



Speaking your language

Description

In honour of Heritage Day on 24 September, our colleague Kaizer Michael Fourie shares his love for South Africa and tells us how he learned to speak seven languages.

Growing up on the dusty streets of Potchefstroom in North-West Province, Kaizer says he identifies as human first, and anything else, be it race, gender or sexuality will follow.

Born to multi-racial parents (his dad is Coloured and his mom is Xhosa, so his official racial designation is Coloured), Kaizer is fluent in both Afrikaans and Xhosa. As a youngster, he often visited his grandparents in Ikageng, where he learned to speak Tswana. “In Ikageng, my friends were Tswana speaking and that’s how I was able to speak Tswana,” he says.



“I later went to live with my maternal grandparent on a full-time basis and had to join their church – singing and praising in five languages! So, I learned Sotho and changed from Afrikaans as a medium of instruction to English, still attending school at the Coloured area.”

Kaizer then went on to work in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga where most people speak Swati, another language he then learned to speak. He says today he can still understand Swati but is not as fluent speaking it as he once was.

“I later moved to Johannesburg, Gauteng or “Jozi Maboneng”, where I’ve never encountered such a diverse group of people – it’s cosmopolitan at its best. There, I learned to speak isiZulu. I married Inkosikazi yam umZulu in our cozzzzzy house in Gauteng’aleng ?.”

At work, Kaizer has Tsonga, Zulu, Tswana, Pedi, Venda, Xhosa, Sotho, Ndebele, Afrikaans and English friends. “The best is when we engage and speak to each other, or even on calls the sound of all these languages together is so unique, it’s as if we’re speaking in tongues.

“Wow, how beautiful to be South African – and even more so when you embrace the cultural diversity of the Rainbow Nation!”

Kaizer says there’s no better place to live than in South Africa with her diversity, her beauty and her rich heritage. “For some weird reason I still don’t know what I am, but I KNOW WHO I AM – diversity is me!”

Category

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