Afrikaans As My Mother Tongue

As a young South African, I grew up in the heart of the countryside on a sheep farm. Within our small community, Afrikaans is our language for communication between one another. I grew up in my mother tongue called Afrikaans, that's the language that shaped me into the person I am today. I grew up in a house where it was very important to use my language purely because it says a lot about your humanity. Therefore, it was and still is very important for me to make sure that I speak and write my language correctly. Because we, as a family, were very concerned about how we speak, different languages ??and cultures have always interested me. I am so privileged to have grown up in a country like South Africa (Africa) where there are so many different cultures and languages.

I started to become aware of my language identity when I moved to Paarl to start my high school career.When I could no longer use my mother tongue to perform and complete all daily activities. In extreme cases at school in some of my subjects, English has become a requirement to master my subjects. English has therefore become more and more my second language. Now that I have started working, I am increasingly realizing that English is the world's language for communicating with others. In my daily tasks and responsibilities, I am increasingly dealing with English. In order to master my studies, I have to master my second language (English) more and more to be successful. Yet most of the environment in which I grew up is Afrikaans, that is my language. Now that my environment has changed, English is becoming a bigger part of my daily life, because I now work in a professional environment.

I strongly believe that using your language reflects who you are. Therefore, it is important to know how to use your native language or any other language by speaking it correctly and using the correct grammar and language rules associated with your language. Each time when you are communicating through your language it should allow you to identify/express a part of your identity through it.

Language becomes reality inside our brains, through abstraction. If I started describing an apple in it’s most general terms - size, shape, color, taste, smell - it would be a matter of seconds before you realized what it was, but as soon as the mental image of the apple was formed in your mind, so would the word “apple”. From that, we find out that language is both the blueprint and the building blocks of thought. In that sense, the way you express yourself is indicative of the way you think and of the way you process information.

English is becoming a very dominant language in my daily activities because it involves a very large part of my work as well as completing and mastering my studies. That is why English is the world's dominant language for communicating with others. Although English plays a very dominant role in my daily life, it still did not change my cultural beliefs. My worldview and thinking were changed by the changes in the language environment, through meeting different languages, I began to learn about other cultures through which I gained knowledge about other people whose identity or language was different from mine.

No, I grew up as an Afrikaans girl and will always be an Afrikaans girl. It doesn’t mean I’m ignorant to other languages and cultures. I truly believe everyone has their own identity and

every culture is special and I love learning about all of them. Especially in a country like SA which has so many different cultures and languages. My cultural beliefs are still the same as before, I respect all cultures for their own beliefs and languages and rules.

No, I don't think my linguistic background has changed at all. Because I still do most of my activities and tasks in Afrikaans on a daily basis. I am now more involved in English conversations than ever before, but most of my conversations are still in Afrikaans. The language that now dominates my thinking and worldview is still Afrikaans. I currently live in Upington and we are a small community in which Afrikaans still dominates, we rarely communicate with each other in English.

People’s languages and accents have always been associated with financial status, intelligence and social status. A few examples are Russian accents are always associated with danger, gangsters and violence because of all the movies and the TV’s influence. Whereas a French accent is associated with romance. These are just a few examples of how accents and languages are associated with certain things, even though it’s not always the truth. Thus using our language and accents we reflect who we are. When you hear me talk you’ll probably make the assumption I’m an Afrikaans girl from a farming background. When you hear a Xhosa native speak Afrikaans, you’ll instantly recognize that this person is not Afrikaans. This is true for all and any languages, an Englishman speaking French or a Zulu speaking Xhosa etc. Our languages reflect who we are, what our backgrounds are and this basically is who we are as people.