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Gary P. Barkhuizen^a & Ute Knoch^a

^a Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand

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Missing Afrikaans: 'Linguistic Longing' among Afrikaans-speaking Immigrants in New Zealand

Gary P. Barkhuizen and Ute Knoch

Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Immigrants arriving in a new country typically have varying ideas about the relative status of their native language and the language of the receiving society, and some have strategies for dealing with maintenance and shift. In all cases there are differences between the immigrants' language experiences in the two countries. This paper reports on a study which investigated what it is that Afrikaans speakers who have immigrated to New Zealand miss about speaking Afrikaans post-immigration; that is, the focus is on the participants' emotional responses to diminished exposure to and opportunities for using Afrikaans and the possible consequences of these circumstances, or what the researchers have termed 'linguistic longing'. The study also explores the strategies implemented by the participants to deal with this longing. The findings indicate that most of the participants claim to miss a variety of linguistic aspects previously available to them in their home country, that some of them consciously implement maintenance strategies in order to fill this gap, but that inevitably signs of linguistic longing are signs of language loss/shift.

Keywords: linguistic longing, maintenance and shift, language and immigration

Introduction

Immigrants arriving in a new country have varying attitudes with regard to the maintenance of their language and culture while becoming a part of the immigrant-receiving society (Dovidio & Esses, 2001; Fishman, 2001). While many have devised and implemented successful strategies for fulfilling their maintenance goals, their language and cultural experiences in the new country will inevitably be in some ways deficient in relation to their experiences in their home country (Koplow & Messinger, 1990; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). There will be something missing, something they cannot do now that they could do then; for example, simply walking into a shop and asking for an item in one's own language, or, even if using the receiving country's language, not being able to use expressions or idioms or dialect-specific vocabulary which may be common in the home country.

In this paper, we report on one aspect of a larger study which investigated the language-related experiences of Afrikaans-speaking immigrants from South Africa living in New Zealand. During interviews with participants they often indicated that there were features of their earlier linguistic lives that they missed. In other words, they perceived a gap between their language behaviour in the new country and their language behaviour in their native country (Mirsky, 1991), and they missed or longed for some of the ways of old.

Most participants realised and accepted that things would never be the same, but some implemented strategies in an attempt to fill the gap and thereby to ease their feelings of 'linguistic longing'.

Within the context of this study, linguistic longing refers to the emotional response to the realisation that (1) opportunities for using and exposure to one's mother-tongue have diminished and (2) the consequences may be individual language loss (i.e. attrition) and/or intergenerational language loss (i.e. shift). In this article, therefore, we focus on the emotional value participants attribute to their mother-tongue, Afrikaans, as manifest in their expressions of linguistic longing, and as 'language attitudes affect language maintenance' (García, 2003: 22), we relate their emotional experiences to their mother-tongue maintenance efforts.

Immigrants and Language Shift

Research into language maintenance and shift in numerous contexts around the world has been well documented (e.g. de Klerk, 2000; Fishman, 2001; Hulsen *et al.*, 2002; Putz, 1991). In the USA, for example, Veltman (2000: 61) paints a rather pessimistic picture for minority languages, stating that

the presence of large, economically deprived, immigrant minority (language) groups characterized by high degrees of institutional completeness has been insufficient to produce the maintenance of ethnic languages in the United States, either extensively or even minimally.

Fishman's work (1989, 1991) on minority and immigrant languages has identified a common pattern of language shift over three or four generations. Shift is accelerated if, among other factors, the immigrants seek interaction with other language and ethnic groups and if their cultural heritage is not strongly maintained. Of course, contact between minority/immigrant languages and the language of the majority group does not always result in language shift. Hebrew, Welsh and Maori in New Zealand are languages where maintenance and revitalisation are being achieved.

In the New Zealand context, Holmes *et al.* (1993) report on language maintenance and shift in three ethnically different communities in Wellington, the capital city; the Tongan, Chinese and Greek communities. Although their research suggests a need for revival of all three languages at a macrolevel, it demonstrates that in the home and the community the factors identified by Fishman (1985) as important for language maintenance (including institutional resources such as schools, newspapers, TV/radio, churches, etc.) are in fact contributing to maintenance.

The situation with other immigrant groups in New Zealand, including Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, is probably very similar. New Zealand has a long history of immigration. Most immigrants in the past have come from European countries (like the UK and the Netherlands), from Pacific Island Nations (like Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and the Cook Islands), and more recently from Asian nations (mostly mainland China, Hong Kong and Korea). Since the early 1990s New Zealand has also received a large number of immigrants from South Africa. Amongst these are more or less equal numbers of English and

Afrikaans native speakers. Census data (Statistics New Zealand) show that in 1991 there were 5652 South Africans living in New Zealand (there were no linguistic data in 1991). According to more recent census data, the numbers grew to 11,334 and 26,061 in 1996 and 2001 respectively. Of those, 5109 and 12,783 claimed to be Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers. These figures clearly show that the number of South Africans immigrating to New Zealand increased dramatically in the 10-year period between 1991 and 2001, and indications (see Smith, 2001) are that these numbers have increased further since then; some estimates are that the figure is close to 35,000 (data on the first language of immigrants since 2001 are not available, but it can be assumed that the ratio of Afrikaans to English native speakers has stayed more or less the same).

South Africans have settled all over New Zealand, though by far the largest number have chosen the biggest city, Auckland, as their home, particularly the suburbs on the North Shore, and Howick, a suburb on the eastern side of the city. Although scattered across New Zealand, the Afrikaans community has very strong ties, boosted through the community activities of the Afrikaans Club, an organisation which issues regular newsletters and organises frequent cultural activities. There are also regular Afrikaans church services in various towns and cities. The Afrikaans community in New Zealand illustrates that strong ties can exist, even if its members are scattered throughout a country. This phenomenon has been described by Zelinsky and Lee (1998) as 'heterolocalism', that is, the existence of an ethnic/national community without any significant spatial clustering.

Despite the obvious benefits of both suburban clustering and a heterolocalistic arrangement for the maintenance of Afrikaans, the situation is still not the same as living in South Africa where Afrikaans is one of the official languages, is widely spoken and in many areas still the lingua franca of the community. The experience of this difference or gap led to a number of Afrikaans speakers who participated in this study pointing out (even without prompting) that they missed various aspects of their former Afrikaans-speaking lives. When this happens, they make conscious choices about whether or not to maintain their linguistic (and cultural) heritage. In this article, we describe what participants miss about speaking Afrikaans, their reasons for their linguistic longing and the strategies they adopt (if any) to compensate for what it is they miss. We end by relating the findings to issues of language maintenance and loss. But first, we provide some background about English and Afrikaans in South Africa.

English and Afrikaans in South Africa

In 1948 the Afrikaans-speaking white population obtained political control in South Africa and Afrikaans and English became the two official languages, though Afrikaans was more widely used in government-controlled institutions such as the civil service and the defence force. The tide against the power of Afrikaans started to turn in 1976 when school children in Soweto demonstrated against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools. Since 1994 Afrikaans has become just one of 11 official languages,

Table 1 Home languages in percentages of South Africa population by population group and total population

	<i>African</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian/Asian</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Total population</i>
Afrikaans	0.7	79.5	1.7	59.1	13.3
English	0.5	18.9	93.8	39.3	8.2
isiXhosa	22.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	17.6
isiZulu	30.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	23.8

Source: Statistics South Africa (2001).

sharing equal status with nine African languages. There is growing evidence that the status of English is rising among South Africans (Bowerman, 2000; Kamwangamalu, 2000) and that Afrikaans is experiencing a slight downward turn (Cluver, 1993; Webb & Kriel, 2000), mainly due to its association with the apartheid regime.

Today, there are 5.9 million people who speak one or another variety of Afrikaans as a home language (Statistics South Africa, 2001). This constitutes 13.3% of the overall population and is overall ranked third after isiZulu (23.8%) and isiXhosa (17.6%) (see Table 1 for a summary of these data). English is spoken by 8.2% of the overall population as a home language. Afrikaans is the home language of 79.5% of the so-called coloured population and 59.1% of the white population, whilst English is spoken by 93.8% of the Indian and Asian population and by 39.3% of the white population. Van Rensburg (1999) reports that approximately 15 million people in South Africa can speak and understand Afrikaans, which is roughly a third of the population. He adds that, particularly in larger cities, second and third language speakers of Afrikaans fall into the 20-year old plus category, whilst younger ages rarely know Afrikaans. Nonetheless, Afrikaans is widely used in public and private life with more than half of its primary users being non-white people.

The Study: Data Collection and Analysis

The participants in the study are 28 Afrikaans-speaking white South African immigrants in New Zealand. They targeted New Zealand as their country of choice for a number of reasons: some for employment reasons or because they had married a Kiwi,¹ but most claim to have done so to escape the high crime rate in South Africa and to provide a better life and education for their children. Interviews were carried out in various locations in New Zealand, from Invercargill at the bottom of the South Island, to Christchurch and Blenheim also in the South Island, Wellington the capital, to New Plymouth, Tauranga, Rotorua, Auckland in the North Island, and to Whangarei in the north of the North Island. Most interviews were conducted in the homes of participants, though there were occasions when the participant’s workplace was more convenient. Usually, the interviews took place with the participants alone but sometimes their partners or family members were present.

The researchers, who are both South Africans, gave participants the option of speaking either Afrikaans or English.² The participants chose mainly English, though quite a bit of codeswitching took place. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on topics to do with the participants' language background in South Africa, language use and language-related experiences in New Zealand and their perceptions of their changing identity. The focus of this article is a question asked near the end of the interviews regarding what the participants miss ('waarna verlang jy ...?'; ['what do you miss ...?']) about the Afrikaans language in New Zealand. Interestingly, this question was not asked in the initial interviews, but the interviewers decided to include it systematically in later interviews because of the frequent unprompted comments covering this issue.

All the interviews were transcribed by one researcher and then checked by the other. The data were then entered into N6, a software package for the analysis of qualitative data. N6 assists data analysis by following the steps of qualitative data analysis described by Miles and Huberman (1994). Themes were coded and categorised, patterns in and between the categories were identified and finally interpretations of these arrangements were made (see Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The categories are represented by the six subsections that constitute the Findings section below.

The Participants

The ages of the 28 participants ranged from 16 to 75. At the time of the interviews they had been in New Zealand for between four months and 14 years. Illustrative comments from 19 of the participants are used in this article. Details of these participants are summarised in Table 2.

Findings

Most participants stated that they clearly miss certain things about the Afrikaans language and speaking Afrikaans since moving to New Zealand. As language and culture are obviously very closely related (Norton, 2000; Schumann, 1986), they also mentioned aspects of South African and Afrikaans cultural life which they long for since arriving in New Zealand. Embedded in their comments are their beliefs about the enormous psychological importance (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002) of Afrikaans for their sense of personal emotional security, the expression and negotiation of self-identity and their socialisation into a new culture (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999). In addition, the data showed a number of strategies adopted by the participants for dealing with what they miss. A small group of people said that for varying reasons they don't miss anything. In what follows, we focus on what it is that participants miss, and (if mentioned) why. We end this section by considering the reasons why some participants do not long for Afrikaans.

Table 2 Details of participants

<i>Name^a</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Location in NZ</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Time in NZ</i>
Rikus	Male	40s	Auckland ^b	Communications officer	2 years
Bertha	Female	Late 30s	South Island city	Physiotherapist	2½ years
Marietjie	Female	30s	North Island city	Teacher	4 years
Boetie	Male	19	North Island city	Student	2 years
Gert	Male	Early 40s	Auckland	Financial adviser	7 months
Ian	Male	Mid-30s	South Island city	Lecturer	4 months
Neil	Male	30s	Auckland	Salesperson	3 years
Nan	Female	75	North island town	Retired scientist	5 years
Uli	Male	30s	North Island city	Engineer	3 years
Radie	Male	Early 40s	North Island city	Manager	5 years
Marike	Female	Early 40s	South Island city	Scientist	2 years
Nonnie	Female	Early 40s	Auckland	Social worker	15 months
Kobus	Male	40s	North Island town	Electrician	14 years
Danie	Male	61	North Island town	Solicitor	7 years
Ilana	Female	Late 40s	South Island city	Technical writer	9 years
Marlies	Female	Late 40s	South Island town	Teacher	1½ years
Irma	Female	30	Auckland	Teacher	4 years
Tim	Male	68	Auckland	Teacher, counselor	5 years
Eddy	Male	Late 40s	South Island town	Lecturer	1½ years

^aAll names are pseudonyms.
^bAuckland is the largest city in New Zealand with a population of about 1.2 million and is located in the north of the North Island.

Ease of communication

Rikus, from Auckland, feels that it is easier for him to use Afrikaans rather than English in day-to-day life. When talking to New Zealanders, however, he sometimes struggles to communicate efficiently and easily. This is not so much to do with his proficiency in English as it is to do with his identification with Afrikaans on a personal level:

My father spoke Afrikaans, it's just something that I grew up with, so it was easy for me to understand the language, I understand the character of the language, my life, your life reacts around the character of the language.

Bertha feels similar:

[I miss] going to a supermarket and being able to speak Afrikaans and being more articulate and explaining exactly what you want in your own mother language. You can just say 'I want that and that' and they'll understand. . . . Yes, I miss just going to the bank and doing things in Afrikaans.

Related to ease of communication is the effort required to speak English so much of the time; in other words speaking English is hard linguistic work! And accompanying this is a feeling of deprivation when participants don't have the opportunity to use or listen to Afrikaans for some time. Marietjie, a primary school teacher, had the following to say:

The only other thing that is personally difficult for me, is I have now for about three times I went away for a couple of days to conferences with Kiwi people and at the conference I would just speak English the whole day and that was horrible for me. At the end of the day I would just have to phone home just to be able to speak Afrikaans a little bit. You know I feel deprived and last weekend I went away to Auckland again with the English people and Saturday night I couldn't take it anymore because I haven't spoken any Afrikaans. I need to speak Afrikaans.

There were some participants, however, who did state that their level of English proficiency hindered their effective communication. Boetie, a student at a tertiary institution, explains, 'when I really have to say something then I don't get the words out so good in English. So in Afrikaans I would have done it much better'. Gert, from Auckland, says that he misses being able to use Afrikaans because he has trouble remembering the appropriate words in English:

If I speak to a Kiwi, sometimes there is a particular word that you wanna use and you can't recall it. The old computer can't find it in the memory bank. . . . If you speak to a South African English-speaking person . . . and you would say [a certain Afrikaans word] but you can't do it when you speak to a Kiwi guy, because they have no idea what you're talking about.

Participants sometimes feel that English doesn't always have such fitting, descriptive words as Afrikaans does. This situation forces them, when talking to non-South Africans, to translate an Afrikaans word or phrase which would be familiar to any South African into an English form appropriate for a New Zealander, as Ian, who had only been in New Zealand for four months, explains: 'sometimes you have the word in your mind in Afrikaans and then you realize that English doesn't have a word that is as descriptive as the Afrikaans word might be'.

Aesthetic dimensions of Afrikaans

With reference to linguistic longing, many of the participants referred to the beauty and richness of the Afrikaans language, qualities which they perceive less frequently in New Zealand simply as a result of diminished exposure to the language. Neil, a young man living in Auckland, is married to a New Zealand woman. His comments illustrate clearly the emotional attachment he has to Afrikaans, which becomes especially evident to him when used in a foreign context:

I still have a soft spot in my heart for Afrikaans and it is just something that you got passion about. I mean, it is just like a passion about sport, I have a passion about the language. Because there is certain things about the Afrikaans language that you can't really describe to someone, it is just different, but it's a nice difference. When you communicate with someone in Afrikaans and you say the little things it is like 'wow'. It is quite awesome, it is a neat feeling when you are in a foreign country.

Nan, an elderly woman who lived her life as a scientific researcher, thinks that the Afrikaans spoken in New Zealand is simple and is losing its richness: 'We are developing a very simple, call it a simple Afrikaans. It's just about the weather and "how are you?" and so on and we are losing all those beautiful words'. Similarly, Uli, a young father of three children, feels that Afrikaans idioms are getting lost in New Zealand: 'But you miss the idioms and the ... Ja, you are not using the idioms so much anymore. It is just something that gets lost'. He regrets that his children will not be able to enjoy using these idioms and in fact predicts that they will learn hardly any Afrikaans at all.

The use of culturally specific idiomatic expressions was probably the most frequently referred to aspect of linguistic longing. To participants, idioms appear to hold symbolic importance for distinguishing the Afrikaans language and its associated culture from other languages and cultures. Not being able to use these idioms freely (in both Afrikaans, as typically they use less Afrikaans, and English, as English-speaking New Zealanders would not understand them) is constantly missed by participants. During the interview with Radie he remarked that it was impossible to tell a Kiwi in English that he was *gatvol* [extremely irritated about something]. Marike even believed that New Zealand English lacked idioms and began to wonder if this was the same for South African English:

I use a lot of idiomatic expressions, I grew up with that a lot ... Can't remember whether my English friends in South Africa used it a lot as

well. So I miss that richness. The language here doesn't feel that rich to me... I don't know if English people in South Africa use idioms that much as we. I think Afrikaans people do... Yeah, I just miss the whole Afrikaans feeling.

Nonnie in Auckland felt annoyed that she couldn't use Afrikaans expressions freely in her workplace:

I suppose what I miss is if I'm here in my office and I sort of have an expression which is so apt and so descriptive in Afrikaans and they don't understand it, whereas everywhere in South Africa where you go most English speaking people will understand that.

Closely related to the aesthetic appeal of Afrikaans for participants is the expression of humour in the language. A significant number of them claimed to miss a particularly brand of humour associated with Afrikaans (possibly in terms of linguistic expression or cultural peculiarity), although none of them specifically pointed out the nature of that humour. Some believe that Kiwis have no sense of humour; others perceive it as different and they find it hard to cope with Kiwis not understanding Afrikaans humour. The following comments illustrate this point. The first is from Danie a 61-year-old who lives in the north of the country: 'But I miss that humour, that is what I miss. I enjoy the Kiwi humour, but it is not the same as the Afrikaans humour'. Ilana has lived in New Zealand for nine years:

I thought initially that the people here have no sense of humor, and typically to realize that yes they do, but it's very very different. And say something because I thought it was funny, and having someone explain to me very very carefully that no it wasn't funny and they took me very seriously. After four or five years it was OK.

Rikus expresses a similar sentiment: 'What I struggle with the language is the sense of humour or the relationship of language and humour in Afrikaans is totally different from the relationship in English. There's contexts and things that you use in English and in Afrikaans that is totally different'. He added later that he had tried to translate a few Afrikaans jokes that had been doing the rounds on the internet to his workmates, and which he thought hilarious, but they only fell on unappreciative ears.

Afrikaans as the language of religion

As reported by Holmes *et al.* (1993), the church is an integral part of people's cultural life. They report in their findings that (amongst other factors) successful language maintenance in a host country can be based around community religious organisations. In New Zealand, several churches cater for Afrikaans speakers. Some church services in Auckland are conducted entirely in Afrikaans and others, although in English, have a solid group of Afrikaans speakers in the congregation. Although more and more initiatives like these are springing up around New Zealand, not all the participants in the study have the opportunity to take part in them. Several mention that they miss the

Afrikaans church service and particularly singing hymns in Afrikaans. Kobus adds:

I miss going to church in Afrikaans...I think to go to church in Afrikaans is really crucial and to be able to sing church hymns in Afrikaans. I miss that. Yeah, it's sort of not the same to go to church in English somehow for me. I don't know why. Maybe I think God is an Afrikaans dude, you know.

Mixing with Afrikaans speakers

When interacting with non-Afrikaans-speaking Kiwis, Afrikaans speakers obviously cannot speak Afrikaans. What they miss therefore is the opportunity to speak Afrikaans freely and frequently with work colleagues and friends. Of course, many still have opportunities to speak Afrikaans within their families or with other Afrikaans friends. But their interactions are usually limited to these domains. Neil has a Kiwi wife and has only Kiwi friends. He really misses the opportunity to speak Afrikaans. He plays rugby for a club in Auckland where all members are New Zealanders, and otherwise mixes with Kiwi workmates in the company in which he works and with his wife's family. He adds: 'I haven't really made those friendships that I had back home. And it is wrong to actually sit here and think back the whole time and think "I wish Jan was here"... Here it is a little bit different'.

Marlies describes how she often feels excluded at work. A teacher, she describes her experiences when she comes into the staffroom at break time:

If it was still in South Africa at school and everywhere you will always be part of a group but here sometimes I feel if there's groups sitting down in the staff room and busy in a conversation, I will take my stuff and go and sit there [another place] and take my newspaper, and I won't do that in South Africa. Do you understand what I mean? It is just that sometimes I don't feel comfortable. If they were all South African and Afrikaans speaking, I just think that... sometimes you wanna say something but you don't really, if it was Afrikaans it would just be much easier.

Couples with a Kiwi partner find it an additional strain not being able to share certain expressions or jokes with the partner. Irma is recently married to her Kiwi husband:

It is the little things in Afrikaans that you can't translate into English and even just the way people say something like *Eet jy lekker, eet jy mooi?* [Are you enjoying your meal?]. How can you translate that? You know, and anyway in that book, I was laughing and then I lost control and I started crying. It was so funny and I felt like I didn't know what to do, it was so funny and I couldn't explain it to [my husband], I couldn't share it, so I just started crying.

Afrikaans media

Apart from using Afrikaans oneself for communicative purposes, participants often referred to longing for reading or listening to Afrikaans in certain media, such as books, magazines, newspapers, radio and television programmes, music and CDs. Nonnie in Auckland says: 'What I do miss, yes, what I do miss is not being able to just walk into a bookstore and find Afrikaans books. That I really miss. Because I love my Afrikaans books'. Irma explains why she misses South African media and why she tries to acquire it regularly:

I really miss heaps of stuff. I try and read, I have lots of Afrikaans books, I read *Die Burger* [a South African Afrikaans newspaper] on the internet, so I try to keep in touch and I have some Afrikaans music, some Koos Kombuis and stuff like that. But I really miss hearing Afrikaans in its natural state, because when I hear Afrikaans here it sounds so forced and artificial, when I read something in that magazine, [New Zealand magazine with a South African interest], it sounds artificial. We don't speak like this, I don't anyway. I miss that.

A common reaction to the lack of Afrikaans-based media is to source it directly from South Africa or from friends in New Zealand. Nan, who is 75 years old says:

We get the *Rooi Rose* [an Afrikaans magazine] and we hand it out. I have read the book on Matthee's new book, *dinges van die Kaap*, '*Pieterella van die Kaap*' a while ago, a friend that came brought it to me. We try and keep up with the CDs and the songs too. And we had, just a week ago, we had one of the South African singers here again. And he comes up and we are just 20 in this little hall, but it is good to listen to Afrikaans again. And there is all the nice new songs. Yesterday I listened to somebody's CD and it said: *Die kabouter wat die reen gaan haal het en teen my venster gemors het*. Now isn't that beautiful? You know, ooo I get goose pimples about that. And another thing is it's not only that, I've got Goosen's little songs, do you know his Griqua songs. Yes, Anton Goosen... It is so beautiful, you know.

Not missing Afrikaans

Although the majority of participants perceive a gap in their language and cultural behaviour since immigrating to New Zealand, a very small number report not missing anything or missing little about the Afrikaans language or its associated culture. The main reason for this is that they are surrounded by Afrikaans speakers in their families or in the community, and this provides them with ample opportunity to use the language. Kobus says, for example:

I built myself a little comfort zone I think by talking Afrikaans at home every day with the kids. So I think a lot of people would be worse off than me that don't. They might miss it a lot more but I still use the language every day.

And Tim, a language teacher adds,

You know, in North Shore, we have been spoiled by the fact that there are so many Afrikaans speakers. [And] in this establishment where I teach, maybe one in four, if not one in three, but let's stay at the bottom of the scale, one in four understands Afrikaans.

He concludes, 'We don't miss it because we talk it. We don't miss it because we email it. We don't miss it because we phone it'.

Other reasons for not missing Afrikaans are stress at work (i.e. too busy to worry about missing Afrikaans) and the wish to improve English. Eddy, who lectures at a tertiary institution, provides both these reasons:

We have got a lot of teaching hours, you know, we are so busy to be honest. . . . I would say rather the challenge of still improving my let's say my scientific level of English that is more of a challenge for me at this stage. . . . I think that is more of a challenge for me than the desire to be conversing in Afrikaans at this stage.

Strategies for Dealing with Linguistic Longing

There are a number of ways in which the Afrikaans-speaking immigrants to New Zealand in this study engage with Afrikaans. In this section, however, we are concerned only with those strategies they employ for dealing with their linguistic longing. These strategies are similar to those which have been identified among other immigrant groups striving to maintain their mother tongue (Fishman, 1989; García, 2003; Pauwels, 2004; Seville-Troike, 2000). One of those mentioned above is becoming involved with church activities and religious services which are either conducted in Afrikaans or which include a number of Afrikaans speakers, usually families. Another, also already mentioned, involves reading and listening to Afrikaans media. Yet another strategy mentioned by the participants is their attempt to surround themselves with South Africans at work or in their spare time. Gert, a financial adviser, reports dealing entirely with Afrikaans or South African clients at the time of the interview. He is concerned about this though, and anticipates having to shift his work language to English in the future:

I am just working amongst South Africans now. I am finding enough clients now, but I feel a bit uneasy, 'cause I think eventually I will have to take the step and cross over, you know I will sometimes have to cross the bridge and maybe just arrive at the other side of the river for a while. Especially, it may dry up on this side, so I'm not really confident enough at this stage yet to try and conduct business with Kiwis and I think mainly because my language, because the accent, you know, you stick out like a sore finger I think when you open your mouth.

Some parents have ensured that one domain in which they and their children will continue to speak Afrikaans is within the family. They have an explicit family language policy (Roer-Strier, 2000), which can take various forms. One New Plymouth family has decided that only Afrikaans will be

spoken in the home, and argue that there is enough opportunity outside the home for the children to learn English. The same policy is practised in Rikus' household in Auckland:

That was a conscious decision [to speak Afrikaans in the home]. It was something that we discussed. It was not something that just happened. We said, 'how will we handle it in the home?' Will we do as some people argue, try to switch to English in the household and in that way hopefully assist the kids that they can adapt quicker? Then we thought with no personal knowledge of whether that will work or not, let's make a decision 'yes' or 'no'. And we said 'no'. Because first of all I thought, if we had to teach them English we would teach them all the wrong English as you just heard [referring to an error he made earlier]. . . . And we thought there is ample opportunity in a day of five, six hours at school, sport afterwards, sport over the weekend, sleep-over with kids, our kids have all got Kiwi friends, South African friends, Russian, you name it, different kinds of nations of friends. And we thought between all of those hours, average maybe ten hours a day, they will have ample opportunity to acquire a good English so that they will kind of have no accent almost or no problem with it when they are adults.

There are other family policy arrangements as well. Kobus is married to a Kiwi woman and has lived in New Zealand for 14 years. Both his children were born in New Zealand. He has always spoken only Afrikaans to his children, and his wife, who has not learned Afrikaans, speaks English to them. The children are now bilingual, though they cannot read and write Afrikaans. Kobus, who is in his 40s, maintains that his own Afrikaans is 'a bit smaller now . . . just basic, social everyday language'.

Finally, one of the most powerful strategies for alleviating feelings of linguistic longing (and also for numbing emotional longing), is to maintain contact with Afrikaans-speaking family and friends in South Africa (see Stroessel, 1998, cited in Hulsén *et al.*, 2002). Almost every participant indicated that they do so; sometimes weekly on the telephone or even daily by e-mail – and all in Afrikaans. Though, even still, such contact reveals signs of language loss, as Marike from the South Island explains:

I always speak on the phone probably three times a month. I phone my sister and she phones me once a month. We speak quite a lot of Afrikaans. I have found when I've emailed that I have definitely also written grammar probably sometimes in English, you know verb at end or beginning I don't know. And there are days when you've been exposed to a certain English word a lot where you are trying to think 'what would that be in Afrikaans?' . . . There isn't quite the same word in Afrikaans or you wouldn't know what to call it in Afrikaans.

Discussion and Conclusion

Notwithstanding the comments above about not missing Afrikaans, it is clear that many Afrikaans-speaking South Africans do. Figure 1 illustrates the

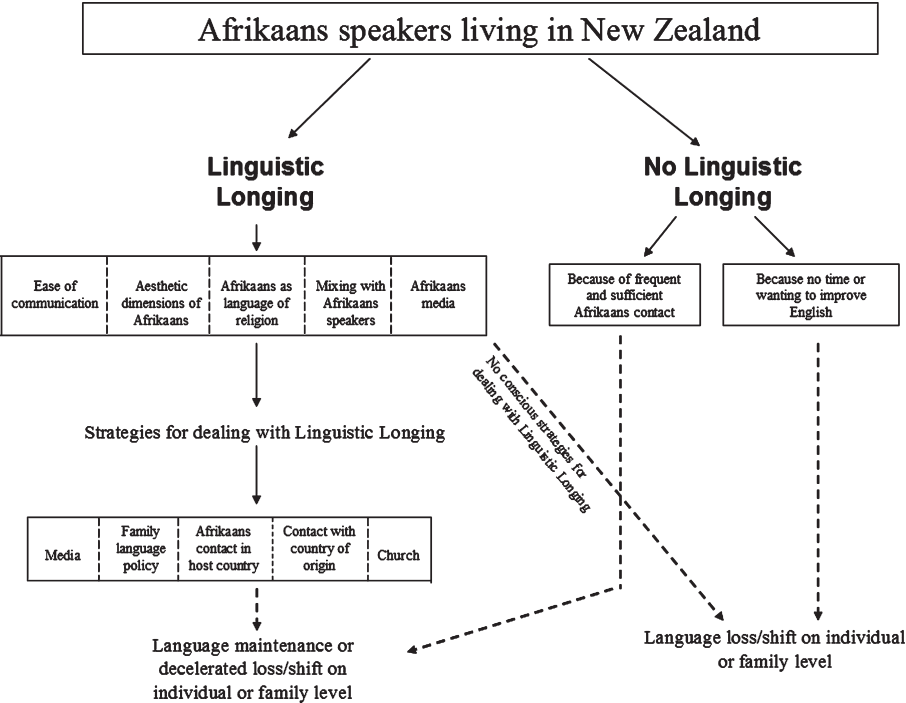


Figure 1 Afrikaans speakers’ linguistic longing in New Zealand

findings of this study and suggests possible outcomes (the dotted lines) for these immigrants in terms of Afrikaans maintenance and loss (both intra- and intergenerational). Those that experience linguistic longing usually make a conscious effort to connect with their language and culture (e.g. the media, family language policy, social contact with Afrikaans speakers in New Zealand and in South Africa and through engaging in religious activities conducted in Afrikaans). Such efforts no doubt lead to a certain degree of language maintenance, at least in the short term (see Clyne, 1991; Schrauf, 1999), and at the microlevel of the individual. They may also lead to a deceleration of the loss process, for themselves in terms of attrition and for later generations (see Fishman, 2001); this is not the same as reversing language shift (Fishman, 1991), but rather a slowing down of the original shift pattern. However, there will be a difference (a deficiency in terms of mother tongue usage) between a person’s current language behaviour and what it was in the past. In the long term, signs of loss and shift towards the receiving-country language will inevitably start to show (Mesthrie, 2003; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Signs of linguistic longing, therefore, are signs of language loss.

As Figure 1 indicates, there are probably also Afrikaans speakers who do not consciously implement maintenance strategies and who will experience loss/shift, just as there will be those who claim not to be missing Afrikaans and because of frequent and sufficient contact with other Afrikaans speakers

will either maintain their Afrikaans or experience decelerated loss (Pauwels, 2004; Veltman, 2000).

Furthermore, in any immigrant group there are always members who are quite happy to be assimilated into the receiving society (Berry, 2001; Stephan *et al.*, 1999), often believing that it is the best option for themselves. Parents claim, as did a number in this study, that doing so will ensure a good education for their children and enhance their own employment prospects. However, there will also always be those who long for their former linguistic lives and will strive to maintain their language and their culture (Hofman & Cais, 1984). Danie expresses what many of the participants felt about Afrikaans and their identities as Afrikaans speakers. He says that once you move to a new country, you begin to realise that 'your language is much more important than you ever thought it would be. It colours your whole life. I mean, when you open your mouth, you are just it'. It is within the context of these emotional attachments and the maintenance efforts of those who experience linguistic longing that Afrikaans will continue to survive in New Zealand, at least in the short term.

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Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Gary Barkhuizen, Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand (g.barkhuizen@auckland.ac.nz).

Notes

1. Kiwi, a kind of local bird, is an informal name for a New Zealander.
2. All interviews but one were conducted by Barkhuizen.

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