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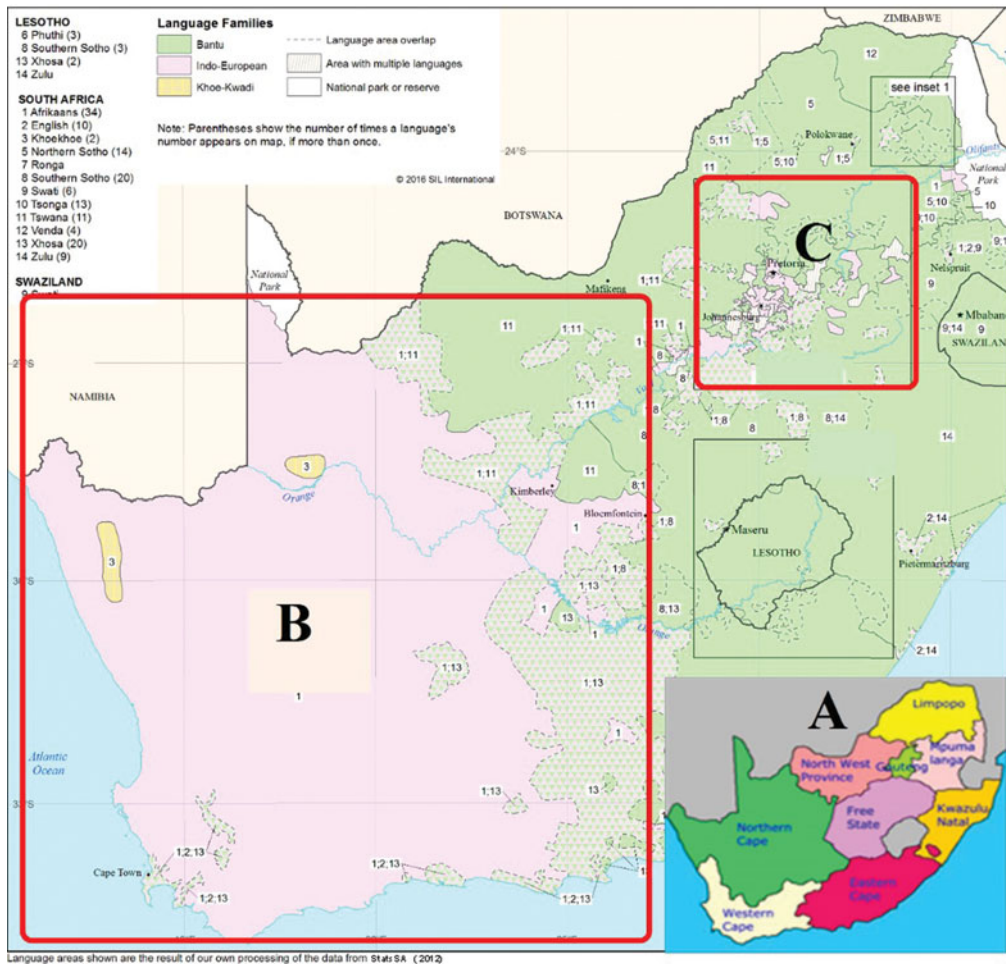
Of the official languages of South Africa, Afrikaans has the widest geographical, demographic and racial distribution (Webb 2003). According to the latest South African census of 2011 (StatsSA 2012), Afrikaans as first language is spoken by 13.5% of the country's inhabitants, only surpassed in numbers by Zulu (22.7%) and Xhosa (16%). In neighbouring Namibia, 10.4% of the population has Afrikaans as their first language. A noteworthy number of recent emigrants to United Kingdom, Australia, Europe and North America are likely to be Afrikaans speakers as well.<sup>1</sup> A handful of elderly persons in Patagonia still speak Afrikaans; they are descendants of some 600 Afrikaans speakers who settled in Patagonia at the beginning of the 20th century (Du Toit 1995, Coetzee et al. 2018).

Of the 6,855,082 Afrikaans speakers in South Africa, 39.78% are White, 50.52% are Coloured and the rest are Black African (8.84%), or Indian Asian (0.86%). Within South African population groups,<sup>2</sup> 75.8% of Coloured South Africans, and 60.8% of White South Africans are first-language Afrikaans speakers. A large number of speakers with first languages other than Afrikaans also have good to reasonable proficiency in Afrikaans. In the post-apartheid era, younger speakers generally lack such skills.

Afrikaans, spoken mainly in South Africa, belongs to the same group of West Germanic languages as Dutch and German. It has its roots in 17th century Dutch, but has been influenced by English, French and German. Traces of other non-European languages are mentioned in the literature, which include, amongst others, Malay and Portuguese (see Conradie & Groenewald 2014, for a general overview and references). The role played by the pidgin talk of the indigenous Cape Khoikhoi (or Khoe) in the development of Afrikaans is dealt with especially by De Ruyter & Kotzé (2002). Kotzé (2014) highlights the role of *Kaapse Moesliemafrikaans* (viz. Cape Muslim Afrikaans) in this regard. The influence of these non-European languages is restricted mainly to aspects other than pronunciation.

<sup>1</sup> No official information as to the precise numbers of such speakers is available.

<sup>2</sup> The 'official' South African population groups, according to the latest available census (StatsSA 2012), are Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites.



**Figure 1** (Colour online) Language map of South Africa. (A) The nine provinces. Light-coloured areas are those where Afrikaans dominates. (B) Areas where Afrikaans is spoken the most, i.e. the Western and Northern Cape. (C) Gauteng and the surrounding areas. (Main map was obtained from Ethnologue: <https://www.ethnologue.com>; inserted map of SA provinces: <https://www.google.co.za/provincesofsouthafrica/map>.)

A number of varieties of Afrikaans are mentioned in the literature. Especially prior to the end of the apartheid era (during the last decades of the previous century), *Standaardafrikaans* (viz. Standard Afrikaans, henceforth SA) was widely regarded as the official variety. De Villiers & Ponelis (1987), specifically referring to 'standard pronunciation', typify SA as developing from the dialect used in the Cape (currently Western Cape) inland, the Eastern Cape, the Free State and Natal (i.e. Kwazulu-Natal), and often used by the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation); one could also add, 'in public life'. Less strictly defined, it may be equated with the koine described by De Villiers & Ponelis (1987: 44) as the 'verbreidste omgangsuitspraakvorm' (the most widely used colloquial language). According to these authors, it can be characterised negatively by the absence, or positively by the presence, of a number of marked pronunciation features (De Villiers & Ponelis 1987: 44). They furthermore indicate the status of SA as that of a formal speech style which, in terms of pronunciation, is free of obvious, particularly regional, dialect

features.<sup>3</sup> Note that at the time of publication of their book, Afrikaans radio commentators of the SABC were exclusively white, educated persons, mainly from the northern parts of South Africa, and centred in Johannesburg (currently in the Gauteng province). Implicitly or explicitly, this formal pronunciation formed, up until then, the basis of virtually all standard phonetic and phonological descriptions of Afrikaans (see Le Roux & Pienaar, 1927, Wissing 1982, Combrink & De Stadler 1987, De Villiers & Ponelis 1987). Le Cordeur (2011) provides the following fairly comprehensive list of Afrikaans varieties other than SA: Cape Afrikaans (including Muslim Afrikaans), Orange River Afrikaans (including Griekwa-Afrikaans, and Namakwalands), Eastern Border Afrikaans (including Karoo-Afrikaans, Tswana-Afrikaans, and Tsotsitaal). However, given his focus on speaker identity, one does not find much detail concerning the pronunciation features of these non-standard varieties.

De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) do include references to and descriptions of facets of the pronunciation of non-standard varieties, notably Cape Afrikaans. Wissing (2017a) devotes some attention to the acoustic features of the vowel system of GA. Links (1989) covers some aspects of the pronunciation of Namakwaland Afrikaans, as spoken in Kharkams, Northern Cape, while Wissing (2011) focuses on acoustic aspects of the phonetics of that variety of Afrikaans.

Currently, a clear drive towards restandardisation can be observed. Odendaal (2014) addresses the question of whether or not restandardisation is desirable from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. This is done by giving an overview of why SA is not seen as being representative of the entire Afrikaans speech community since the 1980s; why it is necessary that the standard be redefined; and lastly, what the restandardisation of Afrikaans would entail in outline.

Hendricks (2016) considers two possible routes in this regard. Firstly, SA could be replaced by one of the historically marginalised regional lects – either south-western Afrikaans (notably, Cape Afrikaans), or Orange River Afrikaans. Hendricks maintains that such a radical undertaking, although perhaps politically correct, could lead to an implosion of the language as a whole, and accelerate *destandardisation* instead (see also Hendricks 2012). He promotes a less drastic reform option, supported by inclusive sociopolitical backing (see also Kotzé 2014 in this regard).

It is against the foregoing background that the current phonetic and phonological description of Afrikaans is to be viewed. The content covered below is largely delimited by the available literature. In this respect, the standard textbooks of Le Roux & Pienaar (1927), Combrink & De Stadler (1987), and De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) form the basic reference works, supplemented by a number of other publications – mainly articles in linguistic journals.

The transcriptions of the narrative of the Afrikaans version of ‘The North Wind and the Sun’ (‘Die Noordewind en die Son’) are based on recordings of a prominent 58-year-old female radio presenter, generally considered to be a speaker of SA.<sup>4</sup> The remaining examples (word lists and those in the main text) are recordings of a second female native speaker (aged 30 years) who speaks what would generally be considered to be SA.

<sup>3</sup> Le Roux & Pienaar (1927: 9) define a standard pronunciation, in general, as the most expedient: ‘die wat die spreker dus die meeste kans gee om deur die groots moontlike aantal mense verstaan te word’ [‘that ensures maximal comprehension by the largest possible number of people’]. Elsewhere (1927: 11), they quote Jespersen (1904) who, concerning Standard German, maintains that a standard pronunciation is dialect free, and that consequently, it could not be possible to tell the origin of speakers on the basis of their accent.

<sup>4</sup> In a nation-wide Internet survey by the author (Wissing 2016), she was nominated from amongst other presenters and speakers of Afrikaans to be the most typical speaker of SA.

## Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d		(c)	k		
Nasal	m		n		(ɲ)	ŋ		
Trill			r				ʀ	
Fricative		f v	s (z)	(ʃ)	(ç) j	x		h
Lateral			l					
Approximant	(v)				(j)			

The consonants that occur in Afrikaans are presented in the above table. The sounds between parentheses have a marginal status, in that they occur in loan words only, or are allophones that result from surface phenomena.

PHONEME PHONEMIC FORM ORTHOGRAPHIC GLOSS

### Basic consonants

p	pas	<i>pas</i>	‘fit’ (V)
b	bas	<i>bas</i>	‘bass’
t	tas	<i>tas</i>	‘suitcase’
d	das	<i>das</i>	‘tie’ (N)
k	kas	<i>kas</i>	‘cupboard’
f	fas	<i>vas</i>	‘fixed’ (ADJ)
v	vas	<i>was</i>	‘wash’
s	sak	<i>sak</i>	‘bag’
m	max	<i>mag</i>	‘power’
n	nax	<i>nag</i>	‘night’
ŋ	baŋ	<i>bang</i>	‘afraid’
x	xas	<i>gas</i>	‘gas’
j	jas	<i>jas</i>	‘jacket’
h	fiŋ	<i>hang</i>	‘hang’

### Loan consonants

g	golf	<i>gholf</i>	‘golf’ (V)
z	zulu	<i>Zoeloe</i>	‘Zulu’
ʃ	ʃeri	<i>sjerrie</i>	‘sherry’
ʒ	ʒã:rə	<i>genre</i>	‘genre’
tʃ	tʃek	<i>tjek</i>	‘check’
ɕ	ɕeli	<i>jellie</i>	‘jelly’
ɲ	urɲjə <sup>5</sup>	<i>oranje</i>	‘orange’

The Afrikaans voiceless plosive consonants /p t k/ lack aspiration, but may show some presence of affrication (Wissing & Coetzee 1996). The voiced plosives /b/ and /d/ are traditionally characterised by the presence of prevoicing, although prevoicing is frequently absent. Coetzee et al. (2018) demonstrate that the voicing contrast is collapsing word-initially, with prevoiced plosives being replaced by voiceless (unaspirated) plosives. They also found that the loss of the voicing contrast does not result in a concomitant loss of lexical contrast.

<sup>5</sup> Opinions concerning the phonetic transcription of *ɲj* differ. Le Roux & Pienaar (1928) use [ɲj] too; so do De Villiers & Pienaar (1987: 63). However, [ɲ] without [j] is also possible.

Lexical contrast, rather, is preserved on the following vowel, with vowels after historically voiced plosives being realised with a low f0, and those after historically voiceless plosives being realised with a high f0 (i.e. the original voicing contrast is being replaced by a tonal contrast).

The alveolar trill [r] varies with the uvular trill [ʀ], the latter found notably in the Boland region of the Western Cape, but also quite frequently in other areas of SA (Pienaar 2017 provides an overview and mentions relevant literature; see also Ribbens-Klein 2016).

Note that /j/ may be either a fricative or an approximant (Le Roux & Pienaar 1927: 82). The first variant is common in onset position, as in [jas] *jas* ‘jacket’; the latter, as an intervocalic glide (e.g. in [fliːə] *vlieë* ‘flies’, the plural form of *vlieg* ‘fly’). [ɦ] has a similar function as a glide intervocalically, as in [traːɦə] *trae* ‘reluctantly’, derived from *traag* ‘reluctant’; so does [v]<sup>6</sup> (in [uːə] *oë* ‘eyes’, the plural form of *oog* ‘eye’). Furthermore, [v] is an allophone of the voiced labiodental fricative /v/, when preceded by voiceless plosives /t k/ (e.g. /tvaːlf/ [tvaːlf] *twaalf* ‘twelve’, or /kvaːd/ [kvaːt] *kwaad* ‘angry’). A small number of (mostly borrowed) words have the post-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ (voiceless), e.g. in [tʃ ek] *tjek* ‘check’, and /dʒ/ (voiced), e.g. in [dʒ eli] *jellie* ‘jelly’. The latter regularly appears in Cape Afrikaans, especially as used by Coloured speakers, e.g. in *ji* ‘you’ (De Villiers & Ponelis 1987: 45). Adam Small, a well-known Capetonian poet, even transcribes this affricate orthographically with ‘dj’ in some of his poems; for example, in *Doemanie*: ‘*djy* moet *djou* palys-hys’ (i.e. *ji met jou paleis-huis* ‘you with your palace house’). Kotzé (1983) mentions similar instances in Malayan Afrikaans.

De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) highlight a type of affrication in Cape Afrikaans that is absent in the standard variety. In the latter, /k/ frequently has [c] as an allophone, via a process of coarticulation, as in /biki/ > [bici] *bietjie* ‘a little bit’, while in Cape Afrikaans, it surfaces as [tʃ], thus [bitʃi].

### Consonant reduction

As is common in other Germanic languages, consonants are reduced in a number of instances, especially at a rapid speech rate. Usage frequency is an important restrictive factor. The most frequently used reductions are the following: /d/-reduction, /r/-reduction, identical consonant cluster simplification, and complex cluster simplification.

Deletion of /d/ is a widely occurring phenomenon in all varieties of Afrikaans, especially, but not restricted to, the phonetic context of sonorant consonants /n m l r ŋ/, followed by unstressed vowels – mostly schwa. Examples include the following: /ʌndər/ > [anər] *ander* ‘other’, /ʰandə/ > [ʰanə] *hande* ‘hands’, /ʌmɔdat/ > [ʌmɔt] *omdat* ‘because’, /keldər/ > [kælər] *kelder* ‘cellar’, and /pərdə/ > [pərə] *perde* ‘horses’. This phenomenon is most commonly found in plural forms similar to *perde*, e.g. in /frində/ > [frinə] *vriende* ‘friends’, and /speldə/ > [spələ] *spelde* ‘pins’. The same happens in attributive adjectives; for example, /vəldə/ > [vələ] *wilde* ‘wild’, and /fɔlxəndə/ > [fɔlxənə] *volgende* ‘next’. Adjectives with -ig (/əx/) also tend to lose /d/, as in /xəvəldəx/ > [xəvələx] *geweldig* ‘mightily’. (For /ɛ/ > [æ] see ‘Vowels’ section.)

In connected speech, the /d/ in function words like *die*, *dat* and *daar* is regularly deleted, as in /ən di/ > [əni] *in die* ‘in the’, /vəl di/ > [vəli] *wil die* ‘will the’, /əm di/ > [əmi] *om die* ‘around the’, and /mar di/ > [maːri] *maar die* ‘but the’. Such deletion extends to cases of consonants other than the sonorants; for example, in /ɔf di/ > [ɔfi] *of die* ‘or the’, /max di/ > [maxi] *mag die* ‘may the’, /ɔp di/ > [ɔpi] *op die* ‘on the’, /ɔk di/ > [ɔki] *ook die* ‘also the’, and /vas di/ > [vasi] *was die* ‘was the’. The loss of /n/ in the function word *nie* ‘not’ is similar to this, as in /ɔf ni/ > [ɔfi] *of nie* ‘or not’, and /max ni/ > [maxi] *mag nie* ‘may not’.

/d/-deletion is not only characteristic of SA. De Villiers & Ponelis (1987: 122) list a number of cases where this commonly happens in Cape Vernacular Afrikaans. They restrict

<sup>6</sup> Also frequently transcribed as [v], e.g. by Booij (1995), in the case of Dutch. Although [v] is classified as labio-dental in the Consonant table, it has a distinct bilabial character in the pronunciation of SA.

this to the loss of /d/ in the position after the homorganic sonorants /n l/. Examples from their list include the following: /xɾɔnd/ > [xɾɔ:n] *grond* ‘ground’, /mɔnd/ > [mɔn] *mond* ‘mouth’, and /xɛld/ > [çɛl] *geld* ‘money’. See also Kotzé (1983), who provides similar examples for Malayan Afrikaans.

In colloquial speech, the voiced alveolar trill /r/ tends to be omitted in syllable-final position. This happens mostly in unstressed syllables, and regularly in the prefix *ver-*, as in /fər'kɛ:rd/ > [fəkiərt] *verkeerd* ‘wrong’. In word-final position, as in /ləkər/ > [ləkə] *lekker* ‘nice’, /r/-deletion is quite common across the board, especially in function words like *daar*, *maar*, *hier*, *vir*: /da:r/ > [da:] *daar* ‘there’, /ma:r/ > [ma:]<sup>7</sup> *maar* ‘but’, /fo:r/ > [fuə] *voor* ‘in front of’, and /fər/ > [fə] *vir*<sup>8</sup> ‘for’. This phenomena is widely present in Malayan Afrikaans. Kotzé (1983) mentions similar examples, but adds to these the loss of /r/, even in complex codas, e.g. [fəkət] *verkeerd* ‘wrong’, [bɔ:s] *bors* ‘breast’, and [kənəs] *kinders* ‘children’ – transcriptions are Kotzé’s.

### Identical consonant simplification

In rapid speech, identical consonants that occur adjacently tend to be pronounced as a single sound, especially in compounds, such as in /jassak/ > [jasak] *jassak* ‘coat pocket’. In the narrow transcription of the *Noordewind* passage provided later, the same is to be observed across word boundaries, as in /net tu/ > [netu] *net toe* ‘just then’, and /varm mantəl/ > [vərəmantəl]<sup>9</sup> *warm mantel* ‘warm cloak’.

### Simplification of complex consonant clusters

Some Afrikaans words have multiple intervocalic consonant clusters, which tend to be simplified in normal speech, e.g. /amptəna:r/ > [amtəna:r] *amptenaar* ‘official’, /səmptə:m/ > [səmtuəm] *simptoom* ‘symptom’, or /ɔntstɑ:n / > [ɔnstɑ:n] *ontstaan* ‘originate’, and /pɑntsər/ > [pɑnsər] *panser* ‘armor’, whereby the obstruent consonants /p/ and /t/ are deleted, when preceded by a homorganic nasal consonant and followed by another obstruent.

### Some phonological processes affecting consonants

Word- and syllable-final plosives devoice in the coda (by ‘Auslautsverhärtung’); for example, /fiud/ > [fiut] *hoed* ‘hat’, and also in /vənd/ > [vənt] *wind* ‘wind’. On the other hand, when followed by voiced consonants, voiceless plosives and voiceless fricatives become voiced allophones through a process of regressive voicing assimilation; for example, /sɛsdə/ > [sɛzdə] *sesde* ‘sixth’. This also happens across word boundaries, as follows: /dəs varm/ > [dɛz vərəm] *dis warm* ‘it’s hot’ – i.e. all types of obstruents, plosives as well as fricatives, can trigger regressive voicing assimilation. Progressive assimilation of voicing is also present in Afrikaans, resulting in the devoicing of voiced obstruents. A widely observed case is that of the onset consonant of the suffix *-de*, as in /sɛsdə/ > [sɛstə] *sesde* ‘sixth’. Note that both types of voicing assimilation are possible in the same word (i.e. *sesde*). It seems that progressive voicing assimilation is more likely to occur in the speech of females, while male speakers more commonly present regressive voicing assimilation.

In Afrikaans, like in many other languages, nasal consonants are often homorganic, with a following obstruent – i.e. there is nasal assimilation. As a process, this is mainly relevant in the case of the alveolar nasal /n/ that takes on the same place of articulation of the following consonant (usually obstruent). Nasal assimilation occurs freely within derivations and compound words. Nasal-final prefixes like *in-* and *on-*, underlyingly ending in the alveolar consonant /n/, thus assimilate according to the place of articulation of the following

<sup>7</sup> The vowel here also frequently reduces to short [a].

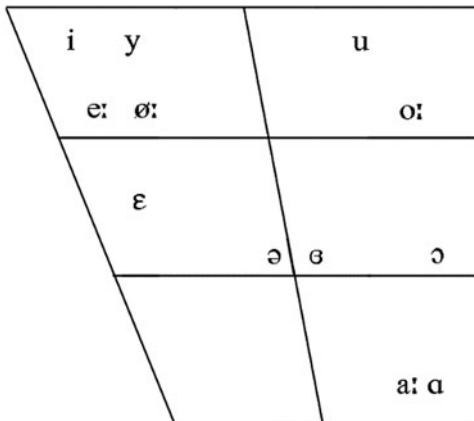
<sup>8</sup> The poet Adam Small uses ‘vi’ for *vir*, in the poem *Doemanie*.

<sup>9</sup> Note the schwa-insertion between two sonorant consonants /rm/ > rəm in syllable-final position: a regular phenomenon in Afrikaans. During resyllabification, this does not happen; for example, /var.mə/ [vərə.mə] *warme* ‘warmish’.

obstruent. Examples of nasal assimilation within derivations include the following: /ənɾas/ > [ənɾas/ *inpas* ‘fit in’ (following bilabial obstruent), and /ənɾəm/ > [ənɾəm] *inkom* ‘come in’ (following velar obstruent). Similar examples are found in compounds, as follows: /ste:nbək/ > [stiənbək] *steenbok* ‘ibex’ (bilabial obstruent), and /ste:nkø:l/ > [stiəŋkuəl] *steenkool* ‘coal’ (velar obstruent). As is the case with similar assimilatory processes, factors like speech rate and usage frequency play a role in the occurrence of this type of consonant assimilation. Wissing (2017b: 138) provides a complete set of examples.

The palatalisation of the allophonic voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ to a voiceless post-alveolar fricative [ʃ] is evident in the pronunciation of especially young speakers (< 40 years), and especially in the coda cluster *-rs*, as in /bars/ > [barʃ] *bars* ‘burst’ (Wissing, Pienaar & Van Niekerk 2015). At the same time, evidence has been found for /s/-fronting in the speech of, in particular, palatalisers, in contexts other than post-/r/, e.g. in /ses/ *ses* ‘six’ – similar to the fronted /s/ of General White South African English, as reported by Bekker (2007). Furthermore, in connected speech, /s/ is realised as palatal [ʃ] when it occurs word-finally, and when followed across a word boundary by the homorganic fricative /j/ – a case of regressive coarticulation (e.g. in /as jəi/ > [aʃəi] *as jy* ‘if you’). Palatal consonants elsewhere are also the allophonic products of regressive coarticulation, whereby the voiceless velar plosive /k/ is realised as a voiceless palatal plosive [ç], when followed by especially the front, high vowel /i/; for example, /kis/ > [çis] *kies* ‘choose’, or /e:/, as in /ke:l/ > [çiəl] *keel* ‘throat’. The same applies in the voiceless velar fricative /x/, realised as a voiceless palatal fricative [ç], as in /xit/ > [çit] *giet* ‘pour’, and /xe:l/ > [çiəl] *geel* ‘yellow’. More examples of this kind are frequently found in standard textbooks, such as Le Roux & Pienaar (1928), Combrink & De Stadler (1987), De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) and Wissing (2017b).

## Vowels



Afrikaans has twelve vowels; a set of eight short (lax, monophthongal) vowels (/i y ɛ ə ə ɔ u/), and a set of four long (tense) vowels (/e: o: ø: a:/), as well as three diphthongs. The long mid-high vowels are usually transcribed by the phonemes /e: ø: o:/, though phonetically they are diphthongal in nature (respectively [iə yə uə]).<sup>10</sup> Note (in the vowel diagram above) the use of the phonetic symbol [ə] instead of the IPA symbol [ɐ] for a rounded schwa, as is

<sup>10</sup>/e: o: ø:/ are commonly accepted as the underlying representation of the diphthongal segments [iə uə yə] (e.g. by Combrink & De Stadler 1987, De Villiers & Ponelis 1987 and Wissing 2017b). A similar conversion is followed in the Dutch tradition. Klopper (1987), on the other hand, recognises these

traditionally being done in all Afrikaans phonetic and phonological work, for example by Le Roux & Pienaar (1928), Combrink & De Stadler (1987), De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) and Wissing (2017b), as well as in the case of Dutch for example by Booij (1995). Allophonic vowels are introduced in the text.

Although the traditional phoneme symbol /a:/<sup>11</sup> for this vowel in Afrikaans seems indicative of a somewhat front vowel, the phonetic value is a relatively retracted one; in modern versions of Afrikaans even somewhat rounded and heightened, in the direction of the low-mid back vowel /ɔ/, rendering a phonetic character resembling [ɐ̞].

### The long vowels

PHONEME	PHONEMIC FORM	ORTHOGRAPHIC FORM	GLOSS
e:	mɛ:s	<i>mees</i>	‘most’
ø:	nø:s	<i>neus</i>	‘nose’
o:	bo:s	<i>boos</i>	‘angry’
a:	na:s	<i>naas</i>	‘next to’

Standard Afrikaans long /a:/, especially when stressed or in an accented sentence position, tends to be pronounced as a fully-back vowel; in some cases, even with a clear rounded character. In extreme cases, it is misheard as /ɔ:/ (Wissing 2006). This near-homophony with /ɔ:/ is a relatively modern sound change, noticed in many younger speakers, especially white female speakers from the northern parts of South Africa. In most non-standard varieties, the long /a:/ has a very similar quality to that of the short vowel /a/.

### The short vowels

PHONEME	PHONEMIC FORM	ORTHOGRAPHIC FORM	GLOSS
i	nɪs	<i>nies</i>	‘sneeze’ (v)
y	nɪs	<i>nuus</i>	‘news’
ɛ	mɛs	<i>mes</i>	‘knife’
ɑ	mɑs	<i>mas</i>	‘mast’
ə	məs	<i>mis</i>	‘mist’
œ	mœs	<i>mus</i>	‘sparrow’
ɔ	mɔs	<i>mos</i>	‘moss’
u	mʊs	<i>moes</i>	‘pulp’

segments as phonemic – thus /iə œu yœ/. Depending on the level of abstractness of the description of the vowels of Afrikaans, this might be a feasible proposal.

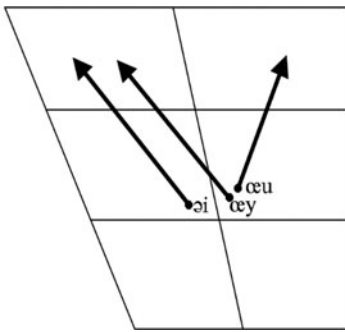
<sup>11</sup>The use of the Unicode name: Modifier Letter Triangular Colon ‘:’ is all but consistent in both the Afrikaans and the Dutch phonetic/phonological literature. While Booij (1995: 27) makes use of this character in the body of his book, e.g. *kaars* /kars/ ‘candle’ and others, in his version of the IPA Dutch vowel space (Figure 2.2 on page 5) this symbol is absent in the case of all long vowels: half-close (/e ø o/). Van Oostendorp (2018), like Booij (1995), does the same in the case of the long vowels, and uses /a/ for the short low back vowel (as in e.g. *pan* /pan/ ‘pan’). Wissing (2018) also follows this system for Afrikaans. Verhoeven (2005: 245), on the other hand, does utilise colon for indication of length in the case of the same three long vowels of Standard Belgian Dutch. All the Dutch linguists mentioned here deploy /a/ for the short back vowel. In the Afrikaans instance, a similar situation is found. De Villiers & Ponelis (1987: 1), for example, use /a:/ for the long vowel, and /a/ for the short one, while Coetzee (1981) prefers this symbol, /a/, for the short vowel, and transcribes the vowel of *aan* ‘on’ with /a:/. Combrink & De Stadler (1987: 26) utilise yet another system: /A/ and /a/ for the long and the short vowel, respectively. In the present article I abide by the IPA system, viz. /a/ for the short, and /a:/ for the long vowel; similarly /e: ø: o:/ in the case of the mid-high vowels.



Afrikaans short vowels exhibit a number of special features. Firstly, the front /ɛ/ is high-mid in nature – strikingly higher than that of Standard Dutch. This vowel (as in /ses/ [ses] *ses* ‘six’) typically lowers to [æ] in especially the northern variety of SA, with the consonants /k x r l/ as coda of a syllable. Examples include the following: /ɛk/ > [æk] *ek* ‘I’, /slɛx/ > [slæx] *sleg* ‘bad’, /fɛr/ > [fær] *ver* ‘far’, and /sɛl/ > [sæl] *sel* ‘cell’. Due to its palatalised character, a narrower phonetic transcription [jæ] is feasible. De Villiers & Pienaar (1987: 108) transcribe this variant as [iæ]. This specific allophone of /ɛ/, when followed by [l], is widely heard in various Afrikaans variants, especially in the southern parts of South Africa, and is not restricted to the speech of Coloured speakers.

Secondly, the high /u/, again, notably in modern Afrikaans, is clearly a centralised vowel (Wissing 2010). This is in line with the characteristically laxer articulation of SA (Le Roux & Pienaar 1927).

### The diphthongs



PHONEME	PHONEMIC FORM	ORTHOGRAPHIC FORM	GLOSS
əi	bəit	<i>byt</i>	‘bite’
œy	bœyt	<i>buit</i>	‘loot’
œu	bœut	<i>bout</i>	‘bolt’

There are three (rising) diphthongs: /əi œy œu/. /əi/ is spelled as either *y* or *ei*, /œy/ as *ui*, and /œu/ as *ou*.

A small number of words exist with *eeu*, *ooi*, *aai*, mostly in word-final open syllables (e.g. [le:u]<sup>12</sup> *leu* ‘lion’, [mo:i]<sup>13</sup> *mooi* ‘pretty’, and [kra:i]<sup>14</sup> *kraai* ‘crow’. In these cases, it is feasible to view the last segment not as [u] and [i], but as the approximants [ʊ] or [j]. See Booij (1995), for a similar proposal in the case of Dutch.

Except for these three diphthongs, a number of allophonic diphthongs also exist. They are derived from vowels plus [j] in the diminutive forms of nouns that have word-final [t] or [nt] in the singular form. As an example, consider *kat+jie* ‘kitten’: /kat+/+ji/ > [kaiki].<sup>15</sup> Apart from [ai], [ui yɪ ɛi əi œi əi] are frequently formed in a similar manner – i.e. all with a short vowel as kernel. The long vowels /e: o: ø:/ also occur in secondary diphthongs, which are formed in a similar way, rendering respectively [iəi], or perhaps rather [iəj].

<sup>12</sup>There is a modern tendency to raise the first vowel [e:] to [i:]; here, too, the final segment might be the approximant [ʊ], instead of [u].

<sup>13</sup>Here, a lowered [ɔ] is often heard, followed by the approximant [j], rendering [mɔj].

<sup>14</sup>Or [kra:j].

<sup>15</sup>[k] in [ki] is sometimes deemed as allophonic [c], i.e. as a palatalised product under the influence of the following high [i]. Le Roux & Pienaar (1927), Wissing (1971) and Donaldson (1993) prefer [c], while De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) use [k].

### Vowel variation

As is the case in other Germanic languages, Afrikaans is characterised by a number of vowel changes, of which reduction is the most salient. Full vowels in unstressed position may reduce, with respect to duration and quality. Reduction manifests itself especially in words with a high frequency of usage, and in informal speech. SA is covered by most textbooks (e.g. those of Le Roux & Pienaar 1927, Combrink & De Stadler 1987, and De Villiers & Ponelis 1987). The pronunciation of Coloured speakers is covered less fully. De Villiers & Ponelis (1987) refer to aspects of Cape Afrikaans; Links (1989) deals with some aspects, notably that of unrounding; and Kotzé (1983), in the case of Malayan Afrikaans, provides examples of aspects such as unrounding and vowel raising. Here, we mainly focus on SA.

### Vowel reduction

Vowels are frequently reduced to schwa in unstressed positions, as in /xər'dəin/ > [xər'dəin] *gordyn* 'curtain', and /kɑ'nɔn/ > [kə'nɔn] *kanon* 'canon'. When stressed vowels get unstressed, reduction to schwa is evident; for example, stressed /e:/ becomes [ə] in [mɑxnə'təsmə] *magnetisme* 'magnetism', derived from /max'net/ *magneet*, and stressed /ɛ/ becomes [ə] in [prɔtəs'tiər] *protesteer* 'protest', derived from /pru'tes/ *protes* 'protest (N)'. These kinds of reduction frequently go together with vowel shortening, whereby long /a:/ in /bɑ'na:l/ *banaal* 'banal' reduces to [banali'təit]<sup>16</sup> *banaliteit* 'banality'.

### Unrounding

A distinctive feature of Afrikaans pronunciation, when compared to Dutch pronunciation, is the unrounding of marked rounded vowels, and also partly of diphthongs. Examples include the following: /nys/ > [nis] *nuus* 'news', /nøs/ > [niəs] *neus* 'nose', and /ræs/ > [rəs] *rus* 'rest' (vowels); and even in diphthongs, as follows: /mœys/ > [məis] *muis* 'mouse', and /sœus/ > [səus] *sous* 'sauce'.

Lack of stress, as well as unaccentness<sup>17</sup> in connected speech, is conducive to, but not limited to this phenomenon. Though high-frequency usage, informal style, and fast speech rate are amplifying factors, it is not unusual to notice unrounding in the case of factors other than these too.

An interesting observation in the written Afrikaans (or in the text messages) of especially learners, is that of hypercorrection; for example, [e:] > [ø:] in [va:rdiər] *waardeer* 'appreciate' > [va:rdyər], and [ə] > [œ] in [ən məi skək] *in my skik* 'satisfied' > [ən məi skœk].

### Nasalisation

Although nasalisation of the vowels of Afrikaans (Coetzee 1977) has been a distinct characteristic of the vowel system since, at least, the first part of the 20th century (Le Roux & Pienaar 1927), it seems to be much less the case in recent years. Heavy nasalisation is not observed in especially the speech of younger persons, as well as Coloured speakers of Afrikaans. Nasalisation occurs especially when a vowel is followed by one of the fricative consonants /f v s/; sonorant segments (the consonants /l r/, even in some instances a vowel) may also trigger nasalisation. In the instance of heavy nasalisation, /n/ is deleted, causing compensatory lengthening of preceding short vowels. A typical example is found in the otherwise identical pair, /ɔns/ [ɔ̃:s] *ons* 'we', compared to /ɔns/ [ɔns] *ons* 'ounce'. Nasalisation of diphthongs does occur, though less commonly.

<sup>16</sup>Even complete reduction to [banali'təit].

<sup>17</sup>Here, the term ACCENT is treated differently to STRESS: while stress implies at least two syllables within the same word – one of which has linguistic stress – one-syllable words may be accented, e.g. for emphatic purposes.

## Stress

Primary stress lies predominantly on the final syllable of monomorphemic words, unless such a syllable is unstressable (usually with schwa as nucleus) when penultimate or antepenultimate stress is required. In quite a number of words only containing schwa, one of these vowels do carry stress; for example, in simplexes such as [ˈbətər] *bitter* ‘bitter’, [ˈvəntər] *winter* ‘winter’, and [ˈsəndələk] *sindelik* ‘tidy’. Words ending on /a/, illustrate a strong tendency towards penultimate stress, irrespective of the word length. In the following simplexes, stress invariably lies on the penultimate syllable: [paˈtata] *patatta* ‘sweet potato’, [ˈjakaˈranda] *jakaranda* ‘jacaranda’, and [kukəməˈkranka] *koekemakranka* ‘indigenous plant’. The same rule applies in South African Bantu proper names when pronounced in Afrikaans, e.g. [mənˈdela] *Mandela*, [raməˈpɔːza] *Ramaphosa*, and [ɛkuruˈlɛːni] *Ekurhuleni*. Final syllables in words of Classic origin generally carry primary stress. Some representative examples include the following: [ambasəˈdɔːr] *ambassadeur* ‘ambassador’, /bəkəˈtɛl/ [bəkəˈtɛl] *bakatel* ‘trifle’, [əntrəˈsant] *interessant* ‘interesting’, [dɛpərtəˈmɛnt] *department* ‘department’, [ɛtiˈkɛt] *etiket* ‘label’, [ˈjurnələs] *joernalis* ‘journalist’, [kɔsˈtym] *kostuum* ‘costume’, [pələˈtɔn] *peloton* ‘platoon’, [kwərəntəɪn] *kwaranˈtyn* ‘quarantine’, [suwəˈniːr] *soewenier* ‘souvenir’, and [trubəˈdʊr] *troebadoer* ‘troubadour’. A complete list of such cases is provided, together with bibliographical references, in Wissing (2017b).

In compounds, it is normally the first constituent that receives primary stress, whereas secondary stress will be on the second constituent; for example, in [ˈplətdak,hœys] [[plət][dak]][huis] ‘flat roof house’, or [ˈərbəitsbə,ləit] [[arbeids][beleid]] ‘labour policy’.

Prefixes and suffixes in words of Germanic origin are normally not stressed. Many of these affixes have schwa as nucleus. Words with unstressed (pseudo-)prefixes include the following: [bəˈxən] *begin* ‘begin’, [xəˈnəːdə] *genade* ‘mercy’, and [fərˈbɑːs] *verbaas* ‘astonished’; and words with unstressed suffixes include the following: [ˈmuədə] *mode* ‘vogue’, [ˈliəpəl] *lepel* ‘spoon’, [ˈtiəkən] *teken* ‘sign’, [ˈɛmər] *emmer* ‘bucket’, [ˈvɔɹt] *wingerd* ‘vineyard’, [ˈniədərəx] *nederig* ‘humble’, [ˈsɑːləx] *salig* ‘glorious’, and [ˈpiːrɪŋ] *piëring* ‘saucer’, etc.<sup>18</sup> Non-native suffixes (or pseudo-suffixes) normally do carry primary stress; consider the following: [huəriˈsɔnˈtaːl] *horisontaal* ‘horizontal’, [priˈdɔːkənt] *predikant* ‘reverend’, [xəmˈnɑs] *gimnas* ‘gymnast’, [pɛrsuˈniəl] *personeel* ‘staff’, [rɛxəˈstriər] *registreer* ‘register’, [jɑpəˈniəs] *Japannees* ‘Japanese’, [rɛpəbliˈkain] *republikein* ‘republican’, [rələxiˈjyəs] *religieus* ‘religious’, [jʊvəlˈiːr] *juwelier* ‘jeweller’, [idiˈjɑːləs] *idealis* ‘idealist’, [sɛrtifiˈsiər] *sertifiseer* ‘certify’, and [hiˈstʊəriˈkɔs] *historikus* ‘historian’, etc.

## Transcriptions of the recorded passage ‘Die Noordewind en die Son’

In this narrative, all twelve Afrikaans vowels and each of the three pure diphthongs are present. The most frequently occurring vowel is schwa /ə/ (N = 54). Every Afrikaans consonant is present as well, bar /j/. Here, /t r s n l n/, in this order, are the most frequently used consonants (N > 29).

### Phonemic transcription

/ʔəp ə kɛr fiet ˈnɔːrdəvənt en sɔn strəi xəˈkrəi ʔoːr vi fan ˈfiələ nəu ˈʔəintlək di ˈstɛrkstə vas || nɛt tu kɔm dar ə ˈrɛisəxər fərˈbɛi | xəˈfiələ ən ə ˈlɛkər ˈvɑrəm ˈmɑntəl || ˈfiələ bəˈslœyt tu dat di ʔeːn vat dət kan ˈrɛxkrəi | ʔəm di ˈrɛisəxər tɔ dvəŋ ʔəm sɛi ˈmɑntəl ʔaf tɔ ˈfiːl | di ˈstɛrkstə əs || tu blɑːs di vɔnt ˈyːrə ləŋk fər ˈʔal vat ˈfiəi vɛrt əs || mɑːr ˈfiu ˈɦɑrdər ˈfiəi blɑːs | ˈfiu ˈdɛxtər ˈfiələ di ˈrɛisəxər di ˈmɑntəl ʔəm ɦɔm || ʔen tɛn ˈlɑːstə lɑːt ˈnɔːrdəvənt ʔal sɛi ˈrɔːsə ˈpɔːxəŋs fɑːr || tu skɛin sɔn ˈlɛkər ˈvɑrəm || ʔen ˈdɑːdələk trɛk di ˈrɛisəxər sɛi ˈmɑntəl ʔœyːt || ʔen sɔː mus ˈnɔːrdəvənt ʔerˈkɛn dat | sɔn di ˈstɛrkstə fan ˈfiələ tveː vas/

<sup>18</sup>Exceptions are -y, -ery, -es, -in – stress-bearing Germanic suffixes.

### Narrow transcription

The transcription is based on the fast reading of a 58-year-old reader.

[ʔə pə ki:rət 'nuərəvənt ən sən strəi xə'krəi 'ʔuər vi fə 'nələ nəu 'əintlək di 'stærkstə vas || 'netu kəm na: rə 'rəisəxər fər 'bɑi | xə'fiəl ən ə 'lækə 'varə'mantəl || 'fiələ bə'slɔitu də di 'ʔiən vɑ rət kən 'ræxkrəi | ʔə mi 'rəisəxər tə duən ʔəm səi 'mantəl ʔaf tə fi:l | di 'stærkstə ʔəs || tu 'blɑ:si vənt 'ʔy:rə ləŋk fə ʔal vɑ tɔi vər təs || mɑr fiu 'fiardər fiəi blɑ:s | fiu 'dɛxtər fiəl di 'rəisəxər di 'mantəl ʔəm hɔm || ʔen | ten 'lɑ:stə lat 'nuərdəvənt ʔal səi 'rɔ:sə 'pɔ:xəŋs fɑr || tu skəin sən 'lækə 'varəm || ʔen 'dɑ:rlək trə ki 'rəisəxər sɛ: 'mantəl ʔait || ʔen suə mus 'nuərdəvənt ʔær'kən | dat sən di stærkstə fɑ 'nə lə tʊe: vas]

### Orthographic transcription

Op 'n keer het Noordewind en Son stry gekry oor wie van hulle nou eintlik die sterkste was. Net toe kom daar 'n reisiger verby, gehul in 'n lekker warm mantel. Hulle besluit toe dat dié een wat dit kan regkry om die reisiger te dwing om sy mantel af te haal, die sterkste is. Toe blaas die wind ure lank vir al wat hy werd is. Maar hoe harder hy blaas, hoe digter hul die reisiger die mantel om hom. En ten laaste laat Noordewind al sy reuse pogings vaar. Toe skyn Son lekker warm, en dadelik trek die reisiger sy mantel uit. En so moes Noordewind erken dat Son die sterkste van hulle twee was.

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### Supplementary material

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