

THE (UN)MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

THE QUEST FOR THE EUREGION- FACTOR

Leonie Cornips
FASoS, Maastricht University
*Institute for Transnational and Euregional
Cross Border Cooperation and Mobility (ITEM)*
& Meertens Instituut (KNAW)

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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)

The MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

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

The MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

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 image features a Dutch flag (Nederlands) with three horizontal stripes of red, white, and blue, set within an ornate, gold-colored frame. The flag is depicted with a slight wavy texture, suggesting it is blowing in the wind. The frame is highly detailed with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns.

The Dutch Language: Nederlands

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Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 -1803)

- 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.

The UNMAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

- 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....

The MAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

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 discourses

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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
Bidialectal/bilingual children are proficient:
linguistically, cognitively, societally, economically



The UNMAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

- 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

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“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)

The UNMAKING OF LINGUISTIC BORDERS

LIMBURG's strength is its 'natural' multilingualism:

- Traditional border multilingualism: German, French
- Lingua Franca: English

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Website WK Wielrennen 2012



Maastricht University



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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 **disinventing** 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)

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