

A reconsideration of the status of English in the Netherlands within the Kachruvian Three Circles model

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ABSTRACT: The English used in the Netherlands, a European Union country, is classified by many linguists as an ESL variety, or, within Kachru's (1985) Three Circles model, as an Outer Circle variety, or as being between an Outer and an Expanding Circle variety. This paper investigates the status of English in the Netherlands through a systematic application of the six criteria used by Kachru (1985) to classify the position of English in a country. The study is based on recent quantitative and qualitative data and shows that English in the Netherlands should be classified as an Expanding Circle variety.

INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands, a European Union country, is one of the many countries around the world where the use of English has increased considerably in the 20th and 21st centuries (Mollin 2006). This paper explores the status of English in the Netherlands within the Kachruvian Three Circles framework (Kachru 1985, 1992). It will be shown that the changes in the functions and use of English in the Netherlands in the last three decades require a re-evaluation of how English in Europe should be viewed in this model, just as Hilgendorf (2007) showed for the status of English in Germany.

The organization of this paper is as follows. The first section discusses the status of English in the Netherlands as described in earlier studies, and the approaches these studies used. In the second section, we first briefly give reasons why we have used the Kachruvian model to describe the status of English in the Netherlands. Subsequently, we reconsider this status on the basis of recent quantitative and qualitative data about the six aspects that Kachru (1985: 12–13) uses to determine the status of English in a country. First, his two features are applied to English in the Netherlands: Is English a code in the linguistic repertoire of its inhabitants, and does English have an important status in Dutch language policies? Second, the status of English in the Netherlands is discussed on the basis of the three functional criteria in the Kachruvian framework: Does English function in what may be considered traditionally un-English cultural contexts, and does it have an unprecedented

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spread in terms of territory covered? Is English used in a wide spectrum of domains with varying degrees of competence? Has English developed nativized literary traditions in different genres? Third, we discuss whether English in the Netherlands has developed its own norms, the last criterion that Kachru uses to determine the function of English in a country. In the third and last section, conclusions are drawn on the current status of English in the Netherlands according to the Kachruvian model.

STATUS OF ENGLISH AS DESCRIBED IN EARLIER STUDIES

A number of linguists have discussed whether English in the Netherlands has the status of a foreign (EFL) or a second language (ESL). They all come to the conclusion that English in the Netherlands is in the course of changing from EFL to ESL. Below, we briefly discuss their findings and the data on which they base their conclusions in chronological order of publication. Berns (1995) categorizes the use of English in the Netherlands in terms of Kachru's model (1985, 1992) in order to determine the status of English in a country. The model consists of three circles that represent the types of spread of English: the Inner Circle is the circle with regions where English is the primary language (e.g. the UK, the US) and the English used is norm providing. The Outer Circle is the circle where English is one of two or more official or state languages—speakers of English also use one or more other languages (e.g. India, Pakistan). Outer Circle countries were once colonized by the British and the English used is norm developing. The Expanding Circle is the circle where English has no official status, but functions as a foreign or international language (e.g. China, Russia). The English used in the Inner Circle is a norm for English in Expanding Circle countries, which is thus norm dependent. The Outer Circle roughly coincides with ESL and the Expanding Circle with EFL. Applying Kachru's model to the European Union, Berns (1995: 9) puts the Netherlands, Germany, and Luxembourg in a special category of countries, the so-called Expanding/Outer Circle, where English is not only a foreign language or international language (as it is in the Expanding Circle), but also serves functions 'in various social, cultural, commercial, and educational settings,' a conclusion she substantiates on the basis of observational data.

McArthur (1996: 13) categorizes the Netherlands as an EFL territory where English is '[v]irtually a second language,' and makes an even stronger claim about the position of English in the Netherlands when he writes: 'The high level of bilingualism between English and the national language in [...] the Netherlands [...] justifies the view [...] that English is no longer really foreign, but a strong second language that is steadily becoming nativised.' Graddol (1999) suggests that English in the Netherlands is still in the process of changing from EFL to ESL, on the basis of the 1998 Eurobarometer data, which show that more than 77 per cent of the population of the Netherlands felt they were able to hold a conversation in English. Finally, Booij (2001) characterizes the role of English in Dutch society in a similar way to Berns (1995), McArthur (1996), and Graddol (1999): 'The Netherlands is one of the countries in Western Europe [...] in which English has a very dominant position as a foreign language, and is developing into a real second language' (Booij 2001: 346).

Berns' (1995) suggestion that English in the Netherlands falls between an Outer Circle and Expanding Circle variety is further explored by Gerritsen and Nickerson (2004). They argue on the basis of incidental observations and mostly qualitative data that the Netherlands only 'partly satisfies' the six criteria a country should meet to be regarded as

belonging to the Outer Circle of world Englishes according to Kachru (1985). Like Berns (1995), they conclude that English plays a role in Dutch society which goes beyond that of English in Expanding Circle countries, but is not yet as extensive as in Outer Circle countries.

Edwards (2010) also takes the view that English in the Netherlands is developing in the direction of the Outer Circle, a view she states in an interview with Dorren (2012):

Although the Netherlands has not awarded formal status to English for intranational use, functionally the language has this role in all sorts of situations [...] In the Netherlands, you can hardly follow a Master program without speaking good English [...] In many companies, it [English] is the obligatory language of meetings and also of email communication, even if only a small minority of the employees don't speak Dutch. (Dorren 2012: 189; our translation).

Although the scholars above show there are indications that English in the Netherlands has Outer Circle characteristics, it should be noted that the Netherlands certainly does not share the historical aspect of Outer Circle regions distinguished by Kachru (1985), that is, having been colonized by an Inner Circle country for a long period of time. Furthermore, all the studies mentioned above faced the problem that they seldom had quantitative data at their disposal.

In this paper, we will use recent quantitative and qualitative information in an attempt to gain further insight into the status of English in the Netherlands. In doing so, we answer Berns' (2005) call for world English research to devote more attention to varieties of English traditionally classified as Expanding Circle varieties.

ENGLISH IN THE NETHERLANDS: FROM A KACHRUVIAN PERSPECTIVE

Our contribution aims to generate greater insight into the status of English in the Netherlands. To do so, we needed a model that provides criteria that we could use as a basis for our analysis. There are many models that can be used to classify world Englishes. For an overview see Jenkins (2009: 17–23). However, we opted for the Kachruvian model since we agree with Mollin (2006: 31) that to date, it is 'the best on offer,' as it is one of the few models that offers criteria for classification which are necessary to achieve a degree of analytical rigor. Below, we consider English in the Netherlands based on the two features and the three functional criteria that Kachru uses to determine the status of English in a particular country. We also discuss whether English in the Netherlands has developed its own norms, the last criterion Kachru uses to determine the function of English in a given country.

Feature one: English as a code

According to Kachru (1985: 12), the first feature to determine whether English in a country has Outer Circle status is whether English is 'only one of two or more codes in the linguistic repertoire' of its bilingual or multilingual inhabitants. Examples are South Africa, Malaysia, and Canada, where English is only one of the codes. In the Netherlands, Dutch is the only official language. In only one of its twelve provinces, Friesland, Frisian is the second official language in addition to Dutch. Therefore, it can be concluded that English in the Netherlands does not meet the first Outer Circle feature that it is a code in the linguistic repertoire of the Dutch.

Feature two: The role of English in language policies

The second feature of a country in the Outer Circle according to Kachru (1985: 12–13) is that ‘English has acquired an important status in the language policies of most of such multilingual nations.’ From the examples he gives, it appears that the recognition of English as an official or an ‘associate’ official language in a country is an important criterion for giving it Outer Circle status. If important status in language policies is interpreted in this strict sense, English in the Netherlands definitely fails to meet this criterion. However, this criterion can be interpreted more broadly. For instance, English can be said to have important status in a country’s language policy if it plays a role in policymakers’ considerations when proposing language policies. In this broader interpretation, English in the Netherlands could be said to have Outer Circle status, since Dutch politics does concern itself in a number of ways with English. For instance, at the end of 2010, a bill was proposed to change the Dutch Constitution and make Dutch the official language. The motivating factor behind the bill was a perceived threat from English:

English in particular is increasingly gaining ground in the Netherlands through the process of internationalization. This bill is to guarantee that the Dutch language can continue to be utilized at all times in the Netherlands. (ANP Parlementaire Monitor 2010).

This indicates that politicians regard the increasing importance of English in the Netherlands as a serious threat to the status of Dutch. Before the bill was proposed, the status of Dutch was not an issue for politicians. To date, the bill has not been passed into law (Van Oostendorp 2012).

Another indication of Dutch politicians’ attitudes to English in the Netherlands is the position it is assigned in foreign-language teaching, and in the goals for teaching programs. In 1985, a law was passed in which English was made the only compulsory foreign language in primary education. It was to take up no more than 15 per cent of teaching hours, around 3 hours and 45 minutes, so Dutch would remain the main language used in primary education. In 2013, the Dutch Assistant Secretary of Education proposed a bill to introduce English in year one of primary school (when pupils are 4 years old) to give them a good grounding that would contribute to pupils’ skills and self-confidence in the labor market (Dekker 2013: 1–2). In 2014, he also started a pilot project for bilingual Dutch-English primary education in twelve schools: English can be used for all subjects, and teaching is in English half of the time. Yet another indication that Dutch policymakers consider English to be important is that English is the only compulsory foreign language at all levels of secondary education (Bonnet 2004; Ten Cate & Corda n.d.), and that the number of hours of English instruction is high. It varies from at least 400 hours for the four-year prevocational secondary education program (*vmbo*) and at least 640 hours for the five-year senior general education program (*havo*), to at least 680 hours for the six-year pre-university education program (*vwo*) (Edelenbos & De Jong 2004). The goals for English programs in secondary education are set in terms of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) for reading, listening, and speaking; writing is not tested (Edelenbos & De Jong 2004). CEFR distinguishes six main proficiency levels (Council of Europe 2000): A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Waystage), B1 (Threshold), B2 (Vantage), C1 (Effective operational proficiency), and C2 (Mastery). The minimum level set for reading is B1 for *vmbo* and B2 for *havo* and *vwo*. For listening, it is B1 for *vmbo* and B2 for *havo* and *vwo*, and for speaking A2 for *vmbo*, B1 for *havo* and B2 for *vwo*.

In 2011, 132 of the 657 Dutch secondary schools, 20 per cent, offered bilingual English-Dutch programs in addition to exclusively Dutch programs (Van Oostendorp 2012; CBS 2011). Bilingual education in the Netherlands is coordinated by the European Platform – internationalisation in education. This platform defines bilingual education as follows:

Bilingual education entails that a pupil is taught a minimum of half the subjects in a foreign language, for instance English. In history and math lessons, for example, English-language textbooks are used and the teacher speaks only English in lessons. In addition, pupils are expected to speak English among themselves in class too. (European Platform 2014; our translation).

According to the standard agreed to by bilingual Dutch secondary schools offering pre-university education (*vwo*), the goal for pupils at these schools is to obtain the Language A2 certificate of the International Baccalaureate for English language proficiency (European Platform 2003; see also Huibregtse 2001), roughly equivalent to a CEFR level between B2 and C1 (Van Wilgenburg, European Platform, personal communication, 21 April 2010).

The role English plays in language policies for Dutch education indicates that it is considered an important language in the Netherlands. However, the role policymakers play is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, they perceive the increasing use of English as such a threat to the Dutch language that they have tried to lay down the official status of Dutch in the Constitution. On the other hand, they find it so important the Dutch learn English that they have made it the only compulsory foreign language in primary and secondary schools, have set high proficiency targets for all secondary school types, and are encouraging English in primary schools. In sum, regarding the two features Kachru (1985) uses to determine whether English in a particular country has Outer Circle status, it would seem the first feature, the code criterion, has not been met. With regard to the second feature – the role of English in language policies – English in the Netherlands does not meet the criterion that it is recognized as an official, an ‘associate’ official, or a state language. Dutch policymakers, however, do meet a broader interpretation of this criterion, in that they concern themselves with English in the Netherlands. In our view, it is difficult to determine whether Dutch policymakers’ attitudes towards English, and the fact that they make efforts to ensure the Dutch population as a whole learns English, provide sufficient indication of the importance of English in language policies to place English in the Netherlands in the Outer Circle.

THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH IN THE NETHERLANDS

Kachru (1985) identified a number of criteria used to evaluate the *de facto* status of English in societies around the world, and these included reference to the spread of English, the domains of use, and levels of linguistic competence.

Functional criterion one: unprecedented spread of English

The first functional criterion that Kachru uses to determine the status of English is whether:

English functions in what may be considered traditionally ‘un-English’ cultural contexts. And, in terms of territory covered, the cross-cultural spread of English is unprecedented among the languages of wider communication used as colonial languages (e.g. French, Portuguese, Spanish), as religious

languages (Arabic, Sanskrit, Pali) and as language varieties of trade and commerce (e.g. pidgins or bazaar languages)' (1985: 13).

A Eurobarometer survey conducted at the end of 2005 among a random sample of 1,032 inhabitants of the Netherlands aged 15 or older (European Commission, 2006, Annex, QASD3a) provided evidence that English is more widespread in the Netherlands than other foreign languages. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents claimed they used English almost every day, whereas figures for the two other foreign languages were much lower: seven per cent reported using German almost daily and two per cent reported using French almost every day. However, it is not clear whether this degree of self-reported use is extensive enough to place the Netherlands in the Outer Circle. Therefore, it would seem the Netherlands should be classified as an Expanding Circle country on the basis of this first criterion.

Functional criterion two: Domains of English and English language competences

The second functional criterion that Kachru (1985: 13) uses to determine whether English belongs to the Outer Circle is whether 'English has a wide spectrum of domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an intranational and an international language.' This second criterion would seem to overlap to some extent with the first functional criterion, spread of English. After all, if English is used in a greater number of domains, its spread increases as well. In this section, we will first consider the various domains in which English is used in the Netherlands, and subsequently, the various levels of English competence of the Dutch.

Domains of English

Kachru (1985) does not define the term domain, but from his examples in later publications (Kachru 2005), it can be inferred that he uses the term in the sense of Fishman's (1972) classic model of 'domains of language use.' In this model, the term domain refers to a social space, such as home, school, or workplace, and is further determined by three factors: participants, location, and topic. For example, in governmental domains, the participants are usually officials and citizens and the location is a governmental office. Topic choice might affect language choice: in a region where two or more languages or language varieties are used, the official language will be used in the governmental domain, but the less official language(s) will be used in the private domain. Although this classic domain concept is not always applicable to multilingualism in modern societies and has provoked discussion (Haberland 2005), we use the term domain here in the sense of Fishman (1972).

Kachru (2005) provides an overview of the functional domains of English across the three circles. The Outer and Expanding Circles differ with respect to six domains where English is used. In Outer Circle countries, English is the only language used in news broadcasting, newspapers, scientific higher education, scientific research, and linguistic creativity, whereas, in Expanding Circle countries, English and at least one other language are used in these domains. In government, English is not used in Expanding Circle countries, but it is used next to at least one other language in Outer Circle countries (Kachru 2005: 17). We will first discuss the use of English in the Netherlands in the above six domains. Second, we will describe the use of English in a number of other intranational and international domains, to give a more complete picture of the use of English in the Netherlands.

Kachru (1985, 2005) does not distinguish between domains in which people are merely exposed to English, and domains in which people actively use it. Following Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 31), such a distinction would, however, seem useful because, in order to use English actively (speaking, writing), higher English proficiency is required than when English is used receptively (reading, listening). Insights into both the active and receptive use of English might help us gain a more balanced view of the use of and competence in English in the Netherlands. Three of the domains that distinguish the Outer Circle from the Expanding Circle according to Kachru (2005)—news broadcasting, newspapers, and government—can be characterized as domains in which English is used mainly receptively in the Netherlands, and does not target a Dutch audience, but people in the Netherlands who have not mastered Dutch. In all three domains, the predominant language used is Dutch. However, the Dutch do have access to English-language international news broadcasting through all-English TV channels such as BBC and CNN (Loonen 1996), and international English-language newspapers are on sale in newsagents. Unfortunately, no figures are available regarding the extent to which Dutch people use these English resources.

In the domain of government, Dutch is the most important language. Parliament sessions are conducted in Dutch and all legislation is formulated in Dutch (Van Oostendorp 2012). English is not used for communication between government and citizens who speak Dutch, but only for communication with people who have not mastered Dutch, that is, expatriates and immigrants. Examples of governmental communication in English are the English versions of sections of websites, and public information in English. It can be concluded that English occurs mainly receptively in the domains of news broadcasting, newspapers, and government, and is predominantly used for people who have not mastered Dutch. Since English is seldom used actively by the Dutch in these domains, the Netherlands should be classified as an Expanding Circle country with respect to these three domains. There is only one domain in the Kachru model in which English is used actively: linguistic creativity, the use of English in creative writing (Kachru, 1985: 13, 2005: 17, 211). However, English is rarely used in this domain in favor of Dutch, except in pop music, as will be discussed further in the section on English for nativized literary traditions.

In two domains of the Kachru model, English is used actively and receptively: higher education and scientific research. In higher education, English is not the only language used, but it occupies an increasingly important place in the Netherlands, as it does elsewhere in the world (Ammon & McConnell 2002; Ljosland 2007; Ferguson et al. 2011), and is without doubt the most important foreign language. In 2011, 12 per cent of BA programs and 59 per cent of MA programs featured in the *Keuzegids Onderwijs*—a guide that informs prospective students about the options they have—were completely taught in English (Van Oostendorp 2012). Some universities, for example, Delft University of Technology and Wageningen University, taught all their MA programs in English (Oosterhof n.d.). An analysis of the English-taught MA programs on MasterPortal.eu in 2013 showed that the Netherlands offered more English-taught MA programs than other EU countries, and that there had been a considerable increase in such programs: from 812 (59% of master programs) in 2011 (Brenn-White and Van Rest 2012) to 946 (92% of master programs) in 2013 (DUB-nieuws 2013; Mastersportal n.d.).

In Dutch-medium courses in higher education, students are required to read material in English: according to Ten Cate and Corda (n.d.), this applies to 96 per cent of university students. Almost all formal, internal communication at Dutch universities is now in Dutch and English. All universities and organizations affiliated with higher

education—such as the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)—have an English-language version of their Dutch website. Although higher education students are extensively exposed to English and use it frequently, English is not the only language used in this domain, actively or passively. This implies that in higher education too, the use of English in the Netherlands does not meet the requirement Kachru (2005) set for Outer Circle countries. With respect to scientific research, English plays an increasingly important role. Many Dutch scientists publish in English (Burrough-Boenisch 2002), perhaps because they are encouraged to publish in top-ranking journals, which are nearly all in English. The renowned Dutch historian Henk Wesseling (2014; our translation) puts it as follows: ‘You might as well not write a book if it’s in Dutch: it doesn’t move you up in the pecking order.’ In the Netherlands, journal rankings are based on international rankings such as the Scimago Journal & Country Rank (Scimago Lab, n.d.). The top 100 journals listed by Scimago Lab in medicine, language and linguistics, strategy and management are all English-language publications. For social and behavioral sciences, 98 per cent of the top 100 journals are in English. Because of the lower importance assigned to Dutch-language journals, a number of them have either ceased to exist (including *Psychologie en Maatschappij* [Psychology and Society] in 2001), have merged with English-language journals, or have switched to English (*Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Fysiotherapie* [Dutch Journal for Physiotherapy] became *Physical Therapy Journal* in 2013). While 55 per cent of the 62 research schools in the Netherlands have a Dutch name, all use English in their internal and external communication and only two use English and Dutch (Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, 2014). In the domain of scientific research in the Netherlands therefore, English does not meet the requirement of use for an Outer Circle country, since it is not used exclusively and Dutch continues to be used too. In sum, although English is used actively and/or passively in all of the six domains that Kachru (2005) uses to determine whether English belongs to either the Outer Circle or the Expanding Circle, we have to conclude that the use of English in the Netherlands in these six domains does not qualify it as Outer Circle English.

To give a more complete picture of English in the Netherlands, we will briefly consider its use in six domains other than those Kachru (2005) used to distinguish the Outer Circle from the Expanding Circle. Following Kachru’s (1985) definition of the second functional criterion, we will first consider the use of English in intranational domains and then the use of English in international domains. The *intranational* domains in which English is used in the Netherlands, mostly receptively, are advertising, entertainment, organizational communication, and education. For example, quantitative research into the use of English in product advertising has shown that English occurs in the domain of advertising, but mostly in the form of single words, slogans or phrases, rather than fully English ads. For instance, in Dutch *Elle*, 55 per cent of ads were found to be partly and 10 per cent completely in English (Gerritsen et al. 2007). In a study of radio commercials, 39 per cent were found to be partly in English, but none completely in English (Smakman et al. 2009). Research on TV commercials showed that 29 per cent were partly and 4 per cent completely in English (Gerritsen et al. 2000). The Utrechtse Onderzoeksgroep (2013) found that 54 per cent of TV commercials in 2012 were partly in English, an increase of 25 per cent compared to 2000. English is not only used in product ads in the Netherlands, but also on product packaging. For instance, the product labels of around 500 products in the Euro Shopper product line until 2014, sold by the largest supermarket chain in the Netherlands, displayed information in English in a large font, and translations into various other languages, including Dutch,

in a much smaller font (Jansen 2010a). The use of English in advertising campaigns and on product packaging may be explained by the fact that such campaigns and packaging are used internationally. However, its use is also an example of intranational use of English in the Netherlands, since English in campaigns and packaging is aimed at Dutch consumers too. English also occurs in other forms of advertising in the Netherlands. Forty per cent of the job ads in the Dutch quality newspaper *de Volkskrant* in 2001 and 87 per cent of the ads on the job site Monsterboard in 2004 contained at least one English word (Korzilius et al. 2006; Van Meurs et al. 2006). The percentage of completely English ads was low: 0.8 and 4 per cent respectively. These results are corroborated by Zenner et al. (2013), who showed that in the Dutch weekly recruitment magazine *Intermediair*, English position titles were more frequently used than all-English ads. Based on the raw data they kindly shared (Eline Zenner, personal communication, April 2014), we calculated an increase from 27 per cent to 68 per cent in the use of English position titles between 1989 and 2008.

With respect to public signage, almost a third of public signs in Amsterdam and in Friesland were found to contain English (Edelman 2010). While Government agency signs never contained English, those of private entities did (35%). Furthermore, the percentage of public signs in English was much higher in the tourist district of Amsterdam (50%) than in other areas of the city and in Friesland, suggesting that English signs are mainly targeted at tourists who do not speak Dutch and are not part of Dutch society (Edelman 2010).

In the entertainment domain, English-language TV series and movies are subtitled rather than dubbed. In 1998, 76 per cent of series and 65 per cent of movies on Dutch television were in English with Dutch subtitles (Blockmans 1998). More than 90 per cent of Dutch secondary school pupils regularly watch English TV programs with Dutch subtitles (De Bot et al. 2007). It is plausible that nowadays Dutch viewers are exposed to even more English through TV, since the majority have access to all-English channels, such as the BBC (Loonen 1996). English-language movies in cinemas are all subtitled in Dutch: only movies for children are dubbed into Dutch (Nasynchronisatie n.d.). After 1970, English movie titles were no longer translated into Dutch (Appel 1989). Another source of contact with English in the entertainment domain is music: more than 80 per cent of secondary school pupils regularly listen to English songs (De Bot et al. 2007).

Organizational communication is another domain in which the Dutch are exposed to English. Many Dutch profit and not-for-profit organizations have a website in Dutch and English. Over the past decade, English has gained momentum as a reporting language for corporations listed on the Dutch Stock Exchange. Annual reports and financial reviews are now published in English and Dutch (for instance, Philips), or in English only (for example, Wolters Kluwer). Between 2003 and 2006, large corporations such as Ahold, Aegon, Heineken, and Philips made English, rather than Dutch, the official language of their annual report. The English version is the version that is legally binding (De Groot 2008). The oral and written internal communications of the Dutch divisions of a number of large Dutch organizations (for example Shell, DSM, Unilever, Reed Elsevier, Ahold) are to a large extent in English (Daelemans 2005). This is due to the fact that some of these Dutch organizations have merged with multinationals, or appointed employees and CEOs from abroad. In order to facilitate internal communication, English was subsequently introduced in all forms of communication (Nickerson 2000; De Groot 2008). Dutch people are not only exposed to English in intranational domains, they also use the language actively. A number of the genres mentioned above (product ads, product labels, job ads, public signs, company websites, annual reports) are likely to be

produced by Dutch people. Van Meurs (2010: 137) showed, for example, that the English job ads in his study were composed by native speakers of Dutch. As pointed out earlier, English is also used actively in education, namely as a language of instruction in 132 bilingual programs in Dutch secondary schools and in 946 higher education programs (Van Oostendorp 2012, CBS 2011, DUB-nieuws 2013).

In *international* communication, English is by far the most important language for the Dutch. As pointed out earlier, English is the most frequently used language for publishing by Dutch scientists. English is also an important language in international business encounters. A study on the use of foreign languages in international interactions in small and medium-sized Dutch companies (Hagen 2001) showed that 82 per cent of the respondents reported using English. The use of English in a number of the six additional domains considered above under intranational domains can be seen as international communication, since it is not aimed exclusively at Dutch people. For instance, product ads using English may be part of international campaigns, all-English job ads are not just aimed at Dutch applicants but also at international applicants, public signs in English are mainly aimed at foreign visitors, and English-language organizational websites, annual reports and financial reviews are also directed at international target groups.

Above we have shown that the Dutch are frequently exposed to English in various intranational and international domains and that they actively use it in a number of these domains, but that receptive use is much greater than active use. English is never used exclusively, but always alongside Dutch. Moreover, in three of the five domains in which only English is used in Outer Circle countries according to Kachru (2005), newspapers, broadcasting and government, English is never used in the Netherlands to communicate with the Dutch. Therefore, the range of the use of English in the Netherlands is apparently smaller than in Outer Circle countries.

In terms of Fishman's (1991) graded intergenerational disruption scale (the so-called GIDS), which indicates aspects of a language that show whether it is endangered, vulnerable or safe, the domains where English is used in the Netherlands are all located at the top level of the scale which, according to Fishman, is non-essential for language death/revival. Lewis & Simons (2010: 15–17) introduced an expanded version of GIDS, adding the level 'international' to GIDS in order to allow for a categorization of all languages of the world. They consider a language to be an international language when it is used as a vehicular language to facilitate communication between people who speak different languages and if the level of official use is international. Our above description of the domains in which English is used in the Netherlands indicates that English is used at this level, as an international language, and as a consequence belongs to the Expanding Circle.

English language competence

The second functional criterion that Kachru (1985: 13) uses to determine whether English belongs to the Outer Circle not only involves the intranational and international domains in which English is used, but also the proficiency of its users. In order to gain more insight into this aspect, we first explore the English language proficiency of Dutch secondary school pupils, and then report on what is known about English language proficiency in general in the Netherlands. Bonnet (2004) and De Bot et al. (2007) measured the English language proficiency of secondary pupils in monolingual Dutch schools, through

Table 1. English language proficiency of pupils in monolingual Dutch schools

	1995–2000 ^a N = 1,128	2002 ^b N = 1,555
Self-assessment of English proficiency	1 = bad, 4 = good	Evaluated as (rather) easy
Listening	3.3	95%
Reading	3.2	87%
Speaking	3.1	–
Writing	2.9	87%
Tests of English proficiency	Correctly identified English words	Questions answered correctly
Listening	–	62%
Reading	–	77%
Speaking	–	–
Writing	–	46%
Grammar	–	65%
Vocabulary	62%	–

Notes: ^aDe Bot et al. (2007: 67–68); ^bBonnet (2004: 69–72, 77); ‘–’ = not investigated.

self-assessment and tests (see Table 1). The pupils’ self-assessment of English language proficiency regarding listening, reading, speaking, and writing was quite high. Language proficiency tests revealed fairly high scores for reading, satisfactory scores for listening and grammar, but less than sufficient scores for writing. Their passive skills were generally at a higher level than their active skills and their self-assessment was higher than their actual performance. Studies of the Dutch population more generally indicate that the Dutch have a high proficiency in English. The Netherlands belongs to the top five countries with the highest proficiency in English on the EF English Proficiency Index (2012), which ranks 54 countries and territories on adults’ English proficiency. The Dutch respondents obtained a score of 66, which corresponds to CEFR level B2. At a number of Dutch universities, teachers and researchers are required to obtain the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate, which corresponds to CEFR level C1. De Bot and Weltens (1997) found that adult native speakers of Dutch self-assessed their English language abilities as high (3.8 on a 5-point scale). A Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2012, among a random sample of inhabitants of the Netherlands aged 15 or older, showed a similar result: 90 per cent of the respondents claimed they spoke English well enough to take part in conversation; 85 per cent said their English was good enough to follow the news on radio or television, and 56 per cent to read a newspaper and to communicate online (European Commission 2012).

Van Onna and Jansen (2006) compared the self-reported and actual English listening, reading, and writing skills of 293 Dutch employees. For each of the three skills, the majority of respondents estimated their proficiency at the B1, B2 or C1 level in CEFR terms, while the actual proficiency of the majority of the respondents was a level lower. In this study too, self-reported English language proficiency was higher than actual proficiency. Similar discrepancies between actual and self-reported proficiency have been found in experiments that investigated Dutch people’s comprehension of English in advertising aimed at a Dutch audience (Gerritsen et al. 2000, 2010; Van Meurs et al. 2004; Dasselaar et al. 2005). It can be concluded that the English language proficiency of the Dutch is relatively high, but not as high as they themselves believe it to be. Moreover, members of Dutch society have

varying degrees of English competence. Younger people perform better than older people (Gerritsen et al 2000; Eurobarometer 2012), higher education correlates positively with higher proficiency in English (Bonnet 2004, EF English Proficiency Index for Companies 2012, Eurobarometer 2012), residents of large towns have a higher proficiency than people living in rural areas (Eurobarometer 2012), and people who use the Internet daily have a higher proficiency than those who rarely access the Internet (European Commission 2012).

In sum, regarding the second functional criterion that Kachru (1985: 13) uses to determine whether English belongs to the Outer Circle, namely, that 'English has a wide spectrum of domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an intranational and an international language,' we have to conclude that the use of English in the Netherlands does not meet this criterion. Although English is used with varying degrees of competence, it is never used exclusively in the six domains where only English is used in Outer Circle countries (Kachru 2005). In all these domains, English is used next to another language, in this case Dutch, as it would be in an Expanding Circle country. Our consideration of a number of additional domains in which English is used in the Netherlands showed a similar pattern: English is never used exclusively, but always in addition to Dutch. Also, there are a number of domains where English is never used. The range of functional domains in which English is used in the Netherlands is apparently different from that of Outer Circle countries.

Functional criterion three: English for nativized literary tradition

The third functional criterion Kachru (1985: 13) distinguishes for English in an Outer Circle country is that it 'has developed nativized literary traditions in different genres, such as the novel, short story, poetry, and essay.' The Netherlands does not have a tradition of literary writing in English: Dutch authors and essayists write in Dutch, and immigrants living in the Netherlands also write in Dutch. Just as elsewhere in the world (Lee and Kachru 2006), popular songs in the Netherlands are a genre which is frequently in English. Of the 243 entries devoted to individual artists and bands in an encyclopaedia covering Dutch pop music from 1960 to 1990 (Steensma n.d.), 57 per cent mention albums and songs with English titles only. Evidence for the increasing popularity of English in popular song in the Netherlands is the language used in Dutch contributions to the Eurovision Song Contest since 1956. Until the 1970s, these were in Dutch, and between 1973 and 1999, only occasionally in English (1973, 1976, 1983). Since 1999, however, Dutch contributions have been in English, except in 2010 (Lijst van Eurovisiedeelneemers, n.d.). Interestingly, these contributions, as well as other popular songs in English that originate in the Netherlands, are generally written by Dutch songwriters.

It can be concluded that there is no nativized literary tradition in English in the Netherlands, except in the genre of popular song. However, Kachru (1985) does not mention this particular genre in relation to this, the third, criterion. With regard to the third criterion then, English in the Netherlands cannot be described as an Outer Circle variety.

Variety with its own norm: Dungleish

Another aspect that Kachru (1985) uses to determine the status of English in a country is whether the English used is a norm-developing variety, in other words, whether it adheres to the norms of an Inner Circle variety or has developed its own norm such as in India,

Pakistan, or Kenya. There are two opposing views in the Netherlands with respect to what should be the norm for English used by Dutch people: one which advocates an Inner Circle norm, particularly British English, and one which advocates a Dutch variety of English. The view that English use by the Dutch should adhere to Inner Circle norms would appear to be more widely supported. The Nederlandse Taalunie [Dutch Language Union], an organization which aims to support the learning and use of Dutch, advocates targeting near-native English in higher education, which it motivates by stating that native speakers of English do not like to see 'their English language used in some sort of gibberish' [our translation], and that failure to observe a near-native target would lead to the decay of the English language (Redactie NRC 2013). It would seem that the Dutch language Union has transferred the aims it has set with respect to Dutch to English. British English would appear to be the norm for pronunciation in Dutch secondary education, even though American English is occasionally allowed as well (Van der Haagen 1998). Dutch people who look for help with their oral and written English also conform to the norms of Inner Circle varieties of English. There are a number of books which discuss features that are characteristic of Dutch people's use of English ('Dunglish,' a contraction of Dutch English) and give advice on how to avoid these. For pronunciation, see Collins et al. 2008; for grammar, see Mackenzie 2002; for more wide-ranging discussions on aspects including vocabulary and conventions, see Burrough-Boenisch 2004).

The main reason given for targeting Inner Circle norms is that failure to do so might result in communication breakdowns (Edwards 2010). Indeed, experimental research has shown that Dutch people's failure to adhere to Inner Circle norms can result in less than successful communication: articles written in English by Dutch scientists, for example, were rejected by experienced reviewers because of miscommunication resulting from the use of Dutch English, for example, the use of the present tense for reporting results that were not certain to be generally applicable (Burrough-Boenisch 2002). People with a moderate Dutch accent in English were accorded less status than people with a slight Dutch accent or a native English (RP) accent (Nejjari et al. 2012). The alternative view that Dutch people should not adhere to Inner Circle norms, but stick to their own variety of English, 'Dunglish,' is also propagated, but far less frequently. Van Oostendorp (2000, 2002) advocates the use of Dunglish by Dutch people, arguing that since there are more non-native than native speakers of English in Dutch contexts, there is no reason for the non-native speakers to conform to the native speakers. The fact that Dunglish is an emergent variety is indicated in interviews conducted by Edwards (2010) with English-language editors/translators of texts written in English by Dutch authors working in academia. The interviewees 'believed a variety of Dutch English would emerge, or may already have emerged' (Edwards 2010: 21). While they tried to correct the Dunglish in texts, they 'felt that they were fighting an uphill battle,' especially because Dutch authors often did not agree with their corrections and would opt for Dunglish variants. Most of the interviewees took a pragmatic approach; if English texts were targeted at a Dutch audience, they left the Dunglish untouched, but if texts were aimed at an international audience, they tried to remove at least those instances of Dunglish that might lead to misunderstandings. Based on these findings, Edwards (2010: 23) concludes that 'Dutch English clearly has some way to go before it is perceived as a legitimate variety.' In an interview with Dorren (2012), entitled 'We speak an own English since decennia,' Edwards takes a more radical view on the position of English in the Netherlands by stating that it is almost an Outer Circle variety. A recent small-scale poll suggests that there may be opposing views on the norms

applied to Dutch people's English, that is, a specific Dutch norm or an Inner Circle norm. The poll asked whether Dutch pupils should learn to speak accent-free English, and the response gives us some insight into Dutch people's tolerance towards a Dutch accent. While 45 per cent of those polled did not think accent-free English is necessary, 55 per cent thought it is (Jansen 2013a, 2013b).

It can be concluded that the official norm for English in the Netherlands is still that of the Inner Circle varieties, especially British English. This places the English used in the Netherlands in the Expanding Circle. At the same time, there is a tendency not to aim for an Inner Circle variety, but to be open to Dutch English, which can be interpreted as a tendency towards the Outer Circle. Kirkpatrick (2007: 182) suggests that the phases that English has gone through in Outer Circle countries (from British English to their own varieties) can now also be observed in Expanding Circle countries. The data about English in the Netherlands presented above seem to corroborate this observation. Where Inner Circle English used to be the only norm, Dutch people nowadays may well opt for a specifically Dutch norm for English.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we wanted to gain further insight into the status of English in the Netherlands within the Kachruvian Three Circles Model. Although it was not possible to apply all the criteria and features of the model systematically since the data we used were collected for different purposes and the definitions of the criteria and features were not always set out in enough detail, we may conclude there are insufficient grounds for categorizing English in the Netherlands as an Outer Circle variety.

First, the Netherlands does not share the historical aspect of Outer Circle regions distinguished by Kachru (1985: 12), that is, having been colonized by an Inner Circle country for a long period of time. Second, English in the Netherlands does not meet the specifications of the first of the two features of an Outer Circle region determined by Kachru, that is, that English is only one of two or more codes in the linguistic repertoire of its bilingual or multilingual inhabitants. Dutch is the only official language in the Netherlands. It is somewhat more difficult to decide whether English in the Netherlands meets the specifications of the second feature of an Outer Circle country, that is, that English has an important status in the language policies of most of such multilingual nations. On the one hand, language policymakers have tried to incorporate the official status of Dutch in the Constitution in order to combat the increasing use of English. On the other hand, they find it so important the Dutch learn English that they have made it the only compulsory foreign language at primary and secondary school. They have also stipulated that children should learn English at an increasingly younger age, and they have set high proficiency targets for all secondary school types. Third, it is difficult to determine whether English in the Netherlands meets the first of the three functional criteria formulated by Kachru (1985) for English in an Outer Circle country, that is, that English is used in un-English cultural contexts, and has an unprecedented spread in terms of territory. At any rate, there is no clear-cut evidence that English is used in this way, so placing the use of English in the Netherlands in the Expanding Circle in relation to this criterion seems the most logical option. With regard to the second functional criterion, it is clear that English in the Netherlands belongs in the Expanding Circle. Although Dutch people have a relatively high competence in English, albeit with wide variations among the population, English is not used exclusively in

domains in which this would be distinctive for an Outer Circle country, nor is it an important code in governmental communication. It is also beyond doubt that the use of English does not meet the third functional criterion for English in an Outer Circle region, that is, having developed nativized literary traditions in different genres, such as the novel, short story, poetry, and essay. Finally, the official norm for English in the Netherlands is still provided by Inner Circle varieties, although there is a clear tendency to also accept a specific Dutch variety, *Dunglish*. This tendency, however, is not yet strong enough in our view to justify placing English in the Netherlands in the Outer Circle.

Our classification of the status of English in the Netherlands as an Expanding Circle variety within the Kachruvian framework is different from the classifications in earlier studies. McArthur (1996), Graddol (1999), and Booij (2001) all concluded that Dutch English either had ESL status or was on its way to achieving it. Berns (1995), Gerritsen & Nickerson (2004), Edwards (2010), and Dorren (2012) found that, while English plays a role in Dutch society beyond that of English in an Expanding Circle country, it is not yet as extensive as in Outer Circle countries. This difference in classification between the present and earlier studies seems to be due to the fact that we had greater access to quantitative and qualitative data on English in the Netherlands than previous scholars. Our conclusion that English in the Netherlands is an Expanding Circle variety concurs with Berns' view on the use of English in Europe: 'Europe is an example par excellence of the Expanding Circle' (Berns 2009: 194). Berns (1995) set apart the Netherlands, Germany, and Luxembourg from other EU countries, since these three countries shared characteristics of the Outer and Expanding Circles. She considered the other EU countries as belonging to the Outer Circle. In her later study (Berns 2009), the above distinction between EU countries is no longer made. This is not surprising, since the self-reported knowledge and use of English increased substantially in the EU after 1994. In the 1994 Eurobarometer survey, the percentage of inhabitants of the twelve EU countries that indicated they spoke good enough English to take part in a conversation was 25 per cent, while by 2012, the percentage for the same twelve EU countries was 43 per cent. Berns (2005) called for more research on varieties of English that are traditionally placed in the Expanding Circle.

This paper has attempted to address that call with respect to English in the Netherlands. Despite problems in applying some aspects of the Kachruvian model, which suggests that further refinement of the model may be required, a systematic consideration of the features and criteria set out in the model, incorporating additional quantitative and qualitative data, has demonstrated that English in the Netherlands is characterized by features of an Expanding Circle variety and meets the criteria for such a variety. This conclusion would not seem to concur with the categorization of English in the Netherlands as an Outer Circle variety, or as being between an Outer and an Expanding Circle variety, as suggested in a number of earlier studies. However, it may be expected that the use of English in the Netherlands will continue to increase given its rise over the past two decades in a number of domains, and given the importance Dutch policymakers attach to ensuring high English language proficiency for the Dutch.

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