

# 15 *Afrikaans*

*Bruce Donaldson*

## 15.1 Introduction

Although the concept of a new language policy for a post-apartheid South Africa is currently being debated, only Afrikaans and English are at present regarded as official languages in the Republic of South Africa. Government is thus officially bilingual, but due to the vast majority of bureaucrats (including the police, armed forces, railways, etc.) being Afrikaners and the fact that the traditional power base of the ruling party (in power since 1948) has been Afrikaans, Afrikaans dominates in that sphere, whereas in the sphere of commerce English dominates. In rural areas, with the exception of most of Natal, Afrikaans is more commonly spoken, whereas in the cities one hears more English.

It is not traditional to talk of the existence of dialects of Afrikaans, and yet certain regional variants do exist, as is to be expected over such distances in a language that has been evolving since the middle of the seventeenth century. Generally speaking three broad regional varieties are recognized (Figure 15.1): (a) the Western Cape, represented in its most extreme form by the highly distinctive speech of many so-called Cape coloureds (i.e. people of mixed race in the South African context) in that region; (b) the Eastern Cape together with the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, settlement of the latter two regions having taken place from the Eastern Cape Province; (c) Orange River Afrikaans, a term applied to a highly distinctive variant of the language that developed among the Griqua population (a subdivision of the coloureds whose ancestors were local Khoi (i.e. Hottentots) and white precursors of the later voortrekkers). The Grikwas live(d) along the Orange River in the northern Cape and southern Free State. A group of these people trekked into South West Africa (now Namibia) in the 1860s and established Afrikaans there as an indigenous non-white language. Their present descendents in Namibia are the Rehoboth Basters. As far as the standard language is concerned, the variant of the former Boer Republics rules supreme, without any negative connotations being applied to other variants, except where those variants, as is commonly the case, go hand in hand with ethnic differences. The quite deviant variety of Afrikaans spoken by many coloureds, for

Figure 15.1 Map of South Africa



example, and sometimes referred to as 'advanced Afrikaans' in linguistic circles (implying that it is the product of pidginization), is one such 'dialect' that is looked down upon, even by many coloureds.

The standard language, which is based solely on the Afrikaans of whites and which is watched over by the *Taalkommissie* of the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, has been nurtured since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, finally replacing Dutch as an official language in 1925.

One of the main problems of current standardization concerns the influence of English. Much has changed and is in the course of changing in Afrikaans because of the intimate contact with English and the high degree of bilingualism among native speakers of Afrikaans. Other than in the realm of international loanwords with cognate forms in English, the influence of English on the phonology of the language strangely enough seems to be minimal. The same is true of the morphology, syntax and even the lexis, the last due to a (too?) highly developed sense of purism. It is above all the idiom, and to a lesser degree the semantics, of Afrikaans that are being affected. In

its idiom it is rapidly becoming a language of translation to which the many expressions like *jou sokkies optrek* 'to pull up your socks', *iemand se been trek* 'to pull someone's leg' and *uit die bloute (uit)* 'out of the blue' bear witness.

### General Characteristics of Afrikaans

Phonologically Afrikaans is characterized by a preference for voiceless over voiced stops and fricatives (the exceptions being /b/ and /d/, but even these are devoiced in final position, and [g] only occurs as an allophone of /x/ in a few limited positions); by a great number of diphthongs (the result of the breaking of historically long vowels *inter alia*); as well as by a strong tendency to unrounding. Morphologically it is characterized by the lack of gender distinction; the lack of conjugation in the verbal system; the almost total lack of the original past tense, as well as a strong tendency to relate past events in the present tense; double negation; and the frequent occurrence of diminutives. The demise of the preterite has even led to Afrikaans losing two of the original characteristics of a Germanic language, i.e. the dental preterite and vowel gradation in strong verbs. Syntactically it differs very little from Dutch, retaining as it does verb-second word order in main and coordinate clauses and SOV word order in subordinate clauses. Characteristic of Afrikaans in this respect *vis-à-vis* Dutch is the common omission of subordinating *dat* leading to the retention of verb-second word order in the dependent clause, as well as the optional retention of interrogative inversion of subject and verb in indirect interrogatives.

## 15.2 Phonology

### Short Vowels

/i/ occurs in loanwords too where it is represented by the grapheme <i> e.g. *artikel, titel*.

When followed by /r/, the vowels /i/, /u/, /y/, and /ɛ/ are pronounced long.

/i/ is one of the sounds that typifies both Afrikaans and South African English *vis-à-vis* their mother forms. South African linguists traditionally transcribe stressed <i> as /ə/. The sound is best described either as a high schwa or a more central /i/, which is why /i/ is used in Table 15.1. But in atonic position <i> is transcribed by schwa.

**Table 15.1** Short vowels

i	y ĩ	u	<i>dief</i>	<i>suutjies</i> <i>kind</i>	<i>boek</i>
ɛ	œ a	ɔ	<i>bed</i>	<i>kus</i> <i>kat</i>	<i>bok</i>

/œ/ is commonly unrounded, thereby seeming to fall together with /i/, e.g. *lug* 'air', *lig* 'light'.

## Long Vowels

Table 15.2 Long vowels

i:	y:	u:	<i>mier</i>	<i>muur</i>	<i>boer</i>
ɛ:	œ:	ɔ:	<i>skêr</i>	<i>rûe</i>	<i>sôe</i>
	a:			<i>kaart</i>	

/i:/, /y:/, /u:/, and /ɛ:/ only occur before /r/ (although /ɛ:/ can also be the result of compensatory lengthening), otherwise ⟨ie⟩, ⟨uu⟩, ⟨œe⟩, and ⟨e⟩ are pronounced short. /œ:/ and /ɔ:/ occur in very few words. Consequently, of the long vowels only /ɛ:/, and in particular /a:/, have a wide distribution, all other historically long vowels having undergone breaking (see Diphthongs). /ɛ:/, or its allophone [æ:], which occurs before /r/ + /d, s, t/, is only found before /r/ (+ consonant), e.g. *dertig* [ˈdæ:rtəx] 'thirty', *perd* [pæ:rt] 'horse', *wêreld* [ˈvæ:rəlt] 'world'. Otherwise /ɛ:/, as well as all instances of /ɔ:/, are the result of the few examples of compensatory lengthening that occurred when an intervocalic /x/ (or /x/ after /r/) was syncopated, e.g. *lêer* [lɛ:ər] 'file' (< Du. *legger*), *môre* [mɔ:ərə] 'morning' (< Du. *morgen*), *trôe* [trɔ:ə] 'troughs' (< Du. *troggen*).

In words like *dans* 'dance' [dã:s], *mens* 'person' [mẽ:s], and *ons* 'we/us' [õ:s], the long vowel is the result of compensatory lengthening, the loss of the nasal also causing nasalization of the vowel.

## Diphthongs

Table 15.3 Diphthongs

əi			<i>wei/wy</i>		
œi	œu	oə	<i>huis</i>	<i>koud</i>	<i>brood</i>
	øə			<i>seun</i>	
eə		ai	<i>weet</i>		<i>baie</i>

The long vowels of Afrikaans, compared with the vowels in cognate forms in Dutch, are characterized by (a) breaking; (b) raising; and (c) unrounding:

- The vowels in *brood*, *seun*, and *weet* are traditionally transcribed without the schwa off-glide, implying that they are monophthongs, but such a view only has an historical validity;
- ⟨oo⟩ and ⟨ee⟩ are also very commonly raised to /uə/ and /iə/.
- The diphthongs /øə/ and /œi/ and the long vowel /y:/, as well as the short

vowel /æ/, written <eu>, <ui>, <uu> and <u>, are all very commonly unrounded to /eə/, /əi/, /i:/ and /i/. In so doing they become almost indistinguishable from the vowels represented by the graphemes <ee>, <ei>/<y>, <ie> and <i>, e.g. *leun/leen*, *huis/hys*, *muur/mier*, *lug/lig*. The diphthong /əi/ is already somewhat unrounded when compared with its cognate in Dutch, /œy/.

/ai/ is limited to very few words, all ultimately of foreign origin, except where it occurs as the result of umlauting in the diminutive, in which case it is strictly speaking an allophone of /a/.

### Diphthongization in Diminutive Formations

Addition of the palatal diminutive ending *-tjie*, or simply *-jie* if a noun already ends in <t> or <d> (both pronounced [t] in final position), causes umlauting of certain preceding vowels. The resulting diphthongs can in fact be regarded as allophones of the original vowels concerned which apply only when a word ends in [ci], e.g.

mat – matjie	‘mat’	pron. [ma:ci]
maat – maatjie	‘mate’	pron. [ma:ici]
hand – handjie	‘hand’	pron. [faiŋci]
aand – aandjie	‘evening’	pron. [aiŋci]
bed – bedjie	‘bed’	pron. [beici]
kind – kindjie	‘child’	pron. [kiŋci]
pot – potjie	‘pot’	pron. [pɔici]
poot – pootjie	‘paw’	pron. [poici]
hond – hondjie	‘dog’	pron. [fɔiŋci]
oond – oondjie	‘oven’	pron. [oiŋci]
voet – voetjie	‘foot’	pron. [fuici]
put – putjie	‘well’	pron. [pœici]
punt – puntjie	‘point’	pron. [pœiŋci]

### Double Vowels

Table 15.4 Double vowels

iu	ui	<i>sneeu</i>	<i>koeie</i>
	o:i		<i>nooi</i>
ai		<i>draai</i>	

### Vowels in Atonic Syllables

There is a prevalence of schwa in atonic syllables, which is written in a number of ways depending on the etymology of the word, e.g. *Afrikaans* [afɾəˈkɑ:s], *belangrik* [bəˈlaŋrək] ‘important’, *boere* [burə] ‘farmers’, *dikwels*

[d'ikvəls] 'often', *gelukkig* [xə'lœkəx] 'happy', *onmiddellik* [ɔ'midələk] 'immediately', *kussing* ['kœsəŋ] 'cushion', *vereniging* [fə'reənəxəŋ] 'society'. The first vowel in the expressions *vanaand* 'this evening', *vandag* 'today', *vanmôre* 'this morning', etc., is a schwa too, i.e. [fə'na:nt], [fən'dax], [fə'mɔ:ɾə]. In words of foreign origin schwa may also be represented by graphemes other than <e> and <i>, e.g. *krokodil* [krəkə'di:l] 'crocodile', *kursus* ['kœrsəs] 'course'. The clusters /lm/ and /rml/ are broken up by a svarabhakti vowel (e.g. *psalm* and *storm*), but not /lk/ and /rk/ as is commonly the case in Dutch.

## Consonants

Table 15.5 Consonants

p	t	k		<i>pot</i>	<i>tafel</i>	<i>kat</i>	
b	d			<i>bom</i>	<i>dak</i>		
f	s	x		<i>Frans/vis</i>	<i>ses</i>	<i>goed</i>	
v			fi	<i>water</i>			<i>huis</i>
m	n	ŋ		<i>man</i>	<i>nooi</i>	<i>sing</i>	
			l				<i>lag</i>
			r				<i>rooi</i>

The stops of Afrikaans are not aspirated at all. <b> and <d> are devoiced in final position, e.g. *bed* [bet], *hand* [hant]. It is traditional to transcribe diminutive forms ending in <djie>/<tjie> as /ci/, but this [c] is essentially an allophone of /k/, e.g. *bakkie* [baci] 'bowl', *vroujie* [frœuci] 'woman'. For historical reasons initial /f/ is represented by either <f> or <v>, more usually the latter. Although minimal pairs may exist where <f> and <v> seem to stand in contrast to each other, they have become homophones in Afrikaans, as they are in western Dutch, e.g. *Fin* 'Finn', *vin* 'fin'. The Dutch voiced fricatives /ɣ/ and /z/ are wanting in Afrikaans, as is the voiced pronunciation of the grapheme <v>; /v/ is represented by <w> in Afrikaans orthography. In certain intervocalic positions /d/ and /x/ are syncopated. /g/ does not occur in Dutch, other than as a result of sandhi, but has developed in Afrikaans as an allophone of /x/ after /r/ when followed by schwa, e.g. *burger* [bœrgər] 'citizen'. <h> is voiced in Afrikaans and as such is unique among Germanic languages. Initially it is often assimilated to preceding consonants, e.g. *gedoen het* [xə'dunət] 'did/have done'. <ng> only occurs medially and word-finally, e.g. *vinger* 'finger', *sing* 'sing'. The cluster /nd/ is assimilated to [n] when it occurs intervocalically, but only in everyday words, i.e. it is in *hande* 'hands', *kinders* 'children', and *wonder* 'wonder', but is not in *bande* 'tyres', *handel* 'trade', and *monde* 'mouths'.

### *Syncope and Apocope of Consonants*

Compared with their cognate forms in Dutch, many words in Afrikaans have lost sounds due to syncope or apocope.

Where /d/ and /x/ occur in Dutch after a long vowel or diphthong and are followed by schwa, they have been syncopated in Afrikaans, e.g. *leier* (< Du. *leider*) 'leader', *saal* (< Du. *zadel*) 'saddle', *nael* (< Du. *nagel*) 'nail', *spieël* (< Du. *spiegel*) 'mirror'. Less frequent is the syncope of intervocalic /v/ (written <w> in Afrikaans and <v> in Dutch), e.g. *naeltjie* (< Du. *naveltje*) 'navel', *oor* (< Du. *over*) 'over', *bo* (< Du. *boven*) 'above'. Exceptions to this are to be found in the many more learned sounding words that have been (re-)introduced from Dutch, e.g. *dodelik* 'fatal', *bespiegeling* 'conjecture', *owerheid* 'government', *te bowe kom* 'to get over'. This syncopation process is still productive in inflected forms, i.e. when a plural or adjectival *-e* ending is applied, e.g. *tyd* > *tye* 'time[s]'; *saag* > *sae* 'saw[s]'; *breed* > *breë* 'wide', *moeg* > *moeë* 'tired'. Also when forming the comparative in *-er* of such adjectives, e.g. *moeër*, *breër*. In *eg* > *êe* 'harrow[s]', *rug* > *rûe* 'back[s]', *trog* > *trôe* 'trough[s]' and *wig* > *wîe* 'wedge[s]' syncope causes compensatory lengthening.

Post-fricative /t/, written <d> or <t>, was apocopated in Afrikaans but returns when a plural or adjectival /ə/ ending is applied, e.g. *hemp* > *hemde* (< Du. *hemd*) 'shirt[s]', *kas* > *kaste* (< Du. *kast*) 'cupboard[s]', *nag* > *nagte* (< Du. *nacht*) 'night[s]'; *eg* > *egte* (< Du. *echt*) 'real', *lig* > *ligte* (< Du. *licht*) 'light'. This is also the case when forming the comparative in /ər/ of such adjectives, e.g. *egter*, *ligter*. Colloquially a /t/ is often inserted in the plural where historically there was none, e.g. *bus* > *busse/buste* (Du. *bussen*) 'bus[es]', *jas* > *jasse/jaste* (< Du. *jassen*) 'coat[s]'. On the other hand, in a few instances historical *t* does not return in the plural, e.g. *kos* > *kosse* (< Du. *kost*) 'food[s]', *wors* > *worse* (< Du. *worst*) 'sausage[s]'.

### **Orthography**

Certain sounds that contrasted historically have fallen together in Afrikaans. This is the case in Dutch too, but is reflected less in the spelling of Dutch than of Afrikaans:

1 Whereas Dutch has the following voiced–voiceless couplets, which are faithfully reproduced in its spelling, Afrikaans has partially adapted its spelling to reflect the fact that this opposition is largely lacking, but certain remnants of the original opposition are still reflected in the spelling, the result of deliberate concessions to the Dutch spelling tradition so as to keep the two languages as close as possible on paper: Du. <g>/<ch> > Afr. <g> (but always pronounced voiceless), Du. <v>/<f> > Afr. <v>/<f> (both pronounced voiceless), Du. <z>/<s> > Afr. <s>, e.g. Du. *gaan* 'to go'/<laachen> 'to laugh' > Afr. *gaan/lag*, Du. *vader* 'father'/<fris> 'fresh' > Afr. *vader/fris*, Du. *zee* 'sea'/<suiker> 'sugar' > Afr. *see/suiker*.

2 The historically distinct diphthongs <ei> and <y> (the latter written <ij> in Dutch) have fallen together in standard Dutch and Afrikaans, but the distinction between the two is retained in the orthography of both languages. In some words the distinction helps distinguish between homonyms, e.g. *wei* 'pasture'/*wy* 'to devote', *hei* 'heather'/*hy* 'he', but on the whole it is retained purely for etymological reasons.

The spelling of the diminutive ending <-tjie>, pronounced [ci], has also been influenced by standard Dutch where the corresponding ending *-tje* reflects the way it is pronounced, i.e. [tjə].

The rules for the doubling of long vowels in closed syllables are as in Dutch, e.g. *aap/ape* 'monkey/monkeys', *boom/bome* 'tree/trees', as are those for the doubling of consonants after short vowels, e.g. *kat/katte* 'cat/cats', *pot/potte* 'pot/pots'.

The rule of congruency demands that where words that contain a <b> or <d> in derived forms, are also spelt <b> and <d> when these consonants occur in word-final position and consequently undergo Auslautverhärtung, e.g. *ribbes* 'ribs' pronounced [rībəs] < *rib* 'rib' pronounced [rīb]; *bande* 'tyres' pronounced [bandə] < *band* 'tyre' pronounced [bant]. Very few words end in *b* in fact.

The compound grapheme <gh> occurs initially in a few words of foreign origin to indicate that they retain the /g/ of the donor language, e.g. *gholf* [gɔlf] 'golf', *ghries* [gris] 'grease'; compare *golf* 'wave' [xɔlf].

The circumflex (*kappie*) is found most commonly on the letter <e> before /r/, e.g. *bêre* 'to put away', *militêr* 'military', but it is omitted when the /r/ is followed by a dental consonant, e.g. *perd* 'horse', *pers* 'purple'. In just a few isolated words it is applied to an <e>, <i>, <o> or <u> to indicate that compensatory lengthening has been applied after the syncopation of an intervocalic /x/ (or /x/ after /r/), e.g. *êe* 'harrows', *wîe* 'wedges', *sôe* 'sows', *môre* 'morning', *brûe* 'bridges'.

## 15.3 Morphology

### Nouns and Adjectives

There is no longer any trace of case inflection to be found in nouns and adjectives outside of the numerous standard expressions where the origins of the remaining inflection have long since been forgotten, e.g. *van ganser harte* 'with all one's heart', *tenslotte* 'at last'. The only living examples of case in Afrikaans are to be found in the personal pronouns.

Given that when an adjective is inflected it takes an *-e*, the sound and spelling changes that occur in such cases are identical to those that apply when nouns take an *-e* in the plural (Du. *-en*), e.g. *boot/bote* 'boat[s]', *groot/grotes* 'big/big ones'; *gebod/gebooie* 'commandment[s]', *dood/dooie* 'dead';



*saag/sae* 'saw[s]', *laag/lae* 'low'; *nag/nagte* 'night[s]', *sag/sagte* 'soft'. This parallel is the result of the identical phonological environment created in both categories when they are inflected.

## Nouns

### Plural Formation

Afrikaans makes no distinction in grammatical gender. It does distinguish number, the primary indicator of plurality being the suffix /ə/, with a substantial minority of nouns (more than in Dutch) taking the suffix /s/ and in addition there are several minor plural declensions that take other endings, e.g. *schoen – schoene* 'shoes', *boom – bome* 'trees', *pot – potte* 'pots'; *arm – arms* 'arms', *sokkie – sokkies* 'socks', *leeu – leeus* 'lions'; *aanwysing – aanwysings/-inge* 'instructions', *horing – horings* 'horns'; *bed – beddens* 'beds', *brug – brûe* 'bridges', *kalf – kalwers* 'calves'; *pad – paaie* 'roads', *skip – skepe* 'ships', *weg – weë* 'ways'.

### Diminutization

The potential to diminutize any noun was inherited by Afrikaans from Dutch, and if Dutch makes extensive use of this morphological device to achieve certain semantic effects, this is all the more the case in Afrikaans where the diminutive is not noticeably less common in the written language than the spoken, which cannot be said of Dutch. This would seem to be in keeping with that general trait of Afrikaans *vis-à-vis* standard Dutch that it is based on an earlier spoken variant of that language. The diminutizing morpheme is *-tjie* (pronounced [ci] for historical reasons), with the allomorphs *-etjie*, *-ie*, *-jie*, *-kie*, and *-pie*, depending on the final sound in the noun, e.g. *vrouwtjie* (< *vrou*) 'woman', *deurtjie* (< *deur*) 'door', *stoeltjie* (< *stoel*) 'chair', *belletjie* (< *bel*) 'bell', *bakkie* (< *bak*) 'container', *paadjie* (< *pad*) 'road', *regerinkie* (< *regering*) 'government', *boompie* (< *boom*) 'tree'.

Many common words only occur in the diminutive form, e.g. *ertjie* 'pea', *mandjie* 'basket', *meisie* 'girl', *mossie* 'sparrow'. Such diminutives can be further diminutized, due to the attrition of the root from which they are derived, e.g. *ertjietjie*, *meisietjie*, etc.

## Adjectives

Predicative adjectives are never inflected, but attributive adjectives often are. In all other Germanic languages that have preserved adjectival inflection, the criteria for inflecting an attributive adjective or not are determined by grammar. In Afrikaans inflection is determined primarily by the phonology of the adjective concerned, but also partially by its semantics (i.e. whether it is being used literally or figuratively, or even affectively). Inflection of the adjective in Afrikaans compared with the same concept in Dutch cannot be regarded as an example of simplification.

There are two main categories of adjectives that inflect, the inflectional ending being /ə/:

1 Adjectives of more than one syllable, which thus includes all derived adjectives, e.g. *belangrik* – *belangrike* ‘important’, *dankbaar* – *dankbare* ‘grateful’, *gemeen* – *gemene* ‘common’, *offisieel* – *offisiële* ‘official’, *perfek* – *perfekte* ‘perfect’, *relatief* – *relatiewe* ‘relative’, *vinnig* – *vinnige* ‘quick’. As several of the examples above and below illustrate, inflection can cause certain changes to the phonology and spelling.

2 Monosyllabic adjectives ending in [t] (i.e. the allophone of /d/ in final position), /f/, /x/, and /s/, for example:

- (a) Adjectives ending in [t], which is written <d>: if the adjective ends in a consonant + <d>, there is no spelling change, e.g. *blind* – *blinde* ‘blind’, *hard* – *harde* ‘hard’. If the adjective contains a short vowel, the <d> remains and is doubled in writing to indicate preservation of the short vowel in the preceding closed syllable, e.g. *glad* – *gladde* ‘smooth’, but if it contains a long vowel or diphthong, it is syncopated (as is also the case in the formation of the plural of nouns), the inflectional ending taking a diaeresis if the root vowel is /e:/, e.g. *breed* – *breë* ‘wide’, *dood* – *dooie* ‘dead’, *goed* – *goeie* ‘good’, *koude* – *koue* ‘cold’.
- (b) Adjectives ending in /f/: if the adjective contains a short vowel, the final /f/ is voiced when /ə/ is added, i.e. <f> > <w>, and is doubled in writing to indicate preservation of the short vowel in the preceding syllable, e.g. *dof* – *dowwe* ‘dull’, *laf* – *lawwe* ‘cowardly, silly’, and if it contains a long vowel or diphthong, or a consonant precedes the /f/, the same voicing takes place but only one <w> is written, e.g. *doof* – *dowe* ‘deaf’, *eksklusief* – *eksklusiewe* ‘exclusive’, *gaaf* – *gawe* ‘fine, good’, *styf* – *stywe* ‘stiff’, *half* – *halwe* ‘half’.
- (c) Adjectives ending in /x/: if the adjective contains a long vowel or diphthong, the final /x/ is syncopated when /ə/ is added and a diaeresis is applied to the <e> where necessary to preserve the distinction between syllables, e.g. *droog* – *droë* ‘dry’, *hoog* – *hoë* ‘high’, *laag* – *lae* ‘low’, *leeg* – *leë* ‘empty’, *moeg* – *moeë* ‘tired’, *ruig* – *ruie* ‘rugged, bushy’.

Adjectives which contain a short vowel, depending on their etymology, either add /tə/ or double the final <g> in writing to indicate preservation of the short vowel in the preceding syllable, e.g. *eg* – *egte* ‘real’, *lig* – *ligte* ‘light’, *reg* – *regte* ‘right’, *sleg* – *slegte* ‘bad’; *stug* – *stugge* ‘morose’, *vlug* – *vlugge* ‘quick’.

- (d) Adjectives ending in /s/: adjectives which historically ended in /st/, and now end in /s/ due to apocope of final /t/, take /tə/, e.g. *bewus* – *bewuste* ‘conscious’, *juis* – *juiste* ‘correct, exact’, *vas* – *vaste* ‘firm’,

whereas those that had no /t/ historically do not inflect, e.g. *fris* 'cool', *grys* 'grey', *los* 'loose', *pers* 'purple', *vars* 'fresh'. Only by comparing with Dutch can one know which words had a /t/ originally and which did not.

Adjectives which end in a consonant + /s/, take /ə/, e.g. *flukse* – *flukse* 'smart', *slaafs* – *slaafse* 'servile', *snaaks* – *snaakse* 'funny'.

The predicative adjectives *jonk* 'young', *lank* 'long, tall', and *oud* 'old' become *jong*, *lang*, and *ou* when used attributively, these reflexes being the result of a phonetic assimilation which occurred when the inflectional ending, which has since been apocopated, was added to the uninflected form.

Monosyllabic adjectives ending in any sound other than [t] (i.e. the allophone of /d/ in final position), /f/, /x/, and /s/ do not inflect, i.e. those ending in:

- 1 The voiceless stops /k/, /p/, and /t/, e.g. *sterk* 'strong', *ryp* 'ripe', *groot* 'big'.
- 2 The nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/, e.g. *dom* 'stupid', *groen* 'green', *bang* 'frightened'.
- 3 The lateral and trill /l/ and /r/, e.g. *koel* 'cool', *swaar* 'heavy'.
- 4 Adjectives ending in a vowel or diphthong, e.g. *mooi* 'pretty', *blou* 'blue'.

For example: *die Groot Trek* 'the Great Trek', *'n groen deur* 'a green door', *dié/n smal gangetjie* 'that/a narrow corridor', *hierdie/n mooi meisie* 'this/a pretty girl'. When such adjectives are used affectively or figuratively, they may be subjected to inflection, but this aspect of inflection is somewhat hazy, e.g. *jou stomme kind* 'you silly child', *diepe tevredenheid* 'deep satisfaction', *die dorre Karoo* 'the arid Karoo'. They may also be inflected in standard expressions where they were inflected in Dutch, e.g. *in volle vertroue* 'in full confidence', *op vrye voet stel* 'to set free'.

### *Nominalized Adjectives*

All adjectives take /ə/ when used nominally after determiners and possessives, e.g. *'n grote/die grote/hierdie grote/jou grote* 'a big one/the big one/this big one/your big one'. The plural of such forms is *die grotes* 'the big ones', etc. If the synonymous alternative construction with *een/ene/enetjie* (i.e. one) is used, the rules of inflection given above apply as the adjective is once again used attributively and not nominally, e.g. *'n/die/hierdie/jou groot een* (or colloquially also *ene* or *enetjie*) 'a/the/this/your big one'; in non-standard speech one hears these *een* constructions in the plural too, e.g. *(die) groot enes* = *(die) grotes* '(the) big ones'.

### Adjectives Derived from Past Participles

#### Historically Weak Past Participles

The fact that many adjectives ending in /x/ and /s/ take a /tə/ ending when inflected, rather than simply an /ə/, is due to an historical sound change that occurred on a wide plane in Afrikaans. With nouns and adjectives final /t/ was apocopated after voiceless consonants, but in weak past participles final /t/, sometimes written <d>, was apocopated in all instances. However, in cases where an /ə/ is added to the participle, and the <t> or <d> are thus no longer in final position, they return in the form of the endings <te> or <de>. This is an issue which can only be fully understood in the light of certain historical factors.

Weak verbs in Dutch form their past participle by the addition of a <ge> prefix and a <t> or <d> suffix to the stem of the verb: <t> is added to stems ending in a voiceless consonant and <d> to those ending in a voiced consonant or a vowel, e.g. Du. *hopen* – *gehoopt* ‘to hope’, Du. *werken* – *gewerkt* ‘to work’, Du. *horen* – *gehoord* ‘to hear’, Du. *bouwen* – *gebouwd* ‘to build’. As verbs, such forms appear in Afrikaans as *gehoop*, *gewerk*, *gehoor* and *gebou*, but when used as attributive adjectives, and thus inflected, they become *gehoopte*, *gewerkte*, *gehoorde* and *geboude*. To this point there is no problem.

One small difficulty in knowing whether to add <t> or <d> to a weak past participle in Dutch is presented by verbs with a <v> or <z> in the infinitive; verbs like *leven* ‘to live’ and *reizen* ‘to travel’, according to the rules of Dutch spelling, add the prefix <ge> and the suffix <d> to the stems *leef* and *reis*: these stems may end in voiceless consonants, but the <f> and <s> are derived from <v> and <z>, i.e. voiced consonants, and this fact determines the correct dental ending. But as such verbs in the infinitive form in Afrikaans are *leef* and *reis*, with no obvious sign of this <f> and <s> being derived from their voiced counterparts, it is difficult in such cases to know whether the correct inflected adjectival form of the verbal past participles *geleef* and *gereis* in Afrikaans is *geleefte/gereiste* or *geleefde/gereisde*; only the latter are strictly speaking correct, although with more obscure verbs speakers of Afrikaans are often in doubt themselves. In such cases their ear can no longer tell them what sounds correct, [-ftə]/[-stə] or [-fdə]/[-sdə], because in practice the voiced forms are seldom heard, they are only written; historically the /f/ and the /s/ were voiced before /də/ too, which is what the distinction was originally based on, but this is certainly no longer the case in Afrikaans. In Afrikaans this difficulty of choice not only affects verbs ending in <f> and <s>, but also those ending in <g>, as a <g> can be derived from a Dutch <ch> (unvoiced) or a Dutch <g> (historically voiced), e.g. *aangehegte/-de* (attached, officially only <te>).

#### Historically Strong Past Participles

Afrikaans abounds with the past participles of historically strong or irregular verbs, but none of them, with the exception of *gehad* ‘had’, is used verbally any more. Where they exist they are used and regarded as adjectives, *gebroke* ‘broken’ < *breek* ‘to break’, *handgeskrewe* ‘handwritten’ < *skryf* ‘to write’,

*gesoute* 'salted' < *sout* 'to salt', *verbode* 'forbidden' < *verbied* 'to forbid'. As illustrated, adjectives derived from strong past participles end in <e> (< Du. <en>).

Many formerly strong verbs have lost their adjectival strong past participle and are now treated as if they have always been weak. This then raises the problem dealt with under historically weak past participles above – do they take a <te> or a <de>, given that in Dutch, where the strong participle is still used, they end in neither, e.g. *aanbeveel* 'to recommend' – *aanbeveelde* (< Du. *aanbevelen* – *aanbevolen*); *afspreek* 'to arrange' – *afgespreekte* (< *afspreken* – *afgesproken*). The forms given are considered correct because they are inflected as if they had been weak in Dutch too. But the originally strong forms of these two verbs – and also of many others – have not yet completely died out, i.e. *aanbevole* and *afgesproke*. The strong form of many other verbs, where it has survived at all, is infrequently used, e.g. *bak* – *gebakte* (< Du. *bakken* – *gebakken*) 'to bake', *vleg* – *gevlegte* (< Du. *vlechten* – *gevlochten*) 'to plait'.

Generally speaking it can be said that the better one's education, the greater one's familiarity with the strong forms; the lower down the social ladder the more one is likely to find analogically formed weak adjectival past participles, e.g. *bevrore/bevriesde* 'frozen', *gebonde/gebinde* 'bound', *voorgeskrewe/voorgeskryfde* 'prescribed', *verboë/verbuigde* 'inflected'. The tide of time is against the strong forms. But if all such weak forms, which after all did not exist in Dutch, still require that a choice be made between <te> and <de>, there is still room for error. Research has shown that Afrikaans speakers are very uncertain on this point, particularly with less familiar adjectives, whether originally weak or not.

In many instances the new analogically formed weak past participle exists side by side with the original strong form, but with a distinction in meaning (unlike those in the previous paragraph), the strong form usually denoting the more figurative meaning, e.g. *breek* 'to break' – 'n *gebreekte koppie* 'a broken cup', 'n *gebroke hart/gesondheid* 'a broken heart/shattered health'; *buig* 'to bend' – 'n *gebuigde klerehanger* 'a bent clothes-hanger', *met geboë hoof* 'with a bowed head'.

#### *Adjectival Inflection in /s/*

Although traditional grammar states that when used after an indefinite pronoun an adjective takes /s/, an historically genitive ending still consistently used in such cases in Dutch and German, this ending is these days commonly omitted in Afrikaans, particularly in speech, but omission of the ending is considered non-standard by many, e.g. *ek het vandag iets interessants gehoor* 'I heard something interesting today', *kan shrywers aan niks beters dink as seks om oor te skryf nie?* 'can't authors think of anything better than sex to write about?' /s/ inflection is most commonly found after *iets* 'something' and *niks* 'nothing' and is now seldom heard after the pronouns *baie* 'a lot', *genoeg*

'enough', *iemand* 'someone' and *niemand* 'no one', e.g. *die kans dat sy iemand spesiaals sal ontmoet is bitter skraal* 'the chance that she'll meet someone special is remote'. /s/ inflection applies to comparatives too, e.g. *iets kleiner* 'something smaller', but even after *iets* and *niks* it is now commonly omitted from comparatives, e.g. *iets interessanter* 'something more interesting'.

#### *Comparative and Superlative of the Adjective/Adverb*

The comparative and superlative are formed as in Dutch, i.e. by the addition of /əɪ/ and /stə/ respectively. The difference between the two languages, if any, is to be found in a more frequent use of the periphrastic variants in *meer* and *mees*, a practice which seems to be gaining ground in Dutch too, but not to the same extent as in Afrikaans where the increased frequency may be due to the influence of English, e.g. *liefdevoller/liefdevolste, meer/mees liefdevolle* 'loving'.

#### **Determiners**

The definite article, *die*, is invariable in both the singular and the plural, e.g. *die man* 'the man', *die vrou* 'the woman', *die huis* 'the house', *die mans/vrouens/huise* 'the men/women/houses'.

As the historically emphatic form of the demonstrative has survived as the definite article (compare Du. *die* and *de*), the demonstrative is simply expressed by stressing the definite article, written *dié*, e.g. *dié man* 'that man'. The distinction between the proximal and the distal demonstrative, common to other Germanic languages, is not necessarily made in Afrikaans, e.g. *dié week* 'this/that week'. But the compound forms *hierdie* 'this' and *daardie* 'that', although less common in the formal written language than *dié*, are commonly heard. The Dutch distal demonstrative *dat* has not survived in Afrikaans.

The indefinite article, 'n, is pronounced [ə], even before nouns beginning with a vowel, although in some areas the nasal is also pronounced.

#### **Pronouns**

##### *Personal Pronouns*

The personal pronouns preserve the only living remnants of case in Afrikaans, but even here the distinction between subject and oblique case pronouns is only to be found in the singular, as the paradigm (Table 15.6) illustrates. Afrikaans has preserved only full (i.e. emphatic) pronouns.

It is a curious feature of Afrikaans that although grammatical gender no longer exists, *hy/hom* and *dit* (the Afrikaans reflexes of Dutch *hij/hem*, and *het*) alternate in free variation as anaphoric third-person singular pronouns with reference to inanimate objects, e.g. *het jy die nuwe plakkaat gesien. Ja, hy is/dis pragtig* 'have you seen the new poster. Yes, it's beautiful'. Note that

Table 15.6 Personal pronouns

	Subject		Object		Possessives		Independent possessives	
sg.	ek	I	my	me	my	my	myne	mine
	jy	you	jou	you	jou	your	joune	yours
	u	you	u	you	u	your	u s'n(e)	yours
	hy	he/it	hom	him/it	sy	his	syne	his
	sy	she	haar	her	haar	her	hare	hers
	dit	it	dit	it	sy	its	syne	its
pl.	ons	we	ons	us	ons	our	ons s'n(e)	ours
	julle	you	julle	you	julle, jul	your	julle s'n(e)	yours
	hulle	they	hulle	them	hulle, hul	their	hulle s'n(e)	theirs

*dit is* 'it is' is commonly said and written *dis*.

*Jul* and *hul* occur as variants of *julle* and *hulle*. Although they can theoretically function as subject and object pronouns, they most commonly occur as possessives or reflexives.

Somewhat analogous to Old Icelandic compounds in *þau*, e.g. *þau Guðrún* 'they and Guthrún', Afrikaans commonly adds *-hulle* as a suffix to personal names to indicate a collective in which the person named is seen as central, e.g. *pa-hulle/ma-hulle* 'mum and dad', *Koos-hulle* 'Koos and his wife, Koos and family, Koos' mob'.

The indefinite pronoun 'one' is rendered by ('n) *mens*, the object and possessive forms of which are *jou*. However, if in the same sentence 'one' is used a second time as a subject pronoun, *jy* is then used, not ('n) *mens*, e.g. *in die Kruger Wildtuin moet ('n) mens nooit uit jou kar klim nie en jy moet voor sonsondergang een van die kampe bereik* 'in the Kruger Game Park one should never get out of one's car and one has to get to one of the camps before sunset'. In the same way the reflexive pronoun belonging with ('n) *mens* is *jou*, e.g. ('n) *mens wil jou graag voorstel dat . . .* 'one rather likes to imagine that . . .'.

That reciprocal pronoun is *mekaar* 'each other', whose functions are the same as *elkaar* (colloquial *mekaar*) in Dutch.

### Second-person Forms of Address

Although formally speaking the distinction between *jy* (pl. *julle*) and *u* (pl. *u*) is identical to that which exists in most European languages between the familiar and polite forms of address, in its use of these forms Afrikaans differs quite substantially from those other languages, even other Germanic languages. *U* is perhaps best regarded as a rather late (i.e. twentieth-century), somewhat learned borrowing from Dutch and is consequently seldom, if ever, heard in the speech of the common man. In his speech *jy* alternates with third-person forms of address, i.e. *ma* 'mother', *pa* 'father', *oom* 'uncle' (used

towards any older male), *tannie* 'auntie' (used towards any older female), *dokter*, *professor*, *dame* 'madam', etc. In this respect Afrikaans is very conservative, but on the other hand this phenomenon goes hand in hand with a tendency to use *jy* towards strangers where the equivalent familiar form could not be used in the other languages that make a distinction between familiar and polite forms of address. This commonly occurs in combination with titulars like *meneer* 'Mr' and *mevrou* 'Mrs' which establish that the speaker is not being unnecessarily familiar, e.g. *goeie môre mevrou, kan ek vir jou help?* 'good morning, madam, can I help you?' = *goeie môre mevrou, kan ek vir mevrou help?* (very formal).

If Afrikaans speakers find themselves in a situation where they feel that one of these third-person forms of address is appropriate, they are usually very consistent in their use of that form, using it in lieu of subject, object, possessive and reflexive pronouns, e.g. *ek kan ma (= jou) ongelukkig nie nou help nie* 'unfortunately I can't help you now' (object), *ma moenie ma daaroor bekommer nie* 'you mustn't worry about that' (subject + reflexive), *sal ma (= jy) my ma se (= jou) kar leen?* 'will you lend me your car?' (subject + possessive).

### *Reflexive Pronouns*

The reflexive pronouns are identical to the above object pronouns; the peculiarly third-person reflexive form *zich* of Dutch (< Ger. *sich*) is unknown in Afrikaans, where *hom*, *haar* and *hulle* are used. Where the third-person form of address is used, the same noun also functions as the reflexive pronoun.

The compound reflexive in *-self*, which prescriptive grammars maintain should only be used where one wishes to stress that the action is reflecting back on the subject, which is certainly the case in Dutch, is in practice more widely distributed than that in Afrikaans, probably due to the similarity with non-emphatic English reflexives in '*-self*', e.g. *gedra jouself* 'behave yourself'.

### *Relative Pronouns*

The relative pronoun for all antecedents, whether they be singular or plural, personal or non-personal, is *wat*, e.g. *die man wat hier langs aan bly is 'n Amerikaner* 'the man who lives next door is an American', *die mense wat op hierdie plaas bly is Rhodesiërs* 'the people who live on this farm are Rhodesians', *die doringboom (doringbome) wat agter die motorhuis groei het te groot geword* 'the thorn tree(s) which is (are) growing behind the garage has (have) got too big'.

Because of the indeclinability of *wat*, the uniformity of verbal endings and the SOV word order of relative clauses, one is sometimes dependent on context to know whether a relative *wat* is the subject or the object of its clause, e.g. *die Engelse soldate wat dié Boere verslaan het, het na die oorlog*



*medaljes gekry* 'the English soldiers who defeated those Boers/whom those Boers defeated, got medals after the war'. Because it is possible to put a *vir* before all personal direct objects (cf. Use of *vir* with personal objects, under section 15.4, Syntax), the ambiguity can be avoided here as follows: *die Engelse soldate wat vir dié Boere verslaan het ...* 'the English soldiers who defeated those Boers ...'.

When the relative is used in combination with a preposition, a distinction is made between personal and non-personal antecedents. In the former case standard Afrikaans does not allow prepositional stranding and requires preposition + *wie*, e.g. *die mense met wie jy nou net gepraat het is Portugese* 'the people to whom you were just talking are Portuguese/the people (who[m]) you were just talking to are Portuguese'.

With non-personal antecedents *waar* + preposition is required, e.g. *die program waarna jy nou net gekyk het was baie swak* 'the programme (which/that) you were just watching was very weak', *dis dinge waarvan ons nooit praat nie* 'they are things (which/that) we don't talk about'. But *waar* + preposition is also possible with personal antecedents, e.g. *die mense waarmee jy nou net gepraat het is Portugese* 'the people you were just talking to (= to whom) are Portuguese'. Such compound relative pronouns are sometimes subjected to prepositional stranding, in which case the preposition is inserted later in the relative clause, prior to the verb(s) in that clause, e.g. *die mense waar jy nou net mee gepraat het is Portugese*. Prepositional stranding of this kind is not as common in Afrikaans as in Dutch, but on the other hand there is a growing preference in the spoken language for stranding in structures of the sort discussed in the next paragraph.

The above *waar* + preposition constructions are regularly replaced in the spoken language by *wat* + preposition (with stranding of the preposition before the verb(s) of the relative clause), e.g. *die program wat jy nou net na gekyk het was baie swak, dis dinge wat ons nooit van praat nie, die mense wat jy nou net mee gepraat het is Portugese*. (Compare the interrogative forms *waarna kyk jy/wat kyk jy na?* 'what are you looking at?') Stranding of the preposition in *waar* + preposition type constructions (i.e. both relative and interrogative), so common in Dutch, is no longer usual in Afrikaans, but it does occur, e.g. *die mense waar jy nou net mee staan en praat het is Portugese*. One's automatic reaction, if one splits in this fashion, at least in speech, is to replace *waar* with *wat*.

(Preposition +) 'whose', both relative and interrogative, with reference to personal antecedents is (preposition +) *wie se*, e.g. *dié mense wie se kinders ek baie gehelp het is nou albei dood* 'those people, whose children I have helped a lot, are now both dead', *hierdie mense is vriende met wie se kinders ek vroeër gespeel het* 'these people are friends whose children I once used to play with (= with whose)'. *Wie se* may also refer to animates other than people, e.g. *die koei wie se kalfie ...* 'the cow whose calf ...'.

'Whose' with reference to non-personal antecedents (i.e. = of which) is

*waarvan* (or *wat se* in colloquial Afrikaans), e.g. *die huisie waarvan die grasdak/wat se grasdak herstel moet word, behoort aan die boer se plaaswerkers* 'the house whose thatch roof (= of which the thatch roof) has to be repaired belongs to the farmer's labourers'.

### *Interrogative Pronouns*

Interrogative pronouns are as in Dutch, with the following exceptions. The Dutch word *welk(e)* 'which' has been largely replaced by *watter* but is still heard in standard expressions, e.g. *in welke mate* (= *in watter mate*) 'to what extent'. This interrogative also occurs in the expression *watter soort* (Du. *wat voor een*) 'what kind of a', and when used independently is optionally combined with *een*, i.e. *watter (een)* 'which one'. *Wat se* commonly replaces *watter* and *watter soort* in prenominal position in colloquial Afrikaans.

Possessive 'whose' is rendered by *wie se* (< Du. *wie z'n* (m.), *wie d'r* (f. and pl.)), the independent form being *wie s'n(e)*.

Prepositional stranding also occurs with interrogative pronouns (see Relative pronouns, p. 493).

## Verbs

### *Tenses of the Verb*

In common with certain other colonial dialects of Germanic (e.g. Yiddish, Pennsylvania German), the preterite has ceded to the perfect. A verb is therefore typically conjugated in the present and past tenses as in Table 15.7. In addition, there is no longer any distinction between strong and irregular verbs, all verbs being treated as weak in the perfect tense, and the traditional distinction between verbs that take 'to be' and 'to have' as an auxiliary in the perfect has disappeared in favour of *het* (finite form of *hê* 'to have').

### *Vestiges of the Preterite*

Only the preterite of the following auxiliary verbs has been retained: *kan* 'to be able' – *kon*, *moet* 'to have to' – *moes*, *sal* 'will' – *sou*, *wil* 'to want to' – *wou*, and *wees* 'to be' – *was*. The preterite of *hê* 'to have' has not survived in standard Afrikaans, with the result that a formal pluperfect has also ceased to exist, general context or adverbs of time making it clear that an action is pluperfect. The following verbs, in addition to the possibility of forming their past tense regularly like all other verbs, have also retained their strong preterite forms, which exist in free variation with the regular forms: *dink* 'to think' – *dag/dog* and *het gedink* (also *het gedag/gedog*), *weet* 'to know' – *wis* and *het geweet*. *Wis* is now becoming rare, whereas there is a semantic distinction between *dag/dog/het gedag/het gedog* (all synonymous) on the one hand and *het gedink* on the other: although the latter can alternate with the former without any differentiation in meaning, it is not possible to use the former when 'thinking of someone or something, e.g. *ek het die hele dag aan*

Table 15.7 Tenses of the verb

Infinitive	<i>werk</i>	'to work'
<b>Present tense</b>		
1 sg.	ek werk	'I work, I am working, I do work, etc.'
2 sg.	jy/u werk	
3 sg. m.	hy werk	
f.	sy werk	
n.	dit werk	
1 pl.	ons werk	
2 pl.	julle werk	
3 pl.	hulle werk	
<b>Progressive</b>	ek is aan die werk	'I'm working'
	ek sit en werk	
<b>Negative</b>	ek werk nie	'I don't/am not working'
<b>Imperative</b>	werk	'work'
<b>Negative imperative</b>	moenie werk nie	'don't work'
<b>Future tense</b>	ek werk	'I'm working'
	ek sal werk	'I will work'
	ek gaan werk	'I'm going to work'
<b>Past tense</b>		
1 sg.	ek het gewerk	'I worked, I was working, I did work' 'I have worked, I have been working' 'I had worked, I had been working'
2 sg.	jy/u het gewerk	
3 sg. m.	hy het gewerk	
f.	sy het gewerk	
n.	dit het gewerk	
1 pl.	ons het gewerk	
2 pl.	julle het gewerk	
3 pl.	hulle het gewerk	
<b>Progressive</b>	ek was aan die werk	'I was working'
	(gewees)	
	ek het (ge)sit en werk	'I have/had been working'
<b>Negative</b>	ek het nie gewerk nie	'I wasn't working/didn't work/haven't worked'

jou gedink 'I thought of you all day', nor is it possible to use those forms when referring to the mental activity of thinking, e.g. *Descartes het te veel in sy lewe gedink* 'Descartes thought too much in his life'. They can only alternate as an irrealis in contexts such as the following: *ek het gedag/gedog/gedink hy was jou broer* 'I thought (= believed) he was your brother'.

### *The Historic Present*

The past tense is very frequently avoided when relating past events if it is obvious from the context (e.g. certain adverbs of time) that the action occurred in the past. Although this practice occurs in other Germanic languages too, it is particularly common in Afrikaans, just as much in the spoken, as the written language. Particularly when a clause is introduced by the conjunction *toe* ('when', on one occasion in the past) or contains the adverb *toe* ('then' in the past), the present tense is most usually used in that clause, whereas the verb in the main clause can be either in the present or the past, e.g. *toe hy tuis kom, sien hy dat sy vrou die hele dag niks gedoen het nie* (present + present + past [= pluperfect]) 'when he got home he saw that his wife had done nothing all day'.

### *The Pluperfect*

With the loss of the preterite of *hê*, the pluperfect of all verbs was also lost, but this does not seem to have given rise to any undue ambiguity – Afrikaans usually relies simply on context to indicate whether a given event in the past occurred prior to another event in the past, but it can rely on the sequence of tenses to indicate a pluperfect.

Although one can say that there is no difference in form between the perfect and the pluperfect, there is one exception to this. The following structure occurs occasionally in both speech and writing when one wants to emphasize that a particular action had occurred prior to another: *hy het dit toe al gedoen gehad* 'he had already done it then'; i.e. the perfect of *hê* (in effect the equivalent of the English preterite 'had') is employed as the auxiliary of the verb. This practice is not unknown in other Germanic dialects. (See The Passive, below, for further comments on the pluperfect).

### *Idiosyncrasies of hê 'to have'*

*Hê* is the only verb that has preserved an irregular past participle, i.e. *gehad*. It, like *wees*, also has a finite form that differs from the infinitive, i.e. *het*. Its preterite form *had* is now considered either dialectal or archaic. In compound tenses where the infinitive of 'to have' acts as an auxiliary in all other Germanic languages, Afrikaans employs the finite form *het*, e.g. *hy sal dit gedoen het* 'he will have done it', *hy moes dit gedoen het* 'he must have done it'.

### *Idiosyncrasies of wees 'to be'*

In addition to *wees* being only one of two verbs whose finite form differs from the infinitive, i.e. *is*, it is also the only verb that still takes *wees* as its auxiliary in the past, e.g. *ek is gewees*. But this form is not often used. Although prescriptive grammar advocates that *was* is the past tense of *wees*, what one most commonly hears is *ek was gewees*, a structure which corresponds with the historical pluperfect, but which is semantically simply a past and therefore also a pluperfect, as indeed is the case with *was*, e.g. *ek was siek (gewees)* 'I

was/have been/had been sick', *hulle het nie geweet dat ek siek was nie* 'they didn't know that I was/have been/had been sick'. As the previous example illustrates, when subordinate word order prevails, *was* *gewees* cedes to *was* or occasionally *gewees het*.

### *The Passive*

The auxiliary of the present passive is *word* 'to become', whereas that of the past passive is *wees*, e.g. *dit word/is deur my gedoen* 'it is being/was done by me'. Due to English influence *was* commonly alternates with *is* in the past, a form which corresponds with the historical pluperfect passive, but it is unlikely that a pluperfect passive really exists in Afrikaans as it is no longer extant in the active; nevertheless the existence of a pluperfect passive with *was* is commonly postulated in prescriptive grammars.

### *Subjunctive Mood*

As is to be expected in a language with such a simplified verbal system as Afrikaans, all formal trace of the subjunctive has disappeared, mood being expressed periphrastically by means of *sou* 'would', should the need arise, e.g. *as jy nie so veel sou eet nie ...* 'if you didn't eat as much ...', *indien dit môre (sou) reën ...* 'should it rain tomorrow.../if it were to rain tomorrow ...'.

### *Reflexive Verbs*

There are somewhat fewer reflexive verbs in Afrikaans than in Dutch. Quite a number are seldom, if ever, used reflexively any more; or the reflexive is at best now optional. It is highly likely that in most cases this development is due to English influence given that all cases where reflexivity is no longer required correspond with English verbs that are not reflexive, e.g. *haas* 'to hurry', *oorgee* 'to surrender', *skeer* 'to shave', *verskuil* 'to hide'.

Reflexive pronouns are identical to object pronouns. Afrikaans reference works now normally give the infinitive of reflexive verbs in the second, rather than the third person, e.g. *jou tuisvoel* 'to feel at home', rather than *hom tuisvoel*.

### *Reduplication*

Adjectives, adverbs, nouns, numerals, and verbs can be reduplicated. Many such reduplications have become lexicalized, but the construction is still productive. Although they can be formed from all the above parts of speech, the reduplicated forms themselves function only as adverbs and verbs, most usually as the former, e.g. *hulle het vroeg-vroeg aangekom* 'they arrived very early', *sy swaar growwe hande het so liggies-liggies oor haar vel beweeg* 'his heavy, coarse hands moved lightly over her skin', *ryp sal plek-plek voorkom* 'there will be frost here and there', *sy kom toe lag-lag in* 'she came in laughing'. Although verbs can be reduplicated to produce adverbs, only

reduplicated verbs, and not other reduplicated parts of speech, can function as verbs, e.g. *hy het sy ogies so geknip-knip* 'he kept blinking his eyes'. Reduplicated nouns can also give rise to new nouns, but this only occurs in the names of certain children's games, e.g. *huis(ie)-huis(ie)* 'mummies and daddies', *dokter-dokter* 'hospitals'.

## 15.4 Syntax

### Order of Verbs

As in Dutch and German, in main and coordinate clauses verb-second word order applies to the finite verb, with all subsequent verbs (i.e. past participles or infinitives) standing at the end of the clause. The few exceptions to this are as in Dutch (e.g. they may precede prepositional adjuncts). In subordinate clauses, where SOV order applies, there is a fixed order for the transitive verb and all additional verbs, unlike in Dutch, which permits a certain variation, e.g. *dat ... sal doen* (Du. *dat ... zal doen/doen zal*), *dat ... gedoen het* (Du. *dat ... gedaan heeft/heeft gedaan*), *dat ... (sou) kon gedoen het* (Du. *dat ... zou hebben kunnen doen*), *dat ... sal laat doen* (Du. *dat ... zal laten doen*), *dat ... sal laat doen het* (Du. *dat ... zal hebben laten doen*), *om dit te gedoen het* (Du. *... om het gedaan te hebben/te hebben gedaan*).

The subordinating conjunction *dat* is as commonly omitted in Afrikaans as in English, in which case the order of the dependent clauses reverts from SOV to verb-second, e.g. *Ek glo dat sy dit gedoen het* > *Ek glo sy het dit gedoen* 'I believe (that) she did it'.

### Prenominal Modifiers

Sentential prenominal modifiers (i.e. with participles) of the kind so commonly used in German, and less commonly in spoken Dutch, do not occur at all in Afrikaans, i.e. Dutch *alle door de staat gesubsidieerde instellingen* 'all institutions that are subsidized by the state'. Afrikaans, like English, puts such information into a relative clause. But non-sentential prenominal modifiers which cannot be rephrased by means of a relative clause are possibly more common than in Dutch, presumably due to the influence of English, e.g. *'n drie jaar waglys* 'a three-year waiting list', *'n vier slaapkamer huis* 'a four-bedroomed house', *'n drie miljoen rand hospitaal* 'a three million rand hospital'.

### Prepositional Groups Formed with *in ... in* and *uit ... uit*

*In* and *uit*, when designating motion rather than place, can be placed after the noun, as in Dutch, but more common, especially in the spoken language, is circumpositioning, e.g. *hy storm (in) die huis in/(uit) die huis uit* 'he storms into the house/out of the house'. In the case of *in*, this construction renders 'into' (motion), as opposed to 'in' (place). Either one postpositioned *in* or two

circumpositioned *in*'s are possible only with certain verbs indicating motion, particularly those with a separable prefix *in*, e.g. *hy het (in) die huis in gestorm/ingestorm*.

Although the prime purpose of circumpositioned *in* and *uit* is to express the idea of motion also inherent in a postpositioned *in* or *uit*, the construction now has a much wider distribution in Afrikaans, being applied in many contexts where there is not even a hint of motion and where a prepositioned *in* or *uit* would suffice, although this practice is much more common in the spoken than the written language, e.g. *die rob is deur tou gewurg en dit was binne in die vleis in* 'the seal had been strangled by rope and it was deep in its flesh', *jy moet sorg dat jy uit die tronk uit bly/uitbly* 'you'll have to make sure you stay out of prison'.

## Possession

### *Use of the Linker se*

The possessive particle *se*, historically an unemphatic form of *sy(n)* 'his' (< Du. *zijn/z'n*), functions in a similar fashion to apostrophe *s* in English, e.g. *die kind se toontjie* 'the child's toe', *die kinders se toontjies* 'the children's toes', *Suid-Afrika se hoofstad* 'South Africa's capital'. A succession of *se* constructions is possible, e.g. *ons bure se vriende se seun* 'our neighbours' friends' son', *dié kind se potlood se punt is stomp* 'the end of that child's pencil is blunt'. *Se*-structures are used with both animates and inanimates, e.g. *dié hond se stert* 'that dog's tail', *dié gebou se dak* 'the roof of that building', *die brief het die vorige dag se datum gehad* 'the letter had the previous day's date on it'. It is also used in adverbial expressions of time, e.g. *'n week se werk* 'a week's work', *hoeveel/twee uur se ry* 'how many/two hours' drive', as well as with measures, e.g. *vyf rand se biltong* 'five rands' worth of biltong (i.e. dried meat)', *miljoene rand se skade* 'millions of rands worth of damage', *tien kilo se aartappels* 'ten kilos (worth) of potatoes'.

As in colloquial English, the possessive can even follow a relative clause that is qualifying the noun to which it refers, e.g. *dit was die vrou wat so pas hier was se kind* 'it was the lady who was just here's child'. But the distribution of such constructions is wider in Afrikaans and is not limited to the spoken language, e.g. *vyf van die twaalf mense wat nog in die hospitaal behandel word, se toestand is kritiek* 'the condition of five of the twelve people that are still being treated in hospital is critical'.

The genitive of indefinite, reciprocal, interrogative, relative and demonstrative pronouns is also rendered by *se*, e.g. *elkeen se vakansie* 'everyone's holidays', *ons het mekaar se kinders baie lief* 'we love each other's children', *wie se handsak is dié?* 'whose handbag is this?', *die mense wie se plase deur die regering opgekoop is, moet nou 'n ander een probeer koop* 'the people whose farms have been bought up by the government now have to try and buy another', *dit is baie ou koppies. Kyk, hierdie (een) se/dié se oortjie het*

*afgebreek* 'these are very old cups. Look, this one's/that one's handle has broken off'.

Use of the possessive form of the demonstrative can avoid the possible ambiguity of third-person possessive pronouns, e.g. *Koos en Jan en dié se pa* 'Koos and Jan and his (i.e. Jan's) father'.

#### *Use of s'n/s'ne*

Running parallel with the use of *se*, as well as that of *s'n(e)* in combination with the plural of independent possessive pronouns, is the use of these particles with nouns. In all the cases mentioned above in the discussion on *se*, *s'n/s'ne* renders possession where the noun or pronoun concerned is used independently, i.e. *Piet se vrou* 'Piet's wife', but *Piet s'n(e)* 'Piet's' (wife understood), e.g. *dis Amanda se ma se sambreel* 'it's Amanda's mother's umbrella', but *dis Amanda se ma s'n(e)*, 'it's Amanda's mother's', *ek weet nie wie s'n(e) dit is nie* 'I don't know whose it is', *vanjaar se oes is twee keer so groot soos verlede jaar s'n(e)* 'this year's harvest is twice as big as last year's'.

#### **Use of *vir* with Personal Objects**

The preposition *vir*, in addition to meaning 'for', also renders 'to' with reference to indirect personal objects, e.g. *ek het (vir) my tannie beloof dat . . .* 'I promised my aunt that . . .', *hy het dit vir my gesê/gegee* 'he told me/gave me it'.

But *vir* is also very commonly used before personal direct objects, although this practice tends to be limited to the spoken language, e.g. *ek sien vir jou later = ek sien jou later* 'I'll see you later', *hy het vir my geslaan* 'he hit me', *ons ken vir mekaar* 'we know each other'. This feature of Afrikaans is commonly cited as a possible instance of Portuguese influence.

*Vir* is also used with the relative pronoun *wie*, which turns a direct object *wat* into *wie* because relative *wie* is used after prepositions with reference to people, not *wat*, e.g. *dit is die vrou vir wie ek gister in die stad gesien het (= wat ek gister)* 'that's the woman I saw in town yesterday'.

#### **Negation**

Afrikaans has the following negators: *geen/g'n* 'no, not a/any', *geeneen* 'not one', *geensins* 'by no means, not in any way', *nêrens* 'nowhere', *nie* 'not', *niemand* 'no one, nobody', *niks* 'nothing', *nooit* 'never'. In certain limited contexts they function alone, but in the majority of cases they are complemented by a *nie*, termed the scope marker, which demarcates the extent of the negation, a function only clearly observable in compound sentences, e.g. *ek gaan dit nie koop nie hoewel ek genoeg geld het* 'I'm not going to buy it although I have enough money' – compare \**ek gaan dit nie koop hoewel ek genoeg geld het nie*. If a sentence consists of only a subject and a finite verb, only a negator is required, e.g. *ek weet nie* 'I don't know', *hy bid nooit* 'he



never prays'. If it consists of only a subject, a verb and a pronominal object, once again only a negator is required, e.g. *weet jy dit nie?* 'don't you know that?', *ek ken hom nie* 'I don't know him'. The negators *geen*, *geeneen*, *niemand*, and *niks*, being pronouns, can act as the subject of a sentence, in which case a scope marking *nie* is required, e.g. *geen mens weet nie* 'no one knows'.

If a nominal object, an adjective, an adverb or a separable prefix follows the verb, a scope marker is required, e.g. *ek ken nie daardie man nie* 'I don't know that man', *jy let nie op nie* 'you're not paying attention' (< *oplet*). If there is more than one verbal form in a negated clause, i.e. if the finite verb is followed by an infinitive or a past participle, a scope marker is also required, e.g. *hy sal nie kom nie* 'he won't come', *hy het nie gekom nie* 'he didn't come/hasn't come'. In effect this rule means that a sentence like *hy kom nie* requires only a negator in the present tense, but a negator plus a scope marker in the future and past tenses.

In a compound sentence consisting of a main clause and a subordinate clause, where the first clause is negated, a scope marker is most usually placed at the end of the second clause, not at the end of the first, e.g. *ek het nie geweet dat hy sou kom nie* 'I didn't know that he would be coming'. Although that is the norm, the following variants are possible: *ek het nie geweet nie dat hy sou kom*, *ek het nie geweet nie dat hy sou kom nie*. If only the second clause is negated, the following occurs: *ek het geweet dat hy nie sou kom nie* 'I knew he wouldn't be coming'. If both clauses are negated, the first clause contains a negator while the second contains a negator and a scope marker, e.g. *ek het nie geweet dat hy nie sou kom nie*. Where a negated relative clause is imbedded in a main clause, sense demands that the scope marker stand at the end of that relative clause, not at the end of the sentence, e.g. *mense wat nie rook nie lewe langer* 'people who don't smoke live longer'.

If a negated main clause is followed by a coordinate clause a scope marker is placed after the first clause, e.g. *hy kan nie kom nie want hy is siek* 'he won't be coming because he's sick'. If the clause following the negated main clause is an infinitive clause, a scope marker is placed at the end of the infinitive clause, e.g. *dis nie so moeilik om Afrikaans te leer nie* 'it isn't so difficult to learn Afrikaans'.

Where negators other than *nie* stand at the end of the sentence, addition of a scope marker is optional, e.g. *ek weet niks (nie)* 'I know nothing', *hy skryf nooit (nie)* 'he never writes', *ek ken niemand (nie)* 'I know nobody'. If *nooit*, *niks*, *niemand* or *nêrens* are uttered in isolation, i.e. not in the context of a sentence but as a reaction to something just stated, *nie* is optional, e.g. *gaan jy dit toelaat/ Nooit (nie)!* 'are you going to allow it? Never!'

The negators *nooit* and *nie* always follow pronominal objects, whether direct or indirect (i.e. those without a preposition), e.g. *hy het my nie gesien nie* 'he didn't see me'. A certain freedom exists as to the position of the negator in clauses containing nominal direct objects whether they be

indefinite or definite, e.g. *ek het nog nooit 'n kar gehad nie* or *ek het 'n kar nog nooit gehad nie* 'I've never had a car', *ek het nog nie die sleutel gevind nie* or *ek het die sleutel nog nie gevind nie* 'I haven't found the key yet'.

## 15.5 Lexis

Afrikaans vocabulary is overwhelmingly of Dutch origin, so much so that on paper at least the two are mutually intelligible, and even aurally after a minimum of exposure to the shifts in pronunciation of the vowels in particular. There are many common instances of Dutch words having either assumed or retained a different meaning from the cognate forms in Dutch, e.g. *aardig* 'peculiar' (Du. 'nice'), *leraar* 'preacher' (Du. 'teacher'), *stadig* 'slow' (Du. 'ceaselessly'). A number of terms previously only heard in the Dutch of seafaring folk have become everyday words in Afrikaans, e.g. *komers* 'blanket' (Du. *kombaars* 'seaman's blanket'), *kombuis* 'kitchen' (Du. 'galley'), *spens* 'pantry'.

As many of the East India Company employees that stayed at the Cape had served in the Indies, as well as the fact that slaves were brought to the Cape from the Indies, a number of Malay words denoting everyday concepts have become an indispensable part of the language, e.g. *nooi* 'girl' (< *nonya*), *kapok* 'the/to snow', *piering* 'saucer', *piesang* 'banana'; *baie* 'much/many, very' (< *banjak*) has almost completely replaced Dutch *veel/heel*. It is possible that Malay had some role to play in the frequency of reduplicated forms in Afrikaans.

As Portuguese, like Malay, was a lingua franca of the Indies in the seventeenth century, some Portuguese loanwords also made their way into Afrikaans, e.g. *bredie* 'stew', *sambreel* 'umbrella', *tronk* 'prison'.

The influence of the indigenous languages (i.e. the Khoisan and Bantu languages) on the lexicon of Afrikaans has been minimal, being limited to a handful of cultural loanwords and a few exclamations.

Despite the fact that a very high proportion of Afrikaners have French surnames, the product of a substantial intake of Huguenot refugees in the 1680s, there is no trace of French influence to be found in Afrikaans, not even on the lexis, with the exception of course of the many French words which were present in Dutch.

Because of a perceived threat to the separate identity of Afrikaners *vis-à-vis* their English-speaking compatriots, there is a longstanding fear of those international loanwords with cognate forms in English such that they are now regarded as dispensable anglicisms with preference being given to indigenous synonyms. This phenomenon has led to an overall impression of the vocabulary of Afrikaans being more Germanic than that of Dutch. Many ingenious neologisms, but above all loan translations from English, further contribute to the overall puristic impression of the vocabulary, e.g.

*lugreëling* 'air conditioning', *rekenariseer* 'to computerize', *toebroodjie* 'sandwich'; *droogskoonmaak* 'dry cleaning', *muurpapier* 'wall paper', *paneelklopper* 'panel beater'.

### **Further Reading**

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