PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION, PERCEPTION AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN THE (FRANCO-)BELGIAN BORDERLAND

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……..

Abstract

The subject of this thesis is the French language in the Franco-Belgian borderland. More specifically, it investigates language, linguistic perceptions and language attitudes in the French-speaking part of Belgium which borders France. The study takes a variationist approach and is grounded in sociolinguistic theory, but it also draws on theories and methodologies from elsewhere in the social sciences. Two questions are at the heart of this study: how do people speak French in the Belgian borderland and why do they speak that way? To answer the research questions, speech and questionnaire data were gathered from 39 informants living in the borderland city of Tournai and its surrounding area. With this data, a variety of analyses were performed. Sociophonetic investigations were carried out on two phonological variables, namely the vocalic oppositions /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/, draw-a-map task perceptual data were analysed through a 'visual methods' lens, and attitudinal data were also examined. Social variation in linguistic behaviour, perceptions and language attitudes was also analysed. The notions of 'space', 'place' and 'spatiality' were accorded considerable importance: the interactions between language and 'space' as the factors of 'mobility', 'media consumption', 'sense of place' and 'regional belonging' were also examined.

The findings include that French in the Belgian borderland is more similar to that in France than to elsewhere in Francophone Belgium and that this is due to a number of factors. Moreover, the French in the borderland appears to be converging on that in France, although some differences persist. It was also found that spatial factors interact with both linguistic and social ones. Finally, it was concluded that whilst there is no longer a physical barrier at the national border, it persists to an extent as a psychological one, and this has ramifications for borderlanders' behaviour: be it linguistic or otherwise.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Preliminary discussion

The subject of this thesis is French in the Franco-Belgian borderland; more precisely, language, linguistic perception and attitudes in the French-speaking part of Belgium which borders France. A variationist approach is taken to this study, although theory both from the discipline of sociolinguistics and beyond informs both the methodological and analytical approaches taken. The overarching research questions for this study are twofold: how do people speak in the Belgian borderland, and why do they speak in that way?

These two principal research questions are born out of a close study of current literature relating to French in Francophone Belgium and France, border linguistics, and contemporary discourses in sociolinguistics. A small amount of research has been carried out on French in the Francophone Belgian borderland, and findings suggest that the French there is more similar to the French of France than elsewhere in Francophone Belgium (cf. Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132); however, these findings are based on small sample sizes. Furthermore, where – if at all – an explanation of this has been given, it is not based on empirical evidence, but on supposition (cf. Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132). And yet, linguists who have studied borders argue, and indeed have illustrated, that linguistic differences are typically heightened at borders (cf. Burnett 2006; De Vriend et al. 2008; Llamas 2010). In this way, borderlanders use language to assert their own identity and contest that of the other, the border serving as a bastion

(Chambers 2014b). That French in the Belgian borderland is claimed to sound more French than Belgian thus appears somewhat atypical. On the other hand, in France scholars have argued, and indeed shown, that whilst regional variation persists, levelling[1] is taking place across the country (e.g. Boughton 2003, 2005; Pooley 2004a; Hornsby 2006, 2009; Mooney 2014, fc). Thus there is precedence for linguistic convergence in Francophone Europe. Whilst these are the most recent findings in the field, one of the current dominant conversations in sociolinguistics and dialectology concerns the notion of space.

Scholars argue that the notion of 'space' has usually been sidelined by sociolinguists: at best space has been 'treated as an empty stage on which sociolinguistic processes are enacted' (Britain 2013: 471). The argument is made that by engaging more with a theorised notion of space, we will be able to gain much deeper understanding of language variation and change (Britain 2010a, 2013, 2014; Heller 2010; Vaattovaara 2012).

To address this disciplinary shortcoming, Britain (2013: 472) takes a cue from beyond the discipline of social dialectology. He advocates an understanding of 'space' as 'spatiality', a tripartite concept, which is key in human geography and combines: (i) Euclidean space; (ii) social space; and (iii) perceived space[2].

[1] We understand levelling as 'a reduction in phonological, morphological or lexical differences between varieties which does not necessarily entail convergence towards the standard (or standardisation) (cf. Foulkes & Docherty, 1999b: 13). Rather, although the most highly localised (or otherwise 'marked'; cf. Trudgill, 1986: 98) variants may disappear, they are not automatically replaced by standard features, but by other supra-local non-standard variants, which may be innovative, and which diffuse over a wide socio-geographical space' (Boughton 2005: 235–236).
[2] Britain lays out how these three differ: '1. Euclidean space – the objective, geometric, socially divorced space of mathematics and physics. When we measure the land area of New Zealand or the as-the-crow-flies distance from Portland to Pittsburgh, it is Euclidean space that we are measuring. 2. Social space – the space shaped by social organisation and human agency, by the human manipulation of the landscape, by the creation of a built environment and by the relationship of these to the way the state spatially organises and controls at a political level. 3. Perceived space – how civil society perceives its immediate and not so immediate environments

Whilst Britain draws on this tripartite concept of spatiality, other scholars (e.g. Jacquemet 2010; Quist 2010; Vaattovaara 2012) have sought to address the theoretical shortcoming by drawing on the concept of 'place' (versus 'space') in their work. Another key concept in the discipline of human geography, Gregory et al. (2009: 539) describe 'place' as:

> a human-wrought transformation of a part of the Earth's surface or of a pre-existing, undifferentiated space. It is usually distinguished by the cultural or subjective meanings through which it is constructed and differentiated...

'Place', therefore, is 'space' made meaningful through interaction and experience (cf. Jacquemet 2010: 65). Another argument that has been repeatedly made by linguists is that it is necessary to integrate investigations of language attitudes into sociolinguistic studies if we are to gain greater insight into mechanisms of linguistic change and patterns of variation (for example, Paltridge & Giles 1984; Boberg 2000; Milroy 2002 in Violin-Wigent 2009; Hambye 2005; Kuiper 2005; Violin-Wigent 2009; Preston 2014). These findings and arguments come together to form the contextual point of departure for this doctoral study.

The aim of this chapter is to: give an overview of the context of the study and objects of investigation; describe the corpus; articulate the intended

– important given the way people's environmental perceptions and attitudes construct and are constructed by everyday practice' (Britain 2013: 472).

contributions of the project; and outline very briefly the structure of the thesis, chapter by chapter.

1.2 Context of the study and objects of investigation

As set out above, this thesis examines French, language attitudes and linguistic perception in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland. More specifically, these are investigated in the Belgian borderland city of Tournai, and its surrounding area: the Tournai *arrondissement* (see Figure 1-1). The *arrondissement* extends to the national boundary with France, and Tournai itself lies less than ten kilometres from the border and approximately twenty-five kilometres to the east of the major French city of Lille. This part of Belgium is French-speaking[3], although the country has two further official languages: Dutch and German.

[3] It also lies within the region of the Picard substrate.

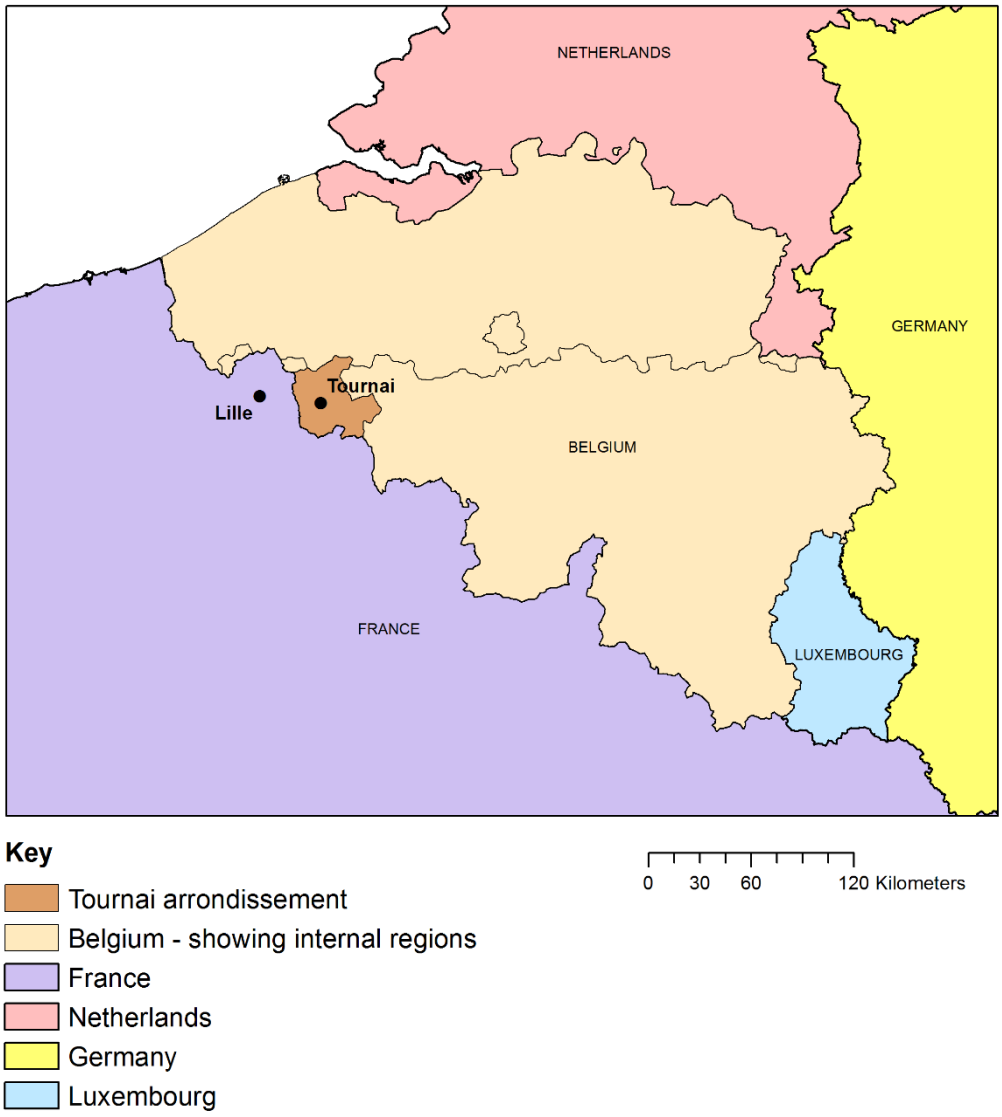


Figure 1-1. Map illustrating area of investigation in the study

The French spoken in Belgium has traditionally been seen – by Belgians and French alike – as inferior to Standard French: the codified variety associated with Paris (Poyart 1806; Remacle 1969 cited in Hambye 2005; Hanse et al.

1971, 1974 cited in Hambye & Francard 2004: 43). As a result of this, there was, for much of the second half of the twentieth century, a strong sense of linguistic insecurity felt by Francophone Belgians (see Boudreau & Dubois 1993; Francard 1989b; Francard 1993; Moreau et al. 1999). In recent years, however, scholars of Belgian French have focused their attention on the notion of an endogenous norm – a legitimised Belgian variety of French. This scholarly interest has been followed, in the non-academic world, by a diminishing sense of linguistic insecurity, as it is reported that Francophone Belgians no longer associate the legitimate variety solely with France (Francard & Franke 2001-2002 cited in Francard fc).

As for the present-day linguistic situation in Francophone Belgium, scholars have illustrated both regional and social phonological variation (e.g.: Francard 1989a; Bauvois 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye 2005, 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). They have shown that whilst certain regional and socially-restricted features appear to be diminishing, others persist. And, as noted above, they have reported that French in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland shows the greatest loss of regional traits, and is more similar to that of France (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012). As mentioned earlier, this is rather interesting, since scholars of border linguistics have often found that linguistic differences are heightened at borders (cf. Burnett 2006; De Vriend et al. 2008; Llamas 2010). This situation is the context for the present study.

One of the interesting findings from studies of French in Belgium is that the oppositions between the mid-vowels /e/-/ɛ/, /o/-/ɔ/ and /ø/-/œ/ as in ‘mangé’-‘mangeais’, ‘paume’-‘pomme’ and ‘jeûne’-‘jeune’ are traditionally maintained

(Pohl 1983; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2008), whilst in France there is evidence that these oppositions are less and less maintained (Lefebvre 1991; Landick 1995, 2004; Fagyal et al. 2002; Hall 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). And yet, as seen with other variables, in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland, Hambye and Simon (2012) argue these oppositions – like in France – are decreasingly maintained. However, this claim is based on a small study in which the primary concern was phonology. Thus, it was accompanied by little investigation into non-linguistic factors.

Since maintenance of mid-vowel oppositions may be described as 'Belgian behaviour' and merging as 'French behaviour', an investigation of these would reveal the degree to which borderlanders sound French or Belgian. Time limitations dictate that it is only possible to study two phonological variables, thus, those which occur more frequently (and concerning which there is more scholarly literature) form the objects of investigation: /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/.

1.3 Description of the corpus

There are two parts to the corpus: the first consists of speech data and the second of questionnaire data. Both parts were collected at the same time from the same informants. The data were gathered during two separate fieldwork trips carried out firstly between January and April and then between September and November in 2015 in and around the Francophone Belgian city Tournai and the administrative area known as the Tournai *arrondissement*. The *arrondissement* corresponds more or less to the area that locals call 'le

Tournaisis'. For this reason, the corpus will henceforth be called 'the Tournaisis corpus.'

52 interviews were carried out during the two periods of fieldwork. However, so as to have as balanced a corpus as possible in terms of social stratification, the data analysed in this survey come from 39 of these 52 informants. Both male and female speakers were sought, belonging to three different age groups. Speakers were also sampled from contrasting socioeconomic backgrounds, which were decided using the proxy of education. It was easier to find informants who had pursued their studies beyond compulsory education than those who had not. Consequently, in the group of speakers who pursued their studies beyond compulsory education, there are four informants for each age and sex category. On the other hand, in the group of speakers who did not, the number of informants varies for each age and sex category varies; however, for every category there is at least one speaker.

All of the interviews were recorded in informal settings, usually in the informant's home. The majority of interviews were one-to-one, but in several instances two informants were recorded at the same time. On a couple of occasions informants were recorded with another person present such as a friend or family member. The interviews followed the general format of a Labovian interview. The interview began with conversation, driven by the informant's interest. This was designed to relax the informant in order to elicit conversational style speech. Following this, a reading passage task was given to elicit reading passage style speech (RPS) and then a word list task to elicit guarded word list style speech (WLS). A metalinguistic discussion of the two

tasks ended this part of the interview and acted as the pivot which led into the written questionnaire. The informant was then guided – or assisted – to fill out the written questionnaire, which included two mapping tasks; however, with audio recording still taking place, they were encouraged to 'think out loud' and discuss the questions and responses.

1.4 Intended contribution of this study

It is intended that this thesis will contribute to several bodies of work in the field of sociolinguistics. Firstly it will make an important contribution to the literature on French in Belgium, providing the research community with knowledge that has been lacking regarding language in this borderland area. One of the dominant scholarly conversations in Francophone Belgian linguistics relates to notions of linguistic insecurity (Klinkenberg 1985; Francard 1993 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 235; Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Hambye & Francard 2004). Using empirical data, this thesis will therefore provide an up-to-date picture of linguistic insecurity in the Belgian borderland, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the conversation. As far as the researcher is aware, this is the first study in Francophone Belgium to use the perceptual dialectological tool of the draw-a-map task. The results of the task will therefore be ground-breaking for the narrower research community.

It is intended that this thesis will also contribute to the wider field of French linguistics, since it will provide new knowledge relating to language, linguistic perception and attitudes in a Francophone country outside France, but which borders with France. It will therefore add detail to the picture of European

French, and the findings should also further our understanding of mechanisms of linguistic change.

This thesis will also contribute to the growing body of 'border studies' in sociolinguistics. Scholars who have carried out such investigations make it clear that borderlands are complex places and that the language in these spaces is not immune from this complexity (e.g. Omoniyi 2004; Burnett 2006; Cramer 2010; Llamas 2010; Beswick 2014; Chambers 2014b; Kallen 2014; Watt & Llamas 2014b). This project furnishes the field with a new case study, which should enable the field to move on somewhat in its understanding of language in border contexts.

Finally, it is intended that this thesis will make an important contribution to the wider sociolinguistics community. The study is driven not only by the research questions that the situation provokes, but also by the requests of the field. As noted above, scholars have articulated the need to integrate studies of language attitudes, space, mobility, contact and sense of place into sociolinguistic studies. Doing just that, this thesis therefore directly addresses concerns of the research community. In this way, it is intended that this thesis will widen knowledge regarding the relationship between these factors and language and, in so doing, drive the field forward.

1.5 Plan of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows: chapter 2 consists of a critical review of the academic literature relating to the thematic strands and objects of the study as outlined above. In chapter 3 the fieldwork location is presented, an account

of the fieldwork is given, and the methodology used to gather the data is presented and discussed. Chapter 4 concerns the analysis of the first of two phonological variables: the (e) variable. This chapter is followed, in chapter 5, with an analysis of the second phonological variable: (o). Chapter 6 is concerned with linguistic perception, and presents the methodology, results, analysis and discussion of the draw-a-map task. In chapter 7 the language attitudes data are analysed and discussed. In the first part of the penultimate chapter, chapter 8, the 'space and place' data are presented, then, in the second half of the chapter, the findings of the previous analysis chapters are discussed alongside those relating to space and place. In the final chapter, chapter 9, key findings of the investigation are summarised, the contributions of the project are discussed, potential policy implications of the research are expressed and future directions for research are laid out.

2 French in Belgium, the French mid-vowels, and border linguistics

2.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter, which contextualises the study, is divided into three sections. To begin, French in Belgium is discussed through critical engagement with the existing body of literature. This is followed by a presentation of the study's objects of analysis: the phonological variables (e) and (o). In the last section, 'border linguistics' – the growing area of sociolinguistics in which the study is situated – is explored. Finally, the chapter closes with a more detailed set of research questions than those already mentioned in chapter 1.

2.2 French in Belgium

In the first part of this section we will give a brief overview of the linguistic situation in Belgium and how it came to be that way, followed by a description of the changes in scholarly and folk attitudes towards French in Belgium. In the second part we will discuss phonological variation in present-day Belgian French, also evoking shortcomings and gaps in research on the topic.

2.2.1 An overview of the linguistic situation in Belgium

The country of Belgium is divided into three administrative regions: Brussels Capital Region, Flanders, and Wallonia (see. Figure 2-1).

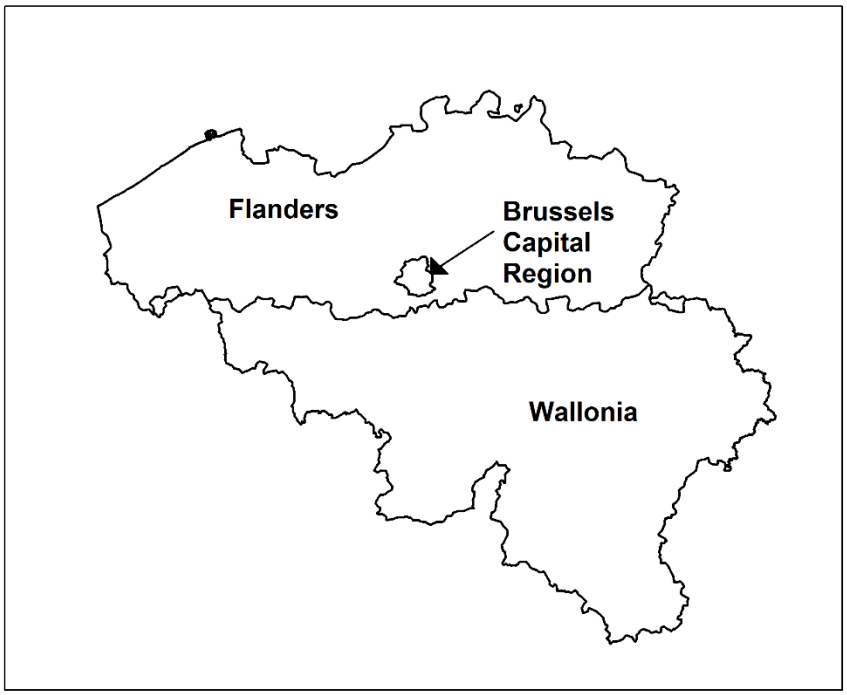
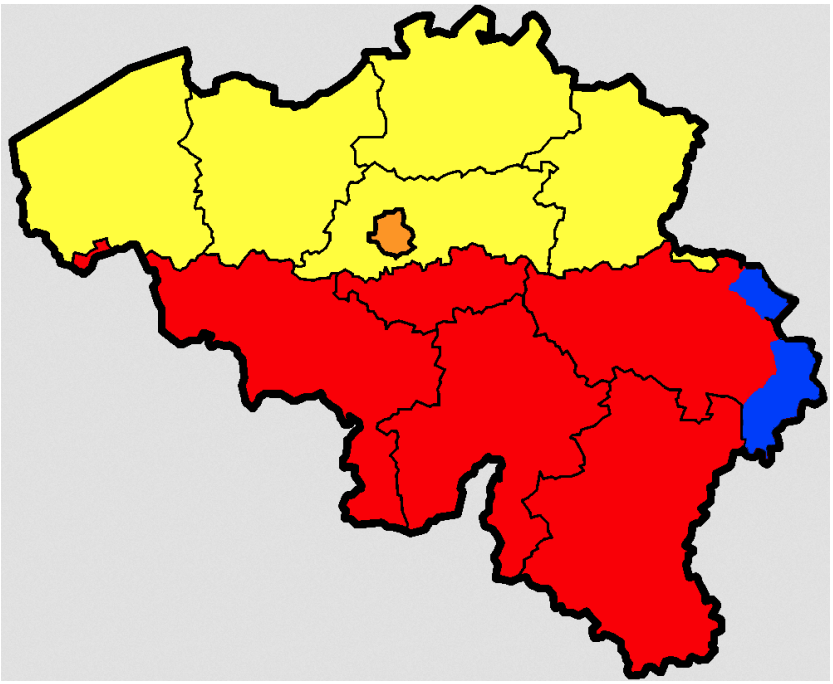


Figure 2-1. Map of Belgium illustrating the three administrative regions: Brussels Capital, Flanders and Wallonia

It is also divided into three linguistic communities: the Dutch-speaking community, the Francophone community and the Germanophone community. These are illustrated in Figure 2-2, in which it can be seen that there is correspondence between the French-Dutch divide and border between Wallonia and Flanders. It can also be seen that the Brussels Capital Region is bilingual French-Dutch. Whilst the map suggests that in each region there is solely one language, in reality it is more complex than this, with speakers of other endogenous and exogenous languages in every region.



(Wikimedia 2016)

	Dutch speaking
	French-Dutch bilingual
	French speaking
	German speaking

Figure 2-2. Map illustrating the different linguistic communities of Belgium.

The existence of the three different official languages in Belgium is a result of migration and settlement of both Roman and then Germanic peoples in the early centuries of the first millennium A.D. However, the linguistic border, in its current location, was not forged at this time; instead it has taken form over the centuries (Blampain et al. 1997: 45–49) and there is no consensus[4] as to why it is precisely where it is.

[4] Blampain et al. (1997: 45–49) evoke a number of possible explanations put forward by themselves and others including the theory of the 'Forêt charbonnière', discussed below, the 'Limes Belgicus', population density and population movement.

In the area synonymous with present day Wallonia, the Romance substrate (*langue d'Oïl*) languages of Picard, Lorrain (known as Gaumais in French), Champenois and Walloon were spoken from the end of the first millennium A.D. (Francard fc). There is evidence of oral French/substrate bilingualism dating back to the Renaissance (Blampain et al. 1997: 231). However, despite 18th-century developments in transport and communication, exposure in Wallonia to the revolutionary French Jacobin regime, and French being deemed the sole official language in Belgium by the government in 1830 (ibid., p. 247), it is supposed that the regional languages remained the sole means of oral communication in rural Wallonia until the end of the 19th century (ibid., p. 231).

The beginning of the 20th century saw a linguistic shift; the imposition of primary education from 1918, coupled with industrialisation and developments in media and communications after the Second World War, saw the region's inhabitants shift, over the course of a century, from monolingual speakers of regional languages to a majority of monolingual speakers of French (ibid., p 231) and minority of bilingual French/substrate speakers.

2.2.1.1 (Linguistic) tension in Belgium

The imposition of French as the sole official language of Belgium in 1830 resulted in tension between the French- and Romance substrate-speaking and Dutch- and Germanic substrate-speaking communities in the regions of Wallonia and Flanders. Whilst French in Flanders was gradually replaced by standard Dutch over the course of the 19th century, becoming an official language in 1898 (Blampain 1997: 249), the tension between the two linguistic communities has persisted.

What is more, not only does the border between Flanders and Wallonia represent a regional and linguistic divide, it also aligns with a socioeconomic one, which is tied up with political differences. Language is therefore intrinsically tied to – and arguably indexical of – identity. A situation of tension is found in present-day Belgium and a discourse prevails according to which the relatively wealthy region of Flanders wishes for the country to split along the regional border. However, along with this discourse is coupled another in the Walloon region wherein it is promulgated that the present-day wealth that Flanders enjoys is thanks to the historical wealth of Wallonia.

Discord between overarching political leanings – a socialist Walloon region and a conservative Flemish region – enhances the sense of internal fracturing (cf. Mnookin & Verbeke 2009). Although attempts have been made in the past few decades to promote a cohesive 'Belgian identity' and were more recently made to mitigate this tension with the formation in October 2014 of a coalition parliament[5], political and regional tensions remain palpable and are constantly reinforced through the distinct linguistic practices of the Walloons and Flemish.

[5] The government sworn in on 11 October 2014 is headed up the Prime Minister Charles Michel of the Francophone centre-right *Mouvement Réformateur*. One of the four deputy Prime Ministers, Didier Reynders, also belongs to this party. The remaining three belong to Dutch-speaking centre-right parties: Jan Jambon of the *Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie*; Kris Peeters of the *Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams*; and Alexander de Croo of centre-right *Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten.*

2.2.2 Contextualising linguistic research in Francophone Belgium

Traditionally, French in Belgium has been viewed in relation to the ideologically important[6] variety known as 'Standard French' (henceforth SF)[7], which historically was associated with the speech of the French Court and today is broadly linked with the upper middle-classes in Paris and the Ile-de-France region (Lodge 1993).

Longstanding and dominant purist attitudes surrounding the French language mean that early works on Belgian French (such as Poyart's *Flandricismes, wallonismes et expressions impropres dans le langage français* published in 1806) are prescriptivist and critical of any deviation from the legitimised standard.

Even in linguistic scholarship, a prescriptivist approach to variation remained the norm in Belgium (see for example Remacle 1969 cited in Hambye 2005; Hanse et al. 1971, 1974 cited in Hambye & Francard 2004: 43) until the second half of the 20th century when, in the 1970s[8], a shift from prescriptivist to descriptive works took place (see Baetens-Beardsmore 1971; Piron 1979, 1985; Walter 1982; Pohl 1983; Reuse 1987; Moreau et al. 1999).

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[6] French is a language with a long tradition of purism and prescriptivism. As early as the 12th century the belief existed in France that there was just one legitimate variety of French. Known as the 'ideology of the standard' (Lodge 1993: 178), this belief was joined with another two: 1) that by definition all other varieties were inferior; and 2) that as a consequence of this the legitimate variety should be the model for imitation.

[7] We use the term 'Standard French' to refer to the prescribed variety, codified in grammars and dictionaries (cf. Swann et al. 2004). This is in contrast to Hornsby (2009: 176) and others, who have used it to refer to the 'majority unmarked usage in a northern and central zone broadly corresponding to the langue *d'oïl* area'.

[8] This also corresponds with the birth and development of sociolinguistics in America and the United Kingdom.

Despite the change in scholarly focus, the notion of a SF remained ubiquitous and so descriptions continued to be in relation to the standard. What is more, although a shift took place in the academic world, an ideology of linguistic inferiority persisted in the minds of the speakers. The result of this was the development of a situation of linguistic insecurity, which in turn became the focus of linguistic scholarship in the 1990s (see Boudreau & Dubois 1993; Francard 1989b; Francard 1993; Moreau et al. 1999)[9].

Towards the end of the 1990s, a new discourse began to emerge in research emanating from Francophone Belgium: one proposing the existence of an 'endogenous norm' (see Blampain et al. 1997, 2001, Francard & Franke 2002; Hambye 2005, 2008; Hambye & Francard 2004, 2008; Moreau et al. 1999; Wilmet 2000). To understand the concept of 'the endogenous norm', it is first necessary to understand the term 'norm', which is itself variously interpreted. In its simplest sense, the linguistic 'norm' is the 'set of patterns in speech which are usual across a community' (Matthews 2007: 246). These patterns are, according to Labov (2001: 213), 'uniform' across the speech community, whilst according to Haugen (1966) they are accepted by those in power, and as such are legitimised. In this sense, the term 'norm' refers to *actual* linguistic behaviour. However, others construe the 'norm' as something distinct, which exists both in reality and in theory. Houdebine (1996), for example, argues for a bipartite interpretation. She approaches language through the construal of the 'linguistic imaginary', an interpretation of language that integrates not only usage, but also linguistic representations. Her model of the linguistic imaginary

[9] And also followed the publication of Gueunier et al.'s (1978) *Les Français devant la norme* – a linguistic investigation partly concerned with notions of linguistic insecurity in three sites in France including Lille.

incorporates two kinds of norms: the objective norm, which represents actual usage; and the subjective norm, which exists in the minds of speakers. Garmadi's (1981: 64–72 cited in Lodge 1993: 154–155) understanding of the norm is distinct yet again. She understands that two norms exist: the 'norme' and the 'sur-norme'. Whilst the first of these 'represents the implicit linguistic consensus which permits mutual intelligibility within any speech community' (Lodge 1003: 154), the second is a set of instructions which marks out which items of the *norme* should be selected if one is to conform to the ideals of a particular group.

Returning then to the notion of the 'endogenous norm', it can be understood that what distinguishes this norm from those described above is its incorporation of the notion of endogeny – that is to say 'growth from within' (and thus also exogeny – 'growth outside'). An endogenous norm, like any other, is usage which has been selected and legitimised by those who possess the power to do so, then later accepted by the wider community (cf. Haugen 1966) such that it becomes the linguistic behaviour observed in the majority (Hambye & Francard 2008). Crucially, though, it exists in opposition to a norm to which it is historically and structurally related and which is, for the speakers of the endogenous norm, an imported, exogenous variety (Manessy 1997). Moreover, since the evolution and maintenance of an endogenous norm requires the rejection of an exogenous norm, which itself necessitates acting on beliefs and ideologies located in the speakers' minds, it is a concept in which both objective and subjective norms are implicated (Hambye & Francard 2008).

Returning to the development of linguistic research in Francophone Belgium, it can now be understood that when scholars were putting forward the suggestion of an endogenous norm, what they were asserting was the existence of a norm that was distinct from that emanating from France; especially Paris. Since until that point linguistic behaviour had only ever been seen in relation to Hexagonal French (French from France)[10], such a suggestion changed the way that scholars perceived the language across the region.

All the same, despite the assertion that an endogenous norm existed, there was a hesitancy to put forward a description of it; rather more common were works in which linguistic traits found in Francophone Belgium were described, preceded or followed by a discussion presenting evidence for and asserting the existence of an endogenous norm. Such discussions, however, often did not make explicit which of the described features were components of the variety under discussion (cf. Moreau et al. 1999; Francard 2001). Despite the mythology surrounding the precise nature of the endogenous norm, beyond the world of academic scholarship, the scholarly reification and valorisation of Belgian French in the 1990s developed in parallel to a diminishing sense of linguistic insecurity across the region (Moreau et al. 1999).

Around the turn of the millennium, and following closely in the footsteps of linguists studying Hexagonal varieties of French, Belgian French linguistics began to draw on the ideas and approaches of colleagues in Anglophone sociolinguistics. This resulted in a shift taking place and, over the past fifteen

[10] French from France is given the name 'Hexagonal French' to mark it out from varieties that are not from France. It is given this name because France, shaped like a hexagon, is sometimes referred to as 'l'Hexagone'.

years, a growing number of variationist investigations have been carried out on Belgian varieties of French (e.g.: Bauvois 2002; Hambye 2005; Goldman & Simon 2007; Woehrling et al. 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012). These studies have all taken a classical variationist approach[11], their aim being to uncover patterns in variation correlating with age, gender and socioeconomic background, as well as to reveal regional variation.

Returning to the endogenous norm, in the past few years discourses surrounding it have changed. Nowadays discussions focus on what might constitute the endogenous norm (cf. Hambye & Francard 2008; Francard fc.). Moreover, where previously evidence was presented in favour of its existence, what is now found more commonly is a discussion of whether or not what is presented as an endogenous norm actually meets the criteria for being one (Hambye & Francard 2008).

Today, the field's attention is focused on the notions of standardisation and levelling. Hambye (2008) and Hambye and Simon (2012) argue that whilst Belgian varieties have undergone standardisation, and are thereby converging on a subjective Hexagonal or – assuming it exists – endogenous norm, they argue that certain features have resisted the process. Instead, as a result of changing ideologies meaning that Hexagonal French is no longer as highly esteemed, Hambye (2005: 368; 2008: 57) argues that Belgian regional varieties are levelling. That is to say that 'differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area' (Williams

[11] Bardiaux (2014) is an exception to this; she investigated variation through a perceptual lens.

& Kerswill 1999: 13). However, whilst Hambye makes the argument for levelling, he does not expand on this in any great detail. Thus, further explanation, and indeed empirical evidence, is required.

With an understanding of the changing scholarly approaches to linguistic variation in Francophone Belgium, and with an awareness of where the field finds itself today, we now go on to a presentation of the phonological situation in Belgian varieties of French. Based predominantly on recent data emerging from variationist works, the picture is made fuller with additional information derived from earlier studies. Since a point of reference is necessary for comprehension, as elsewhere in the literature (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012), linguistic tendencies are presented in relation to SF.

2.2.3 Phonological variation in Francophone Belgium

In Francophone Belgium there are some phonological tendencies that are observed across the region; there are also those that are associated with specific areas, as well as those which are particularly geographically or socially marginal and are not at all widespread.

2.2.3.1 Pan-Belgian traits

There are five main phonological tendencies which are observed across Francophone Belgium, including in the fieldwork region of the Tournai *arrondissement*, located in Western Wallonia. Four of the features relate to vowel articulation and the fifth to consonant realisation.

The maintenance of oppositions between the mid-vowels /o/-/ɔ/, /e/-/ɛ/ and /ø/-/œ/, which are undergoing neutralisation in France, is one of the features of

French in Belgium that is most widely acknowledged in the literature (Pohl 1983; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2008). The tendency to maintain the oppositions of not only the oral mid-vowels: /o/-/ɔ/, /e/-/ɛ/ and /ø/-/œ/, but also the nasal vowels: /ɛ̃/-/œ̃/ and /õ/-/ɑ̃/, is observed across the region and is not limited to any specific age or social group (Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003).

On the other hand, these vowels have been found to display regional and social variation. For example, greater maintenance of the oppositions /o/-/ɔ/ and /e/-/ɛ/ has been observed in central and eastern Wallonia: in Gembloux and in Liège (Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). With regard to age, maintenance is less stable in the speech of younger individuals (ibid., p. 133). Much more will be said about /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ in 2.3 since these pairs form the phonological variables of this study.

As for /ø/-/œ/, Hambye and Simon (2012: 133) have claimed in recent research that the opposition is maintained and that distribution is generally stable. However, in the data upon which the claim is based, they nevertheless report that only two of the twelve speakers made the distinction between ‘jeune’-‘jeûne’: /ʒœn/-/ʒøn/.

With regard to the nasal vowels, the oppositions display distinct behaviours: whilst some had previously argued that /õ/-/ɑ̃/ was being neutralised in eastern Wallonia (Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003: 58), more recent and extensive research suggests that the opposition is in fact conserved across the region

(Hambye & Simon 2012), whilst across the border in *Nord-Picardie* Carton et al. (1983: 24) report confusion between the two in usage. On the other hand, where earlier research (Walter 1982: 111) indicated the maintenance of the opposition /ɛ̃/-/œ̃/, more recent research suggests this opposition is being lost in French in Belgium (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012).

A final opposition, between /a/-/ɑ/, is also found in Wallonia, and this opposition is both qualitative (timbre) and quantitative (duration) (Walter 1982: 111). Recent research suggests, however, that it is now best maintained in the region surrounding Tournai (Hambye 2005) and that elsewhere the qualitative dimension to the opposition has been lost, such that it remains as a quantitative opposition alone, as in: 'patte'-'pâte' [pat]-[paːt] (Pohl 1983; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003).

The occurrence of dieresis[12] in the sequence of 'high vowel + vowel', as in 'scier', as well as the propensity to insert a 'semi-vocalic transition', giving [sije] as opposed to [sje] in SF (Hambye & Simon 2012: 135) is a widely observed trait in Francophone Belgium and the *Nord* (the northern-most region in France), and one which has frequently been mentioned in the literature (Walter 1982; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997: 170-171; Francard 2001; Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012: 135).

Although dieresis is found across Francophone Belgium and the *Nord* in the speech of all social classes (Carton et al. 1983: 25; Bauvois 2001: 111–117;

[12] Here we use the term 'dieresis' in the same way as Akissi Boutin et al. (2012: 64), Coquillon & Turcsan (2012: 110) and others to refer to the non-standard realisation of a semi-vowel and vowel, for example 'nier': [nje], with two syllables – as in [ni.je]. This is in contrast to the term 'hiatus', which Matthews (2005: 161) defines as '[a] division between vowels belonging to different words or syllables.'

Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye 2005), the tendency is nevertheless more common in the speech of older individuals (Hambye & Simon 2012: 135).

A third feature central to the behaviour observed across Francophone Belgium and the *Nord* (Coveney 2001: 78) is the tendency to centralise close vowels (Francard 1989a; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003: 57; Hambye 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012: 134–135). This behaviour sees words such as ‘midi’ and ‘crapule’ realised as [mɪdɪ] and [kʁapʏl], or even [kʁapøl] (Hambye 2005). Whilst some describe the tendency as pan-regional, others claim it is absent from western Wallonia (Klinkenberg 1985; Hambye & Simon 2012). This feature is more commonly observed in older, working-class individuals and is less common when more attention is paid to speech (Hambye & Simon 2012).

Non-standard vowel lengthening is a fourth tendency that is observed across Francophone Belgium (Baetens-Beardsmore 1971: 75; Klinkenberg 1985; Hambye 2008), although it is more prominent in certain regions than others (Hambye & Francard 2004: 51). Moreover, it is better maintained in certain contexts, such as when followed by a voiced plosive (Bauvois 2001), for example in ‘chaude’: [ʃoːd]. Like vowel centralisation, the feature is more common in the speech of older, working-class individuals (Francard 2001: 257). In parts of central and eastern Wallonia, a lengthened vowel is also maintained which originally served to compensate for a deleted pre-consonantal [s] – as represented orthographically by a circumflex (Hambye & Simon 2012: 134), as in ‘pâte’. This allows for the maintenance of an opposition between ‘patte’-‘pâte’: [pate]-[pɑːte].

Finally, word-final consonant devoicing (WFCD) is one of the most commonly observed features of French in Francophone Belgium and the one most frequently evoked in the literature (Grégoire 1956: 87 cited in Hambye 2005: 209; Remacle 1969: 121 cited in Hambye 2005; Baetens-Beardsmore 1971: 79–83; Klinkenberg 1985; Piron 1985: 374; Reuse 1987: 110–112; Warnant 1997: 171–174; Moreau & Bauvois 1998; Francard 1989a, 2001: 25; Hambye 2005, 2008). The tendency is pan-Belgian and is also found in other parts of the Francophone world; in France – in particular the north and east (Pipe 2014) – and in Switzerland (Armstrong & Pooley 2010). All the same, Armstrong and Pooley (2010: 227) assert that WFCD rates are significantly higher in Francophone Belgium than across the border in Lille.

Though presented as a pan-Belgian trait (Armstrong & Pooley 2010), Hambye's (2005) study of WFCD in Tournai and Gembloux revealed regional variation, with rates of the feature across his corpora of 23.7% and 39.5% respectively. This study also revealed stylistic and social variation with older, less educated speakers displaying higher rates of WFCD (Hambye 2005).

Whilst the above five traits are those most commonly evoked in descriptions of French in Francophone Belgium, and feature centrally in descriptions of Belgian French, many others exist, some of which are found across the region, others of which are more restricted. We first look at the remaining pan-Belgian traits.

Absence of the semi-vowel /ɥ/ is a feature of French in Francophone Belgium (Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997: 170; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye 2005; Hambye & Francard 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012), as well as

that in the *Nord* (Carton et al. 1983: 25). Avoidance of this phoneme means that both ‘juin’ and ‘joint’ are pronounced as [ʒwɛ̃] (Hambye & Simon 2012). However, whilst in this instance /ɥ/ is replaced by [w] – as it is whenever it is followed by /i/ (Walter 1982: 111) – replacement by [w] is not categorical: in some positions it is replaced by [y], or is elided, as in ‘puis’ as [pi]. Although the tendency is found across the class spectrum (Hambye & Francard 2008) and described as pan-Belgian, Francard (1989a) reported no absence of /ɥ/ in eastern Wallonia.

Another trait of Belgian French that is generally assumed to be present across the region is a realisation of /e/ in the monosyllables ‘les’, ‘des’ and ‘ses’, as well as in ‘est’ and ‘es’ as [ɛ]. (In SF a close-mid /e/ is expected (Francard 2001: 255)). Whilst many describe this as pan-Belgian, Hambye (2008) claims this is not the case, describing a tendency in Tournai to realise the vowel as the close-mid /e/. The tendency is, however, found across the social spectrum.

Although certainly not unique to Francophone Belgium, schwa elision is described in the literature as a trait of Belgian French (Grégoire 1956: 74 cited in Hambye 2005: 209; Remacle 1969: 115– 116 cited in Hambye 2005; Pohl 1985: 14–15, 1986: 134). It varies according to phonological context; for example, Remacle (1969: 115–116 cited in Hambye 2005) describes schwa elision as being more frequent preceding a voiced sonorant + yod, as in ‘app(e)lions’, and in front of *h aspiré,* as in ‘l(e) hall’. Others describe the differences between Hexagonal French and Belgian patterns in schwa deletion as morphemic. Piron (1978: 30 cited in Hambye 2005) claims that one is more

likely to say ‘on n(e) pourrait plus l(e) ret(e)nir’ in Francophone Belgium, whilst in France the tendency would be to say ‘on n(e) pourrait plus le r(e)tenir’.

Schwa elision is seen to vary according to social identity; Hambye (2005) presents a situation in which younger speakers and those with higher levels of education display higher rates of optional schwa. What is more, in the same dataset, he reveals a pattern of regional variation in which informants from Tournai produce fewer optional schwas than those from central or eastern Wallonia; however, he concludes that this is because of the nature of the sample, rather than a regional effect.

With regard to schwa realisation, the greatest difference between behaviour in Francophone Belgium and France is the realisation of so-called epenthetic schwa in prepausal position (as in ‘belle’, [bɛlə]): higher frequencies are observed in Belgium. Nevertheless, within Belgium, prepausal schwa shows variation: on a regional level it is most frequent in Tournai (Hambye 2005: 333), whilst on a social level it is less frequently observed in the lower classes (Bauvois 2001; Hambye 2005: 332).

As with word-final consonant devoicing, word-final post-obstruent liquid deletion is also observed both in France[13] and Francophone Belgium (Warnant 1997: 172). The trait displays social variation; indeed, it displays normative social class and stylistic patterning, with a decrease in frequency of the marked variant (e.g. [tab] for ‘table’) as one moves up the class spectrum as well as from a conversational task to a more formal reading task (Bauvois 2002). However, in

[13] See Boughton (2015) for a summary.

Belgium this sociolinguistic variable does not display canonical gender variation, since in all but the highest social stratum women produce more of the marked variant than men.

Simplification of other final consonant clusters is a further tendency that is not unique to France[14], but is also seen in Francophone Belgium (Remacle 1969: 123–125 cited in Hambye 2005; Klinkenberg 1985; Reuse 1987: 113–114; Warnant 1997: 172). Its presence is said to vary according to region: speakers in western Wallonia have been seen to simplify clusters significantly less than those in central and eastern Wallonia (Hambye 2005). The feature also displays social variation: it is those individuals who are situated both in the middle age band and middle-class band that show the lowest levels of simplification.

A less-often mentioned simplification phenomenon, which is maintained across the region and is also not unique to Francophone Belgium (Bauvois 2001: 72), concerns the reduction of the sequence /lj/ to [j], as in ‘allier’: [aje] (Klinkenberg 1985; Hambye 2005).

Finally, there are two orthography-specific phonological traits observed across Francophone Belgium. The first of these is the realisation of <w> as [w] – as opposed to /v/ – in SF, as in ‘wagon’ ([wagɔ̃]) (Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997: 171; Hambye 2005). The second is a tendency to avoid ‘gallicising’[15] pronunciation of foreign proper and common nouns such as ‘stand’, realised as [stand] as opposed to [stɑ̃d][16] (Hambye 2005).

[14] The feature is found in Parisian French (Francard 2001a: 252), and other Hexagonal varieties of French (Carton et al. 1983).
[15] The term used in French is ‘fransquilloner’ (Hambye 2005: 93; Francard 2008).
[16] This, Hambye (2005) claims, is in contrast to behaviour in France.

2.2.3.2 Marginal and regional traits

Regional variation is observed in the behaviour of the nasal vowels across Francophone Belgium. Whilst there is a tendency to raise and front nasal vowels across Wallonia (Walter 1982: 113; Francard 1989a), with a realisation of /ɛ̃/ close to [ẽ], for example, a distinct behaviour is found in eastern Wallonia. Here, the denasalisation of vowels is observed, such that the only marked opposition between 'pain' and 'paix' is in length, as in [pɛː] and [pɛ] respectively (Klinkenberg 1985; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2005). In contrast to this, in western Wallonia and Brussels[17], and to a lesser extent in the regions of central and eastern Wallonia[18], a tendency is observed towards assimilatory nasalisation of final oral vowels that are followed by a consonant, as in même [mɛ̃ːm] (Klinkenberg 1985; Francard 1989a; Hambye 2005).

The addition of a semi-vocalic appendix to lengthened vowels has previously been observed in Brussels and eastern Wallonia, as in 'roue', [ʁuːʷ] (Hambye 2005: 168–169). However, in recent studies it has been claimed that this trait is only found in the speech of older and / or working-class informants (Hambye & Simon 2012: 135).

Finally, with regard to vocalic variation, two further regional tendencies are observed: (i) a close /o/ realisation before /R/ in eastern Wallonia, as in 'saur' ([sɔʁ]) (Armstrong & Pooley 2010: 215)[19], and (ii) a very back, open realisation

[17] As well as in *Nord-Picardie* and Lorraine (Carton et al. 1983).
[18] And also in northern and eastern France (Carton et al. 1983).
[19] And also in northern France (Lefebvre 1991).

of /ɑ/ in open syllables in stressed position in Tournai, as in ‘ça’: [sɑ] (Hambye & Francard 2004: 52)[20].

Moving on to consonantal variation, realisation of an initial glottal fricative in some words beginning with a graphic <h>, resulting in the maintenance of the distinction between ‘hêtre’ and ‘être’, for example (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012: 136), has previously been observed in both Brussels and eastern Wallonia (Walter 1982: 110–111; Francard 1989a). However, more recent research has indicated that it is now only found in the speech of older individuals in eastern Wallonia (Hambye & Simon 2012: 136).

The realisation of /R/ varies considerably across Francophone Belgium (Baetens-Beardsmore 1971; Thiam 1995; Francard 2001; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2005, 2008; Armstrong & Pooley 2010). Whilst an apico-alveolar [r] has been observed in the Borinage (Armstrong & Pooley 2010: 218), some describe it as an archaic pronunciation (Warnant 1997; Francard 2001: 255; Hambye 2005) and a trait of older speakers (Pohl 1983: 35). A sometimes devoiced [r̥] has also been observed in Brussels (Baetens-Beardsmore 1971; Demolin 2001: 65 cited in Hambye 2005: 207). In contrast, a dorso-uvular trilled variant, [ʀ], distinct from the standard uvular [ʁ] has previously been noted in Brussels (Baetens-Beardsmore 1971), whilst in more recent research a retracted pharyngealised realisation is described as the norm in Liège (see Hambye 2005: 209).

[20] This is also seen in northern France (Pooley 2004a).

Aside from these regional variants, the most frequently mentioned realisation of /R/ is a ‘strongly articulated’ one; that is to say, one with ‘energetic vibration’ of the uvula (Hambye 2005: 209). Previously this realisation was seen as a characteristic of speech in the Walloon countryside (Grégoire 1956: 50–53, 78 cited in Hambye 2005: 209) and was also traditionally associated with Brussels; however, this is no longer the case (Hambye 2005: 209). Today, distribution of this variant appears to vary with region. Whilst in Tournai it is most frequent in the speech of older speakers, it is the younger speakers in Brussels who show a higher rate of the marked variant today.

One of the less frequently mentioned, more marginal tendencies seen in Belgian French is the velarisation of word-final /l/ following articulatory weakening, as in [mɪɫ], ‘mille’ (Hambye 2005). A tendency for some older speakers to palatalise dental stops before a front vowel, as in [sutʲiɛ̃] ‘soutien’ has also been observed (Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye: 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012: 136). Finally, and restricted to eastern Wallonia, devoicing of word-internal, syllable-final consonants has also been heard (Remacle 1969: 128–129 cited in Hambye 2005), although this is also seen in French in France, though as the result of assimilation, as in ‘observation’ [ɔpsɛʀvasjɔ̃].

The behaviour described above paints a picture of the phonological situation in Francophone Belgium today. Emerging in the image are patterns of social and regional variation, of tendencies which appear stable, and others which do not. In section 2.3 we will give a much more detailed account of the phonological

variables /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/. Now, however, we move on to review language attitudes and linguistic perceptions in French-speaking Belgium.

2.2.4 Language attitudes and linguistic perceptions in Francophone Belgium

2.2.4.1 Language attitudes in Francophone Belgium

As described above, it has previously been suggested that there is a sense of linguistic insecurity in Francophone Belgium, which has developed as a result of the perpetuation of purist and prescriptivist discourses surrounding the French language (Moreau et al. 1999; Francard fc). Such discourses have led to a situation in which, in the linguistic imaginary of Francophone Belgians, the reference model is the French spoken in Paris; a model that they do not successfully master (Francard fc). Positive attitudes towards the reference model are often coupled with negative attitudes towards Francophone Belgians' own varieties; although Francard (fc) argues that certain speakers ascribe value to their own variety when viewing it through Bourdieu's (1977) linguistic market lens and placing it on the 'restricted' market, where notions of collaboration and identity affirmation are valued and the variety has 'covert prestige'[21].

A sense of both valorisation and devalorisation of Belgian French emerges in the results of a survey carried out in the early 1990s of 800 Walloons and Bruxellois (Garsou 1991 cited in Blampain et al. 1997). It was found that 73% of informants rejected the idea that 'bien utiliser sa langue "c'est parler comme les Français"' (Blampain et al. 1997: 385). Yet, only 43% rejected the notion that 'les Belges parlent naturellement moins bien que les Français'. These results,

[21] Matthews (2005: 81) describes 'covert prestige' as '[t]he value implicitly attached by members of a speech community to forms or variants which they use quite normally but claim to avoid. Thus, in particular, that of local or non-standard forms which are overtly proscribed but which reflect the solidarity of each member with the others.'

according to Garsou (1991: 22), illustrate the ‘complexe belge’, an idea which emerges from Francard’s (1991 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 387) survey of school leavers who reject the notion that the best French is spoken in France, yet implicitly agree with this notion in responses to other questions. The seeming contradiction in attitudes expressed in these survey results is not unique to the Belgian borderland; in previous sociolinguistic investigations in other countries, scholars have observed distinct results from implicit and explicit attitudinal tests (Pantos 2010; Campbell-Kibler 2012; Loudermilk 2013:145–146; Llamas n.d).

The most recent research suggests a change is taking place in Francophone Belgian linguistic attitudes; in particular that legitimised language is no longer singularly associated with France (Francard & Franke 2001-2002 cited in Francard fc). This suggestion is corroborated by earlier research in which it was found that whilst speakers’ preconceived ideas might be underpinned by a sense of linguistic insecurity, when asked to evaluate speech samples, participants did not rate Belgian French more negatively than Metropolitan French (Moreau et al. 1999). In conclusion, the research suggests that linguistic insecurity has diminished over time; however, a certain sense of insecurity does continue to underpin the beliefs held by Francophone Belgians, especially among the middle-aged and older members of the community.

2.2.4.2 Linguistic perceptions in Francophone Belgium

As mentioned above, some perceptual studies have been carried out in Francophone Belgium; however, these have predominantly concerned *identification* rather than evaluation of regional origin in samples of language (Bauvois 1996; Rispail & Moreau 2004; Woehrling 2009; Boula de Mareüil &

Bardiaux 2011; Bardiaux 2014). One of the earliest of these, designed to address a lack of perceptual research, was Bauvois' (1996) investigation into the identification of speech samples from five different Belgian cities: Brussels, Liège, Mons, Charleroi and Tournai.

In this study, 172 auditors from Charleroi, Liège, Mons and Tournai attempted the identification task, which required them to respond to three questions:

1. Is the speaker from my region?
2. Which region (north, south, east or west) are they from?
3. Which city (from a list of 14) are they from?

Overall, 35.7% of responses to the second question were correct, with geographical origin of the auditor barely affecting overall rate of identification[22]. And, with the exception of those auditors from Tournai[23], all auditors were best at recognising the speakers from their own region.

In response to the third question concerning city of origin, the overall percentage of correct identifications was much lower: 13.7%. With the exception, once again, of Tournaisiens, who were most proficient at identifying Liégeois, informants appeared better able to identify their own city and did this twice as well, if not better, than other auditors.[24] Both the Liégeois and Tournaisien samples were distanced from the average rate of recognition

[22] The difference between the groups most able and least able to identify regional origin was just 2%.
[23]The Tournaisien auditors identified a higher number of Montois (46.9%) than Tournaisiens (39.2%). Bauvois does not give any explanation for this pattern; however, Tournai is closer to Mons than any of the other cities sampled: the distance by road between the two is approximately 50 kilometres.
[24] In some studies in which a similar pattern has been found, it has been seen to be due to annexation; however the author says this is not the case here, though does not explain why.

(13.7%): the former with a correct rate of identification at 19.9% and the latter at just 7.1%[25].

Woehrling (2009) found a similar pattern in her doctoral research. Respondents undertook an identification task in which samples from the *Phonologie du Français Contemporain (PFC)* project[26] from ten sites in France, Belgium and Switzerland provided the stimuli. The samples came from both men and women, from three different age categories[27]. Languedoc in southern France was the region most correctly identified (91% of the time), Liège was the most identifiable of the Belgian cities sampled (22% of the time), and Tournai was the least correctly identified city (13% of the time) (p. 57). The Tournai sample was more commonly identified as the sample from Treize-Vents (39%) in the Vendée, which was chosen by the researcher to represent SF.

Boula de Mareüil and Bardiaux (2011) uncovered a similar pattern in the experiments they carried out, also using data derived from the *PFC* project. They asked Parisian and Belgian informants to rate accentedness of samples from France, Switzerland and Belgium and to identify regional origin. On a scale of 0–5[28], they found that the French rated the accentedness of the Treize-Vents sample 1.9/5, Douzens (southern France) 4.8/5; Boersch (Alsace) 3.7/5; Nyon (Switzerland) 3.2/5; Liege 3.0/5; Gembloux 2.7/5; and Tournai 2.0/5. Belgian listeners, on the other hand, rated Treize-Vents 2.1/5; Douzens 4.2/5; Boersch 1.8/5; Nyon 3.1/5; Liege 2.7/5; Gembloux 2.4/5; and Tournai 1.4/ 5. From these

[25] Unfortunately Bauvois (1996) does not report where listeners perceive the Tournai samples come from.
[26] *Phonologie du Français contemporain* project: http://www.projet-pfc.net/ [Accessed 16 January 2017].
[27] No mention is made of the socioeconomic background of speakers.
[28] Where 0 = 'no accent' and 5 = 'very strong accent' (Boula de Mareüil & Bardiaux 2011: 48).

results, then, it is clear that both French and Belgian listeners perceived the Tournai sample to be of a similar accentedness to the Treize-Vents sample, although the Belgians found it less accented than the French.

In the identification task, Boula de Mareüil and Bardiaux (2011) found that French listeners identified Douzens (southern France) most easily and were more competent at identifying French samples than Belgian ones. The least identifiable sample was the one from Tournai, which was identified correctly only 13% of the time. In 28% of cases (out of 200 answers) respondents suggested the speaker origin was Treize-Vents. As with the results of Woehrling's (2009) investigation, these results suggest that the speech in Tournai is perceived to sound akin to SF.

Like the French, the Belgian listeners identified Douzens most easily, though they were not as successful as the French listeners. The Belgians were better at identifying Belgian accents than the French, identifying Liège most commonly as Liège and Gembloux as Gembloux. However, the sample from Tournai was most frequently identified as Gembloux, followed by Treize-Vents, then Tournai.

In contrast to the above-described projects, Rispail and Moreau (2004) investigated identification of *national origin* (Belgian, Luxembourgish or French) in both French and Francique.[29] They found variability in identification skills with regard to Francique. 'French Francique' was successfully identified 73% of the time, whilst Belgian French was correctly identified just 59% of the time. The

[29] Francique is a Germanic regional language comprising a number of varieties which are spoken in an area encompassing parts of Germany, Belgium, France and the entirety of Luxembourg (Rispail & Moreau 2004).

French and Luxembourgish were best at identifying their own speech whilst the Belgians were best at identifying 'French Francique'. Looking at the patterns in the responses, the researchers deduced that the border between France and Luxembourg is most clearly delineated linguistically, hence there being the fewest errors for the French and Luxembourgers. Whilst the Franco-Belgian border appeared quite distinct for respondents from these countries, the Luxembourgers did not see the distinction between them. The Belgo-Luxembourgish border is different from the others: it was clear for the Belgians but less so for the French and Luxembourgers.

With regard to the French language samples, it was found that the French were best at identifying their own speech (88.2% correct) and were unable to distinguish between Belgian and Luxembourgish French (p. 61). From this, Rispail and Moreau concluded that political boundaries were not as meaningful. The Belgian respondents were worst at identifying Belgian French: they had a 56.9%[30] success rate with Belgian French compared to 63.8% for Hexagonal French and 66.7% for Luxembourg French.

Finally, building on these perceptual studies, Bardiaux (2014) investigated perceptions of vowel length in Belgian French. This study was motivated by the proposition that vowel lengthening is the most mentioned and stigmatised prosodic Belgian feature (p. 78). She found that in those samples where vowels were most perceived to be lengthened (in four speakers from Liège, one from Gembloux and one from Tournai (p. 97)) the vowels were sometimes actually shorter than those in other samples containing 'un-marked' tokens, and

[30] 25.9% of the times they thought the speaker was Belgian they were French, whilst 17.2% of times they were actually Luxembourgish (Rispail & Moreau 2004: 58).

samples representing SF. From this, Bardiaux concluded that parameters other than vowel lengthening must be involved in shaping perceptions; namely suprasegmental parameters such as intensity and fundamental frequency and segmental parameters such as the nature of the vowel, the consonantal context, syllable perception and position in the phrase. Perception, she concluded, is conditioned by many interacting factors.

In a further study, Bardiaux established that, responding to both natural and synthesised vowels, both Belgian and French participants identified the same tokens as being salient. Overall the stimuli with lengthened vowels were rated as more 'marked'[31] (Bardiaux 2014: 108), illustrating that prosodic traits *are* part of representations of Belgian French.

Respondents also identified several other features as salient: reduction of final consonant groups as in 'ministre*';* velarisation of /l/ or diphthongisation of final vowel in words ending with /l/ such as 'officielles'*;* and closure of /ɛ/ to [e] in words such as 'vraiment' and 'baisser', often associated with the impression of lengthening, indicated in written commentaries by auditors as 'vrééément*'* and 'bééésser*'* (ibid., p. 110). Bardiaux also found that variation in /R/ realisation was mentioned as salient; more often by French respondents, which illustrates variation in perception of the variable and indexical status. In contrast, the Belgian participants were better at identifying regional origin from speech stimuli than the French, who mentioned similarities with rural north-eastern France (2014: 110).

[31] By which we infer they were less neutral 'show[ing] the presence of additional characteristics' (Swann et al 2004: 198).

2.2.5 A summary of phonological variation, language attitudes and linguistic perceptions in the (Franco)-Belgian borderland

Across the literature, a clear pattern emerges wherein the behaviour observed in the borderland city of Tournai is distinct from behaviour elsewhere in Belgium. This pattern holds for neutralisation of vocalic oppositions, dieresis, centralisation of vowels, maintenance of length distinction as a replacement for a deleted <s>, word-final consonant devoicing, prepausal schwas, realisation of /e/ in monosyllables such as ‘mes’, ‘des’, ‘ses’ and ‘les’, consonant cluster simplification, maintenance of the /a/-/ɑ/ distinction, and a back realisation of /a/.

In all but the last two cases, the same pattern emerges: one where a lower frequency (if not complete absence) of the non-standard variant is observed in Tournai. This regional behavioural pattern is addressed in the literature: Hambye and Simon (2012: 133) draw on Eckert’s (2000) work, suggesting the pattern evidences a progressive tendency for speakers in Tournai to adopt a variety which is more ‘advanced’ (Eckert 2000: 88). While no further explanation is given, it can be assumed that what is meant is that the speech in Tournai is more like SF. Implicit in this explanation is the assumption that French in Tournai is converging in the direction of SF; however, the idea is not addressed. On the other hand, in a later work, Hambye and Simon (2012: 131–132) suggest that the similarity between Tournai French and French in France may be because of proximity to Lille, resulting in contact with French nationals. Finally, Hambye (2005: 369) suggests this may be due to Tournaisiens feeling symbolically closer to the French than other Walloons.

Hambye (2005: 94) takes a similar approach when explaining the observed behaviour of the vowel in monosyllables such as ‘mes’, ‘des’, ‘ses’ and ‘les’ with the standard /e/ in Tournai and [ɛ] elsewhere. He describes the pattern in Tournai as reflecting a correspondence between French spoken in Tournai and the dominant usage in France. Implicit in this account is the same suggestion: that the French in Tournai is converging on (or has always been more like) SF in France[32]. This is as far as the explanation goes. And since neither of these theories is supported by empirical evidence, the questions remain as to why French in Tournai is apparently so distinct from French elsewhere in Francophone Belgium and, since findings are based on small samples, whether the French in Tournai does really sound more like SF.

As for language attitudes and linguistic perceptions, as far as the researcher is aware, there have been no specific investigations concerning these two subjects in the Belgian borderland. However, two patterns emerge from the perceptual investigations that have been carried out on Belgian French reviewed above. The first is that whilst respondents generally are better at recognising speech from their own region, respondents from Tournai are not. The second pattern to emerge is one where samples from Tournai are amongst the least identifiable, and the speech is often identified as having come from Gembloux, Belgium (situated southeast of Brussels, approximately 110 kilometres east of Tournai), or even Treize-Vents, France (representing SF). All

[32] What is more, the tendency to realise /e/ as [ɛ] in words such as ‘mes’ and ‘les’ is one of the ones commonly described as belonging to or contributing to the existence of an endogenous norm (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc). The fact that it is absent from Tournai, and thus not common *across* the region, would therefore be an argument against the notion of an endogenous norm. Or, alternatively, it could be argued that the endogenous norm does not stretch as far as Tournai. Either way, neither issue is explicitly addressed in the literature, except through the suggestion, by Hambye (2005), that different linguistic markets may be in operation in Tournai.

the same, these are the only known perceptual findings relating to the Belgian borderland, and thus there is a distinct gap in the knowledge regarding both attitudes and perceptions in this part of Belgium.

Having reviewed the research that has been done on French in Belgium and perceptions of it, we now go on to discuss the phonological objects of investigation in the study.

2.3 Objects of investigation: (e) and (o)

There are two phonological variables at the heart of this study: (e) and (o). Before situating them in the wider French phonological system and describing their behaviour in Hexagonal French, we will present the reasons for selecting them as variables.

2.3.1 Motivation for selecting (e) and (o) as the phonological variables

As identified in the literature review above (2.2.3), scholars argue that maintenance of vocalic oppositions, especially the mid-vowels, is a feature of French in Belgium. However, in the Belgian borderland with France, and specifically in Tournai, the evidence suggests that these contrasts are not as well maintained as they are elsewhere in Francophone Belgium. As will be seen below, a good deal of research has been carried out on the mid-vowels in France and it would appear that the behaviour in the Belgian borderland is indeed more similar to that in France than to that elsewhere in Francophone Belgium. Thus, since this project is concerned with the state – as well as an

explanation – of borderland Belgian French, it was decided that the mid-vowels would be fitting for the study.

Given the scope and limitations of a doctoral project, it was decided that just two phonological variables would be investigated. A detailed review of the literature on the mid-vowels showed that not only does the pair /ø/-/œ/ occur much less frequently in French than either /e/-/ɛ/ or /o/-/ɔ/, but there is that there is more existing literature concerning the latter pairs, which display geographically and socially diverse patterns in change and variation. Thus /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ were selected as the variables for the study. They will be represented as (e) and (o).

We now go on to detail the behaviour of the mid-vowels as a subset of the French phonological system, then review the variation and change that has been observed in the realisations of /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ in France.

2.3.2 The mid-vowels in French

French has an oral vowel system consisting of eleven vowels not including the schwa (Tranel 1998: 36), which are realised with four degrees of openness: open, open-mid, close-mid and close (Figure 2-3):

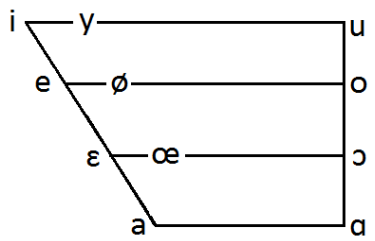

Figure 2-3. The oral vowels in Standard French

The six mid-vowels, three of which have a close-mid realisation: /e/, /ø/, /o/ and three of which have an open-mid one: /ɛ/, /ɔ/, /œ/, form a sub-system of the phonological system. The vowels function in pairs (Tranel 1998: 51) which are composed of two vowels whose realisation differs by degree of openness alone: /e/-/ɛ/, /o/-/ɔ/ and /ø/-/œ/. For this reason the mid-vowels are known is French as 'voyelles à double timbre'. These pairs have near-complementary distribution and as such are often referred to as the archiphonemes /E/, /O/ and /Ø/ (Carton 1974; Vion 1974; Lefebvre 1991; Hall 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Léon 2011).

The near-complementary distribution of the three mid-vowel pairs sees the close-mid-vowels /e/, /ø/ and /o/ found in open syllables whilst the open-mid ones /ɛ/ /ɔ/ /œ/ are found in closed syllables as in 'chez'-'cher': /ʃe/-/ʃɛʀ/, 'peu'-'peur': /pø/-/pœr/ and 'sot'-'sotte': /so/-/sɔt/. Traditionally, this distribution – known as the *loi de position* ('law of position') – has applied categorically in the *Midi* such that a system of allophonic variation is found. In the *Oïl* region, however, the situation is more complex and the realisation of the vowel is conditioned by orthography, morphology and phonological environment as well as the *loi de position.* Taking into consideration these factors, Table 2-1 outlines the behaviour of /E/ in SF, Table 2-2 the behaviour of /O/, and Table 2-3 the behaviour of /Ø/.

/E/							
Stressed syllable							
Open, stressed				**Closed, stressed**			
Open, stressed syllable	/e./ /ɛ./[33]			Closed, stressed syllable	/ɛC/	'belle'	/bɛl/
'-é, -er, -ez'	/e./	'été'	/ete/				
'-è, -ê, -ai[34], -ect, -et'	/ɛ./	'fôret'	/fɔʀɛ/				
'et'(and)	/e./	'et'	/e/				
Unstressed syllable[35]							
Open, unstressed				**Closed, unstressed**			
Open, unstressed syllable	/e./ /ɛ./[36]			Closed, unstressed syllables	/ɛC/	'secteur'	/sɛktœːʀ/
'-é'	/e./	'février'	/fevʀije/	'ex-, es-'[37]	/eC/	'espace'	
'-é' closed after loss of schwa	/ɛC/	'médecine'	/mɛdsin/				
'e-, -ff, -ll, -sc[38], -ss'	/e./	'descendre'	/desɑ̃ːdʀ/				
'de-, re-'[39] (prefixes)	/ø./	'dessus'	/døsy/				
'-ai'	/ɛ./	'saison'	/sɛzõ/				
'err-'	/ɛ.ʀ/	'erreur'	/ɛʀœːʀ/				
Influence of root[40]	/ɛC/→[ɛ.]	'pêche → pêcher'	/pɛʃ/→[pɛʃe]				
Vowel harmony	/ɛ./→[e.]	'pêcher'	/pɛʃe/→[peʃe]				

Table 2-1. Behaviour of /E/ in SF

[33] Orthography plays a central role in determining which vowel is realised in this position and thus is usually sufficient for deducing the pronunciation. Girard and Lyche (1997), who describe the minimal pairs in general as allophonic, claim that the existence of minimal pairs in this position would indicate the pair are allophonic as opposed to phonemic; however, since intraspeaker variation for the same word exists, they conclude it is nevertheless one phoneme with two allophones.

[34] Also 'ais/ait/aient/ai'; however, Martinet and Walter (1973) describe a close-mid [e] realisation of '-ai'.

[35] Unstressed syllables favour neutralisation, so choice is clearly not conditioned solely by the *loi de position* (Girard & Lyche 1997).

[36] Orthography plays a central role in this position too; however, free variation and neutralisation are also common in this position as are intermediate realisations, and vowel harmony is similarly possible in this context (Martinet & Walter 1973).

[37] With words such as 'exiger', 'espace', 'extirper', 'exode', 'expliquer', 'espacer', 'exprès', 'escargot', this is an increasing tendency; a phenomenon linked to the fact that the internal 's' may be in coda position or onset (Girard & Lyche 1997).

[38] In contrast to this, Martinet and Walter (1973) claim that certain people realise the prefix 'de-' in 'descendre' as [dɛsɑ̃dʀ] in order to distinguish it from 'des cendres' [desɑ̃dʀ].

[39] All graphemes, with the exception of the 'de-', and 're-', prefixes, are realised [ɛ] (Girard and Lyche 1997).

[40]Or, for example, [pʀɛt] in 'j'interprète' bringing about [ɛ̃tɛʀpʀɛte] instead of [ɛ̃tɛʀpʀete] (Walter & Martinet 1973).

/O/							
Stressed syllable							
Open, stressed				**Closed, stressed**			
Open, stressed syllable	/o./	'beau'	[bo]	Closed, stressed syllable	/ɔC/	'port'	/pɔʀt/
				'ô, au, eau'	/oC/	'dome'	/do:m/
				/-ʀ/ (including after au)	/ɔʀ/	'faure'	/fɔ:ʀ/
				Exceptional feminine derivatives[41]	/oC/	'grosse'	/gʀo:s/
				/-z/	/oz/	'dose'	/do:z/
				'-ome, one, -osse'[42]	/oC/	'atone'	/ato:n/
Unstressed syllable[43]							
Open, unstressed				**Closed, unstressed**			
Open, unstressed syllable	/ɔ./	'avocat'	/avɔka/	Closed, unstressed syllable	/ɔC/	'postuler'	/pɔstyle/
'ô, au'	/o./	'aurifier'	/oʀifje/[44]	'au'	/oC/	'ex-haustive'	/ɛgzostiv/
'-o' in a prefix as a unit	/o./	'rhino-pharingite'	/ʀinofaʀɛ̃ʒit/	/-ʀ/	/ɔʀ/	'sorcière'	/sɔʀsjɛ:ʀ/
'-o' as a more integrated prefix	/ɔ./	'rhinocerous'	/ʀinɔseʀɔs/	Derivatives of [o] in root word	/oC/	'rose→ roseraie'	/ʀo:z/→ [ʀozʀɛ]
/-z/	/o.z/	'philosophie'	/filozofi/	/-z/	/oz/	position-ner	/pozisjɔne/
'o' in a syllable followed by a syllable with a close vowel[45]	/œ./	'joli'	/ʒœli/				

Table 2-2. Behaviour of /O/ in SF

[41] This is an exception as 'sot' [so] → 'sotte' [sɔt] (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[42] Exceptions are 'madone', 'cortisone', 'Ecosse' (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[43] Unstressed syllables favour neutralisation, so choice is clearly not conditioned solely by the *loi de position* (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[44] Such a realisation results in the minimal pair 'horrifier'-'aurifier': [ɔʀifje]-[oʀifje] (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[45] See Martinet and Walter (1973).

/Ø/							
Stressed syllable							
Open, stressed				**Closed, stressed**			
Open, stressed syllable	/ø./	'feu'	/fø/	Closed, stressed syllable	/œC/	'oeil'	/œj/
				'eû'	/øC/	'jeûne'	/ʒøːn/
				/-z/	/øC/	'gueuse'	/gøːz/
				/-ʒ/	/øC/	'Maubeuge'	/mobøːʒ/
				/-t/	/øC/	'émeute'	/emøːt/
				/tr̥/	/øC/	'neutre'	/nøːtʀ/
Unstressed syllable[46]							
Open, unstressed				**Closed, unstressed**			
Open, un-stressed syllable	/ø./ /œ./ [47]	'jeudi'	/ʒødi/ /ʒœdi/	**Closed, un-stressed syllables**	***/ø./ /œ./***		
Influence of root	/œ./ ← /œC/	'neuvième ← neuf'	/nœvjɛm/ ← /nœf/	/-R/[48]	/œʀ/	'meutrier'	/mœrrtʀije/
No influence of root	/øC/ → [œ.]	'jeûne→ 'jeûner'	/ʒøn/→ [ʒœne]	/-z/[49]	/øz/	'chaleureu-sement'	/ʃalørøzmɑ̃/
No influence of root	/œC/ → /ø./	'cœur → écœuré'	/kœʀ/ → [ekøʀe]				

Table 2-3. Behaviour of /Ø/ in SF

2.3.3 The phonological variable (e)

2.3.3.1 Paris and the Oïl region

In Paris and the *Oïl* region a decrease in maintenance of the opposition /e/-/ɛ/ is taking place (Lefebvre 1991; Landick 1995; Fagyal et al. 2002; Hall 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). Hansen and Juillard (2011), who carried out a real-time trend study of Parisian speech, found a decrease from 69% maintenance of the opposition /e/-/ɛ/ in their 1972–74 corpus to 52% in the 2001–04 corpus. Landick (1995) too observed a decrease

[46] Unstressed syllables favour neutralisation, so choice is clearly not conditioned solely by the *loi de position* (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[47] This position allows free variation (Girard & Lyche 1997).
[48] Walter (1976: 193).
[49] Walter (1976: 193).

over time, with a more marked decline in opposition maintenance in syllable-penultimate as opposed to syllable-final position.

This loss of opposition is predominantly the result of two changes in linguistic behaviour, the first of which is an increase in /ɛ/ realised as [e]. Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013), for example, found in data gathered from six sites in the north of France[50] that 46% /ɛ/ → [e]. Lefebvre (1991) too uncovered this pattern in her study of radio speech from *France Inter*: she found 1% deviation from underlying /e/ and 77% deviation from underlying /ɛ/[51]. Moreover, in a subset of data of the traditionally morphologically and orthographically conditioned /E/ in stressed open syllables, with /e/ in '-é', '-ed', '-er', 'ez' and '-ai', and /ɛ/ in '-ais', '-ait', '-et' and '-ès', Hansen and Juillard (2011: 327) found 85% /e/ realised as [e] and only 53.7% /ɛ/ → [ɛ]. With an overall increase in [e] in open syllables, the pattern observed in this subset shows increased adherence to the *loi de position,* a pattern also observed in verb inflections by Gadet (1989: 93)[52].

The second reported change in behaviour is an increased number of intermediate realisations in both unstressed syllables (Léon 1973; Lefebvre 1988; Gadet 1989: 93; Coveney 2001) and stressed syllables (Gadet 1989: 93; Coveney 2001). Hansen and Juillard (2011: 314) observed this phenomenon to be affecting underlying /ɛ/ to a greater extent than /e/[53]. Thus, once again, a tendency towards raising is observed, Moreover, Fagyal et al. (2002) found in

[50] The sites, which were investigated as part of the *Projet PFC,* comprise: Brécey, Brunoy, Dijon, Lyon-Villeurbanne, Roanne and Treize-Vents (Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013).
[51] As underlying forms, Lefebvre took those forms listed in Martinet and Walter (1973).
[52] Though observed in Paris, Girard and Lyche (1997) describe this behaviour as a trait of French in Normandy with, for example, 'près' and 'pré' being homophones.
[53] Hansen and Juillard (2011: 314) also note that Carton (2000) describes the same pattern, with /e/-/ɛ/ in tonic open syllables being realised either with an intermediate vowel or otherwise respecting the *loi de position* with a realisation as [e].

their acoustic analysis of the speech of their upper middle-class Parisian informants that certain minimal pairs had merged completely whilst in others convergence was seen in either F1 or F2[54] values. These findings, they suggest, evidence a move towards a loss of phonemic contrast.

However, changes in behaviour of the pair /e/-/ɛ/ are not categorical; rather, the vowels are affected more in certain contexts than in others. For example, Hansen and Juillard (2011) observed over time a weakening effect of the *loi de position* in atonic open position (which expects a mid-high /e/): a decrease in [e] from 80.6% to 61.3% was seen between their two corpora. Similarly, they found an increase in mid-high realisations in stressed closed syllables (which expect a mid-low /ɛ/)[55], though even within this context behaviour varied according to phonological environment: raising was found to be less developed when the vowel preceded /ʀ/ than when followed by other consonants.

In addition to syllabic constraints, lexical constraints are also found to influence behaviour of the pair as a vocalic opposition too. Certain function words, such as 'mais' and auxiliaries, favour an intermediate variant (Lefebvre 1988; Fagyal et al. 2002; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013) – this behaviour is expected given the tendency for these words to be unstressed.

Landick (2004) found in her 1986 reading task a greater propensity for word-final oppositions to be lost in certain minimal pairs: 'gai'-'guet', 'gré'-'grès',

[54] F1 and F2 refer to the first and second formants of the vowel, formants being 'amplified frequency bands' (Swann et al 2004: 115), which change as the shape of the vocal tract changes.
[55] In fact, closing of vowels in closed syllables such that 'fumeur' is pronounced [fymøʀ] and 'tête' is pronounced [te:t] is described as a trait of Alsace (Girard & Lyche 1997) and Nord-Picardie (Carton et al. 1983).

‘mes’-‘mais’, ‘mes’-‘mai’, ‘mes’-‘mets’. Furthermore, contrary to the observed increase in adherence to the *loi de position,* she also found realisations of ‘les’ and ‘mes’ as [ɛ][56]. Moreover, within this subset, certain phonological environments were found to have an effect on the vowel realisation: a preceding [ʀ] was found to have an opening effect, resulting in ‘gré’ being realised as [gʀɛ][57]. Orthography too had an effect, the spelling ‘ai’ encouraging [ɛ] in ‘gai’[58].

Both inter- and intra-speaker variation is observed in the behaviour of this pair with variation (as opposed to categorical realisation or categorical neutralisation) being the most commonly observed pattern in Lefebvre’s (1991) *France Inter* corpus. Fagyal et al. (2002: 167) even report a crossover in formant values of minimal pairs with one of their informants realising the words ‘thé’ and ‘jouer’ with a more open vowel than ‘taie’ and ‘jouet’.

Although Hansen and Juillard (2011) did not find that social group affected maintenance of oppositions, Landick (1995) did. Her informants were workers from the *Ecole Nationale Superieure (ENS)* and from the *Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP)* representing those with a higher and lower socioeconomic status respectively. She found 58% of oppositions were maintained by the *ENS* sample whilst a higher rate of 68% was found for the *RATP* sample. However, this unexpected pattern was due to an extremely high percentage of maintained oppositions for the informants belonging to the middle age group of *RATP* informants: the ‘majors’ (83%). In contrast, Hall (2008: 183)

[56] This phenomenon is also reported by Deyhime (1967) who found an open [ɛ] in 36% of realisations of the definite article ‘les’ in his Parisian corpus. This realisation is also reported to be a trait of Belgian French (Francard 2001).
[57] Coveney (2001) describes a general trend, citing Lennig’s findings (1978: 78, 1979: 37), of a tendency among younger speakers to realise /ɛ/ with more open realisation and that preceding /R/ favours this lowering.
[58] Although this is actually described in Girard and Lyche (1997) as the standard form.

found much higher rates of mergers in rural Normandy than urban Normandy and in the lower socioeconomic group (ibid., p. 191).

Coveney (2001), on the other hand, reports that whilst less common before /ʀ/ than before other consonants in closed syllables, the raising of /ɛ/ before word-final /ʀ/, as in [bjeʁ̥], is found in youth speech in the *banlieues*. As for sex, whilst neither Landick (1995; 2005) nor Hansen & Juillard (2011) stratified their corpora according to sex, Hall (2008: 183) did. However, he did not find any significant difference in realisation of the opposition between men and women in Normandy.

Style-shifting is observed in the behaviour of this mid-vowel pair (Fagyal et al. 2002; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). A greater tendency to realise /ɛ/ as [e] is observed in informal speech (Fagyal et al. 2002: 166), whilst less merging is observed in formal speech (Hall 2008: 192) and these patterns, along with the maintenance of oppositions by Landick's (1995) 'majors', would suggest a certain sensitivity to the variable in the *Oïl* region and awareness of what is perceived to be standard. On the other hand, Hall (2008: 195) argues that a merged pair is becoming prestigious amongst younger speakers in urban Normandy because of its association with Paris.

/ɛ/-/ɛː/

As well as the /e/-/ɛ/ opposition, /ɛ/ also opposes /ɛː/, as in 'faite'-'fête': /fɛt/-/fɛːt/. This is a recessive opposition and although most often found in open word-final syllables (Martinet & Walter 1973) it has now largely disappeared (Lefebvre 1991; Landick 1995). Landick observed in her study of informants working for

the *RATP* and the *ENS* an apparent-time decrease in percentage maintenance, with the opposition being better maintained by the *ENS* at 16% on average compared with the *RATP* at 5%, with these figures dropping to just 10% and 0% for the *ENS* 'juniors' and *RATP* 'juniors' respectively.

2.3.3.2 The Midi

The normative behaviour in the *Midi*[59] of the opposition /e/-/ɛ/ is categorical adherence to the *loi de position* such that the pair are in complementary distribution and thus are allophonic as opposed to phonemic (Carton et al. 1983: 51; Girard & Lyche 1997; Coveney 2001). However, this distribution is undergoing change, such that the *loi de position* is less respected. Of the sub-group '-ais', '-aît', '-et', '-spect' and '-près', Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) found that 71% of /ɛ/ were raised to [e], meaning that 29% of tokens deviated from the normative southern [e][60]. This finding suggests a process of convergence towards the northern norm may be taking place, a pattern corroborated by an observed growing tendency among the youth in the *Midi* to realise oppositions such as 'pré'-'près'[61] (Girard & Lyche 1997).

In contrast to the findings of Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013), Violin-Wigent's (2009) study of Briançon French showed very few deviations from the southern norm; in fact only five tokens occurred in her corpus of speech from twenty-five speakers, and one of those tokens she considered may have been due to vowel harmony[62]. Nevertheless, three of the tokens were produced by under-20 year

[59] The term 'Midi' refers to the south of France.
[60] This percentage takes in all speech styles: word list, read text, directed interview and free conversation.
[61] Girard and Lyche (1997) suggest this is due to the influence of the media on pronunciation.
[62] Vowel harmony is a phonological phenomenon wherein the quality of one vowel has an effect on the quality of another in a neighbouring syllable. It may occur in two directions; the second

olds, a result evidencing the tendency of younger informants to converge on the northern norm (Violin-Wigent 2009: 105).

Somewhat contradicting the suggestion of a move towards standardisation are the findings of Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) which reveal style-shifting in the sub-group comprising '-ais', '-aît', '-et', '-spect' and '-près'. In the word list, 91% /ɛ/ → [e], whilst in free conversation 65% /ɛ/ → [e]. This pattern reveals that as attention paid to speech increases, conformity to the *loi de position* increases whilst conformity to the northern standard decreases. This indicates that the perceived prestige norm remains distinct in the *Midi*, with adherence to the *loi de position* taking precedence over standard forms.

2.3.3.3 The Nord

In the *Nord*, the northernmost region of France which borders with Belgium, linguistic behaviour diverges to a certain extent from that of the *Oïl* region more generally. The closure of /ɛ/ to [e] in open, word-final syllables is described as a trait of Northern Regional French (Carton et al. 1983: 24; Hornsby 2006)[63,64]. This realisation sees the pair as allophonic as opposed to phonemic as, following the *loi de position,* /ɛ/ becomes raised in open position; however, other studies do evidence the occurrence of an open-mid realisation in this context (Lefebvre 1991). Similarly, whilst SF dictates realisation in non-final open syllables to be orthographically, phonetically and morphologically conditioned

vowel may have an effect on the first vowel, causing the first to assimilate in quality to the second (regressive assimilation) or, conversely, the first vowel may affect the second, causing it to assimilate to the first (progressive assimilation).

[63] The term Northern Regional French, coined by Hornsby (2006: 2), refers to the emergent regional variety of French spoken in Northern France.

[64] Hornsby bases this description on Carton et al.'s (1983: 23-27) account of 'an area (Nord-Picardie) extending slightly beyond the boundaries of traditional linguistic Picardie to encompass the whole Aisne and Oise to the south' (Hornsby 2006: 48).

(Girard & Lyche 1997), a generally close realisation is reported in this context in Northern Regional French.

Variation is, however, found to occur in this region according to phonological environment. Lefebvre (1991) found a tendency to close /ɛ/ before both /l/ and /ʀ/, with this tendency being stronger for the latter of the two. This realisation has been described by Carton et al. (1983) as a trait of Northern Regional French and one differing from *Oïl* French in general in which, with the exception of speech in the *banlieues,* raising is less developed in front of /ʀ/ than in front of other consonants.

As has been observed in Paris and other parts of the *Oïl* region, and outlined above, an apparent decline in maintenance of opposition in all phonological contexts is also reported in the speech of the Lille area. Lefebvre (1991) found in the minimal pair task that 40% of the 60–80 year old informants did not make the opposition whilst this number rose for the 15–24 year olds to 59%. In conversation the percentages were even higher at 75% and 94% respectively.

The pair is also subject to style-shifting in this region of France. Although the opposition is not generally made[65], as attention paid to speech diminishes, fewer oppositions are made. Furthermore, as attention paid to speech or formality of task increases, an increase in hypercorrections and in intra-speaker variation is observed (Lefebvre 1991). A gender effect is also notable: although no difference in behaviour was observed in conversation style, Lefebvre found

[65] 77% of Lefebvre's (1991: 76) informants (all ages together) never made the opposition in the conversation task and, even in the minimal pair task, only 7% of informants distinguished all minimal pairs.

that women maintained the opposition more than men in the minimal pair task and that they also displayed more variation between styles and more intra-speaker variation.

As for the pair /fɛt/-/fɛːt/, Lefebvre (1991) found that men maintained the opposition more than women (with the exception of when carrying out the questionnaire task), a distribution which indicates that it is a conservative variant. Since Lefebvre (1991: 160) found the distinction was never used in conversation or reading, she concluded that it cannot be considered a social marker.

Style-shifting is most notable amongst younger speakers, a pattern indicating the influence of the teaching of this opposition in schools: young speakers, though they do not make oppositions in casual speech, have them in their repertoire and are thus able to use them in metalinguistic tasks (Lefebvre 1991).

Lefebvre also found that closure of /ɛ/ in front of /ʀ/ – and to a lesser extent in front of /l/ – increased as attention paid to speech did, a behaviour which she claims may be accounted for with one of two potential explanations: (i) hypercorrection, with the raised variant being perceived as a prestige one or (ii) maintenance of the local Picard feature[66]. An interaction with sex of speaker points to the first explanation being the more likely one since in all tasks (with the exception of the reading task) for words with /_ʀ/, women realised more close vowels than men – a pattern indicating the wider perception of the raised realisation as a prestige variant in this region (Lefebvre 1991: 108).

[66] Lefebvre (1991) claims that closure of the vowel in front of /_ʀ/ is attested in the *Picard lillois* of Desrousseaux, though absent in the *Picard tourquennois* of Broutteux.

However, the behaviour of the opposition /e/-/ɛ/ in general suggests that it is not considered a prestige norm, since fewer hypercorrections were found by Lefebvre (1991) for this pair than for other mid-vowel oppositions. Nevertheless, the observation of style-shifting would indicate an awareness of the value of the variable. Moreover, it is the middle age group of informants, aged 25–39, that realise the greatest percentage of oppositions, both in conversation and the questionnaire task, a pattern which has been found in other sociolinguistic studies to indicate behaviour in line with 'standard' norms (Downes 1984; Trudgill 2003: 3). On the other hand, Lefebvre (1991: 108) argues that the behaviour of /ɛ/ in blocked position indicates two seemingly contradictory linguistic imaginaries may come into play with the vowel. The first of these entails the raised variant – a Picard feature – being an indicator of local speech predominantly for men, whilst the second sees it considered an indicator of the norm, attributed to the prestige variety, above all by women.

2.3.4 The phonological variable (o)

2.3.4.1 Paris and the Oïl region

As with the pair /e/-/ɛ/, a decrease in maintenance of opposition of the pair /o/-/ɔ/ has been observed. For example, Hansen and Juillard's (2011: 323) real-time trend study revealed an overall decrease across their two corpora from 89% maintenance in the first corpus to 72% in the second. More specifically, the change appears to be more marked in certain contexts; for example, a decrease in maintenance of graphically-conditioned oppositions has been observed such that the graphemes <au>, <eau> and <ô>, traditionally realised with a close-mid [o], are increasingly realised with an intermediate variant

(Hansen & Juillard 2011: 330; Landick 2004). This change in behaviour – a move towards the loss of the graphemic opposition between <o>-<au>/<eau>/<ô> – is notable in the neutralisation of certain minimal pairs such as ‘khôl’-‘col’, ‘faure’-‘fort’ and ‘saur’-‘sort’ (Landick 2004; Hansen & Juillard 2011).

An increasing loss of opposition between /o/-/ɔ/ is also found in non-orthographically-conditioned contexts. In stressed open syllables (as in ‘bureau’, ‘trop’), a position in which the *loi de position* dictates a close-mid /o/ vowel, a decrease in realisation of close-mid [o] was observed in Hansen and Juillard’s (2011: 323) real-time study from 98.6% to 79%. This decrease was observed alongside an increase in close-mid or intermediate realisations of <o> in unstressed open syllables (as in ‘nationale’, ‘domicile’), a position in which one would have expected an open-mid /ɔ/ (Girard & Lyche 1997; Hansen & Juillard 2011). Similarly, the <o> in stressed closed syllables (except before /_ʀ/), as in ‘envelope’, ‘école’, ‘sotte’, which historically conformed to the *loi de position* with an open-mid /ɔ/, displays an increasing tendency towards an intermediate or close realisation (Hansen & Juillard 2011). Thus a move away from adherence to the *loi de position* is observed in both open and closed syllables.

Another phenomenon affecting the open-mid /ɔ/ is that of /ɔ/-fronting; that is to say realisation of /ɔ/ as [œ][67] (Martinet 1958 cited in Armstrong & Low 2008; Lennig 1978: 83 cited in Coveney 2001; Girard & Lyche 1997; Carton 2001; Coveney 2001; Landick 1995, 2004; Armstrong & Low 2008; Woehrling 2009;

[67] Coveney (2001) also reports Lennig’s finding of a similar and commonly occurring phenomenon in Paris: centralisation of the close-mid /o/ vowel giving rise to forms such as [ʃöz]: ‘chose’. This was most frequent in closed syllables, however, since ‘chaud’ was realised as [ʃo] (Lennig 1979: 34–5 cited in Coveney 2001: 97).

Aubanel & Nguyen 2010; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). This phenomenon is not a recent innovation[68]; it was attested as early as the 17th Century by Vaugelas (1647: 52 cited in Armstrong & Low 2008: 435) who condemned the pronunciation of 'commencer' as 'quemencer'[69].

Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) found in their corpus of northern French that, though not the majority variant, just under a third of underlying /ɔ/ tokens were fronted: [ɔ] = 48%, [o] = 22% and [œ] = 30%, and that the phenomenon was more frequent in certain lexical items: 'd'accord', 'personne', 'notre', 'votre', 'olympiques', 'officielles', 'connais' and 'socialisme'. Moreover, Armstrong and Low (2008) assert that certain conditions have been found to favour the emergence of this variant: semantic weight, lexical frequency, word category, syllabification and stress, and phonological environment[70]. The most significant of these, they attest, is the phonological environment following the vowel; the frontness of the consonant with regard to tongue position will have a constraining effect on /ɔ/ since 'assimilation generally proceeds in an "anticipatory" or "regressive" direction' (Armstrong & Low 2008: 439). The phenomenon is greater in word-final closed syllables than in non-final syllables; Aubanel and Nguyen (2010: 12) found percentage of fronting in these two contexts to be 52% and 18% respectively.

Returning to the back mid-vowel opposition, even in seemingly socially homogenous groups of individuals, considerable inter-speaker variation is

[68] In fact, the fronting of back rounded vowels is not a phenomenon which is unique to French but, rather, is found in many languages (Labov 1994: 116).
[69] Armstrong and Low (2008) describe this as historically a functional phenomenon, evidence for which, they claim, is seen in patterns uncovered in Martinet's (1945) study.
[70] An environment in which /ɔ/ is followed by /_ʀ/ favours /ɔ/-fronting (Gadet 1992: 33 cited in Coveney 2001; Fougeron & Smith 1993: 75; Girard & Lyche 1997; Coveney 2001: 97) giving a realisation of 'alors' as [alœːʀ] or, similarly, 'amour' as [amyːʀ] (Girard & Lyche 1997).

observed in the realisation of the pair /o/-/ɔ/. For example, in her 1986 study, Landick (1995) found individuals' percentages of oppositions in syllable-final context varied from 35% to 94%. Nevertheless, despite this individual variation, behaviour of the pair as an opposition is found to vary according to social class belonging. In fact, an apparent-time decrease in maintenance of oppositions is observed across the social spectrum; however, the decline is more marked for those with a higher socioeconomic background such that, though historically they conserved more oppositions, behaviour across the spectrum is now converging in both word-final (Landick 1995; Hansen & Juillard 2011)[71] and penultimate position (Landick 1995).

Moreover, as with the raising of /ɛ/ → [e] in front of /ʀ/, the raising of /ɔ/ → [o] in words such as 'mort' and 'police', giving rise to [moʁ] and [polis], is described by Jamin (1999 cited in Coveney 2001: 95–96) as a trait of working-class speakers in the Parisian *banlieues*[72].

/ɔ/-fronting too is found to vary according to social class. Landick (1995) found a greater frequency of fronted /ɔ/ variants in the speech of the *ENS* than the *RATP* with percentages at 38% and 29% respectively. Moreover, those

[71] Analysing realisations of syllable-final oppositions in the 1988 data by socioeconomic group and age, Landick (1995) uncovered an apparent-time convergence in the speech of the youngest individuals from an average of 79% for those in the *ENS* group and 69% for those in the *RATP* group to 67% and 65% for the youngest *ENS* and *RATP* groups respectively. Hansen and Juillard (2011) found a similar pattern too: in their first corpus (1972–74), a larger percentage of oppositions were maintained by the group with the higher socioeconomic background (94%) than that with a lower one (83%); however, in the second corpus (2001–4) , the gap had closed and percentage maintenance was 72% for both groups (Hansen & Juillard 2011: 333–334).

[72] Coveney describes how 'this parallels the raising of /ɛ/ to [e] and of /œ/ to [ø] in the same accent, and is another example of the way that variation and change in one set of oral vowels are often matched by similar patterns in the two other series. It is also possible that the raising of / ɔ/ to [o] in the *banlieues* accent is connected with the frequent use of the back [ɑ]: in order to avoid confusion with the latter, the vowel in words that have [ɔ] in SF shifted further away from [ɑ], and up to [o]' (2001: 95-96).

displaying the highest frequencies were the individuals belonging to the middle age band, with percentages of 49% and 34% respectively, a pattern which, according to sociolinguistic theory (Downes 1984: 191; Trudgill 2003: 3), indicates this is no longer perceived to be a vernacular variant, but, rather a standard or prestige variant.

Not just sensitive to social variation, /ɔ/-fronting also displays style-shifting; however, the stylistic behaviour of the variable suggests it has a different status to its social distribution. [ɔ] was found by Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) to be the majority variant in the word list task with rates of fronted [œ] increasing as attention paid to speech diminished. Contrary to what is inferred from the social patterning, then, stylistic variation would suggest the fronted variant is not a standard or prestige one.

These somewhat contradictory patterns may be explained by the fact that the status of the fronted variant has changed over time. Historically condemned (Vaugelas 1647: 52 cited in Armstrong & Low 2008: 435) and traditionally associated with working-class speech or *français populaire*[73] (Desgranges 1821: 180 cited in Carton 2001; Coveney 2001: 96), /ɔ/-fronting is now described by some as a 'snob' variant (Carton 2001). In fact, corroborating this, Armstrong and Low (2008) observed the greatest frequency of /ɔ/-fronting in the speech of young women. Drawing on sociolinguistic theory which sees women as linguistic innovators who favour prestige variants (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 103), Armstrong and Low (2008: 437) interpret the data to indicate a move towards a levelled variety and, since the change it is being led by women, they

[73] We use the term *français populaire* in the sense described by Lodge (1993: 246): 'to designate the speech of the lower socioeconomic groups in Paris'.

propose the fronted variant is a prestige variant which now indexes social position.

2.3.4.2 The Midi

The normative behaviour of the pair /o/-/ɔ/ in the *Midi* is distinct from Paris and the *Oïl* region since the *loi de position* is applied, meaning the pair is allophonic as opposed to phonemic. Moreover, where in SF graphemic or phonological conditioning result in a close-mid [o] realisation of /ɔ/ in closed syllables, in the *Midi* these close-mid realisations are replaced by /ɔ/ such that, coupled with the southern schwa appendix, 'gauche', 'autre', 'sauve', 'rose' and 'auge' are realised as [gɔʃə], [ɔtʀə], [sɔvə], [rɔzə], [ɔʒə] (Carton et al. 1983: 51; Carton 1987: 41 cited in Pooley 2004a: 352). Indeed, in their investigation of the sub-group comprising words in which /o/ was followed by /z/ and / or was spelled with <au> or <ô> such as 'chose', 'sauf', 'côte', Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) found that whilst in the northern data 72% /o/ → [o], in the data from the *Midi,* this percentage dropped to 43%, revealing a greater adherence to the *loi de position*.

Other regional distinctions are found in the *Midi* in the behaviour of the pair /o/-/ɔ/. For example, Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) found underlying /ɔ/ realised in the south as 38% [ɔ], 52% [o] and 10% [œ], whilst in the northern data the distribution was 48% [ɔ], 22% [o] and 30% [œ], thus revealing the mid-high variant to be the majority variant in the *Midi* and the fronted [œ] to be much rarer in this region[74]. Similarly, underlying /o/ was seen to be more stable in the

[74] Given the low frequency of fronted /ɔ/ → [œ] compared with northern speech, Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013: 81) have suggested that where nasal vowels once served to mark out southern varieties from northern ones, /ɔ/-fronting may now be a better discriminatory feature.

Midi than the *Oïl* region (Woehrling 2009; Aubanel & Nguyen 2010; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013).

As seen from the data above, a change appears to be taking place in the *Midi* in the behaviour of the pair /o/-/ɔ/ with a move away from categorical adherence to the *loi de position.* Moreover, since the literature indicates that younger informants deviate more than older ones from normative southern behaviour, it appears a process of levelling is taking place (Violin-Wigent 2009: 108).

Yet, somewhat contradicting the proposed levelling, Violin-Wigent (2009) found in her analysis of data from Briançon, a *commune* just north of the *Midi* region, that the group most adhering to the *loi de position* were those aged 20–40. Typically this age group displays the most standard, least vernacular speech (Downes 1984: 191; Trudgill 2003: 3) and the informants Violin-Wigent interviewed in this group had the highest number of advanced degrees and were the most mobile (Violin-Wigent 2009: 107). Thus a greater frequency of northern standard variants in this group might have been expected; however, Violin-Wigent (2009: 108)[75] argues a revitalisation and valorisation of regional languages, coupled with a sense of identity tied to local forms, would account for this resistance to levelled standard northern forms and maintenance of local features. Indeed, southern forms of 'jaune' and 'rose' with an [ɔ] where northern French would have an [o] are so salient that this realisation is described as a stereotype[76] of southern speech (Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013), whilst a

[75] This finding, Violin-Wigent (2009) suggests, provides further evidence to support Watt's (2000) claim that social and attitudinal factors may have a more significant effect on dialect levelling than internal factors.
[76]In fact Violin-Wigent (2009) suggests that given the 20–40 year-old females' high retention rate, the *loi de position* may indicate or mark regional identity for this group.

negative attitude of northerners towards this southern realisation is also reported (Violin-Wigent 2009).

2.3.4.3 The Nord

Behaviour of the pair /o/-/ɔ/ in the *Nord* displays certain tendencies observed more generally in the *Oïl* region and Paris such as a general decline in maintenance of the opposition (Lefebvre 1991) and increasing tendency to front both /o/ and /ɔ/ to [œ] (Coveney 2001: 96–97; Hornsby 2006). In his analysis of data gathered in the Lille region, Pooley (2004a: 382) found patterns in line with the phonology outlined by Girard and Lyche (1997) with /_l/ favouring [ɔ], whilst vowels corresponding to the digraph <au> that were closed with /_f/ or /_ʃ/ favoured [o]. In line with SF, /ɔ/ was systematically open [ɔ] before /_ʀ/[77] and Lefebvre (1991) found the majority pronunciation before /_z/ to be a close [o].

Despite sharing some similarities with behaviour in the *Oïl* region, some variation in the *Nord* is attested in the literature. For example, in syllables closed by, though not limited to, [v, z, ʒ] /o/ is reportedly realised as an open-mid [ɔ] where in SF a close-mid [o] would be found. Thus realisations such as [sɔv] 'sauve', [ʀɔz] 'rose' and [ɔʒ] 'auge' are observed (Carton 1987: 41 cited in Pooley 2004a: 352; Lefebvre 1991; Coveney 1996; 2001: 95; Pooley 2004a; Hornsby 2006) and understood to be part of a 'northern vernacular French' (Pooley 2004a: 351). In fact, the open realisation in this context is one which is also found in modern Picard, as in: [əlnɔtʀ] 'le nôtre', [kɔs] 'chose' and [nɔʃ] 'noces' (Flutre 1977: 47 cited in Pooley 2004a). In modern Picard, an open

[77] This finding is telling with regard to the shift observed in this region, since 'historically [oʀ] sequences were markers of Picard' (Pooley 2004a: 382) and indeed a raised variant has been observed in working-class Parisian speech in this context.

realisation may even be fronted to [œ] through a process of partial assimilation to a labial or liquid, as in [fœʀʃ] – meaning ‘force’ or [klœk] – meaning ‘clock’ (Flutre 1977: 47 cited in Pooley 2004a: 362), or it may be fronted in other contexts such as [nœs] ‘noces’ (ibid., p. 362). A few other marginal realisations may be observed[78,79], but the majority of /O/ vowels are realised as open-mid variants in closed syllables and close-mid ones in open syllables, in line with the *loi de position*.

In open non-final syllable – as in ‘beauté’-‘botté’ – a great deal of variability has been observed in the opposition /o/-/ɔ/, even among ‘standard’ speakers (Pooley 2004a: 368). Nevertheless, Lefebvre (1991) found it best maintained in formal speech, with women making a greater percentage of oppositions than men; in her data, 10% of oppositions were made by men in conversation whilst 30% were made by women, and these numbers increased to 30% and 50% respectively in the questionnaire task. A correlation with education and the behaviour of this pair is also found, the opposition being better maintained by those who have a higher level of schooling. Despite it being an indicator of socio-professional group belonging and a marker for older people (Lefebvre 1991), use of the opposition is reportedly in decline, as elsewhere in the *Oïl* area.

[78] Pooley summarises Flutre’s description of ‘some largely context-dependent cases of labialisation where [ɔ] becomes [œ] by partial assimilation to a labial or a liquid e.g. [fœʀʃ] ‘force’ “strength” […], although the [œ] variant occurs occasionally in other contexts, e.g. [nœs] ‘noces’ “wedding”. A raised variant has been noted in the Hainaut, e.g. [puf] ‘pauvre’ “poor”[…] Diphthongised variants have been noted in the Artois and the Ternois and near to the Lille conurbation in Flanders and the Pélève e.g. [pœɔf] ‘pauvre’ “poor […] In the Thiérache nasalised forms of [ɔ] were attested in pre-liquid position, particularly before <l>: [pɔ̃l] “Paul”’ (Pooley 2004a: 362).

[79] For this reason, the argument is made that distribution of the pair /o/-/ɔ/ is more consistent in Picard (Landrecies 1984: 29 cited in Hornsby 2006: 33).

Unlike in open non-final syllables, in closed final syllables the opposition shows little style-shifting and just a small amount of age variation; Pooley (2004a: 384) found that the realisation of [ɔ] (the traditional Picard variant) in closed syllables 'shows remarkable stability', though is more apparent in the speech of his youngest and oldest informants. In contrast, an interaction between gender and linguistic behaviour is observed in certain phonetic environments; namely those of /_z/ and /_R/. Lefebvre (1991) found that whilst more women maintained the phonemic distinction in 'maure'-'mort' – conforming to SF – more men closed the /o/ in front of the /R/ in 'mort' than women in informal speech. In contrast, in formal speech the opposite pattern was seen. Since the normative realisation in this context would be an open-mid /ɔ/, Lefebvre (1991) concludes this finding is the result of the contradictory effects of knowledge of the prestige norm and hypercorrection bringing about the closure of /ɔ/ → [o]. Nevertheless, in general, the gendered variation – where women realise the distinction more than men – conforms to the pattern of a well-established Labovian vernacular feature (Pooley 2004a: 387).

The opposition shows variation according to level of education, with the least well educated displaying greater usage of the open-mid [ɔ] variant in closed syllables where SF would dictate a close-mid variant (Lefebvre 1991; Pooley 2004a). Pooley also found a non-standard open /ɔ/ was used significantly more by textile workers (2004a: 393) and those with a high sense of regional loyalty (p. 403).

Of the three mid-vowel oppositions, this is the one which is the best maintained in the Lille region (Lefebvre 1991). Yet it also displays the greatest intra-speaker

variation and the highest frequency of hypercorrections. Such behaviour points towards the widely accepted view that the non-use of this opposition, that is to say the open [ɔ] where the orthography dictates /o/ in SF, is considered one of the principle indicators of local speech and therefore a social marker for the population (Lefebvre 1991; Pooley 2004a; 2009).

Having reviewed the research on French in Belgium and the literature on (e) and (o), we now go on to explore the growing area of sociolinguistics in which this thesis is situated: 'border linguistics'.

2.4 Border linguistics

In recent years, borders, borderlands and transnationalism have become foci of attention in a number of academic disciplines: from environmental health to history of art, to urban development and mobility, to social anthropology[80]. Linguistics has not been untouched by this scholarly trend; borders and borderlands are increasingly identified as sites of sociolinguistic interest (Foxen 2015a). Linguists concur that borders are intriguing spaces, not only because they are 'zones between stable spaces' (Rosaldo 1988: 65; Appadurai 1988: 19 in Cramer 2010: 4) but because, as Watt and Llamas (2014b: 1) put it, they 'possess unusual potential to reveal the processes that motivate the establishment and ongoing negotiation of human relations'. Such is the scholarly interest that, in 2014, an edited volume, *Language, Borders and Identity* (Watt & Llamas 2014a) was published dealing expressly with language in such spaces.

[80] Authors of articles in the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (2015) were based in or associated with these disciplines.

Border studies, when construed as a subset of sociolinguistic studies, are eclectic in nature. The sites they concern are diverse, as are the research questions scholars ask, theories they engage with, methodologies they employ, data they collect and results they find. We will now explore the diversity in this area of academic inquiry.

A variety of border contexts have been investigated. These include political borders which divide nations such as the American-Canadian border (cf. Boberg 2000, 2014; Burnett 2006; Chambers 2007; 2014b), the USA-Mexico border (cf. Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014; Vigil & Bills 2014), the Uruguay-Brazil border (cf. Waltermire 2014); the Scottish-English border (cf. Kiely et al. 2000; Montgomery 2014; Watt et al. 2014); the Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland border (cf. Kallen 2014); Spain-Portugal (cf. De Oliveira 2002; Beswick 2014); Poland-Belarus (cf. Woolhiser 2003); the Hungarian borderlands (cf. Kontra 2003), and the Nigeria-Benin border (cf. Omoniyi 2004). Regional borders include those between Mexico and New Colorado (cf. Vigil & Bills 2014), Kentucky and Indiana (cf. Cramer 2010) and those around Middlesbrough, UK (cf. Llamas 2006). Britain (2014) has studied a linguistic border – the Fenland dialect boundary in southeast England – which evolved as a result of a physical border and which persists today, despite there no longer being the physical barrier, and others have studied borders which are purely linguistic (cf. Bert & Costa 2014). Across certain national borders such as the USA-Canadian one, there is a shared standard language, whilst across others, such as the Portuguese-Spanish border, the standard languages are different. Certain

studies concern language on predominantly one side of the border (cf. Vigil & Bills 2014), whilst others investigate the language on both (cf. Watt et al. 2014).

From this variety of border contexts stems an equally diverse array of research questions. Certain scholars have investigated the linguistic variation or lack thereof seen across a border (cf. Boberg 2014) whilst many others have been more concerned with *explaining* the variation seen (cf. Beswick 2014; Vigil & Bills 2014; Waltermire 2014); some even explore particular factors such as religion and ethnicity (cf. Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014). On the other hand, others have been more preoccupied with linguistic perception and language attitudes than linguistic behaviour (cf. Cramer 2010; Bert & Costa 2014; Montgomery 2014). Finally, many scholars have been interested in how different boundaries such as linguistic, political and cultural ones, map onto each other (cf. Coupland 2014; Vigil & Bills 2014).

In their pursuit of knowledge, scholars have had recourse to a plethora of theories relating to language change and variation, including the family tree and wave models (cf. Boberg 2014: 46), centre-periphery models (cf. Beswick 2014; Boberg 2014; Coupland 2014), exemplar theory, stored memory and stigmatisation (cf. Waltermire 2014), symbolic capital (cf. Beswick 2014), indexicality (cf. Llamas 2010; Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014; Waltermire 2014), accommodation (Cramer 2010; Beswick 2014), audience design (cf. Cramer 2010; Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014); and functional and formal parallelism in bilingualism (cf. Coupland 2014).

Scholars have also engaged with various theories relating to identity including social psychological approaches such as Social Identity Theory (cf. Tajfel 1978b cited in Beswick 2014), social image and belonging (cf. Avanza & Laferté 2005 cited in Bert & Costa 2014) and in group / out group (cf. Bert & Costa 2014; Beswick 2014; Redinger & Llamas 2014; Watt et al. 2014).

A variety of methodologies, as well as data sources, have been used in linguistic border studies, including semi-structured interviews, producing speech samples as well as oral data (cf. Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014; Cramer 2010; Vigil & Bills 2014), conversations (cf. Beswick 2014), focus groups (cf. Cramer 2010), Matched Guise Test (cf. Beswick 2014), face to face questionnaires (cf. Watt et al. 2014), ethnographic research (cf. Woolhiser 2003; Bert & Costa 2014; Beswick 2014) 12), discourse analysis (cf. Woolhiser 2003) written questionnaires (cf. Redinger & Llamas 2014), use of mental maps processed through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (cf. Cramer 2010; Montgomery 2014), use of Relational Analogue Scales and Visual Analogue Scales (cf. Watt et al. 2014)[81], syntheses of previous works (cf. Woolhiser 2003; Boberg 2014; Britain 2014), use of censuses (cf. Montgomery 2014), use of visual expressions of language and identity on the linguistic landscape such as signs and menus (cf. Coupland 2014; Kallen 2014), communications data (cf. Watt et al. 2014), infrastructure data (cf. Britain 2014), commuting data (cf. Montgomery 2014) and, finally, investigations of settlement histories (cf. Boberg 2014).

[81] The Relational Analogue Scale is a specific Visual Analogue Scale which requires participants to ‘rank identity labels by how important they [feel] the labels [are] in relation to their own identities […] by arranging the labels along [...] a horizontal line running between “most important” at one end and “least important at the other”’ (Watt et al. 2014: 19).

The findings of the studies referenced above are, unsurprisingly, diverse. In numerous studies a linguistic difference persists (cf. Boberg 2014; Britain 2014; Chambers 2014b), and in certain investigations scholars have found that linguistic differences are maximised – if not increasing – at the border (cf. Woolhiser 2003; Burnett 2006; De Vriend et al. 2008).

On the other hand, in other studies, there is no clear linguistic boundary and there appears to be an aspect of cross-border influence: a levelled koiné has been identified in the Fens in the UK (Britain 2014), the transfer from English to Spanish of vowel-laxing in front of /l/ is observed on the Utah (USA)-Mexico border (Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014), linguistic shift from Spanish to English is observed in New Mexico – a USA state which borders with Mexico (Vigil & Bills 2014) – whilst in the borderlands of Spain-Portugal, a localised linguistic variety displaying convergence in both directions is observed (Beswick 2014).

Researchers have also found variation *along* borders. Boberg (2014) describes how, along the USA-Canada border, there are sharp, transitional and broad linguistic changes, whilst Watt et al. (2014: 25) observe that there is greater convergence on the western part of the Scottish-English border than the eastern one.

A number of factors have been found to correlate with linguistic behaviour in borderlands, such as industry (cf. de Oliveira 2002); educational policies, mass media and ideologies (cf. Woolhiser 2003); politics (cf. Kallen 2010); religion (cf. Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014; Kallen 2014); ethnicity (cf. Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014); and attitudes and identity (cf. Waltermire 2014; Watt et al. 2014).

Finally, unidirectional or distinct behaviours and perceptions on either side of both the Canada-USA (cf. Boberg 2000) and English-Scottish borders (cf. Kiely et al. 2000; Montgomery 2014) have been observed.

Scholars have advanced a number of explanations for the patterns they have found. Several have evoked language attitudes, ideologies and linguistic insecurity and prestige (cf. Boberg 2000; Cramer 2010; Redinger & Llamas 2014; Vigil & Bills 2014; Waltermire 2014). Others have cited the influence of cultural distinctions (cf. de Vriend et al. 2008; Boberg 2014). Chambers (2014b) takes the argument a step further, explaining patterns observed with the notion of 'heteronomy' – a concept developed by Stewart (1962) which entails that people, with their sense of belonging, have different orientations which have repercussions on language.

Space is evoked in various guises as an explanation for findings. Boberg (2014) draws on settlement histories, whilst Britain (2014) argues that former physical barriers may become psychological ones, which in turn shape spatialities and ultimately language. Contact – or lack thereof – is also cited as a reason for divergence (De Vriend et al. 2008). Commerce is also evoked: Beswick (2014) argues that linguistic similarity and mutual intelligibility facilitate and sustain cross-border activities. On the other hand, certain scholars argue that space – or rather proximity – counts for less in a borderland context; they argue that the border has a barrier effect, attenuating proximity (cf. Burnett 2006: 167; Montgomery 2012, 2014).

Finally, the most commonly posited explanation for observed linguistic situations in borderlands is ‘identity’ (cf. Boberg 2000; Omoniyi 2004; Llamas 2006: 92, 2010; Cramer 2010: 41; Baker-Smemoe & Jones 2014; Bert & Costa 2014; Beswick 2014; Waltermire 2014; Watt & Llamas 2014b: 1–2). As Woolhiser (2003: 345) argues, ‘[i]t is precisely in border regions, where ethnographic characteristics, languages and religious affiliations often fail to coincide, that national identities are most clearly constructed through the selective use of certain markers of group identity’.

Despite the growing body of border studies, there are specific areas in which the field requires attention and further exploration. Firstly, some studies have not taken into account how language attitudes and perceptions influence behaviour. Yet Boberg (2000: 23) argues that if we are to understand geolinguistic diffusion, we must incorporate the factors of ‘prestige and subjective evaluations’ into our studies. In fact, this is an argument made not just in border linguistics, but in the wider Anglophone and Francophone sociolinguistics communities (Paltridge & Giles 1984; Boberg 2000; Milroy 2002 in Violin-Wigent 2009; Hambye 2005; Kuiper 2005; Violin-Wigent 2009; Preston 2014).

Britain (2014) also argues that to understand the linguistic situation in a borderland it is important to understand the way people move around the space; that is to say their practices and routines. To this end, in his investigation of language in the Fens, he cites the infrastructure – or lack thereof – as one of the reasons a dialect boundary persists in the Fens. Whilst this is interesting, and appears to illustrate the interaction between language and space, what his

study lacks, as do others which use commuting, telephone and census data as proxies for contact and mobility (cf. Watt et al. 2014: 12; Montgomery 2014: 132), is empirical evidence of contact and mobility. In addition, the need to engage more with the notion of space is one of the dominant current discourses in sociolinguistics, as scholars identify not only that this topic has been previously side-lined, but that deeper engagement will provide greater insight (Britain 2010a, 2013, 2014; Heller 2010; Vaattovaara 2012).

Finally, whilst Bert and Costa (2014) found that different 'social actors' perceive the linguistic boundary of Francoprovençal to be in different places, little investigation has been done into whether different social groups perceive borders differently and if so why. For example, is it because of distinct senses of identity, or perhaps diverse spatial routines?

Having explained the way borders have been investigated in sociolinguistics, reviewed the research on French in Belgium and the phonological variables (e) and (o), and outlined the gaps in the research, we are now in a position to define the study's research questions.

2.5 Research questions

As described above (2.2.5), very little research has been done on the French in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland, and the behaviour that *has* been observed has not been scrutinised in any rigorous manner and explanations that *have* been given have not been supported by empirical evidence. As a result, this study aims to address two overarching research questions:

1) how do people speak in the Belgian borderland; and

2) why do they speak in that way?

To answer these, many more precise questions must be asked. To address the first, we must pose specific questions regarding phonological behaviour in the Belgian borderland. Based on the findings from studies of French in Belgium, and of (e) and (o), we will ask:

Of (e):

1. Is there a decreasing tendency to maintain the phonemic contrast /e/-/ɛ/ in the Belgian borderland, as in France?
2. Is the tendency to close /ɛ/ to [e] in the context of /_ʀ/, as observed in the *Nord,* seen in the Belgian borderland and, if so, what does this variant index?
3. How do Belgian borderlanders realise the /e/ in monosyllables such as 'les' and 'ses'? Do they realise it with [e], in line with SF, or with [ɛ] – in line with the 'endogenous norm' (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc)?
4. What does the behaviour of (e) tell us more generally about French in the Belgian borderland in comparison with other varieties of French, and processes of levelling and standardisation?

Of (o):

5. Is there a decreasing tendency to maintain the phonemic contrast /o/-/ɔ/ in the Belgian borderland, as in France?
6. Is fronting of /ɔ/ observed in the Belgian borderland and, if so, what does the fronted variant index?

7. Is the tendency to open /oC/ to [ɔC] that is observed in Lille and derives from the Picard substrate also found in the Belgian borderland?
8. What does the behaviour of (o) tell us more generally about French in the Belgian borderland in comparison with other varieties of French, and processes of levelling and standardisation?

To address the second overarching question, we address a variety of questions concerning linguistic perceptions, language attitudes, the influence of space and place, and social background:

Of linguistic perceptions:

9. How do borderlanders in Tournai and the surrounding area perceive their pronunciation?
10. How do they perceptually situate and orientate themselves and their accent within the linguistic space?
11. How do they perceive the border? Do they perceive the political border to be coterminous with a linguistic boundary, as has been shown in studies of Scotland, England and Wales (Inoue 1999: 167), or do they construe a linguistic boundary that is located elsewhere in physical space?
12. Upon what are borderlanders' perceptions based: linguistic realities or something else?

Of language attitudes:

13. How do Francophone Belgians – in this case Tournaisien borderlanders – construe 'correct' French? Do they consider that the most correct French is spoken in France or Francophone Belgium, or in both

countries? Indeed, do they even perceive there to be a difference in the most correct French in France and that in Francophone Belgium?

14. What do borderlanders' individual representations of the most correct French sound like?
15. How do attitudes vary according to social background?
16. Does a sense of linguistic insecurity persist, and does it correlate with different social and generational backgrounds?

Of the influence of space and place:

17. How do sociogeographical mobility, media consumption, and regional belonging affect language, attitudes and perceptions?

Of social background:

18. How does social background interact with linguistic behaviour, perceptions, attitudes and space and place?

In this chapter we have contextualised the study, discussed the phonological variables and laid out the research questions. In the next chapter we will present the region on which this study is focused and discuss the methodology and fieldwork.

3 Fieldwork, methodology and the Tournaisis corpus

3.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins with a presentation of the fieldwork location, including the reasons for selecting it. The methodology and interview protocol are then described. In the penultimate section an account of the fieldwork is presented and descriptions are given of both the planned and actual sample size and structure of the Tournaisis corpus[82]. The chapter closes with a summary of how the data were handled and analysed.

3.2 The fieldwork location: the Tournai *arrondissement*

3.2.1 Reasons for selecting the Tournai *arrondissement as the* fieldwork location

As explained in the previous chapter, the aim of the present study is to investigate linguistic behaviour, language attitudes and perceptions of language in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland. The border between France and Belgium is 620 kilometres long (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière n.d.) and over three quarters of it divides France and French-speaking Wallonia.

[82] As mentioned in 1.2, the Tournai *arrondissement* corresponds closely to an area known by locals as Tournaisis. For this reason, the corpus is named the 'Tournaisis corpus'.

Since the fieldwork was carried out entirely by the researcher, it was not possible to gather data in more than one area. This has been done in several previous border studies such as the *AISEB*[83] study of the Scottish-English border (Llamas 2010, n.d.; Watt et al. 2014) and Boberg's (2000) study of the USA-Canadian border; however, in both instances a team of fieldworkers was involved. So, for practical reasons, and in order that regional background could be a fixed variable, it was therefore decided that a single field site of relatively restricted size would be investigated.

In addition, little sociolinguistic research has been done in the (Franco-)Belgian borderland[84], although a certain amount has been done in the city of Tournai. Data were collected in this borderland city as part of the *PFC* project. As described in the previous chapter, the studies that have been carried out on this data suggest that linguistic behaviour in Tournai is more in line with observed behaviour in France than with that elsewhere in Francophone Belgium (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). Whilst these insights are interesting, it should be noted that they are based on the speech of just twelve informants with mixed educational backgrounds. And although clear correlations emerge in these studies (see 2.2.5), the investigation of why such patterns should emerge is relatively limited[85]. Moreover, because of the nature of the *PFC* project and its

[83] Accent and Identity on the Scottish-English Border: https://www.york.ac.uk/language/research/projects/completed/aiseb/ [Accessed 16 January 2017].

[84] As far as the researcher is aware, just two studies across the Franco-Belgian border have been carried out: those of Pohl (1988), who compared French in Chiers (France) and Semois (southern Belgium); and Rispail and Moreau (2004) who investigated perception of French and Francique in the borderlands of France, Belgium and Luxembourg. Neither of these studies, however, was variationist in nature.

[85] Hambye (2005: 391–392) suggests that this may be because of contact with the French, whilst Hambye and Simon (2012: 133) draw on Eckert's (2000) work and suggest the similarity between Belgian borderland and Hexagonal varieties evidences a progressive tendency for speakers to adopt a variety which is more 'advanced' (Eckert 2000: 88). However, no further explanations are offered than these.

focus on phonology, complementary non-linguistic, attitudinal and perceptual data are very limited.

Given the above situation, it was decided that a larger, more detailed study of French in Tournai would be a useful and timely contribution both to knowledge of language variation and change in European French and to the wider border linguistics research community.

Although the planned area for investigation had initially been the city of Tournai, early on in the fieldwork it became apparent that it would be a challenge to find enough participants who not only met the demographic criteria for the study, but were also life-long or near life-long inhabitants of Tournai. It was therefore decided that, in line with previous Francophone studies (cf. Thiam 1995; Coveney 1996; Bauvois 2002; Boughton 2003), the region of study would be expanded to include not only Tournai, but also the administrative region of the Tournai *arrondissement*.

3.2.2 The history of the fieldwork region

Belgium is a relatively young country and has only existed in its present form since 1830, when it gained independence from the then Kingdom of Holland. Prior to 1830, the geographical space that equates to present-day Belgium underwent repeated reconfiguration, whilst the city of Tournai and its surrounding region experienced frequent changes in ruling power (Voiturier 1978; Desmaele et al. 2013).

Although archaeological evidence suggests that an Iron Age settlement was present on the site of present-day Tournai, the city – then Roman Tournacum – really began to develop around the year 50 AD as Emperor Claudius prepared northern Gaul to attack Germania (Desmaele et al. 2013: 13). From there on in, Tournai spent nearly two millennia changing hands as, through history, the city was taken (sometimes repeatedly) by the Chauci, Franks, Alemanni, Vandals and Salian Franks[86,87], Henry VIII of England, the French Crown, the Spanish Netherlands, the Southern or Austrian Netherlands, and the United Netherlands. What is more, during that time Tournai was subjected to a number of further unsuccessful attacks, for example from the Vikings, the Count of Flanders and the Flemish (Voiturier 1978; Desmaele et al. 2013).

Many of these changes were because of Tournai's location on the river Scheldt (in French, 'Escaut'), which served for many rulers to mark a political border. Its situation on the river also accounts in part for the city's historical significance: from as early on as 50 AD Tournai has been a crossing point on the river, and it was through Tournai that the Boulogne-Cologne Roman highway crossed the river Scheldt (Voiturier 1978).

In summary, whilst Tournai has been part of Belgium for as long as the nation has existed, its political history is complex; a fact which is very present in the minds of its inhabitants, many of whom freely and easily list the many former

[86] These were Germanic tribes.
[87] At this point Tournai became the capital of the Salian Kingdom, and then in 466 the birthplace of Clovis. Conquering parts of Roman Gaul and uniting fractured Frankish Tribes, Clovis' military victories enabled him to create Francia, the region synonymous with modern day France. Tournai is thus considered by some to be the first capital of France (Desmaele et al. 2013).

ruling nations of the city and are quick to mention that the city was, for many periods across history, part of France[88].

3.2.3 The geography of the fieldwork region

The Tournai *arrondissement* is one of 43 in Belgium (Statistics Belgium 2013a). The country is organised administratively on four levels, and has been since 1796 when it was divided by the French. The four administrative divisions comprise: regions, of which there are three: Brussels Capital Region, Flanders and Wallonia (cf. chapter 2); provinces, of which there are 10; the 43 *arrondissements*; and finally *communes*, of which there are 589. The Tournai *arrondissement* comprises 10 *communes*: Antoing; Brunehaut; Celles; Estaimpuis; Leuze-en-Hainaut; Mont-de-l'Enclus; Pecq; Péruwelz; Rumes; and Tournai (see Figure 3-1). The Tournai *arrondissement* is part of the province of Hainaut and the Wallonia region (see Figure 3-2).

[88] In fact, Tournai was in the possession of France from the ninth to early-sixteenth century, then again off and on between the sixteenth and early-nineteenth century (Desmale et al. 2013: 8–9).

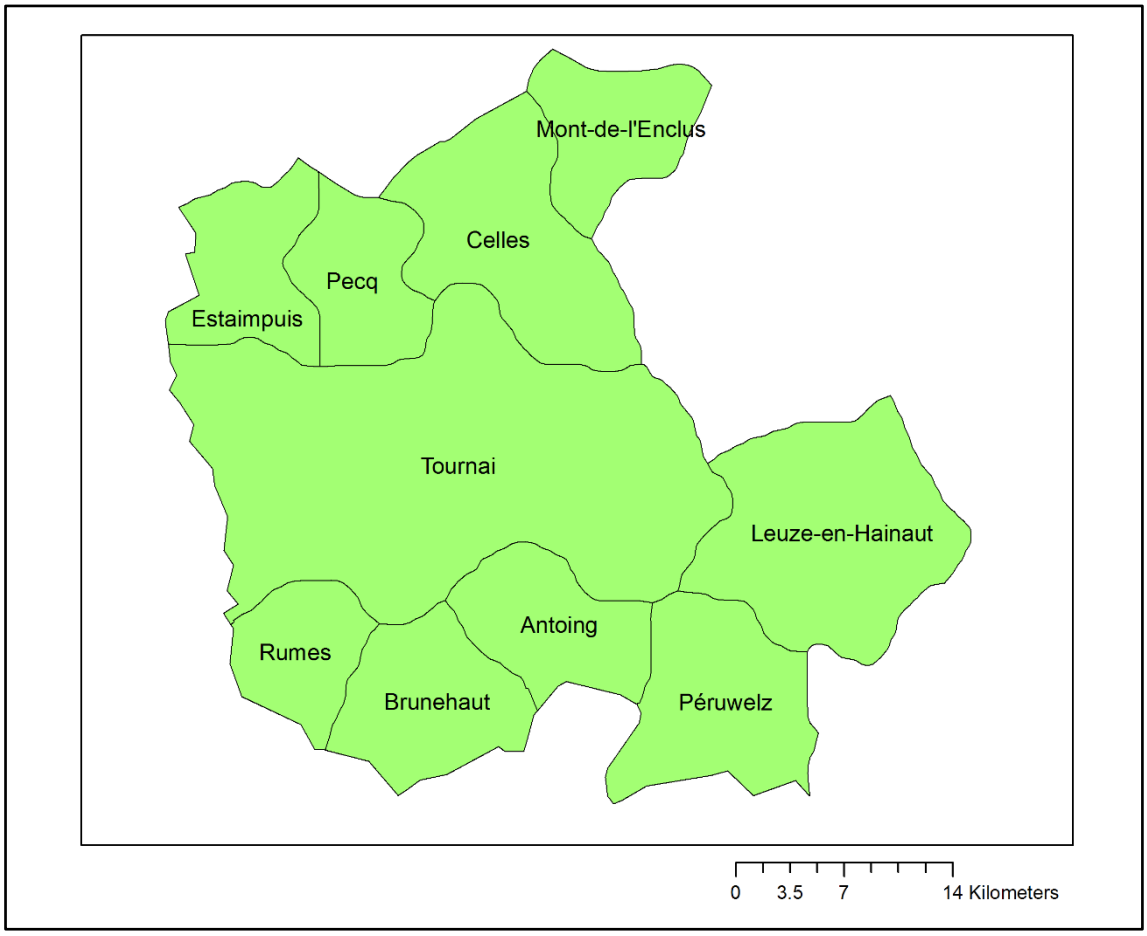

Figure 3-1. The communes in the Tournai arrondissement

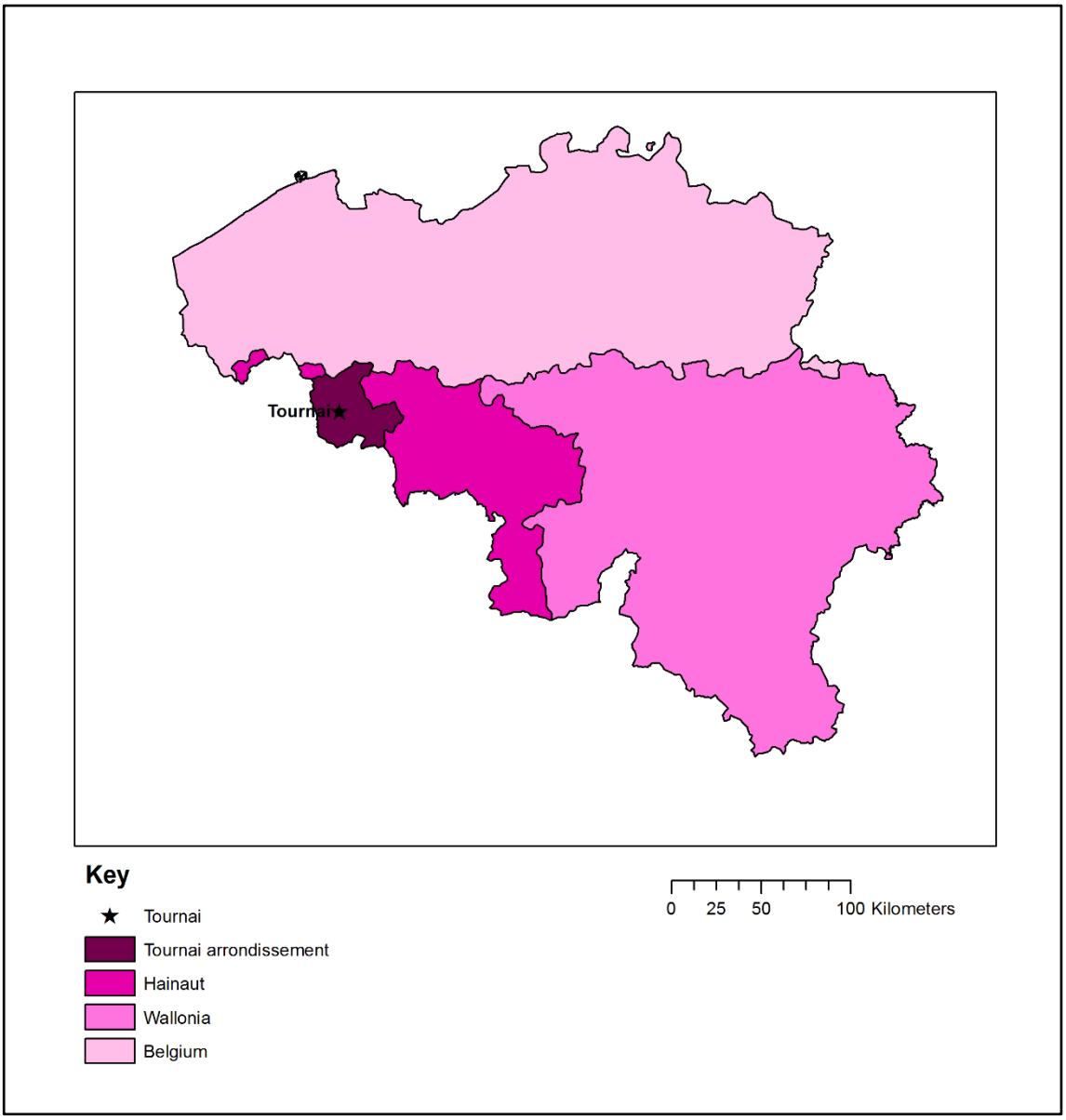

Figure 3-2. Map showing the position of Tournai and the Tournai arrondissement relative to Hainaut, Wallonia and Belgium

The Tournai *arrondissement* covers an area of 607.52 km^2 (Wikipedia 2014). To the south and west, the *arrondissement* borders France, to the northwest it borders the Mouscron *arrondissement* (a region where both French and Dutch are spoken), to the north Kortrijk and Oudenaarde (both of which are Dutch-speaking) and to the east Ath (which is Francophone).

Tournai is the administrative centre for the province of Hainaut and lies approximately 25 km east of Lille (France) and 100 km southwest of Brussels.

The River Scheldt transects both Tournai and the *arrondissement*, entering Belgium in the southwest of the *arrondissement*, and continuing through Flanders and the Netherlands before meeting the North Sea.

Since 2008, Tournai has been part of *Eurometropolis*[89], a 'European Territorial Cooperation Group' (ETCG). The group comprises Tournai (Wallonia), Kortrijk (Flanders) and Lille (France) and is an initiative of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (Eurometropolis n.d. a). One of 37 ETCGs, the group was created in order to 'erase the "border effect" and make day-to-day life easier for its 2.1 million inhabitants' (Eurometropolis n.d. b). In this way, the fourteen founding institutions of the ETCG endeavour to promote and assist the development and strengthening of economic, social and cultural links between the three cities and their surrounding regions (Eurometropolis n.d. c).

3.2.4 The demographic and socioeconomic profile of the fieldwork region

3.2.4.1 Population

Population data from 2010 indicate the population of the Tournai *commune* as 69,043 (Statistics Belgium 2013b). Of those, 62,773 (91%) were Belgian nationals and 6,270 (9%) were foreign nationals. The population density was 323 people per km^2. At the same moment, the population of the Tournai *arrondissement* was 144,486. Of those, 13,401 (9.3%) were foreign nationals, and 131,085 (90.7%) were Belgian. The population density was 238 people per km^2. The most densely populated *arrondissement* in Hainaut in 2010 was that of Charleroi with 767 inhabitants per km^2, whilst the least densely populated

[89] Eurometropolis: http://www.eurometropolis.eu/?noRedirect=1 [Accessed 16 January 2017].

arrondissement was that of Thuin, with 160 inhabitants per km^2. Thus the Tournai *arrondissement* is relatively sparsely populated.

Despite its area being relatively restricted, there is notable variation between the *arrondissement*'s *communes* in population composition. Most notable is the high percentage (26.6%) of foreign nationals in the *commune* of Estaimpuis, which borders with France (Statistics Belgium 2013c)[90,91]. In contrast, the percentage of foreign nationals in Mont-de-l'enclus, which is the central northern *commune* that borders with Flanders, is just 2.7%. (See Table 3-1).

Commune* in the Tournai *arrondissement	**Percentage of foreign nationals[92]**
Mont-de-l'enclus	2.7
Leuze-en-Hainaut	3.7
Celles	4.6
Antoing	5.2
Rumes	6.6
Brunehaut	7.6
Pecq	8.5
Tournai	9.1
Peruwelz	10.6
Estaimpuis	26.6

Table 3-1. Percentage of foreign nationals in each Commune of the Tournai arrondissement in 2010 (Statistics Belgium 2013c).

[90] In fact this number has grown between 2013 and 2017, and was recorded as 30.7% on 18 January 2017 (Commune d'Estampuis 2017).
[91] What is more, the-western most section of the *commune*, Leers-Nord, is contiguous with the town Leers France. That is to say that there are houses – as opposed to farm land – on either side of the border to the extent that on one side of one residential road the houses are in France whilst on the opposite side they are in Belgium.
[92] Data is not available regarding the nationality of foreign nationals.

3.2.4.2 Economy

The economy of the Tournai *arrondissement* is diverse and comprises both agricultural and industrial activity. The city of Tournai has an industrial heritage tied to the limestone substrate found along the river Scheldt. This limestone was quarried over centuries (Voiturier 1978; Desmaele et al. 2013) and transformed into lime in the city's limekilns before being transported and exported along the river. Limestone continues to be quarried and processed today in the *arrondissement.*

Along with industry, Tournai has a tapestry, porcelain and Arts heritage dating back to the 18th century. The city also plays a significant part in the publishing heritage of Belgium, since it is home to the publishing house *Casterman,* which was founded there in 1780 by the Tournaisien Donat-Joseph Casterman. The Arts remain significant in Tournai today with the presence of three art schools: the *École Supérieure des Arts Saint-Luc*, the *Académie des Beaux-Arts Tournai* and the Architecture and Urban Studies faculties of the *Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve*.

Data from the Belgian National Social Security Office (2014) indicate that a total of 47,705 inhabitants of the *arrondissement* paid social security contributions in 2014. Of those, 33,532 (70%) were employed in the private sector and 14,173 (30%) in the public sector. In addition, of those 47,705, 18,238 (38%) were classed as 'ouvriers' (manual workers); 21,955 (46%) as 'employés' (white-collar or clerical workers) and 7,512 (16%) as 'fonctionnaires' (white-collar, civil servants). Table 3-2 shows a breakdown of these jobs according to sector and illustrates that 90% of the workforce work in one of fourteen sectors.

Sector	Number of workers
Social and medico-social care	7430
Education	5954
Wholesale trade and retail	5485
Public administration	4476
Healthcare	4206
Transport and storage	2864
Administration	2857
Construction	2583
Other administrative activities	1424
Tourism and catering	1382
Food, drink and tobacco	1369
Finance and insurance	1119
Manufacturing of goods in rubber, plastic and other non-metal products	882
Legal, accountancy, technical and management activities	811
Other	4863
Total	47705

Table 3-2. Breakdown of jobs per sector in the Tournai arrondissement in 2010 (Belgian National Social Security Office 2014)

3.2.4.3 Culture

Tournai's Arts heritage is part of a rich cultural background, which continues to manifest itself today in diverse ways. Various traditions are celebrated across the year beginning with *Lundi Perdu* or *Lundi Parjuré* – 'Lost Monday' or 'Betrayed Monday' (Jardez 1989: 203–204). Whilst this festival – an evening meal which takes place on the first Monday after Epiphany – is celebrated in several parts of Belgium and northern France, it is best maintained in Tournai.

A carnival takes place annually three weeks before Easter. Although in its present incarnation the carnival has only existed since 1981, carnivals have taken place in Tournai since the 15th century (Carnaval de Tournai 2017a). The carnival, which changes theme every year and requires its participants to wear fancy dress, takes place over several days. It is one of the most important dates

in the calendar for the city's 212 registered *confrérie*s (Carnaval de Tournai 2017b). A *confrérie*, translated as a 'guild' or 'brotherhood', usually consists of a small group of friends or a social group united around an idea, character or concept, such as a way of dressing or a food product.

Later on in the year, on the second Sunday in September, an ostensibly Catholic procession takes place. This procession follows a path around the city as pilgrims and processors follow decorated statutes, shrines and religious relics. Despite its religious origins, the procession is attended and watched by all manner of Tournaisiens and visitors.

Tournaisien traditions are not limited to events; there are two games particularly associated with Tournai and the surrounding villages, which are still played today in some of the region's cafés: *le jeu de fer* and *le jeu de bourles.* Although most popular with older members of the population, some teams, particularly for the latter of these games, include children and teenagers.

There are various groups in Tournai which promote the region's Romance substrate: Picard, and the local variety of Picard: Tournaisien. Although there are no longer any monolingual Picard speakers, it is estimated that Picard continues to be spoken by some 200,000 speakers in France and Belgium (Ethnologue 2016). The most well-known groups practising and promoting Picard in the Tournai *arrondissement* are the singing groups *Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien*[93] and the *Filles Celles Picardes*[94]*.* The first of

[93]*Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien:* http://www.cabaretwallon.be/ [Accessed 17 January 2017].
[94] *Filles Celles Picardes:* http://www.fillescellespicardes.be/ [Accessed 17 January 2017].

these, an all-male singing group, was founded in 1907 and exists to promote literary expression in Picard through concerts and literary events. The second, an all-female singing group, has existed since 2005 and was created with a similar remit by Tournaisiennes who wished to have opportunities to express themselves in the same way as the *Cabaret Wallon.*

As well as the singing groups, at the city's *Maison de la Culture*[95] weekly workshops are held bringing together Picard speakers of all levels from across the Picardophone region.

The city has its own anthem which, according to many, is known by all Tournaisiens. The anthem, '*les Tournaisiens sont là'* ('The Tournaisiens have arrived') dates back to the 19th century and was written by Adolphe Delmée (Jardez 1989: 15). This anthem is written in Tournaisien and the lyrics recount a mixture of history and legend; however, the legend that is most commonly perpetuated is one invented by Adolphe Leray (ibid., p. 22). This legend makes reference to the battle of Austerlitz where, before advancing on the Allies, Napoleon turned to his *aide-de-camp* and asked if the Tournaisiens were there. According to the legend, it was only when they arrived that Napoleon gave the go-ahead. The anthem is often sung at cultural events, even when no other aspect of the event takes place in Picard or Tournaisien.

Having painted a picture of the fieldwork location, we now go on to a presentation of the methodology and interview procedure.

[95]*Maison de la culture:* http://www.maisonculturetournai.com/fr/ [Accessed 17 January 2017].

3.3 Methodology and interview procedure

3.3.1 Methodology

Laid out fully at the end of chapter 2, the research questions for this study, in their broadest sense, are twofold:

1. How do people speak in the Belgian borderland; and
2. Why do they speak in that way?

In order to answer these and the more specific research questions, it was decided that both linguistic and non-linguistic data should be collected.

3.3.1.1 Linguistic data

In line with paradigmatic sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Labov 1966, 1972; Trudgill 1974), and in order that style-shifting could potentially be investigated, it was decided that three different styles of speech should be elicited: conversational style (CS); reading passage style (RPS) and word list style (WLS).

As detailed in chapter 2, the phonological variables (e) and (o) form the linguistic objects of investigation. However, with future studies in mind, it was decided that, as well as (e) and (o), linguistic data would also be collected for the other mid-vowel pair /ø/-/œ/ as well as /a/-/ɑ/, which is another pair that certain scholars have studied alongside the mid-vowels (cf. Lefebvre 1991; Pooley 2004a; Hall 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011).

Although scholars have investigated behaviour of these mid-vowels in both stressed and unstressed syllables (cf. chapter 2), because of time limitations it

was decided that the study would focus just on the vowels in stressed syllables[96], but that they would be analysed in both open and closed syllables.

In order to elicit the vowel sounds, the researcher designed a word list and original reading passage containing appropriate target words. These can be found in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively. Whilst the word list follows methodological conventions, the researcher decided to take an innovative approach to the reading passage task. Discussing the project with fellow scholars, it became apparent that some participants do not feel comfortable reading aloud because of the pedagogic nature of the task. The researcher therefore decided that the format of a *recipe*, preceded by way of a fictional introduction with a short letter, might help to mitigate such feelings as the format entails a series of sentences rather than a block of writing. What is more, with such a format as this, participants would clearly see the low density of writing from glancing at the paper, and it was felt that this would also help to lesson any concerns about the task. It was also decided that the recipe should be nonsensical and comedic as it was thought that this too would mitigate feelings of ill ease, make the task more enjoyable, and hold the participant's attention, whilst lessening attention paid to pronunciation. Indeed this was found to be the case: the majority of participants appeared to enjoy the reading passage.

3.3.1.2 Non-linguistic data

In order to answer the overarching question of why borderlanders speak the way they do, as well as the more specific related questions, it was decided that non-linguistic data would be collected, through a written questionnaire. Since

[96] This was in order that findings could be compared to those from previous studies, in which scholars have typically investigated vowels in stressed syllables.

certain of the research questions relate to linguistic perception and language of Belgian borderlanders, certain tasks were also planned so as to elicit this kind of data.

The perceptual data were gathered through a mapping task, included in the questionnaire; and a detailed description and justification of this methodology is found, along with the results and analysis, in chapter 6. The attitudinal data were gathered through a series of tasks which also formed part of the written questionnaire. Activities included sentence completion, multiple choice and rating tasks. A detailed description and justification of the methodology for this part of the data collection is found in chapter 7, along with the results and discussion. Addressing identified gaps in the research (cf. chapter 1; Milroy & Gordon 2003: 133; Britain 2010b: 70, 2016: 21–24; Heller 2010: 736; Gooskens et al. 2013; Chambers 2014b), it was also decided that data should be gathered concerning informants' sociogeographic mobility, their media consumption, sense of place and regional belonging. This data was also sought in the written questionnaire, and the methodologies employed, results and discussion may be found in chapter 8. Finally, in line with previous studies (e.g. Milroy & Milroy 1978; Dubois and Horvath 1998; Edwards 1992), it was decided that social network and demographic data should be collected. These data were collected through questions in the written questionnaire and a separate *fiche d'identité,* which can be found in Appendix 6.

3.3.2 The interview procedure

The interviews were semi-structured (cf. Labov 1984), and each interview followed the same format. It began with general conversation then developed

according to the participant's interests. The researcher had a list of prepared questions (see Appendix 1); however, these were very seldom required. This part of the interview sought to elicit conversational phonological data (cf. Labov 1984; Tagliamonte 2006).

Following this, the participant was asked if he or she would be happy to read the reading passage. Ultimately, just two participants did not feel happy doing this and a third did not complete the task. Following the reading passage, the participant was given the word list of 103 words and asked to read it aloud. Previous research has shown that the place a word comes in the list, as well as the words it is surrounded by, can have an effect on the phonological realisation of the word (Bowern 2015). Thus, in order to mitigate any potential effects, ten different word lists were made, and in each the 103 words featured in a different order. All participants completed this task.

Following the word list, participants were engaged in metalinguistic discussion; this happened quite naturally due to the metalinguistic nature of the previous reading passage and word list tasks. There were no set questions, with one exception, which was whether the participant had ever been mistaken for a French person. This question was included because previous research has found that French auditors perceive Tournaisiens to be French rather than Belgian (Woehrling 2009). The duration of this part of the interview varied considerably according to each participant's interest in the topic.

This discussion was followed by the written questionnaire, which was divided into five sections (see Appendix 4). The first of these, 'les endroits où vous

passez votre temps' served to elicit data regarding respondents' mobility. The second section, 'la famille, les loisirs et le travail', was included so as to gather information regarding participants' networks. The third section, 'les médias' served to elicit data giving insight into the geographical origin of the audio-visual media consumed by participants. The fourth section 'le parler à Tournai et ailleurs' gathered several different kinds of metalinguistic data, such as attitudinal and perceptual information regarding local, regional, 'correct', 'standard' and 'typical' accents. Finally, the section 'votre région' elicited information concerning informants' sense of belonging and regional affiliation. Subsequent to completion of the questionnaire, the interview finished with the participant being given their 'fiche d'identité': an identity form serving to gather demographic information such as age and educational background.

The duration of interviews ranged between 45 minutes to three hours; however, they typically lasted approximately one and a half hours. Nearly all interviews were conducted at participants' homes, with the exception of a few which took place in the participant's workplace or a café.

Having presented the methodology and described the interview procedure, we now go on to an account of the fieldwork and description of the sample.

3.4 Fieldwork and sample

3.4.1 Planned sample size, structure and speaker characteristics

Following Boughton (2003), it was decided that informants should meet the criterion of having lived the majority[97] – if not all – of their life in the region. As explained in section 3.2.1 the 'region' was initially defined as the city of Tournai. However, ultimately the fieldwork site stretched over the region of the Tournai *arrondissement*.

Similarly, in line with previous studies (e.g. Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974; Lefebvre 1991; Boughton 2003; Landick 2004; Hall 2008) it was decided that sex, age, and socioeconomic background would serve as speaker variables. It was planned that a binary divide of male/female would be made, and that speakers should be divided into three age categories: 18–25; 26–59; 60+ in order that potential apparent-time change[98] could be investigated. Following Hambye (2005), who stratified his sample according to educational background, it was decided that, in the present study, educational background would serve as the proxy for socioeconomic background. It was planned that education should be split into three categories: those having ceased education after compulsory education; those who completed up to three years of non-compulsory education; and those who had completed a Masters or above (at least five years of non-compulsory education).

[97] Boughton (2003: 46) chose the 'nativeness cut off point' of five years of age, whereas in the present study, in order to be able to include an older male from the lower education group, the cut off point of six years of age was chosen.
[98] Apparent-time is '[a]n approach to the study of language change that interprets generational differences in language use as an indicator of linguistic change in progress' (Swann et al. 2004: 11).

There is consensus in the field that a small number of informants suffices for each demographic category (Di Paolo & Yaeger-Dror 2011: 13), whilst Milroy and Gordon (2003: 29) cite the number of four participants 'per cell'; a number which was taken up by Boughton (2003) in her Nancy/Rennes study. With this in mind, it was planned that a total of 72 informants would be interviewed, and the sample would be divisible as illustrated in Table 3-3.

	Compulsory education		**Up to three years of post-compulsory education**		**Masters or above**	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Young	4	4	4	4	4	4
Middle age	4	4	4	4	4	4
Older	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total	12	12	12	12	12	12
Total 72						

Table 3-3. Composition and structure of planned sample

3.4.2 Fieldwork

3.4.2.1 The data collection period

Three visits were made to the research site. The first of these was a two-week familiarisation visit in October 2014. Data were not collected during this time; however, having never previously visited the region, this visit gave the researcher the opportunity to familiarise herself with the site and gain insight through ethnographic observation.

The data for the study were collected during two further visits to the site. The first of these took place between January and April 2015. The researcher was required to return to the UK at the end of April; however, as it had not been possible to gather a sufficient amount of data (meeting the sampling

requirements), the researcher made a second visit to the site between September and November 2015. A total of 26 weeks were spent living in the city and region.

3.4.2.2 Making contact and finding informants

As an outsider to the community with no pre-existing contacts, the familiarisation visit also served to enable the researcher to visit local cultural and administrative organisations and in so doing connections were made. Through spending this time in the research site prior to data collection, she was also able to familiarise herself with several different community groups and networks in the area.

Returning to the site for data collection eleven weeks after the familiarisation visit, the researcher was able to interview some of the individuals she had met during the first visit. Employing the 'friend of a friend' technique (cf. Llamas 2001; Hall 2008: 59; Mooney 2014: 151; Kasstan 2015: 131), the researcher was also able to secure further interviews through several of these interviewees' networks.

So as to be able to integrate into the community and to have a 'lived experience' of the region, during the first period of data collection the researcher became involved in several cultural, community and sporting groups. In the early stages of data collection she struggled with the feeling that, by entering into the research site to gather data, she was taking from the community (cf. Foxen 2014b). However, her active participation in these groups mitigated these feelings, enabling the researcher to feel like she was 'giving back'. During her

time in the field, the researcher attended the above-mentioned Picard workshops in the '*Maison de la Culture*[99]', volunteered at film and canal[100] festivals, gave a dreamcatcher-making workshop to a women's group and voluntarily taught English at two local football clubs, also instigating and co-organising an international youth football project[101]. Moreover, through participating in these groups, the researcher was not only able to gain insight and understanding, but also to meet potential informants. Ultimately, of the 52 interviews that the researcher carried out, 28 contacts were established through the groups the researcher participated in.

3.4.3 Sample structure

3.4.3.1 The final sample size, structure and speaker characteristics

Struggling to find informants who had only completed compulsory education[102], as the second period of fieldwork drew to an end, it was decided that the planned tripartite educational stratification of the sample could be collapsed into a bipartite division, without detriment since this would still enable education to be assessed as an independent variable. In this way there would be a satisfactory number of informants per cell. Despite collapsing the sample in this way, ultimately it remained difficult to locate informants meeting the right criteria. This was because most of the avenues the researcher investigated were networks in which some study after compulsory education was the norm.

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[99] See Appendix 7 for a poem the researcher wrote in Picard for the workshop.
[100] The researcher composed a piece of creative writing about the canal festival, published in the local newsletter: http://www.estaimpuis.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ESTAIMPUISIEN-DEC-2015.pdf [Accessed 17 January 2017].
[101] The culmination of the project was a trip to Liverpool, to participate in a cultural weekend including visiting the Everton football ground, Goodison Park, and meeting the Belgian players Romelo Lukaku and Kevin Mirallas: http://www.evertonfc.com/community/news/2015/11/09/sweet-visit-for-belgian-toffees [Accessed 17 January 2017].
[102] Typically up to the age of eighteen.

It was therefore decided that, whilst four participants per cell would have been preferable, in line with previous research (cf. Hall 2008), fewer would be acceptable where this proved unavoidable, so it was planned that interviews would take place with at least two participants for each cell. However, on the penultimate day of fieldwork two potential participants cancelled. These participants would have belonged to the 'young male, compulsory education' and 'young female, compulsory education' cells. Therefore, in the final sample just one informant occupies each of these cells. What is more, although it was originally planned that the youngest age category would comprise individuals aged between eighteen and twenty-five, no participants in this age range having left education at eighteen could be identified, so the age categories were marginally altered in order that there should be at least one informant in each cell. The sample is therefore split into three age categories: young (18–29); middle-aged (30–59); and older (60+).

Whilst it was decided that the geographical criterion for participation could be expanded to include the Tournai *arrondissement*, it became apparent during several interviews that the criterion had not been effectively communicated and so several individuals who were interviewed did not ultimately meet the geographical criteria. These, along with one other interview, which is not included in the final sample due to the quality of the recording being unsatisfactory, mean that of a total of 52 interviews, 47 meet the criteria for inclusion in the corpus. The demographic distribution of these 47 informants is illustrated in Table 3-4.

	Compulsory education		**Post-compulsory education**	
	M	F	M	F
Young 18 – 29	1	1	4	5
Middle 30 - 59	3	2	6	7
Older 60+	3	5	4	6
Total	7	8	14	18
Total 47				

Table 3-4. Demographic distribution of informants meeting the correct criteria for the study

Whilst education has frequently been used as a proxy for socioeconomic background, so too has occupation (Bauvois 2002; Boughton 2003). Reconfiguring the sample according to occupation, it can be seen that the structure remains very similar. Table 3-5 illustrates the structure of the sample if a binary split is made according to occupational category between those in manual occupations and those in non-manual occupations, determined using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ILO: 2004). Restructuring the sample in this way, just five (11%) of the 47 informants change socioeconomic category. It was therefore decided that education would be used as a proxy for socioeconomic background. Henceforth, the group of speakers who only completed compulsory education will be referred to as ED1, whilst the group of those who pursued their studies further will be referred to as ED2.

	'Manual'		**'Non-manual'**	
	M	F	M	F
Young 18 – 29	1	2	4	4
Middle 30 – 59	3	2	6	7
Older 60+	5	5	2	6
Total	9	9	12	17
Total 47				

Table 3-5. Demographic distribution of informants meeting the correct criteria for the study organised according to occupation

Although appropriate data were gathered from 47 informants, in order to be able to carry out thorough analyses within the time restrictions of the project, the researcher decided to include a maximum of four participants per cell in the final corpus. The final structure of the Tournaisis corpus is thus as illustrated in Table 3-6.

	Compulsory education (ED1)		**Post-compulsory education (ED2)**	
	M	F	M	F
Young 18 – 29	1	1	4	4
Middle 30 - 59	3	2	4	4
Older 60+	3	5	4	4
Total	7	8	12	12
Total 39				

Table 3-6. Size and structure of the Tournaisis corpus

Having given an account of the fieldwork and illustrated the final size and structure of the Tournaisis corpus, we close this chapter with a section concerning the handling of data in the study.

3.5 Data handling and analysis

3.5.1 Recording in the study

After discussions with colleagues and reading linguists' reviews of recording equipment, it was decided that the *Zoom H4n* portable digital recorder would meet the required standard in recording quality as well as the researcher's personal budget. For the same reasons the *Audio-Technica ATD-3350 ATR Series Omnidirectional Condenser Lavalier Microphone* was selected. Where two participants were recorded at the same time, two microphones were used, with a splitter cable.

Where possible, participants were asked to clip the microphone onto their clothing so as to be no more than twenty centimetres away from the mouth, though not in the shadow of the chin nor on the collar (cf. Cieri 2011: 30). However, since some recordings took place in the winter months, it was not always possible to place microphones in the optimal position; on certain occasions it was considered inappropriate to ask participants to make adjustments to their clothing, whilst on certain others there were no possible adjustments to be made. Consequently, in some interviews the microphone had to be placed on the collar, in the shadow of the chin (cf. Hall 2008: 73). In one later interview, when the fieldworker was more *au fait* with how to obtain the best quality recording, it was decided that, rather than on the collar, the microphone would be better placed on a stand in front of the participant.

At the beginning of each interview, the recording levels were checked and, when the researcher noted a tangible change in the participant's volume, she tried to adjust the recording levels; however, she did not wish to draw attention to the recording equipment once participants had already relaxed, so this was not always done. Recordings were made to digital (.wav) format at a sample rate of 44.1 kHz (16-bit), a rate deemed desirable by scholars (cf. Cieri 2011: 31).

3.5.2 Ethical approval, data storage and anonymisation of participants

Prior to carrying out data collection, ethical approval for the project was obtained from the researcher's College of Humanities ethics committee. Then,

once in the field, and at the beginning of each interview, participants were given a consent form explaining in broad terms the nature of the research project and how their data would be used.

Upon completion of the fieldwork, questionnaire and speech data were stored in hard and digital formats on hard drives and in folders in a secure office in the researcher's university. Participants' personal information, gathered on the 'fiche d'identité', was stored separately from all other data, and no digital copy of this information was made. To ensure anonymity, participants' names were replaced by unique codes in analysis documents and spreadsheets. These were then changed to pseudonyms in this thesis.

3.5.3 Phonological data selected

Although three different styles of speech were gathered, ultimately time restrictions meant that compromises had to be made with regard to the analyses carried out. Rather than reduce the sample size or the number of social variables, it was decided that, following previous research (Landick 1995; Violin-Wigent 2009; Hansen & Juillard 2011), only the most formal speech would be analysed, that is to say the word list data. Moreover, whilst WLS is clearly representative of guarded speech as opposed to vernacular speech (Swann et al. 2004: 333), there were several advantages to analysing word list data. Not only was it easier to ensure consistency in the number of tokens gathered from each informant, it was also easier to control for phonetic environments (cf. Violin-Wigent 2009; Campbell-Kibler 2013: 143) and find the tokens in the recordings.

3.5.4 Vowel coding

In sociophonetic investigations, phonological analyses are typically performed either auditorily or acoustically. Auditory analysis (sometimes known as impressionistic analysis) is 'the most traditional form of phonetic description' (Esling & Edmondson 2011: 132). It entails closely listening to speech, making 'accurate judgments' (ibid., p. 132) of what is heard, then transcribing it accordingly, typically using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Several studies of the French mid-vowels have used auditory analysis (cf. Hansen & Juillard 2011; Landick 1995, 2004; Lefebvre 1988, 1991; Violin-Wigent 2009).

In recent years, acoustic analysis has been used in several studies of the French mid-vowels (cf. Fagyal et al. 2002; Armstrong & Low 2008; Hall 2008; Woehrling 2009; Boula de Mareüil 2013; Mooney 2014). Acoustic analysis (sometimes referred to as instrumental analysis) entails the use of specialist computer programmes such as *Praat*[103], which use Linear Predictive Coding[104] to detect formants in the speech. For phonological analyses of vowels, the first and second formants (F1 and F2) are typically measured. F1 indicates the height of the vowel and F2 the frontedness of the vowel. Thus, F1 and F2 measurements of tokens can be used in phonological analyses to compare tokens. This may be done manually, or automatically – with the use of a computer script. Alternatively, a script may also be applied which automatically categorises formant values into one of several possible phonological variants.

[103] PRAAT: http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/ [Accessed 17 January 2017].
[104] Linear Predictive Coding refers to 'a set of algorithms [which] represent formants automatically' (Di Paolo et al. 2011: 93).

The phonological variables in the present study were analysed auditorily. This was because the researcher did not have the expertise to confidently execute the processes required for acoustic analysis, or the statistical expertise required to interpret acoustic data. This is not to say that auditory analysis is less good; it remains a popular and highly regarded method of analysis (Foulkes, Docherty & Jones 2011: 61).

Furthermore, whilst it could be argued that acoustically analysed data are more reliable since they are derived from scientific measurements rather than impressionistic assessments, auditory analysis may also be approached in a scientific paradigm since a reliability check may be performed by the analyst, enabling reliability to be measured and reported statistically (Foulkes, Docherty & Jones 2011).

A reliability check requires the analyst to code the tokens in a subset of data on two separate occasions. The two sets of coded data are then compared and the percentage of tokens that were coded the same way on both occasions is taken as the reliability for the data (Clopper 2011: 188). Where there are variants on a continuum of three or four steps (such as vowel height) the percentage of tokens coded on both occasions 'within one step on the continuum' (ibid., p. 189) can equally be reported. In general, it is reported in the literature that an 'agreement of 80% or better is typically deemed reliable' (ibid., p. 190).

The researcher performed a reliability check using data from two randomly selected informants. 100 tokens were measured on two separate occasions. Of

those 100 tokens, 85 were coded in the same way on both occasions. The reliability of the analyst may therefore be valued at 85%.

In previous mid-vowel studies which have taken an auditory approach to token analysis, researchers have coded tokens in slightly different ways. Landick (2004), for example, made a binary division of the archiphoneme /E/, with two variants: [e] and [ɛ]. Lefebvre (1988), on the other hand, made a tripartite division with [e], [ɛ] and an intermediate variant. Violin-Wigent (2009) categorised her tokens as either the standard variant or not. Hansen & Juillard (2011) transcribed tokens in IPA, adding upward or downward arrows to underlying symbols to indicate a move towards closure or opening; a six step continuum was therefore used: [e]; [e↓]; between [e] and [ɛ]; [ɛ↑]; [ɛ]; [ɛ↓].

The archiphoneme /O/ was divided into three variants by Landick (2004): [o],[ɔ] and [œ]. Lefebvre (1988), on the other hand, did not take into consideration fronting, though included an intermediate variant between [o] and [ɔ]. Violin-Wigent (2009) categorised her tokens as either the standard variant or not. Hansen & Juillard (2011), again, added upward or downward arrows to underlying symbols to indicate a move towards closure or opening; a four step continuum was thus used to code height: [o]; [o↓]; [ɔ↑]; [ɔ]. Frontedness was also transcribed, either with [ø] or [œ].

In the present study, so as to facilitate data handling, tokens were coded with numerical values representing phonetic realisations. For the archiphoneme /E/, [e] was given the numerical value ‘1’, [ɛ] the value ‘2’ and all intermediate

variants were given the value ‘1.5’. Realisations other than these were valued at ‘9’ and a transcription in IPA was provided for detail.

For the archiphoneme /O/, height of vowel was treated in a similar way. [o] was given the numerical value ‘3’, [ɔ] the value ‘4’ and intermediate variants the value ‘3.5’. To facilitate data handling and analysis, realisations other than these, particularly fronted variants, were given arbitrary numerical values and, where necessary, accompanied by an IPA transcription.

Minimal pair oppositions were also measured following Hansen and Juillard (2011); that is to say, not only was maintenance of opposition assessed, so too was degree of maintained opposition. Degree of maintained opposition was categorised and calculated in the following way:

- strong: where each of the pair was realised with its underlying variant, for example ‘ses’ with [e] and ‘sais’ with [ɛ];
- weak: where one of the pair was realised with its underlying variant and the other with an intermediate variant, for example ‘côte’ [o] and ‘cote’ [o̞];
- merged: where both of the pair were realised in the same way, either both with an open-mid variant, both with a close-mid variant or both with an intermediate variant;
- reversed: where an underlying open-mid-vowel was realised with a more close realisation than an underlying close-mid-vowel, for example: ‘môle’ as [ɔ] and ‘molle’ as [o];

- other: where one of the pair was realised with an ‘other’ variant, for example: ‘thé’ with [ɪ] and taie with [e], or both were realised with distinct ‘other’ variants.

Whilst vowel quality was analysed in the present study, vowel quantity – that is to say vowel length – was not. Hansen and Juillard (2011) assessed variation in vowel length; however, their data were derived from sentence-reading tasks. In contrast, the data in the present study are derived from word list reading tasks. Since the nature of this task is such that intonation patterns are likely to be untypical, it was decided that vowel quantity would not be analysed.

A total of 935 vowels were coded for the (e) variable and 854 for the (o) variable, meaning in total 1789 vowels were coded for the present study.

3.5.5 Statistical analysis

Data were analysed using both Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS 23. Descriptive statistical analyses were carried out, allowing for patterns to emerge, and comparisons between subsets of the sample to be made (cf. chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

3.5.6 Mapping

Maps derived from the draw-a-map tasks in the written questionnaire were processed and analysed using the software packages Photoshop and ArcMap 10.2.2. A detailed account of the processing of maps is given in chapter 6.

Having presented the methodology for the study and given an account of the fieldwork and data handling, we now proceed to the first data analysis chapter, which concerns the (e) variable.

4 The (e) variable

4.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins with a short summary of (e) and the research questions that relate to this variable. More detailed accounts of these may be found in chapter 2. Following this, a description is given of the data used in the analysis. The results are then presented and analysed. In the last section, key findings are summarised and discussed, and conclusions are drawn.

4.2 Summary of the (e) variable

The (e) variable is one of the vocalic variables in French that has received the most attention in recent years (cf. chapter 2). In SF, an open-mid /ɛ/ is expected in closed syllables, as in ‘cher’: /ʃɛʀ/, whilst in open syllables both /e/ and /ɛ/ are found, as in ‘chez’: /ʃe/, and ‘chais’: /ʃɛ/. In this latter context, the vowels are phonemic as opposed to allophonic. Studies of *Oïl* French illustrate an increasing tendency in open syllables to adhere to the *loi de position* and raise /ɛ/ to [e] or an intermediate variant. The result of this is that there is an increasing tendency for /e/-/ɛ/ to be merged. In contrast, studies of Belgian French suggest the opposition is maintained across Francophone Belgium, though not in Tournai, where neutralisation has been observed (Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). As for /ɛ/ in closed syllables, whilst in SF this vowel is open-mid, closure to [e] in the context of /_ʀ/ has been identified as a trait of both Northern Regional French and the speech of young people in the Parisian *banlieues.* Finally, though also found in France, a tendency to realise /e/ as [ɛ] in monosyllabic determiners such as ‘les’ and ‘ses’ has been described as a

pan-Belgian trait (Hambye 2008), and this is cited in discussions of the supposed endogenous norm (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc). Hambye (2005: 94) suggests, however, that this non-standard realisation is not found in Tournai.

The literature review in chapter 2 led to the formulation of several research questions regarding (e), which are reproduced here:

1. Is there a decreasing tendency to maintain the phonemic contrast /e/-/ɛ/ in the Belgian borderland, as in France?
2. Is the tendency to close /ɛ/ to [e] in the context of /_ʀ/, as observed in the *Nord*, seen in the Belgian borderland and, if so, what does this variant index?
3. How do Belgian borderlanders realise the /e/ in monosyllables such as 'les' and 'ses'? Do they realise it with [e], in line with SF, or with [ɛ] – in line with the 'endogenous norm' (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc)?
4. What does the behaviour of (e) tell us more generally about French in the Belgian borderland in comparison with other varieties of French, and processes of levelling and standardisation?

Having briefly summarised the (e) variable and laid out the research questions, we now move on to a presentation of the data.

4.3 Data

For each informant, twenty-five vowels in WLS were coded for the (e) variable; all were in mono- or disyllabic words and were in syllable-final, stressed

position. Of these vowels, twenty were minimal pairs in which the target vowels were found in open syllables, as in ‘fumé’-‘fumet’. Ten, therefore, had /e/ in citation form and ten had /ɛ/. These minimal pairs are listed in Table 4-1. The final vowel in the word ‘Tournai’ was also coded, but will be analysed separately from the ten minimal pairs[105]. For each informant, four vowels in closed monosyllables were also coded, and all had /ɛ/ in their citation form. The target words were: ‘chaise’, ‘cher’, ‘fer’, ‘sel’. We will begin by examining the behaviour of the vowels in these four words.

/e/	***/ɛ/***
‘thé’	‘taie’
‘ses’	‘sais’
‘serai’	‘serais’
‘pré’	‘près’
‘mes’	‘mais’
‘les’	‘lait’
‘irai’	‘irait’
‘fumé’	‘fumet’
‘clé’	‘claie’
‘chez’	‘chais’

Table 4-1. Minimal pairs elicited

4.4 /ɛ/ in closed monosyllables

For all but one informant, four tokens in the closed monosyllables ‘chaise’, ‘cher’, ‘fer’ and ‘sel’ were coded in this context[106]. The corpus therefore contains 155 tokens of /ɛ/ in closed syllables. Of those tokens, 149 (96.1%) were realised with an open-mid /ɛ/. The remaining 3.9% comprise two tokens realised as [e]

[105] Both word class and frequency effects have been shown to shape pronunciation, leading to ‘lexically restricted pronunciations’ (Phillips 2011: 178). As such, and given the signification of the word ‘Tournai’, it was decided that the word would be analysed separately.
[106] One informant misread ‘sel’ as ‘ses’, thus this token is excluded.

and four as intermediate variants. This percentage is much lower than that found by Hansen and Juillard (2011: 328) in their 2001–04 corpus of Parisian RPS speech, in which 11.8% of their tokens were raised.

The results in the present study are particularly surprising, since raising in the context of /_ʀ/ is described as a feature of both Northern Regional French (Carton et al. 1983: 25; Lefebvre 1991: 78) and *Picard lillois* (Lefebvre 1991: 78). In addition, it has also been observed in youth speech in the Paris *banlieues* (Coveney 2001: 78). Table 4-2 illustrates that all of the informants who realise /ɛ/ with a raised variant belong to ED1[107], three are older women, one is a younger woman, and the other an older male. Sabrina professed competency in Picard on her 'fiche d'identité' and Rose professed competency in Picard orally.

Informant	**Informant category**	**Word**	**Realisation**
Geneviève	OFED1	'cher'	intermediate
Sabrina	OFED1	'fer'	intermediate
Rose	OFED1	'cher'; 'fer'	close-mid; intermediate
Océane	YFED1	'cher'	close-mid
Anthony	OMED1	'chaise'	intermediate

Table 4-2. /ɛ/ tokens that are raised in the Tournaisis corpus

The presence of the variant, predominantly in the speech of older ED1 informants, coupled with its categorical absence from ED2[108], therefore suggests that the variant is – as it is across the border – a working-class and / or regional variant.

[107] ED1 informants are those who left school at the point of – or prior to – completing compulsory education.
[108] ED2 informants are those who pursued their studies beyond compulsory education.

On the other hand, the association of the variant with women in this corpus could indicate that these tokens are hypercorrections. This is one of the explanations that Lefebvre (1991: 78) gave in response to her observation in Lille of an increasing tendency to raise /ɛ/ as attention paid to speech increased. However, Lefebvre's second possible explanation regarding the raised variant was that it was a maintained Picard feature.

Given the background of the informants who raise /ɛ/ in the context of /_ʀ/, we are inclined to draw a conclusion in line with Lefebvre's second explanation with regard to its status: it is a Picard form. What is more, this is strengthened by its near absence in the corpus and restriction to the speech of ED1, which is something we would expect since it has been shown in France that variants derived from the substrate 'show [the] least vitality' (Hornsby 2009: 170).

4.5 /e/ in syllable-final, open position

Ten tokens[109] of /e/ in syllable-final, open position were elicited from each informant, meaning a total of 390 vowels were coded. Their realisations are illustrated in Table 4-3, where it can be seen that 70% of tokens were realised with the expected close-mid variant [e], 6.9% with an open-mid [ɛ] and 20% with an intermediate variant. 3.1% of tokens were realised with an 'other' variant[110].

[109] The target words were: 'thé', 'ses', 'serai, 'pré', 'mes', 'les', 'irai', 'fumé', 'clé' and 'chez'.
[110] These include seven [ɪ] and five [i] tokens, discussed below.

	[e]	[ɛ]	Intermediate variant	Other variant	total
n=	273	27	78	12	390
%	70	6.9	20	3.1	100

Table 4-3. Realisations of /e/ in syllable-final open position

Whilst there is a considerable body of literature on the (e) variable, it is the behaviour of /e/-/ɛ/ as a pair that is generally documented, and reports on the behaviour of the individual phonemes in *Oïl* French and Belgian French are less numerous. Two exceptions are Lefebvre's (1991) analysis of language in the media and Hansen and Juillard's (2011) real-time study of Parisian speech. Lefebvre (1991: 40) found in 1978 that just 1% of /e/ tokens deviated from the expected variant. Similarly, Hansen and Juillard (2011: 327) reported that in their 1972–74 corpus 99.4% of /e/ were realised as [e]. In contrast, in their 2001–04 corpus, this percentage had dropped to 85.2% (ibid., p. 327), whilst 10.4% of tokens were realised as intermediate variants and 4.4% as open-mid variants.

That just 70% of /e/ in the Tournaisis corpus are realised as [e] suggests that the same linguistic change is taking place in both Paris and the Belgian borderland: adherence to the *loi de position* is decreasing. Nevertheless, there is still a considerable difference in percentage of [e] between the Tournaisis corpus and Hansen and Juillard's latter corpus.

There are three ways to explain this difference in percentage: (i) change in behaviour is happening at a similar rate on both sides of the border, thus the lower percentage of [e] in the Tournaisis corpus, compiled a decade after the Paris corpus, illustrates an ongoing change; (ii) the same change is happening

on both sides of the border but is more advanced in the Belgian borderland; or (iii) the situation in the Belgian borderland is – and has always been – distinct, and there is no change taking place. Deeper exploration of apparent-time and social variation in 4.5.2 will give further insight.

There is another notable difference between Hansen and Juillard's (2011) 2001–04 findings and those in the Tournaisis study: 10.4% of their tokens were realised with an intermediate variant, whilst in the present corpus 20% were realised in this way. The explanations above may also be applied to this finding; however, there is yet another possible explanation: it may be due to the target words elicited. It is reported that function words such as 'mais' and auxiliaries favour an intermediate variant (Lefebvre 1988; Fagyal et al. 2002; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). Of the ten /e/ words elicited, two were conjugated verbs ('serai' and 'irai'), three were function words ('ses', 'mes' and 'les') and one was the high frequency word 'chez'. Thus the higher percentage of intermediate tokens in the Tournaisis corpus may be due to the nature of the words elicited. However, it must be remembered that such words have a tendency to be realised with intermediate variants because they tend to be unstressed in connected speech (Phillips 2011: 182), yet in the present study the words were elicited in WLS, and so were stressed. Since there are other factors that condition /e/ realisation (cf. chapter 2), greater insight will be gained through analysing variation not only according to word class, but also according to phonological environment and orthography. Before turning to this task, we will close this section by addressing the one result that has yet to be discussed: the 3.1% of /e/ realised as 'other'.

How can we explain the 3.1% of ‘other’ tokens in the corpus, which are twelve tokens realised as either [i] or [ɪ] and found in the speech of four women: Lea (in ‘les’, ‘clé’ and ‘chez’ as [lɪ], [klɪ] and [ʃɪ]) (YFED2), Ines (in ‘ses’, ‘serai’, ‘irai’ and ‘chez’ as [sɪ], [səʀi], [iʀi] and [ʃi]) (OFED2), Rose (in ‘irai’ and ‘fumé’ as [iʀi] and [fymi]) (OFED1), and Morgane (in ‘ses’, ‘les’ and ‘clé’ as [sɪ], [lɪ] and [klɪ] (MFED2)? Hall (2008: 194) reports that in Normandy, ‘[t]he position of (e) in the vowel-space is higher than either /ɛ/ or /e/ in any set of reference vowels, but it is not as high as /i/.’ It may be, then, that these phonetic realisations are specifically northern. However, another explanation is possible.

All four of these women raise some of their /ɛ/ tokens, though their rates of raising vary[111]. It may be, then, that, a chain-shift-like mechanism is operating in the speech of these informants wherein their /ɛ/, having moved to occupy the vowel space of [e], is pushing their /e/ into a more raised position: either [i] or [ɪ]. This behaviour, associated with ED2 women, can be interpreted as a kind of hypercorrection in that it appears to be an attempt to maintain a contrast, albeit a non-standard attempt.

Having discussed the behaviour of /e/ in general, we now move on to an analysis of how /e/ realisation is conditioned by preceding phonological environment, orthography and word class.

[111] Lea does not realise any of her /ɛ/ the standard way; they are either raised to [e], or to [ɪ] or [i]. Ines and Morgane raise a considerable proportion of their /ɛ/ tokens, whilst Rose only raises a couple of her /ɛ/ tokens.

4.5.1 Phonological environment, orthographic representation and word class

Little has been said by scholars about the effects of preceding consonant on /e/; however, Landick (2004: 69) found that /R_/ in 'gré' had an opening effect. Table 4-4 illustrates that in the Tournaisis corpus there is considerable variation along these lines: whilst /t_/ strongly favours [e], less than half of the tokens in the context of /s_/ are realised with the standard variant. /m_/ and /l_/ also favour non-standard realisations. In contrast to Landick's claims, /ʀ_/ does not appear to have an opening effect; on the contrary, after /t_/, it is the environment which most favours [e].

Preceding phonological environment	**[e] realisation %**	**[ɛ] realisation %**	**Intermediate realisation %**	**Other realisation %**
/t_/	87.2	0	12.8	0
/ʀ_/	76.1	8.5	12.8	2.6
/ʃ_/	71.8	0	23.1	5.1
/l_/	69.2	3.8	21.8	5.1
/m_/	65.4	12.8	20.5	1.3
/s_/	43.6	10.3	41.0	5.1
All tokens	70.0	6.9	20.0	3.1

Table 4-4. Realisations of /e/ according to preceding phonological environment

Although phonological environment appears to condition vowel realisation, viewing the results through the lens of orthography, a different pattern emerges. Whilst Table 4-5 organises the /e/ words according to orthographic group, Table 4-6 illustrates their realisation. Table 4-6 indicates that it may actually be orthographic group that has an effect on vowel realisation in WLS: whilst <é> strongly favours the standard variant, with 85.9% of /e/ realised as [e], less than

half of the <es> tokens are realised with the /e/. Indeed, <es> is the group to most favour both an open-mid and intermediate realisation. This finding explains why /s_/, /m_/ and /l_/ appeared to favour non-standard variants: rather than the consonant sounds in ‘ses’, ‘mes’ and ‘les’ having a phonological effect, it appears it is the orthography <es> that promotes a non-standard realisation.

<é>	**<es>**	**<ai>**	**<ez>**
‘thé’ ‘pré’ ‘fumé’ ‘clé’	‘ses’ ‘mes’ ‘les’	‘serai’ ‘irai’	‘chez’

Table 4-5. /e/ words organised by orthographic group

Orthographic group	**[e] realisation %**	**[ɛ] realisation %**	**Intermediate realisation %**	**Other realisation %**
<é>	85.9	0.6	11.5	1.9
<ez>	71.8	0	23.1	5.1
<ai>	67.9	11.5	16.7	3.8
<es>	49.6	14.5	32.5	3.4
All tokens	70.0	6.9	20.0	3.1

Table 4-6. Realisations of /e/ according to orthographic group

Just under a third of <ai> tokens are realised with lowered variants, which is perhaps not surprising since, whilst some (Martinet & Walter 1973) describe the standard <ai> realisation as /e/, others (Girard & Lyche 1997: 92) describe the objective norm as /ɛ/.

A general pattern appears to emerge, then, wherein <é> tends to promote maintenance of a standard [e] realisation, whilst other orthographic groups have a tendency to be realised as lowered variants. However, whilst in Table 4-5

words are organised according to orthographic group, these groups also correspond[112] to different *word classes* (see Table 4-7).

Orthographic group	**Target words**	**Word class**
<é>	‘thé’ ‘pré’ ‘fumé’ ‘clé’	content word
<ez>	‘chez’	preposition
<ai>	‘serai’ ‘irai’	conjugated verb
<es>	‘ses’ ‘mes’ ‘les’	determiner

Table 4-7. Illustration of how orthographic group and word class of target words map onto each other

Viewing Table 4-5 and Table 4-7 together, it can be seen that the <é> group, which favours [e], corresponds to the group ‘content words’, whilst those words which have different orthographic representations and show a tendency towards an open realisation are all function words. This pattern is in line with scholarly reports that certain function words favour an intermediate variant (Lefebvre 1988: 79; Fagyal et al. 2002; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). It is also consistent with the general sociophonetic principle that sound changes affect content and function words distinctly. As Phillips (2011: 182) argues, function words ‘are more susceptible to reductive or weakening sound changes, probably due to the low sentence stress typical of function words’.

It emerged above that <es> was the orthographic group to most favour open-mid and intermediate realisations; however, it can be seen in Table 4-7 that this subset corresponds to the group ‘determiners’. The behaviour of this subset of words is of particular interest as it is widely reported that monosyllabic

[112] This was not done intentionally.

determiners such as ‘les’, ‘mes’ and ‘ses’ favour more open realisations in both Hexagonal and Belgian varieties (Deyhime 1967: 74; Francard 2001: 255; Landick 2004). Furthermore, an open realisation in this context is also considered to be a feature of the Belgian ‘endogenous norm’ (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc). In light of this, it is unsurprising that it is the determiners that most favour both intermediate and open-mid realisations, and these results add weight to the argument for the existence of the Belgian endogenous norm. However, this finding is in conflict with Hambye’s (2005: 97) claim that in Tournai behaviour is more in line with that in France; that is to say vowels in these contexts tend to be realised with a standard [e].

Synthesising the findings above, because of the congruence between spelling and word class groups in the data, it is not possible to know whether one or both of these factors has an effect on vowel realisation. It may be that <é> favours the standard variant or, alternatively, that content words favour it, or even that both factors exert an influence. Conversely, orthographic representations other than <é> may favour non-standard variants, or it may be that it is function words that do this. Further research will be required to clarify this; nevertheless, these findings provide a useful point of departure. It also emerged above that determiners favour open realisations, and this appears to be in line with the claimed national tendency and in contrast with the claimed situation in Tournai (cf. Hambye 2005: 97). An analysis of how vowel realisation varies according to various social factors will give us greater insight into this phenomenon, and it is to this task we now turn.

4.5.2 /e/ and social variation

4.5.2.1 /e/ and age

Figure 4-1 illustrates the realisation of /e/ according to age. Although the percentage differences are modest and thus must be interpreted with caution, it is revealed that it is the middle age group that conforms most to SF, realising the greatest percentage of [e] and smallest percentage of intermediate variants. This is not surprising since in language variation and change this is an established pattern for stable variables[113]. Somewhat contradicting this pattern, however, is the finding that the middle age group is also the group that realises the greatest percentage of open-mid variants – a result that warrants further exploration.

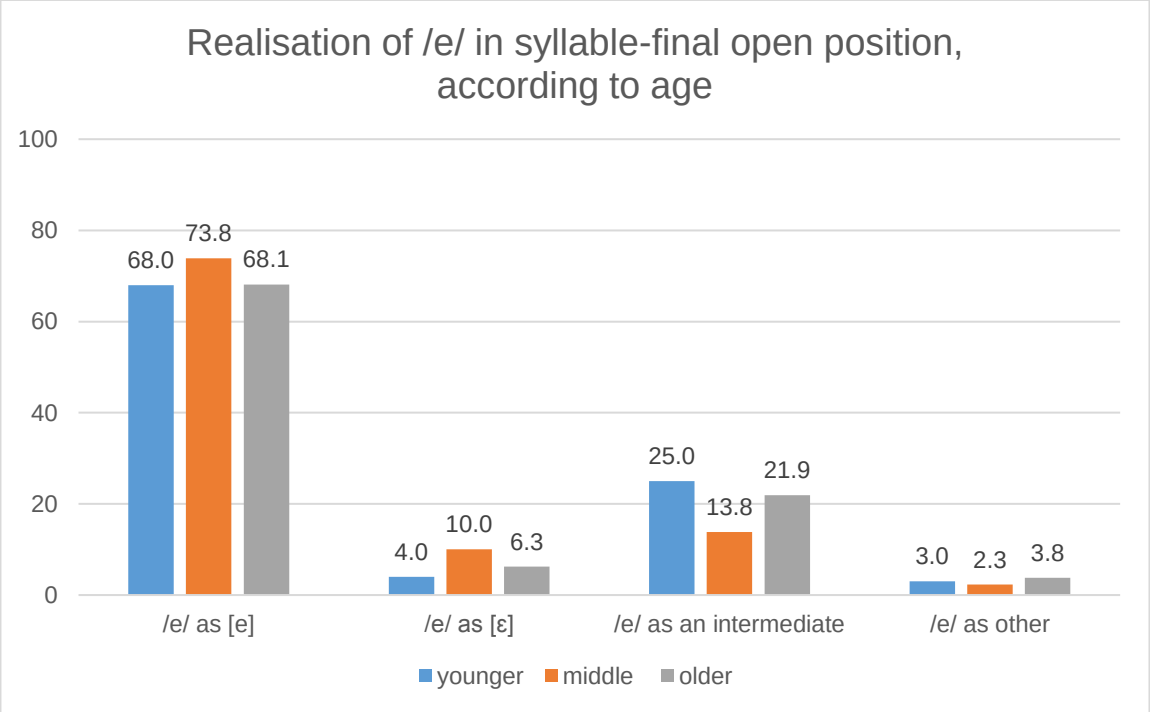

Figure 4-1. Realisations of /e/ in syllable-final open position, according to age

[113] This is the case, for example, for the (ng) variable, a stable marker in Norwich (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 78).

Informant	Informant background	'mes'	'ses'	'les'	'irai'	'serai'	'pré'
Nadine	YFED2					x	
Clara	YFED2				x	x	
Louis	YMED2				x		
Yolande	MFED1	x	x				
Thierry	MMED2	x	x	x			
Yann	MMED2	x					
Veronique	MFED2	x	x				
Jessica	MFED2	x		x	x	x	
Delphine	MFED2						x
Daniel	OMED1		x				
Agnes	OFED1	x			x		
Tiffaine	OFED1	x					
Rose	OFED1	x				x	
Simon	OMED2	x					
Ines	OFED2	x					
Florence	OFED2			x	x		

Table 4-8. /e/ words realised with [ɛ] and informant background

Table 4-8 illustrates the distribution of /e/ words realised as [ɛ] in the corpus. Here we see that 'mes' is the word that both the middle and older age groups realise the most with [ɛ]. However, whilst in the middle age group [ɛ] is associated with ED2, in the older group it is not associated with one educational group in particular. This table also reveals that the younger group, composed solely of ED2 informants, does not realise any of the determiners with an open-mid variant; the open realisations are restricted to verbs. Finally, it can be seen in this table that of the sixteen informants to lower /e/, five are male and eleven are female.

The distribution of open-mid tokens in the Tournaisis corpus paints a complex picture wherein different age groups behave differently. This in turn suggests that they may be orientated towards distinct norms. Since Belgian scholars present an open-mid realisation of words such as ‘mes’ and ‘les’ as a feature of the supposed endogenous norm (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc), the lexical and social distribution of open-mid variants in the speech of the middle age group indicates that this group may be adhering to this endogenous Belgian norm. In contrast to this, none of the lowered variants realised by the younger informants are in monosyllabic determiners; these words are all realised the standard way. It therefore appears that they are orientated towards a linguistic model which is distinct from that of their elders; that is to say SF.

What of the lowered ‘irai’ and ‘serai’ tokens? It seems plausible that these tokens are hypercorrections, realised this way because of an awareness that a temporal contrast (as in ‘irai’-‘irais’) is maintained in SF. Moreover, these lowered tokens are predominantly associated with ED2 and women, a distribution which strengthens the argument that they are hypercorrections.

It was suggested above that the lower percentage of standard /e/ variants in the corpus compared to that seen in Hansen and Juillard’s (2011) 2001–04 Paris corpus could be because of an ongoing change in progress; that is to say an increasing tendency to lower /e/. However, Figure 4-1 does not show the incremental decrease in [e] that we would expect were this to be the case. From this we can conclude that behaviour in the Belgian borderland is both stable and distinct from behaviour in Paris.

4.5.2.2 /e/ and educational background

In Figure 4-2, which illustrates /e/ realisation according to educational background, it can be seen that ED1 realises 68% of /e/ as [e], whilst for ED2 the percentage is 71.2%. Conversely, ED1 displays a higher percentage of intermediate variants. Since one of the established sociolinguistic principles is that those from a higher socioeconomic background are more standard in behaviour (cf. Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974), this variation, though slight, indicates that, generally, intermediate variants are perceived as non-standard whilst /e/ remains the standard variant. (See 4.5 for a discussion of the 'other' tokens.)

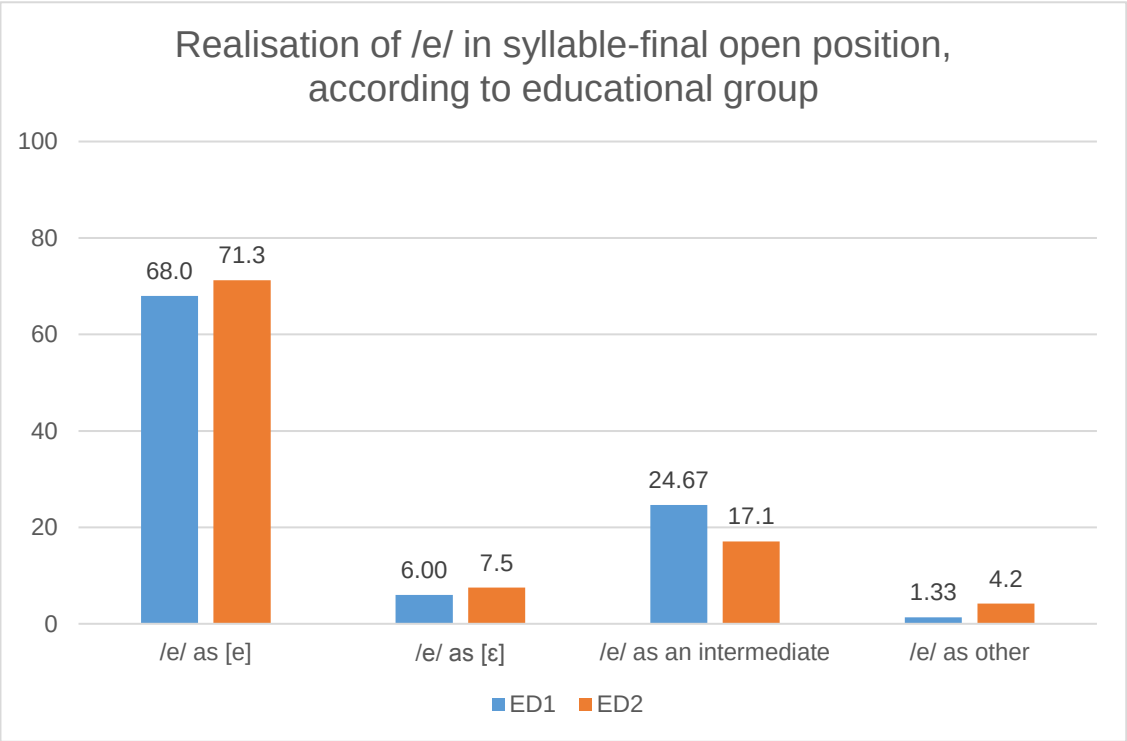

Figure 4-2. Realisations of /e/ in syllable-final open position, according to educational background

4.5.2.3 /e/ and sex

Figure 4-3 illustrates the realisation of /e/ according to sex. Having concluded above that an intermediate variant is perceived as non-standard, we would expect there to be a higher percentage of intermediate tokens in the speech of males and indeed this is what we find. This pattern is in line with the first part of

Labov's (2001: 266) *Principle 2,* which relates to 'the linguistic conformity of women' and holds that '[f]or stable sociolinguistic variables, women show a lower rate of stigmatized variants'. The second part of *Principle 2* holds that women show 'a higher rate of prestige variants than men.' We would therefore expect women to show a higher rate of the standard variant than men. However, Figure 4-3 illustrates that this is not the case: the inverse is found; we appear to have a paradox.

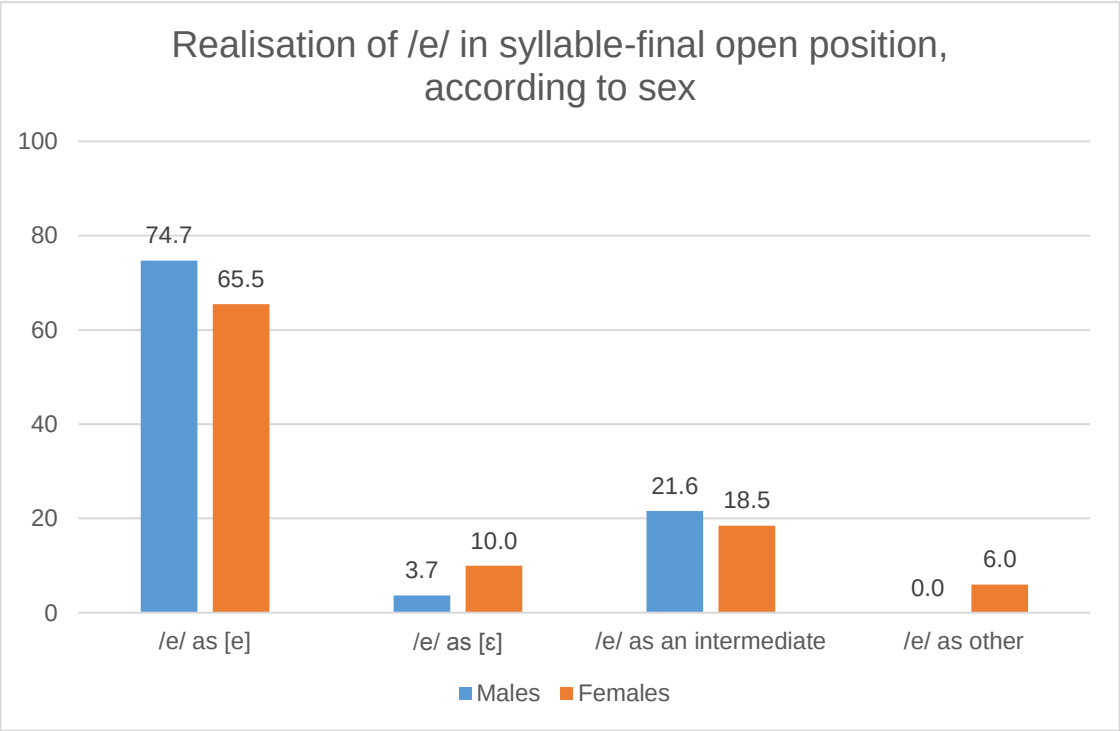

Figure 4-3. Realisations of /e/ in syllable-final open position, according to sex

How can we resolve this paradox? In his 2001 work, *Principles of Linguistic change: social factors*, Labov describes a situation, which he calls the 'Gender Paradox', wherein '[w]omen conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not' (Labov 2001: 293). We can, therefore, explain the variation we see in Figure 4-3

in these terms, which furthermore allows us to infer that whilst the standard variant [e] is the norm it is not overtly prescribed.

To summarise, then, we have seen not only that behaviour in the Tournaisis corpus is distinct from behaviour in Paris, but also that it diverges along generational lines. The findings suggest that whilst younger speakers are orientated towards a Standard or levelled French norm, certain middle-aged and older speakers are orientated towards a supposed Belgian norm. We now go on to examine the behaviour of /ɛ/ in syllable-final, open position.

4.6 /ɛ/ in syllable-final, open position

Ten tokens[114] of /ɛ/ in syllable-final, open position were elicited from each informant, meaning a total of 390 vowels were coded. Their realisations are illustrated in Table 4-9, where it can be seen that 18.2% were realised with the standard variant, 54.9% with [e] and 25.1% with an intermediate variant. The seven 'other' tokens comprise five [ɪ] tokens realised by Lea and two by Morgane. This variation is consistent with the widely reported pattern that there is a loss of /ɛ/ across France in favour of [e] and intermediate variants (Gadet 1989: 93; Lefebvre 1991: 40; Coveney 2001: 77; Fagyal et al. 2002; Hall 2008: 185; Hansen & Juillard 2011: 314; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013: 79). A pattern also found in previous studies (Lefebvre 1991: 40; Hansen & Juillard 2011: 327), Table 4-10 illustrates that there is considerably more variation in /ɛ/ realisation than in /e/ (cf. 4.5).

[114] The target words were: 'taie', 'sais', 'serais', 'près', 'mais', 'lait', 'irait', 'fumet', 'claie'and 'chais'.

	[ɛ]	[e]	Intermediate variant	Other variant	Total
n=	71	214	98	7	390
%	18.2	54.9	25.1	1.8	100

Table 4-9. Realisations of /ɛ/ in syllable-final open position

	Realisation as standard variant %	Realisation as opposite variant %	Realisation as intermediate variant %	Realisation as other variant[115]%	total
/e/	70	6.9	20	3.1	100
/ɛ/	18.2	54.9	25.1	1.8	100

Table 4-10. Realisations of both /e/ and /ɛ/ in syllable-final open position

In Table 4-9 it can be seen that 80% of /ɛ/ are realised with either an intermediate or raised variant. This result is similar to that of Lefebvre (1991: 40), who found in her corpus of media speech that 77% of /ɛ/ tokens were realised with these variants. On the other hand, Hansen and Juillard (2011: 327) found a considerably smaller percentage of /ɛ/ were raised (to [e] or intermediate variants) in their 2001–04 Paris corpus (44.2%), as did Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013: 79) in their *Oïl* French data (46%).

Distinct data processing methods[116] may explain the difference between the vowel behaviour in the Tournaisis corpus and in that of Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013). They cannot, however, account for the differences between these results and those of Hansen and Juillard. However, since Hansen and Juillard observed a real-time change in progress, with an increasing tendency to raise [ɛ], and their data were collected a decade prior to those of the present study,

[115] 'Other' variants include [ɪ] and [i].
[116] Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013: 79) tokens were processed with automatic phone alignment and only two categories were considered: [e] and [ɛ]. We can suppose that had there been an intermediate category, some of the tokens classed as [e] would have been classed as intermediate, which would alter the distribution of variants.

the higher percentage of non-standard variants in the Tournaisis corpus may be due to an ongoing change. An apparent-time analysis in 4.6.2.1, coupled with analyses along other social dimensions, will give further insight into this.

Since morphological and phonological constraints operate on /ɛ/ (cf. chapter 2; Girard & Lyche 1997; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013), we now move on to explore these factors along with the effect of word class.

4.6.1 Phonological environment, orthographic representation and word class

Table 4-11 indicates that preceding phonological environment has an effect on /ɛ/ realisation: whilst /ʀ_/ appears to favour the standard variant, /l_/ and /t_/ appear to have a closing effect. Recalling that in 4.5.1 we saw that /t_/ was the environment to most favour a realisation of /e/ as [e], it could be tentatively concluded that this is also the case for /ɛ/, since /t_/ promotes closure of /ɛ/ to [e] – albeit a non-standard realisation. However, reorganising the data according to orthographic group (Table 4-12), it appears that, rather than phonology, it is orthography which conditions the word ‘taie’ since <aie> most favours closure of /ɛ/ to [e]. What is more, it may be that this is due to the relatively low occurrence of the trigraph <aie>, since elsewhere scholars have found that lexical frequency has an effect on sound change (cf. Phillips 2011: 182).

Preceding phonological environment	[ɛ] realisation %	[e] realisation %	Intermediate realisation %	Other realisation %
/ʀ_/	29.1	47	23.9	0
/s_/	17.9	41	38.5	2.6
/ʃ_/	17.9	46.2	30.8	5.1
/m_/	16.7	56.4	25.6	1.3
/l_/	9.0	64.1	23.1	3.8
/t_/	7.7	79.5	12.8	0
All tokens	18.2	54.9	25.1	1.8

Table 4-11. Realisation of /ɛ/ according to preceding phonological environment

Orthographic group	[ɛ] realisation %	[e] realisation %	Intermediate realisation %	Other realisation %
<ès>	43.6	38.5	17.9	0
<ais>	21.8	43.6	32.1	2.6
<ait>	15.4	57.7	24.4	2.6
<et>	10.3	69.2	20.5	0
<aie>	5.1	75.6	17.9	1.3
All tokens	18.2	54.9	25.1	1.8

Table 4-12. Realisations of /ɛ/ according to orthographic group

At the other end of the spectrum to <aie> is <ès>. Nearly half of these tokens are realised with the expected variant [ɛ] and this is the spelling group to least favour raising. The word elicited for this group is ‘près’, thus it may be that the lexical item ‘près’ promotes the [ɛ] variant, or it may be that it is the grave accent conditioning this realisation, or alternatively, it may be due to the relative high frequency of the lexical item (cf. Phillips 2011: 182).

The groups <ais> and <ait> are those which most favour an intermediate realisation, with percentages of 32.1% and 24.4% respectively. These are also the only two trigraphs which were elicited from target words that were

auxiliaries. Boula de Mareuïl et al. (2013: 79) found that in *Oïl* French, auxiliary verbs favoured intermediate variants; however, despite the tendency to realise <ais> and <ait> with an intermediate variant, organising the data by word class (Table 4-13), this does not appear to be the case in the Tournaisis corpus. What can be seen in Table 4-13, however, is a marked difference between the behaviour of vowels in content words and that in function words: content words strongly disfavour the standard variant, mildly favour intermediate realisations, and strongly favour the close-mid realisation, whilst the more frequently-occuring function words favour [e] to a lesser extent and favour both the SF variant and the intermediate variant to a greater extent. This more general pattern is consistent with Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013: 79) finding that verb inflections and the conjunction 'mais' show a tendency towards intermediate realisations.

Word class		**[ɛ] realisation %**	**[e] realisation %**	**Intermediate realisation %**	**Other realisation %**
Function words	Prepositions and conjunctions	33.3	41	24.4	1.3
	Auxiliaries	21.8	51.3	26.9	0
	Other verbs	17.9	41	38.5	2.6
Content words		10.8	64.6	22.1	2.6
All word classes		18.2	54.9	25.1	1.8

Table 4-13. Realisations of /ɛ/ according to word class

Having analysed the effects of phonological environment, orthography and word class, we now go on to investigate the potential effects of the social factors: age, educational background and sex.

4.6.2 /ɛ/ and social variation

4.6.2.1 /ɛ/ and age

In 4.6, it was suggested that there may be an ongoing change in progress with regard to the behaviour of /ɛ/, with an increasing tendency for /ɛ/ to be realised with a raised variant. Organising the data according to age in Figure 4-4, however, the situation appears more complex than this. Whilst there is a decreasing tendency to realise /ɛ/ as [ɛ], there is no evidence of an increasing tendency to realise /ɛ/ as [e]. In contrast, the younger group do realise a slightly larger percentage of /ɛ/ with intermediate variants, thus there is some evidence of an ongoing change in the Belgian borderland. Moreover, this change is consistent with that found by Hansen and Juillard (2011: 327), since they too found an increase in percentage of intermediate variants over time in their Parisian study. It appears, then, that in this respect, behaviour is changing in the same way in both the Belgian borderland and Paris.

Figure 4-4 also illustrates that the middle age group realise a much higher percentage of /ɛ/ as [ɛ] than both the older and younger age groups. This is a pattern which is found when a linguistic variable is stable[117] and indicates that /ɛ/ is still perceived as standard. Yet the difference is more marked between the middle and younger groups, which does point to a change taking place.

[117] This is the case, for example, for the (ng) variable, a stable marker in Norwich (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 78).

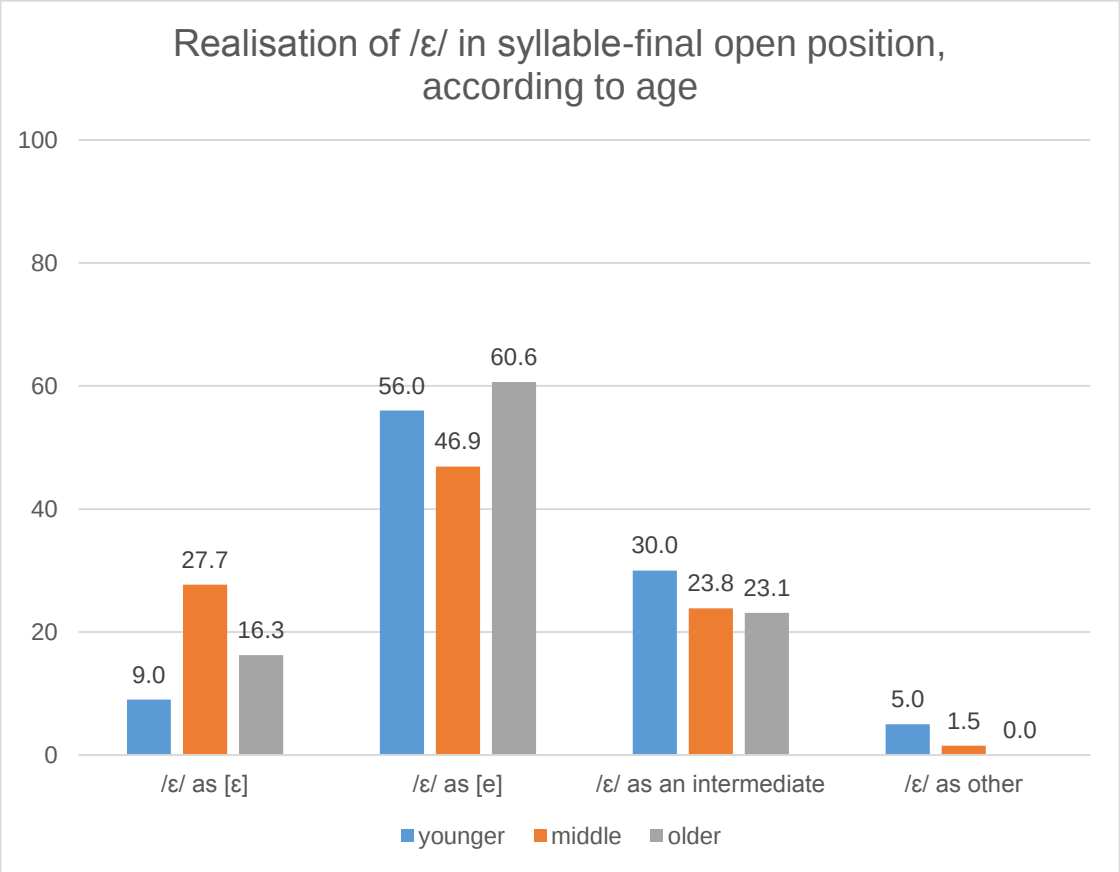

Figure 4-4. Realisations of /ɛ/ in syllable-final open position, according to age

4.6.2.2 /ɛ/ and educational background

Figure 4-5 illustrates the interaction between educational background and /ɛ/ realisation and reveals a large difference in percentage realisation of /ɛ/ as [ɛ]: for ED1 the percentage is 8%, whilst for ED2 it is 24.6%. Correspondingly, greater percentages of both [e] and intermediate variants are realised by ED1. This distribution of variants corroborates the conclusion above that /ɛ/ is still perceived as the standard variant. This pattern is also consistent with findings in Paris: as in the Tournaisis corpus, Hansen and Juillard found that closure of /ɛ/ was more widespread in the speech of – and was being led by – those from a lower socioeconomic background (Hansen & Juillard 2011: 345)[118].

[118] Similarly, though along the stylistic dimension, Fagyal et al. (2002: 166) found a greater tendency to raise /ɛ/ to [e] in informal speech.

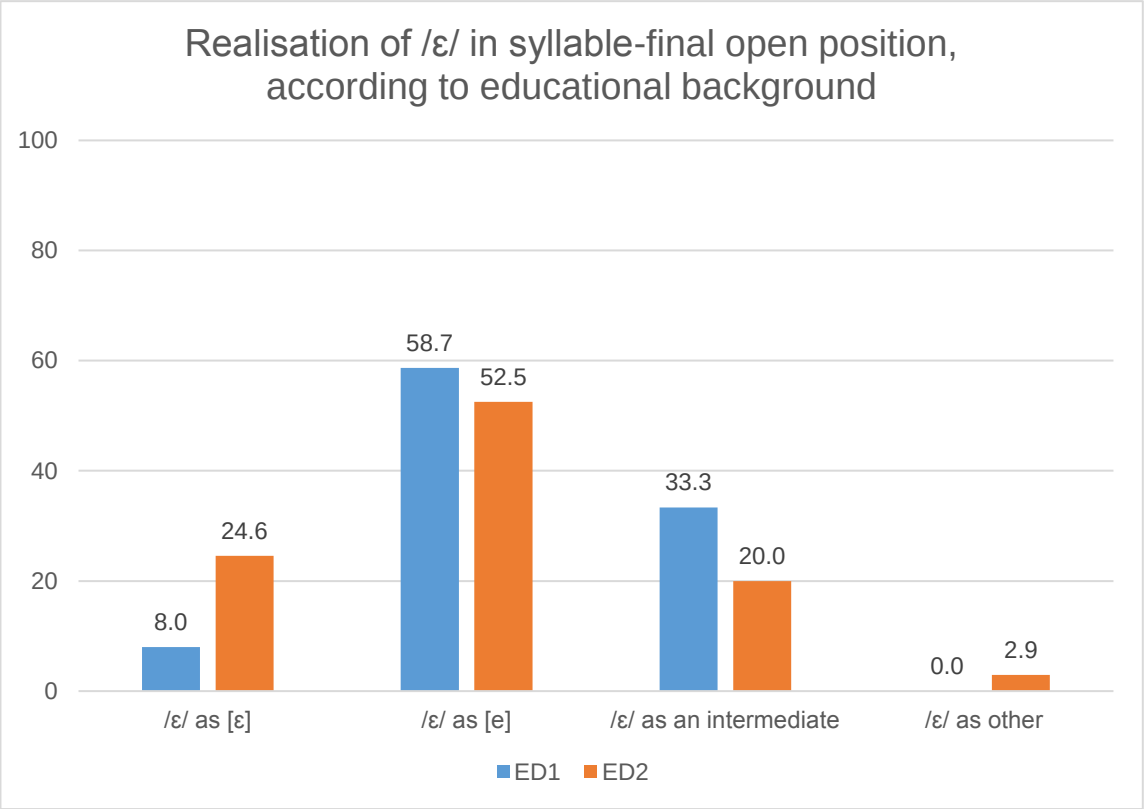

Figure 4-5. Realisations of /ɛ/ in syllable-final open position, according to educational background

4.6.2.3 /ɛ/ and sex

Figure 4-6 shows that women realise a greater percentage of tokens with the SF variant [ɛ]. Conversely, men realise a greater percentage of /ɛ/ as either a close-mid or intermediate variant. As mentioned above, it has been established in language variation research that women are more careful in their linguistic behaviour (Labov 2001: 266). The variation in /ɛ/ realisation according to sex is therefore not surprising, and suggests that not only does [ɛ] remain the standard variant, but also that it is a prestige variant.

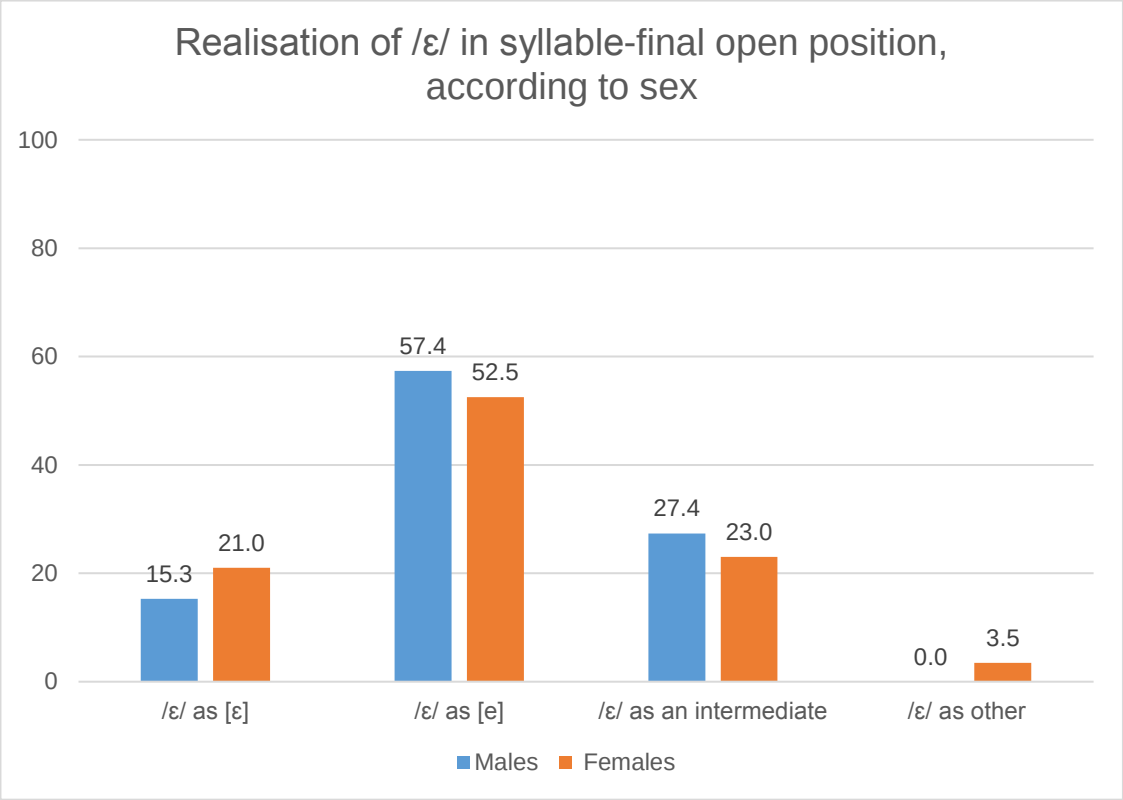

Figure 4-6. Realisations of /ɛ/ in syllable-final, open position according to sex

In summary, then, the behaviour of /ɛ/ in the Tournaisis corpus appears somewhat paradoxical: whilst there is some evidence that there is an ongoing change in progress, with the vowel increasingly realised as an intermediate, [ɛ] remains the standard, prestige variant whilst [e] and the intermediate variant are perceived as non-standard. We now move on to explore the behaviour of /e/ and /ɛ/ in traditionally phonemic minimal pairs.

4.7 Phonemic oppositions

The words in which /e/ and /ɛ/ occur in syllable-final open position that were elicited[119] were selected because they are minimal pairs in which the vowels operate as phonemes. As such, for each informant there are ten minimal pairs

[119] The minimal pairs were: 'thé'-'taie', 'ses'-'sais', 'serai'-'serais', 'pré'-'près','mes'-'mais', 'les'-'lait', 'irai'-'irait', 'fumé'-'fumet', 'clé'-'claie' and 'chez'-'chais'.

in WLS, that is to say there are 390 minimal pairs in the Tournaisis corpus. The realisations of the minimal pairs are reported in Table 4-14 where it can be seen that 10.3% were strong, 16.9% were weak, 58.5% were merged, 10.5% were reversed and 3.8% were realised as an 'other' contrast (see 3.5.4 for a description of how the pairs were coded).

	Strong	**Weak**	**Merged**	**Reversed**	**Other**	**Total**
n=	40	66	228	41	15	390
%	10.3	16.9	58.5	10.5	3.8	100

Table 4-14. Realisations of oppositions where /e/-/ɛ/ are phonemes

Since it is 'well known' (Coveney 2001: 77) that even in SF the /e/-/ɛ/ opposition is often not made, the behaviour exhibited in this study is as expected. A general tendency to merge the pair is repeatedly revealed in empirical investigations, though there is variation between studies: Landick (1995: 94) found 77% of oppositions were made in her 1986 corpus of middle-class Parisian speech, whilst in her 1988 corpus, which encompassed a broader social demographic, the average percentage maintenance of oppositions was 63% (ibid., p. 94); Hansen and Juillard (2011: 322) found in their 2001–04 corpus that 52% of all oppositions were made – either as strong or weak contrasts; and Fagyal et al. (2002), in their study of three middle-class Ile-de-Paris speakers, found that just under 50% (4/7) of oppositions were made by two speakers, whilst 3/7 were made by the third.

Combining the strong and weak oppositions in this corpus, just 27.2% of oppositions are maintained, a percentage which is much lower than those reported above. Since Hansen and Juillard (2011: 322) report a change in progress, with an increasing tendency to merge oppositions, one way of explaining the lower percentage of oppositions in the present corpus would be that it is because of an ongoing transnational change in behaviour. We will return to this hypothesis in 4.7.1.1.1.

Although the scholars cited above describe oppositions in terms of percentage maintenance in corpora, elsewhere in the literature behaviour is described in terms of percentages of *informants* who maintain or merge oppositions. Table 4-15 allows us to look at the data from this perspective: it illustrates the number and nature of oppositions made, and which informants realise oppositions in particular ways.

	Number of informants				
Number of oppositions	**Strong**	**Weak**	**Merged**	**Reversed**	**Other**
10	0	0	1 (Zoé)	0	0
9	0	0	5	0	0
8	0	0	5	0	0
7	1 (Victor)	0	3	0	0
6	1 (Benoit)	1	9	0	0
5	2	0	6	0	1
4	0	1	4	1	2
3	1	11	3	2	0
2	2	6	1	8	1
1	10	11	1	15	0
0	22	9	1 (Victor)	13	35

Table 4-15. Number of oppositions by nature of opposition and number of informants

In Table 4-15, it can be seen that there is no informant who realises all 10 contrasts with a strong opposition and that there is a great deal of inter-speaker variation: whilst one speaker, Victor, an 'animateur' with a background in philology realised 7/10 pairs with a strong opposition, 22 informants (56.4%) make no strong oppositions at all and a further 10 (25.6%) make just one.

As for merging, this behaviour is observed in the speech of all informants but one: Victor. Victor's behaviour is unsurprising since, in the metalinguistic conversation surrounding the word list task, he indicated that he had tried to speak 'good French'[120]. After Victor is Benoit, who realised six strong oppositions. This participant was involved in various cultural and literary activities, which would imply a high level of linguistic awareness. At the other end of the spectrum is Zoé, a farmer, who merges all 10 of her pairs. We can imagine that she would have a relatively low level of linguistic awareness due to being part of a local, close-knit farming network. The high degree of inter-speaker variation in this corpus is not unique; whilst in the Tournaisis corpus, percentage maintenance of strong oppositions ranges from 0% – 70%, Landick (1995: 92) found in her 1986 Parisian corpus that individuals' percentage maintenance varied from 22% to 93%.

Since Lefebvre (1991: 76) found in her study of Lille French that 90% of informants merged at least some oppositions in a minimal pair reading task, that 97.4% (38/39) of speakers in the Tournaisis corpus show at least some merging in WLS could indicate that there is an ongoing increasing tendency to merge pairs. On the other hand, Lefebvre also found that 50% of speakers made *no*

[120] He said: "là j'ai essayé de parler français 'bien parler français'."

oppositions in the minimal pair task. In contrast, in the present corpus, only Victor is in this position, whilst in Hambye and Simon's (2012: 132) Tournai data, two out of the twelve speakers behaved in this way. These findings suggest that whilst merging is slightly more *widespread* in the population of present day Tournai, individuals do not merge to the same *extent* as in Lille. Thus there appears to be distinctiveness in behaviour along regional lines.

Further regional variation is found when we bring in Hall's findings in his Normandy study. Hall (2008: 183) found behaviour to be more conservative than in both Lille and the Belgian borderland: just 67% of rural speakers displayed mergers in the formal speech elicited, and the percentage was smaller still for urban speakers. Whilst merging, then, appears to be a supralocal tendency, observed across France and Belgium, the rates at which the tendency is found vary, and it is in this way that regional variation is found (cf. Hornsby 2009: 172–173; Boughton 2013).

Finally, in Table 4-15 it can be seen that the majority of informants reverse just one or two oppositions, a phenomenon that has also been observed in France (Fagyal et al 2002: 168). Fifteen informants reverse just one opposition. Of those fifteen oppositions, two are verb pairs, for example 'serai'-'serais' and nine are minimal pairs containing one of the determiners 'mes', les or 'ses'. It can be seen, then, that reversed oppositions are marginal and are found predominantly in instances where either a verb is a hypercorrected, or a determiner is lowered and realised in the arguably endogenous Belgian way whilst its pair is raised.

Phonemic oppositions and morphosyntactic variation

Gadet (1989: 93) divides contexts in which /e/-/ɛ/ phonemic pairs are found into two morphosyntactic groups: (i) all contexts except the verb system[121]; and (ii) the verb system. She reports that whilst loss of opposition is observed in both of these groups, it is when oppositions in the second group are merged that more confusion arises. Given this situation, one would imagine that oppositions would be better maintained in pairs belonging to the verb system, where their absence would provoke confusion. However, in Table 4-16, which organises the minimal pairs along these lines, we see that there is little difference in the behaviour of the two groups. Nevertheless, behaviour does diverge in the way that we expect: fewer verbal contrasts are merged and more are strongly or weakly maintained.

Opposition	**Strong**	**Weak**	**Merged**	**Reversed**	**Other**
Verbal	11.5	17.9	55.1	11.5	3.8
Non-verbal	9.9	16.7	59.3	10.3	3.8
All contexts	10.3	16.9	58.5	10.5	3.8

Table 4-16. Realisations of verbal contrasts and non-verbal contrasts (in percent)

Having analysed the behaviour of /e/-/ɛ/ in general, we now go on to explore how behaviour varies according to age, educational background and sex.

[121] For example, the words ‘laid’, ‘lait’ and ‘les’ belong to different word classes, which are: adjective, noun and determiner respectively (cf. Gadet 1989: 93).

4.7.1.1 Phonemic oppositions and social variation

4.7.1.1.1 /e/-/ɛ/ and age

It was suggested above (4.7) that the small percentage of strong oppositions in the corpus (10.3%) could be because of an ongoing change in linguistic behaviour; that is to say an increasing tendency to merge /e/-/ɛ/. What is more, this is the change that is reported to be taking place across the *Oïl* region (Lefebvre 1991; Landick 1995; Fagyal et al. 2002; Hall 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013).

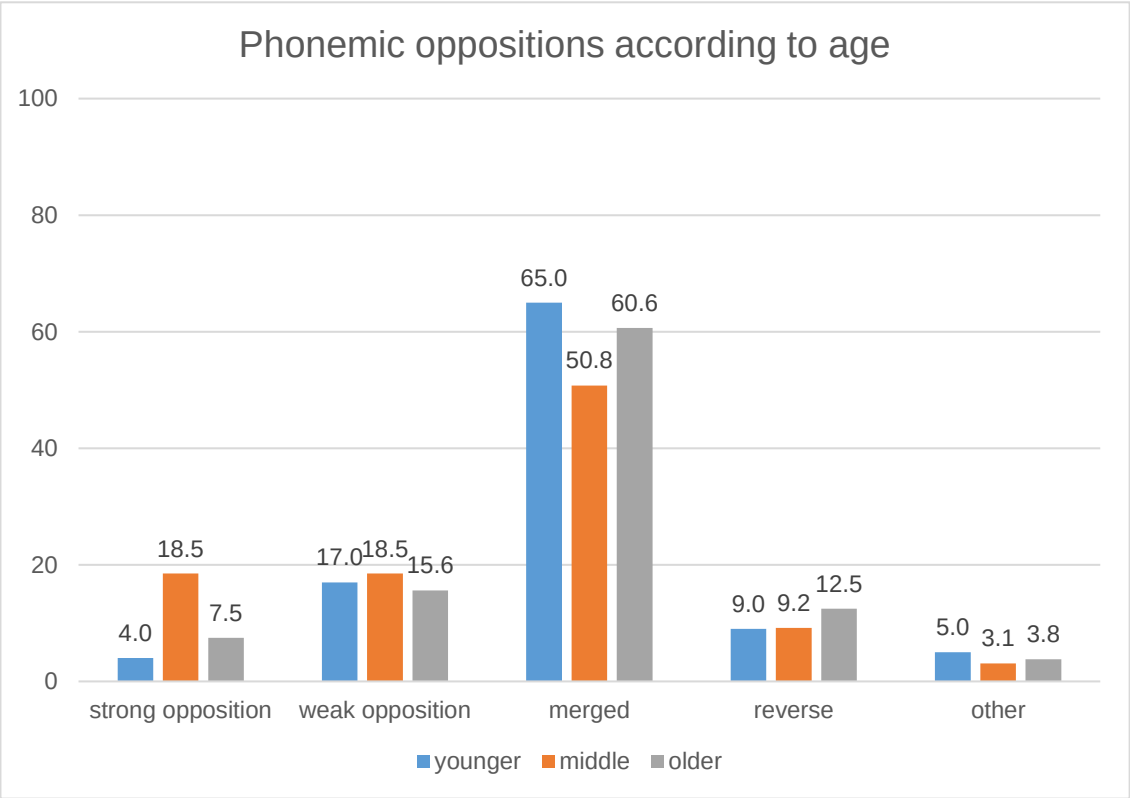

Figure 4-7. Phonemic oppositions according to age

Figure 4-7 suggests that there *is* an ongoing change taking place, since we see a decrease in strong oppositions and increase in merged oppositions between the older group and the younger group, although the percentage differences are relatively modest. Whilst the middle age group are more standard in their behaviour, realising a greater percentage of strong oppositions and smaller

percentage of merged pairs than the other two age groups, this is not surprising, given that we have seen above (4.5.2.1 and 4.6.2.1) that they are the group to display the most standard behaviour. Moreover, this pattern is not unique to the Belgian borderland: Landick (1995: 94) also found that her middle-aged (working-class) Parisian speakers were also those who most conserved the opposition.

Whilst there appears to be an increasing tendency to merge oppositions, there is no strong evidence of an apparent-time increase in percentage of weak oppositions. As for reverse oppositions, which are marginal in the corpus, the pattern is as we expect: the percentage is slightly higher for older speakers, whose reversed oppositions are due to their tendency to lower ‘les’, ‘mes’ and ‘ses’ determiners (cf. 4.5.2.1).

4.7.1.1.2 /e/-/ɛ/ and educational background

It can be seen in Figure 4-8 that the percentage of strong maintained oppositions is markedly lower for ED1 (those who left school before – or at the point of – completing compulsory education) than ED2 (those pursued their studies beyond compulsory education). Conversely, ED1 realise a greater percentage of weak oppositions, which is due to this group’s tendency to raise /ɛ/ to [e] (4.6.2.2); something which also explains why the group merges a higher percentage of pairs.

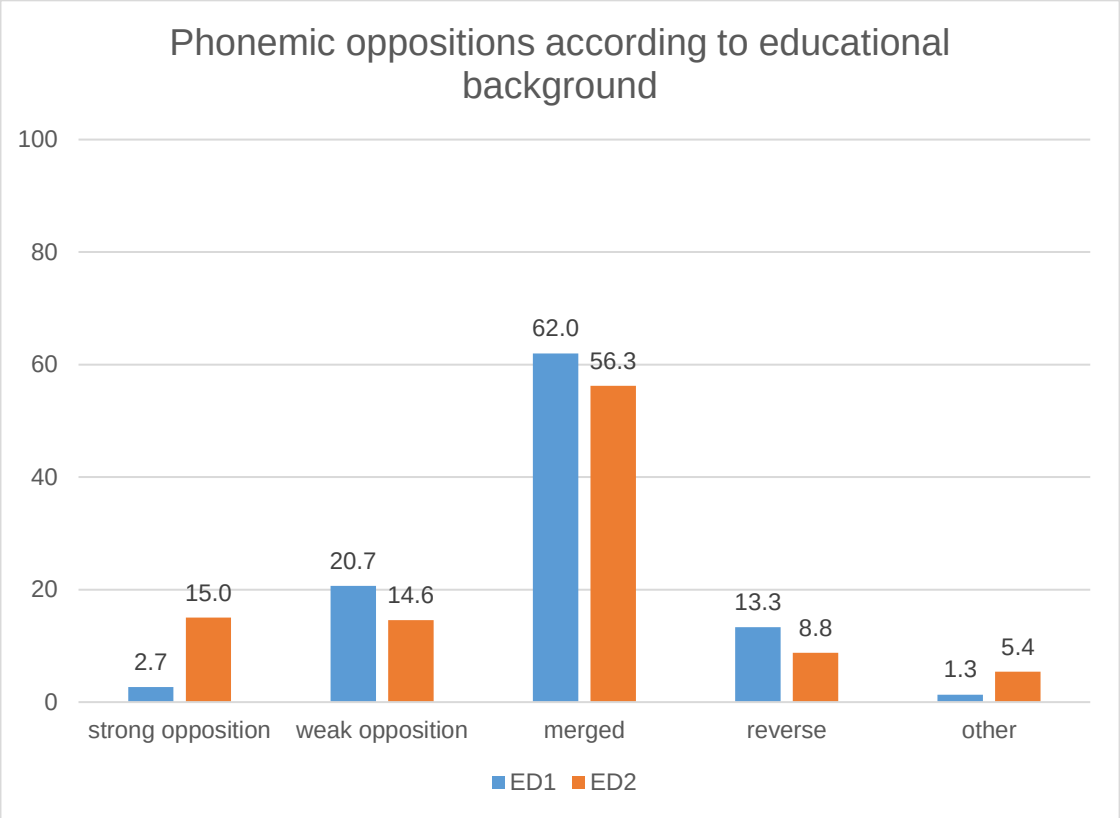

Figure 4-8. Phonemic oppositions according to educational background

That ED1 realise a smaller percentage of strong oppositions and greater percentage of merged pairs is consistent with certain empirical findings in France: Hall (2008: 194) found in both the urban and rural sites of his Normandy study that rates of merger increased as socioeconomic background decreased. Lefebvre (1991: 133), too, found that in the Lille region an increased percentage of oppositions correlated positively with years in further and higher education. In contrast, Hansen and Juillard (2011) did not find socioeconomic background significantly affected opposition realisation in Paris. Landick (1995: 94), on the other hand, found an interaction between age and socioeconomic background: whilst a greater percentage of oppositions were maintained by the older speakers belonging to her middle-class group, for the middle age group

and younger group, it was the working-class group who maintained a greater percentage of oppositions[122].

An interaction between age and socioeconomic background is also seen in the Tournaisis corpus, although it is distinct from that found by Landick (1995). Figure 4-9 shows percentage of strong oppositions with age and educational background cross-tabulated. Organising the data in this way reveals that whilst across ages ED2 categorically realises a higher percentage of strong oppositions than ED1, the middle age band of ED2 'buck the trend' in declining maintenance of oppositions, realising a much higher percentage of strong oppositions than their elders. In contrast, for ED1 the decline is incremental. These patterns suggest that the middle age group of ED1 are not as sensitive to notions of the standard as their ED2 counterparts. One way of explaining this could be that this is because of the distinct nature of the occupations of middle-aged speakers in ED1 and ED2.

[122] Landick (1995) does not offer an explanation for this finding.

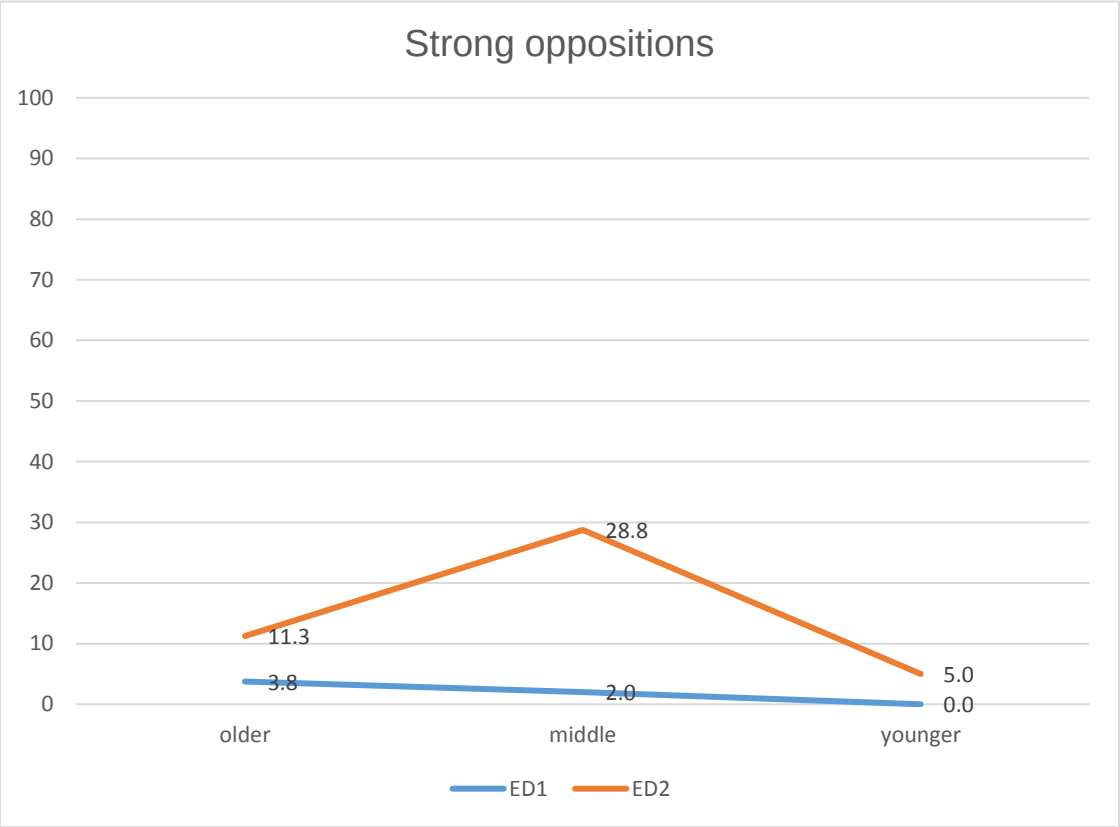

Figure 4-9. Realisations of strong oppositions, cross-tabulating age and educational background

Figure 4-9 also suggests that ED1 is leading the change in behaviour and that ED2 is converging on the behaviour of ED1. Whilst this pattern is distinct from Hansen and Juillard's (2011: 343–344) real-time finding that there was no clear evidence that the lower socioeconomic group were leading the change with regard to /e/-/ɛ/ behaviour, it is in keeping with their wider finding that for /ø-œ/, /o-ɔ/ and /a-ɑ/ it was those belonging to the lower socioeconomic group that were leading the change. The pattern of change in behaviour of this pair is thus consistent with the broader pattern observed in Paris.

Figure 4-10 shows percentage of merged oppositions with age and educational background cross-tabulated. It can be seen that degree of merging does not change greatly for ED1 across age groups. For ED2, however, the picture is different. Whilst the older and middle age groups merge smaller percentages of

oppositions than their ED1 counterparts, with particularly conservative behaviour in the middle age group, the youngest members of ED2 actually overtake their ED1 counterparts in their rate of merging. How can this be explained?

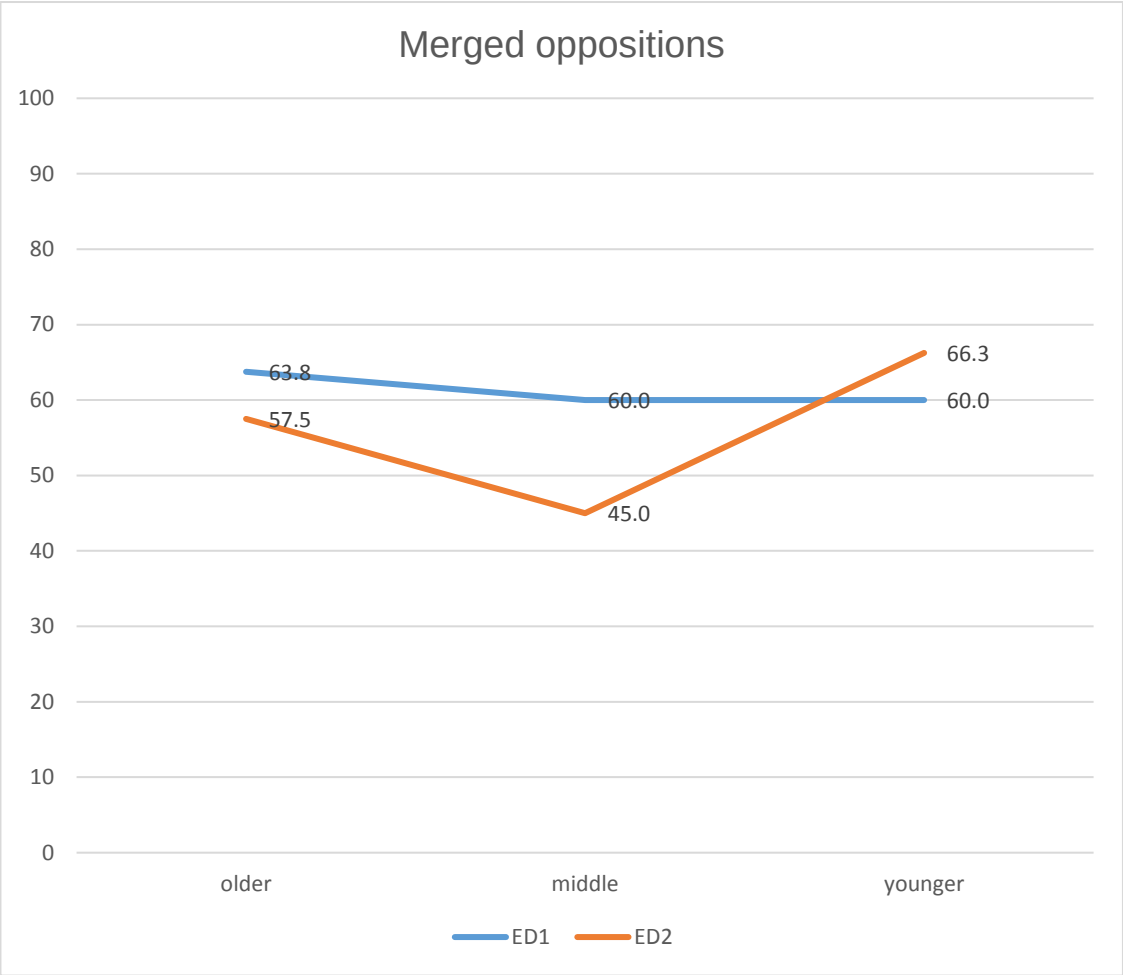

Figure 4-10. Realisations of merged oppositions, cross-tabulating age and educational background

In his Normandy study, Hall (2008: 193) found that younger informants had higher rates of mergers in formal speech samples. From this he concluded that they 'view[ed] a merger as a prestige feature, perhaps because of its prevalence in nearby Paris in particular'. We may draw the same conclusion from the present data. Thus, whilst for the middle age group strong oppositions remain standard and correct, for younger speakers, it is transnational levelled

French behaviour – that is to say merging – which is correct and / or prestigious. This may also be because of an awareness of behaviour across the border, in particular in Paris

4.7.1.1.3 /e/-/ɛ/ and sex

Finally, Figure 4-11 illustrates how sex interacts with phonemic opposition realisation. There appears to be remarkably little difference in realisation of oppositions according to sex, with one exception; that of 'other' oppositions, which was discussed in 4.5. However, a cross-tabulation of sex and *age* in Figure 4-12 reveals that there *is* in fact variation along the lines of sex.

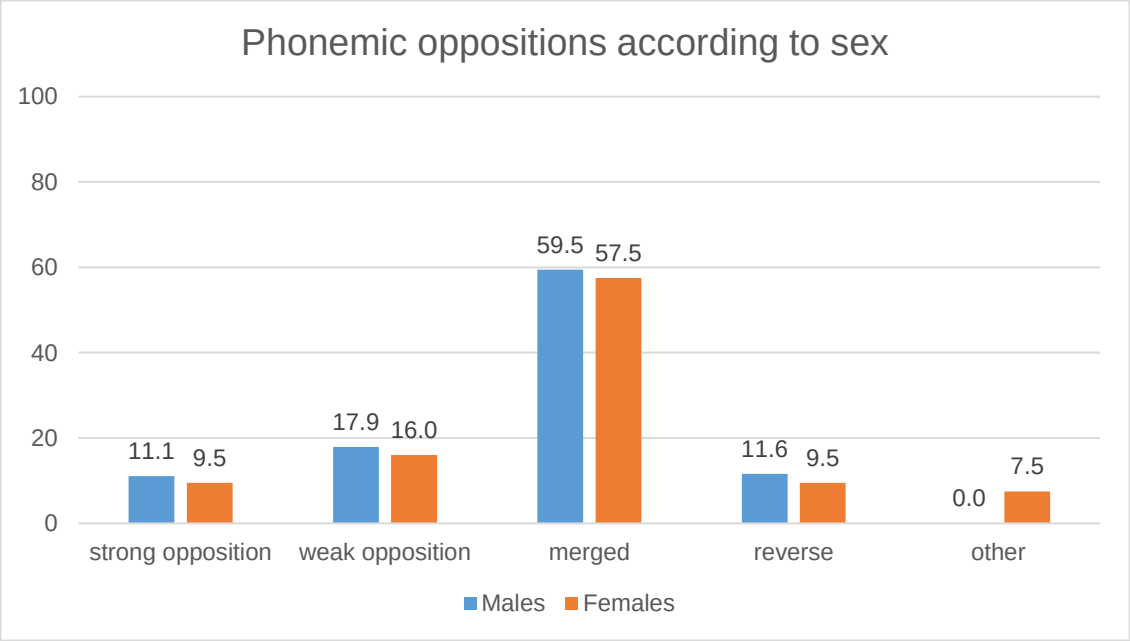

Figure 4-11. Phonemic oppositions according to sex

Some expected patterns emerge in Figure 4-12. For example, the younger and middle-aged women realise a greater percentage of strong oppositions than men, which is what we would expect, given that this is SF behaviour and women are typically more linguistically conformant (Labov 2001: 266). We also

see that, generally, men merge their oppositions at a greater rate than women, although those in the middle age band merge a slightly smaller percentage than their female counterparts; a pattern which suggests that the middle-aged men in this corpus have a relatively high level of linguistic awareness regarding the standard.

This may be because of the occupational backgrounds of the men in the corpus.

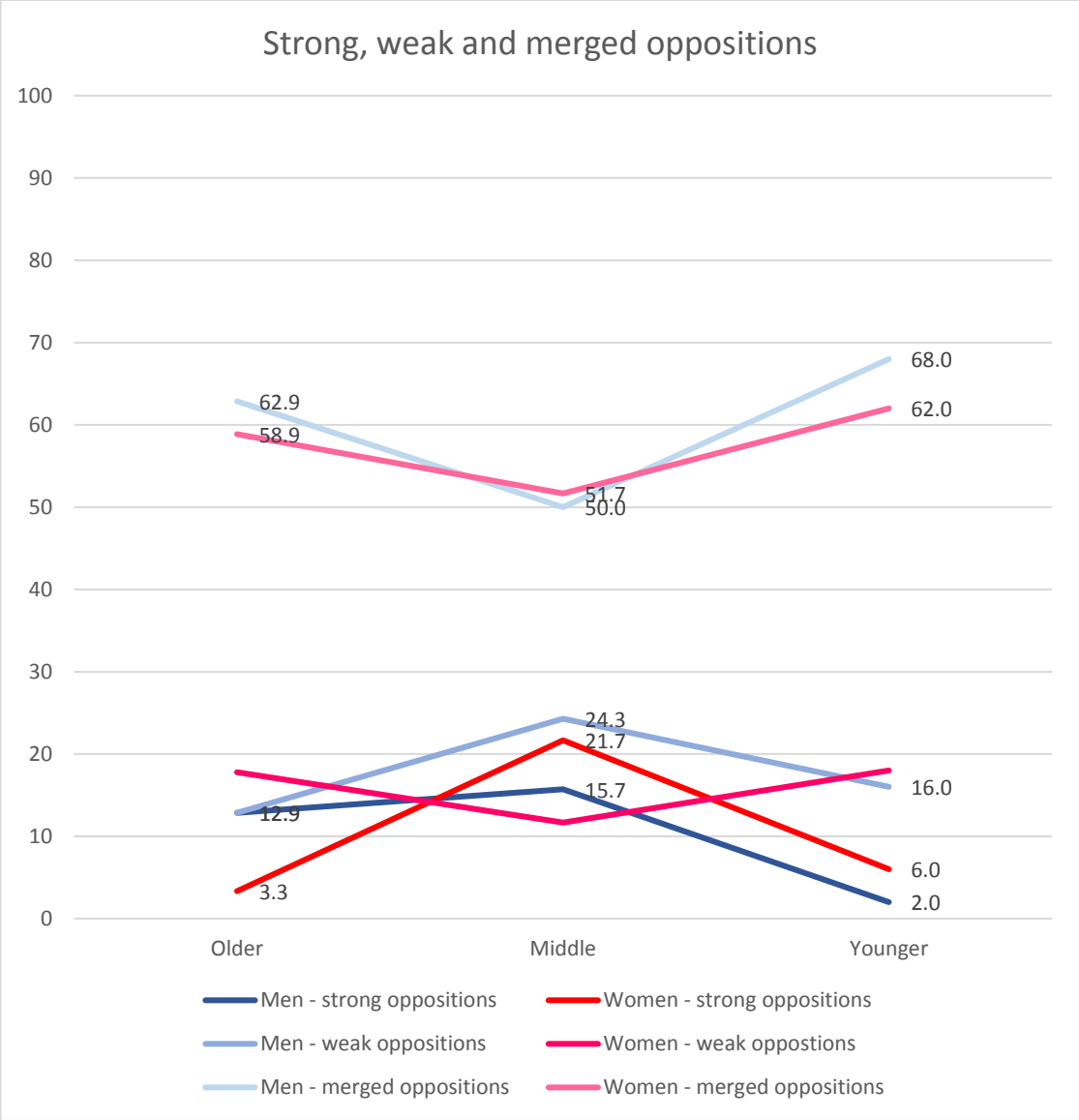

Figure 4-12. Realisations of oppositions, cross-tabulating sex and age

Where the behaviour of men and women diverges is in their realisations of weak oppositions. Whilst younger and older women realise slightly higher percentages of these oppositions than men, the middle-aged women realise a much smaller percentage of weak oppositions than their male counterparts. By their nature, weak oppositions contain an intermediate variant and we have seen above (4.5.2.2 and 4.6.2.2) that these variants are perceived as non-standard. Given the propensity for women (Labov 2001: 266) and those belonging to the middle age group (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 78) to avoid stigmatised variants, the avoidance of merged variants by the middle age group of women is to be expected. This being said, the tendency of their male counterparts, as well as that of the older and younger females, to merge oppositions, indicates that there is confusion surrounding the status of intermediate variants. This confusion is perhaps not unexpected given that we have inferred above that different age groups perceive different realisations of oppositions as prestigious.

Having analysed the behaviour of the pair /e/-/ɛ/, we now go on to analyse the realisation of the word ‘Tournai’.

4.8 ‘Tournai’

Because of its significance, the word ‘Tournai’ was handled separately from other words in which the /ɛ/ vowel is in syllable-final, free position. The citation form of the toponym ‘Tournai’ in modern dictionaries (e.g. Oxford Dictionaries: 2016) has the open-mid variant /ɛ/. This pronunciation is consistent with

certain[123] contemporary descriptions of the realisation of <ai> (e.g. Girard & Lyche 1997), as well as with historic descriptions of this digraph. For example, in his *Traité de Prononciation Française*, Liet (1900: 50) outlines that <ai>, and also <ay>, which is found in the historical variant of 'Tournai' – 'Tournay'[124] – are pronounced with /ɛ/.

Our gaze shifted from reference works to the linguistic landscape[125], Figure 4-13 is a flyer from the annual book fair 'Tournai la Page'. The name of this festival is a play on words on the imperative phrase 'tournez la page' and / or the homophonous infinitive form 'tourner la page'. This word play suggests that 'Tournai' is homophonous with 'tournez' and / or 'tourner', which indicates that in this context, 'Tournai' should be pronounced with [e]. Elsewhere in the cultural landscape[126], a play on words is also made with the phrase 'tournez/er en rond', which becomes 'Tournai en rond'. There is, therefore, evidence to suggest that a realisation of 'Tournai' with [e] – as well as [ɛ] – is acceptable. How, though, is the word realised in the Tournaisis corpus, when it is read in WLS?

[123] Although elsewhere (e.g. Martinet & Walter 1973) a realisation of <ai> as /e/ is also described, as in 'gai': [ge].
[124] The earliest form of the word *Tournai* dates back to the Roman Empire. In the third century reference is made to the area *Tornacum*, whilst in the fifth to the *civitas Tornacensium* (Hennebert 1853). For a detailed description of the evolution of the toponym, see Hennebert (1853).
[125] Here the term 'linguistic landscape' is used to refer to language displayed in public spaces, drawing on the definition laid out by Landry and Bourhis (1997: 23) that it 'refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region.'
[126] For example, there is a music group called 'Les Princesses de Tournai-en-Rond' and a Twitter account by the name 'Tournaienrond'.

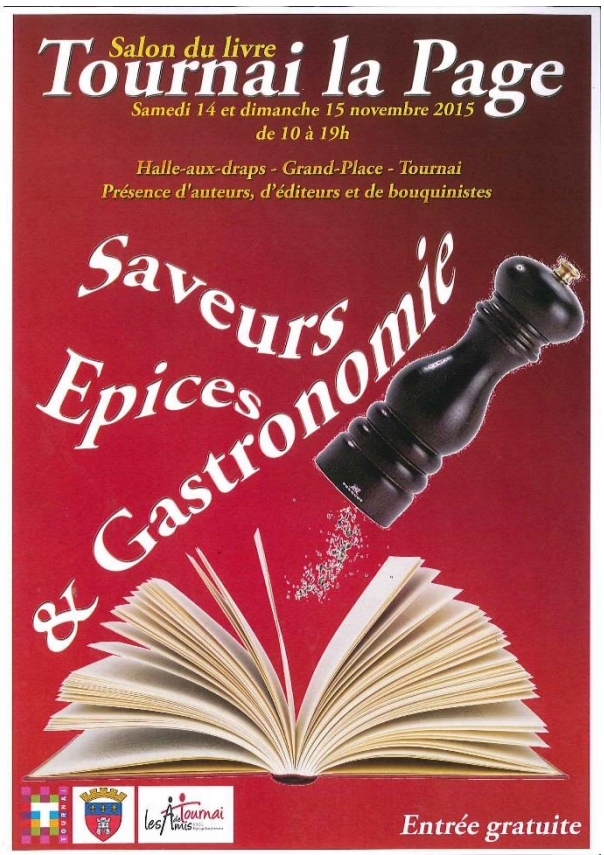

Figure 4-13. Flyer from the book fair 'Tournai la Page' (Tournai la Page 2015)

Figure 4-14 illustrates that there is variation in the realisation of the word *Tournai* and that the majority pronunciation is with the close-mid variant. This is perhaps not surprising, given that we have seen above (4.6) a tendency to realise /ɛ/ with a raised variant. What is more, this general growing tendency is replicated in the behaviour of 'Tournai', since Figure 4-15 illustrates that as age decreases tendency to realise /ɛ/ as [ɛ] decreases, whilst the tendency to realise /ɛ/ with an intermediate variant increases.

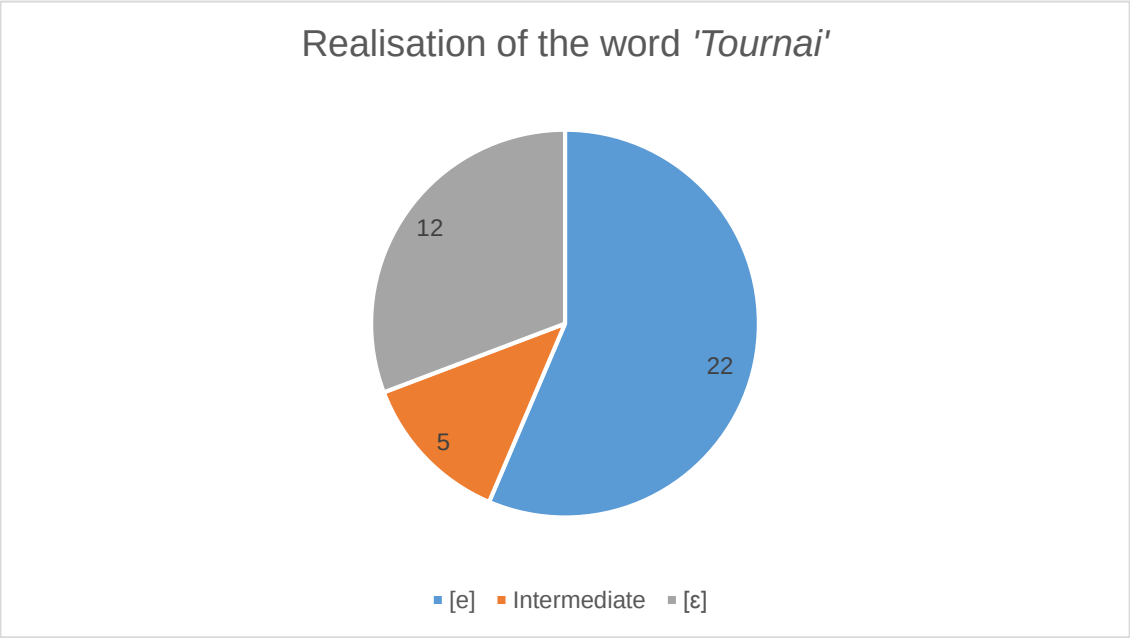

Figure 4-14. Realisations of the word 'Tournai'

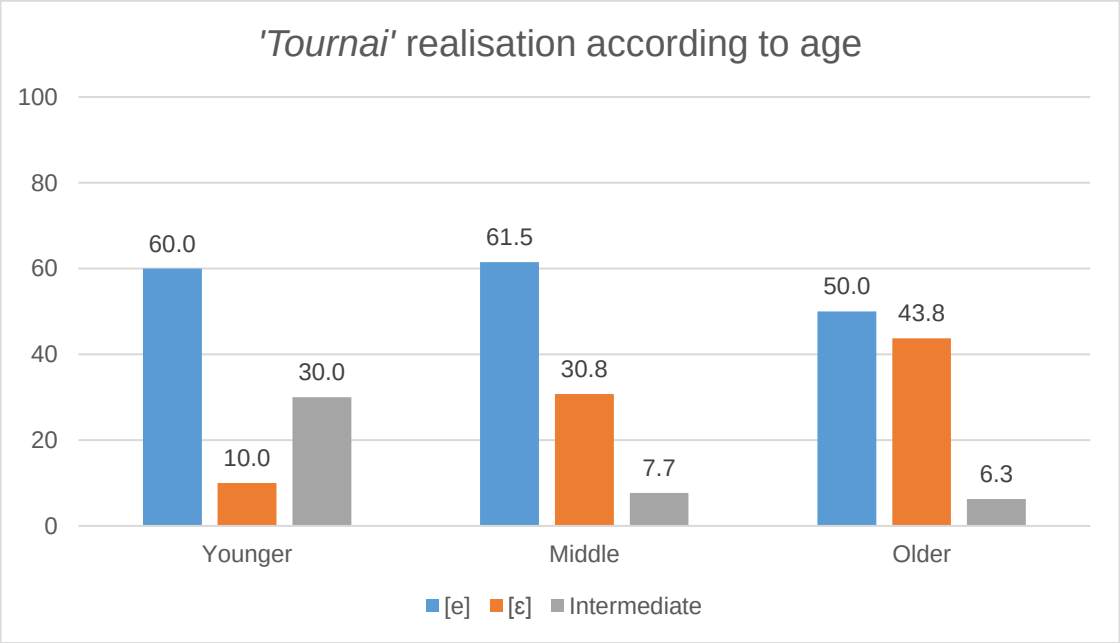

Figure 4-15. Realisations of 'Tournai' according to age

Somewhat more surprising is the pattern that emerges in Figure 4-16 in which it is revealed that ED2 displays a higher rate of intermediate variants than ED1. This is surprising because it was seen above (4.5.2.2 and 4.6.2.2) that generally

ED1 realised a higher percentage of both /e/ and /ɛ/ with intermediate variants than ED2. How may we explain this pattern?

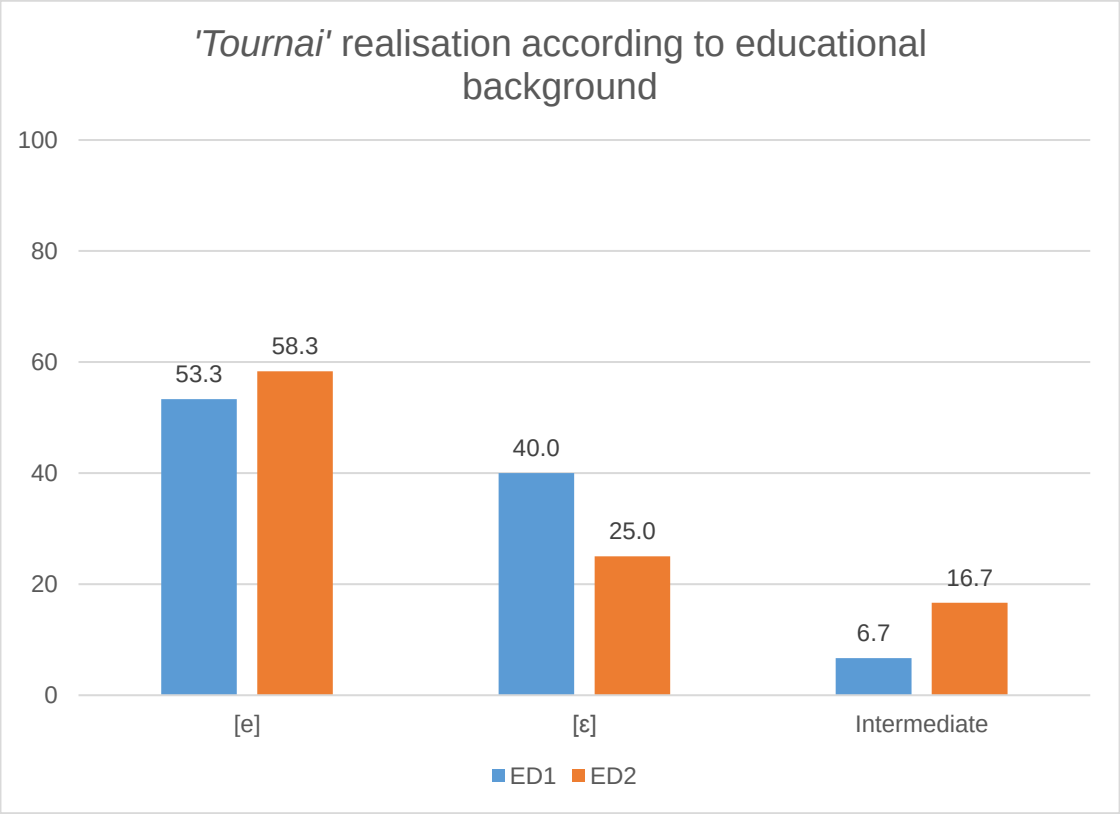

Figure 4-16. Realisations of 'Tournai' according to educational background

As we have seen above, realisations of 'Tournai' with both [e] and [ɛ] appear acceptable; however, this does not preclude there being a belief that one form is 'correct' nor confusion as to which form this is. Since those who have pursued their education are generally more sensitive to notions of linguistic correctness (Moreau et al. 1999: 9), it may be that those speakers in ED2 who realise 'Tournai' with an intermediate variant are doing so as a means of hedging or 'fudging' (cf. Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 110) their behaviour.

It is also surprising to see that ED2 favours [e] whilst ED1 shows higher rates of [ɛ] than ED2. This is unexpected given that it was found above (4.6.2.2) that

generally ED1 display a higher rate of /ɛ/ as [e] and lower rate of /ɛ/ as [ɛ] than ED2. How may we explain this result? Since a realisation of /ɛ/ as [e] is the transnational, levelled, and regional variant, we could imagine a scenario wherein, as a transnational realisation, this 'incoming' variant would be perceived as 'novel'. As a result, the contrasting variant [ɛ], though traditionally standard, would take on a conservative status. Were this to be the case, we could imagine ED2 avoiding /ɛ/. Indeed this is what we find: ED2 avoid the conservative variant and prefer the transnational one whilst ED1 favour [ɛ].

The most remarkable difference in realisations of the word 'Tournai' is illustrated in Figure 4-17, where it can be seen that [e] is strongly associated with men and [ɛ] with women[127]. This distribution seems at odds with the conclusion drawn above that [e] is perceived as a transnational innovative variant and [ɛ] as a conservative one, since in previous linguistic research women have been seen not only to lead change, but also to 'abandon conservative features more readily than men' (Milroy 1980: 113). We would have expected, therefore, to find women favouring [e] and men favouring [ɛ], but this is not the case. However, it was also concluded above (4.6.2.3) that, though innovative, generally a realisation of /ɛ/ as [e] is still perceived as non-standard whilst /ɛ/ as [ɛ] maintains its standard status. Thus, since women are typically more standard in their linguistic behaviour (Labov 2001: 266), we can conclude that the women's preference for [ɛ] is on account of its standard status. In contrast, men, who conform less to the standard, favour the incoming, non-standard variant.

[127] A cross-tabulation of sex and educational background confirmed that we had not neglected to observe an interaction between these two factors: for both ED1 and ED2 the same patterns hold: men favour the [e] variant and women favour [ɛ].

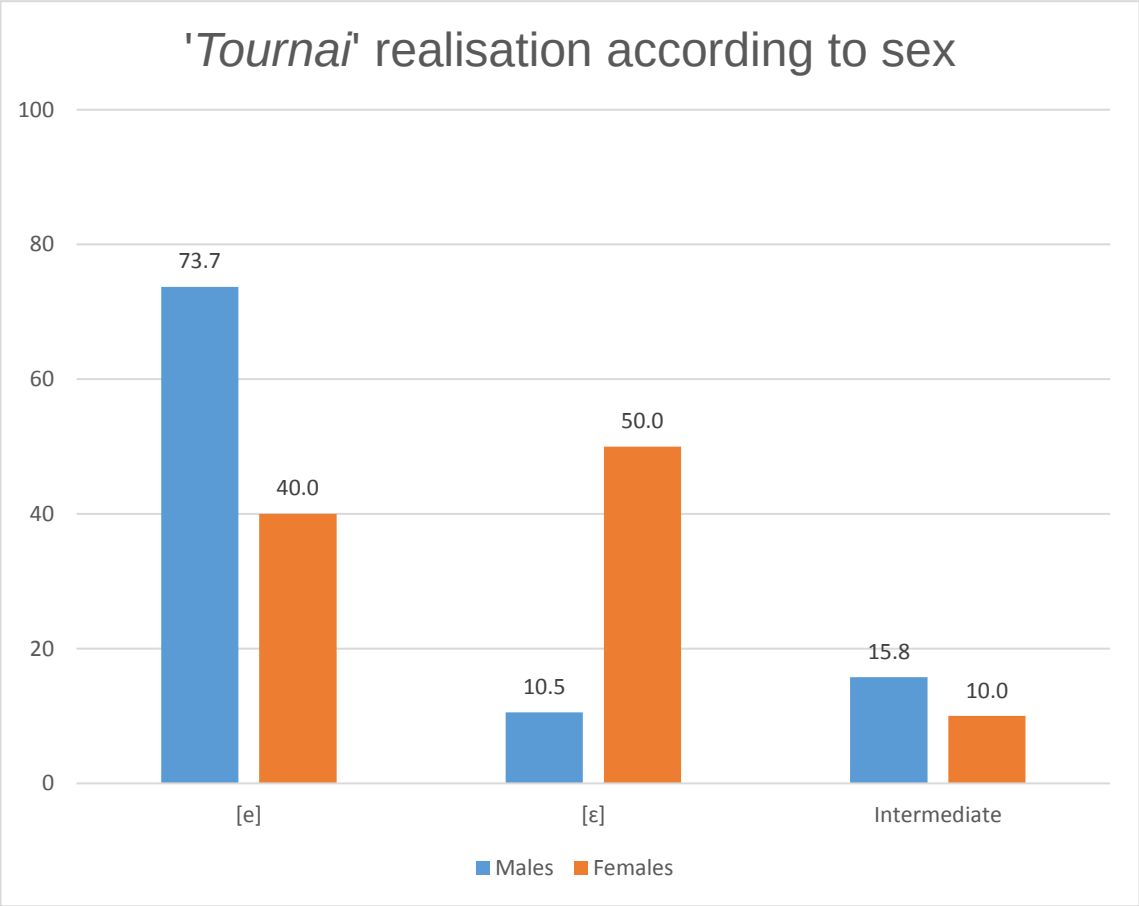

Figure 4-17. 'Realisations of 'Tournai' according to sex

To summarise then, a good deal of variation is seen in the realisation of the word 'Tournai', which leads us to the conclusion that there is no clear norm nor notion of what is 'correct' in the Belgian borderland with regard to pronunciation of the word. The results suggest that in this context both [e] and [ɛ] may have dual statuses: [e] is the incoming, novel, levelled transnational variant, yet it is also non-standard and regional, whilst [ɛ] is considered standard, but also perhaps too 'careful'.

4.9 Summary and discussion of findings

It has been shown in the Tournaisis corpus that for /εC/, /e#/ and /ε#/ as well as for phonemic contrasts and the word 'Tournai', there are different patterns in variation and change.

/ε/ in closed syllables appears to adhere more to the *loi de position* in the Belgian borderland than it does in Paris, where an increasing tendency to raise the vowel is observed. In this way, behaviour in these two locations is distinct, and convergence of Tournaisis French is not taking place.

As for /ε/-raising in the context of /_ʀ/, this substratal Picard feature is still observed in the Belgian borderland – as it is across the border in Lille – however, the trait is vestigial: it is very marginal in the corpus, and is only present in the speech of older people with fewer formal qualifications. The absence of raised /εʀ/ in the speech of younger people suggests that this feature will soon be lost from Tournaisis French, as well, perhaps, as from other varieties of Northern Regional French. This is unsurprising since it has been shown that 'variants closest to the dialect substrate show least vitality' (Hornsby 2009: 170). In this respect, then, regional variation is diminishing and standardisation is taking place.

On the other hand, behaviour of /e/ in word-final open syllable context was shown to be generally distinct in the Belgian borderland from in *Oïl* France: where in Paris there is an increasing tendency to lower /e/ (Hansen & Juillard 2011: 327), this is not the case in the Tournai *arrondissement*. Thus, in this respect, Tournaisis French is not converging on a supralocal Hexagonal variety

and [e] is still perceived as the standard variant – though is not prestigious – whilst an intermediate variant is seen as non-standard.

The situation for the vowel in the monosyllabic determiners ‘mes’, ‘les’ and ‘ses’ is particularly interesting. In the speech of middle-aged and older informants, we observed lowered variants, a phenomenon which is cited alongside descriptions of the endogenous Belgian norm (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc). However, these variants were not seen in the speech of younger informants. This leads us to the conclusion that, whilst middle-aged and older Tournaisiens appear to orientate towards an endogenous variety of French, younger speakers orient instead towards SF.

The analysis of /e/ also revealed that both spelling and word class appear to have an effect on vowel realisation – at least in the Belgian borderland. Whilst <é> and content words favour the standard variant, other orthographic representations, such as <ai> and <ez> and function words favour non-standard variants. The inverse was found with /ɛ/: content words strongly favoured a raised [e] variant, whilst function words favour both [ɛ] and intermediate variants. Synthesising the results for both /e/ and /ɛ/, then, content words favour [e] and function words favour [ɛ].

Regarding the behaviour of /ɛ/ more generally in word-final open syllable context, it was found that, as in France (Lefebvre 1991: 40; Hansen & Juillard 2011: 327), there is more variation in realisation of this phoneme than in /e/. Equally, as in France (Gadet 1989: 93; Lefebvre 1991: 40; Coveney 2001: 77; Fagyal et al. 2002; Hall 2008: 185; Hansen & Juillard 2011: 314; Boula de

Mareüil et al 2013), there is an increasing tendency to realise /ɛ/ with an intermediate variant. Transnational diffusion therefore appears to be happening in this context. What is more, a similar mechanism appears to be in operation on both sides of the border since, as in Paris (Hansen & Juillard 2011: 345), in the Belgian borderland rates of non-standard variants are higher in the speech of those belonging to the lower socioeconomic group. As for the status of /ɛ/, the social variation in its realisation indicates that not only does [ɛ] remain the standard variant, it is also prestigious. This is in contrast to a realisation of /e/ as [e], which does not appear to have prestige attached to it.

As in France (Lefebvre 1991: 76; Landick 1995: 92), a great deal of inter-speaker variation is found with regard to maintenance of the opposition /e/-/ɛ/. Belgian borderlanders show a strong tendency to merge the pair, as do speakers in *Oïl* France. There is an apparent-time increasing tendency to merge phonemic pairs in the Tournaisis corpus, which indicates that the same changes are taking place on both sides of the border and thus that transnational convergence is taking place. What is more, in the Belgian borderland this change is more advanced in the speech of those who have spent fewer years in formal education, as it is in France (cf. Lefebvre 1991: 133; Hall 2008: 194).

As the change in realisation of /e/-/ɛ/ takes place, so too the *status* accorded different behaviours changes and, once again, the same patterns are observed on both sides of the border: Hall (2008: 193) found that amongst his younger Normandy informants a merger appeared to be a prestige variant, and the situation appears to be the same in the Belgian borderland. For younger speakers, it is the transnational levelled French tendency to merge which is

prestigious[128], whilst for middle-aged and older speakers, prestige is still attached to the SF tendency to maintain a strong contrast.

Whilst merging is observed on both sides of the border, regional variation persists through 'differing patterns of adoption' (Hornsby 2009: 173) of this supralocal tendency: the tendency to merge is more advanced in this part of Belgium than it is in Normandy (cf. Hall 2008: 183). It is also more widespread in Tournai than in Lille; however, individuals do not merge to the same extent as in Lille (cf. Lefebvre 1991: 76). All the same, this behaviour marks borderlander speech out as distinct from other varieties of Belgian French, since it is reported that in central and eastern varieties the opposition persists (Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). What is more, subsequent to reading out the word list, Hugo commented about the word 'lait' and how his partner, who was from central Wallonia, was always picking him and their children up on the fact that they realised 'lait' as [le], and that it *should* have been [ɛ]. Thus this regional Tournaisien – and Northern Regional French – tendency is something which appears to be salient in the minds of Walloons.

One of the most striking findings in this chapter is the tendency for middle-aged speakers to adhere to the standard in their realisations of both /e/ and /ɛ/, and consequently also the minimal pair /e/-/ɛ/. This age-related pattern is consistent with generally established patterns in sociolinguistics[129]. However, in this Belgian context, there is perhaps even more reason for middle-aged speakers to adhere to the standard. In Francophone Belgium a sense of linguistic

[128] This is despite the fact that one of the informants, Veronique, a trainer of primary school teachers, said that teachers were still trained to teach children to maintain the contrast.
[129] Trudgill (2003: 6) describes a pattern of age-grading in sociolinguistic variation wherein 'speakers… modify their language in the direction of the acrolect as they approach middle-age and then revert to less prestigious speech patterns after they reach retirement age'.

insecurity has long been felt, with Belgian varieties perceived as inferior in comparison to the ‘reference norm’, which is considered to be associated with the French of France (cf. chapter 2). The behaviour of the middle-aged speakers in the Tournaisis corpus may, therefore, be shaped in part by this, as well, in part, as by their occupations and use of language at work. Moreover, recent research suggests that this belief is changing and that younger speakers in Belgium no longer associate SF with Paris, nor consider that legitimate varieties are exclusively Hexagonal (Francard & Franke 2001–2002 cited in Francard fc). If younger speakers are less preoccupied by notions of correctness and adhering to SF, this may explain why they do not conform to the standard to the same extent.

A final remark to be made about the pair /e/-/ɛ/ concerns morphosyntactic variation. Given the greater propensity for confusion in meaning to arise when /e/ and /ɛ/ are merged in verb inflections (as in ‘irai’-‘irais’) (cf. Gadet 1989: 93), one would imagine that less merging would be found in such contexts. Indeed, it was found in the Tournaisis corpus that this *was* the case; however, the difference in percentage of merging in verbal as opposed to non-verbal contexts was quite modest.

Finally, it was shown above that there is variation in the realisation of the word ‘Tournai’, with [e], [ɛ] and intermediate variants observed. From the distribution of these variants, it appears that, though incoming and novel, the transnational, levelled – and also regional – variant [e] is perceived as non-standard, whilst [ɛ], found in the citation form of the word, may be perceived as both standard and conservative.

In summary, then, these analyses have shown that overall the behaviour of (e) in the Belgian borderland is distinct in some respects from behaviour elsewhere in both France and Francophone Belgium. Yet increasing tendencies of both standardisation and transnational convergence have also been observed. In some respects these findings are not surprising, since previous studies have shown the French in Tournai to be more like Hexagonal French than other Belgian French varieties (Hambye 2005: 368–369). However, in other respects this is surprising: scholars cite a national boundary as a factor which prevents linguistic diffusion and promotes linguistic divergence (Woolhiser 2003: 294; Hornsby 2009: 170–171; Chambers 2014b) and, indeed, this has been illustrated with empirical data (Burnett 2006; De Vriend et al. 2008).

How, then, can we explain: (i) the relative similarity between Belgian borderlanders' French and Hexagonal French (and relative distance between Tournaisis French and other Belgian varieties) and (ii) the apparent-time convergence on Hexagonal French behaviour[130]?

In response to (i), there are various possible explanations as to why Tournaisis French is relatively similar to Hexagonal French. Hambye & Simon (2012: 131–132) suggest that this may be because of the substratal influence of Picard on Tournai French, where other Belgian French varieties have been influenced by Walloon. They also evoke the proximity of Tournai to the Lille conurbation, which in turn means that Tournaisiens come into contact with French people more frequently than other Walloons do (Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon

[130] Be it a northern levelled variety or SF.

2012: 131–132). Finally, they suggest that Tournaisiens might feel ‘symbolically’ closer to the French than to other Walloons[131], and that this might lead to their linguistic norms being more Hexagonal than Belgian (Hambye 2005: 369).

Whilst a combination of these factors would form a plausible explanation as to why Tournaisis French is so similar to Hexagonal French, certain of the claims have been presented with little further explanation and without the support of empirical evidence. For example, the degree to which proximity to France actually results in contact with French nationals is not known. It is also not known if borderlanders *do* feel symbolically close to the French. Empirical data concerning these questions were gathered as part of the Tournaisis study. Thus, in chapter 8, when we look at these data, we will be able to answer these questions and thereby re-evaluate the propositions laid out above.

In addition to the suggestions above, the history of this part of Belgium should be evoked as a contributory factor. As described in chapter 3, the dominion of this borderland area was repeatedly contested through history, with Tournai coming under Frankish, Roman, English, French, Spanish, Austrian and Dutch rule over the centuries. Moreover, Tournai was in the possession of France from the ninth to early-sixteenth century, then again off and on between the sixteenth and early-nineteenth century (Desmale et al. 2013: 8). It was only in 1830 that the Kingdom of Belgium was created and that Tournai become part of present-day Belgium.

[131] Hambye does not elucidate any further on what he means by this.

The historical trajectory of Tournai and its surrounding region is something that is known *and salient* in the minds of Tournaisiens; when discussing the region, several informants – and indeed locals who were not interviewed – were keen to tell the researcher that Tournai 'used to be French'[132]. Furthermore, the historical alliance between Tournai, Belgium and France is visible in the centre of Tournai today: in the centre of the town square *Place de Lille* stands a monument which commemorates the French soldiers who liberated Belgium from the Dutch siege of Antwerp in 1832. Both directly[133] and indirectly[134], then, the history of Tournai may have contributed to shaping the language in the Belgian borderland.

As mentioned above, scholars have suggested that contact with French nationals, as a result of proximity to France, might impact on the language in the borderland (cf. Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132). Whilst this will be explored in chapter 8 there are two other factors, themselves a result of proximity, which may also impact on language in the borderland: migration and media.

Beginning with migration, not only is there the possibility that borderlanders come into contact with French nationals through travelling to France, they also may do so through contact with individuals who have settled or work in the Belgian borderland. Even within the body of informants interviewed in the Tournaisis study, cross-border migration is evident: of the 39 informants, five

[132] On account of her nationality, many were also keen to tell the researcher that Tournai is the only Belgian city to have been ruled by the English! Henry VIII was in rule between 1513 and 1519.
[133] Because of the shared territorial – and thereby linguistic – history.
[134] Because of the potential influence of this history on borderlanders' sense of identity and belonging (cf. Hambye 2005: 369).

had one French parent whilst two informants had parents who were both French.

More generally, in 2010, 9.3% of the population in the Tournai *arrondissement* were foreign nationals[135], whilst in Estaimpuis, the western most commune of the *arrondissement*, the percentage was 26.6%. Moreover, in 2017 it was reported that 30.7% of inhabitants were French (Commune d'Estampuis 2017) (cf. chapter 3).

The education sector also brings French nationals across the border: reports (La Dernière Heure 2016), as well as conversations between the researcher and Tournaisiens, suggest that a high percentage of students in higher education in Tournai are of French origin[136]. It may be, then, that migration and mobility of French nationals, both of which are in part a result of proximity to France, are factors which have contributed to shaping the language in the borderland.

Finally, the potential influence of the media on Borderland French should also be discussed. A controversial notion, Anglophone scholars have generally been sceptical about media influence on phonology (Trudgill 1986: 40; Eckert 2003: 395). However, recent research presents evidence to support the notion (cf. Stuart-Smith 2011; Stuart-Smith et al. 2013). Belgian scholars, on the other hand, have claimed – though without empirical evidence – that French media have influenced Belgian French (Blampain et al. 1997: 164; Francard 2001:

[135] Data is not available on a nationality level.
[136] Although recent reports (La Dernière Heure 2016) suggest this has changed as numbers of foreign nationals in certain subjects have been capped by the state.

257). Yet the argument put forward by Blampain et al. and Francard suggests that media influence impacts on the *whole* of Francophone Belgium, and here we are concerned only with the borderland.

In his interview, Victor (MMED2) explained how, before the age of digital TV, television aerials in the borderland region used to pick up the French terrestrial television channels. Regional French radio stations can also *still* be picked up in this borderland area. Thus it may be that, where there may have been distinctions between the French in Tournai and Hexagonal Northern Regional French, northern regional French media have influenced the language in the Belgian borderland. So as to be able to investigate this proposition, data concerning participants' media consumption were gathered in the Tournaisis study. These data – and what they can tell us about language in the borderland – will be explored in chapter 8.

In conclusion, it seems probable that the similarity between Belgian Borderland French and Hexagonal French is due to a combination of the factors outlined above. As for why Belgian Borderland French is converging on Hexagonal levelled French, we might respond by asking the question as to why it should *not* be converging on levelled French, since levelling has been widely observed across Francophone Europe; both in France (Boughton 2005; Hornsby 2006, 2007, 2009; Pooley 2007, 2009; Armstrong & Boughton 2009) and in Switzerland (Manno 2004). This borderland convergence is likely due to a combination of factors. Firstly, whilst border-crossing for work purposes has taken place since the early 19th century, it has predominantly been Belgian nationals who have crossed into France for work (INSEE 2005). However,

statistics gathered by the Belgian social security organisation *Institut National d'Assurance Maladie-Invalidité* illustrate that since 1990, the flow of workers has been in the opposite direction: a greater number of French than Belgian nationals have crossed the border for work (Figure 4-18)[137]. Indeed, in 2013, the number of French working in Belgium had reached 37,006 (INAMI 2013). Of those French nationals, 20,959 (56.6%) were working in the borderland province Hainaut.

It may therefore be suggested that the change in the nature of cross-border work, which has resulted in more French nationals spending time in Belgium, may be a contributing factor in the convergence of Borderland French on Hexagonal levelled French.

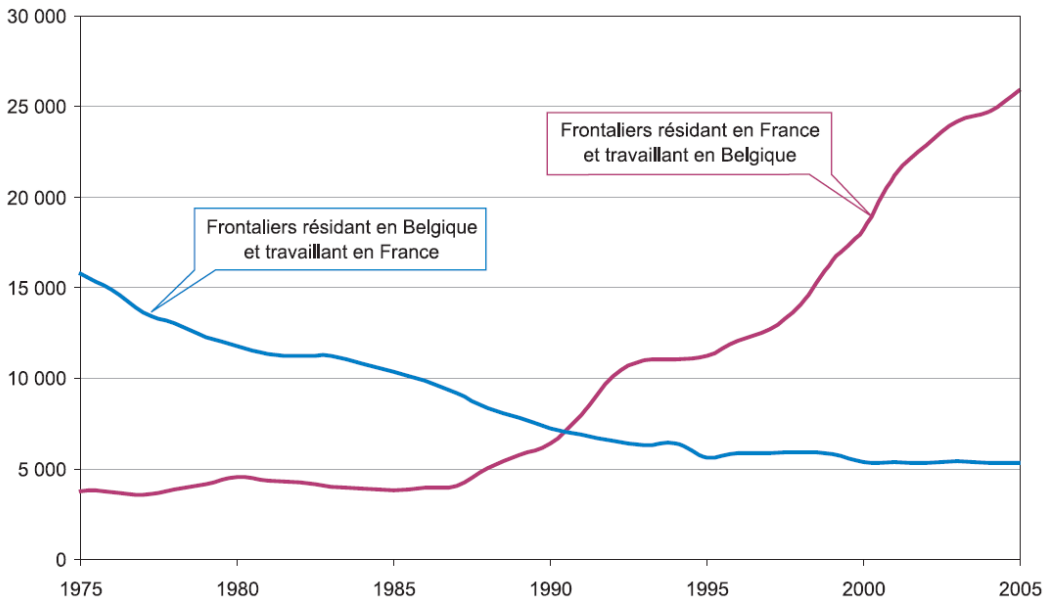

Figure 4-18. Graph showing changing numbers of cross-border workers from France and Belgium between 1975 and 2005 (INAMI, in INSEE 2006)

[137] It is argued that this is, at least in part, because of existing financial benefits for French residents working in Belgium (INSEE 2006: 3–4).

Secondly, in 1995 the Schengen Agreement was effectuated. This agreement ‘abolished checks at the internal borders’ (EUR-Lex 2009) in the Schengen Area, allowing for the free movement of people. It is likely that this geopolitical event has also engendered greater contact between Belgian borderlanders and French nationals, which in turn may have facilitated linguistic convergence.

Finally, it is likely that the opening of the borders with the Schengen Agreement has also enabled Belgian borderlanders to participate more in leisure activities in France. For example, whilst carrying out fieldwork, the researcher engaged with the football community at the local football club: *R. F. C. Tournai*. Some members of the community explained that when they wanted to watch a premier league match, they travelled to Lille, to support *LOSC Lille*, rather than to another Belgian city. In this way, it can be seen that the opening of the border, leading to more engagement in French communities and practices, might also have led Belgian borderlanders to feel more oriented towards France. Since scholars have shown an interaction between cultural or regional affiliation and linguistic behaviour in the USA, UK and France (Underwood 1988: 417–418; Edwards 1992: 107–109; Hazen 2002: 253; Llamas 2007: 600–602; Pooley 2014a: 8), a sense of affiliation to France might have contributed to facilitating the linguistic convergence observed in the borderland. We will return to this proposition in chapter 8, when we explore data collected concerning informants’ regional affiliation.

This chapter has shown that whilst some differences persist between behaviour of (e) in the Belgian borderland and elsewhere in France and Francophone Belgium, behaviour is nevertheless converging on Hexagonal French. It has

also presented an explanation as to why this may be the case. We now go on to investigate the (o) variable in the Tournaisis corpus.

5 The (o) variable

5.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins with a brief summary of (o) and the research questions surrounding this variable. More detailed accounts of these are found in chapter 2. Following this, the data used in this study are described. The results are then presented and analysed. In the last section key findings are presented and discussed and conclusions are drawn, also taking into consideration the findings of chapter 4.

5.2 Summary of the (o) variable

As described in chapter 2, a considerable amount of research has been carried out on the (o) variable. In SF, a phonemic contrast exists between /o/ and /ɔ/ in closed syllables (as in 'paume'-'pomme': /pom/-/pɔm/). They also act as allophones whereby, adhering to the *loi de position*, /o/ is found in open syllables and /ɔ/ in closed ones (as in 'sot'-'sotte': /so/-/sɔt/). Whilst no studies have been carried out on the allophonic behaviour of /o/-/ɔ/, studies of the pair operating as phonemes illustrate that there is a decreasing tendency in *Oïl* French to maintain the opposition. In contrast, it is reportedly maintained in Belgian varieties of French, though to a lesser degree in Tournai. As for the individual phonemes, studies in Lille (France), the closest metropolis to Tournai, have revealed that where /o/ is expected in SF, in Lille [ɔ] is found and is a marker of Northern Regional French. Studies have also illustrated a tendency to front /ɔ/ in France and, though historically this phenomenon was associated with working-class speech, it now appears to be a 'snob' variant.

The detailed review in chapter 2 of the literature on (o) led to the emergence of several research questions regarding the variable, which are replicated here for ease of reference:

1) Is there a decreasing tendency to maintain the phonemic contrast /o/-/ɔ/ in the Belgian borderland, as in France?
2) Is fronting of /ɔ/ observed in the Belgian borderland and, if so, what does the fronted variant index?
3) Is the tendency to open /oC/ to [ɔC] that is observed in Lille and derives from the Picard substrate also found in the Belgian borderland?
4) What does the behaviour of (o) tell us more generally about French in the Belgian borderland in comparison with other varieties of French, and processes of levelling and standardisation?

Having summarised the status of the (o) variable and laid out the research questions, the data will now be presented.

5.3 Data

For each informant, twenty-two tokens in WLS were coded for the (o) variable. These tokens were taken from twenty-two different words. Two of the tokens were in open monosyllables, in the words ‘sot’: /so/, and ‘peau’: /po/. The remaining twenty words contained (o) in syllable-final blocked position; eight of the words had /o/ in citation form and twelve had /ɔ/. Within these twenty words there were three minimal pairs, as seen in Table 5-1. With the exception of the words ‘encore’ and ‘alors’, all words were monosyllabic. For concision, however,

these words will be referred to as monosyllables. The 20 words are listed in Table 5-1.

/o/	***/ɔ/***	**Minimal pair?**
‘paume’	‘pomme’	yes
‘môle’	‘molle’	yes
‘côte’	‘cote’	yes
‘chose’	‘sort’	no
‘chaude’	‘saur’	no
‘auge’	‘cosse’	no
‘sauve’	‘code’	no
‘rose’	‘mort’	no
	‘encore’	no
	‘alors’	no
	‘sotte’	no
	‘potte’	no

Table 5-1. Closed monosyllabic words elicited

5.4 /o/ in the open monosyllables ‘sot’ and ‘peau’

For all but one of the 39 informants, the two tokens in the open monosyllabic words ‘sot’ and ‘peau’ were analysed and coded. For the 39th informant, only one token was available. Thus a total of 77 vowels were coded. A more detailed account of the vowel coding methods used in this study is found in chapter 3.

Table 5-2 illustrates that 98.7% (76/77) of /o/ were realised as [o], in line with SF. Whilst this pattern reflects Hansen and Juillard’s (2011) finding in their 1972–74 corpus of Parisian French, in which 98.6% of /o/ were realised as [o], it is distinct from their 2001–04 Parisian French data, which show an increased tendency to open this vowel; just 79.4% of /o/ are realised as [o] in the 2001–04

corpus, whilst the remaining 20.6% are lowered. The data in this corpus, therefore, suggest that, in this context, behaviour in the Belgian borderland is not changing in the same way or at the same rate that it is in Paris; where there is a decreasing tendency to respect the *loi de position* in Paris, it is still respected in the Tournaisis corpus, and, in formal speech at least, the SF *loi de position* is more adhered to.

	/o/ as [o]	**/o/ as [ɔ]**	**/o/ as an intermediate variant**	**/o/ as a fronted variant[138]**	**/o/ as [ʊ]**	**Total**
n =	76	0	0	0	1	77
%	98.7	0	0	0	1.3	100

Table 5-2. Realisations of /o/ in open monosyllables for all informants

Given the near categorical standard realisation of /o/ as [o] in open syllables, there is little more to be said about behaviour in this context, although the [ʊ] token does merit discussion. This partly fronted, partly raised token was realised by Nicolas (MMED1), a manual worker. Nicolas also fronted the vowel in 'sotte' to [sət], and fronted seven of his twelve /ɔC/ tokens. Thus the [ʊ] may be by analogy with these tendencies.

Having addressed /o/ in open monosyllables, we now turn to /o/ in closed monosyllables.

5.5 /o/ in closed monosyllables

Eight tokens of /o/ in closed monosyllables were elicited from each informant (see Table 5-1 for a list of these words). As there are just seven tokens for one

[138] Variants classed as fronted are those that, on a vowel trapezium, are located on or between the front-most and central vertical lines, that is to say [ɪ, ʏ, ɨ, ʉ, e, ɛ, ø, ə, ɵ, ɚ, œ, ɜ, ɞ, ɐ].

of the 39 informants, a total of 311 /o/ tokens in closed monosyllables were coded. Their realisations are found in Table 5-3, where it can be seen that 79.4% of /o/ are realised with [o], 6.1% are realised as [ɔ], 10.3% as an intermediate variant, and 3.5% as a fronted variant.

	/o/ as [o]	**/o/ as [ɔ]**	**/o/ as an intermediate variant**	**/o/ as a fronted variant**	**/o/ as [ʌ]** [139]	**/o/ as [ʊ]**	**Total**
n =	247	19	32	11	1	1	311
%	79.4	6.1	10.3	3.5	0.3	0.3	100

Table 5-3. Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables

The pattern which emerges for /o/ is quite similar to that in Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013) survey of varieties in the *Oïl* region, in which they found that 69% of /o/ were realised as [o] and 13% as [ɔ]. However, their tokens were categorised as: [o], [ɔ] and [œ], with no intermediate variant, so the comparability of the results is limited.

More comparable, and indeed more similar, are Hansen and Juillard's (2011: 329) findings. They found that 77.1% of /O/ (/o/ or /ɔ/) in closed syllables, spelled with the digraph <au>, were realised as [o] and 22.9% as [ɔ] or an intermediate variant. These percentages are very similar to those in the Tournaisis corpus which are 79.4% for [o] and 16.4% for [ɔ] and intermediate variants combined. This suggests that /o/ in closed final syllables behaves

[139] The IPA symbol [ʌ] is used in this study to represent what the researcher perceived to be an unrounded /ɔ/. This is the symbol that Carton et al. (1983: 24) use to represent unrounding in *Nord/Picardie* French in the example *alors* [aˈlʌʀ̥]. Unrounding of /ɔ/ has also been observed by Armstrong and Low (2008: 445) who chose to transcribe this phenomenon with [a], whilst acknowledging that perceptually it is difficult to know whether the vowel is unrounded or fronted, and thus this might not be the 'most appropriate phonetic representation of the vowel.'

similarly in both Parisian French and the Belgian Borderland French sampled in this study.

As mentioned in chapter 2, fronting of both /o/ and /ɔ/ is a tendency that has been observed as far back as the 17th century and, since the 19th century, has been 'widespread in working-class Parisian speech' (Coveney 2001: 96); however, in the present study, just 3.5% of /o/ tokens were realised with a fronted variant. The recent literature paints contrasting pictures of /O/-fronting. In Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013) *Oïl*[140] study, 17% of /o/ are fronted, whilst in Hansen and Juillard's 2001–04 corpus just 3.1% (n = 34) of /O/ were fronted (Hansen & Juillard 2011: 328). The results from the present study, which sit more in line with those of Hansen and Juillard (2011), suggest that fronting of /o/ is marginal in the Belgian borderland, as it is in Paris, and that the phenomenon is not as advanced as it is in Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013) *Oïl* study. Greater insight into the phenomenon will be gained in 5.5.3, where an assessment will be made of who produced the fronted tokens.

In SF the realisations of /o/ and /ɔ/ in closed syllables are conditioned by both phonological environment and orthography (cf. chapter 2). In order to better understand the data in the present study, we will now investigate these conditioning factors, beginning with phonological environment.

[140] Speech samples came from: Brécey, Normandy; Brunoy, Ile-de-France; Dijon, Burgundy; Lyon-Villeurbanne, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes; Roanne, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes; and Treize-Vents, Pays de la Loire.

5.5.1 Phonological conditioning of /o/ in closed monosyllables

Table 5-4 illustrates the realisation of /o/ according to following phonological environment. Recalling that, in all contexts, 79.4% of all tokens were realised as [o], it can be seen that following phonological environment appears to have an effect. At one end of the spectrum are the following voiced fricative environments, /_v/, /_ʒ/ and /_z/. These environments favour a standard [o] realisation with 94.9% [o] in the environment /_v/, 92.1% in /_ʒ/, and 89.7% in /_z/. At the other end of the spectrum are the environments /_m/ and /_l/ with [o] realisations of 66.7% and 48.7% respectively. In the middle of the spectrum are the stops /_t/ and/_d/.

%	/o/ as [o] %	/o/ as [ɔ] %	/o/ as inter-mediate %	/o/ as fronted variant %	/o/ as [ʌ] %	/o/ as [ʊ] %	Total N
/_v/	94.9	0	2.6	2.6	0	0	39
/_ʒ/	92.1	2.6	5.3	0	0	0	38
/_z/	89.7	3.8	5.1	1.3	0	0	78
/_d/	82.1	2.6	10.3	5.1	0	0	39
/_t/	71.8	7.7	15.4	5.1	0	0	39
/_m/	66.7	2.6	23.1	5.1	0	2.6	39
/_l/	48.7	25.6	15.4	7.7	2.6	0	39
All	79.4	6.1	10.3	3.5	0.3	0.3	311

Table 5-4. Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables, according to following phonological environment

Carton (1987: 41 cited in Pooley 2004a: 352) describes /O/ followed by /v, ʒ, z/ as open in both southern and northern varieties of French; however, in the Tournaisis corpus these are the phonological contexts which least favour [ɔ]. The tokens elicited in the /_v/ and /_ʒ/ environments were ‘sauve’ and ‘auge’. SF dictates that the digraph <au> is realised as [o], so it is unsurprising that these words favour [o]. However, there are other tokens derived from words

containing the digraph <au>: those for /_d/: ‘chaude’, and /_m/: ‘paume’ which do *not* favour [o] as much.

That /_z/ finds itself amongst the top three environments to favour [o] is somewhat surprising given that open-mid variants in this context have been observed in Picardy (Coveney 2001: 95). However, Lefebvre (1991: 81) describes an open realisation in the context /_z/ as an indicator of the local speech norm in Lille, and Flutre (1977: 47 cited in Pooley 2004a: 362) describes an open realisation of /o/ in closed syllables as a feature of modern Picard, as in: [əlnɔtʀ] ‘le nôtre’, [kɔs] ‘chose’ and [nɔʃ] ‘noces’. What is more, several informants in the present study mentioned in their interviews an open realisation in the context /_z/ as a trait of Northern Regional French, describing it as a feature that marks northern French borderlanders out from Belgian borderlanders. This suggests that the open variant in the context /_z/ is a linguistic stereotype (cf. Labov 2001: 196).

Of the seven (out of 78) tokens in the context /_z/ that were lowered, six were produced by members of ED1. Taking into account the above description, this result indicates that an open-mid variant in the context /_z/ has the same non-standard, regional status in the Belgian borderland as in northern France. Thus the near absence of [ɔ] in the context of /_z/ may be due to informants’ desire to distance themselves from the non-standard, regional variant. Or, alternatively, it may be because the corpus comprises twenty-four ED2 participants and only 15 ED1 participants.

It may be that [ɔ] in the context of /_z/ is a variant restricted to Northern France, which Belgian borderlanders know about because of their proximity to the region. On the other hand, an open-mid variant in the context /_z/ may be a transnational Northern Regional French variant, which is absent from guarded ED2 speech. Since the Picard region extends across the Belgian borderland, and this variant is found in modern Picard, the latter explanation is quite likely. The results in this survey are, however, unable to confirm or indeed contradict this unequivocally.

The environment which least favours [o] is /_l/. Of the 39 /_l/ tokens, 19 (48.7%) are realised as [o], six (15.4%) as an intermediate variant, and 10 (25.6%) as [ɔ]. In addition, three tokens are fronted and one is unrounded. This pattern is in line with Pooley (1996: 146), who found that /_l/ was the context which most favoured an open [ɔ]: 64% of his tokens were realised in this way. A smaller percentage (41%) of tokens in the Tournaisis corpus were either open-mid or intermediate; however, this smaller percentage may be due to the spelling of the vowel in the word elicited. The token in the /_l/ environment is derived from the word ‘môle’. Since the spelling <ô> prescribes a close-mid realisation in SF, this may have had a mitigating effect on the tendency to open <ô> in the environment /_l/. What is more, this word can mean both ‘mole’ and ‘ocean sunfish’. Prior to the word list task, informants were given a reading passage in which the word ‘môle’, meaning ‘ocean sunfish’, was used. It was clear from all but one of the informants’ responses to reading this that they were not familiar with this meaning of the word. The lack of familiarity with the word, coupled with the presence of the circumflex, may therefore have led informants to realise the word in a more standard way than if it had been a word in more common usage

(cf. Phillips 2011; Di Paolo et al. 2011). We will further the analysis of ‘môle’ in the following section, which explores orthographic variation.

5.5.2 /o/ and orthographic variation

Of the eight words in the word list where /o/ is located in closed monosyllables, two contained the letter <o>, four the digraph <au> and two the letter <ô>. The 311 tokens coded in this context are therefore distributed in the following way:

- <o>, n = 78;
- <au>, n = 155; and
- <ô>, n = 78.

Table 5-5 illustrates the realisation of /o/ according to orthography. It can be seen that whilst 89.7% of <o> were realised with [o], this percentage drops slightly to 83.9% for <au> and, more dramatically, to 60.3% for <ô>.

%	/o/ as [o]	/o/ as [ɔ]	/o/ as inter-mediate	/o/ as fronted variant	/o/ as [ʌ]	/o/ as [ʊ]
<o>	89.7	3.8	5.1	1.3	0	0
<au>	83.9	1.9	10.3	3.2	0	0.6
<ô>	60.3	16.7	15.4	6.4	1.3	0
All	79.4	6.1	10.3	3.5	0.3	0.3

Table 5-5. Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables according to orthography

Considerably fewer <ô> than <o> are realised with the standard variant and a larger proportion are realised with open-mid variants. However, the subset <ô> comprises tokens from the words ‘môle’ and ‘côte’, and in the previous section it was noted that the word ‘môle’ strongly favoured an open-mid realisation. Since the realisation of <ô> in ‘môle’ may be phonologically – as opposed to

orthographically – conditioned, the subset of <ô> tokens warrants further stratification.

The individual breakdown of realisations of both ‘môle’ and ‘côte’ in Table 5-6 illustrates a big difference between realisations of the two words, with the distribution of <ô> in ‘côte’ much more similar to the overall realisation of /o/ in closed syllables. This finding confirms that /_l/ has an opening effect on /o/. Why should this be so? Pooley (1996: 145) concludes that this effect is due to the high frequency of everyday words like ‘colle’ in which the sequence /ɔl/ is ‘perfectly standard.’ In the absence of any other explanations, we may also draw this conclusion for the findings in the Tournaisis corpus.

%	**/o/ as [o]**	**/o/ as [ɔ]**	**/o/ as inter-mediate**	**/o/ as fronted variant**	**/o/ as [ʌ]**	**/o/ as [ʊ]**
‘môle’	48.7	25.6	15.4	7.7	2.6	0
‘côte’	71.8	7.7	15.4	5.1	0	0
All tokens	60.3	16.7	15.4	6.4	1.3	0

Table 5-6. Realisations of words with the orthography <ô>

All the same, the percentage realisations of <ô> as [o] in both ‘môle’ and ‘côte’ are lower than those of <au> and <o>. This would suggest that spelling *does* have an effect on vowel realisation, with <ô> favouring a more open realisation than <au> or <o>. However, in Boula de Mareüil et al.’s (2013: 78) study of *Oïl* French, the orthography <ô> is shown to favour a close realisation slightly more than other orthographic representations of /o/, so the results remain puzzling. How then can we explain the tendency to open /o/ as represented by <ô> in the Tournaisis corpus? Two possible explanations can be given for this behaviour.

Firstly, the lowering of <ô> may be a regional tendency. Since Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013) *Oïl* study did not cover anywhere north of Paris, this would be one way of explaining the differing empirical findings. What is more, in his study of northern French, Pooley (1996: 145) found that <ô> in the word 'côte' significantly favoured [ɔ]. Alternatively, the changing status of the circumflex in French may be another way to explain the behaviour. Use of the circumflex on <i> and <u> has, since 1990, been optional[141] (Conseil supérieur de la langue Française 1990). Although the context in the present study is <ô>, speakers may, by analogy, be projecting the 'loss' of the circumflex onto <ô>, giving <o>; a spelling which does not historically condition pronunciation. What is more, if speakers are no longer 'seeing' the circumflex, then a speaker seeing <côte> in a word list would see <cote>, for which SF dictates the realisation /kɔt/. Whilst in France there is ongoing resistance to this change, in Belgium the 'new' orthographic conventions have been well integrated: since 2008 the minister for the *Communauté Française* (Ministère de la Communauté Française 2008) has prescribed that only the new conventions be taught in schools.

Having analysed the behaviour of /o/ in closed monosyllables across the corpus, we now go on to investigate how variation in /o/ realisation interacts with the social factors of age, educational background and sex.

[141] Except in two kinds of cases: 1) where omission of the circumflex may cause confusion; for example it is maintained on the word 'dû' so as not to be confused with 'du'; and 2) in the conjugation of verbs, for example in the past historic tense the phrase 'nous vîmes' maintains the circumflex.

5.5.3 /o/ and social variation

5.5.3.1 /o/ and age

Figure 5-1 illustrates the realisation of /o/ in closed monosyllables according to age. It can be seen that the youngest group are those who conform least to SF with regard to [o] realisation: they realise 73.4% of /o/ as [o], whereas the middle age group, who adhere most to SF, realise 83.7% of /o/ as [o]. The older group are slightly less 'standard', with 79.7% of /o/ as [o]. This pattern is not surprising; indeed it is an established pattern in language variation seen with other linguistic variables such as the (ng) variable, a stable marker in Norwich (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 78). It was also observed in chapter 4 (4.6.2.1).

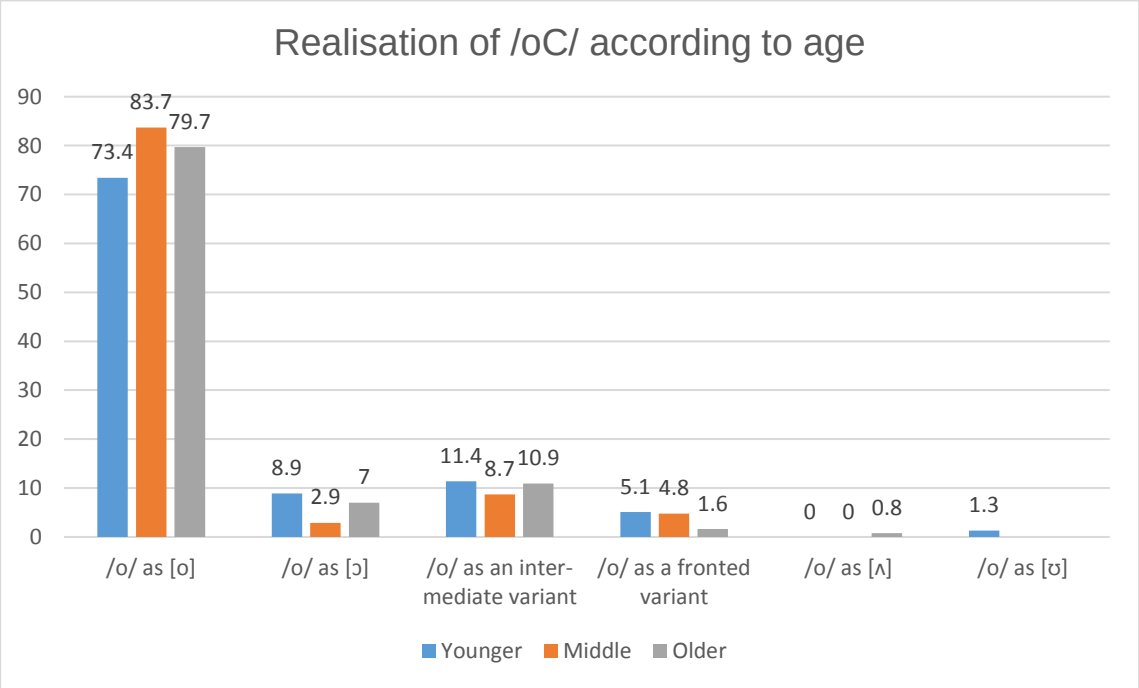

Figure 5-1. Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables according to age

A similar age pattern is found with regard to both intermediate and open-mid realisations of /o/: the younger and older age groups display slightly higher percentages of these variants than the middle age band. Once again, this is in line with established patterns. The difference, though still modest, is more

notable for realisation with the open-mid variant where the percentages for younger, middle and older groups are 8.9, 2.9 and 7% respectively (n = 7, 3 and 9). Since an open realisation is described as a feature of Lille French (Lefebvre 1991), the avoidance of this variant by the middle age group indicates a possible sensitivity to the status of an open-mid variant as a Northern Regional French variant.

Hansen and Juillard (2011: 330) report an increased tendency towards an intermediate realisation of /o/, observed in their real-time survey of Parisian French. In the Tournaisis corpus, however, there is no clear increased tendency to lower /o/ to [ɔ]. This may be on account of the status of the open-mid variant described above. An increased tendency to front /o/ has also been observed in France (Armstrong & Low 2008; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Boula de Mareüil et al. 2013). Whilst the percentage results in Figure 5-1 might appear to illustrate this same pattern, in fact this is not the case. Table 5-7 illustrates that the fronted tokens of /o/ are produced by just five of the 39 informants: two younger, one middle-aged and two older. Thus, there is no strong apparent-time evidence of an increased tendency to front /o/ in this corpus[142].

Informant	**Informant category**	**Number of fronted tokens**	**Fronted tokens**
Océane	(YFED1)	2/7	‘côte’, ‘chose’
Julien	(YMED2)	2/8	‘paume’, ‘chaude’
Nicolas	(MMED1)	5/8	‘môle’, ‘sauve’, ‘paume’, ‘côte’, ‘chaude’
Geneviève	(OFED1)	1/8	‘môle’
Tiffaine	(OFED1)	1/8	‘môle’

Table 5-7. Presence of fronted /oC/ tokens in the corpus

[142] Although there does appear to be an age-related effect on ‘môle’, since this is not fronted by any younger speaker and is the only word that both Geneviève and Tiffaine front.

What is notable from assessing the identity of the ‘fronters’ is that all but one belong to ED1. /o/-fronting in this context therefore seems to be associated with lower socioeconomic background. This finding is not surprising, since, as mentioned above, a link between working-class origin and /ɔ/-fronting has been established in Paris since the 17th century (Coveney 2001: 96). However, the fronting of /ɔ/ is described as increasingly a ‘snob’ variant (Carton 2001; Armstrong & Low 2008). The absence of fronted /o/ variants amongst ED2 in this word list data would indicate that in the Belgian borderland, a fronted /o/ is *not yet* a snob variant, but remains a traditional working-class feature.

It was identified in 5.5.2 that 10.3% of <au> tokens were realised with an intermediate variant. Since Hansen and Juillard (2011: 239) report an increasing tendency to lower <au> to intermediate tokens, it is worth also stratifying this part of the corpus by age to see if there is an apparent-time change in progress in the Belgian borderland. Figure 5-2 thus illustrates realisations of <au> according to age.

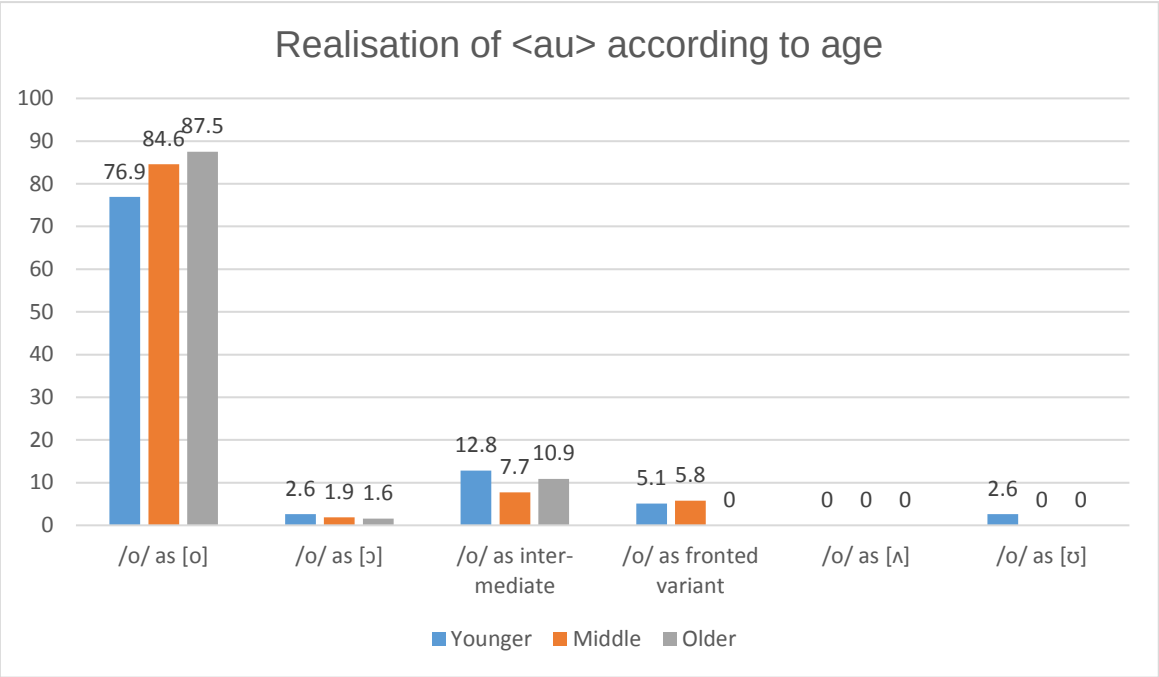

Figure 5-2. Realisations of /o/ as representing <au> in closed monosyllables, according to age

A pattern is certainly visible in Figure 5-2 wherein realisation of <au> as [o] decreases as age degreases. Percentage realisations of <au> as [o] are 76.9%, 84.6% and 87.5% for the younger, middle and older groups respectively, which equate to token numbers of 30/39, 44/52 and 56/64. Whilst there is no clear increase in intermediate realisation, though evidence of age-grading, as Hansen and Juillard (2011) found, aggregating the tokens into those realised as standard [o] and all others (see Figure 5-3), it can be seen that there *is* a general increase in percentage of non-standard realisations as age decreases.

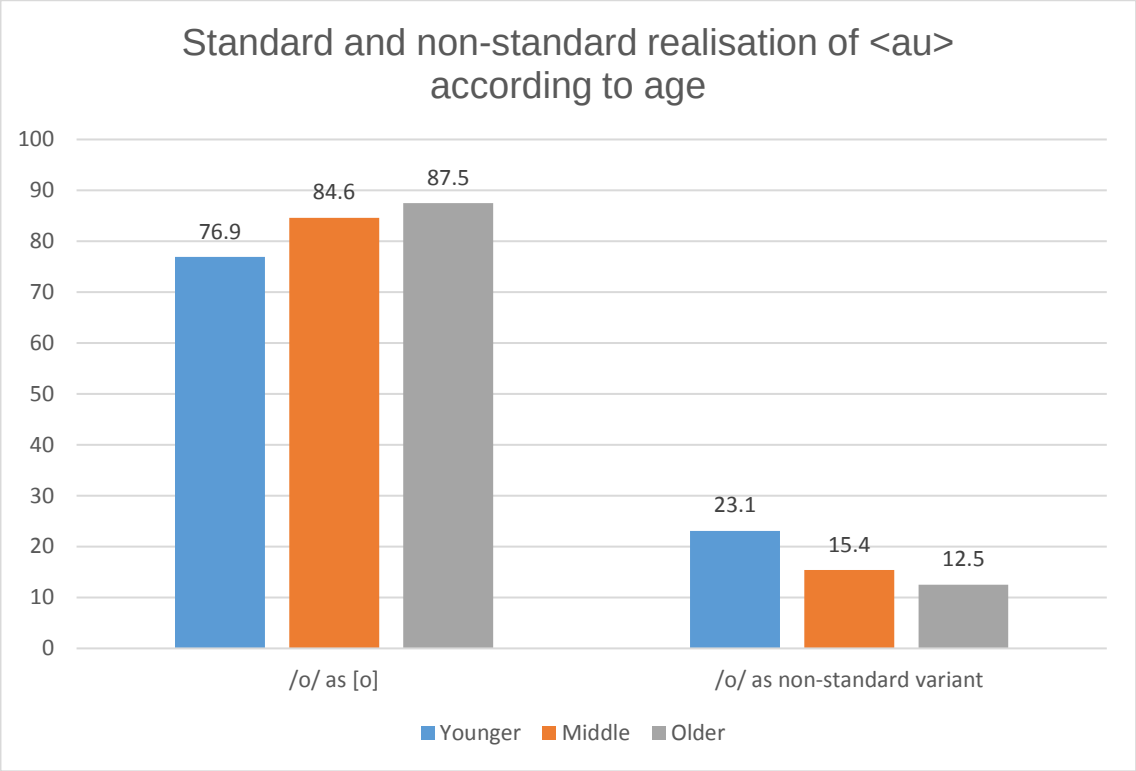

Figure 5-3. Standard and non-standard realisations of <au> according to age

The findings therefore corroborate the behaviour of /oC/ tokens in general; however, in this corpus, <au> does not show a particularly marked increased tendency to be realised as an intermediate variant.

5.5.3.2 /o/ and education

Figure 5-4 illustrates /o/ realisation according to educational background and reveals that ED2 realise a greater percentage of /o/ with the SF variant (90.1%, n = 173/192) than ED1 (62.2%, n = 74/119). Logically and unsurprisingly, then, the percentages of non-standard realisations – [ɔ], the intermediate variant, and the fronted variant – are greater for ED1 than ED2. These results replicate established sociolinguistic patterns (cf. Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974) and indicate that a close-mid [o] is still perceived as the standard.

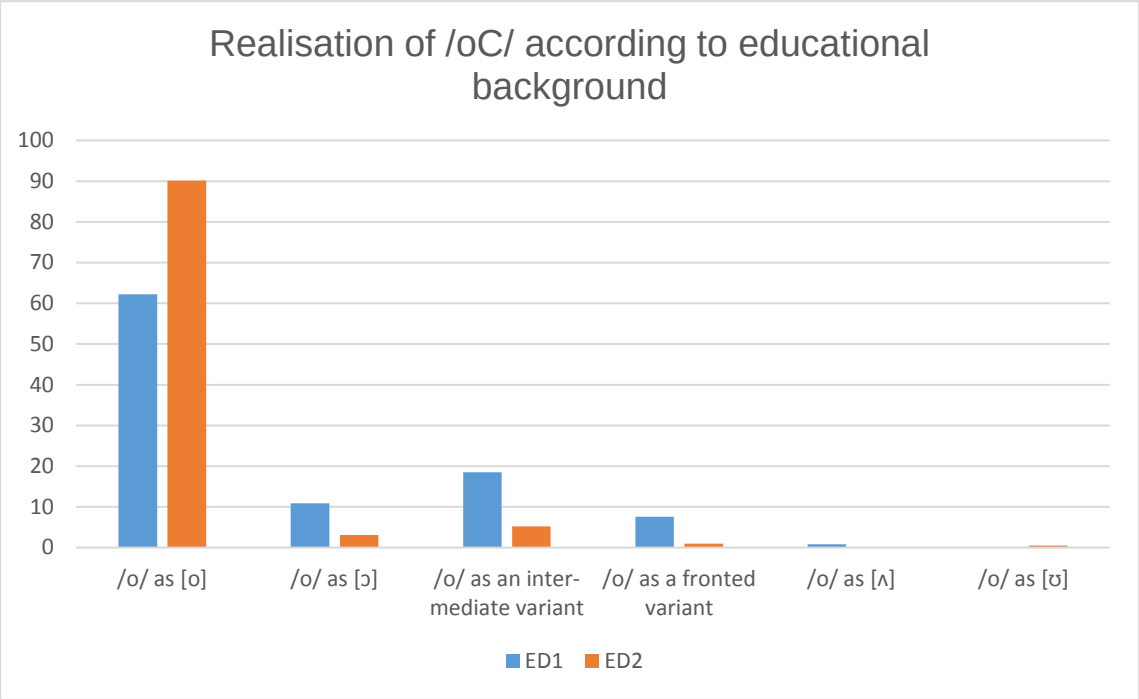

Figure 5-4.Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables according to educational background

5.5.3.3 /o/ and sex

Figure 5-5 illustrates that in the Tournaisis corpus, men realised a smaller percentage of /o/ as [o] than women (with percentages of 75.7% and 83% respectively). Since it has been found in numerous studies that for stable sociolinguistic variables 'women use more higher-status variants than men' (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 61), this pattern corroborates what was found above: that /o/ realised as [o] is still perceived as the standard variant. It also confirms the stability of the variable, which was evident from the lack of apparent-time change in its behaviour.

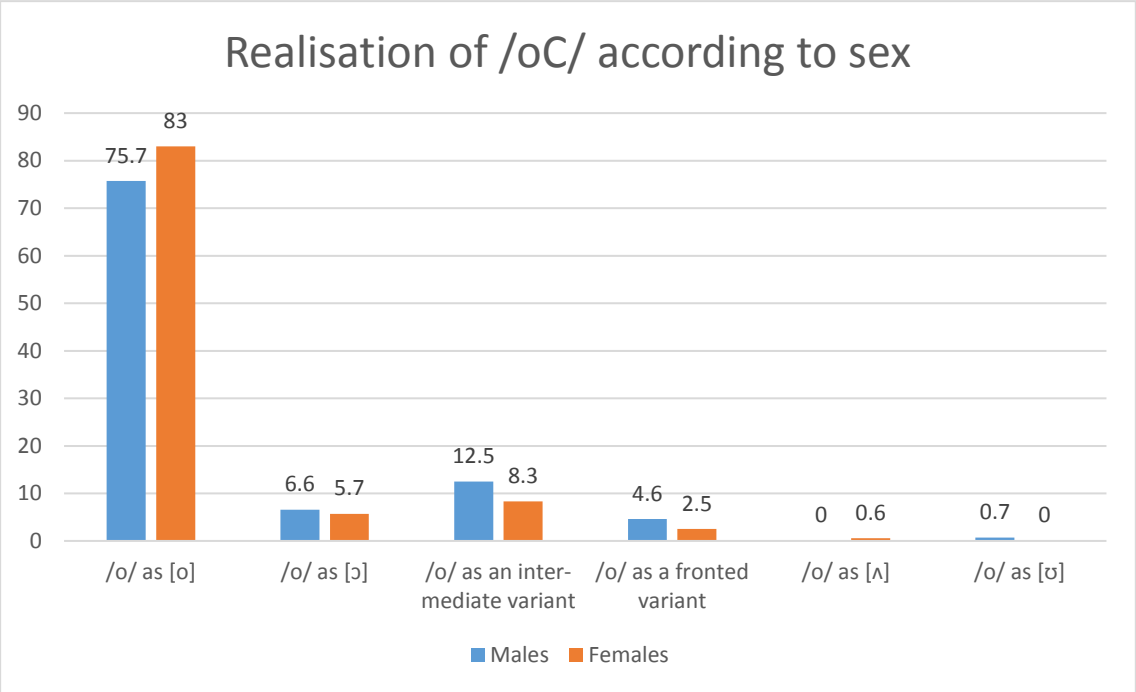

Figure 5-5. Realisations of /o/ in closed monosyllables according to sex

5.6 /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables

Twelve /ɔ/ tokens in the context of /_C/ were elicited from each informant[143]. As there are just eleven tokens from two of the 39 informants, a total of 466 /ɔ/ tokens were coded. Their realisations are illustrated in Table 5-8, where it can be seen that 63.9% maintain the standard [ɔ] realisation, 10.1% are realised as [o], 7.7% as an intermediate variant, 11.2% as a fronted variant, 4.9% as [ʌ], and 1.7% as [ɒ].

	/ɔ/ as [ɔ]	**/ɔ/ as [o]**	**/ɔ/ as an intermediate variant**	**/ɔ/as a fronted variant**	**/ɔ/ as [ʌ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ʊ]**	**/ɔ/ as [u]**	**/ɔ/ as [ɒ]**	**Total**
n =	298	47	36	52	23	1	1	8	466
%	63.9	10.1	7.7	11.2	4.9	0.2	0.2	1.7	100

Table 5-8. Realisations of /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables for all informants

[143] These were: 'pomme', 'molle', 'cote', 'sort', 'saur', 'cosse', 'code', 'mort', 'encore', 'alors', 'sotte' and 'potte'.

This pattern varies to a certain degree from that of /o/ in closed monosyllables. A smaller percentage of /ɔ/ than /o/ maintain the standard realisation: 79.4% of /o/ = [o], whilst 63.9% of /ɔ/ = [ɔ]. For /o/, 6.1% of tokens are realised with their contrasting variant, whilst a greater percentage (10.1%) of /ɔ/ are realised as [o]. 11.2% of /ɔ/ are fronted where just 3.5% of /o/ are. Finally, where just one /o/ is unrounded, 23 (5.4%) of /ɔ/ are and whilst no /o/ is realised as [ɒ], eight (1.7%) /ɔ/ are realised this way. We will now explore these findings in greater detail.

63.9% of /ɔ/ were realised as standard [ɔ], a percentage which is considerably higher than those reported elsewhere. Woehrling (2009: 113) found that in RPS, in speech deemed to represent SF, 55% of /ɔ/ were realised as [ɔ], whilst in RPS speech elicited from three sites in Belgium just 50% of /ɔ/ were [ɔ][144]. With tokens derived from the same data set, Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013: 78) found that in WLS elicited in the *Oïl* region, 53% of /ɔ/ were realised as [o]. The percentage of [ɔ] tokens in the Tournaisis corpus is considerably higher than those reported by Boula de Mareüil et al. and Woehrling. Moreover, in both of the latter studies, /ɔ/ was categorised as /ɔ/, /o/ or /œ/. Were these studies to have had an intermediate variant category, we could imagine that percentages of [ɔ] would have been even lower, since some [ɔ] would perhaps have been classed as an intermediate variant. How, then, can we account for the relatively high percentage maintenance of [ɔ] in the Tournaisis corpus?

[144] These three sites were Tournai, Gembloux and Liège, and the data were collected as part of the *PFC.* Woehrling does not report the data for these sites individually, so any regional variation that might exist is obscured.

One explanation is that, since the tokens are WLS, the high degree of attention paid to speech in the task may have had a particularly strong standardising effect on informants' speech, although tokens in Boula de Mareüil et al.'s (2013: 78) study were also derived from WLS. Alternatively, the researcher's status as a non-native speaker may have had an 'Observer's paradox' effect (cf. Swann et al. 2004: 227), implicitly encouraging more standard behaviour. On the other hand, the distinct findings may be due to different social characteristics of the speaker samples. Finally, it may just be that in the Belgian borderland, speakers adhere more to the standard.

/ɔ/-fronting

The general pattern in fronting in the present corpus replicates that found in previous studies: a greater percentage of /ɔ/ than /o/ are fronted. This is the pattern that Lennig (1979: 34–35 cited in Coveney 2001: 97) found in Paris, for example. However, in other respects the results in the Tournaisis corpus are distinct from those seen elsewhere. In the present corpus 11.2% of tokens are fronted, whereas a greater percentage of tokens are fronted in both Woehrling (2009), where SF = 21% and Belgium = 20% (RPS), and Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013), where *Oïl* French = 28% (WLS).

The difference in percentage of fronted tokens between the present corpus and Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013) is 17%, which is quite remarkable; however, the authors themselves conclude that their corpus 'exhibits more fronting than expected', which they explain, without elucidating any further, as being 'due to the very particular nature of the sample' (p. 78). Nevertheless, between the

present corpus and Woehling's (2009) SF and Belgian corpora, there are still differences of 10% and 9% respectively.

The lower percentage of fronted variants in the Tournaisis corpus suggests that the feature is less established than in the *Oïl* region and occupies a more marginal position, as it does in southern France, where Woehrling (2009: 113) found just 5% of tokens were fronted, and in Alsace, where 10% of tokens were realised in this way.

Further exploration of *who* realises the fronted tokens in the corpus will give greater insight, allowing us to understand the status of the variant in the Belgian borderland and whether there is a change in progress taking place (through apparent-time analysis) in this region with regard to fronting. We will return to these issues in 5.6.2.

/ɔ/-raising

Another phenomenon present in this corpus is /ɔ/-raising: 10.1% of /ɔ/ are raised to [o] and 7.7% to an intermediate variant, meaning that nearly a fifth of tokens (17.8%) are raised to a certain degree. Methodological differences mean this result can only be compared with Hansen and Juillard's (2011: 329–330) findings to a limited extent. In their 2001–04 corpus, they found that for /O/ written <o> in syllables closed by consonants other than /ʀ/ and /z/, 22.1% of tokens were intermediate and 5% were raised. This means a total of 27.1% of tokens – excluding those in the context of /_ʀ/ and /_z/ – were raised to some degree. They found that in front of /ʀ/ 100% of tokens were realised with the standard open-mid variant.

Averaging Hansen and Juillard's results for /ɔ/ in all /_C/ contexts, it can be inferred that approximately the same percentage of raising[145] is found in both the Tournaisis corpus and Hansen and Juillard's (2011) 2001–04 Paris data. This would indicate that the same kind of behaviour is seen on both sides of the national border. But what of the 10.1% of raised tokens in the Tournaisis corpus? Since they are WLS, this could be on account of hypercorrection (Lefebvre 1991: 73). Alternatively, it could be a regional feature, since Armstrong and Pooley (2010: 215), in a collated table of regional Belgian features, describe its observation in eastern Wallonia[146]. It could also be a social feature, since Jamin (1999 cited in Coveney 2001: 95–96) describes raising in the context of /ʀ/ as a trait of working-class speech in the Parisian *banlieues*. Further insight will be gained when we explore how realisations of /ɔ/ vary according to both social factors (see 5.6.2) and phonological constraints. We now proceed to analyse the impact of phonological environment.

5.6.1 Phonological conditioning of /ɔ/

5.6.1.1 /ɔ/ and following phonological environment

Table 5-9 illustrates the breakdown of /ɔ/ realisation according to following phonological environment and reveals that it appears to have a considerable effect on vowel realisation: realisation of /ɔ/ as [ɔ] varies from 79.9% for /_ʀ/ to 51.3% for /_d/.

[145] If we average the 27.1% of raised tokens in syllables blocked by consonants other than /ʀ/ and /z/ in Hansen and Juillard's (2011) later corpus and the 0% of raised tokens in the context of /_ʀ/, we get the percentage 13.5%, which is not dissimilar to the percentage of raised tokens in the present corpus: 10.1%.

[146] On the other hand, Carton et al. (1983: 25) describe centralisation of /ɔ/ to /ɔ̈/ in the context of /_ʀ/ as a feature of *Nord/Picardie.*

	%	**/ ɔ/ as [ɔ]**	**/ɔ/ as [o]**	**/ɔ/ as inter-mediate**	**/ɔ/ as a fronted variant**	**/ ɔ / as [ʌ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ʊ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ɒ]**	**/ɔ/ as [u]**
/_ʀ/	‘sort’, ‘saur’, ‘mort’, ‘alors’	79.9	4.6	9.8	1	0	0.5	5.1	0
/_l/	‘molle’	69.2	2.6	2.6	12.8	12.8	0	0	0
/_m/	‘pomme’	56.4	0	2.6	12.8	28.2	0	0	0
/_s/	‘cosse’	56.4	12.8	5.1	20.5	5.1	0	0	0
/_t/	‘sotte’, ‘potte’, ‘cote’	54.3	13.8	6	20.7	4.3	0	0	0.9
/_d/	‘code’	51.3	15.4	12.8	20.5	0	0	0	0

Table 5-9. Realisations of /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables according to following phonological environment

/ɔ/ in the context of /_ʀ/

In the Tournaisis corpus, /_ʀ/ is the environment to most favour the standard variant. This finding is consistent with patterns seen elsewhere. For example, Pooley (2004a: 381) found in his study of northern French that this was the only context in which /ɔ/ realisation was categorically standard. Hansen and Juillard (2011: 329–330), too, found the same result and observed that this was the only phonological environment in which there was a real-time increase in realisation of the vowel with the standard variant[147].

Whilst Hansen and Juillard’s findings suggest a process of standardisation has taken place in Paris, the results in the Tournaisis corpus suggest that, although the environment /_ʀ/ does most favour the standard variant, standardisation has not fully taken place in the Belgian borderland, since non-standard variants still persist. Nevertheless, some non-standard variants are more widespread in the Tournaisis corpus than others. /_ʀ/ is the environment to least favour fronting, which is consistent with Lennig’s (1999 cited in Armstrong & Low 2008: 443)

[147] They do not provide an explanation for this finding.

finding in Paris and is unsurprising since it has been described as a feature of working-class Parisian speech (Gadet: 1992: 33 cited in Coveney 2001: 97). In contrast, /_ʀ/ is the only environment in which [ɒ] occurs. Since six of the eight [ɒ] tokens appear in the word 'mort', and four were realised by older informants, it is quite plausible that [mɒʀ] is a fixed, traditional, local pronunciation. In addition, 'mort' is a high frequency word and Armstrong and Low (2008: 443) found that it was predominantly in these kinds of words that non-standard variants were found. Alternatively, three of the informants (Agnes (OFED1), Tiffaine (OFED1), and Francis (MMED1) realised 'mort' with a retracted fricative, thus it could be that the following backed /ʀ/ had a lowering effect on the realisation of /ɔ/.

The majority of non-standard tokens (14.4% of the total of 20.1% non-standard) in the context /_ʀ/ were raised vowels. Of the 28 raised vowels, 20 were in the word 'saur'. This is not surprising as, whilst in SF the *loi de position* dictates an open-mid variant, the digraph <au> dictates a close-mid one (Girard & Lyche 1997), thus there appears to be confusion around what is the 'correct' pronunciation[148]. Moreover, the word is a rare one, which perhaps added to the confusion. Of the remaining eight raised tokens, four are in younger ED2 speech and four in middle-aged and older ED1 speech. Whilst those associated with ED2 are possibly hypercorrections[149], due to a life-stage effect, it is likely that those associated with ED1 are working-class and / or regional. What is

[148] What is more, the relatively high number of intermediate realisations of 'saur' by ED2 (9/23 compared to 5/15 for ED1) strengthens the suggestion that there is uncertainty regarding what is correct. Since ED2 speakers have appeared more sensitive to notions of correctness throughout the chapter, these intermediate realisations can be interpreted as them 'hedging their bets'.
[149] This is the conclusion that Lefebvre (1991: 73) draws with some of her raised tokens.

more, as already mentioned, raising in the context /_ʀ/ has been described as a feature of French in eastern Wallonia (Armstrong & Pooley 2010: 215).

/ɔ/ in contexts of /_C/ other than /_ʀ/

Returning to other /_C/ contexts, it can be seen in Table 5-9 that it is the tokens in the alveolar and dental pre-fricative and pre-stop contexts of /_s/, /_t/ and /_d/ which show the greatest percentage of [o] realisation. This corroborates in part Pooley's (1996: 146) findings in northern France, since he found that the voiceless fricatives /f/ and /ʃ/ favoured [o]. On the other hand, he found that /d/ favoured an open-mid-vowel whereas in the Tournaisis corpus it is the consonant to least favour this realisation.

/_s/, /_t/ and /_d/ also show the greatest tendency to front /ɔ/. This pattern corroborates that reported by Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013: 81): '/O/ fronting shows up in Northern French mainly (but not only) before or after anterior consonants'. Coveney (2001) advances the explanation that the dominance of front vowels in stressed syllables may 'provide a statistical "motor" for the fronting of back vowels, via the effect of lingual coarticulation' (p. 175).

Whilst /_s/, /_t/ and /_d/ are all anterior consonants, i.e. dental and alveolar, so too are /l/ and /m/, which favour fronting much less in the Tournaisis corpus[150]. In light of these findings, the question must be asked as to whether place of articulation is the sole explanatory factor for the tendency to front or raise in these contexts. Where /_s/, /_t/ and /_d/ and /_l/ and /_m/ do differ, however, is

[150] This is in contrast to Armstrong and Low's (2008: 440–442) finding where /_m/ and /_n/ were amongst the environments to most favour fronting. This, however, they conclude, is on account of the high frequency of these environments in their data. The methods used for collecting tokens in the Tournaisis corpus do not allow for an analysis of frequency of consonantal environments, thus this factor cannot be investigated in this study.

in their *manner* of articulation: whilst /_s/ is fricative and /_t/ and /_d/ are plosive, /_ʀ/, /_l/ and /_m/, are liquids and a nasal respectively.

Returning again to Table 5-9, we see that whilst /_l/ and /_m/ do not favour fronting, they are the contexts which most favour unrounded variants, with percentages of unrounded tokens for /_l/ and /_m/ 12.8% and 28.2% respectively. Armstrong and Low (2008: 443) report unrounding in the context of /_ʀ/ in their Roanne data, as do Carton et al. (1983: 24) in their *Nord/Picardie* data; however, Carton et al. suggest this is on account of a retracted and devoiced /_ʀ/ which modifies the preceding vowel. This is not the case in the Tournaisis corpus. However, Armstrong and Low also cite the anecdotal evidence of Léon (1993: 192) in which he describes Fanny Ardant, a well-known French actress, realising ‘pot de colle’ as /patkal/. How then can we explain occurrence of unrounding in the contexts of /_l/ and /_m/? Like /_ʀ/, which has previously been shown to favour unrounding, /l/ is a liquid. /m/, on the other hand, is a nasal.

Armstrong and Low (2008: 444) discuss a discrepancy between acoustic and impressionistic analyses in their study of /ɔ/. 97 of the 679 tokens were perceived as ‘back’, though the F2 of these tokens suggested fronting or unrounding. Thus it may be that the tokens in /_l/ and /_m/ were heard by the researcher as unrounded because of a perceptual effect, when in fact they were fronted. Alternatively, it may be that they were unrounded and that, whilst anterior consonants promote fronting of the preceding vowel, liquids and nasals promote unrounding.

In conclusion, it appears that both *place* and *manner* of articulation of following consonant have an effect on the target vowel. Taking into consideration Pooley's (1996: 146) findings too, it appears that *voice* has an effect as well: whilst anterior, voiceless fricatives and stops favour fronted, raised variants, posterior liquids, and nasals, do not. The tendency for anterior consonants to favour fronted vowels appears to be due to a coarticulatory effect wherein the fronted lingual position in the realisation of the following fricative or stop affects the phonetic realisation of the preceding vowel. A similar explanation may be advanced with regard to vowel *raising* since to produce anterior fricatives and stops, the tongue is in both a fronted and raised position. As for the liquids and nasals, it appears that these manners of articulation promote unrounding of the preceding vowel.

Since previous studies have shown the *preceding* consonant to have an effect on mid-vowel realisation – notably on /e/ (Landick 2004: 69) – we will now investigate whether this is also the case for /ɔ/.

5.6.1.2 /ɔ/ and preceding phonological environment

Table 5-10 indicates that preceding phonological environment may have an effect on vowel realisation. Realisation of /ɔ/ as [ɔ] varies from 92.3% for /l_/ to 57.7% for /k_/; however, this variation may be due to factors other than preceding phonological environment. For example, the token in the /l_/ context is derived from the word 'alors'. Recalling that both in previous studies (Pooley 2004a; Hansen & Juillard 2011) and the Tournaisis corpus /_ʀ/ favours the standard variant, it is likely that the tendency for [ɔ] in 'alors' to be pronounced

with the [ɔ] is more because of the effect of the *following* rather than *preceding* consonant.

	%	**/ɔ/ as [ɔ]**	**/ɔ/ as [o]**	**/ɔ/ as inter-mediate**	**/ɔ/ as fronted variant**	**/ɔ/ as [ʌ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ʊ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ɒ]**	**/ɔ/ as [u]**
/l_/	'alors'	92.3	2.6	2.6	0	0	0	2.6	0
/m_/	'molle', 'mort'	75.6	2.6	2.6	6.4	6.4	0	6.4	0
/p_/	'pote', 'pomme'	67.9	0	1.3	14.1	16.7	0	0	0
/s_/	'sort', 'saur', 'sotte'	61.7	7	13.9	12.2	2.6	0	1.7	0.9
/k_/	'cote', 'cosse', 'code', 'encore'	57.7	16.7	9.6	14.1	1.3	0.6	0	0

Table 5-10. Realisations of /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables, according to preceding phonological environments

At the other end of the scale from /l_/ is the environment /k_/, which is the environment to most favour both a fronted realisation (along with /p_/) and a close-mid realisation. 16.7% of /k_/ are raised and 9.6% are intermediate variants. This finding would indicate that /k_/ has a raising effect on following vowel; however, the raising may be on account of another factor. Further insight can be gained by breaking down the /k_/ set and assessing pronunciation of individual words. (See Table 5-11).

	/ɔ/ as [ɔ]	**/ɔ/ as [o]**	**/ɔ/ as inter-mediate**	**/ɔ/ as fronted variant**	**/ɔ/ as [ʌ]**	**/ɔ/ as [ʊ]**
'encore'	94.6	0	2.6	0	0	2.6
'cosse'	56.4	12.8	5.1	20.5	5.1	0
'code'	51.3	15.4	12.8	20.5	0	0
'cote'	28.2	38.5	17.9	15.4	0	0

Table 5-11. Realisations of /k_/ words

Stratifying the /k_/ set by individual word, it can be seen that the percentage of /ɔ/ that is realised as [ɔ] varies considerably. The near categorical [ɔ] realisation in the word ‘encore’ corroborates findings in previous sections that /_ʀ/ favours the standard variant. Removing the word ‘encore’ from the picture, it can be seen that /ɔ/ is realised as [ɔ] in about half of cases for ‘cosse’ and ‘code’ and a third for ‘cote’. Concomitantly, a notable percentage of /k_/ tokens are both raised and fronted. Thus it appears this environment does favour raising and fronting.

The percentage of ‘cote’ tokens that are raised to [o] is particularly high. In 5.5.2 it was seen that the word ‘côte’, and indeed the spelling <ô>, favoured open-mid and intermediate variants. The explanation was advanced that this was due to confusion stemming from the changing role of the circumflex in French. The same explanation may be given for the tendency to raise /ɔ/ in ‘cote.’ Indeed this result strengthens the conclusion made previously. Viewing the behaviour of ‘côte’ and ‘cote’ together, we can see that uncertainty over the role of the circumflex has a destabilising effect on pronunciation[151].

Table 5-10 illustrates that along with /k_/, the environments of /p_/ and /s_/ also favour fronting. Recalling the findings in 5.6.1.1, we can see that place and manner of articulation in both preceding and following phonological environment have an effect on the target vowel, and that in both positions the effects are the same: stops and fricatives and / or more anterior consonants favour fronting

[151] For example, after Thierry had finished the word list task, the researcher asked if he had any comments, to which he replied of the word ‘cote’: “il y a juste le mot ‘cote’…je… on a grimpé la cote ([kɔt]), on a grimpé la cote ([kot])… mais là il y a pas de, il y a pas de chapeau. Qu’est-ce que c’est alors, cote comme ça, c – o – t – e ? … ah, c’est comme une côte … une côte euh, une côte scolaire…”

and / or raising, whilst the nasals and liquids favour an open-mid realisation. This conclusion sits in line with those of Armstrong and Low (2008) and Boula de Mareüil et al. (2013), who consider that anterior consonants have a fronting effect.

Having analysed the behaviour of /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables across the corpus, we now go on to investigate how variation in /ɔ/ realisation interacts with the social factors of age, educational background and sex.

5.6.2 /ɔ/ and social variation

5.6.2.1 /ɔ/ and age

Figure 5-6 illustrates the realisation of /ɔ/ in closed monosyllables according to age and reveals that it is the middle age group which realises the greatest percentage of /ɔ/ as [ɔ]: 73.1%. The youngest speakers are those who least conform to SF; just 50% of their /ɔ/ are with the standard variant. Between these two groups lies the older group, who realise an average of 65.3% of tokens as SF dictates. This pattern sits in contrast with that seen in Pooley's (2004a: 384) data: he found that open [ɔ] was 'most used by the oldest and youngest speakers'. That these patterns appear at odds with each other suggests that [ɔ] has a different status on either side of the border. We may infer that, in the Lille region, although it is the standard variant, [ɔ] is seen as a regional feature – hence the avoidance of this variant by Pooley's middle age band. Across the border, however, we infer that the variant does not have this status and, in line with the *loi de position* and SF, is seen as the standard –hence it is the middle age group who display the highest percentage of [ɔ].

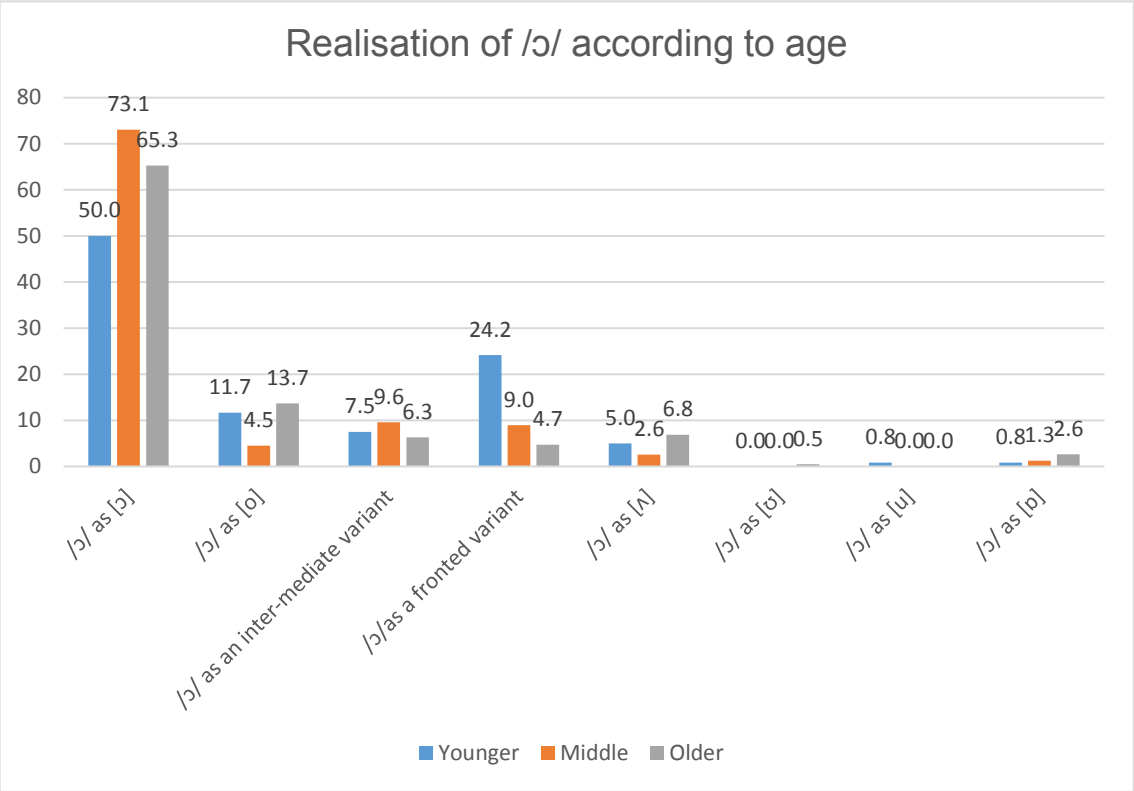

Figure 5-6. Realisations of /ɔ/ according to age

A similar percentage of intermediate variants is realised by each of the three age groups; however, a more pronounced age group-related difference is noticeable in the percentage of closed [o] variants: younger = 11.7%, middle = 4.5% and older = 13.7%. How can these differences be explained? In 5.6 the explanations were advanced that /ɔ/-raising to [o] could be on account of it having a non-standard regional status. The avoidance of raised variants by the middle age group strengthens the argument that a raised variant is seen as a non-standard realisation, whilst the fact that the middle age group realises slightly more intermediate variants indicates confusion around what is the correct pronunciation for these tokens and thus 'hedging' behaviour; an explanation found elsewhere in the literature (Lefebvre 1991: 79). An analysis of other social factors in the following sections is necessary to get a fuller picture.

As with the raised variant, it is the middle age band who least realise the unrounded variant. This result would indicate, once again, that an unrounded variant is perceived as non-standard. Further insight into the status of [ʌ] will be gained from assessing behavioural differences relating to educational background and sex in subsequent sections.

One of the most striking findings to emerge when stratifying the data by age is the distribution of /ɔ/-fronting in the corpus. There is a clear increase in fronting as age decreases, with fronting percentages of 4.7%, 9% and 24.2% for the older, middle and younger age groups respectively. This pattern is consistent with those seen elsewhere in France: Hansen and Juillard (2011: 330) observe an increase in fronting in their real-time survey of Parisian French and, in their Roanne data, Armstrong and Low (2008: 448) find that their younger female informants front a greater percentage of /ɔ/ than their older ones.

In 5.6 it was illustrated that whilst /ɔ/-fronting is present in both France and Belgium, in the Tournaisis corpus it is less evident than in France. The emergence in this corpus, therefore, of an apparent-time increase in fronting, indicates that the fronted variant is diffusing across the border and Belgian behaviour is moving in the same direction as in France: it is converging on French behaviour; cross-border levelling is taking place.

5.6.2.2 /ɔ/ and educational background

Moving from an assessment of /ɔ/ and age to /ɔ/ and educational background, one is struck by how much less variation there appears to be for the latter of these two variables. Figure 5-7 illustrates that 62.6% of /ɔ/ are realised as [ɔ] by

ED1, whilst 64.8% are realised this way by ED2. ED1 realise 10.1% of tokens as intermediate variants, whilst for ED2 the percentage is 6.3%. Both ED1 and ED2 realise 10.1% of tokens with [o]. On the other hand, ED2 realise 12.5% of tokens with a fronted variant, whilst for ED1 the percentage is just 8.9%.

Pooley (2004a: 393–403) found in his survey of Lille French that an open [ɔ] in the contexts of both /oC/ and /ɔC/ was used considerably more by those working in the textile industry and those with a high Regional Loyalty Index. In contrast, the present corpus shows no correlation between open [ɔ] and educational background, which is taken as a socioeconomic proxy. That there is no clear correlation in this context corroborates the conclusion in 5.6.2.1: whilst an open-mid [ɔ] realisation is perceived as non-standard in Lille, [ɔ] maintains its standard status in the Belgian borderland. On the other hand, the higher percentage of intermediate variants produced by ED1 indicates that this realisation is non-standard.

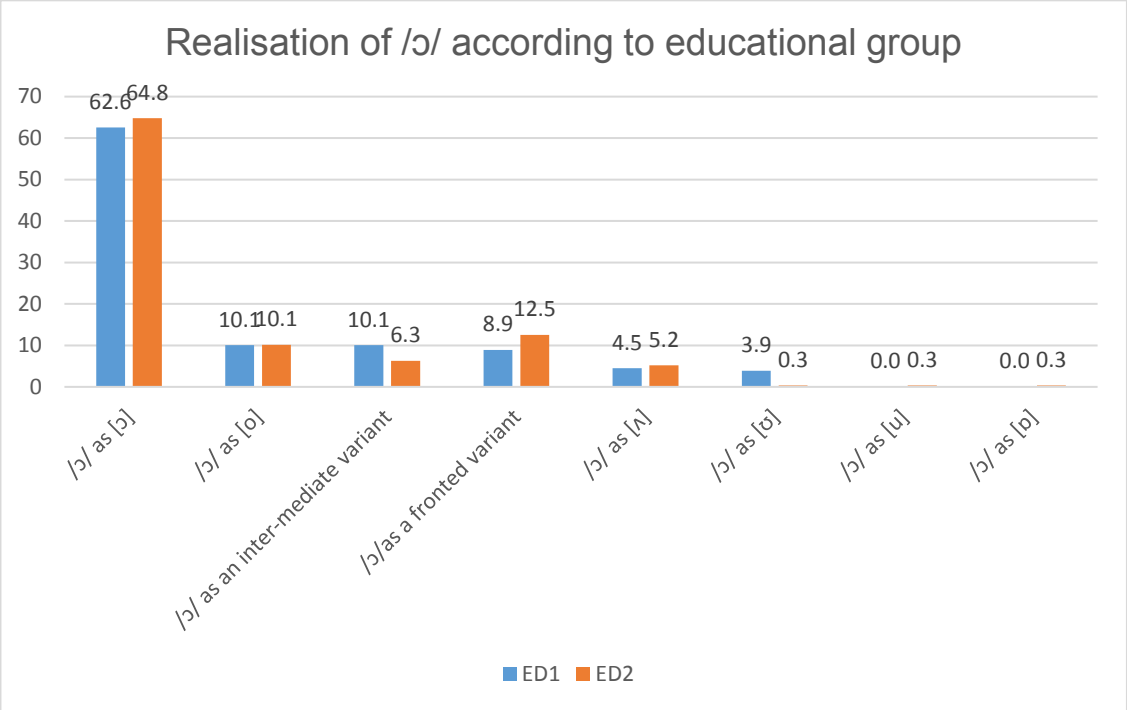

Figure 5-7. Realisations of /ɔ/ according to educational background

The variation in /ɔ/-raising according to age in 5.6.2.1 pointed to the close-mid variant being non-standard. It is therefore somewhat surprising that this variant is equally present in the speech of ED1 and ED2[152]. However, in 5.6 the possibility was discussed that certain raised /ɔ/ were hypercorrections – in line with Lefebvre's (1991:73) conclusion. Thus, it may be that whilst the [o] produced by ED1 are non-standard variants, the [o] produced by ED2 are hypercorrections.

As with the raised variant, the unrounded variant does not show any clear correlation with educational background. The tentative conclusion drawn in 5.6.2.1 that [ʌ] was perceived as non-standard cannot therefore be confirmed through use of this analytical lens. Nor, however, can it be denied.

[152] Although it must be acknowledged that if the intermediate variants are included, then raising is slightly more present in the speech of ED1 than ED2.

Finally, in the Tournaisis corpus, a slightly higher percentage of /ɔ/ are fronted by ED2 than ED1 (12.5% and 8.9% respectively). Although the percentage difference is modest, this pattern corroborates reports that this is a 'snob' – that is to say middle-class – variant (Carton 2001; Armstrong & Low 2008).

5.6.2.3 /ɔ/ and sex

Viewing the corpus through the lens of sex in Figure 5-8, it can be seen that, as with the education variable, the differences between groups are smaller than for age. There are, nevertheless, some noteworthy differences. Women realise fewer /ɔ/ as the standard variant: the percentages are 60.7% for women and 67.4% for men. How can this be explained? Labov's (2001) 'Gender Paradox', mentioned in chapter 2, holds that '[w]omen conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not' (Labov 2001: 293). This pattern, therefore, indicates that whilst [ɔ] is seen as the norm, it is not overtly prescribed.

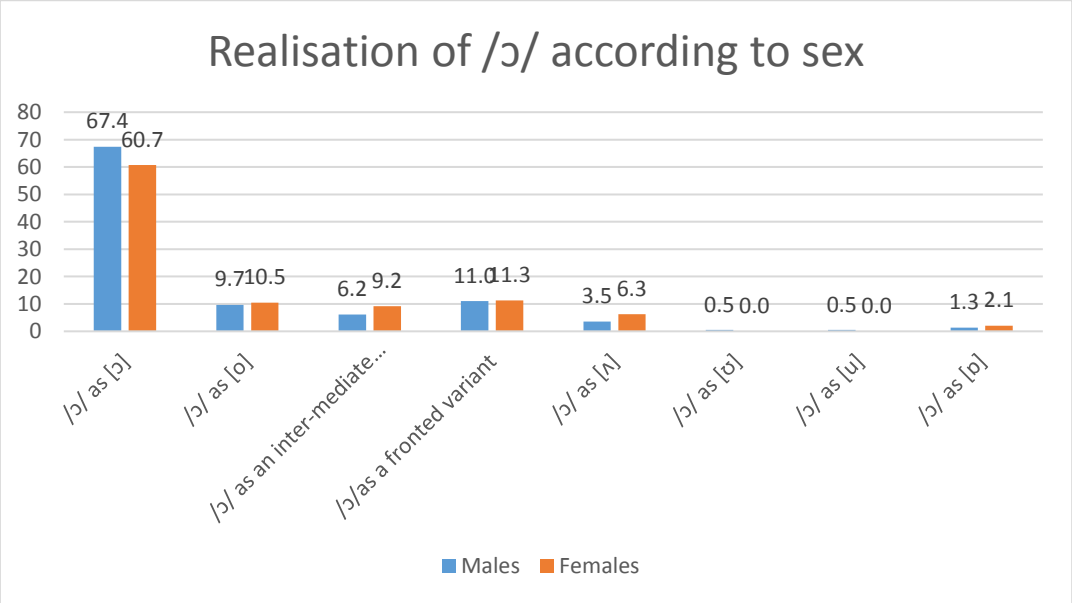

Figure 5-8. Realisations of /ɔ/ according to sex

Women produce slightly higher percentages of all non-standard variants except [u] and [ʊ] than men, although the differences are very small. Whilst the slightly greater percentage of intermediate variants in the women's speech (9.2% compared to 6.2% for men) may be due to the women hedging their pronunciation more, the slightly higher percentage of unrounded variants in the women's speech (6.3% compared to 3.5%) suggests that this non-standard variant is not overtly stigmatised. However, these percentages equate to low token numbers (twenty-two and fourteen for intermediate tokens and fifteen and eight for unrounded tokens), thus these conclusions should be considered with caution.

What is surprising in Figure 5-8 is that there is not a greater difference in percentages of fronting according to sex, since both Carton (2001) and Armstrong and Low (2008) report this phenomenon as being associated with the speech of women. However, this is because seven of the nine fronted tokens realised by the men were articulated by just one informant: Nicolas. This informant belonged to ED1 and was heavily involved in local networks. It is likely, then, that whilst the fronted tokens amongst the younger speakers and women in the middle age band are 'snob' variants, Nicolas' seven tokens are working-class variants.

Removing Nicolas' tokens from the picture, a much more expected pattern emerges. Figure 5-9 illustrates that for all age groups it is women who produce a higher percentage of fronted tokens, which is consistent not only with previous findings in France, but also with the established sociolinguistic principles that it

is women who lead linguistic change and, as innovators, favour prestige variants (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 103).

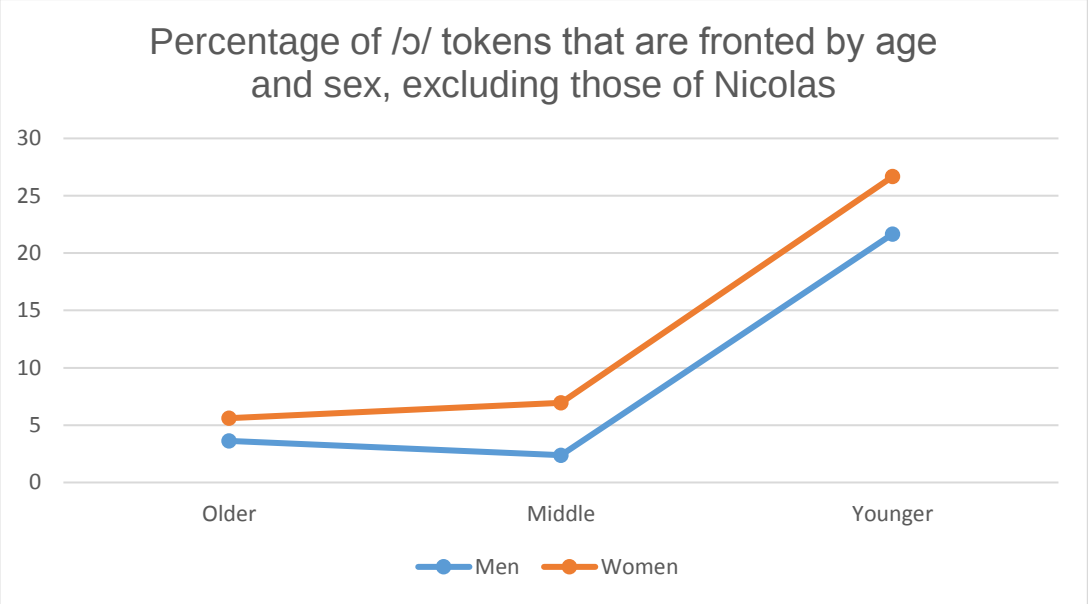

Figure 5-9. Percentage of /ɔ/ tokens that are fronted by age and sex, excluding those of Nicolas.

5.7 Oppositions

5.7.1 Allophonic behaviour

In the Tournaisis corpus there are two WLS pairs for each informant[153] which may be examined in order to observe the behaviour of /o/-/ɔ/ when performing an allophonic role: 'sot-sotte' and 'peau-pote'. The realisations of these pairs – in terms of maintained phonological contrast or lack thereof – is illustrated Table 5-12.

	Strong opposition	**weak opposition**	**other contrast**	**merged**	**reverse opposition**	**Total**
n =	52	0	24	1	0	77
%	67.5	0	31.2	1.3	0	100

Table 5-12. Realisations of oppositions where /o/-/ɔ/ are allophones

[153] With the exception of one informant, Tiffaine, for whom there is just one pair.

Of the 77 allophonic pairs in the corpus, just one is merged: ‘sot-sotte’, realised by Benoit (OMED2) as [so]-[sot]. 52 (67.5%) maintain a strong opposition whilst in the remaining 24 pairs (31.2%) another contrast is maintained. These contrasts are:

- [o]-fronted variant: n = 17
- [o]-[ʌ]: n = 5
- [o]-[u]: n = 1
- [ʊ]-[ə]: n = 1

For all but one of these contrasts, it is the /ɔ/ which is realised with a non-standard variant. Both the [o]-[u] pair and [ʊ]-[ə] were realisations of ‘sot-sotte’. The first was by Julien (YMED2), a student, and the second was by Francis, (MMED1), a farmer. Whilst it seems possible that Julien’s behaviour was a hypercorrection, it seems plausible that the fronting by Francis was an extension of the working-class tendency to front /ɔ/, although these are his only fronted /O/ tokens.

These results illustrate that there is almost categorical maintenance in allophonic /o/-/ɔ/ oppositions, although nearly a third of these oppositions are between [o] and a non-standard variant in the place of underlying /ɔ/. Having already discussed /ɔ/ behaviour in 5.6, and now focussing on the state of the allophonic contrasts, it can be concluded that allophonic oppositions persist in the Belgian borderland.

Since scholars (e.g. Lefebvre 1991; Hansen & Juillard 2011) have typically investigated *phonemic* oppositions, the extent to which comparisons can be

drawn between the present results and the existing literature is limited. With this caveat in mind, however, the pattern in maintained contrasts sits in line with the situation in central and eastern Francophone Belgium where (phonemic) mid-vowel oppositions are said to be better maintained than in France (Hambye & Simon 2012).

On the other hand, the findings are in contrast to the situation that has been described in Tournai, where Hambye and Simon claim that vowel neutralisation, which 'may be the sign of a more "advanced" (Eckert 2000: 88) variety like that of some of their French neighbours […] is at a further stage among speakers' (2012: 133). However, it must be remembered that Hambye and Simon refer only to the *phonemic* /o/-/ɔ/ opposition in closed syllables. In order to better understand the behaviour of allophonic oppositions, we now go on to assess how they vary according to the social factors of age, educational background and sex.

5.7.1.1 Allophonic behaviour and social variation

5.7.1.1.1 /o/-/ɔ/ and age

A clear pattern emerges in Figure 5-10 wherein maintenance of strong, standard oppositions decreases with age, indicating an apparent-time change in behaviour. The difference between the younger group and the older two groups is particularly striking. Whilst the oldest group (aged 60+) realise 83.9% of oppositions and the middle group (aged 30–59) 76.9%, the percentage falls to just 30% for the youngest group (aged 18–29). We have seen in this corpus a strong tendency for the middle age group to adhere to SF. It seems likely, therefore, that, were we to examine oppositions in less guarded speech, we

would find the middle age group adhering less to SF, and thus the staggered decrease in strong opposition maintenance would be more balanced.

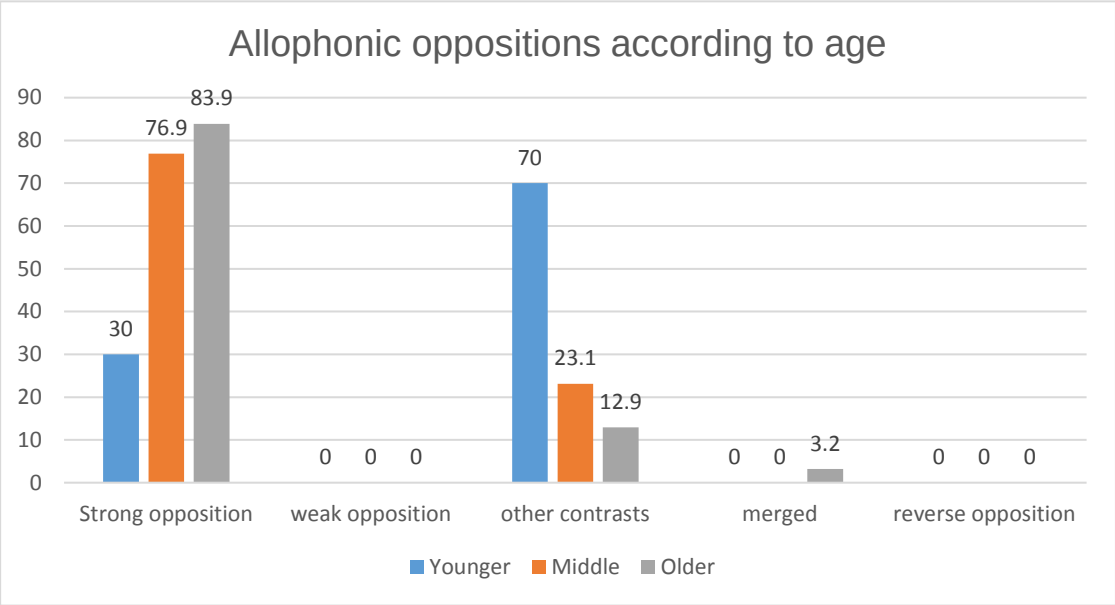

Figure 5-10. Allophonic oppositions according to age

The decline in percentage maintenance of oppositions, however, is not due to an increase in merged oppositions, nor a weakening of oppositions; rather it is because of an increase in 'other' contrasts. Since scholars have typically assessed phonemic /o/-/ɔ/ there are no results in the established literature which can be drawn upon for comparison. Reports in the literature concerning phonemic oppositions, on the other hand, describe an observed decrease in opposition maintenance (Lefebvre 1991; Landick 1995; Hansen & Juillard 2011). It can be seen, therefore, that whilst a decreased tendency to realise standard allophonic contrasts is observed in the Belgian borderland, a contrast of sorts is nevertheless almost categorically maintained.

5.7.1.1.2 /o/-/ɔ/ and educational background

In Figure 5-11 it emerges that a greater percentage of standard oppositions are realised by ED1 than by ED2, with percentages of 72.4% and 64.6% respectively. It is therefore ED2 who realise more non-standard contrasts; 33.3% of their contrasts are non-standard compared to 27.6% for ED1. The majority of 'other' contrasts were either [o] with a fronted variant or [o]–[ʌ]. As was seen in 5.6.2.3, it is the younger, female speakers belonging to ED2 who front a greater percentage of /ɔ/ than ED1, and this fronted variant appears to be a prestige one. It is therefore unsurprising that ED2 realise fewer allophonic oppositions the traditionally standard way.

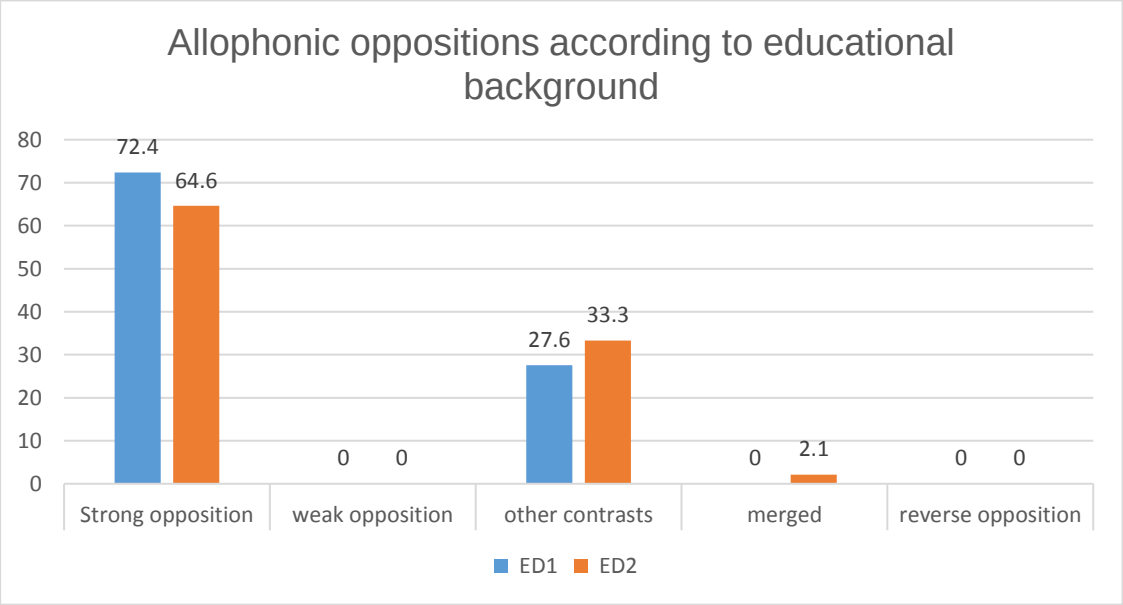

Figure 5-11. Allophonic oppositions according to educational background

A cross-tabulation of age and educational background in Figure 5-12 gives a good deal more insight into the variation in opposition realisation. Here it becomes clear that behaviour is fairly distinct for the two socioeconomic groups. For ED2, behaviour remains largely constant; there is a slight increase in realisation of standard strong oppositions for the middle age band, as we would

expect, but the percentage of these oppositions does not really change with apparent-time. The inverse is seen with merged oppositions, as we would also expect. Finally, the percentage of 'other' contrasts does not change across apparent-time for ED2. In contrast to this, a clear pattern of change in apparent-time is seen in the behaviour of ED1: there is a sharp decrease in realisation of strong contrasts over time, coupled with a strong increase in realisation of 'other' contrasts. Whilst this pattern is striking, it must be noted that the group YED1 comprises just two informants, and thus just four allophonic pairs.

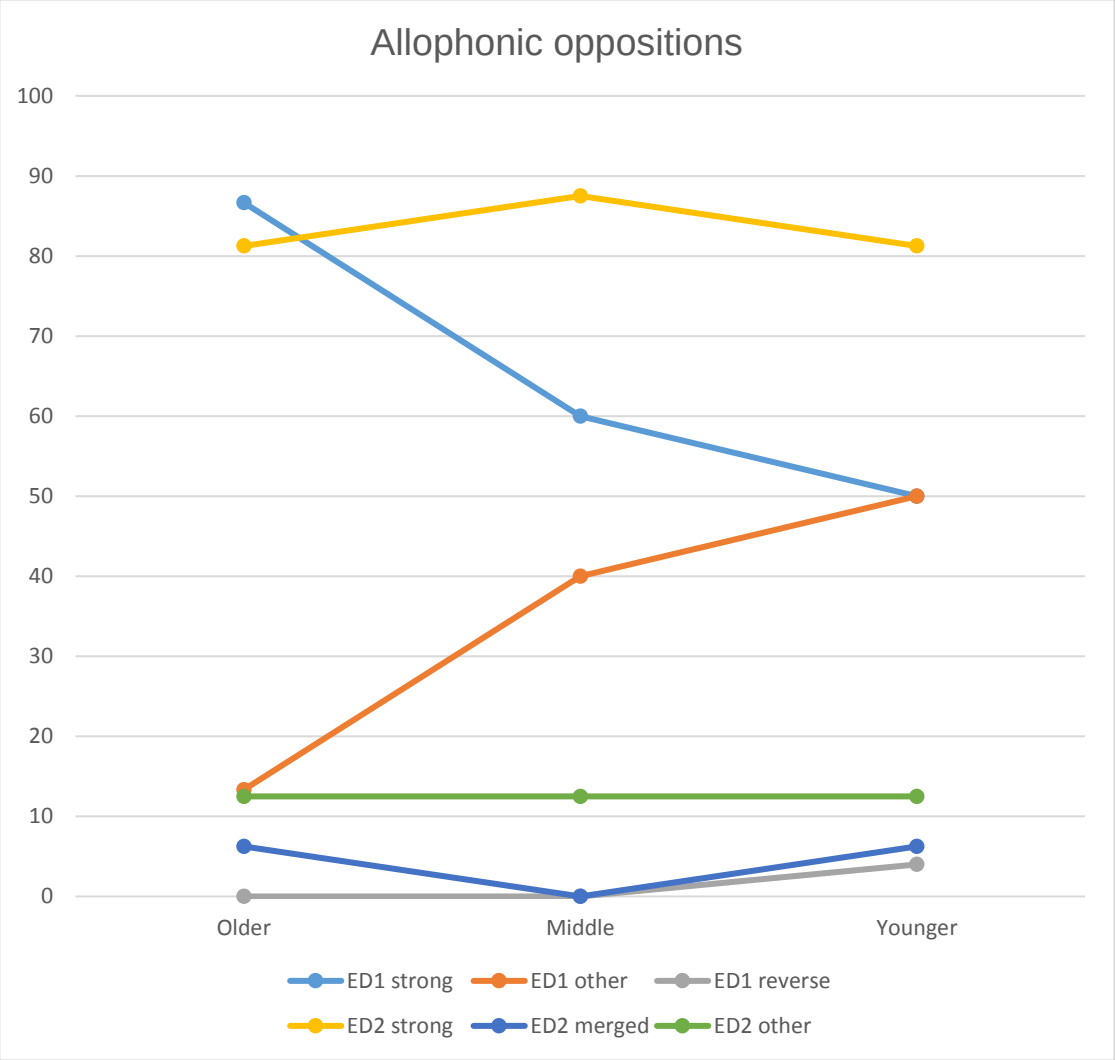

Figure 5-12. Realisations of oppositions, cross-tabulating age and educational background

Once again, these results cannot be compared with previous findings since, as mentioned above, scholars have typically analysed phonemic contrasts. However, we can draw some interesting comparisons. Hansen and Juillard (2011: 343) describe the decrease in maintenance of phonemic oppositions as being 'initié et poussé ou accéléré' ("initiated and pushed or accelerated") by those belonging to the lower socioeconomic group. In Figure 5-12, we see a comparable pattern: whilst the behaviour of ED2 does not appear to be changing, the behaviour of ED1 does; as age decreases, strong oppositions are increasingly replaced by 'other' oppositions. Thus, it appears that, just as Hansen and Juillard found in Parisian phonemic oppositions, ED1 is leading the change in realisation of allophonic oppositions. Since these results are based on very small token numbers, this conclusion must be remain somewhat speculative.

5.7.1.1.3 /o/-/ɔ/ and sex

Figure 5-13 shows that there is very little difference in percentage of strong oppositions for men and women (percentages are 68.4% and 66.7% respectively). For both groups, these percentages equate to twenty-six tokens[154]. These results differ from those in Lefebvre's (1991) Lille study in which she observed that many more women than men maintained (phonemic) oppositions, which she concluded was due to women being more sensitive to the prestige norms.

How can we explain this difference in results? Figure 5-13 also shows that women realise a greater percentage of 'other' contrasts than men. One of the

[154] The difference in percentages whilst token numbers remain the same is due to there being nineteen males and twenty females in the sample.

established principles in language variation and change is that women are linguistic innovators and are associated with incoming variants (Milroy & Milroy 1985: 359–360). Thus, this sex pattern suggests that 'other' contrasts are the innovative, incoming variant. And, indeed, this pattern and explanation triangulate with the finding in 5.7.1.1.1 that rates of 'other' contrasts increase over apparent time.

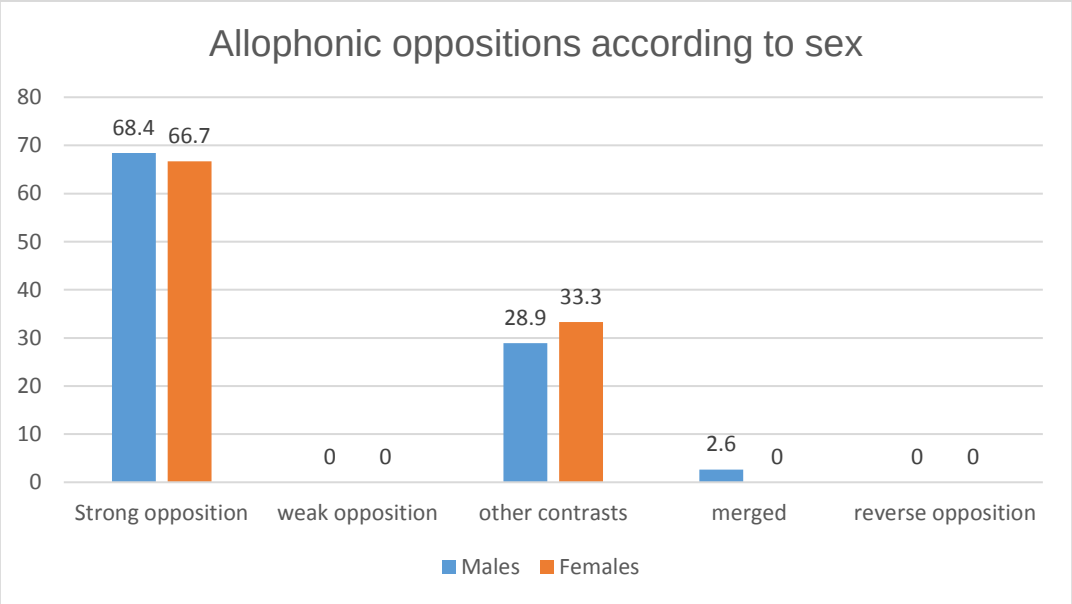

Figure 5-13. Allophonic oppositions according to sex

Having analysed the allophonic oppositions in the Tournaisis corpus, we now move on to examine the phonemic ones.

5.7.2 Phonemic oppositions

In the Tournaisis corpus there are three WLS minimal pairs for each informant which may be examined in order to observe the behaviour of /o/-/ɔ/ when performing a phonemic role: 'paume'-'pomme', 'môle-molle' and 'côte-cote'. Table 5-13 illustrates the realisation of these pairs, showing that of the 117

minimal pairs, 78 (66.7%) maintained some kind of contrast, 36/117 (30.8%) pairs were merged and three (2.6%) were reversed.

	strong opposition	**weak opposition**	**other contrast**	**merge**	**reverse**	**Total**
‘paume’ - ‘pomme’	16	4	16	3	0	39
‘môle’ - ‘molle’	12	6	7	14	0	39
‘côte’- ‘cote’	8	3	6	19	3	39
Total (n)	36	13	29	36	3	117
Total (%)	30.8	11.1	24.8	30.8	2.6	100

Table 5-13. Realisations of oppositions where /o/-/ɔ/ are phonemes

Studies of Parisian French have indicated a decreasing tendency to maintain the /o/-/ɔ/ opposition (Landick 1995: 95; Hansen & Juillard 2011: 322–323), with Hansen and Juillard finding 72% of oppositions maintained in their 2001–04 corpus. In contrast, it has been widely reported in the Belgian literature that vocalic oppositions are maintained in Francophone Belgium (Pohl 1983; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2008).

Given the reported status of oppositions in Belgium, it is somewhat surprising to see that just 66.7% of those in the Tournaisis corpus are maintained, and only 30.8% are maintained ‘strongly’. However, Hambye and Simon (2012: 133) argue that whilst oppositions are maintained in central and eastern Wallonia, in Tournai they are undergoing neutralisation. The data in the Tournaisis corpus illustrate, then, that behaviour in the Belgian borderland is, in general, more similar to that in Paris than elsewhere in Francophone Belgium.

All the same, within the Tournaisis corpus, behaviour of oppositions does vary from pair to pair, as can be seen in Table 5-13. A much greater number of both ‘côte’-‘cote’ and ‘môle’-‘molle’ are merged than of ‘paume’-‘pomme’. Why should this be so? One explanation is that, as was found in 5.5.2, <ô> favours a more open realisation than <au> or <o>, which would lead to merged realisations of both ‘côte’ and ‘cote’ as [kɔt] and ‘môle’ and ‘molle’ as [mɔl]. Another possible explanation is that this behaviour is due to the changing status of the circumflex in the French language, a conclusion also drawn in 5.5.2. In fact, the present patterns strengthen this conclusion. Recalling that the words analysed above were elicited in a word list task, there would have been no wider contextual cues for informants with regard to what words they were reading out. In an age where the status of the circumflex is changing (Conseil supérieur de la langue Française 1990), and variable usage of the circumflex is observed in computer-mediated communication (Van Compernolle 2011), it is possible that the circumflex provides less of a pronunciation cue for speakers nowadays, despite its meaning still being taught in schools[155]. Thus, if hypothetically a person could read the word ‘cote’ on a computer screen and know, from the context, that it referred to ‘the coast’ and was missing a circumflex, by analogy it seems plausible that they could read the word ‘côte’ in a decontextualised word list and, no longer taking the pronunciation cue from the circumflex, pronounce it as ‘cote’. A final explanation for the relatively high rate of merging in ‘côte’-‘cote’ and ‘môle’-‘molle’ could be because of the relative infrequency of these words compared to ‘paume’-‘pomme’, leading to uncertainty surrounding pronunciation.

[155] One informant, Veronique, was a primary school teacher trainer and, during the word list task, commented that they taught student teachers that they should realise the difference.

It is also interesting to note in Table 5-13 that there are more than twice as many ‘other’ contrasts for ‘paume’-‘pomme’ than for the other two pairs. This is due to the high proportion of unrounded and fronted tokens in ‘pomme’, possible explanations for which were given in 5.6.1.1[156].

Despite the variation which emerges between pairs, results can, nevertheless, be aggregated and stratified according to social factors as a means of gaining greater understanding. It is to this task that we now turn.

5.7.2.1 Phonemic oppositions and social variation

5.7.2.1.1 Phonemic oppositions and age

Beginning with age, Figure 5-14 reveals that it is the middle age group that realises the greatest percentage of strong oppositions; 48.7% of oppositions are realised in this way, whilst for the older group the percentage is 29.2% and for the younger group it is 10%. Following this same pattern, it appears that the middle group are those who least merge their oppositions. They also categorically avoid reversing oppositions and are the group with the smallest percentage of ‘other’ contrasts and merged pairs. These patterns illustrate that it is the middle age group who most conform to SF, an established behavioural pattern in linguistic variation seen with stable linguistic variables. On the other hand, the youngest speakers maintain a much smaller percentage of oppositions (10%) than the older group (29.2%) which would imply that behaviour is not in fact stable.

[156] One suggestion was that the high proportion of unrounding could have been a perceptual effect, rather than unrounding. The second suggestion was that the unrounding was due to an effect of a following nasal consonant.

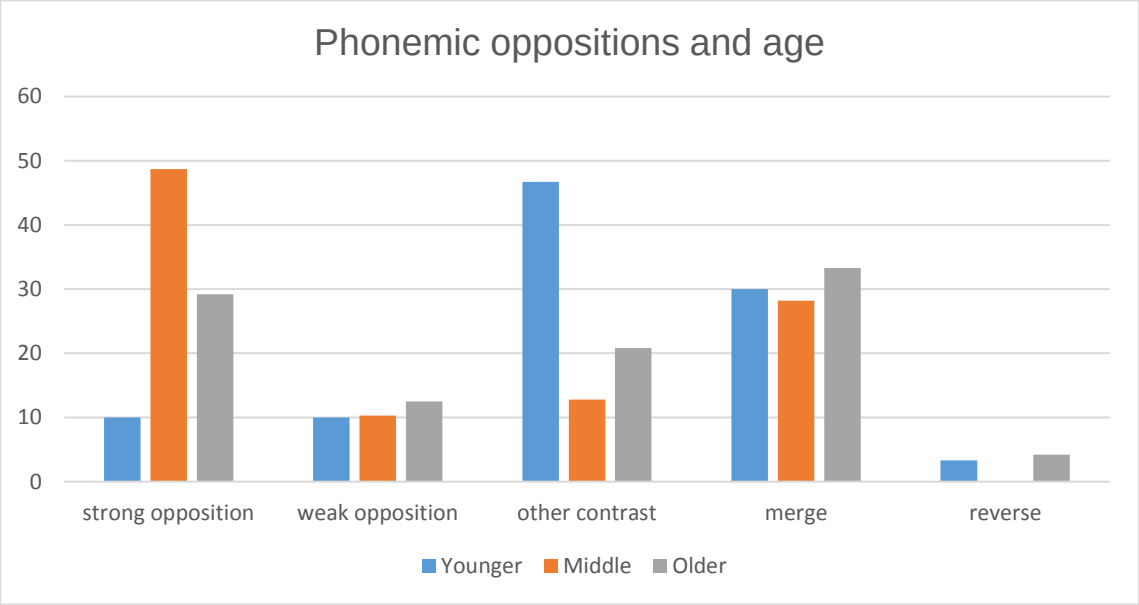

Figure 5-14. Phonemic oppositions according to age

Various scholars have reported a loss in the phonemic /o/-/ɔ/ opposition in both France and western Wallonia (Landick 1995: 133; Hansen & Juillard 2011; Hambye & Simon 2012); in fact, it is reported as part of a general loss in maintenance of all mid-vowel oppositions (Hansen & Juillard 2011). Yet Lefebvre (1991: 93) observed the inverse pattern in the Lille region; that is to say that as age decreased, percentage of informants maintaining the opposition increased.

The pattern in the Tournaisis corpus is distinct from both of these described situations; there is neither an increasing tendency to merge oppositions, nor an increasing tendency to maintain them. Rather, what we observe is a strong tendency for younger informants to realise their oppositions as 'other' contrasts. Thus, whilst a higher percentage of younger speakers' oppositions are non-standard, this group do still maintain *a* contrast.

5.7.2.1.2 Phonemic oppositions and educational background

Figure 5-15 illustrates that ED2 realise 17.5% more strong oppositions than ED1, with percentages of 37.5% and 20% respectively. This pattern replicates those reported across the mid-vowel literature (Lefebvre 1991: 134; Landick 1995; Pooley 2004a; Hansen & Juillard 2011) wherein those belonging to higher socioeconomic groups conserve more oppositions.

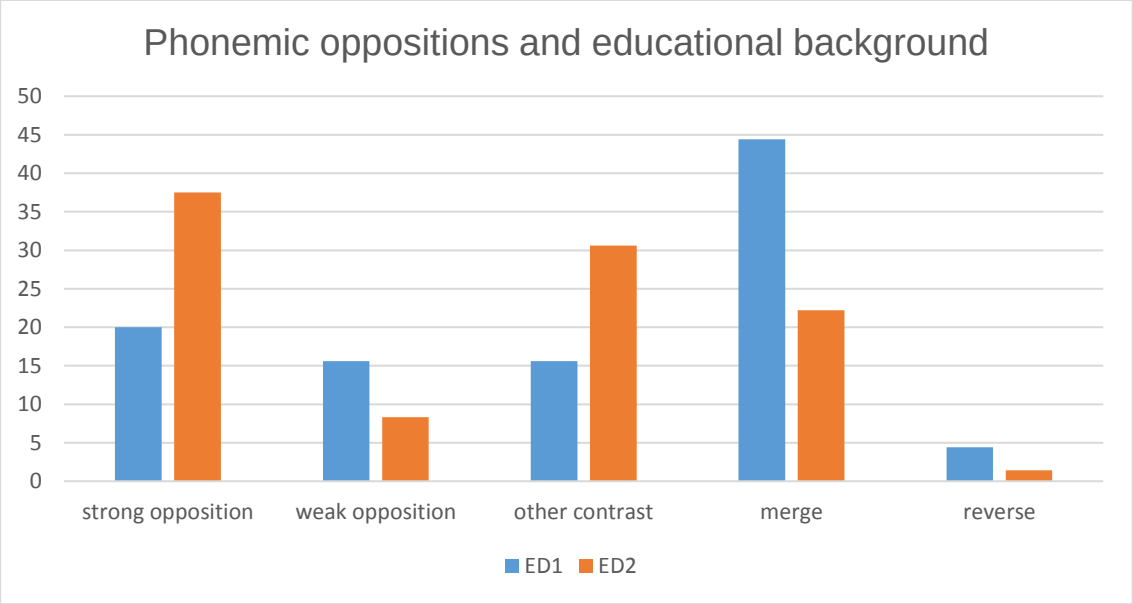

Figure 5-15. Phonemic oppositions according to educational background

It can also be seen in Figure 5-15 that ED1 merge twice the percentage (44.4%) of oppositions as ED2 (22.2%). They also realise nearly twice the percentage of weak oppositions (15.6%) as ED2 (8.3%). In contrast, ED2 realise nearly twice the percentage of less conservative other contrasts (30.6%) as ED1 (15.6%). Thus it appears that behaviour diverges along socioeconomic lines. Whilst there is a tendency for ED1 to weaken or merge oppositions, there is a tendency for ED2 to realise them as 'other' contrasts, predominantly between [o] and an innovative, fronted prestige variant. However, a cross-tabulation of educational

background and age (Figure 5-16) illustrates that the situation is more complex than this.

Figure 5-16 illustrates an interaction between age and social class. Beginning with ED1, it can be seen that there is a higher percentage of strong oppositions in the middle age band, but otherwise, for the younger and older speakers, this behaviour is fairly constant. Similarly, it is the middle age band of ED1 who realise the greatest percentage of merged oppositions, though this percentage drops for the younger group. A decline is also seen in percentage of weak oppositions. All of this is coupled with a strong increase in ‘other’ oppositions as age decreases. As for ED2, we see that the middle age band is the most normative, displaying the highest percentage of strong oppositions. This percentage drops sharply as age decreases. ED2 also show increases in weak, merged and other contrasts over time, though the middle age band do so to a lesser extent, as we would expect.

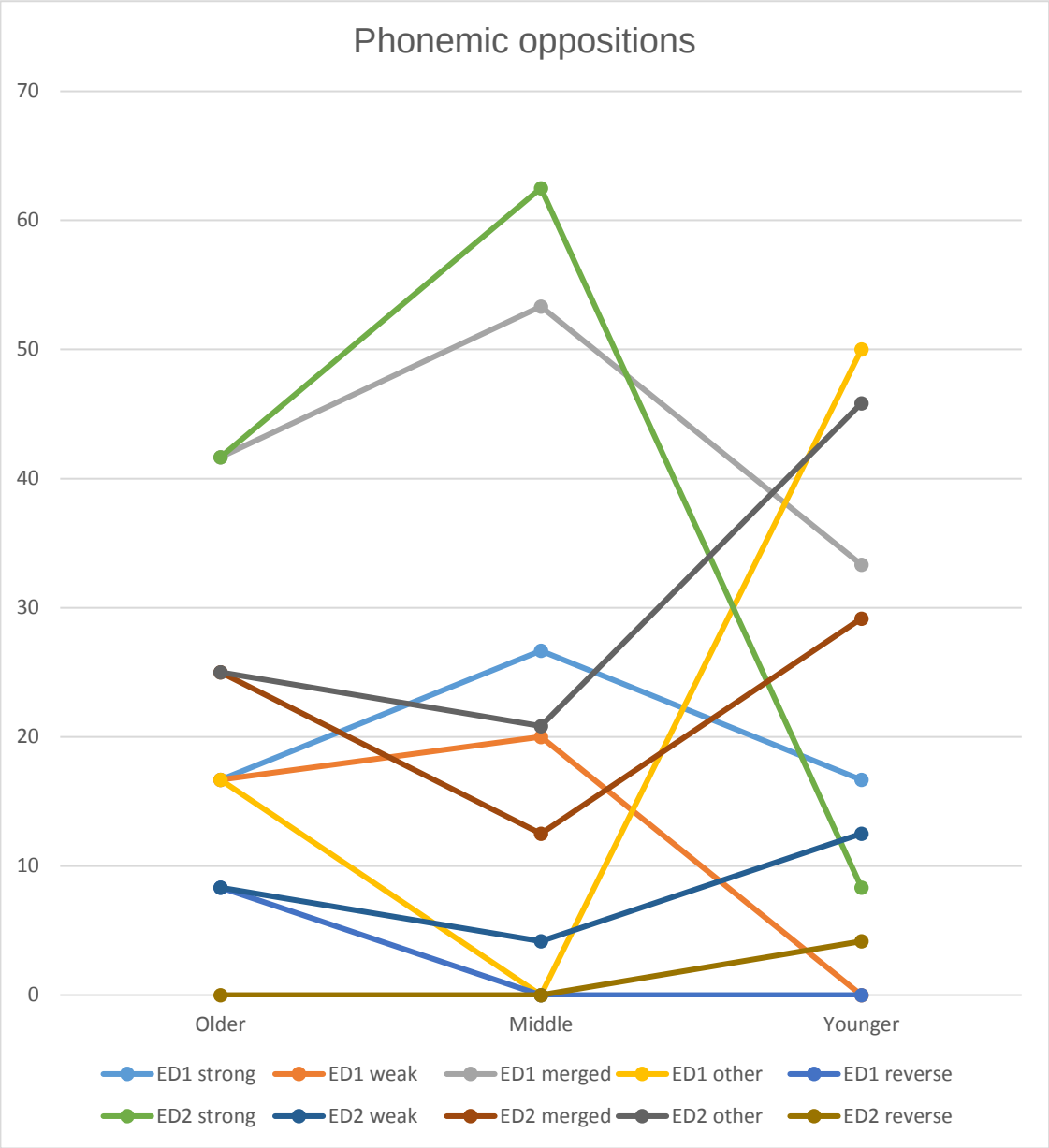

Figure 5-16. Realisations of oppositions, cross-tabulating age and educational background

Comparing ED1 and ED2, we can see that all age groups of ED1 are more non-standard in their behaviour than ED2; however, we can also see that over time ED2 converge on ED1, becoming increasingly 'non-standard' as age decreases.

What conclusion can we draw from the behaviours revealed in Figure 5-16? Hansen and Juillard (2011: 343) found that it was those belonging to the lower socioeconomic group who initiated the tendency to weaken and merge

phonemic oppositions in Paris, and the same pattern can be seen in the Tournaisis corpus. We also see ED2 converging on this behaviour. In contrast, it is ED2 that initiates the tendency to realise oppositions with ‘other’ contrasts, and ED1 converges on this behaviour to such an extent that YED1 realise a slightly higher percentage of other contrasts than YED2. We thus find that there is less social variation amongst younger speakers.

5.7.2.1.3 Phonemic oppositions and sex

Figure 5-17 illustrates that there is variation in realisation of oppositions along the dimension of sex. Females realise a smaller percentage of ‘strong contrasts’ (28.3%) than males (33.3%) whilst men merge a greater percentage (35.1%) of oppositions than women (26.7%) and women realise a greater percentage of ‘other’ contrasts (30%) than men (19.3%).

Since we know that women are linguistic innovators (Milroy & Milroy 1985), and we have seen that ‘other’ contrasts are an incoming, prestige variant, associated with ED2, these patterns corroborate the conclusions drawn above. What is more, it is an established principle that men tend to display a higher rate of stigmatised variants than women (Labov 2001: 266), and we have seen previously that merged oppositions are perceived as non-prestige variants, associated with ED1.

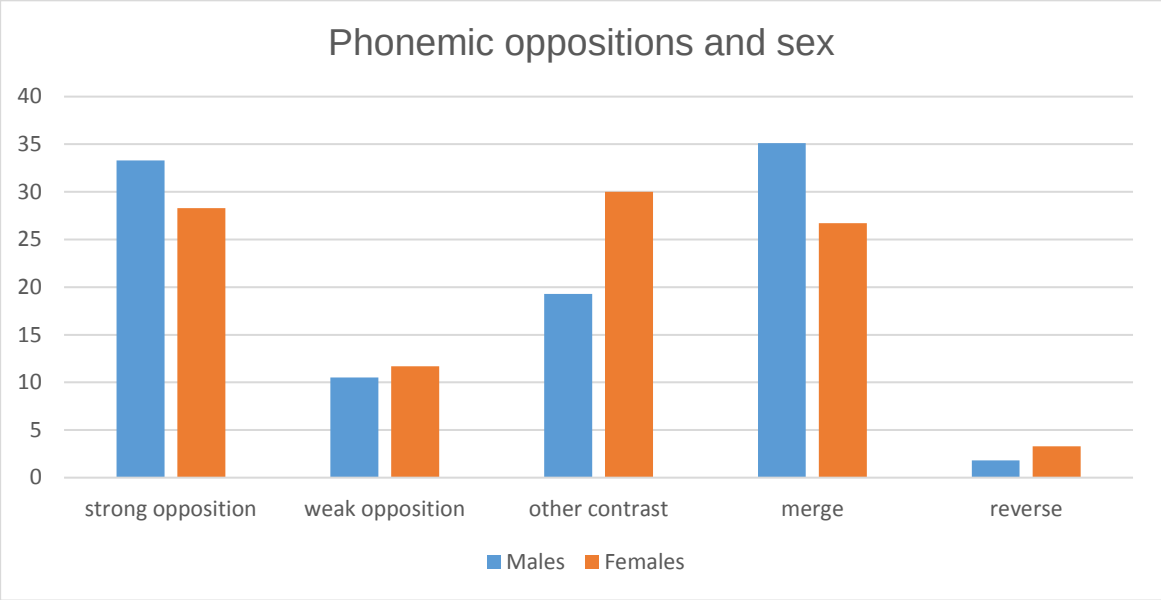

Figure 5-17. Phonemic oppositions according to sex

As we saw above, Lefebvre (1991: 111) found a different pattern in her Lille data: twice the number of women than men realised their oppositions; in particular, it was the women belonging to the higher socioeconomic group who most maintained the contrast. As we concluded for allophonic oppositions (5.7.1.1.3), so too we can somewhat hesitantly[157] conclude that, where previously in Lille and in the minds of older Tournaisiens a strong phonemic contrast was / is the prestigious norm, as far as the younger speakers in the Tournaisis corpus are concerned the prestigious realisation of a phonemic contrast is one between [o] and a fronted variant of /ɔ/.

5.8 Summary and discussion of findings

It has been shown that for /o/, /ɔ/, allophonic variation and phonemic contrasts, there are different patterns in variation and perhaps also in change in the Tournaisis corpus.

[157] Since the percentage differences represent fairly small token numbers, our conclusions must be taken with due caution.

Where in France there is a decreasing tendency to respect the *loi de position* with /o/ in open syllables, in borderland Belgium a standard close-mid variant is maintained. In this context, levelling does not appear to be taking place.

For /o/ in closed syllables, however, the picture is different. As in France, in the Belgian borderland there is a move away from standard pronunciation towards non-standard variants; however, whilst in France this non-standardness increases as age decreases, in Belgium there is no clear evidence of a change in progress. There is, however, a correlation between fronted variants and both sex and educational background: it is the men and those with fewer formal qualifications[158] who appear to realise the sound in this way. Both of these patterns, coupled with an absence of fronted tokens amongst ED2, indicate that a fronted /o/ variant is still perceived as non-standard and has the same status in the Belgian borderland as it does in *français populaire*.

In contrast to the fronted /oC/ variant, it is women and those belonging to ED2 (informants who pursued their studies beyond compulsory education) who realise a greater percentage of /o/ with the standard variant: [o]. These results indicate that [o] is still perceived as the standard.

A realisation of /o/ as [ɔ] in closed syllables has previously been associated with the local speech norm of the Lille region and is also found in modern Picard. In the Tournaisis corpus this phenomenon is notably marginal. Its absence – in particular in the speech of those belonging to the middle age group, coupled with a greater percentage of realisations by ED1 – indicates that an awareness

[158] Those who left school before – or at the point of – completing compulsory education.

of its local, regional status in France does transcend the border and operate in the Belgian borderland. What is more, several informants in the present study mentioned /oz/ realised as [ɔz] as a feature that marked French borderlanders out from Belgian ones, which indicates that this is a stereotyped variant. The question remains, however, as to whether it is a northern *Hexagonal* regional French variant, or a northern *transnational* regional French variant. Given participants' metalinguistic commentary on this variant, we are drawn to the conclusion that the variant is *Hexagonal;* however, Labov (2001: 197) argues that stereotypes may have 'a descriptive tag' which is 'distinct… from actual production'. Thus this conclusion must remain speculative.

One of the surprising things to emerge in this corpus is the finding that <ô> favours a more open realisation than <au> or <o>, a pattern that has not been found elsewhere. The relatively new orthographic conventions relating to the circumflex in French, meaning that on <i> and <u> it is no longer compulsory, may account for this: the scenario may be such that readers are paying less attention to the circumflex and to the constraining effect it traditionally had on <i> and <u>, and are projecting this change by analogy across other vowels. Alternatively, the variable use of the circumflex in computer-mediated communication may have an effect.

For /ɔ/ in closed syllables, a slightly different story can be told. As in France, in the Belgian borderland there is a growing tendency to pronounce /ɔ/ with a different variant, that is to say, not [ɔ]. An increasing tendency to front /ɔ/ emerges in the corpus, and this behaviour is associated with both women and those belonging to ED2. This pattern indicates that, as in France, a fronted

realisation in the Belgian borderland is now a prestige variant. However, fronting in the Belgian borderland appears to be less widespread than in France. Thus it seems that whilst Tournaisiens are converging on a levelled transnational French, the phenomenon is not as advanced for them as it is for their French neighbours: this ‘differential adoption’ (Hornsby 2009: 157) means their behaviours remain distinct (cf. Boughton 2003; 2005). As for /ɔ/-raising in closed syllables, it appears this behaviour is still perceived as non-standard, since raising is avoided by those belonging to the middle age group.

Finally, for /ɔC/, it emerges that place and manner of articulation of both preceding and following consonant, as well as voicing, have a conditioning effect on the vowel. It has previously been established that a following anterior consonant has a fronting effect on the vowel; however, in this corpus there is evidence that along with frontness, voice and manner of articulation also have an effect. In the Tournaisis corpus, voiceless fricatives and stops have a fronting effect whilst voiced liquids and nasals favour back realisations.

With regard to behaviour of the vowel pair as allophones, we see that, though a contrast is maintained, behaviour diverges along socioeconomic lines. Whilst ED2 speakers are largely constant in their realisation of contrasts, the behaviour of ED1 speakers changes over apparent-time: oppositions are increasingly realised as ‘other’ contrasts. As seen in the behaviour of phonemic oppositions in Paris (Hansen & Juillard 2011), this change in behaviour is being led by ED1. It is also more associated with the speech of women.

As for phonemic oppositions, their behaviour in the Tournaisis corpus appears to be more similar to that in Paris than elsewhere in Francophone Belgium. As in France, a decrease in opposition maintenance is observed. This finding lies in contrast to Lefebvre's (1991) observation across the border; she found that in Lille, as age decreased, opposition maintenance increased. All the same, although in this corpus there is a decline in maintenance of oppositions, contrasts – though not necessarily 'strong' (standard) – are largely maintained. Interestingly, this pattern contradicts Hambye and Simon (2012) who report that there is a tendency to neutralise mid-vowel oppositions in Tournai[159].

As with allophonic oppositions, we see that behaviour of phonemic oppositions diverges along socioeconomic lines. Generally, ED1 speakers are more non-standard than ED2 speakers; that is to say they realise a greater percentage of merged and weak contrasts. However, as age decreases, ED2 converges on ED1. In contrast, it is ED2 who initiate the tendency to realise /o/-/ɔ/ as 'other' oppositions and, as age decreases, ED1 converges towards ED2 in this respect. The data indicate that, whilst in the minds of older Tournaisiens a strong phonemic contrast is the prestige norm, for younger speakers prestige is attached to an 'other' contrast: one between [o] and a fronted variant of /ɔ/.

In summary, these analyses have illustrated that overall the behaviour of (o) in the Belgian borderland is distinct from behaviour both elsewhere in Francophone Belgium and in France. However, behaviour is converging on Hexagonal French. This is the same pattern as was found for the (e) variable. Thus, the findings of chapters 4 and 5 paint a picture of Belgian Borderland

[159] What is more, Hambye and Simon's analyses were also largely performed on WLS speech (P. Hambye 2016, personal communication, 16 August).

French as ‘between Hexagonal French and Belgian French’. This scenario chimes with Omoniyi’s (2004: 25) mathematical analogy of borderlands as ‘merger zones which [are]… subsets of either of the two intersecting states.’ What is more, that this pattern is found in both of the phonological variables analysed in this thesis strengthens both the conclusions drawn at the end of chapter 4, and those with which we will shortly close this chapter.

Firstly, recalling the conclusions of chapter 4, the questions were posed as to why Tournaisis French is comparatively similar to Hexagonal French, and dissimilar to other Belgian varieties, and why Tournaisis French is converging on Hexagonal French. It was concluded that the answer to both of these questions was a combination of factors, unique to the Belgian borderland. These factors include: 1) the history of the region; 2) the salience of this history in the minds of locals; 3) the proximity of Tournai and the surrounding region to France; 4) contact with French nationals in France and Belgium; 5) migration of French nationals; 6) a feeling of symbolic closeness to the French; and 7) media influence.

Not only may the same questions be asked of the (o) variable, the same answer may be given: it is likely because of a unique combination of factors that (o) in the Belgian borderland is comparatively more similar to (o) in Hexagonal varieties than in Belgian varieties and, moreover, is diverging from the latter and converging on the former.

As described in chapter 4 (cf. chapter 2, also), typically, scholars have illustrated that national borders act as ‘bastions’ (cf. Chambers 2014b) and

promote linguistic divergence. Yet we have seen in the behaviour of both (e) and (o) that this is not the case for the Franco-Belgian border: Belgian Borderland French is ‘between Hexagonal French and Belgian French’. Though perhaps unusual, this scenario of ‘betweenness’, which is consistent with the notion of the ‘dialect continuum’ (cf. Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 12) is not, however, unique to France and Belgium.

Beswick (2014) has found that this same ‘betweenness’ exists in the Spanish-Portuguese borderland, on both sides of the part of the Spanish-Portuguese border delineating northern Portugal from Galicia. In this region, Beswick (2014: 108) has illustrated that there is a ‘cross-border localised identity’ which is ‘enacted and reinforced’ (ibid., p. 108) by both Galicians and Portuguese through a ‘well-established localised linguistic variety’ (ibid., p. 111). Taking a socio-psychological perspective, Beswick concludes that speech forms are used by borderlanders to position themselves relative to others. For example, Galician borderlanders, who have less in common with other Galicians than those in their cross-border community, use language to ‘distance and differentiate themselves from other Galicians, assigning to them an out-group epithet of exclusion’ (ibid., p. 114). What is more, drawing on Bourdieu’s (1992: 21–24) notion of symbolic capital, Beswick explains how a shared phonology is valuable in economic exchanges across the border (Beswick 2014: 113).

The situation in the Portuguese-Galician borderland is distinct from that in the Franco-Belgian one, since in the first of these inhabitants have distinct standard languages (Portuguese and Spanish), whilst in the second there is the shared

standard language of French. Nevertheless, the scenario in the first resonates with that in the second, and we may project a similar conclusion.

We can conclude that Belgian borderlanders use language to mark themselves out as belonging to a distinct group from other Francophone Belgians and to align themselves with France. What is more, we can imagine that linguistic behaviour in line with that observed in France would give Belgian borderlanders greater social capital when interacting in France and with the French. And yet Tournaisis French pronunciation *does* retain some differences from Hexagonal Frenches. Thus, borderlanders also maintain a distance from Hexagonal French. In this way, it can be seen that borderlanders use their language to enact a 'between' identity, where this betweenness operates on three levels: linguistically they are between Belgian and French; between Belgian and not-Belgian; and between French and not French. Further research will be required in order to establish whether this use of language is conscious or deliberate or not.

This chapter has shown that, as with (e), behaviour of (o) is distinct in the Belgian borderland from elsewhere in Francophone Belgium and France, and that behaviour is converging on varieties in the latter of these places. It has also explained that this is a result of a combination of factors unique to the Belgian borderland. Finally, this chapter has shown that through their linguistic behaviour, borderlanders enact a linguistic identity which is between Belgian and French. In the next chapter we will explore borderlanders' perceptions of their linguistic universe, and will investigate the extent to which their behaviour and their perceptions line up.

6 Linguistic perception

6.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins by outlining the motivations for investigating perceptions of language in this study and presenting the research questions. In the following section, the study's perceptual task – a draw-a-map task – is presented, its shortcomings are illustrated, then solutions are discussed and the task is re-theorised. Following this, the methods used for planning and delivering the task as well as processing and interpreting the data are explained. The results are then presented and discussed. In the final section, key findings are summarised and the re-theorised task is evaluated.

6.2 Motivation for investigating perceptions of language

As discovered in chapters 4 and 5, in some respects Belgian borderlanders behave in ways which are phonologically similar to Francophones in France, whilst in other ways their behaviour is more similar to that of their more centrally- and easterly-located compatriots. But how do borderlanders *perceive* their pronunciation? How do they situate and orientate themselves and their accent within the linguistic space? And how do they perceive the border? Do they perceive the political border to be coterminous with a linguistic boundary, as has been shown in studies of Scotland, England and Wales (Inoue 1999: 167), or do they construe a linguistic boundary that is located elsewhere in physical space? Finally, upon what are borderlanders' perceptions based: linguistic realities or something else?

Whilst studies have investigated Francophone Belgians' perceptions of various accents (Moreau et al. 1999) and linguistic traits (Bardiaux 2014), as well as their ability to identify accents (Bauvois 1996; Rispail & Moreau 2004), as far as the researcher is aware, no scholarly studies have investigated Belgian borderlanders' mental representations of the linguistic space – nor indeed the perceptions of Belgians from elsewhere in the French-speaking part of the country. In order to answer the questions outlined above (cf. chapter 2) and address this gap in scholarly knowledge, a draw-a-map task was included in the interview procedure.

6.3 The draw-a-map task in perceptual dialectology

6.3.1 Contextualising the draw-a-map task

One of the most widely used and well-established tasks in the field of perceptual dialectology is the 'draw-a-map' task. This task was invented by Preston and Howe (1987 cited in Preston 1999a: xxxiv), who drew on the mental mapping methods developed by cultural geographers Gould and White (Gould & White: 1974). The purpose of the task is to uncover individuals' perceptions of the linguistic space through asking them to annotate simple maps with perceived dialect boundaries or labels. Informants' responses may then be aggregated into composite maps, which give a more 'generalized "picture"' of the perceptions of a speech community (Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 52).

Scholars who have used the draw-a-map task have predominantly been concerned with '[c]ounting the lines drawn in respect of each dialect area [since

this] gives a record of the relative perceptual prominence of each dialect' (Montgomery 2014: 123). Furthermore, draw-a-map task data has primarily been subjected to quantitative analysis (Cramer & Montgomery 2016: 13).

6.3.2 The draw-a-map task in Francophone linguistics

The draw-a-map task, or one of a similar nature, has been integrated into various studies including, in a Francophone context, those of Kuiper (1999) and Hall (2008). Whilst Kuiper gave Parisian informants a map of France and asked them to 'circle and identify in writing any regions "where people have a particular way of speaking"' (Kuiper 1999: 244–250), Hall (2008: 239) gave his Normandy informants maps of both Normandy and France and asked them to 'draw lines around areas where people speak differently'. Although Kuiper found a good deal of inter-informant variation, he also found agreement; in particular, many informants shared the belief that people had a 'particular way of speaking' in peripheral areas where languages other than French were spoken, such as Lorraine, Alsace and Brittany. On the other hand, he found that the speech in regions bordering with other Francophone regions – namely Wallonia and Switzerland – was not perceived as distinct. This, Kuiper (1999: 250) concluded, was due to the border acting as a barrier to linguistic awareness, although in a later rating task these varieties were perceived as distinct.

In contrast to Kuiper's study, Hall (2008: 258) analysed perceptions of a much smaller area: the region of Normandy. He too found, though, that whilst there was a great deal of variation, with 88 accent boundaries drawn, informants did agree on a number of perceived dialect areas such as 'La Hague' (37% agreement) and 'Rouen area' (21.7% agreement).

6.3.3 Shortcomings and re-theorisation of the draw-a-map task

Although the draw-a-map activity is one of the most commonly employed tasks in perceptual dialectology, it is not without its perceived limitations. Implicit in Long & Yim's (2002: 251) study, for example, is a belief that the tendency for informants to trace administrative boundaries when delineating speech regions is a methodological shortcoming[160]. Similarly, implicit in Hall's (2008: 245) reported delivery of his draw-a-map task is a belief that the tendency for informants to rely on place names and *départements* when engaging with the activity is also a limitation[161].

Vaattovaara's (2012) critical overview of the draw-a-map task focuses more on the theoretical limitations of the methodology. Current reservations, she states, stem from its 'tend[ency] to leave out the social dimension of space' (Vaattovaara 2012: 121) as well as the inherently problematic fact that 'it presupposes that […] cognitive dialect maps correspond to maps which can be drawn on a traditional map sheet' (Vaattovaara 2012: 138). However, these issues are not restricted to the draw-a-map task. They are, Vaattovaara argues, part of a wider problem in dialectology; namely that the notion of 'space' has, until recently, been considered relatively unimportant (cf. Britain 2010a, 2013).

[160] In fact, Long and Kim (2002: 251) cite their informants' tendencies 'to follow provincial boundaries' when tracing perceived regions as the reason for 'concentrat[ing] on other aspects of the data'.

[161] Describing the delivery of his mapping task, Hall (2008: 245) reports telling his informants not to rely entirely on the human-geographic features such as place names and administrative areas already marked on maps. Later in his chapter, he then concludes that '[this] approach was largely *successful*' (my emphasis. p. 245), from which we can infer that he perceives the reliance on features in perceptual mapping tasks as a problem.

As described in chapter 1, it is only in the past few years that the notion of 'space' has been accorded greater significance in studies of language variation and change. Prior to that, Britain (2013: 471) attests, space was simply 'treated as an empty stage on which sociolinguistic processes [were] enacted'. Indeed, Britain has written extensively (e.g. Britain 2010a, 2013, 2014) on the need for linguists to theorise 'space' and to foreground it as a factor for consideration when examining language variation and change.

If we assess previous perceptual dialectology studies which have included mapping tasks, it is clear that scholars have focused on how perceptions play out in Euclidean space[162], since their primary concerns have been mapping perceived dialect boundaries in space and seeing the extent to which they align with observed linguistic realities (Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 52). Notions of social and perceived space have been presented – if anything – as barriers to understanding perceptions of linguistic space. This can be seen from Hall's (2008: 244) desire, when planning his mapping task, to 'le[ave] as blank as possible' the maps presented to informants, an action which furthermore resonates with Britain's notion of 'space' as a 'blank canvas' (Britain 2013: 472). As mentioned above, Long & Yim (2002: 251), on the other hand, saw informants' tendencies to trace administrative boundaries when outlining 'perceived speech regions' as a reason *not* to investigate these responses. They simply concluded that the tendency 'probably relate[d] to a high degree of regional consciousness' (Long & Yim 2002: 265) with no further interrogation or exploration of the apparent perceptual association.

[162] The term 'Euclidean space', named after the Greek mathematician Euclid, refers to ordinary, physical space, defined by geometric principles.

Although in draw-a-map and similar perceptual tasks physical space has typically been favoured, recently in sociolinguistics and perceptual dialectology the notion of 'space' has been accorded more thought (e.g. Montgomery 2012; Stoeckle 2012; Vaattovaara 2012). Montgomery (2012: 639), for example, builds on Britain's theorisation of space, suggesting that the notion of 'proximity' should not be understood as merely physical. He argues that much is to be gained from reconsidering the concept such that, whilst we may understand it in physical terms, as 'bare proximity' (Montgomery 2012: 639), it may be also be shaped and altered by physical, social and perceptual factors such as natural barriers, psychological boundaries and cultural prominence. Taking the United Kingdom as a case study, Montgomery illustrates how the national border between England and Scotland acts as a 'barrier to proximity' (ibid., p. 655) and therein a perceptual barrier, whilst the effects of distance on perception are attenuated by the salience of 'Geordie' and 'Scouse' in 'the national consciousness' (ibid., p. 658).

Returning to the criticisms and limitations of the draw-a-map task outlined above, it can be seen that the unsatisfactory side-lining of space may be overcome by underpinning the interpretation of draw-a-map data with an understanding of space as 'spatiality'[163]; that is to say, by considering the spaces that participants map not only through a physical lens, but also a social one; that is to say considering their responses alongside their sociodemographic positioning in the community and wider society. What is more, what we are dealing with is perceptual space: the third constituent of

[163] This concept, derived from human geography, sees space as tripartite, combining: (i) Euclidean space; (ii) social space; and (iii) perceived space (cf. Britain 2013: 472).

‘spatiality’. Taking this approach, it can be seen that the tendencies for informants to rely on administrative boundaries and place names when engaging with the task, which have traditionally been seen as limitations (cf. Long & Yim 2002; Hall 2008), may instead be seen as worthy of interrogation.

Whilst certain of the limitations of the draw-a-map task may be overcome by bringing social space into the interpretation and analysis of data, there is one shortcoming, evoked above, that spatiality does not necessarily address, which is that the task ‘presupposes that […] cognitive dialect maps correspond to maps which can be drawn on a traditional map sheet’ (Vaattovaara 2012: 138). Overcoming this limitation is not impossible; however, it does require us to look for inspiration from beyond the discipline and to reconsider our understanding of ‘the map’ as an object.

In the social sciences, visual research methods, which are ‘a collection of methods and approaches for using visual materials or images […] to produce and to represent knowledge’ (Schwandt 2011: 318) are becoming more important and integrated into research. This is as a result of scholars realising, in the words of the anthropologist and visual ethnographer, Sarah Pink, that ‘visually we can communicate knowledge, experiences and ideas in ways that we cannot using only written and spoken words’ (Pink 2011: 320). In turn, the images that are acquired or created may then be used to further understanding of ‘social and organizational behaviour’ (Buchanan 2011: 227). What is more, insights may be gleaned not just from an analysis of the content and context of the image, but also from an analysis of the processes of production (Pink 2011: 321).

As for maps, Powell (2013: 315), a scholar of art education, attests that as a 'visual genre', they 'cross disciplinary boundaries of art, creative writing, geography, and cartography as they link with larger social, cultural and political issues'. Thus, whilst maps are typically presented in the social sciences as illustrations with accompanying text, Powell (2013: 315) argues that, as an artistic form, maps can go much further, providing new means of understanding and representation[164].

Although the elicitation of mental maps is a well-integrated research method in human geography (cf. Holloway & Hubbard 2001: 48–55), as a *visual* research method, mapping appears to have been largely unexplored[165] (although see: Young & Barrett 2001; Powell 2013). Yet scholarly research makes clear the benefits of construing mapping as a *visual* method: Powell describes a fieldworker's 'revelation' that 'when a person started mapping[166], the scale of their map, and the elements of their map told a story about the person's understanding and relationships to [the place]' (Hendrickson 2006: 1 cited in Powell 2013: 324).

Returning to the draw-a-map task in perceptual dialectology, we recall the criticism that 'it presupposes that […] cognitive dialect maps correspond to

[164] Powell asserts: '[t]he artistic angle to mapping has meant a disruption of the conventions of mapping (e.g., legend, scale, symbol, geophysical terrain) and a new aesthetics associated with mapping that involves abstract or metaphoric representations of place and space; reconfigurations of place to address nonlinear perceptions of space and time; the play of scale, borders, and symbols; and the cartography of concepts (e.g., identity) rather than physical places' (Powell 2013: 315).
[165] Powell (2013: 315–316) contests that she is the first to apply the notion of 'visuality as a multisensory experience' to mapping. However, in their study of Kampala street children some years earlier, Young and Barrett (2001) approached a mapping task as a visual method.
[166] Mapping was used as one visual method amongst others in a project investigating and analysing the planned development of El Chorrillo, Panama.

maps which can be drawn on a traditional map sheet' (Vaattovaara 2012: 138). We recall also that this limitation cannot necessarily be resolved by underpinning the task with a theorised notion of space as 'spatiality'. However, what happens if we change the way we look at the mapping activity; if it is construed not as a *mental* mapping task but as a *visual method*, and the map is no longer seen as a 'traditional map sheet' but as an artistic expression? In fact, if we do this, the question of whether or not a cognitive dialect map 'can be drawn onto a traditional map' becomes irrelevant, because we are no longer looking at a 'map'.

By reconceiving of the map as an artistic expression and underpinning the analysis with a theorised notion of space, we are also able to overcome a limitation inherent in participatory tasks: that of knowing *how accurate* the participant has tried to be[167]. For example, traditionally we would interpret a line placed by an informant as representing the *exact* location in Euclidean space that they imagine the linguistic boundary to be. However, by doing this we would be assuming that they had tried to place the line accurately, yet we know that this is not always the case. Indeed, several of the participants in the Tournaisis study made it clear that the placement of their lines was 'approximate'. Viewing the map as an artistic expression, however, allows us to overcome this limitation since we are not solely preoccupied with where in Euclidean space the line has been placed, but where in *social space* it has been placed, and what the informant might have wanted to *express* through its approximate placement. Indeed, geographers Holloway and Hubbard (2001: 51)

[167] Except, of course, if this information is expressly sought.

argue that mental maps are ‘indicative’ and are ‘probably best considered as a metaphor or analogy’.

We have illustrated above that the draw-a-map task has been a valuable tool in the perceptual dialectology toolkit. We have also seen that scholars within the discipline have identified several methodological limitations. Yet, we have also indicated how these shortcomings might be overcome: through underpinning the task with a theorised notion of space, and through viewing the map in the analysis not only as a map, but also as an artistic expression. Having brought the draw-a-map task up to date with current theory and methodologies, we will shape the methodology and interpret the data accordingly, evaluating the re-theorised map task in the final section of the chapter.

6.4 Methodology

6.4.1 Planning the draw-a-map task

Scholars have typically asked informants to circle areas where they consider there to be a distinct accent or dialect (Preston 1996: 307 cited in Preston 2011: 23; Kuiper 1999; Evans 2002; Hall 2008; Cramer 2010; Montgomery 2011 cited in Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 56). However, the questions this study endeavours to answer (cf. 6.2; chapter 2) are such that this would not be the right task to subject informants to, since what is of interest is informants’ perceptions of the area that constitutes their speech community[168]. Thus, it was decided that informants would be given a two-part mapping task:

[168] We take ‘speech community’ to mean here and henceforth the ‘locally constructed speech community’ (Llamas 2006: 95); that is to say the ‘accent’ group that speakers perceive they belong to.

Part 1: Circle the area where people speak like you (with the same pronunciation)[169].

Part 2: Circle the area where people speak with a pronunciation very similar to your own – with the exception of a few differences[170].

Part two was included and kept intentionally vague, in order to see how informants aligned themselves linguistically.

Since information relating to such perceptions of language had not previously been gathered in Belgium, it was not known how big a geographical space the map given to participants should cover, nor whether a regional map would suffice or whether the map should extend over Francophone Europe. Since both Kuiper (1999) and Hall (2008) revealed great variation between informants' perceptions, and the researcher did not want to impose any geographical restrictions on informants through *her* selection of a map, it was decided that informants would be given a choice of maps ranging from the regional to the international. On each of these maps, which are found in Appendix 5, key towns and villages, and roads and rivers that were appropriate to the scale were marked, as was the border with France. On two of the four maps (Map 1 and Map 3) the internal border between Wallonia and Flanders was also marked.

6.4.2 Delivery of the draw-a-map task

The draw-a-map task featured part-way through the written questionnaire (see Appendix 4), which was administered following the semi-structured interview,

[169] '[V]euillez encercler la zone où les gens parlent comme vous (avec la même prononciation).'
[170] '[E]ncerclez la zone où les gens parlent avec une prononciation très similaire à la vôtre, à l'exception de quelques petites différences.'

reading passage and word list task. The four maps were laid out on the table, then informants were invited, through a written question, to select a map to complete Part 1 of the task. Present at every interview, the researcher discussed the question (as she had all previous written questions, where necessary) to ensure comprehension. Once completed, participants were invited to carry out Part 2 of the task, and were informed that they could select a different map if they wished, or use the same one.

In order to facilitate processing the maps (see below), it was planned that participants would be asked to respond to Part 1 with one coloured pen and Part 2 with another; however, ultimately, the addition of another pen appeared to complicate things for certain participants, so the majority used just one.

6.4.3 Processing the draw-a-map data

Typically, perceptual dialectologists have aggregated individuals' responses to draw-a-map tasks by hand (Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 52), most commonly through the tracing of lines on overhead transparencies (cf. Evans 2002: 78; Montgomery 2007: 59). However, in the 1980s Preston and Howe attempted to digitise the process, using a 'digitising pad' on which lines were traced, enabling them to be computerised (Preston & Howe 1987 cited in Auer & Schmidt 2010: 186). Since then, several other kinds of computational processes have been used by linguists[171]; however, in recent years certain scholars (for example, Montgomery (2012) and Stoeckle (2012)) have begun to process their data using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software[172].

[171] For example, Hall (2008: 248) used the software MapInfo Professional to process his data.
[172] The website of ESRI, producers of the GIS software states that 'GIS software is designed to capture, manage, analyse and display all forms of geographically referenced information. GIS

One of the main benefits of using GIS to process mapping data is that it enables the data to be 'link[ed] to the earth's surface' (Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 59) through a process called 'georeferencing'[173]. This spatially referenced data can, in turn, be linked to and compared with other kinds of data. Given the benefits and the potential of GIS[174], it was decided that maps would be processed using this kind of software. In the present study, the software used was ArcMap 10.2.2.

Even for those who are experienced in processing draw-a-map data in GIS, the process is time consuming and 'relatively laborious, involv[ing] many repetitious steps' (Montgomery 2012b: 176)[175]. Stoeckle and Montgomery (2013) provide a helpful account of the stages involved; however, their descriptions were not sufficiently detailed for the researcher to be able to reproduce them. Thus advice was sought from colleagues and online forums and, consequently, the method used by the researcher differs in part from that of Stoeckle and Montgomery (2013). The process used may be summarised in eight stages:

1. Informants' maps are coloured by hand, scanned and saved as the appropriate file type, for example .tif.

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allows us to view, understand, question, interpret, and visualize our world in ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, globes, reports and charts' (ESRI: n.d.).

[173] This is a process through which real-world coordinates are assigned to points on a map. For example, the real-world coordinates for a certain crossroads are assigned to the point on the map where that crossroad is located.

[174] A full account of methodological developments regarding the processing of map data as well as of the benefits of using GIS for such a task is found in Montgomery and Stoeckle (2013).

[175] For the present study, acquisition of expertise and data processing took place over over a number of months alongside other pieces of work. However, had these tasks been the sole objects of the researcher's attention, it is estimated that they would have taken between a month to six weeks.

2. In image processing software such as Photoshop, participants' .tif maps are aligned with one another and edited, such that all that remains is the informants' annotation in one colour and a white background.
3. In the GIS software, a basemap is prepared upon which respondents' maps may be layered.
4. In the GIS software, master .tif maps are georeferenced.
5. Georeferencing metadata from the master .tif is copied and applied to all .tif maps.
6. Participants' .tif maps are loaded into the GIS software then converted to the appropriate kind of shapefile: a polygon. This is in order that composite heat maps may be produced. The polygon is labelled appropriately in order that it can be quickly retrieved.
7. In the GIS software information such as age and sex of the informant is added to each polygon.
8. In the GIS software polygons are combined according to different criteria to produce different composite maps.

6.4.4 Interpreting the draw-a-map data

As detailed above (6.3.1), draw-a-map data has predominantly been analysed quantitatively in perceptual dialectology, and there has been a relative lack of qualitative exploration of the data. Furthermore, little attention has been given to informants' *engagement* with the task; that is to say their processes of production (cf. Pink 2011: 321). Thus it is not known what such analyses might reveal. In our interpretation and analyses of the Tournaisis draw-a-map data, we will address these lacunas. Analyses will be underpinned by a theorised notion of space. Finally, we will interpret data taking both a traditional 'mental

maps' stance – viewing the maps as 'maps' – and also a 'visual methods' stance, viewing the responses as artistic expressions through which informants have sought figuratively to convey meaning.

6.5 Results and discussion

All of the 52 informants interviewed in the field completed a questionnaire; however, time limitations dictate that in this chapter we restrict our analysis to responses from the 39 informants whose speech was analysed in chapters 4 and 5. All but two of the 39 informants engaged fully with the two-part draw-a-map task; both Nadine and Ines responded only to Part 1 of the task. Participants engaged with the task in diverse ways. Thus, before discussing participants' mapped responses, we will first discuss the different ways in which participants approached the task.

6.5.1 Choice of map

To respond to Part 1, thirty-three of the informants selected Map 1[176], three[177] selected Map 2[178], and three[179] selected Map 3[180]. In response to Part 2, the latter six informants kept the same maps. Additionally, one informant[181] selected Map 2 for this part of the task, whilst two others[182] selected Map 3.

[176] This map stretches approximately from Arras (France) to the west, to Kortrijk (Belgium), to the north, to Binche (Belgium) to the east, and to Cambrai (France) to the south.
[177] Xavier (YMED2), Olivier (YMED1) and Richard (YMED2).
[178] This map stretches approximately from Abbeville (France) to the west, to Gent (Belgium) to the north, to Namur (Belgium) to the east, and to Amiens (France) to the south.
[179] Victor (MMED2), Tiffaine (OFED1) and Brigitte (OFED2).
[180] This map stretches from Paris to the southwest to Antwerp (Belgium) to the north, and to Dusseldorf (Germany) in the east.
[181] Christophe (OMED1).
[182] Hugo (MMED2) and Nicolas (MMED1).

It is clear from the choice of Map 1 that for the majority of informants the space in which they perceive that people speak with the same pronunciation as them is relatively restricted. This result is comparable to findings in previous perceptual studies, in which degree-of-difference increased as proximity to a place decreased (Demirci & Kleiner 1999: 269; Kuiper 1999: 247–254; McKinnie & Dailey-O'Cain 2002: 284–287; Fridland & Bartlett 2006: 368).

Of the six to select a larger map for Part 1, only Xavier outlined an area which was larger than the extent covered by Map 1. The remaining five could have outlined the same areas on Map 1. From these results we can make inferences regarding the processing of the activity by the informants. We can infer that the *more* these participants thought about what constituted the area in which people spoke the same way as them, the *smaller* the geographical area got.

In contrast to these six, all three of the informants to select a different map for Part 2 of the task outlined an area which would not have 'fitted' on Map 1. This is unsurprising as the process would have been such that, having completed Part 1, and considering their response to Part 2, they would have known that Map 1 was too small for them.

Something which emerges when looking at the identities of the informants who selected maps covering larger geographical expanses is that seven of the nine were male. Whilst, as we have seen above, this does not mean that the males

actually outlined larger areas, it does indicate there may have been a distinct gendered[183] *initial response*. Why might this be so?

Social geographers generally agree that space is gendered, that different groups operate within space in distinct ways, and that the mobility of women compared to men remains restricted today (Women & Geography Study Group 1984: 90–91; Seager 2009: 18–19; Hine 2011: 25–27). Social geographers also argue that the gendering of space is not restricted to the physical realm. They contend that the activity that takes place in a space changes the human *understanding* and *conception* of that space (Women & Geography Study Group 1997: 7). It may therefore be that this gendered difference in map selection is a result of distinct lived experiences of the space which in turn have shaped the way these informants perceive the space. We will interrogate this explanation in chapter 8 when we explore empirical data concerning mobility.

On the other hand, elsewhere, cognitive psychologists have presented evidence of 'gender-related differences in visuo-spatial ability' (Bosco et al 2004: 519), which suggests that males and females engage with visuo-spatial activities in distinct ways. Thus, rather than a gendered difference in initial perception of the linguistic space, it may be that the difference was in *engagement* with the task. Alternatively, it may be a combination of these factors.

Before exploring aggregated results of the mapping task, we will now discuss the distinctive approaches that informants' took to the task, despite being given

[183] When demographic information was sought participants were asked their 'sex' as opposed to their gender. Here, however, and henceforth, the adjective 'gendered' is used to refer to differences between the biologically defined groups of men and women.

the same instructions, and will discuss what they tell us about how individuals – at least in the present study – perceive and organise the linguistic world around them.

6.5.2 Approach to the task

There was one aspect in which all participants engaged with the task in the same way: to a certain extent they all used place names as reference points when discerning the boundary of the zone where people speak like them (be it identically or similarly). This can be seen in Hugo's (MMED2) response to Part 1 (Figure 6-1) in which Mont-de-l'Enclus and Ellezelles are included in the encircled area but Ronse is excluded.

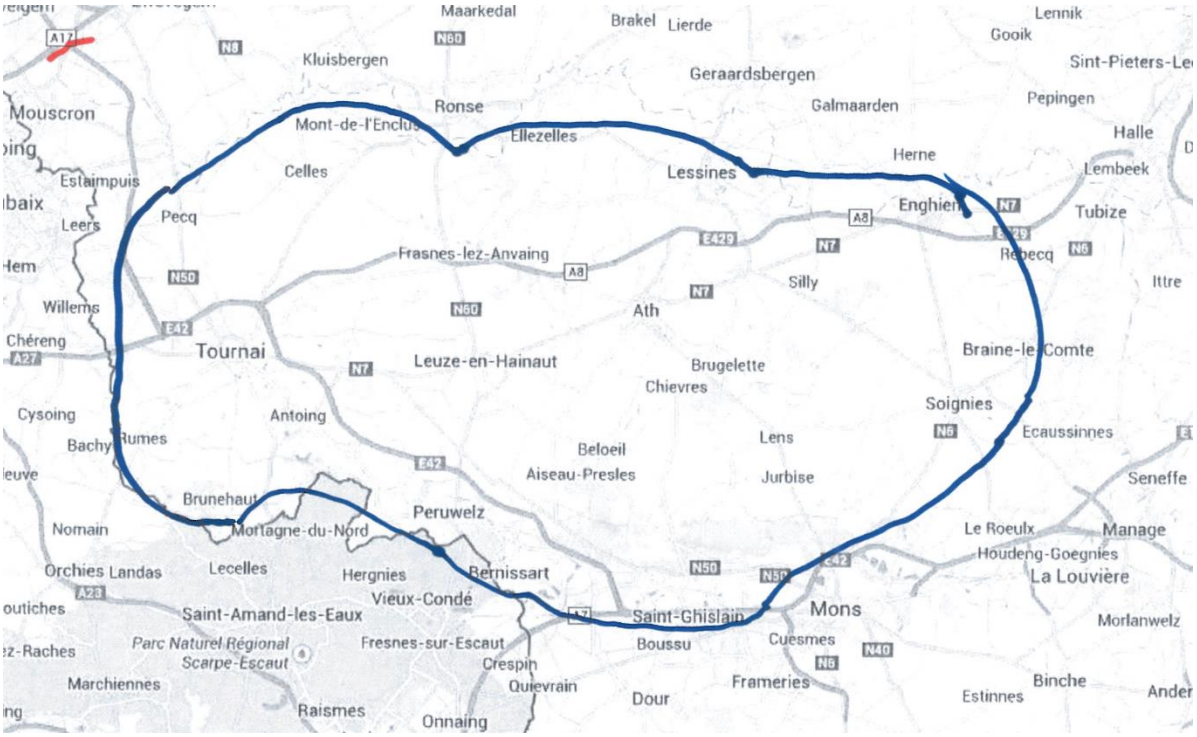

Figure 6-1. Hugo's response to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task

These findings are consistent with those of Hall (2008). In his study of perceptions of Normandy French, Hall too found that, despite being told not to,

certain informants ‘rel[ied] exclusively on […] pre-defined geographical features’ (Hall 2008: 245–246) when mapping perceived dialect areas. What is particularly interesting, however, is that Hall (2008: 245) explicitly told informants that they ‘should not limit themselves to the [places] marked on the maps’, meaning that many did not. Whereas, in the present study, in which this instruction was *not* given, all respondents took their cues from place names, despite being asked to circle an ‘area’ rather than ‘places’.

These findings illustrate that, when conceiving of their linguistic space, rather than Euclidean space, participants take their cues from elements of the Earth’s surface which have been shaped by human agency (cf. 6.3.3; Gregory et al. 2009: 539), that is to say they engage with ‘social space’ or ‘place’. Reflection leads us to the conclusion that this is not surprising; since language is spoken by humans it stands to reason that when conceiving of linguistic space participants define the space in terms of human presence and awareness thereof.

The notions of in-group and out-group[184], which scholars have illustrated play out in linguistic behaviour (e.g. Beswick 2014; Coupland 2014; Redinger & Llamas 2014), also appear to be at play in participants’ perceptions, as illustrated in their engagement with the draw-a-map task. For example, in Xavier’s (YMED2) response to Part 1 (Figure 6-2) he includes both Leuze-en-Hainaut and Valenciennes, but ‘cuts in’ with his outline in order to exclude Bernissart. This indicates that Xavier considers that inhabitants of Bernissart

[184] These concepts, which originate in social psychology – more specifically in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1978b) – have been taken up by scholars in sociolinguistics such as Llamas (2006) and Beswick (2014: 105) as a means of interpreting group identification and behaviour.

are *not* members of his speech community. Jessica's (MFED2) response to Part 2 of the task (Figure 6-3) also illustrates operationalisation of the notion of in-group and out-group and indeed hints at a belief that language and nation are intertwined (cf. Haugen 1966: 927)[185]: in response to the question of where people speak similarly to her, she traces the national boundary with France, indicating that, whilst similar, speech in France is, all the same, different.

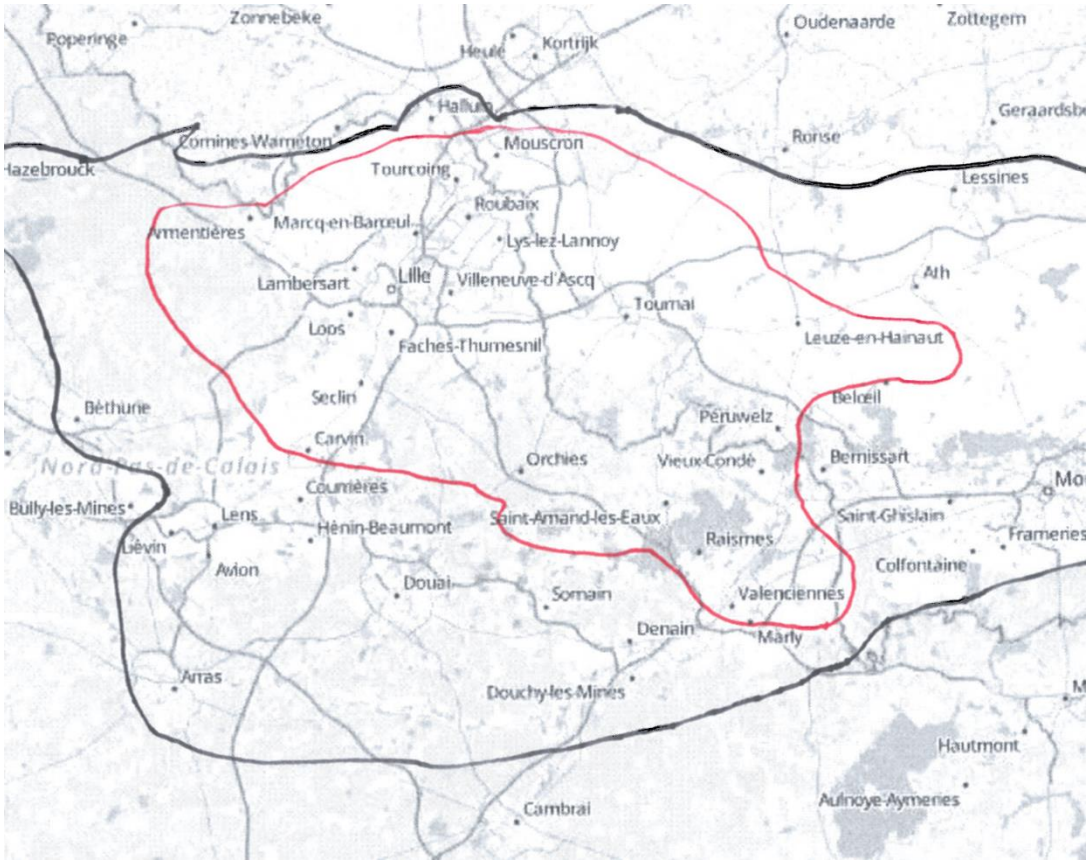

Figure 6-2. Xavier's response to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task

[185] Haugen (1966: 927) describes the situation, 'brought into being [with] the modern nation-state' wherein '[n]ation and language have become inextricably intertwined. '

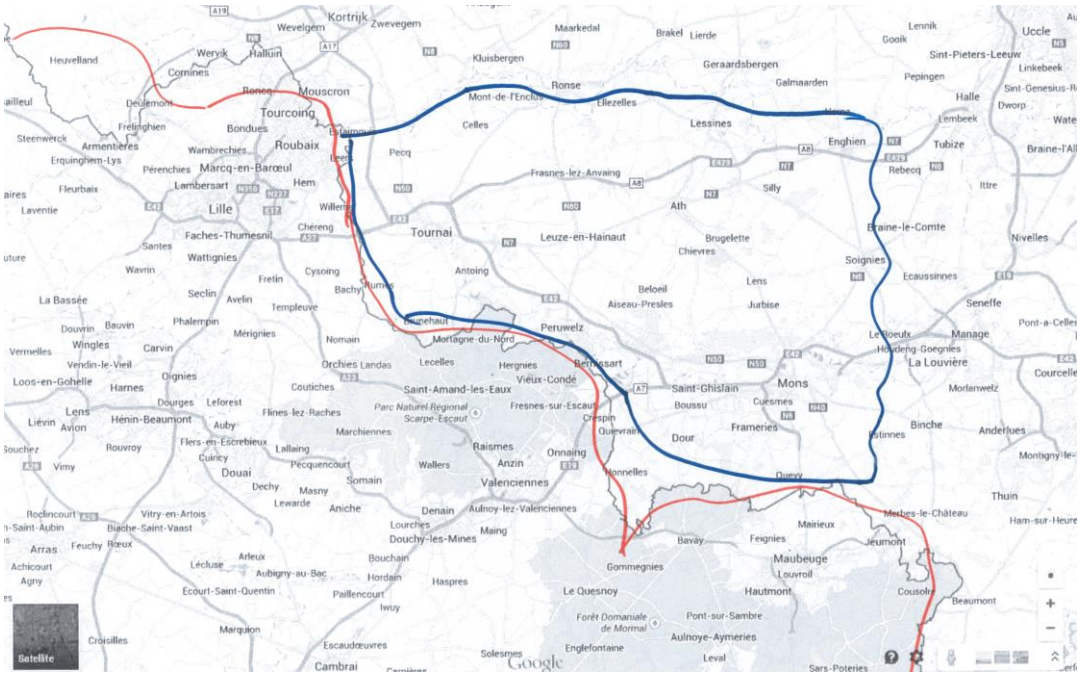

Figure 6-3. Jessica's responses to Part 1 (blue) and Part 2 (red) of the draw-a-map task

As for informants' approaches to Part 2 of the task, which required them to circle the area where people speak similarly to them, these illustrate that participants have distinct ways of conceiving of linguistic variation *across* space. Tiffaine (OFED1) (Figure 6-4) understands 'the area where people speak similarly to [her]' (henceforth Area B) to be a region which is geographically disconnected from 'the area where people speak with the same pronunciation as [her]' (henceforth Area A). She is also one of the few to outline an area in response to Part 1 that does not include where she lives: she circles the area around Lille. One way of interpreting this could be that Tiffaine perceives there to be distinct varieties associated with certain towns: i.e. 'Lille French' and 'Mons French', and that she believes she is speaking 'Lille French', whilst 'Mons French' is the variety which is most similar to her own. Thus Tiffaine appears to construe linguistic space as a patchwork of disparate speech communities, something which is understandable; as Chambers and Trudgill (1998: 6) write:

‘the notion of the dialect continuum is difficult to grasp because […] we are used to thinking of linguistic varieties as discrete entities’.

Figure 6-4. Tiffaine’s responses to Part 1 (Lille – identical) and Part 2 (Mons – similar) of the draw-a-map task

In contrast to Tiffaine, the majority of informants either outline areas in response to Part 2 which are coterminous with the areas outlined in response to Part 1 (e.g. Sabrina: Figure 6-5) (n = 9), or they subsume the area drawn for Part 1 (Area A) by a bigger area for Part 2 (Area B) (n = 15). We can infer from these approaches that these informants *do* perceive a continuum across the linguistic space.

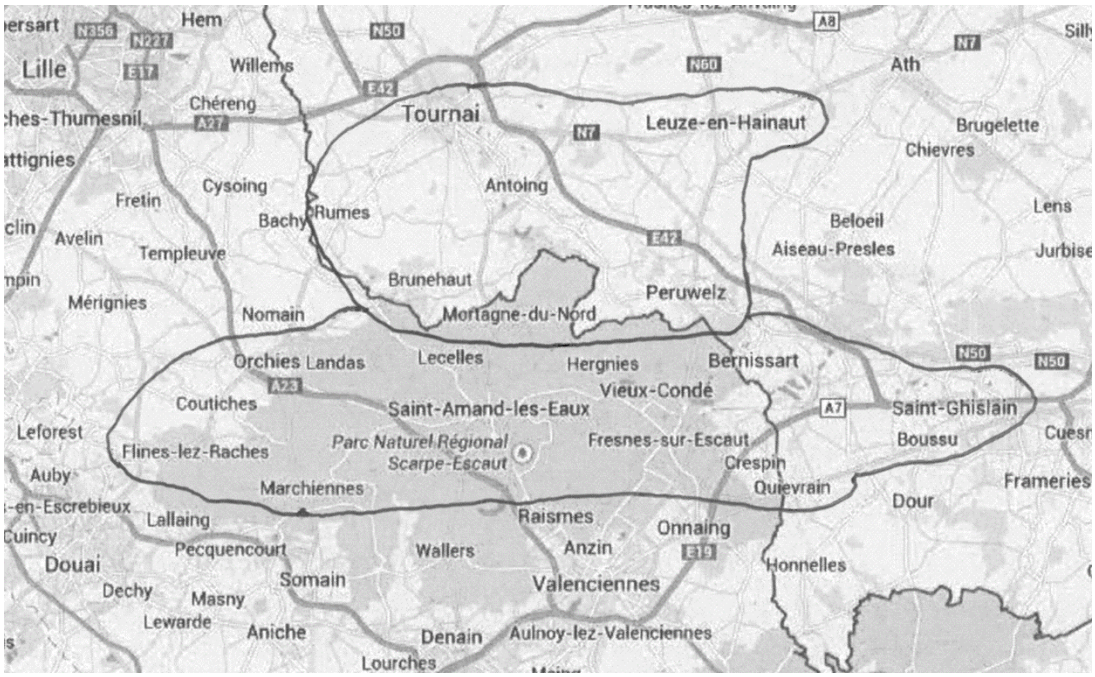

Figure 6-5. Sabrina's responses to Part 1 (top) and Part 2 (bottom) of the draw-a-map task

We can further divide those fifteen responses where participants subsumed Area A by Area B into two distinct groups: (i) where Area A is located centrally in Area B (e.g. Clara: Figure 6-6) (n = 6) and (ii) where Area A is not central to Area B (e.g. Benoit: Figure 6-7) (n = 9). We can infer that participants who responded in manner (i) believe that, travelling in any direction from Area A across Area B, one will find a similar pronunciation with slight differences. Beyond the boundary of Area B, we can infer, informants believe the differences get sufficiently big enough for those varieties to be excluded. What it is not possible to know, however, from such responses, is whether these participants believe that the pronunciation on one side of Area A – for example, to the west – is the same as the pronunciation on the other side – for example, to the east. Nevertheless, this response appears to illustrate a construal of language in part akin to a centre-periphery model[186,187].

[186] The centre-periphery model is 'a spatial metaphor which describes and attempts to explain the structural relationship between the advanced or metropolitan "centre" and a less developed "periphery"' (Scott & Marshall 2015).

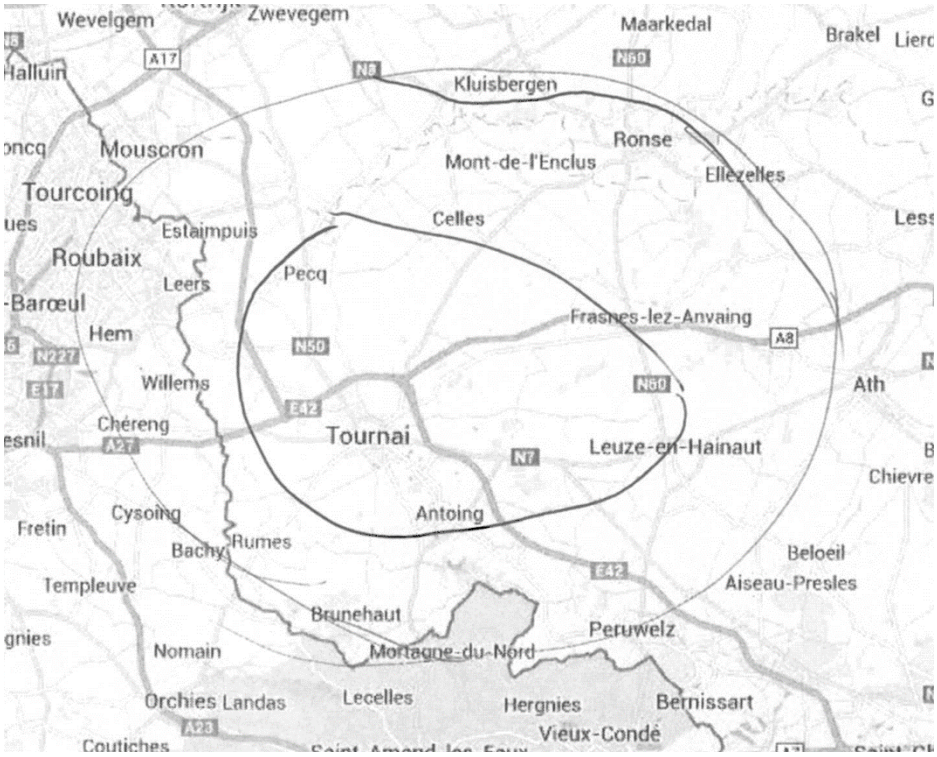

Figure 6-6. Clara's responses to Part 1 and Part 2 of the draw-a-map task

[187] Although there are some differences. For example, in Benoit's response (Figure 6-7), his inner area does not include a 'metropolitan centre', but rather the area in which he lives.

Figure 6-7. Benoit's responses to Part 1 and Part 2 of the draw-a-map task

As for those respondents belonging to group (ii) who did not locate Area A centrally in Area B, but decentralised it, we can infer they have a distinct way yet again of conceptualising language across space. Rather than a centre-periphery approach they appear to construe the linguistic variation in a manner which resonates with set theory[188]. This is to say that group (ii) construe their speech community (those in the area defined in Part 1) as members of a set, which itself is part of a bigger set: their extended speech community (those in the area defined in Part 2).

[188] Set theory refers to 'the branch of mathematics which deals with the formal properties of sets as units (without regard to the nature of their individual constituents) and the expression of other branches of mathematics in terms of sets' (Stevenson 2010).

Finally, viewing Veronique's response to Part 1, in which she identified her speech community with a spiral form, we see an illustration which appears redolent of another theoretical account of language variation across space: that of the 'fuzzy dialect' (Girard & Larmouth 1993; Pickl 2016). Drawing, once again, on set theory, Girard and Larmouth (1993: 108) proposed that 'the realization that the boundary between two dialect areas is actually an area of heterogeneity or mixture naturally suggests interpreting dialect areas as 'fuzzy sets', that is, sets whose boundaries are nebulous.' In this way, we may argue that Veronique's approach illustrates that she conceives of the linguistic boundary of her speech community as 'fuzzy'.

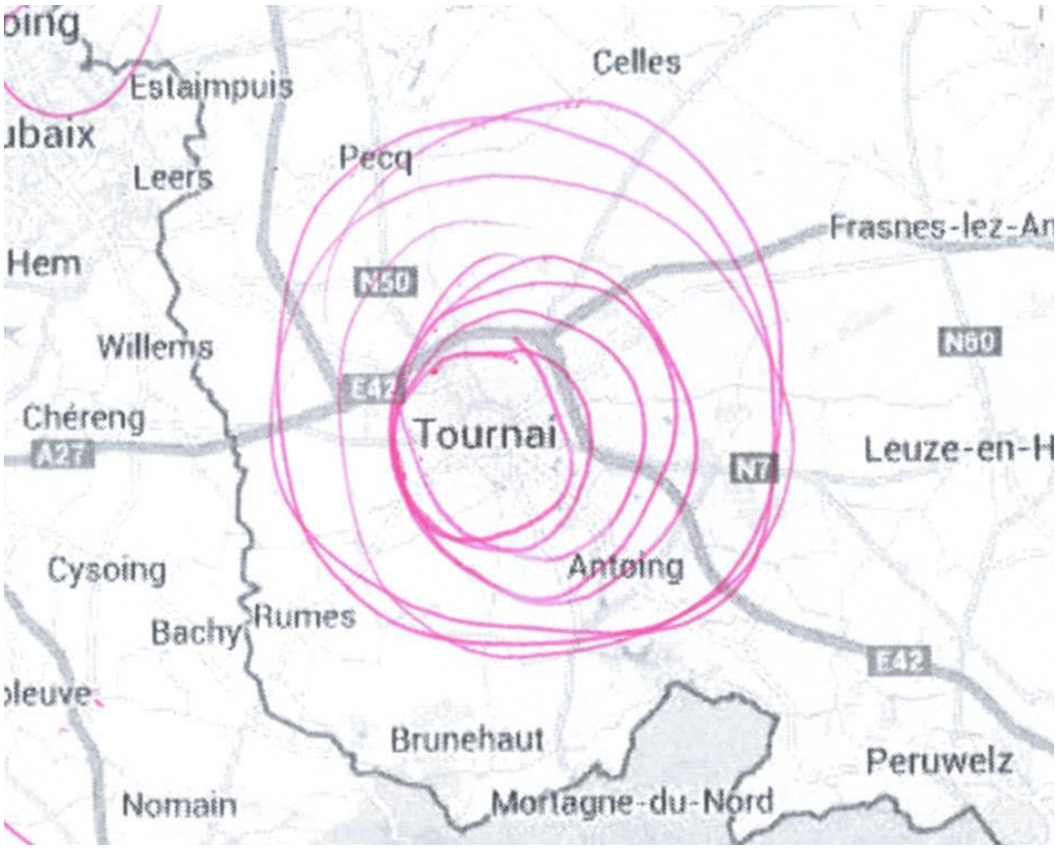

Figure 6-8. Veronique's response to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task

Having analysed and discussed informants' approaches to the mapping task, we now go on to analyse the bigger picture which emerges when individuals' responses are aggregated into composite heat maps.

6.5.3 Aggregated results from Part 1 of the draw-a-map task

We will begin by discussing the geographical extent of the area circumscribed (that is to say the Euclidean distance) before moving on to analyse consensus, disagreement and skew. We will conclude with an examination of orientation biases in the data.

6.5.3.1 Extent

It can be seen in Figure 6-9 that the outermost perimeter of the area where participants consider people speak with the same pronunciation as them stretches north to the border with Flanders, north east to the town Enghien, south east to encompass the *arrondissement* of Mons, south to include the French towns of Valenciennes and Douai and west to Lens. The area, then, stretches further on the east-west axis than on the north-south one: it is corridor-like. But how can we explain the placement of these outer-perimeters? The explanation for the northern border is fairly straightforward: this border is the regional, economic, cultural and linguistic boundary, the other side of which is Flanders: the Dutch-speaking region. In contrast, the motivating factors for the circumscription of the southern, eastern and western boundaries are less clear.

Examining Figure 6-10, which shows the boundary of the Picard-speaking region as delineated by Debrie (1983), there is a notable correspondence

between informants' most easterly perceptual boundary and the Picard-Walloon substrate boundary. What is more, whilst several of the informants' outlines stretch into this area, there is no informant who includes any significant area beyond the Picard zone. How can we interpret this finding?

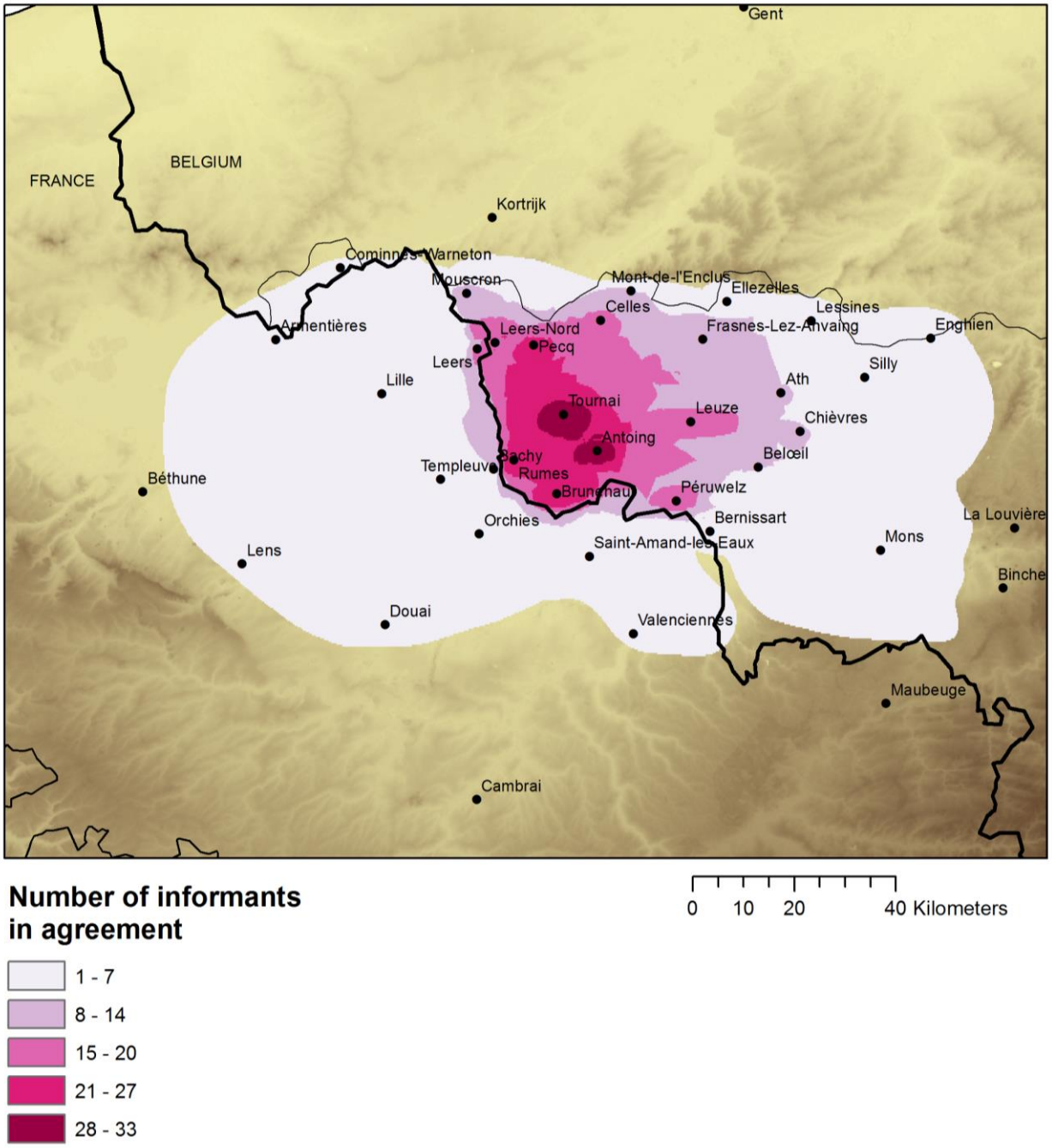

Figure 6-9. Composite map illustrating informants' responses to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task: 'Circle the area where people speak like you (with the same pronunciation)'

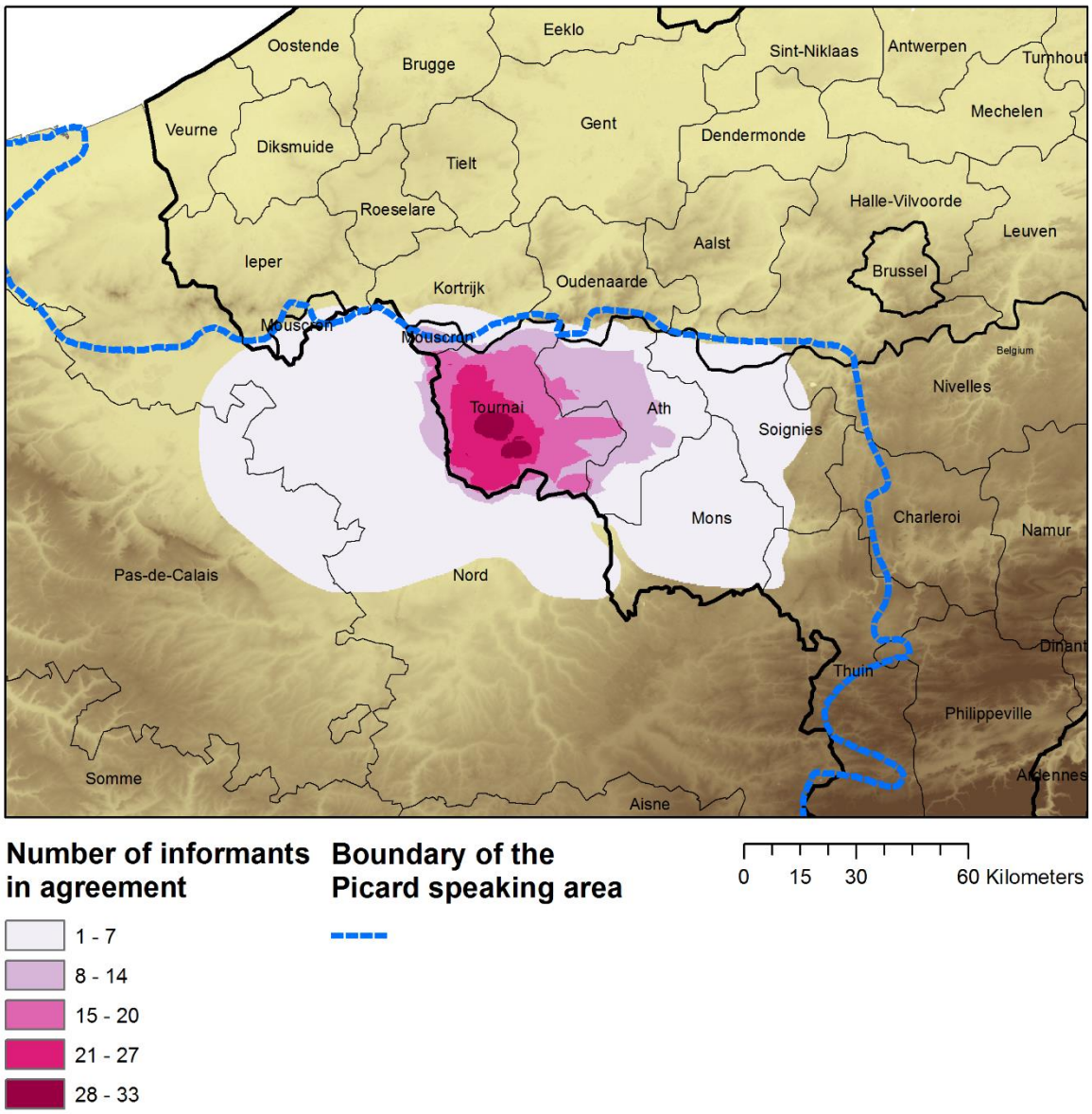

Figure 6-10. Composite map illustrating informants' responses to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task, as well as Belgian arrondissements, French départements, and the boundary of the Picard speaking area, adapted from Debrie (1983)

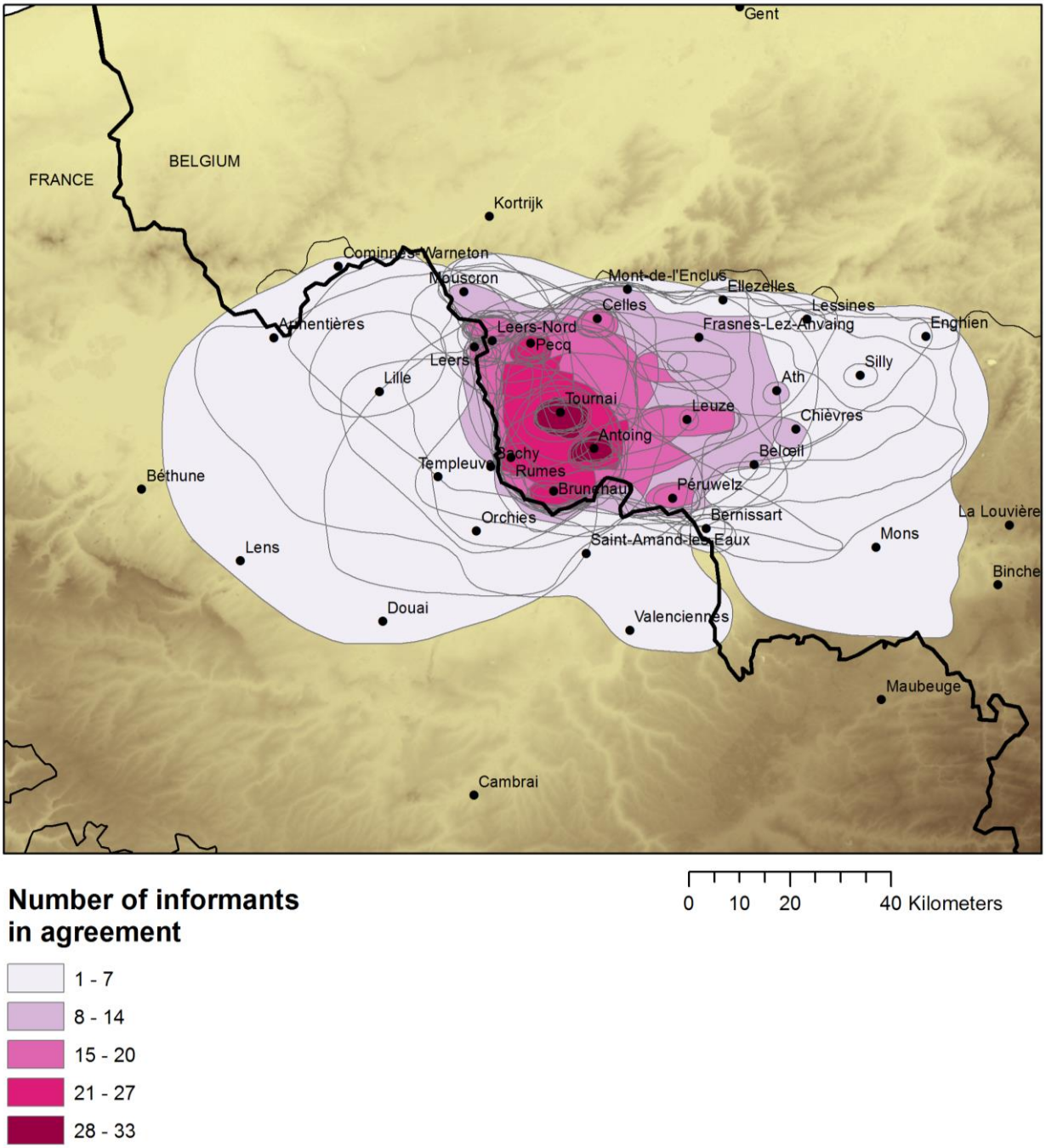

Figure 6-11. Composite map of informants' responses to Part 1 of the draw-a-map task, illustrating individuals' responses

It would be easy and pleasing to conclude that informants' perceptions were based on the reality of linguistic differences that were residues of substratal differences, and whilst this theory cannot be disproven, other possible explanations should be explored. It could be argued that the perimeter stops here simply because it was near the edge of Map 1; however, there are two towns marked on Map 1: La Louvière and Binche, which fall outside the circumscribed zone. Thus the placement of the boundary here must have been intentional, in order to exclude these towns (cf. Pickl 2016: 76). Yet still the question remains as to why the perimeter is here. Both La Louvière and Binche are culturally prominent places: Binche is famous for its carnival and La Louvière is one of the towns in the *Sillon industriel* or 'Walloon axis' – the 'industrial backbone of Belgium' (Halleux 2011: 29). It may be, then, that informants are aware of the varieties in these parts and perceive them to be linguistically different (cf. Montgomery & Beal 2011: 136; Montgomery 2012: 640). Or it may be that they perceive these places to be culturally distinct and equate this cultural distinctness with linguistic distinctness[189]. A similar argument may be made for Mons, a city that just one informant includes in their response to Part 1 of the mapping task, which is also part of the *Sillon industriel.*

The fact that there is so little consensus in the placement of the eastern boundary of the speech community, as seen in (Figure 6-11), suggests that participants may have based their responses on different criteria; that is to say linguistic, cultural or something else. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that

[189] We cannot know for certain what criteria informants based their perceptual responses on since they were not questioned about this.

participants consider that the inhabitants of areas with a distinct substrate are *not* members of their speech community.

As for the western perimeter, viewing the map impressionistically it can be seen that the perimeter extends west roughly as far away from Tournai as it does east: that is to say Tournai is centrally placed on the east-west (and indeed north-south) axis. Tournai therefore appears to be a focal point or 'centre of gravity'. Unlike the eastern perimeter, this western boundary does not correspond with the Picard boundary, which is located much further west.

The lack of correspondence between the western and Picard boundaries could be cited as an argument against the proposition above that the eastern boundary corresponds with the substratal boundary; however, there is a counter-argument to this. Scholars have described and illustrated various barrier effects that political borders have, including on information flow (Gould & White 1974) and linguistic awareness (Montgomery 2012). Thus, it may be that whilst informants have awareness of the linguistic universe around them in Francophone Belgium, beyond the national border this awareness diminishes. Thus they are unable to 'place' the western perimeter line of their speech community.

On the other hand, there are phonological differences in different varieties of Picard (Debrie 1983: 8). Thus it may be that participants attended to these differences when circumscribing their speech community. Alternatively, they may have based their responses on certain linguistic features – perhaps non-phonological in nature – which show regional variation. Finally, they may have

responded according to another unknown criterion. Whilst we cannot say with any certainty why informants mapped their perceived speech community in this way, these findings can, all the same, be added to a knowledge base that has been lacking.

Finally, we turn to the southern perimeter. This perimeter does not extend as far from the Tournai epicentre as it does to the east and west. On the bottom of the map used by most informants (Map 1) was the city Cambrai, which falls well within the historic Picard zone and is approximately the same distance from Tournai as Lens, which one informant included in their response to Part 1. Yet no informant included Cambrai in their speech community; in fact, they did not even include anywhere close to Cambrai. Why should this be so?

Between Tournai and Cambrai there is a regional park: the *Parc Naturel Régional Scarpe-Escaut* (see Map 1, Appendix 5). It is well established in human geography (Gould & White 1974: 143) and dialectology that both historically (e.g. Wood 1963: 254; Britain 2014: 27) and in the present day (e.g. Chambers 2014b), geographical features act as barriers which disrupt the linguistic continuum. We could conclude, then, that this is the case here, and that participants have accurately perceived a difference in pronunciation, which is there as a result of the barrier. On the other hand, there is another possible explanation, which is that the natural feature shapes informants' spatial practices (cf. Britain 2014) such that they do not visit this area, thus do not have the awareness of speech in this region to be able to consider including it in their mapped perceived speech community.

6.5.3.2 Consensus, disagreement and skew

Unsurprisingly, there is strong consensus (at least 70% agreement: n ≥ 28) amongst participants that in the city of Tournai and nearby town, Antoing, people speak with the same pronunciation. There is also consensus, evident from the confluence of lines, that the perceived boundaries of the speech community correspond to the regional and national borders (see Figure 6-11).

Auer (2005: 6) suggests that '[e]thnodialectological (folk) representations of dialect space are usually structured according to [the centre-periphery model], with more or less prototypical core areas and indeterminate outer limits.' Thus we are not surprised to find that consensus decreases as distance from Tournai increases. Over an area which stretches north to Pecq, not far from the regional boundary, and south to Brunehaut and the national border, as well as east to the border, and in which Tournai is centrally located, at least twenty-one informants perceive inhabitants as members of their speech community.

Over a larger area there is, as expected, less consensus; however, as consensus diminishes we begin to see a skew in perceptions and a border effect. At least fifteen informants believe that their speech community extends at least twenty-five kilometres eastwards to Leuze-en-Hainaut; however, to the west of Tournai they believe it stretches just over half this distance: crucially, they believe it stops at the border. Comparing this area to administrative zones, it can be seen that it maps quite closely onto the Tournai *arrondissement*, so it is perhaps not surprising that there is agreement, since this delineated space is socially meaningful.

As consensus decreases yet again, we see that at least eight informants believe their speech community extends over an area which is wider still. And yet again we see a skew in the circumscription of this area. Whilst it extends some 40 kilometres to the east of Tournai, to the west it extends about twenty kilometres, just six kilometres beyond the border.

The skew that emerges in this composite map is not unexpected. In their study of Swedish and Norwegian children's information fields[190], Gould and White (1974: 143–146) found that for Swedish children the 'drop off' in information field from the central perceptual point was much steeper in the direction of – and beyond – the Swedish border, than it was in the opposite direction across Sweden. Equally, they found the opposite pattern in the mapped information fields of Norwegian children.

It is not only in geographical extent that the border with France appears to have an effect, skewing participants' response to Part 1 of the task. It can also be seen in Figure 6-11 that, whist on the Belgian side of the border participants circled specific place names, on the French side of the border, with the exception of Lille and Leers (see below), they did not do this. This finding indicates that the Franco-Belgian border disrupts knowledge of specific places. This may be because the border – though open – continues to shape Belgian borderlanders' movement and routines (cf. Britain 2014: 37–43), thereby persisting as a physical barrier, which in turn disrupts cultural awareness[191] and linguistic awareness (cf. Montgomery 2012: 655–657).

[190] That is to say, their knowledge of various places and spaces.
[191] For example, we can imagine that whilst small Belgian towns might feature on local Belgian news, French towns of an equivalent size, despite being relatively proximal to Tournai, would probably not.

We can see in aggregating the responses to Part 1 of the task, then, that there is agreement amongst the majority of informants that speech across the national border is perceived as distinct; whether this perception is based on experience – or lack thereof – of speech there, is a question we will come back to in Chapter 8 when we investigate the data concerning informants' mobility.

We have seen above that the extent of the area circumscribed by participants as their speech community stretches as far east from Tournai as it does west. We have also seen that agreement is skewed by the national border and extends east where to the west it 'drops off' at the border. We will now explore participants' differences in orientation, and their placement of Tournai and Tournaisis relative to the rest of the area they define as their speech community.

6.5.3.3 Orientation biases

As described above (6.3.3), the nature of the draw-a-map task is such that, whilst some informants are very specific when placing the line on the page, others are approximate. Thus, for some the precise placement of the line is intentional, whilst for others its placement is more due to the trajectory of the pen, and its approximate placement is intended to illustrate the point the informant wishes to convey. What is more, it is not always possible to know which approach the participants took[192]. Nevertheless, it is often possible to

[192] Since one of the research questions concerns the effects of a specific feature – the Franco-Belgian border – on borderlanders' perceptions of the linguistic universe around them, the inherent limitations of this task are particularly frustrating. However, an alternative task, which did not use a map as a stimulus, such as the pile sort method used by Tamasi (2014), would have construed the space in a purely administrative manner; an approach not deemed appropriate by the researcher given the research questions.

infer from the trajectory of the line the participants' intention. In the following analysis, therefore, the researcher has taken the above into consideration when analysing participants' responses.

As can be seen in Figure 6-11, the many lines drawn illustrate that there is a lot of variation in participants' responses to the task. Analysing the responses, the researcher deemed eight of them to be ambiguous, for two distinct reasons. The first reason, which applies to the responses of Brigitte (OFED2), Sabrina (OFED1) and Thierry (MMED2), was that the researcher could not decide whether these informants had intentionally circled parts of France or not. The second reason, however, was more complicated. The remaining five respondents[193] all circled the French town Leers on the map. Whilst at first sight we could infer that these respondents included parts of France in their speech community, the situation is more complex than this: Leers is in fact contiguous with the Belgian town *Leers Nord*, which is sometimes referred to in unambiguous contexts in Belgium simply as 'Leers', whilst Leers is referred to as 'Leers France'. The researcher spent some time in Leers Nord, engaging with various community members. These towns, whilst being distinct, are very much connected. For example, there is a road of which one side is French and the other Belgian. The two towns also come together for certain cultural events such as the *Fêtes de l'amitié franco-belge* (Festivals of Franco-Belgian friendship). Given this situation, and since Leers Nord was not marked on the map, it is impossible to know if those five respondents, when including Leers in their speech community, meant Leers France or Leers *Nord*. This confusion is

[193] Agnes (OFED1); Delphine (MFED2); Océane (YFED1); Quentin (OMED2); Zoé (MFED1).

in itself interesting, since it illustrates the ambiguous and /or porous aspect of this part of the border.

Despite the variation evident in the thirty-one unambiguous responses, they can nevertheless be organised according to orientation of the mapped speech community. Fourteen[194] respondents outlined a relatively restricted area in Wallonia (group i)[195]. Six informants[196] outlined a larger area, which extended further into Belgium, but did not traverse the Franco-Belgian border (group ii). Three informants[197] outlined a restricted area which crossed over into France (group iii), whilst three[198] circled an extended area stretching over both Belgium and France (group iv). Finally, five informants[199] circled an area which was restricted in Wallonia, but extended into France (group v). Within this sample of thirty-one informants, there are nine[200] who appeared to trace the national border when defining the southern and / or western perimeters of their speech area. For these individuals, then, the borders of their nation and language are coterminous (cf. Haugen 1966: 927).

Assessing the composition of these different 'orientation groups', it appears there may be correlations between speech community orientation and sex and educational background, though not with age. Whilst nine of the fourteen

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[194] Anthony (OMED1); Christophe (OMED1); Clara (YFED2); Florence (OFED2); Francis (MMED1); Geneviève (OFED1); Julien (YMED2); Lea (YFED2); Richard (YMED2); Rose (OFED1); Veronique (MFED2); Yolande (MFED1); Emma (YFED2); Morgane (MFED2).
[195] Extending north, south, and west to the border and as far east as Frasnes-les-Anvaing and Leuze-en-Hainaut, but not as far east as Ath, the capital of the neighbouring Ath *arrondissement.*
[196] Dan (OMED1) (slight ambiguity); Ines (OFED2); Hugo (MMED2) (slight ambiguity); Jessica (MFED2) (slight ambiguity); Maxime (MMED2); Olivier (YMED1).
[197] Benoit (OMED2); Louis (YMED2); Simon (OMED2).
[198] Nadine (YFED2); Nicolas (MMED1); Philippe (OMED2).
[199] Patricia (OFED2); Victor (MMEED2); Xavier (YMED2); Yann (MMED1); Tiffaine (OFED1) (who excluded Belgium entirely).
[200] Delphine (MFED2); Florence (OFED2); Francis (MMED1); Hugo (MMED2); Jessica (MFED2); Lea (YFED2); Maxime (MMED2); Olivier (YMED1); Richard (YMED2).

respondents in group (i) were women, in groups (ii)–(v) the majority of respondents were male. This gendered pattern, wherein women define a more geographically restricted speech community, is consistent with the finding above (6.5.1) wherein men showed a tendency to pick larger maps than women when initially engaging with the task. This pattern does, however, contrast with findings from Germany where, asked to outline a dialect area, women defined larger areas than men (Montgomery & Stoeckle 2013: 72). How can we explain the findings in the Tournaisis corpus?

There are several different ways of explaining the gendered variation in response to Part 1 of the task. Firstly, as noted above, social geographers contend that mobility differs along the lines of gender, and that women's mobility is more restricted. If mental maps are products of interactions, movements and experiences (Hollway & Hubbard 2001: 48) and women's mobility is comparatively more restricted, it stands to reason that their perceptions of the linguistic space would, as a corollary, also be more restricted. Thus, not having experienced the linguistic universe around them to the same geographical extent as men, we can imagine women outlining an area with which they were familiar; a *smaller* area. We will return to this potential conclusion in chapter 8 when we investigate the mobility of informants.

On the other hand, mobility might not be the answer. It could be that women and men spatially conceptualise their speech communities distinctly and that their perceptions are not based on any linguistic reality. Massey (1994: 9) argues that whilst notions of the 'universal' and 'general' are 'coded masculine', the term 'local' is associated with the feminine. We can see, then, how these

different responses might be due to distinct gendered conceptualisations of space.

Another possible explanation is that these responses are based on different linguistic realities. However, since neither of the phonological variables in this study have known local Belgian variants, which we would look for to test this hypothesis, we cannot reliably explore the degree to which gendered perceptions and linguistic reality correlate.

As for educational background, a slightly higher percentage (55%) of informants with fewer formal qualifications (ED1) are in group (i) than informants with more formal qualifications (ED2) (40%). As discussed above, these perceptual differences may be due to differences in awareness, which themselves may be as a result of distinct spatial practices by members of ED1 and ED2. This explanation assumes, of course, that ED2 travel further than ED1; an assumption based on previous research findings from elsewhere in Europe[201]. We will explore this conclusion in chapter 8.

On the other hand, these perceptual differences may be based on linguistic realities. However, as articulated above, in order to explore this proposition, further research is required. What is more, it must be remembered that the social variation observed in responses to Part 1 is slight and the sample size is small. Thus these findings remain indicative rather than conclusive.

[201] For example, studies have shown a positive correlation between level of education and likeliness to travel for work in Sweden (cf. Gustafson 2006: 523).

Having analysed and discussed the aggregated results of Part 1 of the draw-a-map task, we now go on to discuss the results from Part 2.

6.5.4 Aggregated results from Part 2 of the draw-a-map task

Two informants did not respond to Part 2 of the draw-a-map task (the part requesting informants circled the area where people speak with a pronunciation *very similar* to their own), meaning 37 maps were combined to illustrate aggregated responses to Part 2.

6.5.4.1 Extent

The area over which participants believe people speak with a 'similar' pronunciation to them, which we will term their 'wider speech community', is, as we would expect, much larger than the zone in which they consider pronunciation to be 'the same'. Figure 6-12 illustrates that the area stretches east across Wallonia, stopping just short of Luxembourg and the Germanophone part of Belgium. To the north, the area extends slightly into Flanders and takes in part of the bilingual French-Dutch Brussels region.

To the west and south the area appears to extend to the Ile-de-France. However, this outer line represents the response of just one participant, Nicolas (MMED1), who, in the interview, drew a line to the edge of the map. Thus, it may be inferred that he was trying to illustrate a belief that his wider speech community extends 'across France'. Nevertheless, since he did not choose to respond on Map 4, which covered the entirety of France, we have kept his response as the outer perimeters of the map he chose: Map 3. Jessica's

(MFED2) response was processed in a similar way[202] in the zone where pronunciation is similar to her own, whilst it was only Nicolas who included Brussels and eastern Wallonia in his response.

Nicolas' responses aside, the aggregated response to Part 2 still covers a larger area than that to Part 1, although not in every direction. Whilst responses to Part 2 stretch further west and south than they do for Part 1, they are still equally restricted by the regional, cultural, economic and linguistic border with Flanders. They are also, perhaps surprisingly, still relatively restricted to the east. Comparing Figure 6-12 with Figure 6-10, it can be seen that, when outlining the area where people speak similarly to them, the majority of respondents do not go beyond the Picard substrate boundary. Thus, despite the relaxed criteria, they still do not consider themselves to be part of the same wider speech community as speakers from central or eastern Wallonia or Brussels.

Is this perception based on a reality? As discussed above, since it is not known what criteria informants were basing their judgment upon, we cannot be sure whether this response is based on a linguistic reality or on something else, such as perceived cultural differences, limitations of knowledge (cf. Montgomery 2012), indirect effects of various spatial practices (cf. Britain 2014), or perhaps a combination of these. However, regional variation in Francophone Belgium is widely reported in the literature (cf. chapter 2) so it is possible that these perceptions are based on a linguistic reality.

[202] In fact, in response to Part 2, Jessica simply traced the national border. It was thus inferred that this was done to illustrate that the area she considered to represent her wider speech community was the entirety of France. Since Jessica chose to engage with the task on Map 1, however, for the purposes of the composite map, the outer perimeters of her wider speech community were kept as those of the outer perimeters of Map 1.

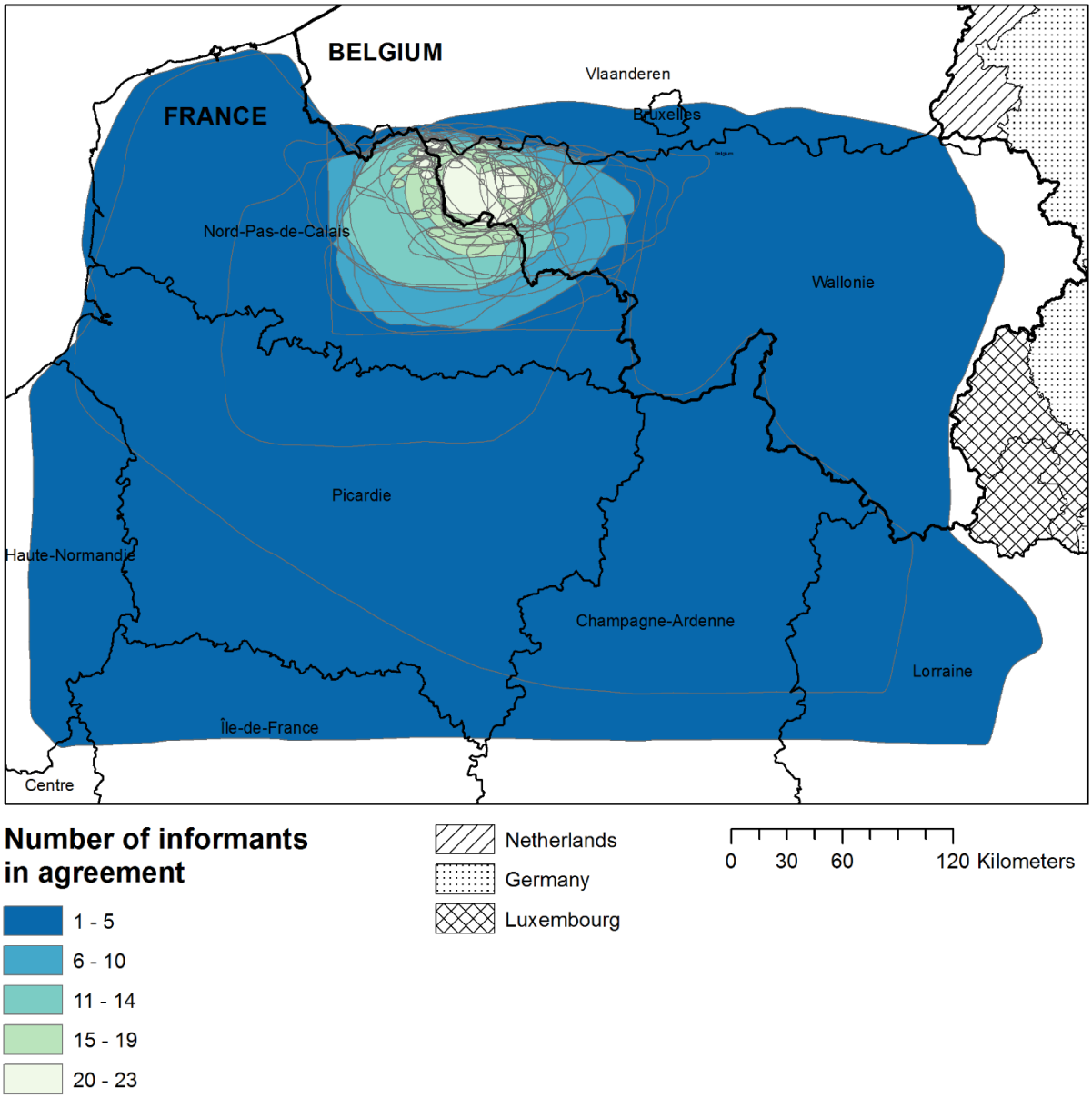

Figure 6-12. Composite map of informants' responses to Part 2 of the draw-a-map task: 'Circle the area where people speak with a pronunciation very similar to your own – with the exception of a few differences'

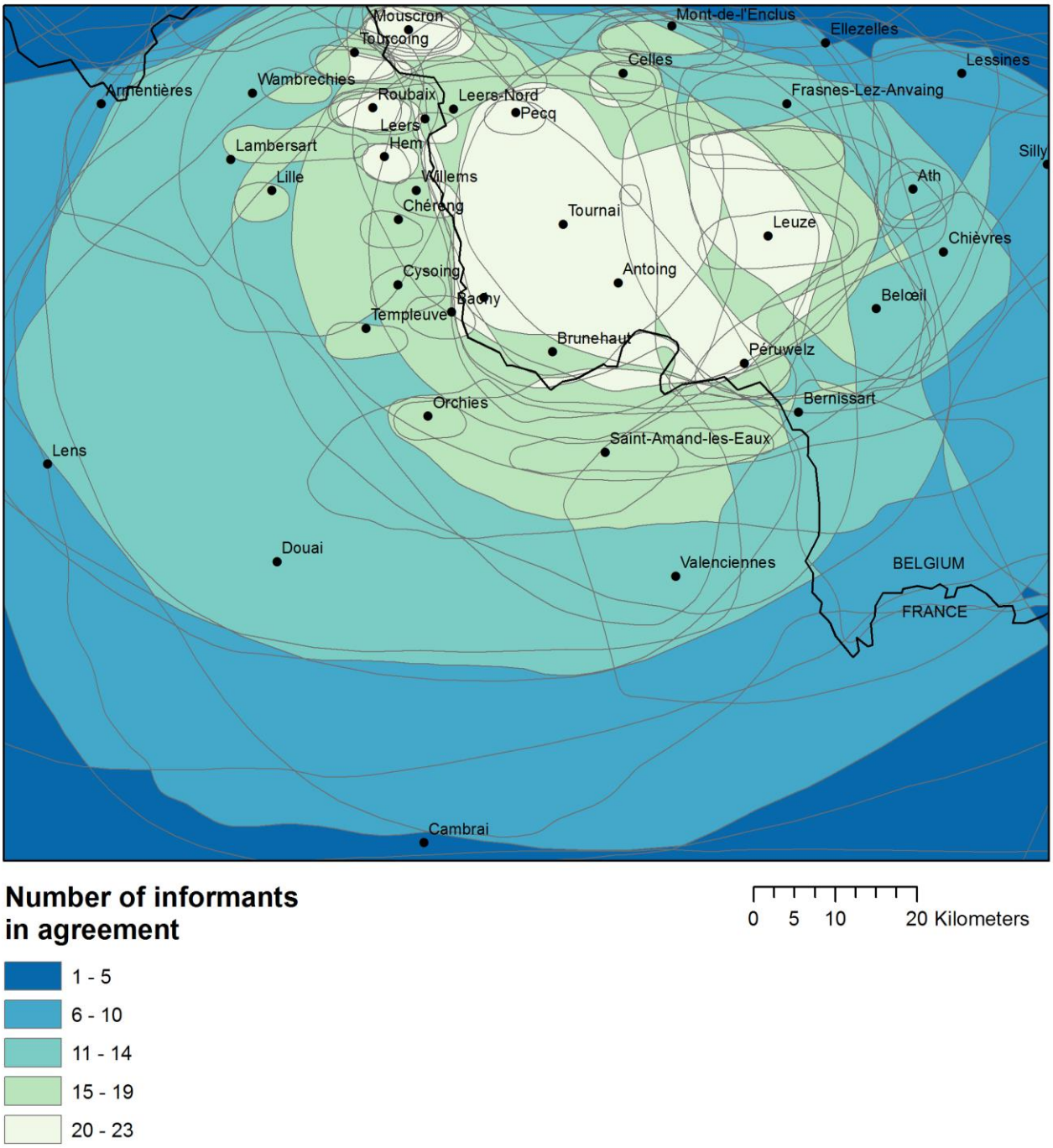

Figure 6-13. Composite map of informants' responses to Part 2 of the task, focusing on areas of greater agreement

6.5.4.2 Consensus, disagreement and skew

The pattern in consensus and disagreement in response to Part 2 replicates that observed in the responses to Part 1: as distance from Tournai increases, agreement decreases. As with Part 1, there is strong agreement that in the Tournai *arrondissement* people speak similarly to them. In contrast to Part 1, however, we also see strong consensus that in the French borderland towns of Tourcoing, Roubaix and Hem pronunciation is similar.

As consensus decreases, another difference between responses to Part 1 and Part 2 emerges. Where in response to Part 1 the agreement was skewed such that it gradually decreased across Wallonia, but 'dropped off' to the south and west at the national border, in Part 2 this is not the case; on the contrary, the skew appears to be in the *opposite* direction: towards France. The area over which at least 40% of informants (fifteen people) agree there is a similar pronunciation extends as far south and west into France as it does east into Wallonia, whilst the area over which at least 29% (eleven people) are in agreement extends further southwest into France than it does in any other direction. It can be seen, then, that where the national border acted as a barrier when informants responded to Part 1 of the task, in Part 2 there is much less of a border effect on participants' perceptions of what constitutes their *wider* speech community.

What is more, where in response to Part 1 informants only circled specific place names in Wallonia (with the exception of Lille and Leers), in response to Part 2 several informants circle particular places in France, just across the border, as

can be seen in Figure 6-13. In this respect, also, the border effect appears to diminish when the specificity of speech community definition is relaxed.

Returning to the skew in consensus, we saw that the aggregated responses to Part 1 of the task formed a corridor-like shape, extending over a greater distance in longitude than latitude. In contrast, the aggregated responses to Part 2 give a different form. Whilst the border with Flanders persists as a barrier, to the south the area is less restricted. Where, in response to Part 1, the *Parc Naturel Régional Scarpe-Escaut* appeared to act as a natural barrier, in Part 2, as the criteria are relaxed, this no longer appears to be the case: it can be seen in Figure 6-12 that at least fifteen informants agree that the area where people speak similarly to them stretches into the *Parc Naturel,* whilst at least eleven believe the zone extends beyond the perimeter of the park, and at least six agree that the zone extends almost as far south as Cambrai.

6.5.4.3 Orientation bias

We saw above that the skew that emerged in the aggregated responses to Part 1, which was due to a border effect, was not present in the aggregated responses to Part 2. Similarly, we can see that the effect of the border on the orientation of informants' perceived speech community changes from Part 1 to Part 2 of the task. Where in response to Part 1 of the task thirteen informants outlined an area including parts of France, with the relaxed criteria of Part 2, an additional fifteen[203] informants shifted their orientation in Part 2 to include parts

[203] In fact we can be certain that eleven informants made this shift, whilst for the other four we infer this to be the case, though there is some ambiguity: two informants circled Leers (France) in Part 1; however, the researcher concluded that these informants meant Leers Nord (see 6.5.3.3). A further two drew a line that crossed slightly into France in Part 1; however, the researcher concluded that this crossing of the border was because of the trajectory of the pen (see above).

of France[204]. With a seemingly diminished border effect, how do informants map the area in which they consider their wider speech community is found?

As was the case for Part 1 of the mapping task, there is a good deal of variation in the way participants orientate their wider speech community. Many informants (such as Julien, YMED2; Maxime, MMED2; Clara, YFED2; and Emma, YFED2) outlined an area which extended both east into Wallonia, and west (and / or south) into France; indeed, this was the most popular orientation: seventeed informants[205] circumscribed Area B in this way[206]. Thirteen informants[207] outlined an area extending predominantly east into Wallonia in response to the Part 2 of the task, whilst seven[208] circumscribed a zone extending mainly into France.

Whilst Part 1 of the mapping task was phrased such that it required an absolute response from informants, asking informants to circle the area where people spoke with the *same* pronunciation, the criterion for Part 2 was more ambiguous: they were asked to circle the area where people speak *similarly.* In this way, we have reason to argue that, whilst participants might have tried to give an accurate response to Part 1, their response to Part 2 may have been more figurative or representative than accurate. Since a figurative response would arguably be less tied to features on the map and to the geographical

[204] Thus there are nine informants who do not perceive a similarity to any pronunciation in France (either in response to Part 1 or Part 2 of the task).
[205] Anthony (OMED1); Benoit (OMED2); Brigitte (OFED2); Christophe (OMED1); Clara (YFED2); Delphine (MFED2); Emma (YFED2); Julien (YMED2); Maxime (MMED2); Nicolas (MMED1); Olivier (YMED1); Sabrina (OFED1); Thierry (YMED2); Veronique (MFED2); Xavier (YMED2); Yann (MMED1); Yolande (MFED1).
[206] The mapped responses were categorised impressionistically, by eye.
[207] Daniel (OMED1); Florence (OFED2); Francis (MMED1); Geneviève (OFED1); Lea (YFED2); Louis (YMED2); Morgane (MFED2); Océane (YFED1); Philippe (OMED2); Rose (OFED1); Simon (OMED2); Tiffaine (OFED1); Zoé (MFED1).
[208] Agnes (OFED1); Hugo (MMED2); Jessica (MFED2); Patricia (OFED2); Quentin (OMED2); Richard (YMEED2); Victor (MMED2).

space it illustrates, we are in a position to exchange the ‘mental maps’ analytical lens for a ‘visual methods’ one and interpret the responses accordingly. Thus, for example, rather than interpret Patricia’s (OFED2) response to Part 2 as illustrating her belief that her speech sounds like that of everyone up to Vermelles, Vitry-en-Artois and Douchy-les-Mines, for example (see Figure 6-14), we can interpret it as a figurative representation of a belief that she thinks she sounds ‘more French than Belgian’.

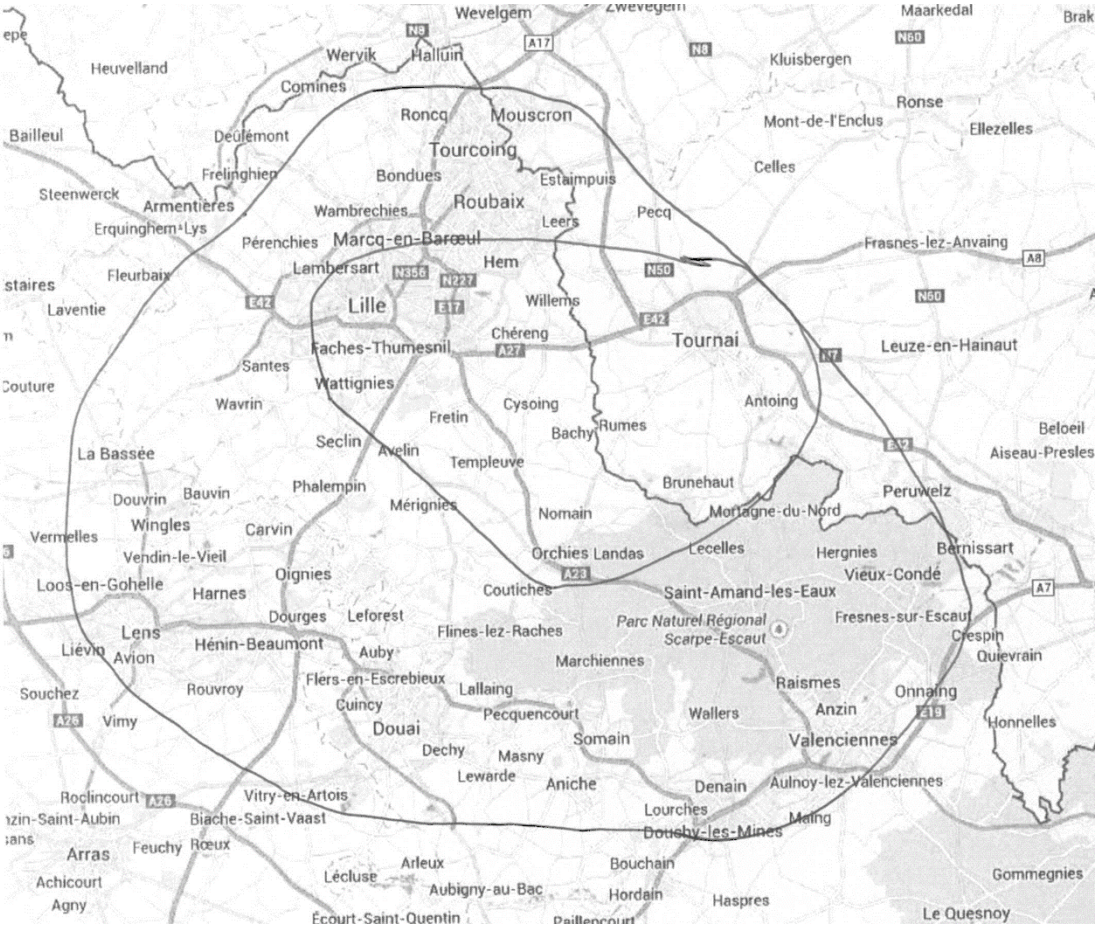

Figure 6-14. Patricia’s responses to Part 1 (inner) and Part 2 (outer) of the draw-a-map task

Viewing the social attributes of the members of these three orientation groups, which we will term: (i) transnational orientation; (ii) Belgian orientation; and (iii) French orientation, and analysing their responses through a ‘visual methods’ lens, some social variation emerges, which we will now go on to explore.

6.5.4.3.1 *Orientation bias and age*

Figure 6-15 illustrates the orientation of informants according to age and reveals that the older informants are most orientated towards Belgium, whilst the middle-aged and younger informants orientate themselves more transnationally. Whilst it is the middle age band who most orientate themselves towards France, it is the youngest informants who are least oriented in this way. How can we explain these differences? There are a number of possible explanations, which we will now explore.

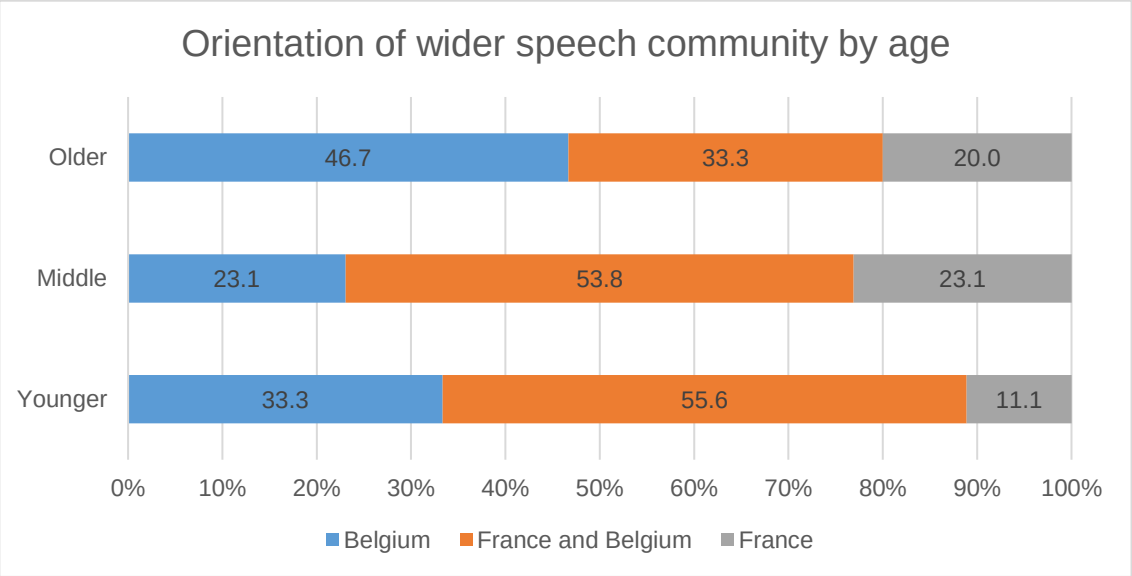

Figure 6-15. Orientation of wider speech community by age

It could be that these differences are based on accurate perceptions of generational linguistic differences. Were this to be the case, we would expect the corresponding linguistic situation to be such that older informants display higher frequencies of Belgian variants, whilst middle-aged and younger informants display higher frequencies of transnational variants. As only two linguistic variables have been investigated in this study, we only have a partial picture of the linguistic reality in the Belgian borderland. With this caveat

presented we can, nevertheless, draw comparisons with the findings of the preceding phonological chapters.

In chapter 4, the phenomenon of lowering /e/ variants in the monosyllabic words ‘mes’, ‘les’ and ‘ses’, described as a feature of the endogenous Belgian norm (Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc), was found in the speech of middle-aged and older informants, but not in that of the younger informants. The conclusion was thus drawn that whilst middle-aged and older speakers were orientating themselves linguistically towards a Belgian norm, younger speakers were more orientated towards either SF or a transnational levelled variety. Viewing the pattern in Figure 6-15 alongside those in chapter 4, it appears that there is some correspondence between older speakers’ perceptions and their behaviour as far as this speech phenomenon is concerned.

As for other phonological phenomena, it was found in chapter 4 that the younger informants realised a slightly higher percentage of /ɛ/ with non-standard intermediate variants; a pattern also found in Paris. Similarly, it was found in chapter 5 that this age group also displayed a higher rate of fronted /ɔ/ variants, this being a supralocal phenomenon in France. In both chapters it emerged that the younger speakers showed a greater tendency to merge the phonemic oppositions /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ than their elders. This tendency has been observed in France, whilst the tendency to maintain the contrasts is described as a feature of Belgian French (cf. chapter 2; Pohl 1983; Klinkenberg 1985; Warnant 1997; Francard 2001; Hambye, Francard & Simon 2003; Hambye & Francard 2004; Hambye 2008; Hambye & Simon 2012). These generational differences in linguistic behaviour therefore correspond with

generational differences in perception, adding weight to the argument that perceptions may be based on linguistic reality.

On the other hand, in chapter 5 it was seen that, whilst in France there are increasing tendencies to realise /o/ with either an intermediate or fronted variant, these tendencies are not seen in the Belgian borderland; in this respect, younger borderlanders do not display transnational linguistic behaviour.

What is more, whilst the middle age band of informants also align themselves perceptually with a transnational community, in chapters 4 and 5 they showed lower rates of certain levelled transnational variants than would have been expected given the variation between the older and younger informants. Whilst this might indicate that the middle age band do not base their perceptions on reality, they were also the group to show the greatest perceptual orientation to France, and the group who most adhered to SF in the linguistic behaviour analysed in chapters 4 and 5. Since in Francophone Belgium the reference norm was traditionally considered to be associated with France (Moreau et al. 1999: 3–4; Hambye & Francard 2004: 41–42), it can be argued that the perceptions and behaviour of middle-aged informants do, in fact, correspond.

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that generationally distinct perceptions may be shaped – at least in part – by linguistic reality, it may in fact be that another factor is in operation: linguistic ideology. As reported above (cf. chapter 2 and 4), for a long time a pervasive sense of linguistic insecurity was felt in Francophone Belgium, with endogenous varieties perceived as inferior to Hexagonal French varieties (Francard & Franke 2001–2002 cited in Francard

fc; Francard fc). However, recent research suggests that this sentiment is diminishing and that younger speakers no longer associate legitimate varieties exclusively with France (Francard & Franke 2001–2002 cited in Francard fc).

We may infer, then, that the tendency for the middle-aged and, to a lesser extent, older speakers to align themselves perceptually with France may be due to the linguistic ideologies they grew up with and have lived with. That is to say, these ideologies may have brought about a desire in these informants to align themselves with the place in which they perceive legitimate varieties to be found. Equally, the relatively stronger orientation of younger speakers towards Belgium and away from France may also be a result of the linguistic ideologies in circulation in that generation. That is to say, since evidence suggests that younger speakers no longer associate legitimate varieties solely with France, we can imagine that there is less motivation for them to align themselves perceptually in that way.

On the other hand, it may be that the generational distinctness of these orientation biases is a result of something else. In sociolinguistic research an established pattern of age-grading[209] has been identified wherein 'speakers […] modify their language in the direction of the acrolect[210] as they approach middle-age and then revert to less prestigious speech patterns after they reach retirement age' (Trudgill 2003: 6). By analogy, then, it may be that the same linguistic ideologies are in circulation across all generations; that is to say, that Hexagonal French is superior to Belgian French, yet it is the middle-aged

[209] Age-grading is the phenomenon wherein linguistic behaviour varies with age, and the same patterns reoccur generation after generation (Trudgill 2003: 6).
[210] The acrolect is the variety 'which is socially the highest, most prestigious variety in a social dialect continuum' (Trudgill 2003: 3).

speakers who are most preoccupied with the notion of linguistic correctness, thus it is this group which most orientates itself perceptually towards France. We will investigate this hypothesis in chapter 7 when we examine the relevant attitudinal data.

We have seen, then, that there is evidence to suggest an interaction between perception and production. The evidence also gives us reason to argue that the generationally distinct perceptions may be shaped by generationally distinct language ideologies. There is, however, another factor which may have influenced the generational differences in informants' perceptions of their extended speech community: spatial practice.

Britain (2014) argues that activities in our daily life are routinised, and that our routinised spatial practices are shaped by the institutions that operate in and across the space. He also argues that '[p]ast events and manipulations of space […] and our past spatial practices can shape future ones' (Britain 2014: 39).

In 1985 an agreement was signed between the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, the French Republic and the Benelux Economic Union, agreeing on the gradual abolition of checks at their shared borders (EUR-Lex: n.d.). Ten years later, in 1995, the Schengen Agreement was signed, and over the following years border checks finally ceased to take place. Viewing the ages of informants in 1995, the youngest informants (born between 1987 and 1995) would have been no older than eight, the middle-aged informants (born between 1955 and 1981) would have been aged between 14 and 40 and the older informants (born between 1930 and 1954) would have been aged

between 41 and 65. In this way, it can be seen that whilst the older informants would have spent the majority of their life living next to a controlled border, the youngest informants would not; for the majority of their life, the border would have been unchecked. We can imagine, then, that the middle and younger informants would have had more of an opportunity to develop transnational spatial practices such as crossing the border for shopping and leisure activities. In this way, their routines may have shaped their perceptions; in particular the lack of perception of a Franco-Belgian border, which in turn may have shaped their perceived belonging to a transnational speech community. We will investigate this hypothesis in chapter 8, when we address the spatial data.

Having advanced this explanation, we are yet to explain why the youngest informants are more orientated towards Belgium and less orientated towards France than the generation above them. Again, spatial practices may provide an explanation. All but two of the younger informants had recently completed – or were still undertaking – studies in higher education. These studies were all in Belgian institutions. Thus their day-to-day lives were lived out in Belgium (cf. Pooley, Turnbull & Adams 2005: 1 cited in Britain 2016: 21). It may be, then, that those younger informants who orientated their extended speech community towards Belgium, based their response on their lived spatial routines – an explanation we will interrogate further with empirical data in chapter 8. What is more, these informants' responses illustrate how, despite the lack of physical barrier, the border persists in institutional systems such as state education (cf. Britain 2014: 39).

Having investigated how linguistic realities and ideologies as well as spatial practices may have led to distinct generational biases amongst informants when orientating their extended speech community, we can conclude that whilst it is not possible to know for certain how participants' perceptions are formed, it is likely that a combination of these factors is in operation. Whilst drawing these conclusions, it is important to recall that they are based on the results of just 37 participants and thus remain indicative. We will now explore variation in biases along the lines of sex and educational background.

6.5.4.3.2 Orientation bias and sex

Figure 6-16 illustrates that women are more orientated towards Belgium whilst men are more orientated towards France and towards a transnational speech community. This pattern corresponds with those seen above, both in 6.5.3.3, where it was found that women outlined a smaller area in response to Part 1, and in 6.5.1, where it was found that men showed a tendency to select larger maps with which to engage with the task. The explanations advanced above were that these gendered differences may have been due to differing spatial practices or linguistic realities. As for participants' responses to Part 2, once again we find ourselves in the same situation; they could be shaped by a combination of these same factors.

In chapters 4 and 5, it was illustrated that men generally merge the phonemic pairs /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ slightly more than women. As described above, merging of these pairs is a phenomenon observed in France, whilst reports suggest that the pairs are maintained across central and eastern Francophone Belgium (Hambye & Simon 2012: 133). Since men orientate more towards a

transnational or French speech community and women orientate towards a Belgian one, in this respect perceptions can be seen to correlate with behaviour. However, it was also found in chapter 5 that women show a greater tendency to front /ɔ/; a supralocal phenomenon observed across France. In this way, then, there is discordance between perception and production. How else may we explain this gendered pattern?

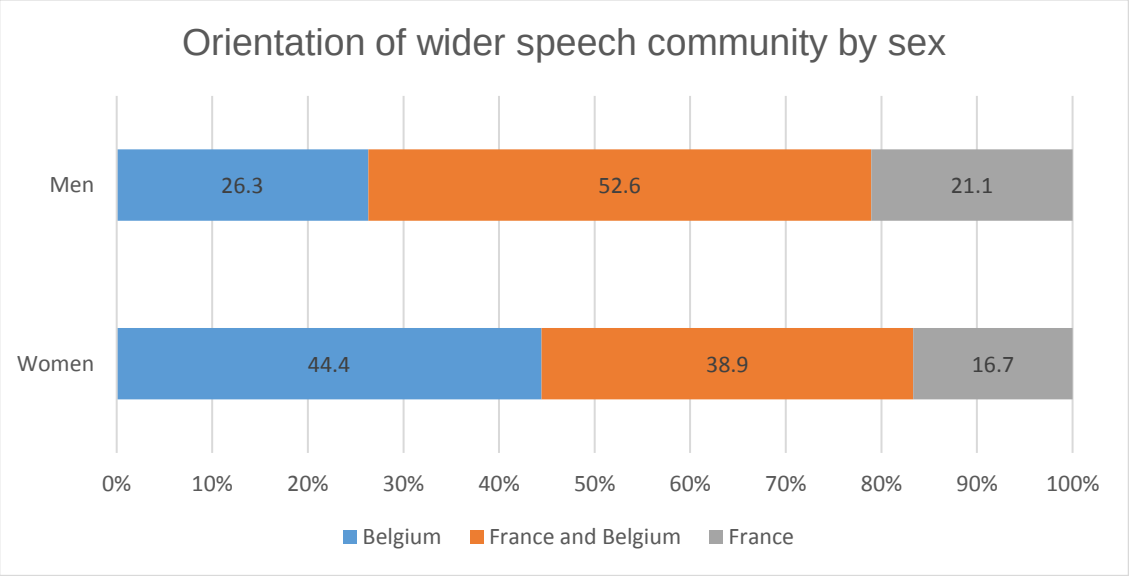

Figure 6-16. Orientation of wider speech community by sex

As described above, scholars assert that space is gendered: whilst the 'local' has feminine associations, the 'universal' has masculine connotations (Massey 1994: 9). What is more, scholars have shown that women travel smaller distances for work (cf. Gustafson 2006: 523), also arguing that the notion of 'home' is 'frequently personified by, and partakes of the same characteristics as those assigned to, Woman/Mother/Lover' (Massey 1994: 10). We can see, then, how gendered experiences of space might have shaped participants' different responses to Part 2 of the task: whilst women perceive their extended speech community as remaining local, within the national boundaries and therein

‘domestic’[211], men perceive a more ‘universal’ speech community which transcends the domestic barrier. We will investigate this further in chapter 8.

We cannot be certain upon which criteria informants based their responses to Part 2 of the task. However, it seems plausible that informants’ gendered perceptions are a product of a combination of spatial practices, gendered differences and perhaps linguistic awareness.

6.5.4.3.3 Orientation bias and educational background

Finally, it can be seen in Figure 6-17 that whilst those belonging to ED1 orientate more towards Belgium and away from France, those belonging to ED2 orientate themselves more towards France. How do these differences compare to the linguistic realities observed in chapters 4 and 5? In chapter 5 a higher rate of /ɔ/-fronting – a supralocal French phenomenon – was found in the speech of ED2. With regard to this linguistic feature, then, perceptions and reality correspond. On the other hand, it is ED1 who show a greater tendency to merge the phonemic pair /o/-/ɔ/, whilst in chapter 4 the same was found for /e/-/ɛ/. Since, as we described above, merging is observed in France, though maintained contrasts are reported in Belgium, here it appears perceptions and reality do not align: we must look elsewhere for a fuller explanation.

[211] The adjective ‘domestic’ can be seen to be particularly fitting in this context, given its use to refer both to the ‘home’ and also to that which ‘exist[s …] inside a particular country’ (Stevenson 2010).

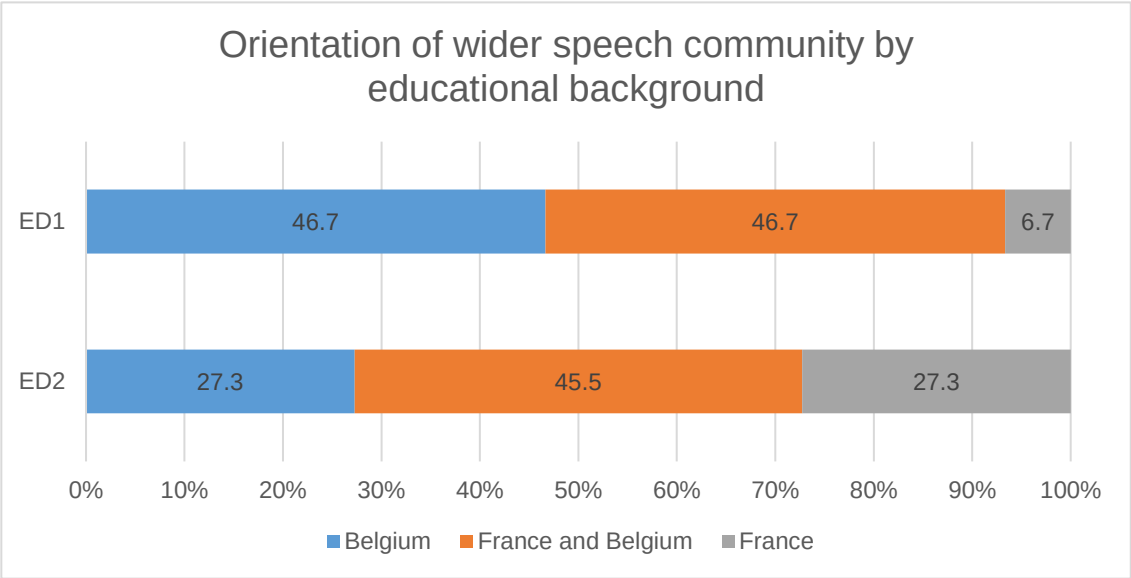

Figure 6-17. Orientation of wider speech community by educational background

We argued above that the middle age band may have orientated themselves towards France because of an awareness of traditional linguistic ideologies in Belgium which see SF as associated with France and Belgian varieties as inferior and incorrect (cf. Moreau et al. 1999: 3–4; Hambye & Francard 2004: 41–42). Since scholars have shown that Francophone Belgians with higher levels of education are more linguistically insecure (Moreau et al. 1999: 9), we could interpret the tendency for speakers from ED2 to align themselves with France as a response to these ideologies and a desire to associate with those who speak 'correct' French. On the other hand, it may be that informants' did not base their responses on linguistic ideologies, be it entirely or in part.

As well as age and sex, scholars have identified differences in spatial practices along the lines of educational background. For example, studies have shown that as level of education increases, so too does mobility and likelihood to travel for work (Courgeau 1985: 151–156; Gustafson 2006: 521). Thus, once again, distinct spatial practices may have played a part in shaping the way ED1 and

ED2 speakers perceive the linguistic space. Or, alternatively, their sense of affiliation to the region may have shaped their responses, since scholars have identified that regional belonging shapes not only linguistic behaviour, but also language attitudes and perceptions (Underwood 1988: 417–478; Edwards 1992; Boberg 2000; Watt 2000: 97; Hazen 2002; Hoare 2002; Pooley 2004b; Waltermire 2014). These are two theories we will investigate in chapter 8 when we address the space and place data.

6.6 Summary of findings

This chapter has provided considerable new insight into the linguistic perceptions of Belgian borderlanders. It has also illustrated that much can be gleaned by approaching the classic draw-a-map task with a theorised notion of space and considering the outputs not only as ‘mental maps’ but also ‘creative expressions’.

Firstly, an analysis of informants’ choice of map as well as their approaches to the task was fruitful. These analyses confirmed what has been found elsewhere: that borderlanders consider that the area where people speak with the same pronunciation as them is relatively restricted. These analyses also shed light on the cognitive processing of the task, enabling us to infer that the more participants thought about the area that corresponded to their speech community, the smaller the area got.

The analysis showed that all speakers – to a certain extent – used place names as reference points and that, when conceiving of linguistic space, they engaged with ‘social space’ or ‘place’ as opposed to Euclidean space. In addition to

these findings, it was also found that notions of in-group and out-group operate in perceptions of linguistic space.

As for informants' approaches to the task, these were diverse, illustrating that participants had distinct ways of conceiving of linguistic variation across space. Whilst some considered linguistic varieties as patchwork-like, tied to potentially distant towns or regions and bounded by 'crisp' (Pickl 2016: 75) perimeters, others appeared to conceive of a linguistic continuum. And whilst for some this continuum fitted with a centre-periphery model, for others a set theory interpretation was more befitting. Indeed the notion of the 'fuzzy dialect' (Girard & Larmouth 1993; Pickl 2016), derived from set theory and 'fuzzy sets', was seen to play out in one participant's drawing of a spiral as a response.

The analysis of the aggregated results from Part 1 of the draw-a-map task, which asked informants to 'circle the area where people [spoke like them] (with the same pronunciation)', showed that there was strong agreement that Tournai and Antoing are part of the informants' speech community and that agreement diminished as distance from Tournai increased. It also revealed that informants identified linguistic boundaries which corresponded with the regional, cultural, economic and linguistic border with Flanders, and the French national border. Whilst there was a good deal of agreement in this respect, there was less consensus on where the eastern and southern boundaries of the speech community lay. Nevertheless, all participants identified a speech community within the parameters of the Picard zone.

The national border was found to skew perceptions of the speech community; whilst consensus diminished gradually going eastwards from Tournai, the ‘drop off’ was much steeper at the border. In addition, it was also revealed that the border had a barrier effect on awareness, since whilst informants used Belgian place names as landmarks, they scarcely did this with French place names. Finally for Part 1 of the task, there was also evidence to suggest that the *Parc Naturel Régional Scarpe-Escaut* acted as a barrier, shaping either linguistic practices or spatial practices, or both.

As for the aggregated results from Part 2 of the draw-a-map task, which asked informants to ‘circle the area where people [spoke] with a pronunciation very similar to [their] own – with the exception of a few differences’, these too revealed some expected and unexpected patterns. As expected, the area was larger than that in which participants considered the pronunciation to be the same as theirs. However, whilst the aggregated ‘wider speech community’ extended further south and west into France, it did not go beyond the ancient Picard-Walloon substrate boundary.

In contrast to the aggregated responses of Part 1, in Part 2 there was no evidence of the border causing a skew in spatial agreement. On the contrary, the skew was in the opposite direction – towards France. The barrier effect of the *Parc Naturel Régional Scarpe-Escaut* also disappeared in Part 2.

As for how responses varied according to participants’ identity, there was evidence of social variation in both participants’ approaches and responses to the task. It was seen that not only did men show a tendency to select a larger

map than women, they also showed a tendency to outline a larger area than women in response to both Part 1 and Part 2 of the task. Variation according to educational background also emerged. It was seen that ED1 showed tendencies to circle smaller areas within Belgium to represent their speech community and wider speech community, whilst ED2 speakers circled larger areas, which were more orientated towards France. Generational differences also emerged in participants' responses to Part 2 of the task: older speakers' wider speech communities were more orientated towards Belgium, whilst for middle-aged speakers, they were more orientated towards France, or were transnational. As for younger speakers, their speech communities were less orientated towards France, and more transnational or orientated towards Belgium.

When looking to explain the social variation in perception observed, a number of possible factors were evoked. Firstly, it was suggested that responses may have been based on linguistic realties, since some correspondence was observed between linguistic behaviour and perception. However, certain behaviours did not line up with perception. The influence of linguistic ideologies was suggested as a possible factor that had shaped responses and evidence was found of a correlation between distinct ideologies and perceptions. Finally, it was suggested that spatial practice may have contributed to shaping the socially varied responses to the task, since there was some correspondence between known sociospatial patterns and perceptions. Whilst these findings are interesting, the variation was fairly modest and the sample size is small. They are thus indicative.

As for the limitations and shortcomings of the draw-a-map task identified by the field, the limitations concern the informants' tendencies to rely on place names when engaging with the activity as well as to trace administrative boundaries. Theoretical criticisms concern the ignoring of social space in the task as well as the question of whether a mental map can be represented on a traditional map. Having outlined the criticisms, we suggested these could be overcome by doing two things: 1) underpinning the task with a theorised notion of space – that is to say considering space as 'social' – and 2) interpreting informants' responses not only as mental maps, but – through taking a visual methods approach – as creative expressions.

This chapter has addressed a gap in the knowledge regarding linguistic perceptions of Francophone Belgians and, in particular, of Belgian borderlanders. It has also shown that by giving importance to the notion of social space in the interpretation of draw-a-map data, as well as interpreting responses as creative acts through which participants 'figuratively convey' what they want to communicate, not only can the limitations outlined above be overcome, but a wealth of insight can be gained. In the next chapter we will explore borderlanders' attitudes towards different linguistic varieties.

7 Language Attitudes

7.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins with an outline of the motivations for investigating language attitudes in the present study and a presentation of the research questions. Following this, an overview is given of the attitudinal data gathered. The results of the tasks are then presented, analysed and discussed. In the final section, key findings are summarised.

7.2 Motivation for investigating language attitudes

As described in chapter 2, for a long time in Francophone Belgium there was a pervasive sense of linguistic insecurity, with Belgian varieties of French seen as inferior to Hexagonal ones (Klinkenberg 1985; Francard 1993 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 235; Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Hambye & Francard 2004). This feeling was shaped by scholarly discourses which, until the 1970s, described Belgian varieties of French in largely prescriptivist terms, highlighting differences between them and the Hexagonal French standard (e.g. Poyart 1806; Remacle 1948 cited in Moreau et al. 1999; Piron 1968 cited in Moreau et al. 1999; Hanse et al. 1971, 1974 cited in Hambye & Francard 2004: 43). Whilst a shift in scholarly discourses took place in the 1970s, and works became more descriptive (e.g. Baetens-Beardsmore 1971; Pohl 1983 cited in Klinkenberg 1985; Walter 1982; Moreau et al. 1999: 5), the sense of linguistic insecurity persisted, with Francophone Belgians continuing to see their own speech as inferior to Hexagonal varieties.

Towards the end of the 1990s, a new scholarly discourse began to emerge regarding the notion of an endogenous norm; that is to say a legitimate Belgian variety, distinct from the Hexagonal norm (e.g. Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Wilmet 2000; Francard & Franke 2001–2002). Today this endogenous norm is still central to many scholarly conversations (e.g. Hambye 2005, 2008; Hambye & Francard 2004, 2008; Francard fc). However, rather than describe the exact features of the norm, works tend to focus on which theoretical criteria such a variety would need to satisfy. As for the sense of linguistic insecurity in Francophone Belgium, findings suggest that this feeling is beginning to diminish and that younger speakers no longer associate legitimate varieties with Paris, nor solely with France (Francard & Franke 2001–2002 in Francard fc).

Given the above situation, we are motivated to investigate more precisely how Francophone Belgians – in this case borderlanders – construe 'correct' French. Do they consider that the most correct French is spoken in France or Francophone Belgium, or both countries? Indeed, do they even perceive there to be a difference between the most correct French in France and that in Francophone Belgium? Since the scholarly literature has predominantly described legitimised French in abstract, ideological terms, or with geographic criteria, we will also investigate what borderlanders' individual representations of the most correct French look like.

In language attitudes and perceptual dialectology research, numerous studies have been done which require informants to rate labelled varieties or speech samples in terms of degree of difference from one's own and / or pleasantness and / or correctness (e.g. in a Francophone context: Kuiper 1999, 2005; Evans

2002; Léonard 2002; L'Eplattenier-Saugy 2002; Boughton 2006; Pustka 2007; Detey & Le Gac 2008; Racine et al. 2013). What is more, ratings have been found to correlate with different criteria. For example, Kuiper (1999: 251) found that informants from Paris and Provence rated peripheral and non-Hexagonal varieties such as those from Alsace and Switzerland as more different from their own, least correct and least pleasant. Boughton (2006: 299), on the other hand, found a correlation between perceived standardness of accent, urbanness and class.

In Francophone Belgium, Moreau et al. (1999: 7) asked Francophone Belgians to respond to various stimuli such as lexical items. They found a clear correlation between items perceived as 'Belgian' and 'incorrect'; however, not all items deemed Belgian were rated in the same way. They also found, contrary to traditional discourses which consider Belgian varieties as inferior to Hexagonal ones (see above), that when informants evaluated speech samples (as opposed to labels), they rated Belgian samples as positively as, if not more positively than, French samples (Moreau et al. 1999: 32–33).

Whilst Moreau et al.'s (1999) study provides a great deal of useful insight, as far as the researcher is aware, no studies have been carried out in a Francophone Belgian context in which degree of difference, correctness and pleasantness are all investigated together. What is more, it is not known how proximity to France might shape such attitudes. For these reasons, we will question how borderlanders rate different labelled varieties[212] along these three dimensions. Since research has shown elsewhere that responses vary according to social

[212] For example, the label 'the pronunciation in Lille' as opposed to a *sample of speech* from a Lille informant.

background of listeners (cf. Paltridge & Giles 1984; Moreau et al. 1999; Hoare 2002; Rispail & Moreau 2004; Hall 2008; Stewart 2012), we will also question how responses vary according to social background of informants.

Finally, from the above investigations we will be able to ascertain the degree to which a sense of linguistic insecurity persists in the Belgian borderland, and will furthermore be able to investigate whether different feelings correlate with different social and generational backgrounds, as has been suggested (Moreau et al. 1999: 9; Franke & Francard 2001–2002 in Francard fc) (see chapter 2 for a list of the research questions).

7.3 Overview of the data gathered

Attitudinal data were gathered using a written questionnaire, which was administered following the semi-structured interview, reading passage and word list task (see Appendix 4). The data were gathered subsequent to the completion of the draw-a-map task (cf. chapter 6). Several question styles were used to elicit the desired information. These were: multiple choice; sentence completion and, following a similar method to Kuiper (1999), grid tasks. These data were gathered from all 52 interviewees; however, time constraints dictate that only those data of the 39 whose data were analysed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 will be examined here. We now go on to investigate informants' responses, question by question.

7.4 Multiple choice task

Informants were presented with five sentences relating to *where* the most correct pronunciation was found and asked to select the single sentence with which they most agreed. The sentences were:

a) La prononciation la plus correcte s'entend en France.
b) La prononciation la plus correcte s'entend en Belgique.
c) La prononciation la plus correcte se trouve en France, cependant parmi les prononciations en Belgique il y en a quelques-unes qui sont plus correctes que d'autres.
d) Bien que la prononciation en Belgique et celle en France soient différentes, elles sont toutes les deux aussi correctes.
e) La prononciation la plus correcte en Belgique est exactement comme la prononciation la plus correcte en France[213].

7.4.1 Results of the multiple choice task

38 of the 39 informants responded to this question and the distribution of their responses is illustrated in Figure 7-1. The most popular option amongst informants was D. Second most popular was E. At the other end of the spectrum, one informant, Francis (OMED1), responded in an 'other' way, selecting both A and D, thus providing a response which seems paradoxical. Aside from Francis, the least popular response was B, with just three votes. Slightly more popular, with five votes each were A and C. In summary, then, the

[213] These translate as: a) the most correct pronunciation is heard in France; b) the most correct pronunciation is heard in Belgium; c) the most correct pronunciation is heard in France; however, amongst the pronunciations in Belgium there are some that are more correct than others; d) although the pronunciations in Belgium and France are different, they are both as correct as each other; and e) the most correct pronunciation in Belgium is exactly like the most correct pronunciation in France.

majority of informants (63.2%) do not perceive one national variety to be more correct than the other. However, a greater percentage believes Belgian and Hexagonal varieties to be distinct (39.5%) than to be the same (23.7%). Just 10/38 informants (26.3%) believe that the most correct pronunciation is heard in France, whilst an even smaller percentage (7.9%) believe it to be heard in Belgium. We will discuss this result in the next section.

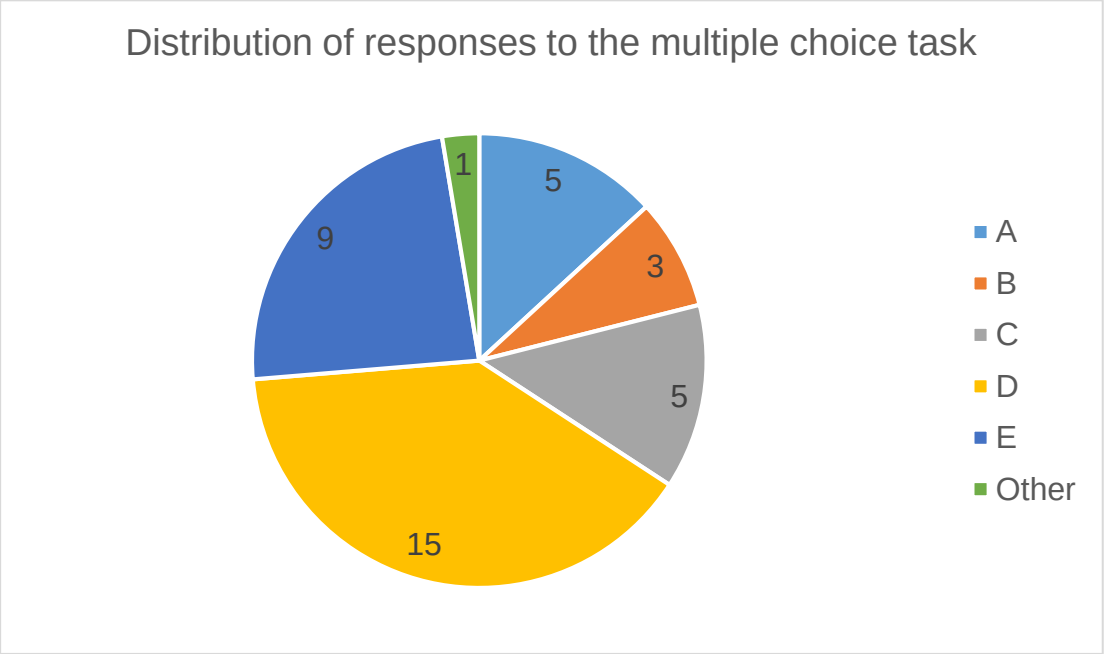

Figure 7-1. Distribution of responses to the multiple choice task

As for social variation, Figure 7-2 illustrates that responses vary according to age. The most noteworthy patterns to emerge from organising the data in this way include that all three of the informants who believe the most correct pronunciation is heard in Belgium (statement B) belong to the middle age group. Equally noteworthy is the fact that whilst nearly a third of older informants believe that the most correct pronunciation is heard in France (statement A), this percentage drops to less than 10% for the middle age group and 0% for the youngest. In contrast, 60% of younger informants believe that, though different, the pronunciations in Belgium and France are equally correct (statement D). A

much smaller percentage of older and middle-aged informants hold this belief (33.3% and 31% respectively).

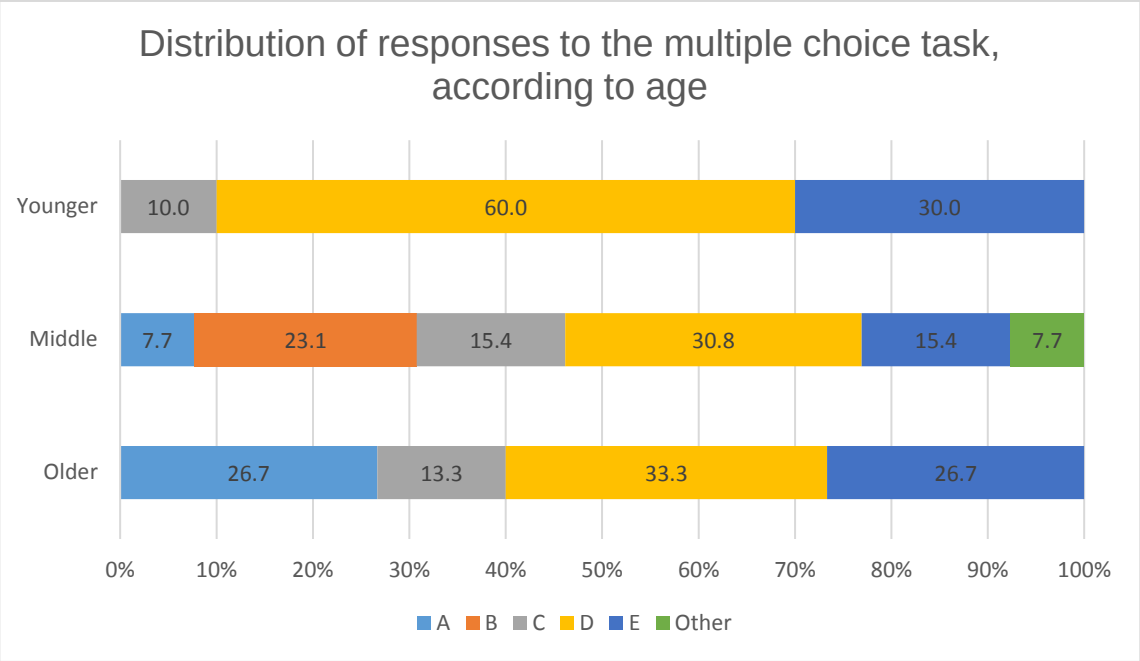

Figure 7-2. Distribution of responses to the multiple choice task according to age

There is some variation according to educational background. Figure 7-3 illustrates that all five of the informants who believe that 'the most correct pronunciation is heard in France; however, amongst the pronunciations in Belgium there are some that are more correct than others' (statement C) are from ED2. In contrast, a greater percentage of ED1 informants believe that the most correct pronunciation is heard in Belgium (statement B). However, these percentages of 14.3% for ED1 and 4.2% for ED2 equate to informant numbers of two and one respectively. Finally, it can be seen that whilst ED1 slightly favours the belief that although the pronunciations in Belgium and France are different, they are both as correct as each other (statement D), ED2 slightly favours the belief that they are exactly the same (statement E).

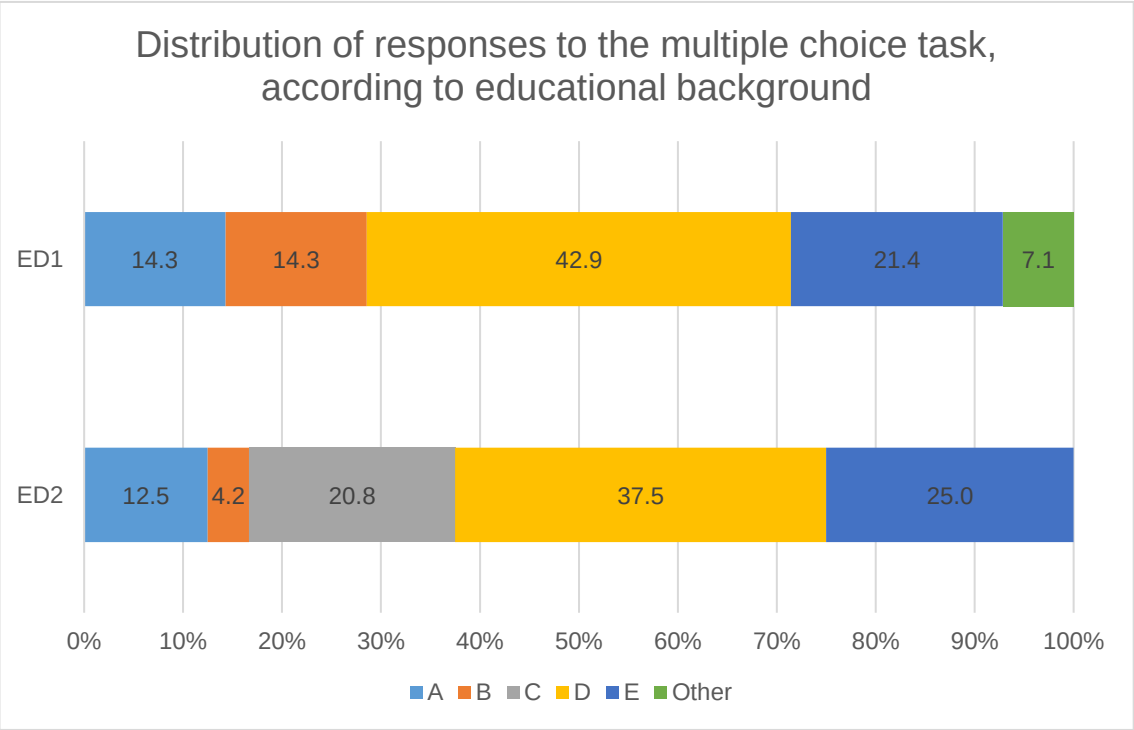

Figure 7-3. Distribution of responses to the multiple choice task according to educational background

Finally, there is also variation along the lines of sex. There are several noteworthy patterns in Figure 7-4. Firstly, it emerges that all three of the informants to profess that the most correct pronunciation is heard in Belgium are male. Secondly, it is revealed that women show a much stronger propensity (42.1% compared to 5.3% for men) to believe that the most correct pronunciations in France and Belgium are equal and the same. Finally, whilst women are slightly more inclined than men to think that the most correct pronunciation is heard in France (statement A) (15.8% and 10.5% respectively), it emerges that men are much more inclined (21.1% compared to 5.3% for women) to feel that 'the most correct pronunciation is heard in France, however, amongst the pronunciations in Belgium there are some that are more correct than others' (statement C).

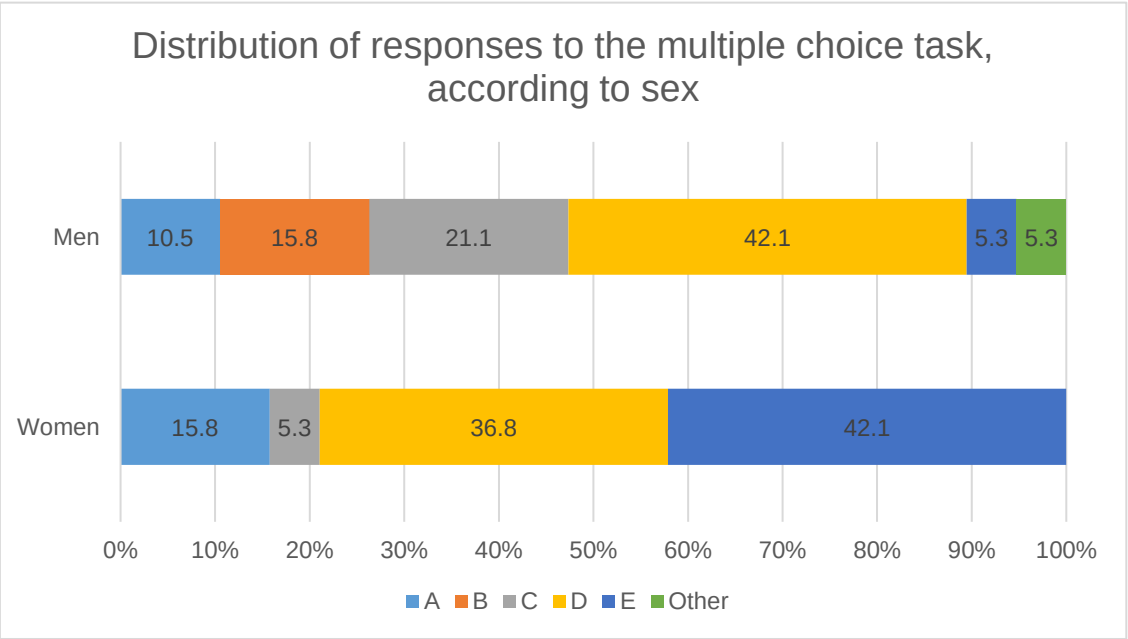

Figure 7-4. Distribution of responses to the multiple choice task according to sex

7.4.2 Analysis and discussion of the multiple choice task

The finding in Figure 7-1 that the majority of informants perceive that the most correct varieties in France and Belgium are equally correct is perhaps not what we would have expected, given the many references in the scholarly literature to a long-present sense of linguistic insecurity (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Francard 1993 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 235; Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Hambye & Francard 2004). This being said, as mentioned above, there is evidence that Francophone Belgians no longer feel as linguistically insecure as they have done previously (Franke & Francard 2001–2002 cited in Francard fc). Less surprising is the finding that a greater percentage of informants believe the most correct pronunciation is heard in France rather than in Belgium. This result is more in keeping with traditional discourses (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235) and indeed findings observed elsewhere, which have shown Francophone Belgians to believe that generally Hexagonal French is more correct than Belgian French (Moreau et al. 1999).

Organising the data according to age (Figure 7-2), an apparent-time change in attitudes emerges: as age decreases, belief that the most correct pronunciation is found in France decreases. This result is unsurprising, since Moreau et al. (1999: 9) found that older informants had more normative attitudes[214]. It also strengthens the conclusion made by Franke and Francard (2001–2002 cited in Francard fc) that legitimate varieties are no longer solely associated with France. Whilst the belief that the most correct varieties in France and Belgium are equal yet distinct is the most popular response for all age groups, it is only in the youngest age group that this is the majority response. These changing beliefs therefore appear to mirror the shift in focus of scholarly literature over the past twenty years; that is to say, from linguistic insecurity to reification and valorisation of an endogenous linguistic norm which may or may not exist (see 7.2).

Combining the percentage of informants who selected sentences A and C, 14.3% of ED1 speakers appear to believe that the most correct pronunciation is heard in France, whilst the percentage for ED2 is 33.3%. It is not surprising that the percentage is greater for ED2, since previous research in Francophone Belgium has shown that more educated informants are more linguistically insecure (Moreau et al. 1999: 9)[215]. The same was also found in Le Havre (Hauchecorne & Ball 1997: 21), and Stewart found in Ile-de-France that middle-

[214] This, the authors suggest, is on account of the shift in the 1970s away from the dominant prescriptivist paradigm. This finding is one which contrasts with that of Paltridge and Giles (1984) in their survey of attitudes towards Hexagonal varieties. They found that overall the elderly were more favourable in their ratings of speech.

[215] Relatedly, Rispail and Moreau (2004) found that those in France, Belgium and Luxembourg who were more mobile had greater levels of linguistic awareness. Since research has shown that mobility and education are positively correlated (cf. Courgeau 1985: 151–156; Gustafson 2006: 521) we can see here a further link – albeit indirect – between linguistic awareness and education.

aged speakers from a higher socioeconomic background were more preoccupied by linguistic correctness than those from a lower socioeconomic background (Stewart 2012: 198).

In light of the above, it is also not surprising that the majority of informants who believe the most correct pronunciation is found in Belgium belong to ED1. Furthermore, all three of the people to select this response were male, which is what we would expect, given that Moreau et al. (1999: 9, 26) found women's attitudes were more normative than men's. Moreover, in the phonological chapters (cf. 4.6.2.3; 4.7.1.1.3; 5.5.3.3; 5.6.2.3) it was found that in certain – though not all – behaviours women were more sensitive to standard or prestige variants. Indeed, this is a generally accepted pattern in sociolinguistics (see for example Labov 1972, 2001; Trudgill 1972)[216].

Another gendered pattern that emerges is women's strong tendency to believe that the most correct pronunciations in France and Belgium are equally correct and the same. Whilst this may be because women truly believe the situation to be such, it may also not be. In his study of attitudes towards foreign-accented speech, Pantos (2010) illustrated that informants' explicit and implicit attitudes diverged[217]. In a task where informants' attitudes are overtly explored, their responses may be different to those in tasks where they do not realise what is being tested. Since attitudes were overtly questioned in the multiple choice task,

[216] Although Stewart (2012: 198) found that in the Ile-de-France males were 9.81 times more likely to rate the least linguistically prestigious cities more negatively.
[217] That is to say, whilst explicit attitudinal testing revealed a bias towards foreign-accented speakers, implicit attitudinal testing revealed one towards US-accented speakers (Pantos 2010: iv).

and we know that women are typically more linguistically insecure[218], it may be that, rather than represent their belief, the women's tendency to agree that Belgian and French varieties are equally correct and the same was due to their desire to align their speech with that which is traditionally considered correct. What is more, this finding corroborates that of Francard (1991 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 387): he found that whilst school leavers outwardly rejected the notion that the best French is spoken in France, implicitly, certain other responses showed they agreed with it.

Having discussed the results of the multiple choice task, we now go on to investigate the sentence completion task.

7.5 Sentence completion task

Informants were given an incomplete sentence and invited to complete it. The sentence was:

> 'Si je voulais parler plus correctement, j'adopterais la prononciation de(s)… qui… parle(nt)…'[219]

7.5.1 Results of the sentence completion task

Of the 39 informants, twenty responded to this question[220]. The responses are replicated below as they were written on the questionnaires:

1. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***Tournai…*** Rose, OFED1
2. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***Paris*** *qui parle(nt)* ***français****…* Olivier, YMED1

[218] See, for example, Labov's (1966) classic New York City study and Thompson's (1984) study of linguistic insecurity in Winnipeg.
[219] In English: 'If I wanted to speak more correctly, I would adopt the pronunciation of… who speak(s)…'
[220] The informants who did not respond said that this was because nothing came to mind.

3. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***Tournai*** *qui parle(nt)* ***Tournaisien****…* Quentin, OMED2
4. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***France*** *qui parle(nt)* ***et : journaux télévisés nationaux****…* Hugo, MMED2
5. *… qui parle(nt)* ***des Francophones de Flandre****…* Yann, MMED1…
6. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***Français*** *qui parle(nt)* ***parisien****…* Yolande, MFED2
7. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***écrivains français ou Francophones de Belgique****…* Brigitte, OFED2
8. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***professeurs****… qui parle(nt)* ***bon français****…* Anthony, OMED1
9. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***linguistes****… qui parle(nt)* ***correctement le français****…* Delphine, MFED2
10. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***porte-paroles*** *qui parle(nt)* ***avec le moins d'accent possible et très clairement****…* Richard, YMED2
11. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***présentateurs journal TV*** *qui parle(nt)* ***le français****…* Christophe, OMED1
12. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***présentateurs télé*** *qui parle(nt)* ***avec un vocabulaire correct****…* Julien, YMED2
13. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***hommes politiques*** *qui parle(nt)* ***avec élégance, vocabulaire choisi****…* Patricia, OFED2
14. …*la prononciation de(s)* ***Jean d'Ormesson****…* Ines, OFED2
15. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***Julie Morelle*** *qui parle(nt)* ***avec une diction parfaite****…* Simon, OMED2
16. … *la prononciation de(s)* ***Roi et la Reine*** *qui parle(nt)* ***très chic****…* Océane, YFED1

17. *…qui parle(nt)* ***des personnes qui ont pris des cours de diction****… Lea, YFED2*

18. ***C'est le niveau d'instruction****…* Daniel, OMED1 (oral response)

19. *… qui parle(nt)* ***je garderai notre prononciation****…* Nadine, YFED2

20. *… la prononciation de(s)* ***moi****…* Maxime, MMED2

7.5.2 Analysis and discussion of the sentence completion task

It can be seen that there is a considerable amount of variation in the responses to the question of which – or whose – pronunciation informants would adopt in order to speak more correctly. For Rose (1) and Olivier (2) correctness is solely associated with a place. On the other hand, for Quentin (3), Yann (5) and Yolande (6), it is associated with a place *and* the people from that place. In contrast, Hugo (4) and Brigitte (7) associate more correct pronunciation with either a place or people from a place, or a profession. Indeed several others responded to the question by evoking professions. This was the case for Anthony (8), Delphine (9), Richard (10), Christophe (11), Julien (12), and Patricia (13). As for Ines (14), Simon (15) and Océane (16), they cited the names of specific individuals, whilst for Lea (17) and Daniel (18), those who spoke more correctly than them were people who had been trained in speaking. Finally, Nadine (19) and Maxime (20) asserted that they would keep their pronunciation.

Looking in more detail at each category of responses, and beginning with those who cited places or people associated with places, it can be seen that within these responses there is variation. Rose and Quentin both cite speech from Tournai. Whilst Quentin lived in Tournai, he was born in a village in the Tournai

a*rrondissement*, whereas Rose had spent her entire life in villages in the region. For them, then, we might infer that the speech of Tournai – the relatively urban centre – was a prestige variety. Indeed, in rating tasks, which we will address in the next section, both of them rated their own speech as being 'very similar' though not identical to that of Tournai. This result is reminiscent of Boughton's (2006: 299) finding in her study of Pays de la Loire speakers in which urbanness, standardness and middle-classness were perceived to correlate whilst ruralness, non-standardness and working-classness were also perceived to be linked. On the other hand, the finding sits in contrast to that of Hall (2008: 274). He found that whilst 8/10 rural informants rated the local accent positively, only 6/20 urban informants did so.

As for Yann, his consideration that the speech of Francophones in Flanders represents 'more correct pronunciation' may appear, a priori, to be a surprising one. Dominant contemporary discourses (cf. Mnookin & Verbeke 2009) concern the fractured nature of Belgium, with political contention arising between Flanders and Wallonia. It is not only politically that these two regions are distinct; they differ along economic, historical, cultural and linguistic lines (cf. chapter 3). Given this divide, and the regionally symbolic nature of language in Belgium (Edwards & Shearn 1987; Blampain et al. 1997; Mnookin & Verbeke 2009), it is surprising to see Yann cite a region in Flanders. However, in both Ghent and Antwerp, which are in Flanders, there are Francophone communities which are descended from the Flemish bourgeoisie who were nearly completely French-speaking in the 18th and 19th century (Massion 1987: 44 cited in Milicková 1997: 54). Since Yann had a keen interest in history and philology,

and had written *'à Gand'* (in Ghent) next to his multiple choice task response, it is likely that his response was due to his awareness of the history of Ghent.

The responses of Olivier, Yolande and Hugo reflect traditional normative attitudes (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235): they all consider that to have more correct pronunciation, they should adopt the accents heard in France. Indeed, Olivier and Yolande specify Paris – the region historically and traditionally associated with SF (Lodge 1993; Franke & Francard 2001–2002 cited in Francard fc). Comparing these responses with those to the multiple choice task, it emerges that whilst Hugo's responses across tasks are consistent[221], those of Olivier and Yolande are not. Olivier selected sentence D and Yolande sentence E. Both of these sentences included the belief that French and Belgian varieties were equally correct. Since there was no explicit association between 'place' and 'correctness' in the sentence completion task, we may see this task as one testing more implicit attitudes towards this correlation than the sentence selection task, in which the link between place and correctness was *explicit*. This finding is thus comparable to that of Pantos (2010; see above) and provides further evidence that when attitudes towards language are tested in different ways, informants' responses may be divergent (cf. Campbell-Kibler 2012; Loudermilk 2013: 145–146; Llamas n.d).

As for the backgrounds of Olivier, Yolande and Hugo, they are diverse. Whilst Olivier was a young male who left school upon completion of compulsory education, Yolande and Hugo were both middle-aged. And whilst both were in professional jobs, Yolande left school at the same stage as Olivier. Although in

[221] Hugo selected sentence C: 'the most correct pronunciation is heard in France; however, amongst the pronunciations in Belgium there are some that are more correct than others'.

the previous section we illustrated a decline in explicit association between Hexagonal French and superiority, the mixed backgrounds of these three informants show that, implicitly, traditional attitudes do appear to persist broadly in society.

As well as citing 'France', Hugo also identified that to speak more correctly he would adopt the pronunciation of national news presenters. He is not the only one to respond in this way. Christophe cited news presenters and Julien cited television presenters. It is not surprising that informants mention television presenters, since these are people who occupy a prominent position, and who the informants – and indeed wider public – are likely to have an awareness of. Social psychologists Busselle and Schrum (2003) argue that in their construction of social judgments, individuals use 'exemplars'. These judgement constructs are 'separate instances of a category encountered by an individual [which] are frequently acquired through the course of media exposure' (Busselle & Schrum 2003: 256)[222]. Thus that individuals have recourse to models associated with the media is not surprising. What is more, news presenters may be seen as professional users of language and are in a position which is serious, requires responsibility and commands respect. The fact that informants from all three age groups had recourse to television presenters illustrates that this is not a generational pattern.

Hugo, Christophe and Julien were part of a larger group who cited professions in response to the sentence completion task. Delphine and Richard cited

[222] Exemplar models have also been taken up by certain sociophoneticians, such as Foulkes and Docherty (2006: 410), who argue that such a model can provide a 'unified account of how sociophonetic as well as linguistic material might be learned and stored.'

professions in which linguistic expertise is the *primary* skill; those of linguists and spokes-persons. Anthony and Patricia, on the other hand, cited roles which require high levels of communicative efficacy and education, and which command respect; they cited teachers and politicians respectively. These professions are also those that the general public would have a high awareness of and be likely to come into contact with; either through the media, in the case of politicians (and news presenters), or, in the case of teachers, in day-to-day life.

As for Brigitte, she cited both a people associated with a place – Francophone Belgians – and a profession associated with a place: French writers. In language attitudes research, scholars categorise responses – or indeed ask respondents to evaluate accents – along two axes: status and solidarity (cf. Stewart, Ryan & Giles 1985; Preston 1999a: 366; Kircher 2012). And research has shown that accents do not tend to be rated equally on both axes; that is to say, if something is rated highly in status terms, it is likely to be rated less highly in solidarity terms, and vice versa (cf. Hoare 1998; Kuiper 1999, 2005)[223]. It can be seen in Brigitte's response that she levels the discordance between status and solidarity. When asked how she would make her pronunciation more correct, Brigitte cites a people with which we can imagine she has a high level of solidarity, yet who have traditionally been accorded low linguistic status: Francophone Belgians, but she also cites a people who traditionally hold a high status, but with whom we can imagine she feels little solidarity: French writers.

[223] For example, Kuiper (1999) found that the French spoken in Provence was rated highly in terms of solidarity, but poorly in terms of status, whilst the French in Paris rated highly in terms of status, but poorly in terms of solidarity. Another example is Hoare's (1998) study in Brittany; however, Hoare found variation according to age: she found that Breton-accented French was rated more highly in terms of solidarity by over 12s whilst by under 12s it was rated more highly in terms of status.

Thus Brigitte's response, which appears somewhat paradoxical, illustrates how feelings of both status and solidarity can come into play when individuals are asked to express overt attitudes towards correctness.

Where Brigitte draws on both status and solidarity when responding to the task, Nadine favours solidarity alone, stating that she would 'keep our pronunciation'. This response may be interpreted in two ways: firstly it may be understood to mean 'I would keep our pronunciation because ours is the most correct'; or it could mean 'I would keep our pronunciation, regardless of how correct it is'. Despite being from a neighbouring village, Nadine's responses to the rating tasks below were that she perceived her speech to be identical to that in Tournai, and that this speech was 'very correct'. Thus we are drawn to the first interpretation; that she believes her pronunciation is as correct as it can get. Nadine was part of a university society of Tournaisiens and those from the surrounding area who gathered expressly to celebrate Tournaisien culture. Thus we can see that Nadine's response to this question, in which she favours solidarity, is consistent with the solidarity she clearly feels for the region.

This result resonates with several findings elsewhere. For example, Hoare (1998: 63) found that the younger speakers who professed to have higher levels of linguistic competency in Breton than older ones also had more positive attitudes towards Breton. From this, Hoare concluded judgments were based more on attitudes than reality. Similarly, Kircher (2012: 360) found that the more '*québécois* participants judged their own variety of French to be, the more favourably they evaluated [it]'. Both of these case studies illustrate Labov's (1996) notion of 'covert prestige' wherein 'nonstandard or apparently low-status

or ‘incorrect’ forms’ are favourably viewed by speakers (Trudgill 2003: 30). Not just observed in a Francophone context, Watt et al. (2014: 24) found an interaction between sense of identity and pronunciation on the English-Scottish border: they found that Scottish people who identified strongly as Scottish displayed higher levels of Scottish variants, whilst English people who identified as English as opposed to British displayed more English variants.

Similarly to Nadine, Maxime’s response to the sentence completion task was the word ‘me’. Unlike Nadine, however, he rated his pronunciation as ‘very similar’ to that in Tournai, which he rated as ‘very correct’. He was also from a village close to Tournai. However, Maxime was a professional sportsman, who played for his local team, but who had, over his career, played for teams elsewhere in Belgium, and played matches across the country. We can imagine then, that Maxime’s response was due to a high degree of local solidarity or affiliation developed in part through representing his home area in regional and national sporting events, at which he would have come into contact with members of ‘out groups’ (cf. Bert & Costa 2014; Beswick 2014; Redinger & Llamas 2014; Watt et al. 2014). Maxime’s response thus provides a further illustration of how regional affiliation and language attitudes may interact. We will explore this suggested link in more detail in chapter 8 when we analyse data concerning regional affiliation.

Not all informants had recourse to professions when responding to the sentence completion task. Lea and Daniel used educational criteria to define their responses. Lea said that she would adopt the pronunciation of those who had had elocution lessons, whilst Daniel, who responded orally, commented that it

was to do with ‘the level of education’. Both of these informants, then, perceive correctness in traditionally normative terms, despite being from opposing social backgrounds. What is more, this response reflects the link between education and linguistic correctness identified by Moreau et al. (1999: 32): they found that Francophone Belgians rated educated speech more positively.

Finally, three informants responded to the question by giving the names of specific individuals: Ines, who worked training primary school teachers, named Jean d’Ormesson, a French novelist, reporter and member of the Académie française; Simon, a retired bank worker, named Julie Morelle, a news presenter on *RTBF: Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française*; and Océane named the King and Queen of Belgium. Both Ines and Simon’s responses reflect those of other informants who named the professions of ‘French writers’ and ‘news presenters’. However, whilst the informants above named professions, and thus may have based their responses on stereotypes, Simon and Ines chose the speech of *real individuals* as their responses; a response which suggests more strongly that an exemplar-based model was in operation (cf. Busselle & Schrum 2003; Foulkes & Docherty 2006). Finally, Océane’s response illustrates her belief that linguistic correctness and status are tied to each other; for her, those at the pinnacle of linguistic correctness and those at the pinnacle of society are one and the same. Whilst this attitude might seem particularly traditional and normative, we must remember that Océane did *not* respond with the names of *French* individuals, which we might have expected, given traditional discourses which associate correctness with French varieties (cf. Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999), but rather Belgian ones. Thus, for

Océane, like Brigitte, both status and solidarity come into play when considering a response to the sentence completion task.

As for how informants described the pronunciation they would consider to be more correct than their own, responses were also varied. Whilst Rose and Christophe simply completed the sentence '…qui parle(nt)...' with 'français' others were more descriptive. Yolande, for example, had recourse to spatial parameters, using the word 'parisien'. As for Anthony, Delphine, Julien and Christophe, they employed prescriptivist terminology, using between them the adjectives 'bon', 'correct' and 'parfait' and the adverb 'correctement'[224]. Finally, as well as using some evaluative, though not traditionally prescriptive, terminology ('avec le moins d'accent possible'; 'vocabulaire choisi'), Richard, Patricia and Océane also described the pronunciation they would adopt in terms of style of delivery, using the phrases 'très clairement', 'avec élégance' and 'très chic' respectively.

Looking in more detail at the prescriptive and stylistic descriptions, it can be seen that these descriptions are given only in reference to named professions or individuals, and not to a spatially defined person or people. What is more, the descriptive comments appear to be specific to the people they refer to. Richard describes spokespeople as 'speaking with the least accent possible' and 'very clearly', which we can imagine would be within the remit of this role. As for Patricia, she describes politicians as speaking 'with elegance' and with 'selected vocabulary'. This description is interesting since, whilst the term 'elegance' may be used to describe a style of speech, it may also be used to describe other

[224] These descriptions resonate with the classic prescriptivist work by Maurice Grevisse (1936): *Le Bon Usage.*

kinds of behaviour such as deportment or clothing choice. In this way we can infer that for Patricia language may be an 'act of identity' (cf. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985), indexing certain identity traits just as various other attributes do (cf. Coupland 2009: 286).

The notion of 'selected vocabulary' is also an interesting one; it reflects an implicit belief that politicians' speech is scripted and thus that this is what the most correct speech looks like to Patricia. Finally, as we saw above, Océane sees that those who represent the pinnacle of linguistic correctness are also at the pinnacle of society: she responds to the question by naming the King and Queen. Her belief reflects traditional, historical perceptions in France: from as early as the 16th century, the King's French was perceived as the most superior and elegant variety in the Gallo-Romance area (Lodge 1993: 133). Océane's description of the King and Queen's speech as 'very chic' illustrates the indexical nature of language, as seen above with Patricia, since the phrase 'very chic' could be just as easily employed to describe a number of behavioural attributes associated with high society such as fashion.

Having discussed the results of the sentence completion task, we now go on to investigate the rating tasks.

7.6 Rating tasks

Informants were invited to rate regional and abstract accents according to three criteria: 1) correctness; 2) degree of difference; and 3) pleasantness. The regional accents were those of Tournai, Brussels, Liège, Lille, Mons, and Mouscron (see Figure 7-5). Tournai was chosen because it was either the city

that informants lived in, or the capital of their *arrondissement*. Brussels was selected because, as well as being the capital, there is a well-known stereotype associated with the city (Bauvois 1996). Mons and Mouscron were selected along with Lille because they are all relatively close; however, Lille is, of course, separated by the national border. Lastly, Liège was selected because it is on the other side of the country from Tournai, and because research has shown not only that a number of regional traits persist in the east, where Liège is situated (e.g. realisation of *h aspiré* with a glottal fricative and merging of /ɑ̃/~/ɔ̃/ (Hambye 2005: 95)), but that it is the regional Belgian accent that is most identifiable for Belgians (Bauvois 1996). Liège was also selected in order that the hypothesis could be tested that geographical proximity and rating are correlated, as has been seen elsewhere (cf. Demirci & Kleiner 1999: 269; Kuiper 1999: 247–254; McKinnie & Dailey-O'Cain 2002: 284–287; Fridland & Bartlett 2006: 368).

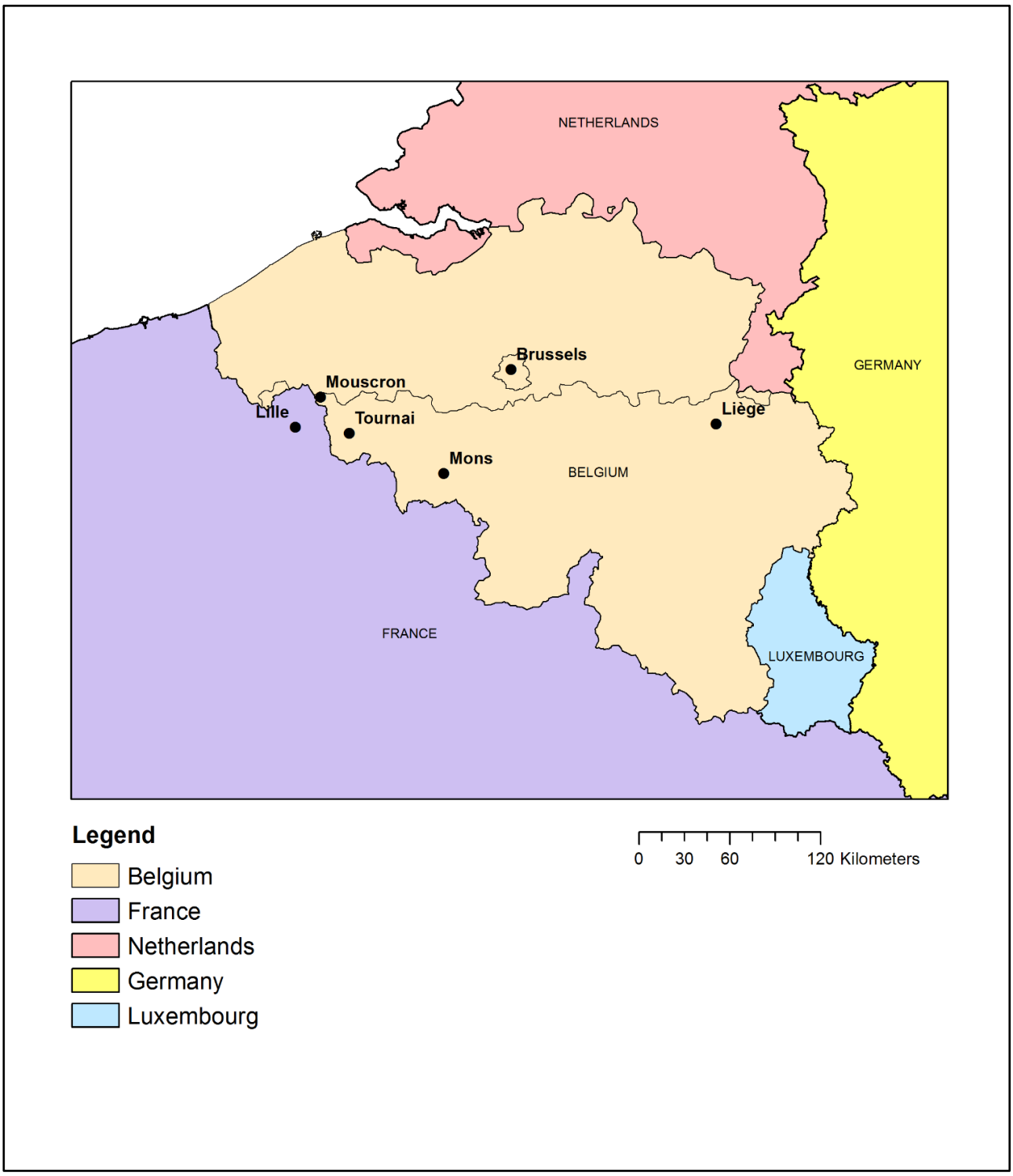

Figure 7-5. Map showing location of places listed in rating tasks

The abstract accents that were selected were: the standard Belgian accent, the standard French accent, the typical Belgian accent and the typical French accent. These were chosen in order to see how informants would engage with and respond to such abstract concepts. However, during the first interview, it

became apparent that some further explanation than just the labels was required. Therefore, for all subsequent interviews, explanations were given on the written questionnaires in order that informants were given the same information. The accents were described as:

> ‘accent standard = ce qu’on enseigne, ou bien ce qui est considéré comme prononciation correcte’[225]
>
> ‘accent typique = ce qu’on entend autour de soi (en général)’[226]

Correctness of pronunciation was rated on a scale of one to five, where 1 = ‘pas du tout correcte’, 5 = ‘très correcte’, and 3 = ‘ni correcte ni incorrecte’. Pleasantness was also rated on a scale of one to five, where 1 = ‘très désagréable’, 5 = ‘très agréable’, and 3 = ‘ni l’un ni l’autre’. Degree of difference was rated on a four-point scale (following Kuiper 1999: 247) where 1 = ‘exactement pareil’, 2 = ‘très similaire’, 3 = ‘un peu similaire’, and 4 = ‘completement differente’.

7.6.1 The correctness rating task

7.6.1.1 Results

Table 7-1 illustrates that overall the standard French accent was rated as the most correct accent, and was rated as slightly more correct than the standard Belgian accent. Closely behind were the Lille and Tournai accents. At the other end of the scale, the typical French accent and typical Belgian accent were rated as only just slightly correct, whilst the Liège accent was the least positively rated with a mean score of 3.03, placing it just above the ‘neither correct nor incorrect’ mark. None of the accents score a mean mark which would place

[225] In English: ‘standard accent = what is taught or correct pronunciation’.
[226] In English: ‘typical accent = what you hear around you (in general)’.

them on the ‘incorrect’ half of the scale. Table 7-1 also illustrates that not all informants responded to the task and that certain informants rated some accents, but not others. The accents that received fewer responses were the abstract ones. We will discuss these results in the next section.

Accent	**Number of responses**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Standard French accent	30	4.33	0.959
Standard Belgian accent	30	4.20	0.925
Lille	33	3.94	1.059
Tournai	33	3.91	1.071
Mons	31	3.84	1.128
Mouscron	32	3.78	1.039
Brussels	31	3.58	0.992
Typical French accent	28	3.43	1.034
Typical Belgian accent	29	3.33	1.104
Liège	31	3.03	1.278

Table 7-1. Mean scores and numbers of participants in the correctness rating task

Figure 7-6 illustrates the variation between correctness ratings according to age. The regional accents are on the left-hand side and are ordered from left to right in decreasing proximity from Tournai, and the abstract ones on the right. A clear pattern emerges wherein all regional accents are rated most positively by the older speakers and least positively by the younger speakers. There is most agreement across age groups with regard to the Brussels accent, whilst ratings diverge most for the Liège accent. As for the abstract accents, here the pattern changes. Mean scores are very similar across age groups for both the standard accents and the typical French accent. However, there is more variation for the typical Belgian accent: it is rated most correct by older informants and least correct by middle-aged informants.

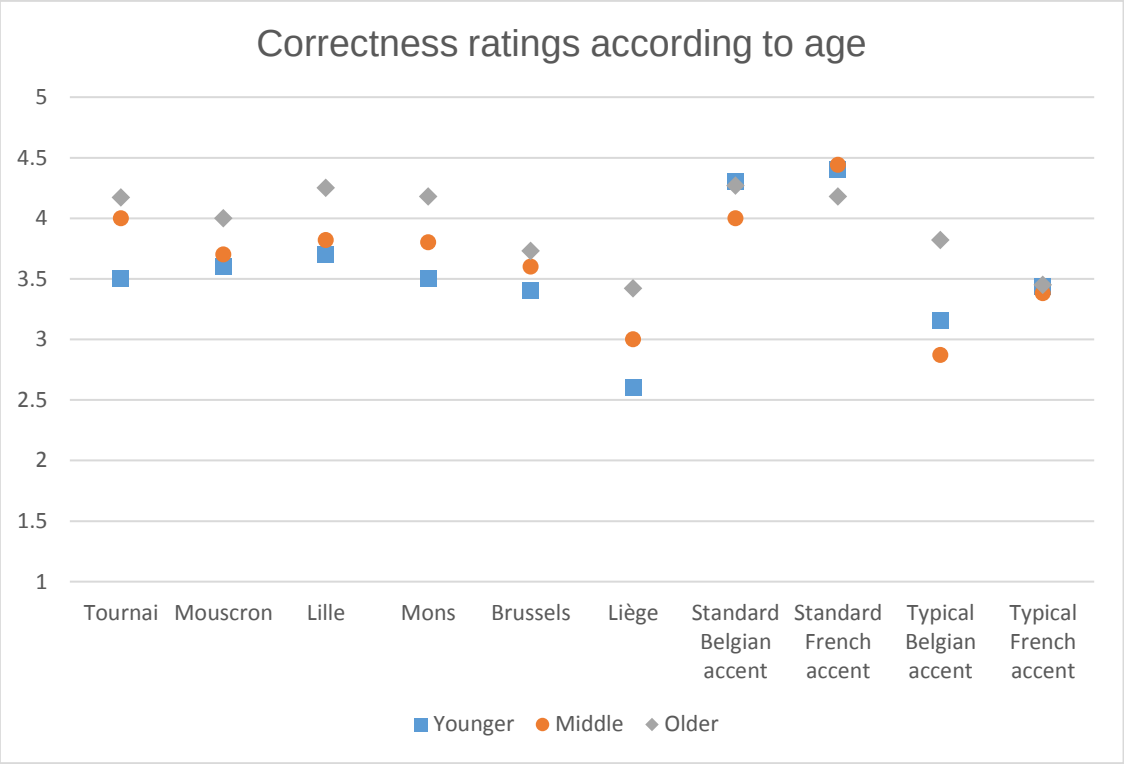

Figure 7-6. Mean scores in the correctness rating task according to age

Figure 7-7 illustrates the variation in correctness ratings according to educational background. Whilst there is agreement between ED1 and ED2 regarding the Liège and Lille accents, there is divergence for the other regional accents, which ED1 rate more positively than ED2. As for the abstract accents, whilst there is near agreement for the typical French accent and standard French accent, the positions are reversed, with ED2 rating the latter more positively and ED1 the former more positively. ED1 also rate both the standard Belgian accent and typical Belgian accent more positively than ED2, with their score for the latter considerably higher. In summary, ED1 give all accents higher scores than ED2, with the exception of the standard French accent.

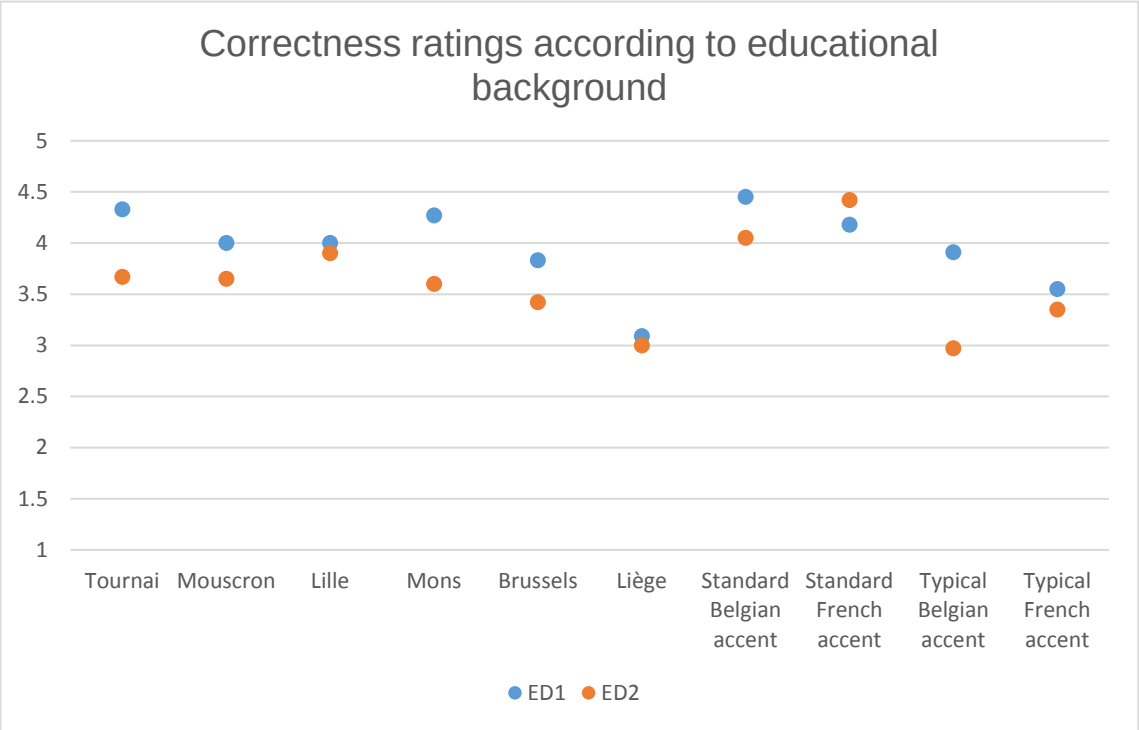

Figure 7-7. Mean scores in the correctness rating task according to educational background

Figure 7-8 illustrates variation in correctness ratings according to sex. Once again, a clear pattern emerges with the regional accents: there is near agreement concerning Liège and Lille, whilst for all other accents the women rate them more correct than men. As for the abstract accents, a pattern emerges wherein the men rate the French accents more highly than the women do, and for the standard accent the mean is considerably higher. On the other hand, women rate the Belgian accents as more correct, with their mean score of the typical accent considerably higher than the men's score. We now go on to discuss these results.

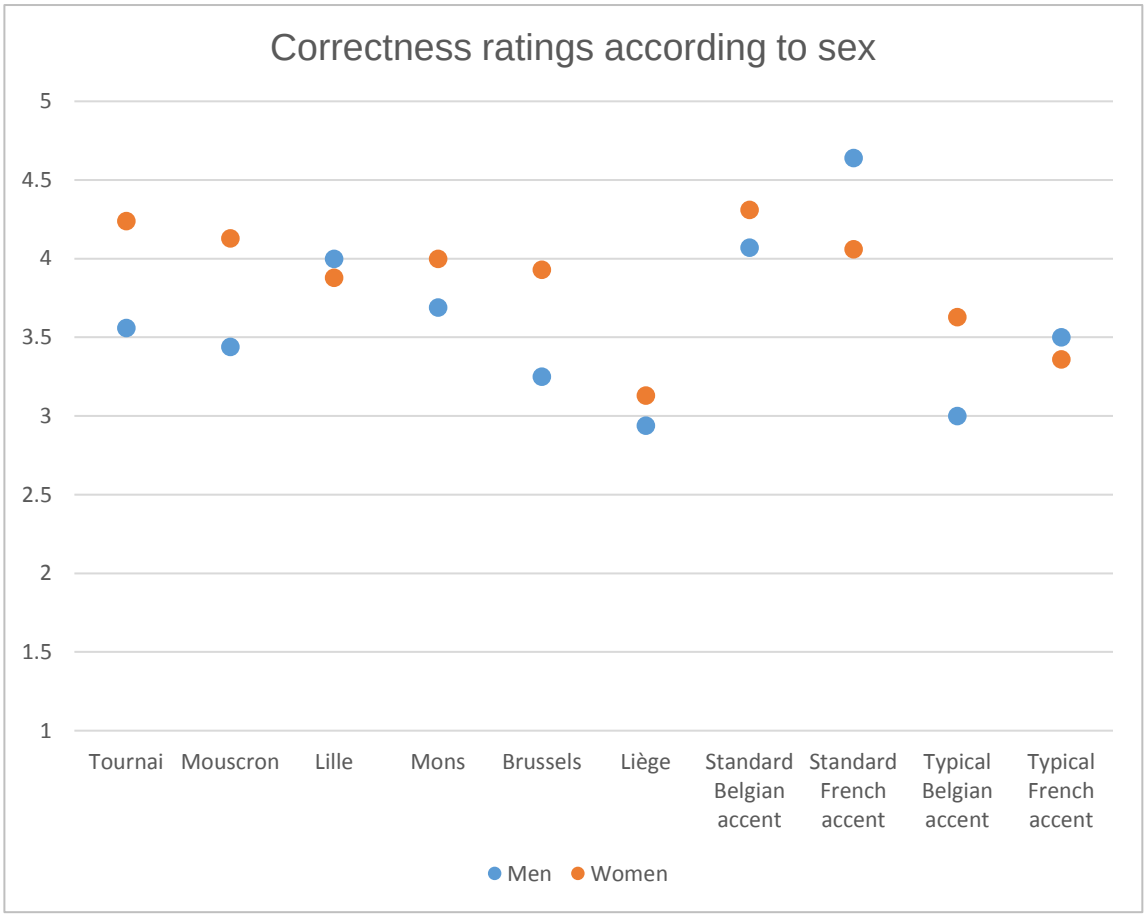

Figure 7-8. Mean scores in the correctness rating task according to sex

7.6.1.2 Analysis and discussion

Firstly, we must address the fact that a certain number of individuals did not respond to this task and that, furthermore, certain individuals rated some regional accents, but not the abstract ones; indeed, this was the case for approximately a quarter of informants. Since the researcher was present for all interviews, usually, when the informant did not respond, a discussion was had as to why not. There were two main reasons: either informants said that they thought all accents were 'equally correct' or they said that they did not know what the 'abstract' labels actually referred to. These non-responses are interesting in themselves. Firstly, they reveal that certain informants are uncomfortable with the idea of linguistic correctness, whilst others have no

problem with it at all. Secondly, they suggest that whilst some people appear to have an accessible exemplar (cf. Busselle & Schrum 2003; Foulkes & Docherty 2006) others either do not, or do not have one they are willing to rate.

That the two abstract accents of SF and standard Belgian French are rated as most correct (see Table 7-1) illustrates that most borderlanders do carry around a belief that a standard *does* exist and, moreover, that it is the normative belief wherein standardness and correctness are intertwined (cf. Lodge 1993: 156). That both the French and Belgian accents receive similar scores is what we would expect, given that in section 7.4 the majority of informants asserted the belief that the most correct varieties in both nations were equally correct. However, that the French accent scores slightly more highly illustrates that the traditional attitudes (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235), which were also seen in 7.4 and 7.5, do persist in the Belgian borderland.

There is little variation in the rating of the standard accents according to age (Figure 7-1); however, the middle age group and – to a lesser extent – the younger age group, as well as those belonging to ED2 and those who are male, rate SF more highly than standard Belgian. In contrast, the older informants, those in ED1, and the women, display the inverse pattern. To a certain extent these patterns in social variation mirror those found in 7.5: in the rating task, as in the sentence completion task, ED2 rate Hexagonal French as more correct than Belgian French, a result which, as mentioned above, replicates those seen elsewhere (Moreau et al. 1999; 32). On the other hand, whilst in the sentence completion task the belief that the most correct French was spoken in France decreased with age, in the rating task this pattern is not seen; on the contrary,

the older speakers rate Belgian French more correctly than their younger compatriots, and also rate it above Hexagonal French, a result which contrasts with Moreau et al.'s (1999) finding. How can we explain this result?

In chapter 6 (6.5.4.3.1) it emerged that of all the age groups, the older speakers were the group who, perceptually, were most orientated towards Belgium. Thus there is correspondence between where older speakers perceive their extended speech community is and where they perceive the speech is most 'correct'. It was concluded that these perceptions may have been shaped by spatial practices, and thus it may be that attitudes too are shaped by spatial practices. Indeed, this conclusion is compatible with Johnston's (1991: 68) argument that regions 'nurture particular belief sets and attitudes'. On the other hand, since in the attitudinal task informants were presented with a number of regional and abstract accents, we can imagine that notions of affiliation – rather than spatial routine – impacted on responses, as was suggested above. What is more, comparable patterns have been found in previous research: Llamas found regional identification interacted with linguistic perception in Middlesbrough (cf. Llamas 2006: 103)[227], and both Armstrong and Unsworth (1999) and Pooley (2004b) found that regional identification and linguistic behaviour interacted in the *Midi* and Lille region respectively. We will explore this explanation in chapter 8, when we examine the mobility and regional affiliation data.

In contrast, that the middle-aged informants rate SF as more correct than standard Belgian is not surprising, since research has shown that this age group are typically more standard in their behaviour (cf. Trudgill 2003: 6). What

[227] Llamas found that speakers' identification with and attitudes towards accents in Middlesbrough correlated with generationally distinct senses of regional identification.

is more, although their response to rate SF as more correct is not what Moreau et al. (1999: 9) found[228], it is consistent with the findings in the behavioural chapters in the present study, in which this age group were the group to most conform to the standard (4.5.2.1; 4.6.2.1; 4.7.1.1.1; 5.5.3.1; 5.6.2.1; 5.7.1.2.1.1). It is surprising to see that the women rated Belgian French as more correct than Hexagonal French; yet in chapter 6 (6.5.4.3.2) it was found that, like older informants, women orientated their extended speech community towards Belgium rather than France. Differing spatial practices and perceptions were evoked as explanatory factors for this finding in chapter 6. As with the older informants, it may be that the 'local' and 'domestic' nature (cf. 6.5.4.3.2; Massey 1994: 9) of women's circumscription of their speech community is replicated in their rating of various accents.

At the other end of the spectrum are the 'typical' accents. That these accents are rated least correct firstly illustrates a belief that some accents are more correct than others, and secondly that what is heard 'commonly' is not as correct as the standard. These results suggest a bipartite construal of language which resonates with the notion of diglossia (Lodge 1993: 257–260) wherein one variety serves for high (H) functions and the other for low (L) functions. Alternatively, they also point towards informants conceiving of a stylistic continuum. However, since informants were not expressly questioned on how they conceptualised these varieties in relation to each other, this interpretation remains speculative.

[228] They found that the speakers aged between 61 and 80 were most normative.

That even the typical French accent is rated more highly that the typical Belgian one reveals once again the pervasiveness of traditional normative discourses (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235). Whilst there is little social variation in ratings of the typical French accent, there is a good deal of variation in ratings of the typical Belgian one. Older speakers, those belonging to ED1, and the women rate it not only more highly than younger and middle-aged speakers, but also more highly than the typical French accent. The age variation replicates that seen with the standard accents and is not what we would expect, given that Moreau et al. (1999: 9) found older speakers to be more normative in their beliefs. On the other hand, Paltridge & Giles (1984: 77), in their study of attitudes towards French accents, found that older speakers were more positive in their evaluations. The variation according to educational background also reflects the pattern with the standard accents as well as those seen in previous research (Moreau et al. 1999: 32). As for the fact that women rate the typical Belgian accent more highly, as with their rating of the standard Belgian accent, this is an unexpected result since Moreau et al. (1999: 9, 26) found women were more normative in their attitudes.

The ratings of the regional accents are interesting: that the older informants are more positive in their ratings is in keeping with Paltridge and Giles (1984) who found the same pattern. That ED1 is more positive than ED2 is also in keeping with previous findings: Stewart (2012) found an inverse correlation between level of income and perceived linguistic correctness in his study of attitudes towards Ile-de-France accents – that is to say those who earned more money were more critical in their evaluations of linguistic correctness. The more positive ratings by women in the present study also reflect the gender

differences that emerged in Stewart's (2012: 198) survey; however, they contrast with Moreau et al.'s (1999: 9, 26) finding that women were more normative.

As for the relative ratings of each regional accent, as distance increases, correctness generally decreases. Tournai scores highly, yet is rated as slightly less correct than Lille. Given the patterns that emerged in the ratings of the abstract accents, and the traditional discourses surrounding correctness (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235), it is perhaps not surprising that the neighbouring French city comes out more highly than Tournai. What is more, the favouring of other over self has been seen elsewhere: Kuiper (2005: 37) found that speakers from Provence ranked their own accent as seventeenth most correct out of twenty-four accents. Looking at the social variation in ratings, it can be seen that this relatively high rating of the Lille accent is due to older speakers' responses. Thus, whilst the normative attitudes did not appear in their evaluations of abstract accents, in line with Moreau et al. (1999: 9), when it comes to regional accents, they do.

That Mons should be rated as more similar than Mouscron is interesting, given that the former is 50km from Tournai and the latter 24km. However, Mouscron is on the linguistic border with Dutch-speaking Flanders and is a commune in which services are offered in Dutch as well as French. We can therefore imagine that an awareness of this shaped informants responses. As for Brussels, the accent rates slightly higher than the typical accents. Since there is a well-known stereotypical Brussels accent (Bauvois 1996), we might have expected the Brussels accent to have been more negatively rated than the

typical accents. However, since Brussels is the capital, we can imagine that awareness of this might have affected informants' responses, causing them to rate Brussels more highly[229].

Finally, the Liège accent was rated considerably less correct than other accents. This is not surprising since previous research has shown that there are a number of regional features associated with Liège (see above, cf. chapter 2) and, furthermore, in conversations with locals in Tournai as well as some informants, Liège was mentioned as being somewhere where there was a noticeable accent.

7.6.2 The degree of difference rating task

7.6.2.1 Results

Table 7-2 illustrates that the Tournai accent was on average rated as most similar to participants' own accent[230]. After this came the standard Belgian accent, which was closely followed by that of Mouscron. At the other end of the spectrum, the pronunciation in Liège was rated as most different from informants' own – not far off being 'completely different' – and the Brussels accent was rated as somewhere between 'slightly similar' and 'completely different'[231]. In summary, a pattern emerges with the regional accents wherein degree of difference generally increases as proximity decreases, regardless of the border. Table 7-2 also illustrates that more participants were happy to respond to this rating task than to the correctness rating task; however, certain

[229] In line with a centre-periphery model, we can imagine that an awareness of the centrality of Brussels in terms of economy, politics and society would have mitigated a response based on informants' awareness of the stereotyped Brussels accent.
[230] The lowest score possible, which represented the description of 'exactly the same', was 1.
[231] The highest possible score, which represented the description of 'completely different', was 4.

informants still felt they could not rate certain accents; in particular the abstract ones.

Accent	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tournai	39	1.51	0.721
Standard Belgian accent	36	2.06	0.924
Mouscron	39	2.10	0.609
Lille	39	2.19	0.808
Standard French accent	35	2.34	0.873
Mons	38	2.39	0.727
Typical Belgian accent	33	2.67	1.080
Typical French accent	33	2.82	1.014
Brussels	37	3.20	0.759
Liège	37	3.59	0.686

Table 7-2. Mean scores and numbers of participants in the degree of difference rating task

Figure 7-9 illustrates a pattern wherein the mean score for degree of difference of the regional and standard accents is highest for the older informants. At the other end of the spectrum, younger informants generally rate regional and standard accents as less different from their own. As for the abstract accents, there are also patterns which are found. As age increases, rating of degree of difference from both the standard accents increases. On the other hand, the oldest informants rate the typical accents as least different from their own, whilst the middle-aged informants rate them as much more different from their own.

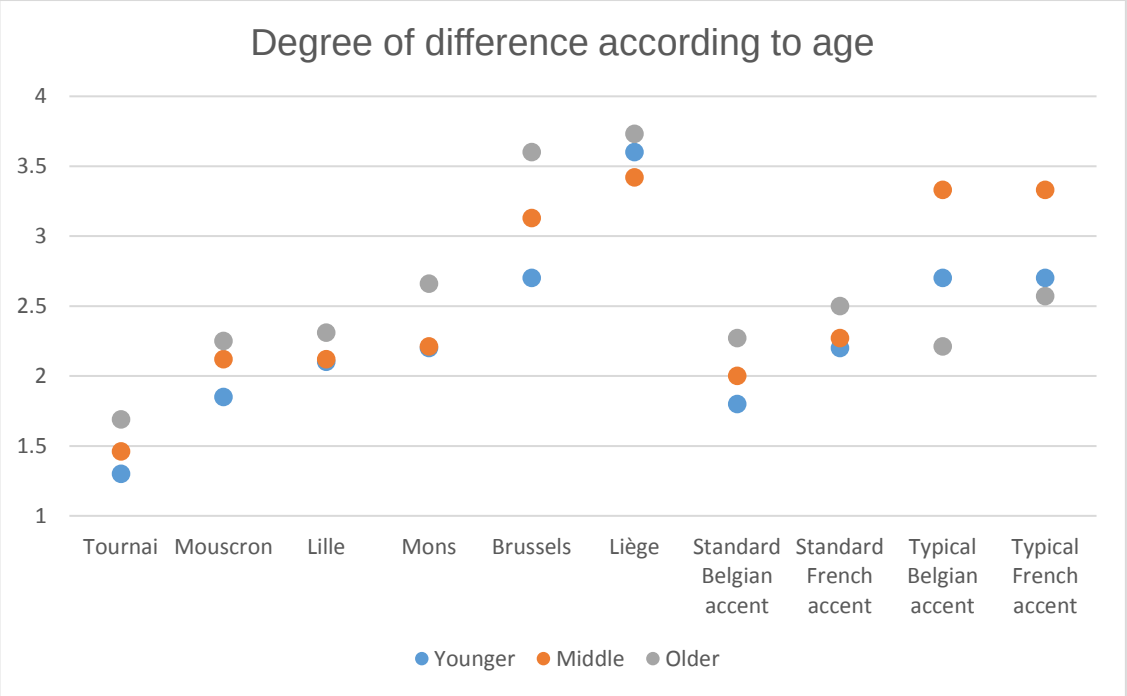

Figure 7-9. Mean scores in the degree of difference rating task according to age

Figure 7-10 illustrates that there is less variation in ratings along the lines of educational background than age. It also reveals that generally there is stronger agreement in ratings of regional than abstract accents. Finally, ED1 tends to rate accents as more different than their own than ED2, with the exception of Tournai and Liège, for which the scores are very similar, and the typical Belgian accent.

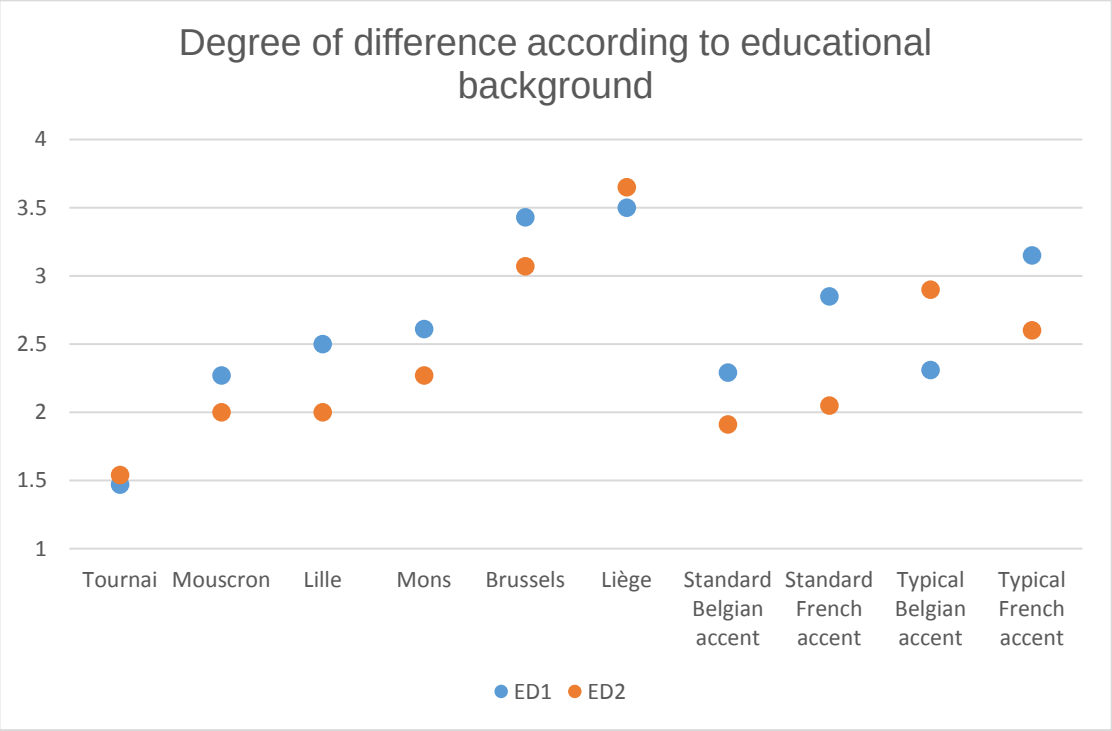

Figure 7-10. Mean scores in the degree of difference rating task according to educational background

Figure 7-11 illustrates that there is very little variation in ratings along the lines of sex. In fact, the biggest difference is between the ratings for Lille, in which men rate the accent as less different to their own than women.

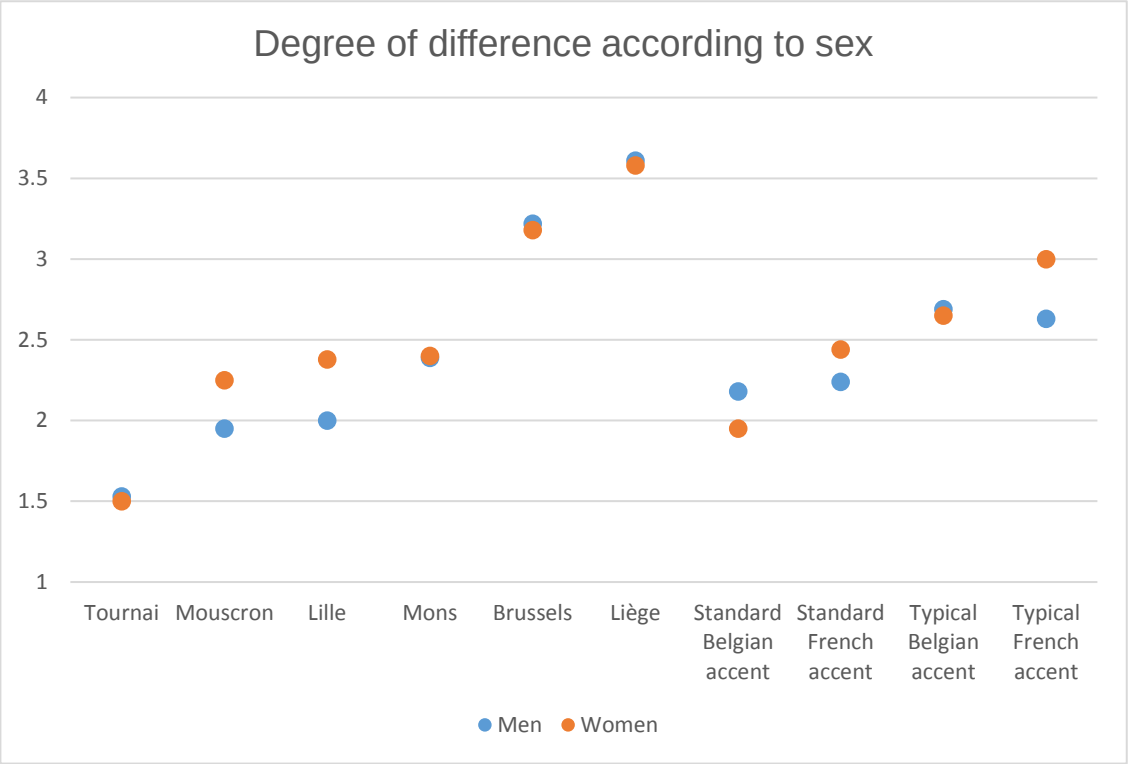

Figure 7-11. Mean scores in the degree of difference rating task according to sex

7.6.2.2 Analysis and discussion

Table 7-2 illustrates that the number of informants to respond to this rating task was greater than to the correctness rating task. However, certain informants were still not comfortable rating the abstract accents. These results illustrate that participants feel happier to engage with a descriptive task rather than an evaluative one. We can infer that this response may be a reaction to the normative prescriptivist discourses which were dominant for a long time.

It is also striking in this table how the perceived degree of difference increases incrementally as proximity to Tournai decreases, a finding which resonates with those seen elsewhere (cf. Demirci & Kleiner 1999: 269; Kuiper 1999: 247–254; McKinnie & Dailey-O'Cain 2002: 284–287; Fridland & Bartlett 2006: 368). As noted above, Lille and Mouscron are approximately the same distance from Tournai and the accents are rated almost identically, yet there is a national

border between Tournai and Lille. Since scholars attest that national borders bring about barrier effects on perceptions of language (Montgomery 2012; 2014; Stoeckle 2012), it is somewhat surprising that we do not observe one in this case. What is more, in chapter 6 (6.5.3), a border effect *did* appear: when informants were asked to circle their speech community, there was a drop off in agreement at the national border, as well as agreement between many that the perimeter of the speech community was coterminous with the national border. Moreover, more informants agreed in chapter 6 that Mouscron was part of the speech community than Lille. How may we explain the differences in results between tasks?

In the draw-a-map task, informants had a visual stimulus and could see the national border; however, in the rating task, there was no visual stimulus. What is more, the Lille accent was not listed separately to the Belgian ones, but in the middle. Thus, there was nothing to associate Lille overtly with France. We may therefore conclude that – at least in the present study – whilst the border may act as a perceptual barrier, its barrier effects are greater when it is visible as a stimulus and diminish when it is not. This finding corroborates that of Tamasi (2003: 85–86). She found that perceptions of US accents changed when the visual draw-a-map task was replaced with a pile sort task[232].

As for the abstract accents, borderlanders rate the standard Belgian accent as very similar to their own, followed by the standard French accent. These are ranked as we would expect since they are in line with previous findings in which

[232] This task, which was developed in cognitive anthropology, requires informants to 'sort cards, each containing the name of an item, into piles so that items in a pile are more similar to each other than they are to items in separate piles' (Weller & Kimball Romney 1988: 20).

the speech of Tournai has been perceived to be standard (cf. Woehrling 2009: 57; Boula de Mareüil & Bardiaux 2011). That is to say, in her study of perceptions of accents, Woehrling found that speech from Tournai was most frequently identified by Parisians as coming from the Vendée; the sample she selected to represent SF. Similarly, Boula de Mareüil and Bardiaux (2011) asked French informants to rate samples of French from Europe in terms of accentedness, and whilst the Vendée sample scored 1.9/5, the Tournai sample scored 2.0. As for the Belgians, they scored the Tournaisien sample at 1.4/5 and the Vendée sample at 2.1/5.

The results of the present study thus corroborate those seen previously elsewhere. The relative ranking of SF and standard Belgian also illustrates a belief that they are not identical; a finding which replicates that in 7.4, where it was seen that 15/39 informants agreed that though equally correct, the most correct pronunciations in France and Belgium were different. As for the typical accents, they are ranked as more different than the standard ones; a finding which is unsurprising, given the above. Furthermore, they are in the order that we would expect: the typical Belgian accent is rated as less different than the French one.

The patterns in age variation are revelatory (Figure 7-9): generally speaking, as age decreases, degree of difference from different regional varieties decreases; that is to say, younger informants perceive less regional variation than older informants. This pattern appears to indicate a belief that levelling or dedialectalisation is taking place in Belgium and, indeed, previous research has illustrated a loss of certain regional phonological features in Francophone

Belgium such as word-final consonant devoicing and a ‘semi-vocalic appendix at the end of [a] vocalic articulation’, as in ‘botté’: [bɔteːɹ] (Hambye & Simon 2012: 135–136) (cf. Chapter 2). It has also shown a high percentage of errors in identification of Belgian varieties by Belgians (Bauvois 1996), a finding which further supports the notion of levelling taking place.

What is more, this is consistent with the findings in chapters 4 and 5, in which a certain degree of transnational levelling was observed in the speech of the younger informants. Two of the most striking results to emerge in Figure 7-9 are that whilst there is agreement over the degree of difference from Liège, there is disagreement regarding Brussels. How may we explain these results? Firstly, as was mentioned earlier, in perceptual experiments it has been seen that the speech in Liège is distinct and recognisable (Bauvois 1996). On the other hand, the phrase ‘Brussels accent’ may have two connotations: as mentioned above, for some it may connote the stereotypical accent (Bauvois 1996) and thus lower class, whilst for others, it may evoke notions of status and standardness because of Brussels’ central role as the nation’s capital. Looking at the age variation, it appears that for the older speakers, they construe the Brussels accent as the first of these two; hence they rate the speech as quite different from their own, whilst the younger speakers may construe it as the latter one; hence they perceive less difference. That the middle age group are positioned halfway between the two indicates a kind of hedging or uncertainty as to what was meant by the phrase ‘Brussels accent’.

As for the variation with regard to standard accents, a similar pattern is seen as with the regional ones: as age decreases, degree of difference from the

standard decreases. This pattern also reflects a belief in, or awareness of, a loss of regional and / or social variation taking place. What is interesting is that it is not the middle age group who perceive their accents to be most similar to the standard models. We might have expected this, given that they demonstrated the most standard behaviour in both chapter 4 and 5. This is thus an example of where perceptions and reality do *not* line up.

On the other hand, the middle-aged informants are the group who consider their accents to be most distinct from the typical Belgian and French accents. This result perhaps illustrates a feeling of linguistic insecurity (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Hambye & Francard 2004), and thus a desire for the middle age group to distance themselves from negatively-evaluated accents. This relative distancing by the middle age group from both standard and typical models resonates with the pattern of 'double distance' described by Belgian scholars (Blampain et al. 1997; Hambye 2005) wherein the Belgian norm is characterised as a variety that is distanced from both the French norm and popular usage. What is more, it was seen in chapter 4 that the middle-aged group were the speakers who displayed the highest rates of lowered [ɛ] in their realisations of the words 'mes', 'les' and 'ses', which scholars argue is a feature of the endogenous norm (cf. Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc). Finally, it is the older speakers who rate their accents as least different from the typical accents; in particular the Belgian accent. This finding may well reflect reality, since research has shown that older speakers show higher rates of social and regional phonological features (Hambye 2005; Hambye & Simon 2012). On the other hand, this response may be shaped by spatial perceptions and / or spatial practices, since it was seen in chapter 6

(6.5.4.3.1) that they were the age group most orientated towards Belgium. Alternatively, this response may be due to generational differences in understanding of the term ‘typical’. Finally, it may be due to a greater preoccupation with demonstrating a sense of local identity than a sense of linguistic correctness (cf. Llamas 2006: 103). We will explore this hypothesis in chapter 8 when we investigate the mobility and regional affiliation data.

The variation according to educational background (Figure 7-10) is very minimal and little is to be said about ratings of the regional accents. On the other hand, the variation in ratings of the abstract accents is more interesting. Whilst ED2 perceives there to be less difference than ED1 between their accents and the standard accents and typical French accent, ED1 perceives there to be least difference between their accent and the typical Belgian accent. These results reflect those seen in chapters 4 and 5 (4.5.2.2; 4.6.2.2; 4.7.1.1.2; 5.7.2.1.2) in which ED2 speakers were found to be more standard in their behaviour. They also reflect the findings in chapter 6 in which it was seen that ED1 speakers orientated their speech community more towards Belgium, whilst ED2 speakers were more orientated towards France.

Finally, there is even less to be said about variation according to sex (Figure 7-11): there is practically none at all, although women perceive their accent to be slightly more different than men to the accents of Mouscron, Lille and the typical French accent. Although the differences are very small, we can see how, at least for the Lille and typical French accent, the patterns resonate with those found in chapter 6 (6.5.4.3.2), since it was seen there that women orientated perceptually more towards Belgium than men.

7.6.3 The pleasantness rating task

7.6.3.1 Results

Table 7-3 illustrates that the mean score for the Tournai accent places it in first position in terms of pleasantness. Second to the pronunciation in Tournai is that of Lille, which is followed closely behind by that of Mouscron and Mons. At the other end of the table, the Liège accent is rated as least pleasant, with the pronunciation in Brussels second to last. Thus a pattern emerges wherein as distance from Tournai increases, pleasantness decreases. Whilst the SF and standard Belgian accents are rated as pleasant as each other, the typical Belgian accent is scored slightly more highly than the typical French one. Table 7-3 also illustrates that most informants responded to the task; however, four did not rate the pleasantness of the abstract accents.

Accent	**Number of responses**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Tournai	39	4.62	0.633
Lille	38	4.14	0.993
Mouscron	39	4.10	0.940
Mons	39	4.08	0.929
Standard French accent	35	4.03	0.954
Standard Belgian accent	35	4.03	0.985
Typical Belgian accent	35	3.86	1.192
Typical French accent	35	3.77	1.190
Brussels	38	3.71	1.160
Liège	39	3.55	1.207

Table 7-3. Mean scores and numbers of participants in the pleasantness rating task

Figure 7-12 illustrates mean pleasantness scores for accents according to age. There is no clear generational pattern, though it can be seen that whilst there is

a high level of agreement for some accents, for others there is not. In particular, there is variation in the ratings of the Brussels and Liège accents, the standard Belgian accent and the typical accents.

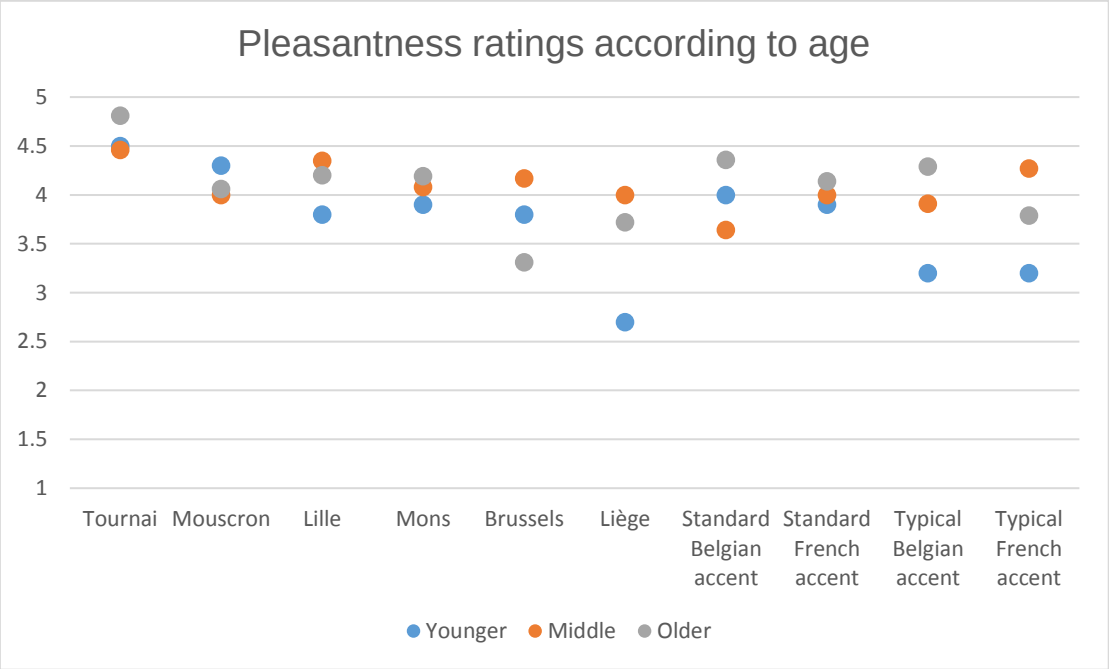

Figure 7-12. Mean scores in the pleasantness rating task according to age

Figure 7-13 illustrates pleasantness ratings according to educational background. A clearer pattern emerges here wherein ED1 generally rates the regional accents as more pleasant than ED2, with the exception of the Lille accent, although there is little variation in mean scores for the regional accents between these two groups. Equally, both ED1 and ED2 score the abstract accents very similarly, although there is a certain amount of disagreement concerning the typical Belgian accent: ED1 rates it more highly.

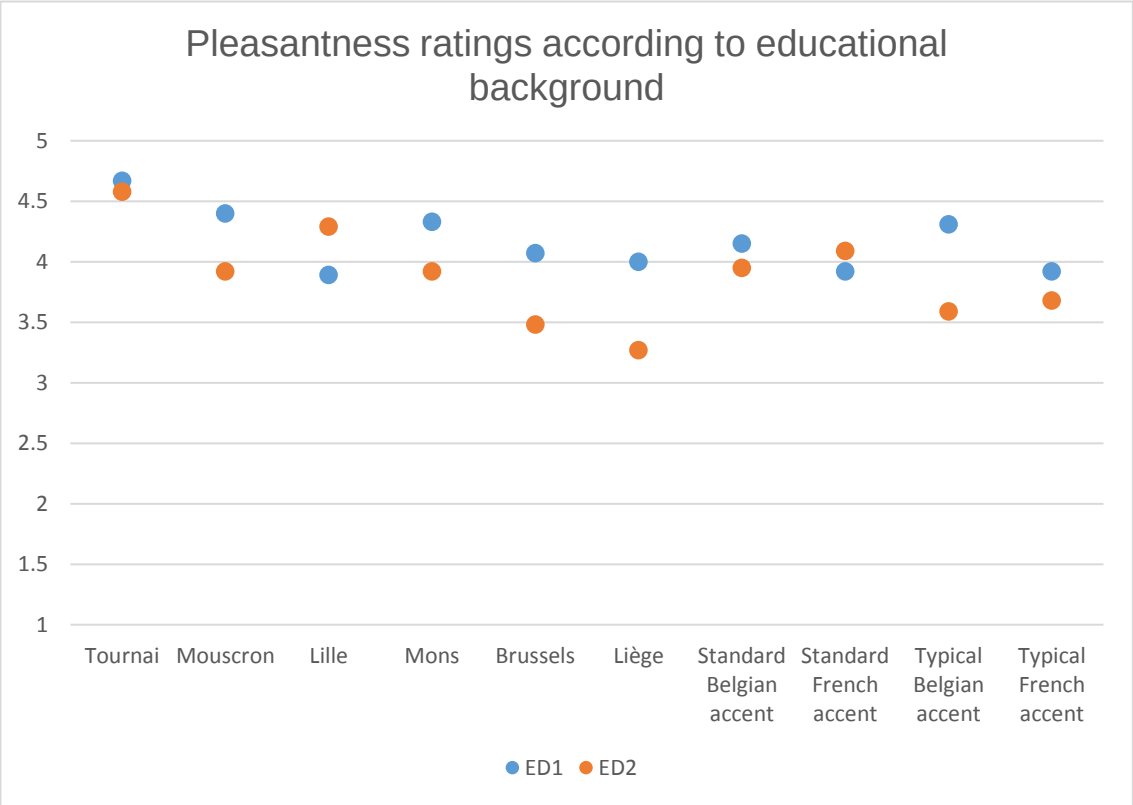

Figure 7-13. Mean scores in the pleasantness rating according to educational background

Figure 7-14 illustrates pleasantness ratings according to sex and reveals that, as with educational background, there is little difference between groups; however, generally, women rate accents as more pleasant than men, with the exception of the Liège, Lille and typical French accents. The greatest degree of disagreement is seen for the standard Belgian accent, although even for this accent the mean score for women is only 0.62 higher than for men.

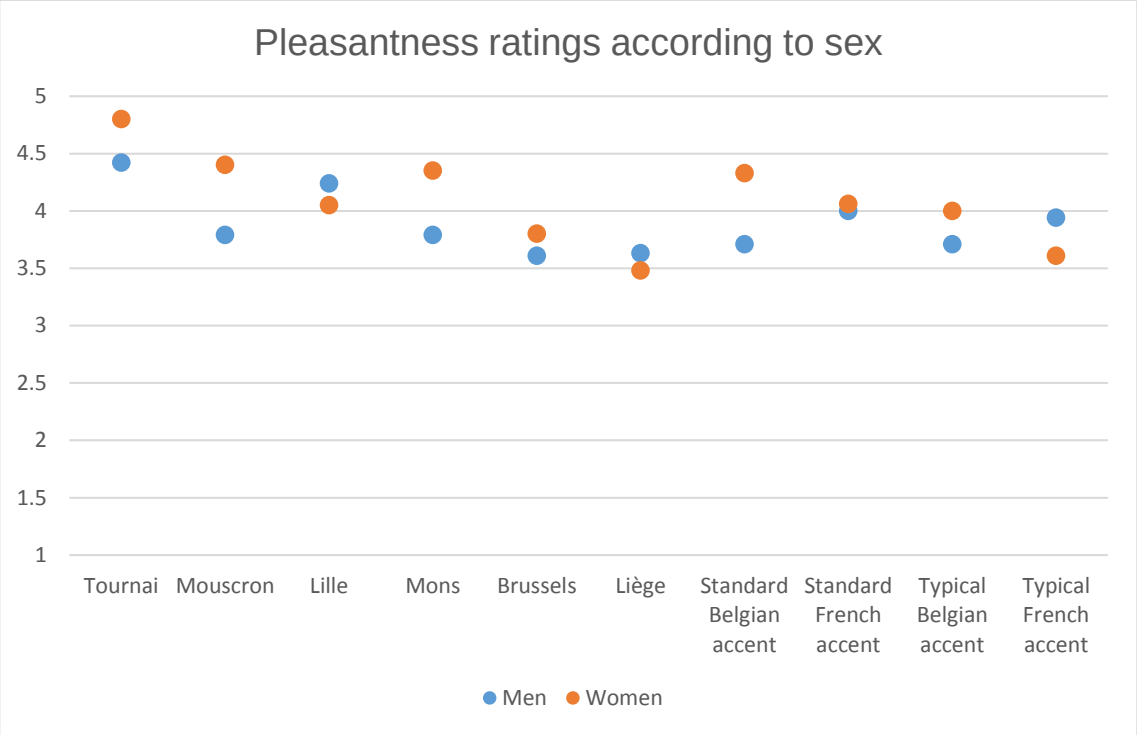

Figure 7-14. Mean scores in the pleasantness rating according to sex

7.6.3.2 Analysis and discussion

Table 7-3 illustrates that whilst the majority of informants felt able to rate the regional accents, four informants, who for the most part did not rate accents in terms of degree of difference or correctness, still felt unable to rate the abstract accents, therein showing a consistent belief on their part that the accents should not – or cannot – be evaluated. These four informants were Geneviève (OFED1), Ines (OFED2), Thierry (MMED2) and Nicolas (MMED1). The backgrounds of these four informants are fairly diverse; however, looking at their profiles, we may attempt to explain the motivation for their beliefs. Thierry's educational background included studying language and linguistics in higher education, thus we can infer a belief in line with the contemporary scholarly stance that valorises all varieties of language equally and engages with them objectively (Mesthrie et al. 2011: 442). Ines was retired, but had worked in a socio-educational capacity prior to retirement, whilst Geneviève worked as a

cashier. Both of these jobs would have seen Ines and Geneviève come into contact with people from diverse social backgrounds, something which may have shaped their attitudes. Moreover, as retired women, it is likely they would have been less preoccupied with notions of linguistic correctness and prestige (cf. Trudgill 2003: 6). Finally, it is hard to find a way to explain Nicolas' behaviour looking at his social background; however, he was also the only informant who, in the draw-a-map task in chapter 6 (6.5.4.1), included the entirety of France, Wallonia and part of Brussels in his extended speech community. Thus in both his mapped response and his responses to the rating tasks, we can see Nicolas holds beliefs of linguistic inclusivity and equality.

Table 7-3 also illustrates that as distance from Tournai increases, pleasantness decreases. This finding contrasts somewhat with those of Kuiper (1999, 2005). He found that whilst speakers from Provence rated their own accent as most pleasant, so too Parisians rated the Provence accent most pleasant. That Tournai is rated considerably more pleasant than all other accents suggests that notions of regional affiliation may have come into play when informants responded to the task. What is more, as mentioned above, interactions such as these have previously been observed. For example Paltridge & Giles (1984: 80) found that speakers from Brittany rated their own accent most positively in terms of appeal, which they hypothesise may be on account of regional linguistic pride (cf. Armstrong & Unsworth 1999; Pooley 2004). We will explore this possible interaction in chapter 8.

That the Tournai accent and other local accents are rated more highly than the standard accents in terms of pleasantness is as we would expect, given that

research in France has shown that accents rate distinctly on status and solidarity scales (Paltridge & Giles 1984; Kuiper 1999; 2005). On the other hand, for this reason it is surprising to see that the standard accents are rated more pleasant than the typical ones. From this we can infer that discourses of linguistic correctness interact with notions of pleasantness in the Belgian borderland, a behaviour which is indicative of a sense of linguistic insecurity, as was seen by Paltridge and Giles (1984: 80) in the way Alsace respondents rated their own language. Indeed this can also be seen from the fact that the abstract accents are rated as more pleasant than the Brussels and Liège accents. As has been mentioned above, there is a good deal of awareness surrounding the linguistic varieties or stereotypes of both Brussels and Liège, thus it may be that this awareness shaped the way informants responded.

As for the social variation, whilst there is no clear generational pattern (Figure 7-12), there are several noteworthy results which emerge. Firstly, it can be seen that the older informants rate the Brussels accent least positively, whilst the middle-aged speakers are most positive in their rating. This pattern suggests that for the middle-aged informants, linguistic correctness and pleasantness are less intertwined than for the older informants. This can also be seen in their ratings of the Liège accent. However, in the case of Liège the younger informants rate it as considerably less pleasant – a finding which illustrates that for them linguistic correctness and pleasantness may be more interrelated. The relative ratings of the typical accents provide further support for this conclusion, since the younger informants rate them as considerably less pleasant than their older compatriots.

On the other hand, the middle-aged and older informants' ratings of typical accents suggest that different beliefs may have shaped their responses. The older speakers rate the typical Belgian accent as more pleasant, whilst the middle-aged speakers rate the typical French accent as more pleasant. From these results we can infer that notions of national identity or indeed spatial practices may have shaped the older informants' responses; indeed, it was seen in chapter 6 that this was the group to most orientate towards Belgium (6.5.4.3.1). In contrast, it appears that traditional discourses linking correctness with Hexagonal French (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235) may have been at play in the middle-aged informants' responses, something which was seen in their relatively standard behaviour in the phonological chapters (4.5.2.1; 4.6.2.1; 4.7.1.1.1; 5.5.3.1; 5.6.2.1; 5.7.2.1.1) as well as in their perceptual tendency to align their wider speech community with France (6.5.4.3.1).

The variation along the lines of educational background (Figure 7-13) wherein ED1 generally rates accents as more pleasant than ED2 replicates that of Moreau et al. (1999: 32) who found that Belgian university students were more critical in their evaluations of Belgian and French speech samples than high school students. Similarly, Hauchecorne and Ball (1997: 21) found that students were more critical of the stigmatised Le Havre accent than non-students.

This variation is, furthermore, as we would expect, given that we have seen, not only above but also in their draw-a-map (6.5.4.3.3) and behavioural data (4.5.2.2; 4.6.2.2; 4.7.1.1.2; 5.5.3.2; 5.7.2.1.2), that ED2 informants are more preoccupied with notions of linguistic correctness and standardness. What is

more, this interpretation is strengthened by the fact that there is a high level of agreement in the ratings of the abstract accents, with the exception of the typical Belgian accent, which is rated considerably less pleasant by ED2 than ED1. Viewing the data through this lens, there is also evidence that notions of national identity and perhaps spatial practices may come into play, since of all the regional accents, the only one that ED1 rate as less pleasant than ED2 is the Lille accent, and in chapter 6 (6.5.4.3.3) it was shown that ED1 were more orientated towards Belgium, whilst ED2 were more transnationally orientated, if not orientated towards France.

There is further evidence that multiple factors shape attitudes in the gendered variation observed in pleasantness ratings (Figure 7-14). Women typically rate the accents as more pleasant than men – a finding which resonates with that of Moreau et al. (1999: 26) who found women were more generous in their evaluations of richness of vocabulary in France and Belgium, and indeed Stewart (2012: 198), who found that men were much more likely to use negative ratings in their evaluation of the least linguistically prestigious French cities.

On the other hand, the women in the present study rate the accents of Liège, Lille and the typical French accent as less pleasant than the men, although for the first two of these the differences are small. Since it was seen in chapter 6 that they were more orientated towards Belgium, it may be that spatial perceptions, practices and notions of affiliation shaped their ratings; an explanation we will scrutinise in chapter 8.

Having analysed and discussed the rating task data, we will now go on to explore correlations between correctness, degree of difference and pleasantness, before closing the chapter with a summary of key findings.

7.6.4 The interaction between correctness, degree of difference and pleasantness

Table 7-4 brings together the mean scores for each accent along the lines of correctness, degree of difference and pleasantness. The accents are ordered in terms of perceived correctness; however, the ranking for each criterion is placed in brackets next to the mean score (cf. Kuiper 1999). The patterns in this table suggest that there are some correlations. For example the standard French accent and standard Belgian accent feature in the top six positions for each criterion. Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, it can be seen that the pronunciations of Liège, Brussels, and the typical French and typical Belgian accents always remain in the bottom four, with Liège ranked tenth for all criteria.

Accent	Correctness	Degree of difference	Pleasantness
Standard French accent	4.33(1)	2.34(5)	4.03(5/6)
Standard Belgian accent	4.2(2)	2.06(2)	4.03(5/6)
Lille	3.94(3)	2.19(4)	4.14(2)
Tournai	3.91(4)	1.51(1)	4.62(1)
Mons	3.84(5)	2.39(6)	4.08(4)
Mouscron	3.78(6)	2.10(3)	4.10(3)
Brussels	3.58(7)	3.20(9)	3.71(9)
Typical French accent	3.43(8)	2.82(8)	3.77(8)
Typical Belgian accent	3.33(9)	2.67(7)	3.86(7)
Liège	3.03(10)	3.59(10)	3.55(10)

Table 7-4. Mean scores and ranking of accents according to correctness, degree of difference and pleasantness

Figure 7-15 illustrates the interaction between correctness and degree of difference ratings. A correlation between the two can be seen wherein as degree of difference increases, correctness decreases; a pattern which scholars have observed elsewhere. Thus we can see that the two are intertwined. Furthermore, we can also infer that for Belgian borderlanders space – or rather spatiality (cf. chapter 6) – shapes language attitudes, since proximity to Tournai correlates negatively with both degree of difference and correctness. On the other hand, correlation does not mean causation. Thus it could be the inverse; that language attitudes shape spatial perceptions. Whilst we cannot say with certainty in which direction – if any – the causation lies, we can confirm that there is a correlation and that, as far as the Belgian borderland is concerned, attitudes and spatiality are intertwined.

In Figure 7-16, it also emerges that as degree of difference increases, pleasantness decreases, thus a correlation is observed. Since degree of difference increases as proximity to Tournai and indeed pleasantness decrease, a further correlation is observed between spatiality and attitudes, which adds strength to the argument made above that the two are interrelated.

Finally, it can be seen in Figure 7-17 that pleasantness and correctness are positively correlated. Whilst this reflects certain findings in the field, it contrasts with others. For example, Kuiper (2005) found that, with regard to the accents of Paris and Provence, the two were inversely correlated. Whilst we could conclude that pleasantness and correctness interact only with each other, they are also inversely correlated with proximity to Tournai. Thus these findings illustrate clearly that in the Belgian borderland attitudes are not aspatial, but are shaped by spatiality. What is more, that Tournai is the clearest outlier in both Figure 7-16 and Figure 7-17 suggests that notions of regional affiliation come into play in evaluations.

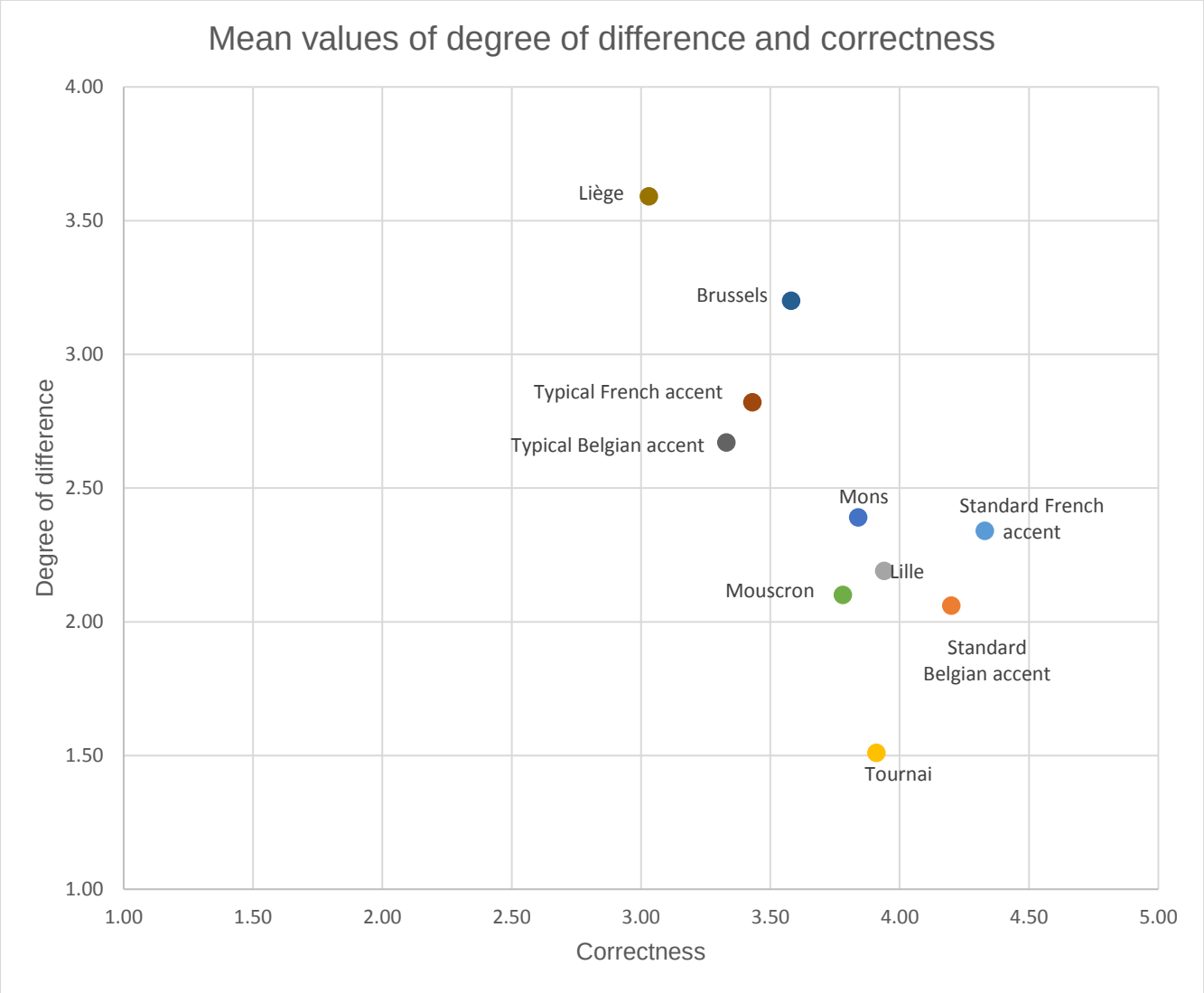

Figure 7-15. Mean values of degree of difference and correctness

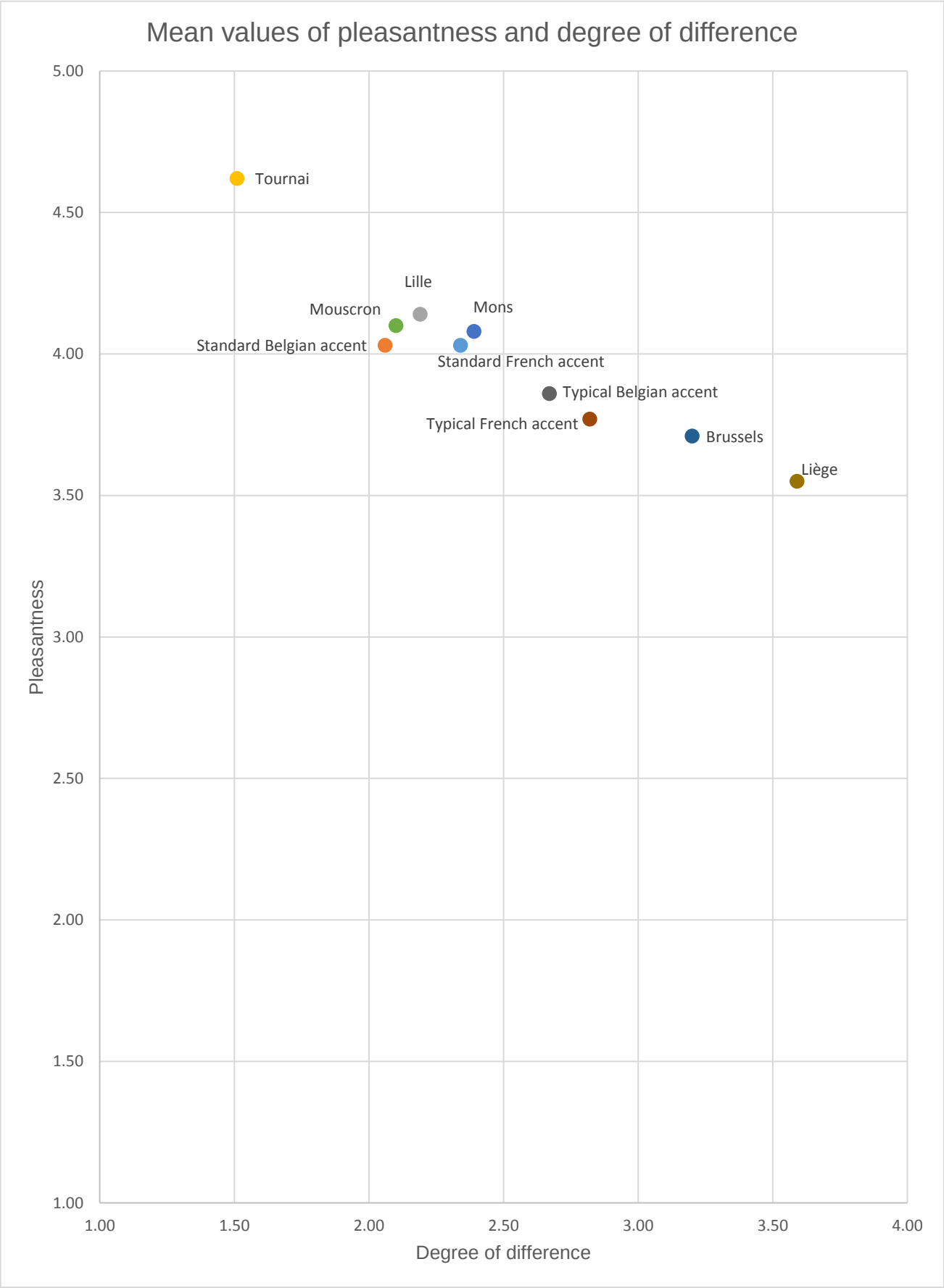

Figure 7-16. Mean values of pleasantness and degree of difference

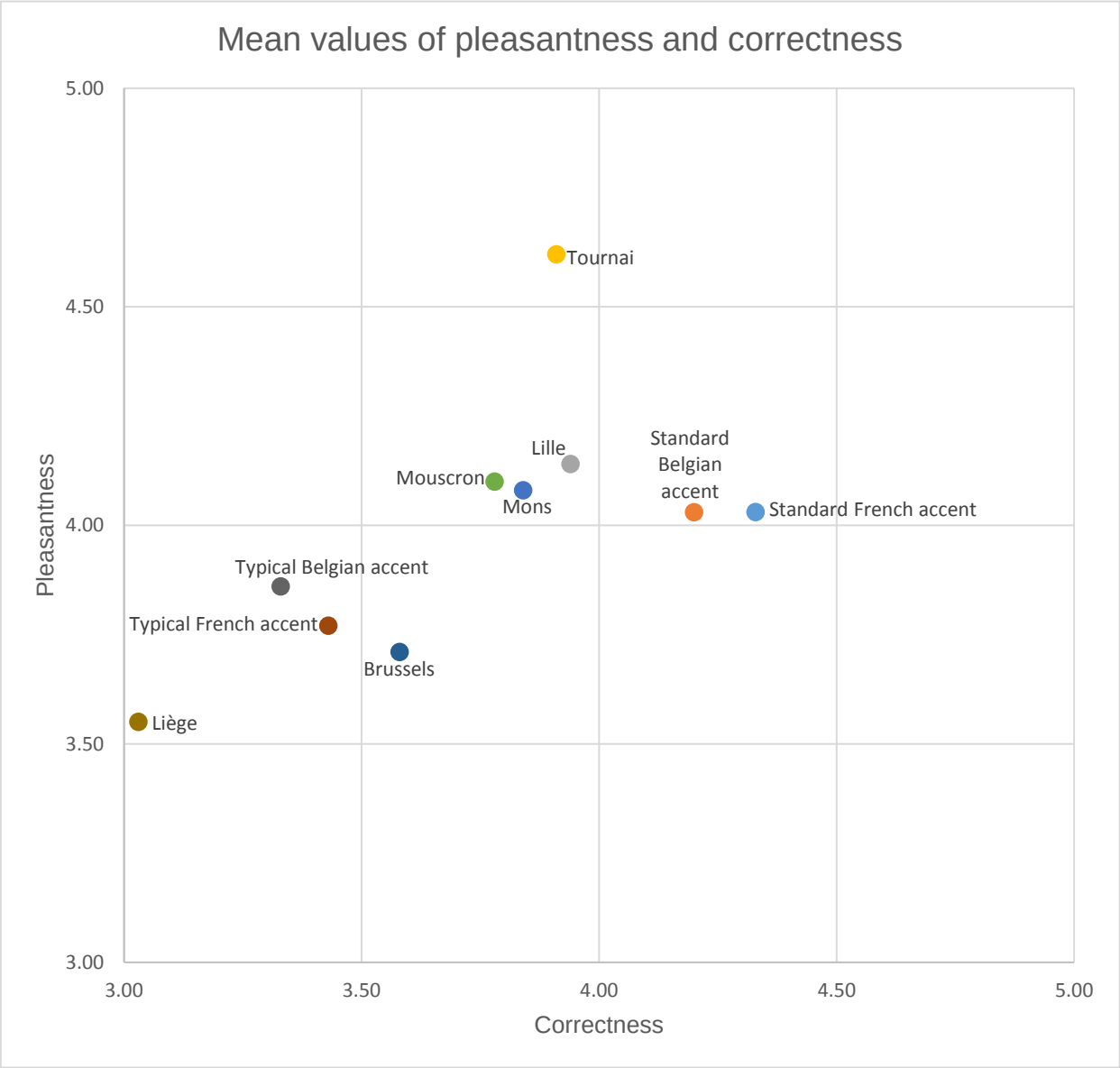

Figure 7-17. Mean values of pleasantness and correctness

Having examined the rating task data, we will now summarise the chapter's key findings.

7.7 Summary of findings

Firstly, the results of the multiple choice task showed that the majority of informants believe that Belgian and Hexagonal French are as correct as each other; however, more informants believe they are different than the same.

Slightly more informants believe the most correct pronunciation is heard in France rather than Belgium; however, this decreases with age: none of the younger informants held this belief. Indeed the majority of them believe that Hexagonal and Belgian French are equal and the same.

Responses to the sentence completion task revealed that individuals' representations of the most correct French are very varied. They may be associated with a place, people from a place, a profession, a person or a position. Normative attitudes emerged in the responses to this task, with France and Hexagonal French mentioned by a few informants, two of whom did not show a preference for France in the multiple choice task. The response of certain individuals to name specific people suggests that these informants have readily accessible exemplars of what – for them – constitutes 'correct' French. It was also revealed that certain informants showed both solidarity and an awareness of status in their responses, whilst for others, their responses rated highly along just one of these axes. Finally, certain informants described the pronunciation they would adopt with terms which could be used to describe other social or behavioural attributes. This indicates a belief for these informants that language, like other behaviours, is indexical (cf. Silverstein 2003) and an act of identity (cf. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985).

As for the rating tasks, in the correctness rating task, traditional, normative attitudes emerged, where in the multiple choice task they did not: SF was rated most highly, followed by Standard Belgian then Lille then Tournai accents. The typical accents were rated amongst the least correct. This dichotomy suggests either a diglossic construal of language or a stylistic continuum may be in

operation amongst informants. The regional and typical accents were rated most correct by older informants, and ED1 informants were more positive in their ratings of all accents except SF. Men rated French accents more positively, whilst women rated Belgian and regional accents more positively. As distance from Tournai increased, correctness decreased.

In the degree of difference rating task, Tournai was rated as most similar followed by standard Belgian. As distance from Tournai increased, so too did degree of difference. This pattern held even for Lille, in France, thus there was no evidence of a barrier effect. Older informants rated the regional accents and standard ones as more different from their own than younger informants; however, they rated the typical ones as less different. These patterns suggest an awareness of – or belief in – a process of levelling or dedialectalisation taking place. Furthermore, of the abstract accents, ED2 informants rated their accents as less different from the standard accents and typical French than ED1 informants, who rated their accent as least different from typical Belgian. The middle age group appeared to distance themselves from both the standard and typical models, showing a sense of insecurity. This distancing resonates with the description by scholars of the Belgian endogenous norm as a variety which is doubly distanced from both the French norm and popular usage (Blampain et al. 1997; Hambye 2005).

Finally, the pleasantness ratings results revealed that pleasantness and proximity were positively correlated. The standard accents were rated more highly than the typical ones, illustrating that correctness and pleasantness interact, something which suggests that a certain sense of linguistic insecurity

persists. This is strengthened by the finding that older speakers rated the typical Belgian accent as more pleasant, whilst middle-aged speakers rated the typical French accent as more pleasant. ED1 rated regional accents more positively than ED2, with the exception of Lille. They also rated the typical Belgian accent more highly, whilst women were more generous in their pleasantness ratings than men.

Viewing the results of the rating tasks together, it can be seen that as proximity decreases, degree of difference increases, whilst both correctness and pleasantness decrease. Although the interaction between space and language attitudes has been observed elsewhere (cf. Llamas 2006: 103), as far as the researcher is aware, in no linguistic study have such clear correlations between proximity, correctness, degree of difference and pleasantness been shown.

Synthesising the results of all of the attitudinal tasks, a picture emerges wherein the sense of linguistic insecurity – at least in the Belgian borderland – does appear to be diminishing. Yet, in all of the tasks there is evidence that traditional normative attitudes do persist to a degree, and that Hexagonal French is still perceived as the most correct French and the standard model. However, in the multiple choice task, the overall picture was one wherein the majority of informants put Hexagonal and Belgian French on a par with one another. Since attitudes towards Hexagonal versus Belgian models were explicitly sought in this question, and less obviously sought in the other tasks, it appears that there may be a conflict between what borderlanders believe, and what they profess to believing: whilst they might claim on the surface that Hexagonal and Belgian French are equally correct, it appears that, deep down, they still see their own

variety as inferior. This finding, which corroborates that of Francard (1991 cited in Blampain et al. 1997: 387), illustrates just how much the kind of question asked shapes the response given.

Similarly, it emerged in the degree of difference ratings tasks that informants rated Lille French as almost identical to their own Tournai French. Yet in chapter 6 a barrier effect was seen wherein many participants did not consider their speech community to include anywhere beyond the national border. This finding therefore also shows how the kind of question shapes the response given. In this particular case, it also shows that when informants were presented with a visual stimulus on which the border was marked, a barrier effect was seen, whereas, in the rating task, in which no mention of the border was given, nor was it visually presented, there was no barrier effect.

Finally, many of the patterns that emerged in the data suggest that notions of regional affiliation might have come into play in informants' responses. Alternatively, they may have been shaped by spatial perceptions or practices. On the other hand, as was said above, correlation does not mean causation. It may be that the situation is more complex than this, and that language attitudes play a part in shaping spatial perceptions and perhaps even spatial practices.

This chapter has evidenced that, outwardly, traditional ideologies and linguistic insecurity are diminishing in the Belgian borderland; however, deep down they may well persist. It has shown a clear inverse correlation between proximity and degree of difference, correctness and pleasantness in the Tournai *arrondissement*. As well as this, it has revealed that individuals appeal to a

number of models, associated with place, status and profession when conceptualising the most correct pronunciation. Finally, it has shown that spatiality and notions of regional affiliation may shape language attitudes. We now go on to scrutinise this hypothesis as we explore the spatial data in chapter 8.

8 Space, place and language

8.1 Organisation of the chapter

This chapter begins by outlining the motivations for investigating various spatially influenced factors alongside language, attitudes and perceptions. In the following section, an overview of the data is presented. The methodologies for collecting the different kinds of data are then presented, followed by the results. Then, in the second part of the chapter, these results are woven into a synthetic discussion of the findings in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

8.2 Motivation for investigating space and place alongside language

As described in chapters 2 and 6, it is only in the past few years that sociolinguists have begun to see space as something more than a 'blank canvas on which dialectological findings [may] be mapped' (Britain 2013: 472). Taking the lead from human geography and theorising the concept of space, scholars have begun to engage with notions of 'spatiality' and 'place'. Whilst 'spatiality' is tripartite in nature and understands space as physical, social and perceptual (Britain 2013: 472), 'place' may be 'defined as a human-wrought transformation of a part of the Earth's surface […] distinguished by the cultural or subjective meanings through which it is constructed and differentiated...' (Gregory et al. 2009: 539). Scholars are beginning to see space as something which is inherently social: our social background shapes the way we move through space and the spatial possibilities open to us (Britain 2010b: 82).

Space as a theorised concept has been operationalised in several ways by the research community. Scholars have investigated the effects of regional mobility, regionality, contact, and sense of place on linguistic behaviour, language attitudes and perception. Through these investigations, a number of interactions have been identified. Mobility has been found to shape linguistic behaviour (cf. Vandekerckhove 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2009 cited in Britain 2010b: 80; Armstrong & Low 2008; Britain 2013: 491), as has the notion of mobility in principle (Armstrong & Unsworth 1999 cited in Armstrong & Low 2008: 451). Regionality, which takes into consideration where an informant was born, raised and lives, as well as his or her parents' origin, has also been found to interact with linguistic behaviour (Chambers 2000: 11). On the other hand, contact through mobility has been seen to shape both linguistic awareness and linguistic insecurity (cf. Rispail & Moreau 2004; Armstrong & Pooley 2010: 246).

As for a sense of place, scholars have illustrated that attitudes towards nationality, regional identity and sense of belonging shape linguistic behaviour, attitudes and perceptions (Underwood 1988: 417–478; Edwards 1992; Boberg 2000; Watt 2000: 97; Hazen 2002; Hoare 2002; Pooley 2004b; Waltermire 2014). Not just affected by the present, scholars have also argued that physical barriers (Britain 2014: 28), historical settlement patterns (Kurath 1949 cited in Boberg 2014: 45), changing boundaries (Kiely et al. 2000) and ancient spatial practices and routines (Britain 2010b: 80) shape those of the present day, which in turn shape linguistic behaviour, attitudes and perceptions.

It is clear, then, that investigations into space and place can provide further understanding and insight when studying language. What is more, in

borderlands, where notions of identity, sense of place, and indeed spatial practices may be particularly complex (cf. Auer 2005: 28; Cramer 2010; Llamas 2010; Baker-Smemore & Jones 2014: 102; Bert & Costa 2014; Beswick 2014; Boberg 2014b), the motivations for investigating space and place are obvious. Nevertheless, as far as the researcher is aware, such notions of space and place have to date been accorded little attention in studies of French in Francophone Belgium. Hambye (2008: 44) argues that awareness of regional variation within Francophone Belgium, tied to a lack of collective identity, prevents the appropriation of a pan-Belgian variety. He also suggests that Tournaisien French may sound more like Hexagonal French than other varieties of Belgian French on account of Tournaisiens feeling symbolically closer to France than Wallonia (Hambye 2005: 369). However, neither of these arguments is underpinned with empirical evidence.

Given the lack of knowledge concerning the effects of space and place on language, attitudes and perceptions in the Belgian borderland, it was decided that potential interactions would be investigated as part of the study. What is more, there are calls from the discipline for researchers to integrate investigations of mobility, contact and sense of place in their sociolinguistic and dialectological studies (cf. Milroy & Gordon 2003: 133; Britain 2010b: 70, 2016: 21–24; Heller 2010: 736; Gooskens et al. 2013; Chambers 2014b). Thus space and place were in part also investigated to address gaps in disciplinary knowledge.

8.3 Overview of the data gathered

Data were gathered in the written questionnaire (see Appendix 4), which was administered after the semi-structured interview, once the reading passage and word list task had been completed. Four areas were investigated: (i) mobility; (ii) sense of place; (iii) regional belonging and (iv) media consumption. Whilst Anglophone scholars have typically been sceptical of the idea that the media contribute to phonological change (e.g.: Trudgill 1986: 40; Eckert 2003: 395), the assumption has been made by the Francophone scholars Blampain, Goosse, Klinkenberg and Wilmet (1997), and Francard (2001: 257), that they do. Thus spatially defined media consumption was also included in the investigation. Following Llamas (2001), data were also gathered in the questionnaire concerning informants' networks and communities of practice; however, the limitations of this thesis mean that these factors were not investigated in the present study. These data were gathered from all 52 interviewees; however, only the data of those 39 informants analysed in the previous chapters will be analysed in this chapter. We now go on to investigate informants' mobility.

8.4 Mobility

8.4.1 Methodology

The first part of the written questionnaire sought to elicit information regarding informants' mobility. Mobility is difficult to assess or quantify (cf. Heller 2010: 736) and few attempts have been made by linguists to engage with 'mobile methods' (Britain 2016: 24). Thus, an original experimental approach was taken. Focusing on the 'everyday', 'mundane' mobility of informants (cf. Pooley,

Turnbull & Adams 2005: 1 cited in Britain 2016: 21), it was decided that mobility would be operationalised through collecting information regarding: i) the places informants spent time; and ii) how much time they spent in such places. Three questions were thus asked. Firstly, informants were invited to circle on a map up to five towns or villages in which they spent the most time. They were then asked to list the places in order of how much time they spent in each place. Finally, the third question asked them to divide up a pie chart accordingly (see Figure 8-1).

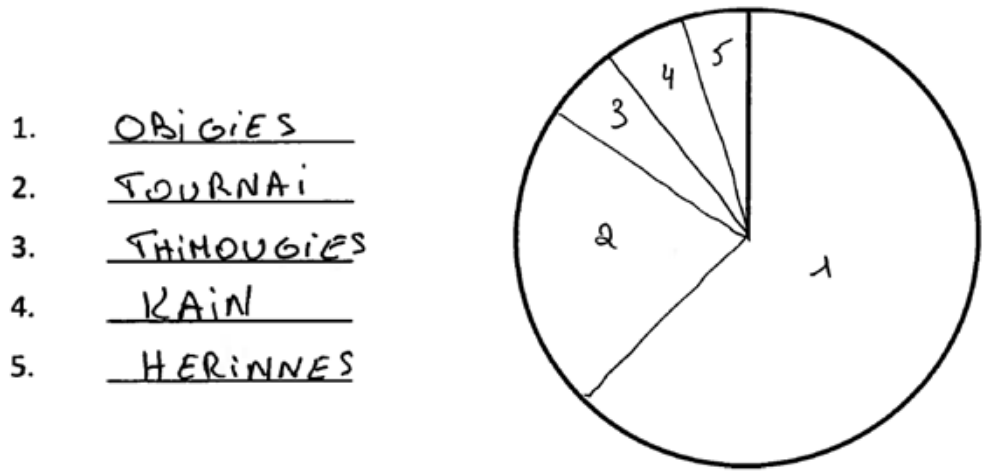

Figure 8-1. Maxime's (MMED2) responses to question two and three regarding his mobility

The first question was included in order that informants had an additional visual stimulus at their disposal. However, it emerged early on in data collection that this question was not necessary; informants did not want to use a map to stimulate their responses as they already had an idea in their mind. Thus, in subsequent interviews this question was presented as optional, and few informants deemed it necessary.

Two concerns were raised repeatedly. Firstly, informants were keen to tell the researcher that responses were approximate. Secondly, informants questioned whether or not they should include time spent sleeping in their home town when dividing up the pie chart. The researcher reassured informants that she knew responses were approximate, and that this was fine. She also explained that since the pie chart represented all of their time, it should include time spent sleeping somewhere. This response was given to ensure consistency.

8.4.1.1 Data processing

The data could be processed in a number of ways; for example it would be possible to quantify informants' responses through measuring the relative sizes of the slices of the pie chart. However, since responses were very approximate, it was decided that this was not the best way to process the data. The nature of the research project is such that what is of interest is how far borderlanders travel in their day-to-day lives and whether they travel into France. Thus it was decided to organise the sample into three different groups: i) those who, in response to question two listed only places in the Tournai *arrondissement* (local); 2) those who listed places beyond the Tournai a*rrondissement*, but not in France (Belgian); and those who listed places in Belgium and France (transnational). Mobility was therefore classed as either:

i) Tournai *arrondissement;*

ii) Belgium;

iii) Belgium and France.

8.4.2 Results

In Figure 8-2, which illustrates informants' mobility, it can be seen that, of the 39 informants, fifteen listed places in France and Belgium in the top five places they spent time, seventeen listed places in Belgium and seven listed places only within the Tournai *arrondissement*.

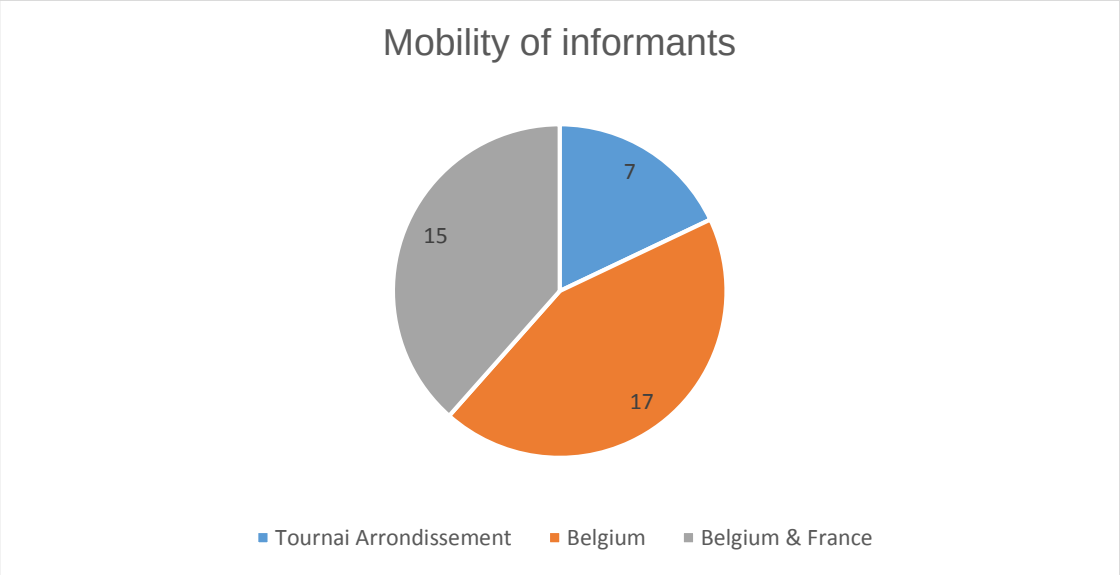

Figure 8-2. Mobility of informants

Figure 8-3 illustrates that the middle-aged participants are the group who are most transnationally mobile, whilst the younger participants (aged eighteen to twenty-nine) are the least transnational, and have the most restricted mobility[233].

[233] This pattern reflects that observed elsewhere. As Britain (2010b: 83) writes: '[t]he geographies of young people are strongly constrained'.

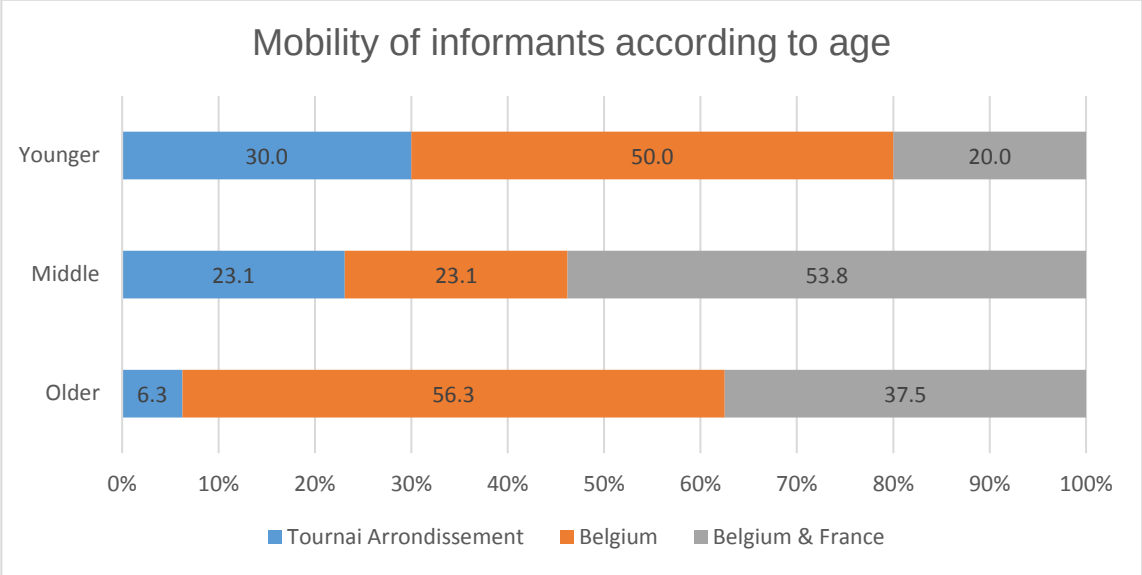

Figure 8-3. Mobility of informants according to age

Figure 8-4 illustrates that there is very little difference in mobility according to educational background, which is somewhat surprising; however, ED2 informants are slightly more mobile within Belgium and less 'local', whilst ED1 informants are slightly more transnational.

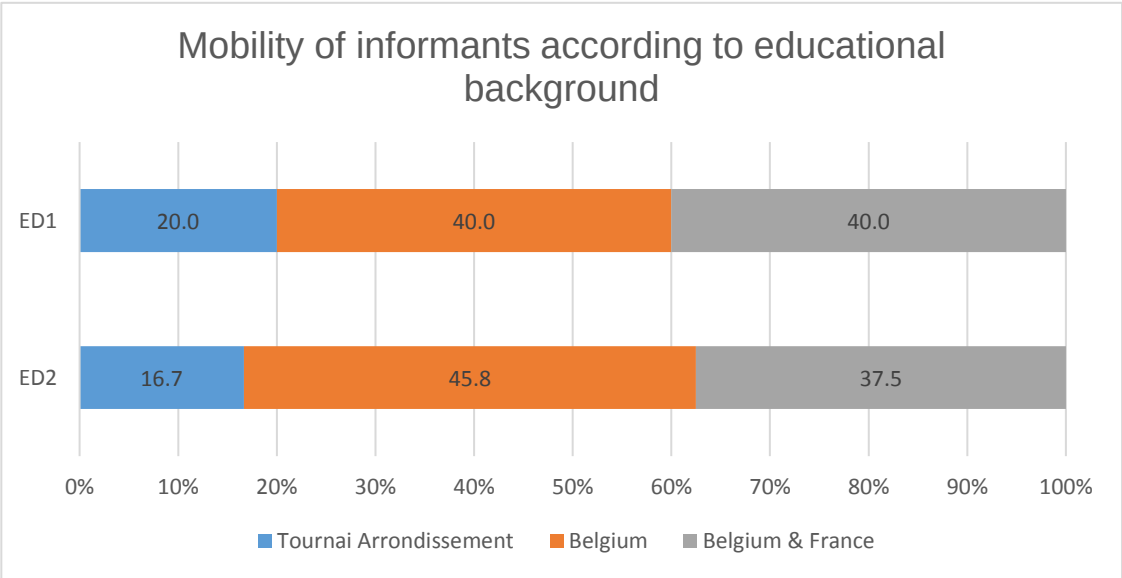

Figure 8-4. Mobility of informants according to educational background

Figure 8-5 illustrates that men are more transnationally mobile than women, however, women are more mobile within Belgium and more 'local'.

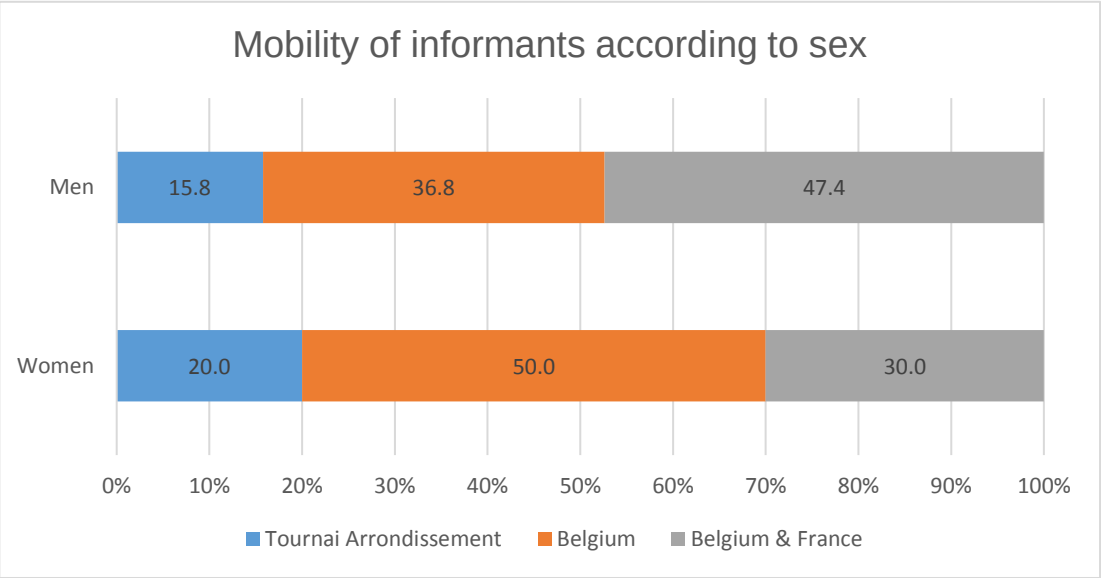

Figure 8-5. Mobility of informants according to sex

8.4.2.1 Mobility and linguistic behaviour

Table 8-1 illustrates that it is those informants with the most restricted mobility who most merge /e/-/ɛ/ - a behaviour typically associated with Hexagonal varieties – whilst those who are transnational in their mobility least merge /e/-/ɛ/.

Mobility	**Mean number of merged /e/-/ɛ/ per person**
Tournai *arrondissement*	6.14
Belgium	6.06
Belgium and France	5.47

Table 8-1. Mean number of merged /e/-/ɛ/ per person

Table 8-2 illustrates that it is those informants whose mobility is restricted to Belgium who most merge /o/-/ɔ/, although the amount of variation is small.

Mobility	**Mean number of merged /o/-/ɔ/ per person**
Tournai *arrondissement*	0.86
Belgium	1
Belgium and France	0.87

Table 8-2. Mean number of merged /o/-/ɔ/ per person

Figure 8-6 and Table 8-3 illustrate that it is those informants whose mobility is restricted to Belgium who produce the greatest number of lowered [ɛ] – the arguably endogenous variant (cf. Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard) fc – in the contexts of 'mes', 'les' and 'ses'.

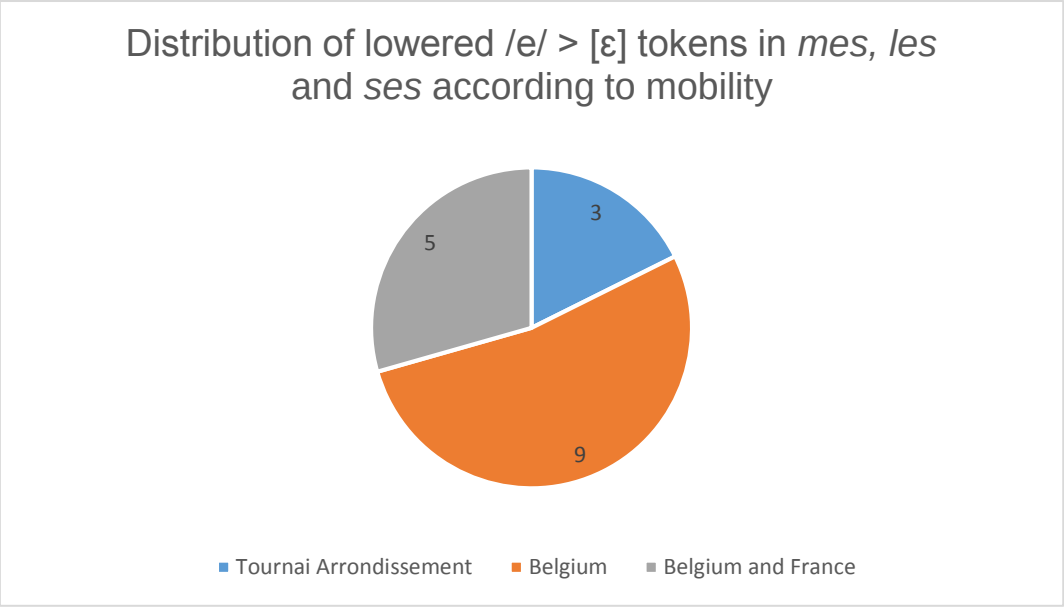

Figure 8-6. Distribution of lowered /e/ > [ɛ] tokens in 'mes', 'les' and 'ses' according to mobility

Mobility	**Mean number of [ɛ] per person**
Tournai *arrondissement*	0.43
Belgium	0.53
Belgium and France	0.33

Table 8-3. Mean number of [ɛ] in 'mes', 'les' and 'ses' according to mobility

Figure 8-7 and Table 8-4 illustrate that that it is those informants whose mobility is restricted to Belgium who produce the greatest number of fronted /ɔ/, whilst those who are transnational front the least, a result which is unexpected. These results will be discussed below.

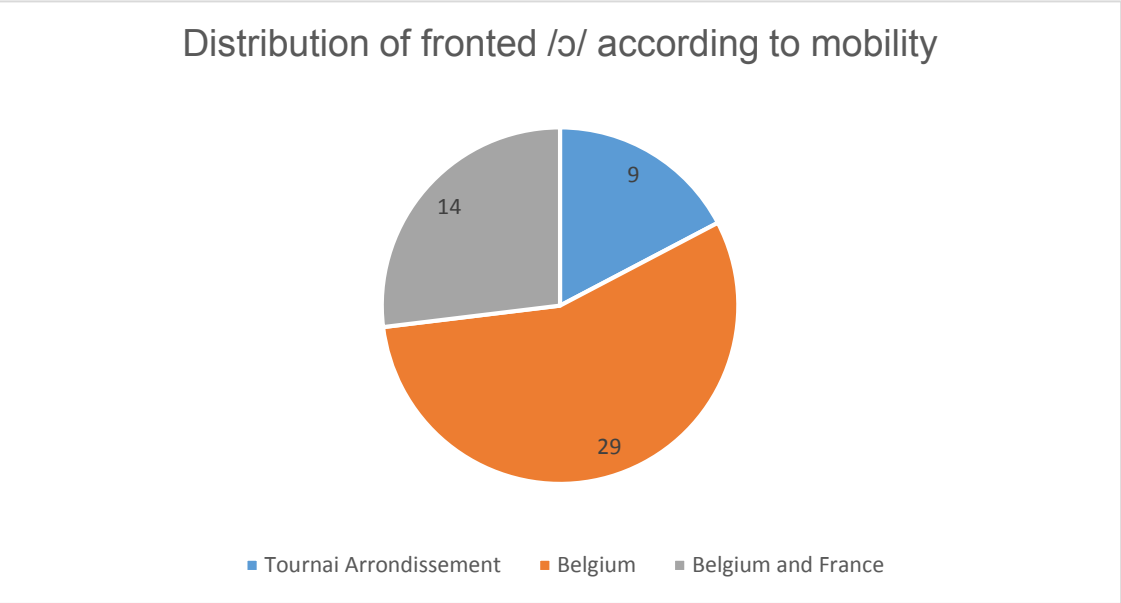

Figure 8-7. Distribution of fronted /ɔ/ according to mobility

Mobility	**Mean number of fronted /ɔ/ per person**
Tournai *arrondissement*	1.29
Belgium	1.71
Belgium and France	0.93

Table 8-4. Mean number of fronted /ɔ/ per person

8.4.2.2 Mobility and linguistic perception

Figure 8-1 cross-tabulates perceived wider speech community with actual mobility. The greatest difference is seen between those informants who are transnationally mobile, yet who perceive their wider speech community to be within Belgium (of which there are just two), and those who are transnationally mobile and perceive a wider transnational speech community (of which there

are thirteen). In short, those who are transnationally mobile are likely to perceive their wider speech community to be transnational.

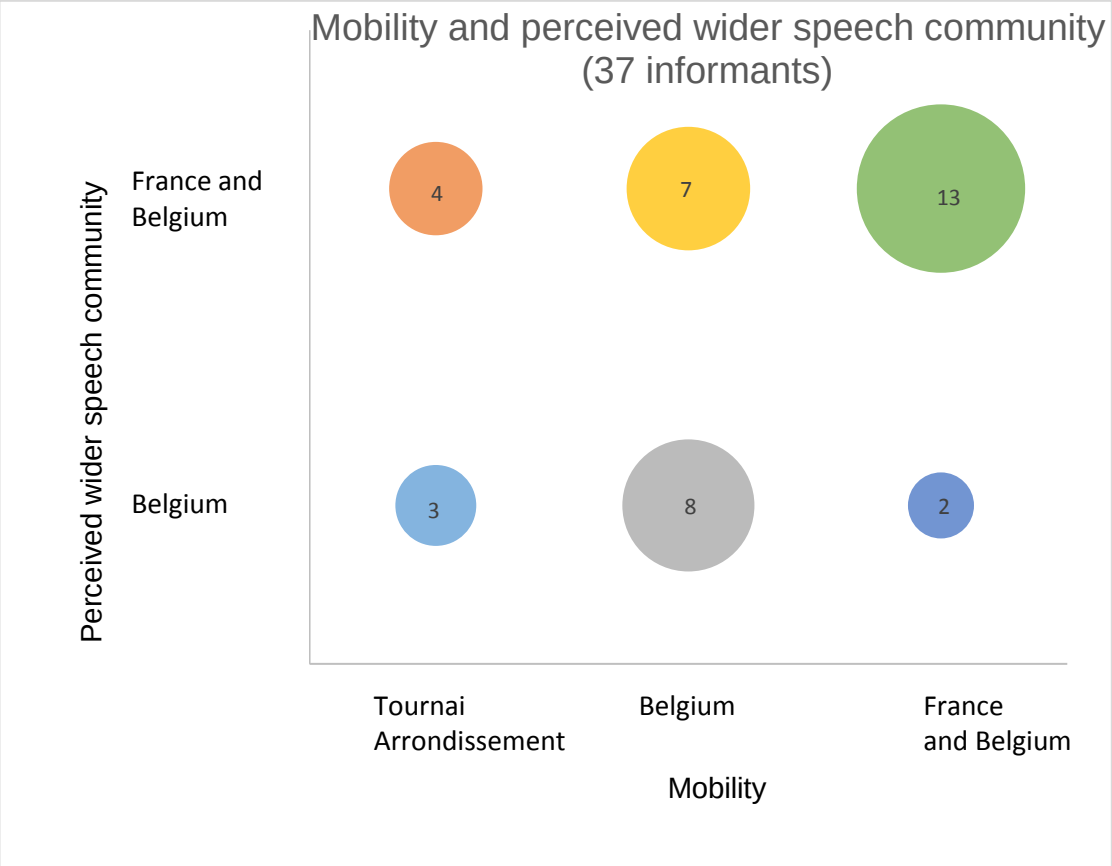

Figure 8-8. Mobility and perceived wider speech community

8.4.2.3 Mobility and language attitudes

Figure 8-9 illustrates that it is those with transnational mobility who perceive their accent as most similar to the Tournai accent and, as mobility decreases, degree of difference increases. Similarly, those with greater mobility perceive their accent as more similar to the Lille accent than those with restricted mobility. Those who are mobile within Belgium perceive their accent as most similar to both the standard and typical Belgian accent, whilst those who are transnationally mobile perceive their accent as more similar to the standard French accent. On the other hand, degree of difference from the typical French

accent increases as mobility increases – which it may be suggested is as a result of increased awareness.

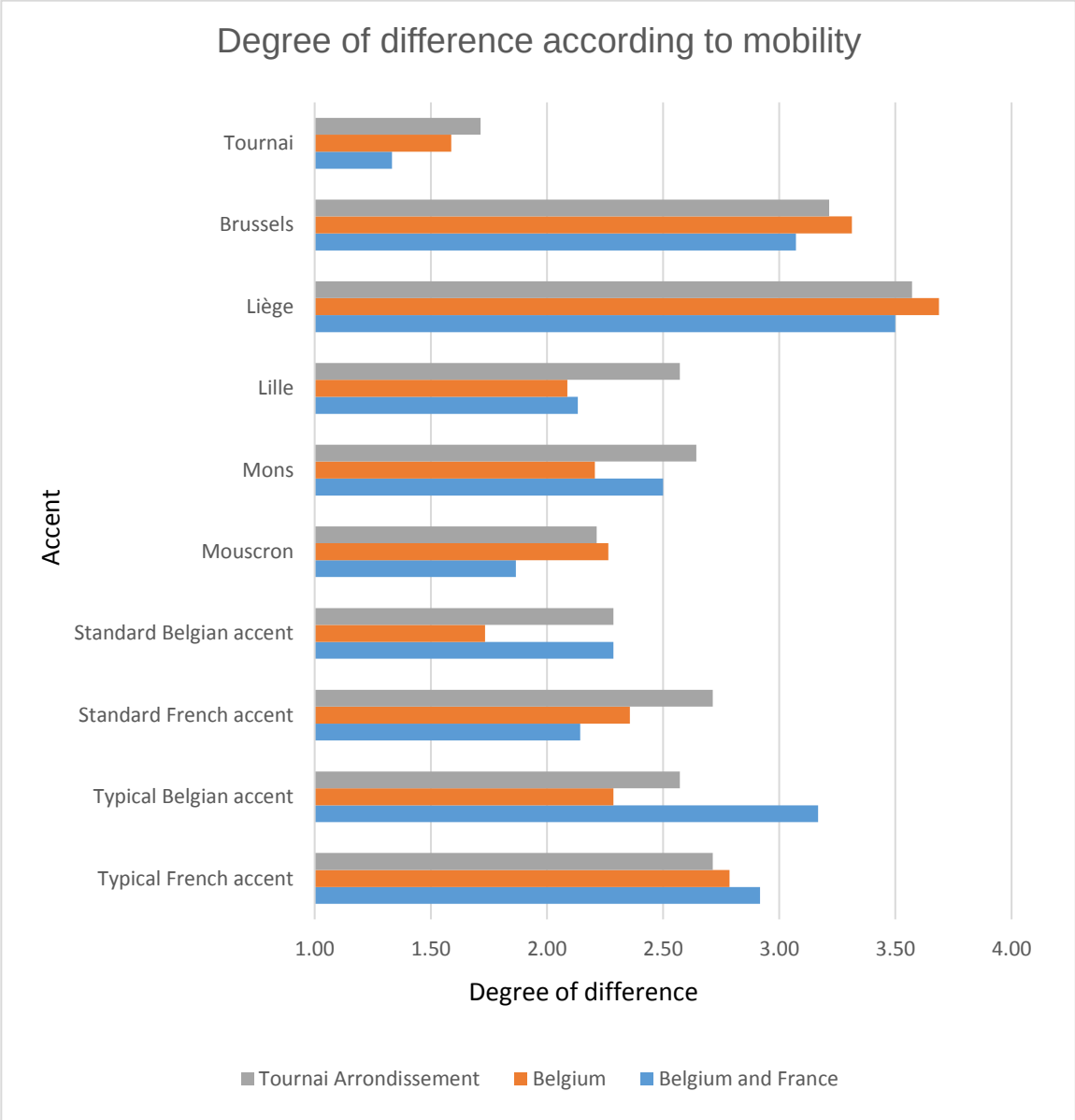

Figure 8-9. Degree of difference according to mobility

Figure 8-10 illustrates perceived correctness according to mobility. It can be seen that as mobility increases, perceived correctness of the Brussels accent increases. It can also be seen that those who are mobile around Belgium rate the standard Belgian accent as more correct than those with restricted and transnational mobility, as they do the standard and typical French accents too.

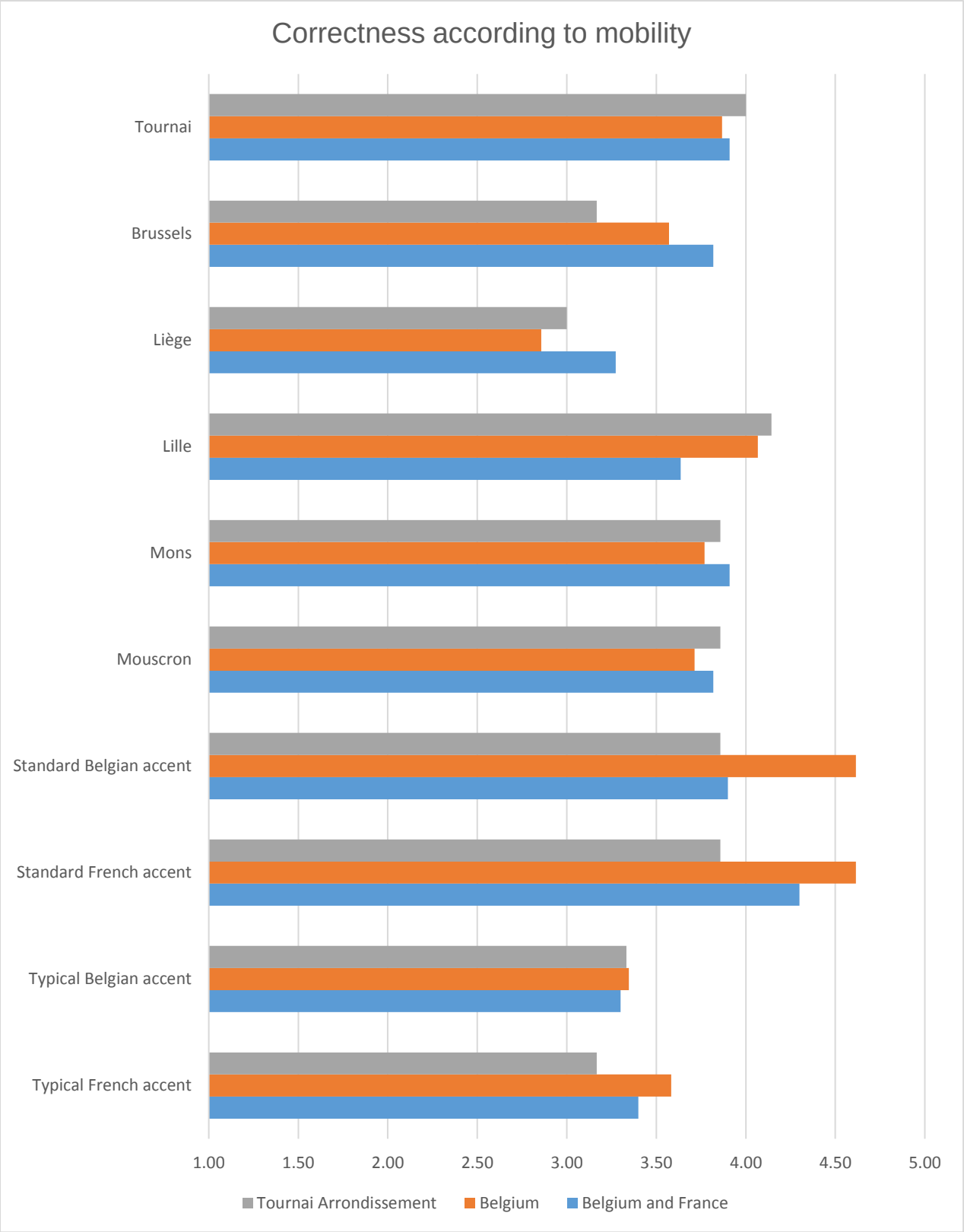

Figure 8-10. Correctness according to mobility

Figure 8-11 illustrates that those whose mobility is restricted to the Tournai *arrondissement* perceive the accent as most pleasant. On the other hand, those

who are transnationally mobile find the Brussels and Liège accents most pleasant. Those who are mobile around Belgium find the Lille, Mons and Mouscron accents less pleasant. As for the abstract accents, those who are transnationally mobile find the standard accents least pleasant, whilst those who are mobile around Belgium find the typical Belgian accent most pleasant and those who are transnationally mobile find the typical French accent most pleasant – perhaps because they are more familiar with it.

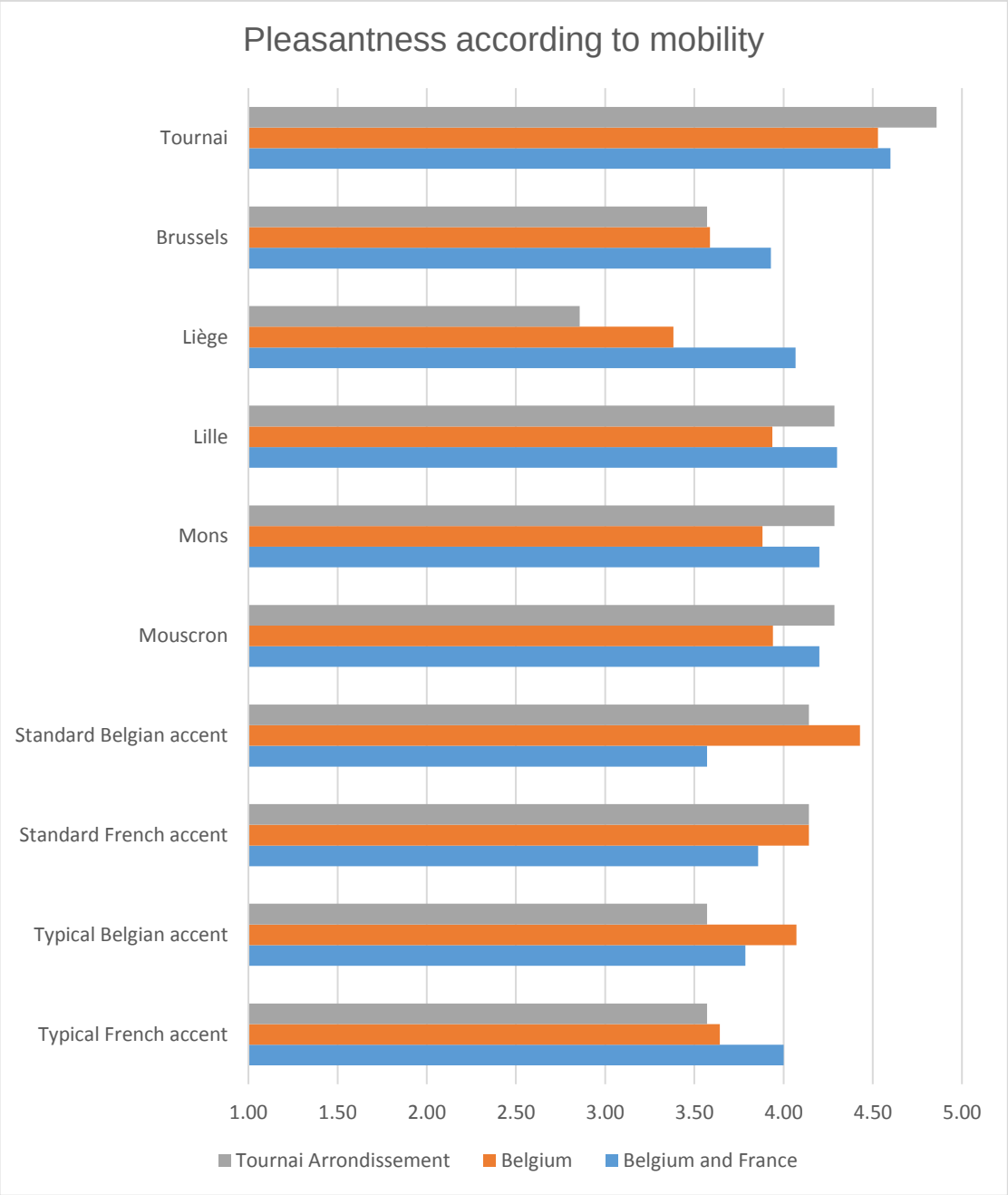

Figure 8-11. Pleasantness according to mobility

8.5 Media consumption

8.5.1 Methodology

Information concerning informants' media consumption was elicited part-way through the written questionnaire (see Appendix 4). Although sociolinguistic interest in media influence has grown in recent years, scholars have, for the most part, '[inferred] media influence post hoc' (Sayers 2014: 185). There is thus little precedent for gathering empirical data in the field. For this reason, an experimental approach was developed. Informants were presented with a grid cross-tabulating origin and form of media, replicated below (see Figure 8-12). They were asked first to estimate the total number of hours they spent engaging with each form of media in a week, then to estimate the geographic distribution of media they consumed.

	Télé	DVD (film/ séries)	Radio	Musique
Heures par semaine	h	h	h	h
Tournai/ Tournaisis	h	h	h	h
Hainaut ou Wallonie Picarde	h	h	h	h
Région Wallonie-Bruxelles	h	h	h	h
Flandres	h	h	h	h
Nord Pas-de-Calais (France)	h	h	h	h
France	h	h	h	h
Ailleurs dans la Francophonie	h	h	h	h
Monde anglophone (version originale)	h	h	h	h
Monde anglophone (doublé en français)	h	h	h	h
Autre	h	h	h	h

Figure 8-12. Table used to gather information relating to media consumption

Whilst all other aspects of the interview procedure were delivered without any problems, this was the question which proved difficult or confusing for many informants. As emerged with the mobility question, informants were keen to alert the researcher to the approximate nature of their responses. Certain informants also struggled with knowing the precise regional origin of media; particularly if it was regional or local. Finally, several also struggled with the order of the task's questions. As a result, the researcher suggested to certain informants that they first calculate hours of consumption on a regional level, before totalling them afterwards.

8.5.1.1 Data processing

The data could be processed in a number of ways; however, given the problems with the methodology described above, it was decided to focus on the television and radio data when comparing the results to other findings, and to collapse the regional origin of media into two groups: French or Belgian.

8.5.2 Results

8.5.2.1 Television consumption

Table 8-5 illustrates the mean number of hours of television consumed by region of origin. It can be seen that the most popular television is that from France. Totalling the national and regional television from both Belgium and France, it can be seen that an average of 5.9 hours of Belgian TV are watched per informant per week, whilst for French TV the number is 6.2. Therefore, on average, within the Tournaisis sample more French than Belgian TV is watched. It must be noted, however, as can be seen from Table 8-5, that there is a good

deal of inter-informant variation in number of hours of TV consumed, thus these results may not reflect the TV viewing habits of the wider borderland population.

Region	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
France	0.0	35.0	5.8	7.4
Wallonie-Bruxelles	0.0	20.0	3.1	5.0
Wallonie Picarde / Hainaut	0.0	22.5	2.8	5.5
Nord (France)	0.0	6.0	0.4	1.4
Francophone world (excluding France and Belgium)	0.0	8.0	0.2	1.3
Anglophone world, dubbed	0.0	7.0	0.2	1.1
Anglophone world, original version	0.0	2.0	0.1	0.4
Elsewhere	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.2
Flandre	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 8-5. Mean number of hours of television consumed per week by region of origin

Figure 8-13 illustrates that as age decreases, amount of television consumed decreases. Figure 8-14 illustrates that more French TV is watched by those belonging to ED2, whilst more Belgian TV is watched by those belonging to ED1. Finally, Figure 8-15 illustrates that the men watch more TV than the women.

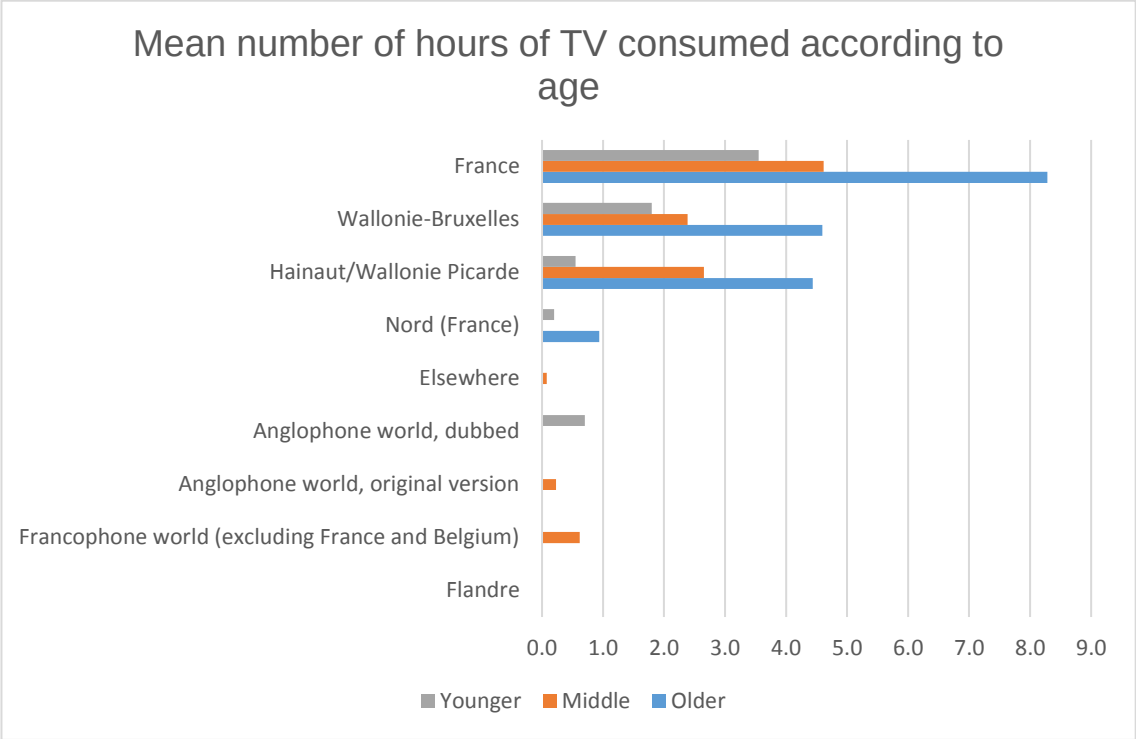

Figure 8-13. Mean number of hours of TV consumed per week according to age

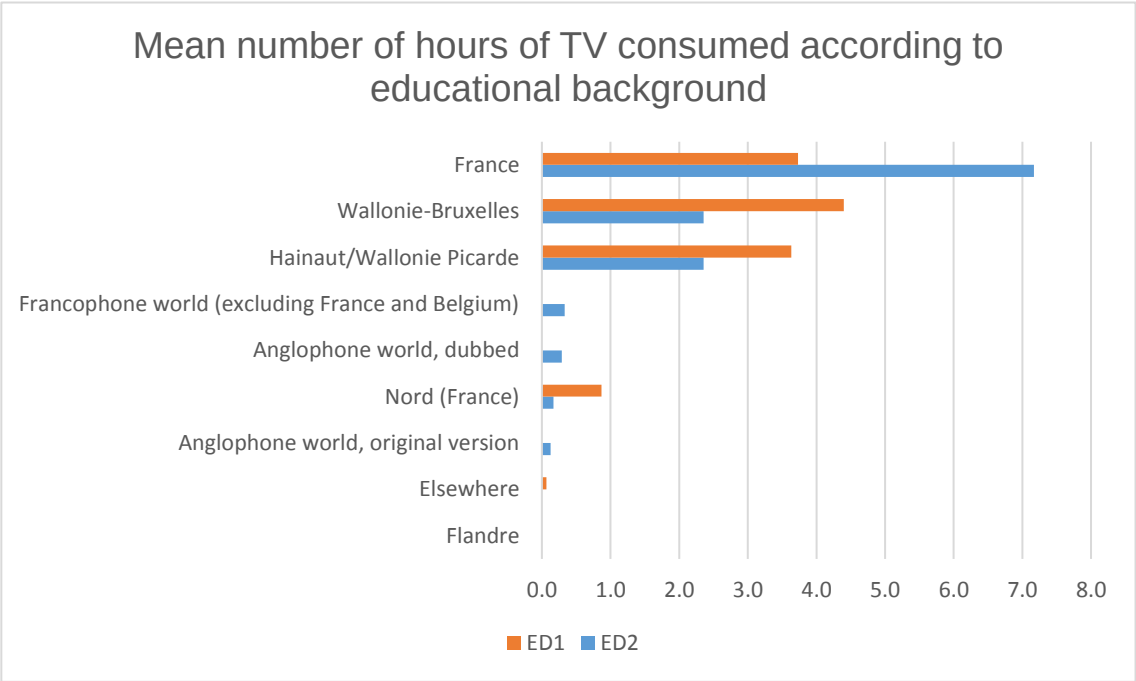

Figure 8-14. Mean number of hours of TV consumed per week according to educational background

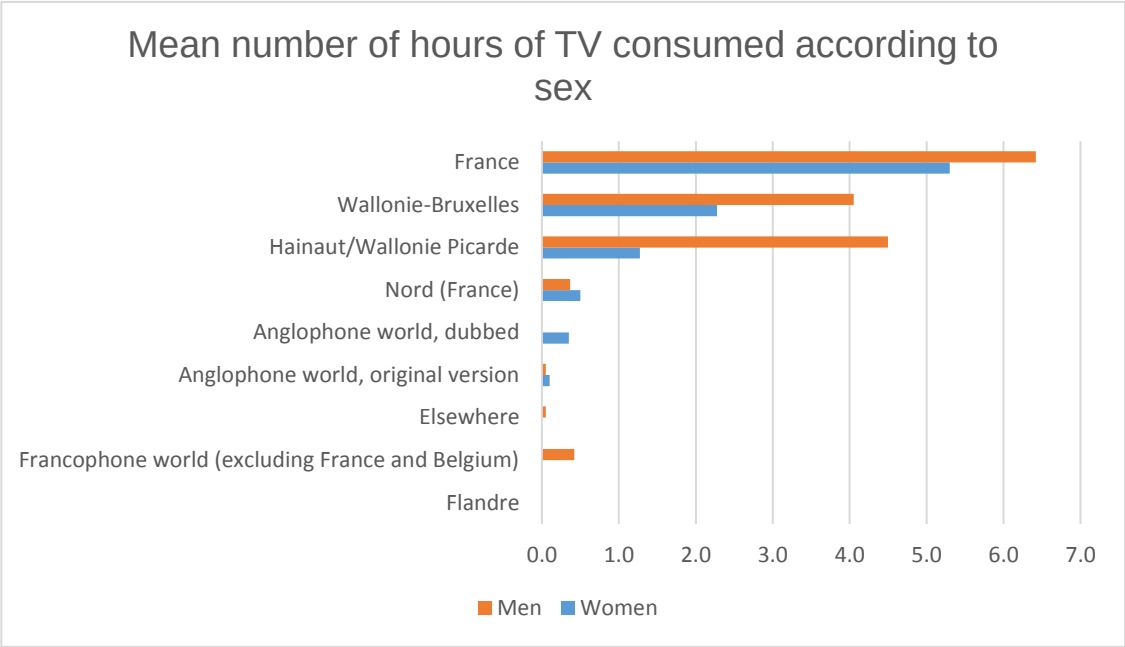

Figure 8-15. Mean number of hours of TV consumed per week according to sex

8.5.2.2 Radio consumption

Table 8-6 illustrates the mean number of hours per week of radio consumed by region of origin and shows that much more Belgian than French radio is consumed on average.

Region	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wallonie Picarde / Hainaut	0.0	72.0	6.1	16.2
Wallonie-Bruxelles	0.0	56.0	5.1	11.2
France	0.0	56.0	2.6	9.6
Nord (France)	0.0	10.0	0.6	2.1
Flandre	0.0	10.0	0.3	1.6
Francophone world (excluding France and Belgium)	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.2
Elsewhere	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anglophone world	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 8-6. Mean number of hours of radio consumed per week by region of origin

Figure 8-16 illustrates that the middle age group listen to much more local radio than either their younger or older compatriots. In contrast, the older informants listen, on average, to more French radio – a finding which is surprising – whilst

the younger ones listen to more national Belgian radio. It must be noted, however, as can be seen from Table 8-6, that there is a good deal of inter-informant variation in number of hours of radio consumed, thus these patterns may not be representative of the wider borderland population.

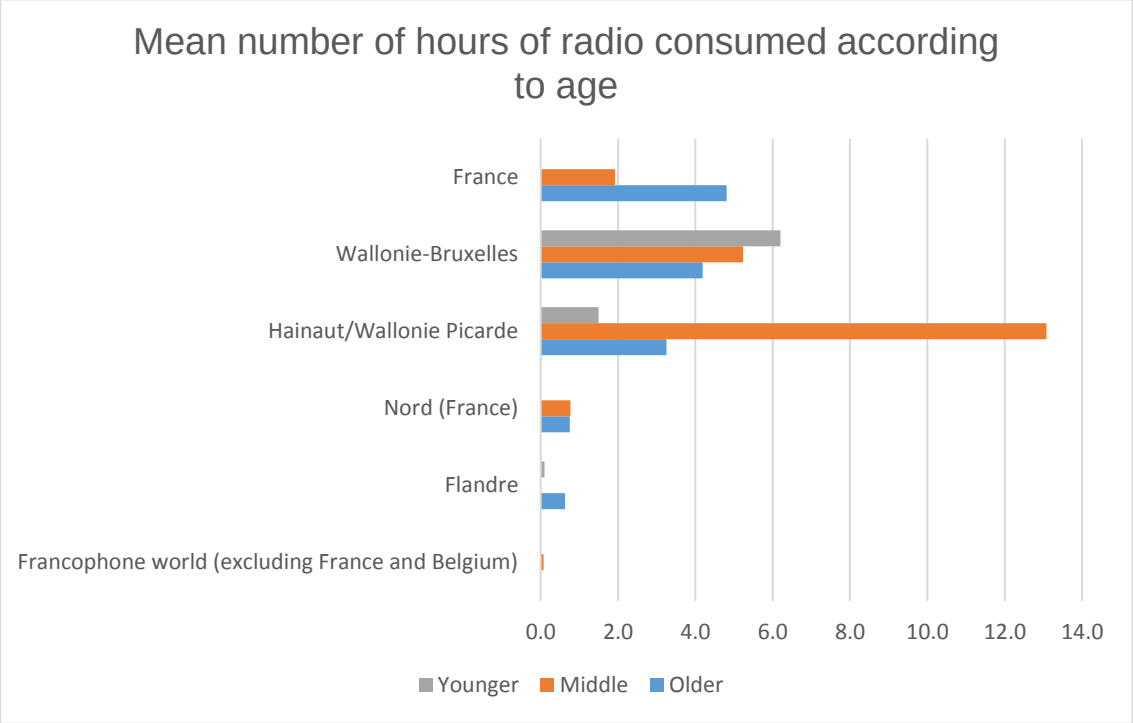

Figure 8-16. Mean number of hours of radio consumed per week according to age

Figure 8-17 illustrates that ED1 informants listen to much more radio than ED2 informants. Figure 8-18, on the other hand, shows that there is less variation along the lines of sex. However, whilst men listen to more regional Belgian radio, women listen to more French radio.

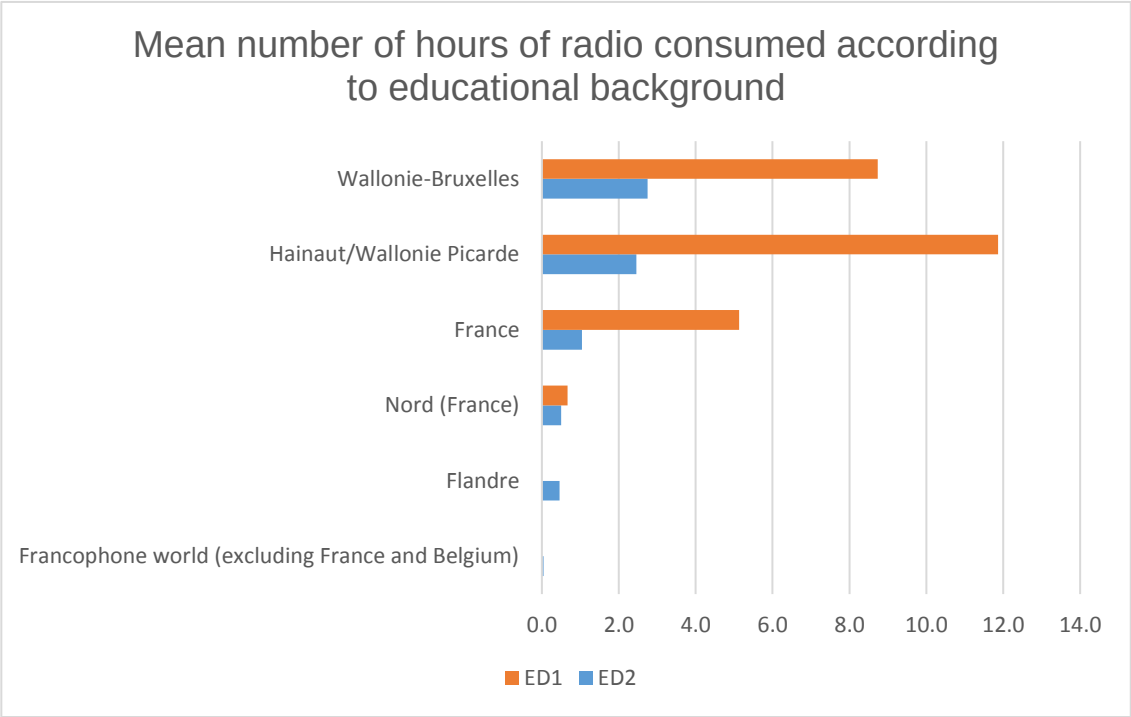

Figure 8-17. Mean number of hours of radio consumed per week according to educational background

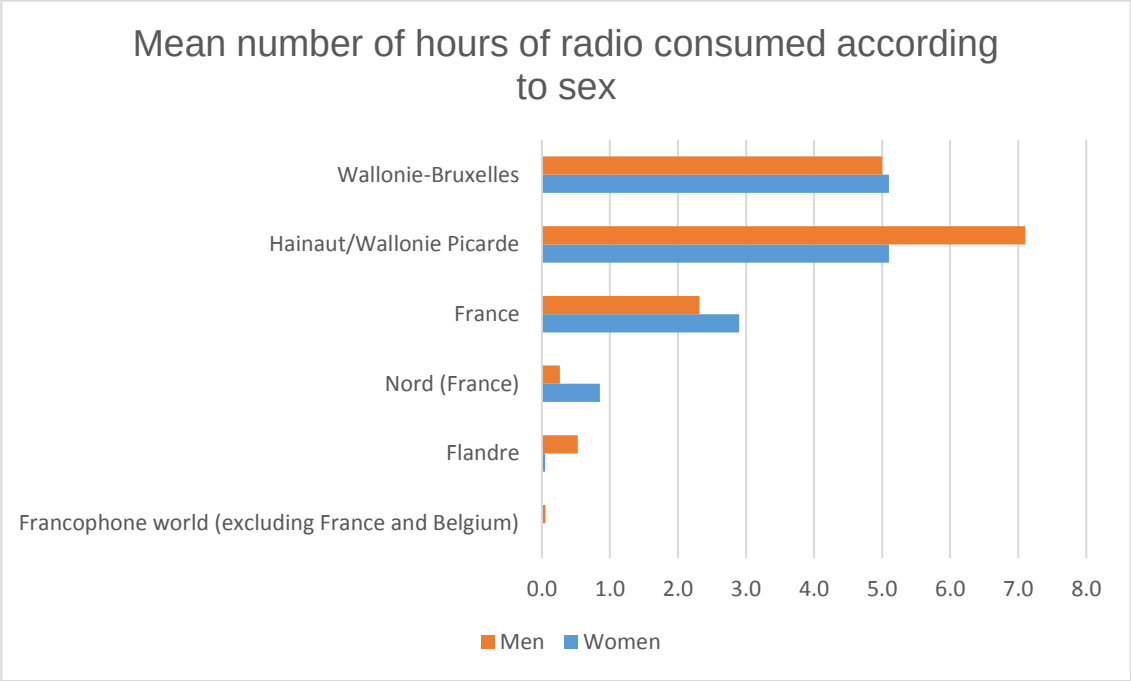

Figure 8-18. Mean number of hours of radio consumed per week according to sex

8.5.2.3 Media consumption and linguistic behaviour

No clear links were observed between media consumption and linguistic behaviour – a finding we will discuss more in 8.7.2. Thus we will focus our attention on those results deemed more informative.

8.5.2.4 *Media consumption and linguistic perception*

Figure 8-19 illustrates the mean number of hours per week of media consumed according to orientation of perceived wider speech community. It can be seen that those speakers who perceive their wider speech community to be within Belgium watch more Belgian television, whilst those who perceive their wider speech community to be transnational watch more French television. It also shows that those who perceive a Belgian speech community listen to more Belgian and French radio than those who perceive a transnational one. It is also interesting to note that those who perceive a transnational speech community listen, on average, to very little French radio, although they do watch more French TV.

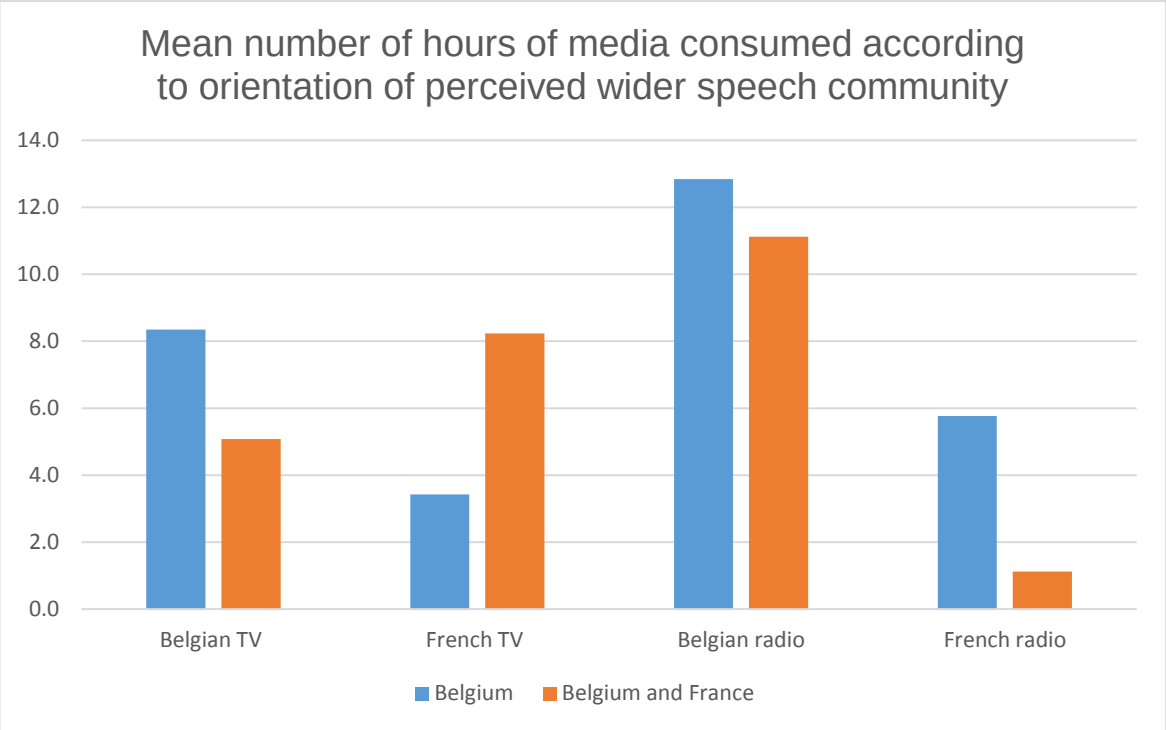

Figure 8-19. Mean number of hours of media consumed per week according to orientation of perceived wider speech community

8.5.2.5 Media consumption and language attitudes

No clear patterns were observed between media consumption and language attitudes. A multivariate statistical analysis may have revealed links; however, due to limitations in time and expertise, this was not possible for the present study.

8.6 Sense of place and regional belonging

8.6.1 Methodology

Information concerning informants' sense of place and regional belonging was elicited in the final part of the written questionnaire. Scholars have often elicited such information through asking questions, the responses to which have subsequently been assigned a value (cf. Underwood 1998; Edwards 1992; Armstrong & Unsworth 1999; Llamas 2001; Pooley 2004b; Jamin 2007). Since one of the things that was of interest in the present study, however, was the degree to which sense of place 'mapped' onto informants' perceived speech community and correlated with other spatial and sociospatial factors it was decided that sense of place would be elicited through a mapping task.

Much like the draw-a-map perceptual dialectological task (cf. chapter 6), informants were given the instruction:

> 'Sur une carte – celle qui convient le mieux – encerclez la zone que vous considérez comme votre "région"'[234].

[234] In English: 'On a map – whichever is most appropriate – circle the zone that you consider to be your "region"'.

Informants were not given the map upon which they had responded to the perceptual dialectological task, nor did they have it in front of them as a visual stimulus. Instead, they were presented with the four different maps to choose from as in the perceptual dialectological task. Informants were very happy to complete the task; indeed, they generally appeared more confident in responding to this task than the perceptual dialectological one. If they did question what was meant by 'votre "région"', the researcher responded by saying it was where they felt 'at home'.

As for informants' regional belonging, it was decided that this would be derived through a Likert[235] grid task in which informants rated their degree of regional belonging to different places. Places included administrative and cultural regions in which Tournai is located, such as Hainaut (county) and Belgium (nation) and places coterminous with the Tournai *arrondissement* such as Flanders[236] and Northern France (see Appendix 4 for the questionnaire). Informants were also given the opportunity to list regions not included in the grid task. A seven point Likert scale was presented with ratings going from '7 = appartenance très forte' to '1 = appartenance très faible', with '4 = appartenance moyenne' in the middle. Finally, informants were asked which of the regions they felt the strongest sense of belonging to.

[235] The Likert scale was invented by the psychologist Rensis Likert. It is used to test people's attitudes about something through asking them to rate their agreement with a statement on a scale, typically between one to five or one to seven.
[236] Flanders was not included in the first fieldwork trip because interest was focused on ratings of France and administrative areas of which Tournai is a part. However, based on reflections between fieldwork trips it was decided this information should be elicited during later interviews.

8.6.1.1 Data processing

The map data were processed using the same method that was used for processing the perceptual dialectological map data, that is to say using ArcMap (cf. 6.4.3). The data could be organised in a number of ways. However, in order to address the study's research questions two main processes were carried out on the data. Firstly, all responses were aggregated to create a composite map illustrating agreement, disagreement, extent, skew and orientation bias in the sample. Secondly, informants' responses were divided into those whose sense of place included France and those for whom it did not.

As for the regional belonging data, these too could be processed in a number of ways. For the purposes of the present study, it was decided that they would be processed in two main ways. Firstly, informants' responses to the final question were processed and, secondly, mean scores for each region were calculated. In order to carry out analyses of responses alongside other factors, the sample was then divided into two groups: i) 'Francophiles': those who rated at least one of the French regions as 5, 6 or 7; and ii) 'non-Francophiles': those who did not rate any of the French regions above 4[237].

8.6.2 Results – sense of place mapping task

Figure 8-20 illustrates informants' aggregated responses to the question of where they perceive their region to be. It illustrates that there is a good deal of agreement. Whilst the extent of the region does include most of France and Wallonia, as well as part of Switzerland and Luxembourg, this is the response of just one person: Thierry (MMED2).

[237] The sample was also initially divided into those who scored at least one of the French regions as 7, and those who did not, and the same patterns were found.

Figure 8-21 is a zoomed-in version of the map illustrating the area that at least five informants agree represents their region. It can also be seen in this map that at least thirty-one of the 38 informants who responded to the question consider Tournai to be within their region.

Moving north from Tournai to the border with Flanders, agreement decreases incrementally, as it does moving east from Tournai towards Brussels. In contrast, there is a notable drop off at the French border, particularly to the west (as opposed to to the south) of Tournai. Indeed, eleven[238] of the 38 informants traced part of the national border when outlining their region. For them, then, the two boundaries are coterminous.

Looking at the individual maps, nine informants[239] clearly did not include France in their perceived region. For a further eleven informants[240] it was concluded that they also did not consider their perceived region to stretch into France and that the penned marks which traversed the border on their maps were due to a lack of accuracy in tracing the border. The remaining eighteen informants[241] all considered their region to extend somewhat into France. Indeed, as can be seen from Figure 8-21, at least eight informants (21%) consider Lille to be within their region.

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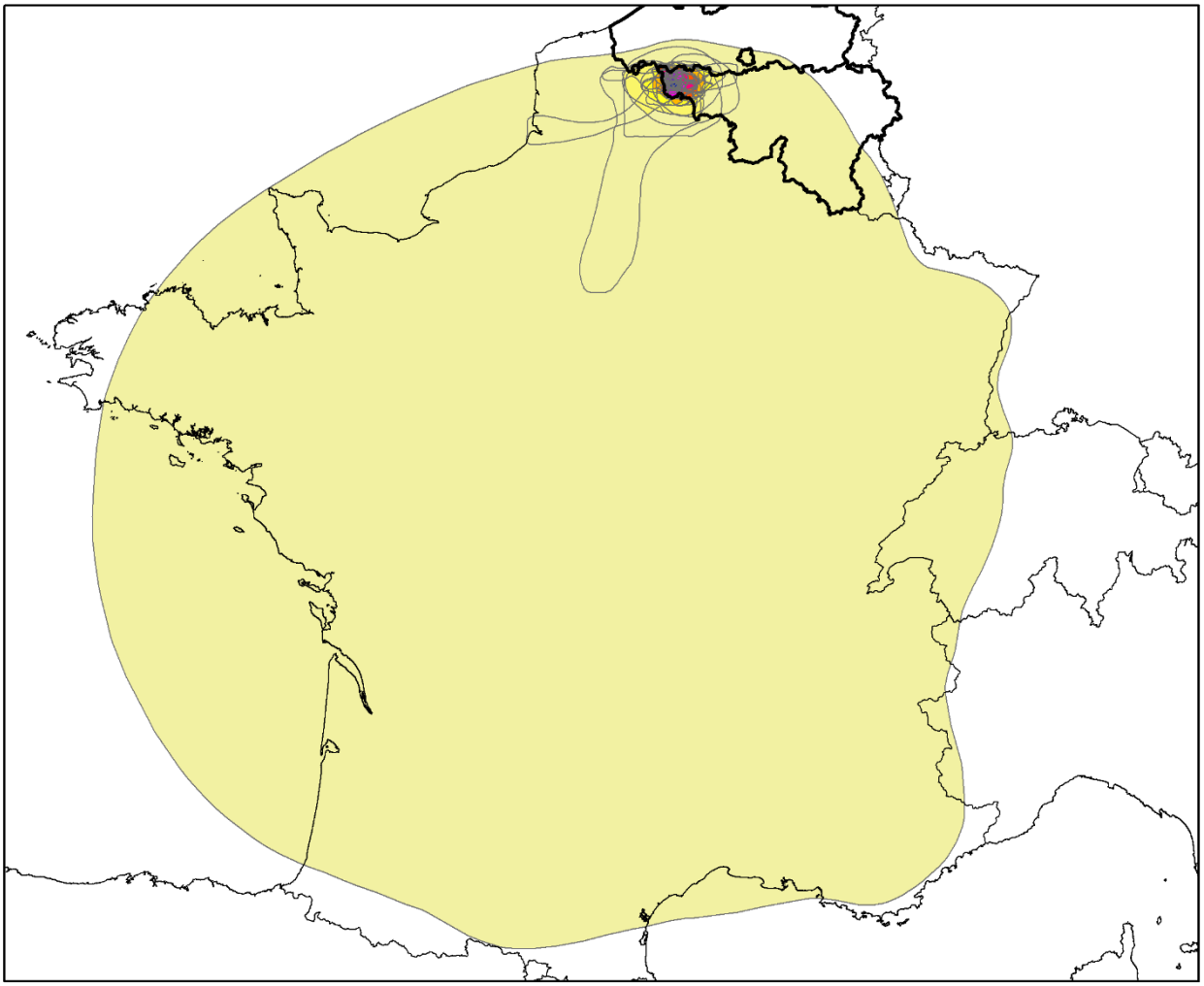
[238] Olivier (YMED1); Louis (YMED2); Sabrina (OFED1); Simon (OMED2); Yolande (MFED1); Anthony (OMED1); Benoit (OMED2); Francis (MMED1); Jessica (MFED2); Maxime (MMED2); Morgane (MFED2).
[239] Nadine (YFED2); Emma (YFED2); Clara (YFED2); Daniel (OMED1); Geneviève (OFED1); Olivier (YMED1); Patricia (OFED2); Rose (OFED1); Xavier (YMED2).
[240] Anthony (OMED1); Benoit (OMED1); Francis (MMED1); Jessica (MFED2); Lea (YFED2), Maxime (MMED2); Morgane (MFED2); Nicolas (MMED1); Oceane (YFED1); Philippe (OMED2); Zoé (MFED1).
[241] Agnes (OFED1); Christophe (OMED1); Delphine (MFED2); Florence (OFED2); Hugo (MMED2); Ines (OFED2); Julien (YMED2); Louis (YMED2); Quentin (OMED2); Richard (YMED2); Sabrina (OFED1); Simon (OMED2); Thierry (MMED2); Tiffaine (OFED1); Veronique (MFED2); Victor (MMED2); Yann (MMED1); Yolande (MFED1).

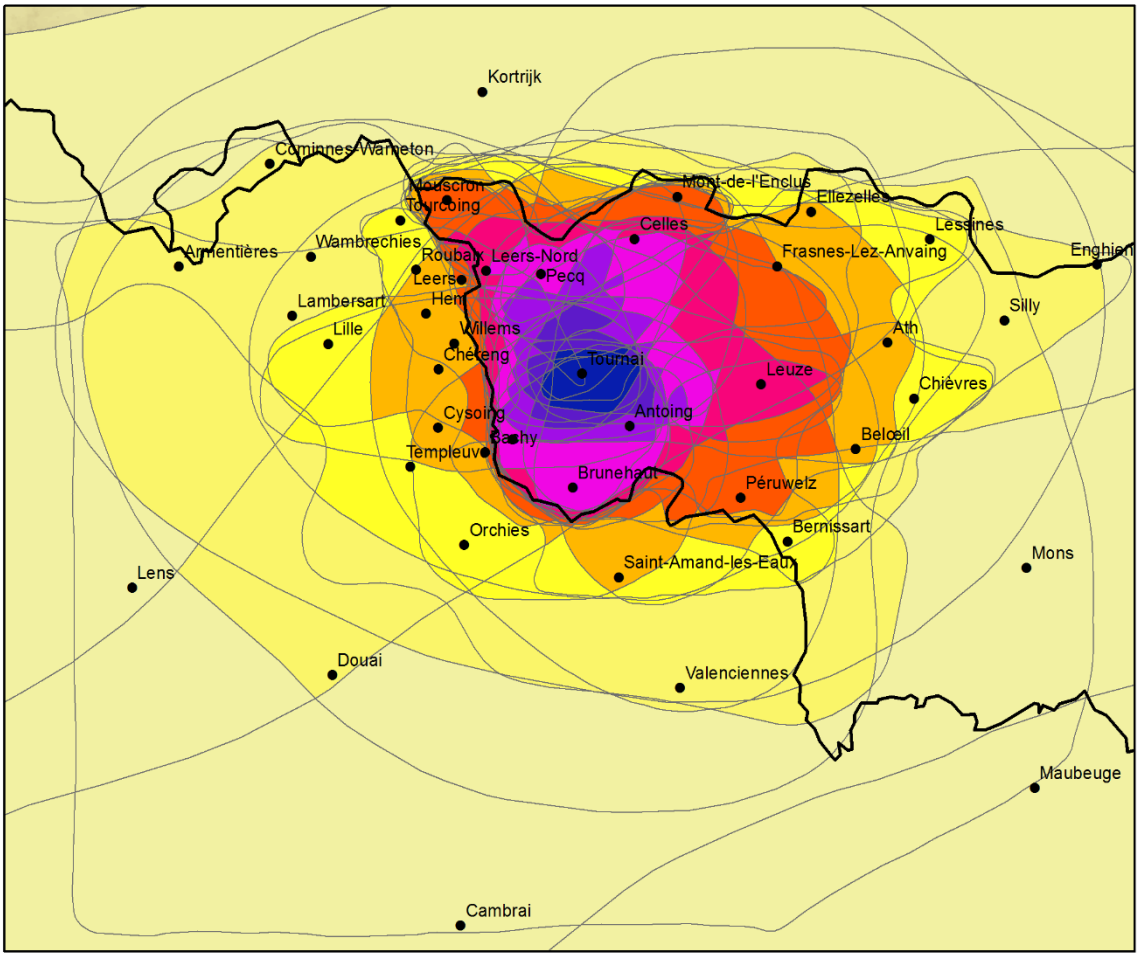


Number of informants in agreement

- 1 - 4
- 5 - 7
- 8 - 11
- 12 - 14
- 15 - 17
- 18 - 20
- 21 - 23
- 24 - 27
- 28 - 30
- 31 - 33

0 95 190 380 Kilometers

Figure 8-20. Aggregate map of informants' responses to the sense of place mapping task



Number of informants in agreement

- 1 - 4
- 5 - 7
- 8 - 11
- 12 - 14
- 15 - 17
- 18 - 20
- 21 - 23
- 24 - 27
- 28 - 30
- 31 - 33

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Figure 8-21. Close up aggregate map of informants' responses to the sense of place mapping task

In Figure 8-22, which illustrates informants' sense of place according to age, it can be seen that the majority of younger speakers perceive their region to lie within the national boundaries. On the other hand, the majority of both middle-aged and older speakers perceive their region to stretch into France.

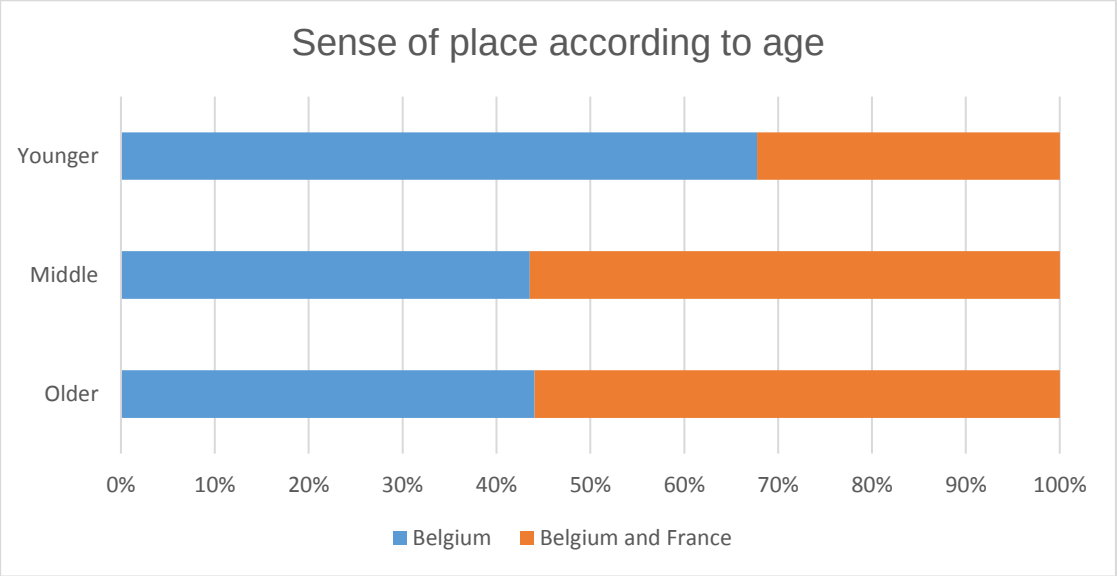


Figure 8-22. Sense of place according to age

In Figure 8-23, it can be seen that the majority of informants belonging to ED1 perceive a purely Belgian region, whilst just over 50% of ED2 informants perceive their region to extend into France.

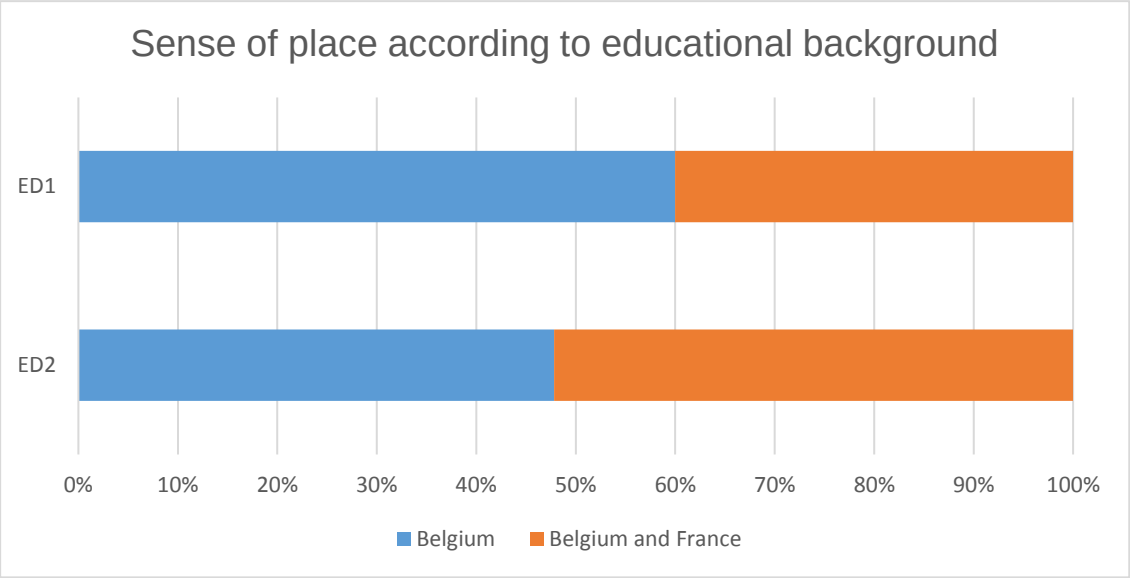


Figure 8-23. Sense of place according to educational background

In Figure 8-24, it can be seen that the majority of males consider their region to extend into France, whilst the majority of females do not[242].

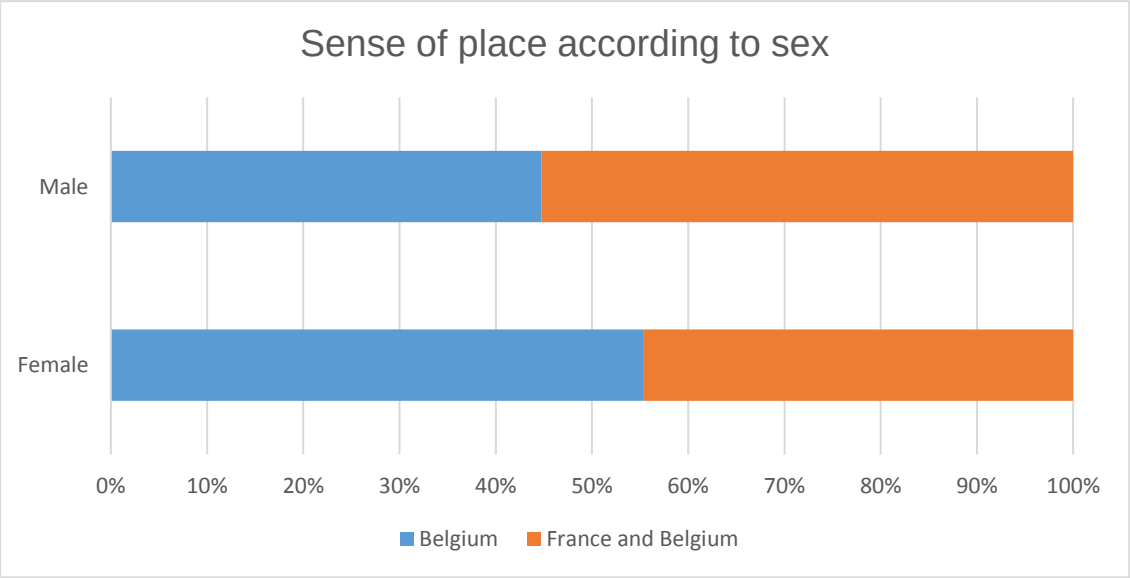


Figure 8-24. Sense of place according to sex

[242] This gendered spatioperceptual behaviour contrasts somewhat with that observed by Hoare (2000, 2002) in Brittany. Hoare found that a greater percentage of females considered themselves to be more French than Breton (2000: 337) whilst more males identified with a Breton identity (2002: 78).

8.6.2.1 *Sense of place and linguistic behaviour*

Figure 8-25 illustrates linguistic behaviour according to sense of place. It can be seen that those who perceive their region to be transnational maintain more strong /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ oppositions on average – behaviour typically associated with Belgium. In contrast, those who perceive their region to be within Belgium merge more /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ on average – behaviour typically associated with Hexagonal French varieties. Similarly, they also front more /ɔ/ on average, whilst those who perceive their region to be transnational lower more /e/ on average. We will discuss these findings in the final section of this chapter.

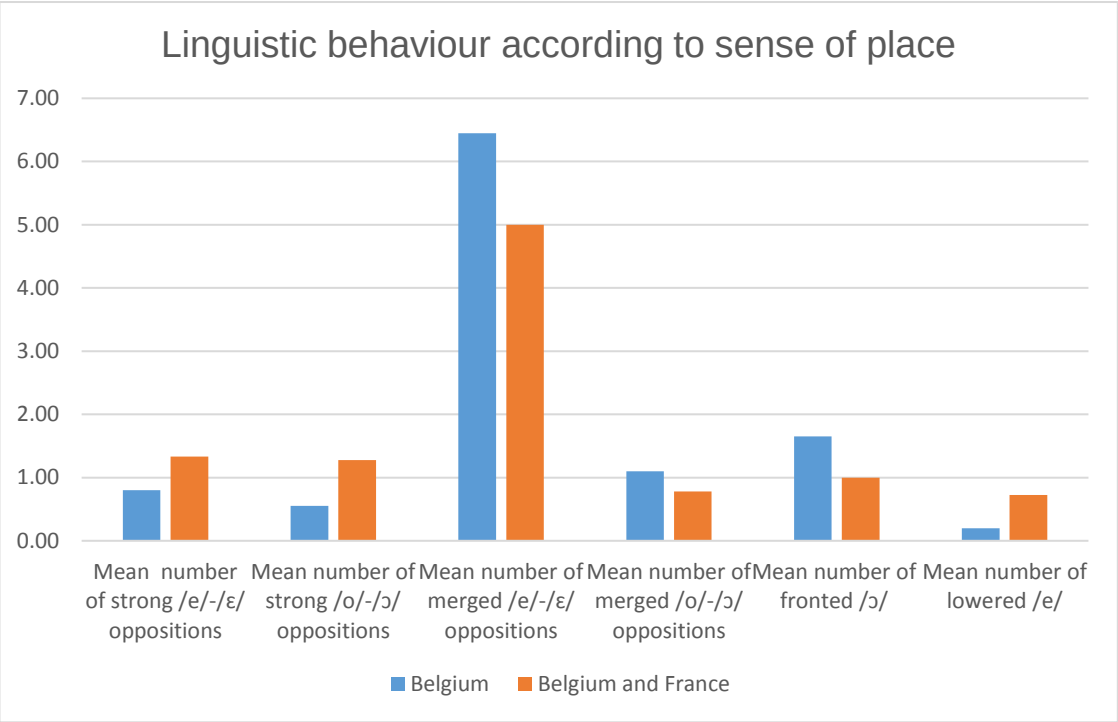


Figure 8-25. Linguistic behaviour according to sense of place

8.6.2.2 *Sense of place and linguistic perception*

Figure 8-26 illustrates perceived wider speech community according to sense of place. Most remarkable is that few people who consider their region to be transnational consider their speech community to be purely within Belgium: just

four people hold this opinion, whilst thirteen people consider both their region and their wider speech community to be transnational.

As for the correspondence between mapped speech community or wider speech community and mapped region, impressionistically assessing the congruence of outlines, fourteen informants[243] appear to outline similar areas in response to both questions, whilst for twenty-four[244] informants there is less correspondence.

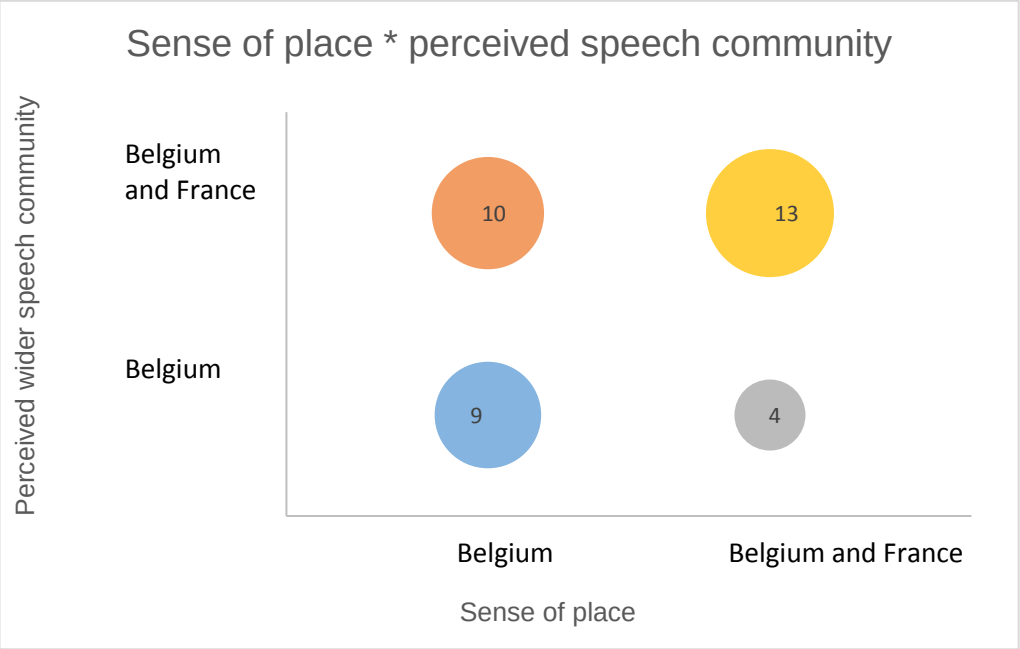


Figure 8-26. Linguistic perception according to sense of place

[243] Agnes (OFED1); Benoit (OMED2); Clara (YFED2); Emma (YFED2); Francis (MMED1); Julien (YMED2); Lea (YFED2); Louis (YMED2); Olivier (YMED1); Rose (OFED1); Sabrina (OFED1); Simon (OMED2); Veronique (MFED2); Yolande.
[244] Anthony (OMED1); Christophe (OMED1); Daniel (OMED1); Delphine (MFED2); Florence (OFED2); Geneviève (OFED1); Hugo (MMED2); Ines (OFED2); Jessica (MFED2); Maxime (MMED2); Morgane (MFED2); Nadine (YFED2); Nicolas (MMEED1); Océane (YFED1); Patricia (OFED2); Philippe (OMED2); Quentin (OMED2); Richard (YMED2); Thierry (MMED2); Tiffaine (OFED1); Victor (MMED2); Xavier (YMED2); Yann (MMED1); Zoé (MFED1).

8.6.2.3 Sense of place and language attitudes

Figure 8-27 illustrates degree of difference and sense of place. It can be seen that those who consider their region to be transnational perceive a greater degree of difference for all accents than those who identify with a Belgian region, with the exception of the Lille accent and typical accents.

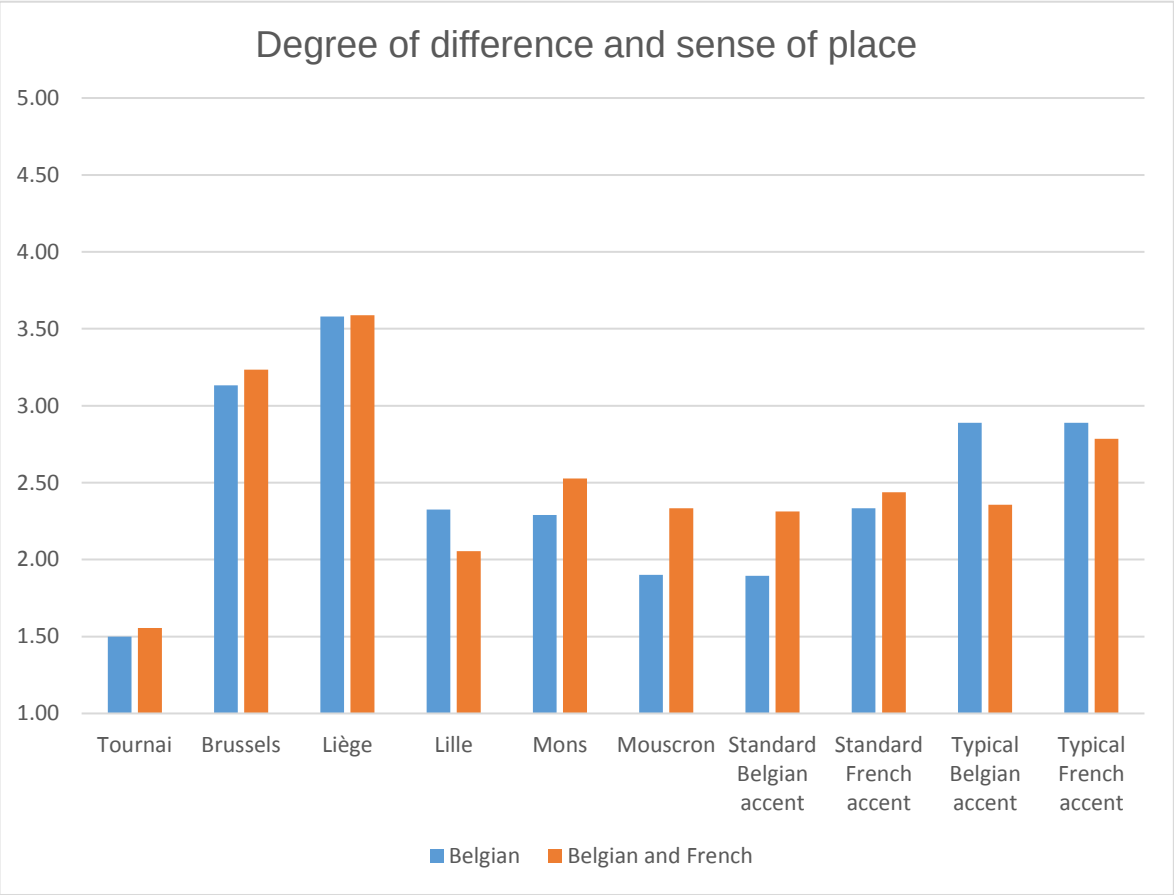


Figure 8-27. Degree of difference and sense of place

Figure 8-28 illustrates correctness and sense of place. It can be seen that those who identify with a transnational region perceive standard accents, the Mouscron accent and the typical Belgian accent as more correct than those who identify with a Belgian region.

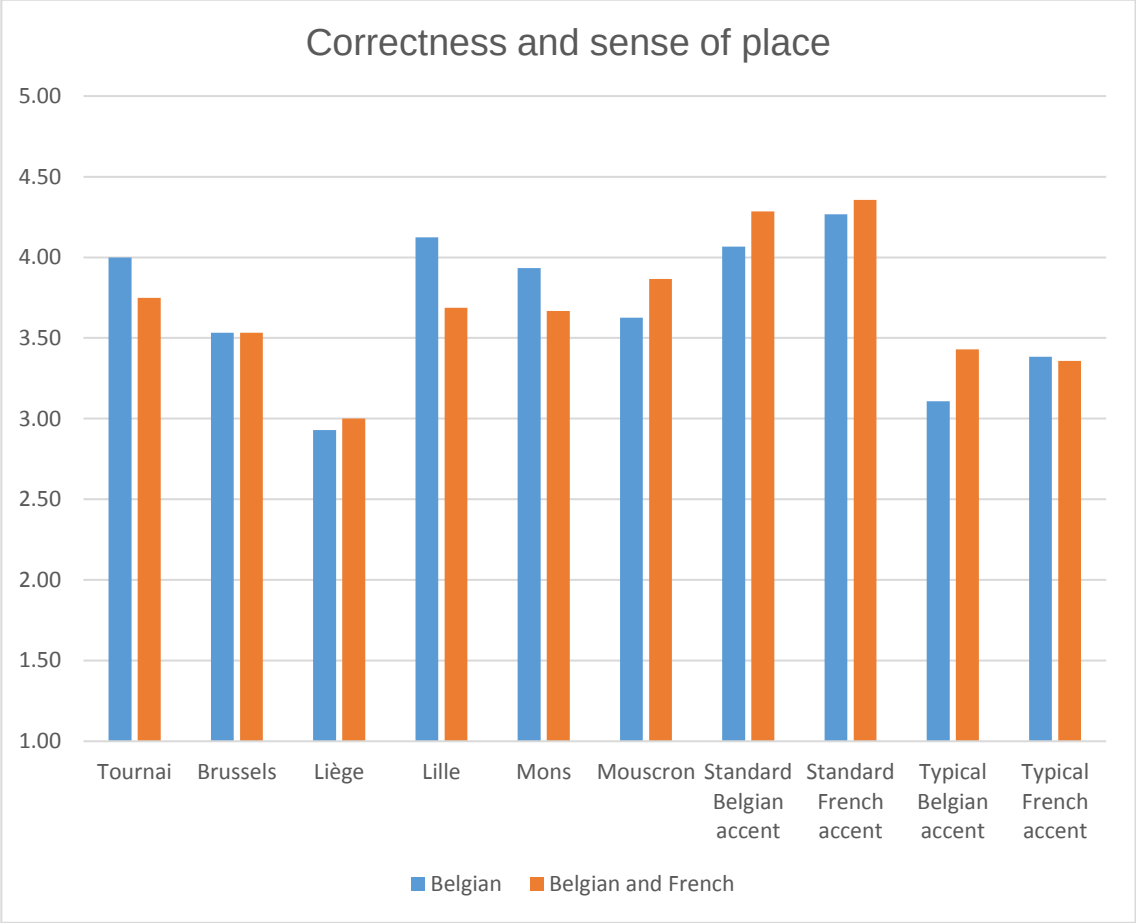


Figure 8-28. Correctness and sense of place

Figure 8-29 illustrates pleasantness and sense of place. It can be seen that those who consider their region to be transnational rate accents as less pleasant than those who consider their region to be Belgian, with the exception of Liège and the typical accents.

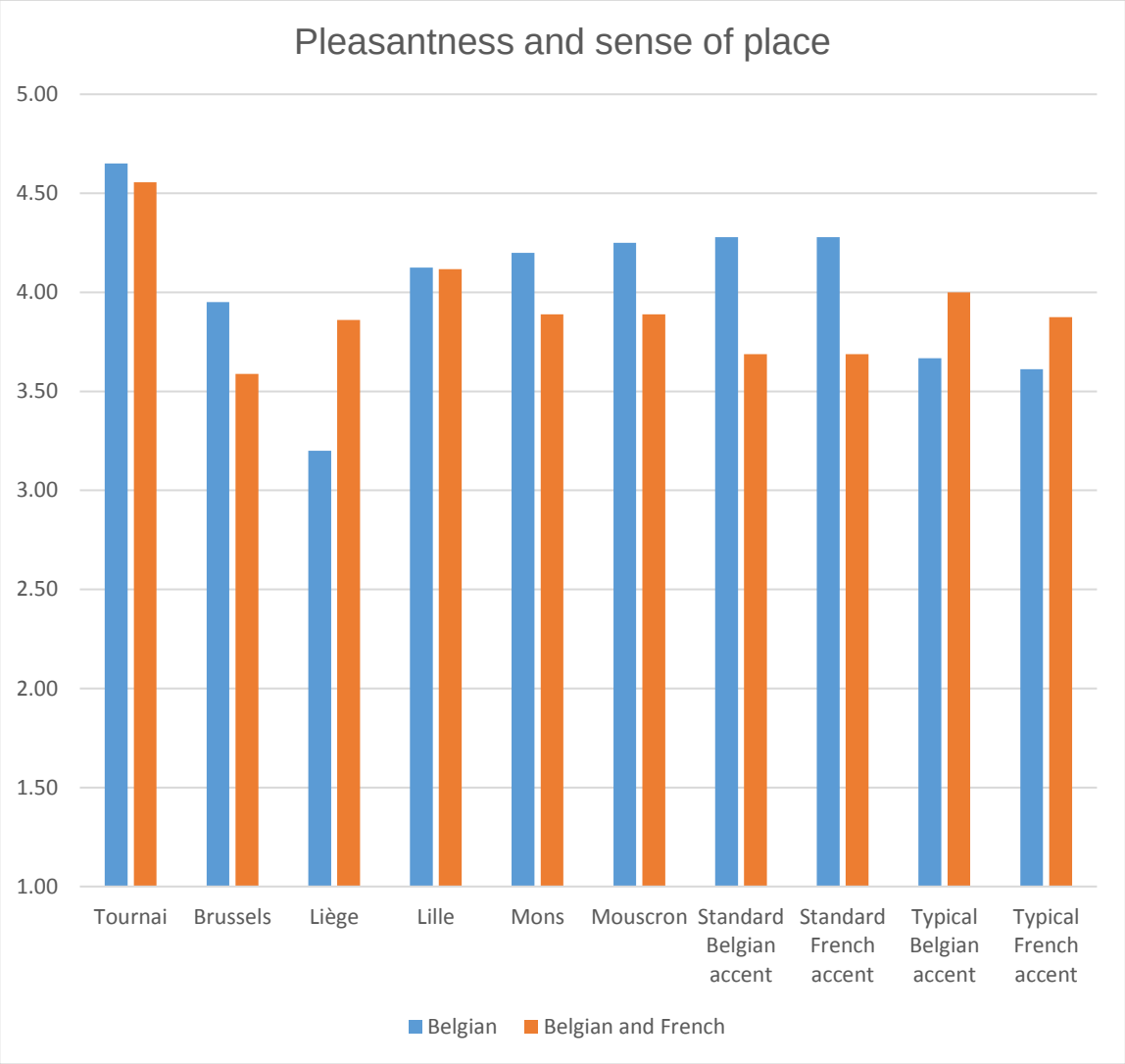


Figure 8-29. Pleasantness and sense of place

8.6.3 Results – regional belonging task

8.6.3.1 Results – strongest sense of belonging

Figure 8-30 illustrates the responses to the final question which asked informants which region they most identified with. It can be seen that the most popular response of informants was to cite the town or village they lived in, followed by the region Tournaisis and then the nation Belgium[245].

[245] This finding replicates that of Kiely et al. (2000), who found in their study of the Scottish-English borderland that inhabitants of Berwick did not identify with a national nor regional identity, but rather a local one. This, they explain, is on account of the ambiguous past of the area and present-day cross-border associational life.

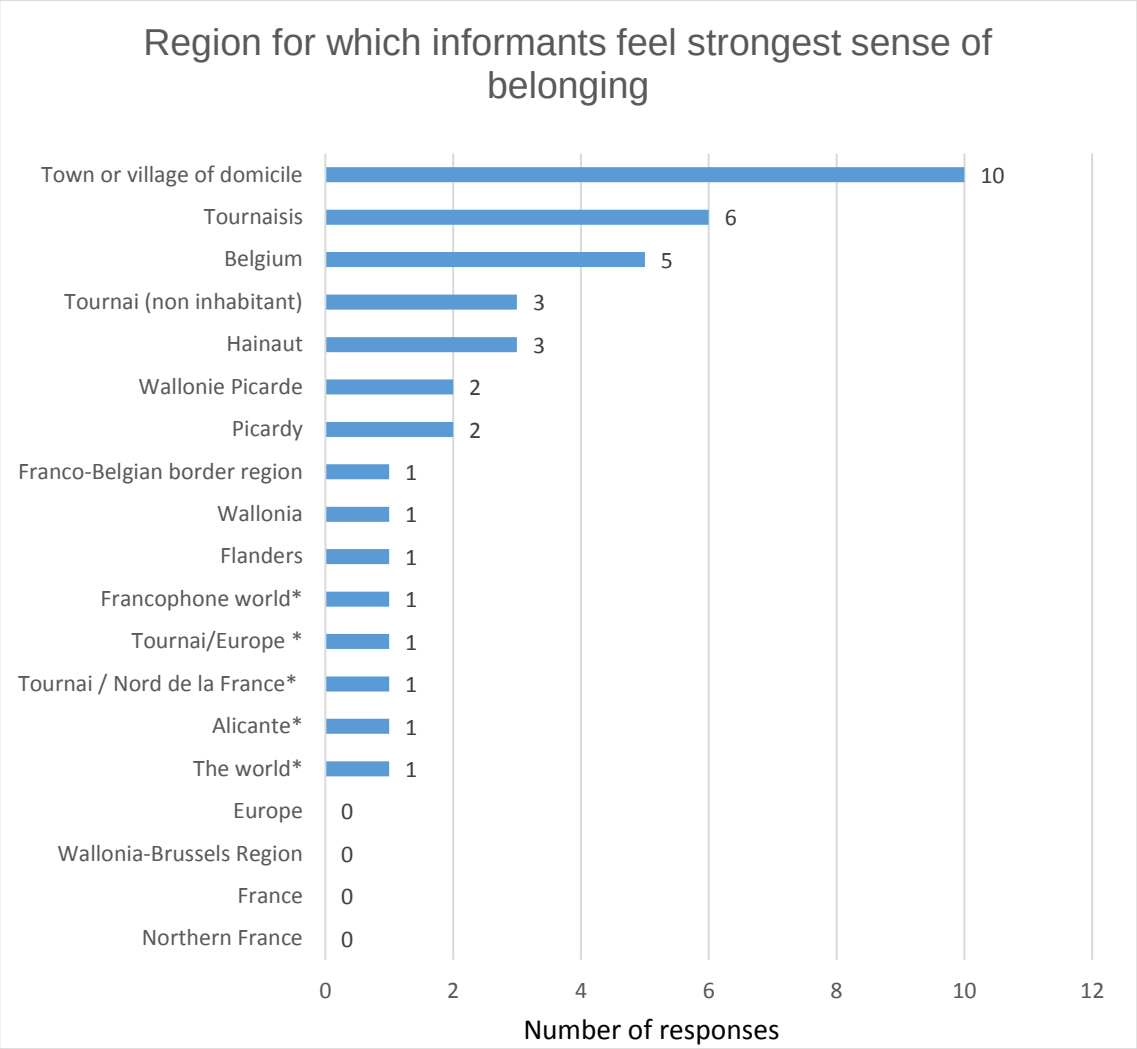


Figure 8-30. Region for which informants feel strongest sense of belonging (places with an asterisk were not included in the preceding Likert task and were added by informants).

Figure 8-31 illustrates region for which informants feel the strongest sense of belonging according to age. The most noteworthy patterns include that whilst five middle-aged and older informants picked Belgium, no younger informants did. Equally, no younger informants chose Picardy, whilst Hainaut was only selected by older informants. On the other hand, no older informants picked the region of Wallonie Picarde – a region which has only been designated in the past few years.

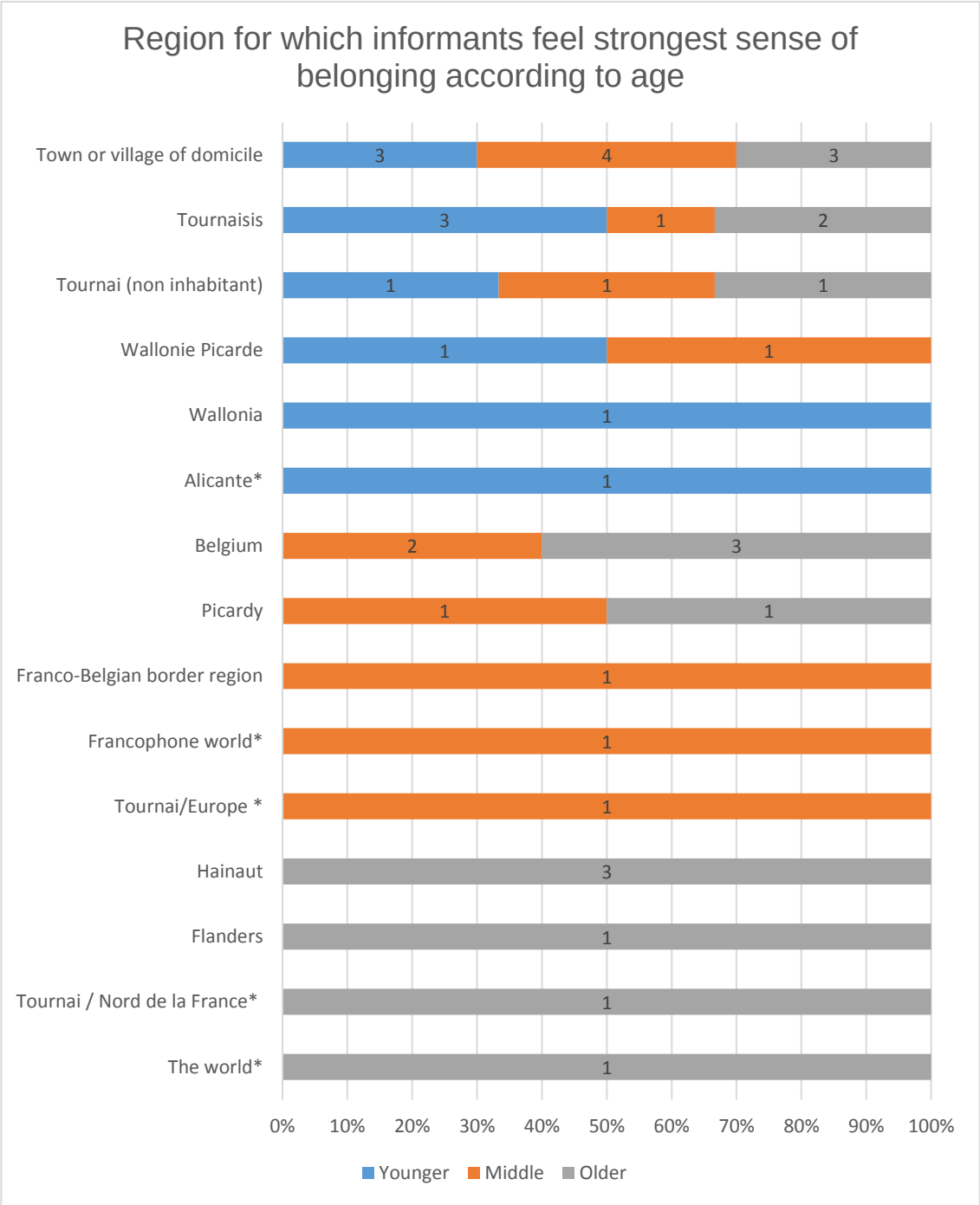


Figure 8-31. Region for which informants feel strongest sense of belonging according to age

Figure 8-32 illustrates region for which informants feel the strongest sense of belonging according to educational background. It can be seen that Hainaut – the traditional administrative regional designation – was only selected by ED1 informants, whilst four of the five informants to select Belgium were ED2 informants. Similarly, both participants who selected Wallonie Picarde were ED2 informants.

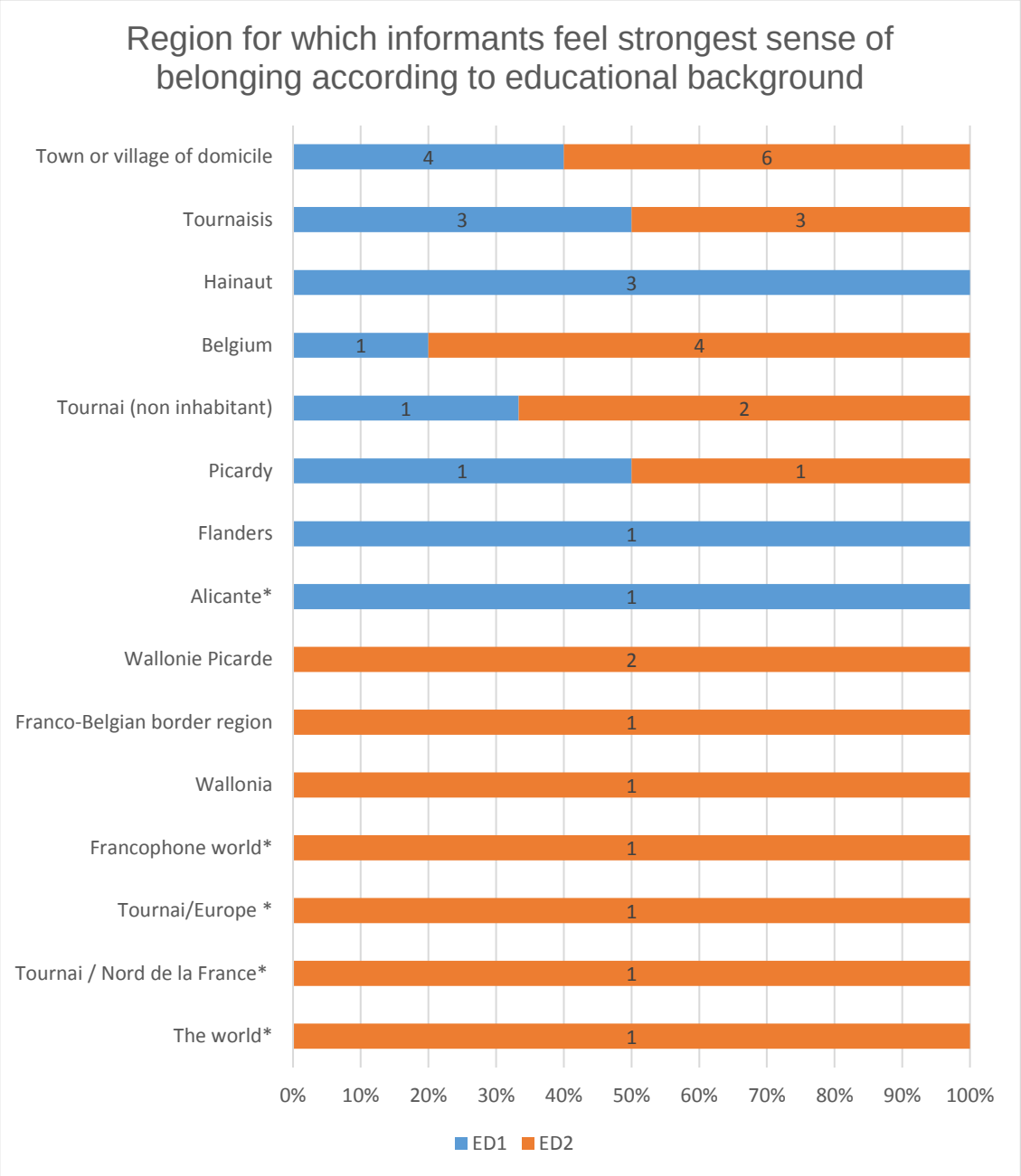


Figure 8-32. Region for which informants feel strongest sense of belonging according to educational background

Figure 8-33 illustrates region for which informants feel strongest sense of belonging according to sex. It can be seen that of the six informants who picked Tournaisis, five were male. On the other hand, three of the five informants who picked Belgium were female. Whilst both of the informants who picked Wallonie Picarde were male, two of the three to pick Hainaut were female.

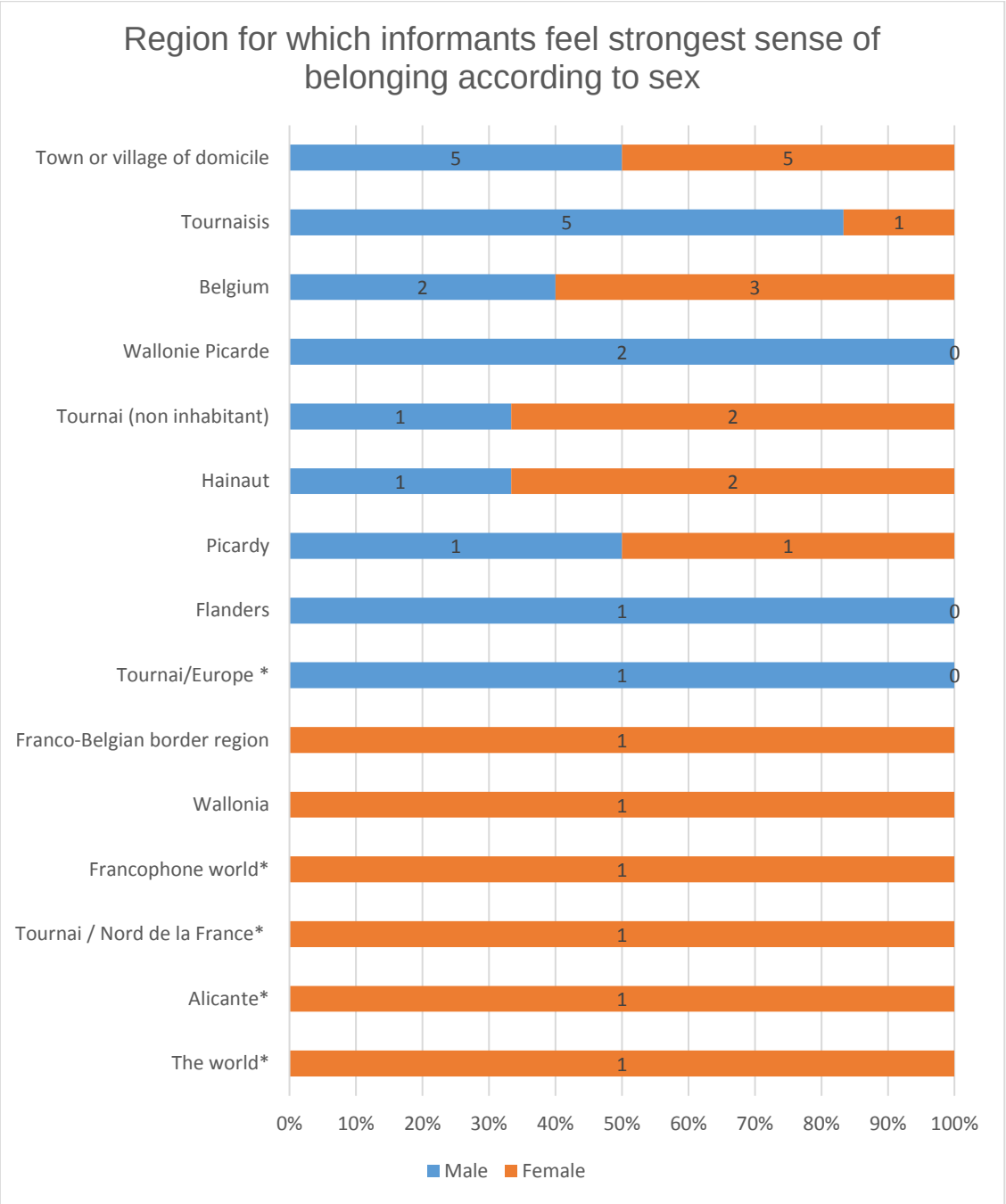


Figure 8-33. Region for which informants feel strongest sense of belonging according to sex

8.6.3.2 Results – Likert rating of regions

Table 8-7 illustrates the mean scores for sense of belonging to each region in descending order of score. It can be seen that Tournai is ranked first, whilst Tournaisis follows closely behind. Flanders is ranked bottom by far. It can also be seen in this table that whilst the Franco-Belgian borderland and the *Nord* (France) are ranked quite far down the list, regional belonging for these places

is rated more highly than for France in general, Wallonie-Bruxelles and Flanders.

	Number of informants	**Minimum score**	**Maximum score**	**Mean score**	**Std. Deviation**
Tournai	38	4	7	6.58	0.919
Tournaisis	39	4	7	6.54	0.942
Belgium	39	1	7	6.18	1.393
Wallonie Picarde	38	4	7	6.11	1.158
Wallonia	39	4	7	5.91	1.202
Hainaut	39	2	7	5.79	1.218
Europe	39	3	7	5.64	1.367
Franco-Belgian borderland	38	2	7	5.50	1.520
Other	23	1	7	5.13	2.341
Picardy	38	1	7	4.74	1.913
Nord (France)	38	1	7	4.53	2.115
Wallonie-Bruxelles	37	1	7	4.00	1.780
France	38	1	7	3.71	2.155
Flanders	22	1	6	2.55	1.896

Table 8-7. Mean scores for sense of belonging to each region

Figure 8-34 illustrates the mean scores for sense of belonging to each region according to age. Amongst the most noteworthy patterns are the fact that Picardy is scored much more highly by the older speakers, whilst the Franco-Belgian borderland is scored much lower by the younger informants. As age decreases, mean scores for both the *Nord* (France) and France decrease, as they do for Flanders. Wallonie-Bruxelles is also rated considerably lower by the younger informants. In contrast, they rate Belgium more highly than their older compatriots.

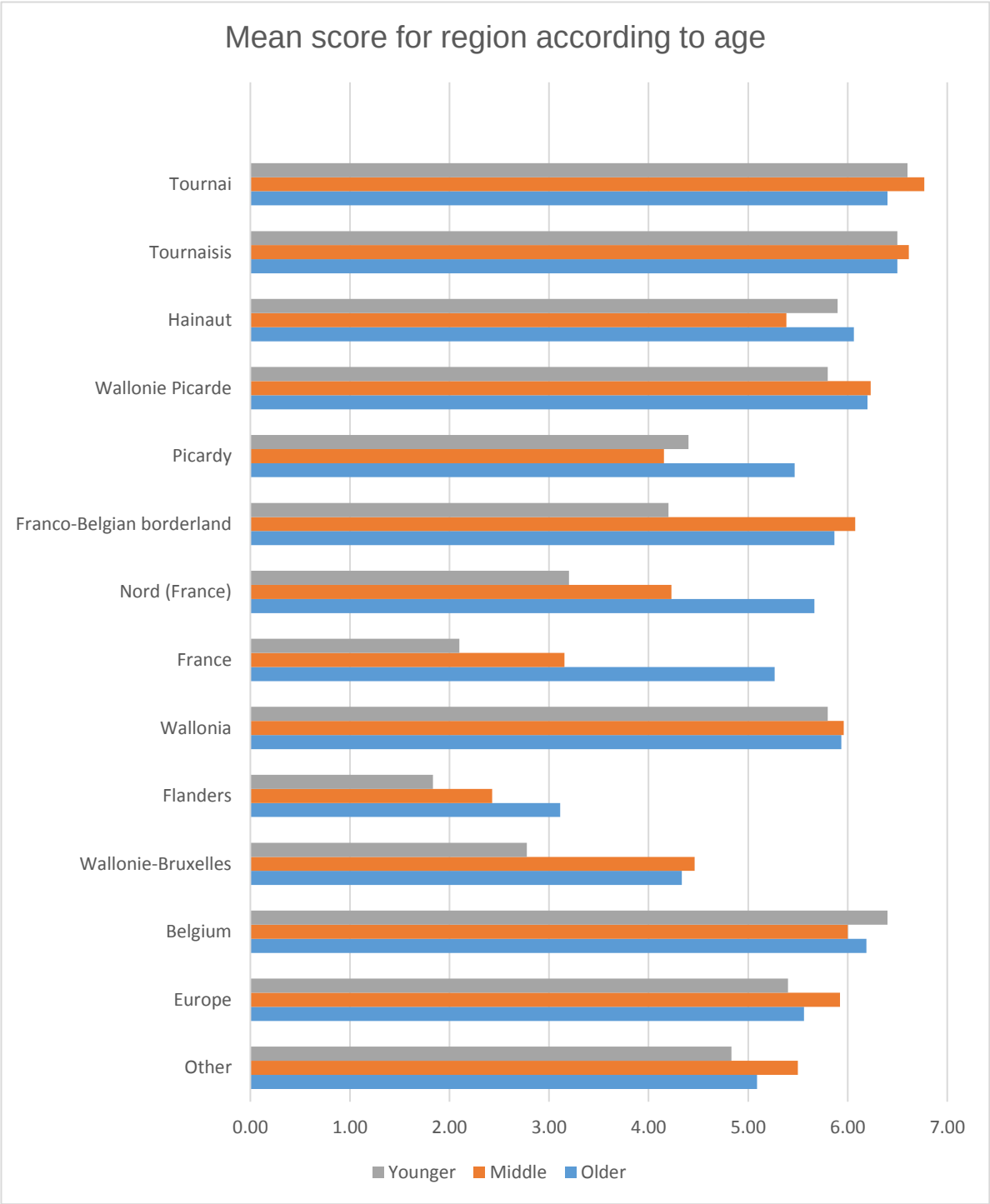


Figure 8-34. Mean score for region according to age

Figure 8-35 illustrates mean score for region according to educational background. It can be seen that – with regard to areas including France – whilst ED2 informants rate Picardy and the Franco-Belgian border more highly than

ED1, ED1 rate the *Nord* (France) and France more highly than ED2. Flanders is also rated considerably lower by ED1 than ED2.

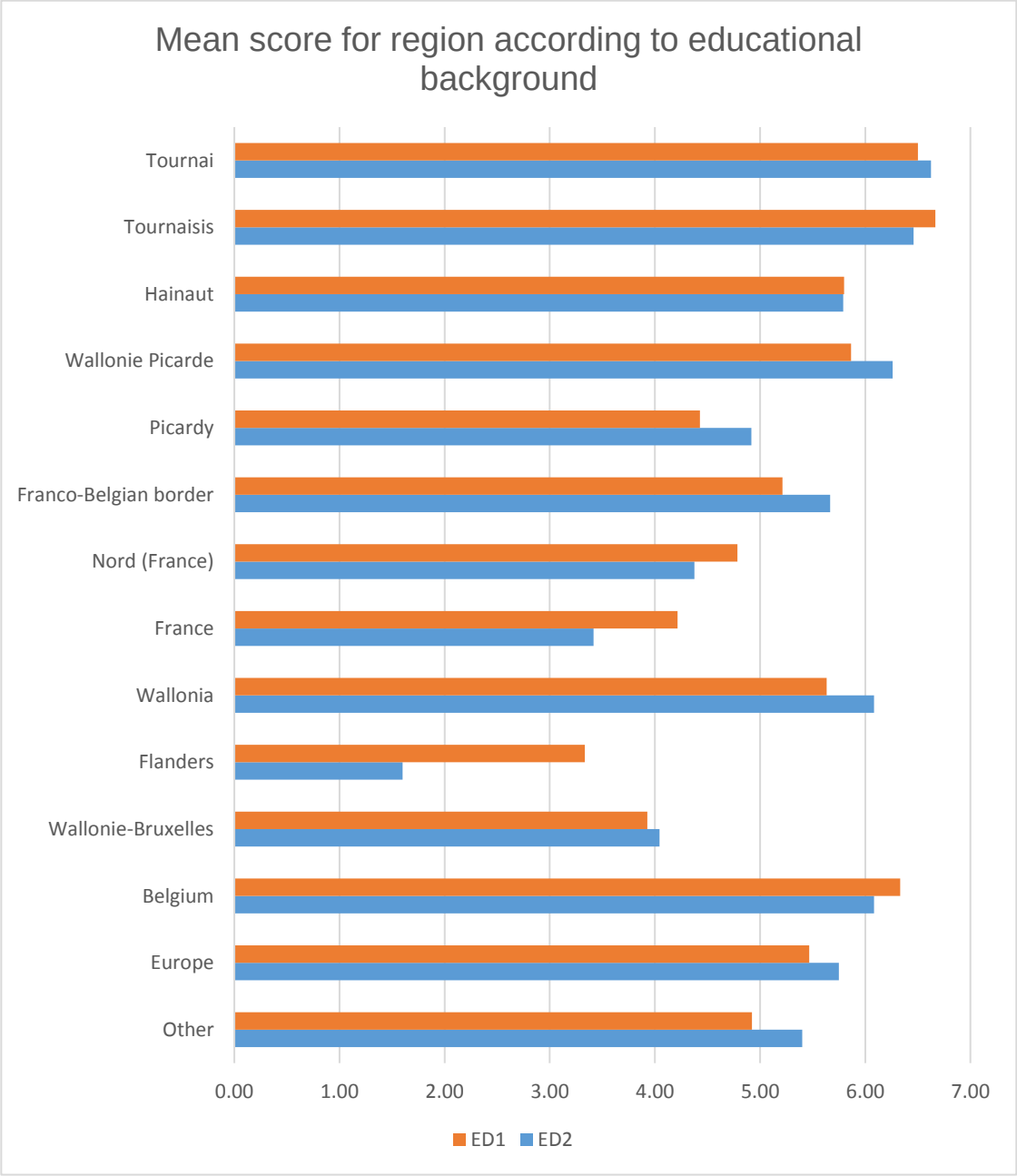


Figure 8-35. Mean score for region according to educational background

Figure 8-36 illustrates mean score for region according to sex. It can be seen that men rate both *Nord* (France) and France higher than women. On the other hand, women rate Hainaut, Wallonia, Belgium, Flanders and Europe more highly.

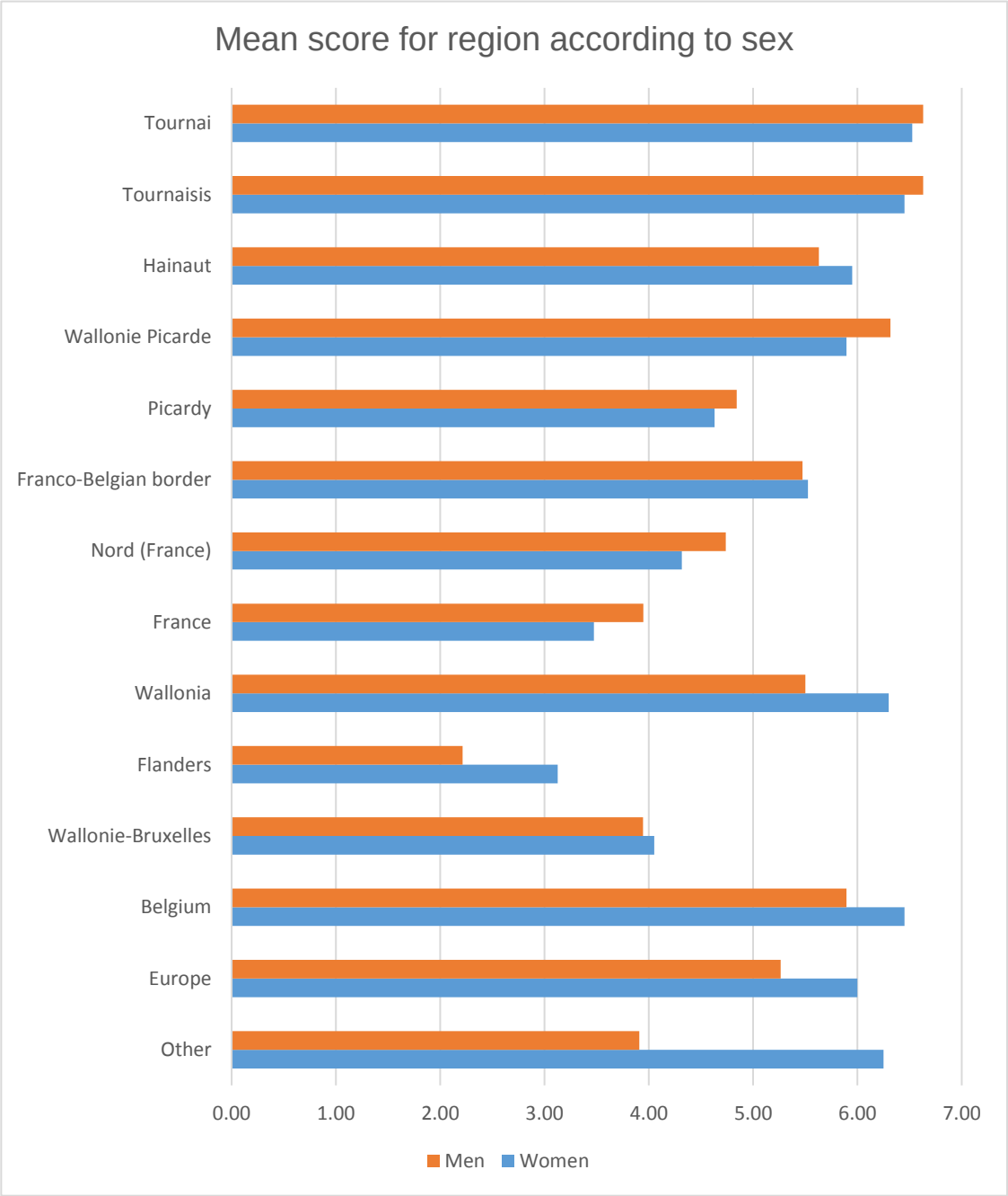


Figure 8-36. Mean score for region according to sex

8.6.3.3 ***Regional belonging and linguistic behaviour***

Table 8-8 illustrates mean numbers of tokens of the phonological variants studied here for Francophiles[246] and non-Francophiles[247]. It can be seen that Francophiles realise on average more strong /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ oppositions and

[246] Those who scored at least one of the French regions as 5, 6 or 7.
[247] Those who did not score any of the French regions above 4.

yet merge more oppositions too. Whilst non-Francophiles front more /ɔ/, Francophiles lower more /e/. For all variants the differences between groups are very small, thus conclusions – which will be drawn in the closing section of this chapter – remain speculative.

Mean number	**Non-Francophile (n = 14)**	**Francophile (n = 25)**
Strong /e/-/ɛ/ opposition	0.50	1.32
Strong /o/-/ɔ/ opposition	0.71	1.00
Merged /e/-/ɛ/ opposition	5.71	5.92
Merged /o/-/ɔ/ opposition	0.79	1.00
Fronted /ɔ/	1.71	1.12
Lowered /e/	0.29	0.52

Table 8-8. Mean numbers of tokens of the phonological variants studied here for Francophiles and non-Francophiles

8.6.3.4 Regional belonging and linguistic perception

Figure 8-37 illustrates perceived wider speech community and regional belonging. It can be seen that informants who had a professed regional belonging to France were most likely to perceive their wider speech community to be transnational. Conversely, those who perceived their wider speech community to be within Belgium were less likely to have a sense of belonging to France.

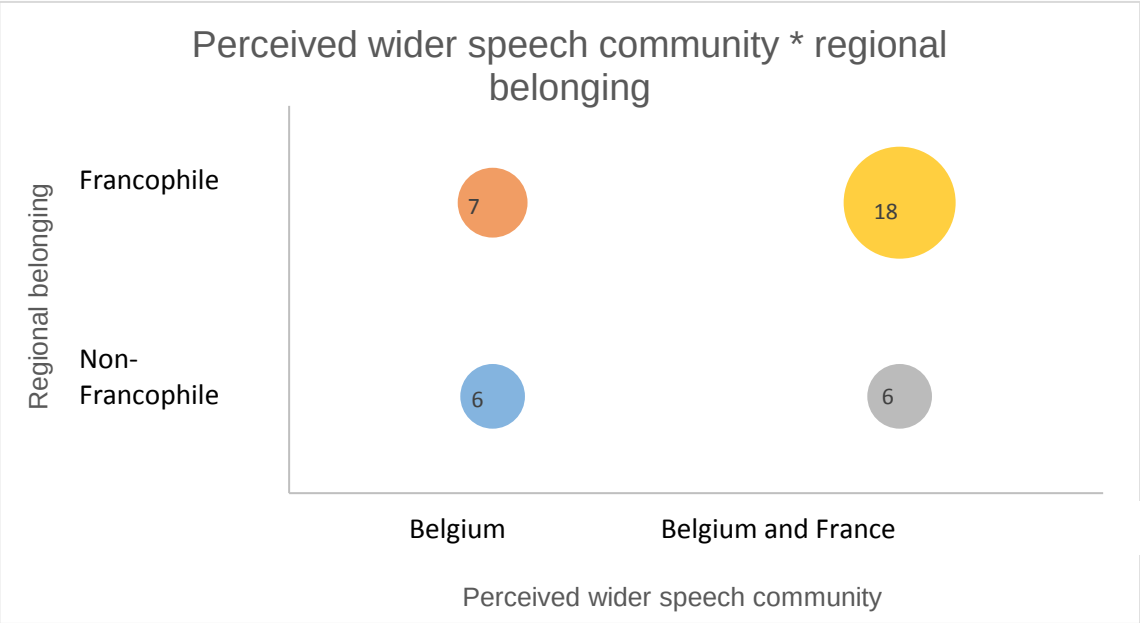


Figure 8-37. Perceived wider speech community and regional belonging

8.6.3.5 Regional belonging and language attitudes

Figure 8-38 illustrates mean degree of difference of accents from the informant's own according to sense of belonging; that is to say 'Francophile' or 'non-Francophile'. It can be seen that, with the exceptions of Brussels and the typical Belgian accent, those who do not feel a sense of belonging to France perceive their accents to be more different to others than those who do. What is more, the greatest differences between the two groups are for their ratings of Lille and the abstract French accents, which they consider much more different from their own than the Francophiles do.

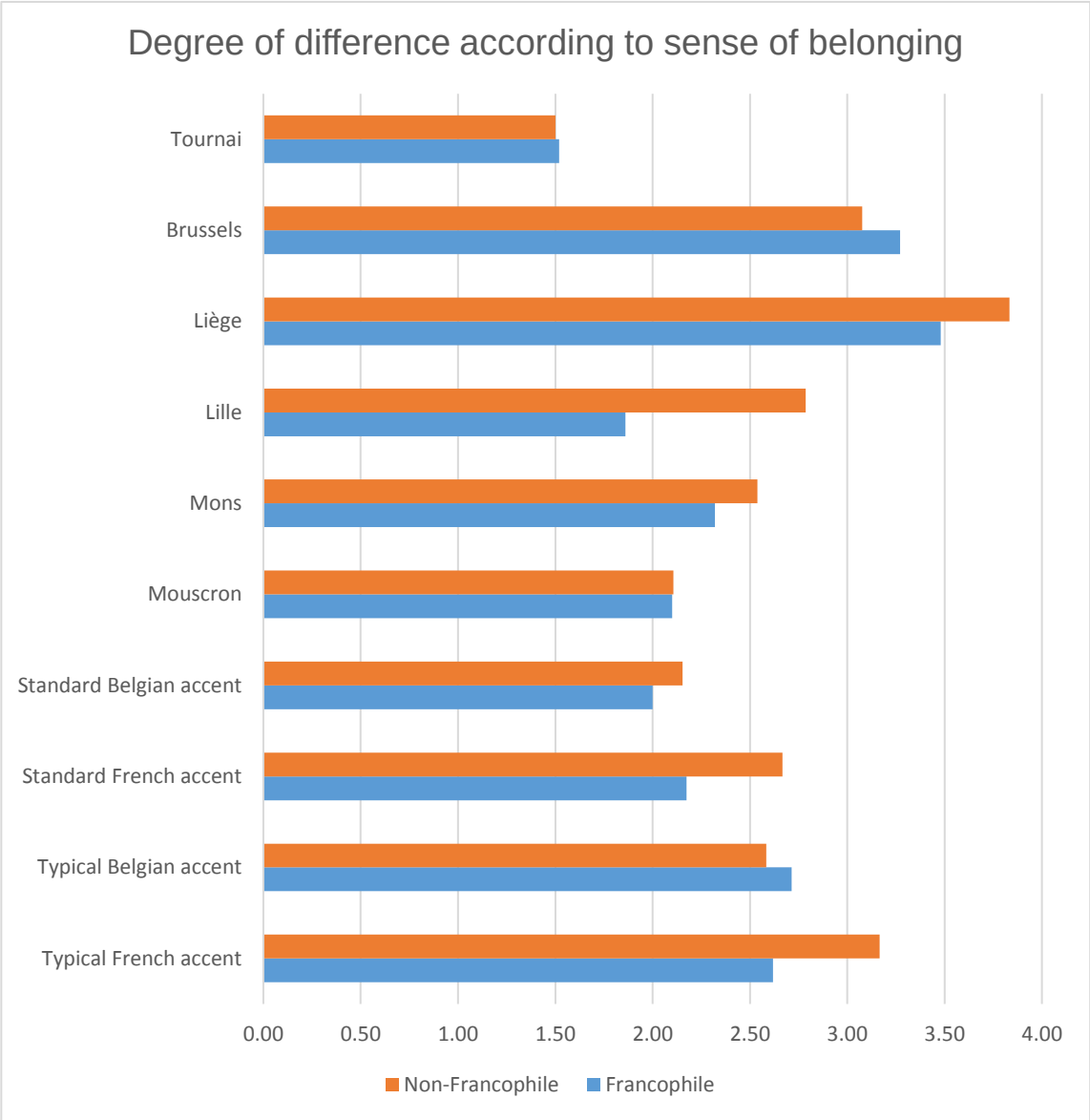


Figure 8-38. Degree of difference according to sense of belonging

Figure 8-39 illustrates mean correctness scores according to sense of belonging. It can be seen that with the exceptions of Lille and the abstract French accents, the non-Francophiles are more generous in their ratings. On the other hand, the Francophiles rate the Lille and abstract French accents as more correct than the non-Francophiles.

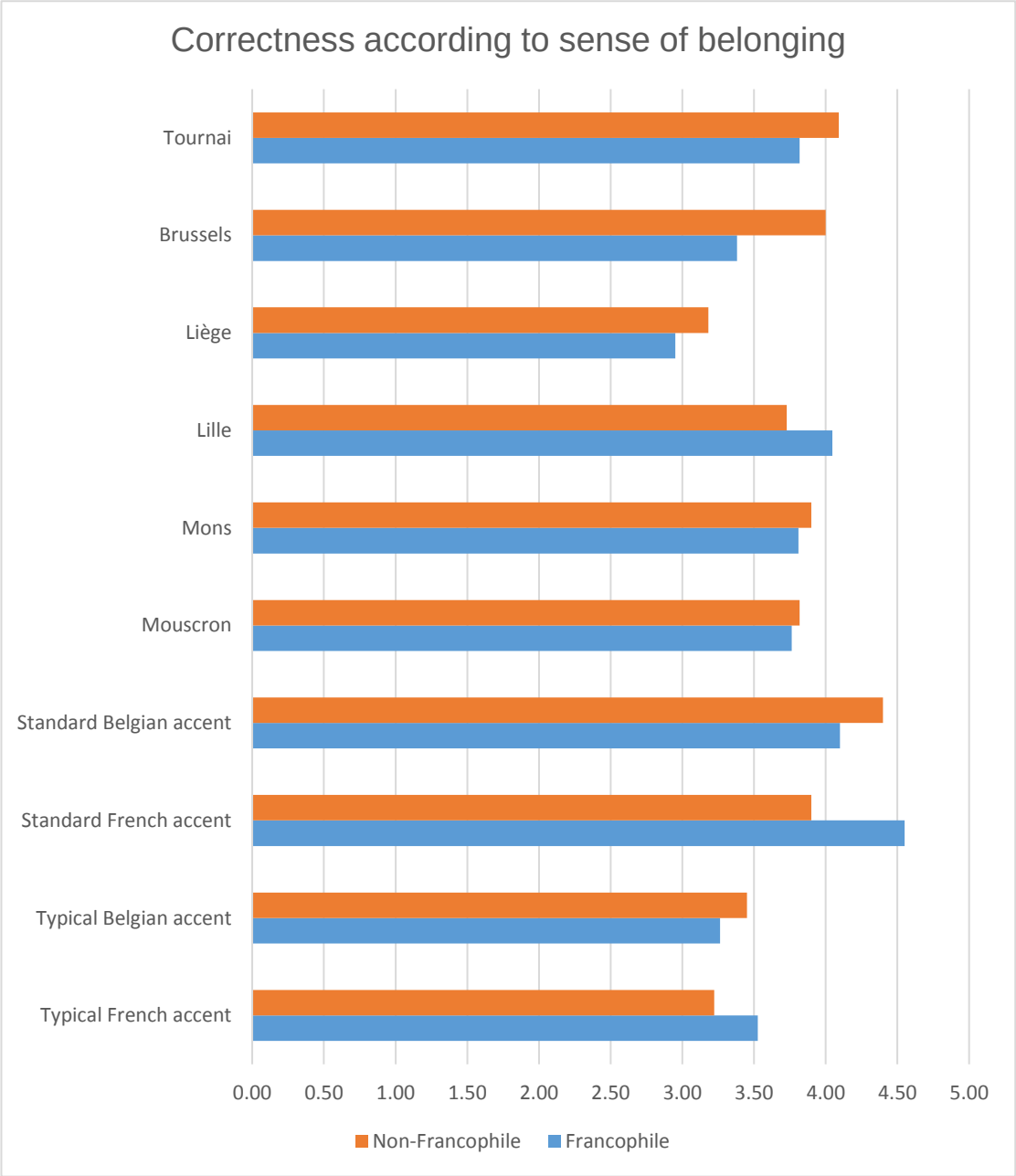


Figure 8-39. Correctness according to sense of belonging

Figure 8-40 illustrates perceived pleasantness of accents according to sense of belonging – be it 'Francophile' or 'non-Francophile'. It can be seen that Francophiles are more positive in their pleasantness ratings for the majority of accents; however, non-Francophiles are more positive in their ratings of the Brussels, Mouscron and standard Belgian accents. The biggest differences are between the scores for the Brussels[248], Lille[249] and typical French[250] accents.

[248] The non-Francophiles are more positive.

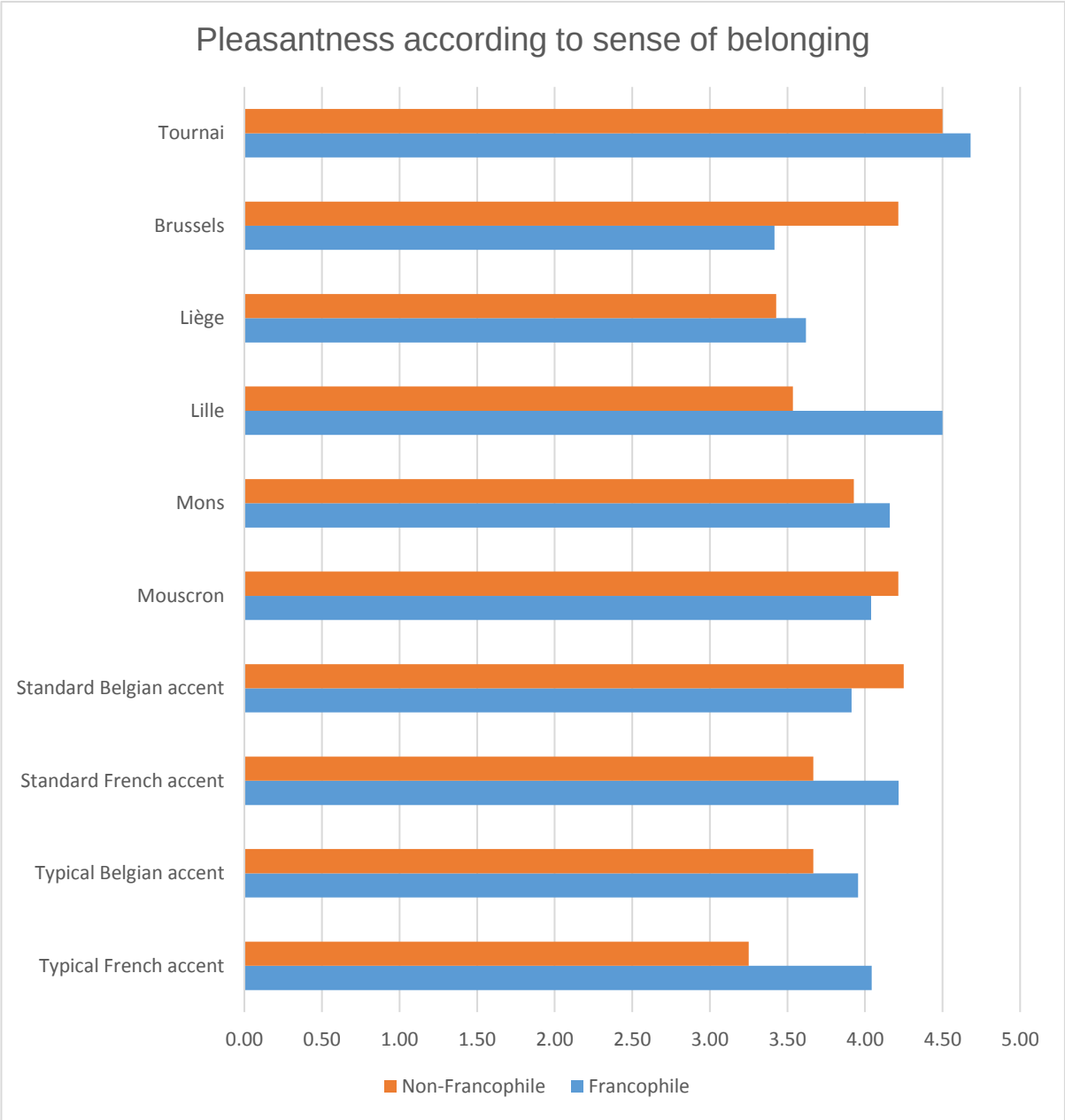


Figure 8-40. Pleasantness according to sense of belonging

8.7 Discussion

In the analysis chapters of this thesis: 4, 5, 6 and 7, spatial factors were variously evoked as potential explanations for the results observed. We will therefore begin this section by reviewing the conclusions drawn in those chapters in light of the results of this chapter. Then, in the second part of this

[249] The Francophiles are more positive.
[250] The Francophiles are more positive.

section, we will close the chapter with a broader discussion of the interaction between language, space and social background in the Belgian borderland.

8.7.1 A return to the conclusions drawn in the previous analysis chapters

8.7.1.1 Linguistic behaviour

It was suggested in chapters 4 (4.9) and 5 (5.8) that linguistic convergence on Hexagonal French may be due to contact between borderlanders and inhabitants of northern France. Fifteen of the 39 informants (38.5%) listed somewhere in France as one of the top five places they spent time. Assuming that borderlanders interact with French nationals when they travel to France, there is likely a good deal of 'everyday', 'mundane' contact between both groups (cf. Pooley, Turnbull & Adams 2005: 1 cited in Britain 2016: 21).

In 8.4.2.1 mobility and linguistic behaviour were compared. There does not appear to be any strong correspondence between the two; however, the biggest variation is seen for /e/-/ɛ/ and /ɔ/-fronting. On average those who are transnationally mobile merge slightly more /e/-/ɛ/ – a behaviour typically associated with France. This suggests that contact through mobility may facilitate /e/-/ɛ/ merging[251], a result which replicates in part that of Vandekerckhove (2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2009 cited in Britain 2010b: 80) who found that mobility brought about convergence in Dutch in Flanders.

[251] What is more, men display higher rates of merged oppositions, as do ED1, and these groups are more mobile around France than both women and ED2 respectively.

On the other hand, those who are more transnationally mobile also front slightly fewer /ɔ/[252]. This suggests that mobility does *not* facilitate the diffusion of a fronted /ɔ/[253], a result which contrasts with Armstrong and Low (2008: 451) who, based on the findings of Armstrong & Unsworth's (1999) study, suggested that higher 'mobility in principle' may correlate with higher rates of fronting. However, it must be remembered that 'mobility in principle' is attitudinal as opposed to behavioural.

Boberg (2000: 23) argues that to comprehend geolinguistic diffusion we must have an understanding of 'prestige' and 'subjective evaluations', and indeed Vigil and Bills (2014) found that the shift from Spanish to English in New Mexico was tied to prestige and insecurity. Merged oppositions are generally considered non-standard in France and Belgium, whilst a fronted /ɔ/ increasingly appears to be a prestige variant. We may posit, then, that whilst in this context contact through mobility appears to facilitate convergence on non-standard behaviour, awareness of prestige appears to facilitate adoption of fronted variants.

It was also suggested in chapters 4 and 5 that the media may shape linguistic convergence. And, indeed, it was found above that on average borderlanders watch 5.9 hours of Belgian TV per week and 6.2 hours of French TV. What is more, *RTL-TVI*, a Belgian television channel, was the most popular television channel in the Francophone region of Belgium in 2015, followed by *La Une*, another Belgian channel, and then *TF1*: a French channel (CSA: 2017). Thus it

[252] Moreover, men and older informants are more mobile around France but display lower levels of fronted variants than those who are less mobile.
[253] Or it may be that fronting has a different indexical meaning for those who are more transnationally mobile.

appears that whilst Francophone Belgians in general have a preference for Belgian TV, borderlanders favour French TV – perhaps because previously they were better able to pick up French terrestrial TV[254]. On the other hand, like their compatriots, borderlanders listen to more Belgian than French radio (CSA: 2017).

In 8.5.2.3, media consumption and linguistic behaviour were compared and no clear link was found between the two. However, adding social background into the mix, certain patterns emerge. Whilst men listen to more Belgian radio, women listen to more French radio. On the other hand ED1 watch more Belgian TV, whilst ED2 watch more French TV. Since women and ED2 front more /ɔ/, it seems that media consumption may facilitate the adoption of the prestigious levelled variant. This finding strengthens the argument made by Stuart-Smith (2011: 234) in an Anglophone context that 'it looks as if local linguistic and social factors together constrain the possibility of media "influence" on language change'. What is more, it corroborates the suggestion above that awareness of prestige facilitates the adoption of fronted variants. On the other hand, older speakers, who show the lowest levels of merging and fronting also listen to more French radio, whilst middle-aged speakers listen to more Belgian radio. This suggests that age has more of an influence on adoption of linguistic behaviour than media consumption.

Finally, it was also suggested in chapters 4 and 5 that symbolic closeness to France and the French may lead to convergence on French behaviour. In fact eighteen (47.4%) of the 38 informants who responded to the 'sense of place'

[254] Victor (MMED2) explained in his interview that, before the age of digital TV, television aerials in the borderland region used to pick up French terrestrial TV.

map task included parts of France in the area they outlined as their ‘region’. As for the regional belonging data, it illustrates that, on average, informants’ regional belonging for the Franco-Belgian borderland is 5.5, for Picardy it is 4.75, and for the *Nord* (France) it is 4.53. All of these scores are above the mid-point of 4.0. In contrast, the average ratings for Wallonie-Bruxelles, France and Flanders are all 4.0 or lower. The data indicate, therefore, that in general informants have a positive sense of belonging to northern France. Hambye (2008) has previously suggested there is a weak sense of belonging in Belgium, which hinders the use of pan-Belgian linguistic behaviour. These relative scores therefore gives some empirical weight to his argument.

In 8.6.2.1, sense of place and linguistic behaviour are compared and it can be seen that those who consider their region to include France maintain more strong and merge fewer /e/-/ɛ/ and /o/-/ɔ/ oppositions on average, with the first of these behaviours being typically Belgian and the second typically French. They also front fewer /ɔ/ and lower more /ɛ/ in monosyllabic determiners, with the first of these behaviours being typically French and the second typically Belgian. These results are largely consistent with those in 8.6.3.3, in which regional belonging and linguistic behaviour are compared: Francophiles realise more strong oppositions, front fewer /ɔ/ and lower more /ɛ/ in monosyllabic determiners. On the other hand, they also merge more oppositions than non-Francophiles.

In these results, therefore, an inverse relationship is seen between affiliation to France and convergence on Hexagonal behaviour since non-Francophiles converge more on Hexagonal behaviour whilst Francophiles maintain more

Belgian behaviour. This indicates that convergence on Hexagonal behaviour in the Belgian borderland does not appear to hinge or depend on strong affiliation to or identification with France. These findings contrast somewhat with those seen elsewhere in the Francophone and Anglophone world (cf. Underwood 1998; Hoare 2002; Montgomery 2012). Hoare (2002: 78), for example, identified positive correlations between professed competency in Breton and self-perception of Breton identity in Brittany.

In conclusion, viewing linguistic behaviour alongside the spatial variables of mobility, sense of place, regional affiliation and media consumption, it appears that contact through mobility facilitates adoption of non-standard variants, whilst media consumption facilitates adoption of prestige variants. Adoption of these variants on the other hand does not necessitate affiliation to France.

8.7.1.2 Linguistic perception

It was concluded in chapter 6 that spatial practices may explain the social variation observed in participants' perceptions of their speech community and wider speech community (6.5.3; 6.5.4). It was suggested that women and younger informants who outlined smaller speech communities more orientated towards Belgium did so because of more restricted mobility and, furthermore, their mobility is more restricted to Belgium than that of the men and the older informants respectively. Thus this explanation holds and, indeed, provides empirical evidence to support the notion that age-specific spatialities shape linguistic perception in different ways[255].

On the other hand, the same proposition regarding restricted mobility was also made to account for the tendency for ED1 informants to outline a smaller, more Belgian orientated speech community; yet they were found to be more transnationally mobile than ED2. Thus this explanation does not hold. Generally, though, the results in 8.4.2.2 show that mobility and linguistic perception are intertwined: 13/15 who are transnationally mobile perceive a transnational wider speech community, whilst only two who are transnationally mobile perceive a Belgian wider speech community. This finding provides further empirical evidence for the argument advanced by Bert and Costa (2014: 196–7) that the individual's lived experience shapes his or her individual conception of the linguistic boundary.

It is not just mobility that appears to interact with linguistic perception, however, an interaction can also be seen above between the latter and media

[255] This resonates with Britain (2010b: 83–86) who describes how age-specific spatialities shape linguistic behaviour.

consumption. Those who perceive their wider speech community to be within Belgium watch more Belgian television, whilst those who perceive their wider speech community to be transnational watch more French television. Whilst scholars have previously argued that media consumption shapes linguistic awareness (Coupland 2007: 184; Busch & Pfisterer 2011: 430; Stuart-Smith 2011: 224–225; Montgomery 2012: 640; Foxen 2013, 2014a), as far as the researcher is aware, this is the first empirical evidence to illustrate the congruence between media consumption and perceptions of one's own linguistic community.

Finally, an interaction is also seen above between linguistic perception and sense of place and regional belonging. 13/17 who consider their region to include France perceive that they belong to a transnational wider speech community, whilst only two who consider their region to include France perceive a Belgian speech community. Similarly, there is a strong correlation between affiliation towards France and perception that one's speech community is transnational. What is more, fourteen of the 38 informants to respond to the sense of place mapping task circled regions which corresponded highly with the areas they considered to be their more precise or wider speech community. These results thus provide empirical evidence of the congruence between 'where I feel at home' and 'where people speak like me'. We will discuss the wider implications of this finding in chapter 9.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that whilst we cannot establish causality, in the Belgian borderland linguistic perception correlates with all of the spatial variables: mobility, media consumption, sense of place and regional belonging.

8.7.1.3 Language attitudes

In chapter 7 (7.7) we concluded that regional affiliation or sense of place shaped language attitudes and indeed the results above support this argument. In 8.6.2.1 those who consider their region to include France perceive less difference between their accent and the Lille accent, and in 8.6.3.5 it is seen that those who are Francophiles consider the accents of Lille and the abstract French accents much more similar to their own. Yet, somewhat contradictorily, those who consider their region to include France (see 8.6.2.1) also perceive their accent as more similar to typical Belgian than those who consider their region to be purely within Belgium. This suggests a certain degree of insecurity, and indeed those who identify a transnational region perceive the standard Belgian and French accents as more correct whilst the Francophiles rate the Lille and abstract French accents as more correct than the non-Francophiles. These patterns are somewhat comparable to Francard's (1989) findings: he found that linguistic awareness and language attitudes were intertwined and that as linguistic awareness and insecurity increased, so too did submission to abstract models.

On the other hand, those who consider their region to be transnational perceive standard Belgian and French as less pleasant than those who perceive their region to be Belgian, whilst they consider typical Belgian and French as more pleasant. Thus affiliation to France, which corresponds with greater perceived correctness of standard models and Lille French, does not correspond with greater perceived pleasantness of such models.

The conclusion was also drawn in chapter 7 that spatial practices may shape language attitudes. In fact, in 8.4.2.3 it can be seen that those who are transnationally mobile perceive their accent as more similar to SF, whilst those who are more mobile within Belgium perceive their accent as most similar to both the standard and typical Belgian accent. Thus the two appear to correlate. On the other hand, there is no apparent correlation between mobility around France and perceived correctness and pleasantness of French models. Indeed, those with restricted mobility around the Tournai *arrrondissement* are the mobility group to rate the Lille accent as most correct. In short, whilst affiliation with France corresponds with rating the French there as more correct, spending time there does not. This is somewhat surprising, as one might imagine that contact led to positive evaluation. However, drawing comparisons with Auer (2005: 13), it may be that it is what is known about '[the language of] those on the other side of the border […] that has an impact on [language attitudes]', rather than the people or the place itself.

Finally, there was no apparent interaction between media consumption and language attitudes. This is somewhat surprising since it has been previously argued (Coupland 2007; Stuart-Smith 2011; Montgomery 2012) that media shape language ideologies. In conclusion, whilst regional belonging and affiliation appear to have an effect on language attitudes, mobility and media consumption do not.

Having revisited the conclusions made in the previous chapters in light of the spatial data, we will close this chapter with a broader discussion of the

interaction between language, space and social background in the Belgian borderland.

8.7.2 Language, space and social background in the Belgian borderland

Synthesising the findings from the present and previous analysis chapters, we find that language, space and social background are closely linked. Generally, men are more transnational. This holds not only for their linguistic perceptions[256], but also their attitudes[257], linguistic behaviour[258], mobility[259], sense of place[260] and regional belonging[261]. On the other hand, in some respects they are more Belgian than transnational: with regard to their linguistic behaviour[262] and their media consumption[263]. As for women, they are more local and Belgian. This holds for their linguistic perceptions[264], attitudes[265], mobility[266], sense of place[267], and regional belonging[268]. On the other hand, in

[256] They define a wider speech community which is transnationally orientated, if not orientated towards France (6.5.4.3.2). They also rate the accents of Lille and typical French as less different from their own than women (7.6.2.1).
[257] They score standard Belgian as much less pleasant than women (7.6.3.1) and generally rate accents less pleasant than women, though not the Lille accent or typical French accent.
[258] They display higher rates of merging (4.7.1.1.3; 5.7.2.1.3).
[259] They are more mobile beyond the Tournai *arrondissement* and in France (8.4.2).
[260] The majority considers their region extends into France (8.6.2).
[261] They rate their sense of belonging to both Nord (France) and France higher than women (8.6.3.2).
[262] They front /ɔ/ less than women (5.6.2.3).
[263] They listen to more Belgian radio than women (8.5.2.2).
[264] They define a smaller wider speech community, which is orientated towards Belgium (6.5.4.3.2). They also rate the accents of Lille and typical French as more different than their own than men (7.6.2.1).
[265] They rate typical Belgian as more correct than typical French (7.6.1.1). They are more generous than men in their ratings of pleasantness of accents, though not for the accent of Lille nor typical French (7.6.3.1).
[266] They are less mobile beyond both the Tournai Arrrondissement and into France (8.4.2).
[267] The majority do not consider their region to extend into France (8.6.2).
[268] They rate their regional belonging to Wallonia, Flanders, Belgium and Europe more highly (8.6.3.2).

some respects they are more transnational: with regard to their linguistic behaviour[269], language attitudes[270] and media consumption[271].

When it comes to sex, then, it appears that gendered mobility, sense of place and regional belonging are intertwined with linguistic perception and some aspects of linguistic behaviour. On the other hand, language attitudes and media consumption do not appear to be spatially contingent. It can be seen, then, that whilst for women their 'localness' (cf. Massey 1994: 9) is not great enough to override their sensitivity to linguistic correctness, their alignment with traditional discourses surrounding the superiority of Hexagonal French, along with their propensity towards linguistic standardness (cf. chapters 4 and 5), are not shaped by their spatiality. This is a finding which contrasts with that of Llamas (2010: 234), who found on the Scottish-English border that when evaluating accents, respondents evaluated more positively those in which the linguistic forms indexically marked their own nation.

As for educational background, ED1 participants are generally more Belgian and local. This holds for their linguistic perception[272], attitudes[273], sense of place[274], sense of belonging[275], media consumption[276] and linguistic

[269] They lead the innovation with /ɔ/-fronting (5.6.2.3).
[270] None of them believes the most correct accent is heard in Belgium (7.4.1).
[271] They listen to more French radio than men (8.5.2.2).
[272] They define a more restricted speech community, which is orientated towards Belgium (6.5.4.3.3). They also perceive less difference between their own accent and typical Belgian than ED2 (7.6.2.1).
[273] They rate regional accents more pleasant than ED2, with the exception of the Lille accent (7.6.3.1). They also rate standard Belgian and typical Belgian as more correct than ED2 (7.6.1.1). Although the differences in pleasantness ratings are small, they rate typical Belgian as more pleasant than ED2 (7.6.3.1). Similarly, there is near agreement regarding correctness of typical French and SF, however, ED1 rate typical French as more correct.
[274] The majority perceive their region to be Belgian (8.6.2).
[275] They rate their regional belonging to the Franco-Belgian border and Picardy less highly than ED2 (8.6.3.2).
[276] They watch more Belgian TV, where ED2 watch more French TV (8.5.2.1).

behaviour[277]. On the other hand, in some respects they are more transnational: their linguistic behaviour[278], sense of belonging[279] and mobility[280]. As for ED2 participants, they are more transnational. This holds for linguistic perception[281], language attitudes[282], media consumption[283], sense of place[284], regional belonging[285] and linguistic behaviour[286]. On the other hand, in some respects they are more Belgian and local: mobility[287] and regional belonging[288].

When it comes to educational background, then, it appears that whilst sense of place, media consumption, linguistic perceptions and language attitudes are all interlinked, they are not tied to mobility, nor regional belonging. It can be seen, then, that socially differentiated perceptions and indeed choice of media consumption appear separated from spatial routines: the perceptual and virtual are separated from the physical; the physically-located and psychologically-conceived borders have different effects, a finding which contrasts to some extent with Britain's (2014) finding in the UK in which the physical boundary of

[277] They display less /ɔ/-fronting (5.6.2.2). What is more, it is only speakers in ED1 who front /oC/ (5.5.3.2).
[278] They display more merging of vocalic oppositions (5.7.1.1.2; 5.7.2.1.2).
[279] They rate their regional belonging to the Nord (France) and France more highly than ED2 (8.6.3.2).
[280] They are more mobile within France (8.4.2).
[281] They perceive a wider speech community and are more orientated towards France (6.5.4.3.3). They also perceive less difference between their accents and standard and typical French than ED1 (7.6.2.1).
[282] The only regional accent they rate more pleasant than ED1 is that of Lille (7.6.3.1). They rate standard and typical Belgian as less correct than ED1 (7.6.1.1); in fact they rate all accents as less correct than ED1 with the exception of SF. They also rate typical Belgian less pleasant than ED1 (7.6.3.1). Although there is near agreement with regard to pleasantness of typical and SF, ED2 rate SF more positively (7.6.3.1). Equally, they rate typical French more pleasant than typical Belgian. Generally, they are less positive than ED1 in their correctness ratings (7.6.1.1).
[283] As for media consumption, they consume more French TV, whilst ED1 consume more Belgian TV (8.5.2.1).
[284] The majority considers their region extends into France (8.6.2).
[285] They rate their regional belonging to Picardy and the Franco-Belgian border more highly than ED1 (8.6.3.2)
[286] They are more standard (4.5.2.2; 4.6.2.2; 5.5.3.2; 5.6.2.2), yet they also show higher rates of 'other' oppositions (5.7.2.1.2), and slightly higher rates of /ɔ/-fronting (5.7.2.1.2).
[287] Whilst they are more mobile around Belgium than ED1, they are less mobile around France (8.4.2)
[288] They rate their regional belonging to the Nord (France) and France less highly than ED1 (8.6.3.2).

the Fens became a psychological one. It also shows that, although the political boundary is marginal in many borderlanders' lives, the psychological one persists; a finding which resonates with Auer (2005), who views borders as imagined, cognitive constructs.

The older speakers show more mixed spatial behaviours. They show transnationality in their mobility[289], sense of place[290], sense of belonging[291], media consumption[292], and language attitudes[293]. On the other hand, they also show Belgian orientation in terms of their linguistic perceptions[294], language attitudes[295], sense of belonging[296] and linguistic behaviour[297]. The only way in which they are clearly orientated to Belgium, therefore, is in their linguistic behaviour and perceptions. And these thus appear to be unaffected by their spatial routines and media consumption. This therefore shows a general misalignment between space and language in the older generation: whilst spatially they are orientated towards France, linguistically, they are orientated towards Belgium.

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[289] They are more transnationally mobile than the youngest informants (though not as mobile as the middle-aged informants) (8.4.2).
[290] The majority perceive their region to include France (8.6.2).
[291] They are the age group with the strongest regional belonging to France, Nord (France) and Picardy (8.6.3)
[292] They listen to more French radio (8.5.2.2).
[293] Nearly one third believe the most correct pronunciation is heard in France (7.4.1).
[294] Their speech community is more orientated towards Belgium (6.5.4.3.1). They are also the group to rate their accents as least different from the typical accents, especially the Belgian one, whilst their mean scores for degree of difference of other accents from their own are highest (7.6.2.1).
[295] They rate typical Belgian as more pleasant than typical French and rate typical Belgian as more correct (7.6.3.1).
[296] The only informants who pick Hainaut as the region they feel the strongest sense of regional belonging are older ones (8.6.3), and, along with the middle-aged speakers, they are the only group within which certain informants select Belgium as the region for which they had the strongest regional belonging.
[297] They show the lowest rates of /ɔ/-fronting (5.6.2.1).

As for the middle age group, they are very transnational – with regard to linguistic perception[298], language attitudes[299], linguistic behaviour[300], mobility[301], sense of place[302] and regional belonging[303]. All the same, they also have certain more local and Belgian aspects – not only their linguistic behaviour[304], perception[305], sense of belonging[306] and media consumption[307]. This pattern illustrates how this group are most affected by preoccupations with language: they are the most standard group, and most linguistically insecure.

Finally, the younger informants' engagement with space is less clear. They are transnational in linguistic perception[308], media consumption[309] and linguistic behaviour[310]. And yet in some respects they are more local and Belgian: with regard to mobility[311], sense of place[312], regional belonging[313], media

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[298] Their speech community is more transnationally orientated and indeed, they are the group who most orientates their speech community towards France (6.5.4.3.1). They consider their accent to be less different from the Lille accent than the older speakers (7.6.2); however, they perceive their accent to be more different from the standard accents than the older speakers.
[299] They rate SF more correct, and rate typical French as more correct than typical Belgian, whilst older informants rate typical Belgian as more correct. In fact, typical Belgian is rated least correct by the middle age group, who also rate SF above standard Belgian (7.6.1)
[300] This group maintains the greatest rates of strong vocalic oppositions (4.7.1.1.1; 5.7.2.1.1).
[301] They are the most transnationally mobile age group (8.4.2).
[302] The majority perceive their region to be transnational (8.6.2).
[303] They are also the age group who have the strongest regional belonging for the Franco-Belgian borderland (8.6.3.2).
[304] This is the age group which shows the greatest rate of lowered /e/ in monosyllabic determiners such as 'les' – an endogenous trait (4.5.2).
[305] They distance themselves both from SF and Belgian and typical Belgian when rating the degree of difference from these accents, illustrating a perceived double distance from both (Blampain et al. 1997; Hambye 2005) (7.6.2.1).
[306] Their regional belonging for France, Picardy and the Nord (France) is not as strong as that of their older compatriots (8.6.3.2).
[307] They listen to more Belgian than French radio (8.5.2.1).
[308] They perceive a transnational wider speech community, though are not orientated purely towards France (6.5.4.3.1). They rate their accent as less different from the SF and Lille accents than their older compatriots (7.6.2.1).
[309] They watch more French than Belgian TV (8.5.2.1).
[310] They are the age group that shows the greatest rates of fronted /ɔ/ variants (p.46), as well as 'other' contrasts in phonemic oppositions (5.6.2.1).
[311] This group are the least transnationally mobile (8.4.2).
[312] The majority consider their region to be purely in Belgium (8.6.2).
[313] They are the group whose regional belonging to the Nord (France), France, Picardy and the Franco-Belgian borderland is weakest (8.6.3.2).

consumption[314] and attitudes[315]. The younger informants, therefore are generally linguistically orientated towards France and yet, spatially, they are orientated towards Belgium, a situation which contrasts with that of the older informants. This finding therefore contrasts that of Hazen (2002) in the USA, who found a correlation between perception of place and linguistic choices.

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For a long time, space was treated arbitrarily in the field of sociolinguistics; it was typically side-lined or deemed secondary or insignificant. However, in recent years scholars have begun to argue and even illustrate how space – be it physical, social or psychological – impacts on language, attitudes and perceptions. This chapter has presented multiple examples in which this *is* the case; in which space shapes language. However, this chapter has also shown that sometimes it does not. Sometimes language and space do not interact; sometimes the power of language is greater than the power of space. We now proceed to the concluding chapter.

[314] They also listen to more Belgian than French radio (8.5.2.2).
[315] None of them believe the most correct pronunciation is heard in France (7.4.1).

9 Conclusion

In this final chapter the key findings of the study are summarised. The scope of the thesis and its contributions – not only to the sociolinguistics of French but also to the wider disciplines of socio- and geolinguistics as well as perceptual dialectology – are then discussed. Potential societal and policy implications of the research are also expressed. Finally, possible future directions for research are laid out.

9.1 Summary of key findings

Returning to the project's research questions as laid out in the introduction in their broadest forms (cf. chapter 1), we recall that this study endeavoured to answer the questions of how Belgian borderlanders speak French and what their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, language are. It sought to explain these findings through investigating how they varied according to social background and, more specifically according to age, educational background and sex. Finally, where scholars have previously used spatial factors such as mobility, media consumption and regional identification to explain linguistic patterns or behaviour without empirical evidence (cf. Blampain et al. 1997; Francard 2001: 257; Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132), this study also sought to operationalise these factors and empirically investigate their interaction with language, attitudes and perception in the Belgian borderland.

Turning first to linguistic behaviour, attitudes and perceptions, it was found, through a close study of the phonological variables (e) and (o), that linguistic behaviour in the Belgian borderland is distinct from behaviour both in France and elsewhere in Francophone Belgium. However, whilst distinctions are maintained through differential adoption of levelled variants (cf. Hornsby 2009: 172–173), language was found to be converging on that in France. Moreover, the endogenous trait of lowering /e/ to [ɛ] in monosyllabic determiners such as 'mes', 'les' and 'ses' (cf. Hambye & Francard 2008: 51; Francard fc) was absent from younger informants' speech. Following Omoniyi (2004: 25), who draws on the mathematical analogy of borderlands as 'merger zones which [are…] subsets of either of the two intersecting states', it was therefore argued that phonologically the French in the borderland is not only between French and Belgian, but also between French and not French and Belgian and not Belgian.

As for linguistic perceptions, it was found that, generally, borderlanders consider the area where people speak exactly like them to be relatively restricted in size and that, for many, the boundary of their speech community is coterminous with the national boundary. Composite maps of informants' perceived speech communities revealed that a barrier effect was in operation when informants outlined their speech community: disagreement decreased incrementally to the east of Tournai, but at the national border there was a 'drop off' (cf. Gould & White 1974: 143–146). On the other hand, when invited to outline their *wider* speech community, the informants were more generally orientated towards France and, indeed, the drop off was seen more to the east of Tournai than the west.

The investigations into language attitudes revealed that whilst overtly borderlanders appear increasingly to see Belgian and French varieties as equally correct (cf. Francard & Franke 2001–2002 in Francard fc), when questioned less overtly about their attitudes, there was evidence of the persistence of traditional normative attitudes (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997: 235), which see the French in France as superior to that in Belgium. Strong correlations were found between proximity, degree of difference, correctness and pleasantness: as proximity decreased, degree of difference increased, whilst correctness and pleasantness decreased.

Turning to the social patterns identified in this thesis, in the phonological chapters it was found that the middle-aged speakers were most linguistically standard (cf. Trudgill 2003: 6), whilst younger speakers ascribed prestige both to merged vocalic oppositions and fronted /ɔ/ variants (cf. Carton 2001; Armstrong & Low 2008; Hall 2008: 193). Whilst the loss of oppositions was led by ED1 (cf. Hansen & Juillard 2011: 343), ED2 speakers were found to be converging on ED1 and were found to be leading the move towards realisation of /o/-/ɔ/ as ‘other’ contrasts; namely with a fronted variant.

It was found that middle-aged informants orientated their perceived speech communities more towards France or transnationally, whilst older informants were more orientated towards Belgium and younger informants were more orientated towards Belgium or else transnationally. Both women and ED1 were more orientated towards Belgium and circumscribed smaller speech communities than men and ED2.

As for language attitudes, the perceived ‘double distance’ (cf. Blampain et al. 1997; Hambye 2005) that Belgian scholars have previously identified, wherein the Belgian norm is distanced from both the French norm and popular usage, was found in the attitudes of middle-aged speakers, who distanced themselves from both standard and typical models of Belgian French; therein showing a feeling of linguistic insecurity (cf. Klinkenberg 1985; Blampain et al. 1997; Moreau et al. 1999; Hambye & Francard 2004). Older informants were more positive in their ratings of regional and typical accents, a finding which contrasts with that of Moreau et al. (1999: 9), and ED1 were more positive in their ratings of all accents other than SF, and were more positive in their ratings than ED2, with the exception of Lille French (cf. Hauchecorne & Ball 1997; Moreau et al. 1999). Whilst men rated French accents more positively, women rated Belgian ones more highly. It was also found that older informants rated regional and standard accents as more different from their own than younger informants; however, they rated typical ones as less different. These patterns, it was argued, suggest an awareness of or belief in a process of levelling or dedialectalisation taking place.

As for space, which was empirically investigated through mobility (physical space), media consumption (cultural space) and sense of place and regional belonging (psychological space), no clear correspondence was found between linguistic behaviour and mobility or media consumption. On the other hand, it was found that slightly higher rates of merging of /e/-/ɛ/ were seen in those who are more mobile around France, whilst higher rates of /ɔ/-fronting were seen in those who consume more French media. An inverse relationship between affiliation to France and convergence on Hexagonal behaviour was found; thus

convergence does not depend on affiliation, a finding which contrasts with that seen elsewhere (cf. Underwood 1998; Hoare 2002; Montgomery 2012: 643).

A correlation was seen between spatial practices and perceived speech community: 13/15 who were transnationally mobile perceived a transnational speech community, whilst only two who were transnationally mobile perceived a purely Belgian wider speech community. Linguistic perception was also found to interact with media consumption since those who perceived the wider speech community to be transnational watched more French television. Indeed, whilst scholars have argued and shown that the media increase linguistic awareness (cf. Coupland 2007: 184; Busch & Pfisterer 2011: 430; Stuart-Smith 2011: 224–225; Montgomery 2012: 640), as far as the researcher is aware, this is the first empirical evidence of the congruence between media consumption and perceived speech community. Linguistic perception, sense of place and regional belonging were also found to interact: 14/38 informants circled areas they considered to be their region and perceived speech communities with high geographical correspondence. 13/17 informants who considered their region to include France perceived a transnational wider speech community, whilst only two perceived it to be a purely Belgian speech community. A strong correlation was also seen between affiliation towards France and perception that one's own speech community is transnational.

Finally, regional affiliation and sense of place were found to correlate with beliefs regarding degree of difference and linguistic correctness; however, not with beliefs regarding pleasantness. That is to say, Francophiles and those who perceive their region to include France rated their accent as less different from

the Lille accent and, along with the abstract accents, as more correct than those who did not show affiliation to France. Yet Francophiles rated both SF and standard Belgian as less correct than non-Francophiles. It was found that whilst mobility and degree of difference go hand in hand (those who are transnationally mobile perceive their accent as more similar to SF), mobility does not correlate with perceived correctness and pleasantness. In short, whilst affiliation to France corresponds with rating the French there as more correct, spending time there does not.

The point of departure for this investigation was that language in the Belgian borderland was similar to that in France (cf. Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132) and indeed this is generally what was found. However, not only was there previously relatively little empirical evidence of this, the question as to why this was the case remained predominantly unanswered. Although scholars had previously offered explanations including proximity and symbolic closeness (cf. Hambye 2005: 369; Hambye & Simon 2012: 131–132), these were not backed by empirical evidence. What is more, since previous research has shown that linguistic differences are heightened at the border (Burnett 2006; De Vriend et al. 2008; Llamas 2010; Chambers 2014b) this finding was somewhat atypical. Having carried out this ambitious mixed-methods study on the Belgian borderland, we are able to provide an answer to this question.

We are able to explain that the relative phonological similarity between Borderland French and Hexagonal varieties, and distance from Belgian varieties, is likely because of a number of factors: the history of the region, its

substrate, proximity to the French border and indeed, an *open* border, resulting in migration of and contact with French nationals, media consumption, positive attitudes towards Hexagonal varieties of French and a sense of belonging to northern France, coupled with a low sense of belonging to Wallonie-Bruxelles and Flanders.

On the other hand, differences between Borderland French and Hexagonal varieties do persist; some of the changes that are taking place in Hexagonal varieties are not taking place in Borderland French. We may conclude that this is because whilst the border no longer operates politically as a physical barrier, it still operates on certain psychological levels (cf. Montgomery 2012; Britain 2014).

9.2 Contributions of the thesis

Before outlining the contributions of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge its scope and limitations. Of course, the most obvious limitation of the thesis is the sample size, which limits the representativelenss of the conclusions. As a doctoral project, however, the restriction on the sample size is inevitable, especially given the number of factors this project addresses. The other clear limitation is the detail with which the spatial variables in chapter 8 were interrogated; there is enough material in the chapter to write a separate thesis. However, once again, the restrictions of the project mean that this has not been possible. Nevertheless, chapter 8 provides an excellent starting point for future research – a topic which we will return to in the closing paragraphs of this chapter.

Despite the limitations outlined above, this thesis has made a number of contributions to the field of Francophone linguistics. Firstly, it has furnished the field of Belgian linguistics with previously lacking knowledge regarding the state of language in the Belgian borderland and has given weight to claims that were previously lacking empirical evidence. It has also provided a nuanced and meaningful contribution to the dominant scholarly conversation regarding language attitudes and linguistic insecurity in Francophone Belgium – therein directly addressing a request from the Belgian research community (Hambye 2005). Finally, it has provided Francophone scholars with an additional picture of a European variety of French in contact with Hexagonal French and has offered up insights into the mechanisms of language change in operation across a Francophone border. Specifically, it has addressed a gap in the research on mid-vowels, since it is the first study, as far as the researcher is aware, to investigate /o/-/ɔ/ when the pair behave as allophones, as opposed to phonemes.

This study also offers a number of contributions to the wider fields of sociolinguistics, geolinguistics and perceptual dialectology. Firstly, it has directly addressed calls from these fields to integrate investigations of mobility, contact and sense of place into sociolinguistic studies (cf. Milroy & Gordon 2003: 133; Britain 2010b: 70, 2016: 21–24; Heller 2010: 736; Gooskens et al. 2013; Chambers 2014b). Through the operationalisation of mobility, this study has been able to provide empirical evidence that mobility does interact with language as well as perceptions of language. It has also shown evidence that sense of place and notions of regional belonging interact with language

attitudes and linguistic perception, although not, in this case study, with linguistic behaviour.

The notion that the media influence phonological change is one which scholars have previously been very sceptical about (cf. Trudgill 1986: 40; Eckert 2003: 395). This study contributes to the conversation and moves it forward, providing evidence that media consumption may facilitate the adoption of prestige variants, and indeed that it interacts with linguistic perception; though not, in this case, with language attitudes.

As well as operationalising the concepts of mobility and media consumption, this study's biggest methodological contribution to the field concerns language mapping. This study has retheorised the draw-a-map task. By underpinning it with a theorised notion of space and engaging with the task as a visual research method, this thesis has illustrated that not only are previously established shortcomings of the task overcome, but also that much more can be gained from this classic perceptual dialectological tool. In this study, engagement with the draw-a-map task as a visual method has given insight not only into how individuals conceive the linguistic space around them, but also how they understand language change within and beyond that space. What is more, it has also shown that individuals have diverse cognitive models of language and that these models resonate with those established in the scholarly literature, for example, the centre-periphery model, the notion of the dialect continuum and the theory of 'fuzzy dialects' (Girard & Larmouth 1993; Pickl 2016). In treating the draw-a-map task as a creative act, this study has paved the way for future scholars to do the same and to further explore the potential of using the draw-a-

map task in this manner. In this way, this study is also a meaningful contribution to the growing collection of ‘visual research methods’ and indeed to the area of human geography concerned with mental mapping, since as far as the researcher is aware it is one of the first social science studies to consider mental mapping a creative task (although see Young & Barrett 2001; Powell 2013).

9.3 Policy implications of the research

There are two main findings in this research which have potential societal and policy implications. Firstly, a relatively high degree of congruence was found between the areas in the perceptual dialectological mapping task that many informants outlined as representing their speech community and the area they outlined as representing their region. This pattern may be translated as ‘where people speak like me is where I consider home’. This finding therefore provokes the question of how displaced peoples and families must feel when displaced from their homes. If a person has had to leave the area where people speak like him or her, can they ever really feel at home? This finding thus has implications for the services and language provision available for displaced people in any country; be it valuing and championing displaced peoples’ mother tongues more and helping them connect with speakers of their own languages, enabling them to feel more comfortable and at home, or indeed through offering better provision for language learning, giving displaced peoples better options to acquire the language(s) of the country in which they reside so as to be able to feel more at home.

The second finding with wider implications is that those borderlanders who spent time in France showed a stronger sense of affiliation to the country. This finding may be translated as 'if I go somewhere I like it more'. The present political climate is such that negotiations are taking place both on a European and global level regarding the status of borders and the rights of citizens to travel to and spend in time in different countries. At the same time, terrorism and fear thereof has led to many European borders becoming 'landscapes of control' (Passai & Prokkola 2009: 17). On a national level, reports suggest that the number of school trips is in decline (ATL 2011). This finding therefore has implications not only for the development of international border policy[316], but also for the value and support we ascribe to school trips abroad and university exchanges.

9.4 Future directions for research

The findings of this study have implications for future research. Firstly, as mentioned above, the sample size in the study is relatively small. Naturally, then, further research with another group of informants would strengthen – or indeed weaken – the study's conclusions. Data were also gathered during the fieldwork relating to informants' networks. Future research, therefore, could draw on this data, which in turn may allow for refinement of the present conclusions, or indeed the development of new ones.

As outlined above, this thesis has only scraped the surface of the spatial data in the Tournaisis corpus; particularly those concerning mobility, media

[316] For example, the European Commission shows a strong interest in 'borders'. In 2015, they launched a public consultation on the subject of 'overcoming obstacles in border regions' (EC 2016).

consumption and regional belonging. These data, along with their relationship to the linguistic and social data, would benefit from deeper scrutiny and analysis. Nevertheless, in this study, in which we operationalised the notions of mobility and media consumption, interactions between both factors and language have been illustrated. Since few have empirically investigated mobility and media, future research should look to do this more rigourously, and indeed the methodologies used in this study provide a point of departure for this endeavour.

Finally, also outlined above, through the use of a mapping task as a visual method, this thesis has paved the way for scholars in the field of linguistics to have greater recourse to visual research methods. The field would benefit from more investigations using mapping in this way. Visual methods is a growing collection of methodologies which are increasingly used in the social sciences (Pink 2011), thus the field of linguistics would likely benefit from being more open to the use of visual methodologies. During the development of the methodology for the current study, the researcher developed a method for visualising and stimulating discussion about identity: the 'Identity Cloud Method' (Foxen 2016). Ultimately, this participatory task was not used in the fieldwork; however, trials have successfully shown that the notion of identity can be investigated innovatively and insightfully through this method. Future linguistic investigations could therefore include the use of the Identity Cloud Method. Regardless, linguists should be encouraged to be more innovative and creative both with their research methods and with their presentations of work.

9.5 Closing comments

During my pilot study trip to Tournai in October 2014, a Tournaisien said to me of the national border ‘les nuages ne s’arrêtent pas aux frontières’ – ‘the clouds don’t stop at the borders’. This comment was made before the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris on the 7th January 2015 and the Brussels bombings on the 22nd March 2016, before the temporary closing of certain European borders and re-instigation of border checks made the national headlines in the UK, and before the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union on the 23rd June 2016. Despite the changes that Europe has seen since the inception of this study, I should like to end this thesis with some encouragement for fellow and future British researchers: the clouds don’t stop at the borders, and neither must we.

Appendix 1: Question prompts for interviews

1. **Vos origines**

- Vous êtes né à Tournai?
- Vous avez habité d'autres villes?
- Et vos parents, vos grands-parents?
- Parlez-moi un peu de votre famille…

2. **Votre enfance**

- Vous êtes allé à l'école à Tournai?
- Vous êtes allé à l'école secondaire à Tournai?
- C'était bien, l'école ?
- Y avait des instits et des profs très stricts - ou ils étaient tous très gentils ?
- Vous faisiez partie d'un groupe ou d'une bande à l'école ?
- Quels étaient vos jeux préférés – à l'école, ou en dehors de l'école ? (par ex. en colonie de vacances, ou en centre aéré)
- Qu'est-ce qu'il y avait comme punitions ?
- *Ça vous est arrivé qu'on vous accuse d'avoir fait quelque chose que vous aviez pas fait ? Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?*
- Quels sont vos meilleurs souvenirs de votre enfance ?
- *Parlez-moi un peu de votre enfance*
- *Comment vous fêtiez votre anniversaire?*
- *Vous vous souvenez de votre anniversaire préféré?*

3. **Vos études**

- A la fin de vos études, vous avez fait quoi ? C'était à quel âge ?
- Vous avez fait ces études où?
- Vous gardez de bons souvenirs de cette époque?
- *Vous pensez que l'éducation et l'enseignement a changé depuis que vous avez quitté l'école? Comment?*

4. **Le travail**

- Vous faites quoi dans la vie?
- Pourquoi vous avez choisi ce métier?
- C'était quoi votre métier de rêve quand vous étiez petit?

5. **Les loisirs**

- Vous faites quoi pendant votre temps libre?
- Vous vous intéressez aux sports?
- Vous diriez que c'est quoi le sport national de la Belgique?
- Parlez-moi un peu du football en Belgique…

6. **Les médias**

- Vous regardez beaucoup la télé ou les films?
- Vous aimez quels genres d'émissions et de films?
- Vous avez une série préférée? Il s'agit de quoi?
- Il y a des comiques bien connus en Belgique? Ils font quels types de blagues? C'est quel type d'humour?
- *C'est quoi la chose la plus drôle qui vous est arrivé dans votre vie?*

7. **Tournai**

- Vous aimez habiter à Tournai?
- Qu'est-ce que vous aimez, qu'est-ce que vous n'aimez pas?
- Vous trouvez que Tournai a beaucoup changé au cours des années?
- Tournai était comment pendant votre enfance?
- Et à Tournai, Il y a beaucoup de choses à faire pour les jeunes?
- Vous avez un quartier ou un lieu préféré de la ville?
- *Vous avez un souvenir qui est particulièrement fort de quelque chose qui s'est passé dans la ville? D'un événement, peut-être?*

8. **Les coutumes tournaisiennes**

- Il existe des coutumes tournaisiennes?
- Vous les fêtez?

9. **Noël et Pâques en Belgique**

- Est-ce que Noël est important en Belgique? Et Pâques?
- Vous les fêtez?
- *Vous avez des coutumes chez vous?*
- *Vous faites quoi?*
- Il y a d'autres coutumes nationales en Belgique?

10. **Le mariage**

- Et le mariage, c'est toujours répandu en Belgique?
- C'est comment un jour de mariage noces typique en Belgique?
- *Vous vous rappelez votre jour des noces?*
- *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé?*

11. **Le conseil communal**

- Vous vous intéressez au conseil communal?
- Si vous étiez bourgmestre de Tournai qu'est-ce que vous feriez?

12. **La Belgique**

- La composition et la structure de la Belgique me semblent très compliquées. Je comprends pas comment ça marche, la Flandre, la Wallonie, et cetera. Vous pourriez me l'expliquer un peu?

Questions II

13. **La façon de parler à Tournai**

- Vous pensez que les Tournaisiens ont une façon de parler particulière, par exemple un accent particulier?
- Vous pourriez me décrire l'accent?
- Vous aimez cette façon de parler?
- Qu'est-ce que vous aimez? N'aimez pas?
- Et en général, que disent les gens sur la façon de parler à Tournai?
- Vous trouvez que vous avez un accent tournaisien?
- Et vous aimez votre façon de parler? Et vos enfants?
- Vous vous rappelez une occasion où vous avez changé votre accent? Pourquoi vous avez fait ça?

- Est-ce que quelqu'un qui n'est pas de Tournai s'est déjà moqué de votre façon de parler?
- On a déjà reconnu votre origine à votre accent? Ou bien on vous a déjà pris pour quelqu'un qui vient d'ailleurs? On vous a déjà pris pour un français?
- Ça vous ferait quoi si quelqu'un vous preniez pour un Français?

Appendix 2: Word list 1

bras
clé
débâcle
tu
ration
Tournai
jeûne
irai
otage
irait
rose
lui
fumé
chaude
jeune
mais
bat
alors
patte
mouette
tas
code
serais
tache
te
paume
pâte
taie
ceux
pré
fleuri
voir
botté
ta
cher

molle
innovation
meuble
mâle
neutre
cuisine
près
muette
ira
beauté
à
fumet
cote
pomme
jeûner
côté
âge
marre
peau
peur
juin
serai
pote
là
peuple
chaise
les
encore
las
claie
histoire
un as
tout
sort
phare

mort
joint
môle
chais
nuage
déjeuner
thé
saur
veulent
fer
chose
cosse
chez
huit
veule
ses
auge
sot
seul
sotte
passe
sel
sais
tâche
sauve
creuse
Louis
lait
nation
côte
feutre
mes
peu

Appendix 3: Reading passage devised by the researcher

Cher Louis,
Je sais que tu adores faire la cuisine, alors je t'envoie une recette d'un plat de Pâques qui date de l'âge de fer ! Il se mange entre amis, à la fin du jeûne du carême.

Cette année je serai à Tournai et j'irai chez Jean qui préparera ce plat. Lui, c'est un as en cuisine!

Si tu voulais te joindre à nous, tu serais le bienvenu. Ta copine serait également la bienvenue. Jean habite à côté de l'office du tourisme, c'est le numéro huit.

En tout cas je t'envoie la recette, qui fait partie de notre histoire culturelle. C'est une innovation de nos ancêtres (du peuple celtique), qui a été inventée il y a longtemps avant que la Belgique soit une nation.

Chausson salé de Pâques

1. Première tâche : aller à la côte et pêcher une môle rose (c'est une espèce de poisson).

2. Deuxième tâche : aller dans un pré fleuri et attraper un jeune mouton par ses pattes. Ils se trouvent souvent près des auges. (N'aie pas peur !)

3. Encore une tâche (c'est la dernière) : aller à une bonne cave et acheter un bon vin.

4. Une fois rentré dans la cuisine, prendre des pommes, les couper en rondelles, puis les laisser sécher sur des claies.

5. Couper l'agneau et le poisson en dés et les mettre au four.

6. Ensuite, verser du lait dans une casserole bien chaude, ajouter de l'ail et du piment (ou quelque chose de piquant) et un peu de sel.

7. Faire chauffer le lait. La clé de la recette, c'est de chauffer le lait à feu doux. (Le fumet sera délicieux !)

8. Avec de la farine, du beurre et de l'eau, faire une pâte. La pétrir, et non seulement avec les paumes, mais avec les bras entiers !

9. Laisser lever la pâte jusqu'à ce qu'elle ressemble à un nuage. Ensuite, l'étaler jusqu'à ce qu'elle ressemble à un feutre épais.

10. Enfin, mélanger les pommes, les morceaux de viande et ceux du poisson avec le lait et envelopper le tout dans la pâte.

11. Mettre le chausson au four pendant 30 minutes.

12. Sortir le chausson et le couper en rations. Servir avec le vin !

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

A. <u>Les endroits où vous passez votre temps</u>

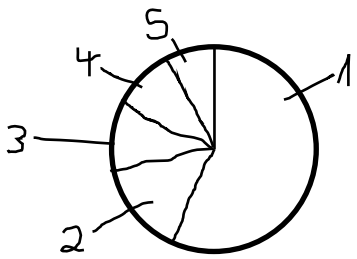
1. Sur une carte – celle qui convient le mieux – veuillez encercler les 5 villes ou villages où vous passez la plupart de votre temps (y compris là vous habitez).

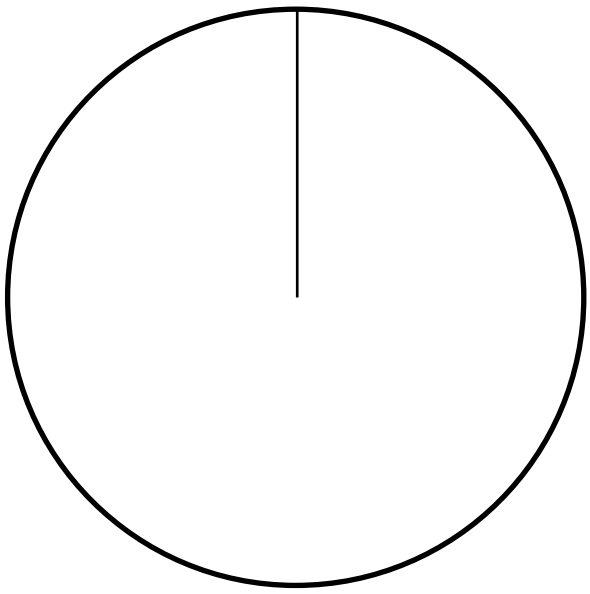
2. Veuillez écrire les noms de ces villes ci-dessous. Commencez par la ville où vous passez la plupart de votre temps.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____

3. Veuillez découper le camembert pour montrer à peu près le pourcentage de temps que vous passez dans chaque ville écrite ci-dessus. Notez les numéros qui correspondent aux villes à côté des tranches.

   Par exemple…





B. <u>La famille, les loisirs et le travail</u>

4. Y a-t-il d'autres membres de votre famille qui habitent dans le Tournaisis (parents, frères et sœurs, cousins, par exemple) ?

a) oui b) non

5. Si vous avez répondu « oui », à peu près combien sont-ils ?_____

6. Avez-vous de la famille qui n'habite pas dans le Tournaisis ? Si oui, où est-ce qu'ils habitent ?

_____

7. Quel est votre métier (soyez aussi précis que possible, s'il vous plait) ? Si vous êtes retraité quel était votre métier principal ?

_____

8. Dans quelle ville(s) travaillez-vous ?

_____

9. A peu près combien de vos collègues sont originaires du Tournaisis ?

a) personne b) quelques-uns c) la moitié d) la majorité e) tous

10. A peu près combien de ces collègues, originaires du Tournaisis, voyez-vous en dehors du travail ?

a) personne b) quelques-uns c) la moitié d) la majorité e) tous

11. Que faites-vous pendant votre temps libre et dans quelle(s) ville(s)/ quel(s) village(s)?

_____

_____

12. Parmi tous les gens avec qui vous passez votre temps libre, à peu près combien sont originaires du Tournaisis ?

a) personne b) quelques-uns c) la moitié d) la majorité e) tous

C. Les médias

13. Veuillez écrire le nombre d'heures par semaine que vous passez à regarder/écouter chaque genre de média.

    Ensuite, estimez le nombre d'heures de chaque genre de média selon l'origine géographique.

	Télé	**DVD (film/ séries)**	**Radio**	**Musique**
Heures par semaine	h	h	h	h
Tournai/ Tournaisis	h	h	h	h
Hainaut ou Wallonie Picarde	h	h	h	h
Région Wallonie-Bruxelles	h	h	h	h
Flandres	h	h	h	h
***Nord* Pas-de-Calais (France)**	h	h	h	h
France	h	h	h	h
Ailleurs dans la Francophonie	h	h	h	h
Monde anglophone (version originale)	h	h	h	h
Monde anglophone (doublé en français)	h	h	h	h
Autre	h	h	h	h

D. Le parler à Tournai et ailleurs

14. Sur une carte – celle qui convient le mieux – veuillez encercler la zone où les gens parlent comme vous (avec la même prononciation).

    Ensuite, encerclez la zone où les gens parlent avec une prononciation très similaire à la vôtre, à l'exception de quelques petites différences.

15. En ce qui concerne le français, cochez la phrase avec laquelle vous êtes le plus d'accord :

    a) La prononciation la plus correcte s'entend en France _____

    b) La prononciation la plus correcte s'entend en Belgique _____

    c) La prononciation la plus correcte se trouve en France, cependant parmi les prononciations en Belgique il y en a quelques-unes qui sont plus correctes que d'autres _____

    d) Bien que la prononciation en Belgique et celle en France soient différentes, elles sont toutes les deux aussi correctes _____

    e) La prononciation la plus correcte en Belgique est exactement comme la prononciation la plus correcte en France _____

16. Complétez la phrase ci-dessous :

    *Si je voulais parler plus correctement, j'adopterais la prononciation de(s)*_____

    *qui parle(nt)*_____

17. Pensez-vous que les jeunes et les personnes d'un certain âge à Tournai ont des prononciations différentes ?

    a) oui b) non c) je ne sais pas

18. Si vous avez répondu « oui », en quoi sont-elles différentes? Et pourquoi pensez-vous qu'elles sont différentes ?

_____

_____

_____

19. Dans quelle mesure votre prononciation est-elle identique à celles des villes mentionnées ci-dessous? Pour chaque prononciation, cochez la colonne qui convient le mieux:

	Exactement pareille	**Très similaire**	**Un peu similaire**	**Complètement différente**
Tournai				
Bruxelles				
Liège				
Lille				
Mons				
Mouscron				
Accent standard* de Belgique				
Accent standard de France				
Accent typique de la Belgique**				
Accent typique de la France				

*** 'accent standard' = ce qu'on enseigne, ou bien ce qui est considéré comme prononciation correcte**

**** 'accent typique' = ce qu'on entend autour de soi (en général)**

20. Dans quelle mesure trouvez-vous les prononciations des villes ci-dessous agréables ?

	5 (Très agréable)	**4**	**3 (Ni l'un ni l'autre)**	**2**	**1 (Très dés-agréable)**
Tournai					
Bruxelles					
Liège					
Lille					
Mons					
Mouscron					
Accent standard* de Belgique					
Accent standard de France					
Accent typique de la Belgique**					
Accent typique de la France					

*** 'accent standard' = ce qu'on enseigne, ou bien ce qui est considéré comme prononciation correcte**

**** 'accent typique' = ce qu'on entend autour de soi (en général)**

21. Dans quelle mesure trouvez-vous chacune de ces prononciations correctes ?

	5 (Très correcte)	**4**	**3 (Ni correcte ni incorrecte)**	**2**	**1 (Pas du tout correcte)**
Tournai					
Bruxelles					
Liège					
Lille					
Mons					
Mouscron					
Accent standard* de Belgique					
Accent standard de France					
Accent typique de la Belgique**					
Accent typique de la France					

*** 'accent standard' = ce qu'on enseigne, ou bien ce qui est considéré comme prononciation correcte**

**** 'accent typique' = ce qu'on entend autour de soi (en général)**

E. Votre région

22. Sur une carte – celle qui convient le mieux – encerclez la zone que vous considérez comme votre 'région'.

23. Veuillez encercler le numéro qui reflète votre sentiment d'appartenance à chaque 'région' ci-dessous. (Vous pouvez encerclez le même numéro pour plusieurs régions)

	7 Appart-enance très forte	**6**	**5**	**4 Appart-enance moyenne**	**3**	**2**	**1 Appart-enance très faible**
Tournai	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Tournaisis	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hainaut	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Wallonie Picarde	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Picardie	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Région transfront-alière	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
***Nord* (France)**	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
France	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Wallonie	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Flandre	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Région Wallonie-Bruxelles	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Belgique	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Europe	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Autre _____	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

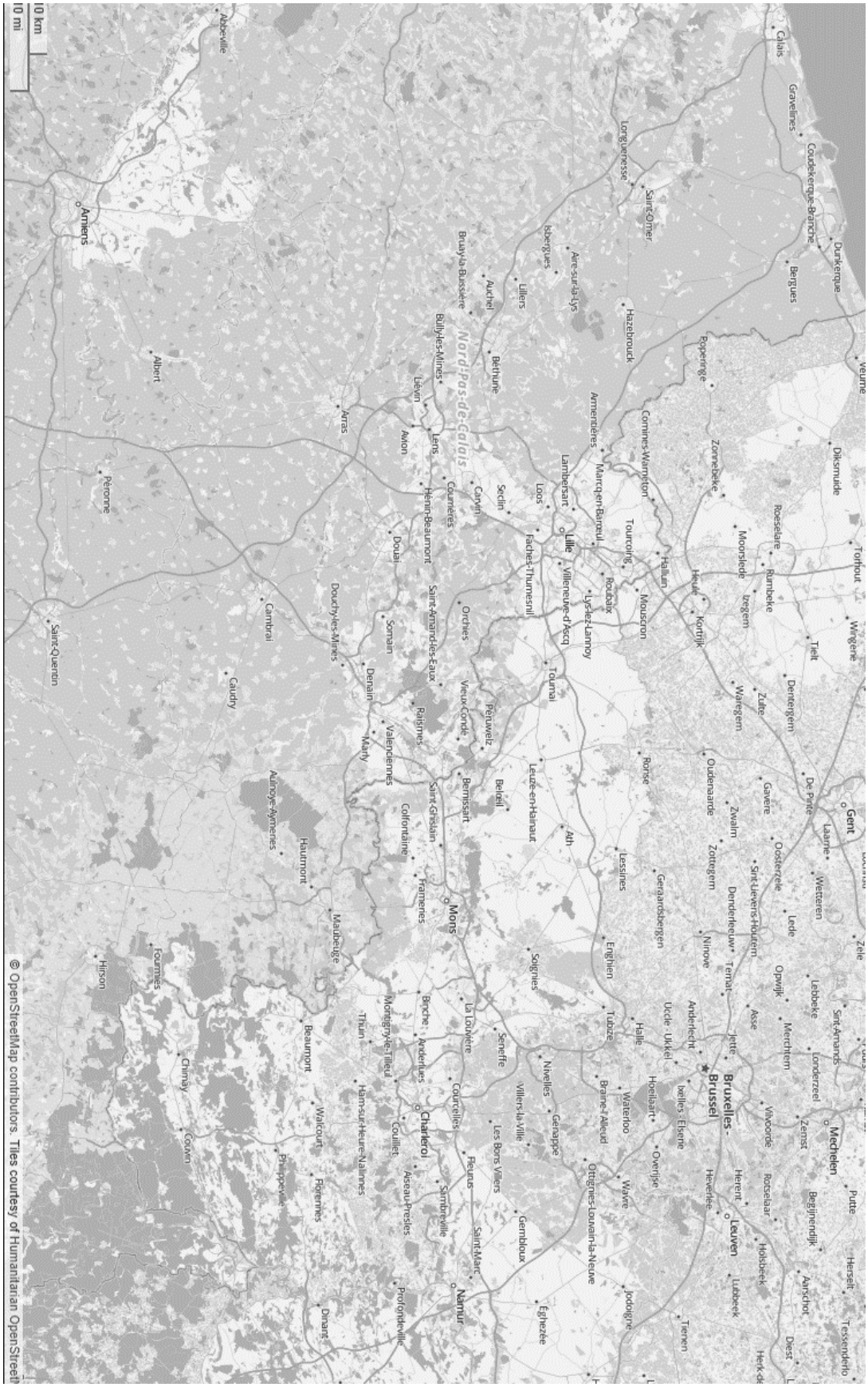
24. Pour quelle région votre sentiment d'appartenance est-il le plus fort? _____

Appendix 5: Maps

(Map 1)

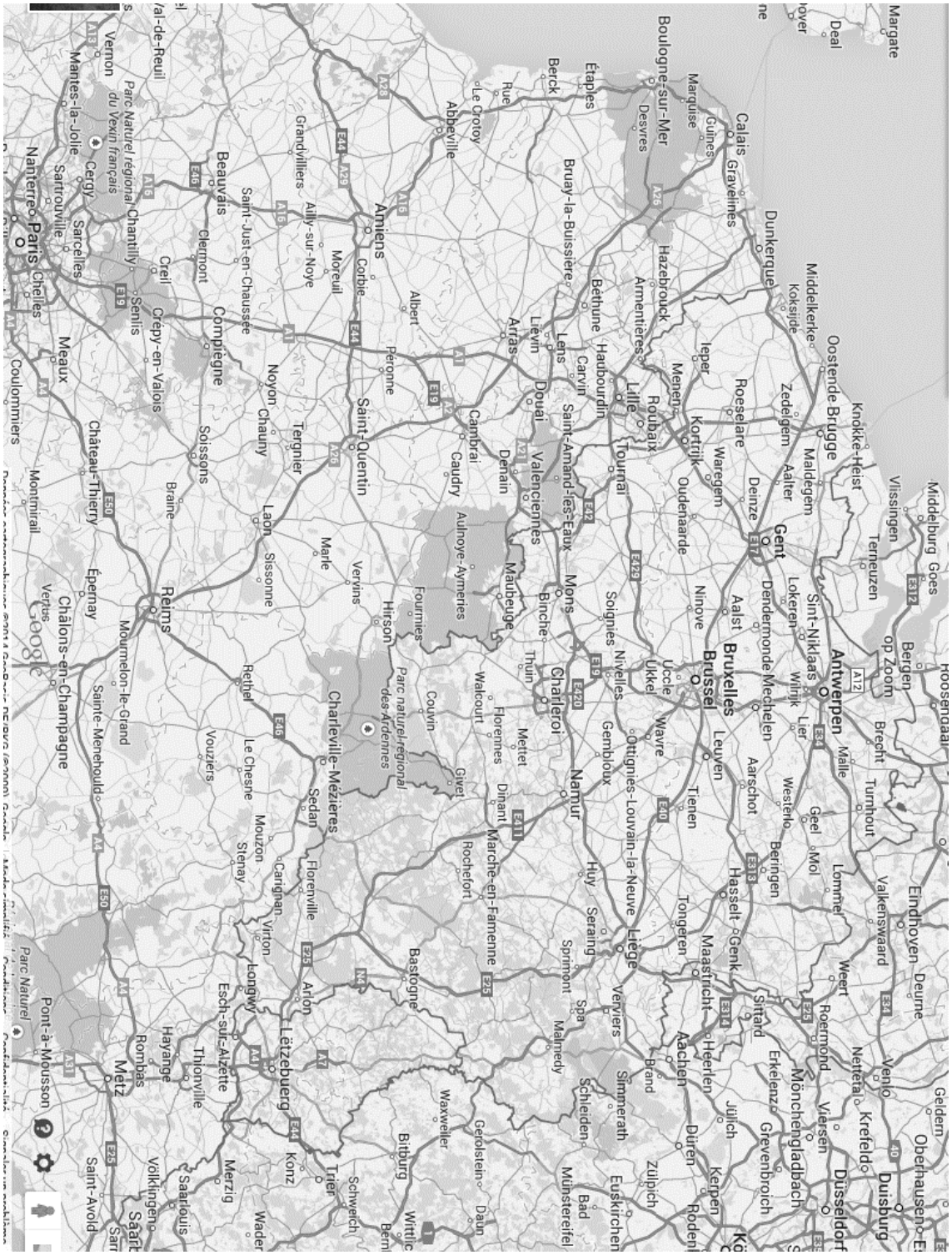
(Image copyright – Google Maps).

(Map 2)



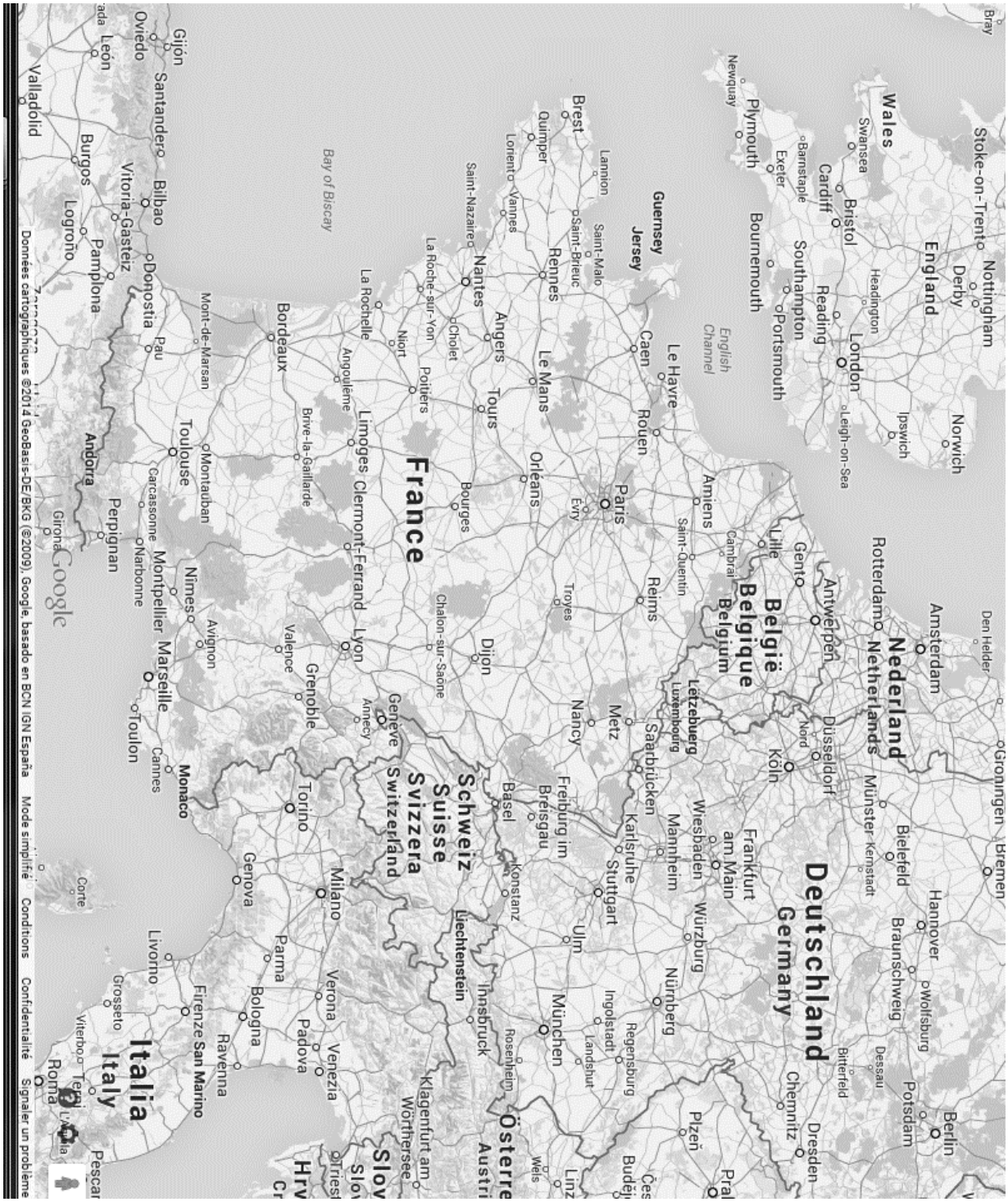
(Image copyright – Open Street Map).

(Map 3)



(Image copyright – Google Maps).

(Map 4)



(Image copyright – Google Maps).

Appendix 6: Fiche d'identité

Date :	
Nom, Prénom :	
Date de naissance :	Lieu de naissance :
Domiciles successifs (villes, en nombre d'années) :	
Domicile actuel :	
Langues parlées (étrangères ou régionales) :	
Études (préciser jusqu'à quel âge et le type d'études) :	
Professions successives :	
Profession actuelle :	
Père Lieu d'origine : Profession : Langues parlées :	
Mère Lieu d'origine : Profession : Langues parlées :	
Compagnon/ compagne Lieu d'origine : Profession : Langues parlées :	

Appendix 7 : Researcher's poem

A l'grand villache qui'i m'a donné ein cœur rouche et blanc

J'éteos tell'mint paf ed découvère el grand villache ed Tournai,

Vous savez, vous-eautes, j'sus pos d'ichi.

J'veos q' ichi tous les jours ch'est comme ein jour de fiête,

Qeu bonheur d' vir tous ces gins, les sorteus qui s'amustent,

Cha m' fait bin plaisi d'vir qui'i tient d' tous les saints qu'on beot;

Je sus fin bénaisse ed ête ichi.

Ainsin, j'comprinds asteur pourquo Henri VIII vouleot aussi ête ichi !

Et bé milliards, j'm rinds compte qu' j'aimreos bin d'dmeurer ichi et que j'ai bin invie d'ête tournaisienne –

Foke èn ptit gribouillage su l'passeport !

J'sais bin qu'in d'a qui m'direont que je sus autermint qu'ein éaute,

Mais i n'a foque ein villache comme Tournai.

Et vous savez, vous-eautes, ête tournaisienne, cha m'ireot comme eine pieau d'anwile.

Et la preufe que ch'n'est pos des carabistoules,

Ch'est que je m'sus fellement mis à l'ouvrage ; j'vin d'écrire em poème à tournaisien !

Sarah Foxen

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