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Indigenization in a downgraded continuum: Ideologies behind phonetic variation in Namibian Afrikaans

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Abstract: This study generally looks at indigenization in languages historically introduced and promoted by colonial regimes. The case study that it presents involves Namibia, a Subsaharan African country formerly administered by South Africa, where Afrikaans was the dominant official language before being replaced by English upon independence. Afrikaans in Namibia still functions as an informal urban lingua franca while being spoken as a native language by substantial White and Coloured minorities. To what extent does the downranking of Afrikaans in Namibia co-occur with divergence from standard models historically located in South Africa? To answer this question, the study identifies variation patterns in Namibian Afrikaans phonetic data elicited from ethnically diverse young urban informants and links these patterns with perceptions and language ideologies. The phonetic data reveal divergence between Whites and Non-Whites and some convergence among Black L2 Afrikaans-speakers with Coloured varieties, while suggesting that a distinctive Black variety is emerging. The observed trends generally reflect perceived ethnoracial distinctions and segregation. They must be read against the background of shifting inter-group power relations and sociolinguistic prestige norms in independent Namibia, as well as of emergent ethnically inclusive Black urban identities.

Keywords: Afrikaans, socio-phonetics, Namibia, language contact, inter-group relations

1 Introduction

Lingua francas spread by colonial powers tend to undergo a process of ‘indigenization’ that leads to new varieties distinct from colonial models (cf. Kachru 2005;

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Moag 1992). While indigenization has been attributed to interferences from local native languages, it has also been discussed as a creative process linked with emergent national identities linguistically constructed in opposition to former colonial centres (cf. Schneider 2007). This study generally asks how indigenization occurs across historical ethnolinguistic boundaries. The proposed case study involves Namibia, a Subsaharan African country formerly administered by South Africa, where Afrikaans was the dominant official language before being replaced by English upon independence. While the visibility of its standard variety – historically associated with Whites and South Africa's northern regions – has locally decreased, Afrikaans in Namibia is still widespread as an L2 alongside L1 varieties spoken mainly by White and Baster/Coloured minorities. To what extent is the downranking of Standard Afrikaans creating scope for emergent indigenous Afrikaans models? This study seeks answers to this question in phonetic data elicited from an ethnically representative young urban sample. The variation patterns revealed by these data are subsequently related to the sociolinguistic distinctions perceived by the informants and their ideological views on language.

Section 2 of this article discusses variation dynamics in (post)colonial lingua francas. Section 3 provides some sociolinguistic background information on Namibia and Namibian Afrikaans. Section 4 describes the elicited data and methodology used to establish and contextualize variation patterns in Namibian Afrikaans. The analysis comprises four main stages. The first stage focuses on native varieties (Section 5) and the second on non-native varieties (Section 6). Quantified variation patterns are matched with variation patterns perceived by the informants and with their language ideologies in Sections 7 and 8. Finally, Section 9 discusses the findings in the broader perspective of language variation and emergent new varieties in postcolonial settings.

2 Language variation in postcolonial lingua francas

Social factors in language variation have most systematically been modelled in monolingual settings, that is, settings marked by a standard-dialect continuum. The variationist paradigm (Labov 2001) typically uses social class, gender and age for predicting variation patterns, which it describes in terms of levels of conformity to high-status varieties (often labelled 'standard'), typically acquired in educational settings and indexical of social mobility. As such, these varieties differ from

"vernaculars", that is, natively acquired low-status varieties that index solidarity within closely knit social networks. Higher conformity to high-status varieties is associated with higher social classes, women, and middle age, while vernaculars are conversely associated with lower classes, men, and adolescence. Using "apparent-time" observations, the variationist paradigm typically discusses variation as "change-in-progress", led by women and interior social classes (see further Cheshire 2002; Milroy 1987). More characteristically used in historical (socio)linguistics, "real-time" observations of language change tend to pay distinctive attention to contact. When it occurs between related dialects, contact may result in "koineization" or "dialect levelling", which both involve inter-dialectal convergence (Hinskens et al. 2005). When it occurs between distinct languages, contact has often been discussed in conjunction with shift, during which transfers from the retreating language into the target language, or restructuring of the target language, may occur (Thomason 2001).

In its initial stages, the study of language variation and change in (post) colonial settings was mostly focused on new vernaculars arising from inter-dialectal contact and on creolization in contexts of racially segregated exposure to high-status varieties (cf. Kerswill 2010). It later came to include (post)colonial L2 varieties (especially English L2 varieties) since, despite being transmitted mostly through education, they may – on a par with vernaculars – be used in low functions as part of complex code-mixing styles (Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008). At the same time as does national awareness, indigenous varieties of the colonial language arise via a process of "nativization", a term largely synonymous with Moag's (1992) "indigenization", which in Schneider's (2007) definition involves convergence between settler varieties and indigenous varieties. That convergence is not entirely mutual. Often forming the first-established high-status varieties of the colonial language, the settler varieties retain long-term normativity in line with the Founder Principle (Mufwene 2001). However, specific provision may have to be made for postcolonial settings from where settler populations have largely withdrawn. With such settings comes scope for subverted varieties of the colonial language to emerge as 'urban youth registers', which – especially in African contexts – may turn into ethnically neutral lingua francas (Hollington and Nassenstein 2015; Kiessling and Mous 2004). To predict language variation in postcolonial settings where settler models may or may not be visible, I propose an approach that takes inter-group relations as a point of departure.

One framework that models language dynamics across ethnolinguistic boundaries is Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory ("EVT", Giles et al. 1977). EVT predicts linguistic convergence based on levels of "ethnolinguistic vitality" (EV) held

by ethnolinguistic groups. EV is defined along three dimensions, namely, "status" (which can be seen from a historical and/or economic perspective), "demographics", and "institutional support". The question of which among these variables has the highest impact on EV is unresolved (see further Ehala 2010; Giles 1979). One may assume – based on variationist predictions – that women lead linguistic convergence with target groups if inter-ethnic boundaries are "soft" enough (Ehala 2010; Giles 1979; see further Mesthrie 2017 on the role of women in spearheading linguistic assimilation across ethnolinguistic boundaries). Not theorized by EVT are those situations that produce ethnically neutral varieties via mutual convergence, such as urban youth registers, whose emergence seems best described via an ethnographic approach (Hollington and Nassenstein 2015; Kiessling and Mous 2004). This study looks at inter-ethnic linguistic convergence and its implications for indigenization using the example of Namibian Afrikaans, a widespread L1 and lingua franca whose historically White standard varieties have lost prestige to English, the linguistic attribute of nationhood in independent Namibia.

3 Afrikaans in Namibia

Formerly known as "Southwest Africa" (hereafter "SWA"), Namibia – with a current population of approximately 2.6 million inhabitants – was at first a German colony (1884–1915) before *de facto* becoming a South African territory (1915–1990). With the South Africa occupation came apartheid, whose purpose was to secure a socioeconomically dominant position for the (mostly Afrikaner) White minority.[1] To that end, two Non-White population groups, namely, "Blacks" and "Coloureds", were designated and incorporated into a racial hierarchy in which the "Coloureds" occupied an intermediate socioeconomic position. Additionally, the Blacks and Coloureds were each subdivided into distinct ethnic or ethnolinguistic categories partly inspired by colonial ethnography (Wallace 2011). The Blacks historically comprise speakers of Bantu and Khoesan languages. The Bantu-speaking groups acknowledged by the apartheid regime were the Ovambos, Hereros, Kavangos, Caprivians and Tswanas, while the Damaras, Namas and Sans constituted the acknowledged Khoesan-speaking groups. Finally, the "Coloureds" mostly comprised the "Basters" and "Cape Coloureds". The institutional reification of Black ethnicities was reinforced via compulsory territorialisation (into "homelands" and designated separate ethnic areas in towns) and the use of indigenous

1 The White population in 1981 comprised 70% Afrikaans-speakers, 23% German-speakers, 6.5% English-speakers (Prinsloo et al. 1982).

languages as initial mediums of instruction (MOI) in line with the principles of *Bantu Education* (Cohen 1994; Peyroux 2004). The dismantlement of apartheid upon independence triggered, among other things, a wave of internal mass-migration, which led to an Ovambo majority in Windhoek, the capital, where Hereros and Damaras had formerly been the main Black populations (Pendleton 1993; Peyroux 2004).

Descended from Cape Dutch,[2] Afrikaans traces its Namibian history back to the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century migrations of Oorlams[3] – a population of westernized Khoekhoes – from the Dutch (and from 1815, British) Cape Colony, shortly followed by the Basters, a population of mixed European-Khoe ancestry, which today still is mostly concentrated around Rehoboth (Stals and Ponelis 2001; see further Lau 1987). Although German SWA already had an Afrikaner population, most of it traces its origins back to the immigration schemes promoted during the South African period, which eventually caused it to outnumber the German population (Aitken 2007; Botha 2007). Finally, "Cape Coloureds" began migrating in significant numbers to SWA's urban centres from an early stage of the South African period (Bruwer 1964). As a result of these migrations, Afrikaans in Namibia comprises Coloured and White Afrikaans varieties, the latter historically closer to the standard variety (Ponelis 1993). As the first introducers of L1 Afrikaans varieties in Namibia, the Basters may be considered the founders of Namibia's Afrikaans speech community. Already established as a lingua franca in SWA's southern and central regions in the pre-apartheid period, Afrikaans was spread further by the Afrikaner-dominated administration. Instrumental in this respect was *Bantu education*, which from 1968 prescribed Afrikaans as a compulsory primary-level subject and secondary-level MOI (Cohen 1994; UNIN 1986). However, while some population groups, especially the Namas, and to a lesser extent the Damaras, appeared to be shifting to Afrikaans, the (mostly Ovambo) northern populations remained relatively underexposed to it (Prinsloo et al. 1982). At independence, SWAPO scrapped Afrikaans as an official language, portraying it as an "oppressor's language". It was replaced with English, which also became the dominant MOI, while Afrikaans and indigenous languages were relegated to the status of optional school subjects (Pütz 1995). Despite English being preponderant since then, Afrikaans is still a significant L1, as well as a widespread lingua franca in the

2 The term "Dutch" was in 1925 replaced with the term "Afrikaans" in South Africa's constitution. Lexically based on Dutch, but grammatically distinct, Standard Afrikaans swiftly displaced Dutch wherever it was represented alongside English in South Africa's education system (Malherbe 1977; see further Ponelis 1993).

3 Reclassified as Basters, Namas, and Damaras under the apartheid, the Oorlams lost visibility as a group.

central and southern regions, while Namibia's indigenous languages remain largely confined to ethnic in-group settings (Stell 2016).[4]

This study asks to what extent and in what forms Namibian Afrikaans is developing indigenized varieties across ethnoracial boundaries. Possible scenarios can be phrased as follows:

Scenario 1: Afrikaans varieties largely coincide with group-specific dialect backgrounds and indigenous languages. This scenario – which implies indigenous varieties that exhibit little or no convergence – is fostered by enduring post-apartheid segregation combined with decreasing exposure to standard models.

Scenario 2: Despite the dominance of English, (White) Standard Afrikaans still forms an established target that counteracts indigenization. As a result, specific social variables, such as gender, override ethnolinguistic background in predicting variation patterns. This scenario accords itself with EVT perspectives that ascribe the highest EV to groups holding high socio-historical status, which in the Namibian case applies to the Afrikaners on account of their former political and economic dominance.

Scenario 3: This scenario predicts indigenization through convergence away from White varieties in a context where traditional prestige norms are being disestablished. In line with the Founder Principle, such convergence could be occurring with Baster Afrikaans, the first established Afrikaans variety in Namibia (Scenario 3a). This scenario most closely fits Schneider's default nativization scenario if the notion of "settler" is uncoupled from its Eurocentric connotations. Alternatively, convergence could be occurring with the Ovambos (Scenario 3b). This scenario accords itself with EVT perspectives in which demographic and political dominance – all attributes of the Ovambos – are the key determinants of a high EV. Finally, convergence could be occurring via koineization/dialect-levelling among Non-Whites, in line with the dynamics that give rise to urban youth registers (Scenario 3c).

To test the above scenarios, this study primarily looks at patterns of vowel realization elicited from an ethnolinguistically diverse sample of urban informants. One advantage of working with phonetic features is that they are experimentally elicitable without requiring high degrees of literacy or fluency, which one can expect to vary widely among L2 Afrikaans speakers. The next section presents the data and the methods used to interpret it.

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4 Namibia's most widespread home languages are Oshiwambo (48.9% of households), Khoekhoegowab (11.3%), Afrikaans (10.4%), Rukavango (9%), and Otjiherero (8.6%). English was declared as a main home language by only 3.4% and German by 0.9% (NSA 2012). In 2001, 69.4% of the population declared to be literate in English, compared with 37.5% in Afrikaans (NSA 2003).

4 Data and methodology

For the purpose of this study, 64 informants aged 17 to 19 were recruited from a range of high schools in and around Windhoek. These informants are categorized in terms of the variables "first home language", "main ethnic affiliation" and "gender". The L1 Afrikaans-speakers comprise 12 Afrikaners, six (Cape) Coloureds (hereafter "Coloureds"), and 10 Basters.[5] The L2 group represents the three "Black" ethnolinguistic groups most strongly represented in Windhoek. It includes 12 Damaras, 12 Hereros and 12 Ovambos. The numbers of females and males were kept equal in each group. To avoid social class effects, the (Non-White) informants were sought at three government schools located in the historically (lower) middle-class areas of Windhoek's western side. Schools located on the city's more affluent eastern side proved to be the only possible source of Afrikaner informants. The main criterion for selecting L2 Afrikaans-speakers was continuous exposure to Afrikaans as a subject from early secondary school in Windhoek. Using older informants for establishing apparent-time trends was judged inadequate on the grounds that 1) exposure of Non-Whites to secondary education considerably differs across generations (Cohen 1994), and 2) Ovambos – who now form Windhoek's ethnolinguistic majority – are historically least exposed to Afrikaans as an urban lingua franca as they gained a significant presence in the city only from the last decade preceding independence (NSA 2012; Peyroux 2004).

To gather quantifiable socio-phonetic data, each informant was given the same Afrikaans word list reading task. Because of many of the informants' lack of experience in interacting with a "White" person in Afrikaans (see further Section 8), I came to the early realization that I could not systematically conduct sociolinguistic interviews likely to produce Afrikaans "casual" styles. The reading task aimed to elicit the essential part of the Standard Afrikaans vowel system as depicted in Wissing (2014a). The monophthongs comprise AF-IE[6] (Std Af. pronunciation usually rendered as /i/), AF-E (/e/), AF-A (/a/), AF-AA (/ɑ/), AF-O (/ɔ/), AF-OE (/u/), AF-UU (/y/), AF-I (/ə/) and AF-U (/œ/). Additionally, provision is made for the /æ-ɛ/-like allophone of AF-E, which tends to appear before /k, x, l, r/ through the label AF-EK

5 All Baster informants were recruited from a high school in Rehoboth, the former capital of the Baster homeland, located 84 km south of Windhoek. The "Coloured' informants had various genealogical backgrounds. All have in common that they declined to be applied the label "Baster' (see further Section 7).

6 I use labels based on spelling conventions to refer to Afrikaans vowels.

(/æ-ɛ/).[7] The selected diphthongs include the "true diphthongs" and "diphthongized long vowels". The former comprise AF-Y (/əi/), AF-UI (/œi/), and AF-OU (/œu/). The latter – described in most detail in De Villiers and Ponelis (1987) – comprise AF-EE (/eə/), AF-EU (/øə/), and AF-OO (/oə/). To limit scope for allophonic variation, only stressed Afrikaans vowels were singled out for analysis. To minimize potential co-articulatory effects, the selection excluded vowels before/after nasals and approximants. Sections 5 and 6 examine the possibility of L1-transfers using the phonetic accounts of Fivaz and Shikomba (1986) for Oshiwambo, Möllig and Kavari (2008) for Otjiherero, and Haacke (2013) for Khoekhoegowab.

The PRAAT software provided the tool for data transcription and annotation (Boersma and Weenink 2019). The formant settings for men and women were 5 and 5.5 kHz, respectively. Measurements for F1 and F2 were taken at 20, 50, and 80% of vowel duration. Stage 1 of the analysis (Sections 5 and 6) involves measuring the average F1 and F2 values of selected vowels for each ethnolinguistic group and normalizing these values using the Lobanov procedure (Adank et al. 2004) implemented through the *Vowels* package for R (Thomas and Kendall 2007). Stage 2 (Sections 5 and 6) involves an auditory analysis conducted by four non-linguist L1 Afrikaans-speaking raters whose task was to assign IPA values to individual vowels. Stage 3 (Section 7) is a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) aimed to establish degrees of similarity between vowel realization patterns across ethnolinguistic groups. Assumptions of inter-group convergence/divergence are made based on the presence/absence of substratal features, as well as on the directionality of female phonetic patterns, based on the variationist assumption that women lead change-in-progress (Section 2). The relative position of ethnolinguistic groups on the PCA plot is tentatively related to the informants' perceptions of language variation and to their language ideologies (Sections 7 and 8).

5 Phonetic variation in L1 Afrikaans varieties

Plotted in Figure 1,[8] the Lobanov-normalized average values for the Afrikaans monophthongs of L1-speakers reveal polarization between Afrikaners and Basters/

7 The AF-EK lexical items only represent environments with following /k/, which are more likely to index ethnic origin (Wissing 2014b).

8 The monophthong plots are based on midpoint F1/F2 values, while the diphthong plots are based on F1/F2 values of onsets and offglides, extracted at 20 and 80% of vowel duration, respectively.

Coloureds. Some Afrikaner monophthongs are more distinct than their Baster/Coloured counterparts. This concerns the AF-UU/AF-IE pair: Afrikaner AF-IE is less close and more [e]-like than Afrikaner AF-UU, closer and more [i]-like. In contrast, AF-UU/AF-IE are merged into [i] among the Baster/Coloureds. The AF-E/AF-EK pair is highly distinct among the Afrikaners: Afrikaner AF-E is realized in a +close [e]-like position and its AF-EK allophone in a +open [æ]-like position, while Baster/Coloured AF-E/AF-EK are merged into [ɛ]. Finally, Afrikaner AF-AA is realized in a +raised [ɔ]-like position compared with Afrikaner AF-A, more open and closer to [ɑ-ɒ], while the Basters/Coloureds merge AF-AA/AF-A into +front [a]. Another contrast concerns levels of centralization/tensing. Afrikaner AF-OE occupies a +centralized position tending towards [ʉ] while it is tenser and more [u]-like among the Basters/Coloureds. Finally, Afrikaner AF-I occupies a more centralized schwa-like position than the Baster/Coloured variants, which are more fronted. One more contrast between the Afrikaners and Basters/Coloureds revolves around AF-O, which the Afrikaners realize in a +close position. Overall, the Baster and Coloured systems are highly similar, although they occasionally contrast in terms of tensing. Some Baster monophthongs are less tense than their Coloured counterparts, resulting in higher degrees of similarity with Afrikaner monophthongs. This is especially the case with Baster AF-OE/AF-I. Meanwhile, Coloured AF-E/AF-A/AF-AA/AF-U are more similar to the Afrikaner variants. Additionally, the Coloureds tend – in line with the Afrikaners – to distinguish between AF-E and AF-EK, realizing AF-E in a closer position than AF-EK, while the Basters tend to merge the two.

The polarization between Afrikaners and Basters/Coloureds found in monophthong realization largely applies to the "true diphthongs" (Figure 2). Specific to Afrikaner true diphthongs are higher diphthongization, +open AF-Y/AF-UI/AF-OU onsets, a tendency for AF-Y and AF-UI to merge into [æ-œ] (while AF-Y onsets are realized in a less open position than AF-UI onsets among the Coloureds/Basters, tending towards [ɛ-œ] in the former case and towards [æ-œ] in the latter case), and +close AF-Y/AF-UI/AF-OU offglides. There is less polarization between Afrikaners and Non-Afrikaners in diphthongized long vowels (Figure 3). Afrikaner AF-EE onsets are more fronted and [i]-like and Afrikaner AF-EU onsets are closer. The Basters display more centralized onsets for all long diphthongized vowels and less diphthongized AF-EU/AF-OO variants. The Coloureds display a more fronted and [i]-like AF-EU onset, undistinguishable from their AF-EE onset, as well as a tenser and more [u]-like AF-OO onset. Additionally, the Coloureds display a more open and [ɛ]-like AF-EU offglide and a less fronted and [œ]-like AF-EE offglide. It is not clear which among the Basters and Coloureds are most similar to the Afrikaners when it comes to diphthongs. Coloured AF-Y is more related than Baster AF-Y to the Afrikaner variant yet overall remains more related to the Baster variant. Conversely, Baster AF-OO is more related than Coloured

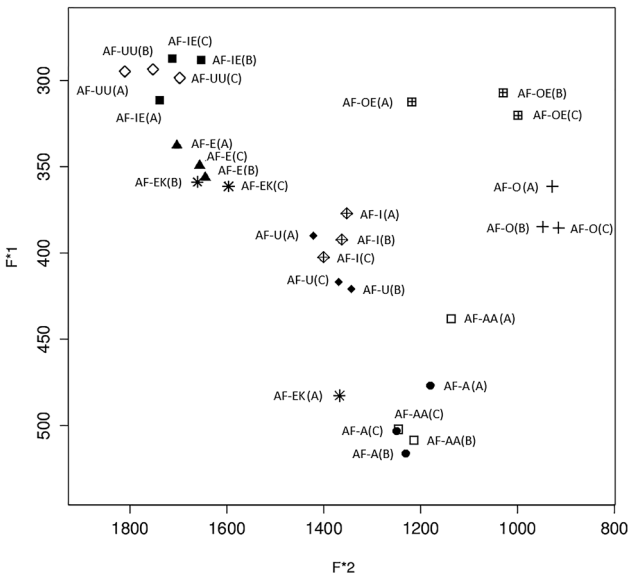

Figure 1: Afrikaans monophthongs as realized by L1 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (*n* = 1812). "B" = Baster; "C" = Coloured; "A" = Afrikaner.

AF-OO to the Afrikaner variant, yet overall remains more related to the Coloured variant. On a par with the Afrikaner variants, Baster AF-EE and AF-EU are clearly distinct yet less diphthongized than the Afrikaner and Coloured variants.

The IPA values largely confirm the inter-ethnic contrasts observed above. Exclusively encountered among the Afrikaners are [æ] for AF-EK, [ɑ] for AF-A, [ɔ] for AF-AA, and [ʉ] for AF-OE. Exclusive to the Basters/Coloureds are the closer values [e-ɛ] for AF-EK, fronter [a] for AF-A/AF-AA, +backed [u] for AF-OE, –open [ɛ-œ] for AF-UI/AF-Y onsets, and +backed [ɔ] for AF-OU onsets. Some features exhibit gradual inter-ethnic contrasts, such as most visibly AF-OU onsets. The Afrikaner variants mostly exhibit +fronted [œ] (in 93% of cases) while the Baster and Coloured variants more frequently display the +backed values [ʌ-ɔ] (B: 38%, C: 34%). AF-OO offglides also display inter-ethnic contrasts: The Afrikaner variants again mostly display mid-central schwa-like values (77%) while the Baster and Coloured variants more often display tense values (B: 46%; C: 49%). Some features vary with gender, such as, most visibly, AF-OU onsets. +Front [œ] for AF-OU onsets occur more among females (A-F: 100%, A-M: 87%; B-F: 50%, B-M: 27%; C-F: 61%, C-M: 35%), while the +backed values [ʌ-ɔ] occur more among males. Other cases of gender variation occur exclusively among the Basters/Coloureds. This concerns

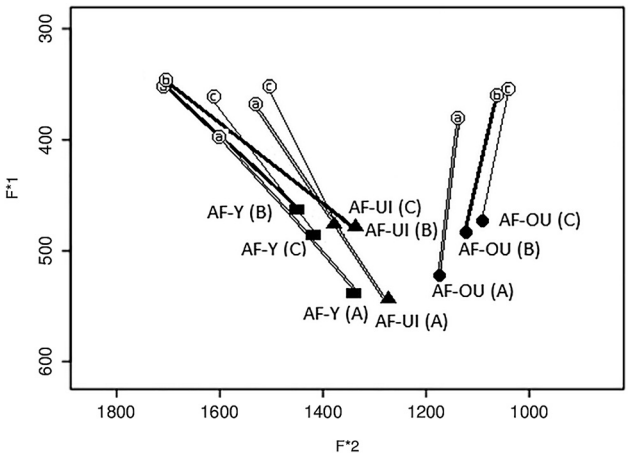

Figure 2: Afrikaans true diphthongs as realized by L1 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (n = 750). "B" = Baster; "C" = Coloured; "A" = Afrikaner.[9]

the distinction within the AF-E/AF-EK pair (always present among the Afrikaners), which is more often associated with Baster/Coloured females (B-F: 17%, B-M: 0%; C-F: 32%; C-M: 4%). It also concerns AF-OO onsets, more centralized among the Baster/Coloured females (B-F: 35%, B-M: 16%; C-F: 18%, C-M: 13%). There is some gender variation specific to the Afrikaners such as, most visibly, with AF-AA: [ɔ] for AF-AA occurs more frequently among Afrikaner females (80%) than among their male peers (23%), among whom +open [ɑ-ɒ] is dominant.

The distribution of the phonetic features detailed above can largely be read as a +/-standard continuum. The Afrikaner variety is most aligned with Standard Afrikaans. Some features reflect accounts of White varieties from South Africa's northern regions, which are implicitly acknowledged as standard (Raidt 1994 [1985]). Among these is a strong distinction within the AF-E/AF-EK pair, as well as diphthongized AF-EE/AF-EU/AF-OO, which contrast with monophthongal variants linked to South Africa's southwest. Some of the encountered features do not fit prescriptive accounts. This concerns the merger of Afrikaner AF-Y/AF-UI into [æ-œ] where Standard Afrikaans prescribes a less open and less fronted AF-Y onset (De Villiers & Ponelis 1987). This merger reflects current South African trends: Wissing (2005) found a correlation between +open [æ]-like AF-Y onsets and (especially female) White South Africans. Stigmatized in Le Roux and De

9 For all diphthong plots, filled shapes stand for onsets while blank circles with abbreviated ethnic labels stand for offglides.

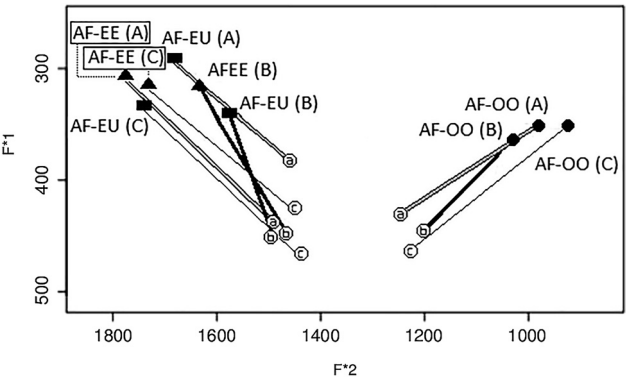

Figure 3: Afrikaans long diphthongized vowels as realized by L1 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (n = 510). "B" = Baster; "C" = Coloured; "A" = Afrikaner.

Villiers (1927), merged AF-UU/AF-IE as found among the Basters and Coloureds is the only feature explicitly considered non-standard. The contrasts between the Afrikaners and Basters/Coloureds generally echo the observations made by Wissing (2013; 2014b) on South Africa's White and Coloured Afrikaans varieties. They also mirror social and ideological fault lines within Namibia's Afrikaans speech community as described in Stell and Groenewald (2016). Some of the contrasts between the Basters and Coloureds could tentatively be explained as a function of the more urban character of the latter and their accordingly higher exposure to Afrikaner varieties. This could explain why – in line with the Afrikaners – the Coloureds distinguish between AF-E and AF-EK while the onset of Coloured AF-UI is closer than Baster AF-UI to the Afrikaner variant.

To summarize findings so far: The phonetic data reveal a sharp contrast between Afrikaners and Non-Afrikaners, although gradual variation can be established when taking a gender-differentiated perspective. In contrast, the distinctions between Basters and Coloureds appear negligible.

6 Phonetic variation in Afrikaans L2-varieties

Figure 4, which plots the Lobanov-normalized average values for the Afrikaans monophthongs of L2-speakers, reveals some polarization between the Damaras and the Bantu-speakers in that the Damaras are more closely aligned with L1-speakers. This higher proximity is manifested by lower levels of tensing, most visible in central/interior vowels: Damara AF-I/AF-U occupy more centralized (and L1-like)

positions, while the corresponding Herero/Ovambo variants appear more fronted and [ɛ]-like. Damara AF-OE exhibits a slight centralizing tendency, which brings it more in line with L1 variants, while the Herero/Ovambo variants are tenser and more [u]-like. In line with L1 patterns, the Damaras also tend to make stronger distinctions within specific vowel pairs. Damara AF-UU is more fronted and [i]-like than Damara AF-IE while it is also less close than its Herero/Ovambo counterparts, which makes it appear closer to (Afrikaner) L1 patterns. The [+/-open; +/-close] distinction within the AF-A/AF-AA pair found among especially the Afrikaners and Basters is most visibly mirrored among the Damaras. The Damara tendency to merge AF-E and AF-EK is reminiscent of the Baster pattern. As such, it contrasts with the +/-fronted distinction that the Bantu-speakers make between the two vowels. The Herero monophthong realization patterns occupy an intermediate position in between the corresponding Damara and Ovambo patterns. Herero AF-UU is more fronted and [i]-like than the Ovambo variant. Herero AF-O/AF-U/AF-OE are more related to the Damara variants than to the Ovambo variants. Additionally, the Hereros make sharper distinctions than the Ovambos within the AF-UU/AF-IE and AF-A/AF-AA pairs.

One immediately striking difference between the Afrikaans diphthongs of the L2-speakers (Figures 5 and 6) and those of the L1-speakers is that the former exhibit lower diphthongization levels. Despite this commonly shared feature, the Damaras still occasionally appear closer to L1 patterns, again by exhibiting less tense realization patterns than their Bantu-speaking peers. The -tense character of Damara AF-Y/AF-UI/AF-OO onsets makes them appear more related to their Baster/Coloured counterparts, while the -tense character of Damara AF-OU/ AF-OO offglides is aligned with L1 patterns in general. Conversely, the +tense character of Herero/Ovambo AF-OU onsets and AF-OO offglides make them distinct from L1 variants in general. Meanwhile, the +tense and [o-u]-like character of Herero/Ovambo AF-OO onsets is more reminiscent of Afrikaner patterns. Compared with the Ovambos, the Hereros exhibit tenser (and less L1-like) AF-Y/ AF-UI onsets, which both tend towards [ɛ], as well as tenser (and less L1-like) AF-EU/ AF-OO offglides. Compared with the Hereros, the Ovambos exhibit tenser (and less L1-like) AF-OU/AF-EU onsets. Compared with the Ovambos, the Hereros approximate (Baster/Coloured) L1-patterns more in the levels of distinction that they make within the AF-UI/AF-Y pair: Herero AF-UI onsets are realized in a more open [æ]-like position than Herero AF-Y onsets while Ovambo AF-Y/AF-UI onsets are merged in a less open position closer to [ɛ].

The IPA values of central/interior vowels confirm that the Damaras exhibit the most L1-like behaviour. The +L1-like central value [ə] is assigned to Damara AF-I in 65% of cases, while the –L1-like more fronted value [œ] (which marginally occurs among L1-speakers) is the value assigned in the remaining cases. In contrast, Herero

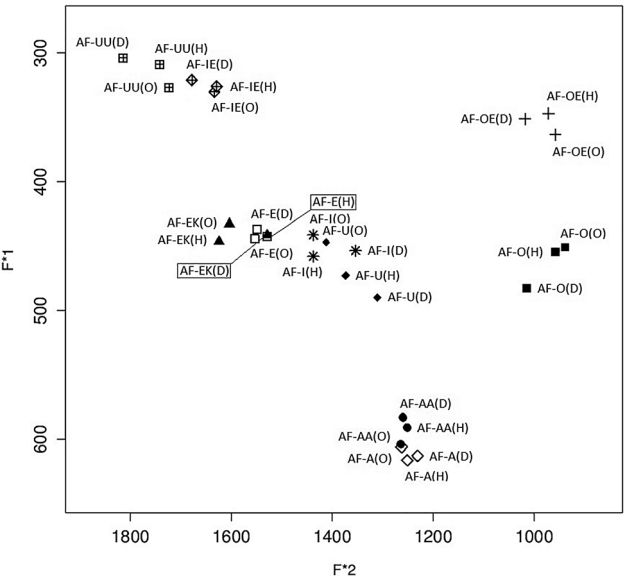

Figure 4: Afrikaans monophthong as realized by L2 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (n = 1913). "D" = Damara; "H" = Herero; "O" = Ovambo.

and Ovambo AF-I are mostly assigned -L1-like [ɛ] (in 58 and 52% of cases, respectively), followed by [œ] (in 41 and 48% of cases, respectively). Although +centralized [œ] is the dominant value assigned to AF-U for all three groups, –L1-like fronted [ɛ] is strongly represented among the Ovambos (in 42% of AF-U cases), followed by the Hereros (15%) and the Damaras (7%). Damara onsets for "true diphthongs" in general are more often assigned +centralizing and +L1-like values than their Herero/Ovambo counterparts, which more often exhibit –L1-like +tense values. +L1-like schwa-like AF-OO offglides more often appear among the Damaras. Some +L1-like features display an association with Damara females. This concerns +fronted [œ]-like AF-OU onsets and schwa-like AF-OO offglides, as found among Afrikaners and Baster/Coloured females, which the Damara females exhibit in 19 and 29% of cases, respectively, while [ɑ-ɒ-ɔ] are the only values among their male peers. Additionally, [ʊ] onsets for AF-OO occur more with Damara females (26%) while [o-ɔ] occur more with males (87%), which mirrors inter-gender variation patterns among the Basters and Coloureds. One specific -L1-like value is associated with Ovambo females, namely [ɛ] for AF-U (61%), while +L1-like [œ] is conversely dominant with males. Finally, –L1-like monophthongal [ɛ] for AF-EU is exclusively found with Herero and Ovambo males (20 and 12%, respectively).

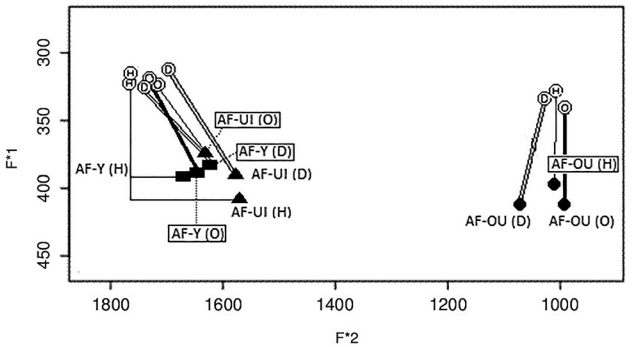

Figure 5: Afrikaans true diphthongs as realized by L2 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (n = 880). "D" = Damara; "H" = Herero; "O" = Ovambo.

The distinctive features of the L2 varieties presented above mostly reside in the relatively high degree of fronting of AF-I/AF-U. In the case of the Herero and Ovambo varieties, this feature may have to be ascribed to the absence of central/interior vowels in Bantu languages, which would also explain why Klopper (1981) observed it among South African speakers of Southern Sotho – a Bantu language phonetically akin to Otjiherero/Oshiwambo. The +monophthongal character of Herero and Ovambo Afrikaans diphthongs may also be derived from interferences

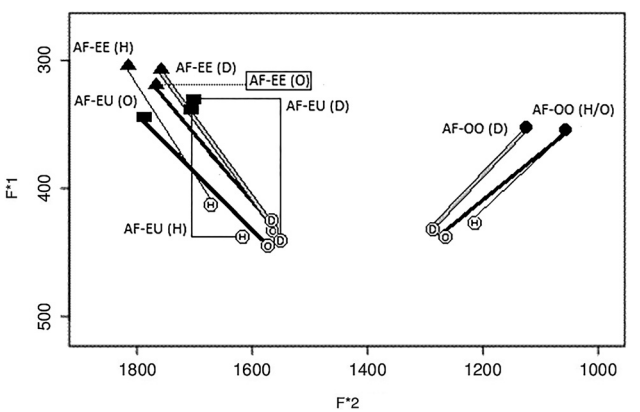

Figure 6: Afrikaans long diphthongized vowels as realized by L2 Afrikaans-speakers. Combined Lobanov-normalized speaker averages for F1 and F2 (n = 620). "D" = Damara; "H" = Herero; "O" = Ovambo.

from Bantu, which has no diphthongs. The fact that AF-I/AF-U and AF-OU/AF-Y/AF-UI onsets are more centralized among the Damaras could be ascribed to the transfer of the schwa-like allophone of Khoekhoegowab [a], found in the onsets of the Khoekhoegowab diphthongs "ai" and "au". However, substratist perspectives cannot account for specific features. There is no apparent substratal reason why the Damara females display stronger centralizing (and more L1-like) tendencies. There is no apparent substratal reason either for why Herero monophthong realization patterns assume an intermediate position in between the Ovambo and Damara patterns given the fact that the Otjiherero and Oshiwambo phonetic inventories entirely coincide. Plausible explanations for these inter-group contrasts must then possibly be sought in group-specific dynamics of convergence with L1 models.

To summarize findings in this section: While sharing distinctly low diphthongization levels with the Hereros and Ovambos, the Damaras (especially the Damara women) generally seem closer to L1 patterns. It is not clear which among the Hereros or Ovambos are closest to L1 patterns. Approximation of L1 patterns is higher among Damara females and Herero females. It is less clear whether Ovambo females are ahead of their male peers in approximating L1 patterns.

7 Phonetic variation in Namibian Afrikaans and perceived social categories

Figure 7 presents the results of a PCA performed on vowel realization patterns categorized by ethnicity and gender. Dimensions 1 and 2 in the scatterplot correspond to Principal Component 1, which accounts for 39.46% of all variation, and Principal Component 2, which accounts for 17.13%. Dimension 1 reveals sharp polarization between Whites and Non-Whites. Within the Non-White cluster, there is a gap between the Basters/Coloureds and the Blacks. The Non-White groups positioned nearest to the Afrikaners are the Basters/Coloureds. The intermediate position occupied by the Damaras between L1-speakers and the other L2-speakers mostly hinges on the more L1-like behaviour of the Damara females. While the Hereros and Ovambos seem equally close to the Basters and Coloureds, the Ovambos seem slightly closer to the Afrikaners than the Hereros. Non-White females are positioned to the left of their male ethnic peers. The Baster, Coloured, Damara, and Herero females are plotted in lower positions than their male peers. In contrast, the Afrikaner and Ovambo females are plotted in higher positions than their male peers. Based on gender behaviours and the distribution of IPA values, the plot could tentatively be interpreted as follows. There is a widening gap between Whites and Non-Whites while the L2-speakers are converging with the

Basters and Coloureds. These trends could be accounted for as follows. Non-White females tend to replicate or approximate features generalized among the Afrikaners, which fits the base variationist scenario of women aligning more than men with standard varieties (see further Section 2 on the "White" associations of Standard Afrikaans). Meanwhile, Non-White females stand aloof from a set of Afrikaner variants. This general observation does not apply to the Ovambos, among whom males are visibly ahead of their female peers in approximating L1 models, more specifically the Baster/Coloured models.

The variation patterns that the informants perceive in Namibian Afrikaans largely mirror the inter-group contrasts identifiable on the scatterplot. All Coloured and Black informants distinguish their varieties from that of the Afrikaners, which "almost sounds like another language" (H-M-5). In line with the high contiguity of Baster and Coloured datapoints, the Coloured and Baster varieties are mostly distinguished by the Basters and Coloureds themselves – and then only marginally (e.g. "There is not much of a difference between Basters and Coloureds, but I can still tell Coloureds", B-M-3). Some ethnic stereotypes are named in relation to Black Afrikaans varieties: [n]-[m]-prothesis among the Hereros (e.g. *ndankie* instead of *dankie* "thanks"), [j]x[dʒ] metathesis among the Damaras/Namas (e.g. [dʒou] instead of [jou] "you-SG"), [r]x[l] metathesis among the Ovambos (e.g. *ly* instead of *ry* "drive"). The Damaras (and Namas) are perceived as more "fluent" in Afrikaans than

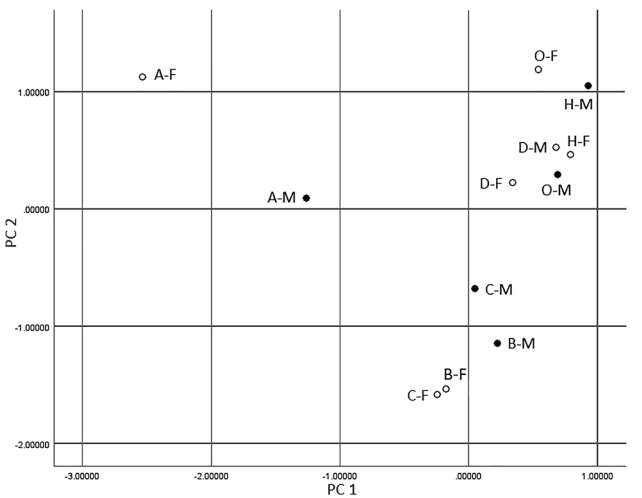

Figure 7: Principal components one and two (PC1, PC2) for variation in individual vowel realization patterns grouped by ethnicity and gender. Blank circles refer to females ("F"), filled circles to males ("M").

the other Black groups ("The Damaras they grow up with Afrikaans", H-M-2), which accords itself with pre-independence signs of incipient language shift among these groups (Section 3), as well as with the left-right polarization between the Damara and the other Black datapoints. In contrast, the competence of Hereros in Afrikaans is generally perceived as poor ("Hereros speak [Afrikaans] lazy", C-M-2). Meanwhile, the relatively high contiguity of the Black datapoints is reflected in perceptions of a specific Black Afrikaans variety, which the Non-White informants label "Kasietaal" (see further Section 8 and Stell 2020). The inter-gender contrasts that appear on the scatterplot are acknowledged by most informants. A gender stereotype specifically applied to the Afrikaner variety is what A-M-2 calls "overrounding girl speech", which the (male) Afrikaner informants illustrate with keywords featuring the AF-AA vowel and link to urban Northern South Africa. The left-right and top-bottom polarization between Damara/Herero females and males can be matched with a few comments. For example, D-M-3 suggests that Damara women sound more native-like than their male peers: "They [Damara girls] are actually good at it [Afrikaans]" while "[Damara] guys mostly speak slang". H-F-5 remarks that "[Herero] guys sound more Herero than we [Herero girls] do". The mutual positioning of the O-F and O-M datapoints can be matched with an occasionally stated perception that Ovambo men are more fluent in (and keener to speak) Afrikaans than Ovambo women (e.g. 'Some [Ovambo men] almost sound like Coloureds', while 'the [Ovambo] girls struggle', C-F-3).

Perceptions of ethnic variation manifest how salient ethnicity is to the informants. The Black informants define their ethnicities in genealogical and linguistic terms, as well as in terms of active family ties to rural areas or to the historical ethnic neighbourhoods of Katutura, the former Black township where they all reside. Baster and Coloured ethnicities are associated with light-skinned phenotypes considered distinct from "White". Although descent plays some role in defining it, the distinction between Basters and Coloureds is mostly articulated in spatial terms: Being a Baster implies residence in Rehoboth, the former capital of Basterland, while being Coloured implies residence in Khomasdal, Windhoek's neighbourhood set aside for Coloureds during apartheid**.** Self-applying the label Afrikaner involves not only identifying with phenotypical attributes of "whiteness", but also with a lifestyle revolving, among other things, around active affiliation with Afrikaans churches (*Gereformeerd*, *Hervormd*, or Evangelical) and interest in rugby among the males. Ethnoracial categories often perceptually coincide with class distinctions, which are themselves mirrored in the spatial opposition that the informants see between Windhoek's western and eastern sides. Wealthiest, eastern Windhoek is home to the *Lanies* (Afrikaans slang for "white" and "rich"), and as such is opposed to the poorer western side, where Katutura and Khomasdal are located. Class divides constrict social networks. The Afrikaner

informants describe theirs as ethnocentric. More ethnic mixing is reported by the Non-Whites, particularly the Damaras in general and the Ovambo males. One additional social distinction, specifically reported by the Ovambo informants, involves degrees of urbanity. This distinction is subsumed into the polarized use of the terms *Gwerrie* (unknown etymology, "backward", referring to northern Ovambos) and *Ombwiti* ("rootless" in Oshiwambo, referring to Ovambos born in town). Applied to Black women "try[ing] to act white" (D-F-3), "coconut" is the only encountered term connoting a sociolinguistic gender stereotype, although it may also be applied to urban Blacks in general.

8 Variation in Namibian Afrikaans: Ideological factors

The informants unanimously portray English as the most important language in Namibia's context. Afrikaans is assigned high functions only by the Afrikaners, who see it as a gateway to South Africa, more specifically to the University of Stellenbosch and Northwest University, where Afrikaans is still used for tuition. In the Namibian context, the Afrikaners regard it as an important language in commercial farming, while otherwise associating it with the Church services that they attend.[10] While all informants agree that Namibia's native languages should be preserved, need for more institutional support is felt only among the Afrikaners and Basters. Support for Afrikaans as a second language subject is expressed by most informants (e.g. "If you don't know it [Afrikaans] you feel left out", O-F-6), but there is also an opinion – more distinctly articulated by the Non-White females – that it is best learnt outside of school. The attributes of social mobility attached to English are visible in its perceived ethnic neutrality: It is no one's native language and its most "correct" varieties are primarily located in Windhoek's English-medium Anglican and Catholic private schools without any ethnoracial specifications (see further Stell 2019). "Correct" Afrikaans, occasionally referred to as "High Afrikaans", or as "Deep Afrikaans" by the Blacks, is primarily associated with native speakers. The Basters and Coloureds associate it with "Whites". In contrast, most Black informants rather ascribe it to Basters and Coloureds, with some Hereros and Ovambos also ascribing it to the Damaras. These fragmented perspectives again highlight ethnoracial fault lines and restricted

10 Most informants reported attending Church. Denominations vary widely among the Non-Whites. The churches they attend are mostly English-medium or multilingual, except for the Lutheran churches attended by the Basters, which use Afrikaans.

Black mobility across the east-west urban divide. Baster and Coloured Afrikaans varieties are more likely to be seen as targets on the western side as they are made visible at school by Baster or Coloured teaching staff. While their association with classroom settings may confer localized high functions on Baster and Coloured Afrikaans, Damara varieties are clearly associated with informal age peer socialization.

The observations made by the Non-White informants suggest a lack of incentive among them for converging with the White variety. One prominent obstacle to convergence is that English seems conventionalized as a default medium in White-Black interactions. The Black informants' rationale for avoiding Afrikaans with Whites is one of linguistic insecurity, as "they [Whites] speak Afrikaans at another level" (H-M-1), which one can attain only by using "straight Afrikaans" (D-M-4), understood as essentially monolingual, and as such opposed to hybridized varieties, which might "offend" (C-M-2) White interlocutors. Wherever Afrikaans is used with Whites, such as particularly in interactions that involve Basters or Coloureds, phonetic convergence with their variety seems excluded: If one uses a White accent when interacting with Afrikaners, "they [Whites] would think you are making fun of them" (C-F-2). One other distinct obstacle to converging with the White variety (and by implication with the high-status standard variety) is that Afrikaans is conceived of as a low-status register functionally subordinated to English: "English is for keeping things nice and clear", while "Afrikaans is just for making a story sound interesting" (D-F-4). A variationist perspective on this functional distribution of English and Afrikaans might explain why (especially Ovambo) Black women manifest a preference for using English (or "Namlish", a mixture of Afrikaans and English) across formal and informal contexts: "most Ovambo girls don't talk Afrikaans even if they can" (O-F-4) while "Oshiwambo is for relatives or for the village" (O-M-1). This puts pressure on young Black men to address their female age peers in English rather than in high-status Afrikaans varieties, irrelevant to indexing deference in inter-gender interactions among young Black generations. There is little question of Afrikaners converging with Non-White varieties: A-F-2 believes that "using broken Afrikaans with them [Blacks] may be seen as disrespectful" while "they [Blacks] may have a hard time with our Afrikaans". Scope for crossing into Non-White varieties is also restricted by their perceived purpose of excluding White outsiders: "They [Blacks] skinner (i.e. "gossip") on us using those funny words we can't understand" (A-M-4).

The informants' comments suggest that Baster/Coloured Afrikaans may act as a target for Blacks. Unlike Black-White interactions, interactions between Basters/Coloured and Black age peers tend to occur in Afrikaans although – as suggested above – English or Namlish tend to be preferred by young Black women also in such contexts. In line with the apparent phonetic convergence of Black varieties

with Baster/Coloured varieties, some Baster/Coloured informants believe that they form linguistic targets to their Black peers on school premises ("They [Black learners] ask us to teach them [Afrikaans]", B-F-3). However, convergence occurs only up to an extent as the Black male informants claim to use *Kasietaal* (Section 6, see further Stell 2020) in both intra- and inter-ethnic interactions with their (mostly male) age peers at school or on the street. Opposed to "classroom Afrikaans", "straight Afrikaans", "Namlish", and Baster/Coloured Afrikaans, *Kasietaal* is spatially rooted in Katutura and young Black men find themselves under considerable peer pressure to acquire it along with the street credentials that accompany it. Described in mostly lexical terms, it comprises a "Tsotsi"[11] South African component spread by South African (gangster) movies, as well as semantically subverted items from Namibian indigenous languages, especially Khoekhoegowab and Oshiwambo. As much as "there is no *Kasietaal* without Afrikaans" (D-M-2), there seems to be no *Kasietaal* without Khoekhoegowab-sounding words, as the ability to produce Khoekhoegowab clicks – foreign to Namibian Bantu languages and *Gwerries* – is considered a marker of urban insiderness in Windhoek's context. Although the Damaras are accordingly named as particularly adept at it (suggesting that they may form the core group of frequent *Kasietaal* users), "good" *Kasietaal* is not supposed to give away one's ethnic background. Perhaps mirrored in the relatively low phonetic contrasts between the Black male informants, there is a strong incentive to acquire *Kasietaal*'s ethnically neutral forms (which some informants define as the "right" combination of Khoekhoegowab and Oshiwambo insertions). Indeed, "good" *Kasietaal* functions as a physical safeguard on Katutura's streets, where sounding "ethnic" can expose one as a fresh migrant, that is, one who is "easy to rob from" (O-M-2).

9 Discussion

Support for Scenario 3a seems relatively strong in that L2-speakers seem to converge with Baster and Coloured Afrikaans, although without producing a seamless linguistic continuum. However, the validity of Scenario 3a is limited by the sharp ethnic differentiation found among the female informants. This suggests – in line with Scenario 1 – that convergence dynamics in Namibian Afrikaans remain constrained by colonial patterns of ethnoracial stratification. The fact that – from the perspective of their Afrikaans varieties – the Coloureds seem slightly more similar to the Afrikaners than do the Basters may be linked to their historically more urban character

11 "Tsotsi' is a Zulu term for "gangster'. *Tsotsitaal* is a South African urban anti-register that originally developed within an Afrikaans grammatical frame (Mesthrie and Hurst 2013).

and higher spatial proximity to the Afrikaners. Meanwhile, the Damaras may owe their halfway position in between the Bantu-speakers and Basters/Coloureds to the fact that they integrated faster than the other Black ethnolinguistic groups into SWA's urban economy, in which Coloureds and Basters were from early colonial times established as the most preponderant Non-White ethnolinguistic groups (Peyroux 2004). Scenario 2 finds some support in the higher concentrations of standard or "White" features encountered among Non-White females (except Ovambo females), which suggests that standard or Afrikaner models still have an impact on Non-White varieties, although standard or "White" features may in fact mostly be relayed to Black populations via the Basters and Coloureds. There is no direct evidence that the Afrikaans varieties of the Ovambos form a focus of convergence (Scenario 3b). However, the Ovambos' majority status may indirectly bear upon the Afrikaans varieties of other Black groups by restricting their scope for converging with L1 models. The commonly shared yet constrained inclination towards Baster/Coloured Afrikaans among the Blacks could in turn be construed as evidence for Scenario 3c that Black Afrikaans varieties are mutually converging.

The phonetic patterns established via the acoustic analysis and the PCA can be read in the light of the language ideologies articulated by the informants. Endowed with indexicalities of geographic mobility, (White) South African varieties are visibly ascribed high prestige by the Afrikaner informants. Social conventions restrict the scope for Blacks to converge with these varieties. Considering the informants' accounts of Kasietaal, the relative phonetic similarity between the Black informants can be read as pressure to pursue a balancing act between L1 Afrikaans models and ethnic Afrikaans varieties. Some of the observed intergender contrasts fit patterns observed in variationist studies conducted in monolingual settings in that women generally engage in linguistic hypercorrection. This tendency translates into higher identification with South African models on the part of Afrikaner females. While this tendency can to a limited extent be observed among the Baster/Coloured females, the Damara and Herero females display hypercorrection by orienting more distinctly than their male peers towards the Baster/Coloured varieties. The idiosyncratic phonetic behaviours displayed by the Ovambo females manifest low levels of focusing that correlate with lack of practice and preference for English. Generally, the behaviour of the Ovambos seems to be one of eagerness to acquire urban "legitimacy". Since native-like competence in Afrikaans constitutes an essential low-status linguistic attribute of legitimate urban identities, Ovambo males visibly invest effort in acquiring it. In contrast, hypercorrection among Ovambo females can be guessed from their stereotyped identification with monolingual English language practices.

This study's findings provide limited support for EV-based predictions of intergroup convergence, mostly via the observation that Ovambo females – as members

of a demographically and politically dominant ethnolinguistic group – stand aloof from existing Afrikaans models, and even abstain from using Afrikaans at all. Besides going against Schneider's base "nativization" scenario, the limited convergence with the White variety suggests that EV-based predictions must be subordinated to assessments of inter-ethnic boundary hardness. If one leaves the Ovambo female informants out of consideration, the study provides support for variationist predictions that women orient more towards exogenous varieties (in the sense of varieties acquired outside of the original social network) than men. The study identifies mutually convergent dynamics that do not seem incompatible with the Founder Principle as they target the 'founding' Baster (and the closely related Coloured) Afrikaans varieties. But convergence with these varieties seems not to reach beyond a certain point, such as particularly in diphthongization levels, which overall remain comparably low in the Afrikaans varieties of all Black groups. This is an indication that Black varieties may be converging into one relatively autonomous Black Afrikaans variety only loosely aligned with Baster and Coloured Afrikaans. A glimpse of that Black Afrikaans variety is given by the informants' accounts of *Kasietaal*, whose reported anti-register functions and ethnically neutral Black male indexicalities place it on a par with youth urban registers observed elsewhere in Africa (Beyer 2015; Hollington and Nassenstein 2015; see further Kießling and Mous 2004).

10 Conclusion

Namibian Afrikaans lost much of its high functions and prestige following Namibia's independence. As standard Afrikaans lost visibility, the scope for Namibian Afrikaans to indigenize away from South African models increased: Black L2 varieties are converging with the founding Baster/Coloured varieties, which are themselves diverging away from White varieties, still oriented towards South African norms. Some evidence of an autonomous Black Afrikaans variety can be glimpsed in phonetic behaviours, as well as in accounts that the informants give of what they call *Kasietaal*, an Afrikaans-based variety with anti-register attributes that has been developing among Blacks. The emergence of this variety must be read in the light of how Afrikaans and English coexist in the current Namibian context: Shorn of its institutional support, Afrikaans offers a local and subvertible linguistic alternative to English, whose visibly prescribed norms link it by default to formal contexts and deference. Variation dynamics in Namibian Afrikaans suggest that the retreat of historically exogenous prestige norms favours indigenization. Emergent urban anti-registers – such as *Kasietaal* – appear as one essential aspect of that process. Pressure to acquire them appears as a driving force

behind convergence away from both traditional normative models and substratal learner varieties. This study is inevitably limited by its lacking apparent-time perspective. Yet, it hopefully provides a methodological point of reference in first quantitatively establishing and then qualitatively contextualizing sociolinguistic distinctions. In the process, it hopefully demonstrates the sociolinguistic relevance of extracting phonetic features in post-colonial variation contexts, where they often form the only systematically elicitable data.

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