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Bilingualism in Daily Life

Foreign Loanwords in Dutch: Integration and Adaptation

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Foreign elements in Dutch are usually spelled in the same way as in the language of origin, provided that language uses the Roman alphabet. Some adaptation to Dutch pronunciation rules always takes place, the degree mainly depending on the level of instruction of the Dutch speaker and on the gap between Dutch and the source language. The three main source languages—German, French, and English—have their own social and/or political connotations and each creates specific problems when Dutch syntactic rules and Dutch inflections have to be applied. Of the other source languages, classical Latin and Greek stand apart, as no effort is made to pronounce the numerous loanwords they provide in a way that comes close to the original pronunciation. As for other languages, their contribution to Dutch is less significant. For some languages there exist transliteration systems, e.g. Russian, for others oral approximation and adaptation are the rule, e.g. Hebrew and Yiddish.

Although the Dutch, having been exposed for many centuries to the influence of their numerically and politically stronger neighbors, have borrowed extensively from French, English and German, and continue to do so, relatively little has been published on spelling adaptation. The reason for the apparent lack of scholarly literature on the subject no doubt lies in the fact that, contrary to German, where the spelling of loanwords often reflects an effort to adapt the orthography to standard German practice (*milieu* > *Miliö*; *cliché* > *Klischee*; *jungle* > *Dschungel*), Dutch normally maintains the original spelling. This statement is too general and has to be qualified in order to explain what should be understood by “normally” and what kind of exceptions there are. Before discussing the details of spelling procedures, the pronunciation of loanwords deserves comment.

Pronunciation

As a general rule Dutch pronunciation tries to come as close as possible to the pronunciation of the language from which the loanword is taken. From a phonological point of view the approximation consists either of the substitution of the closest Dutch phoneme for the foreign one¹, or of the introduction of the foreign phoneme which then becomes a marginal member of the Dutch phoneme inventory. Although on the whole it is true that the foreign pronunciation tends to become a status symbol serving as proof that one has received a proper education, a subtle balance must be maintained between adaptation to Dutch pronunciation and foreignness, as one runs the risk of being considered a snob if one's pronunciation of the loanword stands out too much.

Thus, even those who follow the foreign pronunciation will rarely distinguish between /ε/ and /æ/ in *Ellen* and *Allan* and the Dutch devoicing of final consonants is quite common. As these peculiarities are not reflected in the spelling, it is difficult to know which rules speakers follow in their pronunciation, unless

they make mistakes in orthography that give them away. In some rare cases, however, when the phonological approximation results in phoneme substitution, the “mistake” may become the rule. A recent example is provided by the term *live* when applied to radio or television broadcasts. The fact that the Dutch pronunciation corresponds to *life* has facilitated the substitution. A very respectable Dutch newspaper uses in the same issue of its overseas weekly edition *live* and “*life*”.² In the latter form the quotation marks are undoubtedly used for the purpose of signalling that the writer of the article is aware of the fact that the generally used spelling/pronunciation is not the correct one. Another curious phenomenon linked with the Dutch preoccupation with the correct “foreign” pronunciation can be found in some literary texts as well as in newspapers: instead of the original spelling, the author uses an adaptation to the Dutch system, thus indicating the difference in pronunciation between the English original (British or North American) on the one hand and the Dutch loanword on the other. When a sophisticated intellectual writer uses *tiesjirt* (= T-shirt)³, the reader is left with the task of interpreting the connotations and guessing the reasons for the author’s choice. It may have been made in order to indicate the current Dutch pronunciation as found in circles where the T-shirt is most popular. There may also be a slightly condescending attitude on the part of the author to those circles or to the object T-shirt itself, or to both.

Spelling

A major problem resulting from the Dutch tendency to maintain the original spelling arises when the loanword is used in a position that normally requires some morphological change in Dutch syntax. As will be seen, this morphological aspect has impact on some spellings and creates a sense of either freedom or insecurity for the Dutch users. Some speakers feel that spelling does not matter, whereas others, for lack of a well established norm, tend to avoid inflected forms of loanwords.

After these general remarks some examples will be discussed which have been taken from the three major source languages: English, French and German. Then the specific problems of integration and adaptation posed by each of those three languages will be examined. Borrowings from other languages have a less prominent position, except for those coming from Latin and Greek. Most of the vocabulary of classical origin is not restricted to Dutch and has an international character. In some instances the borrowings are not straight from Latin or Greek, but have been made from another language which serves as an intermediary, French being the language which has fulfilled that function most frequently. It should be noted that Greek loanwords require transliteration, a feature they share with borrowings from other languages such as Hebrew and Russian that do not use the same alphabet as Dutch. In many cases different systems of transliteration exist side by side and inconsistencies are not uncommon, with one and the same publication using several systems at random. Sometimes a loanword has a double origin, coming via Yiddish or German from Hebrew. As dictionaries do not always agree on the identity of the intermediary language, it does not come as a surprise that fluctuations in spelling are the rule rather than the exception in such cases. An added factor in the orthographical uncertainty is to be found in the fact that many of the loanwords of Hebrew or Yiddish-German origin do not belong to standard Dutch and only occur in texts that use a very popular register or in direct quotations of popular or criminal slang.

German Loanwords

Of the three major source languages German is undoubtedly the closest relative. This may explain the fact that direct borrowings that keep their original German form are scarce. Without belonging to a specific sociolect, those few terms that are listed in Dutch monolingual dictionaries seem

more likely to occur in the speech of Dutch people who know German, than in the mouths of those who do not. Expressions such as *so-wie-so* (“in any case”) that, although used in conversations, have not found their way into dictionaries and terms like *überhaupt* (“in general”, “altogether”) that are listed, do not differ in that respect. As for spelling deviations from the German, *überhaupt*, being listed, does not change and even keeps the Umlaut although the Dutch *u* is pronounced like the German *ü*. For *so-wie-so* there may be a substitution of *z* for *s* according to the Dutch spelling for the [z] sound, but the term is not discussed in studies about neologisms, does not belong to the category of Germanisms that take a pseudo-Dutch form, and, as was said before, it cannot be found in Dutch dictionaries. So the question as to whether *z* is actually found instead of *s* must remain unanswered.

For *schmink* (“make-up”), *kitsch* (“sentimental trash”) and *schlager* (“popular song”) there is no difference in spelling except that the capital which begins a German noun is replaced by the equivalent lower case letter in Dutch. For *uhlaan* or *ulaan* the double *aa* renders the long *a* of the original German *Uhlan* or *Ulan* (“lancer”), according to Dutch spelling rules. Whereas the first three words are well known, the same is not true for *uhlaan*, which is both bookish and obsolete. World War II and the German occupation left only a few loanwords such as *blitzkrieg* (“very fast war attack”); other loans, current in the period 1940-1945, e.g. *ausweis* (“identity card”) have almost disappeared and are rarely used in texts other than those dealing with events of that period. The same is true for *spër* (German *Sperre*), a term used for the special - temporary - exemption from deportation granted to some Jews. The word is only used in Holocaust literature⁴, since it no longer has any relevance in contemporary Dutch society. Although the - *re* element of the German original was dropped here, normally the form of the Dutch loan remained very close to its source.

One might argue that *sper* is a Germanism rather than a loanword, a Germanism being defined as a lexical or syntactical - morphological element not indigenous to Dutch but copied from German. Germanisms often have a deceptively Dutch appearance, and language authorities offer widely varying views on specific items, some proscribing them categorically, others accepting them as genuinely Dutch⁵.

Germanisms can be semantic (a German meaning is added to the already existing meanings), morphological (a Dutch root receives a German ending) or structural (Dutch elements are combined following a German pattern that clashes with Dutch morphology and syntax). Spelling does not constitute a problem, as Germanisms follow Dutch orthography and pronunciation rules.

A marginal loanword that is not even widely used in the register of vulgar and criminal language to which it belongs offers an interesting example of spelling adaptation. A recently published dictionary of Dutch "argot"⁶, slang used by criminals, prostitutes and traffickers, gives *fikken* ("to have intercourse with a woman") as a loan from German *ficken* that came into the language during the German occupation 1940-1945. This may be correct, but one should know that there is also a much older word *fieken* with the same meaning as well as with the meaning "to chop". In this acceptation it is used regionally in familiar, though not necessarily vulgar speech. The wavering between the spelling *-ieken* that represents a closed long *i* and *-ikken* with a short open *i* can be explained by the fact that the German pronunciation of *-icken* is more open than Dutch *-ieken*, but more closed than *-ikken*, being somewhere in between the two Dutch pronunciations.

In conclusion one can say that German loanwords that overtly keep their German identity are not very numerous and do not seem to belong to a specific register. Some are rather academic, some of more

general use, and finally there are some terms with strong negative connotations linked to the period 1940-1945. The opponents of a recent plan of the Dutch government to introduce compulsory identity cards call these cards *ausweisen*⁷, thus connecting the project with the wartime situation when all Dutch citizens over 15 years of age had to carry identity cards. Loanwords that have taken Dutch features and loanformations in which Dutch elements are combined in the same way as the elements of the German model cannot always be distinguished from one another. There is no clear distinction either between what is accepted as standard Dutch and what is rejected as a Germanism. Speakers who use Germanisms are often unaware of their origin and some knowledge of German is certainly not a “prerequisite”.

French Loanwords

The situation is quite different for loanwords taken from French. The bulk of the French elements in Dutch clearly belong to well-educated speech and came into the language in the period when French was widely used in European high society and served as the *lingua franca* for diplomats and scholars. When the importance of French as an international means of communication declined, borrowing decreased and loanwords of British and American origin began to outnumber their French counterparts in the Dutch language. As the role and the position of the members of the upper class became less prominent, the use of those French loanwords that were typical of the upper registers of speech became less frequent, and some words and expressions became altogether obsolete.

In spite of this double decline, the French connection is still very strong in Dutch. The integration is sometimes complete, sometimes partial, pronunciation and/or spelling showing nonindigenous features. As for morphological problems, some inflected forms

of loanwords are avoided, but on the whole these words that have survived are by now morphologically integrated.

The following table shows a sample pattern of integration.

Noun Endings

-ité becomes -iteit:	nationalité- nationaliteit
-ance becomes -antie:	distance - distantie
-ation becomes -atie:	nation - natie
-otion becomes -otie:	dévotion - devotie

Verb Ending

-er becomes -eren:	bombarder - bombarderen
	marchander - marchanderen
	offrir* - offereren

Adjective Final Vowels

double final vowel:	confus - confuus
	idiot - idioot
	idéal - ideaal

*The French verb is not necessarily of the -er category.

Adjectives may double the final vowel in order to preserve the closed pronunciation of the French original. Where some final consonants are not pronounced in the masculine (*confus*, *idiot*) the Dutch restores them. This facilitates the use of inflected forms, e.g., *de idiote man*. The same holds for other adjectives such as *charmant* and *elegant*. A rarely used adjective *stupéfait* — it does not occur in van Dale's standard Dutch dictionary⁸ — is pronounced without the final consonant and I have never come across an inflected occurrence of the word. Another indication that it is considered to be a nonintegrated loan can be seen in the use of *é* with the French acute accent "accent aigu".

This brings us back to the relation between spelling and pronunciation. When accents are used, the French pronunciation prevails; when such overt markers are absent, there are many fluctuations that are partly conditioned by social class. The following enumeration does not claim to be exhaustive. Only the most striking deviations from and adaptation to Dutch spelling and pronunciation are listed, with the help of some examples.

French words containing *ch* (š) or *j* or *g* before *e*, *i*, *y* (ž) taken over by Dutch maintain the spelling and the pronunciation: *charmant*, *jus* (in Dutch used to indicate *gravy*: *aardappelen met jus* “potatoes with gravy”). In those sociolects where voiced *z*, *ž* and *v* are absent, the pronunciation of *jus* becomes /šü/ or /sjü/. This substandard variant sometimes is reflected in the spelling *sju*. It is noteworthy that many words are pronounced /jü/, according to the model of Latin pronounced in the Dutch fashion: *jurist*, *justitie*.

The French /g/ before *a*, *o*, *u* is either maintained or replaced by Dutch /X/. Thus *garage* may sound almost identical to French or have the indigenous /X/. In the already mentioned words *elegant* and *elegantie* the absence of accents seems to exclude the French /g/. The equally used direct loan *élégance* (not listed in *van Dale*) on the other hand only has /g/.

A typical switch from French to Dutch pronunciation patterns consists in reducing unstressed vowels in open syllables to /ə/: thus [eləxɑ̃nt]⁹.

French not only contributed /g/ to the Dutch phonological system, it also is responsible for an opposition between short and long vowels that does not occur elsewhere. We are again dealing with a marginal phenomenon. It is curious to note that some of the Dutch “French” pronunciations do not correspond to the real French. Quantitative oppositions are found in the following pairs: /bet/ ~ /bɛ:t/ (*bed*, “bed” ~

bête “stupid”)/kɔr/ ~ /kɔ:r/ (*Cor*, a proper name ~ *corps*, “student fraternity” or “corps diplomatique”), and with /ɔ:/ corresponding to /o/ in French /zɔnɔ/ ~ /zɔ:nɔ/ (*zonne*, poetic for *zon* “sun” ~ *zone*, “zone”). Also /ɔ:/ instead of French /o/ in *rose* “pink” and in the geographical names *Rhône* and *Saône*.

The graphic combination *au* corresponds in Dutch to a diphthong /ɔu/ of which the second element is reduced to a semi-vowel, whereas the French standard pronunciation is /o/. The Dutch pronunciation of words containing an *au* of classical Latin or Greek origin wavers between /ɔu/ and /o/. For some words only /ɔu/ is customary: *aula*, *authentiek*, for others, both pronunciations can be found in standard Dutch: *auto* (/oto/ or /ɔuto/), for others again there seems to be a preference for /o/: *auditie*. If French is the direct source as in the case of *aubergine* (“eggplant”), the French pronunciation prevails and /ɔu/ is considered substandard. On the whole, however, fixed rules are lacking and the classical and the French versions coexist side by side, or even in the pronunciation of a single individual who uses both variants of one and the same word.¹⁰

A few miscellaneous facts will be given in order to show the heterogeneity of the integration routes followed by French loanwords. A term used in my childhood to indicate what the French called *des lits-jumeaux* was, in spite of the fact that *van Dale* indicated that it is a plural, taken by many Dutch speakers to be a singular: *een lits-jumeaux* (literally “a twin-beds”). The accentuation remained unchanged with the stress on the last syllable. For the word *metro*, which, contrary to the French, does not have an acute accent, there is a shift of the stress to the first syllable. This shift can be explained by the fact that *metro* has become a frequently used term after the construction of the Rotterdam and Amsterdam subways. Another word that has recently become quite common is *boetiek* (from *boutique*).

The term is supposed to give an aura of elegance and prestige to all sorts of commercial outlets from small designer fashion shops to bakeries that call themselves *brood-boetiek*. The spelling goes from *boutique* via *boutiek* to *boetiek*.

An equally frequent French term is the neologism *elitair* composed of the French root *élite* and the French adjectival suffix *-air*. The only problem is that the French use *élitiste* and this brings *elitair* into the same category as *zone* (pronounced with /ɔ:/) and an expression such as *flux-de-bouche* which well educated Dutch speakers use sometimes to describe rapid uninhibited talk, although the expression is unknown in France. The pseudo-French is not different from the majority of the real French loan elements in that it belongs to the register of the upper strata of Dutch society. French is considered to be classy and elegant. It has connotations of refined taste that may at times be negatively interpreted as snobbishness. In the period following World War II very little was borrowed from French; English nearly eliminated both French and German as source languages of direct loans.

English Loanwords

Spelling and pronunciation of English and American loanwords generally do not fit into genuinely Dutch patterns. As the spelling of the original is maintained and the pronunciation is an approximation of the English or American model, the foreignness of the borrowings cannot be eliminated. The most striking features of the clash between the loanwords and their Dutch environment are: the differences of the various vowel grapheme/pronunciation correspondences, due to the great vowel shift in English; the absence of voiced consonants in final position in Dutch, the opposition of voiced ~ unvoiced being neutralized as only the unvoiced pronunciation occurs; consonant deviations from the Dutch grapheme/pronunciation patterns are numerous also,

ch /tʃ/ and *j* or *g* /dʒ/ resulting in consonant clusters that are not indigenous to Dutch. On the other hand silent *p* in *ps* of Greek loanwords in initial position (*psychology*) and silent *k* in *kn* (*knee*) are not silent in Dutch where the *p* is sounded in Greek loanwords and where *kn* (*knie* = “knee”) is a current combination.

As English is widely known in the Netherlands, radio, television, movies and records expose the Dutch to correct pronunciation models. There is a surprisingly high degree of faithfulness to the original, in spite of the fact that this involves keeping apart two sets of pronunciation rules.

As we mentioned before, the faithfulness has its limits; voiced final consonants tend to get unvoiced, and vowels usually are less diphthongized and more clipped than their English counterparts. One could say that even when the original pronunciation is imitated, a Dutch accent is noticeable. In a study on English in the Netherlands¹¹, Reinier Zandvoort makes the following remarks about the linguistic aspects of the question:

Turning now to the more strictly linguistic aspects of English infiltration, we may first note that in actual speech, as was to be expected, English sounds are in varying degrees assimilated to Dutch. In the mouth of those with a good command of English this assimilation may amount to very little, though it increases considerably as one goes down in the educational scale. The commonest deviation from standard Southern English is the habit of pronouncing every written *r*, while many substitute the uvular *r* which is natural to them when speaking Dutch. Voiceless *th* often slips in the direction of *s*, while the voiced variety often sounds as *d* (less often as *z*). Final [tʃ] as in *switch* is often simplified to [ts], though those taking part in *bridge-drives* usually manage the [dʒ] rather well. Long vowels, as in *beauty*, *scooter*, *weekend* [wikent] (with the English bilabial

replaced by a Dutch labio-dental) are apt to be shortened; half-diphthongs, as in *home*, *plane* usually become pure vowels (p. XI).

Zandvoort goes on to mention that *back* and *beck* often merge and are both pronounced [bek], that sometimes stress patterns are adapted to Dutch habits, and that the relation between pronunciation and spelling is unpredictable, some words following the English habits (e.g. *tram* [trəm], *handicap* and the morphologically adapted verb *plannen* “to plan”), whereas other words are pronounced as if they were Dutch (e.g. *folklore*) [fol'klɔrə] and the adapted verb *overlappen* pronounced with ∞ not ϵ .

As *plannen* and *overlappen* show, English loanwords undergo morphological change in order to be manageable within the Dutch grammatical and syntactic system. In many instances this adaptation is only partial and the adapted form is not fully integrated. To illustrate this phenomenon consider the following examples:

Baby sitten (“to baby sit”) and the noun *baby sitter* or *sitter*. As an infinitive the verb is used without causing any problems *ik moet, ga baby sitten* (“I have to, am going to baby sit”). However, as soon as finite forms and the past participle are involved a number of difficulties arise. First of all, the speaker has to decide whether to use *sitten, sat, geseten* (or even *zitten, zat, gezeten*, the standard Dutch for *to sit, sat, sat*) or *sitten, sitte, gesit*, according to the normal weak verb conjugation to which all new verbs almost automatically belong. Secondly, the place of *baby* before the finite verbal form is contrary to Dutch syntax. Thus [ik] *baby sitte* seems odd, but one feels equally uncomfortable with [ik] *sitte baby* or *sat, (zat) baby*. Asked which of these they use, Dutch informants confessed that they avoid all of them. The past participle [ik heb] *gebabysit, baby gesit, or baby gezeten* seems to be used somewhat less reluctantly, with a preference for

gebabysit and, sometimes with a playful connotation, *baby gezeten*, while *baby gesit* seems unacceptable.

The noun is mostly *sitter*, but *zitter* does occur. As added complication in the rivalry between *s* and *z* lies in the fact that *s* in the Dutch verb *zitten* is considered substandard.

Racen ("to race"), a weak verb both in English and in Dutch. Again the past tense is the most problematic one, but even the present tense and the past participle are not without some peculiar forms. In the past tense Zandvoort (p. XIII) attests *racede* [re:stə], a form that is far removed from its pronunciation. The third person singular gets in the present tense a *t*: e.g. *ik maak, hij maakt* of the verb *maken* ("to make"). So *racen* becomes *hij racet*. As for the past participle *geraced*, an added problem can be encountered when the participle is used as an adjective that is inflected: *geracede* to be pronounced [xəre:stə], e.g. in the hybrid form *de weggeracede bode kwan terug* "the messenger who raced away came back". One wonders how this spelling versus pronunciation conflict will end, unless a straightforward Dutch graphic rendering *resen, reeste, gereest*, is accepted. For *plannen* ("to plan") the integration is gradually taking place. Zandvoort (p. XII) gives two forms for the past participle, *geplanned* and *gepland*, but now, some twenty years later, only the second form is used. Helped by the existence of the Dutch word *plan* ("plan", "project"), the substitution of ∞ for ϵ is gaining ground and eventually *plannen* may become a completely naturalized Dutch citizen. As the distance between English and Dutch is much greater in the case of *racen*, such a fairly smooth integration process is not to be expected here.

Stoned (other attested spellings *stoond, stoont*) "stoned". As was seen already for the inflected adjectival form of the past participle *weggeracede*, such inflected forms may pose awkward problems. The preferred form seems to be *stoned* and that

would result in the inflected form *stonede*. However, the Dutch generally avoid the use of inflected forms either by using a noninflected form (which is contrary to Dutch usage), or by resorting to constructions where no inflection takes place. The direct quotations given by *Signalement van nieuwe woorden* under the entry *stoned* have either *stonede* or *stoonde*. The noninflected *stoont* also occurs, but the corresponding *stoonte* does not, *stoned* apparently being integrated into the category of adjectives ending in *-d*, that devolve the *d* in final position: *rond* [rɔnt] “round”, *ronde* [rɔndə], and not into that of adjectives ending in *-t*: *rot* [rɔt] “rotten”, *rotte* [rɔtə].

In spite of integration problems, English is making strong progress in its invasion of the Netherlands. While Zandvoort still could maintain in 1964 that French was a more important source of foreign elements than English in a novel that could be considered to be representative of intellectual circles in Amsterdam, the relative position of the two languages has been interchanged since then. The position of French in the Dutch school system has weakened while that of English has been strengthened. Moreover the influence of the mass media works entirely in favor of English, and business as well as technology often use English-American terminology. Sometimes this can be explained by the lack of a Dutch equivalent, but in other instances the preference for English stems from a desire to be dynamic and up-to-date, or a least to give that impression.

There are some forms comparable to what we called pseudo-French, as for instance *dancing* “dance-hall”, *smoking*, “dinner jacket”, “tuxedo”: there are hybrid forms as was seen in *wegracen* “to race away”, in which one or more Dutch elements link with an English component (see Zandvoort p. XIII and p. XV), and there are loan translations, but those fall outside the topic of the relation between spelling and pronunciation. Compared to the French influence in

its heyday, the English influence is less restricted to a special social group. From drug subculture to diplomacy, English loanwords are used, and most of the users of these terms, if not all, have had some degree of instruction in the source language. The widespread knowledge of English tends to preserve the original spelling, it seems, and slows down the process of integration.

Other Loanwords

For the other languages that have contributed to the Dutch vocabulary such widespread knowledge cannot be invoked as a significant factor. The learned words coming from Latin and Greek stand apart in that respect from other loanwords, because of the fact that until fairly recently a thorough instruction in the classical languages was associated with belonging to the intellectual elite. As Greek and Latin were taught, however, without any attempt to come close to a reconstructed original pronunciation, the pronunciation of loanwords used in Dutch sentences did not differ from the classroom pronunciation. The adaptation to Dutch pronunciation habits had taken place already when the learning process started, and so spelling problems and fluctuations are minor. The main trouble spot is *c* pronounced as *k* and sometimes written *k*. Spelling committees have been struggling with this question for decades. Official lists of preferred spellings seem to suggest that the nonpreferred orthography still is acceptable. The general tendency seems to be in favor of *k*. The desire to give the Dutch term its proper identity by distinguishing its spelling from that of its Latin-French counterpart is stronger in Belgium than in the Netherlands, but *k* is making progress everywhere¹². Thus *critiek* "critique", "review" has become *kritiek*, but *criticus* "critic" generally keeps *c*; *vakantie*, "holidays", "vacation", and *oktober* "October" have *k*; *collaboratie* "collaboration" keeps *c* in most instances I have come across.

Other orthographical inconsistencies are found in words having *qu* or *x* in the Latin form. Although *kw* and *ks* can easily be substituted, it is difficult to give steadfast rules in these areas. *Kwart* (“quarter”) and *kwart je* (“quarter” [coin]) always show *kw*, while *quadraat* (“quadrate”, “square”) shares the attention with *kwadraat*, *kwaliteit* is preferred to *qualiteit* (“quality”) but *qualitatief* (“qualitative”) is favored rather than *kwalitatief*. Personal taste and habits prevail, and whichever orthography is chosen, the pronunciation does not change.

The spelling *ks* for *x*, e.g. *ekspres* (“deliberately”) for traditional *expres* is more recent, and *x* still represents the norm, but *ks* is occasionally encountered. Again, both spellings have exactly the same pronunciation.

This is not the case for the spelling *expresso* that corresponds to a hypercorrect pronunciation of the Italian loanword *espresso*. For most Italian loanwords, however, both orthography and pronunciation remain intact. The majority of those loans took place a long time ago in the specialized language used in music not only in the Netherlands but also in many other countries. The *zz* of *pizza* is not a Dutch combination but the *dz* pronunciation that is linked to it, is the generally observed norm with a tendency to devoiced *ts*. The same holds for *razzia* (“raid”) that came from Arabic via French into the Dutch language.

The number of words which the Dutch language has borrowed from Russian is very limited. The need for a transliteration system mainly arises for proper names and geographical names¹³. The Dutch transliteration system is slightly different from the international system *c, č, š, šč* and *ž* being rendered by *ts, tsj, sj, sjtsj*, and *zj*, and *v* corresponding to either *v* or *w* that both have a labiodental pronunciation in Dutch. The most striking deviation in the

vowel representation is that *u* is replaced by the diagraph *œ* that is used in Dutch for the closed tense labio-velar rounded phoneme /u/. Neither system pays attention to Russian pronunciation rules that require prestress and poststress vowels to be reduced and only partially differentiated from one another as *o* and *a* merge as well as *e* and *i*. Dutch pronunciation therefore follows Russian spelling rather than Russian pronunciation: *knoet* “knut” (“whip”); *samovar* or *samowar* “samovar”; *pogrom* “pogrom”; *oekase*, or *oekaze* “ukaz” (“decree”). Some uncertainties remain however; *pógrom* has, in Dutch, the stress on the first syllable contrary to the Russian original, pronounced [pagróm], moreover the [g] of the Russian is pronounced [X]. The Russian /a/ is in between Dutch /a/ and Dutch /∞/. The stressed *-ar* is sometimes written *-aar* as in *Tsaar* [car´]. More interesting is the fate of *pirovat* “to have a party”, “to party”, that became in Dutch *pierewaaien* “to paint the town red”. The prestressed *o* pronounced *a* becomes a poststressed (ə) as the stress shifts from the last to the first syllable. The reduction is in line with the Dutch tendency to reduce unstressed vowels to the neutral *schwa*. This tendency is held in check by transliteration, but fully manifests itself in oral borrowings.

This is particularly true for borrowings from languages that are not well known, as knowledge of the source language cannot protect the original forms. The Hebrew-Yiddish elements in Dutch fall into this category. Their relatively strong position in standard and underworld speech can be explained by the fact that a large Jewish proletariat lived in the inner city area of Amsterdam before the war. To what extent some of the terms have penetrated into standard Dutch is not easy to decide. The speech of an educated inhabitant of Amsterdam is likely to contain more traces of Jewish origin than that of his provincial counterpart. Jewish writers describing

the Jewish milieu always used a number of terms specifically belonging to that milieu. After the war nostalgic memoirs written by survivors of the Holocaust have made some of the Jewish vocabulary better known at large. Finally some postwar publications deal exclusively with Jewish vocabulary of the Dutch Jews¹⁴. The following examples will give an idea of the character of the Jewish element in Dutch:

Bajes slang for “prison”, from *bajes* “house”.

Goochem, “clever”, “cunning”, from *gochom* “wise”.

Jajem slang term for “gin”, from *jajim*, “wine”.

Mokum, “Amsterdam”, affectionate term sometimes preceded by *groot*: *Groot Mokum* literally “big city” from *makom*, “city”.

Majem slang for “water”, “canal” from *majim*, “water”.

The toast used while drinking to somebody’s health *lechajim* has become in Dutch *daar ga je* (literally “there you go”), a toast that always puzzled me, before I knew its origin. As in the case of Russian loanwords no distinction is made between [X] and [g], the latter always being replaced by the former.

From the different examples taken from a variety of languages, it has become clear that Dutch is an open language, and easily admits loanwords. Depending on political and social factors, special areas are favored for specific languages. The adaptation to Dutch spelling and pronunciation habits depends: on the distance between the source language and Dutch; on the knowledge which the Dutch have of the source language; and on the prestige which the source language has in their eyes.

Foreign elements have contributed a great deal to the Dutch language and will undoubtedly go on doing so. However, they do not form a serious menace to the intrinsic qualities of Dutch. On the contrary the openness of the Dutch language constitutes one of its major assets.

arabic

dutch

english

french

german

greek

hebrew

italian

latin

russian

yiddish

1 See for a simple description of this kind of substitution Catford, J. C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: Oxford University Press. Chapter 8: Phonological Translation.

2 *N.R.C. Handelsblad, weekeditie*, March 4, 1986; see also *Signalement van nieuwe woorden W.P. Woordenboek van 200 neologismen*, onder redactie van Riemer Reinsma. Amsterdam - Brussel, Elsevier 1975.

3 Rubenstein, Renate. 1986. *Nee heb je*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, (1st edition 1985), 14.

4 See for instance the introduction written by Karel van het Reve to Koker, David. 1977. *Dagboek geschreven in Vught*. Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschot, 6.

5 See Theissen, S. *De Germanismen in de moderne Nederlandse woordenschat* Series: Bouwstoffen en studien voor de geschiedenis en de lexicografie van het Nederlands XIII.

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6 *Bargoens woordenboek*. Kleine woordenschat van de volkstaal Samengesteld door Drs. Enno Endt in samenwerking met Lieneke Frerichs. Amsterdam: Erven Thomas Rap, Spuistraat 283, Tweede verbeterde en aanzienlijk ver meerderde druk, 1974. (1st edition 1972).

7 *N.R.C. Handelsblad, weekeditie*, July 15, 1986.

8. *Van Dale's Nieuw Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse taal* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950.

9 For phonetic and phonological notations, the system of *Fonologie van het Nederlands en het Fries* by A. Cohen, C. L. Ebeling, P. Eringa, K. Fokkema and A.G.F. van Holk is used. The phoneme / ɣ / occurring only in southern varieties of standard Dutch is not used in this paper that is based on the Northwestern variety in which / x / replaces / ɣ / and the opposition / x / ~ / ɣ / is not found. The opposition / ð / ~ / ɔ / observed in the east of the country is not used either, / ɔ / being the only symbol used for short open o.

10 See *Au en O*, article published by Camiel Hamans in *N.R.C. Handelsblad*, March 23, 1985.

11 Zandvoort, R.W. 1964. *English in the Netherlands (a study in linguistic infiltration)* Groningen studies in English VIII. (Groningen: J.B.Wolters.)

12 One of the rules given in a supplement published in 1955 to *van Dale's Woordenboek* (1950), runs as follows:

The *c* that is pronounced as *k* may in very many cases also be written as *k*: in a few cases only *k* is admitted, as in *karton*, *kritiek*. Where both spellings are recognized, one is completely free to continue to write *c*; the spelling with *k* is often given especially because it is preferred in the Southern Netherlands. [i.e. mainly the Flemish part of Belgium].

13 Scharpé, J.L. 1981. *Uitspraak en accent van Russische namen in transcriptie*. Leuven: Uitgeverij ACCO.

14 Beem, H. 1967. *Sje—eriet. Resten van een taal. Woordenboekje van het Nederlandse Jiddisch*. Assen: Van Goreum. —.1974. *Uit Mokum en de mediene. Joodse woorden in Nederlandse omgeving*, Assen: van Goreum.