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FRONTING OF [k] AND MUTATION IN AFRIKAANS.

To the student of Germanic languages Afrikaans offers many points of interest. Afrikaans not only shares with Dutch the retention of the spirant pronunciation of the consonant "g", but illustrates sound-changes which must have taken place in Primitive Old English.

(i) Fronting of [k]. This change, [k >¹c > t/], is illustrated in all its phases in present-day Afrikaans, e.g. in a word such as "keel" = throat. The standard educated Afrikaans pronunciation is [ke:l], but the other two, and intermediate stages, are heard among the Cape coloured and in country districts among the less educated Afrikaners: viz. [ce:l] and even [t/ɛ:l].

This change is common in words in which [k] stands before front vowels or diphthongs, e.g. in "ken, kurang, kind, kies."

It is also noteworthy that there is a similar change and a fronting of [g] and [χ] before front vowels or diphthongs, e.g. of [g] in "gherilla, ghitaar," and of [χ] in "gee, geld."

(ii) Mutation. Words in which the back vowels [a, o, ɔ, u] occur followed by "-(n)tjie/ -(n)djie" seem in Afrikaans to be in process of mutation, and to be now in an intermediate stage: the front combination in the final syllable has already affected the pronunciation of the preceding vowel which has become diphthongised.

Compare e.g. maat [ma:t] with the diminutive maatjie [ma:ici]

gat [χat]

gaatjie [χa:ici]

pad [pat]

paadjiie [pa:ici]

mandjie [ma:inci]

cf. groot [χro:t] with grootjie [χro:ici]

boontjie [bo:inci]

¹ [c], the voiceless palatal plosive, also occurs regularly in the many words ending in -tjie/ -djie: naartjie [narci], liedjie [lic].

cf. pot [pɔt]	with potjie [pɔici]
hond [hɔnt]	hondjie [hɔinci]
cf. voet [fut]	with voetjie [fuici]
goed [χut]	goedjies [χuicis]

There is a similar tendency observable in the case of the front vowels [æ] and [e] followed by “-(n)tjie/ -(n)djie”:

cf. put [pœt]	with putjie [pœyci]
munt [mœnt]	muntjie [mœynci]
net [nœt]	netjies [nœicis]
tent [tœnt]	tentjies [tœincis]

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