

The lexicon of Limburg today: results from a large-scale survey and Limburgish tweets

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In this paper, I provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the Limburgish lexicon today, and compare it to earlier work (Franco et al. 2019, Huisman et al. 2021). The aim of this talk is threefold. First, I provide a general overview of the amount of variation that still remains in the Limburgish dialects: to which extent have the Limburgish dialects undergone lexical levelling in the last decades? I answer this question by discussing the results from a large-scale survey that ran in August 2024, in which we investigated twenty-four concepts from six semantic fields (among other aspects of the Limburgish dialects). I analyze whether there are parts of the lexicon where the amount of variation has decreased more than in other places by comparing the results to older survey data collected for the *Woordenboek van de Limburgse Taal* 'Dictionary of the Limburgish dialects' in the second half of the 20th century. As a second step, I investigate the importance of the state border between Belgium and the Netherlands for this levelling process in these survey data with dialectometric techniques.

As a final step, I zoom in on four locations in Limburg where the multicultural environment of the coal mines may have left its imprint on the lexicon. To respond to this question, I investigate a second dataset of Limburgish Twitter data. I use techniques from computational linguistics to determine which words are typical for four coal mining hubs (Maastricht, Heerlen, Hasselt and Genk) and how large the lexical distance between each of these hubs is. The hypothesis is that the lexicon used in the city of Genk will stand out and that it will show the clearest signs of multi-cultural influence.

References

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