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# Restandardisation: Eradicating ideology in standardisation?

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*sharing knowledge - shaping debate*



# Introduction

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Standard languages are invariably the preferred varieties of the ruling class or ruling strata in any given society. They prevail as the norm because of the economic, political-military or cultural-symbolic power of the rulers, not because they are ‘natural’ in any meaning of the term.

(Alexander 2013:93-94)



# Afrikaans

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- 6 855 082 native speakers
  - 3 442 164 coloured (“brown”)
  - 2 710 461 white
  - 602 166 black
  - 58 700 Asian and Indian(Statistics South Africa, 2012)
- 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch creole
- Other influences: French, German, Malay, Portuguese, Khoekhoe, Bantu languages



# Standard Afrikaans

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- Written since 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Standardised since 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Ideology of Afrikaner Nationalism (racists nationalist movement)
- Based on East Cape Afrikaans (mostly spoken by white speakers)
- Other varieties: Cape Afrikaans, Orange River Afrikaans (mostly spoken by black speakers)



# Destandardisation

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- Result of liberation movement
- Decline in acceptance of old standards
- Causes highly standardised language to regress to situation of dialectic diversity
- The end of standard language?
- Tension between standardisation and destandardisation



## Standard language & Ideology

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Politics is the cradle in which standard languages are born. To be a standard language, means to bear the sins of politics. In short, to be dragged into the politics of everyday life. To blame a standard language for being used by those in power, essentially implies that you blame it for being a standard language.

(Van Rensburg 2000: 73-74)



## Standard language & Ideology

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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.

(Webb 2010:113)



## Standard language & Ideology

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[...] 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, [...].

(Webb 2010:115)





# Restandardisation

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- Restitution of linguistic injustices and empowerment of disadvantaged speakers
- Restandardisation is language planning which is aimed at revising the form and function of a standard language and influencing the linguistic behaviour of a speech community in order to create a democratic standard.



## Restandardisation & Democratisation

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1. Breaking down negative perceptions about nonstandard varieties
2. Broadening limits of acceptability
3. Expanding the standard
4. Less prescriptive approach to standardisation
5. Top-down and bottom-up language planning



## References

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**Thank you**  
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