



## *Surviving the Other*

### Contrastive Pragmatics in “Expeditie Robinson”

Eline Zenner, Dirk Geeraerts and Dirk Speelman



## Research Question

How can we explain language variation by **contrasting situations** in an intra-lingual contact context?

→ What is the effect of the make-up of a group of **dialogue partners** on language use?

⇒ a **case-study** concerning the use of Colloquial Belgian Dutch in three broadcast seasons of “**Expeditie Robinson**” (*Survivor*)

## Colloquial Belgian Dutch

### *Double Dutch*

Two variants of one language:

- Dutch in the Netherlands
- Dutch in Northern Belgium (Flanders)

### Dutch in Flanders

- discrepancy between the formal and informal use of Dutch
- *formal use*: not very different from Dutch in the Netherlands
- *informal use*: markedly different from the Dutch used in the Netherlands → called Colloquial Belgian Dutch (CBD)

⇒ “Expeditie Robinson”: Dutch and Flemish participants

⇒ CAT (Giles): What is the effect of Dutch participants on the Flemish use of CBD?



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## Contrasting Situations

Measuring the effect of Dutch participants:

- CBD in heterogeneous dialogues (Flemish + Dutch participants) *vs.*
- CBD in homogeneous dialogues (Dutch participants only)

## Overall Variation in CBD?

What is the importance of dialogue partners when looking at the overall picture of CBD-variation?

Comparing the effect of Dutch participants with

- → other context-related factors (register)
- → speaker-related factors (age)



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## Methodological Needs

empirical, corpus-based research, complemented with statistical analyses of the data (cf. Kristiansen en Geeraerts (2007))

# Overview

Design

Results

Which Approach?  
Inferential

Conclusion





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# Overview

- the linguistic variable:  
→ Colloquial Belgian Dutch (CBD)
- the data:  
→ Expeditie Robinson (Survivor)
- the independent variable:  
→ contextual factors (e.g. dialogue partners)  
→ speaker-related features (e.g. age)
- methodological needs:  
→ mixed-effect model on an average index of CBD

⇒ a closer look at the different factors



# CBD (1)

## Sociological Features

### Colloquial Belgian Dutch:

- Flemish (Brabant)
- informal
- youthful

(vgl. Van Gijssel *et al.* 2004)



## (2)

## Linguistic Features

Group	Feature	Standard Dutch	CBD
pronunciation	h-deletion	huis	(h)uis
	t/d-deletion	dat paard	da(t) paard
adnominal	indefinite article	een appel	nen appel
	negative determiner	geen appel	genen appel
	definite article	de appel	den appel
	proximal demonstratives	deze appel	dezen appel
	distal demonstratives	die appel	diejen appel
	possessives	mijn appel	mijnen appel
nominal	diminutives	stoeltje	stoeleke
pronominal	pronominals, 2sing	je	gij
	pronominals, 2sing	je	u
	reflexives	zich	hem
verbal	verbal, 1sing SP	ik ga	ik gaan
	imperative	loop	loopt

# Expeditie Robinson (1)

## Format

- **gamedoc:** social game where the participants have to survive on a 'desert' island
- **Format:**
  1. 2 tribes (cf. infra)
  2. Tribe Switch
  3. Merge
  4. finals
- **Tribal Council:** formal event where one of the participants is voted out of the tribe (and hence voted home) by the other participants

⇒ interesting variety of situations, concerning *register* as well as *group make-up* (cf. infra)



# Methodology (1)

## Material

- 6047 utterances
- 26 Flemish participants
- 3 broadcast seasons of “Expeditie Robinson” (2003, 2004, 2005)

Transcriptions based on the CHILDES-standard

(2)

Independent Variables:

assigned through codes per utterance:

@Situation: &lt;J05.A08.F040.U02.T3.E2&gt;

\*MAX: kom mannekes # ge moet is kijke(n) hoe ze deruit zien #  
 ge moet is kijken eh@fp # (h)ier Douwe ziet is man # ge moet  
 da(t) zien jong(en) # schoon eh@fp jong(en).



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### *Broadcast Season:*

- J03: men vs. women
- J04: Flemish vs. Dutch participants (!)
- J05: younger vs. older participants





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### *Making the Code Unique:*

- A: number of the episode
- F: fragment / scene
- U: number of the utterance within the fragment/scene



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### *Conversational Type:*

- T2: homogeneous informal dialogues (only Flemish participants)
- T3: heterogeneous informal dialogues (Flemish + Dutch participants) → group make-up
- T1: tv-diaries → more formal
- T4: Tribal Councils → more formal
- T5: final episode (studio) → more formal



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### *Emotion:*

- E0: neutral
- E1: negative emotion
- E2: positive emotion



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*Speaker:*

- sex
- age
- region



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*Dependent Variable:*

The calculation of an average CBD-index starts from the utterance



## (3)

dependent variable: an average CBD-index

1. **Step 1:** determine the **relative frequency** of the CBD-realizations for each of the 14 CBD-features.  
Do this for every utterance.  
e.g. how many deleted h's out of the number of possibly deleted h's
2. **Step 2:** determine the **weighted average** of the 14 frequencies for each utterances  
Weighting, e.g.: when there are more possibly deleted h's than possibly deleted t's, the relative frequency of h-deletion will weigh more heavily in the calculation of the index

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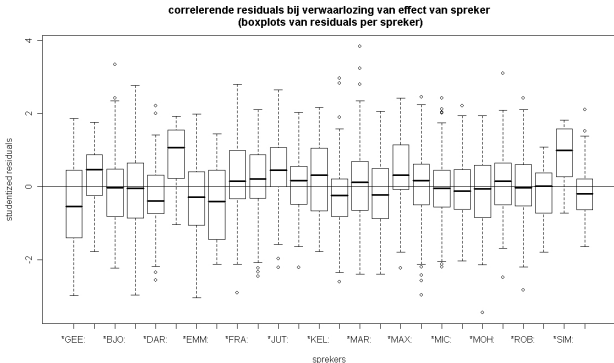


# Approach?

are there enough Flemish participants to safely make generalisations?

⇒ do the participants roughly behave in the same way?

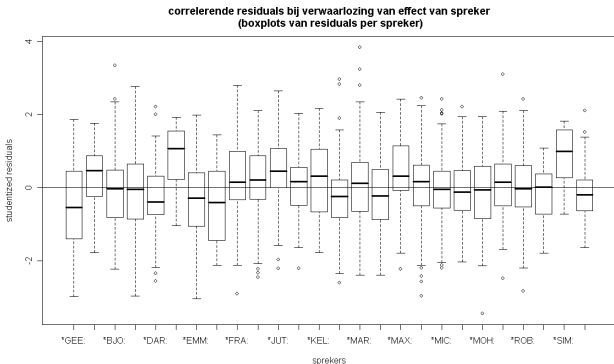
# Residuals of the participants



→ the differences are too big to make generalisations (e.g. multiple linear regression)

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# Mixed-Effect Model

Variable	Estimate	p
(intercept)	-0.265	0.0001
type T2	0.533	<0.0001
type T3	0.326	<0.0001
emotion E12	0.124	<0.01
season J04	0.220	0.067
season J04:type T2	-0.166	0.03
season J04: type T3	-0.110	<0.1
age	...	not significant
region	...	not significant
sex	...	not significant

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## Type

highly significant

importance of:

- formality  $\Rightarrow$  context
- group make-up

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## Emotion

highly significant

importance of formality  
(emotion as private,  
non-public and hence  
informal)

⇒ context

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## Season

### tendency

- J04: *ingroup* tribe  
= *ingroup* Flemish participants
- J03/J05:  
accommodation

⇒ importance context

⇒ importance of group  
make-up



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## Season-Type

important for the factor

*Season:*

*interaction with Type:*

T2/T3 are less distinctive  
in J04 than in all other  
seasons

→ CBD as the general  
Flemish language in J04?

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Speaker-Related Factors?  
not significant

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# Conclusion

	context-related	speaker-related
informality	discursive situation emotion	age sex
identity	team	region

- looking at this divide, CBD is predominantly influenced by contextual features and not by speaker-related features
- using the correct statistical analyses is important to come to correct results
- contrasting situations in intra-lingual contact contexts helps to explain variation in the use of informal language (i.c. CBD)
- contrastive pragmatics is useful!

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Voor meer informatie:

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