



“Blood is thicker than water”

Lectal and structural persistence in Dutch vestigial genitives

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Outline

- Introduction
- Alternation factors
- Structural persistence
- Lactal persistence
- Conclusions

Introduction

- Dutch partitive genitive

<i>iets</i>	<i>interessant-s</i>
something	interesting-GEN
'something interesting'	

$[_{NP} Q_i Adj_j-s] \quad \leftrightarrow \quad [modifier_j head-quantity_i]$

- Variation:
 - The *s* can be expressed, or not: *iets interessant(s)*
- Research question:
 - What factors determine the presence or absence of the partitive genitive -s?

Alternation factors: Methodology

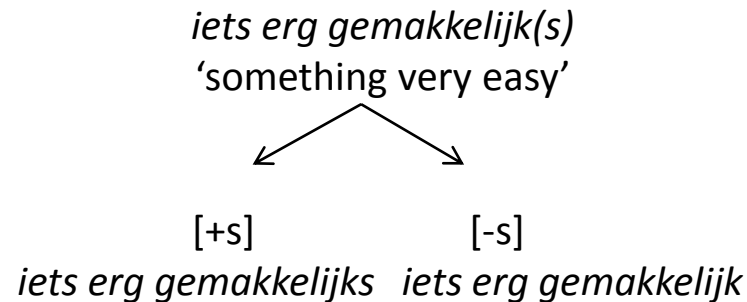
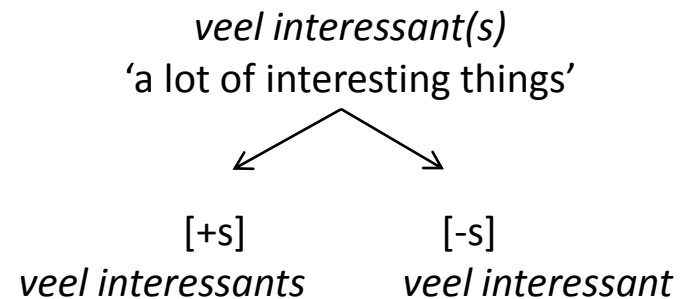
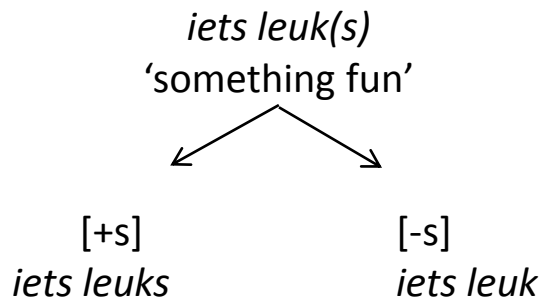
- Corpus: CONDIV (Grondelaers et al. 2000 for details)
- Lectally stratified (regional variety and register)
- 3018 partitive genitives after manual checking
- Binary response variable: [+s] / [-s]
- Effect of both structural and lectal variables
- Mixed models logistic regression
- Stepwise variable selection procedure

Mixed effects logistic regression model

Predictors	Levels of categorical predictors	Estimates	Confidence intervals		P-values	
		success level = [-s]	2,5%	97,5%		
<i>Type-Adjective</i>	intercept	0.07	-0.67	0.82	0.8482	
	<i>other</i>	Reference level				
	<i>deviant</i>	1.96	1.45	2.46	< 0.0001	***
	<i>colour</i>	5.09	3.88	6.30	< 0.0001	***
<i>Variety</i>	<i>Flanders</i>	Reference level				
	<i>Netherlands</i>	-1.69	-2.01	-1.37	< 0.0001	***
<i>Register</i>	<i>chat</i>	Reference level				
	<i>e-mail</i>	-0.48	-0.77	-0.19	0.0013	**
	<i>mass-newspaper</i>	-1.08	-1.42	-0.74	< 0.0001	***
	<i>quality-newspaper</i>	-1.65	-2.22	-1.08	< 0.0001	***
<i>Quantifier</i>	<i>iets</i> ('something')	Reference level				
	<i>niets</i> ('nothing')	-0.05	-0.66	0.56	0.8809	
	<i>veel</i> ('a lot')	-1.14	-1.98	-0.29	0.0083	**
	<i>wat</i> ('something')	-2.00	-2.99	-1.00	< 0.0001	***
	<i>weinig</i> ('little')	-2.50	-4.12	-0.89	0.0023	**
	<i>zoveel</i> ('so much')	-2.35	-4.37	-0.34	0.0221	*
		-0.45	-0.79	-0.10	0.0109	*
<i>Frequency</i> <i>Interaction Variety – Quantifier</i>	<i>Flanders & iets</i>	Reference level				
	<i>Netherlands – niets</i>	-0.33	-1.03	0.38	0.3635	
	<i>Netherlands – veel</i>	0.98	0.02	1.94	0.0443	*
	<i>Netherlands – wat</i>	1.22	0.19	2.25	0.0208	*
	<i>Netherlands – weinig</i>	2.33	0.66	4.00	0.0062	**
	<i>Netherlands – zoveel</i>	2.10	-0.94	5.13	0.1755	

Alternation factors: lexical diffusion

- Random effect: Phrase type



Structural and lexical persistence

- Is this lexicon diffusion truly random?

Mixed effects logistic regression model

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	<i>Netherlands – weinig</i>	2.33	0.66	4.00	0.0062	**
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Structural persistence: deviant adjectives

deviant adjectives:

<i>verkeerd</i>	‘wrong’
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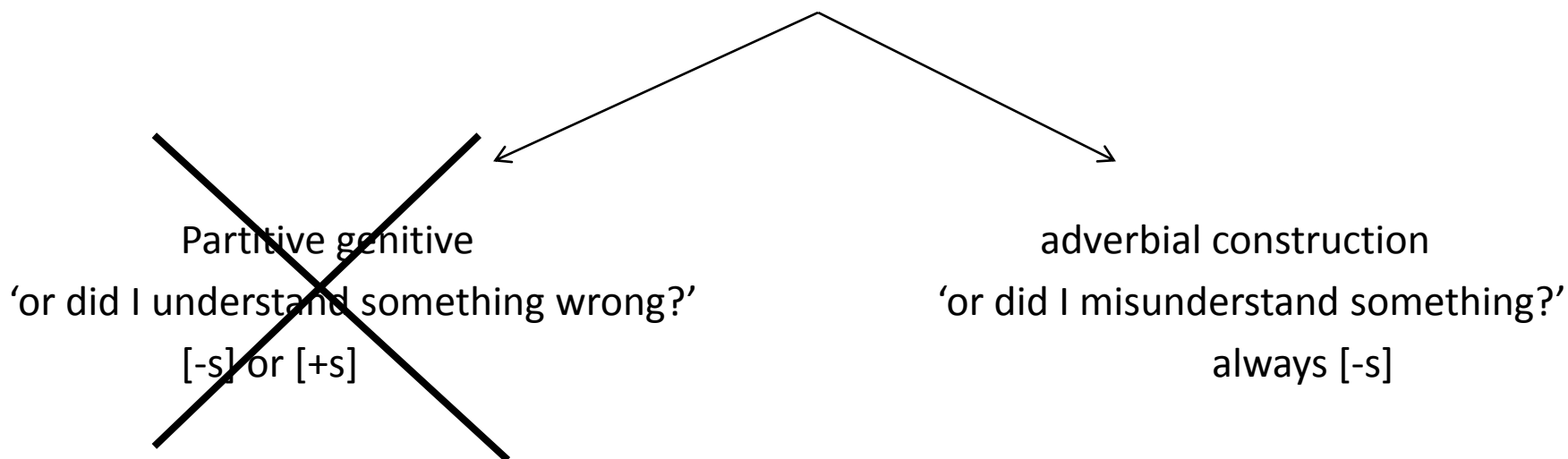
<i>goed</i>	‘good’
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<i>beter</i>	‘better’
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<i>fout</i>	‘incorrect’
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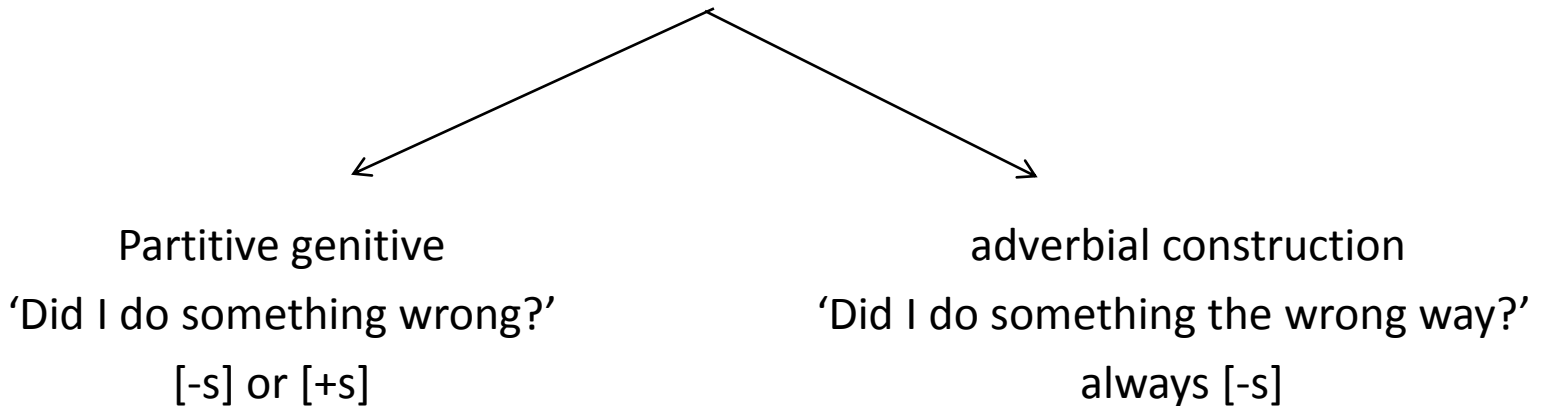
Structural persistence: deviant adjectives

Of heb ik hier iets verkeerd verstaan...
or have I here **something wrong(ly)** understand



Structural persistence: deviant adjectives

Heb ik iets verkeerd gedaan?
have I **something wrong(ly)** done

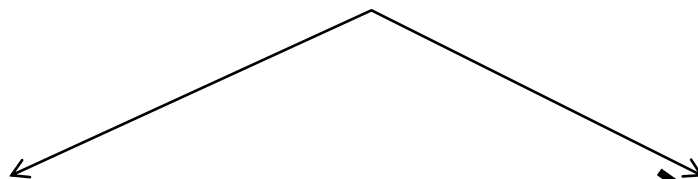


⇒ Preference for [-s]

Structural persistence: deviant adjectives

*Als ik **iets verkeerd** gegeten heb, heb ik buikpijn.*

If I **something wrong** eaten have, have I stomach-ache



Partitive genitive

'If I have eaten something wrong,...'

[-s] or [+s]

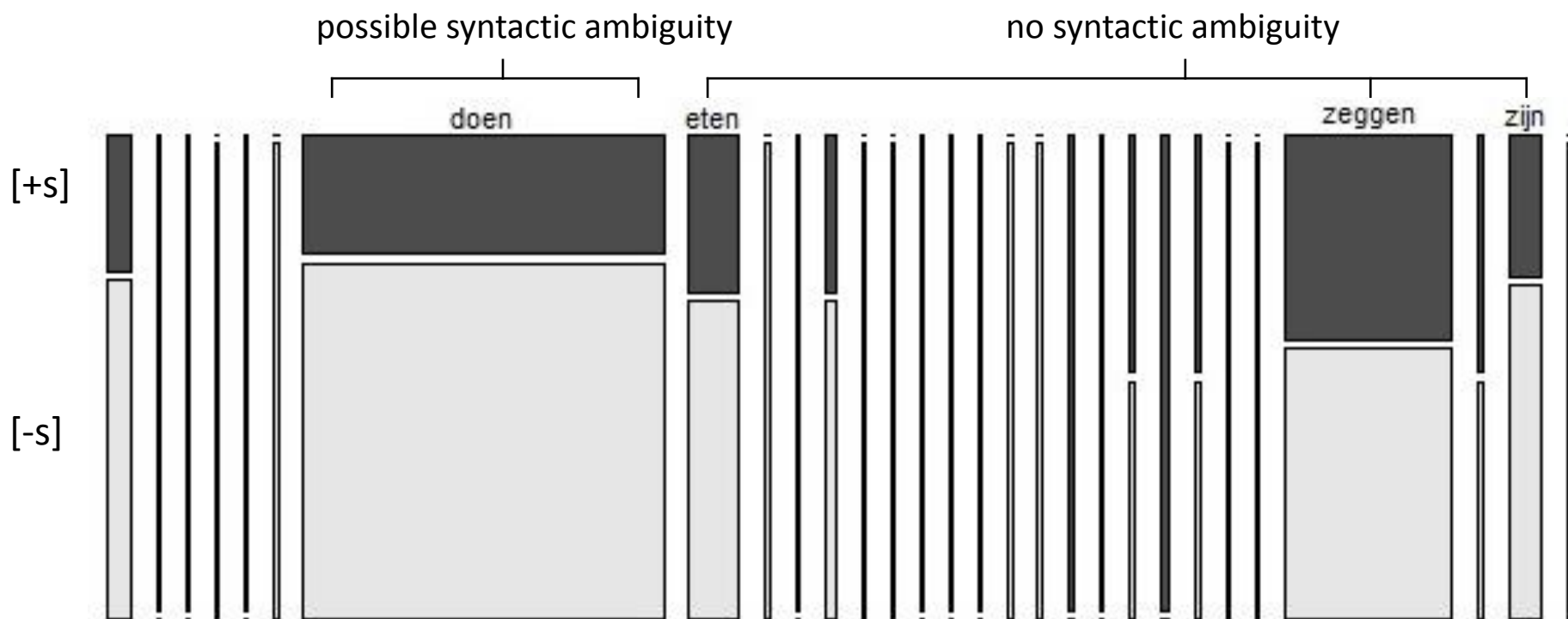
~~adverbial construction~~

~~'If I have eaten something the wrong way,...'~~

~~always [-s]~~

⇒ No reason for [-s] preference?

Structural persistence: deviant adjectives



Mosaic plot: distribution of the variants over the verbs
combined with the adjective *verkeerd* ('wrong')

=> Data still show preference for [-s], even when there's no syntactic ambiguity

Structural persistence

Adverbial construction

*Heb ik **iets verkeerd** verstaan?*

‘Did I misunderstand something?’

Always [-s]

Partitive genitive construction

*als ik **iets verkeerd** gegeten heb,...*

‘If I have eaten something wrong,...’

preference for [-s]



Superficial resemblance

Structural persistence

- **Colour nouns**

Weinig wit ('little white')

Partitive genitive construction

preference for [-s]



Superficial resemblance

- **Modifier-noun constructions**

Veel nieuws ('a lot of news')

Partitive genitive construction

preference for [+s]



Superficial resemblance

Structural persistence

Direct cause:

iets verkeerd (verstaan) often appears without –s



Indirect effect on superficially similar or identical occurrences:

iets verkeerd (eten)

Preference for [-s]

Lectal persistance

Direct cause: Variety

typically Netherlandic

typically Flemish

wat mooi(s)

iets interessant(s)

‘something beautiful’

‘something interesting’

more often appear [+s]

more often appear [-s]



Indirect effect:

wat mooi(s)

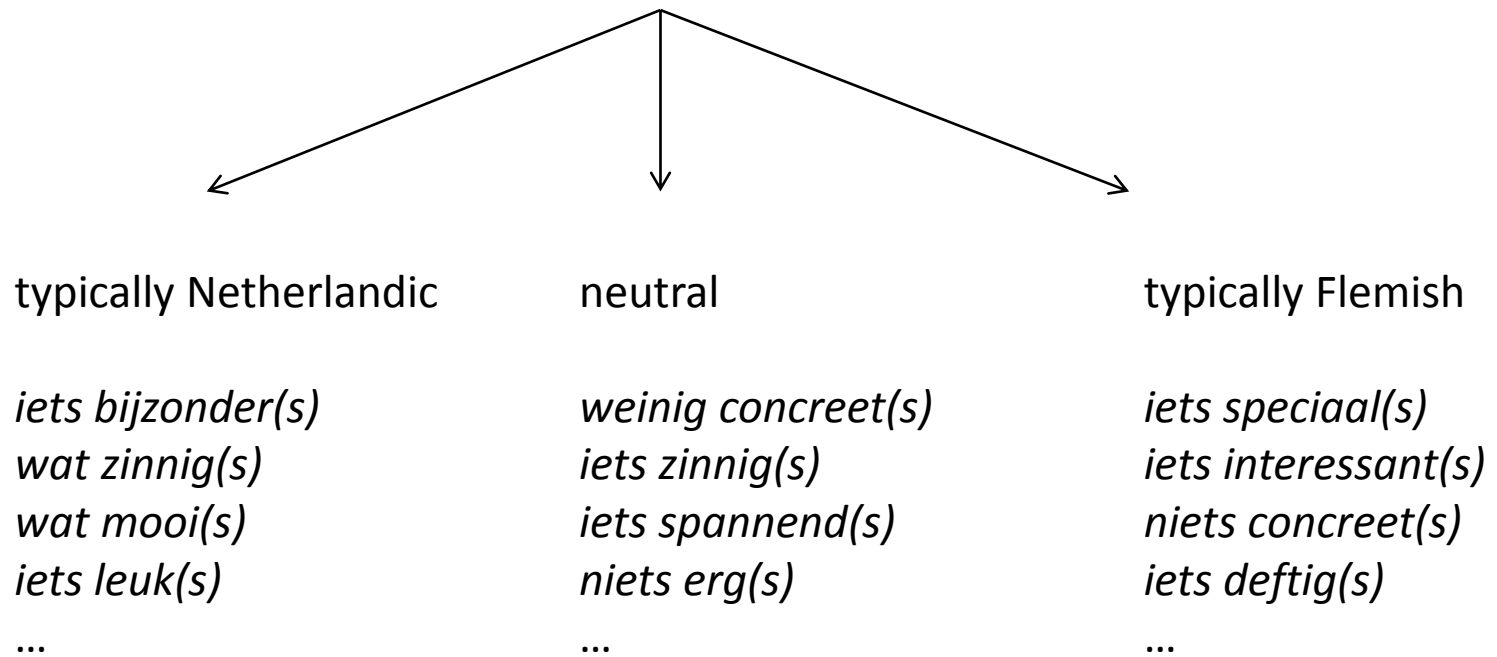
iets interessant(s)

preference for [+s]

preference for [-s]

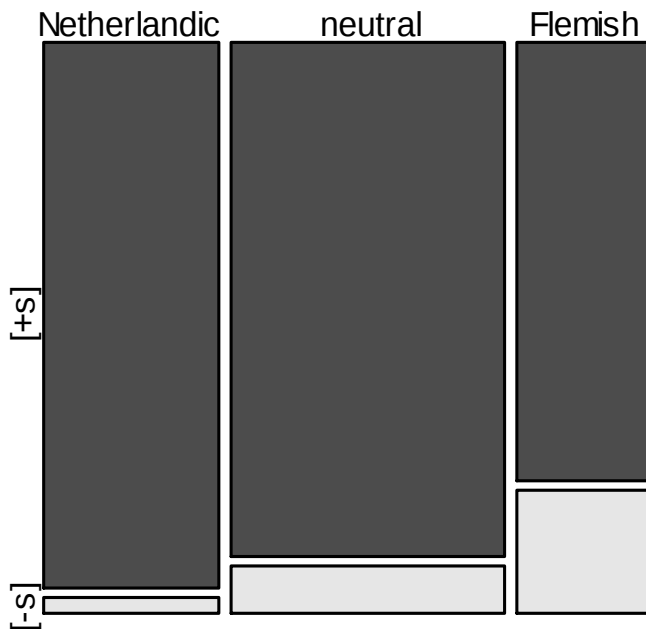
Operationalisation

140 phrase types



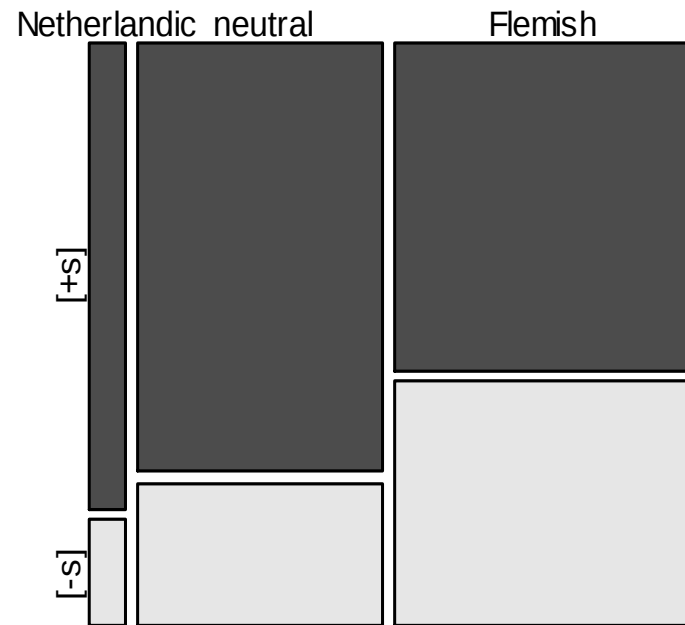
Lectal persistence

The Netherlands



Mosaic plot: distribution of the variants over the typically Netherlandic, neutral and typically Flemish phrases in only the Netherlandic material
(Kendall's $\tau = -0.2146$, p-value < 0.0001)

Flanders



Mosaic plot: distribution of the variants over the typically Netherlandic, neutral and typically Flemish phrases in only the Flemish material
(Kendall's $\tau = -0.1943$, p-value < 0.0001)

Regression model Flanders

Predictors	Levels of categorical predictors	Estimates success level = [-s]	Confidence intervals 2,5% 97,5%		P-values
Type-Adjective	intercept	-0.60	-1.47	0.25	0.1686
	<i>other</i>	Reference level			
	<i>deviant</i>	1.51	1.21	1.83	< 0.0001 ***
Register	<i>colour</i>	4.84	3.68	6.35	< 0.0001 ***
	<i>chat</i>	Reference level			
	<i>e-mail</i>	0.67	-0.81	2.10	0.3681
Quantifier	<i>mass-newspaper</i>	0.77	-0.50	2.02	0.2296
	<i>quality-newspaper</i>	-1.08	-3.61	0.99	0.3490
	<i>iets</i> ('something')	Reference level			
	<i>niets</i> ('nothing')	0.14	-0.26	0.55	0.4890
	<i>veel</i> ('a lot')	-0.98	-1.66	-0.35	0.0031 **
	<i>wat</i> ('something')	-2.00	-3.01	-1.11	< 0.0001 ***
	<i>weinig</i> ('little')	-2.13	-3.77	-0.89	0.0030 **
Frequency	<i>zoveel</i> ('so much')	-2.26	-4.45	-0.61	0.0188 *
		-0.20	-0.59	0.18	0.2943
	<i>neutral phrases</i>	Reference level			
Lectal-Persistence	<i>Flemish phrases</i>	0.62	0.30	0.94	0.0002 ***
	<i>Netherlandic phrases</i>	0.27	-0.42	0.91	0.4272
Interaction Register – Frequency	<i>chat</i>	Reference level			
	<i>e-mail</i>	-0.51	-1.15	0.13	0.1160
	<i>mass-newspaper</i>	-0.88	-1.47	-0.28	0.0037 **
	<i>quality-newspaper</i>	-0.41	-1.43	0.75	0.4552

Regression model Netherlands

Predictors	Levels of categorical predictors	Estimates success level = [-s]	Confidence intervals 2,5% 97,5%		P-values
<i>Type-Adjective</i>	intercept	-2.19	-3.51	-0.95	0.0008 ***
	<i>other</i>	Reference level			
	<i>deviant</i>	2.34	1.89	2.81	< 0.0001 ***
	<i>colour</i>	5.07	3.54	7.13	< 0.0001 ***
<i>Register</i>	<i>chat</i>	Reference level			
	<i>e-mail</i>	0.26	-1.36	1.87	0.7521
	<i>mass-newspaper</i>	0.99	-1.85	3.40	0.4463
	<i>quality-newspaper</i>	-0.34	-3.72	2.68	0.8357
<i>Quantifier</i>	<i>iets</i> ('something')	Reference level			
	<i>niets</i> ('nothing')	-0.43	-1.14	0.25	0.2230
	<i>veel</i> ('a lot')	-0.38	-1.33	0.50	0.4161
	<i>wat</i> ('something')	-0.14	-0.93	0.64	0.7187
	<i>weinig</i> ('little')	-0.33	-1.49	0.74	0.5615
	<i>zoveel</i> ('so much')	-0.63	-3.74	1.55	0.6139
		-0.35	-0.93	0.25	0.2407
<i>Lectal-Persistence</i>	<i>neutral phrases</i>				
	<i>Flemish phrases</i>	0.77	0.14	1.41	0.0172 *
	<i>Netherlandic phrases</i>	-0.85	-1.71	-0.02	0.0483 *
<i>Interaction Register – Frequency</i>	<i>chat</i>	Reference level			
	<i>e-mail</i>	-0.42	-1.17	0.33	0.2663
	<i>mass-newspaper</i>	-1.00	-2.25	0.36	0.1267
	<i>quality-newspaper</i>	-0.36	-1.83	1.18	0.6426

Structural & lectal persistence: summary

⇒ Habitat of the [-s] variant in the lexicon

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| • Other constructions | → | superficial analogies | structural persistence |
| • Flemish lect | → | typically Flemish phrases | lectal persistence |

⇒ Habitat of the [+s] variant in the lexicon

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Other constructions | → | superficial analogies | structural persistence |
| • Netherlandic lects | → | typically Netherlandic phrases | lectal persistence |

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- In line with exemplar theories of language: prior use of constructions leaves a (context-rich) trail in the mind of the language users
- New instances of constructions show allegiance to their perceived parentage: “blood is thicker than water”:
 - ‘Echoing’ effects of adjacent constructions (analogy)
 - ‘Echoing’ effects of lectal parentage
- Constructions are contagious
 - Spreading from one lexical element to the next
 - Spreading from one variety to the next