

# **Dialect and local media: Reproducing the multi-dialectal hierarchical space in Limburg (the Netherlands)**

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## **INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>**

This chapter aims at contributing to an understanding of processes of language standardization by looking at a multidialectal public live performance, broadcast by local media in the Dutch province of Limburg. We will focus on this live performance, which involves a reading-aloud event of extracts from the fantasy book series *Harry Potter*. For this event, extracts were translated in written form into various Limburgian dialects. These translations obeyed the normative dialect orthography acknowledged by the most important main actors in Limburg (see later).<sup>2</sup> The imposition of a normative spelling for dialects evidences processes of codification and implementation, two major stages in language standardization (cf. Deumert 2004, Haugen 2003, Milroy 2001). These ongoing processes in Limburg result in the standardization of multiple dialects that differ maximally from each other, especially at the level of the lexicon. These processes also anchor the multiple dialects to place.

Language standardization involves concern with form and function, and is based on as well as framed by ‘discursive projects’:

Standardization is concerned with linguistic forms (corpus planning, i.e. selection and codification) as well as the social and communicative functions of language (status planning, i.e. implementation and elaboration). In addition, standard languages are also discursive projects, and standardization processes are typically accompanied by the development of specific discourse practices. These

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.limbursespelling.nl/> (accessed 3 February 2016)

discourses emphasize the desirability of uniformity and correctness in language use. (Deumert 2004: 2)

The Dutch province of Limburg is well-known for its long historical process of dialect enregisterment (see the following section) and, therefore, presents an interesting case for exploring how this ongoing process of dialect enregisterment compares to processes of standardization as defined by Deumert (2004).

Coupland (2007), among others, has demonstrated that dialect or localized linguistic elements may better be understood as resources from which people may draw when evoking ‘the local’ or a local identity. Localness, then, is enacted and created, in performances of dialect varieties or dialect forms that are regarded as distinctive for a certain place. The linguistic production of place is an instance of ideologically informed processes in which linguistic elements become indexical of particular social categories, and may subsequently be involved in processes of enregisterment (Agha 2007; Johnstone 2013).

Through process of dialect enregisterment, linguistic resources and their imagined speakers have become inextricably intertwined with specific places (Auer 2013; Quist 2010) in Limburg. In this province enregistered ways of speaking are named after locations, i.e. the dialect of Maastricht or *Maastrichts* (in Dutch)/*Mestreechs* (in dialect), the dialect of Kerkrade or *Kerkraads* (in Dutch)/*Kirchröadsj* (in dialect) and the dialect of Venlo or *Venloos* (*Mestreechs*, *Kirchröadsj* and *Venlo(o)s* are denominal adjectives with adjectivizing suffix *-s*, meaning here ‘Maastricht/Kerkrade/Venlo dialect’). The impact of this naming is all about power since it renders an object visible and imparts a certain character to things (Tuan 1991: 688).

The label *dialect* itself is a problematic, ambiguous term in sociolinguistics. According to Johnstone, dialects are ‘mapped onto geographical space’ in a more Germanic dialectological tradition, and mapped ‘onto demographically defined social groups’ in a more Anglo-Saxon tradition (Johnstone 2011: 569). ‘Dialect’ here is used along the lines of Leerssen, in order to bring in the power asymmetries between speaking a dialect and standard language:

A dialect is the non-official means of communication for a community or region; it has limited currency and is passed on without educational institutions, in the informal privacy of the home situation. It is often oral and rarely written, its usage is often limited to homely matters of family and community life. (Leerssen 2006: 261–262)

The labels *dialect* and *standard* (language) used by both linguists and lay people conceptualize ways of speaking as clear-cut, bounded entities, comparable to wide-

spread perceptions of culture – or, rather, cultures – as discrete objects. From a linguistic analytical point of view, dialects in Limburg differ from the standard language, i.e. standard Dutch, on all linguistic levels (Cornips 2013; De Schutter and Hermans 2013; Hermans 2013). For speakers, objects labeled as dialect and standard have psychological reality and are cognitive constructs creating borders between groups of speakers reflecting a shared ‘they speak like us’ or ‘they speak differently from us’ feeling, based on evaluations of ways of speaking in relation to the local and social contexts of users.

The enregisterment of Limburgian dialects, and the dialect awareness that goes with it, has its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Limburgian identity (distinguished from a national, Dutch identity) became an increasing topic of concern, especially among the Limburgian elite. Comparable to the growing attention paid to dialects elsewhere in Europe, this resulted in a boom in dictionaries, literature and local history writing. These linguistic products have been central in an ongoing process of enregisterment resulting in dialects that have become distinctive and characteristic for specific localities on a micro-level within the province.<sup>3</sup> This historical substrate of linguistic awareness, dialect-related and historical publications and sensitivity for the locality of certain linguistic elements provide the background of our topic of concern.

With Coupland and Kristiansen, we believe that

[r]esearching language ideologies should give us access to the social and cultural dynamics that position European languages as socio-cultural symbols and resources in their different settings. (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011: 11)

Moving beyond a more general conclusion, demonstrating the importance of local language in the construction of local identities, this case study shows how the coexistence of different dialects inform a sense of a distinct, unique Limburgian identity (Cornips et al. 2012; Thissen 2013). As we will show, processes of dialect standardization, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continue to confirm and reproduce this paradoxical notion of ‘multidialectal identity’, or, in other words, the idea of ‘unity in linguistic diversity.’ In this chapter we aim to show how media contribute to singling out one dialect variety as *primus inter pares* in an area that celebrates its dialectal heterogeneity, emphasizing the equal importance of all dialects for establishing a local identity. In contrast to language standardization at the national level, there is no tendency to construct the singled-out dialect variety as a roofing or overarching variety so as to promote a uniform homogenous monodialectal space. Pro-

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<sup>3</sup> This process, described by Blok (1998) as ‘the narcissism of minor differences’ (a notion he borrowed from Freud), is not limited to linguistic features or elements, but often unfolds along cultural lines as well.

cesses of differentiation are often overlooked in studies of standardization at the national level, but they become visible when looking at local or regional levels.

In our setting, the *Harry Potter* reading-aloud event relies on the differentiation between dialects and simultaneously evinces a dominant language ideology. In the absence of the standard language (Dutch), one dialect spoken in the provincial capital, Maastricht, is given a higher ranking in a socio-political hierarchy. The *Harry Potter* case will show how a dominant language ideology in a process of enregisterment is reproduced on a local level without some of the standardizing effects often found at the level of the nation-state. No process of elaboration (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011: 21) takes place with respect of the singled out variety, Maastricht, which is not promoted across social domains and communicative functions outside Maastricht. Where language standardization is typically seen as a consequence of nation-building (see e.g. Anderson 1983), the Limburg case shows how language enregisterment and the standardization of multiple dialects are crucial in the construction of a provincial identity. Standardization in Limburg works on a sub-national level and relatively independently of the national standard of Dutch. Thus, language standardization may occur on several levels simultaneously.

Building on Anderson (1983) and Appadurai (1996), Johnstone (2011) convincingly argues that it is the need of people to re-imagine themselves in an ever-changing world that lies at the heart of the renewed attention for ‘the local’. As will be shown in the reading-aloud event, the local should not be thought of as being ‘just there’, as the natural outcome of a direct connection between a certain place and the people that live there, but needs, in the words of Appadurai, ‘to be produced’ (1996). As our case study also shows, old (newspapers, radio, television) as well as new internet-based media play a crucial role in this production process.

This chapter is organized as follows: In the following section we explain why Limburg can be conceptualized as a multidialectal space. We will focus on the intense dialect awareness and processes of enregisterment in Limburg, both past and present, through which linguistic resources and speakers are inextricably intertwined with specific places in Limburg. This section also describes some of these linguistic resources – more specifically, the most salient phonetic differences between the dialects.

The following section presents a selection of the translated excerpts from the *Harry Potter* reading aloud event. The book series *Harry Potter* was written in English by British author J. K. Rowling. The seven books (published between 1997 and 2007) became world-wide best-sellers. The series recounts the adventures of Harry Potter, a wizard orphan who studies at The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Harry Potter’s main quest is to overcome the growing power of the dark wizard, Lord Voldemort. The characters populating the *Harry Potter* world are either magicians or ‘muggles’. The latter category refers to persons who are not

born into the world of magic and who have no magical abilities (Harry Potter Wiki, n.d.). The *Harry Potter* universe, as is typical of fantasy fiction and fairy tales, is populated by easily recognizable and rather one-dimensional characters. Characters are either good or evil, helpers or opponents, cunning or naïve, etc.

Another section describes how every *Harry Potter* translation needs to be localized, demonstrating that such localizations involve difficult, often politically charged, choices as to which linguistic elements are to be used in the portrayal of dialect-speaking characters. This section shows how people associate linguistically distinctive forms and varieties with specific places, taking these as important indicators for their own or others' (stereotypical) identities. Moreover, it shows how the association of a specific selection of *Harry Potter* characters with specific locations consolidates the view of the Limburgian space as hierarchical and multidialectal. This means that one variety, Maastrichts, is given hierarchical prominence, while a number of other varieties are given prominent functions within the narrative logic of the performance. Finally, the concluding section places our case study in the wider context of processes of standardization.

## THE PRODUCTION AND RECONFIRMATION OF A MULTIDIALECTAL PROVINCE<sup>4</sup>

The province of Limburg became part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the end of the nineteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, the area remained subject to geopolitical uncertainties (Leerssen 2006). Integration into the Dutch state further led, among members of the Limburgian elite in particular, to a heightened awareness of local identity, stimulating the cultivation of cultural and linguistic (dialect) particularities as 'typically Limburgian'. From the 1880s onward, local actors have been codifying linguistic resources by way of dictionaries and grammars, projects coinciding with Limburg's integration into the Dutch nation-state. Codification products that appeared early in Limburg were the dictionaries for the (perceived) dialects of Roermond (1889, Simons), Heerlen (1884, Jongeneel) and Maastricht (1905, Houben) (see Goossens and Van Keymeulen 2006).

Both the urban bourgeoisie and the rural clergy in Limburg took an interest in the dialects as a foundation of authentic local culture and identity. An early example was the foundation, in 1839, of the *Momus Society* in Maastricht, for whom stage and theatre plays had to be enacted in dialect, in addition to French (and German). The orientation towards the dialect in Maastricht by the higher classes certainly resulted in its vitality (Schillings 1976: 39–40). This interest in the dialect was con-

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<sup>4</sup> Largely taken from Cornips (2013).

solidated at a time when the primacy of the national language, Dutch, was far from obvious, and challenged by the use of German along the eastern frontier or French, mainly in the provincial capital of Maastricht (cf. Kessels-van der Heijde 2002).

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dialect amateurs took a renewed interest in dialect witnessed by a ‘revival’ of the producing and publishing of 42 new dialect dictionaries after inactivity that had lasted sixty years.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the gigantic *Woordenboek van de Limburgse Dialecten*, ‘Dictionary of the Limburgian Dialects (data collected between 1880 and 1980 and published between 1983 and 2008), (re)produces and confirms Limburg as a multidialectal space. These efforts have resulted in the enregistering of many dialects, heightened dialect awareness, and the dialects having high vitality<sup>6</sup>.

The importance attributed to being ‘multidialectal’, as a distinctive characteristic of Limburg, is clearly articulated in the latest policy report of *Veldeke*, the province’s oldest and most prominent dialect association.<sup>7</sup>

The organization of the association in local networks is an effect of the earlier mentioned idea that all dialects are carriers of the cultural identity of a village and a city. Together they produce – on the basis of common linguistic characteristics – Limburg as a particularity which is the basis for the experience of Limburgerness [...] The association forcefully rejects every top-down attempt to impose on Limburg a supralocal or supraregional language. Apart from the fact that it would be an artificial and arbitrary construct, a supralocal or supraregional language would fall short in acknowledging the emotional relation that exists

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<sup>5</sup> Dialect dictionaries of the following localities have been published: Arcen (1989), Baarlo (2005), Beek (1982), Beesel (2003), Brunssum (2006), Echt (1988, 2008), Elsloo (2000), Gennep (1993, 2005), Geulle (1992, 1995), Groenstraat (1981), Gronsveld (1979, 2000), Grevenbricht (2011), Heel (2003), Heer (1990), Heerlen (1884, 2000), Helden (2009), Herten (1973), Horst (1989), Kerkrade (1987, 1997, 2001, 2003), Maasbree (2007), Maastricht (1851-1852, 1905, 1914, 1955, 1995, 1986, 1996, 2004, 2005), Meerlo (1973), Meijel (1991), Montfort (2007), Nieuwstadt (2014), Nuth (2002), Posterholt (2005), Roermond (1985, 2003), Schinveld (1995), Sevenum (2010), Simpelveld (1994, 2005), Sittard (1927, 1979, 1973, 2005, 2010), Stamproy (1989), Susteren (2000), Swalmen (2005, 2011), Tegelen (1986, 2006), Thorn (2011), Tungleroy (1985), Valkenburg (1917-1918, 1928, 1994, 2012), Venlo (1992, 1993, 2009), Venray (1991, 1998, 2009, 2010), Weert (1983, 1994, 1998, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Around 900,000 people in Limburg or 75% of its inhabitants report speaking what they perceive as a dialect (Driessen 2006: 103).

<sup>7</sup> *Veldeke* is an acronym, V.E.L.D.E.K.E, from *Voor Elk Limburgs Dialect Een Krachtige Eenheid*, ‘for every dialect a powerful unity’, acknowledging Limburg as a space with separate dialects that can be neatly distinguished from each other.

between the local community and experiencing the regional language in Limburg.<sup>8</sup> (Veldeke 2007: 2). [translation by authors]

The quote highlights both Veldeke's role in processes of enregisterment and promotion of dialects. Veldeke aims at striking a balance between emphasizing the existence of a so-called *streektaal*, a regional language, Limburgian, which received 'minority recognition' as a regional language in 1992, under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML),<sup>9</sup> and stressing the importance of the coexistence of different dialects, all equally important for establishing a local identity, that is, the ideal of 'unity in linguistic diversity' (Council of Europe 1992). Veldeke has developed a standard orthography for writing in dialect.<sup>10</sup> This orthography was first practiced in the 1940s. The Veldeke-orthography was the basis for the normative orthography for all dialects, published in 2003 at the demand of the *Raad veur 't Limburgs*, the 'Council for Limburgian'. The 2003 orthography, although standard, is not uniform for the different dialects but leaves space for orthographic variation, especially in the notation of the different vowels.

The *Raad veur 't Limburgs*, 'Council for Limburgian' was founded in compliance with the minority recognition of Limburgian by the Netherlands as a signatory of the 1992 ECRML. This Council is the current, most important actor in the Limburgian dialectscape. Financed by the province, the Council serves as an advisory committee of the Provincial Council. Its central mission is to "take care of Limburgian"<sup>11</sup>, by designing a language policy for the dialects in Limburg and to study the effects of minority recognition. Similar to Veldeke, the language policy of the Council for Limburgian strives towards the (re)production and reconfirmation of a multidialectal province in which different dialects are put together as being equal.

Local media play a vital role in the reproduction and reconfirmation of the importance of the coexistence of different dialects as an authentic aspect of Limburg. Broadcasters are not expected to use one particular variety but to reflect the dialect-

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<sup>8</sup> "De organisatie van de vereniging in plaatselijke of regionale kringen is een voortvloeisel uit het eerder genoemde leidend beginsel, dat alle dialecten de dragers zijn van de culturele identiteit van dorp en stad en dat zij gezamenlijk – op basis van de gemeenschappelijke taalkenmerken – het Limburgs die eigenheid geven, die de basis is voor de beleving van het Limburgerschap. [...] De vereniging wijst een streven dat erop gericht is Limburg van een bovenlokale of bovenregionale streektaal te voorzien met kracht van de hand: naast het kunstmatige en arbitraire karakter van een dergelijk construct doet het tekort aan de emotionele verbondenheid met de plaatselijke gemeenschap die essentieel is voor de beleving van de streektaal in Limburg."

<sup>9</sup> Minority recognition under ECRML compels the Dutch state to formally recognize the status of Limburgian as a separate variety without, however, being obliged to take relevant measures such as financial support.

<sup>10</sup> This process took many decades and went with intensive discussions and turbulences.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hklimburg.nl/organisaties/raad-veur-lt-limburgs.html>

tal differences. Local broadcast media are: *LI* (the capital *L* stands for Limburg, TV and radio station located in Maastricht), *TVLimburg* (Roermond), *Omroep Venlo*, *RTV Maastricht*, *RTV Roermond*, *WeertTV*, *WeertFM* (radio), and *Midden-Limburg Actueel* (livestream). *WeertdeGekste* (Internet) and *HeerlenLive* (news through LED screens and free wifi) are examples of the newer media. The programs of the most important broadcast public organization *LI* are mostly in standard Dutch. The commercial broadcasting company, *TVLimburg*, on the other hand, uses the simultaneous occurrence of dialects as an established format – it is common to hear various dialects in one broadcast – a dimension that will always be emphasized. In addition, there is one central provincial daily newspaper, *De Limburger/Limburgs Dagblad* that is the fourth largest newspaper in the Netherlands according to the number of subscribers. It has various editions for the different areas in Limburg.

So far, in sociolinguistic literature not much attention has been paid to local media, despite the fact that local media reach large audiences and impact language practices and ideologies. Until now, we have introduced the Limburgian mediascape as an illustration of the diversity, presence and significance of local media, something that remains hidden when limiting oneself to the impact and significance of national media. However, the face value acceptance of multidialectal Limburg in which all dialects are of equal importance ignores the processes of selection and the power relations played out. As we will demonstrate, one of the dialects is awarded a more dominant position. By focusing on the role of local media in mediating local language, the simultaneous processes of codification, standardization, and differentiation through which a specific dialect is attributed a higher status may become visible. This would remain opaque in studies of national media that focus on processes of standardization of the national language.

## LINGUISTIC DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN DIALECTS

One of the first initiatives of the Council for Limburgian was to commission a map (see Figure 1) presenting the dialectscape of Limburg. The map, made by the *Amt für Rheinische Landeskunde* in Bonn, Germany, visualizes Limburg as a multidialectal space in which three major isoglosses (the Benrath Line, Uerdingen Line, and the Panningen Line) separate clusters of dialects. Roughly from north to south, these dialects are labeled: (1) Kleverlands, (2) Mich-Quarter, (3) Central Limburgian, (4) Eastern Limburgian, (5) Riparian transitional dialects, (6) Riparian.



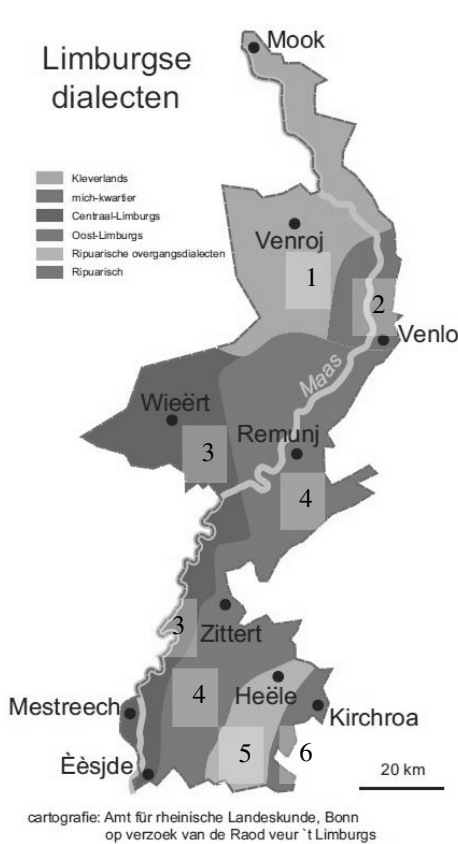


Figure 1: Map showing Limburgian dialect clusters separated by isoglosses

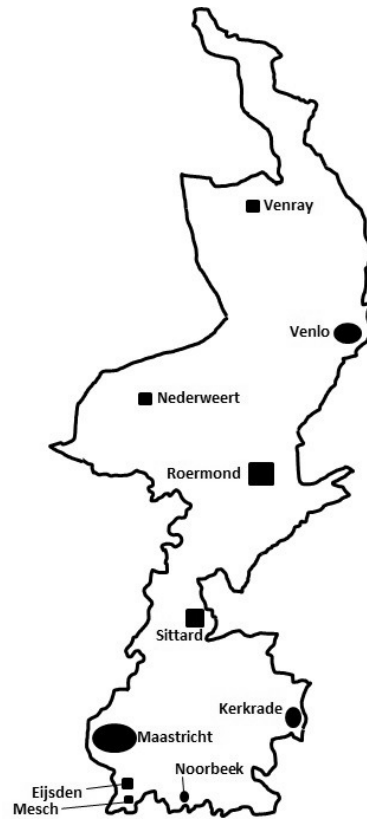


Figure 2: Map of the eleven localities voiced in the *Harry Potter* translated readings

The Limburgian dialectscape is carved up in various ways at different scales. First, the administrative borders of the province are simultaneously the linguistic borders of Limburgian as recognized by ECRML. Second, the map visualizes the dialectscape as divided into six distinct dialect clusters. Third, within these clusters, distinctions made between dialects are named after localities, a practice already mentioned in the first section. As should be evident from our discussion above, the dialect map represents a political and ideological demarcation of the Limburgian dialect area. The linguistic reality does not exhibit such clear-cut borders. (Dialect areas are continua, and dialects are not fixed to geography. Speakers move, and so do dialects.).

In order to show how processes of dialect enregisterment and the importance of a ‘multidialectal environment’ continue to shape perceptions of local identity, we

will focus on four of the *Harry Potter* characters (out of eleven) that were performed in the reading-aloud event in Maastricht (see also next section). The dialects they speak represent four different localities throughout Limburg, namely: Noorbeek (south), Venlo (north), Maastricht (southwest) and Kerkrade (southeast), as illustrated in Figure 2. (These four localities are marked by black circles on the map.)

Our discussion will highlight linguistic, mainly phonological, differences between the selected dialects and the stereotypes associated with these dialects and their speakers. The *Harry Potter* performances allow us to show how dialect forms are imbued with social meaning and how the form–meaning associations are strengthened through the broadcasting of the performances.

Comparing the four localities in Figure 2 with Figure 1 shows that these are situated in four different dialect clusters, as divided by the three major isoglosses that run through linguistic Limburg. Lord Voldemort is performed as being from Venlo, located in the Mich-Quarter area (area 2 in Figure 1); the Prime Minister as being from Mestreech/Maastricht in the Central Limburgian area (number 3 in Figure 1); Rubeus Hagrid as being from Noorbeek in the Eastern Limburgian area (number 4 in Figure 1); and Professor Sybill Trelawny as being from Kerkrade/Kirchroa in the Ripuarian area (number 6 in Figure 1).

From a phonological perspective, these four dialects differ considerably from each other (see Hermans 2013 for an extensive discussion). Let us start in the southeast, the dialect of Kerkrade/Kirchroa. This dialect is located east of the Benrath Line and belongs to the Ripuarian dialects that were heavily influenced by the German city of Cologne. These are the westernmost dialects where the ‘Second Consonant Shift’ applies in a precisely definable phonological environment. Because of this characteristic, these dialects are considered to be a branch of High German. The Benrath Line distinguishes the dialects where a velar in postvocalic position undergoes the shift, away from the dialects where the velar in this position does not change. Thus, Professor Sybill Trelawny, speaking in the dialect of Kerkrade, number 6 in Figure 1, pronounces a verb like ‘to make’ as /mɑxə/ whereas the other three characters, all located to the west of the Benrath Line, pronounce the same verb as /mɑkə/. Speakers from Kerkrade are also famous for pronouncing /tsit/, ‘time’, in the dialect instead of /tit/, as in the dialect to the west of the Benrath Line and, hence, the three other characters. Another striking characteristic from a Dutch perspective to be found in the Kerkrade dialect is the realization of the velar voiced fricative /ɣ/ as /j/ in onset position: /ɣas/, ‘gas’, is realized as /ja.s/ (cf. Hinskens 1993: 85).

Lord Voldemort, voiced as being from Venlo, distinguishes himself from the other three characters in that he is located north of the Uerdingen Line where the last vestiges of the Second Consonant Shift are found. He pronounces the pronoun

‘I’ with a velar stop /ɪk/, whereas the other three characters pronounce it with a shifted velar /ɪx/. The Prime Minister, Trelawny and Hagrid also pronounce other pronouns with a shifted velar, as in /mɪx/, ‘me, accusative’; /dɪx/, ‘you, accusative’; and /aux/, ‘also’ (/ok/ in standard Dutch).

The Prime Minister, voiced as being from Maastricht/Mestreech, is located to the west of the isogloss Panningen Line. He produces an alveolar /s/ as in standard Dutch, whereas Hagrid and Trelawny are located east of the Panningen Line and produce alveolar /s/ in onset with a palatalized alveolar /ʃ/, as in High German. Since Lord Voldemort, from Venlo, is beyond reach of the Panningen Line, he pronounces the alveolar in a standard-like manner, /s/.

We can schematize the phonological differences between the four characters as follows. Table 1 illustrates that every character has a unique pattern:

Tables 2–4 show these phonological differences according to areal zones in respect of the three major isoglosses (note that some of the examples are taken from the character Gilderoy Lockheart whom we will not be discussing further).

One more example of the differences between the dialects, the (orthographic) differences in the pronunciation of the personal pronoun *he*<sup>12</sup> in the four dialects and the use of definite determiner *d’r* ‘the’ before a proper noun is shown in Table 5.

The dialects differ in many more respects at the phonological level, but also at lexical and morpho-syntactic levels, as illustrated by the morphological atlas (De Schutter et al. 2005; Goeman et al. 2008) and the syntactic atlas of the Dutch dialects (Barbiers et al. 2005; Barbiers et al. 2008).

The examples make clear that Limburg is generally conceived as ‘multidialectal’, and that this conviction is widely articulated and carried further: institutionally, such as Veldeke and the Council for Limburgian, through local media of different sorts, by linguists (producing maps with isoglosses dividing clusters of dialects) and by lay people in their daily practices by referring to dialects by names of localities (as do dialectologists), all these actors are involved – albeit in various ways and with various impact, in the reproduction, perception and experience of a multidialectal Limburg.

Table 1: The distinctive pronunciation of four *Harry Potter* characters

	onset	onset	coda
Voldemort	/s/	/ɣ/	/k/
Prime minister	/s/	/ɣ/	/x/
Hagrid	/ʃ/	/ɣ/	/x/
Trelawny	/ʃ/	/j/	/x/

<sup>12</sup> Variation in forms of the personal pronoun ‘he’, listed here, is based on orthographic differences.

Table 2: Dialect features marking the Benrath Line

Velar in coda, /ix/ versus /ik/, 'I'	
MAASTRICHTS (Gilderoy Lockheart):	<i>dao praot /ix/ 'iech' neet gere euver</i> 'I don't like to talk about that'
VENLOOS (Voldemort):	<i>nog veur /ik/ 'ik' woort gebaore</i> 'before I was born'
Velar in onset, /j/ for /ɣ/	
KERKRAADS (Trelawny):	<i>de lɣordiene woare tsau</i> 'the curtains were closed'
NOORBEEKS (Hagrid):	<i>in u licht-mauve lɣlolvend lɣlewaad</i> 'in a light mauve wavy dress'
Affricate /ts/ for stop /t/ in onset	
KERKRAADS (Trelawny):	<i>'t weat /ts/iet</i> 'it is time'
MAASTRICHTS (Prime Minister):	<i>/tlot /tlouveneer</i> 'a wizzard'

Table 3: Dialect features marking the Uerdingen Line

Velar in coda, /auk/ versus /ɔx/, 'also'	
NOORBEEKS (Hagrid):	<i>dan welke tauvenaer /auk/</i> 'than which wizard also'
VENLOOS (Voldemort):	<i>wieste ut /ɔx/</i> 'do you know it as well'

Table 4: Dialect features marking the Panningen Line:

Alveolar in onset, /s/ versus /ʃ/	
MAASTRICHTS (Lockheart):	<i>op 'ne /s/tapel lag</i> 'sitting on a pile'
VENLOOS (Voldemort):	<i>de /s/lang</i> 'the snake'
KERKRAADS (Trelawny):	<i>durch 't luuk /ʃ/toake</i> 'through the hatch'
NOORBEEKS (Hagrid):	<i>agter unne /ʃ/troek</i> 'behind a bush'

Table 5: The personal pronoun *he*

	'he'	+/- determiner
Venloos:	<i>hae</i>	Harry
Maastrichts:	<i>heer</i>	Harry
Kerkraads:	<i>he</i>	d'r Harry
Noorbeeks:	<i>hea</i>	Harry

## PERFORMING *HARRY POTTER*: A MULTIDIALECTAL TRANSLATION

The *Harry Potter* translations and reading-aloud event – for which a total of eleven Limburgian dialects were used – will serve as an example of the way in which dialectal differences and social stereotypes can be used as resources for performing narratives and fictional characters, and how the reproduction of linguistic differences tends to confirm such stereotypes. Simultaneously, the case will show the occurrence of a peculiar form of language standardization on the dialect level, *viz.* the parallel propagation of standardized versions of different dialects that become visible in their written translation. Through these written translations, codification takes place imposed by the standard orthography of the Council for Limburgian published in 2003. The imposition of an official spelling for dialects used in an oral performance like the *Harry Potter* reading-aloud event evidences a process of codification and implementation, two major stages in language standardization (cf. Deumert 2004; Haugen 2003; Milroy 2001).

One day in March 2012, a customer in a children's bookshop in Maastricht grabbed a Dutch translation of a *Harry Potter* book and spontaneously translated and read aloud a passage in his grandmother's Kerkrade dialect. An idea was born! The owner of the bookshop decided to have sections of *Harry Potter* translated into

various dialects. By doing so, the shop owner was perpetuating a much older and broader (European) history of translating very well-known works, varying from the Bible to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* to popular comics, into minority languages, including dialects. Yet, what could be regarded as characteristic of (more recent) translations into Limburgian of well-known books is the tendency to highlight the region's multidialectal identity within such translations.

In the Veldeke translation of the comic book *Asterix and the Big Fight*, the characters speak – depending on their origin – one of the four dialects associated with four Limburgian localities.<sup>13</sup> In *Asterix and the Banquet*, in which the heroes make a tour through Gaul, no less than fourteen dialects appear.<sup>14</sup> In a similar vein, the children's bookshop's *Harry Potter* translation consists of a variety of dialects. Each *Harry Potter* character had to be linked to a particular local dialect in Limburg. Moreover, it was not the owner's intention to have the complete *Harry Potter* series translated and published. Instead, she wanted to organize a public 'Harry Potter reading-aloud dialect event', based on translated sections derived from the series. The sections therefore had to meet two criteria: the texts should be suitable for reading aloud, and they needed to be understandable by people unfamiliar with the *Harry Potter* story. The event was scheduled for July 31 2012, exactly fifteen years after the publication of the first *Harry Potter* book, and it would take place in front of the bookshop, located in a small street in the inner city of Maastricht. The *Harry Potter* reading-aloud event was broadcast by *L1* radio and on local television<sup>15</sup> and was uploaded on *YouTube*, and, according to the bookshop owner,<sup>16</sup> it became a popular item on Facebook.

To complement her own ideas on the ideal combination of characters and dialects, the owner approached customers and friends to ask which dialects had to be included, and which dialect would fit each *Harry Potter* character. Most characters were played by the people involved in the dialect selection and translation. However, some special guests were also invited to participate in the reading and to perform one of the characters, including the King's Commissioner of the province of Lim-

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<sup>13</sup> The comic appeared under the title '*t Titelgevech* in 1996. The featured dialects are associated with Maastricht, Gulpen, Roermond and Venlo. The translators' original plan was to have the Romans speak 'The Hague Dutch'. Yet, as that was going to interrupt the Limburgian atmosphere of the story too much, they opted for Roermond dialect instead, as reputedly that city had the longest history of being governed by the Dutch. (Boekensalon, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup> *Asterix and the Banquet* appeared under the title '*ne Gansentour* in 1998. The featured dialects are associated with the places of Bocholtz, Echt, Geleen, Heerlen, Kerkrade, Kinrooy, Maastricht, Nuth, Roermond, Sittard, Valkenberg, Venlo, Venray, and Weert. The pirates speak 'Dutch'.

<sup>15</sup> On *L1* radio (September 13, 2012 and on *L1* TV (August 1, 2012)

<sup>16</sup> See the interview with the bookshop owner by De Witt, <http://www.boekblad.nl/harry-potter-in-elf-limburgse-dialecten-bij-de.196307.lynx>

burg. He was asked to perform as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, a character that they linked with the dialect of Maastricht. We will return to the processes that informed this selection below, where we will point out how particular dialect styles are regarded as indexical of the personal qualities or peculiarities of the various *Harry Potter* characters, and how this connects to prevalent local hierarchies and stereotypes within the Limburgian region. The ideal of different-but-equal varieties or ‘unity in diversity’ is quite commonly confirmed at an explicit level, while implicitly, in the current dialect performances, a dialect hierarchy is established and confirmed.

More than the eventual performance itself – which only attracted about fifty people – local media were important in disseminating, reconfirming and authenticating the localness of the event. As the Commissioner’s performance was to be part of his ‘summer tour’ through Limburg, the event was announced on the official website of the province of Limburg (Province of Limburg 2014). The provincial daily newspaper *Limburgs Dagblad/De Limburger* announced the event as *Harry Potter kalt plat*, ‘Harry Potter speaks dialect’.<sup>17</sup>

## TRANSLATING HARRY POTTER AND LOCAL MEANING-MAKING

As we have mentioned, the seven volumes in the *Harry Potter* book series, as well as the novel-based *Harry Potter* movies, attract audiences all over the world. With over 400 million copies sold, and having been translated into 73 languages,<sup>18</sup> J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* fantasy series has become a globally known phenomenon (Omniglot n.d.). In localizing *Harry Potter* through translation projects, some of its overwhelming global (popular) cultural appeal is conferred onto these minority languages, whose proponents struggle to show that they are capable of fulfilling the same functions as national standard languages, and may be turned into carriers of contemporary cultural capital.

In our case, the *Harry Potter* translation was intended to represent the world of Limburg in terms of the fictional and symbolic world of *Harry Potter*, and hence became a conflation (although limited) of both worlds’ (perceived) characteristics. Within this fictionalized Limburg, standard Dutch is strikingly absent, although in Limburg, outside the *Harry Potter* reading-aloud event, standard Dutch is used in many different contexts. Clearly, then, this imagined Limburg is constructed as purely Limburgian and un-Dutch (cf. Cornips and de Rooij 2015). This absence of standard Dutch leaves a void to be filled by one of the Limburgian dialects, one that

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<sup>17</sup> De Limburger, July 26, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry\\_Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter)

could assume status and prestige in the socio-political hierarchy as the standard language does in the Netherlands, including Limburg.<sup>19</sup>

As it was the bookshop owner's specific aim to highlight Limburg's distinctive quality of being a multidialectal province, we may ask what distinctive local linguistic forms she regarded as being indexical of the different dialects, and consequently how she connected these with the personal qualities or peculiarities of the performing *Harry Potter* characters. Her selections of some dialects to fill certain characterological functions, and her de-selection of other dialects, are to be seen as part and parcel of ongoing processes of dialect enregisterment in Limburg by actors such as dictionary makers, novelists, dialect associations and dialectologists involved in dialect boundary drawing practices, as reviewed above.

As the bookshop owner told us, the selection of the characters had to be completed before the real translation could start. But of course, the translation processes had already begun with her selection of the translators, as this in a way determined the possible selection of dialects available for the event. This selection was made by the bookshop owner, sometimes in consultation with the translators. Thereupon, text fragments distinctive of each character had to be selected. The 'multidialectal' dimension was added by subsequently selecting a distinctive dialect for each character.

In retrospect, the bookshop owner explained that she wanted to let the story lines wander through the entire province of Limburg. The tour starts and ends in Maastricht which is symbolic for the dominant position of Maastricht within the province:

Everything started and ended in Maastricht. After the start, we circled throughout Limburg. From Venlo, Venray, Nederweert, and Roermond in the middle, to East Limburg with Noorbeek and Kerkrade, to the south with Eijsden, Mesch, and, again, Maastricht.<sup>20</sup>

In the translation of book excerpts into different dialects, characteristics of the fantasy world of *Harry Potter* became conflated with supposed characteristics of the inhabitants of these localities in Limburg. The selection of the characters and the dialects they are assumed to speak are a clear example of language ideologies at work. The bookshop owner and her friends, in their selection of dialects, as well as the customers, in their interpretation and appreciation of the symbolism, articulate connections between dialects and social categories taken to be 'natural', i.e. links are assumed between specific dialects and specific characteristics or traits inter-

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<sup>19</sup> As was, for instance, the case with *Asterix and the Big Fight*, see note 12.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with bookshop owner by Lotte Thissen, October 25, 2013 – translation by the authors.



twined with ideas of ‘a people’ in a particular location (cf. Johnstone 2013; Niedzielski and Preston 2000; Silverstein 2003). So, the *Harry Potter* translation event shows how people perceive and produce Limburg socially, culturally, and linguistically through processes of enregisterment that turn dialects into indexes of places. Moreover, it articulates what it means linguistically to be ‘here’, or ‘from here’ and how places and ways of speaking are thought to be related’ (Johnstone, Andrus and Danielson 2006: 79).

To give empirical substantiation to our argument, we, as discussed above, selected four characters as case studies. Each of these cases will highlight a different dimension of the Limburgian multidialectal space and their inhabitants (see Figure 1). Our material is mainly derived from the radio broadcast of the reading-aloud event and the interview with the bookshop owner by Lotte Thissen (see footnote 20, henceforth: our interview). In the reading-aloud event, the owner explained which associations she and her acquaintances made between dialects, places and the people living there, and how these associations informed the decisions made with regard to the linkages between the different *Harry Potter* characters and specific places and dialects; that is, verbalizations of folk-dialectological knowledge. We will now treat in more detail how this process took place with respect to ‘Rubeus Hagrid’, ‘Lord Voldemort’, ‘The Prime Minister’, and ‘Professor Sybill Trelawny.’

### ***Rubeus Hagrid, the half-giant wizard from Noorbeek***

Hagrid, a half-giant wizard employed at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as the caretaker of the school’s (magical) animals, is a gentle character who may become very emotional from time to time. He is an important friend and ally of Harry and his best friends, Ron and Hermione. In the reading-aloud translation, Hagrid speaks in the dialect of Noorbeek, a tiny village, 16 kilometers south-east of Maastricht, near the Dutch-Belgian border (number 5 in Figure 1), located in the Eastern Limburgian dialect area (see Figure 2). The bookshop owner introduces all characters in the reading-aloud event. She uses, what she, in our interview, describes as a mixture of *Roermonds* (where she was born), *Maastrichts* (where she works) and *Noorbeeks* (where she lives). We did not transcribe these and following fragments phonetically<sup>21</sup> but ‘translated’ her spoken dialect directly into written Dutch, and from there into English. The bookshop owner explains why she associ-

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<sup>21</sup> We do not have knowledge of the official and rather complicated dialect orthography. Moreover, a phonetic transcription and phonetic analysis is outside the scope of this paper. Since in this section we aim to understand the bookstore owner’s decision-making process, we focus on the content of what is said rather than on the phonetics of it. For more on the phonological and phonetic characteristics of the four characters, see the second section of the paper.

ated Hagrid with Noorbeek as follows (we present our English translation here):

### Extract 1

Noorbeek lends itself splendidly to tell about Hagrid. A physically very big person. I spent some time thinking about it. I was faced with a dilemma; we have had a municipal merger. Eijsden and Margraten just merged and I thought, if I already have Eijsden and Mesch, then I should also have something from the former municipality of Margraten, or else I will get into trouble, so I started thinking Cadier en Keer or Margraten, no, that's on the wrong side of the national highway, I need to go further up into the hilly country because, naturally, I'm talking here about Hagrid, right? And he is a nature person, so I think Sint Gieteren, no, it is too flat, too accessible, too central, I need to go all the way to the far corner of the hilly country, I need to go all the way to Noorbeek. Noorbeek lies with its base in the forests of Voeren.<sup>22</sup> Noorbeek is hilly, the only way to get there is uphill, so I think – and I'm living there – that way I won't have a quarrel with anyone. Then that's settled.

From the owner's perspective, Hagrid, as a large person, can be linked to the recent municipal merger of Eijsden and Margraten. Noorbeek is pictured as a remote place "all the way to the far corner of the hilly country ... with its base in the forests of Voeren" (so almost located in Belgium). According to her, Hagrid as a solitary, nature-loving character finds his natural place in Noorbeek. The linguistic differences between Noorbeeks and Maastrichts also play a vital role in the production of the indexicality of Noorbeek (the place)/Noorbeeks (the dialect) versus that of Maastricht (the place)/Maastrichts (the dialects). So, Noorbeek, as an isolated village, and Noorbeeks, as radically different from Maastrichts, indexes its remoteness from the center of Limburgian civic culture and power, Maastricht.

She also told us that she was not satisfied with the initial translation into the 'Noorbeek dialect' (our translation in English):

### Extract 2

It could be made more Noorbeeks-like. I asked someone else to have a look at the Noorbeek translation; so this translation is the combined result of two translators. For example, an *emmer* 'bucket' is a *tob* in Noorbeeks.

This quote shows that the bookshop owner had a clear idea of what pure (i.e. 'pure' in her eyes) Noorbeeks entails, or should be. Words from standard Dutch, such as

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<sup>22</sup> Voeren is the French-speaking pocket of Flanders, Belgium, across the Dutch border.

*emmer*, were not acceptable in the *Harry Potter* translation. Herewith she constructs Noorbeeks as distinct from standard Dutch, and as standing out from other neighboring dialects, Maastrichts in particular. In this enregisterment process, the translator was highly aware of which linguistic, i.e. lexical and phonological, features to use in order to codify and to authenticate the Noorbeek dialect (see the examples given earlier). Clearly, enregisterment involves both selection and codification as crucial elements in language standardization (Haugen 2003). Both vertical differentiation, from standard Dutch, as well as horizontal differentiation, from other, nearby dialects, here primarily Maastrichts are needed to make the enregisterment of Noorbeeks work.

### ***Lord Voldemort, the evil wizard from Venlo***

Lord Voldemort is assigned to the dialect of the city of Venlo. In the *Harry Potter* world, Voldemort, the wizard of ‘The Dark Side’, is the embodiment of evil. His evilness is so enormous that there is even a taboo on mentioning his name, and hence he is often referred to as ‘You-know-who’ or ‘He-who-must-not-be-named’. A meaningful dimension in the case study at hand is that Venlo is the place of birth of the populist politician Geert Wilders. Within Dutch politics, his fierce anti-immigrant and anti-Islam stance places him – for those Dutch who consider themselves more moderate, civilized and ‘leftist’ – in the position of ‘the bad guy’, hence an association with ‘The Dark Side’ is easily made. For the L1 Radio broadcast *Harry kalt plat*, the bookshop owner introduced the performer of Lord Voldemort’s texts as follows, as to make the audience aware of this unintended possibility and the sensitivities involved:

### **Extract 3**

There are cities that aren’t as lucky as other cities. And some cities are more affected than other cities. And Venlo is having a hard time. We chose *Venlo* really only because of alliteration. Only. And the reader has really only come to read aloud under protest from the whole big city of Venlo. I want to emphasize that explicitly.

In our interview, however, she said that in addition to the alliteration, the Wilders-association had also been a motivation for connecting Voldemort with Venlo:

**Extract 4**

Not only did it sound well [the alliteration], but we also liked the fact that two things were running parallel by linking Voldemort to Venlo. Voldemort is the evil one, the enemy, the Hitler of the book, killing Muggles. So an association can be made with discrimination and prejudices, like we see with Wilders. Magic or not: it is about purification of the class of wizardry.

By relating the character of Lord Voldemort, the evil one, with Geert Wilder's place of birth, the indexicality of Venlo as a place where 'bad things' come from is reproduced. The translation also included a word-play in which the magic spell *hocus pocus* was 'translated' into *jocus pocus*: the use of *jocus* refers to the name of Venlo's inner-city carnival association and is selected to contribute to the authentication of 'Voldemort's' text and to anchor it to Venlo.

***The Prime Minister of the Muggle Community at Maastricht***

Maastricht is prioritized by linking it to the elite character in the *Harry Potter* world – the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He is the highest-ranking figure of the non-magical population. To us the bookshop owner explained it would be most fitting if that role was performed by the actual King's Commissioner of Limburg. Fortunately, it was quite easy to get him involved into the event, since she knew him personally.

## Gouverneur Bovens leest Harry Potter - 31 jul 2012



Figure 3: The Governor of the province of Limburg reads aloud, alias the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.l1.nl/video/gouverneur-bovens-leest-harry-potter-31-jul-2012>.

The King's Commissioner is the highest-ranking provincial dignitary and resides at the provincial government building, the so-called Gouvernement in Maastricht (Province of Limburg 2014). He is appointed by the Dutch Crown (the ministers, presided over by the reigning king or queen) for a six-year period. He chairs both the Provincial Council and the Provincial Executive and recommends candidates for appointment as mayor, advises on royal honors, liaises with the Royal Family, assists the police in maintaining public law and order, and represents the province of Limburg's interests in a wide range of matters. As such, he is the most important link between the national government and Limburg's local authorities. This explains why, as the bookshop owner told us: "[the King's Commissioner's] presence lifted up the event through which people took it seriously".

The commissioner had to read the Prime Minister's fragments in Maastrichts, his native dialect. A complex interplay of fiction and reality is at stake here, which provided the event with a particular *grandeur*. At the original performance, but still in his position of the King's Commissioner, he told the audience that 'Muggles' – which, of course, is a neologism of J. K. Rowling's and as such 'untranslatable' – was translated in Maastrichts as *puimes*. *Puime* is considered as typically Maastrichts, and means 'simpleton', 'softy' or 'gentle person'. The translator, a former chair of *Veldeke Maastricht*, apparently chose not to stick to the meaning of Muggle as intended by Rowling (people not gifted with magical powers), but instead selected the distinctive Maastrichts noun *puime* in order to contribute to the authentication of 'the Prime Minister's' text.

The participation of the King's Commissioner very likely has also been an important reason for why the event has been announced in the provincial newspaper and was broadcast by *LI TV* and radio. It is telling that both the *LI TV* broadcast and the *YouTube* video, only selected the King's Commissioner's contribution. Herewith the dominant position of Maastrichts within the Limburgian multidialectal space is further naturalized.

In the *LI Radio* broadcast, the bookshop owner informs that the translator had instructed her to tell the audience that Maastrichts was a *taol*, a 'language', and not a dialect, which she did. He had also proposed to use the official spelling developed in Maastricht for the Maastricht text that differs in small details from the *Veldeke* spelling.<sup>24</sup> Again then, Maastrichts is ascribed a special status, and special requirements of status and prestige are placed on Maastrichts. Both the use of 'language' instead of 'dialect' and the imposition of another orthography were restricted to Maastrichts, and as such reproduce the province's linguistic power hierarchies. It

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<sup>24</sup> This spelling was recognized by the municipality of Maastricht in 1999 and differs in details from the spelling published by the Council for Limburgian. <http://www.mestreechertaol.nl/spelling/de-spelling-vaan-t-mestreechs>

also reveals that the translators, although all volunteers, operate as institutional actors that are most often so prominent in standardization processes.

*Professor Sybill Trelawny, the weird teacher from Kerkrade*

Professor Sybill Trelawny is a witch and Professor of Divination, although usually – as it turns out – foretelling false predictions. The Professor is a weird figure, mainly in the position of being the odd-one-out. In the introduction of this character during the reading-aloud event, the bookshop owner gives no explicit explanation of Professor Sybill Trelawny's linkage to Kerkrade, a small city in the most southeastern part of Limburg. However, in our interview, she revealed some of her associations.

For her, Professor Sybill Trelawny is a person who does not really know what she is doing; she is a vague, diffuse, and funny character. This, of course, is also how the Professor is meant to be by J. K. Rowling. Recounting the moment in her bookstore, with the customer reading out loud that *Harry Potter* fragment in Kerkrade, she told us that she found this so extremely funny that she had to recover her breath from laughing. Again, with the public reading-aloud event in July, the audience, mainly people from Maastricht, burst with laughter upon hearing the Kerkrade fragments. Apparently, ways of speaking associated with Kerkrade are experienced as extremely funny, at least in Maastricht. This provides an explanation for why Kerkrade is indexical of the weird personality of Professor Sybill Trelawny. The perception of Kerkrade as 'funny' or maybe 'weird' is based on its being perceived as the most deviant and exceptional dialect in comparison with other dialects in the province. It is also perceived as the dialect that is the hardest one to understand for people outside of the province, and even for inhabitants of Limburg (cf. Cornips forthc.). This perception is undoubtedly brought about by Kerkrade being part of a branch of High German (as we noted earlier). Its funniness is then based in its otherness, it being different of what a proper Limburgian dialect should sound like.

In conclusion of this section, we have seen that each *Harry Potter* character interpretation needs to be localized, which involves difficult, often politically charged choices as to which linguistic elements are to be used in the performance of characters. As such, rendering a particular character through a specific variety of a language may associate her or him with specific characteristics, lifestyles, and social groups (Lippi-Green 1997: 85). We have also shown that the selection of the *Harry Potter* characters and their respective dialects resulted from language-ideologically informed choices, which are part of the long history of Limburgian enregistering efforts and the ongoing codification process. In these processes, there is a continuous search and need for the authentic, most pure form of a dialect, a

desire that also informed the *Harry Potter* translations. Happenings such as the reading-aloud event analyzed here help to naturalize and legitimize (Bucholtz and Hall 2008) the authentic nature of dialects and their socio-geographical indexicalities. In this *Harry Potter* case, the province of Limburg is (re)produced as a multidialectal space in which different dialects are put together as being equal, as does Veldeke and the Council for Limburgian. Simultaneously, this *status quo* is only apparent since the dialects are also placed in a social-political hierarchy with Maastrichts on top.

## CONCLUSION

Demonstrating the importance of local language in the construction of local identities, this case study shows how the coexistence of different dialects informs a sense of a distinct, unique Limburgian identity. The processes of dialect enregisterment, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continue to confirm and reproduce this paradoxical notion of ‘multidialectal identity’, or in other words, the idea of ‘unity in linguistic diversity’. In our setting the *Harry Potter* reading-aloud event (re)produces and confirms the differentiation between dialects and simultaneously evinces a dominant language ideology. In the absence of the standard language (Dutch), one dialect spoken in the provincial capital, Maastrichts, is given a higher ranking in a socio-political hierarchy. We have shown how media contribute to singling out Maastrichts as *primus inter pares* in an area that celebrates its dialectal heterogeneity and emphasizes that all dialects are equally important for establishing a local identity. The media also contribute to the standardization of what is conceived of different dialects, since extracts of the *Harry Potter* series were translated in written form according to the normative standard dialect orthography developed by the main institutional actors in Limburg, i.e. the Council for Limburgian and Veldeke. Paradoxically, as mentioned earlier, in contrast to language standardization at the national level, there is no tendency to construct or promote Maastrichts as a roofing or overarching ‘Limburgian’ variety that would turn Limburg into a uniform homogenous monodialectal space. Instead, ‘being multidialectal’ remains the dominant language ideology. What we see in the Limburgian *Harry Potter* case is a form of dialectscape cultivation consisting of different co-existing dialects. Each single dialect has been an object of codification, making it into what is considered a ‘pure’ (Haugen 2003: 348) and authentic variety. The *Harry Potter* reading-aloud project evinces this process of standardization of multiple dialects in which dialects are constructed as having their own linguistic elements. The most important institutional actors in Limburg have developed a normative orthography which is not uniform for the different dialects but leaves space for orthographic variation.

The *Harry Potter* translations served as a present-day tool and medium for the reproduction of language-ideologically informed connections between linguistic elements, places, speakers, and their ascribed socio-cultural characteristics. The bookshop owner who initiated the *Harry Potter* reading-loud event rationalized the choices made by mobilizing indexical associations, showing that this social-semiotic work is done at a high level of metalinguistic awareness. As such, these translations forcefully exemplify how selection and codification, components of enregisterment as well as of standardization, are crucial in anchoring linguistic forms and their speakers as local. Although standardization at the national level also entails selection and codification, it does not have this anchoring potential. The *Harry Potter* case shows us how a dominant language ideology resulting in pure varieties is reproduced on a local level without the standardizing effect of unification found at the level of the nation-state.

We would like to thank the book store owner for the interview and for making available to us the translations of the read-aloud excerpts from the *Harry Potter* books.

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