



NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM VITAE

Gerhard van Huyssteen (52) is a professor of Afrikaans linguistics and computer linguistics at the North-West University. He served on the Language Commission of the South African Academy for Science and the Arts from 2005-2021, and was elected chair from 2013-2021. From 2009-2014 he served on the panel of human language technology experts of the Department of Arts and Culture. He is the recipient of the Elizabeth Eybers Scholarship, the CL Engelbrecht Prize for Linguistic Research for his contribution to the publication of the tenth edition of the "Afrikaanse woordelys en spelreëls", and the recipient of the Stals Prize for inter- and multidisciplinary research. Van Huyssteen is best known for his contribution as a linguist in the development of text technology applications and various electronic resources for Afrikaans, as well as for his language quiz programs on Radio Sonder Grense and kykNET, his columns for Beeld / Netwerk24, and four podcast series on language and linguistic issues.

Full CV available at <https://gerhard.pro>

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Summary and highlights

- Age : 52
- Highest Qualification : PhD
- Present Position : Professor, North-West University, POTCHEFSTROOM, South Africa
- NRF Rating : B2 (“Internationally Recognized Researcher”)
- Fields of Specialisation : Cognitive grammar, construction morphology, Afrikaans grammar, swearing, digital humanities, human language technology applications
- Number of Peer-reviewed Publications: Local : 39
- Number of Peer-reviewed Publications: International : 34
- Number of Products/Software Packages : 35
- Postgraduate Students: Completed : 18
- Postgraduate Students: Present : 3
- Number of Conference Presentations: Local : 50+ (see [addendum for a selection of references](#))
- Number of Conference Presentations: International : 50+ (see [addendum for a selection of references](#))
- Years of Teaching Experience : 29
- Career Highlights :
 - Since 1999, accumulated 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th stream income in excess of **R93 million** (see p. Error! Bookmark not defined. **for details**)
 - Chairman of the Technical Committee on Standardisation (“Taalkommissie”) of PanSALB and the “Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns”
 - Founding member of Centre for Text Technology (CTexT; North-West University), and Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (VivA)
 - Guest editor for special editions on human language technology in South Africa of *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* (2003) and *Literator* (2007)
 - Awarded the prestigious Elisabeth Eybers Bursary by the “Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns” (2003), the CL Engelbrecht Prize for Scientific Language Research (2009), and the Stals Prize for Multi- and Interdisciplinary Research (2015).
 - Received awards for excellence in teaching (1997, 1999, 2001)

Research

Expertise

- I obtained my PhD in linguistics in 2000 on a topic in *theoretical and descriptive linguistics* (cognitive grammar; morphology), under the main supervision of Prof. Arie Verhagen (University of Leiden). I still consider myself to be a construction morphologist, with consistent teaching, research, and other outputs in linguistics over the past 25 years.
 - I am under contract with *Amsterdam University Press* to submit a monograph by the end of 2023, which will be on the Afrikaans morphological construction.
- From 2001 onward, the focus of my teaching and research – in collaboration with various co-workers, students, and partners – shifted to *natural language processing* (NLP), with a specific focus on research, development, and sometimes commercialisation of:
 - human language technology (HLT) **applications for end-users** (e.g., spelling checkers, grammar checkers, thesauri, machine translation systems, telephony-based information and reporting systems, dictionary apps, interactive information platforms);
 - HLT **applications for research purposes** (e.g., applications for the rapid annotation of data for machine learning (using various bootstrapping techniques), annotation of digital lexica, collection of speech data, development of research portals and websites);
 - **core technologies** for resource-scarce languages (e.g., part-of-speech taggers, named-entity recognisers, lemmatisers); and
 - **data resources**, specifically text corpora and lexica (but also with some experience working with speech data).
- Recently, the scope of my interests widened to also include other fields in the digital humanities and beyond. Within the context of an *interdisciplinary project on swearwords* (which I conceptualised and currently lead), we investigate, among other topics:
 - **computational constructicography and e-lexicography**, specifically an Afrikaans online swearing encyclopaedia, and other NLP resources related to language taboos;
 - **social perceptions** of swearwords and taboo topics (mainly through *statistical analyses of online questionnaires, and corpus studies*);
 - institutionalised **ensorship**, social censorship (specifically cancel culture), self-censorship (e.g., by novelists), and other forms of information access regulation (e.g., whether parents want content and/or age advisories on books);
 - **neuro-psychological aspects of swearing**, focussing on positive psychology (emotions, stereotyping and prejudice), and positive neurology (but possibly also with some clinical work with children living with autism spectrum disorder); and
 - **artificial intelligence and morality** (focussing on interfacing with virtual assistants);
 - **innovative scientific communication through new media** (specifically systematic building of a community of interest through podcasting and micro-blogging, while reporting research results through non-traditional but peer-reviewed channels).
- I have served in and lead many local and *international multidisciplinary research teams* over the past twenty years. As testimony to my ability to work in such teams, I was awarded the esteemed Stals Award by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns [South African Academy of Science and Art], which is awarded every three years for work of outstanding quality that made an eminent contribution to the practice of science through multi- and interdisciplinary research.

Research outputs and recognition

- Over the past 29 years, I have (co-)authored **34 international** peer-reviewed publications, and **39 South African ones**, plus **35 products/software packages/datasets**. I have presented more than 100 papers at South African and international conferences, of which **seven keynote papers**.
- Within the South African national rating system of researchers, I have been rated as an internationally recognised researcher (“B2”) since 2023 (and since 2011 “C2” as an established researcher). The rating system is based on extensive, anonymous peer-reviewing by local and international scholars.
- I have also received several external bursaries, and **rewards for excellence in research**.

Research and other grants

- Since 1999, I was directly instrumental in accumulating research, development, and/or capital funding in excess of **R93 million (circa €5,5 million)** for the organisations where I have worked, or those that I have helped to establish (e.g. the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans, Viridevert NPC). All this funding has been used for purposes of research and development, with the knock-on effect to create job opportunities, bursaries for students, and relevant research-based products.

Academic network

- My current international network centres almost exclusively around universities and organisations in the **Low Countries**, specifically the University of Leiden, the Meertens Institute, and the Institute for the Dutch Language (INT). Previously I also worked on projects in close collaboration with colleagues and students from the universities of Antwerp, Ghent, Groningen, Leuven, and Tilburg.
 - Extended research visits to the Low Countries include:
 - 2022: Leiden University (three months)
 - 2013: University of Antwerp (six weeks)
 - 2008: University of Antwerp (three months)
 - 2003: University of Tilburg (three months)
 - 1999: Leiden University (full year)
- I am currently serving in the Afrikaanse Taalraad (ATR) and Nederlandse Taalunie’s (NTU) **advisory committee** for cooperation between South Africa and the Low Countries, as well as in the Virtual Portal Advisory Committee of the NTU and the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR). I have also served as member of the ministerial HLT **Expert Panel** of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), the **steering committee** of the HLT network between SA and the Low Countries, and the expert panel of the South African National Centre for HLT.
- From 2005 until 2021, I have served on the Afrikaanse Taalkommissie [Afrikaans Language Commission], which is the only body responsible for the **standardisation of Afrikaans** since 1915. I have been elected chairperson of this body in March 2014, and served as its chair until the end of 2021.
 - As co-author of the tenth edition of the *Afrikaanse woordelys en spelreëls* [Afrikaans wordlist and spelling rules] (2009), I received the CL Engelbrecht Prize for Scientific Language Research from the South African Academy for Science and Arts (SAASA).

Teaching

Undergraduate and postgraduate experience

- I have been teaching for 29 years on the baccalaureus and honours level, and I have received *three awards for excellence in teaching*.
- I have supervised a total of *thirteen Master's students* (twelve of them *cum laude*), and *four PhD students*. Two MA students, both focusing on machine-learning techniques in hybrid approaches, were awarded the prestigious Absa Bronze Medal for the best Master's student in all Humanities faculties at the NWU in 2005 and 2006. One of these students, as well as another MA student in 2014, also received the Marius Jooste Medal for best MA thesis in Afrikaans & Dutch at the North-West University.
- I'm currently supervising *one Master's and two PhD students*.
- I have been a *guest lecturer* at the following international universities:
 - 2022: University of Leiden (three months)
 - 2008: University of Antwerp (three months)

Philosophy and approach

- Since circa 2005, all my teaching activities have been *problem-based* and *project-driven* – by and large modelled on the Maastricht model, but also more recently informed and inspired by the Finnish *phenomenon-based learning*. Over the past four or five years, I have also implemented a *flipped classroom model* in my teaching, with great success and personal satisfaction. At North-West University, I have been one of the early adopters (since circa 2010) of *online teaching*, specifically using a Sakai-based learning management system.
- I also find great pleasure in developing *digital learning materials* for students, such as animation videos. Please see <https://gerhard.pro/category/teaching/> for some examples.

Popular research communication and application

- I'm not only passionate about practical applications of research, but also about making research findings more accessible to a wider, non-scientific audience. The following initiatives speak to these passions of mine:
 - Project leader and editor-in-chief of the Afrikaans section (next to Dutch and Frisian) on the *Taalportaal* platform (taalportaal.org);
 - Compiler and presenter of a *language quiz show* on Radio Sonder Grense (the national Afrikaans radio broadcaster);
 - Conceptualiser and co-presenter of a popular language-based *TV game show* (*Op die Spel*) (three seasons);
 - *Columnist* for a national newspaper (*Beeld*) and largest e-news platform (*Netwerk24*) in South Africa, with more than hundred editions on all kinds of language matters;
 - Developer of the Afrikaans version (*Beter Afrikaans*) of the Dutch *language quiz website* and mobile application *Beter Spellin*;
 - Co-creator and co-presenter of a *podcast and radio series* (*#HoeNou?!*) on ordinary things and where their names come from, which has been broadcasted on more than 30 regional radio stations in South Africa and Namibia;

- Creator and co-presenter of *three academic podcast series* – one focusing on **swearwords in the entertainment industry** (ongoing), and two on **Afrikaans as a standard language** (completed); and
- Project leader of a project that developed a *spelling checker* (2003) and the first *grammar checker* for Afrikaans (2008); the former was selected by Microsoft as its official spelling checker, and it is still the most widely used proofing tool for Afrikaans.

Competencies and skills

Management experience and skills

- I was instrumental in founding *two research institutions*: The Centre for Text Technology (CTexT) of the North-West University, and the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (VivA). I am proud to say that both these institutions are well-known household names in South Africa. I have also served as first executive head of both these organisations.
- I also had a two-year stint as *research group leader* of the HLT Research Group at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR; Pretoria, South Africa).

Languages

- *Afrikaans* is my eerste taal en die taal waarin ek meestal werk en navorsing oor doen.
- *English* is my second language, but I mostly publish, present, and teach in English.
- *Nederlands* is mijn derde taal, maar mijn inschatting is dat mijn gesproken en geschreven vaardigheden op tweedetaalniveau zijn. Ik heb al in het Nederlands zowel colleges als academische presentaties gegeven.
- Ich kann auch *deutsche* Texte lesen, insbesondere wissenschaftliche Texte in meinen Fachgebieten.

Computer literacy and skills

- Windows 11
- Microsoft 365 (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Visio, SharePoint)
- Website design, setup and maintenance (specifically WordPress and Sakai-based sites, also including basics of HTML and XML)
- Sound editing, setup and hosting for podcasting
- Basic knowledge of regular expressions (e.g. Corpus Query Language, Notepad++)
- SPSS 27 (basic knowledge)