

Two significant moments in the history of Kaaps

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Abstract

Two matters are considered in this paper.

(i) *The identification of the first version of Kaaps, the progenitor of Afrikaans.* The earliest version of Kaaps was recorded during the first period of the history of Afrikaans – the period prior to 1652. This period commences with the first visits to the Cape by Dutch mariners. The written records of Kaaps dating from that period are older than any other manifestation of forms in Afrikaans. Some of these early words are currently still in use among speakers of Kaaps, while others have been incorporated into Standard Afrikaans, or appear in dictionaries and the AWS (Afrikaanse Woordelys en Spelreëls – Wordlist and Spelling rules for Afrikaans). Some even continue to survive in the spoken Afrikaans of a number of regional dialects. Reference is also made in this chapter to how Kaaps eventually developed and played an important role in the shaping of other varieties of Afrikaans.

(ii) *The circumstances leading to the incorporation of elements of other varieties into the core description of Afrikaans.* In describing Afrikaans, language historians usually ask *where* particular words and constructions come from. But the question *how* is actually of greater value when investigating the development of Afrikaans. Ek (I) is a word in Kaaps which was, over time, absorbed into general use in Afrikaans. An analysis of how this process took place reveals that the ‘how’ questions are of greater importance in the history of the language than the ‘when’ and ‘where’ questions. The true story of Afrikaans is a socio-historical one. *Destigmatization*, and the circumstances leading to changing norms, are evoked by the ‘how’ questions.

INTRODUCTION

Aims

In this contribution (i) it is shown that Afrikaans was actually being spoken at the Cape before the Dutch East India

Company’s settlement was established in 1652, (ii) the implications of this observation are considered, and (iii) the case of the word *ek* (I), taken from Kaaps, and its later incorporation into standard Afrikaans is discussed.

Language Contact: Khoi and Dutch

When did the contact between the Khoi-Khoin and the Dutch first commence? Lodewijkz and van der Does have written about this. They document the visit of De Houtman to the coast of the Cape in 1595. But De Houtman had been preceded in 1583 by Van Linschoten (Raven-Hart 1967:14, 16-19). This was approximately sixty years before the start of the Dutch colony at the southern point of Africa. The earliest Afrikaans resulted from the first contact between the Khoi-Khoin and Mariner Dutch (*Skeepvaartsnederlands*). This language contact led to the development of the pidgin, Khoi-Afrikaans (also known as Kaaps or the earliest Afrikaans). Den Besten (1989:219) calls such pidgins *trade jargons*. Visiting mariners wrote down some of this Afrikaans (as shown later in this chapter).

More than three centuries after the earliest transcripts of Khoi-Afrikaans were recorded by these mariners, several writers, (like Adam Small in e.g. his anthology *Kitaar my kruis*) still use words containing elements of these pre-1652 transcripts. Small refers to the language in which he writes as Kaaps (Small 1962:9) - a complete language with its roots in the earliest Khoi adaptations of Mariner Dutch.

After the birth of Kaaps, core elements of various languages, including languages from the East and the languages of slaves, contributed to the characteristic features of the language. With the later expansion of Kaaps, parts of it became incorporated into every variety of Afrikaans, including Standard Afrikaans. This makes the details of such incorporation interesting: it asks us to acknowledge the contexts within which it happened (circumstances, time and place as well as details about the participating speakers).

Possible Language Contact: Khoi and other Mariner Languages

Early Kaaps shows hardly any influences and loan words from Portuguese. Why is this so? The Portuguese maintained a significant influence on the ocean's trade routes at that time. Which language contact occurred between them and the Khoi-Khoin? (This question could also be put to their predecessors, the Phoenicians, Chinese and Arabs). The early visits by the Portuguese to the Cape coasts in the sixteenth century (including those of Dias, Da Gama, De Saldanha, d'Almeida, De Brito, Cabral) are well documented. But details of language contact with the Khoi-Khoin are missing. Should increasing influence from Portuguese not have been expected among the Khoi-Khoin? This question is accompanied by a story loaded with perceptions, which may have had possibly important linguistic consequences for Afrikaans. It starts with d'Almeida anchoring in Table Bay in 1510 (Ferreira 2010:70). He died together with between 50 and 64 of his men in a subsequent battle with the Khoi-Khoin (Raven-Hart 1967:11). After that, the Portuguese avoided the Cape. Mozambique Island satisfied their needs. Before the establishment of the Table Bay colony, this was an island the Dutch tried to conquer three times (1604, 1607, 1608) to serve them as a halfway station, but with no success (Ferreira 2010:74).

The Portuguese were certainly no innocents when it came to initiating the battle with the Khoi-Khoin. Their one-sided version of the events surrounding this battle characterized the Khoi as cruel and warlike. The Khoi-Khoin's own version of this battle was not told outside the Cape. But the sailors' stories were told, and over time was embellished further - something that was quite a

common pastime among sailors. They also told detailed stories about sea monsters, and even made sketches of these creatures.

The consequences of the further embellishment of the d'Almeida story is illustrated by at least two cases. A sailor on an English ship, Thomas Stevens, showed the lasting effects of this myth sixty years after the actual battle. His ship was caught in a storm near the Cape, and he wrote a letter to his father in which he said that he was frightened of ending up in the hands of the Khoi-Khoi, "people that are savage, and killers of all strangers" (Raven-Hart 1967:14).

The story also influenced the decision of Cabral, 44 years after the d'Almeida incident, after his ship was wrecked on the Eastern Cape coastline. He decided to head north to find help. This was a safer route for him, as he could avoid the dangerous Cape Khoi-Khoi in this way (Ferreira 2010:72-73).

The language contact between the Khoi-Khoi and European visitors therefore took place mainly with the crews of Dutch ships from 1595, as more Dutch ships visited Table Bay than ships from other countries. This fairly random language contact situation continued for about fifty years. Then the Dutch colony was founded, and more ships, en route to, and returning from the East, visited the Cape more regularly, tightly regimented by the Dutch East India Company (VOC).

The first significant moment for Kaaps: its beginning

Transcripts made by visiting mariners of the Khoi-Khoi attempting to speak Mariner Dutch, reveal the Kaaps and Afrikaans nature of these attempts. Conradie (2014:9, 12) provides examples from Mariner Dutch (from the *bootbrieweprojek*) [*booty letters project*],

reminiscent of the data discussed below: *vol laen* (*volladen*) [fully laden], without the intervocalic [d] (cf. *bôre*, in this data, for *borde* [plates]), and *vra-* as root form (*ick vrade*) [I ask], which can be compared here with *ghe-* [*to give*] of early Kaaps. The few pidgin forms from other languages like English are not accounted for here.

Details about the pidgin used by the Khoi-Khoi were recorded in 2 word lists (Nienaber 1963:99 ff.). (Additional searches for the records of ships that came to the Cape during this period could provide more data.) A word list compiled in 1655 by the French-speaking governor of the Mauritius, De Flaucourt (Den Besten 1989:218 ff.; Nienaber 1963:105 ff.) on his return voyage to France, is the most complete collection of words from that period. During his stay in Saldanha Bay, he recorded more than 221 words (Nienaber 1963:106). Another list compiled in 1626 by Thomas Herbert contains 31 words (Nienaber 1963:22, 99 ff.; Raven-Hart 1967:116-123). A few random additional records contribute to these word lists.

Most Dutch ships arrived in Table Bay (Nienaber 1963:104). De Flaucourt's recordings in Saldanha Bay in 1655 reveals the spread of the early Cape pidgin by this time. Would De Flaucourt's Khoi-Khoi negotiators not have picked up the pidgin from Van Riebeeck's settlement? It is unrealistic to assume that this type of language acquisition could have taken place in the short period of three years. Exposure on both sides was limited in the early years of the settlement. Discourses on trade and the exchange of information generally took place with the aid of interpreters (cf. Groenewald 2002:116 ff. for the role of interpreters).

Some of the words recorded in these early Khoi-Afrikaans word lists are currently part of the standard variety

of Afrikaans, while others are typically Kaaps. Others show similarities with Nama (Nienaber 1963:104). But it is clear that the mother-tongue of the learners of the pidgin is Khoi.

With the growth of Kaaps, Khoi-Afrikaans was widely spoken in the interior during the eighteenth century (Van Rensburg 2013 writes about the *Binnelandse Grensgebied – Interior Border area*). The other language was Pastoral Afrikaans. Khoi-Afrikaans was an important language with many speakers, and has an expansive register showing fewer or more Khoi characteristics. Parts of it can still be heard in that region today, and authors writing in local dialects play an important role in its recording and preservation (cf. Hendricks 2014).

Kaaps and Standard Afrikaans

Môre [good morning/tomorrow]

One of the words recorded during the first incarnation of Afrikaans is *môre* (*morgen* in Dutch). This recording of *môre* is the oldest example of the typical Afrikaans morphological rule that does not permit a –g- between vowels in words like *reën* [rain] and *waens* [waggons]. But this rule exists in Dutch, cf. *regen*, *wagens*. It is noteworthy that only a few recordings of *môre* (without the intervocalic –g-), appear in texts before the nineteenth century. What could be the reason for this? Poneis (1993:158) suspects that, despite the probable frequency of its appearance, stigmatization played a role in its infrequent use. Die incorporation of words without the intervocalic –g- into Standard Afrikaans followed the same path as the word *ek*, and this is discussed below.

Gee [give]

What about suffixes? While Dutch, for example, use –en, this suffix, and others, are not used in early Afrikaans (and therefore Afrikaans, as is discussed later, could not gradually have stopped using it). The first constituent *ghe-* (= *gee* in today's spelling) in De Flaucourt's 1655 recording of the verb phrase *gee-gee* (= *gheme*, which consists of an Afrikaans and a Khoi morpheme) shows the early adaptation of the Dutch language form *ge(ve(n))*. (More examples are provided below of constructions with *gee*.)

Phonological variations

One of the words listed in this record of early Afrikaans, is *bore* (for *borde* [plates] (De Flaucourt 1655)). (i) Whereas in written Afrikaans, a [-d-] follows an [n], [l] and [r], this does not always occur in spoken Afrikaans: compare *hanne*, *keller*, *pere* (spoken Afrikaans) with *hande* [hands], *kelder* [cellar] en *perde* [horses] in written Afrikaans. (ii) In addition, the interchangeable nature of the Khoi-Afrikaans consonants [k] x [b] is also illustrated by this written record. The recognizability of certain words is somewhat veiled by this: the word *bore* (*borde*) is recorded as *core*. De Flaucourt wrote the Dutch word for *huiskat* [house cat] as *toes* (which illustrates the interchangeable use of the [t] x [b/p]-consonants (Nienaber 1963:109)).

Kaaps

One word that has been used in Kaaps since the birth of Afrikaans is *wate* (without the [r] at the end of the word). In Standard Afrikaans dictionaries, this word is simply recorded as *water*, as in Dutch, and ending with an [r]. The absence of [r] at the ends of words, and

(in some circumstances) also in the pre-final syllable of words, is common among speakers of Kaaps: *menee*, *vi*, *wee*, *plesie*, (*vir meneer*, *vir*, *weer*, *plesier*) [*sir*; *for*; *again/* *weather*; *pleasure*].

The word *vagiet* (*vergeet* - *forgot*) is also recorded, with an [a] where Dutch has an [ə] - another common way of pronouncing the word among speakers of Kaaps (cf. die written forms *gapraat* [*spoke*] en *Mosas* [Moses] in the works of Small, and the use of *lewendag* [alive/lively] among speakers in the main areas of influence from Kaaps. To this we can also add the use of *lewendagge* in the title of A.H.M. Scholtz's 1995 book (*Vatmaar: 'n Lewendagge verhaal van 'n tyd wat nie meer is nie*) and the use of *prysag* in Hans du Plessis's poetry in Griqua-Afrikaans.

Early loanwords

To add to the above examples, De Flaucourt records the word *kierie* [walking stick] (as *cali*, which can also be pronounced as *kari*, owing to the interchangeable Khoi-Afrikaans [l] x [r]-consonants (Nienaber 1963:336)). *Kierie* is commonly used in Afrikaans today, and shows that the language contact involving the Khoi-Khoisan was not a one-sided affair.

The word for *brood* [bread] is also recorded. The first syllable of this word is *bro-* without the final consonant *-d*, as in *mon* (*mond*) [mouth], *han* (*hand*) [hand] etc., which can be heard in contemporary Kaaps (Conradie (2014:9) mentions *honder* [hundred], taken from Mariner Dutch). But what about the rest of the word following the syllable *bro-*? The Khoi-Khoisan actually had the perfect syllable for the different types of bread and biscuits consumed by the sailors: *-kwa*. In Khoi-grammar, this syllable is used at the ends of words to express a collective meaning, and so they used *bro-kwa* to describe this bread and biscuits.

With the passage of time, this syllable was given a variety of spellings. Nowadays it is spelled *-kwa*, to refer to the Nama people (*Nama-kwa*) and the Gri-people, the *Grie-kwa*. And where does the Afrikaans word *-goed*, as in *oompie-goed* come from? It is actually *-kwa* which some people heard as *-goe(d)*: the velar sounds are close to one another, cf. *Khoi-Khoi+kwa*, which is also written as *Khoe+khoe+gowa(b)*. How does one translate *-kwa*? The equivalent in meaning for this is *hulle* [they/them], as in *Pa-hulle* [*Father and those with him*] in contemporary Afrikaans. In the Khoi-Afrikaans of the interior, *-goed* was also used with proper nouns, and forms like *Maikel-goed* can still be found (cf. Hendricks 2014).

Spoken language forms that have survived

Ou

The items listed in the first word list have survived to this day - some by becoming part of the written language, and others by becoming part of the register of regional dialects as loanwords. *Ou* is one such example.

Outere

Herbert first recorded the word *ou* in 1626 as a synonym for *gee*, and it is similar to *ou* in contemporary Nama (Haacke 2002, Nienaber 1963). Several observers have noted that *ou* was often used to ask for food. This word has a number of interesting meanings. An elderly inhabitant in the Upington area (personal notes, 2012) suggested that *ou* is part of a more complete expression or combination: *outere*. Closer analysis shows that *outere* is made up of *ou+te+re*. (Khoi is well-known for the ease with which words can be combined). The individual

parts of *outere* can therefore be translated as *gee+my+moet* [*give+me+must*].

Ghemare

De Flaucourt recorded the word *ghemare* in 1655. This word is linked to *outere*, as it also means *gee* [give] and contains the command suffix *-re*. He wrote *ghe-* as the first syllable, as the translation of *ou*, instead of *ou* itself, as Herbert did before him. Did the authorities (in the 40 years since Herbert compiled his list) prefer the Khoi-Afrikaans interlanguage words like *ghe-* in their discussions with De Flaucourt, at the cost of Khoi-words like *ou* (cf. Nienaber 1963:107)? Probably. *Ghe-* is reminiscent of the Dutch language form *ge(ve(n))*, and this is the earliest record of the Afrikaans word *gee*. *Ghe-* without the suffix *-en*, and followed by the Khoi-woord *-ma* (also written as *me* = *gee*) has the literal meaning of *gee+gee*. With the Khoi-command suffix *-re* at the end of the word, its meaning is *gee+gee+moet* [*give+give+must*].

A typical characteristic of Khoi-Afrikaans is the repetition in meaning through words combined from Khoi-Afrikaans and Khoi. Such Khoi-Afrikaans repeat combinations are well-known, cf. *Leeu-Gamka* (*leeu-leeu*) and the first two parts of *hartbees*(*huis*) (*harub+biesie*=*biesie+biesie*).

In 1925, Von Wielligh also noted the use of *ou* in the meaning of *gee* ('ou vir my dan 'n stukkie twak') in Namakwaland. Currently, 400 years after the first written record of *ou* in 1626, this word is still widely used by a broad group of speakers in the Orange River area (according to Anzil Kulsen of Upington).

Ten Rhyne, who wrote down a series of short sentences from the earliest Afrikaans texts in 1672, (Van Rensburg 2012:19-20), also records *ge-*, in *gemme* (= *gee+gee*) (cf. Ponelis 1993:30 ff for

these texts.) The structure of these sentences resemble the data of the pre-1652 Afrikaans.

Perspective

The observations that Afrikaans was being spoken at the Cape before 1652, differ from many other descriptions of the birth of Afrikaans. What are these differences?

- (i) What was the starting point for Afrikaans? This appears to be a key difference in the various descriptions. For some, Afrikaans began with the Dutch spoken at the VOC settlement at the Cape in 1652 (cf. e.g. Willems 2013). This is clearly in contrast to the evidence that the earliest Afrikaans, Kaaps, was already being spoken *before* 1652.
- (ii) The circumstances surrounding the early formation of Afrikaans is another difference. If Afrikaans only began to exist in 1652, it should have been a continuation of Dutch outside of the Netherlands, as in the case of Dutch in e.g. North America (For more on this variety of Dutch, see Noordegraaf 2014.) When colonial Dutch is being discussed, we should distinguish between Creole Dutch and Pidgin Dutch. How is the indigenous influence seen in the case of Creole Dutch? Roberge (2012:389), Den Besten (1987:24, 1989:222) and other researchers are critical of the view that Afrikaans was merely a continuation of Dutch outside the Netherlands, and that this view fails to acknowledge local influences on the language, and Den Besten (1987) asked: '*Het Afrikaans: Mag het ietsje meer Zuid-Afrika zijn?*' [Afrikaans. Might it be a little more 'South Africa'?].

The considerable Dutch influence on Afrikaans can be explained by the conscious, deliberate interventions from Dutch, large-scale importation of loanwords from Dutch and other forms of dutchification which took place during the later history of Afrikaans. These events have their own individual histories, and the details of this dutchification do not permit interpretations of an Afrikaans that started off as Dutch in 1652.

My argument here is that Afrikaans should not be seen as Dutch which gradually changed into Afrikaans, but rather the opposite: Afrikaans is the result of sociolects that were subjected to later phases of dutchification.

- (iii) A third difference lies in the shaping of Afrikaans as a separate language with its own structure which started at the Cape before 1652. Through a gradual process of transformation, Dutch is supposed to have changed into its genetic offspring, Afrikaans. Descriptions of this transformation do not exist. Why, then, are structures in Afrikaans explained in terms of Dutch? For example, in Afrikaans the *-t* suffix did not fall away: it simply never existed in Afrikaans.
- (iv) As a fourth difference, the development of early Afrikaans (Kaaps) before the start of the Dutch settlement in South Africa, questions our understanding of the concept 'language families'. Learners of Kaaps were not rooted in a Germanic language family, and their pidgin was not a *daughter-* or *sister language* of Dutch (perhaps an adopted child?). The roots of Afrikaans do not permit us to say that it is 'the only language of Germanic origin which is spoken exclusively outside Europe' (Willemyns 2013).

THE SECOND SIGNIFICANT MOMENT: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Incorporation through language replacement

The consequences of transvariational contact between speakers of the different varieties of Afrikaans after the establishment of the Dutch colony at the Cape in 1652, were certainly dramatic for all its speakers. One of these consequences was that the mother-tongue of the Khoi-Khoi, who lived all over the Cape Peninsula and the adjacent areas, was replaced by Khoi-Afrikaans (after other factors created the necessary environment for such a shift). This language shift seems to have taken place almost completely about 50 years after the establishment of the Dutch colony. Khoi was then replaced by Khoi-Afrikaans (Van Rensburg 2013). With the expansion of Kaaps, especially from the start of the eighteenth century, Khoi-Afrikaans played an important role in each Afrikaans-speaking community that was formed in the interior of South Africa.

An example: the fate of *ek*

It is easy for the details of how Afrikaans developed to become part of generalised statements on the shaping of the language, when we take account of the influence of Kaaps on other varieties of Afrikaans. But exactly how did it happen? Early dialectology had the motto that *every word has its own history*. We can apply this to Kaaps: *Words of Kaaps origin have their own special history in Afrikaans*. Investigating such word histories should prove the extent of the influence of Kaaps on each variety of Afrikaans (the same applies to grammatical structure).

The developmental history of the singular personal pronoun, *ek* [I], as object in sentences, is a typical example. It is used here as example to illustrate multiple similar cases.

The history of *ek* is as follows: By 1920 Afrikaans had been used in schools, Afrikaans universities and other educational institutions for several years. In that year, the language commission of the Academy decided to alter the norm recognizing *ik* as Afrikaans. It was decided that in future, *ek*, instead of *ik*, would be the only way of writing this word in Afrikaans (see Steyn 2014: 157).

Until 1920 *ik* was the only accepted way of writing this word. Prof. N.J. Brummer of the Stellenbosch Seminary strongly opposed this decision by the commission to replace *ik* with *ek*. And he was certainly not alone. He argued that the word *ek* was taken from the Cape to the north. Declaring *ek* as valid replacement for *ik*, he concluded, is a 'overwinning vir de Maleiers' [victory for the Malay]. In this context: a victory for Kaaps - which it certainly was.

Prof. Brummer was probably well within his rights regarding his perception of the origin and reach of the word *ek*. It was indeed well-known in Cape Malay Afrikaans, regularly appearing in religious texts translated from Arabic (cf. Davids, cited in Willemse en Dangor 2011). For example, in a guide on fasting from 1921 (*die Kitaaboes Sooem*), we read '*ek* is klaar met de Kitaab' [I have completed the Kitaab] (ibid:103). It was also common in daily language usage: Abu Bakr Effendi, e.g. writes the following in a letter (1894, ibid.:94) '*ek* is bajang vir ander.' (= *verander*) [I have changed a lot].

Ek was also used in other sub-varieties of Kaaps. Changuion (1848:100), a Dutch intellectual at the Cape who listened carefully to the local pidgin Dutch, warned against its increasing use. *Ek* was being used by the Khoi-Khoi, he

said, and should therefore be avoided. He cites examples of the Khoi-Khoi saying: '*ek* is, *ek* heef', instead of *ik* *ben*, *ik* *heb*' [I am, I have].

From 1876, *ek* was also the form in which the GRA (Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners – Association of True Afrikaners) wrote the word, probably based on its use in the spoken language in the interior.

What happened later? When the decision by the language commission was carried out, the word *ek* became the norm in Standard Afrikaans. Today, this does not concern anyone, nor is it ever suggested that *ik* should be revived.

This short history tells us so much more about the fate of *ek* in Afrikaans, than simply to say that *ik* was originally Dutch Nederlands, and that *ek* later became Afrikaans. The social history of the earliest speakers of Afrikaans comes into play as well.

The appropriate question of origin which language historians should be asking, in search of the building blocks of Afrikaans, is emphasized by the history of *ek*. Researchers should not be content to ask the question: *Where* does a word like *ek* in Afrikaans come from? A possible answer would be 'From Dutch'. Perhaps someone will say: 'From Kaaps'. Such *where* questions are generally asked when the distinctive characteristics of Afrikaans are examined.

We can ask a better question, which will reveal more about the circumstances of the incorporation of various elements (speakers, time and place) of Afrikaans, and this question should be: *how* did it happen that *ek* in Afrikaans became part of common usage? When details of the *how* are unravelled, as was done above, namely *how* forms like *ek* became part and parcel of general usage and acceptance in Afrikaans, and how its stigmatization was overcome, the story of Afrikaans will be properly revealed. In the linguistic documentation of

Afrikaans, it is of primary importance to capture what happened between its speakers, and how their interactions reflected in the language. The linguistic history of Afrikaans is fundamentally a socio-historical story, which tells us how myths were created (see also Du Plessis 2011), how stigmatization was overcome, and also what the conditions were for changes in *norms* as well as their *spread* and *incorporation* into the broader concept of Afrikaans.

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