Linguistic Dominance and Translanguaging: Language Issues in *Generations: The Legacy*

Kealeboga Aiseng*

Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa

The use of language(s) in media is very important as it can determine inclusion or exclusion. As such, the use of language in the media is contentious. This paper traces two language issues in one of the SABC's longest-running soap operas, *Generations: The Legacy*, language ideology and a tool against that language ideology. The former refers to a linguistic dominance of isiZulu and the latter refers to translanguaging. With the use of transcription data analysis and audio-visual analysis, the current study has concluded that there are issues of linguistic dominance and translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy*. These language issues are perpetuated through the narrative and characters of the story. The appropriate theoretical framework for this paper is the use of language in popular culture, with the view that the use of languages in popular culture can exclude and include, can empower, and disempower. Focusing on the dialogues of the soap using selected episodes as case studies for analysis, the study has also concluded that creative decisions made in the soap are ideological. These findings raise questions about the use of media to perpetuate certain language ideologies and raise questions about whose interests are served by these language ideologies and how to fight these language ideologies.

Keywords: *Generations: The Legacy*, language ideologies, translanguaging, isiZulu, transcription analysis, audio-visual analysis

INTRODUCTION

Generations: The Legacy is representing the language challenges that South Africa still battles with even 28 years into democracy. Even though South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural country, the country still has visible signs of dominance and subordination among social groups. Constantly hearing isiZulu in one programme and seeing that it dominates other languages is a process through which cultural construction is operationalized and institutionalized. Gramsci argues that economic and political control is not only through violence and coercion but through ideology as well. The dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is an ideology. It has been created as a "common sense" that isiZulu is a dominant language in South Africa. This linguistic dominance in *Generations: The Legacy* shows that popular culture is germane to understanding how language(s) is used to conduct, achieve, and uphold these power relations. Hence, the elites rely on popular culture to exercise their powers and spread their worldviews. *Generations: The Legacy* is the longest-running soap opera in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). In that order, the show soap broadcasts mainly in English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, and Sesotho. While the soap does not use other indigenous languages such as Setswana,

Sesotho and isiXhosa as often as isiZulu, it deploys translanguaging to accommodate these languages. While it is not financially sensible to use all nine indigenous languages of the country equally in the story, the soap uses translanguaging as a strategy to accommodate other indigenous languages. Translanguaging refers to spontaneous multilingual practices and the ways those practices can be used in communications (Gort, 2015). Translanguaging removes boundaries between languages (Cenoz and Gorter, 2015). In the context of this paper, translanguaging is regarded as a tool that defies language dominance or hierarchization, especially in multilingual settings. Adopting translanguaging as a linguistic practice is one of the ways *Generations: The Legacy* is defying the dominance of some indigenous languages over others.

The present study aims aim to show that the use of languages in *Generations: The Legacy* is contentious, on one hand, it produces s and disseminates language ideologies and on the other, it challenges them. The language ideology produced in the show is linguistic dominance, with the dominance of isiZulu over other indigenous languages, and the tool produced to fight this ideology is translanguaging. The linguistic dominance of isiZulu in the soap is created by most characters in the soap speaking isiZulu more than other indigenous languages and the soap constantly represents cultural practices of the Zulu culture more than it does other cultural groups. On the other hand, translanguaging challenges this dominance by giving space to other languages and cultures.

Language ideologies are beliefs and ideas about languages as articulated by the users. These beliefs and ideas include the status of a language, authentic and non-authentic languages, language purity, and monolingualism (Song, 2010). Therefore, language ideologies provide a framework for valuing some languages and devaluing others. Krostrity (2004) further alludes to that language ideologies emerge from the socio-political experiences of the speakers. That is, the ways through which speakers grow up and where they grow up influence their language ideologies. With this background, the following questions emerge: how is the use of indigenous languages in *Generations: The Legacy ideological*? What is the status of isiZulu in *Generations: The* Legacy compared to other indigenous languages? How does the soap opera achieve a multilingual outlook?

South Africa has a history of racial, ethnic and linguistic segregation. With the advent of democracy, South Africa became a multilingual and multicultural country in which all identities are treated equally before the law. These factors make it ideal for the SABC as a public broadcaster to be scrutinized in terms of produced and broadcasted content. The preliminary hypothesis of this paper is that SABC's soap operas with the example of *Generations: The Legacy* are creating a world where isiZulu is a dominant language. It is a known fact that isiZulu is the most spoken language in South Africa, hence, the soap opera is also representing the language in that manner. However, considering the history of language and culture in South Africa, considering the equal legal status that all languages have in South Africa, considering that the media has a role in representing the diversity of its society, the dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is worth being studied.

However, this does not mean the soap does not use other indigenous languages, it does but not in the same amount as isiZulu. *Generations: The Legacy* accommodates other indigenous languages through translingual practices. Translingual practices refer to semiotic resources that can be used by multilingual speakers to enhance communication: codeswitching, borrowing and interference (Canagarajah, 2012). Even though translanguaging does not disrupt the presence of isiZulu in the soap, it reduces its complete dominance. This disruption helps the soap achieve a multilingual outlook in its production. Therefore, the paper argues that the soap has a contentious language usage outlook.

The study focuses on the dialogue of selected episodes of *Generations: The Legacy* to unpack contentious language usage outlooks. Bleichenbacher (2012) notes that film dialogue is a result of the language planning process, enabled by agents such as the production company, the director, the crew, and actors. Elements such as what characters in the story and what audiences hear when they are watching the story are a result of many ideological decisions that took place behind the scenes. It was all planned. Also, dialogue is important as it carries and transports prevalent linguistic ideologies (Blommaert, 1999). In this case dialogue from selected episodes is important to understand how language is used to perpetuate or challenge certain language ideologies. Studying the construction of dialogue and its role in the media can reveal hidden meanings about language(s). Bakhtin (1981) conceptualizes dialogue as a sense of power, positioning, and defacement. And that is because dialogue builds consciousness, it increases the individual's awareness of the society (Hamston, 2006). What people speak and how they speak reflect the entire social discourse and ongoing cultural and political struggles of our world. Embarking on dialogue analysis to unpack underlying language usage in *Generations: The Legacy* reveals a tripartite relationship that Bakhtin (1981) called "Addressivity." That is, there is a meaning behind the words we speak, the words we internalize as "inner dialogue" and the words we hear from others. Dialogues are therefore potential sites for the analysis of language ideologies that reside within our societies.

LANGUAGE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND MEDIA LANGUAGE PRACTICES

Spolsky (2004) proposes language policy as a system comprized of formal language management, the complex systems of language ideologies/beliefs and the actual language practices of a speech community. Language policy studies have paid attention to how social actors at macro- (lawmakers), mezzo- (administrators), and micro- (teachers) layers have influenced language development and usage and the politics of language usage (Menken and Garcia, 2010).

Every language policy has a purpose. Tollefson (1991) argues that language policies are adopted to solve language problems in multilingual settings and to increase social and economic opportunities for linguistic minorities or majorities in any society. As a result, language policy involves the development

of public policies. These public policies are meant to affect various aspects of the status and use of languages by people (Schmid, 2006). However, as Schiffman (1998:364) once warned, "implementation may be the Achilles heel of most language planning." This is where I seek to situate the use of isiZulu to other indigenous languages in *Generations: The Legacy*, it is hierarchized.

Chapter 1, Section 6 (1) of the Constitution of South Africa states that "the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu" Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1995). Furthermore, according to (Madiba, 2005), section 6 (2) mandates the government to take practical measures in making sure that these languages are promoted equally (including minority languages). The Constitution states that "recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages" Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1995).

The SABC has its language policy. The SABC language policy considers the provisions of the Constitution of the country and guides the SABC in:

- Providing a range of distinctive, creative, compelling, and top-quality content in all official languages across its platforms.
- Reflecting the needs of each language community in its content and offerings.
- Maintaining distinctive and separate radio services in each of the official languages.
- Integrating the South African Sign Language into its offerings as a means of making content accessible to people with hearing disabilities.
- Including other non-official languages spoken in South Africa, with particular emphasis on Khoi, Nama, and San Languages (SABC, 2020: 32).

Political economy is one of the defining themes of language planning, policy, and implementation in South Africa. The post-1994 economic and political policies shaped South Africa's approach toward media, business and culture (Narsiah, 2002; Sebake, 2017). The result of this was that market influences became dominant in shaping local policies. Globally, multilingualism has been heralded as a desirable turn toward more inclusive communicative policies. However, Kubota (2014), cautions that this might serve the interests and agendas of political and economic agencies as some of them have no interest in the social elevation of the people; their only focus is on profit-making and social control.

Economic influences play a significant role at the SABC. Kupe (2005) argues that PSBs such as the SABC are now completely covered by commercial interests. Public interests can still be seen, but it is not as intense as commercial interests. They have become more commercialized by always having to secure advertising revenue. Thus, PSBs are losing their identities by pursuing the commercial model. This has the potential to make one language dominant over others.

Commercial interests in the SABC have led to many scholars paying attention to the operation of the broadcaster. Mhlambi (2012) contextualizes the relationship between neoliberalism, popular culture, and isiZulu in post-Apartheid South Africa. Mhlambi (2012) argues that the period around 2006 until 2009 saw the popularization of ringtone of songs in isiZulu which were meant to mobilize support for the former president of South Africa, then deputy president, Jacob Zuma, in the corruption and rape charges he was facing as well as removal from his deputy presidency position. The ringtone songs gained popularity as people downloaded them and started using them as means of entertainment. This led to the commercialization and commodification of the songs. That is, transforming a good, a commodity available on the market (Walsh, 2013). Mobile network companies, insurance companies and banking systems started to offer their services in isiZulu (Mhlambi, 2012). What this signifies is the profit-interest that capitalist systems have on languages. It was only until various isiZulu cultural groups made songs about Zuma in isiZulu that capitalist formations gained interest in isiZulu because they realized the rapid growth and influence that the ringtone songs in isiZulu had on the black population. In this case, the interest in isiZulu by these capitalist formations was not in promoting the language, but in commercializing and commodifying the language for their benefit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Ideology

According to Weber and Horner (2012:16), language ideology is the cultural system of ideas and feelings, norms and values, which inform the way people think about language." Language ideology also expands to include ideas about how a language works, how languages are treated in social contexts and how speakers view their languages (Cameron, 2006). The focus of language ideology is to examine the cultural and historical specificity of the construal of language, and not to divorce language ideology from other ideologies of everyday lives. Language ideology is all about mechanisms of using language as a tool to acquire power.

When dealing with language ideology, ideology is "understood in its role as a (i) a promoter of one language at the cost of another language, and (ii) a political-economic weapon in the service of oppressive forces" (Zaidi, 2012). Language ideologies undergird language use (Piller, 2015) and together they serve political ends. This means language ideologies are beliefs that represent the interests of a particular group (Piller, 2015).

Studies have revealed that cultural institutions have the power to affect language practices through their language ideologies (Tseronis, 2002; Ricento, 2005; Anvi, 2012; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018). They also tend to support and naturalize dominant language ideologies (Tseronis, 2002; Ricento, 2005; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018).

These arguments reveal that language ideologies are present and active in cultural institutions. Furthermore, media products are deeply imbricated in relationships of power and ideology (Constantinou, 2005; Androutsopoulos, 2006). These factors should not just be treated as simply embedded within the

mediated texts but seen as very powerful in even determining the message of the media product. To understand how language utilization in the media an ideological mechanism is, it is vital to understand that media spaces are a "highly complex phenomenon that requires a great deal of detailed textual, ethnographic and social deconstruction" (Milani and Johnson, 2010:5).

Moreover, the use of languages in media is shaped by (dominant) language ideologies and potentially shapes the language ideologies of the audiences (Androutsopoulos, 2012). The stylistic decisions regarding language usage in the story are highly influenced by dominant language-ideological discourses, endorsing, opposing or in some way negotiating them (Androutsopoulos, 2012). The position of the current study is that *Generations: The Legacy* is caught up between endorsing, opposing, and negotiating these language ideologies. The elevation of isiZulu over other indigenous languages in the soap is an endorsement of linguistic dominance. While the adoption of translanguaging is a challenge of negotiation against linguistic dominance.

Translanguaging

Translanguaging endorses the idea that human beings speak more than one or two languages; their linguistic repertoire is rich to an extent that they can draw from it at any time, not only for the sake of communication but also for identity formation Makalela (2014). The term "translanguaging" is often traced back to the work of Williams (Wei, 2010) who first used it to describe a pedagogical practice in bilingual classrooms where the input, for example, reading and listening, is in one language and the output, speaking and writing, is in another language. Baker (2006) states that in the classroom context translanguaging has some positive effects; it has the potential to develop the learner's academic language skills in both languages. Mateus, (2014:367) further notes the politics of translanguaging by stating that it is a "complex discursive practice where all students' language practices work toward sustaining ways of communication while giving voice to new socio-political realities by interrogating linguistic inequalities."

Building from the work of Mateus (2014), translanguaging produces certain language ideologies. According to Bagwasi (2017), Languages should not be treated as fixed, autonomous, unified, and bounded entities with linguistic boundaries. Garcia (2009), and Garcia and Hesson (2015) contend that translanguaing challenges the views of languages as separate entities.

Wei's (2010) idea of translanguaging as a language ideology comes from a different perspective. He pays attention to translanguaging from the psycholinguistic notion of languaging. In this way, language is understood as a process to gain knowledge, make sense, articulate one's thoughts and communicate using language. Language from the psycholinguistic notion of languaging means understanding language as a vehicle through which thinking is articulated and transformed into an artifactual form (Swain, 2006).

Hurst and Mona (2017) propose the view that translanguaging is a socially just language practice that involves critically questioning and resisting systems of oppression against any language. This is a form of linguistic democracy; it allows speakers to be in control of what they speak, depending on the contexts in which they find themselves. In a similar vein, Blommaert (2012) alludes to the fact that people pick up small bits of language from any available source and for the most part they are not even aware of borrowings and switches in their languages. For this reason, Garcia (2009) views language as an amorphous continuum in which speakers "soft assemble." This means the speakers can put together (assemble), "as they see fit, sounds, words and sentences from different languages that they know to achieve communicative goals" (Bagwasi, 2017:205).

By adopting translingual practices, small-status languages that are normally not catered for in *Generations: The Legacy* gets to be used, they also receive some airtime. Moreover, these arguments will also reveal that translingual forms are counterstrategies against the dominance of isiZulu in soap operas.

Translanguaging is used as a broader linguistic practice in the context of this study. Therefore, it also encompasses what is locally called *Tsotsitaal* in South Africa. *Tsotsitaal* is a contact language used by black people in South Africa, it serves as a *lingua franca* between black people (Msimang, 1987). *Tsotsitaal* draws its speech community from different social and historical communities. It emerges from the freehold townships of the Western Areas of Johannesburg (Sophiatown, Martindale and Alexandra (Ntshangase, 1995). *Tsotsitaal* developed as an argot or criminal language among the criminal gangs of the Western Areas that were composed mainly of urban male youths (Ntshangase, 1995). However, post-1976 Soweto uprisings, *Tsotsiaal's* status changed, it became a language of resistance against oppression. Milani et al. (2015) also state that *Tsotsitaal* acquired another higher status in South Africa in 1994 when it started attracting young, educated black male and female speakers. *Tsotsitaal* became a sharp and clever subversive dialect (Milani et al., 2015).

In *Generations: The Legacy* we see a typical case of contentious language issues unfolding. With the dominance of isiZulu on one hand and the deployment of translingual forms for other indigenous languages, the soap provides a new perspective to understanding how local soap operas handle the multilingual nature of South Africa.

Television soap operas are inevitably important in our societies. However, most of the work that has been done in this field (Blommaert, 1999; O'hlfearnain, 2015; Hinton et al., 2018) does not pay attention to how soap operas can be a fertile ground for the production and distribution of linguistic dominance among indigenous languages. These scholars have looked at linguistic dominance and language ideologies from the perspective of colonial vs. indigenous languages, emphasizing that colonial languages still occupy a higher position than indigenous languages in former colonies. A few scholars have looked at the relationship between Kiswahili and other African indigenous languages. Moshi (2006), and Okombo and Muna (2017) note that Kiswahili is rising above other indigenous languages in East Africa, it is becoming a lingua franca of the region, due to political and economic factors it is used to kill other indigenous languages and make it the ultimate language.

The study intends to contribute to the current debate propelled by these scholars, however, by focusing the attention on indigenous African languages. The relationship between media, indigenous communities and language is also an imperative issue that has not been explored adequately by scholars. Unlike most of its predecessors who have written extensively on the injustice suffered by indigenous African languages against colonial languages, the current study looks at the injustices suffered by speakers of minority indigenous African languages against speakers of majority African indigenous languages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has opted for an audio-visual analysis of *Generations: The Legacy* to study the above language ideologies in the soap opera. According to Chion (2019), audio-visual analysis is an approach used to understand how a film works in its use of sound combined with its use of images. Questions of "what do I see" and "what do I hear" are serious in the audio-visual analysis as they deepen aesthetic pleasure and help us understand the rhetorical power of films (Chion, 2019).

Generations: The Legacy was selected for this study because it is the oldest soap opera on South African television. But also, the soap is relevant for this study as it was produced to transform the images of black people in the SABC from the Apartheid period to democratic South Africa. *Generations: The Legacy* was the first to show black people who lived in mansions, wore luxury brands and sealed international business deals. Due to the transformation mandate of the post-Apartheid government, the soap was also commissioned to introduce ideas of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the SABC.

This paper focuses on the dialogue episodes of *Generations: The Legacy*, studying how what we hear in the soap is not a mere creative decision, but also an ideological matter. Three episodes of the soap opera have been chosen as case studies of analysis. The first episode aired on the 8th of June 2018. In this episode, Gadaffi is embattled between killing the woman that he loves, Tshidi and saving her life even after she secretly stole millions of Rands from him. The second episode played on the 27th of July 2016 and it was centered on the drama between the Moroka, Cele and Mabaso families during the wedding of Sphesihle and Mazwi. The third aired on the 4th of September 2019 and is mainly about Lucy feeling emotionally disturbed because Mrekza's ex-partner sabotaged her wedding day.

The episodes were chosen using purposive sampling. Robinson (2014) explains this sampling technique is the one in which there is an intentional selection of informants or research participants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme or concept of a phenomenon. In the case of this paper, the selected episodes were purposively selected to reveal the underlying language ideologies of *Generations: The Legacy*.

The focus of this paper is on possible productions of language ideologies and how they are challenged in the use of dialogue in the soap opera. I undertook this task by analyzing transcript data of the episodes of *Generations: The Legacy*. Transcription data analysis was important as it managed to assist me with establishing a deeper understanding of the dialogues of the soap opera, unpacking linguistic analysis of these dialogues and the ideologies behind the way dialogue is written, based on which languages are used and which ones are not. By conducting data analysis using transcription data I was able to preliminary confirm that there is linguistic dominance, with the case of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy*.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this section, the ideological messages in *Generations: The Legacy* are discussed to identify contentious language issues of the soap opera. The principal discussions are divided into two categories: characters and narrative. Under characters, the discussion will focus on which characters dominate the soap opera and which languages they speak. Under the narrative, the discussion will study the representation of cultural narratives such as weddings in *Generations: The Legacy*.

Characters

Generations: The Legacy portrays ideologies of linguistic dominance and translanguaging through characters, their characterization, the type of businesses they own and where their businesses are located. Media products such as films, soap operas, sitcoms, and music videos have a social, political, and historical position based on the creator's sense of right and wrong. This position of the film privileges certain characters, institutions, and cultures. In this subsection, I look at how *Generations: The Legacy* perpetuates issues of linguistic dominance and translanguaging through some characters.

Relevant characters for this discussion include the Diale family and the Moroka family. The Diale family lives together in Alexander, one of the most impoverished townships in South Africa. In the Diale family are the following members: Gog Flo, who is the grandmother to Lucy, Cosmo/Thembinkosi and Lesedi, a teenage girl that Gog Flo adopted. Both Lucy and Cosmo run a drug operation business. Lucy runs an alcohol drinking spot, locally known as a *shebeen* and Cosmo also owns a barbeque/braai restaurant, locally known as *Chesanyama*. Both the *shebeen* and *Chesanyama* are fronting businesses used to cover up for the illicit money made from the drug business.

On the other side of town is an upmarket suburb known as Sandton. There, the Moroka family, a very wealthy advertising mogul family resides. The family is led by Mazwi Moroka. They have business interests in mining, tourism and property. However, because of greed, the family never has peace. They always want to acquire more, even if it means getting involved in illegal dealings.

All these archetypes have ideologies of linguistic dominance and elements of socio-political resistance against linguistic dominance behind them. Characters that live in the suburbs, such as Smanga, Mazwi, and Bafana speak English, isiZulu, Sesotho and Setswana. They are professional businesspeople that work in the corporate world. They also switch between these languages in their communications. Mazwi and Siphesihle use English and isiZulu, Smanga uses English and Sesotho, and Kabisi uses English and Setswana.

The people that live in suburbs have their own social, political and linguistic identities, the same way as those that live in rural areas, townships and cities. In the words of Bornman et al. (2018) suburbs and cities symbolize access to the social, cultural and economic networks. This influences the language practices of these places. The ideology perpetuated by *Generations: The Legacy* is that characters that live in suburbs rarely use translanguaging, they speak "homogenous languages," and isiZulu is the dominant one among those languages. Lippi-Green (2006) states that standard or homogenous languages are just ideologies as they are imposed and maintained by social institutions such as the schools, the media, the corporate sector and language policies. Therefore, creating characters that speak homogenous languages is a way of rejecting linguistic practices that do not conform to the language rules established by social institutions.

In an episode aired on the 08th of June 2018, there was a typical example of the use of homogenous languages among characters who live in suburbs. In the extract below there are three languages used: English, Setswana/Sesotho/ and isiZulu. Tshidi's response (*Eng*?) in line number 3 can be a Setswana word or a Sesotho word. Each sentence has only one language used in it, hence, it is referred to as homogenous language.

1. **Tshidi**: This is insane. How did it get out of hand so fast? This is turning into a PR nightmare!
2. **Jack**: Shh Cima lento. (*Turn that thing off*).
3. **Tshidi**: Eng? (*What*?)
4. **Jack**: Ini? (*What?*). Ayi man, man. Yazi lento le beyingafanele iphele kanje. (*No man, you know, this thing was not supposed to turn out like this*).

This extract is from a scene that was in three languages, Setswana, English and isiZulu. When they interact, they do so in homogenous languages, they do not divert from the languages' rules of grammar and usage. The soap creates a world in which suburb characters speak homogenous languages and township characters do not. This signals the stereotype that living in suburbs is a prestige status, hence, even the languages used must reflect that. And living in townships has disreputable status and the language practices must also reflect that. The underlying meaning is that those that live in townships cannot speak homogenous languages. While the soap could be trying to be as accurately representative as possible of the linguistic realities of townships and suburbs, townships have people that speak homogenous languages and suburbs also have people that translanguage. In *Generations: The Legacy* we are missing that aspect.

Also, in the same scene between Jack and Tshidi, Jack speaks entirely in isiZulu, something he does all the time unless he speaks to a non-African character. Jack is represented as a character meant to uphold the Zulu culture and language even while living in the suburbs. There is no character from other linguistic groups who only speaks their language all the time as Jack does with isiZulu. This representation of Jack as a character that embodies the Zulu culture and language even while living in suburbs is a good strategy by the soap to show that cultures and languages do not only need to be preserved by those that live in the rural areas. Those that live in suburbs can also play a role in preserving their languages and cultures. However, the ideology of the dominance of isiZulu is visible by having only a Zulu character who preserves their culture and languages. In the principle of equity, the soap does not have a Sesotho-speaking character, a Setswana-speaking or a Xhosa-speaking character who are the same as Jack.

This representation of characters in *Generations: The Legacy* shows the dominance of isiZulu over other indigenous languages. For characters who live in the suburbs, isiZulu is the dominant language. Suburb living in *Generations: The Legacy* is covered with a painting that portrays the Zulu language, culture and people as dominant. This suburb life has characters such as Mazwi, Siphesihle, Jack, Bafana, Nandi, Zitha, Mpho, Zondiwe, and Hlubi. It is fact that Zulu people are the dominant group in South Africa, however, in a country that is multilingual, multicultural and a broadcaster that intends to heal the racial, linguistic and ethnic wounds of the past, it is peculiar of *Generations: The Legacy* to be portraying an image of one cultural group as dominant over others.

In *Generations: The Legacy* language usage by characters in the townships and the suburbs reveals a lot about language ideologies and identities. By contrasting language practices between characters who live in suburbs and characters living in townships, the soap is revealing language practices in urban and township spaces of South Africa. The linguistic practices of characters such as Mrekza reflect their backgrounds in communities that are linguistically diverse. Mrekza is represented as a character who comes from a township that has multiple languages. Hence his dialogue is a combination of different languages, Setswana, English, Afrikaans and isiZulu. He is a representative of communities that endorse such linguistic practices. But also, his linguistic practices are a way of negotiating identities using language. However, as much as linguistic practices such as *Tsotsitaal* and *Sepitori* have been accepted in some parts of South Africa, they often face stereotypes in other parts of the country. They are associated with gangsters, and township life (Hurst-Harosh, 2009). Therefore, *Generations: The Legacy* is using characters such as Mrekza (see below excerpt) to break the stereotypes associated with such linguistic practices. The soap is opening the space and allows such linguistic practices to be used without prejudice. This is a language ideology because it challenges the stigma of linguistic practices that are not the standard language formally recognized by the constitution.

Below is an example of a scene in translingual form. Here there are multiple languages used, there are elements of Sepitori, isiZulu, Sesotho and Afrikaans.

5. **Mrekza**: O fokotsa bwang tlhakwana ya motho mfethu? (How do you reduce someone's foot bro?)
6. **Cosmo**: Eyi Mre kushuthi babenzani yabona, baphulinyawo yabona, phakathi kwendayo mara ngaphansi yabona, bese belidonse balihlangaise nomlenze. (*Mrekza, you know what they did…They broke the arch of the foot and pulled the foot in line with the leg*).
7. **Gog Flo**: Yaze yabuhlungu leyonto. (*That is horrible*).
8. **Lucy**: Eyi man, fori ini vele? (*For what exactly?*)

The way characters such as Lucy, Cosmo and Mrekza use language is also a way of bringing different linguistic groups together. As Bornman et al. (2018) contend, language usage reminds people of their cultural heritage, it helps to signal in-group membership, it is also a strategic tool to construct identity and negotiate the social distance. These characters are created and represented as characters that are aware of their origins, aware of their linguistic practices, and they are also aware that they live among multiple cultural and ethnic groups. *Generations: The Legacy* created these characters with their linguistic repertoires to narrow existing linguistic and ethnic groupings and superiority in society. For example, when listening to how Cosmo speaks (see excerpt above), inevitably, human beings do not stay in silos, they come together with other people and when that happens, languages get to influence each other.

Narrative

Cultural rituals such as weddings, funerals and consulting traditional healers are often at the center of the narrative in *Generations: The Legacy*. In this section, I pay attention to the representation of weddings and how they portray ideologies of dominance and counterstrategies against that dominance. *Generations: The Legacy* has seen many weddings such as the one between Mazwi and Siphesihle, Lucy and Mrekza, and Tau and Zitha. Here I will analyse the wedding of Mazwi and Siphesihle and compare it to that of Lucy and Mrekza. The analysis will focus on how both weddings were African, but the former was only focusing on the Zulu culture, people, dances, songs, attires and location. The latter was inspired by various African cultures, it had multiple cultural attires and it had various cultural dances and songs. Both these weddings reveal the dominance of isiZulu in the soap and a counterstrategy against that dominance.

On the 27th of July 2016 *Generations: The Legacy* had an episode that focused entirely on the wedding of Mazwi and Siphesihle. The wedding was held in KwaZulu-Natal, which is a province where Siphesihle comes from. Siphesihle is Zulu and Mazwi is half Zulu and half Tswana. This episode showed a complete dominance of the Zulu culture, Mazwi's Tswana side was not featured in this wedding.

Both Mazwi and Siphesihle as well as the attendants of the wedding were fully dressed in attires influenced by the Zulu culture. The wedding had two parts, the traditional Zulu ceremony, and the western ceremony commonly referred to as the White wedding in South Africa. In both parts, the attendants were dressed in suits, and dresses that were influenced by the Zulu traditional attires. Even characters that are not Zulu such as Karabo Moroka and Tau Mogale were dressed in attires inspired by the Zulu culture. The performances in the ceremony were also Zulu traditional dances and songs. Mazwi as a half Tswana did not have his cultural practices performed at his wedding, especially because his Tswana identity is from his paternal side. Among Africans in South Africa when a child is born between two parents from different tribes or races, the child takes the side of the father as his identity. In this case, Mazwi is Tswana and not Zulu. But his Tswana culture was not featured in his wedding.

However, there is nothing wrong with having a pure Zulu wedding in the story. But in the history of *Generations: The Legacy*, even when it was still called *Generations*, the soap has never had a wedding of the Tswana, Sotho or Xhosa characters even though these are the present cultural groups in the soap. The soap has always had Zulu weddings. This is an ideological representation that makes it possible for the Zulu culture and language to thrive as the dominant group in the soap. The soap elevates Zulu people and their culture above other groups.

This representation of the Zulu culture is an example of cultural dominance. Mohamoud (2021) defines cultural domination as the unequal relationship between the cultures of a certain society. Therefore, when two cultures are featured in an episode, but one appears dominant to the extent that the other is not visible at all, it is cultural domination. This appears as an ideology because in such situations dominant cultures are considered superior, and more important and their principles, ideals and values are imposed on "subservient cultures." As Salwen (1991) states, powerful nations such as the United States of America always impose their cultures on less powerful societies. Hence, the representation of Siphesihle's Zulu culture as dominant over Mazwi's Tswana is a way of imposing the dominance of isiZulu over Setswana.

A multilingual and multicultural soap opera such as *Generations: The Legacy* could be creating diversity by showing audiences weddings, rituals or any ceremonies of the Xhosa people, Tswana people or Sotho people. But that is not the case. The cultural events of the soap are only of the Zulu people. This representation of the Zulu culture in contrast to the representation of other cultures is an ideology. As expressed in Marxist theory, dominant cultures are used to exercise considerable control over other cultures. *Generations: The Legacy* promotes the values, principles, and rituals of the Zulu culture more than they do to other cultures. Such a representation creates subordination among local cultures as it naturalizes and legitimizes the cultural inequalities by promoting only one culture.

African popular cultural artifacts always claim their position as social facts. They are everywhere, they are sometimes used by hegemonic bodies to oppress the people (Barber, 1987). They penetrate political, social and economic institutions. Agwuele and Falola (2009) allude to the same argument; popular culture is a realm of politics, that is, dominant political ideologies have found expression in popular culture. Hence, the issue of language is salient in popular culture. Moody (2013) contends that language in popular culture is never spontaneous but highly edited for consumer appeal. These arguments explain why this study views the dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* as an ideology and not a mere creative product. The decision to make isiZulu a dominant language is influenced greatly by external political, economic, and cultural factors.

However, a counterstrategy against a complete dominance of the Zulu culture in *Generations: The Legacy* is visible in the second wedding. This was on the 4th of September 2019 between Lucy and Mrekza. The wedding was in Alexander township in Gauteng. Looking at the same elements, attire, and performances as looked at in the wedding of Mazwi and Siphesihle, this wedding was inclusive and welcoming of other cultural groups than the previous one. Lucy is Zulu and Mrekza is Tswana. The

characters went with a western African-theme wedding, but local cultures were still represented. Lucy was dressed in a western African-tyle dress, and Mrekza was wearing a blue suit, with a shirt that has Setswana cultural attire imprints. He also wore *Umqhele*, a Zulu cultural hat worn by men. Other characters were dressed in Zulu-inspired attires while others were dressed in Tswana-inspired attires. The performances that took place at the wedding were both Zulu and Tswana cultural dances. Already this wedding was showing audiences that we carry with ourselves multiple identities, be it culture, language, or tribe. The soap is taking the view that identities should not be treated as fixed, autonomous, unified and bounded entities with boundaries.

This wedding was more inclusive than the first wedding. The second one had cultural representations of both the groom and bride. This wedding was also reflective of the location in which it is taking place, Alexander, a township in Gauteng. This township is diverse, it has many cultures, languages and nationalities. That is the reason why the attires were diverse. *Generations: The Legacy* has a history of not showing weddings from other cultures, but in this episode, they broke that stigma and included other cultures. Even though this is not a language ideology, it is a cultural ideology that challenges the dominance of the Zulu culture in the soap opera.

Culturally and linguistically, isiZulu has had its share of dominance in *Generations: The Legacy*, but the soap has also done its best to challenge this dominance. The second wedding challenges the domination of the Zulu culture as absolute or natural. From the way different cultures, ethnicities and tribes are represented in this wedding the soap employs other cultures as an accessory, an accentuation. The wedding employs cultural difference as an aesthetic effect, it elevates the importance of diversity. In doing so, *Generations: The Legacy* joins a wider cultural flow of mixed and shifting allegiances that aggressively intertwine ethnicities, tribes and transcend cultures.

In the second wedding, the soap challenges the orthodoxy of cultural loyalty, that is being loyal to one culture. This wedding focuses on what we choose to become like humans and not what society or culture expects us to become. This is a way of de-centring culture, tribe and ethnicity, it is showing audiences that it is fine to be Zulu and speak Xitsonga, it is fine to be Sotho and wear a Pedi traditional attire. This wedding is different from that of Siphesihle and Mazwi in that it rejects ethnic, cultural and tribal orthodoxy or powerful loyalty to a particular ethnic or historical tradition.

CONCLUSION

The SABC has been mandated to use all indigenous languages equitably in its programming. *Generations: The Legacy* was tasked with the responsibility of transforming black images in the local television. These factors could not be achieved without the usage of indigenous languages. While the soap can be credited for using indigenous languages, there is an issue of isiZulu emerging as a dominant language, with other indigenous languages, especially Nguni languages used minimally.

Generations: The Legacy features language as an ideology and a tool that is made of various styles that are enacted according to situations, activities and relationships between speakers (Bornman et al., 2018). This strategy allows the soap to be relevant in how it deals with the linguistic practices of South Africa. Two language issues in the soap are the dominance of isiZulu and translanguaging. The former is a language ideology because isiZulu dominates the soap in characters that speak the language and the narratives that dominate the soap. Other languages are not afforded the same space and time to portray their cultures. The latter is also a tool against that ideology because by adopting translanguaging in its dialogue *Generations: The Legacy* challenges the dominance of isiZulu in the soap, it gives other indigenous languages a chance to be featured in the soap opera. *Generations: The Legacy* is showing that =, in as much as isiZulu is a dominant language in the country, language usage in South Africa has diversified, it does not exist as bounded systems within bounded communities.

It is the view of this paper that ideologies of language hierarchies are purported through *Generations: The Legacy* and they ultimately become naturalized. Translanguaging as we see it in *Generations: The Legacy* is a language practice that is challenging the dominance of isiZulu in the soap. It is not a mere product of linguistic resources used for communication. This is a linguistic liberation in the sense that it creates a free space for communication; it allows people to speak in any way that they prefer, and it also gives platforms to other languages which are barely used in the SABC.

South Africa has 11 official languages. However, many South Africans do not conform to such a narrative. This is because they are multilingual, as a result, they end up speaking more than one language. That is the reason why in *Generations: The Legacy* translanguaging occurs commonly and spontaneously. The soap is representative and accommodative to a large viewer base and not certain speakers just because their language will generate revenues or is a dominant language in the country. We see this when a character utters a sentence in English while the following sentence is spoken in Setswana or isiZulu, or using English, isiZulu, Sesotho and Afrikaans. Typical examples of the characters who speak like this in *Generations: The Legacy* are Cosmo and Mrekza. This is a representation of an everyday South Africa, especially among black communities. Many other SABC productions have used this practice, including *Yizo Yizo*, *Zone 14* and *SoulCity*. Translanguaging has become a norm for SABC stories.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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