

## **Visualizing dialect change as such; factoring out the role of the standard language**

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In the period 2008-2011 we compiled a large database of dialect recordings for 86 local dialects of Dutch spoken in the Netherlands and the northern part of Belgium ('Flanders') and of Standard Netherlandic Dutch and Standard Belgian Dutch. In each of the 86 locations two older male speakers and two younger female speakers were recorded. Using these data we analyze and visualize the influence of standard Dutch on apparent time changes in these dialects. We will focus on variation in the sound components and test the following hypotheses:

1. Dialect change is mainly the result of convergence to standard Dutch.
2. Sound changes in two dialects which make them converge to standard Dutch, make them also closer to each other.
3. Sound changes in two dialects which make them diverge from standard Dutch, make them also more distant to each other.

In order to test the hypotheses we use a three-dimensional (first hypothesis) and a five-dimensional Levenshtein distance implementation (second and third hypothesis). The use of three- and five-dimensional Levenshtein is a novel step in dialectometry and in the study of ongoing processes of language change and their consequences for the dialect landscape.

All of the hypotheses are confirmed. Dialect change due to convergence to standard Dutch is significantly larger than change which does not affect the relationship to standard Dutch and it is also significantly larger than change due to divergence to standard Dutch. Convergence to standard Dutch usually goes hand in hand with the convergence between dialects, and divergence from standard Dutch usually goes hand in hand with divergence between dialects. of the main findings are visualized.