

Patterns of variation in Dutch ethnolects: linguistic, stylistic and social factors in the realization of /z/

Linda van Meel
Radboud University Nijmegen
l.vanmeel@let.ru.nl
Frans Hinskens
Meertens Instituut (KNAW), VU University Amsterdam

www.rootsofethnolects.nl

1

Study of /z/

- One of the features that characterize and differentiate the speech of Dutch adolescents of Moroccan, Turkish and Dutch descent is the pronunciation of the /z/.
- Today we will discuss two variables:
 - Sharpness of /z/
 - (De)voicing of /z/

2

Research questions (1)

Linguistic characteristics

- 1. To what extent can variation patterns be related to interference from the original languages of the non-native ethnic groups ('substrate effects')?
- 2. To what extent does native Dutch linguistic conditioning apply in the patterns of variation in ethnic groups ('structure effects')?

3

Research questions (2)

Group comparisons

- 3. To what extent can variation patterns be related to the impact of local non-standard varieties ('regional effects')?
- 4. Do the non-native ethnic groups investigated differ in their variation patterns or do they share a more global non-native identity ('inter-ethnic convergence effects')?
- 5. Is there any evidence of spread of ethnic patterns of variation to native Dutch peers (cf. Rampton's 'crossing')?

Style shifting

- 6. To what extent can speakers shift between standard and non-standard patterns ('style shifting effects')?

4

1

Research questions (3)

	Sharpness	Voicing
1. 'substrate effects'	?	?
2. 'structure effects'	?	yes
3. 'regional effects'	?	yes
4. 'inter-ethnic convergence effects'	?	?
5. 'crossing effects'	?	?
6. 'style shifting effects'	?	?

5

Methods: Speakers (1)

- Male speakers of Turkish, Moroccan and non-immigrant Dutch descents
- Two cities: Amsterdam (A) and Nijmegen (N)
- Born and raised in A and N respectively



6

Methods: Speakers (2)

- 10-12 year-olds

	Ethnic background		
city	Moroccan (M)	Turkish (T)	Dutch (D)
Amsterdam (A)	3	3	2
Nijmegen (N)	3	3	3

- 18-20 year-olds

	Ethnic background		
city	Moroccan (M)	Turkish (T)	Dutch (D)
Amsterdam (A)	4	4	3
Nijmegen (N)	3	3	3

7

Methods: Data

- Spontaneous conversations
 - Between 2 speakers
 - 3 or 4 conversations: With 1 or 2 members of their own ethnic background and 1 member of each of the other ethnic backgrounds.
 - About 60 minutes per conversation
 - Free conversation, if needed with help of card games, newspapers, soccer magazine

8

2

Methods: Analyses /z/

- From each conversation, 30 /z/-initial prosodic words were selected per speaker
- ≥ 5 for each left-hand context (obstruent, sonorant, vowel).

Coding:

- Sharpness z: 0 = 'non-sharp', 1 = 'sharp'
- Voicing: 0 = unvoiced, 1 = voiced.

9

Sharpness

Examples

'Non-sharp z' (= indigenous Dutch)

- maar je moet er ook wel zin hebben hoor
but you also have to feel like it

'Sharp z'

- luister als ik uh hartziektes had
listen, if I had heart diseases
- en zijn ze allemaal door?
and are they all through?
- ik heb geen zin meer, man
I don't feel like it anymore, dude.

10

Sharpness Background

- 'sharp z' does not exist in Dutch.
- 'sharp z' has more frication and tenseness than the average Dutch one.
- the position of the corona is more forward in the Moroccan languages as well as in Turkish than in Dutch, i.e. dental (or denti-alveolar) instead of alveolar.

11

Sharpness

Findings

- No 'sharp z' by Dutch speakers in our sample

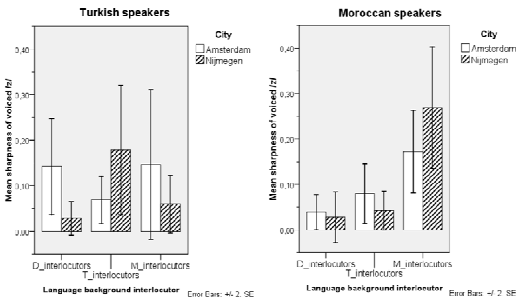


Figure 1 Mean sharpness of voiced /z/ by T speakers and M speakers, split for city and interlocutor.

12

3

Voicing background

- all languages (Dutch, Moroccan Arabic, Berber and Turkish): distinction voiceless /s/ and voiced /z/.
- Dutch:
 - Voice contrast merely in onset position; Final Devoicing
 - obligatory devoicing of fricatives, including /z/, after voiceless obstruents (Progressive Assimilation)

zitzak	opzoeken	gaat zomaar
/zitzak/	/ɔpzuken/	/xæt zomaɪ/
[zitʰak]	[ɔpsuːkən]	[xæt somɑɪ]
'bean-bag'	'look up'	'goes-3sg just (like that)'

13

Voicing background

- tendency to devoice the z in modern standard Dutch
- Dialects of Amsterdam and Nijmegen
 - Amsterdam: relatively much devoicing of z, in all sectors of society
 - Nijmegen: also devoicing of z, yet more variably than Amsterdam

14

Voicing Findings

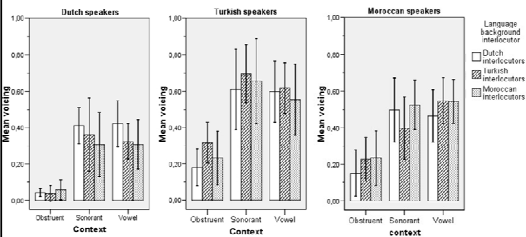


Figure 2 Mean voicing of /z/ for D, T and M speakers, split for context and interlocutor.

15

Voicing Findings

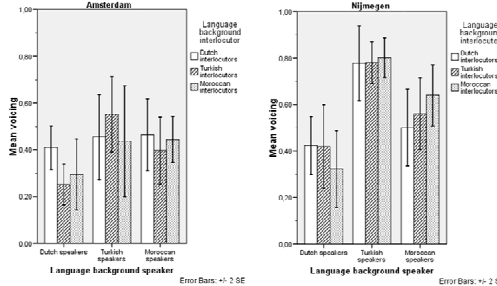
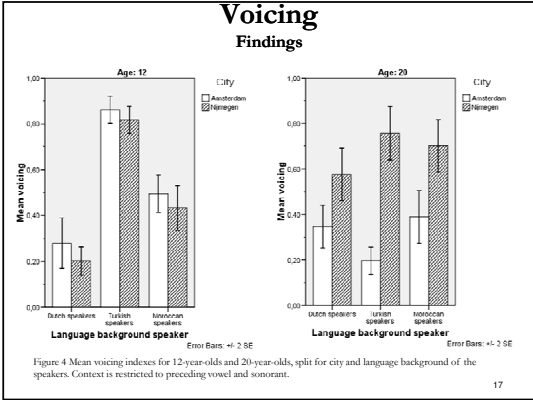


Figure 3 Mean voicing of /z/ for Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan speakers, split for language background of speaker and interlocutor and for city. Context is restricted to preceding vowel and sonorant.

16

4



Conclusions

	Sharpness	Voicing
1. 'substrate effects'	Yes	?
2. 'structure effects'	No	Yes
3. 'regional effects'	No	Yes
4. 'inter-ethnic convergence effects'	Yes, but...	Yes, but...
5. 'crossing effects'	No	No
6. 'style shifting effects'	Yes	No

1. 'substrate effects'

To what extent can variation patterns be related to interference from the original languages of the ethnic groups?

- **Sharpness:** seems to have roots in M (Arabic and Berber), borrowed by T
- **Voicing**
 - Both M and T use voiced [z] after obstruents, which is virtually absent in D speakers.

2. 'structure effects'

To what extent does native Dutch linguistic conditioning apply in the patterns of variation in ethnic groups?

- **Voicing:** voicing of /z/ following obstruents and regressive voice assimilation to a preceding obstruent by Turks and Moroccans, not by Dutch.

3. 'regional effects'

To what extent can variation patterns of devoicing be related to the impact of the local non-standard varieties?

- **Sharpness:** no main effect of the speakers' city
- **Voicing:** Amsterdam significantly less than Nijmegen.
 - particularly strong in the 20-years old participants

4. 'inter-ethnic convergence effects'

Do the two non-native ethnic groups investigated, Turkish and Moroccan, differ in their variation patterns or do they share a more global non-native identity?

- **Sharpness:** T and M constitute one homogeneous group distinct from D, *but* : evidence that M are leading the use of sharp variants
- **Voicing:**
 - after obstruents: the D on the one hand differ from the M and T on the other
 - after vowels and sonorants: we find a different pattern. T seem to voice more

5. 'crossing effects'

Is there any evidence of spread of ethnic patterns of variation to native peers?

- **Sharpness:** The D speakers do not adopt the ethnic sharpness variants at all.
- **Voicing:** D on the one hand are different from T and M on the other

6. 'style shifting effects'

To what extent can speakers shift between standard and non-standard patterns, depending on the ethnicity of the interlocutor?

- **Sharpness:** speaker adapt their speech to the ethnic background of the interlocutor
- **Voicing:** No style shifting effects were found.

In sum

- T & M Dutch are variable, but the variability is structured, and both regionally and sociolinguistically / stylistically conditioned (cf. Bills 1976 on Vernacular Chicano English)

25

Further research

- Include more linguistic variables, to investigate their internal, social and ethnic distribution.

26

- Thank you.
- Questions / comments / suggestions?
- This research is part of the project: Roots of Ethnolects
- by Pieter Muysken (Radboud University Nijmegen) and Frans Hinskens (Meertens Instituut (KNAW) & VU University Amsterdam).
- In collaboration with Roeland van Hout (Radboud University Nijmegen)
- mainly funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).
- More info about the project, as well as a handout of today's presentation can be found on

www.rootsofethnolects.nl

go to publications > presentations

27