

and into another. In *Fatal Attraction*, open spaces are symbolically contrasted against enclosures. Significant in *Thelma and Louise* are the open landscapes through which the protagonists journey. They finally arrive at the Grand Canyon, with the canyon opening up in front of them and a pursuing police armada behind. In the closing scene, they vow to stay together and never to give up, and then drive over the edge – a slow motion leap into space, arrested in the final frame. Is it a literal jump to death or is it a metaphorical jump to freedom? The ending is indeed ambiguous.

Both *Fatal Attraction* and *Thelma and Louise* can be viewed as depicting the deaths of rebellious females who refuse to stay within the bounds of a normal societal framework and instead opt out into dangerous, unstructured and lawless spaces. In my view, both movies play out women's anger at men: men's avoidance of responsibility, men's threats to women's integrity and self respect through sexual harassment, and at men's violence against women. The spatial imagery suggests that the characters in both movies wish to transcend barriers that hold them back from expressions of their own anger or of their sexuality. As demonstrated in contemporary feminist theory, female anger and female sexuality have long been taboo areas, correctly interpreted as threatening to patriarchal structures. Depicting such themes from a female perspective, *Thelma and Louise* is aligned with feminist ideas, even though its ending is equivocal, apparently affirming, if anything, the impossibility of evading cultural frameworks and surviving. A similar resolution is seen in *Fatal Attraction*. While *Fatal Attraction* does address some of the same themes, however, it escapes political categorizations by portraying primarily a spectrum of deep, complex, psychological fears. In *Fatal Attraction*, Alex is not only associated with vaster spaces, she is also subtly linked to a liquidity symbolism. Ancient, perhaps archetypal, fears of woman and nature imaged as uncontainable, unstoppable liquidity threatening to overflow and ruin the fragile architecture of society, merge with contemporary anxieties arising in men but shared by women, fears evoked by questions of what transformations will follow when women transcend the enclosures of silence and powerlessness and gain *real* power to construct new, empowering spaces of their own.

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CHRISTOPHE BORD & CAROL SERRURIER

Language in South Africa

Denna artikel är en exposé över den komplicerade språksituationen i Sydafrika. Den ger såväl en historisk översikt som en spekulation över det nya språkliga läge som demokratiseringen av Sydafrika kan komma att innebära. Förf. är båda verksamma vid engelska institutionen vid universitetet i Toulouse, Frankrike. Bords huvudinriktning är allmän och jämförande germansk språkvetenskap – han har bl a studerat och undervisat i Sverige. Serrurier, som är född och uppvuxen i Sydafrika, där hon också genomförde sin grundutbildning, har främst intresserat sig för samtida sydafrikansk litteratur.

In a book review published in a recent issue of *Word* (43/3 [92]:483) we read: "It would be difficult to identify any controversy confronting the modern study of language – from either the core descriptive or the so-called "hyphenated" areas (psycho-, socio-, ethno-linguistics, language planning, legal or educational matters and others) – which cannot be exemplified, clarified and, often enough, confounded by data from Canada's official Romance language".

Although the situation in South Africa demonstrates certain similarities with that in Canada (two non-autochthonous official languages against a backdrop of aboriginal idioms), and even if we are somewhat reluctant to venture a judgement of our own on the clarification side of the quoted statement, we feel that the South African situation provides an even more cogent argument for 'core' and 'peripheral' linguistic investigations, because it is much more volatile than the Canadian case. Let us add nonetheless that it is our firm belief that multilingual states rarely make for peaceful coexistence between the different groups of people that reside in them. It will not, however, be our aim in this article to use the data at hand to argue a case for a model of linguistic research but, more modestly, to describe a situation by, among other things, recalling the main phases of the historical development before asking some of the questions which South Africans themselves will very soon have to face.

1. The country's ethno-linguistic profile

The 1990 population figures of R.S.A and the country's ethnic make-up are as follows:

Africans (Blacks)	21.6 million
Whites	5.0 million
Coloureds	3.2 million
Asians	0.9 million
Total	30.7 million

These statistics, however, conceal an extraordinary ethnic and linguistic diversity. Apart from the Khoi-San (formerly called Hottentot-Bushman¹) who constitute a minority (1% of the population), most Africans belong to the Bantu ethnolinguistic group according to the following data (for geographical distribution see Map 2):

		Percentage of Africans
Nguni	- Zulu	} 60%
	- Xhosa	
	- Swasi	
	- Ndebele ²	
Sotho	- North, South and West (Tswana)	32%
	Shangaan - Tsonga	5%
Venda		2%

In the non-white, non-African sections of the population we find the Asians (who are predominantly of Indian origin – the former indentured workforce brought in by the British towards the end of the nineteenth century to work in Natal's sugar-cane plantations³), the Chinese (who left their country in the early days of the revolution) and the numerically more important Coloured people⁴ (in Afrikaans: *kleurlinge*) who are the – today somewhat uneasy – offshoots of the first European settlers and Hottentots, slaves (mainly Malaysian), and, later on, Blacks⁵.

Let us now turn to the white component which, although a minority (not quite 20%) of the overall population, has so far wielded the political and economic power in the country. The whites fall into two main groups: the Afrikaners, who are Afrikaans-speaking, and the non-Afrikaners who are English-speaking (for a brief description of the South African variety of English see Todd/Hancock 1986:429-30; the official 'model', though, is still British English). A finer break-down of the languages spoken by the community reveals the following picture:

¹ These terms are now felt to be derogatory. Their dialects are mainly spoken outside RSA.

² Their language is called Sindebele

³ The Indians are mostly English speakers, but also use as their vernaculars some of India's home languages: Tamil (37%), Hindi (33%), Gudjerati (14%), Urdu (9%), Telugu (7%)

⁴ This term is now rejected by the group as an apartheid label. The majority of this group live in the Cape Town vicinity and 90% are Afrikaans-speaking.

⁵ To complete the black language picture, mention must also be made of Fanakolo, a lingua franca made up of words from African languages, Afrikaans and English with a very basic syntax, created to facilitate communication in the mines. Frowned upon by the Blacks. Finally, there are the small scattered communities of Lemba craftsmen in the Northern Transvaal and Zimbabwe, whose language, Tshilemba, is not of the Bantu family, but a form of Karaga. It is thought that these people originate from the East coast of Central Africa.

58% – Afrikaans

37% – English

5% – Sundry (German, Portuguese, Dutch, Greek, Italian, French, Yiddish).

For the geographical distribution of Afrikaans and English, see Map 1.

2. The situation today

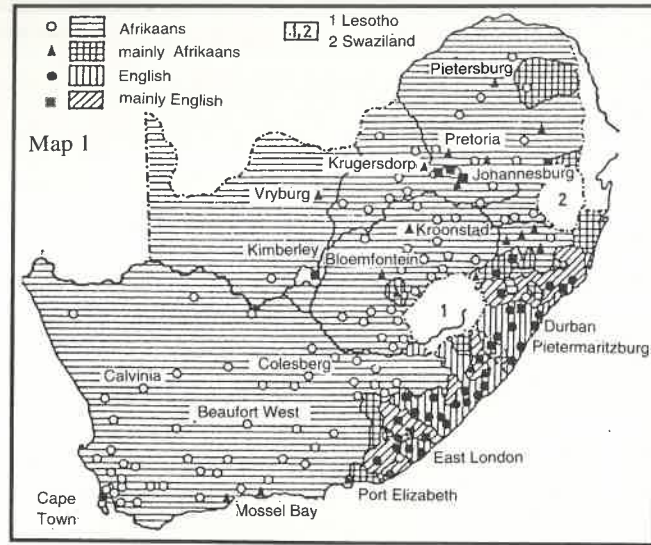
So far only two of the languages that have been mentioned enjoy official status nationwide: Afrikaans and English. What strikes the observer here is the fact that a "minor" tongue (Afrikaans), minor in terms not only of its numerical representation in its home country but also of its obvious limitations as a language of culture and communication with the outside world, is given so much privilege. This situation is of course due to the efforts of the Afrikaners themselves to forge and keep their own identity, the most potent symbol of which, as everyone with a bit of training in socio- and historical linguistics knows, is always language: 'die taal' as the Afrikaners call theirs. Incidentally, South Africa is the only country – to the knowledge of these writers at least – in which a monument (near Paarl, east of Cape Town) has been erected to the glory of one of the national tongues. Not even Iceland or France seem to have gone that far.

The history of Afrikaans falls into three main periods: I) the liberation from the High Language, which Standard Dutch remained for almost three centuries, and thereby from the linguistic schizophrenia that linguists call diglossia⁶. II) the elaboration of the vernacular to cover all areas of human thought and activity (here nineteenth century romanticism and nationalism were as busily at work at the southern tip of the African continent as they were in Europe. III) achieving predominance within the framework of the bilingual setup⁷. It is interesting to notice how the Afrikaners managed to turn their defeat in the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) into a political, and, as

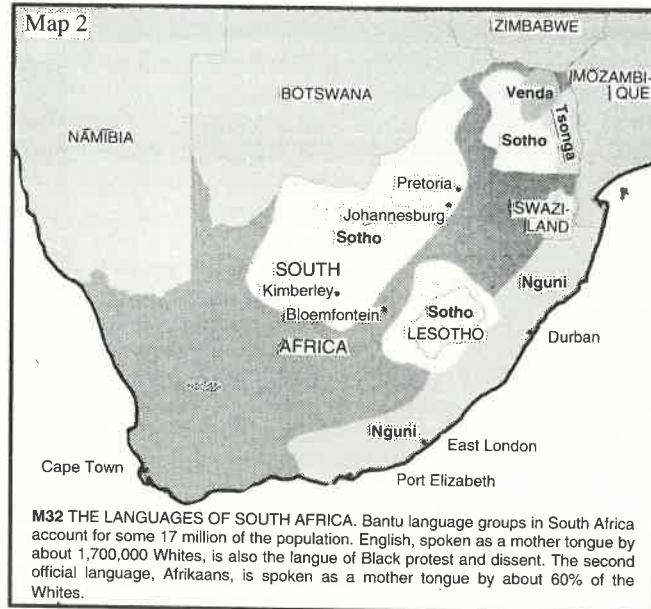
⁶ The relationship between Dutch and Afrikaans is the subject of considerable controversy, mainly because of racial implications. Some schools consider Afrikaans to have evolved from southern dialects (South Holland, Flanders) because of certain shared grammatical features like the double negative. Others claim it to be a simplified form of Dutch that was "creolized" due to the linguistic variety of speakers who came to use it very early on. For a long time, the Afrikaans upper class itself looked down on this "kitchen Dutch", regarding it as unworthy to convey the scriptures. (The Bible was finally translated into Afrikaans as late as 1933 and the Psalmbook 10 years later, but the language had become official alongside English in lieu of Dutch in 1925.)

⁷ The British established official linguistic supremacy very early: in 1822 Lord Somerset proclaimed English the official language of the Cape Colony. The linguistic "kulturkampf" of the Afrikaners had to be fought against two enemies: High Dutch and English. For a detailed account of the evolution of Afrikaans, see Kloss 1978: 151-65.

Map 1: Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africa (from Hutterer 1975:279)



Map 2: distribution of African languages in South Africa (from McCrum/Cran/Mac Neil 1986:303). Figures have been updated by the authors of this article.



it were, an ethnic victory by gradually infiltrating all the channels of politico-administrative power⁸, a take-over that culminated in the institutionalisation of apartheid in 1948.

Of the relationship between white Afrikaans speakers and white English speakers, one can say that it is rather uneasy despite the common skin colour. Hostility towards and distrust of the British by the Afrikaners is, of course, all too well documented and justified by the country's history for one thing, and on the other hand the Afrikaners, despite their numerical predominance, seem – understandably – to suffer from a siege mentality. As far as languages go, it is indeed reminiscent of Quebecer attitudes, except that the latter can, at least psychologically – although they are loath to do so – fall back on metropolitan French for company, whereas the Afrikaner has to be content with the pride of being a linguistic loner. Not only does he have to keep a wary eye on his white linguistic competitors, he also has to fight the growing prestige of English among the black communities, a prestige that he himself contributed to establishing by the enforcement of apartheid. To a black South African, Afrikaans is the language of oppression and English that of liberation, a qualification that to a great extent derives from the international standing of English as a world language, which Afrikaans can hardly claim.⁹

3. What of the linguistic future of the new South Africa?

Since F.W. De Klerk's accession to power (1989) the situation in RSA has been evolving dramatically; it has progressed towards a deconstruction of apartheid, the ultimate goal being the establishment of a democratic society in which every ethnic group would have its say. This of course implies a drastic shift from the situation as we still know it today. It was recently announced (8th May, 1993) that non-racial elections would be held by April 1994. What can the linguistic implications of such an evolution be? As we said earlier, the Afrikaner has always felt threatened, first as a Boer by the Dutch through the East India Company, which incited a number of farmers to "trek" away from Cape Town, then by the Africans who retaliated against the dispossession of their land by the trekkers, then by the British take-over of the Cape Colony, which triggered off the Great Trek and ultimately by the Anglo-Boer wars. Now, after years of asserting Afrikaner pre-eminence through control of the state machinery, the menace takes the form of black power-sharing in the first instance, perhaps followed by total control or at least majority rule by black South Africans according to demographic ratios. In any configuration, the Afrikaans language is sure to lose its (artificially inflated) status as the predominant language of RSA. In the

⁸Government, civil service and the armed forces are almost exclusively in the hands of the Afrikaners.

⁹Let us recall that, in this context, the 1976 Soweto riots were sparked off by a decision to impose more Afrikaans on black education.

worst scenario, it will die out either through absorption or, even more brutally, by official disqualification, if black-white power-sharing turns out to be a mere transition and the black rulers then decide to take revenge on their erstwhile subjugators.

It remains to be seen what Africans will do about the language question once they have gained a measure of power. The majority groups, Nguni and Sotho (92% of all Africans), also enjoy a large measure of linguistic proximity, making the elaboration of a diasystemic standard viable. However, sharp internal dissension on the political plane might block any form of linguistic merging. Would users of that language seek to oust the white idioms or keep them on an equal official footing? Or would a confederative structure give equal status to all languages spoken in South Africa or only to those that have a sufficient number of speakers to warrant the costs incurred by administering and schooling such an ethnic mosaic?¹⁰ It seems that some Afrikaners at least have just provided an answer to our question: the day that a timetable for non-racial elections was announced, an Afrikaner umbrella organisation (the Afrikaner People's Front) was founded under the leadership of four SA Defence Force generals to seek self-determination for the Afrikaner nation in an exclusively Afrikaans-speaking homeland. A couple of days before, a rally was held in Potchefstroom to denounce black violence against white farmers and to envisage "suitable" measures of self-protection.

Whatever the fate of Afrikaans, the only Germanic language to have developed outside Europe, English is sure to consolidate its position in South Africa as a world-embracing language. Not only will it certainly be kept, as it was in India, to offset linguistic fragmentation in a multi-ethnic society, but because in South Africa it has come to be regarded by a large number of Blacks and also by prominent anti-apartheid Afrikaners as the very symbol of free expression and democratic progress, it will also thereby prove wrong those who refuse to see the advance of the English language as anything but a disease spread by economic and political imperialism.¹¹

At any rate the transition of South Africa in the years to come is sure to be an exciting phenomenon for the core and the hyphenated linguist alike, to say nothing of the specialist in African and Germanic linguistics.

¹⁰ In a recent article, "Educated to Serve" by Beulah Ainley, published in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* of April 23 1993, we read: "Many black academics and writers are calling for the teaching of mother-tongue languages in schools. They want African languages to be given equal place with English and Afrikaans or any national language that may be used in post-apartheid South Africa."

¹¹ "Where over 650 artificial languages have failed, English has succeeded; where many other natural languages with political and economic power to back them up have failed, English has succeeded. One reason for this dominance of English is its propensity for acquiring new identities, its power of assimilation, its adaptability to "decolonisation" as a language, its manifestation in a range of varieties, and above all its suitability as a flexible medium for literary and other types of creativity across languages and cultures." (Baugh & Cable 1993:8)

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CURRENT RESEARCH

Here is a brief report on two corpus-based research projects in progress in the Department of English at Lund University, both supported by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR).

The aim of the project "Text-based Contrastive Studies in English" is to compile a bilingual corpus of Swedish and English machine-readable texts and to carry out studies of the structure and communicative use of Swedish and English on the basis of this corpus. The emphasis will be on English, with research focusing on three linguistic areas of central importance in spoken and written communication: *epistemic modality* (Karin Aijmer), *discourse linking* (Bengt Altenberg), and *grammatical focusing devices* (Mats Johansson).

The aim of another project, "Public Speaking", directed by Jan Svartvik, is to investigate speaking to an audience and to describe the differences between such speech and other forms of English usage, private conversation in particular. The study is carried out with the help of the Spoken English Corpus, compiled at Lancaster University and IBM UK Scientific Centre.

Olof Ekedahl is looking at the grammatical content of the prosodic chunks called "tone units" and Bryan Mosey is analysing such features as pauses and speech rate in professional speech.

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