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CHAPTER 1

The volatile linguistic shape of 'Town Frisian'/'Town Hollandic'

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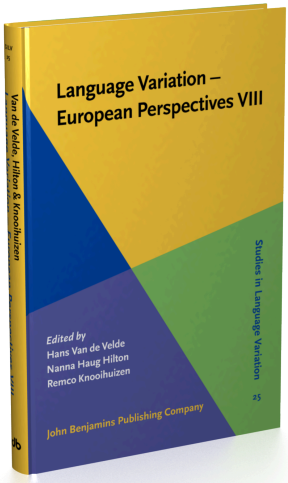

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CHAPTER 1

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Speech communities are communication communities and reflect current or historical ties within societies. Language contact is thus an expression of cultural contact. Often, when these contacts took place in the past, little is known about the sociological context, and a linguistic analysis is one of the few sources that provide us access to historical situations. Historical linguistics aims to decipher the origin and sources of the linguistic 'code': the presence or absence of borrowings in various linguistic domains have been linked to different cultural and political conditions under which the language contact took place.

Two aspects are crucial to a successful interpretation of past events: (1) that the linguistic phenomena are correctly interpreted in terms of their linguistic origin, something that turns out to not always be as evident as it may seem at first glance, and (2) that the available data are a reliable reflection of the linguistic composition of the language at the time of language contact. Given the lack of accurate and detailed historical attestations, many such analyses are based on much younger stages of the languages, assuming a relatively high stability of linguistic markers.

The interpretation of 'Town Frisian', a Dutch variety spoken in a few historical cities in the Dutch province of Fryslân since the 16th century, is a case where both these problematic aspects have insufficiently been addressed, leading to conclusions untenable after closer scrutiny. It is illustrated that the linguistic composition of the varieties was fairly dynamic, and that, on top of it, its perception by linguists and speakers was equally volatile, so that the concepts of Dutch, Frisian and Town Frisian equal 'moving targets' in terms of content and assigned identities. This article focusses on the linguistic aspects of these shifting identities.

Keywords: Frisian, Town Frisian, mixed languages, language contact, historical dialectology

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1. Introduction

The Dutch province of Fryslân is nowadays officially bilingual, with Dutch and Frisian as the two partners (BiZa 2014). Moreover, the Low Saxon dialects, spoken in the south-east of the province enjoy official recognition under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages since 1998.[1] In descriptions of the traditional vernaculars of the province, which has existed in roughly its current boundaries already since the Middle Ages, another group of varieties appears, the so-called Town Frisian dialects (e.g. van der Sijs 2011: 24–25). The geographical distribution of the traditional vernaculars is shown in Figure 1. The situation in the map is an anachronism: it shows the dominant vernaculars of the local inhabitants in the first half of the 20th century and sometime before. Nowadays, L1 speakers of both the Low Saxon and the Town Frisian varieties have become minorities even in their historical core regions (Provincie Fryslân 2014). The map also hides the fact that, also in the 19th and 20th centuries, many places and many individuals were multilingual.

This being said, we will focus on the vernaculars, marked in pink on the map and included under the label 'Town Frisian'. This label is problematic for various reasons. First of all, this is not a form of Frisian, but a Dutch variety, and secondly, it is not only spoken in some of the historical cities of Fryslân, but also in rural areas: the region of Het Bildt, the island of Ameland and in some villages on the island of Terschelling/Skylge. In all these places, Frisian was the dominant vernacular in the Middle Ages and at various moments in the Early Modern Period (ca. 1500–1800), Town Frisian became the first language of the inhabitants. Despite the factual differences among them and the contrasts perceived by their speakers, all these varieties show close linguistic similarities (Van de Velde et al. 2019: 3, 4; van Bree 2001). In the publication by Van de Velde et al., these varieties have been labelled 'Frisian-Dutch contact varieties', which is in fact a much better label. Still, for reasons of brevity and tradition, we will stick to the term 'Town Frisian' (TF) and ask the reader to acknowledge its ambiguity.

The topic of this contribution concerns the relation between changing linguistic characteristics of Town Frisian and Frisian over the centuries and the way it affects our perception of the amount of input of Frisian in the total shape of Town Frisian. This paper will concentrate on the linguistic aspects and less so on the purely sociological aspects of these varieties; see Jonkman (1993) for the TF dialect of Leeuwarden and Jansen (2010) for Ameland. The label 'Frisian' is used to denote

1. https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148/declarations?p_auth=adpW1NPl (consulted 25-07-2020).

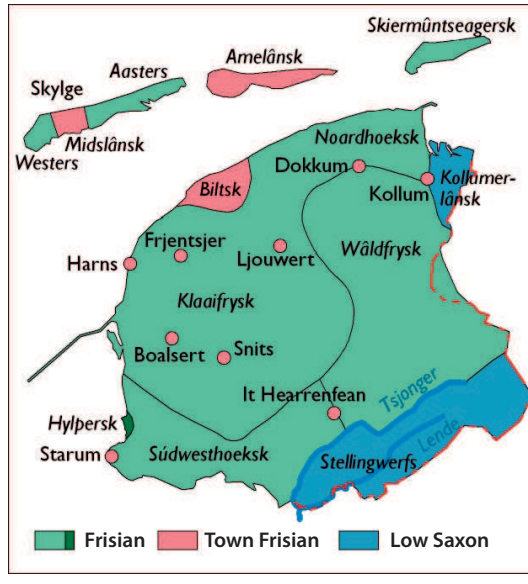

Figure 1. Map showing the traditional vernaculars in the province Fryslân (Frisian labels)

the West Frisian variety, which is only one of the contemporary Frisian varieties.[2] It is worth noting that a similar instance of language shift from Frisian to Dutch has taken place in North Holland, the northernmost part of which is still called Westfriesland. A Frisian linguistic substratum in the traditional dialects of North Holland has been pointed out and studied on several occasions, more recently in van Bree (2012) en de Vaan (2017). This is even more relevant for the history of Town Frisian, because – as will be outlined below – it was in particular the Dutch variety of Holland that contributed to the non-Frisian components of Town Frisian. See Section 5 for a more detailed discussion of the consequences for the history of Town Frisian.

2. Other varieties of Frisian are spoken in Germany: in the Saterland municipality in Niedersachsen and in the *Kreis* ('county') of Nordfriesland in Schleswig-Holstein. These varieties differ that much from one another (Swarte, Hilton & Gooskens 2013) that it seems more appropriate to talk about Frisian as a language sub-family within the West Germanic branch. West Frisian is the variety with the largest number of speakers today, c. 500,000, whereas the total number of speakers of all the other varieties will not exceed 5,000, mostly older people.

2. The linguistic character of Town Frisian

It appears from anecdotal experiences that Town Frisian is perceived as 'Frisian' in the ears of people from outside the province; at the same time, such external Dutch-speaking observers will notice on closer inspection that they are able to understand quite a lot of it, in contrast to 'real' Frisian, which is not directly intelligible for total outsiders.[3] The reason for this difference is that from a contemporaneous perspective the phonetics, the syntax and various morphological inflectional and derivational affixes of Town Frisian show strong similarities with Frisian, whereas other domains, in particular the primary vocabulary and their phonology, converge with Dutch (van Bree 2001; van Bree & Versloot 2008). This has led to the perception of Town Frisian as some kind of mixed language. This is e.g. expressed by Heeringa (2005: 117), who states that "[…] the [TF] varieties are not clearly Frisian or Dutch. […] These findings [based on Levenshtein distances] confirm our conclusion that Town Frisian should be considered as a mixed variety". Given the strong similarities in phonetics between Frisian and Town Frisian, such a conclusion does not come as a surprise when using Levenshtein distances as the measure.

What exactly a 'mixed language' is, varies strongly according to the theoretical frame and point of view of the observer. For non-specialists, everything that shows similarities to more than one language they are familiar with, is a 'mixture' or 'mixed language'. From that perspective, it is surely correct to call Town Frisian a mixed language (Fokkema 1960: 137). But this is not the type of definition linguists usually work with. There are various definitions from multiple scholars. A fairly general one states that mixed languages are "[…] varieties that emerged in situations of community bilingualism, and whose structures show an etymological split that is not marginal, but dominant, so that is it difficult to define the variety's linguistic parentage as involving just one ancestor language." (Bakker & Matras 2003: 1). This etymological split is often a so-called 'grammar-lexicon split' or "a split between the INFL-language and the lexifier language of most of the potentially unbound core lexicon." (Matras 2003: 170). We will come back to this theoretical issue below.

Before delving deeper into the problematic issues of Town Frisian from a theoretical point of view, it is important to briefly sketch the common ground for every theory about its emergence. In Fryslân, including the cities and the islands,

3. There is little controlled experimental evidence for these claims. In particular Charolotte Gooskens has conducted much research in the field of mutual intelligibility of Germanic languages. However, the various studies use different methods, e.g. regarding the type of intelligibility test and the way differences between languages have been measured, in particular the consideration of non-cognates in the computation of overall Levenshtein distances between varieties. Some impressions may be gained from Gooskens & Heeringa (2004: 80) and Gooskens (2007: 453).

Frisian was spoken during the Middle Ages. Around 1500, a language shift took place in some of the cities: Frisian was given up as a first language and replaced by something we now call Town Frisian. Fokkema (1937), in his dissertation on Town Frisian, and van Bree (2001: 130) date the rise of Town Frisian to the early 16th century, like many others do. Sluis et al. (2016: 73), who focus on the variety of Het Bildt, are not explicit about the time of the mixture process there, but they seem to consider the 17th and 18th centuries in particular. Het Bildt region was reclaimed from the sea in 1504 and colonized with settlers both from Holland and Friesland. The 16th century is also estimated for Midsland on Terschelling and the western part of Ameland (van Bree 2001: 135, Jonkman & Versloot 2016: 71–77), whereas the eastern part of Ameland switched from Frisian to TF only in the late 18th century (Schouten et al. 1785).

All views on the emergence of TF agree on the facts that:

- TF is to be classified as a dialect of Dutch, not of Frisian;
- TF shows traces of its Frisian substratum (or adstratum);
- TF shows traces of contact with particularly Hollandic Dutch dialects – after all, Holland has been the dominant province of the Low Countries since the fall of Antwerp in 1585 and had been Friesland's most powerful neighbour already before that time;
- Some traces of TF are more similar to present-day Standard Dutch than to Hollandic dialects.

Opinions strongly diverge on the question about the proportion of the Dutch, Hollandic and Frisian components and the issue, particularly raised by this author and further exemplified in this paper, of the stability of the three components between the time of the establishment of TF in the Early Modern period and its first extensive descriptions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Taking their interpretation of the various proportions and linguistic sources of origin of the features of TF as a starting point, linguists have tried to reconstruct the actual nature and sociological context of the language shift, such as a reconstruction of the number and origin of non-Frisian speakers in the cities, and the relative success of the language shift in terms of potential substratum features and possibly traces of hybridization ('mixed language'). In the early 20th century, the Dutch dialectologist Kloeke (1927: 81) defined Town Frisian as 'Dutch in Frisian mouths'. Kloeke was in a way a sociolinguist *avant la lettre*. His interpretation primarily reflects the Dutch basis of the vocabulary in combination with a Frisian sounding pronunciation. The identification of various linguistic domains with different forms and intensities of language contact was developed in the 20th century and, among others, further developed by Van Coetsem (1988), who distinguished between *recipient language agentivity*, e.g. in the case of lexical borrowing, and *source language*

agentivity, observable in the retention of L1 features of the speaker when acquiring a new L2 (*imposition*). The latter process includes in particular pronunciation and syntax (see also: van Bree & Versloot 2008: 21–31, 234–235). A similar hierarchy of stable and unstable domains can be found in Thomason & Kaufman (1991). The widespread similarities between TF and Frisian in the domains of phonetics, syntax and morphological affixes on the one hand, and the overlap in lexicon between TF and Dutch led to a more detailed interpretation of Kloeke's observation in a way that the 'Frisian' elements in TF represent the relics from a language acquisition process of Frisian speakers learning Dutch.

> Dies impliziert dann auch, daß das Stadtfriesische bei seiner Entstehung als Niederländisch intendiert war und sich aus dem Niederländischen mit einem friesischen Substrat entwickelt hat. Das Stadtfriesische ist somit das Ergebnis eines an einer bestimmten Stelle abgebrochenen Zweitsprachenerwerbsprozesses, nach welchem eine Konventionalisierung stattgefunden hat, wodurch das Stadtfriesische den Status einer selbständigen Sprachvarietät erhalten hat.
>
> (van Bree 2001: 133; emphasis by the current author)[4]

This idea of a new language variety, a hybrid in a way, grown from mostly Dutch lexical components and many Frisian grammatical elements, was strongly advocated by Fokkema (1937, 1960). Sluis et al. (2016) took this idea to identify Town Frisian, in this case the specific variety of Het Bildt, as a 'mixed language' on the basis of South Hollandic and Frisian in the light of the definition that defines a mixed language as a variety "[…] showing a split between the source language of the 'grammar' and that of the 'lexicon', with variation within the class of 'function words'" (Matras 2003: 152). Sluis et al. (2016: 75) also invoke the aspect of a deliberate identity-building aspect, using work from Thomason, in line with van Bree's interpretation of Town Frisian as a distinct, and thus potentially identity-building, linguistic variety. However, diametrically opposite to van Bree, Sluis et al. (2016: 77) claim: "Widespread Frisian-South Hollandic bilingualism, as well as immigration of speakers of Frisian, put the South Hollandic dialect spoken by the initial settlers of Het Bildt under pressure, and caused a near-complete grammatical convergence with Frisian." In their view, the lexicon reflects the substratum component and the grammar comes from 'outside', the adstratum. This is quite a novel approach and seems to go against what we know about stable and unstable domains in language

4. English translation: "This then also implies that Town Frisian was intended as Dutch when it was created and has developed from Dutch with a Frisian substrate. Town Frisian is thus the result of a second language acquisition process that was interrupted at a certain point, after which a conventionalization has taken place, assigning Town Frisian the status of an independent language variety."

contact.[5] A more extreme form of the idea of Town Frisian as a mixed language was presented by Gosses (1933) and more recently reiterated by de Haan (1992: 10–12). It states that Town Frisian was intended as Frisian, but partly relexified in order to enable communication with 'foreigners'. The large overlap of Frisian and Dutch vocabulary, which is also mostly pronounced in a 'Frisian' way (using Frisian phonotactics) can be counted as 'Frisian' under this hypothesis. In a way, it comes close to evaluation of the various linguistic domains by Sluis et al. However it may be, under both interpretations, Town Frisian (including the Bildt dialect) is considered a new language variety arisen from the confrontation of Frisian and Dutch with a grammar-lexicon split.[6]

It is definitely true that in the current bipolar field of Standard Dutch and (Standard) Frisian, the TF varieties are by many of their speakers felt to be different and an expression of a local or regional identity, which is e.g. shown by the existence and the aims of the cultural society *Stichting Bildts Aigene* in Het Bildt.[7] Such a local identity is less strong in the cities, but also there, TF can be used in specific groups or circumstances to lend a given *couleur local* to language use (Jonkman 1993). The question is, however, whether this reflects the circumstances at the time of emergence of these varieties or that it is the consequence of much later developments.

A different view on the origin and character of TF – even acknowledging the same general facts as listed above – is advocated by Hof (1956); Jonkman (1993); de Haan et al. (2013); Versloot (2017), stressing the Hollandic component in TF and claiming that TF was not a new, hybrid variety in the 16th century but perceived as the regional expression of Dutch, within its bandwidth and thus not the outcome of an interrupted language acquisition process. The shape of TF in the 19th and 20th centuries is the result of centuries of change, not only in TF, e.g. as a consequence

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5. An interesting instance of a gradual impact from outside can be found in Warchoł (2003), who describes the way a Polish urban variety of basically monolingual Polish speakers was influenced by Ukrainian through bilingual L1 Ukrainian/L2 Polish speakers from the surrounding villages. The impact can be found in various domains, such as phonetics, prosody, phonology, morphology and lexis. Despite the intense impact, the language remained fundamentally Polish and did not become grammatically Ukrainian, nor did it grow into a new 'mixed language'.

6. De Haan (1992), a generativist, advocates the primacy of grammar over lexicon. That is probably why he considers TF as a Frisian variety. He also explicitly states that massive relexification goes along with a shift in cultural or ethnic identity (p. 19). The primacy of grammar, in particular syntax, over lexicon in the identification of language can also be found in Emonds & Faarlund (2014), who claim that English is a North Germanic language, despite its differences in lexicon, because of structural syntactic similarities that they ascribe to the period of language contact in the Danelaw in the 9th-11th centuries. Neither De Haan's nor Emonds & Faarlund's ideas about TF and English are widely accepted.

7. https://bildtsaigene.nl/ (25 July 2020).

of Frisian adstratum over time (compare fn. 5: Warchoł 2003), but also changes in Frisian, Hollandic and Dutch, obscuring the view on the 16th-century linguistic constellation. Bakker & Matras (2003: 12) mention a view on 'mixed languages' where they can be the product of a gradual development. However, the dominant opinion about 'mixed languages' is that the genetically split character was part of the genesis of the variety. The rest of the article is concerned with the proper diachronic interpretation of the Dutch, Hollandic and Frisian components of TF, in particular at the moment of TF's initial establishment in the 16th century, rather than with the question whether present-day TF could be perceived as a 'mixed language' from a purely synchronic, contemporaneous point of view, potentially as the result of gradual mixing.

Two aspects are crucial to a successful interpretation of past events:

1. that the linguistic phenomena are correctly interpreted in terms of their linguistic origin, something that turns out to not be as evident as it may seem at first glance; and
2. that the available data are a reliable reflection of the linguistic composition of the language at the time of initial language contact.

The complication in the case of Dutch, Frisian and Town Frisian is that the three language varieties are genetically closely related and have been part of the same political and cultural configuration for centuries. So even without any scenario of language shift or widespread bilingualism, they are expected to share many features. This makes it a difficult task to unambiguously identify TF features as substratum, superstratum or adstratum features in a language contact scenario. In most studies on 'mixed languages', the contributing partners are quite different, sometimes even from entirely different language families as in Media Lengua, based on Spanish and Quechua (see more examples in Bakker & Matras 2003).

The second aspect is explicitly addressed by van Bree (2001: 131), who notices that we have a reasonable knowledge about Dutch and Frisian in the 16th and 17th centuries, but that we know very little about the language of the cities, Het Bildt and Ameland in those days. It may be added that also our knowledge of spoken Hollandic varieties in the 16th century is limited. Still, van Bree assumes that Town Frisian as we know it from the earliest written records in the late 18th (Jeltema 1768) and in particular late 19th century (Winkler 1874: 461–496) was very similar to the language of the 16th century. Such an assumption is in line with a widely held interpretation that the late-19th century dialects from the earliest dialect recordings represent an archaic and hitherto fairly stable language form with roots in the late Middle Ages or Early Modern period; see Versloot (2020) for a critical discussion of this concept.

Versloot (2017: 128–130) enumerates the possible relations between Frisian and TF-varieties, which can be held responsible for unique similarities between

them in their recent appearances. Some similarities obscure our view on the times when TF emerged in the 16th century:

1. Shared archaisms, which are no longer found in Standard Dutch;
2. Changes in TF between the 16th and the 20th centuries. Some of these changes may be the consequence of convergence with Frisian, others with Standard Dutch, but it would be wrong to back-project them to the time of the 16th century to make inferences about the socio-linguistic context in which TF emerged;
3. A variant on aspect two are shared Frisian-TF *innovations* not found in Standard Dutch, taking place between the 16th and the 20th centuries; some may originate in Frisian, others in Town Frisian, and for others we may not be able to pinpoint such an exclusive origin;
4. Similarities between Frisian and TF due to the convergence of Frisian with forms of Dutch which are no longer found in Standard Dutch;

The rest of this paper will be devoted to the demonstration of aspects two and four. The second aspect has been little studied, as Jeltema (1768) is generally considered to be the first text in Leeuwarden Town Frisian, which means that nothing is positively known about the linguistic features of Town Frisian from the 16th until the late 18th century. The fourth aspect which has not been treated in so much detail either concerns the fact that also earlier forms of Frisian show rather fundamental influences from Hollandic Dutch, which accounts for many of the later Frisian–Town Frisian similarities and which can mistakenly be interpreted as Frisian substratum features in Town Frisian. A special category are linguistic phenomena that differ from Standard Dutch and could be of Hollandic origin as well as Frisian and, moreover, may be due to an earlier Frisian substratum in Holland.[8]

A final note on the use of the term Town Frisian (apart from the earlier geographical caveat). Despite the shifting terminology applied in history, one should realize that the predecessor of present-day Town Frisian was not perceived as a distinct variety, but rather as a regionally coloured version of the common 'Low German' language of the Netherlands until c. 1750–1800 (see e.g. Wassenbergh 1802). Using the term TF for the language of the Frisian cities or Het Bildt before 1800 is therefore a terminological anachronism. Still, we will do so, to stress the continuity of those varieties (the 19th-century forms were not the result of abrupt innovations) and to have a unique label, to distinguish them from other forms of Dutch.

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8. See for more details of historical linguistic facts in earlier publications: van Bree & Versloot (2008: 219–231); de Haan, Bloemhoff & Versloot (2013: 724–733); Versloot (2017), which is a reply to Sluis et al. (2016).

3. Changes in Frisian that made Town Frisian similar to Frisian

3.1 15th-century changes in Frisian

In the century preceding the language shift in the cities (or at least in the capital, Leeuwarden), one can observe a massive restructuring of Frisian in the direction of Dutch, as illustrated by the maps in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 (left) shows that the inherited word *sella* 'to sell' (note the similarity with English) was replaced by a calque from Middle Dutch (MDu.) *vercopen* > *forkaepia*.[9]

The background colour of the map shows the trend surface, which is a way to depict the gradualness of the sociolinguistic reality and is in a way also an expression of the uncertainty of the precise localizations. The six major cities of Friesland are explicitly marked in the map. They are supposed to be the origin of expansion of the innovative forms. In particular the four westernmost cities, closest to Holland, are the locus of the spread of the innovative form (always in the light colour).

The verb *(for)kaepia* was a regular weak verb in Old Frisian, but it was irregularized in Early Modern Frisian with a past tense and past participle *koft* (Versloot 2020: 420–421). The form *koft* is typically Hollandic (not Flemish or Brabantic) and demonstrates the specific origin of this borrowing (Figure 2, right). The core region of *koft* is found in the north-west, with its high density of cities. These facts support the hypothesis that changes in the language were introduced through trading contacts (note the words 'buy' and 'sell') with speakers of a Hollandic Dutch vernacular. The form *koft*, which is now archaic both in TF and Frisian, where it has been replaced by *kocht* on the basis of Standard Dutch *(ge)kocht*, looks like a TF-Frisian parallel from a modern perspective, but actually attests to the heavy influence of particularly the Hollandic form of Dutch already in the 15th century.[10]

More 15th-century Dutchisms are demonstrated in Figure 3. Figure 3 (left) illustrates the replacement of Old Frisian */i:k/ 'I' by a Hollandic form with short *i* : /ɪk/. Forms of the pronoun 'I' in various minor Frisian dialects, such as the archaic dialect of Hindeloopen or East Frisian varieties (e.g. Wangeroog Frisian *iik*), indicate that the pronoun had a long /i:/ in Old Frisian: */i:k/, opposite to Dutch /ɪk/. Spellings with <y,ij>, indicating a long vowel /i:/, can be found in the 15th century in peripheral parts of Friesland, most distant from the main cities, indicating that

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9. The maps presented in this section are based on an analysis of the West Frisian charters (Sipma & Vries 1927–1977). The charters have been localized (on municipality level), using mentioned place names and, for some of them, information from the biography of the scribes. See for a full account Versloot (2008: 28–40).

10. This 'foreign' origin of *koft* is also acknowledged by Fokkema (1937: 174) and van Bree (2001: 135), who are proponents of the hybridization theory (van Bree has a more nuanced opinion in van Bree & Versloot 2008).

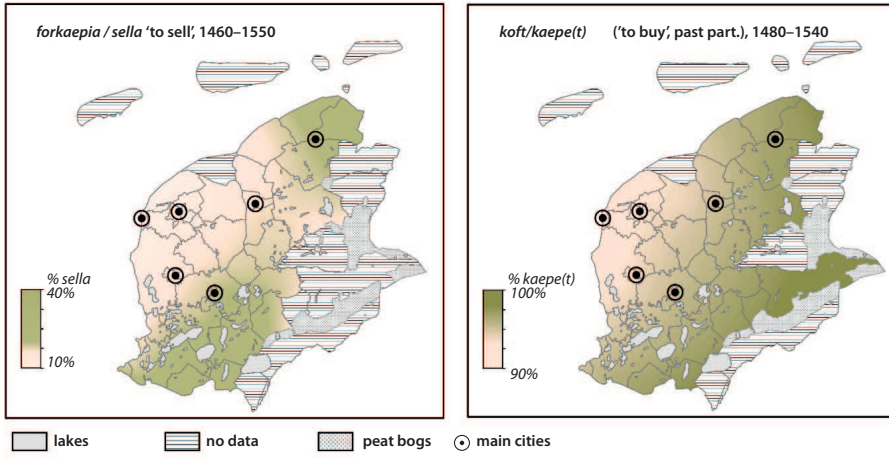

Figure 2. Lexical and morphological changes in 15th-century Frisian (1)

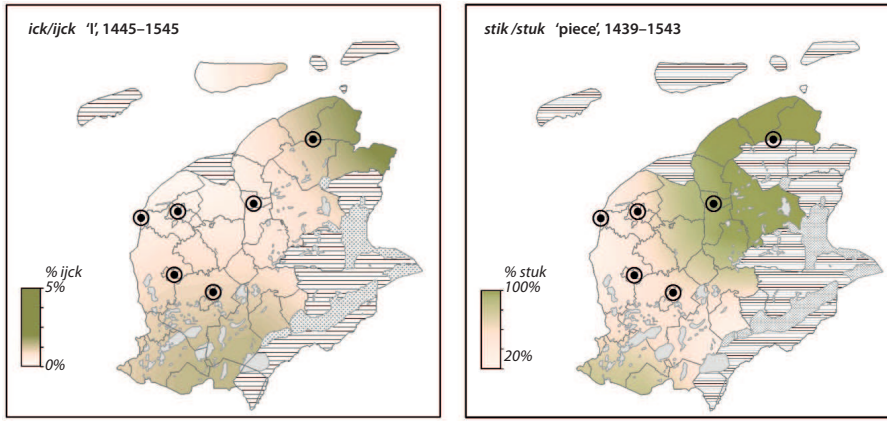

Figure 3. Lexical and morphological changes in 15th century Frisian (2)

Frisian *iik* was replaced by Dutch *ik*. The low percentages of <y,ij> spellings even in the periphery indicate that this change may have started early in the 15th century. Another lexical-phonological change that had its origins in the west of the province is the replacement of Old Frisian *stuk* *[stʊkː] 'piece' by Hollandic *stik* [stɪk]; Standard Dutch has *stuk* [støk] (Figure 3, right). The form *stik* is an exclusively Hollandism-Flemish form[11] and its appearance in Friesland underlines the strong connection to Holland, independent of (early emerging) standardization tendencies in Dutch, favouring the Brabantic form *stuk*.

11. https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/kaartenbank/proxy/image/20099 (27-07-2020)

This makes the similarities between in Frisian and TF in the following constructed sentence:

– F/TF: *ik ferkoft in stik fleis*
– St.Dutch: *ik verkocht een stuk vlees*
'I sold a piece of meat'

the mere result of Dutchification/Hollandification of Frisian, mostly in the 15th century, rather than any impact of Frisian on Town Frisian as it could be perceived from the perspective of the 20th century.[12] The Modern Frisian form without language contact would be: **yk selde in stok flêsk*.

One can easily add more examples of early borrowings from Dutch, even from function words, all dated to the 15th century:

– OFri. *and(e)* 'and' is replaced by MDu. *ende*
– OFri. *thet* 'that' is replaced by MDu. *dat*

The Dutch influence not only affected the lexicon, including function words, but also the morphology. The entire plural formation of Frisian has been restructured on the basis of MDu. in the late Middle Ages. The dominant OFri. masculine ending *-ar* was replaced by *-an*, probably under the influence of MDu. *-en*, already in the 13th century (Versloot 2014). The OFri. feminine ending *-a* was replaced by *-en* in the late 15th century (Versloot 2008: 159) and a new suffix *-s* was introduced from Dutch in the same 15th century to mark plurals of words ending in a *-ə+n,m,l,r*, e.g. *riuchters* 'judges' in a charter from 1448 as one of the earliest examples. The result is that the dominant plural endings are *-en* and *-s* in Dutch, TF and Frisian in basically the same lexical items, despite small differences.[13]

As a final example, one can mention the formation of diminutives in Frisian. Historically, the Frisian diminutive *-k* suffix was morphologically transparent: it created weak-inflected nouns and did not affect the gender of the derivation (Hofmann 1961). Through contact with Dutch, Frisian adopted the suffix *-ke(n)* and its palatalized variant *-tje(n)* always with neuter gender of the derived noun and a plural in *-s* (de Vaan 2017: 122–126).[14]

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12. See for *fleis* Versloot (2020: 419–420).

13. Modern Dutch: Audring, Jenny. (2020); Modern Frisian: Dyk, Siebren. (2020). The *-s*-plurals in the nouns on *-ə+n,m,l,r* only slowly spread to their current distribution in Frisian. Around 1600, the *-(e)n* appeared still in ca. 40% of such words and the absolute dominance of *-s* was not reached before ca. 1800. There are no such figures available for Town Frisian.

14. Because Frisian also possessed a suffix in *-k-* and had instances of palatalization of *-k-* > *-ts-*, one cannot easily say that the Frisian system was entirely replaced by the Dutch one. But it was certainly largely reshaped by the influence from Dutch, with the consistent neuter gender of diminutive forms and the *-s*-plurals as most outstanding features.

By the end of the 15th century, Frisian had developed many structural similarities with Hollandic Dutch, which made it virtually irrelevant (in those instances) whether speakers applied *recipient language agentivity* or *source language agentivity* when they switched to Hollandic Dutch in the 16th century. From a historical linguistic perspective, such features were Hollandic.

3.2 Convergence of Frisian with Dutch and/or Town Frisian in the 16th to 19th centuries

The impact of Dutch on Frisian did not stop after the establishment of a 16th-century form of Hollandic Dutch as a first language in the Frisian cities. On the contrary: together with other factors such as the Reformation, which used Dutch as its language from the very onset, this created even more opportunities for speakers of Frisian to experience Dutch influence. Although the impact of Dutch on Frisian, in particular in more recent times, is widely acknowledged (e.g. Sjölin 1976; Breuker 1993) the effect in earlier centuries is easily underestimated, and in particular the role of the Frisian cities (including Town Frisian) in this process. This was expressed by the founding father of Frisian dialectology, Jan Jelles Hof: "There is no question of directly radiating influence. In villages in the immediate vicinity of the cities […] the local dialect is no more urban in colour than in those far away from one of these sources of contamination." (Hof 1933: 7).[15] In a similar vein is an article by Fokkema (1970a). As much as Hof's observation may be true for the early 20th century, the examples in Table 1 show that many of the changes in Frisian in the Early Modern period are not simply a rapprochement of Frisian to Standard Dutch (SD), but betray typically Town Frisian subtleties, such as *binne* vs. SD. *zijn* 'are' or *gjin* < *gien* vs. SD *geen* 'none'.

Moreover, most of these 'typically TF' features are also found in Hollandic dialects, in particular the ones from the northern part of Holland. We can explicitly dismiss the idea that these TF/Modern West Frisian forms represent genuine Frisian forms, potentially indirectly as Frisian substratum items in Holland, because of the actually attested forms in Frisian in the early 17th century.[16] The table

15. Original text: "Van direct uitstralenden invloed is geen sprake. In dorpen in de onmiddellijke omgeving der steden is […] het plaatselijk dialect volstrekt niet stedelijker gekleurd, dan in die, op verderen afstand van een dezer besmettingshaarden gelegen."

16. We may compare the TF-forms to the few snippets of local Frisian attested from North Holland in the 17th century (Versloot 2018). Some forms are attested there. Compare the West Frisian forms from the early 17th century (first column in Table 1) to the Frisian form from North Holland, if attested: *sint – sinnen*; *(ik) gæ* - > attested is a comparable form *ik stee* 'I stand', 17th c. West Frisian *stea,stæ*, Modern West Frisian *ik stean*; *ho – ho/hoe; het – wot,wet; jæ – sie; flæsk – fleysch*. The last two instances represent etymologically unambiguous Dutch influence on Frisian.

Table 1. Frisian-Town Frisian convergence in the Early Modern period

Frisian ± 1640	Frisian now	TF 20th c.	Standard Dutch	Change	
sint	binne	binne	zijn	16th–17th	'(we) are'
(ik) gæ	(ik) gean	gaan	(ik) ga_	16th–17th	'(I) go'
suwd, thuwz	súd, thús	súd, thús	zuid, thuis	17th	'south, home'
da, ho	doe, hoe	doe, hoe	toen, hoe	18th	'than, how'
habbe	hewwe	hewwe	hebben	18th	'to have'
het	wat	wat	wat	18th	'what'
nin	gjin	gien	geen	18th–19th	'no(ne)'
jæ	sij	sij	zij	18th–19th	'they'
flæsk	fleis	fleis, flees	vlees	19th	'flesh, meat'
komd	kommen	kommen	gekomen	19th	'come (ppt)'

contains various function words, grammatical forms or otherwise lexemes of high frequency and almost all of them represent instances where Standard Dutch differs from present-day TF and Frisian. The regular use of these items in a running conversation may easily evoke the impression that TF heavily leans on Frisian in terms of substratum items. A detailed historical analysis shows two things:

1. that many similarities between Town Frisian and Frisian when differing from Standard Dutch cannot be ascribed to substratum or adstratum influence of Frisian on Town Frisian;
2. that at the time of the language shift in the main cities in the 16th century, the new speakers of TF could not rely on items as in Table 1 from their earlier Frisian L1 – assuming that TF has been stable in these items since the 16th century, which we do not know for sure.

The latter point is one of the biggest issues in our reasoning about the emergence of Town Frisian in the 16th century: how dynamic was this variety and what are the consequences of this dynamics for our estimation of the Frisian contribution to Town Frisian?

4. Changes in Town Frisian after the establishment of Dutch L1 varieties in Friesland

Town Frisian has been known since the late 18th century in the first text presented as written in 'the language of Leeuwarden' (Jeltema 1768). Since then, we have learned more about various forms of Town Frisian, not only from Leeuwarden, but also from other cities, Het Bildt, and Ameland, through the work by Wassenbergh

(1802); Winkler (1874) and the surveys from 1879 and 1895 issued by the *Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 'Geographical Society'. What we observe over that period is first and foremost a rapprochement to Standard Dutch (e.g. Winkler 1874: 464–465, Fokkema 1970b). Versloot (2017: 133) stresses the abandonment of typically Hollandic forms. After all, since the rise of Standard Dutch in the 18th century, dialectal Hollandic forms are not expected to have had much impact on Town Frisian anymore. Such changes comprise e.g. the words for 'two' or 'meat', which were *twie* and *fleis* in earlier forms of Town Frisian, and have been replaced by *twee, flees* (Standard Dutch *twee, vlees*) in the capital Leeuwarden in the first place, whereas the Bildt and Ameland varieties are more conservative in this respect.

But what happened between 1550 and 1768? One of the striking phonological differences between Hollandic dialects and Town Frisian in the 'classical' descriptions from the 20th century is the realization of PGmc. $\bar{e}^1$, which appears as long /a:/ in Standard Dutch and Town Frisian, but as /e.i/ or /ɛ.i/ in North Hollandic dialects or /ɛ:/ in archaic South Hollandic dialects (Heeroma 1935). An example is found in the word for 'sheep', *skiep* [i.ə] in Frisian, *schaap* [a:] in Dutch, *skaap* [a:] in Town Frisian and *skeep* [e.i], *skeip* [ɛ.i] or *schèèp* [ɛ:] in North and South Hollandic dialects. For Fokkema (1970c: 283), who ascribed the similarities between (North) Hollandic and Town Frisian to the fact that both were instances of Dutch on a local Frisian substratum, the different treatment of the PGmc. $\bar{e}^1$ was a clear example of the fact that Town Frisian could not have developed from North Hollandic.

However, closer scrutiny of the available historical data suggests that the differences may not have been that drastic in the Early Modern period. The North Hollandic /e.i/, with further widening of the diphthong to /ɛ.i/, seems to have developed from a more general [ɛ:] or [æ:], but this may well have taken place not before the 17th century (Versloot 2012: 110). On the side of Town Frisian, we get to know from Winkler (1874: 476, 480, 489) and confirmed by some of the early surveys from the Geographical Society, that in cities like Harlingen, Franeker, Bolsward and in Het Bildt, the pronunciation [ɛ:] for /a:/ was still quite common in the late 19th century. While early 20th-century TF *skaap* is clearly distinct from North Hollandic *skeep* or *skeip*, this seems to be a fairly recent state of affairs; extrapolation of the scarce evidence we have from earlier periods suggests a common *[ɛ:] in the 16th or 17th centuries, being a regional realization of the Dutch phoneme /a:/.

Farmer Dirck Jansz, a native of Het Bildt, wrote personal notes in the beginning of the 17th century (Jansz. 1960) in a language that shows similarities in some points to the present-day Bildt dialect (Fokkema 1970d; see Table 2).

Table 2 also shows how close all these TF and Hollandic varieties are and how difficult it is to pinpoint the language of an early 17th-century author (see also Table 3).

Table 2. Bildt-like spellings in Dirck Jansz.'s writings (early 17th c.)

Dirck Jansz.	Mod. Bildt dialect	Modern Frisian	TF- Leeuwarden	Mod. NHoll.	Standard Dutch	Gloss
dartijen	dartyn	trettjin	dertien, dartien	dertien	dertien	'13'
kars	kars	kjers	kers, kars	kars	kers	'cherry'
sne	snee	snie	sneeuw, snee	snei	sneeuw	'snow'
heerst	hêst	hjerst	herst, harst	herrest	herfst	'autumn'

Table 3. Interpretative problems in older writing from the Bildt region

DJ:	*die dit soe dede*	*Godt soewde hem gewen,*	*blitschep na dit swaere Leewen*
Bildt (B):	*dy't dit soa deed,*	*God sou him geve,*	*blijens na dit sware leven*
NHoll.:	*die dit zô dee(d),*	*God zou hem geve,*	*bloiskip nei dit swere leven*
St.Du.:	*die dit zo dee(d),*	*God zou hem geven,*	*blijdschap na dit zware leven*
ModFr.:	*dy't dit sa die,*	*God soe him jaan,*	*bliidskip nei dit swiere libben*
glossing:	who this so did	God should him give	joy after this heavy life

This fragment from Dirk Jansz.'s text illustrates the difficulties in the judgment of earlier writing. In the comparison between present-day Modern Frisian and Standard Dutch, this fragment is clearly 'on the Dutch side'.

- Apart from a few peculiarities in spelling (*soewde, leewen*), one could claim that it is written in an early form of the emerging Dutch standard language.
- Compared to the Bildt version, it may just as well be seen as a direct ancestor of the Modern Bildt dialect, with the spelling <s> in word initial position, in contrast to voiced <z> in Dutch and most of 20th-c. North Hollandic. However, in various North Hollandic dialects, e.g. Amsterdam, Texel, Wieringen an unvoiced realisation is found as well in the 20th century (Daan 1969). <soewde> may represent *[so.wdə], which can be read as a pre-stage for later *sou* [sɔ.w]. The spellings with <w> in *gewen, Leewen* seem even more accurate, given the Modern Bildt (and Frisian) realisation with [v] or [ʊ] in this position, opposite to Standard Dutch [ɣ̊].
- The form *blitschep* shows nearness to Hollandic *-skip*, whereas the Bildt form *blijens* attests to Frisian influence with the Frisian suffix *-ens*. The relative clitic *'t* in Modern Bildt and Frisian is a 19th-century innovation that spread from Frisian into the Bildt dialect.

Depending on one's stance in the evaluation of earlier writing, one may claim that:

- DJ's writing offers a fairly reliable Bildt dialect *of his age*;
- DJ wrote some form of emerging Dutch Standard language with a few regional or personal idiosyncrasies, which may or may not be related to the spoken vernacular of his age in the Bildt region.

The only serious analysis of Dirck Jansz.'s text was performed by Fokkema (1970d), who was particularly interested in similarities with Frisian, in line with his interpretation of TF varieties as Dutch-Frisian hybrids. A comparative analysis in the spirit of Table 3 is pending. The current author is in principle inclined to take the text at face value. That implies that differences between the language of this text and modern versions of the Bildt dialect imply changes in the spoken language between c. 1600 and 1900/2000.

One outstanding feature of Dirck Jansz.'s language has to be mentioned in this context: the unrounding of the rounded front vowels /y(:)/, /ø(:)/ to /i(:)/, /e(:)/. Examples are *mellen* (B: *moln*; but archaic TF *meulen, mullen*) 'mill', *veegel* (B: *feugel*) 'bird', *bijten* (B: *bútten*) 'outside', *hijs* (B: *huus*) 'house'. This phenomenon is known from Vlieland and Egmond, both dialect-geographically in North Holland, in the 19th and 20th centuries (Vos 2013: 34–35) but was apparently common in a much wider area in the early 17th century. If it was not for Jansz.'s text, nothing in the present-day Bildt dialect would suggest that this was once a phonological feature of the dialect.

A nearly contemporaneous source of the language of the cities may be the words marked with *fris.* in Kiliaan's (1599) first dictionary of the Dutch language. Fokkema (1970e, 1970f) analysed them under the assumption that the items represented some form of distorted Frisian. It seems, however, more likely to take them for Dutch from Friesland around 1600, which is the ancestor of the later Town Frisian. See van Bree & Versloot (2008: 229–230) for examples. A full analysis of this source from the perspective of Town Frisian is also still pending.

A full analysis of all the older bits and pieces of evidence about earlier language forms in Het Bildt and the cities will reveal many items, especially in lexicon (e.g. Jansz.: *aijwn* 'onion' ~ modern B: *sipel*) and lexical phonology (e.g. Jansz.: *vroch* 'early' with */o/ ~ modern B: *froech* /u:/), where they differ from the languages as we know them since the late-19th and 20th centuries. One option is to ascribe all these differences to external influences, including various writing traditions, inaccuracies of the sources and their spellings and further individual idiosyncrasies. Even when these sources are not professionally conducted linguistic surveys and while we acknowledge the impact of the written language of those days and certain inaccuracies (such as potential indirect informants for Kiliaan's attestations), these sources are probably valuable pieces of information about the Dutch language in Friesland in the time around 1600. A comparison of those early sources to the later manifestations of the Town Frisian varieties demonstrates that they have experienced considerable changes between the 16th and the 19th centuries.

5. Dual route phenomena

There is one more source for confusion in the evaluation of linguistic features of Town Frisian as 'Frisian' or 'Dutch' in origin and that is the potential 'dual route': etymologically Frisian elements may have entered Town Frisian, with its strong North Hollandic orientation, as Frisian substratum elements in Hollandic, rather than directly from the surrounding local Frisian vernacular. It should be born in mind that North Holland itself was a bilingual Dutch-Frisian region until the beginning of the 17th century, with Frisian as a receding variety (Versloot 2018). In fact, both explanations may be valid at the same time: Frisian speakers in the 16th century, learning some form of Hollandic, will have transferred identical items from their mother tongue into their then L2 without hesitation (Bree, van & Versloot 2008: 216). An example of a possible dual route is given in Figure 4.

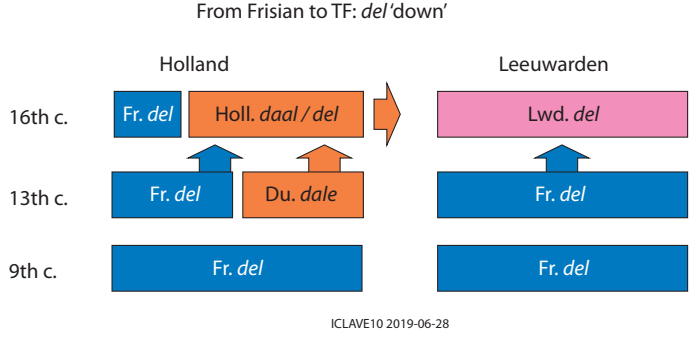

Figure 4. *the dual route of* del *'down'*

One more intriguing example is the word for 'buttermilk': *sûpe* [supə] in Frisian, *súp* [syp] in Town Frisian, attested in Kiliaan as *soepen* *[supən]. The stem appears as an archaic word in North Hollandic as *zuipe(n)* [z̥œ.ypə(n)] < 16th c. *[sy:pən], with the meaning 'buttermilk porridge'. The word can also be found with the meaning of 'buttermilk porridge' in the 17th-century East Frisian dialects of the Harlingerland – *suhpe* (König 1911: 47) and Wangerooge – *woonsuup* (Ehrentraut 1849: 405). In the Harlingerland dialect, a variant *zyep* *[si:p] is attested with the meaning 'buttermilk' (König 1911: 63). *Supa* appears once in the mediaeval Frisian attestations in 1497 with the meaning 'buttermilk' (Sipma 1927: 300).[17]

17. *Ende da deer vpt huus weren foergaren supa omtrent een tonna of oerhael ende oers nen dranck vpt huus waes.* 'And then there in the house were gathered *supa* about a barrel or one-and-a-half and otherwise no drink in the house was'. *Supa* seems to refer to a drink here, so likely 'buttermilk', rather than porridge.

The first element of the Wangeroog word, *woon*, represents the archaic Frisian designation of 'buttermilk' (Århammar 1968: 54). From this complex of attestations, one can conclude that *sûpe* (etc.) originally designates 'buttermilk porridge' (*sûpenbrij* in modern West Frisian) and later shifted to the meaning 'buttermilk'. This 'new' meaning can be found in traditional dialects in Fryslân, Groningen and the northern parts of Drenthe.[18] The word *sûpe* does not continue the Proto-Frisian word for the drink, but it developed regionally from the word for 'buttermilk porridge', with ellipsis of the first part (cf. Wangeroog *woonsuup*). In either meaning, the word is restricted to the wider Frisian area (from North Holland to East Friesland). The meaning 'porridge' is probably older, but the semantic innovation may have taken place sometime in the (late) Middle Ages. So, for any speaker of Frisian in the 16th century, being in contact with people from Holland about 'buttermilk', the word *sûpe* (with Frisian [u]) or *zuipe(n)* with Hollandic [y], would do, although some confusion may be at stake. It is interesting that Kiliaan mentions the Frisian vowel <oe> = [u] but the Hollandic <-en>, whereas the later Town Frisian form shows the Hollandic palatalization and without *-en*, but sticks to the regional meaning of 'buttermilk'.

Dual routes are also possible in other domains than the lexicon. A conspicuous example is the morpho-syntactic phenomenon of the so-called Frisian and Town Frisian gerund, a 'nominal' infinitive in *-ən* vs. a 'verbal' infinitive in *-ə* (Versloot 2017: 124; Hoekstra 2012). This contrast has its roots in earlier West Germanic and is found in Frisian, various (mostly western) Dutch dialects, but e.g. also in Swiss German and 16th-century Low German. The details of the syntactic contexts triggering the gerund differ between varieties, but are remarkably consistent across all varieties of Frisian. In this respect, Town Frisian and North Hollandic dialects are fully on the side of Frisian. Speakers of Frisian in the 16th century, learning Hollandic, could simply transfer their L1 knowledge of this phenomenon into their new L2, Hollandic, matching at least the northern varieties of Hollandic. In North Hollandic, the exact conditioning of the gerund was probably a Frisian substratum feature.[19]

18. https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/kaartenbank/proxy/image/23240 (31-7-2020)

19. Middle Low German in fact had very similar patterns, which to the best of my knowledge have never been described in relation to Frisian; see Lasch (1914: 222, 224, 227) for a very brief description.

6. Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with two main questions:

1. how well can linguistic phenomena of Town Frisian varieties be correctly interpreted in terms of their linguistic origin (Sections 3 and 5)?
2. are the available data a reliable reflection of the linguistic composition of the language at the time of language contact (Section 4)?

It seems evident that the answer to question (1) heavily depends on the linguistic distance between the varieties. The close genetic relationship between Frisian and Dutch, not to mention the multiple varieties of Dutch, in combination with the continuous cohabitation and use by their speaker populations, makes the unambiguous interpretation of elements as 'Frisian', 'Dutch' and 'Hollandic' a hazardous enterprise. One thing should be sufficiently made clear and that is that taking the dialects in their 'classical' shape from 19th- and 20th-century descriptions may easily lead to incorrect interpretations.

While Section 3 was concerned with changes in Frisian over the ages, the discussion in Section 4 illustrated the fact that also Town Frisian itself may have changed considerably over time – and why should it not, when both Frisian and Dutch have changed since the 15th century. So, when we try to identify the Frisian, Hollandic or Dutch components in Town Frisian, we have to realise that our targets are both moving and shifting in character. This makes it complicated to disentangle which linguistic features of Town Frisian are actually the result of the 16th-century process of L2 acquisition and subsequent language shift. One has to distinguish carefully between the diachronic origin of features and the synchronic distribution over the different varieties.

The application of the theory of stability hierarchies of linguistic features, such as the one by van Coetsem or Thomason and Kaufman for the identification of the sociolinguistic constellation under which the language shift took place ("Frisian phonetics imply imposition from the substratum language", etc.) is inhibited by the fact that we have difficulties identifying the actual linguistic shape of the language of the 16th century. The languages come out as so volatile that a simple back-projection of 20th-century phonetic or syntactic features to the 16th century, under the assumption that they are 'stable' elements, seems a matter of overstretching the theory. Various studies of long-standing language contact show that over time language contact with a proportion of multilingual speakers (not necessarily the vast majority) can create patterns that may look like the effects of early, instant language contact. The fact that present-day Town Frisian 'sounds like' Frisian, i.e., both varieties share a lot of phonetic, phonotactic and prosodic features, does not

necessary prove that Town Frisian sounded similarly 'Frisian' in the 16th century. It is even more likely that all three, Dutch, Town Frisian (as a regional form of Dutch) and Frisian, sounded very different from today's versions, which, however, does not exclude the possibility that 16th-century Town Frisian did indeed sound quite similar to 16th-century Frisian. It is just that we cannot infer the latter hypothesis from the 20th-century versions of the language, let alone draw conclusions from the 20th-century phonetics about the level of success, possible instances of (phonetic) hybridisation of Town Frisian in the 16th century.[20] The probably unique aspect of the (Town) Frisian case is that, although the data are too scarce for an easy, fully fledged reconstruction, we have just enough information to know that a linear back-projection of the 19th- and 20th-century data leads to heavily distorted and most likely very wrong conclusions. This is in a way worrying news for historical linguists who try to make reconstructions about sometimes even pre-historical events on the basis of much younger linguistic data (see e.g. Schrijver 2014). It also poses an interesting case from which we can learn about the application of our sociolinguistic theories, such as linguistic stability hierarchies.

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20. The study by Warchoł (2003) mentioned earlier demonstrates the effect of language contact of two speaker populations with one-sided bilingualism over a longer period in basically every linguistic domain. Walker (1993) illustrates that languages spoken in one region by mostly multilingual speakers, tend to harmonize their phonemic inventories. This reflects the concept widely known as a 'Sprachbund'.

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