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Eens een Nederlander, altijd een Nederlander?

*Over het Nederlands van Nederlandse immigranten
in de Belgische Noorderkempen*

Summary

For a few decades, people from the Netherlands have been immigrating to the 'Noorderkempen', the North of the Belgian province of Antwerp. These immigrants might be called 'tax refugees' in most cases, although some came to Belgium because they have a Belgian partner or for other personal reasons. Although both the Flemish and the Dutch people speak Dutch ('Nederlands'), the Dutch language which is spoken in Belgium, differs from the Dutch variety in the Netherlands to a certain extent in the lexicon, the pronunciation and even the syntax.

For her dissertation, Cornelissen 1997 asked those immigrants what impression they had of their new country and its inhabitants. Furthermore, she examined whether they had been influenced by their new neighbours, as far as their language is concerned. As expected, their passive knowledge of Belgian variants was rather large, since they are in contact with these words and expressions almost every day. Yet obviously, they don't just assimilate the Flemish version of Dutch. A discrepancy between the passive knowledge and the active use of the concerned words can be noticed. Their appreciation of 'southern' words is rather low. When they have to choose between two competing terms, they almost always prefer the northern Dutch version.