THE (UN)MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

THE QUEST FOR THE EUREGION-FACTOR

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TWO PARTS:

THE MAKING & UNMAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS
“Language and cultural differences have been identified as the most important obstacle for cross-border communication and workplace.”

Uit: CPB, De arbeidsmarkt aan de grens met en zonder grensbelemmeringen. (2016:4) 
https://www.cpb.nl/publicatie/de-arbeidsmarkt-aan-de-grens-met-en-zonder-grensbelemmeringen
The MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

• WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES (MULTILINGUALISM) AS A PROBLEM?

• HISTORY........
Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803)
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Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 -1803) was a German philosopher. He had a great view!

• That what makes us humans human are language diversities between societies and nations.

• “Language is the essence of the nation”
• “Language is crucial for a national identity”

• Modern nation-state formation in Europe (the Netherlands, France) during 19th century
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Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 -1803)

• A new word was founded i.e. the Dutch language (as the French or the German language) meaning that this language is spoken within the national borders of The Netherlands ONLY : Nederland - Nederlands

• National identities were and are expressed by the idea: ONE nation, ONE people, ONE language, ONE flag and ONE anthem
The Dutch Language: Nederlands
This language i.e. DUTCH is completely identifiable and separable from another language in another nation, for example German in Germany.
“Every nation has a language of its own”

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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY (based on Herder)

MYTH:

- An European state like the Netherlands is monolingual
- The existence of dialects and other languages hinders the facilitation of ideological unity between all Dutchmen, Frenchmen etc....
- People only communicate in a complete language and not in bits and pieces
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THE *EFFECTS* OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY (based on Herder)

FRANCE 1794: Grégoire’s (leading politician) report (see Leerssen 2006):

“On the necessity and the means of destroying regional dialects and to render usage of standard French universal”.

Standard French was the language of only 15 out of 83 departments; there were no less than 30 different regional languages in France.
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THE **EFFECTS** OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY (based on Herder)

• The erasure of numerous languages in public and official activities of national governments:
  - France: Breton, Corsican, Basque; Germany: North Frisian, Sorbian; Italy: Friulan, Sardinian; the Netherlands: Frisian, Limburgish; Portugal: Mirandes; Spain: Galician, Aragonese; Great Britain: Scottish Gaelic, Cornish.
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- **REALITY**: Every European state is multilingual (in the past, now and future)

- **NEEDED NOW:**
  - **DISINVENTION** of Herder’s idea of one nation – one language
  - It worked well in the past to create nation-states
  - But is outdated now: people are bidialectal/bilingual, people communicate also in bits and pieces, a language is not a fixed object etc....
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HOW to *unmake* linguistic borders?...but first the effects of Herder’s one nation – one national language?

- Societal bi/multilingualism had to disappear (dialects, regional languages, other languages)
- Individual bi/multilingualism had to disappear through education and public discours
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• Individual bi/multilingualism had to disappear

• Opinions:
  - Dialect speaking children do not acquire the national language as a native speaker
  - Bilingual children do not acquire the national language as a native speaker
LEAVE YOUR HOME LANGUAGE OTHER THAN THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE IN YOUR BACKPACK, DON’T TAKE IT INTO SCHOOL
ONLY LANGUAGES ACQUIRED AT SCHOOL AND NOT AT HOME ARE IMPORTANT: ENGLISH < FRENCH < GERMAN
MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH MYTH

Bidialectal/bilingual children are proficient:
linguistically, cognitively, societally, economically
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• The disinvention of Herder’s idea
  - Dialect and other language speaking children are PROFICIENT. In the national language, they don’t lag behind, as speakers, they are not deviant
Zero correlation between dialect and CITO-endtest

Paul Jungbluth: After correction of Social Milieu, there is NO correlation: dialect speaking children from all milieus reveal the same CITO scores as monolingual ‘Hollanders’
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• The disinvention of Herder’s idea
  - Monolingualism is the exception worldwide, people worldwide speak various languages/dialects:

• MYTH:
  - people always speak one language in every situation regardless of their interlocutor(s)
  - Language is to blame
An interviewee informs: “Further, Limburg is a closed community which is being cultivated by the use of dialect. Integration requires more effort in a closed community”. (reaction to report Limburgian identity 2017 by Flycatcher Internet research, assignment De Limburger and Limburgs Museum)

https://www.limburger.nl/cnt/dmf20171016_00048989/je-komt-er-niet-echt-goed-tussen-bij-de-limburgers
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However, a dialect = language is not responsible for the degree of experienced *openness* or *closedness* of a part of society; it depends on the attitudes of speakers, independent of their languages.

- So-called cultivation through the use of Dutch, German, English can have the same effect.
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Consequence of Herder’s idea (centers and peripheries):

“That what is considered as Limburg’s unique cultural aspects possibly influence increasing health care consumption in shrinking areas: low self-esteem, sensitive to authority, no ability or authority to act or to decide on one’s own.” (Reaction to: Regionale verschillen geduid. Exploratief onderzoek naar hoog voorzieningengebruik in het sociale domein, Engbersen, R. & Uyterlinde, M., 2017)
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Consequence of Herder’s idea:

- creation of a nation-state, a national unity with centers and peripheries and respective power dynamics
- Limburg is a national PERIPHERY (no dominant power, especially linguistically)
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The Quest for the Euregio-Factor:

- Limburg is a euregional CENTER (especially linguistically)

LIMBURG’s strength is its ‘natural’ multilingualism:
- Traditional multilingualism crosses borders: dialects
Dialect area: crossing national borders

From Venlo (NL) to Düsseldorf (G), to Aachen (G) to Maastricht (NL), to Tienen (B) and back to Venlo (NL)
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LIMBURG’s strength is its ‘natural’ multilingualism:

• Traditional border multilingualism: German, French
• Lingua Franca: English
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Website WK Wielrennen 2012
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LIMBURG’s strength is its ‘natural’ multilingualism:

- Traditional border multilingualism: German, French
- New border multilingualism: Turkish, Polish
- New modes of communication: receptive multilingualism (luistertaal)
- Code-mixing
- Lingua Franca
- Multilingual creativity to communicate in bits and pieces, multilingual ears and linguistic awareness
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The linguistic POWER of Limburg; the invention of multilingual Limburg in a euregional context

- Needs *dis*inventing monolingualism
- Needs *(re)*inventing ‘natural’ multilingualism (local, provincial, euregional)
- Needs *inventing* new euregional languages (Turkish, Polish, Arabic)
- Needs *inventing* bits and pieces of language
- Needs *(re)*inventing its strength (high self-esteem, self-respect as dialect speaker, bilingual speaker)
References


References