

The small matter of the Afrikaans diminutive

A 20 minute presentation is preferred.

This paper presents an analysis of the Afrikaans diminutive allomorphy in an Optimality Theoretic framework (Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004), to our knowledge the first in this framework. The diminutive suffix /-ki/ has four allomorphs [ki], [iki], [pi], and [i], which surface as the result of interactions between prosodic and segmental restrictions. The table below gives examples organized by final segment and stem weight. The data were drawn primarily from native speaker consultation as well as written sources including Donaldson's (1993) grammar.

--#	Weight	Root	Dim.	Gloss	Root	Dim.	Gloss	Root	Dim.	Gloss
Vowel	$\mu\mu$	vɑ:	vɑ:ki	wagon	mɑ:	mɑ:ki	mum	bəi	bəiki	bee
Liquid	$\mu\mu$	nɑ:l	nɑ:lki	nail	fɑ:r	fɑ:rki	hair	al'tɑ:r	al'tɑ:rki	altar
	μ	kɑr	kɑriki	car	kəl	kəliki	spot	rə'bəl	rə'bəliki	rebel
Nasal	$\mu\mu$	sun	suiŋki	kiss	rɑ:m	rɑ:mpi	frame	koniŋ	koniŋki	king
	μ	mɑn	mɑniki	man	rɑm	rɑmiki	ram	dəŋ	dəŋiki	thing
Obs.	$\mu\mu$	mɑ:t	mɑ:iki	mate	xrɑ:f	xrɑ:fi	spade	buk	buki	book
	μ	pət	pəiki	seed	dəp	dəpi	cap	frœx	frœxi	fruit
Cluster	$\mu\mu$	pært	pærki	horse	skoelp	skoelpi	shell	fark	farki	pig

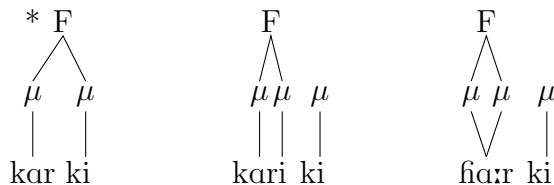
The allomorphy has been described as follows (Donaldson 1993 *inter alia*):

- Stems take the [ki] allomorph if they end in a vowel, or if their last vowel is bimoraic and they end in a sonorant other than /m/; /m/-final heavy stems take [pi] as a result of progressive place assimilation.
- Stems take the [iki] allomorph if they end in a monomoraic vowel and a sonorant.
- Stems take the [i] allomorph if they end in a singleton obstruent other than /t/; /t/-final stems take [ki].
- Stems ending in clusters behave as heavy obstruent-final stems taking [iki] and [i].

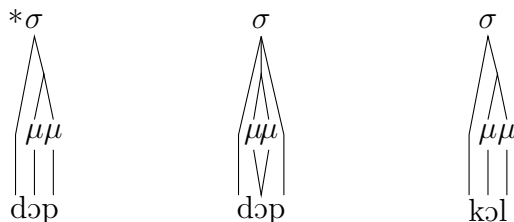
Vowel fronting regularly occurs when a stem-final singleton /t/ deletes (/pət/ > [pəiki]) or a stem-final /n/ regressively assimilates to the diminutive suffix (/sun/ > [suiŋki]).

We analyze the [iki] allomorph as [ki] with an epenthetic vowel separating the stem from the suffix. With sonorant-final stems, the weight of the vowel determines whether epenthesis

occurs: light stems require epenthesis while heavy stems do not. In each case, the suffix attaches to a bimoraic foot. A foot containing both the stem and the suffix is dispreferred by CRISPEGE(STEM, FT) (Itô & Mester 1999):



Obstruent-final stems do not show any effect of vowel weight. Obstruents are analyzed as not being sufficiently sonorous to be parsed as codas. Instead they are parsed as appendices to the syllable unable to host a mora, coercing the vowel or the syllable node to host a second mora to satisfy FT-BIN:



This allows obstruent-final stems to behave as heavy, taking the [ki] allomorph.

When nasal- and obstruent-final stems take the [ki] allomorph, additional changes occur to satisfy AGREE(PLACE). We propose that nasal-final stems show bidirectional assimilation resulting from an interaction between root faithfulness (McCarthy & Prince 1995), positional faithfulness (Beckman 1998), and Preservation of the Marked (de Lacy 2006):

/sun-ki/	AGREE(PL)	IDENT(LAB) _{ROOT}	IDENT(PL) _{ONSET}	IDENT(COR) _{ROOT}
a. sun.ki	*!			
b. suiŋ.ki				*
c. sun.ti			*!	

/rɑ:m-ki/	AGREE(PL)	IDENT(LAB) _{ROOT}	IDENT(PL) _{ONSET}	IDENT(COR) _{ROOT}
a. rɑ:m.ki	*!			
b. rɑ:iŋ.ki		*!		
c. rɑ:m.pi			*	

Obstruent-final stems are subject to the same pressure, but show deletion instead of place assimilation to avoid creating geminates. Stem-final /t/ deletes (/pət/ > [pəiki] *[pəti]), while other stem-final obstruents are preserved, forcing the /k/ of the suffix to delete (/dɔp/ > [dɔpi] *[dɔiki]).

We propose that this analysis successfully captures the interacting factors influencing the diminutive allomorphy.