

Children's preference for English-sounding neologisms: An experimental approach

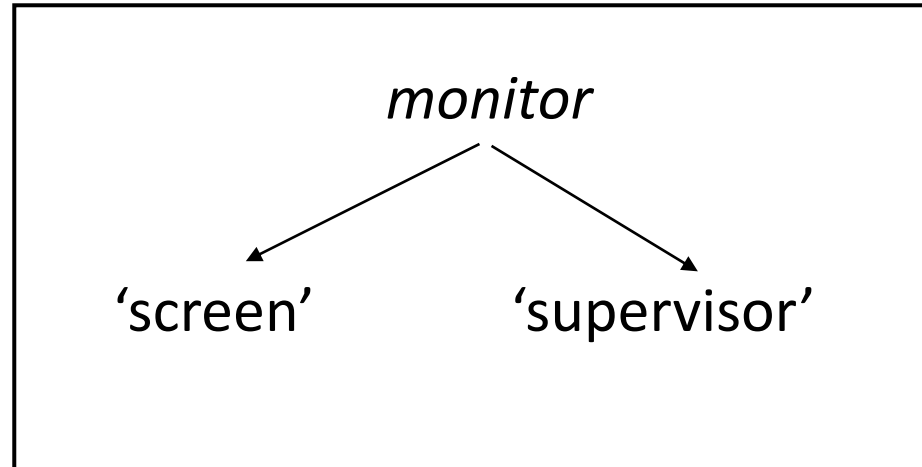
Gillian Roberts, Eline Zenner & Laura Rosseel

Background

- Two recent developments in Anglicism research:
 1. Transition from study of systemic impact of English loanwords to focus on **socio-pragmatic functions**
 - Matras 2009
 2. Shift from semasiological to **onomasiological** approaches
 - Onysko & Winter-Froemel 2011
 - Zenner, Speelman & Geeraerts 2012

Background

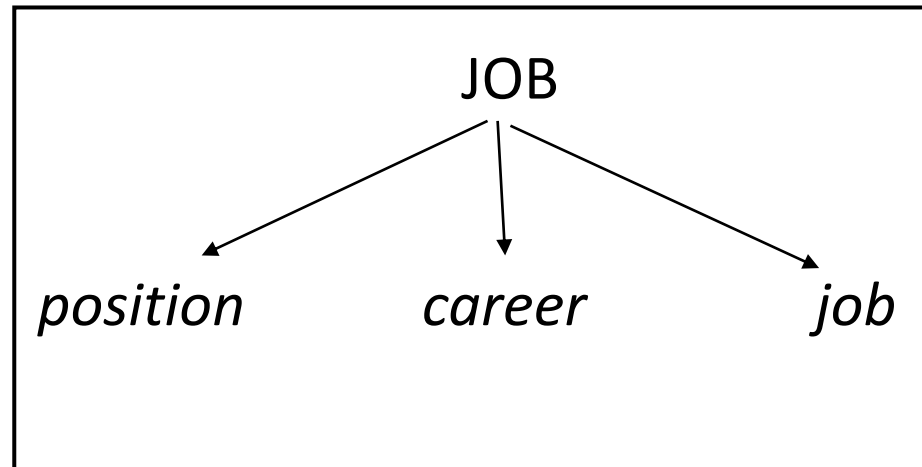
Meaning variation
(semasiological approach)



1 word

meanings

Naming variation
(onomasiological approach)



1 concept

words

Background

- This study integrates these two developments
- socio-pragmatic parameters that steer lexical choice
- usage-based approach taking into account lexical resources from both the heritage language and English

Background

- Case study of an under-studied group: **youngsters**

“key players in the process of globalization”
(Berns 2007:43)

- to inform about
 - a) the socio-pragmatic impact of English
 - b) children’s acquisition of the social meaning of lexical variation

→ also contributing to **developmental sociolinguistics**.

Research aims

- Which social and pragmatic parameters steer children's preference for English lexical items over heritage alternatives?
- How do children acquire such socially meaningful linguistic variation?

This study

Which **socio-pragmatic parameters** steer Belgian Dutch children's preference for **English-sounding names** for **novel objects** from certain **semantic fields** over **Dutch-sounding alternatives**?

1. Forced-choice object naming task
2. Explicit attitudes questionnaire

Methodology: Overview

- Respondents
- Example trial
- Design
 - options & decision – feedback welcome!
- Procedure: key points
- Expected results

Respondents

- Belgian Dutch-speaking primary and secondary school children ($n = 120$)

Age	F	M	TOTAL
8-9 (Grade 3)	20	20	40
10-11 (Grade 5)	20	20	40
12-13 (1 st year)	20	20	40
TOTAL	60	60	120

Respondents: considerations

Which **age groups**?

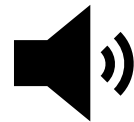
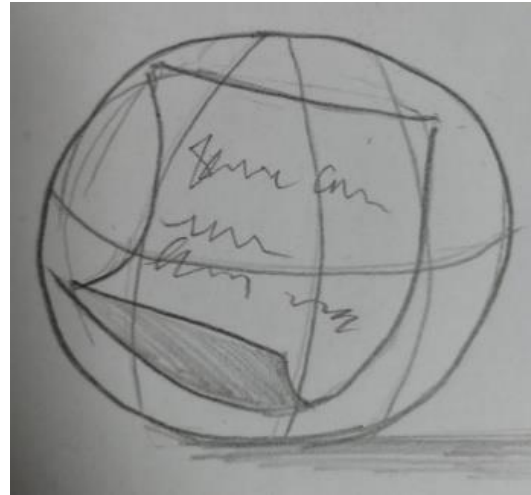
- multidimensional responses to language variation start \approx age 8
- sociolinguistic competence fully acquired \approx age 14
- transition from childhood to adolescence
- exclude children who have started formal English instruction

Regional variation?

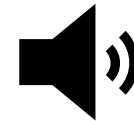
- limited to a single regional area (Limburg, Belgium)

Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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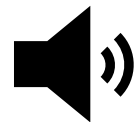
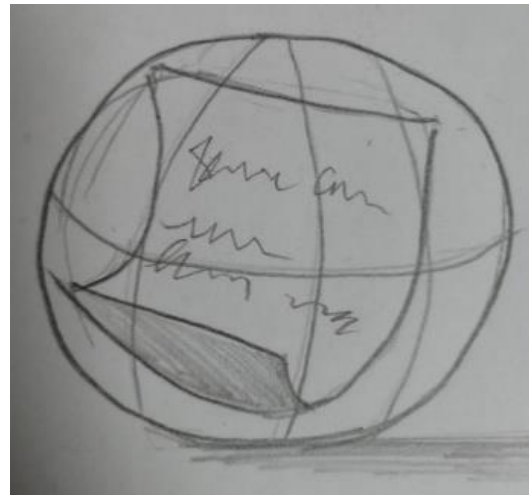
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Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.

“You use this thing to send notes to your family members in other rooms of the house.”



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“I choose this word”

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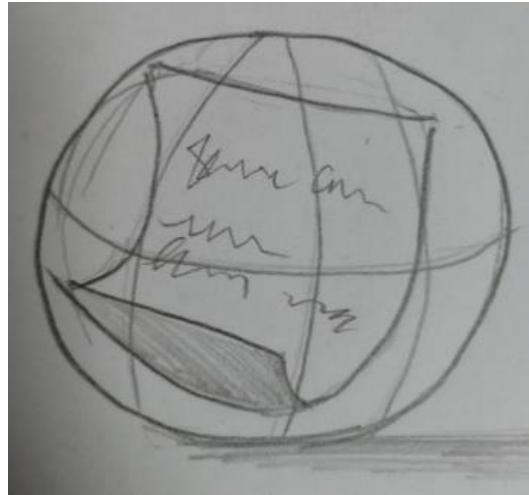
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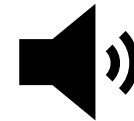
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Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.

→

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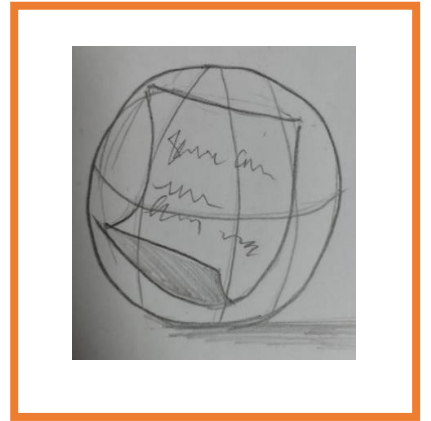
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Design: objects



Options:

- Which independent variables to include?
 - context in which object is presented (discretely/within a story)
 - characteristics of the speaker
 - semantic field of object
-

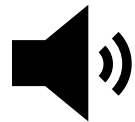
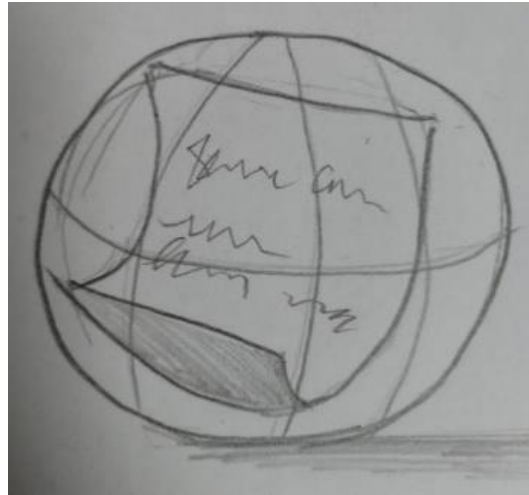
Decision:

Semantic field of object

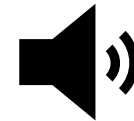
English-prone	IT	youth culture
Dutch-prone	home & family	garden & pets

Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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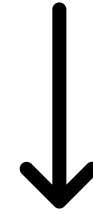
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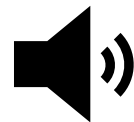
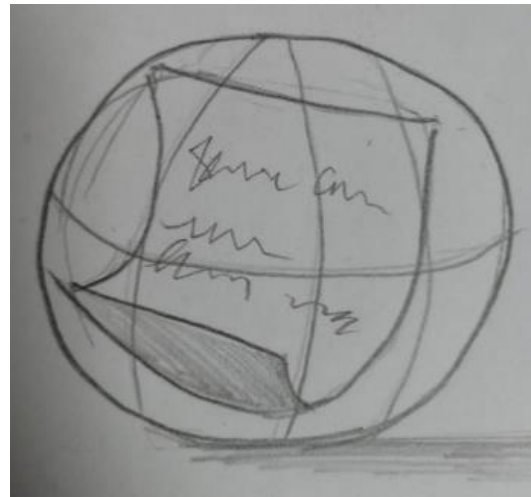
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Experiment: example trial



Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.

Design: **frame sentence**

Options:

- no frame sentence – simply choose between names
 - Dutch sentence indicating the function of the object
-

Decision:

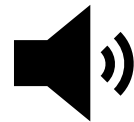
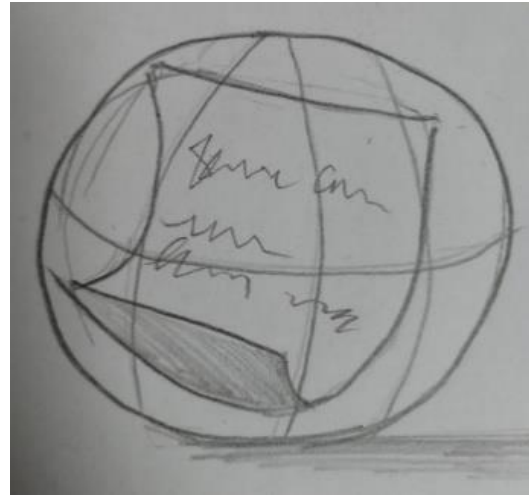
- Dutch sentence indicating the function of the object
- according to limited number of pre-determined structures

Od – V *Dit ding gebruik je om **je huisdier** te **aaien**.*

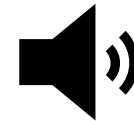
Od – V – Oi *Dit ding gebruik je om **schoenen-tatouages** te **delen** met **je vrienden**.*

Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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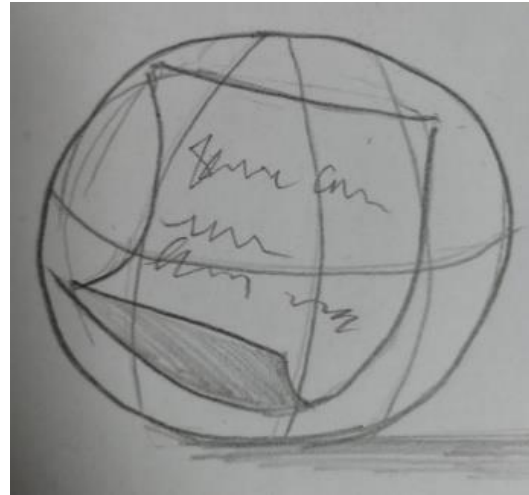
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Experiment: example trial

Dit ding gebruik je om berichtjes naar je familieleden in huis te vervoeren.



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Design: choice of names

Options:

- Type of names
 - existing English and Dutch words
 - graphemically identical neologisms pronounced in English-sounding or Dutch-sounding way
- Vary on linguistic features of names?
 - plausibility or “wordness” of neologisms (Impe 2010)
 - variety of English (BrE, AmE)

Design: choice of names

Decision:

Neologisms

Criteria:

- sufficiently different from existing EN or NL words
- at least two sounds distinguishing EN and NL phonological word
- morphological pattern: monosyllabic; disyllabic
- structure: CCVCC; CCVVC; CVVCC; CVCCVC; CVCVCC

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Design: choice of names

Examples:

	Structure	Phon. EN / Phon. Du	Different sounds
<i>glork</i>	CCVCC	glɔɹk / ɣlɔrk	ɹ/r; g/ɣ
<i>masper</i>	CVCCVC	mæspəɹ / maspər	æ/ɑ; ɹ/r

Design: choice of names

Pre- and post-tests:

- Pre-test to check
 - distance between each Dutch neologism and its English counterpart
 - distance between English and Dutch neologisms and existing words
 - avoid confounds from sound symbolism
- Post-test to check respondents' recognition of English- and Dutch-sounding stimuli

Procedure: key points

- Within-subjects
- Respondents are told that they are choosing between English and Dutch
- Respondents see the graphemic word simultaneously with hearing the phonemic word

Overview of this study

1. Forced-choice object naming task
2. Explicit attitudes questionnaire

Independent variables:

- semantic field
- language awareness
- explicit attitudes
- age & gender

Recap of research aims

Broadly

- Which social and pragmatic parameters steer children's preference for English lexical items over heritage alternatives?
- How do children acquire such socially meaningful linguistic variation?

Specifically

- Which **socio-pragmatic parameters** steer Belgian Dutch children's preference for **English-sounding names** for **novel objects** from certain **semantic fields** over **Dutch-sounding alternatives**?

Expected results

1. Children will prefer the English-sounding names for objects from semantic fields relating to the global status of English and Dutch-sounding names for objects from more “local” semantic fields
 - Androutsopoulos 2012; Piller 2003; Zenner, Speelman & Geeraerts 2015
2. Increasing preference for English compared to Dutch as children grow older.

Thank you

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