

A renewed look at Afrikaans grammar: The Virtual Institute of Afrikaans' General Afrikaans Grammar and Afrikaans School Grammar

The most recent Afrikaans grammar written in Afrikaans dates back to 1983 (Van Schoor, 1983), while the most recent Afrikaans grammar written in English dates back to 1993 (Donaldson, 1993). From a teaching perspective, the content of these sources may therefore be outdated, and can thus not be prescribed at university level. At the same time, Afrikaans linguistics is a very small niche market, which means that few publishers will publish new textbooks on Afrikaans grammar.

What exacerbates the situation, is that the Afrikaans grammar that is included in accredited school textbooks, differs to a large extent from the grammar that is included in university course work. This includes but is not limited to morphological and syntactic constructions that are analysed in different ways. In school textbooks the complexes *geelkleurig* ("having a yellow colour") and *boekrakkie* ("little bookshelf") are both analysed as derived compounds. However, in the grammar that is taught at university level, *geelkleurig* is analysed as a derivational compound, while *boekrakkie* is analysed as a derived compound (see Van Huyssteen, 2017: 201-202). With regards to syntax, the whole noun phrase (e.g. *die beroemde man*, "the famous man") is analysed as the subject of a sentence in university grammar, while only the head noun and article (e.g. *die man*, "the man") is analysed as the subject of a sentence in school grammar (see Lamprecht *et al.*, 2013: 145). What makes matters worse, is the inconsistencies that are observed when the presentation of grammar in various school textbooks are compared. In addition, the grammar information provided does not even correspond to what is stated in international research on Afrikaans. For example, words such as *daarom* ("therefore"), *wanneer* ("when") and *waar* ("where") are categorised as conjunctions, while they are either adverbs with a conjunction function (i.e. conjunction adverbs) or adverbs that eliminate repetition by introducing a relative clause (i.e. relative adverbs).

Consequently the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (henceforth VivA) created a "first linguistics pipeline for Afrikaans, which is also unique in the world" (Van Huyssteen, 2020; see Figure 1). This pipeline begins with *Taalportaal*, a digital platform (available here: www.taalportaal.org), where research by subject specialists with international stature is made available. From *Taalportaal* flows the General Afrikaans Grammar and Afrikaans School Grammar where specialist research is presented in a format that makes it accessible to the current generation of Afrikaans lecturers, students, teachers and learners.

The General Afrikaans Grammar and Afrikaans School Grammar in particular contribute to addressing the gaps that are mentioned in the first two paragraphs. They are housed on **Language Teaching Portal** (TOP – in Afrikaans the *Taalonderrigportaal*, thus henceforth the TOP) on the website of the Virtual Institute for Afrikaans (available here: <https://viva-afrikaans.org/portale/taalonderrigportaal>; see Figure 2).

By creating this digital platform VivA can be regarded as a role player in the blended learning ecosystem, namely as a content provider of quality Afrikaans linguistic material based on research bringing "content and pedagogy experts into the classroom, using asynchronous delivery" not replacing the teacher but enhancing and multiplying her teaching impact (Larson & Murray, 2008:87).

Figures

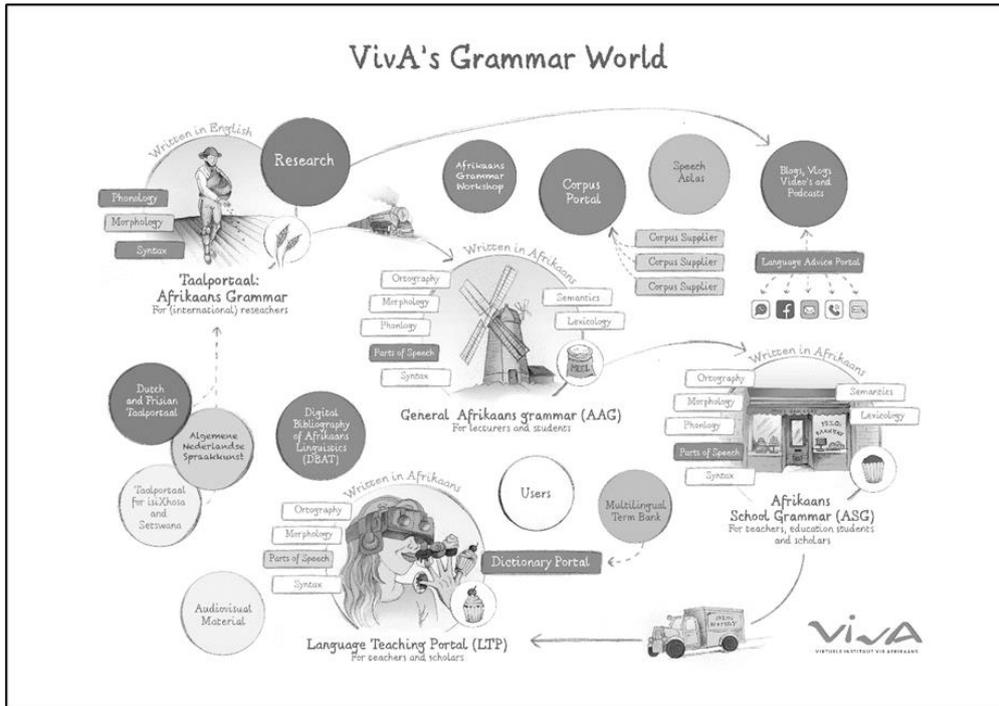


Figure 1. VivA's pipeline for Afrikaans language resources (translated) (Van Huyssteen, 2020)

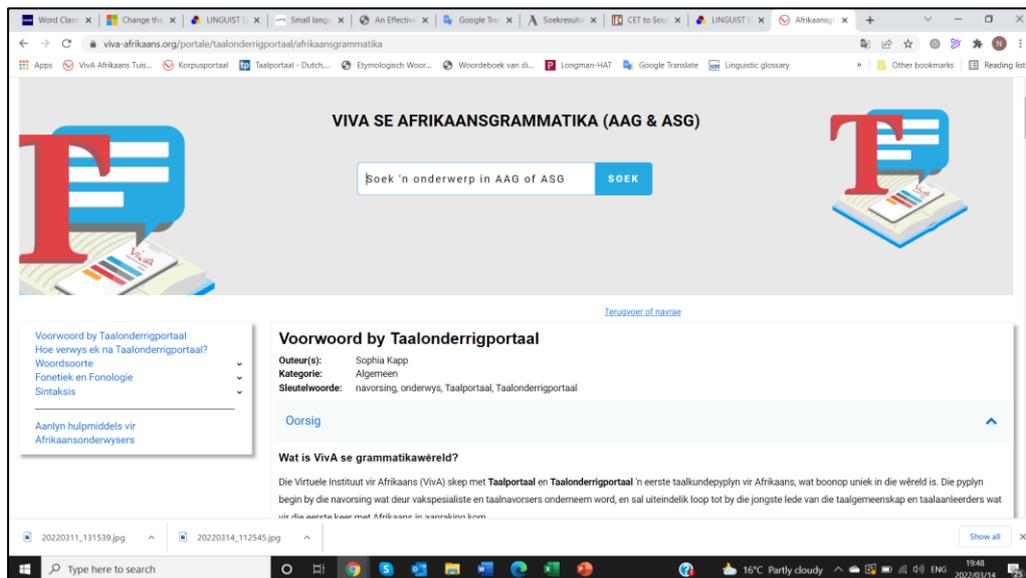


Figure 2. VivA's General Afrikaans Grammar and Afrikaans School Grammar

References

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