

5 The acquisition of Dutch

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5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will consider how two Turkish learners, Ergün and Mahmut, and two Moroccan informants, Mohamed and Fatima, learn how to express temporality in Dutch. One informant per source language is described in some detail, and the second informant's development is then compared against what has been found for the core informant. We first characterise the data used in this chapter; then, brief sketches of the Dutch and Arabic systems of temporality are given.¹ Section 5.2 is devoted to the Turkish informants, section 5.3 to the Moroccan informants, and in section 5.4, the results are compared, and some general conclusions are drawn.

5.1.1 Data

The core data are personal narratives embedded in informal conversations between informants and (mainly) project researchers. As one can easily see, some of these narratives are extremely short. Therefore, they were systematically completed by additional data from the same encounter; this was also necessary in order to get information about future reference. Finally, we have also included sequences from the "Modern Times" film retellings.² The following table gives a survey of the narratives used for analysis.

Table 5.1: *Data set of Turkish and Moroccan learners of Dutch*

Informant	cycle	topic	Nr. of utterances	Duration of stay (months)
Ergün	1	A quarrel with the boss	19	15
Ergün	2	Dutch social security	20	24
Ergün	3	Meeting a friend	29	33
Mahmut	1	The wedding	7	13
Mahmut	2	The "ball accident" 1	12	23
Mahmut	3	The "ball accident" 2	25	31
Mohamed	1	Learning to be a carpenter	22	8
Mohamed	2	Herbal medicine	12	20
Mohamed	3	Playing bingo	41	27
Fatima	1	Housing market	15	18
Fatima	2	Giving birth	20	27
Fatima	3	Social security	9	33

5.1.2 *Some notes on temporality in Dutch and Moroccan Arabic*

Dutch

English, German and Dutch are all West-Germanic languages, and their system of temporality was originally the same. There are still many common features, but also some salient differences, especially between English, on the one hand, and Dutch and German, on the other. In what follows we shall assume familiarity with the English system (see also chapter 2) and highlight the differences.

Verb forms

Like German, but unlike English, Dutch has no morphological category for aspect. The verb system is basically a tense system, i.e., it marks the relation between the time of utterance (TU) and the time for which a claim is made (TT). The relation between TT and TSit is normally AT; there is one exception to which we shall return in a moment.

Simple forms

There are two simple forms, usually called **Praesens** and **Imperfectum** (cf. Geerts *et al.* 1984). Morphologically (and historically), they correspond to the

English simple present and simple past, for example *hij werkt* "he works" and *hij werkte* "he worked". But their function is not the same. These forms conflate the meaning of *he works* and *he is working* in the present and of *he worked* and *he was working* in the past. Furthermore, the Imperfectum is rarely used in everyday language (especially in the southern Netherlands, where the informants lived). Unmarked reference to the past is normally expressed by the Perfectum (see below), but with one exception: the auxiliaries are commonly found in the simple past. Lastly, the Praesens is also a common way to express reference to the future. In these three respects, Dutch and German are very similar, and characteristically different from English.

Dutch also has compound forms:

- (a) There is a special form for future reference, which consists of the auxiliary *zullen* "shall" + infinitive (e.g. "go"): *hij zou gaan*. However, this form can also have a modal meaning (likelihood) without future reference, and as we have just said, the common way to refer to events after TU is by the simple present.
- (b) The **Perfection** is formed by *hebben* "to have" or *zijn* "to be" plus past participle, e.g. *hij heeft gewerkt* "he has worked" or *hij is gekomen* "he 'is' come". The choice of auxiliary depends on the particular verb and has to be learned individually. Just as in English, the auxiliary can be used in past, present or future form (in the latter case with *zullen* "shall"), thus yielding forms which seem to correspond to pluperfect, present perfect, and future perfect, respectively. But functionally, this similarity is deceptive. Whilst pluperfect and future perfect are comparable (with the latter being uncommon), the counterpart of the present perfect, the Perfectum, is regularly used as a simple past tense, and has replaced the Imperfectum in this function.
- (c) As has been mentioned, there is no systematic aspect marking which would correspond to the English simple form —*ing* form distinction. But there are several ways to mark the fact that the action is/was/will be going on, in particular a very common periphrastic construction: *aan het INF zijn*, literally "to be at the INF". Thus, *hij schreef een boek* means "he wrote a book" or "he was writing a book". In order to highlight the latter reading, a Dutch speaker would say *hij was een boek aan het schrijven* "he was a book at the write". We note in passing that this construction, strange as it may sound to the English ear, is almost identical to the historical origin of the *-ing* construction.

Adverbials

The Dutch system of temporal adverbials resembles the English system in all relevant respects. There is one noteworthy peculiarity, though, which plays an important role in the acquisition process; Dutch has two counterparts to English *then*: *dan* and *toen*. Both of them are used for anaphoric sequencing of events (*and then...and then...and then*). But *dan* can only be used to connect situations in the present or future, and *toen* is limited to situations in the past.

It should be clear that this sketch of the Dutch system is very crude; but it suffices for present purposes.

Moroccan Arabic

Two reasons make a clear analysis of the source language of our Moroccan informants difficult. The first one is the pervasive and often-discussed diglossia of Arabic. The language learned by a speaker of "Arabic" in childhood is a local dialect. So-called "Standard Arabic" is only taught in school and then used in formal contexts, in writing, and for communication with speakers from different dialect areas (local dialects usually differ as much from each other as, for example, English from German and Swedish). Hence, it is not easy to say what the source language of our speakers is. In fact, they have two, and this may influence their awareness of a "third" language. The second reason is the fact that most dialects, here Moroccan Arabic, are not well studied, at least not with respect to temporality. The following remarks are based on the most recent grammar of spoken Moroccan Arabic, Harrell (1962), which is very explicit about the verb forms, but less so about their precise meaning. In what follows, we shall concentrate on verb forms (the adverbial system is in principle not dissimilar to the English or Dutch system).

A verb form is made up of a so-called "root", which is supposed to carry the lexical meaning, and a set of affixes of all sorts (suffixes, prefixes, infixes, and any combination thereof). A root usually consists of 3 or 4 consonants. For instance, the cluster *k-t-b* expresses the notion of writing, and we may have, for example, the following forms: *kteb* "he wrote", *iketbu* "they write, were writing", *mektub* "written, being written". These verb forms can be extremely complex, in particular since number, person, and tense categories can be expressed by affixes and also by object pronouns.

Inflected verb forms often combine into complex clusters, notably in connection with the auxiliary *kan* "to be" and "modifying verbs" such as *bda* "to begin", *bqa* "to remain", *gadi* "to be going to", and others. It is these combinations which allow the speaker to express very subtle shades of temporal meaning.

In what follows, we shall only consider the main lines of the system.

It is based on three forms (each in turn inflected for person, number and partly gender): imperfect, perfect (i.e., imperfect prefixed by the durative particle *ka-*), and the very productive active participle. Their meaning is **roughly** as follows. The perfect expresses an action completed at the time of utterance (normally translated either by the simple past or the present perfect). The *ka*-imperfect expresses a habitual action or, in the case of intransitives, an on-going action (mostly, but not necessarily, in the present); the progressive of intransitives is expressed by the active participle. The imperfect, when used alone, expresses a "non-actual" action, such as immediate future, proposals, etc. Most often, however, it combines with one of the auxiliaries mentioned above, and it is this combination which yields the precise meaning. In actual fact, there are many additional constraints and intricacies. But even this rough sketch shows that (a) the system is more oriented towards aspect than towards tense, and (b) it is extremely complex in form as well as in function.

5.2 From Turkish to Dutch

5.2.1 *Ergün*

Ergün, our core informant, was born in Ankara, went to primary school for five years and then worked as a motor mechanic. At the age of 17, he joined his parents who had been living in Tilburg for several years. For five months, he attended a language course, although on an irregular basis, and at the beginning of the data collection, eleven months after arrival, his Dutch competence was judged to be very poor. He had several temporary jobs. His contacts with the Dutch environment were regular, if not intimate: he regularly went to discotheques and played in a mixed Turkish/Dutch soccer team; he thus had permanent access to the target language.

Cycle 1

The following short story gives a good impression of his language after 15 months of stay. He talks about problems at this work place:

Ergün1: *A quarrel with the boss*

- (1) *die fabriek hier kist + he*
'that factory here box + he'

- (2) *en dan altijd ruzie maken + he*
'and then always quarrel make + he'
- (3) *en dan een keer uh twee/over twee keer per dag*
'and then one time uh two/over two time per day'
- (4) *en dan "jij huis gaan naar"*
'and then <boss says>: "you house go to"'
- (5) *en dan die fabriek uh automatike koffie drinken*
'and then that factory uh automatic coffee drink'
- (6) *die kapot*
'that broken'
- (7) *en dan half tien pauze*
'and then half ten <9:30> break'
- (8) *en dan vijftig werken en dan pauze*
'and then fifty <minutes> work and then break'
- (9) *en dan bijna drie minuten blijven pauze*
'and then almost three minutes remain break'
- (10) *en dan ik werken daar*
'and then I work there'
- (11) *en dan klaar*
'and then ready'
- (12) *en dan pomp halen*
'and then pump get'
- (13) *en dan "wat doen jullie hier?"*
'and then <boss said>: "what are you doing here?"'
- (14) *"die pomp halen"*
'that pump get''
- (15) *en ik zeg "waar is die schort?"*
'and I say: "where is that apron?"'

(16) *ik daar blijven*
'I there stay'

(17) *en dan uitgedaan*
'and then taken off'

(18) *en dan pauze drie minuten vier minuten blijven*
'and then break three minutes four minutes stay'

(19) *en dan "doe aan"*
'and then <boss said>: "put on".'

The narrative is neither particularly dramatic nor entirely transparent. But it gives a very clear picture of his language at this point, in particular of his means to express temporal relations. The main observations can be summed up as follows:

- (A) Ergün's utterance structure is between nominal utterance organisation and verbal utterance organisation, i.e., he does not yet use finite forms in any systematic way.
- (B) Verbs normally occur in the infinitive, i.e., with the suffix *-en* (cf. *blijven*, *werken* etc.). This is not trivial because he might as well have chosen something like the bare stem as his "base form".
- (C) There are a few traces of inflexion; in this text, we note three examples: the inflected copula *is*, characteristically in quoted speech, the participle *uitgedaan* (instead of the infinitive *uitdoen*), and the stem *zeg*, instead of *zeggen*. But neither the narrative quoted here nor the remaining text of the encounter, in which this narrative is told, give evidence of a functional use of this variation.
- (D) There are a limited number of adverbials. In the sample, we only note TAQ like *altijd*, *een keer*, one TAD such as *drie minuten* and TAP such as *half tien* and, above all, *en dan*. There are some more elsewhere, of exactly the same type.
- (E) In general, he works with PNO to mark the relative order of events, regularly and, as one might think, redundantly supported by *en dan*. Apparently, this form is incorrectly used: as was said in section 5.1.2, it should be confined to event sequences in the present or future. But there is good reason to assume that this repetitive form cannot be understood as a temporal marker "AFTER previous situation" anyway. This is best illustrated by utterances 4 and 5. Clearly, 5 does not mean "thereafter, the factory has a coffee machine". What is meant, is something like: "Now, next I will tell you that

this factory has a coffee machine". It is a background clause, which falls out of the temporal sequence. The expression *en dan* is a peculiar narrative device of Ergün's variety at this point; it means something like "next, I tell you this". Therefore, it does not duplicate the information already given by *PN0* but rather functions *ES* a discourse marker.

In a sentence, what we see at work here is the familiar basic variety, already observed for the English and German informants (see chapters 3.2.1 and 4.2.1). The only peculiarity is the salient use of the discourse marker *en dan*.

A complete analysis of all nine encounters available for Ergün in the first cycle confirms this picture. As is to be expected, there is a clear increase in the lexical repertoire (cf. Broeder, Extra, and van Hout 1993), but no change in the system of temporality. What is noted, though, is an increasing variation in verb forms. There are some clear though not very successful attempts to construct compound forms with *ben* "am" and *heb* "have". There is no systematic use of these forms at this point. But the very fact that he tries to use them shows that he is working on his language and trying to shift it towards the target.

Cycle 2

We have selected the following sequence because it deals both with the past (Ergün is talking about some trouble he had with social security) as well as with the (relative) future - he goes on speculating about the possible consequences of this trouble.

Ergün2: *Dutch social security*

- (1) *een jaar geleden + ik heb sociale dienst geschreven*
'one year ago + I have social security written'
- (2) *dan geld halen*
'then money get'
- (3) *twee maand geld halen*
'two months money get'
- (4) *en dan ik heb uh die werken de pitt vleesfabriek*
'and then I have uh that work the pitt meat factory'
- (5) *ik heb daar werk*
'I have there work' <I got a job there>

- (6) *ik ga naar de sociale dienst*
'I go to the social security'
- (7) *en dan: "ik heb werken" of "volgende week beginnen"*
'and then <I said>: "I have work <= infinitive>" or "next week start"'
- (8) *toen afgelopen ik heb werken*
'then finished I have work'
- (9) *en dan de politie zeg*
'and then the police say +'
- (10) *+ die ene papier verzonden mijn thuis*
'that one paper sent my home'
- (11) *daar schrijven die*
'there write that/these'
- (12) *jij twee maand die sociale dienst geld halen*
'you two months that social security money get'
- (13) *vijfhonderd eenenzeventig gulden of zoiets*
'fivehundred seventyone guilders or so'
- (14) *moet terug betalen*
'must back pay'
- (15) *en dan niet betalen + turkije weg*
'and then not pay <I will go> Turkey away'
- (16) *en dan ik heb mijn paspoort geen stempel politiestempel*
'and then I have <in> my passport no stamp policestamp'
- (17) *ik ga naar politiebureau*
'I go to police office'
- (18) *ik zeg "mijn paspoort geen stempel"*
'I say "my passport no stamp"'
- (19) *"Ik heb geen blauwe kaart"*
'"I have no blue card"'

(20) en *hij* *zegt*
'and he <lawyer> says'

(21) *die advocaat daar ook de werken + weet ik niet*
'that lawyer there too the work + know I not' <rote form>

(22) *ik ben daar lang wachten*
'I am there long wait' <I will have to wait there for a long time>

Even in this short passage, we note some salient developments, for example a number of inflected forms. An analysis of all nine encounters of this cycle shows the following changes:

- (A) There is a large increase in the lexical repertoire, notably of adverbials. The text sample shows complex constructions such as *een jaar geleden* "one year ago", but also the alternative to *dan*, the adverb *toen*.
- (B) There is a steady increase of finite verb forms; in the sample, finite forms and "base forms" are almost balanced. But this increase is not homogeneous. The detailed picture is as follows:
- only the simple present forms are inflected; examples from the narrative are (6) *ik ga* "I go/am going", (16) *ik heb* "I have" or (20) *hij zegt* "he says/is saying". But note that he uses these forms to refer to the past;
 - infinitives can still be used to refer to past, present or future.
 - there are a few compound verb forms, mainly with *hebben* + past participle, less often with *zijn* + past participle (he does not master the distribution), and occasionally with *zijn* + infinitive (cf. 22 with future reference).
 - Other inflected forms are rare; there is occasionally an isolated participle, such as (10) *verzonden* "sent", and one single simple past in the entire second cycle; this is the copula *was* "was".
- (C) There is no trace of aspectual marking by periphrastic means.
- (D) The use of the discourse marker *en dan* is considerably reduced; the text sample is very representative in this respect.

What this shows is the fact that Ergün does not follow the strategy, adopted by many other learners, of optimising the use of his basic variety: he left this convenient refuge and is on his way to the target variety. In doing so, he is using a system which shows a number of traits of Dutch but is still very far from it. He regularly uses present tense forms, but they may relate to present, past, or future, and he goes on with the infinitive in all of these functions, too. We note,

therefore, a co-existence of the basic variety system and a second system with TL forms but not the appropriate TL functions. As was observed elsewhere, form may well precede function.

At the same time, he starts to construct the appropriate compound forms, with a clear preference for the Perfectum (and essentially ignoring the Imperfectum); this clearly reflects the distribution of these forms in the language of his environment.

We should expect that, in the third cycle, Ergün will overcome this unstable situation between basic variety, on the one hand, and target language like organisation, on the other.

Cycle 3

In the following short narrative, Ergün talks about an old friend from Turkey whom he has recently met. The interview took place after he had moved from Tilburg to Zwolle.

Ergün3: *Meeting a friend*

- (1) *van mijn vriend woont ook die ankara*
'of my <me> friend lives too that Ankara'
- (2) *hij woont bijna vier jaar of vijf zelfde straat*
'he lives almost four years or five same street'
- (3) *ik heb zes of zeven maand geleden + ik heb tilburg woont*
'I have six or seven month ago + I have Tilburg lived'
<correct Dutch form: gewoond>
- (4) *daar is feest trouwfeest*
'there is party wedding party'
- (5) *dan die jongen ook komt*
'then that boy also comes'
- (6) *hij woont nou zwolle*
'he lives now Zwolle'
- (7) *die jongen komt daar*
'that boy comes there'
- (8) *hij + die jongen + hij kijken mij*
'he + that boy + he look me'

- (9) *heel zo kijken*
'very much so look' <makes angry face>
- (10) *ik zo kijken*
'I so look'
- (11) *misschien die jongen kwaad op mij of zoiets*
'perhaps that boy angry with me or so'
- (12) *van mijn neef ook daar geweest*
'of my <me> cousin also there been'
- (13) *maar mijn neef zegt tegen mij*
'but my cousin says to me'
- (14) *"ik ken ik wel die jongen"*
"'I know I well that boy'"
- (15) *"waar dan?"*
"'where then'"
- (16) *ja van ons straat woont die*
'yes, of our street lives that one''
- (17) *"nee + ken ik niet"*
"'no, know I not'" <idiomatic>
- (18) *maar die jongen wij hebben roepen*
'but that boy we have call' <correct: geroepen>
- (19) *die jongen zegt*
'that boy says:'
- (20) *"ik ken ik jou"*
"'I know I you'"
- (21) *hij zeggen tegen mij*
'he say to me:'
- (22) *"ik ken ik jou"*
"'I know I you'"

- (23) *"ik ken ik niet jou"*
'<I said:> "I know I not you"'
- (24) *van mij die/die van mijn neef kennen hem*
'of me that/that of my cousin know him'
- (25) *hij kennen mij*
'he know me'
- (26) *maar ik ken hem niet*
'but I know him not'
- (27) *ja + dan ik heb daar iets praten over + zo turkije ook*
'yeah + then I have there- something talk about so Turkey too'
- (28) *dan die jongen zegt*
'then the boy says'
- (29) *"ja + als die zwolle komt + moet die adres ook geven"*
'"yeah + when that Zwolle comes, must that address too give"'
- (30) *die adres nummer ook geven*
'that address number also give'
- (31) *maar van mij niet bij*
'but of me not with'
- (32) *van mijn neef heeft gehad die adres*
'of my <me> cousin has had that address'

What this narrative clearly illustrates, are three facts:

- (a) There is no real **structural** change: Ergün still uses the (correctly inflected) present tense forms for reference to the past, present (and, though not illustrated here, future); bare infinitives may have the same function; there is no single simple past (in fact, apart from *was*, there is only one occurrence of the simple past of *denken* "think").
- (b) There is a very constant **quantitative** change: bare infinitives disappear, perfect forms become more frequent and slowly take over the role of normal past reference, present tense forms are confined to present and future reference.
- (c) In addition, there is a regular increase in vocabulary, including adverbials of all types. Parallel to this increase, we note the gradual disappearance of *dan*.

At the end of the third cycle, this process is almost complete, although Ergün still makes mistakes in the choice of the appropriate morphological form (especially for strong verbs) and the choice of the appropriate auxiliary. It is remarkable that there is no attempt to mark aspectual differentiation by the (quite common) periphrastic means which Dutch provides to this end. Nor is there any attempt to interpret one of the morphological forms of Dutch in the sense of an aspect marker. The fact that the source language marks aspect apparently leaves no trace in Ergün's acquisition process.

Summary

The overall picture of Ergün's development is strikingly clear, and can be summed up in five points:

- (A) Ergün first works out a **basic variety**, as most learners do, with the properties regularly observed for this basic variety. The only peculiarity is the systematic use of a discourse marker *en dan*.
- (B) Towards the end of the first cycle, he starts playing with inflected verb forms: He starts to use the present tense forms (though not confined to present tense reference) and *hebben* + participle forms for the past; there are also some rare compound forms.
- (C) Qualitatively, there is nothing new until the end of his learning process. He slowly erases bare infinitives, elaborates the perfect forms and, more or less in parallel, avoids present tense forms for past reference.
- (D) Throughout the whole observation period, there is a continuous and steady increase in his lexical repertoire, including his repertoire of temporal adverbials.
- (E) Aspectual marking and simple past play virtually no role.

At the end, his language is quite close to the language of his social environment, if we ignore some morphological errors.

5.2.2 *Mahmut*

Mahmut has almost the same background as Ergün. He was born near Ankara, went to primary school, worked as a motor mechanic and came to Holland at the age of nineteen, to join his wife who had been living here for four years. After one year of unemployment, he got a temporary job in a meat factory. But in contrast to Ergün, he spends almost all of his spare time with Turkish friends and relatives. Apparently, this has consequences for his language development.

We shall not go through this development in detail, because it is very simple and clear. Mahmut soon acquires a basic variety, with all its usual properties, including the regular uses of *en dan* which we observed for Ergün. In contrast to Ergün, however, he does not take the weary road to the target language but rather optimises his basic variety. He adds lexical items to his repertoire, including adverbials, and for the expression of temporal relations, he tries to make optimal use of these adverbials, PNO, and the infinitive. He also successively relinquishes his earlier usage of *en dan*. There are some inflected and compound forms, but they remain rare and are not used to express meaning contrasts. As often happens with a clever management of a basic variety, the result is a very fluent and sometimes even elegant way of telling stories; but it is far from the standard. The following narrative, from the end of the observation period (after 31 months of stay in Holland) illustrates this (and also the unsystematic use of participles):

Mahmut3: *The ball accident (2)*

(1) *ene keer raam kapotmaken + die jongen*
'one time window break + that boy'

(2) *achter spelen*
'at rear play'

(3) *en de raam kapot*
'and the window broken'

(4) *en dan jongen weglopen*
'and then boy run away'

(5) *mijn vrouw niet kennen*
'my wife not know'

(6) *net gezien*
'not seen'

(7) *ikke heb bal handen halen*
'I have ball hands take'

(8) *zo straat lopen*
'so street walk'

(9) *ikke die kindje +/ikke gezien kindje*
'I that child +/I seen child'

- (10) *ikke roepen: "deze voetballen van jou?"*
 I call: "this footballs from you?"

The story goes on in this style for a long time, and it is very vivid and fluent. As the form *gezien* in (6) and (9) show, he indeed uses past participles; but this use is rare and not functional, as they belong to his more or less fossilised, though elaborate, basic variety.

5.2.3 *Summary of Turkish learners*

Ergün and Mahmut illustrate two ways of approaching the acquisition problem. In a relatively short time, they both acquire an elementary and flexible system to express themselves - the basic variety. The structure and functioning of this system has been repeatedly described, so we will not repeat it here. The only peculiarity is the use of the discourse marker *en dan*.

Their further development branches. Mahmut stabilises this system, enriches it lexically, and learns to make optimal use of it. Ergün wants to leave it. His utterances blossom with funny forms which resemble, or do not resemble, target language forms, and which most often do not have the TL functions. Acquisition of form precedes acquisition of function. He then slowly but continuously replaces the - infinitive - basic variety forms by the appropriate ones. It is remarkable that neither he nor Mahmut ever tries to convey aspectual differentiations.

5.3 **From Moroccan Arabic to Dutch**

5.3.1 *Mohamed*

Mohamed was born in Casablanca. After primary, and two years' secondary school, he was trained as a motor mechanic (number 3 in the sample). At the age of 19, he joined his father in the Netherlands, where he soon got a job as a factory worker. So far, his curriculum very much resembles Mahmut's - except that he was not married. As a consequence, and because he was living in a small village near Tilburg with relatively few immigrants, he soon had many Dutch friends of his age, including a Dutch girlfriend. At the end of the data collection period, he was living with another girlfriend. He never took part in a language course.

Cycle 1

The following story was told in the very first encounter, eight months after arrival. It was elicited by the interviewer's question "How did you learn to become a carpenter?".

Mohamed1: *Learning to be a carpenter*

(1) *buurman komt canda*
'neighbour comes Canda' <his home in Morocco>

(2) *buurman komt bij ons om/voor/om timmerman*
'neighbour comes to us to/for/to carpenter'

(3) *om ramen te maakt*
'for windows to makes'

(4) *hij maakt bij uh vijftien/kwartier*
'he makes with uh fifteen <minutes>/quarter'

(5) *ik kijk*
'I watch'

(6) *kwartier ik zeg*
'quarter I say:'

(7) *"ik probeer"*
'"I try"'

(8) *buurman van mijn oom hij kijkt mijn werk*
'neighbour of my uncle he watches my work'

(9) *hij zegt "mooi werk"*
'he says: "good job".'

<Interviewer: "and painting where did you learn that?" >

(10) *die man ook buurman van mijn oom hij komt vandaag*
'that man also neighbour of my uncle he comes today' <=one day>

(11) *oom verf deuren*
'uncle paint doors'

(12) *ramen verf*
'windows paint'

- (13) *hij komt vandaag*
'he comes today' <=one day>
- (14) *ik help uh hem*
'I help him'
- (15) *ik help hem om negen uur tot elf uur*
'I help him at nine o'clock till eleven o'clock'

The story goes on for a while, but the crucial properties are quite clear. Mohamed is clearly beyond the stage of a basic variety. He uses a number of inflected present tense forms. But they typically refer to the past (or even the future, although there is no example in this text). In this function, they alternate with non-finite forms. In remarkable contrast to what has been observed for Ergün, this non-finite form is not the infinitive but a bare stem, such as *verf*.³ In other words: in the first encounter, Mohamed already seems to have reached the stage which Ergün achieved at the beginning of the second cycle. He has left the basic variety and is moving towards TL, but his attempts are somewhat erratic at this point. The dominant underlying principles are still those of the basic variety, but he experiments with various inflected forms. The discourse marker *en dan* occurs but is rare.

Cycle 2

In the following story, recorded 20 months after his arrival, Mohamed talks about the illness of a Dutch friend. The preceding conversation was about the use of herbal medicine, and the story was used as an exemplary tale for the use of herbs.

Mohamed2: *Herbal medicine*

- (1) *een keer was bij ons een nederlands jongen*
'One time was with us a Dutch boy'
- (2) *toen hij met mij naar marrakesh*
'then he with me to Marrakesh'
- (3) *daar was warm*
'there was warm'
- (4) *en toen wij terug naar casablanca heeft die +*
'and then we back to Casablanca has this +' <points to lip>

- (5) *was so veel dik*
'was that much thick'
- (6) *en toen hij wil naar dokter toe*
'and then he will to doctor to' <idiomatic>
- (7) *toen mij moeder heeft iets gedaan voor hem*
'then me <=my> mother has something done for him'
- (8) *beetje met uh/ iets gedaan met naald*
'a bit with uh/ something done with needle'
- (9) *ik weet niet*
'I don't know' <rote form>
- (10) *hier + dan iets doen*
'here + then something do'
- (11) *iets uh/ja die groenten iets van*
'something uh/yeah those vegetables <=herbs> something of'
- (12) *dan + ik denk + over een dag was goed*
'then + I think + after one day was good'

Mohamed's progress is palpable. Apart from his general increase in lexical repertoire, he systematically uses inflected and compound forms. His normal way to refer to the past is either the perfect or, in the case of the copula, *was*. There is still some confusion, as illustrated by the - irregular - infinitive *doen* in 10; it is remarkable that three utterances before, the same event is reported by a correct perfect *heeft gedaan*; we cannot exclude that this may not be random, but rather an intended change in perspective. But these are isolated cases. All in all, he masters, or is at least very close, to the TL system - about as close as Ergün at the end of the observation period.

Cycle 3

The following story was recorded during a conversation about Mohamed's leisure time, about 27 months after his arrival.

Mohamed3: *Playing bingo*

- (1) *die zal ik vertellen*
'that will I tell'

- (2) *wij wassen daar te laat*
'we were there too late'
- (3) *hij was bij mij thuis*
'he was with me at home'
- (4) *was + ik denk + vrijdag*
'was + I think + friday'
- (5) *toen was hal vier*
'then was half four' <=3:30>
- (6) *hij tegen mij "wij gaan centrum in tilburg"*
'he to me: "we go center in Tilburg"'
- (7) *"dat is goed"*
""that is good""
- (8) *toen wij daar*
'then we there'
- (9) *ja zit die jongens allemaal bingo te spelen*
'yeah sit those boys always bingo to play'
- (10) *wij hebben ook mee met hun gedaan*
'we have also with with them done' <=meegedaan = joined>
- (11) *ik krijg niks*
'I get nothing'
- (12) *toen een keer gaat-ie said hij bingo uh*
'then one time goes-he Said he bingo'
- (13) *hij gaat bingo doen*
'he goes bingo do'
- (14) *ja + maar said is me vriend*
'well, now Said is my friend'
- (15) *ik heb die kartje*
'I have this card'

- (16) *ja + was/moest vijf + een ligne horizontale*
'yeah, was/must five + one ligne horizontale'
- (17) *er zit vijf ligne*
'there sits five ligne'
- (18) *ik heb twee of + ik denk + twee*
'I have two or + I think + two'
- (19) *toen ik heb rest ook volgemaakt*
'then I have rest also completed'
- (20) *toen was nog zes*
'then was still six'
- (21) *toen komt die zes*
'then comes that six'
- (22) *tegen hem "bingo"*
'to him: "bingo".'

Again, the story goes on for a long time; but this selection suffices to illustrate the relevant points. Although Mohamed in many respects has still not reached from the Standard, his expression of temporality is now almost perfect:

- (A) He regularly switches between Praesens and Perfectum or, in the case of the copula, simple past (*was, wassen*). The Praesens is occasionally used for events in the past, but only in cases of vivid narration where a native speaker might use the present as well.
- (B) There is only one reference to the future, and here, he indeed uses *zullen* 4-infinitive (1).
- (C) In (9), he even uses a periphrastic construction for aspectual differentiation: those boys were sitting there playing bingo all the time (when we joined them).
- (D) He has totally given up *en dan* and correctly uses the appropriate temporal adverb *toen* whenever he wants to make a shift in time explicit.

We should add that this picture is a bit too perfect: on occasion, Mohamed still uses the bare stem, and there are morphological and also functional mistakes. But they become rarer and rarer, and at the end of the observation period, he is not very far from the language of his local environment.

Summary

We were not able to observe the early stages of Mohamed's development. But from the data we have, it appears that this development is exactly like Ergün's. He first builds up a basic variety - with the interesting difference that his base form is not the infinitive but the bare stem. This basic variety is never considered to be a serious option: he immediately moves on towards the target language, resulting (cycle 1) in a mixture of TL-like forms, without their appropriate function, and relics of the basic variety. Then, there is a slow and continuous shift to the target: stem forms are eliminated (although they do not totally disappear), and the inflected forms become dominant, and correctly used. He even shows occasional attempts to use a kind of aspectual marking; example (9) is not the only case, but these attempts are rare.

5.3.2 Fatima

Fatima was born in Kenitra (western Morocco), had two years of primary school and then worked as a needlewoman. At the age of 25, she married a Moroccan who had been living in the Netherlands for more than twelve years, and joined him in Tilburg. At the first recording, one year after arrival, her Dutch was still close to zero, although she had regularly taken part in a migrant training course for two hours a week, and continued to do so. She had a part-time job as a cleaning woman, but her social contacts with the Dutch speaking environment were quite limited. As a consequence, we would not predict such a rapid learning process as in Mohamed's case. This prediction is borne out by the facts.

Throughout the first cycle, most of Fatima's utterances are heavily scaffolded, and largely, they show nominal utterance organisation - they consist of simple nouns and adverbs, including simple temporal ones, and mostly lack a verb form. But if there is a verb form, it can be of very different types: it is either a bare stem (such as *zeg* "say"), an infinitive (*kijken* "to watch") or even an inflected form (*heeft* "has"). There is no functional differentiation, or course. This variation is important because it demonstrates that the basic variety, with its stable "base form" of the verb, is not just an imperfect imitation of the TL verb forms: in a way, it is a system in its own right, in which one possible verb form is selected to be the base form. In the case of the Turkish learners, this happens to be the infinitive. In the case of Mohamed (and, as we shall see, also of Fatima), it is the bare stem. In the basic varieties with TL English, there is hardly any choice because stem and infinitive coincide. The only other option for the base form

would be *V-ing*, and this form is indeed frequently found (cf. chapter 3).

So, what we observe here is the state **before** the basic variety. Afterwards, Fatima slowly moves to this basic variety, and the following narrative from the midst of the second cycle (after 27 months of stay) shows that she now masters it. She had given birth to a child a few weeks before the encounter and now talks about her delivery:

Fatima2: *Giving birth*

- (1) *veel pijn*
'much pain'
- (2) *ik twaalf uur + ja + twaalf uur huil*
'I twelve hours + yes + twelve hours cry'
- (3) *praat*
'talk'
- (4) *ik zeg*
'I say'
- (5) *"kom + dokter + alsjeblijft"*
"'come, doctor, please'"
- (6) *"ik wil een minuut staan"*
"'I want one minute stand'"
- (7) *dokter zeg*
'dokter say:'
- (8) *"nee + mag niet"*
"'no, may not'" <idiomatic for "not allowed">
- (9) *"alleen slaap"*
"'only sleep'"
- (10) *die dokter van bed automatique met + beetje zit*
'this doctor of bed automatic with + a bit sit' <=stayed there sitting>
- (11) *ik "alsjeblijft + wilt een minuut lopen"*
'I: "please, wants one minute walk"'

- (12) *"kan niet"*
 <he:> "'can not"' <idiomatic for "impossible">
- (13) *ik alleen hier hier veel pijn/veel pijn hier*
 'I only here here much pain/much pain here'
- (14) *ik zeg van dokter*
 'I tell of doctor:'
- (15) *"alsjeblijft + ik ga naar toilet + poep doen"*
 "'please, I go to toilet + crap do"'
- (16) *dokter zeg voor mij*
 'doctor tell for me:'
- (17) *"nee + alles hier doen tot baby kom"*
 "'no, everything here do till baby come"'
- (18) *ja + baby kom ook met uh*
 'yes, baby come also with' <incomplete>

Her narrative shows all characteristics of a basic variety: a single base form of the verb, here the stem, and consequent application of PNO. The initial interval of the whole story is not made explicit, because it was introduced in the preceding conversation. But when the plot line begins, she makes it explicit with a TAP *twalfuur*, and everything else follows PNO, or is given in quoted speech. And in quoted speech, we also find some more complex forms; this has often been noted (cf. Klein and Perdue 1992:chapters 2 and 7). But in the plot line, the variety of forms observed in the first cycle has disappeared in favour of a single base form. Just as Mohamed, but in contrast to the Turkish learners, she does not use the discourse marker *en dan*.⁴

At this stage, Fatima could follow Ergün's and Mohamed's way and move towards TL, or she could stay with her basic variety and polish it as Mahmut does. The result is very clear: she goes the latter way. Throughout the third cycle, she does not learn a single inflected form (there are two occurrences of *was* and a few past participles, but they are not functionally used). Moreover, she gets almost completely rid of infinitives and inflected present tense forms in favour of her stem form. But she considerably enriches her lexical repertoire, including adverbials of all types. At the end of the observation period, she is much more fluent, but no closer to the temporal system of the TL.

5.3.3 Summary of Moroccan learners

The picture is very similar to the Turkish learners. Both Mohamed and Fatima acquire a basic variety. In Mohamed's case, he was already leaving that stage when he was first interviewed. But traces remain. He then rapidly moves towards the TL. In Fatima's case, the first encounters are before that stage. In this "pre-basic stage", she only uses some adverbials, and of course PNO, to mark temporality. She uses a range of morphologically different verb forms, but unsystematically. Then she moves to the usual basic variety and settles there.

5.4 Summary of TL-Dutch

Within the limits of the evidence available here, our analysis yields a relatively clear and consistent picture, according to which the acquisition of temporality has three distinct steps:

I. Pre-Basic Variety

At that level, most utterances dominantly show nominal organisation and only occasionally verbal organisation (cf. Klein and Perdue 1992). They mainly consist of 1 or 2 nouns, and adverbs or particles. If there is a verb form, it can appear in many morphological variants, which are not functionally used. The only way to express temporality is by adverbs and PNO. In our sample, this variety was only observed for Fatima. But it is at least not implausible that the other learners went through a similar phase.

II. Basic Variety

At this stage, utterances dominantly have infinite utterance organisation. There is one verb form, the "base form", which is used for all tenses, aspects, etc. It can be enriched by boundary markers to denote beginning and end. It can also be preceded by modal elements.

Temporality is expressed by a clever handling of adverbials of different types - TAD, TAQ and, above all, TAP - and by PNO. This system is simple, flexible, and allows an efficient expression of most temporal relations needed in everyday communication.

The basic variety is not entirely homogeneous. In particular, we noted two clear differences between the Turkish and the Moroccan variant. Both Turks develop and systematically use a "discourse marker" *en dan*, which is used to

introduce subsequent utterances and means something like "next, I tell you that". In a way, this construction is comparable to the non-temporal *then* or *now* in English texts. The Moroccan learner hardly use this construction. Second, there is also a difference in the choice of the "base form". The Turkish learners choose the infinitive, e.g. *kijken*, whereas the Moroccan learners choose the bare stem, e.g. *kijk*. We cannot exclude that there are other differences, too; but if so, they do not show up in our data.

The basic variety is elegant and versatile. But it has two clear disadvantages. First, it has some communicative drawbacks. Most of these can be overcome by increasing the lexical repertoire. This even applies to the missing aspect marking, which could be compensated for by the use of particles such as *juist* "just", etc. Second, the basic variety, no matter how flexible and understandable, is quite different from the language of the social environment. It marks the learner as an outsider. In order to solve this problem, there is no other way than to learn the language of the environment with all its irregularities and peculiarities. Further development depends on how the learner perceives these problems.

III. Further development

A learner who has attained the level of the basic variety can go on in two ways. He or she can stay in this refuge and try to make optimal use of it. To use another metaphor, the learner can simply enrich the lexical repertoire and learn to play his instrument in a most efficient way. This is what we observe for Mahmut and for Fatima. They do not really develop beyond the stage of the basic variety, but they do gradually enrich it.

By contrast, Ergün and Mohamed leave it behind. At some point, they start to add new and initially very confusing forms - confusing for them and for the interlocutor. Then, there is a very slow but regular process during which morphologically and functionally inappropriate forms are eliminated. We never notice a "sudden insight" which would lead, for example, to the correct use of the pluperfect. Learning is gradual, just as the learning of new lexical items. At the end of the observation period, this process has not lead to perfect mastery; there are still some wrong or inappropriately used forms, and some other forms, such as the periphrastic aspect marking, do not show up at all. But both Mohamed's and Ergün's language is not all that far from the language of their social environment - their language is no longer saliently different.

Why this difference in development? Or in other words, why does Mahmut's and Fatima's language fossilise (with respect to morphology, not to the lexicon), and Ergün's and Mohamed's does not? It seems that these two strategies reflect

two ways of dealing with the insufficiencies of the basic variety. The first strategy is good enough to deal with the everyday communicative problems of a foreigner. There are communicative problems which are not easily solved with an elaborate and well-mastered basic variety, but they are infrequent, and perhaps not worth the effort. The other strategy, which temporarily causes some confusion, leads in the long run to a language variety which is perhaps communicatively not so much more efficient, but which makes its speaker a member of the social environment - or at least less of an outcast.

Notes

1. For a description of the Turkish system, see chapter 4.1.3.
2. Cf. Klein and Perdue 1992, for a detailed analysis of these retellings for the same four informants.
3. The infinitive would be *verven*, third person singular present *verft*.
4. In other texts, we find some occurrences, but they are quite atypical.

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