The discursive construction of the concepts 'organisational communication' and 'organisational culture' in a merged South African company.

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MA IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL LINGUISTICS

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

By

Joanie van der Merwe

December 2014

Supervisor: Dr Marcelyn Oostendorp

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I, the undersigned, declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

………………………….. **December 2014**

Signature **Date**

<u>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</u>

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the manner in which the concept of communication is discursively constructed in a South African insurance company. The company recently underwent a merger which, according to the literature, should increase its awareness of communicative practices. The thesis builds on recent theoretical developments in organisational studies, more specifically, the linguistic turn. The focus falls on the way in which organisational communication is constructed by implementing the analytical tools of thematic analysis and discourse analysis.

All of the participants in this study were involved with the merger that the company underwent. The sample of twenty-three participants included eighteen employees who took part in an electronic survey questionnaire and five employees who were individually interviewed. Additionally, documents concerning the merger were analysed to reveal the way in which the company's organisational communication is constructed by managers. During the data collection, participants were questioned about their perspectives of organisational communication and organisational culture with regard to the merger. The data strongly shows that communication is generally not considered an important aspect in an organisation during the merging process. Interestingly, when participants' attention is, however, drawn to specifically the concept of communication, a mechanistic view of communication is presented with only selected communicative practices considered as 'communication'. The analysis further indicates changing communicative practices in the newly merged company.

In conclusion, this study argues that organisations, especially in a merging context, can benefit from a greater awareness regarding the importance of organisational communication. Further linguistic research in the form of organisational studies in this regard is suggested.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek die wyse waarop die konsep van kommunikasie deur diskoers gekonstrueer word in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse versekeringsmaatskappy. Hierdie organisasie het onlangs 'n amalgameringsproses ondergaan wat volgens die literatuur behoort te lei tot 'n toename in bewustheid van kommunikatiewe praktyke en veroorsaak dat die konteks 'n kardinale element in die navorsing is. Hierdie tesis bou op onlangse teoretiese ontwikkelings in organisatoriese studies, met 'n spesifieke fokus op diskoers en taal (die 'linguistic turn'). Die fokus val op die manier waarop organisatoriese kommunikasie gekonstrueer word deur die analitiese metodes van tematiese analise en diskoersanalise te implementeer.

Al die deelnemers in hierdie studie was betrokke by die amalgamering van die maatskappy. Die steekproef van drie-en-twintig deelnemers sluit agtien werknemers in wat aan die elektroniese opname deelgeneem het en vyf werknemers waarmee individuele onderhoude gevoer is. Dokumente aangaande die amalgamering is addisioneel geanaliseer om sodoende die wyse waarop die maatskappy se organisatoriese kommunikasie gekonstrueer word deur bestuurders, aan die lig te bring. Gedurende die data-insameling is deelnemers ondervra aangaande hulle perspektiewe op organisatoriese kommunikasie en organisatoriese kultuur ten opsigte van die amalgamering. Die data dui daarop dat kommunikasie oor die algemeen nie beskou word as 'n belangrike aspek van 'n organisasie tydens die amalgameringsproses nie. Tog, wanneer die deelnemers se aandag daarop gevestig word en hul gevra word om spesifiek te fokus op die konsep van kommunikasie, word 'n meganiese uitkyk van kommunikasie voorgestel met slegs geselekteerde kommunikatiewe praktyke wat as 'kommunikasie' beskou word. Die analise lig verder die idee van veranderlike kommunikatiewe praktyke in die nuwe geamalgameerde maatskappy uit.

Ter opsomming voer hierdie studie aan dat organisasies, veral in 'n amalgameringskonteks, baat kan vind by 'n groter bewustheid omtrent die belangrikheid van organisatoriese kommunikasie. Verdere linguistiese navorsing in organisatoriese studies in hierdie verband word voorgestel.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study set out to investigate the ways in which the concept of 'communication' is constructed and articulated in a South African insurance company that recently underwent a merger. The literature points out that an increased awareness of communicative practices is necessary during a merging process. This research builds on recent theoretical developments in organisational studies referred to as the 'linguistic turn' or 'discursive turn' (Musson, Cohen & Tietze, 2007; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Deetz, 2003). From a theoretical perspective, this turn entails an amplified focus on the discoursal aspects of organisations and can be observed practically in organisations' offering of workshops, training and courses on effective communication to their employees. However, very little research exists concerning what organisations understand by 'communication' and how they construct communicative processes. This study aims to fill this existing research gap by investigating a specific organisation's perceptions of the concept of 'communication' within the context of a recent merger. This chapter serves as an introduction to the study that has been done.

1.1 Background and rationale

The rise, and ever-growing, phenomenon of globalisation, has led people to a stream of new approaches and a fresh mind-set in terms of the growing economy and the competitive challenges it presents. Mergers and acquisitions are some of the innovations organisations utilise in order to race past their opponents in the market. According to Vazirani and Mohapatra (2012: 31), mergers and acquisitions are seen as a business strategy that aims for enhanced organisational performance. Pablo and Javidan (2004) support this view by stating that organisations strive to maintain business growth and raise their competitive advantage by investing in the application of mergers and acquisitions.

The major change that mergers and acquisitions bring in organisations has an significant impact on all areas of the organisation. One of these areas is the organisational culture. Miller (2003) in Vazirani and Mohapatra (2012: 33) defines organisational culture as "the way things are done in an organisation". Vazirani and Mohapatra (2012: 33) elaborate that organisational culture is "the informal values, norms and beliefs that control how individuals

and groups in an organisation interact with each other and with people outside the organisation". If communication concerning the expected changes in organisational cultures is neglected, the results can be destructive to the merging company. The organisational culture is also, in turn, an important factor to consider with regards to the type of internal communications approach when preparing for a merger (Kitchen, 1997 in Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 50).

According to Spike and Lesser (1995) in Kitchen and Daly (2002: 50), internal communication concerning a merger is crucial for the successful implementation of change programmes. By using communication, employees are prepared for the changes that are approaching. Peng and Litteljohn (2001: 362) agree that communication has a very significant role in training, knowledge distribution and learning during strategy implementation. Elving (2005: 131) adds that communication during organisational change is also important in order to prevent or minimise resistance to change. "When resistance to change levels are low within an organisation, one could argue that the effectiveness of the change-effort will be higher" (Elving, 2005: 131). Furthermore, change results in uncertainty among employees, and Burnes (1992) in Kitchen and Daly (2002: 52) argue that communication is a key method of avoiding this uncertainty.

It is thus clear that a smooth organisational change requires effective communication. Consequently, a firm knowledge of organisational communication is necessary if organisational efficacy and, ultimately, success is the primary goal.

1.2 The context of the specific South African merged company

The merging process of the two insurance companies under investigation commenced in 2010 and although this was a nation-wide process, this study only focussed on one provincial branch. The advantages of the merger were described by top-management as greater risk diversification and raised capital efficiencies. Company A, however, already underwent previous merging processes, most notably with Company C in 1999. It is important to consider that Company A was therefore already a merged company. Then, in 2010, Company A merged with Company B. Company A primarily catered for the lower income market in terms of insurance policies although a small division did exist that focussed on the middle to upper income market. This small division was, however, not as successful as the

larger division that focussed on the lower end of the market. Company B, by contrast, mainly catered for the higher income market but also had a smaller division that catered for the lower income market. Yet again, this smaller division was not as successful as the larger division that targeted the upper end of the market. Due to economic factors, the number of policies sold decreased and served as motivation for a merger between Company A and Company B in order to gain a bigger market share.

In 2010, the decision was made to merge the divisions that catered for similar markets across the two companies. It was further decided to combine the various businesses of both companies into six main business clusters. The merger between Company A and Company B was unexpected for the employees as well as the public and described by some employees as the companies' "best kept secret". This specific context will be investigated to address a particular research gap within the study of organisational communication during mergers.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Even though the 'linguistic turn' has resulted in an increasing awareness of communication and discourse within organisations, communication rarely features as one of the most important aspects of corporate effectiveness. Compared to profit margins, customer relations and work performance, very little consideration is given to the element of communication. Rather, communication is mostly seen as "purely tactical" in its nature and implementation (Goodman, 2001: 118). However, specific situations, like mergers, strongly require the focus to be turned to communication. As mergers entail the integration of two companies, it is also the assembly of two corporate cultures. This cultural integration forces the company to give consideration to and place emphasis on communication.

According to Jensen, Papastefanou and Conradie (2013), communication practitioners in South Africa are somewhat ignorant of the interactional dynamics of cultural dimensions of employees and internal organisational communication satisfaction. It is essential for the corporate individual to be knowledgeable about these dynamics in order to create and maintain effectiveness within the merging workplace. The cultural dimensions present in this study are that of two organisational cultures coming together because of a merger situation. The interactional dynamics mentioned by Jensen, Papastefanou and Conradie (2013) thus take the form of a broad perspective of intercultural communication. Rather than only

considering the traditional view of a culture like a national culture, this study focusses on culture as an entity presented by the corporate organisation (Ginevičius & Vaitkūnaitė, 2006: 201).

Very little research has been done to investigate how organisations understand the concept of communication and their approach thereof. A knowledge of the concept of communication is crucial as this has an large effect on the dynamics of an organisation (Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 47) especially when the organisation is undergoing big changes such as a merger. This thesis is interested in a South African insurance company that underwent a number of merging processes during the period of 2010 to 2013. The focus of the study is on the analysis of the perceptions of communication held by various role-players within the company. More specifically, this analysis is focussed on the ways in which the company constructs organisational communication in interviews with employees who were directly affected by the merger. The analysis includes a general overview of employees' perceptions of organisational communication. Lastly, the way in which organisational communication is constructed by managers in documents concerning the merger will be analysed. This investigation will be led by the following research question.

1.4 Research question

The key research question of this study is as follows: How is the concept of written and spoken communication discursively constructed by a specific South African company that recently underwent merging processes?

1.5 Research aims and objectives

The aim of this research project is to analyse the perceptions of a specific merged company's concept of communication. In order to achieve this goal, research objectives are developed as follows. The research objectives appear in no specific order of importance.

- To investigate what the most prominent themes are that feature in the company's organisational communication concerning the merger.

- To evaluate how the concept of organisational communication in the company is constructed in interviews with selected employees who were involved in the merger, in general by the organisation and in documents written by managers about the merger.

- To examine how organisational culture is constructed in communication concerning the merger.

These research objectives form building blocks that will eventually lead to the answering of the research question.

1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 Research design and data collection instruments

The research design for this study takes a qualitative approach that will ensure an in-depth understanding of the data but will also increase this understanding and lead to a deeper knowledge of the topic as a whole (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 48).

Data was collected through a triangulational procedure (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 49) including audio-recorded, semi-structured individual interviews, document analysis and an electronic questionnaire. By utilising three data sets, the advantage of a thorough overview of the whole organisation will be gained.

Five participants were interviewed for this study. Firstly, the change management consultant was interviewed to discuss the context of the organisation and the merging dynamics. This consultant is appointed by the organisation to manage a smooth and effective change in terms of the merger. This interview was not audio recorded but notes were taken. Secondly, eleven employees were selected via the method of snowball sampling which entails the referring or recommending of participants to the researcher by the already selected group of participants (Wimmer & Dominick, 2001: 94). However, only three employees accepted the request for an interview. These employees were individually interviewed for forty-five minutes to an hour. Questions concerning the background of the merger and personal experiences in terms

of organisational communication and organisational culture of the merger formed the focus of these interviews (see Appendix A). Lastly, an informal interview was conducted with an external auditor for the company to add contextual depth to the study.

Secondly, an electronic survey questionnaire was distributed to all employees in the organisation who were affected by the merging processes. The survey questionnaire was structured to capture the employees' perspectives on the concepts of communication and organisational culture with regards to the merger. The advantage of this instrument is that generalisation to the population is more possible than with other instruments. It is also a very convenient method for participants to take part in the study and more responses are probable.

Lastly, documents, specifically newsletters concerning the merger, were examined. A total of twenty-one newsletters were analysed which all appeared during the merger period. These newsletters were written by the management of the company and the intended readers thereof were company employees.

1.6.2 Data analysis

A combination of thematic and discourse analysis (Gee, 1999) was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a method of discovering and analysing patterns or themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). This method of analysis allows the researcher to identify recurrent, salient but also absent themes. With one of the research objectives for this study being the investigation of what the most prominent themes in the organisation's communication are, this analytical tool is especially appropriate.

Discourse analysis is a social constructivist approach that enables the investigation of how certain concepts are represented, constructed and understood (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 6, 8). Potter and Wetherell (1987: 160) cited in Hughes (2000: 22) agree and state that discourse analysis entails the establishment of the way in which the discourse is compiled as well as the analysis of what can be gained from this construction. According to Vine (2004), the idea of context is invaluable to discourse analysis. Gee's (1999) form of discourse analysis places specific emphasis on the consideration of context which makes this tool ideal for the current study.

1.7 Key terms

The following list contains key terms that are frequently referred to throughout this study.

Organisational culture:

"A specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organisation and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organisation" (Markovi, 2008: 4).

Organisational communication:

Communication that is specifically related to organisations.

Intercultural communication:

Communication that stems from the interaction between cultural groups. For the current study, intercultural communication is focussed on the organisational communication that stems from the interaction of organisational cultures within the specific company under study.

Discourse analysis:

A social constructivist approach in researching how concepts are discursively understood and constructed.

Thematic analysis:

A research method for the discovering and analysing of patterns or themes in data.

Merger:

The combination of two organisations that may or may not be related in order to reap the benefits of functioning together.

Change management consultant:

A professional individual that manages and facilitates the processes of change in an organisation.

1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter 2 forms the first part of the literature review which describes the theoretical framework of organisational culture and organisational communication for this study. The first part commences with a section defining organisational culture followed by the importance of culture as well as organisational culture as concerns mergers. A discussion of intercultural communication serves as a connection between the two parts of this chapter. In the second part, organisational communication is discussed in terms of change and employee enablement.

The second part of the literature review is found in Chapter 3 and provides a discussion of the analytical framework for this study, namely discourse and thematic analysis. An overview of the linguistic turn in social research is given as starting point for this discussion. The chapter further focusses on discourse analysis as proposed by James Paul Gee (1999) as this will specifically be one of the analytical tools that will be used for the data analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion of thematic analysis.

Chapter 4 encompasses the study's methodology. In this chapter, the research design and data collection methods are discussed as well as the manner in which the data analysis will be approached. Hereafter, attention is drawn to the validity and credibility of the data. Lastly, a brief section about the ethical considerations for this study is provided.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of this study as well as a discussion thereof in terms of a data analysis. Because the concept of context is important for this study, this chapter starts with a brief overview of the communication channels that were used during the merger that the company underwent. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis are further implemented to investigate the three data sets. The chapter ends with a summary of the current study's main findings.

In conclusion, Chapter 6 offers the limitations that this study experienced and were affected by, followed by practical recommendations for organisations. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2
Organisational culture and communication

2.1 Towards a definition of organisational culture

The concept of organisational culture originally evolved from cultural anthropology. It was developed during the early 1970s when a concern for the survival of organisations surfaced because of competitive environments. From the 1980s onwards, many books on organisational culture saw the light and this marked the start of research on this novel topic (Quick & Nelson, 2009: 544). Since this time, the phenomenon of organisational culture has been the inspiration for a lot of research.

Markovi (2008: 4) suggests that the contemporary definition of 'organisational culture' encompasses that which is valued within the organisation, such as the leadership style, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines and the typical definitions of success for the organisation. The author concludes that organisational culture is thus "a specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organisation and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organisation" (Markovi, 2008: 4). For Shein (1990: 111), 'organisational culture' is a unique set of basic assumptions that were developed by a specific group of people in reaction to problems of external adaption and internal integration. These are taught to new members of the group as values and beliefs and are accepted as the correct way to act in relation to the problems for the reason that this way of acting has proved to be valid (Sabri, 2004: 128). Smircich (1983) proposed that the organisational culture comprises of factors that are brought into the organisation which renders a social structure within the organisation (Austin & Ciaassen, 2008: 339).

The two terms 'organisational culture' and 'organisational climate' are sometimes used interchangeably. However, there is disagreement in the literature whether these terms indeed refer to the same phenomenon. According to Smollen and Sayers (2009: 437) 'organisational climate' is generally used in addition to or instead of 'organisational culture' and is identified by Allen (2003) in Smollen and Sayers (2009: 437) as employee perception and manifestation of culture. In Van den Hooff and De Ridder (2004: 120), Putnam and Cheney (1985) defined 'communication climate' as "the atmosphere in an organisation regarding

accepted communication behaviour". The literature does show both differences and similarities between the two terms (Ostroff, Kinicki & Muhammad, 2013: 643; Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2011). However, the specific debate about the overlap between the two terms is outside the scope for this particular study and will not be discussed in any more detail. The more commonly used and established term 'organisational culture' will be used throughout for the purpose of this study and will be abbreviated to OC.

In published research, it is confirmed that there seems to be a discrepancy when considering how organisational culture relates to the organisation. Smircich (1983) cited in Riad (2005: 1542) reveals this discrepancy by indicating how some might refer to the OC as something that an organisation "possesses" and others might refer to it as something that an organisation "embodies". Lauring (2011: 236) is of the opinion that these two perspectives need not be in an "either-or" relationship but that both are in effect combined. He suggests that culture directs the actions of individuals and at the same time is created by the individuals' actions in such a way that a dynamic cycle is created. Whether an organisation has a culture or is a culture or whether an organisation encompasses both of these dimensions, the 'organisational culture' is an observable phenomenon within the organisation.

According to Schein (1992, 2004) an organisation's culture can be recognised by particular elements found within the organisation. Three levels are evident for OC: (1) Basic assumptions, (2) values and beliefs and (3) cultural artefacts (Austin & Ciaassen, 2008: 341; Armenakis, Brown & Mehta, 2011). Basic assumptions are underlying elements that operate at an unconscious level and include thoughts, beliefs, expectations and theories. They make up the fundamental dynamics of the relationship between the organisation and the environment, time, space, reality and its members, and this drives behaviour. The values and beliefs are clearly expressed attitudes, ideologies and philosophies that are consciously developed and include formal organisational practices like setting goals, strategies and policies. Cultural artefacts are the visible structures and processes and are manifested by observable rituals, ceremonies, dress, stories told, language utilised, symbols and history recalled (Austin, 2008: 341; Armenakis, Brown & Mehta, 2011: 306).

A wide range of classifications of OC are suggested and researchers distinguish between different types of OCs. Want (2003: 16) proposes a hierarchy of corporate cultures where he draws a correlation between the performance of cultures and the performance of their

companies. He created two categories, namely "cultures of shame" and "cultures of change" and identifies various types of cultures under each one. The culture types that fall under "cultures of shame" are typically those cultures that tend to result in failure and include predatory cultures, frozen cultures, chaotic cultures, political cultures and bureaucratic cultures. The "cultures of change" include service cultures and new age cultures and are seen as high performance cultures. Similar to this model, Burns and Stalker (1961) present mechanistic and organic cultures and Kotter and Heskett (1992) present adaptive and unadaptive cultures which draw on an organisational effectiveness criterion. This, for example, can be where companies with adaptive cultures are known to be more effective in environments that are dynamic (Armenakis, Brown & Mehta, 2011: 306). A contrasting classification is that of Denison (1984) who distinguishes between more participative and less participative cultures. There is no regard to the external environment and the notion was rather to recognise higher profit levels in more participative cultures and lower profit levels in less participative cultures. In turn, some organisations' cultures can simply be described as ethical or unethical (Armenakis, Brown & Mehta, 2011: 306).

More specifically, Harrison (1990) identified four cultural orientations within organisations namely Power, Role, Achievement and Support cultures (Sabri, 2004). Power cultures reflect a paternalistic image where leaders display strength and subordinates reveal submissiveness and loyalty. Role cultures are marked by a lower level of direct supervision, and employees work best when roles and procedures are laid out with clarity and precision. In contrast, the Achievement culture necessitates self-motivating strategies, and structure is of the essence. The Support culture is based on the assumption that individuals want to contribute. Thus, satisfaction is gained from relationships, connection and belonging (Sabri, 2004). Similar to Harrison's Support culture, Handy (1993) and also Cameron and Quinn (1999) identified the "clan" or "club" culture to be a group that values cohesion, relationship and teamwork and consequently, a family-type, informal atmosphere is created. Handy (1993) also agreed with Harrison (1990) on a Role-orientated culture that reflects a formal sense of stability and order (Austin & Ciaassen, 2008).

Pheysey (1993: 15) took the classification and typology a step further when he recognised a connection between Harrison's organisational cultures and the grouping of national cultures as Hofstede (1980) suggests them. National cultures are organised into four groups: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism and Masculinity-Femininity.

According to Hofstede, cultures that have a high level of Power Distance are characterised by subordinates being dependent on bosses or top management and a preference for paternalism is evident. Countries that maintain a low power distance shows minimum dependence on superiors. Ultimately, power distance refers to the unequal distribution of power (Sabri, 2004). Uncertainty Avoidance entails the measure to which individuals display nervousness in unstructured and ambiguous situations and the avoiding thereof by the implementation of certain rules to direct actions. Individualistic cultures emphasise personal achievement while collectivist cultures demonstrate a higher concern for the group's performance. In the Masculinity-Femininity culture group, ambition, achievement and performance take the foreground in masculine cultures. In contrast, strong gender role distinctions and an overall concern with relationships are what characterise Feminine cultures (Sabri, 2004).

When these four national cultures are connected and integrated with Harrison's (1990) four cultural orientations, four OCs can be identified:

- In Power Distance terms where the Power Culture is visible.
- In Uncertainty Avoidance terms which links to the Role Culture.
- In Individualism terms displaying an Achievement Culture.
- In the Femininity Culture matching the Support Culture.

According to Pheysey (1993), these four cultures might exist in every society. Pheysey (1993) is of the opinion that OCs cannot be placed on the same continuum as national cultures (or societal cultures). However, since she argues that the way a society solves its survival problems is found in their culture, and this is further reflected in the organisations within the society, an important correlation between the two can be made (Sabri, 2004).

2.2 The importance of organisational culture

Researchers have paid much attention to the phenomenon of OC in the past, and the literature proves that there is agreement on the fact that OC is important. Harrison (1975) cited in McCarthy (1998: 177) states that OC has a large impact on the most crucial aspects of organisational life as it influences the way decisions are made, how resources are managed and the manner in which individuals behave. A shared experience provides for a shared

understanding within the organisation and this plays a distinctive role in the coordination of activities (Weber & Camerer, 2003). Jeffcutt (1994) proposes that once understanding is born in the organisation, understanding itself is organised (Riad, 2005).

The literature shows that corporate cultures that fail to succeed are increasingly directly connected to failing businesses(Want, 2003; Weber & Camerer, 2003). Lack of attention to organisational culture will result in overall failure of the business. Unfortunately, companies do not always prioritise the culture of their organisation and consequently suffer the effects of 'normalizing' OC (Riad, 2005: 1533). Armenakis, Brown and Mehta (2011) emphasise the importance of OC by arguing that it is in fact companies with a good OC that succeed in achieving the delicate balance of stakeholders' interests. The latter is of crucial importance because a large part of the organisation's image depends on whether the organisation is affecting the community in a positive way.

Cited in McCarthy (1998: 177), Denison (1990) examines the impact that OC has on organisational effectiveness. The aspects of direction, pervasiveness and strength are seen as interrelated and used as the cornerstones for this examination. Direction entails the pathway that culture is influencing the organisation to follow. OC can cause members of the organisation to behave in such a manner that goals are reached or it can influence organisational behaviour to have a negative effect on reaching goals. The pervasiveness aspect refers to the degree to which culture is unanimously understood by the members of the organisation. If this degree is low, the impact on organisational effectiveness will be poor but if the degree is high, the counter effect will take place and a positive impact will be the result. The final aspect, namely the strength of cultural impact, is the amount of pressure that culture applies to the members of the organisation. A strong and cohesive culture will be one that displays acceptance and adoption of the cultural values because members feel compelled to obey the directives established by the culture. In contrast, a weak culture will be one that displays values that are not seen as completely committed and loyal to the group because of a vagueness in the defining and seriousness of cultural values carried over to members by the organisation (Denison, 1990 cited in McCarthy 1998: 177).

If OC has such a big influence on organisational effectiveness, this is a very powerful concept that managers can use to build their company successfully. There are various areas that can consequently be impacted when a company reaches higher levels of effectiveness.

Globalisation is one of the main endeavours organisations have to consider on a continuous basis if they want to ensure their company's place in the market. Markovi (2008) is of the opinion that such a company needs a very strong OC that is fostering a globalisational perspective. Such a company's culture will typically take the form of an inclusive, high-performance culture where shared values and purpose-driven work are important. The advantage of a high-performance culture like this is that they are able to place their focus outward and towards the competitors, customers and community. These organisations prize international experience and managerial knowledge (Markovi, 2008: 6). Yet again, the significance of OC is evident, bringing with it an important key to globalisation.

OC cannot be ignored, especially not when moving into the area of organisational change. Wherever change is considered, a clear understanding of the company's culture is crucial. According to Austin and Caaissen (2008: 339), focussing on corporate culture is even viewed as a growing need for organisations when it comes to the management of change. This is because managers require knowledge on how to adjust cultures whether it is by enhancing them or modifying them. The basic idea is that change effects the whole organisation and thus also its culture which, in turn, can contribute positively or negatively to the organisational outcomes. Foster-Fishman (1995) suggests multiple perspectives in the culture/change relationship because of the fact that culture is so highly complex. These perspectives focus on different parts of culture : consistency, differentiation, fragmentation and ambiguity (Austin & Caaissen, 2008: 340). Foster-Fishman (1995) also identifies three areas that can possibly impact the OC when change in the organisation is about to occur:

- Views of staff that are compatible or incompatible.

- Different views of organisational life and the proposed change held by sub-cultures within the organisation.

- The existence of consistent and inconsistent organisational practices.

Only with a clear understanding of the OC, what can possibly affect it and an in-depth knowledge of the dynamics thereof, can organisations attempt to implement the change-

process. The above three areas can impact the culture negatively, leading to an unstable OC or it can alternatively result in a functional culture. Once the OC has reached stability, Organisational Change can be commenced (Austin & Caaissen, 2008).

The importance of OC is so great and the breadth of it so multifaceted that it demands management. Austin and Caaissen (2008) report two conflicting views on the capacity of managers to change OCs. The one view is that organisational cultures are very difficult to manage because culture is unconsciously generated within the organisation and has an interactional nature. The complex interactions produce culture throughout the organisation and full control over these interactions is barely possible. Managers thus find it difficult to change OCs. The contrasting view is that OC can indeed easily be managed and the creation thereof is even seen in essence as fulfilling a management-directed function. Therefore OC is considered a set of processes that should be managed and are directly linked to organisational performance (Austin & Caaissen, 2008: 345).

Although there is debate on whether OC is difficult to manage or is in fact a management-function itself, OC has remained important in both practical considerations in organisations as well as in academic research. Six strategies for understanding and managing cultures have been identified by Khademian (2002) in Austin and Ciaassen (2008: 347):

Strategy 1: Identify the commitments that form the existing culture.
Strategy 2: Identify the connections between the roots of culture and commitments.
Strategy 3: Think about what needs to change and articulate the change.
Strategy 4: Understand the management of cultural roots as an inward, outward and shared responsibility.
Strategy 5: Relentlessly practice and demonstrate the desired changes in culture.
Strategy 6: Capitalize on incremental change and institutionalize it.

These six strategies are different in their approaches but capture the importance of OC. The strategies are developed within the context of a complex internal and external environment and keeps within the boundaries of its expectations, constraints and legacies (Austin & Caaissen, 2008: 346).

Erez and Gati (2004) propose a dynamic multi-level model of culture. This model consists of lower and higher levels of cultures where the lower levels of cultures are embedded in the higher levels of cultures. As soon as there is a change in one of the levels, it affects changes in the other levels as well. Erez and Gati's (2004) motivation for implementing this model stems from their opinion that culture changes over time and few studies have explored the impact that culture has on change (Erez & Gati, 2004: 584). In their article, Erez and Gati (2004: 587) make a proposition: "Dynamic, rather than stable, models of culture should serve for understanding the changing work environment in response to globalisation." It is clear that Erez and Gati focus on culture and culture change in a very broad sense. According to them, the highest level of culture is the most macro level, which is the global culture. Moving downwards through the levels, their identification suggests the national culture followed by the OC, the group culture and finally, at the lowest level, the individual level of culture (Erez & Gati, 2004: 583). It is these different levels of culture that influence one another and cause for culture to be seen as dynamic.

Boisnier and Chatman (2002: 24) explain that it is generally difficult for organisations with a strong culture to exhibit change and flexibility within their OC. Instead, subcultures within the same organisation take the role of absorbing conflict resulting from resistance to change that comes from this strong culture organisation. At the organisation level, this conflict is too difficult to handle and thus the subcultures play a significant role in "containing conflicting priorities" that stems from the dynamic environment (Meyer, 1982. in Boisnier & Chatman, 2002: 23). Keeping the organisation in a state of stability, the strong culture organisation can now consider suggestions from the subcultures. Subcultures offer an alternative for organisations with strong cultures to maintain a nature of flexibility.

Cited in McCarthy (1998: 179), Hatch (1993) presents a cultural dynamics perspective that portrays the relationship between cultural components as processes. She presents the element of manifestations as the relationship between values and assumption, the element of realisations as the relationship between values and artefacts, the element of symbolisation as the relationship between symbols and artefacts and finally the element of interpretations as the relationship between assumptions and symbols. McCarthy (1998: 179) is of the opinion that this perspective reveals OC as process-based. It can thus be said that OC is here shown as a dynamic entity because it is analysed and understood in terms of processes.

It is now evident that OC is not always seen as something that changes as a result of one or another significant change but can also be viewed as inherently dynamic, flexible and changeable. Kilmann et al. (1985) in McCarthy (1998: 178) refers to "a mosaic of organisational culture" with regard to this nature of OC.

The above literature included a discussion of organisational change and its great dependence on OC. One area where organisational change is prominent is in the sphere of corporate mergers. With the merging of two companies, two different corporate cultures face each other and a new corporate culture is to be inflamed. Change is of the order of the day and if not managed carefully, the delicate air of OC can be damaged to the extent that full recovery is improbable.

2.3 Organisational culture and mergers

According to Riad (2005: 1529), OC is deemed as extremely important during mergers, not only by academics but also by practitioners in organisational settings. Since research has shown that effective mergers can result in big overall successes, there has been a proliferation of research and published academic literature on the management of merger integration. Within this literature, research on organisational performance and influencing factors has become the main focus leading to the discussion of OC that started in the mid-1980s (Riad, 2005).

With the merging of two companies, each company brings along its own corporate culture. In this event, two cultures cannot exist simultaneously and a third corporate culture has to serve as catalyst in order for a newly merged company to function effectively (Riad, 2005: 1531). Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta (2005: 418) describe this third culture as "a new combination where interaction proceeds smoothly and contains discoursal features of both cultures". Merger failure rates are high, and ineffective integration of the two organisations is often associated with terms like 'culture clash' or 'culture ambiguity'. Merger integration consultants recognise the crucial importance of management of organisational culture so that these 'clashes' can be avoided. Evidence of this increased awareness of the management of OC can be noticed in consultant guidelines and books focussing on advice and methods with regard to managing culture clashes but also in the rise of a 'culture clash' prevention and mediation industry (Riad, 2005: 1534).

2.3.1 Third culture

The concept of 'third culture' originated from the initial term "binational third culture" by Useem et al. (1963) cited in Lee (2006: 254). It was defined as the manifested cultural patterns of interacting societies of Western and non-Western individuals as they would come together in a non-Western setting. Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989: 294) cited in Lee (2006: 254) elaborated on but also compressed this definition to: "a situational subculture wherein temporary behavioural adjustment can be made by the interacting persons as they attempt to reach a mutually agreed upon goal(s)." This Third Culture model had the characteristics of adaptability and openness and was seen as a situational and supportive subculture. It was alternatively known as a territory of mutuality. However, Robert Shuter (2010) disagrees with Casmir and Asuncion-Lande and argues that third culture is even beyond adaptation and adjustment. It is rather a renegotiation and synthesis of the components that the human cultural experience comprises of, such as values and attitudes. According to Shuter (2010: 431), this human cultural experience needs to be enjoyed and therefore value systems and communication systems will have to change in order for mutual growth and survival to take place.

Finally, Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989: 294) cited in Lee (2006: 254) proposed a definition for 'third culture' that was, according to them, the most systematic. It is also more in line with the above opinion of Shuter. The definition is as follows:

"In the conjoining of their separate cultures, a third culture, more inclusive than the original ones, is created, which both of them now share. Third culture is not merely the result of the fusion of the two or more separate entities, but also the product of the harmonization of composite parts into a coherent whole."

Lee (2006: 254) is of the opinion that in a third culture there is no place for the domination of one culture over another. Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989: 294) cited in Lee (2006: 255) proposes four fundamental assumptions of third culture:

- It is open-ended and can absorb additional elements as well as have space for instant growth.

18

- It is expansive in its contextual spheres and can include a variety of communication situations.

- It is responsive to demands concerning the alignment of expectations and perceptions of individuals towards each other and towards the situation.

- It is future-oriented because it is the start of an undertaking that will continue over a period of time.

According to Shuter (2010: 429), Casmir is of the opinion that intercultural transactions have the potential to reach an optimal level of effectiveness when third culture building is in progress. It is further also natural that third culture is about more than cultural similarity when intercultural communication is concerned, as also noted by Lee (2006: 254).

Starosta (1991) cited in Lee (2006) points out that there are two models for third culture building. The first model is a chronological model of development which focusses on building a third culture between two individuals. The second model is an intervention model of facilitation which encompasses a third party that assists to create the third culture. Other models similar to the third culture models are the cultural synergy models.

Shuter (2010: 433) also points out the fact that the building of a third culture is phenomenally different than the concept of multiculturalism. Where third culture is distinctly about the creation of a new culture in order to accommodate differences, multiculturalism prizes the uniqueness of cultural identity above everything else. Third culture building is founded on synthesis while multiculturalism seeks to preserve culture without altering it at all.

In their research article, Weber and Camerer (2003: 412) suggest that corporate mergers fail mainly because of the underestimation of cultural conflict and coordination dysfunction that might occur during the merging process. Again it is evident that if OC is often overlooked and not given the deserved attention, the probability of business failure increases. By contrast, Riad (2005: 1548) is of the opinion that OC has become normative in the sense that it is naturally accepted as part of the business. The danger in Riad's opinion is that no space

is left for academic critical reflection and that repression of other perspectives is very likely. However, the fact that academics, practitioners, economists and financially-driven individuals find it extremely difficult to deny the inevitability of OC in mergers (Riad, 2005: 1548) shows that OC certainly is a priority in this sphere and has earned its place above other perspectives.

Bringing two corporate cultures together proves to be the biggest challenge of mergers especially because of the unique engraved quality of culture. As stated by Vazirani and Mohapatra (2012: 33) the necessity of change in the already firmly established OC is no easy task.

2.3.2 Emotion

Cartwright and Cooper (1993) review the possibility that employees can go through a period of weighty tension during the process of adjusting to a new OC (Vazirani & Mohapatra 2012: 33). In this regard a study done by Smollan and Sayers (2009) examines the close relationship between change and emotion that manifests in individuals during organisational transformation. The study not only found that it is important to emphasise OC's role of facilitating organisational change but also that emotions are present in many aspects of change and must be taken into careful consideration. Affective aspects during change are often overlooked. The way that employees will make sense of changes in the organisation is dependent on their perception of the organisation which, in turn, determines their emotional behaviour (Smollan and Sayers, 2009: 450). Thus, if there exists a stable OC, employees' emotions will be positive towards their company which will consequently lead to smoother organisational change.

Sigmar, Hynes and Hill (2012) are also of the opinion that there is a significant emotional aspect to organisations' operations. Emotion management in the workplace has become a popular topic over the years. Covey (1996) states that emotional skills might be a better predictor of corporate success than cognitive knowledge (Sigmar, Hynes & Hill, 2012). This will mean that organisations that foster a culture of emotional well-being have a far better chance at succeeding in corporate mergers. A culture such as this will imply that members possess a high emotional intelligence. Sigmar, Hynes and Hill (2012: 303) states that individuals will handle internal and external events congruent to their emotional intelligence

20

where they have mastered certain competencies. According to Goleman (1995), these competencies include:

- The ability to become self-aware in managing emotions and controlling impulses.
- The ability to set goals and perform well.
- Being motivated and creative.
- Being able to empathize with others.
- Handling relationships effectively.
- Developing appropriate social skills.

2.3.3 Ethnocentrism

An OC that prizes emotional intelligenceenables successful organisational change. Another ingredient that can be added to OCs that will further pave the way to an effective merger is non-ethnocentrism. The meaning of ethnocentrism is explained by Neuliep (2012: 12) as a cognitive orientation where one is of the opinion that one's own culture group is superior to that of others. If this is the attitude that is reigning within a particular OC, this culture will find it extremely difficult to merge with another. Because there are certain unique standards set by the particular culture, the members have a natural tendency as human beings to judge the other culture according to these standards. Ethnocentric cultures are so focussed on themselves that they often ignore the importance of comprehending other cultures (Neuliep, 2012: 12). By ignoring the exploration of another culture, the group is missing out on essential information which will be invaluable for the merging process. This ignoring gives way to mindlessness which is defined by Gudykunst (2005) in Neuliep (2012: 12) as the neglect to recognise that other individuals do not always use the same perspectives in order to interpret interaction as that they themselves would. A mindful culture will be one that understands that other cultures do not necessarily understand a message in the same way as they do (Neuliep, 2012: 12). Lauring (2011) also explains this by stating that it is wise to learn about the other culture's frame of reference so that you might understand their intended meaning in the correct way. By keeping this in mind, 'culture clashes' will be sidestepped and a corporate merger will happen more effectively.

The above mentioned issue of ethnocentrism is also noted by Riad (2005). Her study revealed two OCs that experienced friction during the merging process, with the one culture recognising ethnocentrism in the other one. They describe this notion of the other culture as a 'holier than thou' attitude. Another utterance of this culture group was: "*Your* culture might allow you to do this, but *ours* certainly doesn't" (Riad, 2005: 1545-1546). This indicates resistance to change, which is challenging to overcome. Lauring (2011: 246) refers to this as well and argues that one should be careful of simply viewing cultural misunderstandings as the reason for intercultural miscommunication. He records that it is essential to give recognition to the intentions of people. Mistrust and selfish pursuits might be the reason for resistance to change. Lauring (2011: 236) elaborates: 'The understanding of culture as merely a neutral filter of disturbance is a simplification that does not take into account the micro dynamics of human interaction.'

2.4 Intercultural communication

Kim and Hubbard (2007: 223) argue that understanding between members of different cultures is of growing importance: "As conflict intensifies between culturally defined groups of people, there is general agreement that culture is an indispensable component in the understanding of human behaviour, including communication" (Kim & Hubbard, 2007: 224).

Communication in a newly merged company is often a problem for the reason that the two original cultures (pre-merger) are not familiar with each other's unique OC. A study done by Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta (2005) shows that different cultures observe the same expression of characteristics differently and according to their own cultural standards and norms. As described in the above literature, a 'third culture', in organisational studies, is established when two companies merge. With this, major modifications to the communicative practices are made and new communication channels are formed (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005: 402). The authors also note that there will be an additional change in the internal communication of the new group in the case where the merger involves groups that demonstrate national differences. This is typically occurs in the event of a cross-border merger. The above referenced modifications to communicative practices are also one of the main spheres of interest for studies on intercultural communication: the adaptations in terms of communication that individuals make when they shift between cultures (Kim & Hubbard, 2007: 228).

A lack of clear understanding of the OC before the merging process impact negatively on communication between individuals in the newly merged company. Shrivastava (2012: 58) stresses the importance of interpersonal communication in all organisations' overall business communication.   According to Shrivastava, interpersonal communication is the head propeller of strength to the functionality of business operations.   For interpersonal communication to flourish in a newly merged business, therehas to be a consideration of the OC.

2.5 Organisational communication

There has been a growing academic interest in the field of organisational related communication (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001: 360). Many theorists are of the opinion that organisations would cease to exist without communication (Grunig, 1992 in Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 47).   Indeed, Men (2011) in Men (2014: 266) explain the important task of communication that managers at different organisational levels have. According to Holladay and Coombs (1993) in Men (2014: 266), organisational leadership is performed mainly through communication. Reference is made to the strong influence that communication style, competence and quality can have on employees' attitudes and behaviour (Men, 2014: 266).

However, different fields of business-related communication studies have different ideas about the concept of communication related to an organisation (Mazzei, 2014: 216). Two of these fields are organisational communication and corporate communication. In order to create clarity on these two terms, a short discussion of the purpose, function and description of communication as encompassed by each field will be presented.

Miller (1999: 1) cited in Welch and Jackman (2007: 180) argues that the focus of the organisational communication discipline is the context of the organisation as well as communicative processes.   Goldhaber (1993: 15) in Mazzei (2014: 219) defines organisational communication as "the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with environmental uncertainty." According to Mazzei (2014: 220) four perspectives of communication exist in the field of organisational communication namely the mechanic perspective, the psychological perspective, the interpretive-symbolic perspective and the system interaction perspective. The mechanistic

perspective holds that communication is a linear model that concentrates on transmitting messages through a channel from a sender to a receiver (Mazzei, 2014: 220). The psychological perspective focuses on how individuals' characteristics influence communication (Mazzei, 2014: 220). The interpretive-symbolic perspective views communication as the builder of the socially constructed reality together with culture that influences the interpretations (Mazzei, 2014: 220). The last perspective is the system interaction perspective that esteems the idea of communication processes being larger than the sum of their parts. This perspective is concerned with the sequential patterning of behaviours (Mazzei, 2014: 220).

Regardless of the specific perspective that is adopted, organisational communication has, according to Ashcraft et al. (2009) in Mazzei (2014: 223), as its main goal "the social creation of the process of organizing". Peng and Littlejohn (2001: 362) agree with this and states that communication is embedded in the processes of organising. Previous organisational communication studies claim that communication and organisation are seen as equivalent concepts (Tompkins & Wanca-Thibault, 2001 in Mazzei, 2014: 220) and that communication has a formative role in the creation of the organisation (McPhee & Scott Poole, 2001 in Mazzei, 2014: 220).

Putnam et al. (1996) in Mazzei (2014: 220) presents six metaphor clusters that serve as a condensation of the massive volume of organisational communication research. The first metaphor is the conduit metaphor that sees communication as an information transmission tool while organisations are seen as channels. The second metaphor is the lens metaphor and compares organisations to eyes that constantly look for information within the environment. Communication is seen as a filtering, reception and perception process while the linkage metaphor rather sees communication as a social interaction and sense-making process. This third metaphor views the organisation as a relationship network with communication being the connections that are made. The fourth metaphor is the symbol metaphor that regards the organisation as a literary text where communication is considered interpretation through meaning creation and sharing. The voice metaphor is the fifth metaphor and sees the organisation as a chorus and the voices of the organisational members as the communication. The last metaphor is the discourse metaphor that views the organisation as texts and patterns of interaction. Communication is paralleled with conversation that connects action with meaning.

In comparison with organisational communication, corporate communication is seen as the company's communication activities as an integrated whole and the managing thereof while the goal is to create and maintain a valuable corporate reputation (Christensen & Cornelisen, 2011; Cornelissen, 2008 in Mazzei, 2014: 222). A definition taken directly from Cornellissen (2014: 5) is as follows:

"Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent."

Frandsen and Johansen (2013) in Mazzei (2014: 222) identify three common features in definitions of corporate communication. Firstly, corporate communication is a strategic management function that applies a strategic approach to communication activities. Secondly, corporate communication integrates external and internal communication activities in order to create, maintain and change images and reputations. Lastly, corporate communication occurs inside relationships with the external and internal stakeholders of the organisation.

According to Van Riel (1995) in Mazzei (2014: 222), corporate communication can be divided into three categories that include management communication, marketing communication and organisational communication. Management communication is described as planning, supervising, monitoring, organising and coordinating by senior managers while marketing communication is seen as commercial communication activities to support the sale of goods and services (Mazzei, 2014: 222). Organisational communication embodies diverse communication activities and includes internal communications, investor relations, public affairs, communication with the labour market, corporate advertising, corporate social responsibility communication and public relations (Mazzei, 2014: 222). Corporate communication is thus used as a broad term that embraces different forms of communication and management activities (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011; Shelby, 1993 in Mazzei, 2014: 223).

Mazzei's (2014) study of the definitions given to communication by different business-related communication fields found that the disciplines of organisational communication and corporate communication study the same phenomenon only with different aspects being emphasised for each type of communication (Mazzei, 2014: 225). The emphasis for organisational communication according to Ashcraft et al. (2009) in Mazzei (2014: 223) is the social creation of the process of organising while the emphasis for corporate communication is reputation management. There are three factors of convergence where an overlap in perspectives is visible for the terms 'organisational communication' and 'corporate communication' and were it is evident that these two terms are essentially referring to the same phenomenon (Mazzei, 2014: 223, 224). This convergence reveals the essence of the identity of communication in organisations:

- Both organisational communication and corporate communication regard the communication of an organisation as an indivisible concept.

- A relational perspective is taken with organisational communication as well as corporate communication.

- Organisational communication and corporate communication both believe that communication in the organisation promote the creation of intangible resources like knowledge, trust and reputation.

The two terms 'organisational communication' and 'corporate communication' often create confusion among scholars with the possibility that academics label identical things with different names (Shelby, 1993 in Mazzei, 2014: 217). However, it must be noted that this dilemma also points out that the concept of communication has a rich multi-faceted nature (Mazzei, 2014: 225). The perspective on it must be "the expression of different points-of-view arising from various cultural and professional backgrounds" (Mazzei, 2014: 225).

However, the singular term 'organisational communication' is viewed from a variety of different perspectives among researchers. In Peng and Littlejohn (2001: 360), Neher (1997) identifies three broad categories for the approaches to organisational communication. The first category is named 'interpretivism' and focusses on the experiences of individuals that

are involved in organisational communication rather than the management of organisations. Researchers with this perspective mainly focus on the OC and the specific context and strive to understand specific communications and its roles in the organisation (Peng & Littlejohn, 2001: 360, 362). The second category is known as the 'critical theory' and highlights the concepts of productivity and efficiency. Here, organisational communication is approached via exercises of power and dominance. Functionalism forms the last category where the emphasis falls on the performance of the organisation. The concerns in this category are the improvement of communication systems and the study of intended and unintended outcomes of communication (Peng & Littlejohn, 2001: 360).

The term 'organisational communication' will be adopted for the purposes of this research project with the idea of Mazzei (2014: 222) that organisational communication is a subcategory of corporate communication. For the current study this categorisation will be used, as it makes for a more focused analysis of communicative practices. Therefore, our focus will only be on the subcategory of 'organisational communication' and not the broader and more inclusive 'corporate communication' as described by Mazzei (2014: 222).

2.6 Organisational communication during change

Change is found to be a high priority for twenty-first century organisations because of an increased impact of globalisation, privatisation, technological advances and mergers on these organisations (Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 46; Markovi, 2008). Gilsdorf (1998) in Kitchen and Daly (2002: 46), however, state that problems occur with the implementation of these change programmes because the aspect of communication is neglected. Kotter (1996) in Kitchen and Daly (2002: 49) argues the importance of communicating to employees why there is a need for change as well as how the change will be implemented. This consideration to the function of communication is crucial for the successful management of change in an organisation (Kotter, 1996 in Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 49).

The role that organisational communication plays during a change process such as a merger is of great importance (Appelbaum, Gandell, Yortis, et al., 2000; Lewis, 1999 in Elving, 2005: 129; Invernizzi, Romenti & Fumagalli, 2012: 484). Research focussing on the connection between change management and communication has been done prior to 2012 and is not a particularly new area of interest (Invernizzi, Romenti & Fumagalli, 2012: 483). The focus of

organisational communication during a change process can vary from how to develop messages (Armenakis & Harris, 2002 in Elving, 2005: 130), managers' strategies for communicating change (Clampitt et al., 2000 in Elving, 2005: 130), the specific mediums that are used in communicating change (Lewis, 1999 in Elving, 2005: 130), constructional phases of change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 1999 in Elving, 2005: 130) to internal communication (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Daly et al., 2003 in Elving, 2005: 130). It is also important to recognise that communication activities concerning change management encompass much more than only the narrow element of information provision (Elving, 2005 in Invernizzi, Rometi and Fumagalli, 2012: 483).

Francis (1989), cited in De Ridder (2003), identified two main goals of organisational communication (Elving, 2005: 131). The first goal is informing the employees of, amongst others, themotivation for change and employee queries (Elving, 2005: 131). The second goal is the creation of a community with the underlying aspects of social identity and social categorisation (Elving, 2005: 131). These two goals are also related,because information is necessary in order to create feelings of a community (Elving, 2005: 132). Elving (2005: 133) further argues that in communicating with the aim to create a community, employees form a sense of commitment to and trust in the organisation. The result is organisational identification that enhances the readiness for the change process (Elving, 2005: 133).

When employees are expecting organisational change, feelings of uncertainty can arise (Buono & Bowditch, 1993 in Elving, 2005: 133). An important method to manage this issue is to apply effective change communication (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998 in Elving, 2005: 133). If the communication about the change processes is not clear enough or sufficientfor employees, it may lead to informal communication like rumours to occur (Elving, 2005: 134). This is identified as "merger syndrome" by Appelbaum, Gandell, Yortis, et al. (2000) and is known as a lack of top-down communication as there is increased centralisation and decreased communication of managers with employees. As employees become more focussed on their financial status, careers and well-being, distrust and uncertainty come forth. Elving (2005: 134) concludes that communication thus has an impact on feelings of uncertainty among employees. The goal of organisational communication here will be to address and diminish the uncertainty among employees as quickly as possible (Appelbaum, Gandell, Yortis, et al., 2000). Daniel (1999) in Appelbaum, Gandell, Yortis, et al. (2000)

adds that the key in this process is to create credibility by communicating with openness and truthfulness.

Organisational communication is crucial to the implementation of organisational change and the effect that it has on organisations during this delicate time must not be underestimated.

2.7 Internal communication for employee enablement

Different ideas exist among researchers about what internal communication is (Smith, 2008: 9, 10). Business management literature identifies internal communication as one of the most influential aspects for the survival and growth of an organisation (Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 47). Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014: 185) consider internal communication a necessity for creating relationships with employees. Others have explained internal communication as communication between the leaders of the organisation and the employees who are one of the key publics of the organisation (Dolphin, 2005 in Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014: 185). Quirke (2008) in Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014: 185) states that internal communication is the illumination of connections between information portions while Argenti (1998) in Kitchen and Daly (2002: 49) defines 'internal communication' as the way organisations communicate with their employees.

However, Mazzei (2010: 222) points out that the concept of internal communication cannot be defined as communication that takes place within the boundaries of the organisation, because employees are also part of the external public. Internal communication cannot be isolated from external communication flows because employees, as members of the external public, constantly receive communication input from media channels and other various sources (Mazzei, 2010: 222). Rather, internal communication should be defined as "a set of interactive processes to generate knowledge and allegiance, definitively abandoning a systemic perspective that refers to organizational boundaries" (Mazzei, 2010: 230). In the same regard, Johnson and Chang (2000: 248) refer to communication that stretches across internal as well as external networks and consequently has a reinforcing role.

According to Mazzei (2014b: 82, 83), internal communication has a crucial role to transform employees into strategic communicators because of their potential to process, interpret and spread information about the organisation. Mazzei (2014b: 87) elaborates: "...the most

important strategic communicative actions of employees are to be company brand ambassadors, spread messages about company products, to share expertise and information with colleagues, and to communicate openly with leaders." This transformation of employees is identified as employee enablement (Mazzei, 2014b) or employee engagement (Welch, 2011; Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014: 185) and is recognised as an invaluable influencer of organisational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness (Welch, 2011: 328). In turn, internal communication influences employee engagement through implementing organisational practices that effectively instil the values and goals of the organisation in all employees (Welch, 2011: 339). Internal communication is the implementation of communication strategies in order to enhance effective and positive employee communication behaviours (Mazzei, 2014b: 84).

In Mazzei's (2014b) study about the internal communication strategies for employee enablement, an investigation about the awareness that management had of the relevance of employee communication actions was done (Mazzei, 2014b: 84). In the research model, the influencing variables of culture and specific situations in which the company was emerged (crisis or change) were included. The aim of internal communication was given by the participants as (Mazzei, 2014b: 86):

(1) To motivate employees to embrace the corporate strategy.

(2) To support managers and employees in being external and internal ambassadors to the organisation.

(3) Culture-building and sense-making.

Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) in Men (2014: 265) suggest that internal symmetrical communication is one of the most effective communication strategies with regards to employee relations. Internal symmetrical communication has as its aim the facilitation of a dialogue between the organisation and the employees. The opposite is the top-down approach of internal asymmetrical communication where employee behaviour is controlled in order to meet the requirements of the management (Grunig et al., 2002. in Men, 2014: 267). It is found that internal symmetrical communication results in job satisfaction, identification,

loyalty, positive employee–organisation relationships and positive employee communication behaviour (Men, 2014: 267).

Mazzei's (2014b: 87, 88) study identified seven internal communication strategies for employee enablement according to the participants. The strategies can be summed up as follows:

- Adopt a full disclosure style that will promote trust, transparent communication and two-way communication strategies to enhance mutual sharing and understanding.

- Create a communication path.

- Build trust between managers and employees.

- Build accountability for corporate values.

- Managers must be effective communicators.

- State a mutual benefit.

- Adopt a lot of little practices because it is also financial gain, life quality and accomplishment that motivate people; however, it is communication that is underlying to all this.

Mazzei's (2014b: 87) study discovered that the enablement of employees in the companies under investigation allowed them to actively contribute, because they now embodied innovation, better client conversations, purposefulness and a broader sense of their mission. Employees were integrated via a shared culture motivated by internal communication (Mazzei, 2014b: 88).Mazzei's (2014b: 88) study also found that organisations perceived internal communication as an important method to convey and make sense of information.

2.8 Summary

This chapter gave an overview of OC where a definition was proposed, the importance of OC was highlighted, the relation to mergers was noted and intercultural communication was emphasised. The chapter also provided an overview of organisational communication as a crucial element in organisations in terms of organisational change and employee engagement. In the light of all of the above, it is clear that an understanding of OC and organisational communication is vital for the effective performance of an organisation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the way in which communication is constructed within organisations. The following chapter will discuss one particular approach to studying organisational communication, that of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has become an increasingly popular approach since the so-called linguistic or discursive turn in organisational studies has emerged.

CHAPTER 3

Analytical framework: Discourse and thematic analysis

3.1 The linguistic turn in social research

Since 2000, an increase in the interest and focus of language is visible in the field of social sciences where researchers of various disciplines have taken on a linguistic perspective (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 136, 137). This interest in language and discourse is known as the 'linguistic turn' or 'discursive turn' and is part of a critical and philosophically grounded study of organisations. The term was conceptualised in the 1930s and is rooted in social constructionism and "perspectivalism" which is "the recognition of the constitutive conditions of experience and the de-centering of the human subject as the center or origin of perspective (Deetz, 2003: 421, 422)". According to Ball (1985: 740) and Phillips and Hardy (2002: 12), the linguistic turn was born from the idea that language does not only reflect reality but is also partially responsible for the establishment of reality. It is language that contains the concepts, divisions, classifications and diversities that are implemented in reality. By interacting with language, individuals constantly create and recreate reality (Ball, 1985: 741).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 141) identify three areas where texts and language have emerged in organisational and social research confirming the linguistic turn. The first area is the language itself and focusses on how the nature of language is context-dependent, ambiguous, dynamic and metaphorical and not merely a transportation of meaning. The metaphorical aspect of language is emphasised by some researchers (Brown, 1977; Morgan, 1980, 1983 in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 141) with the notion that language and understanding are dependent on metaphors. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 137) argue that the natural metaphor for organisations will be that of texts while Bate (1994: 257) in Musson, Cohen and Tietze (2007: 47) uses the word "merchants" as a metaphor for organisational managers.

The second area is language in use that labels language as an empirical phenomenon that is present in the conversations constructed by individuals in a variety of contexts (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 141). "If the representational capacity of language is in doubt or denied,

then the study of language use is what is left as robust and reliably replicated empirical phenomena (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 141)".

Lastly, the third area identified by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 141) is the research process with specific focus on the production of texts. The creation of a research report that takes the form of a credible text is labelled as a very "complex enterprise". This complex enterprise is ambiguous in relation to the perceived social reality of the researcher (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 141).

According to Phillips and Hardy (2002: 13), the linguistic turn also meant a change in perspective on the social world. The focus is placed on the reasons and methods behind the construction of the meanings within this social world. This focus exceeds the limited investigation of what the social world means to the individuals living in it. Yet again, discourse analysis is an appropriate method for studying this perspective (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 13; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 142) point out that language has undergone a rich and broad transformation due to the linguistic turn and can now be viewed in the following six ways:

- an active, autonomous, and productive mode of expression;
- the central object of study in social science;
- a rhetorical device for the creation of a credible research text;
- the very stuff researchers work and struggle with;
- a carrier of power through its ability to order and constitute the social world; and
- a vehicle for the potential critical clarification of social issues. (Alvesson & Kärreman (2000: 142).

For the field of organisational theory and management, the linguistic turn resulted in two important changes (Musson, Cohen & Tietze, 2007: 46). The first change was an investigation of the role of language in the constitution as well as the reproduction of the processes and practices of organisations. The second change involved the challenging of an organisation theory based on essentialist views of social reality, with critical perspectives that arose. These critical perspectives hold that meanings are social constructs that undergo

production, reproduction and transformation in certain social contexts (Musson, Cohen & Tietze, 2007: 46).

Musson, Cohen and Tietze (2007: 46) argue that the notion of meaning as contested forms the main principle of the linguistic turn. Vivian Burr (1995) in Musson, Cohen and Tietze (2007: 46) identifies this viewpoint as denaturalisation which challenges scientific-technical perspectives of management. The concept of management as a morally neutral, context-free activity that is based on objective knowledge, comes to stand against a new concept which is one of social constructionist ideas about reality, language and knowledge (Musson, Cohen & Tietze, 2007: 46).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 147) identify two levels on which the linguistic turn is crucial for organisational analysis. These two levels are the level of fieldwork and the level of analysis. On the level of fieldwork, data is mostly found in organisations in the form of talk and thus takes on a linguistic form. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000: 147, 148) continue that the focus might fall on types of talk in studies such as participant observation or ethnography. In studies concerning leadership, the focus may fall on discursive interactions between a leader and subordinates. The idea of talk is popular and is studied over a wide range of organisational areas (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 148). On the level of fieldwork, one particular linguistic form that this thesis will focus on is newsletters. Internal newsletters are a form of mediated communication and positioned under the category of 'controlled' media' (Welch & Jackson, 2007: 187). Grunig and Hunt (1984: 456) cited in Welch and Jackson (2007) note that senior management can use controlled media to send important internal messages to employees without the messages being exposed to potential modification or "filtering". The format, content and channels that are used with regard to these messages are decided upon by the organisation's management of communication (Welch & Jackson, 2007: 187). The big variety of channels that can be used to distribute controlled messages is identified as an important strategic resource for senior management of organisations. The channel used in the current study, newsletters, is a form of push media in contrast to channels like the organisational website that is identified as pull media (Ranchhod et al., 2002: 10 cited in Welch & Jackson, 2007: 188).

The four prominent goals of internal communication like newsletters are given by Welch and Jackson (2007: 188) directly as follows:

- contributing to internal relationships characterised by employee commitment;

- promoting a positive sense of belonging in employees;

- developing their awareness of environmental change; and

- developing their understanding of the need for the organisation to evolve its aims in response to, or in anticipation of, environmental change.

Davis (2004: 277) points out that the publishing of newsletters in an organisation ensures that employees receive news timely. However, more important, the publishing of newsletters avoid employees reading irrelevant information or having to sift through other information sources for the relevant news. Hughes (2000: 21) suggests that discourse analysis is one appropriate approach to use when analysing documents like organisational newsletters. Other approaches include grounded theory, content analysis and qualitative data analysis. Potter and Wetherell (1987: 160) cited in Hughes (2000: 22) remind that discourse analysis requires the analyst to establish how the discourse is put together and what is gained by this construction.

The second level where organisational analysis finds the linguistic turn of importance is in analysis construction. When research results are converted, the converted product mainly takes the form of textual artifacts and this become the main production of scientific discourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000: 148). This is also the case in this thesis, where results are presented in discursive format.

Deetz (2003: 424) is of the opinion that the linguistic turn was a very radical and completely developed way of critically engaging mainstream organisational work and the oppositions to it. Deetz (2003: 424) identifies aspects that were vulnerable to be positively influenced by the linguistic turn within the organisational area:

- The revelation of the historical and political character of organisational practices as well as forms of organisational advantage.

- Adding a dimension of power to new social conceptions of organising.

- The revelation of how technologies and work practices provided particular ways of being in the world where subjective and objective conditions of work are present.

However, Deetz (2003: 425) argue that a superficial understanding of the linguistic turn has resulted in underperformance in areas that could have been transformed and enabled into constructive changes. One of these areas concerns the notion of a discourse perspective to see the manner in which realty is constructed. Instead, the focus was placed on text and talking without reference to what the linguistic turn embodies – the way in which different realities emerge with its power relations (Deetz, 2003: 425).

Another area where the fullness of the linguistic turn has failed to prevail, is in the innovation of individuals to generate new ways of thinking through problems and explanations of organisational activities (Deetz, 2003: 427). Rather than a rigid, formed disciplinary practice, a response to an emergent set of social problems in a generative way is possible because of the linguistic turn. This generative way entails the questioning and reconstituting of social experience in order to present a productive method of thinking and talking about shared situation and enhancing the capacity to act in it (Deetz, 2003: 427).

A widely recognised approach in organisational studies, with reference to the linguistic turn, is the viewpoint that individuals communicate by making use of symbols (Musson, Cohen & Tietze, 2007: 47). Drawing on Ferdinand de Saussure's (1974) linguistic theory, semiology, Musson, Cohen and Tietze (2007: 48) explain how the symbolic dimension of organisational life is presented: "Thus, a semiological approach can be used to explore a wide range of organizational process and activities, from attendance at meetings to lunchtime rituals or the use of information systems, examining how these sign systems are interpreted and appropriated and with what implications."

In the following section, the method of discourse analysis will be discussed as a manner of elaborating on the linguistic turn and describing the theoretical framework that will be followed for the data analysis of this study.

3.2 Discourse analysis

During the past two decades, discourse analysis and the term 'discourse' have grown to become increasingly popular in the field of qualitative research (Cheek, 2004: 1140; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). Discourse analysis finds its roots in semiotics, literary criticism and linguistic studies (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1374) and can be traced back to established perspectives in philosophy, sociology and literary theories from where it was born (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 7). According to Cowan and McLeod (2004: 102), discourse analysis was first developed by Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell who argued that communication has to be observed as it occurs in everyday life if social interaction and cognition are to be understood. However, Kaplan and Grabe (2002: 192) are of the opinion that discourse analysis in terms of linguistics, can be traced back as far as the discipline of Hermeneutics hundreds of years ago. The first noteworthy studies, according to Kaplan and Grabe (2002: 192), to be published in the field of discourse analysis were those of Brown and Yule (1983), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Stubbs (1983) and van Dijk (1983). The aforementioned researchers were also influential in the establishment of academic journals like 'Discourse Processes' in 1978 and 'Text' in 1981 (Kaplan & Grabe, 2002: 192).

The idea of 'discourse' is constructed differently by different researchers and writers (Spong, 2010: 67; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1; Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 3) and is even argued by Cheek (2004: 1140) to be unclear, with confusion around the concept. Some relate discourse to only spoken language while others acknowledge that it includes spoken as well as written language (Wodak & Meyer, 2009 in Spong, 2010: 67). The addition of social practices to discourse is another perspective of 'discourse' and the emphasis here lies in the meaning that is created through these social practices (Gavey, 1989: 61 in Benveniste, Lecouteur & Hepworth, 1999; Spong, 2010: 68). This view of discourse reaches beyond language usage and is understood to establish, as well as reproduce itself in, social institutions and individual subjectivity (Benveniste, Lecouteur & Hepworth, 1999: 61). Another outlook on discourse is that there exists a distinction between the concrete manifestation of discourse and the abstract quality of discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009 in Spong, 2010: 68). Gee and Green (1998: 121) explain discourse analysis as "more than writing talk down and reading the transcript". Hardy (2001) in Phillips and Hardy (2002: 4) argue that discourse analysis strives to establish the constructive effects of discourse by systematically studying texts in a structured way.

Thompson (1988: 368) provides a definition for discourse in Cheek (2004: 1141): "The term discourse refers in this context actually to occurring instances of communication, such as a novel, a newspaper article, a classroom interaction or a conversation between friends. These instances form linguistic units which generally exceed the limits of a single sentence. The discursive analysis of these units may help to highlight by means of various methods, the structural features and relations which characterize these linguistic constructions (Thompson, 1988: 368)."

Spong (2010: 68) defines discourse as constitutive of reality and part of that which creates the social world individuals live in. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 1) give the definition of discourse as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)".

The diverse viewpoints on discourse reflect the broad field that is being dealt with. Different fields of study refer to discourse for different reasons in relation to the specific context (Antaki, 2008: 431). However, Phillips and Hardy (2002: 4) are of the opinion that a general idea of what discourse and discourse analysis are, is sufficient given the unlimited definitions that exists on this topic. According to Cheek (2004: 1143), discourse analysis consists of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches and is not only restricted to one approach. It can be applied to a variety of study fields where different social domains exist (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1).

In the field of organisational study, a variety of approaches to discourse is evident. Koester (2010: 3) elaborates on 'workplace discourse', also named 'institutional discourse' (Koester, 2010: 5) as interactions taking place across a range of occupational settings. Heritage (1997) in Koester (2010: 4) highlights the asymmetrical nature of workplace interactions which refers to the difference in distribution of power within institutions. In terms of discourse, however, identities and roles are not static but dynamic (Koester, 2010: 4). Workplace discourse can include 'business discourse' which is a specific type of discourse that is present in the commercial sector (Koester, 2010: 5). According to Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken (2013: 24), different approaches to business discourse research can include the study of intercultural communication as well as critical approaches in terms of ideology.

Cooren, Matte, Taylor and Vasquez (2007: 157) refer to the establishment and maintenance of organisational discourse as a determinant of the identity of the organisation. They argue that "…a given Discourse can maintain its shape across time and space only if a lot of interactive work is done to assure the stability of its associations in the ordinary day-to-day activity of the people who embody it." Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) explain discourse, in terms of organisational studies, as shaping the idea of organising via certain properties and consequently forming the organisation by causing it to constantly develop.

Another approach to discourse in organisational studies is Vine's (2004) focus on context. This viewpoint emphasises the invaluable role that context plays in identification at the level of discourse. The function of an utterance can only be evaluated if consideration was given to the context in which it took place (Vine, 2004: 61).

3.2.1. Discourse analysis as approached by James Paul Gee

As discussed in the preceding sections, a myriad of different approaches to the study of discourse exists. For the purposes of this study, the approach that will be focussed on is discourse analysis as described by James Paul Gee (1999). For Gee (1999), discourse analysis emphasises the consideration of the context of a specific situation. This is particularly relevant to the current study as the context in which communication occurs (namely a merger) has a significant presence in the study. All contexts of course have a significant influence on the ways in which concepts are discursively constructed, but the context of a merger is especially significant. The literature (see Chapter 2) suggests that more attention is paid to organisational culture and to organisational communication during the process of a merger. A framework that pays significant attention to context thus needed to be selected for the purposes of this study.

Gee (1999: 19) states that discourse cannot be understood in isolation and with clear boundaries around it. Rather, identities and activities need to be taken into account within a specific moment of talk, interaction, thought or action for the situation to make sense. Gee (1999: 20) refers to this as "recognition work" and state that it can occur consciously as well as unconsciously. Recognition work occurs within interaction on a moment to moment basis (Gee, 1999: 20). Four reasons to engage in recognition work are provided:

- To portray an individual's identity and actions to others and self.

- To show recognition to others' identity and actions.

- When human interaction want to be understood by researchers, theoreticians, interventionists and practitioners.

- To reflect on interactions.

Phillips and Hardy (2002: 5) agree with Gee (1999) that it is crucial to take the context into consideration in terms of discourse analysis. When the specific social reality is connected to the particular discourses, discourse analysis can be very powerful in terms of the study of social workings (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 5). Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 277) in Phillips and Hardy (2002: 4) also agree with this and argue that "Discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration…. Discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently." Gee (1999: 54) further develops this notion of historicity of discourse and states that "words bring with them as potential situated meanings all the situated meanings they have picked up in history and in other settings and Discourses".

Gee (1999: 20) also notes that recognition work and discourse are reflexively related to one another referring to the notion that the two create each other. In the same way, Gee (1999: 82) argues that reciprocity is visible between language and reality because language simultaneously reflects and constructs reality. This reflexivity between language and reality is crucial to take note of when investigating how meaning is situated within actual contexts of use (Gee, 1999: 82). Phillips and Hardy (2002: 6) agree with Gee (1999) when they argue that discourse analysis concerns the study of the way in which language constructs reality rather than how reality is reflected by language.

3.2.2 Terminology developed by Gee

Gee (1999) uses certain terminology throughout his explanation of discourse analysis that is invaluable to understanding his perspective. One such term is "situated meaning". This term refers to the notion that various meanings for words are dependable on the sentence context (Gee, 1999: 40). These situated meanings reside inside the individual's mind but are also negotiated between individuals. A definition for situated meanings is given by Gee (1999:

80) as "an image or pattern that we assemble 'on the spot' as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experiences." Gee (1999: 48) provides an example to illustrate situated meaning:

Considering the two phrases, "The coffee spilled, get a mop" and "The coffee spilled, get a broom", different situated meanings are gathered in an individual's mind. In the first instance, the word "mop" creates a link to a situated meaning according to the individual's frame of reference. The situated meaning for the word "coffee" could potentially be "dark liquid, perhaps quite hot". In the second instance, the word "broom" brings to mind a situated meaning for coffee as possibly "dark dry grains".

Cheek (2004: 1144) agrees with Gee (1999) that the meaning given to words is dependable on the specific context in which they are used. Cheek (2004: 1144) argues that language is assigned different meanings according to the specific moment in which the language is used by speakers as well as listeners.

In Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (1985) approach to discourse analysis in Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 26), another sort of terminology is used that holds a connection to what Gee (1999) strives to explain by "situated meaning". The term Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 26) use in their approach is "moments", which refers to all the signs in a discourse. The concept of "moments" reflects how a meaning of a sign is dependable on its relations to other signs within a system where all signs constitute "moments" (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 26).

Another term used by Gee (1999: 40) in his discussion on discourse analysis is "cultural models". This term springs from the idea of situated meaning and holds that the meanings that are connected to words are also linked to cultural and social groups outside of individual cognitive processing. The definition given by Gee (1999: 81) for cultural models are: "Cultural models 'explain', relative to the standards of the group, why words have the various situated meanings they do and fuel their ability to grow more." Cultural models do not only reside in a singular person's mind but are found across the group where it has been influenced by different individuals' perspectives. A bigger picture of the word forms as these cultural models link together and result in organised thinking and social practices within the sociocultural groups (Gee, 1999: 81).

"Situations" is another term that Gee (1999: 82) regularly refers to with regards to discourse analysis. Situations are, in effect, the specific contexts applicable. According to Gee (1999: 83), situations are never entirely new and are repetitive with a degree of variation occurring over time. The repetitions can cause situations to pause in a certain stage resulting in less variations occurring. It is then these repetitions that are responsible for eventually forming institutions such as schools, hospitals and political parties (Gee, 1999: 83). Bernstein (1996) and Lynch and Bogen (1996) in Gee (1999: 84) are of the opinion that the study of the method for situations to produce, reproduce, and be sustained by, institutions is an important aspect in discourse analysis.

A term that Gee (1999: 83) uses in relation to "situations" is "situation network". This refers to a system that includes all the aspects that are considered or involved when a communicative social interaction situation takes place. These aspects are interdependent on one another because each aspect gains meaning from, but also gives meaning to, all the other aspects. There are five aspects that constitute the situation network according to Hymes (1974) and Ochs (1996) in Gee (1999: 82): a semiotic aspect, an activity aspect, a material aspect, a political aspect and a sociocultural aspect. Bøilerehauge (n.d.: 5, 6) presents these aspects in a more condensed way under the two headings of mental activities and physical and factual entities:

Mental activities / processes:
Acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling, thinking, and knowing.

Physical and factual entities:
Bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times, places, symbols, people, and verbal and non-verbal expressions.

3.2.3. The six building tasks

The situation network is constructed by six building tasks through the use of language (Gee, 1999: 85). It is language that is of greatest importance for discourse analysis when considering the situation network. The situation network includes a semiotic aspect that

comes to the foreground through language. Gee (1999: 86) explains the role of the six building tasks as follows: "… they are the work that we do with language (and other semiotic systems, such as gestures or images) to construct or construe a situation in certain ways and not others." In order to understand the six building tasks, reference must be made to "cues" and "clues". By using certain cues and clues in social languages, specific situated meanings are gathered and activated. With different social languages, grammar is applied in different ways that serves as a resource for the six building tasks (Gee, 1999: 87).

The six building tasks that are utilised to construct a situation network are presented by Gee (1999: 85) as follows:

- Semiotic building

The implementation of cues or clues to gather situated meanings about which communicative systems, knowledge systems and ways of knowing are relevant in the specific moment (Gee, 1999: 85).

- World building

The implementation of cues or clues to gather situated meanings about what is considered in the specific moment as reality, present and absent, concrete and abstract, 'real' and 'unreal', probable, possible and impossible (Gee, 1999: 85).

- Activity building

The implementation of cues or clues to gather situated meanings about the type of activities that are taking place and the manner in which it is composed (Gee, 1999: 85).

- Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building

The implementation of cues or clues to gather situated meanings about the relationships and identities that are relevant to the interactions with the related attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting (Gee, 1999: 85).

- Political building

The implementation of cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various 'social goods' like status and power, within the specific moment (Gee, 1999: 85).

- Connection building

The implementation of cues or clues to make assumptions about how the specific moment's interaction is linked to the past and future as well as how the past and future are linked to each other (Gee, 1999: 85).

Gee (1999: 92) also argues that it is important to consider several questions about the six building tasks. These questions revolve around how language is used to construct the different aspects of the situation network in a given communicative interaction moment. Reflexivity comes into play again and questions also involve how the aspects of the situation network give meaning to language (Gee, 1999: 92). When these questions about the building tasks are asked, the shape of an ideal discourse analysis that considers what Gee (1999: 92) refers to as "the whole picture", is portrayed. Some of the questions Gee (1999: 92) asks about each of the six building tasks are given below:

Semiotic building:

a. What sign systems are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation (e.g. speech, writing, images, and gestures)? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

b. What social languages are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

World building:

a. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?

b. What cultural models and networks of models (master models) seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?

Activity building:

a. What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in the situation?

b. What sub-activities compose this activity (or these activities)?

Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building:

a. What relationships and identities (roles, positions), with their concomitant personal, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values, seem to be relevant to the situation?

b. In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

Political building:

a. What social goods (e.g. status, power, aspects of gender, race, and class, or more narrowly defined social networks and identities) are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

b. How are these social goods connected to the cultural models and Discourses operative in the situation?

Connection building:

a. What sorts of connections – looking backward and/or forward – are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction?

b. What sorts of connections are made to previous or future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions, and Discourses outside the current situation?

3.3 Thematic analysis

The second analytical tool used in this study is thematic analysis. The term will be abbreviated as TA throughout the text. Many different approaches to TA exist; the purpose of this section is thus to clearly show which approach will be used and the relation of this approach to other approaches.

TA has its origins in content analysis which dates back to the early twentieth century. Content analysis entails the counting of the frequency with which categories appear in a text or image (Joffe, 2011: 210). According to Joffe (2011: 212), TA is appropriate to apply when the goal of the study is to reveal a specific "group's conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study".

TA is widely used as a method to analyse qualitative data. It is also seen as a foundational method of analysis and many of the principle skills found in TA are also evident in most other qualitative methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) are of the opinion that TA bears the characteristics of a truly qualitative approach, which is subtlety and complexity. This is evident in that analysis of the frequency of codes can be combined with analysis of their meaning in context (Joffe & Yardley, 2004: 57).

Although other researchers like Kellehear (1993) in Tuckett (2005) do not identify TA as a unique and specific approach, Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Joffe (2011) do take this position for TA. One of the reasons why TA is not always seen as an approach in its own right is because it is not a "named" analysis or well-"branded" analysis as other methods tend to be, argue Braun and Clarke (2006: 79-80). They further argue that researchers obliviously use TA for their data and do not recognise it as such. These researchers would rather identify the method to be something else or no method at all. They might mention the emergence or discovery of themes within the data but neglect the idea of the researcher thus playing an active role in identifying these patterns or themes and interpreting them (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 80).

Joffe (2011: 209) is of the opinion that "TA should highlight the most salient constellations of meaning present in the data set. Such constellations include affective, cognitive and

symbolic dimensions."   Joffe (2011: 210) further explains that TA is very systematic and transparent because it values the occurrence of themes while maintaining analytical depth.

A study in the field of education done by Hartley and Morfew (2006) made use of TA when examining mission statements of higher education institutes. The goal was to identify and analyse patterns of difference within the mission statements and compare the results with recognised differences among institutional types of statements. A similar type of study was done by Swap, Annegarn, Suttles, King, Platnick, Privette and Scholes (2003) where a TA of recorded science investigations was done.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) define TA as the identifying, analysing and reporting of patterns, which are essentially themes, in data. TA has an organising as well as a descriptive function in terms of data.   One major advantage of TA is that it is flexible in terms of theory and can be implemented for a variety of theoretical and epistemological approaches. This independence of theory provides for a complex, but rich and detailed, description of data when TA is utilised (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 78). Although TA does not require detailed technological and theoretical knowledge relevant to approaches, the specific theoretical position the particular study takes should be specified. This specification of theoretical position is crucial because certain assumptions about the nature of the data are brought forth with any given theoretical framework. Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight a few aspects that should be taken into consideration when engaging in TA in order to guarantee transparency with regard to these assumptions:

• The definition of a theme
According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), the researcher should specify what is understood by "theme" as different theoretical frameworks will also differ in this definition. Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) define a theme as "a specific pattern found in the data in which one is interested."   Braun and Clarke (2006: 82) emphasise that a theme reveals something important about the data in relation to the research question. They state that a theme is a representation of a patterned response or meaning within the data set that appears on a certain level. The main questions to answer, according to Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), are in terms of the size of a theme and what essentially counts as a theme.

Braun and Clarke (2006) further state that a theme should ideally appear several times across a data set. However, the frequency with which the theme appears is not necessarily an indication of its importance. There is also no standard or expected proportion of the data set that should contain the theme in order for it to count as a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). Because the advantage of flexibility is present, argue Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), there is no need for rigid rules in order to determine the theme. It is thus clear that it is required of the researcher to use their own judgement when determining the definition of a theme, but also to stay consistent during this process even though themes can be determined in various ways (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83).

• Inductive or deductive thematic analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 83), two primary categories for theme identification exist in TA, namely inductive thematic analysis or bottom-up approach and deductive thematic analysis or top-down approach. In an inductive TA, the themes link very strongly with the data and the anlysis can be said to be data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83). In contrast to the inductive TA, deductive TA draws themes from existing theoretical ideas brought to the data (Joffe & Yardley, 2004: 57). Inductive TA draws its themes from the raw data itself (Joffe & Yardley, 2004: 57) and a typical reading of the data will thus search for themes related to the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Deductive TA is driven by the researcher's analytical or theoretical interest and is thus also named Theoretical TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). One recurrent aspect will be chosen when doing deductive TA, and themes within this aspect will then be identified. This is a detailed analysis of the specific aspect and not a general description of the data-set (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). Braun and Clarke (2006: 83) continue that an inductive TA does not have a pre-existing coding frame and the research question evolves through the coding process while with the deductive TA, coding is done with the specific research question in focus.

Inductive TA as well as Deductive TA is implemented in the current study although the main focus falls on Deductive TA. The research aims to present more than only a general description of the data. Rather, themes that emerge from frequently appearing aspects will be explored.

- Semantic or latent theme

Braun and Clarke (2006: 84) are of the opinion that an important aspect to consider when doing a TA, is the level of the theme. There exist two levels on which a theme can be identified, namely semantic or explicit level and latent or interpretative level (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). On a semantic level, the theme is identified according to the "surface meaning" of the data. On a latent level, it is the underlying concepts and assumptions that mould the semantic content that are investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) agree with Braun and Clarke (2006) that two types of themes exist in TA. They refer to these types as "manifest content" and "latent level theme". Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) describe the manifest content of the data as the direct observation of an aspect in the data and latent level as an identification of a theme when an aspect is only implicitly referred to.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 84) continue that when a semantic theme is being developed, the researcher is not interested in any information beyond what the participant wrote or said. The opposite is true for a latent theme; the researcher has to do an in-depth interpretation of the themes in order to develop them. The analysis will thus not only be a mere description of the data but will, in essence, be a theorised version of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). It is important to note that at a semantic level, the analysis should not stop at description of what is said or wrote and that there has to be an element of interpretation of this as well (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) take a step further in this regard and state that there is always an element of interpretation when doing TA; even when the manifest theme is used, the latent meaning should be identified. The current study identifies semantic level themes as well as latent level themes.

- Realist or constructionist thematic analysis

In terms of epistemology, one can distinguish between realist TA and constructionist TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 85). Careful consideration should be given to what type will be utilised when doing TA. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 85), it is the research epistemology that leads the researcher in what to convey with regards to the data as well as the way in which to theorise meaning. With a realist TA, motivations, experiences and meanings are theorised in a plain, direct way because there is a natural relationship between meaning and experience and language (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 85). A constructionist thematic analysis strives to theorise sociocultural contexts and structural conditions which are

the sources of the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 85). This stems from the fact, as given by Burr (1995) in Braun and Clarke (2006: 85), that experience and meaning are socially produced as well as reproduced and not inherent in people. The constructionist TA is also mostly associated with latent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 85). The current study takes the approach of constructionist TA because it is interested in the contexts from which employees' responses are born.

3.3.1 Process

Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) suggest guidelines for doing a TA but Patton (1990) in Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) clearly states that these are not set rules and that flexibility should be entertained according to the specific research question. Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) propose six phases of TA: familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report.

A study done by Burnard (1991) made use of thematic content analysis to interpret interview data. The goal of the analysis was "to produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link the themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system" (Burnard, 1991: 461-462). The analytical process for this study includes fourteen stages and can be related to the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Burnard's (1991) analytical stages, however, is an extension of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases and provides a detailed description of the process. The stages are shortly provided as:

First stage: Interview process with note-taking.

Second stage: Reading of transcripts and making notes.

Stage three: Second reading of transcripts with headings or categories being formulated accordingly.

Stage four: Similar headings or categories are grouped together into broader categories. Dey (1993) in Joffe and Yardley (2004: 61) refers to this condensing of codes as "splicing".

51

Stage five: Filtering stage - removing of similar headings.

Stage six: Validity test: category systems are compared with the researcher's system and necessary modifications are made.

Stage seven: Transcripts are re-read in conjunction with the final list of categories. Adjustments are made where needed.

Stage eight: Coding according to the list of categories.

Stage nine: Coded sections are taken out of the transcript and grouped together. Here, Burnard (1991: 463) emphasises the importance of context with regards to coded sections. When a coded section is singled out, special care should be taken not to lose the meaning of the section in context.

Stage ten: Coded sections are placed under the applicable headings according to the category system.

Stage eleven: Validity check: respondents evaluate the appropriateness of the coded sections (as found in their own interviews) placed under the specific headings. Necessary modifications are made.

Stage twelve: All coded sections are filed together to keep as references for production of report.

Stage thirteen: Writing up process commences. Requires the researcher to produce a commentary that connects all the examples of coded sections that are found under one heading.

Stage fourteen: Deciding how coded sections and appropriate commentary will be connected to literature in order to present findings.

3.4 Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the linguistic turn in social science research and refers to the origins, organisational studies and limitations with implementation. As a method to investigate this linguistic turn, the origins of discourse analysis were discussed. Hereafter, the focus turned towards a specific form of discourse analysis as approached by James Paul Gee (1999). This focus included a description of Gee's (1999) approach and a variety of terminology as developed for this approach. Furthermore, the six building tasks, as proposed by Gee (1999), were discussed. Lastly, a description of the method of thematic analysis was provided. In the following chapter, more detail will be provided on how exactly Gee's (1999) discourse analysis and thematic analysis were implemented in the methodology of the current study.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

In this chapter, the methodological approach that was followed for the study at hand will be discussed. Aspects regarding the research design, research approach, procedures for data collection and data analysis will be elaborated on. A brief overview of the validity and credibility of the data will be presented. Finally, the details concerning ethical issues will be discussed.

4.1 Research design

This study lies within the interpretive paradigm, follows a qualitative approach and is identified as descriptive research. According to Neuman (1997) and Blaikie (1993) in Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 115), the three paradigms for approaching social science research are positivism, interpretive and critical. The interpretive paradigm differs from the rest in that it seeks to understand how individuals create meaning and make interpretations in their natural settings. The interpretive paradigm suits this study when measured against the five major difference areas between positivist and interpretivist identified by Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 116):

i) Role of the researcher: The interpretive researcher forms an integral part of the data while the positivist researcher is separated from the data for the sake of objectivity (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 116). In the current study, there is no single reality for the researcher and the concept of context is placed on the foreground. Moreover, the researcher is integrally part of the data since it is the researcher who personally interviews participants and interprets this data.

ii) Design: For interpretivist research, the design is dynamic but remains static for positivist research, being determined beforehand (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 116). The current study included interviews for data collection with the interview schedule only existing as a framework to guide the interview process. All the questions were thus not necessarily identical for each interviewee and the researcher adapted her approach to questions according to the particular interviewee in order to receive accurate responses.

54

iii) Setting: The interpretivist researcher conducts studies in the natural surroundings while positivist researchers conduct studies in controlled environments (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 116). In order to avoid disrupting the normal flow of activities, the data collection for the current study took place "in the field" at the newly merged company offices in a venue chosen by the participants.

iv) Measurement instruments: The interpretivist researcher is the instrument but the positivist researcher exists apart from the instruments (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 116). For the current study, the researcher did not rely on independent 'tests' or experiments but in a sense became part of the instruments, since all of the outcomes of the research are directly interpreted by the researcher.

v) Theory building: As part of the interpretivist research process, theories are developed. The positivist research process entails testing, supporting and rejecting theory (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 116). In the case of the current study, theories could be formulatedbased on the data.

The critical paradigm will not be discussed as it is relevant to areas such as political ideology and power distribution in society and thus is beyond the scope of this study.

A qualitative research approach was chosen because this study wanted to understand employers and their experiences within the specific context of a new organisational culture. Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 48) are of the opinion that qualitative researchers have the advantage to capture behaviour within a natural setting without any artificiality. Stangor (2011: 15) further confirms the selection of qualitative research approaches by stating that this type of research "is focused on observing and describing events as they occur, with the goal of capturing all of the richness of everyday behaviour…"

Furthermore, qualitative research was selected as a research design because, as proposed by Silverman (2008: 337), it is a significant contributor to the considerations of what the most effective ways of reaching goals for organisational stakeholders are. Silverman (2008: 326) identifies one of these contributors as "Qualitative social scientists' orientations to organisational complexity and holism". This study seeks to examine the reaction of

individuals and the impact on communication when placed in a new organisational culture. A qualitative research design will thus contribute by clarifying the social, cultural and structural contexts that are associated with the organisational problem (Silverman, 2008: 332; Keith, 2005: 141).   Although these clarifications are not necessarily quick solutions for organisational problems, the findings do have the potential to influence stakeholder discussions concerning improved management of continuous dilemmas.   In qualitative research, emphasis is placed on context and it is from this viewpoint that research for this study is being conducted (Silverman, 2008; Keith, 2005).

Two other contributors for organisational stakeholders' debates are also identified by Silverman (2008).   These entail qualitative researchers' standpoints for observing and analysing organisational processes as well as qualitative research's flexibility of design and focus on discovery. Silverman (2008: 328) describes how firstly organisational processes can be analysed by qualitative researchers from the inside dynamics and shed light on "possible unintended consequences of new policies and procedures."   If the existing process is not viewed from the inside, changes that initially seemed small-scale might have unintended and unexpected outcomes once implemented. The results of this study will thus potentially point out inside standpoints that are worthy to take into account for decision-making by outside observers of work processes. Keith (2005: 141) agrees with Silverman that qualitative data is gathered through attentiveness and "from the inside".

Secondly, qualitative research provides the space for research to be flexible, making it easier to react to and deal with "unanticipated opportunities that arise in the course of the research" (Silverman, 2008: 329). Because the research design has this flexibility, this study will have the potential to reveal meaningful information that might not seem relevant initially (Silverman, 2008: 329). Qualitative research designs hold the treasure of discovery. Without assuming that they already know what to expect, researchers embark on their journey of study and frequently end up uncovering new ideas and sources that were not anticipated. De Vos et. al. (2011: 312) confirms this characteristic of qualitative research and states that qualitative researchers generally create the research design according to the needs of the project.

A qualitative research design was not only chosen because of its immediate advantages for this type of study but also for what it potentially can reveal about the organisation that is studied and also within the wider field of intercultural communication.

4.2   Data collection

This section provides an overview of the instruments that were used for the data collection as well as the reasons for choosing the particular instruments. Details concerning the sample selection are also briefly discussed.

4.2.1   Data collection instruments

The primary instruments used for the data collection of this study were semi-structured individual interviews and an electronic survey questionnaire. Key questions were formulated into an interview schedule to serve as a framework for the interviews. This was only to keep focus of the main point of discussion as also noted by De Vos et al. (2011: 352). The data collection method comes to its justice specifically when participants freely elaborate on the questions and lead the researcher to greater depth of the topic that is being explored (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 48). The researcher took care to probe and guide interviewees by asking open-ended questions (De Vos et al. 2011: 352). The questions focussed on the employee's experience of the merger in terms of organisational communication and organisational culture and the way in which they conceptualise organisational communication currently. Semi-structured individual interviews were chosen as a data collection method because of their uniqueness in the following ways as described by Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 139):

- Space is given for lengthy observation of interviewees' nonverbal responses.
- Detailed background is provided for answers given by the interviewees and elaborated on in terms of opinions, values, motivations, experiences, feelings and recollections.
- Follow-up questions can be tailored to the specific interviewee.
- A 'wealth of detail' is gained from the interview.
- Accurate responses on sensitive issues are more probable.

All of the above mentioned aspects of the individual, in-depth interview prove this method to be applicable for use during the data collection of this study because it serves the purposes that the study set out to accomplish.

By interviewing the participants individually rather than in groups, the chances of participants influencing one another are eliminated and provides for accurate data. In Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 30), Rosenberg (1965) titles this phenomenon "evaluation apprehension" and it is described as follows: "Most people are hesitant to exhibit behaviour that differs from the norm and tend to follow the group even though they may totally disagree with the others." Wimmer and Dominick (2011) also identify evaluation apprehension as one of the sources from which artifacts (a possible but incorrect explanation of results) can arise and negatively affect the internal validity of the study.

Each interview was scheduled for forty-five minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher, but notes were taken also throughout each interview in order to ensure that all information was captured within the right context.

The second instrument that was implemented for data collection is an electronic survey questionnaire.   The questions centred on organisational culture and organisational communication and the way in which employees understand these within their company. The aim was to gather a general idea of how employees construct the concept of organisational communication. The survey questionnaire was compiled by using the digital software program, *SurveyMonkey.* Only 13 questions were included in an attempt to make the idea of participating more inviting for employees. Different kinds of questions were included in the survey ranging from multiple choice questions to rating questions as well as open-ended questions.

Lastly, a document analysis was done additionally to the interviews and electronic survey questionnaire. Documents that were analysed took the form of newsletters that included, amongst other information, written communication about the merger. The newsletters that formed the sample for this study were issued during the period of 2010 to 2012 and reached a total of twenty-one.

The implementation of triangulation as described above (utilising three data sets) leads to a broader understanding of the concept under study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 49).

4.2.2 Sample

Five participants were interviewed for this study and formed a nonprobability convenience, or available, sample that later took on a snowball sampling method. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 92), a convenience sample is a group of freely available and easy to reach subjects. The research required participants who had to deal with the organisational structure rearrangements in the company due to the merger. Most individuals that are currently employed at the newly merged company fit this description and a group of employees were suggested by the change consultant for interviewing. It was thus convenient to use this group to conduct the research and they fit the requirements perfectly. Although convenience samples are a valid method for sampling, it is critiqued for not having external validity because it does not accurately represent the population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 93, Stangor, 2011: 114). Originally, eleven employees were contacted for interviews, but only three employees responded to the request. This is not ideal for research purposes as a broader sample would have led to a more accurate representation of the population. This was, however, beyond the control of the researcher but is recognised as a limitation of the study. In addition, information provided by interviews with the change management consultant as well as the external auditor was used to add richer information about organisational processes and practices.

The survey questionnaire was e-mailed to sixty employees in order to cover a broad area of the population. This group was suggested at random by the organisational effectiveness communication officer. However, this selection is still identified as a nonprobability convenience sample and not as a probability simple random sample. Although the characteristic of a probability simple random sample that each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected was present (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 95), the applicable sample does not include mathematical guidelines for probability calculation which is the requirement for probability samples (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 89). Eighteen responses were received for the survey questionnaire.

The participants differed in gender, age and race. The only common factor was that all of them were directly involved in the organisational change situation of the analysed company.

4.3 Data analysis

The two main analytical tools that were used for the examination of the data is a combination of discourse analysis as approached by James Paul Gee (1999) and a thematic analysis. Discourse analysis embodies a fierce social constructivist viewpoint and is interested in how certain concepts came about (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 6, 8). It strives to discover the relationship between text, discourse and context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 6). Gee's (1999) approach to discourse analysis is specifically concerned with the context in which discourse occurs. For Gee (1999: 19, 20), discourse analysis does not exist in isolation but recognises the particular identities and activities that are present in the situation as well.

The current study is concerned with how the concept of communication is constructed by employees in a specific organisation that underwent a merger. The context in which this concept is constructed is thus of great importance to the research. Discourse analysis, and specifically Gee's (1999) approach, is consequently ideal for this investigation.

The second analytical tool, thematic analysis, is suited for the current study since the research aims are to identify certain recurrent, salient and absent themes regarding the construction of communication in the organisation. One of the research objectives is given as: "to investigate what the most prominent themes are that feature in the internal communication concerning the merger."

4.4 Validity and credibility of data

This study strives to have external validity which means that it would be possible to generalise the results to the wider population. Cook and Campbell (1979) in Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 31) suggest a procedure, that was implemented in this study as far as practically possible, to make external validity possible: "Select a sample that is representative of the group to which the results will be generalised."

Another suggested procedure is to replicate the study a number of times to ensure that the results apply to more than one type of subject (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011: 31). Although this might have added to the external validity of the research, there were time constraints that had to be taken into consideration for this study and thus this method could not be used.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 26), internal validity is when the study can be said to have genuinely investigated the research question. In order to achieve internal validity for this study, four sources from which artifacts can possibly arise, provided by Wimmer and Dominick (2011), have been considered. The sources are as follow:

i)   Psychological maturation

It is possible that the psychological characteristics of the interviewees could have changed over time in terms of their attitude toward the new organisational culture. It is taken into account that the merger took place several years ago and that employees could have grown accustomed with the new OC over the years. Their responses might have been different if it were recorded during the period that the merger took place.

ii)   Demand characteristics

Demand characteristics pertain to the subjects' knowledge of the experimental purpose influencing the way that they behave. Interviewees might be tempted to provide the "correct" answers instead of the truthful answers. One method to overcome this potential problem is by cross-validation, when the same question is asked in a different way. During the interview as well as survey questionnaire, careful attention has been given to this area.

iii) Experimenter bias

The researcher was cautious not to influence the results of the study by avoiding mistakes in observations, data recording and interpretations.

iv) Evaluation apprehension

The interviewees might have been afraid or anxious to be interviewed and hesitant to show behaviour that does not correlate with the norm. Instead, they will follow the rest of the group and false data will be provided. This has been dealt with by conducting individual interviews instead of making use of focus groups.

Audit trails, member checks and debriefing have been implemented as a way to build credibility for this study as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) in Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 123). Firstly, a permanent record of the original data was kept together with the researcher's notes. This audit trail gives others the opportunity to review the researcher's thought processes and check the accuracy of the conclusions. Secondly, member checks were performed by asking the interviewee whether the researcher understands what she was told. The notes might have been read back to the interviewee for this purpose. Lastly, debriefing occurred when an outside person who is not related to the research in any way, was asked to evaluate the meanings, methods and interpretations of the researcher.

4.5   Ethical clearance

The company studied gave permission for the collection of data from their employees. A signed letter from the organisational effectiveness communication officer of the company under study stated the approval of this study and granted it permission to continue (see Appendix C).

All of the participants were given letters of informed consent. The letter stated that participation in this study occurs on a voluntary basis and that each participant has the choice to withdraw at any given time during the process. It was also made clear that the participants will have the assurance of anonymity. Lastly, these letters briefly informs the participants about the goal and purposes of the study. All of the participants signed their letters, giving their informed consent.

This research was approved by a Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of the University of Stellenbosch (see Appendix D).

4.6 Summary

This chapter commenced with an overview of the research design with reference to the qualitative approach. Hereafter, a section on data collection included a discussion concerning the data collection instruments that were used in the current study as well as the sample applicable. An elaboration of the data analysis followed with the validity and credibility aspects of the study afterwards. Lastly, the valid ethical elements of this study were considered.

CHAPTER 5
Data analysis and findings

This chapter will serve as a presentation of the study's results as well as an analysis thereof. The discussion starts with a brief sketch of the background of the merger with regard to the communication channels that were used as the context forms a significant part of the analysis. Hereafter, the most prominent themes of the company's organisational communication which emerged after a thematic analysis will be discussed followed by a discourse analysis of the ways in which organisational communication and organisational culture in relation to the merging process are constructed. The thematic analysis will be triangulated with data from the surveys, interviews and newsletters. The discourse analysis will rely on Gee (1999), which holds that the context has an important place in the analysis process. Once again the discourse analysis will use triangulation by analysing all the different data sets. Lastly, a summary of the current study's main findings is presented.

For ease of reference, the research question and the research objectives of the study, as provided in Chapter 1, are presented here:

Research question:
How is the concept of written and spoken communication discursively constructed by a specific South African merged company?

Research aims and objectives:
- *To investigate what the most prominent themes are that feature in the company's organisational communication concerning the merger.*

- *To evaluate how the concept of organisational communication in the company is constructed in interviews with selected employees who were involved in the merger, in general by the organisation and in documents written by managers about the merger.*

- *To examine how organisational culture is constructed in communication concerning the merger.*

5.1 Background of merger: communication channels

When the news about the merger became known, various ways of informing employees about the change was used. One of these channels was newsletters. The company studied regularly distributes newsletters from management. These newsletters are sent to employees via e-mail and contain, amongst other information, communication about the merger. Twenty-one newsletters were studied for the purposes of this thesis, dating from April 2010 to December 2012 (the period when most of the communication about the merger occurred). These newsletters provide contextual information about the merger and will also be analysed. Because this study is concerned with the context in which discourse takes place, quotations from the newsletters have not been isolated to only provide the key words. In order to maintain the context of the written communication throughout, lengthy quotations are presented (Burnard, 1991: 463).

The contextual information above is derived from the individual interview with the change management consultant, the informal interview with the external auditor for this company, the organisational website, the interviews with employees and from the company newsletters. This context is important to consider, in relation to the thematic analysis of the data.

5.2 Thematic analysis of company's organisational communication for emergence of most prominent themes

A combination of the thematic analysis processes as proposed by Burnard (1991) and Braun and Clarke (2006) respectively (also found in Chapter 4) are used for the current study's data analysis. A brief description of the analysis process that was implemented follows.

In order for the researcher to become increasingly immersed in the data, as Burnard (1991) as well as Braun and Clarke (2006: 86) suggest, notes were taken as the data collection progressed, with repeated readings of these notes in accordance with the data. Headings and categories were identified from these texts whereafter similar ones were grouped together to form broader categories for more powerful codes (Joffe & Yardley, 2004: 61). This method of 'splicing' (Dey, 1993 in Joffe and Yardley, 2004: 61) resulted in categories like 'organisational culture' and 'information' to be developed. These categories were then used to code the interviews as well as the survey questionnaire with the result that themes started

to emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 86). These themes arose in the form of either semantic themes or latent themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 84), semantic themes are themes that can be identified on the 'surface level' of the data. Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) describe this type of theme as originating from the direct observation of an aspect in the data. A latent theme, on the other hand, is described as developing from underlying concepts that form the semantic content (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). Joffe and Yardley (2004: 57) agree that a latent theme investigates aspects in the data that are only implicitly referred to. The coded sections were copied into a separate document under the applicable category headings which now formed the main themes for this study. In this stage, consideration was given to keep as much of the original text as not to lose sight of the specific meaning within the context in which the discourse originally took place (Burnard, 1991: 463). For this purpose, large quotation sections are included. A commentary that links the coded sections under each theme is provided which is, in turn, linked to the literature.

After the thematic analysis was conducted, the following themes emerged, contributing to answering the first research objective that was given as*: to investigate what the most prominent themes are that feature in the company's organisational communication concerning the merger.*

5.2.1 Theme A: Communication as absent theme

A thematic analysis of the research data reveals that one recurrently absent theme is that of communication during a merger. In contrast to the literature (Invernizzi, Romenti & Fumagalli, 2012; Grunig, 1992 in Kitchen & Daly, 2002: 47; Goodman, 2001: 118) that indicates that communication is particularly important, the data shows that employee perceptions do not necessarily follow this pattern. During the process of employee interviewing, the concept of communication rarely featured and did not receive any emphasis, unless the topic was specifically initiated by the interviewer. Rather, aspects like structural changes and job descriptions were elaborated on.

Similarly, newsletters addressing the merger also made little mention of the organisational communication in the company during this change period. The few instances where communication was referred to in these documents concerning the merger are discussed below as emergent themes.

One possible way in which to explain this finding from an organisational theory perspective is to consider the idea of task-oriented versus people-oriented leaders. According to de Vries, Bakker-Pieper and Oostenveld (2010) in Men (2014: 266) task-orientated leaders are less communicative than people-orientated leaders. The absent theme of communication could be ascribed to this opinion when the assumption is made that employees are task-orientated rather than people-orientated individuals. By functioning as task-orientated individuals, these employees are not operating within a specially communicative-focused perspective (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010 in Men, 2014: 266).

Another possible way of understanding this trend is by reviewing the particular cultural model that exists around the concept 'communication'. Gee (1999: 81) states that cultural models link to one another and that this results in organised thinking and social practices within a sociocultural group. In this case, a cultural model could have been formed for 'communication' as a result of the social groups within the organisation or because of the organisational culture. It is possible that within the social practices that the individuals engage in, communication is not recognised as important and therefore is not discursively constructed as such. This could explain why the theme of communication is absent and not spontaneously introduced by the participants.

Recall that Gee's (1999: 85) discourse analysis presents six building tasks of which the second task is given as world building. According to Gee (1999), this is the "implementation of cues or clues to gather situated meanings about what is considered in the specific moment as reality, present and absent, concrete and abstract, 'real' and 'unreal', probable, possible and impossible (Gee, 1999: 85). With regard to the current finding of communication as an absent theme, world building takes place in terms of situated meanings that are gathered about that which is absent (Gee, 1999: 85) namely communication.

5.2.2. Theme B: Communication as a notable aspect of organisational effectiveness

Most interestingly, where the concept of communication was introduced in the interviews and survey questionnaire, the importance of organisational communication emerged as a relatively smaller yet prominent theme. A question posed to participants in the survey questionnaire was to rate the following statement on a scale of 0 (strongly disagree) to 5

(strongly agree): *Organisational communication is crucial for the effective functioning of an organisation.* The following graph illustrates the responses:
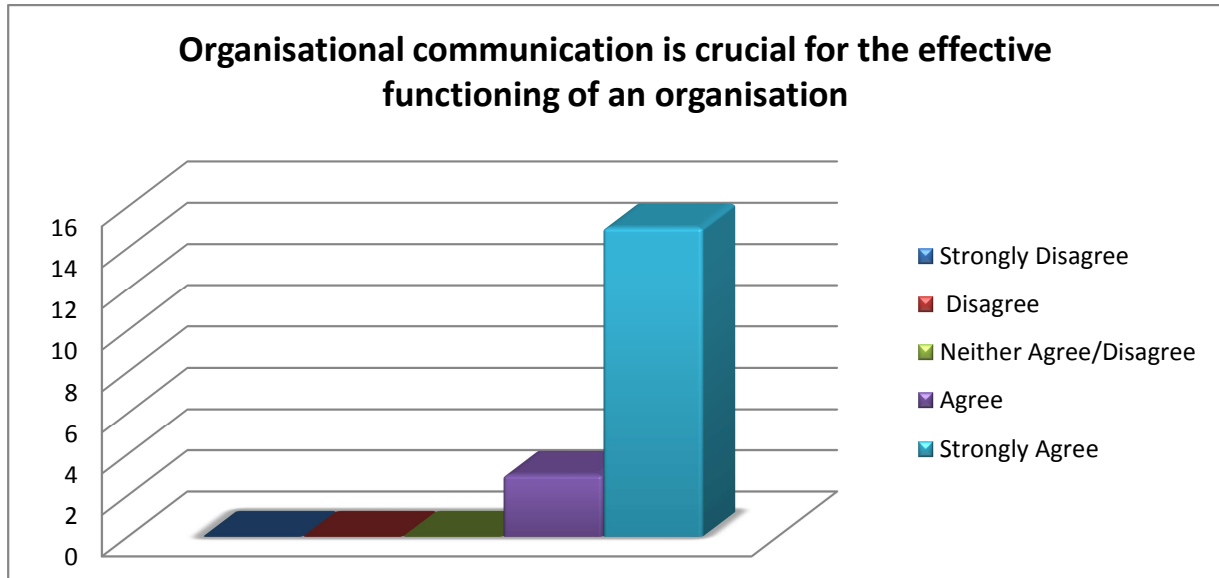

Fig. 1: Organisational communication is crucial for the effective functioning of an organisation.

Figure 1 illustrates that fifteen of the eighteen participants strongly agreed that organisational communication is important for organisations to functioning effectively while three of the eighteen participants agreed with this statement.

The interviews show a similar trend. Although participants would not talk about organisational communication spontaneously, they did recognise this concept as important when the researcher directed their attention toward it. An example from the interviews follows:

(i) **Interviewer:** "Did someone uhm from HR or something introduce this new culture to you? Or were you just kind of thrown into it and now you have to deal with it and don't know that okay I can't just go to… my boss and speak to him or her…uuhhm it's more… systematic than that?"

A lengthy answer about learning from one's colleagues follows this question where after the participant continued:

Participant B: "You have to be able to talk to people. If you don't talk to people, there's no communication. Without any communication (not clear). And I don't believe in the word failure (not clear) because there really is no (unclear) in the bigger picture. But … you need to communicate."

However, these examples still rarely feature in the interview data, which supports the first theme (that of communication being absent) discussed above.

The analysis of the newsletters shows a similar trend. Here, communication as a notable aspect of organisational effectiveness only emerged, as a latent theme, from two coded sections in the analysis, however. The two coded sections are provided:

Newsletter 10:

"So regardless of the delays, and provided we keep on communicating, collaborating and contributing, we'll be opening the windows of opportunity - sooner rather than later: no mountain will be too high for us, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too intimidating."

Newsletter 17:

"Merger communication,
In view of the vital importance of staff and customer communication, we had sight of all the material distributed to date and concluded that messaging had been regular, open and accurate. We made a firm commitment to ensure that the staff of both (Company A) and (Company B) would continue to be kept up to date on progress with the merger. In particular, we decided that staff should be informed about the main issues discussed at each of our meetings as soon as was practically possible and provided for by relevant legislation."

5.2.3 Theme C: Information channel

A semantic theme that emerges from the research data is, when organisational communication is mentioned, it is mainly identified as an information channel. One open-ended question in the survey, specifically addressed understandings of organisational communication. Participants were specifically required to state what they regard as the functions of 'internal communication' (see Appendix B). It is evident from the responses that participants regard internal communication mainly as a tool to distribute information to employees in the organisation. Key phrases when describing internal communication were amongst others: "informing and updating staff", "communicate all relevant information", "to communicate regular two-way company information" and "updating". The same trend could be recognised during the interviews. In the example below, Participant B speaks about communication during the merging process as if it is mainly fulfilling an information-sharing role:

(ii) **Participant B:** "There's there's a limited amount of information you can give to people. And it's not lying, it's not being deceitful. It's just that too much information, people tend to jump to conclusions, so you sometimes have to exclude information. And I guarantee at our level, information was excluded, but for a purpose, coz they knew it has to function at a hundred percent of whatever a hundred percent was. So they didn't tell us… stuff. And we knew that. Uhm… they were upfront about it and they they are better communication company, they really are."

Although Participant B explains an important aspect of communication during the change process, it comes across as if communication is exclusively aimed at information-sharing. During the rest of the interview, few instances occurred where communication was regarded as having other functions.

It is clear from the evidence that when communication is mentioned, it acquired a specific situated meaning for employees. According to Gee (1999: 48), situated meaning is "an image or pattern that we assemble 'on the spot' as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experiences". A possible situated meaning for 'communication' in this data can be given as: a channel to distribute information to the employee's benefit.

70

Furthermore, one could argue that this situated meaning could be gathered as a result of cultural models that exist within the organisation. Gee (1999: 81) defines cultural models as follows: "Cultural models 'explain', relative to the standards of the group, why words have the various situated meanings they do and fuel their ability to grow more." The way in which employees connect the word 'communication' to social or cultural groups determines the meaning of this word (Gee, 1999: 40). It could be possible that employees connect 'communication' to their organisational cultural or societal group which has moulded the specific understanding for the word as a channel to distribute information to the employee's benefit. Gee (1999: 81) further states that cultural models create the opportunity for situated meanings to grow. The situated meaning for 'communication' is thus flexible and has the potential to change and develop according to the dynamics of the social and cultural group.

5.2.4 Theme D: Relationship between organisational communication and organisational culture

The last theme that features in organisational communication concerning the merger is that organisational communication stands in relation to organisational culture. Employees make a definite link between organisational communication and organisational culture in both the survey questionnaire and the interviews. Table 2 can be constructed according to the responses of the survey questionnaire. Participants were asked to rate the following statement on a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree): *The type of organisational communication of a company is dependable on the organisational culture.*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3	*12*	*2*	*1*	*0*

Table 2: Type of organisational communication is dependent on organisational culture.

It is evident from Table 2 that the majority of the eighteen participants agree that the type of organisational communication implemented in a company is dependent on the organisational culture of the specific company. Employees thus make a link between organisational communication and organisational culture. Figure 2 further emphasises this idea. The survey

questionnaire required of the participants to rate the influence that a merger has on each area of organisational culture. Figure 2 shows the responses to this question.
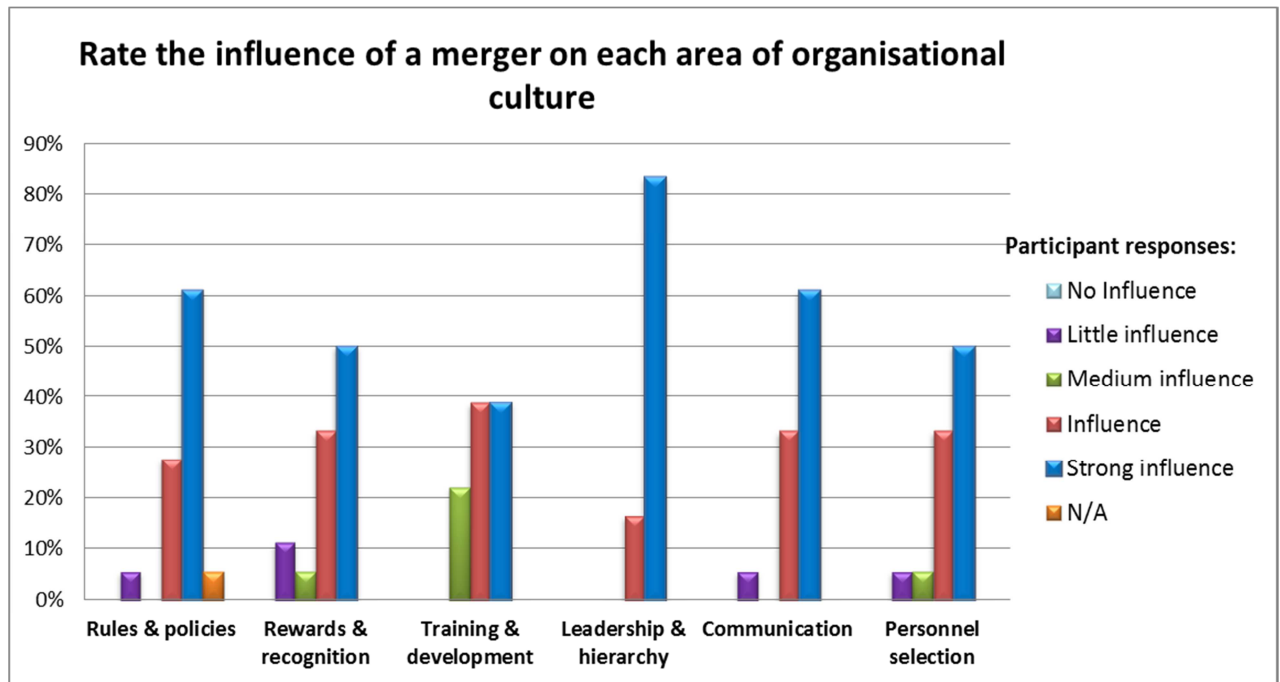

Fig. 2: Influence of merger on areas of organisational culture.

According to Figure 2, leadership and hierarchy are seen as the main areas that are influenced in the case of a merger. The area of communication follows in second place together with rules and policies. This shows that employees do recognise organisational communication as connected to organisational culture because they acknowledge the influence that merger integrations, and thus cultures, have on communication.

The theme also emerged during the interviews. Participant B speaks about how the two organisational cultures differ in terms of how the employees communicate with one another about work. It is given that the new culture of the organisation (after the merger) is less open in terms of communication involved with teamwork. The lack of open, honest communication between employee channels is addressed with reference to the organisational culture. The following serves as an example:

(iii)   **Participant B:** "There's a different… there's a different kind of aah ... ahh … and I know you used the word earlier and I'm thinking of (unclear) … it's like a culture …

in Company A. They're not as open as Company B and Company C[1] were. They're not as forthcoming. They're a little bit more protective. Uhh to give you an example – if you have to do a task or work, let's say for instance this… and until you get the credit for it, you keep it to yourself. That is how they work. So, if if if they do something, they hang on to it and nobody knows what they're doing. And to get information out of that kind of system is … very hard … It's a little bit more complicated dealing with that kind of culture."

(iv)   **Interviewer:**   "And I assume people also…feel no this is the way we do things…uhm…not the way you want it to be done because we've always done it like this."

Participant: "Ja, there is that."

Interviewer: "Is that happening?"

Participant B: "That will happen. It depends again how open you are and how good communication is."

The interviewer refers to organisational culture in the first line of extract (iv). Participant B recognises that there is a link between organisational culture and communication when he says that organisational culture depends on how "open" and "good" communication is.

5.2.5 Theme E: Changing communicative directions

A number of themes which are not evident in the interviews or surveys become evident in the newsletters. In Newsletter 1, the management expresses their awareness of employees' uncertainty regarding merger processes. Clarity is provided in terms of these uncertainties in a way that implies that further organisational communication about this matter will occur from the management to the employees. The latent theme of a 'one-way communicative direction or policy' is present here. The text brings it to the employees' attention that a one-way communication will be available to them for explanatory purposes. However, the

---

[1] Recall that Company C was the organisation that Company A merged with in 1999.

newsletter is not constructed in such a way as to offer employees access to bring queries of uncertainty to management so that a two-way communication is possible. Although the newsletters that followed the current one, repeatedly presented this idea, the theme, however, evolved as the merger progressed. Organisational culture can now be constructed as a 'two-way communicative direction or policy' where employees are invited to ask questions and share in the task to develop a new name for the company.

The following phrases were coded for this theme:

Newsletter 1:

> "Each divisional CEO will also be encouraged to communicate with the staff members of the division about specific matters of interest to the particular division."

> "You have the (management) commitment that we will deal with the transition in a well-considered and fair manner, and will communicate openly with staff in this regard."

From here, the theme starts to evolve into a two-way communicative direction or policy.
Newsletter 5:

> "If you have any queries or concerns, please liaise directly with the human resources departments in your division."

Newsletter 12:

> "Remember to continue sending questions or comments to (Company B's) merger email address or post them to the (Company A) merger site…"

Newsletter 15:
A copy of an employee's question and the management's answer to this, is given here.

> "Q. If the renaming is essential, will staff be consulted and will they be able to make suggestions?

74

A.   The competition for staff of (Company A) and (Company B) to submit names for (Merged Company) was launched on Friday 23 April and the response to date has been extremely enthusiastic. Despite the fact that we are a financial services group, we clearly have numerous imaginative people and visionary thinkers in our employ – keep the creativity flowing! Remember that the winning staff suggestions will enjoy equal consideration along with the proposals put forward by the advertising agencies that have been briefed in this regard."

"Both leadership and staff will play a pivotal role in creating the culture that will underpin the essence of who and what we are aiming to become."

Newsletter 17:

"The process to decide on a new name for the merged entity was also discussed and it was once again agreed that the results of the staff competitions (which closed yesterday, 6 May), will be combined with the proposals received from branding agencies before a final decision is made."

"Regular feedback will remain on top of my agenda so please don't hesitate to carry on asking any questions you may have about the proposed merger whenever the opportunity presents itself, bearing in mind that the Q&A section on (intranet) is always available to you."

Newsletter 19:

"Please continue posting merger-related questions and comments on (intranet) – and I'll continue to do my best to respond…"

It is clear that the communication processes change over time. This theme will be returned to in the more in-depth discourse analysis that will follow.

75

5.2.6 Theme F: Clear communication

A latent theme that emerges from the newsletter data is that the management of the company strives to maintain clear, unambiguous communication. This is evident in the manner that the management deals with external parties involved in the merging processes. Consequently, organisational communication in the company is constructed in these documents about the merger as clear and unambiguous.

Several phrases were coded for this theme:

Newsletter 2:

> "… (Merged Company) approached the Competition Tribunal for clarification regarding the conditions imposed by them on the merger, relating specifically to the definition of retrenchments and a consistent definition of senior management."

Newsletter 9:

> "We do, however, have the complexity, as previously communicated, that certain aspects of the conditions set by the tribunal are not clear. For example, the definition of senior management is ambiguous and what is included in the definition of retrenchments is not explicit."

> "We have decided to approach the tribunal directly for clarity in respect of a number of key issues."

> "Once the uncertain matters have been clarified, we will be able to plan properly for the integration process."

Newsletter 12:

> "In today's hearing we hope to obtain clarity on the definition of retrenchments as well as a consistent definition of senior management, as well as the reasons for the

Competition Tribunal's decision. The feedback from the hearing will inform our approach to the appeal.

Newsletter 14:

"Now that we have clarity on the three issues of concern to us (the definition of senior management; voluntary retrenchments and redeployments within the group), we are confident that we will still be able to attain our business goals."

The thematic analysis provided an idea of general patterns and trends that emerged from the data. A discourse analysis will however provide more insight.

5.3 Discourse analysis: context and situated meanings

The specific context of the discourse under study is of particular importance in Gee's (1999) analytical theory. According to Gee (1999: 19), discourse cannot be understood in isolation or with set boundaries around it. Gee (1999: 53) refers to "situated meaning" as a means to understand language within a given context better. In order to consider all that can be extracted from a context that a language is used in, Gee (1999: 53) suggests four questions to be considered. The following four questions are taken directly from Gee (1999: 53).

- What specific, situated meanings can reasonably from the point of view of the Discourse in which these words are used, be attributed to their "author"?

- What specific, situated meanings can reasonably from the point of view of the Discourse in which these words are used, be attributed to their "receiver(s)" (interpreter(s))?

- What specific, situated meanings can be reasonably from the point of view of other Discourses than the one in which the words were uttered or written (Discourses which would or do bring different values, norms, perspectives, and assumptions to the situation), be attributed to actual or possible interpreters from these other Discourses?

77

- What specific, situated meanings can reasonably from the point of view of the Discourse in which these words were used or of other Discourses, be assumed are potentially attributable to these words by interpreters, whether or not we have evidence that anyone actually activated that potential in the current case?

In this section, Gee's (1999) theory, with reference to situated meanings, context and the historicity (or connection building between texts) will be implemented in order to investigate the data. Whereas the thematic analysis identified recurrent trends, the discourse analysis adds more depth. Firstly, the discourse analysis shows *how* discursive constructions of concepts were created and it also points out contradictions, which cannot so easily be seen through the thematic analysis. A section from the second research objective namely "to evaluate how the concept of communication is constructed in interviews with selected employees who were involved in the merger" is answered here.

5.3.1 Constructing the concept of communication

From the discourse analysis, various constructions of the concept, 'communication' was observed. A number of examples from the data will be presented and analysed here.

(v)   **Participant A:** "Every second week they came down for two days. A whole team of them. At least six of them. And then we had like two full days of meetings, planning, workshops, whether we were talking about HR issues … and retrenchment … and people … or whether we were talking about the system … and what we were doing … and we were having all kinds of deadlines and … sending the data backwards and forwards in the early stages for the early testing and things like that. That definitely helped. We had very good communication. And we used to have regular conference calls."

The participant refers here to communication during the initial phases of the merger. Sometimes communication is mentioned explicitly (e.g. "we had very good communication"), and at other times communication or practices that entails communication are referred to more implicitly. For example, practices such as "meetings, planning, workshops" which rely on communication are mentioned without reference to communication. In other examples, the participant uses verbs (such as talking) that are

associated with communication. Organisational communication (when explicitly mentioned) is explained by participant A as "very good". The situated meanings for the word "good" are limitless and therefore the context in which the word appears must be considered. Participant A constructs organisational communication as positive. "Very good" in this context entails regular communication, a variety of communication and thorough communication. Reference is also made to the fact that this sort of communication was helpful during the change process: "That definitely helped."

(vi)   **Participant B**: "We were able to communicate. So we would've talked in our group. We would've been upfront about it and said this is how we feel about it… but that's okay, we will still get the job done."

The way communication is constructed in the extract above is talk that is happening in a group. The situated meanings that can be gathered, can range from formal meetings to social gatherings to conspiring. However, within the specific context of the sentence, the situated meaning can be formed as talk amongst colleagues that involves sharing feelings and mutual supporting. This is assumed from the phrase: "We would've been upfront about it and said this is how we feel about it…but that's okay, we will still get the job done."

(vii)   **Participant B:** "They were upfront with us. Which was nice. They told us that there would be no … or actually (not clear) retrenchments … but then there wouldn't be … They gave us enough leeway and they gave us HR consulting. So they did, like … take care of the human resource part."

Communication is constructed by participant B as an activity that was presented in an upfront manner. However, the word "upfront" should be understood in the correct context. Situated meanings for the word "upfront" can be understood as an individual communicating to someone in a blunt, direct or frank manner. Alternatively, it can have a situated meaning that can be understood as an individual that communicate to someone in an honest, truthful and sincere manner.   The context in this case, however, shows that the nature of the communication was positive - participant B refers to the communication as "was nice". Therefore, the situated meaning for "upfront" can be a way of communicating in an honest, truthful and sincere manner.

(viii)   **Participant B:** "Even though we didn't know everything, it's a tough…tough call both ways – from the top and the bottom. There's … there's a limited amount of information you can give to people. And it's not lying, it's not being deceitful. It's just that too much information, people tend to jump to conclusions, so you sometimes have to exclude information. And I guarantee at out level, we … information was excluded, but for a purpose, coz they knew that it has to function a hundred percent of … whatever a hundred percent was. So they didn't tell us … stuff. And we knew that. Uhm they were upfront about it and they … they are a better communication company, they really are."

In the above extract, the concept of communication is constructed as taking a certain form with regard to informing employees about something. Several situated meanings can be gathered in this instance: management or bosses informing employees in terms of work instructions, information-sharing amongst employees or employees reporting back to management. The context that is, however, dealt with here, implies that this information-sharing concerns the management or change management consultants informing employees about the structural, managerial, cultural, policy (or whatever may be the case) changes that the merger entails. Further, the way in which employees are being informed about these changes are referred to as "limited amount of information", "not lying", "not being deceitful", "exclude information" and "they didn't tell us". The situated meaning within the context can be gathered that information about the merger was excluded for certain honest purposes. The way in which organisational communication is thus constructed in this case is information-sharing from the management to the employees about merger changes in a manner that excludes certain information without deceiving the receivers.

(ix)   **Participant B:** "Where at least with Company B there was…structured…"

  Interviewer: "Because of the open communication?"

  Participant B: "Definitely."

  Interviewer: "It was better?"

Participant: "Definitely. And as I say, open communication is not always a hundred percent fully (unclear) communication… There have to… (unclear) be something to judge that."

A variety of situated meanings can be gathered concerning the word "structured". This word can refer to the company's physical office layout, a specific leadership style or even policy organisation. However, when the context is taken into consideration, it is evident that the participant is referring to the general way that the organisation is managed. The participant links this idea to an open communication style and it can be assumed that the concept of communication is constructed as having a strong influence on the organisation's management.

When asked to describe communication in terms of reporting to managers, participant C elaborates below on the technical aspects of reporting lines. The ending of his elaboration is provided as starting point in order to maintain the context in which the speech takes place:

(x)   **Participant C:** "So I'm reporting to two executives at the moment… So it is a little bit complicated from that point of view. I mean the reporting lines are … there are formal ones … but a lot of them … ja … isn't that formal. Depends on the person I'm reporting to."

Interviewer: "But that doesn't depend on the specific culture…necessarily? It's more about the personality of the person?"

Participant C: "Ja"

The participant does not construct communication, in terms of reporting lines, as being dependent on the organisational culture. Rather, this form of communication is linked to "the personality of the person". Situated meanings for the word "person" in the sentence, "Depends on the person I'm reporting to", can take many potential forms. The participant can, for example, refer to an employee from a specific organisational culture or possibly to a manager that has a specific personality. When the context is taken into consideration, the participant can be understood to refer to the latter situated meaning because of the interviewer's clarifying question, "But that doesn't depend on the specific

81

culture…necessarily? It's more about the personality of the person?" on which the participant answered positively.

(xi)   **Participant C:** "I think it's being standardised a lot more. Uhm because from a group point of view (unclear) their communication strategy uhm and they've got certain things… I think where they were different when they first merged, I think they are being brought aligned that certain letters will go out. So, you know, the letters that are coming out from the CEO, (management), comes in a certain format and that's tending to be then communicated even if coming from a lower level now. … So yes, you still get a Company A branded internal newspaper (unclear) today and you get the Company B one, which is their one but a lot of the format (unclear) is starting to look like each other. So there is influence there in terms of how the communication will start to happen."

Written communication, and in this example, newsletters or any other forms of letters, is constructed by participant C as being relatively "standardised" after the merger. The situated meaning for the word "standardised" in this particular context, can be assumed as: A set way of compiling these letters instead of the two different ways in which it was compiled by each company individually before the merger. The context further suggests that the participant is constructing this form of organisational communication as dynamic and prone to change: "…how the communication will start to happen".

5.3.2 Constructing the concept of organisational culture

A number of examples from the data will be presented and analysed here to show how the concept 'organisational culture' was discursively constructed.

Recall (iii):

Participant B: "There's a different… there's a different kind of aah ... ahh … and I know you used the word earlier and I'm thinking of (unclear) … it's like a culture … in Company A. They're not as open as Company B and Company C were. They're not as forthcoming. They're a little bit more protective. Uhh to give you an example – if you have to do a task or work, let's say for instance this… and until you get the credit for it, you keep it to yourself.

82

That is how they work. So, if if if they do something, they hang on to it and nobody knows what they're doing. And to get information out of that kind of system is … very hard … It's a little bit more complicated dealing with that kind of culture."

Participant B is constructing the idea of organisational culture in Company A in the excerpt above as "forthcoming" and "protective". Different situated meanings are possible for these words, but taking the context of the whole excerpt into consideration, it is evident that the organisational culture is constructed as reserved regarding the work that employees do and information linked to this. The employees are "closed" and almost "secretive" in terms of discussions about their work.   The culture is further described by participant B as "complicated". A situated meaning within the given context can be that it is harder to function within, engage with or interact in Company A's culture, than it is in Company B's culture.

(xii)   **Participant B**: "I don't know, I just think they got a better culture. I think they've got a more…they they they do it, they go out there and get it done. Uhhm and we're like that, we we we mesh with that, it's like (unclear)… we do things in the same way, if we need to get things done, we get it done. It's like, if we need to get something done and some menial task had to be done, it wasn't like it was below us. It it had to be done. I might only have to do the menial task for a week, a month, but it had to be done."

The participant is constructing the organisational culture of his company as similar to the organisational culture of Company C. He states that Company B has a "better" culture. The different situated meanings that can be gathered for this word are limitless but in the context of the speech, "better" is referring to the way work is approached. Organisational culture is constructed as completing work tasks efficiently, effectively and completely.

(xiii)   **Participant A: "**Company A is very old-fashioned and slow to make a decision…okay… and in Company A there is a culture of ruling by fear. And there's also kind of a like…accountability story. … Nobody wants to take the blame for anything, so they pass it down the line or up the line and no decisions ever get made. That is the problem in this culture."

In the extract above, the participant is explaining the organisational culture in Company A as "old-fashioned", "slow to make a decision", "ruling by fear", "accountability" and "no decisions ever get made". Various situated meanings can be gathered for these words but the specific context of these sentences confirms that the culture is being constructed in a way that suggests difficulty because of the phrase "That is the problem in this culture".

(xiv)   **Participant B:** "Company A is an old ... old … ugh, it's like a sloth. … It's like wading through sludge trying to get something done in this company. … The company itself has got a big break. It's just…inside it you tend to fight a lot more. Culture. And I'm probably feel … kind of like it's been bred that way. I'm not saying all the people when they started off were like that but it's gone towards that."

Participant B is using the word "sloth" in the above excerpt. Situated meanings for the word "sloth" here, could be that the company physically resemble the appearance of a sloth. Another situated meaning could be that the company's organisation is inactive. It could, however, also gather the situated meaning that the pace with which the company operates is compared to a sloth because these animals are known to live and function at an extremely slow pace. In the specific context of the passage, this latter situated meaning is applicable. A metaphor ("…wading through sludge trying to get something done…") is additionally used to strengthen the situated meaning. The participant constructs the company's organisational culture as slow and outdated. This is further confirmed when the participant mentions the singular word "culture" later in the passage.

A second way in which the concept of organisational culture is constructed in the example above, is as dynamic and developing over time. This is supportive by the context in which the sentence appears: "Culture. And I'm probably feel … kind of like it's been bred that way. I'm not saying all the people when they started off were like that but it's gone towards that." There is an element of change, movement and development present in this sentence. Participant C also constructs organisational culture as dynamic and developing over time:

(xv)   **Participant C:** "The way Company A was doing things is kind of dying out and it's going to be … changed as … as senior executives start to … (unclear) retire or whatever it is. The way things are done is going to change."

84

Even though participant C does not identify transition as a change in organisational culture, the context in which the sentence appears ("The way things are done") makes it clear that the participant is indirectly referring to organisational culture and constructing it as dynamic and able to show development over a period of time. This construction of culture, as provided by the participants, resonates with the literature in Chapter 2 where Kilmann et al. (1985) in McCarthy (1998: 178) refers to "a mosaic of organisational culture" when describing organisational culture as changeable and flexible.

(xvi)   **Participant C**: "The cultures are very different. Uhm. By, by moving across onto the Company B's side of things … I think…the team that I was running, had come in from (other companies) and we we were operating fairly independently from a lot of the others… uhm Company A spaces anyway... and our culture was a lot more, probably, aligned to the sort of way that Company B does things. Now, yes it was a bit of a culture change when they came in. Whenever you bring two organisations together there's… you know… change in culture."

The way in which participant C constructs organisational culture with regard to the merger is as "culture change". Situated meanings for "culture change" can be endless, but within this context, the situated meaning is rather a transformation of both cultures with the establishment of a third culture. Third culture is defined by Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989: 294) in Lee (2006: 254) as follows (also found in Chapter 2):

"In the conjoining of their separate cultures, a third culture, more inclusive than the original ones, is created, which both of them now share. Third culture is not merely the result of the fusion of the two or more separate entities, but also the product of the harmonization of composite parts into a coherent whole."

(xvii)   **Participant C:** "The difference in the culture is… Company B almost… delegate more… responsibility. Whereas Company A have got more of a uhm… maternalistic view of…the management structure. So, so, it's a case of… if you take the top (management) has a way he wants (unclear) to see things done. Uhm. And everybody must give it to him exactly that way. Whereas someone like Company B they will say I want you to do this and they'll leave you to do it (unclear) the way you want to ... and give you the freedom to operate in that space as long as you deliver the

same…uh…results in terms of the thing. And they'll give you the freedom to go and try something and… if it doesn't… quite work a hundred percent, well that's fine. But at Company A … (management) says do this and everyone rushes off to go and do that ... and he might just change his mind and then he'll just issue another command and the next person must then go and oh oh okay (unclear) change and then we change and then we change and it's because they all just want to do exactly what he says because if they don't do exactly what he says, then it…it's going to…you know… come back and bite you. So…I think that's where you not getting the freedom of responsibility in terms of it could be handed down."

In the above excerpt, the participant explains the differences in organisational cultures between Company A and Company B with regard to management structures. The organisational culture of Company A is constructed as maternalistic while the organisational culture of Company B is constructed as one where responsibility is regularly delegated. The situated meaning for "maternalistic" can be "caring", "motherly", "protective" or "monitoring" amongst others. When the context is taken into account, it is evident that Company A is compared to Company B and Company B's management structure is given as more freedom-orientated than Company A's management structure. The word "maternalistic" can thus have a situated meaning that refers to "striving to perfect work tasks precisely in a mechanistic way in order to remain within the management's exact requirements and avoiding the possible negative consequences thereof."

5.4 The historicity of discourse: intertextuality and interdiscursivity

One theoretical tool proposed by Gee (1999: 54) that can add depth to the analysis is that of intertextuality which he describes in the following way: "Words have histories. They have been in other people's mouths and on other people's pens. They have circulated through other Discourses and within other institutions. They have been part of specific historical events and episodes. Words bring with them as potential situated meanings all the situated meanings they have picked up in history and in other settings and Discourses."

This idea of Gee (1999) is manifested in the company where interviewees are constantly contrasting Company A and Company B in terms of management, culture, structure and communication. Because of certain discourses known to them, the communicative practices

in Company A are understood as 'different' or even wrong compared to their own. Interviewees draw on history and prior organisational discourse to position their experiences of discoursal practices, also forming a cultural model because interviewees perceive their specific ways as the 'norm' (Gee, 1999: 59). This is being highlighted by the use of metaphors in the interviews. Consider example (xiv) again:

Participant B: "Company A is an old ... old … ugh, it's like a sloth. … It's like wading through sludge trying to get something done in this company…"

According to Gee (1999: 57) an important question can be asked concerning this type of intertextuality: What if the discourse practices in Company A had a different meaning which was more positive? The reaction from interviewees might have then been different and they might consider their own communicative practices as too rushed and over-achieving. However, participants selected, as Gee (1999: 54) proposes, the potential situated meaning they "have picked up in history and in other settings and Discourses."

Intertextuality is also visible in the written communication of the company, specifically the newsletters. Referring back to the example in section 5.2.5 found earlier in this chapter, a progression is evident where communicative practices are evolving from one-way communication (from previous texts) to more open and encouraged two-way communication. Communicative discourses are taking on another form than previous texts did. The following example from the interviews further displays this idea of intertextuality where communicative practices initially were very restricted:

(xviii) **Participant A:** "When they started … when they started flying down…the Company B people were coming to (South African town) … So … firstly when they came down … we weren't allowed to talk to them directly. We all … we had to deal only through project managers and things like that. Then eventually it became ridiculous. You know like why must I tell you something to tell that person when I could talk to that person and we would be on the same wave length?"

Both examples show the 'development' of the communicative discourse practice as identified by Gee (1999: 55) when he argues that words (or discourses in this case) carry meaning from history and is constantly changing and gaining more situated meanings. Even the relative

87

absence of the concept of communication is significant and reveals information about the historicity of discourse and practices within the organisation. Woolard (1999: 5) cites Derrida (1974: 70) who argues that absent signs are "equally present through intertextual chains of signification".

Additionally, in both the interviews and in the newsletters, participants make use of other discourses to make sense of particular concepts or processes. The interview participants used metaphors to refer to the different ways in which the companies that formed the merged company communicated (e.g. "like a sloth"). This process of explicitly drawing on other discourses is often referred to as 'interdiscursivity'. Bhatia (2010: 33) claims that interdiscursivity in organisations is "the function of appropriation of generic resources, primarily contextual in nature, focusing on specific relationships between and across discursive and professional practices as well as professional cultures". In examples from the newsletters, interdiscursivity (Bhatia, Langton & Lung, 2004: 204) is used as a means to motivate and assure employees.

Newsletter 10:

> "So regardless of the delays, and provided we keep on communicating, collaborating and contributing, we'll be opening the windows of opportunity - sooner rather than later: no mountain will be too high for us, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too intimidating."

Newsletter 15:

A copy of an employee's question and the management's answer to this, is given here.

> "Q. If the renaming is essential, will staff be consulted and will they be able to make suggestions?
>
> A.   The competition for staff of (Company A) and (Company B) to submit names for (Merged Company) was launched on Friday 23 April and the response to date has been extremely enthusiastic. Despite the fact that we are a financial services group, we clearly have numerous imaginative people and visionary thinkers in our employ –

88

keep the creativity flowing! Remember that the winning staff suggestions will enjoy equal consideration along with the proposals put forward by the advertising agencies that have been briefed in this regard."

Bhatia (2010: 34) states that "it seems increasingly more obvious now than ever before that textual as well as other semiotic resources and conventions at various levels of professional engagement are appropriated and exploited for the construction and interpretation of discursive as well as disciplinary practices". In the examples above from the newsletters, an inspirational discourse is utilised which is more likely associated with a motivational or inspirational speaker than with a top-management insurance professional. It is clear that these discourses are drawn for the specific discoursal practice of motivation.

5.5 Summary of key findings

Five key findings are presented by this study that ultimately answers the research question. The first and most prominent finding is the absence of communication in the organisation. All three data sets strongly presented this result. The literature indicates the importance of organisational communication, especially in a merger context. In contrast, the current study does not reflect this importance in practice. A cultural model is singled out here where the social practices and organisational culture might have influenced this absent status of communication.

The second finding is that only selected communicative practices are considered as 'communication' and therefore a mechanistic view of communication is adopted by the employees. The analysis reveals that organisational communication is primarily identified as an information distributing channel with few variations from this narrow scope. Communicative practices such as employee enablement, corporate social responsibility, performance assessment or community of practice are not included in the construction of 'organisational communication'. This finding resonates with the literature presented in Chapter 2 stating that one of the perspectives of communication in organisational studies is identified as a 'mechanical perspective'. This is described as a linear model that transmits messages from a sender to a receiver (Mazzei, 2014: 220), emphasising a one-way communication approach as evident in the data.

Thirdly, a definite difference is evident between the two merging companies in terms of the manner in which they operate and communicate. Company A is mainly perceived as having an old-fashioned organisational culture that is slow in decision-making and exhibits reserved and restricted communication. Company B, by contrast, draws employees into a good, open communication structure and thus presents an organisational culture that is dynamic and fast-paced in especially decision-making. It is further assumed that the restrictive communication style of Company A had a strong influence on its type of organisational culture while Company B's open communication style had a strong influence on its dynamic culture. It is thus not only necessarily the organisational culture that determines the organisational communication but also the communication style that can shape the organisational culture.

It was fourthly found that some reference is made to the influence that an organisational culture has on a company. Employees do recognise that organisational culture was present in both companies before the merger but also in the newly merged company. The emergence of a developing third culture is also noted by employees even though there is not directly referred to this as a 'third culture' or even as a 'new culture'.

Lastly, this study found that changing communicative practices are evident in the company under study based on the idea of intertextuality (Gee, 1999). Because words (and discourses in this case) are influenced by the history of other discourses, it embodies multiple meanings of which only some are applicable ina certain discourse situation. As the company in this study progresses with the integration, discoursal practices are developing and being transformed into new discoursal practices according to the combination of Company A and Company B. The way in which organisational communication was initially constructed by each company is now changing with regards to the newly merged company. This is portrayed in oral as well as written communication such as newsletters where the use of interdiscursivity (Bhatia, 2010), amongst others, appears.

Tracing the history of the discourse therefore reveals change over time, which indicate that change is an inherent characteristic of organisations and that processes such as mergers just heighten and intensify change.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, a link is created between the literature and the results in the form of a data analysis and findings discussion. The research objectives, which serve as building blocks for the research question, were constantly referred to. In order to provide more background for the context in which this study took place, a brief overview of the company under study was provided in terms of the communication channels during the merger. Utilising Gee's (1999) approach to discourse analysis as well as a thematic analysis, the data was explored in order to gain insight with regard to the research question. Main themes emerged from the thematic analysis and served as an answer to the first research objective. The data was further investigated by implementing Gee's (1999) discourse analysis where special reference is made to the context and situated meaning of words. A segment of the second research objective as well as the third research objective were answered here. Lastly, a summary of the main findings of this study was provided.

CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how the concept of written and spoken organisational communication is discursively constructed by a certain merged South African merging company. The research objectives were stipulated as follows:

- To investigate what the most prominent themes are that feature in the company's organisational communication concerning the merger.

- To evaluate how the concept of organisational communication in the company is constructed in interviews with selected employees who were involved in the merger, in general by the organisation and in documents written by managers about the merger.

- To examine how organisational culture is constructed in communication concerning the merger.

These research objectives were the means by which the research question was answered.

As the context is of particular importance in this study, the theoretical framework of James Paul Gee's (1999) discourse analysis was selected to analyse data. A second analytical tool was also implemented for this study namely thematic analysis whereby the most prominent themes in the organisational communication of the company emerged. The main findings of this study are summarised in the last section of Chapter 5 and are provided here as follows:

- The concept of communication is found to be an absent theme in the organisation. Reference is only made to communication when the researcher draws attention to this idea.

- Only selected communicative practices are considered as 'communication' and consequently a mechanistic view of communication is adopted by employees.

- There is a definite difference between the two merging companies with regard to the way in which communication and culture are approached. It is found that it is not only necessarily the organisational culture that determines the organisational communication; the communication style can also shape the organisational culture.

- Some reference is made, although not explicitly, to the influence that an organisational culture has on a company.

- Changing communicative practices are evident in the company under study based on the idea of intertextuality.

The main theoretical contributions of this study are firstly the finding that theory regarding mergers is not necessarily implemented in the workplace. Secondly, the study has also pointed to *change* as a focus of research as this seems to be an inherent characteristic of organisations. In fact, stability and order might be an aberrant phenomenon within organisations; by focusing on the discourse within an organisation, the dynamic qualities of organisations become more apparent.

6.1 Limitations

During the course of this study, several limitations presented that were unforeseen by the researcher. These limitations are described below:

Initially eleven individuals were approach to participate in the interviewing process excluding the change management consultant and the external auditor. However, only three employees accepted the request for interviews which resulted in a total of five interviews for this study. This sample size is not ideal as a larger sample will lead to increased generalisability of the research results, which is not possible in this study. Although this might be viewed as a limitation of the study, it does, however, strengthen the argument that the company under study is not orientated in terms of organisational communication.

Selecting the participants for the interviews via the snowball effect resulted in a research sample that was not particularly diverse. A snowball sample is selected where participants

93

are referred or recommended to the researcher by one another (Wimmer & Dominick, 2001: 94). The lack in sample diversity can also be ascribed to the limited, random acceptance of interview invitations which decreased the probability for diversity. This limitation further contributed to a sample that is not representative of the population.

Another limitation for this study was that the peak time of the merger of the analysed company was 2011 to 2012 while this research was conducted in 2013 to 2014. It is possible that the activities regarding the merger were no longer as clear in the employees' minds as they were during the actual period of the merger. Recollections and perspectives might have changed over time that could have resulted in less accurate results.

6.2 Practical recommendations

Organisations are urged to consider the findings in this research and to evaluate their own approach to and application of organisational communication in their companies.

This research suggests that organisations will benefit from a broader concept of organisational communication as well as organisational culture. One way to achieve this can be to thoroughly inform employees about the concept of communication with its diverse functions and also specify how management will approach each function. For this to be possible, it is crucial for managers and leaders to fully comprehend the concept of communication and culture and to embody the company values which reflect this. Clarity regarding what organisational communication and organisational culture entail might increase job security and job satisfaction and result in employees being more productive.

Organisations are further encouraged to make use of the opportunities that organisational communication offers. Implementing this concept effectively in the organisation can lead to employees becoming strong brand ambassadors or committed corporate social responsibility individuals that indirectly increase organisational success.

6.3 Suggestions for future research

Future linguistic research in organisational studies can consider the following suggestions:

- A similar study as the current one can be conducted with a larger, more diverse sample in order to allow the results to be generalised to the wider population. Such as study might reveal information that can be applied to organisations across a variety of spectrums.

- The current study strived to investigate the concept of organisational communication as constructed by employees as well as management. However, the way in which the concept is constructed by management is restricted to written communication in the form of newsletters. A similar study can be conducted that investigates managers' concepts of the company's organisational communication by analysing oral communication as well.

- Further studies like the current one can be conducted that focus on only one aspect of organisational communication (for example internal communication or leadership communication) instead of a general concept as in the current study.

- A study like the current one can be compared to the same study conducted in a non-South African company. Organisational culture might play a bigger role in a comparative study such as this because national cultures will especially be applicable here.

- A longitudinal study which investigates the discourse and social practices in the organisation from the beginning of the merger over a longer period of time will give insight into how discourse and practices change over time.

Bibliography

Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. 2000. Taking the linguistic turn in organizational research: challenges, responses, consequences. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 36 (2): 136-158.

Antaki, C. 2008. Discourse analysis and conversation analysis. In *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*, edited by P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman & J. Brannen. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. pp. 431-446.

Appelbaum, S.H., Gandell, J., Yortis, H., Proper, S. & Jobin, F. 2000. Anatomy of a merger: behaviour of organizational factors and processes throughout the pre- during- post-stages (part 1). *Management Decision*, 38 (9): 649 – 661.

Armenakis, A., Brown, S. & Mehta, A. 2011. Organizational culture: Assessment and transformation. *Journal of Change Management*, 11 (3): 305-328.

Ashkanasy, N., Wilderom, C. & Peterson, M. 2011. *The Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications.

Austin, M.J. & Ciassen, J. 2008. Impact of organizational change on organizational culture. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 5: 321-359.

Ball, T. 1985. Hobbes' linguistic turn. *Polity*, 17 (4): 739-760.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F., Nickerson, C. & Planken, B. 2013. *Business discourse.* New York: Palgrave macmillan.

Bhatia, V. 2010. Interdiscursivity in professional communication. *Discourse and Communication,* 21(1): 32-50.

Bhatia, V., Langton, N. & Lung, J. 2004. Legal discourse: Opportunities and threats for corpus linguistics. In *Discourse in the Professions: Perspectives from corpus linguistics*, edited by U. Connor and T. Upton. Philadelphia: John Benjamins B.V.

Benveniste, J., Lecouteur, A. & Hepworth, J. 1999. Lay theories of Anorexia Nervosa: a discourse analytical study. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 4 (1): 59-69.

Bøilerehauge, D. n.d. Discourse analysis – on the road from shades to colours: An analysis of an American company website. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis working paper).

Boisnier, A. & Chatman, J.A. 2002. The role of subcultures in agile organizations. (Unpublished thesis). University of California, Berkeley.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006. Using the thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2): 77-101.

Burnard, P. 1991. A method of analysing interview transcripts in qualitative research. *Nurse education today*, 11: 461-466.

Cheek, J. 2004. At the margins? Discourse analysis and qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14 (8): 1140-1150.

Cooren, F., Matte, F., Taylor, J. & Vasquez, C. 2007. A humanitarian organization in action: organizational discourse as an immutable mobile. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(2): 153 - 190.

Cornellissen, J. 2014. *Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory & Practice.* 4th edition. London: SAGE Publications.

Cowan, S. & McLeod, J. 2004. Research methods: discourse analysis. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice*, 4 (1): 102.

Davis, P. 2004. Effective communication strategies in a franchise organization. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* 9 (4): 276 – 282.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. and Delport, C.S.L. 2011. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Deetz, S. 2003. Reclaiming the legacy of the linguistic turn. *Organization*, 10 (3): 421-429.

Elving, W. 2005. The role of communication in organisational change. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 10 (2): 129 – 138.

Erez, M. & Gati, E. 2004. A dynamic, multi-level model of culture: from the micro level of the individual to the macro level of a global culture. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 53(4): 583-598.

Fairhurst, G. & Putnam, L. 2004. Organizations as discursive constructions. *Communication theory,* 14 (1): (2004): 5-26.

Gee, J.P. 1999. *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method*. London and New York: Routledge.

Gee, J.P. & Green, J.L. 1998. Discourse analysis, learning, and social practice: a methodological study. *Review of Research in Education*, 23: 119-169.

Ginevičius, R. & Vaitkūnaitė, V. 2006. Analysis of organizational culture dimensions impacting performance. *Journal of Business Economics and Management,* 7 (4): 201–211.

Goodman, M. 2001. Current trends in corporate communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 6 (3): 117–123.

Hartley, M. and Morphew, C. 2006. Mission statements: a thematic analysis of rhetoric across institutional type. *Journal of Higher Education*, 77 (3): 456+.

Hughes, M. 2000. Potential, procedures and pitfalls of analysing internal newspapers. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* 5 (1): 19-25.

Invernizzi, E., Romenti, S & Fumagalli, M. 2012. Identity, communication and change management in Ferrari. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 17 (4): 483-497.

Joffe, H. 2011. Thematic Analysis. In *Qualitative methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*, edited by D. Harper and A. Thompson. London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Joffe, H. and Yardley, L. 2004. Content and thematic analysis. In *Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology*, edited by F. Marks & L. Yardley. London: SAGE Publications. pp. 56–68.

Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. 2002. *Discourse analysis as theory and method.* London: SAGE Publications.

Kaplan, R. & Grabe, W. 2002. A modern history of written discourse analysis. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11: 191-223.

Kim, M. & Hubbard, A. 2007. Intercultural communication in the global village: How to understand "The Other". *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 36 (3): 223-235.

Kitchen, P. and Daly, F. 2002. Internal communication during change management. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(1): 46-53.

Koester, A. 2010. *Workplace discourse.* London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Lauring, J. 2011. Intercultural organizational communication: The social organizing of interaction in international encounter. *Journal of Business Communication*, 48 (3): 231-255.

Lee, S. 2006. Somewhere in the middle: the measurement of third culture. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 35 (3): 253-264.

Louhiala-Salminen, L., Charles, M. & Kankaanranta, A. 2005. English as a lingua franca in Nordic corporate mergers: Two case companies. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24: 401-421.

Markovi, M. 2008. Managing the organizational change and culture in the age of globalization. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 9 (1): 3-11.

Mazzei, A. 2010. Promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15 (3): 221-234.

Mazzei, A. 2014. A multidisciplinary approach for a new understanding of corporate communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19 (2): 216 – 230.

Mazzei, A. 2014. (b). Internal communication for employee engagement: Strategies in American and Italian companies. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19 (1): 82 – 95.

McCarthy, E. 1998. The dynamics of culture, organisational culture and change. *AI & Society*, 12: 155-184.

Men, L. 2014. Strategic internal communication: transformational leadership, communication channels, and employee satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28 (2): 264-284.

Mishra, K., Boynton, L. and Mishra, A. 2014. Driving employee engagement: the expanded role of internal communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51 (2): 183 – 202.

Musson, G., Cohen, L. & Tietze, S. 2007. Pedagogy and the 'linguistic turn': developing understanding through semiotics. *Management Learning*, 38 (1): 45-60.

Neuliep, J. 2012. The relationship among intercultural communication apprehension, ethnocentrism, uncertainty reduction, and communication satisfaction during initial intercultural interaction: An extension of anxiety and uncertainty management (AUM) theory. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 41 (1): 1-16.

Ostroff, C, Kinicki, A. & Muhammad, R. 2013. Organizational Culture and Climate. In *Handbook of Psychology, second edition*, edited by I. Weiner. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. pp. 643-676.

Peng, W. and Litteljohn, D. 2001. Organisational communication and strategy implementation – a primary inquiry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 13(7): 360-363.

Phillips, N. & Hardy, C. 2002. *Discourse Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Inc. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412983921.n1

Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. 1987. *Discourse and Social Psychology. Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour.* London: SAGE Publications.

Punch, K.F. 2005. *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Quick, J. & Nelson, D. 2009. *Principles of Organizational Behaviour: Realities and Challenges.* 6th edition. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Riad, S. 2005. The power of 'organizational culture' as a discursive formation in merger integration. *Organization Studies*, 26 (10): 1529-1554.

Sabri, H.M. 2004. Socio-cultural values and organizational culture. *Journal of Transnational Management Development*, 9: 123-145.

Shrivastava, S. 2012. Identifying the major components of business communication and their relevance: A conceptual framework. *The IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 6 (4): 51-66.

Shuter, R. 2010. On Third-Culture Building. *Communication Yearbook*, 16. New York: Routledge.

Sigmar, L., Hynes, G. & Hill, K. 2012. Strategies for teaching social and emotional intelligence in business communication. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75 (3): 301-317.

Silverman, D. (ed). 2004. *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications.

Smith, L. 2008. *Effective Internal Communication*. 2nd edition. London: Kogan Page Ltd.

Smollan, R. & Sayers, J. 2009. Organizational culture, change and emotions: A qualitative study. *Journal of Change Management*, 9 (4): 435-457.

Spong, S. 2010. Discourse analysis: rich pickings for counsellors and therapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice,* 10 (1): 67-74.

Stangor, C. 2011. *Research methods for the behavioural sciences.* 4th edition. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Starks, H. & Trinidad, S. 2007. Choose your method: a comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17 (10): 1372-1380.

Tuckett, A. 2005. Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: a researcher's experience. *Contemporary Nurse*, 19(1-2): 75.

Van den Hooff, B. & De Ridder, J. 2004. Knowledge sharing in context: the influence of organizational commitment, communication climate and CMC use on knowledge sharing. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 8 (6): 117-130.

Vazirani, N. & Mohapatra, S. 2012. Merging organisational culture through communication – 'Post Mergers & Acquisitions'. *SIES Journal of Management*, 8 (1): 31-36.

Vine, B. 2004. Getting things done at work: The discourse of power in workplace interaction, vol. 124. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Want, J. 2003. When worlds collide: culture clash. Corporate culture – illuminating the black hole. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 24 (4): 14-21.

Weber, R. & Camerer, C. 2003. Cultural conflict and merger failure: an experimental approach. *Management Science*, 49 (4): 400-415.

Welch, M. 2011. The evolution of the employee engagement concept: communication implications. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16 (4): 328 – 346.

Welch, M. & Jackman, P. 2007. Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12 (2): 177 - 198.

Wimmer, R. and Dominick, J. 2011. *Mass media research: An introduction*. 9th edition. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Woolard, K. 1999. Simultaneity and bivalency as strategies in bilingualism. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 8(1): 3-29.

Appendix A: Interview schedule

1. Briefly give an overview of the background of the merger between Company A and Company B.

    Gee asseblief 'n kortlikse oorsig van die agtergrond van die amalgamering tussen Maatskappy A en Maatskappy B.

2. What company did you originally work for before the merger? Period?

    Vir watter maatskappy het u oorspronklik gewerk voor die amalgamering? Tydperk?

3. What company do you work for now? Period?

    Vir watter maatskappy is u nou werksaam? Tydperk?

4. What did your position-transfer entail?

    Wat het u posisie-verskuiwing behels?

5. What was your experience regarding this?

    Wat was u ervaring ten opsigte hiervan?

6. Why was it negative? Examples?

    Waarom was dit negatief? Voorbeelde?

7. Did you experience that certain aspects of the company were approached differently?

In terms of communication, practices and organisation values.

Het u ervaar dat sekere aspekte van die besigheid anders benader word as waaraan u gewoond was?

In terme van kommunikasie, praktyke en maatskappy waardes.

HOW WERE THINGS DONE INITIALLY?

EN HOE WAS DIT AANVANKLIK GEDOEN?

- **Communication**

- ***Kommunikasie***

How does/did communication with the CEO work?

Hoe word/was daar met die CEO gekommunikeer?

How does/did communication work among employees?

Hoe geskied kommunikasie tussen werknemers?/ Hoe het kommunikasie tussen werknemers geskied?

Newsletters/Bulletins

Nuusbriewe/Omsendbriewe

- **Practices/Routines**

- *Praktyke*

Salary changes

Salarisverandering

Meetings

Vergaderings

After hours activities

Na-uurse aktiwiteite

Training of new employees

Opleiding van nuwe personeel

- **Organisation values**

- *Maatskappy waardes*

8. Did these changes influence communication (that concerns you) in general? How?

   Het die veranderinge kommunikasie (wat op uself van toepassing is) oor die algemeen beïnvloed? Hoe?

9. What, in your opinion, mainly contributed to the misunderstandings and miscommunication?

Wat, in u opinie, het die meeste bygedra tot misverstande en miskommunikasie?

Appendix B: Survey questions

Constructing the concept of communication
Q1 **Organisational communication is crucial for the effective functioning of an organisation.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q2 **Organisational communication, corporate communication and internal communication address the same aspects of an organisation.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q3 **The pre-merger briefing was an example of organisational communication.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q4 **Organisational communication is an ongoing process in an organisation.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q5 **Internal communication is needed exclusively for preparing for a merger.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q6 **Effective organisational communication minimises conflict.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q7 **Internal communication is only carried out in the form of training and briefings concerning change.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q8 **Organisational culture is better understood via organisational communication.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q9 **The type of organisational communication of a company is dependable on the organisational culture.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q10 **Organisational culture has an impact on the success of a company.**

Constructing the concept of communication
Q11 **Rate the influence of a merger on each area of organisational culture.**

107

Constructing the concept of communication
**Q12 How was organisational
communication implemented to help you
to understand the goals of the merger?**

Constructing the concept of communication
**Q13 Briefly describe the function of
internal communication in an organisation.**

Appendix C: Permission notes

27 August 2014

To whom it may concern

NOTE OF PERMISSION

Permission is hereby granted that Joanie van der Merwe, Masters Researcher at the University of Stellenbosch, may sent out SurveyMonkey questionnaires to   employees as well as use these results for her research as set out in her research proposal.
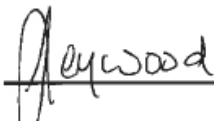
Your sincerely

Lourien Fourie

Organisational effectiveness

021-940 5780

Note of permission

Permission is hereby granted that Joanie van der Merwe, Masters researcher at the University of Stellenbosch, may conduct interviews with   employees as well as use these results for her research as set out in her research proposal.

Signed: Terry Haywood (Business Analyst)

Terry Haywood

Appendix D: Ethical clearance

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

Approval Notice
New Application

25-Sep-2014
Van der Merwe, Joanie J

Proposal #: DESC/VanderMerwe/Sep2014/6

Title: The perceived influence of mergers on corporate communicative culture: A case study of the merger between Metropolitan and Momentum

Dear Ms Joanie Van der Merwe,

Your **New Application** received on **04-Sep-2014**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **10-Sep-2014 -09-Sep-2015**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC/VanderMerwe/Sep2014/6**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1.Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3.Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period.** Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch Universtiy Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.