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**Language Planning by the *Bureau for Indigenous
Languages* in Namibia before Independence**

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Language Planning by the *Bureau for Indigenous Languages* in Namibia before Independence

Abstract

This paper presents a historical résumé of the spin-offs of official language planning by the education authorities in the former South West Africa up to attainment of Namibian independence in 1990. The current language policy of independent Namibia with its promotion of indigenous languages as medium and subject in school in essence is a continuation of the policy established before independence. As, in the initial phase, most of the languages in question were little researched beyond the efforts of missionaries, linguistic research by the language planners was a prerequisite for all aspects of corpus development. The school books published by the BIL henceforth provided a first basis for linguistically defensible language teaching. Graduates with a Namibian African language as major did not exist then. Hence it was tacitly expected that language planners would in their private time acquire postgraduate degrees in the language(s) they were responsible for. In this pioneering phase graduated non-mothertongue speakers worked in tandem with MT-speakers (mothertongue-speakers), as graduated MT-speakers and authors had not yet emerged to work independently.

Keywords: BIL (Bureau for Indigenous Languages), corpus planning, graphization, standardization, dictionary, thesis, dissertation

The overall theme of this conference focuses on “Indigenous knowledge systems and empowerment of African Languages *in the 21st century*”.¹ This paper aims to provide some historical background to the current state of linguistic and literary empowerment of Namibian languages by presenting a historical résumé of mainly the spin-offs of official language planning in the former South West Africa during the 1960s up to attainment of Namibian independence in 1990. In doing so, this paper will not dwell on the development of official language policy, as that topic has received attention in various publications.² Rather, it will provide a bibliographic survey of the linguistic research and materials other than school textbooks that were produced by the staff of the *Native Language Bureau*, later renamed *Bureau for Indigenous Languages (BIL)*, but commonly known as “*Taalburo*”, as part of corpus planning. As, in the initial phase, most of the languages in question were little researched beyond the efforts of missionaries, linguistic research by the language planners was a prerequisite for all aspects of corpus development. Up to 1973 none of the Namibian African languages were offered as undergraduate

1 The original version of this paper was presented at the 18th conference of ALASA, Windhoek, 30 June 2016.

2 See esp. papers by Brian Harlech-Jones.

university subjects anywhere. The school books published by the BIL henceforth provided a first basis for linguistically accountable language teaching.

This paper will moreover not dwell extensively on the development of Khoekhoegowab and Julhoan, as this topic has been dealt with by the author in another paper.³

The Establishment of the *Native Language Bureau*

The current language policy of independent Namibia with its promotion of certain indigenous languages as medium and as subject in school in essence is a continuation of the policy established before independence. Only a brief résumé will be provided here, as the institutionalization of this policy too has featured in various papers.⁴

Until about the middle of the previous century the literary development of Namibian languages for educational purposes developed in an uncoordinated way, depending exclusively on the initiative of various missionary societies and individual missionaries. When the South African government decided to take over formal education of Africans in the South West African mandate, the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Non-European Education in South West Africa* – (Administration of South West Africa 1958) popularly referred to as the van Zyl commission – in 1958 identified six African languages that were to be developed as “mother tongue” for school purposes, to be taught as subject throughout the primary school (i.e. for eight years, then) and be used as initial medium of instruction: “Nama”, Herero, Ndonga, Kwanyama, Kwangali and Tswana. This choice of languages was determined not only by demographic considerations but by the state of literary development of Namibian languages at that time. Tswana, for instance was spoken by one of the smallest minorities (0.4% according to the 1991 census), but could rely on school books from South Africa. No language planners were appointed for it as it was left to the care of South Africa. On the other hand, a single language, “Nama”, was identified for the Nama and the Damara peoples – not to mention the Hailom – as historical circumstances had favoured the development of a written language only for the Nama, not the Damara.⁵ Among the Aawambo it was the opposite situation: As two separate mission societies – the Finnish Mission and the Rhenish Mission had started to develop two different dialects, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama respectively, as written lects, both were identified by the van Zyl commission as separate languages for development. This decision was considered to moreover suit the divide-and-rule policies of the South African government. No language was identified for the Eastern Caprivi as none had been developed for literary purposes by local missions.

The Van Zyl Commission rather half-heartedly recommended that a *Native Language Bureau* (NLB) was to be established to provide the school books for these languages. The envis-

3 Haacke 2005.

4 Cf. Zimmermann 1984; Haacke 1987, 1989.

5 Cf. Haacke 2011.

aged staffing was wholly inadequate, however: a Head with tertiary training in Bantu linguistics, and at least two African teachers as assistants. In addition, two mission societies were to be subsidized financially to establish two private branches of the Bureau that would assist by continuing the ongoing work of these mission societies. At this stage all *local* linguistic expertise, albeit rather non-scientific, was confined exclusively to missionaries. The Odendaal Commission (1963: 244) reported that in 1962 about 79% of schools in the southern sector and 48% in the northern sector still were mission schools.

By the time the NLB was actually founded in the Education Department of the SWA Administration in 1964, the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into South West Africa Affairs* (Republic of South Africa 1962–1963) – commonly known as the “Odendaal Commission” – had recommended an improved and hence more viable staffing structure for the NLB. It recommended

“that the following nine African languages be developed for the purpose of mother-tongue (MT) instruction: Bushman (“!Xū”), Nama, Herero, Tswana, Kwanayama, Ndonga, Kwangali, Mbukushu and Lozi (Sikololo);

that these languages should be used as *medium of instruction* throughout the primary school; that the existing *Native Language Bureau* be developed into a Language and Publication Bureau with sufficient staff for each of these languages;

that for each language group a Literature Committee be set up to ... select or prepare manuscripts for submission to the Bureau for publication.” (Republic of South Africa. 1962–1963: 261)

The Bureau thus consisted of a Head and four educational planners with a degree in an (inevitably South African) Bantu language, each assisted by a mother tongue speaker with an education diploma. This rather costly arrangement of appointing two members of staff per language working in tandem was necessitated by the fact that in those days graduated mother tongue speakers did not exist. In fact, none of the initial “language assistants” had matriculated, as the opportunity did not yet exist in SWA for Africans.⁶ All members of staff had to have some teaching qualification, albeit at secondary level. The development of Silozi was only commenced after 1977.⁷

6 In 1958 the Report of the van Zyl Commission: 105) recommended –
“(i) that, for the time being, no fully fledged senior secondary school should be contemplated for any of the language groups;
(ii) that Nama and Herero pupils for Stds. IX and X be accepted at the Augustineum Training School;
(iii) that Ndonga and Kwanyama pupils for this course should be accepted at the proposed Ovamboland Training School;
iv) that every effort should be made to appoint qualified staff for this course.
(We should point out that there will be no demand for such a course in the Kavango Territory for a least a decade.)”

7 Although Silozi was originally spoken in Barotseland of southwestern Zambia, it was introduced for language planning purposes in the Caprivi Strip as the dominant local groups, the Mafwe and Basubia had incompatible interests.



Initial Staff of the *Native Language Bureau* in 1968

Back row (left to right): language assistants Gabriel Taapopi⁸ (Oshikwanyama), Isaak Gowaseb (“Nama/Damara” = Khoekhoegowab), Stephanus Thikushu⁹ (Thimbukushu), Ismail Kahuure¹⁰ (Otjiherero), !X’aeše l’Oanasi (!Xuun/Jul’hoan), Petrus Amakali (Oshi-ndonga), Damian Nakare (Rukwangali)

Front row: language planners Phillip Volschenk¹¹ (Otjiherero), Jan Snyman¹² (!Xuun & Nama/Damara), Willem (“Tok”) Janse van Vuuren (Head NLB, Oshindonga), Wolfgang Zimmermann¹³ (Oshikwanyama), Johan Kloppers¹⁴ (Rukwangali & Thimbukushu)]

(Photographer unknown)

From the mid nineteen hundred sixties the policy of teaching mother tongues as subjects and using them as medium of instruction gradually started to become established in African schools. This pedagogically sound policy has survived into the education system of independent Namibia. The unfortunate situation was that this policy had been recommended by the very commis-

8 Gabriel Taapopi was the first African Namibian with a post-junior secondary teaching qualification, as he could study in South Africa with the assistance of a church. He used to start his working day by reading a text in the Old Testament in Hebrew, as a Rabbi had introduced him to Hebrew. Taapopi retired in August 1977; successor: Paavo Hasheela.

9 Successor: (Chief) Alfons Majavero.

10 Until March 1975.

11 Until 1971. Successor: Herika Hendrikse (Brown), 1971–July 1977.

12 8.7. 1941–23.6.2002. Appointed in 1965 as “language assistant for Bushman”.

13 20.10.1935–16.4.2004. Head of NLB 1969–1990.

14 Johan Kloppers left in 1975 for the SWA Broadcasting Corporation, but returned to the BIL in 1977 until his retirement by 1990. After his return he was also assigned responsibility for Rucgiriku (Rumanyo).

sion that had advocated the introduction of the South African Homeland Policy in the Mandate South West Africa. To make matters worse, the administration and financing of African education was in 1970 transferred from the Education Department of the SWA Administration to the South African Department of Bantu Education, and with that also the NLB (then renamed to *Bureau for Indigenous Languages (BIL)*). As a consequence the pedagogically sound policy of mother tongue education became discredited as a tool of dividing and ruling within the context of inferior Bantu Education syllabi. The consequences of this disastrous perception will not be discussed here again. Suffice it to observe that the term “moedertaal” (mother tongue) developed negative connotations almost concomitant with those of “Bantu” and was much resented as epitome of Apartheid.

Tasks of the BIL

As there had been no systematic literary development of Namibian languages before, the development of writing systems and literature having largely depended on the initiative of individual missionaries with only limited training in the grammar of the Biblical languages, the BIL was confronted with a classical situation of language planning. The tasks comprised the following:

Graphization and/or standardisation of **orthographies**

Modernization through creation (and publication) of **terminologies** for the teaching of mainly arithmetic and language (grammar), but also as required for other teaching purposes and school books

Compilation and translation of **syllaby**

Production of readers and primers for the **MT as subject** in the primary phase, and language handbooks for the secondary phase

Production of **prescribed literature** for **MT as subject** in the secondary phase (initially translation of European titles)

Production of teaching materials for **content subjects** (biblical studies, environmental studies, arithmetic, mathematics)

Before school literature (starting with initial readers) could be developed, basic corpus planning and codification was required. This involved graphization, standardization and modernization of the languages.

With the exception of “!Xũ “ (*i.e.* !Xuun), graphization involved the standardization of already existing orthographies that had been developed by missionaries. For !Xuun, though, a writing system had to be developed from scratch, as the complex phonology with its 55 “click phonemes” (according to Snyman 1970: 50 *et seq.*) had not been conclusively analysed. Jan Snyman, who was appointed as language planner for “Bushman” and “Nama” in 1965, eventually published his prerequisite research into the phonology and grammar of this language as a Master’s dissertation (Snyman 1970) and a Ph.D thesis (Snyman 1975) and became the recog-

nized linguistic authority on !Xuun, which is reputed to have one of the two largest inventories of phonemes in the world (see Haacke 2005: 163 *et seq.*).

“Nama” (Khoekhoegowab) at that stage was the Namibian language with the most extensive literature. First attempts to print ecclesiastical materials in it date back to 1830—albeit not readable since the printer had omitted the click symbols for technical reasons. A standardization of the orthography—including the click symbols—was attempted by Rhenish missionaries in 1856 (cf. Haacke 1989). It was widely followed by the Rhenish missionaries for the next hundred years, albeit with inherent inconsistencies. Hence it needed quite far-reaching revisions by the BIL, concerning *i.a.* representation of clicks, so-called “diphthongs” and “long” vowels, the use of symbols for plosive consonants in lieu of tonal diacritics,¹⁵ word division. These revisions were perceived by the speakers as being unsettling interferences, to the extent that it took more than a generation before the standardized orthography became established.

The orthographies of the Bantu languages did not need revisions that drastic, since the phonologies of these languages were not as complicated as those of !Xuun and Khoekhoegowab. Ecclesiastical and school literature had since the 19th century been produced in Otjiherero, the two Oshiwambo dialects (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama) and Setswana by missionaries. Silozi, a cross-border language from Zambia, was only included into the development programme of the BIL in 1977 after language planning for the Eastern Caprivi had been transferred from the Ministry of Bantu Education in South Africa to the BIL. Until then Southern Sotho, which is related to Silozi, had been used in the schools of the Eastern Caprivi. A first Namibian orthography of Silozi was published only in 1985. Following the South African disjunctive approach to Bantu word division it is contrary to that of Zambia, where a conjunctive first orthography had been published in 1977 (Elderkin 1998). Silozi had enjoyed some attention by 20th century linguists. Basic research thus was not a prerequisite for corpus development in Namibia.¹⁶

All orthographic rules, just as any other publication for use in schools, had to be submitted to the respective *Language Committees* for scrutiny, editing, creation of required terminology and for final approval for publication. These *Languages Committees* were renamed to *Subject Committees* in the time of National Education and to *Curriculum Committees* in the present dispensation and were intended to cater for representation of the respective language community.

The “Nama/Damara Language Committee” consisted of representatives of the Nama as well as the Damara ethnic groups. Hence the members were appointed in equal numbers. The bipartite glossonym “Nama/Damara” was officially replaced with the revived authentic name *Khoekhoegowab* after 1990 (see Haacke 2011).

15 The convention to avoid diacritics by using the symbols *p*, *t* and *k* to mark words with a higher melody, and *b*, *d* and *g* for words with a lower melody – e.g. *tao* [tãò] “feel ashamed” vs. *dao* [tãò] “burn”, while Khoekhoegowab does not distinguish voiceless and voiced plosives, was first suggested by Jan Snyman (p.c.).

16 Hence Rafael Mbala and after him Henry Buiswalelo were appointed on their own as “language assistants” for Silozi. In October 1982 Anton Bredell was appointed as language planner.



Nama/Damara Language Committee 1974

Sitting, from left to right: J. Vleermuis (Nama), Rev. W.M. Jod (Nama), J. Boois (secretary, language assistant BIL), A. Geingob (chairperson, Damara), F. Tsubeb (Damara), J. Keremin (Dept. Information)

Standing: W. Haacke (asst. language planner), D. Luiperdt (Nama), W. Zimmermann (Head: BIL), Rev. P. Schmidt (Nama), Capt. H. Witbooi (Nama), Rev. E. Eiseb (Bible Society, Damara)

Absent: I. R. Xoagub, !Garoeb (Damara), A. !Hoakhaob

Photo: W. Haacke

As orthographic issues require linguistic insight, the staff of the BIL was during the initial years advised by a *Native Language Board* on which the language planners were guided by reputed South African professors of (mainly) African languages (at various stages (Proff. Jacobus A. du Plessis, Theodor Endemann, Hans Trümpelmann, Egidius B. van Wyk, Ernst Westphal, Dirk Ziervogel) and Rev. Toivo Tironnen (an accomplished expert of Oshindonga). This board first convened for the first time in in 1970, only for the standardizations of the orthographies.

All orthographies for Namibian Bantu languages followed the South African approach to adhere to disjunctive word division in verbs, *i.e.* subject and object concords are spelled disjunctively from the verb stem, not conjunctively as affixes. In fairness it must be conceded though that orthographic rules are not determined solely by linguistic rationale. Established orthographic practice is a strongly determining factor that should not be ignored, as this would unsettle the literate community.

Today all the languages concerned employ the orthographies as progressively standardized (usually in up to two versions) by the BIL. An exception is Zulhoan (!Xuun). In 1969, the year when the first version of the orthography was published, Snyman resigned from the BIL to accept a position for Setswana at UNISA, as the transfer of African education to the Ministry of

Bantu Education was imminent (1970). The ministry used this absence of expertise as pretext to terminate the development of “Bushman” as unfeasible. After an extended period of dormancy a strongly revised version of the orthography, *Zjuc’hoa Orthography No. 2* was, at the initiative of missionary Bible translators, published by the BIL as “the only official spelling system”. This second spelling system was in 1991 superseded by a third orthography as developed by the independent linguist Patrick Dickens in collaboration with Jul’hoan speakers.¹⁷

After the first round of orthographic standardizations revised and/or expanded versions appeared as “... *Orthography 2*” as from 1973 onwards. The orthographies for the Bantu languages and for “Nama/Damara”—as it was officially called by then—basically adhered to the orthographic principles as accepted for the first versions. Revisions were mainly of an editorial nature and also involved inclusion of further detail. Nama/Damara, for instance, was the first language to include rules on punctuation (1977). Some third versions were published by the National Institute of Educational Development (NIED) after the demise of the BIL at independence and involved mainly the replacement of Afrikaans with the respective African language, while keeping the official language English in this bilingual publication. While a first draft of a Rucgiriku orthography was submitted to the Language Board in 1970, the first official orthography of Rucgiriku was published only in 1988. The progress of development of the respective languages depended largely on the availability of language planners for a particular language.

The following orthographies were published by the BIL for eight of the Namibian languages:

196? *Voorgestelde Ortografie vir Kwanyama*

196? *Voorgestelde Ortografie vir Ndonga*

196? *Herero Orthography: preliminary edition*

1966 *Kwanyama Spelreëls/Orthography 1*

1968 *Herero Spelreëls/Orthography 1*

1968 *Kwangali Spelreëls/Orthography 1*

1968 *Mbukushu Spelreëls/Orthography 1*

1969 *!Xú: ’n Boesmantaal (Spelreëls 1)*

1970 *Nama/Damara Spelreëls/Orthography No. 1*

1973 *Kwanyama Spelreëls/Orthography 2*

1973/1975 *Ndonga Spelreëls/Orthography 2*

1973/1980 *Kwanyama Spelreëls/Orthography 2*

17 Cf Haacke 2005: 163 *et seq.* for the history of the development of the Jul’hoan orthographies.

- 1974 *Herero Spelreëls/Orthography 2*
- 1974 *Kwangali Spelreëls/Orthography 2*
- 1977 *Nama/Damara Spelreëls/Orthography No. 2*
- 1980 *Mbukushu Spelreëls/Orthography 2*
- 1983 *Herero Spelreëls/Orthography 3*
- 1985 *Lozi Orthography 2*
- 1987 *Zjuc'hôa Ortografie/Orthography 2 (Boesman/Bushman)*
- 1988 *Gciriku Ortografie/Orthography 1*

The Language Committees, under the Dept of National Education integrated as “Subject Committees”, like the present Curriculum Committees (since independence), were responsible for modernization and standardization by coining terminologies. While general terms were coined *ad hoc* for language primers and readers as required, terminologies for arithmetic and language tuition were coined systematically and published in separate publications as listed below.

- 1971 *Ndonga: taalkundige terme en afkortings*
- 1971 *Kwanyama: taalkundige terme en afkortings*
- 1973 *Ndonga taalkunde en rekenkunde: terminologielys*
- 1973 *Kwanyama taalkunde en rekenkunde: terminologielys*
- 1973 *Mbukushu taalkunde en rekenkunde: terminologielys*
- 197? *Kwangali: linguistic terms and abbreviations/taalkundige terme en afkortings*
- 1975 *Herero rekenkunde: terminologielys*
- 1976 *Herero taalkundige terminologielys*
- n.d. (= 1976) *Nama/Damara taalkundige terminologielys*

All terms coined for Nama/Damara (*i.e.* Khoekhoegowab) until about 2000 were also accommodated in the glossaries and dictionary by Haacke & Eiseb (1999 and 2005, 2002 respectively). Such terms are marked by an asterisk to indicate that the entry is a term recommended for official usage, but that time would have to show whether it would be accepted in actual usage. It is a serious shortcoming that, to the best of my knowledge, terminological data banks at present are no longer maintained for any of the languages in either printed or electronic forms for public access. Hence created terms are largely stillborn.

Once the main prerequisite for corpus development, *i.e.* graphization, had been accomplished, actual production of syllabi and materials could be commenced with. Until about 1978 emphasis for most languages was on the production of readers, primers and prescribed literature for the teaching of the languages as *subject*. After that the focus was shifted to texts as *medium of instruction* for Biblical studies and arithmetic during the first four years of schooling in the respective languages. When this trend was commenced by the Oshiwambo lects, who were most advanced in their production, Nama/Damara—which was lagging behind because of the non-availability of staff before 1973—had to follow suit in the interest of co-ordination. This meant that the introduction of readers and primers for the teaching of the language suffered a hiatus between the introduction of St.4 in 1978 and St.5 in 1984.

Contrary to the present situation at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) teaching materials were in the 1970s produced almost exclusively by the staff of the BIL. External translators or authors were still to emerge. For instance, in the ten years from 1974 to 1983 some 24 original books or translations were produced for Nama/Damara by the BIL staff. In 1977 Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama became the first languages to be offered as examinable subject for Matric (Grade 12). The BIL had to act as its own publisher until 1978, when a local publishing firm, Gamsberg Publishers, was founded that in the initial years became the sole educational publisher of African languages. Johannes (Hans) Viljoen, who was appointed for Oshindonga (and subsequently Oshikwanyama) in 1970, resigned from the BIL in 1980 to run that new publishing firm. Only after independence did various other publishing enterprises emerge that attempted to acquire a share of the market in collaboration with independent authors.

Glossaries and Dictionaries

The need for lexical reference books was only too obvious to the staff of the BIL, also from a personal need while dealing with the languages. The coining of terminology was an attempt to modernize the languages by providing contemporary concepts. But reference works with the existing lexicon in standardized spelling were also essential. As the literary development of the languages had been in the hands of missionaries, most dictionaries used German as second language and were thus inaccessible to the native speakers. Hence bilingual reference works with Afrikaans (and/or English) were called for. As the production of dictionaries was not part of the official terms of reference, these dictionaries mostly were of a moderate scale. Although virtually all of them were called “dictionaries”, most of them actually were glossaries. That is, entries were not presented in chapters with examples and derivations, but in alphabetical word-lists. None of the Bantu reference works are marked for tone. In the following list works that appeared after the author had left the BIL are also included as the compilation was begun during their employment in the BIL, but they are included in square brackets.

Viljoen, Johannes J., Amakali, Petrus. 1975. *Ndonga-Afrikaans-English. Drietalige Woordeboek / Tri-lingual Dictionary / Embwiitya Pamalaka Gatatu*. van Schaik.

[Snyman, Jan W. 1975. *Zu/'hōasi Fonologie en Woordeboek*. Cape Town & Rotterdam: Balkema.]

Turvey, Basil H. C. 1977. *Kwanyama-English Dictionary*. Edited by Wolfgang Zimmermann and Gabriel W. Taapopi. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand.

Viljoen, Johannes J., Kamupingene, Theophilus K. 1983. *Otjiherero Woordeboek, Dictionary, Embo Romambo*. Windhoek: Gamsberg.

[Viljoen, Johannes J., Amakali, Petrus. 1984. *Oshindonga Woordeboek, Dictionary, Embwiitya*. Windhoek: Gamsberg.]

[Viljoen, Johannes J., Amakali, Petrus, Namuandi, M. 1984. *Oshindonga-English / English-Oshindonga Embwiitya / Dictionary*. 2nd edition. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]

[Kloppers, J.K.; Nakare, D.; Isala, L.M. 1994. *Bukenkango Rukwangali-English, English-Rukwangali Dictionary*. Edited by Anton W. Bredell. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]

In 1980, while still employed in the BIL, Haacke launched the long-term *Nama Dictionary Project* with external funding to employ two co-compilers. Pastor Eliphaz Eiseb was employed as co-compiler until 1992 full-time with external funding. Three reference works were published in subsequent years, one being a true dictionary with over 24 000 entries, the other two reduced works in glossary form for use in schools:

[Haacke, Wilfrid & Eliphaz Eiseb. 1999. *Khoekhoegowab-English / English-Khoekhoegowab Glossary / Midi Saogub*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]

[Haacke, Wilfrid & Eliphaz Eiseb. 2002. *A Khoekhoegowab dictionary, with an English-Khoekhoe index*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]

[Haacke, Wilfrid, Eliphaz Eiseb & Christine Gericke. 2010. *Khoekhoegowab-Afrikaans Afrikaans- Khoekhoegowab Glossarium/Midi Saogub*. Windhoek: Macmillan.]

Theses and Dissertations

None of the languages identified for language planning had been described by contemporary field linguists. Exceptions were Rukwangali by Westphal (1958) and Rucgiriku by Möhlig (1967). Under these circumstances the academic work of members of the BIL assumed a relatively centralised role, and linguistic research by the language planners was a prerequisite for all aspects of corpus development. As none of these languages were offered as undergraduate university subjects anywhere these educational planners were appointed as complete novices to their respective languages, having to rely on their undergraduate training in one or other South African Bantu language and the guidance by their respective colleagues. Hence it was tacitly expected that language planners would in their private time acquire postgraduate degrees in

the language(s) they were responsible for. One B.A. (Hons) degree was obtained, seven M.A.s and three Ph.Ds. The following chronological list also includes some Ph.D theses (in square brackets) that were submitted and published after the authors had resigned from the BIL, as the work on the topics was started during the employment of the authors as educational planners.

Janse van Vuuren, Willem J. H. J. 1966. *Die ortografie en klankstelsel van Kwanyama en Ndonga*. MA thesis. Potchefstroomse Univ. vir Christlike Hoër Onderwys.

Volschenk, Philippus A. 1968. *Herero: a morphological survey*. MA dissertation. UCT.

Snyman, Jan W. 1969. *An introduction to the !Xú language*. MA dissertation, UCT; published in 1970 as *An introduction to the !Xú (!Kung) language*. Communications from the School of African Studies, #34. Balkema.

Zimmermann, Wolfgang. 1971. *Die selfstandige naamwoord in Kwanyama: 'n oorsig oor die vorm en inhoud*. MA dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.

[Snyman, Jan W. 1972. *Die fonologie van Zu/'hōasi: 'n deskriptiewe ontleding van data in 'n Zu/'hōasi-woordeboek*. PhD thesis, UCT; published in 1975 as *Zu/'hōasi fonologie en woordeboek*. Communications from the School of African Studies, #37. Balkema.]

Viljoen, Johannes J. 1973. *Die konjugasie en die werkwoord in Ndonga*. MA dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.

Haacke, Wilfrid H. G. 1976. *A Nama grammar: the noun-phrase*. MA dissertation. UCT.

Haacke, Wilfrid H. G. 1978. *Subject deposition in Nama*. MA (Theor. Ling.) dissertation. Univ. of Essex.

[Viljoen, Johannes J. 1979. *Die kopulatief in Ndonga en Kwanyama*. DLitt et Phil thesis. Pretoria: UNISA.]

[Hendrikse, Herika. 1981. *The concepts mood and sentence type in a Herero grammar with theoretical aims*. B.A. (Hons). Rhodes Univ.]

[Haacke, Wilfrid H. G. 1993. *The Tonology of Khoekhoe (Nama/Damara)*. PhD thesis. London (UCL); published in 1999 Cologne: Köppe.]

Grammars and Course books outside school curricula

Until 1980 no tertiary institution existed in Namibia that could cater for Namibian African languages. The highest linguistic expertise was thus confined to the members of the BIL, and some of them engaged in advancing the languages outside the terms of reference of the BIL. Several publications thus appeared for the general market. Viljoen and Amakali were commissioned to develop course materials for Oshindonga as university subject for the correspondence university UNISA. They also acted as lecturers for these courses. Some staff offered evening classes for adult education on behalf of the SWA Administration. One student of Otjiherero evening classes excelled to the extent that he wrote an Otjiherero grammar and co-published a terminology (Booyesen 1982 and 1987 respectively). He furthermore served as proofreader for the new translation of the Otjiherero Bible.

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- [Viljoen, Johannes, Namuandi, M. 1992. *Oshindonga workbook: a practical course for beginners*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]
- [Zimmermann, Wolfgang; Hasheela, Paavo. 1998. *Oshikwanyama grammar*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.]

After Hans Viljoen had with his colleagues Petrus Amakali and Gabriel Taapopi/Paavo Hashela completed the respective language books for Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama up to Std 10 (Grade 12 today) a local entrepreneur employed him in 1979 to open a publishing house that initially catered solely for the publication of Namibian school books in mainly the African languages. Until then the BIL had acted as its own publisher. A year later Petrus Amakali, language assistant for Oshindonga, was also employed by the same publisher to run a branch in Oshakati. The existence of this publishing house was a first financial incentive for African translators and writers to produce titles in their own language. First works of indigenous literature appeared and were prescribed as texts in secondary school. Initially the BIL had to rely on translations to provide prescribed prose and drama. The first prose translation published by the NLB for any Namibian language was *Maya Okanyushi*, a translation into Oshindonga of Waldemar Bonsel's *Die Biene Maja (Maya the Bee)*. As it was a first, a hard cover edition with colour illustrations was approved in 1974. Progressively more school books were produced by independent authors not employed in the BIL. Only after independence did various other publishing enterprises emerge that attempted to acquire a share of the market in collaboration with independent authors.

Conclusion

An inherent problem remained to be the situation, however, that while the African languages were one by one reaching the stage that they were taught in secondary schools up to Grade 12, secondary teachers could nowhere acquire the necessary degree with one of these languages as major, as is required for teachers of senior secondary subjects. When a first Namibian institution of higher education was established in 1980 in the form of the *Academy for Tertiary Education* it was an unquestionable priority that at least certain of the languages identified for literary development were to be introduced for development as major subjects. In 1983 the BIL's educational planner for Nama/Damara, Wilfrid Haacke was appointed to institute a Department of African Languages, and develop university courses for Nama/Damara. In 1985 another educational planner from the BIL, Rajmund Ohly was appointed as senior lecturer for Otjiherero. The Department could progressively be extended to offer six languages at its peak in 1999 at the institutional successor, the *University of Namibia* (UNAM): Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama (later subsumed as Oshiwambo), Rukwangali and Silozi, apart from Kiswahili because of available foreign expertise. Because of a financial crisis UNAM laid off the two foreign professors, though. Ever since then only Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero and Oshiwambo are offered, with no possibility for prospective secondary teachers of Rukwangali, Thimbukushu, Rugciriku or Silozi to study their language at the required tertiary level.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that, after Namibia's attainment of independence NIED had in 1995 been decentralized to Okahandja, while UNAM was established in Windhoek. This geographical obstacle prevents close interaction of the staff of the two institutions, which could have allowed the education officers of NIED to assist in teaching literature of languages for which UNAM has no staff. This would have allowed courses for the remaining languages to be introduced progressively, and at the same time the education officers of NIED could have advanced their own higher training.



Nama/Damara Subject Committee 1987–89

Sitting (left to right): J. Niewenhuizen (language planner), Rev. A. Biwa (chairperson, N), W. Damases (D), D. Swartz (D), Rev. E. Eiseb (Bible Society)

Standing: I Swartz (D), I. !Gowaseb (D), R. Ochs (D), I. !Garob (D), M. !Goraseb (D), J. Boois (secretary, language assistant), M. Döseb (D), T. Däusab (N), Prof W. Haacke (*Academy*), L. Namaseb (*Academy*)

Photo: Christo Landsberg

The restructuring of the staffing concept at NIED from the BIL's two-tier team of a graduated non-speaker with a mother-tongue speaker as assistant to a single mother-tongue speaker per language was an inevitable consequence, once the possibility arose to appoint MT speakers with tertiary training as educational officers. The language primers of the BIL had been prone to suffer from the typical second language approach that books tend to have which are authored by non-mother-tongue speakers. Such books tend to stress formal grammar at the expense of the living language and culture that should enrich the learners. Now the time has arrived where mother-tongue speakers can be engaged that can also be expected to be academically appropriately qualified.

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