



Learning Zulu: A Secret History of Language in South Africa (Translation/Transnation)

Mark Sanders

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"Why are you learning Zulu?" When Mark Sanders began studying the language, he was often asked this question. In *Learning Zulu*, Sanders places his own endeavors within a wider context to uncover how, in the past 150 years of South African history, Zulu became a battleground for issues of property, possession, and deprivation. Sanders combines elements of analysis and memoir to explore a complex cultural history.

Perceiving that colonial learners of Zulu saw themselves as repairing harm done to Africans by Europeans, Sanders reveals deeper motives at work in the development of Zulu-language learning—from the emergence of the pidgin Fanagalo among missionaries and traders in the nineteenth century to widespread efforts, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, to teach a correct form of Zulu. Sanders looks at the white appropriation of Zulu language, music, and dance in South African culture, and at the association of Zulu with a martial masculinity. In exploring how Zulu has come to represent what is most properly and powerfully African, Sanders examines differences in English- and Zulu-language press coverage of an important trial, as well as the role of linguistic purism in xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Through one person's efforts to learn the Zulu language, *Learning Zulu* explores how a language's history and politics influence all individuals in a multilingual society.

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