

Comparability of the Black/White divide in the American speech community and the Coloured/White divide in the Afrikaans speech community

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Abstract

This article attempts to place the discussion on the relationship between African American and European American vernacular Englishes within a broader context involving another speech community split along ethnic lines, namely South Africa's Afrikaans speakers. It specifically attempts to compare observations on the coloured-white linguistic divide within South Africa's Afrikaans speech community with those made on the black-white linguistic divide in the United States, with the aim of shedding light on the correlation between ethnicity and language variation. The article first presents ethnicity and its social and linguistic correlates, drawing on literature on AA(V)E and South Africa. It then identifies the social and linguistic specificities of the American English and Afrikaans speech communities. After presenting a range of grammatical variables and their comparability across both speech communities, it provides an overview first of the various trends of grammatical variation from a mainly variationist perspective, then of Afrikaans-English code-switching, which is treated as a phenomenon that correlates with grammatical variation. It finally attempts to answer the general question whether the U.S. black-white linguistic divide in South Africa's Afrikaans speech community can be referred to as complementary in the study of ethnicity and language variation.

Introduction

Race, as a component of ethnicity, has formed a field of study of its own, influenced by various theories ranging from essentialism to circumstantialism. Its correlation with language behavior attracted significant attention in sociolinguistics, as illustrated by Carmen Fought's *Language and Ethnicity* (2006). Many of the practical illustrations for the correlation between ethnicity and language variation therein come from North America, and more specifically from studies devoted to African American English (AAE).

A turning point in the history of AAE as a polemic topic is the contentious claim made by Labov & Harris (1986: 20), and independently supported by Bailey & Maynor (1987, 1989), that African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and European American English vernacular varieties (EAVE) as lower status dialects are diverging. Several attempts were made to undermine that claim, with suggestions that AAVE and EAVE might in fact show simultaneous tendencies of convergence and divergence, the combination of which might vary across locales, generations, genders, language components, or pragmatic contexts.

Are Black and White English vernaculars in the U.S. converging or diverging? This is still an unanswered question, and this paper does not purport to answer it. Instead it places the discussion on the relationship between AAVE and EAVE within a broader context involving another speech community split along racial/ethnic lines, namely the Afrikaans speech community. Is divergence observable between the main two racial/ethnic components of that community, the Coloureds and Whites, or rather convergence, or maybe both? More generally, how far do observations on the Afrikaans speech community reflect those made with regard to the Black/White linguistic divide in the United States, and how can the

combination of both help achieve a better understanding of the correlation between race/ethnicity and language variation?

In this article I first present ethnicity and its social and linguistic correlates, drawing on literature on AA(V)E and South Africa. I then identify the social and linguistic specificities of the American English and Afrikaans speech communities. After presenting a range of grammatical variables and their comparability across both speech communities, I provide an overview first of the various trends of grammatical variation from a mainly variationist perspective, then of Afrikaans-English code-switching, which I treat as a phenomenon that correlates with grammatical variation. I then attempt to answer the general question whether the U.S. Black/White linguistic divide and the Coloured/White linguistic divide in the Afrikaans speech community can be regarded as complementary in the study of race/ethnicity and language variation. As it turns out, dynamics of convergence and divergence across both the U.S. black-white divide and the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community may provide obvious points of comparison, but the general North American and South African sociolinguistic contexts may ultimately limit the extent to which comparisons can be made.

1. Race/ethnicity and its linguistic correlates: the example of AAVE versus EAE

Ethnicity and race might have in common that they can both refer to ancestry. But there is sometimes reluctance to treat both concepts on a par when it comes to their relationship with 'culture'. The oppressive character of the concept 'race' is – in Banton's opinion (1998: 199) – what would justify keeping it distinct from the concept 'ethnicity', which would rather refer to a 'voluntary identity', itself endowed with cultural attributes. A distinction between 'race' and 'ethnicity' on such grounds would, however, fail to account for those cases where 'race' can turn into a 'positive identity', which – in the North American context – could be illustrated by the popularization of 'Black Consciousness' (Jenkins 2003: 67, Levine 1977). There is little justification, then, not to envision the relationship between 'race' and 'culture' on a par with the relationship between 'ethnicity' and 'culture'. Part of that relationship may be essential, that is, based upon an inherited *habitus* (Bourdieu 1978). But part of it is also defined by the negotiation of boundaries towards 'outgroups' via a selective emphasis on, or even the creation of differences via 'diacritical features' (Barth 1969: 14). Importantly, both the *habitus* and the 'diacritical features' constitutive of ethnicity – whether or not it is co-defined by race – can assume a linguistic character. Of this, the linguistic relationship between African Americans and European Americans provide a fitting illustration.

Variationist studies such as Labov's took the lead in describing the correlation between race/ethnicity and language using the difference between AAVE and EAVE as an example. Among the defining tenets of Labovian sociolinguistics is the assumption that language reflects social factors in much the same way as Bourdieu's *habitus* predetermines cultural behaviours (Labov 2001: 24, Bourdieu 1978). Ethnicity features among those social factors identified by Labov, yet its status versus other factors such as age, social class, gender, is unclear. In his study of New York City speech, Labov (2001: 259) found that ethnicity at large is overridden by all other above-mentioned social factors. Indeed, subsequent studies showed that the use of features held characteristic of AAVE are more correlated with lower classes than with higher classes, more correlated with men than with women, and more correlated with younger generations than with older generations (Rickford 1999: 9-10, 275).

Another variable which can be cross-tabulated with ethnicity is geographical space. Some AAVE studies suggest that the linguistic expression of ethnicity remains constant

across geographical space, in the sense that AAVE would display relatively little regional variation across the United States (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 174-5). There seems, however, to be scope for claiming the contrary. The studies included in Yaeger-Dror & Thomas (2010) provide evidence for the existence of deeply regional AAE varieties (at least at a phonological level). Such regional variation has consequences for the distance between AAVE and EAVE. While AAVE might show signs of divergence with EAVE in one place, it might show signs of convergence in another.

The doubts surrounding the status of ethnicity as an independent social variable need not imply that ethnicity may be of no systematic influence on linguistic patterns. Summing up the findings of a growing body of qualitative research on ethnicity and language variation, Fought (2002: 452) reaches the conclusion that '[e]ven where, on the surface, extensive inter-ethnic contact and integration may seem to be the norm, the study of linguistic variation reveals the underlying preservation and expression of identities divided along the lines of ethnicity'. That conclusion is justified in view of the observation that middle class African-Americans, or individual African-Americans well-integrated in mainstream White society, still use AAVE features, albeit a reduced set of them, especially in contexts where African American identity is at stake (Weldon 2004).

A central variable in the negotiation of ethnic identities is the individual's self-positioning versus the in-group and out-group. Linguistic solidarity with the in-group remains strong, especially within the context of stigmatized communities, whether or not the dominant out-group's norms are internalized at an individual level. This could according to Rickford (1999: 276) be the reason behind the recent increase in use of stereotypical AAVE grammatical features, such as invariant habitual *be*, across African-American groups; that is, the symbolic contrast it offers with EA(V)E varieties may account for the upsurge. Peer pressure among African Americans to not sound like European Americans is fittingly illustrated by the comment by a black pupil recorded by Rickford (Rickford 1999: 275): 'over at my school... first time they catch you talkin' White, they'll never let you go'.

So far I have mostly focused on AAVE without going into detail about its interaction with EA(V)E. A striking finding concerns the asymmetry between the language behaviour of Whites and Blacks, even those who live in close contact. In this regard, Ash and Myhill (1986: 40) found that – at a grammatical level – 'blacks who mingle with whites go a long way towards acquiring the white norm, but whites who mingle with blacks make very little progress towards acquiring the black norm' (see Butters 1989: 194-6 for a critique of Ash & Myhill's conclusion of dialect divergence). And even where close historical contact between blacks and whites seems to have brought about some linguistic convergence, as is generally assumed for the Southern states, there is strong evidence of a consistent disjunction between varieties spoken by Whites and varieties spoken by Blacks – if not categorical, at least gradual (Rickford 1999: 97, 324, Cukor Avila 2003). The reason for such disjunction has to do, of course, with perceptions of status: AAVE remains stigmatised, which can cause Whites to distance themselves from its features, as among other things illustrated at the phonological level by the Northern Cities Vowel Shift, which van Herk (2008) refers to as a 'linguistic White flight'. Also, disjunction between White and Black varieties can have to do with the former more overtly pursuing standard norms, if not 'superstandard' norms (Fought 2006: 115, 117, Bucholtz 2001).

Some studies of AAVE and EAVE may provide evidence of divergence, as detailed by Labov (see Fasold et al. 1987) and Bailey & Maynor (1989), but there is also considerable counterevidence, of which Butters (1989) provides a comprehensive overview. At a quantifiable level, it could be that both convergence and divergence are taking place concurrently, convergence at one linguistic level (or convergence involving one given

variable), divergence at another (or divergence involving another given variable)¹. Besides, pending a more comprehensive survey of geographical variation, the possibility cannot be excluded that intergroup linguistic dynamics may differ from one locale to the next: a converging dynamic somewhere versus a diverging dynamic elsewhere. In any event, the prevalence of a systematic quantifiable linguistic gap is a possibility to reckon with in view of qualitative studies on the relationship between AAVE and EA(V)E varieties which tend to illustrate the power of what Whinnom (1971: 91-7) called the ‘ethological’ or ‘emotional’ barrier to language convergence. Also, a consistent asymmetry between white and black linguistic behaviours can be expected in the light of the historical status of African Americans as a socially marginalized group. Blacks may show more predisposition for convergence with whites than the other way around (as exemplified by Ash & Myhill 1986)². I take the view here that the accuracy of these predictions should be tested against cases of language variation in comparable settings. In the next section I will present the Afrikaans speech community as one such setting.

2. America’s black/white divide, South Africa’s coloured/white divide

Afrikaans is nowadays one of the eleven official languages of South Africa, where it is spoken as a native language by 13% of the population. A slight majority of its speakers (54%) are the so-called ‘coloureds’, a label used for official purposes ever since the British period of colonization, which refers to people of mixed or Khoi-San ancestry. The next largest group of native speakers is formed by whites (42%), followed by small numbers of blacks and Asians. The Afrikaans speech community traces its origins back to the foundation of the Cape colony by the Dutch in 1652. By the mid-18th century, the colony had developed the characteristics of a multiethnic plantation society around its centre: Europeans stood at the top of the colonial hierarchy, while most non-Europeans were slaves or indentured labourers (Elphick & Shell 1989). Altogether, the proportions of Europeans versus non-Europeans, and the social cleavage between the two groups, make the social settings of the Cape Colony comparable to those of the Antebellum American South, to such an extent that conditions for the creation of pidgins or creole varieties within the non-European group, and their diffusion into the European group, might have been present in an equal measure in both cases: non-Europeans tended to speak basilectal varieties, Europeans both basilectal and acrolectal varieties (see Mufwene 2003 for North America, Roberge 1994 for South Africa).

In both North America and South Africa patterns of segregation changed over time. Even though social mobility was rigidly constrained in colonial society, it was not impossible. There were ‘Free Blacks’ in both the Antebellum South and in the colonial Cape. Also, household slavery was widespread in both places, resulting in intimate contacts between slaves and the European households for which they worked. The abolition of slavery in the American South disrupted the close bonds which may have grown between blacks and

¹ An example is provided by Rickford (1999), who describes zero past-tense marking as giving way to the standard norm, while habitual invariant *be* seems to be expanding.

² Can black-to-white convergence in the U.S. context amount to convergence with the white vernacular or with ‘Standard American English’? There is evidence of African Americans adopting features of the locally dominant white vernacular. This was exemplified by Hinton & Pollock (2000) for the Midwest, and by Childs & Mallinson (2003) in Appalachia. Does that bring them any closer to Standard American English? Fought (2006: 117-8) generally associates ‘standard norms’ with ‘whiteness’, although she only quotes Bucholtz’ research on ‘superstandard norms’ in support (2001). What Lippi-Green (1997) calls ‘Mainstream U.S. English’ (MUSE) is not presented as having ethnic connotations. Spears (1999: 73), on the other hand, takes the view that Standard American English (SAE) is ‘white’ by writing that ‘the boundaries of standard English have continually shifted historically to accommodate middle- and upper-class whites, but not working-class whites or blacks of any class’. See further Section 3.

whites, and had the effect of increasing social segregation: growing economic competition between whites - especially lower-class whites - and blacks caused the former 'to fall back upon their 'Whiteness' as [their] only claim to superiority' (Dunn 1976: 117, see further Mufwene 2003: 65-7, 70). In South Africa, the social effects of the abolition of slavery are not as well described as for North America. Whatever the closeness of the bonds that may have developed between Europeans and non-Europeans in colonial South Africa, it is likely that the tight Apartheid legislation implemented under the National Party's reign (1948-1994) did much to undo dynamics of interethnic integration, not least by breaking up racially mixed neighbourhoods such as Cape Town's District Six (McCormick 2002). Van der Ross (1986) in particular describes the social distance between coloureds and whites during the later stages of the Apartheid, in terms that could reflect social distance between whites and blacks in the post-Reconstruction South.

Segregation had a linguistic impact. In America's postemancipation days, the scope became dramatically reduced for black varieties to exert influence on white varieties since for whites '[t]o become bidialectal meant to become quickly déclassé' (Dillard 1972: 212). Tightening segregation meant that linguistic bridges linking the white community to the black community were suspended (Dillard 1972: 213). In South Africa, it seems that bidialectalism did exist among Afrikaans-speaking Whites, but only isolated observations are available in this respect. Von Wielligh (1925: 94) in particular noted in reference to the cross-ethnic use of Afrikaans varieties that the 'poor white man (...) transgresses the boundaries of his status to converse with those who call him 'boss' and uses for the purpose their coarse speech to have a nice chat with them'(my translation). Although no contemporary confirmation is available, bidialectalism among Afrikaans-speaking whites may have receded as an effect of Afrikaner identity politics (in which dissociation from coloureds was a leitmotif, also at a linguistic level) and Apartheid social policies.

The scope for bidialectalism among nonwhites may have been similarly constrained across North America and South Africa, yet with different outcomes, which have to do with the specific sociolinguistic settings of each location. There are historical indications from the United States that blacks have not only tended to sound different from whites, but also undergone both peer-pressure and pressure from white society to not appropriate white speech (Dillard 1972: 207, 212, more recently, Rickford 1999: 275). In South Africa, similar societal barriers impeded acquisition of the standard Dutch or Afrikaans varieties commonly associated with whites, since education remained outside the reach of the vast majority of nonwhites up until the 1950s (Horrell 1970). White resentment at nonwhite attempts at using Standard Dutch or Standard Afrikaans varieties goes unrecorded, but there are definite indications of a pattern among Afrikaans-speaking coloureds, most especially urban Afrikaans-speaking coloureds from the Cape region, of nurturing their Afrikaans variety while using English in interethnic encounters with Afrikaans-speaking whites (Stone 1995, Scheffer 1983)³.

Nowadays, a comparable sociological gap between American whites and blacks on one side, and between South African whites and coloureds on the other, with whites in both cases the socio-economically more advantaged group. That sociological gap is expressed in income, employment and education inequalities, which result in a persistent - if not widening - poverty gap (National Center for Education Statistics 2001, South Africa Statistics 2001, Seekings 2007, Kochhar et al. 2011). Persistent patterns of residential segregation on the basis of race can be found in both the United States and South Africa, although they are less

³ There is a perception of standard Afrikaans being associated with whites. That perception is visible in Afrikaans dialectological literature, where whites are historically described as speakers of the variety called 'Eastern Afrikaans', which is the variety standing closest to standard Afrikaans (Ponelis 1998: 15). That perception is also inferable from McCormick's study of District Six Coloureds' language attitudes (2002).

rigid in the former (McClinton & Zuberi 2006). Another sociological disparity worth mentioning concerns geographical mobility, which can be treated as a direct correlate of social mobility. The geographic mobility of blacks in the United States is high, but spatially more circumscribed than that of whites⁴. In South Africa, coloureds – who are more rural and less economically advantaged – are much less geographically mobile than whites – who are more urban and more socio-economically advantaged – at an interprovincial level (Kok et al. 2003: 55, 63). Yet, U.S. ethnic patterns of geographical mobility cannot be put on a par with those in South Africa. The United States experienced in the early and mid-twentieth century a huge wave of black migration from the Southern to the Northern states ('the Great Migration', see Grossmann 1989, Ellison 1974) to the point that, half a century ago, the vast majority of middle-aged and elderly blacks living in Northern urban areas were born in the South (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 225). That wave of migration has not been matched in South Africa: There is still a correlation between Cape Town coloureds and slave origins, and between Northern Cape coloureds and Khoi-San origins. Besides, coloured migration to the northern urban centers (i.e. the Rand region where among other things Johannesburg and Pretoria are located) has been limited.

A comparison between the U.S. black-white divide and the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community becomes difficult when it comes to describing 'whiteness' and its local significance. Both European Americans and white Afrikaans speakers tend to be perceived as bearers of standard varieties, and there is evidence of – at least – selective alignment among nonwhites with those standard varieties. Yet, whereas Standard English in the context of the United States is confused with 'mainstream' norms (as exemplified by Lippi-Green's concept of 'Mainstream U.S. English' (1997)), Standard Afrikaans in the South African context tends to reflect the norms associated with a demographic minority whose political ascendancy has radically declined in favor of a black majority pursuing English linguistic norms. It is worth asking, then, whether coloured Afrikaans speakers still perceive those standard norms associated with white Afrikaans speakers as worth pursuing. Some observations may suggest divergence, as in McCormick (2002), who describes a collective drive among certain Cape Town coloureds to avoid white linguistic stereotypes, which involve 'correctness' and 'standardness'. Other observations point towards convergence, as in Klopper (1983) and Stone (1995), who note increasing alignment between certain coloured varieties and Standard or white Afrikaans. Another question worth asking is whether there can still be a question of standard norms being associated with whites, in the current context where Standard Afrikaans has since 1994 lost much of its visibility in both education and media (Giliomee 2003).

Whether convergence or divergence is taking place between coloured and white Afrikaans speakers may ultimately depend on the area of language variation considered. Reasons for convergence or divergence must be sought not only inside the Afrikaans speech community, but also in its relationship to South Africa's black majority. This has implications for the comparability of linguistic variables that illustrate the American black-white divide and the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community.

3. Linguistic variables, comparability and predictions

⁴ On the basis of the 2000 U.S. census, Schachter (2003: 4-5) observed that Blacks (alongside Hispanics) had the highest overall moving rate. On the other hand, 'non-Hispanic Whites [...] were more likely to have moved to a different state than other racial or Hispanic-origin groups' while 'Blacks [...] were more likely to have made intracounty (short-distance) moves than non-Hispanic Whites'. The range of geographic mobility for Whites is, therefore, greater than the range of geographic mobility for Blacks. This can be compared with the range of geographic mobility for South African whites, who are more likely to migrate from one province to the next than are coloureds.

Research on AAVE has focused on many aspects of language, but in general phonology and grammar have received the most attention in Labovian quantitative studies. Since Labov's divergence hypothesis rested on quantitative insights, quantifiable linguistic data should serve as a starting point for comparing variation trends across North American and South African settings. I argue here that grammatical variables lend themselves better than phonological variables to a comparative interpretation of dynamics of cross-ethnic convergence and divergence across geographic locations.

In both the North American English and the Afrikaans speech communities; what counts as the 'standard' variety is unclear. According to Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (2006: 10-2), notions of standardness in reference to American English are subjective, yet there exist ways to identify standard varieties of American English on the basis of what they are not. And what they are not is best summarized in grammatical terms: there is general agreement that Standard American English (SAE) does not contain grammatical features disapproved of by prescriptive sources, while it may exhibit regional variation in phonology⁵. As regards Standard Afrikaans, there is also an inclination to determine what it is or is not on the basis of prescriptive sources. And, just as for SAE, reference sources for Standard Afrikaans have much more to say about what its grammatical norm is than about what its phonological norm is (Raidt 1985).

Nonstandard grammatical features of Afrikaans could be subdivided into two categories: those non-standard variants that are described as coloured, and those of which the diffusion is not described as ethnically determined (henceforth 'gradual'). The general question asked specifically of Afrikaans is whether a quantifiable correlation exists between coloureds and nonstandard usage, and between white ethnicity and standard usage, and whether such correlation is strengthening, resulting in divergence between coloureds and whites, or conversely loosening, resulting in convergence between coloureds and whites.

Those Afrikaans grammatical variants of which I aim to determine the diffusion across the ethnic divide are listed in table 1

Feature	Example
1. 1st person plural possessive <i>onse</i> ('our', Std. Af. <i>ons</i>)	Dit is <i>onse</i> dorp ('this is our village')
2. 3d person plural possessive <i>hulle se</i> ('their', Std. Af. <i>hulle</i>)	Dit is <i>hulle se</i> dorp ('this is their village')
3. <i>-t</i> endings in athematic verbs ⁷ such as <i>gaan</i> ('goes/go/to go') where the <i>-n</i> ending is preferred	Ons het kerk toe <i>gegaan</i> ('we went to church')
4. <i>Ge</i> -affixation of the atonic verbal prefixes <i>be-</i> , <i>ver-</i> , <i>ont-</i> in the past tense instead of standard zero-prefixation	Ons het <i>gebegin</i> ('we started')
5. <i>Ge</i> -affixation of linking verb in verbal clusters comprising an infinite verb instead of standard	Ons het <i>gegaan</i> slaap ('we went to sleep')

⁵ The term SAE was preceded by other terms, among which the term 'General American', which was widespread in the early part of the 20th century. The term 'General American' was used coterminously with 'Western' and 'Midwestern American', which were opposed to 'Eastern' and 'Southern American' (Bonfiglio 2002: 176-77, 230-1). A more recent term introduced by Lippi-Green (1997) is 'Mainstream US English' (MUSE), which she opposes to distinctive regional and social varieties of American English.

⁶ For a detailed description of those features, we refer to Ponelis (1993) for a diachronic perspective, and to van Schoor (1983) for a prescriptive perspective.

⁷ In Dutch grammar, 'athematic' verbs are those verbs which take *-n* as an infinitive ending instead of the more widespread *-en*, in which 'e' forms the 'thematic' vowel.

zero-prefixation

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| 6. Inflected verbal form <i>het</i> ('have/has') instead of the standard form <i>hê</i> in infinitive position | Ons wil die kind terug <i>het</i> ('we want the child back') |
| 7. Single negation where double negation is required | Hy het nog <i>nie</i> aangekom ø ('he hasn't arrived yet') |
| 8. Modal constructions such as <i>kon gedoen het</i> or <i>kan gedoen het</i> in the past indicative where a construction with inflected modal and infinitive such as <i>kon doen</i> ('could do') is required | Sy <i>kon</i> dit <i>gedoen het</i> ('she was able to do it') |
| 9. Adverbial pronouns without 'R' where 'R' is required | Ek hou <i>van dit</i> (instead of <i>daarvan</i> , 'I like it') |
| 10. Relative pronouns without 'R' where 'R' is required ⁸ | Die dorp <i>wat</i> hulle <i>in</i> woon (instead of <i>waarin</i> , 'the village in which they live') |
| 11. Verb Second where Verb Last in clauses headed by <i>dat</i> | Ek dink dat hy <i>is</i> siek ('I think that he is ill') |
| 12. Verb First in interrogative wh-clauses where Verb Last is required | Ek wonder hoe <i>kry</i> hy daai geld ('I wonder where he gets that money') |

Features (1)-(6) are among those nonstandard features said to occur almost exclusively among coloureds⁹, as opposed to the remaining features, generally described as 'colloquial' with no ethnic specification. This goes in particular for features (9)-(12). The occurrence of single negation instead of double negation (feature 7) may be described as quite generalized throughout the Afrikaans speech community, but late-twentieth-century synchronic evidence suggests that its highest concentrations occur in the Orange River Afrikaans varieties (van Rensburg 1989: 147). There could also be a correlation between feature (8) and coloured Afrikaans at large, although no quantitative evidence is ever adduced in support¹⁰.

Using North American English linguistic variables as a point of comparison requires making a distinction between variables involving an ethnically marked variant on the one hand, and variables whose standard and nonstandard variants are not necessarily confined in their occurrence to either white or black speakers. Strictly maintaining this distinction is, however, not straightforward, since many variants considered characteristic of AAVE are found in white vernacular varieties, albeit at an often much lower rate. Among the grammatical variants most exclusive to AAVE, those which lend themselves most directly to a comparison with the selected coloured Afrikaans variants – more on account of similarities in their quantitative documentation than on account of any possible typological similarity – are those which generally support Labov's divergence hypothesis in terms of their quantitative diffusion:

1) Invariant habitual *be*

⁸ Prescriptive Standard Afrikaans possesses a range of pronouns consisting of the contraction the relative pronoun *wat* ('that', 'which') with prepositions. Through that process, *wat* turns into *waar*, as in the sentence *die stoel waarop ek sit* ('the chair on which I am sitting). This latter form is referred to as an 'R-pronoun' (Zwarts 1997: 1092). The R-less form, described as colloquial, is found in the sentence *die stoel wat ek op sit*, whereby the pronoun and the preposition are not contracted and the pronoun does not assume the R-form.

⁹ For *onse* and *hulle se*, see Ponelis (1998: 14-5). Ponelis (1993: 391) describes *-t endings* as 'prominent in dialect usage', with 'dialectal' implicitly referring to Coloured varieties. Van Rensburg describes *het* instead of *hê* as characteristic of Southwestern Afrikaans, and irregular past participle formation as characteristic of Orange River Afrikaans (1992: 92, 1989: 147).

¹⁰ It is constructions of the type *kan gedoen het* (uninflected modal + past participle + auxiliary) used in the indicative sense of 'could do' that are correlated with Coloured varieties, while their equivalents of the type *kon gedoen het* (inflected modal + past participle + auxiliary) are described as 'colloquial' without any ethnic specification (Kotzé 1989: 260, Donaldson 1993: 240-4).

Your phone bill be high.

He be getting on my nerves.

2) Present tense, third person –s absence

She have three kids.

3) Copula and auxiliary absence involving *is* forms (as opposed to more generally deleted *are* forms)

She in the same grade.

(Fought 2006: 48-49)

It should be stressed that the above variables count among the most exclusive to AAVE, which need not mean that they never occur in white vernacular varieties. Bailey & Maynor (1985) and Bailey & Bassett (1986) find sporadic instances of invariant habitual *be* among older speakers of Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE, see further Fasold 1981: 182). Cukor-Avila (2003: 92) observes that present tense third person –s absence is ‘stable’ across generations of AAVE speakers and shared ‘at a much lower rate of frequency’ by older SWVE speakers in Springville, Texas (see further Fasold 1981: 170-1). Finally, Wolfram (1974: 514) observed that ‘[t]here are at least two lects of white Southern speech with reference to *is*-deletion: one in which it is not possible, and one in which it is possible to a quite limited extent’ (see further Cukor-Avila 2003: 92, Fasold 1981: 180)¹¹.

Some variables widespread in the North American speech community can lend themselves to a comparison with the selected gradual Afrikaans variables (variants 7 through 12), again, more on account of similarities in their quantitative documentation than on account of any possible typological similarity. One of these variables involves negative concord (e.g. *It wasn’t nothing*, Wolfram 2004: 123). In Standard English, the principle of ‘negative polarity’, whereby only one negative may occur in a sentence, prevails. Double negative usage, on the other hand, is a feature widespread in non-standard English varieties. In the North American case, it occurs in AAVE, but also, to a lesser extent, in European American varieties. Labov (1968: 277) found that negative concord is categorical or semicategorical for AAVE, while it remains strictly optional in surrounding European American varieties. Besides, negative concord is more syntactically generalized in AAVE than it is in European American English, involving, for example, negative inversion, as in the sentence *Don’t nobody like him* ‘Nobody likes him’ (Wolfram 2004: 124)¹². Data on negative concord might or might not be usable in support of the divergence hypothesis. Another variable, involving the nonstandard use of bare-root past-tense forms (e.g. *They run there yesterday*, Wolfram 2004: 122), seem usable against it (Section 5).

At this stage, the most obvious prediction that can be made with regard to grammatical variation in Afrikaans is that variants described as coloured are likely to only or overwhelmingly occur among coloured Afrikaans speakers as much as invariant habitual *be*, omission of 3rd person singular –s and *is*-absence occur only or overwhelmingly among African Americans. Another prediction is, following Fought’s (2002) general conclusion with regard to ethnicity as a factor of variation (Section 1), that there generally is a gap between coloured and white usage, not only with regard to the use of those nonstandard variants

¹¹ It is also important to stress that those variants, if they do occur in white vernacular speech at all, may be semantically or syntactically constrained. As regards invariant *be*, Wolfram (1974: 522) emphasizes that ‘[b]oth blacks and whites have *be* derived from *will* or *would be*, but only blacks typically use distributive *be*’. About *is*-deletion, Fasold & Wolfram (1970: 68) noted that *is* tends to be absent before *gonna* in Southern varieties in general. They further add that ‘[i]n Negro dialect, unlike other English dialects, *is* can be absent wherever it can be contracted in Standard English’.

¹² I am focussing here on multiple negation within the same clause, as in e.g. ‘*we never had nothin’, so it didn’t bother us too much*’ (Feagin 1979: 229), in order to ensure a comparison between the quantitative data on negative concord presented in Feagin (1979) and Wolfram & Christian (1976) (see Section 4).

described as coloured, but also with regard to the distribution of other, more generalized, nonstandard variants, as possibly reflected by the higher occurrence of negative concord and bare-root past-tense forms among African Americans, and their lesser occurrence among their European Americans neighbours in Labov's New York and Philadelphia studies. Whether that prediction can be proven correct depends on demonstrating that there is a white and a coloured pattern of grammatical usage consistently distinguishable across space, which could be illustrated by homogenous distributional patterns of variables within the same ethnic group irrespective of locale.

Analogy with the North American speech community is not very helpful for predicting how homogenous white and coloured Afrikaans might be across space. On the one hand, accounts of how much AAVE differs across regions vary from emphasizing homogeneity (Rickford 1999: 262) to emphasizing deeply regional varieties (Yaeger-Dror & Thomas 2010). Regarding white varieties of English, there are indications of regional variation involving sets of regional markers across social dialects, albeit with considerable stratification (see, for example, Feagin 1979: 274-8 on white speech in Aniston, Alabama). And the question of how much more homogenous white vernacular varieties are than black vernacular varieties seems to be a vexed one (Fought 2002: 462-3). Predictions might nevertheless be possible on the basis of Milroy's (2002: 565-68) social network theory: higher mobility can encourage uniform dynamics of variation in the speech of middle classes across vast areas, whereas lower mobility will contribute to the maintenance of localized speech norms typically best represented among lower social classes. Given the observation that the geographic mobility of South African coloureds is lower than that of their white peers, it may be expected that grammatical patterns may display more regional variation among coloureds than among whites.

After making predictions as to ethnic correlations in patterns of variation and their consistency, predictions also should be made as to the dynamics of cross-ethnic variation, and whether they can be described in terms of divergence in the same terms as Labov used to describe the black-white linguistic divide. In view of the high – and possibly increasing – levels of socioeconomic segregation in South Africa, there is no reason to rule out a linguistic dynamic of divergence, but, for specifically local South African reasons, there are reasons to expect that such hypothetical divergence might not be taking place at the level of grammar. It might indeed be possible that – since Standard Afrikaans has been losing much of its visibility in education and media – whites and coloureds might be converging around nonstandard variants. Such a possibility need not mean, however, that the role of ethnicity as a factor of speech variation may be decreasing in the Afrikaans speech community. Instead, ethnicity may be in the process of finding new means of linguistic expression.

Afrikaans-English code-switching (CS) indirectly indicates the Afrikaans speech community's relationship not only to the Standard Afrikaans register but also to its level of identification with the new black-dominated South African national ideology, of which English is the main linguistic attribute. Therefore, a study of Afrikaans-English CS can possibly account for trends of grammatical variation: English is the language endowed with most prestige in South Africa, and varying levels of identification with English could correlate with varying levels of compliance with standard variants in Afrikaans spoken usage. Whites tend to identify less with the idea of South African nationhood than do coloureds (Roefs 2006). This might be reflected in lower levels of identification with English among whites, as possibly observable through a lower frequency of CS and a higher compliance with Afrikaans standard variants, and in higher identification with English among coloureds, as possibly observable through a higher frequency of CS, and a lower compliance with Afrikaans standard variants. CS as an explanation for grammatical variation is specific to the Afrikaans situation; it forms a linguistic minority within a majority that mostly identifies with

English. A straightforward comparison with the North American situation is not possible, since (1) there is only one standard variety with ‘overt’ prestige in the United States, not two as in the Afrikaans speech community, and (2) vernacular varieties of English and SAE might be too closely related for systematically detecting points of transition between the two. An alternative for relating Afrikaans-English CS to the North American situation is, however, by qualitatively comparing its occurrence and its ideological implications with evolving attitudes towards vernacular varieties and SAE across the North American black-white divide.

4. Corpus and methodology

I assembled five South African samples comprising a total of 310,000 transcribed words from 600 speakers in the period from 2005 to 2007. The geographic and ethnic subdivisions of this corpus were partly meant to reflect the general threefold subdivision into ‘Orange River Afrikaans’, ‘Southwestern Afrikaans’ and ‘Eastern Afrikaans’ established in Afrikaans dialectology (Ponelis 1993: 13-5). To these subdivisions, a distinction was added between rural and urban informants in the northern part of South Africa. Three out of five samples are made up of White speakers (Northern rural, Northern urban, Southern), and two of coloured speakers (Northwestern, Southwestern). If one relies on dialectological maps of the Afrikaans language area, the Northern white samples are best representative of the so-called ‘Eastern Afrikaans’ variety, while the Northwestern coloured sample is best representative of the so-called ‘Orange River Afrikaans’ variety. On the other hand, the Southwestern coloured sample may be best representative of the Southwestern Afrikaans variety, while it is unclear what the Southern white sample might be representative of (see figure 1).

Each sample is composed of roughly equal proportions of women and men and is further subdivided into three age cohorts (17-24, 25-50, 50+). This division into age cohorts allows for ‘apparent-time’ comparisons within the samples to address the question of convergence or divergence¹³. To obtain maximally informal speech data, the recruitment of informants proceeded along the guidelines of the ‘friend of a friend approach’ (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 73-6), but samples from talk shows hosted by community radio stations were sometimes added in order to expand the corpus. To minimize the Observer’s Paradox, the task of interviewing was left to insiders sharing the age range, ethnic and geographic backgrounds of the informants. As a result, our data are strictly in-group data.

¹³ See Bailey (2002) for the advantages and limitations of the ‘apparent-time’ approach in the search for evidence of language change.

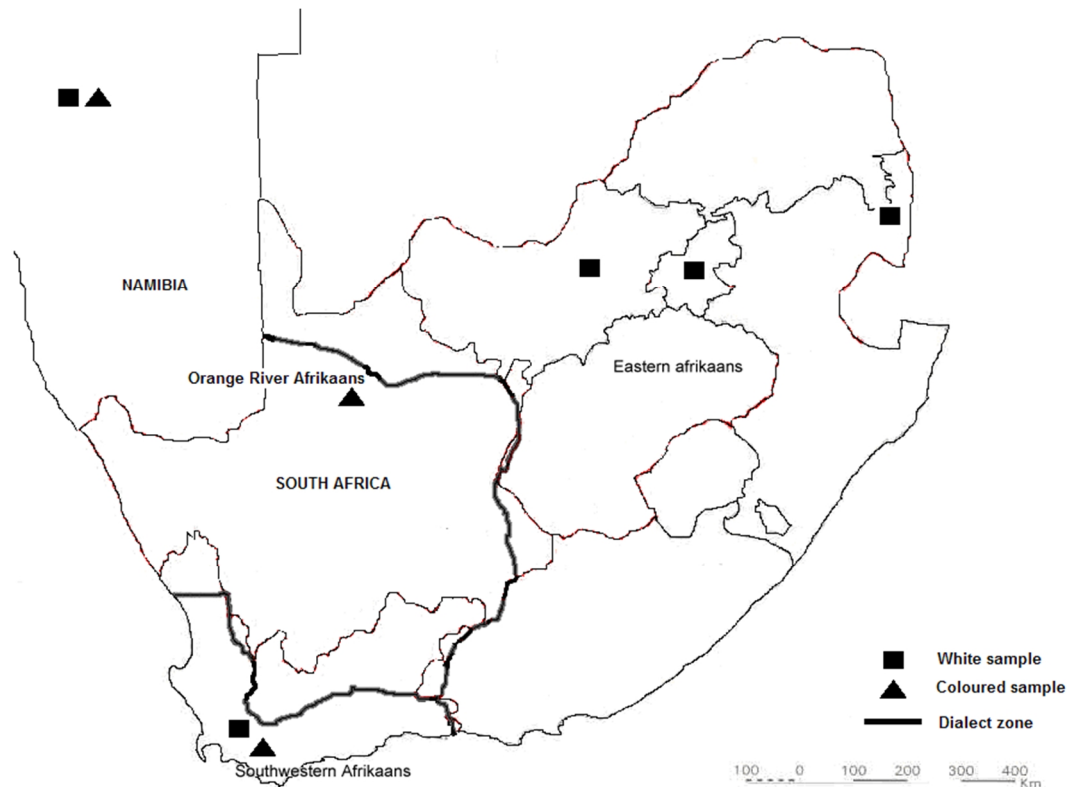


Figure 1. Location of samples in relation to established dialect boundaries

Since this corpus was designed to allow for a quantitative analysis of changes, it presents some similarities with corpora of AAVE designed along Labovian guidelines in that it is subdivided into age and gender categories. However, other social variables of the Labovian model of data collection appeared unusable in the settings of the Afrikaans speech community. One of these variables is the stratification of speech data according to styles, ranging from formal to casual. That method of data collection could not be used to study variation in Afrikaans, since formality in the South African context may imply the use of English only. It is also quite doubtful whether social categories defined along North American criteria are likely to serve the purpose of capturing language variation in the Afrikaans speech community. For example, the category ‘middle-class’, defined along North American criteria, is likely to include most whites and to exclude most coloureds, and while middle-class whites are likely to be Afrikaans-speakers, middle-class coloureds are likely to be English-speakers following a trend of language shifting correlating with upward social mobility observed by Scheffer (1983), and more recently by Anthonissen (2009).

To obtain a representative picture of the Afrikaans speech community, informants were recruited in neighbourhoods with a median income level with respect to the coloured and white averages respectively. Therefore, the data limit the comparison of lower-class groups across the ethnic divide along the lines of, for example, Cukor-Avila’s linguistic study of the biracial community of Springville tenant farmers (2003)¹⁴. In short, the coloured part of our corpus allows for comparisons with ‘casual style’ data on lower-class African-

¹⁴ What seems to be a limitation here may in fact not be one: it is quite doubtful whether levels of ethnic integration which Cukor-Avila described in Springville, Texas (2003) can be found in similar terms in South African settings, where Apartheid policies made a point of systematically dismantling ethnically integrated communities. A fitting example is that of District Six in the Cape, of which the inhabitants were relocated in the 1970s according to their ethnic classification (McCormick 2002).

Americans, whereas the white part allows for comparisons with ‘casual style’ data on middle-class European Americans.

The grammatical analysis comprises two quantitative stages, which are described in detail in Stell (2011). The first stage of the quantitative analysis is univariate, whereby the percentage frequency distribution of individual variables is calculated. A picture is thus obtained of trends of convergence or divergence between whites and coloureds for the individual variables described in the preceding section. The second stage is multivariate, involving multidimensional scaling. Multidimensional scaling is the statistical procedure Labov (1969) used to determine the relative degrees of kinship between his samples, through which a graphic picture can be obtained of trends of convergence or divergence between samples, on the basis of several grammatical variables taken jointly. To determine the relative degrees of kinship between samples on the basis of the behaviour of individual speakers rather than on that of the samples, a series of multivariate correspondence analyses were also run taking individual speakers as a point of departure.

The question that now arises is with which U.S. quantitative datasets the obtained results could be systematically compared and how. Since the methodology described so far for analyzing grammatical variation in the samples is quantitative, it seems obvious that the U.S. datasets used as points of comparison should be assembled along variationist guidelines. Specifically, they should be socially stratified in a way that could allow for a comparison between lower-class African-Americans and lower-class Afrikaans-speaking coloureds on the one hand, and between middle-class European-Americans and Afrikaans-speaking whites on the other. Examples of quantified grammatical data on usage among lower-class African Americans are found in Wolfram’s Detroit study (1969), Labov’s Philadelphia and New York studies (2001, 1972), Fasold’s Washington study (1972), and Rickford’s East Palo Alto study (1999). Quantified grammatical data on European Americans, including middle-class European Americans come from the Appalachian (Wolfram & Christian 1976), and Alabama (Feagin 1979). U.S. rural points of comparison for our more rural South African samples can be found in Cukor-Avila’s and Wolfram & Thomas’ biethnic rural sample from Hyde County (2002).

It is those U.S. datasets that I refer to, either for a comparison with our Afrikaans variables, or globally at the stage of our multivariate analysis, by attempting to piece together a range of quantitative findings they present concerning the use of typical AAVE features and generalized variables such as the negative concord, in order to draw a comparative picture of cross-ethnic dynamics of grammatical variation across space in both South Africa and the United States.

The analysis of Afrikaans-English CS comprises three stages, which are described in detail in Stell (2011). The first stage consists of a systematic comparison between structural Afrikaans-English CS patterns according to the distinctions made by Muysken (2000) between insertional CS, alternational CS and congruent lexicalization. Muysken’s typology was chosen because it lends itself to some measure of quantification while presenting conceptual bridges with conversational typologies of CS, as in particular that developed by Auer (1998). More specifically, what Auer refers to as ‘conversational codeswitching’ exhibits structural characteristics of Muysken’s alternational CS, while what he refers to as ‘language-mixing’ exhibits structural characteristics of Muysken’s congruent lexicalization. Auer’s conversational typology also offers a vantage point from which strategies of identity negotiation can be observed.

Finally, similarities or differences in terms of language variation across the U.S. black-white divide and the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community will be tentatively accounted for by means of a comparative perspective on the wider American and South African sociological contexts.

5. Analysis of individual grammatical variables: Coloured variants

Features commonly presented in sociolinguistic research as coloured are found mostly in the coloured samples (figs. 2 and 3). One among them occurs only among Northwestern coloureds (*hulle se*), while two of them (*het* instead of *hê*, *gaat*) occur only or mostly among Southwestern coloureds. The diffusion of these variants across age cohorts sometimes displays contrasts from one sample to the next. In the Northwestern coloured sample (Fig. 2) all frequencies for these features are decreasing with the exception of irregular *ge-* with linking verbs. By contrast, all corresponding frequencies are increasing in the Southwestern coloureds (Fig. 1), except for *onse*.

Fig. 2. Use of Nonstandard Variants in the Southwestern coloured sample

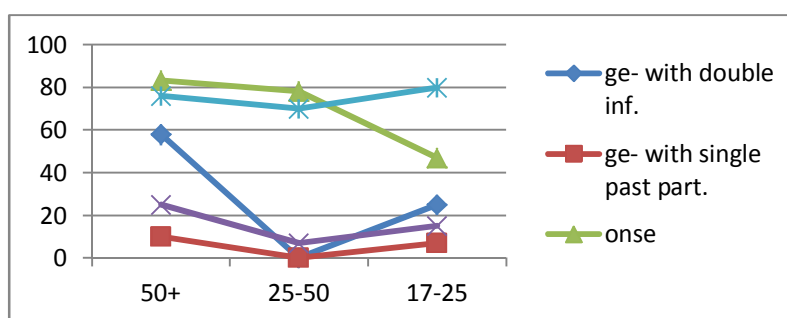
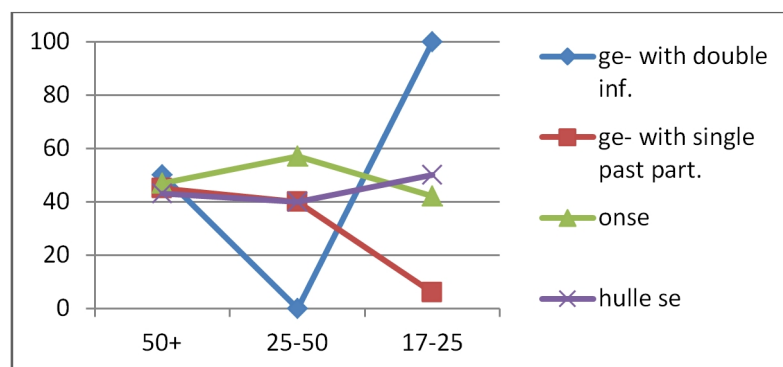


Fig. 3. Use of Nonstandard variants in the Northwestern coloured sample



Most features tend to occur more frequently among men than women, which reflects observations regarding the diffusion of AAVE features (Section 2). Interspeaker variation is considerable. However, only a minority of all speakers use these features at all, except in the case of *het* instead of *hê*, and *onse*.

The situation could be summarized as follows: the described variables testify to the existence of a linguistic gap between coloureds and whites, in that the nonstandard variants discussed in this section are almost exclusively used by coloureds, whereas whites overwhelmingly use the standard variants. From an aggregate point of view, the coloured samples are typified by selective convergence with and divergence from white/standard norms. However significant the levels of interspeaker variation observed, some data presented in figures 2 and 3 could be reminiscent of the North American trends of divergence involving invariant habitual *be*, whose frequency of occurrence is on the rise from middle-

aged to younger Black generations in all U.S. metropolitan locations where it was studied, among which are Detroit (Wolfram 1969), New York (Labov 1969), Philadelphia (Labov & Harris 1986), East Palo Alto (Rickford 1999: 263-4), Washington (Fasold 1972), as well as in rural Hyde County (Wolfram & Thomas 2002). An example is irregular *ge*-prefixation of double infinitives. By contrast, certain nonstandard variants, such as *onse*, seem to be giving way to their standard counterpart. Unlike the North American case as documented by the above-cited studies, if the coloured samples are comparable by virtue of their patterns of selective convergence with or divergence from white usage, they are not necessarily converging with one another. *Ge*-prefixation with single past participles seems to be giving way in the Northwestern coloured sample, not in the Southwestern coloured sample. The Southwestern Coloured sample is marked by the significant occurrence of one feature which we found unrepresented in the Northwestern Coloured sample, i.e. *gaat*. Conversely, the Northwetsern Coloured sample is marked by the significant occurrence of one feature which we found unrepresented in the Southwestern Coloured sample (i.e. *hulle se*).

As discussed in Section 3, those American English features selected for comparison with the Afrikaans ethnic variables, namely invariant habitual *be*, zero copula (*is*-absence) and absence of 3rd singular *-s*, are described as generally exclusive to African Americans, even though their (sporadic or much less frequent) occurrence has been reported in white vernacular varieties, especially SWVE. Comparative studies of Southern white and black vernacular varieties, such as that by Cukor-Avila (2003), might show a striking disjunction between the usage of southern rural blacks and white Southerners, but that disjunction is less striking than that between blacks in general and white Northerners, in whose varieties the described features are conspicuously absent. This could be exemplified by Ash & Myhill's study on black and white Philadelphians (1983): no matter how socially close local whites and blacks are to each other, the former systematically adhere to the white vernacular or standard English, in which the above described features are absent¹⁵. The same finding was made by Labov with regard to the usage of teenage whites from the Innwood area (1972), and of Carla, a teenage white girl from New Jersey who grew up in close contact with blacks (1980).

The occasional occurrence of the nonstandard Afrikaans features in the White samples (especially *gaat* and *onse*) raises the question of whether there might be traces of a linguistic continuum between coloureds and whites regarding the use of these features, which could be reminiscent in its nature of the historical relationship between AAVE and SWVE, if one adopts the viewpoint – recently restated in Mufwene (2000) – that AAVE and SWVE might have been more similar in the past than they are today (see further Cukor-Avila 2001: 113). The answer is complex. According to the point of view represented by Mufwene, some of the American English variants described in this section may have been the result of mutual convergence between the white and black vernaculars, and may have been much more widespread in antebellum SWVE than they are in current SWVE. This might go as well for some of the nonstandard Afrikaans variants described in this section. But, very interestingly, the English and Afrikaans variants under discussion here both show a tendency to be grammatically or semantically constrained among white speakers. As mentioned in Note 11, invariant *be* may occur in SWVE, but it does so mostly as a contraction of *will be* or *would be*, and *is*-deletion in SWVE tends to occur before *gonna*. By contrast, invariant *be* and *is*-deletion occur in more diverse contexts in AAVE. Just as with invariant *be* and *is*-deletion, the use of *gaat* is used in different morphosyntactic contexts across the coloured-white

¹⁵ As mentioned in Section 1, the findings of Ash & Myhill's study might not be entirely reliable, as pointed out by Butters (1989: 194-6), who suspects that the set-up of the research might have been biased by the use made of a Black interviewer, whose native competence in AAVE might have instilled fear in white interviewees of being perceived as illegitimately using AAVE.

divide. Athematic verbs ending on *-t* historically form remnants of Dutch verbal morphology preceding the process of *-t* apocope (Conradie 1994) that led to the current highly regular Standard Afrikaans verbal paradigm (see Section 3). The Southwestern coloured sample is the only sample where, besides occurring as finite and infinite verbal forms, *gaat* (historically derived from the Dutch 3rd person form *gaat* ‘goes’, Std. Af. *gaan*) also occurs in past participle form with a *ge*-prefix as in the example sentence *ons het gegaat na’n trouery* (‘we went to a wedding’, instead of Std. Af. *ons het gegaan na’n trouery*). By contrast, the use of *-t* forms in the white samples remains restricted to finite verbs, as in *wat gaat aan hierso?* (‘what is going on here?’, instead of Std. Af. *wat gaan aan hierso?*).

There is also evidence that different meanings attach to isomorphic features across the black-white divide in the United States and the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community. In an experiment led by Wolfram (1974: 522), white subjects were in most cases unable to provide an accurate interpretation of invariant habitual *be* as employed by African Americans¹⁶. In the Afrikaans case, differential interpretation of isomorphic features across ethnicities is illustrated by the form *onse*. White perception of *onse* as a Dutch inflected form underlies its stylistic specialization as a feature of formal or Biblical registers (e.g. *Onse Vader* ‘Our Father’), whereas its probable derivation from a calque of the Hottentot structure *sida di* (as in e.g. *sida di hab*, ‘our horse’, with *di* being a possessive particle, see Luijks 2000: 130) may underlie its wide diffusion in informal contexts in the coloured samples (e.g. *onse dorp* ‘our village’, *onse mense* ‘our people’), in which a Hottentot linguistic substrate can be assumed.

It could be that the above-described features have the value of ethnic markers comparable to that which Rickford sees in habitual *be*, even though most of them seem to be receding, while habitual *be* is expanding. Weldon’s research on linguistic usage among African-American middle classes shows that – however much they might be quantitatively receding – AAVE features may still form a vivid part of speaker’s stylistic repertoires, strategically resorted to in order to project an African American identity (2004). The same could apply to the South African case: the occasional use of the above described nonstandard Afrikaans features might bear testimony to their status as stylistic devices used to index coloured identity by virtue of the contrast they offer with their standard equivalents, which are in practice associates with white usage. But a question to be asked at this stage is whether the reflection or expression of ethnicity in the Afrikaans speech community is at the grammatical level restricted to the above described variables, or whether it can be more generally summarized as a polarization between whites tending to use standard features on the one hand and coloureds tending to use nonstandard features on the other hand. I attempt to provide a tentative answer to this question in the next section, in which I review the gradual variables presented in Section 3.

5. Analysis of individual grammatical variables: Gradual variables

The selected grammatical variables that I describe as gradual were first submitted to a univariate analysis. Those analyses revealed trends involving mostly convergence away from the standard norm, with whites remaining in most cases closest to the standard norm. An illustration for such trends is provided by the case of R-less relative pronouns (i.e. *wat...van* vs. Std. *waarvan* ‘of which’), of which the frequencies increase across the age cohorts of all samples (fig. 3). An illustration for divergence whereby some samples (i.e. the white samples) converge with the standard norm while others do not (i.e. the coloured samples) is

¹⁶ Another North American example, which does not involve one of the nonstandard English variants under discussion in this paragraph, is formed by the rules of negative concord in AAVE, which are often interpreted with the opposite meaning by white listeners (Labov 1972: 131).

provided by the case of the position of the verb in relative clauses headed by the conjunction *dat*, which causes the verb to feature in clause-final position in standard Afrikaans. In this case, the frequencies of nonstandard order are increasing in the coloured samples while they are decreasing in the white samples (fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Nonstandard use of *Wat* + preposition in the Five Samples Group

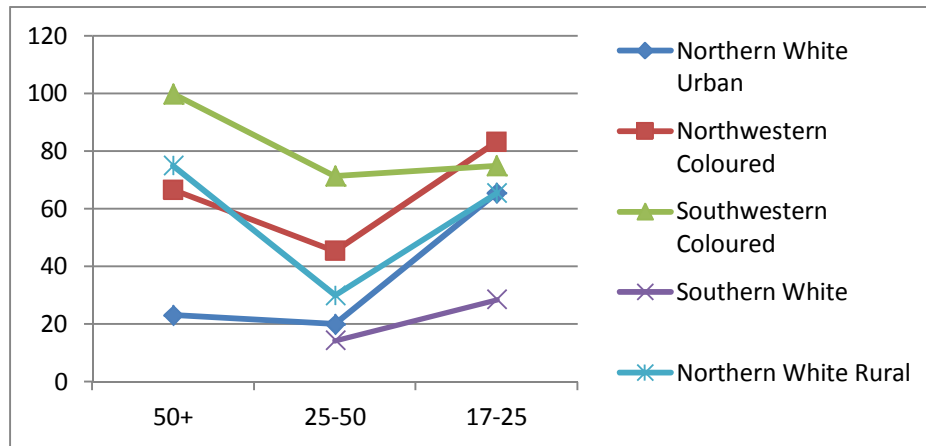
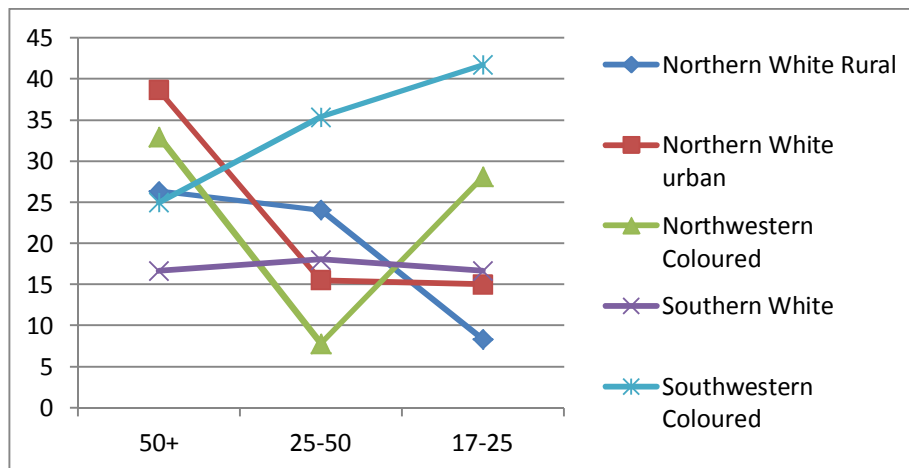


Fig. 5. Nonstandard use of Verb Second in Subordinate Clauses headed by *dat* in the Five Samples Group



As mentioned in Section 3, a number of grammatical variables show social stratification in North American English, in a way comparable to those Afrikaans variables that I describe as gradual. Among those is the negative concord. The frequency of negative concord within the same clause in AAVE has been established as high among young age groups across several urban locations in the United States (see Smith 2001: 115-6 for an overview). Historical evidence, backed by Wolfram’s apparent-time study of Detroit AAVE (1969), suggests that the high frequency of that feature is a recent phenomenon (Howe & Walker 2000: 69, 135). Whether the frequent use of that feature amounts to divergence between blacks and whites is nevertheless not certain: Feagin (1979: 232) presents data in which negative concord (within the same clause) is decreasing across age groups of both upper and lower class Alabama whites, while Wolfram and Christian (1976: 115) observed

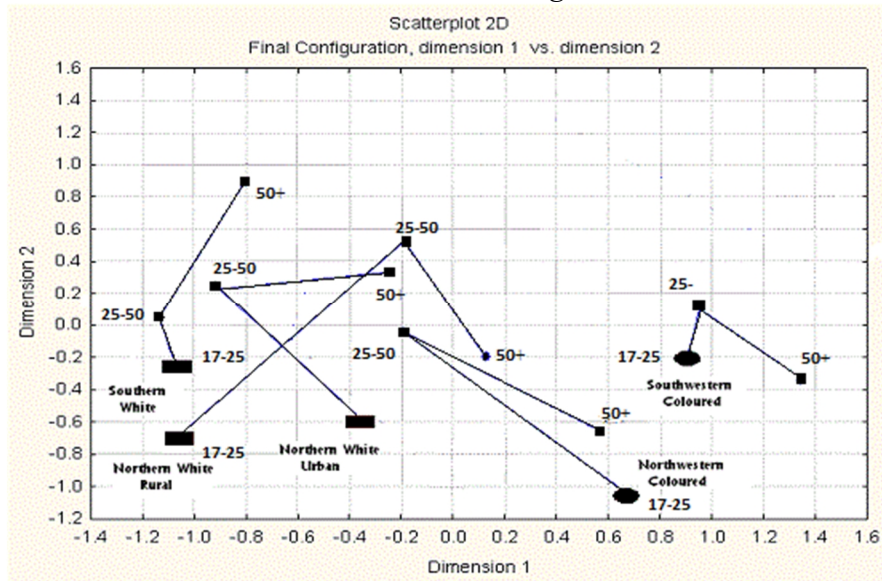
the opposite among Appalachian whites¹⁷. If Wolfram and Christian's observation can be generalized to most European American varieties, one could then be dealing with a trend of convergence away from the standard norm, as observed above for the Afrikaans speech community. But, if verified, this trend in itself can certainly not be generalized to all grammatical features. An example of a socially stratified non-standard grammatical feature which seems to be giving way to its standard equivalent among African Americans is zero past-tense marking. In this regard, Rickford (1991 [1999]: 273) observes that 'the tendency [of using zero past tense marking], if anything, is towards less non-standard usage', by which convergence with white usage could be implied¹⁸.

Figure 6 is a scatterplot obtained through multidimensional scaling. Multidimensional scaling simply visualizes the similarity relationships between cases in an n-dimensional space by arranging these cases in such a way that the rank order of distances between cases (on all measured variables) are maintained. As such, it has been used in sociolinguistics for the purpose of providing a graphic representation of distances between groups of speakers on the basis of sets of linguistic variables (for a similar application, see Deumert 2004: 122, 224). The visual picture of distance between samples in figure 6 involves only gradual variables. 15 points are displayed, each referring to a specific age cohort (17-24, 25-50, 50+) of one of the five samples. The three age cohorts of each sample are linked by means of a line that starts with the older age cohort and ends with the younger age cohort. Dimension 2 displays a gap between younger and older age cohorts, while dimension 1 displays a gap between whites and coloureds. On this basis, one may say that dimension 2 allows a distinction according to age, while dimension 1 allows a distinction according to ethnicity. The interpretation of dimension 1 can go even further. From the results of the individual analyses of all variables, which in most cases show that whites are closest to the standard norm, one can gather that dimension 1 allows distinctions on the basis of degrees of proximity to the standard norm. In other words, the closer to the left side, the closer to the standard norm.

¹⁷ Howe & Walker (2000: 135) further say that 'while the high rate of negative concord among African American youths is unparalleled even in nonstandard white varieties of English, it is premature to attribute this development to the divergence of AAVE from American English, since the use of negative concord is also increasing in other nonstandard varieties' (161).

¹⁸ This assumes that unmarked preterits are a recessive feature in White varieties as well. Unmarked preterits are a feature historically shared by both AAVE and SWVE (Cukor-Avila 2003: 103). Bailey and Tillery (2003: 165) found that unmarked preterits is a recessive feature in urban varieties of Southern American English. It is not clear whether Feagin's Aniston data can corroborate this, as the author's tables include both nonstandard marked preterit forms (e.g. *done*) and present forms/base forms used as preterits (e.g. *come*, *give*), and the occurrence of such variants seems stable – if not slightly increasing – across age groups (1979: 84-9). Wolfram & Christian (1976: 84) report on instances of zero past tense marking, without however quantifying those instances across age groups. Cukor-Avila (2003: 103) describes unmarked preterits as still forming an attribute of Springville SWVE.

Figure 6. Scatterplot for Two Dimensions on the Basis of Gradual Variables and Age Cohorts



It seems that the two more urban white samples (i.e. the Northern white urban sample and the Southern white sample) are converging by following parallel trajectories away from the standard norm. To a certain extent, the same can be said of the coloured samples: there is a drift from the older to the middle-aged groups towards the standard norm, which seems abruptly interrupted (in the case of the Southwestern coloured sample) and even radically reversed (in the case of the Northwestern coloured sample). There seems to be a general pattern of increasing avoidance of the standard norm across the coloured-white divide, except in the specific case of the Northern white rural sample, which continuously drifts towards the standard norm across age groups. Regarding levels of homogeneity, the fact that the two more urban white samples are following parallel trajectories suggests homogeneous dynamics of change across white urban populations. By contrast, dynamics visibly differ between the coloured samples, but they still seem to lead to greater homogeneity between them: they are becoming equally distant from the standard norm. Note, however, that multidimensional scaling involving not only the gradual variables but also the coloured variants (among which some may be specific to either the Southwestern or the Northern Cape coloureds) described in Section 3 yields a different picture, in which the white samples are more tightly clustered together on one side while the coloured samples are wide apart on the opposite side, suggesting higher homogeneity among whites and higher heterogeneity among coloureds.

The multivariate correspondence analysis that I conducted on the basis of individual speakers reflects the results of the multivariate analysis involving gradual variables that I conducted at group level. Two groups of speakers were identified, namely one that is more likely to comprise users of nonstandard morphosyntactic variants, less likely to be white and more likely to be young, irrespective of ethnic or geographic background, and another group that is more likely to comprise users of standard morphosyntactic variants, more likely to be white and more likely to comprise members of the 24-50 and 50+ age cohorts. The observation of a correlation between younger speakers of all ethnic and geographic backgrounds and nonstandard morphosyntactic variants indicates that all samples tend to be characterized by an increasing use of a shared set of nonstandard morphosyntactic variants, by which convergence is brought about. In other words, there are indications here that the Afrikaans speech community might be – from a grammatical point of view in which only gradual variables are involved – in the process of becoming more and more homogenous as a

result of a trend of destandardization observable across its ethnic divide. Whether that trend of destandardization is to be ascribed to age-grading is open to question. The Afrikaans speech community finds itself in a peculiar situation in that standard Afrikaans is losing visibility in favour of English: social pressure to adapt to the standard Afrikaans grammatical model past adolescence and early adulthood might therefore be decreasing.

Whereas there might be a case for talking of grammatical convergence in the Afrikaans speech community regarding the use of gradual variables, the picture is far less clear for American English. Negative concord may have stolen the show as a socially stratified variable in research on black-white linguistic differences, producing a possibly biased picture of divergence, while other features, such as zero past-tense marking, might actually point towards convergence. At the level of individual variables, there are in both settings cases of convergence away from the standard norm, which could be illustrated by the increasing use of R-less adverbial pronouns in the Afrikaans speech community. Convergence towards the standard norm is not observable for the Afrikaans gradual variables under discussion here (while it is for some of the coloured variants discussed in the preceding section), while it seems to be for zero past-tense marking in the United States. Divergence is illustrated by certain Afrikaans gradual variables such as the position of the verb in *dat*-clauses (as well as some ethnic variables discussed in the preceding section), possibly in the same terms as habitual *be* for the United States. Could the general multivariate picture obtained for grammatical trends in the Afrikaans speech community lead to the conclusion that the linguistic gap between coloureds and whites is narrowing, with consequently decreasing scope for the expression of white or coloured ethnicity? My findings on Afrikaans-English CS practices summarized below point towards the opposite.

6. Analysis of CS patterns in the Afrikaans speech community

Our study has revealed a range of similarities and contrasts in forms of Afrikaans-English CS across the coloured-white divide, observable both at the group level and at the individual level, which we describe in detail in Stell (2011). The comparability of CS across the coloured-white divide lies mainly in the fact that that the frequency of insertions (as in 4), alternations (as in 5) and congruent lexicalization as illustrated by nonconstituents (6) is increasing across generations of both coloured and white samples, while Afrikaans remains the dominant matrix language in all samples.

(4) Vir my is dit net bikkie boring.

'For me it is just a bit boring.' (Northern white urban sample)

(5) Maar dis jou eie besluit of jy dit sal toelaat maar ek weet nie ek het geen probleem met enige swartmense bruinmense pienkmense nie. Live and let live.

'But it's your own decision whether or not you will allow that but I don't know I have no problem with any black people brown people pink people. Live and let live.' (Northern white urban sample)

(6) Ek suck at dit.

'I suck at it.' (Southwestern coloured sample)

Upon closer inspection, grammatical contrasts do appear. The first contrast might illustrate differing levels of symmetry in language fluency, reflected in the overrepresentation

of insertions and the limited array of their grammatical classes in the Northwestern coloured sample, historically underexposed to English. On the other hand, higher symmetry is illustrated in the white and Southwestern coloured samples by the larger arrays of grammatical classes as well as the higher frequency of adverbials. In the case of the Southwestern coloured sample, it is specifically illustrated by the presence of English function words (e.g. the conjunction *because*) as well as of turn- or utterance-internal nonconstituents. The second grammatical contrast has to do with levels of morphosyntactic integration. Higher levels of convergence between Afrikaans and English in the Southwestern coloured data are illustrated by the observation that Afrikaans morphological rules are more often waived than in the white data: English adjectives occur more often in uninflected form in attribute position where it normally should be inflected according to Afrikaans grammatical rules (e.g. *daai stupid ou* ‘that stupid guy’), and English verbs occur more often with English past participle morphemes (e.g. *ge-registered* ‘registered’). By contrast, English adjectives tend to occur in the white sample in locations where they do not need to comply with Afrikaans morphological rules (that is, in predicate position as in *dit is unfair* ‘it is unfair’), and English verbal forms are assigned Afrikaans past participle morphemes (e.g. *ge-drop* ‘dropped’).

There is further evidence of English alternations being more syntactically integrated in the Southwestern coloured data, as illustrated by the higher proportion of English clauses at subordination or coordination sites (7) and the higher midsentence occurrence of English nonconstituents (6). By contrast, English clauses are more often flagged or detached syntactically in the white data (5), while nonconstituents tend to be rare and sentence/utterance-peripheral (e.g. *hy is 'n daily obviously* ‘you are a daily obviously’).

(7) En hy begint om te hardloop met die arme vrou in die rystoel and she ask him:
‘bokkie nou hoekom hardloop jy nou met my?’

*‘And he starts to run with the poor woman in her wheelchair and she asks him:
‘Darling, why are you running with me?’* (Southwestern coloured sample)

Levels of morphosyntactic integration as observed in the Southwestern coloured data, as well as the presence of nonconstituents as illustrated by (6), are indicative of a higher potential for congruent lexicalization. By contrast, Afrikaans-English CS in the white data seems to be more insertional/alternational. Finally, Afrikaans-English CS in the Northwestern coloured data is insertional/alternational, but its overall frequencies are higher than in most white samples, even though white populations are historically more exposed to English. If one treats high frequencies of CS as the main symptom of congruent lexicalization¹⁹, the Northwestern coloured sample then presents more potential for congruent lexicalization than do the white samples.

If one leaves aside the Northwestern coloured data, in which asymmetry in language proficiency does not allow for any significant variation in conversational patterns of CS, the conversational characteristics of Afrikaans-English CS display stark differences across the white-coloured divide. In the Southwestern coloured data, complex English input (in the form of English clauses or English nonconstituents) tends to occur more in midturn position, apparently not filling any contextualization function, as illustrated by the underlined English clause in (8).

¹⁹ According to Muysken (2000: 230), frequent CS, or ‘back and forth switching’, forms one of the symptoms of congruent lexicalization.

(8) Hulle het 'n policy gehad van van redlining so basically wat daai beteken is if you live on the other side of their you know arbitrary demarcated red line dan kan jy nou nie 'n homeloan kry nie irrespective of your credit history.

'They had a policy of of redlining so basically what that means is if you live on the other side of their you know arbitrary demarcated red line then you can't get a homeloan irrespective of your credit history.' (Southwestern coloured sample)

Also, when it can be interpreted as signalling a new conversational frame/footer, the English input is not coextensive with that conversational frame: It may unpredictably give way to Afrikaans or spill over into the subsequent sequential unit following a logic of 'triggering', which illustrates 'language-mixing' in Auer's sense. This is illustrated by (9), where the underlined part signals only the beginning of the quote, which is subsequently carried on in Afrikaans.

(9) Maar ek wil vier modules van 'n ander departement ook gehad het en toe sê hulle nou vir my: No you cannot have those, English is your major, jy moet vir African Literature en Renaissance nog by doen.

'But I also wanted to have four modules from another department and then they tell me: No you cannot have those, English is your major, you still have to add African literature and Renaissance.' (Southwestern coloured sample)

By contrast, English clausal alternations tend more to be utterance or turn-peripheral in the white data, and to fill contextualization functions such as that of closing a turn, as illustrated by (5). In contrast to the Southwestern coloured data, English clausal alternations are coextensive with the new conversational frame/footer they signal, as illustrated by (10), where the narrative structure remains Afrikaans throughout. These two features are representative of 'conversational codeswitching'.

(10) En sy eet tuna en erm sy vra haar man wat dit is (.) En hy sê: 'It's tuna. It's fish'. Of nee? Wat. 'It's tuna'. Toe sê sy: 'I know, but is it chicken or fish because it says chicken of the sea'.

'And she eats tuna and erm she asks her husband what it is (.) And he says: 'it's tuna'. Is that right? 'It's tuna'. Then she goes 'I know, but is it chicken or fish because it says chicken of the sea'.' (Northern White Urban sample)

Generally, there are traces of an Afrikaans-English 'mixed code' among both Southwestern and Northwestern coloureds, while traces of a mixed code are absent among whites, in whose speech individual switches tend to serve an identity negotiation function as characteristic of 'conversational codeswitching'. A fitting illustration for the use of language-mixing in the Northwestern coloured data is provided by (11), which forms a sample of 'political speech', in which individual switches obviously lack stylistic salience.

(11) Err die challenge van local government remain om effective services te deliver aan communities but die key objective is (.) is dat ons die mindset moet change van councillors en (.) en officials om te kyk na die developmental aspek soos uitgewys in die constitution van die country.

'Err the challenge of local government remains to deliver effective services to communities but the key objective is... is that we must change the mindset of councillors and...and officials to look at the developmental aspect as set out in the constitution of the country' (Northwestern coloured sample)

This contrasts with white patterns of CS, where individual switches often tend to possess stylistic salience. This is illustrated by (12), uttered by a young female student with rural origins who is lashing out at the conservative Afrikaner stereotypes. Not only for its English origin but also for its alternative pop-rock connotations, the label *hardcore* collides head-on with the A.P.K. stereotype²⁰. Also, the implied conflict between the 'A.P.K. Afrikaner' stereotype and modernity is emphasized again in the use of the expression *ninety four era*, whose English form accords with its symbolic connotation as the end of Afrikaner dominance in South Africa.

(12) Dit is regtig...jy kry...dis net jou hardcore uhm AP Kerk Afrikaner wat sou Kyknet kyk reg deur die dag oordat hulle nog vasgevang is in die voor ninety four era.

'This is really...you get...that's just your hardcore AP Church Afrikaner who would watch Kyknet all day long because they are still stuck in the pre-ninety four era.'
(Northern urban white sample)

In summary, convergence in terms of CS frequencies does not necessarily mean increasing uniformity in forms and functions across the white-coloured divide: there are clear signs of one white grammatical/conversational type of CS, and of one conversational and two grammatical types of coloured CS. The grammatical and conversational characteristics of CS among whites suggest the enduring influence of purist linguistic notions among whites, while the relatively high occurrence of congruent lexicalization and/or conversational code-mixing in the coloured samples conversely suggests that Afrikaans and English are being conjointly used as devices for conveying 'colouredness' in a national context where appropriating English amounts to identification with the majority's post-Apartheid ideology.

7. Discussion

The results of the conducted analyses reveal a picture in which a relatively homogenous white norm can be identified, opposed to more heterogenous coloured patterns. When it comes to grammatical variation, that white norm seems to be more bunched up against standard Afrikaans – albeit decreasingly – than do the coloured patterns. Trends of divergence and convergence between samples could be identified. Whether the observable trends tend towards convergence or divergence in the specific case of morphosyntactic variation depends, to a degree, on the nature or range of variables involved. Whether the observable trends tend towards convergence or divergence in the specific case of CS depends on whether frequencies of general grammatical types come into focus, or the specific properties of these grammatical types, or conversational patterns of CS.

Morphosyntactic divergence between samples is illustrated by the behaviour of certain individual variables across samples. The Southwestern and Northwestern coloured samples are diverging from all other samples on the basis of the realization of a range of morphosyntactic variables whose nonstandard variants are never or hardly found in the white

²⁰ The *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* ('Afrikaans Protestant Church') counts among the more conservative White Afrikaans churches.

samples (e.g. *ge*-prefixation of linking verbs vs. zero-prefixation). But trends of convergence between samples, which may be labelled unilateral and mutual, are also evident. An example of unilateral convergence was found in the coloured sample, which appear to be moving closer to the white samples on the basis of certain morphosyntactic variables (e.g. *onse*). Mutual convergence includes trends involving symmetric fluctuations (e.g. R-less adverbial pronouns, which appear to be increasing in all samples). The multivariate stage of the analysis at group level produced a picture of near-general convergence, mutual, or through symmetrical fluctuations between samples, either away from the standard norm (3 samples) or towards the standard norm (2 samples).

The multivariate analysis that I conducted on the basis of individual speakers reflects the results of the multivariate analysis involving gradual variables that I conducted at group level. Two groups of speakers were identified, namely one that is more likely to comprise users of nonstandard morphosyntactic variants, less likely to be white and more likely to be young, irrespective of ethnic or geographic background, and another that is more likely to comprise users of standard morphosyntactic variants, more likely to be white and more likely to comprise members of the 25-49 and 50+ age cohorts. The observation of a correlation between younger speakers of all ethnic and geographic backgrounds and nonstandard morphosyntactic variants indicates that all samples tend to be characterized by an increasing use of a shared set of nonstandard morphosyntactic variants, by which mutual convergence is brought about.

The first stage of the analysis of CS patterns concerned grammatical types of CS, which I subdivided into insertions, alternations and congruent lexicalization. A general overview of CS frequencies revealed that the occurrence of CS increases vastly from the 25-49 age cohorts to the 17-24 age cohorts, which could be interpreted as evidence of convergence. A detailed analysis of the specific grammatical properties of insertions, alternations and congruent lexicalization across samples did, however, reveal significant differences between samples that may refute complete convergence. White and Northwestern coloured patterns of CS may be called ‘insertional/alternational’ while the Southwestern coloured sample shows more potential for congruent lexicalization. In the terms of Muysken’s probabilistic model for CS grammatical types (2000: 228, 247), the insertional/alternational character of CS in the white samples could be ascribed to the tradition of linguistic purism in the white Afrikaans speech community, while the higher potential for congruent lexicalization in the Southwestern coloured sample could be attributed to the tradition of language amalgamation among Cape Peninsula coloureds, as documented by among other things McCormick (2002). On the other hand, the insertional/alternational character of CS in the Northwestern coloured sample should rather be interpreted as a consequence of the relative novel status of English among Northern Cape coloureds, underlying asymmetric patterns of language fluency.

The conversational features of CS were also found to vary significantly across samples. In the white samples, individual code-switches tend to be pragmatically salient whereas they tend to lack pragmatic salience in the Southwestern sample, in keeping with the characteristics of ‘language-mixing’, of which traces were also found in the Northwestern coloured sample. By contrast, CS patterns in the white sample illustrate what Auer (1998) refers to as ‘conversational codeswitching’. This contrast could be attributed to different values attached to English across the ethnic divide. Interestingly, that contrast seems to reflect the differences in degrees of symbolic attachment to the concept of South African nationhood among whites and coloureds, respectively, with the former identifying less with it than the latter (Roefs 2006).

Can one generally talk of convergence or divergence between the samples examined throughout this study? Most of the potential for convergence between samples is found at the

morphosyntactic level, even though there remains room for differentiation by means of local/ethnic morphosyntactic markers. CS is increasing across all samples, yet there remains room for differentiation in grammatical and conversational terms. Are the observed trends leading to definitive outcomes? The answer to this specific question narrowly hinges upon the plausibility of age-grading. In a Labovian perspective, the 17-24 age cohorts of all samples could age into a more standard and more monolingual variety, as illustrated by the linguistic usage of some of their older peers. Whether age-grading is to occur might ultimately depend on the continued visibility of standard Afrikaans in general, and of the perception of standard Afrikaans as a valid alternative to English.

Comparing the trends we observed in the Afrikaans speech community with trends in the United States is challenging. As much among coloured Afrikaans speakers as among African Americans, there are trends of divergence from white usage, which are illustrated primarily by individual variables, as in particular habitual *be* in the United States. But in the United States, there seems to be – except for Wolfram and Christians’ observation that negative concord might be increasing among whites in Appalachia (1975: 161, 231-2) – no quantitative evidence of convergence of white usage with black usage, on the basis of which one might conclude, as in the South African case, that trends of mutual interethnic convergence away from the standard norm are operating at the level of grammar.

The main difference between the coloured-white divide in the Afrikaans speech community and the black-white divide in the United States could then be expressed in terms of differences in perceptions of the standard norm. Standard American English (SAE) is deeply entrenched at the national level in the United States; it is the language of the educational system, and tends to be associated with whites (see Section 2). On the other hand, standard Afrikaans, with which white Afrikaans speakers are associated (see Section 2), no longer plays a defining role in the definition of South Africa’s mainstream linguistic norms, and is furthermore losing visibility as a formal medium. Disaffection from standard Afrikaans can, for that reason, be found in all sections of the Afrikaans speech community, causing the resurgence of nonstandard grammatical features across the coloured-white divide, by which a general impression of convergence might be produced, if only gradual variables are taken into account. But that general impression cannot be generalized at other linguistic levels. This is well-illustrated by our analysis of Afrikaans-English CS patterns, where different ideologies may underlie the different forms and functions of CS that were found across the white-coloured divide.

The apparent disjunction that we could observe between trends in grammatical variation and trends in CS across the coloured-white divide could illustrate the observations made by Labov (1984) and Rickford (1999 [1985]) on the relationship between phonology and grammar in patterns of convergence and divergence between European Americans and African Americans. Divergence between AAVE and European American varieties may for example occur at a given linguistic level such as phonology, while convergence is taking place at other levels, such as grammar, or the other way around, which makes general conclusions about linguistic convergence or divergence difficult. Ultimately, the linguistic area most likely to show divergence might be that linguistic area with which identity values are associated. To judge by Labov’s and Rickford’s observations, some communities might be more likely to use phonology, while other communities might conversely be more likely to use grammar as a means to express identity. In the case of the Afrikaans speech community, where white and coloured ethnicities are characterized by differing levels of attachment to the mainstream black-dominated national ideology, levels of identification with that mainstream national ideology’s language in the form of CS into English is most likely to support any hypothesis of divergence. It could also indirectly explain why, in general, whites – who tend

towards conversational codeswitching – are closer to the Standard Afrikaans norm than their coloured peers – who tend towards language-mixing.

To what extent can trends observable in the Afrikaans speech community help formulate hypotheses regarding the nature of the linguistic black-white divide in the United States? There is one claim – criticized for the lack of empirical evidence it is based on – which the South African data presented in this article could help qualify, namely the claim by Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998: 175, see further Fought 2006: 59) that the level of morphosyntactic homogeneity among African Americans across the United States is higher than the level of morphosyntactic homogeneity among European Americans. It was shown that the higher mobility of white Afrikaans speakers correlates with a higher homogeneity in morphosyntactic patterns – at least in the more urban samples – which does justice to Milroy's claim that higher mobility favours higher linguistic homogeneity. Could it be, then, that – at an aggregate level – European Americans – who are comparable to white Afrikaans speakers in terms of the range of their geographic mobility – might actually show higher morphosyntactic homogeneity than their African American peers? Clarity in this regard partly depends on the morphosyntactic variables selected for testing that hypothesis. Perhaps high-frequency features such as the negation patterns could be more suitable to that effect than, say, low-frequency regional markers such as the highly stereotypical Southern *fixin' to* or *y'all* (Bernstein 2003). Pending more comprehensive findings on European American English varieties, there might still be a case for assuming that AAVE might in fact display comparatively more morphosyntactic homogeneity, despite the predictions that could be made on the basis of Milroy's claims. For a start, African Americans might be less mobile than their European American peers – but only at an interstate level. Second, the Great Migration is a fairly recent phenomenon – in the sense of more recent than the various coloured migrations that took place in colonial South Africa – and it may still be reflected in relatively high levels of homogeneity at the morphosyntactic level.

The comparability of the Afrikaans case and the U.S case with regard to dynamics of convergence/divergence is limited on account of the different levels of prestige attached to Standard Afrikaans and SAE, respectively. The prestige of Standard Afrikaans has decreased in favour of an external language, of which we detailed the profound influence in the stylistic register of Afrikaans speakers. The rise of English as a prestige language in postapartheid South Africa is the factor behind a dynamic of convergence between coloureds away from the standard Afrikaans norm (while divergence is at work at the level of CS). Since SAE is strongly associated with education in the United States, it would seem logical – from a South African perspective at least – to assume that vernacular varieties show convergence with it at certain linguistic levels. This is indeed the possibility which Butters (1989: 180) raises regarding AAVE and EAVE: '[t]he vernaculars are isolated enough that they continue to produce independent innovations, but they are required to respond to the linguistic norms of the superculture with enough force that, in the end, they do not grow increasingly different'. There are suggestions, however, that convergence might be elusive, in both the Afrikaans and U.S. cases. My South African data showed that convergence at the morphosyntactic level is compensated for by divergence in terms of CS use. In the United States, evidence of morphosyntactic convergence such as unmarked past tense (see Rickford 1991 [1999]: 273) is compensated for elsewhere by divergence, as illustrated at the phonological level by patterns of vowel fronting in EAVE (Butters 1989: 62-2). But could convergence be less elusive in the U.S case where one 'superculture' is hegemonic, as opposed to the South African case where two 'supercultures' are available for profiling ethnicities against each other?

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