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

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CHAPTER 7

Orthographic variables (3)
Word-medial and word-final /s/

1 Discussion in Siegenbeek (1804)

The variable discussed in this chapter is characterised by a discrepancy between pronunciation and spelling. In fact, the orthographic representation of word-medial and word-final /s/ (< Wgm. **sk*) as <sch> or <s> in words like *men(sch)* 'man, person' and *tuss(ch)en* 'between' has been described as "a thorny problem right up to the present day, when the last relics of the '-sch' spelling are being tidied away" (Gledhill 1973: 421). Historically, the spelling variable under investigation goes back to the West Germanic consonant cluster **sk*, which originally occurred in all positions of a word, for instance initially in **skip* (> *schip* 'ship'), medially in **waskan* (> *was(ch)en* 'to wash, to clean'), and finally in **busk* (> *bos(ch)* 'wood(s), forest'). It is generally assumed that the pronunciation as /sk/ was still very common in the Middle Dutch period. However, the variation found in spelling practices probably reflected an ongoing sound change. Whereas the <sc> spelling was used in initial and medial position, possibly still reflecting the /sk/ pronunciation, <sch> frequently occurred in final position[51]. The <sch> spelling had also been used in initial and medial position from the thirteenth century onwards. With regard to pronunciation, <sch> was maintained in initial position as the cluster /sx/ (< /sk/), but further reduced to /s/ in medial and final position (Rutten & van der Wal 2014: 49).

De Wulf et al. (2005: 18) argue that this position-dependent differentiation in pronunciation must have taken place in most Middle Dutch dialects. Although the remnants of this split can be found in present-day Standard Dutch (i.e. initial /sx/, but medial and final /s/), there is some more dialectal variation. In various dialects of North Holland and Friesland, for instance, /sk/ still occurs at least in word-initial position. Word-medially, /sk/ is incidentally found in some places in North Holland, too, whereas both /sk/ and /sx/ occur in the north-eastern regions (De Wulf et al. 2005: 24)[52]. In word-final position, clusters (either /sk/ or /sx/) are practically absent in the entire language area (De Wulf et al. 2005: 28-29).

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[51] In contrast, De Wulf et al. (2005: 18) argue that <sc> was the typical spelling only in initial position (but not in medial position, cf. also Rutten & van der Wal 2014: 49), as opposed to <sch> for both medial and final position. This actually suggests variation in medial position, probably signalling a change in both pronunciation and spelling practices.

[52] The Wgm. cluster **sk* in word-medial position has also been maintained in several Flemish dialects (cf. e.g. Taeldeman 2013). However, as this dissertation focuses on the Northern Netherlands, the situation in the Southern Netherlands will not be discussed here.

The phonological variation across positions still found in Dutch dialects also supports the claim that the <sch> spelling was preserved longer in word-medial position than in word-final position (Gledhill 1973: 426).

In his official orthography of Dutch, Siegenbeek (1804: 228-232) also addressed this orthographic feature, discussing "het gebruik der enkele *s*, of van den zamengestelden klank van *sch* in sommige woorden" 'the use of the single *s*, or of the combined sound *sch* in some words'. Generally, he prescribed <sch> in these positions. In reference to the mistakes even made by 'otherwise neat writers', Siegenbeek (1804: 228) remarked the necessity to comment on this spelling issue:

> Daar het niet vreemd is, ten aanzien der voorgestelde bijzonderheid, ook anderszins keurige schrijvers te zien mistasten, zal het noodzakelijk zijn, daarover in deze Verhandeling ook met een enkel woord te spreken.
>
> 'As it is not unusual to see otherwise neat writers miscalculating with regard to the presented special case, it will be necessary to also say a few words about it in this treatise.'

To begin with, it has to be noted that Siegenbeek did not prescribe word-final <sch> in all cases. In fact, he discussed the crucial – and etymologically correct – difference between the spelling of adverbs and adjectives [53]. According to Siegenbeek (1804: 229), adverbs like *dagelijks*, *hedendaags* or *vergeefs* (originally genitive forms) had to be spelled with word-final <s>, the homonymous adjectives required the <sch> (derived from the historical suffix *-isch*):

> Dus behoort men ook *dagelijks*, *hedendaags*, *ginds*, *regts*, *links*, in den zin van bijwoorden, met eene enkele *s* te schrijven, als eigenlijk tweede naamvallen zijnde van de onderscheidene bijvoegelijke of zelfstandige naamwoorden, waarvan zij komen; doch diezelfde woorden, als bijvoegelijke gebezigd, vereischen de *sch*. Deze uitgang namelijk, bij verkorting voor *isch*, is bij ons een zeer gemeenzame uitgang van bijvoegelijke naamwoorden, het zij van andere bijvoegelijke, het zij van zelfstandige naamwoorden afkomstig, als *grootsch* van *groot*, *trotsch* van *trots* (*hoogmoed*), *aardsch* van *aarde*, *Haarlemsch* van *Haarlem*, *Amsterdamsch* van *Amsterdam* en honderd andere.
>
> 'Therefore one also has to write *dagelijks*, *hedendaags*, *ginds*, *regts*, *links*, in the sense of adverbs, with a single *s*, as they are actually second cases of the distinct adjectives or nouns, where they derive from. But the same words, used as adjectives, require the *sch*. This ending, shortened for *isch*, is a very common ending for adjectives in our language, either deriving from other adjectives or nouns, as *grootsch* from *groot*, *trotsch* from *trots* (pride), *aardsch* from *aarde*, *Haarlemsch* from *Haarlem*, *Amsterdamsch* from *Amsterdam* and hundred others.'

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[53] The adjectival suffix *-s* (here: Siegenbeek's <sch>) derives from the Old Dutch *-sc/-sk*, e.g. in *himilisc* 'heavenly', and later *-sc/-sch/-s* in Middle Dutch. The unstressed *i* in this suffix had been dropped very early in Dutch (compared to other Germanic languages). The adverbial suffix *-s* (here: Siegenbeek's <s>), on the other hand, was originally a genitive suffix, which can still be seen in fossilised temporal adverbials like *'s morgens* 'in the morning' (< *des morgens*) (cf. *EWN*).

The question arises whether there were any differences in pronunciation between *dagelijks* (adv.) and *dagelijksch* (adj.), or more generally, between word-final <s> and <sch>. Referring to the example of inflected forms of adjectives, Siegenbeek's (1804: 229) comment gives an idea of the differences found in contemporary (everyday) spoken language and writing:

> Men vindt hiervoor, vooral bij vroegere schrijvers, in de verbuiging wel eens, overeenkomstig de dagelijksche uitspraak, *aardse*, *grootse*; doch deze schikking naar de spreektaal werd in den schrijfstijl, sedert lang, met regt verworpen.
>
> 'Especially among earlier writers, one sometimes finds *aardse*, *grootse* in the declension, in line with the daily pronunciation, but this compliance with the spoken language had been rightly rejected in the writing style for a long time'

This indicates that <s(ch)> in inflected forms such as *aards(ch)e* or *groots(ch)e* (i.e. in word-medial position) must have been pronounced as /s/ rather than /sx/. Although Siegenbeek acknowledged these changes in spoken language, his (conservative) spelling choice did not reflect them. It even contradicts his first spelling principle *Schrijf, zoo als gij spreekt* 'Write as you speak'. As can be seen in the quote above, at least in the case of adjectives, the variant <sch> is etymologically motivated. Siegenbeek explicitly referred to the original and very common (*zeer gemeenzame*) adjectival suffix *-isch*, shortened *-sch*.

A closer inspection of Siegenbeek's word list in the appendix of his orthography reveals that <sch> is the default spelling for both word-medial and word-final position – except for the group of adverbs mentioned above, as well as to make a distinction between homonyms such as *wassen* (*crescere*) 'to grow' and *wasschen* (*lavare*) 'to wash, to clean'[54] (1804: 231). The word-medial and word-final <sch> words cover practically all parts of speech such as nouns (*mens(ch)*, *vlees(ch)*), verbs (*wens(ch)en*), adjectives (*Hollands(ch)*) and prepositions (*tuss(ch)en*). This range will also be reflected in the corpus analysis in Section 4.

2 Eighteenth-century normative discussion

Despite the striking differences between spoken and written language, orthographic variation between <sch> and <s> in word-medial and word-final position was rarely discussed in eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse. The widespread preference among grammarians for <sch> becomes evident in their use of this variant, while normative comments or even explicit rules on this spelling issue were surprisingly sparse.

In the early eighteenth century, Sewel (1712) at least briefly mentioned his preference for <sch> in both word-medial and word-final position:

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[54] Etymologically, Siegenbeek's different spellings of these homonyms are indeed grounded on two different Old Dutch words: *wassen* < *wassan* 'to grow', and *wasschen* < *waskan* 'to wash, to clean' (cf. *EWN*).

> Ook voegtze wel in […] eysch, mensch, aardsch, wereldsch, Duytsch, Engelsch" (1712: 13)
> Hierom behoort men te spellen, […] tusschen, menschen" (1712: 41)
>
> 'It is also used well in […] eysch, mensch, aardsch, wereldsch, Duytsch, Engelsch
> Therefore one has to spell […] tusschen, menschen'

Interestingly, Sewel (1712: 33) attested that there was no difference in pronunciation between <sch> and <s>, when he discussed the case of homonymous *bosch* 'wood(s), forest' and *bos* 'bunch':

> Het woord *Bosch* spreekt men gemeenlyk maar uyt, *bos*; evenwel is het best zich aan de oude spelling te houden; want behalve dat *bos* zoude kunnen genomen worden voor *bus*, zo kan met 't onderscheyd der woorden door een verscheelende spelling gevoeglyk betekenen, als *Bosch* [een woud], en *bos* [een bondel], alhoewel men zou moogen zeggen dat het laatste zynen oorsprong heeft van 't eerste, omdat een *Bos* pennen schynt te zyn een *bosch* van pennen [sylva pennarum].
>
> 'The word *Bosch* is commonly pronounced as *bos*. However, it is best to maintain the old spelling, because apart from the fact that *bos* could be taken for *bus*, one can properly signify the difference of the words by a different spelling, as *Bosch* [woods], and *bos* [bundle], although one would say that the latter derives from the former, because a *Bos* pens seems to be a *bosch* of pens [sylva pennarum].'

In these cases, the 'old spelling' <sch> was thus (also) maintained to avoid the identical spelling of homonyms written with <s>. The issue of homonyms with <sch> and <s>, in fact, reoccurs several times throughout the eighteenth-century tradition. Stijl & van Bolhuis (1776: 58), for instance, also illustrated the *bosch/bos* example. According to van Rhyn (1758: 25f.), the <sch> spelling helps to distinguish between the two homonymous verbs *wassen in de zin van groeijen* 'to grow' and *wasschen, in de zin van rynigen* 'to wash, to clean'. Three years later, Elzevier (1761: 127) mentioned the same example.

A remarkable comment on the contemporary pronunciation in word-final position is found in van der Palm (1769: 23), who explicitly rejected the (frequently occurring) spelling with single <s>:

> *Vr.* Moeten de woorden *visch*, *mensch*, enz. niet enkel geschreven worden *vis*, *mens*, enz.
> *Antw.* Men mag de *ch* in de woorden *visch*, enz, niet verwerpen, schoon zulks van vele onkundigen geschiedt: want zulks zoude tegen den aert der woorden en de rechte uitspraek stryden.
>
> '*Q.* Don't the words *visch*, *mensch*, etc. just have to be written *vis*, *mens*, etc.?
> *A.* One must not reject the *ch* in the words *visch*, etc., although this happens among many unknowing people. Because that would contradict the nature of the words and the right pronounciation.'

Unfortunately, van der Palm did not elaborate on the *aert der woorden* 'nature of the words' and particularly the *rechte uitspraek* 'right pronunciation' in word-final position.

A more elaborate discussion of the phonetic nature of <sch> was suggested by Zeydelaar (1774). Generally, he advocated <sch> for all positions and explicitly rejected the single <s> in word-final position. Whereas Zeydelaar (1774: 69-70) acknowledged that final <sch> had been realised as /s/ by many language users, he still heard a *blaasend geluid* 'blowing sound' in medial position:

> Aan het einde der woorden klinkt *sch* niet anders dan eene enkele *s* en men moet ze ook niet anders uitspreeken, in
>
mensch	boersch	hollandsch
wensch	helsch	zweedsch
hemelsch	visch	Fransch
aardsch	rinsch	duitsch
trotsch	rusch	Engelsch.
gottisch		

> Veelen hebben de bovenstaande woorden, omdat *sch* daar als eene enkele *s* in klinkt, reeds begonnen met eene enkele *s* te schrijven; 't geen men niet naarvolgen moet.
>
> Niettegenstaande de sch, in de opgegeevene woorden, als eene enkele s wordt uitgesprooken, zoo bekomt de sch wederöm haar blaasend geluid, zoo draa die woorden meervouwdig gemaakt of in derzelver buiging geschreeven worden, op de volgende wijse.
>
Menschen	boersche	hollandsche
wenschen	helsche	zweedsche
hemelsche	visschen	fransche
aardsche	rinsche	duitsche
trotsche	russchen	engelsche.
gottische		

> 'At the end of words *sch* does not sound different from a single *s*, and one should not pronounce it differently either, in […]
>
> Many have already started to write the abovementioned words with a single *s*, because *sch* sounds like a single *s* here, which one should not follow.
>
> Notwithstanding the fact that sch is pronounced as a single s in the listed words, the sch receives its blowing sound again, as soon as those words are in the plural or written in their inflection, in the following way […]'

Zeydelaar (1774: 70-71) further argued that despite the same pronunciation in word-final position, <sch> must not be confused with <s> in homonymous words, illustrated by the often-cited examples *bosch/bos*, *wasch/was* and so forth.

What becomes evident is that in contrast to the coherent preference for <sch>, eighteenth-century comments on the phonetic background of this spelling were more heterogeneous. Five decades before van der Palm and Zeydelaar, ten Kate (1723 II: 74) attested the /s/ pronunciation in both word-medial and word-final position:

> Onder Zagtstaertigen hebben wij nog tweederhande Uitgangen, om een Bijnaemlijken of *Adjectivalen* Zin aen een Woord te geven; naemlijk, (I) ISCH of ISCHE (bij inkrimping SCHE of SCH, en, na 't gemak van de uitspraek, in Spreek- en Lees-tael slegts SE of S), als GROOTSCH of GROOTS, *Magnificus*, *Superbus*, van GROOT *Magnus*; AERDSCH *terrenus*, van AERD, *terra.*
>
> 'Among the softly-tailed we still have two kinds of endings to give an adjectival meaning to a word, namely (I) ISCH or ISCHE (in the case of reduction SCHE or SCH, and, for the ease of pronunciation, in spoken and reading language only SE or S), as GROOTSCH or GROOTS, *Magnificus*, *Superbus*, from GROOT *Magnus*; AERDSCH *terrenus*, from AERD, *terra.*'

At least in the specific case of adjectival suffixes, ten Kate's approach seems remarkably tolerant, which is characteristic of his so-called common orthography (as opposed to his so-called critical orthography, see van der Wal 2002a). In fact, he acknowledged – and possibly accepted – both the etymological <sch> spelling (shortened from *-isch(e)*) and the <s> spelling derived from the *Spreek- en Lees-tael* 'spoken and reading language'. Ten Kate mentioned the example of *mens(ch)*, acknowledging <sch> and <s> as possible contemporary variants, i.e. *Ménsche*, *Ménsch* or *Méns*. His stance on <s> in writing remains ambiguous, though. Gledhill (1973: 433f.) argues that ten Kate "has no desire to reflect this pronunciation in the spelling ('schrijf-tael'), though he does not condemn it in the spoken language". He adds that <sch> is the most common form in ten Kate's publication, although his usage of variants is rather erratic, with co-occurring forms such as *tusschen* and *tussen*, or *Nederduitsche* and *Hoogduitsen* (Gledhill 1973: ibid).

The most striking exception to the <sch>-promoting majority of eighteenth-century normative works is van Belle (1748; 1755), who was the only grammarian in this century to explicitly reject the <sch> spelling in word-final position:

> […] nooit naa de S in *Wensch*,
> *Mensch*, *Valsch* óf *Fransch*: het is genoeg *Vals*, *Mens*.
> *Schaap*, *Schep*, *Schip*, *Schop* zyn ligtlyk uit te spreeken,
> Maar *hémelSCH Goed* blyft in de keele steeken:
> Duit*sch*, Holland*sch* Geld, Moor*sch* Goud, Hel*sch* Spel, Aard*sch* Guit
> Spreekt nimmermeer een Neederlander uit. (1748: 12)
>
> '[…] never after the S in *Wensch*,
> *Mensch*, *Valsch* or *Fransch*: *Vals*, *Mens* is enough.
> *Schaap*, *Schep*, *Schip*, *Schop* are easy to pronounce,
> But *hémelSCH Goed* sticks in one's throat:
> Duit*sch*, Holland*sch* Geld, Moor*sch* Goud, Hel*sch* Spel, Aard*sch* Guit
> Are no longer pronounced by a Dutchman.'

Here, van Belle unambiguously referred to the changes that had taken place in spoken language. In contrast to word-initial position, /sx/ in word-final position had no longer been pronounced and, moreover, was much more difficult to realise. Not only was van Belle the first grammarian since Winschooten's *Letterkonst* of

1683 (cf. Gledhill 1973: 431) to reject <sch> in non-initial position – he remained a progressive exception throughout the eighteenth century. As Gledhill (1973: 436) concludes, "tradition was still too well-set for the public to adopt this spelling on a large scale".

In sum, the vast majority of eighteenth-century grammarians preferred the historical spelling as <sch> in both word-medial and word-final position. Late eighteenth-century grammarians such as Wester (1799) and Weiland (1799) continued to advocate <sch> rather than <s>, paving the way for Siegenbeek (1804), who followed his predecessors and officialised the conservative variant in his national orthography. Eighteenth-century comments on the contemporary pronunciation remain somewhat vague. As outlined in this section, there was more dissent on this issue, ranging from /s/ in both positions (ten Kate 1723) to /s/ in final but a 'blowing sound' in medial position (Zeydelaar 1774). However, as this case study focuses on word-medial and word-final <sch>/<s> as an orthographic variable, possible variation and change in pronunciation will not be investigated further at this point.

3 Previous research

Although *sch/s* variation can be regarded as a controversial orthographic variable, illustrating the tension between pronunciation and spelling, only very little (socio)linguistic and/or corpus-based research has been conducted so far. Gledhill (1973), however, has a comprehensive chapter on this feature. Providing a useful, critical outline of <sch>/<s> in different positions, his chapter comprises the long history of this spelling feature from the Middle Dutch period until the second half of the twentieth century. It is particularly interesting to see that although attempts to get rid of non-initial <sch> had been made since 1683 (Winschooten), the traditional <sch> spelling was only abolished as late as 1934 "when Marchant put the first official nail in its coffin" (Gledhill 1973: 426).

Based on data drawn from the *Letters as Loot* corpus, Rutten & van der Wal (2014: 49-54) investigate the orthographic representation of reflexes of Wgm. **sk* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century private letters. Their case study focuses on the regions of North Holland and Amsterdam, where the /sk/ pronunciation was still found word-initially. Thus, the <sc> and <sk> spellings can be considered as (unconventional) localisable variants reflecting the dialectal /sk/ pronunciation, as opposed to <sch> as the (conventional) supraregional variant. However, Rutten & van der Wal's (2014) case study reveals that supraregional <sch> was by far the most frequently used spelling in initial position, even in the dialect areas maintaining the /sk/ pronunciation. In other words, the localisable <sc>/<sk> spellings as possible dialect interference with written language could only be attested in a minority of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century letters, mainly from less-experienced writers (i.e. lower and lower middle class, as well as women).

4 Corpus analysis

4.1 Method

For the analysis of this orthographic variable, two variants will be considered, which appear as the main variants in the normative discussion as well as in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, viz. <sch> and <s>. Alternative spelling variants such as <s>/<sse>, <s>/<sze>, <sg>/<sg(h)e> (cf. Gledhill 1973: 447-453) occur only very marginally in the corpus data (less than 15 occurrences altogether) and will therefore be left out of consideration in the corpus analysis. Furthermore, there are no attestations of the historical spellings <sc> or <sk> in word-medial or word-final position in the corpus at all.

In order to assess the actual use of variants in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts, the ten most frequent words containing <sch>/<s> in word-medial and/or word-final position were selected according to their occurrences in the *Going Dutch Corpus* (listed in order of decreasing frequency in the corpus):

- WENS(CH); TUSS(CH)EN; MENS(CH); FRANS(CH); ENGELS(CH); VIS(CH); HOLLANDS(CH); DUITS(CH); TURKS(CH); VLEES(CH)

These items are best regarded as sets of words with <s(ch)> in word-medial or word-final position, covering search queries such as *MENS(CH) (i.e. word-final position with occurrences of, e.g., *mensch* and *medemensch*), *MENS(CH)E* (i.e. forms with <s(ch)> in word-medial position, e.g. *menschen* or *menschelijk*) or *TUSS(CH)EN* (i.e. *tuss(ch)en* as well as *ondertuss(ch)en* and *tuss(ch)entyd*). Possible spelling variation, for instance *ij/y* variation in the DUITS(CH) queries, was also taken into account. In line with Siegenbeek's discussion on the <sch>/<s> spelling, the corpus analysis also comprises various parts of speech, including nouns (*mens(ch)*), verbs (*wens(ch)en*), adjectives (*Hollandsch*) and prepositions (*tuss(ch)en*).

All selected words (except for FRANS(CH)) are, at least in some form, explicitly mentioned in Siegenbeek's word list in the appendix of his 1804 orthography, prescribed to be spelled with <sch>. FRANS(CH) spelled with <sch> occurs several times throughout Siegenbeek's treatise.

4.2 Results

Table 1 shows the distribution of variants across the two diachronic cross-sections and in the entire *Going Dutch Corpus*. The prescribed Siegenbeek variant (i.e. <sch>) is highlighted in light grey.

In the late eighteenth-century period, <sch> is the most frequently used variant, occurring in 72.7% of all instances. The alternative <s>, however, can hardly be regarded as marginal with a share of 27.3%. Despite the general

eighteenth-century normative preference for <sch>, the 'phonetic' spelling <s> does occur relatively frequently in actual language usage.

Table 1. Distribution of variants across time.

	Period 1: 1770–1790				**Period 2: 1820–1840**			
	<sch>		**<s>**		**<sch>**		**<s>**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total	607	72.7	228	27.3	690	95.0	34	5.0
Word-medial	487	78.0	137	22.0	518	96.1	21	3.9
Word-final	120	56.9	91	43.1	172	92.0	15	8.0

In the early nineteenth-century period, i.e. after <sch> had officially been prescribed by Siegenbeek (1804), this traditional spelling further consolidates its position as the dominant variant, increasing to 95.0%. This means that the <s> spelling considerably loses ground to 5.0% in the entire corpus – regardless of its more accurate representation of the contemporary pronunciation. Generally speaking, this orthographic variable undoubtedly reveals an immediate effect of the national spelling regulation on language practice.

With respect to the diverse eighteenth-century comments on the phonetic nature of <sch> in different positions in a word, one might assume that this internal factor also affects the distribution of spelling variants. Historically, the position had an influence on the use of spelling variants (cf. Section 1). The 'old' spelling <sch> was preserved much longer in word-medial position (e.g. in *tusschen* and *menschen*) than in word-final position, "especially in the Southern dialects" (Gledhill 1973: 426).

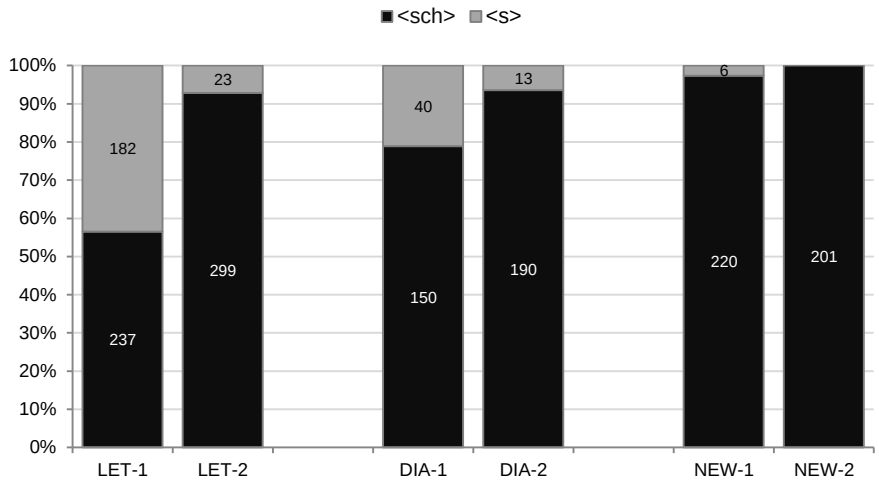
In order to take into account the possible effects of this internal factor, Table 1 also shows the results for both positions separately. It turns out that in the period before Siegenbeek, there is indeed a difference in distribution. Whereas <sch> is clearly the main variant in word-medial position with a share of 78.0%, the two co-occurring variants <sch> and, to a lesser extent, <s> are more evenly distributed in word-final position, viz. 56.9% versus 43.1%. These position-dependent differences level out after Siegenbeek, although <s> is still somewhat higher in word-medial position (96.1% as opposed to 92.0% word-finally).

One might carefully argue that the eighteenth-century findings confirm the previous observation that word-medial <sch> was maintained longer than word-final <sch>. Or do they even reflect a possible difference in eighteenth-century pronunciation, as argued by Zeydelaar (1774)? A more fine-grained analysis is needed, which is why I return to this internal factor by taking a closer look at the position-dependent distribution across genres.

Genre variation

Figure 1 shows the relative distribution of variants across the three genres of the *Going Dutch Corpus*, viz. private letters (LET), diaries and travelogues (DIA), and newspapers (NEW).

Figure 1. Distribution of variants across genre and time.



Genre differences are most evident in the eighteenth-century data. The results for private letters display the highest degree of variation between the two variants. While <sch> (56.6%) is slightly more frequent than <s> (43.4%), both variants coexist in letter writing. In diaries and travelogues, the prevalence of <sch> is more pronounced with a share of 78.9%, whereas <s> is a less frequent variant, compared to private letters. In newspapers from this period, <sch> is already used in 97.3%, with only six tokens of the alternative <s>. It appears that <sch> had probably been established as the default variant in printed, published texts by the late eighteenth century.

The nineteenth-century results show that the diachronic developments from the pre-Siegenbeek to the post-Siegenbeek period lead to the same situation in all three genres. With very little room for variation, <sch> is established as the (only) prevalent variant in the period from 1820–1840. Whereas the distribution remains stable in newspapers (i.e. <sch> in all instances), the change is much more visible in the two types of ego-documents. The share of <sch> increases from 78.9% to 93.6% in diaries and travelogues, and, most strikingly, from 56.6% to 92.9% in private letters. In other words, <s> practically vanishes from language usage, even in the handwritten sources.

As shown in Table 1 before, the position in a word reveals some interesting differences between word-medial and word-final <sch>/<s>. With regard to the remarkable degree of genre variation, particularly in the eighteenth century, I return to this internal factor by zooming in on the genre-specific distribution of

<sch>/<s> in word-medial and word-final position separately. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Position-dependent distribution of variants across genre and time.

	Period 1: 1770–1790				**Period 2: 1820–1840**			
	<sch>		**<s>**		**<sch>**		**<s>**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
LET medial	172	59.5	117	40.5	211	92.1	18	7.9
LET final	65	50.0	65	50.0	88	94.6	5	5.4
DIA medial	122	87.8	17	12.2	142	97.9	3	2.1
DIA final	28	54.9	23	45.1	48	82.8	10	17.2
NEW medial	193	98.5	3	1.5	165	100	0	0.0
NEW final	27	90.0	3	10.0	36	100	0	0.0

According to the eighteenth-century results, word-medial position is more likely to have the <sch> spelling than word-final position – across all genres. However, while the distribution of variants across positions is relatively similar in private letters (59.5% medial versus 50.0% final) and newspapers (98.5% medial versus 90.0% final), there is a striking difference in the sub-corpus of diaries and travelogues. In these sources, <sch> occurs in 87.8% of all instances in word-medial position, but only in 54.9% in word-final position.

In the nineteenth-century results, the discrepancy between word-medial and word-final position in diaries and travelogues largely levels out. Its remnants are still noticeable, though. Whereas <sch> has a share of 97.9% in word-medial position, it is used in 'only' 82.8% in word-final position. No such difference can be attested in private letters and newspapers from the same period.

The question arises why the position of <sch>/<s> in a word only seems to affect the distribution of variants in diaries and travelogues, but not in the other two genres. First of all, one can presume that the position-dependent differences in diaries and travelogues are not purely based on differences in pronunciation. If this was the case, one would expect a similar or even more remarkable difference in private letters, i.e. the genre closest to authentic spoken language. Instead, variation across positions in a word turns out to be genre-specific, only occurring in diaries and travelogues. As briefly discussed in Section 1, the <sch> spelling (as well as the pronunciation of clusters /sx/ and regionally /sk/) has generally been assumed to be preserved longer in word-medial position, whereas <s> (reflecting the reduced /s/ pronunciation) became conventional in word-final position. With regard to the corpus results, this situation of position-dependent variation and change in spelling practices (and possibly pronunciation) is actually only visible in the eighteenth-century diaries and travelogues. Remarkably, diarists seem to maintain the position-dependent distinction between medial <sch> and final <s>, perfectly in line with

traditional historical phonologies of Dutch, at least for earlier periods. Based on the corpus data and contemporary grammarians, however, it is unlikely that late eighteenth-century Dutch still maintained this distinction in phonology. In writing, neither private letters nor newspapers appear to reflect or maintain such a position-related distinction. The results for diaries and travelogues are thus unexpected and potentially indicate a more conservative writing tradition that was (genre-) specifically preserved in these sources.

In any case, these quantitative findings once again support the assumption that the genre of diaries and travelogues takes a special intermediate position in the corpus design between private letters and newspapers. In the eighteenth century data, the distribution of variants in word-final position is actually very similar to that in the private letters. Word-medially, on the other hand, it is relatively close to that in the newspapers. One might conclude that the use of the traditional spelling <sch> (regardless of the contemporary pronunciation) was somehow maintained longer in diaries and travelogues than in private letters, at least in word-medial position.

Diachronically, however, the developments towards <sch> as the (only) dominant spelling in nineteenth-century usage are witnessed for both word-medial and word-final position. Therefore, this internal factor will not be considered in the investigation of the remaining external variables.

Regional variation

The relative distribution of variants across the different regions in the *Going Dutch Corpus* is presented in Table 3 (FR = Friesland, GR = Groningen, NB = North Brabant, NH = North Holland, SH = South Holland, UT = Utrecht, ZE = Zeeland).

Table 3. Distribution of variants across region and time.

	Period 1: 1770–1790				**Period 2: 1820–1840**			
	<sch>		**<s>**		**<sch>**		**<s>**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
FR	86	72.3	33	27.7	109	94.8	6	5.2
GR	66	66.0	34	34.0	89	87.3	13	12.7
NB	84	74.3	29	25.7	91	91.9	8	8.1
NH	96	68.1	45	31.9	98	94.2	6	5.8
SH	101	75.9	32	24.1	103	99.0	1	1.0
UT	84	82.4	18	17.6	111	100	0	0.0
ZE	90	70.9	37	29.1	89	97.8	2	2.2

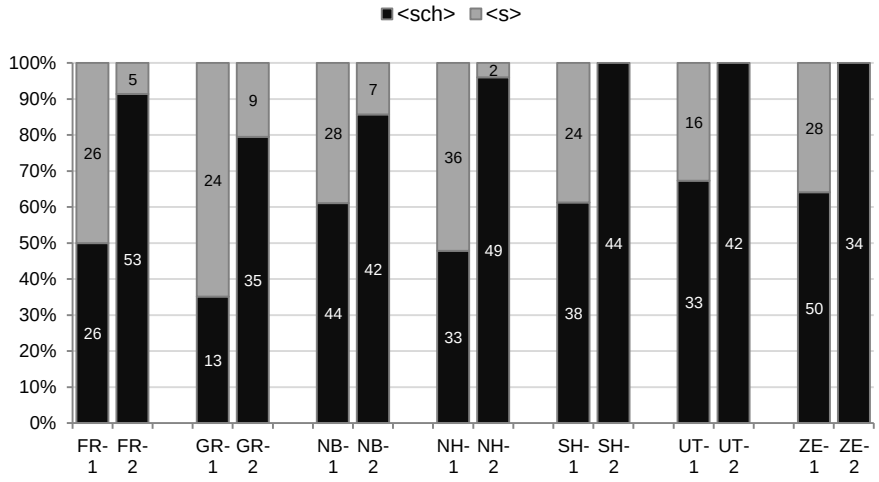
Generally, <sch> is the most frequently used variant in the late eighteenth century in all seven regions. Some degree of regional variation can certainly be attested, though. The highest share of 82.4% is found in Utrecht, whereas Groningen has a comparatively low share of 66.0%. Despite these differences, no clear regional patterns become evident.

The same is true for the early nineteenth-century results, in which <sch> occurs in approximately or even more than 90% in all seven regions. Again, the region of Utrecht leads with <sch> being used in 100% of all instances. Like in the first period, the most instances of the alternative <s> spelling are still found in the Groningen data (12.7%).

Regional variation across genres

Taking into account the genre differences attested before, the regional distribution of variants was also investigated across the three genres. Zooming in on private letters first, Figure 2 reveals some more regional variation.

Figure 2. Distribution of variants across region and time (private letters).

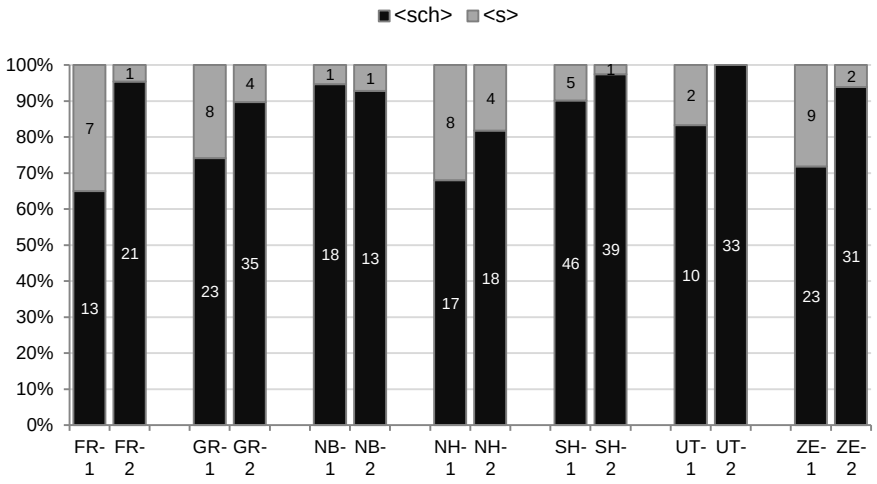


The eighteenth-century results show that <sch> is the most frequently used spelling in private letters from North Brabant (61.1%), South Holland (61.3%), Zeeland (64.1%) and particularly Utrecht (67.3%), but not in all regions. Most strikingly, <s> has a relatively high share of 64.9% in Groningen, where it outnumbers <sch>. Moreover, the two variants are (almost) equally frequent in Friesland and North Holland. This suggests a tendency that <s> is more common in private letters from the northern regions than from the southern ones. In the nineteenth-century period, all seven regions shift to <sch>. In South Holland, Utrecht and Zeeland, the prescribed variant even reaches 100%, and 96.1% in North Holland. The remnants of <s> primarily occur in letters from the peripheral

regions of Friesland, Groningen, and North Brabant. Once again, the highest share of <s> is attested in Groningen (20.5%).

Figure 3 shows the regional distribution of variants in the sub-corpus of diaries and travelogues.

Figure 3. Distribution of variants across region and time (diaries and travelogues).



Unlike the results for private letters, <sch> is the most frequently used variant in eighteenth-century diaries and travelogues from all seven regions. It is particularly prevalent in North Brabant (94.7%) and South Holland (90.2%). On the other hand, the share of the alternative spelling <s> is comparatively high in Friesland (35.0%) and North Holland (32.0%) and, to a slightly lesser extent, Zeeland (28.1%) and Groningen (25.8%). In the nineteenth-century period, diaries and travelogues from all seven regions have <sch> as their prevalent variant, ranging from 100% in Utrecht to 81.8% in North Holland.

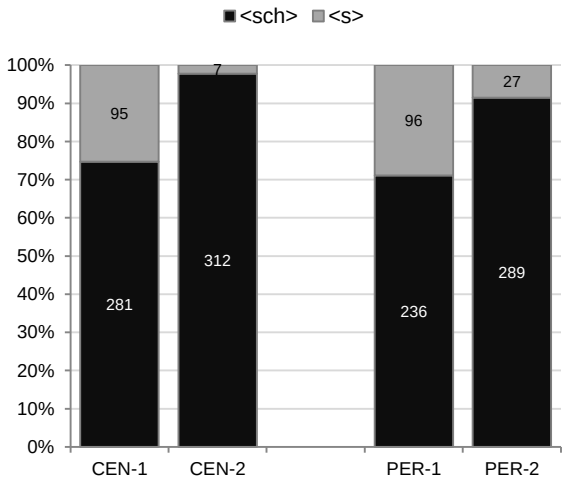
As shown in Figure 1, no variation could be attested in the newspaper data, except for a very low number of <s> in the eighteenth-century period (i.e. six occurrences). Therefore, it is redundant to present the distribution across regions and time in the newspaper data.

Variation across centre and periphery

Spatial variation in the distribution of variants was further investigated with regard to the centre–periphery distinction (CEN = centre, PER = periphery), as presented in Figure 4.

The differences between the centre and the periphery turn out to be fairly marginal in both periods. In the eighteenth-century data, <sch> is the dominant variant both in the centre (74.7%) and in the periphery (71.1%).

Figure 4. Distribution of variants across centre–periphery and time.

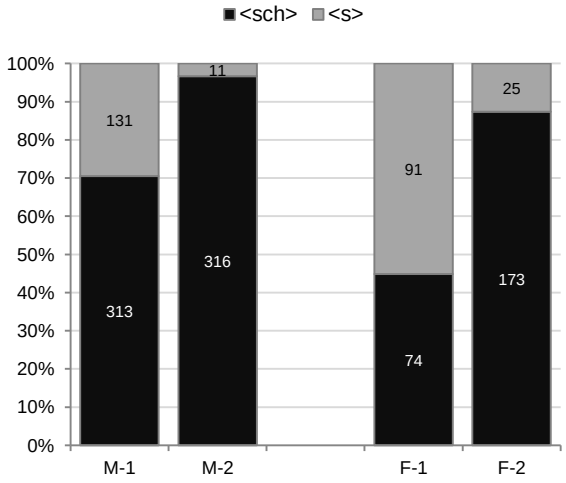


In the nineteenth century, the share of the prescribed variant <sch> increases to 97.8% in the centre, being practically the only variant in usage. In the periphery, we find more or less the same distribution, although the predominance of <sch> is slightly weaker than in the centre with a share of 91.5%.

Gender variation

Figure 5 shows the distribution of variants across gender (M = male writers, F = female writers), based on data from the two sub-corpora of ego-documents.

Figure 5. Distribution of variants across gender and time.



The results actually reveal striking gender differences, particularly in the late eighteenth-century period. Men use <sch> as the most frequent variant, occurring in 70.5% of all instances. In contrast, <s> is the most frequently used variant among women of the same period with a share of 55.2%. In fact, the 'phonetic' spelling co-occurs with the slightly less frequent <sch> (44.8%) in ego-documents produced by women. In the early nineteenth century, both genders increasingly use <sch> in conformity with Siegenbeek, i.e. male writers in 96.6% and, slightly less pronounced, female writers in 87.4%. It seems evident that Siegenbeek's prescription in favour of <sch> affected both genders. Even though the spelling norm was adopted more frequently by men than by women, its effect is most visible in the strong increase of <sch> in the female data.

5 Discussion

The orthographic variable investigated in this chapter can certainly be regarded as a good example of an effective spelling norm. In Section 1, it was pointed out that Siegenbeek (1804) prescribed the historical <sch> spelling for Wgm. **sk* in word-medial (e.g. *tusschen*) and word-final position (e.g. *Hollandsch*), rejecting the alternative variant <s>. This was a conservative choice in two respects. First of all, Siegenbeek followed the vast majority of grammarians, who used and advocated the <sch> spelling in their normative works throughout the eighteenth century (Section 2). Secondly, by selecting <sch> as the standard variant, Siegenbeek also chose not to reflect the changes that had taken place in spoken language. As acknowledged by several grammarians including Sewel (1712), ten Kate (1723), van Belle (1748; 1755) and even Siegenbeek (1804) himself, word-medial and word-final <sch> had actually been pronounced as /s/ rather than the fricative cluster /sx/ still found in word-initial position. This is interesting as the preference for the traditional, etymologically motivated <sch> spelling actually contradicts Siegenbeek's first fundamental spelling principle, viz. *Schrijf, zoo als gij spreekt* 'Write as you speak'.

Regardless of the officialised discrepancy between pronunciation and spelling, the corpus analysis in Section 4 revealed that the prescribed variant <sch> was almost invariably adopted in early nineteenth-century usage. In the late eighteenth-century data, <s> still occurred in more than one-fourth of all instances. In private letters from that period, the share of <s> was even higher. In fact, genre proved to be a strong external factor for this orthographic variable. Whereas <sch> had already been established as the default variant in late eighteenth-century newspapers, i.e. in printed and published texts, there was more room for the alternative 'phonetic' <s> spelling in handwritten ego-documents. In diaries and travelogues, but most notably in private letters, <sch> coexisted alongside the almost equally frequent <s> spelling.

Furthermore, the position in a word, i.e. word-medial or word-final <sch>/<s>, was taken into consideration as an internal factor. Although earlier observations (e.g. Gledhill 1973), arguing that <sch> was longer preserved in

medial than in final position, were confirmed to some extent, the differences in distribution appeared to be mainly genre-specific. In fact, a striking position-dependent difference became evident in eighteenth-century diaries and travelogues, but not in the other two genres. It could be argued that this highlights the special intermediate position of these sources in the *Going Dutch Corpus* design, suggesting that the spelling in diaries and travelogues was more conservative and 'written' than in private letters (word-medial) but more 'oral', i.e. more closely reflecting the contemporary pronunciation than in newspapers (word-final). Possibly, diaries and travelogues reflect an older writing tradition with two position-dependent spellings in line with the historical-phonological distinction of medial /sx/ (<sch>) and final /s/ (<s>).

Regional variation was mainly attested in ego-documents, most notably in private letters. In the eighteenth century, not all regions used <sch> as their main variant. In fact, <s> was the most frequent variant in Groningen and also occurred equally frequent as <sch> in Friesland and North Holland. In other words, letter writers from the northern regions used <s> relatively more often than in the rest of the investigated language area. With regard to the dialectal variation briefly addressed in Section 1, this might be somewhat surprising. Keeping in mind that Wgm. **sk*, at least word-medially, has been maintained as a cluster (/sk/ and/or /sx/) in some dialects in North Holland and the north-eastern regions including Groningen, one might assume that <sch> was interpreted as a possible representation of /sk/ (Rutten & van der Wal 2014: 51) or /sx/. However, the reduced form <s> appears to be relatively frequent in these regions, thus not reflecting a possible (dialectal/regional) cluster pronunciation. This is largely in line with Rutten & van der Wal's (2014) case study on initial <sc>/<sk> in private letters from North Holland/Amsterdam, also showing that dialect interference on spelling in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century letter writing rarely occurred. In the nineteenth-century data of the *Going Dutch Corpus*, regional differences levelled out. Furthermore, spatial variation between the centre and the periphery turned out to be marginal in both periods.

In contrast, gender was another strong external variable affecting the distribution of variants. Particularly striking in the late eighteenth century, male writers primarily used <sch>, whereas women used <s> slightly more often than <sch>. In line with the general increase of <sch> after 1804, these gender differences were less striking in the early nineteenth century. However, the shift in the female data from a slightly dominant usage of <s> (alongside <sch>) in the first period towards <sch> as the clearly prevalent variant in the second period emphasise Siegenbeek's normative influence.

To sum up, the case of word-medial and word-final <sch> gives evidence of a remarkably effective spelling norm, officialised by Siegenbeek in the context of the *schrijftaalregeling*, and widely adopted in both printed and handwritten texts, across all regions and both genders.