

MARTIN MÖSSMER

Curriculum Vitae

PH.D. STUDENT, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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EDUCATION

2023– PH.D., LINGUISTICS, expected in May 2028

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor, USA

Advisors: Professors Andries W. Coetzee & Patrice S. Beddor

2018–21 M.A., LINGUISTICS, awarded with distinction

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, South Africa

Thesis: *Xri: A study of contact, and phonetic and phonological change*

Advisors: Professors Rajend Mesthrie, Heather J. Brookes, & Rainer Vossen

2017 B.A. (HONS), LINGUISTICS, awarded in the First Class

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, South Africa

Thesis: *The Rise and Fall of Xri: The history of a completed language shift in the Northern Cape, South Africa*

Advisor: Dr. Matthias Brenzinger

2014–16 B.A., LINGUISTICS, & CLASSICAL STUDIES, awarded with distinction in both majors, and the degree awarded with distinction

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, South Africa

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

2026 Brookes, H., Southwood, F., **Mössmer**, M., Makaure, P., White, M. J., Coetsee, C., Yalala, S. L., Kruger, H., Ndhambi, M., Ndlangamandla, S., Bhuda, M. T., Brink, N., Buthelezi, N., Jiyana, W., Khumalo, F. P., Ludidi, B., Matfunjwa, M., Miriri, L., & Skosana, N. (2025).

[Instrument adaptation for measuring early child language development across multilingual and sociocultural diverse settings](#). *Developmental Psychology*, 62(1), 288–302.

2026 Brookes, H., Southwood, F., Makaure, P., White, M. J., **Mössmer**, M., Defty, C., Yalala, S. L., Brink, N., Kruger, H., Matfunjwa, M., Ndhambi, M., Ndlangamandla, S., Bhuda, M. T., Buthelezi, N., Jiyana, W., Khumalo, P., Miriri, L., Skosana, N., & The South African CDI

Team. [A crosslinguistic study of gesture and lexical development in South African infants](#). *First Language*. Advance online publication.

- 2025 Brookes, H., Makaure, P., Yalala, S. L., Danvers, H., **Mössmer**, M., Little, F., Ndhambi, M., Southwood, F., Ludidi, B., & the South African CDI Team. (2025). [Mean Length of Utterance: A study of early language development in four Southern Bantu languages](#). *Journal of Child Language*, 52(2), 244–269.
- 2021 Southwood, F., White, M., Brookes, H., Pascoe, M., Ndhambi, M., Yalala, S. L., Mahura, O., **Mössmer**, M., Oosthuizen, H., Brink, N., & Alcock, K. (2021). [Sociocultural factors affecting vocabulary development in young South African children](#). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 642315.
- 2019 **Mössmer**, M. (2019). [The rise and fall of Xri: The history of a completed language shift in the Northern Cape, South Africa](#). *Anthropological Linguistics*, 60(4), 44–74.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION / UNDER REVIEW

- (submitted) Coetzee, A.W., Henriksen, N., García-Amaya, L., Mackay, B. & **Mössmer**, M. (under review). Supplementing historical evidence with linguistic evidence: On the regional provenance of Patagonian Afrikaans. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*.
- (submitted) Coetzee, A. W., & **Mössmer**, M. (under review). Afrikaans diphthongs. In M. J. Ball & F. Hu (eds.), *Diphthongs, Triphthongs and Polyphthongs: A survey*. *Studies in Phonetics and Phonology Series*. University of Toronto Press.
- (in prep.) Coetzee, A.W., Mackay, B. & **Mössmer**, M. Afrikaans word recognition: Do listeners adjust to the socio-ethnic identity of the speaker?
- (in prep.) Coetzee, A. W., Mackay, B., **Mössmer**, M., & Sneller, B. Intersectional identities: Regional and socio-ethnic variation in Afrikaans.
- (in prep.) Gowlett, D. F. & **Mössmer**, M. The development of syllabic consonants in Sotho-Tswana and Nguni.

DATA SET

- 2024 **Mössmer**, M. (ed.). (2024). *Woordelys van die Griekwataal, ook bekend as Xri* [Wordlist of the Griqua Language, also known as Xri]. [[Unpublished manuscript](#)].

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- 2024 SAIO Research Grant: Department of Afroamerican & African Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

- 2023 Fellowship: Gates-Cambridge Scholarship. [declined].

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

- 2019 Fellowship: Centre for Curating the Archive: [Onthouers | Rememberers Project](#).
Lestrade Scholarship for Linguistic Study of Indigenous Language in Africa.
- 2018 Language Legacies Grant: The Endangered Language Fund.
Fellowship: Centre for Curating the Archive: *Onthouers* | Rememberers Project.
Lestrade Scholarship for Linguistic Study of Indigenous Language in Africa.
- 2017 Fellowship: Harry Crossley Research Fellowship.
Lestrade Scholarship for Linguistic Study of Indigenous Language in Africa.
- 2016 Humanities Faculty Scholarship.
- 2015 Humanities Faculty Scholarship.

AWARDS & HONORS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- 2025 Deborah Keller-Cohen Teaching Award, Department of Linguistics.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

- 2016 Dean's Merit List (Humanities Faculty).
Class Medals: SLL3057 The City in the Ancient World; SLL3055 Athenian Life & Culture.
- 2015 Dean's Merit List (Humanities Faculty).
Class Medals: AXL2300F Linguistics IIA; SLL2122S Mandarin IIB.
- 2014 Dean's Merit List (Humanities Faculty). *Class Medal*: SLL1054 The World of Odysseus.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- 2026 Graduate Student Instructor. LING137 Wi.: *Epic Grammar Fails*. Dr Bradley Mackay.
Sociolinguistics. (142 students).
- 2025 Head Graduate Student Instructor. LING111 Fa.: *Lenses into Language: Mind, Society, Justice*. Prof. Ezra Keshet
Introductory linguistics. (244 students).
- 2025 Graduate Student Instructor. LING114 Wi.: *A World of Words*. Dr Lisa Levinson.
Semantics & psycholinguistics. (51 students).
- 2024 Graduate Student Instructor. LING115 Fa.: *Language in a Multicultural World*. Dr Yourdanis Sedarous.
Language contact & endangerment, & multilingualism. (73 students).

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

2022–23 Lecturer. GL348/GL418: *Critical Sociolinguistics*.

Designed new upper-level class, critically examining three controversial topics in linguistics and the debates around them: linguistic relativity, creole exceptionalism, and the ‘Khoisan’ languages. The second iteration of the class had an additional module on language endangerment and obsolescence.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2018 Head Tutor (Head TA). AXL2300 & AXL2301: *Linguistics IIA & Linguistics IIB*.

Formal & sociolinguistics; coordinating tutor team, grading assignments and exams.

2017–18 Tutor (TA). AXL1300 & AXL1301: *Linguistics IA & Linguistics IB*.

Formal and sociolinguistics; grading assignments and exams, and individual tutoring.

GUEST LECTURES

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Apr 2026 *Language and Discrimination*. LING137 Epic Grammar Fails. Dr Bradley Mackay.

Nov 2025 *Multilingualism I*. LING340 The Social Life of Language. Dr Bradley Mackay.

Mar 2025 *Word Acquisition*. LING114 A World of Words. Dr Lisa Levinson.

Feb 2025 *Let’s Talk About ‘Watersnakes’ in Xri: Non-traditional elicitation methods for documenting critically endangered languages*. LING780 Reflecting on our Identities in Language Research. Prof. Cherry Meyer & Prof. Savithry Namboodiripad.

Nov 2024 *The Rise and Fall of Xri*. LING115 Language in a Multicultural World. Dr Yourdanis Sedarous.

Nov 2024 *Multilingualism I*. LING340 The Social Life of Language. Dr Bradley Mackay.

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Nov 2025 *Language endangerment and loss: The story of Xri*. LING101 Languages of the World. Dr Sophia Eakins. Online.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

2023– Graduate Research Assistant, Phonetics & Phonology Lab

Data collection and research contribution for Prof. Andries Coetzee’s ongoing investigations of sociolinguistic variation in Afrikaans varieties, and diasporic Afrikaans in Patagonia.

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

2021–23 Study Coordinator, [Child Language Development Node](#)

Coordinating the second phase (with five languages) of a major nation-wide research project developing and validating McArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories (MB-CDIs) for South Africa's 11 official spoken languages (www.sa-cdi.org). Research management and contribution, data management, quality control, logistics, finance, budgeting, coordinating 11 fieldworker teams (~120 fieldworkers) at nine research sites, scientific questionnaire development, and organizing workshops and scientific meetings with projects contributors from nine universities.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2018–21 Study Coordinator, Child Language Africa

Coordinating the first phase of the South African research project adapting MB-CDIs for six official languages (www.sa-cdi.org). Pilot study and main study for six languages.

2018–19 Fieldworker, [Onthouers | Rememberers Project](#), [Center for Curating the Archive](#)

Supported by Prof. Pippa Skotnes' Mellon Foundation and Oppenheimer Generations grants, and working with community members, I documented part of the cultural heritage and traditions of the Griekwa people, as told by over 50 community members, integrated with their personal histories and stories. People told stories about encounters with the *Waterslang* – a dangerous water being that inhabits rivers and springs, about their initiation experiences as young women, older ways of life from their childhoods, and how things changed in the turbulent times of Apartheid, and the bitter-sweet years post-Apartheid.

2018 Research Assistant, Linguistics Section

General research-related duties as assistant to Prof. Heather Brookes, chair of the *8th International Society for Gesture Studies Conference (ISGS8)*. Logistics, budget, conference program, and abstract collation and publication, for the *ISGS8* conference.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2017–23 Localization and Language Consultant, what3words.com, Freelance

Localization and translation of the what3words geolocation platform for Afrikaans, including map localization and translating ongoing updates and user interface features.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS

2026 (Ir)-regular sound change? Understanding voice onset time and fundamental frequency in Orange River Afrikaans obstruent production. *Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference 2026*. Provo, Utah.

- 2026 Alignment between human reading and large language models varies across word class. With Jonathan R. Brennan, James Baybaş, Sid Bhushan, Noa Segal, Simón Campos, Xueyang Huang, Sylvan Jesien, Rachel McCullough, George Stain, Elliot Stork, Hsin-Ju Wu, Yueke Zeng & Lisa B. Levinson. *Human Sentence Processing 2026*. Boston, Massachusetts. Poster.
- 2026 How listeners do and don't adjust for cross-dialectal differences: Socio-ethnic variation in the Afrikaans vowel system. With Andries Coetzee & Bradley Mackay. *Linguistics Society of America 2026 Annual Meeting*. New Orleans, Louisiana. Talk.
- 2025 Afrikaans word recognition: Do listeners adjust to the socio-ethnic identity of the speaker? With Andries Coetzee & Bradley Mackay. *5th Afrikaans Grammar Workshop (AGW5)*. Ann Arbor, Michigan & Online. Talk.
- 2025 Let's Talk About 'Watersnakes' in Xri: Non-traditional elicitation methods for documenting critically endangered languages. *9th International Conference on Language Documentation & Conservation (ICLDC9)*. Honolulu, Hawai'i. Talk.
- 2025 Intersectional identities: Regional and socio-ethnic variation in Afrikaans. With Andries Coetzee, Betsy Sneller & Bradley Mackay. *Linguistics Society of America 2025 Annual Meeting*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Talk.
- 2021 Equivalent child language assessment instruments across languages: Southern Africa CDIs. With Michelle J. White, Heather Brookes, Nina Brink, Olebeng Mahura, Mikateko Ndhambi, Helena Oosthuizen, Michelle Pascoe, Sefela Yalala, & Katie Alcock. *13th International Symposium on Bilingualism (ISB13)*. Warsaw, Poland. Talk.
- 2021 Adaptation and development of the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI) for South African languages. With Sefela Yalala, Olebeng Mahura, Babalwa Ludidi, Helena Oosthuizen, Katie Alcock, Nina Brink, Heather Brookes, Mikateko Ndhambi, Michelle Pascoe, Frenette Southwood & Michelle J. White. *South African Linguistics and Applied Linguistics Society Conference (SALALS 2021)*. Online. Talk.
- 2021 Sociocultural factors affecting vocabulary development in young South African children. With Mikateko Ndhambi, Babalwa Ludidi, Frenette Southwood, Nina Brink, Heather Brookes, Olebeng Mahura, Katie Alcock, Helena Oosthuizen, Michelle Pascoe, Michelle J. White & Sefela Yalala. *South African Linguistics and Applied Linguistics Society Conference (SALALS 2021)*. Online. Talk.
- 2019 "I drank this language from my mother's breast": Layers of proficiency among Xri-speaking elders (Northern Cape, South Africa). *9th Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment (CLE9)*. Cambridge, United Kingdom. Talk.

- 2018 The former distribution of Xri speakers and their language shift: A critical review of the historical sources. *20th International Congress of Linguists (ICL20)*. Cape Town, South Africa. Talk.

INVITED TALKS

- 2023 *But is it 'Khoisan'?* Re-examining a popular linguistic term. Department of General Linguistics, Stellenbosch University. May 8, 2023. Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 2022 *Xri: A study of contact, and phonetic and phonological change*. Department of General Linguistics, Stellenbosch University. February 3, 2022. Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 2021 *A Slow Death: Language contact and phonetic change in Xri*. [Kalahari Basin Area Network](#). January 21, 2021. Online.

SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- 2025–26 Organizer, Phonetics & Phonology Discussion Group (Phondi).
- 2024–26 Graduate Committee (member).
- 2024–26 Co-organizer (with Em. Sarah Thomason), Historical Linguistics Discussion Group (Histling).
- 2025 Organizing Committee, 5th Afrikaans Grammar Workshop (AGW5).
- 2023–24 Colloquium Committee (member).

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

- 2017–18 Executive Assistant to conference chair, Prof. Heather Brookes, *8th Conference of the International Society for Gesture Studies (ISGS8)*. Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2018 Assistant to conference chairs, Dr Mantoa Motinyane and Dr Matthias Brenzinger, *7th International Conference on Bantu Languages (Sintu7) & 19th Interim Conference of the African Languages Association of Southern Africa (ALASA19)*. Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2018 Student volunteer, *20th International Congress of Linguists (ICL20)*. Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2017 Assistant to conference chair, Dr Matthias Brenzinger, *6th International Symposium on Khoisan Languages and Linguistics (Riezlern-6)*. Cederberg, South Africa.

FIELDWORK

- 2024 *June/July*: Northern Cape, South Africa. Orange River Afrikaans speakers.
- 2023 *July*: Western Cape, South Africa. Afrikaans speakers, for Prof. Andries Coetzee.

- 2019 *March*: Northern Cape, South Africa. Xri documentation & searching for speakers/rememberers, recording Griekwa personal histories, cultural heritage and traditions.
- 2018 *July/September*. Northern Cape, South Africa. Xri documentation & searching for speakers/rememberers, recording Griekwa personal histories, cultural heritage and traditions.
- 2018 *February*: Northern Cape, South Africa. Searching for Xri speakers/rememberers.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- FLUENT: Afrikaans (native), English (native), German (heritage)
- CONVERSATIONAL: isiXhosa [S. Bantu], Mandarin Chinese, French
- RESEARCH LANGUAGES: Orange River Afrikaans, Xri [Khoekhoe]; Nguni (isiNdebele, isiZulu, Siswati); Sotho-Tswana (Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana); Tshivenda; Xitsonga

MEMBERSHIP

Linguistics Society of America (LSA)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Praat, FastTrack, ELAN, Qualtrics, some R, a little Python