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A Companion in Linguistics



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A Festschrift for Anders Ahlqvist on the occasion of his sixtieth
birthday

Edited by
Bernadette Smelik
Rijcklof Hofman
Camiel Hamans
David Cram



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Cover photograph © Bernadette Smelik 1995; remains of the monastic school of the early medieval monastery in Nendrum (Co. Down), where according to Hofman (1996: 21-3, quoted in Lambert, this volume) the St Gall Priscian Ms. (discussed in Ahlqvist 1988) was possibly written.

Frontispiece © Jacob Ahlqvist 2004.

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From Irish sheep boy to toddler Keesje

Dutch child language study and its international context*

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1. Introduction: Irish sheep boy and toddler Keesje

In the late seventeenth century, the interesting case of the so-called Irish sheep boy drew the attention of the famous Dutch physician Nicolaes Tulp (1593-1674), immortalized by Rembrandt's Anatomy Lesson. When, at the end of his life, Tulp made a Dutch translation of his previous *Observationes Medicae* (1641), he mentioned the arrival in Amsterdam of the Irish boy, who had lived among wild sheep from a very early age and had adapted himself to his companions in such a way that he even bleated and ate only grass and hay.¹ The boy, unable to speak, was examined by Tulp himself, who took a great interest in the production of sounds both by animals and human beings and, if possible, would have anatomized him in order to check his organs of speech. The sheep boy is one of the well-known examples of feral children, which played an important role in the eighteenth-century international debate on the origin of language.² These children were expected to serve as evidence for the original pre-linguistic state of man and possibly for the origin and development of language as well. In the Netherlands, almost half a century later, yet another feral child was seen as a nine days' wonder: the Kranenburg girl (or *Puella Trans-Isalana*) who was discovered in the eastern province of Overijssel in 1717.³

* My research on early psycholinguistics in the Netherlands was carried out within the ULCL (University of Leiden Centre for Linguistics), in collaboration with my colleague Ariane van Santen. Cf. Van der Wal and Van Santen (forthcoming) and Van Santen and Van der Wal 2004. I thank Rosemary Combridge (London) for her useful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

¹ In 1672, the sheep boy had been discovered and at the estimated age of sixteen brought to Amsterdam where he was on show to the public. Cf. Tulp (s.a.: 364): '*Tot Amsterdam is gebracht en voor elkeen tentoongesteld een jonge hekspringer (=wildebras) van zestien jaren, die, zijn ouders bij ongeval missende, onder de wilde schapen van jongs opgevoed, derzelfder natuur als aangewend had (...).*'

² Cf. Van der Wal 1999. For ancient investigations in the origin of language cf. Campbell and Grieve 1982.

³ Cf. Van der Wal 1999 for more details.

Like the Irish sheep boy and other cases, the case of the Kranenburg girl only offers us scant information on her linguistic skills (at her discovery she stammered and spoke unintelligible words) and her subsequent progress (six months later she understood the signs given to her and she could speak words).⁴

From the perspective of language acquisition research, it was still a long way from scholarly interest in deviant forms of language acquisition, such as that of feral children and the deaf and dumb, to the scientific study of child language.⁵ After the eighteenth-century 'discovery' of the child as not merely a young adult, but an interesting phenomenon in itself, we had to wait till the second half of the nineteenth century for reports on the language acquisition of young children.⁶ Internationally, the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries saw a strong interest in first-language acquisition, less from linguistics than from medicine, biology and psychology. By then child language research was being carried out mainly from a psychological perspective, highly stimulated by the rise of psychology as an independent discipline.

It is against this background and in a context of psychological linguistics that in the Netherlands a book with the remarkable title *De roman van een kleuter* ('The novel of a toddler') was published by the Dutch linguist Jac. van Ginneken (1877-1945) in 1917.⁷ *De roman*, which was meant to be a textbook for the native language education of lower form secondary school pupils, actually offered something completely new: an elaborate description of a case of first-language acquisition. It was toddler Keesje's linguistic progress that Van Ginneken described with the help of the notebooks received from Keesje's mother, Mrs. De Josselin de Jong, who carefully observed and noted down her child's utterances. Two years later, S. Rombouts (1883-1962), teacher at a training-college for elementary-school teachers, published *De psychologie der kleuertaal, verklaard voor taalleeraren, pedologen, opvoeders en kindervrienden* ('The psychology of infant language, explained for language teachers, child psychologists, educators and friends of children'). It was a companion to Van Ginne-

⁴ Extensive reports such as those on Victor of Aveyron, a wolf child discovered in 1799, are exceptional. Cf. Itard 1962 and Malson 1972.

⁵ Schreyer (1994: 73) points out that the babbling of babies and the communication of the deaf and dumb also were "handy analogues of the unobserved and perhaps unobservable, speechless savage that was natural man".

⁶ Well-known examples are the reports by Darwin, by the physicians Sigismund and Vierordt, the philosopher Taine, the pedagogues Strümpell and Pérez, the linguist Egger and the psychologists Lazarus and Steinthal (Blumenthal 1974: 1120; Stern 1907: 5).

⁷ For the context of psychological linguistics see Elffers 1999.

ken's *Roman*, with which Rombouts aimed at offering teachers background information on child language.⁸ Apart from an additional introduction and final chapter, Rombouts book fully covers the chapters of the *Roman*, whose contents he discusses with reference to international publications and comparing Van Ginneken's data with those resulting from the study of foreign children.

Whether Van Ginneken's *Roman* was an attractive textbook for pupils or whether Rombouts' manual for teachers was successful, are questions that do not concern us here. It is as early publications on child language that these books interest us. In this article in honour of my dear friend Anders Ahlqvist, I want to examine the relationship between these Dutch publications and their contemporary international context. After discussing Van Ginneken's and Rombouts' approach in section 2 and offering a bird's-eye view of the study of child language at the turn of the century in section 3, I will go into a few topics under discussion in section 4 (the child's development and the lexicon) and pay attention to two scholarly debates in section 5. The results will allow us to draw conclusions and evaluate the Dutch contribution to early psycholinguistics in section 6.

2. Van Ginneken, Rombouts and first-language acquisition

During his whole scholarly life, the Jesuit Jac. van Ginneken, a many-sided professor of Dutch language and literature, was a convinced adherent of the psychological paradigm.⁹ He considered language as a psychological phenomenon and psychology as the ground for linguistics.¹⁰ His psychological language view also marks his approach to child language. In his opinion, knowledge of the child's psyche was necessary to get a better understanding of language acquisition. It is, therefore, not surprising to find chapters entitled '*t Verstand wordt wakker*' ('The mind awakes'; chapter 2) and *Het kinderlijke denken* ('A child's way of thinking'; chapter 7) next to *Het sprakeloze wicht* ('The speechless child'; chapter 1) and *De eerste kinderwoorden* ('The first words of a child'; chapter 3) in *De roman*. Drawings, made by Van Ginneken's former student Herman

⁸ Van Ginneken himself, who wrote a preface to Rombouts book, considered it as '*la partie du maître*' next to his own *Roman* as '*la partie de l'élève*'.

⁹ Van Ginneken also taught comparative Indo-European linguistics and Sanskrit at the Catholic University of Nijmegen (now Radboud University). For more detailed information about Van Ginneken cf. Wils 1948, Noordeggraaf 1988: 222-3, Joosten 1998: 11-32.

¹⁰ Cf. Elffers 1996: 53.

Haeck, illustrate how the child's mind operates.¹¹ At first, Keesje's mind is just a small window that could only contain one idea, one sensation or one intention (*ééne voorstelling, één gevoelen of één bedoeling*, Van Ginneken 1917: 68) and Keesje can therefore produce only one word which is represented by one little boy in the drawing. Later on this little boy is joined by others and the various, differing relationships between the words are expressed by the various, different positions that the children in the drawings take. The drawings at the same time illustrate Van Ginneken's view of the mind as an internal stage on which, actor-like, psychological entities, such as ideas and images, enter, leave and get in touch with one another.¹²

Rombouts, who closely follows the order of Van Ginneken's *Roman*, starts with his own introduction in which he takes a stand to clarify his approach. In his view, child language should be considered and explained, just like all language, from a psychological point of view:

Child language does not differ essentially from adult language; it is only simpler, more primitive, more elementary. Similarly, the essence of child language is its significance as an expression of what goes on in the human soul; child language too is a mirror of psychological life (Rombouts 1919: 1).¹³

It is clear that Van Ginneken and Rombouts take the same view.¹⁴ Moreover, Rombouts argues for the study of child language as a means of observing processes of sound change, change of meaning, analogy, compounding and derivation. Active factors of a sensory, motory, physiological, apperceptive or social nature can be examined with the living language producer. It is not insignificant that in this plea Rombouts uses the term apperceptive (*'apperceptief'*) which indicates the psychological process of the assimilation of observations into larger units. The concept *apperception* plays an important role in the work of the psycho-

¹¹ These drawings are also to be found in Kempen 1996 or on the DBNL-site (www.dbnl.org), which comprises *De roman van een kleuter*.

¹² Van Ginneken is an adherent of the so-called *Vorstellungspsychologie* strongly advocated by Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), an approach which considered the mind as a kind of 'innere Bühne' (cf. Knobloch 1984: 415).

¹³ 'De taal van het kind is in den grond der zaak geen andere dan de taal van den volwassene; ze is slechts eenvoudiger, primitiever, meer elementair. Ook het wezen der kindertaal bestaat dus in haar beteekenis als uitingsfaktor van hetgeen er omgaat in de menschenziel; ook de kindertaal is 'n spiegel van psychisch leven'.

¹⁴ I have to add that both Rombouts and Van Ginneken do not underestimate language as a social phenomenon.

logists Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) and Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) and likewise in that of the linguist-psychologist Heymann Steinthal (1823-1899).¹⁵ Therefore, apart from other evidence, this one example of terminological usage shows that Rombouts' linguistic ideas (as well as Van Ginneken's) should not be considered independently of the contemporary international context.

3. The international context of child language study

In the international field of child language study two influential publications dating from the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century require mention. First of all, *Die Seele des Kindes* (1881), published by the physician Wilhelm Preyer (1841-1897), who observed his own son closely at least three times a day during the first 1000 days of his life. Relying on these observations, he described successively the child's development of sense-organs and sensations, that of volition, and that of reason and language. Preyer's book, which saw many reprints and was translated into a number of languages, is a fine example of early child language research which was a part of overall medical-biological research into the development of the child. The second influential publication to be mentioned is the detailed monograph *Die Kindersprache*, written by the psychologists Clara (1878-1945) and William (1871-1938) Stern, who in this book wholly focussed on language acquisition. Their book comprises three parts: it offers the '*Sprachgeschichte*' of their daughter Hilde and their son Günther from their first till their fifth (Günther) or sixth (Hilde) years (first part), followed by the psychology of child language (second part) and the linguistics of child language (third part).¹⁶ This 'wonderful book' (*mooie boek*) was praised by Van Ginneken (1913: 347) and was familiar to Rombouts too, as we shall see.¹⁷ Its importance can not easily be overestimated; it was characterized as 'the most influential text for the next generation of developmental psycholinguists' (Blumenthal 1974: 1122).

The question now arises what publications and discussions on child language played a role in Van Ginneken's *Roman* and Rombouts' manual. As far as Van Ginneken is concerned, we can be brief: although he claims to have an excellent overview of the international literature on

¹⁵ For apperception in Steinthal e.a. see Elffers 1999: 307-8.

¹⁶ Clara and William Stern also made notes about their third child Eva, but they did not give an account of her language acquisition (Stern and Stern 1907: 14).

¹⁷ Other Dutch linguists who were familiar with Stern and Stern 1907, are the creolist D.C. Hesseling (1859-1941) and the professor of Dutch language and literature C.G.N. de Vooy (1873-1955) (cf. Hesseling 1909 and De Vooy 1916).

child language (Van Ginneken 1913: 347), in his *Roman van een kleuter* he hardly ever refers to these publications or to data on foreign children. To put the record straight, I have to stress that the *Roman van een kleuter* is not the kind of book in which we would expect many references and discussions. These we expect to find in Rombouts' book for teachers, which was meant as an introduction into the new field of language acquisition research.

In Rombouts' book we meet the scholarly world of that time: not only Wilhelm Preyer, William and Clara Stern, already mentioned, but also the influential psychologist Wilhelm Wundt from Leipzig, who has been characterized as 'master psycholinguist',¹⁸ and one of his pupils, Ernst Meumann (1862-1915), professor of philosophy and pedagogy in Zürich and author of *Die Sprache des Kindes*. In addition to many German publications, we find French publications by Gabriel Compayré (1843-1913) and Emile Egger (1813-1885), which were translated into German too, and English publications by the psychologists Granville Stanley Hall (1846-1924), Wundt's first American student in Leipzig, and John Dewey (1859-1952), a major representative of American functionalism, and the Canadian psychologist Frederick Tracy (1862-1951), whose *The psychology of childhood* (1898) was translated into German and Dutch (Tracy 1910). They, and many more, are listed in Rombouts' extensive bibliography of more than one hundred publications. In order to assess his indebtedness to the various scholars mentioned and to give an impression of the issues under discussion, I will deal with a few topics from Rombouts' manual and discuss his (and incidentally also Van Ginneken's) opinions on some of the scholarly debates of their time.¹⁹

4. The child's development and the lexicon

Without giving a hard and fast rule for the child's development, Van Ginneken sometimes indicates an important change: 'We are now at the beginning of Keesje's second year of life (...). In the third half year a major change in the child's inner life is taking place; the child begins to understand'.²⁰ For a division into stages of development Rombouts

¹⁸ For this characterization cf. Blumenthal 1974. Dutch contemporary linguists such as Hesseling 1908 often refer to Wundt, and to his *Die Sprache* (1900) in particular.

¹⁹ As Rombouts does not give detailed references when discussing particular topics, a thorough comparison of various publications and of Rombouts' manual was required to assess his indebtedness to other scholars.

²⁰ 'We staan nu aan het begin van Keesjes tweede levensjaar (...) In dit derde halfjaar begint zich nu een groote omwenteling in het kinderlijk zieleleven te vertoonen; het kind begint iets te verstaan' (Van Ginneken 1917: 15).

(1919: 157-8) refers to Meumann and Tracy. According to Meumann, the newborn child has to go through a fourfold development: an *acoustic* stage (learning to hear and conceive sounds of others and of himself correctly), a *motory* stage (learning to master his speech musculature), an *ideomotory* stage (learning to produce sounds wittingly) and an *ideal* stage (acquiring elementary word meanings).²¹ This partition partly runs parallel with Tracy's four stages, in which the child's volition is a decisive element. After the *impulsive* stage (sounds are only spontaneous expressions of motory energy), the *reflective* stage (sounds are produced in response to specific sensations) and the *instinctive* stage (sounds express the child's needs and various states of mind such as hunger and pain), the child enters the *voluntary* stage in which volition controls the speech mechanism (sounds are wittingly imitated).²² These both four-stage divisions largely apply to what we call nowadays the prelinguistic period. Rombouts himself distinguishes, after the first stage of expressing sensations and volition, the next stage in which onomatopoeias such as *piep-piep* 'bird' are produced, followed by the naming stage in the first half of the second year (Rombouts 1919: 44-5). The latter is the beginning of a period of intensive asking for the names of things, described by Van Ginneken (1917: 35).

Whether linguistic development is identical for all children, is a matter of some discussion. Referring to differences between Stern's daughter and son, Rombouts points out that girls acquire language faster than boys (Rombouts 1919: 46-7). He also stresses individual differences in rate²³ and rejects the idea that children are all at the same level of development at the same age (Rombouts 1919: 152). Rombouts differs in this respect from Van Ginneken who stresses similarities: 'all boys and girls under the age of three are in fact the same and act the same ... Each toddler is a toddler and that is it' (Van Ginneken 1917: 1). What does the similar (although not identical) pattern of development imply for the acquisition of the lexicon? With the lexicon we touch upon a topic of elaborate contemporary research.

Whereas Van Ginneken only gives examples of the first words produced by Preyer's son (calling *hatta* when someone was leaving; Van Ginneken 1917: 28), Idelberger's child (saying *wou wou* for a porcelain dog; *ibidem* 29), and Tögel's son (*obba* when his father lifted him; *ibidem*

²¹ Cf. Meumann 1903: 13 (this detailed reference is not to be found in Rombouts 1919).

²² Cf. Tracy 1910: 194-5 (this detailed reference is not to be found in Rombouts 1919).

²³ Elsewhere we find Rombouts' personal view on male and female differences of development: as the physical growth is faster and earlier completed, but thus completed at a lower level, so is the mental development (Rombouts 1919: 154).

29),²⁴ Rombouts pays attention to the scholarly debate on children's first words. He discusses the 'logical' view, defended by, among others, Preyer, Lindner, Taine, Oltuscewsky, Sikorsky and Egger. They all supposed that the first words of a child were abstract concepts and some of them (Lindner, Preyer and Compayré) even assumed that a one-year-old child performed various logical activities such as making comparisons, abstractions, generic concepts and distinguishing causality and identity. According to Rombouts (1919: 36), this was an incorrect view, a view disputed by Ament, Wundt, Tracy, Dewey and Harlow Gale. Rombouts seems to take his own stand in this debate, but, comparing Rombouts' text with various of his references, I discovered that both this discussion and the opinion he gives are to be found in Meumann (1903: 43-5). Meumann appears likewise to be his source when Rombouts argues that the child's first words do not refer to objects / things, but express feelings or efforts and therefore are of an affective and volitional character (Rombouts 1919: 37; Meumann 1903: 54) (that is to say: 'chair' means 'I want to sit on the chair'). Other cases in which Rombouts relies heavily on Meumann could be added such as his discussion of overextension in connection with toddler Keesje calling all kinds of food *pap* 'porridge' (cf. Rombouts 1919: 49-50). When establishing both the presence of almost all parts of speech and the predominance of nouns in the toddler's lexicon at the end of the second year, Rombouts uses elaborate statistics from Clara and William Stern (1907: 216-8) and Tracy (1910: 173-8). These tables show a lexicon which consists of 60 % nouns, 20 to 25 % verbs and 15 to 20% other parts of speech.

Rombouts' (and Van Ginneken's) indebtedness to Stern and Stern (1907) may be illustrated by yet another significant example, that of analogy in child language. In Keesje's acquisition of past participles, Van Ginneken gives an excellent description of analogy (*dokke* for *gedronken* 'drunk', *keeche* for *gekregen* 'got') and false analogy (*eroept* for *geroepen* 'called', *evalt* for *gefallen* 'fallen', past participles of strong verbs produced with the final endings of weak verbs).²⁵ In the course of time Keesje is said to produce a lot more past participle forms which he 'could not have heard from father or mother' (Van Ginneken 1917: 181). This comment is similar to that of Stern and Stern (1907: 135) who also state, dealing with verbal conjugation: '*vieles wird vom Kinde gesprochen,*

²⁴ These are all examples which Van Ginneken could have found in the table of '*Sprachanfänge verschiedener Kinder*' (Stern and Stern 1907: 159-62).

²⁵ A detailed discussion of Van Ginneken's description is to be found in Van der Wal and Van Santen (forthcoming).

was ihm der Erwachsene nie vorgesprochen hat'. Stern and Stern (1907: 135) argue that we have to deal with '*spontanen Verarbeitungen, die das Kind mit dem imitativ erworbenen Material vornimmt*' and which often result in a so-called *Analogiebildung*. Rombouts fully agrees with this view as appears from his straightforward translation '*taalprodukten, die hun ontstaan danken aan 'n eigen spontaan nawerken van het imitatief verworven materiaal*' (Rombouts 1919: 133; 'language products which originate from a spontaneous application of the material acquired by imitation').²⁶

Providing useful background information for teachers, Rombouts not only goes into concepts and views that immediately relate to the child language data that Van Ginneken described. He outlines a few more abstract scholarly debates too, of which we will briefly discuss both Häckel's hypothesis and the nativists and empiricists controversy.

5. Scholarly debates

Rombouts takes a critical stand in the discussion of Ernst Häckel's (1834-1919) biogenetic recapitulation hypothesis. This hypothesis claimed the parallellism of ontogenesis and phylogenesis: the development of the human embryo was assumed to reflect the development of the human species. This biological-evolutionary hypothesis was transferred to language acquisition: according to various scholars first-language acquisition reflected the way in which language had come into being. Advocates of this view were, among others, Preyer, Compayré, Oltuscewski, Gutzmann, Ament, Egger, all involved in child language study. Among the opponents Wundt and Meumann are to be found, whereas Stern and Stern are said to take a position in between. They agree with a certain amount of parallellism, but reject Häckel's law. Rombouts evidently dissociates himself from the Häckel adherents by rejecting the idea that child language research teaches us anything about the origin of language. Rombouts' text does not make clear, however, whether he takes the side of Wundt or that of Stern and Stern. Further research shows that Rombouts does not give his own opinion in the first place: he appears to present a fairly accurate account of Stern and Stern (1907: 262-3). Having said this, I stress that Rombouts remains a genuine opponent of Häckel's law, as is shown, for instance, when he

²⁶ In yet other aspects of the explanation of analogy Rombouts relies on Stern and Stern 1907, e.g. in quoting Hermann Paul and in the remark that analogy only reveals itself in incorrect forms, although it equally works in correct ones (Rombouts 1919: 134-5; Stern and Stern 1907: 136 fn. 1).

opposes Tracy's view elsewhere.²⁷ Unfortunately, he does not bring up his compatriot Hesselning's argument against the application of Hackel's law to language, an argument which could have added force to Rombouts' own stand. Hesselning convincingly pointed out the entirely differing circumstances of the first human beings, who began to speak in an environment without fully-fledged native speakers, whereas our children are born and raised in a well-speaking environment (Hesselning 1909: 525).

It is not only in the outdated Hackel discussion that Rombouts takes a stand. The nature of language and that of language acquisition attract his attention too. First of all, Rombouts stresses that in a human being the psychological and the physical element cannot be separated from one another. The indivisibility of spirit and matter shows itself in language: the sounds produced are both in origin and nature not physical, not psychological, but of psycho-physical nature (Rombouts 1919: 149). Secondly, he argues that in a newly born child language is potentially present:

Language is not a gift that the child inherits from his parents, in complete or even incomplete form. Each individual has to acquire language laboriously and gradually. Only the language faculty, the potential speaking, is innate. The resultant of both this faculty and the second factor, education, delivers speech, the actus (Rombouts 1919: 150).²⁸

That speech has to be developed has both a psychological cause (the child has no ideas yet and therefore cannot express anything) and a physiological one (the speech musculature is still so rudimentary that the child could not express a thought, even if he/she had any).

Just as for knowledge in general, for linguistic knowledge (or language acquisition) the philosophical question can be raised whether knowledge is native or whether it depends on experiences. It is the well-known controversy between nativists and empiricists which in one form or another has been on the map for centuries. Condillac's empiricist epistemological approach (1746: knowledge derives from experi-

²⁷ Tracy argues for a high number of verbs in child language and unsuccessfully maintains that this phenomenon proves the biogenetic recapitulation theory.

²⁸ *'Ook de taal is niet 'n geschenk, dat het kind in volledigen of zelfs maar onvoltooiden vorm van z'n ouders als erfstuk overneemt. Ieder individu moet zich de taal moeizaam en geleidelijk verwerven. Slechts de faculteit, de potentie tot spreken is aangeboren. De resultante van dit vermogen n 'n tweeden factor, de opvoeding, levert de klanktaal, de actus op'.*

ence) is not supported by Rombouts who stresses that in the acquisition of knowledge or skills there are always two factors, one external and one internal, the latter unjustly ignored by Condillac.²⁹ In his final chapter Rombouts once more underlines his own position as against both the nativists, who consider the spiritual development of the child only as purely a product of innate factors, and the empiricists, who consider it as purely the product of external factors or experience. Rombouts agrees with Stern and Stern (1907: 123): it is all a matter of convergence! In language acquisition, that is perfectly clear: heredity does not suffice to learn the language of one's parents if the child does not live in an environment of native speakers (Rombouts 1919: 151).

6. Concluding remarks

It is time to draw conclusions about the early psycholinguistic publications of Van Ginneken and Rombouts and their relationship with the international field. Van Ginneken was an all-round linguist, who wrote an extraordinary textbook about the language acquisition of toddler Keesje. In this book he described genuine data which he fitted into his psychological view of language. He appeared to be familiar with Stern and Stern 1907, a book which he highly praised and to which he sometimes referred in his *Roman*. And what about Rombouts? Is he the scholar who gives a critical survey of the contemporary state of affairs and who, discussing assets and liabilities, takes his own stand? That is the impression that we get at first, but closer examination reveals Rombouts' wide indebtedness to his sources. Many similarities with Stern and Stern were found, even when Rombouts seemed to be giving his own opinion.³⁰ Likewise Rombouts is greatly indebted to Meumann and for specific topics to others, such as Tracy.³¹ To put the record straight, Rombouts himself does not pretend anywhere to be giving a highly original contribution. After having examined his manual, we may characterize him as a clever compiler and translator rather than as a critical scholar. This characterization should not suggest that examining his manual has been a fruitless historiographical enterprise. It is through the eyes of Rombouts that we get a view of the reception of international research in the Netherlands at the turn of the century. Moreover, within the limits and purpose of his manual, Rombouts succeeded in

²⁹ 'dat bij het verwerven van kennis of vaardigheden steeds twee factoren meewerken, een van buiten en een van binnen, welke laatste door Condillac wordt genegeerd' (Rombouts 1919: 104).

³⁰ More examples are to be found in Van der Wal and Van Santen (forthcoming).

³¹ Data and examples of other children often can likewise be traced back to Meumann 1903.

putting Van Ginneken's contribution to early psycholinguistics in the context of contemporary international research. I hope that my description of this interesting interaction between the international field and early Dutch study of child language will be appreciated by Anders Ahlqvist, who has always been such a stimulating participant and such pleasant company at international conferences.

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