

Language regards and child-directed speech

Colloquial Belgian Dutch in Flemish households

Eline Zenner, Dorien Van de Mieroop & Stefania Marzo

Overview

1. Child-directed speech and sociolinguistic awareness
2. Colloquial Belgian Dutch
3. Data
4. Variationist perspectives
5. Discourse analytic insights
6. Conclusion

CDS

Acquired insights

Parents adapt their language when talking to their children

- Phonetic contrast
- Utterance length
- Syntactic complexity
- Pitch
- ...

Different reasons to do so

- Analytic function of CDS
- Social function of CDS
- Sociolinguistic awareness

CDS and sociolinguistic awareness

Variation between standard and vernacular forms in CDS

- Less vernacular than parent-to-parent
 - Speech to boys more vernacular than speech to girls
 - Proportion standard language decreases with age children
- Help children acquire complete sociolinguistic repertoire
- When to you use which variety?
- Insight into parents' language regards

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Colloquial Belgian Dutch

Flanders:

Delayed standardization

Exonormative orientation

→ CBD:

substandard

supraregional

autonomous

new standard?



CBD as autonomous BD standard?

- Speaker evaluation paradigm
- Societal treatment approach
- Research with developmental agenda

De Vogelaer (forthcoming)

De Houwer (2003)

speaker evaluation

family language

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Dinner table talk

- one **Antwerpian** family (from ongoing project with >16 families)
- **parents**: teachers, 35/39 yrs old
- **children**: four boys, nine months and 4/5/7 yrs old
 - prelinguistic vs. linguistic
 - preschool vs. school
- **data**: three hours of self-recordings, 3233 utterances
- **transcriptions**: CHILDES/Jeffersonian
- **context**: mealtime
 - interface of power and intimacy
 - “the built-in tension between dinner as an activity and dinner as a social, conversational event” (Blum-Kulka 1997); frames of talk
- **sociolinguistic interviews**

Pronouns of address

Standard/CBD alternation

Stereotype variable

register	type	Standard Dutch	CBD
polite speech	nominal, SV	u	u
	nominal, VS	u	u
	oblique	uw	uw
	reflexive	zich	zich
	possessive	uw	uw
casual speech	nominal, SV	je/jij	ge/gij
	nominal, VS	je/jij	ge/gij/-de/-degij
	oblique	je/jou	u
	reflexive	je/jou	u
	possessive	je/jouw	uw

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Pronouns of address

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Stereotype variable

992 pronouns of address in the data

570 SD, 374 CBD

When SD, when CBD?

mixed methods

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Type of pronoun

type	variety	variant	tokens	proportion variant	proportion variety
nominal, SV	Standard	je	89	0.270	0.594
		jij	107	0.324	
	CBD	ge	74	0.224	0.406
		gij	60	0.182	
nominal, VS	Standard	je	125	0.350	0.697
		jij	124	0.347	
	CBD	ge	19	0.053	0.303
		gij	17	0.048	
		-de	38	0.106	
		-degij	34	0.095	
oblique	Standard	je	5	0.069	0.639
		jou	41	0.569	
	CBD	u	26	0.361	0.361
reflexive	Standard	je	2	0.250	0.250
		jou	0	0.000	
	CBD	u	6	0.750	0.750
possessive	Standard	je	58	0.374	0.477
		jouw	16	0.103	
	CBD	uw	81	0.523	0.523

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		jij	107	0.324	
	CBD	ge	74	0.224	0.406
		gij	60	0.182	
nominal, VS	Standard	je	17	0.051	0.37
		jij	17	0.051	
	CBD	ge	17	0.051	0.03
		gij	17	0.051	
		-de	38	0.106	
		-degij	34	0.095	
oblique	Standard	je	5	0.069	0.639
		jou	41	0.569	
	CBD	u	26	0.361	
reflexive	Standard	je	2	0.250	0.250
		jou	0	0.000	
	CBD	u	6	0.750	
possessive	Standard	je	58	0.374	0.477
		jouw	16	0.103	
	CBD	uw	81	0.523	

Highest preference SD in subject forms with inversion
 Lowest preference for SD in possessives
 p-value for Chi-square < 0.00001, Cramer's V 0.16

Priming

Variety of the closest pronoun of address that was used prior in conversation by any of the interlocutors

	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
SL.primed	413	146	0.261
CBD.primed	154	209	0.576

($p < 0.00001$, Cramer's V 0.316)

Speaker-Hearer

Basic break-down

	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
CDS	446	272	0.379
PAR-PAR	7	61	0.897

(p-value < 0.00001, Cramer's V 0.295)

Speaker-Hearer

In more detail

speaker	hearer	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
father	CH1	82	68	0.453
	CH2	98	55	0.359
	CH3	46	16	0.258
	CH4	16	58	0.784
mother	CH1	57	24	0.296
	CH2	86	33	0.277
	CH3	61	18	0.228

- Father more vernacular than mother
- Differentiation between children
- Pattern stronger for father
- CH4?

(p-value < 0.00001, Cramer's V 0.295)

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Discourse analytic insights

This variation between children is partially expected, and partially surprising: CH4 in the pre-linguistic phase

=> a qualitative exploration of the data is required

Qualitative exploration of surprising difference

Father's CDS to older children:

- dus da(t) mag je zo da(t) mag je me(t) je handjes ete(n) als je da(t) wil
*so you can eat that like that you can eat that with your hands if you like**

Father's CDS to the youngest child in pre-language phase, right after the child had not entirely finished his bottle of milk (of 180 ml):

- al goe(d) da(t) ge geenen tweehonderdentien besteld (h)ad e Jaan
*good that you hadn't ordered a two hundred and ten hey Jaan**

*in translation, all SL second person pronominal forms are underlined, all CBD-forms are in blue

Qualitative exploration of surprising difference

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- dus da(t) mag je zo da(t) mag je me(t) je handjes ete(n) als je da(t) wil
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Father's CDS to the youngest child in pre-language phase, right after the child had not entirely finished his bottle of milk (of 180 ml):

- al goe(d) da(t) ge geen en tweehonderdentien besteld (h)ad e Jaan
good that you hadn't ordered a two hundred and ten hey Jaan

Perfect illustration of the tension between the instrumental goal and the social goal typical of dinner talk
(Blum-Kulka 1997)

New research question

Perhaps it is not the increasing age of the children beyond the pre-language phase that causes the parents to use more CBD when addressing them, but the type of talk that is used to these children that elicits a different type of language variant?

Discourse analytic insights

Family meals in Western society:

Three typical “types” – or frames – of talk (Brumark 2010):

- **Social/relational:** talk for the sole purpose of talking
- **Instances of pedagogic comments:** teaching the children something
- **Instrumental/transactional:** related to the activity of having dinner

Social/relational frame

- 1 FAT *moest ge morgen uw goed rapport al terug meenemen naar huis*
'did **you** have to take your good report back home tomorrow already'
- 2 *(.) a:h naar school bedoel ik of-*
'(.) a:h to school I mean or-'
- 3 *wil je eerst nog es stoefen bij euh*
'do you first want to brag to erm'
- 4 *want morgen komt opa he*
'because granddad is coming tomorrow hey'
- 5 CH3 *o:pa*
'gra:nddad'

Pedagogical frame

- 1 CH1 *maar welk is eigenlijk 50 plus 50*
'but what is 50 plus 50 actually '
- 2 MOT *wat denk je*
'what do you think'
- 3 CH3 *60*
- 4 CH1 *2 plus 2, 50 plus 50 is 52*
'2 plus 2, 50 plus 50 is 52'
- 5 MOT *nee 50 plus 2 is 52 (.) 50 plus 50 is 100*
'no 50 plus 2 is 52 (.) 50 plus 50 is 100'

Instrumental/transactional frame

- 1 MOT *wil jij graag die fruityoghurt*
'would you like to have that fruit yoghurt'
- 2 FAT *of een boterham met choco*
'or a sandwich with chocolate spread'
- 3 MOT *met aardbei (.) weer met aardbeie(n) (.) ja*
'with strawberry (.) again with strawberries (.) yes'
- 4 CH1 *ja*
'yes'
- 5 MOT okay

Quantitative distribution of SL/CBD-pronouns across the 3 frames

Frame	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
social/relational	139	153	0.524
transactional	398	194	0.328
pedagogical	30	8	0.211

($p < 0.0001$, Cramer's V 0.200)

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Frame	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
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transactional	398	194	0.328
pedagogical	30	8	0.211

data scarcity in the pedagogical frame



further scrutiny of the other frames

Instrumental/transactional frame

Speaker	Hearer	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
father	CH1	61	34	0.358
father	CH2	78	45	0.366
father	CH3	34	11	0.244
mother	CH1	47	20	0.299
mother	CH2	66	33	0.333
mother	CH3	52	13	0.200
parent	parent	6	30	0.833

(p for Chi-square < 0.00001, Cramer's V 0.297)

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parent	parent	6	30	0.833

No age related patterns in CDS!

Social/relational frame

(excluding jokes, typically F->CH4)

SP	H	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
father	CH1	7	15	0.682
father	CH2	17	7	0.292
father	CH3	8	2	0.200
mother	CH1	3	0	0.000
mother	CH2	18	0	0.000
mother	CH3	8	5	0.385
parent	parent	1	28	0.966

(p for Chi-square < 0.00001; Cramer's V 0.694)

Social/relational frame

(excluding jokes, typically F->CH4)

SP	H	SL	CBD	prop.CBD
father	CH1	7	15	0.682
father	CH2	17	7	0.292
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Relational frame

father

mother

CH1

CH2

CH3

CH1

CH2

CH3

father-CH1

father-CH2

father-CH3

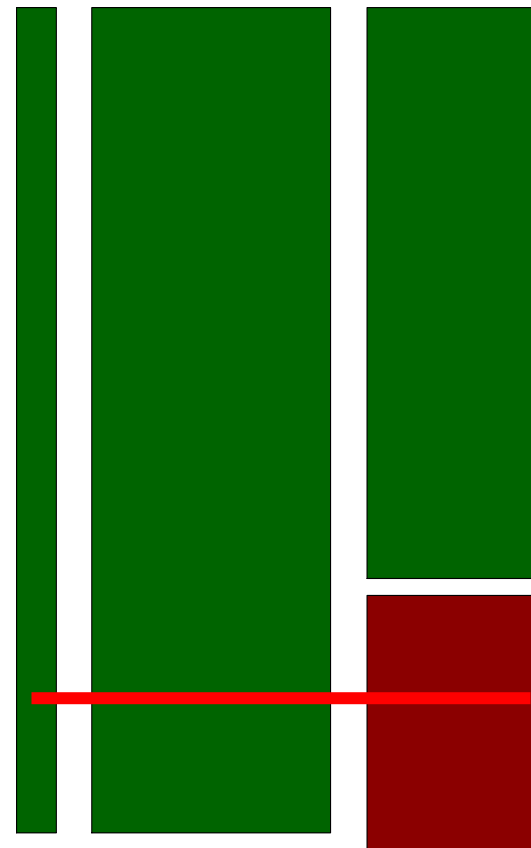
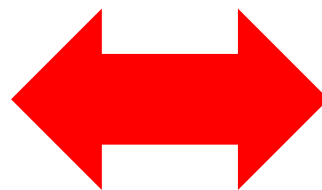
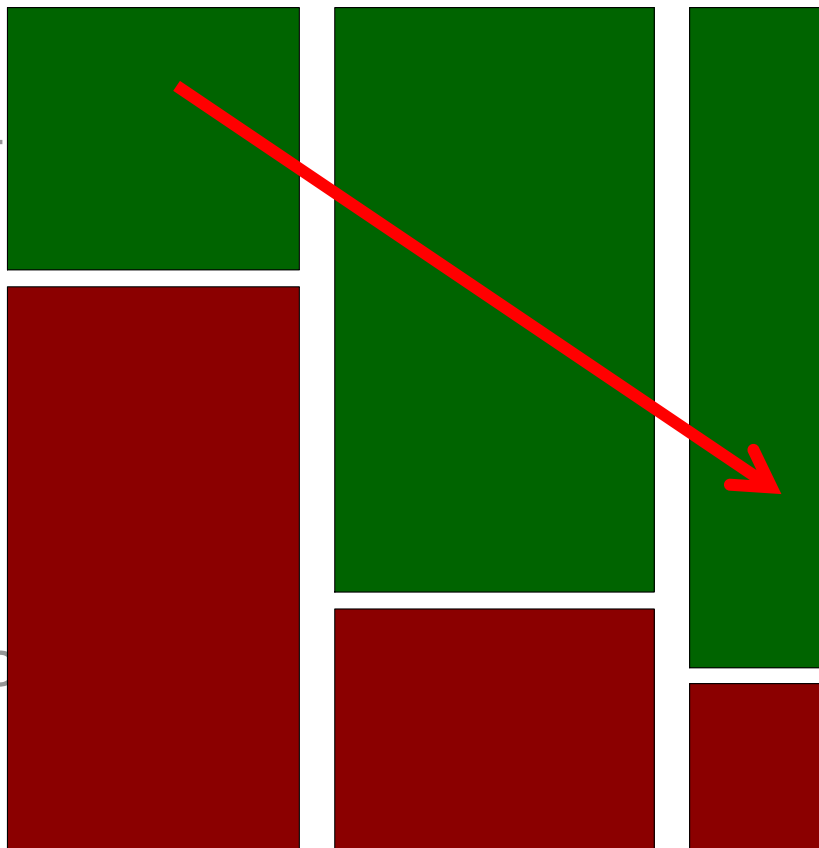
mother-CH1

mother-CH2

mother-CH3

SL

CBD



Overall

On the one hand: our data support Foulkes et al's findings (2005) concerning:

- the increase of vernacular features in CDS when children grow older
- the observation that vernacular features are more abundant in fathers' speech than in mothers' speech

On the other hand: these findings only seem to hold:

- for specific types of interaction, namely talk within the relational frame
- for specific interlocutors, namely only the father

Zooming in on the mother's SL/CBD-use

nearly exclusive use of standard forms **in the relational frame**, which contradicts the expected pattern.

So: why are there any 'transactional' CBD-utterances by the mother? What are their characteristics?

1. Self-initiated self-repair

Within a turn:

MOT *ja das waar ma nu gade nu ga jij zitten () nu ga jij zitten*
'yes that's true but now **you** go now you go sit down () now you go sit down'

Across turns:

- 1 FAT *allé trek uw broek maar aan*
'come on put on **your** pants'
- 2 MOT *allé trekt uw broek maar aan meneer de () trekt uw broek naar boven*
'come on put on **your** pants mister ()' 'pull up **your** pants'
- 3 CH2 *auw*
- 4 MOT *nee broek naar boven voor je erop gaat zitten (.) nee.*
'no pants up before you sit on them (.) no'
- 5 FAT *nee*
'no'
- ((child attempts to hitch up his pants while being seated))
- 6 MOT *nee (.) da gaa nie*
'no (.) that does not work'
- 7 FAT *onnozele onnozele*
'(you) silly silly'
- 8 CH2 *da ga wel e*
'it does work hey'
- 9 FAT *en dan zit uw onderbroek nie goe*
'and then **your** underpants are not okay'
- ((child falls from his chair))
- 10 MOT *das waarom da we zeggen da je eerst*
that's why we say that you first'
- 11 *je broek moet aandoen en dan pas op je stoel gaan zitten*
have to put on your pants and then sit on your chair'

- 1 FAT *allé trek uw broek maar aan*
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have to put on your pants and then sit on your chair'
- Father uses CBD consistently
-

- 1 FAT *allé trek uw broek maar aan* Father uses CBD consistently
 'come on put on **your pants**'
- 2 MOT *allé trekt uw broek maar aan meneer de () trekt uw broek naar boven*
 'come on put on **your pants** mister ()' 'pull up **your pants**' Almost literal mirroring by Mother
- 3 CH2 *auw*
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 have to put on **your** pants and then sit on **your** chair'

Shift to SL which remains consistent, even during 'dramatic' events

2. CBD in negotiation - as a form of mitigation?

MOT *eerst een hap en dan moogt ge uw mop vertellen*


'first a bite and then **you** can tell **your** joke'

MOT *kom (.) ewel ier steek deze in uw mond en dan kriebelt ge verder*

'come (.) well here put this in **your** mouth and then **you** tickle on'

3. CBD in reactions to child-initiated non-routine requests

- 1 CH2 *mag ik proeven van die saus*
'can I taste that sauce'
- 2 MOT *gij moogt daar es van proeven (.) wacht ze man*
'you can taste that (.) wait my man'
- 3 CH2 *is da pikant*
'is that spicy'
- 4 MOT *jah*
'yes'
- 5 CH2 *nee (.) k wil da nie proeven*
'no (.) I don't want to taste that'
- 6 MOT *ma proeft es (.) dan weete wat dat da is pikant*
'but taste it once (.) then you know what that is spicy'



Non-serious request, cf. non-verbal activity of the mother putting some sauce on the child's finger

3. CBD in reactions to child-initiated non-routine requests

1 CH2 *mag ik proeven van die saus*

'can I taste that sauce'

2 MOT *gij moogt daar es van proeven (.) wacht ze man*

'you can taste that (.) wait my man'

3 CH2 *is da pikant*

'is that spicy'

4 MOT *jah*

'yes'



When the activity is ratified as a part of the 'real' dining practice, there is a shift to SL

5 CH2

1 MOT *moet ik moet ik het moet ik er een beetje in je bord doen*

'shall I shall I shall I put a little bit on your plate'

6 MOT

2 CH3 *nee*

'no'

3 CH2 *bij mij wel (.) bij mij wel*

'for me yes (.) for me yes'

4 MOT *bij jou wel*

'for you yes'

Mother in transactional frame

The mother's CBD-use in the transactional frame

- is often self-repaired
- often occurs in 'special' positions



complexity of intersecting interactional features and contextual factors potentially influence the choice between CBD and standard language and may elicit style shifts

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Conclusion

Pseudo R²: 0.287

C: 0.769

Correct pred: 73.9% (baseline 61%)

	Estimate	Std.Error	z-value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-0.181	0.298	-0.606	0.545	
prime CBD-prime	1.395	0.180	7.759	0.000	***
Sp.H father-CH2	-0.473	0.263	-1.796	0.072	.
Sp.H father-CH3	-0.798	0.368	-2.169	0.030	*
Sp.H father-CH4	0.973	0.388	2.506	0.012	*
Sp.H mother-CH1	-0.687	0.329	-2.090	0.037	*
Sp.H mother-CH2	-0.916	0.292	-3.137	0.002	**
Sp.H mother-CH3	-1.107	0.347	-3.187	0.001	**
type subject.VSO	-0.634	0.217	-2.926	0.003	**
type possessive	0.420	0.239	1.759	0.079	.
type oblique.reflexive	-0.262	0.346	-0.756	0.450	
frame trans/instr	-0.458	0.228	-2.011	0.044	*

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	Estimate	Std.Error	z-value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-0.181	0.298	-0.606	0.545	
prime CBD-prime	1.3				
Sp.H father-CH2	-0.4				
Sp.H father-CH3	-0.7				
Sp.H father-CH4	0.9				
Sp.H mother-CH1	-0.6				
Sp.H mother-CH2	-0.9				
Sp.H mother-CH3	-1.1				
type subject.VSO	-0.6				
type possessive	0.420	0.239	1.759	0.079	.
type oblique.reflexive	-0.262	0.346	-0.756	0.450	
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- All parameters reach significance
 - Patterns confirm exploratory analyses
 - Prime factor has most weight in ANOVA
 - Smaller effect for frames
 → Mother vs. father?

Sociolinguistic interview

MOTHER: Standard Dutch as the (unattainable) norm

Ik vind da(t) zo moeilijk om te zeggen da(t) ik Algemeen Nederlands praat. Voor mij is Algemeen Nederlands het taalgebruik van de journalisten. Dan (h)eb ik nie(t) de pretentie, allez ja, om te zeggen da(t) ik Algemeen Nederlands praat.

'I find it so hard to say that I speak Standard Dutch. For me Standard Dutch is the language use of the journalists. Then I won't be as pretentious, well, as to say that I speak Standard Dutch.'

Sociolinguistic interview

FATHER: teach children what to use when

Ik denk da(t) we allebei toch wel het belangrijk vinde(n) da(t) ze effectief kunnen switche(n), da(t) ze effectief Algemeen Nederlands kunnen kennen en dat ze ook weten dat er een aantal contexten zijn waar da ge da beter nie(t) gebruikt, maar dat het goed is da(t) je da(t) kan. Da(t) ge da(t) nie(t) moet doen als ge bij uw vrienden zijt, da(t) da(t) iets anders is, maar da(t) ge weet hoe het int [: in het] echt moet.

‘I think we both find it important that they really are able to switch, that they are truly able to know **Standard Dutch** and that they also know that there are a **number of contexts where you better don't use that**, but that it's good that you can. That you don't have to do that when you are with your friends, that that is something different, but **that you know how to do it in real life.**’

Summarizing

Father: teaching children sociolinguistic awareness

Mother: mainly aiming for the standard, less variation

Generally

- Effect of age in CDS needs to be understood against the background of frames
- Different language regards can be present in the same family: conflicting evidence for status of CBD, even in one family
- Importance of mixed methods

Future

→ More families, more variables, more data...

THANKS FOR LISTENING

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