

The Effect of Limburgish Bidialectalism on Third Language Acquisition

A Study at Secondary Education



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Abstract

This thesis examines the effect of (Dutch-)Limburgish bidialectalism, speaking both the standard and an indigenous variety of a language, on the acquisition of third language grammar. Previous research on bilingualism, a phenomenon related to bidialectalism, has found that bilingualism positively influences third language acquisition (TLA). Research into bidialectalism's effect on TLA has been limited. Though bidialectalism's effect on the first language is positive, it is unknown whether this occurs in TLA as well. This leads to the following question: how does Limburgish bidialectalism influence the acquisition L3 English grammar? First-year pre-university education secondary school students were tested using a grammar test focused on the Present Continuous/Simple, and a questionnaire measuring language exposure and language background. It was hypothesized that bidialectal speakers would have higher grammar scores than the monolingual group, and that an effect would occur for the degree of bidialectalism (how often a bidialectal uses Limburgish). The results indicated that the bidialectal group had significantly higher grammar scores than the monolingual group. However, no significant difference could be found between frequent dialect users and less frequent dialect users. It is concluded that Limburgish bidialectalism may have a positive effect on the acquisition of this particular grammatical aspect in English.

Keywords: third language acquisition, bidialectalism, bilingualism, dialect, Limburgish, grammar

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1. Introduction

Speaking multiple languages is gaining popularity worldwide. Over half of the world's population is bilingual, and more and more people are becoming multilingual (Vince, 2016). The popularity of multilingual repertoires is noticeable in education as well, as a large number of secondary schools in the Netherlands offers bilingual education. Even primary bilingual education is possible; 34% of the primary schools in the Netherlands start teaching English to children between the ages of 4 and 7, though children usually do not follow English lessons at primary school until they are 11 (Thijs, Trimbos, Tuin, Bodde, & De Graaff, 2011). As bilingualism is on the rise, the question arises what advantages bilingualism can offer to its speakers. A grounded theoretical basis into bilingualism is able to account for the advantages bilingual speakers have over monolingual speakers. One of these advantages lies in its positive effects on third language acquisition (TLA).

Previous research has shown that bilingualism positively influences multiple aspects of the acquisition of a third language (Sanz, 2000; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2013; Kopečková, 2016; Garraffa, Beveridge, & Sorace, 2015; Molnár, 2008; Grenfell & Harris, 2015). The access to multiple language systems (Cenoz, 2013) leads to faster acquisition and higher attainment levels (Sanz, 2000). Speaking two languages from an early age on can lead to long-term advantages. Not only is the acquisition of L3 grammar positively influenced, but the effects of bilingualism are noticeable in other aspects of language acquisition as well. Research has focused on different elements, such as pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge and command, syntactic structures, reading, and listening. An advantage for bilinguals could even be found in their general cognitive abilities (Garraffa et al., 2015). The bilingual participants involved in these studies significantly outperformed their monolingual peers, as they are more experienced in the language learning process. The body

of research focused on bilingualism and its effects on TLA supports the upcoming popularity of speaking multiple languages.

Not only are bi- and multilingualism gaining popularity, but dialects too are generating considerable interest in terms of language status. Limburgish, the dialect of the province of Limburg in the Netherlands, has recently been awarded the status of an official regional language (Tiems, 2019). A development as such shows how dialects are outgrowing their substandard status and regaining importance. The Ethnologue states that 50 to 90 percent of Limburgish inhabitants speak Limburgish besides Dutch, the official language in the Netherlands. This is called (Dutch-)Limburgish bidialectalism. Research into bidialectalism, though it is sparse, has provided a loose description of what bidialectalism entails, hinting towards a preliminary definition. Since research into bilingualism is limited, its effect on TLA is not clear yet.

As dialects are acquiring increasingly higher language statuses, it is important to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes of bidialectalism. While there has been previous research on bilingualism and how it influences the acquisition of a third language, none has focused on how bidialectalism influences a third language. Furthermore, as today's population is particularly focused on a multilingual linguistic repertoire, it is relevant to build on what previous preliminary research has found on Limburgish bidialectalism and its influence on the speaker's first language, and expand bidialectalism's definition by researching its influence on a third language. Since there is no general, exact definition available yet, it is necessary to undertake research that yields clear results, which can be used for revising the definition of bidialectalism and its properties.

This leads to the following question: *How does Limburgish bidialectalism influence the acquisition of third language (English) grammar?* Are the results similar to what has been found about bilingualism's influence on TLA? In this thesis, 89 children completed the

Language Exposure and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) (Marian, Blumenfeld, & Kaushanskaya, 2007) and filled out a grammar test. All children followed pre-university secondary education and the testing took place at two schools, testing one class per school. On the basis of the LEAP-Q results, a group of 51 participants was selected for further analysis, subdivided into high-bidialectals, low-bidialectals, and monolinguals. The research question leads to two hypotheses:

1. Bidialectals have higher L3 English grammar scores than monolinguals.
2. High-bidialectals have higher L3 English grammar scores than low-bidialectals.

Results of the grammar test were statistically analysed using one-way ANOVAs and post-hoc tests. As expected, a significant relationship between language background and grammatical performance was found. However, a difference between low- and high-bidialectalism could not be found.

This thesis will be organized as follows. The following chapter gives an outline of the theoretical background of third language acquisition, bilingualism, dialects, and bidialectalism. Besides providing an overview of the body of research relevant to the topic, this section will construct a complete picture of the aspects of bidialectalism that have been previously researched, and more importantly, the unexplored elements. To accurately justify the relevance of this research, the third chapter will explain the present study and its academic importance. The fourth chapter sets out the methodology used for the experiment and provides justifications for the decisions made. In the fifth chapter, a detailed overview of the results will be presented and the subsequent statistical analyses that were carried out on those results. The sixth chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the results, possible explanations, and suggestions for further research. This paper will end with a conclusion.

2. Theoretical Background

The main aspect this study addresses is the influence of Dutch-Limburgish bidialectalism on the acquisition of English as a third language. The term TLA will be adhered to, as this study examines the influence of a language and a dialect on it. Since a dialect is closely related to a language, using second language acquisition (SLA) would not be appropriate in this situation, as the speakers already have more experience with internalizing language or dialect structures and processes than monolingual speakers. This poses an interesting connection and relatedness between bidialectalism and bilingualism. Furthermore, as dialects have risen in status, more interest is generated in bidialectalism. Bidialectal speakers' often inferior status to bilingual speakers calls for reconsideration and, with that, more research on bidialectalism as a separate process needs to be carried out.

2.1 Third Language Acquisition

TLA is a term discussed extensively at this moment, though it has not studied as an isolated phenomenon for a long time. It remained subsumed under second language acquisition up until about ten years ago (Jaensch, 2013). Though TLA is a term separate from SLA, not all researchers agree that the processes underlying these terms are actually different. There seems to be a division in the field between the researchers who do believe TLA is similar to SLA and those who do not. Before providing an overview of these two perspectives on the difference or similarity between SLA and TLA, it should be identified what exactly a third language is. Defining a third language is quite controversial, as its definition depends on the researcher's view on whether a third language and second language are similar or not. Proponents of the 'no difference assumption', stemming from literature overgeneralizing the word 'second' (De Angelis, 2007), consider the acquisition process of a second language to be adequately similar to that of third or additional languages. Mitchell and Myles (2004), for example, regard the

word 'second' as an umbrella term, wherein all foreign languages after the second language are included, as the processes are, as they claim, the same. Second languages, according to them, are nothing more than "any languages other than the learner's native language or mother tongue" (p. 5). The no-difference assumption is supported by Sharwood Smith (1994) as well, who argued that SLA refers to any other language learned by a (group of) learners other than their first language, irrespective of the number of other non-native languages the learner knows and irrespective of the kind of learning environment (p. 7, as cited in Cenoz, 2000, p. 39).

However, as stated by Jaensch (2013), even though TLA research may seem similar to SLA research, the acquisition of a third language can be considerably affected by the added variable of knowing more than one previously learned language. TLA might share some of the characteristics of SLA, but important differences are involved, since third language learners have the advantage of at least two languages in their linguistic repertoire (Cenoz, 2013). Wang (2013) states that TLA is an offshoot of second language acquisition, concentrating on "the acquisition of a subsequent language beyond the second" (p. 99). The assumption that a third language differs significantly from a second language contributed to the study of TLA as an phenomenon apart from SLA. Researchers have attributed the complexity of TLA to numerous linguistic factors such as context of acquisition (Cenoz, 2000), perceived distance between the involved languages (Molnár, 2008), linguistic typology (Cenoz, 2000; Williams & Hammarberg, 1998), acquisition orders (Cenoz, 2000), and cross-linguistic influence (Wang, 2013; García-Mayo, 2012; Mutta, 2014; Duhalde Solís, 2015). Cross-linguistic influence, the transfer of structures from the previously learned languages to the third language, is a prominent feature attributed to the process of TLA. Since speakers have access to multiple languages in their linguistic repertory (Cenoz, 2013), these languages could influence the third language and structures could be transferred, either facilitating or interfering the acquisition process. In the case of SLA, the first language facilitates the second language when transfer

leads to immediate or rapid acquisition, and interferes with the acquisition of the second language when the transfer leads to errors in the second language (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2018). The acquisition of a language beyond the second could assist in the facilitation of acquiring the structures of that language, as third language learners have more experience with internalizing language structures. TLA also allows greater diversity than SLA with regard to acquisition orders. Since multiple languages are present, more acquisition orders are possible which complicates studying the relationships between the languages involved. This can present variation in linguistic typology (Cenoz, 2000). In line with Jaensch (2013), Cenoz (2000) too states that the additional language complicates the processes of TLA. Not only linguistic factors, but also non-linguistic factors play a role in the complexity of the processes in TLA, for instance the sociocultural status of the languages involved in the learning process, which presents greater diversity when more than two languages are involved (Cenoz, 2000).

Research on TLA has mainly focused on cross-linguistic influence. The placement of sentence negation in TLA was studied by Bardel and Falk (2007). They argued for a qualitative difference between “the acquisition of a true second language (L2) and the subsequent acquisition of an L3” (p. 459). It was also argued that syntactic transfer took place from an L2 to an L3 by using data on sentence negation in the acquisition of Swedish and Dutch as L3s. They aimed to account for transfer by comparing negation structures in different languages. All three of the Germanic languages in the study had the same negation placement because of their V2 property. The negation placement of languages without V2 (English, Hungarian, Italian, Albanian) varied, meaning the placement was different in each non-V2 language. The study involved two sets of participants. The learners were subdivided into two groups: L1 is a V2 language and L2 is a non-V2 language, or L1 is a non-V2 language and L2 is a V2 language. All participants either had a V2 L1 and a non-V2 L2, or vice versa. The first set consisted of five L3 Swedish learners, with English, Dutch, German, or Hungarian as L1 or L2. These

participants were recorded during group lessons. The second set consisted of four L3 Dutch or Swedish learners who were recorded individually. These participants' language backgrounds included German, English, Dutch, Italian, Albanian, and Swedish. All participants were beginners, and their learning was formal and took place during lessons outside the language community. Results of the experiment showed evidence for positive L2 transfer of the placement of negation/V2 to the speakers' L3 (Bardel & Falk, 2007, p. 479).

The acquisition of a third language can be influenced, either positively or negatively, by different factors. Bilingualism is a good example of how a third language can be affected in a positive manner, as it has been shown that bilingual speakers have an advantage over monolinguals when learning another language. The following section will give an overview of the research on the influence of bilingualism on different aspects of TLA.

2.2 Bilingualism and Third Language Acquisition

Bilingualism is one of the research fields combined most often with research on TLA. It entails actively using two languages from an early age on (Oschwald, Schättin, von Bastian, & Souza, 2018). The advantage that bilingual speakers have over monolingual speakers, namely the access to multiple language structures and language learning strategies, makes bilingualism an interesting phenomenon, not only on its own but also as a facilitation device for other languages and because of its widespread effects on TLA. Previous research has shown that bilingualism has a positive effect on the acquisition of a third language (Sanz, 2000; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2013; Kopečková, 2016; Garraffa et al., 2015; Molnár, 2008; Grenfell & Harris, 2015). Bilingual third-language learners were found to acquire their third or foreign language faster in comparison to monolingual learners, and they reach a higher level of attainment (Sanz, 2000, p. 34). Cenoz (2013) explains that the bilinguals' advantage can be

partially explained by their experience as language learners, as the wider range of learner strategies that they have developed facilitates learning a third language.

Usually, advantages are reported more often by studies that focus on overall L3 achievement and measure multiple proficiency dimensions than by research that focuses on very specific aspects of third language proficiency, as stated by Cenoz (2013, p. 77). A narrow linguistic focus could result in missing the advantages bilinguals have, as they do not necessarily profit from their linguistic advantage in every aspect of language proficiency. Yet, there are numerous studies which have managed to capture the significant difference between bilinguals and monolinguals learning an additional language. The following section will describe the specific linguistic aspects tested in relation to bilingualism.

The influence of bilingualism on third language learning in the Basque Country, a bilingual community situated at the north-west coast side of Spain, was tested by Cenoz and Valencia (1994). Their research evaluates the effects of Basque-Spanish bilingualism, specifically additive bilingualism, on the acquisition of a third language, which was English in this case. Additive bilingualism occurs “when a second language and culture have been acquired with little or no pressure to replace or reduce the first language” (Baker, 2001, p. 114). This opposes the subtractive form of bilingualism, where, while acquiring the second language and culture, there is pressure to demote or replace the first language (Baker, 2001). Basque, a minority language, is used for instructional purposes, and English is taught as a foreign language (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994, p. 197). A total of 320 students, 48% monolinguals and 52% Spanish-Basque bilinguals, were tested on four language skills of English (speaking, writing, reading, and listening). The students took a vocabulary and grammar test as well (p. 200). The results supported the hypothesis, showing that bilingualism has a positive effect on TLA. The advantage found for the bilingual students could not be explained in terms of transfer, as English and Basque do not share any similarities. In terms of language families,

English belongs to the Proto-Indo-European language family whereas Basque is a language isolate.

Vocabulary was tested as well in a study by Sanz (2000), combined with structure knowledge, aimed at bilinguals in Catalonia. Both the bilinguals' L1 and L2 were Romance languages (Spanish and Catalan). The monolingual students and bilingual students were tested on their knowledge of structure and vocabulary of their L3 (English). The experiment consisted of two sessions. In the first session, participants completed a questionnaire establishing the income and profession of their parents and completed a section of the Raven's Progressive Matrices Test to measure intelligence. In the second session, the same participants completed the vocabulary and structure sections of the CELT English proficiency test. In line with what other previous research on bilingualism and TLA has found, results showed an advantage for the bilingual participants in the L3 (Sanz, 2000, p. 34).

The effect of bilingualism on L3 vocabulary was also tested by Zare and Mobarakeh (2013), who studied the effect of Arabic-Persian bilingualism on L3 vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners. They compared 50 Arabic-Persian bilinguals to 50 Persian monolinguals. The participants filled in a questionnaire to determine the participants' mother tongue and the languages the participants could speak or understand. Their vocabulary was tested on a pre- and post-test with 50 words selected from a vocabulary book. Results showed that Arabic-Persian bilinguals outperformed their Persian monolingual counterparts in general L3 vocabulary learning (Zare & Mobarakeh, 2013, p. 132). This study portrays bilingualism's positive effect on L3 vocabulary acquisition.

L3 Vocabulary and grammar were not the only aspects tested in relation to bilingualism. Kopečková (2016) researched whether active bilinguals are advantaged compared to foreign language users in learning to produce L3 Spanish rhotic sounds (Spanish /r/, /r/, English /ɹ/) and, if so, whether the degree of advantage for active bilinguals increases over time, i.e. the

long-term effects of bilingualism in the development of L3 production. She tested a group of 19 multilingual children at a secondary school in Germany. The participants were divided into two groups based on their linguistic background: active bilinguals and foreign language users (p. 415). Results showed that the active bilingual group performed significantly more accurately at producing Spanish rhotic sounds than the foreign language users at all testing times. She also found a favourable trend in the active bilinguals' developing ability to produce the English rhotic sound. It could be concluded that the results suggest that active bilinguals, in comparison to foreign language users, have a long-term advantage in the production of L3 novel sounds (Kopečková, 2016, p. 423).

Overall, these studies show a significant relationship between bilingualism and a higher level of attainment or faster learning of a third language. These studies suggest a long-term advantage for bilingual speakers who are learning or acquiring a third language. The previous knowledge of a second language substantially influences the ability to learn a third language. Though the influence is significant, this by no means accounts for a causal relationship. Language learning is a complex process, and it can be influenced by various factors, as stressed by Cenoz and Valencia (1994). One aspect that remains unclear concerns that status of the language forms involved, as a dialect could influence a third language differently than a language.

2.3 Dialect and Bidialectalism

The terms *language* and *dialect* remain ambiguous and flexible to this day. Hazen (2001) defines a language as mutually intelligible. Mutual intelligibility can occur within one language or between multiple languages. One language is mutually intelligible when two speakers who both speak that language can understand each other. When multiple language are involved, they are regarded as mutually intelligible when communication between speakers is possible

when these speakers each use their own language without knowing each other's language (Swarte, Schüppert, & Gooskens, 2013). These languages are usually closely related.

A dialect is defined as a set of linguistic features “distinguishable both qualitatively and quantitatively from other dialects of the same language” (Hazen, 2001, p. 86). Chambers and Trudgill (1980) define a dialect as a low-status, substandard form of language. A dialect, according to Siegel (2010), refers to “varieties of the same language that differ from each other in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar” (p. 2). These varieties are then associated with particular social groups or geographic regions. As definitions set out by researchers often vary, it remains difficult to formulate a clear definition and description. Are dialects similar to languages, or are they in no way comparable? To what extent do a language and a dialect actually differ? According to the late Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich, “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy” (as cited in Melinger, 2018, p. 1). Though the distinction is tough to make, Anderson (2010) states that the difference typically relies on issues of power, authority, and culture rather than purely linguistic considerations, which actually play a less significant role. A dialect is usually seen as the lower-class form of a language. It is often considered to be standing outside the language, even, according to Haugen (1966). He labels the terms *language* and *dialect* as cyclically applicable, where *language* is always the superordinate form and *dialect* the subordinate term. Hence, he states that “every dialect is a language, but not every language is a dialect” (Haugen, 1966, p. 924).

Limburgish formally remained a dialect of Dutch until 1997, when it was acknowledged as a regional language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by local and national authorities. The Netherlands currently has 5 languages under the charter: Frisian, Low Saxon, Romani, Yiddish, and Limburgish (“States Parties to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and their regional or minority languages”, n.d., p. 2). Only Frisian is recognised as an official language besides Dutch.

Limburgish is acknowledged as a regional language under the charter, though this does not mean that it is actually recognized as such in the Netherlands. Recently, in March 2019, Dutch Home Secretary Kajsa Ollongren announced that the Dutch national government will recognize the Limburgish dialect as an official regional language through an agreement which will be negotiated towards the end of 2019 (Tiems, 2019). Despite its official provincial or regional language status, it is difficult to conceptualize Limburgish as an actual language, as it has no standard spelling or pronunciation and consists of different varieties (Ramakers, 2016). Though it has obtained the regional language status, it is not (yet) an official language. It is therefore no surprise that expert opinions still differ about whether or not Limburgish can be seen as a language (Camps, 2018, p. 66). Since it is quite complicated to grasp the status of Limburgish, it would be most fitting to consider it to be a dialect. Limburgish has not obtained the status of an official language, and for the clarity of this research I thus will address Limburgish as a dialect. Irrespective of the classification of Limburgish as a dialect, speaking two varieties of a language, bidialectalism, may have similar effects as speaking two languages.

Limburgish bidialectalism entails speaking the standard language in the Netherlands (Dutch) as well as a social dialect of the region of Limburg in the south of the Netherlands (Limburgish). According to Hazen (2001), the term bidialectalism is metaphorically derived from bilingualism. While it is difficult to establish how analogous it is to bilingualism, he observes that it is quite hard to pin down what bidialectalism is exactly. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *bidialectal* as “command of two regional or social dialects of a language, one of which is commonly the standard language” (*OED Online*, s.v. bidialectal). Additionally, Smith and Durham (2012) describe bidialectalism as “an indigenous variety operating alongside more widespread norms in a community of speakers” (p. 58).

As bilingualism involves (simultaneous) SLA, bidialectalism is characterized by (simultaneous) second dialect acquisition (SDA). SDA involves three broad types of dialects:

national, regional, and social dialects. A national dialect is characteristic of a country, a regional dialect is spoken in one particular region of a country, and a social dialect is a variety spoken by a particular group based on social aspects rather than geography (Siegel, 2010). As is the case with SLA, SDA can either be naturalistic or educational. In this study, the acquisition of the second dialect is naturalistic when that (regional) dialect is Limburgish, as there is no formal education taught in this dialect. When the (national) dialect or standard variety is Dutch, this is both naturalistic and educational. If a child acquires this national dialect in the first four years of its life, this would be naturalistic SDA, as Dutch children go to primary school at the age of 4. The context would then shift from naturalistic to educational.

The studies that research the effect of bidialectalism on the L1 paint an inconsistent picture. A study by Giesbers, Kroon, and Liebrand (1988) tested 59 standard speaking and 9 dialect speaking primary school pupils in different Dutch proficiency tests, among which listening, writing, and speaking tests. Results showed that children speaking the standard variety had an advantage over dialect speakers in reading comprehension, writing abilities, and overall school achievement. Giesbers et al. do state that their findings may reflect inadequacies of their research design. Their sample size might have been too small to generate statistically significant results (Giesbers et al, 1988, p. 90).

On the contrary, studies by Vangsnes, Söderlund, and Blekesaune (2017), Roumans (2018), and Francot, van den Heuij, Blom, Heeringa, and Cornips (2017) found that bidialectalism has a positive effect on the first language. Vangsnes et al. (2017) examined the relationship between the linguistic background of Norwegian pupils and their school achievements. It aimed to shed light on the following question: Does the simultaneous acquisition of two closely related written linguistic varieties yield developmental advantages that improve school achievement? (p. 346) Norwegian children grow up to be functional in two closely related written standards: Bokmål (majority variety) and Nynorsk (minority variety).

The study specifically focused on bidialectal literacy and its effect on school achievement. Children growing up with Nynorsk as their primary written variety of Norwegian at school simultaneously acquire Bokmål. However, the converse does not hold for the children who grow up with Bokmål. School achievements of 416 municipalities were analysed. Results showed that Nynorsk municipalities generally achieve better results at school than Bokmål municipalities when comparing municipalities with similar adult population education levels. The results suggest that growing up with the Nynorsk (minority) variety is a predictor for good school achievements (Vangsnes et al., 2017, p. 355).

The effect of Limburgish bidialectalism on a child's L1 has been researched by Roumans (2018) and Francot et al. (2017). Francot et al. (2017) explored whether a distinction can be made between young monolingual and bidialectal children through a newly-developed Limburgish dialect word production task. They also examined whether children raised speaking Limburgish run into more problems acquiring Dutch vocabulary than monolingual Dutch children. Educators sometimes assume that speaking a dialect would negatively affect the acquisition of Dutch, as some researchers (Kroon & Vallen, 2004; Yao, Ohinata, & Van Ours, 2015, as cited in Francot et al., 2015, p. 3) found that children raised with a dialect experience difficulties acquiring Dutch vocabulary. Francot et al. (2017) administered two tests to 128 children: a dialectal proficiency test called the Limburgish Word Task (LWT), and a Dutch language proficiency test (the Dutch version of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-NL)). Results of the LWT showed extensive variation across vocabulary items as well as across children. It could be concluded that, based on the LWT, it was not possible to distinguish between the bidialectal and monolingual children. Results of the PPVT-NL showed that the use of dialect facilitated the knowledge of standard Dutch vocabulary, suggesting that "growing up in a vital bidialectal community in Limburg may be advantageous for vocabulary acquisition in standard Dutch" (Francot et al., 2015, p. 15).

Roumans (2018) examined whether or not Dutch-Limburgish bidialectalism has an effect on literacy in the L1 (Dutch) of primary school children in grades 4 and 8. She specifically focused on whether or not there is a relationship between speaking a dialect and poor language skills in Dutch. She tested 283 children, of which 126 were bidialectal and 157 were monolingual, using a standardized CITO spelling/reading test and a survey. A child was coded as monolingual when he or she spoke mostly Dutch with their friends and family, and coded as bidialectal when the child spoke Dutch as well as a local Limburgish dialect with their friends and family. It was hypothesized that there would be “no or a positive relationship between the Dutch spelling and reading competences of bidialectal children speaking a local Limburgish variety and Dutch” (Roumans, 2018, p. 31). Results showed that bidialectal children performed equally well or significantly better than the monolingual children, in line with the hypothesis.

The studies mentioned above have shown that bidialectalism has a positive influence on the speaker’s L1. It has been previously mentioned that bilingualism is related to bidialectalism, and research has established a positive relationship between bilingualism and TLA. It is unclear yet whether the same effect occurs for bidialectalism, which involves speaking a dialect and a language instead of two languages.

The difference between languages and dialects relies on social stigma and political factors rather than linguistics, according to Haugen (1966). This leaves researchers wondering what effect this has on the processing of a language and a dialect, as the linguistic difference is not as pertinent as, or at least less significant than, the social stigma and political affiliations attached to it. Melinger (2018) tried to clarify how a language and dialect differ internally rather than externally. Results of her study revealed that languages are processed differently than dialects. This shows that there is a behavioural divergence between bilingual and bidialectal processing. She evaluated whether “*between-dialect* translation equivalents behave

like *between-language* translation equivalents in a picture-word inference task” (p. 83). The design was mirrored from bilingual research. Participants were asked to name pictures of common objects in either Standard Scottish English (dominant dialect) or Scots (less preferred dialect). After five experiments, no evidence for a bidialectal facilitation effect was found. She states that bilinguals are very good at keeping the linguistic systems for their two languages separate, whereas the results suggests that bidialectal speakers may not be as good at separating those systems (Melinger, 2018, p. 85). This could show that though bidialectalism and bilingualism are often assessed as related, the underlying processes may not be as similar.

Though Melinger (2018) suggests languages are processes differently than dialects, the behaviour of bidialectals actually seems to be more similar to the behaviour of bilinguals than that of monolinguals. Antoniou, Kambanaros, Grohmann, and Katsos (2014) tested the linguistic and cognitive profile of Cypriot Greek-Standard Modern Greek ‘bilectal’ children in comparison to multi-/bilingual and monolingual children. Bilectal is a synonym for bidialectal. The experiment aimed to establish if speaking two varieties can have similar effects on cognitive development as bilingualism. Antoniou et al. tested 136 children (64 bilectal, 47 multilingual, 25 monolingual), who took various tests, among which language proficiency measures, working memory tests, inhibition tests, a switching test, a non-verbal IQ test, and socioeconomic status measures. In contradiction to Melinger’s (2018) findings, the bilectal children turned out to perform more similarly to bilingual children than to monolingual children (Antoniou et al., 2014, p. 11).

Overall, this section has shown that the research on bidialectalism’s influence on the L1 paints an inconsistent picture, though most studies have found a positive effect. It is unknown if this effect also exists for TLA, as there has been a lack of research on this particular subject. It is unsure if bidialectalism is as related to bilingualism as it may seem, since studies by Melinger (2018) and Antoniou et al. (2014) show contradicting results.

3. Present Study

The present study focuses on the effect of Dutch-Limburgish bidialectalism on the acquisition of L3 English grammar. It has been established that bidialectalism is a related phenomenon to bilingualism, as both include the previous knowledge of two language forms, either two languages or a standard variety and a dialectal variety of a language. Research on bilingualism and third language acquisition has shown that bilingualism positively influences the acquisition of a third language, as it leads to faster learning and higher attainment levels (Sanz, 2000). It has yet to be examined whether a similar influence can occur when someone is bidialectal. Language typology may play a role in this, too. The languages involved in Sanz' study researching Spanish-Catalan bilinguals are typologically similar and stem from the same language family. Since Limburgish and Dutch are typologically related as well, this might similarly influence the effect of speaking Limburgish and Dutch on a third language.

The inconsistencies in the theoretical basis of bidialectalism call for further research. There has not been explicit research into the effect of bidialectalism on TLA. This effect could be similar to that of bilingualism, as Antoniou et al. (2014) showed similar performance patterns for bidialectals and bilinguals, or the results could be in line with the findings presented by Melinger (2018). The contrast in results of these two studies poses an interesting question. How is it possible that the performance of bi(dia)lectal speakers is similar to that of bilingual speakers if a dialect, according to Melinger, is processed differently than a language?

This research can hopefully be used to define the properties of bidialectalism further. Research on bidialectalism remains limited up until now, and a study like this could give more insight in the underlying processes of bidialectalism and provide a better understanding of how these speakers acquire a third language. Research into bilingualism could facilitate research into bidialectalism. If studies on bidialectalism find similar effects to the effects bilingualism has on TLA (Sanz, 2000; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2013; Kopečková,

2016; Garraffa et al., 2015; Molnár, 2008; Grenfell & Harris, 2015), it could reveal just how similar bidialectals are to bilinguals. The present study examines the influence of bidialectalism on TLA and addresses the following research question: *How does Dutch-Limburgish bidialectalism influence the acquisition of L3 English grammar?* This research question will be tested on first-grade secondary school participants using a grammar test and the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2014). The participants will be categorized as high-bidialectal, low-bidialectal, or monolingual. The following two hypotheses will be tested:

1. Bidialectal participants have higher L3 English grammar scores than monolingual participants.
2. High-bidialectal participants have higher L3 English grammar scores than low-bidialectal participants.

Though it could be debated from a sociolinguistic viewpoint that the monolingual participants in this study are actually monodialectal, since a standard language is hardly ever truly spoken. Monodialectal speakers speak one variety of a language (Durrant, Delle Luche, Cattani, & Floccia, 2014). However, the choice was made to base the terms used in this thesis on official language status. Since Dutch is an official language in the Netherlands and Limburgish only received an official *regional* status, and this research is not of a sociolinguistic nature as the research by Durrant et al. (2014), the participants who only speak Dutch will be labelled as monolingual, and not monodialectal.

The conscious choice for a grammar test stems from the other linguistic fields to which researchers attributed the positive effect of bilingualism in TLA. The focus seems to be on pronunciation (Kopečková, 2016), vocabulary knowledge and command (Zare & Mobarakeh, 2013; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Sanz, 2000), general cognitive abilities (Garraffa et al., 2015), reading and listening (Grenfell & Harris, 2015), and syntactic structures (Sanz, 2000). Grammar remains one of the aspects which is relatively poorly researched, though it is touched

upon in some studies (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Garraffa et al., 2015). Yet, these researchers always combined testing grammar with testing another linguistic ability. In order to shed more light on the effect bidialectalism has on L3 grammar, this study will focus on testing grammar only.

4. Methodology

This study attempts to take a first step towards a further and more detailed definition of the properties of bidialectalism in relation to TLA. In order to achieve this, an experiment was carried out where the L3 English grammatical competencies of bidialectal children were compared to those of monolingual children, with an additional factor of the degree of bidialectalism. Three groups of Dutch secondary school pupils were tested; one ‘low-bidialectal’ group, one ‘high-bidialectal’ group, and one monolingual group. The experiment consisted of an adjusted version of the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007) and a grammar test specifically designed for this study. The question that this experiment tries to answer is: *How Limburgish bidialectalism influence the acquisition of L3 (English) grammar?*

4.1 Participants

89 Dutch secondary school pupils between the ages of 11 and 13 ($M = 12.30$, $SD = 0.49$) were tested for this experiment: 37 boys, 48 girls, 1 participant who identified as ‘other’ and 3 participants who failed to fill in their sex. The participants were selected for further analysis of their grammar scores based on their answers on the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007). Three sub-groups were eventually formed. The first group consisted of 10 ‘low-bidialectal’ participants with a Limburgish usage percentage between 10 and 49%, the second group consisted of 15 ‘high-bidialectal’ participants with a Limburgish usage percentage of 50% or more, and the third group consisted of 26 monolingual participants with no knowledge or usage of Limburgish or another dialect. The children were selected from first-year Athenaeum¹ classes at two secondary schools (two classes per school): the bidialectal participants at Trevianum Scholengroep Sittard, in the south of Limburg, and the monolingual participants at Over

¹ The level VWO at secondary schools in the Netherlands represents pre-university education and is divided into Athenaeum and Gymnasium. The difference between these two school levels is that Gymnasium has Greek and Latin as (mandatory) subjects, whereas Athenaeum does not.

Betuwe College (OBC) Bommel, in a small town between Arnhem and Nijmegen in the east of Gelderland. Monolingual participants were consciously tested at a secondary school in Bommel, since the risk of dialect influence in Limburg was too high. Usually, when a child lives or grows up in Limburg and does not speak Limburgish, chances are high that the child does understand the dialect and could even use some words and sentences. This would affect the validity of this research and could possibly influence the results. All of the data was collected anonymously. The participants at OBC received a privacy form to inform their parent(s)/caretaker(s). This privacy form was specifically requested by the school and is included in Appendix A.

4.2 Materials

The materials used in the experiment consisted of the LEAP-Q (section 4.2.1) and a grammar test (section 4.2.2).

4.2.1 LEAP-Q

For the selection of the bidialectal group, the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007) for Dutch was used and adapted. Since the LEAP-Q is an existing and well-known method for testing language background, the choice was made to keep its basic template, while adding, removing, and changing a few aspects. The questions used in the adapted version were specifically selected for the purpose of this experiment. Unnecessary questions were eliminated to shorten the length of the questionnaire, as the testing took place during class and had to be kept relatively short. Some questions were made by the author and added to the questionnaire. The LEAP-Q administered 11 questions. One question established whether a participant had dyslexia, a language deficiency, or a learning deficiency. None of the participants had a learning deficiency, although 1 participant was excluded from the experiment because of dyslexia, and

1 participant was excluded because of a language disorder. Dyslectic participants or participants with a learning/language disorder were consciously excluded as they are not fully representative of regular language learning. The LEAP-Q aimed to select participants with Dutch/Limburgish as L1/L2 and English as L3 for the bidialectal conditions, and participants with Dutch as L1 and English as L2 for the monolingual condition. In order to exclude participants with a language background that did not comply with the prerequisites of this experiment, participants were asked to fill in all languages they used, if they had an L1 other than Dutch and whether they lived in another country for over 3 months. To portray a clear image of the participants' exposure to the languages involved in this research, a question was included which established whether the participants would use Dutch or Limburgish/dialect in specific situations: interaction with friends and family, reading, education, television, and music and radio. The questionnaire portrayed the usage percentages of the participant groups for Dutch and Limburgish/dialect as well. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

4.2.2 Grammar Test

The participants were administered an English grammar test, which was designed for this study. The items presented in the test were selected with regard to the level of difficulty of the vocabulary used. The test included grammatical aspects that were relatively new to (most of) the participants, namely the use of the Present Continuous, both on its own and in relation to the Present Simple. This grammatical aspect was chosen in consultation with an English teacher at Trevianum. It was chosen carefully, as this was something the (Limburgish) participants only just started learning. This choice was made to determine whether or not the participants in Limburg acquired the L3 grammar better than their monolingual peers. The test was composed of 5 exercises, with a maximum of 30 points possible. The exercises were all aimed at different applications of the present continuous. The test contained, besides one

general multiple-choice exercise, different gap-fill exercises specifically aimed at constructing the Present Continuous form of particular verbs, using the Present Continuous and Present Simple in negation and question formation, and combining the Present Continuous and Present Simple in sentence context. These questions required the participants to fill in the correct verb forms. For each question, the maximum score was 5 points, except for the combination exercise, which had a maximum score of 10 points. The full grammar test is included in Appendix C.

4.3 Procedure

The testing of both experimental tasks took place during class with supervision of a single experimenter and the teacher of the respective group. First, the experimenter introduced the two experimental tasks and explained what the participants had to do. The participants were handed the tasks and were asked to start with the grammar test, for which there was a 10-minute time limit. While taking the grammar test, the participants had to work individually. If a participant finished the test before the end of the given time, they were allowed to start the LEAP-Q in the meantime. After 10 minutes, the grammar tests were collected, irrespective of whether the participants had finished or not. The participants could then (continue to) fill in the LEAP-Q and deliberate with their fellow classmates. After approximately 5 minutes, the LEAP-Q was collected as well and the children received chocolate Easter eggs as a thank-you. None of the participants were aware of the exact objective of this research previous to the experiment.

4.4 Design

The experiment used a between-subjects design. The independent variable was language background, and had three values: 1 for high-bidialectal, 2 for low-bidialectal, and 3 for

monolingual. The dependent variable was overall grammar score, a total over the 5 exercises. First, the overall results for all 3 groups were compared using a one-way ANOVA. Then, the task-specific scores were compared using individual one-way ANOVAs for each exercise. Post-hoc tests (Tukey HSD) were conducted for the comparisons between the different groups.

5. Results

The results of the LEAP-Q are presented in 5.1. The results of the overall grammar scores are presented in 5.2.1, with separate analyses for the task-specific scores in 5.2.2.

5.1 LEAP-Q

The LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007) outlined the language background of the participants, the independent variable of this study. It entailed whether or not a participant used Limburgish or dialect, and if so, to what degree. Results are presented in Table 1, which indicates the participants' first, second, and third/foreign languages.

	Dutch	Limburgish	English	Other
First language (L1)	85 (95.5 %)	3 (3.4 %)	0	1 (1.1 %)
Second language (L2)	3 (3.4 %)	22 (24.75 %)	53 (59.6 %)	11 (12.1%)
Third/foreign language (L3)	0	0	25 (39.3 %)	54 (60.7%)

Table 1: The participants' language backgrounds.

The 'other' category in Table 1 was comprised of a number of different languages and dialects: French, German, Indonesian, Moroccan, Spanish, Greek, Russian, Frisian, Bulgarian, Flemish, and different local dialects of various regions of the Netherlands (Brabant, Achterhoek, Huissen, Millingen).

The bidialectal participants selected for further analysis had Dutch and Limburgish as their L1 and L2, Dutch being their L1 and Limburgish their L2 or vice versa. A prerequisite for these participants was that they indicated English as their third language. For the monolingual group, the prerequisite was Dutch as the first language, and English as the second language. Based on the language background, a first selection was made for participants who

were to be excluded, because they were bilingual, had dyslexia or a language/learning deficiency, or because they did not comply to the prerequisite language background for the three participant groups. Therefore, 38 participants were discarded, because their dialect usage percentages were either too low for the bidialectal group or too high for the monolingual group, because they had dyslexia or a language disorder, or because they were bilingual or had a different L1 than Dutch.

The LEAP-Q also established the usage percentage of Dutch ($M = 79.12$, $SD = 21.51$) and Limburgish or another dialect ($M = 27.64$, $SD = 28.15$) of the three selected groups. The large standard deviation of the Limburgish/dialect usage indicates the data were widely spread out, considering that the monolingual group had low dialect usage percentages and the bidialectal groups had higher dialect usage percentages, respectively. The participants' usage percentages served as the main criterium for the selection of the three different groups. After the first selection was made based on language background, bidialectal participants were selected when their Limburgish usage was 10% or higher. A subdivision was made afterwards, dividing the group into a low-bidialectal subgroup and a high-bidialectal subgroup. For the low-bidialectal group, the mean percentage of the usage of Limburgish was 23.50% ($SD = 13.95$). For the high-bidialectal group, the usage percentage was 62.00% ($SD = 15.45$).

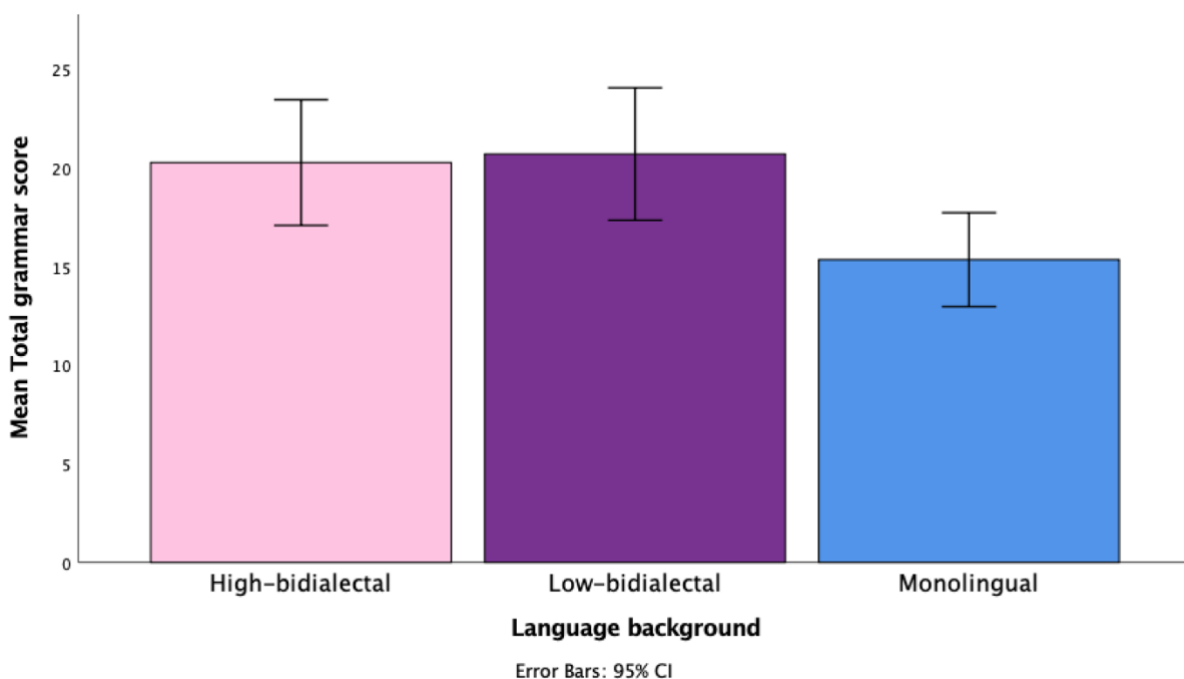
Participants were asked to indicate whether they would use Dutch or Limburgish in specific situations: interaction with friends, interaction with family, reading, education, watching TV, and listening to music or radio. Answers were measured using a scale of 1 to 5. All five answers were labelled in terms of the language(s) used in the specific situation: 1 indicated only Dutch, 2 indicated more Dutch than Limburgish, 3 indicated half Dutch and half Limburgish, 4 indicated more Limburgish than Dutch, and 5 indicated only Limburgish. The bidialectal participants tended to use most of their Limburgish when interacting with family; 48% of the bidialectal group used only Limburgish with their family. The monolinguals were

given the same task, except the label Limburgish was changed into dialect. These results are not included here, as the monolinguals selected for the experiment did not use any dialect.

5.2.1 Grammar test

The overall results of the grammar test were as follows:

Figure 1: Means of total grammar scores grouped by language background.



The mean total grammar score for all three participant groups combined was 17.84 (SD = 6.10) out of 30 points possible. The mean total grammar score of the whole bidialectal group was 20.44 (SD = 5.25), with 20.70 for the low-bidialectal group (SD = 4.69) and 20.27 for the high-bidialectal group (SD = 5.75). The monolingual group had a mean total grammar score of 15.35 (SD = 5.90).

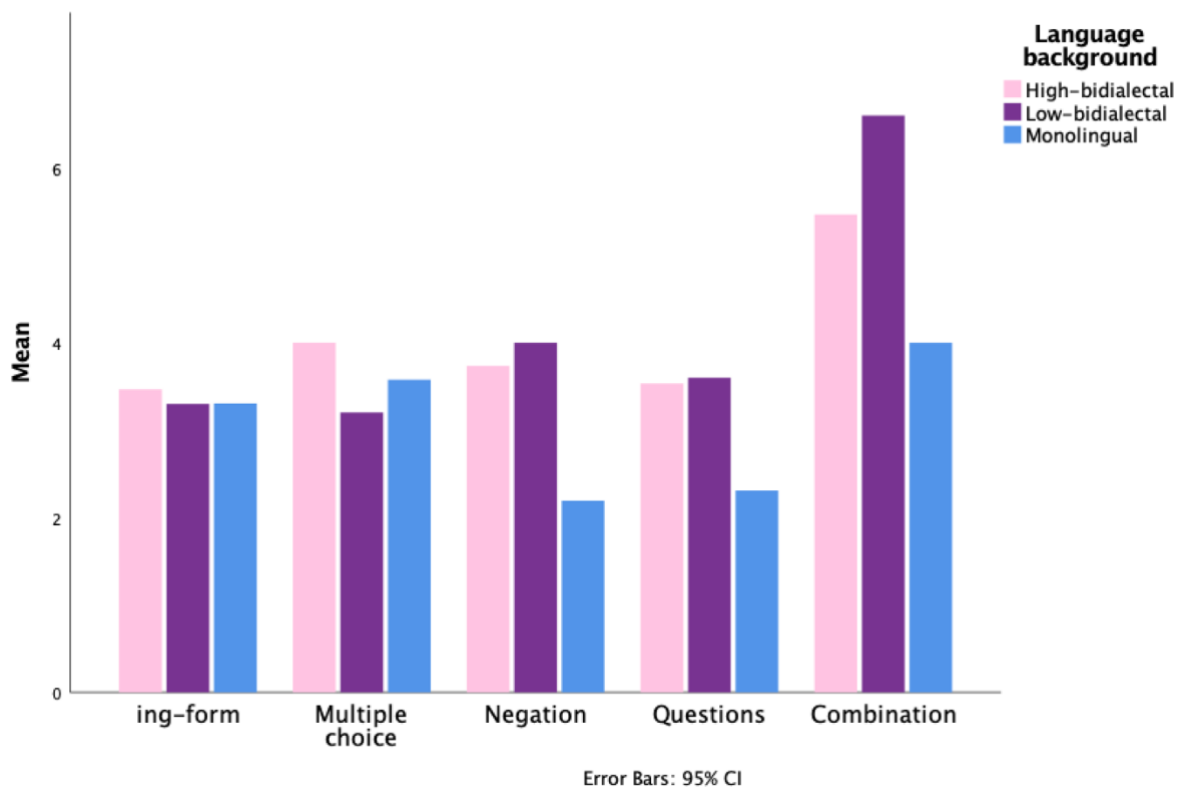
A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of language background on the total grammar scores in high-bidialectal, low-bidialectal, and monolingual conditions.

There was a significant effect of language background on the total grammar scores, $F(2, 48) = 5.20$, $p = .009$. The effect size (r) was .42. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean total grammar scores of the low-bidialectal condition ($M = 20.70$, $SD = 4.69$, $p = .037$) and high-bidialectal condition ($M = 20.27$, $SD = 5.75$, $p = .026$) were significantly different from the monolingual condition ($M = 15.35$, $SD = 5.90$).

5.2.2 Task-specific scores

The results of the individual tasks were as follows:

Figure 2: Means of task-specific scores grouped by language background.



Five individual one-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effect of language background on the task-specific grammar scores. There was no significant effect of language background on the scores for the ing-form exercise, $F(2, 48) = 0.09$, $p = .914$, and the multiple-

choice exercise, $F(2, 48) = 1.59, p = .214$. Though no significant effect was found for the combination exercise, the one-way ANOVA did portray a favourable trend towards significance, $F(2, 48) = 3.19, p = .054$. This trend went in the direction of a significant difference between the low-bidialectal and the monolingual group, in favour of the low-bidialectal group. A significant effect of language background was found on the scores for the negation exercise, $F(2, 48) = 12.19, p = .000$, and the question formation exercise, $F(2, 48) = 4.72, p = .013$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean task-specific scores for negation for the high-bidialectal condition ($M = 3.73, SD = 1.10$) and the low-bidialectal condition ($M = 4.00, SD = 1.33$) were significantly different ($p = .001$) from the monolingual condition ($M = 2.19, SD = 1.20$). The post-hoc test for the question formation task using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean scores of the high-bidialectal condition ($M = 3.53, SD = 1.19$) were significantly different ($p = .036$) from the monolingual condition ($M = 2.31, SD = 1.57$). Though the question formation scores of the low-bidialectal group ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.51$) did not differ significantly from the high-bidialectal group ($p = .993$), the difference between the low-bidialectal group and the monolingual group showed a favourable trend towards significance ($p = .054$) in favour of the low-bidialectal group. These results suggest that bidialectalism, either low or high, has an effect on the acquisition of negation and question formation. The results will be discussed further in the next chapter.

6. Discussion

This study addresses the research gap in the theoretical background of bidialectalism, namely its influence on TLA. The sample was selected on the basis of an adapted version of the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007). Of the 89 subjects who took part in the experiment, just over half of the participants were eligible for further analysis of their grammar scores. These participants either indicated not to use Limburgish or dialect at all, or they indicated a usage percentage of 10% or higher, whereupon the selected bidialectal group was divided into a low-bidialectal subgroup and a high-bidialectal subgroup. The results of the grammar test show an effect of (bidialectal) language background on overall grammar scores. An overall analysis using a one-way ANOVA confirmed that the total grammar scores of the bidialectal group were significantly higher than the total grammar scores of the monolingual group. Individual one-way ANOVAs of the task-specific scores revealed that for two exercises, the bidialectal group's scores were significantly different from the monolingual group's scores. In this chapter, these results will be examined in detail.

The LEAP-Q served the main purpose of selecting the participants for further analysis based on how much per cent they used Dutch and Limburgish or dialect in the past half year. Besides these main questions, the questionnaire also established whether the participants would use Dutch or Limburgish/dialect in different situations; interaction with friends/family, reading, education, music/radio, and television. The results revealed that the bidialectal participants used Limburgish most often in interaction with family. This is a logical outcome, since Limburgish children usually grow up learning Limburgish from their parents. The context of learning Limburgish is almost exclusively naturalistic, since the dialect is used in formal instruction settings.

The results of the grammar test were used to analyse whether the hypotheses tested in this thesis can be accepted or have to be rejected. The first hypothesis predicted that the

bidialectal group would have higher overall grammar scores than the monolingual group. This hypothesis can be accepted, as evidence was found ($p = .009$) that bidialectal speakers had higher overall grammar scores. The effect size found ($r = .42$) points to a medium to large effect. This relationship is further supported by the statistically significant differences between some of the task-specific scores of the whole bidialectal group and the monolingual group. Though the bidialectal group surpasses the monolingual group in three out of five tasks, their task-specific scores are only significantly higher for two exercises: negation and question formation. As can be seen in Figure 2, the high-bidialectal group and the low-bidialectal group outperformed the monolingual group in nearly all tasks, except for the multiple-choice exercise, where the low-bidialectal group had the lowest mean score of the three groups, and the ing-form exercise, where the low-bidialectal and monolingual groups performed equally. The bidialectals' significantly better overall performance is partially caused by the high scores they obtained for the question and negation exercises. These preliminary results seem to suggest that bidialectals acquire the use of the present continuous/simple in negation and question formation in English better than monolingual participants. Though the experiment and the results only touch upon a small aspect of language acquisition, a significant effect was found which seems to suggest that bidialectalism can lead to a better understanding of L3 English grammar.

The second hypothesis predicted that the high-bidialectal participants, with 50% dialect usage or higher, would have higher overall grammar scores than the low-bidialectal participants, with 10-49% dialect usage. Unfortunately, no evidence was found that high-bidialectal speakers perform better than low-bidialectal speakers ($p = .981$). None of the task-specific scores showed a significant difference between the low- and high-bidialectal participants. Thus, this hypothesis has to be rejected. The results seem to suggest that the degree

in which a bidialectal speaker uses their language does not have an effect on the acquisition of third language grammar.

The findings of this experiment agree with what previous research has found. As to bidialectalism, studies by Roumans (2018) and Francot et al. (2017) found that (early) bidialectalism seems to have a positive influence on the child's first language. The positive influence that speaking Limburgish and Dutch has been shown to have on L1 Dutch seems to persist through to the L3. A study by Vangsnes et al. (2017) showed that Bokmål-Nynorsk bidialectals have better school achievements. However, the minority variety (Nynorsk) in this study is actually a language of instruction. Though both Vangsnes et al.'s study and this study show similarities, there is an important difference as well: Limburgish is not a language of instruction. The fact that the 'minority variety' in this study is not a language of instruction could mean that there is a different underlying cause of bidialectalism's facilitation in TLA.

As there is no research yet concerning the effect of Limburgish bidialectalism on a third language, the results of this experiment are compared to what has been found in the body of research surrounding bilingualism and TLA. The findings supporting the first hypothesis agree with the facilitation effect bilingualism has on TLA. These results suggest a new dimension to the definition of bidialectalism, as bidialectals appear to perform similarly to bilinguals, just as Antoniou et al. (2014) found. The results of this paper seem to be in line with their observation. Although there is no direct evidence from bilinguals in the setting used in this study, the performance of the bidialectal group lends support to previous findings in the literature on bilingualism and its effects on TLA. The previous knowledge of two language forms or varieties seems to lead to better understanding of L3 grammar. It cannot be concluded yet that the bidialectal participants have higher attainment levels, as they just started to learn the grammatical aspects involved in this study.

The Basque-Spanish bilingual students involved in Cenoz and Valencia's study (1994) took, among other tests, a grammar test. They claim that the results, vouching for a positive influence on the third language caused by bilingualism, cannot be explained in terms of language transfer. The question is, then, whether or not the results in this study can possibly be explained by language transfer caused by similarities in language typology. Sanz (2000) found that two typologically similar languages, Spanish and Catalan, have positively influenced the acquisition of a third language (English). Though it is never explicitly stated in her study that the advantage for the bilinguals lies in the typological similarities between the two languages involved, it is a possible explanation. However, facilitation due to language transfer or similarity seems unlikely in this thesis. As Sanz's study involves two languages which are both used for instructional purposes, the studies are not as similar as they might seem. It would be a possible alternative explanation if Limburgish had been a language of instruction, but it is not. Language status could play a role as well. Catalan is an official language, whereas Limburgish is an official *regional* language, which is a lower status. The preliminary conclusion that bidialectalism as a process has an effect on TLA and not the specific languages involved seems to be a more logical explanation than language typology.

It is plausible that some limitations could have influenced the results obtained. Among the difficulties encountered was coordinating which aspect of English grammar had to be tested for both schools and the fact that monolingual participants could not be recruited in Limburg because of the risk of dialect influence. As the syllabi for both schools differed and it was unexpectedly difficult to find one aspect that could be tested at both schools in the same period, the choice was made to consult with the school in Limburg only. The bidialectal participants had been taught the specific grammatical aspect a day before the testing moment, whereas the monolingual participants were about to be taught the present continuous the day after the testing moment. This could have influenced the results in favour of the bidialectal group, which

is supported by the rejection of the second hypothesis due to the absence of a difference between the low- and high-bidialectal group. Yet, difficulty with the grammatical aspect was inevitable, as the timeframe for the experiment did not allow much flexibility. Given that the focus of the study was on this specific grammatical aspect, it is not inconceivable that dissimilar evaluations would have arisen if the focus had been on a grammatical aspect more familiar to both the bidialectal and the monolingual group. However, this would be more likely to occur when the bidialectal group had had significantly more classes in these specific grammatical aspects. Yet, the subject was only touched upon once in one class.

An extraneous factor that could have influenced the results is previous knowledge of English. Since the testing moments at the school were relatively short, there was not enough time to include a general proficiency test in the experiment. It is possible that some children already had knowledge of English, considering the influence of social media, television, music, and games. The participants might have already been familiar with the Present Simple or Continuous aspects, too. The monolingual group had not been taught the Present Continuous yet. Still, a few monolingual participants had outstanding grammar scores, even higher than some bidialectal participants, who had been taught the Present Continuous just before the testing moment. Though it cannot be pinpointed what precisely causes these deviant scores, it could stem from previous knowledge of English, or even language aptitude. Though this might have influenced the results of a few participants, the effect would not have been large enough to significantly question the validity of this research.

This research suggests there is an effect of bidialectalism on third language grammar scores. However, this does not mean that a causality can be established. As there has been a lack of research into bidialectalism and its effects on a third language, future research could expand on this topic and investigate the relationship between speaking a dialect and acquiring a third language further. Longitudinal research could establish the children's starting

proficiency level and measure how much their knowledge of the involved subjects has improved. Using a pre-test and a post-test after having had more classes in and practice with the subject, progress can be documented. This can provide a clearer image of whether or not the knowledge of bidialectals improves faster than that of monolinguals, since a longitudinal set-up allows time for close monitoring of the speakers' changing proficiency levels. For the comparison with bilingual speakers, future research could directly compare bilingual speakers to bidialectal speakers using one test for both groups. Since the circumstances in this research and in previous research on bilingualism are different, this research can only point out that the behaviour of the bidialectals in this study seems to be similar to that of bilinguals, as they significantly outperformed their monolingual peers. Research specifically comparing both bilinguals and bidialectals to monolinguals in one study could establish whether or not a relationship between their behaviours can actually be established.

As the participants in this study have not had the same amount of education on the grammatical subject, future research can build on this by studying a subject that is equally familiar to all participants, or it could focus on other aspects of language learning, such as reading and listening. This study specifically addresses Dutch-Limburgish bidialectalism. Further research could address other language-dialect combinations as well, to see if the effect exists for other bidialectal speakers, and not just for Limburgish bidialectals. Limburgish has obtained the status of an official regional language. Does the same effect occur when the dialect has a lower language status? A dialect with a lower status could influence TLA differently. Future research could focus on this and work on expanding and adjusting the definition of bidialectalism.

7. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the effect of (Dutch-)Limburgish bidialectalism on the acquisition of L3 English grammar. It attempted to establish a positive influence, as a broad body of previous research found that bilingualism, related to bidialectalism, positively influences the acquisition of multiple aspects of a third language. Since there has not been any research into Limburgish bidialectalism combined with TLA, this study focused on the effect of Limburgish bidialectalism on third language (English) grammar. Two hypotheses were tested:

1. Bidialectal participants have higher grammar scores in English than monolingual participants.
2. High-bidialectal participants have higher grammar scores in English than low-bidialectal participants.

Based on the results of the LEAP-Q (Marian et al., 2007), three participant groups were formed; a high-bidialectal group, a low-bidialectal group, and a monolingual group. The overall grammar scores and the task-specific scores of these groups were statistically analysed using one-way ANOVA tests. The findings of this experiment support the idea that bidialectal speakers acquire third language grammar better than monolingual speakers, as results portrayed a significant difference in the overall grammar scores between the bidialectal group and the monolingual group. The hypothesis that bidialectal speakers would have higher overall grammar scores than monolingual speakers could be accepted. However, within the bidialectal group, no significant effect could be found on the total grammar score. Thus, the second hypothesis had to be rejected. The degree of bidialectalism did not seem to have an influence on the acquisition of third language grammar. The results of the task-specific score analyses indicated that the bidialectal participants had significantly higher scores for the question and negation exercises. This implies that bidialectal participants acquired question formation and negation in combination with the Present Continuous and Present Simple aspects better than

monolingual participants. Taken together, the findings suggest that Limburgish bidialectalism can lead to easier acquisition of specific grammatical aspects of L3 English.

This research illustrates that bidialectalism seems to have an effect on TLA, but it also raises the question whether this would still occur if the limitations of the experiment would have been solved. Although these limitations occur due to the selection of the grammatical aspect chosen for the test and the limited timeframe, the findings add to a growing body of research on our understanding of bidialectalism, its processes, and its possible influence on language acquisition. This research could be valuable in expanding the definition of bidialectalism, as research focused on bidialectalism, due to its sparseness, is not sufficient enough to provide a generally applicable definition. It is therefore important that more research is conducted on bidialectalism.

To better understand the implications of the results found in the present study, future studies could address other aspects of language acquisition besides grammar. The focus could also still be on grammar, but the choice of the tested aspect would require more coordination. A longitudinal research could, in contrast to the cross-sectional set-up in this thesis, observe and monitor the participants' proficiency over a period of time. As this study is specifically aimed at Limburgish bidialectalism, future research could address other dialect-language combinations.

All in all, this thesis has tried to help in expanding and adjusting the definition of bidialectalism. Hopefully, it will provide useful insights and data which can provide a stepping stone to further research on bidialectalism.

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Appendix A: Privacy Form OBC Bommel

Beste ouder(s)/verzorger(s),

Vandaag heeft uw zoon/dochter meegewerkt aan een onderzoek voor mijn bachelorscriptie. Hierbij is er een korte vragenlijst afgenomen en een Engelse grammaticatest. De vragenlijst betrof de talen die uw zoon/dochter kent en hoeveel hij/zij het Nederlands gebruikt (of een dialect). Met mijn onderzoek ga ik testen of kinderen die Nederlands en Limburgs spreken makkelijker Engels leren dan kinderen die alleen Nederlands spreken.

Mijn onderzoek is volledig anoniem afgenomen, afgezien van leeftijd en geslacht. De data worden vertrouwelijk verwerkt en voor geen andere doeleinden gebruikt dan mijn scriptie. Er wordt in mijn onderzoek niks vermeldt wat herleidbaar is naar een specifieke leerling.

Mocht u nog vragen hebben of het onderzoek, wanneer het afgerond is, graag willen ontvangen, neem dan gerust contact met mij op via het emailadres onderaan deze brief.

Bedankt voor de medewerking en uw begrip.

Met vriendelijke groet,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Otten'. The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'O' and a cursive 'tten'.

Tahnee Otten
Student Engelse Taal en Cultuur RU Nijmegen

Appendix B: LEAP-Q

Leeftijd		Geslacht	Jongen <input type="checkbox"/> / Meisje <input type="checkbox"/> / Anders <input type="checkbox"/> / Wil ik niet zeggen <input type="checkbox"/> (Kruis aan wat van toepassing is)
-----------------	--	-----------------	--

(1) Noteer alle talen/dialecten die je beheerst in volgorde van vaardigheid (de taal/het dialect die je het beste kent eerst):

1		2		3		4		5	
----------	--	----------	--	----------	--	----------	--	----------	--

(2) Noteer alle talen/dialecten die je beheerst in de volgorde waarin je ze geleerd hebt (je moedertaal eerst) en geef daarbij aan hoe oud je was toen je begon met het leren van die taal:

	Taal/dialect 1	Taal/dialect 2	Taal/dialect 3	Taal/dialect 4	Taal/dialect 5
Taal					
Leeftijd					

(3) Heb je (nog) een andere moedertaal dan Nederlands/Limburgs?

- Nee
 Ja, namelijk _____

(4) Heb je langer dan 3 maanden in een ander land dan Nederland gewoond?

- Nee
 Ja, namelijk _____

(5) Is er een van de volgende dingen bij je vastgesteld? *Kruis aan wat op jou van toepassing is:*

- Dyslexie
 Taalachterstand
 Leerachterstand
 Geen van deze dingen

Nederlands

De volgende vragen gaan over jouw gebruik van het Nederlands.

(1) Hoeveel heb je het afgelopen halfjaar Nederlands gebruikt?

- (Bijna) niet
 Minder dan de helft van de tijd
 Ongeveer de helft van de tijd
 Meer dan de helft van de tijd
 (Bijna) de hele tijd

- (2) Hoe zou je je gebruik van het Nederlands uitdrukken in een percentage? (*Heb je bijvoorbeeld ongeveer de helft van de tijd Nederlands gebruikt, dan is dat ongeveer 50%*)
 _____ %

Limburgs

De volgende vragen gaan over jouw gebruik van het Limburgs.

- (3) Hoeveel heb je het afgelopen halfjaar Limburgs gebruikt?
- (Bijna) niet
 - Minder dan de helft van de tijd
 - Ongeveer de helft van de tijd
 - Meer dan de helft van de tijd
 - (Bijna) de hele tijd
- (4) Hoe zou je je gebruik van het Limburgs uitdrukken in een percentage? (*Heb je bijvoorbeeld ongeveer de helft van de tijd Limburgs gebruikt, dan is dat ongeveer 50%*)
 _____ %

Nederlands/Limburgs

Zou je Nederlands (NL) of Limburgs (LIM) gebruiken in de volgende situaties?
Omcirkel wat per situatie op jou van toepassing is:

	<u>Alleen NL</u>	<u>Meer NL dan LIM</u>	<u>Half NL/Half LIM</u>	<u>Meer LIM dan NL</u>	<u>Alleen LIM</u>
<i>Interactie met vrienden</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Interactie met familie</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Lezen</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Opleiding</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Televisie kijken</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Radio/muziek luisteren</i>	1	2	3	4	5

Heb je een andere thuistaal dan Nederlands? Geef dat hieronder even aan:

Ja, mijn thuistaal is _____

BEDANKT VOOR HET INVULLEN ☺

Appendix C: Grammar Test

English Grammar

Opdracht 1: *Vul de Present Continuous vorm in van de volgende werkwoorden.*

Voorbeeld: do – **doing**

1) smile - _____

2) lie - _____

3) swim - _____

4) become - _____

5) offer - _____

Opdracht 2: *Kies het beste antwoord. Let op! Je mag maar **1 antwoord** aankruisen. Als je een antwoord hebt aangekruist maar je wilt je keuze veranderen, maak dan het hokje van het foute antwoord **helemaal zwart!***

1) John _____ football at the moment.

- play
- plays
- are playing
- is playing

2) Gary _____ rice every day.

- eat
- is eating
- eats
- are eating

3) Be quiet! I _____ an important letter.

- is writing
- write
- am writing
- writes

4) Sorry, but I _____ what you're saying right now.

- do not understand
- does not understand
- am not understanding
- are not understanding

5) A: Do you like the cinema? B: Yes, I _____ there about once a month.

- go
- am going
- goes
- do going

Opdracht 3: *Maak de zinnen af. Gebruik de Present Simple of de Present Continuous.*

1) Julia _____ (not / ride) her bike right now.

- 2) We _____ (not / stay) at home tonight
- 3) I _____ (not / like) bananas.
- 4) The students _____ (not / know) the answer.
- 5) I _____ (not / sit) in the garden at the moment.

Opdracht 4: *Vul de juiste werkwoordsvormen in. Kies tussen de Present Simple en de Present Continuous.*

- 1) _____ he _____ (work) on the computer right now?
- 2) _____ Sarah _____ (swim) every morning?
- 3) _____ John _____ (study) today?
- 4) _____ you _____ (go) to the cinema often?
- 5) _____ you _____ (come) to the party tonight?

Opdracht 5: *Vul de juiste werkwoordsvorm in. Kies tussen de Present Simple en de Present Continuous.*

- 1) Mark usually _____ (to make) the sandwiches for lunch, but today Jenny _____ (to make) them.
- 2) He usually _____ (to take) a shower, but today he _____ (to take) a bath.
- 3) My parents usually _____ (to stay) at home and watch television when they're on holiday, but today they _____ (to go) for a walk.
- 4) Alice usually _____ (to get up) at half past seven, but today she _____ (to get up) late because it's a holiday.
- 5) They usually _____ (to take) their dog on their walks, but today they _____ (to leave) the dog at home.

BEDANKT VOOR HET INVULLEN ☺