

EDITORIAL

This special edition of *Multilingual Margins* is very special indeed. It affords most of the contributors to the book *Kaaps in Fokus* (eds. Frank Hendricks and Charlyn Dyers, published by African Sunmedia in 2016) the opportunity to share their research and viewpoints on this variety of Afrikaans with a much wider audience through the medium of English. Kaaps (also known as Cape Vernacular Afrikaans) is a regional and often highly stigmatized variety of Afrikaans. The book *Kaaps in Fokus* was the end-product of the first academic symposium ever to be held on this variety of Afrikaans. The symposium took place at the University of the Western Cape from 19-20 July 2012, as a joint venture of the Departments of Afrikaans and Nederlands and Linguistics, supported by the Foundation for Empowerment through Afrikaans (SBA) and the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR). Hendricks and Dyers selected a number of papers from this symposium to create the first strong, coherent publication on Kaaps which aims to contest a number of myths about this variety:

1. That Kaaps is the language of brown people in South Africa
2. That Afrikaans is a white man's language
3. That Kaaps is a comical language
4. That Standard Afrikaans is representative of all its speakers

Instead, the book calls for the restandardization of Afrikaans, the use of Kaaps in a variety of domains and continued research into this variety. Individually, the nine chapters in the book may all represent the viewpoints of their respective authors, but collectively

they offer a comprehensive perspective on Kaaps. Like the book, this special edition, published with the permission of African Sunmedia, is presented in two parts thematically. The first four contributions offer a sociolinguistic overview of the nature, history and formation of Kaaps, as well as its changing status in postmodern society. A more contextual approach to the role of Kaaps is presented in the five papers that make up the second part of this edition. A paper by Michael le Cordeur, which was not part of the original book, is included with permission in this edition as a tribute to the late poet and philosopher, Adam Small (1936-2016), whose works are among the most revered literary publications in Kaaps.

The opening paper by **Frank Hendricks**, which provides the overall orientation to this entire publication, presents the linguistic characteristics of contemporary Kaaps. The paper also provides the roots and historical marginalisation of this variety, and offers projections on its future. Hendricks argues for the necessity to see Kaaps as a feeder resource that can enrich and revitalise Standard Afrikaans, and the critical importance of fully acknowledging this variety within a polylectic language description model, which is provided in the paper.

Taking a historical perspective, **Ernst Kotzé** sees Kaaps as one of the varieties which played a key role in the genesis of Afrikaans. He places particular focus on Cape Muslim Afrikaans as the nuclear dialect of Kaaps. The paper considers the factors which have contributed to the development and ongoing growth of this important form of Afrikaans. For

Kotzé, Kaaps has a vitality which is both historically grounded and progressively modern, and he agrees with Hendricks that it should be one of the feeder varieties of a restandardized Afrikaans.

In his contribution, **Christo van Rensburg** uses the term *Kaaps* as synonymous with 'Early Afrikaans', i.e. the Afrikaans spoken at the Cape in the seventeenth century, which would be spread to the interior of South Africa from approximately the start of the eighteenth century by the Khoi-Khoi. He sees and treats Kaaps as a hybrid language form, with Khoi-Afrikaans and Cape Muslim Afrikaans as two of its most important sub-varieties. At the core of his paper is his argument that Afrikaans (Kaaps) was being spoken at the Cape *before* 1652. In other words, the roots of Afrikaans (Kaaps) can be traced back to the period before the start of the Dutch East India Company's settlement at the Cape.

The paper by **Charlyn Dyers**, draws attention to the ongoing conceptual evolution taking place in Linguistics, especially sociolinguistics, in which our understanding of the established concepts used to teach the discipline is shifting to much more nuanced definitions. The growing understanding of the role played by linguistic hybridity alongside (and sometimes instead of) the standardized varieties, particularly in the ways people acquire knowledge both formally and informally, is closely related to the changing status of non-standard language varieties like *Kaaps*. Increasingly, educators are finding innovative ways of using such varieties in the education of children and students who acquire these hybrid codes from birth.

The paper by **Hein Willemsse**, the first of the contributions on the different contextual roles of Kaaps, discusses the affirmation of the dignity of speakers of

Cape Afrikaans (Kaaps) with reference to the need for bi-dialectic tuition at school and the inclusion of Afrikaans poetry written in Kaaps. A greater awareness of language varieties must be cultivated in education and the media so that learners develop the ability to control a variety of language registers. The *soppangheid* (dignity) of Kaaps is not only a linguistic issue, but can also serve as a confirmation of the dignity of all Afrikaans speakers.

Michael le Cordeur considers the potential role of Kaaps as medium of instruction in education in two contributions. He takes a pedagogical approach, and warns about the damage inflicted on the self-image of children by the marginalisation in the domain of education of their home language, Kaaps, which also serves to strengthen negative attitudes towards it by its own speakers. Le Cordeur concludes that such learners are being disadvantaged at school, and is of the opinion that the Department of Basic Education should rise to the challenge of providing a more inclusive type of language education than what current practices offer. In tribute to the late Adam Small, le Cordeur's second contribution asks whether teaching the drama *Krismis van Map Jacobs* offers solutions to learners in gang-infested areas, given the framework of South Africa's current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Two sub-questions considered whether teaching should take place in Kaaps and whether the theme of *Map Jacobs*, 30 years after it was written by Adam Small, is still relevant within the CAPS curriculum.

Christo van der Rheede and **Anastasia de Vries** consider the role of Kaaps as potential driver of economic growth in their contributions. Drawing on community theory as development theory, van der Rheede argues that Kaaps can be positioned as a language

of economic empowerment and wealth creation for its users. The success of the economic exploitation of Kaaps lies with its speakers, and will contribute to changing the negative perceptions on Kaaps as an inferior language form with no economic value. Anastasia de Vries offers support for van der Rhee's viewpoints through her analysis of the use of Kaaps in the tabloid *Son* and Afrikaanse mainstream newspapers. Her contribution clearly demonstrates the economic vitality of media which speaks to communities in varieties with which they identify.

Although *Kaaps in Fokus* is essentially an academic publication, it also provides

insight into what Hendricks terms 'the pain inflicted on this variety and its speakers over the years'. This is echoed in several of the papers arguing for the restoration of dignity not only to this oldest variety of Afrikaans, but especially to its speakers. And this focus on its speakers is what particularly makes the book and its English version in this special edition of *Multilingual Margins*, such timely and relevant publications.

Charlyn Dyers

Guest Editor