

## **Place-making in Dutch Limburg and the impact of coalmining on languageculture: The case of (parodic) Heerlen Dutch**

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The province of Limburg is the most recent province of the Netherlands and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was subject to geopolitical uncertainties. The question I will address in this talk is: How can we explain the construction of a strong Limburgian identity through languagecultural practices although this territory and a territory of that name is quite recent? (Cornips & Knotter 2017). In order to answer this question I will discuss two interrelated issues. First, borders are socially (re)produced, and are thus always susceptible to being modified, transformed, erased, recreated, reimagined, and transgressed (cf. Soja 2005: 33).

I will discuss how the Limburgian linguistic space is carved up in multiple scales depending on the actors and the socio-historical contexts involved. This part will be the preamble to problematize the linguistic perspective that 'space' exists in an independent way as some kind of a container, or at least as something (substantially) existing previous to social practices is unrealistic (Arijs 2017; Cornips 2013; Cornips & Knotter 2017).

To this end, I will introduce the second issue namely the languagecultural effects of the coal mining industry in the former century in the Eastern Mine District with Heerlen as its centre (Cornips & de Rooij 2015/2019/2020). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the expanding coal mining industry attracted numerous migrants and their language varieties from within the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe (Italy, Poland, Germany, Belgium, Slovenia, Austria, and Hungary). As a result, a new language variety emerged in Heerlen which I have labelled Heerlen Dutch (Cornips 1994). People characterize Heerlen Dutch - then and now - as neither dialect nor Dutch but something in between.

Nowadays, people in Heerlen relate to the coalmining past of this city through a variety of languagecultural practices that cut across diverse media forms and genres, both textual (poems, rap songs), visual (portrait photography, material commodities), and digital (posts on Facebook, YouTube videos). I will show how people in Heerlen, through these practices express, repeat, and renew their individual and collective memories of Heerlen as the coal mining centre (Cornips & Van den Hengel 2021).

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