

Is Dutch a Pluricentric Language with Two Centres of Standardization? An Overview of the Differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch from a Flemish Perspective

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Abstract: Dutch, a West-Germanic language, is spoken by approximately 23 million people worldwide. In Europe, it is the language of all of the Netherlands and the northern part of Belgium, called Flanders. It is often said that since the Dutch and the Flemish speak Dutch differently, they in fact speak two different languages – Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch (Flemish). Linguists, however, argue they are not necessarily two separate languages but rather two varieties – a Netherlandic and a Belgian variety – of the same language, Dutch. Since there are a substantial number of grammatical, lexical, phonetic and even spelling differences between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, the question is whether Dutch is a pluricentric language with two centres of standardization or not. By explaining the socio-historical background of the Dutch language and giving a comprehensive overview of the differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch, this article attempts to answer the aforementioned (research) question.

Keywords: language varieties; the Dutch language; Netherlandic Dutch; Belgian Dutch (Flemish); standardization; language change; pluricentrism

1. Introduction

Dutch, a West-Germanic language, is spoken by approximately 23 million people, of whom 16 million live in the Netherlands, 6 million in Belgium and 1 million in the remaining 4 countries in which Dutch is an official language, that is Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Saint Martin (Feitencijfers 2013).



Fig. 1. The Dutch language area (after Vandeputte 1994: back cover).

In Europe, Dutch is the language of all of the Netherlands and the northern part of Belgium, called Flanders (see Fig. 1). It needs to be added that both the Dutch region of Frisia and the Belgian Brussels-Capital Region are bilingual, the two official languages in the former being Dutch and Frisian, while in the latter (Belgian) Dutch and French. There are also a few exceptions, the most notable one being the French town Bailleul (Belle in Dutch), in which Dutch is even used at school (Willemyns 2003). Other exceptions are Bad Bentheim and Kleve in Germany.

It is often said that since the Dutch and the Flemish speak Dutch differently, they in fact speak two different languages – Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch, which is also referred to as Flemish. Linguists, however, argue they are not necessarily two separate languages but rather two varieties – a Netherlandic and a Belgian variety – of the same language, Dutch (Geeraerts 2001: 341). De Caluwe (2013: 45) takes it a step further and calls Dutch “a pluricentric language with Dutch Dutch as the dominant variety and Belgian Dutch in the non-dominant position.” For the purpose of clarity, therefore, Belgian Dutch, or Flemish, here refers to any variety of Dutch that is spoken in Flanders. This is in line with Hinskens and Taeldeman (2013: 2), who claim that “‘Flemish’ refers to the supra-regional (and in part slightly dialectally coloured) variety of standard Dutch [...] that is spoken in Belgium today.”

An important aspect of Belgian Dutch is *tussentaal*, which can be literally translated as intermediate language but in literature it is sometimes referred to as interlanguage (see, for instance, De Caluwe 2004: 54). Jaspers (2001: 129) calls this interlanguage a Flemish substandard variety. Geeraerts and Van de Velde (2013: 532) refer to it as Colloquial Belgian Dutch, which is hardly surprising, as “from a structural perspective, it is situated in between the standard variety and the Brabant dialects of Northern Belgium” (Vandekerckhove 2007: 189). There are, incidentally, a few tendential, *extra-linguistic* differences between a language and a dialect. Nortier (2009: 11-12) states that even though the generally accepted view that a language, unlike a dialect, has a written form, is standardized, and has a written literary tradition is true to a large extent, it does not always reflect reality. She gives the examples of Limburgish, among others, to prove her point. Yet, these can also be seen as exceptions to the rule. A stable difference between a language and a dialect is that languages have dialects but dialects do not have languages (Nortier 2009: 13). After all, a “dialect is a language variety which is used in a geographically limited part of a language area in which it is typically ‘roofed’ by a structurally related standard variety” (Hinskens and Taeldemann 2013: 4). Sometimes it is also difficult to state when one dialect ends and another one begins (Cornips 2012).

The prevailing attitude towards *tussentaal* is negative, which is reflected in two terms used by van Istendael (1989) and Geeraerts (2001) as synonyms, namely *verkavelingsvlaams* ‘subdivision Flemish’ and *soap-Vlaams* ‘soap-Flemish’

respectively. Furthermore, van Istendael (1989: 108-109) calls it “iets vuils, het is een taal die uit angst voor dialect en uit angst voor het Nederlands is geboren, die taal van de Vaamse intellectuele luiheid” [something dirty, it is a language that was born out of fear for dialects and out of fear for the Dutch language, that language of Flemish intellectual laziness].

However, Geeraerts (2001) and Jaspers (2001) talk about a *zondagspakmentaliteit* ‘Sunday-suit mentality’ among the Flemish, a term that can be interpreted as follows. Just like that suit worn on Sundays, the language norm in Belgium, standard Belgian Dutch, does not feel comfortable to a large number of the Flemish even though they are aware of its importance. This illustrates how important a role the Flemish intermediate language plays in the linguistic landscape of Flanders. In fact, Grondelaers et al. (2011: 217) claim *tussentaal* “may one day become the new standard of Belgian Dutch.”

Geeraerts (2001: 338-339) hence distinguishes three layers within Belgian Dutch, namely VRT-Dutch, the previously mentioned *tussentaal* and Flemish dialects. VRT stands for *Vlaamse Radio-en Televisieomroeporganisatie* [Flemish Radio and Television Broadcasting Organization], which implies that VRT-Dutch is the language used by journalists, newsreaders, radio hosts and TV presenters.

Netherlandic Dutch, on the other hand, does not have such an intermediate language. It does, however, distinguish between standard language, informal spoken language (which typically is Standard Dutch with a regional coloring), and, as in the case of Belgian Dutch, dialects.

The relations between and within Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch are shown in Fig. 2. Among others, this figure seems to suggest that the distance in language between the standard variety and the spoken variety is much smaller in Netherlandic Dutch. Geeraerts (2001) gives the example of news programs and the Big Brother programs, claiming the difference in language between those programs is much bigger in Flanders than it is in the Netherlands. Also Grondelaers et al. (2001: 179) claim that studies conducted in the 1990s “confirmed the alleged diachronic convergence between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch from 1950 and 1990, as well as the larger distance traditionally assumed between standard and substandard language in Belgian Dutch” than in Netherlandic Dutch. This stance was confirmed by some of their own findings. They warn, however, against drawing definite conclusions from their data as more research into the matter is required. Besides, the (structural) distance varies and often seems reflected in the geographical distance to the *Randstad*, which is the economic and cultural center in the Netherlands.

One of the main issues, therefore, is whether Belgian Dutch is converging with or diverging from Netherlandic Dutch (Grondelaers et al. 2001; Vandekerckhove 2005, 2007).

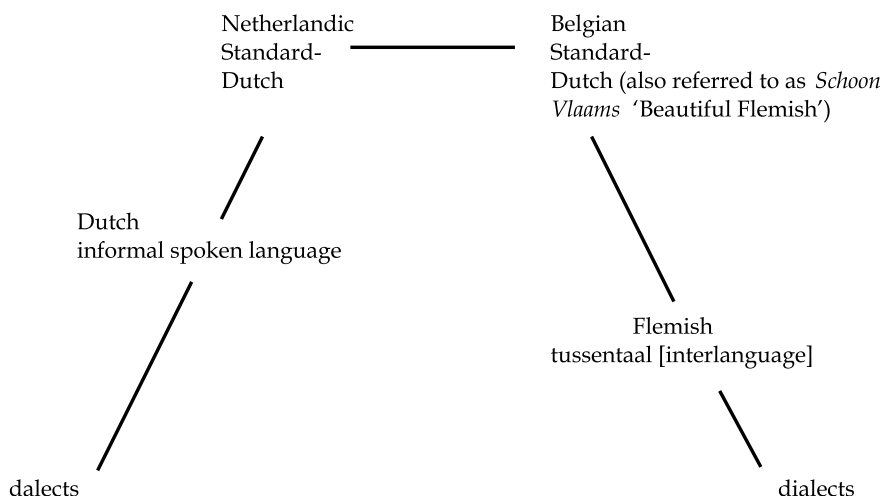


Fig. 2. Continua showing relations between two varieties of Dutch, Netherlandic and Belgian, and between the standard varieties and the dialects (after Geeraerts 2001: 340).

2. The story behind Dutch and Flemish

To fully understand and appreciate the similarities and differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch, a closer look needs to be taken at the socio-historical background.

The year 1585 seems to be an important date in the development of Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch as it symbolizes the separation of the north and the south. By taking over the city of Antwerp, the Spanish forced about 150,000 inhabitants of present-day Flanders and Brabant, mostly members of the elite, to flee to the north (Janssens and Marynissen 2008). What followed was a period in which the north became an independent state with its own language, while the south first remained under the control of the Spanish, before, in the eighteenth century, becoming part of the Austrian branch of the Habsburg house. Finally, it was annexed by the French Republic in 1795 (P. Debrabandere 2005), as was the northern part of the Netherlands, which, however, regained autonomy in 1815.

Much as the Dutch language developed into a standard language in the north, in the south it mainly existed only in the form of dialects (De Caluwe 2004: 53). Not much changed between 1815 and 1830, when the north and the south were united in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (P. Debrabandere 2005). King William I of the Netherlands tried to impose the Dutch language in the south by issuing a decree in 1819 (Schyns 2002: 40) but this was to no avail as the French language

remained the language used in politics, administration and education in the south, even after Belgium gained independence in 1830 (Janssens and Marynissen 2008: 142).

The situation started to change in the last quarter of the 19th century as the developing cultural and economic elite in Flanders started to demand equal rights for speakers of Dutch (De Caluwe 2004: 53). This was partly achieved in 1873 when the first language law was introduced. It stated that those who did not speak French had a right to a trial in Dutch (Janssens and Marynissen 2008: 145). In 1898 Dutch and French were made fully equal by law (Schyns 2002: 40).

The changes that followed in Flanders include the introduction of Dutch as the main language at Ghent University in 1930 (De Caluwe 2004: 54) and a growing number of writers who decided to replace French with Dutch in their work from the 1930s onwards (Schyns 2002: 41).

Some other important dates and developments were 1932, which marked the introduction of Dutch as the official language in all schools in Flanders (P. Debrabandere 2005), the propagation through and by the mass media of Netherlandic Dutch as the norm in Flanders in the 1950s and 60s (De Caluwe 2004: 54), and the signing of the Treaty of the Dutch Language Union between Belgium and the Netherlands in 1980 (Taalunie 2013). Nevertheless, problems have by no means been solved as De Valck (2007) reports on there still being tension between Dutch and French speakers in Belgium.

While Netherlandic Dutch has undergone a long and quite a steady development to a widespread standard language, *Standaardnederlands* 'Standard Dutch' being until the beginning of the twentieth century more like a second language in the Netherlands, Belgian Dutch seems to have been introduced 'by force' and only quite recently to a region which even today is dominated by speakers of dialects and the so-called *tussentaal* 'intermediate language.' This discrepancy, among others, accounts for the inconsistencies in how Dutch is spoken and written in Flanders, the differences in grammar, vocabulary, phonology and spelling between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, as well as the inability to standardize the Dutch language as it is used in Flanders. It must be stated, however, that this search for a linguistic norm, achieved a long time ago in the Netherlands, is gathering pace in Flanders.

Vandekerckhove (2007: 189) argues that present-day written language and public speech confirms predictions made by linguists halfway through the 20th century that Belgian Dutch would "catch up its historical retardation in the standardisation process" with colloquial speech showing opposite tendencies. Again, the main mechanism for such a development in colloquial speech is the gradual expansion of *tussentaal* (see also Jaspers 2001), which, unlike the standard Dutch variety, is gaining in popularity even among adolescents and young

adults. “The northern standard Dutch variants which young Flemish learn at school and see and hear in all kinds of media on a daily basis may belong to their linguistic repertoire, but they are not integrated into their colloquial in-group language. These variants even seem to be excluded from their in-group ‘speech’¹ intentionally” (Vandekerckhove 2007: 201).

F. Debrabandere (2005) is very cynical about this process, blaming parents and young teachers, who have been indoctrinated by, what he calls, variety-linguists, that is linguists who “promote,” or rather study, language varieties. In his opinion, by classifying mistakes as varieties, they are responsible for the inability of the Flemish to speak Dutch correctly.

3. Differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch

If we take Belgian Dutch to mean the Dutch language as it is spoken in Flanders, including *tussentaal*, and, to a certain extent, dialects, there are a substantial number of grammatical, lexical, phonetic and even spelling differences between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch. Many of the Belgian Dutch/Flemish examples below are also listed in Geerearts and Van de Velde (2013) when they describe Colloquial Belgian Dutch.

3.1. Grammar

One of the most commonly quoted grammatical differences between the two varieties of Dutch is the use of the pronoun *gij/ge* for the second person singular in Belgian Dutch (see, for instance, De Caluwe 2004; Vandekerckhove 2004).

Both Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch have two pronouns for the second person singular. In Netherlandic Dutch these are the informal *jij/je*, which are used when referring to people we are friends and/or on a first-name basis with, and the formal, or polite, *u*, which is used when addressing older people or adults we do not know. In Belgian Dutch these are *gij/ge*, as equivalents of *jij/je*, and *u*. To clarify, the difference between *jij* or *gij* and *je* of *ge* lies in the former being stressed and the latter being unstressed. Vandekerckhove (2005: 393) posits that the “Standard Dutch (or Netherlandic Dutch) informal pronouns of the second person singular *je*, *jij* and *jou(w)* are still hardly integrated in the supraregional colloquial language of most Flemings.” Instead, “the Flemish *ge*-paradigm still dominates Belgian Dutch” (Vandekerckhove 2005: 393). Of importance, when it comes to the connotations of the pronoun *gij/ge* as seen by the Flemish, it takes a position which is intermediate between *jij/je* and *u*. Also, the Dutch only use

¹ The word ‘speech’ is in inverted commas as this conclusion is based on a study into language used in electronic chatting, which is spoken communication in writing.

gij/ge in a religious context to refer to the Lord, just like *thou* in English, hence making it 'reverential.'

Another difference between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch is the gender of some nouns. In general, Dutch nouns can be masculine, feminine, both of which take the definite article *de*, and neuter, which take the definite article *het*. Noun gender is only significant, however, when personal or possessive pronouns are to be used. In other words, in a sentence like 'If the table is in the way, move it to the side,' in Dutch the personal pronoun depends on the gender of the noun. The noun 'table' is, or at least was in the 1980s (see example below), masculine in Netherlandic Dutch and feminine in Belgian Dutch and hence the pronouns *hem* or, in the reduced form, 'm 'him' and *haar* or, in the reduced form, *d'r* (*ze* in the example below) 'her' will be used respectively in the translation of the main clause of the aforementioned conditional sentence:

- (1) ND² Als de tafel in de weg staat, schuif hem ('m) dan maar opzij.
 BD Als de tafel in de weg staat, schuif haar (ze) dan maar opzij.
 'If the table is in the way, move it to the side'

(Geerts et al. 1984: 51).

Other examples of differing noun gender are *peer* 'pear,' *pan* 'pot' or 'pan,' *bank* 'bench,' *kast* 'wardrobe' or 'closet,' *naald* 'needle' or *pijp* 'pipe.'

Diminutive suffixes, which are much more common in Dutch than, say, Polish, constitute another category in the discussion of grammatical differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch. The basic grammar rule says that the suffix *-je* is added to the noun. Depending on the phonological properties of the final syllable of the simplex noun, however, many diminutives acquire one of the following four extended suffixes: *-tje*, *-etje*, *-pje* or *-kje*. In Belgian Dutch, the most common suffixes are *-ke(n)* and *-sje(n)* or a variety of extended alternatives, such as *-ske(n)*, *-eke(n)*, *-eske(n)* and *-tsje(n)* (Verkleinwoorden 2013). Table 1 presents a few typical examples.

Vandekerckhove (2005: 394), however, argues that despite these many differences "the Standard Dutch diminutive suffix appears to be better integrated in colloquial Belgian Dutch than the Standard Dutch pronoun *je*," which was discussed earlier.

The declension of words in attributive position before nouns, such as articles, pronouns and adjectives, constitutes yet another group of grammatical variables which can show how Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch differ (De Caluwe 2004; Goossens 2000). Standard Netherlandic Dutch has one indefinite article, namely *een/n*, usually pronounced as /ɛn/. In Belgian Dutch, an indefinite

² ND means Netherlandic Dutch, while BD refers to Belgian Dutch.

Table 1. Examples of diminutive suffixes in Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch.

Nouns (including translations)	Netherlandic Dutch Typical suffix → noun	Belgian Dutch Typical suffix → noun
<i>boek</i> 'book'	-je → <i>boekje</i>	-ske → <i>boekske</i>
<i>zon</i> 'sun'	-etje → <i>zonnetje</i>	-eke → <i>zonneke</i>
<i>café</i> 'café'	-tje → <i>cafeetje</i> ³	-ke → <i>caféke</i>
<i>bloem</i> 'flower'	-pje or -etje → <i>bloempje</i> or <i>bloemetje</i>	-eke(n) → <i>bloemeke</i> or <i>bloemeken</i>
<i>kat</i> 'cat'	-je → <i>katje</i>	-eke or -sje → <i>katteke</i> or <i>katsje</i>

article that precedes a masculine noun can take on the form of *ne*, for instance *ne stoel* 'a chair,' or, if the following word, be it an adjective or a noun, starts with the phonemes/segments *h*, *d* or *t*, *nen*, for example *nen hoge stoel* 'a high chair.' If, however, it precedes a neuter noun that does not start with a vowel or the phoneme *h*, the indefinite article is *e*, like *e kind* 'a child.' As far as definite articles are concerned, in addition to the general division into *de* and *het*, Belgian Dutch also has the article *den*, as a flexion form of *de*, if a masculine noun starting with a vowel follows it, like in *den aap* 'monkey.' Finally, the general rule in Dutch is that a definite article, a demonstrative pronoun and a possessive pronoun are followed by a word ending in *-e*, for example *de zwarte pen* 'the black pen,' *dat nieuwe horloge* 'that new watch' and *zijn oude huis* 'his old house,' while so-called *het*-words, that is neuter nouns, do not require any declension of adjectives if they follow indefinite articles, as in *een lief kind* 'a sweet child.' In Belgian Dutch, however, if the nouns are singular feminine and the adjectives end in a contrastively voiceless morpheme, the suffix *-e* is not added, for instance *die schoon hand* 'that clean hand.' The same goes for nouns in the plural, for example *lief kinderen* 'sweet children.' In Belgian Dutch adjectives can also be declined, which is why phrases like *nen dikken boek* 'a thick book' rather than the standard *een dik boek* are hardly surprising.

When referring to the future in Dutch, the verb *gaan* 'to go' can be used, for instance *We gaan morgen surfen* 'We are going surfing tomorrow'. In some regions in Flanders, speakers use a double *gaan*-structure, as in *Ik ga nog wat gaan rusten*, which can be loosely translated as 'I am going to go rest' (Taeldeman 2007).

Another example is the redundant use of the word *dat* 'that' after a subordinate conjunction, for instance *Ik weet niet wanneer da(t) zij komen* 'I do not know when that they are coming' (Taeldeman 2007).

What can be used superfluously as well is the past or perfect participle. An example could be the sentence *Ik ben opgebeld geweest*, which can be translated as 'I have been called been' (Schyns 2002: 42).

³ A change in spelling in Netherlandic Dutch but no change in Belgian Dutch.

Last but not least is the issue of word order. Naturally, there are quite a few literal translations from French in Dutch but these concern mainly lexis (see 3.2.). However, such a calque is sometimes also reflected in the French word order of Belgian Dutch sentences (Schyns 2002: 42). P. Debrabandere (2005) gives the following example. The Netherlandic Dutch phrase *Aan dit programma hebben meegewerkt: ...* 'The following people have contributed to / worked on this program: ...' becomes *Hebben meegewerkt aan dit programma:* in Belgian Dutch, which reflects the French word order of *Ont collaboré à ce programme:*

Another aspect of word order concerns the order of the auxiliary verb and the past participle at the end of a sentence. There are two options: the green order, which places the past participle first, and the red order, which puts the auxiliary verb first (Werkwoordsvolgorde 2013). The colors refer to those used on a map, hence they do not indicate (in)correctness. To illustrate:

- (2) (a) *Ik hoop niet dat je ontslagen wordt.*
 (b) *Ik hoop niet dat je wordt ontslagen.*
 'I hope you will not get fired.'
 (c) *Hij vraagt zich af wanneer zij gekomen zijn.*
 (d) *Hij vraagt zich af wanneer ze zijn gekomen.*
 'He wonders when they came.'

In (a) and (c) the word order is green, in (b) and (d) it is red. Even though all grammar books, including ANS (Geerts et al. 1984), accept both orders as correct, there are some differences in terms of regional, stylistic, syntactic, semantic, psycholinguistic, normative, personal and rhythmic preferences (Arfs 2007). In terms of regional preferences, she states: "In the North-East (Groningen and Drenthe) and in the South-West (West- and East Flanders) the frequency of the green order is higher and in the central part of where Dutch is spoken (Holland, Utrecht and Brabant) the red order appears more often" (Arfs 2007: 224).

De Sutter (2005), in his analysis of how frequently these orders are used in the Netherlands and Belgium, reports on a slightly higher occurrence of the green order in Belgium and the red order in the Netherlands. Schyns (2002: 42-43) gives the example of *zullen klaar zijn* and *klaar zullen zijn* 'will be ready,' stressing how the lack of explicit linguistic norms in Flanders may also make matters confusing. Another example of such a verb cluster in clause-final position could be *Ik heb willen leren zwemmen* 'I would have liked to learn (how) to swim' versus *Ik heb willen zwemmen leren* (where the verbs *leren* 'learn' and *zwemmen* 'swim' are in reversed order).

3.2. Lexis

The overwhelming majority of Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch words, phrases and expressions are identical. There are, however, quite a few differences as well. These can stem from administrative decisions, the influence of French and dialects, and the urge of the Flemish to break with either French or the northern variety of Dutch, which, in turn, reflects their need for Belgian Dutch purism.

A turning point in the lexical relation between the north and the south was the 19th century (Geeraerts 2002). This was marked by both the acceleration of removal processes that started earlier and the onset of other divergent evolutions. An example of the former is the increase in the number of French words and phrases used in Belgian Dutch, a tendency that is put down to the gradual *gallicization* or *Frenchification* of education and administration. An example of the latter are Flemish deviations from Netherlandic Dutch, which were the result of literal translations of administrative and legal documents from French sources.

As a result, there is lexical dissimilarity between present-day Netherlandic Dutch and Belgian Dutch.

Table 2. Examples of French words and phrases as used in Belgian Dutch with their (Standard) Dutch and French equivalents. Numbers 1-4 are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005), while numbers 5-7 are taken from Schyns (2002: 42).

No.	(Standard) Dutch (including English equivalents or descriptions)	French words and phrases as used in Belgian Dutch ⁴ (including translations)	French
1.	<i>rotonde</i> 'round-about'	<i>rondpunt</i> <i>rond</i> 'round'; <i>punt</i> 'point'	<i>rond-point</i>
2.	<i>een klacht indienen</i> 'to file a complaint'	<i>klacht neerleggen</i> <i>neerleggen</i> 'lay down'	<i>plainte</i>
3.	<i>hervatten</i> 'resume/continue'	<i>hernemen</i> 'take again'	<i>reprendre</i>
4.	<i>historisch overzicht</i> 'a historical outline / summary'	<i>historiek</i> 'historical'	<i>historique</i>
5.	<i>Er is niemand.</i> 'There's nobody.'	<i>Er is geen kat</i> <i>geen</i> 'no' / <i>kat</i> 'cat'	<i>il n'y a pas un chat</i>
6.	<i>de weg kwijt zijn</i> 'be in a tizzy / be shaken'	<i>het noorden verliezen</i> <i>noorden</i> 'north'; <i>verliezen</i> 'lose'	<i>perdre le nord</i>
7.	<i>kopieën maken</i> 'make copies'	<i>kopieën nemen</i> <i>kopieën</i> 'copies' / <i>nemen</i> 'take'	<i>prendre des copies</i>

⁴ These are called 'gallicismen' in Dutch, which is a clear reference to the region of Gaul.

To begin with, Table 2 presents examples of French words and phrases as used in Belgian Dutch with their (Standard) Dutch and French equivalents. They show how strong an influence the French language has had on Belgian Dutch.

However, throughout the 20th century attempts were made at introducing pure Belgian Dutch forms in order to distinguish it from French (see Table 3). Prędota (2003: 45) describes this introduction of purisms as a reaction to the excessive use of borrowings. To the examples shown in Table 3, he adds the word *duimspijker* 'thumbnail'⁵ to replace *punaise* 'thumbtack / drawing pin.'

Table 3. Examples of pure forms of Belgian Dutch words with their (Standard) Dutch and French equivalents. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	(Standard) Dutch, often also dialects in Belgium (including translations)	Pure forms of Belgian Dutch words (including translations)	French
1.	<i>horloge</i> 'watch'	<i>uurwerk</i> literally 'hourwork', also 'timepiece' or 'clockwork' (also used in Netherlandic Dutch, albeit with a slightly different meaning)	<i>horloge</i>
2.	<i>honorarium</i> 'fee/remuneration/royalty'	<i>ereloon</i> 'honorary wage/pay'	<i>honoraires</i>
3.	<i>paraplu</i> 'umbrella'	<i>regenscherm</i> 'rainshield'	<i>parapluie</i>
4.	<i>reconstructie</i> 'reconstruction'	<i>wedersamenstelling</i> 'the putting together again'	<i>réconstruction</i>

Belgian Dutch also has a number of words and phrases that have entered the language from Flemish dialects (see Table 4). It could be argued, however, that the words *camion*, *frigo* and *tas* are derived from French (for instance, *tas* from *tasse*).

Table 5 presents a number of archaic words and phrases which have survived in Netherlandic Dutch only in set or idiomatic expressions but are commonly used in Belgian Dutch.

⁵ Nail as a small metal spike with a broadened flat head.

Table 4. Examples of words and phrases as used in Belgian Dutch dialects with their (Standard) Dutch equivalents. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	(Standard) Dutch (including translations)	Belgian Dutch dialects
1.	<i>vrachtwagen</i> 'truck'	<i>camion</i>
2.	<i>koelkast</i> 'fridge'	<i>frigo</i>
3.	<i>schoonmaken</i> 'cleaning'	<i>kuisen</i> ⁶
4.	<i>metseen</i> 'build in / with bricks'	<i>metsen</i>
5.	<i>kopje koffie</i> 'cup coffee'	<i>tas</i> ⁷ <i>koffie</i>

Table 5. Examples of archaic words and phrases as used in Belgian Dutch with their (Standard) Dutch equivalents and examples of how they are still used in (Standard) Dutch in set or idiomatic expressions. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	(Standard) Dutch (including translations)	Archaic words and phrases still used in Belgian Dutch (including literal translations or translations as the word is used in Netherlandic Dutch, if applicable)	In (Standard) Netherlandic Dutch still used in ... (including translations)
1.	<i>jurk</i> 'dress'	<i>kleed</i> 'carpet / rug'	<i>priesterkleed</i> 'priest's garb / sacerdotal vestment'
2.	<i>huilen</i> 'cry'	<i>wenen</i> if capitalized 'Vienna'	poetry
3.	<i>omdat, aangezien</i> 'because / since'	<i>vermits</i>	X
4.	<i>kleding</i> 'clothing'	<i>kledij</i>	... historical context, folklore, and such.
5.	<i>avondeten</i> 'supper'	<i>avondmaal</i> 'evening meal'	<i>Het Laatste Avondmaal</i> 'the Last Supper'

⁶ The word *kuisen* appears in one of the films used in the experiments.⁷ In (Standard) Netherlandic Dutch, the word *tas* means bag, satchel, case.

Though exclusively formal in Netherlandic Dutch, some words are used in everyday speech by speakers of Belgian Dutch (see Table 6).

Table 6. Examples of formal, neutral and informal words as used in Belgian Dutch. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	Formal in Netherlandic Dutch; neutral in Belgian Dutch (including examples and translations)	Neutral in Netherlandic Dutch (including translations)	Informal (including examples and translations)
1.	<i>te</i> 'in' <i>Ondertekend te Amsterdam op 29 mei 2010.</i> 'Signed in Amsterdam on 29 May 2010.'	<i>in</i> 'in'	X
2.	<i>daar</i> 'because' <i>Daar ik hoofdpijn had, ging ik naar bed.</i> 'Since I had a headache, I went to bed.'	<i>omdat</i> 'because'	X
3.	<i>reeds</i> 'already / yet' <i>Heb je dat reeds gedaan?'</i> Have you done that already?'	<i>al</i> 'already / yet'	X
4.	<i>werpen</i> 'throw' <i>Hij wierp de bal naar de andere kant.</i> 'He threw the ball to the other side.'	<i>gooien</i> 'throw'	X
5.	X	<i>elkaar</i> 'each other'	<i>Mekaar</i> 'each other' <i>Ze kennen mekaar 2 jaar.</i> 'They've known each other for 2 years.'

As in any other country, Dutch and Flemish university students also speak a jargon of their own. Perhaps surprisingly, their slang differs from each other, as can be seen in Table 7. It is of interest to note that the language used by Flemish students is sometimes used among Flemish non-students as well. This is not necessarily true of Netherlandic Dutch.

There are certain words that exist in both varieties of Dutch but are sometimes used differently by speakers of Belgian Dutch (see Table 8), the reason being interference from French or Flemish dialects.

Table 7. Examples of words and phrases used by students in the Netherlands and in Flanders with their (Standard) Dutch equivalents. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	Standard language (including translations)	Language used by Dutch students (including translations of the word or phrase and/or literal translations of the words or the word or words that make up the phrase)	Language used by Flemish students and in Belgian Dutch (including translations of the word or phrase and/or literal translations of the words or the word or words that make up the phrase)
1.	<i>gezakt zijn</i> 'fail/have failed'	<i>gestraald zijn / gesjeesd zijn</i> 'come a cropper/flunk' <i>stralen</i> 'beam/radiate/shine'; <i>sjezen</i> 'tear / tear off / fly / fly off'	<i>gebuisd zijn</i> 'flunk' <i>buis</i> 'tube / pipe'
2.	<i>kamer</i> 'room'	<i>hok</i> 'shed / storeroom / dump'	<i>kot</i> 'hovel / kennel / shed'
3.	<i>hospita</i> 'landlady'	<i>Hospita; huisbaas;</i> 'houseboss'	<i>kotbazin / kotmadam</i> <i>kot</i> 'hovel/kennel/shed'; <i>bazin</i> 'female boss'; <i>madam</i> 'lady, derived from French

Table 8. Examples of pairs of words as used in Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch. The examples are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005).

No.	Pairs of words (including translations and/or literal translations)	One of the pair as sometimes used in Belgian Dutch (including literal translations)	The same context in (Standard) (Netherlandic) Dutch (including translations)
1.	<i>noemen / heten</i> 'to name / to be called'	<i>Ik noem Peter.</i> 'I name Peter', where 'name' is a verb	<i>Ik heet Peter.</i> 'I am called / My name is Peter'
2.	<i>vooreerst / eerst</i> 'before first / first'	<i>Vooreerst wil ik zeggen dat ...</i> 'Before first I want to say that ...'	<i>Eerst wil ik zeggen dat ...</i> 'First I want to say that ...'
3.	<i>ritme / tempo</i> 'rhythm / speed'	<i>in dat ritme</i> 'in that rhythm'	<i>in dat tempo</i> 'at that speed'
4.	<i>terug / weer</i> 'back / again'	<i>Hij is terug ziek geworden.</i> 'He has become ill back.'	<i>Hij is weer ziek geworden.</i> 'He has become ill again.'
5.	<i>doorgaan / plaatsvinden</i> 'continue, be on / take place'	<i>Het feest gaat morgen door.</i> 'The party will continue / be on tomorrow.'	<i>Het feest vindt morgen plaats.</i> 'The party will take place tomorrow.'

Last but not least, there are a number of words and phrases that are typically Belgian Dutch in the sense that they are solely used in Flanders. Table 9 presents eight such examples as well as their Netherlandic Dutch equivalents or general descriptions.

Table 9. Examples of words and phrases that are typically Belgian Dutch with either their Netherlandic Dutch equivalents or appropriate descriptions. Numbers 1-5 are taken from P. Debrabandere (2005), while numbers 6-8 are taken from Geeraerts (2001: 338).

No.	Belgian Dutch (including equivalents and literal translations, if applicable)	Netherlandic Dutch (including equivalents and literal translations, if applicable)	description
1.	<i>gouverneur</i> 'provincial governor / Lord Lieutenant' (also use in the Netherlands but only in the southern province of Limburg)	<i>Commissaris van de Koningin</i> '(Royal) Commissioner'	X
2.	<i>oudercomité</i> 'parents' council' <i>ouder</i> 'parent'; <i>comité</i> 'committee'	<i>ouderraad</i> 'parents' council' <i>ouder</i> 'parent'; <i>raad</i> 'council'	X
3.	<i>vieruurtje</i> <i>vier</i> 'four'; <i>uur</i> 'hour' or 'o'clock'	X	A light meal of coffee, tea or chocolate with cake or cookies at 4 pm.
4.	<i>vijgen na Pasen</i> 'too late' <i>vijgen</i> 'figs'; <i>Pasen</i> 'Easter'	<i>mosterd na de maaltijd</i> 'too late' <i>mosterd</i> 'mustard'; <i>na</i> 'after'; <i>maaltijd</i> 'meal'	X
5.	<i>paling in het groen</i> <i>paling</i> 'eel'; <i>groen</i> 'green'	X	Stewed eel with chervil sauce.
6.	<i>een handje toesteken</i> 'give / lend somebody a hand' <i>handje</i> 'little hand'; <i>toesteken</i> ≈ 'stick'	<i>een handje helpen</i> 'give / lend somebody a hand' <i>handje</i> 'little hand'; <i>helpen</i> 'help'	X
7.	<i>fruitsap</i> 'fruit juice' <i>fruit</i> 'fruit'; <i>sap</i> 'juice'	<i>vruchtensap</i> 'fruit juice' <i>vruchten</i> 'fruit'; <i>sap</i> 'juice'	X

8.	<i>met haken en ogen aan elkaar</i> <i>hangen</i> 'by a thread' <i>met</i> 'with'; <i>haken</i> 'hooks'; <i>ogen</i> 'eyes'; <i>aan elkaar</i> 'attached to each other'; <i>hangen</i> 'hang'	<i>met de hakken over de sloot</i> 'by a thread / by the skin of one's teeth' <i>met</i> 'with'; <i>hakken</i> 'heels'; <i>over</i> 'across'; <i>sloot</i> 'ditch'	X
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Tables 2-9 are by no means exhaustive but they do provide a comprehensive overview of typically Belgian Dutch words and phrases.

3.3. Phonology

Some might argue that one only needs to listen to a few sentences spoken by a typical speaker of Netherlandic and a typical speaker of Belgian Dutch to be able to distinguish between the two, the main reason being the distinctly different pronunciation (see, for instance, Taeldeman 2007). In fact, De Caluwe (2007) goes as far as to say that Belgian Dutch has its own pronunciation.

Just like in the case of grammar and lexis, these differences can be put down to the impact of Flemish dialects, French influences, and the willingness or desire to eradicate French and Netherlandic Dutch influences.

Another deciding factor, however, is the lack of processes in Belgian Dutch that did take place in Netherlandic Dutch. Van Hout et al. (1999), for example, give the example of changes in the pronunciation of Netherlandic Dutch in the second half of the 20th century not taking place in the pronunciation of Belgian Dutch. These include the devoicing of voiced fricatives, the uvularization of *g* and the diphthongization of the long mid vowels, all of which originated in the language spoken in the conurbation of Randstad. Fewer changes seem to have occurred in Belgian Dutch. And if there are any, they are influenced by the variety spoken in the Belgian province of Brabant. Also, speakers of regional dialects are slowly and gradually influencing the standard pronunciation of Belgian Dutch (Van Hout et al. 1999; Vandekerckhove 2007).

A number of characteristics of Belgian Dutch pronunciation have been described in the literature. Taeldeman (2007), for instance, draws attention to the following attributes:

- speakers from the Flemish province of Brabant will make the short /i/ and /u/ in words such as *vis* 'fish' and *put* 'well' longer, pronouncing the words as [vi:s], making it sound like the word *vies* 'dirty', and [pu:t], while a person from Western Flanders will have a more open realization;

- speakers from Western Flanders and the west part of Eastern Flanders will pronounce *gaan* ‘go’, in standard Dutch pronounced as $[ɣa:n]$, which can be confusing for a person accustomed to Netherlandic Dutch as they can mistake it for the word *haan* ‘rooster’, and *haan* as $[ɦa:n]$ or even, hypercorrectly, as $[ɣa:n]$; another characteristic, influenced by the French language, is the dropping of /h/, because of which the Flemish may pronounce *helemaal* ‘totally’ as *élemaal*, *hebt* ‘have’ (in the second person singular) as *ébt* and *gehad* ‘had’ (as the past participle of ‘have’) as *g’ad*;
- any speaker of Belgian Dutch may drop the final phonemes *t* and *d* pronounced as /t/ at the end of words, as in the words *wat* ‘what’ and *dat* ‘that’, pronouncing them as $[wɑ]$, or even $[wɑ]$, and $[dɑ]$ respectively. Other typical examples include such words as *goed* ‘good’, *niet* ‘not’ and *met* ‘with’.

To continue the issue of final consonants, it is very common for speakers of Netherlandic Dutch to drop the final *n* (Van de Velde 1996), especially in verbs, for instance *beamen* ‘confirm’ is likely to be pronounced as $[bɔʔä:mə]$ in the Netherlands, while the Flemish would be inclined to say $[bɔʔä:mən]$, though not necessarily speakers of *tussentaal*.

The pronunciation of the word *wat* shows another difference, namely the fact that /v/, like any *w*, tends to be labiodental in Netherlandic Dutch and bilabial in Belgian Dutch.

There are a number of ways in which /r/ can be pronounced but researchers seem to agree that in Belgian Dutch it is less rolled, or rolling, than in Netherlandic Dutch (see, for instance, Van Bezooijen and Van den Berg 2004: 87).

In Netherlandic Dutch, the final consonants of prefixes do not always re-syllabify if the root of the following word starts with a vowel, for instance *uit[ʔ]eindelijk* ‘finally’ and *on[ʔ]afhankelijk* ‘independent’, making the prefixes non-cohering (Noske 2006). What is more, in the word *onafhankelijk* ‘independent’, there is no /h/ and the phoneme *f* is at the start of the third syllable (see Table 10).

Table 10. Pronunciation of *uiteindelijk* ‘finally’ and *onafhankelijk* ‘independent’ in Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch (after Noske 2006).

Word	Pronunciation – underlying form	Pronunciation – Netherlandic Dutch	Pronunciation – Belgian Dutch
<i>uiteindelijk</i> ‘finally’	/œyt+ɛində+lək/	$[œyt:ʔɛin.də.lək]$	$[œy:tɛin.də.lək]$
<i>onafhankelijk</i> ‘independent’	/ɔn+af+har+lək/	$[ɔn.ʔaf'har.kə.lək]$	$[ɔ.nɑ'fɑŋ.klək]$

Some other typical differences pointed out by Noske (2006) are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Some typical phonetic differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch (after Noske 2006).

Word or phrase (including translation)	Netherlandic Dutch pronunciation	Belgian Dutch pronunciation [or some variety thereof]
<i>het is</i> 'it is'	/ət ɪs/, [tɪs], [ətɪs]	/ət ɪs/, [tɪs], [hətɪs]
<i>was het</i> 'was it'	/ʋas ət/, [ʋasət]~[ʋazət]	/was ət/, [wast]
<i>de engelen</i> 'the angels'	[də.ɣ.ɛ.ŋə.lə]	[dɛŋ.lɪn]
<i>dat ik</i> 'that I'	/dat ɪk/, [datɪk]	/da ɛk/
<i>ik hoor</i> 'I hear'	/ɛk o:r/, [ko:r]	/ɪk ho:r/, [ɪkho:r]

Moreover, in connected speech, already present in some of the aforementioned examples, other phenomena may occur (Jaspers 2001: 130-132). For example, if there is a question with the verb *wilt* 'want' and the *gij*-pronoun, the phoneme *t*, normally pronounced /t/, is pronounced /dɛ/, as in *wildegij* 'Do you want?' (rather than *wilt gij* in Belgian Dutch or *wil jij* in Netherlandic Dutch). The same goes for *oenoemdegij* 'What do you call ...?' (rather than [h]oe noemt *gij* in Belgian Dutch or *hoe noem jij* in Netherlandic Dutch).

3.4. Spelling

The Dutch language, regardless of the country or region it is used in, be it, for example, the Netherlands or Flanders, has one system of spelling rules, regulated by the Dutch Language Union, accepted by the relevant authorities, collected in the so-called *Groene Boekje* [Green Booklet] and taken as the standard by governmental and educational institutions as well as, at least in theory, by the media. In other words, as opposed to varieties of English (color and center in American English vs. colour and centre in British English) for instance, there are no official spelling differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch.

There are, however, discrepancies when it comes to the spelling of names, especially last names. This is due to the influences of French on Belgian Dutch. The French, who ruled in Belgium at the time, introduced the obligation to register names in 1795; in the Netherlands such a requirement was not introduced until 1811 (Familienamen 2015), which was 7 years after the introduction of the first official spelling rules called *de spelling Siegenbeek* in the northern part of the Dutch language area in 1804 (Spelling 2015). This accounts for such differences

as *-ck(x)* vs. *-k(s)*, *c* vs. *k*, *uy* vs. *ui*, *ae* vs. *a(a)*, and *-gh* vs. *-g* (for example Hendrickx, Sterckx, Van Dijk, Cuypers, Geeraerts, Claessen, Van Haeringen and Vandenbergh in Belgian Dutch vs. Hendriks, Sterks, Van Dijk, Kuipers, Geeraerts, Klaassen, Van Haringen and Van den Berg in Netherlandic Dutch). This is a tendency, which means that Flemish spelling can be and sometimes is used in Netherlandic Dutch names as well. One more discrepancy is the spelling of names such as Vandenbergh and Vandekerckhove as single words in Belgian Dutch (Van den Berg and Van de Kerkhove in Netherlandic Dutch). Finally, there are differences in some single words, like *Slovakije* ‘Slovakia’ in Belgian Dutch vs. *Slowakije* in Netherlandic Dutch (Slovakije 2015).

4. Conclusion

In literature and everyday speech there is a number of terms used to name the ‘varieties’ used in the Netherlands and Flanders. The former can be referred to as Netherlandic Dutch, Dutch Dutch or simply Dutch, the latter as Belgian Dutch or Flemish. Moreover, both ‘varieties’ distinguish between standard language, informal spoken (sub-) standard language, and dialects. Belgian Dutch also *tussentaal* ‘intermediate language’ or ‘interlanguage,’ a Flemish sub-standard variety. This confusing terminology, the many dialectal influences, and the growing impact *tussentaal* has on Belgian Dutch make it impossible to standardize all the characteristics of the two varieties into one language, giving a clear impression that Belgian Dutch is diverging, or, to be more precise, has in many ways already diverged from Netherlandic Dutch.

There are, after all, a number of consistent differences that make distinguishing between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch possible (Wiercińska 2009). The historical overview provided in part 2 explains how these variations came into being. Examples of grammatical differences include the pronoun *gij/ge* for the second person singular in Belgian Dutch (instead of *jij/je* in Netherlandic Dutch), the gender of some nouns, diminutive suffixes, the declension of words in attributive position before nouns (such as articles, pronouns and adjectives), the use of the verb *gaan* ‘to go’ in Belgian Dutch to refer to the future, the superfluous use of both the word *dat* ‘that’ after a subordinate conjunction and the past or perfect participle in Belgian Dutch, and the word order. Examples of lexical differences include French words and phrases being used more often in Belgian Dutch, Belgian Dutch purisms, words and phrases that have entered Belgian Dutch from Flemish dialects, and different slang used by Flemish and Dutch university students. Furthermore, there are differences at the level of formality. In other words, what is formal in

Netherlandic Dutch may be neutral or informal in the Belgian variety or what is typical in one region may sound too formal, or even posh, or too colloquial in another, and vice versa. Also, there are certain words that exist in both varieties of Dutch but are sometimes used differently by speakers of Belgian Dutch, the reason being interference from French or Flemish dialects. Examples of phonetic differences include making the short /i/ and /u/ longer in Belgian Dutch, dropping the final phonemes t and d in Belgian Dutch, /v/ being to be labiodental in Netherlandic Dutch and bilabial in Belgian Dutch, the dropping of /h/ in Belgian Dutch, the diphthongization of long vowels and voiceless /g/, /v/ and /z/ in Netherlandic Dutch, and others. In terms of spelling, there are no official differences between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch. Finally, the discrepancies that do exist concern mainly names and are mainly the outcome of French influences on Belgian Dutch, especially at the end of the eighteenth century.

All the differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch outlined above as well as the status these ‘varieties’ have in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium) indeed seem to attest the view that Dutch is more of a “pluricentric language with two centres of standardization” (Vandekerckhove 2005: 394) now (see also Geeraerts; Van de Velde 2015).

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