‘Disintegrating the agenda’ — strategies of transformation discourse

Rosalie Finlayson* and Sarah Slabbert

1 Department of African Languages, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Pretoria 0003, South Africa
2 Honorary Research Associate, University of the Witwatersrand, PO Wits, 2050, South Africa
* Corresponding author, e-mail: finlar@unisa.ac.za

Abstract: This article considers issues of language use in South Africa with regard to some salient discursive practices at an academic institution. In the contexts under review, language choice and use are embedded within a context of linguistic power relationships (high status versus low status, dominant versus minority, ideological, European versus African, the discourse conventions of an academic institution versus that of the ‘struggle’ etc.) which in turn reflect the political power strands in South African society. The article will analyse and illustrate how a second language code was extremely effectively manipulated by various stakeholder groupings when subjected to the forces of transformation power politics. This effective manipulation of a second language code, in this case the colonial language, by the colonised to undermine the power vested in a representative of the coloniser within an institution, among other things, undermined the accepted norms of the code itself.

Introduction
As South Africans move towards accommodating the eleven languages declared official in the first democratic constitution of 1996, the manifestations and impact of language choice and use in a variety of contexts have opened up new fields of investigation. This language choice and use is embedded within a context of linguistic power relationships which in turn reflect the political power strands in South African society (ideological, high status versus low status, dominant versus minority, European versus African, the discourse conventions of an academic institution versus that of the ‘struggle’ etc.). This paper gives a thick description (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999: 1) of some salient discursive practices used in the transformation debates at an academic institution. The issues surrounding language and power have often been the topic of sociolinguistic investigation (cf. Kress & Hodge, 1979; Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Blommaert, 1999).

This paper investigates the relationship between language and power in a South African post apartheid transformation context. More specifically the aims of this paper are:

1. to define transformation discourse,
2. to contextualise the transformation discourse that will be discussed, and,
3. to analyse and illustrate how a second language code was extremely effectively manipulated by various stakeholder groupings when subjected to the forces of transformation power politics. To this end selected examples will be used, drawn from recordings of some strategic level meetings and debates during the period 1998 to 1999, concerning the election of a new principal for one of the largest universities in South Africa.¹

Our study fits within the theories and methodologies of interactional sociolinguistics as exemplified by the work of Hinnenkamp, 1991; Roberts, Davies and Jupp, 1992; and Young, 1994. In the analysis of interactions these studies are often in tangent with the philosophy and methods of critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis (cf. the work of Fairclough, 1995; Kress & Hodge, 1979; and others). Ruth Wodak (in Verschueren, Östman & Blommaert, 1995: 204) considers critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis to be “fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of domi-
nance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.”

In line with the four tasks to pragmatic description and explanations that Verschueren (1995: 15) assigns, we will identify contextual objects of adaptability by focussing on the ideological underpinnings and the context and participant structure, we will situate processes with reference to structural layers of adaptability and account for the dynamics of adaptability and we will consider differences in the salience of the adaptation processes.

We use the term ‘ideology’ in the Faircloughian sense of social relations of power. Fairclough (1995: 17) alludes to “asymmetrical relations of power, to domination” in his application of the term ‘ideology’. Textual analysis presupposes a theory of language and a grammatical theory. For our analysis Halliday’s theory of Functional Grammar will be used. The focus will be on how language structures fulfil their primary social functions in what Halliday (1978) calls the social semiotic of language.

**Defining transformation discourse**

Transformation has become one of the key processes to mark the political transition in South Africa from an apartheid regime to a democratically elected government. The transformation forums founded by various institutions to facilitate this process have become the playgrounds in which a “struggle for authoritative entextualization” takes place (Silverstein & Urban, 1996: 11). According to Bloomaert (1999: 9) the struggle for authoritative entextualization “develops usually over definitions of social realities: various representations of reality which are pitted against each other — discursively — with the aim of gaining authority for one particular representation.” Mehan (1996) calls this “the politics of representation”:

Proponents of various positions in conflicts waged in and through discourse, attempt to capture or dominate modes of representation... This competition over the meaning of ambiguous events, people, and objects in the world has been called the “politics of representation”... Indeed, the process of lexical labeling is itself an entextualization process. Complex, contextually nuanced discussions get summed up in (and hence, are entextualized through) a single word. (Mehan, 1996: 253)

These transformation forums could be regarded as a unique meeting ground of ideologies, cultures and specific power agendas.

For the purposes of this paper we define transformation discourse as the interaction between the ideology of an academic establishment which has operated within the old South African order, further to be referred to as the ‘old order’ and the ideology of the ‘struggle’, termed in the paper as ‘the new order’, as it has been manifested within an academic environment. ‘Struggle’ is a term used to describe the political process launched to confront and eliminate the policies and practices of apartheid in South Africa. We focus on the language used by the ‘new’ order, although we also attend to aspects of the interaction between the ‘new’ and the ‘old’. Transformation discourse can be considered as a type of negotiation discourse but is unique in the sense that the goal is not negotiable, as in substantive negotiations between unions and management for example. In this context the specific transformation goal was the election of a new principal of a university. However, the power position of the participants towards this end goal was negotiable and was played out in the discourse.

It should be noted though that the tension between the two ideologies was played out even with regard to the term ‘transformation’ itself. Hours, for example, were spent in transformation meetings at the institution debating the very definition of ‘transformation’. The underlying focal point of the debate was the challenge for the replacement of the old order by the new and the concomitant power struggle between supporters of the two orders.

**Context and participant structure**

It is important to place this investigation within the contextual dynamic present during that period from which the research material was taken.

The relationship between the opposing ideologies and the resultant power struggle was complex. The multiple tensions between student versus academia, black versus white, administration versus academia, various political affiliations and individual animosities extended to conflict within the individual person. The position for individual role-players was not clear-cut. Role-players found themselves shifting alliances. One of the reasons for this was the erosion of the power position of sup-
portive structures and another was the inner turmoil experienced by individuals of the old order in perceiving the apparent crumbling of past securities and comfort zones.

Role-players found that defined stereotypes of other people biased their perception of their actions (Van Dijk, 1984: 14) and created pre-conceived prejudices. However, the shifts in alignment refuted stereotypical assumptions about role-players and their responses, and challenged prejudices. The fuzziness in alignment also had implications for in-group versus out-group relationships.

The power juxtaposition inherent in transformation discourse can be viewed as comparable to the enigma of ‘Otherness’ as explored by Todorov with regard to the conquest of America (1985). Both the ideology of the academic establishment and that of the ‘struggle’ can be constructed in terms of a Self and an Other. The transformation process however forced opposing ideologies to engage with each other, thus pushing individuals into a position where they no longer wanted to be “a bearer of strategies to protect identity through devaluation of the other”, because “if one transcends the domestic field of identities through which the other is constituted, one loses the identity and standing needed to communicate with those one sought to inform” (Connolly, 1991: 44). The implication of this was that the power relationship continuously developed new strains.

The academic institution, as in the case of other similar institutions, has been subjected to strategic changes in terms of its internal structures, their representivity, the realignment of the educational system and the roles and attitudes adopted by members of the variety of stakeholder groups involved. In fact, the situation at this institution could be regarded as a microcosm of the situation in the country as a whole where changes of necessity have had to take place.

**Internal structures**

Prior to the acknowledgement of the need for transformation, the structural arrangements present at this institution, although regarded by the management of the institution as generally efficient, were found by the new order to be top down, authoritative and unrepresentative of the demography of the country as a whole. An audit of the personnel, both administrative as well as academic, showed further the urgent need for change. The institution subsequently initiated an aggressive programme of affirmative action that began to add momentum to its changing staff complement. Within this context, there were conflicting forces at work, some urging change, while others were resisting the process.

**Realignment of the educational system**

A further tension was provided after 1994 when top politicians, including the Minister of National Education as well as the Deputy President, urged this institution to get in line with the new dispensation in tertiary education. Within this milieu, the critical period of change within the country’s educational system brought additional forces to bear on the institution. Various forums were established to actively work towards the process of change. To this end a University Broad Transformation Forum (UBTF) was established in 1996 as an interim body to carry out a political programme to bring about visible change and was a driving force within the institution to “ensure that this University becomes a financially sustainable and transformed institution” (UBTF, 1999: 1). In response to these directives a number of commissions were created to conduct investigations on subjects such as governance, language, strategic aspects, human resources, student affairs, finance as well as teaching and learning.

**Roles and attitudes**

Group dynamics in many of the departments at this university changed as a result of the 1994 general election that marked the political transition from apartheid to a democratic dispensation. It became increasingly evident to both academic and administrative staff that the power base of their established support structure within the university was being eroded. This led individuals to begin searching for other havens of protective stability and group identity. This also introduced a dynamic of uncertainty *vis a vis* past loyalty versus the inevitable opportunism of individuals whose vested interests were undeclared.

This fluid situation spawned new dimensions in transformation discourse as it continued to be played out in the evolving developments in the university.
Discourse analysis

The database used for this investigation comprises cassette recordings of ten (approximately fifty-eight hours) meetings of the University Broad Transformation Forum (UBTF) and ten (approximately sixty-six hours) of the selection committee for a new principal. One of the authors was present at all these meetings. Three extracts from the selection committee meetings, given as examples (1), (2) and (3) below, have been selected to illustrate the nature of transformation discourse as it manifests itself at an academic institution with regard to some specific issues. It should be noted that the discourse analysis presented in this paper is based on the full data set and not on the illustrative extracts only. Further, the findings were presented to key participants at the university in order to verify the validity of the interpretations and the conclusions.

Examples

Clarifying note:
Underlined text = exclusive reference
Underlined capitals = inclusive reference

Example 1: Selection Committee — for the election of a new principal (18/02/1998)
26 members formed the selection committee for the election of the new principal. The committee comprised all the stakeholders of the University i.e. Council, academia, administration, the unions, students, Women's Forum, Black Forum and external stakeholders. The Chairperson in this example was a white Afrikaner male. He was subsequently replaced by a black woman as Chairperson. The issue at stake in this particular example was an advertisement calling for applications for the post of principal of the university.

1 Union: Chairperson, I, I thank you for your indulgence. I was..., without being disrespectful again, was going to say that... er... maybe suggest some kind of procedure which would sort of circumvent whatever kind of problems in terms of protraction... the processes suggested would take us time. I, however, want to unpack a bit, but before doing so, so to avoid that other people should be confused, in terms of procedure, the proposal... er... by my comrade the other side I felt, it's my opinion, that you should either, as Chair, solicit, or find out, throw tentacles, as to is it acceptable or not in terms of adoption and going forward. It's not a rigid position, it helps you to find if there is any dissenting view to that, apart from the input, then you are able to establish that the majority of the people present are agreed on that position. I am saying that Chairperson in the sense that it's much easier that way er... so that you can then marry that position but I don't see a contradiction. I am not trying to motivate for sake of time, I can do so, but save to say, I'm completely in agreement, align, or alignment with that position which in my own personal view is actually that people are the very core and it then encapsulates that position, there is no contradiction in that, and it also encapsulates or takes into account the position that says er... it must be a highly qualified kind of person. It does not eliminate any of the inputs of points raised. I may be ignorant or ignoring certain positions. You could get some persons to draft us an advertisement. I would like to save you time...

21 Chair: Er... Yes, I prefer it... I'm looking for a way forward — does everyone agree that we can use this...

23 Acad: Mr Chairman, I'm a bit confused, what are WE looking at...?

24 Chair: I'm looking for a way of getting a combination of what WE have, what are OUR objectives. What would you like to add? Do you want to add...?

26 Acad: What is important... it is the core of the search... if YOU look at the six characteristics the Student Group have submitted... YOU can combine them... ONE must also have academic management capabilities... credentials... educational management is extremely important, financial management... I would rather see sensitivity with regard to human relations matters — WE must look at a variety of criteria, or characteristics or whatever you want to call them... and WE must try to deal with them as briefly clearly and neatly as possible in an advertisement... WE must look at additional criteria.

34 Chair: That's what I've asked that WE accept what is before us plus an additional information.
Student: Thanks Chair, I hope that to make sure that we assist this meeting, it is important to assist meetings so that meetings are able to take decisions. If we don’t do that you are not helpful. Chair, I think you are correct and I agree with you... er... that submissions must be... if there is any stakeholder who wants to make submissions... are there any clarity seeking questions... let us isolate strong disagreement and any agreements... Don’t try to reconcile them now. Let us decide on a committee. This committee must be mandated to marry these submissions and come back to us... this committee must be representative...

Acad: Thanks Chair, I’m fully in agreement with my comrades... they talk of quality and academic leadership... we have serious reservations about that. I want to believe it’s in the literature that we have academic freedom etc, but nothing about administrative and professional person... it must not be limited.

Acad: WE have had different inputs... all are important... WE need to have a proposal otherwise we’ll sit here till 12 o’clock... I share your concern for speed and progress.

Chair: I feel an advert is an advert... WE’ll have to look through each applicant... my suggestion is that if everyone is happy...

Acad: I’m inclined to agree with you... sorry are you finished?

Chair: WE shouldn’t place too much emphasis on the advert... WE must just do it now...

Acad: The stepping stone is the advert... yes?

Union: Chairperson at the end of the day you’ll notice that... I hope you’re following my line of march?... but we should progress...

Chair: Is there anyone who doesn’t agree with the basic concept of what everyone has said here — WE are all ad idem?

Example 2: (12/06/1998)
This example is from a stage in the proceedings in the election of a new principal where a short list of candidates needs to be drawn up. Following the short-listing, certain objections were raised regarding the actual composition of the committee as well as the process involved. Legal opinion was then sought. We have included this example in order to illustrate the focus on procedural matters that characterised these meetings.

Chair: Please let me check something... am I not allowed to vote?
Union: Yes... Because in terms of the procedure...
Chair: I haven’t got a deliberative vote?
Academic: Er... Because... Maybe we should be able to have a clear interpretation of the casting vote... does it mean...?
Union: No, there is no casting vote...
Black Forum: So that we are clear when we say 26 it means it includes or it excludes the Chairperson... I think we should have a correct interpretation... and also... the 26 it includes the secretary or does it...?
Chair: No...
Black Forum: Chairperson, I’m not saying it does... I’m saying that at the end of the day we should not have suspicions... It’s what I’m trying to ascertain...
Chair: Is it correct?... I do not have a deliberative or casting?... so if there is an equality of votes we vote over again?
Black Forum: It’s what I’m trying to ascertain...
Chair: Are you satisfied...
Example 3: The issue is who should be on the short list and whether some should be excluded altogether.

1 Student: Chairperson, may I just get more clarification on this position...
2 Chair: OK.
3 Student: I don't agree because they've changed it afterwards again... this decision...
4 Chair: OK...
5 Student: The decision was to consider... that they instruct US to consider... to consider the...
6 inclusion of of of another... If this was then they could have said already... It...
7 was referred back to US so that WE can consider it...
8 Chair: But at the same time...
9 Academic: WE were informed by the law faculty... they have discovered according to law...
10 that WE have created a precedent...
11 Babble of voices...
12 Chair: Order please... Can WE have just one person on the floor? Thank you...
13 Academic: I'm giving you, you may not agree, but that is the version...from OUR experts,
14 once...
15 Union: And then?
16 Chair: I wish to inform you that decisions have been made, it's post factor...
17 Academic: Is it your recommendation that WE have been instructed by them then that we...
18 have to go back to this? It seems perfectly clear to me...
19 Babble, agreement, murmurs...
20 Union: We are having to compromise over and over again...
21 Chair: Can I remind you of what was put forward...
22 Academic: The fundamental contention is the status of the committee...
23 Union: On the basis of the... that particular precedent, that constituted a reason to say...
24 include them and the process must continue, while others say the process cannot...
25 continue... let us say, let us resolve the issue, I don't understand what people are...
26 saying that these are contradictory... ifthere is any person saying these are...
27 contradictory and not a true reflection... then that person must show us where are...
28 those minutes... and show evidence.
29 Chair: Let US continue please... either option 1 or option 2. With a condition on option...
30 2.
31 Academic: There can be three options...
32 Chair: Can WE agree then and move forward?
33 Black Forum: Chairperson, we need bilaterals with stakeholders...
34 Chair: We are not separating it...
35 Academic: There was talk of bilaterals...
36 Chair: I don't know what the problem is... it will be reflected in the minutes.
37 Academic: As long as the formulation is very clear... what or what or what or... Then I'm...
38 satisfied. It must be clear that this was not a formal resolution...
39 Student: Ja, Chairperson, I thought that WE have addressed that problem, but I'm happy that...
40 um... unfortunately the Professor is reopening the debate and I want to...
41 participate on that... I think I disagree...
42 Chair: OK, WE are not reopening the debate...
43 Student: The, the, the Professor is contesting what I suggested and what I suggested...
44 Chair: OK, let's get clarity...
45 Student: And what I suggested complements the summary...
46 Chair: OK, let's get clarity first... Are you putting this as one of the recommendations of...
47 this committee?
48 Student: My argument, my argument is that... this three recommendations, it was the resolution...
49 of this committee... then the decision must be made. WE discussed and resolved...
50 and this should be reflected in the minutes. WE must maintain the democratic...
51 nature of this committee... there is a contestation, and I'm saying it's the wrong...
52 assumption... I'm arguing that we said there should be bilaterals...
53 (Pause...)
54 Academic: WE never discussed this... WE are a committee and WE're busy with a process,
55 WE don't have to report... WE never discussed reporting...

Continued overleaf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>WE discussed the options.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>I want to challenge any person...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>I challenge...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>You'll challenge after I've finished speaking, Prof... I didn't exercise any impatience when responding to them... My comrades will agree... what they are arguing is out of order and it did not assist us to solve this problem. If you say this is a true reflection of what happened in that meeting, then I'm not prepared to participate in this meeting, I can rather be over-rulled by the vote, I think that will be a democratic process. But I insist that WE include the three recommendations... If there is a person proving me wrong, I suggest that let there be an evidence... of what happened in that meeting. This is just a biased view... it is just a subjective view... I'm saying that that is negotiating in bad faith... But we are very sensitive and careful of this process... Don't play with our patience... But if you are going to force us, I am not going to do that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>There is no contestation...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>WE did not say WE were going to report this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Is that is what is being contested, I need to understand that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>Ja, Chairperson, thanks. I think that question is very critical... Because I don't understand where is the contention... is the contention on the basis of the recommendation that have been made... that have been reflected in this document or whether it is about the process of reporting because er... my reading and if my memory is still serving me well I don't consider that the recommendation are a contention... I want to submit that that is also problematic... sure...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>I agree that WE did discuss that there should be bilaterals... also the participation of all. WE don't want to exclude anyone...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>OK let us move forward... next item please...</td>
</tr>
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**Task-orientation versus process orientation; individual versus constituency**

The members of the academic and administrative establishment (the 'old' order) rarely voiced the need to report back to a constituency and came across as being fiercely individualistic. In this sense they continued to act as the independent thinker unable to disassociate themselves from this position. Further, the academic and administrative establishment vested their control of the process in their focus on the task at hand as exemplified in (1) in lines 48 to 49 and 54, by comments such as "We need to have a proposal otherwise we'll sit here till 12 o'clock. I share your concern for speed and progress" and "We shouldn't place too much emphasis on the advert... we must do it now...".

In contrast the members of the new order functioned as representatives of a particular constituency and therefore the constant need or pressure to report back and discuss with their constituency was foregrounded. References to stakeholders and representivity and reporting back, such as "This committee must be mandated to marry these submissions and come back to us... This committee must be representive...", as exemplified in lines 42 and 43 in (1), typically mark their contributions. In this regard they functioned within the paradigm of African communitarianism (Senghor, 1998: 443).

In contrast to the old order, the new order vested their control in process-orientation such as questioning minutes, resolutions, roles and functions, e.g. whether the Chairperson had a casting vote or not, whether the secretary could vote or not, as exemplified in (2), lines 1, 3, 9 and 13, and also, in (1) in lines 6 and 7, even taking the liberty of directing the actions of the Chairperson, "You should as Chair".

A classic method of strengthening an argument is to call on an authority. This the academic and administrative establishment did by calling on the established structures such as Senate, the law faculty and experts (for the advertisement for the principal's post). In many instances the legitimacy of the very structures upon which they were calling was in question, thus undermining instead of enhancing their power base.

The new order called in the authority of democratic procedures of the process, representivity, transparency, good faith, which in the context of a country that has recently obtained
its democracy, are holy and unquestioned values.

Paradigm of confrontation
Socio-political alliances were shaped and altered in the discourse as opposing camps, deeply suspicious of each other in terms of a 'we' and a 'they', were assigned with the task to reach consensus on a defined common objective. In our previous research on multilingual discourse within a South African urban context, adaptation processes and communication strategies were described as functioning within a paradigm of accommodation (Finlayson & Slabbert, 1995). In this situation however, the dynamics of adaptability (Verschueren, 1995: 15) operate within a paradigm of confrontation.

The result was two contradictory but intertwined processes that in many instances obstructed each other. The process of selecting a principal was obstructed by the political struggle; the political struggle on the other hand was obstructed/blocking by the critical objective to reconcile differences and find consensus in the process of selecting a principal.

Example (1) above shows how the formulation of the advertisement for the principal became a political issue. The requirements proposed to be mentioned in the advertisement were interpreted as selection criteria designed to favour candidates of the opposing camp as lines 44 to 47 in (1) illustrate: "They talk of quality and academic leadership...we have serious reservations about that. I want to believe it's in the literature that we have academic freedom etc. but nothing about administrative and professional person...it must not be limited."

The reaction of the opposing camp was to regard the concern as premature, which can either be regarded as a refusal to engage with the other, or as an inability to engage with the other.

The Chairperson ignores the argument, as illustrated in (1), lines 51 and 54, by: "I feel an advert is an advert...we'll have to look through each applicant" and "We shouldn't place too much emphasis on the advert...we must just do it now". However he grabs onto the call for action, and he uses it as a cue to marry the student's and academic's objections with the previous suggestion of an appointed representative sub-committee to draft an advertisement, which he subsequently pushes through by using two rhetorical questions. The questions are formulated in such a way that it leaves no opening for the dissenting voice that it calls for, see lines 58 to 59 of (1): "Is there anyone who doesn't agree with the basic concept of what everyone has said here? — we are all ad idem?" In this way the responsibility of the advertisement is shifted to the proposed sub-committee.

Manipulation of the code
Possessing the code
All transformation discourse at this academic institution was conducted in what was regarded as a 'neutral language code' — English. However analysis of the data questions the neutrality of the code choice. It was evident that the English language and its structures could be regarded as conducive to the Western academic discourse. Therefore the opposing ideology found itself in a position where out of necessity it needed to break the advantage that the English language held for the Other. This advantage will be qualified in the section 'Lexical power play' later on in the paper. Bourdieu (1991: 67) states that "the linguistic relation of power is not completely determined by the prevailing linguistic forces alone; by virtue of the languages spoken, the speakers who use them and the groups defined by possession of the corresponding competence, the whole social structure is present in each interaction (and thereby in the discourse uttered)."

Various illustrations of this occur in examples (1) and (3) above. 'Possession of competence' in this context was vested in a non-standard variety. It was the old order who found themselves at a disadvantage and 'possessed' with regard to their competence in a variety that deviated from the norm. Kachru (1992: 62) notes that

A "deviation" has the following characteristics: it is different from the norm in the sense that it is the result of the new "un-English" linguistic and cultural setting in which the English language is used; it is the result of a productive process which marks the typical variety-specific features; and it is systemic within a variety, and not idiosyncratic.

The non-standard variety used by the new order was characterised by a set of discourse features which are discussed below. Gough (1996: 66) in his investigation of Black South
African English (BSAFE) finds that “BSAFE discourse is characterised by idiosyncratic discourse markers that appear to be strongly influenced by the mother tongue.” He does not provide a detailed description nor many examples. Gough’s observation that discourse markers such as “in fact”, “in my opinion I can say”, “again” and “by all means” are used for emphasis or to underscore a point, was similarly observed in the variety of the new order. In light of this and other areas of agreement with Gough’s observations, the more general occurrence in BSAFE of the discourse features discussed in this article needs to be further investigated.

Confusing meaning
The discourse on the part of the new order was marked by opaque and confusing arguments in a verbose and flowery language. This would be interspersed with forceful suggestions in simple language. The first paragraph of (1) illustrates how a speaker intersperses a forceful suggestion (“You could get some persons to draft us an advertisement”) with an opaque, confusing argument. The intonation structure emphasises the suggestion, with the result that the hearer latches onto the part that s/he can make sense of and accepts it as a positive contribution. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 9) refer to a ‘waffle phenomenon’ in their discussion on non-native referential discourse.

In none of the instances in the present research is clarification of meaning requested or demanded, whereas clarification on procedural matters is consistently requested by and granted to those representing the new order.

A possible explanation for this could be that the symbolic power relation that constituted this market (Bourdieu, 1991) precluded the clarity seeking questions. It would have been too personal, too confrontational, thus obstructing the purpose of these meetings that were deemed to be reconciliatory in nature. The clarification requests on procedures, on the other hand, were not directed at an individual, and could therefore not be regarded as obstructing the purpose of the meetings.

Lexical power play
In a similar vein, various new terminologies and metaphors were introduced by the new order constituency, for example “following the line of march” i.e. understanding the argument. Many more such examples could be given, such as the list below:

- confirm mandate
- my brief
- the decisive comrade
- I hope I’m protected...
- I will be brief since I don’t have an emerging solution
- I want to believe/assume that...
- I want to ask a clarity seeking question...
- I want to go home on the point...
- In the light of this conceptualisation...
- With your indulgent personage...
- I fail to subscribe to that point
- On that I point I rest my case
- I will refrain from entertaining the possibilities
- I’d like to take my comrades on board to get a mandate...
- I concretely believe...
- I’m following the line of march...
- I’ll succumb to the procedural points that have been raised
- allay my fears
- Can I be informed of the relevance?
- I submarine (i.e. I abstain, I withdraw)
- What you are saying is not incorrect...
- Let me correct your point of correction...
- disintegrating the agenda
- democratically suppressed
- I don’t want to be spontaneous in my argument

With this semantic manipulation a new code was created which the opposing camp simply had to deal with. Questions such as the following may be posed: why was it accepted? Why was it not exposed as ‘not English’? Surprisingly the code was accepted despite the disadvantage that it put the opposing camp in. One of the reasons was that English was not the first language for the majority of the members of the academic establishment. The many Afrikaans-speaking representatives found themselves in a disadvantageous position since the fact that they were second language speakers made them question their own judgement of the manipulation of the code. This was mentioned in personal communication. The jargon was eventually even copied by those representing the academic establishment thereby demonstrating that they were conceding to the power of the new order. In this power game, language is the ball that is the manifestation of
the game, that scores the points, which is handled within defence and attack strategies, that is juggled to trick the opposition, which moves to various positions and which shifts constantly from one side to the other. It is the instrument that is used to tip the power balance.

The primary codes came into play during breaks and after meetings. Immediately after a meeting was closed, Afrikaans comments could be heard on the tapes. In the same way, the African languages were used for in-group discussions and for excluding the out-group. One of the authors personally experienced the considerable confusion among the in-group when a member of the perceived out-group entered such a conversation by virtue of her knowledge of the African languages.

The guise of tentativity
Both orders would clad their respective power play in linguistic structures of tentativity for example,

- personal reference which restricts the validity of the utterance e.g. "I felt, it's my opinion..."; "In my own personal view...";
- conditional clauses and higher order sentence introductions e.g. "I think I disagree...", "I want to believe...";
- repetitions e.g. "I felt, it's my opinion";
- epistemic modality e.g. "I may be ignorant but...", "You could get persons to draft the advertisement...";
- degrading the self e.g. "I may be ignorant but...", "I thank you for your indulgence..." and,
- indefinite noun phrases e.g. "...some kind of procedure..." in "I was going to suggest some kind of procedure...", and
- the subjunctive mood e.g. "I was going to suggest some kind of procedure...".

This was more marked in the case of the new order, particularly so, because they would swing from this very tentative, almost apologetic, albeit effective, approach to a highly assertive, almost aggressive mode. The old order would make use of the more reserved approach that had generally characterised academic meetings, being neither overly tentative nor overly assertive.

The new order would furthermore throw off the guise of tentativity and use modulation (Halliday, 1994: 191) with regard to functions of the chair and procedures, by using various assertive modes, for example deontic modality. See examples (1) and (3) above for examples, such as: "We must look at a variety of criteria" (1), line 30, "We must try to deal with them as briefly, clearly and neatly as possible in an advertisement" (1), lines 31 and 32, "This committee must be mandated to marry these submissions and come back to us" (1), line 42, "This committee must be representative" (1), line 43, "We must maintain the democratic nature of this committee" (3), line 49, "There should be bilateral" (3) line 51.

The oscillation between highly tentative and highly assertive was also found with regard to suggestions. Suggestions ranged from very tentative to direct orders. Contrast for example lines 18 to 19 of (1), "I may be ignorant or ignoring certain positions. You could get some persons to draft us an advertisement with lines 40 to 43: "let us isolate strong disagreement and any agreements... Don't try to reconcile them now. Let us decide on a committee. This committee must be mandated to marry these submissions and come back to us". The inclusive first person plural was used frequently in this regard: "Let us say, let us resolve..." in line 23 in (3).

Pronominal structure
The pronominal structure of the discourse is in itself an enactment of power alignments and power shifts. The reference of the first person plural shifts according to the state of interaction. If it's a state of compromise or consensus the 'we' is the inclusive 'we' which would refer to the committee, whereas in a state of confrontation it is used to strongly juxtapose the self against the other, the 'we' against 'they' and 'them' as exemplified in lines 44 to 47 of (1) and 58 to 67 of (3). In (1) and (3) exclusive reference has been underlined and inclusive reference has been underlined and appears in capital letters.

This is particularly apparent amongst the new order representatives. In contrast an old order academic in lines 26 to 33 of example (1) would overtly use the inclusive 'we', and yet, when one analyses the reference of the 'we', it is apparent that the stated values, i.e. academic management capabilities, credentials, educational management and financial management, are not shared by the full committee. For example, the sentence "We must look at additional criteria" allocates a peripheral position to
criteria that the new order would regard as essential.

A shift in allegiance would often be played out in terms of pronominal structures. For example the academic (line 44 of (1)) indicates his empathy for the new order by using the possessive “my comrades”. It is only in the context of this possessive that the reference of the subsequent “we” becomes evident to be not the inclusive committee, but rather, “we”, the new order.

Resolution dynamics
The discourse was characterised by a lack of coherence between argument and resolution. Decisions often happened unrelated to the current argument. The Chairperson in (1) for example would make a unilateral decision by transforming a suggestion which had not even been discussed into a resolution.

In (3), the third person sides with the opposing camp. This is interpreted by the Chairperson as changing the whole dynamic of the debate from intensely confrontational to a resolution. “OK, let us move forward... next item please” (line 79).

In the progress towards resolutions, the power balance was tipped unpredictably by singular actions that often did not reflect the course of the argument.

Salience of the adaptation process
Verschueren (1995: 15) measures salience in terms of explicit communicated meaning versus implicit information. Within a confrontational paradigm salience takes on a new meaning. In this context the ‘salience’ of an adaptation process can be measured in terms of its effectiveness within the power dynamic. In this context the above exemplifies a coherent set of highly motivated (and therefore highly salient) processes which have developed into a political code. This high level of consciousness of these adaptation processes is evident from the fact that they form part of the instructions in, for example, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (NEHAWU) Handbook.

Conclusion
The texts we have discussed illustrate the dynamic relationship between the production/reception of text and simultaneous social interaction that Fairclough (1995: 6) has called the two fundamental social processes that occur in the social spaces that “are” text. The outcomes of the meetings have revealed that the power balance in this instance was on the side of the new order i.e. the discursive advantage that the new order had over the old order became manifest in the decisions of the meetings. An attempt has been made in this paper to demonstrate how linguistic structures very effectively contributed towards an imbalance in the power play within the transformation process. This was achieved, one could argue, by the very effective manipulation of the previous colonial language by the colonised to undermine the power vested in an institution historically associated with the coloniser, among other things, by undermining the accepted norms of the code itself. The power position of a second language code manifested itself in a very complex and fascinating way in this discourse. For the old order the second language code undermined their power and added to their insecurity, while for the new order the second language code was embraced with virtually no inhibitions. Their limited command of the second language code was used to their advantage. In this process, a new order of discourse emerged. It became increasingly evident that as the transformation process advanced, the participants began to apply their various evolving language usages more confidently as they became more embedded in the exchanges between the stakeholder groupings. This seemed to ease the tension that existed during the early stages of the process and more readily facilitated productive interaction, shared understanding and outcomes. Participants of the ‘old’ order began to embrace the terminology of the manipulated code accepted as part of the ‘new’ order; thus making themselves a part of the in-group and affording a perceived shared camaraderie. It has also been found that the function and use of this new manipulated form of English has been accepted as the norm in recent meetings, showing that participants are indeed “following the line of march”.

The complex relationship between power and a second language code as illustrated in this paper adds a further dimension to the discussion on the power vested in the possession of a code (cf. Bourdieu 1991). The implications that this holds for language planning in a multilingual society should be explored further.
Notes

1 Formal permission was obtained from the university and all stakeholders involved in the process.

2 Personal communication.

References


