



Language attitudes towards the South African Sign Language: The case
of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban

By

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DECLARATION

I, Nkululeko Perfect Ngcobo, declared that this thesis titled “Language attitudes towards South African Sign Language: The case of KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban” presents my own work and where others’ literature has included. I have provided references of the original sources. This work has not been submitted in any other institutions for any other degree.

Signatu

Date 05/04/2021

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ABSTRACT

South African Sign Language is one of the previously marginalized indigenous languages. Therefore, it is difficult for Deaf people to improve their lives using SASL as a medium of instruction. However, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes SASL as a language of teaching and learning in schools for the Deaf although it has not yet given the official status equivalent to other languages and Deaf people are still experiencing difficulties in spite of the fact that the Constitution recognizes their language.

On the other hand, hearing people believe that Deaf people are disabled and cannot achieve their goals using SASL. As a result, the majority of Deaf people are unemployed, uneducated and largely excluded from mainstream society. The study aims to investigate language attitudes towards SASL by drawing on the lived experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members. This study was conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban. The researcher interviewed 27 members of the society including three South African Sign Language Interpreters. Given that the study focuses on a small population, the results cannot be generalized to other Deaf organizations in South Africa. However, the insights that it generates are invaluable to future studies on SASL and the experiences of Deaf people.

The study outcomes indicated that there are negative attitudes towards SASL, which emanate from stereotypical views on what constitutes a language. These negative attitudes have perpetuated language barriers and isolated the Deaf community. By conducting this study, the researcher hopes to assist language policy makers and the Deaf community to discover the importance of promoting the use of SASL.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

SASL	South African Sign Language
SASLI	South African Sign Language Interpreters
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
NLB	National Language Board
KZNDA	KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAINDS	South Africa's Integrated National Disability Strategy
DEAFSA	Deaf Federation of South Africa
IREC	Institutional Research Ethics Committee
KZNDA	KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Linguistic diversity is a fundamental characteristic of any society. According to Stroud (2018:94), differences in languages are a permanent feature of humanity. However, whenever there are different languages in society, language attitudes, both positive and negative, emerge. Ionas (2014:127) defines “language attitude as a manifestation of the social attitudes of individuals, distinguished by a focus on and specific reference to both language and its users”. Language attitudes are demonstrated through actual behaviour (Sybille 2014:39). Using the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban as a case study, this qualitative study investigates language attitudes towards South African Sign Language (SASL) through exploring the experiences of KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members in relation to prevailing attitudes towards SASL. According to Hurst (2017:150), the study of language attitudes has long been a concern for sociolinguists. Thus, in supporting this statement, Bichani (2015:36) argues that language attitudes have a leading influence on the various levels of language shift and maintenance.

The motivation behind this study is that the South African Constitution provides for the promotion and use of SASL (Akach 2010:25). Section 6 paragraph 5 of the Constitution tasks the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) with the responsibility to advance and make conditions for the development and use of all official languages including marginalized languages such as the Khoi, Nama and San and Sign Languages. As such, it is important to find out whether a conducive environment for the recognition of Sign Language has been created at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. One way of doing this is to research prevailing attitudes towards SASL to find out whether or not Sign Language is being given the same recognition as spoken languages. This chapter outlines the background of the study, problem statement, research aims and objectives, research questions, significance of the study and research design. It also concludes with an overview of chapters.

1.2 Background of the study

Sign Language is not a universal language as each country has its own national Sign Language (Baker 2016:13). Sign Languages worldwide are natural languages in their own right. They are systematic and rule-based, with different vocabularies and grammatical structures as spoken languages (Baker 2016:11). Ganiso (2012: 25) stipulates that Sign Language can be defined as a visual gestural language created and used by Deaf people to communicate, express thoughts, feelings and abstract ideas.

Sign Language is a distinct language which uses special features for communication which are different from those used by spoken languages. In addition, the distinguishing feature of Signed Languages is that they are communicated through the medium of space using body parts such as hands, face, head, and upper torso (Burroughs, Sibanda, and Rakometsi 2018:9). Reflecting on the state of Signed Languages in other African countries in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region, Matlosa (2010:70) points out that African countries from the SADC legislated the formulation of new language policies different from those established by colonial governments. In supporting the above statement, Mokoo (2009:15) states that some previously marginalised Indigenous languages were granted high status equal to the status of official languages. In line with SADC policy, the South African Constitution (1996) elevated nine indigenous languages to official status. This constitutional provision granted power to marginalized languages and ensured parity between languages. In addition, Matlosa (2010:71) postulates that the new policies sought to provide for a situation where all official languages could become mediums of official communication.

Although the Constitution provides for the recognition of Sign Language, existing policies constantly disregard marginalized languages in a way that creates room for negative attitudes towards minority languages. Thus, one of the purposes of this study is to investigate whether negative attitudes perpetuate the marginalization of the South African Sign Language. Mokoo (2009:32) states that Sign Languages used by Botswana's Batswana people, Lesotho's Basotho people and South Africans are still marginalized. In the context of Lesotho, Matlosa (2010:73) states that the Lesotho Constitution of 1993 gave only two spoken languages the official language status and overlooked the existence of Lesotho Sign Language. On the other hand, Mokoo (2009:20) contends that

Botswana's language policy of 1966 prioritizes only spoken languages whilst rejecting linguistic and cultural diversity as the basis for self-identification. Although the constitution of the Republic of South Africa identifies a total of eleven spoken official languages, SASL is not recognized as an official language. The above-mentioned language policies of different countries in the region disempower linguistic minorities groups. From a language planning point of view, it is evident that attitudes towards Sign Languages are generally negative. By failing to recognize Sign Languages as official languages, governments of South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana create the impression that they do not value Signed Languages. The South African Constitution of 1996 acknowledges that the recognition of linguistic human rights is a prerequisite for the development of communities (Preamble, The Language in Education Policy of 1997). It also highlights that language is a source of community transformation which offers access to economic opportunities, social mobility, education and cultural activity. Furthermore, the South African Schools Act of 1996 stipulates that SASL should be the medium of instruction in schools for the Deaf. It also proclaims that the right of the Deaf community is constitutionally and legally protected in South Africa. Therefore, Deaf people should be given their full right to access higher education, interpreting services in public events and jobs of their interest. Lastly, SASL should be recognized as an official language and not just as a language of learning and teaching. As Akach (2010:17) points out, the Language in Education Policy of 1997 mentions that cultural diversity is a valuable national asset. Nevertheless, reviews of the past experiences of the Deaf Community show that the Constitution has not done much in transforming the lives of the Deaf community (Akach 2010:16). This implies that the constitution is a mere piece of which does not translate to the transformation of the lived experiences of Deaf people in different communities across the country. More so, society continues to perceive the Deaf community. Furthermore, PanSALB was established to preserve and promote the development of previously marginalized languages, including Sign Language (Ganiso 2012:26). However, only minimal actions have been taken to develop Sign Language. As a result, sign language one of the marginalized indigenous languages in South Africa. The Deaf Federation of South Africa (2015:18) reports that SASL is the native language of one million Deaf people, including hearing people who are born to Deaf parents.

Despite the positive gestures in South African policy documents, Deaf people continue to

face numerous challenges. Deaf people are under-represented in most government departments and agencies, as well as in professional and administrative occupations. Deaf people are generally found in unskilled or manual positions (Musegi 2012:4). They face limitations in almost every important aspect of their lives.

1.2.1 The history of Deaf education

In the history of Deaf education worldwide, there was great pressure to remove Signed Languages as media of instruction and to replace them with spoken languages. The general suppression of Signed Languages by administrators sent a message to deaf children that spoken languages were better than Signed Languages (Hill 2012: 3). In 1863, South Africa had 44 schools for the Deaf which used the oral method of communication until the enactment of the Group Areas Act in 1950 (Akach 2010: 37). The use of an oral approach at Deaf schools as a medium of instruction was a manifestation of a linguistic impression that did not recognize Signed Languages as complete languages. Reagan (2008: 7) points out that Deafness was also perceived as a condition that had negative effects on cognitive, emotional and social development, language, and literacy acquisition. Sign Language was inaccurately viewed as primitive, incoherent series of gestures, an ungrammatical means of communication, having no potential to express abstract concepts and therefore, harmful to the development of speech and language of the Deaf child. According to Krausnekers (2015), attitudes of mainstream society against Deaf individuals existed for centuries. Sign Language was demeaned and forbidden in schools and to some extent in society in general. Brightman (2013: 21) argues that Sign Language has been suppressed in many parts of the world. In most countries from the 1700s onwards, schools for Deaf children favored an oral educational approach where the use of Sign Language was prohibited. Children were taught to speak and lip-read the dominant spoken language.

Furthermore, Chong (2016), Akach (2010), and Brightman (2013) found that the main aim of the international conference towards the Deaf education held in Milan, which was led by hearing opponents of Sign Languages was to ban the use of Sign Language in classrooms and around communities. They wanted to push through pure oral methods for teaching Deaf children. Therefore, all schools were forced to shift to the oral approach as the preferred method of instruction, so that they could master, and use spoken language

like the hearing population. Sign Language was modified to suit the grammar of a dominant spoken language. In Ngoben's (2017: 11) view, Deaf people are still facing barriers in accessing fundamental services they need in order to fit into mainstream society and become independent. The following section will define the two different linguistic modes of communication available in Deaf schools beginning with the oral approach.

1.2.2 Oral Approach

The oral approach to Deaf education emphasizes auditory skills and aims to teach Deaf children to speak so that they would be able to communicate with the hearing world. The oral approach has its focus on teaching Deaf children to develop listening skills through speech and language therapy that focuses on residual hearing using assistive devices. This approach also encourages lip-reading skills.

1.2.2 Total communication

Total communication is a philosophy where every possible means and modality is used to educate learners who are Deaf. A variety of methods such as fingerspelling, miming, pictures, lip-reading, gestures, and oral speech may be used. The use of residual hearing via amplification such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, and FM systems is also strongly encouraged. Total communication does not lead to the full development of SASL (Peel 2004: 19). Instead, it overlooks the importance of preserving Sign Language as the language of a minority group and creates more challenges since the majority of families cannot afford to provide their children with expensive gadgets. The use of these two approaches extinguishes the Deaf culture and encourages misconceptions about the language. On the other hand, hearing parents in most cases do not know Signed Languages. Therefore, they view the use of these gadgets as an attractive solution to the communication problem and sufficient for the child to learn to speak. Therefore, if the use of Signed Languages in schools for the Deaf is poor, Signed Languages ultimately become endangered languages (Mouldin 2016: 40).

1.1 Problem Statement

A report conducted by SAINDS (2016) stipulates that people with disabilities in South Africa have been excluded from the mainstream of society and have thus been prevented

from accessing fundamental social, political and economic rights. More so, a study by South Africa's Integrated National Disability Strategy (SAINDS) (2016) states that the marginalization experienced by Deaf people and their families results from a range of factors, namely the political and economic inequalities of the apartheid era; social attitudes which have perpetuated stereotypes about Deaf people and a discriminatory and weak legislative framework which has reinforced and perpetuated exclusionary barriers.

In addition, studies conducted by SAINDS (2016) reveal that the key forms of exclusion responsible for the cumulative disadvantage of people affected by hearing loss are poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and employment exclusion. Moreover, the extremely high levels of unemployment amongst Deaf people can be attributed to several factors, namely low skills levels due to inadequate education; discriminatory attitudes and practices by employers; past discriminatory and ineffective labour legislation; inadequate access to information; and ignorance in society. Therefore, the study explores societal perceptions and attitudes towards SASL and people who use it as a medium of communication.

According to a report compiled by the Deaf Federation of South Africa (2015:22), 75 percent of the Deaf in South Africa are unemployed, uneducated, uninformed, and undervalued, with the percentage growing every year. In South Africa, Deaf people have been rated as hopeless people with no brilliant ideas or visions about their lives (Mweri 2016:57). There is a limited number of Deaf graduates in South Africa because higher education is accessible to Deaf, especially given the poor status of SASL (Deaf Federation of South Africa 2015:22). In South African hospitals, Deaf people have lost their lives due to miscommunication between the patients and nurses or doctors. Some Deaf people have lost case in court because of lack of professional SASL interpreters in courts. Furthermore, disease outbreaks such as the Covid- 19 pandemic victimize Deaf people because they do not receive adequate announcements and/or communication in their language of choice. Reports by DEAFSA (2015) confirm that the non-official status of SASL is the main reason for the challenges that Deaf people face in society. It is therefore important to investigate attitudes towards SASL because most of the challenges that Deaf people revolve around societal perceptions and misconceptions about Deaf people and Sign Language.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate public attitudes towards South African Sign Language (SASL) through exploring the experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members.

1.2.3 The objectives are to:

- Explore language attitudes towards SASL and its users at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban,
- Investigate the ideological views and constructs that influence the prevailing attitudes; and
- Investigate the underlying factors that perpetuate the isolation of Deaf people from mainstream society.

1.2.4 Research questions:

- What are the prevailing language attitudes towards SASL and its users at the KwaZulu- Natal Deaf Association in Durban?
- Howdo ideological constructions and views influence prevailing attitudes Towards Deaf people?
- How do underlying attitudes towards Deaf people perpetuate their isolation from mainstream society?

1.3 The significance of the study

The study seeks to assess how language attitudes affects minority groups, with specific focus on members of the Deaf Association of South Africa in KwaZulu Natal. Few recent studies have been conducted on language attitudes towards Sign Language users. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by focusing specifically on language attitudes in relation to members of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. The study will

benefit upcoming researchers in the field Sign Language in KwaZulu Natal in particular and South Africa in general. The study will also assist the Deaf community from the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association to understand how language attitudes affect their community and the promotion of their language. Given that PanSALB's mandate is to promote and protect marginalized indigenous languages (Preamble, The Language in Education Policy of 1997), this study will determine whether PanSALB has been successful in its mandate. Most importantly, the study intends to demonstrate the importance of Sign Language to both hearing and Deaf communities since "90 percent of Deaf children are born to hearing families who typically do not use Sign Language" (Brightman2013:35).

1.4 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design and semi-structured interview as a tool to collect data from the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban. The Association offers Deaf students various training programs which include, adult education, Information Technology and Retail learnerships. The researcher communicated with all the participants who were willing to contribute to the study and informed them about the purpose of the study. The study investigated t language attitudes towards South African Sign Language users at KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. Participants were registered members between the age of 18 -45, Deaf students, SASL interpreters, administrators, and facilitators. Purposive sampling was used in this study since participants were nominated based on their capacity to provide the researcher with useful information in line with the objectives of the study. The interview sample included six facilitators, four administrators, fourteen students, and three interpreters.

Participants were interviewed catered for diverse gender orientations. The interviews were carried out in a conversational style. All interviews were video recorded and conducted using Sign Language. The collected data were analyzed through thematic content analysis following the processes of coding, categorizing, and developing themes to respond to the research questions. Thus, findings were organised according to themes that were developed from the collected data. Furthermore, the researcher used the coloured Microsoft Word highlighter to mark the central words and thereafter grouped them to find the themes that guided the whole process of analysis.

This is the location of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association, where the study was conducted.

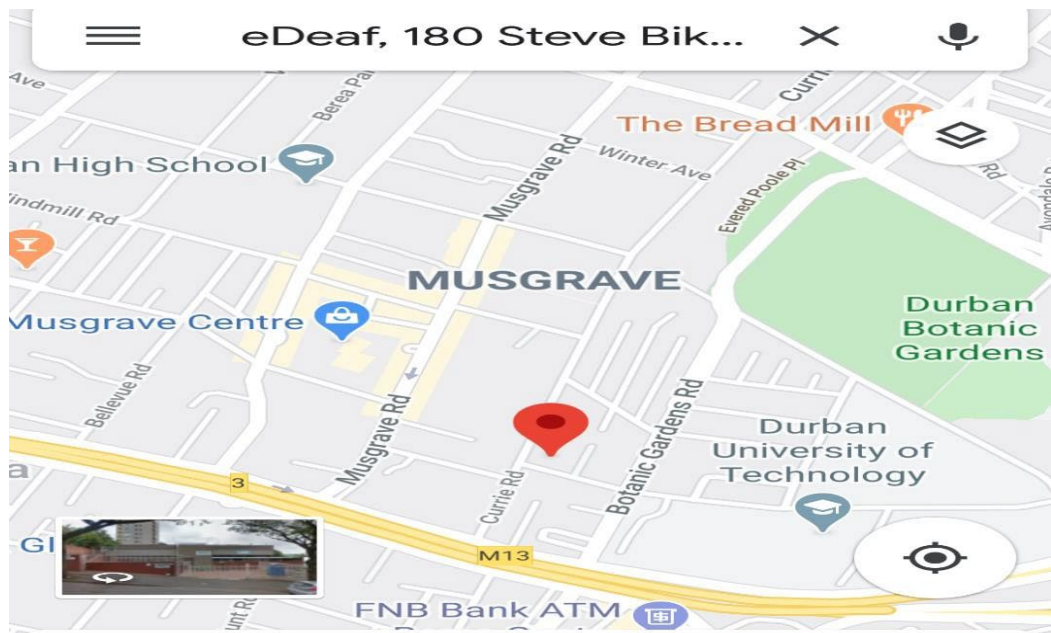


Figure 1.1 Study site: KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association

Source (Google maps. 2020)

1.5 Organization of the study

Chapters	Outline of the content
1	Introduction and background of the study
2	Literature review
3	Methodology of the study
4	Research outcomes and analysis
5	Conclusion and recommendations

1.6 Ethics

The researcher received an approval ethical clearance letter from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) of the Durban University of Technology on 13th of October 2020 and thereafter started the process of collecting data at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. The e information collected from participants was treated with confidentiality.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the background of the study, aims, and objectives of the study and problem statement. It also presented the research questions, the significance of the study, research design, ethics and summary of chapters. The conceptual framework will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Signed Languages are regarded as non-real languages in most countries and Deaf people are defined as people with disabilities. According to Arya, McClung, Katznelson, and Scott (2015: 4), entrenched attitudes and ideologies help to standardize or marginalize Sign Language and its users. Linguists have been involved in the study of language attitudes but, there are few studies that relate to language attitudes towards Sign Language in South Africa. Therefore, this chapter reviews literature related to language attitudes and Signed Languages. Apart of discussing available literature also presents the conceptual framework that guides the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the negative impact that language attitudes have had on Sign Language and its users. The following Conceptual framework was employed to guide the study.

2.2 Conceptual framework

This research study drew theoretical insights from Verena Krausneker's (2015) framework of language attitudes. Central to this conceptual framework is the idea that language attitudes can be directly or indirectly measured by an analysis of social treatments. The theory is premised on the understanding that any attitudes towards languages (Signed Languages included) are influenced by ideologies from the dominant group in society. The ideologies thrive on stereotyping, devaluating, and marginalizing minority groups economically. This conceptual framework is useful because on how ideologies and stereotypes influence language attitudes.

2.3 Language ideologies

Piller (2015: 4) defines language ideologies as beliefs about language where the linguistic difference is called upon to nationalize social organization and are also deployed in the interests of a society's dominant group, thereby serving to justify social inequality. Gallois (2010: 3) found that language ideologies reflect people's beliefs about what language is and how it should be used. She also defines language ideologies as a cultural or subcultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, loaded with moral

and political interests. People are socialized into and create language ideologies as a means of explaining the source and meaning of links between linguistic and social phenomena. In the same vein, Layton (2014:19) observes that ideologies in communities exclude and discriminate against those who are unable to fit the norm. In South Africa, for instance, language ideologies often privilege spoken languages and their users. In addition, Kangira (2016: 157) states that dominant languages (spoken languages) are usually favored over socially subordinate languages in order to retain their privileges in accessing society, economics, and education.

Therefore, the study intends to contribute knowledge towards how to change negative attitudes towards SASL by proposing recommendations that may lead to a change in attitudes.

Verena Krausneker's (2015) work evaluates the context in which attitudes develop and thrive. According to Verena Krausnekers (2015), there are three specific ideologies that constitute attitudes towards SASL.

2.3.1 The De-valuating ideology

According to Krausneker (2015: 416), the devaluating ideology either ranks Sign Languages as lowest on an imagined hierarchy of languages or claims that Sign Languages have no morphology, hence they are not languages. As a result, such languages are deemed to be of no value for children. This ideology is delaying the process of developing SASL and its users. In addition, Hill (2012: 65) points out the history of Deaf education worldwide, where there was great pressure to remove signed Languages as medium of instruction in schools for the deaf and society at large and replace them with spoken language. The general suppression of Signed Languages by administrators sent a message to people that Spoken languages are better than Signed Languages (Peel 2004: 14). However, this statement has a negative impact on Deaf children. It makes them underestimate their ability to succeed or enjoy the privileges that speakers of spoken language enjoy (Chong 2014: 20).

More so, Mweri (2016: 88) stipulates that spoken languages are the predominant mode of communication. Other languages such as Signed Languages are viewed as marked since they do not conform to the norm. This shows that Signed Languages are still

devaluated by spoken languages and policy makers (Mooko 2009: 20). However, this study is keen to bridge the gap between the dominant languages and marginalized languages and recommend ways to promote the use of Sign Language as a complete language that is as important as spoken languages. Negative attitude towards Sign Language delays the right to cultural activity and social mobility. The following section discusses stereotyping ideology.

2.3.2 The Stereotyping ideology

Krausneker (2015: 419) argues that most people believe that Signed Language users are disabled. Bell, Carl, and Swart (2016: 9) point out that hearing people can view Deafness as a disability that needs to be fixed. This pathological perception largely contributes to the social stigmatization of Deaf people and the Deaf community. Krausneker (2015: 419) believes that Sign Languages and Sign Language users need protection because people often perceive Sign Languages within the disability paradigm. The stereotyping “ideology portrays Deaf people as useless communities with no goals, with even some at Deaf schools undermining the capability of Deaf children”. Some even use various modes of communication to teach Deaf learners instead of using pure Sign Language (Holness 2016: 30). This ideology violates the rights of Deaf people. In fact, some government institutions do not have enough qualified SASL interpreters to indicate that they value Deaf people (Zulu 2014: 10).

2.3.3 Economic paradigm ideology

Krausneker (2015: 20) defines the economic paradigm as the most powerful attitude-forming p as it foregrounds how economic factors influence language attitudes towards Sign Language and its users. Deaf people need Sign Language interpreting services to communicate with mainstream society and they depend on government to provide them with the interpreting services. The main concern is that the government does not allocate enough budget for Sign Language interpreters in public institutions. Therefore, this ideology perpetuates isolation of Deaf people in societies instead of integration.

2.4 Language attitudes

Language attitude is a manifestation of the social attitudes of individuals in relation to both language and its use in the community (Ionas 2014: 129). According to Chakrani (2013: 25), language attitudes can be defined as the strong positive or negative emotions experienced by people when they are faced with a choice between languages in a variety of situations. More so, language attitudes are distinguished from other attitudes through their object (Chakrani 2013: 22). Baker (2016:1 984) states that language attitudes can be defined as attitudes which speakers of a different language or language variety have towards each other languages or language varieties. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, elegance, and social status.

Hill (2012: 65) points out that attitudes towards languages are generally initiated by the process of language standardization. Recognizing one language as standard impacts the status of other languages and social groups. When members of minority groups use the language for official purposes, they technically become members of that particular language (Hill:2012: 3). Ionas (2014: 98) found that spoken languages are viewed as standard languages with an overt status. Language prestige is acquired through the process of standardization, and it is associated with a dominant social group in the community (Hill 2012: 3). In South Africa, prestige is given only to official spoken languages and, therefore, thus perpetuating negative attitudes towards SASL as the majority of hearing people tend to neglect the rights of Deaf people (Ngoben 2017: 12).

People have attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about their language and the languages of other people (Krausneker 2015:416). They may feel that unwritten language is not a real language, and that the national language is the best way to get a job or the best chance at improving their lives. Chakrani (2010: 20) contends that attitudes cannot be observed directly but are demonstrated through actual behavior. In addition, Ceil and Schembri (2014: 83) argue that, where languages are in contact, the majority language is usually attributed positive qualities while the non- dominant minority language, for example, Sign Language is often viewed negatively. These derogatory attitudes may originate among powerful, dominant language groups and can be slowly adopted by the minority group so that in the end its members feel they are using an improvised language. Therefore, in the case of Sign Language, Ceil and Schembri (2014: 21) states that several powerful and influential hearing people have argued that Signed Languages are not real languages and

that they merely gesture and cannot be used to express abstract knowledge.

However, since the constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes South African Sign Language, the government built Deaf schools in each province. There are also SASL interpreters, Deaf organizations and Sign Language programs at universities such as Wits, University of Free state, and Stellenbosch, to name a few. This indicates that Sign Language is a language like any other and therefore it deserves scholarly attention.

2.4.1 Attitudes

Abongdia (2009:34) defines attitudes as subjective evaluations of both language varieties and their speakers, whether the attitudes are held by individuals or by groups. Abongdia further argues that political and socio-economic forces can change a community's attitude toward a particular language or variety of language. This also illustrates the influence of prevailing ideologies on language attitudes. On the other hand, Ionas (2014: 93) states that attitude is viewed as an evaluative statement (favorable and unfavorable) related to a person or object. Chakrani (2010: 20) notes that attitudes are composed of the following components. First, the Affective component (which means that an attitude constitutes feelings about an attitude object), secondly, Cognitive component (which pertains to our beliefs about the world) and thirdly the Behavioral component (which notes that attitude is behavioral in that they encourage certain actions towards the attitudinal object).

Thus, Getie (2020: 12) argues that there are cases where a favorable attitude towards a language coexists with an unfavorable attitude towards its users. In this case, one can positively value a language but hold a negative attitude towards learning it. The South African constitution recognizes the existence of SASL and its users but does not recognise the language as official. Hence, the language is still underrated, and the majority of Deaf people continued to be marginalized, doing general occupations that require limited education and vocational skills. The majority of Deaf people are denied the right to express their thoughts and ideas through their native languages.

In addition, Ionas (2014: 90) states that other concepts related to attitude include stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Ionas (2014: 92), defines stereotype as an exaggerated belief associated with a group. Its function is to justify our behavior in relation to that group. Prejudice is an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a

group simply because he/she belongs to that group. Lastly, discrimination is defined as a negative action carried out, based on prejudice. According to Verena Krausneker (2015) language attitudes are influenced by prevailing ideologies.

2.5 Overview of South African Sign Language

According to Akach (2010: 17), the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, recognizes cultural diversity and thus it seeks to promote multilingualism, develop official languages, and respect the use of all languages in the country, including South African Sign Language. It also identifies a total of eleven official languages. Although SASL is not among the eleven, it is directly mentioned in the Constitution. The Constitution also provided legislative room for the creation of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), which is authorized to promote and create conditions for as well as the development and use of all official languages including Khoi language, Nama, San Languages and Sign Languages (Department of higher of education and training 2017:13). Hence, under the support of PanSALB, a specific National Language Board (NLB) was formed for SASL with two precise objectives; to initiate and implement strategic projects aimed at creating awareness, promoting SASL, and funding projects aimed at developing SASL (Ganiso 2012: 26). However, SASL has not yet been accorded the official status equivalent to that of spoken languages and the Deaf community is being excluded from fully participating in the mainstream economy due to language difficulties. According to Matlosa (2010: 22), Deaf people have been oppressed, isolated from the hearing community because hearing people continue to perceive Deaf people as dependent. This statement is supported by Thomas (2017: 23) who stipulates that people with hearing impairments have educational and cognitive delays due to language problems. Some Deaf people suffer from discrimination and lack of social interaction because of communication difficulties. This clearly indicates that language policy makers in South Africa have not yet achieved their aim of promoting the use of SASL (Holness 2016: 18). In addition, hearing challenges affect all ages, races, and ethnicities across the entire spectrum of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds. Some people were born Deaf and some lost hearing as a result of medical condition or illness (Thomas 2017: 4). Therefore, it is important to value and preserve SASL as it is the language of Deaf people

in South Africa. South Africa should be a solid and positive society with no language barriers against the Deaf community. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes linguistic human rights as a pre-requisite for the development of communities. Language is a source of community development, which gives access to education, economic opportunities, political parties, social mobility and cultural activity (Akach 2010: 18). Therefore, it is also important to promote and introduce SASL into public schools and higher institutions of learning. This can help mitigate the negative attitudes towards SASL and SASL users.

2.6 Language and culture

According to Ceil and Schembri (2014: 183), all languages are created equal with evaluative judgments. Negative attitudes towards minorities, individuals with disabilities are present in society (Sparrow 2005: 139). More so, language and cultural development are entangled, especially for the Deaf culture. When the language is acquired, attitudes and cultural identity develop through interaction with society (Brightman 2013: 30). Language is the core of every culture, and people tend to believe their culture is more positive and superior to other cultures (Ceil 2014: 50).

Ceil (2014) further points out that the most important functions of language are, personal, social, and political. Language is the core of a culture, and groups/ culture share heritage, value systems, and practices that develop into an in- out-group belief system (Holcomb 2013: 24). Thus, cognitive development including language emerges from interaction with society, and culture is a result of the interaction language and language modalities (Sparrow 2005: 140). Since this study is concerned about the Deaf, the following section reviews literature about Deaf culture and the Deaf community.

2.6.1 Deaf culture

Dominant hearing cultures have seen Deaf culture as inferior, resulting in oppression and discrimination. Holcomb (2013: 22) defines Deaf culture as a collective group of individuals with any degree of hearing loss, who use Sign Language as their primary language, mode of communication, have a common heritage, and share similar attitudes. On the other hand, the term 'Deaf' is used primarily for those with congenital Deafness or who acquire Deafness at a very early age. Those individuals who tragically become profoundly Deaf later on in life but who have had an opportunity to acquire spoken language are rarely considered to be part of the Deaf culture unless if they become fluent signers (Ceil 2014: 49).

Those who are labelled as hard of hearing and have a substantial amount of oral language are often excluded from the Deaf group. They are usually viewed as people who required treatment or cure through hearing aids (Peel 2004: 13). Sparrow (2005: 141) claims that there are some important differences between those who belong to the Deaf culture and other cultural groups. An important criterion for membership in Deaf culture is being Deaf. This means that the "Deaf" with (capital 'D') belong to a cultural/ linguistic group whose language is SASL whereas the "deaf" with (lower case 'd') are people with hearing loss but do not have any cultural connection with the Deaf community. While hearing people may enter some way into the lifeworld of the Deaf by learning Sign Language and through contact with Deaf people, they remain to some extent outsiders (Ceil 2014: 181). The experience stemming from being Deaf is central to the cultural identity of the Deaf. Thus, the role played by Sign Language in the Deaf community makes clear, that being Deaf is not sufficient for membership of Deaf culture. However, the upper-case "D" (Deaf) is frequently used in this study to refer to those with profound hearing loss. Given that that 90 percent of Deaf Children are born to hearing parents (Sparrow 2005:138) submits, Deaf culture cannot rely on the most familiar mode of cultural transmission whereby culture is passed down from one generation to the next within the family, from parent to child. Instead, cultural transmission of Deaf culture occurs primarily in cultural institutions of the Deaf, and through contact with cultural role models other than parents (Holcomb 2013: 23). Cultural institutions view the Deaf form sociocultural as opposed to a medical perspective. The small letter 'd' is associated with the medical/pathological perspective while the capital letter 'D' is associated with the socio-cultural perspective. The following classifications distinguish between the two models (medical and sociocultural).

2.6.2 Medical model

The pathological perspective towards Deafness emphasizes curing those who are Deaf to make them normal (Mauldin 2016: 30). Peel (2004: 12) found that this perspective regards hearing loss as a societal deficit and does not account for diversity that is medical or clinically based. Deaf people are excluded from regular education schools in contravention of White Paper 6 (2001), which states that disabled people should not be excluded from mainstream society. Such exclusions immediately create perceptions that Deaf people are inadequate human beings who are unfit to be included in mainstream economic and social life. This negative attitude prevents society from learning Sign Language and the Deaf people experience social restrictions. The superior view of medical and scientific knowledge contributes to medical professions gaining a dominant position in society (Mauldin 2016:35). Matlosa (2009: 40) states that it is clear that from the pathological paradigm, a Deaf person's inability to hear is viewed in a negative light and as a deficit. She also points out that, due to their hearing loss and communication difficulties, Deaf people experience psychological problems. When Deaf learners are regarded as disabled, reliant on hearing people, and unable to achieve the same results as their hearing counterparts, the outcome is the creation of barriers between the Deaf and their hearing counterparts. Therefore, instead of being motivated to learn and acquire literacy, Deaf children end up dropping out of schools.

2.6.3 Social model

According to Peel (2004: 16), Deaf people are seen as members of a linguistic minority group sharing a strong identity, a common language (Sign Language), and unique culture (Deaf culture). From this paradigm deaf communities become a group of people who share a common means of communication. In addition, Hill, Lillo-Martin and Wood (2019: 10) points out that the sociocultural view of Deafness leads to an empowerment approach to language rights for the Deaf, in which Signed Language and other support structures are called for not as means to correct a disability, but rather because of the Deaf as a cultural and linguistic minority.

Sparrow (2005: 144) argues that the Deaf community should be accepted and respected as a separate cultural group with its own values and language. Deaf people are proud to be part of the Deaf community and thus refer to themselves as a unique linguistic minority

group. In Sparrow's (2005: 175) view, Sign Language is a prerequisite to the Deaf social community. It is not physical disability but Sign Language which unites Deaf people in a social community that exhibits all the traits of a language community. The Sign Language community is the Deaf person's safeguard against isolation from mainstream society. The Deaf community is a guarantee for individuals' social and psychological well-being.

2.7 Deaf community

The Deaf community evolved over many generations as a result of Deaf people coming together. It has allowed Deaf people to escape the isolation and loneliness of living with hearing people. The function of the Deaf community continues to serve as a powerful magnet for Deaf people seeking better lives (Holcomb 2013: 21). Thus, Andrew and Leigh (2016: 19), define the Deaf community as a group of people who live in a particular location, share common goals, and in various ways, work towards achieving these goals. On the other hand, Sparrow (2005:177) points out that, society should recognise the Sign Language and the community of the Deaf. The Deaf people must be able to make decisions about issues that directly concerning them in their community. The policy makers must no longer ignore Deaf people's demand for equal treatment, education, and the promotion of SASL. The importance of the present study is to explore the challenges encountered by Deaf people daily when they seek help. The main focus is to encourage hearing people to acquire the basics of Sign Language to avoid language barriers mostly in courts, health institutions, workplaces, and educational settings. Lastly, it is also important to motivate the Deaf community to be proud of their language as a unique linguistic minority group and, to demand official status as other South African languages.

2.8 Attitudes towards the Deaf community

Before 1994, the right of Deaf people to use SASL was not considered, and the majority of Deaf and hearing people did not recognise SASL as a language. Deaf people were not recognized as a cultural minority with their own language. Furthermore, even today SASL is not one of South Africa's eleven official languages, but it has a status in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Ganiso 2012: 25). According to Matlosa (2009: 38), Deaf people have labelled themselves as linguistically deficit, cultural deprived, socially isolated, and have been regarded as inferior.

According to Brightman (2013: 8), many deaf people have adopted a negative attitude towards hearing society and have downgraded themselves. Instead of relying on their language, they may be concerned to improve their skills in spoken language, believing it is necessary for social and economic success (Brightman 2013: 9). Thus, Hill, Lillo-Martin and Wood (2019: 10) claimed that these conflicting feelings are a product of Deaf people's experience of growing up and are based on misconceptions about the language both at school and home. Natural Sign Language is generally not used or encouraged. Deaf children rarely have exposure to adult Deaf or native role models and are not taught their native language. As a result, Deaf people distance themselves from the clinical-pathological perspective and form culture-based linguistic values Deaf people prefer to be understood from the perspective that they have their own visual methods of communication (Holcomb 2013: 20). Punch (2016: 40) contends that Deaf people are less likely to translate their career interests into goals, and their goals into actions because their efforts are usually impeded by adverse environmental factors. This includes factors such as economic difficulties, lack of family support, and educational limitations that can circumscribe one's career goals and constitute barriers to career choices and development.

According to the Royal Association for the Deaf (2009: 13), Deaf children experience segregation through language differences which affects their placement in residential schools. Chong (2014: 48) further intimates that socially dominant languages are frequently favored over socially subordinate languages. Murray (2015: 15) points out that linguistic minorities such as members of the Deaf community believe that they can only become informed citizens with full participation in society if they used the dominant language. Deaf people may feel excluded and underprivileged, and the frustration that they experience may lead them to believe that they will never be able to succeed in life or

be able to enjoy the privileges that others enjoy. According to Wallang (2016: 13), the general attitudes of hearing people is that they continue to view Deafness as a disability which requires some kind of assistance to integrate into the larger community. Oftentimes, tribal minority languages carry a minimal function in several domains apart from their speech community. Sign Language, though, does not carry any functional role in mainstream education or any societal domain apart from its communities such as Deaf schools and institutions. Therefore, even if Sign Language is recognized as equal to spoken languages, it still needs to operate and function in several domains in society in order to act as a support system for the Deaf community (Wallang 2016: 7).

2.9 Accessibility of information and career barriers

Communication difficulties influence hearing people's attitudes toward Deaf people. Several factors such as the misconception that Deaf people are disabled have perpetuated (SAIND 2016). Therefore, the communication barrier between hearing and Deaf people continues because hearing people are not aware of simple communication tactics, such as maintaining eye contact (Punch 2016: 4). Thus, this separation within society means that it is hard for meaningful engagement between Deaf people and hearing people to take place. On the other hand, the Royal Association for Deaf people (2009: 13) found that most public institutions do not provide information in visual formats, which makes it unreachable to Deaf people.

Hearing people who are acquainted with Deaf people may momentarily overlook the status of their Deaf counterparts. This has mostly happened in gatherings where Deaf people often attempt to communicate with hearing people through gestures and writings. However, the majority of Deaf people in South Africa cannot communicate and express themselves without the use of Sign Language. Therefore, the visibility of qualified Sign Language interpreters is critical. A report by the Royal Association of Deaf people (2009: 14-15) stipulates that in the workplaces the majority of Deaf workers' experience isolation and are left out of social interaction which can cause health problems such as depression and mental illness.

In addition, in order to overcome this negative attitude and ill-conceived approach towards

Deafness, hearing people need to arrange a weekly Deaf awareness, which provides a clear focus on the difficulties often encountered by Deaf people in relation to communication and access to information, preferably facilitated by Deaf people. Punch (2016: 6) emphasizes that interaction is a vital part of building a good relationship between Deaf and hearing people. The misconceptions and misunderstandings between Deaf and hearing people affects relations between the Deaf and the hearing.

2.10 Language barriers in health institutions

There are no legal provisions in place to ensure the provision of Sign Language interpreting services in the health sector in most countries including South Africa (Zulu 2014: 11). Orrie and Motsosi (2018: 209) found that communication between health providers and patient is pre-requisite for any meaningful intervention to occur in the process of seeking health care. Deaf patients as a linguistic minority group face communication challenge in health care interactions. The inability of systems to accommodate the disabled particularly the Deaf through the provision of Sign Language interpreters may undermine the role of health systems as forces of social cohesion and weaken the role of patients as co-producers of health (Zulu 2014: 13).

In addition, the communication barriers may contribute to Deaf patients' reduced initiative to ask questions whenever they misunderstand things. The Deaf have considerably poorer access to primary care and are faced with complications at all stages of the health care seeking process. When they go to the pharmacy, they experienced problems understanding the purpose and correct use of the medication dispensed by the pharmacists. Furthermore, Orrie and Motsosi (2018: 209) found that in Africa, HIV prevalence rates are higher amongst the Deaf and hard of hearing than the population average. This is largely due to lack of knowledge on prevention and poor access to care due to their inability to communicate with staff, marginalization and the general assumption that the Deaf people are asexual. Khumalo (2015:27) argues that patients should be involved in the medical dialogue, rather than being reporters of symptoms, so that they will be more comfortable to express themselves. In addition, there is a huge demand for the inclusion of qualified interpreters in medical settings to ensure effective

communication (Khumalo 2015:27).

2.11 The role of language

Mumbembe (2016: 45) defines language as a tool that speakers use to convey cultural knowledge, political and educational ideas. Language plays an important role in defining people and makes them rapidly recognizable to other members of their speech (Thomas 2017: 30). People identify other people through their native language. Consequently, Dorasamy (2012: 20) argued that language is integral to learning as it plays a major role in the development of an appropriate culture of learning. In addition, language is also important for academic performance. (Price 2010: 40) submits that speakers of a certain language use a language to uphold cultural differences. Languages represent and guard against any loss of cultural differentiation or identity that may come about as a result of the loss of language. In addition, language is a significant means of communication used by people to express their identity and draw conclusions about other people. It is attached to tradition and culture and for that reason, people who share the same language understand each other perfectly than people from different languages (Brightman 2013: 17). Thomas (2017: 33) intimates that it is more challenging for Deaf children to obtain jobs after tertiary education because of the language barrier and possible lack of literacy skills which include reading comprehension.

2.12 South African Sign Language

South African Sign Language (SASL) is not an official language and currently it is taught only in special schools for the Deaf. SASL is a unique language, and it is not linguistically related to spoken languages in South Africa. It is a distinct, rule-governed, grammatical, systematic, and non-arbitrary communication system similar to other natural Signed Languages (Ngobeni 2017: 10). In supporting Ngobeni's statement, Andrew and Leigh (2016: 18) point out that Sign Languages are not the same as spoken languages of the broader community. They have a grammar that differs markedly from spoken languages in contact with them. Countries that use the same spoken languages do not necessarily have mutually intelligible Sign Languages. Therefore, Sign Languages used in America,

Zimbabwe, Lesotho just to name a few, are quite different from each other.

Sign Languages do not develop according to the grammatical rules of spoken languages (Andrew and Leigh 2016: 19). Ganiso (2012: 26) defines SASL as a visual-gestural language that has been created and is used by Deaf South Africans to communicate with each other. It is a language that allows Deaf people to access everything. Ganiso (2012: 27) also points out that Sign Language is a completely human language that meets every criterion that one can apply to describe language. Sign Language is expressed through a combination of hand shapes and facial expressions. The language itself contains processes that spoken languages do not seem to have (Mandyata 2018: 2).

However, there are natural Signed Languages, which are used by Deaf people, and there are also contact Sign Languages, which are commonly used by both Deaf and hearing people when interacting (Mandyata 2018: 3). Therefore, the lack of recognition of SASL and curriculum development for the Deaf has for generations denied children educational and employment opportunities. Hence, this lack of recognition is linked to the issue of special schools rather than mainstream schools for children with hearing impairments, which means that relevant bodies have not prioritized the development of SASL (Holness 2016: 25). Ngobeni (2017: 4), contends that SASL is a real language, which should be equal in status to all other languages. Deaf people do not live apart from hearing people, and they need to communicate with hearing people in order to function socially and economically.

According to Baker (2016: 98), Sign Language performs a similar range of functions to spoken language; to communicate, to convey social relations and to express cultural identity. However, even though some studies confirm that Sign Language is a real language, it is not yet taken as a core part of the Deaf community in South Africa. The most shocking part is that Deaf people are excluded from many things because their language is unrecognized. In supporting this statement, Ganiso (2012: 29) states that before 1994, Deaf people did not have the right to use SASL and the majority of the Deaf were not recognized as a cultural minority with their own language. Thus, SASL is still not one of South Africa's 11 official languages, but it has a status in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Napier and Leeson (2016: 37) found that Signed Languages are based on a complex system of classifier handshape movements and locations. In

contrast, spoken languages are produced orally using the tongue and vocal cords, which are difficult for Deaf people to understand (Napier 2010: 37). Therefore, spoken languages should not be treated as better than Signed Languages since both serve the same communication purpose.

In supporting this argument, linguists and psychologists such as Quinto-Pozos (2014: 28) have found overwhelming evidence that Sign Languages are more natural languages compared to all languages that have been studied. This evidence affirms that Signed Languages deserves the same treatment as spoken languages, and Deaf people should partake in events that occur in society together with hearing people. Akach (2010: 28) views Sign Language as a core part of Deaf people. He argues that proficiency in Sign Language allows membership in the Deaf community and in cultural events that usually take place in communities where Deaf people reside. This membership is important for Deaf people because it encourages them to be proud of who they are as human beings and increases self-esteem in the ability to cooperate in a wide array of situations.

However, Ntsongelwa (2018: 5) believes that Sign Language is used by Deaf people for various factors, for example, for communication purposes, identity, education, and business. The most common misconception among hearing people is that Sign Language is a universal language. In reality, Sign Languages are developed naturally in various Deaf communities and are different in their structures around the world. On the other hand, Brightman (2013: 20) claims that Deaf people use Sign Language to set their culture and develop their own labour unions, churches, sports clubs, and Deaf organizations.

2.13 Attitudes of hearing parents towards SASL

The negative attitudes towards Sign Language does not affect only Deaf people but also families around them since they do not know how to communicate well with their children (Kangira 2016: 37). Some families refuse to learn Sign Language believing that Deafness can be cured using medical devices such as cochlear implant and hearing aids (Akach 2010: 44). The attitudes towards Sign Language begin at home because Deaf children do not acquire Sign Language as a mother tongue (Ridge 2009: 4). Brightman (2013: 35), expands this by stipulating that interaction with language is required to attain socialization. However, hearing children's communication with parents begins at birth whereas 90

percent of Deaf children are born to hearing parents who do not expect to give birth to Deaf children upon delivery. Therefore, hearing parents begin to view Deafness as a disability that needs to be cured through medication (Mweri 2016: 9).

Brightman (2013: 44), reports that due to lack of knowledge and inexperience, hearing parents of Deaf children have attitudes towards Deafness. Social stereotypes also lead hearing people to develop attitudes towards Deaf people (Ridge 2009: 4). In addition, hearing people who are not exposed to the Deaf community may have preconceived beliefs about Deafness (Andrew and Leigh 2016: 11). Many parents with Deaf children consider them as an unfortunate gift from God. These parents favor hearing children compared to Deaf children and Deaf children do not even get the opportunity to be educated (Mauldin 2016: 80). Thus, (Kangira 2016: 32) reveals that Hearing parents prefer an oral method of communication as they are told by professionals that speech is natural for children. However, Deaf children face various challenges such as barriers in education and employment environments. The act of attempting to make Deaf children communicate and function as hearing people is unfair. Some Deaf children can master speech and lip-reading but many have failed (Brightman 2013: 50). Thomas (2017: 23) posits that Deaf children should acquire their minority language, which is Sign Language from birth. On the other hand, Akach (2010: 37) states that some hearing parents believe that Deaf children should not use Sign Language from birth as it would prevent them from being able to participate in hearing society. Some parents perpetuate t negative attitudes towards Deaf children by denying them the opportunity to learn Sign Language from birth. The Deaf Federation of South Africa (2015: 10) also confirms that the majority of Deaf people do not acquire Sign Language naturally as a mother tongue because they lack a signing environment at home. They learn Sign Language at a later stage from peers in school. Baker (2016: 66) attributes this scenario to the long-standing view of Deafness as a pathology, contributing to the suppression of Sign Language. In supporting this argument, Miller (2010: 2) found that Deaf children are born into a unique linguistic situation, whereby hearing loss prevents them from attaining the naturally occurring spoken languages of their parents. Therefore, without language access, they are unable to fully participate in the family interactions that are so crucial to language development. More so, he points out that, Deaf children are at the risk of delays in communication and language development as well as delays in critical thinking skills and have problems with

social and emotional development because of the role that language contributes to these important areas (Miller 2010: 3). Lastly, Akach (2010:118) points out that many parents of Deaf children appear to appreciate that the child will ultimately learn to speak if they received the best possible hearing devices, including the surgical procedures for cochlear implantation. Thus, such medical interventions may result in medical risks and massive financial constraints on parents with often limited sources of income.

2.14 Language acquisition

According to Ridge (2009: 3), language is acquired best in early childhood, and it is more difficult to acquire later. More so, Sign Language is excluded from the critical period hypothesis on grounds that it can be successfully by any person at any age. However, Mwari (2014: 20), contends that children are expected to acquire their mother tongue naturally through cultural transmission by interacting with people in their growing environment. Brightman (2013: 35) found that 90 percent of Deaf children are born and bred in an environment that does not expose them to Sign Language.

On the other hand, 10 percent of Deaf children have the privilege of having Deaf parents and therefore, grow up in an environment that enables them to acquire Sign Language naturally. However, according to Faridy (2017: 10), it is more challenging to those who grow up with hearing parents if there is no support from family and surroundings, such as schools, neighborhood, and parents, which are three important foundations to develop a young child. The development of mother tongue depends on the language used by parents at home. Thus, the responsibility of these parents is to learn basic signing in order to enhance the parent-child relationship and create a conducive learning environment.

Looking at the importance of language acquisition, Mwari (2014: 20) stimulates that mother language assists Deaf children in generating pride in their identity as well as fostering connections with community members. Mwari (2016: 11) further argues that failure by Deaf children to learn their mother tongue early has a negative social impact on them. However, he also points out that most parents send them to schools for the Deaf at an early stage because they lack the communicative skills to bring them up. In addition, most Deaf learners acquire their primary language at different ages and during different cognitive development phases because most of them have hearing parents. Therefore,

this makes it difficult to compare the language acquisition milestones of Deaf learners (Ridge 2009: 4). On the other hand, Thomas (2017: 16) contends that the acquisition of a language is a normal procedure that occurs naturally for hearing children. More so, language is essential in all schools because it acts as a medium of instruction. It also allows people to attain perceptions and to improve their thinking skills. Nevertheless, Deaf children rarely acquire language at birth especially those with hearing parents

2.15 Attitudes towards Deaf education

The perceptions that teachers of Deaf children have towards education vary. This means that teachers, hold different theories and use different approaches in teaching Deaf students. Some believe that Deaf children should have learned their minority language from parents while others believe that Deaf children should not acquire Sign Language from an early stage because it would prevent them from participating in mainstream society (Kangira 2016: 35). However, a study by Akach (2010: 45) reveals that the majority of teachers are posted to schools of the Deaf without being linguistically prepared to communicate with Deaf students. In some cases, teachers who teach Deaf children are not trained to use Signed Language. Some think that the amplification of sounds through hearing aids assist in the acquisition of speech. Mandishona (2015: 18) observes that Deaf children have constantly found it difficult to accomplish higher grades in their education and have always struggled to acquire new skills due to several constraints such as economic and social attitudes compared to other children without hearing defects in mainstream education.

However, chapter two of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or the language of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable (Akach 2010: 37). In a study on attitudes towards Deaf education in Zimbabwe, Musegi (2012: 18) states that the government of Zimbabwe introduced educational policies which included education for all children and built schools in all provinces, however, the right of Deaf children in both countries has not been fully addressed in terms of education compared to hearing children.

In addition, Musegi (2012: 16) contends that Deaf children have been neglected and most

of them have been receiving vocational training and are placed in boarding institutions where they undergo elementary education after which most of them are then taught skills such as sewing and carpentry. Hlatywayo (2015: 11) on the other hand, avers that schooling is for all young people and a form of preparation into adulthood. Therefore, the knowledge and skills acquired at school will assist Deaf children to make their way into the world of work. However, for many Deaf children, the curriculum does not provide adequate preparations for independent living and for furthering their studies to their universities of choice. Deaf learners experience educational complications mainly because of communication barriers.

Wallang (2016: 11) is of the view that residential schools serve as important platforms in transmitting Deaf culture and language because they naturally provide students with a rich and comprehensible language environment where young Deaf students develop social bonds between themselves. However, it rarely happens in higher education, religious institutions, and workplaces. Those who obtained high education in most cases are those with a mild case of hearing loss who can associate themselves with mainstream society and amongst them, only a few are the members of the Deaf community. Those who have profound hearing loss are usually enrolled in skill-based education which is accessible through Deaf clubs and disability associations. Moreover, Hlatywayo (2015: 15) found that Deaf schools have not extensively addressed environmental noises in the classrooms. Many classrooms have been found to be excessively noisy and not appropriate for Deaf children. However, background noises have been proved to have the greatest effect on the hearing ability of Deaf children. In addition, Reagan (2008: 10) points out that, Sign Languages are rarely used in formal education settings. Rather, education institutions prefer to employ either a form of contact Sign Language or artificially constructed manual Sign codes for a Spoken language.

2.16 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature related to the present study. The focus was on language attitudes towards SASL, which includes ideologies that perpetuate negative attitudes towards SASL and delayed linguistic milestones for Deaf children. Such ideologies overlook the right of Deaf children to receive critical information, their language of choice, culture, education, safety, and security as mentioned in the constitution of the

Republic of South Africa. More so, according to Sager (2019: 54), audiologists have encouraged hearing parents to decide on their Deaf child's primary language. However, language is the centre of every culture, and people tend to believe their culture is more positive or superior to others.

The chapter discussed literature on status of Sign Language in relation to other languages. The chapter also highlighted that language acquisition is a critical for all human beings it must be acquired at an early age. Since the majority of Deaf children are born to hearing parents, they do not have the opportunity to learn Sign Language early. The chapter also reviewed literature on Deaf culture, Deaf communities, Deafness and Deaf education. Most Deaf people are born to hearing parents; therefore, everyone needs to acknowledge Deaf communities. Lastly, whenever there are different ethnic groups in society, positive and negative attitudes towards minority languages emerge. This chapter has thus highlighted the negative attitudes that society has towards Sign Language.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature related to the study. It also highlighted challenges faced by the Deaf community in various sectors. This chapter presents the methodology of the study. Mgweba (2017: 74) points out that research is conducted to test a research problem and data is collected and gathered from the targeted objects to resolve the problem. Therefore, this study employed a qualitative research methodology to answer the research questions. Madenga (2017: 170) defines methodology as the means of undertaking something. In practice, research methodology goes beyond research procedures and strategies to encompass the philosophical underpinnings of a research study. This chapter outlines the methodology that was employed during the process of conducting the entire study. It provides explanations of the following terms: research design, target population, sampling method, measuring instrument, anonymity, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation used to obtain responses (William, James and Karina 2017:58). Merriam and Grenier (2019: 11) note that the design of a qualitative study includes shaping a problem from the literature, forming a research question, selecting a sample, collecting and analyzing data, and representing the findings. A qualitative research approach was proposed for this study since the approach allows the researcher to study the phenomenon in its natural setting. The following section defines the qualitative approach, its purpose and methods of collecting data.

3.3 Qualitative research

This approach “centres on the attempt to achieve a sense of meaning that others give to their own situation” (Claire 2010:12). Researchers are interested in knowing how people understand and experience their world at a particular point in time and in a particular context. Moreover, they seek to explore how individuals experience and interact with their social world (Merriam and Grenier 2019: 12). Abongdia (2009: 49) defines qualitative research as concerned with people’s interpersonal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings. Thus, the researcher attempts to describe the findings from the perspective of the participants. However, in order to achieve this goal, data will be collected directly from the selected population.

The researcher used the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association as the research site. A total of 24 Deaf members within the organization were interviewed to obtain their experiences, knowledge, and deep thoughts about public attitudes towards their native language. Since communication and understanding are the main goals in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Bloomberg and Volpe 2016: 65). William, Kanik and James (2017: 50) explain that qualitative research is a method that uses a naturalistic approach to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real-world settings where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena. Qualitative research produces findings that one cannot arrive at through quantification. The findings of qualitative research are derived from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally.

3.3.1 The purpose of qualitative research

According to Creswell, Ebersohn, and Elof (2019: 57), the purpose of qualitative research is to offer the researcher the perspective of the target audience members through engagement in a culture or situation or direct interaction with the people under study. This indicates that in the qualitative paradigm, the researcher becomes an instrument of data collection.

3.3.2 The objective of qualitative research

The objective of qualitative research is to encourage better self-awareness and increase insight into the human condition. It also emphasizes improved understanding of human behavior and experience (Creswell, Ebersohn and Elof 2019: 55).

3.3.3 Methods for qualitative research

William, Kanik and James (2017: 57) point out that in qualitative research, methods such as open-ended unstructured interviewing, direct observation, document analysis and overview, and participant observation are designed to assist researchers to understand the meanings people assign to social phenomena and to explain the mental process underlying behaviors. Hence, the researcher chose the interview as method to understand the selected participants.

3.4 The research sites

According to Pillay (2018: 51), the research site is the physical place where the study is conducted. The data for this study was collected through interviews at the KZN Deaf Association in Durban, which offers several programs, courses and learnerships on the following five main areas: Wholesale and retail learnerships, adult education and training programs, end-user computing training/ IT, SASL training, and Deaf specific soft skills (eDEAF 2020). All trainings on site are conducted by Deaf facilitators in their first language (SASL). The Association aims to provide the labour market with trained and skilled Deaf people, who are ready to join the mainstream economy.

The study included only permanent staff members and registered students in order to obtain first-hand and trustworthy data from people who have experienced exclusion from mainstream society. The researcher also interviewed SASL interpreters from the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association because they interact with Deaf people daily and have a wealth of information about the Deaf community. The interviews were organised following the Coronavirus regulations and based on staff availability with the organization.

The initial idea was to spend approximately three hours per day with two participants doing face-to-face interviews. However, due to Covid-19, the researcher had to slightly adjust his plan by reducing the duration of the interviews from 1h30 per person to approximately 8 minutes. The primary goal was to complete the entire process within two weeks, however, the researcher had to complete the entire process within a week. The researcher managed to interview three participants within 30 minutes per day as required by the organization's management. Participants who were working remotely were interviewed telephonically. Other participants requested to respond to structured interview

questions and were given not more than two days to complete the document. The following table presents the adjustments to the interview schedule as a result of Covid-19.

Table 3.1 : Summary of changes initiated by Covid-19

Methods of collecting data	Semi-structured interview	Telephonic interview	Structured interviews questions
Participants (27)	15	1	11
Preferred method	√	√	√

The security guard ensured that everyone was sanitized and had a standard temperature before they entered the premises. The researcher brought a 70 % alcohol-based sanitizer and extra transparent masks for participants to wear before the beginning of the interviews. The distance between the participants and the researcher was 1,5 meters to ensure social distance in accordance with Covid-19 protocols. After every 15 minutes cleaners were asked to use disinfectant wipes to clean the surface of the desks particularly on the edges. The management was the first group to be interviewed, followed by facilitators and students. All participants were given equal time to participate and enough time to complete their thoughts. All participants were interviewed using English and the SASL.

3.5 The scope of the study

3.5.1 Delimitation

Delimitations limit the scope and describe the limitations of the study in relation to sample size, geographical location or settings in which the study was conducted. The study was conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban. The scope of the study was limited to one Deaf organization. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to other Deaf communities in KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, Data was collected within the association. Only registered staff and students between the age of 18-45 participated in the study.

3.6 Target population

The target population is generally a large gathering of people or object that is the primary goal of a scientific query or a collection of individuals or objects that seem to have similar characteristics (Pillay 2018: 51). A researcher cannot interview every member of a population group. Therefore, the researcher relies on sampling techniques to select participants. Research findings a study that focuses on a small group cannot be generalized to other contexts. Generalizing research findings is the act of applying the results of a sample population to the entire target population (Madenga 2017: 181). The following table presents the sample of the study.

Table 3.2 Sample of the study

Participants	Number of participants (27)
Administrators	4
SASL interpreters	3
Facilitators	6
Students	14

3.7 Sampling method

Sampling is the process of selecting the right individuals or objects from a population of interest. By studying the sample, you can generalize your results to the population from which units were selected (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff 2019: 218). Non-probability sampling was employed to determine the target population of this study. According to Utete (2016: 85), non-probability sampling techniques include quota sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and judgmental sampling. Non-probability sampling attempts to comprehend conclusions about a larger population under study through a certain sample of the population (Maphosa 2017: 132). More so, Pillay (2018: 52) points out that, in non-probability sampling, individuals are nominated based on the judgement of the researcher. Therefore, this study used purposive sampling to select the right sample. Purposive sampling is a method where the researcher selects a sample with a purpose in mind related to the kind of participant the researcher is looking for (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff 2019: 219). The researcher focused on a small group of 27 participants who were between the ages of 18-45 years old. In addition, all participants were members of the Deaf community including three Sign Language interpreters working for the association. These participants were selected based on their interests on the research problem. The researcher collected data from a purposively selected group of people to get detailed and in-depth narratives and to ensure that data is collected from participants who are familiar with the research problem. Kumar (2014:365) provides the following advantages of using purposive sampling:

- It is cost-effective and time-effective
- It's easier to make generalizations about the sample compared to a random sample where not all participants have the desired characteristics; and
- The information might consist of a low margin of error.

3.8 Data collection

According to Mgweba (2017: 79), the following guidelines are pre-requisites for data collection:

- The participants must be motivated to share information with the researcher and the researcher must be transparent about the objectives of the study.
- The questions must be clear so as to assist participants to understand what is required of them and the type of responses expected by the researcher.
- The participants must be able to respond to the questions and should possess the required information.

Interviews were used as data collection instrument. Interviews were conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban during the working hours. Participants were asked to sign in the agreement form before the interviewing process. More so, interviews were conducted in the private office with the organization to protect participant's privacy. All covid-19 regulations were followed. Appointments were made through emails with the association's administrator to discuss the possible times and conducive spaces to conduct interviews. Interviews were conducted during lunchtime from 11:00 up to 12:00. All interviews were informal and open-ended and were carried out in a conversational style which allowed the participants to relax and feel comfortable to share information. All interviews questions were clear to participants and were also explained to participants before the interviewing process. Participants who were uncomfortable with the interviewing process were given structured questions two days before the interviews. The interviewing process was video recorded with the permission from the participants. Sign language was the medium of instruction since most of participants were Deaf. Therefore, the researcher conducted interviews alone because he is a qualified SASL interpreter.

3.9 Measuring instrument

There are many types of qualitative research instruments. However, one's choice of instrument depends on what one wants to achieve at a particular time. The interviews were employed as the research tool for the study. Mgweba (2017:79) identifies two general points that should be taken into consideration during the process of collecting data:

- It must be guaranteed that all participants have been well approached, informed about the context and purpose of the study; and
- Participants must be assured of confidentiality and anonymity with regard the information they provide.

When these points are observed, participants feel safe and comfortable to proceed with the process of data collection. The researcher spent approximately five minutes with each participant informing them about the context of the study. Moreover, everything concerning the interview process and purpose of conducting the study were clearly discussed. The following section defines the interview as the selected research instrument for this study.

3.10 Interview

According to Creswell, Eberson, Eloff (2019: 218), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to learn about the beliefs, ideas, views, opinions and behaviors of the participant. Qualitative interviews aim to see the world through the eyes of the participants, and they can be a valuable source of information, provided they are used correctly. However, the interviewer should get permission from the participants before tape-recording. It is also crucial to take notes so that you can review the responses. All interview questions were clear and allowed participants to be able to share their experiences about the attitude of hearing people towards SASL. The study aimed to investigate language attitudes towards SASL through exploring the experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members towards SASL. The researcher used interviews to gain a deeper understanding of factors and ideologies which contribute to language barriers, how hearing people perceived deaf people and the marginalization of Sign language. The following are the advantages and disadvantage of using the interview as a method of data collection as provided by Kumar (2014: 182).

3.10.1 Advantages

- Participants can explain and add information,
- Interviews allow the researcher to elaborate on the questions,

- They are valuable for collecting in-depth data,
- The interviewer can control the order of the questions; and
- The interviewer can limit sample size.

3.10.2 Disadvantages

- They consume time,
- Hard to tabulate responses; and
- The researcher can affect the statement of the participant.

3.11 Data analysis

According to Cuesta (2016: 6), qualitative analysis can explore the complexity and meaning of social phenomena. Data may include written texts such as documents or audible and visual data. Data analysis is the central step in qualitative research. Flick (2013: 3) emphasizes that

data collection is limited to recording and documenting naturally occurring phenomena. In qualitative research, the researcher needs to find key themes and patterns to connect concepts (Peel 2004: 51). The collected data were analyzed through coding, categorizing and developing themes intended to respond to the research questions. Thus, findings were organised according to themes that were developed from the collected data.

The researcher used the coloured Microsoft Word highlighter to mark the central words and thereafter, grouped them to find the themes. This process allowed the researcher to settle from large volumes of reading material (Cuesta 2016: 38). Data needs to be compressed into controllable chunks by creating categories. This process is called data coding and reduction. This process is crucial in qualitative research as it connects different areas of data that share a common property, which is then categorized. In addition, coding and data reduction takes ideas, reduces the data to associated segments, and links them together to create meaningful related data (Peel 2004: 51). The primary objective was to find similarities and differences in responses from the participants. The study objectives and research questions were linked to the interview questions. Additionally, Verena

Krausneker's (2015) conceptual framework on language attitudes was employed to guide the process of analyzing and interpreting data.

3.12 Ethical considerations

According to Utete (2016: 92), ethics refer to the suitability of the researcher's behavior in his/her engagement with participants. The key ethical issues include informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the protection of participants. Peel (2004: 59) points out that it is crucial to protect the identities of participants and the research site. Anonymity should be provided and any information that would indicate the research site should be avoided. Ethical approval for this study was provided by the ethics committee of the Durban University of Technology (See Appendix A). The researcher obtained a gatekeeper's letter from the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association to conduct the research (See Appendix B). All participants were asked to complete the consent form before the interview process (See Appendix C). The potential participants were approached individually and given a full explanation of the purpose of the research. Participants were advised that contribution to the research was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the research at any time with no negative effect. The researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality by not disclosing the names of participants.

3.13 Anonymity

All participants were advised to sign a consent agreement form in order to protect their identity and private information. All information supplied by the participants was treated with confidentiality. The interview schedule responses will be stored in a safe storage in the Department for a period of five years, as stipulated by the University, thereafter, be shredded. Electronic records will be kept on a password locked laptop for five years and thereafter be deleted.

3.14 Validity and Reliability

Validity in research is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of results (Morgan 2014:80). Flick (2013:52) defines validity as the assurance that the research instruments can frequently represent the same outcomes if the same outcomes can be consistently attained by using the same methods under the same conditions. To ensure the validity of

the research. the researcher had to avoid a close relationship with the targeted group. The researcher used two criteria to assess the validity of the results: credibility (whether the results are credible) and transferability (whether the results apply to other contexts). The researcher guarantees that the results are supported by other studies and that the conclusions can be tested based on findings. The researcher increased the validity by ensuring that informants were clear about the nature of the research, interviewing the same informant on several occasions, making observations more than once, by comparing the results obtained with other evidence, and verifying the information with the targeted group.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability, and repeatability of the informant's accounts as well as the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately (Morgan 2014: 87). Utete (2016: 89) defines reliability as the extent to which findings are consistent over time and are an accurate representation of the total population under study. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the instrument is considered to be reliable. The researcher with the participant's permission recorded all the interviews to ensure that accuracy was maintained, and the process assisted the researcher to capture the information as it was presented. In addition, the original video clips and complete interviews schedules were kept at hand during the process of writing up so that if anything went wrong, the researcher would go back to the original interview transcript or video clip. More so, the interview transcript, field notes, coding of themes were open to supplementary examination by the supervisor and researcher.

3.15 Challenges of collecting data

The availability of staff members and students within the organization's premises was the main challenge due to Coronavirus regulations. The majority of staff members were working remotely full-time. This challenge d delayed the process of data collection. The researcher had to postpone appointments with participants. Some participants preferred to respond to structured interview questions at home since they were unable to remove their masks. In addition, the researcher was allocated only one week to complete the data collection process and he had to spend 30 minutes within the organization's premises. Most students were not interested in participating since the study was conducted during

their lunchtime. The researcher had to wait for them to finish their business and then approach them.

3.16 Conclusion

This discussed how the study was conducted and provided clear explanations on the methods of data collection that were used in this research. The qualitative research design was discussed. The chapter also explained why a qualitative research design was the most appropriate approach for the study. This study was conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association because the primary goal was to investigate language attitudes towards South African Sign Language by exploring the experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members. The purpose was to obtain information about the attitudes of hearing people towards SASL and the Deaf community. Therefore, the study used interviews as a suitable tool for collecting data as they enable the participants to interact with the researcher. The chapter highlighted the disadvantages and advantages of using interviews in qualitative research. The study also highlighted how the collected data was analyzed and explained how the validity and reliability of the study was guaranteed. The following chapter will provide a presentation of the research findings and the analysis of the outcomes.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and justified all the measures, instruments and techniques that were followed to complete the data collection process. This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the interviews that were purposely collected from the members of the KwaZulu- Natal Deaf Association in Durban (KZNDA). It focuses on negative attitudes of hearing people towards South African Sign Language (SASL) and Deaf people, who formed the majority of the research population. Krausneker's (2015) conceptual framework of language attitudes will guide the discussion of findings.

4.2 Data collection

The data for this chapter was collected through interviews from 14 Deaf students, 6 Deaf facilitators, 4 Deaf administrators and 3 qualified South African Sign Language interpreters (SASLI). This makes a total of 27 participants whose ages ranged from 22 to 42 years old. Participants' names will not be disclosed to maintain confidentiality, as was promised to the participants before the interviews. The interview process provided a researcher with an opportunity to collect rich and meaningful data (William, Kanik, and James 2017: 50). Thus, the researcher obtained the required information by asking specific questions and allowing participants to supply as much information as possible.

4.2.1 Challenges during the process of data collection

The researcher experienced some complications due to Coronavirus regulations. Instead of conducting face to face interviews as initially planned, the researcher had to arrange telephonic interviews because some members some members of the Association were working remotely.

Some facilitators and administrators preferred to answer structured interviews questions in written form since we were unable to lip-read and make proper facial expressions with the mask on the face. The researcher managed to interview two Sign Language interpreters and ten Deaf students within the organization due to Coronavirus

working shifts. The other four students preferred to answer interview questions in writing. Hence, the researcher had to arrange a telephonic interview with the other SASLI.

The staff attendance and time length of interviews was the main challenge as the researcher was allocated only 30 minutes to conduct interviews and to be inside the organization's premises. This was a huge challenge as the researcher had to double up his working capacity.

4.3 Discussion of outcomes

The outcomes derived from this chapter would be intended to respond to the following research questions.

- What are the prevailing language attitudes towards SASL and its users at the KwaZulu- Natal Deaf Association in Durban?
- What ideological constructions influence these prevailing attitudes?
- What are the underlying factors that isolate Deaf people from the mainstream?

4.4 Data analysis method

The collected data were analyzed through coding, categorizing and developing themes intended to respond to the research questions. Thus, findings were organised according to themes that were developed from the collected data. The researcher used the coloured Microsoft Word highlighter to mark the central words and then after, grouped them to find the themes. Kumar (2019: 466) defines themes as the pattern in data that discloses something of interest regarding the research topic and provide a rich description of the research findings.

The interview transcriptions and video recordings were reviewed frequently by the researcher to get acquainted with the data. The following table presents themes and subthemes derived from in-depth interviews analysis.

Table 4.1 Themes and sub themes

Themes	Sub themes
The language standards in the society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language status • Society's dominant language
Communications barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of interpreters (Health institutions, Workplaces, Courts and Higher education)
Attitudes of hearing parents towards SASL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language acquisition
Poor Deaf basic education	

4.5 Developing codes

The coding process is important in qualitative research as it connects different units of data that share a common property, which are then categorized. It also takes ideas, reduces the data to related segments, and connects them to create meaningful interrelated data (Peel 2004:51).

The following table presents codes that were given to participants, Interpreters, Deaf students, Deaf administrators, and Deaf facilitators.

Table 4.2 Summary of codes given to participants

SASL interpreters	Deaf facilitators	Deaf students	Administrators
SASLi1	FA	S1	Ad1
SASLi2	FB	S2	Ad2
SASLi3	FC	S3	Ad3
	FD	S4	
	FE	S5	
	FG	S6	
		S7	
		S8	
		S9	
		S10	
		S11	
		S12	
		S13	
		S14	

4.6 Familiarizing myself with data

The collected data were collected from the participants using the android smart phone as a tape and video recorder. Due to Covid-19, as it was difficult to access the campus's resources. The researcher familiarized himself with the collected data through reviewing, listening and reading transcriptions of recorded material and written responses from those participants who were not interested and afraid of contact interviews due to Covid-19. All

transcribed data were turned into a written document thereafter, the researcher re-read the data to ensure consistency.

4.7 Data analysis and findings

This section presents the detailed discussion of findings through following the emerging themes and sub-themes. The collected data were categorized into four themes and four sub- themes. The responses from the participants are presented verbatim.

4.8 Theme one: The language standards in the society

Standard language in the community has the authority to unite community members and to exclude those who do not have access to that means of social and professional interaction. Hill (2012:65) points out that attitudes towards languages are generally initiated by the process of language standardization. When one language is deemed standard that impacts the status of other languages and social groups that use those languages in a particular context regardless of their social status (Hill 2012:3). ParticipantAd1 (2020) points out that;

Spoken languages such as English and isiZulu in Durban are given higher status compared to South African Sign Language. Therefore, since the majority of Deaf children are born to hearing families, so as Deaf children, we were forced to learn English and speech so that we could be the part of the community. I learnt to lip- read in order to understand people although it was difficult. I used to have a piece of paper in my pocket and pen to write down whenever I am looking for an assistance. More so, I used to stay at home alone because it was difficult to start friendship with hearing peers.

In addition, FC (2020) who experienced challenges due y language standards in society notes,

I remember when I was in high school, twenty years ago in one of the

highly rated schools for the Deaf in KwaZulu-Natal. Some of the teachers were teaching using English mixed with Sign Language as a medium of instruction. They were also teaching us to pronounce words and we didn't have SASL as a subject. However, this had denied us an opportunity to access institutions of higher learning because we didn't have the second language as the main requirement. I noticed that our language did not have the same power as spoken languages. In addition, this had also denied us as Deaf people an opportunity to form Deaf clubs such as churches, sport clubs and drama clubs because SASL was oppressed by spoken languages.

The above participants note that dominant languages contribute to the marginalization and exclusion of minority languages. Since everyone is mandated to utilize spoken languages in order to access or transmit information, thereby, those who are unable to utilize spoken languages are excluded. The response from this participant parallels Kraunseker's (2015) conceptual framework which highlights that language attitudes can be directly by analyzing social treatment. Everyone has the right to receive information or knowledge in their language of choice. However, it is unconstitutional to oblige someone to use other languages to access information. Therefore, it is clear that Deaf people have been excluded and denied the right to develop their culture since their language is underestimated. In addition, it is evident from the two participant's responses that standard languages within societies have the power to perpetuate negative attitudes towards those who are not standardized.

4.8.1 Status of the language

It has been noted in this study that the constitution of the Republic of South Africa identifies a total of eleven official languages, but SASL is not among the official languages. However, it is directly mentioned in the constitution as an official language only for educational purposes. Sign Language should be recognized as an official language and offered in mainstream schools to allow language acquisition and cultural acceptance

of Deaf people. The failure to recognise SASL has denied Deaf people educational and employment opportunities. To support this statement, Ganiso (2012: 45) argues that people are treated unfairly and suppressed because of language. Those individuals who are deprived of linguistic human rights may be prevented from enjoying other human rights, including fair political representation, fair trial, access to education and information, freedom of speech and maintenance of their culture. Ad2 (2020), notes that,

Government has the power to ensure that Deaf people are not deprived of their human rights on the basis of their disability. Further on this, I regard SASL as a significant means of communication utilized by us as Deaf people to express our identity and to solidify our culture. Therefore, I would like to pronounce that it is the right time for democratic government to recognise SASL as the twelfth official language to normalize negative attitudes towards this language.

The same participant states that the status of a language has power to marginalize and uplift that particular language. Language status confers identity, respect, value, cultural acceptance to a language. The unofficial status of SASL does not only marginalize the language but also suppresses and limits Deaf people from achieving their goals. FB (2020) points out that,

The unofficial status of SASL perpetuate negative attitudes towards the language and its community. The majority of hearing people normally exclude us as Deaf people in vital community meetings, and they don't even bother to hire interpreters for Deaf people. However, they believe that we are disable so it is impossible for us to be the members of the community committees. Therefore, it is the government responsibility to promote languages in society by according to them equal status. For that reason, the blame should not go against hearing community members if

the government is quiet about the status of the minority language. SASL should be given equal status and introduced into mainstream education from the basic level up to the higher level in order to eliminate negative attitudes towards Deaf people.

In addition, Ad1 (2020) reported that, it is not easy to survive under the situation whereby you rely on other people to speak on behalf of you, while you are present. Everyone has a right to express themselves with their language of choice. Therefore, as Deaf people we should be able to address our issues with or without an interpreter. The majority of hearing people have been discriminating the Deaf community due to misconceptions they have about Sign Language.

In supporting this statement, Layton (2014: 19) observes that ideologies in communities exclude and discriminate those who are unable to fit in. The devaluating ideology ranks Sign Languages lowest on an imagined hierarchy of languages. In fact, the hierarchy questions whether Deaf culture is a real culture (Krausnekers 2015). One South African Sign Language interpreter (SASLI1) noted this when she said,

People do not consider our qualification amongst other important professions due to inferiority of SASL. They overlooked the importance of having proper training for SASLI, even in higher institutions of learning in KwaZulu-Natal in particular. Only one university offers the programs of Sign Language interpreting and this, therefore, indicates that the language has not yet been given a high status such as spoken languages. In addition, I also support that Sign Language should be the 12th official language in order to offer the language the same value as other languages. I believe this can open more opportunities for Deaf

people.

This indicates that PanSALB has not yet promoted and protected SASL in the country required by the Constitution. Although there is something positive about the status of Sign Language compared to the past years, SASL is yet to be recognized as an official language. This discussion shows that the unofficial status of SASL perpetuates negative attitudes towards the language and its users. The government should act decisively to eliminate repetitively negative attitudes towards the Deaf community.

4.8.2 Society's dominant language

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, all languages are equal. The constitution also guarantees respect for all languages used in the country including SASL. Society holds attitudes towards SASL because they consider spoken languages superior to SASL. Society views Sign Language through the disability paradigm (Krausneker 2015). Participants disclosed that SASL users are expected to acquire the majority language through medical cure so that they would be considered as normal people. This stigmatization devalues the language and culture of Deaf people while elevating spoken language. It also refutes the value and the contribution that Sign Language has made to the Deaf community. This has influenced some parents of Deaf children to believe that Sign Language has no value and no future for their children. Krausneker's (2015) conceptual framework points out that society believes that Signed Languages have no value for upcoming generations. Therefore, for this reason, some Deaf children are forced to attend mainstream schools with the aid of medical devices such as cochlear implants, hearing aids and transcribing apps for them to be the part of the hearing society. This attitude continues with the marginalization of the minority language and its users.

Krausneker's (2015) states that attitudes towards languages including Signed languages are influenced by ideologies from the dominant group in society. Ceil and Schembri (2014: 83) argues that where languages are in contact, the majority language is usually attributed positive qualities, while the non- dominant minority language, for example, Sign Language, is often viewed negatively. These derogatory attitudes may originate within the more powerful, dominant language group and can be slowly adopted by the minority group so that in the end its members feel they are using an improvised language. This

statement complements the majority of participants' experiences who pointed out that some members of the Deaf community have developed negative beliefs towards SASL, especially those who have residual hearing. They have moved to mainstream schools, made relationships with hearing people, and now regard themselves as normal people. According to the participants, this has created extreme ignorance in society.

Dominant languages are usually favored over socially subordinate languages. Linguistic minorities such as Sign Language users can only become informed community members with full participation in society if they adapt the dominant language (Mouldin 2016: 35). SASLi1 and SALi2 (2020) note that,

SASL does not have power in communities as a minority language, and Deaf people are struggling. They mostly rely on visual communication with captions written in English, such as posters for significant communique around the community. However, communities mostly prefer to use their indigenous languages to spread the information. In this case, Deaf people are being excluded since the majority of them barely understand spoken languages and they cannot read and write properly. The only time that community pioneers recruit Sign Language interpreters to assist is when they are looking for support from Deaf people such as votes or when they do awareness's about a new communicable disease.

However, there are existing official tribal minority languages that carry a minimal function in several domains apart from their speech community. However, Sign Language does not carry any functional role in mainstream education or any societal domain apart from its community, Deaf schools, and institutions (Wallang 2016: 13). S1 (2020), says that,

I have noticed that the minority group of deaf people (those with residual hearing) in different communities have recruited Deaf people to use both

Sign Language and hearing aids to be identified as full members of the community. However, this has the negative impact toward the language and the community because it destroys the culture and the identity of Deaf people. Some of them have developed friendship with hearing people but the problem is that they lost their identity. I know some they wish even to marry hearing people. However, that is a bad idea because they destroy our culture.

This ideology has manipulated the attitudes towards SASL users some of whom have gradually developed the belief that their language has no value. This has resulted in unnecessary dropouts at the high school level with some students becoming alcoholics. Young women become victims of unprotected sex and pregnancy. Krausneker (2015) states that this ideology claims that Sign Languages have no morphology and are not real languages.

Languages should be granted equal treatment as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa outlines. Equal treatment for everyone's language can gradually reduce negative attitudes towards Sign Language and its community. In addition, equal treatment of languages may allow the Deaf community to engage mainstream society with self-confidence.

4.8 Theme two Communication barriers

Communication is the most important tool in mainstream society where different ethnic groups share ideas, information and experiences. However, language is the key tool for communication. This means that everybody has the right to effective communication since it is critical for healthcare and safety. However, language can act as a barrier to human interactions in society. In most cases, these barriers are initiated by language variations within the society or attitudes towards minority languages. This study discovered that Deaf people in South Africa have been marginalized for years and are unable to participate in society because of language barriers against them. The lack of participation in society has ruined their ability to control or take care of their lives, making them feel inferior, and

denying them opportunities to develop the society.

Deaf people are highly discriminated in societies and communication is the greatest barrier. Since hearing people do not want to learn Sign Language, the Deaf have been experiencing difficulties because of language differences. Society perceives, Deaf culture as inferior, resulting in oppression and discrimination (Matlosa 2009: 39).

4.8.3 Absence of interpreters (Health institutions, Court, Workplaces and Higher education)

Krausneker's (2015) economic paradigm highlights that the linguistic minority group depends on Sign Language interpreters to interact with the mainstream society. They also depend on the state to provide them with interpreting services. However, the government does not allocate enough budget for interpreters. For that reason, public institutions on many occasions lack the budget for interpreters. As a result, Deaf people use their grants to pay their own interpreters. Some Deaf people had missed an opportunity to go to institutions of higher learning due to unavailability of SASL. However, some institutions of higher learning offer interpreting service on selected programs which may limit the number of Deaf people who can pursue career of choice. Moreover, disability departments in institutions of higher learning have insufficient budget for interpreters. This negatively impacts the inclusion of Deaf people into higher institutions of learning. This is the most powerful ideology that perpetuates communication barriers in societies since the Deaf people cannot afford interpreters. Zulu (2014: 11) points out that there are no legal instruments in place to ensure the provision of Sign Language interpreting in the health sector in most countries including South Africa. S3 (2020), points out that,

The absence of interpreters is the most difficult challenge in my life because I cannot express myself clearly in public and I cannot receive crucial information without the aid of interpreters. Information such as the state of the nation address, court trails, doctor's prescription and interviews. However, sometimes I ended up missing out some important information due to the unavailability of interpreters. Most South African churches exclude Deaf people and regard us as people with disability as

they kept on praying for us instead of offering interpreting service. I thought church is where everyone should be comfortable and cherish the moment, but they don't recognise us as a different linguistic minority group.

Student participants disclosed a very critical issue that they were unable to protect their private information because they could not understand and write meaningful English. S4 and S7 (2020) reported that,

I once experienced an excessive communicative challenge in one of the highly recognized South African banks, insurance companies and accounts stores. The huge concern was the lack of effective communication between me, and the service providers and I ended up signing for useless expensive policies that put me into serious debt for years. Therefore, since I am unable to communicate through written languages, I thereby, request them to organize interpreters for Deaf clients as their valued clients to indicate that our contribution is valuable such as other customers.

The third participants who was a student also shared a sad experience he had with the court. S14(2020), revealed that,

I was once accused of assaulting my hearing girlfriend. She shared her side of the story with the officers and then they believed her. When they realized that I was Deaf they couldn't give me an opportunity to share the side of my story. I was custody for one month until my high school teacher came voluntary to assist me. I was advised to find my interpreter because they couldn't find anyone. It was their excuse since we were in rural area.

It was so painful to stay there together with hearing inmates. I had no pen and paper to be able communicate with them. Therefore, we real need interpreters as Deaf people because some of us they cannot even construct a paragraph to express themselves.

The unavailability of Sign Language interpreters is a serious challenge which prevents effective communication between the Deaf and mainstream society. These participants stated that government should provide sufficient budget to cater for the needs of the Deaf. Some participants believed that Deaf people are often neglected because they are not represented in the presidency. These responses correspond with Kraunseker's (2015) economic paradigm where hearing people question whether Deaf people really deserve financial support. On the other hand, Abongdia (2009:34) declares that political and socio-economic forces can influence a community's attitudes towards a particular language.

In addition, the painful situation for the Deaf community in South Africa is that Deaf people are regarded as unproductive and incapable of contributing positively to society. They are perceived as an economic burden on society and left in poverty. The lack of interpreting services in institutions such as banks, courts, police stations and hospitals make Deaf people to perceive themselves as less important and marginalized minority groups.

- **Health institutions**

There are no legal instruments in place to compel health institutions to provide Sign Language interpreting services in most countries including South Africa (Zulu 2014: 11). Thus, during the interview process one participant shared his experienced with the health sector. This was supported by S6 (2020),

I once visited a public hospital in Durban and the most challenging part was that nobody was willing to assist me quickly. They kept me waiting and walked around looking for someone who is familiar with Sign Language. Thereafter, I was requested to transcribe down the primary

intention of visiting the hospital. They did not care of how serious the illness could cause damage to me while I was still struggling with constructing sentences in written English.

In addition, another participant seconded the above participant by sharing his own experience. S10 (2020) said that,

Communication barriers sometimes prevent me as a Deaf person to ask questions about medical prescriptions or the clarity about my health conditions. Thus, as a Deaf person I have poor access to basic health care, and I use to face complications almost at all phases of the health care admission process. I experienced challenges in understanding the correct use of the medication distributed by the pharmacist.

Health workers' negative attitudes worsen existing access barriers for the Deaf community. Participants noted that hearing health workers such as nurses, pharmacists and doctors have serious negative attitudes towards Deaf people. S8 (2020) reported that,

I once visited a local health institution with young boys for circumcision purpose. Interpreters were unavailable to assist with the full explanation of all procures. The health institution manager declares that interpreters are too expensive and there are limited professional Sign Language interpreters around their village. Therefore, I was just circumcised without any full explanation of risks and benefits of the entire procedure. I signed the consent form before circumcision, but I misunderstood all the medical terms. However, I felt like, I was deprived the right to understand everything through my native language. Sign Language interpreter is the

first priority for Deaf individuals, thereby, I demand financial support for interpreters.

Krausneker's (2015) economic paradigm states that government sectors may have questions before they allocate budget to Deaf people because of some people believe that Deaf people do not need or deserve money. In some case, people in positions of power also do not see the need to provide Deaf people with a proper service.

- **Workplaces**

Employment status is essential to every South African citizen regardless of their health status. This study has indicated that the majority of Deaf people are denied the opportunity to hold higher positions in workplaces. In most companies, disability centres seem to have insufficient budget for Sign Language interpreters. Therefore, Deaf people are further denied the opportunity to participate in job interviews. Few Deaf people are employed as general workers and assigned heavy work. This is also another factor that contributes to Sign Language being perceived as unreal language (Krausneker 2015), Since the majority of Deaf people have been denied the right to employment and the provision of interpreting services, the Royal Association of Deaf (2009: 14-15) stipulates that in workplaces the majority of Deaf workers experience isolation and are out of social interaction at work due to the unavailability of interpreters, which can cause health problems such as depression and mental illness. Thomas (2017: 33) posits that it is difficult for Deaf children to obtain jobs after tertiary education because of the language barrier and possible lack of literacy skills which include reading comprehension. In this regard, SASL3 (2020) shared her experience with the researcher about this matter as follows,

I was privileged to be appointed as a Sign Language interpreter in one of the largest companies in South Africa. I was assigned to work with two Deaf technicians during the day and to assist them with report compiling. However, I worked for three months without monthly payments. I was informed that after three months my contract would be terminated due to

financial instability. Consequently, the two Deaf people were forced to adapt the company's culture which was dominated by hearing people.

This study has indicated that socio- economic factors are the most powerful tools that perpetuate negative attitudes towards Sign Language because government has failed to provide sufficient budget to various disability units in public departments particularly the Deaf unit. The economic paradigm is the most powerful attitude-forming backdrop which initiates negative language attitudes towards Sign Languages and its users (Krausneker 2015). Attitudes towards Sign Language matters are compounded by the economic paradigm whereby those in positions keep asking whether it is prudent to allocate money towards particular needs of the Deaf. FE (2020) disclosed his experience of language attitudes in the workplace as follows,

I had an infrequent opportunity just a year after completing the degree in Information and Technology. I was lucky to be shortlisted for an interview in one of the biggest local networking companies in KZN. I passed all the online assessments that formed the selection process. However, I was shocked during the interview that nobody had noticed on the application form that I was Deaf. They did apologies and, I had to wait for them to reschedule the appointment with a Sign Language interpreter. More so, they advise me to bring my interpreter since they could not afford to pay the interpreter. I had a bad experience and, I confirmed that Deaf people are still excluded due to communication barriers.

It is apparent the two responses that discrimination towards Deaf people is a reality. Some hearing people still have attitudes towards Sign Language, and they do not believe that Deaf people could have a better future. S7(2020) suggested this he said,

I had an opportunity to work as a general worker in one of the biggest retail stores in Durban. I was the only Deaf person surrounded by the hearing

people. It was so difficult during the first of week of the training and everyone was look at me. I had to write everything down and they were also complaining about my writing skills. I used to work alone during staff meetings, and I was working more than 8 hours a day. I worked for the whole month without a single day off. It was so painful to work there because everyone had no basics of the Deaf culture. They were throwing pens and papers if they call, and some were just laughing around me. I tried to teach some of them the basics of Sign Language and Deaf culture, but they were not interested. Some were saying I am not supposed to be working because I receive the disability grant. I had to leave the job because they were excluding me in every store activity, and I was not happy.

This ideology has denied the majority of Deaf people the right to information and the economy. The Deaf continue to live isolated lives without support from broader society. This study has established that economic issues foster language barriers and negative attitudes towards Deaf people.

- **Higher education**

It is uncommon to find students with hearing impairments holding diplomas and degrees issued by higher institutions of education in South Africa. There are limited programs that accommodate Deaf people. In most institutions, lecturer venues are not designed to accommodate Deaf students and the majority of hearing students have negative attitudes towards Sign Language. However, Deaf students are forced to enroll in specific programs offered by the university. Thus, student with other types of disabilities compared to student with hearing impairments appeared as the most protected and supported group of students. This indicates that Deaf people are being excluded due to stereotype ideologies and negative attitudes initiated by language differences around communities. People with hearing impairments have educational and insufficient or progressive delays due to

language problems. Some Deaf people experienced discrimination from their peers due to communication difficulties (Thomas 2017:23).

In most cases, those with a mild case of hearing loss obtained higher education since they could associate themselves with mainstream society. On the other hand, those who have profound hearing loss are usually enrolled in skill-based education which is accessible through Deaf clubs and disability associations. This was supported by S4, S9, S11 and S12 (2020) who pointed out that Deaf people are found in vocational programs or learnerships offered by the Deaf organizations such as the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. In supporting this statement, Dakwa and Musegi (2012: 16) contends that Deaf children have been neglected and most of them have been receiving vocational training. Some are placed in boarding institutions where they undergo elementary education, after which most of them are then taught skills, such as sewing and carpentry. Thus, the majority of them from high school levels have goals of furthering their studies. However, due to negative attitudes portrayed by hearing people towards Sign Language are unable to fulfil their goals.

Those who had the opportunity to study, dropped out due to poor reading and writing skills. The language policy makers from higher institutions of learning exclude Sign Language as a language of a linguistic minority group. This may result in hearing peers side-lining Deaf students in college/university programs. Hearing peers naturally are led by delusions that Deaf people are incapable of coping in institutions of higher learning due to lower levels of intellectual capacity. However, this sometimes-denies Deaf students the right to contribute to group assignments and destroy their confidence towards the ideal carrier. This was also supported by S2 (2020) when she states that,

I had an offer of studying in one of the highly accredited colleges in South Africa, however, I had to ask my uncle to assist me during the entire process of registration. That was the last time I attained proper treatment as other students. It was hard during the first three months as I was struggling to get lecture rooms on time and misunderstood briefs for modules. On the other hand, all venues were dark, so it was difficult to lip-

read the lecturer and take notes simultaneously. More so, everyone was avoiding being around my desk and others kept on looking at me with sad faces. I took seven years to finish the diploma and it was hard to study without an interpreter. The college's disability unit had no Deaf representative. People who are working in disability unit or departments had no background of Sign Language. Therefore, those people cannot represent Deaf students. It is clear that attitudes towards us as Deaf people start from them because they do not even encourage the inclusion of Deaf people or hosting Deaf awareness events.

In addition, S13 and F1 (2020), pointed out that normally the curriculum at the secondary level does not provide Deaf students with sufficient preparations for tertiary education. This was upheld by Hlatywayo (2015: 11) who revealed that for many Deaf children, the curriculum does not provide adequate preparations for independent living and furthering their studies up to their university of choice. Therefore, only a few Deaf students can adapt at tertiary level without interpretation services especially those from private schools for the Deaf. More so, Sign Language is not recognized as the language of teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning, however, this also creates carrier barriers as some programs are only designated for hearing students. Therefore, they exclude Deaf students and deny them the opportunity to prove themselves. On the other hand, the language policy makers of institutions of higher learning do not protect Sign Language and its users. Therefore, they contribute more to factors which affect Deaf students in higher education. This indicates that Signed languages are still devalued by spoken languages and policy makers (Mooko 2009: 20).

Lastly, there is no proper training and awareness provided to all staff members within institutions about Sign Language or Deafness. Consequently, this could have assisted in reducing the level of discrimination against Deaf students and improve social communication with everyone. The administrator/ Ad3 (2020) shared her experience concerning the importance of proper training for all staff members. She reported that,

It was ten years ago when I went for a late application in one of the biggest universities in Durban. During the day of application, I tried to communicate with an SRC member through written language although my English was not good at that time. He took me straight to the admission office then I stood on the queue

for more than 3 hours. However, when I came inside, I greeted everyone with smile and soon as they realized, I was Deaf, four of them came closer trying to sign. They were laughing and signing meaningless signs then after three minutes they wrote with big font on the white paper that they do not accommodate Deaf people. I was disappointed because of their bad attitudes towards me, and I was denied an opportunity to explain myself.

The researcher has discovered that the lack of recognition of SASL in some institutions of higher learning had generated serious delays to the Deaf community. Deaf people are unable to develop their lives through advanced education due to prevailing attitudes from institutions higher of learning. Attitudes such as underestimating their language, misconceptions about Deafness and other learning supports prevail in higher education. On the other hand, some factors again have denied Deaf people an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills. Those factors include being financially unstable, unavailability of interpreters, no proper trainings for staff members about Deaf culture, unsuitable lecturer rooms, and discrimination from hearing peers. However, In South Africa, prestige is given only to official spoken languages and, therefore, these measures perpetuate negative attitudes towards SASL as the majority of hearing people tend to neglect the rights of Deaf people (Ngobeni 2017: 12).

4.9 Attitudes of hearing parents towards SASL

The majority of Deaf children grow up not having learnt their mother tongue. This has a

negative social impact on them. Most parents send their Deaf children to schools for the Deaf at an early stage because they lack the communicative skills to bring them up (Mweri 2016: 11). On the other hand, Brightman (2013: 35) found that 90 percent of Deaf children are born and raised in an environment that does not expose them to Sign Language. More so, 10 percent of Deaf children have the privilege of having Deaf parents and therefore, grow up in an environment that enables them to acquire Sign Language naturally.

In this study, the majority of Deaf people acquired Sign Language at a later stage from school. The majority of them have reported that they were born into hearing families whereby everyone was not exposed to Sign Language. Therefore, some of them were sent to mainstream schools while others stayed at home. Further on this, another group was encouraged to learn spoken languages and to use hearing aids.

4.10 Language acquisition

According to Ridge's (2009: 3) language acquisition hypothesis, language is acquired best in early childhood, and it is more difficult to acquire later. Mwari (2014: 20), contends that children are expected to acquire their mother tongue naturally through cultural transmission by interacting with people in their growing environment. In this study, participants reported that language acquisition is the most difficult stage in their childhood since the majority of them were born into hearing families. Their hearing parents taught them spoken languages and failed to accept their conditions.

This was supported by S1, S7, S13 and F2 (2020), when they state that our parents could not accept, we have hearing loss instead, they took us to traditional healers for years trying to cure our condition. However, they denied us the right to acquire our language and culture at an early stage such as our hearing peers. More so, sometimes they took us to church conferences for prayer hoping that we will recover. Our parents have negative thought towards their conditions that maybe they are a curse from God.

In addition, S1(2020), revealed that,

I remember when I was six years old, before I went to school for the Deaf. I used to have several sessions with a speech therapist until my mother gave up on my condition. She had to admit that I was Deaf, though it was difficult from her side.

I wish all women could understand that Sign Language is a real language, and it is important to Deaf people. More, I advise all families who have Deaf people to support and respect them.

The majority of Deaf people have been denied the opportunity to acquire and develop their language and culture from birth. This is due to the negative attitudes their family hold towards Deafness. Deaf children rarely have exposure to Deaf adults or native role models. They are not taught their native language, either naturally or formally, unlike their hearing peers. S6 (2020), shared an experience which parallels with the above statements,

I was approximately nine years old when I was doing grade one at a mainstream school not far from my home. I was the only student with a hearing impaired in the classroom and it was tough. I would sleep almost for the entire session and the class teacher, after realizing that I was Deaf, she advised my parents to take me for cochlear implants. However, after the implantation process nothing had changed, and they had to admit that I was profoundly Deaf. I went to school for the Deaf at a later stage and that is where I acquired Sign Language from Deaf peers.

The study revealed that Deaf children from hearing families lack family support and early language acquisition. As a result, the majority of Deaf learners acquire their primary language at different ages and during different cognitive development phases. This is why

s it is difficult to compare the language acquisition milestones of different Deaf learners (Ridge 2009: 4).

The pressure of exclusion and depression begins at home, which makes them doubt their ability to compete in society. On the other side, the hearing parents of Deaf children do not admit that Sign Language is a real language for Deaf people. They force Deaf children to learn spoken languages and hearing cultures at an early stage rather than developing their own language. Brightman (2013: 8) supports this statement when he points out that many Deaf people have adopted the negative attitude of hearing society and have downgraded themselves. Instead of relying on their language, they are concerned about improving their skills in spoken language, believing it is necessary for social and economic success. This indicates that negative attitudes towards Sign Language and discrimination against Deaf children begins in families. The majority of hearing parents deprive their Deaf children of the right to language acquisition, culture, and better education. One of the participants shared his painful experience of being a Deaf child in a large family of hearing members. FG (2020),

I was born into a large family who were deeply into ritual practices. I assumed they considered a Deaf person as the misfortune since my mother had to leave the family to take care of me. However, due to her illness, I was adopted by another family with two Deaf members. I was ten years old without any language exposure, and it was difficult to communicate with other children. I started grade one when I was eleven years old, although it was difficult, but I tried my best to learn Sign Language. More so, even at home everyone was willing to assist with signs, and that is where I realized that being Deaf does not mean it over about you. However, you need your own language in order to be successful. I would advise that every Deaf child should acquire their primary language during the right phase in order to eliminate all the negative beliefs against the Deaf community.

Krausneker's (2015) conceptual framework, affirms that hearing people view Deafness as a disability that needs to be fixed. This pathological perception largely contributes to the social stigmatization of Deaf people and the Deaf community. Consequently, the majority of participants emphasized that SASL is their source of community development which gives them access to everything. They also revealed that they are a unique linguistic minority group such as other minority groups. Therefore, people should treat them as normal in order to eliminate negative attitudes towards the Deaf community. Moreover, they pleaded with government to introduce SASL from basic education up to tertiary level as they have done with foreign languages such as Mandarin.

Further on this, the promotion of SASL may assist the upcoming Deaf generation to acquire Sign Language from their early age, to obtain warm support from their families, and more attention from societies. The importance of language acquisition is supported by various scholars in this study. Mweri (2014: 20) opines that mother languages assist Deaf children in generating pride in their identity as well as fostering connections with community members. Participants also pointed out that early acquisition of Sign Language helps Deaf people to develop their terminology, culture, norms and to be proud of being members of the Deaf community. However, some Deaf people do not know proper Sign Language due to lack of early language acquisition and exposure from elders. Furthermore, government should recognise Sign Language as the twelfth-official language in order to remove all factors that contribute to negative attitudes towards Sign Language. The late acquisition of Sign Language from the Deaf child indicates that the majority of hearing parents have negative attitudes towards Deafness. However, Mumbembe (2016: 45) defined language as a tool in its domain of use and its speakers convey cultural knowledge, political and educational ideas. Thus, Deaf children have been denied an opportunity to acquire language at an early age. In addition, it has emerged from this study that Deaf people without Sign Language as their tool of communication regard themselves as being oppressed. Therefore, hearing parents of Deaf children should also acquire Sign Language in order to accommodate and support them. People should consider Sign Language as a natural language like any other language and stop having attitudes towards the language so that it would be easier for them to learn the language.

4.11 Poor Deaf basic education

The majority of participants reported that the basic education in Deaf schools is poor. Some teachers do not sign properly, and others seem like they never had proper training and exposure to Sign Language. Some participants never had Sign Language as a subject at school. Most participants had no matric certificate due to bad treatments from schools that led them to leave school in lower grades. Most teachers from Deaf schools encourage the use of oral approach and mixed methods or total communication (Signing and talking simultaneously) to teach Deaf students. For instance, some encourage students to use hearing aids in order to be able to understand oral speech. However, the use of these methods to teach a Deaf child does not develop SASL. Instead, it overlooks the importance of preserving Sign Language as the language of a minority group and it creates more challenges since the majority of families might not afford to provide their children with gadgets (Peel 2004: 19). Moreover, there are few qualified Deaf teachers in Deaf schools, and as an alternative they employ Deaf students with matric certificates to work with hearing teachers.

Participants also pointed out that the government and the Department of basic education overlook the importance of Deaf education. The curriculum does not provide Deaf children with sufficient preparations for independent living as they do for hearing children. The response below reveals one of the participants' experiences. S13 (2020) reported that,

When I was doing grade ten in one of the Deaf schools in KwaZulu-Natal. I realized that some teachers at school were not using pure SASL to teach us. Their Sign Language was more like a mixture of American Sign Language (ASL) and SASL, which was confusing and challenging as it was most Deaf students were failing subjects including myself. The main reason behind was the lack of effective communication between us and some of our teachers who were not good in SASL. However, as a result I taught myself the skill of lip-reading in order to be able to understand spoken language. I repeated grade ten two times then I was

advised to join the vocational programs which was based in craft work. I denied the opportunity then I moved to other Deaf school, where I managed to pass grade 12 with a Bachelor.

The above response corresponds with the responses of the following participants S10, S5 and FA (2020) when they reported that,

Most of the Deaf schools prefer to use Signed Exact English (SEE) and Total communication (a mixture of signs and spoken words) as the methods of teaching and learning since some of them are not good in SASL. Some teachers consider these techniques in light of the fact that there are hard of hearing (those who had residual hearing) students. Therefore, they tend to overlook Deaf students hoping that hard of hearing students will explain everything after a lesson. On the other hand, they use these students as interpreters since they sign natural as profound Deaf. We demand that the government should bring only qualified teachers with competence in Deaf culture and SASL. Consequently, by instilling that act will therefore create smooth communication and strong bonds without any negative attitudes towards Deaf pupils.

Participants reveal that the lack of pure SASL as a language of learning and teaching creates more frustrations academically and psychologically. Participants also pointed out that although some teachers inspired them, some held negative attitudes towards SASL as a method of teaching. This indicates that they are there for money not to serve or inspire the lives of Deaf youths. The collected data reveal that the government has not done much in developing t Deaf education compared to mainstream education.

The responses of previous participants (S5, S10, S13, and FA) parallel Brightman's (2013) argument that during the apartheid regime, Sign Language was banned as a method of teaching and learning in Deaf schools. The regime encouraged the oral approach for

teaching Deaf children.

All four participants indicated that the medium of instruction as the most serious challenge. The above responses indicate that some hearing people are led by stereotyping ideology. Therefore, they neglect the promotion of pure Sign Language as a real language.

The Deaf Schools Governing Bodies in corporation with the department of basic education should ensure that the promotion of SASL as a medium of instruction in Deaf schools.

4.12 The summary of collected data

The collected data revealed that the prevailing attitudes towards SASL is a major problem affecting Deaf people. Participants believed that hearing people regarded them as people who are unable to compete in the mainstream society. These kinds of attitudes depressed them and affected their motivation to further their studies or develop their skills in public institutions of higher learning. The data collected from the interviews also revealed that the prevailing government policies appeared to be a major factor that determines language ideologies of the population. Further to this, language ideologies appeared to privilege spoken languages and their users. The majority of hearing people including parents of Deaf children believed that Deaf people were not capable of competing in technical and scientific programs, as a result they enrolled them into vocational skills programs.

The findings show that the three ideologies in Krausneker's (2015) conceptual framework have a great influence on the marginalization SASL. These ideologies also perpetuate negative attitudes towards SASL and its users.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the interpretation and analyses of data relating to how attitudes towards South African Sign Language affect Deaf people. Data were analyzed and interpreted under themes and sub-themes that were formulated from collected data. The findings show that communication barriers, ignorance, lack of language acquisition, poor

education, absence of interpreters and lack of adequate support from families contribute to negative attitudes towards SASL. The negative attitudes are compounded by the fact that SASL is yet to be recognized as an official language. This alone has contributed to the undervaluing SASL and its users. Participants confirmed that there are still negative attitudes towards their language in society.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study has explored the lived experiences of Deaf people in relation to the attitudes of hearing people towards SASL. All participants were Deaf people including three Sign Language interpreters working for the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. In one of the objectives of this research was to examine the prevailing attitudes towards SASL and to investigate whether Sign Language had same status as spoken languages. Chapter four presented the findings and discussions of the findings. The present chapter provide a summary of the findings, limitations, recommendations for parents, teachers, and government. Lastly, it outlines recommendations for future research and conclusions.

5.2 Summary of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the language attitudes towards South African Sign Language (SASL) through exploring the experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members. This study was conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban. This organization has various programs for Deaf people such as IT, Adult education, and Retail learnership. The research questions were formulated based on the study objectives. Hence, one of the research questions was to investigate the underlying factors that isolate Deaf people from the mainstream society. A qualitative research methodology was employed for this study. Interviews were used as the instrument for collecting e data, and the sample of the study consisted of 27 participants. The collected data was analyzed guided by Krausnesker's (2015) conceptual framework on language attitudes and analyzed using thematic analysis. Lastly, the study objectives were formulated as follows.

- Explore language attitudes towards SASL and its users at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban.
- Investigate the ideological constructions that influence the prevailing attitudes; and Investigate the underlying factors that isolate Deaf people from the mainstream.

5.3 Discussion of the study objectives and how they were achieved

This section explains how the study met each objective.

5.3.1 Explore language attitudes towards SASL and its users at the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban.

The previous chapter revealed that prevailing attitudes towards SASL is a major problem. It noted that affects participant's confidence among hearing people. Further to this, some participants believed that hearing people regarded them as people who are unable to compete in mainstream society. These kinds of attitudes affected most of the participants to the extent they had lost interest in furthering studies or developing skills in public institutions of higher learning. The study also reveals that hearing people do not believe that SASL is a real language that deserves the same status as spoken languages.

However, some hearing people including, parents of Deaf children did not promote the use of SASL. Instead, they encouraged Deaf children to utilize devices such as hearing aids and learn spoken language in order for them to fit into mainstream society. Participants indicated that some Deaf people have been deprived of the opportunity to work, educate themselves and engage with hearing people. In addition, some participants believed that all these negative attitudes were caused by the fact that SASL is not an official language.

Some participants testified that Deaf people had experienced difficulties because of communication barriers, lack of interpreters and ignorance from public institutions. Some teachers from schools of the Deaf could not sign properly, therefore, they used inappropriate medium of instruction to communicate with Deaf children. This alone has resulted in Deaf children dropping out of school in lower grades.

5.3.2 Investigate the ideological constructions that influence the prevailing attitudes.

The data analysis from the previous chapter revealed that stigmatization, devaluation of sign language, status of the language and the dominance of spoken languages in society are the most powerful ideological constructions that perpetuate negative attitudes. Participants in the study disclosed that spoken languages in communities are attributed

positive qualities while Sign Language is viewed negatively. As a result, some hearing people developed assumptions about the Deaf community. The study notes that government language policies and the structure of South African communities are major factors that promote toxic language ideologies. In addition, participants revealed that language ideologies privilege spoken languages and their users at the expense of SASL.

5.3.3 Investigate the underlying factors that isolate Deaf people from the mainstream.

The analysis from the previous chapter shows that the unavailability of South African Sign Language interpreters in public institutions such as courts, colleges, hospitals and universities exclude and isolates Deaf people from the mainstream society. In addition, the lack of budget for interpreters in public departments, unavailability of qualified Sign Language interpreters, societal ignorance, inadequate education, and lack of information, are factors that exclude Deaf people from the mainstream society.

5.4 The summary of the study findings

The problem of the study is that Deaf people have been deprived of opportunities to express themselves through their language, SASL. Furthermore, Deaf people are often excluded in mainstream society and denied the right to access information, obtain higher education, employment and important information. Therefore, the motive for conducting this study was to investigate all the possible factors that might perpetuate negative attitudes towards SASL. This was achieved through exploring the lived experienced of members of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association. The analysis shows that society has negative attitudes towards SASL and its users. Participants noted that language ideologies devalue and stereotype Deaf people. Factors such as ignorance and unavailability of interpreting services perpetuate language attitudes towards SASL.

5.5 Limitations

Due to public health regulations, participants attended classes weekly. According to the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association's management list and rules, three separate groups of students were attending classes. The researcher was granted only one week to complete the entire data collection process. This had a negative impact on of data collection since

the researcher had to adjust timeframe and working plans in order to abide by the management's stipulations. The researcher had to spend seven minutes with each participant during interviews since he was allowed to spend 30 minutes a day inside the premises of the Deaf association. The interviews happened during lunch times, as a result some participants were not interested in participating. Some preferred to take the interview guide and bring it back after two days. Other participants required further explanations on questions due to limited knowledge of English while others took more than 5 days to bring back the questionnaires. This process created delays in data collection. However, the researcher managed to complete the interview process successfully and gathered quality data from the participants. All selected participants were willing to contribute to the study and they were so supportive

The following section presents recommendations that can be considered for future studies.

5.6 Recommendations

This research alone cannot resolve all the issues in relation to the lived experiences of Deaf people. These recommendations were purposely developed to suggest possible focus areas for future studies. In addition, these recommendations are meant to promote and preserve SASL as a minority language.

Recommendations are proposed in the following segments.

- parents of Deaf children
- teachers in schools for the Deaf
- government

5.6.1 Recommendations for parents with Deaf children

- Parents should learn to accept that their children have a different language, identity and culture. Therefore, they should allow their children to acquire their language at an early age by associating them with the Deaf community at an early stage. Humphries (2019: 135), stipulates that Deaf child have the right to acquire their

language at an early age.

- Parents should spare time in their busy schedules to teach their Deaf children about life. Ignoring a Deaf child makes him/ her become irresponsible, stressed and uninterested in life. On this note, DesGeorges (2016: 445) states that if the parent provides a good support and makes decisions for the child, the child will fulfil his /her goals successfully.
- Parents need to create a learning environment at home and an equal relationship among all family members to minimize elements of stress. Every parent who minds about the future of their child keeps watching on their activities. Therefore, parents of Deaf children should learn to support their children in any activities that they embark on. In supporting this recommendation, Morgan and Kaneko (2020: 5) points out that families should understand the unique needs of children who are Deaf and apply that knowledge to their own children.
- Parents should stop viewing Deafness as a disability. Instead, they should do deep research about Deafness before their children reach the age of five years. DesGeorges (2016: 444) reveal that parents of Deaf children should change their understanding of hearing loss in order to make good decisions for their children and to monitor their own children.
- The whole family should be well informed about Deafness and should take lessons in basic SASL in order to accommodate the Deaf child in family conversations. Humphries (2019:135) emphasizes that the whole family should learn Sign Language simultaneously with the Deaf child in order to develop a strong bond.
- Families who have Deaf children should contact Deaf associations for extra information. All members should support each other. Humphries (2019: 140) highlights that parents and family members of Deaf children should use all available resources including Deaf education services, TV programs, books and Deaf community centres in order to support a Deaf child.

5.6.2 Recommendations for teachers in schools for the Deaf

- Teachers should be monitored when they have classes in order to evaluate whether they use pure SASL or total communication. However, Kelly, McKinney and Swift (2020: 4) points out that teachers arrive at schools for the Deaf without any proper training or prior knowledge of Deaf culture.
- Teachers should have proficiency in SASL as a basic requirement. In supporting this recommendation, Ngobeni (2020: 2) emphasizes that 90 percent of teachers in South Africa teach Deaf children without any proficiency in SASL as a medium of instruction.
- Teachers should have positive attitudes towards the use of SASL in teaching and learning in schools for the Deaf. Some teachers in schools for the Deaf overlook particular chapters and topics assuming that Deaf learners cannot understand the context (Kelly, McKinney and Swift 2020: 3).

5.6.3 Recommendations for government

- Sign Language programs should be available in all learning institutions so that even hearing persons can access them. This will gradually develop positive attitudes towards SASL. More so, in supporting this statement, Sawula (2018: 38) reveals that out of 26 universities in South Africa, few universities offer SASL programs.
- Interpreters are the key contributors in Deaf communities. Therefore, universities and Deaf organizations should create more training programs for Sign Language interpreters. In addition, there are no recognized bodies that are specifically designated to train interpreters in KZN (Sawula 2018: 38).
- All community gatherings, including church seminars and general meetings, should involve Sign Language interpreters to accommodate Deaf people who often suffer from exclusion and lack of social interaction because of communication difficulties (Holness 2016: 18).
- Government should increase financial allocations in all disability units to support Deaf people with resources and services such as interpreting services and learning equipment. It is important to allocate budget for Sign Language interpreters in the

public health care sector in order to reduce the communication challenges faced by Deaf people (Zulu 2014: 35).

- Institutions of higher learning should employ successful Deaf people to serve as role models in disability units. This could assist Deaf students to reveal their challenges and encourage other Deaf students to become graduates. In addition, political parties, sports committees, and ward committees should appoint Deaf people to represent the Deaf community. Further to this, Ngobeni (2020: 2), stipulates that people who are associated with Deaf students must understand their values and culture to be able to interact with them.
- SASL should be granted official status equal to other languages in addition to being a language of learning and writing in schools for the Deaf. This could eliminate negative attitudes towards SASL since people judge languages according to their status. The study revealed that people who use dominant languages (spoken languages) are the most privileged. Ngobeni (2017:12) states that prestige is given only to spoken languages and this perpetuates negative attitudes towards SASL as the majority of hearing people tend to neglect the rights of Deaf people.
- All Deaf associations and schools for the Deaf should have an annual campaign to promote the use of SASL and motivate hearing people to learn SASL. This can assist hearing people with basic Sign Language competence such as maintaining eye contact (Punch 2016: 4).

5.7 Recommendations for future research

This research has established that language attitudes towards SASL are constructed by prevailing language ideologies. These language ideologies deny the majority of Deaf people the right to freedom of speech, education, work, and access to information and health. The present study investigated the language attitudes towards SASL using the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban as a case study. It is recommended that further studies on similar areas should be conducted in other regions to find out whether Deaf people are unfairly or fairly treated in other societies. There is space for a study that will explore the impact of employing teachers who are not proficient in SASL in schools for the Deaf and who have never obtained even a single training for teaching in special

schools. Furthermore, more future studies can look at the treatment of Deaf people in the following areas: workplaces, public and private institutions and public committees. It is important to find out whether Deaf people are involved in public community forums or not. Lastly, other future studies can focus on the impact of not having SASL as an official language equal to other languages in South Africa.

5.8 Conclusion

This study focused on investigating language attitudes towards SASL using the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association as a case study. The importance of the study was to extent to which language attitudes contribute to the marginalization of Sign Language and its users. In addition, the study to revealed that language attitudes towards SASL affected the Deaf community of the KwaZulu- Natal Deaf Association. Literature indicates that negative language attitudes towards SASL result in multiple challenges for the Deaf community such as inadequate education, language barriers and the perpetuation ignorance about the needs of the Deaf in society. The e study also found that the South African Constitution has not done enough to protect Deaf communities. Deaf people together with Deaf organizations and scholars should continue to promote the use of SASL until it is granted official status like other spoken languages.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Request for permission to conduct study



11 November 2020

180 Steve
Biko Road,
Musgrave,

Durban

4001

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Madam/Sir,

My name is Nkululeko Perfect Ngcobo, a Language Practice student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my master's dissertation involves "Language attitudes towards South African Sign language: The case of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban".

I hereby seek your consent to grant me a permission to conduct my research project within your organization.

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal, which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent

and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC). If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0622018028, email: mapholobankule@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nkululeko Perfect

Ngcobo Durban

University of Technology

APPENDIX B Letter of information

LETTER OF INFORMATION



Title of the Research Study: Language attitudes towards South African Sign Language: The case of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association in Durban.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: (Nkululeko Ngcobo, BTech in Translation and Interpreting Practice)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr Gift Mheta Mrs Nqobile Sawula (Masters in Language Practice)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Research conducted by Nkululeko Perfect Ngcobo for the completion of Masters in Language. I therefore invite you to participate in this research project. The aim of the proposed study is to investigate language attitudes towards South African Sign Language through exploring the experiences of the KwaZulu-Natal Deaf Association members towards South African Sign language. Your participation in this study would be highly appreciated.

Outline of the Procedures: The interviews would be conducted following the interviewing process. Five teachers, three interpreters, five teacher's assistants, and four administrators will be interviewed. Participants

who will feel uncomfortable to be interviewed will be given (not more than five days' prior) the structured questions that will guide the interviews. Interviews will be expected to vary in length from 50 minutes to 1h30. Data analysis will be done based on the information collected.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There will be no risk against you.

Benefits: The final draft will be published as an informative article on SASL. Therefore, the researcher would like the published document to be used at the KZN Deaf Association as a learning tool for the upcoming generation.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time from this research project with no negative consequence.

Remuneration: There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project.

Costs of the Study: There will be no benefits from participating in this research.

Confidentiality: The interview schedule responses will be stored in a safe storage in the Department for five years and thereafter be shredded. Electronic records will be kept on my password locked laptop for five years and thereafter be deleted.

Research-related Injury: There will be no harm towards you.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Supervisor: Dr Gift Mheta

Telephone number: 0313733006

Email: giftm@dut.ac.za

Co-Supervisor: Mrs Nqobile Sawula

Telephone number: 0313735119

Email: Nqobile1@dut.ac.za

Researcher: Nkululeko Perfect Ngcobo

Telephone number:

0622018028 Email:

mapholobankule@gmail.co

[m](#)

The Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Prof S Moyo, on 031 373 2576 or moyos@dut.ac.z

APPENDIX C Consent Letter



CONSENT LETTER

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _____
(Researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics
Clearance Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant
Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex,
age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this
study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself
prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research
which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature /Right Thumbprint

I, Nkululeko Ngcobo, herewith confirm that the above participant has
been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature

APPENDIX D Interview questions for deaf students

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DEAF STUDENTS

CONSENT

I _____(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time, if I feel the need to do so.

I hereby provide consent to:

Video record my interview Yes... No...

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Interview questions

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your Race?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. Is there any other Deaf member in your family? Yes/ No? If yes, how do you communicate with other family members?
5. Do you consider South African Sign Language as your native language? Yes/no? If No, please explain.
6. What challenges do you face as a SASL user?
7. In your view, why is South African Sign Language very important to the Deaf community?

8. Have you ever been in court for crime reporting or being arrested? Yes/no? If yes, how did you communicate with court officials or law enforcement agents? What kind of attitude was shown to you as a SASL user?
9. How do they communicate with you in public clinics and hospitals?
10. How do you receive information about communicable diseases?
11. How do you understand doctor's prescriptions? In addition, how do you explain or ask something about your health condition?
12. Do you believe in Sign language interpreters? In addition, how do you identify if the interpreter is familiar with the Deaf community?
13. Would you like to work with hearing people? Whether yes or no, please explain why.
14. In terms of internships or skill developments. Does the government treat Deaf students like hearing students? If you say no. Why?
15. How do hearing people perceive Sign language or the Deaf community?
16. In your view, why are most of Deaf people not studying in South African Universities?
17. How do people in your community treat you?
18. In your opinion, what strategies can be employed to eliminate these challenges?

APPENDIX E interview questions for South African sign language interpreters

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

CONSENT

I _____(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time, if I feel the need to do so.

I hereby provide consent to:

Video record my interview Yes... No...

Signature of participant_____ Date_____

1. How long have you been working as an interpreter?
2. Why did you choose Sign language interpreting?
3. What are the challenges of working as a Sign language interpreter?
4. How do you deal with those challenges?
5. How does Sign language differ from other languages?
6. How do you perceive the Deaf community, as an interpreter?
7. In your view, does the community in general respect SASL users?

APPENDIX F Interview questions for staff

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF

CONSENT

I _____(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time, if I feel the need to do so.

I hereby provide consent to:

Video record my interview Yes... No...

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

1. What is your highest level of education?
2. Where did you obtain your highest qualification?
3. How do hearing parents treats you as a teacher?
4. Would you like to work with hearing people? Whether yes or no, please explain why
5. How was your childhood around hearing people?
6. Did you make a job application to any public sector? Yes/No? If no, please explain?
7. If your answer was yes in the above question. How did they interview you?
8. Why SASL is important to the Deaf community?
9. What attitudes do people show towards you as a SASL user?
10. How do you communicate with hearing people in board meetings?

APPENDIX G Approval letter to collect data

APPROVAL LETTER TO COLLECT DATA FROM KWAZULU- NATAL DEAF ASSOCIATION

8 October 2020

Dear Nkululeko Ngcobo,

We would like to inform you that you have been accepted into eDeaf Employ and Empower (Pty) Ltd for your collection of data, regarding your research.

Within the duration of the five days, we have allocated 30 mins per day for you, from 11:00 – 11:30am (as this is the learners tea break).

We look forward to having you. All the best on your research.

Kinds regards

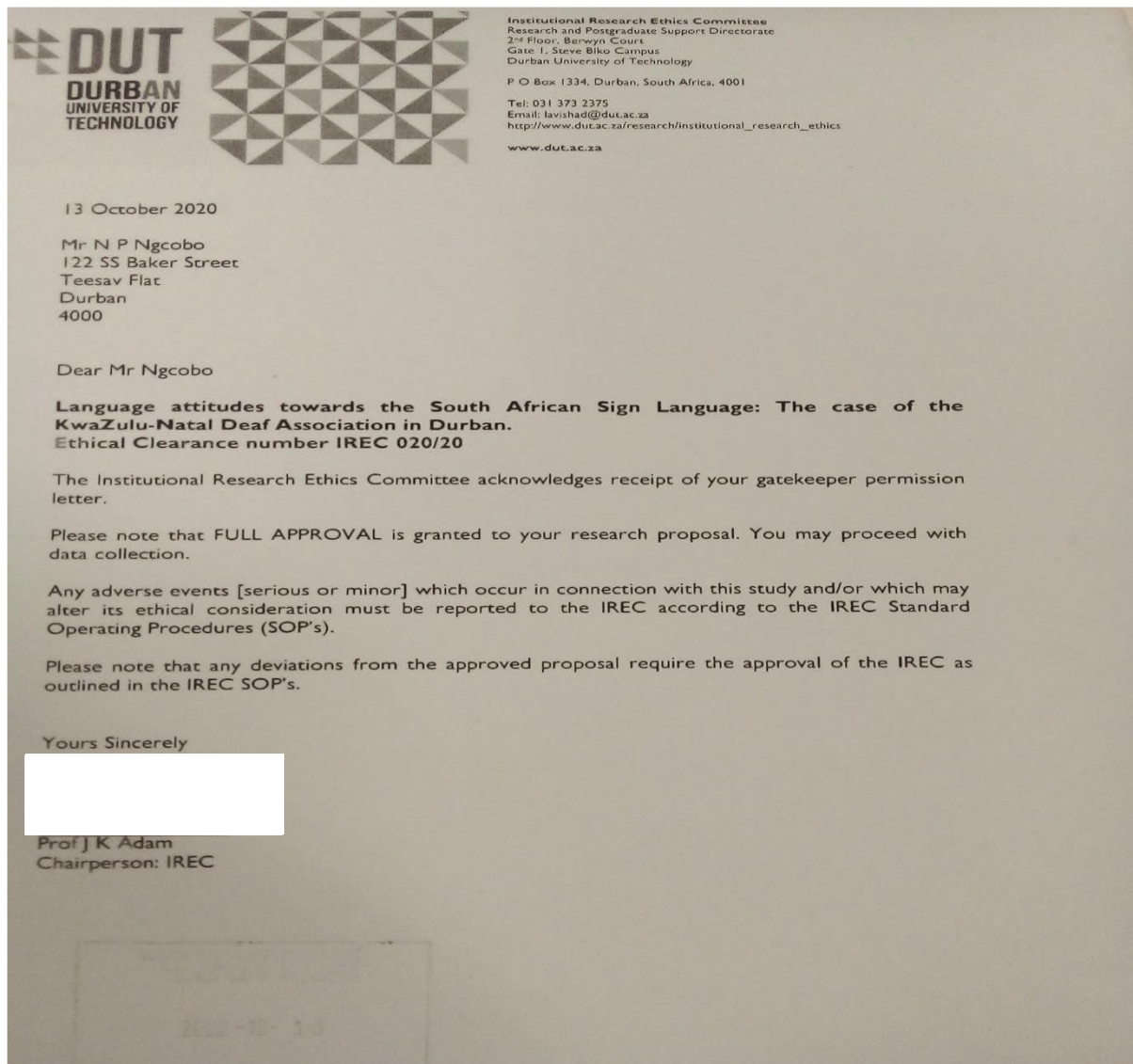
Shubnum Maharaj
BRANCH MANAGER



Employ and Empower Deaf cc (eDeaf)
CK 2007/068783/23 * BE-BEE Level 2
Directors: N. Bhana; J.J. Kotze

APPENDIX H Ethical clearance

APPROVAL LETTER FROM ETHICAL CLEARANCE



APPENDIX I Turnitin Report