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The Hollandish roots of Pella Dutch in Iowa*

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o. Introduction

In an excellent overview, den Besten & Hinskens (2005) provide a systematic account of recent research concerning the diversification of Dutch due to external causes. They essentially distinguish three groups:

- varieties of Dutch outside the speech community
- ethnolects of Dutch
- daughter languages of Dutch

Among the daughter languages, special attention is paid to the most important and best known among these, i.e. Afrikaans, and also to Negerhollands, which is much less known. This language was spoken on the Virgin Islands from around 1800 until 1987, when the last speaker died. Among the ethnolects of Dutch are varieties such as Jewish Dutch.

In this study we will focus on a variety of Dutch which until recently was spoken in the US, Pella Dutch, spoken in Pella, Iowa. We will pay special attention to its system of verbal inflection. In order to analyse this, it is necessary to have detailed knowledge of the dialect(s) of the migrants and the areas they came from *in patria*. I will show that Pella Dutch reflects to a large extent forms that already existed in the dialects of the immigrants *in patria*, and that these are not the result of innovation or paradigmatic leveling which took place in the period after immigration. In this respect Pella Dutch is like many German-American dialects: Features of the immigrant dialects are not necessarily the result of some kind of leveling or koineization process, but rather may reflect features of one or more contributing dialects that were brought in from Europe.

* Thanks to Joseph Salmons and especially to Jeroen van de Weijer and the anonymous reviewer for many useful comments. I alone am responsible for any mistakes.

§1 gives an overview from which area *in patria* the speakers of Pella Dutch originally came from. In §2, I will show how typical features of Pella Dutch originated from forms that the settlers brought along from their home areas in the Netherlands, i.e. the border areas of the provinces of Zuid-Holland and Gelderland, and the islands of southern Zuid-Holland. §3 contains conclusions and §4 lists a number of points for future research.

Map 1. Areas of provenance of the Pella settlers from 1846–1880. Circles indicate areas of concentration: larger circles indicate more migrants. Production Evert Wattel, see Wattel & van Reenen (1996).

1. Roots

When some 20 years ago I participated in a conference at Grinnell College, Iowa, a colleague invited me to pay a visit to his relatives in Pella, so that I could speak Dutch with them – something that he was not able to do. For a considerable period of time, Pella had been an isolated community, and many of the settlers continued to speak Dutch as their first language. In Pella, I was introduced to the VanZee family, whose Dutch had a central Dutch, rural flavour to my ear; their Pella Dutch was different from Standard Dutch. More recently, I learned that there are several dozens VanZees in Pella, who all descend from Engel van Zee. He hailed from Herwijnen in the western part of the Tielerwaard (province of Gelderland), near the border with Zuid-Holland (see area 1a on Map 1), where he lived from 1775–1868 (Stout 1922:158).

Since my visit to Pella, two important studies on Pella Dutch have been published, Webber (1988) and Smits (1996). Webber gives an overview of the language, while Smits describes the disintegration of its inflectional system. Both studies contain interesting observations on the roots of the Pella settlers, but this point is not examined in any detail by either author. The provenance of the settlers does play a crucial role in Smits (1996), however, since the study of aspects of the history of a migrant language, its formation, evolution and disintegration makes it necessary to take into account the dialectal elements from which it developed.

In van Reenen (1999), I examined the identity of the Pella migrants and where they came from (see also <http://easy.dans.knaw.nl/>). The results are represented in Map 1 and Table 1. They can be summarized as follows:

1. In 1846–1847, a group of Dutch settlers, under the leadership of the Seceder Reverend Hendrik Pieter Scholte, founded Pella in the state of Iowa. For the period between 1846 and 1880, I have retraced 2,666 individuals, i.e. more than 90% of the emigrants from the Netherlands. In the early years of migration, the great majority of the migrants belonged to the Reformed group of Seceders of Reverend Scholte; later, ordinary Reformed settlers were most prominently present. Other religious groups did not play a role, see Table 2.

2. The great majority of the emigrants came from rural areas – Utrecht city (area 3b) being the only exception: from the islands of southern Zuid-Holland and the border area of Zuid-Holland and Gelderland (areas 1a–c). The areas around this core, in Zuid-Holland, Gelderland West, and Utrecht (areas 2 and 3), the Gelderse Vallei and coastal area (areas 5b and 5c), around Zutphen (5a) and Friesland (areas 4) may have played a modest, reinforcing role. The influence of the other areas of migration (6) is negligible.

3. As the founding fathers and mothers, we would expect that the Seceders from the core area 1 on Map 1 had a strong impact on the formation of Pella Dutch. (See Mufwene 1996 on the “founder principle”.)

Table 1. Number of migrants per area. *Famhips* (family heads or independent persons) and total number of migrants.

1. Core area: border Zuid-Holland/Gelderland, Zuid-Holland islands			
191	774	1a.	Vijfherenlanden and surrounding areas
76	278	1b.	Hoekse Waard
31	125	1c.	IJsselmonde
298	1177	Total	
2. Area around the core area			
25	94	2a.	Bommelerwaard
16	55	2b.	Voorne/Putten
13	42	2c.	Goeree-Overflakkee
10	50	2d.	Schieland
9	20	2e.	De Klundert (Noord-Brabant)
4	11	2f.	Land van Altena
4	13	2g.	Neder-Betuwe
3	19	2h.	Krimpenerwaard
84	304	Total	
3. Utrecht			
44	166	3a.	border area Utrecht, Zuid-Holland, Noord-Holland
22	82	3b.	Utrecht, city and surrounding area
66	248	Total	
4. Friesland: Frisian, Town Frisian, Northern Dutch dialects			
71	228	4a.	Frisian dialect speakers
27	59	4b.	Town Frisian: a form of Northern Dutch
19	60	4c.	Stellingwerven, Steenwijk: also Northern Dutch
117	347	Total	
5. Other areas which provided considerable numbers of migrants:			
30	85	5a.	Achterhoek
64	249	5b.	Gelderse Vallei, especially Ede
14	60	5c.	Gelderland, coastal area
108	394	Total	
6. Remaining areas:			
8	41	Over-Betuwe (Gelderland southeast)	
18	59	Noord-Holland rest	

2. Dialect features in the language of Pella

In this section, I compare a series of common verb forms in Pella Dutch presented in Smits (1996) with dialect features found in the Dutch homeland of the migrants. In §2.1, forms of *hebben* 'to have' are presented, in §2.2 I discuss first person singular and plural forms of verbs like *doen* 'to do' and §2.3 gives present tense first person singular forms of regular verbs.¹ Dutch dialect data come from the GTRP (2000), col-

1. There are many more features to be examined, such as the present plural of the verb *zijn* 'to be'. Here too there are patterns that indicate that the core area played an important role, cf. van Reenen (1999).

Table 2. Number of migrants to Pella per period, and their religious affiliation. For data per year see Van Reenen (1999) Appendix B.

period	Sec	Ref	rest	unknown	total	famhips
1846–1848	571	41	6	40	658	166
1849–1854	258	238	4	4	504	137
1855–1880	233	1231	37	3	1504	419
Total	1062	1510	47	47	2666	722

Famhips = family heads or independent persons.

Sec = Seceders. I have grouped together as Seceders: (*Christelijk*) *Afgescheiden*: 'Seceders, Christian Reformed'; *Gereformeerd*: 'Reformed'; *Christelijk Gereformeerd*: 'Christian Reformed' (the first in 1871, in total 4 famhips: 14 individuals); *Hervormd afgescheiden*: 'Reformed Seceders, Christian Reformed'.

Ref = Reformed. I have grouped together as Reformed: (*Ned.*) *Hervormd*: 'Dutch Reformed'; *Nederduitsch Hervormd*: 'Netherlands Reformed'.

lected since the beginning of the 1980s. The data for Pella Dutch come from Smits (1996: 20–26), which presents results from two corpora, one collected in 1966 and the other in 1989.

Comparing data from the 20th century with variants of dialects that were spoken 100–150 years ago contains, of course, the risk that the dialects have changed. This problem could be avoided by using older data. Although such data are not always easily accessible, I was able to check facts for older periods in several cases.

A problem of a different nature concerns the choice of the informants in the Pella corpora. Although according to Smits (1996: 228) the 1966 corpus more closely resembles Standard Dutch than the 1989 corpus, it is older and in one respect more reliable than the 1989 corpus. The 1989 corpus includes data from ten informants. However, four of these persons were not from Pella. Below I will draw mainly on the 1966 corpus, which contains speech from 30 Pella speakers. Although all informants of the 1966 corpus came from Pella, their roots *in patria* are not completely representative, since the Gelderse Vallei (area 5b) seems to be slightly overrepresented, just like the number of informants coming from minor dialect areas (cf. van Reenen 1999: Appendix E). Consequently, the possibility cannot be excluded *a priori* that traces of the dialects of areas 5b and 6 on Map 1 are slightly overrepresented.

2.1 Forms of the present tense third person singular of *hebben* 'to have'

Standard Dutch: *Hij heeft* 'he has' (Smits 1996: Table 4.18:130, see also 71, 83–84, 130–131, 161) has a number of variants:

heeft	heb	het	hebt	hebben	had	Total
21	8	101	1	0	2	133 corpus Pella Dutch 1966

Map 2. *(Hij) heeft* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

Maps 2–7 show where the different forms occur. Map 2 shows that *(hij) heeft* is not frequent in (the relevant) Dutch dialects, and neither is *(hij) hebt* (see Map 3). However, *(hij) heeft* is certainly not infrequent in Pella Dutch and the difference with lower-frequency *(hij) hebt* is striking. This difference must be due to the influence of Standard Dutch. Thus, I do not agree with Smits (1996: 84), who considers *(hij) hebt* as a regularization: this variant simply migrated from the Netherlands, where it was rare, as it still is in Pella Dutch. *(Hij) heb* and *(hij) het* are both frequent in and around the core area (areas 1–3 on Map 1), as Maps 4 and 5 show. However, in Pella Dutch *(hij) het* is considerably more frequent than *(hij) heb*. This is understandable, since older data show that *(hij) het* was more common in the Dutch dialects of areas 1–3, while *(hij) heb* was more exceptional than it now is (see Opprel 1896: 40, 42; Kloeke 1956; Daan

Map 3. *(Hij) hebt* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

1965; van Bree 1997: 125).² Pella Dutch still has the old form *(hij) het*. In addition, the use of *(hij) het* as the norm in Pella Dutch has been reinforced considerably by the fact that *het* also occurs as the majority form in areas 4 and 5, i.e. the Gelderse Vallei and part of the coastal area, in the majority of Frisian dialects (besides *hat* or *had*, see below), in Town Frisian and in Stellingwerfs. According to Smits (1996: 131), “*het* may actually be a dialect form that survived the process of dialect leveling”. Since it was the most common form in a large majority of all relevant dialects, I would rephrase this

2. It is remarkable that the forms *hij he(e)*, *ait*, *hait*, *et* do not occur in the data of the 1966 corpus, especially since Webber (1988: 92) mentions *he(e)* for Pella Dutch. According to the RND (clause 43, map 13; clause 24, map 85; clause 117, map 117), such forms are also present in the dialects of the core area and its surroundings.

Map 4. (*Hij*) *heb* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

as "*het* is actually the only result to be expected of the process of dialect leveling". As Trudgill (1983:105) observes: "Where varieties in contact are related and similar, they may retain what they have in common and lose what is different." Besides (*hij*) *het*, we also find, although rarely, (*hij*) *had*. These forms must be Frisian (see Map 6). By contrast, consider (*hij*) *hef*, the third popular dialect form (see Map 7). Virtually no migrants in my data come from the eastern area (provinces of Drente, Overijssel, East Gelderland) where this form occurs. It is therefore not surprising that it is completely absent in Pella Dutch.

Map 5. (*Hij*) *het* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

2.2 Present tense first person singular and plural of *doen* "to do"

Standard Dutch: *Wij doen* "we do" (Smits 1996, Table 4.16:123, see also 71, 85, 108, 123–124) also has a number of variants. I have added the relevant data from the 1989 corpus (Smits 1996, Table 5.11:210). This group of verbs which end in *-n* includes *gaan*, *staan*, *slaan*, *zien*, *doen* plus their derivatives and compounds, all included in Smits' data (Smits 1996:69). My own data only concern *doen*.

doen	doenen	doet	doe	rest	total	
23	12	0	5	0	40	corpus Pella Dutch 1966
5	2	2	1	5	15	corpus Pella Dutch 1989

Map 6. (Hij) *hat*, *had* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

Quite a number of forms in Pella are different from Standard Dutch *wij doen*. Map 8 shows that in present-day dialects *doene(n)* occurs in the western part of Frisia and marginally around the core area. It is frequent only in a part of Noord-Holland which is completely irrelevant to the present investigation. However, in older data *doene* does occur within the core area. Therefore, Smits' (1996:85) claim that the formation of *doene* "seems to be an internally induced attempt to bring the plural form of these verbs into line with the canonical shape of plural forms of Standard Dutch" does not describe what happened in Pella Dutch, but what must have happened in Oud-Beierland, many years ago. "By analogy with the other verbs, the monosyllabic *doen*, *zien*, *gaan*, *staan* and *slaan* in the present plural usually have also taken *e*: *we doene ons best*, *Ziene jullie dat niet?* *We zijne bij mekander*. *Zij gane der na toe*" (see Opprel 1896:41, my translation PvR). Where the creation of *doe* (IPA [du]) in the corpus of

Map 7. (Hij) *hef* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

1989 is concerned, Smits (1996:124) points out the influence of English *do*. Indeed, this form is very exceptional in the relevant Dutch dialects.

With respect to variants of Standard Dutch: *Ik doe* "I do" (Smits 1996, Table 4.16:123, see also 70, 85, 108, 123–124, 175, 191, 234), I have also added the relevant data from the 1989 corpus (Smits 1996, Table 5.11:210):

doe	doenen	doet	doen	rest	total	
13	0	9	0	0	22	corpus Pella Dutch 1966
1	0	9	1	4	15	corpus Pella Dutch 1989

Standard Dutch *ik doe* ([du] in IPA) is very close to its English equivalent *I do*. Yet it is far from the only form in Pella Dutch, and it is even becoming marginal. Smits (1996:71) observes: "In western dialects, 1st person singular verb forms such as *ik*

Map 8. (Wij) *doene* (dark) in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

gaan, *ik gaat* ... occur." However, forms like (*ik*) *gaan*, *doen* are lacking in the 1966 corpus and are marginal in the 1989 corpus, whereas, in spite of any influence from English, *doet* is quite popular. Map 9 shows why. (*Ik*) *doet* is the typical form in the core area 1 and around the core (areas 2 and 3). The older RND data (clause 136, map 109) confirm this: final *-t* occurs more frequently north of Rotterdam, in almost the whole of Utrecht, and slightly more often in the Alblasserwaard (area 1 on Map 1). By contrast, (*ik*) *doen* occurs mostly outside any of the relevant areas. The *doet*-forms are the only ones to have migrated to Pella. Smits (1996:85) observes:

... we can regard the generalization of *-t* forms to the 1st person singular of the *-n* verbs as an attempt to bring these forms into line with the canonical shape of 1st person singular verb forms: Dutch 1st person singular verb forms should end in

Map 9. (*Ik*) *doet* ○ versus (*Ik*) *doen* ● in modern Dutch dialects. Production Evert Wattel.

a consonant. ... the misuse of stem + *-t* forms may not be an independent force, but may be due to the striving for surface regularity.

I completely agree with this scenario, but the scene is not Pella. The attempt had taken place already long before, in Zuid-Holland and Utrecht.

2.3 Present tense first person singular of the regular verbs

Let us turn to Standard Dutch: *Ik draag*, *loop*, *bak*, etc. "I carry, walk, bake" (Smits 1996, Table 4.15:120, see also 89, 119, 178). I have also added the relevant data from the 1989 corpus (Smits 1996, Table 5.9:204):

Map 10. *(Ik) draagt, loopt, bakt* etc. in modern Dutch dialects. Source Daan (1965: 13).

stem	+t	+en	other	total	
455	7	2	0	464	corpus Pella Dutch 1966
15	5	1	3	24	corpus Pella Dutch 1989

The standard form clearly dominates in Pella Dutch, and stem + *t* is quite exceptional, although the 1989 data seem to show another pattern. Stem + *t* is not frequent in present-day Dutch dialects either (see Goeman 1992: 130). If it occurs, it occurs in and around the core area. Such forms may have been more frequent at an earlier time. Baker van Dulst from Poederooyen (Bommelerwaard, area 2c) uses stem + *t* in a letter from 1840 to Reverend Scholte in *ik... ontfangt* 'I receive' (Smits 1977–1991: III:313), which proves that the relevant area must have been more extended to the east than it is on the map of Goeman (1992). The discussion and maps in Daan et al. (1965: 12–14; see also Daan 1985: 14), based on data from 1871 and later, and Goeman (1976: 191, 193), based on a comparison of data from 1941 and the RND twenty years later, confirm this: Poederooyen seems to have been part of the *-t* area. When Smits (1996: 178) classifies these forms as 'Generalization of regular 3rd person singular verb forms in *-t*' and as 'Non-conventional use of forms', the generalisation did not apply to Pella Dutch. Instead, the non-conventional use migrated straight from Zuid-Holland and Gelderland and is now slightly regressing in Pella.

3. General conclusions

1. Many linguistic properties of Pella Dutch migrated straight from the dialects of the homeland, in particular from the core area consisting of the islands in southern Zuid-Holland and the border area between Zuid-Holland and Gelderland.
2. Although Smits (1996) allows for the possibility that properties of Dutch dialects were transplanted directly to Pella, her study lacks a framework in which we can distinguish between forms migrating from the relevant Dutch dialects to Pella and changes that were newly introduced in Pella in the formation of Pella Dutch. As a consequence, the conclusions in Smits (1996) concerning both the disintegration of inflection and the dialect roots of this language are speculative. On the basis of Smits (1996), it cannot be established to what extent aspects of the disintegration of inflection are properties of Pella Dutch or were they were already present in the dialects *in patria*.
3. Comparisons between migrant languages and the dialects *in patria* are often difficult to test for lack of data concerning the origin of the migrants and/or the properties of their dialects. In cases like Pella Dutch, however, historical information is widely available. This information helps us to carry out what might be called the sociolinguistics of the past and to see how original dialects contributed to the formation of a new language.

4. Further research

The approach adopted in Smits (1996: 83) leads her to observe: 'It is not unlikely that some of the trends ... may already have been active in the dialects transplanted to the Iowa Dutch settlements.' I have shown that in quite a number of cases this observation is correct. Since both for Pella Dutch and for the relevant Dutch dialects more sociolinguistic material is available, it is worth trying to reconstruct how Pella Dutch evolved from a mixture of dialects and standard Dutch to its actual form in the 20th century. Further research is possible along at least three main lines:

1. A closer analysis of relevant dialects from around 1850 in the Netherlands. In this manner it can also be established to what extent properties of these Dutch dialects have been taken over by Pella Dutch. This will be a difficult task, since hardly any dialect descriptions from this period are available, and letters written in dialect such as those from baker Van Dulst, from which we quoted in §2.3 above, are rare.
2. Further analysis of Pella Dutch, especially with respect to three points:
 - a. The completion of the linguistic profile of as many migrants as possible in Pella on the basis of the tape recordings that are available.
 - b. An analysis of as many linguistic aspects as possible, for instance those mentioned in Webber (1988) and Smits (1996: 14, 63, 89, 94) or directly from the

tape recordings, in order to determine wherever possible what happened with the migrated dialect forms.

- c. In this study I have used the name Pella Dutch, whereas Smits 1996 uses the term Iowa Dutch. Since we do not know whether these terms refer exactly to the same varieties, an analysis of the language of other Iowa settlements, especially Orange City and Peoria, may be useful. It may answer the question to what extent Smits' 1989 corpus is reliable in this respect.
3. An investigation of (the variants of) Dutch spoken in the settlements of Michigan, which were founded in the same period as Pella by Reverend van Raalte. This variety has its main roots in dialect areas in the Netherlands which are often complementary to, and sometimes overlap with, those relevant for Pella Dutch. Research concerning the migrants who followed Reverend van Raalte, a contemporary colleague of Reverend Scholte, may shed further light on the formation of Dutch immigrant languages.

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