Conflicts in the city, cities in conflict?
Romano-Germanic encounters in the Low Countries.

Thematic session SS19, Berlin
Catharina PEERSMAN, Gijsbert RUTTEN & Rik VOSTERS
(Historical Sociolinguistics Network)

Abstracts

Dear contributor,

For your abstract and presentation, we would like you to pay special attention to the following points. We feel such particular streamlining of our session's contributions is necessary for 2 reasons. Primo, given the huge number of thematic sessions at SS19, it is recommended to stress our "unique" selling points. Secundo, we plan to publish a thematic volume on our topic and agreeing on the basic outlines beforehand might save us all time later on.

1. The historical aspect. We aim at covering a considerable time period from the middle ages to the 21st century by selecting presentations on Romano-Germanic encounters in the Low Countries across different time periods (e.g. Peersman $14^{th} – 15^{th}$ century Flanders, Rutten & Vosters $18^{th}-19^{th}$ century Flanders).
   This does not necessarily imply that you have to do a diachronic study, you can just as well focus on one specific time period and set it against a general historical background (which most researchers automatically do when contextualizing their research).

2. The geographical delimitation. We strictly limit our session to contact/conflict situations between a (or multiple) Romance language(s) and a (or multiple) Germanic language(s) in the Low Countries, that is: present-day Belgium, Luxembourg, the North of France ("French Flanders") and the Netherlands.

3. "City/cities". Although this is the general theme of the *Sociolinguistics Symposium* you do not have to force a city into your research to get accepted. Romano-Germanic encounters do not necessarily appear most strongly in an urban contexts, so if your research does not particularly focus on a city, that is not problematic.

Please enter your abstract according to the guidelines (http://neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/ss19/cfp) into the conference tool **before January 31, 2012**. We would appreciate it hugely if you could send (a draft of) your abstract to us first, for some first-hand feedback.

Good writing, stay tuned and see you in Berlin!

The organizers

Catharina, Rik, Gijsbert

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For centuries, the Low Countries have been at the intersection of Germanic and Romance cultures and languages, where various cities have become metaphorical epicenters of language contact. Whether in peaceful coexistence or at the heart of heated conflicts, these Romano-Germanic encounters have made their mark on the sociolinguistic landscapes of present-day Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, and left a fascinating paper trail for (historical) sociolinguists to investigate.

Past research has often focused on internal aspects of language contact (e.g. lexical borrowing, GEERAERTS & GRONDELAERS 1999). In recent years, however, linguistic encounters in the Low Countries have also sparked up a considerable amount of interest from sociolinguistic angles, often within a larger European framework (DARQUENNES 2010). It is well-known that contact between languages – or better: contact between language users – implies conflict as well, and language is often used to index underlying socio-political oppositions (NELDE 1987). In Belgium, the current governmental crisis goes hand in hand with the highly politicized tension between francophone and Dutch-speaking communities, where contemporary conflicts are often framed in historical terms (DE KEERE & ELCHARDUS 2011).

In the past, cities have especially served as focal points for sociolinguistic events: Courtrai and Bruges as the mythicized places where 'French oppression' was halted by the Flemish in 1302 (LAMBERT 2000), Brussels as the multilingual capital of the new Belgian nation and its policy of Frenchification in the nineteenth century (VANHECKE & DE GROOF 2007), and Luxembourg city as a language planning laboratory of the twentieth century (HORNER 2009). But sites of intense contact and conflict can also be found in other areas, such as the German-speaking territories in Wallonia, which poses considerable amounts of cultural and linguistic autonomy as a result of the language struggle in the rest of Belgium.

In this panel, we would like to bring together an international group of experts on Romano-Germanic encounters in the Low Countries, focusing on language contact and language conflict in urban contexts. We welcome papers on both the historical and the present-day situation, from any subfield of sociolinguistics (language policy, language ideology, discourse analysis, language and identity studies, etc.). The languages under discussion are Dutch, French, German and Luxembourgish.
Possible research topics include:
- language legislation and the protection of minority and majority languages
- French as a prestige language in the history of the Low Countries
- migration and language shift, for instance in French Flanders and in Brussels
- multilingualism in the Low Countries: status, corpus and acquisition planning
- Flemish language identities in urban contexts
- language education and education policy
- competing language ideologies and the position of French in Flanders
- language policy and linguistic identities in Luxembourg city
- the German-speaking community as a 'privileged minority' in Belgium?
- French as the language of trade and diplomacy in late medieval and early modern urban life
The panel will consist of six papers of thirty minutes (including a ten-minute discussion). The first paper will provide a historical overview as a general introduction to the overall topic, and the last speaker will tie different perspectives together by way of conclusion.

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