

## Denominal adjectives in Afrikaans: The cases of *·agtig* and *·e-rig*

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*In Afrikaans, an understudied West-Germanic language, at least two suffixes that transform nouns into adjectives exist: ·agtig as in jagluiperd·agtig ‘cheetah-like’ and ·e-rig/·rig as in hanswors·e-rig ‘clownish’. These suffixes denote meanings that could be paraphrased as ‘with some of the characteristics of N’. This article discusses whether or not these affixes communicate evaluative meaning, and if so, what these meanings could entail. To adhere to a usage-based approach, denominal adjectives ending with either ·agtig or ·e-rig were extracted from corpora available on the website of the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (VivA). Both high and low frequency types were analysed. Choosing constructions with frequencies as low as 1, serves to describe the range in which these affixes combine with different nouns, without focusing on high frequency constructions that are possibly lexicalised and unanalysable. The constructions were split and morphologically annotated to show the bases, suffixes, and possible linking morphemes. It was evident that certain types of nouns preferred a specific affix; that ·agtig tends to be separated from the noun it combines with by a hyphen; and that using either of these affixes will elicit an evaluative, attenuative meaning.*

**Keywords:** Afrikaans, denominal adjectives, descriptive, evaluative, morphology

### 1. Introduction

Word-forming processes are common in Germanic languages, for example, adding *·ish*<sup>1</sup> to *clown* in English creates an adjective from a noun. The same word-forming process is identifiable in Afrikaans, a West-Germanic language closely related to Dutch, as well. In Afrikaans, nouns such as *skedel* ‘scull’ and *sfinks* ‘sphinx’ as illustrated in (1) are adjectivised by adding specific suffixes. By adding *·agtig* to *skedel* or *·e-rig* to *sfinks*, adjectives are formed. The meanings that these affixes contribute range from ‘with some characteristics of N’ to ‘not completely N, but in some way like N’.

- (1) a. *skedel·agtig*  
scull·ADJR  
‘scull-like’ (VivA, 2020a)
- b. *sfinks·e-rig*  
sphinx·LK·ADJR  
‘sphinx-like’ (VivA, 2020a)<sup>2</sup>

In this article, the affixes *·agtig* and *·e-rig* are described with particular focus on: 1) whether or not these affixes communicate evaluative meaning; and 2) what that meaning is, should a meaning be attributable in the first place. The discussion on the meaning of these affixes will

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1 Hyphens are interpreted as graphemic linking morphemes; they are not used to indicate morpheme boundaries. In this article, middle dots (·) are used to indicate morpheme boundaries, following the tradition of Bauer (2003) and by Trollip & Van Huyssteen (2018).

2 All the examples used in this article are taken either from the Comprehensive or Exclusive corpus available on the website of the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (VivA). To limit unnecessary repetition, the source of every example is not indicated hereafter.

be based on what is known concerning evaluative meaning as well as the dataset that was collected for this article. Moreover, the discussion is structured as follows: Section 2 contains a short discussion on evaluative word meaning and what is known about these affixes in Afrikaans; Section 3 outlines data collection procedures and presents the analysis; Section 4 offers a summary of salient findings and concludes by presenting possibilities for future research. It is noteworthy to mention the novel dataset used in this research, which comprises illustrative constructions from contemporary Afrikaans corpora.

## **2. Evaluative meaning**

A brief overview of evaluative meaning is offered in this section. Expressive, intensive, and/or emotive language use has been of interest to many linguists. From Bowers (1963) investigating intensification and related social aspects, to Scalise (1984) developing evaluative morphology; and from Stump (1993) and Bauer (1997) expanding thereon, to Potts (2007) identifying characteristics of expressive language like the independence and untransferability of expressive meaning. A more recent language-specific study focuses on the ways in which emotion is built into the structure of certain Dutch constructions (Corver 2016). There are several studies in which different aspects of evaluative language, in general or specific languages, are described. Examples of other studies include Fortin (2011), who focuses on the semantics of mainly Spanish evaluative affixes; Ghesquière (2017), who distinguishes between intensifying and focusing; and Hübler (1998), who studies ways in which emotions have diachronically manifested in language. Furthermore, a contemporary and comprehensive work by Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015a) contains chapters illustrating the range of approaches to evaluative language (specifically evaluative morphology) and it contains numerous language specific chapters as well.

Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015b), from a morphological perspective, indicate that studies that investigate evaluative affixes generally lack explicit definitions. However, Liebrecht (2015: 29) does formulate a specific definition for evaluativity and defines it as the linguistic expression of a speaker's or author's personal feelings, stance or judgements on an object, state of affairs or ways of doing. When it comes to defining evaluativity, there is at least consensus that the language user is communicating a judgement. Existing definitions of evaluative language tend to be formulated by means of characteristics that are or are not current depending on the construction. One example is Stump (1993: 12-13) who formulates properties of evaluative rules that include changing the semantics of the base and inheriting or retaining some of the base's morphosyntactic features. Similarly, Potts' (2007) characteristics of expressive language forms the basis of his definition. Both acknowledge that not all the criteria they identify will always be present and that it depends on the construction and the context. Hunston (2011: 3) agrees with the difficulty of trying to assign a set of linguistic forms to the range of what can be termed evaluative language. In contrast to the formulation of certain criteria for what could be termed evaluative language, Bauer (1997: 564) concludes that evaluative word meaning is a result of a number of normal morphological processes rather than a separate type of morphology. In essence, disparity in defining evaluative language is apparent.

Studies in which aspects of evaluative language use in Afrikaans are addressed, either focus on syntactic constructions or are outdated. Studies that mention or partially discuss Afrikaans evaluative constructions include Combrink (1967), Coetzee (1983), Coetzee &

Kruger (2004), Feinauer (1981), and Van Huyssteen (1996). In these older studies, compounded adjectives, diminutives, curse words, as well as Afrikaans sexual expressions are the topics of discussion. Recent studies, including Berghoff (2016), Dekeukelaere (2016), and Van Beveren (2016) are theoretically situated within constructionalisation and focus on Afrikaans syntactic or adverbial constructions. Existing research on Afrikaans evaluative constructions is limited as not all the constructions or studies are specifically labelled as evaluative, emotive, or intensive.

Considering the focus of this article, only sources necessary to give context and to formulate a concise definition of evaluative meaning have been considered. Evaluative meaning is taken to entail descriptive, but also non-referential meaning indicating a judgement by the speaker or language user. The meaning the construction has is dependent on the language user's judgement or perspective when the construction is being used. Afrikaans has not benefited widely from these discussions yet. Due to how broad the definition is and how the evaluative meaning itself can extend, this article is limited to the attenuative meaning that is highlighted by the use of *·agtig* and *·e-rig* in Afrikaans denominal adjectives.

### 2.1 Attenuation and pejoration

Attenuation of any value is personal and is, by implication, evaluative. Hence, the researcher postulates that the meaning(s) that *·agtig* and *·e-rig* contribute are attenuative in nature. Amelioration, a concept related to attenuation, is one of the main categories of evaluative word meaning that Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015b) identify. The other main categories of evaluative word meaning that are identified are diminutivation, augmentation, and pejoration. One of the classes that Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015b) list as an evident functional category from existing literature is 'approximation/reduction/attenuation'. There is, therefore, a conceptual connection between attenuation and approximation. To approximate word meaning entails toning down intent or commitment to the description, be it in terms of a request or an opinion. To refer to a someone as *clownish* and not outright as a *clown* illustrates this non-commitment, approximation or threat mitigation. Focusing on attenuation as part of evaluative word meaning, and more specifically in Afrikaans with reference to the suffixes *·agtig* and *·e-rig*, adds a descriptive dimension that previous studies have yet to explore.

### 2.2 Deriving adjectives in Afrikaans

Nouns, as a major word class, are common input for affixes that form adjectives or adverbs in Afrikaans. Both adjectivising affixes that are the focus of this article, namely *·agtig* and *·e-rig*, commonly take nouns as bases. The morphological function of these affixes to derive adjectives has neither been disputed in literature concerning Afrikaans nor will it be disputed in this article. Rather than uncertainty about the morphology of *·agtig* and *·e-rig*, there is a lack of consensus about their semantic content. Three works that focus on Afrikaans morphology form the basis for what is known about *·agtig* and *·e-rig* in Afrikaans linguistics: Combrink (1990), Kempen (1969), and Van Huyssteen (2017).

According to Kempen (1969: 416-417) derivations with *·agtig* are more common in Afrikaans in comparison to other derivational forms. He discusses *·agtig* with reference to its word-categorical functionality, its semantics, as well as its diachrony and productivity. According to its word-categorical function, *·agtig* takes either nouns, verbs, or adjectives as input and the result is always an adjective. Semantically, Kempen (1969) distinguishes five

possible meanings specifically with reference to constructions with noun bases. Afrikaans examples from the dataset used in this paper have been added to illustrate Kempen's categories, except for category (iii) that is illustrated using two of Kempen's examples:

- i. If the noun base is a name or something associated with a person, *·agtig* pertains to mostly physical and stereotypical-negative resemblances, e.g., *Mozart-·agtig* 'Mozartian' and *Kafka-·agtig* 'Kafkaesque'.
- ii. If the noun base is an animal and the whole construction is used to describe a person, the same meaning is as in (i) is also ascribed, e.g., *bobbejaan·agtig* 'baboon-like' and *krap·agtig* 'crablike'.
- iii. In the case of animal or plant names as base nouns, constructions with *·agtig* are nominalised and pluralised with *·es* and signal scientific membership of the family or genus, e.g., *lelie·agtig-e-s* 'other lilylike plants' and *skimmel·agtig-e-s* 'other mouldlike plants'.
- iv. When minerals, fruits, etc. are the bases and are contrasted with forms that can also take *·e-rig*, the forms with *·agtig* indicate a physical or imagined resemblance, e.g., *peper·agtig* 'pepperlike' and *ui·e·agtig* 'onion-like'.
- v. If the noun base is a body part, bodily fluid, or illness, *·agtig* indicates complications brought on by the noun base, e.g., *kramp·agtig* 'crampy' and *senuwee·agtig* 'nervous'.

It is noteworthy that Kempen (1969: 418) mentions the pejorative nature of denominal adjectives ending with *·agtig* in passing. He illustrates this meaning by contrasting examples that can either take *·agtig* or *·e-rig*, but he does not elaborate any further. Besides the implied attenuative meaning in four of the five semantic categories (iii) appears to be an exception; he also neglects to explicitly state that *·agtig* has attenuative meaning. It is also not clear whether category (iv) accommodates resemblances that are not exclusively physical or exclusively imagined. For example, when saying someone is *kat·agtig* 'catlike', it is possible to imply that the person looks or acts like a cat (physical) or that they share characteristics like sleeping through the day or push objects off surfaces.

In his discussion of *·e-rig* Kempen (1969: 460-463) includes allomorphs of the affix (*·rig*, *·de-rig* and *·te-rig*) in his analysis, with *·e-rig* being the allomorph responsible for 85.17% of his data.<sup>3</sup> He discusses *·e-rig* in identical categories as in the discussion of *·agtig*, with an important difference regarding the semantic content. Where Kempen distinguishes quite specific meanings for adjectives with *·agtig*, the only meaning he specifies for adjectives with *·e-rig* is that they indicate perceived tendencies that are inherently pejorative. He does not elaborate on this pejorative nature any further.

More than twenty years later, Combrink (1990: 39, 44) lists *·agtig* and *·e-rig* in his updated monograph of Afrikaans morphology. In his discussion of affixes that possibly have emotive meaning, Combrink (1990: 92) does not specifically mention these affixes. What he does say about Afrikaans affixes in general is that it will most probably be the case that affixes in Afrikaans have mixed meanings containing some element of grammatical, lexical, and emotive meaning. He spends a chapter discussing *·agtig* in Afrikaans and includes an addendum with a list of collected constructions (Combrink 1990:149-162, 413-415). Like Kempen, Combrink distinguishes several possible meanings for constructions affixed with

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<sup>3</sup> The insertion of the middle dot in the cases of these affixes are additions made by the author of this article, not by Kempen (1969). For purposes of this article, these alternatives were not included in the data retrieval or the discussion.

*-agtig*: ‘somewhat X’, ‘like X’, ‘with a great deal of X’, ‘tend to X’, and ‘part of the X-genus’. Combrink (1990) argues against the pejorative nature of *-agtig* that Kempen (1969) advocates, stating that the negative interpretation of the affix is due to the base used and other non-grammatical assumptions with reference to meaning, not exclusively due to the use of *-agtig*.

The most recent account of Afrikaans morphology, that of Van Huyssteen (2017), serves as a modern introduction to students of linguistics. In his concise account, almost three decades after Combrink, Van Huyssteen (2017) only mentions *-agtig* as a Germanic adjectiviser. He does not elaborate on its possible semantic meaning(s).

The works of Combrink and Kempen are applicable to this research for two overarching reasons. Firstly, when considering meaning in general and the meaning of these affixes, Combrink’s statement about the combined grammatical, lexical, and emotive meaning of affixes is important. It pertains to one basic tenet of cognitive grammar (hereafter CG): CG is centred around the principle that meaning is encyclopaedic and cannot be separated into stringent linguistic or non-linguistic forms of meaning (Langacker 1987). Secondly, the semantic categories they identify for denominal adjectives with *-agtig* will be used in the annotation of the dataset to test its practical use. If Kempen and Combrink’s approaches to meaning are combined, they represent how the evaluative meaning of *-agtig* and *-erig* will be viewed: The affixes, noun bases, and language users are all influences when it comes to the overall attenuative meaning of the final construction.

### 3. Denominal adjective dataset

#### 3.1 Collection and description

In an effort to investigate what is claimed about these affixes in previous publications, usage-based data are needed. In this case, the data have been extracted from two corpora on the website of the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (VivA). The constructions in the datasets were retrieved from the Comprehensive corpus<sup>4</sup> and the Exclusive corpus.<sup>5</sup> The first step in extracting the items consisted of using a regular expression to retrieve all the tokens ending with *-agtig* and *-erig*. However, not all words in Afrikaans ending with *-agtig* or *-erig* are analysable as nouns with the relevant suffix. Examples that were extracted from the initial data that illustrate the afore-mentioned consideration are shown in (2) and (3).

- (2)
- a. *aandagt--ig [sic]*  
attention·ADJR  
‘attentive’
  - b. *be·magt·ig*  
VR·might·ADJR  
‘empower’
  - c. *Sotho--·magtig*  
Sotho·LK·might·ADJR  
‘able to speak Sotho’

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4 Version 1.7 of this corpus, as on 6 May 2020 contains a total of 225,103,429 tokens. More information available at <http://korpus.viva-afrikaans.org/whitelab/explore/corpus>

5 Version 1.8 of this corpus, as on 6 May 2020 contains a total of 40,625,503 tokens. More information available at <http://korpus.viva-afrikaans.org/whitelab/explore/corpus>

- (3) a. *flits·berig*  
flash·article  
'short article'
- b. *doelgerig*  
goal·oriented  
'goal-oriented'
- c. *...gerig*  
...aimed  
'aimed'

In addition to removing the constructions as shown in the examples in (2) and (3), manually removing duplicates, as well as attending to spelling, typing, and splitting errors were necessary. Complex derivations like *kleindorpie·agtig* lit. 'small town-ish' > 'narrowminded' were also excluded from the final dataset as they are not analysable as a noun and an affix. Where alternative realisations of constructions surfaced, only ones conforming to established writing and spelling rules were included in the final dataset. For example, *katt·e·rig* 'catty' was realised in the corpora as *katt·e·rig*, *Katt·e·rig*, *\*kat·e·rig*, *KATt·e·rig*, and *KATT·E·RIG*. Only *katt·e·rig* is part of the final dataset with the summed frequency of all the realisations, excluding the spelling errors' frequency. Tokens where a construction was realised with and without a hyphen or other linking element (either the *·e·*, *·s·* or *·er·*) were analysed as separate instances. For example, both the constructions in (4) were included as separate constructions because the hyphen is used in one realisation and not in the other. Trollip & Van Huyssteen (2018) discuss the position and influence of hyphens and other linking elements in complex Afrikaans constructions, so the matter will not be repeated here. The reason why the other linking elements were annotated in the final dataset but do not form part of the discussion in this article, is that the *·e·* in *·e·rig* is argued to be a systematic linking element that forms part of the affix. The annotation of linking elements will undoubtedly assist future research on the structure of complex constructions, but it is not used further in this article.

- (4) a. *fariseër·agtig*  
pharisee·ADJR  
'pharisaical/hypocritical'
- b. *fariseër·-·agtig*  
pharisee·LK·ADJR  
'pharisaical/hypocritical'

A summary of the extracted tokens is given in Table 1. The reason for the original disparity in the distribution of the extracted tokens in the first step is attributed to the size difference of the corpora. The Exclusive corpus is roughly 18% the size of the Comprehensive corpus. It is interesting to note that the final count of *·agtig* constructions is more than that of *·e·rig* constructions. The complete annotated dataset is available in the repository of the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Link to the data repository: <https://repo.sadilar.org/handle/20.500.12185/7>.

Table 1: Summary of extracted dataset

	<i>·agtig</i>	<i>·e-rig</i>
Total types from the Comprehensive corpus	811	1680
Total types from the Exclusive corpus	268	550
Total types extracted	1079	2230
Total constructions in the final dataset after removing doubles, typing errors and constructions not analysable as nouns and affixes	<b>432</b>	<b>250</b>

### 3.2 Method

Owing to the size of the dataset, it was possible to extract, clean as well as morphologically and semantically analyse the constructions by hand. The dataset was divided into two separate sortable files, one containing constructions with *·agtig* and the other constructions with *·e-rig*. The first phase of the analysis consisted of splitting the constructions and identifying their bases (nouns in all cases) and linking elements if there were any present. The nouns were further categorised as being either a general Afrikaans noun (e.g., *slang* ‘snake’) or a named entity/proper name (e.g., *Brown*).<sup>7</sup> Random examples from the dataset are included in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, which illustrate some of the constructions and the different possible annotations. In first column of Table 2.1, the full construction appears, with the total frequency of the construction in the dataset in the next column. The third column specifies the noun base; the linking element, if there was one present, is indicated in the fourth column with ‘n/a’ representing no linking element. The fifth column indicates whether the bases were tagged as either named entities (abbreviated to NE) or general Afrikaans nouns (abbreviated to N). The sixth column specifies one of Kempen’s categories for the specific construction, and the seventh column one of Combrink’s categories. In the table, PIR is an abbreviation for ‘physical or imagined resemblance’ and LX is an abbreviation for ‘like X’ where ‘X’ indicates the noun base. The number of syllables of the noun base is indicated in the eighth column, while the number of syllables in the whole construction is indicated in the ninth column. Table 2.2 mirrors Table 2.1 bar the two semantic category columns as *·e-rig* denominal adjectives were not semantically categorised due to neither Kempen nor Combrink identifying categories for denominal adjectives ending with *·e-rig*. Most of the annotated categories in the tables were chosen so as to give an account of the structural composition of the constructions. The two extra columns in Table 2.1 (columns 6 and 7) are meant to give an account of the semantic content of denominal adjectives ending with *·agtig*.

<sup>7</sup> For purposes of this article, *named entity* will be used when reference is made to proper names.

Table 2.1: Examples from the *-agtig* annotated dataset

Denominal adjective	Total frequency	Noun base	LK	Base is a named entity (NE) or common noun (N)	Kempen category	Combrink category	Syllables of base	Syllables of construction
<i>bergagtig</i>	137	berg	n/a	N	PIR	LX	1	3
<i>grasagtig</i>	6	gras	n/a	N	PIR	LX	1	3
<i>kinder-agtig</i>	584	kind	-+er	N	PIR	LX	1	4
<i>lymerig</i>	10	lym	e	N	PIR	LX	1	3
<i>Madiba-agtig</i>	2	Madiba	-	NE	PIR	LX	3	5

Table 2.2: Examples from the *-erig* annotated dataset

Denominal adjective	Total frequency	Noun base	LK	Base is a named entity (NE) or common noun (N)	Syllables of base	Syllables of construction
<i>bossurig</i>	11	bos	e	N	1	3
<i>griepurig</i>	30	griep	e	N	1	3
<i>Jensma-erig</i>	1	Jensma	e+-	NE	2	4
<i>lymerig</i>	10	lym	e	N	1	3
<i>stok</i>	107	stok	e	N	1	3

### 3.3 Results and discussion

Semantic annotation was performed to discern the attenuative nature of these constructions' meaning. The categories used to annotate the constructions are the categories identified by Kempen (1969) and Combrink (1990) as discussed in Section 2.2. Both identified specific categories for *-agtig*-constructions while stating that constructions with *-erig* are either always pejorative (Kempen) or that their meaning is made up of many components not limited to only the suffix (Combrink). Only two of the five categories Kempen identified for *-agtig* were used, whereas only one of Combrink's five categories was used. Categories were excluded because the noun bases do not allow verbal or adjectival interpretations, and the category of plant or animal families was not present in the available data.<sup>8</sup> Owing to the broad and/or overlapping formulation of the categories in which *-agtig* constructions could be divided, annotation proved challenging as the results show. Most of the constructions were annotated as Kempen's "physical or imagined resemblance" (abbreviated to PIR), considering that the other categories explicitly specify a physical or external resemblance. Discerning whether the resemblance that is being signalled in any of the constructions refers to a physical characteristic, metaphorical trait, or imagined resemblance is complex. One example that illustrates ambiguity as an instance of the afore-mentioned complexity, is *duiwel-agtig* 'devilish'. This denominal

<sup>8</sup> When considering this category, it is necessary to highlight that *-agtig* constructions forming part of this category require additional suffixation that changes the constructions into nouns.

adjective could either be categorised as “external resemblance when describing a person” (abbreviated to ERP), or PIR considering that the broad formulation of PIR includes physical and metaphorical resemblances. It is plausible that calling someone *duiwel·agtig* encompasses metaphorical traits like untrustworthiness or being evil. The same challenge was faced with Combrink’s categories that are even more generally formulated than Kempen’s. Two of Combrink’s categories are ‘Somewhat X’ (abbreviated to SX) and ‘Like X’ (abbreviated to LX), where ‘X’ represents the noun. All the constructions formed with *·agtig* can easily be placed in the LX category, as can every construction with *·e·rig*.

The semantic annotation of *·agtig* denominal adjectives resulted in 12 occurrences being categorised in Kempen’s ‘illness or disease caused by’ (abbreviated to IDC) category, and the 420 others as PIR. Examples from the dataset categorised as IDC appear in (5) and examples of PIR in (6). With reference to Combrink’s categories, only the LX category was used because the SX category requires a verb base to be paraphrased accordingly. The semantic annotation confirms these affixes’ attenuative meaning, albeit broadly. The need for or feasibility of clear-cut categories that distinguish different types of attenuation is an avenue that should be explored in future research.

- (5) a. *kanker·agtig*  
cancer·ADJR  
‘cancerlike’  
b. *koors·agtig*  
fever·ADJR  
‘feverish’
- (6) a. *dier·agtig*  
animal·ADJR  
‘animallike’  
b. *gras·agtig*  
grass·ADJR  
‘grasslike’

There are three notable aspects from the data that will be statistically considered. The first aspect pertains to constructions occurring only once in the dataset, also known as hapax legomena. Examples of hapaxes from the dataset are given in (7). Of the 432 *·agtig* constructions, 234 appear only once. In the case of the 250 *·e·rig* constructions, 105 are hapax legomena. There seems to be a significant relationship between *·agtig* and the coining of once-off denominal adjectives,  $X^2(1, N = 682) = 9.38, p = .002$ . The presence of this significant relationship between *·agtig* and hapax legomena offers the opportunity in future work to investigate morphological productivity, especially with reference to the models that Baayen (1994) developed.

- (7)
- a. *hings·agtig*  
stallion·ADJR  
'like a stallion'
  - b. *roes·agtig*  
rust·ADJR  
'rusty'
  - c. *vink·e·rig*  
finch·LK·ADJR  
'finch-like'
  - d. *woestyn·e·rig*  
desert·LK·ADJR  
'desertlike'

A second aspect is that the denominal adjectives in the dataset with *·agtig* tend to be realised with a hyphen, or graphemic linking morpheme, more often than is the case with *·e·rig*. From the 432 *·agtig* constructions, 84 ending with *·agtig* contain hyphens between the noun base and affix, whereas only 7 of the 250 constructions ending with *·e·rig* contain these specific hyphens. One could propose that this is due to vowel clashes (the base ending with an *a* and *·agtig* following) or loan words, but *skilpad·-·agtig* 'tortoise-like' and *spesery·-·agtig* 'spicy' are evidence to the contrary. Instances where hyphens are used to separate the noun base from *·agtig* and *·e·rig* are given in (8). A chi-square test indicates a significant association between *·agtig* and the presence of hyphens to separate the suffix from the noun base,  $X^2(1, N = 682) = 37.94, p < .00001$ . This significant association between *·agtig* and the use of hyphens provides an avenue for future work to investigate whether or not there is a possible conceptual underpinning for separating the affix from the noun base.

- (8)
- a. *Elizabeth·-·e·rig*  
Elizabeth·LK·LK·ADJR  
'Elizabethan'
  - b. *meisie·-·agtig*  
girl·LK·ADJR  
'girlish'
  - c. *papegaai·-·agtig*  
parrot·LK·ADJR  
'parrotlike'

The third aspect is with reference to named entities as the noun bases in denominal adjectives. If one examines the annotated frequencies, *·agtig* seems to be marginally preferred when named entities are used as bases. In total, 21 of the 432 *·agtig* constructions have named entities as bases, whereas only 9 of the 250 *·e·rig* constructions have named entities as bases. The tendency is not significant as is the case with the other two aspects,  $X^2(1, N = 682) = 0.60, p = .439$ . The first two tendencies indicate a general preference for *·agtig* when denominal adjectives are constructed.

Considering the data collected for this study, generalisations regarding semantic content cannot be made. The evaluative meanings that *·agtig* and *·e·rig* incorporate in the focusing of the nouns are all attenuating and, by implication, are evaluative. Undeniably though, these affixes add an attenuative meaning, giving the language users' motivation to communicate that

something is in some way like something else, but not completely. Language users can construe meaning that is not purely referential or truth conditional, and that is illustrated by the examples throughout the discussion. When a language user refers to something as *kitsch-e-rig* ‘kitschy’, it is based on their subjective opinion rather than any verifiable or descriptive characteristic of the object or person being referred to.

With reference to the word length, nouns that are used with *-agtig* contain on average 0.5 more syllables than nouns used with *-e-rig*. This is merely a perfunctory observation with regard to structure and more research on any morphophonemic characteristics of denominal adjectives in Afrikaans is needed to make any claim about *-agtig* preferring nouns that have more syllables.

#### 4. Conclusion

This article served as an exploration of denominal adjectives in addition to evaluative word structure and meaning in Afrikaans with particular focus on denominal adjectives formed with *-agtig* and *-e-rig*. The issue addressed in this article was determining whether or not two Afrikaans adjectivising affixes can lead to evaluative meaning interpretations of denominal adjectives and, should that be the case, explored what these meanings could include. The discussion started with a broad overview of what evaluative meaning entails. Ultimately, the definition of evaluative meaning used was that it is a judgement by a speaker that departs from pure referential meaning. One specific evaluative meaning, that of attenuation, was elaborated on and fitted to the two affixes that were discussed.

The research of Combrink (1990), Kempen (1969), and Van Huyssteen (2017) were summarised and evaluated in order to establish what is known about *-agtig* and *-e-rig* in Afrikaans. No uncertainty exists with reference to its adjectivising function, but the accompanying semantic function warrants more attention. No explicit statement of these affixes’ attenuative meaning is made, which is evident from existing and rather vague descriptions. Kempen and Combrink differ only with regards to the inherent pejorative meaning of *-agtig*. The core meaning that both affixes contribute to a complex construction could be summarised as ‘in some way like N, although not completely’. The basic meaning distilled from these sources still needed to be measured against available usage-based examples.

In the third section, the compilation and annotation of the dataset was discussed. Through the discussion it was apparent that the limited data still gave rise to several mainly structural observations. Afrikaans speakers tend to coin more once-off denominal adjectives with *-agtig* than with *-e-rig*. It was apparent that both affixes profile attenuating meaning – an inherent evaluative meaning pertaining to a language user’s subjective evaluation of the presence of a characteristic of the noun base. The semantic annotation based on Kempen and Combrink proved less enlightening than was expected. Language users use hyphens more than ten times more often when *-agtig* is used, signalling the noun bases explicitly. There are still many research opportunities in Afrikaans complex adjectives whether they have nouns, verbs or other adjectives as bases. Future research should include expanding the dataset, including other suffixes that form denominal adjectives in Afrikaans, and explore the use of hyphens when *-agtig* is used compared to a general lack of hyphens when *-e-rig* is employed.

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## Abbreviations

ADJR	adjectiviser
C	comprehensive corpus
CG	cognitive grammar
E	exclusive corpus
ERP	‘external resemblance applied to a person’
IDC	‘illness or distress caused’
lit.	literally
LK	linking element
LX	‘like X’
N	common noun
NE	named entity
PIR	‘physical or imagined resemblance’
VivA	Virtual Institute for Afrikaans
VR	verbaliser

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