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Policy versus Practice. Language variation and change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch

Krogull, A.

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Author: Krogull, A.

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CHAPTER 2

Historical background

1 Historical-sociolinguistic context

1.1 Socio-political overview

In the Northern Netherlands, like in many other parts of (western) Europe, the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence and rise of a strong nationalist movement. The decades around 1800⁷ in particular can be considered the fundamental years of Dutch nation building, grounded on the socio-political ideals of a homogeneous nation and inclusive citizenship⁸. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Northern Netherlands began to undergo a series of radical changes and transformations (e.g. van Sas 2004: ch. 1; Kloek & Mijnhardt 2004), which were also “beneficial to the standardisation of Dutch” (Willemyns 2013: 107; cf. de Bonth et al. 1997: 369), resulting in a national language policy and the official codification of the Dutch spelling and grammar in the early 1800s.

In the course of the 1780s, the socio-political climate in the Dutch Republic, also known as the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands (*Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*), was characterised by internal political conflict, in particular by the growing tensions between the republican Patriots (*patriotten*) and the royalist Orangists (*orangisten*). The opposition to the reigning House of Orange, with Prince William V (1748–1806) as its stadtholder, had increased ever since the beginning of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780–1784). The French Revolution, which had started in 1789, further strengthened the republican and anti-Orangist sentiments of the Patriots, who demanded more freedom and power for the civilian population (e.g. van Sas 2004: ch. 8). However, without a centralised state organisation, it was difficult for the Patriots to start a revolution. Another important political conflict, which divided the Dutch Republic internally, was related to the tensions between the old but mouldering federalism and the more progressive unitarianism, inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution (cf. also Rutten 2016a: 16).

The most profound socio-political developments took place in the so-called Batavian-French era, in which the Northern Netherlands were under a strong French influence. In 1794, the troops of the revolutionary French Republic invaded the Southern Netherlands (under Austrian rule at that time), which were occupied

⁷ For a detailed account of the nation-building period around 1800, see Kloek & Mijnhardt (2004).

⁸ The notion of *inclusive citizenship* refers to the socio-political ideal that all members of a given society, rather than only a selected group, are concerned.

and annexed by France in 1795. The same year, the French troops also invaded the Dutch Republic, which became a vassal state of France, forcing the last stadtholder William V to flee into exile in England. With the backing of the French, the Patriots now seized power throughout the country.

In 1795, the peace treaty with France, known as the Treaty of The Hague, led to the foundation of the Batavian Republic (*Bataafsche Republiek*), as the Northern Netherlands were called between 1795 and 1801. Following the French model, the democratic government of the Batavian Republic gradually replaced the federal structure of the old Dutch Republic by a unitarianist form. The year 1796 saw the establishment of the first national parliament, the National Assembly (*Nationale Vergadering*), which was “basically the country’s first representative body” (Kloek & Mijnhardt 2004: 25). The design of a new constitution was one of the parliament’s primary tasks. Approving a proposal that was clearly unitarianist, the first constitution of 1798 (*Staatsregeling voor het Bataafsche Volk*) laid the foundation for the Dutch nation-state. Although the initial constitution underwent many changes in subsequent years, turning the Batavian Republic into the Batavian Commonwealth (*Bataafsche Gemeenebest*) between 1801 and 1806⁹, it became apparent that the new national government could intervene in domains that had never been matters of political concern before (Kloek & Mijnhardt 2004: 26).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the government appointed so-called *agenten* ‘agents, ministers’, including the Minister of National Education (*Agent van Nationale Opvoeding*), Johan Hendrik van der Palm (1763–1840). Education, as well as language, had become issues of political interest and were considered important means to promote the national unity. Van der Palm called for the nationalisation of the school system, which also had decisive consequences for linguistic matters. In fact, it was from this period onward that “grammar and spelling have been focal points of Dutch educational policy, discursively constructing the alleged rules of written Dutch as ‘the’ rules of ‘the’ language of ‘the’ Dutch nation” (Rutten 2016: 124). These fundamental socio-political developments in the process of Dutch nation building were embedded in the broader ideological context of Enlightenment, which will be outlined in Section 1.2 below.

1.2 Enlightenment movement

With regard to ideology, the eighteenth century was typically characterised by the Enlightenment movement. Like in many parts of western Europe, discourse in the Northern Netherlands aimed at the spread of enlightenment through the population as a whole and, ultimately, at the creation of a homogeneous nation (Rutten 2016b: 45-46). Two of the main themes during the eighteenth-century

⁹ In 1806, after the Batavian regime, Dutch independence came to an end with the creation of the Kingdom of Holland (1806–1810), ruled by Louis Napoleon, the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte. The French period ended with the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1813. Two years later, the Northern and Southern Netherlands were unified into the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (cf. also Kloek & Mijnhardt 2004: 21-30).

movement of Dutch *volksverlichting*, literally ‘folk enlightenment’, were emancipation and social action (Rutten 2016b: 47). Particularly in the second half of the century, many private and semi-public initiatives were actively engaged in the Enlightenment discourse and participated in prize contests on the education of man (cf. e.g. Los 2005; Mijnhardt 1987). Learned and cultural societies were founded in many towns and cities from the 1760s onwards. Rutten & van Kalmthout (2018: 16) argue that “[b]y means of competitions, debates, treatises and readings [...] learned societies contributed in their own way to the national and international exchange of new scientific insights”. Some of these societies were also concerned with language, most notably the *Maatschappij voor Nederlandsche Letterkunde* ‘Society for Dutch Language and Literature’ (henceforth referred to as the Maatschappij) and the *Maatschappij tot Nut van ’t Algemeen* ‘Society for the Benefit of the Common Good’ (henceforth: the Nut). The Maatschappij, founded in 1766, had its origins in the student societies of university towns like Leiden, and was prominently involved in language-oriented activities. Furthermore, the Nut, founded in 1784, was one of the most influential societies during the Enlightenment period, well known for its contribution to emancipation and social action. Its central aim was social change by spreading enlightened knowledge across all layers of society (e.g. Kloek & Mijnhardt 2004). The Nut also strongly argued for a revolution in the national school system, which entailed the production of new school books (Simons & Rutten 2014: 54-55).

The role these learned societies played for the national language and language-in-education policies of the early 1800s can hardly be underestimated. The ideology of inclusive citizenship, explicitly represented by societies like the Nut, coincided with the central ideas of the government, increasingly considering education as a powerful instrument to create national unity. In 1796, the government of the Batavian Republic approached the Nut for expert advice for a nationally-organised educational policy. In the highly influential report *Algemeene Denkbeelden over het Nationaal Onderwijs* ‘General Ideas on National Education’, published in 1798, a broad range of topics and policy measures were discussed, such as a renewed school system, school inspection, teacher training and curricula. Generally, the Nut emphasised the need for mother-tongue education and grammar teaching in the national school system (Rutten 2016b: 46).

In addition to primarily educational aspects, Enlightenment discourse also addressed linguistic matters. Possibly the most explicit arguments with regard to the *moedertaal* ‘mother tongue’ can be found in the well-known prize essay *Het belang der waare volksverlichting* ‘The importance of the true enlightenment of the people’, written by Hidde Wibius van der Ploeg (1769–1853) and anonymously published by the Nut in 1800. Highlighting the mother tongue as “what binds the individual members of the population together, irrespective of their social position or gender” (Rutten 2016b: 49), van der Ploeg (1800: 35) argued that a true enlightenment of the Dutch population would not be possible without a ‘general and rule-based knowledge’ of the nation’s language:

Doch ik [...] beweer, dat waare volksverlichting niet denkbaar is, ‘zonder eene algemeene en naar regels geleerde kennis van de Moedertaal des Lands;’ ja, mijns oordeels, is het nodig, dat het volk, zal het verlicht kunnen heeten, of kunnen worden, in alle Departementen van den Staat, **niet alleen gelijkkluidend spreekte, maar ook zodaanig, als men in de volksschriften gewoon is te schrijven en in de openlijke aanspraaken zich uit te drukken;** op dat het volk in staat zij, bij het leezen van de eerste, en het aanhooren van de laatste, alles te verstaan, en zich, in het gemeene leeven, weder overal verstaanbaar te maaken. [emphasis mine]

‘But I argue that the true enlightenment of the people is not imaginable without a general and rule-based knowledge of the mother tongue of the country. Yes, in my opinion, it is necessary that the people, will they ever be or become enlightened, in all departments of the State, **not only speak identically, but also in the way that is commonly written in popular publications and in public speeches,** so that the people are able to understand everything when reading the former and hearing the latter, and, in the common life, can make themselves understood everywhere again.’

According to Rutten (2016b: 50), van der Ploeg’s position was “a clear call for nationwide homogenization both in the spoken and in the written language”. What is more, van der Ploeg (1800: 35; 129) pled for the eradication of so-called *platte taalen* ‘vulgar languages’, i.e. regional dialects, and thus explicitly rejected the use of non-standard Dutch to the benefit of the (yet-to-be-codified) national standard variety:

‘Er zou dus een groot stuk der verlichting gewonnen zijn, indien in een land gene, zo genoemde, *Platte Taalen* gevonden wierden, die zeer hinderlijk zijn in het onderwijs der jeugd, en dus ook in de algemeene verlichting, welke laatste toch alleen, bij het gros des volks, door het eerste kan verkregen worden (van der Ploeg 1800: 35)

‘A great part of enlightenment would be gained, if so-called *vulgar languages* were not found in the country, which are true hindrances in the education of the young, and therefore in the general enlightenment, too, which can only be reached through education among the majority of the population’ (translation by Rutten 2016b: 50)

In other words, van der Ploeg argued that the use of dialects, or any variety other than the national standard variety, was not only an impediment to the education of the youth, but also to the enlightenment of people in general. Strikingly, he even extended the use of the standard language to the private domain, demanding from school teachers to ensure that children always use the *zuivere moedertaal* ‘pure mother tongue’ not just at school, but also among each other and at home with their parents (Rutten 2016a: 22).

It seems evident that this section can only give a glimpse at the Enlightenment discourse in the Northern Netherlands¹⁰. However, it is important

¹⁰ See, for instance, Rutten (2016b) for a more comprehensive outline of the ideological framework, especially in the context of standardisation and the national language policy.

to note that the emergence of language and language-in-education policies in the early 1800s (cf. Sections 3 and 4, respectively) should not only be regarded as the outcome of the socio-political changes with regard to nationalism and nation building, but also against the background of the bigger ideological framework of Enlightenment. The general debates on *volksverlichting* and the participating learned societies, aiming at the spread of enlightenment through the population at large, actively contributed to the nationalisation of language and education. In fact, together with the parallel developments in eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse (cf. Section 2), they paved the way for the official *schrijftaalregeling* ‘written language regulation’, as investigated in this dissertation.

2 Metalinguistic discourse

As outlined in Section 1, the socio-political and ideological developments in the Northern Netherlands are reflected in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century metalinguistic discourse. Particularly in the crucial period around 1800, the political ideology of nationalism was also closely tied to linguistic nationalism (cf. Blommaert & Verschueren 1998). From around 1750 onwards, language became “a socializing force” and “a means to establish a community, a nation, and to improve civil society” (Noordegraaf 2004: 218). In other words, the mother tongue was instrumentalised to create a Dutch national identity and, ultimately, a homogeneous Dutch nation. The conception of language as a national symbol increasingly called for a standardised variety of (written) Dutch, which has its roots in eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse. According to Rutten (2016b: 41),

[t]he major change in the history of standardization [...] occurs in the eighteenth century, when important concepts such as the mother tongue, hierarchization and polishing are radicalized, brought together into one coherent language ideology, and combined with social and political ideas about the nation and about social action and emancipation.

It is also in this period that the so-called standard language ideology (cf. Chapter 3) emerged, which is “intrinsically connected to the nation-building processes of that time” (Rutten 2016b: 41).

There had been a vivid normative tradition in the Northern Netherlands throughout the eighteenth century with the publication of numerous spelling books and grammars ever since the earliest decades. In the course of the century, however, metalinguistic discourse “underwent a social turn” (Rutten 2009a), in which the question of target audience gained in importance. According to Noordegraaf (2004) and van de Bilt (2009: 60–68), the social orientation is one of the defining characteristics of eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse. From rather diverse language planning activities in the early 1700s, the debates developed into a national language policy in the period around 1800 (Rutten 2016a: 14). Rutten (2012a) distinguishes three different periods in the normative tradition, in which the intended audience was gradually widened: from the period of *elitist*

grammar (1700–1740; cf. Section 2.1) to the period of *civil grammar* (1740–1770; cf. Section 2.2) and, finally, the period of *national grammar* (from 1770 onward; cf. Section 2.3). These three stages paved the way for the national language policy, and more specifically the *schrijftaalregeling* in 1804/1805, with the codification of the first official orthography (Siegenbeek 1804) and grammar (Weiland 1805) (cf. Section 3).

2.1 Elitist grammar (1700–1740)

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, language planning activities were chiefly individual efforts rather than concerned with the construction of a national language (Rutten 2016a: 20). Many of the normative grammars from the first half of the eighteenth century still followed the *vondelianist* tradition, which was explicitly founded on the language of seventeenth-century literary authors, mainly the Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679). With regard to the intended audience, the grammars of the early eighteenth century were primarily targeted towards an elite readership of educated men such as ministers and poets, hence the term *elitist grammar*. As grammars also signalled intellectualism and scholarship in this period, it was almost impossible to study Dutch grammar without knowledge of Latin and/or Greek. In this respect, linguistic education and knowledge of grammar clearly distinguished the intellectual elite from the middle and lower classes (Rutten 2009a: 57). The focus of elitist grammars was on specific written registers, mainly poetry, literary prose and sermons. Rutten (2016b: 39) sums up that this type of grammar was “based on the written language and targeted towards the written language – it is first and foremost a textual discipline, in which references to the spoken language hardly occur”.

Despite the restricted focus on specific registers and audiences, two of the most influential normative grammars of the eighteenth century were published in this period: Arnold Moonen’s *Nederduitsche spraakkunst* ‘Dutch grammar’ of 1706, and Willem Sewel’s *Nederduitsche spraakkunst* ‘Dutch grammar’ (1708, 1712) (cf. Rutten 2009a: 58). Ten Kate’s *Aenleiding tot de kennis van het verbeene deel der Nederduitsche sprake* ‘Introduction to the knowledge of the sublime part of the Dutch language’ (1723) had a particularly strong historical focus and comparative perspective (cf. also van der Wal 2002a). Other publications from the fairly diverse period of elitist grammar include Petrus Francius’ introduction to his Dutch translation of Gregorius Nazianzenus’ *Van de mededeelzaamheid* (1699), David van Hoogstraten’s *Aenmerkingen over de geslachten der zelfstandige naemwoorden* ‘Remarks on the gender of nouns’ (1700), Jakobus Nylöe’s short grammar *Aenleiding tot de Nederduitsche taal* ‘Introduction to the Dutch language’ (1703), Adriaen Verwer’s Latin grammar of Dutch called *Linguae Belgicae idea grammatical, poetica, rhetorica* (1707) and Balthazar Huydecoper’s *Proeve van taal- en dichtkunde* ‘Essay on linguistics and poetics’ (1730).

2.2 Civil grammar (1740–1770)

In the second half of the eighteenth century, metalinguistic discourse saw the first stage of widening to the extent that the rules for spelling and grammar, as laid down in normative publications, should become common knowledge to all adult citizens of the Northern Netherlands. The intended audience encompassed both men and women as well as the youth of the upper and middle classes, but still excluded the lower classes. Rutten (2009a: 58) argues that the education of Dutch *burghers* ‘citizens’ and the evolution of *civil grammar* were “the linguistic counterparts of the democratic revolutions of the later 18th century”. Compared to elitist grammars, normative works published in this period no longer required any knowledge of Latin and/or Greek. Generally, they were characterised by a comparatively simplified approach, rephrasing complex grammatical issues in a less classical but more comprehensive vocabulary, and also employing educational strategies (Rutten 2009a: 58).

For the period of civil grammar between 1740 and 1770, Kornelis Elzevier’s *Proef van een nieuwe Nederduitsche spraekkonst* ‘Outline of a new Dutch grammar’ (1761), Frans de Haes’ *Nederduitsche spraekkonst* ‘Dutch grammar’ (1764), Jan van Belle’s *Korte wegnyszer, ter spel- spraek- en dichtkunten* ‘Short introduction to orthography, grammar and poetry’ (1748) and *Korte schets der Nederduitsche spraekkonst* ‘Short sketch of the Dutch grammar’ (1755), and Kornelis van der Palm’s *Nederduitsche spraekkonst, voor de jeugdt* ‘Dutch grammar, for the youth’ (1769) are usually regarded as the most important grammars (Rutten 2009a: 56).

2.3 National grammar (1770 onwards)

The third and final period of eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse is characterised by the further widening of the target audience, which mirrored the inclusive idea that all members of the Dutch nation should be trained in the grammar of their national language (Rutten 2016b: 42). The *national* grammars from the late eighteenth century onward, in fact, addressed all inhabitants of the nation, and often specifically children. From an activity of certain social groups in the early decades of the eighteenth century, grammar had turned into a matter of national concern, aiming at the society as a whole. Instead of dividing the Dutch society, knowledge of grammar was now used to separate the Dutch nation from other nations (Rutten 2009a: 58–59).

Among the important normative works published in the period of national grammar are Ernst Zeydelaar’s *Nederduitsche spelkonst* ‘Dutch orthography’ (1774), Klaas Stijl & Lambertus van Bolhuis’ *Beknopte aanleiding tot de kennis der spelling, spraekdeelen, en zinteekenen van de Nederduitsche taal* ‘Concise introduction to the knowledge of the spelling, parts of speech and punctuation of the Dutch language’ (1776), Adriaan Kluit’s *Vertoog over de tegenwoordige spelling der Nederduitsche taal* ‘Treatise on the present spelling of the Dutch language’ (1777), Lambertus van Bolhuis’ *Beknopte Nederduitsche spraekkonst* ‘Concise Dutch grammar’ (1793) and the

anonymous *Rudimenta of gronden der Nederduitsche spraake* ‘Fundamentals of the Dutch language’, written by Gerrit van Varik (and published by the Maatschappij tot Nut van ‘t Algemeen) in 1799.

It was particularly in this period of national grammar that the one language–one nation ideology came into existence (Rutten 2016b: 45), explicitly linking the mother tongue, and the knowledge thereof, with the concepts of citizenship and nationhood. These ideas paved the way for the *schrijftaalregeling* with official regulations for the Dutch orthography and grammar (Section 3).

3 Language policy: The *schrijftaalregeling* of 1804/1805

The early nineteenth century saw the first official codification of a standardised variety of (written) Dutch, laid down in a national orthography and a national grammar. For the first time in the long standardisation history of Dutch, the government was concerned with language and actively involved in the regulation of spelling and grammar. The codification itself was initiated by the Minister of National Education, Johan Hendrik van der Palm (who was the son of the aforementioned Kornelis van der Palm, cf. Section 2.2). In fact, it was one of the minister’s tasks to ‘take all possible measures to purify and cultivate the Dutch language and to regulate its spelling’, as mentioned in the *Instructie voor den Agent der Nationale Oproeiding* ‘Instruction for the Minister of National Education’ (1798: 6):

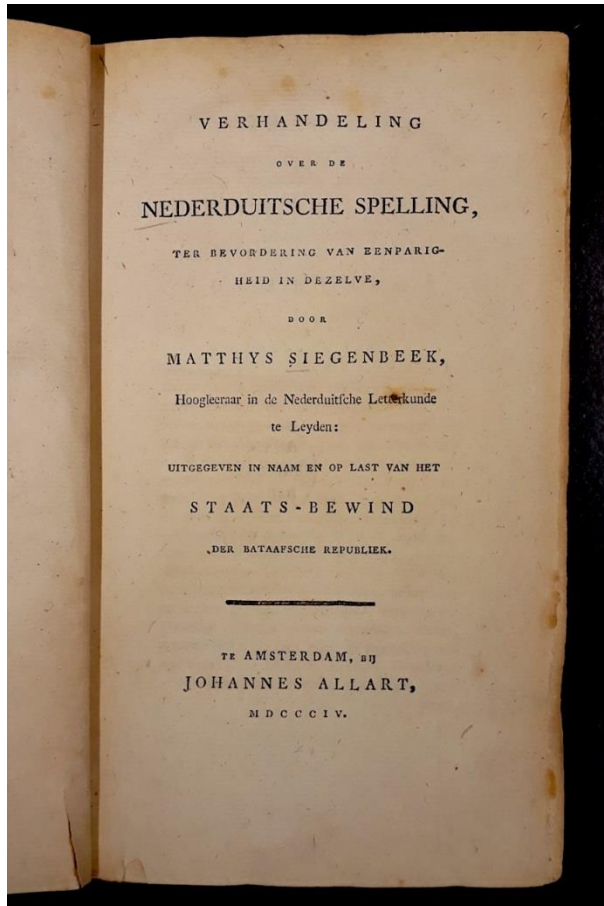
Hy zal alle mogelyke middelen beramen, om de Nederduitsche taal te zuiveren, te beschaven, en derzelver spelling op eenen gelyken voet interigten.

Carried out on behalf of the national government, the *schrijftaalregeling* of 1804/1805 comprised two complementary works, which, according to Noordegraaf (2018: 146), “can be seen as inaugurating the final phase of the codification of the Dutch standard written language”. First, the national orthography of 1804 was codified by Matthijs Siegenbeek (Section 3.1). Secondly, the national grammar, codified by Petrus Weiland, was published one year later in 1805 (Section 3.2). These official regulations for both spelling and grammar were intended to be used in the administrative and educational domains.

3.1 Siegenbeek (1804): National orthography

In the context of the normative tradition in the Northern Netherlands, Matthijs Siegenbeek (1774–1854) is first and foremost known as the codifier of the national orthography of Dutch, published in 1804 as the *Verhandeling over de Nederduitsche spelling ter bevordering van eenparigheid in dezelve* ‘Treatise on the Dutch spelling for the promotion of uniformity therein’ (cf. Figure 1).

Figure 1. Title page of Siegenbeek's orthography (1804, Leiden University Libraries).



Traditionally, however, Siegenbeek, who was born in Amsterdam and trained to be a clergyman, has often been remembered as the first professor of Dutch – even though this claim was repeatedly adjusted in recent years. When Siegenbeek was inaugurated as extraordinary professor of Dutch rhetoric at Leiden University in 1797, several academic professors had been involved in teaching Dutch linguistics, literature and rhetoric at universities before him. Nevertheless, Siegenbeek was the first professor to hold a chair solely devoted to Dutch (Vis 2004: 10; cf. also Rutten 2018: 26). In 1799, his extraordinary chair was changed into a regular chair and widened to Dutch language and literature¹¹.

Apart from his university duties, Siegenbeek was actively involved as a long-term board member of one of the first and most important learned societies,

¹¹ For a comprehensive outline of Matthijs Siegenbeek's activities in the field of Dutch studies and his linguistic publications in particular, see Rutten (2018).

the aforementioned *Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (cf. Section 1.2). Between 1803 and 1822, he was the secretary of this Society. Siegenbeek also published numerous works in the fields of literary history and rhetoric but also linguistics. Although he discussed a fairly wide range of linguistic topics, Siegenbeek is mainly associated with the *schrijftaalregeling* and his national orthography. As outlined before, it was the Minister of National Education, Johan Hendrik van der Palm, who commissioned Siegenbeek to write the official orthography of Dutch. His *Verhandeling over de Nederduitsche spelling* was published in 1804 *in naam en op last van het Staats-bewind der Bataafsche Republiek* ‘in the name of and by order of the government of the Batavian Republic’, as mentioned on the title page.

Siegenbeek’s orthography was based on a set of three main principles (e.g. van der Wal & van Bree 2008: 318-322; van de Bilt 2009: 206-207), the most fundamental of which was the phonological principle. Commonly known as *Schrijf, zoo als gij spreekt* ‘Write as you speak’ (Siegenbeek 1804: 13), spelling had to be in accordance with the pronunciation: “de spraak dat gene is, ‘t welk door het schrift moet worden uitgedrukt, zoo behoort natuurlijk de eerste ten rigtsnoer te strekken voor het laatste” ‘speech is what needs to be expressed by writing, which is why the former must, of course, serve as a guideline for the latter’ (1804: 14). Rutten (2018: 34) assumes that Siegenbeek was “probably well aware of many regionally and socially conditioned phonetic differences”, when he argued that ‘the most pure and most polite pronunciation’ (*de zuiverste en meest beschaafde uitspraak*, 1804: 18, 26), as heard in his native region of Holland (1804: 20), should serve as a guide for the spelling. In addition to the phonological principle, which Siegenbeek admitted to be insufficient for a fully-fledged orthography, he proposed two more principles. Apart from pronunciation, one must also take into account the *Afleiding der Woorden* ‘derivation of the words’ as well as *het algemeen erkend en aangenomen gebruik* ‘the generally acknowledged and accepted usage’. With respect to *Afleiding*, Siegenbeek not only referred to the etymological principle in the strictest sense, but also encompassed what is commonly known as the principle of *gelijkvormigheid*, literally ‘uniformity’, which implies morpheme consistency. He argued that ‘it is impossible to know the actual power and meaning of the words, without the necessary knowledge of their origin and derivation’ – “dat het onmogelijk is, de eigenlijke kracht en betekenis der woorden wel te kennen, zonder de noodige kennis van derzelve oorsprong en afleidinge” (Siegenbeek 1804: 29).

When working on his *Verhandeling*, Siegenbeek was undoubtedly influenced by his eighteenth-century predecessor Adriaan Kluit. In fact, many of Kluit’s (1763, 1777) spelling choices were followed – and officialised – by Siegenbeek. Van de Bilt (2009: 203-212) even claims that Kluit himself played a crucial role in the codification of Dutch. Interestingly, Kluit was also one of the language experts who had been consulted by J. H. van der Palm, before he officially approved Siegenbeek’s orthography.

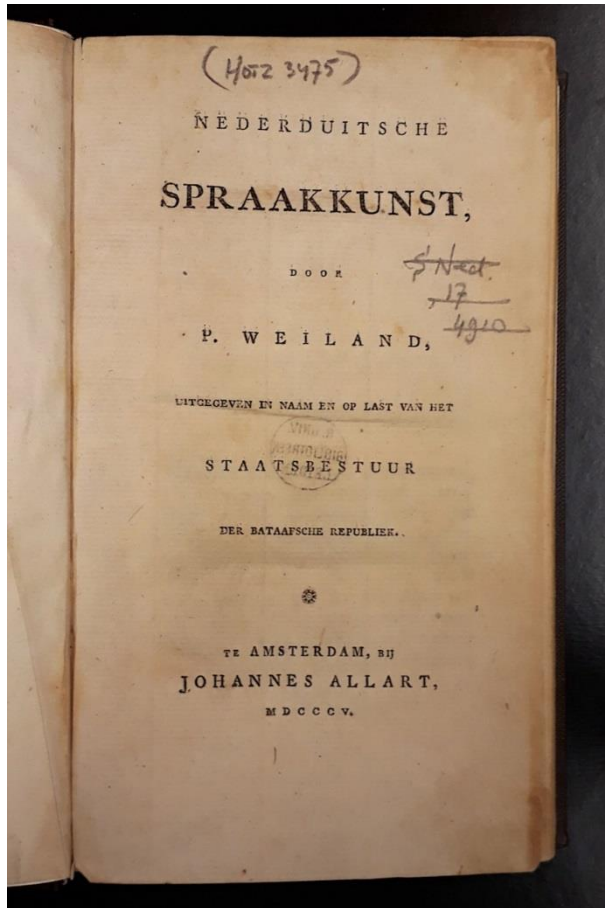
Assessing Siegenbeek’s role in and contribution to the history of Dutch linguistics, Rutten argues that “[t]hroughout his career, Siegenbeek was in defence of Dutch, where *Dutch* should be interpreted as a cultivated, normalised, and

uniform variety modelled after the written language of well-known authors, symbolically representing the Dutch nation” (2018: 27), concluding that “asking Siegenbeek to design the national orthography was clearly the right choice” (2018: 43).

3.2 Weiland (1805): National grammar

Pieter, later Latinised as Petrus, Weiland (1754–1844) made an impact on the history of Dutch as a prolific lexicographer and grammarian, most notably as the codifier of the national grammar of Dutch, his *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* ‘Dutch grammar’ of 1805 (cf. Figure 2).

Figure 2. Title page of Weiland’s grammar (1805, Leiden University Libraries).



Before that, Weiland, who was born in Amsterdam, studied theology in Leiden and became a Remonstrant minister in Rotterdam. In 1789, Weiland was elected as a member of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde*. Confronted with several failed attempts of the Society to compile a comprehensive, explanatory dictionary of Dutch, Weiland suggested that he would be willing to work on a dictionary on his own. This proposal ultimately resulted in eleven volumes of his *Nederduitsch Taalkundig Woordenboek* ‘Dutch Linguistic Dictionary’ (1799–1811)¹².

In addition to his work on lexicography, Weiland also published on orthography and grammar. In 1801, when the Batavian government was developing concrete plans for a national language policy, Weiland was requested by the Minister of National Education to codify the Dutch grammar, which he accepted (Noordegraaf 2018: 148). His *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* was published in 1805, i.e. one year after Siegenbeek’s orthography, and again *in naam en op last van het Staatsbestuur der Bataafsche Republiek* ‘in the name of and by order of the government of the Batavian Republic’.

In fact, it was the first – and also the last – authorised grammar to be prescribed by a Dutch government (Noordegraaf 2018: 145). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Weiland’s *Spraakkunst* had been peer-reviewed by an advisory board of Leiden scholars, including Matthijs Siegenbeek and Adriaan Kluit, who approved his proposal.

Weiland’s national grammar was evidently modelled upon the works of the influential German grammarian Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806), especially the *Umfändliches Lehrgebäude der deutschen Sprache* of 1782. According to van Driel (1992: 226), “Weiland attempted to become the Dutch Adelung”, and he was even accused of plagiarism (Noordegraaf 2018: 155). Apart from Adelung, whom Weiland called *Duitschlands grooten Taalleraar* ‘Germany’s great language teacher’ (1805: XVI), the *Spraakkunst* was also heavily influenced by Lambert ten Kate’s *Aenleiding tot de kennis van het verbevene deel der Nederduitsche sprake* (1723). Weiland divided his grammar into two parts, referred to as *Spelling* and *Woordvoeging*, respectively. In the comprehensive first part on phonetics and morphology, he discussed, for instance, the sounds of Dutch and its parts of speech. This part is actually an adaptation of the almost 200-page introduction in the first volume of his dictionary (1799). In the second part, Weiland focused on syntactic matters.

Noordegraaf (2018: 154) explains that “Weiland first and foremost sought to provide a practical grammar: an authoritative and solid resource for forming an opinion about the correctness of contemporary Dutch language use”. In this respect Weiland was fairly successful, as his authorised grammar was reprinted many times well into the second half of the nineteenth century and, moreover, adapted for use in schools (e.g. *Nederduitsche spraakkunst ten dienste der scholen* in 1806).

¹² For a comprehensive outline of Petrus Weiland’s linguistic activities and particularly his 1805 grammar, see Noordegraaf (2018).

4 Language-in-education policy

Parallel to the national language policy, which resulted in the official *schrijftaafregeling* in 1804/1805, as discussed in Section 3, the period of Dutch nation building in the years around 1800 also saw fundamental changes in the educational system¹³. Language and education were closely intertwined during the Batavian-French period, when the national debates led to “proposals to make grammar and spelling obligatory subjects in primary school, and to concrete language-in-education laws aimed at the top-down dissemination of grammatical knowledge in the school system” (Rutten 2016: 124-125).

Generally, in Late Modern European nationalism, the implementation and dissemination of the standard language variety were first and foremost educational issues (Rutten, Krogull & Schoemaker accepted). In the case of the Northern Netherlands, the appointed Minister of National Education, J. H. van der Palm, was given the task to nationalise the educational system by bringing it under government control. He was handed an instruction, the *Instructie voor den Agent van Nationale Opvoeding* (1798), with a detailed list of his tasks and responsibilities, which included, for instance, a proposal for the reform of the primary school system (article 3), the compilation of a list of prescribed school books (article 4) and the establishment of a school inspection system (article 8). The latter would enable the government to exert influence on practices in the classroom (cf. also Schoemaker & Rutten 2017). As pointed out in Section 3, the regulation of the language also fell under the responsibilities of the Minister (article 15), which led to the official codification of the Dutch orthography and grammar by Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805), respectively.

From 1801 onwards, a series of educational laws were passed. These acts were largely inspired by the 1798 report *Algemeene Denkebeelden* proposed by the Nut society (cf. Section 1.2). The first two education acts were issued in 1801 and 1803, but were barely enforced due to the many constitutional changes during the unsteady Batavian-French period. The third and final education act of 1806, however, was put into practice and remained in effect until 1857 (when a new school act was passed). In the 1806 act, knowledge of the Dutch language was explicitly mentioned as one of the fundamental elements in the national school curriculum, alongside reading, writing and arithmetic (Boekholt & de Booy 1987: 99). For the first time, orthographic and grammatical issues of Dutch became a central part of primary education.

As noted before, J. H. van der Palm initiated the regulation of the Dutch spelling and grammar, which were meant to be adopted in the administrative domain, comprising all printed documents by the government. Furthermore, the prescriptions laid down in Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805) became the valid

¹³ The language-in-education policies in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century are examined in depth in Bob Schoemaker’s PhD sub-project, which is also part of the Leiden-based research programme *Going Dutch. The Construction of Dutch in Policy, Practice and Discourse (1750–1850)* (Schoemaker 2018; cf. also Schoemaker & Rutten 2017)

norms for the educational domain and were thus highly recommended to schoolteachers throughout the country (cf. *Notulen* 1804):

Dat dezelve Spelling zal worden gevolgd en in acht genomen in alle Onderwijsboeken, welke van 's Lands wege, ten dienste der Scholen, zullen worden uitgegeven, met aanschryving aan alle Schoolopzieners, om hunne beste pogingen aan te wenden, ten einde deze Spelling alom in de Scholen worde geadopteerd. (Siegenbeek 1804: xvi-xvii).

'That this spelling will be followed and regarded in all school books which will be published on behalf of the country for the use in schools, with an instruction for all school inspectors to make their best efforts in order to adopt this spelling everywhere in the schools.'

Dat de regels en gronden van taalkunde, bij deze Nederduitsche Spraakkunst vastgesteld, zullen worden gevolgd in alle onderwijsboeken, welke van 's Lands wege ten dienste der Scholen zullen worden uitgegeven, met aanschrijving aan alle Schoolopzieners, om hunne beste pogingen aan te wenden, ten einde dezelve regels en gronden alom in de Scholen worden geadopteerd. (Weiland 1805: xiv)

'That the rules and principles of language, as laid down in this Dutch grammar, will be followed in all school books which will be published on behalf of the country for the use in schools, with an instruction for all school inspectors to make their best efforts in order to adopt these rules and principles everywhere in the schools.'

In the interest of the nation's unity, the language-in-education policy of the early 1800s aimed at the widespread dissemination of knowledge of the national standard variety. Language and education formed a coherent framework in order to ensure that all future citizens of the nation would acquire the official language norms during their formative school years (Boekholt & de Booy 1987: 96-97). The question whether and to what extent the government succeeded in spreading the national language through the Dutch population at large will be at the heart of this dissertation. In Chapters 5-12, the effects of the early nineteenth-century language and language-in-education policy measures on actual language use are analysed systematically on the basis of authentic usage data in the *Going Dutch Corpus*. The theoretical framework for these analyses will be introduced in Chapter 3.