

THE TALK OF THE TOWN: LANGUAGES IN AMSTERDAM 1507-2007

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0. Abstract

This paper is an impressionistic sketch of the language history of Amsterdam in the past five hundred years. To this end we discuss some of the main economic and demographic developments of the city and the political units that it has formed a part of, notably the County of Holland, the Republic of the United Netherlands and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Departing from the past and present dialect situation and processes such as dialect leveling, we also study the language contact effects of migration movements of several types, immigration from abroad and from different regions in the Netherlands. Religious refugees played an important role; this holds for e.g. Brabant Protestants from the Antwerp area around 1585, German religious refugees during the Thirty years War (1618-1648), and Huguenots (i.e. French Protestants) from 1685 onwards. Particular attention is paid to Sephardic (from 1593) and Ashkenazic Jewry (from 1618); especially the Ashkenazim and their main vernacular, Yiddish, had an important role as Yiddish was the source for Jewish Dutch. It had long-lasting lexical (on Amsterdam dialects and modern colloquial Dutch) and phonetic effects (on the Amsterdam dialects).

More recently, economic considerations played the main role in the immigration, as in the case of the Chinese (as of 1911), Italians, Yugoslavs and the Spaniards (after World War II). Large scale migration from Surinam started in the 1960s. The main groups among the latest arrivals include Turkish migrants (now 5.1 % of the Amsterdam population) and Moroccans (8.7 %).

We end this paper with a brief sketch of a research project which concentrates on the relatively young ethnolects of Dutch spoken by second generation migrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent in Amsterdam as well in the city of Nijmegen (in the southeastern part of the Netherlands).

1. Introduction

The *New Yorker* has a regular section titled 'The Talk of the Town', with often acerbic comments on current political life and *mores* in the Big Apple. Cities have been centers of talk and intense interaction throughout their history, hotbeds of change hosting clashing linguistic varieties and fostering innovations. Here we focus on one such city, Amsterdam.

Although Amsterdam was officially proclaimed the capital of the Netherlands as late as 1983, it has for centuries been the main Dutch city in economic, cultural and political

respects. Demographically it has also been the number one Dutch city since the 16th century, attraction pole for immigration, both national and international. Now it stands for linguistic diversity and functions as a window on the outside world.

This paper gives a modest, rough and incomplete sketch of the multilingual history of Amsterdam throughout the past five hundred years. Lucassen and Penninx (1994) provides a general history of migration to the Netherlands, while Kuijpers (2005) focusses on the crucial period of the 17th century in Amsterdam history. Extra and De Ruijter (2001) provide an overview of the minority languages in the Netherlands.

2. The Middle Ages

2.1 Early history

In the course of the Middle Ages Amsterdam developed from a fishing village, that had an important harbour in 1275 already. Five hundred years ago, Amsterdam was a small city, yet to become a world trading port. The population was around 1.000 in 1300, while this had risen to 3.000 around 1400. At the end of the 15th century a new ring of canals was built around the town, suggesting gradual expansion of the population and of commercial activities.

Around 1507, Amsterdam was still under Habsburg rule. In 1477, the Netherlands had been incorporated into Austria and through the Habsburg monarchy it came under the rule of the Spanish crown. After many years of resistance (in which William of Orange played an important role) against the Spanish rule, in 1581 the deputies of the northwestern Dutch provinces declared independence from the Spanish empire and founded the *Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden*, the Republic of the United Netherlands.

2.2 Dialect origins

The medieval Amsterdam dialect probably showed substantial resemblances to the other Northern Hollandic dialects of the era (Daan 1949: 11). Only in later centuries this has changed and it gradually started to diverge from the surrounding dialects. Around eight Northern Hollandic peculiarities (seven of which are phonological, four of which in turn concern vowel quality) are no longer found in the later Amsterdam dialect (Berns & van de Braak 2002: 19-20).

3. Waves of late 16th and early 17th century immigration

In the early seventeenth century the character of the city changed drastically, primarily due to immigration. The following population figures for the city illustrate this (based on the study on migration by Kuijpers 2005: 19):

1585	30.000
1625	115.000
1632	120.000
1679	200.000
1680	219.000

By 1650 Amsterdam had grown from a provincial port and fishing town to the third city in Western Europe, after London and Paris. If we take into account that in those days mortality rates were higher than birth rates in the city, it is clear that around that period only a fraction of Amsterdam's inhabitants was actually born in the city.

Two kinds of immigrants are commonly distinguished for this period (echoing our current split into 'economic' and 'political' refugees): religious and economic immigrants. Then as now, the two categories are not easy to keep apart, however. Religious immigrants include (Kuijpers 2005: 15):

- Sephardic Spanish and Portuguese Jews around 1590
- German religious refugees during the Thirty years War (1618-1648)
- Protestants from the southern Netherlands after the Spanish take-over of Antwerp in 1585
- Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685
- Ashkenazic Jews from about 1630 onward

It is often said that the religious immigrants brought Amsterdam its wealth. This is only partially true. Many Walloon and French Huguenots were not rich at all, and neither were the Ashkenazic Jews. What is most important is probably that some immigrant groups brought a large trading network with them, which contributed much to the cities wealth.

Economic immigrants from outside the Republic were mostly Germans and Scandinavians, and people from the eastern provinces inside the Netherlands (Kuijpers 2005:

17). Although this is not very well documented, cyclic migration played a very important role (Kuijpers 2005: 19) for this category of immigrants.

In the subsequent discussion we will not keep these two groups separately, but follow the general sequence in which these immigrant groups were presented above.

3.1 Sephardim

From 1492, the period of the Inquisition and Counter-Reformation onwards, Jews fled from Spain as well as from Portugal, where the Inquisition was established in 1536. Many Sephardim (Jews from the Iberian Peninsula) settled in the Low Countries, i.e. in present-day Belgium and the Netherlands.

In 1585, after the Fall of Antwerp to the Spanish and the Catholic Inquisition, very many of the Sephardim who had settled in what is now Belgium fled to the Netherlands; in 1593 the first Sephardim arrived in Amsterdam. Especially the so-called Maranos or crypto-Jews (Jews who had converted to Catholicism but continued to practice their Jewish religion in secret) were attracted to the newly independent Republic of the United Netherlands and many of them openly returned to Judaism after they had settled there. In 1602 the first Sephardic religious service was held in the Amsterdam (Stoutenbeek and Vigeveno 2003: 12).

From the beginning of the 17th century the Jews in the Netherlands stepped into the daylight. Official Jewish communities were founded; they were called the *Portugese Natie* 'Portuguese Nation'. Many Sephardim became confirmed supporters of the House of Orange, which developed into the Dutch monarchy.

The Sephardim, who had maintained their relations with the Levant and Morocco, played a considerable role in the development of Amsterdam as an international trading centre. The Amsterdam Sephardic Jews established commercial relations with Denmark and several other European countries; through the agency of the (Jewish) ambassador of the Emperor of Morocco in The Hague, commercial relations were established with the Barbary States. Jews conduced to the establishment of the Dutch West Indies Company in 1621. In the course of time, Sephardim conducted trade with Brazil in sugar and tobacco and with India in diamonds and cotton.

Apart from merchants, there were several physicians among the Sephardim in Amsterdam; after all, Jews were permitted to enroll as students at the university to study medicine. Jews were not allowed to join the trade guilds, although exceptions were made in

the case of trades which were related to their religion, such as estate agency, printing, bookselling, as well as the sale of meat, poultry, groceries, and medicine.

The Sephardim spoke Judeo-Spanish (also known as Judeo-Romance, Ladino or Judesmo) and Judeo-Portuguese. Portuguese had more prestige and won out among the Dutch Sephardic Jews. Although many Sephardic Jews gave up their language (Störig/Vromans 1988: 232), according to Prins (1916: 4), Judeo-Portuguese and even Judesmo were spoken until the middle of the 19th century.

3.2 Germans

Basing herself on marriage registers and other church records, particularly of the Lutheran church, Kuijpers (2005) concludes that between 50 and 60% of the migrants from outside of the Republic came from the north west of Germany. Migrants from Schleswig-Holstein simply could not cope any more at home, due to the consequences of the Thirty Years' War and a flooding. The city council of Husum actually financed the trip to the Netherlands for many poor people. In Amsterdam these immigrants remained in the bottom layers of the urban social hierarchy. Progressively they were excluded from all kinds of services, and they were not made to feel welcome at all in the city, for which they provided much of the cheap labour as sailors, carriers, harbour worker, and domestic servants.

Kuijpers provides no information about their language use; we may assume that they rapidly assimilated to Dutch, which was not completely alien to their own way of speaking.

3.3 Dutch provinces

After the Fall of Antwerp in 1585, i.e. the occupation of this then very wealthy seaport by the Spanish (whose mission it was to roll back the effects of the Reformation and to reintroduce Catholicism - cf. section 3.1 above), thousands of inhabitants of this Brabantine city and other parts of Brabant and Flanders fled to the cities in the north, especially Amsterdam. This affected Amsterdam in many ways. First of all, economically: the Amsterdam harbour soon replaced the Antwerp harbour in international trade. In addition, the Brabant immigrants in general were culturally and financially advantaged and many of them immediately joined the top layers of society in the Hollandic cities; as a group they soon had much prestige. Numerically they were also very significant (cf. Van der Horst & Marschall 1992: 53–55) and they were particularly influential.

In 1617 the Amsterdam poet and playwright Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Brederode (1585-1618) wrote the comedy *Spaanse Brabander*¹ in which, among other things, he made fun of the then current Brabant fashion. The protagonist is Jerolimo Rodrigo, a fake nobleman and a bankrupt swindler; despite his name, he is of Brabant descent. Act One of this comedy starts with a monologue of Jerolimo, speaking of Amsterdam and its inhabitants. His first lines are (translations approximate):

“T'Is wel een schoone stadt, moor 'tvolcxken is te vies:”

It certainly is a beautiful city, but the people are too sloppy / untidy

“In Brabant sayn de liens ghemaynijck exkies”

in Brabant the people are usually refined

“In kleeding en in dracht, dus op de Spaansche mode,”

in their clothing and dressing style, the Spanish way,

“Als kleyne Konincxkens of sienelaycke Goden. ”

as though they were little kings or visible gods

The famous poet Vondel also writes unfavourable, in a work from the year 1650, about the Brabant dialect that floods over Amsterdam.

The present-day Hollandic dialects, including the Amsterdam dialect, are marked among other things by the monophthongisation of the diphthongs /*ei*, *au*, *œy*/; this phenomenon, which can also be found in a group of Flemish and Brabant dialects of Dutch, may well have been imported by the refugees from the Antwerp area. Moreover, ever since the Brabant immigration wave reached the city, the dialects in and around Amsterdam stand out because of the vowel in such items as *daar*, *maken* (‘there’, ‘make’), etc., which is [o^u], whereas the surrounding dialects have [ɛ:]. The deviant Amsterdam variant has been interpreted as a Brabantism, borrowed from the highly respected Brabant refugees (Kloeke 1934; Paardekooper 2001).

Especially as a consequence of the Brabant immigration Amsterdam grows rapidly. In 1625 the city, which then is estimated to have around 115.000 inhabitants, is extended enormously for the first time (Daan 1949: 8).

¹ Digitally available through
http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/bred001spaa01_01/bred001spaa01_01_0027.htm#26

3.4 Dialect differentiation

On the basis of notes of Winkler 1874, who again based himself on the reminiscences of his contemporary Johan ter Gouw, Daan (1949: 11-15)² sketches the old dialect diversity in the city. It seems that in the middle of the 19th century, no fewer than 19 more or less different Amsterdam dialect varieties existed. These varieties were limited to particular neighbourhoods; the fact that some neighbourhoods contained many foreigners seems to have influenced their dialect varieties. Specific occupations were overrepresented in specific neighbourhoods, which will have been reflected in the vocabulary. Thus the dialect spoken in the Jordaan neighbourhood was a 'farmer's variety'; De Jordaan was a densely populated suburb, incorporated into the walled city in 1612 (Berns & van de Braak 2002: 48). As a consequence of the fact that many Amsterdam people in that era did not often leave their neighbourhood (Daan 1949:14), their varieties of the dialect differed from each other; the differences were primarily phonological and lexical in nature. Phonologically this primarily concerned the quality and quantity of the vowels. Lexically it also concerned loan words. The Kattenburg dialect appears to have had Frisian, Norwegian and Danish elements, the Zeedijk dialect more nautical idioms, the Fransepap dialect words from the thieves' and beggars' jargons.

3.5 French Huguenots and later French influence

In 1598 the Edict of Nantes was proclaimed by the French king Henri IV. The huguenots (the name for protestants in 16th and 17th century France) from then on were allowed to exercise their faith. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the edict definitively, after which 50.000 huguenots fled to the Dutch Republic. Their cultural (including linguistic) influence appears to have been limited, in spite of their numbers.

French loan words started entering the Dutch vernaculars only a century later, via the language use of court circles and members of the upper class (Daan 1949: 8); in the dialects, including the Amsterdam dialect varieties, more French loan words have been preserved than in the (later) standard variety. This borrowing process started in the decades after 1795, the year in which the 'Bataafse Republiek' (Batavian Republic) was created after the model of and with military assistance of the post-revolutionary République Française. This Bataafse Republiek was in fact a vassal state of France, as the government was heavily oriented

² And, slightly more elaborate, Berns & Van den Braak 2002: 43-52.

towards --and often directed by-- France. From 1806 until 1810, Napoleon's brother Louis was the Dutch king; from 1810 until 1815 the Netherlands were a part of France. The period between 1795 and 1810 is often referred to as 'de Franse Tijd', the French Period.

4 The special role of Yiddish from the 17th century onwards

4.1 Ashkenazim

After expulsions from German cities such as Frankfurt (1615) and in the course of the 30 Years War, from 1618 onwards, Jews from Central and Eastern Europe (Ashkenazim) migrated to the Netherlands. They were primarily Western Yiddish speakers from Germany and other parts of north-western Europe. In the aftermath of the massacres in the wake of the Chmielnicki Uprising against the Polish landed gentry in the Ukraine, which took place in 1648 and '49, many Eastern-European Jews (including people from Poland and Lithuania - Störig/Vromans 1988: 231) fled to Holland.

As the big majority of the Ashkenazim were poor, they were less welcome. With only few exceptions³ they were not allowed to settle in Amsterdam, Therefore many of them settled in rural areas, where they earned a living as pedlars and hawkers. They became the founders of numerous small Jewish communities throughout the Dutch provinces. Over time, retail trading and diamond-cutting brought many of these Ashkenazim to prosperity. As far as their language situation is concerned: from 1686 onwards, the first Yiddish newspaper in the Netherlands appeared.

In the course of the 18th century, the Dutch economy suffered a setback. As many of the Ashkenazim in the rural areas were no longer able to subsist, they moved to the cities looking for jobs. Since, according to religious laws, it took ten adult males to celebrate major religious ceremonies, many small Jewish communities fell apart. As a result of this, even more Jews then migrated to the cities where the Jewish populations grew enormously, causing the Jewish quarters to become overcrowded. In Amsterdam (or *Mokum* '(Yiddish) city' originally in Jewish parlance,⁴ but currently much more widespread), very many Jews lived in a neighbourhood known as *Jodenhoek*, 'Jew Corner'.

³ These few Ashkenazic Jews in Amsterdam succeeded in establishing a religious community; in 1635 the first Ashkenazic religious service was held in Amsterdam (Stoutenbeek and Vigeveno 2003: 13).

4.2 The use of Yiddish in the city

The Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, quickly numerically superior, kept separate communities. Many Sephardim became upper class, while the Ashkenazim became a largely impoverished lower class. The two groups kept distinct also politically and culturally; this includes their liturgy and language use. Nevertheless many Sephardim learned or shifted to Yiddish, thus Van Ginneken (1913: 59).

1796 was the year of the Emancipation of Dutch Jewry, a political move of the government and one of the results of the French Revolution. From 1796 onwards, Jews in the Republic had civil rights and thus lost their status of stranger. Yiddish was proscribed. Among the Jews there were both proponents and opponents of the enforced assimilation.

Napoleon was defeated in 1815 at Waterloo. In 1814, a law had already been passed abolishing the French régime. After his enthronement in 1815, King William I took measures to enhance the integration and assimilation of the Jews. These measures included: a) the obligation for all faiths to establish religious communities. This put an end to the existence of the independent Jewish communities, b) Jewish schools were obliged to teach not only religious subjects, but also worldly / secular subjects, c) the use of Yiddish in schools and synagogues was forbidden. In 1849 the first Jewish weekly in Dutch started appearing.

Despite the fact that it was proscribed, Yiddish remained the language of the large majority of the Ashkenazim; initially it remained the language of the masses, although its use was already largely confined to the domain of the family. In the course of the second half of the 19th century the numbers of speakers rapidly decreased. The Dutch Ashkenazic Jews born before 1875 almost certainly knew Yiddish actively - after 1875 much less so, and the number of speakers started decreasing. Partly because of the educational reforms which resulted from the 1857 and 1878 education acts, Dutch-Yiddish bilingualism grew in the 19th century and it must have been relatively stable for several generations.

4.3 Jewish Dutch

For Yiddish the tide turned in the last quart of the 19th century. Prins (1916: 3) wrote that Yiddish was dying, but not without leaving traces behind, namely Jewish Dutch. The author pointed out that there "... is a variety of Dutch that only Jews know, and there is a variety of

⁴ *Mokum Mollof* < *Mokum Ollof*, lit. City A, 'Amsterdam'. Cf. *Mokum Reis / Rijst*, City

Yiddish that can pass for Yiddish only in the NLs".⁵ The latter has also been noticed by other authors. Incidentally, Jewish Dutch was not only spoken by Jews. According to Winkler (1874: 88) and Prins (1916: 10), at least in the Amsterdam 'Jodenhoek', Jewish Dutch was also spoken by the *gojim*, the Christians, who lived there.

During the Second World War 80.000 Jewish inhabitants of Amsterdam were murdered, about one tenth of its population (De Rooy 2007). In 1968, Izak Kisch, who must have been retired at the time, notes that he and the members of his generation who have survived the Holocaust, are the last of the Dutch Jews who had the 'ghetto-pronunciation' of Dutch (Zwarts 1937).

Among the features of Jewish Dutch - now virtually extinct - were the aspiration of word-initial voiceless stops, a general 'confusion' of the [+/- voice] specification of obstruents, and more in particular the voiced realisation of voiceless non-velar obstruents (*zoebel*, st. Dutch 'soepel', 'supple, pliable', *zijver*, st. Dutch [s]ijfer 'digit' - Gans 1988: 639), 'h aspirée' and 'h muette' -among the Sephardim- as in *ebben*, standard Dutch 'hebben', '(to) have' and the hypercorrect reaction to it (*hop*, st. Dutch op 'on', *havond*, st. Dutch avond 'evening', etc.), the unrounding of round front vowels, the complementizer *as* (where native varieties of Dutch have *dat*) and the mysterious particle *an* which can precede nominal and pronominal subjects and objects.

The inventories of Jewish surnames in Amsterdam between 1669 and 1850 presented by Van Straten et alii (2002) span 118 pages (with 102 names on each page), and contain just enough detail to bring the Jewish community back to life, as it were. The vast majority of the names in the inventories seems to have belonged to Ashkenazim.

4.4 Jewish Dutch traits in the Amsterdam dialect?

At present many originally Jewish lexical items (words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin as well as Dutch Yiddish words of Germanic origin) are general use in Amsterdam and more general in colloquial Dutch. Many if not all of these items have been included in Van de Kamp & Van der Wijk's (2006) well documented dictionary, which also contains 'Portuguese' Jewish items.

The 'Amsterdam' pronunciation of /s/ (mentioned in section 4.4 above) deserves special attention. The observation by Winkler and Prins (cf. section 4.1.1 above) that in the

R[otterdam]. *Mokum* is etymologically rooted in Hebrew *māqōm*. (Den Besten 2006).

main Jewish neighbourhood in Amsterdam, Jewish Dutch also used to be spoken by non-Jews seems to be 'circumstantial evidence' for the hypothesis that the characteristic Amsterdam 'grave' and slightly palatal pronunciation of /s/ may derive from the so-called 'ghetto-pronunciation' of Dutch or, indirectly, from Yiddish (Hinskens 2004: § 5.3).

5. The late 19th century expansion of the city and 20th century developments

After the 17th century the population grew slowly but steadily. Census data show that Amsterdam had over 317,000 inhabitants in 1879; the city had then expanded far beyond the original rings of canals (the *grachtengordel*). Some results of a mid-19th century dialect questionnaire give insights into phonological (and a few morpho-phonological) peculiarities of the Amsterdam dialect (Berns & Van den Braak 2002: 21-26).

With industrialization the city started growing more rapidly again. By 1889 the number had increased to over 406,000 and by 1899 to almost 511,000. In 1930 the city had over 757,000 inhabitants (Daan 1949: 9-10). The increase was generally not due to immigration, however.

5.1 Chinese community

Currently there are 3489 Chinese in Amsterdam (official figures, the actual number will be much higher), many of them living in their 'Chinatown' centred around the Nieuwmarkt. The first Chinese arrived in 1911. They were often employed on the Dutch shipping lines, and lived in boarding houses. In their wake Chinese traders came, who started restaurants and laundries. In the thirties the community went through hard times, and many members were reduced to selling peanuts in the streets. However, after WW II the community started to thrive and it is currently very active. Linguistically, however, it had little or no impact on the city as a whole. The community has remained fairly closed and many people kept speaking Chinese.

5.2 Italians, Yugoslavs, Spaniards

⁵ Prins 1916: 3, 9 - our translation.

From the fifties onwards migrants from southern European countries came to Amsterdam in substantial numbers. On the whole these migrants either have returned to their country of origin, or completely integrated into Dutch society, including frequent mixed marriages. We will focus here on the Italians as an illustrative example. Italian craftsmen have been present from the 16th and 17th centuries onward, but the first substantial groups came from the north of Italy in the 1920s (Merens 1996: 136). They worked as *terrazo* makers, sculptors, ice cream vendors, and restaurant owners. After 1955 larger contingents arrived from southern Italy, and were employed in larger industries. Around 1990, there were over 31.000 of direct Italian descent in all of the Netherlands, and a fraction of these in Amsterdam. On the whole, the groups shifted to Dutch, but those who maintained close links with Italy, e.g. through their business, retained Italian.

5.3 The Surinamese population

Surinamese Dutch (SD) is spoken both in Surinam and in the Netherlands, the original colonising country to which many Surinamese have migrated. It is a widely recognised ethnolect, and some of its features have led to ethnic stereotypes. It has also been described on a number of occasions, in part under the rubric of ‘mistakes’ of Surinamese children in the Dutch classroom. Charry (1983) is still the most sophisticated study focusing on this ethnolect, which requires much more investigation.

The history of Surinamese Dutch began in 1667 with the Dutch take-over conquest of the originally British plantation colony. Until the abolition of slavery in 1863, the originally African slaves were not allowed to speak Dutch. In the contact between blacks and whites and among the growing creole population Sranantongo or Sranan (formerly known as *Negerengels*, ‘Negro-English’) developed, a lexically English-based creole language. Sranan was sometimes also used among the whites. In 1873 the blacks were allowed to leave the plantations. In 1876 compulsory education laws were introduced. Through education Dutch was propagated not only as the official but also as the only language - and these efforts were effective as for most people Dutch became the second language.

Well before the abolition of slavery in 1863 a start had been made with the recruitment of contract workers - notably Chinese, Hindustani and Javanese, who maintained their original languages, although in all cases specifically Surinamese varieties developed (e.g. Sarnami is Surinamese Hindustani). These groups gradually acquired Sranan as well as Dutch, both the official, continental, and the emerging Surinamese variety. In 1954 Surinam

was assigned 'internal autonomy', which, however, did not lead to an autonomous language policy. This situation did not change after Surinam had become independent in 1975; the government has always officially adhered to the norms of the continental variety of Dutch.

The use of Dutch in Surinam has always been largely confined to the city, Paramaribo, where there has been a non-white Dutch speaking elite ever since the beginning of the 19th century. Members of the higher classes tend to use Dutch at home, in many cases even as their mother tongue, while members of the lower classes mainly speak their ethnic language at home, although they are competent in Dutch (De Kleine 2002). In daily life, Dutch competes with Sranan; in fact, a continuum extends between Sranan via Surinamese Dutch to 'metropolitan' standard Dutch (Van Donselaar 2005: 117; Van Bree & De Vries 1997: 1149). In their daily contacts, according to the stylistic requirements of the interactional circumstances, most people use the various gradations in the part of the continuum that ranges from Sranan to Surinamese Dutch. At the same time frequent code switching and mixing occurs between Sranan and Surinamese Dutch.

Surinamese Dutch is a diffuse language variety. Apart from Dutch items, its vocabulary mainly contains Sranan, English as well as some originally Indian elements (mainly to refer to specific species of plants and animals). Grammatically, Surinamese Dutch is generally characterised by among other things the variable non-realisation of small function words such as *er* ('there'), the expletive subject *het* ('it'), pronominal objects, the reflexive pronoun, as well as by the focus particle *is*.

Large scale migration from Surinam to the Netherlands started in the 1960s - in most cases of people with a reasonable educational background. In the time of Surinam's independence, considerable numbers of less educated Surinamese came to the Netherlands. Nowadays, the Surinamese are the largest ethnic minority in several big cities in the western part of the Netherlands. Very many Surinamese live in the neighbourhood 'Bijlmer' or 'Bijlmermeer', which was built in the late sixties of the last century in the southeast of Amsterdam.

Surinamese Dutch in the Netherlands is characterised by a large variational band width, but almost all varieties have the stereotyped bilabial /w/, the slightly nasalised /ɛ/ before nasals (as in e.g. *mens*, 'human being'), a rolling /r/, a less sharply articulated velar fricative, frequent SVO word order and subordinate clauses which are not introduced by *dat*, 'that', as well as, obviously, words and idioms from Sranan. Features of the Surinamese ethnolect of Dutch which also occur in indigenous varieties of Dutch are the devoicing of

voiced fricatives, the use of *hun* (dative 'them') as a subject pronoun and the use of *gaan* ('go') as an auxiliary. Almost all of these features characterise Surinamese Dutch both in the Netherlands and in Surinam.

The Papiamentu-speaking Antillians from Curaçao and Aruba primarily settled in Rotterdam; there is only a small community in Amsterdam.

5.4 The Turkish and Moroccan communities

In 2005 the city had 742 783 officially registered inhabitants, of which 8.7 % was of Moroccan, and 5.1 % of Turkish descent. These very substantial numbers have had an important impact on the city as a whole, and we believe that through the very large numbers of schoolchildren and young people of Turkish and Moroccan descent they will have an impact on future varieties of the Amsterdam dialect.

Space does not allow a more complete description of these communities and their linguistic behaviour here. The Turkish community is in its majority Turkish speaking, with Kurdish as the primary minority language. The Turks maintain tight networks, are relatively successful through their own businesses and organisations, and keep well abreast of developments in Turkey. There is also a tendency towards strong language maintenance in this community.

The Moroccans are in the majority of cases from a Berber speaking background, although most Moroccans in the Netherlands speak Moroccan Arabic as well, particularly in the older generations. Moroccan young people have often shifted to a variety of Dutch, and may only have limited knowledge of the original languages of their community. There is also much less of a sense of overall community in the Moroccan immigrant group, although this sense of belonging to Morocco is fostered by anti-Moroccan sentiments in the Dutch population.

5.5 African migrants and other recent migrants

In 2005 there were 48 nationalities officially registered in Amsterdam with more than 500 members each (in total, one would be hard pressed to find a nationality not represented at all). Actual figures will be much higher. Among recent migrant groups a few stand out. From Middle and South America, the Dominican Republic is well represented. In the African

contingent, the Ghanese stand out. Currently there are well over 10.000 Ghanese in the city, concentrated in one residential neighbourhood. While the community came into existence in the early seventies, most Ghanese came after 1992. Their migration pattern can be characterised as network migration: a family invests in one migrant, who then generates enough income to make his (or less frequently her) family members come over.

While the Ghanese are relatively successful as a group, they tend to maintain their own languages, and the use of English with outsiders is frequent.

5.6 The urban dialect in the 20th century

Some phonological features of three varieties of the Amsterdam dialect from the middle of the 20th century have been briefly sketched in Berns & Van den Braak (2002: 27-28). A few differences between the varieties still appear to exist, albeit perhaps not always very systematically. The differences between these varieties of Dutch and the standard language are almost exclusively phonological in nature. It is thus a matter of definition if we refer to the indigenous varieties of Dutch spoken in Amsterdam as dialects or as accents.

6 Two more features of the current setting

6.1 Emigration to the suburbs and into the city

Just as in the 17th century the native Amsterdam population started to become a numerical minority (De Rooy 2007). In 2005 54 % of the inhabitants had a Dutch background and 37 % belongs to an ethnic minority; but in the younger segments of the population this last percentage is significantly higher.⁶ Particularly in the seventies and eighties many neighbourhoods deteriorated, and working class and lower middle class Amsterdam native residents decided to move to newly built more suburban sleeping communities in the area around the city. Many members of the upper middle classes had already left in the fifties and sixties to more established suburbs. This emigration (which is now affecting the upper segments of e.g. the Surinamese community) has further shifted the balance between immigrants and native residents; however, it also appears to have reached its limits, as the city is discovered to be a desirable, exciting place to live by young professionals. No studies have

⁶ Source: website gemeente A'dam: http://amsterdam.nl/wonen_milieu/inhoud2/item_2931.

been done so far of the new ways of speaking in the emerging suburbs, which are often ‘little Amsterdams’ by themselves.

6.2 The role of English

As elsewhere in the Netherlands, but particularly in Amsterdam, there has been a tremendous growth in the use of English. There is lots of public information in English, bilingual Dutch/English signs and postings, English spoken in the streets, etc. This phenomenon has not been studied systematically, but it probably results both from tourism, from the important role of Amsterdam as an international trading (banking, finance) and cultural (publishing, music) centre, and from the fact that English is the lingua franca among many expatriate and recent immigrant groups.

7. Our own research

Since 2005, the present authors supervise a research project entitled 'The roots of ethnolects, An experimental comparative study'.⁷ The project, which runs until 2009, concentrates on two young ethnolects of Dutch in Amsterdam as well in the city of Nijmegen). These ethnolects are spoken by second generation migrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent. Among the research questions that we try to answer in our design are the following:

Q1. Which aspects of language use / which components of the grammar characterise ethnolects as distinct varieties?

There are striking similarities between several known ethnolects of Dutch. Both Indonesian (De Vries 2005: 72-74) and Curaçao Dutch (Joubert 2005: 37-39, 45-47) are characterized by (among other things) deviating usage of grammatical gender as well as by the variable non-realization of the adverbial pronoun *er*, 'there', and pronominal *het*, 'it'. The bilabial realisation of /w/ occurs in Indonesian, Curaçao and Surinamese Dutch; this also holds for the voiceless realisation of the fricatives.

⁷ The other researchers involved in this project, which is financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), are Esther van Krieken, Wouter Kusters (2005 and 2006) and, at present, Hanke van Buren and Arien van Wijngaarden.

Q2. To what extent are ethnolects based on interference from the original language of the ethnic group in question ('substrate effects')?

We expect many properties of the original languages of the speakers: gender in Berber, no gender in Turkish; strongly developed posterior consonants in Berber, vowel harmony in Turkish; etc. to influence the resulting ethnolects, but this still needs to be studied.

Q3. To what extent are ethnolects based on properties resulting from processes of second language acquisition?

Quite obviously, processes of naturalistic second language acquisition will put their stamp on the ethnolects, leading to simplified verbal paradigms, the absence of morphosyntactic distinctions with weak functional load, etc.

Q4. To what extent are ethnolects based and on local (urban) dialects or other indigenous non-standard varieties?

The voiceless realisation of fricatives (which occurs in Indonesian, Curaçao and Surinamese Dutch) also occurs in indigenous varieties of Dutch; this also holds for the use of *hun* (dative 'them') as a subject pronoun. Further research is needed to determine if and to which extent the use of *gaan* ('go') in both Surinamese and Jewish Dutch as an auxiliary is similar that in the Flemish dialects of Dutch. In any case, young Moroccans recorded in Dutch in both Nijmegen and Amsterdam undoubtedly sound Moroccan, but they also undeniably sound like young people from those two cities.

One of the questions regarding features of specific ethnolects is where they come from. Another question is where they go to. Chambers (2003: 105-107) demonstrated how speech characteristics of the English of ethnic Italians in Toronto seem to spread to the ethnic Greeks in East End, a neighbourhood where both groups coexist. This mechanism has been referred to as 'crossing' (Rampton 1995). Hence the following research question:

Q 6. Is there any evidence of spread of ethnic varieties outside of the ethnic group?

With respect to the individual ethnolect speakers the question arises

Q8. To what extent can speakers of an ethnolect shift to more standard varieties and to non-ethnic non-standard varieties?

Arguably, to speakers who control the standard or standard-nearer varieties, ethnolect features are a means for stylisation and identity marking. This departs from the common notion that ethnolects are merely imperfectly learned variants of the target language.

To answer the research questions, recordings are made of stratified random samples of 12- and 20-year old boys Turkish and Moroccan descent in Nijmegen and Amsterdam. The recordings concern both elicited and conversational speech; for the conversations, the situation is systematically manipulated such that every boy speaks with a peer of Turkish, Moroccan and Dutch descent, respectively. The analyses are partly quantitative in nature. Apart from variation linguistics also contact linguistics plays a key role in this investigation.

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