the teachers candidly expressed their opinions. Among their sentiments, one teacher, highlighted a prevailing lack of interest among students to engage with the language: *"Nowadays students are not interested with Telugu. This (trend) starts as from Primary itself. Parents do not encourage their children"*. This creates a fear among the teachers of having less students, and even no G7 intake in a school, which means a loss of three slots per week in the timetable for the next three years: *"It is discouraging that this year there is no intake for form 1"*.

Moreover, some teachers raised questions about the perceived value of the subject, particularly when comparing its relevance in rural versus urban areas. Additionally, a few participants shifted the responsibility onto parents, pointing out that there is waning encouragement from parents for their children to learn the language. This trend was linked to the decreasing size of extended families, resulting in the erosion of cultural ties and diminishing interest. Intriguingly, two participants even alluded to the notion of not attending the temple, a space traditionally associated with language promotion.

Another participant stated that maintaining students in upper classes depends on the motivation of the teachers themselves. For one teacher, this is obvious for there is no longer job prospects compared to the past when the subject was studied: *"Some students tell you that they will learn Telugu, but what will they do with it? There are so many degree holders who do not have jobs"*. One teacher also pointed out that having a student brought up in a Telugu family background does not guarantee that the child will choose the subject. The main concern of the teachers was about having fewer students than they expect, creating dissatisfaction.

When asked about their feeling as a Telugu teacher, many showed satisfaction, citing their achievements and good moments in their career. Furthermore, one participant shared an incident where they felt a sense of pride in reminding the rector of a policy decision that

permitted her to teach the subject even with just one student. This instance serves as a poignant illustration of the participant's awareness of being part of a minority and their assertive response to perceived suppression or marginalisation:

“... the school was not willing to offer the subject at A-Level. My students were asked to opt for other subjects. Then, I remembered of an article in the newspaper. I made photocopies and gave to the rector. I told him that the option should be given. Intake at grade 7 is one or two students, where shall I get 5 students in lower six? Then he accepted”.

When there is a demand, the subject is offered. The success of students in the language was also a motivating factor as stated by Ashna:

“I have done nine years in a girl’s college. I am very proud, how much I prepared, because I have students who have done Main (A-Level), I have strived and struggled. I have prepared my notes myself and it is a good feeling when they passed”.

A teacher explains how she makes additional effort outside school hours not for monetary incentives, but for engagement with the students, and the language:

“... look at my case. I go to give tuition at XXX for Saturday extension classes. Why do I go? Not because of the money involved, but it is an engagement with the children. They want to do something”.

Though some teachers are multidisciplinary in their teaching subjects, there is no intention to leave their job as they like their profession for several reasons.

When queried about their role as Telugu teachers and the objectives they uphold, the participants emphatically stated their commitment to preserving an integral identity and advocating for a language intertwined with its cultural heritage. They viewed this responsibility

as an essential aspect of their profession, emphasising the need to safeguard their distinct identity, which is at risk due to the language's minority status within the local context, as Ashna suggests that:

“ ... today we are very few in the population. If we do not speak the language, who will?”

However, the complexity of the phenomenon in the multilingual context of Mauritius is such that, Ashna herself, despite showing strong desires to educate the students to be able to encourage spoken Telugu, does not have a space, except for her classroom, to speak the language, for Telugu is not the vernacular spoken in any of the spaces.

Other participants exhibited a strong sense of language loyalty, viewing themselves as ambassadors of the language and bearing the crucial responsibility of its preservation. This sentiment aligns with Fishman's (2007) assertion that a profound sense of attachment to a specific language fosters a desire to promote and protect it. Another participant is optimistic, expressing the belief that the language is not in danger due to the presence of numerous teachers and ongoing activities. This observation underscores the role of language the policies within a multilingual context, wherein the sustained existence of languages is facilitated through educational initiatives. These efforts are sustained by teachers who serve as paid agents tasked with the promotion and preservation of these languages.

Similarly, another participant highlighted the ongoing recruitment of teachers, which contrasts with the scarcity experienced during past decades when many of the current participants were students. Examining the language's reach, the discussion revealed its firm grounding within the ethnic backgrounds of both learners and teachers. The participants underscored the language's inclusivity, affirming that anyone can learn or opt for the language. They also expressed a willingness to welcome students from different communities who wish to learn the language, even if they are 'not connected' to the culture.

The focus group discussion has proven invaluable in providing a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, which has helped me explore the experiences of the participants as well as identify further avenues for the case studies.

5.4 Identifying Participants for Next Stage of Study

In this section, I present the six participants chosen for the case studies. The characteristics of the teachers that were targeted for the interview have already been mentioned. Being a case study and a phenomenological study, my selection of participants was based on desired characteristics that would yield the maximum data to understand the teachers' experiences and who would serve as a representative example of the Telugu teacher community as a whole (Hammarberg & Lacey, 2016; Ellis, 2019).

5.4.1 The determining characteristics

The emerged themes, categorised under 'Gender and Age', 'Educational and Professional Background', 'Ethno-religious Background and Ancestral Heritage', and 'Teachers' Experiences and Engagement with the Telugu Language', which were derived from the data fathered from the questionnaire. These themes collectively contributed to a clearer understanding of the phenomenon under study. They also helped me to adopt a set of characteristics to define my choice of participants.

The characteristics that I adopted were:

1. Distribution of male and female participants
2. The Age and experience of the participants and the generation they belong to
3. Involvement of the participants in socio-religious activities
4. The place of study; locally versus the native land of the language
5. Language use and home environment
6. The level of engagement of the participants with activities related to the language.
7. Accessibility of participants and willingness to participate in the study

Two male participants were chosen, one from the elder generation and one from the younger generation. While one is deeply involved in sociocultural and religious activities, the other is simply limited to teaching the language at school. Among the remaining participants who are females, two belong to the younger generation and two are in their middle-ages. Two of the participants studied in Andhra Pradesh. Some of the participants are engaged with the language outside school hours at different levels.

Language use was another element that was taken into consideration to choose the participants. So I ensured that I incorporated participants speaking the language in different spaces as well as participants who affirmed that they used Telugu with students only. However, it is to be noted that all the participants showed similarities as far as ethnic and religious background was concerned. As discussed, due to the fact that the Telugu community is a small close-knit one with a high rate of intra-religious marriages, 100% of the participants stated practicing Hinduism and 95% have both parents from the Telugu ethnic group, with the remaining 5% having the father from the Telugu community. The choice of participants is presented in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.15 Selected participants chosen to participate in the study

	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Experience	Qualifications	Place of Study	Extra involvement	Other key characteristics
1	Nanda	Male	55	25	BA, PGCE	MRU	Priest, Active in socio-cultural activities, Tuition, curriculum	Priest
2	Ashna	Female	35	15	BA, PGCE	MRU	Evening classes Extra-curricular activities	Extension school teacher
3	Sanjhiana	Female	30	8	MA, PGCE, MBA	IND	Mauritius Broadcasting Socio-cultural Activities tuition, extra curricular	
4	Jack	Male	35	10	BA	MRU	Not involved in Telugu activities	
5	Kriti	Female	28	2	BA, MA PSY	IND	Singer	Freshly appointed
6	Devi	Female	36	12	BA, PGCE	MRU	Textbook Panel, Socio-cultural activities	

5.4.2 Participants

This section provides a detailed breakdown of each participant.

- Nanda

Nanda is the eldest of the participants. Aged 56, he has the most work experience, representing the second generation of teachers of Telugu. The first generation comprised a few who learned the standard language from India and then trained individuals like Nanda. Furthermore, he is one of the two male participants (from the only 5 in the population), with contrasting elements both in terms of engagement with the language and in age. The features that also make Nanda interesting is that he has gone through the different eras of a Telugu teacher. Additionally, Nanda is a priest, he has been engaged in textbook and manual writing, and is a public figure in the Telugu community. Another noteworthy characteristic is that he also boasts memberships with various associations and organisations related to the Telugu language in Mauritius. Thus, all these invaluable characteristics present a wide range of avenues that can be explored to understand the experiences of Telugu teachers.

- Sanjhiana

Sanjhiana is one of the four female participants. Being in her early 30s, she is a product of the contemporary education system. During her academic journey, Telugu was taught and available as an optional language till her HSC. She pursued her studies in India, completing both a BA and MA in Telugu. I chose her as a participant due to several notable features she possessed. Apart from her educational background in the language's native region and her proficiency in Telugu, she is actively engaged in various community and educational activities. Moreover, her involvement after school hours includes participation in Drama Festivals, giving tuition, online adult classes, and even a position as a radio jockey at the MBC.

- Devi

Devi, in her late 30s, has a longstanding association with the Telugu language. Her journey began during primary school and continued with private examinations during her secondary school years. She possesses a diploma, degree, and PGCE acquired in Mauritius. Her selection for the case study was influenced by her placement within the mid-generation group of educators. Moreover, her shift from a rural to an urban setting contributes to her distinctive profile. Notably, she actively participates in community-level Telugu activities. Additionally, her involvement with the MES for examination and her role as a board member of the Telugu Speaking Union are key features that caught my attention.

- Jack

Jack, in his mid-thirties, represents the second male participant, offering a distinct contrast to Nanda in both language engagement and age. What drew me to select Jack were his intriguing attributes. Initially, he pursued the subject due to his proficiency in it, and only later recognised the potential career prospects it presented. His tertiary education was completed within Mauritius. However, he was never fully engaged as he entered the field just because there was a scarcity of teachers, and he had the qualifications required. For nearly a decade, he worked as a temporary teacher, without pursuing further advancements, until eventually securing a permanent position.

- Kriti

Kriti, in her late twenties, occupies the role of the third female participant of this study. I selected her due to her distinctiveness. As the youngest permanent educator, Kriti assumed her role just two years ago. What sets her apart is her lack of prior teaching experience and her initial absence of aspiration to become a Telugu teacher. Her journey took a unique trajectory: receiving a scholarship to Andhra Pradesh based on commendable results in Telugu at HSC, she pursued a joint degree in Telugu and Psychology. Upon obtaining her Master's degree in Psychology, her return to Mauritius led to her appointment as an Educator, a permanent position that she accepted. Like Jack, she is not engaged in any other teaching activities except during work hours. However, she comes from a family rooted in Telugu culture; both her parents have good education and proficiency in Telugu.

- Ashna

Ashna is in her mid-thirties and the fourth of the female participants. I chose her as participant because she has joined teaching Telugu at a very young age, and she is deeply involved in evening school teaching where she gives her time to extra-curricular activities. Coming from a family background where the culture and language was considered a rich heritage, she studied the subject with the assistance of benevolent teachers who helped her as the subject was not available at school. Like many of the teachers during her time, she joined primary teacher training after HSC and then completed her degree, and then joined the secondary sector. She is very involved in extra-curricular activities.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter served as a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the results from the preliminary sources of data, which assisted in the first level of exploration of the experiences of teachers teaching Telugu in Mauritius. The themes that emerged from participants were grouped into different categories, and the participants for the next stage of the study were identified.

After conducting a comprehensive review of the literature (Chapter 2), establishing the theoretical framework (Chapter 3), detailing the methodology (Chapter 4), and presenting a descriptive analysis of the Telugu teachers in this chapter, I am now prepared to introduce an added layer of objectivity and precision to the research questions. Subsequently, in the next few chapters, I will embark on a thorough exploration of the phenomenon through an in-depth analysis of the experiences of the six selected participants.

The next part of this thesis, a series of three chapters, will deal with the different case studies.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH FIRST GENERATION SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter begins a series of three related chapters where I explore the experiences of Telugu teachers in the Mauritian multilingual context through six case studies. The first case study discussed is that of Nanda, a male Telugu teacher. Notably, he embodies a dual minority status – being male within the subset of Telugu teachers. Moreover, Nanda's generation of teachers mediate between the pioneers and the subsequent generations. He himself learned under the tutelage of the first generation of Telugu teachers and has been teaching the language since. Through Nanda's insights, various pivotal elements and themes emerge that hold significance for both the phenomenon and the teachers' experiences.

6.1 Orientation

The structure of the chapter is as follows. After the introduction (section 6.0) and orientation (section 6.1) of the chapter, I present a portrait of Nanda based on the three interviews held with him (section 6.2). Then, in sections 6.3 and 6.4, respectively, I discuss Nanda's journey of becoming a Telugu teacher and his current role as a teacher. In Section 6.5, I portray Nanda at home and in the locality. In section 6.6, I offer an in-depth examination of one of his roles within the Telugu community of his locality – specifically, his dual role as a part-time priest and a socio-cultural model. The chapter is concluded in section 6.7.

6.2 Portrait of Nanda

In order to analyse the experiences of the teachers through the participants who embody the phenomenon, I have constructed a portrait of Nanda using data from the interviews.

6.2.1 First interview with Nanda

At 56 years old, Nanda holds the distinction of being the eldest among the participants, displaying a fervent passion for the Telugu language. Nanda displayed genuine enthusiasm upon learning about the interview opportunity. It is worth noting that, as with the other

participants, Nanda knows me personally. This context established a foundation for the interview as a dialogue between two familiar individuals.

The first meeting with Nanda was designed to complement the existing data acquired through the survey. The interview focused on extracting information regarding his educational and career trajectory, which holds significant insights into the formative phase of teaching this minority language. It also shed light on the language's evolution, the role of educators like Nanda, and their contributions.

In addition to providing a glimpse into the teaching practices prevalent during that era, the first interview with Nanda offered valuable perspectives on his personal experiences and the nuanced shifts that have occurred over the course of three decades.

6.2.2 Nanda at home

The second interview with Nanda took place several weeks after the first one. As with the other participants, I was welcomed at his place of residence. The interview, in essence, served as a pretext for our encounter. Nanda's family members, who were already acquainted with me, extended their hospitality by warmly welcoming me and offering tea. During the interview, the spotlight shifted to Nanda's experiences in his role as a Telugu teacher. Additionally, the discussion delved into how the dynamics of his home and local environment have influenced him as someone who embodies the Telugu culture.

6.2.3 Nanda, death ceremony

The third interaction with Nanda within the context of this study occurred following a funeral ceremony, during which Nanda assumed the role of the officiating priest for the prayers. Within this specific setting, Nanda commanded significant respect within the community. He adorned a traditional Indian ensemble, which was white in colour. The event attracted an assembly of around 100 attendees, the majority of whom were attired in traditional attire.

In addition to conducting the funeral rites, which encompassed recitations of prayers in both Sanskrit and Telugu, Nanda adhered to Hindu rituals in accordance with tradition. His involvement extended beyond the formalities; he provided moral support and actively engaged in sharing the sorrow of the grieving family. Nanda held a central role in determining the course of action and guided the participants on the appropriate steps to undertake in accordance with the cultural customs linked to Telugu community funeral rites.

Subsequent to this occasion, the interview provided a valuable lens into Nanda's socio-cultural engagement, particularly his pivotal role in upholding the religious and cultural traditions affiliated with the Telugu heritage. This conversation facilitated an exploration of Nanda's involvement in preserving these practices. As discussed by previous researchers, the death ceremony is one of the *samskaras* observed by the different ethnolinguistic groups following their forefathers' traditions (Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2017).

6.3 Becoming a Telugu Teacher in the Early Days

In the 1970s, only a few years after gaining independence, the nation was in a building phase and, on the sociolinguistic level, Kreol language was not acknowledged as a language (Stein, 1986). Yet it was assimilating most of the then spoken languages in the community, including Bhojpuri and the minority Indian languages spoken by a few. By 1972, it had emerged as the predominant spoken vernacular (Stein, 1986; Baker, 2007). Importantly, during this juncture, the minority languages like Telugu had encountered a substantial language shift and were no longer commonly spoken at home (Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2017). Following the introduction of ALs in the educational system, four Telugu teachers were recruited and trained at the MIE as Telugu teachers in the year 1972 (Luthmoodoo, 2013). However, most of the teaching in Telugu, as pointed out by Nanda, was being carried out in evening schools run at community level in the different temples, for Telugu was offered in very few public schools due to the lack of trained teachers. Just like the different ethnic communities cater for the teaching of their languages, Telugu was taught from one generation to the other at the evening schools run by the temples (Prabhakaran, 1991, 1994; Luthmoodoo, 2013; Bhaskar, 2017; Sokappadu, 2017). Nanda attended one such school where the teacher was a priest and had some knowledge of the language. The next section deals with the evening school.

6.3.1 The evening school in the 1980s – Community agency

Nanda's case serves as a focal point that sheds light on and provides valuable insight into the place and role of evening community schools (*Sayantrapubadi* or *Patasala* as used by Prabhakaran [1991, 1994]) in upholding the cohesion of the Telugu ethnic community. Moreover, these institutions play a pivotal role in the transmission of what is deemed integral to the Telugu culture. In Chapter 1, I introduced the presence of these schools, which are supported by the Ministry of Education with the purpose of safeguarding and upholding ALs. Through the lens of Nanda's experience, numerous community and pedagogical facets come to light, offering insights into the operation and significance of these evening schools. At the

community level, a significant number of children from the community were enrolled in these afternoon classes. These 'schools' predominantly functioned within the confines of the *mandiram*, the Telugu temple, serving as a space where the teacher would provide guidance to the children of the Telugu community. This community primarily consisted of children of labourers, as in the case of Nanda. In the first interview, when asked about the evening schools, Nanda replied in Kreol as follows:

Lekol lapremidi ti pe fer dan bann mandiram. Ti ena osi bann Pandit ki konn langaz -la ti pe montre sa abaz volonter. Ansam avek langaz-la kouma mo pe dir twa ti pe montre boukou zafer kouma manier, valer, kiltir ek relizion. To aprann fer lapriyer tou.

[Evening classes were held at the Mandiram/Temple. There were priests who knew the language and taught them on voluntary basis. Along with the language, many values, culture, good behaviour and religion were taught. You even learn doing prayers.]

This highlights the community's commitment to language instruction and its transmission to the succeeding generation. The priests, possessing language proficiency, voluntarily undertook the role of educators, underscoring their active involvement in fostering and preserving the language. This finding is aligned with the studies conducted by Bhaskar (2012) and Prabhakaran (1991, 1994), revealing the significant role priests have played in the revitalisation of the Telugu language not only in Mauritius but also in various other Indian diasporic countries.

As far as pedagogical aspects are concerned, there was no formal curriculum. A disciple of the teacher who was the priest in the temple, Nanda followed whatever his teacher (guru) taught him. In his view, these teachings encapsulated the essence of learning Telugu. The instruction encompassed not only language but also values, culture, ethical conduct, and religious principles. His learning of Telugu and lessons included performing prayers, underscoring the integration of language acquisition with religion. The link and relationship between the guru and the disciple are profound, characterised by a rich transfer of knowledge. This process of education facilitated through the evening community school was of great importance. It was particularly notable since secondary school education involved fees and was not accessible to everyone. In contrast, these evening classes were both cost-free and voluntary,

and therefore held considerable value for the community. This sentiment is echoed in the following excerpt.

Lekol segonder ti peyan. Alor nou ti pe aprann partou-partou. Bann sosiokiltirel ti pe ed nou bokou. Samem nou ti pe aprann-aprann. Donn koudme tou anmemtan.

[Secondary school was fee paying. So, we learned everywhere. Sociocultural groups gave a big helping hand for Telugu. So we learned. Even helped at the same time.]

As Nanda later mentions, when he enrolled in formal training at the MGI, the focus shifted toward imparting functional language skills. This insight from Nanda's experience unveils two distinct instructional approaches prevalent in the teaching of AL. These encompass religion-oriented 'preaching', as well as functional language teaching.

Another aspect of the evening school was its organisational structure. Students across various grades were integrated, with older students taking on the responsibility of instructing the younger ones. This dynamic led to Nanda's initial exposure to the role of a teacher. This is portrayed in the following extract from the first interview.

Alor mo 'nn koumans teach dan lekol lapremidi, etan done mo ti enn etidian, alor sistem-la ti koumsa, dan lekol lapremidi ti ena tou bann klas. 1st a Form 5. Ti ena wit klas, alor kan to 'nn rant lekol Telugu, to ena bann gran zelev ki ti pe fer ti-klas, anmemtan ki nou 'nn vinn aprann, nou 'nn montre bann zelev, savedir nou ti deza enn teacher; kouma enn zelev mem nou ti pe ed bann lezot zelev fer bann ti-klas.

[I started to teach in the evening classes. I was myself a student there and the system was such that the elders would teach the younger ones. We had all classes from grade 1 to grade 11. Around 8 classes mixed up together. So, when you reach there, you can see elders teaching younger ones, while they have themselves come to learn. In so doing, we were already practising as informal teachers, helping other students.]

The practice of older students instructing younger ones is a pedagogically intriguing aspect, inadvertently contributing to Nanda's gradual adoption of a 'teacher' role. However, it is important to acknowledge that this technique was necessitated by the community's constrained resources, rather than being a deliberate educational strategy. The instruction of Telugu within

the evening school framework was evaluated within the context of the community, and Nanda successfully achieved the equivalent of the SC level. He accomplished this through the utilisation of available resources and guidance provided by his priest-teacher. This underscores the concerted endeavours undertaken at the community level to facilitate the teaching of the language. Likewise, Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982) and Prabhakaran (1994) also highlight the community's efforts in fostering cohesion among its members, thereby contributing to the collective advancement of the community as a whole.

The insights gleaned from Nanda's case underscore significant parallels between the operational approaches of evening schools in the Mauritian and South African contexts, as Prabhakaran (1991, p. 104) expounds:

The main aim of any Telugu patasala under a branch sabha was to teach the Telugu language to the South African Andhras, to facilitate the maintenance of the Telugu language and the Andhra culture in South Africa.

During his time in school, Nanda completed his secondary education without any exposure to Telugu, as the language was not yet included as a subject. Consequently, Nanda's sole formal education in Telugu was attained through the evening community classes.

6.3.2 An interventionist approach to revitalise dying languages

As elucidated in Chapter 1, ALs confronted significant assimilation challenges. Among these languages, Bhojpuri, for instance, underwent a notable decline, while others such as Telugu, Marathi, and Gujarati teetered on the brink of extinction (Bissoonaath, 2010; Stein, 2008). To avert a fate akin to the decline experienced by African languages like Malagasy, the government has adopted an interventionist approach in response to the urging of various communities of Indian origin. Culture politics (Srilata, 2008) played an important role as the country is led by majority Indo-Mauritians, who are the majority as discussed in Chapter 1. The introduction of ALs in public schooling meant that there was a status planning (Spolsky, 2004), which effectively elevated these languages to taught languages within the curriculum (Tirvassen, 2007; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2020).

Standardised forms of these languages were introduced, sparking a demand for proficient educators. Nanda serves as a prime example of a teacher who has reaped the rewards of this interventionist approach, experiencing improved career prospects as a result. The government faced the need to recruit teachers to work in schools as there was a scarcity of teachers of Telugu, and those teaching in evening schools were mainly priests who had informal

knowledge of the language. A certificate obtained through the annual examinations conducted at the evening schools, which equated to a Grade 11 level in Telugu, was acknowledged as a valid qualification (Sokappadu, 2008).

Nanda, who had been seeking temporary employment to sustain himself, suddenly discovered that he met the eligibility criteria to apply for the position of an experienced Telugu teacher – a role esteemed for its prestige. Nanda's experience exemplifies how his acquired knowledge, passed down through transmission, as well as what he would subsequently impart during informal sessions, have been acknowledged and elevated by the state to a higher status (Tirvassen, 2017).

Nanda's identity changed with him becoming a Telugu teacher. As a government employee, this position conferred him with societal status, intensifying his motivation to further enhance his subject-specific qualifications. This newfound status acted as an additional impetus, motivating him to invest greater effort in elevating his proficiency. Thus, the state's initiative to reevaluate ALs has not only rejuvenated these languages but has also propelled young individuals, who grew up learning them, with a renewed drive and direction to sustain the tradition of transmission.

While Nanda's journey required him to invest extra efforts, including retaking certain examinations, the prospect of becoming a teacher was an opportunity he could not afford to miss. This determination assured the continuation of language instruction. The transformation of Nanda's professional identities, attributed to the revitalisation of the language, is distinctly visible. This tallies with previous studies by Brutt-Griffler (2008), May (2013), and Colla (2018), who remark that language teacher identities are influenced by positive outcomes in the domain.

At the same time, Nanda's keen interest and deep passion for language acquisition are evident. He continued to pursue advancements in this domain. After venturing into the realm of AL instruction, Nanda embarked on an extensive educational journey at the MGI. Over the span of approximately a decade, he consecutively undertook various courses – beginning with Primary training, progressing through a Certificate in Telugu, followed by a Diploma, Degree, and then completing a PGCE qualification. Even before enrolling in any tertiary course at the MGI, Nanda recalls completing a programme tailored for HSC examination preparation. This was necessitated by his decision to retake the HSC examinations, incorporating Telugu as a subject. While narrating his educational path in the first interview, he elaborates that:

Lamem parkour MGI komanse. Mo'nn fer 2-an Advance Level, kan fini 3-an Diploma. Lerla 3-an Degree. Lerla 2-an PGCE. Savedir depi training mo'nn res fer kour mem MGI.

[This was the beginning of my journey at MGI. After HSC I did an Advance Certificate, Diploma, then a 3 years degree then a 2 years PGCE. Meaning as from my teacher training, I have been studying.]

This highlights his unwavering motivation and active commitment to mastering the language, starting from scratch and forging his career path. While his initial exposure and familiarity with the language were instrumental, he emphasises that the process of learning within a structured educational framework, complete with examinations, was distinctly dissimilar from the experience he had undergone in the informal setting of the evening school. Unfortunately, Nanda did not have the chance to study Telugu in India, unlike many youngsters today who are afforded this opportunity (Chapter 8 deals with two cases of teachers who studied in India).

6.3.3 The Mahatma Gandhi Institute – Symbol of essentialist intervention

The role of the MGI in AL education, as discussed in Chapter 1, is pervasive. All teachers involved in AL teaching in Mauritius have had a journey there. Discussing the role of the MGI during the first interview, Nanda states that:

Wi MGI li la pou promouvwar bann AL. Tou zafer AL santre dan MGI. Ofet inn set up mem dan sa loptik-la, enn partnership ant governman Moris ek Lenn. Mwamem mo'nn aprann Moris. Alor tou mo bann modil ti laba. Mo'nn aprann bokoulaba o-nivo tertier.

[Yes MGI is here to promote AL. Everything regarding AL is centered at the MGI. Actually, the MGI was set up with this goal. A partnership between the Mauritian and Indian government. I myself studied in Mauritius. So, all my modules were centered there. At tertiary level, I spent most of my time there.]

Nanda's journey offers an avenue for analysing the institution's significance in two key aspects: firstly, in revitalising ALs through instruction; and secondly, in the ongoing pedagogical and content-oriented training in these languages. Nanda emphasises this as he goes on to state:

Be mo lepok pa ti ena dimounn kalifie pou ansegn nou Telugu nivo HSC. Laba ti ena bann lecturers depi Lenn.

[During my time, there were no qualified people to train you for HSC. At MGI there were lecturers from India.]

Thus, it can be noted how in the early days in Mauritius, teachers and lecturers were brought from India to train teachers, as explained by Nanda. The establishment of a government-operated institution specifically dedicated to ALs underscores the government's commitment to the preservation and advancement of these languages. The institution aligns with what Kloss (1977) and later May (2015) critique as 'promotion-oriented language rights', which entails fostering competence and usage of Indian diasporic languages and Modern Chinese within various contexts, including schools. Nanda maintains an active role at the MGI and is presently involved in the textbook writing panel and curriculum development. The MGI bears the responsibility of crafting the curriculum and producing educational resources such as textbooks for the instruction of this AL within the nation. As a present member of the curriculum panel, Nanda feels proud that his experience as a teacher has helped him to be part of the panel where he is giving his input to advance the subject.

6.4 Nanda as a Telugu Teacher

6.4.1 Nanda in the educational system

Nanda, being someone who has gone through the different stages and changes in the curriculum, affirms that he knows what is expected from him as a teacher of Telugu. This shows confidence in the job he is doing, which can be attributed to his long years of experience in the field. Like three of the other participants involved in this study, Nanda moved from primary to secondary school teaching after completing his degree, and he is well-acquainted with the educational system and teaching of Telugu at both levels. However, for him, the role of a Telugu teacher extends beyond merely imparting language proficiency and grammar skills solely for examination purposes. He expresses that his satisfaction lies in enabling students to converse in the language. As Telugu is offered as an optional core subject, numerous students select it with the intention of enhancing their overall academic performance. Consequently, their focus often revolves around studying the subject primarily from an examination point of view. It wasn't until 2018 that a shift occurred in the examinable syllabus, introducing an incorporation of communication skills.

Nanda also highlights that interactions with the language often tend to be unidirectional, with limited opportunities for meaningful exchanges or conversations. In the classroom, he

demonstrates mastery over the language by using it for instruction. However, students often respond in different languages, with only minimal efforts to engage in spoken Telugu. The same pattern continues beyond the classroom when Nanda employs Telugu in his interactions, while others merely listen passively without active engagement. Due to practical constraints, the medium of instruction cannot be Telugu, and Nanda employs his mother tongue, which is Kreol, to teach Telugu. The following is an extract of what he says during the first interview to show how challenging his task is to teach a minority language in a multilingual context:

4-5 lalinn difisil defwa. Savedir nou bizin fer vocabulary building pou zanfana-la kapav konpran. Medium of Teaching, li pa pou kapav Telugu. Pou enn zelev mem ziska HSC pa pou kapav koz Telugu ale mem. Sa demann enn gran preparasion. Mo bizin fini kone ki mo pou al fer avek zanfana-la, ki mo pou al dir li ek zanfana-la si to pa koz Kreol (mother tongue/lang maternel) avek li, li pa pou konpran. Mainly SC HSC li bizin mother tongue pou ki zot kapav konpran lesans seki pe montre zot.

[So, 4-5 lines too is difficult sometimes. [speaking 4-5 lines in Telugu] Then it is vocabulary building so that the students can understand. The medium of teaching cannot be Telugu. Even for a student at HSC level, you cannot speak in Telugu for long. So, the work asks for preparation. I need to know what is to be done with the child. If I do not speak the mother tongue with the child, he or she will not understand. SC and HSC students need to understand the basics and essence being taught and this is possible only using the mother tongue.]

This draws attention to an important aspect related to the use and study of the language in a multilingual context like Mauritius. Teaching the language necessitates utilising another language, such as Kreol in the Mauritian context. This approach aligns with the Grammar Translation method employed in language instruction, a commonly utilised technique for teaching foreign languages (Piantaggini, 2020). Moreover, according to Nanda, the Telugu language is rarely employed within the classroom setting, and instances of occasional code-switching are prevalent (Auckle, 2015) as the students find it difficult to speak more than four to five lines of Telugu. Although Nanda doesn't perceive teaching Telugu through Kreol as an issue, he does express disappointment over the students' inability to engage in extensive conversations in Telugu. This sense of disappointment highlights that educators like Nanda are dissatisfied with the teaching outcomes, underscoring the realisation that desired objectives or targets are not being achieved, even with qualified instructors in place.

6.4.2 An officer implementing policy and enacting agency

With an extensive teaching career in the realm of Telugu, the language has consistently remained an integral part of Nanda's everyday life. Functioning as a language ambassador, his involvement with Telugu extends across diverse spheres. However, it is important to note that "contact with the language" within the multicultural landscape of Mauritius isn't a random occurrence. Existence of the language is limited, and contact is achieved only when the person in question orientates towards the language. Being in contact with the language means engagement with the language, and Nanda's mode of living is shaped in such a way that he is in contact daily with Telugu. This quest and engagement with the language is linked to Nanda's role as a teacher of Telugu. Teachers are employed to implement the Ministry's policies (i.e., by teaching the language at school). Given that the role of ALs within the educational system is primarily cultural, the recruitment of educators like Nanda underscores the idea that AL teachers can be compared to appointed agents for language promotion and preservation. This finding is reinforced by the Fishman (2007) who observes how AL education, and teachers employed to teach those languages, have an impact in preserving the cultures of those language speakers. The following extract from interview one shows Nanda's opinion about teaching Telugu in Mauritius and its place in the Mauritian multilingual context:

Dan kontext Moris, ki plas ou donn Telugu ein? Ou panse li ena so linportans?

Wi li linked avek nou listwar ek zordi se enn leritaz. Nou, nou la pou protez sa leritaz-la ek anpes li mor. Apre samem bote nou pei, ena plizier langaz. Sakenn ena pou li alor nou bizin protez pou nou. Ena bokou dimounn pa kas latet. Me nou ki atase avek nou lang, nou bizin donn li so valer.

[In the Mauritian context, where do you situate Telugu? Do you feel it is important?

Yes. It is linked with our history and today it is a heritage. We are here to protect this heritage and prevent it from dying. And then that is the beauty of the country. There are many languages. Each one has his and we need to protect ours. There are many people who do not care. But we who are attached to our language need to give it its value.]

Thus, based on Nanda's experience, the Telugu language embodies a heritage that enriches the nation's cultural landscape, and the preservation of this multicultural essence holds paramount importance. Every community should safeguard its heritage, and Nanda is diligently fulfilling

this role. In doing so, Nanda demonstrates that he is aware that he contributes to maintaining the social fabric of his multilingual nation. His attitude also demonstrates how Telugu teachers show a high sense of language loyalty and agency to promote the language, and this is embedded in his personality. In essence, he can be regarded as a contemporary cultural custodian akin to his own teacher, now executing the same responsibilities in a more structured and scholarly setting. However, he is officially designated and remunerated for fulfilling this role.

Moreover, Nanda also expresses his sorrow when it comes to challenges in his teaching. Many times, he has to limit himself to teaching basic grammar and vocabulary, especially with low performers, which makes him feel that he cannot teach 'the proper way'. The 'proper way', according to him, should have been teaching the language in a holistic way, encompassing linguistic features along with the socio-cultural aspects attached to it. This can be noted in the following extract from the first interview.

Ki ou pe rod dir par teach language la properly?

Setadir explik li langaz lamem ek osi explik li lor background, literature, bann zafer spesifik ek atase avek langaz.

[What do you mean by “teaching properly?”

I mean teaching the language along with everything related to the background of the language, the literature, specificities attached to the language.]

Being a teacher who acquired the language within sociocultural contexts, he leans towards a culturally oriented approach rather than solely focusing on language proficiency. However, he acknowledges that the constraints are such that even educators, in his view, encounter challenges in both learning and using the language. This sentiment resonates with Poloogadoo's research (2010), which illustrates how both teachers and learners of the Telugu language in Mauritius consistently express struggles stemming from the language's perceived difficulty level. Nevertheless, he has consistently found himself captivated by the culture and literature associated with the language, which he aptly describes as 'rich.' This fascination has been a driving force behind his continuous efforts to enhance his proficiency in the subject. To illustrate, when he embarked on teaching at the HSC level, Nanda underscores the necessity for supplementary preparations and extra assignments in order to effectively convey the subject matter. There have been occasions where he sought assistance from fellow colleagues. Nowadays, he acknowledges the significant contribution of social media, which has proven

invaluable by furnishing resources and experts accessible online to address uncertainties whenever they arise. This is supported by the findings of Mufta (2022) who found that social media is a powerful tool for language acquisition.

6.4.3 Managerial support to the AL teacher

Managerial support plays a pivotal role in shaping professional experiences, and Nanda's narrative enabled me to delve into his encounters with school leaders he has collaborated with. He has mixed opinions, for having worked under various managements in different periods of time, he suggests that things have changed for the better over time. Nanda has lived during a period when ALs were not given importance by management. Due to low numbers of students, there were no proper classroom allocations. For instance, during the first interview, he mentions the yearly amount attributed to teachers for the purchase of materials for the school library:

Bon nou pa gagn extra sipor an-term bann materyel. Bann-la gagn bann livre eksetera... par departman zot gagn 2000 Roupi pou aste liv. Nou dan nou departman sa diviz a-trwa. Sa si pa sak lane. Bon management li pou siport twa as far as possible. Me pa kouma lezot.

[Well, we do not get too much support in terms of materials. For example, for books, other departments get Rs 2000. We get Rs 2000 for the whole department and it has to be divided into three. That too not every year. Well, it is true that management will support you as far as possible, but not like other subjects].

Lack of teaching resources affects the efficiency of teaching and learning, and this has been a major issue in the teaching of Telugu in the context (Poloogadoo, 2020). The different allocation of resources as noted by Nanda reveals the perceived status of the language.

Another experience is that of having had to share a class with the Tamil teacher, both working simultaneously. This can be found in the extract below from the first interview:

Tamil, Telugu ek si ena Marathi nou trwa ti pe fer klas dan enn sel klas si ena klas. Sinon anba lavarang mem. Me ofil bann lane, sitiasion inn sanze. Aster nou ena mem drwa kouma lezot.

[Tamil, Telugu and Marathi, if there was Marathi, were taught in the same classroom. Or in the corridor. But over the years, things changed. Now we have the same right as others.]

Nonetheless, he acknowledges that the passage of time has brought about changes, marked by enhancements in policies and infrastructure. He affirms that presently, they are treated on a more equitable basis. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that educators like Nanda have navigated through challenging periods in their careers. Their enduring motivation and fervour for teaching the language have been unwavering, fuelled by a resolute mission of preserving a linguistic identity passed down by their own mentors. They have persevered, making the best of the resources at their disposal. This reflects previous findings from Fishman (2007) who explains how loyalty towards a language and the mission of preservation encourage and motivate teachers to teach the language.

6.4.4 Colleagues' perceptions of the Telugu teacher

Diverse individuals possess varying teaching philosophies, and as a result, their perceptions about the subjects being taught differ. This variance can cause some subjects to be either overvalued or undervalued (Laundaon, 2020). This divergence in valuation contributes to prejudice among staff and colleagues, as Nanda attests. He notes that for a considerable period of time, AL teachers were not esteemed by all educators, fostering a sense of inferiority among them. Nanda further states that during his early career, some of his colleagues who taught other subjects looked down on him. The subject he taught was not viewed as important in their eyes, making him feel inferior and demotivated. The following extract from Nanda's first interview shows how some colleagues even ask for his teaching time to catch up with their lost time.

Bann lezot-la zot pa care. Dan lepase ena vinn demann mwa mo peryod tou pou fer zot additional work seki zot pa 'nn reisi konplete. Klas Telugu pou zot kapav skip. Savedir pou zot li pa inportan.

[Teachers of other subjects do not care. In the past, there were some teachers who even asked my students and periods in order to be able to complete their syllabus. This shows that they feel Telugu is not important.]

While this might have been an authentic instance of making up for lost time, Nanda perceives it as a form of marginalisation. Over time, he observes transformations, encompassing policy shifts aimed at language preservation, as well as an enhanced level of comprehension among his colleagues. Therefore, once again, it can be noted how status planning in language policies has a role in influencing agents of those policy implementors. The following words from Nanda in the first interview portray his gratitude.

Wi pe met boukou kas, parey kouma bann lezot size. Se ankourazan pou nou bann

zelev. Ek bann lezot pran nou kouma enn profeser parey kouma zot. Nou si nou bizin fer nou par.

[Yes, the govt is investing a lot. It is encouraging for our students. And others treat us alike like them. We must also play our role.]

The societal perspective on teachers and the subjects they teach significantly influences both educators as well as students opting for those subjects. AL, as discussed in Chapter 1, has been uplifted in status in the curriculum, and today it is a subject like any other subject taught at school. Over time, Nanda has evolved into a figure who garners respect from his colleagues. This has affected his role as a teacher, augmenting his self-assurance and motivation to continue fulfilling his role as a Telugu teacher.

6.4.5 The Telugu teacher-student relationship

The relationship between the Telugu student and their teacher is a close one, and it is evident that the majority, if not all, of the participants (as elaborated in this and the forthcoming two chapters) have extensively discussed the dynamics of their teacher-student relationships. The teachers of the participants have been more like a ‘coach’, which can be attributed to a range of factors.

Firstly, it is important to highlight that the Telugu class comprises a small number of students, a characteristic that holds true both during Nanda's era and at present. Consequently, there exists a greater level of proximity between the students and the Telugu teacher.

Secondly, although language selection is open to all students, as underscored in Chapter 1, the majority of students typically belong to the same Telugu ethnic community. Nanda explains that the inclusion of non-Telugu students in his class is now a common phenomenon, which did not exist during the early stages of his career.

Thirdly, another aspect influencing the teacher-student relationship is the community's modest size, which heightens the likelihood of the teacher being acquainted with the student or their parents, or sharing communal spaces within the community. This social proximity significantly shapes the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship.

Fourthly, being a small teaching group, the teacher is able to adapt to the needs of the student and work at his or her pace. It is also to be kept in mind that, the teachers are active agents of language and culture promotion and preservation, and the content is often influenced by cultural aspects of the language. These in many cases, as pointed out by other participants,

have been unique experiences for students who feel that they have learnt something ‘practical’ in the Telugu class. The content taught by Nanda is not limited to grammar and linguistics of the language, but a lot of extracurricular activities, which make the teaching more interesting. Thus, the pedagogical techniques, like role playing and creating a socio-cultural environment, adopted by Nanda have been unique. These techniques are a fusion of his learning experiences, both at the temple and at MGI.

Nanda attributes much of his positive experiences to his former students, most of whom have become teachers of Telugu. He feels a sense of gratification for the students who are very grateful and attribute their achievements to his hard work. This has encouraged him to continue working hard for the community in his later career.

6.4.6 Nanda and the students’ parents

As discussed previously, the Telugu ethnic community in the context is a small and close-knit one. It has also been discussed in Chapter 5 that parental support plays a major role in the choice of subjects at various levels. Through Nanda’s experience, it can be said that the Telugu teacher is someone popular and respected in the Telugu community, who shares a good relationship with parents and, in some cases, also advises them in matters of education. As Nanda shares, he – as the Telugu teacher – suddenly becomes someone close in the community, who will also assist in the students’ behaviour. This can be noted through Nanda’s words from the second interview:

*savedir nou pran li pa zis tel langaz Telugu kan ena enn problem zot pou vinn get
twa to kapav ed zot personelman.*

*[So, we do not only help in terms of Telugu, but also personally in case of
difficulties]*

This is another experience of being a Telugu teacher that transcends pedagogy and curriculum, as experienced by educators like Nanda. Another noteworthy aspect is that although Nanda may not receive ample resources and faces instances where fellow teachers request his subject's class time, implying a perceived lack of importance, he enjoys respect from the community to which his students belong. They recognise him as a true teacher and value him for his teachings. This also highlights the importance of language education among the members of the particular ethnic community.

6.5 The Telugu Teacher at Home and in the Locality

In this section, I discuss the experiences of the Telugu teacher in the home and community context. As established earlier, a teacher's experiences extend beyond the confines of the classroom. Insights from the second interview conducted with Nanda at his residence, which delves into his experiences at home and within the local milieu, contribute to an exploration of these facets.

6.5.1 The home culture – Telugu family members

The home culture highly depends on the family members. It is to be noted that Nanda's wife is of Telugu origin. Intra-ethnic marriage among minorities is a common phenomenon in this context (Devi, 1978), especially during Nanda's era. Though Nanda's wife does not speak Telugu, she is acquainted with the culture and the practices. This is an important feature in Nanda's life as it shapes his family background and daily life. The couple has two children, and according to Nanda, there was never any doubt about the choice of AL/optional language that they would choose during their schooling. Both children have pursued Telugu studies up to the HSC level and are proficient in the language, even though they did not choose to pursue a career in that field. Nanda's family background is one characterised by the support of his relatives, enabling him to sustain his livelihood as a Telugu teacher. Having had two children who have learnt the language is also symbolic of the passing of knowledge, language, and culture to the next generation.

6.5.2 Keeping to one's origin

Nanda demonstrates how ancestral objects like the 'tambaalam', 'kunda', and 'vigrahaalu' [plate, pot and statues] which were brought from Andhra Pradesh by his forefathers are of immense importance to him. He explains how these objects are meticulously cleaned on special occasions like the Ugadi – the Telugu New year. This underscores Nanda's commitment to preserving his cultural heritage, as these items represent his roots. To him, losing touch with one's origins is tantamount to losing one's identity (Fishman, 2000; Eisenlohr, 2007). This is suggested in the second interview where he remarks:

Biensir enn valer ansestral. li ena enn gran valer. enn dimounn kontan li kone so muttaatalu kot sorti, ki kiltir li ti pe swiv par exanp nou bann gran dimounn ti pe swiv ... sa nou baz nou kiltir sa e personn pa le koumadir pa fer li malgre ki li pa tro swiv relizion parski nou sorti laba.

[Of course an ancestral value, is so much valuable. An individual likes it when he knows from where his parents come, which culture he or she was following, for example, our ancestors... this is the base of our culture, and although one is not religious, nobody wants to not follow these as we come from there].

In his perspective, language, culture, and values constitute a heritage that has been and should continue to be transmitted to subsequent generations. This viewpoint likely plays a significant role in his perception of the subject's importance within the curriculum. Through his role as a Telugu teacher, Nanda fulfils his aspiration of ensuring the language is passed down to others while preserving its existence and garnering respect for it in the multicultural context (Fishman, 2000). The fact that Nanda is aware of the critical role he is playing in the preservation of the language and, as a result, maintaining the symbolic heritage of his forefathers, motivates him in his job.

6.5.3 The home language of the Telugu teacher

The home language spoken by Telugu teachers like Nanda is Kreol, which is the mother tongue of the majority of the population. Telugu is a learnt language for the teacher, and it is not spoken by the family members. In the case of Nanda, his children have also learnt the language, but they do not speak it. This demonstrates how, though the Telugu teacher is an expert in the language, however, in a multilingual country like Mauritius, even the home environment may not be a space where he speaks the language. Though he says that this is not an issue, at certain times Nanda expresses his dismay that he is unable to speak the language at home. However, it is a common phenomenon that the Kreol used at home among family members contains more Telugu words compared to its usage outside the home. This is also common when a teacher of Telugu like Nanda addresses someone who is from the Telugu community. For instance, in the exchange below, the number of Telugu words used is remarkable, and this mixture of Telugu language with Kreol would not be understood if spoken to someone outside the Telugu community.

Alor normalman enn disi enn 30 an de sela mo'nn koumans aprann la langue, nou aprann kiltir poojavidhi eksetera alor kan nou ti pe al Ashram beau climat alor sak semenn donn nou kalam kagitam. pooja sa tel sanskar, zanfann inn ne bizin donn namakarana sanskar li ale depi la, antima sanskaram.

[So normally around 30 years back I started to learn the language and the culture, ways of doing prayer and all. So, when we were going to the temple, each week

we were given a pen and paper; so this prayer, that ceremony, a child is born, need to do this naming ceremony, someone dies the last rites...]

Hence, even though Kreol is the spoken language, the context in which it is utilised results in the frequent incorporation of Telugu words. Both Nanda and I (as the researcher) can comprehend this linguistic fusion due to our shared community background. Had this linguistic blend been employed outside of the community, communication barriers might have arisen. This aspect highlights the homogeneity within the Telugu classroom, where the Telugu teacher often instructs Telugu students – a scenario distinct from that of other subject teachers.

During the initial interview, while conversing about his involvement with the language, Nanda emphasises that by offering tuition at home to aid students, he brings the language into his domestic environment. This is noted in the extract below:

Ek sinon eski ou donn leson lakaz ou ed bann zelev tou?

Biensir, lontan li ti koumsa nou ti pe lekol Telugu gratwitman avek letan nou 'nn rant lekol Telugu anmemtan erla finn ena lexamen Sc/HSC erla bann zelev vinn get twa pou pran lesonla mo ena bann bon group Form 4, Form 5, Lower, Upper, ena bann bon group ki ed bann zelev enn tipe dan lapremidi apart ler lekol pou donn enn ti leson. Kumsa mo amen sa langaz la dan mo lakaz.

[And, do you give tuition at home, or do you help students?

Of course, long back it used to be like this, we used to have evening schools free of cost, then came the SC HSC examinations. Students came to look for me for tuition. I have tuition groups for form 4- 5 lower and upper 6. I help them in the afternoon after school hours. Like this I brought the subject home.]

Hence, it becomes apparent that Nanda derives a sense of enjoyment from his interaction with the language through his students, as they afford him the opportunity to immerse himself in it. The act of bringing the subject into his home holds significant value for him, underscoring his deep attachment to the language.

6.5.4 The mandiram (Telugu temple)

Along with the home environment, the role of the community in shaping the experiences of the Telugu teachers was explored. The Telugu temple is a place of significant importance in understanding the experiences of Telugu teachers. In the Mauritian context, it is evident that places of worship of various religious faiths are present in every locality. All the participants

in this study, including Nanda, associate the Telugu temple in the locality to have played a major role in their career and personal development, as well as in their present life routine. This resonates with the research of Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982), who, in her study of the Telugu ethnic identity in Mauritius, explicitly discusses the *mandiram* or Telugu Temple. These temples, often headed by the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha (now Mauritius Telugu Maha Sabha), are a place of major significance for the development of linguistic identity and a sense of belongingness.

The Telugu community predominantly practices Hinduism, and the *mandiram* serves as a significant site of identification for them. Within the broader Hindu community, different segments uphold unique customs and traditions rooted in their ancestral lineage and devotion to specific deities. This aligns with the observations made by Jones (2015), who illustrates how the absence of specific religious places, such as the *mandiram*, can lead to an identity crisis and a feeling of loss among immigrants in the context of London. In this scenario, the absence of a 'desired deity'¹⁶ within the temple causes a sense of loss. Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982) further shows how, in the absence of a *mandiram* in the locality, members of the Telugu community in the 1980s unified their resources and founded one.

Similar to many teachers of his generation, Nanda dedicated a significant portion of his free time at the Telugu temple. This temple served as a gathering spot for members of the Telugu community, providing a platform for discussing community activities and organising cultural events. The individuals overseeing the temple are committed to promoting and preserving Telugu language and culture among people of the ethnic group. The setting up and management of the temples in the different parts of the country itself was an incentive initiated by the Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha, a sociocultural body set up by Telugu promoters.

The Telugu Maha Sabha and its network of temples act as active agents that hold a significant role in the lives of teachers. Primarily, they have played a pivotal role in shaping the teachers themselves. Individuals like Nanda have had the chance to engage in teaching even before formally considering the role of educators, and this occurred prior to the implementation of the government's educational policies. Secondly, the Telugu temple acts as a place where Telugu people meet occasionally and participate in different activities related to Telugu language and culture. The weekly prayer on Fridays is a common feature across the country, which all members attend, and this is followed by a dinner. In various places, the audience is

¹⁶ Different people, though from the same ethnoreligious group, pray to diverse deities, depending on several factors. For example, in Hinduism, the three main deities are Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, and Lord Vishnu.

also addressed in Telugu and the message of the priest translated in the mother tongue, Kreol. Nanda elaborates on his long-standing role in conducting weekly prayers, a duty he takes pleasure in as it serves to enlighten his community. Consequently, the engagement of Telugu teachers in such spaces and activities holds great significance. Often, the resources and expertise of Telugu teachers are required in such context. Thus, both the students interested in Telugu activities as well as teachers involved spend a large share of their free time at the temple. All the participants in this study have at different times in their career been deeply involved in the activities of the temple. Their experiences with the language and their roles as Telugu teachers are profoundly shaped by their active participation in the temple's activities.

As discussed in section 6.3, the *sayantrapubadi's* [Evening School] existence is intricately linked to the Telugu temples. More than 70% of participants in this study have engaged in teaching at these schools at some point in their careers. Furthermore, as detailed in Chapter 5, more than 40% of them continue to teach in these schools to this day. The *mandiram* thus carries out the role of the 'second home' through the support given to the youth. Nanda, a product of that very system, unequivocally asserts that his involvement at the *mandiram* (Telugu temple) has been instrumental in shaping and nurturing his personality. This immersive environment has played a pivotal role in his personal development, and with the passage of time, he has transitioned into a role where he now aids the next generation, exemplifying the cyclical nature of community support and growth. Thus, being a Telugu teacher, he finds that it is his duty to pass on knowledge of the language and culture, thus forming part of the cycle which has been put in place for generations.

When questioned about the role of the temple in promoting language in the third interview held in a socio-cultural space, Nanda responds as follows:

Ok e bon eski sa tanp-la li enn platform pou promote langaz Telugu?

Biensir me selman langaz ek kiltir. li pa zis langaz parski langaz-la. dan tou seremoni nou koz enn tipe langaz-la me dimounn pa vinn aköz langaz dan tanp alor pli boukou zot vini aköz kiltir-la aköz lapriyer-la alor zot vini zot swiv lapriyer-la, e biensir zot pou ekout ou koz enn tipe langaz zot pou interese kone ki pe rod dir ek pou bizin translate, transliterate tousala. Selma zot interese vin aprann langaz la pou fer la prier dan mandiram dan bann aktivite ki fer an parallel kuma evening school.

[ok, so, does the temple act as a platform to promote Telugu language?

Of course, but language and culture. It is not only language. In all ceremonies, we speak only a little of the language. People do not come because of the language, but for the culture and prayers, and of course they then listen to the language and try to understand it and then we translate and transliterate. However, they are interested to come and learn the language to perform prayers in the mandiram through activities held in parallel like the evening school.]

The role of places of worship in upholding culture and language is thereby underscored, aligning with earlier research conducted by Nirsimloo-Anenden (1982), Jones (2015), Balraj and Manan (2020), Bhaskar (2007), and Venkanah and Owoodally (2023). These studies have emphasised the significance of Telugu temples in the preservation of the Telugu language within the context of Mauritius.

6.6 Nanda as the Part-Time Priest – The Telugu Teacher Being the Social Guru

One of the features for choosing Nanda as a participant was the fact that he is a part-time priest. One of the interviews with Nanda was conducted after he had just performed a Hindu funeral. This section analyses how Nanda's involvement in ALs contributed to shaping the person he is today, how he negotiates this being, and how it influences and impacts on the concept of ALs and the concept of being a teacher of an AL.

6.6.1 Becoming the priest

Initiation to becoming the priest already took place when Nanda attended the evening classes which were held at the temple where he assisted the then teacher who was a priest. As he explains in the second interview held at his place, he went with the aim of learning the language, but he was told that language, culture, and religion were all linked:

mo'nn ale mo'nn al ek so misie...wai.... Kan mo'nn ale pe koumans aprann lapriyer laba mo dir li be lapriyer-la mo pa interese mwa, langaz-la li dir mwa non sa pou vinn ladan li donn twa enn papie tel pooja koumans aprann mo dir be langaz-la kote li dir be langaz-la li vinn ansam ek kiltir-la ek kiltir-la li dan sa lapriyer-la

[When I went there, I found that I was being taught prayers. I told him I was not interested in prayers. I was interested with only the language. He then told me

that everything is combined. He gave me a paper about the different prayers and asked me to start learning them.]

Having established himself as a Telugu teacher, Nanda's commitment extended beyond the classroom. He took a proactive step to deepen his understanding of performing prayers by enrolling in a youth group aimed at receiving training from a priest. Nanda's dedication is truly noteworthy as he willingly sacrificed his leisure time to participate in these training sessions, which were conducted on Sundays. His determination was evident as he undertook a considerable journey to attend these sessions. The following excerpt from Nanda's third interview exemplifies his unwavering commitment:

Dimans nou ti pe zwenn e nou ti pe kontigne aprann tousa sanskar la kouman enn pandit, sa training-la inn kontigne sak semenn, inn ale koumsa 4 an, 5 an.

[Every Sunday we used to meet we used to learn all those ceremonies just like a priest this training continued every week for about four to five years.]

The group he joined was not limited to only individuals proficient in Telugu. Those who knew Telugu, like Nanda, had an advantage for they could read the scripts, while others who could not read Telugu had to learn the prayers through transliterations.

E zot tou seki ti pe aprann zot ti pe aprann li an ki lang, an Telugu?

Savedir seki konn Telugu li gagn enn skript an Telugu seki pa konn Telugu malerezman nou bizin translate li let romenn mantra a – z nou bizin translate tou an let romenn nou donn li, pou li kapavs wiv sa mantra-la.

[And whatever you were learning it was learned in which language?

So, those who knew Telugu got Telugu script and those who didn't know Telugu unfortunately, we had to translate or transliterate it in Roman script it was translated into Roman script and given to them so that they could read the mantras.]

While not every individual who possesses knowledge of the language opts to become a priest, Nanda is making use of his knowledge of the language to learn a domain where he will use the language.

This extract indicates that it is not compulsory to be literate in Telugu to become a priest as there have been evolutions/solutions over time. As pointed out, there are priests who learn the rites or the *mantras* through transliterations so that the faith can be practiced (Venkanah

&Auleear-Owoodally, 2023), which highlights the sociolinguistic aspects of the existence of language and religion in the context. This also leads to diglossia, as both pronunciation as well as semantics are affected (Venkanah &Auleear-Owoodally, 2023).

6.6.2 A Telugu priest in the Mauritian multicultural context

In a multicultural context like Mauritius, where various religions are embraced and each ethnic group practices its own faith, a priest holds significant respect within the society. As previously explored in Chapter One, numerous national public holidays are dedicated to religious celebrations and observances. It is to be noted that 100% of the participants in the questionnaire stated that they practice a religious faith. The Telugu priest is one who performs prayers following the Hindu religion in South Indian traditions. Venkanah and Auleear-Owoodally's (2023, p.3) research reveals that Telugus "revivify and reinvigorate an (imagined) ancestral language (in its oral and written forms) by using a faith practice that has been passed down generations". Nanda elaborates on his responsibilities as a priest and how his services are sought after for various ceremonies. This is an experience he takes pleasure in, as it not only serves as a part-time job but also allows him to contribute to and serve his community. Whenever there are major ceremonies like births, weddings, funerals, or occasional prayers, Nanda is called to officiate the prayers. This has also made him popular in the Telugu community as well as in the locality. The next section focuses on how Nanda's role as a priest influences his identity as a Telugu teacher and how his responsibilities as a priest contribute to his efforts in promoting Telugu, an ancestral language.

6.6.3 The AL teacher being a priest – Ethnoreligious functions of language

Through Nanda, I had the opportunity to analyse the experiences of a teacher who is involved both in teaching and the performing of religious practices. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, in the Mauritian context, while ALs are taught as a third and optional language in the curriculum, in society they have religious and cultural functions and are more anchored in the religious spaces. Thus, I was able to unpack the experiences of Nanda about the link between language and religion.

Nanda's upbringing led him to believe that the acquisition of religious practices was inherently linked with language learning, even before encountering a structured curriculum. The deep interconnection between ancestral languages and ethnoreligious contexts prompts one to contemplate whether language instruction can truly occur without imparting the associated religion and culture. The answer from Nanda is certainly yes, but when the functions

of ALs are analysed, a pattern emerges wherein language is acquired within the school setting but applied within socio-cultural contexts. Through the experiences of Nanda, one can note that Nanda not only acquired the language but also employs it in his everyday life through the various roles he undertakes. This is portrayed through his words from the third interview:

Oumem antan ki enn prof Telugu eski ou fer enn lien ant fer lapriyer setadir ou mod-de-vi ein, fer lapriyer ek teaching eski ena enn relasion ant sa de-la?

Biensir, parski li konekte nou langaz, nou kiltir tousala kan nou pe teach sa language-la nou trouve ki ena enn kiltir deryer sa e kan nou pret aster nou pe swiv sa kiltir-la.

[You as a teacher of Telugu, do you make a link between doing prayers as your mode of living and teaching at school? Is there a relationship between the two?]

Of course, because it is connected to our language, our culture and we are teaching this language. So, we find that there's a link a culture behind and when you are a Priest, you follow that culture.]

Being both a priest and a Telugu teacher, Nanda perceives himself as someone ‘complete’. Each of the two complements the other as he considers that language, culture, and the religion are interlinked, and the link is “very, very strong”. This is mentioned by Nanda in the third interview when he states:

pa tou prof ki forme kote kiltir zot konn langaz biensir me kote kiltir bien tigit. zot pe fer zot best, zot pe teach zot langaz zot pe teach enn tipe kiltir-la osi me kan enn pret li enn lot.

[Not all teachers are formed in terms of culture. They know the language but less the culture. They do their best, they teach the language, a little bit of culture, but when a priest is doing it, it's something deeper.]

Nanda's life experiences have invariably revolved around "Telugu", an amalgamation of language, culture, and religion that, according to him, are inseparable entities. Furthermore, he mentions that AL teachers becoming priests is a common phenomenon, where the deeper their language knowledge grows, the more closely connected they feel to the culture, prompting them to actively practice it. This resonates with what Souza (2016) portrays as the Religion-Ethnicity-Language (REL) triangle, which captures the complex link between religion, ethnicity, and language. Moreover, their involvement and education in the language and culture

provided them with opportunities to practice religion, especially since they often had some free time due to their role as AL teachers. Thus, it can be noted how the Telugu teacher, especially in Nanda's generation, are strong language, religion, and culture advocates, which explains the strong link perceived and bequeathed to the next generation. Though many studies (Prabhakaran, 1991; May, 2003) have shown that culture can exist without language, and though Nanda himself admits that he communicates in Kreol even during prayers, he continues to underscore the essence of language in culture preservation.

Having discussed how educational policies demarcate language and religion, Nanda states that he knows how to negotiate between being a priest and being a Telugu teacher. As seen in the excerpt from the third interview below, he demonstrates awareness of the demarcations and what he needs to teach:

Savedir tou bann modern traits in education depi lane 70 mo panse gouvernman inn met enn policy ki zot pe teach enn language alor pena pou teach religion Telugu in class religion is not supposed to be teach in class. sa paran-la so devwar sa li trap lane zanfana-la li gete ki relizion li pou fer li swiv, alor dan klas pa bizin enn interference language and religion.

[so all the modern traits in education since the 1970s I think the government put the policy that they are teaching only a language and you do not have to teach religion in class. Delivery religion is not supposed to be taught in class, it is a duty of the parents to decide which religion the child wants to follow. So, in the classroom there shouldn't be interference between language and religion.]

Nanda provides an example of a situation where he had a Muslim student whom he taught Telugu at school. He highlights the importance of focusing solely on teaching the language in such cases, and although this scenario was not a common occurrence, it has become more frequent over time. This instance also prompts him to recognise that a Telugu class may include students from various ethnic backgrounds, not just the Telugu community.

However, one's experiences and positionality cannot be overlooked, and Nanda's teachings do reveal certain characteristics influenced by his role as a priest. Firstly, his approach of conducting classes calmly and peacefully can be attributed to traits he has developed through his involvement as a priest. He adopts the Hindu-ethos of the guru-disciple relationship, which can be said to have been inherited since his days at the 'Sayantrapubad' [evening school]. Secondly, being a priest and well versed in Hindu mythology, he finds that he is at ease teaching

literature to higher classes, extensively exploring the literature, which often has strong connections to Hindu mythology. Therefore, although language and culture might appear separate, the characteristics of his role as a priest are intertwined with his personality and his role as a teacher. In fact, he even states that some students know that he is a priest in the larger community, and this brings him a lot of respect.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter initiated the series of three chapters where I discussed the different characteristics of the Telugu teachers through six case studies. Through the case study of Nanda, I was able to gain insight into the experiences of a teacher of Telugu who was from a generation of Telugu teachers that had lived through the initial stages of the language's introduction. I explored his career trajectory and growth as a teacher. The professional, home, and community experiences of Nanda were also discussed. The next chapter deals with the case studies of three Telugu teachers who started their teaching career approximately 20 years after Nanda.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH MID-GENERATION TEACHERS

7.0 Introduction

Continuing from the preceding chapter, which delved into the experiences of Telugu educators through the lens of an elder generation teacher, Nanda, this chapter shifts its focus to an exploration of educators' experiences through a collective perspective. Here, the spotlight rests on a trio of teachers - Devi, Ashna, and Jack - who aptly exemplify the middle generation of secondary Telugu educators. Differing from Nanda, the elder generation teacher, and in contrast to the modern cohort of educators to be discussed in the subsequent chapter, the middle generation teachers exhibit distinct arrays of experiences. This chapter seeks to unpack these distinctive experiences and shed light on the nuances that set them apart. By delving into the case studies of Devi, Ashna, and Jack, I successfully unearthed various elements and themes that hold significance within the context of this phenomenon, subsequently shedding light on the intricacies of these teachers' experiences.

7.1 Overview

This chapter unfolds across eight distinct sections. Following the introduction (section 7.0) and an overview (section 7.1), section 7.2 focuses on crafting individual profiles of each participant, meticulously constructed from the insights gathered through the three interviews conducted with them. Subsequently, section 7.3 delves into a discussion surrounding their journeys toward becoming Telugu teachers during that particular time period. The challenges intrinsic to teaching an AL like Telugu are thoroughly examined in section 7.4, as illuminated through the lens of the presented cases. In section 7.5, the spotlight turns to a discourse on the primary content that constitutes the core of the AL curriculum. Section 7.6 provides a comprehensive exploration of their experiences as members of a minority group. Their involvement in the reconstruction of a cultural milieu intimately linked to Telugu is unpacked in section 7.7, shedding light on their active engagement within this context. The chapter is concluded in section 7.8.

7.2 Portrait of Ashna, Devi & Jack

7.2.1 Ashna

Ashna stands as one of the two female subjects whose case studies are intricately examined within this chapter. During our initial interview, which took place at her residence after her tutoring session, I embarked on a journey to uncover her educational and career trajectory. Raised within a family that profoundly values Telugu culture and ancestral heritage, Ashna's upbringing has been profoundly shaped by these tenets. Her introduction to the Telugu language occurred during her primary school years.

At secondary level, Ashna managed to continue learning the language in private as the school where she studied did not offer the subject. At higher secondary level, she had to change her school in order to be allowed to write the subject for examinations, yet she did not have adequate teaching facilities and had to depend on help from teachers from the community willing to help her. Upon the completion of her HSC, Ashna secured a position as a Trainee Primary teacher. Subsequently, she pursued her degree on a part-time basis in Mauritius. She was then recruited as a Secondary Educator. I further explore her positive and negative experiences in terms of her job satisfaction, work environment, relationship with students, subject content taught, as well as her opinions about educational policies and about the future of Telugu in the first interview.

During the second interview, which took place at Ashna's home where I was warmly welcomed, my attention shifted to her home and family environment. She painted a detailed picture of the home environment where she grew up, highlighting the ambiance of her childhood home that was imbued with Telugu traditions. This atmosphere was further shaped by the close bonds within the tight-knit Telugu community, accentuated by the *mandiram*'s role as a platform fostering this cohesion. That latter also contributed to her Telugu education through the *sayantrapubadi* [evening classes], where later she too became a teacher. Her involvement in the activities held at the *mandiram*, such as weekly prayers and participation in extra-curricular Telugu activities, significantly influenced her affinity for Telugu.

The third Interview held at the *sayantrapubadi* [evening school] helped me to explore the existence and running of these schools which has been of significant importance in the revitalisation, promotion, and maintenance of Telugu. Through an activity held on that day at the school, I had the opportunity to explore how the teaching of an AL is deeply rooted in

ancestral heritage and traditions as well as the importance teachers give to the culture and passing on of those traditions.

7.2.2 Devi

Devi is another female participant whose case study is explored in this chapter. The first interview with her was held after a meeting related to the Telugu curriculum. The educational and career path of Devi is similar to that of Ashna. Through Devi, I was able to gain insight into her perceptions of the policies, motivation of Telugu teachers, study and use of the language in the context, as well as coping with students and the work environment.

During the second interview conducted at her residence, I gained a deeper understanding of her domestic surroundings. Presently residing in a nuclear family with her husband and son, she drew comparisons in terms of social life between her current situation and her mother's household prior to her marriage. She now lives in a town and the lifestyle, especially regarding her socio-cultural life, has changed. Similar to the approach taken with other participants, in the second interview, I delved into the impact of the community, including factors such as the presence of the *mandiram* and the role of socio-cultural agents within the locality where she is involved.

Devi actively participates in numerous extra-curricular activities focused on promoting the Telugu language. I interviewed her following a literary contest, during which she had accompanied her students as participants. Through the third interview, I had the opportunity to delve into her teaching journey and her engagement in endeavours conducted beyond school hours by various stakeholders for language maintenance.

7.2.3 Jack

Jack is one of the few males of his era who pursued a degree in Telugu. The choice of the name 'Jack', a non-Indian one, compared to all the other participants, tally with his real name, being a European one. Through his first interview held at the school where he works after school hours, he discussed his career path. He mentioned not having any intention of becoming a Telugu teacher, but was fortunate to have studied at the MGI, an institution where AL is available until HSC. Unlike the challenges faced by Devi and Ashna in their Telugu education, Telugu education was accessible to Jack, who studied the language and completed a degree in it. The fact that he completed a degree in the language kept him involved in the teaching profession as his services were needed as a supply teacher. However, Jack stated that he fulfils his engagement and dedicates his time to do what he is paid for. He claims that outside his

work hours, he is not involved with any of the socio-cultural activities, which sets him completely apart from all of the other participants in the study. During this first interview, he further discussed the challenges and inspirations he encounters in his role as a teacher. These challenges encompass the declining interest of students in learning the language, while his motivations stem from the opportunity to provide individual attention due to the relatively small number of students.

In the second interview held at his home, I explored more of Jack's home and community background. This included where he was born and brought up, which showed that, since childhood, he has been involved in socio-cultural activities. Unlike other participants, there is no Telugu temple in the locality, but he used to go to one in the nearby village where he participated in activities organised as well as the evening classes held there. Therefore, through this interview, I got the opportunity to explore his experiences both as a teacher of Telugu as well as a student of Telugu in the past.

In the third interview, which took place at a Telugu wedding ceremony, I had the chance to connect with Jack within a socio-cultural setting. This environment also provided an avenue to converse about other socio-cultural events he participates in, such as prayers and cultural festivals.

7.3 Becoming a Telugu Teacher

In the case of Nanda, as discussed in the previous chapter, becoming a Telugu teacher was a matter of opportunity that presented itself to someone already engaged in the culture of transmitting knowledge. Regarding the current trio of participants who completed their schooling during the 1990s, it is important to note that an educational framework was already established, complete with eligibility criteria, for those aspiring to pursue a career as Telugu teachers. Thus, a career as a teacher of Telugu necessitated some planning or decision making in terms of the educational paths and subject options. In this section, I discuss the experiences of becoming a Telugu teacher through the cases of Devi, Ashna, and Jack.

7.3.1 Gender shift in the profession

While male figures like Nanda have been the symbol and advancement of the language in its early introductory days, the profession is now dominated by female teachers like Ashna and Devi. Jack is one of the few male Telugu teachers of this generation. Prabhakaran (1991) in her study of the life of the early Telugu immigrants in South Africa points out that during the initial

years of immigration, it was an Indian custom that females would not venture out and only males would attend evening classes. The fact that women now dominate the profession shows a social change in the role of women in the society.

Ashna attributes the gender imbalance of female dominance to the fact that women have domestic responsibilities, and she deems the working hours of the teacher as appropriate. She gives the example of her brother, who, despite achieving good results in Telugu in lower classes, was not encouraged to pursue Telugu further, unlike Ashna's experience. Ashna discusses this in the first interview:

Mo bann frer si inn aprann, me zot pa 'nn kontigne.

Sa enn pwin interesan. Ou si ti konn Telugu, bann-la si ti konn Telugu. Kouma ou 'nn vinn profeser ek bann-la inn swazir enn lot metie?

Be sa lepok-la bann misie pa ti tro interese avek ansegn Telugu. Mwa mo atase ar langaz-la ek so kiltir ek mo mama inn ankouraz mwa plis. Li ti anvi profeser.

[Even my brothers did well in Telugu, but they did not continue.

That's something interesting. You knew Telugu. Even they learned Telugu. How come you chose this profession and they chose something else?

At that time, males were not so interested with the teaching profession. I was more attached with the language and culture and my mum encouraged me more. She wanted me to become a teacher.]

Expanding on this, she articulates her aspiration to work as a drama coach. However, when making her career choice, she opted to become a Telugu teacher. This decision stemmed from her awareness that being a drama coach would entail irregular hours, a circumstance challenging for a woman juggling household responsibilities. This demonstrates that the characteristics and requirements of teaching appeared to suit females (Drudy, 2008; Ullah, 2016), as discussed in Chapter 5. This is another reason explaining the gender imbalance in the profession. This imbalance is more pronounced among language teachers, particularly AL teachers. Sons are often encouraged to pursue higher paying and desirable jobs, while the post of the teacher, which starts at eight in the morning and ends at half past two, is often seen as better suited for females who are commonly the primary homemakers (Ullah, 2016).

Furthermore, the inherent characteristics of the job, encompassing cultural preservation and family care, could be perceived as aligning more with the roles traditionally associated

with women. It is worth noting that this generation of women has been raised in a cultural context where employed females had to manage household responsibilities – a contrast to the individuals discussed in the next chapter, namely Kriti and Sanjhiana, who dedicated themselves to their career pursuits. Both Devi and Ashna had opportunities to study abroad, but they hesitated, in contrast to the younger generation represented by Kriti and Sanjhiana, who aspired to achieve at least a master's degree from an early age.

The gender imbalance in the field of AL is further visible even among the learners of the language. This is demonstrated through the experience of Ashna who, while discussing her job at school in the first interview, points out that:

Vi ki mo dan enn kolez garson, pena bokou zelev. Langaz pa interes zot. Zot plis kote161lan161kk. Alor mo161lann mo travay mem mo ena tigit zelev. Dan gran klas mo les zot fer size ki zot anvi pou zot karyer.

[As I am in a boys' college, I have fewer students... languages do not interest them. They like more of technical side ... So I plan my work although few students. In higher classes, I let them do what they like, subjects they need for their career path.]

This shows how males are not interested in learning languages, especially ALs, as compared to females. This prevailing pattern over time has contributed to the gender imbalance among teachers of languages. Empirical evidence indicates that the female brain is inherently predisposed to language acquisition, a trait that can be observed right from birth (Dionne & Plomin, 2003). Studying gender differences in second language learning, Wingman (2020) observes that language learning has become feminised.

7.3.2 Parental choice – Ashna fulfilling the dream of the mother

In his study titled 'Investigation of Parents' Involvement in Minority Language Maintenance', Li (2013) explores how the home context and parental influences play a significant role in the preservation of a minority language. Li discusses how the choices made regarding a minority language can lead to the development of robust affiliations with that language. Through the case of Ashna, it becomes apparent that parental choice had a significant influence on her choice of study, and consequently, teaching and preserving an AL like Telugu. The unrealised aspiration of Ashna's mother to become a Telugu teacher served as a motivating factor that propelled and influenced Ashna to pursue the same path. Ashna's mother, who belongs to the same generation as Nanda, was unable to realise her ambition of becoming a Telugu teacher

due to the lack of opportunities, as her responsibilities were centred around managing the household. The sacrificial role that women of Nanda's generation often undertook is evident in Ashna's narrative during her initial interview. She speaks about her motivation to learn Telugu, shedding light on the influence of her mother's unfulfilled aspirations.

Mo mama kan li ti tipti li osi ti pe fer bien an Telugu, me kouma to kone lontan bann misie pa ti pe les madam travay alor li pa 'nn reisi rantre. Li ti touzour anvi ki mo pa rat bann lasans parey alor li 'nn gid mwa ek li ki 'nn motiv mwa al fer profeser.

[When my mother was a student, she also did very well in Telugu, but as you know, husbands would not allow their wife to go to work in those days. So, she did not opt to work as a teacher. She did not want me to miss such opportunities. So, she encouraged me and motivated me to become a teacher.]

Thus, Ashna was encouraged to learn Telugu by her mother with the aim of becoming a teacher one day so that she does not face the same fate as her mother. This shows how the society was a patriarchal one. However, the words of Ashna demonstrate that she recognises that life has changed in terms of gender opportunities. It is evident that Ashna's brother received similar encouragement to learn Telugu, albeit only up to Grade 6. This highlights the pattern wherein families contribute to cultural transmission by imparting education in the ancestral language at the primary level (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2007; Payneeandy, 2009). However, Ashna goes beyond this foundational transmission, signifying a more profound engagement. In contrast, her brother's education stops at Grade 6, implying that his educational trajectory does not align with the pursuit of Telugu. Conversely, Ashna takes a more active approach by delving deeper into language and cultural development. In her secondary education, she chooses Telugu as one of her subjects. Importantly, she receives robust encouragement and substantial support from both her parents and the community to excel in her pursuit of Telugu. Eventually, she goes on to become a Telugu teacher. This notion is substantiated by the fact that Ashna indicates excelling in all her subjects, yet she specifically chooses the Telugu career path.

Devi's career path bears resemblance to that of Ashna. Encouraged by her parents, Devi undertook the journey of learning the language with the aspiration of eventually becoming a Telugu teacher, which she successfully achieved. This highlights a recurring pattern where, in many cases, the decision to pursue an AL or not, as well as the choice of the language to be learnt, comes from the parents. This process typically commences during a child's enrolment

in Grade 1 at a primary school. This parental influence continues into the secondary level, as elucidated in Chapter 5. The study reveals that a considerable number of Telugu teachers have pursued the subject due to parental preferences or active encouragement from their parents. Research conducted by Even (2003) demonstrates that possessing a robust understanding of the content in a particular subject not only fosters effective transmission of that content to others but also creates avenues for pursuing a career in teaching. This is seen through the different cases in this study. By gaining proficiency in the language and developing language loyalty (Fishman, 2007), teachers of ALs were motivated to embrace the teaching profession and teach those languages.

Analysis of Jack's case shows that, in aspects involving culture or ancestral heritage, parental choice is respected. During the third interview held at the wedding of his cousin, when asked how he would celebrate his wedding, he stated that it would be a traditional one, despite the fact that he is not actively involved in culture or religion.

***dernie interview ki nou ti fer to ti dir to pa tro religious ou tro in dan culture.
Mai nou trouve ki kan ariv enn par exanp maryaz... to pe maintain 4 zour
traditionel...***

*mo pe bizin maintain li, enn se pa mo swa personel...Ok...se parski mo bizin fer
plezir mo bann gran dimounn ki dan mo lantouraz...Ok... parski bann-la expect
ki zot ti fer li, zot expect ki zanfand dan zot lakour; dan zot lakaz, dan zot fami bizin
fer li donk...Ok...se par rapor a sa, se pou fer zot plezir*

***[In the last interview you told me that you are not too religious and cultural.
But it can be noted that when it comes to wedding for example, you are
maintaining four traditional days...***

*I am compelled to maintain, it is not my personal choice... ok it is because I have
to please my elders in my surrounding, because they expect that, as they have
done it, I, as a child in that yard, in that house have to do it alike. So, I will do it
to please them.]*

Thus, it can be noted how parents still have a say in different aspects regarding ethnicity, be it the traditions and culture transmitted, or the choice of learning a language considered close or part of the culture. This supports the words of a minister at the parliament, who stated that “when we go to school - I did when I went to primary school; it was already decided for me that I should go and learn Hindi and not any other languages” (Hansard, 2010, p. 78). The fact

that parents choose the languages to be learned is significant as it shows that culture and practices are still maintained through transmission from one generation to another (Sani, 2012).

7.3.3 Strong home culture – Local learner and teacher of a foreign language

A common aspect about the three case studies discussed in this chapter is that all of the participants have studied the language at all levels in Mauritius. Though other teachers of the same generation have had the opportunity to study in the native land of the language, Andhra Pradesh, these three participants have not been exposed to the native land, and at the time the research was being conducted, none of them had been there. Unlike Kriti and Sanjhiana (whose case studies are discussed in the next chapter) who have studied in India, the participants in the present case studies have adopted a culture and are living it, as well as demonstrating strong affiliation without even having visited the native land. This illustrates the profound influence of the cultural heritage inherited from their parents, which significantly shapes their way of life. So much so, that they are actively involved in perpetuating this heritage to the succeeding generation through their roles as teachers. In this sub-section, I emphasise the lived experiences of the participants, primarily explored through the in-depth discussions held during the second interview. During this interview phase, I extensively inquired about the participants' home environments to gain comprehensive insights.

Devi states that her forefathers have inculcated a culture at home, where there were certain norms which had to be followed. For example, every morning and evening, she had to perform the routine *pooja* [prayer]. Even in her new home, she has a special *pooja gadi* [prayer room] outside her house, as discussed in interview two:

To ankouraz to fami pratik relizion ou swiv kiltir?

Wi biensir. Sinon pa ti pou ena mo ti Mandiram dan lakour. Mo panse nou bizin kree sa lanvironnman sakre la.

Kan to ti kot to mama, zot ti ena enn plas pou fer lapriyer?

Wi, laba li ti andan lakaz mem. Enn ti Pooja Gadi. Tou Pooja ti pe fer laba mem.

Ki interval to fer Pooja laba ein?

Kan nou ti tipti toulezour nou ti pe fer 'Om' avan sorti lakaz. Mem tanto si.

[Do you encourage your family members to practice the religion or follow a culture?

Yes, of course. Else there wouldn't be a temple in my yard. I think we should create that sacred environment.

When you were at your mother's place, did you have a place like this to do your prayers?

Yes. There it was inside the house. It was a small Prayer room. All prayers happened there.

At what intervals do you do prayers?

When I was a kid, every day we used to do all before leaving the house. Every evening too, we used to pray.]

Even without personally experiencing India, it becomes evident that the home culture closely mirrors Indian culture. This outcome is attributed to the interplay of two factors: the legacy of ancestral cultural inheritance and the role of cultural politics, which have effectively maintained and fortified a deep sense of affiliation with Indian culture. This allegiance to their cultural origins serves as a notable driving force (Eisenlohr, 2007; Bissoonauth, 2010). Furthermore, her unwavering dedication to her lifestyle and religious practice is evident in the above exchange. This steadfast commitment to her way of life has enabled her to acquire a language that her parents did not speak, yet one that is intricately woven into the fabric of the culture she lives and breathes.

Nevertheless, Ashna, who has been raised in a comparable environment to Devi's, expresses her disillusionment with the evolving circumstances. It is noteworthy that socio-economic shifts and generation gaps are natural progressions over time, a perspective articulated by Ashna in the subsequent excerpt from the second interview:

Kapav mo panse mo old school. Zenerasion asterla kapav pa pans parey. Me nou, nou granparan ti bien tradisionel. Nou nou'nn zis pas dan tranzision inpe. Zordi zour ena bokou nuclear family. Bann inpe pli imite Eropean. Pa gagn letan al Mandiram. Both parent travay. Mama, papa fatigue. Pa gagn letan bann zafer Mandiram. Kiltir langaz ektesera vinn segonder. Nou nou'nn grandi avek sa persepsion-la. Alor bann nouvo pena mem persepsion.

[Maybe I am 'old school'. Today's generation do not think alike. But our grandparents were very traditional. We just went through a transition. But nowadays there are many nuclear families. The new generation is more 'European' no time to go to the temple. Both parents work. They are tired. Things like culture, language(ancestral) etc become secondary. We grew with a perception. They do not have that perception.]

Ashna qualifies herself as *old school*, acknowledging that she is rooted in the conventional and orthodox culture in which she has been brought up. By qualifying the new generation as more 'European', she points out that Westernisation has brought major changes in the mode of living of the new generation. As a result, elements like the temple, which she considered so important, and which has been a pivotal element in her character and personality building, no longer have the same importance for the newer generation.

Conversely, her statements could also be interpreted as indicative of a diminishing ethnic connection among the younger generation. The term "westernised" might also be understood as "creolised" in this context (Baker, 2007), suggesting that the contemporary generation, characterised by the absence of the perspective she mentions, is no longer inclined to uphold the heritage passed down by their forefathers. Therefore, this brings a feeling of loss to Ashna, who feels that she is losing her battle of preservation, despite the fact that 'creolisation' is a common phenomenon in multilingual contexts like Mauritius (Baker, 2007; Natchoo, 2020).

7.4 Challenges in Teaching and Learning an Ancestral Language

At the time Devi, Ashna, and Jack were learning Telugu as students, the language curriculum was going through reforms. English and French were taught as compulsory languages, while Asian languages/Oriental languages were taught as an optional subject (Miles, 2000; MOE, 2008). Kreol, the mother tongue, was only a vernacular and not considered a language, and its usage in the formal setting was avoided. There was a strong will from the state to uplift the status of the AL, and this led to the computing of AL as one of the subjects in the CPE for the attribution of high schools as discussed in Chapter 1 (Miles, 2000; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022). Regarded as a biased choice, this decision, which wasn't in favour of the Kreol community, has sparked significant debates across various circles, as it meant that good results in AL now would potentially serve as an advantage in the allocation of Middle School placements (Miles, 2000; Ramasawmy, 2004). This meant that the learners from the Creol

community would need to either learn an Indian language or sit for the examinations in only four subjects. This measure has indeed been critical in the survival/uplifting of minority Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu or Marathi, which would have disappeared in the context had there not been such strong-willed status planning (Spolsky, 2004). The language is alive, mostly in the curriculum, however, the participants express that they face challenges which I present in the following sub-sections.

7.4.1 Varying difficulty level of the various ALs

When the AL curriculum was introduced, all ALs were standardised to ensure equitable treatment. This meant that all languages received the same level of resources, facilities, and allocation of policies (MIE, 2019). While this presents a significant advantage, particularly for minority languages that greatly benefit from these comprehensive measures, Telugu teachers have expressed their apprehensions. They point out that Telugu, despite being categorised as a "minority language" within this context, is spoken by a relatively small number of individuals and is therefore vulnerable to language assimilation (Sokappadu, 2008). Poloogadoo (2010) demonstrates how teachers and learners of the Telugu language in Mauritius have always been struggling in terms of the difficulty level of the language. When asked about the challenges faced in his teaching in interview one, Jack straight away pointed out that the language is difficult, as portrayed in the following extract:

Sinon ki bann challenges to panse ena...dan lansegnman Telugu?

Size-la difisil... nivo-la difisil. par rapor a nivo curriculum. Pa'nn liste ektesera inn simplifier les choses pou profeser...

Sinon ki bann challenges to panse ena...dan lansegnman Telugu?

Size-la difisil... nivo-la difisil. par rapor a nivo curriculum. Pa'nn liste ektesera inn simplifier les choses pou profeser...

[Else what challenges do you think exist in the teaching of Telugu?

The subject is difficult. Level is difficult, based on the curriculum. The panellists have simplified things for teachers....]

By noting that the curriculum panel members have streamlined the content to be taught, Jack effectively communicates that certain materials previously taught were inaccessible to some of his students. Furthermore, it could be inferred that certain facets of language instruction pose challenges for educators as well. In contrast to languages like Hindi and Urdu, which enjoy

greater popularity among the ALs in this context, Telugu is less readily accessible (Poloogadoo, 2012). This observation aligns with Miles' perspective (2010, p. 222) when evaluating the execution of reforms in the CPE examinations during the 1990s, where he makes the following assertion:

Not all oriental languages are equally difficult or equally well taught. For instance, Hindi, with the largest and best endowed pedagogic infrastructure, is in a privileged position vis-a-vis Tamil and Telugu (Miles, 2010 p. 222).

This is corroborated by Ashna, who highlights that Hindi's greater accessibility in the media (due to the majority of the Indo-Mauritian population originating from North India) allows her students to comprehend Hindi, even without formal instruction in the language. Remarkably, this understanding persists despite the lack of linguistic affinity between Hindi, an Indo-Aryan language, and Telugu, a Dravidian language. Nevertheless, a point of contention arises regarding the uniform curriculum and equitable assessment applied to all ALs. Given that all languages are allotted the same teaching duration, any failure to achieve anticipated objectives could indicate a challenge either in the teaching methods employed or in the learning process itself.

As a result of the difficulties faced, Devi explains that she has to request her students to come to the evening school. This allows her to dedicate more time to teach them the basics. This sentiment is echoed in an excerpt from her second interview, where she discusses her commitment to community service, particularly to assist students to learn Telugu.

Me lekol Telugu li enn plis. Vi ki nou langaz inpe difisil pou kontext lokal ek penase, exposure, sa ed nou travay bann zelev-la zot baz inpe plis.

[Evening class is an add on. As our language is difficult for the local context and there is not enough exposure, this helps us to work their basics.]

The aforementioned statements underline Devi's unwavering commitment to upholding the Telugu language by providing the necessary support in a manner she deems suitable. She takes further action in this pursuit by extending her assistance to collaborative partners, such as the Telugu Speaking Union (TSU), established by the Ministry to facilitate the promotion of the language (MOE, 2018). In the third interview conducted subsequent to a language competition organised by the TSU, she expresses the following:

Kuma to kone Telugu pas koze mem dan moris. Nou bann zelevs pa expose e alor zot pa koz langaz la. sa bann competitions la agir kuma l platform ki donn zenfan lokasyon prepar kitsoz ek develop zot langaz.

[As you know, Telugu is barely spoken in Mauritius. Our students are not exposed and thus do not speak the language. These competitions act as a platform to give the students an opportunity to prepare something and develop their language skills.]

This exemplifies her active involvement with the language and concurrently highlights how, in her capacity as a teacher, she recognises the obstacles her learners encounter. As a result, she endeavours to devise strategies to assist them in overcoming these challenges. Like many of her fellow Telugu educators, she seizes any available opportunity to be part of spaces where the language exists. Indeed, the AL teacher has to accept the fact that the language is not a commonly spoken one. Consequently, opportunities for exposure are limited to particular media or specific environments. To ensure her students acquire the language, she must actively seek out these avenues and spaces for language learning. These may be the social media or socio-cultural settings where the language exists. This resonates with the findings by Bhaskar (2012) who discovered that teachers of Telugu are involved in the revitalisation process as they are engaged in many socio-cultural activities outside school hours to raise proficiency in the language among the learners. A similar discovery was made by Venkanah and Auleear-Owoodally (2023, p. 1), as they affirm that the “Telugu community are endeavoring to revivify and reinvigorate an (imagined) ancestral language (in its oral and written forms) by using a faith practice that has been passed down generations and by drawing on the scriptural resources at their disposal”.

7.4.2 Telugu as the scarcity area subject

In terms of human resources in the educational sector, minority languages like Telugu have been categorised as ‘scarcity areas’, for there has for long been a shortage of a qualified teaching force since the subject was introduced (PSC, 2008). As discussed in the case study of Nanda, he joined the service with the minimum academic result he had in the language. An examination of the cases of Devi and Ashna reveals that their Telugu education has been hindered on multiple occasions due to the scarcity of teachers. This can be observed through Ashna's statements in her initial interview:

Me dan rezion XXX pa ti ena mem profesoer sa lepok-la ... sirtou segonder...Tou seki ti ena ti sorti Lenn ti pe vini apre zot Degre.

[But in the XXX region, we did not have any teachers, especially for secondary education... All those existing, were students who just finished their degree and returned from India.]

While a shortage of qualified teachers in Telugu has been a disadvantage as far as their Telugu education was concerned, it became a blessing in disguise for their career path as there was a shortage and they were easily recruited. In fact, as soon as they completed their HSC, they were eligible and this became the career path they adopted by joining the teacher training for primary school Telugu teachers. Even when they completed their degree following a part-time course over a period of five years, it did not take them much time to get employed in the secondary sector for they were among the few candidates who had a degree in Telugu. The following was said by Ashna during her first interview when questioned about Telugu being a scarcity area:

Ofe dan mo lepok wi. Nou ti lucky. Pa asterla. Asterla ena plis Degree holders.

[Yes, that's true for my era. We were lucky. Now there are more degree holders.]

The circumstance of their employment arising from a shortage of teaching staff holds significant implications in the lives of the Telugu educators during that period. Jack perceives this situation as a chance that emerged, even though he harboured different career ambitions. On the other hand, both Ashna and Devi perceive their recruitment as a call to serve a purpose, asserting their commitment to dedicating their time and energy towards fulfilling this mission.

This situation gives rise to two opposing perspectives on decisions regarding ethnolinguistic alignment. One stance suggests that an individual's choice is primarily driven by factors such as social and material benefits (May, 2003). In contrast, the other perspective revolves around the concept of essentialist teacher identity, where an individual's decision might be rooted in a deeper sense of identity and purpose tied to their heritage and language (Fishman, 2007). In both instances, the teachers exhibit a sense of teacher agency (Priestley & Biesta, 2015) in their efforts to advance the language. The teachers' role as guardians of their own employment by virtue of their proficiency in the language can be seen as a driving force behind their commitment to its preservation. This dedication can be attributed to the incentives they derive from their roles as AL teachers.

7.4.3 Availability of the subject/options

Another challenge as experienced by the participants is the allocation of subject combinations in higher classes. As from Grade 10, students have to choose eight subjects. A subject is offered at school when there is a minimum of five students. However, an exception is made for ALs, especially minority ones as, in most cases, there are fewer than five students in the whole section. It is to be pointed out that the fact that the exception has been made is in itself a favourable policy decision. Devi explains how, in some cases, school managers tend to discourage the enrolment of one or two students who opt for the subject. She recognises the pivotal role played by these one or two students in seizing the opportunity to learn the language, realising that if they don't, the language could potentially fade away. On the other hand, school managers favouring good use of resources ignore the essence of preservation. The following is an extract from the first interview held with Devi, when she discusses how language policies help to promote AL.

AL li la pou promouvoir nou langaz ek kiltir ancestral. Size la li dan lekol alor si p enseign li, pas aköz ena ziss 1 ou 2 zelev zot pou dir pas capav donn combinaison.

[AL is here to promote our language and ancestral culture. The subject exists at school and if it is being taught, not because of the fact that there are only 1 or 2 students they will not give the combination.]

Deprived of the opportunity to learn Telugu at their secondary schools and having faced difficulties during their education in Telugu, both are aware of the improved changes in policy in favour of the students studying an AL such as Telugu today. Thus, being ambassadors of the language, they do not accept or remain silent when school managers refuse to give subject combinations with Telugu as a subject. Ashna states that in most cases, there is often only one student opting for Telugu at HSC level, that is Grade 12, and often, the student is asked to choose another subject or to do Telugu privately. In her 13-year career as a secondary school Telugu teacher, she has never had the opportunity to work with HSC students. She expresses this with much regret during her first interview when she speaks about her experiences.

Mo feel mal parski depi mo 'nn rant segonder, zame mo 'nn teach HSC. Enn fwa ti pou gagne me li 'nn transfer eksetera pa ti ena loportinite teach HSC. Mo ti pou kontan. Mo sagrin kan mo tann zelev dir rekteur pe dekouraz zot....

[I feel very bad as since I joined in secondary, I never got the opportunity to teach HSC. Once I would have got it, but the student got transferred. I did not get the chance. So, I feel bad when I hear rectors discourage students.]

Hence, it becomes evident that due to the limited number of Telugu students and an even smaller fraction who continue their studies up to the HSC level, only a handful of teachers have the chance to work with them. The students rely on policies to be able to learn the subject and they cannot accept the fact that some school managers deny subject combination involving Telugu based on the reason that there is only one student. Furthermore, Telugu teachers insist that students be allowed to study the language even if he is the only one in the school to do so at HSC level. This shows the privileged status the state devotes to ALs. Ashna explained her views and her need to fight for her subject and students in the first interview:

Wi ena bann policies. Me malgre sa bizin fight. Get kouma momem mo 'nn fight pou mo bann zelev. Pa ti pe rod donn opsjon Telugu aköz ti ena tigit zelev. Nou 'nn reisi fer rektris aksepte donn li opsjon.

[Yes, we do have policies. Despite that you need to fight. See I myself have had to fight for my student as they were not awarded the Telugu option because of few students. We managed to convince the rector to give the option.]

The above statement demonstrates Ashna's loyalty to the language as well as the teacher identity she has developed over time. She is ready to fight for her students and for her job as an AL teacher.

Devi herself has encountered similar situations and has devised her own strategy to address this matter. During the initial interview conducted at the school, while deliberating on language policies, Devi mentions how she proactively communicates with higher authorities whenever such instances arise.

*Nerport ki problem mo gagne, enn kout-fil Misie *** o-nivo Minister. Li fini help. Kan paran ekrir let, kan korl Minister ena enn power. Bann-la lao zot la pou ed nou. Get Tamil si parfwa kan pa gagn konbinezon, kan ena presion zot oblize done.*

*[Any problem I get, I phone Mr *** at the Ministry, who helps. When students write letters or complaints from parents, there is a power. Look for instance in the case for Tamil, when they put pressure, they are compelled to give the options.]*

The above statement therefore shows that if the teacher or the parents do not express their concern for the choice of the language, the student can easily be devoid of the option. Devi also takes the example of Tamil, which is another minority AL like Telugu, but one which is known to be more combative in the context as far as their linguistic rights are concerned (Chetty, 2020). Therefore, unavailability of subject combination is a major issue among Telugu teachers that contributes to negative experiences as they feel marginalised (Freeman, 2008).

However, the above extract also demonstrates several aspects on how ALs are *over-protected* in the system. The authorities are sensitive to issues regarding AL and how this is used as a tool or a support by the teachers of AL. Firstly, among the so many issues the Ministry of Education faces, the issues of AL are treated with utmost importance with the pressure from the different ethnic communities. Hence, these actions can be characterised as cultural politics, as the policies empower Indian languages to maintain supremacy within the context, coexisting alongside compulsory global languages. This is noteworthy given that the indigenous languages have persistently faced a decline over time. Secondly, while some students of other subjects move to other schools in order to get the combination of their choice, the student of the AL is able to intervene and request for a teacher, though it will be a one-on-one class because of the ‘minority’ case. In this context, AL students are favoured. On the other hand, what is happening to Kreol in the context regarding lack of teachers or options indeed demonstrates that a minority language can enjoy more favourable policies than a majority language, which may find itself marginalised.

Thus, the issue of the minority/majority as discussed in Chapter 3 is very visible here, where the language of the majority receives the treatment usually assigned to a minority language, and a minority language is given priority over a majority language. This further demonstrates how the policies of preservation implemented by the government and the notion of ‘promotion-oriented language rights’ (Kloss, 1977; Spolsky, 2004) creates a cocoon for the AL teachers who enjoy a privileged status in their combat for the subject they teach. Here, it is to be noted that, as discussed in Chapter 2, representatives of the Telugu community, like many others, were not in favour of Telugu as an examined subject being computed for ranking for CPE. Yet, over time, it can be seen how the official policy, which does not reflect the majority’s view, has had a deep impact on the educational system, and the AL teachers are the agents who have benefited the most from this policy.

Thirdly, the instance where Devi can reach out to Mr. *** for assistance, owing to their shared ethnic community, highlights that “sak zako protégé so montagne” (a Kreol saying

signifying that each monkey protects only its own mountain). This saying reflects the reality that individuals often prioritise their own interests, even if they profess otherwise, even at an institutional level. This raises the broader issue of ethnic identity, unity, and a deep sense of belonging within the Mauritian context, highlighting its sociocultural fabric (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Stein, 1986; Eisenlohr, 2004; Eriksen, 2005; Bissoonauth, 2010). It also underscores the escalating trend of ethnicisation within institutions (Claveyrolas, 2017). This situation further highlights the presence of multiple identities, as previously discussed in Chapter 2. It illuminates the inclination observed within the Mauritian context, where many individuals prioritise their ethnic identity over their national identity (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Eriksen, 2005; Bissoonauth, 2010). Ethnic representation in Mauritian institutions (Bissoonauth, 2010) serves not only as a mechanism for ensuring equity and balance but also acts as a tool for division.

7.4.4 Lack of curriculum resources

Lack of curriculum resources has been another challenge raised by the teachers of Telugu in the case studies. Both as students and later teachers, Ashna, Devi, and Jack affirm that they have faced difficulties due to the lack of proper teaching resources. Devi and Ashna relied heavily on the guidance and support of their teachers, as their assistance was crucial. This reliance was particularly significant considering that they did not study the subject at the secondary schools they attended. These schools were private institutions that did not employ Telugu teachers. Telugu teachers in high schools were available only in some state colleges and at the MGI at that time.

Jack, on the other hand, did have a Telugu teacher at the school he attended, but states that he himself did not prepare some of the prescribed higher school literature texts for they were not available at the MGI Library, the only place they could have been accessible at that time. As a result, this led to the consequence of him having to repeat a year and retake the exams in the subsequent year. This supports the findings of Maffea (2020) who explains how lack of appropriate teaching resources demotivates teachers as well as students in their performance and makes the teaching and learning process more difficult.

In their roles as educators, both Devi and Ashna highlight the common practice of creating their own teaching materials and instructional aids over the years. However, as Jack and Ashna affirm, things have changed in recent times with the implementation of the ‘Nine-year continuous education’, a major reform (MOE, 2020). As a result of this reform, the

government has undertaken substantial investments in developing new educational resources for students ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 9. It is crucial to emphasise that regardless of the student enrolment numbers, the government allocates resources uniformly across all subjects featured in the official curriculum. This inclusive approach proves advantageous to AL subjects such as Tamil, Telugu, or Marathi, which equally benefit from various educational policies. Some (Payneanandee, 2008; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal. 2020) also state that, through all the mechanisms that exist to promote the AL, the government invests more in the development and promotion of ALs compared to other “core subjects” in the curriculum. Therefore, this reveals the major development in terms of availability of resources over time due to the favourable policies.

7.4.5 Lack of support and loneliness

As previously discussed in this section, a majority of the participants in this study assert that Telugu is a challenging language both to learn and to teach, particularly within the Mauritian context. Consequently, educators often find themselves in need of assistance from their colleagues. This aspect is exemplified in the first interview with Jack, as illustrated below:

To bann lezot koleg pa ed twa?

Wi, parfwa mo pran led bann lezot profeser Telugu. Mo pa ezite pou demande kan ena bann kestion.

[Do your other colleagues help you?

Yes, sometimes I take the help of other Telugu teachers. I do not hesitate to seek for help when I have questions.]

In the above section, Jack mentions how support from colleagues teaching the same language is helpful, especially when teaching an AL. However, Telugu teachers work in isolation and there are very few platforms and few exchange opportunities among Telugu teachers. In most cases, there is only one Telugu teacher in one school, which means that there is no collegial support in terms of subject content or other issues related to the subject. This issue was highlighted in an interview with Kriti, whose case study is discussed in the next chapter.

7.5 Content Taught for an Ancestral Language

In this section, I focus on the content taught in the curriculum and how the Telugu teachers view their responsibilities of teaching what they are prescribed to teach.

7.5.1 Teaching Telugu at school

Telugu, taught as an AL, primarily serves the significant purpose of preserving language and culture, as elaborated upon in Chapter 3 (Bissoonauth, 2010; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017; Rughoonundun, 2022). This is further demonstrated by Devi's words in her second interview when she mentions that "*AL li la pou promouvoir nou langaz ek kiltir ancestral*", which means "*AL is here to promote our language and ancestral culture*". This statement is supported by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which states that ALs, referred to as Asian Languages in the document, are taught to keep Indian languages brought into the Mauritian context alive. This endeavour is undertaken to help preserve existing cultural practices attached to these languages, as the people are deeply rooted in these practices (NCF, 2019).

These words further reinforce Teo's (2008) assertion that "the ethnic language is the carrier of culture" (p. 4). However, when the aims related to teaching Asian languages as listed in the NCF (2019) are analysed, it can be noted that emphasis is placed on developing language proficiency and communicative skills (Cummins, 2012). Therefore, these languages are promoted as ALs but taught for proficiency and communication in the curriculum.

It appears that each teacher adopts his or her own approach to teaching the language, depending on their experiences, despite the fact that there is a pre-established official curriculum. The taught curriculum and hidden curriculum often lead to teaching aspects of culture. Bataineih (2009) explains that understanding of the different forms of meaning that are encoded in the grammar and vocabulary of a language comes only with full understanding of the culture in which it operates. This understanding becomes crucial when engaging with different cultures and navigating unfamiliar circumstances. Thus, exposure to these cultural aspects is vital to facilitate seamless communication and eliminate potential barriers between distinct cultures (Fishman, 2007). A behaviour considered proper in one culture, may be odd in the foreign learner's culture. Therefore, while designing the curriculum, this has to be taken into consideration (Spolsky, 2008).

The case of Devi provided me with insights into the contents taught. Devi has been involved in content creation for the new curriculum, that is the development of textbooks and other materials to be used for teaching in classrooms. In the first interview, when asked to describe the curriculum for secondary education in Telugu, she explained the following:

*Be tou seki ena dan enn langaz: gramer, vokabiler parey kouma Angle ek Franse.
Apart enn de bann great personalities eksetera, nou, nou pou pran li dan nou*

kontext Telugu. Sa laspe kiltir ek listwar-la pou atase avek nou silabus.

[All what consists of a language. Like grammar, vocabulary, just like English and French. However, for passages on great personalities, events etc, we have them in our own context. Yes, historical and cultural aspects are attached to the syllabus.]

Devi's description of the syllabus, though short, differentiates the content of an AL to other languages taught for communicative purposes in the context. She makes the link between historical and cultural aspects of the language. When a language is learnt, one also picks up the culture associated with the language (Crystal, 2008). Bataineih (2009) further adds that,

Some languages are associated historically with particular cultures; the languages provide the key to the associated cultures, and especially to their literature; the languages cannot be fully understood otherwise than in the context of the cultures (p. 295).

In this case, where the primary objective of teaching the language is the preservation of both language and culture (MGI, 2019), it follows that the curriculum inherently incorporates elements interwoven with cultural aspects. Therefore, as Devi points out, while preparing the content materials, along with language basics like grammar and vocabulary, inclusion of comprehension passages on cultural and historical aspects of the language are important.

Jack, in outlining the changes within the curriculum, underscores that the fundamental objectives of imparting values, culture, and traditions have remained steadfast. He asserts that these elements constitute the core essence of ALs. He highlights this during the first interview conducted at his workplace:

Nou silabus inn sanze inpe, me ena bokou zafer ki mars an paralel avek seki ti ena avan ek seki asterla. Mem dan nou nouvo liv ena bokou bann zafer ki relie ar bann zafer ansien, zis pou protez nou tradision, nou kiltir ek nou fason viv... zanfann ki pe aprann Telugu ou nerport ki lang Asian, mwa mo dir pou Telugu, nou aprann bokou manier: kouma pou asize, montre to respe, kot mo pa trouv sa dan bann lezot size...

[Our syllabus has changed a little, but there are many aspects that are parallel to the previous syllabus. In our new books, there are many things related to our customs, traditions, way of living in order to safeguard them A student learning Telugu or any other AL, but I am saying from point of view of Telugu, learns

manners, courtesy, respect, way of behaving, which does not exist in other subjects.]

Therefore, it can be noted how teachers of Telugu are more oriented towards the socio-cultural aspects related to the language rather than focusing on teaching a language for communication skills like English or French in the context. The socio-cultural perspective to language teaching and learning (Jolly, 1995; Lacerda et al., 2004; Johnson, 2009) emphasises that individuals need to interact with their surroundings while learning a language. Liddicoat and Crozet (1999) further add that “language is shaped and framed by culture” (p. 5).

In fact, Jack liked this facet of the subject right from school days when he was a student of Telugu. When asked in the first interview why he was fond of the Telugu class, he remarks:

Be isi pou koumanse ti ena zis 4 zelev dan klas-la. Apre klas-la ti ena plis aktivite ek bann teachings lor bann mesaz moral ek bann valer. Lorla enn langaz diferan ki lezot pa konpran.

[To start, there were only 4 students in the classroom. There were more activities and teachings on values, moral teaching. On the top of that, it was a different language that others did not understand.]

Jack illustrates that the unique circumstance of having only four students in the classroom set his class apart from others. This smaller class size allowed for individualised attention for each student. Additionally, the content taught in the class was centred around moral values, a factor he found praiseworthy and appreciated. All these factors altogether develop a different experience of learning, which increased the interest of Jack towards the subject.

Another important element regarding Telugu at school is the support through policies (Miles, 2000) as discussed in Chapter 1. The fact that AL is an optional core subject and computed in major national examinations, good results in AL means a competitive edge, which has therefore been a successful policy from the point of view of promoters of AL. This can be noted through the case study of Ashna, who states that:

Interes li zis kot ena bann paran ena lintere pou langaz-la, ou zanfana si li vmem bon ek li'nn anvi gagn enn bon rezilta, setadir Grade 1 dan langaz-la.

[The interest exists only if the parent is interested or if the child is really good at the subject and wants to aim for good result or a distinction.]

Hence, beyond the previously discussed parental choice, another influential factor drawing students towards the subject is the prospect of achieving favourable outcomes. Attaining good results in the subject stands as a significant pull factor. Notably, the subject's performance outcomes play a role in shaping teachers' experiences, an aspect that was examined in depth through the case studies. Good results in the language are motivating factors both for the students and for teachers as portrayed in the above extract. This supports the research carried out by Hanus (2015) who explains that positive results boost teaching and learning. Devi further points out in her third interview that those students who perform well demonstrate an affiliation for the culture as well.

Apra par lexparyans, mo trouve mo bann zelev ki fer pli bien, rant dan langaz lamem ek aktiv dan kiltir.

[Moreover, by experience, I find that those who learn the language well and perform better are the ones who are then actively involved in culture.]

Consequently, certain students excel in the Telugu language and select the subject primarily to enhance their overall academic performance. This aligns with the objectives of the policies – to motivate students to engage with ALs. Interestingly, this pursuit often leads them to develop an affinity for the associated culture as well.

7.5.2 AL taught in a different setting – Pedagogical approach at the *Sayantrapubadi*

The *Sayantrapubadi* [evening school/extension school] was introduced in Chapter 1 and further explored through the case of Nanda in the previous chapter. Its significance is such that I have undertaken a deeper analysis of it through the case studies presented in this chapter. Remarkably, all participants in this study have experienced being students at the *Sayantrapubadi* and have later taken on roles as teachers in these schools. Ashna and Devi teach in these evening schools in their respective locality three hours per week. Ashna's third interview, conducted at the evening school, concentrated solely on her role as a teacher at the *Sayantrapubadi*. Through this interview, I gained valuable insights into the process of teaching an AL outside the formal school curriculum. The case of Nanda provided a window into evening schools during the 1980s, whereas the cases presented in this chapter serve to examine the current state of these same schools, shedding light on the present situation. Ashna has been involved in the teaching of Telugu language at the *Sayantrapubadi* [evening class] for 15 years now and she always had her own approach to teaching. In the following paragraphs, I focus on the pedagogical approach adopted at the evening school.

Activity-based teaching

It can be noted that the *Sayantrapubadi* focuses on activities according to the participants. While at school students can only be taught about the Telugu culture, at the evening class teachers get the opportunity to practise the culture through activities. It is to be pointed out that most evening schools are held at the *Mandiram*, which is a completely different setting from a normal classroom at school. Ashna discusses this setting during the third interview:

Isi li plis zanford-la pe epanwir limem dan langaz-la li pe gagn enn platform pou exprim li. Enn latmosfer diferan kot li parmi so bann kamarad Telugu mem. Alor nou diversifie nou teaching inpe isi. Mwamem kouma enn profeser mo gagn exprim mwa plis isi.

[We focus more on developing language skills and the student gets a platform to express himself. A different environment where s/he is among students of the same community. So, we diversify our teaching here. I, as a Telugu teacher get to express myself more here.]

She also points out that the students are from the Telugu community, which means that there is a homogeneous environment where the children can communicate among themselves in the targeted language. Another feature of the evening school where Ashna teaches is that parents are allowed to accompany their children to learn the language. While formal schools are reluctant to involve parents in their activities and complain about their lack of interest too, the mutual trust between these two stakeholders is remarkable in the case of evening schools. It is more a family community development rather than learning content for examinations. This parallels the functions of similar schools in the context of the United Kingdom, as expounded by Li Wei (2015). These schools encourage interactions between children and parents, fostering a community that not only shares language but also culture. In this environment, friendships are cultivated and connections are established. This raises the question of the role of the Telugu teacher within the the exo-system in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model (Evans, 2020).

Through the case of Nanda, discussed in the previous chapter, the activities held at the evening school during Nanda's time have already been explored. Over time, while the evening schools focus more on academic learning of the language, their main goal has been to maintain

and promote the language, culture, and religion. The following extract, where Ashna speaks about an activity held during the third interview, demonstrates the same.

Sak lane mo fer Ugadi isi o-nivo lekol. Seki nou aprann li pa zis an teori. Ena bokou bann fami zordizour zot lwin avek nou bann tradision ek langaz. Alor mwa mo ed rekree sa lanvironnman ki pa existe parmi sartin bann zenn-la isi pou zot gagn enn lide kiete sa ek zot kapav replik li lakaz. Zordizour bann paran tousala travay alor zot pa gagn letan fer tousala lakaz. Sa bann zanfan-la pe elwagn avek langaz ek kiltir. Get kouma Ugadi Pacchadi mem ki sinbolik pou Telugu, ena bann zanfan pa mem kone kiete sa. Alor isi mwa dan aktivite zordi la zot pou gagn enn lide tou sa bann zafer ki lie avek nou kiltir-la.

[Ugadi at school level is celebrated like this every year. We do not only learn theory here. There are many families today who are getting further to traditions and language. So, I help recreate that environment which does not exist among some youth so that they get a better idea what the festival is and how they can replicate it at home. Today, parents are busy with work and the children are getting far away from the culture. For example, the Ugadi pacchadi is symbolic for Telugus and many students do not know what it is. So today, in today's activity, they get an idea of the things related to our culture.]

It is also to be noted that the above activity is more inclined towards culture as well as a religious celebration, which is the Telugu New Year and the beginning of the Hindu calendar. Ashna explains how due to changes in society, with parents having no time for home education, she engages herself in teaching culture and values. She is striving to empower her students to become advocates for Telugu cultural practices within their homes, which is a departure from the conventional expectation that these practices are instilled within students' households from the outset. Therefore, she has recreated an atmosphere in the context of the Ugadi celebrations so that the students experience the celebrations, which can be replicated at home. As discussed in Chapter 2, Safran (2008) states that there is a persistent relationship between ethnicity, language, and culture. The professional and personal experiences of Ashna demonstrate the same as this also resonates with the findings of Prabhakaran (1991) while studying the *Patasalas* (extension schools) in the south African context.

National Telugu Drama festival

In his analysis of the situation of Telugu in Mauritius, Bhaskar (2017) points out that the National Telugu Drama festival, organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage yearly, is one of the few events where people can be seen communicating in the Telugu language. Ashna states that participation in the National Drama festival is an annual feature at the evening school she teaches. Although the festivals are open to schools also, Ashna affirms that most of the groups that participate are either from *Mandirams* (Telugu Temple) or from the evening schools run by those temples. At school, according to her, it is more difficult to involve students in such activities which take a lot of teaching time, whereas at the evening class, they can dedicate more time. This shows the engagement and motivation both from teachers and students of being involved in such activities, which contribute to the learning as well as practising of the language skills. Ashna's words also confirm Bhaskar's (2017) analysis of the measures in Mauritius regarding the promotion of the Telugu language.

Literary competitions

The evening school is also a platform for preparing students to participate in extra-curricular activities organised by different bodies having the objective to promote the language. It is to be pointed out that since Telugu is not being spoken at home, and very few of the parents are educated in Telugu, students wishing to participate in Telugu competitions need a lot of support from their teachers. Moreover, as Devi pointed out, teaching time at school rarely allows scope for participation in such activities unless the student is a high achiever. Therefore, once again, according to Ashna, the evening school is a platform for students to be trained and prepared for literary activities:

Nou ossi ena ban activite ki nou fer avec teaching. Guet kuma nou ena TSU. Li organise ban competitions. Alor ici nou prepare sa ban zelev la impe pliss koter sa. Kumsa zot capav partcipe dan ban poem recitation competition essay writing tousala.

[We also have activities that we are engaged with apart from the teaching. Like there is the Telugu Speaking Union which organises competitions, here we prepare the students to participate in those competitions. Like this they participate in poem recitation competition, essay writing competition etc.]

By engaging in various activities, it becomes evident that Ashna, as a teacher at the evening school, actively fosters the establishment of environments that facilitate practical utilisation of

the language. This initiative aligns with and complements the linguistic understanding students gain within their formal schooling. This correlation is reminiscent of findings by Creese (2008), who characterises complementary schools as volunteer-driven institutions that supplement mainstream education through various activities. These schools are established to foster community ties and literacy among children who come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Creese, 2008; Li Wei, 2014).

7.6 Being the Minority

The analysis of data derived from these three case studies reveals that the participants exhibit numerous concerns and reservations of being a teacher of a ‘minority language’. It has been discussed, while problematising the concept of ‘minority languages’, that categorising Telugu as a ‘minority language’ is debatable taking into consideration the favourable policies it enjoys. Yet, being a teacher of a language to which a small segment of the population affiliates and opts for, has an impact on the personal and social behaviour of the teachers, which are discussed in the following sub-sections.

7.6.1 Insecurity about the Telugu teacher’s job

At various junctures, different participants exhibited a sense of uncertainty regarding their prospects of teaching Telugu. Career instability thus becomes a major experience that needs to be explored. One clear example is the case of Ashna, who demonstrated her apprehensions regarding the future of Telugu in schools. During the first interview, when asked if she felt insecure, she answered: “*Not really, but we do not know one day. We should accept we are a minority*”. In the second interview, she pointed out that:

Bon pou mwa mo trouve, zordizour, sa lanplwa profeser pou al teach Telugu li a-risk. Nou nomb zelev diminie.

[Personally, I think that this job, that is of teaching Telugu is at risk. The number of students is decreasing.]

This demonstrates that there is a constant fear of being redundant one day due to the fact that the Telugu community is a minority one in the context, and she is employed as a teacher of a language that can die. Despite the fact that the authorities usually find a satisfactory solution for all parties in cases where an employee becomes redundant (like redeploying them in other posts related to culture or teaching), she does not want to reach such a stage for it would affect

her identity. During her third interview, when asked how she enjoyed and felt working so hard for a language that is barely spoken and whose existence lies on language policies, she stated:

Mwa mo feel proud. Langaz-la li existe. Mo pa kone dan zenerasion fitir kouma li pou ete, li pou ankor existe ou pa, me nou antan ki profeser, nou pe fer nou maximum zefor pou ki sa bann zanfan-la konpran maximum ek demin zot si zot sovgard sa langaz-la pou li pa vinn extinct.

[I feel proud. The language is existent. I do not know how it will be in the future generation, if it will exist or not, but we as teachers are making maximum effort for these students and so that tomorrow they can safeguard the language so that it does not become extinct.]

The above statement shows that she is grateful to the previous generation (the likes of Nanda's teachers) that has kept the language alive. While she expresses her dedication to preserving the language to the best of her ability, she acknowledges her uncertainty about the future. She can only hold onto the hope that her students are receptive and actively engage in preserving the language, preventing it from potentially becoming 'extinct', which is a strong English word used by her. The use of the word "extinct", which she uses *verbatim*, shows her awareness of the vulnerability of the language in the Mauritian context, where the language is not spoken, even among members from the same ethnic community. She affirms her full engagement to the cause of the preservation of the language, but she does not have the certitude that her engagement and that of her colleagues will save the language from extinction in Mauritius.

Conversely, adopting a more pessimistic stance, Jack issues a cautionary note that the language is on the brink of vanishing if teachers fail to fulfil their responsibilities adequately. During his conversation about the future of the language in Mauritius in the first interview, he states that:

Be si nou pa fer enn travay kouma bizin, be.... definitivman nou pou redundant.... Sa travay ki nou pe fer zordi la ki pou ed nou... ek si sa zenerasion-la inn fini, mo pa krwar pou ena ankor sa ein..donk nou bizin fer maximum...

[But if we do not work well, we shall definitely be redundant. Whatever we do today will help us tomorrow. And if this generation ends [stops learning the language], it will die for good. Thus, we should give our best...]

The above statement also demonstrates that the teaching of Telugu is something whose existence has been preserved over the years, and once disappeared, Telugu will become extinct

in the context for good, which would mean the end of all the efforts of the generations who have in one way or the other been involved in its preservation. This assertion aligns with the findings of Caportorti (2007) and Freeman (2007) concerning the preservation of minority identities.

7.6.2 Working for the community (Ethnic group)

Fishman (2007) states that language loyalty plays an important role in the language revitalisation process, especially among minorities, as it creates a motivating factor among the promoting agents involved in the revitalising process. While discussing why she is so engaged, Ashna in the third interview demonstrated her language loyalty (Fishman, 2007) and motivation to work for the Telugu community. She expresses the following, during a bring-and-share exercise at the evening class where they were celebrating the Ugadi festival, which is the main cultural celebration for Telugus in Mauritius:

Se plito mo volonte. Get kouma nou, nou'nn grandi dan sa domenn-la, nou'nn aprann nou bann profeseur inn montre nou, nou si nou pe share nou knowledge. Nou'nn fer bann zanfan mem amenn bann ingredian ek bann zafer. Se plito enn bring and share ek zot tou inn fer li bien volonterman. Ena osi Mandiram ek bann profeseur ki'nn ede. Nou'nn plann kouma nou pou fer sa ek sakenn inn donn so koudme. Mo espere li enn sikse ek zanfan aprann ek met an-pratik seki zot finn aprann.

[It is rather my will. We have grown up in this field. We have learnt what our teachers taught us and now we also share our knowledge. We have made our students themselves bring the ingredients. It's more a bring and share and everyone did it voluntarily. There is also the Mandiram and the teachers who have collaborated. We have planned it and each one gave a helping hand. I hope it is a success - children help and put into practice what they have learnt.]

In the provided passage, Ashna highlights the engagement of students in the event referred to as 'bring-and-share'. This gathering entails an experience of Telugu communal dining where every individual has the chance to contribute by bringing food from their respective places. It is evident that the Telugu teacher not only imparts linguistic knowledge but also instills community values and cultural practices. Through this process, she contributes to strengthening the cohesion within the minority Telugu community, a phenomenon previously discussed in Chapter 2. This aligns with the concept that ethnic minorities often foster social cohesion

through activities that bond their community together (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982). It is also noteworthy that she receives support and encouragement from other Telugu teachers. This student activity yields multiple outcomes. Firstly, the young Telugu learners engage in the culture through the collaborative nature of the event. This goes beyond mere teaching; it involves active cultural practice. Secondly, the Telugu culture is passed from one generation to another, just like it had been the case when Ashna was a student. Therefore, she is replicating her own experience as a learner, and this is significant as the goals of maintenance are achieved.

Jack states that he derives happiness while working for the progress and advancement of the Telugu community when he says “*Happiness c kan mo p teach Telugu, mo p ressi fer kitsoz pou mo communitte*” [*Happiness is when I am teaching Telugu, I am doing something for my community*]. Therefore, through the case of Jack, it can be noted that the sense of attachment to the community and working for its progress is omnipresent. The idea of gaining satisfaction from sharing knowledge gained can be seen through the experiences of Jack. This supports the findings of Hargreaves (2001) and Borg (2008) who discuss how teachers find satisfaction and happiness by giving back knowledge gained.

The participants who affirm having been brought up at the *Mandiram* [Telugu temple] demonstrate having picked up certain social values like voluntary work. This culture has been transmitted from generation to generation and could be seen in Nanda’s case too in the previous chapter. Devi discusses it in her second interview, and she points out how she is ready to do voluntary work in order to help the Telugu community.

Si nu abitie ede dan ban zafer social depi tipti, nou develop I labitid. Moi, mem si mo pa ti ankor enn prof Telugu mo ti deza pe ede parski mo ena enn sertenn apartenans dan la langue kuma mo ti dir dernier fwa mo feel ki mo enn Telugu e mo pe al ede dan I zafer ki concern Telugu. Akoz sa li pous moi pou mo al ede dan bann asosiasyon la. Si mo pa fer li, lezot pas pu fer li et li pu mort.

[We do help in these activities since our childhood, we have developed a habit. Even though I was not yet a Telugu teacher, I was helping because I felt a sense of belongingness, as I said last time, I feel I am a Telugu and I am going to help in something concerning Telugu. This pushes me to go help in the associations. If I do not do it and others do not do it, it will die.]

She ends by saying that the survival of the language depends on the few teachers who have learned the language and others will not help in doing it. Thus, the symbolic value of her effort

is priceless, and she feels proud of her role as a teacher of Telugu. Furthermore, the concept of continuity and steadfastness is evident in her experiences, as she indicates her engagement in social work from a young age, a practice that has been ingrained in her over time. The concept of acculturation, cultivated from an early age, evolves into a way of life. As a Telugu teacher, she is dedicated to fostering this same sense of belonging in her students, with the aspiration that they too can cultivate this same way of being. The main motive is the sense of belongingness, which in itself is a major factor that affects language maintenance (Fishman, 2007; Spolsky, 2009). The above words also demonstrate how the Telugu teacher embodies the language, to such an extent that she affirms that it is her responsibility to preserve and maintain the language. This behaviour supports Fishman's (2007) concept of language loyalty, which suggests that someone teaching an ethnic or endangered language develops a mission for preservation.

However, loyalty and the effort for maintenance can once again be attributed to the result of positive incentives that one draws from being an AL teacher. May (2003) states that in many cases, when it comes to preservation, an essentialist approach towards preservation is adopted. The individual social mobility of the individual influences behaviour, which leads to actions in favour of the cause. In this case, it can be noted how Jack has benefitted from the policies of the state and he became a Telugu teacher, considered a noble and decent post in the context. He never planned to become one, but as he became one, he has to teach the language and, the language being an endangered one, he admits that he has to run the extra mile and be involved in preservation practices. The extract in section 7.6.1 where Jack expresses his fear of being redundant, and thus there is a need to work harder, clearly shows his concern for safeguarding his employment and nothing beyond that.

7.6.3 Cultural and ethnolinguistic identity

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the sub-divisions of the Hindu community exist on the basis of the languages of forefathers. The Telugu community in Mauritius, therefore, though being a minority, is a subset of the majority Hindu population. The Tamils, Telugus, Marathis, and Hindi-speaking or Bhojpuri-speaking North Indians share Hinduism as their religion, and all of these ethnic communities identify as Hindus. Nevertheless, as highlighted by Hollup (2000), the dynamics of cultural politics have spurred a homogenisation process, causing uncertainties in official records and among the Mauritian populace concerning these minority Indian ethnic groups (Hollup, 2000).

Earlier research (Eisenlohr, 2008; Claveyrolas, 2017; Ramsoondur, 2018; Venkanah & Auleear Owodally, 2023) has revealed that the various Indian ethnolinguistic groups, especially the two Dravidian ones, Tamil and Telugu, uphold their distinctiveness, in contrast to the North Indian community, often referred to as Hindus. The analysis of responses in this study reveals that these misunderstandings have a significant impact on the participants, leading to instances where their identities are misconstrued. Even between individuals from the two Dravidian cultures (which share substantial similarities), participants expressed negative sentiments when their ethnolinguistic affiliations were mistaken.

In the third interview held with Devi, she mentions the following regarding one of the benefits of cultural functions:

Kouma dan Moris bokou dimounn panse Tamil, Telugu li enn sel kominote. Be mo panse sa bann fonksion-la ede montre diferans ki ena. Lerla osi ena vizibilite. Bann lezot si pe konn inpe nou bann tradision.

[Like in Mauritius many think that Tamil and Telugu are the same community. Then I think that these functions help to show the difference that exists. Then there is a visibility. Others get to know about our traditions.]

The desire to highlight the distinction reflects an effort to emphasise and safeguard one's identity, which often gets entangled with another within the complex framework of a multilingual context. This concept resonates with Jones (2015), who illustrates how the confusion of one's identity can evoke a sense of marginalisation.

During the first interview carried out with Ashna, she also points out the same “problem”, as she puts it, and explains how she too takes the same pain of clarifying the difference to others:

Dan Moris osi ena enn lot problem kot dimounn panse Telugu ou Tamil enn sel sa. Alor lerla mo dir zot. Ena enn diferans.

Sa afekte ou?

Wi mo ena mo idantite kouma enn Telugu. Lerla mo dir zot pa vedir kan mo met lakord zonn ou 7 kari ek bann-la si met enn sel sa. (laughing). Bann ritiel eksetera komin. South Indian. Me mo explik zot pou partaz inpe ek zot si konn inpe. Bann-la si kirye lerla. Se bann zafer parfwa nouvo pou sertin. Mo feel proud pou explik zot...

[In Mauritius, another problem is that people think that Telugu and Tamil are one. Then I tell them the difference.

Does this behaviour of theirs affect you?

Yes. My identity as a Telugu. Then I tell them when I put yellow thread (Tamil and Telugu married women wear that.) or I eat seven curries (south Indian traditional dish for both Telugus and Tamilians) does not mean I am Tamil. The rituals are similar, south Indian. However, I share and explain them. Even they are curious to know. For some people it is something new. I feel proud to share information about my culture.]

The two extracts above show the similarities in the experiences of the two participants in terms of identity within the multilingual Mauritian context. Both of them feel it is important to make others aware of the differences between the two ethnic groups, and in so doing, they are actually foregrounding their sense of belongingness and show their disagreement as their identities are mistaken (Jones, 2005). Therefore, the involvement of the Telugu teachers in socio-cultural spaces can also be interpreted as involvement in a space where they are able to live their identities.

Conversely, it is also valuable to examine the participants' sentiments toward Mauritian culture, where Kreol serves as the unifying language of the nation. Despite the fact that the two participants communicate in the Kreol language and practice the Mauritian culture, they claim that Kreol is spoken by everyone and does not evoke the ancestral feeling of belongingness like Telugu does. However, this same view is contrasted by the newer generation of Telugu teachers (as discussed later in section 8.6), where both participants state that, while studying in India, they missed the Mauritian culture, its *sega*, the *dholl puri* and the Kreol language, which are features of their identity. Sanjhiana even affirms that listening to someone speak Kreol language was something she enjoyed while studying in India. The aforementioned findings underscore that the roles languages play are heavily contextual, shaping the sense of belongingness and yielding subjective experiences that vary among individuals.

7.7 Language and Culture Maintenance, Far From the Native Land

While in the next chapter I discuss how globalisation has led to the meeting of the diasporic and native worlds, in this section I demonstrate how Telugu teachers like Ashna, Devi or Jack are ambassadors of the Telugu language and culture, teaching a language and culture of a

foreign land bequeathed to them, despite the fact that they have never been to that land (India). Their experiences are lived through reconstructions and re-enactments, which I present in this section.

It has been discussed that the language is not spoken in the context, except for some rare spaces within the home environment or at ethno-religious or socio-cultural spaces (Bissoonaath, 2010). Compared to India where the language is the mother tongue and used for communication, in the Mauritian context, it has identity functions (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022). Therefore, the different socio-cultural bodies engage in the reconstruction and re-enactment of practices so that the language and culture can exist (Eisenlohr, 2010), which Claveyrolas (2017) explains as a reinvention of Indianness. As Devi explains in the third interview, language and culture are interlinked and the two are complementary.

Me nou pa koz li. Alor ki tradision ek kiltir li pratike. Nou pratik li lamezon. Me sa de-la zot bien link. Si pena tradision, pena langaz ou pena motivasion ou baz pou al aprann enn langaz. Alor nou pa bizin les tradision-la mor si nou anvi prezerve langaz-la ek vis-versa.

[but we do not speak it. But the tradition and culture we practise it. At home. The 2 are linked. If there is no culture, there is no language or no motivation to learn a language. So, we should not let the tradition die if we want to preserve the language and vice versa.]

The observation that language and culture are interconnected, as elucidated by Devi, aligns with the essentialist approach proposed by Fishman (2007). Devi's experiences illustrate how her perspective is shaped in a manner that incorporates culture at its core. She also points out that if any of the two is not preserved, it will lead to their erasure, as discussed by Calvet (2010) who notes that language loss and culture loss are correlated. Hence, it's evident how the participant, acting as a guardian of the language, opposes the assimilation of language and culture, echoing the sentiment that "history is the graveyard of cultures" (Edwards, 2001:235), and there is the urge and desire to stick to and maintain what remains of what once existed. This concept aligns with ecological theories, where each unit that once existed in the environment is valuable and its loss means ecological destruction (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Skuttnab Kangas, 2000; May, 2004).

Nonetheless, while Devi asserts the interconnectedness of language and culture, an argument could be made that this perspective is learned through her role as an AL teacher and represents her personal viewpoint. It may be seen as an essentialist stance aimed at advocating for the Telugu language and culture. She mentions that there is no culture if there is no language, but this has been denied by researchers like May (2003) and Mesthrie (2007). The latter example illustrates how Indian cultures in the South African context endure even as their corresponding languages have been assimilated. This pattern is also observed for the Telugu language in Mauritius, where, as previously mentioned, the language is predominantly spoken among proficient individuals like teachers. However, the Telugu culture is embraced by a significant portion of the Telugu community, even those who do not speak or understand the language.

Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the practice of culture has evolved to the extent that certain cultural aspects are integrated and observed without necessarily being recognised as overt displays of cultural adherence. When questioned about everyone wearing a traditional Indian outfit at the wedding in interview three, Jack points out that though they are Indian traditional clothes, people wear them because they have become a trend, as stated below in the third interview held with him.

Bon sari nou kapav dir, nou pa kapav dir li enn, li sir ki li enn abiyman tradisionel...wi...bann anset ti pe servi li pou al dan lapriyer, dan bann fonksion lot-lot, me aster li enn trend...li enn trend...li enn trend, sari se bann personn Indou ki li pe servi me aster nou gagn Katolik, Mizilmann, ki li bann Europeen...wi...bann Ameriken, zot pe abiy an sari zot pe al dan enn fonksion, li pena okenn limit, li pena rien avoir avec....kiltir, tradision... se zis enn trend ki li fashionable

[Well saree we can say that, not can say, but it is surely a traditional wear. Yeas our ancestors used to wear it in prayers, functions etc. But now it is a trend, today not only Hindus wear saree, but we also have Catholics, Muslims. Europeans, Americans, they all wear sarees in functions. So, there is no limit and it does not have to do with culture or tradition. For me it is only a trend and fashion.]

Hence, according to Jack's perspective, he holds the belief that the dress code is merely a matter of fashion. He asserts that individuals who don Indian attire on such occasions do not necessarily do so to convey any particular cultural significance. However, this perspective

stands in stark contrast to Devi's viewpoint. Delving into Devi's experiences, it becomes evident that the approach to the dress code carries deeper significance for some individuals. Devi's perspective sharply diverges from Jack's, as she selects her attire based on the context, where the dress code holds a distinct relevance. When she is asked to comment on her dress code in the third interview during the literary contest, she explains that she feels at ease with it, and secondly:

Mo trouv li pli respektab, pli relevant. Mo enn profeser Telugu alor mo abiy mwa bien. Kouma zordi mo'nn vinn dan enn konpetision Telugu. Mo pa pou met enn jinn ou enn t-shirt. Mo met moi bien. Mo penser 1 churidar li pli approprier. Sak plas ena so habiyman ki mo trouve aproprie.

[I find it more respectable, more relevant. I am a teacher of Telugu. So, I dress myself properly. For instance, today I have come to a competition, so, I will not wear a jean or a T shirt. I dress myself well and I feel a churidar is more appropriate. Each place has a dress code which I find appropriate.]

This underscores the fact that culture and life experiences play a pivotal role in shaping social behaviour, a phenomenon that differs from person to person. As someone actively engaged in conserving and advancing Telugu language and culture, the dress code at an event centred around promoting Telugu language holds immense significance for Devi. This aligns with the findings of Tyler (2011), who posit that donning traditional attire serves as a means to emphasise one's culture and identity.

The Telugu culture is also present in the eating habits of the participants, especially in their home environment. This is portrayed by Ashna, during the second interview held at her place.

Manze. Fason kwi. Get dan enn maryaz ou lakaz, mo trouv mwa kwi plis seki Aziatik manze. Sak semenn mo bizin kwi mo Sambar. Ou enn mwa enn fwa mo kwi mo Pulihora. Pou enn wi, enn non mo kwi Jawa, Palkayalu. Bann trik koumsa. Get ennta dimounn dir mwa manze sinwa leze. Mil mo sey aplik li mo pas reisi. Mo rod mo diri, mo Sambar. Mem si gagn acidit, mo 7 kari. Li sinboliz inpe Teluguness.

[Food. The way of cooking. At a wedding or at home, I cook more of Asian food. Every week I need my sambar. Once a month I cook my pulihora. Whenever I feel I cook jawa, palkayalu. Things like this. See many people tell me Chinese food is

light. I keep on trying, but cannot get used to it. I need my rice, sambar, or 7 curries. Even though I get acidity. I associate it with Telugu.]

Therefore, it can be noted that the Telugu teachers are not only engaged in enhancing the academic level and proficiency of the language, but also the culture they themselves embody to a huge extent. While this aligns with Ho's (2009) discussions in Chapter 2, which argue that individuals closely associated with a specific language, particularly ALs, are also closely connected to its culture (Liddicoat, 2013), it doesn't disregard the viewpoints presented by May (2003) and Mesthrie (2007) on the separability of language and culture. This cultural pattern of living can also be observed among those who embrace the Telugu culture while not necessarily engaging with the language (Sokappadu, 2017).

7.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the experiences of mid-generation teachers of Telugu through the cases of Devi, Ashna, and Jack. Through these three case studies, I was able to bring out several elements and themes like the deemed challenges experienced by the teachers, the main contents and strategies adopted by the Telugu teacher, the experiences of belonging to a minority group, and the involvement of teachers in the re-enactment process. It has been noted how, while the AL teachers benefit from favourable language policies and measures, they strive hard for language maintenance, nevertheless at times expecting too much. The next chapter deals with an analysis of the phenomenon through the case studies of two young teachers who have studied during three years in Andhra Pradesh, India, where Telugu is the native language.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS OF TELUGU TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES THROUGH YOUNGER GENERATION TEACHERS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter marks the third of a series of three chapters that explore the experiences of Telugu teachers in the multilingual context of Mauritius through six case studies. The chapter focuses on the case studies of two female participants: Sanjhiana and Kriti, aged 30 and 29, respectively. The common factor between these two participants is the fact that both, who are the 5th generation of descendants of Indian indentured labourers, belong to the youngest generation currently teaching at secondary level. They are also the product of the same educational system. Both are holders of a master's degree, which is a feature common only among those Telugu teachers in their generation. Another shared characteristic is that both have pursued their undergraduate and master's degrees in Andhra Pradesh, where Telugu is the native language. Through these two cases, I unpack how, over generations, the social fabric of the multilingual context has constructed unique identities where the shift is swift.

8.1 Overview

This chapter consists of the following sections. After the introduction (section 8.0) and the overview (section 8.1), section 8.2 gives an overall portrait of the two participants. Section 8.3 focuses on the native land of Andhra Pradesh which has had a major impact on the experiences of Telugu teachers who have studied there. Section 8.4 unpacks the theme of 'ancestral heritage', while section 8.5 focuses on education policies and the educational path of the youngest generation of teachers. In section 8.6, I discuss how Telugu teachers live multiple identities in the context influenced by spaces. Section 8.7 explores how globalisation has helped in the meeting of the two worlds, that is the reunification of some teachers who are Indian descendants in Mauritius with India. The chapter concludes with section 8.8.

8.2 Portraits of Sanjhiana and Kriti

After conducting three separate meetings with each of the two participants spanning a four-month period, I meticulously crafted their profiles using data extracted from the interviews along with personal observations. This section serves to introduce the participants to the reader, highlighting key characteristics that are instrumental in understanding their experiences. As elucidated in the methodology chapter, the three interviews were conducted in distinct settings, and the next sub-sections deal with different encounters with each of the two participants.

8.2.1 First encounter with Sanjhiana

Sanjhiana was eager to get involved in this research study as she is passionate about the language and her profession. Nearly six months after having participated in the survey, she was informed about the semi-structured interview in which she was keen to participate. The meeting took place after working hours. Right from the outset, her involvement could be noted in her voice. She expressed herself freely and was very much at ease with the topics discussed, which focused mainly on her becoming and being a teacher of Telugu.

8.2.2 Sanjhiana at home

One month after the initial meeting, the second interview occurred. Sanjhiana, dressed in casual attire, greeted me warmly at her residence, where she has resided with her parents since her childhood. She was still eager to express herself about details she missed in the previous interview. The interview focused on her home environment, as well as the locality where she has been engaged in Telugu activities since her childhood. This allowed for an investigation into the influences of her domestic surroundings on her overall experiences.

8.2.3 Sanjhiana at her baby's cradling ceremony

The third interview with Sanjhiana occurred after approximately one year. By this time, she had already gotten married, and the interview was conducted during her baby's cradling ceremony – a significant event in Telugu culture that continues to be upheld by a majority of Telugu individuals in Mauritius (Nirsimloo-Anenden, 1982; Prabhakaran, 1991; Bhaskar 2017; Sokappadu, 2023). During this interview, she fervently elaborated on the cradle ceremony and the rituals that are traditionally carried out in accordance with the practices passed down by her ancestors. Having witnessed these customs through the experiences of her elder sisters, she perceives these rites as symbols of an ancestral legacy that has been handed down across generations. With her recent childbirth, she takes immense pride in her role in

continuing these traditions and feels a deep attachment to the customs and practices. It is to be noted that she usually uses the Telugu words for each of the rites and translates it, as if being informative about the rites. Through this interview, I was able to explore her experiences as a Telugu teacher in a socio-cultural setting.

8.2.4 First interview with Kriti

The initial encounter with Kriti took place at her workplace. She conveyed her gratitude for being involved in the study and affirmed her enthusiasm for supporting and cooperating with it. As with all participants, the primary objective of the first interview was to delve into Kriti's educational and professional journey, as well as her encounters as a Telugu teacher.

8.2.5 Kriti at home

Three weeks after the first interview, following my request, I was invited to Kriti's place for the second interview. She had prepared an Indian traditional dinner on that occasion, a family tradition that she follows whenever someone, a relative or someone close, visits her place.

8.2.6 Kriti celebrating the *Venkateshwara Pooja*

The third meeting with Kriti occurred during a *Venkateshwara Pooja* hosted at Kriti's place. The *Venkateshwara Pooja* is a prayer organised yearly, where people of the Telugu ethnic group fast for 40 days (See Section 1.4.3). The *mandirams* (Telugu temples) conduct daily prayers with the logistical support provided by *the National Task Force*.¹⁷ This assistance is extended to the Telugu community for their prayers, akin to the support granted to other communities for their respective celebrations. This means that the celebrations are also covered by the media, especially the national radio/television channel.

Kriti is well-informed about these arrangements and frequently takes an active role in the organisation. On an individual level, certain families meticulously arrange these prayers once during the forty-day period and extend invitations to their immediate relatives. Kriti stands as an example of an individual who has extended invitations to her relatives and neighbours to partake in this celebration. Being a Telugu teacher, and involved in socio-cultural activities, was a key feature spotted and worth exploring. This interview therefore helped provide insight into the socio-cultural undertakings of Telugu teachers.

¹⁷ In order to promote multiculturalism in the country, the government grants financial assistance to each ethnic community for the celebrations of different festivals or prayers at National level. The Telugu community receives this assistance for the celebration of the *Venkateshwara Pooja*.

8.3 Andhra Pradesh, the Native Land

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Telugus in Mauritius originate from the state of Andhra Pradesh (now bifurcated into two states, namely Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) and were brought to the island through indenture. Most of them did not regain their native land (Prabhakaran, 1991; Teelock, 2009). Thus, over the generations, there has been a strong desire nurtured by the descendants of the immigrants to visit the native land of the ancestors. As discussed previously, in the conception of ALs, the land or place from where the ancestors originated is of major significance. In numerous instances, the desire to re-establish a connection with the ancestral homeland is realised through visits to India as tourists. This is exemplified by participants such as Nanda, as well as through the plans of individuals like Jack. In this section, I analyse how Sanjhiana and Kriti experience having lived in that native setting of their ancestors for three years.

8.3.1 Access to the native language

Kriti and Sanjhiana demonstrate a feeling of pride to have studied in Andhra Pradesh. A degree in Telugu is available in many South Indian cities, but the speciality of studying in Andhra Pradesh is that Telugu is the language spoken in that state. The majority of the 80 million speakers of Telugu are from the state of Andhra Pradesh, with approximately 3 million immigrants scattered in countries like Australia, the UK, the USA, Malaysia, and South Africa (Bhaskar, 2017).

As highlighted in Chapter 1, Mauritius has a negligible Telugu speaking population out of the 4% of the population that forms the Telugu ethnic community. Studying Telugu in its native land undoubtedly came as a major element of personal development to the two participants, for it was the first time that they were in contact with the language in its original birthplace. Both Kriti and Sanjhiana are now exceedingly fluent in the language, a proficiency they attribute to their previous residence in Andhra Pradesh. One example that Sanjhiana puts forward during the first interview is the use of vocabulary itself. When she was asked about her encounter with the language in Andhra Pradesh, she stated:

Here they have the tendency to take everything by the literal meaning.

That is how I studied here. But when I went to India, I realised that I need to adapt to the situation there, else I become obsolete.

So, do you find a difference among those who studied in India and

those who did not?

Yes of course. For instance, when I was in India, I told a teacher that I am sick (meaning extremely sick) instead of saying I was not well. They thought that I got an incurable disease. Here, that is the way we speak. We do not use spoken language. It's literal. We do not use expressions in their context.

This statement from Sanjhiana demonstrates how her second language learning experiences influenced the acquisition of the Telugu language (Kaushanskaya, 2011). Her new encounters in the language's native land transformed her prior interactions with the language. This process of relearning unfolded rapidly, taking place during a period when she was still in the process of learning the language and had three full years ahead to spend there. It's evident that she is immensely grateful for the opportunity to study in the language's original homeland, allowing her to grasp the language in its authentic context. She also recounted the story of her landlord's mother, who exclusively spoke a variety of Telugu slang, prompting her to realise the distinctiveness of that particular language variation (Krishnamurthy, 2009).

Research in the field of Telugu linguistics have shown that there is a wide variety of regional dialects which are dynamic (Shivaprasad, 2020). Both Sanjhiana and Kriti have been confronted by a new setting, where the language spoken is an evolved one. Moreover, Sanjhiana's use of the term "obsolete" to describe the challenge of keeping pace with language changes further underscores her experience of the linguistic situation in the Mauritian context. Prabhakaran (1997), on the other hand, illustrates the evolution of spoken Telugu in the South African context, whereas in Mauritius, the spoken rendition of the language has been entirely assimilated by the dominant languages. While numerous studies have concentrated on establishing a social context to facilitate second language acquisition (Fishman, 2004; Elmes, 2013; Bahrani, 2014) – a process akin to the one the participants underwent in Mauritius – the experiences of both Sanjhiana and Kriti in India are distinctive. They find themselves adapting their language proficiency, which they acquired through education, to the language's *authentic* context.

The authentic context is also one that is dynamic, while the context in Mauritius is one that has been preserved as ancestral and has remained static. This is evident in the ways greetings are conducted. Kriti recounts a similar experience in the first interview held at her workplace, where she mentions the distinction between the Telugu she learned and the Telugu spoken.

Telugu ki bann-la koze laba lamem ti bien diferan de seki nou nou finn aprann. Nou nou finn aprann Telugu ki dan liv. Nou pa koz li alor bann-la koz Telugu parlan. Par exanp, kan nou al dan klas isi nou pou dir “Namaskaramandi Guruvugaaru”, laba langaz-la inn evolue e nou pa dir sa. Zot lot langaz ti diferan. Bon sa lingwistik. Parey kouma Angle ek Franse si ekrir ek koze pa parey

[Telugu spoken there is not the same that we have learned. We have learned in books and not the spoken language. They speak the spoken language. For example, when we go to class, we say “Hello dear teacher” (Mauritian way – oldish one with lots of respect) there they have evolved and will not say that. [“hello dear teacher” in the orthodox way].

Thus, though she has studied the language for 13 years, she comes across a new variety of the language, just like it was the case for Sanjhiana. This brings to the fore the linguistic concept of “Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills” (BICS) and “Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency” (CALP), whereby there is a difference between language acquisition used for social interaction and for academic purpose respectively (Cummins, 2009). It's only through her time in Hyderabad that Kriti comes to realize she hasn't acquired the range of varieties and registers of the language used in that specific context. Given that the language is taught within the curriculum, learners are typically introduced to the standard and normative variety of the language (Cummins, 2009). This also raises the question about the variety of languages in the syllabus, in relation to the teaching of a non-mother tongue. In a context like Mauritius, where languages are taught for preservation purposes and not communicative, how do teachers like Sanjhiana and Kriti experience teaching the variety which they are aware is not a mother tongue in the native context?

It's worth noting that in its native context of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, covering an area of 270,000 square kilometres – comparable to half the size of France or twice the size of England – there are approximately 72 million speakers who use over 20 distinct language varieties. What should Telugu teachers focus on in the Mauritian context: the genuine, lively, authentic Telugu spoken within the Telugu community in Andhra Pradesh, or the refined language depicted in textbooks? It is important to highlight that both teachers mention the importance of imparting their learners with an awareness of the various language varieties and registers that exist. These distinctions become evident when students are exposed to the spoken language through media or movies.

Through these circumstances, I got the opportunity to explore and analyse how the two participants cope with the new linguistic circumstances they face. In the case of Sanjhiana, she points out how she disciplined herself to speak only in Telugu among her friends, who in most of the cases, being multilinguals, shifted to the English language knowing that she was a foreigner and more at ease with English. This brings out the concept of immersion in a language or culture where the process of engagement leads to effective outcomes and competencies such as culture and language awareness (Onusu, 2021). Onusu (2021) focuses on cultural exchange programmes while conceptualising cultural immersion, and this can be noted in the present case study where the Indian Council for Cultural Exchange (ICCR) programme leads to strong transformation in the language learning patterns of Sanjhiana.

Furthermore, studies have shown the relationship that exists between cultural immersion participation and the process of identity transformation (Onusu, 2021). These experiences have played a significant role in shaping Sanjhiana's career as a teacher, as her journey aligns closely with her initial expectations. She asserts that her purpose in embarking on this journey was to establish herself as a language professional, and she was determined to achieve mastery regardless of the challenges she encountered. This reveals a strong desire to become proficient in Telugu and a competent Telugu teacher. Whatever she is today is not the product of haphazard events, but rather she toiled to become a Telugu teacher. Her case can thus be contrasted to the different cases in the previous chapters regarding the journey to becoming a Telugu teacher.

On the other hand, Kriti undergoes a phase referred to as 'The Silent Period' in the process of language acquisition. During this period, she refrains from actively using the language but gradually becomes more engaged in the process of acquiring it (Bligh, 2014). Entering the linguistic environment as an outsider and essentially a newcomer, Kriti carried her own apprehensions about speaking accurately and the possibility of facing ridicule. This sentiment is substantiated by her remarks during her initial interview at her workplace:

it took me a while to speak. Koumansman mo ti pe ezite inpe. Mo ser ti fini dir mwa pa koze, bann-la pou riy twa. Lerla avek letan mo 'nn fini gagn langaz-la. Nou kapav koz Telugu e ansam avek English. Sa se enn experyans inik an term aprantisaz lang-la.

[It took me a while to speak. At the start, I used to hesitate a little. My sister had told me not to speak as others would bully me. Then with time, I picked up that

variety of the language. I can speak Telugu mixed with English. That's a unique experience in terms of language learning.]

It took her some time to adapt to the setting. Moreover, she elaborates on her close friendships with locals and the necessity to grasp the local slang in order to actively engage in humour and conversations. This holds importance as it underscores another instance of an individual immersing themselves in the natural, local context of the language, employing a range of linguistic expressions unfamiliar to a language learner in Mauritius. However, Kriti underwent acculturation into the community due to her purposeful presence – pursuing her advanced studies in the language. When queried about the influence of language exposure in Hyderabad on her personal growth during her initial interview, Kriti articulates that:

Wi kan mo an klas, mo explik bann zelev mo experyans laba, kouma nou koz Telugu laba. Sa exposure-la inn ed mwa pou amelior momem bokou. Me li osi vre ki being a Telugu Teacher pa vedir koz Telugu bien, me ansegn langaz-la. Mo exposure laba inn fer mwa vinn bon lor koz langaz-la, mo 'nn epanwi momem. Mo pli alez.

[When I am in the classroom today, I explain to students my experience there, how we speak the language. That exposure has helped me to improve my language skills. But it is also true that being a Telugu teacher does not mean speaking the language eloquently, but teaching it. However, that exposure made me a good speaker, I grew up. I am at ease.]

The above statement demonstrates how Kriti is proud of her exposure in Andhra Pradesh. She is conscious of the value of exposure, which enhances proficiency and fluency. Her experiences also give her a feeling of comfort in the language, and thus ‘happiness’, self-esteem for her competency in the language, which has helped her in her linguistic development and the shaping of her professional identities (Dewhirst, 2022). This helps explore how she mediates between the use and study of the language. She affirms that she is at ease with the language. Yet, she also makes a claim that not all good teachers of Telugu are eloquent in the language, which resonates to the Mauritian multilingual context where the spoken language is not mastered, even among the teacher community, despite the latter being good teachers of the language. This brings out the difficulty of learning a foreign/ancestral language in the context, which is often desired by many, but yet a difficult task (Poloogadoo, 2020). Kriti's reflection also brings up the question of what it means to be a ‘good language teacher’, as she believes

that a good teacher needs to be one who can efficiently transmit linguistic aspects of the language to the learners.

Another element that needs to be pointed out is the association between language, culture, and religion. While in Mauritius, languages are ethnic markers; Telugu as a mother tongue in its native land is used by individuals from all ethnic groups. For instance, in the first interview held with Kriti, when questioned about the link between language and culture, she explains the following:

Mo ti bien surprised. lefe ki ena bann muslims ki koz Telugu. Lerla mo 'nn konpran kouma kontext diferan isi ek laba. Mo 'nn konpran ki Telugu li zis enn langaz. Li pa nesaser pou swiv kiltir-la ler li pe aprann langaz-la. Sa inn fer mwa aprann ki ena enn diferans ant langaz ek kiltir.

[I was very much surprised with the fact that Muslims were speaking Telugu. Then I understood that the context was different there compared to here. I understood that Telugu is just a language and it is not necessary to follow the culture to speak the language. This made me realise the difference between language and culture.]

She therefore realised that Telugu was the mother tongue in that particular context and used by everyone. She was masked by her personal experiences, for she believed that languages are attached to religion and that was why she was surprised to find Muslim ladies speaking Telugu on her arrival in Hyderabad, the capital city of Andhra Pradesh. The juxtaposition of language, ethnicity, and religion in Mauritius, as compared to life in Andhra Pradesh, is readily apparent. Kriti's accumulated experiences have significantly contributed to her personal development and the comprehensive moulding of her identity as a Telugu teacher. This is precisely why she assumes a distinct approach to her role as a Telugu teacher within the school environment. Despite hailing from a family anchored in Telugu culture and traditions, she affirms that at school, she only teaches language. Examining her case and delving into her background reveals a noteworthy observation: Kriti's involvement in cultural and ethnic customs related to Telugu was more pronounced than her proficiency in speaking the language itself. She confirms that her conversational fluency in Telugu primarily developed during her time in Hyderabad. Therefore, through Kriti, the arguments expressed by May (2004) regarding the detachability of ethnicity and language can be analysed.

Another feature in Andhra Pradesh to which the Telugus in Mauritius are acquainted is the Telugu movie industry – the Tollywood – which forms part of the local culture there. Both

Sanjhiana and Kriti, like other Telugu teachers in Mauritius, have been watching those movies broadcasted in Mauritius on Mondays in order to improve their language skills since their childhood. As discussed in Chapter 1, Telugu movies aired in Mauritius have served as a consistent source of exposure to authentic spoken Telugu for numerous years (Bhaskar, 2007). During their time in Hyderabad, the two participants had the privilege of regularly watching the majority of newly released movies. While a form of local entertainment, these movies also served as an additional resource for enhancing their language proficiency. Sanjhiana mentions how memorable her first movie experience in Hyderabad was.

Kan premier fwa mo ti alle Imax pou guet Magadheera, mo ti gane frisson. Aprer sa nu'nn alle get buku fim Telugu. Ici nou ti p guetter l foi par semen pou apran langaz la. Laba li pliss pou entertainment. Mai pou nou, li ti toujours l fasson apran lanagaz la.

[When I went to Imax for the first time to watch Magadheera, I had goosebumps. After that, we had been to many Telugu movies. Here we used to watch them once per week to learn the language. There, it was more of entertainment. But for us, it was still a way of learning the language.]

All these linguistic experiences have shaped the experiences of these two participants. Sanjhiana states that she often evokes these experiences in class for there are often comprehension passages or subject contents which are directly related to experiences she has lived in the land from where the language originates. Whenever she has her Telugu HSC classes, she has a lot of original real first-hand experiences to share, something which she says would be impossible had she not been to India. Therefore, her experiences in India have significantly influenced her teaching practices in Mauritius. As discussed in Chapter 7, it becomes evident that educators who haven't physically been to Andhra Pradesh or Telangana rely on media exposure and recreations of experiences to achieve a similar effect.

8.3.2 ICCR – Diaspora-access available through the ICCR-cultural exchange

Operating under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India, the ICCR was founded in 1950 by India's first Education Minister. The ICCR's primary aims encompass actively engaging in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations. Its purpose extends to fostering and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries, facilitating cultural exchanges with other countries and people, and fostering relations with nations (ICCR, 2022). Mauritius,

having a preferential relationship with India (and “over-romanticised” as used in Chapter 1), it has, since the foundation of the ICCR, benefited from the ICCR in terms of scholarships offered to around 80 countries every year (ICCR, 2022). During the 2010s, for instance, more than 100 scholarships were offered yearly to students from Mauritius for tertiary education (MOE, 2020). Among the scholarships offered, it is to be noted that there are some slots reserved for the study of Indian languages (MOE, 2020). For example, the student who comes out first in Mauritius at the HSC in every Indian optional/ancestral languages automatically has a reserved slot to avail the ICCR scholarship (MOE, 2020).

In the case of Telugu in Mauritius, these scholarships have played a significant role in the language revitalisation process over the years, especially tertiary education in Telugu. All the six tertiary faculty members of the MGI have studied in India through the ICCR (MGI, 2021). At secondary level, among the participants in the preliminary phase of this research, for instance, 15 of the 34 respondents have studied in India, through the ICCR, including Sanjhiana and Kriti. It is worth noting that all individuals among them who have pursued Telugu studies in India have done so through the ICCR programme. This implies that no individual has independently financed their own education in Telugu in India; rather, they have benefited from the ICCR's educational initiatives. Hence, the assistance provided by the Indian government via the ICCR for the preservation of Indian languages, both in Mauritius and other Indian diasporic nations such as Malaysia, Fiji, Suriname, Kenya, and more, holds significant importance.

The above element can be analysed through the experiences of the two participants. Firstly, when I inquired, in the first interview, about how and why Sanjhiana ended up studying in Hyderabad, she points out:

*Ok donc seki mo konpran, li enn tipe sirkonstans ki 'nn fer twa vinn enn profeser Telugu. Twa **ki'nn fer 1 aplikasion labours ou bien finn donn twa li?***

Mo ti apply aköz mo ti kone mo 'nn travay bien ek mo kapav gagn li. Mo ti klase segon dan HSC.

Eski to ti ena posibilite al etidie enn lot pei ou enn lot landrwa?

Non. Dabor finans zwe enn rol e answit depi tipti bokou ti fini met dan mo latet ki mo pou al 'Andhra' pou fer Telugu. Andhra parski se laba ki 'maison-mère'

To pe dir maison-mère. Setadir native land. Eski to ena kit nosion de sa plas-la avan to ale? To ti ena kit latasman avan ale?

Wi. Se plas nou bann anset sorti e tou seki inn al aprann Telugu inn al laba mem atraver ICCR. Plas-la nou inn trouv li dan bann fim avek bann seki lezot inn rakonte, bann ansien zelev ek bann tourist.

Dan segonder kan to ti pe fer size-la, to ti kone enn zour to pou gagn labours?

Mo ti touletan anvi gagn labours-la. Me se apre Form 5, kan mo 'nn sorti premie dan Telugu o-nivo nasional ki mo 'nn gagn plis konfians ki mo pou gagn labours.

[Ok so it is more or less circumstances that guided your trajectory? Did you apply for the scholarship or you just got it?

I applied for it as I was ranked 2nd at HSC level and knew I could get it

Did you have the possibility to study elsewhere or in another country?

No, firstly finance plays a major role. And then since childhood I was aiming Andhra to study Telugu. Andhra because it is the native land.

You said native land. Did you have any notion of that place before going? Did you have any attachment?

Yes. It is the place from where our ancestors originate. All those who have been there through ICCR went there. We know the place through movies and other students or tourists.

When younger, while doing the subject, did you know that one day you would get a scholarship?

I always wanted to get that scholarship. But it was after the SC exams, when I came out first that I knew I had a good chance of getting the scholarship.]

In the case of Sanjhiana, the scholarship had three purposes. Firstly, it would allow her to study in a foreign country, an opportunity which she could not financially afford, which shows that good results in the language at the examinations led to a 'priceless' reward. This first purpose again demonstrates what May (2003) argues as the rational choices about ethnolinguistic alignment, whereby an individual's decision is solely on the basis of the social and material gain it will bring them. Secondly, it would be an opportunity to reunite with the land from where her ancestors came, a place she was acquainted with through movies or other Mauritians

who have been there. She refers to the place as “maison-mere” in the previous extract, which means that it is the source, and she wants to ‘*drink the water at the source*’. These expressions hold significance as they unveil the narrative of a teacher who has journeyed to her ancestral homeland – the origin of her present existence. Notably, she highlights the compelling force that led her to Hyderabad, a force rooted in her lifelong aspiration to study Telugu in the very place. This ambition was further illuminated when she achieved the top rank in Telugu during the SC examinations. Thus, the existence of the ICCR scholarship has made of Sanjhiana what she is today; she has benefited from the educational policies and has completed her studies and gained proficiency in Telugu, automatically becoming eligible to serve as a Telugu teacher and thus seizing the opportunity. Her passion and language loyalty makes her involved in most activities related to the language in the Telugu community, making her one of the pillars in her generation who is supporting and preserving the language in its multilingual context.

In Kriti's case, she was already familiar with the ICCR scholarship due to her elder sister having availed of it a year prior. Even though she didn't initially aspire to become a teacher, her strong performance in the HSC examinations provided her with the chance to receive cost-free higher education in India. This path aligned with her sister's experience. Moreover, she opted to pursue psychology, a field she held an affinity for. The following statement comes from the first interview held at her workplace.

Pou nou vinn profeser nou bizin ena enn Degree in Telugu at least. Alor si to pa ti pe aim li, ki'nn arive koumsa? To'nn terminn dan sa parkour-la.

Bon mo ena enn gran ser ki zis l an pli gran. Donk. Mo le ou mo pa mo 'nn swiv bokou so bann steps. Mo sœur très brillante. Alor mo ti ena enn gran presion. Mo bizin fer bien an form 5, mo bizin fer bien an HSC. E mo panse apre HSC, mo ser ti gagn labours pou al Andhra Pradesh. Mo paran inn ankouraz mwa si apply. Mo pa ti anvi vinn prof me avoka. Alor a lepok. Ti ena financial restriction sa lepok-la. Lerla mo 'nn sezi lokazion sa labours-la. Mo ti osi ena enn pansan pou la psychologie. Alor laba mo'nn gagn lokazion aprann Telugu joint avek Psychologie

[In order to be a Telugu teacher at secondary level, you need to have at least a degree in Telugu. So, if you did not aim it, then how come you ended doing a degree in Telugu?

... After HSC, my sister got a scholarship to study in Andhra Pradesh. So, a year later, even I was encouraged to follow the same pathway. I did not want to become a teacher but lawyer. At that time, we had financial constraints. Then I opted for applying the scholarship as I had done very well in Telugu. I had a liking for Psychology, and like my sister, I would get the opportunity to study Telugu joint with Psychology.]

Analysing the career path of these two participants, one can notice that the 'ICCR scholarship', it becomes evident that the 'ICCR scholarship' serves as a prominent external factor that has significantly shaped their journey towards becoming Telugu teachers. This scholarship has played a pivotal role in steering them onto their specific career path, reshaping their sense of belongingness. Both Kriti and Sanjhiana were already attached to the idea of belonging to a foreign culture, nurtured successively by their grandparents and parents.

However, their time spent in India has led their sense of belonging to take a new direction, as they now feel a stronger attachment to the native land where they spent a significant three years of their lives. Therefore, the experience of studying in India holds a deeper significance, symbolising the reunion of two distinct worlds. Both of them go further stating that they keep contact with Andhra Pradesh, demonstrating that a bridge/bond has been created between the two worlds. While Sanjhiana goes there every opportunity she gets, be it for professional reasons or for relaxation, Kriti affirms having "*left a piece of my heart there*". These words are significant for they show how the experience of having studied there have had an impact on her life.

In the third interview with Kriti, she confirms that she eventually came to realise her role as 'India's cultural agent'. She expresses contentment in fulfilling this role, given her strong attachment to the culture. This exemplifies the efficiency of the goals articulated by the ICCR, as stated at the outset of this section. The establishment of cultural relations between India and other nations, particularly those with diasporic communities, yields fruitful outcomes in the context of diaspora building. This holds true in the modern global era, as discussed by Srilata (2012) regarding Indian Ocean imperialism, and also in light of India's positioning as a global economic superpower. Therefore, it can be noted how geopolitics plays an important role in cultivating and maintaining an identity.

8.4 Ancestral Heritage

Ancestral heritage is another major element that influences the experiences of the Telugu teacher. As discussed in the preliminary chapters, the language itself can be categorised as one of the main elements legated by the ancestors, which has a symbolic value for the descendants.

8.4.1 The community and its practices as a heritage

The Telugu community in Mauritius exhibits a greater degree of engagement in cultural preservation as opposed to active language usage. This assertion finds support in the research of Brutt-Griffler (2005), who posits that one doesn't necessarily require language proficiency to be classified as a 'heritage speaker'. Deusen-Scholl (2003) characterises heritage language learners as “a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-speakers who may be generations removed, but who may feel culturally connected to a language” (p. 221). Being a minority group of people who were brought from the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, their language was quickly assimilated as they were dispersed in various estates in the island. For instance, as Sokappadu (2000) puts it, members of the same family were sent to different estates across the island, endangering the sense of family kingship.

However, in the different estates, being minorities, the different individuals hailing from the same port in India formed communities among themselves and the level of cohesiveness led to the preservation of cultural practices and values. These were taught to the descendants, despite the fact that the language transmission did not take place in most cases as there was the influence of other majority vernaculars such as Bhojpuri and Kreol. The transmission of cultures and values has been embedded in whatever the immigrants taught their children. For example, as showcased by Nanda in Chapter 6, he was educated in the intricacies of performing religious ceremonies, along with the associated teachings. In his childhood perspective, this was equated with the process of learning the Telugu language. Therefore, it is evident that the language's role in this context takes on a "passive" aspect.

Even in Sanjhiana's and Kriti's generation, their proximity to the community and culture is considerable. In both cases, when the home environment and locality background was analysed, the existence of the *mandiram* [Telugu Temple] in the locality and their involvement in it since childhood is noteworthy. Both stated that they had grown up spending much of their free time in activities held at the *mandiram*, which is an active agent in the promotion of religion, culture, and language. Furthermore, in their roles as teachers today, they persist in offering their expertise to children seeking to learn both the culture and language. In

this manner, akin to the observed trend among teachers from previous generations, they accord paramount significance to serving the Telugu community through social engagement. The subsequent excerpt is taken from an interview conducted during a socio-cultural event (her baby's cradling ceremony).

Kouma to viv sa ein? Antan ki enn profeser Telugu?

Mwa mo siper ador sa bann rituel-la, mo trouv sa interesan. Sa rann noumem pli interesan, inik, pli motive.

Noumem ki to pe rod dir?

Mo pe rod dir noumem, nou kominote.

Kominote Morisien?

Kominote Telugu. Mo fier pou swiv sa bann rites-la ki mo bann granparan inn lege. I am speaking their language.

[How do you experience all these, as a Telugu teacher?

I like these rituals and find them interesting. It renders us more unique and motivated.

Who are the 'us'?

I want to say our community.

The Mauritian community?

The Telugu Community. I am proud I am following these rites that my forefathers have legated. I am speaking their language.]

The above statement portrays how the rituals render her 'unique' and 'motivated'. It also underscores the transformation of language into an ethnocultural marker, with language functioning as a code or symbol rather than solely a means of communication. While such rituals are present across various religions, each religion has its unique way of execution. Even within Hinduism, these practices vary, influenced by the regional differences within India where they are performed. Therefore, she is so attached to the Telugu way of performing the rituals, which shows the importance of the traditions to her. She displays a remarkable 'loyalty' to the Telugu community, a community that has successfully preserved its 'uniqueness' (Fishman, 2007). This resonates with the Mauritian motto of "unity in diversity", wherein the individual 'uniqueness' of each group is acknowledged and celebrated. These factors shed light

on the origins of the participant's experiences, which she attributes to the Telugu language (functioning as a symbol in this context), as well as her motivation to excel in her role as an active advocate for the promotion of the Telugu language. Moreover, as Sanjhiana puts it, speaking the tongue of the forefathers is something that she feels proud doing as it is symbolic of the success of the forefathers' struggle to preserve the language and culture. These sentiments find support in the following excerpt by Ramsoondar (2018, p. 18):

In my goings to the kovils, I realised that I was the only one who did not have any cognisance of the Tamil language, but because of my father's involvement with the Quatre Carreaux kovil I unknowingly was in regular contact (with my elder brother and sister) with all Tamil traditions. The music, the saris, the colours and the feeling of home has amalgamated in my childhood to become part of my cultural roots.

Another cultural practice directly tied to the realm of teaching and encountered by Sanjhiana is the ceremony of "akshrabhyasam", a symbolic ritual marking the initiation into the process of learning alphabets. This is normally carried out by a priest, with the symbolical presence of a teacher. The following extract from the third interview held with Sanjhiana portrays her joy of participating in such cultural occasions, linked to her role as the teacher.

Ena Akshrabhyasam. Setadir zanford-la vinn dan enn laz kot aster li pou al ekrir. Dan enn Tambalam, enn Swami pou met diri. Lerla enn Pantulamma pou fer zanford-la ekrir so premie mo la.

Ou'nn deza asiste sa?

Wi, mo'nn deza. Momem mo ti fer Pantulamma-la. Bizin fer li ekrir Shreem.

Alor dan nou ka, se enn inisiasion a lang Telugu alor?

Wi Aksharaabhyasam. Vedir aprann alfabet. Setadir aster li pou al koumans ekrir.

A ki extent nou kapav dir lang Telugu involved?

Be li pe ekrir mem an Telugu. Se laprantisaz mem li bien sinbolik.

[we have the aksharabyasam (learning ceremony). Means when the child reaches such an age where he will start writing. In a plate, the priest will put some rice and a teacher will make the child write an alphabet.

Have you ever attended one?

Yes, I even acted as the teacher. You have to make the child write the syllable “Sheem”.

So, in our context it is an initiation to the Telugu language?

Yes. Aksharabyasam means learning of alphabet. So now he will start to write.

To what extent is Telugu language involved?

He is writing in Telugu. The learning process itself is symbolic.]

In the aforementioned passage, Sanjhiana elucidates that she assumed the role of the teacher during the ceremony. Taking on this role and guiding her student to symbolically write their first alphabet on a plate of rice constituted a distinctive experience for Sanjhiana. Such traditions are uncommon, given the gradual assimilation of cultures over time, and are typically observed in specific cultural or religious contexts, such as the *Mandiram*. The ensuing subsection delves into the concept of language as heritage.

8.4.2 The tongue as an ancestral heritage

As deliberated in Chapters 1 and 2, the roles of optional languages like Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, or Modern Chinese, taught as modern languages, do not inherently align with the objectives of teaching modern languages. These objectives primarily revolve around fostering proficiency for effective communication. Most of these languages do not function as native languages but as important markers of religious and ethnic identity (Rajah-Carrim, 2005; Sauzier-Uchida, 2008; Hollup, 2010). In fact, students opt for the languages, especially because of their attachment to the ancestral heritage as discussed in Chapter 5 while unpacking the phenomenon. Consequently, the promotion of the language serves more as a means of safeguarding what still endures or has been preserved. The analysis of the data gathered from Kriti and Sanjhiana distinctly illustrates that the Telugu language holds the status of ancestral heritage for them.

In the case of Kriti, the language was bequeathed to her father by the latter’s grandparents who could speak the language. Kriti’s father gained popularity both in the Telugu community and in the Mauritian society because of his involvement in the activities related to the language. Growing in such an environment, Kriti states that she developed a passion in what her father was doing and followed the same path. In fact, she has had a special connection with the language and its practice, through the *Ramabhajanams*, which was initiated by her father himself.

She is still engaged in singing devotional songs in Telugu, which her father and grandfather were famous for in the community. The following statement during the interview at her homeplace portrays how her father was involved in activities, leading to promoting ‘Teluguness’ both in terms of language and culture:

Papa was a writer; composer in Telugu language ek li ti p fer so la misik. A p pres 18 albums lin fer. Alor leten ki mo ti p share avek mo papa li ti p explik moi boku lor ramabhajanam. Kuma zot ti p assizer sante, organiser tousa. Lonten kan ban dimoune ti p santer ti ena 2 group. Sa v dir zot fer 1 debat entre zot dan la musik ek parol. Mo papa dir moi ramabhajanam si sipozar kumsa.li ti p xpliker kuma ban tata ti p santer. Ki ena dan ban santer la zot debate. Lin viv sa li. Ti ena a lot a lot about Telugu Culture. Li ti p montrer moi impe kuma li ecrir sante. Kuma li compose la misik. This was in a way. Mo capav dir mo ti p live sa Teluguness la boku avec mo papa. So lavi ti involved ladan

[Father was a writer, a composer in Telugu language and he created his music. He created around 18 albums. So, when I spent time with my father, he used to explain a lot to me about our culture, Ramabhajanam. How they used to sit and sing in the past, organising the Ramabhajanam, In the past, when people were singing, there were like two groups. They used to debate while singing in terms of music and lyrics. My father told me that even Ramabhajanam was supposed to be like that. He explained how grandfathers (old people) used to sing, the content of the songs. He lived it. He knew a lot about Telugu culture. He used to show me how to compose songs. This was in a way a little bit how I lived the Teluguness at home with my father. His life rotated around this.]

Kriti's heartfelt accounts of her father hold a special place in her heart, as she takes pride in his role in advancing the Telugu community. Research conducted by Rosowsky (2019) and Venkanah and Auleear-Owoodally (2023) further highlight how religious songs have a significant influence on the preservation of language and culture. Kriti has inherited some of the aspects for she also sings and points out that singing Telugu songs with her father has been one of the ways she lived her ‘Teluguness’. The above narrations somewhat echo the quote below from He (2010, p. 3), discussed in Chapter 2, while conceptualising an AL.

My home language is Chinese. My parents are from China. They praised me, scolded me, all in Chinese. ... My Chinese is really bad. I can't read and I can only write my

name. But when I think of Chinese, I think of my mom, dad, and home. It is the language of my home, and my heart (He, 2010, n.p.).

Thus, it can be noted how, while in the above paragraph Kriti explained about her proficiency in the language, in this paragraph, she demonstrates that the language has a “particular family relevance” (Fishman, 2001, p. 69). The annual *Venkateshwara pooja* that she organises, extending invitations to numerous individuals within her community, used to be conducted by her late father. This ritual holds a symbolic significance, representing the attachment she has inherited and continues to uphold, even in her father's absence. It can also be noted how the existence of the language in the family is a family heritage. She portrays the allegiance of her family lineage to Telugu culture through all the artefacts, such as the “kunda” [pot], “Tambaalam” [plate], and “ginne” [mug]¹⁸ present at her place, and how her father used the Telugu culture to keep the family as well as the society linked. It can be observed that she employs the Telugu terminology for these artefacts, which hold special and sacred significance. These items are used for very specific cultural occasions, just like in the case of Nanda as discussed in Chapter 6.

In the case of Sanjhiana, even though the language wasn't spoken at home, she managed to learn it due to the cultural environment in which it was practiced. Now, she aims to pass it down to the next generation in its spoken form. In the third interview, held after the baby cradling ceremony, she affirms that she will provide an environment where the child will be able to learn Telugu language both in its written and spoken form.

E twa eski to zānfan pou aprann koz Telugu?

Wi, biensir. La li ankor tipti. Me mo fini panse kan li pou vinn inpe gran, mo pou rod enn tutor pou online pou li kapav pick up langaz-la natirel. Koumsa li pa pou fer fas a bann difikilte ki nou, nou finn gagne kan nou ti aprann langaz-la. Apre lavantaz ki li, li pou ena se so bann parans konn langaz-la. Mwa mo paran pa ti konn langaz-la ditou.

[and what about you, will your child learn speak Telugu?

Yes, of course. She is still a newborn. But I have already thought about it. When she grows up a little I will look for an online tutor so that she can pick the natural language. Thus, she will not face the same issues that we have faced to learn the

¹⁸ These recipients mentioned are made of copper and represent a replica of those used by the Indian immigrants.

language. And the advantage she has is that her parents know Telugu. My parents did not know Telugu.]

Hence, the aforementioned sentiments expressed by Sanjhiana highlight that the language serves as an ancestral heritage, diligently handed down from one generation to the next. Sanjhiana, who has had the privilege of acquiring the language and now teaches it, takes her efforts in revitalisation a step further. Her intention is to instil the native spoken language in her own child, utilising the modern technologies at her disposal. She draws a parallel between her child's circumstances and her own, believing that her child is more fortunate due to having parents who possess language proficiency. This, she believes, will facilitate the child's language learning journey. This resonates with the recommendation put forth in the research conducted by Yuksel and Brooks (2017) on the preservation of endangered ancestral languages.

8.4.3 Awareness about assimilation and need for preservation

Sanjhiana and Kriti demonstrate an awareness about the evolution of the Telugu language in the context. Being Telugu teachers, they are agents of the language and have to promote it. However, their quest for preservation is not limited to the fact that they are employed in the sector; both also demonstrate a high level of belongingness. Again, the effort of the grandparents towards that end is highlighted, as portrayed by Sanjhiana when she describes the baby cradling ceremony in the third interview:

Isi li bokou pli sinp, pli sinbolik, inpe seki granparan inn reisi transmet ek inn kapav afford fer.

[Here it is simple, symbolic, somewhat what our grandparents have succeeded to transmit and what they have afforded.]

The above statement reflects a mixture of sorrow stemming from the incomplete transmission of authentic practices, juxtaposed with a sense of contentment derived from the partial success in passing them down. Telugu teachers like Sanjhiana and Kriti attribute the existence of the language in the context to their forefather's efforts who have started the language preservation process whose continuation they feel they need to carry out. Thus, when Telugu teachers like Sanjhiana and Kriti are delivering in the classroom, they feel that they have just more than the content of the language to transmit. In the first interview held with Sanjhiana, she tells that:

Alor, kan mo pe teach Telugu mwa, li pa zis al dan klas, fer mo klas kouma enn profeser Angle. Nou tou konn enn profeser so travay ki li ete exakteman. Li al dan klas, li swiv enn timetable. Mwa mo ena enn lot travay anplis ki sa. Mo sarye enn

pwa; nou granparan so kiltir avek mwa savedir anmemtan mo bizin montre li inpe nou kiltir aköz li pa expoze ditou avek kontext-la. Alor li vinn boukou plis ki sa. Ankouraz li al tanp, si li pa al tanp aköz kontext, montre li enn-de ti poem, lapriyer ki li kapav fer. Montrer li fer enn ti Muggu par exanp. Alor sa plis mo timetable.

[So when I teach Telugu, I just do not go to class and do my class like an English teacher. We all know the duties of a teacher... going to class, follow a timetable. I have another role in addition to that. I carry the burden of our forefather's culture with me. At the same time I have to teach a little bit about our culture as the student is not completely exposed to it. So, it is more than just teaching. Encouraging them to go to the temple where the context is available, teaching some poems, prayers, muggu¹⁹ as well as official curriculum.]

Sanjhiana's acknowledgment of carrying the weight of her forefathers' culture vividly underscores the potency and significance of her determination to impart not just the language, but also the associated culture. This brings a feeling of self-accomplishment and loyalty to the lineage, which echoes the initial survey where it was found that 61.7% chose this profession because they are teaching the forefather's language and contributing to language and culture maintenance. Thus, the conscience about the need for preservation is enacted in the teachings of the participants.

Sanjhiana is also someone who embodies the Telugu culture and traditions, which becomes apparent as she details her intentions for her wedding ceremony to follow the Indian traditional customs. This aligns with the observations made in the third interview with Jack from the preceding chapter. In Telugu families, wedding ceremonies are conducted in accordance with South Indian traditions, which have undergone some assimilation and alterations over time due to the multicultural nature of the country (Sokappadu, 2010). However, Sanjhiana emphasises that she had meticulously arranged her wedding to adhere to the traditional South Indian customs. Additionally, she had even journeyed to India specifically to shop for cultural items that were not accessible in Mauritius. She affirms being among the very few individuals who had her wedding card printed in both English and Telugu, setting an example for others to follow. Below is an extract from the third interview held with Sanjhiana.

Mo mariaz ti fer en consultant mo ban camarad ki dan lind. Ici finn ena boku sanzmanns dependan lor plisieurs factor avek le temp. Nu fin fer li as authentic as

¹⁹ Drawing on the floor as per Hindu traditions

possible. Monn mem deplase monn al lind pou aste ban zfer tradisyonel ki pena ici. Mem mo kart ti an Telugu enn parti ensam avek angle, enn lexemp pou ban lezot suiv.

[My wedding was performed consulting my friends in India. Here there has been a lot of changes over time depending on several factors. We have tried to do it as authentic as possible. I even went to India to do shopping of traditional items not available here. Even my invitation card was partly in Telugu, along with English, an example for others to follow.]

This brings a revitalisation of lost practices (Ravi, 2013), while fostering a sense of reunification with India (which I discuss in a later section). Through the revitalisation of cultural traditions, she narrates how she has become a role model, inspiring others to tread a similar path. In this endeavour, she has assumed the role of a Telugu teacher, dedicated to the preservation of a culture that has assimilated within the given context.

8.5 Education

In this section I analyse the cases of Sanjhiana and Kriti in terms of the educational system and policies. The educational system as well as access to education has improved over the years since the introduction of AL at school with different reforms implemented. The focus of my analysis revolves around two key aspects. Firstly, I examine how the educational system swiftly designs the career path of the two participants; and secondly, I highlight how these two participants have transcended the traditional boundaries of Telugu teaching by opting to pursue master's degrees in unrelated fields, earning a different status as Telugu teachers in their workplace.

8.5.1 The educational policies leading to becoming the Telugu teacher

During the period when Sanjhiana and Kriti were students (1996 to 2008), it is worth acknowledging that Telugu was offered as an optional AL subject in the majority of primary schools. Unlike Nanda or the trio of Devi, Ashna, and Jack, these two participants did not encounter the challenges associated with teacher availability. This phenomenon underscores the system's progress in achieving stability. Sanjhiana and Kriti were able to learn the language without encountering the obstacles that their predecessors, who were similarly interested in the language, had faced.

At secondary level, it is the same scenario: Though Sanjhiana states that she had frequent changes in teachers, it is to be noted that the Ministry of Education made sure that they had a teacher, and they were taught the language without major disruptions. When questioned about her journey to becoming a Telugu teacher, Sanjhiana, for instance, highlights that she acquired proficiency in Telugu during her primary schooling and continued to study the language throughout her secondary education until she completed the HSC examinations. Subsequently, she earned a scholarship to India. This concise summation of her career trajectory stands in stark contrast to the challenges encountered by participants in the preceding two chapters. It underscores the marked difference in experiences, attributing the smooth progression to the educational system – a departure from the difficulties faced by their predecessors.

In the case of Nanda, the subject of Telugu was often unavailable at the primary level in numerous schools. On the other hand, examining the experiences of Devi and Ashna reveals a recurring theme of the challenges they encountered at each stage of their education, where they had to grapple with difficulties in obtaining support for their Telugu education. The availability of teachers in the case of Sanjhiana and Kriti is symbolic of the stability in their AL education. Both were also attending the evening or Saturday classes as well, which shows how the teaching of the AL had known a significant improvement in terms of availability of teaching staff.

A stabilised language policy and a background where Telugu language and culture was valorised ensured that Kriti and Sanjhina continued with the Telugu option until the SC and then HSC. Sanjhiana was ranked 1st in Telugu at SC in the island while Kriti was ranked 5th in her batch, which meant that both continued with the subject at HSC level. Both Kriti and Sanjhina mentioned that they opted for a change in college after SC in order to join the MGI. As discussed, the MGI focused more on AL, and the fact that these two participants showed their interest to join that institution clearly demonstrates their attachment to Telugu (they would have to leave regional schools to travel to schools further away). Thus, it can be noted how the improvement of AL education through policies over the years, which costs the state a lot, has led to motivating the younger generation to learn the language, pushing them to a career in the field.

8.5.2 Role of teacher in maintenance

The role of the Telugu teacher has already been highlighted when discussing the topic of scarcity in the field in the previous chapter. In this section, I direct my attention to how the

gathered data has provided valuable insights into the participants' experiences with their own teachers. Both Sanjhiana and Kriti attribute their success in the language at primary and secondary level to dedicated teachers. Thus, it can be noted that the study of the language and success is dependent teachers, whose personality as well as pedagogical skills play a major role. Sanjhiana and Kriti are now emulating their teachers after embracing the profession for they have enjoyed positive experiences. The following is what Kriti says about his teacher:

*Mo prof se Guruvu ***. Li ti bien sever. Pli to bon, pli li pouss twa. To pa gagn drwa fer fot. Alor mo ti bien devwe anver sa size-la. It was definitely my favourite subject. Mo tiens li beaucoup a coeur...*

*[I had Mr *** as teacher. He was very strict. The more you performed well, the more he used to encourage you. You could not afford any mistake. So, I was very dedicated in the subject. I respect him a lot....]*

The excerpt above highlights the deep respect Kriti held for her Telugu teacher, underscoring the value she placed on the guidance and assistance provided. Despite the teacher's strict demeanour, Kriti remained undeterred, her attachment to the language acting as a motivating force. The current reality, where Kriti herself is now a Telugu teacher, serves as a testament to the teacher's success in shaping her journey. This progression also emphasises the significant impact of learning experiences in shaping an individual's trajectory and eventual role.

8.5.3 Teacher education

Another highlighting fact about this generation is their education. Unlike the participants from earlier generations in this study, Sanjhiana and Kriti have experienced a rapid and relatively smooth educational journey, culminating in the completion of their first degrees in India. It's worth noting that their pursuit of education didn't halt there; both individuals seamlessly transitioned to pursuing their master's degrees without delay. This dedication to continuous education sets them apart and reflects their commitment to personal and professional growth. While Sanjhiana opted for a distance degree in Telugu, Kriti chose psychology. Sanjhiana's master's degree was not even completed when she joined the PGCE, a course that all secondary teachers are encouraged to follow (which 80% of the sample of Telugu teachers have completed as discussed in Chapter 5).

The fact that the younger generation is more qualified compared to their predecessors gives them a distinct status in their workplaces. Firstly, they are professionals in their fields and master their subject. Both demonstrate expertise in the field and are able to share their

knowledge in different aspects of the language, even outside teaching. Sanjhiana, for example, states that she is involved in a series of activities like helping the Telugu associations with their academic projects, working as a radio jockey, or preparing students for literary activities at the *Mandiram*.

Secondly, the perception of the new generation of teachers, as well as their own self-perception, differs significantly from the participants examined in the preceding two chapters. Possessing qualifications equal to or surpassing their colleagues affords them the chance to contribute extensively to the wide range of activities held at school. For example, Sanjhiana states that:

Bon lekol mo teach Telugu, me zame mo pou kone as a Telugu teacher kouma zot pran mwa parski mo involve dan bokou-bokou zafer... plis ki teaching. Alor dan mo free time mo pou al fer teat eksetera... mo fer lezot-lezot zafer. me li vre si mo ti pou fer zis Telugu mo ti pou asize, dimounn ti pou look down upon parski zot pa konserne avek langaz-la...

[Well, at school I do teach Telugu, but I do not know their opinion of me as only a Telugu teacher because I am involved in so many activities. I am involved in many extra- curricular activities. It is true that if I were involved in only Telugu, people would have looked down upon me because they are not concerned with the language.]

With dual master's degrees in General Psychology and Organisational Psychology, Kriti frequently extends her assistance in counselling students at the school where she is employed. Thus, a change can be noted in the status of AL teachers, in contrast to what Devi mentioned in the previous chapter where: “*AL teachers are considered AL teachers*”. Teachers with multidisciplinary expertise like Kriti and Sanjhiana have transformed the identity of the Telugu teacher, altering the perception that they are specialists in a subject deemed 'easy'. Even though others might lack interest or concern for the subject, as Sanjhiana articulates, the Telugu teacher has managed to establish a level of status equality. On the contrary, as Sanjhiana points out, AL teachers are able to contribute more to the holistic development of students through subject-related extra-curricular activities which are praised by school management.

8.6. Living Multiple Identities in Multilingual Land

As pointed out in introductory chapters, the peopling of Mauritius is a recent phenomenon that has started following historical events. Consequently, the most recent influx of people occurred during the arrival of indentured labourers, and since then, five generations have transpired. As generations evolve, discernible shifts in socio-cultural trends become evident. A pertinent example is the changing perspective on intercultural marriages within Mauritian society. While such unions were once deemed taboo a generation or two ago, they have now become commonplace in the Mauritian context over the recent decades. Consequently, a transformation has occurred in terms of individual identities within society. Sanjhiana and Kriti, who represent the youngest generation of Telugu teachers, exist within a context where the Telugu teacher, in their instances, clings to their ancestral heritages. In this dynamic landscape, these teachers are compelled to navigate multiple identities, contingent on different spaces and contexts.

8.6.1 The ‘Telugu’ home environment in multilingual Mauritius

As discussed previously, the home environment and who the family members are play a vital role in shaping the experiences of an individual. The two cases examined in this chapter pertain to the same generation, showcasing both distinctions and commonalities. Although there has been a decline in intra-religious and intra-ethnic marriages (CSO, 2019), it's evident that the parents of both participants hail from the same ethnic community, namely the Telugu community. The participants assert that this factor has significantly shaped their life experiences. For instance, both of Kriti's parents are well-versed in Telugu and proficient in the language, a circumstance that has greatly facilitated her language learning journey. This sets her apart from her friends who were also studying the language. Additionally, cultural practices and traditions are deeply ingrained and observed within her household. Conversely, Sanjhiana's parents do not converse in Telugu. Nonetheless, within the household, they actively embraced the culture and ethnicity, displaying a strong sense of connection to all things Telugu. This underscores the fact that the familial environment in which one is raised exerts an influence on their subsequent choices and decisions

As one grows up, there are several changes in terms of allegiance to ethnicity (Fishman, 2001). According to the participants, their identification as 'Telugu' is evident across various spaces and contexts. The prominence of their ethnic affiliation is particularly pronounced at home, in temples, and during Telugu festivals. However, this intensity gradually recedes when they interact with society at large. In Kriti's case, the Telugu language is manifested in the

context among Telugus only when it is foregrounded during festivals. During the second interview held at her place, when she was questioned on the usage of Telugu, the following exchanges took place:

Nou vinn lor usage Telugu, to pe dir mwa li inpe restrin?

Li pa inpe restrin li boukou restrin nou koz Telugu zis si nou pou fer animatris, swa dan teaching, swa kan nou al dan bann seminar ou konferans kot nou kone lot dimounn ki koz Telugu. Zis zour kot ena Telugu festivals...

Alor to panse Telugu festivals ena enn gran rol dan Moris an term influence langue parle Telugu?

Biensir. Mo 'nn donn twa diferan spheres kot nou servi li. Me wi, mo maintain, kan ena bann Telugu festivals ki nou servi langaz-la. Nou fer plis bann program, lerla mem to pou trouv bann drama, bann cultural shows, nou pou sante. Get mwa mo artis ek mo konn sante an Telugu. Sa fode ena bann fet mem ki bann-la pou vinn rod mwa pou sante, bann organisers. MBC rezional etc

[Let's come to the usage of the language. You tell me it is somewhat limited?

It is not somewhat limited, but very limited. We speak Telugu only when we are animating a programme or in teaching or when we go to seminars where there are others speaking Telugu. And also, when there are festivals...

So, do you think that Telugu festivals have a huge role in Mauritius in terms of influencing spoken language?

Of course, I gave you the different spheres where we use it. But yes, I maintain, we use the language more when there are Telugu festivals, we have more programmes, cultural shows and songs. Look I am an artist and I know singing in Telugu. It is only during these festive festivals that organisers look for me for singing: the MBC, Regional committees etc.]

The above exchanges once more illustrate how Telugu teachers are compelled to participate in socio-cultural activities in order to find opportunities to engage with the spoken language. Kriti underscores the reality that it is primarily during festive occasions that a suitable context emerges for her to converse in the language, given the heightened mobilisation among community members during such times. This again demonstrates the space and cultural specificity of ALs in multicultural Mauritius. This again points to the function of the ALs in

the context, where the function is to live in languages and their cultures, rather than merely speaking them for communicative functions.

8.6.2 Identities manifested through cultural artefacts, dress code, and food

The choice of attire serves as a symbol of the participants' multifaceted identities. It's evident that individuals dress differently depending on the context. In the case of both Sanjhiana and Kriti, a casual dress code is typically favoured for their workplaces. However, during special events at school, they opt for a traditional dress code, which is considered more appropriate. Both participants express possessing a substantial collection of such traditional attire for such occasions. The traditional dress code is symbolic of their cultural heritage. This is portrayed through the words of Kriti below from the third interview:

Ok pou zordi mo trouve dress code se plito tradisionel, Indian. Enn langa vornì. Eski to abiy koumsa tou bann fonksion religious?

Yes, mostly, of course for religious functions nou tou in fact abiy in traditional wears, nou profite pou met sarees and half saree. Parski half saree is an identity for the Telugu and also our sarees are sirtou dan tge term komsi a Moris la zot tou kan get enn saree Telugu fini kone enn saree Telugu nou ena enn particular cotton silk saree that we wear...

Et sinon sa lidantite to pe dir mwa to met li pou bann fet religious, eski to met li andeor bann fet religious osi defwa ? Par exanp, lekol ou...?

Wi, wi, wi lekol specially being a Telugu teacher I am donk defwa wi li, mo allow mwa mem met saree pou vinn lekol or for any, mem for no reason.

Eski li enn zafer diferan, bon apart lamod apart so bote, eski to bann koleg si zot abiy zot tradisionelman defwa?

Defwa but mostly when there are functions at school, kan ena fonksion a lekol e osi vi ki mwa mo abitie osi perform dan lekol, I make it a must to wear saree. And get la pou ena Prize giving day everybody will be in traditional wear even today many of us are in traditional wears today donc...

When interviewed at the social gathering, it is to be noted that both ladies were traditionally dressed; while Kriti wore a 'Langa Vorni', which is the traditional dress worn by young ladies in Andhra Pradesh, Sanjhiana wore the 'Cheera', which is worn by married women. All these portray an adherence to a particular culture, which is intricately tied to its linguistic nature.

These two participants, being teachers of that particular language, are brand ambassadors of the language in the multilingual Mauritius.

8.7 Globalisation as a Modern Trend for Reunification to Native India

Having discussed how the phenomenon of ALs has been ignited and nourished over time, I now discuss how globalisation has brought a new trend. While the different generations have been cut and separated from native India, today the new generation of Telugu has full access to what was considered lost.

8.7.1 The meeting of two worlds

Over the decades that have transpired since the settlement of Indian immigrants, a process of reconstruction and re-enactment of Indian cultures has unfolded to such an extent that Mauritius has earned the moniker of "Little India" by some (Eisenlohr, 2007). Globalisation has ushered in a world that is increasingly interconnected, resulting in the emergence of more pluralistic nations. The experience of Kriti in India provides valuable insight into her process of adapting to Indian culture. This adaptation is facilitated by pre-existing similarities in language and culture that have been preserved, allowing for a smoother integration. The following exchanges took place during the second interview at Kriti's place:

Bon si nou compar toi laba avek 1 afgan ou 1 africain (pas morisien), a ki extent tonn senti toi dan 1 nouvo lemond ou tonn senti toi home sick? Eski tonn depeyse?

Non mo pann depeyse. O kontrer monn feel plis rooted. Ti kumadir something that was never there, but was supposed to be there... moi mo dir tou ban Telugu, ou tou ban kin vin depi laba, zot sipoze, at least once in their lifetime alle rann 1 visit lind. They need to go and live sa Teluguness la. Sa en term specific Telugu. Kan nou pren lind mem en general, 1 Morisien pas pu depeyse ditou aköz laba li kumadir moriss mem. Monn realiz sa kan monn alle lerop. Lerla monn al compran kuma ban afgan afrikain tousala ti p depayse dan lind. Pou nou sa change la pas nanien ditou sa. Moriss in copier tou dan lind mem.

Ok. Donc mo p compren que nou capav qualifie sa kom 1 reconnection apre tou sa lanne la? Seki mo p compren tonn truv ban zafer ki tonn aprann, tonn tende?

Oui monn experiens sa. It was a very enriching experience. It was a connection en term que, guet tou seki mone guet dan fim depi tipti, ban actriss, ban acteur, sa behaviour dan fim la, laba mone ressi guetter kuma li etet vraiment pareil. Ban dance, ban manger, kiltir... I could live and enjoy it.

En terme manger tone gagne probleme?

Moi non, vue k a la maison ici nou ti deja Telugu. Nou manz bien fort et ban zepiss ki servi laba. Bien masala. Mem zafer ki laba presk. It was not a problem.

Et bon si nou vin an term habillement?

Habillement oui. Depi bien tipti mo integre dan kiltir. Touletan kan ena la prier etc nou dan langa orni. Tou letan sari, bottu.

[Well, if we compare you there to an Afghan or an African (not Mauritian) to what extent you felt yourself in a new world or homesick? Were you lost?

No, I was not lost, in the contrary, I felt more rooted. It was as if something that was never there, but was supposed to be there. I request all Telugu or everyone that come from there, they should go at least once in their lifetime. They need to go and live the Teluguness. That was in terms of Telugu specifically. When we take India in general, a Mauritian will not At all there as it is like Mauritius only. I realised this when I had been to Europe. Then I understood why Afghans and Africans were feeling... in India. For us, that slight change is nothing. Mauritius copies everything from India.

Ok so I understand that we can qualify this as a reconnection after all these years? I understand that you came across things that you have learnt and heard?

Yes, I experienced this. It was a very enriching experience. It was a connection in terms of, for example when you watch a movie since childhood, the actors, the behaviour of the artists and all, it is really the same. The dance, food, culture... I could live and enjoy it.

In terms of food, did you face any difficulty?

No as here, at home we were already Telugu, we eat spicy and the same spices that are used there. It was not a problem.

And when we come to dress code?

Dress code... Since childhood I follow culture. Every time when there are prayers, we are dressed in langa vornu, saree and bottu. (traditional skirt, saree and ...)]

Hence, it becomes evident that the multicultural attributes of Mauritius contribute to its versatility, transforming it into a nation where individuals from diverse origins have revitalised and re-enacted practices reminiscent of their native lands. In the present case, it can be noted through the above exchanges, how the Mauritian is rooted in the Indian culture, though he or she does not realise it. Despite being a foreigner in India, she does not feel as lost as 'real' outsiders like those from the African continent or from Afghanistan. This underscores how, as a diaspora, Mauritians maintain a strong connection to Indian culture. These observations circle back to the discussions in Chapter 3, where the concept of "Little India" was explored. The perception of Mauritius' proximity to India as overly romanticised aligns with Srilata's (2010) concept of post-colonial cultural visibility. In this context, ethnicity assumes a pivotal role, particularly in the context of preserving ties with one's native culture.

Analysis of these two participants' experiences in the native land also shows that they have built additional attachment to that place, which is also the land of their forefathers. Having had the opportunity to study in that native place, be it designed or by coincidence, as discussed, has promoted the sense of belongingness to that particular language and culture among teachers of Telugu, who are also the direct ambassadors of the language in the Mauritian context.

While for generations the Telugus have been following practices based on the idea of re-enactment and reconstruction of an imaginary context or space (Eisenlohr, 2007), the two participants who have studied in India demonstrate and give several examples of having lived the authentic culture in the native land. For example, both participants have ensured a visit to Tirupathi, a religious city which is believed to be the abode of the main deity, Lord Venkateshwara²⁰, prayed to by Telugus in Mauritius, which is as symbolic as the Ganga Talao, a crater lake considered sacred (like river Ganges) for immigrants from North India (Eisenlohr, 2007). Sanjhiana has been to other places of religious interest like Bhadrachalam or Simhachalam, which are places from where the Telugus have immigrated. They still perform some ceremonies which they have preserved, such as the 'Ramabhajanam'²¹ or the 'Narasimha

²⁰ Lord Venkateshwara is the most recent incarnation of Lord Vishnu according to the Hindu mythology. His main temple, also the place where he incarnated is found in the City of Tirupati, found in Andhra Pradesh.

²¹ The Ramabhajanam is a festival celebrated in honour of Lord Rama, incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is believed to have exiled in the regions of Andhra Pradesh.

Pooja²², originating from those places (Prabhakaran, 1991; Sokappadu, 2023; Venkanah & Auleear-Owoodally, 2023). The ceremonies also involve chants or songs in Telugu, which have been preserved over generations, as explained by Nanda in Chapter 6.

The participants affirm that having been to India helps them understand the changes that have occurred in traditions in both contexts. These contexts have undergone various processes, such as creolisation in the case of Mauritius and the additional impact of colonisation in India. Their experiences in India aid in gaining a deeper comprehension of the language and culture, while also introducing a contemporary dimension to the practices that have been upheld and preserved across generations. This example is clearly seen when Sanjhiana has her baby cradling ceremony²³, where one notes that she is attached to the traditions her ancestors have bequeathed, but she adopts a more modern touch to doing those activities by catering for the present environment (multilingual), authentic knowledge gained in India, and what the ancestors have followed.

8.7.2 Adaptability of names

Through the case of Sanjhiana, I had the opportunity to delve into her aspirations for the future generation. Inhabiting a multicultural nation, she opts for a Telugu name for her newborn, upholding her heritage. However, she is also deliberate in selecting a name that is easily "readable" across multiple languages. This choice underscores her desire to accommodate the diverse Mauritian setting and the broader global landscape, which is influenced by the ongoing dynamics of immigration.

*Mo bebe apel ****, savedir******

Alor to'nn choose enn Telugu name alor?

Wi.

Eski li komin ein? Tou profeser Telugu fer parey?

Non pa neseserman. La nou pe bouz ver globalizasion. Ennta panse pa kone ki parti lemond zanfan-la pou ale. Ki pei zot pou ete. Alor li vinn difisil. Li vinn kouma enn tag.

²² Narasimha Pooja is a prayer performed in honour of Lord Narasimha, whose main temple is found in the coastal district of Simhachalam in Andhra Pradesh.

²³ One of the interviews took place during Sanjhiana's baby cradling ceremony. The baby cradling ceremony, conducted in accordance with Hindu traditions, is an event during which various rituals and ceremonies are performed following the birth of a baby.

Be enn nom Indian pa aksesib partou? Nom enn person se so idantite non?

Non me pa tou dimounn ki pran li koumsa. Pa tou profeser Telugu ki viv li parey.

Eski to'nn pran an konsiderasion kontext Moris avan swazir enn nom.

Wi biensir. Nou viv dan Moris enn mo li kapav ena diferan meaning dan diferan langaz. Alor nou pa pou swazir enn nom ki term-la pa tro korek dan enn lot langaz.

*[My baby's name is***, which means ***.*

So, you have chosen a Telugu name?

Yes

Is it common for all Telugu teachers to choose Telugu names?

No not necessarily. In an era of globalisation, many think where their children will land. Different countries. So, your name may become a tag.

So, an Indian name is not accepted everywhere? Its someone identity, isn't it?

Well, not everyone considers it so. Not all Telugu teachers share the same experience.

Did you take into consideration the Mauritian context while choosing a name?

Yes of course. We live in Mauritius and our names may have different meanings in different languages present. So, we do not choose a name that may sound awkward in another language.

Although Sanjhiana seems to understand that globalisation is a normal phenomenon and the languages and culture are dynamic, she does express her fears and dismay, about acculturation, just like in the case of Devi. Being a Telugu teacher, she does not want her students to be influenced by the Western culture as portrayed in her words below from the third interview.

Sinon ou dir mwa ou pe fer sa pou gard langaz-la e kiltir-la vivan. Alor eski ou feel enn danze kelkepar?

Biensir li enn danze parski nou deza tigit. Ek avek globalizasion, nou inflians plis avek lezot. Par 'West'. Ena enn dangze kot bann zanfan ek paran. Mem incline towards sa.

Be ki pa bon avek sa?

*Si zot pou incline towards 'West', zot pou mwin incline towards zot kiltir.
Westernization ek tradisionel li opoze.*

***[So, you tell me, you are doing this to keep language and culture alive. So, do
you feel a danger somewhere?***

*Of course it is a danger, because we are already small in population. And with
globalisation. We are more influenced by others, by the West for example. There
is a risk where students and even parents are inclined towards it.*

Then what's wrong with that?

*If they will be inclined towards the west. They will be less interested. That was
their culture Westernisation and traditional it's opposing.]*

Thus, Sanjhiana represents the Telugu teacher who, though is living in a modern globalised world, does not want her cultural background to face Western acculturation as it would lead to learners, who are already a minority, to be less interested in the culture. This sentiment aligns with research on the preservation of identity in the globalised world, as discussed by Rosenmann and James (2015), Bhat and Bhaskar (2017), and Murthy (2016). Yet as noted in section 8.6, multiculturalism has already set the pace for multiple identities in contexts like Mauritius, and globalisation is no new challenge for the social integration process (Lindo, 2005). In fact, the creolisation, a prevalent occurrence in multilingual environments such as Mauritius (Baker, 2007), has already engendered hybridity across numerous cultural dimensions. However, Sanjhiana's expressions convey a sense of longing to preserve purity (Natchoo, 2020), even as she navigates a society where multiple identities come to the forefront depending on specific spaces (Said, 2018).

8.7.3 Digital world and teaching resources

While much of the research in the field of languages points to the adverse impact of globalisation on ALs, this section delves into how globalisation has actually facilitated greater accessibility in language instruction. Globalisation has not only brought people closer but has also contributed to advancements in the domain of teaching ALs.

Having resided in India during the digital era for a specific duration, Kriti and Sanjhiana can be likened to 'digital natives' in contrast to Telugu teachers from previous generations who are considered 'digital immigrants'. While many teachers use modern technology and resources to reconnect to India, Sanjhiana and Kriti use technology to continue living what they have

lived during the period they have been in India. For instance, Sanjhiana mentions that she maintains strong connections with her classmates who studied Telugu alongside her, thanks to various social media platforms. They frequently engage in discussions about various facets of the language. Through social media, they also have the opportunity to conduct interactive sessions with fellow Mauritian or individuals studying in India. Both participants have friends in India, and these connections have remained intact as they have adapted to the digital landscape.

In terms of teaching resources, Sanjhiana and Kriti state that there are so many resources and teaching aids available online nowadays, compared to the past, as discussed by the teachers in the earlier chapters. It is also noteworthy that these two participants, while encountering challenges in teaching Telugu similar to those highlighted by their colleagues in the previous two chapters, did not identify a lack of oral exposure to Telugu as a major issue. This is because they have access to alternatives, such as social media, that can compensate for the absence of spoken Telugu in their context.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the series of three chapters in which I have extensively discussed the distinctive attributes of Telugu teachers through the analysis of six case studies. By closely examining the cases of Sanjhiana and Kriti, I've gained valuable insights into the experiences of Telugu teachers who belong to the younger generation. These case studies have shed light on their rapid career progression, marked by the opportunity to receive scholarships to Andhra Pradesh – the homeland of their ancestors and the native land of Telugu – ultimately leading them to their roles as educators.

Furthermore, these analyses have delved into their experiences and identities as teachers of an AL within the contemporary global context. The exploration has highlighted their ability to navigate the complexities of their cultural heritage and linguistic roots, while also adapting to the dynamic nature of the modern world.

In summary, the examination of these cases has provided a comprehensive understanding of their identities, as well as the challenges, triumphs, and unique trajectories that shape the journey of Telugu teachers in the modern global world.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

9.0 Introduction

This study explored the experiences of teachers who teach the ancestral language Telugu in the multilingual context of Mauritius. During British colonisation, indentured immigrants were brought from India, including a minority originating from the state of Andhra Pradesh. In their adopted homeland, these immigrants endeavoured to conserve their language and culture by transmitting them to the next generation. Adopting a policy of preservation, educational policies have, during the second half of the 20th century, included these languages in the curriculum, which are taught as optional languages and given the appellation of ‘ancestral languages’, alongside English and French, which have been maintained as compulsory languages. The ALs that have a strong ethnic base, therefore, carry a long history and feelings of displacement, and have a strong symbolic value. The study aimed to investigate the experiences of AL teachers, discern the underlying reasons for these experiences, and gain insights into how they navigate, utilise, and study the language in the Mauritian context. Previous research on teacher experiences, both internationally and within Mauritius, has not concentrated on this specific group of educators who teach a diasporic language not spoken in their daily lives, yet embody its culture.

In this chapter, I present the main findings of this research, followed by the theoretical implications and policy implications of the study. I also discuss the effectiveness of my research choices and the limitations of the study. I conclude by presenting my contribution to the body of knowledge and providing recommendations for future research.

9.1 Overview

This chapter consisted of the following sections. The first section following the introduction (section 9.0) and overview (section 9.1) summarises the findings of this study (section 9.2). Section 9.3 deals with the theoretical implications of this study; section 9.4 explains the policy implications; section 9.5 deals with the methodological implications; and section 9.6 focuses

on the implications for professional practice. The limitations are acknowledged in section 9.7, and section 9.8 unpacks the contribution of this study. This is followed by section 9.9 where suggestions are made for future research based on the study's findings. The final section concludes the study (section 9.10).

9.2 Main Findings

9.2.1 Telugu teachers demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to their no longer spoken immigrant forefather's language

The study revealed that Telugu teachers demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to the language they teach, alongside the culture and ethno-religious aspects attached to it. However, the use of the language is very limited to certain spaces, mostly the classroom and socio-cultural spaces, where the teachers are the interlocutors. It can be noted, through the case of Telugu, how a language is an ethnifying agent in the multilingual context as it helps to unite the community – a community that has been trying, just like other communities, to preserve the sense of relatedness to a diasporic language, though the latter is not a spoken language in the context. Thus, Telugu teachers, who are the products and agents of the state's endeavour to promote multilingualism through the revitalisation of diasporic languages, demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to the language of their ancestors. This language has metamorphosed into an integral facet of their identity, even though it is no longer used for communication purposes in the linguistic landscape due to its accommodation by the predominant vernacular, Kreol, in the context. Thus, the study underscores that language functions shape individuals' experiences with it, a phenomenon that is context bound. Participants who are immersed in the daily use of Kreol language and culture often exhibit a heightened sense of affinity toward a diasporic language solely due to its ontological functions. Therefore, one is the language of the *tongue* and the other is the language of the *heart*.

9.2.2 Telugu teachers are engaged in the revitalisation and language maintenance process and enacting agency for preservation

The results of the research show that the teachers are engaged in the revitalisation and promotion of an identity *perceived as being at risk*. By approaching the participants in the different spaces, it was found that the AL teacher embodies the *Teluguness*, though the language is not spoken for communicative purposes, but is foreground in the different spaces where the teacher evolves.

Additionally, the study identified that Telugu teachers, despite receiving payment for their roles, exercise agency in promoting language and culture within their teaching practices. They extend their efforts beyond the confines of the syllabus, engaging in preservation efforts. By examining the experiences of Telugu teachers, one can ascertain the extent to which these educators serve as implementers of policies, and how their own experiences of becoming AL teachers influence them to exercise agency in preserving the language. In doing so, the teachers are fully engaged in teaching and promoting the subject across various levels and settings. Telugu teachers instruct the language within schools, evening classes, to adult learners within the community, and collaborate with different organisations to foster its promotion. The Telugu teacher is therefore the ambassador of the language in the Mauritian multilingual context.

9.2.3 The engagement and agency are the result of language loyalty, engineered by policies

Another finding is that Telugu language teachers actively execute national policies that have essentialist objectives, which are carried out through the educational system. Consequently, they assume the role of paid agents in this endeavour. The AL teachers therefore exist in a ‘cocoon’ as they are paid to do what their ancestors have been doing freely. Nevertheless, they show a high level of language loyalty, which explains their engagement with the language and their agency for its promotion. At various points in their careers, Telugu teachers participate in activities or make decisions that reflect their passion and dedication towards the language. Their experiences, stemming from their upbringing and socio-cultural background, have forged a sense of loyalty towards the Telugu ethnic community. This allegiance is further enhanced among the younger generation of teachers due to their immersion in the Telugu-speaking community in Andhra Pradesh. A significant element of this loyalty encompasses the language, intertwined with culture and religion. This allegiance profoundly impacts their determination to uphold their identity, aligning with the objectives of preserving both language and culture.

9.2.4 Telugu teachers attribute a special role and importance to their profession

The study showed that Telugu teachers hold their profession in high regard. A substantial number of them have deliberately chosen this path, either due to their own inclination or influenced by family members, with the intention of preserving a symbolic value across generations. Additionally, their career choice is also driven by aspirations for social mobility, as teaching is a revered and respected occupation. Telugu as a language would be totally assimilated in the context had it not been for the language management policy in favour of ALs

which resuscitated the language through its teaching as part of the school curriculum. This fact contributes to explaining the esteem in which the profession is held since it ensures the maintenance of the culture and the language. Therefore, the majority of Telugu teachers consider their employment more than a job and a mission of promotion and preservation, and it is this role that maintains their drive and performance. AL teachers also believe that their role is less about developing functional proficiency in the language and more about fostering an inner disposition towards the language and the culture associated with it. Thus, it is less about skills and more about attitude and internalisation of certain behaviours and values, which ensures the maintenance and survival of the language. Through the study of the three generations of teachers, it was also found that the inferiority complex that existed among AL teachers in the initial stages has diminished over time.

9.2.5 Language policies, geopolitics, culture politics, promotion-oriented rights as well as learning experiences lead to transformations in Telugu teacher identities and experiences

The study has provided me with insights into the experiences of teachers spanning different time periods. Through the various cases, I was able to identify three generations of teachers who are still active in the field. These cases facilitated the exploration of transformations over time without necessitating a longitudinal study. It could be noted across the different generations that experiences have been the result of socio-cultural factors as well as the evolution of the linguistic landscape. The first generation of Telugu teachers benefited from community-level support and government interventionist approaches. Subsequent generations have benefited not only from community support but also from various educational policies that prioritise language preservation, particularly Indian languages. These policies are influenced by political factors and cultural politics, alongside the already established colonial languages of English and French in the education system. These have thus shaped the experiences and professional identities of the Telugu teachers, whose existence itself is a product of educational reforms.

The first generation had the opportunity to secure government employment using the basic language knowledge they acquired from informal temple-run schools. These schools employed the transmission philosophy, a traditional teaching approach involving purposeful and conscious sharing of information, knowledge, and ideas by an expert to students. Thus, it was a teacher-centred approach where the teacher has full control of the content, and the teacher is the arbitrator of the truth. The transmission philosophy also follows a pattern where knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation in the community, and the learners

grasp whatever is taught to them. The goal of AL education was geared toward preservation and maintenance. The teachers have emerged from a lineage rooted in a guru-disciple relationship, a tradition of transmitting knowledge that might have been passed down from the forefathers of the indentured labourers. However, with the interventionist approach, reforms were brought into the education of ALs, which were standardised as a curriculum was developed. Despite the shift from the community-generated model to the government interventionist model, the goal of AL teaching has remained the same, that is, the maintenance and preservation of ALs. With the recruitment and training of teachers, the middle generation has been able to learn the language and advance a step further to complete tertiary studies in the field. The last generation has benefitted from established measures for education in the language as well as opportunities to learn the language in the native land of the language through scholarships.

Another finding is the learning experiences of the teachers themselves when they were students. The Telugu class was one with a different setting and that marked most of the participants and motivated them to learn the language till higher classes. The extension or evening schools, once run voluntarily, now benefit from incentives from the Ministry of Education, which ensure their existence. The extension schools, being engaged in the teaching and promotion of Indian languages and culture, are also considered assets that help in maintaining and keeping alive the cultural bond between India and Mauritius. These are also being considered for national heritage status, recognising their historical significance. All these evolutions have shaped as well as transformed the experiences and professional identities of the teachers involved in this field.

9.2.6 Telugu teachers mediate the use and study of the language by maintaining a home environment where *Teluguness* is omnipresent, but Telugu is not the mother tongue

Despite Telugu not being used for day-to-day communication at home, the language is still upheld within the household environment through the utilisation of specific vocabulary registers, particularly those associated with Telugu culture. By incorporating a substantial collection of Telugu vocabulary into the everyday language, which is predominantly Kreol Morisien – the language uniting the entire Mauritian community and widely spoken as the primary language in most Mauritian households – this linguistic connection is maintained. The Telugu vocabulary that enriches the Kreol Morisien vernacular pertains to specific lexical fields like food preparations/dishes, culinary utensils, Telugu inspired ethnic garments, devotional rituals, etc. These lexical fields are omnipresent in the Telugu home environment, which shows

that the Telugu teachers, like their parents and grandparents, continue to maintain a home environment where different aspects of Telugu culture and traditions are lived.

The study shows that the home environment of the Telugu teachers plays an important role in shaping childhood experiences and identities. Parenting played an important role in the motivation to learn the language. Telugu culture has been bequeathed at home, and this transmission can be noted through different generations of the Telugu teachers. Results also show that there is an attempt to educate one's children in Telugu and encourage them speak the language in certain spaces, among speakers of the language. All the participants who have children ensured that they are educated in the language, just like their own parents have motivated them to learn the language and become a teacher of it.

Reconnection to the foreign land of the ancestors has also been established through culture exchange programmes where some of the teachers have studied and spent considerable time. There is also evidence of reconstruction of religious diasporic practices in their culture as well as daily routine. The Telugu teacher, therefore, embodies the Telugu language and culture, with the prominence of these identities varying depending on the context. It has also been noted that while the Telugu culture is dominant at home, the language takes a more central role in the classroom environment rather than the home setting.

9.2.7 The link between language, culture, ancestry and religion

In the context, it was found that culture has a specific meaning which is very much tied to the ancestry of the individual or group. Thus, the language of the forefathers is highly symbolic and significant, though culture and religion can exist with limited language presence or even language assimilation. Through the analysis of the different spaces, it was found that Telugu language is limited in terms of language, yet very vivid and lively in terms of culture and religion (as bequeathed by elder generations). This observation reveals that despite language assimilation, aspects of culture and religion have been successfully transmitted to the current generation within the context. It is not uncommon for Hindu priests to address the audience or preach in Kreol. Through the cases, it was also found that a language can exist as a vernacular, without culture being attached to it (Telugu in Hyderabad).

The study, however, shows that in the case of ALs, culture and religion are embodied by the Teachers of the AL, and they also form part of the ethnicisation agents. Ethnicisation of the ALs is high in the context where the ethnic identity of the individual can easily be known through the language of the ancestors. This supports the belief that the ethnic language is the

"carrier of culture" (Teo, 2008, p. 4). The language and the culture are also foregrounded in religious spaces, where religious agents promote the ALs, be it through the running of schools or through negotiations in language or educational policies. Some Telugu teachers have also formed part of the religious agents (cf. Nanda). This superposition of the teaching and priestly roles for Telugu teachers is fading with the generations and being replaced by a clear distinction between the roles. However, the different case studies raise the question of ALs can exist in a creolised context like Mauritius, detached of the culture and religion. While the teachers admit that it also happens that they sometimes have students of other communities and they manage to teach language only (detached from culture and religion), they question the relevance and raise the issue of belongingness.

9.2.8 Teachers are socially involved and engaged in socio-cultural activities in socio-cultural spaces where their *Teluguness* is lived, beyond school learners

The teacher, being the focus of the study, led to the exploration of the different spaces in which they exist. The findings of the study indicate that specific spaces exist where the use of the language is prominent or where interlocutors make a conscious effort to communicate in the language. These include cultural spaces as well as teaching settings outside schools where extra-curricular activities are organised. The clients in these cases are not limited to school children and include the wider Telugu community (students, adult learners etc). In some cases, teachers are also involved in religious practices, which they associate with the language. For instance, their practice of the Telugu variation of the Hindu religion, as seen in the case of the *Venkateshwara Pooja*, Telugu wedding, or prayers performed on the occasion of Ugadi as discussed in this study, demonstrates the participants' strong attachment to Telugu religion and culture. On such occasions, there is an increased use of the Telugu language within the homogeneous group, although not always with complete proficiency and continuity. This effort to maintain the use of the language showcases how the sense of *Teluguness* is experienced, particularly among the participants who *represent* the language.

9.3 Theoretical Implications

9.3.1 Discussion of findings

9.3.1.1 Sense of attachment to AL

Telugu teachers exhibit a profound sense of attachment to their ancestral language, which was once spoken by their immigrant forefathers but is no longer commonly used. Despite

speaking a different mother tongue themselves, these teachers are actively involved in the process of revitalising the language and its functions.

In terms of the study of ALs, Chapter 2 discussed how the concept of aligning one's *identity* (Bardua, 2016) to a specific foreign setting. This alignment has led to individuals embracing multiple identities and foregrounding their identity of belonging to a particular ethnic group during certain situations and at particular times (Bhabha, 1994; Malouf, 2007). In a creolised setting, where assimilation of languages and cultures is strong and high, the *Telugus* (like other ethnic groups) have kept and nurture some highly symbolic behaviour and artefacts that encapsulate their *Teluguness*.

The current study has confirmed the latter concept, as it has been noted that Telugu teachers demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to the language their forefathers spoke as well as the cultures originating from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, despite the fact that proficiency in the language is limited among *Telugus*. Ideas of displacement (the Chronosystem) and reconnection with the past have been portrayed as symbolic. Cultural politics have played an important role in the maintenance of purity (Bissoonaath, 2010) and reversing acculturation to some extent (Spolsky, 2008), leading to cultivating a sense of belongingness to the past and keeping the connection with the land of origin, that is Andhra Pradesh, in India (Hollup, 2000; Eisenlohr, 2007; Fishman, 2010) despite the fact that personal socio-economic success has been achieved in the local context (Claveyrolas, 2017). Thus, reconnection to a diasporic land and re-enactment of diasporic traditions and allegiances to diverse lands of origin as discussed in the literature (Mehta, 1995; Hollup, 2000; Eisenlohr, 2007) is visible in this study.

Jayaram (2000) further argues that diasporic languages are embedded with socio-cultural experiences, and it is common for the users of the language to foreground their linguistic identities, symbolic of the ancestral roots in certain settings and occasions. Furthermore, research carried out by Fishman (2010) who explains that language is one of the elements that binds individuals through their common linguistic identity is confirmed through the experiences of the teachers. Though there has been a shift in the language used and most of the teachers affirm using Kreol for their day-to-day communication and even as a medium of instruction to teach Telugu, the linguistic identity is more significant and not merely a surface feature of ethnic identity in this case.

Previous Research by Devi (1982) shed light on how members of minority ethnic groups (the exo-system) like Telugu in a multicultural context show a high level of cohesion among themselves. Preserving their unique identity and culture holds significant importance for the self-esteem of these minority group members, ultimately influencing their level of success within the broader society (Hogna, 2011; Fang, 2017; Carmignani, 2006; Colla, 2018). Garcia states that, “The ability to language and to ethnify is significant... It is through languaging and ethnifying that people perform their identifying” (Fishman & Garcia, 2010, p. 519). Garcia’s description of ethnifying and languaging shows that individuals continually engage in specific languages in order to express distinct identities.

This study has shown how the teachers of Telugu use the different spaces in the multicultural setting to foreground their identities at different levels (the macro-system). These experiences have also led to the preservation of traditional Hindu patterns in the context. The idea of ‘Indian Ocean Imperialism’, as discussed by Srilata (2010) and Claveyrolas (2017), thus becomes visible with the government’s official policy (the chrono-system) to favour the celebrations of all religious and social rituals. Revitalisation of the language through cultural practices and the construct of re-enactment of diasporic traditions (Eisenlohr, 2007) was also visible among teachers of Telugu in their home environment and socio-cultural spaces they are engaged with (The meso-system). This was visible through their engagement in the *Venkateshwara pooja* or the *Ramabhajanam*. The experiences of the Telugu teachers in this study have shown that the latter are fully engaged in such celebrations and also encourage their children (in the micro-system) to follow the same for it is a space where the language is spoken.

However, it is important to note that the uniqueness of this context lies in the fact that, despite the high level of engagement and loyalty that participants demonstrate towards both the language and culture, there remains an inherent aspect: none of the generations, including the current one, actually speak the Telugu language. This is distinct from situations in other places, such as in the UK, where two individuals of Telugu descent might engage in Telugu conversation when they meet (Yadla, 2016).

Telugu people have come up with a way of embedding their *Teluguness* in their *Mauritianness*, which shows that an integrated plural identity has been built. The participants assert the Teluguness of their community members and simultaneously affirm their own Teluguness through distinct linguistic and cultural practices. However, their daily linguistic reality resides in Kreol language due to their Mauritian identity. They are Mauritians,

characterised by a Creolised culture, predominantly communicating in Kreol, even as they teach the Telugu language.

This summarises the situation of the 3rd to 5th generation of descendants of immigrants in this country where everyone is an immigrant's descendant. The Telugu language spoken is not one that is fully mastered by the different users. This was noted through participants who contrast even their own use of the language with what they witnessed by natives in Andhra Pradesh. Only a few participants affirm they have extensive fluency and proficiency in the language.

9.3.1.2 Devoted Telugu teachers embody language and culture

Telugu teachers attribute a special role and importance to their profession, leading to their being fully engaged with the language, showing language loyalty, linguistic essentialism, and enacting agency.

The study has shown that AL teachers demonstrate a positive feeling towards their role in the different systems. Firstly, being ambassadors of the language in the context, the role of the teachers encompasses language use in the micro-system, with different interlocutors, including children, parents, other family members, and teachers (Spolsky, 2019). In alignment with this discovery, Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) additionally emphasise that the teacher assumes a pivotal role in shaping academic programs, thereby contributing to the preservation of heritage languages within the community, constituting the exo-system.

The study has also shown that Telugu teachers demonstrate a high level of job satisfaction (Baron, 2012) and they attribute a special importance to their role. Most of the participants affirm that they are engaged in preserving an identity and not merely a language taught for communication. Garcia claims that “language, as a social construction, is not only an instrument for communication but also a semiotic and symbolic tool” (Fishman & Garcia, 2010, p. 520). Adopting the same stand, Edwards (2009) proposed that language is a system in which its users have agreed upon the language's meaning and symbolism within their relative speech communities (the macro-system).

This research consolidated the above findings as it could be noted that Telugu language becomes representative of the experiences and social identities of the Telugu teachers, leading to their own conception of their being. Results show that being teachers of an AL, Telugu teachers feel that their role is much more, and they show a high level of involvement in socio-cultural activities, especially in the different systems outside the micro-system.

The outcomes of this research further corroborate the theoretical notion that teacher agency takes on a significant role in the context of minority and ethnified languages, surpassing the influence of educational policy structures (Priestley et al., 2015; Fishman, 2010). Telugu teachers function with the mission of revitalising and preserving the language of their ancestors, and their school-based instruction represents just one stride towards accomplishing this objective. This illustrates that the role of AL teachers extends beyond the micro-system.

The results resonate with the studies carried out by Bahry (2016) who points out that language, society, and social relations involve human agency and structure. However, May's (2003) arguments about the understanding the real motives of engagement was also helpful to understand the experiences and behaviour of the participants. While Fishman's theory of language loyalty (2010) has been of major significance to this study, it was also noted that the professional identities, motives, and agency of the Telugu teachers can be attributed to their personal economical and career benefits for social mobility (May, 2003).

9.3.1.3 Language status shaped by culture, policy, learning, geopolitics, impacting Telugu teachers' identity

Socio-cultural factors, favourable language policies, learning experiences as well as geopolitics influence the perceived status of languages and subsequently experiences of Telugu teachers leading to a transformation in terms of identity and experiences.

Another finding of the research is the different levels of transformations that have taken place over time in the teaching of ALs. The experiences of the Telugu teachers have demonstrated how, over the years, socio-cultural factors and language policies have brought transformations in the teaching of an AL in the curriculum. In a modern world turning to global languages, it has often been debated if endangered languages should be protected or allowed to perish (Calvet, 2007). In many cases, socio-political priorities and culture politics have dictated policy as decision-making about language policies is influenced by the agendas of the most powerful groups in a polity (Spolsky, 2004).

However, the research has demonstrated that these languages still have their space within the community, or it should be said that the space has been maintained through national policies with essentialist objectives implemented through education and, as a result, they become paid agents. The mutual socio-economic strategies aimed at strengthening the ties between India and Mauritius resulted in the institutionalisation of ethnic identity (Claveyrolas, 2017). The interventionist approach adopted by the government through different measures has

given a new dimension to ALs, impacting on the teachers involved in teaching the languages as it has shaped their identities and uplifted the status of teachers who were promoting the language (Fishman, 2000; Tirvassen, 2009).

Language in the curriculum (Spolsky, 2004) has also impacted on the level of proficiency of the language as the study has shown that educational reforms have allowed the teachers to learn the standardised version of the languages, with the correct grammar and linguistics compared to what had been passed on over generations by immigrants, who were uneducated. At an individual level, the personal experiences of the AL teachers as learners have made them become what they are. On the other hand, the favourable policies over time have also created a ‘cocoon’ for the AL teachers. They owe their employment to the favourable educational policies, and the research further demonstrates that the latter take the ‘[linguistic] rights’ for granted as they assume that they should be supported by the state in their endeavours.

9.3.1.4 Telugu teachers foster language through immersive home and cultural engagement

Telugu teachers mediate the use and study of the language by maintaining a home environment where *Teluguness* is omnipresent and by actively being involved and engaged in socio-cultural activities in socio-cultural spaces.

Researchers delving into teachers' experiences have contended that the exploration of these experiences should extend beyond the confines of the school environment. This is because the personal and professional life encounters of teachers are interconnected, forming an integral part of their narrative (Pajares, 1992; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Hargreaves, 2001). Additionally, a teacher is embedded with the content knowledge which forms part of his or her daily life, highlighting the social implications as he or she is in constant contact with students, colleagues, and parents, both during and outside school hours. Results from this study have confirmed that the skills and knowledge of the AL teacher is not limited to the Telugu classroom, but to home and social spaces, thus highlighting the interaction between the micro-system and the exo-system.

The study reveals that the home environment (micro-system) holds significant relevance in relation to the Telugu language and culture. Even if the language is not actively spoken within the home, it still wields substantial influence in shaping childhood experiences and identities. This finding is aligned with that of Yuksel and Brooks (2007) who affirm that early caregivers have the ability to influence the acquisition of ALs. In her research titled 'Society and the Condition of the Child in Mauritius', Payneeandy (2009) underscores child-

rearing practices, particularly emphasising the micro-system, within various contexts. The research highlights the prominence of ethnic education in Mauritius, primarily among children who are descendants of Indian immigrants. Rughoonundun-Chellapermal (2007) asserts that the home environment profoundly impacts a child's development in areas such as culture, values, and even decisions regarding the child's future path.

These findings have been confirmed in the present study as it is noted that throughout the different generations, the teachers of Telugu, both as children and later parents, have been involved in practices encouraging the learning of ALs for maintenance purposes. Telugu culture has been bequeathed at home, and this transmission has been noted through different generations of the Telugu teachers. There is an attempt to educate one's child in Telugu and encourage them to speak the language among speakers of the language, as well as safeguarding the culture and religion attached to it. According to Polinsky and Kagan (2007), this is normal practice among heritage language communities. Therefore, it can be noted that the Telugu teachers are not only engaged in enhancing the academic level and proficiency of the language, but also the culture they themselves embody to a huge extent. This consolidates Ho's (2009) discussions with regard to the debate between language and culture, especially for ancestral languages (Liddicoat, 2013).

While certain researchers in the field of English Foreign Language (EFL) argue that culture might not always be a pivotal factor in language acquisition (Chomsky, 1965; Khemlani-David, 1998), this stance holds less weight in the case of ALs (Diaz, 2012). Mahboob (2020) emphasises the close relationship between children and their parents and grandparents, encapsulating the micro-system (Evans, 2020). In this research, it could be noted that all the participants who have children ensured that they are educated in the language, just like their own parents have motivated them to learn the language and become a teacher of it.

The process of language learning occurs both within and beyond the school setting, as highlighted by Morales (2016). The study shows that, along with teaching at school, teachers are engaged in providing their services outside school hours. There are external agents like the community which recreates specific spaces where use of the language exists and encouraged through extra-curricular activities. This supports the findings of Polinsky and Kagan (2007) who affirm that heritage language teaching is not limited to the classroom as the community has a more important role in helping preservation. This was seen through the involvement of the different socio-cultural organisations and the schools run by them. Many Telugu teachers also form part of the teaching staff involved in those evening schools where the teaching and

learning is carried out using different approaches like involvement in activities. Furthermore, activities in which the teachers are involved outside their school hours are not limited to children as learners as they also target adult learners who turn up not only to learn the language, but also cultural as well as religious elements linked to the language. Brutt-Griffler (2005) and Yadla (2016) explain these involvements as being motives for keeping alive the cultural significance of the language and safeguarding its social status.

9.3.2 Theorising the findings

In this section, I theorise the different findings by applying the various systems of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory – the initial lens I adopted to comprehend the phenomenon – with the teacher positioned at the core. Initially, through the assortment of traits exhibited by Telugu teachers from distinct generations, I have drawn comparisons and presented them in Table 9.1. Figure 9.1 subsequently provides a visual representation of this study's findings, with further elaboration provided in Table 9.2.

Table 9.1. Comparison of main traits observed across generations

Main Traits		The first generation Telugu Teacher	Mid Generation Telugu Teacher	Young Generation Telugu Teacher
Becoming the ancestral language Teacher	Micro System	Initiation was influenced by parents. Learning of the language was included in the home environment for some teachers. The home environment was influenced by ethnolinguistic beliefs and norms as there was a strong cohesiveness among members of the same ethnolinguistic group.	Becoming a Telugu teacher among the mid generation teachers was a matter of parental choice, with the agency to reverse acculturation and engage in language revitalisation. It was an opportunity for career path in teaching. There has been a gender shift in the profession as more females were encouraged to learn the language. This can be attributed to the fact that most females were encouraged to learn Als.	Parental choice again prevails for the choice of learning Telugu at different levels, but not only for the sake of preservation, but also to obtain competitive results, to learn an additional language and as an additional opportunity for career path.
	Exo-System	Becoming the AL teacher was both a product of and an initiation to community service. Many performed this role in the community, and so becoming a Telugu teacher would also mean being employed to perform tasks already in practice.	The community, through agents like <i>mandirams</i> and socio-cultural associations, encourage the teaching and learning of AL. The teachers affirm that they have been brought up and guided to learn the language and become a teacher. However, numerous difficulties and challenges are faced in the learning process.	The community, through agents like <i>mandirams</i> and socio-cultural associations encourage the teaching and learning of AL, with youngsters less motivated. All facilities and resources have been provided for those willing to pursue education in the language.

	Macro-System	Values, culture, and customs have been assets to be transmitted and in cases were valued more than the quest for social status.	Social mobility is as important as the essence for language and culture maintenance. However, most teachers in this generation find a means of achieving status by becoming an AL teacher	Social mobility is preferred to maintenance. Educational policies are well established and are the main motivating factors to study and teach Als. Many in this generation have become Telugu teachers and developed language loyalty only because of well-established policies which have facilitated their education in the language.
	Chrono-System	Culture politics and geopolitics influenced people to keep to their roots.	Cultural politics has a role in reconstruction, re-enactment and reinventing cultural practices as well as language revitalization which creates the space for teachers to exist	Learners are exposed to the wider world and have the opportunity to learn in the native place of their ancestors as well as participate cultural exchange programmes. These programmes help to strengthen the cultural ties and diasporic sense of belongingness.

Main Traits		The First Generation Telugu Teacher	Mid Generation Telugu Teacher	Young Generation Telugu Teacher
Being the ancestral language Teacher	Micro System	The teacher maintained and influenced the language choice at home. The AL teacher was a strong language and culture advocate.	The language is not spoken, even in the home environment. The AL teacher finds himself/herself as the only one who can speak it. The AL teacher influences the vocabularies used at home as many Telugu words are used. The AL teacher is regarded as a protector of the language.	The language is not spoken at home, but the AL teacher influences the vocabularies used at home as many Telugu words are used. Moreover, the language being taught in most public schools, children have minimum basic proficiency. However, outside the classroom or Telugu-specific spaces, the teacher speaks other languages.
	Exo-System	Being an AL teacher helps to give back what has been learned from teachers and this is done with passion. The way and means used by the first generation teachers, with limited resources show language loyalty and the motivation of teaching.	At school level, the teacher is a paid agent for the promotion of languages, and therefore a language advocate. However, most of the teachers express the challenges of teaching a subject they consider 'difficult' due to lack of resources. The community solicits and encourages the services of AL teachers in different aspects related to language like evening schools, adult classes, radio & television programmes, etc.	The teacher in this generation is well equipped and has all facilities and resources at his/her disposition. Within the ethnic community, being an AL teacher hailing from the third generation is an asset to the community held in high esteem, encouraged and rewarded in terms of opportunities.

	Macro-System	The first generation AL teacher is more respected in the community than in the workplace. However, the interventionist measures to uplift the status of ALs in the long run completely changes the perception with regards to ALs and those teaching them.	In the beginning of their career, many Al teachers exclaim being perceived as teaching something “outdated” and a preacher of religion at the workplace. Their job was not recognised among people in the wider community. However, the eventual policies have been so favourable that they allow themselves to “fight for their rights” with even one student opting for the subject.	The teachers state that they are considered a professional in their field and their effort recognized. They further affirm that they do not excel only in the field of Telugu.
	Chrono-System	The teachers have not been in contact with the native land of the ancestors. They have been teaching what had been bequeathed and they participate in the diaspora in matters related to language preservation.	The teachers have lived many years of career in contact with the native land only through media and through reconstruction and re-enactment practices taught by others.	The Telugu teachers of this generation explains having the opportunity to study and frequently visit the native land. In close contact due to social networking.

Main Traits		The first generation Telugu Teacher	Mid Generation Telugu Teacher	Young Generation Telugu Teacher
AL teacher as an ambassador for language promotion	Micro System	The language and culture are embedded in the mode of living of the teacher who, though does not necessarily spoke the language during childhood attempts to create a home environment where Telugu is present	The language is not spoken, even in the home environment. The AL teacher finds himself/herself as the only one who can speak it. Even the spouse, unless the latter learned it at school, cannot speak the language.	The AL teacher influences the vocabularies used at home as many Telugu words are used. Moreover, the language being taught in most public schools, children have minimum basic proficiency, leading to a multilingual repertoire.
	Exo-System	The AL teacher militates for the language preservation and represents the language among the people within the ethnic group. Classes as well as cultural rites are performed. The ‘Teluguness’ is more present in specific cultural spaces	The role is a more structured one and is performed through institutions set up for the promotion of AL. for example, the teachers in this generation are active in evening schools. Language loyalty is another aspect noteworthy among the teachers.	The new generation of Al teachers mediate the use of the Telugu language in social spaces through participation in extra-curricular activities. The ‘fluidity’ in the shifting of identity and roles according to spaces is more visible among the younger generation. Social media also plays a major role, linking people who can speak the language.

	Macro-System	The first generation AL teachers are among the pioneers in what they consider the “upliftment” of the language and culture in the context. Their experiences demonstrate positive achievements for the community beyond their working hours.	The Telugu teacher is an ambassador of the language and culture at his workplace and is involved in programmes organized at school level as well as national level foregrounding the visibility of the culture/language in the multilingual context.	The younger generation is involved in cultural celebrations among diasporic countries, facilitated by technological tools and social media.
	Chrono-System	Some teachers of this generation have been the first ones to bring or negotiate the importation of teaching resources from India, bridging the gap between the native and diasporic land.	Embodies the cultural and linguistic element of a language that has been symbolic to the grandparents, though most of the teachers of this generation, at least in the early years of their career have never been to the native land of the language.	Embodies cultural and linguistic element of a foreign language, which is symbolic of the grandparents’ efforts, but is also lived through the media or by directly travelling to the native land. So, the teacher mediates between the local context and the international context.

Main Traits		The first generation Telugu Teacher	Mid Generation Telugu Teacher	Young Generation Telugu Teacher
Sense of belongingness	Micro System	The sense of belongingness is very high among the first generation secondary Telugu teachers. Artefacts as well as intangible assets like customs, traditions and values are preserved as ancestral heritage and transmitted to members of the family.	Ethnic background shaped the home environment of the teacher since childhood and that sense of belongingness is maintained further.	The sense of belongingness to the culture and language is visible through artefacts as well as values bequeathed by the parents from generation to generation.
	Exo-System	The community was one where allegiance to ethnolinguistic beliefs was very high.	The community, through agents like <i>mandirams</i> and socio-cultural associations promote the sense of belongingness and cohesiveness within the ethnolinguistic group and the teacher forms part of it.	The community, through agents like <i>mandirams</i> and socio-cultural associations encourage the teaching and learning of AL, with youngsters less motivated.

	Macro-System	Values, culture, customs and linguistic identity hold high significance in the multicultural landscape. The teachers who were also socio-cultural advocates who worked for the ethnolinguistic groups demonstrate a high sense of belongingness.	Social mobility is as important as the essence for language and culture maintenance. However, most teachers in this generation find becoming an AL teacher a means of achieving status.	The sense of belongingness to the language and culture of their forefathers is still noticed among the younger generation.
	Chrono-System	Culture politics and geopolitics influence the people to keep to their roots and maintain the sense of belongingness to the culture and language.	Cultural politics has a role in reconstruction, re-enactment and reinventing cultural practices and adherence to a remote place, culture and “tongue” which are considered ancestral heritage.	Teachers have the opportunity to learn in the native place of their ancestors as well as participate cultural exchange programmes which help to strengthen the cultural ties and diasporic sense of belongingness.

Main Traits		The first generation secondary school Telugu Teacher	Mid generation Secondary school Telugu Teacher	Young Generation of secondary school Telugu Teacher
Being a social guru	Micro System	The teacher, being the breadwinner and head of the household is the main decision taker at home and influences members in the immediate environment to be active in many aspects regarding the language and culture. Children are taught the language till upper classes.	The mid generation of secondary school teachers are mostly females and play a major role in culture and language dissemination within the home environment.	The young generation of Telugu teachers demonstrate a sense of belongingness to the culture and language as they are involved in activities which are symbols of the ethnolinguistic practices in their home environment. This is seen through religious prayers organized, customs and traditions still practiced, choice of traditional, name of children etc. Yet, it is to be noted that Telugu as a language is barely spoken, and limited to specific words in conversations.
	Exo-System	The AL teacher in the initial stage of his career has also been a teacher/preacher in the Telugu community and in many cases also performed prayers on specific occasions, which is also practiced till present. It is a mode of living embedded in socio-cultural activities. The running of evening schools was also led by social workers, most of whom are teachers of Telugu.	AL is less about religious transmission and more teaching a language for maintenance and uplifted as an examined subject. However, the values and culture associated with the language are emphasized in the teaching and the majority of learners hail from the ethnolinguistic community. The teachers affirm playing the role of preservation.	The young generation of AI teachers mediate the use of the Telugu language in social spaces through participation in extra-curricular activities. However, results show that even the third generation of teachers are language and culture advocates and foreground their linguistic identity in specific spaces, like cultural ones and encourage their students to adopt same by being role models.

	Macro-System	The first generation AL teachers are among the pioneers in what they consider the “upliftment” of the language and culture in the context. Their experiences demonstrate positive achievements for the community which has been achieved both during their working hours as well as outside school hours.	The Telugu teacher is involved in programmes organised at school level as well as national level for festivals leading to visibility of the culture/language in the multilingual context.	The young generation of teachers are engaged in encouraging students for activities organized at national level and are active agents in the promotion and foregrounding of cultural and linguistic identities.
	Chrono-System	The first generation of teachers have been carrying the role of transmission agents and are even proud to have succeeded in their ‘mission’.	The mid generation Telugu teachers have continued the ‘mission’ of maintaining a less spoken ancestral language in a more globalized and multilingual setting.	The young generation of teachers still embody the language and culture of a displaced community and are still transmitting them to the next generation through education.

Main Traits		The first generation Telugu Teacher	Mid Generation Telugu Teacher	Young Generation Telugu Teacher
Development of Teacher Identity	Micro System	The teacher in his home environment is respected for the job he does.	Commands respect in the home environment being a teacher is a noble job.	The teaching profession is still valued and being a Telugu teacher is equally valued.
	Exo-System	The first generation of Telugu teacher has already been a teacher to the community before being officially employed as one.	AL teacher is one who is held in high esteem by the members of the ethnolinguistic community as he or she is an agent in the promotion of the language, culture, and values.	The AL teacher's role is valued in the community and the teacher understands that he or she is teaching for 'preservation' purposes.

	Macro-System	The first generation have witnessed the implementation of the new language policies and they have taken long to situate themselves before that. They have often been downgraded by colleagues as the AL teacher was considered inferior. The upliftment in status through policies has been favourable to them.	Favourable language policies make it that the AL teacher is able to claim certain “rights” despite having few students. They do not hesitate to draw the attention of authorities whenever they feel ... AL teachers foreground their critical role/responsibility to safeguard a ‘minority’ language in the multilingual context. Teachers also express the fears of becoming redundant due to lack of students.	The AL teachers of this generation demonstrate more confidence in performing their duties and no longer demonstrate inferiority complex compared to AL teachers of the previous generations. The AL teacher also foreground multiple identities depending on spaces.
	Chrono-System	Government interventions and collaborations from the Indian government to set up the MGI for example constitute a milestone in the promotion of AL. the teachers benefit from this as their teaching skills would further develop and their role valorised.	The teacher enjoyed well established policies and trainings to become a Telugu teacher, who is not respected only nationally, but also across the diaspora.	Cultural politics and the proximity of the state with the native land influence the teacher’s identity. Participation in international seminars is common, which develops the teacher identity and confidence.

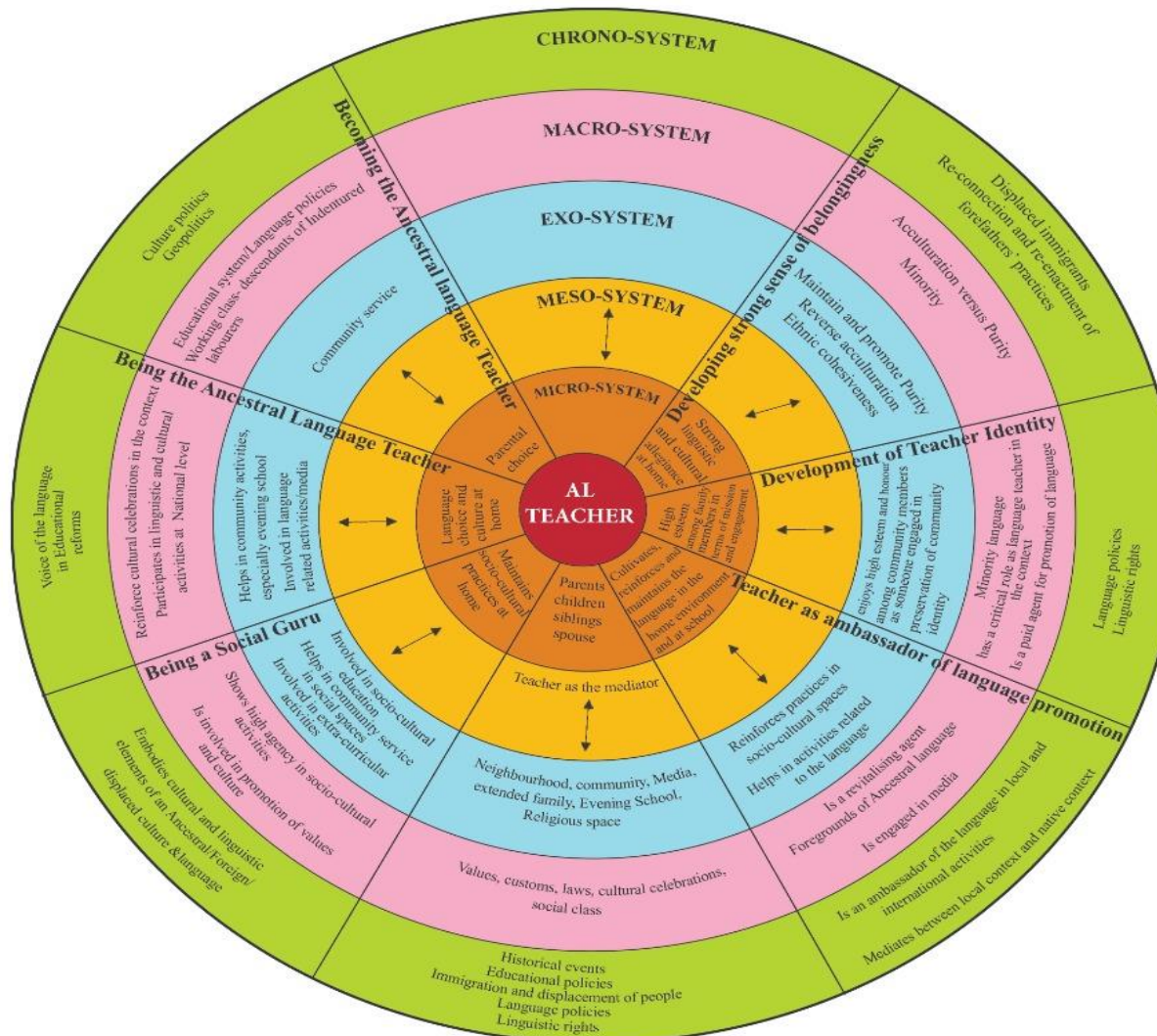


Figure 9.1. Visual representation of the results using Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

Table 9.2. Unpacking main constructs of the model

	CENTRE	MICRO-SYSTEM	MESO-SYSTEM	EXO-SYSTEM	MACRO-SYSTEM	CHRONO-SYSTEM
Findings	Telugu Teacher	Home environment school Parents children siblings spouse	Teacher as the mediator ↔	Neighbourhood community Media extended family Evening School Religious space	Social class cultural celebrations values Laws customs	Historical events Educational reforms change in policies linguistic rights immigration – displacement of people
Telugu teachers demonstrate a high sense of belongingness to their no longer spoken immigrant forefather's language	Demonstrates strong sense of belongingness to the language and culture	Demonstrates strong linguistic and cultural allegiance at home, though the language is not a vernacular.		Maintains and promotes purity Reverses acculturation Encourages ethnic cohesiveness	Acculturation versus purity Minority	Immigration People-displacement Displaced immigrants Re-connection and re-enactment of forefathers' practices
Telugu teachers show language loyalty	Language loyalty	Cultivates language among members at home		Engaged in activities for the promotion of the	An ambassador of the language in the wider	Militates for the survival, promotion of the language.

				language in the community	multilingual community	
Telugu teachers are engaged in the revitalization and language maintenance process.	Agent for revitalization and promotion			Revitalization in community		
Telugu teachers attribute a special role and importance to their profession, enacting agency and shaping identity.	High esteem Teacher identity Teacher Agency	High esteem among family members in terms of mission and engagement		High esteem and honour among community members as someone engaged in preservation of community identity	Enacting agency by promoting language in macro-system Minority language Critical role as language teacher in the context Paid agent for promotion of language	Language policies Linguistic rights
Language policies lead to transformations in identities and experiences over time	Transformation over time					Education policies have been factors of identity transformation as the

						language has been valorised.
Telugu teachers mediate the use and study of the language by maintaining a home environment where <i>Teluguness</i> is omnipresent		<p>The Telugu teacher demonstrates strong cultural allegiance. The home environment is one where the culture is cultivated and reinforced. In such a homogeneous environment, the Telugu teacher, though he or she speaks in Kreol for communication use a register with many Telugu words.</p> <p>Reverse acculturation</p>		<p>However, the multilingual Blend into the larger Mauritian community with the choice of Kreol as the home vernacular.</p> <p>Cultural Agents promote maintenance of purity</p> <p>Reverse acculturation</p>		

<p>Teachers are socially involved and engaged in socio-cultural activities in socio-cultural spaces where they are valued</p> <p>The AL teacher is an ambassador of the language in the context</p>	<p>The teacher experiences respect</p>	<p>Cultivates, reinforces and maintains the language in the home environment, at school and in society</p>		<p>The home culture is expanded at community level.</p> <p>Reinforce practices in socio-cultural spaces</p> <p>Helps in activities related to the language</p>	<p>Revitalising Agent</p> <p>Foregrounding of Ancestral language</p> <p>Engaged in media</p>	<p>Ambassador of the language in local and international activities</p> <p>Mediator between local context and native context</p>
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Analysis of the data has yielded findings (discussed in the previous section) such as the development of a strong sense of belongingness to the language, development of teacher identity, and language loyalty. These findings have been structured into the ecological model, where they are represented in different sectors in the figure. It may be observed that changes have been made to the original model by Bronfenbrenner (1987) which originally focuses on the child at the centre. The modified model places the AL teacher at its core, with distinct layers symbolising various systems that elucidate the array of experiences, changes, and presence of the AL teacher. This portrayal underscores the multi-faceted nature of the teacher's role, influenced by an array of social factors.

The following paragraphs explain the different systems within the new model.

The centre – The subject

Bronfenbrenner (1997) elucidates that the individual is not solely impacted by the environment but is also an evolving and dynamic entity that progressively engages with the environment, endeavouring to exert influence over it. Within the adapted model, several vital components in the process of identity development are integrated, with the environment exerting its influence over all these processes. Upon delving into the identities of the teachers, their experiences, the reasons behind those experiences, and the manner in which they teach the language, it becomes evident that they emerge as products of various systems. Their experiences stem from the influences of these systems, and they use the systems to mediate the language at different levels. The AL teacher, beyond being a language ambassador, encapsulates the culture intertwined with the language and plays an active role in its advocacy and preservation. Language loyalty, a profound sense of belonging, a strong vocational pride, and the identity as a teacher collectively foster the emotional impetus that gives rise to teacher agency. The different layers of the environment therefore directly impact on who the AL teacher is, as the latter is at the centre.

The micro-system

In the original model, the micro-system includes the main socialisation agents: family, peers or equals, school, and social media. These institutions, identified by the participants, are regarded as the closest entities that shape their behaviours, roles, and interactions in the daily contexts in which they actively engage (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). In the adjusted model, though, I narrow down the micro-system to comprise parents (who hold a pivotal role in determining

language choices for both instruction and acquisition), the spouse (whose influence impacts language usage across various daily settings), as well as siblings and children.

The research has conclusively shown that acquiring a language and its corresponding culture has predominantly been shaped by parental decisions and upbringing. This, in turn, significantly impacts the career trajectory, particularly in the case of becoming an AL teacher. The robust linguistic and cultural attachment within the household also contributes to the development of the sense of belonging that the teacher prominently displays.

Within the micro-system, language loyalty takes root, serving as a symbol of the ancestral heritage. Moreover, the position of a Telugu teacher is deeply revered within the home environment, as it holds a direct connection to their roots, consequently influencing the identity of these AL teachers. Additionally, the teacher wields the power to shape their immediate surroundings by perpetuating the experiences they themselves have undergone.

Collectively, these factors aptly illustrate how the micro-system exerts its influence on the experiences of the AL teacher.

The meso-system

In this model, I have shifted the teacher from the micro-system to the meso-system. This alteration stems from the specific focus on AL teacher experiences rather than child development. In this context, the AL teacher operates as an intermediary within the meso-system, playing a crucial role positioned between the micro-system and the exo-system. This pivotal role is manifest in various practical dimensions. As the findings indicate, the teacher is perceived as an insider due to their familiarity with parents and students. This sense of closeness emerges from their belonging to the community, which is tightly knit due to ethnic cohesiveness. Given the shared cultural background, religion, and roots, the teacher and students experience similar socio-cultural contexts. Consequently, the AL teacher effectively bridges the gap between these two systems, thereby influencing their experiences. This multifaceted role and responsibility distinctly shape the teacher's encounters.

The exo-system

The exo-system assumes paramount significance within this study, primarily due to its engagement with multiculturalism and multilingualism within a backdrop defined by unity amid diversity. Within this context, various elements such as the neighbourhood, community, media, extended

family, and school offer distinct spheres where roles, language usage, and the prominence of one's identity vary significantly for the language teacher. The teacher is often engaged in community service, especially in the promotion of ethnolinguistic values within the community. He or she also helps in language maintenance through different platforms like the media, social media, etc. The exo-system is also the space where the Telugu teacher garners considerable reverence for their 'mission' of language preservation, thus playing a pivotal role in shaping teacher identity.

The macro-system

The macro-system, mirroring the attributes of culture within a particular historical and societal juncture, holds profound importance within the context of this study's phenomenon. The societal backdrop, cultural festivities, values, and the prevailing legal framework collectively serve as both influences and outcomes of the AL teachers' actions and decision. All the teachers are the descendants of the indentured labourers and belong to the working class. As demonstrated through the findings, the education of the teachers, choice of subjects, etc., have been guided by the educational policies in practice. Currently, it is these very language and educational policies that substantiate the presence of Telugu teachers and direct their position as educators. These policies also guide their role as a teacher and influence their behaviour in the different systems. Therefore, the macro-system plays an important role in the experiences of the AL teachers.

The chono-system

Geopolitics and cultural politics assume a significant role in this context. The nation's population composition, the sociolinguistic panorama, and the demographic structure are all outcomes of historical colonisation processes. These historical factors currently mould the experiences of AL teachers, whether as descendants of displaced immigrants or in relation to their roles within the system, including issues associated with minority sentiments..

Language policies and educational frameworks also exert a considerable influence on the experiences and identities of AL teachers. Broader discussions, such as those concerning linguistic rights, are integral components of the chrono-system. Results have also shown that there is an element of reconnection to the once motherland as some of the participants, especially those who have studied in the native land of the ancestors through culture exchange programmes, demonstrate an affinity for that land, where they often go on holidays. The exchange programmes in themselves have been portrayed as a means of bridging the gap between the once motherland (currently

diasporic land) and the current context. Therefore, geopolitics and culture politics, which form part of the chrono-system, impacts the experiences of AL teachers.

9.4 Policy Implications

Through the findings of this study, I have portrayed that the educational and language policies in Mauritius cater for the different Indian diasporic linguistic groups. Language revitalisation and preservation among Indian minorities have been achievable due to interventionist measures aimed at their conservation. However, this hasn't been the case for African languages, where similar interventions have been lacking. The linguistic identities of the different segments, irrespective of the number of students belonging to that group, characterised by ethnicity in this case, have been valued. One of the long debates about one ethnic group not having an AL, has been remedied through the introduction of the Kreol Morisien in the curriculum, though the modalities of this introduction have in turn engendered another debate about the ethnic or national relevance of the language. The study's findings offer compelling evidence for the curriculum to persist in its endeavours to promote languages, which, in turn, bolsters the island's social and cultural integration efforts. These conclusions also resonate with the nation's core value of unity in diversity. Moreover, this study has the potential to guide policymakers in various contexts, aiding their comprehension of the experiences of teachers involved in ancestral or heritage language instruction.

Moreover, the study illustrates that Telugu is a truly 'genuine' AL, as it remains intricately interwoven within living traditions. This stands in contrast to other ALs taught within the same category, such as Hindi, which is more of a standardised language classified as an 'ancestral language', yet wasn't the immigrants' mother tongue. Therefore, languages like Telugu, Tamil, and Marathi, which are minorities among the Indian ALs, have a greater ancestral symbol, as they were the mother tongues of the immigrants, though their learners today are the ones who 'struggle more' due to several aspects as pointed out by the participants.

The existing curriculum policies strive to cultivate specific language competencies, which are subsequently assessed through examinations, ostensibly placing all ALs on equal footing. However, the actual socio-linguistic dynamics within the multilingual context highlight that proficiency levels in different ALs among their respective learners vary considerably.

9.5 Methodological Implications

A case study explores and analytically explains a contemporary phenomenon *in depth* and *within real life situations*. These situations possess geographical parameters that enable the delineation of boundaries, aiding in the definition of the case (Cohen et al., 2007). In this research, I have delineated the phenomenon as the longstanding practice of teaching a specific category of languages within the Mauritian context. These languages are inherently ethnic and diasporic in nature, distinct from other globally-taught languages in the same context. Furthermore, they are not primarily intended for communicative or cognitive purposes.

I have extensively delved into the subject matter, seeking explanations and gaining profound insights into the phenomenon through various data sources. This exploration has been aimed at understanding the experiences of the teachers who play a vital role as active agents within this phenomenon. Using an interpretive research paradigm, I was able to derive constructs and make meaning out of the subjective experiences of the Telugu teachers through the interpretive phenomenological approach.

The preliminary source of data collection through the questionnaire and focus group discussion served as foundational steps, enabling me to pinpoint key dimensions of the study. This stage was particularly valuable because, as the researcher, I was still navigating my own comprehension of the phenomenon. The selection of participants for the semi-structured interviews was apt, given that it allowed me to analyse the phenomenon across diverse generations. Along with a questionnaire targeting the whole population and a focus group discussion, my data generation strategies also included having three different interviews in three different spaces. This strategy was instrumental in producing a wealth of rich data, as it facilitated insights into the varied identities of the teachers in diverse settings.

Guba's (2008) constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability served as effective tools in addressing the issue of trustworthiness. These constructs provided a robust framework that enabled me to capture an authentic depiction of the case and to avoid biases.

Thematic analysis facilitated the organisation of ideas arising from the gathered data, shaping the composition of the second section of the thesis. However, I encountered certain challenges during the process. Notably, my positionality as a Telugu teacher and my deep

involvement in activities concerning the subject within the context presented a complex dynamic that required careful consideration.

9.6 Professional Practice Implications

As a fellow Telugu teacher, similar to all the participants, this research has provided me with a profound comprehension of my colleagues through their unique experiences. The implications stemming from this understanding are fourfold:

Firstly, the research has offered me a window into the lived experiences of my diverse colleagues, each of whom has taught during varying periods. This exposure has enabled me to gain insight into the evolution over time, consequently enhancing my positioning as a teacher within the field.

Secondly, this study has shed light on the nuanced methods my fellow teachers employ to teach the language, their interactions with students, their motivation levels, and their personal connections to the language within different contexts. This knowledge is invaluable as it now grants me a more comprehensive perception of the field, encompassing these diverse aspects..

Thirdly, this study effectively showcased that the teaching and learning of ALs extend beyond the confines of the classroom, permeating various socio-cultural settings.

Lastly, the study underlines the significant role parents play as key stakeholders in the education of ancestral languages. The development of cultural identities predominantly occurs within the home environment, and it is here that the linguistic and cultural value of these languages is cultivated and nurtured.

9.7 Limitations of the Study

This section acknowledges the limitations of this study.

Firstly, the utilisation of the interpretive paradigm was effective as it enabled me to explore the experiences of Telugu teachers and assign significance to their thoughts and behaviours. However, these meanings are inherently subjective and are analysed within a specific theoretical framework. It is important to acknowledge that, being an interpretive study, this paradigm confines itself to ascribing meaning to emergent phenomena and may not necessarily reflect objective truth or the areas of interest for future researchers. The process of assigning meaning to experiences is

intrinsically context-sensitive, and the true nature of existence can often be revealed and comprehended through one's active involvement within the context.

Secondly, while I did not encounter significant challenges regarding the participants' willingness to engage in the study, the limited population size of Telugu teachers, coupled with their close-knit connections, raised the potential for certain participants to not fully disclose certain experiences during interviews with an insider-outsider – considering my dual role as both an insider and an outsider due to my involvement in various aspects of the field. Nonetheless, the inclusion of three interviews with each participant played a crucial role in mitigating this concern. These multiple interactions allowed for the recovery of any potentially missed information and enabled the cross-verification of statements, enhancing the overall rigour of the data collection process.

Finally, an additional limitation pertains to the sampling strategy employed. The study's focus on Telugu teachers' experiences was examined primarily through the lens of secondary school teachers. An alternative sample could have consisted of primary school teachers. While the decision to focus on secondary school teachers was informed by the fact that many of them had previously worked as primary school teachers in their career trajectories, it is worth acknowledging that this may not provide a comprehensive representation of all Telugu teachers. Furthermore, secondary school teachers often hold higher language qualifications (a degree certificate is required), setting them apart from primary school teachers who typically hold a HSC as their qualification.

9.8 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The study embarked on an exploration of the experiences of teachers engaged in the instruction of a subject that stands apart due to its unique socio-cultural, socio-political, and functional characteristics. Notably, prior research has not concentrated on the experiences of teachers who navigate the intricacies of teaching such a language within a context where the language is imparted with a conscious awareness of its origins, while also remaining steadfastly aligned with them. Examining the experiences of these teachers provided me with an opportunity to untangle the intricate nature of language instruction within an exogenous, multicultural, and multilingual society such as Mauritius. By interpreting the findings through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, with a focus on ALs and positioning the teacher as the central figure within the

model, I pursued a novel approach that hadn't been previously explored in this manner. ALs also play a crucial role in maintaining a vibrant connection with the ancestral homeland, and the teachers, who encapsulate not only the language but also the culture, assume a pivotal role in this ongoing process. Unpacking the experiences of teachers instructing such languages has provided a fresh perspective on teachers' encounters and has also facilitated a deeper exploration of the phenomenon of ALs. Consequently, this study contributes to the extant literature on ALs by offering novel insights and enriching the understanding of this subject.

9.9 Areas for Future Research

While this study primarily emphasised the significance and interpretation of teachers' experiences, several avenues for future research warrant exploration.

One potential area involves investigating the methodologies employed in teaching ALs within multilingual contexts, along with assessing their effectiveness. This could provide valuable insights into pedagogical practices tailored to AL instruction.

Furthermore, there is potential for conducting comparative studies that examine teachers' experiences in teaching Telugu beyond Mauritius, in various Indian diasporic nations such as South Africa, Fiji, or Malaysia, as well as within different states of India. These comparative analyses could unveil nuanced differences and similarities across diverse contexts.

Another promising avenue is the examination of teachers' experiences within other ALs within the same context. Such research could shed light on how similar phenomena manifest within different linguistic and cultural settings.

Considering my substantial engagement with this topic over the years, I also recognise the potential for cultural investigations into this phenomenon. Such inquiries could delve into how the cultural lens further shapes and influences teachers' experiences and their role in preserving ALs.

9.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has offered a captivating exploration, driven by my personal involvement within the field, seeking to comprehend the experiences of educators engaged in the same subject as myself. With its integration into the official curriculum during the early 1970s, Telugu teachers have consistently upheld the mantle of imparting the Telugu language, culture, and values. This

practice, having been informally present since the arrival of immigrants, has served to preserve and promote a distinctive identity.

The distinct experiences of Telugu teachers, akin to their counterparts in other **ALs**, are vividly illuminated in this study. Undertaking this journey allowed me to delve deeper into these experiences and the underlying factors that shape them. The case study methodology was apt for exploring this phenomenon. Employing the interpretive phenomenological approach, coupled with semi-structured interviews conducted with six participants in varied settings, facilitated data collection and analysis. This research approach, viewed through a socio-cultural lens and guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, has led to a comprehensive understanding of the subject, and thus, answering the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study.

This concluding chapter outlined the primary findings of this study alongside their theoretical implications within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's model. It also discussed the implications of this study across various dimensions, including the methodology, limitations, and professional practice. In addition to presenting the contributions to the body of knowledge, the chapter also listed promising avenues for future research.

References

- Alba, R. and Foner, N. (2015). *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton University Press.
- Amparo, R. (2013). *Gaining insight into teaching: A phenomenological exploration of the lived experience of the teachers of the year*. FIU.
- Ansó Ros, J., Maijala, M., & Valkamo, N. (2021). The role of the teacher in heritage language maintenance courses in Finland. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–14.
- Aronin, A. & Muiris, O. (2004) *Exploring Multilingualism in Cultural Contexts: Towards a Notion of Multilinguality*. Larissa.
- Auckle, T. (2012). From code-switching to language mixing in a Mauritian Creole speaking community. In R. Tirvassen (Ed.), *Langage de jeunes, plurilinguisme et urbanization*. Paris. L'Harmattan.
- Auckle, T. (2015). *Code-switching, language mixing and fused lects: Language alternation phenomena in multilingual Mauritius* [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa]. Institutional Repository. <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/19832>
- Bahrani, T. (2014). Second Language Acquisition in Informal setting Theory and Practice. *Language Studies*, 4 (8), 1714-1723.
- Bahry, S. (2016). *Language Ecology: Understanding Central Asian Multilingualism*. *Language Change in Central Asia*. DeGruyter Mouton.
- Baker, P. (1972). *Kreol, A description of Mauritian Creole*. C. Hurst and Company.
- Baker, C. (2003). Language Planning and the Welsh. *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings*, 41, 71.
- Baker, C., & Jones, S. P. (1998). *Encyclopaedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*.

Multilingual Matters.

Baker, P., & Fon Sing, G. (2008). *The making of Mauritian Creole*. Analyses diachroniques à partir des textes anciens. Westminster.

Balraj, B., Singh, S., & Manan, M. (2020). The Relationship Between Language and Religion. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10 (11), 1217-1224.

Bataineh, R. (2009). The Effectiveness of Drama-Based Instruction in Jordanian EFL Students' Writing Performance. *TESOL International Journal*, 12(2), 103-118.

Beinhoff, B. (2013). *Perceiving identity through accent : attitudes towards non-native speakers and their accents in English*. Peter Lang.

Benedict, B. (1962). The Plural Society in Mauritius. *Race*, 3(2), 65-78.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/030639686200300206>

Bhagwan, D. (1979). Presidential Rule in India: A Study in Crisis Politics. *Asian Survey* 19(6), 611–26.

Bhaskar, T. (2017). Telugu Language in Mauritius. *Unpublished article*.

Bhaskar, T. (2007). *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*. Amsterdam University Press.

Bhaskar, T., & Bhat, C. (2003). A General Note on the Telugu Diaspora in the United State. In: G. Kumar, ed. 2003. *Indian Diaspora and Giving Patterns of Indian Americans in the USA*, 71-94. Charity Aid Foundation.

Bhaskararao, P., & Ray, A. (2016). Telugu. *Journal Of the International Phonetic Association*, 47(2), 231-241.

Bhat, C. & Bhaskar, T. (2007). Contextualising Diasporic Identity: Implications of Time and Space on Telugu Immigrants. In: G. Oonk, ed. 2007. *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*. Amsterdam University Press.

- Bissoonaath, A. (2010). Language Shift and Maintenance of Ancestral Languages in Mauritius. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 32(5), 1-14.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003) *Qualitative Research of Education: An Introductive to Theories and Methods* (4th ed.) Pearson.
- Bokhorst-Heng, W. D. (1999). *Language and imagining the nation in Singapore*. University of Toronto.
- Borg, S. (2008). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. Continuum.
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J.C. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Sage.
- Bourhis, R. & Sachdev, I. (1984). Vitality perceptions and language attitudes: Some Canadian data. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 3 (2), 97-126.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3,77–101.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Harvard University Press.
- Brutt-Griffler, J. (2005). The use of heritage language: An African perspective. *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 609-612.
- Bunwaree, S. (1994). *Mauritian Education in a Global economy*. Edition de l’Ocean Indien.
- Callary, B., Rathwell, S., & Young, B. (2015). *Insights on the Process of Using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis in a Sport Coaching Research Project*. The Qualitative Report.
- Calvet, J. (1998). *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Calvet, J. (2006). *Towards an Ecology of World Languages*. Oxford University Press.
- Calvet, J. (2006). *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, R., & Peyton, J. K. (1998). Heritage language students: A valuable language resource. *The ERIC Review*, 6(1), 38 – 9.

- Canagarajah, A. (2005). *Multilingual Communication and language acquisition*. New Research Directions.
- Canagarajah, A. (2008). Language shift and the family: Questions from the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora 1. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12 (2), 143-176.
- Carmignani, S. (2006). Figures identitaires créoles et patrimoine à l'île Maurice: Une montagne en jeu. *Journal des anthropologues*, 104-105, 265-285.
- <https://doi.org/10.4000/jda.562>
- Cenoz, J. (2013). Defining multilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33(1), 3–18.
- Cenoz, J. & Garcia, O. (2017). Breaking away from the multilingual solitudes in language education: International perspectives. *International Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 16(4).
- Central Statistics Office. (1972). Housing and Population Census of Mauritius. Volume V: Population General Tables. <https://statsmauritius.govmu.org>
- Central Statistics Office. (1983). Housing and Population Census of Mauritius Analysis Report Volume II- Demographic Characteristics. <https://statsmauritius.govmu.org>
- Central Statistics Office. (1990). Housing and Population Census of Mauritius Volume IV: Educational Characteristics. <https://statsmauritius.govmu.org>
- Central Statistics Office. (2000). Population Census- Main Results. <https://statsmauritius.govmu.org>
- Central Statistics Office. (2011). Housing and Population Census Volume II: Demographic and Fertility Characteristics. <https://statsmauritius.govmu.org>
- Chew, P. (2007). Remaking Singapore: Language, Culture and Identity in a Globalized World. Pp. 73-93 in *Language Policy, Culture, and Identity in Asian Contexts*, A. B. M. Tsui

- and J. W. Tollefson (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cho, J. (2019). *Multilingual Sydney*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cho, H. (2014). It's Very Complicated' Exploring Heritage Language Identity with Heritage Language Teachers in a Teacher Preparation Program. *Language and Education*, 28 (2), 181–195.
- Chowdhury, M. F. (2014). *Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World*. North South University of Bangladesh.
- Chowdry, H., Crawford, C., Dearden, L., Goodman, A. and Vignoles, A. (2013). Widening participation in higher education: analysis using linked administrative data. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. 176(2), 431-457.
- Claveyrolas, M. (2017). 'Indo-Mauritians' and the Indian Ocean" literacy accounts and anthropological readings. *Journal of Indian Ocean Region*, 13(2), 174-189.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morisson, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge.
- Colla, M. (2018). *The Impact of Ancestral Language Maintenance on Cultural Identity Among White Immigrant Descendants: A Phenomenological Qualitative Study* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tasmania].
- Corcoran, R. P., & Tormey, R. (2012). *Developing Emotionally Competent Teachers. Emotional Intelligence and Pre-service Teacher Education*. Peter Lang.
- Creese, A. (2015). Translanguaging and identity in educational settings. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000233>
- Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2015). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 1-9.
- Darling, N. (2007). Ecological Systems Theory: The Person in the Center of the Circles. *Research in Human Development*, 4(3), 203-217.

DOI: 10.1080/15427600701663023

- Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching Selves: Identity, Pedagogy, and Teacher Education*
- Demelza, J. (2016). Being Tamil, being Hindu: Tamil migrants' negotiations of the absence of Tamil Hindu spaces in the West Midlands and South West of England. *-
Religion, 46(1), 53-74.
- Dewaele, A. (2012). *The effect of immigration, acculturation and multicompetence on personality profiles of Israeli multilinguals. International Journal of Bilingualism, 18*(3), 203-221.
- Dewhurst, C. (2022). Professional identities: Third space and professional development,
International Journal of Educational Research, 114(1), 10-12.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as Experience*. Capricorn Books.
- Dionne, G., Dale, P. S., Boivin, M., & Plomin, R. (2003). Genetic evidence for bidirectional effects of early lexical and grammatical development. *Child development, 74*(2), 394-412.
- Drudy, S. (2008). Gender balance/gender bias: the teaching profession and the impact of feminisation, *Gender and Education, 20* (4), 309- 323.
- Duarte, J. (2020). Research priorities in the field of multilingualism and language education: a cross-national examination. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 23*(2), 220-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1792475>
- Duff, P. A. (2014). Case study research on language learning and use. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 34*, 233-255.
- Du Plessis, M. (2018). The Khoisan languages of southern Africa: facts, theories and confusions. *Critical Arts, 33*(1), 33-55.
- Edwards, J. (2014). *Language and Identity: An introduction*. Cambridge University

Press.

Eisenlohr, P. (2008). Temporalities of community: Ancestral language, pilgrimage, and diasporic belonging in Mauritius. *Journal of Linguistic anthropology*, 14(1), 81–98.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43104022>

Elmes, D. (2013). The relationship between language and culture. *Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(5), 753-757.

Ellis, K. M. G. (2019). *A phenomenological case study exploring teacher experiences in the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy within their predominantly African American classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation, Azusa Pacific University).

Eriksen, T. (2007). *Linguistic diversity and the quest for national identity: The case of Mauritius*. Ethnic and Racial Studies.

Fang, T. (2017). How to Maintain a Minority Language through Education. *Chinese Studies*, 6, 1-11.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2017.61001>

Farquhar, J. (2015). A Quality Framework for Case Study Research: “Convincingness”. In: Robinson, L. (eds) *Marketing Dynamism & Sustainability: Things Change, Things Stay the Same.... Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*. Springer.

Faraclas, N. (2012). *Agency in the emergence of creole languages: The role of women, renegades, and people of African and indigenous descent in the emergence of the colonial era creoles*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Fernandez, S.& Clyne, M. (2007). Tamil in Melbourne. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28 (3), 169-187.

Fetson, K. (2009). Homi Bhabha's Third Space and African identity, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 21(1), 23-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696810902986417>

Fisher, M. H. (2014). *Migration: A world history*. Oxford University Press.

Fishman, J. A. (2000). Why is it so hard to save a threatened language? (A perspective on the cases that follow). In: Joshua A. Fishman, ed., *Can Threatened Languages*

Be Saved? 1–22. Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. A. (2001). 300-plus years of heritage language education in the United States. In J. K. Peyton, D. A. Ranard, & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource*, (pp. 81–98). Washington, DC & McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics & Delta Systems.

Fishman, J. A. (1964). *Language loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups*. DeGruyter Mouton.

Fishman, J. A. (1977). Standard versus dialect in bilingual education: An old problem in a new context. *Modern Language Journal*, 61, 315-325.

Fishman, J. A. (1989). *Language and ethnicity in minority sociolinguistic perspective*. Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theory and practice of assistance to threatened languages*. Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. A. (1998). Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education by Colin Baker and Sylvia Prys Jones. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 22(2-4), 317-319.

Fishman, J. A. (1999). *Handbook of language & ethnic identity*. Oxford University Press.

Fishman, J. A. & García, O. (2010). *Handbook of Language & Ethnic Identity*. Oxford University Press.

Fishman, J. (1980). Bilingualism and biculturalism as individual and as societal phenomena. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1(1), 3-15.

Francis, J. (2008). The Basque Language in the French State. G. Totoricagüena et I. Urrutia.

- The legal status of the basque language today, Eusko Ikaskuntza, pp.221-241, 2008, 9788484191643. fahal-01669104f.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. (2007). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(1), 397-417.
- Frenzel, A. C. (2014). Teacher emotions. In E. A. Linnenbrink-Garcia & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *International Handbook of Emotions in Education* (pp. 494-519). Routledge.
- Garcia, O., Johnson, S. I., & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning*. Caslon Publishing.
- Garner, M. (2005). Language ecology as linguistic theory. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*. 17(10), 23-91.
- Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, M. J. (2014). The possibilities of phenomenology for organizational research. *Organizational research methods*, 17(2), 118-137.
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage.
- Gray D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world* (Third). Sage.
- Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages: An introduction to bilingualism*. Harvard University Press.
- Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative data Analysis*. Sage.
- Greenfield, L. & Fishman, J. (1970). Situational Measures of Normative Language Views in Relation to Person, Place and Topic among Puerto Rican Bilinguals. *Anthropos*, 65(3/4), 602-618.
- Grenoble, L. & Lindsay, W. (1998). *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grosjean, F. (1984). Le bilinguisme: Vivre avec deux langues. *Bulletin de Linguistique*

- Appliquée et Générale de l'Université de Besançon (Bulag), 11, 4-25; and Travaux Neuchâtelois de Linguistique, (Tranel), 7, 15-42.
- Guba, E.G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal* 29, 75–91.
- Hadi, M.A. (2016). Ensuring rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38 (3), 64.
- Hammersley, M. (2013). *What is Qualitative Research?* Bloomsbury.
- Hanoomanjee, E. (2000). *Ethnicity, social policy and mobility*. In S. Nirsimloo-Gayan (ed.) *Towards the Making of a Multicultural Society*. Mahatma Gandhi Institute.
- Hansard. (2010). *Parliamentary Transcript*. Mauritius National Assembly.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001). *Emotional Geographies of Teaching* [Unpublished College teacher's Record].
- Harmon, J. (2014). *Heritage Language and Identity Construction: A Critical Ethnography of Kreol Morisien as an optional language in primary education within the Republic of Mauritius*. [PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape].
- He, A. W. (2010). *The Heart of Heritage: Sociocultural Dimensions of Heritage Language Learning*. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 66–82. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0267190510000073>
- He, W. (2010). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Herdina, P. & Jessner, U. (2002). *A dynamic model of multilingualism. Perspectives of change in psycholinguistics*. Multilingual Matters.
- Hernandez, E. (2017). Redefining the Experiences of Students in Continuation High Schools: A Narrative Profile of a Latino. *The High School Journal*, 100 (4), 264-281.
- Hitchcock, C., Hughes, M., McPherson, L., & Whitaker, L. (2021). The role of education in

- developing students' professional resilience for social work practice: a systematic scoping review. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 51(7), 2361-2380.
- Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. J. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill.
- Hohr, H. (2013). The Concept of Experience by John Dewey Revisited: Conceiving, Feeling and "Enlivering". *Stud Philos Educ* 32, 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-030-7>
- Hollup, O. (2010). Islamic Revivalism and Political Opposition among Minority Muslims in Mauritius. *Ethnology*. 35(28), 5-10.
- Homi, B. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Psychology Press.
- Hongna, G. (2015). *On the Protection and Development of the Minor Languages during China's Social Transition 论社会转型期少数民族语言的保护与发展*. Guizhou.
- Hornberger, H. (2001). Educational linguistics as a field: A view from Penn's program on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 17 (1-2), 1-26.
- Hornberger, N. (2007). Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy*, 1, 27–51. Hornberger, N. H. (Ed). (2003). *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework*.
- Imbens-Bailey, A. (1996). Ancestral Language Acquisition: Implications for Aspects of Ethnic Identity among Armenian American Children and Adolescents. *Sage Journals*, 32(3), 34-45.
- Jayaram, N. (2000). *The Dynamics of Language in Indian Diaspora: The Case of Bhojpuri/Hindi in Trinidad*. Sage.
- Jessner, U. (2008). A DST Model of Multilingualism and the Role of Metalinguistic

- Awareness. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92 (1), 270 - 283.
- <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00718.x>.
- John-Naidu, P. (2015). *The Struggle to be South African: Cultural Politics in Durban, Contesting Indian Identity in the Public Sphere*. [Masters dissertation, University of Durban-Westville].
- Kagan, D. (1992). *Implication of Research on Teacher Belief*. Educational Psychologist.
- Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2008). Language policy, vernacular education and language economics in postcolonial Africa. In P. K. W. Tan & R. Rubdy (Eds.), *Language as commodity: Global structures, local marketplaces* (pp. 171-186). London: Continuum.
- Kandler, C. (2017). Theoretical perspectives on the interplay of nature and nurture in personality development. In J. Specht (Ed.), *Personality development across the lifespan* (pp. 101–115). Elsevier Academic Press.
- Kaushanskaya, M., Yoo, J., & Marian, V. (2011). The Effect of Second-Language Experience on Native-Language Processing. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8, 54–77.
- Kelleher, A. (2010). What is a heritage language? *Journal of Applied Linguistics*. University of California.
- Khemlani-David, M. (1998). Language shift, cultural maintenance, and ethnic identity; a study of a minority community: The Sindhis of Malaysia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 130 (1), 67-76.
- Kloss, H. (1966). German-American Language Maintenance Efforts. In J. Fishman, V. Nahirny, J. Hofman and R. Hayden (Ed.), *Language Loyalty in The United States*.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Krishnamurti, B. (2003). *The Dravidian Languages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Labov, W. (1969). A Study of Non-Standard English. *ERIC*, 3(1), 1-72.

- Labov, K. (2006). *Language Variation and Change*. West Virginia University.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. & Cameron, L. (2008). *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Lasky, S. (2005). *A Sociocultural Approach to understanding Teacher Identity, Agency Learning and teaching of Modern languages, Second languages and Foreign languages*.
- Lee, T. (2009). Language, Identity, and Power: Navajo and Pueblo Young Adults' Perspectives and Experiences with Competing Language Ideologies. *Journal Of Language, Identity & Education*, 8(5), 307-320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348450903305106>
- Léglise, I. (2007). *Language and colonialism. Applied linguistics in the context of creole communities*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Lemarchand-Chauvin, M., & Tardieu, C. (2018). Teachers' Emotions and Professional Identity Development: Implications for Second Language Teacher Education. 10.1007/978-3-319-75438-3_23.
- Lewis, M. (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. SIL International.
- Li, S. (2013). *Investigation of Parents' Involvement in Minority Language Maintenance: Case Study of Chinese Heritage Learners' Parents*. University of Toledo
- Li, W. (2006). Complementary Schools, Past, Present and Future. *Language and Education*, 20(1), 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780608668711>
- Liddicoat, A & Crozet, C. (1999). *Striving for the third place Intercultural competence through language education*. Oxford University Press
- Lim, L. (2015). Coming of age, coming full circle: The (re)positioning of (Singapore) English and multilingualism in Singapore at 50, *Asian Englishes*, 17(3), 261-270.
- Lindo, F. (2005). The Concept of Integration: Theoretical Concerns and Practical Meaning.

- Social Integration and Mobility*, 7(20), 148-150.
- Lutchmoodoo, R. (2013). *Teaching of Telugu in Mauritius- An Evaluation*. Star Press.
- Maffea, J. (2020). *Lack of Resources in Classrooms*. [Unpublished English Department notes].
- Mahadeo, D. (2017). *The development of the linguistic repertoire of primary school learners within the Mauritian multilingual educational system*. [Doctoral Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal].
- Malouf, A. (2010). *In the Name of Identity*. Penguin Group.
- Marton, F. (1986). Phenomenography—A Research Approach to Investigating Different Understandings of Reality. *Journal of Thought*, 21(3), 28-49.
- Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. (2017). PSAC Statistics.
<https://mes.intnet.mu/English/Statistics / PSAC%20Statistics/Pages/default.aspx>
- Mauritius Examination Syndicate. (2015). National Certificate of Education.
<https://mes.intnet.mu / NCE/Pages/default.aspx>
- Mauritius Institute of Education. (2015). National Curriculum Framework. Grades 1 to 6. MOEHRTE.
- May, S. (2003). Rearticulating the Case for Minority Language Rights. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 4(2), 95-125.
DOI:10.1080/14664200308668052.
- May, S. (2015). The problem with English(es) and linguistic (in)justice. Addressing the limits of liberal egalitarian accounts of language. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 18(2), 1-18.
- Mahatma Gandhi Institute. (2006). *Language Evolution*. [Unpublished School of education report]
- Marshall, G. (2002). The purpose, design and administration of a questionnaire for data collection. *Radiography*, 11(2), 20-23.

- Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust. (2012). *A Study of Marathi Settlements in Mauritius*. Government Press of Mauritius.
- Mesthrie, R. (2006). Subordinate immigrant languages and language endangerment: two community studies from KwaZulu-Natal'. *Language Matters*, 34(1), 75-99.
- Mesthrie, R. (2007). Language shift, cultural change and identity retention: Indian South Africans in the 1960s and beyond. *South African Historical Journal*, 5(7), 134-152.
- Mehta, S. (1995). Power Dynamics of Indian Immigrants in Mauritius: A Study in Ethnic Relations. *Indian Anthropologist*, 25(1), 1-11
- Miles, W. (2000). *The Politics of Language Equilibrium in a Multilingual Society: Mauritius*. *Comparative Politics*, 32(2), 215. <https://doi.org/10.2307/422398>
- Ministry of Education & Scientific Research, Mauritius. (2014). Education Reforms in action: 2008-2014.
<http://ministryeducation.govmu.org/English/Documents/EDUCATION%20REPORT%20in%20Action%2002.9.14.pdf>
- Morales, P. Z. (2016). Transnational practices and language maintenance: Spanish and Zapoteco in California. *Children's Geographies*, 14(4), 375-389.
- Moraru, A. (2016). *Understanding how second-generation multilingual immigrants reproduce linguistic practices with non-autochthonous minority languages in Cardiff, Wales*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Cardiff University]
- Mufwene, S. (2002). *Creolization is a social, not a structural, process*. In: Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh and Edgar Schneider, eds., *Degrees of Restructuring in Creole Languages*, 65–84. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Murdan, A. (2021). *Bhojpuri in Mauritius* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Africa].
- Murthy, C. (2017). Telugu diaspora as soft power: mapping media, cultural ties and political

economy with homeland. *Diaspora Studies*, 10(1), 97-115.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09739572.2016.1239438>

Nababsing, V., Mathur, H. (1999). Mauritius: Cultural Accommodation in a Diverse Island Polity. In: Young, C. (eds) *The Accommodation of Cultural Diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Napal, D. (1965). *Les Indiens a l'Ile de France* Editions Nationales.

Natchoo, N. (2020). *A creolizing Curriculum: Multicultural Education, Ethnopolitics and Teaching Kreol Morisien* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kansas].

Nirsimloo-Gayan, S. (2007). On the possibility of a shared cultural heritage. *Journal of Mauritian Studies*, 4(1), 44-49.

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18(2), 34-50.

Numrich, C. (1996). *On becoming a language teacher; Insights from diary studies*. TESOL

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Odden, A., & Carolyn, C. (2010). *Paying Teachers for what they know*. Washington.

Okemaw, V. (2019). *Learning and Teaching an Ancestral Language: Stories from Manitoba Teachers* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta].

Onosu G. (2021). The Impact of Cultural Immersion Experience on Identity Transformation Process. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(5), 26-80. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052680>

Oozeerally, S (2012). *Mondialisation, chaos, ecologie, Maurice: vers une autre sociolinguistique*. Unpublished article.

Pajares, P. (1992). *Teachers' Beliefs and Educational Research*. American Educational Research Association.

Parameshwaran, M. (2014). Explaining intergenerational variations in English language

- acquisition and ethnic language attrition. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 37(1), 27-45.
- Parsuramen, A. (1986). Report of Select Committee on CPE, Government of Mauritius, National Assembly.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). 'Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: a personal, experiential perspective', *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Paulston, C. (1994). *Linguistic minorities in multilingual settings: Implications for language policies*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Payneeanandi, M. (2009). *Society and the condition of the Child in Mauritius*. Mauritius Reasearch Council.
- Peerthum, S. (2016, July 31). Manilal Doctor—A Man of the People. *Mauritius Times*.
www.mauritiustimes.com/mt/satyendra-peerthum-1/
- Peerthum, S. (2017). 'They came to Mauritian shores': *The Life-Stories and the History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826–1937)*. Appravasi Ghat Trust Fund.
- Peghini, J. (2017, April 18). Quel héritage pour le mauricianisme? *Lexpress*.
- Pernecky, T., and Jamal, T. (2010) (Hermeneutic) Phenomenology in tourism studies. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(4), 1055-1075.
- Pham, L. (2018). *A Review of key paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry*. Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Piantaggini, L. (2020). Grammar-Translation: What Is It—Really—For Students? *Journal of Classics Teaching*, 21(42), 92-94. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2058631020000513>
- Polinsky, M. & Kagan, O. (2007). Heritage Languages: In the 'Wild' and in the Classroom. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 21(2), 10-12.

- Polinsky, M. (2000). The composite linguistic profile of speakers of Russian in the US. In Kagan, O. The learning and teaching of Slavic languages and cultures. Bloomington, IN: *Slavica*. pp. 437–465.
- Poloogadoo, R. (2018). *The problems and prospects of teaching Telugu as a second language in Mauritius* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Mauritius].
- Prabhakaran, V. (1991). *The Telugu Language and its influence on the cultural lives of the Hindu 'Pravasandhras' in South Africa*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Durban-Westville].
- Prabhakaran, V. (1992). Generation - A factor in language shift and maintenance of the Telugu language. *South African Journal of Linguistics*, 10(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10118063.1992.9724454>
- Prabhakaran, V. (1993). The Religio-cultural dynamics of the Hindu Andhras as a governing factor for Telugu language maintenance in South Africa. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 6(1), 69–83.
- Prabhakaran, V. (1994). *The Religio-cultural dynamics of the Hindu Andhras in the diaspora*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Durban-Westville].
- Prabhakaran, V. (1995). Language attrition – A Case study of Telugu language in South Africa. *South African Journal of Linguistics*, 13(4).
- Prabhakaran, V. (1997). The parameters of maintenance of the Telugu language in South Africa. *Language Matters*, 28(1), 51–80.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10228199708566120>.
- Prabhakaran, V. (1998). Multilingualism and language shift in South Africa: The case of Telugu, an Indian language. *Multilingua*, 12(2/3), 297–319.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.1998.17.2-3.297>.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2015). Teacher agency: what is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (eds.), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the*

- Bottom Up*. Routledge.
- Purschke, C. (2020). Exploring the linguistic landscape of cities through crowdsourced data, in *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*, eds S. Brunn and R. Kehrein (Cham: Springer), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73400-2_220-1
- Putman, S. (2012). Investigating Teacher Efficacy: Comparing Preservice and Inservice Teachers with Different Levels of Experience, *Action in Teacher Education*, 34(1), 26-40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2012.642285>
- Rajah-Carrim, A. (2004). The role of Mauritian Creole in the religious practices of Mauritian Muslims. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 19 (2), 363-375.
- Rajah-Carrim, A. (2005). Language Use and Attitudes in Mauritius on the basis of the 2000 population census. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*.
- Rajah-Carrim, A. (2007). Mauritian Creole and language attitudes in the education system of multiethnic and multilingual Mauritius. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28(1), 51-71.
- Rajah-Carrim, A. (2008). Choosing a spelling system for Mauritian Creole. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Language*, 23(2), 193-226.
- Rasinger, S. (2010). Ethnolinguistic vitality and language use amongst Eastern European migrants in East Anglia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 31 (3), 287-300.
- Richards, L. (2011). *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publications.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Analysis, Qualitative Research Methods*. Sage.
- Roberts, B. (2002). *Biographical Research*. Open University Press.
- Roberts, T. (2013) 'Understanding the research methodology of interpretative

- phenomenological analysis', *British Journal of Midwifery*, 21(3), pp. 215-218.
<https://doi.org/10.12968/bjom.2013.21.3.215>.
- Robillard, D. (1993). « *Ce que « comprendre » pourrait bien vouloir dire ?* »
- Robinson, C. (2009). Where minorities are in the majority: language dynamics amidst high linguistic diversity. In K. De Bot (ed.) *Case Studies in Minority Languages. AILA Review* 10 (2), 52 -70.
- Rosenmann, A. & Reese, J. (2015). Social Identities in a Globalized World: Challenges and Opportunities for Collective Action. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. tba. tba.
 10.1177/1745691615621272.
- Rosowsky, A. (2019). Singing in my language(s): How religious verse and song contribute to minority language maintenance. In R. Pandharipande, M. David, & M. Ebsworth (Ed.), *Language maintenance, revival and shift in the sociology of religion* (pp. 33–50). Multilingual Matters.
- Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, N. (2007). *Famille, enfant, école: Les représentations de l'école et de l'écrit d'enfants entrant dans l'écrit en langues étrangères; études de cas conduites à l'île Maurice auprès d'enfants scolarisés âgés de 4 à 8 ans* [Doctoral Dissertation, Université De Toulouse].
- Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, N. (2012). Clarté cognitive et littératie: Le développement de concepts scientifiques en langues étrangères en contexte d'enseignement multilingue. Une Etude De Cas. In R. Tirvassen (Dir.), *L'entrée dans le bilinguisme*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, N. (2013). The challenge of instructed bilingualism and bi-literacy in the Mauritian context [Paper presentation]. International Conference on Urban Multilingualism and Education, Gent, Belgium.
- Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, N. (2018). Learning to read in a multilingual context: The

- Mauritian experience [Paper presentation]. 5th International Conference on Language and Literacy Education, Humel, Wits University, Johannesburg.
- Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, N. (2020). Taking research out of the test-driving zone. An option for strategic research. *Journal of Education. Epistemology, Methodology and Research in Language Studies*, 2(1), 1-30.
- Rule, P., & John, V. M. (2015). A Necessary Dialogue: Theory in Case Study Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(4).
- Safran, W. (2008). *Language, ethnicity and religion: A complex and persistent linkage*. Nations and Nationalism.
- Said, F. & Zhu, H. (2017). "No, no Maama! Say 'Shaatir ya ouledee Shaatir!'" Children's agency in language use and socialisation. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 3(2), 115-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006916684919>
- Sallanbank, J. (2013). *Attitudes to Endangered Languages: Identities and Policies*.
- Sambajee, P. (2010). The dynamics of language and ethnicity in Mauritius: *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*. 2016 ; Vol. 16.
- Sauzier-Uchida, E. (2006). Language Choice in Mauritius- National unity and Socio economic Advancement. *Journal of Liberal Arts*, 126, 99–130.
https://dspace.wul.waseda.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2065/32794/1/KyoyoShogakuKenkyu_126_Sauzier-Uchida.pdf
- Sebba, M. (1997). *Contact languages: Pidgins and Creoles*. Palgrave.
- Senior, R. (2006). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign language. *TESL Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 4-9*.
- Shenton, A. (2010). *Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects*. Northumbria University.
- Siemund, Peter & Li, L. (2020). *Multilingualism and Language Policy in Singapore*. Oxford University Press. 10.4324/9781003049890-14.

- Silverman, S. (2016). *Qualitative Research*. Sage Publication.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, R. (1983). Multilingualism and the Education of Minority Children. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. & Cummins, J. (eds.) *Minority education: 9–44. Multilingual Matters*.
- Smith, J. A. (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis, *Research journal*, 5(1), 9-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2010.510659>.
- Shneiderman, B., & Plaisant, C. (2006, May). Strategies for evaluating information visualization tools: multi-dimensional in-depth long-term case studies. In *Proceedings of the 2006 AVI workshop on BEyond time and errors: novel evaluation methods for information visualization* (pp. 1-7).
- Sokappadu, R. (2008). *Telugu in Mauritius*. The Star Press.
- Sokappadu, R. (2016). *The Telugu Culture in Mauritius*. HS3 Printing.
- Sokappadu, R. (2017). *The Telugu Culture in Mauritius*. HS3 Printing.
- Sokappadu, R. (2023). *The Telugu Culture in Mauritius*. HS3 Printing.
- Sonck, G. (2005). *Language of Instruction and Instructed languages in Mauritius. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 26 (1), 37-51.
- Souza, A. (2016). Language and faith encounters: Bridging language-ethnicity and language-religion studies. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(1), 134–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1040023>.
- Spivak, R. (2006) *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sridhar, K. (1988). Language maintenance and language shift among Asian-Indians: Kannadigas in the New York area. *International Journal of the Sociology of language*, 1988 (69), 73-88.
- Srilata, K. (2010.) Indianités francophones / Indian Ethnoscapes in Francophone Literature. *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 2(4), 29-45.

- Stein, P. (1982). *Connaissance et employ des langues à l'Ile Maurice*. Hamburg: Buske.
- Stein, P. (1986). The value and problem of census data on languages: an evaluation of the language tables from the 1983 population census of Mauritius. In J. Fishman et al. (Eds.) *The Fergusonian impact. In honour of Charles A. Ferguson*, 2, 265-277. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Suntoo, R., & Chittoo, H. (2011). Youth Culture and Development in Mauritius. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 11(10), 1-5.
- Taylor, P. & Medina, M. (2013). Educational research paradigms: From positivism to Multi-paradigmatic. *Journal for Meaning-Centered Education*, 3 (1), 230-233.
- Teelock, V. (2009). *Mauritian history: from its beginnings to modern times*. Mahatma Gandhi Institute.
- Teelock, A. (2019). Post-Indenture Mauritius: Explorations into the history, society and culture of indentured immigrants and their descendants in Mauritius. *Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund*, 3, 159-176.
- Teo, P. (2008). Mandarinising Singapore: A Critical Analysis of Slogans in the Speak Mandarin Campaign. *Critical Discourse Studies* 2(2), 121–142.
- Timostuk, I. & A. Ugaste. (2012) The Role of Emotions in Student Teachers' Professional Identity. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 35 (4), 421–433.
- Tirvassen, R. (2009). *Ecole et langues maternelles dans les systems educatifs des iles du sud-ouest de l'océanindien* [Schools and native languages in the education systems of islands in the south-west of the Indian Ocean].
- Tirvassen, R. (2014). *Créolisation, plurilinguismes et dynamiques des langues*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

- Tirvassen, R. (2016). The Mauritian Education System: Was there a will to anglicize it? *Education Research and Perspectives*, 34(1), 88-110.
- Tirvassen, R., & Ramasawmy, S. (2017). Deconstructing and re-inventing the concepts of multilingualism: A case study of the Mauritian linguistic landscape. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistic Plus*, (51), 41-59.
- Tirvassen, R. (2019). Recherches Sociolinguistiques et Militantisme – Et si la theorisation n'était qu'un autre point de vue? *École et Plurilinguisme dans le sud-ouest de l'Océan Indien*, 28(1), 22-38.
- Tirvassen, R. (2018). Sociolinguistics and the narrative turn. Researching language and society in contexts of change and transition. *Leiden, Boston: Brill*.
- Troy, J. & Walsh, M. (2009). Reinstating Aboriginal placenames around Port Jackson and Botany Bay. In H Koch & L Hercus (Eds). *Aboriginal placenames: naming and re-naming the Australian landscape* (pp. 55–69). Aboriginal History Monograph 19. Aboriginal History Inc and ANU E Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. Penguin.
- Tsunoda, T. (2005). *Language endangerment and language revitalization*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ullah, H. (2016). *School Teaching as a Feminine Profession: The Legitimization and Naturalisation discourses in the Pakistani Context* [Unpublished research work].
- Valdes, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 410- 426.
- Valdes, G. (2021). The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic-teaching professionals. *The Learning and Teaching of Slavic Languages and Cultures*, 28 (3), 375-400.
- Van Manen, M. (2017). Phenomenology and Meaning Attribution, *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 17(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2017.1368253>.

- Varma, M.N. (2008). *The Political History of Mauritius*. Star Publications Pvt Ltd.
- Varma, M.N. (2013). *The Political History of Mauritius*. Star Publications Pvt Ltd.
- Van Deusen-Scholl, N. (2003). Toward a definition of heritage language: socio-political and pedagogical considerations. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 2, 211–230.
- Van Deusen-Scholl, N. (2018). The Negotiation of Multilingual Heritage Identity in a Distance Environment: HLA and the Plurilingual Turn. *CALICO Journal*, 35(3), 235–256.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26554576>
- Venkanah, S. & Auleear-Owoodally, M. (2023). Keertanam and Bhajanam: The Faith (Literacy) Practices of the Telugu Community in Plural Mauritius. *Heritage Language Journal*, 20(1), 1-35.
- Volek, M. E. (2014). *Speaking of Bakhtin: A study of the sociolinguistic discourse on Bakhtin and language*. University of British Columbia.
<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0167541>
- Walsh, J. (2006). Language and socio-economic development: Towards a theoretical framework, *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 30 (2), 127-148.
- Ward, W. (1941). *Report on education in Mauritius*. Government Printing.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2002). *An Introduction to sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Watt K. (2019). *The Legacy of Indentured Labour*. In: Ratuva S. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Ethnicity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0242-8_100-1
- Wendel, J. (2005). Notes on the ecology of language. *Bunkyo Gakuin University Academic Journal*. 5(1), 51-76.
- Wijayanto, A. (2005). *An Ecolinguistic Perspective on the Languages Used by a Javanese in*

- banjarmasin-South Kalimantan (a case study)*. Linguistik dan Sastra.
- Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., O. Nyumba, & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and evolution*, 9(1), 20-32.
- Yadla, A. (2016). *Maintaining the heritage language and identity: the case of new diaspora Telugus in London* [PhD Thesis. Anglia Ruskin University].
- Yagmur, K. (2011). Does Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory account for the actual vitality of ethnic groups? A critical evaluation. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 32 (2), 111-120.
- Yin, R. (2006). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. *Applied Social Research Methods series*. Sage Publications.
- Yuksel, P., & Brooks, P. (2017). Encouraging usage of an endangered ancestral language: A supportive role for caregivers' deictic gestures. *First Language*, 37(6), 561–582.

Appendix 1: Data Production Plan

Research Title: Teachers' experiences of teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual context: The case of Telugu in Mauritius

Critical questions:

1. What are Mauritian teachers' experiences of teaching Telugu?
2. To what do Mauritian teachers who teach **Telugu** ascribe their experiences of teaching the language? (WHY do they feel that way?)
3. How do teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius?

Questions	What are Mauritian teachers' experiences of teaching Telugu?	To what do Mauritian teachers who teach Telugu ascribe their experiences of teaching the language?	How do teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius?
Why is the data being collected?	To explore and understand the experiences of teachers teaching Telugu: Challenges, difficulties, attitudes, motivation level, job satisfaction as well as their living in the language and the culture attached to the language.	To explore the causes of the positive and negative experiences lived by teachers. To explore the reasons behind their experiences and the factors that affect or influence the experiences.	To explore how teachers negotiate the context – how they work within the multilingual setting. To explore their home background and identity in society and relate these with the way they negotiate the context.
What are the research instruments ?	Questionnaires and focus-group discussions will be used to have an overview analysis of the phenomenon. They will also help to choose participants for interviews .	Questionnaires and focus-group discussions will be used to have an overview analysis of the phenomenon. They will also help to choose participants for interviews .	Questionnaires and focus-group discussions will be used to have an overview analysis of the phenomenon. They will also help to choose participants for interviews .
Who (or what) will be the sources of the data?	Secondary school Telugu teachers	Secondary school Telugu teachers	Secondary school Telugu teachers

Questions	What are Mauritian teachers' experiences of teaching Telugu?	To what do Mauritian teachers who teach Telugu ascribe their experiences of teaching the language?	How do teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius?
How many of the data sources will be accessed?	Approximately 40 questionnaires will be distributed to Telugu Educators targeting the whole population. 6 participants will be chosen from the 40 for the interviews, which will be the main data source.	Approximately 40 questionnaires will be distributed to Telugu Educators targeting the whole population. 6 participants will be chosen from the 40 for the interviews, which will be the main data source.	Approximately 40 questionnaires will be distributed to Telugu Educators targeting the whole population. 6 participants will be chosen from the 40 for the interviews, which will be the main data source.
How often will data be collected?	40 teachers will fill in the questionnaire once in their own time and will return it at pre-arranged dates and times. 3 interviews per participant in 3 different settings at 3 key spaces, namely after work, the home environment and a socio-cultural setting	40 teachers will fill in the questionnaire once in their own time and will return it at pre-arranged dates and times. 3 interviews per participant in 3 different settings at 3 key spaces, namely after work, the home environment and a socio-cultural setting	40 teachers will fill in the questionnaire once in their own time and will return it at pre-arranged dates and times. 3 interviews per participant in 3 different settings at 3 key spaces, namely after work, the home environment and a socio-cultural setting
Justify this plan for data collection.	The questionnaire will provide data to answer to research questions as well as having an insight into the phenomenon. It will further help choose appropriate participants from a large group. To get in-depth data to answer research questions, in-depth semi-structured interviews will be used.	The questionnaire will provide data to answer to research questions as well as having an insight into the phenomenon. It will further help choose appropriate participants from a large group. To get in-depth data, in-depth semi-structured interviews will be used.	The questionnaire will provide data to answer to research questions as well as having an insight into the phenomenon. It will further help choose appropriate participants from a large group. To get in-depth data, in-depth semi-structured interviews will be used.

Appendix 2: Gatekeeper Permission Letter

To: Public Relations Officer

Ministry of Education & Human Resources, TE and SR.

From: Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra (Educator Secondary - Telugu).

Bel Air SSS

Date: 30 August 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Authorisation to conduct PhD Research.

I am Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra (Educator Secondary - Telugu). I am currently enrolled on a PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa. My supervisors are Professor Ansurie Pillay and Prof N. Govender from the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and Dr Nita Rughoonundhun, Associate Professor at Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Reduit.

My research project is entitled: **"Teachers' Experiences of Teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual Context: The Case of Telugu in Mauritius"**

The aim of my study is to explore the teaching experiences of Telugu Educators. The outcome of my study will develop a better understanding of ancestral language educators' beliefs, motivation and emotions and teaching practices.

It would therefore appreciate if permission for same could be granted. I wish to inform you that the concerned educators will be contacted outside school premises and outside school hours. Interviews will be done outside the school environment.

If you wish to have any further information about any aspect of the study, feel free to contact me on 59072747 or on 4131242. You may also contact my UKZN supervisors, Prof Ansurie Pillay by email pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za and Prof Govender by email govendern37@ukzn.ac.za and my local supervisor Dr Nita Rughoonundhun at the MIE on 4016555 or by email n.rughoonundhun@mieonline.org.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully



Yenkanah Shailendra

Appendix 3: Gatekeeper Approval



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES, TERTIARY EDUCATION
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

ME/305/3T₁₅

06 February 2019

Mr Shailendra Yenkanah
Bramsthan Road
Richemare
Centre de Flacq

Dear Sir

Subject: Authorisation to conduct PhD research

Please refer to your correspondence on the above subject.

2. This is to inform you that permission has been granted to you to collect data from Telugu Educators subject to the following:
 - i). Informed consent of the sampled participants would have to be sought and obtained before you proceed with the collection of data; and
 - ii). Anonymity of participants and of their institutions as well as confidentiality of data would have to be maintained.
3. It is understood that data will be collected outside school hours and premises.
4. You will have to submit a copy of your findings to the Ministry upon completing the study.

Yours faithfully,

C. Surajbali-Bissoonaath (Mrs)
for Senior Chief Executive

Appendix 4: Informed Consent – Information Sheet and Consent Form

Dear _____

Information Sheet

Research Topic: Teachers' Experiences of Teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual Context: The Case of Telugu in Mauritius

I, Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra (Educator Secondary - Telugu), am currently enrolled on a PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. My supervisors are Professor Ansurie Pillay and Prof N. Govender from the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa/, and Dr Nita Rughoonundhun, Associate Professor from Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Reduit.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. To explore the teachers' experiences of teaching an ancestral language such as Telugu
2. To understand reasons for their experiences, that is, why they feel that way
3. To understand how teachers of Telugu mediate the use and study of the language within the multilingual context of Mauritius

The outcome of my study will develop a better understanding of ancestral language educators' beliefs, motivation and emotions and teaching practices, and thus help stakeholders better equip ancestral language teachers.

You are invited to participate in this PhD study based on your experiences as a Telugu teacher living and teaching in Mauritius. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the research process at any time.

Participation in this study will require that you:

- Share your reflections of your living and teaching experiences as a teacher.
- Fill a questionnaire
- Agree to be interviewed. All interviews will be audio recorded.

As the researcher I will ensure your confidentiality in this study and will protect your anonymity and that of your school/institution at all times. All data generated in this study will be kept for five years and will be safely stored in hard copies or password protected virtually and will be appropriately destroyed at the end of the five-year period.

I would be grateful if you would agree to participate in this study.

As part of this study, I will produce a thesis and various other conference presentations and publications. You will be acknowledged in my thesis and any other output from this research.

For any additional information, you may contact my supervisors whose details are mentioned above or the HSSREC Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba, Email: Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you,

Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra

Date

Participant Consent Form

Research Topic: Teachers' Experiences of Teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual context: The case of Telugu in Mauritius

I, _____ understand the contents of this document and consent to participate in the study by Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra on “**Teachers’ experiences of teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual Context: The case of Telugu in Mauritius**”

I understand that:

- My participation will involve questionnaire, interviews and narratives as explained in the information letter.
- I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
- I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
- I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. However, I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
- The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible for me to be identified by the general reader.
- For any additional details, I may contact the following supervisors: Professor Ansurie Pillay and Prof N. Govender from the Faculty of Education at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa/ Dr Nita Rughoonundhun, Associate Professor from Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Reduit or the HSSREC Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba, Email: Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam

Good morning. Thank you for agreeing to filling in this questionnaire and thus participating in my research.

The purpose of this research is to explore the living and teaching experiences of Teachers of Telugu in the local multilingual context. You may fill the questionnaire at your ease and return it to me. Should you require additional info, please do not hesitate to contact me.

This questionnaire contains fill in the blank questions, closed ended questions and Likert-scale questions.

1. (i) Surname Other name(s)
.....
- (ii) Gender
- (iii) Age
- (iv) Marital status:
- (v) Number of children:
- (vi) Number of Siblings:
- (vii) Professional occupation of spouse:
- (viii) Address
.....
- (ix) Mobile Number Home/Office
- (x) Approximate immigration year of forefathers:

2. (i) Where did you start learning Telugu formally?

At home

☐

At temple

☐☐

At evening classes run by temple

At School ☐

Other* ☐

(ii) Before learning the language at school, where did you have exposure to the language?

At home ☐

At temple ☐

At evening classes run by temple ☐

At School ☐

Television ☐

Radio ☐

Other* ☐

(iii) At what age did you start learning Telugu language?

(iv) Why did you choose Telugu as an optional language subject at primary school? (You may tick more than one response).

The subject was interesting. ☐

My parents encouraged me. ☐

My parents wanted it. ☐

I was directed to that class at school. ☐

I scored good marks. ☐

I hail from the Telugu community. ☐

(v) Why did you choose Telugu at secondary school? (You may tick more than one response).

I found the subject interesting. ☐

My parents encouraged me. ☐

My parents wanted it. ☐

I hail from the Telugu community. ☐

Other* ☐

3. (i) Qualifications (Please tick)

Diploma ☐ BA ☐ PGCE ☐

MA ☐ Other ☐

(ii) Place of study (SC & HSC).

SSS/MGI ☐ Private ☐ Other * ☐

(iii) Place of study (Undergraduate).

UOM/MGI ☐ Andhra Pradesh ☐ Other * ☐

(iv) Place of study (Post graduate).

UOM/MGI/MIE ☐ Andhra Pradesh ☐ Other * ☐

4. (i) Years of teaching experience as Telugu teacher.

0-3 ☐ 4-10 ☐ 11-18 ☐ 19-25 ☐ >25 ☐

(ii) Number of postings

5. (i) Religious faith

Atheist ☐ Hindu ☐ Christian ☐ Muslim ☐ Other ☐

(ii) Do you practice your faith?

Yes ☐ No ☐ To some extent ☐

(iii) In which language do you practice your faith? (You may tick more than one option.)

Hindi ☐ Tamil ☐ Telugu ☐ Marathi ☐
Kreol ☐ English ☐ French ☐ Other* ☐

(v) If of Hindu faith, what are your regular place of worship? (If any)

Kovil ☐ Mandir ☐ Mandiram/Aalayam ☐

Other* ☐ Do not pray ☐

6. (i) Father's occupation

(ii) Father's occupation

(iii) Mother's occupation

(iv) Grand father's occupation

(v) Grand mother's occupation

(vi) Are both parents from the Telugu speaking community?

Yes ☐

No

- (vi) Do you have photos of your deceased grandparents/forefathers hung at your place as a sign of their remembrance?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- (vii) On a scale 1 to 5, please tick to what extent you are emotionally attached to belongings/heritage of your grandparents/forefathers.

1 2 3 4 5

Low

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

High

- (viii) Language/s spoken to spouse. (Please tick)

Kreol ☐

English ☐

French ☐

Bhojpuri ☐

Telugu ☐

other * ☐

- (ix) Language/s spoken to children at present. (Please tick)

Kreol ☐

English ☐

French ☐

Bhojpuri ☐

Telugu ☐

other * ☐

- (x) Language/s spoken by your child/children among siblings/friends.

(Please tick. You may tick more than one box.)

Kreol ☐

English ☐

French ☐

Bhojpuri ☐

Telugu ☐

other * ☐

(xi) Language/s spoken to parents during childhood. (Please tick. You may tick more than one box.)

Kreol	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bhojpuri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telugu	<input type="checkbox"/>	other *	<input type="checkbox"/>

(xii) Language/s spoken to parents during childhood. (Please tick. You may tick more than one box.)

Kreol	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bhojpuri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telugu	<input type="checkbox"/>	other *	<input type="checkbox"/>

(xiii) Language/s spoken to grandparents during childhood. (Please tick. You may tick more than one box.)

Kreol	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bhojpuri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telugu	<input type="checkbox"/>	other *	<input type="checkbox"/>

(xiv) Language/s spoken to siblings during childhood. (Please tick. You may tick more than one box.)

Kreol	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bhojpuri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telugu	<input type="checkbox"/>	other *	<input type="checkbox"/>

(xv) Language/s spoken to parents at present. (Please tick)

Kreol	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bhojpuri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telugu	<input type="checkbox"/>	other *	<input type="checkbox"/>

- (7) How did you become a Telugu teacher?
(Tick as many statements as you deem relevant)

It has always been my dream since school days. ☐

I could not find any other job. ☐

It was the only way I could become a civil servant. ☐

Having done further studies in Telugu, this was an obvious option.

I believed it was the most relevant way of preserving ☐

the Telugu minority and its culture. ☐

My parents wanted me to become a Telugu teacher ☐

Any other reason. (Please specify in one sentence) ☐

.....

- (ii) Within the Mauritian multilingual context, what visibility do you think the Telugu language enjoys?

Low

--	--	--	--	--

High

- (iii) My positive experiences of teaching Telugu may be ascribed to: (Tick as many statements as you deem relevant)

My students score Good results. ☐

Class size is small. ☐

I am teaching something different. ☐

I am contributing to the preservation of Telugu language. ☐

I am contributing to the preservation of Telugu culture. ☐

Parents are very appreciative of my endeavor. ☐

Any other reason (s). (Please specify in one sentence).

.....

(iv) My negative experiences of teaching Telugu may be ascribed to: (Tick as many statements as you deem relevant)

My students score poor marks.

☐

Students are not interested.

☐

Class size is small.

☐

Parents not showing interest.

☐

Few students choose Telugu at SC & HSC levels.

☐

School management not supportive.

☐

Any other reason. (Please specify in one sentence)

☐

.....

(v) How happy are you with your job? (Rate on scale 1 to 5)

1 2 3 4 5

Not Happy

--	--	--	--	--

Very Happy

(vi) My job as a teacher of Telugu enables me to:
(Tick as many statements as you deem relevant)

earn a decent salary.

☐

be an ambassador of the language.

☐

pass on the knowledge I have gained.

☐

Promote and preserve the language and culture.

☐

Any other (Please specify).

☐

(vii) My job earns me a lot of respect in the Telugu community.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Cannot answer ☐

(viii) Will you be happy if your son becomes a teacher of Telugu?

Yes ☐

No ☐

I am indifferent ☐

I do not know ☐

(ix) Will you be happy if your daughter becomes a teacher of Telugu?

Yes ☐

No ☐

I am indifferent ☐

I do not know ☐

(x) As a teacher of Telugu, do you feel as integrated as a non-optional subject teacher?

Yes ☐

No ☐

I am indifferent ☐

I do not know ☐

(xi) Would you have liked to be a teacher of another language subject rather than Telugu? (e.g. Hindi, English, French etc.)

Yes ☐

No ☐

cannot answer ☐

(xii) Would you like to be a teacher of another subject instead of Telugu?

Yes ☐

No ☐

cannot answer ☐

(i) Apart from the Telugu teaching classroom setting, I am in contact with Telugu language through (Please tick. You may tick as many responses as you want)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Radio programmes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Television programmes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social media | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| International magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chatting/Video calling friends abroad | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Socio-cultural and religious functions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet (browsing) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any other (Please specify) | |

(ii) I use Telugu language with

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| my students. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| my parents. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| my spouse. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| my children. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| colleagues. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| the priest. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| foreign friends who speak the language. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| other people. (Please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(iii) Outside school hours, in which of these activities related to Telugu language are you engaged?

(Please tick. You may tick as many responses as you want)

☐

Private tuition

Saturday/Evening Telugu classes

☐

Adult Telugu classes

☐

Drama clubs

☐

Performing prayers

☐

Singing in temple

☐

Radio jockey

☐

Television host

☐

Member in socio-cultural group

☐

Writer

☐

Literary clubs/unions

☐

Other (please specify)

☐

(iv) Teaching Telugu in Mauritius is challenging because
(Please tick. You may tick as many responses as you want)

students are not interested.

☐

parents do not encourage their children to learn it.

☐

learning the language does not lead to career opportunities.

☐

of lack of resources.

☐

the language is not promoted by the Ministry.

☐

the language is not used widely in Mauritius.

☐

Any other reason. (Please specify)

☐

.....

(ii) Engagement in socio-cultural activities helps to improve teaching and learning of ancestral languages like Telugu. How far do you agree?

1 2 3 4 5

Disagree

--	--	--	--	--

Agree

Reasons: (optional)

.....

.....

.....

(iii) Any other reflection

.....

.....

I thank you for your precious time.

Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form - Recording

Dear Participant

I, Mr Yenkanah Shailendra, am a student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my PhD thesis, I am conducting research. Therefore, I kindly seek your participation. The title of my research is:

“Teaching an Ancestral Language in a Multilingual context: The Case of Telugu in Mauritius”

The aim of my study is to explore the teaching experiences of Telugu Educators. The outcome of my study will develop a better understanding of ancestral language educators’ beliefs, motivation and emotions and teaching practices.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

- All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Fictitious names will be used to represent your name and the name of your institution.
- Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.
- There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.
- All information will be used for scholarly purposes only
- With your permission the interview will be recorded. Please tick accordingly.

	Yes	No
Audio recording		
Video recording		

Signature

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Yenkanah Shailendra; mobile 59072747 or my supervisor: Prof. Nadaraj Govender; Cell: 074 373 3259; Email: Govendern37@ukzn.ac.za.

You may also contact the HSSREC Research Office: Ms. P. Ximba, Email: Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za you for your contribution to this research.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Yenkanah Shailendra

Appendix 7: Semi-structured Interview Schedule- 1

Semi-structured interview

Dear _____

Good morning. Thank you for your time for today's meeting. Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in my research.

The purpose of this interview is to explore the **living experiences** of Teachers of Telugu in the local multilingual context. The duration of the interview will be one hour. Should we require more time we can schedule another interview, if you are agreeable to it.

We may start as soon as you are ready.

Journey into Teaching

1. Describe how you have come to be a teacher. (your journey)
Did Telugu bring you to teaching or did teaching bring you to the field of Telugu?
2. How long have you been in this field?
3. What are your prior working experiences before joining teaching?
4. Please tell me about your teacher training.

Teaching Telugu

5. Describe the work involved in Telugu teaching.
6. What can you say about main content taught?
7. Please tell me about your students' motivation of learning the language.
8. Do your colleagues (1. Teaching Telugu 2. In your department 3. Teaching other languages 4. Teaching other subjects) support you?
9. What support does your rector/management provide to you?
10. In your opinion, how do staff, parents, rector and students perceive Telugu as a subject?
How do they perceive you as a Telugu Teacher?
11. How do you perceive Telugu?
12. Are you happy teaching Telugu?
13. What makes you happy in teaching Telugu?
14. What makes you unhappy in what you do?
15. Can you tell about any incident at school related to teaching Telugu which you liked very much or disliked?

Highlights, Challenges and opportunities

16. What are some of your career highlights?
17. What are some of your challenges with respect to teaching Telugu?
18. Please share your knowledge of how language policies (especially regarding optional languages) assist or challenge you as a teacher?
19. Were the policies of the past better or worse than the present ones? Why?
20. What other aspects either at the personal, institutional or national (or even global) level influence teaching of Telugu.
21. How do you see the future of Telugu in Mauritius?
22. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you for your contributions to my study. I value and appreciate your time and effort.

Thank you,

Mr. Yenkanah Shailendra

Appendix 8: Semi-structured Interview Schedule- 2 – At Home

Semi-structured interview

Dear _____

Good morning. Thank you for your time for today's meeting at your place. Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in my research.

The purpose of this interview is to explore the living experiences of Telugu teachers in the local multilingual context. The duration of the interview will be about half an hour. Should we require more time we can schedule another interview.

We may start as soon as you are ready.

1. How long have you been living here?
2. What are the languages you use at home with (i) parents (ii) children?
3. What are the activities practised in the locality (Religious/Social/Educational)? Any activity or pastime related to Telugu language?
4. Are you member/regular/interested in such activities?
5. How do they help you?
6. Does your home background/culture affect your personality as a Telugu teacher?
7. To what extent?
8. Please explain what other Telugu-related activities you are involved in, other than teaching at school?
9. Do those activities help you in the teaching of Telugu?
10. According to you, does participation in socio-cultural activities help or reinforce the teaching learning process (Telugu)?
11. What artifacts (indigenous) or artefacts (artificial) used at home that are Telugu language related?
12. Do you give private Telugu assistance/coaching/tuition? Who are your students?
13. How interested are the students in learning Telugu? Why are they interested in learning the language?
14. What problems do your students experience in the language?

Appendix 9: Semi-structured Interview Schedule- 3. At Social Gathering

Semi-structured interview

Dear _____


Good morning. Thank you for your time once again for today's meeting and for agreeing to participate in my research.

The purpose of this interview is to explore the living experiences of Telugu teachers in the local multilingual context. The duration of the interview will be approximately half an hour. Should we require more time we can schedule another interview.

We may start as soon as you are ready.

1. Can you list functions/ ceremonies or rituals that you never miss?
How often do you attend Telugu-related social functions?
2. Apart from the teaching context, how much do you use Telugu language?
Where do you use Telugu language? How much? (words/ sentences/ speech/ long conversations, etc)
3. How do you feel about speakers using Telugu at Telugu-related social functions?
4. How do you feel about the use/non-use of traditional dress at Telugu-related social functions?
5. Apart from traditional dress, what are other cultural markers and artifacts used in social activities linked with the language? (for example, ganta/pulu/danda/tambaalam/naivedyam/prasadam) How far are you acquainted to them?
6. Do your students attend these cultural/social functions?
7. Do your colleagues attend social functions like this? Does it improve knowledge/access to the language/teaching skill?
8. Do you have native Telugu-speaking friends abroad/in Mauritius? How did you meet them?
9. What does it mean to be a Telugu/Mauritian Telugu?

Appendix 10: Language Editor's Letter



PROOF-READING

PROFESSIONAL EDITING SERVICES

PHD PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (SU) • MTH PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (SU) • BA (HONS) PSYCHOLOGY (UNISA)
BTH (HONS) PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (UNISA) • BTH PASTORAL COUNSELLING (UNISA)

DR LEE-ANNE ROUX

EDITOR | PROOFREADER

+27 82 825 7325
leeanne@proof-reading.co.za
www.proof-reading.co.za

30 August 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LANGUAGE EDITING

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited the thesis titled:

Teachers' experiences of teaching an ancestral language in a multilingual context: The case of
Telugu in Mauritius

By

Shailendra Yenkanah

(This certificate does not cover any alterations made subsequent to the editing process).

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Appendix 11: Turnitin Originality Report

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 22-Oct-2022 10:14 AM CAT
 - ID: 1932234675
 - Word Count: 81196
 - Submitted: 1
- PhD Thesis By Shailendra Yenkanah

Similarity Index

4%

Similarity by Source

Internet Sources:

4%

Publications:

3%

Student Papers:

0%

1% match (Internet from 07-Oct-2020)



<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17521882.2019.1694554>

<1% match ()



[Colla, Micaella Elizabeth. "The Impact of Ancestral Language Maintenance on Cultural Identity Among White Immigrant Descendants: A Phenomenological Qualitative Study", USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center, 2018](#)

<1% match (Internet from 29-Nov-2020)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_planning_and_policy_in_Singapore#Speak Mandarin Campaign \(SMC\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_planning_and_policy_in_Singapore#Speak_Mandarin_Campaign_(SMC))

<1% match (Internet from 01-Jan-2021)



["Telugu language", Wikipedia, en, 2021](#)

<1% match (Internet from 01-Jan-2021)



["Languages of South Africa", Wikipedia, en, 2021](#)

<1% match (Internet from 15-Jan-2021)



[https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume12/E-Journal GJHSS %20Vol 12 Issue 3 February.pdf](https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume12/E-Journal_GJHSS_%20Vol_12_Issue_3_February.pdf)

<1% match ()



[Harmon, Jimmy Desiré. "A critical ethnography of Kreol Morisien as an optional language in primary education within the Republic of Mauritius", 'University of the Western Cape Library Service', 2015](#)

<1% match ()



[Rajah-Carrim, Aaliya. "Multilingualism, linguistic ownership and ethnic identity: attitudes to, and use of, Mauritian", The University of Edinburgh, 2005](#)

<1% match ("Handbook of the Changing World Language Map", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020)



["Handbook of the Changing World Language Map", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020](#)

<1% match (Internet from 21-Aug-2022)

✖ https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/4245/05Chap%204_Research%20methodology%20and%20design.pdf

<1% match (Internet from 20-May-2020)

✖ <http://uir.unisa.ac.za>

<1% match (Internet from 14-Sep-2022)

✖ https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/19832/thesis_auckle_t.pdf

<1% match (Internet from 29-Jul-2022)

✖ <https://scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?PaperID=74853>

<1% match (Internet from 18-Jul-2020)

✖ <https://mafiadoc.com/a-study-of-marathi-settlements-in-mauritius-mauritius-marathi-59c95c151723dde7806f64e0.html>

<1% match (Internet from 20-Nov-2019)

✖ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/eba2/f12bb5d139e3c2c3c004f2e308eeb1012415.pdf>

<1% match (Internet from 07-Dec-2020)

✖ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/annual-review-of-applied-linguistics/article/defining-multilingualism/43CE7314179D99DF482C36287AEB7FB0>

<1% match (Internet from 13-Oct-2021)

✖ https://journals.najah.edu/media/journals/full_texts/evaluation-authentic-socio-cultural-elements-prescribed-english-language-textbooks-secondary-schools.pdf

<1% match (Internet from 10-Jan-2019)

✖ <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81181777.pdf>

<1% match (Internet from 03-Jul-2022)

✖ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257665261_The_Concept_of_Experience_by_John_Dewey_Revisited_Conceiving_Feeling_and_Enliving

<1% match (Internet from 08-Nov-2021)

✖ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322405274_The_use_of_focus_group_discussion_methodology_Insights_from_two_decades_of_application_in_conservation

<1% match (Internet from 07-Jan-2021)

✖ <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html#:~:text=Bronfenbrenner%20divided%20th>

<1% match (Internet from 11-Mar-2016)

✖ <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk>

<1% match (Internet from 14-May-2019)

✖ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

<1% match (Internet from 30-Mar-2015)

✖ <http://sociology.sunimc.net>

<1% match (Internet from 26-Jul-2022)

✖ <https://www.dcu.ie/humanities-and-social-sciences/news/2021/jul/new-chair-indian-studies-be-co-funded-dcu-and-indian>

<1% match (Internet from 02-Feb-2022)

✖ <https://wqd.110cxpera.pw/prehistoric-meaning-in-telugu.html>
<1% match (VARIJAKSHI PRABHAKARAN. "Multilingualism and language shift in South Africa: The case of Telugu, an Indian language", Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication, 1998)

✖ [VARIJAKSHI PRABHAKARAN. "Multilingualism and language shift in South Africa: The case of Telugu, an Indian language", Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication, 1998](#)
<1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2022)

✖ https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/6691/Prabhakaran_Varijakshi_1991.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1
<1% match ()

✖ [Rajasinghe, Duminda Roshan. "Leadership Development through Executive Coaching: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis", University of Leeds, 2018](#)
<1% match (Internet from 13-Aug-2022)

✖ <https://bianet.org/english/minorities/112728-unesco-15-languages-endangered-in-turkey>
<1% match (Internet from 28-Oct-2017)

✖ <http://spilplus.journals.ac.za>
<1% match (Thomas Ricento. "Language policies in education: critical issues", Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 2014)

✖ [Thomas Ricento. "Language policies in education: critical issues", Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 2014](#)
<1% match (Internet from 26-Jul-2022)

✖ <https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/39462/23593539%20Keyser%20J.M.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>
<1% match ("Manual of Romance Sociolinguistics", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018)

✖ ["Manual of Romance Sociolinguistics", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018](#)
<1% match (Internet from 25-Sep-2022)

✖ https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/tesis/2017/hdl_10803_458691/oma1de1.pdf
<1% match (Richard K. Barz. "The cultural significance of Hindi in Mauritius", South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 2007)

✖ [Richard K. Barz. "The cultural significance of Hindi in Mauritius", South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 2007](#)
<1% match (Internet from 06-Nov-2020)

✖ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595033.pdf>
<1% match (Internet from 11-Dec-2020)

✖ <http://repository.pedagogica.edu.co>