

MULTILEVEL SYNCRETISM AND THE EVOLUTION OF AFRIKAANS
PERIPHRASTIC POSSESSIVES WITH *SE*

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In memoriam: J. Garcia (1942-1995)
We miss you.

1. The Problem

In Dutch three constructions are available to render the possessive relation. One can use the sigmatic genitive after proper nouns and (namelike) NPs denoting close relatives (1a, b), the preposition *van* (1c), or a weakened form of the possessive pronoun, which varies according to the gender and number of the possessor (1d-f):

- (1) a. Pieters fiets 'Peter's bicycle'
 b. mijn moeders keuken 'my mother's kitchen'
 c. de auto **van** mijn vader 'the car of my father'
 d. mijn vader **z'n** auto
 'my father POSS car'
 e. mijn moeder **d'r** huis¹
 'my mother POSS house'
 f. die mensen **d'r/hun** kleren
 'those people POSS clothes'
 g. *Berbice **z'n** substraat
 'Berbice's substratum'

The sigmatic genitive was on the wane in Cape Dutch already by the middle of the eighteenth century (Scholtz 1963:108). It has disappeared entirely from Afrikaans, though it does occur vestigially in older literary forms of the language (cf. Le Roux 1923:84-88). Afrikaans has retained the periphrastic possessive construction with the preposition *van* (2a, b) although it is not as common as the parallel construction with *of* in English (Donaldson 1993:99). Afrikaans appears to have generalized a weak form of the Early Modern Dutch masculine possessive pronoun *sij(n)*'his' (Modern Dutch *z'n* ← *zijn*) to all cases and has done away with metropolitan constraints such as agreement for gender and number (2c-f) and animacy (2g-h).² In fact the se

construction is today the primary means of expressing possession in Afrikaans, being rather more usual than the equivalent construction with *van* (Donaldson 1993:99).

- (2)
- a. die huis **van** my pa
'the house of my father'
 - b. die vensters **van** die huis
'the windows of the house'
 - c. my vader **se** motor
'my father POSS car'
 - d. moeder **se** huis
'mother POSS house'
 - e. die mense **se** klere
'the people POSS clothes'
 - f. die kinders **se** skool
'the children POSS school'
 - g. die haelstorm **se** skade
'the hailstorm POSS damage'
 - h. Berbice **se** substraat
'Berbice POSS substrate'

Se is used with expressions of measurement and time:

- (3)
- a. tien kilo **se** appels (cf. Du. tien kilo appels)
'ten kilos of apples'
 - b. vyf rand **se** suiker
'five rands (worth) of sugar'
 - c. agt uur **se** kant
(cf. Dutch *tegen/rond/omstreeks acht uur*)
'eight o'clock POSS side' (i.e., 'about 8 o'clock')
 - d. vandag **se** kinders
'today POSS children'

Se can be cliticized to the end of a clause or phrase that qualifies the possessor. Sentences of the type in (4a-d) are possible in colloquial spoken English and even Dutch--although native speakers may not agree on specific cases.³ Be that as it may, Afrikaans goes much further than

either language in permitting the interpolation of a postnominal modifying clause between the possessor and possessive pronoun⁴:

- (4) a. **Die man** wat nog in die hospitaal behandel word, se toestand is kritiek.
- a'. **De man** die nog in het ziekenhuis behandeld wordt **z'n** toestand is kritisch.
- a''. **The man** who is still being treated in the hospital's condition is critical.
- b. Dit was **die vrou** wat so pas hier was se kind.
- b'. Het was **de vrouw** die zo pas hier was **d'r** kind.
- b''. It was **the woman** who was just here's child.
- c. **Vyf van die twaalf mense** wat nog in die hospitaal behandel word, se toestand is kritiek.
- c'. **?Vijf van de twaalf mensen** die nog in het ziekenhuis behandeld worden **d'r/hun** toestand is kritisch.
- c''. ***Five of the twelve people** who are still being treated in the hospital's condition is critical.
- d. Juis **die lande en wêrelddele** wat dit die minste kan bekostig, se bevolkingsgroeï die vinnigste.
- d'. ***Juist die landen en werelddelen** die het het minste kunnen bekostigen **hun** bevolkingsgroeï *is het sterkste*.
- d''. ***Exactly those countries and continents** that can afford it the least's populations are growing the most rapidly.

In Afrikaans periphrastic possessive constructions are perfectly acceptable even with very heavy NPs in both written and spoken language (Donaldson 1993:98, Ponelis 1993:241).⁵

2. Major Positions

Although a relatively minor feature of Dutch, the periphrastic possessive construction with *se* has become highly productive in Afrikaans. How this remarkable expansion came

about does not seem particularly controversial now, although I shall provide arguments for reopening the question.

Scholtz (1963:107-9) proceeded from the observation that whereas *z'n/d'r* can refer only to animate nouns in contemporary Dutch, 'in die 17de eeu was die gebruik ruimer, soos blyk uit die voorbeelde 't *Ryck sijn vee* (Vondel), 't *hol zijn deur* (Hooft), 't *eerste (Bedd) sijn gemack* (Huygens), 't *schip den Olifant syn touw* (Van Riebeeck), ens.' (p. 107). As for the neutralization of gender, Scholtz (1961:108) continues: 'Dis onmoontlik om te sê wanneer die verdringing van *haar* deur *syn* (*s'n, se*) begin het. Dit is wel opmerklik dat in ver uiteenliggende Nederlandse dialekte soos Vlaams ("moeder *sen* boek" . . .) en Gronings ("*Voader zien* gèld. Bij ouden en bij ongeletterden ook nog wel van vrouwen . . . : *Jaantje zien klaid* . . .") dieselfde verskynsel aangetref word.' However, the encroachment of *syn* (*s'n, se*) into the environment following plural possessors is wholly unknown in the metropole, so far as Scholtz could determine.

Because the Netherlandic antecedents are at best unclear, one must assume autochthonous internal evolutive change within the socioeconomically dominant European settler community at the Cape of Good Hope. In vernacular Early Modern Dutch the weak forms of the possessive pronoun (*z'n, d'r, 'r*) came to be reanalyzed as inflected forms, which would mean that *Jan z'n, Moeder d'r* became structurally isomorphic with the sigmatic genitive (*Jan's, Moeder's*).⁶ To put the matter somewhat differently: The grammatical relation signalled by the weak possessive pronouns gradually overtook their capacity to select referents from the universe of discourse. Once *z'n, d'r*, etc. were no longer interpretable as pronouns, gender and number distinctions became wholly superfluous and could be leveled out.⁷ According to Scholtz (1963:109), this realignment had to have been underway by ca. 1775 or so, even though its result is not discernable in the source material until much later.

Of probative value are the so-called 'independent' possessive pronouns in Afrikaans; that is, in the predicative function (*dis myne* 'it's mine') or as the specifier with an elliptical noun head (*myne is weg* 'mine is gone').

(5)

Dutch

sg. 1 ik/mij	de/het mijne	(die/dat) van mij
2 jij/jou	de/het jouwe	(die/dat) van jou
3 hij/hem	de/het zijne	(die/dat) van hem
zij/haar	de/het hare	(die/dat) van haar
het/het	de/het zijne	
2 u/u	de/het uwe	(die/dat) van u
pl. 1 wij/ons	de/het onze	(die/dat) van ons
2 jullie		(die/dat) van jullie
3 zij/hun	de/het hunne	(die/dat) van hen

Afrikaans

sg. 1 ek/my	myne	Die huis is myne.
2 jy/jou	joue, joune	etc.
3 hy/hom	syne	
sy/haar	hare	
dit	syne	
2 u/u	u s'n, u s'ne	
pl. 1 ons	ons s'n, ons s'ne	
2 julle	julle s'n, julle s'ne	
3 hulle	hulle s'n, hulle s'ne	

In the singular the Afrikaans 'independent' possessive pronouns *myne*, *joue*, *syne*, and *hare* correspond with their metropolitan etyma and as such continue the Dutch tradition (Raidt 1983:157). The historically correct form of the second person singular in Afrikaans is *joue*, although it has largely been replaced by *joune*, which is formed by analogy with *myne* and *syne*.⁸

In the formal second person pronoun and in the plural the metropolitan forms *onse*, *uwe*, *hare*, *hunne* have been replaced by a neolistic construction: the personal pronoun plus *s'n*. The alternative form *s'ne* (< Dutch *sijne*, i.e., the inflected possessive of the third person singular masculine and neuter) is less common (Donaldson 1993:141). Interestingly enough, these same pronominal categories have leveled out overt distinctions between nominative and oblique case forms.

Elliptical possessed NP's require *s'n* in Afrikaans as well, irrespective of gender and number of the possessor (cf. Donaldson 1993:100):

- (6) a. Dit is Jerry s'n, Donna s'n, die bure s'n.
'It's Jerry's, Donna's, the neighbors.'
- b. My huis is klein, maar Donna s'n is nog kleiner.
'My house is small, but Donna's is smaller still.'
- c. Vanjaar se oes is twee keer so groot soos
verlede jaar s'n.
'This year's harvest is twice as large as last year's.'

As concerns the 'independent possessive' formative with elliptical possessed NP's in Afrikaans (*supra*), the Netherlandicist position extrapolates a West Germanic prototype from structures of the type in 7:

- (7) a. In wessen Haus? -- In meines Herren **seines**
(Paul 1919:3.325)
- b. seine Aussprache war so wie des Demosthenes **seine**
(idem)
- c. kein geringerer Heldenmuth, als Carls des Großen **seiner**
(idem)

Parallel constructions have been reported in dialects of the northeastern provinces of the Netherlands, viz, Drenthe and Groningen⁹:

- (8) a. Wies boek is dat? Jan **zienent**. Dat is Jan **zienn**.
'Whose book is that? Jan's. That is Jan's.'
- b. **Wie zienn** is dat?
'Whose is that?'
(cf. Afrikaans **wie se / wie s'n** 'whose?')
- c. Die hoed is **voader zienn**.
'That hat is father's.'

Scholtz (loc. cit.) found no precise equivalents in modern Hollands, but following Overdiep (1937:§127) concluded that the structures in 8 must be equatable with those in 9:

- (9) a. Dat is **Piet de zijne**.
'That is Piet's.'
- b. Ze hebben **Piet de zijne** weggenomen.
'They took Piet's away.'

This pattern is attested sporadically in our Cape Dutch documents of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries:

- (10) a. men heer neeteling, bij mijn lijt 20 mut koren en
6 mut rog van Sprig sijn soon--volgens juffrou Sprig
haer seggen dat [het] haer niet toe en kom [en]
dat het **haer soon sijn is**.
(CJ 767, 1758; cited from Van Oordt [ed.] 1947:30).
'Mr. Neethling, here with me lie 20 measures of
grain and 6 measures of rye of Sprig's son--according
Ms. Sprig's testimony that it did not come to her,
that it is her son's.'
- b. zulks is des Ondergetek: Schuld niet, maar des Veld Corporaal
Scheepers **zijne**, die hem niet heeft afgehaald
(CJ 399, p. 952, 1770)
'such is not the fault of the undersigned, but rather of Field
Corporal Scheepers POSS, which has not demeaned him'
- c. daar Nu desen plaas bofen gemelde burger flak in mijn,
in ook in **de heer Leiste zeijn**, in mijn uijt drift is
(KT 63, 1783)
'since now this farm above the aforementioned
Burger is flat in mine and also in Mr. Leiste's, in my outer flock'
- d. want mejn aan teeken is ouwer dan **nukerk seijn**
(KT 162, 1801)
'because my registration is older than Nieuwerker's'
- e. maar **wie sijn** dat het is weet ik niet (KT 212, 1811)
'but whose it is, that I do not know'

Scholtz (1963:109) believed that in this well-established metropolitan pattern lies the prototype for the pronominal 'independent' possessives, which is a Cape Dutch innovation. The question *Wie syne is dir?* 'Whose is it?' elicits in response *Piet syne* 'Piet's,' *Die Hartmanns syne* 'the Hartmanns,' or the like. For Scholtz, it was but a small step from there to an analogical projection of *sijn* into the pronominal system, whence *ons (julle, hulle) syne* 'ours, yours (pl.), theirs.'

For Scholtz, autochthonous reanalysis of 'inherited' Netherlandic structures is sufficient as an explanation of the historical development of the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive.¹⁰ However, the weight of scholarly opinion favors the idea that language contact provided the

impetus for this reanalysis and generalization at the old Cape. Reasoning on strictly contrastive grounds and without consideration of the actual mechanisms of development, it is possible to assume that the Afrikaans construction shows how an originally Dutch pattern was favored by tendencies in Khoikhoi and in the principal slave languages, Creole Portuguese and Pasar Malay.

Le Roux (1923:96-98), Hesseling (1923:118-19), and especially Valkhoff (1966:17-18, 227-29) have all pointed out the possibility that Creole Portuguese influence contributed to the enormous success of the Dutch construction in Afrikaans. There it is the feminine form of the third person singular of the Portuguese personal pronoun that has been generalized: *sua* or *suwa*, often reduced to *su* and even 's (Schuchardt 1890:215-18). Both Creole Portuguese *suwa* and Malay *punja* are invariant possessive particles that are used in the same type of construction as in Afrikaans:

(11) Creole Portuguese:

- a. keng *suwa* fila?
'whose daughter?'
- b. agora *suwa* tempu
'now POSS time' = die jetztige Zeit

Malay:

- a'. sijāpa *pūnja* anak?
- b'. sakārang *pūnja* mūsīm

Afrikaans:

- a''. wie se dogter?
- b''. die *nou* se kjēners
(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.81).
'the now POSS children'

Creole Portuguese *suwa*, or weakened *su*, correspond to *sy*, or weakened *se*, in Afrikaans. Le Roux (1923:98) also drew attention to similar constructions in Nama involving an invariant genitive marker *di* (given as *ti* by Hagman 1977:37).¹¹ In Orange River Afrikaans (12b'-c') one finds that the possessive particle can even attach itself to personal pronouns, and this is also true for Nama:

(12) Nama:

- a. *khoib di hāb*
'man POSS horse'
- b. *sada di haab*
'we POSS horse'
- c. *//ēib di ómi*
'he POSS house'

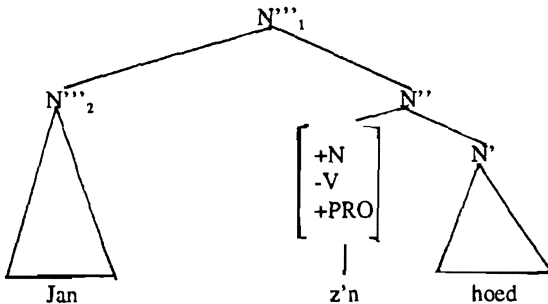
Afrikaans:

- a'. *die man se perd*
'the-man POSS horse'
- b'. *ons se perd* (Standard Afrikaans: *ons perd*)
'we POSS horse'
- c'. *hy se huis* (Standard Afrikaans: *sy/haar huis*)
'he/she POSS house (his/her house)'

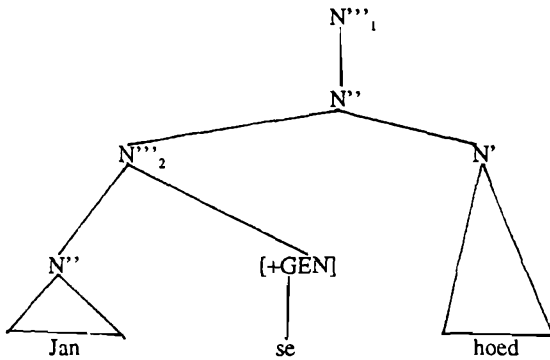
The occurrence of personal pronouns as possessors (e.g., *hulle se werk* 'their work', *hulle s'n* 'theirs') is unique to Afrikaans (Ponelis 1993:241).

Le Roux's suggestion was taken over by Rademeyer (1938:67) and has since been elaborated into a formal hypothesis by Den Besten 1978:31-38. Briefly, the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive construction differs somewhat from that of Dutch:

(13) Dutch:

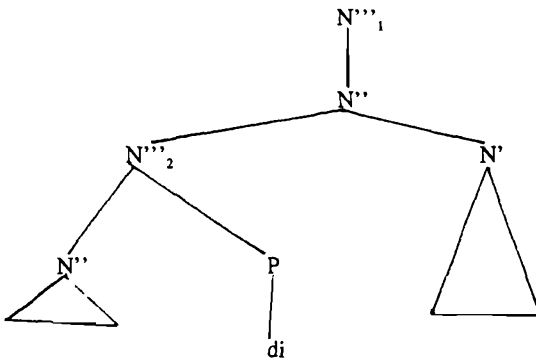


Afrikaans:



Den Besten (1978:35-36) regards Nama *di* as a postpositional genitive marker of a NP. As is obvious from 14, its structural analysis approximates that of the Afrikaans possessive formative (*supra*).

(14) Nama (following Den Besten 1978:36):



When acquiring Dutch, the Khoikhoi encountered a possessive construction that on the surface resembled a structure with which they were familiar. They reinterpreted the Dutch structure in 13 in terms of their own associative construction (cf. 14), and they looked for one morpheme corresponding with *di*. Parallel developments in the Dutch of the slaves led them to choose *z'n* (*s'n, se*).

Ponelis (1992, 1993:225-47) has examined the history of the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive in considerable detail and has likewise concluded that 'foreign influence' contributed significantly to the generalization of periphrastic structure. He, too, believes that the Afrikaans pattern resulted from a goodness of fit between superstrate Dutch and the substrate contact languages with regard to a specific encoding strategy. Specifically, the characteristics shared are (i) periphrastic structure; (ii) a free and invariant possessive particle; (iii) the order of the elements (possessor + possessive formative + noun head); (iv) multifunctionality (attributive and predicative deployment); and (v) combinations involving both personal pronouns and full NPs (Ponelis 1993:244).

3. Assessment

It has never been denied that the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive is in some sense rooted in the Dutch personal possessive. The question, rather, is whether the Afrikaans construction is, in fact, (i) the sole product of a series of internally motivated changes that were either autochthonous at the Cape of Good Hope and/or inchoate in the Netherlandic dialects exported there from the metropole; or whether (ii) substratum transfer in the form of calquing or reanalysis advanced a Dutch trend. The first view (which I have referred to as the Netherlandicist position) is not confirmed by the syntactic or historical evidence. The language-contact position, as far as it goes, is today generally accepted even though it does not actually show how or why such a unification took place. With the exception of Den Besten's formulation (loc. cit.), it is vague as to the actual mechanisms of change.

A simple unification within the *Sprachbund* of four more or less functionally equivalent structures around some common factor seems rather improbable. As a general rule, grammatical particles are very rarely transferred at all (Whinnom 1971:96). Despite some arresting surface similarities, the individual systems do differ from one another in important respects. From Schuchardt's description (1890), it is clear that Creole Portuguese *suwa* is a free form. We can infer this status from the fact that in addition to the unmarked order of elements [possessor N + POSS + possessed N], the possessive construction in Creole Portuguese could apparently evince two alternate arrangements--namely, one with a preposed possessive formative (i.e., in phrase-initial position) and another in which the order of the nouns is transposed (Schuchardt 1890:215):

- (15) a. **suwa** kere Sijor (Malay: kahendak Allah)
'der Wille des Herrn'
- b. ingguwal **suwa** tres mes (Malay: antāra tīga būlan)
'die Zwischenzeit von drei Monaten'

In Nama the 'genitive' particle *di* is also a free form vis-à-vis roots and suffixes (Hagman 1977:14). But here, too, the particle may be either pre- or postposed with respect to the head (possessed) noun (Rust 1965:27):

- (16) a. /hon-khoib di hāb
- a'. hāb /hon-khoib dib
'the master's horse'

Furthermore, in any 'genitive' phrase the associative particle *di* (given as *ti* by Hagman) may be deleted without a change of meaning:

- (17) a. //nāā̃ !hūúp t̃ kòpaku
- a'. //nāā̃ !hūúp kòpaku
'the languages of that land'

According to Hagman (1977:37), this happens more frequently in rapid speech than in deliberate speech.¹² If the genitive particle was also omissible in Khoikhoi dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then the motivation for a reanalysis along the lines argued by Den Besten is diminished (though admittedly not ruled out). There is the one data point in our Cape Dutch corpora that may reflect an earlier calque on a particleless 'genitive' structure in Khoikhoi. It occurs in a letter the author of which represents himself as a Griqua:

- (18) waar sal wy nu gaan en niet in **ander menschen land** woonen
(*The South African Commercial Advertiser*, 1830)
'Where shall we go and not live in other people's land?'

Juxtaposition of possessor and possessed nouns without a possessive pronoun or preposition (*van*) would be quite impossible in Standard Afrikaans or Dutch.

From a sociolinguistic point of view, one has difficulty with the idea of European settlers directly accepting a Khoikhoi syntactic innovation of no small proportion. More generally, the requisite degree of multilingualism in all four contact languages (which are typologically quite different) for a wholesale of structural convergence between possessive constructions simply never existed in colonial South Africa. A stable Cape Dutch Pidgin would be the only medium

through which this kind of syncretism could come about. In other words my claim is that the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive is the product of a convergence between a structure in the language of the descendants of European settlers at the Cape and structures in a stable Cape Dutch Pidgin, which was spoken principally by people of colour in the speech community.

4. Diachronic Analysis

In the way of substantiating my claim, I should like first to assert that Cape Dutch would in all likelihood have retained the Netherlandic personal possessive construction (albeit with a wider scope than Modern Standard Dutch), had it not come into contact with other languages.

Throughout the eighteenth century acrolectal Cape Dutch (i.e., the variety closest to the metropolitan language; cf. Roberge 1994) maintained gender and number distinctions in the paraphrastic possessive construction (19).

- (19) a. onderwyl kwame **vanriet sijn wage** met monsieur debeer
(Duminy diary, 1797, p. 87)
'in the meantime Van Riet's wagon came with Mr. Boar'
- b. **duminij vilisteerde mijn met vransie sijn geboorte dagt**
(idem, p. 91)
'Duminy congratulated me on Fransie's birthday'
- c. ook sagt ik uit broer **deletter sijn brief**
(idem, p. 109)
'also I saw from brother De Lettre's letter'
- d. in die **ouwers haar droufhijt** (idem, p. 109)
'in those parents' sorrow'

Even the rather more Afrikanderized (mesolectal) Dutch of the field cornets has *generally* retained agreement between possessor and possessive pronoun with respect to number and gender.

- (20) a. en de mensche trek uijt mijn diiesticse en
liebenberg zijn diiesticse (KT 240, 1812)
'and the people depart from my districts and (into?)
Liebenberg's districts'
- b. volgens **iuffrou Sprig haer seggen**
(C.J. 767, 1758)
'according to Ms. Sprig's testimony'

- c. de weduwe **haar** soomer weij (KT 57, 1782)
'the widow's summer meadow'
- d. en de weduwe **haar** plaats (KT 57, 1782)
'and the widow's farm'

We do find sporadic occurrences of the masculine possessive pronoun with feminine antecedents in the course of the eighteenth century. The boldface examples in 21 are cited by Ponelis (1993:236), but I have added the clauses in which they actually occur so that the reader can adduce the full contexts:

- (21) a. het waerden van **de weduwe Juri cristofel smit sijnt** goet
(MOOC 8/5, Inv. 67, 1734)
'the appraisal of the widow Jurie Christoffel Smit's property'
- b. Dat is de leijst van **de ouwe vrou zijn** goet
(MOOC 14/197, 1773)
'that is the list of the old woman's property'
- c. dat mijn schoon zoon johannes Janse bij het afsterwe van zijn vrouw **mijn dogter zijn goeder** [goeden?] heeft Laate opneeme
(MOOC 14/214, 1774)
'that my son-in-law, Johannes Janse, upon the death of his wife, has had my daughter's goods collected'

It is conceivable that the masculine pronoun in 21a was triggered by the name of the late husband; and that the reading of 21c could be something like 'that my son-in-law . . . upon the death of his wife, my daughter, had his goods collected.' However, the element of doubt in these cases is small, and 21b is unambiguous. Be that as it may, the gender distinction in the singular appears to have remained *relatively* stable through the first four decades of the nineteenth century:

- (22) voor **juffrow Schepers haar** wagen en voor hunne wagens ook
(Tregardt diary, 22 March 1837)
'for Miss Scheper's wagon and for their wagons as well'

In the plural the extended variants of the third person oblique and possessive pronouns--*haarlie/haarlij* (< *haarlui*) and later on *hulle* (< *hunlui*) have made inroads into the periphrastic possessive construction by the nineteenth century:

- (23) a. maar mejn heer weet dat ik en kort op de drosdeij
gewees bin op **de klagers haar lij klagte[n]**
(KT 247, 1812)
'But My Lord knows that I have recently been to the
drosdy [i.e., magistrate's residence] on account of the
plaintiffs' complaints'
- b. hebbe ze belasting op **de mense haarlie kop** gezet
(*De Kaapsche Courant*, 12 August 1826).
'the have put a tax on the people's head[s]'

The suspension of metropolitan constraints in acrolectal Cape Dutch appears to have been incremental and marginal. That process appears to have begun with an expansion by metaphor; namely, the scope of the periphrastic construction came to include entities that are collectively animate.¹³ The first attestations are from 1783 (24a) and 1802 (24b).

- (24) a. in ook mijn **fe sijn drink kul** (KT 63b, 1783)
'and also my cattle's watering hole'
- b. En ook een os gestoole van hem het was ook **de drie volk zijn spoore** en ook getuijg Nuclaas Bester de Klerk zijn beurman dat van hem ook een bees gestoole ben ook **drie volk zijn spoor** en ook ben daar bij Bester een velds waage uijt gespanne gewees heef zulle de man zijn schaape en bokke weg genoome (KT 167, 1802)
'and also one ox [was] stolen from him; it was also the three people's tracks and also Nicholas Bester, de Klerk's neighbor, testified that one head of cattle was stolen from him, also three people's track, and also a field wagon was outspanned; they took the man's sheep and goats'
- c. een kombaars van die natie **haar eige maaksel**
(Tregardt diary, 1836-38)
'a blanket of that nation/tribe's own making'
- d. in Jan Companie **zyn** tyd
(*Het Kaapsche Grensblad*, 17 Oct. 1844)
'In the [Dutch East India] Company's time'

During the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, we find some leakage of the 3 sg. masc. form *sijn* into the plural as a competitive alternate with the expected forms *haar*, *haarli(e)*, and *hulle*. Consider the alternation in the Tregardt diary (25a), in a series of letters from *Het Kaapsche Grensblad* ca. 1844-45 (25b), and in the Bezuidenhout letter (25c):

- (25) a. de vrouwe **haar** pad (Tregardt diary, 1836-88)
'the women's path'
- a'. wijgerde **Carolus en Strydom haar geweeers**
(Tregardt diary, 1836-38)
'Carolus and Strydom's rifles failed'
- a''. twee van de stadsmenschen **zijn** volk
(Tregardt diary, 1836-38)
'two of the city inhabitants' people'
- b. Ik wou dat die Kopdokter wat op Grafferent was, ook hier wou kom, en de **mans haarle koppe** wou voel.
(*Het Kaapsche Grensblad*, 5 Dec. 1844).
'I wish that that head doctor who was in Graaff-Reinet would also want to come here and would feel the men's heads.'
- b'. Ik denk die gouvernement moet hem aanstel om al **de Kaffers hulle koppe** te voel.
(*Het Kaapsche Grensblad*, 5 Dec. 1844).
'I think the government must employ him [the head doctor, *supra*] to feel all the blacks' heads.'
- b''. en nou wil die gouvernement zelfs hulle handen in **de boere zyn zaake** steek
(*Het Kaapsche Grensblad*, 23 Jan. 1845).
'and now the government wants to stick their hands into the farmers' affairs'
- c. en daar was **die Hartmans hulle vrinde** by
(Bezuidenhout letter, 7 March 1851)
'and the Hartmans' friends were there'
- c'. al **de Oliphants Hoek mense zyn** osse
(Bezuidenhout letter, 7 March 1851)
'the oxen of all the Oliphant's Hoek people'

It is interesting to note at this juncture that the strong pronominal possessive formatives--with gender and number oppositions intact--are preserved as refined variants even through the first half of the present century in Euro-Afrikaans (*haar* 'her' vestigially in the Free State among elderly people, *sy*, *haar*, and to a lesser extent *hulle* in the Boland)¹⁴:

- (26) a. Jan sy boek
(Standard Afrikaans; Jan se boek)
'Jan's book'

- b. **Maria haar hoed**
(Standard Afrikaans: Maria se hoed)
'Maria's hat'
- c. die boere **hulle** huise
(Standard Afrikaans: die boere se huise)
'the farmers' houses'

Against this backdrop, let us now consider two contemporaneous corpora from approximately 1869-71 that show a more radical break with metropolitan norms. The first corpus consists of the letters and sketches of Samuel Zwaartman of Fraserburg (in the northwest), which appeared in *Her Volksblad* during the years 1870-71. Zwaartman (the pseudonym of one W. H. A. Cooper) utilizes the Cape Dutch Vernacular so as to conceal his identity in what are satirical portraits of local affairs and colonial politics. In these letters animacy constraints and agreement for gender and number are wholly absent from the periphrastic possessive construction. The form of the possessive element is that of the masculine singular--with or without the final nasal (*zij(n)*).

- (27) a. Ik moet **my ou vrouw zijn rug en beene** vrijwe.
(27 Jan. 1870)
'I must massage my old wife's back and legs.'
- b. maar ik moes dorp toe ry om **mij plaas zij belasting** reg te maak
(3 Feb. 1870)
'but I had to go to the village in order to settle my farm's tax'
- c. **Hulle wil die de mense zijn verbeterings** nie uitpetaal nie
(10 Feb. 1870).
'they (Parliament) do not want to pay out the people's improvements.'

If we compare Zwaartman's usage with that of Tregardt or Bezuidenhout, it becomes clear that the drift toward an invariant possessive formative is very far advanced; and nobody would disagree. However, it seems strange that after two centuries of relative stability, this structure should experience a *per saltum* transformation within a scant twenty to forty years. Clearly, the impetus for this change must lie somewhere other than the European superstratum.

Our second corpus from the mid nineteenth century is the Bayaan uddin ('Uiteensetting van die godsdienst') of Abu Bakr Effendi (ca. 1869). This is a Cape Muslim/Arabic-Afrikaans text that describes the religious duties of Islam and as such could not be more different in purport

and provenance than the letters from Fraserburg. Nevertheless, there are affinities with respect to the usage of the periphrastic possessive in these corpora. Like Zwaartman, Abu Bakr utilizes invariant *sain* irrespective of the gender, number, or animacy of the possessor:

- (28) a. **foerau sain kafan** wat es ghanoegh
(Van Selms, ed., 1979:128)
'woman POSS death garment, which is enough'
- b. **uaatar sain ghadiertie** es fis
(Van Selms, ed. 1979:16)
'water POSS animals are fish'
- c. en fer **tewie labarān sain salāt**
(Van Selms, ed., 1979:10)
'and for two day's improvements'
- d. **dafl̄ es rasūl ullaḥ sallā llāhu** 'alaihi wasallam sain oedir
(Van Selms, ed. 1979:36)
'proof is the apostle of Allah--may Allah honor and praise him--POSS order'

Clearly, Zwaartman's usage represents an accommodation of norms that were well established in basilectal Cape Dutch and not a *per saltum* shift in Euro-Cape Dutch. Rather, we are dealing with the convergence of several phenomena.

As regards anaphoric pronouns, I want to claim that the Cape Dutch Pidgin had one anaphoric pronoun *hy* for singular and plural, masculine, feminine, or inanimate:

- (29) Die Gift al gedaan dood, wie kan **hy** meer wat schaden?
(Khoikhoi speaker, cited from Kolbe 1727:2.114)
'This/that poison has died, whom can it harm any more even a little?'

Consider the following patterns in contemporary Orange River Afrikaans:

- (30) a. En dan kaptein Kok se vrou. **Hy's** mos nou ook 'n Griekwa
(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.334).
'And then Captain Kok's wife. Now she's also a Griqua.'
- b. Daar is saad gewees wat die plant mee gesaai is, en as **hy** groei,
dan kom hulle lote, nou die blaaiie
(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.328).
'There was seed with which the plant was sown, and if it grew, then came their shoots, then the leaves.'

- c. **Hy** [piesangs] kom baie skaars.
(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.322)
'They [bananas] come very scarce.'
- d. Hier's nie piesangs nie, baas. . . . Maar 'n mens
kan **hom** darem in die winkel koop, nè?
(Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.321).
'Here there are no bananas, master. . . . But you
can buy them in the shop, can't you?'

See further Links 1989:78-80. The emergence of a gender distinction in the third person singular pronoun is arguably secondary and due to the influence of Euro-Cape Dutch. Overt pronominal marking for plural referents was made possible by the expansion of the Dutch pronoun *hulle* (etymologically oblique *hun + lui*) for both subject and object.

The early Cape Dutch Pidgin may have expressed possession by means of simple juxtaposition of nouns (*supra*). At some point, however, the possessive relation came to be characterized by the interpolation of a possessive formative between possessor and possessed nouns. This formative had strong, weak, and emphatic variants. The emphatic form--Dutch *sijne*--occurred only in predicative usage. The strong form was Dutch *sij(n)*, with or without the nasal and undifferentiated for number or gender. The weak variant was *se*, which is to be derived from Creole Portuguese *su*. In principle, *su(w(a))* should have been easily transferred or relexified, given that it was demonstrably a free form, the allomorphs of which were phonologically similar to a corresponding form in the superstrate. The fact that Afrikaans *se* could be plausibly explained as the reduced allomorph of Early Modern Dutch *sij(n)* may be a red herring. Nasal-less *se* is virtually unknown in our Cape Dutch corpora before the mid nineteenth century (cf. Scholtz 1963:108). When the reduced allomorph of *sij(n)* does occur, it is consistently spelled with a nasal:

- (31) a. dat routenbag **zen** vee (KT 52, 1782)
'that Rotenbach's cattle'
- b. uijt buys **sen** kraal (KT 116, 1792)
'from Buys's kraal'

Scholtz (loc. cit.) was confident that the absence of *se* for nearly two centuries was due to the conserving influence of Dutch orthography ('invloed van die Nederlandse skryftradisie'). This is a perfectly reasonable assertion--all the more so if *z'n* is commonly articulated without the

nasal in colloquial and dialectal forms of Dutch. At the same time, our Cape Dutch writers were often only semiliterate. Most seem to have cared little about bringing their language into conformity with Dutch prestige norms, to which they had minimal exposure in any event. Moreover, preservation of a weak pronominal allomorph would be peculiar indeed insofar as Afrikaans has otherwise done away with such forms (Dutch *daar/er, ik/'k, jij/je, zij/ze* etc., Afrikaans *daar/*er, ek/*'k, jy/*je, sy/*se*, etc.). At the very least, we would have to reckon with a convergence of *se* < Creole Portuguese *su(w)a* and a presumable (but still hypothetical) *se* < Early Modern Dutch *sij(n)*.

In contemporary varieties of Orange River Afrikaans possessive pronouns can be formed by the placement of *se* to the right of the corresponding personal pronoun:

- (32) a. Maar daarie tyd toe **hy se** vader mos nou daai jare in die Boere-oorlog gegaan het (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.294).
'But that time when his [he + POSS] father went then in those years into the Boer War.'
- a' Standard Afrikaans: sy vader 'his father'
- b. Nou dis nou **ons se** speletjie wat ons geleer speel het (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.309).
'Now this is now our [we + POSS] little game, which we learned to play.'
- b' Standard Afrikaans: ons speel 'our game'
- c. **Julle se** skool het nōu gesluit (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.271).
'Your [you pl. + POSS] has now closed.'
- c' Standard Afrikaans: julle skool 'your (pl.) school'
- d. **Hulle se** rokke dra hulle hiersō wys (Van Rensburg, ed., 1984:2.275).
'Their [they + POSS] skirts they wear in this manner.'
- d' Standard Afrikaans: hulle rokke 'their skirts'

This type of possessive formation is conventionally seen as a calque on a Khoikhoi and/or Creole Portuguese structure, but I think it is rather more likely a neologism that arose during the expansion of the pidgin. Note that the earliest attestation of this construction in Cape Dutch

(1848) has the strong allomorph of the possessive formative and that the form of the third person plural attributive possessive pronoun is *hoeuaile sain* globally in Abu Bakr (33a) and hulle zijn facultatively in Zwaartman (33c-d):

- (33) a. . . . hy zyn paerd kan nie val nie.
(*Cape of Good Hope Literary Magazine*, October 1848)
'his horse cannot fall'
- b. an moenie dering fan hoeuaile sain besennie an maskie fer midie sainie
(Van Selms, ed., 1979:16)
'and do not drink of their urine, even if for medicine'
- c. dit kan maskie wees dat hulle wil heh dat hulle zijn koppe moet koel wees
(24 Jan. 1870)
'[they + POSS] heads must be cool'
- d. ik ziet party kerels wort alte kwaat als hulle zijn naam in de krant staan
(24 Feb. 1870)
'I see some fellows become very angry if their [they +POSS] names appear in the newspaper'
- cf. e. cf. Abu Bakr (Van Selms, ed., 1979:2)
djoeuaile moet waas djoeuaile sain jilie ghasiegh
'you (pl.) must wash your whole face'
- e'. Standard Afrikaans: julle moet was julle hele gesig

The emphatic form of the possessive formative was apparently disallowed in attributive usage (**Jan sijne hoed*). In the so-called independent function, *se* was infelicitous:

- (34) a. het is leman seyn
(KT 203, 1810)
'It is Leman's'
- b. en heeft en haarlij gehuur met hoelij zen
(KT 170, 1802)
'and have hired them with theirs'
- c. Dat die witte ooi hulluij zijn is
(Tregardt diary, 1836)
'that the white ewe is theirs'
- d. dat was mijn en Pieta zijne
(Tregardt diary, 13 April 1838)
'that was mine and Pieta's'

- e. Dit is niemand zyn schuld as **hulle zyn**
(*Het Kaapsche Grensblad*, 5 Dec. 1844)
'that is nobody's fault but theirs'
- f. zoo als wy hoor is de meeste van die perde **Veldcornet**
Keulder zyne (Bezuidenhout letter, 1851)
'so when we hear that most of the horses are field
cornet Keulder's'

With regard to the instantiation of *hy se*, etc., I should like to suggest that this emerged out of a discourse-dependent strategy that was prominent in the stabilized Cape Dutch Pidgin. Characteristic of the pidgin was a strong tendency to topicalize subjects by means of left dislocation and resumptive pronouns. This doubtless reflected the pragmatic exigency of establishing the focus of discourse. Resumptive pronouns of the type in 35a would not be unusual in the colloquial varieties of West Germanic dialects that are constitutive of the European base of Afrikaans. However, I would argue that the subsequent examples from Cape Afrikaans (35b) and Orange River Afrikaans (35c, d)--varieties with closer affinities to the erstwhile Cape Dutch Pidgin--deploy resumptive pronouns with greater freedom than Euro-Afrikaans.

- (35) a. **Jiena sy werk nou in een van die factories daar.**
Ysie sy maak in die office in tee
(Adam Small, *Kanna hy kô huis toe*, 1965).
'Gina, she works now in one of the factories there.
Ysie, she makes tea in the office.'
- b. **Die boosies hy gaan dieper** (Van Zyl 1947:136).
'The little bushes, they go deeper.'
- c. **Die vlieg soos jy hom so lê sien, hy is nie sommer**
ding nie (Van Zyl 1947:137).
'The fly, as you see him, he is not just any old
thing.'

The data in 36 from nonstandard varieties of Afrikaans suggest that possessive pronouns may also be used resumptively; in other words the antecedent of a possessive pronoun in the subject NP can be a topic:

- (36) a. **Kanna sy hart was oek maar nie hierso nie**
(Adam Small, *Kanna hy kô huis toe*, 1965).
'Kanna, his heart was also not here.'

- b. **Roeslyn haar kombuis** was altyd 'n lekker plekkie
(idem).
'Roeslyn, her kitchen was always a nice place.'
- c. **Poena sy soort, hulle't** my sistertjie gevang
(idem).
'Poena his kind, they caught my sister.'
- d. **Die kend haar ander seusie sy** had weer entersaaings
(Van Zyl 1947:146).
'The child, her other sister she again had
appendicitis.'

I am inclined to view the nonstandard possessive formative *hy se* (later *hulle se*) as an outgrowth of this kind of discourse-dependent strategy establishing focus. Consider:

- (37) toe die keend **hy se** seusie huissiek was
(Van Zyl 1947:146)
'when the child he POSS sister was sick at home'

The models would be: *Die kind hy was siek, die kind sij seusie was siek*, whence *Die kind hy sij* (cf. 33a; later *se*) *seusie was siek*.¹⁵

The meaning of the associative construction in the stable Cape Dutch Pidgin, as I reconstruct it, was that the referent of the noun terminating the noun phrase containing *sij(n)* is possessed by, related to, contained in, or in some way associated with or defined by the referent of the first noun in the phrase. Consider the pidgin sentence in 38, attributed to a Khoikhoi boy, informing his interlocutor that the corpse of a sheep shows marks of human teeth (note also the absence of plural marking on *tand*):

- (38) . . . had Aaron **zijn soontje** gent. heuningberg naar de craal gesonden, met last om te sien, wat die ophooping beduidde, welk hottentotje daarbij gekoomen zijnde geroepen had, dat daar een dood schaap lag, 't welk door de jakkels aangevreeten was, met hervatting egter kort daarop: Neen! daar is volk **zijn tand!** [i.e., mensentanden] (CI 411 1776, pp. 65, 81, 89)
'[I] had sent Aaron's son, named Heuningberg, to the kraal, with the task of seeing what the pile-up meant, which little Hottentot having come upon it, had called out, that there lay a dead sheep, which had been devoured by the jackels, but with resumption shortly thereupon: ["No! there are human teeth!"]'

The pidgin associative construction could also express temporal relations, deixis, and looser relationships between entities (e.g., purpose, origin, a characteristic trait or quality). Let us now reconsider Wikar's direct quotation of a Khoikhoi characterization of the baboon:

- (39) de oude tyden **zijn** mens
(Wikar, ca. 1779)
'the old times POSS man'

The semantic interpretation of 39 ('the man of olden times') is not in dispute. Rather, the syntax of this utterance--standing alone--is ambiguous, for it could merely be an interlectal nonce hybrid involving the adjectival construction *de oudtydse*. I believe that the data in 40 lend considerable support to my view that Wikar has preserved for posterity a tiny fragment of pidgin grammar.

Sentence 40a is contained in a letter ostensibly written by a Griqua:

- (40) a. want wy denk aan **de oude tyt zyn mannier**
(*The South African Commercial Advertiser*, 1830)
'for we think of the old times POSS manner'
- b. outye syn mense
(*Ons Klyntji*, 2.203, ca. 1897, cited from Hessling 1899:135)
'old times POSS people'

Finally, why does *se* and not *sij(n)* persist and eventually become the standard Afrikaans possessive formative? In this connection I believe that there was a rapprochement between the pidgin associative formative *sij(n)*, which corresponded functionally not only with its counterpart in acrolectal Cape Dutch (*sijn/sij/sen*) but also with the adjectival suffix *-s* (*-sch* in older spelling). In attributive position this suffix takes adjective inflection, whence homophonous *-se*.

- (41) a. Abu Bakr.
fan **z**uhur **sain** fard (Van Selms, ed., 1979:100)
- b. van middag **se** plig(-gebed)
'of noon's duty(-prayer)', i.e., obligatory prayer
- c. van die middag **se** plig(-gebed)
'of the noon duty(-prayer)'

The example in 41c is not intended to impute an actual adjective to the language but to illustrate the close semantic proximity. In the previous century Mansvelt (1884 [1971:179])--and following him Hesseling (1899:135, 1923:118)--discerned a virtual merger between the possessive formative and the adjectival suffix:

- (42) **Lânse**. eig. *land-sen* of *-zijn*, staat vor den genitief van land, in uitdr. als: *dielanse saad* (zaad in *Z. Afr. gewonnen*); *anderlandse saad* (ingeveord zaad).

Donaldson (1993:99n.) compares the following: *die stadsraad van Bloemfontein, Bloemfontein*

se stadsraad, and *die Bloemfonteinse stadsraad* 'the Bloemfontein city council'. According to him, *Bloemfontein se* and *Bloemfonteinse* fall together in speech.

5. Conclusion

To sum up: The immediate cause of the Afrikaans periphrastic possessive construction appears to have been multilevel syncretism, in which syntactic and semantic properties are traceable to multiple inputs. Hybridization came about with the convergence of acrolectal Cape Dutch with a stable Cape Dutch Pidgin. There was a developmental 'conspiracy' between universal processes, simplified inputs, superstratum rules and hybridized discourse-dependent structures emanating from interlectal communication. The determinants suggested involve (i) the loss of overt gender and number marking in an early Cape Dutch Pidgin; (ii) the use of invariant *se* < Creole Portugues *su* < *su(w)a* alongside Dutch *sij(n)* to indicate close relationships generally in the pidgin rather than possession in the strict sense; (iii) some loosening of metropolitan constraints on the scope of the personal possessive construction in acrolectal Cape Dutch; and (iv) the grammaticalization of a topicalization strategy that involved the interpolation of resumptive pronominal forms between (normally) subject NPs and their predicates.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, University of Manchester, 13-18 August 1995. Thanks are due to Edith Raidt, Tom Shannon, Muriel Norde, Piet van Reenen, Roger Lass, Walter Francke, and Rob Howell for their comments on my conference paper. I am especially grateful to Hans den Besten for his critique of a preliminary draft of the present version. The usual exculpations apply.

1. In contemporary spoken Dutch, it is the weak form of the pronoun that occurs as the possessive formative (cf. Ponelis 1993:232, 234). Thus, *mijn moeder d'r huis* should have the weak form *d'r* but not *haar* (*mijn moeder haar huis*). However, Norde (1995) reports that the strong forms have made inroads. As examples she gives: [*Sharon*] *Stone haar enorme aantrekkingskracht* 'Sharon Stone's enormous attractiveness'; *Cees zijn beslissing* 'Cees's decision.'
2. Possessive pronouns without a final nasal (viz. *my*, *sy*) were common in vernacular Early Modern Dutch and are well represented in our Cape Dutch corpora; cf. Scholtz 1963:101-5; Koelmans 1966; Raidt 1974:103, 1983:156-57, 1991:214-15; Ponelis 1992, 1993:226-27.
3. For example, Norde (1995) reports that the following sentence is possible in spoken Dutch: *die man die ik gisteren in het café tegenkwam z'n vrouw* 'that man whom I met yesterday in the café POSS wife.'
4. The Afrikaans examples are taken or adapted from Donaldson 1993:98-99.
5. Ponelis (1993:241) construes *revier water daer Snijman over klaegt zijn loop* (St. 6/90, 1760) as early evidence for the interpolation of a modifying clause between the possessive pronoun and its antecedent ('the course of the river that Snyman complains about,' according to Ponelis). If his analysis is correct, then the Afrikaans pattern must trace at least two of its defining properties--absence of an animacy constraint and adjunction--to

acrolectal Cape Dutch. If one considers the entire passage, however, this analysis does not hold:

Bekenne ik onder getekende getuijge als dat revier water daer Snijman over klaegt
sijn loop te voore altoos na sijn plaes gehadt heeft en dat er anders geen loopende
water en is die zoo veer loopt . . .

(St. 6/90, 1760)

'I, the undersigned witness, acknowledge that [the] river water about which
Snyman complains has previously always had its course in the direction
of his farm and that there is no running water elsewhere that runs so far'

It would seem that *sijn loop* is the direct object of *hebben*. To rephrase the sentence in contemporary Dutch: *De rivier heeft zijn loop alijd al naar/al na(bij) zijn plaats gehad.*

6. According to Hermkens (1973:70): 'De onbeklemtoonde vormen *m'n, je, z'n, d'r* worden door geen enkele grammaticus genoemd. Toch waren ze algemeen gebruikelijk in de omgangstaal.'
7. Similarly, Le Roux (1923:89) and Hesseling (1923:118) felt that Afrikaans *se* is suffixal rather than pronominal. More recently, Den Besten (1978:32-34) has argued that the possessor noun phrase plus *se* are in a determiner (specifier) relationship with respect to the possessed noun. In a similar vein Carstairs (1987:157-58) suggests that the Afrikaans possessive marker is an enclitic with the preceding NP as host.
8. Scholtz 1963:107, Donaldson 1993:139, Ponelis 1993:228.
9. Le Roux 1923:96; Overdiep 1937:§§95, 127, 129; Scholtz 1963:109.
10. Similarly, Bosman 1916:95.
11. Van der Merwe (1963:69, 1964:139) opined that *di* should be translated by *van 'of.*' Den Besten (1978:32) has argued that Le Roux was correct.

12. According to Rust 1965:27:

Wie im Deutschen, so kann auch im Nama der Genetiv dem ihn regierenden Hauptwort vor- oder nachgestellt werden. *Wenn vorangestellt*, dann fällt er gleichsam mit der unveränderten Genetivpartikel "di" auf das Hauptwort zu (des Mannes Vater: khoib di dadab; des Knechtes Ziege: !gāb di biris; Gottes Wort: Elob di mīs). *In schneller Rede*: verflüchtigt sich das zu khoib dadab, !gāb biris, Elob mīs. . . . Der *nachgestellte Genetiv* wird durch das zugehörige Suffix an das ihn regierende Hauptwort gleichsam *angeklammert*. Ohne dasselbe (d.h. ohne das Suffix) würde er ganz ohne Beziehung im Satz stehen und unverständlich bleiben. Obige Beispiele würden in diester Stellung lauten: dadab khoib dib, biris !gab dis, mīs Elob dis. . . . Die *Umstellungsmöglichkeiten* von genetivischen Satzgruppen u. anderen Satzgliedern innerhalb desselben Satzes sind mannigfaltig, ohne dass der Sinn des Satzes dadurch geändert wird. . . . Die Umstellungen hängen mit der Sinnbetonung zusammen; es werden jedesmal bestimmte Satzteile hervorgehoben.

3. Scholtz (1963:108-9) describes a-b as 'verbindings wat in Nederlands onmoontlik is.'

4. Cf. Bosman 1916:95; Le Roux 1923:89, 97; Scholtz 1963:107; Ponelis 1993:232. Scholtz (1954 [1963:108]) observed: 'In die Boland is kinders nog in die 20ste eeu geleer om die vorme *sy (se)* en *haar* ná manlike en vroulike persoonsname respektieflik, en in mindere mate *hulle* ná meervoudige naamwoorde "reg" te gebruik, maar toe was alle vorme behalwe *se* al op sterwe ná dood.'15. The forms *hulle se*, *julle se*, *ons se* are secondary; see Roberge 1994:67-70.

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