

## On Reconstructing Variation in Cape Dutch (1710–1840)

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Allar vóro af scafnar, þær er vóro á ristnar,  
 oc hverfðar við inn helga mioð,  
 oc sendar á víða vega (*Sigrdrífumál* 18)

### 0. Setting.

In this essay I shall address some methodological issues concerning the reconstruction of variation in the early history of Afrikaans (roughly 1710–1840), with a view toward theorizing the mechanisms and sociolinguistic forces that underlie the formation of this language. Since discussions of the methodology of evaluating our Cape Dutch source material have been mostly sketchy, and since most scholars have neglected to make their methodology explicit, it is natural that much has been assumed that will not bear up under close scrutiny.

I shall not take up the tired question as to whether Afrikaans is a creole or semicreole. The answer to this question is ultimately decisionistic, depending on one's point of view. If one defines a creole on the basis of certain sociohistorical conditions, specifically, as a language variety that developed out of contact between western European languages and non-European languages in an extraterritorial setting and involving people born in the colonies of nonindigenous parents, then Afrikaans would certainly meet that definition. In this respect, Afrikaans stands apart from extraterritorial varieties of language that developed from contact of diverse metropolitan dialects (and only these), indigenized varieties of western European languages (e.g., Indian and West African

English), and foreign-worker varieties in Europe. If one proceeds from a linguistic-typological definition grounded in prototypical structural features (Markey 1982, Makhudu 1984), then Afrikaans would lie within the intermundia between creole and noncreole.

I follow Mufwene (e.g., 1996a) in rejecting the idea that creolization constitutes a special diachronic process, for no kind of restructuring that has contributed to the development of languages generally regarded as “creoles” is peculiar to them. Creolization, then, is assumed not to be a primary theoretical concept in the present research program insofar as it reduces to cognitive processes that facilitate or mediate linguistic change generally.

In previous work (e.g., Roberge 1992) I have used the term *Cape Dutch Vernacular* to characterize the transitional stages between metropolitan Dutch and the emergence of *Afrikaans*, a label that I restrict to the standardized variety that began to take shape from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Deumert (1999:43n.) has refined the term *Cape Dutch Vernacular* such that it refers “to a complex variation continuum which comprises a wide range of varieties and linguistic variants, many of which were not selected into the emerging standard language.” *Cape Dutch* is a general cover term for the full range of Netherlandic speech forms represented at the old Cape.

### **1. Postulates Regarding the Instantiation of Variation in Cape Dutch.**

In keeping with the “Galilean style of inquiry,” which involves “radical abstractions and idealizations in defining the initial scope of the inquiry” (Botha 1988:6), I proceed from a number of postulates with regard to the formation of *Afrikaans*.

The Dutch-speaking population at the Cape of Good Hope reflected a wide variety of metropolitan dialects (Holland, Utrecht, Zealand, Brabant, Flanders, the eastern provinces of the

Netherlands) during the Dutch East India Company era (1652–1795). The Cape colony also included significant numbers of Europeans to whom Dutch was not native, namely, speakers of Low German dialects (which constitute a segment of the dialect continuum that stretches from the Netherlands through Northern Germany), High German dialects, and French, with the arrival of Huguenot refugees at the Cape in 1685.

There is reason to believe that Afrikaans has historical links to an inchoate koine that formed in Amsterdam and other urban centers in Holland during the seventeenth century due to internal immigration and an influx of refugees from Germany and French-speaking regions. Because the cities were not able to absorb all the immigrants into the mainstream economy, these groups must have been well represented in Dutch colonial populations (cf. Poneis 1993:122, 127-29; Buccini 1996). The affinities have been observed between Hollands and Afrikaans may be attributable to a strong “founder effect” exerted by the Dutch outpost's first commander—Jan van Riebeeck (1619?–1677)—and his entourage, as Kloeke (1950) thought; or they may have become established in the cities of Holland among speakers who were constitutive of the founder population of the Dutch colony in southern Africa. Be that as it may, the metropolitan base of Afrikaans was not the simple development of one metropolitan dialect (cf. Scholtz 1963:232–56), a point that even Kloeke (1950:333ff.) conceded. We formulate the first postulate as follows:

**Postulate 1.** The Dutch of the European superstrate community was highly variable.

The indigenous Khoikhoi comprised the primary substrate community during the initial period of European contact and occupation. By 1652, when the Dutch East India Company established a permanent colony at the Cape, Europeans and the Khoikhoi had had 164 years of contact with one another, most of it in the last 50 years of this period (Elphick 1977:86). These facts provide the bases

for our second postulate:

**Postulate 2.** Jargonized forms of Dutch (and English) emerged among the indigenous Khoikhoi during this 164-year period.

Language contact in the early Cape society was furthered by the importation of approximately 63,000 enslaved persons between 1652 and 1808 (Shell 1994:12). Prior to formal introduction of slavery to southern Africa in 1658, there were only a handful of personal slaves at the Cape, including a few in Van Riebeeck's household. The first significant numbers arrived in that year from Angola and Dahomey. Subsequently, the Cape turned east for most of its slaves—to the Indonesian archipelago, the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, the Mascarenes, and Mozambique (Shell 1994:12–13). Slaves from the eastern possessions of the Dutch East India Company outnumbered all other slaves imported to the Cape and remained in the majority until the mid 1780s, when the east African mainland and Madagascar became the primary sources of slave labor.

The length of time between the beginnings of immigration and what Baker (e.g., 1993:137–38) calls Event 1—the point at which the slave population surpasses the slave-owning European population—is crucial in creolization. The longer this period, the greater the exposure of newly arrived slaves to the superstrate language. In the Cape colony, the pre-Event 1 period was roughly 52 years, that is, between 1658 and 1710. During this time, L2 acquisition on the part of these newcomers could be more directly targeted toward the language of Europeans than in other slave labor systems in which creole languages have formed.

By that I do not mean that enslaved peoples necessarily aspired to acquire the language of the Europeans as such. Their real aim was to communicate, particularly with fellow workers. Slaves were drawn from a multitude of starkly different geographical and cultural origins, constituting easily

the most diverse population of any recorded slave society (Shell 1994:11). Furthermore, the labor system at the Cape often entailed the separation of new arrivals from their linguistic and cultural groups. There was always a need for communication between the various segments of a polyglot society: between Europeans and indigenes; between slaves of varying ethnic backgrounds; and between slaves of whatever background, Europeans, the Khoikhoi, and free Blacks. Neither Creole Portuguese nor Malay were in *general* use as *lingue franche* because too few rank-and-file settlers and indigenes knew these languages. These facts provide the bases for our third postulate:

**Postulate 3.** Africans and Asians sharing no common language used their jargonized versions of superstrate Dutch in order to effect what Baker (1990, 1997) has called a *medium of interethnic communication* (MIC). This practice led to the creation of a stable Cape Dutch Pidgin within the Afro-Asian substratum by roughly 1710. Speakers created the MIC they needed not only by drawing on a range of resources available in Dutch, Creole Portuguese, Malay, and Khoikhoi dialects but also by innovating.

By “stable,” I mean the existence of structural norms. It is important to add at this juncture that the Pidgin was surely not a static entity; on the contrary, it was a developing system and variable in itself, given a multiplicity of sub- and adstrata. Den Besten (1999:19) maintains that “we still do not know when Cape Dutch Pidgin became extinct. It seems to have disappeared somewhere between the 1740s and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.” I would maintain that the latter chronology is highly plausible.

There was no subsequent formation of a plantation society, for the Cape was poorly suited to plantation agriculture. The slave population never greatly exceeded the settler population, and there were no large slaveholders, save for the Dutch East India Company itself and a few of the

bigger farms in the western Cape. The demographic event corresponding to Baker's Event 2—when the number of locally born slaves surpasses the slave-owning population—did not take place in southern Africa. From the 1760s, the percentage of the Cape slave population that was locally born was at or near 50% (Shell 1994: 16–17). Indeed, natality was rather low within the slave population. The demographic event corresponding to Baker's Event 3—when the regular supply of slaves comes to an end—took place in southern Africa from about 1808, the year in which the legal international slave trade was abolished. At the same time, the period 1784–1808 saw the largest influx of slaves from abroad, which can only have prolonged the need for an MIC. I make so bold as to suggest that the Pidgin lasted through the lifetime of the last wave of captives, a date that we shall approximately and arbitrarily stipulate as 1840. Thus, L2 versions of Dutch were not filtered through succeeding mass concentrations of slave labor, becoming more and more diluted as they spread further from their point of origin. These demographic factors explain why basilectalization of Dutch in southern Dutch was far less extreme than in other creole situations.

Another conspicuous difference between the slave societies in southern Africa and in other parts of the world (e.g., the Caribbean) is the *functional dominance* of the superstrate language. In the course of the eighteenth century locally-born language learners drew on the resources of a fully developed superstrate language (Cape Dutch) alongside a coteritorial Cape Dutch Pidgin. The primary developers of Afrikaans were speakers shifting from the multilingualism—in the retained substrate and adstrate languages of their forebears and the Cape Dutch Pidgin—to the functionally dominant superstrate language alongside the pidgin and then to a single language. Europeans at the old Cape can be expected to have transmitted their vernacular without interruption to their descendants. However, given the intimacy of their own linguistic encounters with the labor force and

with children growing up among the children of enslaved peoples and free children of color, Europeans accepted individual features from the Cape Dutch Pidgin but did not adopt it in its entirety.

Within sixty years of Dutch occupation, the traditional Khoikhoi economy, social structure, and political order had almost entirely collapsed in the southwestern Cape. The decline of Khoikhoi identity as it had existed prior to 1652 was exacerbated by attendant language shift to Dutch. The Khoikhoi continued to speak their own dialects among themselves until the mid eighteenth century, at which time their dialects began to disappear from the western Cape. By 1800, there were few Khoisan in the colony who were not in the service of the Europeans as farm and domestic labor. From 1775, the offspring of female Khoikhoi and male slaves known as *Bastaard Hottentots* were legally indentured until the age of twenty-five. Along the northern frontier, the class of Cape Dutch-speaking Khoikhoi who had been in service came to be known as *Oorlams*; one such group pushed into present-day Namibia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *Bastaards* were of mixed European, Khoikhoi, and slave parentage. From this class there emerged in the early nineteenth century a series of Cape Dutch-speaking communities along and to the north of the Orange River known collectively as *Griqua*. In the mid nineteenth century a group of *Bastaards* settled in Rehoboth in Namibia.

The convergence model of language formation links change with variability during the period of immigration and intensive language contact, as also the subsequent reduction of that variability as the cumulative outcome of linguistic accommodation.

**Postulate 4.** The colonial speech community in southern Africa saw the convergence of developing systems with fully developed systems. This convergence took place roughly between the approximate date of Event 1 (ca. 1710) and the passing of the

generation of enslaved people whose arrival at the Cape coincided with the approximate date of Event 3 (ca. 1808–40).

Developing systems involve competition among grammatical features and their selection according to their salience, semantic substantiveness, and plausibility as linguistic signs based on factors that are language- or situation-specific, along the lines proposed by Thomason and Kaufman (1988: ch. 6) and Mufwene (e.g., 1990, 1996b). The convergence of fully developed systems also involves selection from a variety of possible features, though change is not always in the same direction or towards the same target. Additionally, issues of power, identity, and acculturation are vital factors in these selection processes, as Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985:198–99) have demonstrated.

## **2. A Linguistic Continuum at the Old Cape (1710–1840).**

The colonial speech community at the Cape between 1710 and 1840 was defined by continuous linguistic space in which speakers placed themselves by virtue of their linguistic behavior. The dimensions of this space can be recovered only by means of reconstruction, which may be conducted in two complementary ways, namely, through *imputation* on the basis of later documentation (which is far and away more copious) and direct examination of the contemporaneous philological record.

Deumert (1999) has collected and analyzed a corpus of private documents (letters, diary excerpts) written by 136 Cape Dutch speakers between 1880 and 1922. The time period in question is pivotal in the history of Afrikaans, for it coincides roughly with the emergence of an elaborated and prolific written tradition within the settler community (from ca. 1875) and the recognition of Afrikaans as the second official language (in lieu of Dutch) of the Union of South Africa (1925).



Limiting the corpus to private documents in order to control the stylistic variable has a clear and obvious benefit, though keeping this variable constant has a cost insofar as the corpus is dominated by Whites (120 out of 136), given the fact that literacy itself was still racially skewed during the period in question. Be that as it may, Deumert's corpus reveals a complex pattern of structured variation that defines a linguistic *continuum*, which existed in southern Africa until well into the early twentieth century.

If the structured heterogeneity adduced by Deumert provides a window into the linguistic repertoire of Cape Dutch speakers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then the observed patterns can in principle be imputed back to eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for which the philological record does not contain a similarly robust body of private documents. In theory, there are three possibilities: between 1710 and 1840 Cape Dutch was *more* variable, *less* variable, or *equally* variable. The second and third possibilities are highly unlikely, given ongoing immigration to the Cape (both voluntary and involuntary), expansion of the colonial frontier (and the displacement of people that this implied), the formation and re-formation of various social and ethnic groups, language contact, and the fact that basilectal Cape Dutch and the Cape Dutch Pidgin (extinct by 1880) remain to be accounted for. These possibilities may therefore be disregarded. The third possibility would mean that the convergence of variables into modern Afrikaans was even more dramatic, when viewed longitudinally, than is indicated in Deumert 1999. Thus, the task of reconstruction must also involve the philological interpretation of older source material.

It is, of course, obvious from the outset that we must be able to differentiate the source material according to text type and the communication networks in which locally-born writers would likely have participated. Furthermore, we want to be able to identify diagnostic linguistic variables

that correlate with these differences. However, extrapolation of variability on the basis of contemporaneous documentation from the period 1710–1840 is difficult. Our corpora are limited, heterogenous, and fragmentary. With one exception, the extant source material contains no functionally differentiated body of material from the hand of a single writer, which might reveal variation according to use (register). Moreover, we often know little about the writers themselves.

The metropolitan prestige norms, at the one end of the continuum, are best represented in our Cape corpora and thus most easily retrieved. These norms are preserved in official communications of the Dutch East India Company, in various diaries and reports that were intended to be part of the official record, starting with Van Riebeeck's *Dagbregister* (Bosman and Thom, eds., 1952–57), which he compiled over the course of his tenure as commander (1652–1661). Metropolitan prestige norms are also preserved in private documents written by officials and employees, as well as family members, whose networks were connected to the official sphere. In 1751, Hendrik Swellengrebel (1700–1760) retired as governor of the Cape of Good Hope and returned to Holland with his children. His eldest daughters, Helena Johanna (1730–1753) and Johanna Engela (1733–1798)—both born at the Cape—kept a journal during their voyage from Cape Town to the Dutch Republic that is written in a simple but very good Dutch (Barend-Van Haefen, ed., 1996). After 1795, however, knowledge of metropolitan Dutch gradually became limited to those individuals who could claim a level of education beyond the rudimentary.

*Acrolectal Cape Dutch* is represented by the diary fragment of a prosperous Cape Town resident, Johanna Duminy (*née* Nöthling) from 1797 (Franken, ed., 1938). The language of her diary is somewhat removed from metropolitan Dutch in morphology (e.g., loss of gender and personal agreement in verb inflection) and in the use of many local lexical items (Roberge 1994a:60–63). With

regard to other features, however, the Duminy diary remains reasonably close to Dutch. She consistently maintains the opposition between finite and nonfinite forms of the verb and the use of *zijn* as a perfect auxiliary with mutative intransitives, that is, verbs that denote some kind of change from one position, location, or state to another. For the relation of anterior events, the preterite is Duminy's tense of choice, but her diary does contain 96 tokens of the perfect, 77 of which occur with *hebben*, 19 with *zijn*. All of the perfects for intransitive mutative verbs are consistent with metropolitan norms (Roberge 1997).

*Mesolectal Cape Dutch* is represented in several sources. First, we have the reports of unlearned (sometimes only marginally literate) field cornets between 1712–1831 (collected in Van Oordt, ed., 1949–52), who in many cases appear to have struggled simply to compose their reports to their magistrates. Individually, these letters can diverge significantly in terms of their linguistic distance from metropolitan Dutch. Collectively, however, they represent a uniform text type. Mesolectal Cape Dutch is also preserved *in extenso* in the diary of the Voortrekker leader Louis Trigardt (1836–38), which is considerably more literate than the field cornet letters (Le Roux, ed., 1977). In addition to the loss of gender and personal agreement, mesolectal Cape Dutch is characterized linguistically by the variable neutralization of the opposition between finite and nonfinite verb forms, especially in the verb cluster (2–3):

## (1) Acrolectal Cape Dutch:

1. dan ik sal vannagt in de wage mijn bet **late** opmaken (Duminy diary, 27 November 1797)  
'Then tonight I shall have my bed made up in the wagon.'
2. ik gong self om onse wage te **late** pakken (Duminy diary, 12 December 1797)  
'I myself went to have our wagon packed.'

## (2) Mesolectal Cape Dutch:

1. Dese 2 roovers die jk met christiaan opperman meestuert(,) niet weer los te **laate** (KT 46, 1781)  
'These two robbers, which I sent along with Christiaan Opperman, not again to let loose'
2. waarop botman de komando te rug heeft **Laten** roepen (KT 70, 1784)  
'whereupon Botma had the commando called back'
3. ik versoek de ED: Heer gouwerneur de selfde lant en de waater over te **laat** sitten an den burger Petrus Jourdaan (KT 27, 1777)  
'I request the honorable governor to have transferred the same land and the water to the burger Petrus Jourdaan.'
4. de plaats genaamt de ronde huvel . . . aan de berg rievier die ik heb **laat** aantekenen (KT 36, 1779)  
'the farm named "The Hillock" . . . on the mountain river, which I have had registered'

- (3) a. . . . en alsdan de gehele boel te **laten** gaan (Trigardt diary, 1 March 1838)  
 ‘and then to let go the whole lot’
1. Ik had Carolus een kis **laate** maken voor haar doot, toen ik za[g dat] daar voor haar wijinig hoop was (Trigardt diary, 1 May 1838).  
 ‘I had Carolus make a coffin before her death, when I saw that there was little hope for her.’
- c. Zij had eenige van haar pagagie goederen **laat** vallen (Trigardt diary, 3 September 1837)  
 ‘She had let fall some of her baggage.’

The Netherlandic perfect auxiliary system remains largely intact in mesolectal Cape Dutch, although *hebben* shows some encroachment in contexts that should trigger *zijn*. The *Kaapse taalargief* has 414 mutative intransitive verbs, of which some 395 take *zijn* as their auxiliary, 19 take *hebben* in lieu of *zijn* (Roberge 1997). Trigardt uses *zijn* 786 times with mutative intransitives and *hebben* 16 times (Smuts 1967:27).

Whenever, in dealing with the interpretation of manuscript material, the investigator encounters forms that vary from a stipulated norm, four explanations are possible. These deviant forms are either (i) “garbage” (*lapsus calami*, to borrow phrases from Lass 1997:62), that is, purely mechanical errors; (ii) linguistically insignificant graphic variation (e.g., 2 sg. *gij*, *gy*, *geij* ‘you’); (iii) random leaks from the vernacular, in which linguistic change is in progress or fully diffuse, though concealed to a greater or lesser extent by a conservative written tradition; or (iv) indicators of stable, patterned variation in the spoken language—in the present case, reflective of a linguistic continuum linking metropolitan Dutch with the Cape Dutch Pidgin. The conventional view—which has been

advanced by scholars with sometimes radically different views on the formation of Afrikaans (Valkhoff 1966:203–5, 1972:51–52; Scholtz 1963:116, 225, *passim*; Le Roux 1977:xxv; Raidt 1983:6–7, 27–30, 1991:115–16) has centered around scenario (iii). Accordingly, the mixed language of our Cape Dutch corpora is largely an orthographic fiction. Writers sought to produce “correct” Dutch as best they could. But their knowledge of metropolitan norms was not always sufficient for the task. They were unable to suppress completely the interference of the vernacular. The result is a kind of “pseudo-Dutch” or “Africanized” Dutch representing unstable, intermediate forms of the language that crop up due to leakage from the vernacular and influence from written Dutch.

The plethora of nonstandard variants and hypercorrections in our documents make vernacular “interference” and insufficient knowledge of “High Dutch” all but certain. But even with due allowance for the distinction between written and spoken language, the received interpretation is highly problematic. There is no compelling reason to assume a priori that our diarists and the field cornets were attempting to write metropolitan Dutch. Literacy was relatively low among the settler population. Access to metropolitan prestige norms was available to some extent through itinerant tutors, but such opportunities were limited. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that norms favored by the elite in the Cape colony would be favored by the rank and file. Methodologically, there lurks the danger of tautology. Nonstandard features in the texts supposedly find their motivation in the vernacular. Metropolitan features are supposedly due to the conservative influence of Dutch orthography and norms. There are also good empirical reasons to reject the standard view. In addition to the diary, Louis Trigardt has left to posterity a letter from 1823 to the *Heemraad* in Grahamstown, which, though hardly flawless when judged by the metropolitan norms, is written in a passable Dutch. The letter, not the personal document kept for private purposes, represents

Trigardt's attempt to write "correct" Dutch (see Roberge 1994b). A major implication of Deumert's study (1999) is that the idea of a sharp linguistic distinction between an "Afrikaans" vernacular and written Dutch from ca. 1750–75 (i.e., with diglossia, cf. Scholtz 1965:183, Steyn 1980:135) cannot be upheld. For these reasons, the conventional interpretation of the language in the *Kaapse taalargief* documents and the Trigardt diary must also be abandoned.

*Basilectal Cape Dutch* designates the varieties that formed among locally born slaves and Free Blacks in the Cape colony, the Bastards, and Bastard-Hottentots, and by Whites who lived among them. These varieties bear the imprint of the Cape Dutch Pidgin alongside significant innovation during language shift, the latter of which, due to limitations of space, cannot be considered here. It goes without saying that *basilect* is an inherently relative term, for the degree of system reorganization that differentiates the base of a continuum from the variety closest to the superstratum can vary considerably cross-linguistically. The variety that is basilectal for one creole may be mesolectal for another (Mufwene 1996b:192). In the case of Afrikaans basilectalization was not as extreme as in Atlantic creole communities due to differences in the social context.

Basilectal Cape Dutch and the Cape Dutch Pidgin are themselves recoverable only through reconstruction, the principal evidence for which obtains from quoted speech that is preserved in travelers accounts, official documents (such court records, the letters of the field cornets), the Trigardt diary, and in nineteenth-century vernacular literature. The Cape Dutch Pidgin was characterized (inter alia) by the complete deflection of the verb, loss of the auxiliary verbs *hebben* and *zijn*, and the use *ge/ga* as an unbound past tense marker with an invariant form of the verb stem; see Roberge 1994a:79–82, 1994c:66–71 for details. The initial impetus for this reconstruction is typological (inflectional morphology being a common casualty during pidginization generally) and

anecdotal. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Hinrich Lichtenstein made the following observations regarding Khoikhoi dialects and the Dutch of the Khoikhoi along the frontier:

- (4) Was nun die innere grammaticalische Bildung der Sprache betrifft, so scheinen mir zunächst folgende Umstände bemerkenswerth. . . . Ferner fehlt es ganz an Hilfszeitwörtern und selbst die holländisch redenden Hottentotten wissen sich in den Gebrauch derselben nicht zu finden (Lichtenstein 1812 [1967:608]).

The empirical bases for the reconstruction obtain from the quoted speech of Isaak Albach, *bywoner* in Trigardt's party who is married to a woman of color and has children who are described as *bastards* (Trigardt diary, entries for 3 August and 24 December 1837). Albach's first language is presumably French; he is described as a *Fransman* in the diary (entries for 27 June 1837 and 13 February 1838), and conjecture about his provenance has centered on Alsace and Paris (Le Roux 1977:viii, xvi). As I have argued elsewhere (Roberge 1994c), Albach's Cape Dutch, as quoted by the diarist, appears to be an interlectal version of basilectal Cape Dutch, which has in its turn been influenced by the Cape Dutch Pidgin.<sup>1</sup> Of interest are the following features: (i) complete absence of verbal inflection; (ii) the absence of the Netherlandic preterite, save for *was* (which, of course, has survived in Afrikaans); (iii) the use of various allomorphs of 'have' (*het*, *had*, *-at*, semantically undifferentiated) to establish past time reference, mostly with the morpheme *ge-/ga-* (for which Albach substitutes *ke-/ka-*) affixed to an invariant verb stem (though sometimes without the prefix, as in 5a); (iv) the absence of 'be' as an auxiliary (see 5c, *Kat keloop; noijt nie ikat weer kekom kepraat*); (v) the use of *ge-/ga-* (again realized as *ke-/ka-*) plus the invariant verb stem to relate



anterior events , that is, with no auxiliary.<sup>2</sup> Feature (iii) is indicated in italicized boldface, feature (v) in roman boldface.

- (5) a. Die hos ouwe Hinderk gister *uit spaan het*, is allekar wek. No kister ik kom daare bij ou Henderik; ikke vraa Isaak waar de hos. *Ikke wel* somar stuur Isaak, hij moet loop kijk de hos; owe Henderik ze Diderik moet oppas de hos; Isaak help slag de wele bees voor hem. Rek, ou Lowies, Diderik was mijn jonke; hij *had* niet *slaap* en de huis van nak (Trigardt diary, 20 May 1837).

‘The ox that old Hendrik outspanned is gone entirely. Now yesterday I come by old Hendrik; I ask Isaac where the ox [is]. I want just to send Isaac, he must go look [for] the ox; old Hendrik says Diederik must look after the ox; Isaac helped kill the wildebeest for him. Right, old Louis, Diederik was my boy; he did not sleep in the house this evening.’

- b. hij *het* twee vellingsh in mijn waa *gezet*; ik ook *gehelp* daar zoo, ou Lowies. Ik warrem *gemaak* de eijser; das waar, ou Lowies, Ik nie **keslaan**; ou Hendrik **keslaan** mijn wiel. Noo daan, daar’s die vrouw zijn arm. Ook ik *het* warm *kemaak*, maar das waar: ouwe Henderik **keslaan**, ou Lowies: ik nie **keslaan**. Ik twee schaaap al **kebetaal**. . . . Gester ik *het kemaak* voor owe Hendeerik een tank (Trigardt diary, 25 May 1837).

‘He put two wheel rims into my wagon. I also helped there, old Louis. I heated [lit. warm made] the iron, that’s true, old Louis. I did not beat [it]; old Hendrik beat my wheel. Now then, there’s the woman’s arm [i.e., an implement of some kind or wagon part]. I also heated it, but it is true, old Hendrik beat [it], old Louis, I didn’t

beat. I already paid two sheep. . . . Yesterday, I made tongs (futchel of a wagon?) for old Hendrik.’

1. Een mal ik *had* zoo *kakrij* ik *had* *kevrij* een weed vrou, daar op Nuvel. Zij *had* mij mak *kamaak*, aldaa zij *had* mooi *kapraat*, mijn zaam, een dan zij zee: Wat je dink, verdom Vrans man? Zij gee mijn die beesstok ater mijn schoublat. *Kat keloop*; noijt nie *ikat* weer *kekom kepraat*. Ikke zee nie zal ver jouw zoo kaan, ou Hans; ikke *had* zo *kekrij*. Rek, ou Lowies, das waar, *had* zoo *kakrij* ikke Moet oppas, ou Hannis, ver jouw ook zoo kaan nie (Trigardt diary, 27 June 1837).

‘One time I received such [a beating]. I was courting a widow, there in Nieuveld [?]. She made me tame, since she had spoken nice with me, and then she says: “What do you think, stupid Frenchman?” She gives me [hits me with] the cattle stick on my shoulder blade. I ran away; I never came speaking [calling on her] again. I say it should not go this way for you, old Hans. I got a beating. Right, old Louis, it’s true, I got such a beating, I did. You must watch out, old Hans, that it doesn’t go this way for you.’

2. Ik *het kezee* ver jou die plek is nie koed (Trigardt diary, 18 July 1837).  
‘I told you, the place is no good.’
3. Pieta daar *gekomp*, bij de lam schaap, vra ver Katrijn een spel; hij kom bij Marie; Pieta hij vra ook een spel voor Marie. Hij zee voor Koot: zoo ik *karoep* mijn Bosman; *kakvra* voor hem; hij zal nie lie nie. Ik neem voor haar bij Jan; *kavra* de Boes[man]; hij *kazee* ja, Katrijn (en) Marie *het* so *kazee*: Pieta *had keslaan*; ik *had kwoel*. Ja, ou Lowies, wat hij meen daar mee? Pieta *kavraa* voor haar de speld; is gekwaat

(Trigardt diary, 3 August 1837).

‘Pieta came there, by the lamb sheep, asks Katrijn for a pin [for the removal of a splinter from his hand]; he comes to Marie; Pieta, he asks Marie for a pin, too. He tells Koot: so I called my Bushman; [I] asked him; he will not lie. I took her to Jan; [I] asked the Bushman; he said yes, Katrijn and Marie said so. Pieta hit. I got in his face [about it]. Yes, old Louis, what does he intend with this? Pieta asked her for a pin; is angry.’

4. Ik **kaloop** die dag; ik zoo **kaloop**. Ouw Lowies weet: ik loop zoo; kij voor mijn. Gert voor **kaloop**. ikke nie **kakijk**. Ik loop zoo gunter. Ik vra: Waars de kop daar anderkant de kraal? Gert hij huil. Ik zoo door **kaloop**; ik kom bij de krans weer. Ou Lowies weette, hieronner kom ikk[e] donker daar (Trigardt diary, 3 August 1837). ‘I walked that day; I went very far. Old Louis knows: I walk very far. Look at me. Gert went before. I didn’t look. I go far yonder. I ask: Where is the hill there on the other side of the kraal? Gert, he cries. I walked very far through there; I come again to the ridge. Old Louis knows, I come down here from there [after it had become] dark.’
5. Wanneer ikke **kepraat**? Nooijt ik **had kepraat**. Ik **had kevank** de Boesman; nooijt ik **had kabring**; ik **kad** doot **kemaak**. . . . Wat uit gemaak is, is uitgemaak. Als mijn klij[n] goed verbruij, ikke straf (Trigardt diary, 8 September 1837). ‘When did I speak [about that]? I never spoke [about that]. I caught the Bushman;

never did I bring [him]. I killed him. . . . What is settled is settled. When my small fry displease me, I punish.’

Before concluding that these data afford us evidence for basilectal Cape Dutch, we must rule out the possibility that the forms in question are an artefact of one individual’s Dutch interlanguage and thus of little probative value for reconstruction. A control may be exercised in the case of Albach’s quoted speech by comparing the usages in 5 with those preserved in other textual sources and/or recorded in contemporary field work.

The use of *ge* + V without auxiliary is ubiquitous in the Arabic Cape Dutch *Bayânudin* of Abu Bakr Effendi (ca. 1869, printed ca. 1877).

(6) die ierstie maak soekoen aal wat foeioel **ghawourart** (Van Selms, ed., 1979:2)

‘The first makes clean all that became/has become dirty.’

cf. Standard Afrikaans *geword het*, Dutch *geworden is*

We also encounter this structure sporadically in Orange River Afrikaans, which is spoken principally by people of color in the northwestern Cape, the southern Orange Free State, and Namibia.

(7) Ja meneer ons kan baie antôu. Hoe die grootmensê ons **gewys** hoe om die koring te stamp

(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984: 2.85)

‘Yes, sir, we can remember well how the adults showed us how to stamp the grain.’

cf. Standard Afrikaans *gewys het*, Dutch *gewezen hebben*

Similarly, the interchangeability of ‘have’ allomorphs (*het* < Dutch *heeft*, *had* < Dutch *had*) in Albach’s quoted speech finds parallels in the Arabic Cape Dutch text *Vraag en antwoord*, (ca. 1868) in 8 and in Orange River Afrikaans (9):

- (8) a. wat *all\_hu ta`l\_sara`at* ghamaak **het** (Van Selms, ed. 1951:73)  
 ‘what Allah, he is exalted, has made law’
- b. die wat *all\_hu ta`l\_har\_m* ghamaak **het** (Van Selms, ed. 1951:74)  
 ‘that which Allah, he is exalted, has made forbidden’
- c. *all\_hu ta`l\_hat* nie laif nie en kalier (Van Selms, ed. 1951:51)  
 ‘Allah, he is exalted, has not body nor color.’
- d. hai **het** banjak wiet kiraairie (Van Selms, ed. 1951:76)  
 ‘He has very white clothes.’
- (9) a. Die goue pondtjie bas? Ja, ek **had** hulle **gakjen** bas (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.275).  
 ‘The gold pound [coin], master? Yes, I knew them, master.’
1. Ek **het** die tiensielings ok **gakjen** (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.275).  
 ‘I also knew the 10 shilling pieces.’

In addition to the evidence above, we find that Albachs’s usage shows other parallels with Orange River Afrikaans: an alternation between *ge-* and *ga-* (compare 5c, e, g with 7–8), which we also can discern in the contracted form *das* (5b–c) beside Standard Afrikaans *dis* [des] → *dit is* ‘it is’; the (sporadic) affixation of *ge-/ga-* to both the semiauxiliary and lexical verb in verb clusters (Albach [*h*]at *kakom kapraat*, Orange River Afrikaans *het geloop gestuur* ‘has gone/went to send’, Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.37) and (more frequently) to verbs with inseparable prefixes (Albach *kebetaal*, Orange River Afrikaans *gebetaal*), SVO order (Albach *hij moet loop kijk de hos*, Orange River Afrikaans *hy kom haal my hier* ‘he comes to get me here’, Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.212), and the emphatic form of the first person pronoun *ikke* (Afrikaans *ekke*) as the subject of clauses (5a, 5c, 5f–g; cf. Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.117).<sup>3</sup> Given these correspondences, it is very probable that

Trigardt has preserved for posterity a specimen of basilectal Cape Dutch.

It should further be noticed that Trigardt attributes a number of other hallmark Afrikaans features to Albach, while at the same time avoiding them himself in the diary, viz, the double (brace) negation (5e), the object marker *vir* (5c–f), resumptive pronouns (5e–f), and the indirect form of address (*sydelingse aanspreekvorm*, twice in 5f). In view of the variation that we are able to infer from the Trigardt diary, what we know today as Afrikaans did not emerge solely from the mesolect but is rather the product of convergence between mesolectal and basilectal Cape Dutch.

### 3. Further to the Reconstruction of Sociolinguistic Space at the Old Cape.

The conventional notion of a *continuum* implies a finely graded, unbroken “spectrum of usage” (DeCamp 1971:36, Deumert 1999:265) that is systematic and structured, the variants of which can be arranged hierarchically along a scale ranging from most or least acrolectal or basilectal. However, a conceptualization of sociolinguistic space that is both unidimensional and linearly ordered is a heuristic idealization that belies a messier, rather more complicated picture.

Let us consider, albeit briefly, the second person singular pronouns that were exported to the Cape from the metropole. These are the Hollandic forms, nominative *ji*, oblique *jou*, possessive *jouw* (weak form *je*), alongside Brabantine/southern forms, nominative *gij/ge*, oblique *u*, possessive *uw*. Moreover, *u* is surprisingly well attested as a subject pronoun in our Cape Dutch corpora, even though it does not become established as the polite second person pronoun in the Low Countries until the nineteenth century. Subjective *u* occurs four times in the Duminy diary, sporadically in the *Kaapse taalargief* (e.g., KT 47, 1781), and some 18 times in other archival material between 1711 and 1781 (Scholtz 1963:76–77); it is even attested in Abu Bakr’s *Bayānūdin*:

(10) **oeuai** moet wiet *haid* het tewie *ma`n\_* (Van Selms, ed., 1979:30).

‘You must know menstruation has two meanings.’

These second person singular forms were in competitive alternation with one another until well into the nineteenth century (*pace* Ponelis 1993:207). There was crossover between the Hollandic and southern paradigms, as we see in 11:

11. a. gaa **gij** luij met **jouw** drien, en als **je** **Luij** hem gevonden heeft . . . (CJ 226, opp. 203, 1732)

‘you people go in your threes, and when you have found him . . .’

1. Ik waar schouw **u** om dat **je** anders **je** ring verliesen soud . . . Michiel **je** moest dat in geen herberg of op een ander plaats seggen, want sij souden **u** wel daar over op het lijf komen (CJ 342, p. 364, 1738).

‘I warn you because you would otherwise lose your ring . . . Michiel, you must not say that in any inn or in any other place, for they would well come at you on account of it.’

Trigardt manages to use all three types in a single discourse:

(12) En als **geij** bij oom Jan blijven wel, ken **jij** het doen, om zijn gat op te passen. En als **gij** braaf voor hem op gepast en gewerk heb, probeer dan: houjd **u** hand open en verso[e]k hem daar te kakken tot drie mal toe; zal **U** wel een paar harde keutels in **u** hand hebben (Trigardt diary, 26 July 1837).

‘[Trigardt, to his son Pieta:] And if you want to stay with Uncle Jan, you can do it in order to watch his arse. And if you have worked and looked after him well, try this then: hold your

hand open and ask him to shit there three times. You will probably have a few hard turds in your hand.'

Perfect continua are not to be expected in practice, for variables do not necessarily show linear progressions from basilect to acrolect. This is hardly surprising, for the formation of the Cape Dutch Vernacular is not strictly defined by the incremental diffusion of linguistic change but is rather due to "catastrophic" linguistic encounters, between both related metropolitan dialects and genetically unrelated (and typologically different) languages.

#### 4. Conclusion.

On the assumption that speakers must be involved in the actuation of change, variation cannot be *too* structured, for people have the freedom to innovate and change. If one adopts Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985:181–82) view of speech acts as acts of projection, the uniformitarian principle allows the inference that Cape Dutch speakers exhibited the effects of communal and individual acts of identity; that is, they directed their linguistic output so as to resemble or distance themselves from the various groups with which they interacted.

Consider the entry for 'have' in Arnoldus Pannevis's 1880 glossary (published in Van der Merve, ed., 1971:59–127):

- (13) **Hêh** (oude menschen zeggen nog *hewwe*) . . . Algemeen hulpwerkwoord tot vorming van den verleden tyd van het bedryvend overgaand werkwoord, ook der onzydige werkwoorden.  
 'Hêh 'have' (old people still say *hewwe*) . . . General auxiliary verb for the formation of the past tense of the active transitive verb, also of the neutral (intransitive) verbs.'

The disappearance of *zijn* cannot have occurred by internal change within the elapsed time; that is,



between the final entry in Trigardt's diary (10 August 1838) and the compilation of Pannevis's glossary. Rather, such abrupt changes in the patterns of variation represent the conscious manipulation of both linguistic resources and attitudes toward variability on the part of advocates of the Cape Dutch Vernacular and the emergence of a standard-language ideology from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. What Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985:199) stress as a general principle underlies the emergence of the standardized language that we know today as Afrikaans: "At any moment in time each of us can select from a variety of possible models, each socially marked; change only takes place when the social values of the possible models change, and the behaviour of the community is re-focussed as a result."

## NOTES

1. Den Besten (1999) has recently lent support to this view and has provided additional data.
2. At first blush such structures would appear to be "elliptical perfects," as Abraham and Conradie (1999) characterize them, although etymologically they are of a rather different nature.
3. Trigardt also puts *ikke* in the mouth of Adonis, an African: *Ikke wittinie, Baas* 'I don't know, Master' (14 September 1834).
4. Although polite *u* has become established among educated urban speakers, in professional circles, and in the media, it is elsewhere felt to be "unnatural" in Afrikaans as a "cultural borrowing" (*kulnurontlening*) from Dutch.

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