

Habitual *do*+infinitive construction in Heerlen Dutch: how actors breach syntactic restrictions through language play

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The Syntactic Atlas of Dutch Dialects (Barbiers et al. 2008) shows that *doen+infinitive* in declarative clauses as in (1) is used by dialect speakers in large parts in the Netherlands.

(1) Ik doe werken_{inf}
I do work

The *doen+infinitive* construction is not considered part of standard Dutch, although speakers may use it in their Dutch. These speakers are heavily stigmatized.

In this talk I will focus on spontaneous spoken Dutch speech, and on carnivalesque language use in Heerlen, a former coal mining village located near the Belgian and German border in the southeast of the Netherlands (province of Limburg) (Cornips, 1998).

I will argue that the *doen+infinitive* construction in (1) expresses habitual aspect, it only occurs in main clauses, it may easily combine with modifiers that already indicate a habitual reading in standard and/or Heerlen Dutch. These modifiers are (i) specific adverbial phrases of time, namely the ones that indicate a plurality of events and (ii) compound verbs, e.g. infinitives involving NP's that do not have the status of real objects but, instead, they function as predicate modifiers (Cornips 1998).

In the second part of the talk I will argue that syntactic variation can be considered as a multi-layered phenomenon that is the outcome of cognitive capacities but strongly influenced by social or linguistic practices (*cf.* Cornips 2015, Eckert 2012). I will show that syntactic restrictions in the use of *doen+infinitive* may be overcome by creative actors and that this may be accounted for by considering the (de)selection of the *doen+infinitive* construction, language ideology and linguistic interaction as inseparably interconnected in the process of social semiosis (Silverstein 1985, Cornips, de Rooij and Stengs 2017).

References

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