RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program
Language Group Specific Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: Afrikaans
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Afrikaans

Language Group Specific Informational Report

By: Sarah Petronio
TESL 539

Where is it spoken?

• Afrikaans is one of eleven official languages spoken in South Africa.

• It is spoken to a lesser extent in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

• Afrikaans is spoken by nearly 13.35% (5,983,420) of the South African population.

• Key Dialects: Cape Afrikaans (considered the standard, Orange River Afrikaans (or Northwestern Afrikaans), East Cape Afrikaans (or Southwestern Afrikaans)

• Although the language is mostly derived from Holland variety Dutch, there is linguistic borrowing from Malay, Bantu languages, Khoisan languages, Portuguese, and other European languages.

(http://www.theodora.com/wfb/south_africa/south_africa_maps.html)

(UCLA Language Materials Project, n.d)
(Central Intelligence Agency, 2012)
(www.ethnologue.com)

Linguistic lineage: Indo-European > Germanic > West Germanic > Low Franconian > Afrikaans

History of Afrikaans

• Dutch traders settled Cape Town in 1652, establishing it as a spice route. The Afrikaans spoken today originates from 17th century Dutch.

• Scholars continue to argue as to the origins of the language and whether it is considered a Creole although it retains the basic Dutch syntax.
(Mesthrie, 2002)

• It was originally referred to as 'Cape Dutch' and was primarily an oral language with proper Dutch being the formal, written language.

(http://www.aslintl.com)

[Click here to read a New York Times article titled
"Blacks Shaped Language Of Apartheid, Linguists, Say"](#)

FOR USE BY WHITE PERSONS

THESE PUBLIC PREMISES AND THE AMENITIES THEREOF HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF WHITE PERSONS.

By Order Provincial Secretary

VIR GEBRUIK DEUR BLANKES

HIERDIE OPENBARE PERSEEL EN DIE GERIEWE DAARVAN IS VIR DIE UITSLUITLIKE GEBRUIK VAN BLANKES AANGEWYS.

Op Las Provinsiale Sekretaris

The majority of Afrikaners are bilingual in both Afrikaans and English with the younger generation showing a dominance in English due to a focus in English education after 1994 (end of the Apartheid).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ApartheidSignEnglishAfrikaans.jpg)

Specific Language Characteristics

•Afrikaans is a predominantly analytic language.

•Uses a subject-predicate system like English.

•Partly a guttural language.

•Uses a double negative structure through use of negative participle i.e. *nie* before and after the verb.

Ex. hy het **nie** gekom **nie**
'he didn't come'
hy het **niks** gedoen **nie**
'he didn't do anything'

•'n is used as the only indefinite article

(http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=6&menu=004)

•Uses a process of reduplication as a means of word formation. *(Botha,1988)*

Ex. Die leeu brul-brul weg.
The lion walk roar roar away.
"Roaring repeatedly, the lion walks away."

•There are no grammatical genders.

•Adjectives come before nouns and *e* is added to the adjective to denote its significance. *(Donaldson, 1993)*

Ex. die Nederlands**e** taal
    'the Dutch language'.

Writing System

Vowels and diphthongs

a	aa	aai	au	e	ê	ee	eeu	ei/ey	eu	i	ie	ieu	o
[ʌ/a]	[ɑː]	[aə]	[ou]	[ɛ/eː/ə/æ]	[ɛː]	[eː]	[iːu]	[əi]	[øː]	[ə/i]	[i]	[iu]	[ɒ/oː]

oe	oei	oi/oy	oo	ooi	ou	ow	u	û	ui	uu	uy	y
[u]	[uiː]	[oj]	[oː]	[ɔiː]	[əu]	[ou]	[θ/y]	[œː]	[œy]	[y]	[œy]	[əi]

Consonants

b	c	ch	d	dj	f	g	gh	h	j	k	l	m
[b/p]	[s/k]	[x]	[d/t]	[c]	[f]	[x/g/ç]	[g/k]	[ɦ]	[j]	[k]	[l]	[m]

n	ng	p	q	r	s	sj	t	tj	v	w	x	z
[ŋ/n]	[ŋ]	[p]	[kw]	[ɾ]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t/d]	[tʃ, kj]	[f]	[w/v]	[ks]	[z]

Notes

- b = [p] at the end of a word, [b] elsewhere
- c = [s] before e, i or y, [k] elsewhere
- d = [t] at the end of a word, [d] elsewhere
- e = [æ] in some words, e.g. ek (I), berg (mountain), skêr (scissors), though in the dialect of Cape Town, *Kaaps*, the e in these words = [ɛ]
- g = [g] between l/r and e, [x] elsewhere
- gh = [k] at the end of a word, [g] elsewhere
- n = [ŋ] before c, k, q or x, [n] elsewhere
- -ns nasalizes the previous vowel and a mutes the n, eg: *Afrikaans* [afrɪˈkãːs] and *ons* [ɔ̃ːs]).
- tj = [tʃ] at the beginning of a word, [kj] in -tjie
- w = [w] after a consonant, [v] elsewhere

(http://www.omniglot.com/writing/afrikaans.htm)

- •Afrikaans has 22 consonants, 20 vowels, and 9 diphthongs.

- •Q, X, and Z are rarely used.

- •The alphabet includes diacritics such as ê

- •Most vowels have long and short varieties.

Click here to hear an audio clip of two women speaking Afrikaans
*Note how guttural the sounds are. Click WordPad icon to read a short synopsis of the conversation.

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uH3ail6kkEQ&feature=youtu.be)

(C. Kolbe, personal communication, February 22, 2012)

Common Errors in Phonology

- The /th/ sound as in 'this' is hard to pronounce and many times is substituted with /dis/ or /f/. ex. 'with'-wiff & 'thought'- fought.

- Consonant diagraphs like /ch/ are difficult to pronounce. ex. **ch**icken.

- /v, d, w/ may sound like /f, t, v/ ex. (paid-pait)

- Over emphasis of /r/ occurs due to rolling of the letter in L1.

(Sajavaara, 1983)
(Donaldson, 1993)

More Common Errors in Phonology

- English words that represent one concept may be condensed to one word as the Afrikaans orthography rule states.
  Ex. "Traffic light" which is one concept is "Verkeerslig"
       Verkeer(s) = Traffic   Lig = Light.
       (C. Kolbe, personal communication, February 22, 2012).

- Excess letters are used in spelling English words. Ex. br**ie**k (brick)
  - The 'ie' in Afrikaans is used as a short i in English.

- The /c/ sound in English is always spelled with a 'k' in Afrikaans and so this can lead to misspellings: Ex. kat (cat), brik (brick)
  - 'c' is rarely used in L1.

(Sajavarra, 1983)
(Donaldson, 1993)

Common Errors in Semantics

- Differences in spatial perception exists between Afrikaans and English. (Sajavaara,1983)
  - Different prepositional phrases are used.
  - Ex. No smoking beyond this point.
  - Rook verbode binne ('within') hierdie gebide. (No smoking within this point)

  *The Afrikaans speaker focuses on the prohibited area without a perception of movement from one area to another.

- Nouns in Afrikaans tend to reference 'unbounded' concepts whereas in English most nouns refer to 'enclosed' concepts. (Sajavaara,1983)
  - Ex. The children are standing in a **row.**
  - Die kinders stan op 'n ry.

  *A row is referred to as an enclosed space in English whereas in Afrikaans it is considered a line that is unbounded such as a 'path' in English.

(http://www.managementblog.com.au/management _blog/2007/03/index.html)

Common Errors in Grammar

- Afrikaans tense is not necessarily expressed. *(Kolbe,2012)*
  - Only three tenses exist in Afrikaans: present, past, and future. Conditional, perfect, and pluperfect tenses are difficult to contextualize and utilize correctly.

  Ex. He **would have been** going **had it not been** raining.
  These use of tenses would be hard for a L2 to use correctly.

- There is no verb conjugation depending on the tense.
  - As a basic rule the auxiliary verb 'het' and 'ge' are used before the verb to denote past tense. *(Donaldson, 1993)*
  - 'sal' is added before the verb to denote future tense.

  Ex. Ek loop. - I am walking.
     Ek **het** geloop. - I have walked.
     Ek **sal** loop. - I will walk.

More Common Errors in Grammar

- There is more emphasis on the action in a sentence. Duplication of the verb to show emphasis or continuity instead of using a specific adverb. *(Botha, 1998)*
  - This can leads to unnecessary duplication in English.
    Ex. krap- means 'scratch oneself' krap krap krap means 'scratch oneself vigorously'

- Tendency to use double negatives in L2 if directly translating from L1. *(Markey,1982)*
    Ex. "You must <u>not</u> do that" Jy moet dit <u>nie</u> doen <u>nie</u>.
     A L2 speaker might first say: "You must not not do that."
        (C. Kolbe, personal communication, February 22, 2012).

Cultural Etiquette

South Africa has a mixture of many different ethnic groups, therefore no truly generalized rules can be made.

- Urban dwellers tend to be more direct than those living in rural areas.
- Handshakes are considered an appropriate greeting between members of the same sex.
- Men and women also greet each other with a handshake.
  - Women usually initiate the handshake first.

(www.culturecrossing.com)

(http://www.as-found.net/exhibitions/handshake-party/)

Cultural Etiquette Continued

•Instead of arguing with strangers, Afrikaners either ignore the situation or give ambiguous answers/replies.

•People usually stand close to one another during a conversation.

•People tend to touch arms, shoulders, and hands to emphasize verbal language.

•Direct eye contact is normal although is refrained from when talking to elders as it is seen as disrespectful.

(www.cultural crossing.com)

http://eyedoctor.homestead.com/BodyLanguage.html

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