The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

After 1994, transformation interventions in all sectors of South African society were needed to adequately address socio-economic disparities caused by apartheid policies. The objective of equalising conditions between 'racially' divided categories within the education sector was thus a high priority for the newly elected democratic government. Higher education institutions, including Stellenbosch University (SU) also recognised the need for transformation to eradicate 'racial' inequalities at formerly white Afrikaans institutions. However, given these inequalities, the interventions at SU led to disagreements over language policy that resulted in a fiery *taaldebat* (language debate)*.* This in turn, also gave rise to tensions between maintaining an Afrikaans identity for the university versus transforming it into a multicultural one in which English as medium of instruction would be increasingly used. It is precisely because SU was still grappling with the above that I decided to embark on a study that investigated the complexities emerging in the nexus between transformation, language and identity, by focusing on a student initiative, the Adam Tas association.

This study seeks to understand how the process of transformation is unfolding at a historically Afrikaans university (HAU) where identity politics plays a major role in terms of linguistic and 'racial' matters. The second objective is to provide a better understanding of what the Adam Tas student association entails as well as to investigate its goals and actions in a broader contextual perspective. My research is also geared towards discovering what the future of teaching in Afrikaans might be on university and national level. Lastly, this anthropological study attempts to provide the reader with an alternative understanding of the challenges that are associated with the transformation process of a HAU, within the larger context of higher education transformation in South Africa.

The uncertainty surrounding the 'higher functions' of Afrikaans, brought about by the implementation of a more inclusive language policy at SU, resulted in the establishment of Adam Tas by a group of students. The association's motto of 'Transformation through Afrikaans' is indicative of Adam Tas's strong association with only one language, Afrikaans. This emphasis on Afrikaans is thus contradictory to its claim of supporting the

inclusion and integration of all diverse 'racial' categories. Despite Adam Tas's claim that it is in agreement with university management regarding SU being in need of transformation, the vision of this association is also contradictory to one of the goals of university management: transforming Stellenbosch University into a non-ethnic university.

In drawing conclusions on the discourse of identity, my research showed that Adam Tas is still viewed by many non-white, non-Afrikaans-speakers at SU as a white, Afrikaner association with a right-wing agenda, despite its numerous efforts to rid the association of this exclusive image. Another finding regarding Adam Tas is that it is promoting Afrikaner culture through its numerous activities and social events which have strong links to white, Afrikaner culture. The fact that the majority of its membership is white and Afrikaans-speaking, contributes to the association's white, Afrikaner identity, in a concrete and visible manner.

OPSOMMING

Na 1994 was transformasie intervensies in alle sektore binne die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing nodig om sosio-ekonomiese ongelykhede, veroorsaak deur apartheidsbeleid, voldoende aan te spreek. Die doelwit van die nuut verkose regering om kondisies binne die opvoedkundige sektor gelyk te maak, was dus 'n hoë prioriteit. Hoër onderwysinstellings, ingeslote Universiteit Stellenbosch (US), het ook die behoefte aan transformasie raakgesien as 'n middel om rasse-ongelykhede by historiese Afrikaanse universiteite (HAUs) uit te roei. Gegewe hierdie ongelykhede, het die implementering van transformerende intervensies by US egter gelei tot verskille rakende taalbeleid wat in 'n *vurige* taaldebat ontaard het. Laasgenoemde het weer op sy beurt aanleiding gegee tot spanning tussen die behoud van 'n Afrikaanse identiteit vir die universiteit teenoor die transformering van hierdie identiteit in 'n multikulturele een waar Engels as voertaal meer prominent gebruik sou word. Weens die feit dat US nog steeds met die bogenoemde kwessies worstel, het ek besluit om hierdie studie aan te pak waarin die komplekse verhouding tussen transformasie, taal en identiteit ondersoek word, deur te fokus op 'n studente-inisiatief, die Adam Tas studente-organisasie.

Dié studie stel ondersoek in na die wyse waarop die transformasieproses by 'n HAU ontvou, waar identiteitspolitiek 'n groot rol speel by taal- en rasse-kwessies. Die tweede doelwit is om 'n beter begrip van die Adam Tas studente-organisasie te bied asook hul doelwitte en aksies in 'n breër kontekstuele perspektief te ondersoek. My navorsing is ook gerig op wat die toekoms vir Afrikaanse onderrig op universiteits – asook nasionale vlak mag inhou. Ten slotte, poog dié antropologiese studie om 'n alternatiewe begrip aan die leser te bied in terme van die uitdagings wat geassosieer word met die transformasie-proses van 'n HAU, binne die groter konteks van hoër onderwys transformasie in Suid-Afrika.

Die implementering van 'n meer inklusiewe taalbeleid by US, het verhoogde onsekerheid rondom die 'hoër funksies' van Afrikaans meegebring, wat weer gelei het tot die stigting van Adam Tas deur 'n groep studente. Die motto van die organisasie, 'Transformasie deur Afrikaans', dui op Adam Tas se sterk bande met slegs een taal, Afrikaans. Dié klem op

Afrikaans is teenstrydig met hul bewering dat hulle inklusiwiteit en integrasie van alle diverse groepe steun. Alhoewel Adam Tas beweer om in ooreenstemming met universiteitsbestuur te wees dat US transformasie benodig, blyk hul visie teenstrydig te wees met een van die doelwitte van die universiteit: om die universiteit in 'n nie-etniese instelling te omskep.

Aangaande die identiteitsdiskoers, het navorsing getoon dat Adam Tas nog steeds deur die meerderheid nie-wit, nie-Afrikaanstaliges by US as 'n wit, Afrikaner-organisasie met 'n regse agenda beskou word, ten spyte van verskeie pogings om die organisasie juis van hierdie eksklusiewe beeld te stroop. 'n Verdere bevinding oor Adam Tas was dat die organisasie Afrikaner-kultuur bevorder het deur hul vele aktiwiteite en sosiale funksies wat sterk bande met wit, Afrikaner-kultuur weerspiëel het. Die feit dat die meerderheid van hul lede wit, Afrikaans-moedertaalsprekers is, dra by tot die assosiasie met wit, Afrikaner-identiteit op 'n meer konkrete en sigbare wyse.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Introduction

Two decades since South Africa shifted politically from an apartheid state to a democratically elected one in 1994, the country has transitioned on many levels of society in its attempt to establish democracy fully. These transitions were regarded by the current government as absolutely necessary, firstly to minimise, and ultimately to eradicate the injustices and deep-rooted inequalities that the apartheid system created. Consequently, apartheid policies and regulations had to be replaced by democratic values and an ethos that would benefit all citizens, irrespective of apartheid classifications, based on 'race'. Here, 'race' refers to visible somatic differences although scientists do not recognise the use of the term any more today as it essentialises a much more complex biological reality. The criterion of 'race' was also utilised as the standard against which South Africans were classified during the previous political dispensation (and still are today). Emile Boonzaier (1988:58) claims that,

> '[r]ace' ... is a concept used to classify or categorise humans according to *physical* characteristics – and thereby help us bring order to the chaotic range of human physical variation. 'Race' is, however, much more than this.

This identity marker was utilised by apartheid leaders as a tool to legitimise practices of segregation and oppression of black, coloured and Indian citizens. Regarding the coloured citizens, Adhikari (2005:2) asserts that 'the term *Coloured* … alludes to a phenotypically varied social group of highly diverse cultural and geographic origins'. He further notes that '[t]he Coloured people were descended largely from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoisan population and other black people…' (Adhikari, 2005:2). Given the above as well as the complexity and essentialist aspects closely attached to the term 'race', this identity marker will be cautiously utilised throughout this thesis only to denote official classifications without thereby implying that the concept of 'race' refers to categories that are based on scientific evidence or social justice.

The implementation of transformation interventions in South African society gave rise to problems that could not be anticipated beforehand. These problems included disagreements over the best way to address past injustices and imbalances on the social, economic and educational level. It was because the government and higher education

1

institutions, specifically Stellenbosch University (SU), were still grappling with these dilemmas that I decided to embark on a study to investigate and report on the complexities of language and identity arising from transformation. I wanted to investigate this topic on a micro- as well as on a macro-level: the micro-level of SU, and the macro-level of South Africa as a country.

At the outset of the post-apartheid period, the African National Congress (ANC) - government thought it absolutely necessary to implement transformation policies in areas where it was urgently needed, such as education. According to the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the transformation of higher education institutions was necessary to 'restructure and transform programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic' (South Africa, 1997). Given South Africa's racially-based discriminatory past, it became important that issues pertaining to language were also thoroughly addressed when the reconstruction process of the higher education sector of South Africa started off. This reconstruction period comprised that all higher education institutions, especially historically Afrikaans universities (HAUs), were compelled to alter their exclusive language policies to ones that were more inclusive and accommodating to South Africa's diverse populace. Chris Brink confirmed the former statement by mentioning that 'the Language Policy on Higher Education was made public in November 2002 ...' and that this legislation resulted in 'the requirement that all universities should develop a language policy' (2006:16, 17).

This requirement by the government to implement more inclusive language policies in the higher education sector through a transformation process, led to strong post-apartheid resistance from certain lobby groups such as the *taalstryders* (language warriors). This resistance became more intense as discussions about transforming SU's dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition to a language policy that is more inclusive became more prominent. The strong resistance from the *taalstryders* resulted out of a need to protect the strong Afrikaner[1] history and culture that was (and still is, although in a lesser sense) attached to SU. Kees (C.S.) van der Waal (2009a) argues that '"Afrikaner" as a term is problematic [because] it combines a racial underpinning with language as criteria'. He further argues that this term constitutes 'essentialist terminology' because it 'confirms a nationalist discourse of independence of linguistic groups, [thus] a Romantic perspective'

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[1] Erasmus (2002:96) explained the term *Afrikaner* '… as a white South African, whose mother tongue is Afrikaans'.

(Van der Waal, 2009a). The romanticisation or idealisation of *Afrikanerskap* is frequently drawn upon and emphasised by a prominent Afrikaans language activist such as Pieter Kapp[2], whenever he delivers a historic account of the Afrikaans language.

The main purpose behind redefining SU's exclusive language policy was to make the university more accessible to non-Afrikaans-speaking students. Furthermore, the implementation of transformation at SU led to disagreements over language policy that resulted in a fiery *taaldebat* (language debate)*.* Brink (2006: i) argues that 'the *taaldebat* at Stellenbosch is essentially a long-running campaign to maintain the "high status" domains of Afrikaans'. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) is of the view that '[l]anguage should not only be viewed as a means of communication but also as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interest and display their practical competence'. Regarding the context of SU, following Bourdieu's view, it can be argued that, at this Afrikaans-dominant university, language as a medium of power was indeed used where non-Afrikaans-speaking individuals were concerned and not merely as a medium in which to communicate and educate on tertiary level.

Another factor, as it emerged in the transformation process of SU, was identity politics, which became very evident whenever the parties involved in the *taaldebat* argued. Thus, the *taaldebat* also gave rise to tensions between maintaining an Afrikaans identity versus transforming this exclusive identity into a multicultural one. The main focus of this study, such as the title suggests, is to investigate the tensions between Afrikaans identity and transformation at SU, by focusing on a student initiative, the Adam Tas student association.

I first became aware of the Adam Tas student association when my supervisor suggested that I utilise this association as a vehicle to address important issues surrounding the main themes of my Master's thesis, namely language, transformation and identity. I did not have the slightest idea what the Adam Tas association was about but this initial lack of knowledge about the association was not out of the ordinary. From the information that I accumulated from questionnaires distributed amongst students enrolled at SU, many students, especially coloured and black students, indicated that they had no prior

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[2]See Prof. Pieter Kapp's 2011 article, 'Stellenbosch student se rol in die vestiging van Afrikaans as onderrigtaal aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch', *LitNet Akademies* Jaargang 8(3); and his recent 2013 publication, *Maties en Afrikaans, 1911 – 2011: 'n Besondere verhouding.* Pretoria Boekhuis: Pretoria.

knowledge of this association. Nevertheless, after an extensive period of familiarising myself with the knowledge that was available (at the time) about the association, I got a partial picture of what the association was all about.

The Adam Tas student association was formed as a result of the ongoing and unresolved language struggle at SU. The initial motto of the association was 'Transformation in Afrikaans' but this changed to 'Transformation through Afrikaans'. This decision (taken by the executive committee of 2010) to slightly change the motto of the association was due to the notion that the initial wording of the motto was bordering on exclusivity, a characteristic that Adam Tas was trying to eliminate from its association completely. The leadership of the association thus felt that the newly formulated and improved motto expressed their overall objective better. In my opinion, this change did not have much significance, because the argument still stands that transformation cannot be fully accomplished *through* or *in* a single language, in this case, the Afrikaans language. This emphasis on Afrikaans, by a student association such as Adam Tas, was hugely influenced by the uncertainty that still hangs over this 'high status' language. Although the motto of Adam Tas also seemed to include a transformation agenda, university management claimed that the mission of Adam Tas was contradictory to the vision of SU which seeks to establish a multilingual identity. Some of the leaders of the association confirmed speculation that the relationship between these two bodies was not amicable.

Hence, Adam Tas can be regarded as an attempt by Afrikaans-speaking students to 'save' their mother-tongue from what they regarded as threats to its survival in an increasingly anglicised higher education sector. The argument that has been made throughout the thesis is that although Adam Tas claimed to be an association that is promoting inclusion and diversity, its actions gave evidence of a more complex situation. In the following chapters of the thesis more information on the latter will be provided.

1.2   Motivation

My main motivation for embarking on this study was to contribute to grounded research on how the introduction and implementation of transformation policies and practices impact on the language struggle and identity politics in a historically white, Afrikaans-dominant university. There also existed a strong need to look at transformation, language and identity in combination because such studies in the academic domain are scarce. I wished to investigate the tensions that arose between attempts to retain the dominant Afrikaans

identity of SU versus the implementation of transformation policies on the ground as well as on the managerial level of this higher education institution. It is necessary to mention that any process that involves change comes with a certain degree of challenge, no matter what the subject. Thus, transitioning the university from a white, Afrikaans-dominant institution into one that reflects diversity and integration of all, irrespective of cultural and 'racial' backgrounds, can indeed be regarded as an enormous and complex challenge. One of the factors that contributed to the complexity of this challenge was the huge investment that was made towards the Afrikaans language as a core element of Afrikaner nationalism during *apartheid*. Also, the manner in which concepts such as transformation, identity, language, etc. were constantly being utilised at SU, with specific reference to the *taaldebat*, can be described as very problematic, mostly due to the fact that the parties involved in this language debate were constantly throwing arguments back and forth in terms of which language policy was best suited for this university. According to Brink (2006: ii),

> the *taaldebat* is ... representing the interplay between two directions of thought   regarding the future of Afrikaans. There are those whose point of departure is that Afrikaans should be *protected*, and that the best way of doing so is by *making rules*. And there are those who believe that Afrikaans should be *promoted*, and that the best way of doing so is by *making friends*.

Most existing studies, reporting on the *status quo* of higher education in South Africa, focused on the role of language in the higher education sector. Jansen's book, *Knowledge in the Blood* (2009), is an example, reporting on the experience of Afrikaner students in the higher education sector environment, therefore the micro-level. Furthermore, in terms of micro-level studies, a considerable number of articles had been published and studies had been conducted which focused on specific university contexts, such as SU (Brink 2006; Giliomee and Schlemmer 2001, 2006; Leibowitz 2005, 2006, 2007; Scholtz and Scholtz 2008; Van der Waal 2002, 2008, 2012, 2013). Although all of these studies focused on the interwoven nature of concepts such as 'transformation', 'identity' and 'language' at SU, none of these involved focusing on a student association. My research thus aims to address this void by contributing to existing research conducted on issues concerning the three main concepts of my thesis, by utilising a student association, Adam Tas, as a vehicle to shed light on how transformation, identity and language have impacted on the still ongoing transformation process at SU. However, on the macro-level, Giliomee and Schlemmer's 2001 book, *Kruispad: Die toekoms van Afrikaans as openbare taal*

5

('Crossroads: The future of Afrikaans as public language'), was an exploration of what the future held for Afrikaans as a public language in the South African context. This book can be regarded as an example of a macro-level analysis of language, and in this case, Afrikaans.

It seems important to the government that the higher education sector becomes a reflection of South Africa's diverse population by demanding that all higher education institutions become accessible to all, irrespective of skin colour, religion, cultural background, political affiliations, etc. It was stated in a government publication, *Language Policy for Higher Education*, adopted by the Department of Education in 2002, that

> [t]he notion of Afrikaans universities runs counter to the end goal of a transformed higher education system, which as indicated in the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE), is the creation of higher education institutions whose identity and cultural orientation is neither black nor white, English or Afrikaans-speaking, but unabashedly and unashamedly South African (Department of Education, 2002).

The obstacles that arose from the implementation of the various transformation initiatives in the higher education sector, and more specifically SU, could not have been anticipated beforehand. For example, the changes in language policy that resulted due to the implementation of transformation, gave rise to a great percentage of uncertainty amongst mostly white, Afrikaans-speaking students and alumni of SU regarding the future of the Afrikaans language at this tertiary institution. These individuals perceived the Afrikaans language to be under threat, due to the increasing inclination to utilise English as the language of instruction in classrooms. An example of a group of such individuals is the Adam Tas student association, a student initiative consisting of mainly white, Afrikaans-speaking students, who felt the urgency to prevent SU from becoming entirely anglicised. It's precisely due to the latter that these students decided to join Giliomee and other *taalstryders* (language warriors), in the 'struggle' to protect the higher functions of the Afrikaans language at SU.

1.3   Problem statement

The transformation of SU from a previously white, Afrikaans-dominant university to a more diverse and integrated higher education institution involved dramatic alterations to its informal exclusive language policy, from Afrikaans-dominant to a formal language policy that is a reflection of SU's newly adopted values of inclusion, diversity and integration.

However, this change in language policy gave rise to a heated language debate, also known as the *taaldebat*. Due to the perception, held by a certain group of white Afrikaans-speaking students, that Afrikaans as a medium of instruction is under threat at SU, four Afrikaans-speaking students (three white and one coloured), decided to launch a student association in 2007, namely the Adam Tas association.

My study is aimed at understanding the role of this student association in the nexus of transformation, language and identity at SU. Furthermore, this study would like to investigate why the Adam Tas association came into being, what the context was in which it operated and how it positioned itself in the wider debate regarding transformation, language and identity. It is important for me to emphasise simultaneously that I am also interested in the changes that have taken place within the Adam Tas association as well as how its relationship with the university management, the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the student body has developed. Another aspect that I would also like to explore is how the identity politics of the Adam Tas association can be read off their activities despite opposite claims made by its leadership at public events and during the interviews that I have conducted with them.

1.4   Methodology

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997:1, cited in Amit, 2000:1) argued that 'the single most significant factor determining whether a piece of research will be accepted as (that magical word) "anthropological" is the extent to which it depends on experience "in the field"'. Regarding my experience in the field, I have done extensive research on the Adam Tas student association in the field over a three-year period by utilising various social research methods such as the consultation of literature, conducting fieldwork observation and interviews as well as distributing questionnaires among respondents. In terms of literature, I have consulted existing data (published and unpublished versions) that were available concerning issues of transformation, language, identity, culture, multiculturalism as well as multilingualism.

I have engaged in numerous informal conversations with students on campus in terms of the three themes of my study, namely transformation, language and identity. A vital part of my ethnographic study involved interviews, which equipped me with a direct and personal insight into the participant's personal view on the issues under investigation. Semi-structured interviews were thus conducted with selected executive members of Adam Tas

7

as well as other prominent individuals on campus, such as the Dean of Students, who was also closely involved in projects that concerned transforming and diversifying SU. For ethical reasons, I always ensured that my name and the purpose of my study became known to the individual upon approaching her/him as a potential interviewee. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main method because these provide the researcher with the opportunity to gain information that had not necessarily been anticipated by him or her. During the time of conducting the semi-structured interviews, the less structured manner in which the questions were formulated, added to the comfortableness that all research participants experienced and to the amount of valuable information I received from these individuals. A relaxed atmosphere was created for the interviews which was important when the more 'hard questions' relating to identity and transformation were discussed.

An additional social research method appropriate for my type of qualitative study involved the distribution of questionnaires amongst enrolled students at SU. The latter was done to gain a clearer picture of the opinions of students in relation to the issues of this study. To elaborate on the composition of the student questionnaire, one of my main priorities was to investigate how Stellenbosch students felt about issues relating to transformation, language and identity by focusing on the unresolved *taaldebat* at this university. Due to factors such as limited availability of students on campus and the time-consuming nature of the completion of the questionnaire, I decided on distributing questionnaires in student residences where respondents could complete all of the questions in the privacy of their own rooms and in their own time. In the case of the senior residence, *Huis de Villiers* (the senior residence where I have also resided for five years), where questionnaires were distributed, research participants were given the option to slide the questionnaire underneath my door, as a means to protect their identity.

Approximately one hundred questionnaires were distributed amongst a diverse group of students who differed in culture, 'race', religion, political affiliation, gender as well as mother-tongue. Precisely half of these questionnaires were distributed in the student residence, *Huis de Villiers*. This student residence consisted of mostly postgraduate students, provided accommodation to men and women and was occupied by people of various backgrounds. The fact that this senior residence was also home to international students contributed to the already diverse environment that residents of *Huis de Villiers* were exposed to. With regards to transformation, I wanted to discover how *Maties* (the

8

nickname given to SU students) perceived the changes that have been made to the university's dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction, the institutional character of SU as well as the image of residential culture and related matters. On the issues surrounding identity I was curious to establish how the (still ongoing) transformation process of SU into a multicultural higher education environment, influenced the attitude towards Afrikaans among white Afrikaner students at SU. Thirdly, in terms of language, how *Maties* felt about university management's vision that SU should become a multilingual university in the future, in order for it to promote diversity, integration and inclusion. In the questionnaire, I have also enquired about the views of students regarding the progress that SU has made thus far in terms of transformation.

Raymond Madden (2010:54) states that '[a]n ethnographic field is not equivalent to a simple geographic or social space, nor is it a mental construct of the ethnographer, but it does require both these elements'. In terms of ethnographic fieldwork, the Adam Tas student association is regarded as the central point of my study. I have engaged in numerous informal and formal conversations with leaders and members of this student association as well as with randomly chosen students on campus about the language struggle, transformation, diversity and integration. The information accumulated during these conversations is incorporated in my findings and conclusions. In order to gain 'insider knowledge' about the Adam Tas student association that was formed as a result of the ongoing and unresolved language struggle, I did intermittent participant observation over a period of two years (June 2008 until June 2010). Madden (2010:16) confirms the importance of this social research method by claiming that 'participant observation has been a fundamental aspect of ethnographic research over the past century'. In addition, DeWalt, DeWalt and Wayland (1998:264) state that,

> the practice of participant observation provides two main advantages to research. First, it enhances the quality of the data obtained during fieldwork. Second, it enhances the quality of the interpretation of the data. Participant observation is thus both a data collection and an analytical tool.

At the numerous functions held by Adam Tas, in my role as a partial member of the association, I have entered into informal conversations with members of the association. Semi-structured interviews were also done with members of the executive committee. During one of these informal conversations with a prominent member of Adam Tas, it was suggested that I should accept partial membership of the association, which would enable

me to receive all the necessary updates on activities of the association. I agreed but with the condition that my objectivity as a researcher should by no means be compromised. Earl Babbie and Johann Mouton (2001:293) similarly point out that, '[w]hen doing participant observation, one is faced with the difficulty of simultaneously being one of the members of the group, and also observing everyone else from the researcher's point of view. This can become a dilemma at times'. DeWalt et al. (1998) follow the same line of thought by stating that '[p]articipant observation raises many important ethical issues for ethnographers. These issues include the problem of establishing "limits to participation" …' (1998:291). However, by becoming a partial member of the Adam Tas student association, I had the privilege of doing participant observation that enabled me to observe this association without compromising the natural atmosphere best suited for gaining an inside perspective into this student initiative as well as my credibility as a researcher. After being declared a partial member, I attended most of the meetings and functions held by Adam Tas, which formed a core focus of my study. By thoroughly familiarising myself with the mission, vision and goals of this association over an extensive period and becoming a visible member at its numerous functions, I was able to gather valuable insight into this student initiative.

On the positive side, I found that the executive, general members as well as students who were attending the functions were very helpful and that the willingness of some members to express their opinions regarding language-related issues actually increased during socialisation, especially after alcoholic refreshments had been served. On the other hand, some of the problems encountered during the period that I spent with this association related to the impression that I got from some of the members that they were in fact trying very hard to convince me on certain issues. It seemed as if they were telling me one thing, but that their actions revealed the opposite. For example, at the numerous meetings and activities of Adam Tas that I attended, I was fully acknowledged by some of the members and leaders, but if I ran into some of the same individuals at a public place, not long after the Adam Tas event, they did not even acknowledge me, in fact some of them looked the other way. The finding that I have made regarding the above occurrences, is that only when it was necessary for these students to act friendly and approachable at functions of Adam Tas in terms of the association's ideals, mission and vision, these particular students (mostly white and Afrikaans-speaking) did exactly that, but after their 'duties' ended at these functions and they came across me (a female coloured student) at another location, a while later, they did not even acknowledge me as a fellow *Matie*.

10

Michael Crotty (1998:4) stipulates that, '[e]thnography, [is] a methodology that sprang in the first instance from anthropology and anthropological theory…'. Madden's (2010:n.pag.) account of what defines ethnography is that, '[a]n ethnography is ultimately a story that is backed up by reliable qualitative data and the authority that comes from active ethnographic engagement'. I also needed to back up my story by familiarising myself with the Adam Tas association in the most useful and complete manner. Therefore, I started my ethnographic experience by meeting and getting-to-know the students behind establishing this student initiative. However, despite being very optimistic and positive about starting my research project, I was somewhat intimidated, mostly by my own preconceived notions and stereotypes about this association. This slightly overwhelming feeling was quite obvious when I first entered my ethnographic field. To elaborate on the notions and stereotypes referred to above, I can honestly state that my initial notions about the Adam Tas student association included the belief that the latter mainly consisted of a bunch of right-wing, white Afrikaner students, who were entirely opposed to SU transforming into a multicultural higher education institution and who were merely motivated by a concealed agenda. The latter refers to utilising this association as a means of clinging to an Afrikaner university with all of the Afrikaner history and traditions attached to it, in an attempt to exclude non-white, non-Afrikaans-speaking individuals from SU.

My initial meeting with the Adam Tas student association, on the 20th of April 2009, occurred at a discussion event (*sprekersaand)*, namely the *Wyn-en-Politiek-aand* (Wine and Politics evening, my translation) that the association held in a small hall, known as *Die Bloukamer*, situated in the CJ Langenhoven Student Centre (better known as *Die Neelsie*). Upon entering *Die Bloukamer*, I noticed that the room was filled with students as well as lecturers socialising and conversing about the topics on the agenda for the evening. As an outsider, I immediately felt relieved by the comfortable atmosphere that prevailed. To my surprise, I discovered that although three quarters of the attendees were white, I did not feel overwhelmed by this percentage as I initially expected to be. In Madden's words, '[d]oing ethnography inverted my expectations, challenged my assumptions and forced a critical rethink of ideas I held to be problematic, teaching me valuable lessons in the process' (2010:n.pag.).

At this discussion event I was provided with the opportunity of introducing myself to some of the executive members as well as the general members of the association. After introductions I simultaneously disclosed the fact to these executive members that I wanted

permission from the association to use the latter as a vehicle to study important issues surrounding the *taaldebat*. Interestingly enough, I observed that the executive members were not only astonished by my unexpected interest in their student initiative but some also seemed delighted by the fact that their association would in turn gain some exposure by becoming a vital part of my thesis project. Others displayed some degree of mistrust regarding the motives behind my interest in their association. After receiving written permission from the leadership of Adam Tas, by the middle of 2009, to conduct research on the association, I attended numerous functions of the association and gradually became more familiar with the association.

After attending some discussions of the association and engaging in its social events, I was told by an important member of the association that an executive member suggested that the executive committee of the association should offer me a position within the association, because they liked my out-of-the-box thinking. Thus, they could envision me playing a valuable role in terms of handling media related issues. At first, I was surprised upon hearing about the offer, because this association consisted of mostly white Afrikaans-speaking students. I responded by asking to consult with my supervisor first, knowing that accepting this offer could compromise my research in terms of the ethical conditions that my research has to comply with. On the topic of ethics, Ralph Grillo (1985 cited in Escobar 1991:661-662) states that '[w]hile anthropology is characterized by objectivity and the exclusion of moral values as methodologically irrelevant, administration requires that moral values be made explicit, since ethical standards are demanded'. My supervisor confirmed my suspicions that accepting the position would definitely jeopardise the ethical aspect of my research. To this day, I am not entirely sure of the reason behind wanting to offer me such a visible position within this student association. A possible explanation is race-related, because by handling media related issues of the Adam Tas student association, I would become the face of that organisation. Given the fact that I am coloured and not white (as most of its leadership was), one is left with the question of what the reason behind the offer was, and if this was in fact a strategic move on the part of the association to make Adam Tas appear more diverse and integrated than it in fact was. Contributing to the strangeness of the offer, the member that informed me about the offer did not, at a later stage, enquire about my answer to their informal proposition, and that made me question the motive behind the offer even more.

However, despite uncertainties, my opinion about the responses received from the

executive members of the association was twofold: on the one hand, in terms of assistance, both the management of the Adam Tas student association as well as its general members, were indeed helpful and in some instances eager to voice their opinions about issues relating to language, transformation and identity. However, my observation was that some participants were trying hard to convince me of their liberal and transformed beliefs and positions regarding the *taaldebat.* When I conducted the formal interviews with some of the executive members, I felt a certain degree of hesitance when sensitive issues were addressed. It appeared as if they were in some manner afraid that my thesis would, in the end, expose and portray their association in a negative manner which was not my intention at all. A more detailed discussion of these issues will follow in Chapter 5.

1.5   Chapter outline

In Chapter 2, an in-depth discussion will be given based on existing literature to present the three main themes of this study, namely transformation, language and identity. In this chapter the inextricable close relationship between these themes will be investigated relating them to the title of this thesis. With regards to Chapter 3, the focus will be on higher education in South Africa. This chapter will mainly portray challenges facing this sector in the midst of the transformation from apartheid rule to democracy that is taking place throughout the country. The conditions experienced in the higher education sector before 1994 and how these conditions have altered after 1994 will be elaborated on. In this chapter, background information on current higher education legislation will be provided. The challenges that the higher education sector of South Africa is facing and struggling with will be addressed. The discussion will not only be directed to a macro- but also to a micro-level because it is important to explore the situation not only in a broad national view (South Africa), but also from a local perspective (Stellenbosch University). Thereafter, this chapter will shed light on the challenges that SU, a historically white, Afrikaans-dominant institution, is facing in the midst of transformation.

The fourth chapter of this study is on the *taaldebat* at SU and the identity processes associated with language and 'race'. In this chapter, the future of Afrikaans in education will be investigated on a national and on a university level. Here, attention will be drawn to other higher education institutions, but primary emphasis will be given to SU. A brief history of the controversial and unresolved *taaldebat* that is taking place at Stellenbosch will follow. In this chapter it becomes vital to elaborate on the identity processes that are associated with language as well as 'race' at SU.

Chapter 5 is an ethnographic exploration of the Adam Tas association, in other words, what the association stands for as well as its role in the transformation process at SU. A short history of the Adam Tas student association is given. Thereafter, the association's objectives in achieving transformation, locally as well as nationally, will be elaborated on. The difference in notions between the Adam Tas student association and the management of SU regarding the meaning of transformation will be discussed. Lastly, the ethnographic experience obtained within the Adam Tas student association will be addressed and interpreted. The final chapter contains concluding remarks and interpretations of the issues discussed in the preceding chapters.

1.6   Conclusion

The main purpose of the study is to provide the reader with an anthropological understanding of challenges in the transformation process of a historically white Afrikaans-dominant university. These challenges resulted in the emergence of a *taaldebat* between two opposing groups. The first group wanted to save the Afrikaans language and identity of SU, whereas the other wanted SU to transform meaningfully, not only on the surface in terms of higher education legislation, but also on a deeper institutional level. This contestation formed part of a larger context in which the transformation of the entire higher education sector of South Africa was taking place. One particular group that perceived the Afrikaans language under threat at SU, is the Adam Tas association formed and led by mostly Afrikaans mother-tongue students. My study aimed at understanding the role of this student initiative in the tertiary environment in which it operated by focusing on how processes of transformation, language and identity unfolded and were dealt with at this institution of higher learning. Therefore, all of the above issues were investigated and dissected on a micro- as well as a macro-level. The next chapter will focus and elaborate on the interrelatedness between relevant concepts for this study, particularly language, culture, transformation and identity, on a micro- and macro-level. Theoretical and comparative literature will be consulted with the intention of developing a theoretical framework that could help in interpreting the results of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Transformation, Language and Identity

2.1   Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to provide theoretical insight into the three main themes that my study comprises namely transformation, language and identity. This relates to the observation that each of these three themes features very prominently in the ongoing *taaldebat* at SU. As stated in the introductory chapter, this *taaldebat* erupted between a group wanting to protect and preserve the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language at SU as the dominant medium of tuition against a group supporting a more inclusive and integrated approach to language policy. The first group, consisting of mostly white Afrikaans-speaking academics, became increasingly concerned about the future of the Afrikaans language at SU when transformation interventions relating to language policy were implemented. This group feared that the increasing tendency to use more English in a dual medium setting would undoubtedly lead to the demise of the Afrikaans language and would ultimately result in the complete anglicisation of the faculties within the undergraduate sphere of this HAU. In his book, Brink (2006:89) refers to this view as the 'slippery slope' argument, frequently utilised by Afrikaans language activists in the language debate. To prevent the perceived anglicisation of SU, members of the Afrikaans-speaking elite decided to mobilise in the fight against the possible demise of the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language.

However, the Afrikaans-speaking elite was not the only group resisting what Brink (2006:100) called the 'englishification' ("verengelsing") of SU, a group of mostly white Afrikaans-speaking students also became more vocal, in the form of the Adam Tas association. The student association's initial protest action was based on its belief that the Afrikaans language has to retain its dominant position as the main medium of tuition at SU and that the university can transform in Afrikaans. However, as Adam Tas leaders became more aware of the irreversible demographic and language policy changes that occurred within the university over time as well as the realisation that the association needed to become more 'pragmatic' in order to attract a larger support base amongst students, in particular coloured, black and Indian students, the association became more complacent towards transformation interventions at SU.

During the period of conducting extensive fieldwork and research into language-related matters at SU, I observed that whenever the future of the Afrikaans language at this university was discussed, most Afrikaans language activists did so in a highly emotive manner. This emotional reaction can be linked to the fact that for these particular individuals, their mother-tongue Afrikaans is closely linked to their social identification, who they are as a people (Afrikaners). Thus, if their mother-tongue (Afrikaans) as a medium of instruction is perceived to be under threat at SU, as the result of the implementation of a more inclusive language policy, so is their Afrikaans identity. The historical and cultural link that Afrikaans as a language has with the identity of some of its white mother-tongue speakers partially explains the strong opposition that SU management has received thus far from Afrikaans language activists in an ongoing and unresolved *taaldebat*. Thus, for some of the Afrikaans language activists, the *taaldebat* is not so much a struggle to maintain the dominance of the Afrikaans language at SU, but also as Melissa Steyn (2001) argued, 'part of the renegotiation of identity in South Africa after 1994'. This renegotiation of Afrikaner identity in the post-apartheid context has strong links with attempts to retain nationalist socio-political power after political power over the state was lost when the ANC-government took over from an all-white nationalist apartheid government. Here, one can draw on Mariana Kriel's argument that 'language struggles are hardly ever about language alone; they have been and continue to be nationalist struggles (and as such power struggles) at heart' (2003:164).

There are numerous challenges that the higher education sector of South Africa is facing as a result of transformation legislation introduced for higher education institutions by the current government. At SU the transformation process resulted in a newly emerging restructuring of power relations between the formerly marginalised black population and parts of the white stakeholders in the university, that include disagreements closely linked to identity-related issues. According to Van der Waal (2012:459),

> [t]he public fight for Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University reflects the stress of Afrikaner whiteness under conditions of transformation in which the language remains the strongest marker of ethnic identity.

Apart from its academic status, SU was widely known for its Afrikaans character and history. Brink (2009:26) stated that '[f]or many decades, Stellenbosch University had an intimate relationship with the powers of Afrikaner nationalism'. Given the close relationship and heavy investment that SU had with the Afrikaans language, over many decades, it is

therefore not surprising that by changing the dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition to a more inclusive language policy in a transformation process, conflict and tensions arose. This happened in a heated language struggle that related closely to the survival of an Afrikaans or rather, Afrikaner identity.

2.2   Transformation

In terms of obtaining a general understanding of the concept of 'transformation' first, Thiven Reddy's (2008:1) description of it as 'a change from one qualitative state to another, and usually implies "improvement" ' is useful here. When the ANC-led government took over from an authoritarian apartheid government, the general consensus among black leaders was that South Africa should be governed in a democratic manner and that radical transformation in all spheres of society was needed to restore deep-seated inequalities between the marginalised and the white minority. With reference to the White Paper 3 (3:1.1), the *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* states that,

> the Committee's understanding of transformation is based on the approach contained in White Paper 3, which argues that transformation "requires that all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era" (South Africa, 2008:36).

It was necessary that all apartheid systems which were based on discrimination, oppression and segregation be abolished and replaced with new, inclusive and liberal ones in order for South Africa to move forward and become relevant in the post-apartheid context. In obtaining a sense or understanding of what transformation means in the post-apartheid South African context, Reddy (2008:1) further states that, 'the term embraces diverse meanings in competing discourses of social change. It arguably occupies centre-stage of the contemporary political terrain and, as to be expected, is the locus of intense contestation'. The intense contestation that Reddy is referring to here relates to the divergent connotations that South African citizens attach to the term 'transformation'. Reitumetse Mabokela (2000:3) similarly points out the complexity surrounding the understanding of the concept 'transformation' by arguing that 'the first challenge ... is defining the term transformation' because 'there are as many interpretations and understandings of this concept as there are participants'. Furthermore, the differences in opinion regarding the appropriate constitutional transformation practices, spilled over in the

education sector, specifically higher education. The impact of the restructuring process of transformation in the higher education sector according to Reddy 'resulted ... in wide differences of opinion about current policies' (2008:8). An example of conflicting opinions regarding transformation's interpretation and application is found within the context of SU. In an interview, Pieter Kapp, a prominent Afrikaans language activist and former President of the Convocation of SU, reportedly stated that the university should be known as an Afrikaans university that promotes multilingualism. Contrasting sentiment among supporters of the multiculturalist approach, such as Chris Brink, revolves around promoting Stellenbosch University as a bilingual university that promotes the Afrikaans language instead (PRAAG, 2007). Reddy furthermore argues that,

> [a]mong the issues causing widespread tension and disagreement are student numbers, admissions and quotas, staff composition and the promotion of black staff to senior positions, course offerings, Eurocentric curricula content and institutional culture (2008:8).

These issues mentioned by Reddy, are also receiving high priority at SU in a *taaldebat* that resulted from unresolved disagreements as to how language should be managed at this university. Diverse approaches are offered by those involved in this debate as solutions to obstacles that arose as a result of the implementation of transformation practices, such as language policy. The former statement is corroborated by Reddy when he claims that 'at the University of Stellenbosch, the predominant question here is the language of instruction'. Reddy went on further by pointing out competing perspectives that surfaced in the *taaldebat* at SU as a result of changes to its language policy:

> The change from Afrikaans as the predominant medium of instruction to a 'dual medium' system, allowing for English and Afrikaans undergraduate lectures – the proposal of university reformers – would enable more African students to attend the university. However, 'traditionalists' have waged a well-organised campaign to retain Afrikaans as the only language of instruction .... [A]frican students ought to learn Afrikaans; there are enough coloured Afrikaans-speaking students who already make the university sufficiently non-racial; and an Afrikaans – language university should be encouraged and supported by the state as it promotes a multilingual society (2008:8).

Reddy's perspective revolves around the idea that Afrikaans language activists are promoting a very exclusive approach as to how Afrikaans as medium of instruction should be managed at SU. Their perception of what it means to diversify a former Afrikaans enclave is also limited because diversification does not involve the inclusion of certain racial categories only, such as the coloureds, but rather includes all races.

18

In relation to the campaigning of pro-Afrikaans supporters for an Afrikaans university, the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal spelled out the danger that lies in promoting any university as an Afrikaans language university in an official document, *Language Policy on Higher Education*. He argues that if this practice was to be accepted and incorporated into higher education policy, 'could have the unintended consequence of concentrating Afrikaans-speaking students in some institutions and in so doing setting back the transformation agendas of institutions that have embraced parallel or dual medium approaches as a means of promoting diversity' (Department of Education, 2002:12). Van der Waal follows a similar line of thought when he argues that '[an] Afrikaans-only policy will create a ghetto' because '[s]tudents need interaction' (2009a). In the post-apartheid South African context, the promotion of an Afrikaans university could result in Afrikaans-speaking students becoming culturally poorer due to being only subjected to a homogeneous Afrikaner culture. A university that is accepting students from diverse cultural backgrounds is more likely to expose Afrikaans-speaking students to a diverse set of cultures and in the process expanding their university experience.

Leibowitz et al. (2005:33), conceptualise the term, transformation with regard to language of teaching, as follows:

> Transformation requires attention to the ways in which individuals' home and academic languages are valued and respected, as well as ways in which individuals' linguistic resources can become forms of cultural capital, and sources of power in the knowledge economy.

Applying Leibowitz et al.'s conceptualisation of the term transformation to the apartheid period, it can be noted that Afrikaans as a linguistic resource also functioned as a form of cultural capital, and a source of power. This language was used as an instrument to promote white Afrikaner culture within South Africa's education system to such an extent that non-white, non-Afrikaner students felt excluded at HAUs, such as SU.

It is important to elaborate on the racial terminology used in this thesis because I do not ascribe to these notions as analytical instruments and the racial terminology is solely utilised for descriptive purposes. Thus, for clarity purposes, it becomes crucial to distinguish between the social categories referred to in this text. The relevant social categories referred to are whites, coloureds, Indians and lastly blacks. In this thesis, these racial labels are only used to identify former legally defined racial categories and not to encourage a continued discriminatory agenda. It will also be useful here to distinguish

between Afrikaner as an identification and Afrikaans as a language. To be labelled as an Afrikaner, a combination of racial (white), language (Afrikaans) and cultural (unique, Afrikaner identity) characteristics is required. Afrikaans as a language denotation, on the other hand, crosses racial boundaries and is not bounded to one 'race' only because Afrikaans[3] is spoken by multiple races.

To return to the concept of transformation, this process consists of a range of issues including processes based on identity markers such as 'race' and language. Transformation, in the current South African setting, refers to the restructuring of relations and entitlements in terms of overcoming the inequalities of the past dispensation that was based on racial discrimination. For transformation to be meaningfully implemented, on the institutional level, it becomes vital for the institution to be inclusive in terms of social categories. It is also necessary to mention that despite implementing transformation successfully in terms of issues such as 'race' and language this process is not free of difficulties. Leibowitz et al. (2005:30) elaborate on these difficulties by pointing out that,

> [t]he interrelatedness of language with other identity markers … has important implications for debates around transformation of teaching and learning: one cannot adopt change interventions based on isolated phenomena or factors, without considering how embedded these factors are in a myriad of interweaving elements, some more directly cognitive, and others, more directly ideological or affective.

On the national level, it can be said that a clear imbalance existed in terms of the number and level of academic qualifications obtained by whites relative to non-whites. Although South Africa transitioned into a democratic political system, inequalities such as the above are still obstacles. Some of these obstacles were listed in the official national document on educational transformation, the *Green Paper* (2.1.1) of 1996, as follows:

> Resources were inequitably and inefficiently allocated; governance structures were undemocratic; access was highly skewed on racial lines; there was a lack of coordination, common goals or systematic planning; and there was an inability to respond to the economic and social needs of the majority of the population (Department of Education, 1996).

Official policy documents such as the *National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)*,

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[3] According to Webb et al. (1992:25 cited in Webb and Kriel, 2000:20), 'Afrikaans is the first language of about six million South Africans of all races and is known as a non-primary language by about a further ten million persons'. Also: 'More than half of its primary users are not white people'.

the *Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation* (1996), the *White Paper* (1997), the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* and the *National Plan for Higher Education* (2001) were all adopted to meet the key objectives on the transformation agenda put forward by the Ministry of Education. The main objectives of the adopted policies for this sector, clearly refer to the promotion and establishment of diversity; access to higher education sector for all, irrespective of 'race', gender, mother-tongue, etc.; academic excellence and, most importantly, to be perceived as being both relevant and possessing the ability to compete with other higher education institutions on a world-wide basis and in the process receive international recognition.

At the *Second New Hope Student deliberation*, held on the sixth of May 2009, Mohamed Shaikh, spokesperson and director of communications at SU, said:

> The management of the Stellenbosch University, views the university as a national institution that needs to be transformed, in order for it to fit in with the objective of national government of transforming the country as a whole. 'Transformation in Afrikaans' [the initial motto of Adam Tas], is precisely not what university management wants (Stellenbosch University, 2009c) (my translation).

From the above, it can be derived that SU management seems to be leaning more towards becoming a multicultural institution of higher learning instead of retaining its image as a white, Afrikaans-medium university. It also seems to be extremely important to this institution to be in line with the ethos and objectives of the current democracy, especially where transformation is concerned. This inference is confirmed when Shaikh further stated that 'the university does not want an ethnic university any more' (Stellenbosch University, 2009c). From the above, it can be derived that SU management is also claiming to be supportive of a multiculturalist model, in the same way that Christa van der Walt and Chris Brink (2005) are arguing about higher education legislation in post-apartheid South Africa. These authors are implying that '[w]hen one looks at the South African Language Policy for Higher Education … it appears to support a multiculturalist model' (2005:846). From Shaikh's claims, one can argue that SU does not want to reflect a single homogeneous 'racial' – or cultural group any more but rather wants to become a reflection of South Africa's entire diverse population.

To return to the concept of 'transformation', Njabulo Ndebele (2004:1), states that 'originally understood as a complex and creative process of change, [transformation]

began to be reducible [in higher education in South Africa post-1994] to a single measure of success: race'. Also: 'In this context … an institution declared … "untransformed" could … [experience] a damning crisis of legitimacy'. The racial discourse features very much in the transformation process of the higher education sector due to the fact that 'race' was the driving factor behind the creation of all the national apartheid policies which also spilled over in the education sector. Overall, if South African universities including SU come to be regarded as untransformed institutions, this image could harm its legitimacy as reliable knowledge providers and higher education institutions of academic excellence. Jonathan Jansen is of the opinion that '[i]n the end, the real test of whether South African institutions have achieved inclusive institutional cultures might well be the extent to which black and white students "feel at home" within universities' (2004:123). In terms of Jansen's argument, it can be noted that if SU was to retain its identity as a dominant Afrikaans-medium university (the preference of Giliomee and other Afrikaans language activists), English-speaking whites but especially blacks, would certainly not find themselves 'feeling at home' at this university due to the fact that they have been excluded on linguistic grounds.

The challenges of transformation will be extremely difficult to meet due to the fact that a balanced management programme of transformational practices at educational facilities will have to operate on a continuous basis. Not only do higher education leaders have the responsibility of rectifying and transforming this sector, but they are also expected to practice social justice, a value that is emphasised and endorsed by the Constitution of South Africa. Pro-Afrikaans supporters within the 'Third Afrikaans Language Movement' (Webb, 2010) instead argued in favour of their human right to be recognised as a group of Afrikaans first-language-speakers and thus attributed more value to this right than the social justice right favoured by the higher education leadership. Afrikaans language activists, operating within the guidelines of the Third Afrikaans Language Movement are claiming that it is their constitutional right to 'fight' for their mother-tongue, a language that is recognised as one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. Nancy Fraser (1996 cited in Leibowitz and Van Deventer, 2007:89) points out the importance of both approaches, when she states that,

> there is a complementarity of the need for redistribution of power, resources and ability to participate in decision-making, on the one hand, and of the need for recognition of individuals' or groups' rights to respect and dignity, on the other.

22

Here, Fraser is pointing out the choice that has to be made between recognising an individual or group's constitutional right to receive an education through their mother-tongue against an individual's right to participate in higher education and thus having access to the resources of the country. Applying the above statement by Fraser to the context of SU, it is necessary to mention that the 'minority argument', the 'numbers argument' as well as the 'demographic profile argument' concerning the Western Cape is often used by Giliomee and his followers to justify their pro-Afrikaans arguments in language-related debates at SU, in order to regain recognition as Afrikaans-speakers. Fraser (1996:12 cited in Leibowitz and Van Deventer, 2007:105) is, however, arguing in favour of 'the right to participate' against the right to recognition. She further states that 'in proposing to assess recognition, politics that fail to respect human rights are unacceptable, even if they promote social equality'. From Fraser's account one can derive that the right to participate in higher education outweighs the right to be recognised as a language group whose human rights has to enjoy preference over the right of the marginalised to have access to the county's resources.

Although SU has made undeniable transformational changes in terms of the transformation of its exclusive use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition and its white Afrikaner-dominant residential culture through the implementation of transformative institutional legislation in an effort to 'kick-off' the transformation process, great challenges regarding implementation and monitoring of these changes still remain. Historically Afrikaans-medium universities (such as SU) are facing more difficult challenges than English-medium higher education institutions in terms of the cultural mandates of some groups. Van der Walt and Brink are also pointing out that,

> there is usually some kind of cultural mandate at work, emanating from the environment and historical context within which the university is situated.... Historically, the protectionist model may also relate to some form of nationalism, or minority rights (2005:844).

The cultural mandate that Van der Walt and Brink are mentioning, has to do with cultural heritage claims that are also prominent in Afrikaans language activists' arguments concerning the Afrikaans language. These claims are based on this group's belief that the Afrikaans heritage and culture would be lost if Afrikaans loses its 'higher functions' at SU. Cultural claims can result in a slower pace of the transformation process at HAUs, because claims for cultural heritage are not relevant at English-medium universities.

Regarding the cultural mandate of pro-Afrikaans supporters, the Ministerial Report (South Africa, 2008:136) states that, 'universities … have an obligation to work for the good of society. They cannot be sectional, sectarian or crafted in the image of, and for the benefit of segmented elements of the social system in which they operate'. Thus, as an academic institution, SU management is in favour of a unified acceptance of the multicultural identity that this higher education institution wants to adopt for transformation purposes. In the end, one of the main functions of higher education institutions in the country, regarded by many as national assets, is to serve as knowledge-providers for its citizens. Therefore, it becomes comprehensible that the transition from a single cultural identity (Afrikaner identity) to achieving a multicultural one is of enormous significance to SU.

In terms of the transformation of staff, the Ministerial Report also found that 'in relation to gender, Stellenbosch suggests that while there is "formal equity" between genders, a "male dominated culture persists at SU" ' (South Africa, 2008:62). Thus, SU still consists of more male academic personnel than female lecturers, although this higher education institution is subjected to equity policies regarding gender. Furthermore, in relation to the transformation of institutional culture, it was stated that,

> [at] the US … the institutional environment is one where: … (suspicion) abounds, on the one hand that transformation will affect standards and on the other that an obsession with quality is little more than a thinly veiled form of resistance to meaningful transformation (South Africa, 2008:62).

The Ministerial Report also suggested that the 'quality argument' that Afrikaans language activists is claiming to be one of the most important reasons for their resistance to the anglicisation of SU, should be also observed from another angle, which relates to the prevention of non-white students entering this former Afrikaans enclave. The 'standards will drop' argument put forward by Afrikaans language activists at Stellenbosch University, according to Brink (2009:24), 'is the most common and stereotypical fear concerning widening participation' and 'is usually code for a bigger claim … that the quality of education on offer will suffer as a consequence of widening participation'. Brink's assertion connects with the above argument made in the Ministerial Report of 2008 that the quality of education will decrease if admission requirements at higher education institutions are 'lowered' to accommodate non-white students from previous disadvantaged population groups that did not obtain the required symbols for entry into programmes at HAUs.

On the topic of residential culture, SU evolved 'from a "tradition-driven and regulation-driven" culture in the organisation of residences to a value-driven culture. The values adopted by the residences are guided by the values of the University, which are consistent with the values in the Constitution' (South Africa, 2008:93). Furthermore, SU has also incorporated that shift to a value-driven culture, through the implementation of its *Luister, Leef en Leerprojek* (Listen, Live and Learn project) (Stellenbosch University, 2011e) as well as by replacing the concept of *Jool* by the MAD² (Making A Decision 2 Make A Difference) programme (Stellenbosch University Student Council, 2012). The Ministerial Report states that '[t]he shift in focus to a value-driven culture is to be welcomed.... However, it is not clear whether it necessarily provides an alternative to the tradition-driven culture of the past' (South Africa, 2008:93). In order for the university to eradicate the dominance of Afrikaner culture at SU, the adoption of a value-driven culture seems to promote inclusion, given that this ideology is not favouring a single, homogeneous culture, as was done in the past but that it is actually embracing the cultural diversity at SU.

Regarding the evaluation of transformation interventions already implemented in the higher education sector, the Ministerial Report's finding was that 'there is a considerable distance [in terms of achieving relevant and meaningful transformation] that is yet to be travelled before we can pause' (South Africa, 2008:136). Despite the above implementation obstacles to transformation, two of the early successes of this process, nationally, were that 'in legal and regulatory terms, the higher education system is in a good standing and that the important first step in the process of transformation has been taken' (South Africa, 2008:132). The obstacles to the implementation of transformation in public institutions, as mentioned in the Ministerial Report clearly indicate that not six nor nineteen years can erase the damage that apartheid caused South Africa, especially given the long period that the apartheid project was imposed upon South Africa's systems as well as its citizens. Given the fact that language constitutes such an important part of the main argumentation in this thesis, the following section will consist of a theoretical discussion of discourses relating to language, relevant to the situation at SU.

2.3   Language

Elie Kedourie (1985:58-64 cited in Webb and Kriel, 2000:31) argued that 'language is … most important; it is "the external and visible badge of those differences which distinguish one nation from another; it is the most important criterion by which a nation is recognized to exist" '. From Kedourie's conceptualisation of language, the main factor that stood out

25

about this concept in his analysis is that (in cases where some countries in Europe only have one language) it assists humanity in distinguishing one nation from another as well as provides visible evidence that a nation actually exists. Vic Webb (2010:109) points out the importance of language in any given community by mentioning that,

> [l]anguage has an important role in the construction of a community: … it also, importantly, functions as the mediating instrument through which a community of practice is constructed. A good example of this process is the construction of the white Afrikaans-speaking community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ….

From Webb's discussion of language, it can be derived that the role of language takes on many forms besides the fact that it assists in the communication between members of the same speech community. A language, more importantly, functions as an essential factor in the formation of a person's or group's identity. Therefore, it becomes vital to mention that whilst a language has important functions in social life, a language also has different identity functions. The language (mother-tongue) that an individual speaks, acts in most cases, as a representation of that individual's identity. However, Van der Waal et al. (2009b:n.pag.) argues that, '[l]anguages are not fixed biological species, but adjust to and accommodate changing contexts; they merge and flow continually in social processes of give and take'. From the above, it is clear that language occupies many important roles because it not only assists individuals in communication and interaction processes but also functions in the formation of a person's social identification.

The role that language occupies as medium of tuition, however, can be seen as an essential component in higher education, due to the fact that this is the channel through which students acquire the necessary knowledge, experience and exposure which are needed to function successfully in the employment sector. To elaborate on how language is important in higher education in South Africa, it becomes necessary to provide the reader with background information on how the Afrikaans language was appropriated and implemented to serve the ideals of the white Afrikaner in the previous political dispensation. Drawing on the work of Van der Waal, Thomas Blaser and Christi van der Westhuizen assert that the '[t]he language Afrikaans was "purified" of its creole origins, and used by ethnic entrepreneurs to maintain a racially exclusive social group' (2012:385). The Afrikaans language was thus utilised as an important tool to promote ideological beliefs relating to Afrikaner nationalism. On the topic of Afrikaner nationalism, Blaser and Van der Westhuizen (2012:382), state:

> Afrikaner nationalism which, had elevated *Afrikanerdom* as the highest embodiment of a

> 'purified' Afrikaner culture and language, had captured state power, ruled over a racially and ethnically demarcated society and ensured the economic advancement and political dominance of white Afrikaans-speakers.

In relation to Blaser and Van der Westhuizen's above statement, one can argue that Afrikaner nationalism was used as a tool to promote and benefit only one self-perceived homogeneous group: the white Afrikaner. One pillar of Afrikaner nationalism involved the promotion and development of only one language, the Afrikaans language in its standard and purified form, the mother-tongue of the white Afrikaner. This is often referred to as linguistic nationalism. Vic Webb and Mariana Kriel (2000:27) state that '[i]n most cases linguistic nationalism involves the structural and functional expansion of the nation's low-function vernacular'. Afrikaans acted as a low-function vernacular in terms of its public functions before it was invested in and promoted to become one of the two official languages of the country during apartheid. Regarding the political history of South Africa, language always played a leading role where nationalism was concerned. Even before the Nationalist apartheid government came into power in 1948, attempts were made to promote the Afrikaans language, the mother-tongue of its white Afrikaans-speaking citizens in a bid to increase the economic conditions of the then poor white Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaner. It was believed that by promoting the Afrikaans language nationally, this low-function vernacular (at the time) would blossom into a language with 'high status' that could be developed into a language of science in the higher education sector. This process would then increase the material wealth of poor white Afrikaners because their linguistic capital (their mother-tongue, Afrikaans) could then be turned into economic -, social - as well as political capital. Kriel (2003:162) similarly argues that 'languages are potentially valuable financial assets ... '. In furthering Kriel's argument one notes that if Afrikaans retains its dominance in the higher education sector, white Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaners would still enjoy exclusive access to economic privileges and opportunities to valuable resources that the country had to offer and also attain power over non-Afrikaans speaking Africans who are excluded from these privileges and opportunities. Linguistic nationalism of course, in today's conditions, is an attempt to return to the situation where Afrikaans was dominant and strongly related to Afrikaner nationalism in the 20th century.

Van der Waal noted that 'the political economy of language needs to be understood, the fact that notions about social and linguistic entities and policies are driven by inequalities ... [and] the drive for protection may indicate that vested interests are at stake'

(2009a:n.pag.). Applying Van der Waal's statement to the Afrikaans language activists, it can be observed that this group is in fact using language as a means to retain and secure other interests such as their economic and social privileges that they perceived to be 'under threat' in the post-apartheid South African context. Furthermore, the drive for protection that Van der Waal speaks of relates to groups, such as the pro-Afrikaans activists who strive to protect the Afrikaans language and its heritage at all cost. In this regard, Mads Vestergaard (2001:29) observes that '[m]any Afrikaner organisations, academics, and politicians have expressed concern that their culture and language are under serious threat in the new South Africa'. It can be said that this group lost its political control when apartheid ended and is continuously trying to regain some power by focusing on their constitutional rights as a minority group in South Africa by constantly engaging in disputes about the protection of the Afrikaans language and its heritage.

Bourdieu (1991), a social theorist, wrote extensively about language and he stated that '[l]anguage should not only be viewed as a means of communication but also as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence'. Regarding Bourdieu's statement, the argument can be put forward that those Afrikaans activists, who are in favour of ensuring that SU retains its status as a dominant Afrikaans-medium university, are in fact seeking to retrieve some of the socio-political power that white Afrikaners lost when the ANC-led government took over from a mainly white nationalist apartheid government. It can be pointed out that these individuals are utilising the Afrikaans language as a means to exclude or dominate non-Afrikaans-speaking individuals, on tertiary education level. Webb and Kriel (2000:44) argue along the same lines that 'the exceptionally strong demand for the continued recognition and use of Afrikaans … may, ultimately, simply be a disguise for the need to retain (or regain) political and economic control in some way'. Although the above argument refers to white pro-Afrikaans supporters exerting power, it becomes necessary to mention that the latter is not the only group who exerts power regarding the use of language at SU. Other entities, such as the government as well as the non-Afrikaans-speaking students and staff population at SU, are also exerting power through their insistence on receiving lectures in English and providing lectures in English, respectively.

Throughout the time that I have conducted my fieldwork on the campus of SU, I have observed that many of the younger generation of Afrikaans language supporters, although fighting for the preservation and protection of Afrikaans (their mother-tongue) do not want

28

to accomplish the above goal at the expense and exclusion of other languages. This younger generation seems to be leaning more toward a multicultural and multilingual policy instead of a single-medium Afrikaans policy. In contrast to the younger generation, their older counterparts (such as Giliomee and his followers) seem to be supportive of a more exclusive approach in terms of language-related practices, as a means to ensure the survival of 'their' mother-tongue against a powerful and universal language such as English. Although Giliomee strongly objected against apartheid ideology and practices, it can be argued that his and other pro-Afrikaans supporters' main objective to retain SU's informal Afrikaans-dominant language policy, correlates on a linguistic level with apartheid ideology, in the sense that during the apartheid regime it was believed that all *God-given* cultures and *their* respective mother-tongues should function separately and remain separated for generations to come.

Contrary to the exclusivist arguments of pro-Afrikaans activists, pointed out above, Charles van Leeuwen and Robert Wilkinson (2003:11) assert that,

> [i]t seems almost inevitable that universities have to come to terms with the multicultural, multilingual societies in which they are vested. Perhaps for too long, universities have been used by national governments as a means to extend their social policies.

Van Leeuwen and Wikinson's remark is also applicable to the context of SU, due to the fact that the former apartheid government also used HAUs, including SU, as a tool to extend and develop their social policies of 'racial' segregation in the education sphere. However, in the post-apartheid context, according to Lloyd Hill (2009:328-329), '[i]n terms of national language policy, institutions of higher learning were expected to "promote multilingualism" by means of a language policy and a more detailed language plan'. Although it is important to attend to the national needs of the country in which the university is situated, it is also equally valuable for a university to recognise the need to equip its students to succeed not only academically but also socially and culturally in any foreign territory. Thus, if Giliomee and his fellow pro-Afrikaans activists are to succeed in their mission to retain the dominant informal Afrikaans-medium language policy of SU and in the process drastically minimise the level of English currently utilised as the medium of instruction at this university, this decision would have a definitive impact on the accessibility of non-Afrikaans-speaking students to SU.

On the topic of parallel medium and the huge financial costs attached to it, Hill (2009:342) pointed out that,

> [g]iven the widespread recognition earlier in the century that parallel medium universities were too expensive to maintain, how does one explain the rapid shift to parallel medium instruction among Afrikaans universities in the 1990s? The answer lies in an examination of the changing status of Afrikaans, both as an academic medium at university level and more generally as a form of cultural capital in post-apartheid South Africa.

Although parallel medium instruction was considered a very expensive process by not only South African universities, but also universities abroad, in the South African context managements of higher education institutions came to the realisation that the value of the Afrikaans language in the public domain had decreased significantly. Therefore, moving to more inclusive language policies, such as parallel medium and dual medium, seemed to be a relevant practice in South Africa after apartheid's termination.

With regard to the language debate, which is not yet fully resolved at SU, it can be said that the language rights enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa were created as a basis from which language-related issues should be equitably dealt with. Post-apartheid legislation created a string of contradictions because the language rights enshrined within the Constitution are now being used by the pro-Afrikaans activists in a justifiable manner (by emphasising their rights as a minority group) as a means to retain the privileged position that Afrikaans occupied during the period of 'racial' domination. Vestergaard (2001:39) sheds more light on the previous point by arguing that,

> [m]inority rights … were meant to protect fragile, weak minorities against the oppression of the strong, wealthy majority. This is not the case with the Afrikaners: they are not weak, and they are as a whole wealthier than the majority. But more importantly, they are the old power elite – the oppressors.

One of the findings in the Leibowitz report, regarding language deficiency at SU, (2006:3-4) was that,

> [d]espite the fact that there is a greater proficiency in Afrikaans amongst students and staff, there is a small but noteworthy minority in both cases who possess little or no proficiency in this language. This leads to a fundamental dilemma: does one cater for the minority, which is to varying extents bilingual, or for the minority, which is to varying extents not proficient in Afrikaans at all ….

From the above finding taken from the Leibowitz report, it can be derived that one of the fundamental elements accompanying the restructuring of the institutional character of SU was the choice that this particular university had to make regarding the appropriate language policy. Given SU's shift from an informal Afrikaans-dominant language policy to a

formal but more inclusive one (accepted at the end of 2002), it was not surprising that SU's racial profile had changed by 2013. Kees van der Waal and Monica du Toit (2016:5) state: 'By 2013 Afrikaans-speakers formed 48% of the total, indicating a significant tipping of the demographic scale'. Many Afrikaans activists have reacted with great concern to these changes and responded that this shift in language policy by SU management was in no way constitutional and just in relation to Afrikaans-speaking students, whom they regard as having been loyal supporters of SU throughout many years.

It can be concluded from this section which focused on language that language-related matters in the higher education context are indeed very complex partly because the status of any language is affected by political transitions that societies are experiencing. In the post-apartheid South African setting, the value and demand of an Afrikaans-identity changed after the ANC-led government took over from a dominantly Afrikaans-speaking apartheid government. The change in the demand for Afrikaans, evident in the public sphere, impacted on the higher education sector in such a manner that many of those first-time students whose mother-tongue was Afrikaans, were now increasingly choosing to receive their tertiary education in English, which was their second language. This choice by Afrikaans-speaking students was influenced by the impact of globalisation on universities world-wide. The globalisation process is regarded as the connecting link between developed and developing nations world-wide. The implication of the latter on the higher education sphere is that now universities separated by distance are able to communicate and exchange academic material between universities through technological innovations directly and instantly. However, this connection between different universities requires that a common language is found in which effective communication can take place. Here, the English language, as a common language and its status as an international language is valuable. Globalisation also impacted on university students because the inclination to choose English as medium of instruction above Afrikaans is now more evident in the higher education sector of South Africa. The perception of the value of the English language increased dramatically because of its added advantage as a common language between South African higher education institutions and higher education institutions abroad, which increased interaction and resulted in the further promotion of the English language.

2.4   Identity

Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000:14) described identification and categorization '[a]s a processual, active term, derived from a verb: "identification" lacks the reifying connotations of "identity"'. These authors further express that the conceptual framework of identification, '[i]nvites us to specify the agents that do the identifying …' and that '[i]dentification - of oneself and of others – is intrinsic to social life ...' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:14). Philip Riley (2007:2) underlines Brubaker and Cooper's expression by stating that 'identity is not just something we can decide on ourselves. Because it is at least partly social, our identity is decided on – "constructed" – by other people'. Riley's statement relates to the fact that our identity is partly shaped by the social environment in which we operate, the environment of the home, the church, the school, etc. that form integral components of any community. It can be argued that the social environment that we are exposed to plays a vital role in the formation of our identity. According to Piet Erasmus (2002:90), '[i]dentity may at best be considered subjective, a fluid (not absolute) thought and / or language-related construct revealed in narratives but finding no manifestation beyond the human spirit in societal reality' (cf. Strauss 1999:13; Martin 1995:7) The definition that Erasmus is ascribing to the term identity, is relevant in the sense that identity is not a rigid concept reflecting an essential social condition, but it is subjected to change and in actual fact it is basically about telling a story about who we are as people. Brubaker and Cooper refer to Charles Tilly's conceptualisation of identity as a '"blurred but indispensable" concept and defines it as an "actor's experience of a category, tie, role, network, group, or organization, coupled with a public representation of that experience …"' (2000:12). The argument raised by Tilly that identity is a 'blurred … concept' refers to the notion that identity (as a concept) has no solid boundaries, due to its always changing nature.

Today, given the democratic government's goal to establish a shared national identity amongst all its citizens, that is based on shared democratic values and the African identity of the majority of the population, one would expect that the big emphasis on ethnic and racial identity would have decreased. On the contrary, the opposite has emerged amongst minority groups in the country. Some white Afrikaners felt pressured to secure the survival of their white Afrikaner identity as well as their mother-tongue in a multicultural and highly linguistically diverse country. Their agenda centred around placing the emphasis on their group identity rather than on the shared national identity that the ANC government is striving for. An example of this trend is the promotion of white Afrikaner cultural activities.

The Afrikaans music industry grew as a result of white Afrikaners feeling threatened that their identity may not survive.

It was observed that peoples' emphasis on group identity instead of national identity in the post-apartheid setting,

> keeps identity politics alive in South Africa, because people would want to protect their interests on the basis of racial categories. This might be to the detriment of South Africa's new democracy, because one would not want to be associated with other groups on the basis of race. Therefore, the idea of national identity developed in South Africa because it was perceived as a solution to problems created by identity politics (Dumiso, 2004:25).

Although the initiative to develop and promote a national identity instead of a 'racial' identity after entering democracy seemed like a great idea to the new leaders of the country in their mission to promote and assist the unification process of all 'races', South Africans are still clinging to and adding more value to their diverse 'racial' identities than to a unifying national identity. Mattes (1997 cited in Dumiso, 2004:27) found that,

> it is only when members of an ethnic group feel strongly about their identity that they do not feel threatened. Therefore, this will lead them to be comfortable with a national identity ... [T]he strength of national identity increases with one's ability to accept difference and diversity....

To apply Mattes' thoughts to the situation at SU it can be argued that when the dominant position of Afrikaans, the mother-tongue of the Afrikaans language activists was threatened by the increasing use of English as medium, the Afrikaans identity of these Afrikaans-speakers was also threatened. As pro-Afrikaans supporters became increasingly unconvinced of the university's commitment to the development of Afrikaans within a multilingual context, their insecurity towards its Afrikaans identity also increased. This led to this group placing more emphasis on their group identity as Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers opposed to their national identity as South African citizens.

According to Brink (2006: ii), the language debate at SU is also,

> [i]n the hard sense … about a *reaffirmation* of identity – the group identity, namely, of the Afrikaners.... In the soft sense the *taaldebat* is about a *search* for identity – an elusive group identity, namely, of all those who speak Afrikaans as their mother tongue.

Here, Brink is referring to the white Afrikaners, who use their language as a means to redefine their seemingly fragile Afrikaner identity but his statement also applies to those Afrikaans activists who want to unite coloured and white Afrikaans-speakers.

As stated throughout the chapter, the introduction of transformation interventions

pertaining to language was met at SU with strong resistance from Afrikaans language activists. The decision to diversify SU student population through the implementation of a more inclusive language policy resulted in an active campaign, driven by mostly white Afrikaans-speakers, to retain the dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition. According to Duncan et al. (2002:202) this tertiary institution was regarded as one of the universities that 'were built to serve white Afrikaners'. It can be noted that the white identity of these white Afrikaners was also endorsed at SU, previously known as 'Stellenbosch College … [and] renamed Victoria College in 1887 to honour Queen Victoria's golden jubilee' (Kapp, 2011:373). Delving into Stellenbosch University's historical background, it emerges that,

> [t]he adoption of the University Act in 1916 by the then Union of South Africa Parliament paved the way for the establishment of a university. On 2 April 1918, Victoria College became Stellenbosch University thanks to £ 100 000 donation by a local benefactor, Mr Jan Marais (Stellenbosch University, 2014).

Brink (2009:26) is of the view that Stellenbosch 'is also … the place where apartheid was born' and that this university 'for many decades, had an intimate relationship with the powers of Afrikaner nationalism'. At SU and other Afrikaans universities the Afrikaans language was developed into a 'high status' language. Today, however, the picture is different due to the university's active mission to make the institution more inclusive. By replacing the former Afrikaner identity with a multicultural one that is more in line with the image that South Africa as a country wants to portray to the world, the university management is indeed trying to stay true to its recent commitment of becoming an institution that serves the population as a whole and that also recognises the impact of globalisation on the higher education sector. This multicultural identity is accepted by many of the younger white Afrikaans-speaking students and will be beneficial in the restorative process, especially concerning the change in perceptions about SU. By adopting a multicultural identity, the university also minimises the negative associations of Afrikaner identity that many South African citizens attached to this institution.

As I have already mentioned, the above shift towards a multicultural identity from an Afrikaner identity is to an extent complicated by Afrikaans language activists, with a diverse set of motivations for wanting to keep the Afrikaner identity of SU. Regarding these motivations, one can state that some Afrikaans language activists may indeed long back to an older political identity, others are more concerned about language as such, whilst

another group looks at Afrikaans as a bridge to unite white and coloured Afrikaans-speakers in post-apartheid South Africa.

Another perspective relating to 'racial' identity comes from Steyn, a professor in Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, best-known for her work on whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Steyn (2004:153) points out that '[t]he stakes in this *white talk* ... are much higher; it is experienced not simply as a matter of preserving privilege, but as a fight for a sustaining sense of selfhood'. This argument of Steyn is in line with Van der Waal's argumentation that '[t]he viewpoints in the debate are related to larger issues with material and ideological dimensions' (2008:69). Also: '[U]nderlying interests are seldom expressed or revealed, due to the common assumption and mystification that the debate is solely about language' (Van der Waal, 2008:69). Steyn and Van der Waal are both referring to the underlying motives of the Afrikaans language activists in the language debate at Stellenbosch and that these activists are not only campaigning to protect and preserve their mother-tongue Afrikaans but that the debate also revolves around the protection and preservation of the Afrikaans identity that is attached to the Afrikaans language. Afrikaans language activists seem to practice what Van der Waal termed 'strategic essentialism' (2008) when they are using their identity as Afrikaans-speakers to regain some of the cultural power that white Afrikaners lost when the ANC-led government took over.

To provide the reader with an insight to the term, 'strategic essentialism', Van der Waal (2008:55) noted that,

> [T]he feminist and postcolonialist writer Spivak … coined the term [strategic essentialism] to refer to the need for temporary solidarity for purposes of social action in specific cases. Her approach is to see the need among oppressed social categories or 'sub-altern groups' as a justified emphasis on their separateness, but only as a short-term strategy in their search for recognition and social influence ….

From Spivak's definition it can be further derived that Afrikaans language activists are now using their 'separateness' or identity as Afrikaans language speakers as justification in a language debate to distinguish them from the rest as a short-term solution to regain power and recognition that were lost when Afrikaans was no longer regarded as the only and dominant language of instruction on the campus of SU.

2.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, the three main themes, namely transformation, language and identity have been elaborated on and substantiated by consulting existing literature centred on these three concepts and their respective meanings. Diverse theoretical approaches were investigated and incorporated and connected to the main focus of this thesis, which is the tension that arose between retaining an Afrikaans language identity versus transforming this Afrikaans identity into a multicultural identity at SU. The literature on transformation pointed out that although higher education institutions took the first step in the transformation process, in terms of legislature, unforeseen obstacles still need to be addressed. The latter refers to gaps that still exist in the implementation phase of legislation in the higher education sector. The literature also suggests that transformation policies should not only be implemented on the surface, but should rather entail a deeper implementation for meaningful integration to take place between students and staff of diverse 'racial' origin.

On the topic of language, the literature indicates that when dealing with linguistic issues on university level, one cannot dismiss the influence that power relations have on this discourse. Here, one can draw on Bourdieu's perspective that language is also a form of power. In the language debate at SU, language (Afrikaans) is utilised as an identity marker by Afrikaans activists, in an effort to establish a shared identity amongst all Afrikaans-speakers, irrespective of 'racial' origin, in the fight to 'save' the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language in the higher education sector.

In relation to identity, the literature showed that 'identity' is a social construct and that it is an always evolving process and not rigid in any manner. This was evident when the requirements of what it means to be called an Afrikaner changed in the post-apartheid context to include non-white Afrikaans-speakers in the fight to save the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language. Initially one had to be white and Afrikaans-speaking to be named an Afrikaner, but in the post-apartheid context Afrikaans language activists realised that the racial requirement that was formerly needed to be named an Afrikaner had to be eliminated and replaced with language as the only criterion for an Afrikaans/Afrikaner identity. Thus, the fight to save the Afrikaans language in the higher education sector, led to the renegotiation of identity, one that is apparently free from exclusion, 'race' and separatism.

Therefore, the above discussions on transformation, language and identity are the backdrop against which the crucial issues of this study will be more thoroughly addressed. The close relationship between these main themes, shown in each section of this chapter, will be explored in the chapters that follow. Further discussion on the impact that the transformation process had on language- and identity-related issues at SU will revolve around the Adam Tas association, which can be regarded as the central focus of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Challenges in transforming the higher education sector of South Africa

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the conditions experienced in South Africa's higher education sector, before and after 1994, will be explored. Furthermore, higher education legislation (with specific reference to the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997*) as well as its effects in higher education will be discussed. The challenges on the macro-level that higher education in South Africa is experiencing after 1994 will also be elaborated on. On the micro-level, the internal as well as the external challenges that a HAU, such as SU, is experiencing during its transformation will also be looked into. The dynamics behind the transformation process taking place at SU will be investigated as well as how this process has influenced language planning and language policy processes at this HAU. This chapter supports the main line of argumentation of the thesis, in the sense that here, macro-level challenges, brought upon by the implementation of transformational changes in the higher education sector are shown to be directly impacting on all higher education institutions, especially the HAUs. This discussion in turn will provide a valuable background for the investigation on a micro- or institutional level.

3.2   The higher education sector before 1994

The situation in the higher education sector before South Africa adopted a value-driven policy of democracy can be described as racially discriminatory and - oppressive. Unequal racially-biased circumstances that black, coloured and Indian South African citizens were subjected to in their pursuit of obtaining a professional qualification, resulted in no or limited access to higher educational opportunities. This discriminatory practice led to uneven ratios in qualifications obtained by whites compared to black, coloured and Indian South Africans, a racial disparity, still prevalent today.

South Africa's higher education sector was heavily implied by apartheid legislation during the period of minority rule. Legislation was created to make higher education institutions a tool to further segregate and marginalise segments of society in terms of their 'racial' classification. Conditions at white Afrikaans universities differed from those at black universities on various levels. Jansen described conditions at historical Afrikaans-medium (white) universities as follows:

> [T]here was no racial tension, for white lecturers taught white students about white society with a white curriculum; the whites were from the same cultural and religious base … and so there was little concern about or need to engage *difference*; everybody communicated in Afrikaans, the textbooks and lectures were in the same language, Afrikaans-only symbols and signboards appeared everywhere, only Afrikaans students were admitted, and with a few exceptions only Afrikaans-speaking lecturers were hired (2009:13).

On the other hand, black universities were created to accommodate and segregate black students from their white counterparts. The quality of education in higher education institutions also varied tremendously. Whites were given a far better education than blacks. Apartheid rulers believed that there existed no reason whatsoever why blacks should obtain a high level education, such as whites were provided with, when they would only serve their black communities. As Hendrik Verwoerd, a former Prime Minister of the apartheid government emphasised:

> The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour…. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in a European community while he cannot and will not be absorbed there (Behr 1988:36 cited in Reddy, 2004:12).

The segregation of the higher education sector into two divisions, to accommodate blacks and whites separately, was justified by the notion that it was considered 'just' to educate blacks according to their own culture. This racially divided practice eventually led to growing student resistance and protest action among black students against discriminatory policies in the higher education sector. Reddy (2004:9) points out the irony that although apartheid leaders located black universities in remote places to prevent blacks from engaging in critical cultural and political action, these black universities did in fact create the platform for black students to unite and protest against unfair and inhuman practices.

One can infer that the above protesting by black students intensified and gained significant momentum with the Department of Bantu Education's decision in 1974 to impose the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools. The major focus for black students in their quest for the transformation of the educational system was the abolition of 'Bantu education' and radically changing society as a whole. Steve Biko, president of SASO (South African Student Organisation), said: 'What we want is not black visibility but real black participation' (Stubbs 1988:5 cited in Reddy, 2004:24). This new liberation

movement provided blacks with the opportunity to regain some dignity and develop their own notions and ideologies in their movement towards freedom and democracy for all in South Africa. Webb and Kriel (2000:23) also argue along the same lines by stating that '[s]omehow these protests [referring to the 1976 Soweto-uprising] gave black South Africans a sense of power and a sense that they would be able to change their plight'. Thus, the protest movements by the black majority in South Africa emerged against the injustices committed against them under apartheid legislation. The argument can be made that these protest movements by black people, gave them back a sense of human dignity, hope and power to change their future from an oppressive and discriminatory one to a future in which equality, democracy and freedom can be enjoyed. From the above, it is evident that black students not only criticised 'Bantu education', which was initially forced upon them, but were also critical of the entire apartheid political setting.

3.3   The higher education sector after 1994

Specific issues that were addressed in the higher education sector after 1994, relate to inaccessibility of higher education; low student success rates (especially amongst the previously disadvantaged population groups), inequalities and discriminatory practices within the system with regard to gender and 'race' and lastly incorporating the fragmented and racially divided higher education systems into a single nationally co-ordinated higher education sector. Andre Kraak (2001:5) argues that '[t]he demand for equity in higher education has been a cornerstone in the struggle against Apartheid'. Also: 'The call for increased access and higher participation rates for blacks in the HE system is a response to apartheid's inequities in education … [and] globalisation's growing pressure for a more highly skilled future workforce' (Kraak, 2001:5-6). In relation to access, one of the mechanisms that the democratic government utilised to deal with the problem of exclusion was to firstly put legislation in place which compelled HAUs to change their exclusive language policies and consequently the dominant white institutional character which prevailed at these universities. These transformational changes in turn, will add to the diversification of the student populations at these former predominantly white higher education institutions.

Diversifying the student profile of any institution, at least on a statistical level, requires a significant increase in the numbers of non-white students. According to statistics taken from the CHE (2004) and the DHET (2009), 'in 1993 African students constituted 40% (191 000), and black students 52% of the student body, in 2008 they made up 64,4%

(514 370) and over 75% respectively of overall enrolments' (Badat, 2010:5). 'Student enrolments at all universities actually declined from 1997 onwards and surprisingly, the former Afrikaans language universities and distance education providers attracted the most number of black students' (Reddy 2004:40). Nico Cloete, director of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), confirmed the former, when he reported that 'the percentage of whites more than halved (from 60% to about 25%) and blacks doubled (from around 35% to 75%)' (Cloete, 2009). Regarding gender equity 'women students made up 43% (202 000 out of 473 000) of enrolments in 1993, by 2008 they constituted 56,3% (450 584 out of 799 388) of the student body' (CHE, 2004; DHET, 2009 cited in Badat, 2010:5). It was expected that after 1994, more students would enrol at higher education institutions, due to the accessibility factor that democracy brought along. Despite these above increases in enrolments, there still exists an unequal gap in statistics between white postgraduates and their black counterparts, which is another challenge for the higher education sector to overcome, if the latter wants to correct past injustices by empowering the marginalised through education.

In relation to public accountability, the role of universities also changed dramatically from being active participants in the apartheid regime to becoming institutions providing assistance in the building of a new democratic culture, irrespective of 'race' or other characteristic factors of the past regime. One of the outcomes that universities post-1994 are offering, is their contribution to the establishment of a black middle-class in the South African context. On a more grand scale, transforming the overall image of a divided, unequal and racially-based higher education sector, was and still seems today to be one of the most challenging factors inherited from the previous political dispensation. One aspect of this comprehensive change involves becoming 'internally restructured to face the challenge of globalisation, in particular, the breaking down of national and institutional boundaries which removes the spatial and geographic barriers to access' (South Africa, 1997). It is important for any university to stay relevant in this highly competitive globalised world. Thus, acknowledging that some obstacles facing the higher education sector of South Africa can be described as a direct result of globalisation is also necessary. On some levels, higher education institutions abroad find themselves to be in the same position as their South African counterparts with regard to the impact of globalisation. However, despite important shifts in the opportunities in the South African society, many of the poor and working class still find it difficult to access higher education due to unaffordable university fees. In an attempt to address this challenge of unaffordability

government has made some financial support available in the form of subsidies and bursaries, such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), to poor South Africans students, of which the main target group is previously disadvantaged students. Saleem Badat's assessment (2010:6) of the NSFAS initiative is that it 'has been successfully established and expanded as a means of effecting social redress for poor students'. Although government is providing financial assistance to a large number of individuals who are unable to afford higher education without state funding and student aid schemes, these efforts are still insufficient, because the number of needy students in the higher education sector surpasses the financial assistance currently provided.

3.4   The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 is referred to in official government documentation as the principal act because it was considered the first official legislation to regulate and monitor higher education institutions after 1994, following the formulation of the Green Paper on Higher Education (1996), the Draft White Paper on Higher Education (April 1997) and eventually the White Paper on Higher Education (July 1997) and the National Plan (2001). The main functions of the act are:

> [T]o regulate higher education; to provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on Higher Education; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public Higher Education institutions; to provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor; to provide for the registration of private Higher Education institutions; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in Higher Education; to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; to provide for matters connected therewith ... (South Africa, 1997).

One of the major achievements of the principal act thus far, is that it transformed South Africa's differentiated education system into what Kraak labelled a 'single unified HE system' (2001:4).The amalgamation of the higher education sector into a unified system resulted in equal access to higher education institutions, irrespective of 'race', religion, mother-tongue, etc. In terms of monitoring the state of higher education, the principal act led to the formation of the South African Council on Higher Education. This 'independent statutory body advise[s] the Minister of Higher Education and Training … on all aspects of higher education policy' and is also responsible for 'develop[ing] and implement[ing] a system of quality assurance for higher education' (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2011). Marie Ferreira (2003:56) observes that 'the adoption of the Higher Education Act of

1997 … provided the legal foundation for the policies that had been developed by the NCHE and stated as policy in the White Paper'.

Another culminating point, according to *World Data on Education (*2010/11) was that '[t]he Higher Education Act of 1997 incorporated teacher education into higher education removing colleges of education from provincial control and enabling the emergence of a single national system of qualifications for professional educators' (International Bureau of Education of UNESCO, 2010). The removal of colleges of education is publicly criticised by a prominent academic such as Jonathan Jansen. According to Jansen (2012) the quality of teachers that universities are producing today is much poorer than the quality of teachers that colleges of education delivered in the past. Jansen's argument seems credible given the fact that universities do not specialise in education but have other faculties to focus on as well unlike the former teaching colleges which only specialised in generating and developing teachers. The argument also exists among some educationalists that teaching colleges are considered the better option in terms of having a more practical approach to teaching compared to universities which are known for following a more theoretical approach.

3.5 Challenges relating to transformation in the higher education sector

Section 3.3 differs from this section insofar that it gave insight on what the overall situation was in the higher education sector after 1994. This description also involved mentioning the broad challenges experienced as a result of transforming this sector into a more diverse and integrated entity. In this section, however a more concentrated account will be provided of specific obstacles that have arisen as a direct result of the implementation of transformation legislation and - practices in higher education institutions.

In relation to the transformation goal of integration, Jansen is of the opinion that,

> schools (and indeed universities) have been much more successful at meeting the demand for racial desegregation than achieving the ideal of social integration…. In the case of universities, both legislative demand and new funding incentives have made racial desegregation a survival imperative if not a social justice response (2004:5-6).

Jansen further argued that 'schools and universities struggle with migration towards higher levels of integration' (2004:6). He identified four levels as follows: The 'first level' refers to

43

'racial desegregation', which according to Jansen can be 'easily achieved'. 'The second level is staffing integration; the third level is curriculum integration; and the fourth level is institutional culture integration' (2004:6). Racial desegregation was successfully achieved by many higher education institutions, although on the topic of staffing integration much still needs to be done to successfully contribute towards integration in the higher education sector. From the above, it can be derived that although government leaders incorporated the values of democratisation into the education sector by means of policies and legislation, the implementation of the latter is indeed very difficult. The implementation of programmes which can lend assistance in monitoring the progress that has been made in practice might minimise the current problem.

Another important and complicated obstacle that higher education post-1994 is also facing refers to the continuous struggle with language policy. It was stated that,

> higher education is to ensure the simultaneous development of a multilingual environment in which all our languages are developed as academic/scientific languages, while at the same time ensuring that existing languages of instruction do not serve as a barrier to access and success (Department of Education, 2002).

Although the higher education sector is striving to achieve multilingualism at higher education institutions, this goal is still out of reach. One of the obstacles in achieving this goal, relates to what Van der Walt and Brink (2005:846) argued, that in contrast to 'Europe and Canada where government and provincial authorities show their commitment to multilingualism by providing financial support', just the opposite is true for South Africa because 'the Language Policy for Higher Education requires a commitment to multilingualism without any funding incentives'. This lack of funding is definitely a major obstacle for many higher education institutions in the country, given Van der Walt and Brink's emphasis that 'multilingualism in any form is a cost on the university that practices it' (2005:845). 'The Ministry acknowledges that the implementation of multilingualism will, in practice, be in tension with other imperatives and considerations such as the need for financial affordability and the rights of others' (Department of Education, 2002). If South Africa's education sector can indeed achieve the successful implementation of multilingualism in its institutions, the goals of achieving diversity as well as integration will be simultaneously promoted because diversity and integration go hand-in-hand with incorporating a policy of multilingualism. However, if higher education leaders fail to come up with an inclusive language policy, the past will be relived because in the same manner

44

that 'race' prevented most non-whites from studying at HAUs during apartheid, exclusion of people by another identity marker (language) could continue in post-apartheid South Africa.

Reddy argues: 'In the post-1994 period much has been achieved by the democratic government on the legislative policy front to transform higher education institutions and to make them more socially responsive and critically engaged in deepening and broadening South Africa's democracy' (2004:39). He further suggests that 'implementing these policies has proven to be a slow, arduous and ambiguous process …' (Reddy, 2004:39). Despite meaningful contributions already made by South African universities, higher education institutions have not achieved their goal of transformation on a deeper integral level because the changes that have already occurred are largely attributable to government policies and not so much to the efforts made by universities themselves to transform the institutional culture and structure of their higher education environments.

A similar finding to the above was made at the end of an investigation conducted by a Ministerial Committee under the leadership of Crain Soudien that was conducted in 2008 after the Reitz incident occurred at Free State University in the same year. The majority of South Africans are still concerned about matters such as student access to higher education, affordability of higher education, the type of graduate that higher education produces as well as the slow pace of curriculum changes. The latter was seen as in need of becoming more appropriate, considering the fact that apartheid ideology was reflected through academic material produced before 1994 in some institutions. Ferreira's (2003:28) argument connects with those put forward by Reddy and the Ministerial Committee, when she asserts that 'higher education institutions now face a number of critical challenges and only if they are able to adapt to these challenges, will they be able to maintain a relevant place and role in society' .

Taking Reddy, the Ministerial Committee as well as Ferreira's arguments into account, it is my view, that the higher education sector has incorporated important changes on a legislative level in an effort to alter conditions at institutions, but these can be considered as the groundwork needed if the ultimate goal is to transform the entire academic sector into an entity that would provide a relevant service to South African society.

3.6   Challenges that Stellenbosch University is facing with regard to transformation

The implementation of transformation at SU did not occur without strong opposition, which was expected given its close association with Afrikaans and Afrikaans identity on all levels. Pressing issues such as inaccessibility, diversifying its staff and student body along gender and 'racial' lines, unaffordable university fees, inadequate student success on undergraduate and postgraduate level, diversification of its resident student cultures as well as implementing an integrated and multilingual language policy etc. had to be adequately dealt with. All of these issues are closely intertwined and will be concentrated on in this section.

SU is very committed to its overarching goal of achieving diversification on all levels by correcting and developing initiatives to eliminate past injustices. This commitment is confirmed under the section, 'Redress' in SU's Vision 2000, where it is stated that '[t]he University acknowledges its contribution to the injustices of the past, and therefore commits itself to appropriate redress and development initiatives' (Stellenbosch University, 2000). To honour its commitment to redress, the first challenge of accessibility needed to be addressed. In other words, no discrimination in terms of 'race', ethnicity, religion, political views, mother-tongue, etc. could occur when admissions to the university were being handled.

Regarding admissions or access, a growing concern for SU relates to the many previously disadvantaged matriculants who are prevented from getting access to the university, mostly because of insufficient grades that exclude them from meeting the requirements for the programmes that the university has to offer. SU thus faces the task of collaborating with the basic education sector, particularly high schools, to improve the results obtained during the Grade 12 final examination. Nompumelelo Sibalukhulu is of the view that '[f]ailure at the basic education level spells trouble for the country' (2010:n.pag.). Improving the results of matriculants at previously disadvantaged schools will offer many of those learners better opportunities to access university education. However, it is important to note that most of the schools that produce poor matric results grapple with factors such as inadequate resources, including skills levels and training of teachers.

In relation to the challenge that SU management has of diversifying its student profile

more, Magda Fourie-Malherbe, Vice-Rector of Teaching (at the time), asserts that 'the numbers of enrolled black, coloured and Indian students at SU are currently the lowest compared to all the other South African universities' (Stellenbosch University, 2009a:4). She adds however that the university set some goals in motion to achieve before 2015 'to increase the percentage of undergraduate black, coloured and Indian student admissions from the current 24% to 34% and to also improve the average success rate from 82% to 84%' (ibid: 4). Llewellyn MacMaster, Dean of Students at SU, similarly stated in a personal interview, that '2008 statistics have shown that the number of coloured, rural students accepted here decreased, as opposed to the number of white English-speaking students that increased' (2009).

Statistics of SU, taken from the *Fact Book 2011: Part 1* (p.26), confirmed that the coloured population was the only 'racial' category whose numbers decreased from being '4 524 in 2010 to 4 454 in 2011' (Stellenbosch University, 2011c). Russel Botman's statement that there are 'too few black students enrolled at SU' agrees with Fourie-Malherbe's above assertion that SU has the lowest number of black … students compared to other institutions (Lunchtime live, 2009). Statistics taken from the *Fact Book 2011: Part 1* (p.26), further indicated that although the number of black students enrolling at SU for the past three years, seemed to increase each year, the overall representation of this 'racial' category is still far less, compared to their white – and coloured counterparts, enrolled at the same university. In 2009, 3 655 black students enrolled at SU; in 2010, 4 035 and in 2011, 4 233 (Stellenbosch University, 2011c).

However, on a departmental level, Hermann Giliomee argues in his online article, *'n Nekslag vir Afrikaans* (A death-blow for Afrikaans, my translation) (Giliomee, 2010), that '[i]n 2009, the number of black ("African") students declined in four faculties at SU. In the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the total number of black students, for the past three years has stagnated under 80' (my translation). The challenge, therefore, will be to implement strategies that would also attract more 'coloured', rural students, if this higher education institution wants to act in line with the national needs and policy requirements of government. In terms of the numbers of population groups that got entry to SU, white students still represent the majority, followed by 'coloured' students, then black students and lastly the Indian students. These figures have not significantly changed over a three-year period, except for the decrease in coloured students, getting entry into this HAU. The impact of increasing the non-white student population has led and will result in fewer white

Afrikaans-speaking students gaining entry into this university in the future.

The continuous and growing challenge of providing financial support to poor, especially previously disadvantaged students, is another obstacle that SU faces. This financial challenge, thus, requires that SU management creates strategies to accumulate funds so that poor students who cannot afford university education can have access. An example of such a strategy is 'the university's creation of an international campaign [the HOPE project] directed at fundraising that has a target of R1.75 billion and this number in itself reflects SU's serious commitment to the plan for its positioning' (Stellenbosch University, 2011g). In terms of SU's financial targets, 'Stellenbosch University Council approved an amount of R320 million for financing the University's new direction…. [A]n amount of R225 million is allocated to ensure student success which includes bursary funds' (Stellenbosch University, 2011g).

Another and important challenge for SU is to ensure student success, because according to this university's statistics, a large numbers of students fail because of language deficiency and not because of intelligence. Fourie-Malherbe stated: 'Attention has to be given to the role that language plays in getting access to higher education and the success of students, in a responsible manner' (Stellenbosch University, 2009a:4). Fourie-Malherbe also argued that 'a multilingual model was developed that contains a combination of parallel medium - as well as dual medium instruction, that enables the university to comply with the requirements of accessibility, diversity, student success as well as financial sustainability' (ibid: 4). Furthermore, Fourie-Malherbe noted that,

> this multilingual model will offer Afrikaans-speaking students the opportunity to study in their mother-tongue and simultaneously empower them in English too…. This model will also enrich students by enabling social interaction with their counterparts and lecturers that come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, in a bilingual teaching context (ibid: 4).

Karen Macgregor (2007) argues that '40% of South African students drop-out of university in their first year' and that 'on average 70% [of those] come from low-income [mostly Black Africans] families'. The challenge therefore, is to ensure that the success rate for first years and students in general is sustainable and steady. The other challenge is to search for an integrated linguistic model that can accommodate English-speaking students and simultaneously promote and maintain Afrikaans in a multilingual context. In the end, the

overall challenge for SU, as a national asset, is to be of service to all citizens and not just a segment of the population.

The university has committed itself to the further development of Afrikaans and promises a future for the vernacular, but in a multilingual and multicultural environment. This commitment is contained in the *Strategiese Raamwerk vir die Eeuwisseling en Daarna van 2000* (Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond) or commonly known as *Visie 2000* (Vision 2000). According to SU's Vision 2000 document, with regard to *Language* [11.1], it states that '[t]he University positions itself as a language-friendly university, with a responsive and flexible approach to language of instruction, and with Afrikaans as its point of departure' (Stellenbosch University, 2000). This decision to move away from a position in which Afrikaans was seen as the dominant language can be considered as a major shift in the history of SU. The latter's commitment to moving towards a multilingual approach in terms of language policy from an exclusive one, was emphasised and further strengthened through official policy documents such as Vision 2012. This official document can be regarded as a 'visionary description of the status quo at Stellenbosch University by 2012 ...' (Stellenbosch University, 2003c), and also emphasises the University's commitment to promote 'Afrikaans as a language of teaching and science in a multilingual context'.

Regarding the role that the Afrikaans language occupies at SU, Van der Waal (2008:67) argues that 'Stellenbosch University, as the prime symbol of Afrikaans elitism, is a natural site for putting up a last stand, even if this provides merely symbolic satisfaction'. Here, Van der Waal is referring to newly mobilised Afrikaans language movements, within the post-apartheid period, whose main requirement for acceptance into these movements now centres around language and not on 'race' as it was done in the past. In the past, Afrikaans was strictly the main medium of instruction for academic and administrative purposes. In terms of the position that Afrikaans occupied at SU in the post-apartheid context Leopold Scholtz and Ingrid Scholtz (2008:295-296) said that,

> [t]he language audit [that was done in 2002], showed that SU could not, in practice, be named an Afrikaans university anymore, because undergraduate tuition in Afrikaans single-medium declined from 96,8% in 2000 to 65,7% in 2002. On the postgraduate level, Afrikaans was only utilised 31,7% of the time as the language of instruction. In addition, approximately 73% of the undergraduate class notes were in English as well as Afrikaans (my translation).

Scholtz and Scholtz (2008:296) further observed that as a result of the above findings by the language audit, SU decided to formulate a language policy – and language plan despite an increasing storm among worried alumni and letter writers in *Die Burger*. However, despite serious concerns (expressed by alumni and certain academics) relating to the urgency to protect and preserve the higher functions of the Afrikaans language at SU, university management was in agreement with government leaders that in order for this HAU to transform into a fully diverse and multiracial institution, radical adjustments had to be made regarding its language policy. Brenda Leibowitz and Ildilette Van Deventer (2007:91) noted that,

> [t]he Language Policy on Higher Education (2002:15) required each university to develop a Language Policy for all higher education institutions to indicate in their strategic plans how they would promote multilingualism, and for the Historically Afrikaans Institutions to submit rolling plans showing how the language of instruction would not impede access to certain strategic disciplines.

At SU, for example, this struggle resulted in a fiery language debate between a category who wants to preserve and protect the high functions of the Afrikaans language versus a category who wants to transform this higher education institution into an inclusive, multilingual and multicultural entity. One of the pro-Afrikaans groups at SU is the Adam Tas student association, whose main aim is to achieve 'Transformation through [only] Afrikaans' despite claims of being diverse and inclusive. Shaikh argued that 'Transformation in Afrikaans' is precisely not what university management wants to do (previously mentioned in Chapter 2 (2.2)), it rather wants to facilitate more non-Afrikaans speaking students to study here by introducing and adopting parallel medium instruction' (Stellenbosch University, 2009c). SU claimed to be committed to its other aim of promoting Afrikaans within a multilingual academic setting, but the institution made it very clear that they did not want to accomplish this goal by 'transforming in Afrikaans' because that might suggest that the university was still giving Afrikaans a privileged position over the other two official languages of the Western Cape, namely English and isiXhosa. Overall it seems as if the management of SU regarded it as important to fit in with the framework of the national government and the constitutional principles, and this was evident in the comments that Shaikh made in his speech.

In terms of *Institutional Culture* [11.4], '[t]he University acknowledges institutional culture as a factor in accessibility. Accordingly, it commits itself to an ongoing and critical appraisal

of its institutional culture and of the implications of that culture for accessibility' (Stellenbosch University, 2000). Although this is a vision that SU is striving for, and actively making an effort to achieve this goal by creating official documentation such as *Vision 2012*, it had not achieved this goal of diversifying its institutional character yet, because according to the study conducted by Leibowitz and Van Deventer (2007:89), 'Stellenbosch University is currently [at the time the study was conducted] white and Afrikaans in terms of both staff and student population'. However, the finding of this study, regarding Afrikaans-speaking students still constituting the majority within SU's student population no longer applies. Statistics taken from the 2013 academic year indicated a shift in demographics where the number of Afrikaans-speaking students has now become less than the number of English-speaking students.

Another important transformational change that SU had to undergo involved diversifying the strong Afrikaans character of its student accommodation. Student residences on campus were widely seen as only supporting the traditions of white Afrikaner resident culture (*koshuiskultuur)*, but after the University committed itself to becoming a transformed, racially diverse and integrated higher education institution, its commitment extended to changing these residence cultures. In an interview, MacMaster (2009) stated:

> The university introduced training programmes to the various head students of student residences, which firstly focused on welcoming programmes for first-years entering these residences. The other main objective was to use negative incidents that occurred at student residences in a restorative way, by bringing the victim as well as the perpetrator together, as a means to discover the origin of the problem. The monitoring programme (*moniteringsprogram*), of the Centre for Student Communities, is very beneficial. The only negative factor is the obstacle of ensuring the continuation of transformation progress, because each year new head students are appointed and they have to be newly trained and that in itself can prevent effective evaluation of the progress that has been made.

Although SU has adopted an initial transformational framework that can steer its transformational agenda, it is apparent that a historically Afrikaans tertiary institution, such as SU, is struggling with balancing two important factors. The one includes having to adhere and adapt to the government's national policies and legislation on higher education and the other honouring its loyalty to its alumni and investors who mostly consist of white Afrikaans-speakers, some of whom also insist that SU retains its informal dominant Afrikaans-medium language policy. The Ministerial Report underlines the above, by

asserting that '[a]t Stellenbosch it was suggested that the alumni "control everything" and are the major stumbling block to transformation' (South Africa, 2008:119). This stumbling factor as well as the numerous challenges mentioned in this section could slow the transformation process down and prevent this higher education institution from focusing on its main objective which is achieving academic excellence.

3.7   How transformation takes place at Stellenbosch University

SU formulated plans which were mainly created to assist the institution in their management and attainment of transformation and diversity. The issues that are core with regard to transformation and diversity are repeatedly referred to and accentuated in the various policy documents. These issues relate to addressing the transformational dilemmas with regard to the designated groups, namely that of access or admissions, affordability, academic success and empowerment.

The Diversity Framework, 'drawn up by a Task Team … during the first semester of 2003' consists of 'various completed plans, [and] set in their given places, forms … [part] of the Diversity Plan of the University' (Stellenbosch University, 2003a). The aims of these plans relate to the University's overarching commitment to ensure that its institution is on a constructive path and making continuous progress with regard to institutional reform, redress and the implementation of transformation practices on different levels within the university system. These plans include: (1) implementation of sound management principles; (2) a research management plan; (3) a teaching management plan; (4) an admissions plan; (5) an integrated approach to community service; (6) a business plan; (7) a plan for internalisation; (8) a language policy and plan; (9) a systemic diversity planning. To make sure that these plans are also implemented on faculty level, it was stated in the same source that '[a]ll faculties, and the larger administrative divisions, are thus encouraged to draw up a 3-year rolling plan and to keep it up to date' (Stellenbosch University, 2003a).

To ensure that the university adheres to government guidelines relating to issues of employment equity, a Committee for the Management of Multiculturalism was established according to Van der Waal (2002:88). A Task Team that was assembled in 2000 to regulate Diversity and Equity 'stressed the need for the promotion of diversity, not only in terms of equal opportunities, but more generally as well, in order to promote a culture of tolerance in the university' (ibid: 88). Van der Waal (2002:88) is of the view that,

52

> [a]n important element of the new approach to diversity by the management of the university was that it was linked to Afrikaans as the "natural language" for the university. Afrikaans was to be used to empower students and the promotion of diversity was to help create a wider concept of Afrikaans.

In other words, during Brink's term, attempts relating to transformation were initially made to accomplish transformation through and with the maintenance of Afrikaans, whilst more room was made for English. Ironically, the numbers of coloured students that were needed for this vision have not increased as anticipated. Therefore a new shift was made to multilingualism and a larger platform for English was given, in a bid to also maintain Afrikaans. The argument made by Giliomee and other language activists was that despite management's decision to label Afrikaans as the "natural language" of SU, the latter was increasingly running the risk of becoming entirely anglicised.

To fully comprehend how the process of transformation has unfolded at SU since 1994, an overview of this process is needed. On the one hand, the process of transformation at this HAU since 1994 can be described as one full of obstacles, long deliberations and strong opposition especially during the development of its new and inclusive language policy in 2002. On the other hand, this transformation process provided the university with the opportunity to restore its negative image brought about by the apartheid system, as a university that was regarded as a child of apartheid. In relation to the above, Van der Waal (2002:86), provides a similar account on what the situation was at SU during the initial transformation period, when he states that,

> [a] central issue at Stellenbosch University in 2002 was the tension between two conflicting tendencies concerning race and language. On the one hand there was the need for racial transformation and increased access for the previously excluded part of the population, and on the other hand there was an increasing demand for entrenching Afrikaans as the main medium of undergraduate instruction.

3.7.1 Accessibility and medium of instruction (Language Policy)

The steps taken regarding transformation also relate to the adoption of a new and inclusive language policy and - plan in 2002, due to changes in the demographic profile of the university from a mainly white Afrikaner tertiary institution to one that promotes inclusion, multiculturalism and multilingualism. SU's language policy is closely linked to the transformational agenda of the university as well as other core facets that are directly impacted on as a direct result of transformation. Before elaborating on language

53

transformation any further, it is necessary to distinguish first between the different modes of teaching which include instruction in Afrikaans, more commonly referred to as the A-option, the T-model or dual medium as well as the parallel medium mode of instruction. Instruction in Afrikaans occurs mostly in the undergraduate sphere of the university where modules are solely provided in the Afrikaans language. The T-model or dual medium of instruction takes place where a module or subject is provided in both Afrikaans and English in the same classroom in contrast with the parallel medium option where a module is provided in separate streams of Afrikaans and English, thus in separate classrooms.

During a 2009 interview, a senior official stated that he regards the parallel medium option as a positive model of instruction, because 'Afrikaans is protected through this model but that the negative side to parallel medium instruction is that it would hamper the integration of students'. He also felt that, 'consequently there would be no interaction between students in a classroom setting and therefore the result will be less social cohesion or social integration, exactly the opposite of what university management wants to achieve'. On the other hand, he feels that the dual medium - or the T-option can be considered 'as the best option in terms of promoting social integration amongst students, who could also become more skilful in both the Afrikaans as well as the English language' (2009). One can certainly understand where this senior official's arguments stem from regarding the benefits and disadvantages that both the parallel - and dual medium language policies have to offer. Both policies can be utilised given the circumstances, and the fact that the university chose the option of applying both is a sign of its dedication to offering their clients the best possible solution regarding language-related dilemmas, which was in itself an enormous challenge for SU to overcome.

3.7.2 Affordability and accessibility

The second facet involved in making tertiary education more affordable and accessible to South Africa's underprivileged section of the population was the allocation of R 40.4 million in 2012 for recruitment bursaries for black students specifically. An additional R 19 million was also simultaneously provided to help needy students (Stellenbosch University, 2011h: 3). The implementation of an initiative such as the Rector's awards, which consists of awarding full scholarships or bursaries to academically deserving poor students, is also geared towards making SU more accessible and diversifying its student corps in the process. To prevent students from the designated groups from not meeting the requirements to get into certain specialised degree programmes, the university in

collaboration with the schools sector has launched certain recruitment projects, which formed part of the larger HOPE PROJECT. In relation to the objectives behind the larger HOPE PROJECT, Van der Waal and Du Toit assert that '[t]he Hope Project … launched the university more actively into programmes of research and community interaction that were relevant to pressing needs in South Africa and beyond' (2016:6). The recruitment projects include 'Rachel's Angels', SciMathUS (a year-long bridging programme from the Institute for Mathematics and Science Teaching at Stellenbosch University (IMSTUS), Imbewu (previously known as Gesog), an enrolment programme facilitated by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences which targeted non-white underprivileged learners and the Schools Partnership Project. The main objective behind these projects was to prepare learners for higher education and provide academically deserving and underprivileged learners the opportunity to study at SU (Stellenbosch University, 2011h).

3.7.3   Diversifying the student profile

Two key policy documents such as Vision 2000 and the SU Institutional Plan 2012 – 2016 are reflective of SU's commitment to 'the diversification of its student and staff corps to reflect the composition of South African society …' (Stellenbosch University, 2015). Statistics taken from the 2013 academic year is indicative of the impact that transformation had on student numbers in relation to 'race' and language. In terms of 'race', the numbers showed that white students still occupied the majority position at SU. However, in relation to home language, a significant change occurred: Afrikaans-speaking students no longer constituted the majority at SU. This shift occurred as a direct result of transformational changes of SU's demographic profile and the adoption of a more inclusive language policy and – plan.

3.7.4   Ensuring student success

SU has incorporated a few initiatives to foster transformation and social redress by putting programmes in place that would increase the likelihood that students, especially those from the designated groups, would become academically successful graduates. To overcome the challenge of students failing the first-year of a degree programme, the university has implemented certain projects such as the 'First-year Academy in 2006/7', a virtually based initiative which consists of a range of campus-wide measures, such as early assessments, teaching and learning coordination points, tutor and mentor programmes, ResEd programmes and counselling services. This initiative is apparently successful and has a 85% first-year retention rate (Stellenbosch University, 2011h).

3.7.5 Diversifying the staff composition in terms of gender, race, empowerment and opportunity

Regarding gender representation at SU, its staff population was still dominantly male in terms of its current academic personnel at the time of writing. According to 2013 SU statistics, changes in terms of incorporating more non-white and non-Afrikaner administrative and service personnel into its staff population, was starting to become visible. On the university's website it was reported that 'SU intends to increase its percentage of black (black, coloured and Indian) staff to 53% by 2015. In 2009, this percentage was at 38,4%, and had grown to 40,97% by 2012' (Stellenbosch University, 2015).

In terms of empowering its staff, the University implemented the PLUS programme, 'a professional year-long internship for administrative and support staff. Staff members are afforded the opportunity to obtain a formal qualification, thereby progressing to a higher job level' (Stellenbosch University, 2015). In addition to the PLUS programme, SU also offers 'The Legacy project', a project directed at increasing the number of black academic personnel and also the funding available to appoint more senior black academic personnel in the humanities and social sciences (ibid). On the university's website it was further stated that,

> [f]unding from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation along with a significant amount appropriated by the University Council, is used to build a more diverse staff component…. Young academics in the social sciences also receive financial assistance to obtain their doctorates as part of the Mellon Academic Staff (MACS) Development Programme (Stellenbosch University, 2015).

3.7.6 Diversifying student residence cultures on campus

Another factor relating to the progress that SU has made thus far is the elimination of certain exclusive white Afrikaner traditions in student residences that were regarded as offensive and discriminatory to non-traditional students. An example of such a discriminatory practice was the *doop* (initiation) activities at the start of each year, implemented as a means to welcoming first year students into these residences. For Brink the oppressive and exclusivist values underlying the residence traditions were unacceptable and contrary to the ideals the university should stand for. There was a need for more places in the hostels for non-traditional students, but this also entailed a need to adjust the prevailing hostel culture (Van der Waal, 2002:88). Brink's initiative to change the

dominant white Afrikaner residential culture of SU did not occur without resistance from white Afrikaans-speaking students, as these alterations according to Van der Waal, 'were perceived by many residence students as an attack on their traditions and identity' (2002:88).

One reform initiative that was implemented to diversify the university's resident student culture was, as a senior official optimistically stated in an interview, to 'establish a value-driven resident or institutional culture' (2009). A value-driven culture differs from the 'tradition-driven and regulation driven culture' insofar that it gives residences the agency to assess its traditions and associated activities against an agreed set of values which are unique to each residence (South Africa, 2008:93). What makes this reform strategy favourable is that it 'requires a constant reassessment of traditions and practices', which can turn out to act as a preventative tool in the re-occurrence of undesirable discriminatory practices in residences. Despite the beneficial value of this 'preventative initiative', the assessment of the Ministerial Report is that 'it is not clear whether it necessarily provides an alternative to the tradition-driven culture of the past' (South Africa, 2008:93). This value-driven resident culture was recently implemented through a *Luister, Leef, en Leerprojek* (Listen, Live and Learn project) in certain residences on the main campus of SU, such as *Huis de Villiers*, where '[t]wo of its sections were allocated for the Listen, Live and Learn project as a testing phase for 2011' (Stellenbosch University, 2011e).

3.7.7 Diversifying the institutional culture

According to *the 2012 Vision Statement of the University of Stellenbosch*, the latter 'puts a high premium on diversity of ideas and is successfully attracting both staff and students from diverse sections of our society. There is an ease of acceptance regarding the various cultural backgrounds' (Stellenbosch University, 2003c). However, in an interview, conducted in 2009, a senior official at SU argued that this university still had many untransformed practices attached to it that should by no means continue to exist. According to this official, students were continuously encouraged by the Student Affairs Division to consult with them regarding problems relating to transformation practices, but peer pressure prevented students from doing so. The senior official's overall view, in terms of transformation progress, was that 'Stellenbosch University now finds itself in a much better position' than, for example, five years ago. He believed that change was definitely taking place, although the process seemed to be very slow (2009).

In relation to the above, Giliomee is arguing the contrary, when he stated that '[t]he university has made no real progress on transformation and has left the coloured Afrikaans-speaking community in the lurch' (Giliomee, 2009). Although Giliomee's assessment on SU's inability to successfully attract coloured students can be corroborated by the decline in their numbers in the period 2010 to 2011, as seen in the *Facts Book 2011: Part 1* of SU, Giliomee's motives for focusing on this racial category, was linked to the language politics of the university. The new Afikaner elite pressure group, the individuals behind the language struggle at SU, was trying to mobilise all Afrikaans-speaking racial categories, in their movement to preserve and protect Afrikaans as the dominant language of instruction on the undergraduate level. Van der Waal further noted that the groups most against 'the winds of change brought about by the transformation of higher education in historically Afrikaans universities … [are] Afrikaner elite pressure groups …' (2002:88-89). During the *taaldebat* it came to light that a part of the mainly white Afrikaans-speaking students also perceived the loss of dominance of the Afrikaans language at Stellenbosch as an attack on their as well as the institution's traditions and identity. It seems that the resistance towards the more inclusive linguistic approach at SU in 2002 was coming from this part of the student population and not the academic personnel. This finding corresponds with the finding made in the Leibowitz report (2006), in which it was stated that some students, more so than academics, were in favour of keeping SU Afrikaans.

The answers extracted from my questionnaires, suggested that the overall sentiment among white students who participated in the study was that some aspects of the transformation process affected them negatively. In contrast, their non-white counterparts were overall in favour of this process, although most within this category still felt that more could be done to accommodate them culturally as well as linguistically at SU. In my research it was also found that many coloured and African black students still possessed a very negative perception of this HAU.

3.8   Conclusion

SU made transformational changes on an institutional level, however much remained to be done in the period of research. According to Fourie-Malherbe, Stellenbosch University's ultimate goal was 'to prepare *Maties* for the spectrum of identities which marks the modern professional life and equip them to go into the workplace as leaders, not only in South Africa but in the globalised world of the 21st century as well' (Stellenbosch University,

2009a:4). This statement by Fourie-Malherbe was indicative of SU's recognition and acknowledgement of the effect that globalisation and democratisation had on South Africa's higher education sector. This HAU also made restorative changes to its image, nationally and internationally. White and coloured students at SU agreed (in my questionnaires) with this statement, but the majority of black students disagreed in terms of the contributions to transformation that SU had made thus far. Despite receiving critique from black students, this university was making progress with transformation if the many challenges in the higher education sector post-1994 are considered.

Chapter 4: The *taaldebat* at Stellenbosch University and identity processes associated with language and 'race'

4.1   Introduction

The emergence of a language struggle, more commonly known in media sources and amongst the general public as the *taaldebat* at SU, has its origin in the '*algemene taaldebat* ("general debate about Afrikaans")' (Brink, 2006:61). Brink stated that 'the *algemene taaldebat* … gathered momentum after 1994, as the perception grew that Afrikaans was being eroded, either through benign neglect, or worse, through some active anti-Afrikaans agenda' (2006:61). For the purposes of this study, I will not focus on the bigger *algemene taaldebat* about Afrikaans, but rather on the smaller one that is taking place at SU. Before 1994, the default language of tuition at this university was Afrikaans, although concessions were made to accommodate English-speaking students and lecturers. After almost a decade into post-apartheid South Africa, the Ministry of Education published a document, namely *The Language Policy on Higher Education* (Department of Education, 2002:15), which 'required each university to develop a language policy for all higher education institutions, [and also] to indicate in their strategic plans how they would promote multilingualism …' (cited in Leibowitz and Van Deventer, 2007:91). Therefore Afrikaans-medium universities (including SU) had to change, e.g. into bilingual universities, in order for these institutions to be accessible to English-speaking students. The decision to change SU's dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction to an official language policy that is more accommodating to students who are not proficient enough in the Afrikaans language to successfully study through this medium, gave way to a growing concern amongst Afrikaans-speaking academics such as Giliomee and Schlemmer who believed that, 'the use of Afrikaans at tertiary level is crucial to its survival as a language with "higher functions", and that a language without "higher functions" is a second-rate language' (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 2001:118).

Contrary to the above views of Giliomee and Schlemmer, Brink believed that '[t]he *taaldebat* … is not about Afrikaans as such. It is about a certain *kind* of Afrikaans, and a *certain status* for Afrikaans' (2006:63). To elaborate on Brink's perspective, one can assert that the *taaldebat* at SU is to a certain extent not so much a struggle for the Afrikaans language as it is a struggle for some white Afrikaans-speakers to hold onto their Afrikaner identity. Brink's perspective correlates with that of Van der Waal (2009a:n.pag.) that the

60

'[*t*]*aaldebat* is technically about language, but [it] is also [about] identity politics'. It was believed that when the Afrikaans language was given equal status to English by the apartheid government, '[t]o Afrikaners, Afrikaans provided a sense of personal worth, as well as jobs and other economic advantages' (Giliomee, 2003a:545). Here, Giliomee is not only pointing out how much value the Afrikaans-speakers attribute to their mother-tongue, Afrikaans, but also how much Afrikaans-speakers benefitted from the equalisation of Afrikaans next to English, when Dutch was recognised as equal to English in 1910 (Dutch later replaced by Afrikaans) and the further promotion of Afrikaans when the nationalist apartheid government came into power after 1948. On the other side, Giliomee's account is also indicative of the social, economic and personal loss that Afrikaans-speakers would endure if the Afrikaans language was to become a language without economic benefits for its speakers. This also explains the strong resistance from white Afrikaans language activists against what they regard as the anglicisation of the country on all levels, including higher education. Given the economic benefits that the Afrikaans language provided for its white mother-tongue speakers, Kriel (2003:174) states that '[i]t is the linguistic capital of Afrikaners that is under threat, and, by implication their social power'. Here Thompson's (1991:14 cited in Kriel, 2003:173) point that 'one form of capital can be converted into another', is helpful in understanding why the protection and preservation of the Afrikaans language in an increasingly English-dominant higher education sector is so important for the Afrikaans language activists. From Thompson's account, it can be derived that any form of linguistic capital could be turned into economic capital and the latter could then increase material wealth. On a national level, by retaining Afrikaans as a relevant language in an increasingly anglicised country, and as a dominant medium of tuition at SU, Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers will continue to have access to economic resources and the labour market. That would put them in a position to turn their linguistic capital (referring here to their university education through Afrikaans tuition after graduation) into economic capital that could add to their material wealth. Afrikaans language activists are of the belief that if the Afrikaans language loses its 'higher functions' in the higher education sphere, particular at a HAU such as SU, then the future and personal worth as Giliomee, referred to above, of Afrikaans-speakers will be lost.

In this chapter I will be focusing on the future of Afrikaans in education on national as well as university level, specifically at SU. The focus will then shift to the *taaldebat* that emerged at SU as a result of the perceived fear that some Afrikaans activists have that the Afrikaans language is under threat at this predominantly Afrikaans university. In the next

section, a discussion will follow on the identity processes associated with language, 'race' and cultural practices at SU. Lastly I will report on identity politics at SU and conclude by linking the identity politics of the *taaldebat* to the Adam Tas student movement which is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

4.2   The future of Afrikaans in education on a national level

After 1994, the new ANC-led government viewed institutions of higher learning as national assets, and that these institutions were, in terms of national legislation, obliged to adapt to the goals and ideals that the democratic government was striving to achieve. These goals and ideals include complete transformation of the entire higher education sector into a multicultural, multilingual and diverse sphere. Brink's (2009:23) statement that '[p]re – 1994, the mainstay of the argument for widening participation was in terms of human rights' is valuable here. From Brink's statement, it can be derived that 'widening participation', in the South African context, refers to the widening of the perimeters in the higher education sector. This expansion would allow all previously excluded 'racial' categories to have access to HAUs in post-apartheid South Africa. It is therefore of the utmost importance to the government that this sector becomes accessible to all, irrespective of criteria such as 'race', gender, mother-tongue, ethnicity, nationality, religion, etc. The new government aimed (and is still trying) to transform the education sector which includes all public basic and higher education institutions. In relation to the higher education sector, one of these transformation initiatives included that all institutions of higher learning had to create a language policy that was inclusive and non-discriminative in nature. However, to formulate and construct new democratic language policies is one thing*,* but to implement, regulate and monitor them successfully is another matter. Unforeseen problems regarding the translation of these newly constructed policies into practice were inevitable. The difficulties that resulted from the implementation process of inclusive transformative policies in the higher education sector are also referred to in an official document, namely the *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions*. In this Report of 2008, the Committee found that,

> [i]n assessing the impact of the policies ... a great deal of dissatisfaction [exists] throughout in the system…. [W]hile there is no doubt that significant policy development has indeed occurred towards transformation, the next important step of making those policies work ... has not been taken yet (South Africa, 2008:132).

62

Within South Africa's basic education sector, one factor contributing to the decline in preference for Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in public schools relates to the fact that some learners whose mother-tongue is Afrikaans are increasingly choosing English-medium schools over Afrikaans-medium schools. One of the main reasons given by these learners and their parents for making that particular choice is that they perceive English schools as more beneficial in terms of the increasingly English working environment that exists in South Africa today, stimulated by the increasing globalisation factor. These learners and their parents, who only represent a segment of the population, argue that attending English schools will increase their chances of finding work, given the dominance of the English language in the world of employment. The same argument is referred to in an article entitled: *So Engels soos 'n Afrikaner in die Vrystaat* ('As English as an Afrikaner [living] in the Free State', my translation), written by an American journalist, Eve Fairbanks, in an Afrikaans weekly newspaper *Rapport* (21.02.2010). In this article, Fairbanks's investigation showed how Afrikaans-speaking students chose to attend a top English-medium school rather than a top Afrikaans-medium school, mainly for the reasons mentioned above. According to the five girls that Fairbanks interviewed, 'they haven't lost anything' by making the above choice, and in their opinion, 'they have in fact won so much more, because by choosing to attend English schools they are indeed thinking of their future'. One of the girls, named Chanelle, said, 'my parents have decided that I can go anywhere in the world, if I can speak English'. Chanelle also believes that she has 'the best of both worlds, because English can take her to the O.R. Tambo Airport and Afrikaans on the other hand, to Oudtshoorn'. According to the principal of Eunice, the school where the five girls received their secondary education, 'the number of Afrikaans mother-tongue learners has increased significantly during the last few years' (Fairbanks, 2010).

The above scenario represents the nightmare that compelled FW de Klerk (former president) to call an urgent meeting in Stellenbosch (in January 2010), where the future of Afrikaans as a university language was discussed. This meeting is referred to as the Vredenheim Conference (*Die Vredenheim-beraad*), due to the fact that it was 'held at the Vredenheim wine estate on 28 January 2010' and here 'experts on the different tuition options, university representatives and prominent Afrikaans organisations addressed the Conference' (FW de Klerk Foundation, 2010a). The counter argument about the future of Afrikaans is that it is doing well, but that it had to be scaled down in public institutions, including in higher education. If this is the case, why is there a perceived threat amongst some Afrikaans-speaking academics that Afrikaans as a language of tuition is in danger in

the higher education sector of South Africa? This perceived threat felt among some of the Afrikaans-speaking elite, contributed heavily to the formation of a newly emerging group of Afrikaans language activists, mainly consisting of older, white elite Afrikaners (the majority being academics). These individuals are claiming to address, what they regard as unfair practices committed against the Constitutional rights of Afrikaners. The future of the language in terms of its literary functions indeed seems to be in a more secure position due to the fact that more books are being published in Afrikaans than before and art in Afrikaans is also flourishing.

My questionnaires, distributed on campus, indicated that the majority of SU students, irrespective of 'race', agreed that Afrikaans as an official language should have a place in the future of South Africa. In addition, the fact that the Afrikaans language received equal status with the other ten official languages in the Constitution is indicative of the integrating role that the democratic government sees it to play in post-apartheid South Africa. This gesture or strategic move of awarding Afrikaans equal status to the other ten official languages and, according to Alexander, 'parity of esteem', can be considered as a form of including Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers in the new 'Rainbow Nation' (Alexander, 2003:15-16). One of the reasons behind the decision (taken by the writers of South Africa's Constitution) to include Afrikaans as one of South Africa's official languages, relates to efforts of ensuring peaceful relations with white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans during the transition phase of the country from an authoritarian state to a democratic one. Another reason that has led the new democratic government into awarding Afrikaans official recognition was that this government foresaw the role of reconciliation and restitution that Afrikaans could play in unifying South Africa's diverse 'racial' categories. In terms of securing the relevance and future of Afrikaans on a public level, Brink (2006:165) believes that 'part of the price to secure the future of Afrikaans as a vibrant South African language is that it should disengage from the identity of *Afrikanerskap*'. It may be the case that the role and future of the Afrikaans language in the public sphere may be dependent on the ability of its speakers to abandon the former exclusive Afrikaner identity that was attached to Afrikaans and rather support ideals relating to diversity and transformation. This may include the acceptance and promotion of the process of creolisation, the recognition of different varieties of the Afrikaans language as well as the support for the equal operation of the English language, next to Afrikaans in former Afrikaans universities. An Afrikaans language activist, Hermann Giliomee, differed from Brink's view regarding the future of the Afrikaans language and was instead arguing that '[t]he future of Afrikaans depends vitally

on the degree of loyalty its speakers have to the language in which they were brought up' (2003b:27).

Regarding the formulation and development of transformed language policies that each higher education institution was compelled to implement, extra attention was given to HAUs. Leibowitz and Van Deventer (2007:91) observed that '[h]istorically Afrikaans Institutions (HAIs) [had] to submit rolling plans showing how the LOLT [Language of learning and teaching] would not impede access to certain strategic disciplines'. The submission of these 'rolling plans' by HAIs can be regarded as just a manner of ensuring that these predominantly white, Afrikaans institutions were in fact making progress with regard to institutional transformation, with the assistance of the transformation policies already created and implemented in their respective higher education institutions.

As a result of the above requirement by government, SU as a HAI also transformed its dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction (prior to 2002) to one that is more accommodating to non-Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers, in an attempt to change its demographic and 'racial' profile from dominantly white and Afrikaans-speaking to one that is more representative of the province as well as the country in which it is situated. The core of SU's language policy is that,

> [t]his higher education institution] is committed to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context. Language is used at the University in a manner that is directed towards engagement with knowledge in a diverse society. The University's commitment to Afrikaans as an academic language does not exclude the use of various languages at the University in its engagement with knowledge: apart from Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, Dutch, German and French are included (Stellenbosch University, 2002).

In the same document it is also stated that 'Afrikaans is the default language of undergraduate learning and instruction', while 'English is used in particular circumstances as a language of undergraduate learning and instruction'. In terms of postgraduate studies, it is stated in the same source that 'Afrikaans and English are used'. 'English is used alongside Afrikaans as a language of communication for the University, as circumstances may require' (Stellenbosch University, 2002).

The adoption of an inclusive language policy brought along benefits, such as the

promotion of diversity and the integration of social categories, but it also created certain obstacles at SU. One of these obstacles, relating to the implementation of more accommodating language policies at this University, was the emergence of a *taaldebat* in which one group was fighting for the preservation of the Afrikaans language at this higher education institution, opposed to another group that was arguing for a more inclusive and multicultural approach whenever linguistic issues were to be discussed and important decisions taken at this HAU.

In 2006, Giliomee and Schlemmer argued in their book, *'n Vaste plek vir Afrikaans – Taaluitdagings op kampus* (A firm place for Afrikaans – Linguistic challenges on campus) (my translation)*,* that

> there doesn't exist a single Afrikaans university in the country any more. The institutions that were historically Afrikaans, are mostly bilingual institutions and two of them, namely the UWC (University of the Western Cape) and the former University of Port Elizabeth (now the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)), became practically entirely anglicised (*verengels*) (2006:178). Also: [A]t three of the concerned universities, the language of instruction for Afrikaans-speaking students is still Afrikaans – by means of parallel medium instruction at two (the UFS (University of Free State) and the "RAU"-campus of the University of Johannesburg (UJ)) as well as the increasing use of interpreter-services to be able to keep Afrikaans as the primary language of instruction at undergraduate level (at the Potchefstroom-campus of the NWU) (2006:178) (my translation).

Giliomee and Schlemmer (2006:178) further stated that,

> [a]t two of the biggest HAU – institutions, namely the UP and the US, the position of instruction in Afrikaans is more complicated. While both institutions are generally committed to official undergraduate instruction in Afrikaans and still formally consider Afrikaans as the main language of instruction, in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences at these institutions, there is a deviation from the formal rule. Parallel medium classes are indeed provided, but dual medium classes are increasingly being given with an informal tendency to the dominant use of English. At both universities, the language policies are being heavily discussed with the eye on reviewing, and both managements qualified their devotion to Afrikaans as an assured medium of instruction in different manners (my translation).

Although the managements of both institutions made assurances about the future of Afrikaans at their respective universities, this promise proved to be hard to keep, considering that the world was becoming increasingly globalised and more pressure was

66

being placed on higher education institutions to become more accessible, and therefore more anglicised academic entities. This increasing use of English at HAUs, such as UP and US, was indeed contributing to the strong reaction that individuals such as Giliomee and his followers were showing.

It is evident that Giliomee and Schlemmer were indeed very suspicious and sceptical of the manner in which the dual medium language policy was utilised at the UP and the US, as a preliminary solution to the problematic situation that the Afrikaans language was in at both universities. These authors raised concerns over 'the manner in which only English (or mainly English) is used under a "cloak" of dual medium at the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Pretoria' and felt that '[u]nless people came to their senses, it will lead to severe debilitation of Afrikaans as a public language' (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 2006: ix, my translation). Currently, the dominant manner in which the Afrikaans language operated in the SU context had vanished and this would have implications in the future. In terms of the position of Afrikaans as undergraduate language of tuition, the Afrikaans language was still standing strong for a number of years, despite factors such as the ongoing and controversial language debate, the demographic changes that had taken place as well as the ongoing need for transformation at SU. By 2015, however, the momentum for demands for better access for black students and resistance to the dominance of Afrikaans in university life had built up among black students and reached a culmination point with the launch of the Open Stellenbosch movement. This movement has put enormous pressure on SU's management to make the historic language shift to English as primary medium of tuition in an attempt to transform the university into a more inclusive and accessible entity with regard to non-Afrikaans speakers. A possible implication of this recent development is that the position of Afrikaans as main medium of tuition on undergraduate level becomes more vulnerable and the shift to English as primary medium of tuition becomes more possible.

4.3   The *taaldebat* at Stellenbosch University – a brief history

The language struggle, more commonly known as the *taaldebat,* is a very controversial topic, which still receives extensive media coverage, particularly in daily Afrikaans newspapers, such as *Die Burger*. The manner in which the media report on this topic can be perceived as potentially harmful to the image of this formerly white, Afrikaans-dominant higher education institution. Van der Waal (2008:66) argues that '[t]he Afrikaans media have a further interest in the *taaldebat*, namely to preserve their readership (market sector)

67

and to promote the language medium through which they exist'. Apart from the media publishing their own thoughts on the *taaldebat* at SU, the submission of letters by the South African public to *Die Burger* also contributed to the heated language debate. Although struggles concerning language policy can indeed be regarded as an everyday manifestation occurring at all HAUs, circumstances differ given the history as well as context in which each HAU is situated.

During the time that I accumulated information on my research topic, I observed that Afrikaans media sources, such as *Die Burger,* a daily local Afrikaans newspaper in the Western Cape as well as the Afrikaans national Sunday newspaper, *Rapport,* placed the focus on SU with regard to language-related issues. By constantly reporting on language-related issues at this university, these two Afrikaans newspapers were in fact promoting the language medium through which they distributed information and in the process also increased their respective circulation figures. Leibowitz and Van Deventer (2007:89) argue along the same lines that '[t]he University [SU] is the centre of focus and attention of strong community forces who would like it to remain the symbol of the maintenance of Afrikaner heritage and culture'. Thus, the main reason for the high interest in SU is related to the fact that this HAU was regarded as the prime educational institution of Afrikaners in the 20th century, a symbol of their political and social success. Furthermore, SU is also perceived by many pro-Afrikaans activists as the last enclave where the Afrikaans language has a chance, to survive as an academic language. This mentality was also observed among conservative members of the Adam Tas student association, during the period that I researched the association. The impression that this group of students gave, being mainly white and Afrikaans-speaking, was that they were also of the belief that SU was entitled to function as an Afrikaans-dominant university. This belief was based on the demographic profile of the province in which the university was situated, i.e. that the majority of people, living in the Western Cape, were first language Afrikaans-speakers and that this province was therefore entitled to a dominant Afrikaans-medium university, given the fact that the other two universities (The University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC)) in the province were operating as fully English-medium universities.

When all universities, including the HAUs in the country, were compelled by higher education legislation to develop inclusive language policies, SU also accelerated its transformation process (before 2002, coloureds were appointed as staff members

occasionally) by exchanging its exclusive and dominant use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition for a more inclusive approach to language policy. The main purpose behind this institutional change was to diversify its student population and thus making its demographic and 'racial' profile more representative of the province and country in which it was situated. Unsurprisingly, some members of the white Afrikaans-speaking elite (mostly former academic staff) at SU were not in unison with government leaders regarding their instructions that this institution was also to transform fully. As a result, a vigorous and emotional public debate developed concerning the language policy of this tertiary institution. According to Webb (2002:246 cited in Van der Waal, 2008:66) '[t]he level of debate is low, with lots of emotion and speculative, one-sided opinions'. The highly emotional manner in which Afrikaans language activists dealt with language-related issues in a language debate at a former Afrikaans university, was as an indication of the important role that language (in this case, Afrikaans) occupied as the prime symbol of Afrikanerskap. The position of the pro-Afrikaans group, in terms of the *taaldebat*, was to protect and preserve the higher functions of the Afrikaans language in the education sector, most importantly in higher education.

For the pro-Afrikaans group the fact that Afrikaans was recognised in the South African Constitution as well as the assurance that the general use of Afrikaans (in everyday life) amongst fellow Afrikaans-speakers will not easily die out, were viewed as insufficient guarantees that the higher functions and future of a language that was deeply rooted in the nationalist history of Afrikaners and was part of the language registers of many South Africans was ensured and protected. Although Afrikaans was also the mother-tongue of another 'racial' category, the coloureds, this category was not nearly as involved in this *taaldebat* as their white counterparts. Coloured mother-tongue Afrikaans-speakers were instead opting for an inclusive approach to the Afrikaans language and believed that the only way of ensuring its survival was to include, recognise and support other varieties of the Afrikaans language and not just the standard version that white Afrikaans activists created and were now fighting for. On the other hand, a group one could name the 'multiculturalists', favoured a multiculturalist and multilingual approach at SU instead. This approach, according to the 'multiculturalists', will ensure that SU becomes accessible to all previously excluded categories on the basis of language. Scholtz and Scholtz are however critical of the approach followed by the multiculturalists by stating that their 'approach is largely ideological' while those of the 'unilingualists' (referring to the pro-Afrikaans group) is mainly based on 'academic and pedagogic grounds' (2008:293).

When former Vice-Chancellor, Chris Brink, took charge of SU in 2002, the language struggle or the *taaldebat* really took effect because management reacted to the insistence that English should be used more in a classroom setting, mainly due to the increasing number of white English-speakers who went to study at Stellenbosch. A few months after Brink's appointment, he requested that a language audit should be conducted on SU to investigate the use of Afrikaans at this institution. This language audit was performed under the leadership of Ludolph Botha from Stellenbosch University's academic support services. The finding in this language audit was that undergraduate tuition in Afrikaans decreased from 69.8 % in 2000 to 65.7 % in 2002. On postgraduate level, Afrikaans was only utilised in 31.7% of cases as a language of tuition. Another finding of the audit was that Afrikaans as language of science should be promoted within a multilingual context. After the findings of the language audit became known, a Task Team (officially known as the Language Committee) was formed under the leadership of Leon de Stadler, who occupied the position of director of Stellenbosch University's Language Centre. Under Brink's instruction, this Language Committee was tasked to draw up a new language plan for the university (Ferreira, 2002a). According to De Stadler, the message behind Stellenbosch University's language policy is that the latter, as a policy that is aimed towards the future, is trying to contribute towards the realisation of the following ideal: the creation of a favourable learning and tuition environment that is beneficial to all Stellenbosch students, and: an environment in which the promotion of Afrikaans as an academic language and the asset of multilingualism can be reconciled with one another on an imaginary manner. In the Language Plan, four options were described and these included the A-language specification (A=Afrikaans), which is the default option for all undergraduate programmes and then there are three restricted options which can only be practised after approval by the language committee. These options are the bilingual option (also known as the dual medium or T-option) in which Afrikaans and English are used in combination, the English option with English as primary language of tuition, and the parallel medium option (De Stadler, 2002).

This *taaldebat* was then a public reaction on the decisions taken by university management as well as its implementation thereof. The emotional intensity attached to the language debate at SU contributed to the fact that it went through several cycles. Van der Waal (2008:67) states that '[t]he debate erupts in cycles, especially when a decision has to be made by the university on issues that might change its formerly more exclusivist character in relation to student and staff recruitment'. He (Van der Waal, 2008:67) also

observed that,

> [o]ne [of the several cycles] focused on diversity and the democratisation of *koshuiskultuur* (residence culture) in 2002, another on the regulation of a language policy in 2003, another on the honorary degree bestowed on an Afrikaans communist [Bram Fischer] in 2004, and the latest was a focus on the T-option in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in 2005.

Scholtz and Scholtz (2008:295) stated that Stellenbosch was traditionally very language friendly (*taalvriendelik*) (because) room was made for students who chose to write their assignments and exams in English and those who wanted to direct their questions in English, despite the fact that SU was known as an Afrikaans-medium institution that offered undergraduate and postgraduate lectures in mainly Afrikaans (my translation). Piet le Roux's summary of the *taaldebat* at SU during the year 2000, referred to the dynamic changes that SU incorporated in order to make non-Afrikaans-speakers feel at home in Afrikaans at this HAU: by 'showing relevance for a context, by creating a comprehension for 'otherness' in a new political context, to dynamically fit in with an increasingly integrated world ...' (Le Roux, 2007) (my translation). In 2002, a student, Christa van Zyl, directed a petition in support of Afrikaans to voice her standpoint (and those of her fellow Maties who supported her) that Stellenbosch University should operate as an Afrikaans tertiary institution with Afrikaans as the main medium of tuition, with more than 3000 signatures. Van Zyl was of the opinion that a double medium or parallel medium option would lead to the demise of Afrikaans as academic language at Stellenbosch University (Ferreira, 2002b). In the following year, the language policy that was accepted at the end of 2002 was implemented and first-year modules in especially the Faculty of Arts (later renamed to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) were provided according to the T-option. In 2004 the T-option was introduced as the default option for both the first-year and second-year of tuition in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Le Roux, 2007) (my translation)*.

In 2005, the T-option was extended to the third year of tuition in the Faculty of Arts. This decision by the University was internally taken via the *Taalkomitee* (Language Committee) and thus did not require public participation. This incident clearly portrayed the important role that the *Taalkomitee* occupied in decision-making processes regarding language policy. It thus becomes important to substantiate the role of the Language Committee, which was to implement and monitor the language policy of the university (Stellenbosch University, 2011d). Objections were raised against the university's internal decision-making on language policy and also against its decision to implement this change in the Faculty of

Arts without public announcement. These objections against university management were publicly made in the media by Afrikaans language activists. The strong resistance to the university's language policy was evident when Hermann Giliomee, Breyten Breytenbach and Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, prominent white Afrikaans-speaking public figures and critics of the former Afrikaner nationalist project of apartheid, sent a letter to *Die Burger* (22.09.2005) to object to the language policy. These individuals called this language plan, *die dood in die pot vir Afrikaans* (death in the pot for Afrikaans, my translation) (Giliomee, Breytenbach and Slabbert, 2005). A huge debate emerged in *Die Burger* in 2005 and for months this newspaper was full of comments about the language debate. A large number of Afrikaans writers signed a petition against the T-option. Etienne van Heerden, Tom Dreyer en André P. Brink collectively made a statement against the T-option. However, about 60 lecturers within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences signed a petition in favour of the T-option (Le Roux, 2007) (my translation).

In 2006, the language debate took another turn. According to Scholtz and Scholtz 2008:298),

> the next step was to elect four Council members, three of which were elected by the Convocation and one by the donors of the university. This election was conducted purely on the basis of the question whether or not the candidates supported the A-option or the T-option. The candidates who supported the T-option lost to the A - optionists, because they could only accumulate 25 % of the votes. With clear support from the Convocation, the four new A - optionists serving on the Council – proff. Hermann Giliomee, Christo Viljoen and Lina Spies, as well a former member of parliament mr. Jacko Maree could resume the fight against the further anglicisation of Stellenbosch University (my translation).

In terms of the Convocation's role in the *taaldebat*, it can be firstly stated that the convocation 'consists of all the graduates as well as all present and past academic personnel of the University' (Stellenbosch University, 2011a). In the language debate around Afrikaans teaching this body became a prominent pressure group that was mobilised to counter the perceived shift to English at SU. Some of the prominent members of the Convocation played a very important role in this ongoing *taaldebat*. Two prominent members, Hermann Giliomee and Pieter Kapp (President of the Convocation from 2001 to 2011), were in the category of those wanting to keep undergraduate classes of Stellenbosch University in mainly Afrikaans (Scholtz and Scholtz, 2008:293). Giliomee and Kapp took on very vocal roles as Convocation members in the *taaldebat* at SU. Kapp, in

his capacity as President of the Convocation, questioned the management style of the rector (Brink) and was one of the driving-forces behind the language debate. Regarding the Convocation, it is also necessary to report that the majority of the support that the Convocation accumulated came from its white older Afrikaans-speaking alumni, which included all graduates and academic personnel from SU.

Another member of the Convocation, who was unanimously appointed as secretary of the Convocation at a Convocation meeting on the 11th of November 2010, was a former chairman and one of the founding members of the Adam Tas student association (Stellenbosch University, 2010). A prominent businessman and member of the Convocation, who still represents the latter on SU's Council, donated money to the Adam Tas student association. Thus, pro-Afrikaans groups such as Adam Tas as well as prominent Afrikaans activists formed a network that had close ties with the Convocation of SU and were exerting pressure on the Council of the University, whenever important decisions were being taken regarding language issues.

Regarding the role of the Council, it is stipulated on SU's website that '[t]he Council of the University of Stellenbosch governs this higher education institution and the institutional statute' (Stellenbosch University, 2011b). Due to the Council's governing role of SU, it took decisions on language use at the university, given the fact that a proposed language policy has to be approved by it before it can be implemented at the institution.

Scholtz and Scholtz (2008:298) stated that,

> [i]n 2006, the Language Committee was instructed to provide a conceptual framework for the new language plan and - policy that sanctioned the extended use of the T-option. In addition and in a sudden dramatic turn, the Vice-Chancellor requested Hermann Giliomee to provide an alternative conceptual framework before the Language Committee, on behalf of the Convocation. From this, the so-called Vlottenburg group resulted, consisting of proff. Giliomee, Jaap Durand, Jakes Gerwel, Johan de Villiers, Arnold Schoonwinkel, dr. Lawrence Schlemmer, prof. Neville Alexander and dr. Frederik van Zyl Slabbert (my translation).

What was interesting to observe regarding the composition of the so-called Vlottenburg group was the fact it consisted of politically diverse academics, each with divergent ideological views on how language should be managed at SU. Although Hermann Giliomee and Neville Alexander agreed that Afrikaans as main medium of teaching should

be offered at least at undergraduate level, significant ideological differences existed between these two prominent academics. Alexander supported an inclusive system in which Afrikaans can operate next to other African languages in a multilingual setting. In contrast, Giliomee openly supported a more exclusive system in which Afrikaans should be the dominant medium of tuition or at least operate equally next to English at SU. Giliomee's approach to language as a *taalbul* involved his regular referencing to war metaphors whilst Alexander's approach was geared towards celebrating the creolisation of Afrikaans or other varieties of Afrikaans (utilised by coloured and black speakers) which were previously dismissed as the non-standard compared to the pure standard form of Afrikaans that white Afrikaners promoted and endorsed.

In an article in *Die Burger* (2007), it was reported that the recommendations of this group (the Vlottenburg group) included the notion that all undergraduate instruction should occur through the Afrikaans language and that this language policy should therefore be clearly communicated to prospective students together with the information that SU will be playing a supportive role in terms of enabling non-Afrikaans students to study successfully through the Afrikaans language. Regarding exceptional cases and on the basis of clear motivation and cost stipulations, as submitted or laid before the management in a memorandum, tuition could be offered as follows: (a) In faculties such as Military Science (*Krygskunde*) where no lecturer was available that could present the module in Afrikaans and where lecturers who were only proficient in English were used, then only English as medium of tuition could be utilised. However, it was the responsibility of the department to make plans to promote the acquisition of Afrikaans by students and for interpreter-services as necessary. (b) Parallel medium (English and Afrikaans in separate classes). This occurred where (i) student numbers were such that it was practically impossible to separate a group into two or more groups; (ii) the language proficiency of the lecturers in the responsible department were making such a rule or arrangement practicable; (iii) that this arrangement was affordable and did not put an unacceptable burden on lecturing and administrative personnel. (c) Double medium (Afrikaans and English as medium of tuition in one classroom). This can only be utilised as a measure of transition in the first year and can only be applied in cases where students who were not Afrikaans language proficient were following a remedial (*remediërende*) course (*Die Burger*, 2007).

After Brink completed his five-year term at the end of 2006, he left SU and accepted the position of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle in England. Brink's decision to

depart and not making himself available to be elected for another term of office apparently rested partly on the heated ongoing *taaldebat* at this HAU and the constant resistance that he had received from Afrikaans language activists. Shortly after Brink's departure, his book, *No Lesser Place - The taaldebat at Stellenbosch*, was published in 2006. In this publication, Brink is providing the reader with insider knowledge into how language and language-related issues manifested in an ongoing unresolved language debate and how these issues should be handled within the context of a former Afrikaans university, such as SU. Brink's successor, Russel Botman, took office from 2007 until his sudden passing on the 28th of June 2014. Botman's approach can be described as more accommodating than Brink's, who according to Kapp (PRAAG, 2007), in an interview, had failed to understand the dynamic of language displacement. Kapp stated that Botman, in his view, showed much more understanding of this situation (PRAAG, 2007) (my translation).

In 2007, a new student organisation, namely the Adam Tas student association, was established. This student organisation was formed in response to the uncertainty that surrounded the Afrikaans language as 'high status' language in the midst of the transformation process taking place at SU. The Adam Tas association can be regarded as an attempt by Afrikaans-speaking students to 'save' the Afrikaans language as medium of instruction in an increasingly anglicised higher education environment. In the next chapter (chapter five) this student association will be thoroughly dissected and discussed.

Also in 2007, a new language policy was proposed by SU's language task team, and this proposal was widely rejected. The Institutional Forum, an advisory body for SU's Council, rejected the policy and requested that the proposal was deleted in its totality. Roelof Nel, former deputy chair of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and executive committee member of the IF stated that the main objections of students were that this proposed language policy by the language task team was inapplicably vague, that it represented decentralisation and that it did not take into account the views of the concerned parties (especially those of students) (Venter, 2007). According to Kriek, another representative of the IF, the language policy proposed by the language task team would lead towards what he labelled language federalism (*taal-federalisme*) which would only bring confusion among students if it lacked clear guidelines to function (Venter, 2007). The Council of SU decided to reject the proposal and, while it decided on better monitoring of its language policy and to institute an investigation into parallel medium instruction, to retain the policy of 2001 (Le Roux, 2007) (my translation).

The result of the change to the T-option, also known as dual medium instruction was that an already heated debate between the two opposing sides in the *taaldebat* became verbally more aggressive. This was indicative of the interest that was shown in language as the core symbol of *Afrikanerskap.* In a newspaper article, published in *Rapport* (20.04.2014), the historian, Hermann Giliomee's criticism towards Brink's managing style was clearly portrayed through a parallel that he had drawn between Brink and a character in Graham Greene's, novel, *The Quiet American*. In this novel, another character stated: 'I have never known a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused' (Giliomee, 2014). Giliomee's aim in comparing Brink to this fictional character was possibly to portray how Brink handled language-related issues at SU in a troublesome way. Giliomee further referred to the work of the French-Canadian language sociologist, Jean Laponce's view that 'when a universal language is the language of the state and of commerce, a parallel- or dual-medium system at a university is fatal for the smaller language' (cited in Brink, 2006:69). In conjunction with Laponce's view, Scholtz and Scholtz is of the opinion that 'the bilingual approach at Stellenbosch is practised in such a way that the end product is, more likely than not, a unilingual English situation' (2008:293). In other words, if Afrikaans and English are utilised next to each other in a parallel – or dual language system at SU, the English language will be preferred above the Afrikaans language because the former is, according to Laponce, the universal language and also the dominant language used within the state and the business sectors in South Africa.

In Brink's (2006:71) book he quoted Giliomee: 'If Stellenbosch University is to *verengels* any further, then it is Ichabod for Afrikaans'. The term, 'Ichabod', that Giliomee was using, refers to the biblical notion that the end will be in sight - for SU if the latter is to change into a fully English-medium university. Such a statement seems to indicate that this University was regarded by Giliomee and the other pro-Afrikaans supporters as the 'ideal territory', where there existed a possibility that 'their' Afrikaans language could survive, be protected and preserved. 'The sense of ownership which the older constituency feels over Stellenbosch University has been a significant factor in the *taaldebat*' (Brink, 2006:92). The Ministerial Report also explained that ownership is an issue in Afrikaans-medium institutions because it is 'closely linked to issues of identity, culture, religion and language …' (2008:120). In the context of SU, it can be said that the symbolic issue of ownership is indeed an obstacle in the language debate due to the Afrikaans character and identity of the university that is closely linked to an exclusive Afrikaans identity that

some conservative, white, Afrikaner individuals are fighting for.

About the group on the other side of the spectrum, who according to Brink (2006:161) take on a 'multiculturalist stance', the following can be observed: they do recognise the need for SU to accept languages other than Afrikaans to be used as medium of instruction, in order for this institution to move forward and not repeat past mistakes. The multicultural group's vision includes the ideal that the university must become a more accurate reflection of the demographic profile of this province and country, by accepting not only more rural 'coloured' and black students but also increasing the number of its non-white academic staff that would provide the evidence that this former white, Afrikaans-dominant institution of higher learning is indeed the home of a more diverse and more integrated academic community. Therefore, this group perceives it to be vital for SU to use Afrikaans and English as well as isiXhosa (to some degree or where it is practical) as languages of instruction. However, this group was less activist and less organised than the language activists. My research suggests that the majority of black students strongly disagreed with the notion that African languages could have an equal place at SU in the future, versus white and 'coloured' students who felt the opposite.

Given that Stellenbosch University is situated in a province whose main official languages are Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, it can be regarded as logical, constitutional and relevant that this institution might strive to become a reflection of the people living in this province. According to the *Provisions of the Language Policy of Stellenbosch University*,

> Afrikaans is the default language of undergraduate learning and instruction. English is used in particular circumstances as a language of undergraduate learning and instruction. Afrikaans and English are used in postgraduate learning and instruction. Provisions are made for isiXhosa in some programmes with a view to professional communication. The University promotes isiXhosa as a developing academic language, amongst other ways, through its Language Centre (Stellenbosch University, 2002).

In terms of how language matters should be dealt with at SU, Brink proposed that the university just had to tackle each obstacle to the best of its ability and put the focus not so much on what can be done for the future, but for the position that the university now finds itself in. In the first instance, Brink's proposition related to the guarantee that Afrikaans activists demanded from SU management that the position of the Afrikaans language as medium of tuition would be secured for future generations. Secondly, his proposition also

related to the notion that the circumstances at SU were constantly evolving due to changes in the university's language policy and its demographic profile. The language policy of the university was not static due to management's decision to revise it every four years to ensure that it was in line with the needs of its student population. The university's demographic profile showed how it had changed in 2013 when white Afrikaans-speaking students no longer constituted the majority of the student population due to the influx of white English-speaking students at the university. Chris Brink as well as his successor (Russel Botman) also stated on numerous occasions that although the university included English as a medium of instruction, it was still very much committed to the further development and use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction next to English. In terms of the language policy of 2002, Brink (2006:29) stated:

> The basic thrust of the policy is that: The University of Stellenbosch is committed to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context. Language is used at the University in a manner that is directed towards engagement with knowledge in a diverse society

The above commitment to Afrikaans was also included in the Strategic Framework – Vision of 2012, developed under Botman's leadership. This indicates that the management of SU was continuously committed to the development of Afrikaans as an academic language although the use of English on academic as well as administrative levels was increased significantly.

On the 30th of November 2009, the Council of Stellenbosch University decided that Afrikaans would be maintained at a minimum offer of 60% in the following three years in terms of undergraduate studies (Giliomee, 2010:n.pag.) (my translation). According to Giliomee, 'this does not mean that 60 percent of the classes will be provided in Afrikaans-medium. This year [2010], 51% of all the modules will be provided in dual medium ... also known as the T-option' (2010:n.pag.) (my translation). The implication of this undertaking of the Council and university management was potentially more resistance from the Afrikaans language activists, given that this group was not in favour of the dual medium language option. As earlier reported in this chapter, the pro-Afrikaans group was negative towards dual medium and felt that this language option would undoubtedly lead to the Afrikaans language losing its 'higher functions' at SU in a few years. The inclination to increasingly deviate towards English in dual medium classes would, according to Afrikaans language activists, result in the university moving more rapidly towards the anglicisation of

the entire undergraduate sphere at SU. During an interview, a senior official at SU seemed to disagree with Afrikaans language activists and was rather supportive of the T-option or the dual medium option, by stating that this language option could promote integration in classes between students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (2009).

Recent developments at SU according to Van der Waal and Du Toit included the decision to implement translation services 'where classes were smaller than 150 students and larger classes were divided into Afrikaans and English streams (the parallel medium approach)' (2016:6). The reason behind this shift by SU management in 2013, according to these authors was 'to address the deadlock caused by the intersection of the right to access and the right to language identity in undergraduate teaching and learning ...' (Van der Waal and Du Toit, 2016:6). It is clear from Van der Waal and Du Toit's statements that SU management was indeed trying to find middle-ground solutions to language-related dilemmas which would benefit both Afrikaans-speaking students as well as their non-Afrikaans-speaking counterparts. The former's need to be educated through the Afrikaans language and the latter's to receive a tertiary education through English seemed to be in reach at this well-known HAU.

Taken the above into account, forces the question: does SU possess the power to maintain its commitment to Afrikaans even if the pressure from the government on HAUs increases drastically to the point where this institution has to choose between the economic sustainability of the university versus the historical maintenance of the Afrikaans language and its heritage? Another question is: is the university, in practice, still providing 60% of its modules in Afrikaans and what is the impact of the demographic changes that occurred in the student population and lecturing personnel? Also, how does the commitment to providing 60% of classes in Afrikaans relate to the transformation goals of the university? What were the reactions to this commitment by the university?

The resolution of a *taaldebat* could certainly be regarded as a highly challenging task for any higher education institution, let alone a former Afrikaans-medium institution such as SU. Although the participants in this highly contested debate regard their opposing goals as extremely important, it must not be forgotten that the university is also a business which cannot afford to make decisions based on emotions alone. Thus, despite university management's commitment to promote and develop Afrikaans, it has the national obligation to do so within a multilingual environment. The latter obligation has to do with

ensuring the sustainability of the university as a business which in all fairness will affect the sustainability of teaching in Afrikaans.

Due to the fact that emotions play such a big role in this debate, decisions regarding language issues at this former Afrikaans-dominant university are in most cases contested by Afrikaans language activists, participating in the *taaldebat*. As Brink (2006:103-104) repeatedly argued, 'the issue of Afrikaans at Stellenbosch is not so much a problem that has to be solved, as it is a matter to be managed'. In concluding this section, one may ask: will living in the past benefit anyone? Isn't what is now expected to do whatever is humanly possible to ensure not only the future of teaching in the Afrikaans language but also the future of the university?

4.4 Identity politics: Identity processes associated with language, 'race' and culture and the attached obstacles to transformational progress at Stellenbosch University

Brubaker and Cooper stated that,

> "[i]dentity"... is both a category of practice and a category of analysis. As a category of practice, it is used by "lay" actors in some (not all!) everyday settings to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others. Understood as a product of social or political action, "identity" is invoked to highlight the processual, interactive development of the kind of collective self-understandings, solidarity, or "groupness" that can make collective actions possible (2000:4).

Despite these 'defining' benefits that the term identity provided over decades, this concept has been widely criticised by theorists for its limited qualities (see Identity (2.4), in Chapter 2). Brubaker and Cooper (2000:10, 11) further stated that recently theorists 'have become increasingly aware of and uncomfortable with the strong or "hard" implications of everyday meanings of "identity"'. The strong or hard implications of identity refer to 'the emphasis on sameness over time or across persons' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:10, 11). It is for such a reason that theorists nowadays prefer the use of the term 'identification' instead of 'identity' because 'identification' in Brubaker and Cooper's words, 'calls attention to complex (and often ambivalent processes, while the term "identity" designating a condition rather than a process, implies too easy a fit between the individual and the social' (2000:17). This redefining of the term "identity", according to Brubaker and Cooper 'make it immune from certain objectives, especially from the dreaded charge of "essentialism"'

80

(2000:8). Essentialism, in Van der Waal's (2008:53) view is 'an understanding of a phenomenon in terms of a set of characteristics that overgeneralise and thereby overdetermine that phenomenon'. Van der Waal further points out that '[t]he problematic aspect of essentialism is that it does not yield to insight about complexity, process and differentiation' (2008:54). Before applying the aspects of essentialism onto the context of SU, it is important to add that this former Afrikaans university was regarded as a university with a very strong Afrikaans (or Afrikaner) identity. One manner in which this Afrikaans identity and Afrikaner traditions of white Afrikaners was strengthened at this university, was through the implementation of activities in, for example, student residences, that reflected white Afrikaner culture. Given the fact that SU was a white Afrikaans-dominant university, it is unsurprising that the white Afrikaner culture also dominated the university environment across generations. This practice at SU was explained and placed in a broader context by Kiguwe. Kiguwe's argument that 'Afrikaner Nationalism successfully utilised language as a symbol of the nation in which Afrikaner identity was solidified largely through language' (cited in Taylor, 1995:329) revolves around the idea that the Afrikaans language was utilised in a manner of providing and uniting the white Afrikaans-speaking community, with a new and strong sense of identity through efforts of assigning a great importance to their mother-tongue, Afrikaans. Van der Waal's (2009a:n.pag.) statement that 'Afrikaans was idealised and romanticized as an essentialist, reified identity' accords with the above argument that Kiguwe has put forward.

Given SU's history with the Afrikaans language, essentialist notions manifested through discourses on language, identity and culture in the *taaldebat*. The emergence of this *taaldebat* at SU made it possible for members of pro-Afrikaans activist movements to invoke a new sense of groupness among all Afrikaans-speakers. This action by Afrikaans activists can be regarded as an attempt to mobilise all Afrikaans-speakers for collective action against what they regard as a perceived threat, namely that SU is becoming increasingly anglicised, which (according to these Afrikaans activists) will ultimately result in Afrikaans losing its 'higher functions' at this HAU. Brubaker and Cooper claimed that,

> [s]trong notions of collective identity imply strong notions of a group boundedness and homogeneity. They imply high degrees of groupness, an "identity" or sameness among members, a sharp distinctiveness from non-members, a clear boundary between inside and outside (2000:4).

This collective identity or sameness of Afrikaners is emphasised through the use of a

shared language (Afrikaans) by Giliomee and Afrikaans pressure groups as well as by the Adam Tas student association. This emphasis on sameness is especially utilised whenever Afrikaans activists are seeking support from all Afrikaans-speakers, especially the coloured Afrikaans-speaking population. Willemse (2009:n.pag.), a coloured Afrikaans-speaking academic, differs from his white counterparts and rather believes that the future of the Afrikaans language depends on the real participation of all speakers of Afrikaans and that this action involves more than the 'white' – 'coloured' associations that are nowadays so prominent. However, we also have to be conscious of not committing the mistake of generalising findings or practising essentialism. In terms of the latter, Kiguwe states that '[c]onstructs and notions of what it means to be an Afrikaner or Zulu, for instance, may have varying levels of criteria and priorities for different individuals so classified' (cited in Taylor, 1995:329). In the same way it can be argued that two individuals within the same cultural group may have totally divergent notions about certain issues, for instance, although one Afrikaner may feel compelled to protect and preserve his mother-tongue, he or she might also be prepared to accept the equal use of English with Afrikaans as a means of securing the future of his first language. On the other hand, another Afrikaner may be supporting the ideals and arguments of individuals like Giliomee and other members of the Third Afrikaans Language Movement, where this group not only supports the dominant use of Afrikaans at SU but also urges that this institution again becomes an Afrikaans-dominant university, as in the past. Kiguwe would agree that the notions that two Afrikaners might have regarding policy may in fact differ, despite the fact that these two individuals belong to the same cultural and 'racial' category.

It is the view of Van der Waal that the '[*t]aaldebat* [at SU] is technically about language but is also about identity politics' (2009a:n.pag.). Steyn (2001) went a bit further than Van der Waal and elaborates on the position of white Afrikaners in the post-apartheid context and argues that the language debate can be seen as part of the renegotiation of identity in South Africa after 1994. Where whites had been able to take their identity as the standard for their own and others' lives in the country before the 1990s, a repositioning of identity had to take place since 1994. This repositioning included ridding the Afrikaner identity of its exclusivist and racist characteristics and replacing it with more inclusive and integrative elements. Now the emphasis is placed on language as identity marker instead of 'race' whenever language issues are debated. Van der Waal is arguing that,

> [m]any of the older generation seem to feel threatened by the succession of events in the country that underlines the equalisation of social categories. For them the language

82

struggle is part of their attempt to overcome the perceived assault on their collective identity (2002:93).

Thus, with regard to SU, identity always played (and still plays) an enormous role at this institution. Furthermore, the white identity of Afrikaners was reinforced at this former white Afrikaans-dominant university. The majority of students, enrolled at SU during apartheid consisted of white Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaners. However, despite the fact that transformational changes have already occurred, the picture in terms of SU's 'racial' profile was, until very recently, in some respects still similar to that of the apartheid period.

As discussed earlier, the shift of the university towards a multicultural identity from an Afrikaner one was reflected in the *taaldebat.* Brink (2006: ii) believes that '[t]he *taaldebat* ... is not just about language. It is about *identity*'. Leibowitz and Van Deventer are of the opinion that '[g]iven the decrease in status of Afrikaans since the end of apartheid … the role of the language at SU is a very emotive issue for many Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, who perceive it as in danger of becoming minoritised' (2007:90). During my interactions with students on the campus of SU, the majority of black and coloured students felt that the main reason why Giliomee and other prominent Afrikaans language activists were so eager to save the Afrikaans language can be mainly attributed to the loss of political power that the privileged white population experienced when apartheid ended. Louw (1992:21) is arguing along the same lines, namely that the struggle to save the Afrikaans language is in fact a fanatic cling to power and material interest. Jacobs (2001:2) similarly states in his master's thesis, *'n Taalbeleid om veeltaligheid aan die US te bevorder* (A language policy to promote multilingualism at SU, my translation) that now that the Afrikaner is stripped of his political basis of power, it seems as if he/she is grasping blades of grass in order to protect and ensure his Afrikaner identity by trying to save the Afrikaans language (my translation). Van der Waal highlighted that 'the language debate at Stellenbosch is part of the wider debate on Afrikaans and that the Afrikaner is going through continuous cycles of navel-gazing' (2008:66). Given the above statements made by Louw, Jacobs and Van der Waal, the argument can be put forward that Afrikaans activists are now using language as an identity marker to regain some of the lost power, and not 'race', as was done in the past. The *taaldebat* can thus be seen not so much as a language struggle but as a struggle for power. Here Bourdieu's (1991) argument that language is always a form of power is applicable to the *taaldebat* where the latter not only revolves around an obvious aspect such as language but also around a more hidden

aspect such as the need for power.

Van der Waal (2002:93) mentions that '[r]epresentatives of the coloured elite have expressed their disgust with the *taalstryd* as a stereotypical conservative white Afrikaner issue'. Also: 'He [Hein Willemse, head of the Afrikaans department at UP] indicated that Afrikaner interests were often equated with the interests and experience of all Afrikaans-speakers, excluding … the black experience in Afrikaans and co-opting black Afrikaans-speakers' (Van der Waal, 2002:93). In the past, when white Afrikaans-speakers did not need any assistance from their non-white counterparts, the latter were not allowed free access to SU, on the basis of 'race'. However, when the support of these non-white Afrikaans-speakers was needed by their white counterparts, as in the *taaldebat*, they were acknowledged as worthy fellow Afrikaans-speakers. It is evident that in the past, white Afrikaans-speakers did not acknowledge non-white Afrikaans-speakers because of the emphasis on a bounded group of pure whites as well as the variation between the standard and the non-standard varieties of Afrikaans. Webb and Kriel (2000:39) state that '[b]eing Afrikaans was a condition for being a member of the Afrikaner nation/*volk*, but it was not the only condition…. [O]ne had to be white. The so-called coloureds therefore did not qualify as Afrikaners despite the fact that they were predominantly Afrikaans-speaking'. The non-standard variety of Afrikaans spoken by coloured people was seen as 'underdeveloped' and 'inferior' by Afrikaners in at least most of the 20[th]century. Regarding the non-standard variety of Afrikaans that was spoken by coloured people as well as their culture, Willemse (2009:n.pag.) states that 'this creolising culture and language [of coloured Afrikaans-speakers] are bubbling under the surface of the official [standard Afrikaans variant] and are still regarded as deviant or exotic'.

The white Afrikaner culture was visible in the *koshuiskultuur* (residence culture), especially in terms of welcoming programmes for first-year students. Non-white first-years entering these residences, although coming from diverse cultural backgrounds, were obliged to participate in activities reflecting white Afrikaner traditions. When I entered a student residence as a first year in 2002, most of the welcoming activities in the residence reflected white Afrikaner culture. Belonging to the minority of coloureds at SU, I did not feel as much part of this particular residence as my white counterparts with Afrikaner backgrounds. Before the management of SU made the decision to abolish all 'racially' offensive welcoming activities where first years are concerned, better known as *doop*, in student residences on campus, initiation practices were not nearly as severe in the female

84

residences as in the case of the male residences. Although all *doop* activities are no longer permissible at SU, less evident and less offensive white Afrikaner cultural activities still continued to form part of Stellenbosch University's *koshuiskultuur* (residence culture). In the Ministerial Report of 2008 a similar finding was raised which supports my argument that some form of *doop* or initiation activities are still taking place. This Report stated that 'it seems that initiations still continues to a greater or lesser extent, especially after the orientation week, when there is less stringent monitoring' (South Africa, 2008:94). Justifications offered for the ongoing use of these less evident white Afrikaner cultural activities, despite the current implementation of transformation practices for the entire university (that is a top priority), are that for integration to effectively take place, non-whites must familiarise themselves with the 'culture' of whites and vice versa. Whether that is true and in fact occurring is another matter due to the fact that the majority of students who occupy leadership positions in student residences are still mainly white Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers and as a result of that white Afrikaner *koshuis* traditions are still practised on different levels in most student residences on campus.

It was also observed on numerous occasions that the extra-curricular practices outside of the academic environment of SU consisted of activities that were based on white Afrikaner culture. An example of such an activity is the *Sokkie* dances held in the *Neelsie* student centre, which are regarded by many white Afrikaans-speaking students as a cultural tradition. In March of 2009, the Student Affairs Division under the leadership of Llewellyn MacMaster (Dean of Students), tried to tackle the problem by organising a multicultural musical show, *The Hunter's Dry Bash*, by getting disk-jockeys (commonly known as DJs) from diverse 'racial' origin involved, to firstly entertain and, most importantly, to assist with the integration process of all the 'racial' categories on campus. This effort by MacMaster and his team, in my view, was very successful and more initiatives similar to this one can help students, especially those coming from non-Afrikaner backgrounds, to feel more at home at this formerly predominantly white Afrikaans university.

During informal discussions conducted with non-white and non-Afrikaner students on campus, the majority stated that they still felt excluded and some even reported being 'racially' discriminated against in some of the numerous student *pubs* and clubs in the Stellenbosch town area. In terms of the latter, it seems important to draw on Mabokela's (2001:69) statement where she quoted a SU student who said: 'Just look at Stellenbosch (the town) – its White, White, White. Where do I go to socialise? …'. Clubs and pubs in

Stellenbosch, patronised by students mostly accommodated white Afrikaans-speaking students in the past by providing music that catered for them. However, some changes have occurred on the social scene. Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly evident that the type of music that students from diverse cultural backgrounds favour is becoming more similar, mostly due to collaboration between white Afrikaans-speaking musicians and their non-white Afrikaans-speaking counterparts. Another factor contributing to this similar taste in music is the increasing tendency to favour the music of international musicians above that of local musicians. Thus, in terms of social integration of 'racially' and culturally diverse categories at SU, some positive integration did in fact occur outside the academic environment.

In my view, another important factor that could increase integration between 'racial' categories at SU, involves sport. The management of this HAU seems to agree that sport can be used as a tool to encourage integration between diverse social categories. Thus, *The Sport Plan of the University* was created and included within the diversity framework, displayed on the university's website, for the main purpose to 'provide opportunities in the area of student recruitment, and for the development of an inclusive institutional culture' (Stellenbosch University, 2003b). Regarding the situation at SU it was quite evident that sport generally associated with white culture received preferential treatment in the form of sponsorships and media coverage.

One of the findings from my questionnaires was that the majority of non-white students still regard white culture to be very dominant at SU. Leibowitz and Van Deventer (2007:89) state that 'Stellenbosch University is currently mainly white and Afrikaans in terms of both staff and student population'. Despite the latter observation, the management of SU stated on numerous occasions that one of its main goals is to respect and recognise the cultural practices of all individuals coming from diverse cultural background. This goal is reflected through SU's commitment to diversity, evident in all its policy documentation. An example of SU's commitment to diversity was seen when Muslim followers entered the Ramadan period. It became an institution for Botman, the former Vice-Chancellor, to wish these followers a prosperous Ramadan beforehand. This can be regarded as evidence that (although a small gesture) the university was in fact making an effort to embrace and acknowledge the various cultures belonging to its diverse academic community.

With regard to the wider South African university context the Reitz incident that occurred

86

on the 26th of February 2008 at the University of the Free State (UFS) is relevant for this discussion. This incident became known when a video was made public and it was reported that the footage on the video was most probably 'racially' motivated. This video depicted how four white male students, living in a student residence called Reitz, had black cleaning staff on their knees and forcing them to eat food that was apparently urinated on. The four students involved claimed that the intent behind their actions can in no way be attributed to racism, but was rather part of a mock initiation. However, according to the *Ministerial Report*, the 'real intent was to protest against the University's recently introduced policy to integrate the student residences' (South Africa, 2008:23). The actions of these four students were regarded widely as humiliating, degrading and inhuman, and this took many non-whites back to the years of oppression and discrimination when similar practices occurred. For many South Africans, the Reitz incident 'opened up old wounds' of unresolved 'racial' tensions between the different 'racial' categories on campus. This incident is a clear indication that higher education institutions throughout the country are still struggling to overcome 'racial' and cultural obstacles. The Ministerial Report also notes: 'The role of institutions ... is to challenge the prejudices of students and to understand and explore these as a basis for overcoming them' (South Africa, 2008:96). Jansen argued that,

> [l]iving together in the residences more than learning together in the classroom often caused racial tensions to boil over – and for good reason, since historically, "the residence as a spiritual home for many students became more important than their university. The residences are where I collected the raw emotions of white and black students (2009:11).

This emphasis on student resident life by Jansen points out where most 'racially' offensive (often hidden) incidents are taking place. These are often swept under the rug and thus not properly dealt with. In relation to the Reitz incident, one of the leaders of Adam Tas whom I interviewed stated that as in the case of UFS, SU was also not free from 'racial' discriminatory practices. As a matter of fact, this student leader felt that 'racial' discrimination was still occurring at SU but just in a more subtle and hidden manner.

To conclude, the argument made earlier in Chapter 2 that there exists a very important and close relationship between language, culture and 'race' is also applicable here. Thus, as in the case of some Afrikaners (referring specifically to the group wanting to protect the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language), their mother-tongue seems to have very important associations with their cultural and 'racial' identity and vice versa. This cultural

and 'racial' identity can be expressed through the use of their mother-tongue, Afrikaans. Furthermore, it can be inferred that the claimed cultural identity of an individual can be a very potent political factor, because according to some white Afrikaner students, it forms such an integral part of their whole identity: who they are as well as where they come from. In relation to SU, an option for university management includes not eliminating white cultural identity but to rather exclude traditions that are regarded as discriminatory and oppressive to non-white *Maties* in the post-apartheid context. The Leibowitz Report (2006:5), at the time, documented the reaction of some white Afrikaans-speaking students at SU to the elimination of everything that suggests that Stellenbosch University is an Afrikaans higher education institution, as follows:

> Any indication that the University will not remain "Afrikaans" will involve much consternation amongst this group [the student population] and the negative reaction, which would potentially assume a publicised and politicised form, would have to be taken into account if a new policy were to depart substantially from the old, and in favour of less Afrikaans.

It is important to add here that the situation at SU has changed at the time of writing, seven years after the findings of the Leibowitz Report were published in 2006, due to the fact that Afrikaans-speaking students no longer constituted the majority. Afrikaans also lost its dominant position as the medium of undergraduate education. The high level of resistance that some Afrikaans-speaking students were expected to portray against the acceptance of the elimination of the Afrikaans language at SU, is not so clear-cut any more. Despite the above change in opinion among some white Afrikaans-speaking students, I have also noted increasing resistance and critique from Afrikaans language activists such as Kapp and Giliomee towards university management as the university's commitment towards transforming into an inclusive, multilingual institution of higher learning is becoming stronger. Thus, in my view, the option to eliminate all discriminatory and oppressive traditions attached to SU would most definitely cause a strong reaction from these prominent members of the protectionist group in the *taaldebat* as well as some white Afrikaner students. The goal of uniting SU's diverse student population on a deeper integral level may be possible if a new inclusive comprehension of the term *koshuiskultuur was* explored and incorporated into student resident culture. This is in effect what has been the aim of a *New Residence Placing Policy* that was approved on the 29th of April 2013 by the Council of Stellenbosch University. As stated on the university's website, an objective of this policy is,

> that students be placed and allocated in such a way that it will contribute positively to the

formation of sound, diverse communities that will in turn contribute to optimal growth and development in the out-of-class context and to eventual success (academically and otherwise). Also: The five diversity factors taken into account in this regard are: (1) South African citizen or international student; (2) language preference (Afrikaans, English, or Other); (3) ethnicity (Coloured, Black, Indian or White); (4) first- or non-first-generation student; and (5) economic class (for students who need financial support in the form of bursaries and who qualify for such support on the basis of a means test) (Stellenbosch University, 2013).

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter focused on the future of the Afrikaans language in education not only on a national but also on a university level, the *taaldebat* at SU, identity issues as well as obstacles relating to 'race' and culture and lastly on identity politics that are intensifying at this former white Afrikaans-dominant institution.

Regarding the future of Afrikaans on the national level, it can be concluded that the fact that this language was granted official and equal status to the other ten official languages, as recognised in the Constitution of South Africa, is certainly no guarantee that the language will retain its public functions. On a university level, the fact that the Afrikaans language obtained a 'high status' partly due to its contributions to science, literature, art, etc. is also no guarantee that the language will survive in a dominant form at SU. Jacobs (2001:30) emphasises the important role that language has, by arguing that '[l]anguage and language planning should have the goal of addressing all the language needs of a society, especially because language revolves around people'. Thus, aiming to exclude or minimise the prominent use of English as medium of instruction other than Afrikaans from this HAU, is not a solution to the perceived threat that some Afrikaans language activists, specifically the *taalstryders* at SU have identified. This perceived threat relates to the notion that SU is becoming more anglicised after every academic year at the cost of Afrikaans which was named the 'default' language of undergraduate instruction in policy documents such as the Strategic Framework of the Century and Beyond (2000).

These Afrikaans language activists were also very critical of the term 'default' that was used in this official document and argued that the term 'anchor' language would have suited the position of Afrikaans as main medium of instruction at SU much better. They also insisted that the survival of the Afrikaans language as main medium of tuition relied on

certain guarantees and rules that had to be assured and applied respectively in terms of how SU management went about language-related issues. These rules included that the Afrikaans language had to be protected with more rigid monitoring in all faculties and classes because according to Giliomee 'no effective monitoring system exists [at SU]' (Giliomee, 2009:n.pag.). Transparency regarding the Afrikaans language as main medium of instruction of undergraduate teaching to prospective students and staff also had to be done. The so-called *taalstryders* also wanted Afrikaans medium instruction from the second-year onwards in undergraduate teaching and that English-speaking lecturers had to adapt to lecturing in solely Afrikaans from a certain year onwards. This rigid monitoring strongly resembled the rigid manner in which the nationalist apartheid government ruled the country as a whole. An example of this rigid monitoring was when non-white citizens were monitored and supervised on an all-time basis through a pass system whose main purpose was to regulate non-whites in white urban areas.

The progressive group, who included the former Vice-Chancellor of SU, Chris Brink, which is opposing the views of the *taalstryders* is arguing for a more inclusive approach to linguistic and cultural matters at SU. This group wanted to 'place the language issue in a broader set of relations' and stated that 'the position of Afrikaans needed to be understood in the context of post-apartheid' (Van der Waal 2009a:n.pag.). Van der Waal stated that Chris Brink transformed the university to become less exclusive (2009a:n.pag.). Brink was criticised by the *taalstryders* for how he handled the Afrikaans language issue and as a result was not trusted by the activists with the protection of Afrikaans. One of the critiques that the *taalstryders* constantly received from the progressive group is that they are blatantly ignoring the social and contextual changes that the country is going through. A similar point was made (although referring to the institutional context) in an article written by a group of professors of SU in the *Mail and Guardian*, 'Language of division and diversion' (Van der Waal et al. 2009b), which was a direct response to an article, 'A war of deadly languages', written by Hermann Giliomee. In the article, the professors pointed out that 'the challenges of a multilingual society, the demands of a globalising scientific community and socio-economic needs ought to be central when Afrikaans in higher education is discussed' (Van der Waal et al. 2009b). The point that the professors wanted to convey to Giliomee and other *taalstryders* (language warriors) was that their agenda which mainly focused on the protection of the 'higher functions' of Afrikaans at SU, needs to take other important factors into consideration as well as the fact that the dynamics within this former Afrikaans-dominant university has changed and is still evolving.

It is also important to mention that the *taaldebat* involved more than two groups. According to Van der Waal (2009a:n.pag.) a new group emerged in the *taaldebat* that included coloured Afrikaans-speaking leaders, namely the late Jakes Gerwel and Neville Alexander, Hein Willemse, Russel Botman, Nico Koopman, etc. Van der Waal further stated that these coloured leaders were 'criticized by white Afrikaners for their pragmatism and lack of a struggle mentality' (2009a:n.pag.). This lack of a struggle mentality that Van der Waal is referring to refers to the reluctance portrayed by coloured Afrikaans-speaking leaders to support the exclusive objectives and views of their white Afrikaans-speaking counterparts concerning the protection of the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language in the language struggle. One of the coloured Afrikaans-speaking leaders, Hein Willemse, mentioned at the Roots Conference, held at the University of the Western Cape from 22-23 September 2009, that despite the lawful insistence on language rights (by Afrikaans language activists), this discourse has no broad legitimacy in the long-term. He further stated that he supports Afrikaans as a language free of the conservational coercion and forms of narrow nationalism that mark such a big part of its formal development over the past century (Willemse, 2009:n.pag.). Thus, significant differences existed between white Afrikaans leaders and their coloured counterparts concerning the protection and preservation of Afrikaans for future purposes.

Although identity issues pertaining to 'race', language and culture at SU seem insurmountable currently, available solutions do exist. A possible way forward may involve a deeper understanding of all the views in the *taaldebat* and allowing certain compromises to take place. Brink (2006:iii) is of the view that '[w]hile Stellenbosch University may choose to promote Afrikaans as a language of teaching and science, it is not the business of Stellenbosch University to *save* Afrikaans'. In relation to Brink's view, I can see the value in maintaining the use of Afrikaans, to some degree, as an everyday language as well as one of the media of instruction at SU. Here, it becomes valuable to acknowledge the fact that this HAU is not situated on an island but rather in a country that is striving to transform into a fully diverse, integrated and united nation. Hence, the post-apartheid context, in which SU is currently operating, has to be taken into account whenever language and language-related matters are discussed. Therefore, the benefits and disadvantages of adopting a multicultural and multilingual identity on a deeper institutional level versus retaining a dominant Afrikaans identity should be carefully weighed up by all stakeholders in the *taaldebat*. After all, SU is regarded as a national asset by the

91

government, and therefore has the national obligation to portray the country's rich diversity as well as being of service to the whole population and not just certain 'racial' and cultural categories of its populace.

Chapter 5: The Adam Tas student association and its role in the transformation process at Stellenbosch University

5.1   Introduction

This chapter sets out to provide an ethnographic account of the Adam Tas student association. In addition, the reasons behind establishing this association, whose main focus is centred around Afrikaans activism at SU, will be explored and analysed. The increase in national initiatives surrounding Afrikaans activism post-apartheid was fuelled by the loss in special support from the government for Afrikaans when the 11 official languages were equalised. In relation to the position that the Afrikaans language occupied post 1994, Vestergaard (2001:26) claims that 'since 1994, Afrikaans has had to find its place among ten other official languages'. The national 'fight' for language rights shifted towards the higher education sector when some Afrikaans-speaking academics and leading opinion-makers became concerned about the decline in the use of Afrikaans as a medium of tertiary tuition. This concern among the Afrikaans elite led to the decision to mobilise in an attempt to save Afrikaans from being eliminated in higher education. These concerns took centre stage in a *taaldebat* at SU, a HAU where the implementation of transformational interventions was creating tension between the university management and Afrikaans language activists who wanted to maintain an Afrikaans identity.

Concerns relating to the decline of Afrikaans as a medium of tuition at SU were not confined to the older members of the Afrikaans elite (as indicated in the previous chapter), because a group of mostly white, Afrikaans-speaking students also voiced similar concerns. These Afrikaans-speaking students decided to mobilise in the 'fight' to save the Afrikaans language from dying out in what they perceived as an increasingly anglicised higher education environment. Thus, the Adam Tas association was formed as a result of the ongoing and unresolved language struggle. The association's initial motto was 'Transformation in Afrikaans', and this emphasis on Afrikaans was influenced by the uncertainty that was surrounding Afrikaans, as a 'high status' language in the midst of the transformation process at SU. The Adam Tas association, as an Afrikaans language movement, was formed during a period of very strong controversy. During this controversial period very strong language was utilised by the association's leadership at its numerous protest actions. An example of strong language that Adam Tas used on the main campus was its message written on placards that the alterations that university

management made to the language policy would result in the 'death of diversity'. Messages that the association wanted to convey to students were demonstrated through strong controversial symbolic actions. An example of a strong controversial action that was portrayed by Adam Tas was when it carried an empty coffin on the campus of SU to symbolise the 'death of diversity'. These extreme measures taken by Adam Tas, generated a diverse set of reactions within the student community of SU.

It is interesting to add that these strong and controversial demonstrations displayed by a social movement are not unique to the Adam Tas association. The direct action AIDS movement, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which was formed in New York in March 1987, also made use of, as Gould puts it '…raucous demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, zaps and disruptions, die-ins and other forms of street theatre, meetings with government and other officials, and eye-catching agitprop…' (2009: 4). These protest actions resulted out of desperation against the increasing AIDS-related deaths among gay and lesbian individuals and the then Reagan administration's inaction towards the epidemic. In comparison to Adam Tas, ACT UP organised much more '…symbolic representations of death' in the form of "die-ins" or '…people lying on the ground holding up headstones…' (Filar, 2014) in a bid to alter public policy surrounding treatment options and most importantly alter the general consensus surrounding AIDS and subsequent discriminating practices committed against the infected. At one actual representation of death, members of ACT UP, decided to hold a political funeral of one of its members by carrying the person's body through the streets and then opening the casket in a public space, which is against public policy, thus risking arrest by police. At another protest action, members of ACT UP threw the ashes of all those members who died as a result of AIDS, onto the lawn of the White House, in an attempt to remind the government of their civil duty towards all citizens, irrespective of health status (Filar, 2014). It can be suggested that in the same manner that deep-seated emotions towards the Afrikaans language fuelled emotionally-filled public demonstrations by Adam Tas, as the language became increasingly threatened, the frustration, anger and desperation of ACT UP's members, in relation to the AIDS crisis, also fuelled their controversial public demonstrations.

As time elapsed, Adam Tas leaders became aware of the changes in demography and language policy at SU which resulted in Afrikaans-speaking students no longer constituting the majority as English-speaking students increasingly gained entry into this former Afrikaans enclave. The change in demography at SU compelled Adam Tas to

94

reconceptualise its initial policies if it was to become a recognisable force on campus. One of the changes in the association was to come across as being more tolerant towards transformation and extending its invitation to black and coloured students. This change in attitude of Adam Tas can be regarded as an attempt to seek a new support basis (among the non-white student population at SU) and redirect its foci for action.

The first section of the chapter sheds light on the association's historical background which will include the link to its namesake Adam Tas, an early opponent of colonial oppression. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the goals of Adam Tas as well as the contribution that the leaders of this association intended to make to the unfolding transformation process at SU. I will also shed light on how changing dynamics in the *taaldebat* led to changes in the association which included the adoption of a renewed role in the transformation process at SU. Irreversible changes in demography and language policy at SU, which occurred over a period of time, had to be accepted as realities and could thus not be further ignored by Adam Tas leaders and other Afrikaans language activists. Thus, these institutional changes at SU led to certain strategic adjustments in the Adam Tas association in an attempt to increase its support and relevance on campus. I will also elaborate on the association's idea of its possible future impact, not only institutionally, but also on the national level.

5.2 History of the Adam Tas student association

5.2.1 Establishment of the association

The Adam Tas student association was established on the 10th of February 2007 in front of the main administration building of SU when a big anchor, decorated in the colours of the national flag, was tied to the pillars of the building. The first chairperson, Roelof Nel, stated that 'the symbolism behind this was that Stellenbosch University is not an island but is tightly anchored in its context, where it should be playing a role, namely in South Africa and the Western Cape' (Nel, 2007, my translation). This event attracted media attention and led to reports on radio stations and in newspapers throughout the country and globally. This organisation was established by four SU students: Roelof Nel, Piet le Roux, Jared Abels and Nico de Wet. Nel was appointed as the chairman of the association and Le Roux as the strategic planner because they were seen to possess the necessary leadership skills to head the association. Both of them were also elected to the SRC of the university the following year. Abels took on the position of vice-chairman and De Wet became the additional member of the Executive Committee. According to the founding

95

members, the association was named after Adam Tas to honour this historical figure, who lived in the Stellenbosch area. In an interview, a more recent executive member confirmed what influenced the choice of name of the association, by stating:

> Adam Tas was a rebellious figure on own soil, because he went against a certain principle. He is regarded as a local hero (because he came from Stellenbosch) and due to that *Maties* (or students at Stellenbosch University) can relate better with him because he was also from Stellenbosch. In my opinion, the founding members were honest in their motives when they chose a name for the organisation (my translation).

A short description of the life of Adam Tas is useful to understand why the association wanted to have this historical link.

Prior to the arrival of Adam Tas in the Cape of Good Hope in 1697, he belonged to the *burgerstand* (middle class) in the Netherlands. At the time, according to the policy of the VOC (Dutch East Indian Company), the *vryburgers* (free citizens) were the only group allowed to produce food for the market. This allowed them to earn just enough to make ends meet. The term, *vryburger*, is explained in *Die Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (HAT) as a citizen that possessed the right to practise a free occupation (*vry beroep*) … (my translation) (Odendaal and Gouws, 2000:1334). Civil servants, on the other hand, were not allowed to produce food because their only task was to serve the VOC located in Amsterdam. Hunter states that 'the VOC was the most powerful and profitable commercial entity in the world, the main engine of prosperity for the United Northern Provinces, or Dutch Republic' (2009:6). Hunter further notes that '[p]erpetuating that wealth was the responsibility of the VOC's board, the Here Sewentien, or Lords Seventeen' (2009:6). Early in the 18th century, prominent civil servants decided to ignore the unwritten contract that prohibited them from producing food for the market. This led to a struggle between the civil servants and the citizens because the rights and claims of the citizens who lived in the Cape were violated by the civil servants who considered themselves to be superior to the poor citizens. Adam Tas decided to stand up for the *vryburgers* by acting as a prominent speaker on their behalf (Giliomee, 2007:n.pag.).

In 1705 Adam Tas formulated a document that was signed by 63 *vryburgers*, in which their complaints were stated. In this document, the *vryburgers* complained to the Lords Seventeen about the malpractices that the Governor (Willem Adriaan van der Stel) and his civil servants carried out and that they feared that the civil servants might prohibit them from producing food for the market, which could result in starvation amongst the *vryburger*

community. In reaction the civil servants decided to arrest Adam Tas and confiscate his writing-table. The supporters of Adam Tas were also arrested and locked up in the Castle. Adam Tas was locked up for more than thirteen months. Six months after Adam Tas was released, the Lords Seventeen granted the citizens of the Cape permission to go ahead with producing food for the market and not only prohibited civil servants from trading in the Cape, but also demanded that they sell their farms. The outcome was considered to be an enormous victory for Adam Tas and the citizens of the Cape (Giliomee, 2007).

Adam Tas was released from prison on the 17th of April 1707 (Giliomee, 2007). The decision by the Adam Tas association leadership to declare this day (17 April) as the day of Adam Tas was meant to commemorate the life of its namesake. In my interviews with the leadership of the association it became very clear that the main reason why the Adam Tas student association wanted a link to Adam Tas was because of the similarities that the association's leadership assumed their association to have with this historical figure. The main similarity, according to them was that in the same way that Adam Tas fought for the rights of the *vryburgers* to produce food for the market, as a means of survival, the student association also claimed to be fighting for the right of Afrikaans mother-tongue speaking students at SU to receive their lectures in Afrikaans and in the process ensure the survival of the Afrikaans language in an increasingly anglicised higher education environment. In an interview with a former chairman of the Adam Tas student association, he commented that 'the African National Congress, has a great amount of respect for Adam Tas and perceived him to be an important historical and political figure due to the fact that this (ordinary) man fought for the rights of a minority group that was discriminated against'. It can be argued that the respect that the former chairman claims the ANC possessed for Adam Tas, derived from associations made with its own liberation struggle because in the same way that Adam Tas fought for the rights of the oppressed, the ANC also fought for the human rights and dignity of the marginalised population during the period that apartheid prevailed.

Several factors contributed to the formation of this student initiative in 2007. During 2006, Chris Brink, who then occupied the position of Vice-Chancellor of SU was widely criticised by Giliomee and other so-called *taalbulle*[4] (language warriors) for wanting to anglicise SU. The creation of the Adam Tas association was one of the ways in which the Afrikaans

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[4] A *taalbul* can be described as an individual whose mission is to fight for a language in opposition to other languages that are seen to be in competition with it.

language lobby was putting pressure on the university management that eventually led to the departure of Brink at the end of 2006. As a result of Brink's departure the controversy concerning language issues decreased. Discussions regarding language policy resumed as soon as the new Vice-Chancellor of SU, Russel Botman, was appointed. This appointment led to the start of a revision process of the university's language policy, four years after its introduction, as already decided on at the introduction of the language policy in 2002. The main reason behind the decision to have revisions every four years was to ensure that university management continued to be operating in unison with the needs of its student population, regarding language policy and their academic success. In 2007 it was also decided by the Council of SU to reject proposed policy changes and, with better monitoring and with an investigation into the provision of parallel medium instruction, to stand by the policy of 2002.

The language policy that was accepted in 2002 stated that 'Afrikaans is the default language of undergraduate learning and instruction. English is used in particular circumstances as a language of undergraduate learning and instruction' (Stellenbosch University, 2002). Giliomee stated that this language policy was 'ostensibly [keeping] the English (the lion) at bay' by '[singling] out Afrikaans single medium as the 'automatic' or 'default' option, and allows the use of dual medium only in circumscribed cases' (Giliomee, 2009). The founding members of Adam Tas, shared the above sentiment of older Afrikaans language activists, that the implementation of the T-option, or dual medium instruction, could reduce and ultimately eradicate the use of the Afrikaans language in the long-term. The latter concern contributed hugely to their decision to mobilise and establish an association in 2007 that could act as a mouth-piece for Afrikaans-speaking students on campus. Although Adam Tas was in agreement with university management that SU was in need of transformation their only requirement was that this process of transformation should occur through the Afrikaans language to ensure its survival and protection at this university in the long-term.

The Adam Tas student association had links to prominent members of the Convocation of SU who were driving the language struggle. Firstly, Adam Tas had strong ties with the prominent language activist, Hermann Giliomee, in the sense that this former SU lecturer and public figure involved in the *taaldebat,* performed numerous speeches at discussion events *(sprekersaande)* of Adam Tas. One of these discussion events, named the *Wyn-en-Politiek-aand* (Wine-and-Politics evening) was held on the 20th of April 2009, at a venue

called *Die Bloukamer* (The Blue Room, my translation), a hall situated in the *Neelsie* student centre. This was the second event of the association that I attended. The atmosphere at the Wine-and-Politics evening, can be described as relaxed but simultaneously tense. The dimmed lights in the room contributed largely to this relaxed atmosphere and the relatively small space used in The Blue Room added to the intimate and cosiness of the event. Refreshments, including wine, were served to attendees. Before the welcoming process started, all attendees were requested to fill their glasses and small plates and settle in at a table of their choice. Approximately fifty attendees were present, of which the majority was white and Afrikaans-speaking. No black attendees were present and only three coloured individuals were visible: which included me, my companion and one executive member of the association. These disproportionate statistics as well as the fact that this was only my second time attending the events of Adam Tas contributed heavily to my nervousness and discomfort. After my companion and I had settled in at a table and the meeting started, I became less nervous and to some extent comfortable.

The public significance of this discussion event was that it occurred only days before the 2009 local elections. Giliomee provided a critical overview of the arguments that some of the political parties had regarding language and culture (*Die Matie,* 2009). Whenever Giliomee had encouraged Afrikaans-speakers at SU to act on the possible demise of the Afrikaans language as medium of tuition, most of the attendees were applauding him. Another speaker at the event, Lina Spies, a former professor in the Department of Afrikaans and Dutch at Stellenbosch University and well-known Afrikaans poet, emphasised her continued support for Afrikaans in the language struggle and encouraged Afrikaans-speaking students at SU to unify in the fight to save the Afrikaans language from a possible demise. Vasti Roodt, senior lecturer in Political Philosophy in the Department of Political Science at Stellenbosch University delivered a more neutral speech in which she pointed out to attendees the importance of voting in the upcoming local elections and the impact that informed decision-making during an election can have on a society afterwards. The local student newspaper reported that the chairman of the association, Nico de Wet, claimed that the reason behind organising this Wine-and-Politics evening was because Adam Tas wanted to create a last opportunity for students to think critically in terms of their vote (*Die Matie*, 2009). It is interesting to note that a student association that claims to want to save the Afrikaans language from dying out at a former Afrikaans-dominant university was using their event as a vehicle to inform and remind students of voting at an

upcoming local political election. This led me to conclude that Adam Tas's quest for retaining Afrikaans as the main language of tuition at SU might in itself also be a quest to restore some of the political power that the minority lost when the ANC-government took over in 1994.

Giliomee's regular presence and public speaking at events held by Adam Tas, such as the Wine-and-Politics evening, was not the only indicator of his strong ties to the association. His close relationship with Adam Tas was also portrayed when the leadership stated on its web page that the association should approach Giliomee for advice. This public statement by Adam Tas, adds to the speculation that Giliomee and other members of the older white Afrikaans-speaking activists, whose goal it was to ensure that SU would retain its Afrikaans-dominant character, were behind the establishment of the Adam Tas student association in the first place. Regarding the possible role of some senior Afrikaans-speaking activists in the establishment of the Adam Tas association, a top official at SU shared a similar sentiment during an interview:

> Adam Tas has the right to establish an organisation but the motives behind establishing such an organisation can also be questioned. Older people may be responsible for the formation of this organisation and are thus using these (younger) students at SU to portray their opinions [more] openly (my translation).

A number of the prominent older white Afrikaans-speaking activists were chosen to help reach the aims of the Convocation. The latter became a prominent site for the Afrikaans activist lobby as they could mobilise the pro-Afrikaans sentiments among the alumni. Giliomee was elected by the Convocation to be one of their representatives that served on the Council of SU from 2006 until 2010. A prominent student leader at SU, one of the founding members and the first chair of Adam Tas, Roelof Nel, was subsequently unanimously appointed as secretary of the Convocation in 2010. Thus, both Giliomee and Nel were strongly tied to the Convocation and the Adam Tas student association (Stellenbosch University, 2010).

It is also interesting to take note of the link that the Adam Tas association had with some other members of SU's Council. On the web page of Adam Tas (The Adam Tas association, 2010), it was mentioned that a prominent businessman, who also represented the Convocation on SU's Council, donated R 35 000 to the Adam Tas association during the 2008/9 term. This information leads to the finding that with regard to both the

Convocation as well as the Council of SU, the Adam Tas student association had strong ties with some of the members who served on the Convocation management body as well as on the Council of SU. These strong ties were very beneficial for Adam Tas in terms of representation and acknowledgement of the association at prominent functions held by both entities.

The motivation provided by Adam Tas leaders for establishing the organisation arose from ongoing talks around campus concerning the language policy of SU. In these conversations students spoke increasingly about their concerns regarding the role and survival of Afrikaans as the main language of instruction at this institution as well as the role that Afrikaans-speaking students should play during these heated debates. It became apparent that students were worried about three main concerns: 1) 'The role of the *Afrikaners* and the Afrikaner-student in post-apartheid South Africa'; 2) 'The role of the coloured students in post-apartheid South Africa and the need for empowerment in the Western Cape'; 3) 'The place of black (non-Afrikaans-speaking) and international students at Stellenbosch University' (Nel, 2007, my translation). The reason behind the establishment of Adam Tas on the campus of SU, despite the fact that the student community at this higher education institution was widely regarded as being highly apathetic to campus-level politics, seemed to point to the increasing inclination to utilise English as medium of instruction in classrooms at the cost of Afrikaans. Another reason that contributed to the mobilisation of Afrikaans-speaking students in the form of Adam Tas, was connected to increasing feelings of deprivation and threat that some white people were experiencing in the new South Africa. These sentiments of some whites in the post-apartheid context generated wide support from white Afrikaans-speakers as discussions on internet blogs have shown. Chris Brunette (2007) displayed one commentator's position in an online debate, *Reaksie op Blitsdebat: SêNet* (Response on Rapid debate: Just Say, my translation) in which the *taal* (language) at SU was debated. In Brunette's (2007) article, the commentator remarked:

> The whole polemic concerning language is nothing less than a mock-fight: The Afrikaner self has feelings of being side-lined and is thus using the language policy of Stellenbosch University, as spelled out by the Rector of SU, Prof Brink, to resist against everything that they felt were being squashed (my translation).

In response to the position of the first commentator, a second commentator, in the same article, pointed out the loss that will be endured if Afrikaans was to be eliminated at this

tertiary institution:

> Language debate – a few facts: To let Afrikaans die out, is in fact, depriving a modern civilised group of people of their mother-tongue (Brunette, 2007) (my translation).

In relation to the above sentiments portrayed in Brunette's article, both of these comments reflected the sentiments that were put forward by stakeholders in the *taaldebat* at SU.

To return to the aims of Adam Tas, Nel stated that their initial intention was to establish the Adam Tas student association as one 'that would exert itself for the promotion of Afrikaans for students at Stellenbosch University' (Nel, 2007, my translation). Their specific aims were to: 1) 'Encourage a critical conversation about Afrikaans that took place in the Afrikaans language'; 2) 'Mobilise Afrikaans-speaking students to play an effective role in South Africa'; 3) 'Play a unifying role for Afrikaans'; 4) 'Be a mouthpiece for [the] Afrikaans language (as well as its mother-tongue speakers)' (Nel, 2007, my translation).

To elaborate on these and other aims of Adam Tas, it can be stated that the organisation's main aim was captured in its motto, 'Transformation through Afrikaans'. Whether that is at all possible, is debatable. The implication behind creating this motto was that more coloured Afrikaans-speaking students should have been recruited and that there also existed a point of difference regarding the attainability of this objective. In terms of the motto of the association, the first question that comes to mind is: can a higher education institution be perceived as meaningfully transformed if it attempts to transform through the use of a single medium of tuition, namely Afrikaans? Isn't one of the core implications of transformation into the new democratic South Africa the integration of all the diverse aspects of South African society that include all languages, all 'races', all religions, all cultures etc.? Most of the students in the black and coloured student category at SU whom I interviewed or informally conversed with about the Adam Tas student association argued that one of the real intentions behind electing non-white students in leadership positions was to depict the association as more diverse and integrated to achieve their ultimate goal: ensuring the survival and preservation of the Afrikaans language at this university. These students labelled the coloured student, Jared Abels, as 'a puppet' in the association's 'hidden agenda of exclusivity' when he was elected as deputy chair in 2007 and chair in 2008. In a formal interview, an official at SU also displayed his scepticism towards Jared Abels' initial appointment as deputy chair of Adam Tas, when he claimed:

> Jared was only used as a pawn [by Adam Tas] in [his appointment] as deputy chair [in 2007] to portray a certain image of the organisation to students within the student

community that the organisation is supportive of a multicultural context and also the integration of students from diverse racial [categories] (my translation).

Thus, the election of Jared Abels, a coloured student, as deputy chair in 2007 and again as chair in 2008, might have been a strategic move by the association's leadership to alter their exclusive white image. Contrary to their expectation, this move was fruitless because it reinforced opinions within the black and coloured racial categories of students at SU that Adam Tas had a hidden agenda that related more to exclusivity than inclusivity and diversity.

The Adam Tas leadership regarded the continuity of the association as important. It was reported by Theron (2007:3) that the association was 'constantly searching for younger students to ensure the continuity of the association', taking it to the next level of becoming a better entity. The Adam Tas association also discovered that a great number of the current generation of Afrikaans-speaking students were not in the least optimistic about the Afrikaans language, mostly due to the impact that globalisation, and more specifically anglicisation (*verengelsing*), had on every tertiary institution world-wide. Manuel Castells (1997:51 cited in Kriel, 2003:174) 'maintains that the age of globalisation is at [the] same time the age of nationalist resurgence, and that the new nationalist movements are very often language-based ... '. Kriel (2003:174) argues that '[t]he new wave of Afrikaner nationalism is, in [her] view, a textbook example of ... a defensive reaction to globalisation'. A fair number of Afrikaans-speaking students believed that for them to become 'more English' and 'less Afrikaans' would benefit them in the longer-term, specifically when they entered a much globalised working environment after graduating from university. It is for these reasons that the leaders of Adam Tas incorporated the aim of re-instilling a sense of hope and pride into the mindsets of Afrikaans-speaking students in terms of their mother-tongue.

The initial motto of Adam Tas was 'Transformation in Afrikaans'. According to Ernst Marais, former chairman (2009/2010), the association's motto was changed shortly after the election of the association's new executive committee to 'Transformation through Afrikaans' (Steenkamp, 2010). Marais further reported that they have felt that this change reflected the association's objections better because the primary aim of Adam Tas was to promote Afrikaans as an inclusive language at Stellenbosch University (SU) (Steenkamp, 2010). It was also stated on the web page of the association (Adam Tas association, 2010)

as well as in interviews conducted with its leadership that the focus of this student initiative was to reflect inclusion, and not to be an association that was politically motivated or racially exclusive. Throughout the three years of conducting fieldwork on Adam Tas, the opposite can be said in terms of its 'racial' profile: despite the association's focus to reflect inclusion, it was rather reflecting just the opposite, due to the fact that the majority of its membership was white Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers, thus reflecting a white Afrikaner image. My research findings suggest that the reason behind this dominant white Afrikaner image of Adam Tas resulted because of little (if any) interest shown by non-Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers, in the aims and consequently the membership of Adam Tas. Most of the students in this 'racial' category claimed that although the association emphasised inclusivity and claimed to promote diversity, the association was far from practising both. They also felt that by wanting to 'Transform through (in) Afrikaans', this association was actually misusing the term 'transformation' for their own benefit: which was to ensure that SU retained and preserved its dominant informal Afrikaans language policy and Afrikaans identity for future generations.

However, university management was not supportive of the motto of Adam Tas because the university did not want to regain the image of an exclusive ethnic character that this HAU carried throughout the years of apartheid. They rather wanted to fully transform into a multicultural higher education environment in which the Afrikaans language would be promoted and developed in association with the English language to prevent any further exclusion of English-speakers. The latter ideal of SU management might be harder to achieve according to a top official. In an interview, this particular official stated that although SU's objective was to transform into a multicultural and multilingual university, the financial support that the institution received (and was still receiving) from the older generation who wanted to maintain and protect Afrikaans at SU, would retard achieving this university's goal of turning that objective into a reality. This financial support that SU was receiving referred to current as well as past benefactors such as the 'wealthy Stellenbosch businessman and farmer Jannie Marais' who gave '[a] donation of £100 000' according to Kapp (2011:373) to 'Stellenbosch College ... renamed Victoria College in 1887 to honour Queen Victoria's golden jubilee', when it 'opened its doors to students in April 1918' (Kapp, 2011:373). In their arguments, concerning the preservation and protection of the Afrikaans language at SU, Afrikaans language activists were constantly referring to the responsibility that SU management had towards its white Afrikaans-speaking benefactors to maintain the Afrikaans identity and - heritage of this HAU. Despite

104

obstacles such as the one just referred to, it seemed as if SU management's approach towards transformation included transforming its tertiary institution in such a manner that it would be reflective of the diversity of the entire South African community that it served. Thus, given the association's motto of 'Transformation through Afrikaans', which was contradictory to university policy, the argument can be made that Adam Tas existed in a context of contradictions and paradoxes.

5.2.2 Activities organised by Adam Tas

In the months that followed after the establishment of the association, many events were organised to not only encourage more discussion on topics that pointed to the future and survival of Afrikaans as an academic language at this university, but also to attract more students irrespective of 'race', culture, religion, etc. Important and well-known figures who were approached to deliver speeches at the different discussion events included Breyten Breytenbach, Christo van der Rheede, Johan Rossouw (executive officer of the FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations), Helen Zille (DA-leader and former mayor of the City of Cape Town), Basil Kivedo (ex-Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) activist) and Van Zyl Slabbert (chancellor and former academic of SU), etc.

The Adam Tas association also improved their relationship with the Black Student Association when they met with the latter's executive committee. In an article, *Wenke uit Matieland* (Suggestions from *Matieland*, my translation), Nel reported that the Adam Tas student association had a comfortable and amiable meeting with the Black Student Association and also that they had been 'working together to overcome 'racial' boundaries' (Nel, 2008). Nel further described the event as very uplifting and after the meeting, everyone was socialising. Lastly, he stated that 'at the end of the evening, each association's chairman became an official member of the other association' (Nel, 2008).

Despite all the positive events and accomplishments, small though they may have been, that occurred during the first year of the association, Nel pointed out that particular challenges were encountered during this first year. They were the following: 1) 'the recruitment of support from not only students but also the personnel corps of Stellenbosch University'. According to him: 'Many hours were spent on talks with student leaders, as well as other student groups on campus'; 2) 'The bringing-about of structures, a constitution, a design for an emblem, the establishment of a budget as well as other administrative requirements that made the establishment of their association possible in

the first place'; 3) 'The still ongoing apathetic attitude that prevailed on Stellenbosch campus that should be addressed'; 4) 'Image management: Both local and nationally, certain groups and political parties wanted to position themselves very distant from Adam Tas student association' (Nel, 2007, my translation). Some wanted to pull their image to the far right and others wanted to place them to the far left. From the start, Adam Tas leaders knew that image management was going to be one of their core challenges. According to one of the executive members of the student association, the local student newspaper, *Die Matie*, failed in its task of being a relevant source of information to *Maties* in terms of campus-level-politics. It can be argued that the above position on *Die Matie* was also supported by Nel, when he stated that this local student newspaper made no secret of questioning their motives for establishing such an organisation and therefore decided to give them minimal publicity from the start. The student newspaper was not interested in Adam Tas because it was reported by Theron (2007) that the editorial staff felt that Adam Tas could possibly be interpreted by the student – and staff population of SU as right-wing as well as a form of anti-transformation activism. The argument can be made that *Die Matie* did not want any association with the Adam Tas student association due to its controversial image. In the association's defence, however, a founding member of Adam Tas claimed that the student newspaper indirectly supported the anglicisation of SU and was therefore against any initiative that had the goal of promoting Afrikaans at this institution. However, it is important to mention here that *Die Matie* was not the only entity that questioned the motives behind establishing the Adam Tas student association. Most non-white students and many academic staff members also questioned this student initiative and some went so far as to argue that the real individuals behind establishing such an organisation were in fact older white, orthodox, Afrikaans-speaking men (also known as the *Old Guard).* Claims were made that it was in fact Hermann Giliomee and other prominent Afrikaans language activists who were using these young, white Afrikaans-speaking students from Adam Tas to further their plan of protecting and preserving the high status of the Afrikaans language at SU.

In relation to the older white Afrikaans-speaking generation's role in the language debate at SU, a *Matie* commented in an online discussion on the literary Afrikaans online website, *Litnet*, mentioned in Brunette's (2007) article that:

> Afrikaans will fend for itself: This debate is clearly an intellectual tug-of-war, distant and alienated from the realities and is saddled by a previous generation (my translation).

To elaborate on what this organisation regarded as contributing to the transformation of SU, the Adam Tas student association implemented certain projects during the first three years of establishment. Projects that stood out were the association's many discussion events (*sprekersaande*); student deliberations, which were being held once every year; the Afrikaans movie festival (*Afrikaanse Fliekfees*) held in August 2009); '*DiversiTAS*' movie festivals (*DiversiTAS Fliekfees*) held from 19 -23 April 2010), where a range of movies was shown to students in order to promote a sense of diversity; Cape Town train tours to inform students about the heritage of Afrikaans and its culture by visiting museums, historic places etc.; and the '*DiversiTAS*' rock festival held on 30 July 2009, to appeal to the fun or lighter side of being a student. To shed more light on the Afrikaans movie festival, the Adam Tas student association received a reduction in the amount payable on the broadcasting rights of Afrikaans films, screened by the association to *Maties* during its *Afrikaanse Fliekfees* (Afrikaans film festival). A former chairman of Adam Tas, Ernst Marais, stated that by showing only Afrikaans films to students, during the Afrikaans film festival, the association's objective was to promote the use of Afrikaans as a language of amusement and raised awareness amongst students on campus as well as to promote the language itself. The *DiversiTas* Movie Festival (April 2010), on the other hand, was held because according to the leadership of Adam Tas, the focus, that year, fell on the diversity of all South Africa's languages and cultures, therefore the diverse nature of the films (and not only Afrikaans ones) that were chosen to be shown. This event decreased in recent years, mainly due to minimum interest shown by students. The sponsors for the *DiversiTas* Rock festival (*DiversiTas Rockfees*) held in July 2009, were the ATKV and Tassenberg. At this Rock festival, the prominent Afrikaans singer, Koos Kombuis, the Afrikaans Rock band, *Baarmoedergevoel,* Simon Swerwer and the top 15 of *Maties* Idols provided entertainment to *Maties* (Adam Tas association, 2013). The Afrikaans Rock Festivals and - Shows on campus have increased over recent years because they were organised every year by Adam Tas. Students displayed huge interest due to popular Afrikaans Rock singers and - bands that performed at these events. In 2012, the association held a rock show with regular and prominent Adam Tas supporter, Koos Kombuis and The Jolly Jammers on the 08th of February 2012. On 20 February 2013, Adam Tas organised a Rock Show with performances by Koos Kombuis, Ashtray Electric, Spoegwolf, Dogtown and Slagyster (Adam Tas association, 2013).

The association posted an advertisement on its web page, asking for more financial donations from the South African public despite widespread financial support Adam Tas

was receiving from prominent Afrikaans organisations and Afrikaans language supporters. Tassenberg Wines that was providing wine at most of the association's functions was one of those supportive groups. The association confirmed this partnership with Tassenberg Wines by claiming on its web page that it had established a good relationship with Tassenberg Wines, therefore the prominence of Tassenberg wine bottles at all its functions. In my view, the significance of Tassenberg Wines at the functions of Adam Tas can be related to a commonality between the two: both were named after Adam Tas, the freedom fighter, who resided on his farm in the Stellenbosch area.

To elaborate on another project (mentioned above) that Adam Tas facilitated, the discussion event that stood out for me amongst the many that I have attended was the Second New Hope Student Conference, a joint initiative by the Adam Tas association, the SRC of 2009, Student Affairs and the FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS. What made this discussion event special was the fact that this was the second *Nuwe Hoop Studenteberaad* (New Hope Student deliberation, my translation), an event annually held on campus. The atmosphere at the first one, held on the morning of the 19th of April 2008, can be described as relatively laid-back and highly organised. The second *Studenteberaad* on 'LANGUAGE POLICY and its impact on DIVERSITY' was held on the night of the sixth of May 2009 in the Auditorium of the J.S. Gericke library on campus. My initial thoughts were that the second *Studenteberaad* was going to be conducted in a similar fashion to the first one, but was I mistaken. When I entered the slightly noisy Auditorium, I was pleasantly surprised by the massive interest that was shown by the number of students who turned up to attend this event. The previous year (2008), we were only a handful of students (the majority being white) attending the first *Studenteberaad*. This low interest showed by students, probably related to the fact that this event was held on a Saturday morning. However, as I got seated at the second *Studenteberaad* I sensed something different, and this difference related to the fact that attendees were more racially diverse and also seemed more optimistic and eager for the meeting to start. However, this eagerness was nothing compared to what subsequently happened at the *beraad*.

As the event unfolded, black students voiced their opinions regarding language policy to such an extent that it completely upset the programme of the Second New Hope Student Conference. Issues that were not initially on the agenda were emphasised, and a few black students entered into a heavy argument with Piet le Roux, a white Afrikaans-speaking executive member of the association, for conducting his speech in only

108

Afrikaans. According to these students, Le Roux was indirectly dismissing their presence as English-speakers whose proficiency in Afrikaans was not nearly sufficient to make sense of his arguments. As a result, these non-Afrikaans-speaking students could not question Le Roux on certain aspects of his speech afterwards. The executive member's response to these non-Afrikaans-speakers was that he prepared his speech only in Afrikaans because the message that he wanted to conveyed to attendees, could according to him, only be done through the Afrikaans language. Le Roux further justified his decision to conduct his speech in only Afrikaans, by reminding all of these outraged black students that Adam Tas was an organisation whose motto (at the time) was 'Transformation in Afrikaans'. In the end, this executive member of Adam Tas did not give in to the requests of the black students to translate his speech to English. This decision by Le Roux was vigorously contested, and the black students involved were very angry at what they perceived as 'just another overt form of exclusion' at SU. These black students felt alienated by Le Roux's reaction and stated that 'this behaviour correlated with similar occurrences that happened prior to 1994 at Stellenbosch University'. They also questioned whether 'any real transformation has in fact occurred at this university'. This reaction from black English-speaking students correlated with a finding made in a study conducted by Leibowitz and Van Deventer at SU. In their study it was reported that 'there was a disquiet expressed by non-Afrikaans-speakers … in an Afrikaans environment, notably expressing feelings of powerlessness, or of being discriminated against' (2007:98).

From where I was sitting, the leadership of Adam Tas seemed ill-prepared in the handling of this type of incident. This clearly indicates that Adam Tas leaders did not anticipate strong resistance from non-Afrikaans-speakers and to go a bit further did not anticipate any resistance from this linguistic category at all. As a result of executive members having their hands full with these outraged black students and their inability to neutralise the situation, Mohamed Shaikh and Llewellyn MacMaster, other guests speakers at the event, assisted Adam Tas leaders in getting the meeting under control.

Brink's (2006:94) argument that 'the debate about Afrikaans remains trapped within Afrikaans' and 'if the proponents for Afrikaans language rights really wish to make an impact, they should conduct their arguments in English as well' is applicable to the conflicting situation described above. This refusal by Le Roux to translate his speech to English raised an important question: which linguistic group was really targeted by Adam Tas for support through their numerous social activities and discussion events? Le Roux's

refusal to accommodate non-Afrikaans speakers also had interesting connotations with the manner in which prominent historians and Afrikaans activists portrayed and emphasised the value of the Afrikaans language in academic literature and in the media. In the same manner that Le Roux romanticised and idealised the Afrikaans language as the only language in which he could convey his message to students, prominent historians and Afrikaans activists, such as Kapp and Giliomee were also romanticising the Afrikaans language by referring to it as a 'special' language with distinct attributes. This incident has clearly shown that within the Adam Tas association, preference was given to Afrikaans above all other languages at public functions, especially where speeches were concerned. This attitude or behaviour was contradictory to the image that Adam Tas was trying to portray to the SU community: that it was an organisation that was diverse, non-discriminatory and open to all irrespective of mother-tongue, 'racial' origin, religious affiliations, etc.

On an institutional level, the disagreements at this event can be viewed as a direct reflection of the underlying conflict that still existed among white Afrikaans-speaking students and their black English-speaking counterparts at SU, despite the formulation and implementation of transformation policies. This conflict was constituted and fuelled by diverse notions on transformation, language and identity-related issues. The fact that students received minimal opportunities to voice their opinions in open settings, events such as the student deliberations were consequently utilised as platforms to raise concerns relating to tensions that arose from clinging to an Afrikaans identity as opposed to adopting a multicultural identity instead, in order to achieve meaningful transformation at SU. A guest speaker at the second *Studenteberaad*, Tshepo Mvulane, contributed this reaction from students to the fact that 'students aren't part of the dialogue about language and until the latter become managers of status quo, nothing is going to change'. He referred to this as 'talking about us, without us'. If one considers the slogan of SU, 'Your knowledge partner' one is left with an assumption that SU students as 'partners' of the university, should be playing a prominent role in the decision-making or policy formation processes. Mvulane's statement however, shows the contrary.

The massive interest in this event by black, coloured and Indian, English-speakers (who were usually ignorant of events that Adam Tas facilitated or was part of) might be attributed to the manner in which the second *Studenteberaad* was advertised on placards all over campus. On these placards were the faces of two prominent student leaders, Piet le Roux

110

and Tshepo Mvulane. Both of these students of which one was an Afrikaans mother-tongue speaker, white and a founding member of Adam Tas and the other an English-speaking black student, served on the SRC at the time. My initial thoughts on the advertisement, was that it closely resembled the manner in which a boxing match was advertised: where the faces of the two opponents were placed next to each other. It seemed as if the organisers of the event wanted to portray Le Roux and Mvulane in the same manner as opponents in a 'fight'. This marketing strategy might be an attempt to attract more students to events of Adam Tas and in the process advance the association's credibility and relevance on campus as a diverse integrated student association. In retrospect, what subsequently happened at the event was not unexpected due to a series of factors. These include the competitive nature in which Le Roux and Mvulane were portrayed on the advertisement, having in mind that these two leaders originated from diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds. Secondly, the notion that any discourse on language was in most cases conducted in a highly emotive manner at SU. Given these factors, the dramatic turn of events that followed was not as unexpected as it initially seemed, because the set was staged by Adam Tas leaders and the other organisers for sparks to be flying between the parties involved at the second *Studenteberaad*.

5.2.3 Constitution and the recruitment of members

In terms of the constitution of the association, it can be stated that Adam Tas consisted in 2011 of an executive- , marketing- , web- , financial – and a refreshments committee (the association labelled it as the *Vreetsaam Komitee)* (Adam Tas association, 2010). In an interview with an executive member of Adam Tas, he stated that the association's membership was approximately 200 when he started his term (2009/2010). He further stated that during this period the association added a few more members via *Facebook*, a popular social network, direct messaging to friends from cellular phones (SMS), reminding them of functions being held, placing of banners on campus, by word-of-mouth as well as by making application forms available at all of their meetings for new members to join. Another executive member commented during an interview: 'At the start of the academic year we set up a stall in the *Neelsie*, mainly to increase the visibility of our association, especially in terms of first-year students, who have no knowledge of our existence as well as to attract older students to our organisation'. In relation to increasing its visibility on campus, the association's leadership created a welcoming banner that was placed on the Merriman-bridge in January 2010 to welcome first-year students and draw their attention to Adam Tas.

During the three-year period that I have done research on Adam Tas, which included attending important events on the association's calendar, I have observed that the number of students attending these events was much less than the 200+ claimed membership. The majority of Adam Tas's membership can be classified as white, Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers. Thus, at one of the association's end-of-year meetings, where new leaders were elected for the next term, it came as no surprise that the majority of its members who were present, were white, Afrikaans-speakers and only three students were 'coloured'. As usual, there were not any black students present at this meeting. While the majority were white, Afrikaans-speaking members, the average number of attendees was very low. It can be estimated that ± 30 people were present at the 2009 year-end event. More than half of the questionnaires completed by black and coloured students suggested that these 'racial' categories did not believe that it was possible for the Adam Tas association to 'Transform in Afrikaans', given the historical connotation that Afrikaans had with apartheid as a language of oppression. The initial wording of the motto is used here, due to the fact that when the information on the questionnaire was formulated and distributed amongst students, the motto had not been changed by the leadership of Adam Tas. The questionnaires further suggested that the majority of coloured respondents disapproved of this student association. It was also shown by the questionnaires that more than half of black, coloured and Indian students ignored the numerous meetings of Adam Tas. At the time, half of black students that had taken part in the questionnaire survey had not even heard about this student initiative, let alone attend a meeting. Almost fifteen of the thirty white Afrikaans-speaking respondents, on the other hand, were in favour of this association, although less than half of those questioned had attended a meeting of this association. These questionnaire results suggest that many of SU's student population, irrespective of 'race', still questioned the motives behind the establishment of Adam Tas. This supports my claim that Adam Tas was receiving little interest from not only SU's non-white, non-Afrikaans-speaking student category but also from the white student population in general, given that this category of students made up 18 915 of the 28 193 student admissions at the start of 2011 (Stellenbosch University, 2011f). Thus, the question that comes to mind is: In terms of the association, what can be said about the motives behind extending its invitation of membership to non-Afrikaans-speakers if their main aim was 'Transformation through/in Afrikaans'? Were they not indirectly encouraging these non-Afrikaans-speakers to discard their mother-tongue and rather support this association, to ensure the survival of Afrikaans, the mother-tongue of most Adam Tas members, at SU?

It is also necessary to report on the limited interest that Adam Tas received from *Maties* on its web page, regarding its numerous activities. This might be attributed to the notion that the web page of Adam Tas was not very accessible to non-Afrikaans-speakers because most of the information provided, was solely in Afrikaans. The other possible reason for the minimal interest might be linked to a fear of public association with Adam Tas, which some students still regarded as having a hidden right-wing agenda. The fact that the web page was also non-existent throughout 2011 did not improve the situation at all.

5.2.4   Controversies that Adam Tas were involved in:

5.2.4.1 Carrying of an empty coffin onto the *Rooiplein* of Stellenbosch University

The Adam Tas association was linked to a controversial event which occurred on the 29th of April 2009, a week before a protest action took place at the *Kasteel* (The Castle) in Cape Town. At this event, Adam Tas decided to carry an empty coffin onto the *Rooiplein* (the Red Square) of SU. The *Rooiplein* is a central location on campus, which is situated above the main library of the university and is mostly full of students, especially over the lunch-hour. It can be stated that Adam Tas strategically decided on this location, because the leadership wanted to firstly ensure that some students would indeed be present at this event and, secondly, making sure that they drew attention and thus were getting their message across to students, namely that the future of the Afrikaans language at SU was in terrible danger. In terms of the number of individuals who took part in this event, it can be said that only a handful of general members of the association participated because the majority who actively took part in this event were members of the executive committee. Adam Tas also made use of placards to increase the visibility of their message and capture the attention of the students.

The symbolic meaning behind Adam Tas carrying an empty coffin on campus was to suggest to students that the alterations that were made to the language policy would result in the 'death of diversity'. Adam Tas leaders also believed that this decision would ultimately lead to the even further decreasing use of Afrikaans as medium of tuition at SU. The use of the metaphor, 'the death of diversity', according to the interpretation of Van der Waal et al. (2009b) regarding Giliomee's interpretations 'constitute grotesque hyperbole' and was therefore representative of Adam Tas's strong opposing opinion to management's decision on language policy. This event briefly brought traffic on the SU campus to a standstill because students on the *Rooiplein* stared in disbelief to the extreme measures those Adam Tas leaders went to. This action by Adam Tas sparked a diverse set of

113

reactions within the student community of SU. The majority of students felt that Adam Tas went too far with the coffin-idea, whereas supporters of the association felt that this demonstration was a great idea to emphasise the urgency and importance of the controversy around language. It was reported in the student newspaper that this portrayal on the *Rooiplein* signified Adam Tas's extreme concern over possible complications of the decisions regarding the language policy (*Die Matie,* 2009). This controversial event on the *Rooiplein* probably led to management's decision not to grant Adam Tas permission to conduct another event on campus.

5.2.4.2 The Adam Tas association's protest action held at *Die Kasteel* in Cape Town
Another controversial event orchestrated by Adam Tas was its protest action and the organisation's hasty decision to move this event from Stellenbosch campus to *Die Kasteel* (The Castle) in Cape Town. This event made front-page news in the student newspaper, *Die Matie* and was also covered by the SABC 2 News Channel as well as *Die Burger*. In *Die Matie* (2009) it was reported that Adam Tas had hastily shifted their protest action to *Die Kasteel,* the well-known tourist attraction and symbol of the historical roots of the white settler population in the country, as a means to publicly protest against SU Council's planned language policy decision to implement dual medium instruction in senior years. This event took place on the same day as the SU Council meeting because the association believed that the Council of SU would confirm a decision pertaining to the forcing of English tuition onto students. Adam Tas further believed that this step taken by the Council of SU would be similar to the apartheid government's decision to force Afrikaans as a medium of tuition onto black learners (*Die Burger,* 2009). According to Nico de Wet, chairman (at the time) of the association, the significance behind choosing *Die Kasteel* as a replacement, related to the fact that Adam Tas was imprisoned in 1706 at this same location and who 'also protested against unfair government practices' committed against the free citizens (*vryburgers).*

The symbolic meaning behind Adam Tas's protest action against SU management's decision to extend dual medium tuition from the second-year onwards was portrayed by publicly reading their grievances in front of the *Kasteel.* Adam Tas leaders felt that this decision taken by SU management was going to undermine diversity and transformation due to the fact that English was going to overshadow the Afrikaans language in practice (*Die Burger,* 2009). It was further reported in *Die Matie* (2009) that another reason behind this hasty shift from the initial location (the campus of SU) occurred because the correct

procedure had not been followed by the leadership of Adam Tas regarding the facilitation of protest action on campus. Allegedly, the association did not submit their request to university management in advance (five workdays) for approval. Adam Tas responded that management discriminated against them because they had witnessed in the past how other student organisations, who also submitted requests for facilitating activities on campus, had done so in less than five workdays and that those requests were nonetheless successful. Furthermore, *Die Burger* (2009) reported that Adam Tas leaders were of the opinion that SU management indeed practised double standards when the association was not granted permission to conduct the protest action on campus. This protest action by Adam Tas received further media coverage in the local student newspaper of SU (*Die Matie*), the Afrikaans news channel, SABC 2, as well as the local daily Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Burger* (*Die Matie,* 2009).These three media sources had a mainly Afrikaans readership or viewership.

5.2.4.3 The signing of Adam Tas association's 'Manifesto for transformation' on the campus of Stellenbosch University

Another public event that was reported on in *Die Matie* was when the Adam Tas student association signed a petition addressed to the university management, asking for interpreter-services (*tolkdienste*) on 16 June 2010 on the campus of SU. Apparently, this document was signed by 39 of SU's student leaders, amongst them four Student Council members. The goal behind this petition was to promote the experimental implementation of interpreter-services at SU, in order to 'scientifically establish' whether these services could deliver a solution to the language issue (Steenkamp, 2010). The Adam Tas Manifest for Transformation with Afrikaans (*Die Adam Tas - Manifes vir Transformasie met Afrikaans*) was also signed at the same event. This document, reported on in the online version of *Die Burger* (23.06.2010), in an article, *Adam Tas-manifes moet gesteun word* (The Adam Tas manifest has to be supported, my translation), contained ten propositions by the Adam Tas association to SU management (Jordaan, 2010). The first proposition was based on the association's assumption that Afrikaans was not something that could be tossed away for the sake of transformation whilst the other nine propositions all had to do with the language policy and the handling of Afrikaans on the SU campus. This refers to the Adam Tas association's criticism of a policy that, in their view, disregarded language rights and the religious and cultural functions that Afrikaans holds for its mother-tongue speakers. In response to Adam Tas's above critique, SU management defended its decisions on language policy when the rector of SU, Russel Botman stated in a newspaper

article, *Engels verdring Afrikaans nié by US* (English is not rooting out Afrikaans at SU, my translation), that Afrikaans can only be protected if it is viewed as a language amongst other languages, thus as a linguistic ubuntu (Peyper, 2010) (my translation).

5.3 Differences regarding transformation between the Adam Tas association and Stellenbosch University management

This part of the chapter explores the different perspectives that the Adam Tas student association and SU management had regarding their notions of transformation. These two entities differed substantially in their definitions of transformation, what transformation as a process comprised, and what they perceived as meaningful contributions to transformation. My research indicated that it was rather difficult to find common ground between them.

First, addressing the opinions of university management, an earlier comment made by Shaikh (spokesperson of the university) is applicable here, where he stated that the objectives that Adam Tas has in terms of transformation were precisely opposite to what university management wanted to achieve for this university, regarding its transformation. Shaikh also argued that the motto of the association, 'Transformation through Afrikaans', was precisely what the university did not want to be associated with and that the university no longer wanted an ethnic university, which only catered for a certain linguistic category (Stellenbosch University, 2009c). University management was of the belief that their understanding of the term transformation differed in important respects from that of the Adam Tas student association. For example, Shaikh pointed out that university management regarded SU as a national asset, whose main aim was to be accessible to everyone, irrespective of 'race', class, religion, 'culture', mother-tongue, etc., in order for this predominantly white, former Afrikaans university to fully diversify and ultimately transform into a world-class higher education institution. University management, therefore felt that by 'transforming through (only) Afrikaans', the Adam Tas student association, indirectly opened the door to the possibility of excluding people from this university again, and past injustices could re-occur that would ultimately destroy the progress that had been made so far in terms of transformation and diversity.

In terms of the relationship that existed between Adam Tas and the management structure of SU, one executive member of Adam Tas stated in an interview: 'Yes, we are indeed

putting pressure on university management, but the latter did not really take notice of our organisation. In fact, we are receiving much opposition and no co-operation whatsoever from university management'. This alleged snub from university management has shown Adam Tas can be regarded as an indirect reflection of the strong commitment that university management had made towards transforming this former Afrikaans enclave into a multicultural and language-friendly higher education environment that does not support any action that could lead to re-labelling SU as an exclusive tertiary institution. Furthermore, Adam Tas was of the belief that their motto did not promote the exclusion of the non-Afrikaans-speaking student – and staff - population at SU. On the contrary, the association's leadership claimed that it was open to all, irrespective of mother-tongue. As Roelof Nel stated, one of their main slogans was, after all, 'to stand together as an organization to promote Afrikaans as a language and culture that is inclusive and dynamic and that also could play a leading role in our rainbow nation' (Nel 2007, my translation).

The association's leadership agreed during the interviews that more progress had to be made regarding transformation and therefore the Afrikaner image of SU had to change. Adam Tas leaders agreed with university management that SU had to change into a multicultural institution and that English could be utilised, to some extent, as a secondary medium of instruction in classrooms to accommodate both non-Afrikaans-speaking students and academic staff. However, their only requirement was that Afrikaans should still be used as the dominant medium of instruction. In other words, English should in no way overshadow the use of Afrikaans in classrooms.

The argument can be made that although the projects mentioned above cannot really be regarded as major contributions to transformation at SU, to the Adam Tas leadership these attempts were at least 'droplets in the bucket'. According to them, it were these 'drops' that in fact inspired and motivated them to do more for the survival of Afrikaans at this university. It can also be concluded that these projects became a symbol of hope for Adam Tas supporters to continue in their mission of transforming through Afrikaans. Although university management did not see the Adam Tas student association as assisting them in the transformation process of this higher education institution, this association had the constitutional right to fight and stand up for what they believe in. Thus the argument can be made that because of this discrepancy in perspective between the student association and university management, the already slow transformation process at SU was expected to be further delayed because any managerial decision regarding the Afrikaans language that

Adam Tas was not agreeing on, might be contested through protest actions. This delay put a strain on SU management, which was already under severe pressure by the higher education minister's demand to diversify and transform the university more rapidly.

5.4 Additional characteristic aspects of the Adam Tas association

5.4.1 Symbolism of emblem

First emblem (no longer in use)

Current emblem

The Adam Tas student association created their first emblem in which certain elements, significant to the association, were portrayed. The first element is the oak, which 'symbolises [that] their focus lies locally at Stellenbosch University'. Also that the association's main aim is the promotion of Afrikaans amongst students - the people they believe to be the real leaders of tomorrow. The other elements are hands and a flame. For the association, the hands (one black, one brown and one white) represent the idea that

their white, coloured and black members stand together for Afrikaans, accommodate each other's unique backgrounds and form part of an inclusive Afrikaans community (Van Schalkwyk, 2008). This portrayal of black, brown and white hands in the emblem was also representative of the message that Adam Tas wanted to send out: that all its members belonging to the white, coloured and black 'racial' categories were united in the association's mission to 'Transform through/ (in) Afrikaans'. On the one hand, the white, brown and black hands in the emblem also indicated that this association was open to all individuals, irrespective of 'racial' origin. On the other hand, the use of the three 'racial' categories also emphasised the continued emphasis on racial identity by the association. This in itself reflected a conservative ideology. The flame suggested that 'they as Afrikaans speakers *burn* for their language (Van Schalkwyk, 2008). The flame may also refer to the 1959 emphasis on 'the miracle of Afrikaans' that was celebrated then and symbolised by flames.

The next element, *die ratte* (the gears), according to the association's senior members symbolised the 'working-together-power' of the association, the fact that they were progressive and practical in their beliefs and that they could make a difference together if they, as a group, could integrate and uplift each other. The last element, the circle, was said to be a symbol of encouragement of discussions in Afrikaans and about Afrikaans. Adam Tas spokespersons perceived the association as one that should stimulate discussions that would provide guidelines to transform in Afrikaans (Van Schalkwyk, 2008).

The black hat with the red feather located on top of the emblem symbolised Adam Tas, the political activist who fought for the rights of the *vryburgers* (free citizens). This type of hat was popular in white Afrikaner culture during the period that Adam Tas existed, especially among white farmers. It was also interesting to note that the emblem of Adam Tas contained the layout as well as the colours of the new flag of South Africa's Rainbow Nation. The colours forming the letter 'Y', prominent on the national flag, was also incorporated into the emblem of Adam Tas. Thus, incorporating characteristics of the new national flag into the emblem of Adam Tas, the leadership of the association indicated that it was not promoting racism and exclusivity, but was rather supportive (to some extent at least) of the new democratic government. The current emblem portrays the image of a bleeding human heart. The significance behind this emblem is to portray the love that Adam Tas has for Afrikaans or that the association's proverbial 'heart' bleeds or beats for the Afrikaans language. Furthermore, the association of the heart with Afrikaans is

interesting in the sense that Adam Tas is also practicing romanticism here, with the manner in which its association with the Afrikaans language is portrayed through the current emblem.

5.4.2   Adjustment in Adam Tas's approach: being less outspoken regarding identity politics

According to its leaders, the association took on a more social and relaxed approach in their second year of establishment by focusing much less on the serious side of the Afrikaans language and instead incorporated more social events with fun elements onto their calendar. The majority of these social events were associated with the Afrikaans language or Afrikaner culture on some level. An example of such an event was the Cantus (*'SING SONG' – AAND MET BODEMLOSE BIER*) ('SING SONG' – EVENING WITH BOTTOMLESS BEER, my translation), an item that was included as an activity onto the 2010 calendar of the association and that was held in August in a location called *The Hidden Cellar*. During this event, students chose an Afrikaans song from a given list and if sung correctly, were awarded a prize that came in the form of drinking bottomless beer. According to the association, their ultimate goal was to stand together to promote Afrikaans not only as a language but also as a culture that can undoubtedly be seen as inclusive and dynamic and could play a leading role in the rainbow nation.

After many discussions with Adam Tas leaders and members, I came to the realisation that this association was ambitious, given their objectives and what they wanted to achieve not only at SU but also in a broader sense. One of their goals was to extend their intended positive impact to other HAUs, by setting a good example of how a future of Afrikaans can be ensured at such an institution, without compromising or endangering meaningful transformation practices. Therefore, the message of the Adam Tas student association was that transformation through (in) Afrikaans was possible and could be achieved.

It becomes vital to include the various internal changes that the Adam Tas association went through after its establishment. The Adam Tas association started off during a period of strong controversy as a result of a heated language debate that took place at SU. This controversy was further intensified by the association's strong use of language as well as their demonstrations. An example of the strong language that Adam Tas utilised concerning the Afrikaans language, was when the association claimed that the alterations that were made to the language policy would result in the 'death of diversity'. The

120

association's claim that the 'death of diversity' would occur at SU was demonstrated by carrying an empty coffin onto the *Rooiplein* of SU during lunch-hour, when this area was full of students (as was shown in 5.2.4.1).

The association's strong controversial approach to language matters at Stellenbosch did not favour them at all, in fact, this approach attracted widespread resistance and criticism from university bodies such as university management, the local student newspaper, *Die Matie*, the SRC and also from the majority of black and coloured students of SU. This snub that Adam Tas received from all of the above parties, compelled the association to change their serious approach to 'save' the Afrikaans language from declining at SU from 2009 onwards to one that was more relaxed by rather focusing on the fun side of the Afrikaans language. During an interview, one executive leader referred to this new approach as to *partytjie in Afrikaans* (to party in Afrikaans). Adam Tas received resistance from university management because the latter claimed that the association's mission and vision were not in line with the recent realities that the university was faced with. These realities included demographic and language policy changes at SU. Due to these structural and internal changes that this university faced, Adam Tas as well as other Afrikaans language activists had to decide whether or not to adapt their existing policies and vision to incorporate the realities of today and stay relevant or hold onto their initial vision and keep on receiving resistance and thus run the risk of pining away. The association chose the first option and incorporated changes by firstly changing its motto into one that was more reflective of inclusivity and more accommodating to non-Afrikaans-speakers. The initial motto was 'Transformation in Afrikaans' and the phrasing changed to 'Transformation through/with Afrikaans'. Furthermore, the Adam Tas association became more tolerant of transformation practices by increasingly reaching out to coloured and black students. Thus, the different dimensions that the language struggle produced over time resulted in Adam Tas taking on, what they regarded as a different, relevant and contributing role within the transformation process of SU.

An indication that the Adam Tas association aimed to achieve a wider meaning in society was when Piet le Roux decided to go and work for the De Klerk Foundation as an operational officer (FW de Klerk Foundation, 2010b) after his term ended as Strategic Advisor of Adam Tas between February 2007 and December 2009. The argument can be made that the Adam Tas association was not a strong enough vehicle for Le Roux to pursue his goal of ensuring the survival of the Afrikaans language at SU. Thus his decision

to join the FW de Klerk Foundation because the latter, that had conducted a national study in the higher education sector (*A Study of Afrikaans on university level*) in 2010, might have a larger impact than a localised student initiative. Piet le Roux later became a member of the University Council (2012) and was known for his strong position regarding the maintenance of Afrikaans teaching at SU. In September 2015 the University Council distanced itself from Le Roux's extreme political attacks on politicians regarding transformation and the role of Afrikaans in transformation (especially the controversy around Afrikaans as a stumbling block for access of black students).

To answer the question whether or not this association would achieve transformation through Afrikaans seemed to be very difficult in the years after its emergence, given the fact that Adam Tas was struggling on its own turf of convincing others of its legitimacy. Regarding the objectives of Adam Tas, I argue that to replicate this organisation nationally, this body first had to obtain results on the ground level. In other words, objectives that had relevance to SU first had to be accomplished in order for the association to influence or impact on other HAUs, who were struggling with similar linguistic and transformation dilemmas.

5.5   Role of the Adam Tas student association in transformation at Stellenbosch University

According to the leaders and members of the Adam Tas student association, they regarded themselves as actively assisting SU management in terms of the transformation process. The results of my questionnaires indicated that coloured and black students at SU were overall strongly in favour of at least the equal use of Afrikaans and English in classroom settings, as opposed to a minority of white Afrikaans-speaking students, who were against it. By 2015 black students were strongly pressing for the provision of all courses in English, a move which has put additional pressure on Afrikaans language activists to 'protect' the Afrikaans language as medium of tuition at SU more actively. By inviting English-speaking students to become members of their organisation, Adam Tas leaders viewed themselves as participating and contributing meaningfully to the transformation process by submitting not only to management's goal but also to government's goal of promoting diversity and integration of all people irrespective of criteria such as 'race', religion, culture, mother-tongue, etc. in the higher education sector.

Given the above, it can be stated that although the Adam Tas student association did not occupy a significant role thus far in the ongoing transformation process, during the interviews its leadership expressed sentiments of hope and pride of what they had accomplished during the association's infancy period. Regarding their perceived accomplishments, one executive member stated during an interview that in his opinion, he contributed positively towards the petition of the language manifest and the driving of the *tolkdienste* (interpreter-services) during his term (2009/2010). Another executive member claimed that he contributed during his term (2009/2010) by creating an open space for encouraging open and critical conversations about topics relating to language and transformation in the SU context. The progress that the Adam Tas student association had made in terms of its role in the transformation process at SU was very limited partly due to its conflict with SU management.

The overall interpretation of the situation at SU is that the ongoing language debate is still very alive, which puts an enormous amount of pressure on the management of SU. During my research, the questionnaires suggested that students, regardless of 'racial' classification, reported to be interested in the ongoing language debate, despite being initially labelled as apathetic towards language-related dilemmas. This result correlates with the finding made in the Leibowitz Report that in relation to students, there was 'overall ... an awareness of the Language Policy and Plan at Stellenbosch University…' (2006:3). The recent interest shown by students towards issues pertaining to the medium of tuition might be attributed to students' realisation that alterations to language policy at university level might negatively impact on their academic results and consequently success. Therefore, although the University Council has the deciding vote when it comes to making language policy, this will not occur without resistance from Afrikaans language activists, such as Kapp and Giliomee and the Adam Tas student association. These parties would most likely protest against what they regard as unfair and discriminatory decisions. Nevertheless, it will be quite interesting to see where this debate about language policy at SU will ultimately lead. It is evident that disagreements over language and identity-related issues are far from being solved. It is my view, that the South African public can expect more arguments and differences emerging at SU between the opposing groups in this controversial language debate.

The year 2015 was filled with several dramatic developments concerning the language issue at SU. The first development involved the launching of a new student movement,

named OPEN Stellenbosch (OS), which consists of discontented and frustrated English-speakers, who felt excluded by SU's current language policy and practices. On their official Facebook page, OS describes themselves as 'a collective of students and staff working to purge the oppressive remnants of apartheid in pursuit of a truly African university' (OPEN Stellenbosch, 2016). The main demand of OS involved the elimination of Afrikaans as primary medium of instruction at SU, in an attempt to make SU more accessible to English-speakers who are not proficient enough to successfully study through academic Afrikaans. The other major development was the surfacing of 'Luister', a short documentary compiled by OS that portrayed mostly black discontented SU students, who felt the necessity to voice their sentiments on racist practices committed against them on academic, administrative and social levels. This documentary led to the ordering of the Rector's Management Team (RMT) in early September 2015, to appear before the Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training to provide their account on the racially-based discrimination still experienced by black students, as displayed in 'Luister', as well as on transformational progress at SU.

It can be concluded that the increasing pressure SU's management received from OS all year round, contributed greatly to the ground-breaking announcement (in November 2015), by the newly appointed vice-chancellor, Wim de Villiers, that '…all learning at Stellenbosch University will be facilitated in English, and substantial support will be provided in other South African languages, according to students' needs' (Hill and Robins, 2015). The Council of SU, however, consequently decided against this new language initiative by management and instead opted to stand by the language policy accepted in 2014, which supported the equal use of Afrikaans next to English. AfriForum Youth also entered this terrain when they decided at the start of 2016 to take SU to court '[a]fter the faculties of Engineering and Law at the US … took a decision on 23 and 25 January 2016 that English should be the primary language of instruction…' (*Stellenbosch University retains Afrikaans as medium of instruction*, 12.2.2016). On 12 February 2016, the Cape Town High Court ruled in favour of AfriForum Youth and SU subsequently agreed to adhere to Council's decision taken in November 2015.

5.6   Conclusion

The Adam Tas student association was established in 2007 by four students, probably with some assistance from senior language activists due to their perception of the situation of Afrikaans at SU. The increasing talks on campus about the survival of Afrikaans were

shaped by the ongoing *taaldebat* that went beyond the *Matie* campus, especially in the Afrikaans media. This association can be regarded as a direct response to the insecure position that the Afrikaans language was perceived to be in when the transformation process of SU led to the growth of English as a medium of instruction in classrooms. However, Adam Tas received criticism from a wide range of entities, such as the black and coloured students, *Die Matie,* Stellenbosch University management as well as the SRC. The criticism was specifically orientated to the implications of white exclusiveness that seemed to underlie the aims of the association and its activist stance, especially in the first year of its existence.

Interpreting the Adam Tas association in terms of transformation, the association's overall understanding of transformation was contradictory to that of university management. The latter was not accepting Adam Tas's motto, 'Transformation in [through] Afrikaans', due to university management's claim that it no longer wanted to be an ethnic university. University management rather promoted diversity and aimed to transform SU into a multicultural and integrated university. However, Adam Tas moved to a position where it was in agreement with management that SU was in need of transformation. Despite this agreement, Adam Tas was believed by many non-white students at SU to be an organisation that was only appearing to be in favour of transformation, in order to further their own objective, which was to ensure the survival of Afrikaans, the mother-tongue of most of its members as well as the white Afrikaans identity that was closely attached to the Afrikaans language. The association's claim to be open to non-Afrikaans-speakers was indicative of Adam Tas portraying itself as an inclusive, non-racial and diversified entity (although, in reality, this was not always the case, especially in its first period), in order to achieve its goal to ensure the survival of Afrikaans at SU. Thus, despite the association's numerous attempts to alter its conservative image to one of honesty, transparency and inclusivity, the majority of black and coloured students at SU still viewed Adam Tas as an association with a right-wing agenda.

With regard to identity, it can be concluded that Adam Tas's numerous claims of being an inclusive association could be questioned. The association could be interpreted as promoting a white Afrikaans identity, through its cultural activities and social events, which, in reality, were excluding students whose mother-tongue was not Afrikaans. The fact that its membership of 200+ was mostly white and Afrikaans-speaking, was not helping to change the perception of white exclusiveness and in fact contributed to its white Afrikaans

identity. Throughout the three years of my research on Adam Tas, the majority of black and coloured students at SU labelled this association as an attempt by a group of right-wing white, Afrikaner students, who were against transforming this higher education institution into a multicultural entity, despite Adam Tas's endless attempts to improve its image from exclusive and racist to inclusive and liberal.

After Adam Tas's first period, the association recognised in later years (around 2009), that the association was in need of important alterations to their vision and mission due to irreversible changes in demographics and language policy in the university. The association also realised that the increasing resistance and criticism received from important university entities, such as university management resulted from their narrow interpretation of transformation. Thus, Adam Tas decided to change their mobilising approach from strong and controversial to one that was more accommodating to black and coloured students as well as towards transformation practices that university management already incorporated and promoted, such as the newly accepted policy on residential culture. Another important decision, made by Adam Tas to change its motto to 'Transformation through Afrikaans' from 'Transformation in Afrikaans' was also indicative of the change that occurred within the association. This change, in their view, reflected a more inclusive approach to languages other than Afrikaans. However, the sincerity of this move was still, in my opinion, unclear because of the fact that this implied a dramatic shift in the vision and mission of the association. The objective behind all of the above alterations to Adam Tas, was to increase the association's relevance and impact as a student association at SU and in the process increase support among students and other language activists.

In my view, the association seemed to be also aware of the changing higher education environment of SU and seemed to be more accepting of the benefits that transformation practices such as a multilingual university can have on both Afrikaans as well as English-speaking students studying at SU. The impact of the changes that Adam Tas has made in recent years, pertaining to the following of a more inclusive and integrative approach to language and transformation practices at SU will have to be evaluated over time to see whether or not these changes enhanced the legitimacy and credibility of Adam Tas as a 'diverse' student movement.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter I attempt to briefly reflect on all the important themes relating to language, 'race', identity and transformation, as discussed throughout the thesis. A summary of the main arguments in each chapter will then follow. Concluding remarks on all these arguments will be made at the end of the thesis. The main objective of this study was to understand the role of the Adam Tas association in the nexus of transformation, language and identity at SU by focusing on the reasons why a student association, such as Adam Tas came into being, what the context was in which it operated and how it positioned itself in the wider debate regarding transformation, language and identity.

The implementation of transformation interventions at SU, with regard to language policy, led to disagreements over language policy that resulted in a fiery *taaldebat* or language debate. This, in turn, gave rise to tensions between maintaining an Afrikaans identity for the university against transforming it into a multicultural university in which English as a medium of tuition would increasingly being used. Apart from the resistance that SU management received from prominent historians and Afrikaans language activists such as Giliomee and Kapp, a group of mostly white Afrikaans-speaking students also became more vocal over concerns relating to the future of the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language at SU. These students then decided to mobilise against what they regarded as the increasing anglicisation of SU, in the form of a student association, Adam Tas.

Chapter 1 comprised of an introduction into the relevant aspects of the study. In this chapter the 'building blocks' of the thesis were elaborated on and these relate to: the objectives of the study; the motivation for embarking on this study; a problem statement; a methodology section in which all the various social research methods that were used during my fieldwork were reported on as well as a chapter outline section in which all the main arguments of the chapters were summarised.

Chapter 2 focused and elaborated on the interrelatedness between relevant concepts for this study, particularly language, culture, transformation and identity, on a micro- and macro-level. In this chapter, theoretical and comparative literature was consulted with the intention of developing a theoretical framework that could help in interpreting the results of this study. The concepts of transformation, language and identity were discussed with regard to SU as well as the national context.

127

With regards to Chapter 3, the focus was placed on higher education in South Africa. This chapter mainly portrayed the challenges facing this sector in the midst of the transformation from apartheid rule to democracy that is taking place throughout the country. The conditions experienced in the higher education sector before 1994 and how these conditions have altered after 1994 were elaborated on. In this chapter, background information on current higher education legislation was provided. The challenges that the higher education sector of South Africa were facing and struggled with were addressed. The discussion was not only directed to a macro- but also to a micro-level because it was important to explore the situation not only in a broad national view (South Africa), but also from a local perspective (Stellenbosch University). Thereafter, this chapter shed light on the challenges that SU, a historically white, Afrikaans-dominant institution, was facing in the midst of transformation.

As was highlighted throughout the thesis, especially in Chapter 3, transformation was the driving-force behind most initiatives for change in higher education created and implemented in post-apartheid South Africa. SU's management realised that the entire university had to transform. Although hesitance and criticism of transformation at this HAU existed, and indeed persists, especially from conservative activists, such as the *taalstryders* (language warriors), management believed that practices relating to discrimination, such as the placement of students in residences according to 'racial' category, retaining SU's dominantly Afrikaans-medium language policy, etc. was no longer acceptable. It was clear that SU management took a strong position regarding becoming an inclusive institution that no longer discriminated on linguistic and 'racial' grounds. However, the influence of language activism also tied management down to some extent in their pursuance of their stated transformation aims. It can be argued that management contributed to the formulation of new policies to effectively alter the Afrikaner image that accompanied SU. Therefore, this HAU made a vital choice and commitment to transformation, by focusing on its access and language policies to make it more accommodating to black, non-Afrikaans-speaking students who wished to obtain their higher education qualifications at this well-known tertiary institution. Chapter 3 indicated that although SU took the first steps in the transformation process by creating transformed policies on language and residential culture, this HAU still had a long way to go.

As the preceding chapters have shown, change does not come easily. The transformation process gave rise to many debates, discussions and disagreements about the best

possible solution to problems, disputes and obstacles that the language struggle at SU created, directly and indirectly. A HAU such as SU was experiencing much more difficult challenges with regard to the medium of instruction and internal communication than historically English-medium universities, due to the role that it had played in the past in perpetuating apartheid and Afrikaner ethnicity in South Africa. One of these challenges refers to the issue of cultural mandates, brought forward by cultural groups that HAUs had to deal with. These cultural mandates were linked to the cultural history and identity that were attached to the particular HAU. In the case of SU, a group of prominent white Afrikaners (mostly academics) was fighting to protect and preserve the Afrikaans language and its cultural history for future generations, in what was called a *taaldebat*. In Chapter 3, it was also concluded that despite the meaningful transformational changes to its language policy and its residential culture, more still needed to be done. These included diversifying and integrating the staff and student population more, appointing more females on academic and managerial levels as well as promoting and establishing a shared student residential cultural identity as *Maties* instead of an Afrikaner one amongst all students living in student residences.

Chapter 4 focused on the Afrikaans language, its future in education on national and institutional level, the *taaldebat* at SU as well as the identity-related issues and obstacles emerging from the fight to save the Afrikaans language from becoming a minority language at SU. Due to disagreements regarding identity between Afrikaans language activists and university management, identity politics at SU increasingly intensified. In this chapter, it was also stated that when the ANC-led government took over from a white nationalist government, English became the official language in the public sphere for practical purposes. Due to a rapid decline in its public functions, Afrikaans was in a far more insecure position nationally than on university level. Afrikaans language activists acknowledged this decline and entered into a language struggle at SU, in an attempt to save the 'higher functions' of Afrikaans for future generations. Some of the arguments of Afrikaans language activists in the *taaldebat* at SU related to their belief that the survival of Afrikaans as the main medium of instruction heavily relied on certain guarantees and rules which had to be strictly monitored in faculties and classes. The Afrikaans language activists also called for more transparency regarding the Afrikaans language as main medium of instruction in undergraduate education at SU to prospective students and staff. This fight to retain the dominant position of the Afrikaans language at SU was in reality also a fight to redefine the Afrikaner identity of white Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers in

the post-apartheid context (Steyn, 2001). When Afrikaans lost much of its public functions, the Afrikaans identity of Afrikaans-speakers also lost its prominence in the process. The counter argument proposed by Brink to Afrikaans language activists, with regard to securing the survival of the 'higher functions' of the Afrikaans language, was that 'part of the price to secure the future of Afrikaans as a vibrant South African language is that it should disengage from the identity of *Afrikanerskap*' (2006:165). The other proposition by Brink was 'for Afrikaans to walk away from protectionism and exclusivity, and accept the concomitant risks of multiculturalism *in order to grow*' (2006:166). Brink and others, who had a more inclusive approach to language-related matters at SU, stated that 'the position of Afrikaans needed to be understood in the context of post-apartheid' (Van der Waal, 2009a:n.pag.). It is important to state that the *taaldebat* did not only involve a conservative group versus a progressive one. Van der Waal (2009a:n.pag.) asserted that a newly emerging group of coloured Afrikaans-speaking leaders also entered this debate. These coloured leaders were reluctant to support the conservative and exclusivist ideals and objectives brought forward by prominent white Afrikaans-speaking academics in the struggle to save the 'higher functions' of Afrikaans. Hein Willemse, a coloured Afrikaans-speaking leader stated at the Roots Conference held in 2009 that he rather opted for an 'Afrikaans (language) free of the conservational coercion and forms of narrow nationalism that mark such a big part of its formal development over the past century … ' (Willemse, 2009:n.pag.) (my translation).

In relation to the main arguments in the *taaldebat*, mentioned above, Jansen's comment that 'it … would be disastrous to choose between the options of redress or reunion' (2009:203) is relevant here. Jansen's comment becomes relevant because it is precisely due to the complexity encountered when simultaneously correcting past injustices and achieving reconciliation between 'racially' divided groups, that most transformation processes in the higher education sector, especially at SU, were sometimes delayed. This delay was manifesting at SU through what was known as the *taaldebat*. The argument can be put forward that although one of university management's objectives was to make SU more accessible to non-Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers by increasing the use of English as a medium of instruction in classrooms, it was also recognising the need of its Afrikaans mother-tongue student population to receive lectures in Afrikaans. To accommodate both linguistic categories, one of SU's objectives was to promote the Afrikaans language within a multilingual context. By doing so, SU was making a conscious effort to correct past injustices, such as the exclusion of English-speakers on the basis of

mother-tongue but also at the same time still acknowledged its Afrikaans mother-tongue student population and thus promoting reconciliation between the two divided linguistic categories. Fraser's (1996) argument that 'there is a complementarity of the need for redistribution of power, resources and ability to participate ... on the one hand, and of the need for recognition of individuals' or groups' rights to respect and dignity, on the other', elaborated on in Chapter 2, sums up SU management's accommodating approach to language-related matters.

At the time of the study, Stellenbosch was still committed to its goal, summarised in the *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and beyond* (Stellenbosch University, 2000) to continuously develop Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual setting. According to the (now former) Vice-Chancellor Russel Botman, '[n]ot only does the university have to take local circumstances of the university into account, but also the fact that we fit into the global society' (Botman, 2011). The objective of SU to continuously develop Afrikaans in a multilingual context can be described as inclusive in the sense that it was trying to accommodate both its Afrikaans-speaking population and their English-speaking counterparts.

The consequence of the perceived alienation of Afrikaans students at SU emerged, when the latter concluded that university management was moving too rapidly in terms of shifting the language policy to English. This conclusion led some *Maties* into believing that SU management wanted to Englishify (a term used by Brink) the university in its entirety and not only diversify the institution as they claimed to be doing. The perceived alienation that Afrikaans students at SU felt led to the formation of fear that still exists amongst some white, Afrikaans mother-tongue students that in turn led to the establishment of the student initiative Adam Tas.

Chapter 5 focused on Adam Tas, a young student association that was formed at SU as a result of the uncertainty and perceived fear that a group of white Afrikaans-speaking students experienced in the midst of transformation taking place at this predominantly white Afrikaans institution. Despite the association's claim that it was in agreement with university management that SU was in need of transformation, the motto of Adam Tas, 'Transformation through Afrikaans' was contradictory to one of the goals that university management wanted to accomplish: transforming into a non-ethnic university. This difference between university management and Adam Tas might explain the disregard that

the student association claimed to have encountered from university management as well as the SRC, in terms of not responding to its numerous invitations to communicate. This snub from university management and the SRC might be related to fear of public association with the Adam Tas student association.

Regarding language, it can be stated that Adam Tas was promoting only the Afrikaans language through its motto, 'Transformation through/ (in) Afrikaans', despite claims that it was an association supportive of inclusion and diversity. Practices relating to undermining the goal of achieving meaningful transformation at SU, through only acknowledging a single language (Afrikaans), would exclude non-Afrikaans-speakers on a linguistic level. To draw conclusions, in terms of identity, the argument can be made that Adam Tas was still viewed by many non-white, non-Afrikaans-speakers at SU as a white, Afrikaner association with a right-wing agenda, despite its numerous efforts to rid itself of this particular image. Overall the argument can be made that Adam Tas was promoting an Afrikaner culture through its numerous cultural activities and social events that were strongly linked to white, Afrikaner culture. The fact that the majority of its membership was white and Afrikaans-speaking, was contributing to the already existing notion amongst a segment of non-Afrikaans-speaking students that Adam Tas portrayed a white, Afrikaner identity.

The association's initial period was characterised by very strong language and controversial demonstrations during its protest actions which emphasised its commitment to the protection of the Afrikaans language as medium of tuition in an increasingly anglicised higher education environment. However, their approach changed in recent years when the association recognised that the irreversible demographic and language policy changes that SU underwent, could no longer be ignored. Adam Tas then made a few adjustments such as changing its motto from appearing exclusive and right-wing to inclusive and diverse. The association also appeared to be more tolerant towards the transformation process at SU compared to its strong resistance in earlier years.

The association's adoption of a more 'peaceful' approach was evident when the chairman of Adam Tas, Pieter Burger, recently claimed that the association wants to work together with the university to find a peaceful and fair solution to the issues on campus (Van den Berg, 2015). This statement was made in reaction to the previous week's three-day long disruption of activities and the occupation of a building on campus by the student

movement, OPEN Stellenbosch (OS). This protest action by OS sparked strong resistance from associations such as Adam Tas and AfriForum Youth who joined forces by issuing a petition against OS. In this petition, it was requested that the University Council hold *Matie* students accountable for their behaviour and conduct when rules are broken. OS responded to the petition in the form of an entry on its Facebook page, which stated that there seems to be a focus on disobedience, something which they feel reflects the patriarchal disposition of the institution. University management has started with an investigation into the disruption on campus and according to prof. Wim de Villiers, (Botman's successor) SU-rector and vice-chancellor, disciplinary action will be considered after the completion of the investigation. This public opposition by Adam Tas against OS's controversial protest action is very surprising, given that Adam Tas's initial period was also characterised by strong controversial public protests on campus over SU management's decisions on language policy.

The above conclusions attempt to provide the reader with an anthropological and complex understanding of what transformation as a concept means for the higher education sector, especially for a HAU such as SU. How this concept impacted on both the university management and the Adam Tas association internally, was investigated. In relation to Adam Tas, this student movement was formed during a period of very strong controversy. The association utilised controversial mechanisms to get messages across to students by utilising strong language such as the 'death of diversity' and controversial demonstrations such as the carrying of an empty coffin on the campus of SU. However, due to changes in the demographic profile of the university's student population (Afrikaans-speaking students constituted no longer the majority) as well as the incorporation of a more inclusive and accommodating language policy, Adam Tas as well as other Afrikaans language activists could no longer ignore these irreversible changing realities at SU. The association then decided to adapt to these realities by becoming more tolerant towards transformation and reaching out to black and coloured categories in its search to establish a new support basis and foci for action.

Taking all of the above into account, SU's future and relevance might well depend, not on the activism of a narrow ethnic association and its associates, but on its ability to transform itself into an institution that reflects the new values of the country in which it is vested, of diversity, integration and equality, as spelt out in the Constitution of South Africa and in higher education legislation.

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