



### YANKEES, MANNEQUINS AND SANTA CLAUS: THE DUTCH INFLUENCE ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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**ABSTRACT:** The world of today is globalized which has led to the spread of the English language as a *lingua franca*. This has resulted in the borrowing from the English vocabulary by the majority of languages. However, it is not very well known that the Dutch language has loaned vocabulary to the English language. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to answer the questions how Dutch loanwords entered the English language and how the English and American culture was influenced by the Dutch. The research for this paper was executed through a descriptive-qualitative approach. Studies by De Vries (1916), Llewellyn (1938), and Van der Sijs (2009) comprise the basic references of this paper, due to their degree of relevance and reference to the research of this paper's subject. It is observed that the Dutch language has influenced the (American) English language and the culture of the English speaking community due to the political, economic and military supremacy of the Dutch from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. It is concluded that a paper such as this might contribute to the insight that every language has its importance in today's globalized world.

**Keywords:** Dutch loanwords, English Language, Culture.

**RESUMO:** O mundo hodierno é globalizado. Esta globalização levou à disseminação do idioma inglês como língua franca. Isso resultou no empréstimo do vocabulário em Inglês para a maioria dos idiomas. No entanto, não é muito conhecido que a língua neerlandesa emprestou vocabulário para o Inglês. Sendo assim, o foco deste estudo é responder às perguntas como vocábulos emprestados do neerlandês entraram no Inglês e como a cultura inglesa e norte-americana foi influenciada pelos neerlandeses. Esta é uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativo-descritiva. Os estudos desenvolvidos por De Vries (1916), Llewellyn (1938) e Van der Sijs (2009) foram usados como referências básicas para a consecução deste, devido ao seu grau de relevância e referência para a pesquisa. Percebe-se que a língua neerlandesa tem influenciado a língua inglesa (britânico e/ou americano) e a cultura dos povos da língua inglesa cultura, devido à supremacia política, econômica e militar dos neerlandeses durante a Idade Média até o século XVII. Conclui-se que um artigo como este pode contribuir para a percepção de que cada língua tem a sua importância no mundo globalizado de hoje.

**Palavras-chave:** Empréstimos Linguísticos do Neerlandês, Língua Inglesa, Cultura.

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### 1 Introduction

The world of today is globalized. This globalization has led to the fact that no matter where one lives, Chinese food is eaten all over the world, everybody is connected to the world through the internet, and we travel by plane all over the world. Also, the same television series are watched, which are mostly series from the United States of America, whether one lives in Germany, Belgium or Brazil.

These aforementioned television series are, since they are from the United States, in the English language. This has caused the influx of a considerable familiarity with English words in many languages. Also, the economic, political and military dominance of the United States has contributed abundantly to the spread of the American English language and American culture to all parts of the world.

However, the English language had already spread its wings over the seven seas in earlier times due to the force of the British Empire. The overall result of this Anglo-American dominance on the world has resulted in the borrowing of English vocabulary by the majority of languages. It is noted, though, that also the English language, despite its powerful position in the world, has borrowed expansively from other languages.

An example of one of those languages, which is responsible for loanwords in the English language, is Latin. Also, the Greek language has marked the English language by providing a considerable amount of loanwords. Besides the influence from these classic languages on the English language, the influence of the French language on the English language is regarded as considerable.

However, it is not very well known that besides the aforementioned languages, the Dutch language has also loaned a remarkable amount of vocabulary to the English language. Cable & Baugh (1978, p. 188) state that: “[t]he latest study of the Low Dutch element in English considers some 2,500 words”. Despite this presence of the Dutch element in the English language, this fact is quite obscure.



In respect to this obscurity of the Dutch element in the English language, Salverda (2003, p. 128) states that: “[...] much of this was forgotten, due to the intense linguistic rivalry that developed between the Dutch and the English in the late eighteenth century”. Furthermore, Cable & Baugh (1978, p. 188) add that: “[o]ne must grant the possibility of more influence from the low countries upon English than can be proved by phonological or other direct evidence”. This statement justifies the importance of studying the Dutch influence on the English language.

The importance of the study of the Dutch influence on the English language is also stipulated by Salverda (2003, p. 124), when he states that: “[i]t may therefore be of interest to consider in some more detail the historical background and development of this Dutch element in English”. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to answer the question of how Dutch loanwords entered the English language.

Another objective is to answer the question of how the English and American culture and was influenced by the Dutch. This paper aims to answer these questions through the discussion of the following topics: the Dutch influence on the English language in general, the Dutch influence on the United States of America and the Dutch influence through Anglo-Dutch language contact in South Africa.

The research for this paper was executed through a descriptive-qualitative approach. According to Key (2007), a descriptive research contains categorized information, which is tabulated. This tabulated information is meant to distinguish the data and to aid the reader in noting the data. Also, a descriptive research, as in this paper, involves the description of various examples and the visualization and comprehension of the data. Key (2007), states that qualitative methods include the seeking of empirical support to produce information in regard to the subject that is studied. Qualitative methods may also be used for generalizations beyond the studied subject.

Studies by De Vries (1916), Llewellyn (1938), and Van der Sijs (2009) comprise the basic references of the paper, due to their degree of relevance and



reference to the research of this paper's subject. Also, the different moments of publishing of these studies indicate the continuous interest in the subject of this paper. Furthermore, other relevant books, articles and websites to the subject of this paper were studied.

Llewellyn's (1938) and De Vries' studies are centered on the Dutch influence on the English language in general. These authors describe which Dutch loanwords entered the English language and how they entered the English language. For example, many Dutch words entered the English language through maritime contacts. Furthermore, these authors also describe the Dutch influence on South Africa and the United States.

To research the Dutch influence on the United States was Van der Sijs' (2009) work was studied, which overviews the Dutch influence on the United States from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. This work not only describes the Dutch linguistic influence on the United States, but also describes the Dutch influence on North American culture and politics.

The sheets in this paper were based on the studies by De Vries (1916), Llewellyn (1938), and Van der Sijs (2009). Also, several other examples mentioned in studies by Cable & Baugh (1978) and Crystal (1997) were included in the tables. The examples in the sheets have the purpose to illustrate the Dutch element in the English language. The Dutch original counterparts of the loanwords were included for a better comprehension of the borrowing process.

This introduction will be followed by three sections. The first section discusses the Dutch influence on the English language in general. The second one discusses the Dutch influence on the United States of America, whereas the third section describes the Dutch influence on South African English through Anglo-Dutch language contact, followed by the final remarks and the references.



## 2 The Influence of Dutch on the English language in General

This section attempts to describe how and why Dutch vocabulary has entered the English language in general. Also, it is discussed why the Dutch influence on the English language is often neglected and denied. However, firstly it is regarded as important to discuss briefly some general features of the Dutch language in order to place the Dutch language into perspective regarding its relation to other languages and its position in the world.

The Dutch language<sup>3</sup> is, according to the DUTCH LANGUAGE UNION, an official language in the Netherlands, Belgium<sup>4</sup>, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles<sup>5</sup>. It is also spoken, although not as an official language, in parts of France and Indonesia. Furthermore, the Dutch language is spoken in South Africa where it has developed into Afrikaans, which will be discussed later on in this article.

The Dutch language is an Indo-European language, belonging to the Germanic languages. The Germanic languages are divided into three groups. A first group contains the East Germanic languages, which consists of dead languages such as Gothic. A second group consists of the North Germanic languages, such as Swedish, Danish and Norwegian. The West Germanic languages, the third group, include languages such as Frisian, German, Afrikaans, English and Dutch (CABLE & BAUGH, 1978).

### 2.1 Dutch influence on the English vocabulary, obscured by differences in phonology and spelling

Since Dutch and English are both West Germanic languages, it is often thought that borrowings from Dutch are mere cognates. Furthermore, some borrowings from Dutch are rather unrecognizable due to several differences between Dutch and English. Brachin (1985) states that English verbs are not suffixed, whereas Dutch verbs are

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<sup>3</sup> Also referred to as Low German or Low Dutch in older studies.

<sup>4</sup> Belgian Dutch is often referred to as Flemish.

<sup>5</sup> Caribbean islands, such as Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten.



suffixed. For example, the verb *plunder* comes from the Dutch verb *plunderen*, which indicates the *-en* suffix of Dutch verbs. Therefore, the Dutch origin of many English verbs has been obscured.

Furthermore, according to Brachin (1985), borrowings from Dutch have also been anglicized regarding pronunciation, which has modified the spelling of many Dutch borrowings. This modification of spelling has also contributed to obscuring Dutch borrowings in English. For instance, the Dutch word *deel*, has entered the English language as the word *deal*, due to the fact that the *ee* spelling in English is pronounced as in *deal*. This change in spelling to *ea* in English has obscured the Dutch origin.

### 2.2 General origins of Dutch linguistic influences on English

The Dutch linguistic influx into English commenced when William the Conqueror brought Flemish soldiers and weavers to England in the eleventh century. The Dutch influence on England lasted to the late seventeenth century when England was ruled by the Dutch prince William of Orange, who was requested by the English to protect them from the Catholic King James II. In turn for his protection, William, who was married to the English princess Mary, was crowned King of England in 1689 (DE VRIES, 1916).

De Vries (1916, p. 96) states that during these six centuries the Dutch influenced the English people considerably in: “[...] general civilization, in learning, in trade, in industry, in agriculture, in art, in literature, and in nearly every part of human life”. This influence was principally due to the fact that the Dutch were ahead of the English regarding political and military power, science and arts. Also, according to Llewellyn (1936), the English lacked vocabulary to describe, for example, new technologies invented by the Dutch-speaking world. Thus, the English incorporated vocabulary from the then world-leading Dutch into their vocabulary.

### 2.3 Dutch linguistic influence through commerce, trade and transport



A first example of this Dutch influence involves vocabulary that concerns trade, commerce and transport. For instance, the mercantile class was hardly existent in the thirteenth century in England. The English traders also lacked capital and organization, unlike the Flemish traders who were well-organized in guilds. This led to a Flemish dominance concerning products such as wool and other clothing products of which market cities such as Bruges and Antwerp became the staple places (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

This Flemish dominance regarding wool and clothing products also caused an emigration of Flemish weavers to England, since this profession was hardly represented in English society. Due to Flanders' economic dominant position in the thirteenth century, more qualified Flemish laborers were invited to work in England, such as beer brewers. These Flemish brewers invented a new type of malt, called beer. Thus, the English, who still brewed ale, invited Flemish brewers and their laborers to teach the English to brew beer, which also led to an influx of loanwords, such as *beer* from *bier* and *brewery* from *brouwerij* (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

Furthermore, the Dutch controlled the seas (principally the North Sea) from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century. The English, who had a modest fleet, depended thus on the Dutch for the transport of their products to England. Also, the English depended on the Dutch mercantile fleet to transport their wares abroad, including to their own colonies. Furthermore, The English needed the Dutch to transport travelers to and from Europe's mainland (LLEWELLYN, 1936). A borrowing from Dutch, such as wagon and others, related to transport can be detected from sheet 1.

### SHEET 1 - Examples of loanwords related to commerce, trade and transport

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
beer	bier
booze	buizen
brandy	brandewijn
brew	brouwen
brewery	brouwerij
bundle	bundel
deal	deel
freight	vracht



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gin	jenever
pack	pak
skate	schaatsen
sledge	slee
spool	spoel
swindle	zwendel
staple	stapel
tram	tram
wagon	wagen
wool	wol

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Source: compiled by author based on: Cable & Baugh (1978), Crystal (1997), De Vries (1916) and Llewellyn (1936).

The word *buisen* in its Middle Dutch meaning, from which the English has borrowed the word *booze*, is obsolete in Modern Dutch. The meaning of *buis* in Modern Dutch is tube.

#### 2.4 Dutch linguistic influence through maritime contacts and warfare

It is noted in the previous section (2.3) that the Dutch controlled the overseas trade through their mercantile fleet, which was larger than all the mercantile fleets of Europe together. This Dutch superiority on sea led to English annoyance, since the English were even depended on the Dutch for their trade with their own North American colonies (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

This annoyance led to the Navigation Acts, the first of which was enacted in 1651. These Navigation Acts had the purpose of diminishing the trade with and dependence on the Dutch. Also, these Navigation Acts had the purpose of controlling the trade with the English overseas territories. The Dutch were unimpressed by the English protectionist measures and continued their trading. The mutual irritation between the Dutch and the English led eventually to the four Dutch-Anglo wars<sup>6</sup> (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

These wars proved to lead to varying degrees of success for both sides. The first wars proved to be more successful for the Dutch, whereas the last wars proved to be favourable to the English, who eventually usurped the Dutch position as leading sea

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<sup>6</sup> Respectively in: 1652-1654, 1665-1667, 1672-1674, and 1780-1784.



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power. Nonetheless, these wars led to a substantial influx of borrowings from Dutch into English, due to the initial superior position of the Dutch as a seafaring nation, which can be detected from sheet 2 (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

However, not all the Dutch-Anglo sea contacts were hostile. During several wars, such as the Eighty Years' War (1586-1648) or the Dutch Independence War (1568-1684), the Dutch and English fought together, mostly on sea against their mutual Spanish enemy. Also, the Dutch and English fought on many occasions together against the French. This joint Anglo-Dutch warfare led to a further influx of Dutch vocabulary into English. Llewellyn (1936) further indicates that the Dutch supremacy on sea regarding fishing and whaling led to linguistic influence from Dutch on English.

It is noted that a considerable influx of Dutch vocabulary through warfare had already entered the English language during the eleventh century when William the Conqueror had hired Flemish mercenaries to defeat the English. On more occasions, mainly during the Middle Ages, the English hired Flemish mercenaries to join their armies, principally during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

Furthermore, Dutch loanwords also entered the English language due to the fact that the Dutch prince William of Orange, who was married to the English princess Mary, became King of England as William III on English request, since the English wanted protection from the Catholic King James II. This other contact through warfare also caused an influx of warfare related vocabulary from Dutch into English, of which examples can be detected from sheet 2 (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

### SHEET 2- Examples of loanwords through maritime contacts and warfare.

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
ahoy	hoi
avast	vast
booty	buit
buoy	boei
caboose	kombuis
cruise	kruisen
dock	dok
dune	duin
drill	drillen



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iceberg	ijsberg
keelhaul	kielhalen
knapsack	knapzak
maelstrom	maaltroom
mate	maat
plunder	plunderen
rover	rover
sloop	sloep
skipper	schipper
smuggle	smokkelen
trigger	trekker
uproar	oproer
walrus	walrus
wrack	wrak
yacht	jacht

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Source: compiled by author's based on: Cable & Baugh (1978), Crystal (1997), De Vries (1916) and Llewellyn (1936).

It is noted that the Dutch language has borrowed the noun *cruise*, in its meaning of a sea voyage, from English, despite the Dutch origin of this word.

### 2.5 Dutch linguistic influence through culture, arts, crafts and leisure

During the seventeenth century the Dutch were at the height of their power. Therefore, this century is known as “The Golden Century”. This power was not only reflected through military, colonial and commercial success, but also through an elevated level of culture, arts and crafts, compared to other nations. De Vries (1916, p. 66) confirms this by stating that: “[t]he general standard of English civilization was very low, while at the same time that of the Netherlands was ahead of all Europe”. Examples of this advancement are renowned painters such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals and Jan Steen.

This Dutch prominence regarding arts, such as painting, resulted in that the English imported many Dutch paintings and Dutch painters during the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century. This occurred due to the high prestige of paintings by Dutch and Flemish masters. Also, The Flemish and Dutch masters were invited to paint portraits of the English nobility and to teach the English to improve their artistic skills. Especially during the reign of King James I a large colony of Dutch and Flemish



painters was present at the English court. This led to an influx of Dutch loanwords regarding painting, such as easel (from *ezel*) and landscape (from *landschap*) (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

The English also lacked skilled craftsmen in many professions. Thus, the English imported many craftsmen from the Netherlands and Flanders during the Middle Ages, but mostly during the reign of Elizabeth I, due to the Dutch-Flemish technical advancement. In this respect Llewellyn (1936, p. 131) stipulates that: “[...] Dutch craftsmen seem to have been prominent in every advance of English material culture”. This advancement of Flemish and Dutch craftsmen is perceived mostly regarding weaving, carpentry, decorating, pottery, building and tailoring. The prominence of these craftsmen led to several loanwords, such as mannequin. This word originates from the Dutch word *manneken* (little man), which is a model to fit clothes or model clothes after (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

The presence of the many Dutch and Flemish artists and craftsmen influenced also the leisure time of the English. Several sports and leisure activities were copied from the Dutch and Flemish, including vocabulary connected to these leisure activities. For instance, the sport golf is derived from the Dutch sport *kolf*, which means stick. Furthermore, card games, played by the Dutch and Flemish led to the introduction of the word *luck*, which is based on the Dutch word *geluk* (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

### SHEET 3 – Examples of loanwords through culture, arts, crafts and leisure.

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
bell	bel
bluff	bluf
boy	boef
clock	klok
curl	krul
decoy	de kooi
easel	ezel
etch	ets
frolic	vrolijk
golf	kolf
hustle	husselen
lack	laken
landscape	landschap



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luck	geluk
maid(en)	meid
mannequin	manneken
pickle	pekel
plug	plug
pot	pot
Quack(salver)	kwakzalver
rack	rek
sketch	schets
slaughter	slachten
spike	spijker
splinter	splinter

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Source: compiled by author based on: Cable & Baugh (1978), De Vries (1916) and Llewellyn (1936).

*Decoy* is derived from the Dutch word *de kooi*, which means literally the cage. This cage was used to hunt ducks, hence the English meaning of *decoy*, which means to trap or to lure. However, *decoy* was also the name of a card game of Dutch origin, in which one had to lure the other players.

### 2.6 Dutch linguistic influence through science

The Netherlands, as the name indicates, is a country located below sea level. This location has led to numerous floods. During the eleventh century Dutch engineers invented a way to control floods. This controlling was executed through the creation of polders: land reclaimed from the sea through the use of dikes and windmills. Due to the experience and technological advance regarding reclaiming and draining land, the English, principally during the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century, invited Dutch engineers for consultation and executing draining and reclaiming land, leading not only to the copying of the Dutch engineering skills, but also to the borrowing of related vocabulary (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

The Dutch, besides their engineering skills, were also leaders in the science of botany at the city of The Hague, thus attracting English scientists, scholars and students to study botany in the Netherlands. Furthermore, books on botany contained Dutch words related to botany, which were copied literally in several languages. An example



of this is the English word *knoll*, which is based on the Dutch word *knol* (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

The Hague was not the only renowned city in the Netherlands as a city of scholarship and science. The University of Leyden was also highly respected throughout Europe, mostly regarding the study of medicine. This caused the matriculation of many students at Leyden University. Not only many English students crossed the North Sea to study medicine at Leyden, but also Dutch physicians were consulted by English patients. The results of these events caused an influx of Dutch vocabulary regarding medicine. The word *drug*, which originated from the Dutch word *droog* is an example of this. The literal meaning of this word is dry, since most medicines were made of dried herbs in those days (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

*Dope* is derived from the Dutch verb *dopen*, which means to dip. Medicines were often applied by dipping a cloth in the liquid medicine. In English this dipping in medicine became associated with the use of narcotics, due to the use of drugs such as opium.

#### SHEET 4 – Examples of loanwords related to science

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
cough	kuch
dam	dam
damp	damp
dike	dijk
dope	dopen
drugs	droog
gas	gas
knoll	knoll
measles	maze len
pink (body part)	pink
polder	polder
pump	pomp
smoke	smook
snuff	snuif
stuff	stof
wart	wrat

Source: compiled by author based on: Cable & Baugh (1978), De Vries (1916) and Llewellyn (1936).



This section has indicated that Dutch vocabulary has entered the English language from the eleventh century to the eighteenth century. This linguistic influence was caused due to the dominant position of the Netherlands during the seventeenth century. Also, Dutch vocabulary entered the English language through trade, commerce, transport, maritime activities and warfare. The Dutch eminence regarding science, arts and crafts likewise has left its linguistic marks on the English language. However, it is noted that, besides this general influence, the Dutch language has also left its marks in particular circumstances on the English language. A first outcome of this is the Dutch influence on the United States of America, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 3 The Dutch influence on North America

The former city of Brooklyn, which was consolidated into the city of New York as a borough in 1898, has as its motto *Eendraght Maeckt Maght* (Unity Makes Force). This motto, in seventeenth century Dutch, has been maintained by the borough of Brooklyn in its official seal and flag up to these times. However, this is not the only reminder of the Dutch colonial expansion that has left its marks on the United States of America. Therefore, in this section will be discussed the Dutch influence on the United States and the American English language through colonialism. Furthermore, the Dutch influence on the American language and culture through the influx of Dutch immigrants to the United States will be discussed.

#### 3.1 The Dutch colonization in North America

The Dutch set foot on North American soil in 1609 when a Dutch ship under the command of the English captain Hudson sailed up a river that was to receive the captain's name. This mission, commissioned by the United East India Company, had as its initial goal the discovery of a faster route to Asia. The Dutch immediately rose to the occasion and started to trade with the native population (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).



The Dutch traded beads, axes and beans for furs. These furs were of interest to the Dutch, since the Russians had monopolized this product and therefore demanded high prices for it. Also, the Dutch were interested in the abundant timberlands of what the natives called *Manna-Hata*<sup>7</sup>. The fur trade and the timberland provoked more expeditions to North America when in 1614 the Dutch claimed this part of North America as their colony under the name of *Nieuw Nederland* (New Netherlands) (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

The Dutch founded in 1621 the West Indian Company, which obtained the monopoly to trade with North and South America. In 1625 the Dutch settled permanently in *Nieuw Nederland*. This settlement received the name of *Nieuw Amsterdam* (New Amsterdam) and was located at what nowadays is known as Manhattan, New York City (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

However, the Dutch colonial presence in North America was short-lived, since Peter Stuyvesant, the director-general of the West Indies Company, had to surrender the *Nieuw Nederland* colony to the English as a result of the second Anglo-Dutch war (1665-1667). An Anglo-Dutch peace conference decreed that *Nieuw Nederland* was to be handed over to the British. The British renamed *Nieuw Amsterdam* into New York (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

It is noted though that the British rule did not end the Dutch influence in North America. The Dutch settlers continued to use their mother tongue and were thus responsible for an influx of Dutch loanwords. Also, the Dutch settlers maintained a prominent position in the now British colony of New York. This prominent position also led to the borrowing of Dutch vocabulary into American English.

### 3.2 Linguistic and cultural outcomes of Dutch colonization in North America

A first outcome of this borrowing consists of place names. Van der Sijs (2009) notices that the British adapted the Dutch names for towns, principally in the New York

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<sup>7</sup> Indigenous name for what later became known as Manhattan.



area in an anglicized form. Thus, for example, *Breukelen* became Brooklyn. Other examples are Staten Island (from *Staten Eiland*), Coney Island (from *Konijnen<sup>8</sup> Eiland*), Harlem (from *Haarlem*), Flushing (from *Vlissingen*), Wall Street (from *Waalstraat*), and Rhode Island (from *Rood<sup>9</sup> Eiland*).

Furthermore, as Van der Sijs (2009, p. 232) states: “[t]he key innovation that Dutch introduced into the world of commerce is the suffix *-ery*”. This suffix is considered as an Americanism, since it appeared only later in British English. The speakers of English in North America incorporated into their speech the Dutch suffix *-ery<sup>10</sup>* to form such words as bakery (*bakkerij* in Dutch) and bookbinding (*boekbindery* in Dutch).

Also related to the world of commerce is the word *dollar*. This word is based on the Dutch word *daalder*. This *daalder* was a coin that was used and minted in several Dutch provinces starting from 1538. The Dutch settlers also used this coin in North America. The British, after the incorporation of the *Nieuw Nederland* colony into the British Empire, continued to use the *daalder* in their North American colonies under the anglicized name of dollar, which is still the currency of the United States of America and which has become a symbol for the United States (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

Another typical symbol of the United States is the word *Yankee*. This word entered the American English language in the late seventeenth century. This word is based on the Dutch names *Jan* and *Kees*. These names are common Dutch first names, corresponding with the English names of John and Charles. The British, noticing that many Dutchmen were named *Jan* and *Kees*, used these names to address the Dutch settlers in a contemptuous and demeaning way. However, after some time, and principally during the American War of Independence, the Americans commenced to use the word Yankee as a reappropriated nickname and as a symbol of rebellion against the British rule in North America (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

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<sup>8</sup> *Konijnen* means rabbits.

<sup>9</sup> *Rood* means red.

<sup>10</sup> Spelled as *-erij* in modern Dutch.



This American rebellion against the British also led to the borrowing of a Dutch word, which is regarded as an archetypical example of an Americanism. This word is the word *boss*, which is derived from the Dutch word *baas*. In English, the common word to use to describe someone who was in charge in those days was the word *master*. However, as Van der Sijs (2009) describes, the Americans were much more democratic and loathed the use of the word *master*, since it related to their British masters during the American War of Independence. Furthermore, the word *master* became negatively associated with slavery. Therefore, the more neutral word *boss* became common to use in The United States to describe someone who is in charge.

Van der Sijs (2009) also provides examples of expressions which denote the Dutch in a negative way, due to the Angle-Dutch competition for world dominance. An example of this is the expression: a “Dutch treat”. This expression is used when every guests brings his own food and beverages to a party. This expression is also used when people pay their own check in a restaurant. Further expressions related to this behavior are “to go Dutch” or “a Dutch party”<sup>11</sup>. Van der Sijs (2009) provides more examples of the Dutch, depicted in a negative way in American English expressions, such as “Dutch kiss” (a kiss without passion) and “Dutch courage” (cowardly behavior).

However, Van der Sijs (2009) also provides more positive examples regarding the image of the Dutch. A first example of this concerns the “American Dream”. The Dutch West Indies Company prohibited the forming of guilds in their North American territory. These guilds forced all craftsmen and tradesmen to join a guild and to work for a fixed price. The prohibition of the guilds in North America contributed to the fact that all professions and trades became open to everyone. This resulted in free enterprise and an open market in which everyone had the opportunity to make one’s fortune, which is the basic principal of the American Dream.

Another example of the Dutch influence on the American way of life, dating from the Dutch colonization of North America, concerns general citizenship. The Dutch

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<sup>11</sup> In the Netherlands this is called an “American party”.



granted a full and general citizenship to all inhabitants of its North American colony, whereas in England general citizenship was only granted to a small part of the population in the home country as well as in the English colonies. Thus, general citizenship in the United States is a Dutch legacy, still present in the United States of America (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

A further influence on American politics and the American way of life concerns the American Declaration of Independence (1776). The American Declaration of Independence was inspired by the Dutch *Plakkaat van Verlatinghe* (Act of Abjuration) of 1581, which can be regarded as the Dutch declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the American Declaration of Independence was acquainted with the Dutch Act of Abjuration and based a part of the American Declaration of Independence on the Dutch ideas regarding national and individual freedom (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

### 3.3 Dutch immigrants in the United States of America

It is noted that the Dutch influence on the United States of America is not only based on the brief Dutch colonization of North America, since a number of 265,539<sup>12</sup> Dutchmen entered the United States after the colonial period. A first group of these immigrants entered the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century due to religious reasons. In the Netherlands occurred a schism in the Protestant church. The followers of the new Protestant direction felt obstructed by the Dutch government. For instance, their schools did not receive financial help from the Dutch government. Therefore, many followers of these new protestant groups moved to the United States, mainly to the Midwest, in order to find religious freedom and tolerance (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

Another group of Dutch immigrants followed in the 1880s. This group came to the United States to seek a better life since the United States offered many possibilities

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<sup>12</sup> Dutch speaking Belgian immigrants are not included.



to the Dutch immigrants, which were absent in the Netherlands due to an economic crisis. The aftermath of the Second World War (1939-1945) also led to a considerable influx of Dutch immigrants, seeking to escape the immense poverty and destruction caused by the devastating effects of the Second World War (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

### 3.4 Examples of the influence of Dutch immigrants on the United States

Despite the relatively modest number of Dutch immigrants, their influence is considerable. For instance five American presidents are of Dutch ancestry: M. Van Buren<sup>13</sup>, T. Roosevelt, F.D. Roosevelt, G.H. Bush and G.W. Bush. Also, many towns received their names from Dutch immigrants. Van der Sijs (2009) mentions examples such as: *Amsterdam, Barneveld, Groningen, Holland, Middleburg, Nassau, Nederland, Orange City, Pella, Wilhelmina* and *Zeeland*. Most of these names were based on names of the towns from where the Dutch immigrants originated (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

Other examples of the Dutch influence on the United States concern vocabulary on housing, since Dutch immigrants were responsible for the influx of several housing terms into American English. For instance, the word *block* as in a *block of houses* is based on the Dutch term *huizenblok*. The word *stoop*, meaning a small platform or porch, originates from the Dutch word *stoep*. *Boulevard* is often considered as of French origin. However, it is based on the Dutch word *bolwerk*, which entered the French and American English language as *boulevard*<sup>14</sup> (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

Furthermore, Van der Sijs (2009) discusses the influx of Dutch loanwords through children's language into the American English language. An example of this children's language concerns the word *pinky*<sup>15</sup>. This word is derived from the Dutch word *pink*. The children's diminutive<sup>16</sup> of this word in Dutch is *pinkie*. As such, the word *pinkie* entered the American English language.

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<sup>13</sup> Van der Sijs (2009) mentions that Van Buren was Dutch speaking. English was his second language.

<sup>14</sup> *Bolwerk* also entered the English language as *bulwark*.

<sup>15</sup> In British English this word is referred to as *little finger*.

<sup>16</sup> The adult's diminutive in Dutch is *pinkje*.



Also, the word *spook* originates from the language spoken by Dutch children. This word is derived from the Dutch word *spook*, which has the same meaning as in English. The verb *to snoop* is also based on Dutch children's language. Van der Sijs (2009) describes that this verb is based on the Dutch nouns *snoep*, *snoeper* and Dutch verb *snoepen*. The noun *snoep* means candy, whereas the verb *snoepen* denotes the act of eating candy. The noun *snoeper* denotes a person who eats candy or a person who is sneaky or nosy. In this latter meaning the verb has entered American English as the verb *to snoop*.

Likewise, the Santa Claus tradition entered American English through children's language, spoken by the Dutch immigrants' children. In the Netherlands and Belgium *Sint Nicolaas* or *Sinterklaas* (in children's speech), is an old medieval tradition, which is existent up to our times. *Sinterklaas* gives presents to the children during the night of the fifth to the sixth of December. In order to receive their presents, the children have to sing *Sinterklaas* carols. Also, as in the American version, *Sinterklaas* has a book in which is written whether the children's behavior was good or naughty during the year (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

However, the obvious Catholic references to *Sinterklaas* were objected to by the predominately Protestant Americans. Therefore, *Sinterklaas*'s name was anglicized into Santa Claus<sup>17</sup>. Also, the day of commemoration was changed for that of Christmas time. Furthermore, *Sinterklaas*' appearance was adapted. *Sinterklaas*'s means of transport was also changed. His horse was replaced by a sleigh, a word which is borrowed from the Dutch word *slee* (VAN DER SIJS, 2009).

### SHEET 5- Examples of borrowings from Dutch in American English.

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
bazooka	bazuin
bindery	binderij
block	blok
boss	baas
boulevard	bolwerk

<sup>17</sup> Father Christmas in British English.



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burgher	burger
coleslaw	koolsla
cookie	koekie
crooner	kreunen
Dollar	Daalder
geek	gek
growl	gruwel
hunk	honk
kit	kitte
pinky	pinkie
pit	pit
Santa Claus	Sinterklaas
scone	schoon
scoop	schop
sleigh	slee
snoop	snoep
spook	spook
stoop	stoep
wafer	wafel
waffle	wafel
Yankee	Jan Kees

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Source: compiled by author based on Llewellyn (1936), De Vries (1916), and Van der Sijs (2009).

A bazooka is a military device, used to launch rockets. However, the name is based on the Dutch word *bazuin*. This word means trumpet. The Americans pronounced this word as bazoo. As such it entered American English in the meaning of a simple wind instrument or slang for mouth. Because of the bazooka's likeness with a trumpet, the word *bazuin* was the inspiration for the word *bazooka*.

It is noted in this section that the North American culture and the American English language were influenced by the Dutch. This influence occurred in a first moment through colonization. Later, the Dutch influence was caused by Dutch immigrants, who entered the United States during the nineteenth century. Examples of the Dutch influence have been discussed in this chapter. Further examples can be detected from sheet 5.

#### 4 Anglo-Dutch Language contact in South Africa

The current South African government recognizes an impressive amount of eleven official languages. According to the South African governmental census of 2001,



the most spoken home language is IsiZulu (23.8%). The language which is the third spoken home language is Afrikaans (13.3%) whereas English is only to be found as the sixth spoken home language (8.2%). South Africa is probably the nation with the most direct contact between the Dutch and the English languages due to historic reasons, which will be discussed in this section (McARTHUR, 1998).

### 4.1 Dutch or Afrikaans?

The amount of speakers of English as home language in South Africa is rather modest despite its position as the *lingua franca* of education, government, entertainment and so on. Furthermore, the English language as spoken in South Africa, known as South African English (SAE), has undergone many linguistic influences due to the presence of nine indigenous languages such as IsiZulu and Xhosa. This influence is reflected through the use of indigenous languages to describe local phenomena which lack an English equivalent. For example, South African English contains indigenous vocabulary such as *Gogga* (bug), *Gogo* (grandmother) and *Imbizo* (gathering) (McARTHUR, 1998).

However, McArthur (1998) states that 50% of the SAE vocabulary is based on Dutch or Afrikaans. It is also noted that the Dutch or Afrikaans influence is not only present in the vocabulary of SAE, but also present in the syntax and pronunciation of SAE, which will be discussed later. To do so, it is regarded as important firstly to explain the difference between the Dutch language and Afrikaans, how they were established in South Africa and how they grew to such prominence in South Africa, marking not only South African English, but also the English language spoken in other countries.

Nowadays, Afrikaans and Dutch are regarded as different languages, although a minority of linguists considers Afrikaans as a Dutch dialect or as a Dutch-based Creole language, according to the many discussions regarding this subject on the



internet<sup>18</sup>. This discussion is caused by the fact that linguists such as Mesthrie (1995) have estimated that ninety to ninety-five percent of the Afrikaans vocabulary originates from Dutch. Besides this, according to McArthur (1998), English became South Africa's sole recognized language in the 1820s, followed by Dutch in the 1880s, which led to an unrecognized position for the Afrikaans language.

Afrikaans only attained official recognition in 1925, when it was granted the same rights as Dutch and then only as an assimilated language with Dutch, confirms McArthur (1998). The name Dutch only became obsolete when it was removed from the South African constitution in 1983. From this year on, up to 1994, Afrikaans and English were the two official languages in South Africa. Therefore, since linguists are indecisive whether to regard Afrikaans as an independent language or not, as well as due to the similar characteristics between Dutch and Afrikaans as mentioned before and the fact that Afrikaans is based on Dutch, it is opted to refer to Dutch-Afrikaans instead of Dutch or Afrikaans in the context of this paper.

#### 4.2 The presence of the Dutch and the Dutch language in South Africa

Whether the language of the descendants of the Dutch colonists should be considered as Dutch or Afrikaans is an ongoing debate led by many linguists, as has been discussed in the previous paragraph. However, it should be established how the Dutch-Afrikaans language has arrived in South Africa and how it became an official language, leaving its mark on the English language.

The Dutch language arrived in South Africa when Van Riebeeck in 1652 founded a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope for the Dutch East India Company, which later became a farming colony. The Dutch settlement was seized by the British in 1795, when the Netherlands were occupied by Napoleonic France. The Cape colony was returned to the Dutch in 1803, but in 1806 finally incorporated into the British Empire (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

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<sup>18</sup> For example: The Antimoon Forum and the site of the UCLA.



The Dutch and British hardly merged and kept mostly to their own groups due to mixed interests; the Dutch were mostly interested in agriculture and the British in trade. Also, tensions grew between the British and the Dutch settlers, since the British instituted English as the sole language of South Africa in 1825. Dutch was granted equal rights only in 1882. Furthermore, the sending of many impoverished English families to South Africa, who took land and jobs from the Dutch, caused friction between the English and the Dutch (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

The Dutch settlers, called *Boers* (farmers), left their homes and began to migrate (the so-called Great Trek) during the 1830s and 1840s in search of new land and to escape from the British control. The Great Trek caused eventually the founding of several independent *Boer* republics. The British succeeded to subdue the *Boer* republics (the Orange Free State and the Republic of Transvaal) in two wars, the so-called *Boer wars* (1880-1881 and 1898-1902), despite international protests and lobbying by President Kruger of the Transvaal republic in search of international help (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

### 4.3 Language contact between the British and the Dutch

The previous paragraphs have described how the Dutch and their language were established in South Africa. Of further importance will be the description of how the language contacts between the Dutch and the British were established. Firstly, it is noted that the Dutch and British hardly maintained contacts since the Dutch were mostly agriculturally interested and the British trade interested. Despite this situation, Dutch-Anglo marriages did occur, which provoked Anglo-Dutch language contact (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

Furthermore, the gold rush during the 1860s attracted the arrival of thousands of British immigrants, which forced the Dutch to interact more with the British. Likewise, the *Boer wars* were responsible for an increasing language contact since these wars provoked the sending of 300,000 British soldiers. These soldiers were taught



Dutch-Afrikaans words and phrases for a better understanding of their enemies (LLEWELLYN, 1936).

#### 4.4 The South African English vocabulary and Dutch-Anglo language contact

It is noticed in the previous paragraphs that South African English has received much influence from Dutch-Afrikaans due to increasing language contact. The most important outcome of this language contact is reflected in the vocabulary of South African English. However, McArthur (1998) notes that the use of Dutch-African vocabulary depends on the social background of the speaker of SAE. McArthur (1998) divides the speakers of South African English into three groups.

A first group relates to the upper-classes, who tend to speak Received Pronunciation (RP). Their variation is known as Cultivated. A second group refers to General, a variation spoken by the middle-class. A third group of speakers of South African English is referred to as speakers of Broad. This variation is working-class based and tends more to Dutch-Afrikaans vocabulary than the Cultivated and General variations (McARTHUR 1998).

Despite this dependence of social class regarding the use of Dutch-Afrikaans vocabulary, it is noted by McArthur (1998) that the use of Dutch-Afrikaans vocabulary is present in all layers of South African society due to a lack of English counterparts. For instance, the Dutch settlers had already established names for many typical South African geographical sites, towns and flora and fauna before the arrival of the British. Thus, as Llewellyn (1936) confirms, the British incorporated these names into the English language due to a lack in the English language.

An important group of Dutch-African names, which are used in South African English, deal with names of towns. The list concerning Dutch-African based names of towns is substantial. McArthur (1998) provides examples such as: Bloemfontein, Boksburg, Klerksdorp, Dordrecht, Johannesburg, Kaapstad, Utrecht, Potchefstroom,



Kroonstad, Midrand, Stellenbosch, Welkom, Witbank, Krugersdorp and Rustenburg, amongst others.

Other examples as listed by both McArthur (1998) and Llewellyn (1936) that concern geographical names in South African English, borrowed from Dutch-Afrikaans, include: *berg* (mountain), *kloof* (valley), *rand* (edge), *bush* (in Dutch: bos), *rooibos* (sagebrush), *veldt* (field), *drift* (flow of a river) and *kop* (top of mountain). These examples mentioned contain several of the most commonly used in South African English.

A second group of borrowings from Dutch-African vocabulary present in South African English relate to names concerning flora and fauna. Llewellyn (1936) indicates that many South African animals and plants were unknown to the British when they incorporated South Africa into the British Empire. Thus, the British borrowed heavily from Dutch-Afrikaans, since the Dutch settlers had already named many animals and plants. Some of these names have become known throughout the English speaking world.

A famous example of this animal-related borrowing from Dutch-Afrikaans, as mentioned by Llewellyn (1936), which has entered the realms of International English, is *reebok* (antelope). *Reebok* is also known as a brand name for tracking shoes and sneakers throughout the English speaking world and beyond. Another example of the Dutch-Afrikaans influence regarding flora and fauna on South African English, as described by Llewellyn (1936), include *aardvark* (groundhog), *boomslang* (a kind of snake), *meerkat* (a wild cat), *springbok* (a kind of antelope) and *buck* (*bok* in Dutch).

Llewellyn (1936) also mentions that many borrowings from Dutch-Afrikaans entered South African English through warfare and daily life contact between the Dutch-Afrikaans settlers and the British. Despite many attempts by the English speaking South Africans to use English words, many Dutch-Afrikaans names for food have been borrowed. These daily life contacts have been responsible for the influx of



such words as: *biltong* (a kind of steak), *boerworse* (a kind of sausage), *sparerib* (from *ribbespeer*) and *braai* (barbeque).

Besides this culinary vocabulary, Dutch-Afrikaans has been responsible for the influx of vocabulary related to warfare into South African English due to the aforementioned Great Trek and the *Boer* wars. Llewellyn (1936) provides examples such as: *laager* (a fortified camp), *spoor* (a track), *kommando* (a command) and *trek* (voyage).

Also, daily contact between the Dutch-Afrikaans population and the British affected the English language as spoken in South Africa by introducing vocabulary that entered South African English for miscellaneous reasons. Llewellyn (1936) mentions examples such as *boer* (a farmer), *Hottentot* (a denomination for indigenous people), *outlander* (a foreigner, mostly used for the British) and *Afrikaans* (the language of the Dutch settlers).

#### 4.5 The syntax of South African English and Anglo-Dutch language contact

Besides the Dutch-Afrikaans influence on South African English vocabulary, Dutch-Afrikaans also influenced South African English regarding syntax. An example of this phenomenon is *no* as affirmative sentence initiators. This feature entered South African English through Dutch-Afrikaans; languages which commonly use *no* as affirmative sentence initiators. Thus, speakers of South African English might utter: “How are you? No, I’m fine”. It must be stipulated that the use of *no* as affirmative sentence initiators depends on the social class of the speaker, for instance, speakers of Broad South African English are more inclined to use *no* as affirmative sentence initiators than the other classes of speakers of South African English (McARTHUR, 1998).

Furthermore, McArthur (1998) describes another example of the Dutch-Afrikaans influence on the South African English syntax, namely the use of *busy* plus a progressive. An example of this feature is: “I’m busy waiting for the bus”. This



phenomenon is quite common in Dutch and Afrikaans. Also in this case the use of *busy* plus a progressive depends on the social class of the speaker. Mostly speakers of Broad South African English tend more to use *busy* plus a progressive than the other speakers of South African English.

#### 4.6 The pronunciation of South African English and Anglo-Dutch language contact

The pronunciation of South African English also underwent influence from Dutch-Afrikaans. For instance, McArthur (1998) indicates that Afrikaans and Dutch lack the Received Pronunciation vowel /æ/ as in /<sup>TR</sup>ÆP/. Thus, the pronunciation of this vowel in South African English can consequentially be produced by some speakers, under the influence of Dutch-Afrikaans, as /<sup>ɘ</sup>/, resulting in /<sup>TR</sup>cP/ instead of the Received Pronunciation utterance /<sup>TR</sup>ÆP/.

McArthur (1998) also mentions that the /<sup>ɘ</sup>/ sound can be pronounced as /<sup>ɶ</sup>/, due to the Dutch-Afrikaans influence in South African English. Likewise, in Dutch and Afrikaans, /ɪ/ is often realized as the [ɶ]. Some speakers of South African English have also incorporated this phenomenon into their pronunciation. Again, it is noted that these variations in pronunciation depend on the speaker. Upper-class speakers of English in South Africa tend more to Received Pronunciation, whereas the Broad speakers tend more to incorporate Dutch-Afrikaans elements into their utterances (McARTHUR, 1998).

#### 5 Final remarks

It is noted in the introduction that the world of today is globalized. One of the consequences of this globalization is that the English language has become a *lingua franca* due the political, economic and military dominance of the United States of



America. However, it is observed in this article that the English language has also incorporated vocabulary from other languages, such as the Dutch language.

This Dutch language has exercised its influence on the English language due to various reasons as have been described in this paper. One of these reasons is related to the political, economic and military supremacy, which the Dutch exercised over the English from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. This supremacy led to the borrowing of Dutch vocabulary in the English language in general as has been described in the second section.

Also, American English has borrowed from the Dutch language. Besides this linguistic influence, the Dutch influence on American culture is observed. It is concluded, regarding the Dutch influence on the United States that this influence was caused by the Dutch colonization of North America in the sixteenth century. Also, Dutch immigrants who came to the United States during the nineteenth century were responsible for further linguistic and cultural influences on the United States.

Furthermore, it is noted and described that Anglo-Dutch language contact in South Africa has led to an influx of Dutch loanwords in South African English. Also, this language contact has marked South African English considerably with respect to pronunciation and syntax. It is concluded that the Anglo-Dutch language contact originated from the Dutch colonization of South Africa. Also, the *Boer* wars have also led to further language contacts between the Dutch and the British.

Despite this linguistic and cultural influence, The Dutch marks on American culture and the English language are not well known and underestimated due to the prominent position of the English language nowadays. Words such as *waffer*, *golf* and *dune*, which are present in many languages, are regarded as of English origin. Therefore, it is hoped that this paper can contribute to greater recognition of the Dutch influence on the English speaking world.

It is also concluded that the recognition of the Dutch influence on English, as well as the influence of other languages on English, may contribute for more interest to



study and value other languages and cultures. Furthermore, the perception that the English language has also been influenced by other languages may contribute to undermine language learner's prejudice towards the English language.

This prejudice has often been caused by the dominant position of English and the borrowing from English, which is regarded as a threat towards one's native language. Therefore, the perception that the English language, despite its borrowings from other languages, has maintained its own character might contribute to less prejudice and distrust towards the English language. Thus, an article as this might contribute to the insight that every language has its importance in the globalized world of today.

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