



Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) KONINKLIJKE NEDERLANDSE AKADEMIE VAN WETENSCHAPPEN

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published in

Sociolinguistic Variation: Data, Theory, and Analysis. Selected papers from NWAVE-23
1996

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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citation for published version (APA)

Cornips, L. (1996). Social stratification, linguistic constraints and inherent variability in Heerlen Dutch: The use of the complementizers om/voor. In J. Arnold, R. Blake, & B. Davidson (Eds.), *Sociolinguistic Variation: Data, Theory, and Analysis. Selected papers from NWAVE-23* (pp. 453-467). CSLI Publications.

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**Social Stratification, Linguistic Constraints and Inherent
Variability in Heerlen Dutch: The Use of the Infinitival
Complementizers *om/voor****

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I present a subpart of a study on the social dimensions of the regional Dutch spoken in Heerlen (henceforth: Heerlen Dutch), focusing on the variation between the infinitival complementizers *om* and *voor*. The variation between these complementizers raises several interesting theoretical issues, the first being whether the variation is expressed at the level of group and/or individual speech. The second is whether the variation between *om* and *voor* involves only a mechanism of lexical substitution or, whether it depends on semantic/syntactic factors. And the last is the role test effects play in language production and hence, syntactic variation.

Heerlen is a town of 90,000 inhabitants situated in Limburg, a province in the southeast of the Netherlands, near the Belgian and German border. Heerlen is a very suitable location in which to examine language variation. From 1900 to 1930, the expanding mining industry in Heerlen attracted numerous workers from elsewhere in the Netherlands and abroad. This immigration altered the linguistic uniformity of Heerlen; the native population who spoke the local dialect of Heerlen, became a minority. A new intermediate variety of Dutch emerged, namely Heerlen Dutch. Nowadays, Heerlen is still a bilingual community; its inhabitants speak either the local dialect as a first language and Heerlen Dutch as a second language, or Heerlen Dutch as a first language. Furthermore, syntactic interference in Heerlen Dutch from the local dialect may well result in syntactic constructions that are not acceptable in the Standard Dutch of the Netherlands. Thus, in Heerlen Dutch, the infinitival complementizer *om* in (1) is the Standard Dutch variant realization, while *voor* in (2) is the local dialect variant realization (Jongeneel 1884: 65, HD= Heerlen Dutch):¹

(1) HD	<i>wie</i>	<i>zijn</i>	<i>wij</i>	<i>om</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>oordelen</i>
	who	are	we	COMP	to	judge

‘who are we to judge’ (3: Gies)²

* I have profited greatly from discussions with Pieter Muysken.

¹ In the spoken variety of Standard Dutch the infinitival complementizer *voor* is used marginally (Gerritsen: 1991). I discuss this later in this paper.

² The figure appearing before the speaker's pseudonym refers to the number of the tape-recording.

- (2) HD want tijd voor te eten had je
 since time COMP to eat had you
 niet
 not
 'since you had no time to eat' (27: Dik)

In the first part of this paper I discuss the variation between *om* and *voor* in spontaneous speech. First, I look at the level of group speech, in particular social stratification (Labov 1966). Secondly, I center on possible linguistic constraints. Lastly, I examine the level of individual speech, e.g. the notion of inherent variability (Bickerton 1971). In the second part of this paper I discuss the great discrepancies between the spontaneous speech data and the test data concerning social stratification and performance mechanisms (Bock 1986).

2. The spontaneous speech data

2.1 Speaker variables

The total number of male speakers in this survey is 67. The speakers were selected at random. Three speaker variables were taken into account in order to investigate the social distribution of the varieties of Dutch spoken in Heerlen, namely language background, education/occupation and age. The male speakers were divided into three language groups according to their language background, namely *import*, *dialect* and *Heerlen Dutch*:

- IMPORT: persons who speak (Heerlen) Dutch as a first language and whose parents were born outside the province of Limburg;
- DIALECT: persons who speak the local dialect as a first language and (Heerlen) Dutch as a second language;
- HEERLEN DUTCH: persons who speak (Heerlen) Dutch as a first language and whose parents speak the local dialect as a first language.

The speakers were further subdivided into smaller groups according to their education/occupation and age. The education/occupation variable is based on a high to low scale, i.e. middle/high level employees and unskilled/skilled labor. With respect to the variable age, a distinction was made between those aged between 20 and 45 years or older than 60. The speaker variables are shown in Table 1. The specifications of these variables made it possible to investigate whether the speakers show social stratification. Since the complementizer *voor* is the local dialect variant realization in Heerlen Dutch, I expected to find that the speakers who speak the local dialect as a first language would use the infinitival complementizer *voor* more often than the other groups of speakers.

Table 1: Number of speakers in each cell divided according to speaker variables

	low level of education		high level of education		total
	young	old	young	old	
language					
IMP	3	6	5	5	19
DIA	5	6	8	10	29
HD	8	—	8	3	19
total	16	12	21	18	67

2.2 Social stratification of *voor* usage

The number of speakers that produce *voor* in spontaneous speech is 37. This is shown in Table 2, which also includes the proportions and percentages of speakers that use *voor*. In order to assess social stratification, I analyzed these proportions by means of a χ^2 test. Table 2 reveals significant results for the language background and occupation/education variables. More precisely, it shows that the group of speakers who speak the local dialect as a first language and the group of speakers with a low level of education/occupation use the local dialect variant *voor* significantly more often than the other groups of speakers.

Table 2: Proportions of speakers in each cell using *voor* (spontaneous speech)

VOOR	low level of education		high level of education		total	
	young	old	young	old		
language						
IMP	2/3	3/6	2/5	2/5	9/19	47%
DIA	5/5	6/6	3/8	7/10	21/29	72%
HD	6/8	—	1/8	0/3	7/19	37%
total	13/16	9/12	6/21	9/18	37/67	55%
	81%	75%	29%	50%		

χ^2 (language background)=6.54 df=2 p<.05; χ^2 (level of education)=10.62 df=1 p<.005

2.3 One linguistic constraint

In this section, I focus on syntactic and semantic factors that might affect the occurrence of *om* or *voor* in Heerlen Dutch. In general, three types of infinitival clauses are distinguished (Haegeman 1991:244). Consider the spontaneous speech data of Heerlen Dutch in (3), all of which involve *om*, the Standard Dutch variant, as an infinitival complementizer:

- (3) a. *ik heb wel tachtig keer geprobeerd*
 I have ADV eighty times tried
om met dat roken te stoppen
 COMP with that smoking to stop
 'I have tried to quit smoking eighty times' (15: Jan)
- b. *je ziet vaak een taxi van Aken hier*
 you see often a cab of Aken here
in Heerlen rond rijden ...ja om het spul
 in Heerlen round driving yes COMP the stuff
op te halen
 PART to collect
 'in Heerlen you often see a cab from Aken driving around to collect the stuff' (15: Peter)
- c. *is moeilijk om Sinterklazen te vinden*
 is difficult COMP Santa Clauses to find
 'is difficult to find Santa Clauses' (10: Nico)

In (3a) the infinitival clause is an object clause; it is the complement of the verb *proberen* (try). In (3b) an infinitival clause is used as an adjunct; the clause is a purpose clause. In (3c) the infinitival clause is the complement of the adjective *moeilijk* (difficult).

Let us turn now to the spontaneous speech data in (4), all of which involve *voor*, the dialect variant of the infinitival complementizer:

- (4) a. *hebben een paar keer geprobeerd voor mee*
 have a few time tried COMP PART
te doen aan zo'n quiz
 to do in such a quiz
 'several times (we) tried to participate in such a quiz' (2: Wybe)
- b. *die moest naar de hei gaan elke dag*
 he had PART the heath go every day
voor te wandelen voor lucht te
 COMP to walk COMP air to
krijgen
 get
 'every day he had to go to the heath to walk, to get air' (14: Ralph)
- c. *ik vind het zo erg voor een*
 I find it so terrible COMP an
beest kapot te maken
 animal RESULT to animal
 'I find it so terrible to destroy an animal' (31: dhr Bast)

Similarly, in Heerlen Dutch the infinitival complementizer *voor* is used if the infinitival clause is an object clause, as in (4a), if the infinitival clause is a purpose clause, as in (4b), and if the infinitival clause is the complement of an adjective, as in (4c). From above, it is clear that in Heerlen Dutch *voor* has the same syntactic distribution as *om*. The similar syntactic distribution of *om* and *voor* in (3) and (4) suggest that they are only lexical alternants.

However, in the spoken variety of Standard Dutch, the infinitival complementizer *voor* is only marginally used. Therefore, it may be argued that there exists a syntactic/semantic factor that promotes or inhibits the occurrence of complementizer *voor*. It has been pointed out by Gerritsen (1991) that *voor* is sometimes used if the infinitival clause is a purpose clause as in (3b) and (4b) (Gerritsen 1991:61, 69). Since in Standard Dutch (and Dutch dialects) the preposition *voor* is also capable of expressing purpose (Geerts 1984: 881), it can be argued that the form *voor* in a purposive infinitival clause corresponds to the form *voor* used as a preposition. From this point of view, the meaning of the infinitival complementizer *voor* in a purpose clause resembles the meaning of the prepositional form *voor* (see Gerritsen 1991). However, these two *voors* behave differently depending on the particular clause in which they are located. And, thus, it is here that we may look for a possible *om/voor* distinction.

In Dutch there are several criteria for distinguishing an infinitival purpose clause from other infinitival clauses. First, an infinitival purpose clause (henceforth: [+purp] clause) can be substituted with a nominal constituent ('voor het kopen') as demonstrated in (5b). However, this is not possible in the case of a non-purpose clause (henceforth: [-purp] clause) (see (6b)):

- (5) a. *Ik ga naar de stad om/voor een*
 I go to the town COMP a
boek te kopen
 book to buy
 'I am going to town to buy a book'
- b. *Ik ga naar de stad voor het*
 I go to the town PREP the
kopen van een boek
 buying of a book
 'I am going to town in order to buy a book'

- (6) a. *Ik vind het moeilijk om/voor een
I find it difficult COMP an
beest te doden
animal to kill
'I find it difficult to kill an animal'*
- b. **Ik vind het moeilijk voor het
I find it hard PREP the
doden van een beest
killing of an animal
'I find it difficult in order to kill an animal'

Secondly, the complementizer must be present in a [+purp] clause, but is optional in a [-purp] clause. This is shown in (7) and (8), respectively:

- (7) *Ik ga naar de stad *(om) een boek te kopen
I go to the town COMP a book to buy
'I am going to town in order to buy a book'*
- (8) *Ik vind het moeilijk (om) een beest
I find it hard COMP an animal
te doden
to kill
'I find it hard to kill an animal'*

Finally, a [+purp] clause differs from a [-purp] clause in that it leads to a grammatical result if it is topicalized. Consider (9) and (10), respectively:

- (9) *Om een boek te kopen, ga ik naar
COMP a book to buy, go I to
de stad
the town
'In order to buy a book I am going to town'*
- (10) **Om hem te benaderen, heb ik vaak
COMP him to approach have I often
geprobeerd
tried
'I have often tried in order to approach him'

Table 3 shows the occurrences of *om* and *voor* in the two types of infinitival clauses, namely [+purp] and [-purp] clause. Note that Table 3 reveals only the data for speakers who use both *om* and *voor*. It demonstrates that in spontaneous speech the factor [\pm purp] yields

significant results with the use of the dialect variant *voor*. Clearly, *voor* is used more frequently in a [+purp] clause.

Table 3: The distribution of *om en voor* according to [+purp] and [-purp]-infinitival clause (spontaneous speech)

	OM	VOOR	total
- purp	149	21	170
+ purp	104	99	203
	253	120	373

$$\chi^2(\pm \text{purp}) = 56.21 \text{ df}=1 \text{ } p < .001$$

2.4 The variable [\pm purp] clause combined with speaker variables

It appears that in the spoken variety of Standard Dutch (Gerritsen 1991), the complementizer *voor* is marginally acceptable in an infinitival purpose clause whereas *voor* is always unacceptable in other infinitival clauses. It has been observed that the use of *voor*, in Standard Dutch, in an infinitival purpose clause is due to a recent language change. From the above, it is not obvious in Heerlen Dutch whether, from the synchronic point of view, the use of *voor* in an infinitival purpose clause originates from the local dialect or from a recent development in Standard Dutch. In contrast, it is certain that the use of *voor* in a non-purpose clause originates exclusively from the local dialect since this use is not acceptable in Standard Dutch. With the above assumptions in mind, we expect that (i) the group of dialect speakers will produce more *voor* in a non-purpose clause than the other groups of speakers and (ii) due to a recent development in Standard Dutch, *voor* in a purpose clause will be more frequently used by the younger speakers.

Figure 1 reveals that eight out of eleven speakers (73%) who produce *voor* in a non-purpose clause belong to the group of dialect speakers and that nine out of eleven speakers (82%) belong to the group of older speakers. Sure enough, this distribution supports the hypothesis that the use of *voor* in a non-purpose clause originates from the local dialect.

Figure 1: The use of *voor* in a [-purp] infinitival clause according to speaker variables (spontaneous speech)

speaker variables	number of speakers using <i>voor</i>
IMP-old low	1
IMP-old-high	1
HD-young-low	1
DIA-old-low	5
DIA-old-high	2
DIA-young-low	1
total	11

Figure 2 reveals that the use of *voor* in an infinitival purpose clause correlates with the factor age. Sixteen out of twenty-six speakers (62%) belong to the youngest age group. It is striking that the use of *voor* in a [+purp] infinitival clause is independent of the language background and education/occupation variables.

Figure 2: *The use of voor in a [+purp] infinitival clause according to speaker variables (spontaneous speech)*

speaker variables	number of speakers using <i>voor</i>
IMP-old low	2
IMP-old-high	1
IMP-young-low	2
IMP-young-high	2
HD-young-low	4
HD-young-high	1
DIA-old-low	2
DIA-old-high	5
DIA-young-low	4
DIA-young-high	3
total	26

Summarizing, it has been demonstrated that linguistic constraints are extremely useful in a sociolinguistic survey. The social distribution of *voor* in Table 2 (see § 2.1) becomes more accurate using the linguistic distinction [\pm purp].

2.5 Individual grammars

Thus far, I have shown that the use of *om* or *voor* in Heerlen Dutch varies according to the level of group speech. In particular, I demonstrated that the use of the complementizer *voor* in Heerlen Dutch correlates with several social and one linguistic factor(s). Turning to the level of individual speech, the situation in Heerlen Dutch is not clear-cut, with respect to the occurrences of the infinitival complementizers *om* and *voor*. The records of the spontaneous speech data do not reveal homogeneous behavior. As can be seen in Figure 3, some speakers produce only *om*, e.g. speaker 1, some speakers use both *om* and *voor*, e.g. speaker 4, and only one speaker (67) uses *voor*.

Figure 3: *Individual production of om and voor*

Speaker	no. <i>OM</i>	no. <i>VOOR</i>	Total	proportion <i>VOOR</i>
1-2	19	0	19	0
3	19	5	24	.21
4	19	1	20	.05
5	18	0	18	0
6	17	0	17	0
7	16	0	16	0
8	16	3	19	.16
9	15	1	16	.06
10	14	0	14	0
11	14	4	18	.22
12	14	1	15	.07
13-14	13	0	13	0
15	13	1	14	.07
16	12	0	12	0
17	12	1	13	.08
18-19	11	0	11	0
20	11	2	13	.15
21	11	1	12	.08
22	11	3	14	.21
23	10	0	10	0
24-28	9	0	9	0
29	9	5	14	.36
30	9	1	10	.10
31-32	8	1	9	.11
33	7	2	9	.22
34-35	6	0	6	0
36	6	3	9	.33
37	6	1	7	.14
38-40	5	0	5	0
41-42	5	5	10	.50
43-45	4	0	4	0
46	4	2	6	.33
47	4	1	5	.20
48	4	10	14	.71
49-52	3	0	3	0
53	3	2	5	.40
54-55	3	1	4	.25
56	2	6	8	.75
57-58	2	4	6	.67
59	2	2	4	.50
60	1	0	1	0
61	1	8	9	.89
62	1	7	8	.88
63	1	5	6	.83
64	1	2	3	.67
65-66	1	1	2	.50
67	0	16	16	1
Total	523	120	643	

A closer look at the individual occurrences of *om* and *voor* reveals that the constructions in (11) that were uttered by one speaker ('Bert') on the same occasion. Strikingly, it appears that both variants *om* and *voor* occur even while one speaker is maintaining the same level of speech style (Bickerton 1971). Moreover, it is surprising that the same speaker uses both *om* and *voor* in the same linguistic category. Hence, both (11a) and (11b) are infinitival purpose clauses.

- (11) a. *moet ik terug komen om dat half*
 must I back come COMP that half
jaar of te maken
 year PART to finish
 'I must come back in order to finish that half year' (12: Bert)
- b. *je komt hier voor te studeren*
 you come here COMP to study
 'You will come here in order to study' (12: Bert)

Focusing on the range of individual grammars in Heerlen Dutch, of 643 *om/voor* occurrences in spontaneous speech, 67 speakers and 2 infinitival-types, e.g. [+purp] and [-purp] clauses (see also Bickerton 1971), Figure 4 reveals that the speakers produce eight different grammars that take the form *om* or *voor* or *om/voor* in each linguistic category. Furthermore, 28 speakers produce only *om*, whereas 22 speakers produce *om* in a [-purp] clause but *om/voor* in a [+purp] clause, respectively grammar 1 and 2. Note that the speakers do not produce grammar 9. This behavior confirms, to a certain extent, the results shown above; if both *om* and *voor* are simultaneously available, a non-infinitival purpose clause promotes the variant *om* and an infinitival purpose clause promotes the variant *voor*.

Figure 4: Number of individual grammars according to linguistic category on the basis of spontaneous speech

Grammar	[-purp] clause	[+purp] clause	# of speakers (N=67)
1	<i>om</i>	<i>om</i>	28
2	<i>om</i>	<i>om/voor</i>	22
3	<i>om</i>	<i>voor</i>	3
4	<i>om/voor</i>	<i>voor</i>	3
5	<i>om/voor</i>	<i>om/voor</i>	3
6	<i>voor</i>	<i>om/voor</i>	3
7	<i>voor</i>	<i>voor</i>	1
8	<i>om/voor</i>	<i>om</i>	1
9*	* <i>voor</i>	* <i>om</i>	0
	----	<i>om/voor</i>	1
	----	<i>om</i>	1

Summarizing, on the level of individual speech, the grammars in Figure 4 display that although the use of *voor* is sensitive to social stratification and linguistic factors, the speakers produce *om* as well as *voor* as two equivalent features. Hence, five out of eight grammars display inherent variability. In Heerlen Dutch it is within the bounds of possibility that the inherent variability can be explained by two (or a combination of) options. First, it can be argued that in Heerlen Dutch the Standard Dutch variant *om* displaces the dialect variant *voor*. However, this option is not supported by the facts in Figure 4. Moreover, this option raises the question of why so many speakers (22 out of 67) realize grammar 2, and not, for example, grammar 5. It is for this reason I argue that the inherent variability in Heerlen Dutch is due to an other option, namely a semantically controlled dialectization of the spoken variety of Standard Dutch. In other words, influenced by the use of *voor* both in the local dialect and in the spoken variety of Standard Dutch, the speakers do not derive the variant *om* but the variant *om/voor* from Standard Dutch. Since in Standard Dutch the variant *om/voor* is only used in an infinitival purpose clause, only this option clearly explains the large number of realizations of grammar 2.

3. The test data

Let us now turn to the test data. Generally, special survey methods are required in order to obtain a sufficient account of syntactic data. It is for this reason that the data in this sociolinguistic survey were also collected by means of a simple oral repetition test. All of the speakers were asked to repeat sentences that contained more than twenty items or words containing either the *om* or *voor* complementizer. In the repetition test, I offered 66 speakers 11 infinitival clauses. Five of the infinitival sentences were purpose clauses and six non-purpose clauses.³

It can be argued that the large number of items has an effect on the capacity of the speakers' short-term memory. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that this kind of stimulus makes it difficult to repeat exactly the surface structure of the sentence. If this is so, an accurate repetition of *om* or *voor* provides weak evidence that the test variant is within the speaker's dialect; consistent inaccuracies (usually translation, e.g. substitution of *om* for *voor* or the reverse), provide strong evidence that the test variant, e.g. *om* or *voor*, is not within his dialect (Carden 1976:101).

3.1 The linguistic and social variables

An interesting question arising out of this work is to what extent the spontaneous speech data and the test data are consistent with linguistic and

³ In this paper, I do not discuss the design of the survey and the methodology that I used to construct the repetition test (see Cornips 1994).

social distribution. It can be argued that several performance-mechanisms have to be taken into account if both data sets display discrepancies with regard to linguistic and social variables. As already discussed, the linguistic variable [\pm purp] clause displays significant results in the spontaneous speech data. It is evident from Table 4 that in the test data the factor [\pm purp] clause also yields significant results with the dialect variant *voor*. As in the spontaneous speech data, here too it is clear that *voor* is used more often in a [+purp] clause than in a [-purp] clause, 20% and 6% respectively. Hence, there are no discrepancies between the spontaneous speech data and the test data.

Table 4: *The distribution of voor in test data by [-purp] and [+purp] infinitival clause (the numerator includes repetitions of voor and translations of om by voor whereas the denominator includes the total output of om and voor)*

	<i>[- purp] clause</i>	<i>[+ purp] clause</i>
repetition <i>voor</i>	19/168	39/169
translation <i>om</i> by <i>voor</i>	2/160	33/198
total	21/328 (6%)	72/367 (20%)

χ^2 (+purp) = 26.10, df = 1, $p < .001$

Without a doubt, the social variables differ from the linguistic variable in that they do not display the same distribution as the spontaneous speech data. Consider Tables 5 and 6. First, Table 5 shows that there are no longer significant results with respect to the use of the dialect variant *voor* in a non-infinitival purpose clause according to speaker variables. This is in contrast to the spontaneous speech data (see Figure 1). Secondly, Table 6 reveals that in the test data the dialect variant *voor* in an infinitival purpose clause correlates with language background, i.e. the group of import speakers uses *voor* more frequently than the other groups. This behavior is also in contrast to the social distribution in the spontaneous speech data (see Figure 2).

Table 5: *The distribution of voor according to number of speakers (N=16) and [-purp] infinitival clause (test data)*

VOOR	low level of education		high level of education		total
	young	old	young	old	
N=16					
language					
IMP	2/3	1/6	1/5	0/5	4/19
DIA	0/5	4/6	4/8	1/9	9/28
HD	2/8	-	1/8	0/3	3/19
total	4/16	5/12	6/21	1/17	16/66

No significant correlations

Table 6: *The distribution of voor according to number of speakers (N=37) and [+purp] infinitival clause (test data)*

VOOR	low level of education		high level of education		total
	young	old	young	old	
N=37					
language					
IMP	3/3	5/6	3/5	4/5	15/19
DIA	5/5	5/6	2/8	0/9	12/28
HD	6/8	-	1/8	3/3	10/19
total	14/16	10/12	6/21	7/17	37/66

χ^2 (language background) = 6.12, df=2, $p < .05$;

χ^2 (education/occupation) = 17.35, df=1, $p < .001$

3.2 The test effects

Although I do not have an explanation for the varied social distributions, I would argue that these patterns are primarily due to distinct test effects. In order to provide some insight into these test effects, I present a detailed list of all the speakers who have a deviant output in the test data compared with their spontaneous speech and their variables. As observed in Figure 5, this applies to a total of 25 speakers. Compared with spontaneous speech, there are two ways in which the speakers may vary in their test production. First, they use only *om* in their spontaneous speech, whereas in their test data they also use *voor* (see group I, II and III in Figure 5), or they use only *voor* in spontaneous speech and only *om* in the test (see group IV).

With respect to the four groups of speakers in Figure 5, groups III and IV seem to be most noteworthy since they display interesting test effects. Consider first group III. Since these speakers only repeat the test input but do not translate it, their test production can be ascribed to a test effect, or rather, a repetition effect (Bock 1986). If we examine the speaker variables in this group, we see that, proportionally, the majority of these speakers belongs to the oldest age group.

Figure 5: Number of speakers according to variables who display a deviant test output in comparison with their spontaneous speech (N=25)

		spontaneous speech	repetition <i>voor</i>	translation of <i>om</i> by <i>voor</i>	N
I	IMP-young-low	om	+	+	2
	DIA-young-high	om	+	+	
II	IMP-young-high	om	-	+	5
	IMP-old-high	om	-	+	
	IMP-old-low	om	-	+	
	HD-old-high	om	-	+	
	HD-young-high	om	-	+	
III	IMP-young-high	om	+	-	6
	IMP-old-low	om	+	-	
	IMP-old-high	om	+	-	
	IMP-old-high	om	+	-	
	DIA-old-high	om	+	-	
	HD-young-low	om	+	-	
IV	IMP-old-high	voor	-	-	12
	IMP-young-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-old-low	voor	-	-	
	DIA-young-high	voor	-	-	
	DIA-young-high	voor	-	-	
	HD-young-high	voor	-	-	
	HD-young-low	voor	-	-	

Group IV displays another performance-mechanism since these speakers neither repeat nor translate the test input. As a result, they use only *voor* in their spontaneous speech although it does not show up in their test output. We can conclude from this that these speakers are subject to stylistic variation. Their test output appears to show that these speakers are capable of controlling variation between *om* and *voor*. According to Labov (1972:179), we might consider *om* as a marker; that is to say, *om* is sensitive to stylistic variation because of the speaker's conscious or unconscious awareness of its social diagnosticity. After all, the variant *om* is the prestige variant belonging to the domain of Standard Dutch. If we also examine the speaker variables in group IV, we find that ten out of

twelve speakers have a high level of education/occupation. Thus, speakers with a high level of education/occupation are capable of controlling variation in their test data, whereas this is not the case in their spontaneous speech data.

4. Conclusion

In this paper it has been demonstrated that the variation in the use of the infinitival complementizers *om* and *voor* in Heerlen Dutch is sensitive to social and linguistic factors. Clearly, the variation between *om* and *voor* is also manifested on the level of individual speech, i.e. speakers use *om* and *voor* as two equivalent features. Furthermore, from the test data, it appears that in Heerlen Dutch the variant *om* is a marker. In other words, compared with the complementizer *voor*, *om* is a prestige variant that is sensitive to stylistic variation.

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