

# **Macro sociohistorical forces, contact, convergence and the development of modern linguistic areas: Further updates from South Africa**

Rajend Mesthrie

(University of Cape Town)

Keywords: South Africa, multilingualism, areal linguistics, language contact, convergence, South African English, Afrikaans, Bantu languages.

Mesthrie (2017) makes a case for the development of a robust South African linguistic area (impinging on neighbouring parts of southern Africa, especially Namibia). In pre-colonial times (up to the mid- 17<sup>th</sup> C) the autochthonous Khoisan languages formed an important substratum that resulted in the eventual transformation of Southern Bantu languages, especially in their phonologies. Colonisation wrought further changes on the indigenous Bantu languages, firstly via Afrikaans (17<sup>th</sup> C on) and then English (19<sup>th</sup> C on). South Africa differs from other heavily colonised territories in that indigenous languages survived and remain an essential part of an African multilingualism with official status since 1994. This has opened up new avenues of mutual influence between the living, growing substrata of mainly Bantu languages and the globally and locally prestigious English language. Afrikaans has played an intermediary role – almost as a clearing house – in disseminating features within the emerging linguistic area. The paper for ICL21 will update two dimensions of macrolinguistic relevance: (a) firstly by drawing attention to existing work on the influence of Afrikaans and English on German within the linguistic area, and (b) examining how convergence between Afrikaans and English has laid the foundations for a mixed language in some communities (called Kaaps) that is gaining recognition as an autonomous language. The paper will follow Filipovic & Hawkins (2019) in making a case for bilingualism as a stronger force than just contact in areal linguistics, but goes further in drawing on the present author's work on principles of sociolinguistics (of power and prestige) and second language acquisition (of transfer and overgeneralisation). Grammatical effects will be illustrated across language families (Bantu, Khoisan, Germanic, Austronesian) drawing on a variety of constructions including negation, reduplication, aspect marking and word order.

## **References**

Mesthrie, Rajend (2017), South Africa and Areal Linguistics. In R. Hickey (ed) *The Cambridge Handbook of Areal Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 527 – 550.

Filipović, Luna & John A. Hawkins (2019), 'The CASP model of bilingualism: Language interactions within and across bilingual minds'. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 23(6): 1223-1248.