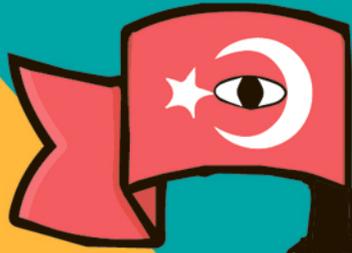


KAT BLAD



qué taal



ISSUE NO. 113, FEBRUARY 2020



DEAR LANGUAGE LOVERS,

First of all, I want to say thank you to all our readers for supporting our magazine in the best way possible – by reading it! A great deal of hard work has gone into this issue, and much of that work is quite oblique from scrolling through the pages. A huge thank you to those pictured above (from right to left: Brittany Daize, Aemun Ahmed, Sasha Damonte, Sinja Wojnarowicz Stentoft, Maggie Janssen) as well as Domonkos Király and Linn Berkvens! Kat-blad also owes a lot to its wonderful writers who have filled the pages with intriguing linguistic content, as well as Oleg Semak for the gorgeous cover. So, thank you everyone, and from all of us at Kat-blad, we hope you enjoy and learn something new!

I'd like to give a little background to Kat-blad as we get a lot of questions about our humble magazine. The biggest FAQ: *Why is it called Kat-blad?* 'Kat' is an acronym for 'Katern Algemene Taalwetenschap' which translates from Dutch to **obscure bookbinding term** *General Linguistics*. Unsurprisingly, 'Kat' is also the Dutch word for *cat* and, well, 'blad' simply means 'magazine'.

We strive to release a full issue twice a year filled with a range of content that covers a diverse range of

both types of languages and linguistic subfields. We want to compile a magazine that gives our fellow students, who we can safely assume range from low- to high-key language nerds, language-oriented content that doesn't come from a textbook, an academic journal, or lecture slides. But rather, from the students they sit beside in class and the professors they are taught by.

We have the vision of Kat-blad being a shared experience for not only linguistic students but for the professionals currently at work in their respective fields. In this issue, we have included various abstracts that have been submitted by our very own UvA professors to give students a chance to read about what the Linguistics department has accomplished in research. Reversely, this issue also has abstracts of student research to inspire incoming first years and give our teachers hope of the upcoming generation of linguists. In this issue, you can expect articles on some fascinating linguistic topics from manufactured accents of the 20th century, to Nigeria's language-mixing hip-hop, to ancient poetry! We also have a *Qué Taal* page, named after our fundraising events last year, where we give a fun overview of a lesser-known language. In this issue – Ukrainian! And be on the lookout for an especially active *katje*.

[ˈhapi ˈʃiɾɪŋ]

Lots of love,

Brittany Daize

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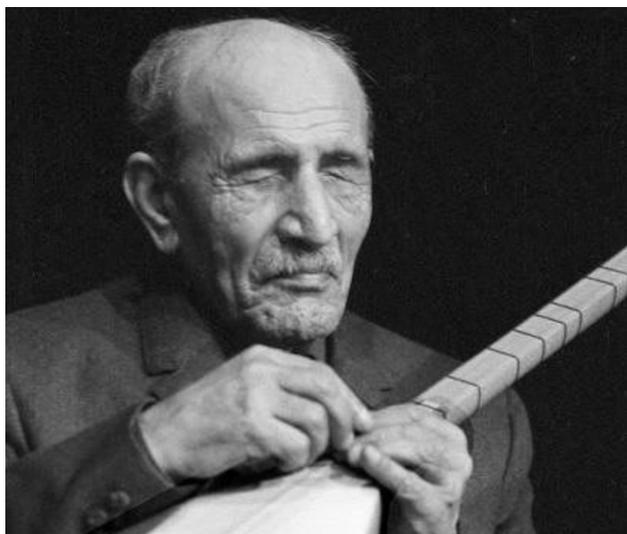
A LINGUISTIC PEEK INTO TURKISH POETRY

By Aykut Güler

When it comes to Turkish culture, it is inevitable that you will hear about food or the Ottoman Empire. However, naturally, there is more to it than just food and palace life. After all, what makes a culture is the people. And if you want to learn about the people, literature is a great place to look at.

Turks started to use writing relatively late, at around the eighth century. Until that time (and actually, to date), stories and history of common folk were passed down in the form of oral poetry. So it is likely that you will hear about a flood, a love story, a protest against an emperor, death, crops etc. And to make it easier to remember, poetry was almost always accompanied by string instruments and followed a syllabic metre. This is the most general characteristic of Turkish Aşık (a homonym for a bard and lover,) [‘a:ʃu:k] Poetry. It is free, sometimes protest, and always sincere. It is not as *sterile* as its noble counterpart, Divan Poetry.

Divan Poetry was seen as the pinnacle of



Aşık Veysel Kara Toprak

literature during the peak of the Ottoman Empire for a few reasons. First, it was written, so if you were illiterate you were already excluded. Second, it had a limited number of themes such as love, praising or mocking the emperor, or religion. Third, it had established allegories, and novel ones were rare. An example of these established allegories would be the relation between gül [gyl] (rose) and bülbül [byl’byl] (nightingale). A rose is beautiful and colorful, but it has thorns. The nightingale is delicate, has a lover’s passionate voice, and it is in love with the rose, so it sings and sings.

However, Divan Literature and Poetry is a well-known branch of Turkish literature, and Aşık Poetry has some branches that phonologist would probably enjoy, like Lebdeğmez. Moreover, Aşık Poetry is from the people and for the people. And it still lives today, whereas Divan Literature is mostly contained within the history of Ottomans. In this article, you will read about Traditional Aşık Poetry, a lipographic poetry form called Lebdeğmez, and Modern Aşık Poetry.

Traditional Aşık Poetry

As I previously mentioned, Aşık means both a lover and a bard. This fact is a statement in itself that Turkish bards are in love, and singing with a subtle tenderness unique to people in love. It is one of the dominating themes of Traditional Aşık Poetry, and all aspects of love like breakups, longing, cheating, or happy endings can be found. However, relationships between LGBTQ individuals are non-existent (at least as far as I know) in Aşık Poetry, even though homosexuality was acknowledged in the Ottoman era. Additionally, incest relationships between in-laws can be found in Traditional Aşık Poetry as well.

It is not only love that bards talked about though. Nature is another central theme. Turks’ pagan beliefs from the times they lived in Asia still have an effect on how important nature is. For example, one of the most famous türkü /tyr’ky/ (ballad) in Turkish talks about how the Aşık has lived a long and tiresome life and come to understand that the only loyal and fair thing is nature. For those who want to listen, you can go to youtube and search “Aşık Veysel Kara Toprak” and watch the first video that your search returns. Click [here](#) for an example!

What distinguishes Traditional Aşık Poetry from other genres? At this point, it is important to remember that in Turkish stress is on the final syllable of a word, and it keeps moving towards the right edge when a suffix is added. So iambs and trochees from English would not work. Turkish used a syllabic metre, a unit that counts syllables on every line. The metres varied mostly between 7, 8, 11, 14 syllables. And each metre consisted of two durak (lit. stop). 4+3, 4+4, 6+5, and 7+7 were the most common durak for the respective meters.

gi.de.ri'm (3) / jo.'lum ja.'ja (4)

I leave, on foot

dže.ma.'lin (3) / ben.'zer a.'ja (4)

Your face like moon

e.ri.'dim (3) / ha.jal ol.'dum (4)

I've melted (and become) a dream

gyn.le.'ri-(3)/ sa.'ja sa.'ja (4)

After counting days

Notice that there are four lines in this stanza. This is because a quatrain is the canonical stanza for Aşık Poetry. How about rhyme? Turkish searches rhyme in the stem, not at the right edge of a word. This is because Turkish is an agglutinative language, therefore, a lot of words can have the same suffix. It is not challenging to form many lines with the same ending. However, it is a bit tricky to find stems that rhyme.

One exception is that if a line ends with a stem and the following line has a stem+suffix, then the similar sounds at the end would still count as rhyme. In short, the same suffix cannot form a rhyme, but a stem-suffix combination in any two lines is okay. If the same suffix is repeated throughout lines, it is called redif [redif], and rhyme would be in stems of the final words. Rhyme is an important aspect of Aşık Poetry as it survived for generations, thanks to people who memorized these ballads. Give it a try and read it for yourself, it is in IPA!

The Poetry Competition [ˈleb.dej.mez]

A poetry competition where two Aşık challenge each other to recite their poems in company of a string instrument called Saz. The twist is that they are not allowed to use any labial sounds in their poems, they have to recite to an audience and they have to improvise if it is a poetry duel.

If you ask Google to translate the paragraph above to Turkish, you would see that there are eight labial sounds. Just imagine how difficult it is to write such a poem. But it does not end there, because to ensure that an Aşık follows the rule, he has to put a needle in between his lips. Ouch!

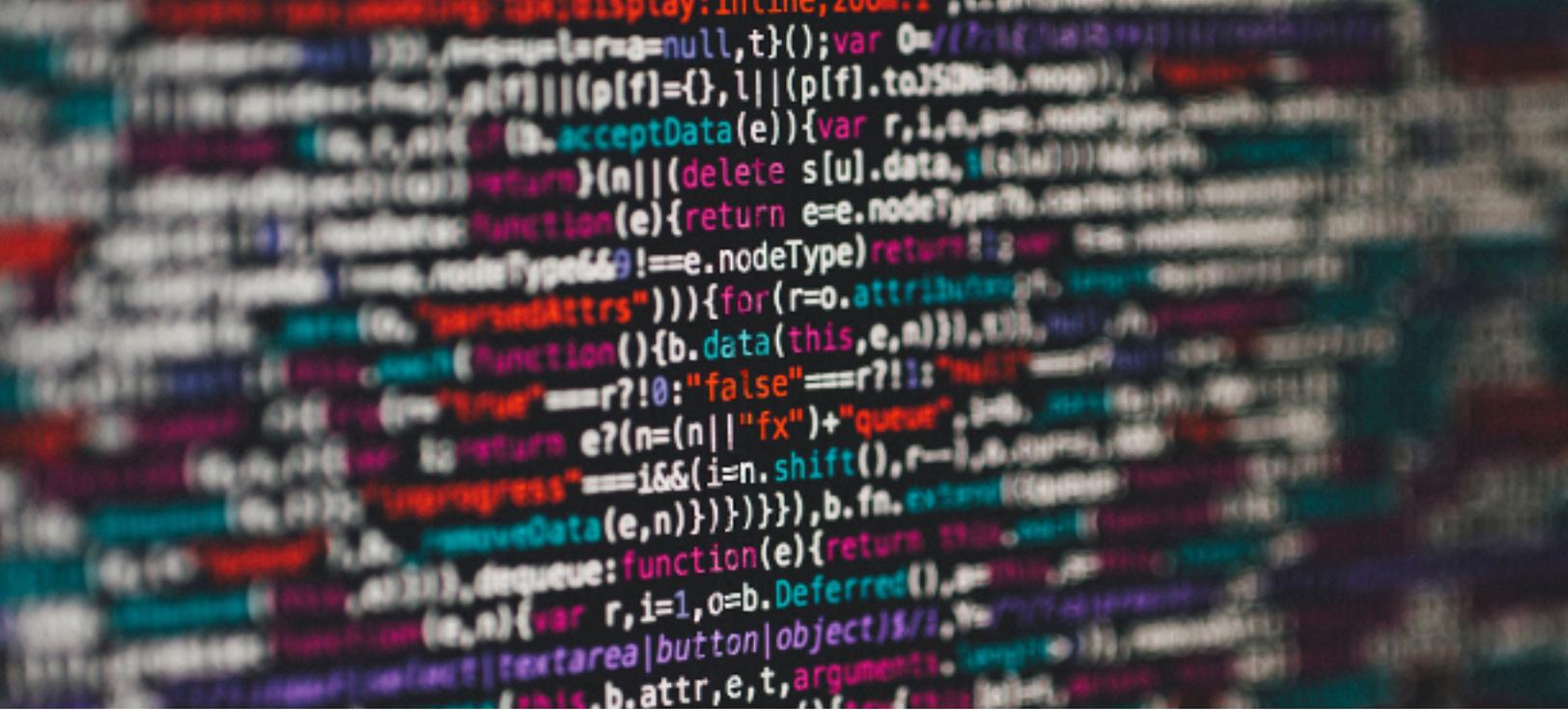
Lebdeğmez literally means “Lips do not touch.” Not very surprising, is it? The first known example of Lebdeğmez is from the fifteenth century. An excerpt from the poem is below¹, but unfortunately, I cannot translate it to English. If you want to hear how it sounds, you can read it to yourself...

**ajntu asa:kirde ſehi:ri dijar
tigkeſi askeri leſker ſikar**

Fast-forward to the 21st century, and you can actually watch two Aşık challenge each other - just click on the video! Which one do you think has won?

Unfortunately, we are taught about all the wars and treaties in our history classes, but we seldom learn about the people who make these lands a country. Most of what we know about different nations and their history is limited to know how our ancestors came into contact with them during hard times. I believe that literature is one of the most elegant ways to get to know about a culture, and I hope this article sparked an interest in you for unfamiliar territories of poetry.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE

By Cathy Doyle

Of the approximately 7000 languages spoken in the world today, only 3995 have a developed writing system. But what about the languages that only have a written form? Computer programming languages are what allows us to communicate with computers, to tell them what to do. Computers run on codes, which are made up of 1's and 0's. When written in a specific sequence, these codes tell the computer exactly what it has to do. Because computers don't understand commands in human languages, and humans don't speak in 1' and 0's, there has to be a middle ground to allow the two to communicate.

Programming languages have been around for much longer than we realize. The first recognized programming language was thought up way back in 1883, by a woman called Ada Lovelace. It was used to compute Bernoulli numbers for Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. The next type of programming language didn't come about until decades later. Assembly Language, a simple language one level up from binary code, was invented in 1949 in order to simplify the task of coding, just in time for IBM to release their first computing machine in 1953. This system is much more similar to what we know today as a programming language compared to Ada Lovelace's model.

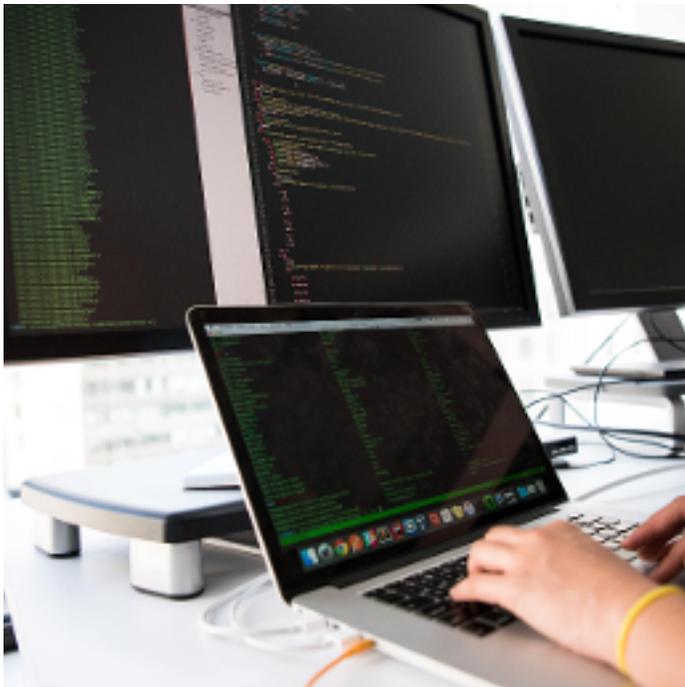
Later on, in 1957, came Fortran. Fortran, short for Formula Translation, was developed in order to compute complex mathematical and statistical calculations. It is said to be the oldest programming language still in use today. Next came Algorithm Language, or Algol as it's better known. This language was created for scientific use, eventually becoming the basis for the development of systems like Java, C, C++, and Pascal. Each language was built using Algol as its foundation, but then had its own specific purpose. COBOL and LISP followed shortly in 1959. COBOL was until recently still very widely used in

"Programming languages have been around for much longer than we realize."

business and IT, from ATMs and card readers to traffic systems. A little fun fact about COBOL: pieces of its source code can be found on the Terminator's vision display in The Terminator.

In 1964, students at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, developed BASIC, which allowed students with little mathematical knowledge to use computers. It was later modified by Bill Gates and Paul Allen, becoming the first-ever Microsoft product. Then came Pascal in 1970. This simpler and easy to use language was originally intended to be used as a tool to teach programming. However, it ended up becoming the main language used by Apple when they first began to develop software. Smalltalk, SQL, and C came along next in 1972. C is considered to be one of the first high-level programming languages. This means that it looks more like human language than computer language, that is to say, more orthography and less 1's and 0's.

The majority of programming languages released after 1972 were simply more evolved forms of ones already in existence. For example, C++, a descendant of C, was



There are approximately 700 programming languages currently, which are used by millions of people daily.

released in 1984. It is one of the most widely used programming languages of today and can be found in anything from game engines to Photoshop. Python, released in 1991, forms the framework used to build sites like Instagram. Fun fact about Python: it was named after the infamous comedy group, Monty Python.

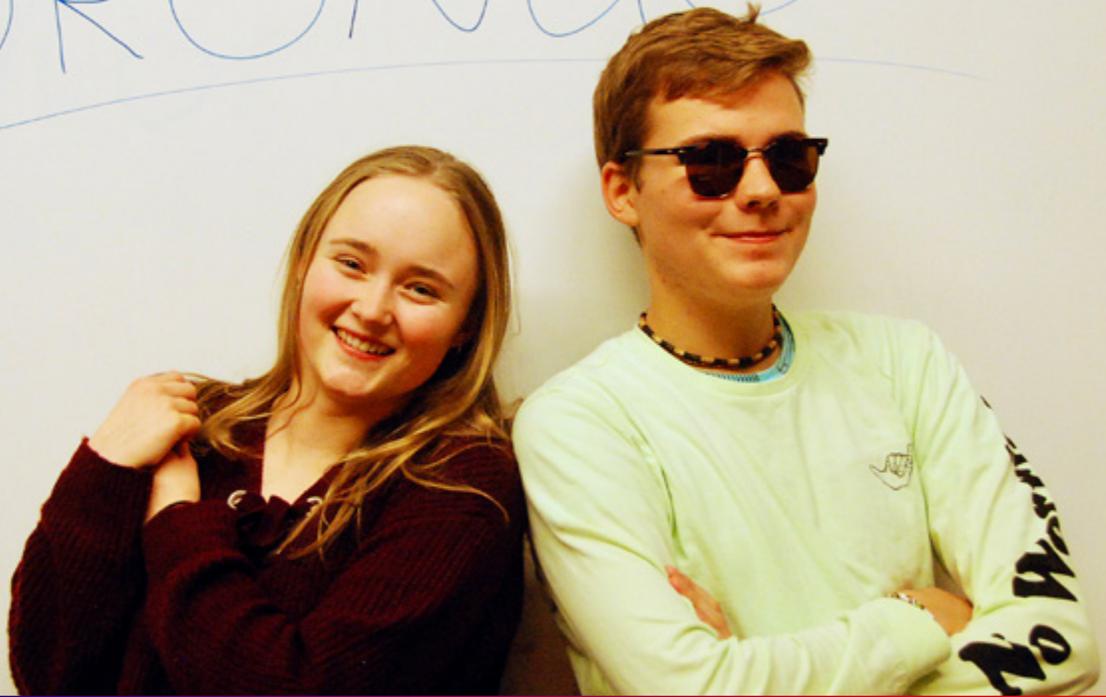
One of the best-known programming languages was created in 1995. Java, which was originally only intended to be used on hand-held devices, was later developed to

"There are thousands of other programming languages that could be mentioned, which all contribute to the technology we use in our daily lives. We often take for granted just how much we rely on these languages. And just like these naturally occurring ones, programming languages change and develop over time, to keep up to date with our needs. Perhaps in the future, they may even take the place of spoken language."

work for the World Wide Web. Today, roughly 3 billion devices run Java programs. Google created Go in 2009 to help deal with the ever-expanding and evolving technological world. It allowed programmers to work more efficiently on much larger systems than before. In 2014, Apple developed Swift as a replacement for all the C programs. It is a much more versatile and comprehensive programming language, and can be used on desktop and mobile apps.

This brief timeline is by no means complete. There are thousands of other programming languages that could be mentioned, which all contribute to the technology we use in our daily lives. We often take for granted just how much we rely on these languages. You could even argue we use them more extensively than we do English, Dutch, Mandarin, or any spoken language. And just like these naturally occurring ones, programming languages change and develop over time, to keep up to date with our needs. Perhaps in the future, they may even take the place of spoken language completely. Let this serve as a reminder, for now, not to forget about this very special, very useful, and very unique form of communication.

DRONGGO!



RIPPER AUSSIE SUMMARY

On the 3rd of December, **Anouk Roggema** and **Gideon van Wijk** hosted a presentation as an introduction into the cultural and linguistic basics of Australian English, the dialect/language spoken by most Australians today. In this article, they will give an informal summary of the linguistic aspects covered in their presentation.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the extremely high amount of diversity within Australia and the history of colonisation, there are many so-called “ethnolects” and other cultural/regional accent markers. However, these are not as common, and so we will primarily discuss the Broad, General, and Cultivated accents. As such, the identification of these three “main” accent groups is a generalisation.

PHONETICS / PHONOLOGY

Consonants (CAussienants)

The consonant pool of Australian English is largely the same as other variants of English. However, there are some notable differences including the aspects of Rhoticity, Linking & Intrusive R’s, Alveolar Taps, Coalescence, and Unreleased [t̚].

Firstly, Australian English is non-rhotic. This means that despite /r/ being pronounced word-initial and pre-vocalic positions, /r/ is not pronounced in postvocalic positions. This is a pervasive feature with one notable exception to this rule. The exception is known as the linking and intrusive R in inter-vocalic positions. For example, the linking R is present in phrases such as “car alarm” and is thus pronounced [kɑːrələ:m], rather than [kɑːələ:m]. An example for the intrusive R would be the phrase “law and order”, pronounced as [lɔːrændɔːdə] (note bolding).

Another quality of Australian English, which it shares with General American English, is the alveolar tap, [ɾ]. It is also a partial merger of /t/ and /d/ in intervocalic positions. For example in words like “butter” [bʌɾə] and “ladder” [læɾə]/[lædə].

Australian English coalesces /tj/ and /dj/ become /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ respectively. This can be seen, for example, in the words “dune”, “duty”, and “Tuesday” ([dʒʌn], [dʒʌri], and [tʃʌ:zdeɪ]). Another case of coalescence is that /sj/ and /zj/ are often realised as [ʃ] and [ʒ], as in the words “assume” and “resume” ([əʃʌ:m] and [rɪzʌ:m]). Other dialects of English may realise these as [s] and [z].

Another feature that most Australians use is an unreleased [t̚] at the end of a word, for example in the words “trait” and “habit”.

Vowels (Aussie Aussie Aussie A E I O U!)

This is where the biggest variation can be found...

Diphthongisation

Australian English has a very large tendency towards diphthongisation, especially as a progression from long monophthongs. Some variations, such as the Broad accent include a drawl - a phenomenon where vowels which would otherwise be short are extended. This paves the way for these now-long monophthongs to be diphthongised in the same way. As such, accents with a drawl have a greater tendency for diphthongisation.

Examples of diphthongisation include the word “fleece”, which is nominally pronounced as [fli:s], can be pronounced as [fli:is] (Cultivated), [fli:is] (General), [flə:ɪs] (Broad), and many other variations in between. Or “face”, nominally [feɪs], which can be [fe:ɪs] (Cultivated), [fe:ɪs] (General), [fə:ɪs]/[fə:ɪs] (Broad), and other variations.

Trap-Bath Split

Another feature is the trap-bath split, whereby the vowel in these two words are pronounced in a different way. Most speakers of Australian English will use [ɐ] in words like ‘laugh’, ‘path’, and ‘class’, but there is still some variation. For example, Gideon speaks with a South Australian accent, pronouncing the /a/ in words like ‘plant’ and ‘example’ with [ɐ], whereas Anouk would use an [ɛ]. The reason for this is that speakers of South Australian English have a greater tendency to use the [ɐ] before [n] and [m]. This is known as the “Broad A”. This split exists to varying degrees across the world.

In American English, it is far less developed,

whereas the Australian states are a bit of a mix. The vocalisation of /l/ is another feature common in South Australia. In this phenomenon, a post-vocalic [l] will be dropped in favour of something similar to an [ʊ]. It can operate similarly to rhoticity, whereby prevocalic and intervocalic /l/ is still pronounced within the flow of speech. For example, “noodle”, “milk”, “veal”, and “fool” would be pronounced [nʌ:du], [mi:ʊk], [vi:ʊ], and [fu:ʊ] respectively.

Celery-Salary Merger

In Victoria, a feature of Australian English exists called the ‘celery-salary merger’ whereby, especially by younger people, the /e/ and /a/ are pronounced the same way and both sound like ‘salary’ [sæləri]. Due to the merger, many younger Victorian speakers thus pronounce their capital city Melbourne as [mælbən]. Interestingly, this celery-salary merger is also present for many older Victorians, but rather the other way around: both sound like ‘celery’ [seləri]. However, the generation in between does distinguish between the two.



THE THREE MAIN ACCENTS

Broad

Despite being less common than the *General* accent, the Australian *Broad* accent is best known abroad as the ‘strongest’ or ‘most stereotypical’ variation of Australian English. This is likely a result of popular media personalities such as Steve Irwin, Russell Coight, Crocodile Dundee, and former Prime Minister Julia Gillard. This is why many foreign actors (mostly Hollywood) will often attempt (and often fail) to impersonate it. We will discuss this again further on.

The Broad accent is mostly regionalised to rural areas. However, due to the vast nature of the areas that Australian rural communities cover, it is not entirely uniform in character. We will not be going into detail in this article, but it is good to keep in mind. In addition to rural communities, the broad accent is, to a lesser extent, associated with working-class urban communities.

This variation can be characterised by the following traits; consonant elision, syllable assimilation, restricted intonation, a drawl, and a greater tendency for pervasive nasality.

General

The *General* variety of Australian English is the most common variety, manifesting itself primarily in urban centres (where the majority of Aussies reside). As a result of this, it is the variety we have based the article on. Just like the *Broad* accent, the *General* accent also has variations, of which we have briefly covered some aspects. Notable speakers include Hugh Jackman, Ian Thorpe, Eric Bana, and the authors of this article.

Cultivated

The *Cultivated* accent is the least common variety and is more similar to Received Pronunciation (so-called “standard British English”) than any of the other accents, so it could be perceived as such by untrained ears. This variety is very much associated with the upper-class and is, therefore, sometimes colloquially referred to as the ‘posh’ accent. Due to its upper-class nature, it is quite rare and has been dwindling substantially as it mixes with the General accent. As the accent diminishes, some of the features have

integrated into the General accent. Examples include usages of [ɛɪ] in “face” and [aɪ] “price” in some speakers. Notable speakers of the cultivated accent include Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, and former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

GRAMMAR

‘But’ negation

A relatively uncommon, but very interesting, feature in Australian English which is more present in younger generations is the negation of a sentence by the addition of “but” to the end. For example, “I like him but” can be interpreted to mean “I don’t like him”.

- Notation: *I like.1sg he.3sg.obj NEG*

We hope you enjoyed this informal introduction into Australian English. We couldn’t cover everything but maybe in the future, we’ll do an instalment on Aussie slang, Music, or something else.

Cheers for reading!

P.S. the title of this piece refers to Aunty Donna’s (an Aussie sketch comedy group) *Ripper Aussie Summer* sketch series. Go watch it. You’re welcome.

Anouk Roggema and Gideon van Wijk



AMERICA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ACCENT

The Mid-Atlantic accent - how it came to be and how it disappeared!

By Linn Berkvens

Many films from the early 20th century are linguistically characterized by the fact that the cast of actors speak in an accent that seems to fall somewhere between a British accent (or, Received Pronunciation) and what we now recognize as General American English. This accent is most prominently characterized as being non-rhotic (meaning that the [ɹ] sound is dropped at the end of most words), emphasizing the [t] sound and softening vowels, though there are many more small features that distinguish it from a contemporary American speech pattern. This interesting accent is known as the Mid-Atlantic accent, and it wasn't just used in movies or theatre shows: it was considered a prestigious accent as well, used by individuals from the highest class.

How did this accent originate? Ever since the 19th century, many American upper-class communities adopted the qualities of British accents, mainly the non-rhotic aspect of this type of speech. According to sociolinguist William Labov, this accent was “taught as a model of correct English”. This superior view on the British accent might stem from the times that the United States was still a colony of the British. As of the beginning of the 20th century, a different kind of accent came into the picture. Phonetician William Tilly introduced, and consequently started teaching, a phonetically consistent American speech standard which, according to him, would “define the sound of American classical acting”.



"The time to make up your mind about people is never"

Katharine Hepburn
as Tracy Lord in
The Philadelphia Story, 1940

The accent now known as the Mid-Atlantic accent began to dominate the speech of actors of that time since they were classically trained and instructed to speak with it. Someone who largely contributed to

The Mid-Atlantic accent had never been a natural accent. Individuals who spoke it were explicitly taught how to use it.

this was voice coach Edith Skinner, once a student of Tilly, who phonetically codified the Mid-Atlantic accent as well as wrote an instructional text on the accent named 'Speak with Distinction'. She vigorously insisted on her students learning and using the accent during her time teaching at Juilliard. Because of the accent being displayed so widely on the cinema screens, it seems appropriate to speculate that it might have spread among regular audiences. This is however not confirmed. Perhaps two of the most notable actors who utilized the accent were Katherine Hepburn and Cary Grant, both displayed in the first part of the video below...



***Franklin D. Roosevelt
Madison Square Garden, 1936***

Outside the cinematic and theatrical world, the accent spread amongst aristocratic American families, due to it being taught in many preparatory schools. The accent was also referred to as World English. It very specifically did not derive from any regional dialect in America or England, supposedly to increase its feeling of internationality. Speaking with this accent gave an image of someone who was educated and cultured. It was indeed considered, what

we might call, a posh accent, only spoken among those who were the most cultivated, the most enlightened and, especially, the richest. An example of a lifelong speaker of this accent is American president Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose speech pattern is displayed in the video below.

After World War II, the use of the Mid-Atlantic accent, both in films as well as among the upper-class, very quickly decreased. The most prominent reason for this shift is due to the post-war economy in the United States. The economy increased significantly after America's involvement in the war, making the country the richest one in the world. The state of the economy changed many individuals' social status from lower-/working-class to middle-class. This meant that the rich upper-class was less idealized since life was now fairly comfortable for the majority of the population. Because of this, an accent specifically catered to this group of aristocratic individuals seemed quite ludicrous, and, therefore, it faded out of existence.

All of the aforementioned changes were also reflected in the film industry. Where the accent was widely popularized on the big screen before, it was now almost completely absent. Movies before the war seemed to often be more refined than reality. The behavior of upper-class people was admired and, on film, depicted in a glorified way. Their linguistic behavior was part of this as well. However, after the economic changes that occurred, the use of the Mid-Atlantic accent simply seemed too unrealistic given that it was barely used in real life anymore.

The Mid-Atlantic accent has never been a natural accent. Individuals who spoke it were explicitly taught how to use it. If this accent was even used among regular people before, it would now be completely obsolete. Without influence from aristocrats and movie stars, the common citizen had no real reason to speak in this accent. It is contemporarily only really used by actors when depicting historical figures or when appearing in a period piece. However, we can still always enjoy listening to recordings and videos of the time when this strange accent, which seems to find the middle ground between British and American accents, was used.

CODE-SWITCHING IN NIGERIAN HIP-HOP

By Miriam Mosesson

LANGUAGES IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, over 500 languages are spoken. Nigerian English is the official language and is used formally for government communication, and in the judicial, as well as the education system. Nigerian English was developed during the colonization of the country and is mostly influenced by British English rather than American English. However, there are phrases and words which are unique to Nigerian English (Chepkemoi, 2019).

In addition to Nigerian English, there is Nigerian Pidgin which is a contact language. It is spoken informally and has no official status. It was traditionally been associated with low prestige since it is mostly used by uneducated speakers. However, recently it has grown and is now the language with the highest population of users. It is also used by educated speakers for communication, and many people speak both varieties (Ogechi and Plag, 2018).

There are many regional languages in Nigeria, and Hausa is one of them. With around 30 million native speakers and 20 million using it as a second language, it makes it one of the largest languages in West Africa. In Nigeria, 25% of the population belongs to the Hausa people, and it is one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. Another regional language spoken by around 19 million is Yoruba, which is the native language of the Yoruba people and is spoken in West Africa.

NIGERIAN HIP-HOP

Hip hop came to Nigeria in the late 1980s and became popular in the country around the early 1990s with pioneering groups such as The Remedies, Trybesmen and the Plantashun Boyz. Since then, Nigerian hip-hop (NHH), also known locally as Gbedu or Naija, has become a well-known genre with a large fanbase of mostly young and middle-aged people. A typical feature for NHH is code-switching (the alternate use of two or more languages in the same conversation). Artists express their identity through language choice, and apart from singing in English, many people sing in Nigerian Pidgin and the regional languages. Singing in English and a regional language also represents a pan-Nigerian identity which differs from a purely English speaking identity, based on the policy of English being the official language in Nigeria. The code-switching serves a localising and globalising function in terms of having local listeners and expressing identity while still reaching out to a bigger audience (Akande, 2013).

Furthermore, NHH has been described by some as an imitative variety of American hip-hop. There are even opinions that NHHs reliance on American hip-hop results in local creativity being suppressed by American and Western influences. Some observers of NHH lyrics argue that the lyrics influence the audience negatively in the form of americanization and general openness to social vices. On the other hand, NHH unlike American hip-hop, typically exclude lyrics about gangsterism, sexualization and misogyny.



Linguistic Groups of Nigeria in 1979

STYL-PLUS

Styl-Plus started out as a gospel quartet and was formed in 1997 in Nigeria. In the early 2000s, the group went from only singing gospel to pop songs, including themes like love and inspiration. On their official website, the group writes that their motto is “Positive-Cultural-International” which they transmit through their language blended lyrics.

Styl-Plus dominated the Nigerian radio stations in 2003 with two singles, one of them Olufunmi (analyzed in this article) which made the group popular. As a boy-band singing about love, it may not be surprising that their fan base to a large extent consists of young girls.

OLUFUNMI - LANGUAGES AND STRUCTURE

The song *Olufunmi* is divided into two verses: a rap verse followed by a bridge, and a chorus that is sung twice after every verse and four times after the bridge. This makes it the main focus of the song. There is a very clear division between the languages that are used. The chorus is in Yoruba, which can be seen as a way to enhance the theme of the song while the rest is in Nigerian English. This indicates that the musicians had an intention to use two codes and that it was a conscious choice. Though the chorus shown in (2) is in Yoruba, there is some background singing that is in English. Following are some phrases that were picked up in the background:

Please don't leave me girl

Stay girl

Stay with me my baby

Please don't make me cry (while singing this the artist imitates a person crying by putting his fingers next to his eyes)

I'm waiting for you

(2) Olufunmi ooo	(God has given me) Name of a female Yoruba
Ma pa mi l'ekun o	Don't make me cry
Olufunmilola	(God has given me wealth) A fuller version of the name
Mase fi mi s'ile lai lai	Don't leave me forever
Duro timi ooo	Stay by my side
Olufunmi o	(God has given me) Name

It could be that the singers translated some of the main themes of the chorus into English and sign the meaning, so that an audience which does not speak Yoruba can still follow the chorus.

Furthermore, the words 'ekun' (tears), 'fi sile' (to leave) and 'duro' (wait) are all words in standard Yoruba and the musicians have avoided dialectal variations which again can be seen as a way to reach listeners across the country and from different tribes.

THE MUSIC VIDEO

The music video features two main settings. Firstly, there is a love story between a man (represented by the different band members in every scene) and a woman who is about to leave the country. The man who is in love with her runs to his car and drives to the airport to convince her to stay with him. These scenes are all in a Nigerian environment, judged by the nature and people in the background.

The second setting is the band members in a big room with a black background, and Styl-Plus written on the wall. All singers are wearing baggy clothes and are singing straight into the camera while dancing and moving to the music. After an informal conversation with four fellow students, we all agreed that the setting, clothes and body language are strongly associated with the American hip-hop culture, and artists like Ne-Yo and Usher were mentioned as comparisons.

While the language shifts are marked musically by the different parts of the song, this is not represented as clearly in the music video. The two settings shift multiple times and occur during both languages and all parts of the song.

THE LYRICS

The lyrics tell a story of a man who is deeply in love with a woman named *Olufunmi*, who is about to leave him. The man imagined a future with her and sings about how heartbroken he will be if she leaves, asking her to stay with him. At first, it seems like any other love song similar to many western ones. However, parts of the lyrics can be connected to Nigerian culture. A couple of times the song touches on the themes of marriage and children shown in examples (1) and (4).

(1) *When I said to you that I never want to love another woman
girl it was true, so true.
I meant to marry you and when I did,
I'd be the one to take care of you for you*

(4) *You could be the one to make me wanna have a child
You could be the one I'd take on a date down the
aisle
And be the first and the last girl to become my bride*

Marriage is an important part of Nigerian culture and is seen as sacred by many. It can, therefore, be assumed that singing about marriage can bring out emotions and convey a strong message of love, which would maybe not have the same effect in other cultures. In an interview with one of the band members, he is asked if he feels pressure from his parents to get married, to which he responds:

“There is no loving parent that will not mention it once in a while, but at the end of the day, you will accept what your child presents to you. If you force him to get married and for any reason, the union ends in divorce, you would feel sad. One must not get married to the wrong person as it is also crucial to the future of the unborn children”

As mentioned earlier, NHH has been accused of imitating the American variety. However, an important aspect of the lyrics in *Olufunmi* is the exclusion of gangsterism and sexualization. Many Western monolingual English songs sexualize women and include themes like one night stands and clubbing, which is also often featured in music videos. Styl-Plus, on the other hand, sings about true love and genuine feelings, including a reference to Romeo and Juliet, which in my opinion reflects the Nigerian culture in respect to the importance of marriage, compared to the American perception.

Hopefully, this article has piqued your interest, so consider reading the sources below. Hopefully, they can satisfy some of your curiosities!

1. Agbo, Ogechi & Ingo Plag (2018) The relationship of Nigerian Pidgin English and Standard English in Nigeria: Evidence from copula constructions.
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3. Babalola, E. Taiwo & Taiwo, Rotimi (2009) Code-switching in Contemporary Nigerian hip-hop music. *Itupale Online Journal of African Studies*.
4. Chepkemai, Joyce (2019) What Languages Are Spoken In Nigeria? Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-nigeria.html>
5. Niyi Akingbe & Paul Ayodele Onanuga (2018) Leveraging poetry on the airwaves: appropriating linguistic creativity in Nigerian hip hop lyrics, *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 15:1-2, 19-40, DOI: 10.2989/18121004.2018.1534335

Below are the links to the lyrics and music video of Olufunmi:

Lyrics:

<https://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/stylplus/olufunmi-lyrics-950455.html>

Music video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xNbe1Qg1_I



RESEARCH AT THE UVA

Kat-blad gives you a taste of the work done (or currently being done) in various fields of linguistics by both professional researchers and students.

Klaas Seinhorst MA

Phonetics, Phonology

Most of you probably know me as a teacher in the Phonology course, but the bulk of my workload is my PhD project “The learnability of phoneme inventories”, supervised by Paul Boersma and Silke Hamann. In my project, I try to shed some light on the question whether cross-linguistic tendencies in the structure of sound systems can be attributed to considerations of learnability, or in other words, if certain sound systems are more frequent than others because we find them easier to learn.

My dissertation will incorporate three different sources of evidence: computational, experimental, and typological. The computational part centers around a neural network model of auditory and lexical learning, developed by Paul and other (former) members of our research group. We use this model to simulate how the phonological features that are needed to define sound systems emerge from scratch, and how typological tendencies in sound systems result from cultural evolution.

In order to answer to my research question, I need to find out what exactly humans find easy or difficult to acquire; a pretty direct way to do that is to conduct an experiment. I’ve

done two, trying to figure out how two measures of complexity influence learning success: I taught participants phonological systems of different complexities and tested how well the learners could replicate them. A difficulty in designing these experiments was that participants had already acquired a spoken phonology, which might interfere with the learning task. At the advice of colleagues from the Sign Language group, I, therefore, used a simplified Sign Language instead.

Another crucial piece of information comes from typology: what patterns can we observe in natural languages? One study, done together with my student-assistant Floor, compares how well the two measures of complexity predict tendencies in a large database of sound systems; another evaluates a few attested sound changes in terms of their complexities.

It turns out that while individual learners try to reduce complexity, natural languages actually allow for a lot of complexity: apparently, learning biases may be overruled by phonetic biases (in speech perception and production).

***For more info, check out
Klaas' personal page here!***



RESEARCH AT THE UVA



Dr. Nel de Jong
Pyscholingustics

More and more Bachelor programs at Dutch universities are being taught in English. Many people are worried that students may not know English well enough to complete their studies successfully, and write clear and coherent papers. We tested how many words first-year Bachelor students know, and how much they know about these words. We then looked at whether their academic writing grades were related to their vocabulary knowledge, grammar knowledge, degree program and gender.

Participants were 168 Dutch and international students in their first year of a Bachelor degree program (Literature, Communication, or Science). They completed two vocabulary tests and made their Academic Writing and Grammar grades available. The first test was the *English Vocabulary Size Test* (Beglar, 2010). This multiple-choice test estimates the number of mid- and low-frequency words of which the participants can recognize a definition or a synonym. The second test was the *Word Associates Test* (Read, 1993; www.lex tutor.ca), which tests how many word associations (synonyms, collocations) participants can recognize. Dutch-speaking students also completed a Dutch equivalent of the *Vocabulary Size Test* (WTN-Plus; Linger & De Jong, 2019).

We first examined the vocabulary test scores. Results showed that participants who scored higher on the *Vocabulary Size Test* generally also scored higher on the *Word Associates Test* ($\rho = .54$). Additionally, Literature students scored higher than the Communication students on the *Vocabulary Size Test*, and higher than both the Communication and Science students on the *Word Associates Test*. Next, we examined the relationship between academic writing skills and other factors. We found that writing grades were predicted by the *Vocabulary Size Test* score, grammar grade and degree program, but not by *Word Associates Test* score and gender. English and Dutch vocabulary size scores showed a weak but non-significant correlation.

Although all students were able to write a clear and coherent paper, our study has shown that even at this advanced proficiency level, expanding vocabulary size and perfecting grammar knowledge may still help improve students' academic writing performance.

This study was conducted as part of Marcus Hewitt's Honors Program project at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, which was supervised by Nel de Jong. It will be presented in August 2020 at the conference of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) in Groningen.

Is academic writing performance of first-year university students predicted by their vocabulary knowledge, grammar knowledge, gender and degree program?

References

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- Linger, N., & de Jong, N. (2019). Knowledge of low-frequency and academic words in first and second language Dutch. *Poster presented at Vocab@Leuven*, Leuven, Belgium.
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RESEARCH AT THE UVA

**Sasha Damonte, Emma Peri, Bastiaan Sizoo,
Zawadi Williams**

First Year Linguistic Group Project

Falling with the Door into the House: Complaint Performance and Perceived Politeness thereof by Dutch English Speakers and British English Speakers

This cross-cultural study aims to ascertain whether there is a difference in the degree of directness used by Dutch English speakers (DES) and British English speakers (BES) in complaint production. It also aims to discern if this difference is dependent on social distance. Lastly, this study investigates whether the two populations differ in their perception of politeness, specifically in relation to varying levels of directness. Two separate experiments were conducted. In the first experiment, a sample of ten DES and ten BES participated in a written, multiple-choice discourse completion test (DCT), comprised of six different social situations of varying social distance. The participants were then presented with four options for complaint production and asked to select the one that they perceived to be the most appropriate. The options were created by applying directness strategies to spontaneous responses collected during a pilot study. The second experiment aims to discern whether DES and BES have different perceptions of politeness. Seven DES and seven BES rated the complaint-production options from Experiment 1 on a scale from one to six with '1' being 'very impolite' and '6' being 'very polite'. To analyse the collected data, t-tests were compared for the first experiment, while a linear regression analysis was conducted for the second experiment. The results show that DES and BES do not differ significantly in their perception of politeness. However, they do differ in the degree of directness they use in complaint production; notably, DES opted for more direct responses than BES in situations of high social distance. These findings also highlight the underlying pragmatic differences in the way DES and BES use English. As a result, they may contribute to the field of interlanguage pragmatics, and help improve the teaching of English as a lingua franca, by highlighting the importance of pragmatics in language acquisition.

Final Devoicing is Lenition Insights from Macedonian

Dr. Marijn van t' Veer
Phonology



In this study, I aim to compare the behavior of /v/ in Dihovo Macedonian (Groen, 1977). Its allophones in intervocalic and word-final positions are [v] and [f], but surprisingly a deletion option is available in both positions. Unfortunately, the source is quite restricted in breadth and depth. In collaboration with Mishko Bozinoshki and Silke Hamann, new data has been collected, and preparations for acoustic analysis are underway. What follows is a preliminary analysis based on the data reported in Groen (1977). Needless to say, I am quite curious whether the new data is consistent, or whether it will raise new and interesting questions.

Final Obstruent Devoicing (FOD) often results in the neutralisation of a contrast, and is frequently modeled in terms of the loss of a feature (Lombardi, 1995, and others). This observation lends credence to treat FOD as an instance of phonological weakening. On the other hand, Final Obstruent Devoicing leads to voiceless obstruents, which are typically seen as somehow stronger than voiced obstruents. Hence, it has been proposed that FOD is in fact a case of fortition, at least in some languages. (Iverson & Salmons, 2007, on German).

In Dihovo Macedonian, intervocalic /v/ undergoes dramatic degrees of lenition, resulting in sometimes in [v], but often rendered virtually imperceptible.

1. Intervocalic Lenition in Dihovo Macedonian

UR	SR	Gloss
/uvo/	[uo]	“ear”
/pravo/	[prao]	“right, true”

I take it as uncontroversial that the process illustrated in example 1 is one of lenition; the resulting segment is phonetically weaker (to the point of disappearance), and the position (intervocalic) is prosodically weak if any position is.

Let us next consider word-final occurrences of /v/ in Dihovo. Like in standard Macedonian, if /v/ is realised word-finally, it is realised as [f].

2. Final Devoicing in Standard Macedonian

UR	SR	Gloss
/nov/	[nof]	“new (M.sg)”
/nov-a/	[nova]	“new (F.sg)”

Crucially, however, it does not always make it to the surface, as omission of any realisation of word-final /v/ is in free variation with the devoiced allophone.

3. Word-final allophones of /v/ in Dihovo Macedonian

UR	SR	Gloss
/brav/	[braf] ~ [bra∅]	“ram”

The point here is that word-finally, /v/ is either devoiced or nearly completely omitted. This presents us with a situation where the same phoneme (/v/) has the same allophone (null) in two different positions, one of which is uncontroversibly weak.



дихово, Македонија

4. /v/ in Dihovo Macedonian

Intervocalic	Word-final
[v] ~ ∅	[f] ~ ∅

Under a strengthening analysis of FOD, we would be forced to conclude that for one and the same phoneme, the opposing forces of strengthening and weakening lead to partially overlapping results. Furthermore, we would have to conclude that fortition can lead to deletion.

I propose that the behaviour of /v/ in Dihovo Macedonian demonstrates that Final Obstruent Devoicing is a process of lenition. Following Harris (2009) I propose that phonological strength has a paradigmatic (i.e., lenition as the loss of a primitive) and a syntagmatic component (i.e., the prosodic position determines which primitive to sacrifice). In intervocalic position, the natural “move towards zero” (Hyman, 1975, citing Venneman) is to do away with primitives denoting consonantal properties (such as obstruency), whereas in word-final position the natural move to zero includes sacrificing laryngeal specifications (such as Voice).

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**For more info,
check out Marijn's
personal page
here!**



RESEARCH AT THE UVA

**Brittany Daize, Merel Koorn, Lizzie Oakey,
Erina Sawa**

First Year Linguistic Group Project

Assessing Language Attitudes towards Women's Use of Direct and Indirect Speech

While a significant amount of research which looks at different ways men and women produce speech has already been carried out, little attention has been drawn to language attitudes towards speech. Therefore, this paper focuses on the different ways men and women perceive women's speech, specifically, on the taboo subject of sex expressed euphemistically, directly and dysphemistically. The experiment was executed with an online questionnaire distributed to thirty male and thirty female native English speakers, aged between 18 to 25 years. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first gathered the background information of the participants, and the second contained the experiment itself. This consisted of audio fragments to which participants responded on both adjectival scales and a masculinity-to-femininity scale. Contrary to the hypothesis, the results showed that gender is not a main factor influencing men's and women's language attitudes towards women's speech on the taboo topic of sex. There were no significant differences between the average responses given by men and by women. This paper contributes to understanding societal perceptions of women's speech.



In loving memory of

Erina Sawa

1998 - 2020

惠理菜

*We were a small puzzle
And a piece is gone
We are all left baffled
Wish you could come*

*Good luck where nobody knows
Where every soul anyway goes
We hope you find the peace
Don't forget you will be missed*

*With so much still to say
We are all in silence
There will come a day
And we'll meet in heavens*



LUSTRUM IV

VOS IS TWENTY YEARS OLD

From Left to Right: Tjerk Bouwmans (chair) - Josje Ritmeester (secretary) - Casper Cornelisse (treasurer) - Luuk Hendrix (supervisor)

While I take a sip from my half-filled glass of water, the two gentlemen from the Lustrum Committee enter the pre-arranged restaurant P1lek, on the NDSM-werf, relatively early. Coolly, I stand up so that I can shake hands with both of them, but before I even get the chance to do so I am already hugged by Luuk (25, chair of the VOS-Board). ‘You are a legend, old sport, do not stand up for us.’ Tjerk (20, chair of the Lustrum Committee) equally respects my being-here by giving me a lenient handshake in combination with a friendly tap on my shoulder. ‘Good to see you again, Old Fox.’. By looking at Luuk’s appearance and gestures, you immediately see that he is no stranger to the game, as he directly beckons the waitress the moment Tjerk and him arrive at my table. ‘Can we all get that vegan dish? And a lot of bread, please. For me and him a beer. Do you want a beer as well, Sal?’ I shake my head and point to my glass of water in front of me. It is nice to see how much that red-haired kid from Almere grew into such a self-assured chair. I only met Tjerk a couple of months ago during a book presentation from some author at a publisher. The moment I came in he immediately approached me, after which he enthusiastically told me about the Lustrum Committee that he was leading. Because I was already there twenty years ago, I was very honoured to get the responsibility to do this interview and substantially question both gentlemen about the Lustrum-Week that will take place in April, from Monday the 20th till Friday the 24th.

How did you guys end up in the Lustrum Committee?

Tjerk: *At one of the first borrels of the year I saw that Luuk was wearing a VOS t-shirt with ‘Lustrum IV’ on it. I directly said: ‘If there will be a Lustrum Committee, I am going to lead it.’ I sort of shotgunned it, to be honest. During the last TWeekend, I asked two fellow students from my year that I am on a good level with to help me with the committee.*

Luuk: *Someone from the board has to keep an eye on the committee of course. In combination with the fact that the Lustrum is very special, I did not doubt any second to fill the last role in the committee.*

How does that interaction go between two ‘chairs’ in one committee?

Luuk: Absolutely fine, Old Fox. Tjerk is very ambitious in all of his ideas and thinks big. I help him and the others when it is needed. When something needs to be taken care of with another study association or with another chair-member, it is convenient that I can manage that directly.

Tjerk: I keep an eye on the committee itself, and Luuk keeps an eye on me. Just see it as an infinite circle with keeping each other sharp.

You already talked about two students from your year that complete the committee, Tjerk? Who are they?

Tjerk: Casper and Josje. Josje is our secretary and maintains the contact via the mail with certain locations. Casper is in charge of financial matters.

Luuk: You should meet them, Sal.

I am sure I will, Luuk. So, we are dealing with Casper, Josje, Luuk and Tjerk in alphabetical order. What makes this committee so special?

Tjerk: All of us aren't that special, I would say, but to be in this committee is very special. We have the privilege to organise a whole week that we only do every five years. VOS has turned 20 years old. I am only one year older, I realise.

Luuk: Besides, it is our very first Lustrum after the change to English as the main language for the study we do. VOS has grown immensely since the moment I became a member. It is undoubtedly the pinnacle of you as a current VOS-member, but it sure is the pinnacle from VOS as a student association until now as well.

That is a rough statement, Luuk. Tell me something about ‘Lustrum IV’.

Tjerk: We think very big, Sal. The whole week will be a celebration of the Lustrum with all sorts of activities, so that there is always something to do. It is not solely one activity or one trip, no. We really want to offer the members something to remember.

Luuk: Self-evidently, it will be a week full of partying with a huge final party on Friday, but we do not forget our duty as a study association by organising cultural and linguistic activities. Besides, there will be a day in honour of the old members, since we have not forgotten who kept VOS alive in the last 20 years.



What do these old members mean for VOS?

Luuk: They mean the world. They always cared to sustain the association, no matter how small it was. If you are going to celebrate a fourth Lustrum, you simply can not forget the people that made VOS great during the last twenty years. Momentarily, it is different. We have a big pool full of members, so forming a board is not that big of a problem, but back then there were only fifteen people who studied linguistics per year. Therefore, it could have been the case that nobody wanted to form a board one year. So, I am quite proud of the fact VOS is still here.

Tjerk: Besides, people love nostalgia. There is nothing better than reminiscing about things that have happened back then, and to be together.

Salomon Vos

WHAT DO THESE OLD MEMBERS MEAN FOR VOS?

Luuk

THEY MEAN THE WORLD.

Lustra tend to have some sort of theme, title or credo? Did you also think of something like that?

Luuk: Absolutely! We knew very quickly to whom we are going to dedicate the fourth lustrum to.

Tjerk: Indeed. We thought it was fitting to dedicate it to you, Old Fox. Lustrum IV will also be known under the name: *The Year of the Old Fox*.

I feel very honoured, boys. Will the Lustrum also represent some linguistic term or subject?

Tjerk: How the fuck do you know that, Old Fox!?! But, yeah, we do.

Luuk: Synecdoche! Tjerk and I are both very interested in semantics and pragmatics.

Tjerk: Apart from the fact that synecdoche is a very cool combination of letters, we also like the meaning it represents. Just like the synecdoche, we see Lustrum IV as a part of the whole. Study associations from the humanities work together, but tend to live apart from each other. We want to exemplify that Lustra are not only for the members from one association but also for members from other associations.

Luuk: They will be very welcome at certain activities. After all, we cannot exist without each other.

Due to the fact that members from other associations are also welcome, it would not be a surprise that you will also try to organise an activity or two with some other student associations, is it not?

Tjerk: Yes, we would love that. We are thinking of a night where students debate against each other or teachers, and where students talk about their experiences.

Luuk: Imagine the debate of Chomsky vs Foucault, or a random TED-talk, but then more witty and quicker. We are really looking forward to this evening!

Surely, you do not think small. Such a big week full of activities asks for the required logistics. Is the workload not too heavy for only four people in a committee?

Tjerk: I would not say the workload is too heavy, but we are certainly aware of the fact that we cannot do everything by ourselves. For that reason, there will be VOS-Volunteers at certain activities to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Luuk: Also, we will work together or ask for help from the activity committee or other active members when we organise something. Think of

evenings with for example music, art or a quiz. In a way, we make the “Lustrum Week” together.

It seems to me that the “Lustrum Week” will be a terrific memory. Are you also going to make sure that there will be artefacts or objects that remind them of Lustrum IV?

Luuk: There will be special limited lustrum merchandise. Besides, we are also working on an almanac/yearbook.

Tjerk: That almanac will be very cool, Old Fox! It will be full of stories, columns, interviews etcetera. Moreover, all members will be able to find themselves back in the almanac.

Do you two want to say something conclusive to the members of VOS and the readers of Kat-blad?

Luuk: When the time comes – very soon – purchase a *passe-partout*! It will give you certain privileges and funny extras during the “Lustrum Week”!

Tjerk: “Lustrum Week” is really going to be something. Do not ever forget that.

I say we toast on that!

Tjerk: I will toast with you when you have a beer in your claws in April, Old Fox!

Luuk: I would not worry about that, knowing the Old Fox, Tjerk! Cheers, Salomon! To *The Year of the Old Fox*!

Tjerk: To you, Old Fox! To synecdoche! And on top, to Lustrum IV!

Both chairs drink their glasses to the bottom. Time has passed very quickly apparently because when Luuk looks at the clock I notice he startles a bit. ‘We must go, Tjerk. It is time for the next appointment.’ Tjerk nods, stand up and pays the bill at the bar. After both gentlemen put on their jackets, they both give me a friendly yet strong handshake. ‘We would love to stay with you, Old Fox, but we cannot make a bad impression with the DJ we are planning to book for the end party.’ I calmly shake my head and tell them to go outside. while the two leave Pllek, I take a last sip from my glass of water. I should not have done this interview, I think by myself. Now, the only thing I can think about is this “Lustrum Week”.

Salomon Vos (De Oude Vos)

Ласкаво просимо до Українського Кє Таль!
 [lɛ'skavɔ 'prɔsɪmo dɔ ʊkrɛ'jin's'kɔɦɔ kʲɛ 'talʲ]
 'Welcome to Ukrainian Qué Taal!'

Ukrainian is an East Slavic language spoken by about 40 million people, 35 of whom are native speakers. It is the only official language of Ukraine, although in the East there are many Ukrainians (24%) who speak Russian on a daily basis^{[1][2]}.

Ukrainian is a fusional, nominative-accusative, null-subject language that has a T-V distinction. Underlyingly, the word order is SVO, but due to the Ukrainian inflectional system, the word order is rather free. Nouns decline for 7 cases, 3 genders and 2 numbers. Adjectives agree with nouns in case, gender and number. Verbs conjugate for 3 tenses, 2 voices, 3 persons and 2 numbers. Verbs come in aspect pairs - perfective and imperfective^[3].



Click on the icon to practice the following dialogue with Sasha.

Привіт, я Саша, а тебе як звати?

Pryvít, ja Sáša, a tébe jak zváty?

Ні, I'm Sasha and what's your name?

Привіт, мене звати Кат'є.

Pryvít, mené zváty Kát'je

Ні, my name is Katje.

Як ся маєш, Кат'є?

Jak sja máješ, Kát'je?

How is it going, Katje?

Чудово! А ти як?

Čudóvo! A ty jak?

Great! And how are you?

Дуже добре, дякую!

Dúže dóbre, djákuju!

Very good, thank you!

Звідки ти рідом?

Zvídky ty ródom?

Where are you from?

Я з України.

Ja z Ukrajíny

I am from Ukraine.

Кохання is usually used for romantic relationship, whereas Любов can be used in any situation.



Click here to see Ukrainian sound inventories.



Listen to words and phrases from different native speakers.



Love Terminology

Любов [lʊ'boʊ] love

Кохання [ko'xannʲɛ] love

Любити [lʊ'bʲɪtɛ] to love

Кохати [ko'xatɛ] to love

- один [o'dɪn] 1
- два [dʊɑ] 2
- три [trɪ] 3
- чотири [tʃo'tɪrɪ] 4
- п'ять ['pjɑtʲ] 5
- шість [ʃ'isʲt] 6
- сім ['sɪm] 7
- вісім ['visim] 8
- дев'ять ['dɛʊjɛtʲ] 9
- десять ['dɛsʲɛtʲ] 10
- сто [stɔ] 100
- тисяча ['tisʲɛtʃɛ] 1.000
- мільйон [mʲi'lʲjɔn] 1.000.000
- мільярд [mʲi'lʲjɑrd] 1.000.000.000

Fun fact: Ukrainian is one of the official languages of Transnistria*, on par with Moldavian and Russian.

*officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic - a breakaway state, internationally recognized as de jure part of Moldova.



Смачного!
 [smɛ'tʃnɔɦɔ] =
 Eet smakelijk!
 lit. smačno-ho =
 tasty-GEN

- (a) Я люблю тебе [ja lʊ'bʲlʊ te'bɛ]
 - (b) Я кохаю тебе [ja ko'xɑjʊ te'bɛ]
 - (a) Ja ljub-lju tebe
 - (b) Ja koxa-ju tebe
- I.NOM love-PRES.1SG you.ACC

Прислів'я [pre'slivjə] - Proverbs ^[4]

Або пан, або пропав.

abo pan abo propa-v
or lord or vanish-PST.1SG.M

Meaning: It will be what it will be: the risky business will either be a great success or a complete failure.

English equivalent: To sink or to swim.

Терпи, козаче, отаманом будеш.

terp-ý kozáč-e otamán-om bú-deš
be.patient-IMP.FAM cossack-VOC chieftain-ABL be-FUT.2SG

“Persevere, cossack, and you will become a chieftain.”

Meaning: Patience leads to success.

Не той хліб, що в полі, а той, що в коморі.

ne toj xlib ščo v pól-i a toj ščo v komr-i
not that.SG.M bread which in field-LOC but that.SG.M which in pantry-LOC

Meaning: Don't be too confident in your success until the deed is not finished. The end result is important.

English equivalent: Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.



Лайка ['lajkə] - Cursing

Ukrainian has a vast variety of curse words that are rather soft, some of which are shown below. The very harsh curse words are borrowed from Russian (e.g. *súka*).

Дупа ['dupə] ass

Йолоп ['jɔlop] fool (for men)

Дурена [dʊ'repə] fool (for women)

Курва ['kurvə] slut (also used as a curse exclamation)

Бздун [bzɔdun] (for men) farter

Бздюха ['bzɔdʲuxə] (for women) farter

Біс [bis] evil spirit (e.g. devil or Satan)

Іди до біса ['idɪ dɔ 'bisə] go to hell / screw you (lit. to the evil spirit)

Якого біса? [jə'kɔɦɔ 'bisə] Why/what the fuck?

Скоромовки [skɔrɔ'movkɪ] - Tongue twisters

Slow Speech



Бурі бобри брід перебрели, Бúri bobrý brid perebrelý,
забули бобри забрати торби. zabúly bobrý zabráty torbý.
Fulvous beavers waded a ford but they forgot to take their bag (with them).



Хитру сороку спіймати морока, Хýtru soróku spijmála moróka,
а на сорок сорок — сорок морок. a na sórok sorók - sórok morók.
There is a trouble catching a magpie, but forty magpies mean forty troubles.



Недоперекваліфіціровавшійся. Nedoperekvalificirovavšijsja
It is a made-up word that no one would ever use, but it is a word nonetheless.
nedo-pere-kvalificirovavšijsja basically means un-over-qualified, which makes no sense.



Fast Speech



Goodbye!

Formal

До побачення! [dɔ po'batʃennjə] **

** lit. until meeting

Familiar

Давай! [de'vaj]

Па-па! [pe'pa]

Чао какао! [tʃao ke'kɔo] *

* lit. ciao cocoa



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