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The status of Standard Dutch in the L1 and L2 classroom: language perceptions of teachers and pupils, and a plea for further research

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In recent studies, the linguistic landscape of Flanders is often described as *diaglossic* (Auer 2005), with a range of intermediate varieties between Standard Dutch and the dialects, which is typically known as *tussentaal* (lit. 'in-between-language'). This highly colloquial variety enjoys rapid expansion, but is also heavily stigmatized by members of the political and cultural elite, who remain loyal to the official standard language ideology (SLI) and propagate the use of Standard Dutch. While the status of the standard in Flanders is problematic, due to its both non-endogenous (the standard was imported from the Netherlands and imposed on the community) and non-vital character (as Standard Dutch in Flanders is "a virtual colloquial variety [...] rarely spoken in practice" (De Caluwe 2009:19)), Flemish language-in-education policies insist on Standard Dutch as the only acceptable norm in schools, adequate to respond to 'problems' of language deficiency and multilingualism, and the inequality and discrimination which ensue from them (Delarue & De Caluwe 2015).

This heavily polarized landscape presents Flemish teachers with increasing difficulties: while most of them indicate they are much more at ease in *tussentaal*, they are expected to adhere to Standard Dutch at all times. In this presentation, we analyze the way(s) in which teachers cope with this tension, drawing upon a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews with 82 Flemish primary and secondary school teachers. How do teachers respond to language-in-education policies and the propagated standard Dutch norm, and how do their (standard) language perceptions relate to those of Flemish pupils (cf. Delarue & Van Lancker submitted)?

Questions regarding the position of Standard Dutch are even more pertinent when foreign language learners are taken into account: which language variety or varieties should be used during classes of Dutch as a foreign (*NVT*) or second (*NT2*) language. In these courses, the focus is still – primarily or even solely – on Standard Dutch, although that often means that learners are trying to master a language variety which is not used by the majority of Flemings (cf. Hiligsmann 2010: 217-218). How does this affect the language perceptions of Dutch language learners, *vis-à-vis* both Standard Dutch and non-standard varieties of Dutch? In recent Flemish sociolinguistic research, these perceptions have been largely neglected, and we would like to end our talk with a plea not to overlook the L2 learners of Dutch in future perceptual research.

References

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