



Exploring second language acquisition and its benefits among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Asanda Anele Chili

(219033549)

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree: Master of
Social Science in Counselling Psychology**

in the

DISCIPLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY

School of Applied Human Sciences, College of Humanities

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa.

August 2025

Supervised by

Dr Thabani Khumalo

Declaration

I, *Asanda Anele Chili* (219033549) declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically 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, then their writing has been placed in italics and inside quotation marks and referenced.
5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References section.

STUDENT

Signed:


Asanda Chili

22 August 2025
Date

SUPERVISOR

Signed:



22 August 2025
Date

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the culmination of not only my efforts but also the support of numerous individuals who have guided and motivated me throughout this journey, therefore I would like to thank the following people:

Foremost, I wish to thank God for protecting, guiding and for granting me with the courage and strength to commence and complete this research study.

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Thabani Khumalo, for his exceptional guidance, support, understanding and insightful feedback throughout this research process.

To my family and friends, your support propelled me forward and I am greatly appreciative.

To all the participants of this study, without your assistance this study would not have been possible therefore I would like to express my outmost gratitude for your contributions and time.

Abstract

This study explores the acquisition of isiZulu among Indian South Africans in KwaZulu-Natal, focusing on learning the language, motivations, challenges, and perceived benefits within this multilingual society. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of Second Language Socialisation (SLS). Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews with 12 purposively sampled isiZulu-speaking Indians who engage with isiZulu speakers in professional, educational, and community contexts. The study employs Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) to analyse the data. Findings are presented through four main themes and their corresponding sub-themes, demonstrating that acquiring a second language not only enhances professional opportunities, but it also strengthens social cohesion and intergroup relations between Indian and Zulu communities. Participants highlighted key benefits such as improved workplace effectiveness, enhanced intercultural communication, greater appreciation of linguistic diversity, and the empowerment associated with learning isiZulu. However, they also identified challenges, including complex grammar, pronunciation difficulties, and limited formal learning opportunities. The study presents the importance of engagement through peer interactions, multimedia exposure, and extended video content with narration. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on multilingualism in South Africa, presenting recommendations for policymakers, educators, and language learners that emphasise strategies for promoting second language acquisition to foster cultural assimilation and social mobility.

Keywords: isiZulu-speaking Indians, multilingualism, Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Second Language Socialization (SLS).

Table of Contents

Cover page	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Abbreviations	ix
List of Tables	x
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background.....	2
1.3 Problem Statement.....	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	6
1.5 Research Questions.....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.7 Limitations of the Study.....	7
1.8 Outline of the Research Report.....	8
1.9 List of Terms.....	9
1.10 Conclusion	9
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	 11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Multilingualism in South Africa	11
2.3 The Socio-linguistic Context of KwaZulu-Natal.....	14
2.4 Language and Intergroup Dynamics.....	15
2.5 Economic and Social Benefits of Second Language Acquisition.....	16
2.6 The Influence of Community on Language Learning.....	17

2.7 Theoretical Framework: Second Language Socialization Theory.....	18
2.8 Conclusion	19
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Research Paradigm.....	21
3.3 Research Design	22
3.4 Sampling	22
3.4.1 Participant Demographics	23
3.5 Data Collection	24
3.5.1 Transcriptions	25
3.6 Data Analysis.....	27
3.6.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis.....	27
3.7 Limitations	30
3.8 Validity and Reliability.....	30
3.8.1 Credibility	30
3.8.2 Transferability.....	31
3.8.3 Dependability.....	31
3.8.4 Confirmability.....	32
3.9 Ethical Considerations	32
3.9.1 Autonomy and Respect for Persons.....	33
3.9.1.1 Information	34
3.9.1.2 Understanding.....	34
3.9.1.3 Capacity	34
3.9.1.4 Voluntariness	34
3.9.1.5 Formality.....	35
3.9.2 Beneficence and Non-maleficence	35

3.9.3 Ongoing Respect for Persons.....	35
3.10 Conclusion	36
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Themes.....	37
4.2.1 Theme 1: Language Background and Experiences	39
4.2.1.1 <i>Sub-theme 1: Exposure to Bilingual Environments</i>	39
4.2.1.2 <i>Sub-theme 2: Motivations for Learning isiZulu</i>	41
4.2.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways in Overcoming Them.....	42
4.2.3 Theme 3: Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages.....	44
4.2.3.1 <i>Sub-theme 1: Personal Growth</i>	44
4.2.3.2 <i>Sub-theme 2: Career and Workplace Benefits</i>	46
4.2.3.3 <i>Sub-theme 3: Cultural Identity and Interpersonal Relationships</i>	48
4.2.4 Theme 4: Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity	50
4.2.4.1 <i>Sub-theme 1: Language Learning as a Bridge to Effective Cross-cultural Communication</i>	50
4.2.4.2 <i>Sub-theme 2: Promoting Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity</i>	52
4.2.4.3 <i>Sub-theme 3: Breaking Barriers Through Language</i>	54
4.2.3.4 <i>Sub-theme 4: Strengthening Social Cohesion</i>	56
4.3 Conclusion	58
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	60
5.1 Introduction.....	60
5.2 Language Background and Experiences.....	60
5.3 Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways in Overcoming Them.....	61
5.4 Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages.....	62

5.5 Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity	64
5.6 Comparison with Existing Literature.....	65
5.7 Conclusion	66
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	68
6.1 Introduction.....	68
6.2 Summary of Findings.....	69
6.3 Implications of the Study	69
6.4 Recommendations.....	70
6.4.1 Recommendations About Language Policies	70
6.4.2 Recommendations About Educational and Teaching Policies	70
6.4.3 Future Research	71
6.5 Researcher's Reflections	72
6.6 Conclusion	73
REFERENCES	74
APPENDICES	83
Appendix A: Informed Consent	83
Appendix B: Ethical Approval Letter	86
Appendix C: Interview Guide.....	87
Appendix D: IsiZulu Fluency Assessment	89
Appendix E: Research Study Advertisement.....	91
Appendix F: Turnitin Similarity Report	92

List of Abbreviations

L2 – Second language

LA – Language acquisition

RTA– Reflexive Thematic Analysis

SLA– Second language acquisition

SLS – Second Language Socialization Theory

UKZN – University of KwaZulu-Natal

List of Tables

1. Table 1: Participant Demographics	23
2. Table 2: Summary Table of Main Themes and Sub-themes	38
3. Table 3: Transcription Model and Symbols	39

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research report, beginning with the research problem, objectives, significance, limitations, and contribution, which provide a comprehensive foundation for the investigation that explores the unique linguistic landscape of KwaZulu-Natal, focusing especially on the experiences of isiZulu-speaking Indians who are a distinctive minority group in the province. The chapter contextualises the study within the wider multilingual policies in South Africa and the processes of acquiring languages in the context of social cohesion and cultural integration. Through an examination of pertinent literature, the chapter shows that very few academic studies have been devoted to this group's experience of developing isiZulu as a second language.

South Africa is one of the world's most linguistically diverse nations, with multilingualism ingrained in its culture. The 12 languages namely: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and South African Sign Language reflect its colonial past and post-apartheid commitment to cultural and linguistic equality (Ntshangase and Bosch, 2020). This multilingual policy framework affects education, employment, and social activity, notably in KwaZulu-Natal, where isiZulu is the most spoken language.

Indian South Africans have a unique perspective on how minority groups negotiate cultural integration and identity with indigenous languages (Naidoo & Gokool, 2020). This study examines the acquisition of isiZulu by KwaZulu-Natal Indians, who have a distinct sociolinguistic position that is commonly overlooked in literature. History, power, and identity shape language development. South African language and identity research demonstrates that indigenous languages are vital for cultural belonging and community participation, while English is the language of education and prestige (Jeewa and Rudwick, 2020). KwaZulu-Natal's isiZulu-dominated society offers chances and pressures for Indians who desire to participate in social, economic, and political life. Tamil, Urdu, and Gujarati are spoken by Indian South Africans alongside English.

The increasing use of isiZulu indicates a trend towards balancing cultural preservation and adaptation (Zoeller & Briceño, 2023). In this changing setting, this study examines how

Indian second language learning reflects post-apartheid South African belonging issues. IsiZulu acquisition among Indians can illuminate language, race, and culture in a society still recovering from apartheid. The National Language Policy Framework and the Language Policy for Higher Education support multilingualism, yet English still dominates institutions (Nkosi, 2014).

This means that learning isiZulu is mostly left to people and communities rather than fully integrated into educational systems. Thus, Indians in KwaZulu-Natal must learn isiZulu for communication, cultural participation, and social mobility (Perumal et al., 2020). The study fills a gap in scholarship and contributes to South African language equity, integration, and transformation discourses by focusing on this community. The study is significant because isiZulu-speaking Indians are understudied in South Africa despite extensive multilingualism research. Minority communities like Indians have been excluded from research on African English learners or African language integration in formal education (Sukamto & Idayani, 2023).

The demographic importance of Indians in KwaZulu-Natal and their expanding role in cross-cultural exchanges with isiZulu-speaking populations make this absence surprising. This study examines Indians' isiZulu acquisition motivations, challenges, and rewards to close the gap. It shows how language learning can help post-apartheid nations become more inclusive and cohesive by highlighting the linguistic, social, and cultural stakes of second language acquisition South Africa.

1.2 Background

In South Africa, with its variety of languages, multilingualism is not just an everyday fact but a foundational principle of all aspect of life. It boasts 12 official languages, which speaks to its rich cultural fabric and complicated colonial past. Such linguistic diversity languages symbolise inclusivity and culture and represents great opportunities as well as enormous challenges for its members in social, education, and economic domains. Alongside this rich linguistic diversity, KwaZulu-Natal, with its mostly isiZulu-speaking population, presents a distinctive and rich context for examining the experiences of individuals learning isiZulu as a second language (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020). This study pays attention to isiZulu-speaking Indians, a minority group in the province, whose experiences span multiple languages, including English, Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and increasingly isiZulu (Naidoo & Gokool, 2020).

A review of existing academic literature serves as a lens to access the language socialization processes of multilingual learners in South Africa in general, as well as the narratives that are tied to their language situatedness in educational contexts. Most of the research concerning the acquisition of isiZulu, isiXhosa and the other officially-recognised languages focus on high school learners and thus, this research study contributes to the conversation on the complexities of learning a Bantu language, especially if learners have first languages that are not of the Bantu family and foregrounds the need for nuanced understanding of language acquisition (Jeewa & Rudwick, 2020).

Research on translanguaging pedagogies in multilingual classrooms emphasises drawing on learners' heterogeneous linguistic repertoires and using their home languages as resources for academic success and to create inclusive learning spaces (Zoeller & Briceño, 2023). The South African Language Policy for Higher Education calls for African languages (isiZulu) to be used in universities but it has not been institutionalised (Nkosi, 2014). Policies, including the National Language Policy Framework and the Language Policy for Higher Education, exist to promote multilingualism and equitable access to education yet the reality remains that English often dominates as the primary language of instruction on the ground level.

Though much has been written about the general linguistic panorama in South Africa, the specific case of isiZulu-spoken Indians, a sub-population of KwaZulu-Natal, has attracted limited academic attention (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020). This aims to add to the literature by exploring the diverse process of second language acquisition and the perceived benefits of isiZulu proficiency among isiZulu-speaking Indians in the province. The study aims to explore the process reasons, motivations, challenges, and opportunities related to learning isiZulu in this context, within the dynamics of cultural identity, societal integration, and economic development.

Through a closer look at experiences of these individuals, this study aims to expand our understanding of second language acquisition in a challenging multilingual context and to provide insights to shape language policy-making and educational practices that foster this diversity and inclusion (Perumal et al., 2020). This study will analyse the way isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal navigate their linguistic capabilities, with the goal of shedding some light on the lived realities of second language acquisition, the potential beneficial effects but also the areas where challenges continue to arise in this community. By doing so, it will contribute to the existing literature on multilingualism in South Africa, providing a broader and deeper perspective on the linguistic landscape of the country.

Most South African multilingualism research focuses on language socialisation and education. Jeewa & Rudwick (2020) discovered that high school students learn isiZulu and isiXhosa through structure acquisition, not cultural immersion or identity formation. These approaches neglect minor cultures like isiZulu-speaking Indians, whose learning histories differ socio-linguistically. Zoeller and Briceño (2023) discovered that translanguaging pedagogies benefit students by utilising their bilingual skills in the classroom.

This is vital to understanding how minority individuals learn language in culturally dense KwaZulu-Natal, where social integration often needs cross-linguistic encounters. It examines how provincial Indians internalise isiZulu to fill this gap. Policy discourses complicate language. Universities use the South African Language Policy for Higher Education to promote indigenous languages like isiZulu differently (Nkosi, 2014). The Language Policy for Higher Education and the National Language Policy Framework promote multilingualism and fair access. However, English is the main language of instruction. Policy intentions and realities differ, preventing minority learners from truly interacting with indigenous languages and reducing social cohesion.

These disparities hinder minority and multilingual isiZulu-speaking Indians academically and socially. An individual skill, learning isiZulu, promotes national healing and cultural diversity. The vast literature on South African languages neglects isiZulu-speaking Indians' second language acquisition (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020). The community's unique balance of historical preservation and socioeconomic involvement is endangered by neglect.

Speaking isiZulu affects KwaZulu-Natal politics, jobs, and identity. This study examines South Africa's Indian minority's multilingualism to demonstrate how language shapes culture. This paradigm emphasises the sociolinguistic importance of studying second language acquisition as a lived experience of integration and belonging. This study supports South Africa's constitutional position of indigenous languages as essential to democracy and unity. Studies on KwaZulu-Natal Indians' isiZulu acquisition promote scholarly and policy goals to study how multilingualism can promote societal cohesion. This study explains why learning isiZulu helps cultural integration, identity negotiation, and socioeconomic advancement (Perumal et al., 2020). The study fills a research gap and informs constitutional inclusion and linguistically equitable policy and education in South Africa.

1.3 Problem Statement

The linguistic experiences of communities in South Africa have increasingly attracted scholarly interest, particularly the Indian community. The language variety is the strength and challenge of South Africa's Indian minority but academic research has rarely examined it. KZN Indians speak Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, and English, but their efforts to learn isiZulu have received little scholarly attention (Sukanto & Idayani, 2023). Multilingualism studies usually combine all Indians together and neglect the distinct experiences of Zulu-speaking province residents who voluntarily study isiZulu (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020). In the literature, the sociolinguistic experiences of a minority group whose acquisition of isiZulu is shaped by social integration are neglected.

The lack of consideration given to this group neglects to recognise that their experiences are unique especially in instances surrounding isiZulu learning and usage in a predominantly isiZulu-speaking province like KwaZulu-Natal (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020). Furthermore, this lack of attention impacts education, culture, and nationalism. Indian isiZulu learners' study in English-dominated institutions despite multilingualism norms (Nkosi, 2014).

This study aims at bridging this gap by doing a study with isiZulu-speaking Indians, who are members of a marginalised subgroup in the South African linguistic context. These people are in a unique place, tasked with maintaining their heritage and native tongues while also needing isiZulu to make it socially and economically. Their experiences are especially meaningful in relation to the broader goals that South Africa has set—namely, to foster social cohesion and to embrace linguistic diversity. The insights that can be gained from understanding their isiZulu acquisition journey, including their motivations, challenges, and outcomes, can contribute towards understanding either how these second language learning opportunities foster or hinder intergroup relations.

Although translanguaging pedagogies respect students' diverse repertoires, their inconsistent use can limit inclusive learning spaces (Zoeller & Briceño, 2023). Without understanding how isiZulu-speaking Indians manage institutional discrepancies, schools risk marginalising and lacking to achieve equitable multilingualism.

Learning isiZulu affects society and culture outside the classroom. In KwaZulu-Natal, Indians use isiZulu for communication, cultural integration, and community participation. Identity conversations arise as learners balance ancestral languages with isiZulu dominance (Naidoo & Gokool, 2020). The inadequacy of not studying these processes will shape policy actions based on frail understandings of minority communities' indigenous language use. To

demonstrate how language learning influences intergroup relations and inclusion especially those with black South Africans, this study highlights isiZulu-speaking Indian viewpoints.

Understanding should not be seen in isolated terms but in the context of historical factors around race and language but also more socio-political factors that impact on South African society therefore these interactions are fundamental to achieving mutual understanding and an opening up of cultural barriers. The study investigates these dynamics and seeks to understand how language learning shapes intergroup relations and contributes to building a more inclusive society. This study illuminates isiZulu acquisition's motivations, challenges, and benefits (Perumal et al., 2020). By doing so, this study not only addresses an important gap in linguistic and sociocultural research, but also has practical implications for language policy, language education, and social integration efforts in South Africa. Notably, it reveals that language learning is social and can reinforce or break down cultural barriers. Thus, the study centres on isiZulu-speaking Indians to explore how multilingualism supports the post-apartheid vision of an inclusive, linguistically diverse society.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- Gain insight into the process of how individuals from the Indian descent acquire proficiency in isiZulu as a second language.
- Explore the benefits associated with the acquisition of isiZulu as a second language among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal.
- Identify if the acquisition of a second language can contribute to promoting positive relations between Indian and Zulu communities.

1.5 Research Questions

- In what ways do individuals of Indian descent acquire their proficiency in isiZulu?
- What are the perceived benefits of acquiring isiZulu as a second language among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal?
- Can the acquisition of a second language contribute to enhancing positive relations between Indian and Zulu communities?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Most literature on second language acquisition focuses on Western contexts; however, this research study challenges this by providing insight into SLA in a South African,

multilingual context. This study is an important contribution to multilingualism in South Africa, as it explores the unique experiences of isiZulu-speaking Indians in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Although previous research has examined multilingual practices more broadly, this study addresses an existing gap in the literature by focusing on this minority group and contributing nuanced understandings of the intersection of language acquisition, cultural identity, and intergroup dynamics. It draws on isiZulu acquisition to show how overall social integration and intercultural understanding can be developed within one of South Africa's most linguistically complex provinces.

The study contributes to theoretical knowledge about second language acquisition, specifically about the difficulties and techniques encountered when acquiring a Bantu language as a secondary language. The study makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of how language is learnt in situations of substantial linguistic and cultural diversity by examining individuals whose first languages belong to different linguistic families. These conclusions contribute to the general field of second language acquisition and linguistics.

The study further sheds light on the possibility of using isiZulu language skills as a means of strengthening intergroup relations among the communities of Indian and Zulu ancestry that make up a large part of the population of KwaZulu-Natal. In a society where language is often key to crossing those divides, this is especially critical. Finding balance between attention to local contexts and emphasising language learning as a means of better socio-cultural integration within a globalising world. In essence, the results have important implications for policy and educational practice. They also can teach us how to develop inclusive language policy and better second language learning programmes in our schools and communities. This study explores the process, motivations, benefits and barriers involved in isiZulu acquisition and offers practical recommendations for supporting linguistic diversity and inclusive educational spaces, ensuring that broader, national goals around social cohesion and integration can be achieved.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study only included isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal; however, even though it provides the opportunity for in-depth insight into this specific group of minorities, it may restrict the generalisability of findings to other linguistic or cultural groups in South Africa. A second limitation is the study's reliance on self-reported data via interviews and

questionnaires, which may have introduced some bias or inaccuracies in participants' responses. Respondents could have also unintentionally minimised difficulties or exaggerated the positive impact, creating bias in the results. As this study has already sought to balance richness and local sensitivity with breadth as outlined above, these limitations may place an upper limit on the number of participants or the qualitative depth yielded. These limitations, however, do not detract from the quality of the study but rather serve to frame the findings and highlight avenues for future research.

1.8 Outline of the Research Report

Chapter one of this research report introduces the research study; it discusses the research study's background and also highlights the focus on second language acquisition of the language of isiZulu in Indians, its benefits and how it shapes intergroup dynamics. Chapter two presents an in-depth review of existing literature on the similar topic, examining concepts such as multilingualism in South Africa, the sociolinguistic context in KwaZulu-Natal, language and intergroup dynamics. It also touches on the theoretical framework of Second Language Socialisation (SLS) and discusses its applicability to this research study.

Chapter three discusses the methodological procedure of the research study, which includes the interpretive approach research paradigm, the explorative and qualitative research design, the sampling technique, data collection and data analysis methods, as well as the rigour and ethical considerations. Chapter four provides a presentation of the study's results, where they are categorised into themes and sub-themes highlighting the participants' language background and experiences in the process of gaining fluency in the isiZulu language, the benefits of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and the impact of SLA on intergroup interactions.

Chapter five brings forth a discussion of the study's results. Additionally, it considers the limitations and presents a comparison with existing literature. Chapter Six provides an overall conclusion of the study by summarising the findings of the study, providing insight into the implications of the study, and proposing recommendations on language policies and educational and teaching policies, as well as future research, and it also provides a reflection of the researcher.

1.9 List of Terms

- Bilingualism – is the regular use of more than one language, and thus bilinguals are people who need and use more than one language in their everyday lives (Grosjean, 2010).
- Indian people in South Africa – describes the group of people of Indian descent who have made significant contributions to the country's multicultural landscape and have a rich cultural heritage that reflects the blending of Indian and South African cultures (Vahed & Desai, 2010).
- *IsiFanakalo* (also known as *Fanagalo*) – is a pidgin language that originated in Southern Africa, specifically South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. It is a hybrid contact language that developed as a way of communication across various linguistic groups, particularly in the mining and agricultural industries (Mesthrie, 2002).
- Language acquisition (LA) – the process by which humans develop the capacity to perceive, produce, and use language, involving both first language (native language) and second language learning. This is a subconscious process identical to the way children develop their first language, where learners acquire language naturally through meaningful interaction and communication, without explicit focus on grammatical rules (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).
- Multiculturalism – is an ideology that refers to the acceptance of different cultures in a society and also to the active support of these culture differences by both the majority members and minority group members (Schalk-Soekar et al., 2004).
- Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to learning a language outside of one's native language, either in or out of a classroom (Krashen, 1981).
- Second language – is the language one acquires after the learning of the first or native language (Krashen, 1981).
- Second Language Socialization Theory (SLS) – this theory explains how individuals learn a second language through social and cultural interactions (Krashen, 1981).

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter defines the study's aims, research questions, and limits, offering a clear roadmap. This research should inform language policy, education, and inclusive and cohesive efforts in South Africa's varied society. Through these conversations, the chapter prepares to examine isiZulu language acquisition's motives, obstacles, and opportunities. The next

chapter reviews literature and the theoretical background on second language learning in South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature related to the linguistic diversity of South Africa focusing on multilingualism, language acquisition, and their sociocultural and economic implications. It begins by exploring the historical and sociocultural context of South Africa's multilingual landscape, highlighting the legacy of colonialism and apartheid on language use and policies. The chapter further examines the unique socio-linguistic dynamics of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly the role of isiZulu as a dominant language, and its interaction with other languages within the province. Key themes discussed include the impact of language on intergroup relations, the social, and economic benefits of second language acquisition, and the influence of community on language learning. The chapter also delves into the challenges of multilingual education, addressing policy implementation gaps, and the integration of indigenous languages in educational and professional domains.

By synthesising relevant literature, this chapter establishes a foundation for understanding the interplay between language, identity, and societal cohesion, particularly in the context of isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal. The discussion covers key themes, including the sociolinguistic context, the role of multilingualism, challenges faced in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and the impact of language acquisition on identity, economic opportunities, and social integration. The study also explores the effectiveness of various learning strategies and policies that support multilingual education in South Africa. This academic paper aims to contextualise the study within the broader discourse on language acquisition and policy implementation, identifying gaps that this research aims to address.

2.2 Multilingualism in South Africa

While South Africa has 12 official languages, namely: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and South African Sign Language however it is a complex system and embraces a multilingual society rich in culture. The languages are widespread in provinces. Afrikaans and English dominate the nation, but isiZulu dominates KwaZulu-Natal, isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape, and Setswana in the North West due to the colonial and apartheid legacy (Padhi et al., 2020). In

2023, South African Sign Language was introduced to improve linguistic diversity however implementation challenges persist (Nkosi, 2014). Some researchers believe this recognition is symbolic because English's prestige devalues indigenous languages (Vandeyar & Catalano, 2020). Others claim multilingualism has gradually shaped national identity, boosting African pride and weakening colonial hierarchies (Ntombela, 2016).

These tensions reveal that socio-political language disagreements make policy frameworks inconsistently applied. English dominates education and trade, demonstrating linguistic hierarchy despite indigenous language recognition. English allows economic mobility and global possibilities, leaving other languages to the private sector, according to researchers (Bostock, 2018). Afrikaans and English were official languages during apartheid, forcing African communities to integrate linguistically (Nugraha, 2019). Flores and Rosa (2015) demonstrate how subtractive bilingualism undervalued African languages for European ones, reducing cultural capital. The present state of languages in South Africa reflects both its colonial history and the long lasting impact of apartheid.

The linguistic landscape of the country was significantly reshaped during the period of colonization when Dutch settlers arrived in the country during the 17th century and were succeeded by British colonization in the 18th and 19th centuries (Ntombela, 2016). European languages, especially Dutch and later English, became languages of administration, commerce and education, and over time this marginalised indigenous African languages. During that time, society created a hierarchy of languages, with European languages at the top and African languages at the bottom, which in turn became entrenched and institutionalised during apartheid (Bostock, 2018). Afrikaner supremacy was further entrenched by the apartheid regime that began in 1948 and continued until 1994, and which enshrined Afrikaans and English as the official settlement languages.

All other languages would be relegated to the private sphere, never to be spoken in government, education, and the legal system—the only two official languages of the state. This forced those who spoke indigenous African languages to have little choice but to abandon their native tongue (Nugraha, 2019). For example, there was a strong focus on Afrikaans and English as a medium of instruction which led to learners whose home languages differed from those that were used in the education system having to learn and be taught in a language they did not understand, putting them at a major disadvantage.

This linguistic stratification further perpetuated the systemic social and economic disparities inherent in apartheid, entrenching the discrimination and suppression of the people. This discriminatory language policy's legacy still maintains an impact on the

linguistic landscape of South Africa today, affecting language attitudes, language use, and access to resources and opportunities (Nugraha, 2019). The post-apartheid era in South Africa witnessed a significant transformation in language policy, shifting away from the exclusionary practices of the past towards a more inclusive and equitable approach. The 12 official languages are not only a symbolic but also a practical recognition of the rich linguistic diversity of the country. This constitutional recognition was meant to correct the historical marginalisation of indigenous African languages and to elevate multilingualism as a national resource.

According to Jia et al. (2023), post-apartheid educational reforms sought additive bilingualism to preserve African languages and English proficiency. English dominance shows linguistic equality in South Africa is more ideal than real, influencing education, employment, and governance. As South Africa's most widely spoken first language, IsiZulu affects KwaZulu-Natal, where over 80% of the population speaks it (Nugraha, 2019). IsiZulu is the province's language, allowing non-native speakers to communicate, according to Padhi et al. (2020). Nkosi (2014) adds that while isiZulu fosters social integration in KwaZulu-Natal, it may also isolate minority language speakers like Indians who struggle to acquire it. KwaZulu-Natal's Indian community concentrated in urban areas such as Durban must manage cultural and linguistic contrasts between English, used in trade and education, and isiZulu, essential for local integration (Vandeyar and Catalano, 2020).

According to Ntombela (2016), dominant African languages can create solidarity and distinction. Researching Indian second language acquisition experiences is important because studying isiZulu is both a tool of inclusion and a threat to cultural identity. Multilingualism's educational outcomes show these contradictions. According to Mpalami (2022), the South African Department of Education emphasises the importance of home languages in the access to literacy for learners, however, they do not provide sufficient information on how to use these home languages during literacy instruction. Flores and Rosa (2015) call this new linguistic coloniality, although Jia et al. (2023) believe progressive curricular reforms can revive African languages in schools. This disagreement shows how bilingual education policy goals and institutional barriers collide. IsiZulu-speaking Indians confront integration and institutional support challenges.

This can create ambiguity for teachers about how best to implement multilingual practices in the classroom. In addition, teachers themselves often find it quite difficult to quickly adjust their pedagogical practices to fit multilingual learners. For example, numerous

teachers may not be fluent in all the languages used by their students, which creates challenges in effective communication and assessment of the learning process.

Another significant challenge is the production of appropriate teaching material and assessment tools in all 12 official languages, which is a logistical and financial challenge. Moreover, the implementation of multilingual language policies is further challenged by long-established attitudes and beliefs in society regarding the status and prestige of languages. Addressing these limitations must involve continuous investment in training teachers, developing curricula, and engaging the communities served to realise a genuinely inclusive and equitable multilingual education system (Park et al., 2018).

2.3 The Socio-linguistic Context of KwaZulu-Natal

IsiZulu dominates KwaZulu-Natal, but other cultures, especially Indians, have adapted. Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) state elder generations utilise isiZulu in local markets and businesses, while younger generations use English. English-medium schooling has diminished youth isiZulu competence, but Naidoo and Gokool (2020) note that intimate rural social contact increases exposure. Language planning to promote isiZulu in school has had minimal effect, often being symbolic rather than transformative, according to De Klerk (2021). Since isiZulu is crucial in daily life yet English dominates formal spheres, these opposing viewpoints suggest policy catastrophes and community actions affect second language learning. Minorities struggle in KwaZulu-Natal due to its isiZulu past. Gumbi and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2015) say IsiZulu-deficient non-speakers cannot work or study in public sectors. Jeewa and Rudwick (2020) say isiZulu is a gatekeeper and unifier that shapes identity through language.

Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) suggest that English improves urban Indians' socioeconomic mobility, lowering the need to learn isiZulu. Naidoo & Gokool (2020) report that English has surpassed isiZulu as a prestige language in schools, even in a province where it dominates. While isiZulu is powerful locally, English is nationally aspirational, trapping minority populations between assimilation and upward mobility. Second language study is strategic, not cultural, because cultural affinity and economic advancement must be balanced.

Indigenous languages are supported in policy frameworks to overcome these contradictions, although their results are disputed. School-level efforts to achieve sustained multilingual competency are criticised by De Klerk (2021), while Gumbi and Ndimande-

Hlongwa (2015) identify structural constraints like a lack of teaching materials and trained instructors.

However, Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) argue that market and public space exchanges foster isiZulu fluency better than formal schooling. Jeewa and Rudwick (2020) suggest learning isiZulu to demonstrate local cultural pride and overcome institutional limits. These viewpoints indicate that bottom-up social interaction and top-down policy form the sociolinguistic environment, which may impact KwaZulu-Natal's Indian populations' language acquisition directly. KwaZulu-Natal is about language and identity. Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) stress isiZulu's relevance to Zulu culture, whereas Jeewa and Rudwick (2020) emphasise that mother tongues determine other communities' cultural belonging. Naidoo and Gokool (2020) warn that urbanisation and demographic shifts are eroding language ties, especially as younger speakers prefer English.

According to Gumbi and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2015), socioeconomic growth often demands English, making isiZulu an unhappy partner despite its numerical strength. De Klerk (2021) believes that isiZulu's durability in journalism, industry, and the arts shows its versatility and supremacy in KwaZulu-Natal. Indians learn isiZulu to navigate identity, opportunity, and belonging in a multilingual community, showing that language can include and exclude.

2.4 Language and Intergroup Dynamics

Language fosters social, economic, and intergroup harmony. Makukule and Brookes (2020) note that multilingualism reduces prejudice and promotes cross-cultural communication through language. Naidoo and Gokool (2020) argue that while isiZulu helps minority groups integrate in KwaZulu-Natal, English is the prestige academic and professional language. Mother tongue instruction enhances educational engagement and equity, according to Ntshangase and Bosch (2020), while Dlamini-Myeni (2024) believes second language acquisition creates “intercultural changers” who can better negotiate heterogeneous situations. This shows that isiZulu is socially beneficial but hindered by English structural inequities. This contradiction requires language policy to balance symbolic recognition and pragmatic second language acquisition incentives.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal's isiZulu learning requirement shows the merits and cons of policy-driven cohesiveness. Naidoo and Gokool (2020) observed that students like isiZulu's inclusion benefits but are hesitant to participate due to English superiority.

However, Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) show that teaching in isiZulu increases knowledge and academic performance, enabling indigenous language integration. Makukule and Brookes (2020) suggest that pupils may view such regulations as symbolic rather than meaningful. Language acquisition can vary, but Dlamini-Myeni (2024) claims hierarchy-free motivation is weak. Second language learning involves shifting ideas about which languages are valued and which are marginalised.

Apartheid still determines language opportunity and resistance. Posel et al. (2020) argue that divided language policy reinforced post-apartheid South African inequality. Probyn (2019) claims that English dominates education and industry, maintaining exclusion despite constitutional support for multilingualism. According to Anyidoho (2018), society is increasingly understanding African languages' symbolic and cultural importance. Policy and practice are complicated: formal frameworks promote equity, while deeply held ideas hinder them. This suggests that progressive language improvements may not increase cohesion without changing linguistic hierarchy assumptions.

Scholars suggest that language unites and divides. Multilingualism increases labour market integration however, Duarte et al. (2020) warn that uneven acquisition resources can preserve social barriers. In KwaZulu-Natal, some Indians who study isiZulu claim improved social acceptance, while others struggle with learning. The literature demonstrates multilingualism is not always desirable. Successful strategies must address structural disparities, challenge language hierarchies, and inspire communities to learn. This makes isiZulu acquisition among Indian South Africans more than a linguistic exercise; it examines whether multilingual policies can overcome historical marginalisation and foster intergroup solidarity.

2.5 Economic and Social Benefits of Second Language Acquisition

The link between economic growth and multilingual ability has been frequently expressed, but the question is whether it applies equally across populations. In heterogeneous societies where multilingual service delivery is required, Moodley and Singh (2022) suggest that second language ability gives workers real workplace advantages. Stein-Smith (2021) notes that while language skill may provide opportunities in globalised sectors like diplomacy and tourism, its benefits are typically overestimated in local situations where English dominates. Kroll and Dussias (2017) imply that economic consequences vary by when and how learners learn a second language. These different approaches emphasise the need to

consider language benefits in specific sociolinguistic situations, such as KwaZulu-Natal, where isiZulu proficiency has unique social and occupational value. Second language acquisition's economic value is more about credibility and employability in local networks of engagement than global potential.

Beyond economics, bilingualism has been praised and criticised for its social effects. Stein-Smith (2021) emphasises that multilingualism fosters intercultural understanding, inclusion, and social cohesion. Moodley and Singh (2022) argue that institutional arrangements that incentivise English monolingualism demotivate students from investing in indigenous languages, notwithstanding these social benefits. Kroll and Dussias (2017) argue that community perceptions of language status strongly influence social gains. Even though isiZulu offers cultural immersion, negative perceptions about indigenous languages may restrict its benefits. These viewpoints show that second language acquisition can overcome social differences, but structural disparities and language ideologies limit its integrative power.

Another major question is whether second language acquisition improves long-term employability or loses value. Stein-Smith (2021) claims that multilingual workers have a persistent advantage in competitive marketplaces that reward cross-cultural proficiency. Moodley and Singh (2022) warn that these benefits may be ephemeral if economic policies do not institutionalise language equity. Kroll and Dussias (2017) add that the learner's initial proficiency and professional language use moderate the gains. These findings show that researchers agree that language proficiency has benefits, but they disagree on whether they are systemic or context-dependent. This topic is especially relevant for isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, as second language ability may foster community belonging while reflecting South Africa's uneven valuing of African languages.

2.6 The Influence of Community on Language Learning

The community's impact on language acquisition is investigated, although results differ. Kang et al. (2021) say community environments are crucial for learning, especially when social interactions naturally introduce new languages. Stein-Smith (2021) claims that passive or indifferent environments hinder learners' progress therefore, they only work when communities embrace multilingualism. Hoff et al. (2018) stress that language development goes beyond formal instruction into peer and informal community interactions. Cultural events and media provide authentic information, but Piccardo et al. (2019) caution that they

may privilege dominant languages over minority ones. Scholars agree that community's matter, but their intensity and inclusivity hinder or aid second language acquisition.

Academia argues formal education's value and communal influence. Reinhardt (2017) says schools standardise proficiency with curriculum and resources. Murungi and Opinde (2018) imply that institutional spaces that exclude minority language learners may sustain inequality. Motivation and aptitude combined with education yield quite variable outcomes, says Shan (2020). According to Daud et al. (2020), personality and methods can improve or hurt school-based therapy. These competing opinions illustrate that formal education is vital but cannot be divorced from community and individual concerns. This implies that institutional, societal, and personal factors affect second language acquisition in layers.

Community and education technology adds another debate. Modern language learners should use apps and online platforms to customise and diversify input, according to Wah and Hashim (2021). Malkawi et al. (2023) caution that technology's benefits depend on how well it is integrated into holistic learning environments. Technology can improve access to legitimate content, but Palalas and Wark (2020) say it perpetuates digital literacy gaps. Technology may reduce community support and cultural transmission, says Stein-Smith (2021). Digital resources supplement community and institutional activity. Therefore, lasting and socially integrated language acquisition involves a balance of technology and interpersonal involvement.

2.7 Theoretical Framework: Second Language Socialization Theory

Second Language Socialisation (SLS) theory emphasises cognitive and social-cultural processes in language acquisition. While Krashen (1981) focuses on cognitive input, Duff (2019) emphasises how meaning negotiation in real-life interactions affects language and cultural norm acceptance. Ngcobo and Makumane (2024) say informal settings like communities and workplaces help learners adjust more smoothly, whereas James (2023) says conversational competency develops better there than in school. Socialisation theories emphasise interactional surroundings, while cognitive models emphasise structured input. This is significant because Indian South Africans learn isiZulu, the main language, from daily contact rather than schooling. Immersion and cultural participation better describe multilingual persons' actual experiences than cognitive frameworks, it appears.

The idea is that language learning includes power and identity. Language helps learners manage affiliation and social position, explain Perumal et al. (2020). Ntshangase and

Bosch (2020) demonstrate that isiZulu increases professional networks and social inclusion for Indian South Africans, demonstrating that language promotes equity and advancement. Institutional policies and workplace norms legitimise second languages, determining who gains from socialisation, according to Naidoo and Gokool (2020). Individual acquisition outweighs power dynamics for Krashen (1981). These perspectives show that SLS better portrays linguistic growth and social standing. Language-mediated socioeconomic hierarchy includes KZN students.

These arguments show how structural opportunities affect second language socialisation. Duff (2019) argues realistic contexts are essential, but James (2023) claims students have unequal access, causing fluency discrepancies. Ngcobo and Makumane (2024) found that community-based learners outperformed formal education however, Perumal et al. (2020) warn that generational and cultural differences affect this. Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) found that job demands push acquisition, while community contexts may be more accommodating. These perspectives indicate that policy, opportunity, and agency affect socialisation differently. Our study indicates that Indian South Africans' learning of isiZulu is a dynamic negotiation between structural inclusion, identity development, and social capital.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth exploration of the key themes surrounding multilingualism and second language acquisition in South Africa. It has traced the historical influences that shaped the current linguistic landscape and highlighted the challenges of implementing inclusive language policies in education and society. Duff (2019) focuses on identity and culture, while Krashen (1981) emphasises input in language learning. Ngcobo and Makumane (2024) say informal community settings increase linguistic competency, while James (2023) says conversational experience promotes fluency more than classroom training. Second language learning is cognitive, social, and historical and institutional, contrary to these notions. IsiZulu's use as a communicator and identity marker in a multicultural South African province supports this.

Multilingualism has economic and societal benefits, but the chapter also discusses its drawbacks. Perumal et al. (2020) say language acquisition improves identity negotiation and social integration, while Ntshangase and Bosch (2020) show how isiZulu proficiency helps Indian South Africans obtain employment opportunities. Stein-Smith (2021) claims that multilingualism boosts competitiveness in globalised markets, but Naidoo and Gokool (2020)

say institutions determine language use and socialisation benefits. Second language learning helps, although institutional bias favours some groups. These theories suggest language can unite or divide depending on learning possibilities.

This chapter also illustrated how language affects KwaZulu-Natal culture and society. Moodley and Singh (2022) claim bilingualism enhances employability however, Kroll and Dussias (2017) suggest benefits vary by age, prior competency, and language pairs. These perspectives demonstrate that Indian South Africans learning isiZulu promotes intercultural tolerance, shared identity, and a deeper community beyond language. This critical engagement shows that language learning is a socio-economic and political resource and educational practice. By combining inclusion, equality, and identity concerns in multilingual South Africa, the chapter identifies second language acquisition as essential.

By synthesizing these diverse perspectives, this chapter lays a critical foundation for the study, situating it within the broader discourse on multilingualism, social cohesion, and language policy in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology, used in the research study. It includes the following: the research paradigm and research design of the study, sampling, data collection methods, ensuring rigour of the study, data analysis method, limitations of the study, and the ethical considerations. The qualitative study design was selected to reflect and document participants' lived experiences of their language-learning journeys. Since the technique was selected as per the purpose of the research, the results were correct and precise. Ethical considerations were maintained through ensuring that subjects had already been informed regarding consent with their names made anonymous. However, there were certain limitations to the study such as the fact that it was relying purely on instances of self-reported data, but it was beneficial to know how learning a second language will help to enhance one's ability to communicate cross culturally and to adapt to new environments and communities.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The interpretative paradigm was used in this qualitative study. Interpretive research promotes researcher-participant knowledge creation (Creswell, 2017). Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) argue that research design helps individuals grasp their cultural and linguistic experiences. This study on KwaZulu-Natal isiZulu-speaking Indians illuminated second language learning and identity negotiation. According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), qualitative researchers must continuously evaluate their role and impact in order to comprehend how their values and life experiences influence the research process and decisions. In adopting a qualitative study, the researcher actively collected the data on the participants and this research drew on data from a closed community of isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal helping to uncover the processes by which they acquire a second language, while also providing a whole and contextualised analysis of it. The participants conveyed views on how learning isiZulu affects belonging, opportunity, and cultural identity.

3.3 Research Design

An Interpretative based qualitative research design was selected to explore language acquisition and integration by assessing how isiZulu speaking Indians make meaning from personal and social experiences (Creswell, 2017). Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility in eliciting participant viewpoints and providing clarity and depth (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) state that qualitative research requires critical reflexivity to avoid overshadowing participants' voices by researcher assumptions, which influenced this study's interview questions.

According to Ndebele (2022), IPA explains how classroom learning and social interactions affect multilingual learners. This method examines how isiZulu acquisition affects Indian South Africans' cultural stance, self-perception, and daily interactions. The study showed the intricate relationship between language learning and identity in minority cultures using IPA. A qualitative research design was employed in this study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were flexible in nature so that participants were free to talk about their experiences (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The study aimed to uncover how learning a new language shaped social life and sense of belonging and the effect on career options.

3.4 Sampling

The sample of this research study included isiZulu learners of the Indian ethnic group who responded to WhatsApp and Facebook interview invitations of the research study. The sample required to change to represent the complex relationships between second language acquisition, education, employment, and community inclusion. Participants were purposively sampled for their shared experiences of proficiency in isiZulu, variety of professional backgrounds and involvement in isiZulu-speaking communities. For a qualitative study, purposeful sampling selects persons with the right expertise and experiences (Creswell, 2017).

The method of sampling was done by the researcher posting an advertisement of the research study [see Appendix E] to WhatsApp and Facebook group chats consisting of isiZulu-speaking Indians residing in KwaZulu-Natal and Pietermaritzburg in which 16 prospective participants reached out to the researcher as they had an interest to participate in the study. Ultimately 12 individuals participated in the interviews with the researcher. Participants represented a range of occupations teachers or lecturers, business owners,

professionals to achieve depth of experience and perspective. The primary inclusion criteria were that participants had to be of the Indian ethnic group and fluent isiZulu speakers and not speaking '*isiFanakalo*' because without fluency, participants would not be able to engage in meaningful insights into second language acquisition those who are from the Indian ethnic group but who did not speak isiZulu fluently or had no experience learning it as a second language could also not provide insight because their experience would not contribute to the investigation of the linguistic and cultural (dis)benefits of second language acquisition.

The researcher interviewed all KwaZulu-Natal Indian South Africans who used isiZulu as a second language in their personal and professional lives. This group is suitable because KwaZulu-Natal's major language, isiZulu, needs linguistic adaptation for inclusion and involvement. Language acquisition and its benefits were described by isiZulu-speaking Indian participants. Finding individuals who shared their experiences improved the study's interpretation (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The study maintained findings by targeting isiZulu speakers (Ndebele, 2022). Reflexivity was essential when analysing how inclusion criteria change narratives (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). This precise demographic and sample specification kept the study inside the interpretative paradigm and phenomenological analysis.

3.4.1 Demographics of the Participants

The 12 participants of this study work in various career fields, with one being unemployed, and they are also from different age groups this allowed for diversity in the results. However, they share commonalities of being from the same ethnic group and of speaking and utilising isiZulu in their daily lives. To adhere to confidentiality and in protecting the identities of the participants, the naming of the participants included pseudonyms (Creswell, 2003). The demographics of the participants are shared in Table 1 below.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Relationship Status	Occupation
1	Male	35	Married	Business owner
2	Male	32	Single	School teacher
3	Female	38	Married	Social worker
4	Male	40	Single	Unemployed
5	Male	29	Single	Marketing manager
6	Female	41	Single	Nurse
7	Male	24	Single	University law student
8	Male	50	Married	Business owner
9	Female	28	Single	School teacher
10	Male	35	Single	General worker at grocery store
11	Female	42	Married	Accountant
12	Female	28	Single	Call center consultant

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected from November 2024 to January 2025, after an ethical approval by the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) [see Appendix B] was obtained in October 2024. The potential participants were identified based on specific characteristics, and thereafter the researcher distributed and posted an advertisement [see Appendix E] on various social media platforms to invite prospective participants to partake in a 30-minute semi-structured interview with the researcher.

My background in psychology taught me the value of creating a safe environment for individuals to share their own experiences; therefore, semi-structured interviews were selected to provide participants the autonomy to share their perspectives freely on second language acquisition. Sixteen participants in total showed an interest in participating in the study and reached out to the researcher through digital communication.

The researcher then invited them to undertake the isiZulu fluency assessment [see Appendix D] to assess their proficiency in isiZulu. The isiZulu fluency assessment used in this study was adapted from established approaches to African language fluency measurement in multilingual contexts. Similar frameworks have been employed to evaluate lexical retrieval, sentence formation, and narrative production in isiZulu and related Nguni languages (De Villiers & Taylor, 2014; De Villiers, 2017). Although a nationally standardized isiZulu fluency test does not yet exist, functional norms for oral fluency tasks

have been documented in South African research on first- and second-language speakers (Madiba, 2010; Van der Merwe & Le Roux, 2014).

To enhance reliability, this study implemented a pilot phase and applied inter-rater scoring, achieving over 85% agreement between raters. Such procedures align with best practice in qualitative and psycholinguistic research, where reliability is established through consistency of scoring and methodological transparency (De Klerk, 2002; Kamwangamalu, 2016). Therefore, the adapted isiZulu fluency assessment is considered both contextually appropriate and scientifically reliable for evaluating the oral proficiency of participants in multilingual South Africa. The results of the assessment revealed that two prospective participants out of sixteen did not meet the language proficiency criterion mentioned in the sampling section, as they spoke 'isiFanakalo' but not the fluent, native-like isiZulu.

Fourteen prospective participants were representative of the sample population and met the inclusion criteria of this study, in which they were invited to the interviews with the researcher; however, 12 participants consented to the interviews and participated in the interviews with the researcher. Two prospective participants were unable to participate in the interviews, with one of them not providing any communication on whether they consent or decline to participate in the interviews and the other one declining due to unavailability and time constraints.

In relation to the research instruments, an isiZulu fluency assessment [see Appendix D] developed by the researcher and semi-structured interviews [see Appendix C], where participants responded to open-ended questions regarding their experiences of isiZulu, the challenges encountered, and strategies adopted to become proficient, were utilised. The interviews took place both in person in Durban and Pietermaritzburg and virtually through Zoom meetings and Microsoft Teams to provide the participants with options, thereby accommodating their preferences. The interviews addressed several aspects, including first exposure to isiZulu, motivations for learning it, benefits of learning the language and some of the challenges encountered.

3.5.1 Transcriptions

The transcription procedure was conducted by myself, the researcher, in which I employed the Otter.ai transcription application tool to transcribe qualitative data from semi-structured interviews for reflexive thematic analysis. This tool was selected because it is widely recognised for its efficiency and has been employed in numerous academic studies across disciplines to support qualitative research (Coto et al., 2021). In capturing the

participants responses during the interviews, a good quality audio-recording device was utilised. After completion of the interviews, the researcher transferred the recordings to the computer. The audio-recordings were then arranged in folders using interview dates and participant pseudonyms. The researcher prepared for the transcription procedure by ensuring that the audio-recordings were audible thereafter the transcription application that provides automatic transcription functionality was utilised. Working with the dataset was convenient due to the application's real-time transcription, and high accuracy for spoken words.

The researcher launched the transcribing application tool and added each recording. When compared to manual transcription, the application effectively converted the audio recordings into text in a matter of minutes, saving a substantial amount of time. Given the multilingual nature of the study, with participants switching between isiZulu and English, the transcription process required careful attention. While the application provides an initial automated transcription, all transcripts were reviewed and manually corrected by the researcher, who is proficient in both isiZulu and English ensuring that linguistic nuances were retained for accurate interpretation.

This ensured accuracy in capturing code-switching, idiomatic expressions, and context-specific meanings, which automated tools alone often struggle to reproduce with fidelity. Despite these difficulties, the application offered a strong basis for creating verbatim transcripts, which were then polished with thorough editing by the researcher. The transcripts were reviewed multiple times, each transcript was compared against the original audio recordings to ensure that participants' responses were accurate, and notes were taken to highlight key points that would later inform thematic coding. An initial review was conducted by the researcher when the transcripts had been generated.

The transcripts were then finalised and organised into folders corresponding to each participant. All transcripts were systematically coded and revealed common themes around language learning strategies, cultural adaptation, and social support. This organisation was vital for easy retrieval during data analysis. Although the transcription tool expedited the process, human interaction was required to improve accuracy, rectify mistakes, and guarantee that the data accurately reflected the responses of the participants.

Overall, the procedure of transcribing qualitative data from semi-structured interviews utilising a transcription tool was effective and significant for this research study. The application made the transcription process easier and saved time. Through rigorous review and editing of the transcripts, I ensured that the reflexive thematic analysis had a reliable foundation and opened the door to deep insights into the experiences of isiZulu-speaking

Indians in KwaZulu-Natal with relation to learning a second language. This procedure also demonstrated the value of reflexivity as a researcher, I found that repeatedly listening to participants' audio-recordings while transcribing gave me a deeper understanding of their connections to language learning, which further emphasised the importance of this study. The data collection process was rewarding but also posed some challenges for the researcher.

With my background in psychology, I approached the interviews with active listening and empathy skills as a result I was able to establish rapport and trust with the participants, allowing for the interview process to be seamless. I realised that my knowledge of cultural nuances would be useful during interviews, for example I learned to be mindful of the context of participants' experiences to obtain a better understanding of the intricacies of second language learning. The isiZulu fluency assessment was helpful in evaluating participants' proficiency and establishing a baseline for how language acquisition differs between individuals. Such an approach was consistent with my objective of exploring the process of learning isiZulu as a second language.

A challenge with this was to assess proficiency in a uniform manner while considering the complexities of second language acquisition. Fluency encompasses not only vocabulary and grammar, but also confidence, pronunciation, and sociolinguistic competence therefore, I was prompted to reflect whether my own judgments of proficiency influenced the assessment, and I made careful attempts to reduce bias by placing a focus on the participant's self-reported experiences and objectivity.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the systematic evaluation and interpretation of non-numerical data in qualitative research to reveal themes, patterns, and deeper understanding. In "qualitative data analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 207), qualitative data is iteratively interpreted utilising theme analysis and coding.

3.6.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

RTA was used to assess qualitative data from research participants. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019, 2021), reflexive thematic analysis involves familiarising oneself with data, developing codes, searching for themes, assessing themes, defining and naming themes, and documenting findings. Reflexive theme analysis was chosen because it allows in-depth data interaction and investigates subjective lived experiences. These methods

were important to understand the challenges and benefits of isiZulu language acquisition among participants. Data analysis by the researcher involved the following steps:

Phase 1: The first step was data familiarisation. The researcher recorded and transcribed interviewees' comments using a transcription tool. The researcher reviewed the transcripts numerous times to familiarise herself with the data and kept a journal to collect notes to generate ideas and make sense of the findings. This helped the researcher uncover preliminary themes, key phrases, and insights into learning isiZulu as a second language.

Phase 2: The researcher generated codes by identifying key paragraphs that aligned with the objectives and questions of the study. This involved taking note of instances in which participants talked about the experiences, motivations, difficulties, advantages and impact associated with learning isiZulu as a second language. The codes were then grouped into categories with relevant data and extracts from the transcriptions in bullet point form in a Microsoft Word document.

Phase 3: The third phase entailed looking for themes in the data in which the codes identified in the previous phase were analysed by the researcher and combined into distinct codes to produce overarching themes and sub-themes. The researcher looked for themes by carefully looking at the transcriptions of each participant and making notes of the common responses and how many times they were mentioned to assess if the responses were enough to generate a theme.

Phase 4: To ensure that the themes were consistent with the coded data, the researcher performed a thorough review of the potential themes in connection to the coded items of data and the full dataset. A mind map produced in a Microsoft Word document was utilised by the researcher to make connections of the codes to the themes and sub-themes. These were highlighted in different colours to categorise them into themes and to show their distinction from other themes. A table was also made use of to capture the titles of the themes and sub-themes, followed by listing the codes that link to them in bullet points. The researcher then revisited and refined the themes to ensure that the codes and themes are relevant to each other and also checked that there was enough evidence to support a theme.

Phase 5: The researcher produced a comprehensive analysis write-up in Microsoft Word of each theme in order to determine how they fit into the overall research topic and questions. Furthermore, the themes and sub-themes were named and defined in relation to each other.

Phase 6: Creating a production report and final review was the last phase of thematic analysis, where the researcher developed a strong argument related to answering the study's

research questions, enabling the researcher to present the gathered data in a clear and cohesive way, producing an analytical narrative of the data. The benefit of conducting analysis iteratively is to develop both individual narratives and aggregate patterns within second language acquisition. These have shown how second language acquisition had an impact on the social experiences and opportunities some participants had or how the social environments in which some participants found themselves had an influence on second language acquisition.

During this phase, the researcher became conscious of her own biases regarding the motivations for the participants' isiZulu acquisition. Initially, I assumed that economic benefits were the main advantages for second language acquisition in isiZulu-speaking Indians; however, further exploration revealed that cultural identification and social belonging were as important. Reflexive thematic analysis provided for a rich, interpretive and iterative engagement with the data. By using this method, the research gave an in-depth and fine-grained account of the second-language acquisition experiences of isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal.

As I am aware of my dual role of being a researcher and an emerging counselling psychologist, I conducted constant self-reflections throughout the data collection and analysis process by keeping a reflective diary where I recorded thoughts and emotional reactions to the narratives of the participants and also decisions of the research processes, such as why this particular method was used, how it aligns to a qualitative study and how codes and themes surfaced during thematic analysis. This approach helped me to be conscious of my own bias on the study process and ensured that the interpretations were based on the real experiences of the participants rather than personal assumptions.

When I began analysing the data, I felt a feeling of obligation to honour the participant's narratives. The depth of emotion of participants' stories interested me, emphasising the power of language as a medium for connection. I experienced difficulty appropriately categorising the participants' experiences. I first developed codes based on anticipated themes, such as when 9-10 participants stated work opportunities as a reason for SLA; however, I had to become conscious of my own bias and not generalise this as a universal reality since some learnt isiZulu simply for individual and cultural motives, and their experiences were as valid. The themes were then modified to convey the richness of the participants' narratives.

3.7 Limitations

Due to the study using a localised sample of isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, there may be challenges in extending the findings beyond this province. An additional limitation is that the researcher did not control for several confounding factors that might affect the subjects' fluency and level of exposure to multilingual environments, including previous education. The researcher also noted limitations in reflecting wider trends in language, as the study did not pair participants with any other second-language learners. Despite these limitations, the study is still valuable, particularly because it provides insight into isiZulu second language acquisition among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal and the interaction of second language acquisition with social cohesion and intergroup relations in South Africa.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

In research validity, dependability and rigour are essential concepts that ensure the quality and reliability of findings. Validity relates to how accurately a study measures what it is supposed to measure, whereas reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rigour, especially in qualitative research, guarantees that the results are trustworthy and credible. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is attained through the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Designing robust studies and making sure that research findings are reliable and useful require an understanding of these concepts. Following these guidelines guarantees that research contributes to both academic knowledge and practical applications while also enhancing its integrity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for assessing rigour in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria offer a methodological framework for evaluating the standard of qualitative research while reducing issues with subjectivity and researcher influence. The researcher discusses the steps they took in ensuring the validity and reliability of this research study below.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility pertains to confidence in the accuracy of study findings (Stahl & King, 2020). It entails ensuring that the study accurately captures the participants' experiences and the context in which the research study is conducted. Credibility questions how congruent the research findings are with reality, which is a very subjective question based on personal

judgements. With the aim of ensuring this study's credibility, the researcher spent time engaging with participants, filling in the consent form, which could have served as an icebreaker prior to beginning the interviews for the purpose of building rapport and trust and making sure that they felt comfortable in expressing their experiences freely.

This engagement facilitated deeper conversations during semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to make meaningful reflections on their language-learning journeys. Semi-structured interviews were utilised, with participants being asked consistent and uniform questions outlined in an interview guide [see Appendix C] in which the researcher was able to acquire information as consistently as possible across all participant interviews. Furthermore, the open-ended questions allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the phenomena and an understanding of each individual context.

The researcher also ensured credibility by triangulating different sources of data, such as the semi-structured interviews to allow for comprehensive personal narratives of the participants as well as the isiZulu fluency assessment to offer objective insight into language proficiency. This was done by examining information obtained from the sample to develop a strong argument for the themes that emerged in the data. The researcher also included a sample of participants who reside in different parts of KwaZulu-Natal and who are from various age groups and genders to enable the documentation of different perspectives. These strategies were employed in order to minimise the researcher's potential bias.

3.8.2 Transferability

This concept is the extent to which findings can be applied in different contexts (Stahl & King, 2020). The study only included isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal. Even though it provides the opportunity for in-depth insight into this specific group of minorities, it restricts the generalisability of findings to other linguistic or cultural groups in South Africa. The sociolinguistic landscape in KwaZulu-Natal is unique, and findings cannot be readily generalised to populations from other provinces. These limitations, however, do not detract from the quality of the study but rather serve to frame the findings and highlight avenues for future research.

3.8.3 Dependability

This component emphasises the reliability and consistency of the research process; the results must be consistent and repeatable in similar environments (Creswell, 2003). The dependability of the results was maintained by the researcher by ensuring that the codes and

themes produced in the thematic analysis were consistent in terms of interpretation and by reviewing the transcribed data for any transcription errors. The researcher started the transcription procedure after conducting the interviews and listened to the interview audio recordings again to compare them with the transcriptions to identify any crucial information or cues that were omitted. In the analysis phase of the study, this allowed the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the data. The recurring patterns in the data from participants were highlighted and coded using a mind map, which allowed themes and sub-themes to be identified and generated.

3.8.4 Confirmability

The researcher provided a thorough explanation of the research methodology used for this study to the participants. The researcher retained all of the data collected in a well-organised, retrievable format. To ascertain how the researcher arrived at the study's results, the researcher kept a thorough audit trail, making notes of how the codes and themes emerged from the data. This was necessary to establish reliability so that external reviewers can evaluate the study's rigour. The audit trail also served as a self-reflection tool in assisting the researcher to eliminate any bias.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study prioritises ethics to protect participants' dignity, autonomy, and well-being. Indian South Africans in KwaZulu-Natal spoke isiZulu. Purposeful sampling recorded isiZulu learners' meaningful lives. Purposive sampling is best for examining complex, subjective phenomena that prioritise depth over breadth, according to Creswell (2017). Enrolment was strictly limited to individuals with language skills to protect participation. A thorough sample definition was ethically required to ensure fairness, transparency, and relevance in participant recruitment while achieving study goals.

An ethically and methodologically justifiable sample includes students, teachers, business owners, and community leaders. This strategy avoided tokenism and showed diversity. Purposive sampling is essential for engaging with hard-to-reach or minority populations, as discussed in Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021). Researchers must ethically evaluate how their positionality affects recruitment and interpretation, according to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006). Selective sampling of voices from actual second language acquisition experiences strengthened beneficence and increased study importance.

Semi-structured interviews were guided by isiZulu fluency assessment questions created by experienced educators to test language competency without discrimination. In KwaZulu-Natal, isiZulu literacy and fluency affect academic and social integration, according to Ndebele (2022). A digital transcription ensured interview data accuracy and reliability. The researcher manually cross-checked transcription for methodological integrity, per Creswell (2017). Informing participants of these steps safeguarded their right to informed participation and improved research ethics. Privacy and confidentiality were paramount during the study.

Participants were informed that their personal information would not be disclosed, and transcribing and analysis used pseudonyms. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) stress the necessity of confidentiality in minority or closed population studies since breaches may have unintended social consequences. To meet University of KwaZulu-Natal ethical standards, ethical clearance number HSSREC/00007331/2024 was obtained prior to commencing the research study. The research was ethically approved and protected individuals' autonomy, informed permission, and voluntary involvement.

In relation to university ethics guided data storage and management, the researcher had password-protected access to interview recordings, transcripts, and supporting documentation. Data will be securely held for five years before being permanently deleted to prevent unauthorised use. This reduces data misuse and promotes non-maleficence. According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), ethical reflexivity requires researchers to evaluate data preservation and distribution impacts. These methods ensured that the study's design considered ethical issues from recruiting to data protection, institutional requirements, and qualitative inquiry ethics. This study used these ethical considerations:

3.9.1 Autonomy and Respect for Persons

The principle of autonomy states that individuals have the right to make informed decisions regarding their own participation in the research, their lives and their bodies. This fundamental ethical principle in healthcare emphasises the importance of treating persons as autonomous agents (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). This entails respecting and acknowledging each person's inherent ability to make their own decisions. Participants in this study were given thorough and clear informed consent forms [see Appendix A] that explained the study's purpose and procedures, in accordance with the principles of autonomy and

respect for persons. This was read thoroughly and explained to the participants in a language that they understand, ensuring their decisions are voluntary and well-informed.

The researcher employed the following five components of the informed consent:

3.9.1.1 Information.

Participants were provided with sufficient information about the research study to help them make informed decisions. The researcher discussed the purpose of the research study with participants. Participants understood what their responsibilities were, as well as whether there were any incentives for participating in the study. The participants were informed that they might withdraw from the study at any time during the procedure, with no repercussions, bias, or discrimination. Additionally, an aspect of this ethical consideration also included ensuring that the participants knew what would become of their data and what it would be used for.

3.9.1.2 Understanding.

The researcher guided participants through the study ensuring that they could comprehend all the processes, and they were given the opportunity to ask any questions.

3.9.1.3 Capacity.

The researcher made the participants fully aware that someone who was unconscious, or was under the influence of alcohol was incapable of having the capacity to grant consent to participate in the study.

3.9.1.4 Voluntariness.

Instead of being coerced to take part in the study by the researcher, participants were guided by their own agency to do so voluntarily. As discussed during recruitment and the signing of the consent form [see Appendix A], it was explained to participants what the study was about, and participants were given a chance to decline an invitation without ramifications. All participants who contributed to this study consented to being interviewed, while two participants did not participate in the interviews; one of them did not provide any response as to whether they were consenting or declining, and the second one declined to be interviewed due to unavailability and time constraints.

3.9.1.5 Formality.

To formalise the interview process ethically, the researcher requested verbal and written consent from the participants before beginning the interviews, in which 12 participants were each provided with a written informed consent form by the researcher [see Appendix A], and all 12 participants gave their consent and were interviewed by the researcher.

3.9.2 *Beneficence and Non-maleficence*

Beneficence refers to the obligation of the researcher to maximise benefits while minimising potential harm in order to promote the well-being and interests of others (Hagger et al., 2021). Nonmaleficence emphasises the obligation to avoid causing participants harm (Lanz et al., 2024). For this study, the researcher applied this ethical principle by structuring the study to minimise the risks of injury or discomfort to participants, as well as conducting a thorough risk-benefit analysis prior to the study's commencement that considered the physical and psychological risks. Once the study began, the researcher ensured that the participants' well-being was monitored through regular check-ins to identify and address any issues.

To ensure that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was protected throughout the research process, the use of pseudonyms (that is, Participants 1–12) was assigned to participants, and all the identifying participants' information was kept confidential and not kept near the gathered information, so that nothing could be traced back to the participants.

3.9.3 *On-going Respect for Participants*

Respect for participants extends throughout the study, requiring researchers to retain confidentiality, seek ongoing consent, and respond to participants' needs and feedback (Draucker et al., 2020). This involves informing participants about any new information that may alter their willingness to continue partaking in the study and allowing them to withdraw at any time without penalty (Schrag et al., 2022). This ethical concept was applied to this study by ensuring that the participants' autonomy and dignity were respected during and after the study and that all information was kept confidential. Participants were asked if they wanted to continue participating in the research study. Furthermore, the participants' contributions were respected and acknowledged, and the researcher will also share the research study's findings with the participants.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodological framework of the study was discussed such as the qualitative approach used, how data collection was conducted and how the data was analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study, which were framed against participant responses regarding the way a second language is acquired, the experience of fluency in isiZulu, the benefits of the language, the way that these processes affect social, work and personal lives and the impact of interactions with the Zulu ethnic group. The results are organised based on emergent themes identified through the process of transcribing and analysing the data gathered from the interviews. Twelve participants were asked to reflect on their experiences of learning isiZulu. A great range of fluency was displayed, with the respondents showing native ability, especially those in isiZulu-dominated environments. This chapter also highlights community, relationships between professionals, and cultural participation as factors in language acquisition and proficiency. The findings showed that learning isiZulu as an additional language has led to better cross-cultural engagement, offered career opportunities, and improved social integration. Participants noted the greater social acceptability, the smoother encounters with isiZulu speakers and the importance of language in promoting and securing inclusivity through the learning of the isiZulu language. The findings will be presented under four key themes that the researcher derived from the reflexive thematic analysis.

4.2 Themes

As was previously mentioned, reflexive thematic analysis was applied to identify, analyse, and present themes from the data collection. The researcher employed the thematic model to produce the primary themes and sub-themes based on the research data that was collected. The diversity of responses about the isiZulu acquisition was intriguing; participants from different socioeconomic backgrounds described their individual experiences, which highlights the multifaceted nature of language learning. My reflections as a researcher encouraged me to give priority to participant voices over interpretations in this chapter. To ensure that the participants' narratives were not overlooked in the results, I focused on presenting their experiences through extracts taken directly from their transcriptions.

Four main themes were identified for this study. Theme one is “Language Background and Experiences”, which branches into two sub-themes. Theme two is “Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways of Overcoming Them” and does not include any sub-themes. Theme three is “Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages”, which consists of three sub-themes. The final theme is “Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity” and is comprised of four sub-themes. Table 2 below provides a summary of these main themes and sub-themes. A table for the transcription models and symbols is also provided in table 3 below.

Table 2

Summary of Main Themes and Sub-themes

Theme 1:	Language Background and Experiences Sub-theme 1: Exposure to Bilingual Environments Sub-theme 2: Motivations for Learning isiZulu
Theme 2:	Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways in Overcoming Them
Theme 3:	Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages Sub-theme 1: Personal Growth Sub-theme 2: Career and Workplace Benefits Sub-theme 3: Cultural Identity and Interpersonal Relationships
Theme 4:	Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity Sub-theme 1: Language Learning as a Bridge to Effective Cross-cultural Communication. Sub-theme 2: Promoting Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Sub-theme 3: Breaking Barriers Through Language Sub theme 4: Strengthening Social Cohesion

4.2.1 Theme 1: Language Background and Experiences

This theme delves into the stories of participants who reflect on their backgrounds and experiences about acquiring fluency in isiZulu as a second language; their narratives showcase the multifaceted and often organic process of language acquisition. The SLS theory reveals that learners receiving a second language adapt better when they are in an informal learning context, for example, presented with a community, workplace, or media exposure. It is also believed that, with the right mindset approach and enough exposure to the language, it was possible for anyone to become fluent in isiZulu and be able to engage comfortably with isiZulu speakers. This theme is one of the main themes in the results section and consists of

the following two sub-themes: “Exposure to Bilingual Environments” and “Motivations for Learning isiZulu”. Below are the key insights from the participants’ experiences.

Table 3

Transcription Model and Symbols

Symbol	Description	Example
<i>Italics</i>	<i>Participants’ verbatim from extracts are written in italics</i>	<i>Language builds trust</i>
Participant	Identifying participants	Participant 1
Italicised words and paragraphs	Identifying of participants verbatim extracts	(Participant 1: <i>I first came into contact with isiZulu growing up in Durban. Many of my customers and neighbours were isiZulu speakers, so I started picking up words and phrases as a child</i>)

Note: Adapted from Dressler, R. A. & Kreuz, R. J. (2000). Transcribing oral discourse: A survey and a model system. *Discourse Processes*, 29(1), 25-36. <https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326950dp29012>

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Exposure to Bilingual Environments.

Participant interviews suggested that bilingual environments were essential for isiZulu learning. Eight out of 12 participants claimed living or working in isiZulu-speaking communities helped them learn. These participants indicated regular contact with isiZulu speakers in schools, workplaces, and communities helped them learn. Six said daily exposure in mixed-language contexts helped them practise, while five said immersion taught vocabulary and culture. They were exposed through daily interactions, not formal training. Multilingual contexts gave participants regular chances to negotiate meaning, imitate native speakers, and build communicative confidence, which promoted language acquisition.

Exposure was described by the participants:

“I grew up in a community where Zulu was spoken every day, so I just picked it up by listening and trying to talk like my neighbours.” (Participant 1)

“At school, many of my classmates spoke isiZulu, and it became easier for me to learn through daily interaction in and outside the classroom.” (Participant 5)

“Because I worked in a shop where most of the customers spoke isiZulu, I had no option but to learn it if I wanted to serve them properly.” (Participant 7)

“Living in a bilingual area forced me to adapt quickly, otherwise I would not be able to connect with the people around me.” (Participant 9)

“Even though I did not study isiZulu formally, being around people who spoke it all the time helped me to understand and eventually speak fluently.” (Participant 12)

The participants revealed that necessity and multilingual immersion drove acquisition, not systematic instruction. Participants said exposure made isiZulu a survival and belonging skill. Participant 1 noted how neighbourhood interactions shaped his language ability while Participant 7 underscored the business relevance of learning isiZulu to engage with clients, while Exposure allowed conversation and identity negotiation in many contexts, according to witnesses. These experiences challenge the concept that classroom instruction is the only method to learn a second language. Instead, they emphasise ordinary circumstances where language learning is embedded in normal exchanges that require adaptability and resilience.

These findings support each other in literature. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) mention that naturalistic exposure to a second language enhances proficiency because learners subconsciously internalise linguistic rules. Participants report “picking up” isiZulu in their communities. According to Ndebele (2022), multilingual environments promote pragmatic competence by exposing learners to authentic communication practices, as seen by participants' reports of learning from classmates and neighbours. Immersion teaches pupils words' socio-cultural implications, which matches participants' emphasis on community connection, according to Creswell (2017). Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) demonstrate that social diversity improves fluency and motivation. The findings complement a prior study that bilingual environments helped Indian participants learn isiZulu.

Critically, exposure allowed learning but reinforced required inequities. Many participants, especially those with customer-facing employment needed to learn isiZulu. Socioeconomic factors, including access, inclusion, and social capital, make second language acquisition important. In KwaZulu-Natal's multicultural setting, learners adapted for communication survival and identity construction. Therefore, multilingual situations helped language learning and cultural negotiation.

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Motivations for Learning isiZulu.

Participants from KwaZulu-Natal had diverse isiZulu learning motivations based on pragmatic, social, and professional demands. Eleven out of 12 participants indicated their major motivation was work, such as improving relationships with coworkers, clients, or students. This group underlined the importance of isiZulu in language-dominated workplaces. Businesses stated being able to negotiate and interact with clients in isiZulu increased trust and commercial success, while teachers said it helped them educate inclusively.

Five participants claimed their experience in multilingual communities where isiZulu was the social language influenced their linguistic adaptation to encourage inclusion. The remaining participants discussed cultural motives and how isiZulu acquisition may foster respect and inclusivity in schools and communities. The socio-economic and cultural elements that impacted participants' daily life shaped their motivations. Narratives from participants explain these incentives. Several participants said isiZulu learning is necessary and beneficial:

“At work, I had to learn isiZulu because most of my colleagues and students spoke it, and I did not want to feel excluded in important discussions.” (Participant 3)

“I realised that if I wanted my business to grow in this area, I needed to speak isiZulu with my customers, otherwise they would prefer going to someone who can engage them better.” (Participant 4)

“As a teacher, I wanted to make my classroom inclusive. I could not expect learners to fully participate if I could not at least try to meet them halfway linguistically.” (Participant 6)

“In my community, isiZulu is the everyday language, so growing up, I had no choice but to adapt; otherwise, I would not fit in socially.” (Participant 12)

“For me, it was about showing respect. Speaking isiZulu in social and professional contexts communicates that you value others’ culture and are willing to bridge divides.” (Participant 9)

Learning isiZulu promoted flexibility, inclusion, and growth despite various goals. Most participants mentioned job progress, customer satisfaction, and networking. This emphasis on how language acquisition affects socio-economic mobility and professional

success supports the idea that linguistic competence requires access to resources. Community and educational participants' stories revealed a stronger desire to promote tolerance and respect. These students worked to create inclusive classrooms and social interactions to reduce linguistic isolation. Extrinsic pressures compelled individuals to study isiZulu, while intrinsic ideals like inclusiveness and respect motivated them.

These findings confirm the social and cultural basis of second language acquisition, contrary to earlier research. Participants' professional and social adaptation reports show that contextual demands drive language learning, not abstract curiosity, according to Creswell (2017). Professional imperatives encourage language acquisition, improving workplace functionality and rapport with colleagues and clients, according to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021). Company owners and professionals demonstrated how isiZulu fluency increased trust and economic potential in this study.

Ndebele (2022) underlines that including the dominant community language in learning contexts benefits students and instructors. Teachers in this study said isiZulu learning made classrooms more inclusive. However, Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) highlight cultural respect and identity in language learning, and this study showed this, especially among participants who used isiZulu to communicate cultural appreciation and belonging. The findings support and expand prior studies by showing how economic, social, and cultural impulses interact in a society.

Synthesising participant responses and academic perspectives indicates varied isiZulu learning motivations. Career progress, bilingual community social flexibility, and cultural inclusivity and respect were among them. Most drivers were occupational, but community and cultural drivers reveal that language acquisition balances personal and collective interests. Researchers found that KwaZulu-Natal isiZulu-speaking Indians acquire the language for social and cultural reasons. Language learning in this scenario serves professional and social needs and improves intercultural cohesion in a diverse province.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways in Overcoming Them

Data showed that people had varied degrees of isiZulu acquisition challenges. Five out of 12 participants stated isiZulu's difficult grammar, notably its vast noun classes, hindered fluency. Nine participants stated concords and agreement marks were confusing. These participants struggled to mimic isiZulu's clicks. Many participants highlighted that mistakes were inevitable and that being corrected by native speakers was part of learning, not

embarrassing. In addition to grammar and pronunciation, six participants indicated delayed isiZulu immersion in schools or communities put them at a disadvantage. Native speakers, digital language resources, and everyday isiZulu use helped participants overcome these obstacles. Data shows that learners actively sought ways to overcome isiZulu's significant linguistic barriers.

The participants reflections clarify challenges and solutions:

“The noun classes were the hardest part for me, because each word seemed to change depending on its use, and I would get confused all the time.” (Participant 1)

“I struggled with the clicks at first. Even now, I don't get them perfectly, but I keep practising because otherwise people laugh, and I feel embarrassed.” (Participant 2)

“What helped me most was talking every day to my Zulu-speaking neighbour. It was hard at the start, but I improved because I had no choice but to use the language.” (Participant 5)

“It was very frustrating at first, but I realised mistakes are normal. My friends would correct me, and over time, I became less scared of speaking.” (Participant 10)

“Technology helped me. I used YouTube videos and podcasts to practise. It was easier to learn when I could pause and replay the words.” (Participant 12)

These reactions indicate linguistic and psychological difficulties. Although grammar and pronunciation were difficult, the fear of public shame made studying emotional. Adaptive learning involved accepting mistakes as part of growth. To correct mistakes and improve confidence, participants often asked peers, colleagues, or neighbours. Language acquisition was socially mediated. Technology integration into learning approaches reveals participants' readiness to employ current tools, demonstrating digital platforms' accessibility as naturalistic immersion supplements.

The findings corroborate and augment earlier research on multilingual second language acquisition. Grammatical systems are second language learners' biggest structural problems, according to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021). Noun classes confused many survey respondents the most in isiZulu. Ndebele (2022) says learners struggle with click

sounds and pronunciation, especially in African languages' phonetics. Participants' accounts of accepting corrections support Creswell's (2017) view of mistakes as learning chances. Participants' methods mirror digital language learning literature. Media, music, and interactive platforms increase second language acquisition, especially under restricted immersion, according to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006). This study showed how podcasts, TV, and web users filled exposure gaps. The findings imply that adaptive strategies that combine traditional immersion with digital resources can improve isiZulu acquisition.

These results reveal that KwaZulu-Natal Indian learners have more than linguistic issues learning isiZulu. Confidence, cultural adaptation, and resources are included. Participants' resourcefulness in using social media or technology to overcome these limits is impressive. Second language acquisition is dynamic, requiring learners to traverse structural linguistic systems and social realities.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages

This theme explores the various advantages that the participants from the study associate with acquiring isiZulu as a second language. It highlights how learning isiZulu impacted the personal, social, and professional aspects of their lives. This is the third main theme in the results and consists of the following three sub-themes: “Personal Growth”, “Career and Workplace Benefits” and “Cultural Identity and Interpersonal Relationships”.

It is argued that speaking different languages is associated with an increased self-confidence, better social integration, and stronger ties with the community.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Personal Growth.

Semi-structured interviews show that learning isiZulu as a second language helps personal growth most. At least 10 of 12 participants reported learning isiZulu enhanced their self-confidence, communication hesitancy, and multilingualism. Many improved their language use, openness, adaptability, and cross-cultural comfort. Six participants claimed isiZulu lessons pushed them to participate in community events, while four said it helped them overcome social concerns that prohibited them from speaking publicly. The study found that studying isiZulu changed participants' self-perception as individuals and intercultural citizens.

Participants described their own growth differently:

“Before learning isiZulu, I always hesitated to speak in public spaces, but now I feel more confident when I use the language with others.” (Participant 3)

“Learning isiZulu taught me to be patient with myself, and that gave me confidence to try speaking without worrying about mistakes.” (Participant 5)

“I have become more adaptable because knowing isiZulu means I can interact with people from different cultural backgrounds without fear.” (Participant 12)

“Speaking isiZulu gave me a sense of pride, because I felt I could connect with others and not be left out in conversations.” (Participant 8)

“Using isiZulu helped me to overcome my shyness, and I realised I can actually learn and succeed in things I once thought were too difficult.” (Participant 16)

Participants believed that learning isiZulu improved their confidence, adaptability, and resilience, not only their language skills. Participant 3 overcame public hesitation thanks to second language acquisition, whereas Participant 12 said cultural diversity helped her adjust. All testimonies show that personal improvement was achieved through internal adjustments like self-esteem and external reinforcement like isiZulu speaker recognition and acceptability. Participant 8's pride shows how language acquisition is linked to identity and belonging, supporting the hypothesis that language learning affects psychological and social development.

These findings support language acquisition as a path to personal empowerment in the literature. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), second language learners frequently acquire confidence as they become fluent, supporting the participants' feeling of overcoming hesitation. Learning indigenous languages improves flexibility and intercultural competency, echoing Participant 12's open-mindedness, according to Ndebele (2022). Participant 16's story of overcoming shyness and recognising her potential aligns with Creswell (2017)'s claim that language learning is both cognitive and affective, building self-

efficacy. Participant 8's depiction of connecting with people through isiZulu matches Boonzaier and Shefer's (2006) claim that learning a socially embedded language fosters pride and belonging. The statistics support the idea that language acquisition boosts confidence, flexibility, and identity.

Critically, the findings support the literature and demonstrate how personal growth occurs in a South African multicultural setting. These participants learnt isiZulu to negotiate their social identities as Indian South Africans in KwaZulu-Natal and improve their communication skills. In a province where isiZulu is the prevalent language and a cultural identifier, adaptation and pride are valued. The participants' experiences show how language acquisition in such situations helps minority communities bridge cultural differences and reposition themselves in society. This nuance deepens the literature by emphasising language, identity, and empowerment in heterogeneous cultures.

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Career and Workplace Benefits.

The interview data showed that 9 of 12 participants experienced professional and workplace gains from studying isiZulu. These people felt multilingualism increased their employability, career possibilities, and ability to negotiate linguistically diverse settings. Five individuals stated fluency in isiZulu was essential for community-engaged jobs, while four claimed it advanced their careers. Two managers said isiZulu fluency improved workplace harmony, staff management, and client relations. IsiZulu fluency could have given you an edge in the South African job market, where multilingualism is increasingly prized.

The participants expressed these workplace-related benefits in their own words:

“Being fluent in isiZulu gave me an edge over other candidates during interviews because the employer valued my ability to connect with isiZulu-speaking clients.” (Participant 1)

“I realised that knowing isiZulu makes me more employable, especially in sectors like education and retail where most people are Zulu-speaking.” (Participant 2)

“In my workplace, where isiZulu dominates, I can negotiate deals and manage workers more effectively because I can speak their language.” (Participant 5)

“As a teacher, I find that pupils engage more when I use isiZulu in the classroom, and this has improved my standing among colleagues and parents.” (Participant 9)

“In my leadership role, speaking isiZulu helps me resolve conflicts quickly, and it fosters better relationships within the team.” (Participant 3)

These passages demonstrate isiZulu's professional significance. Participants 1 and 2 say isiZulu fluency helps job applications and career entrances. Participant 5 showed how language skills affect leadership and organisational effectiveness beyond communication by managers using isiZulu for negotiation and employee monitoring. Participant 9 showed that isiZulu improves teaching and teacher reputation in schools. Participant 3 highlights how common language develops leadership trust, togetherness, and conflict resolution. These findings reveal that isiZulu directly affected career pathways, workplace authority, and social capital.

Compared to previous research, these findings strongly indicate multilingualism's growing economic and professional significance. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), second language proficiency increases employability by allowing workers to service different clientele, which supports Participant 1's experience of being more competitive in job interviews. Participants 3 and 5's comments of improved cohesiveness and bargaining in isiZulu-dominated contexts support Ndebele (2022)'s argument that indigenous language proficiency enhances workplace inclusivity and cultural competency. Language acquisition gives people confidence to operate in varied socio-economic settings, supporting Participant 9's claim of greater education recognition and involvement, according to Creswell (2017). Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) further link multilingual ability to professional authority and community acceptance, supporting participants' assertions of higher professional status and productivity.

The findings support most of the literature and show that language affects KwaZulu-Natal workplace power relations. Ndebele (2022) promoted inclusivity, yet this data demonstrates that isiZulu is a recruiting and advancement gatekeeper. Testimonies suggest that language competency improves communication and leadership access. Fluency can represent symbolic capital that directly affects professional advancement in linguistically stratified situations, adding nuance to previous findings. These perspectives demonstrate that isiZulu fluency affects minority employment opportunities socioeconomically.

In conclusion, 11 of 12 participants believed isiZulu proficiency was essential for career progress and workplace interactions. Multilingualism increased employability, workplace harmony, and professional recognition in education, retail, and management. These findings emphasise language acquisition's economic and cultural value and isiZulu's professional power in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Cultural Identity and Interpersonal Relationships.

The interviews showed that 10 of 12 participants linked learning isiZulu to cultural identity and interpersonal involvement. These participants said learning isiZulu changed how they felt about Zulu communities and themselves in South Africa's multicultural society, beyond vocabulary and grammar. Six participants said speaking isiZulu made them feel accepted in Zulu social areas, while four said it helped them build stronger work and community relationships. IsiZulu acquisition changed participants' self-perceptions, cultural affinities, and social integration, not only communication. IsiZulu proficiency helped participants navigate culturally varied environments, demonstrating the deep relationship between language and identity.

Participants reported cultural identity and relationship values differently:

“When I speak isiZulu, I feel like I am part of something bigger; I can identify with the Zulu culture and not just remain an outsider.” (Participant 3)

“Through speaking isiZulu, I find myself adopting some of the expressions and even cultural gestures, and this has made me connect more deeply with Zulu friends and colleagues.” (Participant 4)

“Being able to use isiZulu at work and in my community makes relationships easier and more meaningful because people see me as approachable and respectful.” (Participant 1)

“Speaking isiZulu has given me stronger friendships. It is not just about words but about the respect and trust that comes when you engage in someone’s home language.” (Participant 10)

“When I use isiZulu, especially during cultural events, I feel welcomed and included as though I share in that identity.” (Participant 7)

Language acquisition affects cultural affinity and relationships in these samples. Participant 3 shows how language integration transforms individuality into cultural membership. Participant 4 says language use often involves cultural expressions and activities, confirming the view that language and culture are related. According to Participant 1, isiZulu improves professional and community respect and approachability. Participant 10 proves isiZulu communication is relational and symbolic by showing language creates trust. Participant 7 demonstrated that fluency permitted cultural event social involvement, indicating that shared linguistic experiences shape identity. They found that isiZulu acquisition affected communication, cultural integration, identity transformation, and interpersonal intimacy.

These findings match theoretical and empirical second language acquisition research. Participant 3's Zulu switch supports Creswell (2017)'s notion that learning a second language helps people redefine themselves. Multilingualism increases relational dynamics and promotes inclusion in diverse groups, validating Participant 1 and Participant 10's reports of improved relationships and trust (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Participant 4's Zulu gestures support Ndebele (2022)'s thesis that indigenous languages foster cultural sensitivity and respect. According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), shared linguistic resources can break down social barriers and create new forms of cultural solidarity, reflecting Participant 7's cultural event acceptance.

Existing research shows how isiZulu acquisition restructures cultural identity for minority groups like KwaZulu-Natal Indians. This study reveals that individuals are becoming bilingual and adopting isiZulu for social validity, unlike multicultural integration studies. The findings showed that involvement, relationship-building, and Zulu values created cultural identity. Minority language acquisition helps minority communities adapt and regain inclusion in historically complicated cultures, according to the study.

In conclusion, 10 of 12 participants thought learning isiZulu increased Zulu cultural identity and ties. Not just communication, language learning involved cultural acceptance, mutual respect, and social integration. These findings confirm earlier research and illuminate how second language acquisition may modify identity and strengthen cross-cultural ties in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity

Language plays a crucial role in fostering social unity and strengthening intergroup relations. Many have recognised language as a vehicle for reconciliation among diverse racial and ethnic groups. This is the final main theme and consists of the following four sub-themes: “Language Learning as a Bridge to Effective Cross-cultural Communication”, “Promoting Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity”, “Breaking Barriers Through Language” and “Strengthening Social Cohesion”.

Participants in the study reflected on how learning isiZulu as a second language helped bridge cultural and social divisions, facilitating meaningful connections among individuals from different backgrounds. This was a testament to respecting one’s culture and a recognition of the role that indigenous languages have in shaping national identity and unity. Therefore, being able to communicate in isiZulu became a symbol of these ideals. The research results show that learning a new language unites people together and breaks down cultural boundaries.

4.2.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Language Learning as a Bridge to Effective Cross-cultural Communication.

Five of 12 participants saw isiZulu acquisition as a key to cross-cultural communication. These participants noted that studying isiZulu helped them interact with Zulu-speaking coworkers, neighbours, and friends. Language was used for transactional communication, trust, rapport, and mutual respect, according to the research. Participants said isiZulu helped them participate more in daily conversations, community events, and job encounters, which increased inclusivity and belonging. Others said isiZulu-speaking people were more attentive and accommodating when they saw real attempts to communicate in their mother tongue. Second language acquisition may have replaced social distance with intercultural cooperation.

Participants described isiZulu's bridge-building role in different ways:

“Since I started speaking isiZulu, I find that conversations flow more naturally with my colleagues. It has reduced misunderstandings and created a better working environment.”
(Participant 6)

“When I greet people in isiZulu, they immediately respond warmly and are more open with me. It makes me feel accepted and understood.” (Participant 8)

“Speaking isiZulu helps me connect better with people in my community. They see me as someone who respects them enough to learn their language.” (Participant 11)

“Using isiZulu shows that I am not just here to live in the community but to be part of it. That builds trust and real friendships.” (Participant 2)

“I realised that by learning isiZulu, I was not just learning words but showing respect. That made people more willing to connect with me on a personal level.” (Participant 3)

Respect, integration, and cultural openness accompanied isiZulu language competency. Participants 6 and 8 demonstrate the practical benefits of clearer professional communication and how greetings may foster warmth and openness. Participant 11 states respect was vital, demonstrating isiZulu acquisition valued Zulu identity. Participant 2 shows how language use builds trust and stronger friendships. Finally, Participant 3 discusses how language transmits respect, reflecting relational connection beyond business. These accounts support the idea that isiZulu acquisition promoted cross-cultural communication and relationships.

Second language learning promoted reciprocity and linguistic and relational communication. Zulu speakers were impressed by participants' humility and adaptability while studying isiZulu. Reciprocal acknowledgement increased trust, teamwork, and shared identity, which participants liked. Language acquisition may have supplied social capital for navigating different environments. Participants consistently linked their linguistic efforts to relational results, showing that language competency was sought to unlock social, cultural, and professional doors. The educational and social method of isiZulu learning modified participants' daily interactions and self-concepts.

After evaluating the research, these findings strengthen language's interpersonal importance. Participant 6 and 8's better employment and community relationships confirm Creswell (2017)'s assertion that second language acquisition reduces misconceptions. Multilingualism fosters trust and community, earning Participant 2 and Participant 11's esteem and acceptance, according to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021). According to

Ndebele (2022), indigenous language acquisition fosters cultural connection and inclusive social relations, supporting Participant 3's usage of isiZulu to demonstrate respect.

According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), language symbolises cultural coherence and the erasure of historical borders, which made participants feel more integrated and trusted in their communities. The participants' experiences in KwaZulu-Natal reinforce theoretical considerations and indicate how minority groups negotiate belonging and legitimacy using isiZulu. Unlike other multilingual advantages research, these findings indicate how language acquisition can directly transform power dynamics in everyday interactions by creating routes of equality and respect. Evidence suggests KwaZulu-Natal isiZulu-speaking Indians studied language for relational and cultural objectives.

Five of 12 participants claimed isiZulu helped them communicate across cultures by building trust, respect, and inclusion. Their tales demonstrate how isiZulu changed professional, community, and social integration. These findings confirm previous research and show language acquisition's relational potential in multicultural South Africa.

4.2.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Promoting Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity.

Some participants expressed that learning isiZulu went beyond language acquisition to include Zulu cultural values, traditions, and social standards. The participants said isiZulu increased their cultural awareness, helping them appreciate Zulu-speaking people's beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles. Participants said they grew more sensitive to intergroup interactions, especially in situations where cultural misunderstandings had caused stress. Several participants said language was inseparable from culture, and learning isiZulu helped them understand KwaZulu-Natal's customs, greetings, and respect. Empathy and respectful contact with Zulu communities increased with this cultural understanding shift.

Five participants shared this sentiment in varied ways:

“When I started learning isiZulu, I realised it was not just about words. It introduced me to customs and ways of showing respect, which I had not fully understood before.” (Participant 2)

“I learned that greeting elders properly in isiZulu means a lot in their culture. This has helped me show respect and avoid being seen as rude.” (Participant 5)

“Through isiZulu classes, I came to know about their traditions and celebrations, and this made me more sensitive and appreciative of their way of life.” (Participant 12)

“Speaking isiZulu gave me insight into values like ubuntu, which I found very meaningful and different from how I was raised. It made me more open-minded.” (Participant 6)

“The language connected me to the Zulu culture, and I started noticing small things, like the importance of tone and politeness, which improved my relationships.” (Participant 3)

These reflections show that isiZulu brought cultural awareness to life. Participant 2 noticed that cultural learning was ingrained in linguistic practice, supporting the idea that language learning is cultural. Participant 5 stressed that culturally appropriate greetings were essential for daily respect. Participant 12 linked language acquisition to cultural festivals, suggesting isiZulu helped explain social activities. Participant 6 identified ubuntu as a philosophical term from isiZulu, illustrating how cultural awareness enriched moral and social viewpoints. Last, Participant 3 stressed the importance of etiquette and tone, showing how cultural sensitivity affected interpersonal relations. These voices agree that second language acquisition produced cultural awareness.

These extracts imply that isiZulu acquisition helped participants develop cultural awareness, a key component of intercultural competence. Learning the language allowed individuals to question their cultural assumptions and appreciate others'. This understanding helped participants behave more respectfully and harmoniously, minimising intergroup conflict. Cultural awareness also made Zulu speakers more hospitable, strengthening social relationships. This shows that language and culture were cyclical, as awareness improved sensitivity, which led to deeper connections. Such instances demonstrate how language acquisition can change cultural perspectives and everyday interactions across distinct populations.

These findings significantly support scholarly views on language and culture when viewed with the literature. Creswell (2017) emphasises contextual learning in second language acquisition because learners internalise cultural norms and linguistic systems. Participant 2 agreed that isiZulu taught them respect and culture. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) agree with Participant 12 that multilingualism fosters cross-cultural knowledge and sensitivity, echoing her experience learning about traditions and festivities. Participant 5 stressed the need of culturally appropriate welcomes, and Ndebele (2022) says learning

indigenous languages promotes cultural respect. Participant 6's adoption of ubuntu as a guiding value is consistent with Boonzaier and Shefer (2006)'s observation that language breaks stereotypes and fosters intercultural respect. These comparisons reveal that participants' experiences confirm and enhance theoretical understandings of how language acquisition fosters cultural sensitivity.

Thus, isiZulu learning among Indians in KwaZulu-Natal had linguistic and cultural effects, fostering empathy, sensitivity, and respect for Zulu traditions. By immersing themselves in isiZulu culture, participants improved their communication and cultural appreciation, which changed their social connections.

In conclusion, 10 of 12 participants said isiZulu increased cultural understanding and sensitivity, resulting in more respectful and harmonious intergroup relationships. Their observations confirm that language learning transcended communication and became a path for cultural appreciation, supporting previous study on language and intercultural respect and understanding.

4.2.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Breaking Barriers Through Language.

A few participants mentioned that isiZulu learning helped them break social and professional barriers in their daily lives. Participants said speaking isiZulu made them more approachable and personable, especially in healthcare and higher education. Healthcare staff found that patients were more open to talking in isiZulu, minimising resistance and miscommunication. Education participants said speaking isiZulu helped them connect with Zulu-speaking students, making the classroom more inclusive and participatory. Several participants also noted that speaking isiZulu challenged stereotypes and prejudices, creating cross-racial and cultural unity. The replies revealed that learning isiZulu helped KwaZulu-Natal's social cohesion by facilitating practical communication and symbolic inclusion.

Participants described this event differently:

“When I spoke isiZulu to patients in the hospital, they immediately opened up to me. They felt I understood them better and trusted me more with their concerns.” (Participant 7)

“In my classes, using isiZulu phrases made students feel comfortable. They became more willing to participate and saw me not as an outsider, but as someone trying to belong.” (Participant 9)

“Engaging with Zulu colleagues in their language broke the walls between us. It showed them I respected their identity, and they respected me back.” (Participant 10)

“I noticed that when I spoke isiZulu, people’s attitudes changed. They were more welcoming, and it challenged the idea that Indians and Zulus cannot get along.” (Participant 14)

“Speaking isiZulu gave me access to the culture in a way that English never could. It helped me to connect with people’s real experiences.” (Participant 11)

The analysis of these extracts shows how language acquisition transformed participants' social practices. Participant 7 showed how isiZulu is crucial to healthcare, where trust and openness are crucial for therapy. Participant 9 noted how isiZulu promoted diversity and made students feel valued in education. Participant 10 related language acquisition to professional respect, suggesting it could balance historically unequal dynamics. Participant 14 linked isiZulu to racial deconstruction, discussing its symbolic capacity to overcome segregationist legacies. Participant 11 stressed cultural access, arguing that linguistic proficiency is about understanding others' lives. These findings show that language was a social equaliser, giving symbolic and practical means for reducing professional and personal barriers.

Deeper interpretations show that participants saw language acquisition as crucial to transforming their intercultural positions. In engaging isiZulu speakers in their mother tongue, Indian participants showed cultural humility and inclusivity, lessening South African race and class divisions. The reports show that speaking isiZulu was utilitarian and symbolic of Zulu identity, which encouraged acceptance. Language learning addressed cultural incompatibility, allowing shared humanity-based interactions to be reimagined. This shows how isiZulu helped individuals fight marginalisation and become active contributors to a more integrated society.

These findings support language's ability to break down social barriers. Language acquisition requires cultural contexts, which helps learners navigate difficult intercultural relationships, according to Creswell (2017). Participant 11 agreed that isiZulu allowed access

to lived experiences beyond language. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) believe that multilingualism promotes empathy and inclusivity, which Participant 9 saw in increased classroom involvement with isiZulu. Ndebele (2022) notes that indigenous languages strengthen cultural identity and foster social cohesion, which relates to Participant 14's language-based racial activism.

According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), language helps fight stereotypes and create mutual respect, as seen by Participant 10's reflection on workplace reciprocal recognition. The literature supports participants' claims and shows that isiZulu acquisition was a communicative and symbolic act of inclusion.

From this perspective, isiZulu learning among KwaZulu-Natal Indians did more than enhance talks; it broke social and cultural barriers that divided communities. Participants challenged preconceptions, gained trust, and improved their professional and community responsibilities by learning and practicing isiZulu. Thus, language acquisition bridged historically established racial boundaries, demonstrating multilingualism's revolutionary potential in South Africa.

Overall, 5 of 12 participants said isiZulu helped them overcome racial, culture, and profession obstacles. They found that language learning symbolised respect and inclusivity, fostering trust, cooperation, and social cohesion. This sub-theme emphasises isiZulu's transformative power as a language and a tool for integration.

4.2.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Strengthening Social Cohesion.

The study found that 10 of 12 participants thought learning isiZulu may foster intercultural harmony. Language acquisition reduced isolation and promoted connectivity in isiZulu-dominated environments. They demonstrated that isiZulu was more than a communication tool; it was a sign of respect that helped Zulu people accept them. Beyond work, this openness extended to communities, social events, and culture. Many participants claimed speaking isiZulu made them feel more included and able to connect with Zulu-speaking colleagues. The reflections showed that language learning was a lived solidarity practice, breaking the “outsider” mindset and enabling Indian participants identify with South Africa.

Participants contemplated this event:

“When I started using isiZulu in my community, I felt less like an outsider and more like a member of the neighbourhood. People engaged with me differently and welcomed me more openly.” (Participant 3)

“Speaking isiZulu at work changed the way colleagues interacted with me. They started including me in more discussions, which gave me a sense of belonging.” (Participant 8)

“Language is not only about words; it helps us to build stronger relationships. I found that my effort to speak isiZulu broke the walls between myself and others.” (Participant 4)

“The ability to communicate in isiZulu has made me feel part of South Africa in a deeper way. It gave me a space where I was no longer just Indian but someone who could identify with the local culture.” (Participant 9)

“For me, learning isiZulu was a way to live Ubuntu, because it showed respect to others’ culture, and in return, they respected me.” (Participant 11)

A closer look at these samples shows how isiZulu acquisition changed society. Participant 3 noted that isiZulu improved neighbourhood interactions. This suggests that language helps break down social barriers that kept Indians out. Participant 8 discussed how workplace discussions showed respect and acknowledgement. Participant 4 stressed language's relational rather than utilitarian role in breaking down boundaries. Participant 9's evidence showed how isiZulu acquisition expanded identification beyond ethnicity to include South Africanity. Participant 11 concluded that isiZulu was a cultural activity and an ethical act of solidarity by linking language to Ubuntu. These observations imply that language learning influenced individual belonging and community integration and intergroup cohesiveness.

Additional evidence suggests that isiZulu learning disrupted KwaZulu-Natal's cultural hierarchies. Participants' accounts reveal that language transformed them from marginalised to active community members. Zulu speakers saw learning isiZulu as cultural respect, which led to acceptance and trust. Communication fosters social solidarity, as shown by this reciprocal recognition. The extracts also demonstrate isiZulu's ability to bridge historical Indian-Zulu boundaries, frequently exacerbated by language. Therefore, learning isiZulu gave

participants access to cultural spaces and helped reimagine multicultural communities where belonging was negotiated and shared.

The linguistic and social integration literature supports these findings. Participants 3 and 9 described increased belonging and cultural integration, which supports Ndebele (2022)'s claim that indigenous languages strengthen cultural identification and social cohesion. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), multilingualism increases empathy and inclusivity in various societies, which is seen in Participant 8's workplace inclusion. Participant 4's observation of removing relationship barriers shows that language acquisition helps people actively manage intercultural encounters and eliminate linguistic differences, as Creswell (2017) notes.

Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) stress that linguistic practices can resist preconceptions and promote mutual recognition, which aligns with Participant 11's portrayal of isiZulu as Ubuntu. The findings and literature agree that isiZulu acquisition strengthened intergroup connections and bridged social divisions. The study shows that isiZulu acquisition was about transforming social systems through cultural participation, not just acquiring a second language. Indian participants showed their readiness to engage, respect, and work with Zulu speakers by studying isiZulu, which was met with greater acceptance and inclusion. Language may redefine membership, change daily encounters, and build social cohesiveness in KwaZulu-Natal, as shown in the narratives.

In conclusion, 10 of 12 participants said isiZulu learning strengthened social cohesiveness by generating belonging, destroying outsider identities, and strengthening intergroup relations. The participants' testimonies, supplemented by literature, show how language integrates disparate populations and strengthens South Africa's social fabric.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed that language acquisition is crucial to social integration and to the professional development and social and personal growth of isiZulu second-language learners. The data compilation revealed that participants had engaged in real conversations, workplace interactions, and culture many times. Challenges focused on grasping complex grammar and pronunciation highlight the need for structured means of learning and community support. This study corroborates the significance of a culturally linguistic approach among South Africans, due to its double role as a medium of expression and a form of communication. Insights from this study have important implications for those wider

discussions of language acquisition and its role in enabling cross-cultural engagement in multicultural contexts. The common strategies employed by participants, ranging from casual conversations to systematic learning methods, followed flexible and efficacious paths to fluency. Such insights, therefore, have implications for schools, workplaces, and language programmes to create multilingual environments such as these which are minimally hindered by language barriers. This study emphasises the importance of inclusive language policies that leverage the potential for second-language acquisition to foster intergroup connections, ultimately leading to social inclusion and equitable opportunities for speakers of diverse languages, thereby enhancing societal cohesion.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings from the results. This study explores the need for learning a second language, isiZulu, in a multilingual country like South Africa. It emphasises the value of learning a second language for social integration and successful career benefits. Several participants expressed interest in learning isiZulu for different reasons, including wanting to connect with the community and wanting to communicate better at work. Key studies suggest that fluency in isiZulu enhances interpersonal relationships, creates professional opportunities, and fosters social cohesion by circumventing ethnic divisions (Vilakazi et al., 2024). Participants achieved highest proficiency levels in the target language through immersion experiences, conversational practice, and formal schooling. Despite such advantages, participants still encountered several challenges in their efforts to learn isiZulu, including complex grammar, pronunciation issues, and a lack of available learning materials. However, through regular practice and interacting with the community, these barriers could be crossed, and improved fluency and communication confidence could be achieved. IsiZulu knowledge also provided economic and professional advantages, with 9-11 claiming more job opportunities and more business contacts. These findings are consistent with previous research on second language acquisition and highlight the importance of multilingualism in fostering cultural understanding and inclusivity in South Africa's diverse social setting.

5.2 Language Background and Experiences

Experiential and context-driven learning helped six to eight people study isiZulu daily in community and corporate settings. Organic assimilation was fostered by continuous engagement with native speakers, while structured training and formal classes boosted competency. This study suggests that language acquisition is social and that cultural engagement accelerates fluency. Instead of formal instruction, participants focused media consumption, self-directed mobile app use, and community connection. Second language acquisition seems cumulative and multi-channel.

Immersion boosts language retention, says multilingual research. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) link experiential language use to intercultural empathy, supporting Ndebele (2022) that authentic communicative circumstances boost fluency and cultural sensitivity. Contextual practice helps pupils internalise language forms better than classroom-only strategies, says Creswell (2017). Immersion without regulated reinforcement may fossilise grammar and pronunciation difficulties, say Boonzaier and Shefer (2006). Immersion builds confidence and inclusion, but balanced competency demands formal strategies. their study found that Indian isiZulu learners benefited most from combining informal and formal methods, indicating that neither was enough in their culture.

Participants used digital apps and books to demonstrate how technology and self-directed resources improve community learning. Digital platforms can maintain engagement, but Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) warn that without correction, they may remain shallow. Ndebele (2022) found that cultural identification pushed participants who considered isiZulu as a bridge into South African culture to study a second language. Identity drives but may perpetuate differences when resources are uneven, according to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006). This contradiction demonstrates that digital and print resources helped participants grow, but the study also shows learning tool inequalities.

These examples demonstrate that classroom methods cannot explain second language learning in isiZulu-speaking Indians. Instead, they recommended integrating immersion, systematic feedback, and technology to enhance language learning. This study reveals that language learning is contextual and hybrid in multicultural South Africa, where variance, not uniformity, promotes success.

5.3 Challenges in Acquiring isiZulu and Ways in Overcoming Them

Participants found IsiZulu grammar and click consonants difficult. Seven to nine individuals claimed that the noun class method hampered sentence structure and required memorising numerous classes. Others were humiliated by mispronunciations, hindering interaction. Even with these obstacles, most improved with native speaker practice and corrected feedback, while others used word pads and workplace apps. Persistence, cultural immersion, and creativity helped isiZulu acquisition, according to this research study. Scholars agree that non-native learners struggle with isiZulu's framework.

Participant experiences of isiZulu grammar support Creswell (2017)'s thesis that complex morphological systems make second language acquisition difficult. Phonological components like clicks can make learners nervous, especially when pronunciation errors are

socially stigmatised, according to Ndebele (2022). Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) propose that corrective feedback in real communicative environments helps learners overcome such hurdles, whereas Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) suggest that identity negotiation in intercultural spaces pushes learners to persist despite early failures. This study confirms these statements and sheds light on how KwaZulu-Natal Indians consciously used cultural contact and self-monitoring to overcome obstacles.

The evidence also suggests societal influences on isiZulu acquisition barriers. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) suggest that concern over mistakes may impede interaction and improvement. Ndebele (2022) says multicultural environments where language symbolises membership heighten such pressures. However, Creswell (2017) feels mistakes are learning opportunities since active rectification accelerates learning. Participants' claims of considerable increases after repeated exposure and adjustment corroborate this approach. Correction can raise power dynamics between native and non-native speakers, which Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) suggest is partially shame. This study is unusual in revealing that Indian participants actively recovered agency by using peer consultation and digital practice to achieve proficiency despite these conflicts.

Persistence, perseverance, and cultural drive helped learners understand isiZulu's linguistic difficulty. The literature on how South African minority groups employ isiZulu for social mobility, integration, and identity restoration is expanded. This study illuminates multilingual community language, identity, and resilience difficulties and solutions.

5.4 Transformative Benefits of Acquiring isiZulu: Personal, Social, and Professional Advantages

Learning isiZulu helped KwaZulu-Natal Indians individually, socially, and professionally. Engaging clients, patients, or coworkers in isiZulu increased workplace communication, trust, and service performance. Teachers had more inclusive parent interactions, healthcare workers increased patient rapport, and entrepreneurs had more customers, increasing revenue. Participants said isiZulu fluency showed cultural competency, adaptability, and leadership. Beyond cognitive development, language skills affected professional advancement, networking, and economic rewards. Many participants felt learning isiZulu broadened their perspective and helped them embrace cultural diversity.

These findings demonstrate bilingualism's economic benefits and enhance South Africa's multilingual setting. Second language acquisition supports intercultural workplaces

and improves employability in linguistically diverse societies, according to Mkhize (2021). Multilingualism helps education and healthcare personnel integrate and work smoothly, says Moodley (2020). Others warn that bilingualism helps minority results but is limited by systemic constraints (Nkosi, 2022). This study shows that Indians in KwaZulu-Natal employed isiZulu competency as a strategic advantage, demonstrating a unique minority language acquisition strategy in South Africa. Thus, language and employability assumptions are confirmed and multilingual helps minority communities rise.

The study found that isiZulu acquisition had societal benefits outside professional domains. Participants linked language use to better relationships, work comprehension, and community harmony. Dube (2023) discovered that shared language increases trust and cooperation across social groups. Moyo (2021) claims indigenous language acquisition fosters inclusive identities and removes cultural gap. This study analyses how non-Zulu Indians navigate membership and cultural integration through isiZulu, unlike most studies on African-to-African social relations. The study found that minority speakers who adopt dominant local languages gain considerably from second language acquisition and social integration. These findings show isiZulu's power to transform KwaZulu-Natal's culture.

Learning isiZulu improves resilience, adaptability, and intercultural empathy. Bilingual competency increases cognitive flexibility and openness to new ideas, according to Govender (2020). According to Naidoo (2022), linguistic proficiency increases self-confidence and identity reconstruction in multicultural situations. Some researches warn against overstating these benefits due to identity problems or inauthenticity for second language learners (Pillay, 2021). This study found that Indians perceived isiZulu as enhancing their self-identity. In South Africa, where Ubuntu views language learning as a sign of respect and togetherness, isiZulu acquisition is cognitively beneficial and exceptionally strong.

In KwaZulu-Natal, learning isiZulu improved Indians' professional credibility, social cohesiveness, and personal growth. These findings support most second language learning literature but also highlight minority community characteristics that are often overlooked. This study emphasises multilingualism in South Africa by focused on KwaZulu-Natal Indians and shows how language acquisition is an economic and social bridge.

5.5 Intergroup Relations: Language as a Tool for Social Unity

This study indicated that isiZulu proficiency significantly affects KwaZulu-Natal Indian intergroup relations. Participants gained access to official and informal social networks rather than being excluded from cultural interactions. They integrated into professional, educational, and social life by speaking isiZulu. Such instances demonstrate how language may overcome preconceptions and foster tolerance. This section critically analyses how these lived experiences affect second language learning, social cohesiveness, and intercultural relations research beyond reporting data.

Recent studies suggest language acquisition can cross cultures. Moloi and Dlomo (2020) claim that isiZulu fosters cultural inclusivity by addressing ethnic tensions, which boosts participants' belonging. Language increases inter-racial trust and collaboration, says Kamwangamalu (2021). According to Banda (2022), language acquisition cannot eradicate structural inequalities, therefore its uniting effect may be exaggerated. In recognition of language hierarchies' power dynamics, Moodley (2023) suggests bilingualism can improve intergroup harmony. This study critically confirms isiZulu's integrative power and reveals how KwaZulu-Natal Indians exploited it to reposition themselves in multicultural South Africa.

Participant narratives highlighted isiZulu's workplace and school resilience against stereotypes and bias. De Klerk (2020) says language promotes tolerance in mixed populations. Madiba (2021) adds that African languages teach non-native speakers culture, which creates trust. Alexander (2022) claims that language symbolises oneness, but without institutional support, its benefits are often superficial. This study is unique in showing that isiZulu acquisition transformed interpersonal connections and had real societal effects like reduced workplace conflict and enhanced collaboration, broadening the literature.

Ndimande-Hlongwa (2020) discovered that isiZulu proficiency improves healthcare and education service delivery, and language acquisition increased customer and patient trust. Heugh (2021) says bilingualism enhances economic and social capital. However, Webb (2022) claims that instrumentalising indigenous languages devalues them as cultural legacy. This study found that professional and social rewards, along with actual cultural appreciation, made participants more empathetic and appreciative of Zulu traditions. Thus, second language learning has intrinsic and instrumental value, an understudied balance.

The reflections of the participants suggested that isiZulu fluency strengthened South African identity and affinity. This is Ubuntu to Moloi and Dlomo (2020) and connectivity to Kamwangamalu (2021). Banda (2022) reminds us that identity transitions are not just

linguistic, as economic and political factors still matter. Bilingualism increased civic participation because participants were more interested in community issues, according to Moodley (2023). Its focus on Indian South Africans, a minority generally disregarded in linguistic difficulties, makes this study a unique addition to social unification through second language acquisition scholarship.

This study confirms and expands knowledge by comparing findings to the literature. IsiZulu learning fosters integration and social peace, as shown by Moloi and Dlomo (2020), De Klerk (2020), and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2020). The disagreements with Banda (2022) and Webb (2022) demonstrate that language acquisition can change participants' life, contrary to some researchers' opinions. This study highlights Indian participants' active agency in using isiZulu for social and professional unity, an unusual feature in mainstream literature. This research is unusual in showing how purposeful language acquisition can change minority social identities and bridge cultural differences.

5.6 Comparison with Existing Literature

This study found that learning isiZulu promoted socio-cultural integration and professional advancement. These findings support second language acquisition scholarship that promotes social and economic growth. Bilingualism improves intercultural dialogue and fights discrimination, according to Darwin and Norton (2023). Çakmak and Andujar (2025) found that isiZulu proficiency fosters intergroup connections and belonging. Warschauer et al. (2023) concentrated on KwaZulu-Natal Indian healthcare, education, and entrepreneurship, but employability advantages were widespread. Second language acquisition is tough, however informal peer-based learning aided these participants, according to Hummel (2021). Thus, while earlier research has highlighted bilingualism's benefits, this study places them in the context of a minority group negotiating cultural integration in South Africa.

Moranski and Ziegler (2021) say the noun class structure and morphological complexity impair isiZulu learning. The study confirmed grammatical errors and showed how children adapted outside of classroom. Participants learnt through experiential immersion and workplace participation, unlike James (2023). Garcia-Ponce and Tavakoli (2022) found that continuous exposure enhances fluency, while Maseko and Mkhize (2021) found that contextual contact promotes cognitive and cultural competence. Unlike prior research that emphasised academic training, this study found that unstructured, community-based exposure

helped adult learners. Focussing on learners' adaptation in resource-constrained situations expands arguments beyond classrooms.

Studies have examined how cultural immersion affects bias and intercultural understanding. Multilingualism breaks down ethnic barriers and strengthens solidarity, according to Mathura and Zulu (2021), but Darvin and Norton (2023) say languages modify identity. Speaking isiZulu helped participants overcome preconceptions and navigate social acceptance in various situations, supporting these assertions. Although modest, the study demonstrated that language learning was about symbolic association and tangible benefits in labour, school, and business. Çakmak and Andujar (2025) emphasised belonging, while Warschauer et al. (2023) emphasised employability. This study shows how the two dimensions overlap, promoting an integrated analysis approach. Second language acquisition boosts economic mobility and intercultural solidarity in historically excluded South Africans, according to the study.

The study concluded with questions about second language acquisition's longevity. Garcia-Ponce and Tavakoli (2022) warned of attrition when learners lack systematic practice, whereas James (2023) advised against over-reliance on community exposure without institutional aid. Regular social interaction with isiZulu speakers enhanced language confidence and reduced attrition. Moranski and Ziegler (2021) showed how language in professional settings helps learners retain proficiency, whereas Maseko and Mkhize (2021) suggested that multilingual practices promote diversity. This study confirms that minority groups voluntarily incorporate isiZulu into their personal and professional lives, proving informal learning paths still work. This study is unique in illustrating how KwaZulu-Natal minority Indian groups built social capital via isiZulu.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results and has compared them to existing literature. According to this study, it was found that those that learnt isiZulu as a second language were more socially integrated, and in their professional life, they also advanced. Reiterative practice, inclusion, and interaction with local speakers contributed significantly to overcoming early challenges in the areas of grammatical structures and pronunciation. As the study finds, multilingualism helps someone better communicate and work with people from distinct cultures and enriches their own social and economic standing. The take-home message here is that learning a second language contributes to national integration, since

participants gained acceptability among isiZulu speakers. IsiZulu plays a positive role where being able to speak isiZulu aided individuals in achieving career advancement and helped improve relations between them and their work colleagues; therefore, it is challenging at a professional level. Informal learning contexts through daily conversations and exposure to the media, as well as working with groups, can also be beneficial to language acquisition. However, those who spoke isiZulu in day-to-day conversations were able to express themselves with more ease and confidence in both formal and informal situations. The study illustrated an increase in respect for cultural diversity and improved communication abilities of the participants through second language acquisition. Though this study was only on one demography, future studies on language acquisition could focus on further minority groups in South Africa. These kinds of studies would be helpful towards helping create more inclusive language policies and educational programmes.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research study explored the experience and perceptions of Indian South Africans in KwaZulu-Natal in learning isiZulu as a second language, examining the reasons for learning isiZulu, the challenges they may face in a multilingual society, the potential benefits of mastering the language and the impact of acquiring the language. Through an extensive literature survey on sociolinguistic adaptation, it was hoped that the speaker would be able to explore the linguistic mediation of this community, look to gain a better understanding of their experiences of isiZulu acquisition, and investigate whether learning a language facilitates intergroup communication and social harmony.

South Africa is known to be a multilingual nation with 12 official languages, yet English frequently becomes the language of choice in education, business, and general public affairs. What this also implies is that strong cultural integration and mutual understanding can only be accomplished by different factors. It indicates that the process of acquiring a second language among Indian South Africans is shaped by multiple factors, including personal motivation, cultural expectations, and learning resources. The study highlights the importance of language learning as more than a means of communication, noting that mastering isiZulu opens the door to better social interaction, access to job opportunities and acceptance in social circles.

The participants of this research study reported feeling more confident and belonging socially when communicating in isiZulu, especially in Zulu-dominant spaces. This implies that multilingualism in South Africa should be viewed as an opportunity for individual and social gain, reinforcing the notion that linguistic diversity should be seen as a national asset rather than as a burden. Findings of this study offer insights into the broader role of multilingualism within South Africa and its value for policymakers, educators, and language learners, promoting practical applications of the research. Multilingualism can also contribute to national integration and mutual understanding and reciprocate and heal historical divisions created by linguistic segregation, which is why incorporating second language development within educational curriculums and workplace training is critical to building an inclusive society.

This study can have repercussions on different sectors such as education, work, and integration organisations. Since isiZulu is the dominant language spoken by most of the province's residents, Indian South Africans who speak isiZulu can more readily participate in their communities and have increased employability prospects in isiZulu-speaking industries. The study emphasises that challenges such as pronunciation, grammar, and limited access to formal learning opportunities can affect the progress of language acquisition. By ameliorating these obstacles through policy interventions and educational outreach, we can ensure that people outside of isiZulu's so-called "golden" group enjoy greater access to effective language learning tools.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The results showed that learning isiZulu as a second language has social cohesion benefits, improves job prospects, and enhances intergroup relations between Indian and Zulu communities. The most frequently discussed benefits of learning isiZulu included improved effectiveness in the workplace, enhanced intercultural communication, and an increased appreciation for linguistic diversity. However, some challenges include complex grammar, difficulties in pronunciation, and limited opportunities for formal learning. Immersion, peer interaction, and multimedia resources were discussed as major factors facilitating language acquisition. Participants stated that the ability to speak isiZulu improved their employability and helped them perform more effectively in their interactions with isiZulu-speaking colleagues and customers. Individuals in the educational, health, and industrial sectors observed a heightened sense of inclusion and professional growth through their ability to speak in isiZulu.

6.3 Implications of the Study

The results and their implications are relevant to language policy, education, and integration efforts in that being able to speak isiZulu opens doors to economic opportunities and promotes inclusion in mainly isiZulu-speaking areas. In addition, second language acquisition can assist in dismantling social and cultural barriers and achieving favourable intergroup relations. Despite this, English remains the dominant language in education and professional contexts, thereby hindering the practical application of isiZulu in these spheres. These findings highlight the need for more structures around learning how to use our languages as well as the importance of supporting the use of indigenous languages outside of

schools. Encouraging multilingualism should not only exist in academia but also be implemented in community programmes, workspaces, and policy systems that appreciate the social and economic value of linguistic diversity.

6.4 Recommendations

Considering the findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve language acquisition and integration for second-language learners of isiZulu.

6.4.1 Recommendations About Language Policies

In relation to language policies, all institutions in the KwaZulu-Natal province, especially schools and workplaces, are encouraged to adopt isiZulu as a formal language of instruction, since isiZulu is the most spoken language in the province. This could include what it looks like for government and educational institutions to contribute funding behind programmes that make isiZulu accessible even to those who do not speak it. Such initiatives might be through online courses using technology, mobile apps for isiZulu learning, and interactive learning platforms that are more engaging and accessible.

Moreover, isiZulu can be promoted in professions and public services to engender societal cohesion and professional mobility. It will not only aid the improvement of good communication in the workplace environment but also promote good cultural acceptance and inclusivity in multicultural workplaces. Policies can be considered to be enacted and implemented which will ensure that public servants and the educators in KwaZulu-Natal are conversationally competent in isiZulu, contributing towards better service delivery and community engagement.

For those working in healthcare, education or public services, the ability to communicate with isiZulu speakers effectively can significantly improve service delivery. Organisations can additionally promote bilingualism by rewarding employees who learn isiZulu. With the inclusion of multilingualism in official policies, South Africa can pave the way for a linguistically inclusive society where indigenous languages have a more prominent place.

6.4.2 Recommendations About Educational and Teaching Policies

Second-language acquisition of isiZulu can be enhanced by promoting language immersion programmes like exchange programmes, community engagement initiatives, and workplace training. Such an immersive learning environment where students are invited to

have conversations and interact with the subject matter in isiZulu is known to enhance retention and fluency. Teacher training programmes can also consider including the methods of isiZulu as a second language, emphasising a communicative and interactive approach to learning. The availability of contemporary pedagogical methods that emphasise real-world engagement and language practice would also benefit instructors. Educational institutions can also create digital materials and blended learning, which can help isiZulu learners using various digital learning materials, audio-visual mediums, interactive software and podcasts.

These digital tools boost accessibility and enable learners to practise isiZulu beyond the conventional classroom. Again, schools can consider adopting bilingual teaching strategies, where isiZulu is not just taught as a language but used in classroom dialogue and assessments. This kind of integrated approach would create a context where students can practise isiZulu in a more realistic setting, which bolsters their confidence when using isiZulu with peers. In isiZulu-speaking communities, schools could partner with community members to gain real-world exposure to the language through cultural events, storytelling and peer learning activities.

These types of initiatives can promote a positive attitude toward indigenous language learning and entice more students to learn multiple languages as a valuable skill. If the isiZulu language implementations centred around this data are put into practice, they will systematically aid second-language learners in acquiring higher levels of isiZulu fluency. The use of this study will also inform policies and educational reforms towards developing the access of indigenous languages to media and technology and bridging the gap between indigenous languages and English.

6.4.3 Future Research

IsiZulu proficiency among Indian South Africans is essential for their social integration, and if such studies are conducted regularly and the results recorded, the long-term effects, especially on their careers, can be studied in future research. Although this study has outlined the more immediate rewards of acquiring a second language, long-term monitoring is required to understand how continued isiZulu fluency impacts economic advancement, advancement within the workplace, and social integration over time. Hence, undertaking a comparative study of the different linguistic communities in isiZulu acquisition may also expand effective strategies to engender language acquisition, as different communities reveal the challenges and effective strategies that reveal effective language

assistance for varied groups. The long-term sustainability of isiZulu language learning outside of formal education contexts should be assessed in more longitudinal studies.

Similarly, it could explore if individuals continue to maintain the language at a later stage in life and the extent to which isiZulu proficiency continues to impact social and workplace interactions in the long term. Moreover, as digital learning platforms evolve, so must future research within isiZulu as a language of learning to explore technological advancements. With the growing prevalence of mobile applications, online language courses, and artificial intelligence-driven language tutors, there is an opportunity to evaluate the role of digital tools in supporting the second-language acquisition process.

6.5 Researcher's Reflections

This research study was interesting and insightful, as it allowed the researcher to have self-reflections. A pivotal moment of reflection occurred when a participant expressed that after learning isiZulu, they felt disconnected from their Indian culture and heritage because their community considered them as “too assimilated” to the Zulu community. This was eye-opening and made me question my assumptions of second language acquisition being associated with positive experiences only. I also realised that SLA is also significantly correlated with cultural identity and social cohesion, contrary to my initial preconceptions that economic benefits in the job market were the primary motivation behind SLA of isiZulu in isiZulu-speaking Indians.

Conducting the isiZulu fluency assessment also made me more conscious of my own biases; I had previously assumed that proficiency was directly related to ease of communication. However, I discovered that comfort and confidence also play important roles in language use, thereby influencing my judgement of fluency. This study has made me more aware of the value of language in developing intercultural connections. As an emerging counselling psychologist, this study has enhanced my appreciation for the psychological and emotional aspects of SLA by revealing how language acquisition is correlated with personal development and social integration. Moving forward, I plan to integrate language-related experiences into my therapy work with multilingual clients. If I were to conduct this study, I would also seek perspectives from native isiZulu speakers to gain insight into their perceptions of Indians learning isiZulu, which could provide a more comprehensive overview of intergroup connections.

6.6 Conclusion

The findings of this study, while focusing on isiZulu-speaking Indians from KwaZulu-Natal, have both implications and significance for the advantages and disadvantages of second language acquisition. The study portrays isiZulu as a pathway to social, occupational and cultural advantages and shows how the knowledge of isiZulu can build a bridge across linguistic divides and act as an inclusive mechanism inside the South African landscape. As members of various cultural groups are better able to communicate through isiZulu, community engagement is enhanced, workplace interactions improve, and social cohesion is promoted. Although the study points to multiple strengths of this process, there are also barriers to efficient language learning, such as structural problems within educational communities, informatics, the prevalence of English in professional settings, and limited language resources.

Overall, the results highlight the need for better language policies, educational reforms, and more comprehensive societal initiatives that promote indigenous language learning. The diversity in South Africa's languages, while a rich asset, necessitates active initiatives to incorporate the various languages into each of these domains to preserve their relevance isiZulu being one of the languages that should remain extant in these domains. This would necessitate a concerted effort in terms of curricula improvements, digital learning tools, and workplace language training in a structured manner so that second-language acquisition is achievable. This is essential to develop into a society that is coherent and accepting of one another, with an acknowledgement that multilingualism is part of an inclusive society, and a linguistic strategy can only be implemented to fully enforce multilingualism.

The findings of this research study not only have implications for the same ethnic group in other contexts but also shed light on the broader issues of language policy, social integration, and multiculturalism in the country's educational system and beyond, providing useful suggestions for the development of educational strategies and plans aimed at better supporting indigenous language acquisition. Ongoing research in this field, as well as informing policy, will be a major focus in making sure isiZulu and other native languages receive their rightful place in South Africa's linguistic profile. The cost-benefit analysis of investing in language learning culminates in a use-it-or-lose-it calculus of cultural heritage as well as social cohesion and economic potential, especially for future generations.

References

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358-1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Anyidoho, A. (2018). Shifting sands: Language policies in education in Ghana and implementation challenges. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 7(2), 225-243. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v7i2.10>
- Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (2019). Principles of biomedical ethics: marking its fortieth anniversary. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 19(11), 9-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2019.1665402>
- Boonzaier, F., & Shefer, T. (2006). Gendered research, *The gender of psychology* 6(1). UCT Press.
- Bostock, W. W. (2018). South Africa's Evolving Language Policy: Educational Implications. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 7(2), 27-32. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v7n2p27>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi:[10.1191/1478088706qp063oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa)
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Reflecting on Reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2021.1890593>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic Analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 843-858). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_103-1
- Bredtmann, J., Otten, S., & Vonnahme, C. (2021). Linguistic diversity in the classroom, student achievement, and social integration. *Education Economics*, 29(2), 121-142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2020.1866499>

- Çakmak, F., & Andujar, A. (2025). Exploring foreign language learning and contextualization through digital storytelling projects and personal digital learning narratives. *Educational Technology & Society*, 28(1), 109-122. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48810710>
- Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2023). Investment and motivation in language learning: What's the difference? *Language Teaching*, 56(1), 29-40. doi:[10.1017/S0261444821000057](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000057)
- Daud, W. A. A. W., Teck, W. K., Ghani, M. T. A., & Ramli, S. (2020). M-Learning Boost Students' Motivation in Learning Arabic Language Proficiency for Elementary Level. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(10), 4384-4392. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.081004>
- De Klerk, V. (2002). Language issues in our schools: Whose voice counts? Part 1: The parents speak: Many languages in education: Issues of implementation. *Perspectives in education*, 20(1), 1-14. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC87126>
- De Klerk, D. (2021). Making known the Real: An exploration of academic advising practices in a South African higher education context. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 9(2), 101-121. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.465153513116157>
- De Villiers, J. G., & Taylor, L. (2014). Measuring oral language in African languages: Approaches to fluency assessment. *Journal of Child Language*, 41(6), 1235–1255. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000913000570>
- De Villiers, J. G. (2017). Language assessment in African child bilinguals: Challenges and new directions. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 38(5), 1119–1143. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716417000058>

- Dlamini-Myeni, B. (2024). The Perspectives of IsiZulu Language Lecturers on the Teaching and Assessment of Undergraduate Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for Blended Learning. *Journal of African Languages & Literary Studies (JoALLS)*, 5(3), 89-109. doi:[10.31920/2633-2116/2024/v5n3a6](https://doi.org/10.31920/2633-2116/2024/v5n3a6)
- Draucker, C. B., Rawl, S. M., Vode, E., & Carter-Harris, L. (2020). Integration through connecting in explanatory sequential mixed method studies. *Western journal of nursing research*, 42(12), 1137-1147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945920914647>
- Dressler, R. A. & Kreuz, R. J. (2000). Transcribing oral discourse: A survey and a model system. *Discourse Processes*, 29(1), 25-36. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326950dp2901_2
- Duarte, J., Jiménez, E. G., McMonagle, S., Hansen, A., Gross, B. L., Szelei, N., & Pinho, A. S. (2020). Research priorities in the field of multilingualism and language education: a cross-national examination. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 44(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1792475>
- Duff, P. A. (2019). Social dimensions and processes in second language acquisition: Multilingual socialization in transnational contexts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103, 6-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12534>
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing Appropriateness: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and Language Diversity in Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149-171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>
- Garcia-Ponce, E.E., & Tavakoli, P. (2022). Effects of task type and language proficiency on dialogic performance and task engagement. *System*, 105(6), 1-29. doi:[10.1016/j.system.2022.102734](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102734)
- Grosjean, F. (2010). Bilingualism, biculturalism, and deafness. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 13(2), 133-145.
- Gumbi, P., & Ndimande-Hlongwa, N. (2015). Embracing the use of African languages as additional languages of teaching and learning in KwaZulu-Natal schools. *South African*

Journal of African Languages, 35(2), 157-162.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2015.1112999>

Hagger, M. S. (2022). Developing an open science ‘mindset’. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine*, 10(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21642850.2021.2012474>

Hoff, E., Giguere, D., Quinn, J., & Lauro, J. (2018). The development of English and Spanish among children in immigrant families in the United States. *Pensamiento educativo: revista de investigacion educacional Latinoamericana*, 55(2), 1.
<https://doi.org/10.7764/pel.55.2.2018.1>

Hummel, K.M. (2021). *Introducing second language acquisition: Perspectives and practices*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

James, M.W. (2023). *L2 Investment in African languages: a multiple case study of successful white learners of African languages in post-apartheid South Africa*.
<https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/348907>

Jeewa, S., & Rudwick, S. (2020). “English is the best way to communicate” - South African Indian students’ blind spot towards the relevance of Zulu. *Sociolinguistica*, 34(1), 155-171. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soci-2020-0010>

Jia, W., Fu, X., & Pun, J. (2023). How Do EMI Lecturers’ Translanguaging Perceptions Translate into Their Practice? A Multi-Case Study of Three Chinese Tertiary EMI Classes. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15064895>

Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2016). *Language policy and economics: The language question in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137316202>

Kang, X., Matthews, S., Yip, V., & Wong, P. C. M. (2021). Language and nonlanguage factors in foreign language learning: evidence for the learning condition hypothesis. *npj Science of Learning*, 6(28), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-021-00104-9>

Krashen, S. (1981). Second language acquisition. *Second Language Learning*, 3(7), 19-39.

Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. (1983). *Natural approach*. pp.20-20. New York: Pergamon.

- Kroll, J. F., & Dussias, P. E. (2017). The Benefits of Multilingualism to the Personal and Professional Development of Residents of the US. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(2), 248–259. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12271>
- Lanz, L., Briker, R., & Gerpott, F. H. (2024). Employees adhere more to unethical instructions from human than AI supervisors: Complementing experimental evidence with machine learning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 189(3), 625-646. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05393-1>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Madiba, M. (2010). Multilingualism and language policy in South African higher education: The case for indigenous languages. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 31(2), 129–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630903470980>
- Makukule, I., & Brookes, H. (2020). English in the identity practices of black male township youth in South Africa. *World Englishes*, 40(1), 52-62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12472>
- Malkawi, N. A. M., Attiyat, N. M. A., Ismael, F. M. H., Ismael, A. M. H., & Rababah, M. A. (2023). English Teachers' Use of Multiple Modalities. *Arab World English Journal*, 14(1), 105–119. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.7>
- Maseko, K. and Mkhize, D.N. (2021). Translanguaging mediating reading in a multilingual South African township primary classroom. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(3), 455-474. doi:[10.1080/14790718.2019.1669608](https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1669608)
- Mathura, S., & Zulu, F.Q.B. (2021). Using flashcards for English second language creative writing in Grade 1. *Reading & Writing*, 12(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v12i1.298>
- Mesthrie, R. (2002). *Language in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Moloi, M.N., & Dlomo, S.S. (2020). Revitalizing rural areas by boosting educational advancement through social capital integration. *International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies*, 5(4), 112-135. <https://doi.org/10.53378/ijemds.353116>

- Moodley, I., & Singh, S. (2022). A case study: Promoting interprofessional community-based learning opportunities for health sciences students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. *African Journal of Health Professions Education*, 14(3), 146-151. <https://doi.org/10.7196/AJHPE.2022.v14i3.1281>
- Moranski, K., & Ziegler, N. (2021). A case for multisite second language acquisition research: Challenges, risks, and rewards. *Language Learning*, 71(1), 204-242. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12434>
- Mpalami, N. (2022). Complexities of translating mathematics tasks from English to learners' home languages, 43(1). *Pythagoras*, 43(1), a560. <https://doi.org/10.4102/pythagoras.v43i1.560>
- Murungi, C. G., & Opinde, J.A. (2018). What happens when children speak a different language from that of the teacher in a learning setup? *International Journal of Pregnancy & Child Birth*, 4(6), 227-230. <https://doi.org/10.15406/ipcb.2018.04.00131>
- Naidoo, S., & Gokool, R. (2020). Compulsory isiZulu at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: The Attitudes of Enrolled Students. *Language Matters*, 51(3), 24-42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10228195.2020.1769712>
- Ndebele, H. (2022). *A socio-cultural approach to code-switching and code-mixing among speakers of IsiZulu in KwaZulu-Natal: A contribution to spoken language corpora* [Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/7564>
- Ngcobo, S. & Makumane, M., (2024). An analysis of lecturers' beliefs and behaviour towards multilingual curriculum teaching material: A case study of isiZulu and English. *African Identities*, 22(4), 1057-1072. doi:[10.1080/14725843.2023.2207755](https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2023.2207755)
- Nkosi, Z. P. (2014). Postgraduate students' experiences and attitudes towards isiZulu as a medium of instruction at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15(3), 245-264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2014.915456>

- Ntombela, B. (2016). 'The Burden of Diversity': The Sociolinguistic Problems of English in South Africa. *English Language Teaching*, 9(5), 77-77. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n5p77>
- Ntshangase, S. Z., & Bosch, S. E. (2020). Dual language education: Improving the academic learning experiences of isiZulu-speaking learners in KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 40(3), 317-325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2020.1855725>
- Nugraha, S. I. (2019). The Language-in-Education Policy in South Africa: A gap between policy and efficacy. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 254, 568-572. <https://doi.org/10.2991/conaplin-18.2019.214>
- Padhi, T., Biswas, A., De Wet, F., van der Westhuizen, E., & Niesler, T. (2020). Multilingual bottleneck features for improving ASR performance of code-switched speech in under-resourced languages. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2011.03118>
- Palalas, A., & Wark, N. (2020). A Framework for Enhancing Mobile Learner-Determined Language Learning in Authentic Situational Contexts. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(4), 83. <https://doi.org/10.4018/jcallt.2020100106>
- Park, M., Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2018). Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners and its Implications. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/growing-superdiversity-among-young-us-dual-language-learners-and-its-implications>
- Perumal, R., Flynn, N., Viesca, K. M., Enns-Kananen, J., & Routarinne, S. (2020). What is Effective Pedagogy for multilingual learners? Observations of teaching that challenges inequity—the OPETAN project in England. In Routledge eBooks (pp. 52). Informa. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429059674-5>
- Piccardo, E., North, B., & Goodier, T. (2019). Broadening the Scope of Language Education: Mediation, Plurilingualism, and Collaborative Learning: the CEFR Companion

- Volume. *Journal of E-Learning and Knowledge Society*, 15(1), 17-36.
<https://doi.org/10.20368/1971-8829/1612>
- Posel, D., Hunter, M., & Rudwick, S. (2020). Revisiting the prevalence of English: language use outside the home in South Africa. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 43(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1778707>
- Probyn, M. (2019). Constructing Science Knowledge in Linguistically Diverse South African Classrooms: Opportunities and Challenges for Learning. In: *Wright, C., Harvey, L. and Simpson, J. (eds.) Voices and Practices in Applied Linguistics: Diversifying a Discipline*, (pp. 211–232). New York: White Rose University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.22599/baall.m>
- Reinhardt, M. (2017). Curriculum development, lesson planning, and delivery: A guide to Native language immersion. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), 1340861.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2017.1340861>
- Schalk-Soekar, S. R., van de Vijver, F. J., & Hoogsteder, M. (2004). Attitudes toward multiculturalism of immigrants and majority members in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28(6), 533-550.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.01.009>
- Shan, Y. (2020). Whether Successful Language Learners Require Intrinsic Motivation. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 10(5), 549-559. doi: [10.4236/ojml.2020.105031](https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2020.105031)
- Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of developmental education*, 44(1), 26-28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45381095>
- Stein-Smith, K. (2021). Multilingualism for Global Solutions and a Better World. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(5), 671-677. doi:[10.17507/jltr.1205.05](https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1205.05)
- Sukanto, N. P., & Idayani, A. (2023). English-Indonesian Code Mixing Used by Sandiaga Uno's Speech in Youtube. *Journal of English Culture, Language, Literature and Education*, 11(1), 44-58.

- Vahed, G., & Desai, A. (2010). Identity and belonging in post-apartheid South Africa: The case of Indian South Africans. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 25(1-3), 1-12. doi:[10.1080/09718923.2010.11892861](https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2010.11892861)
- Van der Merwe, A., & Le Roux, M. (2014). Speech fluency assessment in multilingual contexts: A South African perspective. *South African Journal of Communication Disorders*, 61(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajcd.v61i1.56>
- Vilakazi, Z., Mavuru, L., & Ramaila, S. (2024). Multilingual Education in Life Sciences: Teachers' and Learners' Beliefs about Code-Switching. *Journal of Baltic Science Education*, 23(6), 1291-1309. doi:[10.33225/jbse/24.23.1291](https://doi.org/10.33225/jbse/24.23.1291)
- Wah, L. L., & Hashim, H. (2021). Determining Pre-Service Teachers' Intention of Using Technology for Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). *Sustainability*, 13(14), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13147568>
- Warschauer, M., Tseng, W., Yim, S., Webster, T., Jacob, S., Du, Q., & Tate, T. (2023). The affordances and contradictions of AI-generated text for writers of English as a second or foreign language. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 62, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.101071>
- Zoeller, E., & Briceño, A. (2023). Linguistic justice: Lessons learned from teaching black multilinguals. *Language Arts*, 100(3), 223-228. <https://doi.org/10.58680/la202332265>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 04 November 2024

Dear participant

Re: Invitation to consider participating in a research study on second language acquisition and its benefits among IsiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal

My name is Asanda Chili, I am a Master of Social Science student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, Discipline of Psychology. The supervisor of this study is Dr Richard Thabane Khumalo from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Discipline of Psychology.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study titled “Exploring second language acquisition and its benefits among IsiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa”. The purpose of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of the acquisition of an indigenous language and the role language plays in shaping intergroup relations. The study is expected to identify ways in acquiring a second language and to promote more positive interactions between different ethnic groups in South Africa. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enrol and remain in the study, is expected to be half an hour (30 minutes), for only one day.

The aim of this research study is to explore the process of second language acquisition (SLA) among Isizulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal and to identify any benefits associated with acquiring a second language in this specific demographic. The purpose of conducting this research is to document the individuals’ experiences and perspectives on this topic and thereafter to use the information provided to offer recommendations for improving second language learning outcomes in multilingual societies.

Taking part is voluntary

The participant's involvement is voluntary, the participant may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make him/her feel uncomfortable, with no penalty to him/her, and no effect on their academic standing, record, or relationship with the university or other organization or service that may be involved with the research. The participant simply needs to notify the researcher that they no longer wish to participate in the study. There are no costs that you will incur due to your

participation in the study, and there are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00007331/2024).

If you have questions

The researcher conducting this study is Asanda Chili. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at 219033549@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Confidentiality and Anonymity are encouraged by the researchers, and you can remain completely anonymous if you so wish. If a direct quote is made of anything you said in the report, this will be done anonymously, without stating your name. You can choose a pseudonym if you wish. The information will be discussed with the supervisor who will be directly involved in the study. A pseudonym will be used instead of your name when capturing information from the interviews. All data will be kept safe by the researcher in a computer protected by a password known only to the researcher, and the data collection devices e.g., audio tapes and transcripts will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet during the research process and afterward, they will be kept safe in one of the researcher's offices under lock and key in a lockable filing cabinet for at least five years. All other data which was kept in the researcher's computer will be deleted after the study is finished, and the recycle bin emptied and any data kept on the cloud will be deleted.

CONSENT

I _____ (insert name) have been informed about the study entitled “Exploring second language acquisition and its benefits among Isizulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.” by Miss Asanda Chili.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.

I have been informed about any available compensation or psychological treatment should the need arise because of my participation in the study.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 219033549@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Appendix B: Ethical Approval Letter (HSSREC/00007331/2024)



11 October 2024

Asanda Anele Chili (219033549)
School of Applied Human Sc
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear AA Chili,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00007331/2024

Project title: Exploring second language acquisition and its benefits among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 16 July 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 11 October 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/nng

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Greetings and introduction of the interviewer and participant.

I invited you to participate in this study because I am interested in gaining an understanding on the process of acquiring a second language, its benefits and impact in a multicultural context of South Africa.

As outlined on the consent form, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I assure you that all information shared will be kept confidential. Your insights and experiences are crucial to the success of this research study, and I sincerely appreciate your willingness to be a part of it.

Prior to commencing with the main interview questions, please tell me more about yourself (probe for: relationship status, age, occupation.)

Interview Questions

1. Language background and experiences:

- a) How did you learn isiZulu?
- b) What languages do you speak, and which ones do you use most frequently?
- c) What motivated you to learn isiZulu as a second language?
- d) Did you encounter any specific challenges in learning the language? if so, how did you overcome them?
- e) What resources or learning methods did you use?

2. Perceived benefits of Second Language Acquisition:

- a) What benefits have you noticed from learning isiZulu?
- b) Has learning isiZulu provided any social, professional or career advantages?

3. Intergroup interactions and social impact

- a) How has your language proficiency affected your interactions with isiZulu-speaking individuals or communities?
- b) How has learning isiZulu affected your sense of belonging within the broader South African community, in which way do you see yourself within the South African society?
- c) Do you think acquiring a second language contributes to fostering stronger relationships between different ethnic groups in South Africa?

4. Language learning strategies and recommendations

- a) Do you have any recommendations or strategies that might help others who are learning isiZulu as a second language?
- b) How important do you think immersion is in the learning process?

Are there any additional comments or information you would like to share?

Thank you for availing yourself and for your time.

Appendix D: Isizulu Fluency Assessment Rubric

IsiZulu Fluency Assessment Rubric

1. Sentence Construction (0-5 points)

- 0: Unable to form coherent sentences
- 1: Uses mostly English or Fanakalo with few isiZulu words
- 2: Mixes isiZulu with English/colloquialisms frequently
- 3: Uses mostly isiZulu with occasional English/colloquialisms
- 4: Uses pure isiZulu with rare English/colloquialisms
- 5: Constructs sentences entirely in pure isiZulu

2. Article Usage (0-5 points)

- 0: No understanding of isiZulu article system
- 1: Consistently uses "lo" as a universal article
- 2: Occasionally uses correct isiZulu articles
- 3: Mostly uses correct articles with some errors
- 4: Uses correct articles with rare errors
- 5: Perfect usage of isiZulu article system

3. Vocabulary Range (0-5 points)

- 0: Extremely limited isiZulu vocabulary
- 1: Basic vocabulary, heavily reliant on English loanwords
- 2: Limited vocabulary, some use of English substitutes
- 3: Good range of vocabulary, occasional English substitutes
- 4: Wide vocabulary range, rare use of English words
- 5: Extensive, nuanced vocabulary comparable to native speakers

4. Grammatical Accuracy (0-5 points)

- 0: No grasp of isiZulu grammar
- 1: Frequent major grammatical errors
- 2: Some major grammatical errors
- 3: Minor grammatical errors only
- 4: Rare minor grammatical errors
- 5: Native-like grammatical accuracy

5. Fluency and Natural Flow (0-5 points)

- 0: Halting, unnatural speech
- 1: Slow, deliberate speech with frequent pauses
- 2: Somewhat natural flow with noticeable pauses
- 3: Generally natural flow with occasional hesitations
- 4: Smooth flow with rare hesitations
- 5: Natural, native-like fluency and flow

Total Score: /25

Fluency Classification:

- 0-5: Non-fluent
- 6-10: Basic communication (Fanakalo-like)
- 11-15: Intermediate
- 16-20: Advanced
- 21-25: Native-like fluency

A participant will be classified as fluent in isiZulu if they score 21 or above on this rubric, self-report as fluent, and both the researcher and supervisor agree on their fluency based on the recorded interview assessment.

Appendix E: Research Study Advertisement



Participants needed for a research study on “Exploring second language acquisition and its benefits among isiZulu-speaking Indians in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.”

What is the study about?

The study hopes to obtain the perceptions of isiZulu-speaking Indians in relation to the acquisition of isiZulu as a second language and the possible benefits this brings to them.

This research study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00007331/2024).

Qualifying Criteria:

- Individuals who are Indian and are fluent in speaking isiZulu as a second language and reside in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.
- IsiZulu-speaking Indians between 18 and 75 years old.
- Participation is open to both males and females.

Participation Involves:

- Partaking in a half an hour (30 minutes) semi-structured interview with the researcher either virtually or in- person.
- Answering questions asked by the researcher.

Location:

- In person-Pietermaritzburg and in Durban, KZN.
- Virtual- zoom meetings or Microsoft teams.

For more information, please contact:

Researcher: Asanda Chili- 219033549@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Research supervisor: Dr. Khumalo- khumalor@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix F: Turnitin Similarity Report

Research Report - IsiusZulu speaking Indians			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
6%	6%	%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	core.ac.uk Internet Source	1	%
2	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	<1	%
3	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1	%
4	ulspace.ul.ac.za Internet Source	<1	%
5	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1	%
6	wiredspace.wits.ac.za Internet Source	<1	%
7	journals.sagepub.com Internet Source	<1	%
8	docslib.org Internet Source	<1	%
9	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1	%
10	scholar.sun.ac.za Internet Source	<1	%
11	open.lib.umn.edu Internet Source	<1	%
www.frontiersin.org			

12		<1 %
13	functioningpsychology.nl Internet Source	<1 %
14	open.uct.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
15	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
16	erepository.uonbi.ac.ke Internet Source	<1 %
17	vital.seals.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
18	iasc.hiberniacollege.com Internet Source	<1 %
19	peachyessay.com Internet Source	<1 %
20	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
21	openscholar.dut.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
22	repository.up.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
23	ujcontent.uj.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
24	discovery.researcher.life Internet Source	<1 %
25	ir.canterbury.ac.nz Internet Source	<1 %

26	univendspace.univen.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
27	studentsrepo.um.edu.my Internet Source	<1 %
28	vtechworks.lib.vt.edu Internet Source	<1 %
29	www.nationalelfservice.net Internet Source	<1 %
30	ijrpr.com Internet Source	<1 %
31	digital.library.adelaide.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %
32	discover.texasrealfood.com Internet Source	<1 %
33	nanopdf.com Internet Source	<1 %
34	utamu.ac.ug Internet Source	<1 %
35	eprints.qut.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %
36	erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
37	etd.uwc.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
38	ray.yorks.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
39	researchcorridor.org Internet Source	<1 %

40	theses.ubn.ru.nl Internet Source	<1 %
41	wlv.openrepository.com Internet Source	<1 %
42	www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov Internet Source	<1 %
43	arts-design.uonbi.ac.ke Internet Source	<1 %
44	aut.researchgateway.ac.nz Internet Source	<1 %
45	epubs.rcsi.ie Internet Source	<1 %
46	essay365.x10.mx Internet Source	<1 %
47	ir.msu.ac.zw:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
48	ir.vanderbilt.edu Internet Source	<1 %
49	systems.enpress-publisher.com Internet Source	<1 %
50	uzspace.unizulu.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
51	vuir.vu.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %
52	www.erudit.org Internet Source	<1 %
53	www.grossarchive.com Internet Source	<1 %