

# **THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH ON AFRIKAANS**



**BC Donaldson**

## THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH ON AFRIKAANS

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**A case study of linguistic change in a  
language contact situation**

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“Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden, man muß nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken.” From Goethe's Maximen und Reflexionen

## PREFACE

The last time a monograph devoted entirely to the question of anglicisms in Afrikaans appeared was in 1937. (cf. Rousseau 1937) Since then a great deal has changed. The Afrikaner has become much more bilingual than he was in those days and he has lost even the passive knowledge of Dutch that was prevalent back in the thirties, so soon after Afrikaans replaced Dutch as the other official language of South Africa. Most Afrikaners are now even less a product of the platteland than they were earlier this century; there is no longer a geographic and cultural gap between them and their English speaking compatriots. These new circumstances have led to a degree of English influence on Afrikaans that is without compare in the world of European languages. And yet the world is largely ignorant of this unique linguistic situation. It is my hope that this book will be read both inside and outside South Africa: in the former case I hope it may serve as a useful update on what is occurring in the language as a result of the intimate contact with English and one day serve as a record of the situation as it was in the 1980's (as Rousseau's book has recorded for posterity the situation prevailing in the 1930's); and in the latter case I hope that those involved in research on bilingualism will now take cognisance of the relevance of the South African situation to their field of science and not pretend it doesn't exist just because they find the politics of the country concerned distasteful.

Throughout this book I have employed, in line with common practice, the Harvard method when referring to other sources. Full details of the works cited can be found in the bibliography at the back.

Although the word *Diets* is no longer current in Holland because of the negative connotations it acquired during World War II, it is still frequently used in South Africa where these connotations do not exist and where it occurs as an indispensable collective term for Dutch, Frisian and Afrikaans. As English does not have such a term, I have taken the liberty of using it indiscriminately with this meaning as if it were English.

Many of the examples given in the corpus in chapter seven appear in lists. It was not always practical for the notes to which the numbers in those lists refer, to be placed at the foot of the pages concerned; in such cases the notes will be found at the end of the lists, sometimes several pages further on. Where it was technically feasible for the numbers to refer to conventional footnotes, these will be found on the page in question.

To avoid confusion arising in situations where (cf. p.50), for example, may refer either to a work under discussion at that point or to a page of this

book, such page numbers are in italics when reference is being made to the latter, e.g. (cf. p.50).

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Due largely to the fact that this book has been widely prescribed at South African universities, I was offered the unexpected pleasure of being able to prepare a second edition within a year of the appearance of the first. This edition differs from the first in several small but important ways. Firstly, it has been improved typographically and secondly and more importantly, it has taken into consideration many of the criticisms of the first that were made in the many reviews of the book. In addition, Marja van de Vathorst of Utrecht has gone through the corpus with a careful eye to weeding out the expressions which slipped through as examples of anglicisms in Afrikaans but which appear to be known in Dutch after all. Many other refinements and small corrections have been made to the text as a whole.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The financial assistance awarded to me by the Human Sciences Research Council in 1985 is hereby also gratefully acknowledged. All opinions expressed and all conclusions made in this work are those of the author and must not be regarded as those of the HSRC.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABN	Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands (Standard Dutch)
Afr.	Afrikaans
ANS	<i>Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst</i>
AWS	<i>Afrikaanse Woordelys en Spelreëls</i>
Dt.	Dutch
Eng.	English
fig.	figurative
Flem.	Flemish
Gk.	Greek
HAT	<i>Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal</i>
intr.	intransitive
Lat.	Latin
n.d.	no date
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
s.o.	someone
s.t.	something
tr.	transitive
WAT	<i>Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal</i>
WNT	<i>Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal</i>



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