

names. In 'Master-of-Masters' ('Meneer-van-'n-Meneer'), for instance, the strange little man in the story insists on using odd names for everyday objects, such as *barnacle* for bed, *squibs and crackers* for trousers, *white-faced siminy* for cat, *hot cockalorum* for fire, and *pondalorum* for water. Linda devised such wonderful Afrikaans names with a local flavour that the existing English names were just not suitable. So Linda's bed, *Wit-soos-Melk-Volstruiseierdop*, became *Milky-White-Ostrich-Eggshell*; her trousers, *Potloodstreepen-Fluitjiesriet*, became *Pinstripes-and-Bulrushes*; the cat, *Witgesig-Snorbaard-Kniepootjies*, became *White-Faced-Whiskers-Kneady-Paws*; fire, *Sjoe-Sjoe-Snikheet-Hanekammetjie*, became *Ow-Ow-Red-Hot-Cockscomb* and water, *Wolkedruppels-wat-Poeletjies-Maak*, became *Drops-of-Cloud-Making-Puddles*. Easy if you just follow the lead of the expert!

In James Berry's version of Linda's story 'Skop-Skop Agterpootjies en Aap-ma', the main character, who swings around in trees, is known as Swing-Swing Janey. But Linda had different plans for her character, so a name change was called for:


Mevrou Hond het die oulikste kind gehad, haar naam was Skop-Skop Agterpootjies. Hierdie hondekind kon bollemakiesie slaan, rond-omtalie draai soos 'n bromtol, dan op haar voorpote gaan staan en met die agterpootjies in die lug kon sy groot, swaar kokosneute vang wat uit die bome val. Daarom was haar naam Skop-Skop Agterpootjies.

Mother Dog had the cutest child. Her name was Hippity-Hoppity-Hind-Legs. This puppy child could turn somersaults, spin like a top and balance on her forelegs. With her hind legs in the air, she could catch great big coconuts falling from trees. This was why she was known as Hippity-Hoppity-Hind-Legs.

The puppy's special talent sets Monkey Mother thinking, and the rhyme is an added bonus for the translator to play around with:

*Wiep-wap, wiep-wap, rats vang sy,
die regte een om te werk vir my.
Hout aandra en mango's pluk,
rek en strek en grond toe buk.*

*Swish! Swoosh! what's this I see?
Just the one to work for me.
Picking mangoes, hauling wood,
stretching, fetching monkey food.*

In conclusion I can only say that making the acquaintance of Linda Rode and her forestful of wonderful characters has been an enriching, fun-filled and highly enjoyable experience. 

Clarity on spelling

***Diacs and Quirks in a Nutshell. Afrikaans spelling explained.* Nicky Grieshaber.**

2011, Second, revised edition. Nicky Grieshaber Publications. Pietermaritzburg. Soft cover, 138 pages. ISBN: 978-0-620-51726-3. e-ISBN: 978-0-620-51980-9. Available from the author at <http://www.nickygrieshaber.co.za> in print and electronic formats (PDF, MOBI for Kindle and EPUB).

First published in 2000 as *Afrikaans Spelling Explained* (Brevitas, Howick), this second edition is an asset to teachers, learners and anybody learning Afrikaans as a second or third language. Although not a hefty reference book, it offers a wealth of knowledge to apply in teaching, learning and writing Afrikaans. The various electronic formats in which the book is also available greatly enhance its practical usefulness.

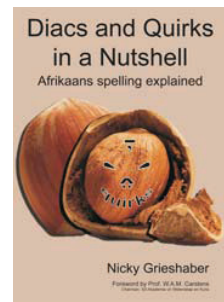
The author draws on his extensive experience as a language practitioner (translation and editing), lecturer and teacher to answer the most commonly asked questions about Afrikaans spelling. He uses the 2009 edition of the *Afrikaanse Woordelys en Spelreëls* (AWS) as a reference for his explanations, but it is not a discussion of the AWS.

The explanations and discussions are clear and to the point, keeping to the basic facts needed to understand the matter at hand. Further elaboration, definitions and explanations are found in the endnotes and annexures.

In Part II the explanation of the three underlying *principles of Afrikaans spelling* (tradition, Standaardafrikaans and similarity) lays a sound foundation for the rest of the book.

Part III deals with 'diacs', the author's abbreviation of *diacritics*. In addition to the 'true' diacritics, the hyphen and apostrophe are also discussed because of the important role they play in Afrikaans spelling. He uses the Afrikaans terms for the diacritics – *kappie* (circumflex), *deelteken* (diaeresis), *koppelteken* (hyphen), etc. – on the premise that even English-speakers are more familiar with the Afrikaans terms. The same convention is used in this review.

In all cases detailed explanations are given of



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the rules on the use of the different diacritics and from the onset the reader realises the importance of pronunciation in determining the Afrikaans spelling conventions. This then also explains the particular attention given to phonetic signs in Annexure B. The use of the *deelteken* and *koppelteken* receives the most attention in this section. The author not only explains the rules on when and why the diacritics must be used, but also mentions exceptions (e.g. *linguis* without the *deelteken* as would be expected) and cases that might be perceived as contradictory (the *deelteken* in *spieël* compared with *finansieel* without a *deelteken*).

Interesting cases also receive attention, e.g. the surname *De Villiers* where the two different possible ways of pronunciation determine the use of the apostrophe when using the plural and diminutive forms (p. 51).

The ‘quirky’ aspects of Afrikaans spelling receive attention in Part IV: variants, when to double consonants, common errors concerning vowels, splitting words (*woordafbreking*), joining words (compounds), the use of capital letters and the punctuation of abbreviations. Of these, compounds receive the most attention. In the longest chapter in the book (15 pages) the author labels it as the most troublesome writing convention, even for mother-tongue speakers, although Afrikaans is more consistent in forming compounds than English, which mostly follows the opposite convention (retaining separate words). This adds to the confusion of the bilingual writer in South Africa (p. 73).

The author concentrates on the seven most frequently used types of compounds and where the influence of English causes the

most problems. The longest discussion is on the adjective + noun + noun combination as most problematic. Here, as elsewhere in the book, the AWS forms the basis of the discussion and explanations.

Three *self-tests* are included covering all the aspects discussed in the book. The answers are provided with explanations and references where required. They are useful to identify areas needing more attention and to test the reader’s understanding of the rules and principles.

The *annexures* in Part VI cover Alt commands for diacritics, phonetic symbols with examples and notes, the 2009 AWS and a short list of commonly misspelt words that gives both the wrong and the correct spelling.

The longest annexure (Annexure B) pertains to phonetics and comprises explanations of the symbols as well as examples and notes. This is important, particularly for the non-Afrikaans reader, given the fact that so many of the rules for spelling and use of diacritics and other signs are governed by the pronunciation of the words.

Annexure C on the AWS provides a brief overview of the content and layout of the 2009 edition, paying special attention to the main word list (*Woordelys*) and how to use it. The author stresses that the changes to the conventions of this edition have effectively outdated ‘... all school and university textbooks, and all other Afrikaans spelling guidelines, written before the 2009 version appeared.’

The overall impression is that the examples and explanations clearly illustrate the rules, exceptions and anomalies of the aspect under discussion. Textboxes contain important information, tips (e.g. how to type diacritics) and interesting facts and examples.

Reference is made throughout the book to other related chapters, paragraphs, endnotes and applicable sections of the AWS. Changes in the 2009 AWS from previous versions are also indicated, for instance that adjacent *i*’s do not need a *deelteken*, the relaxation of the rules regarding the *afstandskoppelteken* (rule 12.24) and changes relating to compounds (where the prefixes *nie-*, *non-*, *oud-* and *eks-* are concerned).

In this work the author has succeeded in removing the ‘quirks’ of Afrikaans spelling, enabling the reader to understand and apply the do’s and don’ts. He has done this using the clear communication he advocates as his motto on his website.

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