

Univerbation in Afrikaans verbal diminutives

Cora Cavarani-Pots & Engela De Villiers
KU Leuven

This paper concerns the verbal diminutive suffixes *-el* and *-er* in Afrikaans. In previous work (Cavarani-Pots et al. 2023), these suffixes have been analysed on par with their Dutch counterparts. In this paper we present the results of a nonsense word experiment on these suffixes in Afrikaans (94 participants) and Dutch (242 participants). The results show that the Afrikaans participants significantly underperform in guessing the meaning of these suffixes compared to the Dutch participants. We take this to mean that the underlying structure of verbs containing these suffixes is different in the two languages. Based on the three-way division of affix types of Creemers et al. (2018), we follow Cavarani-Pots et al. (2023)'s analysis of the Dutch *-el* and *-er* suffixes as being level Ia suffixes, i.e. suffixes that appear right above the stem they attach to. For Afrikaans, however, we propose that *-el* and *-er* have lost their suffixal status, and have undergone univerbation with the stem.

Keywords: verbal diminutive suffixes, roots, univerbation, Afrikaans

1. Introduction

This paper concerns the verbal suffixes *-el* and *-er* in Afrikaans – two suffixes that are present in Germanic more generally. The *-el* suffix has been studied for German (Weidhaas & Schmid 2015) and Dutch (Audring et al. 2017), and recently also comparatively for Dutch and Afrikaans in parallel with the *-er* suffix (Cavarani-Pots et al. 2023). According to these studies, the *-el* and *-er* suffixes indicate iteration and/or attenuation, as can be seen in examples (1)–(4) for Afrikaans and Dutch, respectively. In examples (1) and (2), the events of bumping up and down and flickering can be interpreted as being repetitive (i.e. iterative) events, while the events in (3) and (4) can be considered to be of low intensity (i.e. attenuated).

- (1) *hobbel*¹/*hobbelen* ‘to bump up and down’
- (2) *blikker/flikkeren* ‘to flicker’
- (3) *doesel/doezelen* ‘to sleep lightly’
- (4) *knapper/knapperen* ‘to crackle’

In previous work (Cavarani-Pots et al. 2023), we have claimed that the Afrikaans and Dutch *-el* and *-er* suffixes are level Ia suffixes, based on the typology of Germanic affixes of Creemers et al. (2018). According to their analysis, which will be discussed in Section 2, level Ia affixes are roots that are positioned closest to the morphological stem. As a response to our previous work which focused on situating the *-el* and *-er* suffixes within Creemers et al. (2018)’s affixal typology, in this paper we shift our attention to the question of whether these morphemes are actually still affixes in Afrikaans and Dutch. Our previous study suggested that the suffixal status of *-el* and *-er* is not as clear in Afrikaans compared to Dutch. In order to test this hypothesis, for this study we conducted a nonsense word experiment on native speakers’ awareness of the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in both languages. The results of this experiment indicate that, in contrast to Dutch speakers, Afrikaans speakers do not seem to recognise the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in Afrikaans as real suffixes anymore. This finding is important for two reasons. First, our study makes an important empirical contribution to the field of comparative Germanic morphology, by showing clearly that even though Afrikaans and Dutch morphology look similar on the surface, closer investigation can reveal unexpected and important differences (De Vos 2003; Conradie 2007; Cavarani-Pots 2020). Second – and this will be the main focus of the second half of this paper – our study can be viewed as a first exploratory study into which types of affixes (in the sense of Creemers et al. (2018)’s three distinct levels of affixes) can undergo univerbation with the stem they attach to. According to Creemers et al. (2018), level Ia affixes are roots that are positioned closest to the lexical stem. Based on our empirical findings, we propose that in Afrikaans, the *-el* and *-er* suffixes have lost their suffixal status, and have undergone univerbation with the root. A theoretical implication of our proposal is that only affixes with level Ia status in the sense of Creemers et al., are able to make this change, given their root status. Univerbation between a stem and a level Ib or level II affix, which we take to be functional heads, is expected to be impossible.

1. In Afrikaans, there is no infinitive marker *-en* present and the infinite form of the verb is similar to the indicative.

The outline of the paper is as follows. In Section 2, we briefly discuss previous work on which the current paper builds, namely Creemers et al. (2018) and Cavirani-Pots et al. (2023). In Section 3, the methodology and results of the non-sense word experiment are presented. Our theoretical analysis of the data is presented in Section 4, and in Section 5, we discuss the implications of our results and theoretical analysis from a broader perspective, and conclude.

2. Previous work

2.1 Creemers et al. (2018)

The typology of Germanic affixes of Creemers et al. (2018) extends the traditional two-way classification of level I and level II affixes (Siegel 1974; Kiparsky 1982; Selkirk 1982) to include a subdivision of level I affixes. They propose this extra subdivision because of categorial flexibility, that is, the observation that some affixes are output flexible and can therefore create more than one category (e.g. both verbs and nouns). The properties associated with each level are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Properties of affixes (Creemers et al. 2018: 50)

Properties	Level I		
	Level Ia	Level Ib	Level II
Can affect stress pattern?	YES	YES	NO
Categorially flexible?	YES	NO	NO
Can attach to a root?	YES	YES	NO
Relative position wrt stem	1	2	3

According to Creemers et al. (2018), the first property of level Ia and level Ib affixes is that the stress pattern changes after affixation, while it stays the same after affixation with level II affixes. Secondly, only level Ia affixes are categorially flexible, which means that these affixes can lead to the creation of more than one category. Neither level Ib nor level II affixes have this property. The third property shows that both level Ia and level Ib affixes can attach to roots, while level II affixes cannot, and lastly, the order of the different affix types is such that level Ia affixes fill the first position after the stem, level Ib affixes the second position, and level II affixes the third, or most peripheral position. In order to account for these facts, Creemers et al. (2018) argue that level Ia affixes are categorially flexible because they are roots, while level Ib and level II affixes are categorially rigid because they

spell out categorial heads. The ordering differences are accounted for by proposing that because level Ia affixes are roots, they are closest to the stem; level Ib affixes can attach to roots and therefore occur just outside level Ia affixes, while level II affixes can only select categorised material causing them to occur most peripherally. As we discuss in Section 4, this proposal by Creemers et al. (2018) will prove to be very useful in understanding which affixes can undergo univerbation.

2.2 Cavarani-Pots et al. (2023)

For Dutch, Creemers et al. (2018) have argued that there are no verbal suffixes with level Ia status. However, they did not investigate the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in their paper. In Cavarani-Pots et al. (2023), we have argued, based on an extensive dictionary and annotation study, that the Dutch and Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* suffixes fill this typological gap, in that they are of level Ia status. This claim is based on the properties of affixes mentioned above: The first property relating to stress-shifting could not be tested in this case, as all of the items in our dataset were monosyllabic and thus, stress-shift could only target the suffix itself. Considering the fact that the vowel in the *-el* and *-er* suffixes is a schwa, these suffixes cannot bear stress. Secondly, we have claimed that suffixation with the *-el* and *-er* suffixes can lead to the creation of both nouns and verbs, making them categorially flexible. That is, we take the *-el* suffix in a noun like *cirkel* ‘circle’ to be the same suffix as in the verb *cirk-el-en* ‘to circle’, and likewise for the *-er* suffix in a noun like *hamer* ‘hammer’ to be the same suffix as in the verb *hameren* ‘to hammer’ (see Cavarani-Pots 2023 for arguments and discussion). This is a defining feature of level Ia suffixes. The *-el* and *-er* suffixes also behave like level Ia suffixes according to the third property, as they can attach to roots (e.g. *kabb-el-en* ‘to ripple (of water)’ and *dobb-er-en* ‘to rock lightly’, with *kabb-* and *dobb-* being non-lexical roots). Lastly, we considered the order of these suffixes with relation to the stem by placing it in a word that contains a level Ib suffix as well. Creemers et al. (2018: 53–54) categorise the Dutch suffix *-ig* as a level Ib suffix, which is the suffix we used for this test. The Afrikaans equivalent of this suffix is *-(e)(r)ig*. In these cases, the *-el* and *-er* suffixes always occur closest to the stem and precede *ig/-(e)(r)ig*, with the reverse order being ungrammatical. This property is illustrated in (5) for Dutch and in (6) for Afrikaans.

(5) *hakk-el-ig* / **hakk-ig-el* ‘stuttering’

(6) *hakk-el-rig* / **hakk-rig-el* ‘stuttering’

The fact that the order of *-el/-er* occurring after the level Ib suffix *-ig/-erig* is ungrammatical, is a strong indication that the *-el/-er* suffixes are of level Ia status, since the only possible order of suffixes is *stem-level Ia-level Ib-level II*.

Even though these properties suggest the level Ia status of the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in Dutch and Afrikaans, one other option arises as well; since level Ia affixes cannot be separated from the root by any material, it might in fact also be the case that they are *part of the root*. Based on contrasting native speaker intuitions of the authors of this paper about the clarity of the meaning contribution (i.e. that of iteration/attenuation) of the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in Afrikaans and Dutch, our previous study led us to hypothesise that this other option of the suffixes being part of the root, is true for Afrikaans. In other words, we changed the focus of our investigation from exploring how these suffixes fit in the Germanic typology of affixes to considering the possibility of them not being suffixes at all in Afrikaans. In order to test this intuition, we conducted a nonsense word experiment, which we discuss in the next section.

3. The experiment

3.1 Methodology

In order to investigate speakers' awareness of the meaning of the *-el* and *-er* suffixes, we set up a nonsense word experiment. Our main assumption was that if speakers score very poorly on guessing the meaning of the suffixes in comparison to that of more productive affixes, this might indicate that these suffixes have lost their suffixal status in the given language. To test the speakers' awareness of the suffixes' meaning, we created two online experiments, one for Dutch and one for Afrikaans, using the software Qualtrics®.

For the main suffixes under investigation, *-el* and *-er*, we invented five nonsense verbs containing the suffix. The proposed meaning of the nonsense verbs' bases were all of a type of verbal semantics that would be compatible with the addition of iterative and/or attenuative meaning (e.g. movement/eating/sound-related meanings). As a control group, we invented two nonsense verbs for a set of five verbal prefixes, which at least for Dutch are taken to be productive (De Haas & Trommelen 1993). These verbal prefixes were: *ver-*, *be-*, *ont-*, *her-*, and *mis-*.² For each nonsense verb, the participant was asked: 'Imagine X means 'to

2. At first sight, it would be more logical to take other verbal suffixes as a control group, rather than verbal prefixes. However, there are only two such suffixes in Dutch and Afrikaans, namely *-ig* and *-eer*. *-ig* is also a completely unproductive suffix in both languages, whose meaning is

X'. What do you think *X-suffix* means?' So a concrete test item would be: 'Imagine *nap* means 'to eat'. What do you think *napper* means?' The informants were asked to type down their answer in a white box, and were encouraged to leave a comment about their reply if necessary. Prior to the task, the informants were instructed on how to execute the task. Upon finishing the task, they filled in a short background questionnaire that controlled for their language background, age, et cetera. The experiment was completed by 242 native speakers of Dutch and 94 native speakers of Afrikaans.³

3.2 Data preparation

Before we could analyse the results of the experiment, we had to manually annotate the answers in the white boxes as given by the informants. As each co-author of this paper is a native speaker of either Dutch or Afrikaans, we could do this task ourselves. Two factors were taken into account in the annotation for a given answer as being 'correct' or 'incorrect', namely (i) whether the informant correctly guessed that the nonsense verb containing the affix was still a verb (i.e. that they realised that attaching the affix did not alter the verbal status of the base), and (ii) whether their description of the meaning of the nonsense verb contained the semantics of the given affix. As for this second factor, for the *-el* and *-er* suffixes we worked with meanings related to iteration and/or attenuation. For the verbal prefixes, we based ourselves on the description of the semantics of these prefixes as given in De Haas & Trommelen (1993).

3.3 Results

Let us start by giving an overview of the averages of correct answers (in percentages) per affix per language. This overview is given in Table 2.⁴

very untransparent, which means it would be a rather bad candidate as a control. As *-eer* was thus the only possible candidate to use in a control group, we decided to just focus on a set of productive verbal prefixes instead.

3. The fact that fewer Afrikaans speakers completed the questionnaire compared to Dutch is unsurprising as there are also fewer native speakers to begin with (25 million for Dutch versus 7 million for Afrikaans). Furthermore, access to internet to complete an online questionnaire is more limited in South Africa as compared to the Netherlands and Flanders. Finally, speakers of Afrikaans are also less used to filling in language questionnaires than Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch speakers.

4. The results of the experiment are Open Access, available via this link: https://osf.io/9zp3s/?view_only=d3bddb253bc345fe8206483e151d1d77.

Table 2. Average of correct answers per affix per language

	Dutch	Afrikaans
	Average correct (%)	Average correct (%)
<i>-el</i>	63.1	36.8
<i>-er</i>	67.0	26.6
<i>be-</i>	79.8	42.6
<i>ver-</i>	66.9	45.8
<i>ont-</i>	89.3	68.6
<i>her-</i>	77.4	70.8
<i>mis-</i>	78.4	64.4

The following observations can be made from this table. First, it is clear that the Dutch speakers significantly outperform the Afrikaans speakers on guessing the meaning of the *-el* and *-er* nonsense verbs (respectively 63,1 and 67,0% correct versus 36,8 and 26,6% correct). Second, the Afrikaans participants more generally perform less well on the task compared to their Dutch peers. Especially so when it comes to the answers to the nonsense verbs containing the prefixes *be-* and *ver-*. We will return to this unexpected finding in the discussion and conclusion section. Third, for both languages, the scores on the *-el* and *-er* suffixes are lower than those on the control group prefixes, however, more so in the case of Afrikaans compared to the case of Dutch. That speakers perform less well on the *-el* and *-er* suffixes is not unexpected, as they are much less productive than the control group prefixes, and speakers therefore have less evidence for their semantics in their daily linguistic input. Most prefixes are furthermore semantically more transparent than the *-el* and *-er* suffixes, which contain a range of meanings connected to iterativity and attenuation. For example, the semantics of *her-* (again) and of *mis-* (wrongly) are much more transparent. However, in the case of Afrikaans, speakers perform really poorly on the *-el* and *-er* suffixes, which we think cannot just be explained by unproductivity and less transparent semantics.⁵ In the next section, we will build on this experimental finding to claim that these two suffixes have lost their suffixal status in Afrikaans.

5. Note that Afrikaans speakers perform even worse on the *-er* suffix (26,6%) than on the *-el* suffix (36,8%). This might be due to the fact that the verbal *-er* suffix is homophonous with the comparative *-er* suffix and nominalizer *-er*, which might have made the task harder for *-er* nonsense verbs than for the *-el* ones. The answers of the speakers in fact often reflected misinterpretations in terms of word class. Note also that this problem does not arise in Dutch, as Dutch has an infinitive marker, showing explicitly to the informants that the nonsense word is a verb, whereas Afrikaans does not have such a marker. Hence, the *-er* nonsense word could have been misinterpreted as the comparative form of a nonsense adjective or as an agentive noun.

Let us now focus on the percentage of speakers per number of correct answers for the *-el* and *-er* suffixes. Recall that for each suffix, five test items were used. This makes it interesting to see what the spread is of participants over the six logical possibilities, namely 0 correct answers, 1 correct answer, 2 correct answers, 3 correct answers, 4 correct answers, and 5 correct answers – per suffix. The data are given per language, for Dutch in Table 3 and for Afrikaans in Table 4.

Table 3. Percentage of participants (pp) per number of correct answers per suffix for Dutch

Suffix	0	1	2	3	4	5
	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)
<i>-el</i>	6.2	9.5	13.2	21.1	26.4	23.6
<i>-er</i>	6.2	6.2	12.8	23.1	26.4	25.2

Table 4. Percentage of participants (pp) per number of correct answers per suffix for Afrikaans

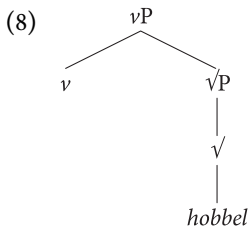
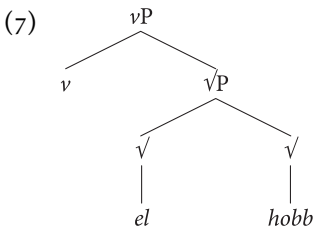
Suffix	0	1	2	3	4	5
	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)	pp (%)
<i>-el</i>	28.7	23.4	22.3	13.8	6.4	5.3
<i>-er</i>	47.9	19.1	15.9	9.6	4.3	3.2

Comparing these two tables, we can see that Dutch and Afrikaans participants show mirror images of each other. That is, whereas the majority of Dutch speakers are spread over 3, 4, and 5 correct answers, the majority of Afrikaans speakers are spread over 0, 1, and 2 correct answers. We take this as further evidence that these suffixes are not true suffixes anymore in Afrikaans; speakers cannot guess their meaning anymore independently of the stem of the verb.⁶

6. As for the groups of Afrikaans participants who did guess the meaning of 3, 4 or 5 nonsense *-el* or *-er* verbs correctly, we suspect that these participants have an above average linguistic awareness, possibly due to their type of education and/or profession. Unfortunately, we did not include questions related to type of education and profession in the background questionnaire, which means we cannot check whether this assumption is correct. Future work might look into the effect of education and profession when it comes to a different performance in morphological decomposition in the future.

4. Theoretical analysis

As mentioned in the previous section, we take the fact that the Afrikaans speakers perform so poorly on guessing the meaning of the *-el* and *-er* suffixes to mean that they have lost their suffixal status in the language. The Dutch speakers performed well on guessing the meaning of the suffixes, which we take to mean that our previous analysis of these suffixes as level Ia suffixes is still correct (Cavirani-Pots et al. 2023). Thus, for Dutch we argue that the *-el* and *-er* suffixes are categorially flexible suffixes, and thus that these suffixes should be seen as roots rather than the exponence of a functional head (following Creemers et al. 2018). For Afrikaans, however, we propose that all instances of *-el* and *-er* verbs (which are respectively 130 and 53 verbs, see Cavirani-Pots et al. 2023), are cases of univerbation. That is, we propose that, diachronically, the ‘real’ root (e.g. *hob* in *hobbel*) and the suffixal root (*-el* or *-er*) have fused, and are now stored as monomorphemic in the lexicon of Afrikaans speakers.⁷ The difference in underlying structure is illustrated in the two treelets below: (7) illustrates the structure of the verbal stem *hobbel* in Dutch, and (8) the structure of the same verbal stem in Afrikaans.⁸



7. Note that an alternative possibility should be mentioned as well, namely that in the Cape Dutch pidgin stage of Afrikaans, Dutch *-el* and *-er* verbs were already analysed as monomorphemic, and directly stored as such in the lexicon of those speakers. A detailed diachronic investigation is needed in order to test which of the two analyses is the correct one. We leave this for future research.

8. Note that in the treelet in (13), we combine the ‘real’ root and affixal root by letting the former project into a root projection. We only do this for ease of exposition, and do not take a stance here in the complex theoretical debate on how two roots are combined in syntax. See among others Zhang (2007); Harley (2009) and De Belder (2017) for relevant discussions.

The phenomenon of univerbation, in which two morphemes get reanalysed as monomorphemic, has been discussed extensively from a diachronic perspective, but never from a generative perspective (see for references e.g. Himmelmann 2004; Brinton & Traugott 2005). As we take the latter perspective here, it is interesting to reflect a moment on what our analysis means for a potential generative account for univerbation phenomena. Within generative, separationist approaches to morphology like Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993; Harley & Noyer 1999), it is often assumed that lexical items should be seen as featureless roots in the lexicon, whereas functional items should be seen as a (bundle of) functional feature(s) (Halle & Marantz 1993; Harley & Noyer 1999; Borer 2005). Creemers et al. (2018), building on De Belder (2011) and Lowenstamm (2014), have argued that some derivational affixes should rather be seen as roots than as functional heads, namely the level Ia affixes. If we assume that the univerbation in Afrikaans took place based on the proposed underlying structure for Dutch *-el* and *-er* verbs as given in (7), this means that univerbation has taken place between two roots. Keeping the strict dichotomy between featureless roots and functional features in the lexicon, this also means that we predict univerbation to be only possible between (i) a lexical item (root) and a level Ia affix (i.e. as in the case of *-el* and *-er* verbs in Afrikaans), and (ii) between two functional heads (e.g. as in *each other* in English, see Haas (2007) for discussion). Even though testing whether this prediction is indeed the case for all univerbation phenomena as found in the literature is far beyond the scope of this paper, intuitively it does make sense that a lexical item could only absorb the meaning of an affix whose semantics is neither very transparent (e.g. has a wide range of meanings, or rather opaque semantics, as is the case with level Ia affixes), nor clearly functional. In future work, we hope to address this prediction in a systematic way, as well as a more fully worked out proposal of the exact process of these two roots ‘fusing’ together.

Our analysis of Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* verbs as monomorphemic units containing a single root raises a potential issue when it comes to the complexity of the semantics of the newly formed root (e.g. *hobbel*). Within Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993; Harley & Noyer 1999), the root is taken to be the most bare form of semantics, namely an instantiation of a ‘pure concept’ (Harley (2009), see e.g. Acquaviva (2009) for discussion, and Alexiadou (2014) and chapters therein). However, two remarks are in order here. Firstly, the author of this paper that is an Afrikaans speaker has the intuition that the semantics of iterativity and/or attenuation is much less prominent in the Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* verbs as compared to the Dutch ones, and her intuition is shared by other native speakers we have consulted. This means that the root semantics of these verbs would not be too complex in terms of something being a ‘pure concept’. Second, recent

work on root semantics by Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2020) show that this semantics can be more complex than has been previously assumed. We hope to investigate the potential difference in semantics between the Dutch and Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* verbs and the implications of their differences in terms of root semantics in future work.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we have presented data from a nonsense word experiment which we used to investigate Dutch and Afrikaans speakers' awareness of the meaning of the verbal suffixes *-el* and *-er*. In previous work, we argued that in both languages, these verbal suffixes have the status of level Ia suffixes in terms of Creemers et al.'s (2018) three-way division of derivational morphology. However, results of our experiment showed that the Afrikaans speakers perform very weakly in guessing these suffixes' meaning, especially so compared to their Dutch peers, which we took to mean that in Afrikaans these suffixes have in fact lost their suffixal status. In the analysis section, we proposed that in Afrikaans, the lexical item in *-el* and *-er* verbs and the suffixes themselves have undergone univerbation in an earlier stage of the language, which means that synchronically, these verbs are stored as monomorphemic units in the lexicon. Note that our data also point towards the correctness of Creemers et al.'s (2018) proposal for the existence of a level Ia class of affixes, at least from a generative perspective. Without this level, which is assumed to be a root, it would have been hard to account for the difference in underlying structure between Dutch and Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* verbs. That is, if we only had the classical two-way division between level I and level II affixes, the *-er* and *-el* would have been level I affixes, which before Creemers et al. have been assumed to be functional material. Functional material, such as functional features, can never fuse with a root, however, as this would then lead to a violation of the strict dichotomy between lexical items as featureless roots and functional items as (bundles of) functional features (but see Klockmann 2017 for a different view).⁹

9. Note that we thus predict that for a level II or level Ib suffix to be able undergo univerbation with the root, they first need to grammaticalise into level Ia suffixes. Changing from a higher level status to a lower is precisely what must have happened to the *-el* and *-er* suffixes in Dutch, since these suffixes were much more productive in earlier stages of Dutch, and productivity is generally assumed to be a property of level II and to a lesser extent level Ib affixes (see Creemers et al. (2018) and references therein.)

More generally, it looks like Afrikaans derivational morphology is less productive and more often undergoes univerbation with the base, beyond just the *-el* and *-er* suffixes. Recall from Subsection 3.3 that also on the verbal prefixes *be-* and *ver-*, the Afrikaans participants scored unexpectedly weak (respectively 42,6% correct and 45,8%, compared to Dutch 79,9% and 66,9%). Even though an in-depth analysis of this finding is left for future research, we did check whether these prefixes are possibly less productive in Afrikaans than in Dutch. We checked this by taking a random sample of 150 Dutch verbs containing the *ver-* prefix, and a same sized sample for those containing *be-*, and we manually checked in the *Woordeboek vir die Afrikaanse Taal* ‘Dictionary for the Afrikaans language’ (online, accessed via Virtuele instituut vir Afrikaans, ViVA) whether these verbs also exist in Afrikaans. We found that out of the 150 Dutch *ver-* verbs, 75 are hardly ever used or sound archaic, and out of the 150 Dutch *be-* verbs, this is so for 85 of the verbs. Doing the same exercise the other way around (that is, taking a random sample of 150 Afrikaans *ver-* and 150 Afrikaans *be-* verbs, and checking the existence of their cognates in the Dutch dictionary the Van Dale), gave significantly different results: out of 150 Afrikaans *ver-* verbs, only 7 are not attested in Dutch, and out of 150 Afrikaans *be-* verbs, only 4 are not attested in Dutch. These findings are thus an indication for *ver-* and *be-* to be less productive in Afrikaans than in Dutch, and potentially for them to have undergone univerbation with the lexical item they attach to as well. Future work should address the issue of morphological decomposition in Afrikaans complex verbs (and in extension, complex elements of all word classes) in comparison to Dutch in more detail. The fact that modern Afrikaans (partly) developed from pidgin varieties such as Cape Dutch pidgin (den Besten 2012), might have been an important factor in the synchronic possibility of less transparent or simply different derivational morphology compared to the modern variety – modern Dutch – of one of its superstrate languages. Note also that this potential difference between Dutch and Afrikaans derivational morphology and the capacity of their native speakers to morphologically decompose complex elements fit with work that shows cross-linguistic differences in morphological decomposition and awareness. For instance, it has been shown for English (Rastle et al. 2000; Marslen-Wilson et al. 1994) and French (Longtin et al. 2003) that speakers in priming experiments do not show a priming effect with semantically opaque complex words. A priming effect is in this case the effect of e.g. recognising a semantically opaque complex word with an affix in it faster when before a semantically transparent complex word with that same affix has been shown. In other languages, however, such as Arabic (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson 2004), Hebrew (Feldman & Bentin 1994; Frost et al. 2000), German (Smolka et al. 2009) and Dutch (Creemers 2020), speakers do show priming effects with semantically opaque words. As discussed in Creemers (2020), it has been argued that

these cross-linguistic differences can be explained by the overall productivity of the morphological system of a given language (Smolka et al. 2009). In the case of Afrikaans, we know that the morphological system is less productive, at the very least for the inflectional part of it, as Afrikaans has much less inflection than Dutch (Combrink 1990). This might in turn mean that Afrikaans language learners have a lower degree of morphological awareness in general, and therefore will not just assume a complex underlying structure for any bimorphemic word they encounter. Our results furthermore also relate to what has been found for complex Latinate words in English, such as *successor*, *casualty*, et cetera, which have been suggested to be stored as wholes in the lexicon (see Creemers (2020) for experimental evidence and extensive discussion). Just like the Latinate words in English that came into the language via language contact and borrowing, the source for the Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* words is probably to be found in an early stage of the development of Afrikaans, during which these verbs were borrowed from an earlier variety of Dutch. In parallel then to the Latinate words in English, these verbs in Afrikaans are most likely stored as a unit.

Concluding, we hope to have shown that a different analysis of Dutch and Afrikaans *-el* and *-er* verbs is required, and that with our analysis of these verbs in the latter language within the generative framework we have made interesting predictions regarding the phenomenon of univerbation, the semantics of roots, and the potential relation between a language's morphological productivity and speakers' awareness of morphological decomposition. More research on the potentially large amount of cross-linguistic differences in the Dutch and Afrikaans morphological system is called for.

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Address for correspondence

Cora Cavirani-Pots
CRISSP/KU Leuven
Kerkhoflei 43
Mechelen, 2800
Belgium
cora.pots@kuleuven.be

Co-author information

Engela De Villiers
CRISSP/KU Leuven & Stellenbosch University
engela.devilliers@kuleuven.be

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