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## Constructing an inclusive speech community from two mutually excluding ones: The third Afrikaans language movement

### Constructing an inclusive speech community

The article deals with the aim of leaders in the Afrikaans community to maintain Afrikaans as a language of high-function formal contexts in post-1994 South Africa through the construction of a community which meaningfully includes all its speakers as members, referred to as a "speech community". Basing the concept "speech community" on Johnson and Milani's description of such a language as "a complete and society-bearing language" and on Pavlenko and Blackledge's notion of "a public", it lists the obstacles which the development of an "inclusive Afrikaans community" need to deal with and discusses five issues which have to be debated in such a developmental process. The article also provides a brief overview of activities which the Afrikaans establishment have organised since 2003 (referring to them as "the third Afrikaans language movement") to restore the language-political status of Afrikaans, and asks whether the emphasis on constructing an inclusive speech community is a creative way of addressing the problem with which they wish to deal. Key words: Language appropriation, language-political restoration and maintenance, linguistic exclusion, speech community.

### **Introduction**

The democratisation of South Africa in 1994 had far-reaching language-political consequences for the country: on the one hand eleven languages (including nine Bantu languages) were recognised as national official languages with the commitment to promote these languages; on the other hand, global and local economic, educational and social forces led to the dominance of English in the public sphere, the marginalisation of Afrikaans as a public language, and the continued peripheralisation of the Bantu languages as public languages, leaving them in effect in the same position as they were under the previous regime.

From 1994, Afrikaans, the topic of this article, experienced rapid attrition as a public language, becoming far less used in state administration, education, the economy, politics and social life. Changes in the language-in-education situation provide a clear illustration of the public decline of Afrikaans. On the basis of equity, the need to provide access for all learners to education and the need for social transformation, schools and tertiary educational institutions came under increasing pressure to use English as the language of learning and teaching. As a result, the 1 396 (white) single-medium Afrikaans schools in the country in 1993 dropped to 840 in 2003 (Rademeyer

2005). Similarly, in the early 1990's, there were five Afrikaans-medium universities, today two still use Afrikaans to a significant degree, alongside English.

In the context of their significant loss of political power in 1994, many leading white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans perceive the demise of Afrikaans in the public domain as symbolic of their marginalisation, disempowerment, and loss of control over issues about which they feel they should be allowed control, such as the education of their children. For many white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, post-1994 government management is experienced as a threat to their human rights (e.g. the right to mother-tongue education and single-medium Afrikaans schools) and their access to socio-economic opportunities (largely denied through affirmative action).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the increasing dominance of English in public life is perceived as an imposition: that English is being covertly imposed on them, that their identity is being devalued, that their basic linguistic human rights are being threatened and that they have become second-class citizens. Their loss of power and their loss of control over the cultural resources they formerly had: education, government infrastructures, radio and television, led to "Afrikaners experience(ing) significant trauma and identity "dislocation" (Louw 2004: 51). Ironically, Afrikaners have once again<sup>2</sup> become the Other, and are involved in a struggle against minoritisation and marginalisation. And once again, language is used as the instrument in the struggle.

Given the transformation initiated by the events of 1994, a group of concerned white Afrikaans intellectual leaders from a variety of cultural organisations<sup>3</sup> met in 1998 to discuss the need to reverse the attrition of Afrikaans in the public sphere and to restore it as a high-function language so that it can once more function as "a complete and society-bearing language" (Johnson and Milani 2007: 1), a vehicle of respect for the self, and an instrument for the re-construction of a sense of self-value.

Afrikaans thus once again became a site of struggle, an instrument with which community leaders wish to obtain control over what they consider to be their own, and to obtain recognition for their perceived ethno-linguistic distinctiveness. A third Afrikaans language movement seems to have started.<sup>4</sup>

### **The third Afrikaans language movement**

From 2003 onwards, a number of Afrikaans institutions (such as the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurliggame and the National Language Body for Afrikaans, an institution of the Pan South African Language Board), co-operated in the construction of a new Afrikaans language movement.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the major events in this movement include a national language conference on Afrikaans (Stellenbosch, September 2004), a workshop on a planning strategy for the promotion of Afrikaans (Johannesburg, February, 2005), and a second national

language conference (Pretoria, February 2007). In addition, a national conference was held to discuss the retention of Afrikaans as a language of science (Stellenbosch, August, 2006). The outcome of these meetings was that a National Forum for Afrikaans (NFA) was formed, and that the Taalbelangegroep vir Afrikaans (Language Interest Group for Afrikaans) was established on 4 August, 2007.<sup>6</sup> The NFA has taken the lead in planning and managing the meetings.

The major objective of the movement is, of course, to maintain and promote Afrikaans as a high-function language, and several strategies have been devised to achieve this goal, such as involving persons from the four racial groups who use Afrikaans as a first language in the discussions about the movement, thereby wishing to ensure that the Afrikaans council to be established obtains the support of speakers from each of these groups.

From the beginning, the debate emphasised the need to unite the people who speak Afrikaans into a single, inclusive community, which should then become a cohesive entity and possess power.<sup>7</sup>

The rest of this article will deal with this aim of the language movement: to construct a single, inclusive Afrikaans community. It will ask, firstly, what the term “single, inclusive speech community”<sup>8</sup> refers to, then discuss the obstacles to such a construction, and, in conclusion, list the issues which need to be debated in this regard.<sup>9</sup>

### **The concept “inclusive speech community”**

Two basic questions to be dealt with in a discussion of this particular issue are: (a) what the concept “inclusive speech community” refers to, and (b) what features a community needs to have in order to function effectively in a language movement (to “have power”).

Following the discussion of the notion of “a public” in Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), an inclusive speech community can be described as a community characterised by:

- (a) a shared (common) language which:
  - (i) meets the community’s communicative and functional needs and demands;
  - (ii) is an expression of its social identity and is a carrier of its cultural heritage;
  - (iii) meets the emotional needs of every member (feelings of belonging and feelings of ownership), and
  - (iv) enables the community to function as a coherent entity;
- (b) frequent intra-community verbal interaction, through which its identity is “constructed and validated” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14);

- (c) shared institutions, such as schools, cultural organisations, churches and linguistic organisations/language organisations, and
- (d) a shared linguistic ideology.<sup>10</sup>

Language has an important role in the construction of a community: besides being the medium through which members can interact effectively with each other and with their environment, it also, importantly, functions as the mediating instrument through which a community of practice is constructed.

A good example of this process is the construction of the white Afrikaans-speaking community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: having appropriated Afrikaans as a “white” language (Pokpas and Van Gensen 1992), Afrikaans-speaking intellectual leaders (church leaders, educationists, cultural leaders, linguists), driven by Afrikaner nationalism, gradually established its form, functions and purposes, and controlled the communicative behaviour of its speakers. This happened through the work of the Taalkommissie for Afrikaans (*Language commission*) of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, the co-operation of Afrikaans teachers, the development of school syllabii and school textbooks, the determination of what constitutes acceptable linguistic skill through examination assessments, and the Afrikaans media. Equally important was the work of the early Afrikaans linguists, who defined Afrikaans as a “European” language,<sup>11</sup> promoted it as a legitimate object of study, wrote grammars for it, developed technical terminology and compiled dictionaries. The white speakers of Afrikaans thus obtained control over decisions about what was “acceptable”, legitimate and authoritative Afrikaans (standard Afrikaans), and established its political power, with the co-operation of the Afrikaans churches, cultural bodies such as the ATKV and the FAK, and Afrikaans dominated political parties. By the 1940s, the ideology of white Afrikaans was firmly established and had become legitimated, with social credibility and political authority. “Afrikaans” had thus mediated “between social structure and linguistic practices”. A new language ideology had been developed, which reshaped linguistic and social structures, thus illustrating, once again, that language and identity are mutually constitutive, with one not independent of the other.

If the current movement to promote Afrikaans as the language of black, coloured,<sup>12</sup> Asian/Indian and white speakers (see Table 1 below) is to succeed in uniting “the people who speak Afrikaans into a single, inclusive community, which will be a cohesive entity and possess power”, it will have to consider to what degree present-day Afrikaans in all its diversity constitutes a shared language which meets its users’ communicative and functional needs and demands, is an expression of their social identity and a carrier of their cultural heritage, meets their emotional needs and enables the community to function as a coherent entity, and whether the community as a whole shares the same linguistic ideology. Finally (or maybe the process should

begin with it – since identity is critically constructed on the basis of personal experiences), it should consider to what degree Afrikaans facilitates “frequent intra-community verbal interaction” (through which its new identity can be “constructed and validated”)<sup>13</sup> (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14), and whether shared institutions in which Afrikaans is a binding element, such as schools, cultural organisations, churches and linguistic organisations / language organisations have been developed.

Afrikaans will be an inclusive language when it has mediated the transformation of its speakers into a community of practice, and functions as “a complete and society-bearing language” (Johnson and Milani 2007: 1).

The second question that needs to be dealt with regarding the notion “inclusive speech community”, is the issue of “having power”: what features a reconstructed Afrikaans community needs in order to facilitate a language movement.

The re-construction of a group of speakers into a community of practice, a public, is a political action, “a language-based form of political legitimation”, in which “images of linguistic phenomena gain (wider) social credibility and political influence” (Gal and Woolard 2001). Goosen (2007: 1) makes the same point: “taalbewegings”, he says, “slaag slegs as hulle oor politieke mag beskik en ondersteun word deur populêre sentiment” (language movements only succeed when they have political power and are supported by popular sentiments). If Afrikaans is to be maintained (or re-promoted) as a high-function language it needs to have legitimacy, social credibility and political authority for all its speakers, and it needs to have these features to such an extent that it can reshape its speakers into a new social order and can garner their support for activities directed at promoting their common language in high-function public life.

**Obstacles to the construction of an inclusive Afrikaans community**

The major obstacle in the process of constructing an inclusive Afrikaans community by the NFA (or the Afrikaanse Taalraad – *Afrikaans Language Council* – established on 26 May 2008), is the racialisation of Afrikaans.

The almost 6 million speakers of Afrikaans are racially distributed as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Distribution by race of first-language speakers of Afrikaans, 1996; 2001

	Black	Coloured	Asian/Indian	White	Total
1996	217 606 (3.7%)	2 931 489 (50.44%)	15 135 (0.026%)	2 558 956 (44.03%)	5 811 547
2001	247 940 (4.16%)	3 172 050 (53.21%)	19 720 (0.03%)	2 535 390 (42.53%)	5 961 060

(Total population: 45 million.)

Source: *Census SA*

As mentioned above with reference to Pokpas and Van Gensen (1992), Afrikaans was appropriated as a “white” language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. From 1948 it has furthermore increasingly become known as a “white” language, and, also, as the language of apartheid and of the oppressor.

The racial divide between speakers of Afrikaans is clear, first of all, from the tension between members of the coloured and white communities, which has existed for a long time.<sup>14</sup> Leaders in the coloured community, for instance, mobilised against the politics of the white political leadership (General Hertzog and Prime Minister Louis Botha) in 1913, and thereafter strongly protested against the actions of the ruling National Party, such as the establishment of separate residential areas and forced removals, as Van de Rhee (2007: 1) points out. Giliomee (2004), too, states that Afrikaner unity was achieved “on the back of coloured exclusion”, and that the National Party, the main champion of Afrikaner culture and the language movement, “abandoned the coloured people in the 1930’s” (when Afrikaner nationalism was strongly gaining momentum).

The radical division between the two groups is also reflected by striking economic and social inequalities. As regards educational differences the following statistics are illustrative: of every 1 000 coloured learners entering school in 1993, only 326 completed Grade 12, as opposed to 853 in the case of the white community, and, that 21,8% of all coloured children under 16 years of age do not attend school (Van de Rhee 2007).

Concomitant with the economic, social, political and educational divisions is, of course, the linguistic division.

Sociolinguistically, two ethno-linguistic varieties of Afrikaans are recognised alongside standard Afrikaans: Cape Afrikaans and Griqua Afrikaans (also called Orange River Afrikaans (see Van Rensburg 1984)).<sup>15</sup> Both these varieties are regarded as non-standard. Given the language ideology of the (formerly dominant) white speakers (and its implementation by teachers, socio-cultural and religious leaders and the media), considerable conflict arose between these two categories of Afrikaans varieties, with the speakers of the non-standard varieties being marginalised and disadvantaged (particularly in schools) (see also De Villiers 1992).

A similar situation obtained in the literary domain, with little shared oral traditions and with the canonised literature being mainly that of white authors. As Willems (2007a: 204) points out: Through the influence of Afrikaner nationalism on literary studies the presence and contribution of black speakers were actively played down or silenced (see also Willems 2007b: 11).

The racialisation of Afrikaans has at least four consequences for any attempt to develop Afrikaans as an (inclusive) “society-bearing language”. Firstly, Afrikaans, in the form of standard Afrikaans, which is its “public face”, is a symbol of white identity and is, largely, an object of emotional attachment for its white speakers. For many

of its coloured speakers it (i.e. standard Afrikaans) is neither a symbol of identity nor an object of emotional attachment. In fact it has a stigmatised meaning, as is apparent from the following comments: Afrikaans, wrote Jakes Gerwel, a former university rector and extraordinary professor of Afrikaans at the University of Pretoria, has an image of *arrogansie en wreedheid* (arrogance and cruelty); Henry Jeffreys (2006: 4), editor of the Afrikaans newspaper *Die Burger*; described the deeply-rooted division between coloured and white speakers as most probably the highest price that Afrikaans must pay for its earlier exclusivity, and Charlyn Dyers (2007: 5), director of an institute at the University of the Western Cape promoting multilingualism in a research project on the negotiation of identity by school children in a post-apartheid township in greater Cape Town, reported that: “Most ‘Cape Coloureds’ do not, and never have, identified with White Afrikaners who share their language” and “neither have they ever displayed the same [...] emotional investment in keeping the language pure”.<sup>16</sup>

A second consequence, following on the first, is that coloured speakers of Afrikaans are negative about a language movement for Afrikaans: Dyers (2006: 14) refers to the Afrikaners involved in the movement as “a beleaguered collectivity”, using a phrase from Edwards (1995). Other commentators have also expressed suspicion about the agendas of the pro-Afrikaans movement, describing its leading figures as “activists”, and as a reactionary group of “neo-Afrikaners” who are unhappy about their loss of status and power and want to re-establish Afrikaner nationalism through ethnic mobilisation (Du Preez 2006). Gerwel (2006) is equally negative, describing the movement as a political movement which has hijacked Afrikaans for narrow, nationalistic purposes.<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly, the racialisation of Afrikaans (as well as the ethnicisation of the African languages – their use in the construction of supposedly distinct identities – as part of the apartheid government’s policy of “homelands”) has led to negativity about the promotion of the ten official languages (other than English), on the basis of the possibility that such promotion may effect greater ethno-linguistic awareness and may feed into the development of ethnic nationalisms, which could act as obstacles in the country’s nation-building programme.<sup>18</sup>

A final consequence is that language attitudes to Afrikaans seem to have changed, especially among its younger speakers. The Afrikaans-speaking community was never, of course, a one-dimensionally “homogeneous” community. However, three or four decades ago Afrikaner institutions such as the family, the school and the church, had a reasonably strong hold on the behaviour of its members. Increasing contact with persons of “foreign cultures” through the globalised media and the liberation of South Africa in 1994, has, arguably, led to a greater cultural diversification. This is apparent, for example, from the perceptions of young Afrikaans-speaking persons of the former insistence on “pure” Afrikaans as an imposition and an attempt by school

and church at social control, and they have developed a resistance to the normative representations of what it means to be Afrikaans-speaking. They are constructing new (often hybrid, de-centred, plural) identities and are developing new linguistic repertoires, typically code-mixed varieties (Afrikaans and English) to index their identity differences, and now seem to be “claiming their own, new, social spaces and prerogatives” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 19).

Given the racialisation of Afrikaans and its consequences, the notion “Afrikaans” will clearly have to be radically deconstructed and then reconstructed through negotiation as a racially inclusive entity.<sup>19</sup> Such a process of negotiation will be difficult, since, firstly, it involves the replacement of widely held myths (for example that Afrikaans is a white language, and that standard Afrikaans is the only correct/proper form of Afrikaans) (Wicomb 2006: 168); secondly, as Kasibe (2006) points out: the construction of identity usually occurs within the context of power, particularly in the sense that it involves a struggle against an identity imposed by the powerful; and thirdly, that it can only occur if the current, persistent economic, educational and social inequalities between the coloured and white communities have been bridged in a meaningful way.

In addition to the obstacles presented by the racial element in the language debate, the following factors will also complicate attempts to construct an inclusive Afrikaans community:

- The enormous strength of English. English is generally regarded as the most important instrument of access to symbolic and material resources and is socio-politically fully legitimised. A significant number of Afrikaans-speaking members of the coloured middle class is said to be shifting rapidly towards English, and Afrikaans-speaking white parents are increasingly deciding to send their children to English-medium schools.
- The possible perception of the government that Afrikaans leaders seem only concerned with their own interests, particularly linguistic and cultural interests, whereas other communities in the country have far bigger problems (such as poor education, health, unemployment and housing).
- The possibility that the ANC government has an anti-Afrikaner agenda. Louw (2004: 47), for example, talks about Afrikaners having to “face a degree of state hostility directed at their language and cultural forms”.

Given these obstacles, it is difficult to see how Afrikaans can develop into a symbol which represents a common identity (whatever one understands by this term), can carry a common heritage and can meet the emotional needs and demands of all its speakers.



### **Issues to be debated in the construction of an inclusive speech community**

There are several issues which have a direct bearing on the construction of an inclusive Afrikaans speech community about which further clarity needs to be obtained. These include the fact that the construction of an inclusive speech community has to be handled within the context of a political economy which strongly favours English, the need to function meaningfully within a state philosophy of pluralism, constructing an appropriate language ideology, that the process of reconstructing Afrikaans implies meeting the real needs of the whole community, and the need to establish research priorities.

### ***Constructing an inclusive speech community within the context of English***

Bourdieu (1992: 51, 55–7, and elsewhere) argues that, though languages and linguistic practices have no power in themselves, they can be converted into economic and social capital. This happens through various agencies (such as the education system and the media) which give certain languages (and ways of speaking) legitimacy and authority and, of course, brand other languages and ways of speaking as less valuable, without legitimacy and authority).<sup>20</sup> As such languages, linguistic varieties and discourse styles become factors affecting the production and reproduction of wealth, and can function in domination, control and the continuation of privilege and inequality.<sup>21</sup> Gal (1989: 356) points out that, before economic and political globalisation, languages and varieties existed independently and “in harmony” with one another, but now languages have become part of global economic and political systems (driven by powerful supra-national companies) and are thus subject to competition, legitimation / illegitimation and domination / subordination.

Added (and probably related) to the development of languages as tools in the political economy of a country is the market-drivenness of modern-day activities (*students are clients and training courses are packages*). Goosen (2007: 3) describes this mode of thinking more aggressively, arguing that “die hegemonie van neo-liberale globalisme [...] herskep die totale menslike belewenis tot ‘n mark (en) reduseer mense tot gewone verbruikers” (the hegemony of neo-liberal globalism [...] recreates the entire human experience into a market (and) reduces humans to mere consumers).

Given the above, it will be essential for any programme aimed at constructing an inclusive Afrikaans community to take particular notice of the embeddedness of the South African languages in the local and global political economy.

### ***The need to function meaningfully within a political system directed at pluralism***

It is possible that the leaders of the Afrikaans movement could tend (albeit sub-consciously) to respond to the current language-political position of Afrikaans with reference to its social status and functions before 1994, when it was one of two official languages at the national level. This would not, of course, be justified in the present

political context, and one would need to develop a clear understanding about what constitutes the linguistic rights and privileges<sup>22</sup> (and obligations) of its speakers in the context of ten other such languages.

Participants in the language debate (including the debate about Afrikaans) continually assert that the promotion of a particular language needs to be handled within the context of multilingualism. Yet there is as yet no comprehensive understanding of what multilingualism comprises (except, of course, in the superficial sense of “knowing more than 2 languages”). Multilingualism (or, more appropriately, linguistic pluralism), I would suggest, should be understood with reference to at least the following requirements:

- (i) That the struggle against poverty, inequality and national development and empowerment is directly linked to the effective and meaningful establishment of multilingualism;
- (ii) That the survival of every language (specifically the ten minor languages of South Africa) depends on the survival of the others;
- (iii) That multilingualism needs to be seen as a resource (something with which employment can be obtained, higher wages earned, social prestige acquired, and so forth);
- (iv) That all individuals should be able to communicate in at least three South African languages;
- (v) That the formal study of every language at school must deal with the meaning of multilingualism, and must foster knowledge of the speakers of other languages and an attitude of tolerance for such speakers.

Additionally, one could argue, the NFA (and the Afrikaans Language Board) need to come to terms with the dominance of English (obviously not with the hegemony of English), accepting that it will function as the major language of public life, and plan their activities with this reality in mind.

### ***The need to construct an appropriate language ideology***

If Afrikaans is to be re-constructed into a symbol of non-racialism and developed as a social binding instrument across the racial divide, the belief that propriety, authority and legitimacy is somehow (exclusively) related to proficiency in standard Afrikaans can obviously not be sustained, and a “new” ideology about Afrikaans needs to be formulated and propagated, conveying the understanding that speakers of other varieties of Afrikaans (generally black, coloured or Indian/Asian speakers) are not backward, inferior or less intelligent. Such a linguistic re-construction would entail new thinking about the role of diversity in a speech community, along the lines described by the Indian sociolinguist, Lachman Khubchandani (1987), who clearly demonstrates that the vernaculars of a community have a fundamental role: “In a

hierarchical patterning of speech variation”, he writes, “no single variety can be associated with the dominant role [...] Speech variation in everyday settings in a pluralistic society [...] is explicated as an instrument of an ongoing redefinition of relationships, merely accentuating one’s identity, criss-crossed by the imperatives of context and purpose.” Such a change in thinking requires, first of all, that teachers of Afrikaans radically change their attitudes to and judgements about “non-standard” Afrikaans, and secondly, that the functional importance of vernacular varieties of the language be formally recognised. In this regard note should be taken of the extended debate on the educational sociologist Bernstein’s (1964) deficit hypothesis and his distinction between restricted and elaborated codes.

A more difficult question is to decide how these “other” forms of Afrikaans can become effective instruments for gaining access to symbolic resources, and thus be instruments of empowerment.

Implied in a reconstructed linguistic ideology is, of course, that it does not only concern the form of language (the grammar, the “system”) or the production of dictionaries and school grammars, but also the use of the language: the discourses, the topics, the participants, and the attitudes, views and beliefs.

### ***The process of reconstructing Afrikaans implies meeting the real needs of the whole community***

A (reconstructed) Afrikaans obviously also needs to serve the instrumental and social needs of all its speakers, and if the new language movement wishes to attain political legitimacy and influence, transmitting an image of being socially and politically transformed, and demonstrating that it is genuinely driven by wanting, also, to meet the needs of (formerly and currently) subordinated, disadvantaged communities, the NFA needs to devote most of their material and human resources to empowerment projects, particularly among the coloured working class communities (see Olivier 2006: 21–9; and Van de Rhee 2007).<sup>23</sup> Olivier reports that there were at least 45 literacy programmes in the Eastern, Northern and Western Cape, and 26 projects in the rural areas of the Western Cape (focusing on literacy, health care, skills development and the provision of legal support). Many of these initiatives, however, do not seem to be functioning effectively, whilst a number of them have switched to using English for conducting their work.

### ***Research***

Finally, a programme for the development of Afrikaans into an instrument and a symbol of an inclusive speech community, needs to be based on validated information. Research on various issues is necessary. Four of these issues are:

- (i) The linguistic needs (and wants) of members of all the communities in which it is used, irrespective of race;
- (ii) The socio-cultural dynamics of identity construction among young people;
- (iii) The history of other language movements and the strategies implemented in these movements in constructing a speech community, particularly in societies in which democratic principles and an ethos of pluralism are accepted.
- (iv) The role of language promotion agencies, such as the intelligentsia/intellectual leaders, print capital, television, (schools, churches?) and so on.

## Conclusion

In closure, a comment by Giliomee (2004: 53) seems appropriate: there is very little guarantee that the “Afrikaners as a people [...] will survive”, but, he says, he thinks they have “the ability to survive in a creative way”. Assuming that Giliomee’s Afrikaners include coloured, black and Indian speakers of Afrikaans, the question is: is the movement to transform Afrikaans into an inclusive language such a “creative way”?

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## Notes

1. Afrikaners (generally defined as white speakers of Afrikaans) sometimes express the opinion that the ANC government has an anti-Afrikaans agenda (or ideology), which is then publicly denied by ANC spokespersons. It is conceivable, of course, (given, *inter alia*, changes to place names and street names), that the ANC regime is directed at the Africanisation of South Africa, that is, presenting the country as an African country. After all, almost 80% of the South African population is black (or 92.5%, if “black” includes “coloured” and Asian/Indian).
2. As they were in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Now, of course, the “we” is black, but with English still emblematic of dominance.
3. The FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations), Groep van 63 (Group of 63), ATKV (Afrikaans Language and Culture Association), Praag (Pro-Afrikaans Action Group), Vriende van Afrikaans (Friends of Afrikaans), SA Akademie (South African Academy of Science and Art), Vrydaggroep (Friday Group), the Taalsekretariaat (Language Secretariat), Stigting vir die Bemagtiging deur Afrikaans (Foundation for Empowerment through Afrikaans), the Afrikaanse Forum and the NTLA (the National Language Body for Afrikaans), (see Prinsloo 2006: 179–251). Supporting the movement were community leaders such as the leading historian, Hermann Giliomee, and Ton Vosloo (chairperson of the board of Naspers, a multinational South African media company).
4. Following the first and second language movements, ca. 1875 and 1905 respectively. The stance of the present Afrikaans leadership must also be seen against the background of the struggle since 1806 against the covert and overt imposition of English. As Giliomee (2004) points out: Afrikaners were strongly dominated by the English colonial governments and made to feel inferior and threatened, held in contempt, regarded as backward, cruel and unjust. The Afrikaans-speaking white community then used Afrikaans to “carve out their own (cultural and economic) space to free themselves from their feelings of inferiority towards the much wealthier and more confident

- English section” (9). (See also Giliomee 2003). Afrikaans thus became an instrument of social mobilisation and the construction of an own identity. Afrikaner nationalism was a response to “slights to an ethnic group and its culture” (19), and was not primarily an economic or class phenomenon. The recognition of Dutch in 1910 (with Afrikaans added in 1925) as the equivalent of English for official purposes was understood as recognising the equality of Afrikaans-speaking whites relative to the English, giving them a sense of self-worth, and access to higher-level jobs and economic advantage. Today, Afrikaans-speakers are once again exposed to “the full force of English cultural predominance and superior black numbers”.
5. Since 2004, leading members of the *Stigting vir Bemagtiging deur Afrikaans*, an institution focused mainly on addressing the serious social and educational needs of coloured speakers of Afrikaans, have also become leading role-players in the movement.
  6. Several books on the language-political promotion of Afrikaans have also been published over the past few years: Van Rensburg (2004); Giliomee and Schlemmer (2005) and Brink (2005).
  7. The NFA’s use of the term *power* obviously needs to be defined. Does it refer to economic or political power? Does it reside in institutions or in social structures? What is its purpose: to contribute meaningfully to the establishment of a pluralist state or, in the case of Afrikaans, to promote Afrikaner nationalism? (see also Gerwel 2006: 3). Goosen (2007: 1), the national chair of the FAK, uses the term to refer specifically to political power: he writes of the need for “*veel groter politieke spierkrag*” (far greater political muscle), suggesting, one assumes, that pressure should be exerted on the government (but doesn’t indicate how this should happen).
  8. The term *speech community* is used to refer to “people who are in habitual contact with each other by means of (a common) language” (see Swann et al 2004: 293).
  9. No attention will, obviously, be given to issues such as what it is that needs to be done, how matters should be handled and who should be involved in the construction process.
  10. The term “language ideology” is used to refer to beliefs and attitudes about language (e.g. who “owns” it, who speaks it, how, and what constitutes “good” / “bad”; “proper” / “poor” language use). The term is often used to “rationalise existing social structures, relationships and dominant linguistic habits” (Swann, et al 2004: 171). Two examples of linguistic ideology common in debates about Afrikaans are (a) that standard Afrikaans is the only “proper” and “correct” way of speaking and that it is superior to “non-standard” Afrikaans whose speakers are somehow regarded as culturally backward and cognitively inferior; and (b) that if the cultural identity of the Afrikaner (white Afrikaans-speaking person) is to be maintained (or even “saved”), it is essential to maintain Afrikaans in its existing form and to protect it from outside influence (in the 1960s, particularly against Anglicisms). People who adopt these ideologies are generally intolerant about the use of “non-standard Afrikaans”, considering its use to be deviant and undesirable.
  11. In the early 1980s Afrikaans linguists began paying serious attention to “non-standard” Afrikaans varieties, for example Van Rensburg (1984). In 1989 Van Rensburg also presented a conference paper proposing the re-standardisation of Afrikaans through the recognition of lexical items and phonological, morphological and syntactic structures from Cape Afrikaans.
  12. This “community” is referred to by various names, including “brown”. (The term “black” has also been used, probably for political reasons.) In the rest of this article the term “coloured” will be used.
  13. Leading through negotiation to, for example, mutual understanding, tolerance, personal mobility and equal access to information and opportunities.
  14. It is unclear whether coloured speakers of Afrikaans see themselves as coloured Afrikaans-speaking people (emphasis on language) or as Afrikaans-speaking coloured people (emphasis on race).
  15. These varieties are today used by many of the descendants of the Khoe, San and the former slave populations.
  16. Dyers does find, however, that Afrikaans (in the colloquial form of the Cape, i.e. as a “non-standard dialect”: “enjoy(s) a certain status as well as a strong vitality in the poor working-class townships of the Cape Flats” (5); has a “dominant role [...] as an index of their individual as well as collective identities” (13); that Grade 8 pupils in the local school were “sentimental, and even passionate about their mother tongue, Afrikaans” (18); and that they “identify powerfully with” it (22).
  17. A feature of the Afrikaans language debate is the perspective, propagated mainly by Goosen (2006, 2007), that coloured speakers of Afrikaans and Afrikaners should be distinguished (he also refers to

*Afrikaanse bruines* (Afrikaans browns) and *Afrikaanse Afrikaners* (Afrikaans Afrikaners); that an eventual Afrikaans language council should preferably have a federal structure in which different bodies represent different cultural communities; and that the Afrikaner is 'n *besondere kultuur-historiese gemeenskap* (a particular cultural-historical community). Besides the fact that the supporters of these views need to explain their conception of the notion "culture" and describe the features of these "culturally distinctive communities", they also need to consider the likelihood that their views may directly undermine attempts to construct an "inclusive Afrikaans speech community".

18. The government has seemingly, for example, relegated language and ethnicity out of the public sphere and into the private sphere. (Their neglect of meaningful language promotion could, in practice, be driven by an ideology of modernisation and assimilation (see Louw 2004)).
19. Cynical scholars in the domains of cultural studies and the politics of language would probably comment that moves to deracialise Afrikaans in an attempt to retain it as a high-function language in South Africa is an example of supreme irony. Formerly, when "whiteness" was the unmarked category and "non-whiteness" defined the Other, race was a convenient tool in the construction of identity. Now that "non-blackness" / "whiteness" defines the Other, race is seen as an obstacle.
20. As Bourdieu also points out: symbolic dominance is not necessarily explicitly imposed – it can develop through the unquestioning acceptance by the powerless (e.g. lower classes) of the legitimacy and authority of the practices of the dominant parties.
21. The material and social value of English in South Africa explains many language political phenomena, such as which South Africans are monolingual (mainly first-language speakers of English), bilingual (mainly first-language speakers of Afrikaans) and multilingual (mainly first-language speakers of the Bantu languages); why urban vernaculars have developed; diglossia, code-switching and code-mixing, etc.
22. The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, article 6 lists "status", "use", "equitable treatment and parity of esteem".
23. This is probably a vitally important dimension of the envisaged reconstruction process and of constructing an inclusive community "with power". Louw (2004: 53) argues, for example, that the effective construction of a community depends on the degree of (print and visual) literacy of its members. The higher the degree of literacy in a community the larger their capacity to consume and produce texts (also literary texts), thus developing a self-sustaining dynamic.

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