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Mandarin-accented Dutch Prosody

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The dissertation reports on two perception experiments (Experiments 1 & 2) and three production experiments (Experiments 3, 4 & 5) that explore the phonology and phonetics of the prosody of Mandarin-accented Dutch. Experiment 1 was conducted to see how well Chinese speakers of Dutch (CSD) identify the correct accentuation patterns in Dutch sentences, while Experiment 2 explored the extent to which they are able to identify the most appropriate intonation contour for sentences in context. Experiment 3 studied their choice of intonation melody in the production of seven 'intonational idioms'. Experiment 4 investigated how CSDs produced Dutch monosyllabic Falls, Rises and Fall-rises under variation of the availability of sonorant sounds. Experiment 5 studied how different types of focus affected the pronunciation of falling intonation.

The perception experiments showed that CSDs do not know what intonation pattern to use and what words to accent when faced with contextualized sentences. This finding reveals that CSDs could not be expected to produce correct prosody in Dutch even if their command of the phonetics was perfect. Experiment 3 showed that this conclusion is correct on the basis of a production experiment, where CSDs failed to produce the right melody in 'intonational idioms'. Together with Experiments 4 and 5, this experiment also showed that CSDs do not command the phonetic routines used by native speakers and often transfer L1 prosody to their Dutch. The one exception was the lack of any transfer from Mandarin in the pronunciation of pitch falls as a function of focus.

This dissertation will be of interest to all those working on phonetics, prosody, Dutch and Mandarin Chinese phonology as well as second language acquisition.

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