

An interactively oriented D-system: variation triggering remorphologisation in Kaaps

This paper aims to demonstrate how variation arising in strongly vernacular contact varieties can be systematised to produce novel morphosyntactic distinctions, even in a highly deflected language. Our focus is Kaaps, which is often simultaneously described as potentially the oldest and also the most heavily English- and, more generally, contact-influenced variety of Afrikaans (Hendricks & Dyers 2016); in particular, we focus on aspects of the D-system, comparing Kaaps with its Standard Afrikaans (SA) counterpart.

The pronoun systems of SA and Kaaps differ systematically in that Kaaps employs a **morphological** opposition between /d/-initial and /d/-less forms to encode nuances that are encoded **lexically** by *d*-initial forms in SA. As 3rd person neuter pronoun, SA has *dit*, where Kaaps has *it* (1), and encliticised *dis* ('it's'), where Kaaps has *is* (2).¹

(1) **It** wasse goeie jaa vi ôs. (KAAPS; SA = **Dit** was 'n goeie jaar vir ons.)
it was.a good year for us

'It was a good year for us.' (Trantraal *Rapport Weekliks*, 10/1/2016, p.15; Hendricks 2016:24)

(2) **Is** stil innie voorhys virre oomblik. (KAAPS; SA = **Dis** stil in die voorhuis vir 'n oomblik.)
is quiet in.the front.house for.a moment

'It's quiet for a moment at the front of the house.' (Trantraal 2018:33)

Furthermore, the SA definite article *die* is also /d/-less in Kaaps (cf. *wassie* in (3)), where articles generally encliticise onto preceding elements (cf. also *virre* > *vir* 'n = 'for a' in (2)). Thus, two very salient definite D-elements that are /d/-initial in SA are /d/-less in Kaaps. Importantly, however, Kaaps does feature /d/-initial D-elements:

(3) **Dai** wassie laaste kee wat ek vi Amelia gesien et. (KAAPS)

that was.the last time what I for Amelia seen have

'That was the last time I saw Amelia.'

(Trantraal 2018:24)

(4) **Dais** waa POLITICAL ACTIVISTS soes Noam Chomsky my veloo. (KAAPS)

that's where political activists like Noam Chomsky me lose

'That's where political activists like Noam Chomsky lose me.' (Trantraal 2018: 9)

Daai is a contracted form of SA *daardie* (there.the = 'that'), which SA speakers also use colloquially, both as a deictic and as an anaphoric element. Importantly, SA speakers more typically use *dit* to signify anaphoric *that*; consider the SA counterpart of (4):

(5) **Dis** waar politieke aktiviste soos Noam Chomsky my verloor. (SA)

This is not possible in Kaaps, where expletive & referential *it* are always lexically distinguished from anaphoric *that* in a way that they are not in SA (cf. (7)). Thus in Kaaps pronoun-initial /d/ seems to be "morphologised" as a high/CP-level demonstrative (Guardiano 2009), capable of signifying both deixis and anaphoricity (cf. Kayne 2018 on English /θ/ signifying definiteness, and Oshima & McCready 2014 on speaker-**and**-hearer-distal *that* as an "equalising" anaphoric marker). Further, interviews revealed an exclusively anaphoric /h/-initial form in Kaaps, absent in SA:

(6) Speaker A: Joe willie vi sy eie kos betaalettie.

Joe wants.not for his own food pay.have.not

'Joe doesn't want to pay for his own food.'

Speaker B: Ja- nee, **haai** man hou sy gelt styfvas.

yes-no that man hold his money tight-fast

'I agree, that man hangs onto his money tightly.'

Speakers who employ *haai* also have *hat* in place of complementiser *dat* ('that'). So in essence, this Kaaps D-system morpholexically marks 2 distinctions that are syncretised in SA:

¹ Cited data originate from native speakers; data from published texts were checked with multiple native-speaker informants.

(7)	Kaaps	SA	Gloss
	/ʔ/-initial forms: <i>it</i> and <i>is</i>	<i>dit</i> and <i>dis</i>	3 rd person singular neuter ('it/'s' {both}); anaphoric <i>that</i> {SA}
	/d/-initial forms: <i>dai</i>	<i>daa(rd)i(e)</i>	deictic <i>that</i> {both}
	/h/-initial forms: <i>hai</i>	<i>dit</i>	anaphoric <i>that</i> {Kaaps}

Importantly, there is inter-speaker variation regarding the precise circumstances in which the /h/-initial forms are used, with a range of distinct, but formally coherent microsystems emerging in modern-day Kaaps. Specifically, some appear to restrict the use of *haai* to anaphoric human or animate referents (as in (6)), using *daai* in all other deictic and anaphoric contexts; others restrict *haai* to plural anaphoric referents, using *daai* elsewhere; still others appear to employ *haai* in all anaphoric contexts, reserving *daai* for deictic use; and yet others make this two-way distinction, but employ only *daai* in clause-initial position (as in (3-4)).

Our analysis of the “remorphologisation” of the Kaaps D-system highlights three aspects that appear to characterise the way in which speakers and acquirers of strongly interactively-oriented vernacular contact varieties harness variation:

- (i) the information-structural and (inter)subjective orientation and peripheral location of the innovated morphology;
- (ii) the respective roles of interacting adults and language-acquiring children; and
- (iii) the characteristic Maximise Minimal Means pattern typifying the emerging microsystems, also seen where L1 acquirers and adult speakers whose objective it is to achieve effective communication draw on salient formal features to structure variable input.

(i) builds on much work suggesting that phasal peripheries, cross-categorially, encode information-structural meanings (topic, focus, etc.), and also speaker-hearer-specific perspectival/evaluative meanings (see i.a. Savoia et al. 2017, Biberauer 2018). In this context, it is striking that the innovations in the Kaaps D-system target onsets. (ii) and (iii) suggest the possibility that the Kaaps innovations originated via a combination of interaction-driven adult and acquisition-driven child regularisation of initially variable input. We argue that a Maximise Minimal Means (MMM) approach (Biberauer 2017) facilitates insight into how the various Kaaps microsystems could have emerged. MMM is a general-cognitive learning bias, a “third factor” in the sense of Chomsky (2005), which is assumed to be active - in different ways - in both children and adults. The distinctions that are morphologised in Kaaps target interactively useful interpretive nuances that one might expect to be particularly significant in the context of complex multilingual interaction of the kind that has been the norm among the Kaaps community since its 17th century origins. In particular, the /h/-oriented refinements of the deictic and anaphoric system inherited from Dutch involve interactively “basic” sources - proximal *hierdie* (‘here.the.’ = ‘this’) and *hy* (‘he’) - that serve speaker-centred functions in both colloquial SA and Kaaps, the latter as an intersubjectively motivated affectedness and specificity marker extending beyond the masculine singular domain. The harnessing of these forms is plausibly adult-initiated (see i.a. Perfors 2016 on adult willingness to regularise variable input where communication is the key objective). The /d/-related innovations and further reinforcement of the adult-initiated regularities, in turn, have the character of child-driven regularisation (see i.a. Hudson Kam & Newport 2005, Biberauer 2017). In L1 acquisition scenarios, MMM drives acquirers to minimise the postulation of formal features i.a. by maximising domains over which already postulated (i.e. earlier acquired) features apply. Acquirers are taken to be sensitive to systematic departures from Saussurean arbitrariness - here: the distribution of /d/-, /h/- and /ʔ/-initial forms. As deictic forms are acquired early (by 2 years), whereas anaphoric forms are acquired later (Shafer & Roeper 2000, van Kampen 2004, Kirby & Becker 2007), it is to be expected that Kaaps, but not SA acquirers will establish the [+/-deictic] significance of /d/ vs /ʔ/ early. This opposition then sets off the potential for a “cascade” of remorphologisation targeting the anaphoric system.