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On the nature of mixed languages: The case of Bildts

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Abstract: It was recently claimed, in the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Issue 242) that the Bildt dialect in Friesland (Netherlands), spoken from the sixteenth century in a region reclaimed from the sea, poses a specimen of so-called “mixed languages”, characterised by a split between the source language of the “grammar” (from Frisian) and that of the “lexicon” (from Dutch). This article evaluates the linguistic arguments and poses a rather different conclusion to that above. Many of the grammatical similarities between Frisian and the Bildt dialect are not the result of borrowing or imposition from Frisian, but are (a) shared innovations in Frisian and Dutch based varieties in Friesland (including the Bildt dialect) in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, (b) commonly preserved archaisms, and (c) the result of the convergence of Frisian with Dutch. It is suggested that all early-modern language varieties spoken in Friesland were part of a *Sprachbund*, that also comprised the vernaculars of North Holland, under the umbrella of the emerging Standard Dutch. This different linguistic interpretation makes the sociolinguistic argument of identity-driven language mixing obsolete, because such a mixing never took place. It can, however, be acknowledged that the current shape of some Dutch-based varieties in Friesland can synchronically be re-analysed in terms of being “mixed languages”.

Keywords: Frisian, mixed languages, *Sprachbund*

1 Introduction

A recent article by Van Sluis et al. (2016) is called “Bildts as a mixed language”. A prototypical mixed language is defined as a variety “[...] showing a split between the source language of the ‘grammar’ and that of the ‘lexicon’, with variation within the class of ‘function words’” (Matras 2003: 152). Van Sluis et al. (2016) claim that Bildts, a language spoken in a part of the Dutch province

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Fryslân (Friesland), can typologically be ranked under the “mixed” languages, in one league with e.g. the African language Ma’á. In the case of Bildts, one is historically dealing with varieties of Dutch on the one hand, spoken by at least a substantial part of the initial settlers of this area that was reclaimed from the sea in the early sixteenth century, and the Frisian language of the adjacent “old” land on the other hand. The authors see widespread bilingualism among the speakers of Bildts as a reason that “[t]he original Hollandic grammar [...] was eroded” and “[...] the lexical elements [...] came to be imported into a framework of Frisian contextual flexion and syntax [...]” (Van Sluis et al. 2016: 77).

The interpretation of the lexicon will not be a point of discussion here: the current author and Van Sluis et al. agree that it is basically Hollandic (Dutch) with some lexical borrowing at a level that does not exceed the level of borrowings in any moderate form of language contact, and hence is far under the level of e.g. the Romance impact on English or the Low German impact on Scandinavian languages. The whole line of argumentation of Van Sluis et al. relies on a proper classification of the “Frisianness” of the grammatical framework.

The authors hardly mention, however, the fact that the Bildt dialect is part of a series of very similar varieties spoken in Fryslân, which are widely described as mixtures of Frisian and Dutch: Town Frisian, spoken in various historical cities in Fryslân, the dialect of the island of Ameland and the dialect of Midland on the island Terschelling (Haan et al. 2013: 724–733). The discussion about the origin of these dialects has been an on-going debate (see for an overview Bree et al. [2008: 34–38]). This debate can be summarized in three scenarios of the origin of Town Frisian (also applicable to the other mentioned varieties):

1. Town Frisian is Frisian that was largely re-lexicalized with Dutch words;
2. Town Frisian is the result of incomplete L2-acquisition by Frisian L1-speakers;
3. Town Frisian is mainly the result of the adoption of sixteenth century spoken Dutch, especially from North Holland.

The most recent representative of the first scenario was Haan (1992: 11–12). Van Sluis et al. seem to suggest a new variant of this first scenario: the emergence of Bildts was not the result of a deliberate relexicalisation of Frisian for communicational purposes (as claimed by Haan), but a gradual(?) loss of the Hollandic grammar and its replacement by the Frisian grammar. This seems to pose a novelty in language contact. As grammar is generally considered to be more stable than the lexicon and generally identified with the linguistic substratum or source language (Bree et al. 2008: 23–24), it implies that Bildts is primarily the result of speakers of Frisian who adopted the Hollandic lexicon

from the original settlers of the region. This is not further explored here, because of other, more factual shortcomings in the interpretation of Van Sluis et al.

This article purports that the Frisianness of the Bildts grammar is overestimated by Van Sluis et al. and that Bildts cannot be considered a “mixed” language in the strict typological definition as claimed by them. One can definitely agree that Bildts bears the traces of a long-standing language contact between a Hollandic dialect and neighbouring Frisian, but the impact on the grammar was less deep than claimed by Van Sluis et al.; moreover, the direction of the transfers was not only from Frisian to Bildts, but also from Hollandic (not necessarily from the Bildt region) to Frisian. Various communalities between Frisian and Bildts should rather be labelled as expressions of a *Sprachbund*, where innovations and retentions are shared in a way that languages show more common structural features than they did at their initial stage of contact.

The next section presents a re-evaluation of the linguistic arguments by Van Sluis et al. Section 3 discusses the sociological aspects that are claimed to have contributed to the “mixed language” status of Bildts. These revisited arguments are piped into an alternative typological interpretation in Section 4 and summarized in the concluding section, which also contains an epilogue about Town Frisian and “mixed languages”.

2 The linguistic arguments

The grammar and lexicon of Bildts is fairly well known and described in e.g. Koldijk (2004) and Buwalda et al. (2015). Modern West Frisian is accessible in e.g. Tiersma (1999), or the online *Taalportaal* (<http://taalportaal.org/taalportaal/topic/>) and the Dictionary of the Frisian Language (Van der Veen and De Boer: 1984–2011). Bildts grew from the contact between sixteenth century Dutch speaking settlers from the current provinces of North and South Holland with speakers of Frisian. Van Sluis et al. (2016: 62) state that they “[...] will compare twentieth century Bildts with twentieth century Frisian and twentieth century South Hollandic, and [...] will rely on knowledge of the historical development of Frisian and Dutch in order to arrive at a well-motivated interpretation of that comparison.” This is a fundamental methodological problem. In the constellation of (emerging) Standard Dutch, Hollandic dialects, Bildts and Frisian, one is basically dealing with “moving targets”. All these varieties changed and the problem is that apart from the (emerging) Standard Dutch,

probably the least important partner in this constellation, there is little information about the shape of the other three varieties in play. An additional problem of the Hollandic dialects is that we have indications that settlers of the Bildt region came from both South and North Holland, implying a large range of possible source varieties. Moreover, the dialects of North Holland are evidently forms of Franconian on a Frisian substratum (see e.g. Hoekstra 1994; Hoekstra 2012; Bree 2012), so some of the similarities between Frisian and Bildts may be rooted in the fact that the first speakers in the Bildt region brought these features in their Hollandic dialects from North Holland (Versloot 2013: 305–306), features that happened to match the language of their new neighbours. Quite some information about these changing circumstances can be found in Bree et al. (2008: 219–229, in particular), but also in Haan et al. (2013) and in Jonkman and Versloot (2016: 71–74, 118–122).

Like Van Sluis et al., this article will refer to features found in the archaic twentieth century Hollandic dialects, both from South and North Holland. This knowledge will be extended with information from seventeenth century forms of (supposedly) spoken Amsterdam Dutch, based on a small corpus of comedies by Bredero (1616) and Tegnagel (1642). The shape of Early Modern Frisian can be reconstructed by using Frisian texts from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, all accessible in Versloot et al. (2006). The following discussion will run through most of the linguistic items that Van Sluis et al. (2016) discuss (page numbers without name/year refer to this publication).¹

2.1 General impression

On pages 63–64 of their work, Van Sluis et al. (2016) present an example sentence that should illustrate that “all of [its] forms reveal that the development of Bildts subsequent to its introduction to the Frisian environment has been such that it converges with Frisian, and not with Dutch [...]”:

¹ An important source for the history of the Bildt dialect are the texts written by Dirk Jansz., a farmer in Het Bildt in the early seventeenth century (Jansz and Gerbenzon 1960). Van Sluis et al. (2016: 75) say that “[...] the text as a whole has been claimed not to give a reliable impression of early seventeenth century Bildts”. Haan et al. (2013: 726) state that his texts were “[...] written in what seems to be a mixture of emerging S[andard] D[utch] of his era and local forms”. The analysis of the language by Fokkema (Jansz. and Gerbenzon 1960: IL–LXIII) is fairly pre-occupied with traces of Frisian rather than identifying the exact relation between this language specimen and the spoken Hollandic language of the Bildt region at that time. A comprehensive analysis of his writings from the perspective of seventeenth century Hollandic and present day Bildts is pending.

- (1) *dou he-st der feul meer fan loof-d*
 you-2SG have-2SG of.it much more of believe-PRF
- (2) *as-te doe wet-e wou-ste*
 than-you-2SG then know-INF want.PST-2SG
 ‘You have believed much more of it than you wanted to admit at the time’

Table 1 illustrates why people perceive Modern Bildts as being close to Frisian: in these eleven words plus the word order phenomenon, Modern Frisian and Bildts concur (nearly) completely in 8 (4+4) aspects, including the striking lexical similarity in the 2nd person singular. Modern Dutch and Bildts comply (almost entirely) in 6 (2+4) aspects. Despite this, the entire sentence is easily understandable for a speaker of Dutch, assuming that s/he recognizes the meaning of *dou hest* (e.g. thanks to knowledge of the German *du hast*).

Table 1: An example sentence by Van Sluis et al. (2016) in Modern Frisian, Dutch and Bildts.

Modern Frisian	<i>do</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>folle</i>	<i>mear</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>leaud</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>witte</i>	<i>woest</i>
	[dɔw]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[folə]	[mi.ər]	[fɔn]	[ljɔwt]	[ɔstə]	[du]	[vitə]	[vu:əst]
Modern Bildts	<i>dou</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>feul</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>loofd</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>wete</i>	<i>wouste</i>
	[dɔw]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[fø:l]	[mi.ər]	[fan]	[lo:ft]	[astə]	[du]	[ve:tə]	[vɔwstə]
Modern Dutch	<i>Jij</i>	<i>hebt</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>veel</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>geloofd</i>	<i>dan je</i>	<i>toen</i>	<i>wou</i>	<i>weten</i>
	[jɛːi]	[hɛpt]	[tr]	[vɛ:l]	[mi.ər]	[van]	[xəlɔwft]	[dæːjə]	[tun]	[vɔw]	[vɛːitə]

Note: Dark grey marks identical forms, light grey is used to mark near identical forms and the identical word order and infinitival ending in the verbal cluster in Frisian and Bildts on the one hand, and the root vocalism overlap of the verbs between Bildts and Dutch on the other.

The sentence illustrates in a perfect way the pitfalls of the whole methodology: sounding fairly Frisian from the modern perspective of a comparison between Standard Dutch and Frisian, the sentence illustrates on closer scrutiny exactly the opposite of what its designers stipulate. Van Sluis et al. see “Frisian” features in *hest*, *doe*. They acknowledge that *dou* ‘you’ may have been Hollandic still in the sixteenth century (2016: 68), a pronoun which comes with a Hollandic verb form **hest* from Dutch *hebben* ‘to have’. The form *doe* ‘then’ is – contrary to their statement, however – without any doubt *not* Frisian. It is common in Holland in the seventeenth century, while Frisian had *da* or *do* < OFri. *thā*. *Doe* appears for the first time in Frisian in 1602 in the writing of J.

J. Starter, who came from Holland, lived in Leeuwarden and acquired Frisian as a second language learner. The form *doe* did not become widespread in Frisian before the eighteenth century. The complexity and dynamics of the position of Bildts becomes more clear in a comparison with all the varieties involved. See Table 2.

The pronunciation of the historical samples is an educated guess. The “North Hollandic ca. 1600” variety is based on the seventeenth century Amsterdam dialect, with a replacement of the pronoun and verb form of the second person singular (Verdenius 1942) and the application of the word order of northern North Hollandic dialects as known in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Versloot et al. 2012).

Comparison of Bildts with the early seventeenth century Amsterdam dialect teaches that Bildts and the old Amsterdam dialect only differ in the use of *dou/jy*, the word order in the verbal cluster, the infinitival ending and potentially in the extent of the devoicing of word initial fricatives and final devoicing.² Combining the Amsterdam dialect from the seventeenth century with knowledge about the morphology and syntax of North Hollandic dialects from the nineteenth and twentieth century (Winkler 1874a: 40; Pannekeet 1995) leads to a reconstructed form of North Hollandic around 1600, which is basically identical with the shape of the sentence in the Bildt dialect.

There is no convergence of Bildts to Frisian in this example sentence, rather the direction is the other way around. The Frisian preposition *fen* was replaced by the Dutch based form *fan*, which underwent a further development in the pronunciation in the nineteenth century, when /a/before /n/ became [ɔ] in Frisian, hence the Modern Frisian [fɔn] versus the Bildts [fan], which did not (!) follow this change. The second instance of the convergence of Frisian with Hollandic is the mentioned borrowing of the older Dutch *doe*, replacing the genuine Frisian forms *da* and *do*. Frisian also implemented the diphthongisation of word final /u:/to /o.u/, being part of the Dutch variant of the “Great Vowel Shift”. So it is Frisian that converged to Bildts or rather Hollandic and Dutch in general. Standard Dutch moved away from its sixteenth and seventeenth century form in the region Holland, which was more extensively kept in the Bildt dialect, although we certainly don’t want to

² In the twentieth century Amsterdam dialect, Standard Dutch initial /z/ and /v/ were pronounced as [s] and [f], but the consistent spelling with <z> and <v> by the seventeenth century comedy writers makes us assume that they were rather pronounced as in Modern Dutch, where these consonants are half voiced. Final devoicing spread gradually and affected Frisian in the nineteenth century. Final devoicing of at least /d/ is still absent among some speakers of the Dutch-based dialects of Midsland and Ameland.

Table 2: The example sentence by Van Sluis et al. (2016) in six different modern and historical varieties, including the language of Het Bildt.

Frisian ca. 1600	<i>du</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>folle</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>fen</i>	<i>leeuwd</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>witte</i>	<i>woeste</i>
	[du]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[folə]	[mi.ər]	[fɛn]	[li.əwɔ̯]	[astə]	[da]	[vɪtə]	[vuːrəstə]
Modern Frisian	<i>do</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>folle</i>	<i>mear</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>leaud</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>witte</i>	<i>woest</i>
	[dɔːu]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[folə]	[mi.ər]	[fɔn]	[ljoːwt]	[ɔstə]	[du]	[vɪtə]	[vuːrəst]
Modern Bildts	<i>dou</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>feul</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>loofd</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>wete</i>	<i>wouste</i>
	[dɔːu]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[føːl]	[mi.ər]	[fan]	[loːft]	[astə]	[du]	[vɛtə]	[vɔːwstə]
Nhollandic ca. 1600	<i>dou/du</i>	<i>hest</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>veul</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>loofd</i>	<i>aste</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>wete</i>	<i>wouste</i>
	[dɔːu]/[du]	[hɛst]	[tr]	[yøːl]	[mi.ər]	[yan]	[loːyɔ̯]	[astə]	[du]	[vɛtə]	[vɔːwstə]
Amsterdam ca. 1625	<i>iy</i>	<i>hebt</i>	<i>ter</i>	<i>vuel</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>loofd</i>	<i>as je</i>	<i>doe</i>	<i>wou</i>	<i>weten</i>
	[jɛːi]	[hɛpt]	[tr]	[yøːl]	[mi.ər]	[yan]	[loːyɔ̯]	[æçə]	[du]	[vɔːu]	[vɛːtən]
Modern Dutch	<i>jij</i>	<i>hebt</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>veel</i>	<i>meer</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>geloofd</i>	<i>dan je</i>	<i>toen</i>	<i>wou</i>	<i>weten</i>
	[jɛːi]	[hɛpt]	[tr]	[yːl]	[mi.ər]	[yan]	[xəlɔːwft]	[dɑ̃ːjə]	[tun]	[vɔːu]	[vɛːtə]

assert that Bildts has remained unchanged since its establishment in the sixteenth century. It can be argued that this sentence, that Van Sluis et al. designed to illustrate their claim of Bildts as a “mixed language” with a Dutch lexicon embedded in Frisian grammar, has illustrated that the dynamics are more complicated and that this example at least does not support such an interpretation.

2.2 Phonology

The realisation of the word initial <g> as [g] in Frisian and Bildts instead of the [x] in Dutch and Hollandic is definitely a case of the convergence of Bildts with Frisian. Older stages of Dutch and Hollandic had rather [ɣ] there. Siebs (1931: 76) notes down the pronunciation with [ɣ] for the Bildt dialect (*gân* = [ɣa:n]). The situation is, however, more complicated in terms of the geographical distribution. The /g/ is nowadays also pronounced in the “Frisian” way in other Dutch-based varieties in Fryslân: Town Frisian, the dialect of Midsland on the island Terschelling and in the dialect of Ameland. The pronunciation with [ɣ] is, however, found in the genuine Frisian dialects of Schiermonnikoog and West and East Terschelling, just as in the ultimate south of the province. This southern region with spirant realisation in Frisian was much bigger in the nineteenth century (Siebs 1901: 1296). It may have been due to the influence from neighbouring Dutch and Low Saxon and would be an instance where the external influence on Frisian was reversed in the twentieth century. On the more local scale, the pronunciation [g] in the Bildt dialect is indeed a case of convergence with the adjacent Frisian.

This seems not to be the case with the pronunciation as [ɑi] and [ɔi] for older /ei/, as in *maisy* ‘girl’ (Dutch *meisje*; Frisian *famke*), which sounds nearly identical to Frisian *meitsje* ‘to make’ in the adjacent Frisian villages [moitsi]. The velarized realisations are limited to the region around the Bildt region (especially Arum and Bitgummole in the MAND [Goeman et al. 1980]) and are relatively new (see Siebs [1901: 1294-1295-1416] for the spread in the nineteenth century). Winkler (1874b: 489) mentions it as a typical feature of the Bildt dialect that he relates to Hollandic dialects, where it is indeed fairly widespread (e.g. in North Holland: Pannekeet [1995: 47]). A similar observation can be made about the realisation of *-je* [jə] as *-i* [i]. Forms with [i] for *-je* are nearly absent in Siebs (1889).³ In both instances, Het Bildt is in the centre of the regional extension and

³ I found only *mæits'i* ‘to make’ for Murnerwoude (= Damwâld), a region where this pronunciation is not very common nowadays (see also Visser 1992).

could just as well be the source of the change, rather than a follower of the Frisian phonological practices. Altogether, the phonological examples attest to a mutual exchange of realisations between Frisian and Dutch, largely taking place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2.3 Derivational and inflectional morphology

The formation of diminutives in the Bildt dialect is clearly not Frisian (Haan et al. 2013:730–731), despite the minor detail of *-tje* [tjə] > *-tsy* [tsi] (see also Section 2.2.). The insertion of [s] in the cluster [tj] is a nineteenth century innovation which is shared by Frisian and the Dutch based dialects of Fryslân, including Bildts, but e.g. not by the Frisian dialect of Schiermonnikoog. The diminutive system of the Bildt dialect comes from Holland and shows many traces of South Holland (Haan et al. 2013: 728–731).

Van Sluis et al. (2016: 67) quote Koldijk (2004) in their claim that “[...] South Hollandic and Frisian equally contributed to Bildts plural formation”. The Frisian aspects in Bildts are supposedly aspects such:

- as the more widespread use of the plural ending *-s* than in Dutch, such as in *êrms* ‘arms’, *herings* ‘herings’ (Dutch *armen*, *haringen*, Frisian *earms/-en*, *hjerrings/-en*);
- the *-ens*-plural as in *redens* ‘skates’; singular *reed* (Frisian: *idem*, Dutch *schaatsen*);
- *folken* ‘peoples’, *blâden* ‘leaves’ (Dutch *volk(er)en*, *blad(er)en*, Frisian *folken*, *blêden*);
- a short vowel in *dakken* ‘roofs’, *slotten* ‘locks’ (Dutch *daken* [a:], *sloten* [oʊ], Frisian *dakken* [a], *slotten* [ɔ]).

Koldijk also claims that Bildts has *-s*-plurals where Dutch has *-eren*, such as in *kalves* ‘calves’ (Dutch *kalveren* Frisian *keallen*). Various aspects have been missed here by Koldijk and hence by Van Sluis et al. In the first place, the plural ending *-s* is an import from Dutch in the fifteenth century. In Modern Dutch, the ending is in inherited words predominantly found in disyllabic words in *-en*, *-er*, *-el*, *-em* (Geerts et al. 1984: 61). In Frisian, plurals in *-en* are still frequent in such words (ca. 45%) in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, such as in *mingelen* ‘measure for fluid’, *schouderen* ‘shoulders’, instead of the Modern Frisian *mingels*, *skouders*. The distribution between *-en* and *-s* in Frisian and Dutch is largely parallel and controlled by prosodic constraints. Where these constraints are ambiguous, variation occurs, and this variation is not only found in Frisian but also in various Hollandic dialects

(Pannekeet 1995: 216, 217). Also the plural ending *-ens* is an innovation in Frisian, and Koldijk (2004: 131) mentions extensive parallels in Hollandic dialects. The so-called plural in *-s* in *kalves* (sg. *kalf*) is in fact a plural in *-ers* with a mute /r/ before /s/, which is a phonological development shared by Frisian and the Dutch based dialects in Fryslân from the eighteenth century. Hence Bildts *kind-es* (sg. *kind*) corresponds morphologically entirely with the North Hollandic *koinde-ers* (Pannekeet 1995: 218; Goossens 1987: map 6 and 7), which is paralleled by *kind-eren* in Standard Dutch. The major difference between all the Dutch based varieties and Frisian is the lack of the *-r*-formative as part of a plural marker in Frisian (Haan et al. 2013: 728; Versloot 2014). A competition between forms with and without *-r* exists in some lemmas not only in the Bildt dialect, but also in Standard Dutch. The lack of open syllable lengthening in words such as *dakken* is widespread in Frisian, but is also found in Hollandic dialects and is not an exclusive feature of Frisian (Pannekeet 1995: 219). Note that the form *dakken* itself is not attested in Frisian before the nineteenth century and is a borrowing from Dutch (the original Frisian lexeme is *tek*).

The current author's conclusion is that the plural formation in both Bildts and Frisian is fundamentally Hollandic, where the varieties in Fryslân (including Frisian itself) developed some common patterns in various subcategories, which are shared by Hollandic dialects. Bildts never adopted specific Frisian relics, such as *kij* 'cows' (sg. *ko*; Bildts. *koe*, *koies*), nor did Frisian introduce the unproductive *-r*-formative that is found in a limited series of Dutch (and Bildts) nouns.

2.4 Personal pronouns

Van Sluis et al. (2016: 65) claim that “[t]he Bildts paradigm of personal pronouns corresponds exactly with that of neighbouring spoken Frisian, with two exceptions [...]” as an illustration of the fact that “[i]n functional categories, Frisian-origin words are more common”. It should be noted in the first place that an overlap between Dutch, Bildts and Frisian is to be expected in most forms, because of their common descent, apart from some minor phonological differences. The lexical similarity in the 2nd pers. sg. with Bildts subj. - obj. *dou* - *dij*, Frisian *do* - *dy* is not due, however, to convergence but reflects a common retention against the Standard Dutch *jij* - *jou*. The form *jimme* for the 2nd pers. pl. is an unambiguous loan from Frisian. It filled a gap in the system of pronouns, namely the sg./pl. contrast in the personal pronouns of the 2nd person in Hollandic (Winkler 1874b: 495). The use of the

original object form *jo* of the historical 2nd pers. pl. (subject form *ji*) in the subject position of the politeness form is a common innovation in Frisian and Bildts, which – at least in Frisian – became more widespread from the second half of the seventeenth century, 150 years after the initial population of the Bildt region. The use of *jo(u)* as a vocative can already be found in the Amsterdam dialect of the early seventeenth century, such as in: *jou ondier as je bint* ‘you varmint that you are’.

In the forms of the 3rd pers.sg. feminine and in the plural, the convergence runs clearly from Frisian to Dutch/Hollandic. In the sixteenth century, the Frisian paradigm looked like the example shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Personal pronoun forms in sixteenth century Frisian, forms based on Bogerman’s sixteenth century proverbs (Boer 1897), the Burmania proverbs from 1614 (Burmania 1940) and the archaic Hindeloopen dialect (Boer 1950).

	feminine singular	plural	Bildts twentieth century sg. & pl.	Frisian twentieth century sg. & pl.
subj.	<i>jo</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>sij</i>	<i>sy</i>
obj.	<i>h(i)ar, h(i)er</i>	<i>h(i)arre/herre/h(i)em</i>	<i>h(e)ur</i>	<i>har</i>

An enclitic form *se* is common already in Old Frisian in all four functions in Table 3 and probably paved the way for the introduction of *sy* as the subject form for the singular feminine and the plural from Dutch. The form *sy* only became more widespread in Frisian from the second half of the eighteenth century, apart from incidental attestations, such as the first one in 1618 by the already mentioned Hollandic second language learner of Frisian, J. J. Starter. In the object form, Bildts has *hur*, *heur* [hø(:)r], matching the Hollandic *heur*, *huer* (A’dam dialect), against the Frisian *har* (Standard Dutch *haar* [ha:r]). The Frisian clitic form of the 3rd pers. sg. masculine, *er* [ər], is more and more replaced by *y* [i] from Dutch from the twentieth century onwards, eliminating one of the contrasts between Frisian and Bildts in the pronouns in favour of another Dutch-based form.

To sum up: the synchronic paradigms of the personal pronouns in Frisian and Bildts are indeed very similar, but this is not because they are overwhelmingly of Frisian origin. The paradigms attest to various instances of borrowings from Dutch to Frisian (*sy*, *har*, *-y*), incidentally of a borrowing from Frisian to Bildts (*jimme*), some common retentions (2nd pers.sg. *dou*) and a common innovation (*jo(u)* as a subject form).

2.5 Verbal morphology

Van Sluis et al. (2016: 68–70) assign quite some weight in their argumentation to the special gerund form in *-en*, next to the verbal infinitive in *-e* as “[...] such a complex feature cannot have been the result of language contact through trade relations. Rather, this complex system points towards a Frisian substrate, and is evidence that native Frisian speakers had input in the grammar of Bildts.”

It is certainly true that in this respect Bildts parallels Frisian entirely and that the exact distribution of the gerund forms is a unique pan-Frisian grammatical marker (Hoekstra 2012). The fundamental phonological contrast between Frisian and Standard Dutch is in this respect marked by the optionality of word final /n/ in unstressed syllables after schwa in Standard Dutch, while the contrast between [ə] and [ən] is grammatically distinctive in Frisian in various contexts. This phenomenon is also relevant for the verbal endings in the plural in the present and past tense, in the past participle and in the plural marking of nouns. The distribution in a series of linguistic varieties from Zeeland (Landheer 1951), North Holland (Hoekstra 1994; Pannekeet 1995) and Fryslân is given in Table 4.

Table 4: The alternation of *-ə* and *-ən* in various morphological categories in a series of Dutch and Frisian varieties.

	Stand.Dutch	Zeeland	N-Holland	Ameland	Mod. Frisian, Bildts & Town Frisian
Verbal infinitive	-ə(n)	-ə	-ə	-ə	-ə
Nominalized infinitive	-ə(n)	-ən	-ən	-ən	-ən
<i>te</i> + infinitive	-ə(n)	-ən	-ən	-ən	-ən
perc./asp. + infinitive	-ə(n)	-ə	-ən	-ən	-ən
pl. ind. prs.	-ə(n)	-ə	-ə	-ə	-ə
pl. ind. prt.	-ə(n)	-ə	-ə	-ə ⁴	-ən
strong past part.	-ə(n)	-ə	-ən	-ən	-ən
noun plurals	-ə(n)	-ən	-ə	-ən	-ən

⁴ The lack of the final *-n* as the verbal plural marker of the past tense seems to be a relatively recent development. The Ameland dialect in 1870 as attested in Winkler (1874b: 486–487) complies with the distribution in Modern Frisian, Bildts and Town Frisian.

The pattern of the verbal inflection of the infinitive and gerund is also found North Hollandic dialects (at least in the early twentieth century) and some aspects can also be found in dialects further to the south, as Van Sluis et al. themselves already indicate. This implies that fifteenth century settlers from North and South Holland probably came with a pattern of endings that resembled the situation in Frisian at that time to a large extent. It has to be noted that the situation with all other instances than the endings of the infinitive and gerund only got their present day shape much later than the sixteenth century, when some form of *n*-apocope affected the Hollandic dialects.⁵ It can be concluded, therefore, that the acquisition of the ‘Frisian’ gerund pattern by speakers of the Bildts was not such a major leap as claimed by Van Sluis et al.

2.6 Word order

Van Sluis et al. (2016: 70, 71) mention word order phenomena as typical parallels between Bildts and Frisian, such as a descending word order in verbal clusters (see Tables 1 and 2) and the lack of the *Infinitivus Pro Participio* construction in both Frisian and Dutch, a phenomenon that is typologically linked to descending word order. The authors claim (2016: 72) that Bildts has “Frisian [...] word order”. If we look at the word order in verbal clusters in Holland in the sixteenth century, it turns out that the descending word order in verbal clusters was at that time nearly as widespread as it is in Frisian and Bildts (Coussé 2008: 57, 58). Moreover, a small percentage of ascending word order can also be found in Frisian in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Bor 1971; Hoekstra 2010). This implies that the mentioned similarities in word order are rather an expression of a common retention of an archaic word order than the result of a strong conversion of Bildts syntax towards Frisian patterns as claimed by Van Sluis et al. (2016: 78) when they say that Bildts has experienced “so much change in [...] syntax”.⁶

From the account in this section it follows that the “Frisianness” of the Bildts grammar can be evaluated quite differently than in Van Sluis et al. This has direct repercussions for their interpretation of Bildts as a “mixed” language in terms of the defined theoretical concept. This is discussed in Section 4.

⁵ In the early seventeenth century Amsterdam dialect, *n*-apocope had not affected the language yet (Versloot et al. 2012).

⁶ The recent changes in Frisian in verbal clusters towards ascending word order under the pressure of Dutch show that word order change does not have to come from substratum influence, but can also come from wide spread bilingualism (Ytsma 1995; Hoekstra and Versloot 2015).

3 The sociolinguistic arguments

On page 73 of their study, Van Sluis et al. try to account for a supposedly widespread Bildts-Frisian bilingualism among speakers of the Bildt dialect as a result of the socio-economic constellation. They state that at least since the seventeenth century “Het Bildt [was caused] to trade with neighbouring Frisian towns and villages [...]. Thus Hollandic speakers in Het Bildt were cut off from their ancestral homeland” (Van Sluis et al. 2016: 73). Additional socio-economic factors were that “[...] the provincial authorities were and are located in Leeuwarden, outside Het Bildt. Likewise, the cattle market used to be held in Leeuwarden, the capital of the province”. Based on these observations, they argue that “[...] competence in Frisian was an economic necessity for most Bildts speakers”. This might be true, if all these people in the surrounding towns and villages, including the capital Leeuwarden, had been speakers of Frisian. The reality was far from this, however. Only on page 61 the authors briefly mention the existence of Town Frisian. The reality in Fryslân between ca. 1550 and 1950 was that the cities were linguistically dominated by so-called Town Frisian, which is, contrary to what the name suggests, a Dutch based variety, very similar to the one spoken in the Bildt region. The main difference is that the South Hollandic element is missing in Town Frisian and its roots are more clearly found in North Holland and the emerging Dutch standard language (Bree et al. 2008: 216–217). In the early twenty-first century, Town Frisian is spoken by only ca. 10–15% of the inhabitants of Leeuwarden, Dokkum, Kollum, Franeker, Harlingen, Bolsward and Sneek (Provincie Fryslân 2007: 9). However, the language was for centuries the prestige language of broad sections of the city dwellers and, with various shades of approach to the Dutch standard language, the dominant language of the cities (Jonkman 1993). The city-population, of which a substantial part spoke Town Frisian, made up ca. one third of the population of Fryslân in the eighteenth century (Kalma et al. 1968: 374). Two of these cities, the capital Leeuwarden and nearby Franeker, are less than 15 km distant from the Bildt region. This means that within a radius of ca. 20 km around the Bildt region there were in the eighteenth century objectively more speakers of Dutch based varieties (Bildts, Town Frisian) than of Frisian.⁷ Town

⁷ It is difficult to estimate the number of Frisian speakers in the cities. Winkler (1874b: 462) mentions that there are quite a few, but identifies these speakers explicitly in relatively new quarters beyond the former city walls. We assume that a more than neglectable percentage of city dwellers had Frisian as their mother tongue, but the well documented experiences of the twentieth century (Fokkema 1937; Jonkman 1993) suggest that they quickly converted to Town Frisian. At the same time, this was a source for a trickling Frisian adstratum influence on Town Frisian (compare Wachol 2003 for a similar case of Polish-Ukrainian language contact).

Frisian was more prestigious than Frisian until the middle of the twentieth century, so any status based convergence should have been towards Town Frisian, which was, as mentioned, nearly identical with the Bildt language. The prestige of these Dutch based varieties was not limited to the cities as evinced by the developments on Terschelling and Ameland. The inhabitants of the historical seats of power on Terschelling (Midland) and Ameland (Ballum) and their direct surroundings adopted a Dutch based variety, probably in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, whereas Frisian remained in use on the rest of the islands. The rest of Ameland shifted to the more prestigious Dutch-based dialect in the eighteenth century (Winkler 1874b: 484). It is, moreover, important to note that the whole contrast between Town Frisian, Bildts and Dutch is a distinction that only arose not earlier than the late eighteenth century. Until that date, the mentioned varieties are considered to be different expressions of one linguistic entity (Jonkman 1993: 186–190, 306–307), as still claimed by Wassenbergh (1806: 4–5).

Another aspect of the Frisian-Bildts language contact was the fact that Bildts is well understood by speakers of Frisian. Frisian speakers were passively acquainted with Dutch through the Church since the sixteenth century and everybody who received some form of education did so in Dutch and not in Frisian. Frisian speakers were also familiar with the variety of Dutch spoken in the Frisian cities (what we in retrospect call ‘Town Frisian’) and by upper-class people in the country-side. Based on the sociological patterns in the nineteenth and twentieth century, it can be concluded that speakers of Town Frisian did not adjust their language in their contact with speakers of Frisian. Anecdotic evidence also comes from the Frisian literature, where the hind from the Bildt region in the famous novel *De sûnde fen Haitze Holwerda* (Houten 1938) consistently uses his own dialect in contact with his Frisian speaking employer.

The picture that arises from our observations is quite different from the one sketched by Van Sluis et al. Speakers of the Bildt dialect were indeed in contact with sociologically equally footed Frisian speakers in the surrounding villages, but also with speakers of the far more prestigious and typologically closely related Dutch varieties in the cities nearby. Speakers of Frisian were used to being addressed in Dutch-based varieties and understood them without a problem, so the social and linguistic pressure for speakers of Bildts to learn Frisian and become bilingual was much less than claimed by Van Sluis et al. We don’t want to argue that there was no Bildts-Frisian bilingualism. There are enough accounts of linguistically mixed families in the nineteenth and twentieth century (e.g. Jensma 1975) and that may have been similar in the centuries before. However, the suggestion of a sociolinguistically isolated

group of relatively poor speakers of a low-prestigious Dutch-based variety in a Frisian dominated surrounding is clearly incorrect.

4 The typological interpretation

Van Sluis et al. summarize their linguistic implications on pages 71–72 of their study. We subsume various forms of Dutch and Hollandic Dutch dialects here briefly under “Dutch”. They conclude the following:

- The core lexicon is Dutch/Hollandic;
- The inherent flection (plurals, diminutives) is Dutch with some Frisian;
- Contextual flection, i.e. verbal endings, are synchronically Frisian, perhaps with roots in Dutch;
- The syntax “patterns like Frisian”.

These still somewhat subtle formulations are then directed towards their hypothesis of Bildts as a “mixed language”, by stating that a non-Frisian origin of the contextual flection is “improbable” and the brief summary is simply that Bildts has “Frisian contextual flection and word order”.

We see a set of different dynamics in the relation between Frisian and Bildts grammar. There are definitely instances of Frisian influence on Bildts, apart from the commonly acknowledged incidental lexical exchange. There are various examples of more structural similarities, in terms of grammatical features and function words.⁸ We limit ourselves to the examples from Van Sluis et al. (2016) and the items that were brought up in Section 2. The current author sees the following categories here:

1. *Borrowings from Frisian into Bildts:*
 - The derivational suffix *-ens* (to make nouns out of adjectives, like English ‘-ness’);
 - The personal pronoun *jimme*.
2. *Shared innovations or choices from existing variation which we assume originated in Frisian:*
 - The insertion of [s] in the cluster [tj];

⁸ Van Sluis et al. (2016: 65) mention *hier* ‘here’ as South Hollandic, but this was also Frisian before 1750. It is just that Bildts did not join the phonological process of “breaking”, which turned [hiːr] into [(h)jɪr]. De form *dêr*, which they claim to be Frisian, is also found in our samples from the seventeenth century Amsterdam dialect, although *daer* is the common form in those texts, just as *waer* (for ‘there’ and ‘where’).

- The realisation [g] of /g/;
- The loss of /r/ before alveolar consonants;
- The additional clitic 't in subordinate complementizers (*dy't*, *hoe't*, etc.)

They can be dated to the nineteenth century and moved Frisian and Bildts away from Dutch. Most of them are also found in Town Frisian. Neither the Bildt dialect nor Town Frisian adopted the nineteenth century Frisian darkening of /a/to [ɔ] before alveolar consonants.

- The identical distribution of *-e* and *-en* in verbal endings in Bildts and Frisian.

This is a case of a Frisian-based re-arrangement of existing variation in various sixteenth century Hollandic dialects, rather than the introduction of an entirely novel linguistic feature. For sixteenth century speakers from the northern parts of North Holland, which are mentioned as one of the source regions of the immigrants (Koldijk 2004: 24), there was no difference at all.

3. *Shared innovations or choices from existing variation which we assume originated in Bildts:*

There are also innovations that are likely to originate in Bildts, namely the velarized pronunciation of /ei/as [ai] or [ɔi] and the realisation of /jə/as [i].

4. *Similarities between Frisian and Bildts due to the convergence of Frisian:*

Some of the similarities between Bildts and Frisian are the result of the convergence of Frisian with Dutch and Hollandic varieties, not necessarily Bildts. Examples are the adverb Frisian *da* >> *doe*, the noun plural formation in Frisian and the forms of the 3rd person personal.⁹

5. *Shared archaisms:*

An aspect that is easily forgotten in the synchronic confrontation of Standard Dutch, Bildts and Frisian is their shared archaisms. Here can be mentioned the retention of the personal pronoun *dou/do* plus its verbal ending *-st*, and in syntax the ascending word order and the lack of IPP.

⁹ Another intriguing instance, not discussed so far, is the adoption of the irregular past tense form *koft* 'bought' from Hollandic into Frisian in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century, instead of the regular forms *kaepe(t)* (2nd weak verb class), to the infinitive *kaepje* 'to buy' (Mod. Frisian *keapje*). The form appears first in texts from the surroundings of the cities in North West Fryslân. There are many more instances of the convergence of Frisian, already in the fifteenth century, with Hollandic/Dutch, such as the replacement of the conjunction *and* by Dutch *ende* or the verb *sella* 'to sell' by the loan translation *forkaepje* (Dutch *verkopen*). The latter development also has its core in North West Fryslân, where most of the historical cities are found.

6. *Instances of non-convergence between Frisian and Bildts:*

Apart from the bulk of the lexicon, one can mention here the diminutives and essential parts of the verbal system, namely the lack of a second weak class of verbs in Bildts, contrary to Frisian and the actual shape of the ablaut patterns of strong verbs. We do not know about instances where Bildts converged with Town Frisian.

From all this, it follows that there is little reason to consider Bildts to be “a Frisian grammatical system in a Dutch lexical jacket” (Van Sluis et al. 2016: 72). The number of phenomena where Bildts explicitly converged with Frisian are limited and counterbalanced by a similar number of linguistic elements (on every level of lexicon and grammar) where Frisian converged with Hollandic and Dutch during the period between 1500 and now. Both varieties share in some cases the retention of a feature that was lost in Standard Dutch. The result of these parallel convergences and retentions was that Bildts and Frisian indeed became similar in many aspects of their grammar, including pronunciation and also – not discussed so far – their idioms and lexical semantics. The appropriate theoretical label – realising that labels are always an abstraction from a complicated reality – for this constellation is in the current author’s view *Sprachbund*. The constituting partners of this *Sprachbund*, (emerging) Standard Dutch, North Hollandic, South Hollandic and Frisian are closely related, much closer than in other *Sprachbund* configurations such as the classical Balkan-*Sprachbund* or Standard Average European (Haspelmath 2001). A similar configuration of mutually converging closely related languages can be/was found in North Friesland (Germany) with Frisian, Danish, Low and High German (Walker 1990, 1993). This makes it more difficult to disentangle the origin of various linguistic features and makes it a hazardous enterprise. Especially the lack of enough historical sources for Town Frisian and Bildts constitutes a serious problem.

Most of the characteristics quoted by Van Sluis et al. (2016: 75) for “mixed” languages, such as widespread bilingualism and the preservation of the linguistic identity, apply to *Sprachbund* configurations as well. The Bildts case fails essentially on the characteristic that “subsystems of the resulting language can be separated according to the language of origin”, especially in the way the authors claim Bildts to be composed of a Dutch lexicon with a Frisian grammar. The various subsystems of phonology, morphology and syntax, which are indeed fairly similar for contemporaneous Bildts and Frisian but still not identical, are the result of stepwise and gradual permutations either in one or in both of the two systems in either direction, with different linguistic sources.

5 Conclusion and epilogue

Bildts is not a “mixed” language in the way Ma’á in Tanzania is claimed to be. Bildts is Hollandic in origin and this origin is still visible on every linguistic level, especially in the lexicon and morphology. The phonology, morphology and syntax reflect the results of a long-standing language contact with Frisian due to contact between speakers of different varieties, personal bilingualism and a shared lingua franca (Dutch, to some extent historically also Town Frisian), with various levels of individual competence of the speakers, where passive knowledge of the other varieties was a major source of the exchange of linguistic phenomena.

Bildts, Town Frisian and present day Frisian are the result of a *Sprachbund*, which can be called the *Zuiderzee Sprachbund*, originally stretching from Amsterdam to Fryslân, with a special input of South Hollandic features in the case of the Bildt dialect.¹⁰ This entire region consisted of a Frisian speaking countryside (note that Frisian only died out in North Holland in the early seventeenth century) and Hollandic speaking cities (in Fryslân at least since the early sixteenth century) under the umbrella of the (emerging) Dutch standard language. Frisian Dutchified rapidly, already from the fifteenth century, got entirely lost as a vernacular on the western side of the Zuiderzee (currently IJsselmeer), and only maintained itself in Fryslân (with ca. 30% non-Frisian speakers in the eighteenth century), predominantly in the countryside but not in newly claimed areas such as the Bildt region and East Kollumerland. It was – if one speculates here – only thanks to the decline of the economy of Holland in the eighteenth century, with, for example, its dramatic reductions of inhabitants in the North Hollandic cities (Noordhoff Atlasproducties 2011: 275, 312) that the Frisian language did not endure the same fate as in North Holland. The

10 Examples of the *Zuiderzee Sprachbund* innovations, that are neither historically Dutch nor Frisian, nor entered the Dutch standard language are e.g.: (1) The present plural forms of the verb ‘to be’ *binne/benne* instead of fifteenth century Frisian *sint*, Middle Dutch *sijn/sijt*. The new forms appear in Hollandic in the fifteenth century (Loey 1969: 93), in Frisian in the sixteenth. (2) The transition *-bb-* > *-ww-* in the verb ‘to have’: Fr. *hawwe, hewwe* since the late-eighteenth century; N-Holl, especially in the eastern parts. (3) The Frisian forms *ik gean, wy geane* ‘I/we go’, *ik stean, wy steane* ‘I/we stand’ and *wy dwaan(e)* ‘we do’ (now *wy dogge*) which are only incidentally used in the sixteenth century and increasingly in the seventeenth century instead of forms without *-n*, such as *wy gæ, ik stee, wy dwa*, etc. Standard Dutch has *ik ga,sta,doe, wij gaan,staan,doen*. The form *i(c)k doen* appears infrequently in Middle Dutch (Loey 1969: 92) and is common in Hollandic dialects (Landheer 1951: 86–87). The plural *doene(n)* is e.g. mentioned for North Hollandic (Pannekeet 1995: 172). The data from the seventeenth century Amsterdam dialect corpus does not attest to *ik *gaen, wij *gaene*, but contains twice *ze doenen* ‘they do’ against 27 plural forms *doen*.

demographic boom, especially in the countryside, in the nineteenth century strengthened the numerical presence of Frisian speakers in Fryslân and it is probably not without a reason that Frisian developed various linguistic innovations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which increased its contrast with Dutch and Hollandic, rather than bringing the languages further together. Town Frisian and Bildts participated in various of these innovations, especially in the nineteenth century, which saw an increased migration of people from the countryside to the cities. One may say that since that time, the *Sprachbund* has narrowed to the current province of Fryslân (*Fryslân Sprachbund*), still with the same range of participants: Hollandic-based dialects, genuine Frisian and Standard Dutch.

The twentieth century envisages the increasing dominance of Standard Dutch, putting a strong mark on the linguistic shape of the other members in the *Sprachbund*. In Haan et al. (2013: 725, 733) it is claimed that “[t]his led to a gradual elimination of typically Hollandish features and a redefinition of Town Frisian as an asymmetric compromise between contemporaneous Dutch and Frisian, more and more resembling a scenario [...]” where “Town Frisian is [interpreted as] Frisian that was largely re-lexicalized with Dutch words”. This implies that despite the claim that historically Town Frisian and Bildts are not “mixed languages”, they may be re-interpreted as such in the present-day constellation. In the current linguistic constellation, all features that are part of the *Fryslân Sprachbund* are by naïve language users interpreted as “Frisian”, irrespective of their historical origin. Such a grammar – or in practice rather a set of deviations from the grammar of Standard Dutch – including phonetic features, can be filled with a Standard Dutch lexicon, which is purified of all the specific traces from historical Hollandic dialects. Such a process seems to be going on in the Town Frisian varieties in Fryslân, foremost in the variety of the capital Leeuwarden. This can be illustrated with the examples in Table 3, taken from Goeman et al. (1980).

Table 5 shows the pronunciation of five words that have historically a Hollandic shape in Frisian-Dutch contact varieties, mostly differing from both present-day Dutch and Frisian. The variety of Hollum on Ameland is the most archaic in this set of examples and overlaps entirely with various North Hollandic dialects as documented in the early twentieth century (Heeroma 1935). The dialect of Leeuwarden shows a full merger with Dutch, but, respecting the phonotactic constraints of the *Fryslân Sprachbund*: it has voiceless word initial fricatives, a centralising diphthong before the alveolar consonant /n/ and the loss of /r/ before alveolars. Through this and similar shifts, the present-day Leeuwarden dialect is more and more approaching the definition of a real “mixed language”, with a Dutch lexic and lexical phonology and *Fryslân*

Table 5: Lexical phonology between archaic Hollandic and Modern Dutch in Frisian-Dutch contact varieties.

	Mod. Dutch	Leeuwarden	Bildt	Hollum (Am.)	Mod. W. Frisian
‘two’	twee [tʷeː]	twee [tʷeː]	twee [tʷeː]	twië [tʷiə]	twa [tʷaː]
‘son’	zoon [zoːn]	soan [soːən]	seun [søːʏn]	seun [søːn]	soan [soːən]
‘meat’	vlees [ylɛːs]	flees [flɛːs]	flais [flɛːis]	fleis [flɛːis]	fleis [flɛːis] (older: [flɛːsk])
‘midge’	mug [møx]	much [møx]	mîg [mîx]	mîch [mîːəx]	mich [mîx]
cherry	kers [kɛrs]	keˊs [kɛs]	kars [kɛs]	kaˊs [kɛs]	kjers [kjɛs]

Sprachbund grammar (including phonotactics). Present day Town Frisian is, however, a receding language and its redefinition as a “mixed language” marks the final stage of a dying language, rather than a vivid creation of a vital variety. Table 5 also illustrates that the Bildt dialect remains on the archaic, historically Hollandic, side.¹¹ This implies that if any of the Frisian-Dutch contact varieties can be included under the label “mixed language”, they are rather the modern versions of Town Frisian than the more peripheral varieties from Ameland and Het Bildt. There the differences distinguishing them from both Dutch and Frisian are preserved, possibly as part of their local identity. Altogether, these varieties offer an interesting testing ground for further research in the field of language contact and the sociology of language.

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¹¹ The Bildt form *twee* ‘two’ may reflect the South-Hollandic origin of the dialect, rather than recent rapprochement to Dutch.

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