

Geeraerts, Dirk & Stefan Grondelaers. 2000. "Purism and fashion. French influence on Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch". *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 13 (1999): 53-68.

Purism and Fashion. French Influence on Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch

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1. BACKGROUND

In the course of the 20th C, the variant of Dutch spoken in the northern part of Belgium underwent a process of standardisation. The reader who is not familiar with the history of Belgian Dutch should recall that in the Renaissance, linguistic standardisation was well on its way in many European countries. In Flanders, however, ongoing standardisation was blocked as a result of the political separation of Flanders from the Netherlands. Instead of developing its own linguistic standard, Flanders increasingly used French as a supra-regional standard language. In the 19th century, this frenchification was at its height in all public domains. During the reunion of the Southern and the Northern Netherlands (1814-1830), Dutch was reinstated as the official language in Flanders, and in the 1930's, Standard Dutch emerged as the supra-regional Flemish language, and resumed its process of standardisation (for a more detailed overview, see Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Speelman: 1998).

Just like American English differs from British English and Austrian German differs from German German, the Belgian standard language differs in some respects from the variety which is spoken in the Netherlands since the 17th C. In this paper, we focus on the role of words of French origin in the emergence of these differences. From the extensive body of – mostly attitudinal - research that has been devoted to the factors which determine the linguistic nature of Belgian Dutch (see Creten 1982, 1982; Deprez & Geerts 1977a, 1977b, 1978; Deprez 1981; Dewulf 1983; Goossens 1974, 1975; Knops 1982; De Schutter 1973, 1987, 1992, Taeldeman 1993), the following findings have to be mentioned: in general, informants positively evaluate words which belong to Standard Dutch, whereas they generally reject words which belong to their dialect: Standard Dutch is not only accepted as a model to be imitated, it is also regarded as the direct antipode of dialect. Associated with this concept of the dialect as the antipode of Standard Dutch, is a negative appreciation of French: the Dutch dialects in Belgium historically underwent a marked influence of French, and the struggle for recognition of Dutch as the official language in Belgium often materialised as a competition with the French standard. Hence, French influence is considered to be anti-Dutch, on the level of dialect as well as standard language.

This preference for 'pure' Dutch appears to be less marked when words of other foreign origin - and especially English - are involved: since English does not manifest the aforementioned competition factor, it is not regarded to the same extent as a menace to the ideal of linguistic purity. In addition, the influence of English is much younger than the influence of French. Since the Anglo-Saxon influence largely dates from after the Second World War (presumably the period in which the standardisation of Belgian Dutch resumed its course), it has been suggested that the Anglo-Saxon influence in fact *promoted* the convergence between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch: both areas, it was hypothesised, would undergo the influence of international Anglo-Saxon culture to a comparable extent.

These findings, however, are predominantly based on investigations of attitude, and attitudinal data need not correspond to actual language behaviour. The research we report on in this paper attempts to supplement earlier findings by concentrating on the actual evolution of the French influence on Belgian Standard Dutch. Our investigation is part of a more comprehensive study of the relationship between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch (see Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Speelman (1998), and Geeraerts (1997)).

2. MATERIAL

The empirical foundation of this research project primarily consists of 40.000 observations of actual language use: from magazines and newspapers, we recorded the names for 30 concepts, 15 from the lexical field of clothing terminology and 15 from the field of soccer terminology. The resulting database allows us to discover the respective proportion in Belgian and Netherlandic publications of the term *buitenspel* 'offside' and the loanword *offside* 'offside' for the concept OFFSIDE; or in the case of the concept JURK 'dress', we can determine whether there is a preference for designation by means of *jurk*, *japon* or *kleed*. The core of the observed material consists of magazine- and newspaper material recorded in 1990; this core is extended in two ways.

In the first place, analogous material was collected for 1950 and 1970, which enables us to carry out a 'real time'-investigation of lexical divergence or convergence processes. The empirical findings of these diachronic investigations - a discussion of which exceeds the intentions of this paper - can be regarded as a 'correction' of Van de Velde's investigation (1996) of the evolution of pronunciation in Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch: whereas Van de Velde observed a marked divergence in pronunciation between the two areas, lexically there appears to be a more stable relationship between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, and to some extent even a converging tendency.

Second, the stratification of language use was taken into account when constructing the database. Between standard language and dialect, there are a number of 'strata' on which register differences may cooccur with an increasing geographical specialisation. For an investigation of the relationship between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, these strata - viz. the regionally coloured informal variants of the standard language - are extremely relevant: it can not only be expected that the

linguistic differences between Belgium and the Netherlands will increase on this regiolectic level, the question must also be raised whether the distance between supraregional and regional language use is the same in Belgium and in The Netherlands. Is the internal structure of the Belgian Dutch language community - quantified as the distance between supraregional and regional language use - comparable to the structure of the Netherlandic language community, or does the relative retardation in the standardisation of Belgian Dutch manifest itself in a larger distance?

In our investigation, the intermediate level between dialect and written standard language is represented by the clothing terms that we collected from labels and price tags in shop windows. The intended audience of this form of communication is more restricted than the national or binational audience which constitutes the target group of the magazines from which the core material was selected: the cities where the shopwindow material was collected merely have a regional commercial function. The fact that we are dealing with written language in a semi-formal situation, on the other hand, ensures that we steer clear of the purely dialectical pole of the stratificational continuum. The shopwindow material hence represents language use from a more informal register than the magazine material.

The window material was collected in Leiden, Maastricht, Leuven en Kortrijk: for The Netherlands as well as for Belgium we hence dispose of material from a major university town situated in what is known to be the linguistic centre of both areas (respectively De Randstad and Brabant), and material from a major economic centre (with a secondary academic function) in the periphery of the linguistic community. This parallel conception should enable us to answer questions about the internal structure of the Belgian and the Netherlandic linguistic community in a systematic way.

3. METHODS

In order to study the real-time evolution of the proportion of French words in Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, we first define the ratio of words with a certain feature in a certain portion of the database. The starting-point in this respect is the onomasiological profile of a concept in a subset of the database, i.e. the set of alternative terms (each with its individual frequency) for a certain attested in a source or collection of sources (for instance, the Belgian magazines). Thus we can determine the proportion of the terms *buitenspel* 'offside' and *offside* (for the concept OFFSIDE) in the Belgian and Netherlandic publications, and for a clothing concept such as DRESS we can find out whether there is a preference for designation with *jurk* 'dress', *japon* 'dress' or *kleet* 'dress'.

The proportion of terms with a certain feature in the onomasiological profile of one concept is given in the following formula. Given a set K of lexical expressions with a common feature (for instance, in the context of this paper, terms of French origin), we refer to $A_{K,Z}(Y)$ as the ratio of terms with that feature in the onomasiological profile for concept Z in dataset Y. $A_{K,Z}(Y)$ is defined as follows:

$$A_{K,Z}(Y) = \sum_{i=1}^n F_{Z,Y}(x_i) \cdot W_{x_i}$$

In this definition x_1 and x_n stand for the terms which are attested in dataset Y as expressions of concept Z, and which belong to subset K (i.e. which manifest the feature that K defines). $F_{Z,Y}(x)$ stands for the relative frequency of expression x in database Y for concept Z. W_x is a weight which is included in the formula to make membership in K gradual. *Blouse*, for instance, is a term of French origin, and so is *bloes*, but the French influence in the latter is less marked: *bloes* is a variant of *blouse*, but at the same time it has been so considerably adapted to Dutch that it cannot safely be put on a par with *blouse*. As a consequence, the value W for *bloes* is determined as 0.5, so that for the determination of French influence, it represents only half of the value of *blouse*.

Starting from the definition of $A_{K,Z}(Y)$, we subsequently define $A_K(Y)$ as the global proportion of the subset K (the set of terms with feature K) in dataset Y:

$$A_K(Y) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n A_{K,Z_i}(Y)$$

In this definition, Z_1 to Z_i stand for the concepts which constitute database Y. The proposed calculation yields the average proportion of terms from subset K in the onomasiological profiles of the concepts Z in sample Y. Crucially, this definition presupposes that each of the concepts Z represents an equal quantitative weight in the onomasiological structure of the lexicon. If, by contrast, one decides that frequency differences between the concepts should be taken into account in the calculation, a weighted calculation is preferable:

$$A'_K(Y) = \sum_{i=1}^n A_{K,Z_i}(Y) \cdot G_{Z_i}$$

The weight G_{Z_i} is the relative frequency of a concept Z in the total sample Y.

In this paper we are interested in the proportion in Y of words with the feature FRENCH. The basic parameter for assigning this feature is a term's etymology, combined with the degree to which it has been adapted to the linguistic nature of Dutch. Words of French descent which have not been noticeably adapted to Dutch receive score 1 for the feature FRENCH. The underlying rationale is that the non-Dutch character of a word can only exert influence on the language user's behaviour when the expression at issue is identifiable as a non-Dutch word. Because this identifiability is a subjective matter, the calculation proposed will only yield approximative data on the factors which influence the language user's choice. In the attitudinal supplement to the corpus data discussed here (see Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Speelman 1998), informant judgements about the non-Dutch character of words can be quantified more directly; the subjective evaluations collected there, however, cannot be transferred to the investigation at issue: it would be anachronistic to transfer contemporary judgements to linguistic behaviour of 1950.

The assignation of the feature FRENCH is not a binary matter: a number of intermediate cases between 0 and 1 are distinguished. The terms *bloes* 'blouse' and *vest* 'formal jacket', for instance, are not directly recognisable - phonologically nor

graphically - as originally French words; they consequently receive value 0,5. Compounds which contain a French lid receive the score of the foreign word: language users who object to *costuum* 'suit' will also avoid *mantelcostuum* 'woman's suit'. *Gebeel* 'two-piece' and *tweestuks* 'two-piece' are loan translations; as such they only indirectly manifest French influence, and hence they receive the score 0,25. To the pseudo-gallicism *japon* 'formal dress' (which, though not French etymologically, is easily regarded as such - compare older etymologies which consider the term as a hybrid manifestation of *jupon*) we assign value 0,5.

vest (m/v)	Bel50			Net50			W
	abs	rel	rel*W	abs	rel	rel*W	
cardigan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
gilet	3	3,9	3,9	0	0	0	1
jasje	14	18,4	0	8	26,7	0	0
vest(je)	59	77,6	38,8	22	73,3	36,7	0,5
			42,8			36,7	

Table 1: Francophone influence in the designation of VEST in the Belgian and Netherlandic 1950 material

Let us, in order to clarify these abstract formulas, concentrate on a concrete example from the database. Suppose one wishes to determine the francophone influence in the Belgian and Netherlandic 1950 designation of the concept VEST 'cardigan'. To that end one first obtains the onomasiological profiles of VEST in the Belgian and Netherlandic 1950 sample (respectively Bel50 and Net50 in table 1), i.e. the set of alternative terms with their absolute (abs) and relative (rel) frequencies. The relative frequency of each term per profile is then multiplied with its individual W-value (cf. final column), viz. the weight assigned to that term in order to determine its degree of membership in category K, in this case the category of terms of French origin. Because *gilet* 'cardigan' in our example is a French term which has retained its original spelling and pronunciation, it receives the maximum W-value 1. *Vest* 'cardigan', by contrast, has been so obviously adapted to Dutch that its W-value is only 0.5. The third column 'rel*W' in the Bel50-section and the Net50-section of table 1 lists the product of relative frequency and W-value per term, and the sum of the products in these columns respectively yields the proportion of French terms for VEST in the Belgian 1950 material and the Netherlandic 1950 material, viz. $A_K(\text{Bel50}) = 42.8\%$, and $A_K(\text{Net50}) = 36.7\%$.

4. HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the existing literature on the impact of French on Belgian Dutch, two series of hypotheses can be formulated. The first series concerns the diachronic evolution of the French influence, which is generally considered to decrease. A second group of hypotheses relates to the correlation between French influence and stylistic variation: we may assume that the French influence on Belgian Dutch will be more outspoken on the substandard level, viz. in the shopwindow material.

The first group of hypotheses postulates that the French influence on Belgian Dutch decreases, whereas it remains stable – or rather, does not manifest a clear evolutionary pattern - in Netherlandic Dutch. In the shorthand format of the hypotheses presented in (1)-(4), “ $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(x)$ ” stands for “proportion of French words in datasample (x)”, B and N stand for Belgium and The Netherlands, whereas 50, 70, and 90 respectively denote 1950, 1970 and 1990. “ $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(x)$ ” represents the weighted type of calculation, in which frequency differences between concepts are taken into account:

$$[1] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[2] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[3] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$$

$$[4] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90}).$$

In view of the historical background of the linguistic situation in Belgium, we can anticipate a greater initial influence of French in Belgium than in The Netherlands:

$$[5] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50})$$

$$[6] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50})$$

$$[7] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70})$$

$$[8] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70}).$$

The expectations which have up to now been formulated with respect to French influence, pertain to the *global* French influence measured at the three points in time. The second series of hypotheses, however, differentiates between the magazine and the shopwindow material. If - according to the classical view which we take as a starting-point - French has a different influence on Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, then we can anticipate that the subset of French words in Belgian Dutch will be larger in the Belgian shopwindow material than in the Belgian magazine material. The puristic attempt to restrain the French menace, will not surface as much in informal language: if Belgian Standard Dutch is characterised by a tendency to bar French, then this tendency will not be as marked in substandard or informal language use.

$$[9] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[10] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[11] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[12] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[13] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

$$[14] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$$

In [9]-[14], the abbreviations *Leu*, *Kor*, *Lei*, *Maa* stand for the Leuven, Kortrijk, Leiden, and Maastricht shopwindow sample respectively. *LeuKor* represents the combination of the Leuven and the Kortrijk sample, and in *LeiMaa*, the Leiden and the Maastricht sample are combined. In addition, we assume that the tendencies phrased in [9]-[14] do not play any role in The Netherlands: we expect, in other words, that the subset of French terms in the Netherlandic shopwindow material is similar in size to that in the Netherlandic magazine sample.

$$[15] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$$

$$[16] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$$

- [17] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
 [18] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
 [19] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
 [20] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$

The French subset in the Belgian shopwindow material, finally, will be larger than that in the Netherlandic sample, if at least we assume that the historical influence of French on the Belgian standard language also manifests itself on this substandard level.

- [21] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa})$
 [22] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei})$
 [23] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa})$
 [24] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa})$
 [25] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei})$
 [26] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa})$

5. RESULTS

The first basic expectation - the decrease of French influence over time - can be tested on the basis of the following hypotheses. The presentation of the results differentiates between the clothing terms (CL) and the football terms (FO). A margin of 5% is taken as the threshold for difference.

- [1] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
 CL $36,64 > 27,81 > 18,71$
 FO $0,54 = 0,21 = 0,04$
 [2] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
 CL $35,61 > 22,27 > 18,14$
 FO $0,55 = 0,23 = 0,04$
 [3] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
 CL $39,65 > 24,54 = 23,03$
 FO $0,26 = 0,39 = 0,25$
 [4] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
 CL $44,01 > 21,94 < 29,90$
 FO $0,31 = 0,53 = 0,34$

The decrease of the French influence in Belgian Dutch is evident in the domain of clothing. The football data, however, cannot be taken into account in this respect, since French influence is virtually non-existent there.

In the Netherlandic sample there is little diachronic consistency as far as the proportion of French words is concerned, but the actual development does not manifest the clear tendency we have in the Belgian material: there is a marked drop between 1950 and 1970, but in the development towards 1990, we observe a visible increase. This somewhat erratic evolution can be attributed to the fact that French influence does not carry a normative charge in Netherlandic Dutch, whereas in Belgian Dutch, the francophone bias is historically determined.

The specific pattern of evolution on the Netherlandic side could well be the consequence of a culturally determined stylistic development: the marked drop in 1970 may be the result of an inclination to regard words of French origin as too distinguished; together with traditional dress code and etiquette, some of the “distinguished” clothing names apparently also vanished in the late 60’s. This is by no means an unlikely hypothesis, as the decrease in 1970 is predominantly caused by the demise of such words as *japon* ‘formal dress’ (in favour of *jurk* ‘dress’), *colbert* ‘formal jacket’ (in favour of *jasje* ‘jacket’) and *blouse* (in favour of *bloes*). The expansion of the French subset in the 1990 sample may then be the result of a “renaissance” of traditional etiquette (and terminology) in the 80’s - a restorative tendency which also manifests itself in other social phenomena in that decade. (Additional testing of this interpretation is impossible with our type of material, since it would require systematic differentiation of the source magazines. If next to general magazines, we had also included glossies in the material, then it could have been possible to check whether the evolution of the French subset would correlate with the specific stylistic characteristics of the glossies: it can be anticipated that the “high brow” character - from a stylistic point of view - of these magazines inhibits the aforementioned, sociologically motivated evolution of French words.)

The fact that the French influence in the Netherlandic sample reflects different tendencies, renders the second component of the first series of hypotheses less probable. The specific factors which determine the evolution of the FRENCH-subset in the Netherlandic sample do not imply that that subset is smaller than in Belgian Dutch. The latter is confirmed by the empirical data (due to the low absolute frequencies in the soccer material, we restrict ourselves to the clothing field data):

- [5] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50})$
 $36,64 = 39,65$
- [6] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B50}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N50})$
 $35,61 < 44,01$
- [7] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70})$
 $27,81 = 24,54$
- [8] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B70}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N70})$.
 $22,27 = 21,94$

We now turn to the second series of hypotheses, which focus on the relationship between the formal, written register and the shopwindow register. In accordance with our expectations, the French influence is significantly higher in the shopwindow material than in the magazine sample. The fact, however, that this difference is only reflected in the non-weighted calculation, suggests that the French bias is stronger in infrequently attested concepts:

- [9] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
 $37,51 > 18,71$
- [10] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
 $39,53 > 18,71$
- [11] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$

- 35,73 > 18,71
- [12] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
20,99 = 18,14
- [13] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
21,97 = 18,14
- [14] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{B90})$
20,01 = 18,14

Once more in contrast with our expectations, is the observation that Netherlandic shopwindows also contain more French than Netherlandic magazines. Again this tendency is more outspoken in the non-weighted calculation. A possible explanation for this striking observation is along the same line as our discussion in the previous section of the specific evolutionary pattern of French in the Netherlandic magazines. We suggested then that the “snapped” pattern (with decline in 1970 and increase in 1990) may be the result of the altered appreciation of the stylistic value of French terms. If one of the emanations of the renewed interest for French in the 90’s really is an increased fondness of the distinguished undertone of the French expressions, then it is not strange perhaps that this effect predominates in the shopwindows. If French names nowadays truly have an enticing, appreciative undertone, then that quality is likely to be more strongly activated in a pre-eminently commercial environment than in a magazine, where commercial pressure need not materialise in recommendations of a lexical nature.

- [15] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
31,44 > 23,03
- [16] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
31,13 > 23,03
- [17] $A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) = A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
31,47 > 23,03
- [18] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
33,28 = 28,90
- [19] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
33,91 > 28,90
- [20] $A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) = A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{N90})$
32,85 = 28,90

The assumption that French influence is stronger in the Belgian than in the Netherlandic shopwindow is not systematically confirmed: in only two out of six comparisons in [21]-[26], the basis assumption is unambiguously validated. Recall that a similar observation was made with respect to the magazine material: the francophone bias is subject to different tendencies in both areas, but it is by no means more outspoken in Belgium. From this we might infer - with a certain amount of caution - that puristic tendencies in Belgian Dutch penetrate to the regiolectic level. An indirect indication for the latter is the observation that it is particularly the *weighted* calculations which manifest a stronger francophone bias in the Netherlandic shopwindow material compared to the Belgian shopwindow material. It was already shown that French words in the Leuven and Kortrijk windows predominantly

designate infrequently used concepts. In the Leiden and Maastricht windows, by contrast, this frequency effect is completely absent. The fact that a high concept frequency restrains the francophone influence in the shopwindow may then indicate that the this type of substandard language takes the formal, written standard as its model. That is to say, it seems plausible that the attempt to speak a civilised variant of Dutch (devoid of French influence) will sooner affect the frequently used concepts - where the effect for the language user is maximal.

$$[21] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) \\ 37,51 > 31,44$$

$$[22] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) \\ 39,53 > 31,13$$

$$[23] \quad A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) \\ 35,73 = 31,47$$

$$[24] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeuKor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{LeiMaa}) \\ 20,99 < 33,28$$

$$[25] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Leu}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Lei}) \\ 21,97 < 33,91$$

$$[26] \quad A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Kor}) > A'_{\text{FRENCH}}(\text{Maa}) \\ 20,01 < 32,85$$

6. CONCLUSION

The development of Belgian Dutch is characterised by a reaction against French influence. The outcome of our investigation into actual language use corroborates the existing attitudinal research, but supplements it in two ways. Whereas, to begin with, the traditional research was limited to Dutch speaking Belgium, we can now directly compare the Belgian evolution with the Netherlandic development. As could be expected, the reaction against French is absent in Netherlandic Dutch. The proportion of French terms in Netherlandic Dutch appears to be subject to fluctuations inspired by the specific stylistic value of French. The informal zeitgeist of the late Sixties seems to explain the ‘snap’ in the diachronic evolution of the “distinguished” French terms.

Since, second, we based ourselves on actual language use instead of attitudinal data, we can determine to what extent the puristic reaction against French has a diverging effect on the relationship between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch. That the evolution of the francophone bias does not seem to be motivated by the same factors in Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch does not imply, apparently, that this evolution has a diverging consequence: the effects of the separate developments do not obstruct the basic tendency of convergence we observe in Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Speelman (1998).

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