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Maintenance, identity and social inclusion narratives of an Afrikaans speaker living in New Zealand

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Abstract

This article reports on a narrative study which explored the language maintenance and the related identity experiences of an Afrikaans-speaking migrant from South Africa who has lived in New Zealand since 2001. The article tells his Afrikaans maintenance story, focusing particularly on identity and language use, as constructed during a series of three narrative interviews conducted over a period of six years. It is informed by recent discussions of social inclusion in the field of migration and sociolinguistics. A thematic analysis of big story data and a positioning analysis of a small story show that the migrant was successful at maintaining Afrikaans and achieving social inclusion within his social networks. However, based on the analyses, the article also suggests that the ways social inclusion interacts with language maintenance and the construction of self are dynamic and complex in migrant contexts.

Keywords: language maintenance, migration, social inclusion, New Zealand, Afrikaans

1. Introduction

For those who choose to migrate, the reasons for doing so are probably as varied as the migratory experiences themselves. They range from a search for a 'better life', including secure employment, good quality education and a safe environment, to the escape from crime or war, poor living conditions and financial hardship (Barkhuizen and de Klerk 2006; Olshtain and Horenczyk 2000; Yelenevskaya and Fialkova 2003). However, as the Migration Studies Project at Pennsylvania State University observes, "Migration today goes beyond the stereotypical notion of poor people entering a more developed country ... seeking a better quality of life" (Migration Studies Project). Some migrants, for example, may for business reasons live and work in multiple countries, others leave one country to live in another for

personal reasons (e.g. a change of lifestyle, a different work experience) which have nothing to do with existing hardship or an imagined better quality of life, and yet others follow family members (older or younger) who have migrated for their own reasons.

It is probably safe to say, though, that when migrants settle permanently in another country “identity and one’s sense of self are most put on the line, not least because most or all previous support systems in terms of history, culture and language have been removed and must rapidly be replaced by new ones” (Block 2007: 75). Immigration therefore involves adjustment (Tannenbaum and Berkovich 2005). New identities are negotiated and constructed (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). And language practices are very much implicated in these identification processes. Migrants who are speakers of minority languages in the new country may use the dominant language(s) more frequently and their own language(s) less so. Some may find it necessary to learn the dominant language(s). Such language practices have significant consequences for an individual’s language maintenance and shift. This article reports on a narrative study which explored the language maintenance and the related identity experiences of an Afrikaans-speaking migrant from South Africa (called Gert, a pseudonym) who has lived in New Zealand since 2001. The article tells his Afrikaans maintenance story, focusing particularly on identity and language use, as constructed during a series of three narrative interviews conducted over a period of six years. It is informed by recent discussions of social inclusion in the field of migration and sociolinguistics (Piller and Takahashi 2011); that is, the extent to which individuals are included or excluded (socially, economically, emotionally, and politically) in migrant contexts through their language practices and the language ideologies that prevail in those contexts.

Narrative is an ideal way to get close to the sociolinguistic life events and experiences of research participants (Pavlenko 2007). By constructing narratives participants engage in narrative knowledging (Barkhuizen 2011) by making meaning of certain issues and experiences that are important to them, thereby giving these issues and experiences coherence so that they as well as researchers are better able to understand them. Furthermore, in the performance of narratives narrators discursively make claims about their identities; who they are and how they relate to others both in the there-and-then of past experiences and in the here-and-now of narrative talk-in-interaction (see Bamberg 2011). In the article I tell Gert’s big story (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Freeman 2006), representing his extended biographical account of his life in New Zealand. I also analyse one particular small story (a

shorter interview extract; Georgakopoulou 2006; Watson 2007) extracted from interview data to illustrate in more detail how Gert's sociolinguistic experiences, including successful Afrikaans maintenance, mediate his access to key social inclusion sites, specifically the Auckland neighbourhood where he lives and the mainly migrant community in which he works. To do so I draw on Bamberg's (1997, 2004b) positioning analysis approach, which attempts to uncover in interaction "the process of how ... positions come into existence and how they assist the construction of a sense of self and identities" (Bamberg 2004a: 137). The article shows, through Gert's narratives, both big and small, the multi-faceted nature of the intersections between migration, language use and maintenance, identity, and social inclusion.

2. Social inclusion, language maintenance, identity

Piller and Takahashi (2011: 372) point out that employment is at the heart of social inclusion for migrants, but social inclusion also means having access to health care, education and a decent standard of living. It further means achieving a sense of belonging, "community participation and a sense of empowerment". Yates (2011: 460) adds a sense of affiliation, a feeling of inclusion, well-being and being welcomed, and thus the right to be visible, valued and respected. Yates's conception emphasises the reception of newcomers by members of the host community, which is itself not "some mythical mainstream of an ideal nation state" but rather an ethnically and culturally diverse, dynamic set of intersecting communities. Social inclusion is therefore not only about migrants overcoming settlement challenges but also "valued recognition," respect and acknowledgement (Yates 2011: 460) by communities in these contexts.

Both Yates (2011) and Piller and Takahashi (2011) argue that language mediates access to social inclusion. It is widely assumed that language competence is linked to social inclusion (e.g., being a proficient English speaker in New Zealand makes it easier to engage in education and employment and attain a sense of achievement and belonging), or that linguistic assimilation "is the high road to social inclusion" (Piller and Takahashi 2011: 372). However, Piller and Takahashi (p. 372) warn that "objective language proficiency levels can be rendered almost meaningless by the prevalent language practices and language ideologies in a particular context". And Yates points out that more than language competence is at stake since what is important is the way migrants actually engage in the community. The social

networks they establish and maintain, via the dominant language of the community, have significant implications for their social inclusion.

Yates's (2011) research in Australia, for example, found that some migrants existed in "ethnic bubbles" (she cites the use of this term in a study by Colic-Peisker, 2002, of the experiences of cultural and emotional integration, or the lack thereof, of Croatian migrants in Western Australia), whereby they found refuge (security, affiliation, safety) within their own ethnic group's social networks. They did not seek social connections beyond these networks, and so felt disaffiliated from the broader English-speaking society. The result is that many of her migrant participants did not (attempt to) learn English, a much needed resource for integrating and connecting with contexts in which they would find employment, live their daily activities more comfortably and with less fear, and experience a sense of affiliation with the English-speaking people of the country they had moved to. The result, says Yates, is that these individuals remained "isolated and insulated" in their own ethnic bubbles (p. 469). She concludes that if there is little interaction between the new arrivals and speakers of the dominant language the result is social exclusion rather than inclusion for the migrants, a situation where "societies may be setting themselves up for ghettoization" (p. 469).

Piller and Takahashi (2011: 374) describe social inclusion as a "fuzzy concept", adding that it takes on different meanings in different sociopolitical contexts. The challenge for applied sociolinguists, they say, is "to account for both the complexity of social inclusion as well as its complex intersections with language". This article takes up this challenge by examining the complex story of Gert's social inclusion in relation to his language choices and language use; his initial desire to learn to speak with a Kiwi accent and thereby (he believed) sustain and grow his business by gaining English-speaking New Zealand clients, his realisation after a longer period of settlement that this was not necessary since he could maintain a client base within the Afrikaans-speaking South African community in New Zealand, and finally his sense of belonging, success and contentment as a member of New Zealand society more broadly. Gert is a well-educated, advanced user of English. He speaks fluently and can interact easily with English speakers in a wide range of contexts. As a migrant he does not need to learn English. In one sense, therefore, English competence is not a barrier to social inclusion. At the same time, however, his accent readily identifies him as South African (hence a migrant), and, in most interactions, as an Afrikaans-speaking South African (with the political baggage that that sometimes carries in migrant contexts). Gert's

position is somewhat different from the migrants in Yate's (2011) and Colic-Peisker's (2002) studies. He is Afrikaans-English bilingual and despite his extreme South African accent (which concerned him greatly on arrival) has access to both languages for living his migrant life in New Zealand. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how Gert's language practices (the linguistic choices he makes, whom he interacts with, in what social spaces or domains, for what reasons, at particular moments, or over time) achieve for him a sense of both social inclusion and the social exclusion which inevitably accompanies it.

At the heart of this discussion is language maintenance. Sometimes studies on language maintenance focus on large speech communities (see the articles in this issue) and at other times they examine the maintenance practices of smaller groups, such as families (King and Fogle 2006; Schüpbach 2009; Tannenbaum and Berkovich 2005), and, as in the case of Gert, individuals (Jeon 2010; Pauwels 2004). Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels (1995) identify a number of factors which affect maintenance on the individual level. These include birthplace, period of residence, age, gender, education, knowledge of English prior to migration, and reason for migration. These factors probably all play some role in Gert's language practices, and I have mentioned some of them already. But any of them or their combinations can only be understood in the particular social contexts in which they are salient. In this article I explore, through big and small story narrative analytical procedures, how Gert constructs his identities in those contexts, and what the consequences of his identity construction and related language maintenance practices are for his experiences of social inclusion.

3. Afrikaans in South Africa and New Zealand

Prior to 1994, Afrikaans and English were the two official languages in South Africa. In 1994 South Africa introduced a new language policy giving parity to 11 official languages (English, Afrikaans and nine African languages). Since then, there is evidence that the use of English is growing (de Klerk 2001; Kamwangamalu 2001) and that Afrikaans is experiencing negative shift (Webb and Kriel 2000), mainly because of its association with the apartheid regime, and probably also because of the implementation of a national language policy which explicitly promotes multilingualism as well as the status and corpus development of the African languages in the country. Most recent census data show that there are about 6 million people who speak Afrikaans as a home language (Statistics South Africa 2001) which constitutes about 13.3% of the population.

According to the 2006 census, 41676 South Africans live in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2006). Amongst these are more or less equal numbers of English and Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers (21123 claimed to be Afrikaans speakers in the 2006 census). Afrikaans speakers live in towns and cities across New Zealand, but the vast majority are in Auckland, located particularly in the suburbs on the North Shore and in eastern areas of the city. Community relations in these locations are strong, bolstered by close cultural ties and by organized social and religious activities. To a certain degree, this is the case even for other Afrikaans speakers scattered throughout the country, illustrating the phenomenon described by Zelinsky and Lee (1998) as heterolocalism, that is, the existence of an ethnic/national community without any significant spatial clustering. Regular print and e-newsletters distributed by cultural and religious groups with Afrikaans interests, inexpensive phone charges and low travel costs contribute significantly to this heterolocalistic arrangement.

4. Methodology

I begin this section with a brief biographical description of the participant, Gert. I then describe the data-collection procedures (three narrative interviews) and the data-analytical processes (a thematic analysis of four interview extracts to provide an outline of Gert's big story, and a more detailed small story positioning analysis of another interview extract). I also make the case for combining both big and small story analysis in order to produce a richer understanding of available narrative data. In doing so, I present an overview of literature on big and small stories, positioning and positioning analysis.

Gert is a white Afrikaans speaker from South Africa who immigrated to New Zealand in 2001. He lives on the North Shore in Auckland, in a neighbourhood dense with Afrikaans-speaking South African migrants. At one stage there were seven such families living on his street. He says: "You know, I want to believe that this is, particularly this area where we are in, has got the highest, biggest concentration of Afrikaans outside South Africa, in the world probably". Gert is Afrikaans (L1) - English (L2) bilingual. He is married to an English (L1) speaker who is also fluent in Afrikaans. Afrikaans is the language of the home and family. At the time of our first interview in 2002, Gert's children were aged 10 (his son) and 8 (his daughter). Gert is a financial broker who works independently from an office at home. He is affiliated to a larger company, however, and sometimes meets with colleagues from that organization.

I first made contact with Gert in 2002. He was looking for South African clients and I was looking for participants for my study on Afrikaans-speaking migrants living in New Zealand (Barkhuizen and Knoch 2005; Barkhuizen 2006). In 2002, after ethics approval from my university's Ethics Committee was granted we had our first interview, seven months after Gert arrived in New Zealand. Exactly two years later, the second interview took place, followed by the third, four and half years after that, in 2008. The format of the interviews was typically narrative, whereby the task of the interviewer is "to invite others to tell their stories, to encourage them to take responsibility for the meaning of their talk" (Chase 2003: 274). Each interview was conducted in Gert's home and lasted between 30-60 minutes.

4.1. Big and small stories

Small stories are "snippets of talk" (Georgakopoulou 2006: 123) or "ephemeral narratives arising from talk-in-interaction" (Watson 2007: 374). They are small stories both in the sense that they are literally short, embedded in everyday conversations (Ochs and Capps 2001) and research discussions or interviews (Bamberg 2004b; Norton and Early 2011), and in the sense that they contrast with the more researched, prototypical big stories of our lives which tell of past experiences in autobiographical accounts such as extended or multiple interviews, memoirs and written reflections (Barkhuizen 2011). Small story analysis emphasises the performance aspect of storytelling, or narrative *practices*, in the particular contexts in which the narratives are constructed. What is of relevance here, though, is that identity is discursively performed in the process of narration (De Fina 2011; Vásquez 2011). Bamberg (2011: 102) says: "Identity is navigated as much in the many small stories that are successfully or unsuccessfully prompted in ordinary interaction as it is presented in extended accounts of biographical material". Freeman (2006: 135) agrees, saying, "We are not only the selves that issue from small stories. Whether we like it or not, we are also ... big story selves". Freeman adds that big and small stories therefore complement one another. Below I first outline Gert's big story, and I use small stories to do so. In other words, I have extracted four short excerpts from across all the interview data and analyse these thematically (see Norton and Early, 2011, who use a similar approach). This is followed by a more detailed positioning analysis of a longer small story from the third interview (see Appendix A).

4.2 Positioning and positioning analysis

Davies and Harré (1990: 48) define positioning as a discursive practice “whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and intersubjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines”. In this interactive process, “people ‘produce’ one another (and themselves) situationally as ‘social beings’” (Bamberg 1997: 336). In other words, those involved in the interaction, in the narrative co-construction, position themselves in relation to one other and to the content of their jointly produced story, as well as to broader discourses, or “the world out there” (Bamberg 2006: 144), thereby making claims about who they are, their identities.

Positioning *analysis* attempts to link two approaches: “how people attend to one another in interactional settings” and “the analysis of what the language is referentially ‘about,’ namely sequentially ordered (past) events and their evaluations” (Bamberg 1997: 336). The former is concerned with the performance of the small story; how participants discursively co-generate the narrative text, and involves careful line-by-line analysis of the unfolding talk-in-interaction, very much like conversation analysis. The latter focuses on the content of the told story, i.e., what happened, which includes the participants or characters in the story, their relationships and what they do together.

Positioning takes place at three levels, and the analysis focuses on these levels in turn, moving progressively from the local to the global. Level 1 positioning analysis asks, “What is this story about?” and “Who are the characters and why are they positioned this way?” (Watson 2007: 374). The focus here is very much on the content of the story, who the characters are, and how they relate to one other. Level 2 positioning analysis examines “how the speaker both is positioned by and positions him/herself to the actual or imagined audience. This level concerns how the content and structure of the talk are actually interactive effects” (Korobov 2001). The focus on this level is on the performance of the story in a particular interactive context. At level 3, having worked through levels 1 and 2, “we are better situated to make assumptions about the ideological positions (or master narratives) within which narrators are positioning a sense of self” (Bamberg 2006: 145). The analysis thus moves beyond the small story content and telling to consider the normative discourses (the broader ideological context) within which the characters agentively position themselves and by which they are positioned. At this level I believe it is apt to consider other narrative data (i.e., moving beyond the small story itself) which may be available to the analyst (Barkhuizen 2010) in order to gain a fuller understanding of the co-narrators’ identity claims.

5. Findings

5.1. *Sticking out like a sore finger*

Gert's story is a maintenance story, but it is perhaps not the stereotypical migrant's story. Gert is well educated. He is also financially secure and probably faces little danger of being unemployed. However, the situation was somewhat different when he first settled in New Zealand. At that time, he expressed his concern about working as a financial broker only with Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, many of whom he had secured as clients even before they had left South Africa. He believed that in the future he would need to "cross the bridge" and begin working with English-speaking New Zealanders if he was to sustain his business. He did not feel confident about speaking English, although his proficiency could be considered quite advanced, and he desired to acquire a Kiwi accent. In our first interview, seven months after his arrival in New Zealand, Gert had the following to say:

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

In this metaphor-rich story, Gert articulates his feeling of exclusion from work-related experiences which engage English-speaking Kiwis: he feels "uneasy", "not really confident" and "not sure". It is probably both the Englishness (a linguistic concern) and the Kiwiness (a cultural concern) of these potential clients which prompt such feelings of insecurity and possibly fear. He is temporarily satisfied, however, that he now has enough business, but believes that that won't be the case for long. He will soon run out of South African clients – they will "dry up on this side" – and he will have to go in search of new clients by crossing the river to the other (English-speaking Kiwi) side. It is there where he imagines social inclusion in the work domain, mediated by his sounding like a Kiwi. At the moment, though, Gert's accent signals his migrant status, and possibly his Afrikaans-speaking background; when he speaks he sticks out "like a sore finger (sic)". At the end of this interview Gert asked

me if I knew of a place where he could be taught the Kiwi accent. He has thoughts, therefore, of shifting his language use towards more English, particularly a New Zealand variety of English.

5.2. *McDonald's drive-through*

Exactly two years later Gert tells in our second interview how things had changed with regard to his work circumstances. He had built up a solid base of South African clients, enough to sustain his business, which was still growing, and consequently felt he no longer needed to target New Zealanders. Not only did he realise he no longer needed to, he also realised he no longer desired to. This realisation was sparked by an incident that occurred while purchasing ice-cream at a McDonald's drive-through, probably around the time he was still preoccupied with acquiring a Kiwi accent. He tells the story as follows:

Until I found out, I eventually decided I don't need to do it [target New Zealand clients and learn to speak like Kiwi]. Because once we went to the McDonald's and I ordered ice-cream at the drive-through and the kids were sitting at the back, Frederick [his son] and his friend Karel, who is also an Afrikaans guy, and I ordered, and I was trying to talk like a Kiwi. And the son, his friend said to me, "Oh, that sounds gross. Why are you trying to talk like that?" He said just talk normally. *Oom, praat net gewoonlik* [uncle, just talk normally] just talk normally like a South African. He says because they respect you for being a South African. I think that is quite a comforting, that was quite comforting coming from a child, when he said they respect you for being a South Africa, because I think we have a good reputation.

This small story is a language and identity story; it perhaps represents Gert's moment of realization ("until I found out") that it is "quite comforting" to be a South African in New Zealand. His misguided attempt to sound like a Kiwi was dismissed by his son's friend, who urged him to just talk normally; i.e. like a South African. The youngster adds that "they" (New Zealanders) respect South Africans ("you") for what Gert believes is their "good reputation" (possibly meaning 'good citizens'). Gert accepts this position, agreeing with the boy ("I eventually decided I don't need to"). There are thus early signs of social inclusion in this small story, but the manner in which it is being achieved is rather complex. It is not simply an ingroup-outgroup, we-them, either-or situation. If Gert does indeed begin to experience inclusion it is within two intersecting domains. Firstly, it appears that he senses

(with prodding from his son's friend) recognition and respect from the "they" in the small story – the wider New Zealand society; inclusion here being the quality of reception by members of the host community (see Yates 2011). Secondly, the story shows that Gert has decided that he no longer needs to 'pretend' to be Kiwi for instrumental and emotional reasons, and that, with some relief possibly, he can retreat to his work-related network embedded within the South African community to seek inclusion there.

5.3. 99.9% South African

Four and half years later (2008), in our third interview, Gert and I had the following exchange about his growing business:

Gert: So I've decided I'll just deal exclusively with South Africans. Although a number of them are English speaking like yourself.

Gary: So you were saying earlier that your clients are 99.9% South African?

Gert: Yeah, and of them, Afrikaans probably 70%, I guess. Maybe 70%. So I've got more Afrikaans, I've got the same, roughly the same ratio of Afrikaans to English-speaking clients here than what I had in Pretoria after 18 years with [name of company]. I'm serious. So that's quite amazing.

In this story, Gert reaffirms his decision to work only with South African clients, the majority of whom (70%) are Afrikaans speaking. There is no need for him to seek English-speaking Kiwi clients, as he previously anticipated he would when he first arrived in New Zealand. He finds it "amazing" that, compared with his work situation in South Africa 18 years previously, the ratio of English- to Afrikaans-speaking clients has not changed. Why Gert finds this remarkable is that he is an Afrikaans-speaking migrant working in a country where Afrikaans is not a dominant language by any means. This is thus a language maintenance small story. Gert can live his working life using mostly Afrikaans, and the variety of English he does use in the workplace is familiar to South Africans migrants, who make up virtually 100% of his clientele. There is no need for Gert to learn Kiwi English or to pretend to be Kiwi, like he did years before at McDonald's. Language shift is not necessary. The emotional tone of this story is one of accomplishment, pride and contentment, signifying social inclusion in the work domain.

5.4. The South African guy

Later in the same interview, Gert paints a similar inclusion picture, but this time his story world extends beyond the workplace to more social (recreational) domains, although they are still closely associated. He also sums up his vision of how he imagines he will be positioned in the future (“in twenty years’ time”), and his emotional response to this positioning. He says:

We’ve met many other Kiwis that we mingle with socially on those events [work-related conferences]. When they invite me on a fishing trip, that’s happened, or I get invited by the insurance company to go to Eden Park [a rugby stadium], to their corporate box, and there’s many Kiwis. So I know, you know, we’re on first name terms now with many people that we’ve met over the years. And I think we get along with them particularly well. But I accept that they, to them I’m still the South African. And I will be in twenty years’ time. They will say, “You know Gert, he’s the, you know, that South African guy”. So that is the perception and it’s fine with me.

Although Gert works mainly with (Afrikaans-speaking) South Africans and lives in a neighbourhood with a large number of people from the same migrant community, he does also interact with Kiwis (beyond, of course, the inevitable transactional encounters that one experiences in daily life, such as in shops, schools, and the doctor’s surgery – although where Gert lives some of these encounters may actually be in Afrikaans). This usually happens through connections within his work-related network; conferences, fishing trips, and watching rugby with his colleagues. As a migrant, Gert fits into these engagements comfortably, and certainly feels included: “we get along with them particularly well”. His English is easily proficient enough to cope with these social interactions. However, Gert acknowledges that he is, and will continue to be, perceived as different (“that South African guy”), but he doesn’t see this as exclusionary. In fact, it appears that he is quite content being positioned as a South African by his English-speaking, Kiwi colleagues, saying, “it’s fine with me”.

In sum, after eight years of living in New Zealand Gert feels included in New Zealand society, at least within his business-related networks. Here he manages quite easily to use English for all interactional purposes, and there is no need to learn to sound like a Kiwi. Shift to English is simply not something that Gert has to be concerned with. His acceptance, perhaps even with some degree of resignation, of being referred to as “that South African

guy” possibly hints at Gert’s awareness of the potential for social exclusion in his life, but this does not seem to affect his sense of well-being and belonging. Frankly, it doesn’t seem to bother him at all. Mostly at work, Gert speaks Afrikaans, as he does at home and within the migrant community in his neighbourhood. In these domains he clearly experiences social inclusion, mediated by his use of Afrikaans, and his willing, effortless use of English when necessary. The positioning analysis of the small story in the next section reveals similar patterns, but also raises new social inclusion and identity issues. The interview itself is the interactional site where such issues emerge.

6. More than just a *braai* story

The small story to be analysed in this section can be found in Appendix A. It is extracted from our third interview conducted in 2008. I have called it *More than just a braai story* because although it tells the story of a *braai* (barbecue) Gert hosted in New Zealand to celebrate his 50th birthday and how similar it was to a *braai* held in South Africa on the occasion of his 40th birthday, the story is much more than a description of what happened. Gert tells the story to illustrate how he has maintained his use of Afrikaans in New Zealand. The majority of guests at both events, ten years apart, in two different countries, were Afrikaans speaking. In telling the story, Gert makes identity claims about who is he; he positions himself within the context of the interview, co-constructed with me (an English-speaking South African migrant), as well as vis-à-vis the broader discourses of immigration, language maintenance and racism. The analysis reveals a slightly fuzzier conceptualization of social inclusion than has so far been discussed in relation to Gert’s mainly work life in New Zealand.

6.1. Level 1: What is the story about?

Analysis at level 1 pays “close attention to the ways in which the constructed/represented world of characters and event sequences is drawn up” (Bamberg 2006: 145). In other words we ask: Who is in the story, how do they relate to one another, and what do they do? The focus is thus very much on the content of the story and how through the telling of this content the characters in the story world and their relative positions are discursively negotiated.

The story begins with Gert, the main character, telling Gary¹ about his 50th birthday *braai* party in Auckland to which he invited about 45 guests. Everyone at this *braai*, except for one couple (line 23), were Afrikaans speaking. Gert immediately compares it with his 40th

birthday braai held in South Africa (lines 3-4) ten years earlier, where there was the same number of guests, about half family and half friends, and all Afrikaans speaking. This is the (astonishing) story Gert wants to tell – an Afrikaans language maintenance story. In the telling, it is as though he is thinking: “Who would have thought this was possible? Here I am an Afrikaans-speaking migrant from South Africa living far away in New Zealand and having a braai where all my guests are Afrikaans speaking!” The story could have ended at this point (line 24) and Gert’s message would have been communicated. All content so far is certainly relevant to the purpose of the interview. In this early part of the small story Gert is clearly positioned as South African (e.g. “in Pretoria”), a migrant (e.g. “in a different country”), an Afrikaans speaker (e.g. “all of them but one couple was Afrikaans”), and party host (e.g. “we had a sheep on the spit”). These interrelated positions are constructed throughout Gert’s telling of his Afrikaans maintenance story.

In line 25 the story takes an interesting, unanticipated turn. Gert suddenly shifts his attention to Gary, the interviewer, also a migrant, but an *English*-speaking South African, and imagines what Gary must be thinking. For the purpose of getting his maintenance story told, Gert has been emphasising the point that all his friends are Afrikaans, but he suspects that Gary may be interpreting this position as prejudice: “and you may say that I’m now biased against English-speaking South Africans”. He quickly declares (line 27) that he is not, and then does significant discursive work in lines 29-60 to prove that this is the case. These lines (25-61) tell another story embedded within and very much related to the longer Afrikaans maintenance story. The embedded story is about the relationship between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, not only Gert and Gary living as migrants in New Zealand. The story is set within the sociopolitical, historical context of tensions (and wars) between Afrikaners and the English in South Africa (Lanham 1996). Gert and Gary are more or less the same age, and grew up in apartheid South Africa. They are well aware of these tensions.

After attempts at supplying evidence to show that he is not racist, through reference to non-existent English-speaking friends, and then a plea to Gary to not “feel offended” (line 60), the maintenance story continues (line 62). Here Gert introduces two other characters; a Kiwi couple who attended the braai. Besides using their presence in the story as further evidence that he is not biased towards English speakers (“we got along with them”, line 69), Gert positions them in contrast to all the other guests at the party, warning the Kiwi couple

that “there’s only going to be *Jaapiers* [South African migrants] there” who are “going to speak Afrikaans the whole night”. The Kiwis decide to go anyway, being used to associating with different cultures; “apparently he loves Fiji he stayed in Fiji” (line 87). Reference to the Kiwi guests and their involvement in the party mediates Gert’s return to the topic with which he started the story: “and then I said you know what ten years ago I had the fortieth birthday and now I’ve had my fiftieth with a *skaap* [sheep] *braai*” (lines 95-96). He ends by re-stating his Afrikaans maintenance message, saying there were 45 people at this braai, “all Afrikaans all new friends” (line 97).

6.2. Level 2: How is the story co-constructed?

Positioning analysis level 2 focuses on the performance aspect of the story; “the interactional means employed for getting the story accomplished” (Bamberg 2004a: 137). The braai story is an extract from a narrative interview and is thus constructed by both Gary, the interviewer, and Gert. Because of the nature of narrative interviews, where participants are invited to “tell me about” (Chase 2003: 88), and during which stories are then told, it is to be expected that Gert holds the floor for much of the story. Gary supports Gert throughout with frequent insertions of “mm” and “yea”, and also laughing and responding to statements as one would in a normal conversation. Gary is thus a relatively passive audience for much of the story (see Ochs and Capps, 2001, on tellership), but is definitely a present co-constructor, who shapes the narrative’s trajectory. It is along this trajectory, through the storytelling talk-in-interaction, that Gert positions himself and is positioned.

Gert’s announcement in line 1, that “we had a sheep on the spit”, positions him as party host. He confirms his hosting position a number of times in the story, with statements such as “I was doing the *spit braai*” (line 4), “I had the same thing ten years later” (line 15), and “I’ve had my fiftieth birthday with a *skaap braai*” (line 96). This position is not peripheral to the action of the story. The party is the spatiotemporal context in which Gert positions himself as an Afrikaans-speaking migrant and in which he tells his Afrikaans maintenance story. But it is his enthusiasm for this story that alerts him to how he may be failing as a host (to Gary, the English-speaking interviewer) in the context of the narrative telling. A potential conflicting position emerges (he is not being hospitable to English-speaking Gary and he may appear to be biased against English speakers more generally), and so he manages the involvement of Diane, his wife, who was also present during the telling of

the story, even though she was not intentionally a part of the interview (she was sitting in the same room within earshot of proceedings). Her unexpected contribution is an important one.

At the moment when Gert begins to feel uncomfortable about the topic of sociolinguistic racism and anticipates what Gary might be thinking and feeling (line 25), he turns to Diane for support, perhaps to reassure Gary that he is not biased, and thereby diffuse the potential tension or embarrassment which Gert thought might develop. He asks her to confirm that they have English-speaking friends (line 32), but unfortunately she is not able to do so (“no all Afrikaans”). After again suggesting what Gary might be thinking, “you think we are you think we are *boer* [Afrikaner] racists” (line 34), he again, this time rather hesitantly, positions himself as not racist (line 36), and then digs for further evidence to support this positioning. This time he refers to other characters in his story; English-speaking friends of their Afrikaans-speaking friends (lines 38-55). By association, then, he reasons that he does have English connections, and he adds “we do get along like a house on fire with them”. The small story ends with Gert telling Gary not to feel offended. His long laugh after saying so and Gary’s “oh no no no not at all (laughs) not at all” indicate that this conversation has been reasonably light-hearted, with no animosity felt by either party. Making sense of social inclusion in this story is not so straightforward. Gary, positioned as an English speaker, becomes a character in the story, possibly representing other English-speaking South African migrants. Socially, Gert does not have close connections (i.e. at the level of friendship) with that sociolinguistic group, and consequently we can assume he does not affiliate with it. There are many English-speaking South Africans who live in his neighbourhood, however, and he does have English clients (about 30%), and so it is unlikely that he experiences any serious feelings of exclusion. The embedded small story certainly reinforces Gert’s position as someone who is maintaining his use of Afrikaans, however. And later reference to the Kiwi couple who attended the braai allows Gert to return to make this point at the end of his story (at line 95); i.e. he lives his migrant life mainly in Afrikaans, very much like he did in South Africa.

6.3. Level 3: Who am I in relation to broader discourses?

At this level of positioning analysis, I move beyond the text of the braai story to consider Gert’s positioning in relation to broader discourses (or narratives). Gert positions himself within these discourses, as seen in his storytelling performance at level 1 and 2, but he is also

positioned by these discourses. What then are the most apparent positions constructed in the interactional unfolding of the small story? I would argue that these are, inter alia, party host, South African, Afrikaans speaker, migrant *Jaapie*, and not a *boer* racist. From the analysis above, it should be clear that these positions are not unrelated. Instead, they are interconnected in complex ways, becoming more or less salient at different interactional moments in the narrative. Together, these positions reveal who Gert is, within the context of the small story and vis-à-vis normative discourses on a more macro level.

In discussing these positioning-discourse relationships, I have argued above in the methodology section that reference to other available narrative data (in this case, the four narrative extracts and their discussion that precede the positioning analysis in this findings section) enhance the interpretation of Gert's identity claims. I therefore make mention of these stories, where applicable. Gert is positioned within three dominant discourses. The first of these is an *immigration* discourse. Gert is a South Africa living in another country. Although he felt as though he stuck out like a "sore finger" when he first arrived in New Zealand, because of his accent, and he pretended at McDonald's to speak like a Kiwi in order to overcome this exclusion, Gert does not struggle ethnolinguistically. His English proficiency is good enough to cope outside the home and family domain, and he has every opportunity at work, and even in the wider community, to maintain his Afrikaans. Gert is thus positioned within a *language maintenance* discourse, and it is an easy fit. The braai story demonstrates the extent to which he is immersed in Afrikaans, and he lives and works in circumstances which allow easy maintenance. Gert is content to be an Afrikaans-speaking South African living as a migrant in New Zealand. In many ways, his life is not very different from the way he lived in Pretoria ten years before.

Or is it? Gert's stories of working only with South Africans claim social inclusion in his workplace, but his Kiwi colleagues (will always) view him as "the South African guy". The braai party story claims inclusion in the context of friends who are all Afrikaans speaking, but they are "new friends" (line 98). These are not life-long friends Gert grew up with, at school and in his neighbourhood, but new friends who are recent migrants like himself. The 40th and the 50th birthday parties are somewhat different after all. Gert's interaction with Gary during the embedded linguistic racism small story may have been light-hearted and there is certainly no evidence that any tension was felt between the two of them. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that attitudes towards ethnic and cultural others infuse many

English-Afrikaans (not only black-white) social encounters amongst South Africans. The country's sociopolitical history, which is a racist one, means that a *racism* discourse permeates discursive identity-making. In addition, New Zealanders know South Africa's political past and the roles that whites and Afrikaners played in it. They are also aware that many South Africans migrated to New Zealand because of their dissatisfaction with or fear of new political regimes in South Africa. Initial encounters with South Africans therefore are sometimes tentative. The potential for social exclusion at this micro, interpersonal level is ever present.

7. Conclusion

In the braai small story we learn a lot about Gert. He tells us about himself and his experiences of Afrikaans maintenance. In other words, he self-constructs a representational account of who he is (Wortham 2000). But, as I have shown in the positioning analysis above, he also positions himself interactionally through the telling of this story with Gary. The analysis of the story depends on both the representational self-construction *and* the interactional positioning in order to arrive at Gert's positions. The analysis of the embedded racism story (lines 25-61), for example, illustrates well both Gert's discursive enactment and his representation of his non-racist self. The analysis of the full small story reveals positions which include party host, South African, Afrikaans speaker, migrant *Jaapie*, and not a *boer* racist. At level 3 of the analysis I related these positions to three normative discourses (immigration, language maintenance and racism) within which Gert's self can be more fully explored. Further understanding is achieved when we consider in addition his big story. To do this, I selected for thematic analysis four small stories from other available interview data; i.e. *Sticking out like a sore finger*, *McDonald's drive-through*, *99.9% South African*, *The South African guy*.

Taken together, this range of representational and interactional narrative data paints a fairly full picture of Gert's migrant life in New Zealand, particularly in relation to the areas which were the focus of this analysis, that is, his identity, his language maintenance practices and social inclusion. I have commented on all these areas in this article. To conclude, I present a broader conceptualization of the *interrelationships* among these three areas of interest as they relate to the experiences of Gert, but perhaps to migrants in other contexts as well. Figure 1, inevitably too simply, represents their intersection. Each is drawn as a double-

headed continuum to emphasise the tension or pull individuals experience in relation to that area.

Place Figure 1 about here

With regard to the maintenance continuum, for example, Gert initially felt the desire to learn and use a Kiwi variety of English for the sake of sustaining and expanding his business. He was thus pulled in one direction along the maintenance continuum (perhaps, towards shift). At the same time, he was using Afrikaans in the home, family and neighbourhood domains, and so was pulled in the other direction (towards maintenance). Over time, the need to shift to English decreased as he realized it was not necessary to grow his business, and so movement along the continuum in the opposite direction occurred. This back and forth movement in terms of language maintenance will continue in Gert's life. In different interactional and temporal contexts there will be movement in different directions.

Because of his advanced level of English proficiency, the heterolocalistic situation of the South African community in New Zealand, and the many opportunities for Gert to speak Afrikaans, he is a reasonably good candidate for social inclusion. Social inclusion for him plays out on different intersecting domains, including (a) the home, family and neighbourhood, (b) the South African community, (c) his workplace, and (d) New Zealand society at large. His sense of affiliation, belonging and being valued (Yates 2011) within these domains, mediated by his language choice and use, means that in some contexts (e.g. micro-interpersonal and macro-sociopolitical) he feels a sense of inclusion – thus moving in one direction along the inclusion continuum. However, at other times, in other contexts, he moves the other way towards exclusion, for example, when he encounters prejudiced New Zealanders or English-speaking South African interviewers!

Movement this way and that along the identity continuum is not surprising considering conceptions of identity as multiple, dynamic and situated (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), and positions as discursively constructed in particular contexts. The braai small story shows one set of interacting positions for Gert. These (and others) are salient in other contexts as

well, as witnessed in the narrative data covering imagined visits to “the other side of the river”, and experienced visits to McDonald’s and Eden Park, for instance.

This article has shown that migrants, like Gert, live in continually changing story worlds, which are, for the focus of analysis in the article, the three-dimensional spaces constructed by the intersecting continua of language maintenance, social inclusion and identity. Moving back and forth along the continua simultaneously within this space means that for migrants settlement is a complex, ever-changing process. Moment by moment and over time migrants negotiate their way through this space constantly searching for recognition, respect, security and a sense of belonging.

Notes

1. In the analysis that follows I refer to myself in the third person in order to distinguish between Gary the co-creator of the small story and Gary the author of this article.

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Appendix A: Gert's small story from the third (2008) interview: More than just a *braai* story.

1	<i>Gert:</i> and I had we had a sheep on the spit <i>Gary:</i> oh, yes <i>Gert:</i> and when I had my fortieth birthday I had about forty forty-five people and I was also doing the <i>spit braai</i>
5	<i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> in Pretoria <i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> and some of them were my obviously there were quite a number of family members
10	<i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> so not of that many were friends <i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> they were like I say twenty family and twenty friends <i>Gary:</i> mm
15	<i>Gert:</i> I had the same thing ten years later in a different country <i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> altogether <i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> there were no friends no family only friends
20	<i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> also about forty-five <i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> and all of them but one couple was Afrikaans <i>Gary:</i> (laughs)
25	<i>Gert:</i> and you may say that I'm now biased against English-speaking South Africans <i>Gary:</i> (laughs) <i>Gert:</i> I'm not <i>Gary:</i> yea <i>Gert:</i> it's not it's really I do get along very well with
30	<i>Gary:</i> yea <i>Gert:</i> I've got friends who's got exclusively English-speaking do we have any English speaking friends Diane (to his wife) South Africans <i>Diane:</i> no all Afrikaans <i>Gert:</i> er you think we are you think we are <i>boer</i> racists (laughs)
35	<i>Gary:</i> (laughs) <i>Gert:</i> (clears throat) no it's just by it's not because we don't <i>Diane:</i> (inaudible) <i>Gert:</i> because I looked at I look at my other friends of mine they've got English-speaking friends
40	<i>Gary:</i> mm <i>Gert:</i> er we like Andre has got Eddie and who else do they have who's English-speaking <i>Diane:</i> (inaudible) <i>Gert:</i> ja but they've got Kiwi friends
45	so we got you know um

	<p>who else is there Diane Andre's got English-speaking South African friends</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> so friends of ours</p>
50	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> who you know and it's maybe just a coincidence</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> yea right</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> they have English-speaking South African friends</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
55	<p><i>Gert:</i> and we do get along like a house on fire with them so that's not</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> a really so I don't think we are sort of biased against English-speaking</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> right right mm</p>
60	<p><i>Gert:</i> so please don't feel offended (laughs long)</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> oh no no no not at all (laughs) not at all</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> but the one guy's</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> (still laughs)</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> a Kiwi the one couple who was here was a Kiwi and his wife</p>
65	<p>and we get along very well with them he's also a broker and we go on these conferences so we've met up with them and you know we got along with them</p>
70	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> so I said to them I'm going to have this birthday party and I would like you to come along but I want to forewarn you that there's only going to be <i>Jaapias</i> there</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> (laughs)</p>
75	<p><i>Gert:</i> and they're only they're going to speak Afrikaans the whole night</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> and so you have to you know you can decide if you say no you may feel a bit awkward then we can get together later</p>
80	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> for a meal or so and he immediately said no no I would like to come</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> he said because it won't do me any harm to get a bit of exposure to a different culture</p>
85	<p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> apparently he loves Fiji he stayed in Fiji</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> ah ok</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> for a while</p>
90	<p>he said he's been invited to those Fijian you know massive eat-out oooooo type (laughs) things</p>
	<p><i>Gary:</i> (laughs) yea</p>
	<p><i>Gert:</i> a few times where they speak Fijian</p>

95	<p>and he was you know so he was here and then I said you know what ten years ago I had the fortieth birthday and now I've had my fiftieth birthday with a <i>skaap</i>[sheep] <i>braai</i> and I've got forty-five people all Afrikaans all new friends</p> <p><i>Gary:</i> mm</p>
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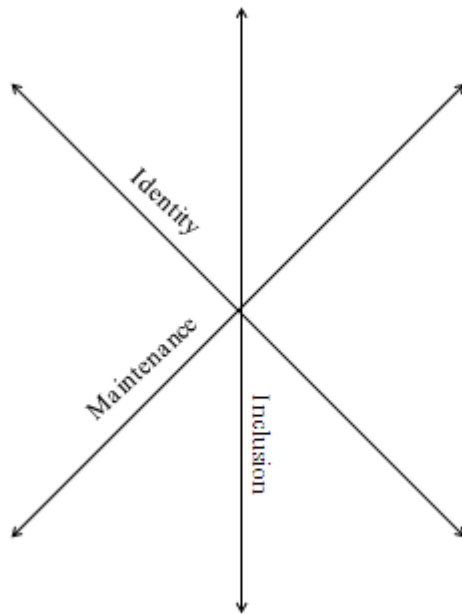


Figure 1: Intersecting migration continua.