

Where is *het* heading?  
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The colloquial Dutch auxiliary *het* ‘have’ has a history of being invasive. Having “started life” as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, it spread to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> persons and the plural, and during the development of Afrikaans competed with, and replaced Dutch forms such as *heb(t)*, *heeft* and *hebben*. An important structural victory was ousting mutative *zijn* (i.e. *Zij is naar huis gegaan* > *Sy **het** huis toe gegaan*), and when the preterite disappeared as a past tense category and the perfect, i.e. past participle + *het*, had to help fill the gap, the frequency of *het* rose once again. In one corpus of spoken Afrikaans (Kroes 1982, Hoofkorpus) *het* is 16 times more frequent than *is*, with both in auxiliary function. *Het* also ousted infinitive *hê* in verbal strings marking the *irrealis*, such as *moes harder gewerk **het*** ‘should have worked harder’ and even in infinitive phrases such as *om te gewerk **het*** ‘to have worked’ (Dutch *te hebben gewerkt*).

In some varieties of Afrikaans, the infinitive of the main verb, *hê*, yielded to *het*, cf. *om daardie donkie te **het*** ‘to have that donkey’ in 20<sup>th</sup> cent. Griqua Afrikaans, and *dat ons Hem meer moet lief**het*** ‘that we should love Him more’ in a Moravian booklet from 1873 (*Benigna van Groenekloof of Mamre*). Even the irregular past participle *gehad* ‘had’ is regularised to *gehet*, as in *het nie klagte **gehet** nie* ‘didn’t have complaints’ in Griqua Afrikaans, and *het* doubling occurs, as in *laat (= dat) ek die gelukwense ... **het** geontvang **het*** ‘that I received congratulations’, in Namaqualand.

It may be argued that *het* has been grammaticalised further than other auxiliaries towards becoming a clitic. This is supported inter alia by its phonetic reduction to [ət] or [t], in particular sentence-finally; in Griqua Afrikaans it may even be completely absent in SOV structures such as relative clauses, e.g. *die mense wat opgestan* ‘the people who got up’.

One of the questions to be asked is when these changes took place in the predecessors of today’s standard Afrikaans. Even though S.J. du Toit, in his *Comparative Grammar of English and Cape Dutch* of 1897, supplies *gehad hê*

‘have had’ and *gewees hê* ‘have been’ as past tense forms, and *ek sal/sou geloop hê* ‘I will/would have walked’ as futures, *het* crops up in his historical novel, *Di Koningin fan Skeba*, of 1898, viz. *Hiir moet daarom fanselêwe mense gewees het*. ‘Surely there must have been people here long ago.’

Apart from its constructional history in varieties of Afrikaans, *het* also needs to be looked at from other angles. A number of syntactic or morpho-syntactic phenomena need to be captured in a theory, for example:

- the obligatory juxtaposition of auxiliary *het* and a past participle, viz. *dat <gedoen> moes <gedoen> word*, but *dat \*<gedoen> moes <gedoen> het*;
- the a-symmetrical selection of auxiliaries between V2, where *was gewees* is preferred, and sentence-final *gewees het*, with only *het*;
- the intrusion of a past participle between *te* and *het*, as in *om te gedoen het*, vs *om gedoen te word/ wees/ hê*;
- the selection of the irregular past participle *gehad* with *het* as against *gehê* with certain other auxiliaries, cf. *(lief-)gehad het*, but *(lief-)gehê word/ wees*, which may be an active-passive or a tense contrast.

Other aspects that require consideration, apart from historical, dialectal and (morpho-)syntactic aspects, are the acquisition of *het* as auxiliary, and the prescriptive status of *het* in varieties of Afrikaans where *het* has completely replaced *hê*.

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