Distinguishing regional varieties of standard Dutch

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In our study of the pronunciation of standard Dutch a lot of regional variation is observed for a large number of phonetic-phonological variables, e.g., n-deletion, duration of the high vowels, diphthongization of mid vowels, place of articulation of vowels, place and manner of articulation of (r), place of articulation of (g), duration and voicing of fricatives, etc. Data are taken from a corpus of 160 speakers of standard Dutch, stratified for community (The Netherlands vs. Flanders), region, age and sex.

In this contribution we will investigate whether and how these variables co-vary (statistical techniques to be used include factor analysis, cluster analysis, and multidimensional scaling) and whether different regional varieties of standard Dutch can be distinguished. If so, we want to determine on a more general level the phonological characteristics of the different varieties of standard Dutch. The analyses will provide more insight in competing tendencies in the Dutch language area as standardization-destandardization, regionalization-centralization (i.e. the spreading of regional characteristics from the core area to the periphery and convergence-divergence between the Netherlands and Flanders.)