

# LINGUISTIC ACCOMODATION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: MEPS AND INTERPRETERS

## Background

Defrancq (2018) proposed to view the European Parliament as a **discourse community** (Swales 1990):

- Because of the shared working environment, not only do MEPs influence interpreters' language, but interpreters may also linguistically influence MEPs.
- Possible repercussion for interpreting corpora: are they really comparable?

Defrancq (2018) tested this **convergence hypothesis** on the basis of discourse markers but obtained no conclusive results

Defrancq & Plevoets (2019) investigated **formulaic expressions** (n-grams)

- = Clear features of conventional(ized) language use (Plevoets & Defrancq 2018)
- Ferraresi & Milicevic (2017) found a difference between source speeches and interpretation for collocation *types* but not for collocation *tokens*

## Research question

Is the (formulaic) language use of MEPs similar to that of EP interpreters, compared to non-EU (i.e. national) parliament members?

## Data

Corpora:

- European Parliament Interpreting Corpus – Ghent
- Spoken Dutch Corpus, component g
- = Naturalistic data (Gile 1998)

Additionally, allows for the comparison of interpreting with non-interpreting (Baker 1993)

## EPICG

Plenary sessions of the European Parliament

270 000 tokens... and rising

French, Spanish, English and Dutch

- 2006 batch : only French source and Dutch target language
- 2008 batch: French, English and Dutch both as source and target language

## SDCg

Plenary debates in Belgian and Dutch parliaments

360 000 tokens:

- The Netherlands: 220 000 tokens
  - Belgium/Flanders: 140 000 tokens
- 1998-2003 (Oostdijk 2000)

## Method

Preliminary step: Simple Correspondence Analysis of

- 4 language varieties
  - 181 n-grams (3- & 4-grams)
- R package **svs** (Plevoets 2015)

Confirmatory step: Mixed Model with file/speech as random effect

R package **lme4** (Bates et al. 2015) and **effects** (Fox 2003) for visualization

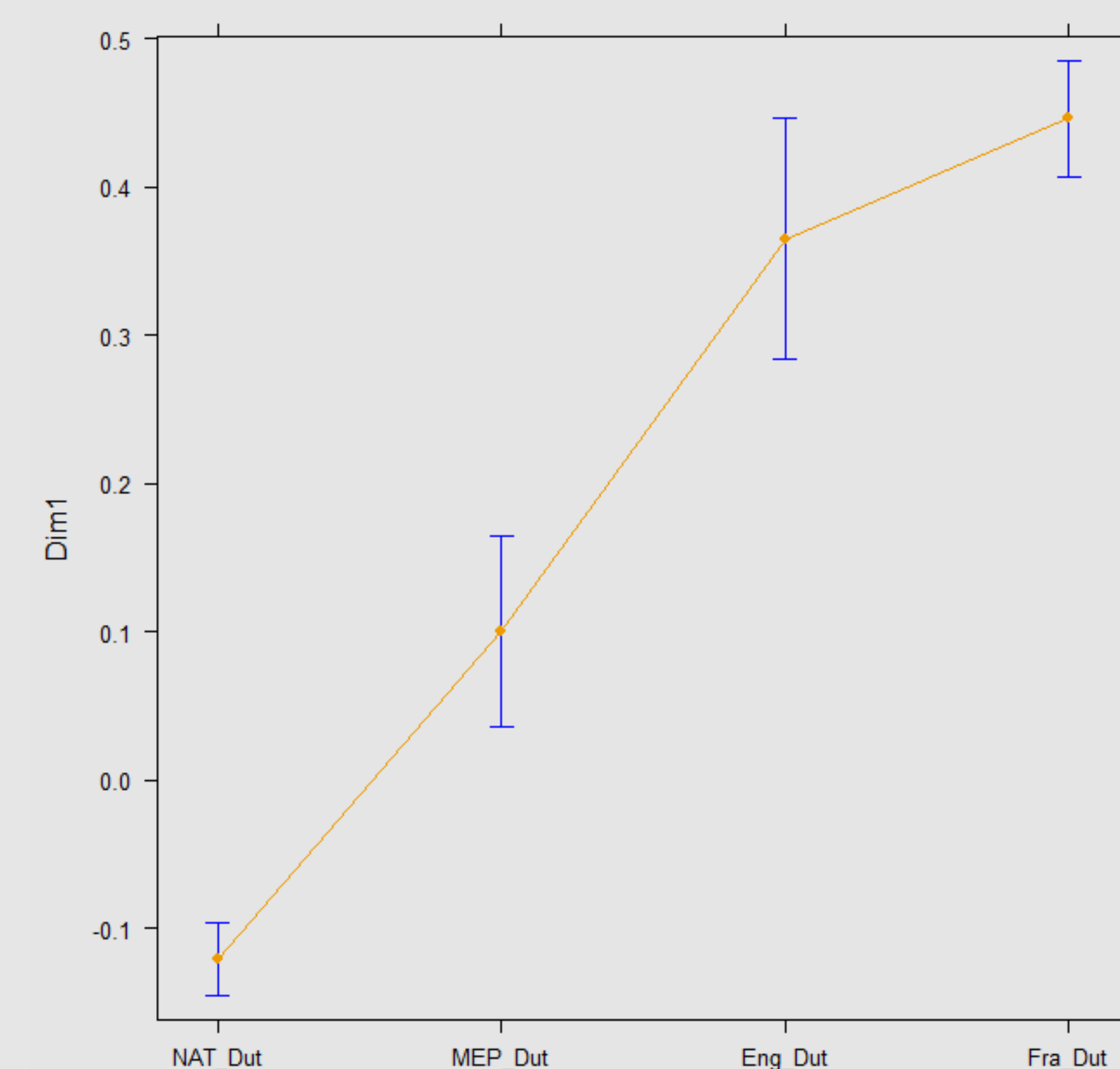
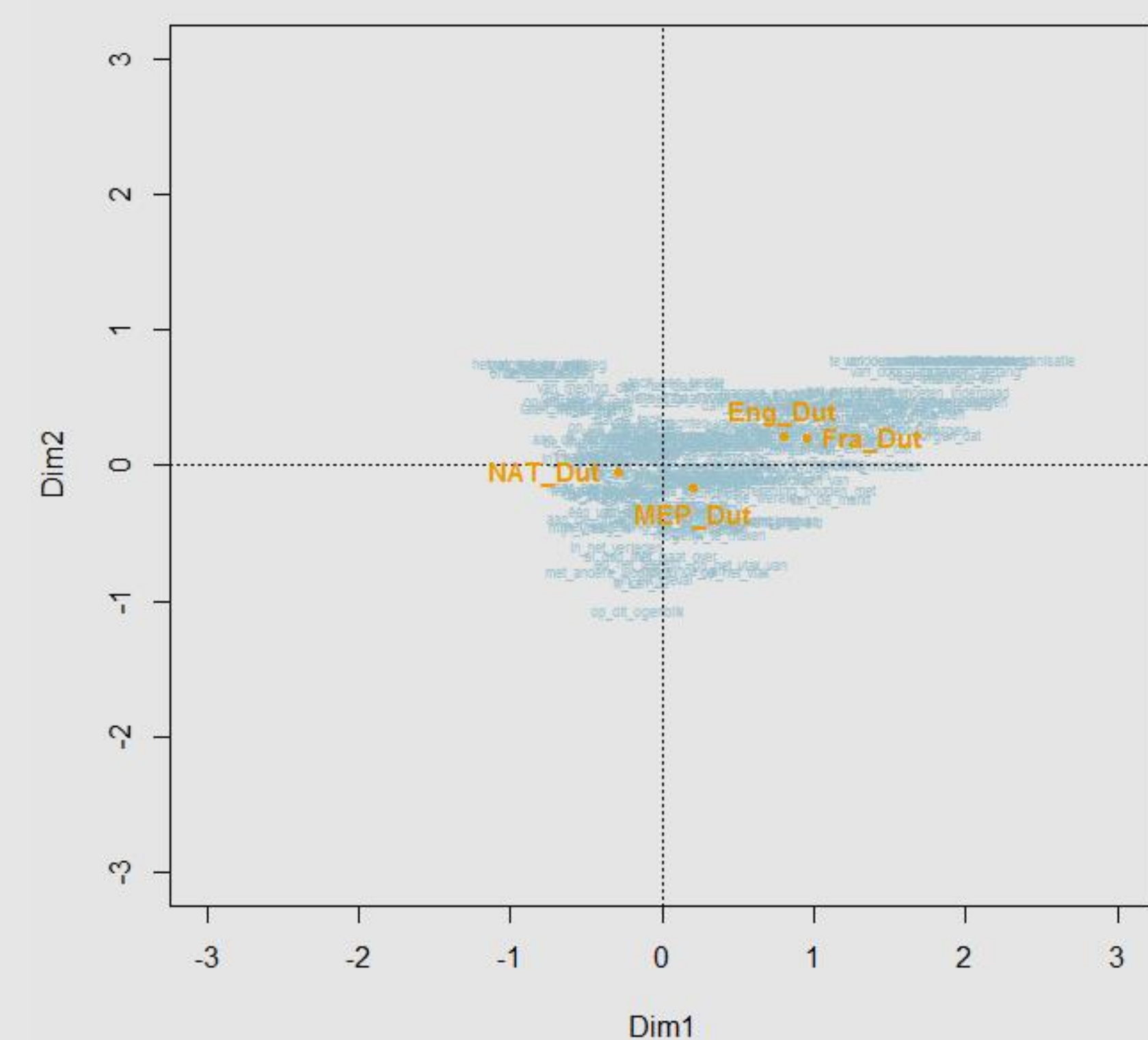
## 4 language varieties:

- 239 Monolingual Dutch speeches in Belgian and Dutch national parliaments
- 43 Dutch source texts in EP (from MEP's)
- 27 Dutch interpreted from English in EP
- 137 Dutch interpreted from French in EP (= 108 from 2006 + 29 from 2008)

## 181 n-grams = 3- & 4-grams from Plevoets & Defrancq (2018) without:

- N-grams referring to EP entities
- N-grams related to a debating context

## Results



## Conclusion

MEPs are 'midway' between EP interpreters and non-EU parliament members

Additionally, MEPs show preference for Netherlandic Dutch

Possible confirmation from other source languages (e.g. English)?

## Contact

koen.plevoets@ugent.be  
bart.defrancq@ugent.be  
www.vtc.ugent.be

Universiteit Gent

@ugent

Ghent University