


Rondbak, Rondraps, Getting around, Rondsloop. Does it matter?



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Does it matter how you say it?

The drop, the itch, gonorrhoea, bad blood, syphilis, HIV, AIDS, the big A, crabs, morning drip, herpes, fever kiss, the clap, cystitis, VD – whatever you wanna call it, make sure you're not gonna get it. (Lovefacts, p. 26)

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What is the problem?

Problem on two levels:

- Lack of documented evaluational research on loveLife's print media
 - Study by Delate (2001) on His & Hers billboards
 - loveLife's evaluation of first year (1999—2000)
 - loveLife's reader survey of *S'camtoUNCUT* (2004)

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The problem (cont.)

- Lack of linguistic heterogeneity
 - "Those with an African home language found print media less useful for HIV/AIDS information" (Human Sciences Research Council 2002).
 - "It is recommended that closer attention and emphasis be given to multilingual approaches -- specifically communicating in the home language of intended audiences. Given that media is such a powerful influence that makes people take HIV/AIDS seriously, television, radio, billboards and leaflets should be presented in the home language of the intended audiences to ensure that they are understood" (Human Sciences Research Council 2002).
 - Kelly, Parker and Oyosi (2001) argue for culture specific approaches that "recognise the heterogeneity of young people and address them as members communities of risk rather than as being uniformly at risk, and that developers targeted programmes accordingly".
 - Kelly, Parker and Oyosi (2001) express the need for a study that can make a "contribution to understand the significance of the linguistic heterogeneity that exists in the country in relation to HIV/AIDS communication".

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The term *slang*

- Slang has "rarely been defined in a way that is useful to linguists" (Dumas and Lighter 1978).
- "We all share an assumption that there is a lexical category of slang, (but) we differ widely in our assumptions about what items belong in that category" (Dumas and Lighter 1978).
- Slang: "language on a picnic" (Partridge 1970); "the province of the young --of socially engaged young men and women" (Allen 2001).
- Slang a vocabulary construct
- Slang will be seen as a gradient, at the one end will be "proper" slang words which are group specific, at the other end will be more informal words which are no longer group specific (cf. Stenstrom et al 1996).
- The term "slanguage" is coined to cover "all kinds of slangy language" (Stenstrom et al 1996).

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A model for slanguage

Slang lexicon

- Slang words in dictionary
 - Words labelled slang/informal/coll.
- Slang words not in dict.
 - Vogue words: *player, nah, gal, lurv*
 - Vague words: *wotzit, thingamabob*
 - Dirty words: *hefuck*

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Slanguage (cont.)

Slang words and/or meanings not in dict.

Clipping: *fab* (fabulous)

Acronyms: *the big A* (AIDS)

Proper names as generic nouns: *Zombieville* (ignorant)

Derivations from pop. culture: *Hasta la vista, baby*

Borrowings from other languages: *Jekker*

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loveLife text (thethaNathi, issue 3/June 2002)

Getting around

Why have one **guy** or **gal** when you can have many? It's about quantity, **right**? WRONG. The days of the **playa** are over.

Some of us **lurv to score**. We mean sleeping with a **hot** new **babe** every night, or trying to be a bigger **playa** than the rest of the crowd. But these games could **land** us in a **pit** of problems. You know that it will probably kill you as your chance of **catching** HIV/AIDS **skyrockets**. Having one **love** is **heaps** better than being a **playa**.

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Research questions

- What effect has teenager slang on message acceptance?
- Which slang (own slang vs. loveLife slang) do the learners identify with?

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Why the language style shift?

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT):

- Speakers are motivated to use language in different ways to achieve a desired level of social distance between themselves and their listener (Giles & Noels 2002).
- The accommodative act is shaped by the following:
 - Sociohistorical context of the interaction
 - The initial orientation of the interactants
 - The immediate interaction situation, speaker's motivations, addressee focus, strategies and communicative behaviour
 - Evaluation and future intentions

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CAT (cont.)

For convergence to be evaluated favourably by the receiver, i.e. the receiver will perceive the speaker socially attractive, the receiver must perceive the following:

- The speaker's beliefs about the receiver's communicational style must match the receiver's own communicational style.
- The linguistic style must be positively evaluated, meaning not stigmatised.
- The linguistic style must be appropriate for both speakers and receivers.
- The speech style matches to a linguistic stereotype for a group in which the receiver perceives him-/herself to have membership.

(Giles, Mulac, Bradac & Johnson 1987: 37-38; Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles & Coupland 1988:178; Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile & Ota 1995:146; Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005:131)

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Language expectancy theory

- LET assumes that language is a rule-governed system in which people develop certain expectations and norms about what constitute appropriate language behaviour in certain contexts, and violations of these expectations can affect their acceptance or rejection of a message (Burgoon, Denning & Roberts 2002:120-121; Burgoon & Siegel 2004:149).
- If a source positively violates these expectations about appropriate communication behaviour, attitude change towards the advocated position increases, a negative violation of these expectations can inhibit persuasive effectiveness (Burgoon, Denning & Roberts 2002:122; Burgoon & Siegel 2004:155; Bradac & Giles 2005:216).
- A violaton is considered positive when the behaviour is better or more preferred than the expected behaviour in the situation (Burgoon, Denning & Roberts 2002:121; Burgoon & Siegel 2004:151).

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Language attitude studies

- Standard variety rated higher in terms of competence/socio-intellectual status dimensions (by both standard-accented and non-standard-accented listeners)
- Non-standard variety rated higher in terms of personal integrity and/or social attractiveness – ie the solidarity dimensions (by non-standard-accented listeners)
- Cheyne 1970; Giles 1971; Bourhis, Giles & Lambert 1975; Ryan & Carranza 1975; Giles, Baker & Fielding 1975 (quoted in Giles & Powesland 1975:101–105); Ryan & Sebastian 1980; Giles, Wilson & Conway 1981; Ryan & Bulik 1982; Giles & Sassoon 1983; Brown, Giles & Thakerar 1985; Giles, Henwood, Coupland & Coupland 1992; Levin, Giles, Garrett 1994; Saal & Fredericks 2005.
- Cheyne 1970; Giles 1971; Bourhis, Giles & Lambert 1975; Flores & Hopper 1975 (quoted in Street Jr & Hopper 1985:179); Giles, Wilson & Conway 1981.

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Language attitude studies (cont.)

- Standard variety perceived more favourably in terms of social attractiveness – ie solidarity dimensions (by standard-accented listeners)
- Non-standard variety produced significant attitude shift (among regional-accented listeners)
- Standard variety showed tendency to produce attitude shift (among standard-accented listeners)
- Ryan & Sebastian 1980; Ryan & Bulik 1982; Rubin 1997; Stewart, Ryan & Giles 1985; Saal & Fredericks 2005.
- Giles 1973 (quoted in Giles & Powesland 1975:93–94).
- Powesland & Giles 1975 (quoted in Giles & Powesland 1975:95–96); Saal & Fredericks 2005.

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General trends: Language attitude studies

- Listeners' identification with the variety (standard or non-standard) seems to be the stronger predictor for social attractiveness. Listeners who perceive the speaker as "one of us" (as an ingroup member) tend to perceive the situation as solidarity-stressing; i.e. these listeners are more socially attracted to the speaker, and the speaker tends to reflect greater integrity (cf. Edwards 1982:25; Street Jr & Hopper 1982; Giles & Street Jr 1985; Giles & Powesland 1975).
- Contrary to previous claims (cf. Giles & Powesland 1975; Giles & Street Jr. 1985) the standard variety can be evaluated favourably in terms of both competence and social attractiveness. The condition for social attractiveness is: The listener must identify with the standard-accented speaker.
- The non-standard variety is perceived favourably only in terms of social attractiveness and/or personal integrity. The condition: The speaker must be viewed as an ingroup member.
- Identification with the variety is more likely to enhance message acceptance.

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Language attitude studies: the social attractiveness dimension

- Garrett, Coupland and Williams (2003:176): "There is also evidence that the social attractiveness often said to be a recurrent accompaniment of 'non-standard' dialects may be achieved by quite different symbolic routes. The data suggest that the dialect semiotic (...) works alongside other factors (...)"
- A study was conducted among grade 11 learners to examine the effect of Standard Afrikaans and loveLife slang on the source's social attractiveness. Learners (from Eersterust and Wilgers High school) responded to the following question:
 - Would you like to have the writer as a friend? Why do you say so?

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Findings of pilot study

Table 1: Writer as friend

	Standard Afrikaans	loveLife slang (English)
Eersterust learners	58%	56%
	<i>Most frequent reason:</i> Can learn from writer (36%)	<i>Most frequent reason:</i> Fit into young people's style (25%)
Wilgers learners	42%	58%
	<i>Most frequent reason:</i> Can learn from writer (16%)	<i>Most frequent reason:</i> How young people talk (11%) Sound nice (11%)

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Language attitude studies: social identity dimension

- From the mid-90's speaker-evaluation studies began to examine the effect of accented speech on listeners' social identities.
- Language can be a determining factor in making social identities salient. Cargile and Giles (1997) found that the non-standard accent (in this case a Japanese-English accent) had a main effect on the salience of social identities. The Japanese-accented speaker elicited a heightened American identity among the non-Asian American respondents (majority Anglo Americans).
- Bresnahan, Ohashi, Nebashi, Liu and Shearman (2002) found that (American) participants who exhibited a strong ethnic identity rated American English (as opposed to a foreign accent) significantly higher in status, dynamism and attractiveness than subjects with a weak ethnic identity.

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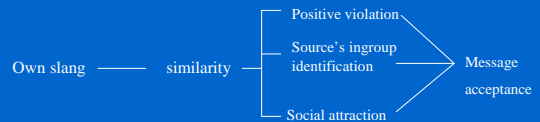
Social identity and persuasion

- Mackie and Queller (2000:145) found that when the source was known to be an ingroup member before the arguments were presented, the participants showed a tendency to accept the message of the ingroup member (x outgroup member) irrespective of the merits of the arguments.
- Duck, Hogg and Terry (2000:281-285) found that in AIDS advertising which students judged the impact of as socially acceptable, students who identified more with the student ingroup were more willing to accept the impact of AIDS commercials on themselves than outgroup members (non-students).
- Identification with the non-standard variety is more likely to make social identities salient; ie listeners are more aware of their group membership and more inclined to evaluate speakers in terms of the shared attributes of the ingroup members. Speakers of non-standard varieties are more likely to perceive the interaction in intergroup terms.

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Predicting the effects of teenager slang



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Methodology

- *Study population*
 - Grade 11 learners with Afrikaans as home language attending high schools in the east of Pretoria.
- *Selection of schools*
 - Eersterust Secondary
 - Silverton High
 - Wilgers High
- *Own slang texts*

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loveLife slang text

Getting around

Why have one **guy** or **gal** when you can have many? It's about quantity, **right?** **WRONG**. The days of the **playa** are over.

Some of us **lurv to score**. We mean sleeping with a **hot new babe** every night, or trying to be a bigger **playa** than the rest of the **crowd**. But these games could **land** us in a **pit** of problems. You know that it will probably kill you as your chance of **catching** HIV/AIDS **skyrockets**. Having one **love** is **heaps** better than being a **playa**.

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Standard Afrikaans text

Rondslaap

Hoekom slegs een **kêrel** of **meisie** hê as jy baie kan hê. Dit gaan mos oor **getalle, nie waar nie?** **VERKEERD**. Die dae van **rondslaap** is **verby**.

Sommige van ons **hou daarvan om rond te slaap**. Ons **bedoel daarmee** om elke aand met 'n **ander seksueel aantreklike meisie** of **seun te slaap** of om **meer seksmaats** te hê as die **res van die groep**. Maar hierdie **speletjies** kan vir ons **ernstige probleme veroorsaak**. Jy weet dit kan jou **lewe kos**, want jou kans om **MIV/Vigs te kry skiet die hoogte in**. Om een **verhouding** te hê, is **baie beter** as om **verskillende seksmaats** te hê.

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Eersterust slang

Rondbak

Hoekom slegs een **ou** of **dol** hê as jy 'n **gang** kan hê. Dit gaan mos oor **nommers, of hoe?** **WRONG**. Die dae van **rondbak** is **kla**.

Sommige van ons **like rondbak**. Ons **meen** om elke aand met 'n **different ntcha dol** of **ou te bak** of om meer **bakkers** te hê as die res van die **gang**. Maar hierdie **games** kan vir ons **serious problems gee**. Jy weet dit kan jou **sat maak**, want jou kans om die **Groot Siekte** te kry is **sky-high**. Om een **relationship** te hê, is **ntchaer** as om **different bakkers** te hê.

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Wilgers slang

Rondraps

Hoekom slegs een **ou** of **chick** hê as jy baie kan hê. Dit gaan mos oor **hoeveel**, of hoe? **WRONG**. Die dae van **rondraps** is klaar.

Sommige van ons **like** om **rond** te raps. Ons **meen** om elke aand met 'n **ander sexy chick** of **ou** te raps of om meer **sex partners** te hê as die res van die **gang**. Maar hierdie **games** kan vir ons **serious problems** gee. Jy weet dit kan jou lewe **vat**, want jou kans om **Aids** te kry is **baie hoog**. Om een **relationship** te hê, is **cooler** as om baie **sex partners** te hê.

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Preference for text versions

Table 2: Learners' evaluation of own slang texts

	Understand all the words	Words that do not fit (25% frequency)	Preference for text versions
Eersterust learners (n=36)	100%	Aids: 97% <i>Alternative:</i> Groot siekte (70%)	Eersterust slang: 76% Standard Afrikaans: 11% loveLife slang: 19%
Wilgers learners (n=19)	100%	none	Wilgers slang: 63% Standard Afrikaans: 16% loveLife slang: 26%

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Independent and dependent variables

- Sample size: 255 (M=102; F=153)
- Independent variable
 - Language variety: Eersterust slang (Eersterust learners)
Wilgers slang (Silverton and Wilgers learners)
loveLife slang
Standard Afrikaans
- Dependent variables
 - Similarity
 - Language expectancy
 - Source's ingroup identification
 - Social attractiveness
 - Message acceptance

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Findings

- Variety similarity
 - Eersterust slang was seen significantly more similar to the way the learners speak than loveLife slang and Standard Afrikaans.
- An analysis of the question *Do you like the language used in the text* revealed that Eersterust slang and Standard Afrikaans are by far the most liked varieties.

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Findings (cont.)

Table 3: Do you like the language used in the text?

	Yes	Most frequent reason
Eersterust slang (n=50)	82%	The way we speak (54%) Easy to understand (24%)
Wilgers slang (n=55)	38%	Easy to understand (15%) Similar language use (13%)
loveLife slang (n=75)	59%	Similar language use (20%) Easy to understand (17%)
Standard Afrikaans (n=74)	70%	Easy to understand (39%) Similar language use (8%)

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Findings (cont.)

- Language expectancy
 - Eersterust slang, Wilgers slang and loveLife slang were seen as a violation of the learners' language expectancies.
 - Eersterust slang was viewed more as a positive violation than Wilgers slang and loveLife slang.
- Source's ingroup identification
 - Learners who read the Eersterust slang text experienced more awareness of their teenager identity than those in the other conditions.
 - Learners in the Eersterust slang condition perceived the writer more as an ingroup member than those in the other conditions.

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Findings (cont.)

- Social attractiveness
 - Learners in the Eersterust slang condition were more socially attracted to the writer than those in the loveLife (and Wilgers) slang condition.
 - No main effect for social attraction between the following conditions: Eersterust slang and Standard Afrikaans.

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Findings (cont.)

Table 4: Writer as friend

Variety	Yes <i>Frequent reason</i>	No <i>Frequent reason</i>	Don't know <i>Frequent reason</i>
Eersterust slang (n=50)	66% <i>Gives good advice (24%) Caring (20%) Think alike (12%)</i>	6% --	28% <i>Don't know the writer (20%)</i>
Wilgers slang (n=55)	25% <i>Gives good advice (9%)</i>	24% <i>Not my type of friends (9%)</i>	51% <i>Don't know the writer (36%)</i>
loveLife slang (n=75)	40% <i>Gives good advice (15%) Think alike (9%)</i>	20% <i>Don't know the writer (3%)</i>	40% <i>Don't know the writer (24%)</i>
Standard Afrikaans (n=74) 7/3/2007	36% <i>Gives good advice (16%) Caring (5%) Think alike (5%)</i>	22% <i>Don't know the writer (3%) Writer is HIV-positive (3%)</i>	42% <i>Don't know the writer (28%)</i> 32

Relevance for document design

- Message acceptance
 - No main effect
- Relevance for document design
 - Teenager slang – upgraded and favourably perceived in the Eersterust community, loveLife slang consistently downgraded.
 - Eersterust slang attracts the attention of the learners more than loveLife slang and Standard Afrikaans
 - Eersterust slang succeeds in creating a credible and socially attractive teenager source
 - Eersterust slang has the potential to effect message acceptance
 - Wilgers slang – downgraded and unfavourably perceived by learners in the Silverton and Wilgers community.
 - Standard Afrikaans much more favourably perceived – scored consistently higher means than Wilgers slang and loveLife slang on all relevant dimensions

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