The Flemish-Brabant dialect of Orsmaal-Gussenhoven

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Orsmaal-Gussenhoven is a small village in the Belgian province of Flemish Brabant with about one thousand residents. It is located halfway between the towns of Tienen (Brabant) in the west and St.-Truiden (Limburg) in the east, and about 12 km north of the Dutch–French language border, which separates the northern part of Belgium (Flanders) from its southern part (Wallonia). No systematic description of the local dialect is available (for a toponymic study, see Kempeneers 2004). A dictionary including a short grammar is available for the dialect of Melkwezer, 2.5 km to the north of Orsmaal-Gussenhoven (Hondshoven 2003). However, the sound systems of the two dialects are not identical.

All speakers of the local dialect are bilingual with Belgian Standard Dutch (Verhoeven 2005). The present description is based on the speech of one male and three female speakers aged between 40 and 75 years. The recordings of the examples and of the read story are available at http://journals.cambridge.org/ipa, alongside the online version of the present Illustration. They are taken from two female speakers, F1 (sections 'Consonants', 'Vowels', 'Stress', 'Non-distinctive accent', and 'Transcription of passage') and F2 (section 'Intonation').

Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			k	
Nasal	m		n			ŋ	
Trill			r				
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ	(h)
Approximant	β̞				j		
Lateral approximant			l				

Additional palatalized consonants: t^j k^j

Journal of the International Phonetic Association (2010) 40/2
doi:10.1017/S0025100310000083

p	pak	‘pack’	b	bak	‘box’			
t	taks	‘tax’	d	dak	‘roof’	tʲ	mʊtʲ	‘courage’
k	kak	‘excrement’				kʲ	kraːkʲ	‘jug’
m	maː	‘sleeve’	n	naː	‘now’	ŋ	rɪŋ	‘ring’
f	fɛːn	‘fine’	v	vɛːs	‘screw’			
s	ˈsœmɪçə	‘some’	z	zœçt	‘addiction’			
ʃ	ʃɒːs	‘chance’	ʒ	(d)ʒɒː	‘Jean’			
x	ˈlaxə	‘laugh’	ɣ	ˈdaːɣə	‘days’			
h	haːs	‘house’						
β̞	β̞a	‘what’	j	jaː	‘yes’			
l	laː	‘lazy’	r	raː	‘mourning’			

In pre-pausal position, /p t tʲ k kʲ/ may be produced with a homorganic frictional release. /b d/ are fully or partially voiced in word-initial and intervocalic positions but voiceless in word-final position, neutralizing the contrast with /p t/. /tʲ kʲ/ are restricted to the coda where they contrast with /t k/ (e.g. [mʊt] ‘(I) must’ – [mʊtʲ] ‘courage’, [kraːk] ‘(I) crack’ – [kraːkʲ] ‘jug’). Morpheme-final /p t k/ may be voiced when followed by a voiced plosive or a vowel. Examples are *schapdeur* [sxabˈdœɪɾ̞] ‘cabinet door’, *zakdoek* [ˈzagduk] ‘handkerchief’, and *de hoek om* [dəˈnuɣ̞m] ‘round the corner’.

/n/ is alveolar before allomorphemic /k/, velar before tautomorphemic /k/, and palatalized before allomorphemic /kj/. Examples are [ˈbiːn.-kə] ‘leg-DIM’, [ˈbaŋ.k-ə] ‘bank-PL’, [ˈbanʲ.-kjə] ‘job-DIM’ (hyphens mark morpheme boundaries). /ŋ/ contrasts with /n/ word-finally and intervocalically ([hɪn] ‘hen’ – [rɪŋ] ‘ring’, [ˈbɪnə] ‘inside’ – [ˈbɪŋə] ‘to bind’). Word-final [nʲ] is restricted to French loans such as [ʃamˈpanʲ] ‘champagne’. /r/ before a stressed vowel in word-initial syllables is an apicoalveolar trill or fricative. Intervocalic /r/ and /r/ in the onset after a consonant may be reduced to [ɾ]. Word-final /r/ is highly variable both within and between speakers. The most frequent variants are the apicoalveolar fricative trill [r̝], the apicoalveolar fricative [ɹ̝], and an apicoalveolar affricate [ɾɹ̝]; the last two variants tend to become voiceless in pre-pausal position (cf. Whitley 2003).

/v z/ in word-initial position are often voiceless or partly voiced, with the second half being voiceless. Sometimes, /v/ and /z/ are affricated to [bv] and [dz], respectively. Intervocalic /v z/ are voiceless. /ʒ/ is restricted to word-initial position of French loans. Like /v z/, /ʒ/ tends to become devoiced or affricated to [dʒ] (see also Peters 2006 on Hasselt; on devoicing of initial and intervocalic fricatives in Belgian Dutch see Verhoeven 2005 and Verhoeven & Hageman 2007).

/x/ is restricted to word-final and intervocalic position. In the onset, it is restricted to the sequence /sx/. /x/ is [x] before and after back vowels and [ç] before and after front vowels and [ə]. Intervocalic /x/ between a stressed and an unstressed syllable is [x] if preceded by a back vowel. /ɣ/ in word-initial and intervocalic positions is mostly voiceless but produced with less acoustic energy than /x/. In word-initial and intervocalic position, it is [ɣ] before or after back vowels and [j̝] before or after front vowels. In word-final position, the contrast between /x/ and /ɣ/ is neutralized. /h/ is restricted to morpheme-initial position. One speaker did not use /h/ at all. The other speakers dropped /h/ occasionally, especially before unstressed vowels.

/β̞/ and /j/ are restricted to word-initial and intervocalic position. /l/ tends to be velarized, especially in postvocalic position.

Vowels

Whereas the consonant inventory of the dialect is moderately-sized in a world perspective, the vowel system is remarkably large. It comprises eight short vowels, 10 long vowels, and 12 diphthongs, of which eight are closing, one is fronting, and three are centering. In addition, there is /ə/, which is restricted to unstressed syllables. Comparably rich vowel systems are reported for the nearby Brabantian dialects of Melkwezer and Tienen (Hondshoven 2003: 204ff.) and for the Limburgian dialects of Weert, Hechtel, Eksel, Hasselt, and Hamont (Heijmans & Gussenhoven 1998, Agten 1999, Peters 2006, Verhoeven 2007).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100310000083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

SHORT VOWELS			LONG VOWELS		
ɪ	blɪk	‘plate’	iː	bliːk	‘bleaching’
			eː	zeːç	‘saw’
ɛ	β̞ɛl	‘well’	ɛː	zɛːç	‘sieve’
a	mat	‘market’	aː	raː	‘mourning’
ɒ	mɒt	‘mat’	ɒː	rɒː	‘raw’
ɔ	mɔt	‘moth’	oː	roːp	‘(I) pick up’
ʊ	ʊx	‘you’	uː	uːx	‘eye’
ʏ	rʏç	‘back’	yː	dryːç	‘dry’
			øː	køːl	‘cold-ADJ’
œ	mœl	‘mull’	œː	œːl	‘owl’

DIPHTHONGS					
ei	sxeit	‘(I) shoot’	uɪ	kuɪ	‘cow’
ɛɪ	sxɛɪt	‘fart’	øy	zøyk	‘(I) search’
aɪ	maɪ	‘marble’	œʏ	rœʏk	‘smell’
əʊ	məʊ	‘mom’	iə	kiəs	‘cherry’
ɞʊ	mɞʊs	‘mud’	eə	keəs	‘cheese’
aʊ	ˈpaʊzə	‘portion’	ɛə	kɛəs	‘candle’

UNSTRESSED ONLY

ə	də	‘the’

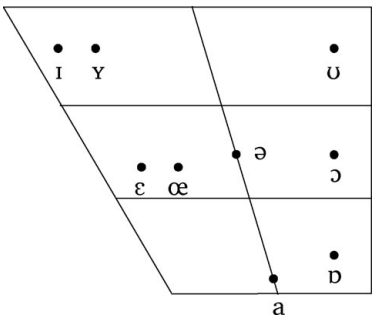

Figure 1 Short vowels.

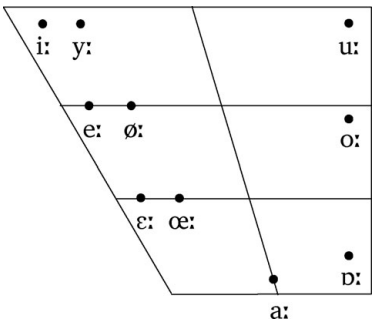

Figure 2 Long vowels.

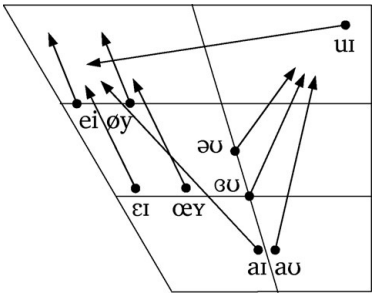

Figure 3 Closing and fronting diphthongs.

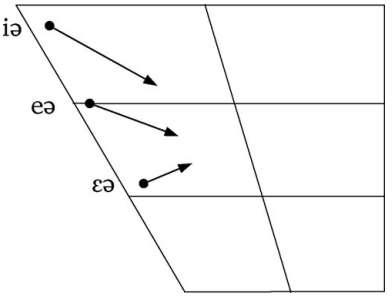

Figure 4 Centering diphthongs.

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/ɪ/, /ʊ/ and /ɔ/ are often fairly close but not as close as their counterparts /iː/, /uː/ and /oː/. There are also marginal phonemes /o/ and /y/, which are restricted to a few French loans. /uɪ/ corresponds to /ɔɪ/ in the dialect of Melkwezer. /iə/, /eə/ and /ɛə/ occur syllable-finally and before bilabial, labiodental, and alveolar consonants, where they contrast with /iː/, /eː/ and /ɛː/, respectively (cf. [tiːn] 'ten' – [tiən] 'toe', [beːɻ] 'beer' – [beəɻ] 'bear', [mɛːt] 'May' – [mɛət] 'march'). Long round vowels are diphthongized before tautosyllabic alveolar plosives. The second part of these diphthongs resembles the unrounded version of the preceding vowel or a schwa-like sound. Often, a labial offglide occurs between the first and the second part of the diphthong. Examples are [nyət] 'never', [muət] 'murder', [bɔət] 'beard', and [kɒət] 'map'. The monopthongal counterpart of the diphthong [ɔə], however, is not attested in our data. There is also a diphthongized variant of /øː/, as in [døən] 'thorn', which in our data has a palatal offglide between the two parts of the diphthong.

In stressed syllables, short vowels are followed by a coda consonant. Exceptions are high-frequency words, such as [βa] 'what', and French loans, such as [dəˈpo] 'depot'. As in Belgian Standard Dutch, a schwa may be inserted in non-homorganic consonant clusters in coda position, if the first element is /l/ or /r/; examples are [ˈsxɛləp] 'shell', [ˈmɛlək] 'milk', [ˈfɪləm] 'film', [ˈkaləf] 'calf', [ˈdœrəp] 'village', [ˈβɛrək] 'work', [ˈbɛrək] 'mountain', [ˈarəm] 'arm', and [ˈkɛrəf] 'basket'.

Stress

Stress location is as in Belgian Standard Dutch. In compounds consisting of two nouns, primary stress occurs sometimes on the head noun rather than on the modifying element. Examples are [stɒtˈhaːs] 'town house' and [sxabˈdœɪɾɻ] 'cabinet door'. Many French loans preserve their original stress pattern, that is, primary word stress is on the last syllable. This stress pattern may give rise to the reduction of the preceding vowel, as in [kəˈdaʊ] Fr. 'cadeau'.

Intonation

Table 1 gives an overview of the most common nuclear contours using the ToDI notational system (Gussenhoven 2005).

The dialect uses H*L as the default accent in both nuclear and pre-nuclear position, which corresponds to H*L of Standard Dutch. However, the H tone of both nuclear and pre-nuclear H*L is aligned later than in Standard Dutch. It occurs on the first post-nuclear syllable if there is an unstressed pre-final syllable available (medial column). We represent the nuclear accent in Table 1 in (1a, b) and (2a, b) as H*L rather than L*H because in many cases no low target on the nuclear syllable is detectable and the choice of H*L reduces the complexity of the overall phonological representation. In the 'late peak' condition (3a, b), L* moves the nuclear H tone further to the right. If the intonational phrase contains a post-nuclear foot, as in (3a), H aligns with the first post-nuclear stress. If there is no post-nuclear syllable available, as in (3b), the peak of the 'late peak' contour occurs on the nuclear syllable but still later than in the neutral condition (1b). Narrow focus moves the peak of nuclear H*L to the left such that the peak occurs on the vowel of the nuclear syllable. In the rising contours L*HH% and L*H0%, narrowly focused nuclear words show a steeper rise.

The Standard Dutch fall-rise indicating non-finality is absent from our data, whereas an implicational fall-rise in the sense of Wells (2006) is attested. At the beginning of the intonational phrase, %H contrasts with %L. %H is frequently combined with H*LL% in questions.

Non-distinctive accent

Orsmaal-Gussenhoven is close to the western border of the Franconian tone accent area, which covers large parts of the Belgian and Dutch provinces of Limburg, of North Rhine-Westphalia

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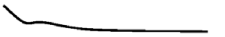
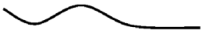
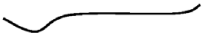
Table 1 Nuclear contours in non-final wide focus condition. Speaker F2. Middle column: '. . . want to drive to Wageningen'. Right column: '. . . a tree'. Dutch orthographic spelling.

Contour	Non-final	Final
H*LL%	1a  ... naar WAgeningen willen rijen H* L L%	1b  ... ne BOEM H*LL%
!H*LL%	2a  ... naar WAgeningen willen rijen !H* L L%	2b  ... ene BOEM !H*LL%
L*HLL%	3a  ... naar WAgeningen willen rijen L* H L L%	3b  ene BOEM? L*HLL%
L*HH%	4a  ... naar WAgeningen willen rijen L*H H%	4b  ene BOEM? L*HH%
L*H0%	5a  ... naar WAgeningen willen rijen L*H 0%	5b  ... ene BOEM L*H0%

in Germany, and of Luxemburg. Many dialects in this area use two word accents to distinguish between lexical and grammatical meanings, known as *stoottoon* ('push tone') and *sleeptoon* ('dragging tone'), or accent 1 and accent 2. The dialect of Orsmaal-Gussenhoven appears to use a 'non-distinctive accent', which shows phonetic features of accent 2 of Limburgian dialects. First, the late peak timing of nuclear and pre-nuclear H*L accents makes them sound strikingly similar to the pitch movements on nuclear and pre-nuclear accent 2 words in the dialects of Hasselt, Borgloon, and Tongeren in south-western Limburg (Grootaers 1910; Peters 2006, 2007, 2008). Second, two of our speakers (speaker F1 and, less consistently, speaker F2) tend to add a high target to the final word of the intonational phrase after a final low boundary tone (see Figure 5a). Interestingly, this pitch pattern, which is not distinctive in the dialect, resembles the pitch pattern found on phrase-final accent 2 words in some more distant dialects of north-eastern Limburg (Gussenhoven & van der Vliet 1999, Gussenhoven 2000). In contrast to the East-Limburgian rise, however, the rise shown in Figure 5 tends to generally occur on the last syllable of the intonational phrase bearing an unreduced vowel. This syllable may contain a single sonorant mora (Figure 5b) and may be a post-nuclear syllable of the nuclear word (Figure 5c), the nuclear syllable in pre-final position (Figure 5d), or the stressed syllable of a post-nuclear word ([ɣəˈdryːmt] in Figure 5e).

Transcription of recorded passage

[‖] marks the end of an utterance and [|] the end of an intonational phrase within an utterance. The stress mark ['] indicates an accented syllable.

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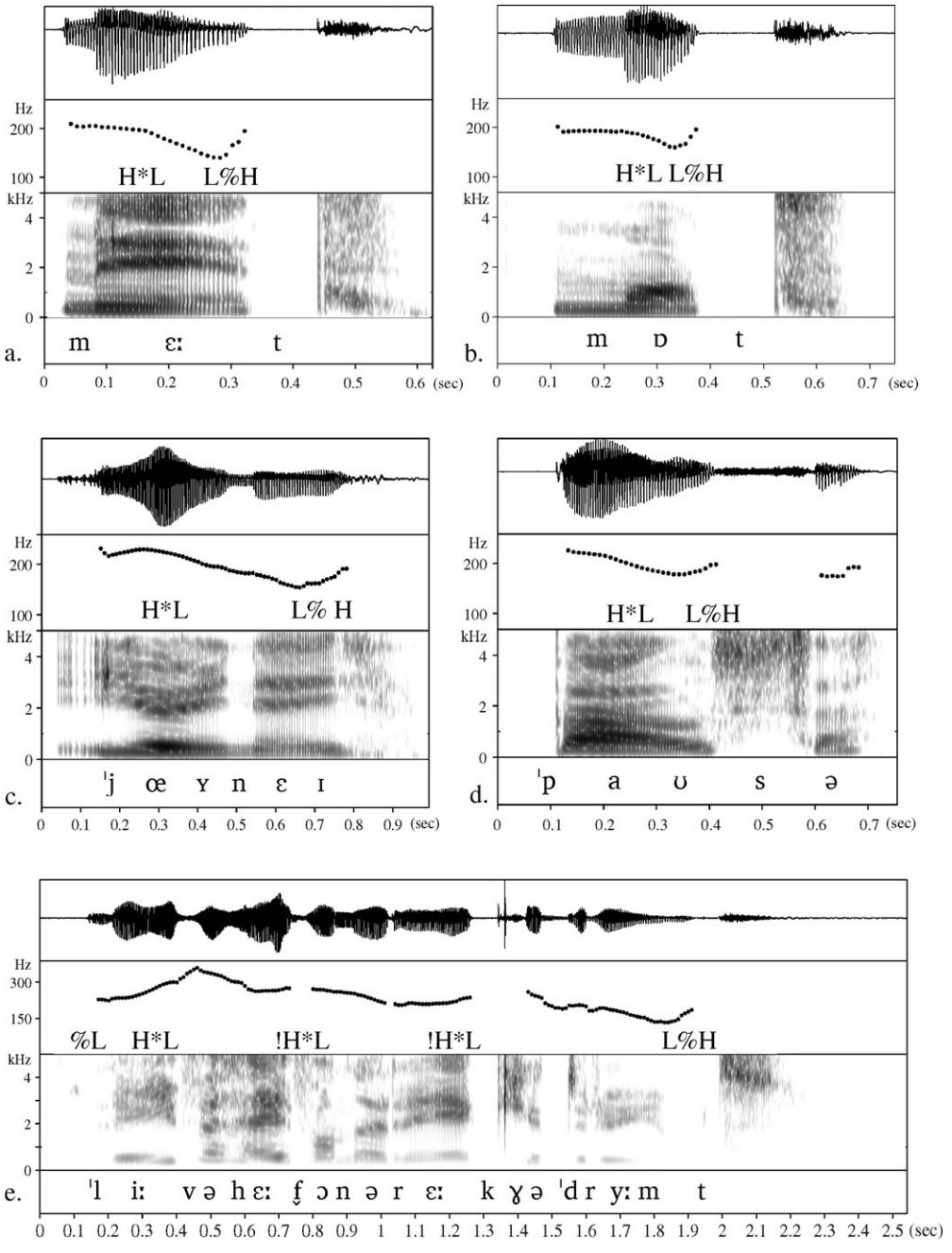

Figure 5 Falling contours with final rise on IP-final word. (a–d) Nuclear position ([mɛːt] 'May', [mɒt] 'mat', ['jœʏnɛɪ] 'June', ['paʊsə], portion') and (e) post-nuclear position (['liːvə hɛːf fɔn ə rɛːk ɣəˈdryːmt] 'Lieven-has-of-an-empire-dreamt'/'Lieven dreamt of an empire').

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100310000083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Broad transcription

də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt ɛn də zɔn hadən ɛn dɪsˈkøːsə ˈɛvə də vroːx | β̪iː van ən tβ̪iː də ˈstɛrkstə β̪as | tʏn dʏ ʒyst ˈɛmant vœrˈbɛː.kɔm bɛ nən ˈdɪkə ˈβ̪armə jas aːn ‖ zə ˈspraːkə ɔf | da β̪ɛə də vərˈbɛːɣaŋər zaʊ dər tœ ˈkrɛːɣə ˈzɛnə jas ˈaːtətrɛkə | də ˈstɛrkstə zaʊ zɛn ‖ də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt | bəˈɣɔn œt ˈalə maxt tə ˈblɔəzə | ma u ˈhatər dat ər bleːs | dɛs tə ˈfɛldər traks də vərˈbɛːɣaŋər ˈzɛnə jas təʊ ‖ œtˈɛːndəlɪk | ɣav də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt ʊp ‖ dəˈnoː bəˈɣɔs də zɔn ˈkraxtɪç tə ˈstroːlə | ɛn dəˈrɛk trɔk də vərˈbɛːɣaŋər ˈzɛnə ˈjas ˈaːt ‖ də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt | mʊs ˈtəʊɣɛːvə dat də ˈzɔn də ˈstɛrkstə β̪as ‖

Narrow transcription

də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt ʔɛn də zɔn ˈʔadən ən dɪsˈkøːsə ˈɛvə də vɾoːx | β̪i van ən tβ̪iː də ˈstɛɾəkstə β̪as | tʏn dʏɪ ʒyst ˈɛmant ɣœrˈbɛː.kɔm bə nən ˈdɪkə ˈβ̪aɾəmə jaˌs aˌːn ‖ zˌə ˈspraːkə ɔf | da β̪ɛə də vərˈbɛːɣaŋəɾˌ zaʊ dəɾˌ tœ ˈkrɛːɣə ˈzɛnə jas ˈaːtətrɛkə | də ˈstɛɾəçstə zˌaˌʊ zˌɛˌn ‖ dˌə ˈnœrˌdərβ̪ɪntˢ | bəˈɣɔn ɛt ˈalˠˤə maxt tə ˈblɔəzˌə | ma u ˈhatər dat ər bleːs | dɛs tə ˈfɛldəɾˌ trɒks də ɣərˈbɛːɣaŋə zˌɛnə jas təʊ ‖ œtˈɛːndəlɪk | ɣˌav də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt ʊpᶲ ‖ dəˈnoː bəˈɣˌɔsˌ də zɔn ˈkraxtɪç tə ˈstroːlə | ɛn dəˈrɛk trɔk də vəˈbɛːɣaŋɐ ˈzˌɛnə jas aˌːtˢ ‖ də ˈnœrdərβ̪ɪnt | mʊs ˈtəʊɣɛːvə dat də zɔn də ˈstɛ̠ɾəkstə β̪aˌs ‖

Standard Dutch orthographic version (adjusted to the dialectal version)

De noordenwind en de zon hadden een discussie over de vraag wie van hun tweeën de sterkste was, toen er juist iemand voorbij kwam met een dikke, warme jas aan. Ze spraken af dat wie de voorbijganger zou ertoe krijgen zijn jas uit te trekken de sterkste zou zijn. De noordenwind begon uit alle macht te blazen, maar hoe harder dat hij blies, des te dichter trok de voorbijganger zijn jas toe. Uiteindelijk gaf de noordenwind op. Daarna begon de zon krachtig te stralen, en direct trok de voorbijganger zijn jas uit. De noordenwind moest toegeven dat de zon de sterkste was.

Acknowledgements

This study was carried out as a follow-up study to the project *Tonale Dialecten van het Nederlands* (2003–2005), which was funded by the Vlaams-Nederlands Comité, a joint research foundation of the *Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen* (FWO) and the *Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research* (NWO). I am grateful to Ria van den Brandt (Nijmegen), Karel Verhelst (Hasselt), Paul Kempeneers (Tienen) en Firmin Schollen (Linter) for helping me to get in contact with my consultants. I thank my speakers for giving me their time and best efforts and Rita Colpaert for indispensable practical help. For many helpful comments I thank John H. Esling and two anonymous reviewers, and Carlos Gussenhoven, to whom this study is dedicated.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100310000083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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