

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Andries W. Coetzee, associate professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2004	University of Massachusetts
M.A.	2002	University of Massachusetts
M.A.	1996	Potchefstroom University, South Africa
B.A.	1994	Potchefstroom University, South Africa
B.A.	1993	Potchefstroom University, South Africa
B.A.	1992	Potchefstroom University, South Africa

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Extraordinary Professor, Research Unit of Languages and Literature in the South African Context, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
2011 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
2006 – 2011	Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
2004 – 2006	Language Learning Visiting Assistant Research Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Coetzee’s teaching is essential to the department’s undergraduate and graduate curricula in phonology. More broadly, his teaching introduces undergraduate students to the scientific investigation of language and rigorously trains graduate students as both researchers and teachers. These contributions emerge through the service courses he teaches, which range from the largest introductory undergraduate course to research writing and graduate student instructor training courses for doctoral students. He has developed these and other courses with imagination and skill, and his impressive teaching evaluations show that he is highly successful at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He also teaches specialized courses in phonological theory and in using experimental data to evaluate formal phonological models. Professor Coetzee is an engaged mentor of graduate students. Since his promotion to associate professor, he has co-chaired three dissertations and been a member of two additional dissertation committees. Letters from former Ph.D. students praise the intensive and effective help they received from him as they progressed through their doctoral studies.

Research – Professor Coetzee is a phonologist who is a world leader in the study of the variable sound structures of language. Although traditional phonological models have largely ignored the gradient data of variation, Professor Coetzee’s research has been a driving force behind a change in this theoretical landscape. His approach uses innovative experimental techniques to identify patterns of variation, and his findings have fundamentally shaped the discipline’s current understanding that an essential property of phonological knowledge is knowledge of the variable

structures that encode grammatical, phonetic, and social information. His approach demonstrates how to formally model variation. His more recent contributions to the study of the variable sound structures of language extend to variation leading to sound change (sponsored by the National Science Foundation), and to the study of variable sound structures of languages spoken in South Africa, especially Afrikaans (supported by the Michigan Humanities Collaboratory). Professor Coetzee's research contributions, regularly published in top-tier journals, place him at the forefront of the discipline both theoretically and experimentally.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

- "A comprehensive model of phonological variation: Grammatical and non-grammatical factors in variable nasal place assimilation," *Phonology*, 33, 2016, pp. 211-246.
- "Grammatical change through lexical accumulation: Voicing co-occurrence restrictions in Afrikaans," *Language*, 90, 2014, pp. 693-721.
- "Frequency biases in phonological variation," with S. Kawahara, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 31, 2013, pp. 47-89.
- "Variation: Where laboratory phonology and theoretical phonology meet," in Oxford Handbook of Laboratory Phonology, A. C. Cohn et al., eds., Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 62-75.

Service – Professor Coetzee holds major leadership roles in his department, the university, and the profession. He has been the associate chair and director of graduate studies in Linguistics. Within the college and university, he has been a member of the college's Curriculum Committee and a member of the provost's Faculty Advisory Committee. He is currently the associate director of the African Studies Center (2017-2018). His service to the profession includes serving on international editorial boards, co-directing the 2013 Linguistic Institute of the Linguistic Society of America, and, most notably, serving as the editor of *Language*, the flagship journal of the Linguistic Society of America (2017-2024). While the editorship of *Language* is a clear indicator of his scholarly distinction and vision for the discipline, all of these leadership roles reflect his exemplary commitment to excellence.

#### External Reviews:

##### Reviewer (A)

"As one reads Professor Coetzee's publications, one is struck by how much progress he has made in tackling increasingly deep and difficult questions concerning how to model variation, by working incrementally on related pieces of the problem: what defines the set of possible variants? What determines their relative proportions? How do those proportions get modulated by various factors? So, one of the most impressive features of the work is how it all fits together..."

##### Reviewer (B)

"To cut to the chase, Dr. Coetzee's scholarly work epitomizes what one hopes to see in a senior scholar—innovative, engaged, accessible, and both empirically and theoretically well grounded. He has produced an impressive body of scholarly work that already has and will continue to have a significant impact on the fields of phonology, laboratory phonology, and phonetics."

Reviewer (C)

"...I find Dr. Coetzee to be a highly accomplished scholar, whose research has advanced formal and experimental approaches to the study of sound patterns, and enriched the empirical foundations of the discipline through rigorous investigations of diverse languages. He is internationally recognized for the quality and depth of his research, and his work has measurable impact in the field."

Reviewer (D)

"...Coetzee has produced an impressive and original research output since his last promotion, at the same time providing important guidance and service to the field (and, as I assume, to his department). For all of the above reasons he is already seen as a senior figure in the field, one who is eminently qualified to hold the title of Professor. I do not hesitate in adding that I would be honored to have him as a full professor colleague in my own department."

Reviewer (E)

"Andries Coetzee...is a phonologist who specializes in the role of variation in phonological theory and how to measure and model it. This area is right at the forefront of the direction in which modern phonology is advancing, and he is known and respected as a leader in that area and in phonology in general."

Reviewer (F)

"This authoritative breadth is one of the reasons Coetzee is among the most influential phonologists today. The field of phonology has undergone a transformation over the last 20 years, now relying often on methods that go beyond formal modeling, and delving into theoretical territory that is in fact more challenging to model formally. Coetzee has been at the forefront of this transformation of the field."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Coetzee's research in phonological theory has transformed the discipline, and his contributions to the department's teaching mission include engaging and successful courses across the curriculum. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Andries W. Coetzee be promoted to the rank of professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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