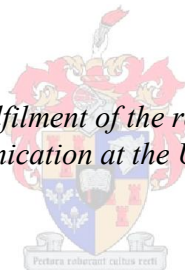


Intercultural communication and the community of practice in a South African sport team

by
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be created. Along with this theoretical framework the use of qualitative research methods was used in order to elicit biographic and sociolinguistic data as well as personal preferences and opinions.

The assessment of the data collected highlighted the linguistic repertoires and language proficiencies of the coaches and players alike and it showed that commonality was found in the use of English as the lingua franca of the team. The selected participants revealed proficiency in other languages which showed their multi-/bilingual capabilities, with only one case of a participant who was monolingual and only proficient in English, the team's lingua franca. The collected data also showed personal preferences with regards to communicating within the team and how a player would ideally like to receive positive and negative feedback by coaches.

In answering the three research questions as proposed in chapter one:

1. The players and coaches alike feel that they are a part of the CofP of the Western Province amateur team, because they are able to communicate openly and freely with each other and they all understand the common goals that have been placed upon them.
2. The coaches and players are very open and honest with each other, and with the help of English as the common lingua franca, it is possible to communicate a common goal of a good team environment, culture and atmosphere.
3. There was a mixed consensus in that some participants believed that language and culture didn't affect effective communication, but those who believed said that language rather than culture is more of a barrier, and therefore the understanding of a specific language and finding a common language in the Western Province amateur team allows

the team to construct an identity that is unique which only members would understand within a CofP.

The study has therefore taken into consideration the barriers that may be associated with intercultural communication, and how individual biographic and sociolinguistic data may affect personal preferences and opinions in the sports team environment. These considerations show relevant issues that may affect effective team communication, environment, culture and atmosphere, however from the conducted study it is shown that individual differences can create a team dynamic that is unique and positive. The findings indicated that all participants are comfortable in the lingua franca of the team and it allows all members to feel part of the CofP. The use of a lingua franca has allowed all the members to communicate freely and openly as well as understand clearly. The mixed consensus among participants with regards to the effect language and culture may have on effective communication is a clear sign of individual difference of cultural and linguistic background. The participants who agreed, stated that language rather than culture acts a barrier toward influencing effective communication. The study has therefore clearly shown that the Western Province amateur team is held together by a language in which all members are able understand and communicate freely and openly, while culturally and linguistically different members can interact and conform to the rules, ideal, beliefs and objectives of the team. This indicates that culturally and linguistically different individuals are able to contribute toward a successful on and off field team culture, environment and atmosphere in which a unique CofP can be created in order to accommodate all members.

5.4 Research difficulties

The main difficulty of the study was associated with time constraints, in that the questionnaires took up valuable time during and after training sessions. The player questionnaires and

interviews consisted of three in total and the participants thought of them as a bit tedious. The questions asked were straight forward; however they did not elicit as much in depth data from the participants as was hoped.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

As for future recommendations I would suggest the research to be conducted in more than one province and in more than one semi-professional sporting code. The research conducted for this thesis was only based in the Western Cape and only made use of the Western Province amateur cricket team.

South Africa's diversity is wide spread in that specific cultural and language groups originate from and tend to settle in various provinces. This phenomenon can affect the research results, in that L1 and L2 languages may differ as well as differing opinions based on biographic and sociocultural data. The use of various provinces will be helpful in determining whether or not culture and language may affect effective team cohesion in specific areas.

The use of different sporting codes can also affect the results in that different team sports may attract a different demographic and in that sense the team dynamic alters. The use of different sport codes may be useful in the future so that specific studies can be conducted for specific sporting codes which will allow for different results to be produced and then eventually compared.

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APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Pseudonym: _____

For research by Muneer Alexander

MA in Intercultural Communications

Department of General Linguistics, Stellenbosch University

All information on this questionnaire will remain confidential.

A. Personal Information

Surname: _____ First name: _____

Telephone number: _____ E-mail: _____

Sex: _____

Year of birth: _____

Place of birth: City _____ Province: _____ Country: _____

If you were not born in South Africa, how long have you been living here? _____

Occupation: _____

Education: Highest qualification obtained: Grade

University/ College degree/ Diploma

Cricketing history: Highest level of cricket played _____

B. First Language (mother tongue)

What do you consider to be your first language? _____

What is the first language of: your mother? _____

your father? _____

Which language(s) did you speak at home as a child?

Is your first language the language with which you are the most comfortable?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "NO" to the question above, please explain:

C. Second Language:

What is your second language? _____

For how long have you been exposed to this language?

For how long have you received instruction in this language? _____

Approximately how many hours a week do you use your second language?

D. Education and Language Use

Which language(s) were you formally educated in? Where (i.e city – country)?

	Language	City/Country
Primary School		
High School		
College		
University		
Team Environment		

Which language(s) do you use:

at home: _____

at work: _____

in social situations: _____

in the team environment: _____

E. Team environment (cricket team)

What language does your coach use when talking to you?

Do you feel comfortable communicating in this language?

Which language do you use when talking to your coach?

Why?

Which language would you like to use predominantly in the team environment?

Why?

Please rate your linguistic ability in the following languages: English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and any other languages that you know (please specify).

Please use the following abbreviations:

L = low (poor)

I = intermediate (good)

A = advanced (very good)

NN = near native (excellent)

Language	English	Afrikaans	isiXhosa	Other: _____	Other: _____
Reading					
Writing					
Speaking					
Listening					
Overall Competence					

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (COACHES)

General Information:

1. Name: _____
2. Date of birth: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Position in the team: _____
5. Number of years in current position: _____
6. Place of birth: _____

Language Information:

7. First language: _____
8. First language of mother: _____
9. First language of father: _____
10. Is your first language the language you are most comfortable with? _____
11. If "NO", please explain: _____
12. Second language: _____
13. How long have you been exposed to your second language: _____
14. Which language(s) were you formally educated in?
 - Primary school -
 - High school -
 - College -
 - University -

15. Language predominantly used in the team environment: _____
16. Language predominantly used with fellow coaches/managers: _____
17. Language predominantly used with players: _____
18. Language predominantly used at home: _____
19. Language predominantly used in social situations: _____

Feedback on performance (structured interview):

20. Briefly explain how you give players feedback on their performances/ gave feedback in the past?
21. How would you give negative feedback (i.e. feedback on aspects of the player's performance that can be improved)?
22. How do you handle giving positive feedback (i.e. feedback on aspects of the player's performance that are satisfactory)?
23. How do you experience such feedback discussion with players?
24. What kind of responses do you get from players when giving them feedback on their performance?
25. If the player you are communicating with is a first language speaker of another language, do you discuss his performance in his first language or in yours?
26. Do you ever switch between languages during discussions?
27. Which factors do you think contribute to a successful discussion? And to an unsuccessful one?

28. Do you think that language and culture can influence how effective communication is during such discussions?
29. If yes, how do you think language and/or culture influence the effectiveness of communication?
30. Do you think that misunderstandings sometimes occur between the coach and the player during such discussions?
31. If yes, do you think that this may be due to the coach and the player speaking different first languages/ coming from different cultures?
32. How would you address the following issues while providing feedback on performance?

The player is:

- Highly enthusiastic
- Very innovative with regards to problem solving
- Always well presented, and
- Has a good relationship with his fellow team mates

However, he:

- Often over-indulges in social chitchat during practice hours,
- Has a nasty habit of missing practice
- Frequently under-performs

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (PLAYERS TO COACHES)

(Each player will complete a language background questionnaire)

1. In which language do you and your coach communicate when discussing your performance? Do you sometimes switch between languages during such discussions?
2. How do you feel when you are receiving feedback on your performance?
3. How do you respond to positive feedback, for example, when a coach compliments you on the efficient way you are practicing or praises/ compliments you for your on field performances?
4. How do you respond to negative feedback, for example, when a coach tells you that he is unhappy with the way you are practicing and with your on field performances, and they expect more from you?
5. How would you ideally want a coach to give negative feedback?
6. Which factors do you think contribute to a successful discussion about performance? And to an unsuccessful one?
7. Do you think that language and culture can influence how effective communication is during such discussions?
8. If yes, how do you think language and/ or culture influence the effectiveness of communication?
9. Do you think that misunderstandings sometimes occur between the coach and player during such discussions?
10. If yes, do you think that this may be due to the coach and the player speaking different first languages/ coming from different cultures?

11. Imagine for a moment that you are the coach. How would you address the following issues while providing feedback on performance to a player?

The player is:

- Highly enthusiastic,
- Very innovative with regards to problem solving,
- Always well presented, and
- Has a good relationship with fellow team mates.

However, he:

- Often over-indulges in social chit-chat during practice hours,
- Has a nasty habit of missing practices
- Frequently under-performs.

APPENDIX D: PLAYER TO PLAYER COMMUNICATION INTERVIEW

(In addition to the language background questionnaire that each player will complete)

1. In which language do you and your fellow team mates mainly communicate in? Do you sometimes switch between languages?
2. When communicating with a team-mate that has a different first language to yours? Are you comfortable and able to switch to a second language of common ground?
3. Do you think language and culture can influence how effective team dynamics are during on field and off field interactions?
4. If yes, how do you think language and/or culture influences the team dynamics?
5. Do you feel that if you are unable to communicate with another team-mate it leads to avoidance?
6. If yes, why?
7. Do you think culturally-different individuals perceive you differently?
8. If yes, why? And in what manner (positive or negative)?
9. If you could play an influential role in creating a team dynamic and environment where there were no misunderstandings due to language and culture, what would you do and how would you go about doing it?
10. As a player communicating with another player, are there ever times when you need to help in clarifying the coaches instructions, due to language and cultural barriers?
11. If yes, how do you do so? And how are you able to understand what your fellow team-mates needs?