

Talking in and out of place

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STELLINGEN

behorend bij het proefschrift

Talking In and Out of Place: Ethnographic reflections on language, place, and (un)belonging in Limburg, the Netherlands.

Lotte Thissen

1. Inhabitants in Limburg who are considered to be 'outsiders' due to their looks and/or descentance can often speak and understand dialects very well, which makes denying, questioning or ignoring their language practices a painful experience. People should therefore stop asking questions such as 'where are you from?'
2. Anyone can feel *in or out of place* depending on the context; even so-called Dutch *autochtonen* (natives) can feel *out of place* in Limburg.
3. The concept of *foreignness* captures the need people have to establish shared feelings of otherness, especially in this globalizing world where national identities are formulated in stringent terms of 'us' and 'them.'
4. Limburg, despite its peripherality, can be regarded as a linguistically diverse area. Speakers in Limburg use linguistic forms associated with local, regional, national, and global levels.
5. The province of Limburg is not unique: the dynamics discussed in this study may be found anywhere, as people all over the world are constantly engaging in linguistic and cultural place-making practices that put forward ideas about who is *in* and *out of place*.
6. Self-reflexivity is an opportunity rather than a hindrance to sound research for both anthropological as well as sociolinguistic studies, since the researcher's Self is an important embodied tool in learning about how others perceive and approach us.
7. A marriage between cultural anthropology and sociolinguistics comes with great benefits: for example, ethnographically studying the ways that people make places meaningful through language and cultural practices as well as emphasizing the value of sociolinguistic analysis in understanding how people align with and distance themselves from one another.
8. Ethnographic insights into society serve as a thermometer for social cohesion and health and should therefore be taken into account by policymakers and politicians.
9. Societal campaigns should explain that language practices and terms, such as 'the Limburger' and 'the Dutch(wo)man,' are more inclusive and plural than they are currently perceived. Only then will it be possible to bridge gaps and decrease societal segregation.
10. Ph.D. candidates should go for a research stay abroad at another university or institute, since this offers precious writing time in a new environment and opportunities to benefit from the expertise of talented scholars.
11. Toilets are tiny safe havens for ethnographers to jot down observations and conversations in tranquility – even when this means that research participants may suspect serious intestinal problems.

Maastricht, January 2018