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

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Morphosyntactic variables (2)

Masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns

1 Corpus analysis

Building on the analysis of neuter relative pronouns presented in Chapter 10, this second morphosyntactic case study focuses on masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns. A historical overview of the Dutch relativisation system was provided in Section 1 of the previous chapter. For a comprehensive outline of norms and preferences related to the use of relative pronouns (i.e. including masculine and feminine forms), see Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 10, discussing Weiland (1805) and eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse, respectively. In addition to the corpus analysis of masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns, the present chapter also contains a general conclusion drawn on the basis of the findings from two individual case studies on relative pronouns (Section 3).

1.1 Method

For the corpus analysis of masculine and feminine singular (common gender in present-day Dutch) and plural relative pronouns in subject and object position, the occurrences of the following variants were extracted:

- Nominative: *die, wie, welke, dewelke*;
- Accusative: *dien* (masc. sg.), *die* (fem. sg.; pl.), *wien* (masc. sg.), *wie* (fem. sg.; pl.), *welken* (masc. sg.), *welke* (fem. sg.; pl.) *denwelken* (masc. sg.), *dewelke* (fem. sg.; pl.).

For the sake of clarity, these variants will be referred to as *die, wie, welke* and *dewelke* (comprising both nominative and accusative forms) throughout this chapter.

Possible spelling variation, for instance the *k/ck/c* variation in *(de)welke*, was also taken into consideration. All-non relative occurrences were filtered out by hand, including *die* functioning as demonstrative pronoun, *wie* as interrogative pronoun as well as in the formulaic expression *wie weet* ‘who knows’, and *welke* as interrogative pronoun. Ultimately, 2,473 occurrences of masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns in subject and object position were extracted from the *Going Dutch Corpus* and used for the analysis. Before the quantitative

results will be presented in Section 1.2, I briefly discuss the use of the possible variants (*die, wie, welke, dewelke*) in different contexts, illustrated by examples taken from the *Going Dutch Corpus*. Two internal factors will be taken into account, viz. the definiteness as well as the animacy of the antecedent.

The definiteness of the antecedent was empirically tested on neuter relative pronouns in Chapter 10 (Section 5.2). Referring to the different types of antecedents in van der Horst's (1988) definiteness cline, van der Wal (2002b: 32) points out that masculine and feminine relative pronouns can have four possible antecedents:

In the case of DIE/WIE there are four possible antecedents (categories 1, 3; 5 and 6 above). In Modern Dutch, DIE is still the common gender and plural relative pronoun which occurs with an indefinite or definite antecedent (categories 3, 5 and 6) and functions as subject, indirect or direct object. It is the more remarkable as at the end of the sixteenth century, both DIE and WIE occurred as free relatives. [...] In Modern Dutch WIE is the current free relative form, but the pronoun has not made its way into the other categories yet, in any case not in accepted Standard Dutch.

In other words, the antecedents of masculine and feminine relative pronouns may be free or headless relatives (context I), indefinite pronouns (context III), indefinite noun phrases (context V), and definite noun phrases (context VI). However, the corpus analysis of neuter relative pronouns in Chapter 10 has shown that the relevance of the antecedent's definiteness is fairly limited. Moreover, in the case of masculine and feminine relative pronouns, definiteness is generally a less interesting factor due to the relatively restricted spectrum of possible contexts, in which masculine and feminine forms can occur. Whereas neuter forms can be used in all contexts, the vast majority of masculine and feminine forms refers to either indefinite or definite noun phrases as antecedents (i.e. contexts V and VI). In other words, there are too few contexts to investigate possible diachronic developments on the cline. Although I will occasionally refer to these contexts, the definiteness of the antecedent will not be studied as an internal variable again.

Another possible internal factor that has been argued to affect the choice of particular relative pronouns is the semantic property of animacy. Assuming that the animacy of the antecedent conditions the distribution of variants, all occurrences of masculine and feminine relative pronouns in subject and object position referring to noun phrases in the definiteness contexts V (indefinite noun phrases) and VI (definite noun phrases)⁷⁴ were manually coded as either animate or inanimate. Here, 'animate' refers to humans, animals, collective nouns, but also God and other deities⁷⁵ (cf. also Bergs 2005: 146), whereas 'inanimate' comprises all

⁷⁴ Context I, i.e. free or headless relatives (antecedents embedded), and context III, i.e. indefinite pronouns (mostly referring to human entities), are excluded from this analysis.

⁷⁵ In his case study on relative clauses in Middle English family letters, Bergs (2005: 146) applies a tripartite classification of antecedents into animate (AN), inanimate (INA) and deity (DE), the latter of which is "an umbrella term that subsumes entities such as 'God', 'Jesus', 'The Holy Trinity', saints, etc.". According to the literature, "these referents may

non-human/non-animal referents (including dead animals as food, e.g. *nieuwe haring* ‘new herring’). Particularly in modern linguistics, the concept of animacy has often been treated as a hierarchy, theoretically allowing a fine-grained classification of antecedents. Working with similar historical data as in Hundt & Szmrecsanyi’s (2012) corpus-based study on animacy in Early New Zealand English, I follow their approach by applying the binary animate–inanimate distinction here.

In the following, the variability of masculine and feminine relative pronouns in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century usage will be illustrated by examples taken from the *Going Dutch Corpus*. The originally demonstrative *d*-form *die*, which was the default form in the earliest periods of Dutch, occurs as free relative in (1). While *wie* is the free relative form in present-day Standard Dutch, there are no occurrences of nominative *wie* or accusative *wien* as free relatives in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century data of the *Going Dutch Corpus*. However, the case of dative *wien* in (2) shows that the *w*-form does occur in this context. In contrast, the alternative pronominal forms *welke* and the extended alternative *denwelke* do not seem to be used as free relatives at all:

- (1) **die** een vrouw vraagt, moet weten, van waar hij dezelve zal mainteneeren
 ‘who(ever) asks a woman, must know from which he should maintain her’
- (2) **wien** het ook ten deele moge vallen
 ‘whom(ever) it may be allocated to’

In examples (3–5), the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun such as *elk*, *ieder*, *iemand*, *niemand*, *veel*, *weinig* and so forth, commonly referred to as context III⁷⁶. In the corpus, there are only attestations of the *d*-form in this context:

- (3) *iemand* [...] **die** morgen vroeg voor mij naar Harderwyk gaat
 ‘someone [...] who goes to Harderwijk for me tomorrow morning’
- (4) *elk*, **die** belang in de algemeene welvaart stelt
 ‘anyone who is interested in [the] general prosperity’
- (5) *alle* **die** na mij vragen
 ‘all who ask for me’

have had an influence on the choice of the relativizer”. With regard to the investigated period and the selected sources of the present study, comparatively rarely referring to God and other divine entities (especially in newspapers, diaries and travelogues), such a distinction seems less relevant.

⁷⁶ Unlike the idiomatic expression *al(les) wat* (as opposed to other indefinite pronouns like *iets*, *niets*, *veel*) in the discussion of neuter relative pronouns (Chapter 10), there is no comparable (grammaticalised) case with regard to masculine and feminine relative pronouns. Therefore, a split of context III does not seem necessary here.

In contexts V and VI, the relative pronouns have indefinite or definite noun phrases as antecedents. It is in examples (6–12) where the full spectrum of variation becomes apparent, as practically all forms occur in reference to noun phrases. Also considering the factor of animacy, the (a) examples refer to animate antecedents, whereas the (b) examples have inanimate antecedents (if applicable).

In context V, i.e. indefinite noun phrases, *die* (6), *welke* (7) and *dewelke* (8) each occur with animate and inanimate antecedents:

- (6) a. *eene goedaardige kleine oude vrouw, die een weinig Hollandsch en Fransch spreekt*
‘a good-natured small old woman, who speaks a little Dutch and French’
- b. *een sterke Donderbui, die met eenen harden wind en sterken regen begon*
‘a heavy thunderstorm, which started with a strong wind and heavy rain’
- (7) a. *een elendige kok, welke nog geen eens aardappelen kan kookken*
‘a miserable cook, who cannot even cook potatoes’
- b. *eene ervaring, welke ik nimmer zal vergeten*
‘an experience, which I will never forget’
- (8) a. *25 Jagers [...] de welke alle weeken een stuk wild aan 't hof moeten besorgen*
‘25 hunters [...] which have to deliver a piece of game to the court every week’
- b. *een zwaare hoofdpyn dewelke wel haast met braken ge verzeld ging*
‘a bad headache which was almost accompanied by vomiting’

The only form that does not occur in this context is *wie*, although it should be noted again that there are several attestations of the *w*-form declined for genitive and dative case referring to indefinite noun phrases in the corpus, for instance in *een persoon, wien 't acces geweigerd is* ‘a person, who was denied access’ (animate antecedent) and *een groote tafel 12 voeten lang 8 breed wiens byzonderheid was dat zy uit een stuk gemaakt was* ‘a large table, twelve feet long, eight wide, whose special quality it was that it was made out of one piece’ (inanimate antecedent).

Finally, all four possible forms occur in context VI (see examples (9–12)), referring to definite noun phrases. In the corpus data, *die* (9), *welke* (11) and *dewelke* (12) occur with both animate and inanimate antecedents, whereas *wie* (10) only occurs with an animate referent.

- (9) a. *de Postmeester die wy dubbelt geld boden*
‘the postmaster whom we offered twice the money’
- b. *de heerlyke Koffij die de abdis heden ochtend in haar Klooster had doen bereiden*
‘the delicious coffee that the abbess had prepared in her convent this morning’

- (10) [eene nieuwe bierbrouwerij van] de Heer Jan van Cleef **wie** lekker bier brouwt
 ‘[a new brewery of] Mister Jan van Cleef who brews delicious beer’
- (11) a. *die wedúwe, welke reeds hoog bejaard was*
 ‘the widow, who was already very old’
- b. *de gezonde lucht welke men hier inademt*
 ‘the healthy air which one breathes here’
- (12) a. *de voornaamste actrice van Parys Mad^e du Gazon [...] dewelke hier voor 20 Representaties 1200 Livres trekt*
 ‘the most prominent actress of Paris, Mademoiselle du Gazon [...] who gets 1200 livres for 20 shows here’
- b. *de Water machiene [...] de welke aan alle de brouwers Water uit de Schelde verschaft*
 ‘the water machine [...] which supplies all brewers with water from the Scheldt’

While the main purpose of these examples is to provide a first overview of the possible forms in different contexts, as they occur in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, it is crucial to conduct a quantitative analysis in order to shed light on variation and change in the distribution of relative pronouns. The corpus results are presented and discussed in Section 1.2 and 1.3, respectively.

1.2 Results

The overall distribution of Dutch masculine and feminine relative singular and plural pronouns in subject and object position (i.e. nominative and accusative forms) is shown in Table 1 (P1 = 1770–1790, P2 = 1820–1840).

In the entire *Going Dutch Corpus*, the *d*-form *die* clearly emerges as the prevalent relative pronoun for masculine, feminine and plural referents. In fact, the only competing form in language usage is the additional form *welke* with a share of 27.7%. Both the *n*-form *wie* (0.3%) and the extended variant *dewelke* (0.9%) occur very marginally.

Table 1. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across time.

	<i>die</i>		<i>wie</i>		<i>welke</i>		<i>dewelke</i>		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
P1	888	72.3	3	0.2	315	25.6	23	1.9	1,229	100
P2	871	70.0	4	0.3	369	29.7	0	0.0	1,244	100
Total	1,759	71.1	7	0.3	684	27.7	23	0.9	2,473	100

Compared to the neuter relative pronouns investigated in Chapter 10, there is a considerably more limited set of variants in actual language use. In fact, only two forms (*die*, *welke*) are commonly used in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, as opposed to at least four competing forms of the neuter pronoun (*dat*, *wat*, *hetgeen*, *hetwelk*, to a lesser extent *welke*).

Diachronically, the distribution of variants presented in Table 1 turns out to be remarkably stable across periods, which is in line with the results for the neuter relative pronouns. Some small-scale developments are interesting, though. First of all, *welke* generally seems to gain ground in the nineteenth-century period, increasing from 25.6% to 29.7%. The increase of *welke* is mainly at the cost of *die*, which minimally decreases from 72.3% to 70.0%. It has to be further investigated, though, whether this is a general tendency, or whether there are genre-specific developments involved, similar to the case of neuter relative pronouns. Second, the extended form *develke* only occurs (marginally) in the eighteenth-century period (1.9%), but is completely absent in the nineteenth-century period. With only a few attestations in each period, the *n*-form *wie*⁷⁷ remains very marginal across time.

Genre variation

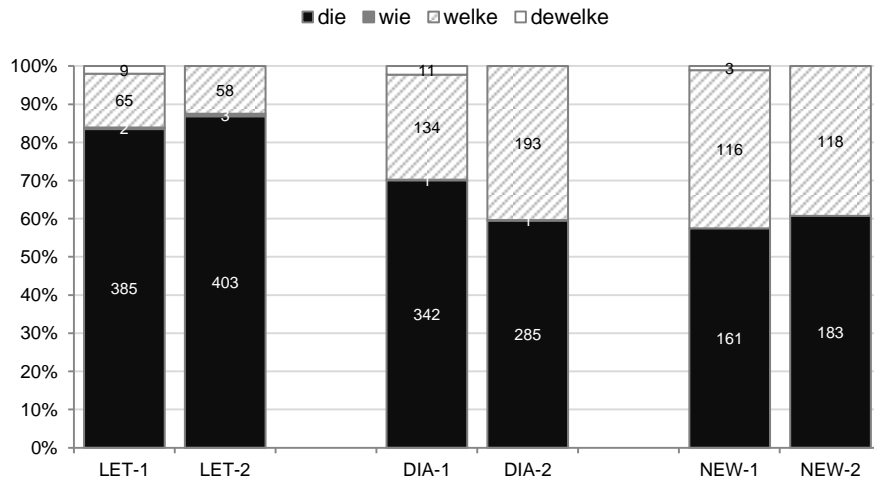
In the previous analysis of neuter relative pronouns (Chapter 10), genre proved to be the most relevant (external) variable affecting the distribution of variants. Figure 1 shows the distribution of variants across the genres of the *Going Dutch Corpus*, i.e. private letters (LET), diaries and travelogues (DIA), and newspapers (NEW).

Again, the results reveal considerable genre differences. In private letters from the eighteenth-century period, the *d*-form *die* is by far the most frequently used relative pronoun (83.5%). The additional pronominal form *welke* has a comparatively low share of 14.1%. The remaining variants *develke* (2.0%) and particularly *wie* (0.4%) are extremely marginal in usage.

In the second ego-document genre, viz. diaries and travelogues, the prevalence of *die* is less pronounced than in private letters. Occurring in 70.1%, *die* has to be considered as the main variant, but the considerable share of *welke* (27.5%) gives evidence of two competing forms in these sources. Very similar to private letters, *develke* (2.3%) and *wie* (0.2%) are low in frequency.

In newspapers, i.e. the printed, published genre of the corpus, *die* and *welke* are most evenly distributed, occurring in 57.7% and 41.4%, respectively. In other words, they coexist as main variants in newspaper writing. There are three attestations of *develke* (1.1%), whereas *wie* is completely absent in these sources.

⁷⁷ When we also consider genitive and dative forms (including occurrences after prepositions), the originally interrogative *w*-forms like *wiens* and *wier* are somewhat more frequent. In fact, they have been used in the historical genitive since the Middle Dutch period. In the entire *Going Dutch Corpus*, one can find 41 attestations of *wiens* (gen. masc. sg.; also gen. neut. sg. of *wat*), 24 of *wier* (gen. fem. sg., pl.), 44 of *wien* (dat. masc. sg.) (cf. Weiland 1805: 113-114 for the paradigm), and 15 of *wie* after prepositions.

Figure 1. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across genre and time.

The genre-specific distribution of variants remains relatively stable in the early nineteenth-century results. In the private letters, *die* slightly increases from 83.5% to 86.9%, whereas *welke* decreases from 14.1% to 12.5%. Generally speaking, the distribution in the letter data has to be regarded as stable, though. A similar stability in the distribution of variants can be attested in nineteenth-century newspapers. *Die* (60.8%) is still the most frequently used variant, but coexists alongside the second variant *welke* (39.2%).

In contrast, *die* considerably loses ground in diaries and travelogues, dropping from 70.1% to 59.5%, mainly in favour of *welke*, which increases from 27.5% to 40.3%. In fact, the only considerable changes are attested in these sources. In line with the remarkable diachronic developments in the use of the neuter relative pronouns (Chapter 10), diaries and travelogues seem to undergo genre-specific developments from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. They appear to diverge from the more ‘oral’ ego-documents (private letters) in the first period towards the more ‘written’ formal language of printed, published texts (newspapers) in the second period.

On the whole, there are no genre-specific differences with regard to the use of *wie*. In both periods, there are only a few occurrences in the two ego-document genres and no attestations at all in newspapers. The previously at least marginally used *dewelke* disappears in all three genres in the nineteenth-century period.

The genre differences regarding the use of masculine and feminine relative pronouns – i.e. primarily *die* in private letters, but both *die* and *welke* coexisting in newspapers (and increasingly in diaries and travelogues) – suggest a link to Weiland’s (1805) awareness of stylistic or register variation. As outlined in Section 2 of the previous chapter, the relativisers *welke* and (less frequent) *dewelke* were assigned to the so-called ‘solemn’, more formal style, whereas *die* was more typical of the plain style. In line with Weiland’s (1805) comments, the corpus findings

presented here reveal that *welke* is considerably more frequent in printed, published texts than in the ‘common’ language of handwritten private letters, where *die* prevails. The question arises whether and to what extent this can be interpreted as a reflection of Weiland’s (1805) observations. Did his comments on stylistic or register variation set the pattern for early nineteenth-century practices? In the case of newspapers and private letters, the differences are already visible in the late eighteenth-century data, suggesting a situation in which *welke* must have been perceived as more formal than *die* – before Weiland (1805). Given the diachronic stability in these two genres, his direct influence on the nineteenth-century period was probably fairly limited. However, the increase of the ‘solemn’ form *welke* (at the expense of *die*) in nineteenth-century diaries and travelogues is remarkable and once again highlights the special position of this genre, certainly from a diachronic point of view. While it is not possible to prove Weiland’s intervention on this development either, it might be argued that his observations discussed in the national grammar promoted the general awareness and status of *welke* as a more formal variant as compared to *die*.

Animacy of the antecedent

The internal factor of animacy is investigated with a selected data set from the *Going Dutch Corpus*. In the previous section on genre variation, diaries and travelogues as well as newspapers turned out to be particularly interesting with regard to variation, with both *die* and *welke* being used as coexisting forms. Therefore, these two sub-corpora were selected to investigate the influence of the antecedent’s animacy. The third genre, i.e. private letters, seemed less suitable for this analysis, as *die* appeared to be by far the most frequent form in usage, thus leaving little room for variation to study. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across animate and inanimate antecedents.

	<i>die</i>		<i>wie</i>		<i>welke</i>		<i>dewelke</i>		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Animate-1	245	69.4	1	0.4	102	28.9	5	2.1	353	100
Inanimate-1	246	61.0	0	0.0	148	36.7	9	4.0	403	100
Animate-2	235	67.0	1	0.3	115	32.8	0	0.0	351	100
Inanimate-2	226	53.6	0	0.0	196	46.4	0	0.0	422	100

In the late eighteenth century, both *die* and *welke*, i.e. the two main variants in usage, refer back to animate and inanimate antecedents. The generally more frequent *die* has a share of 69.4% with animate antecedents, and a share of 61.0% with inanimate antecedents. *Welke* occurs in 28.9% of all instances with animate antecedents, and in 36.7% with inanimate antecedents. In other words, the

distribution across animate and inanimate antecedents is fairly well-balanced in the eighteenth-century period, although one might argue that *welke* is slightly more likely to refer to inanimate antecedents than to animate antecedents.

In the early nineteenth century, the differences are somewhat more pronounced. While the distribution of forms is diachronically fairly stable in the case of animate antecedents, one can witness a relative increase of *welke* with inanimate antecedents (from 36.7% to 46.4%) at the expense of *die* (from 61.0% to 53.6%). While this is generally in line with Weiland's (1805) preference for the more 'solemn' form *welke* in the higher registers, the increase of *welke* is, at least to some extent, conditioned internally by animacy, which is a factor that had not been considered by Weiland.

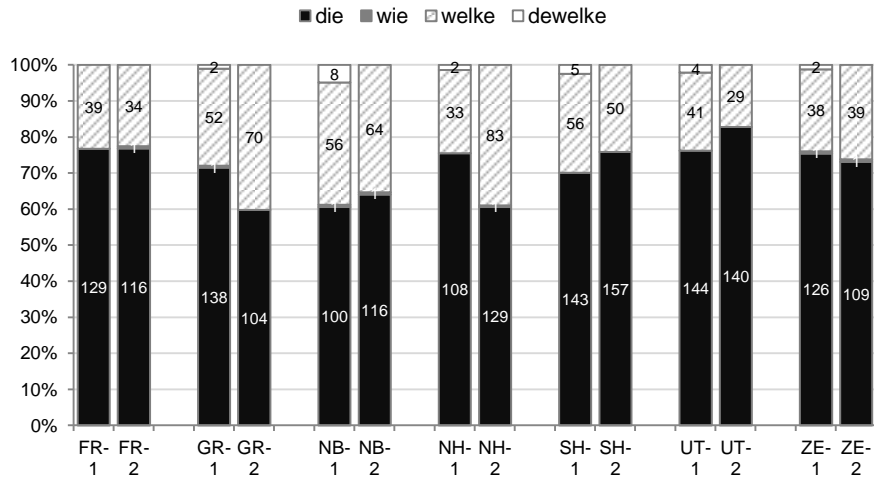
Taking into account the low number of tokens, the results for *wie* and *develke* can only be assessed tentatively. The extended form *develke*, exclusively used in the eighteenth-century period, seems to be slightly more common with inanimate antecedents (4.0% as opposed to 2.1% with animate antecedents), although this might very well be due to the small sample. The *n*-form *wie* occurs twice in the selected data set (one attestation for each period), both of which refer to animate antecedents. While this might not be representative enough to draw any solid conclusions, the remaining (five) instances in the entire *Going Dutch Corpus* were also considered in order to support these tentative findings. In fact, all seven occurrences of nominative and accusative *wie/wien* refer back to animate antecedents. Here, the relative pronoun appears to be restricted to animate antecedents indeed.

Given the limited relevance of the animacy of the antecedent, particularly on the distribution of the two main variants *die* and *welke*, this internal factor will not be taken into consideration in the following analyses of masculine and feminine relative pronouns.

Regional variation

The relative distribution of variants across the seven selected regions of the Northern Netherlands is displayed in Figure 2 (FR = Friesland, GR = Groningen, NB = North Brabant, NH = North Holland, SH = South Holland, UT = Utrecht, ZE = Zeeland).

Clear regional patterns in the distribution of masculine and feminine relative pronouns do not emerge, although there is also variation to some extent. Generally, the *d*-form *die* is the most frequent variant in usage across all seven regions. In the eighteenth-century period, its share varies from 60.6% in North Brabant to more than 75% in Zeeland, North Holland, Utrecht and Friesland. The share of *welke* ranges between 21.7% in Utrecht and 33.9% in North Brabant. Furthermore, it is notable that the infrequent form *develke* is not restricted to particular regions, but is practically spread across the entire language area.

Figure 2. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across region and time.

As pointed out before, *dewelke* disappears in nineteenth-century usage (in all regions). Overall, the distribution of variants remains rather stable in the second period, particularly in Friesland and Zeeland. In Groningen and North Holland, the share of *welke* increases from 26.9% to 40.2%, and from 23.1% to 39.0%, respectively. Recall that the neuter counterpart *betwelke* also appeared to be somewhat more common in the northern regions (cf. Section 5.2 of Chapter 10). In Utrecht, on the other hand, *die* clearly consolidates its status as dominant variant, increasing from 76.2% to 82.8%. As a result, the regional differences increase in the second period, with Groningen and North Holland being the regions with the highest shares of *welke* on the one hand, and Utrecht being the region with the strongest prevalence of *die* on the other.

In addition to the general distribution of variants across regions in the entire corpus, a closer look is taken at regional variation in two diverging types of ego-documents, i.e. private letters (Figure 3), and diaries and travelogues (Figure 4).

Starting with private letters, Figure 3 shows that *die* is the prevalent variant in all regions in both periods. In the eighteenth century, the difference ranges from 72.6% (North Brabant) to 90.0% (Friesland), and from 76.8% (Zeeland) to 96.1% (North Holland) in the nineteenth century.

There is more variation and change in the diaries and travelogues, as can be seen in Figure 4. In the eighteenth-century period, *die* is the most frequently used form in practically all regions except for North Brabant. Here, *die* occurs in less than half of all instances (47.1%), whereas *welke* and *dewelke* together have a share of 52.9%. It has to be kept in mind, though, that the data for North Brabant derive from only two different diarists in the first period and only one diarist in the second period. Idiosyncratic preferences might influence the distribution in texts from this region.

Figure 3. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across region and time (private letters).

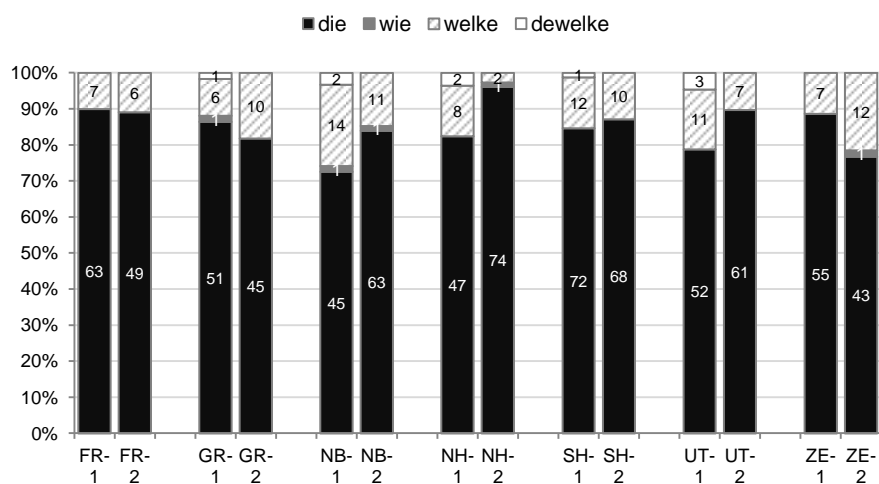
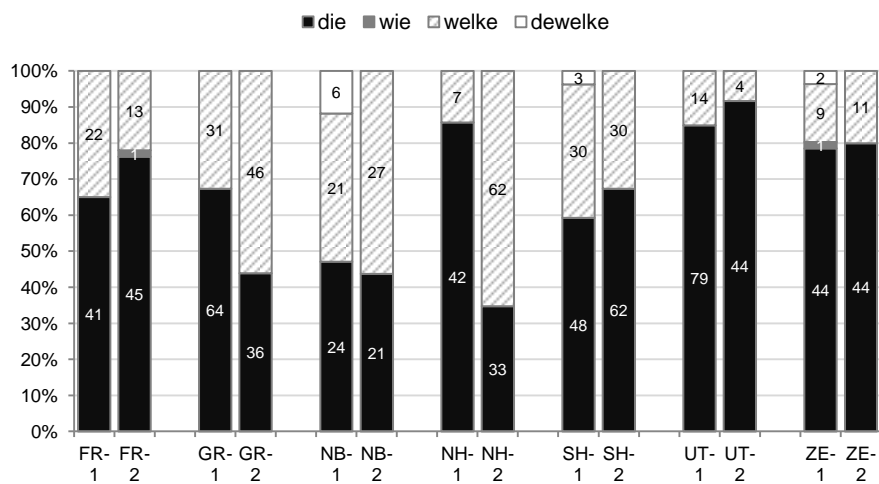


Figure 4. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across region and time (diaries and travelogues).



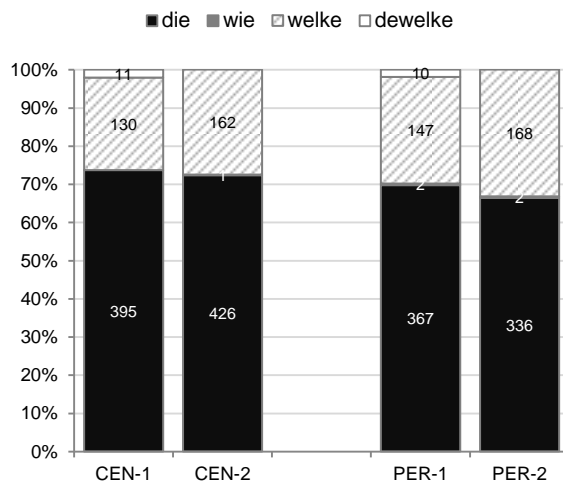
Diachronically, the most striking change can be attested in the North Holland data. The *d*-form drops from 85.1% to 34.7%, while *welke* considerably gains ground from 14.3% to 65.3%. This is in sharp contrast to the opposite developments attested in private letters from the same region, where *die* becomes practically the only variant in usage in the nineteenth-century period. This shift of main variants used in diaries and travelogues from North Holland (and in a slightly

less extreme way also Groningen), i.e. from mainly *die* in the first period to two-thirds of *welke* in the second period, clearly affects the overall distribution across regions presented in Figure 2. The distribution in texts from other regions is much more stable across time, particularly in Zeeland, but also in Utrecht, South Holland and North Brabant, the latter of which still maintains its high share of *welke* (56.3%).

Variation across centre and periphery

Furthermore, spatial variation in the distribution of variants was investigated across the centre (CEN) and the periphery (PER), as presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across centre–periphery and time.



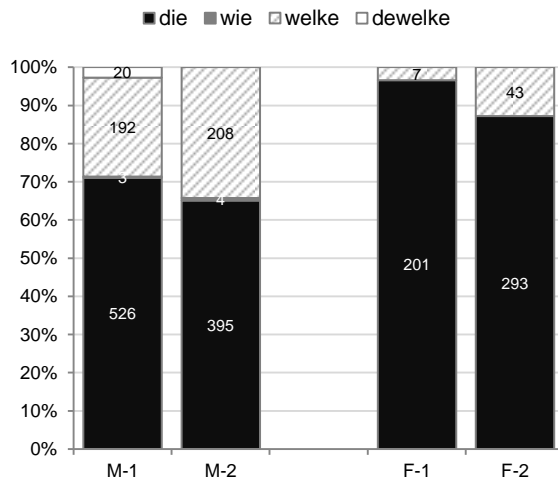
Both synchronically and diachronically, differences between the centre and the periphery appear to be limited. As could be expected from the results of the seven investigated regions, *die* is the most frequently used form (around 70%) in both the centre and the periphery as well as in both periods. *Welke* is the second most frequent form in usage (around 30%). At least in the eighteenth-century data, the extended form *dewelke* still occurs equally marginal in the centre and the periphery with eleven and ten instances, respectively.

The increase of *welke* in the nineteenth-century results is slightly more pronounced in the periphery (increase from 28.0% to 33.2%) than in the centre (from 24.3% to 27.5%). Recall that the increase of neuter *betwelke* was also stronger in the data from the periphery. Overall, both the distribution of variants and the diachronic tendencies are very similar, though.

Gender variation

Based on data from the two sub-corpora of handwritten ego-documents, Figure 6 presents the results of the distribution of variants across gender (M = male writers, F = female writers).

Figure 6. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across gender and time.



The gender differences are certainly striking. In the late eighteenth century, male writers most frequently use the *d*-form *die*, which occurs in 71.0%. However, with a share of 25.9%, the additional pronominal form *welke* is also quite common in ego-documents by men. Moreover, two other (minor) variants can be attested: the extended form *dewelke* (2.7%) as well as three attestations of the *w*-form *wie* (0.4%). There is much less variation in the eighteenth-century data of female writers. In fact, *die* is used in 96.6% of all instances, leaving hardly any room for other variants. The only other form in the texts written by women is *welke* (3.4%), whereas there are no attestations of *wie* or *dewelke* at all.

In the early nineteenth century, the distribution of variants turns out to be rather stable in the data by male writers. The most frequent relative pronoun is *die*, occurring in 65.1%, which is a slight decrease as compared to the late eighteenth century. The share of *welke*, however, increases from 25.9% to 34.3%. In other words, male writers use the additional pronominal form in more than two-thirds of all instances. The use of the *w*-form *wie* is still very marginal (0.7%; four tokens), whereas *dewelke* no longer occurs. In ego-documents written by women, the *d*-form *die* maintains its dominant position with a still high share of 87.2%. However, like in the data by men, *welke* gains ground (from 3.4% to 12.8%), at the expense of *die*. Again, neither *wie* nor *dewelke* occur in the data by women.

Given the relevance of genre and the growing divergence between the two types of ego-documents in particular, I additionally cross-tabulated gender and genre, presented in Tables 3a (private letters) and 3b (diaries and travelogues).

Table 3a. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across gender and time (private letters).

	<i>die</i>		<i>wie</i>		<i>welke</i>		<i>dewelke</i>		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male-1	235	76.3	2	0.7	62	20.1	9	2.9	308	100
Male-2	184	81.8	3	1.3	38	16.9	0	0.0	225	100
Female-1	150	98.0	0	0.00	3	2.0	0	0.0	153	100
Female-2	219	91.6	0	0.0	20	8.4	0	0.0	239	100

Table 3b. Distribution of masculine/feminine relative pronouns across gender and time (diaries and travelogues).

	<i>die</i>		<i>wie</i>		<i>welke</i>		<i>dewelke</i>		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male-1	291	67.2	1	0.2	130	30.0	11	2.5	433	100
Male-2	211	55.2	1	0.3	170	44.5	0	0.0	382	100
Female-1	51	92.7	0	0.0	4	7.3	0	0.0	55	100
Female-2	74	76.3	0	0.0	23	23.7	0	0.0	97	100

On closer inspection, it turns out that in private letters written by men, *welke* actually loses ground in period 2, slightly dropping from 20.1% to 16.9%, whereas the share of *die* slightly increases from 76.3% to 81.8%. This is surprising as it is against the general development of *welke* among male writers displayed in Figure 6. In the data contributed by male diarists, however, *welke* gains ground from 30.0% to 44.5%. Evidently, the relative stability in the overall distribution of variants used by men is, to a certain extent, based on the genre-specific developments in diaries and travelogues. In other words, the results from diaries and travelogues are crucial for the attested gender variation.

Another interesting finding is the development of *welke* in the private letters written by women, increasing from a very marginal 2.0% to 8.4%. While this is generally in line with the diachronic rise of *welke*, it also shows that there is gender variation on a small scale, as the same variant declines in the equivalent data from their male contemporaries. Even more pronounced is the increase of *welke* in diaries and travelogues written by women, from 7.3% to 23.7%.

2 Discussion

The case study in this chapter focused on the masculine and feminine singular (present-day common gender) and plural relative pronoun in subject and object

position. Four forms were investigated: (1) the originally demonstrative *d*-form *die*, (2) the originally interrogative *w*-form *wie*, (3) the additional pronominal form *welke*, and (4) the extended alternative *dewelke*. All variants were mentioned and discussed in Weiland's (1805: 119-120) grammar and also occurred in the *Going Dutch Corpus*.

After giving a general overview of the possible forms in Section 1.1, illustrating their usage in different contexts of definiteness as well as with animate and/or inanimate antecedents, variation and change in the distribution of relative pronouns was investigated quantitatively. In the corpus analysis in Section 1.2, it was shown that out of the four possible variants, only two were actually frequent in usage, viz. *die* and, to a lesser extent, *welke*. Both the *w*-form *wie* and the extended form *dewelke* turned out to be very marginal variants in the corpus data.

Diachronically, the distribution of masculine and feminine relative pronouns was remarkably stable, which is in line with the findings of the neuter forms in Chapter 10. Two tendencies were noticeable, though. First, *dewelke* was only attested as a minor variant in the late eighteenth century, but no longer occurred in the early nineteenth-century data. Secondly, *welke* appeared to gain ground in the second period. A similar increase was attested for the neuter form *betwelke*.

Focusing on genre variation, the results in this chapter revealed great differences between the investigated sources. Most notably, private letters showed a strong preference for the *d*-form *die*, whereas both *die* and *welke* co-occurred as two competing main variants in newspapers. As already seen in the analysis of the neuter relative pronoun, diaries and travelogues take a special intermediate position in the multi-genre corpus design between private letters on the one hand, and newspapers on the other. While *die* lost ground in nineteenth-century diaries and travelogues, the use of *welke* considerably increased, converging towards the proportion also found in newspapers. This indicates a genre-specific change with regard to the use of relative pronouns, diverging from the more oral private letters in period 1, towards the more written style of newspapers in period 2.

Geographical variation in the distribution of forms was comparatively limited. Although there was some degree of variation across the seven investigated regions (e.g. the surprising decrease of *die* in nineteenth-century diaries from North Holland), clear patterns could not be detected. Similarly, variation between the centre and the periphery was marginal.

On the contrary, gender proved to be a robust social variable once more. Particularly in the eighteenth-century period, the distribution of variants across genders showed evidence of striking differences. Whereas male writers used both *die* and *welke*, female writers used *die* in practically all instances. Furthermore, the extended form *dewelke* only occurred in ego-documents written by men. In the nineteenth-century period, the gender differences somewhat converged, but still remained visible in the results. One can argue that women preferably used the more common form *die*, whereas men also used the more formal options *welke* and (at least in period 1) *dewelke* along *die*.

Finally, in addition to the external variables, one internal variable was taken into consideration. Since the animacy of the antecedent has often been

considered as a relevant factor affecting the distribution of relative pronouns, this general assumption was tested on data from the sub-corpora of diaries and travelogues, and newspapers. However, the influence of this semantic property appeared to be fairly limited. In fact, the two competing main variants *die* and *welke* equally referred to both animate and inanimate antecedents, even though it was suggested that *welke* in the nineteenth-century period was slightly more likely to refer to an inanimate antecedents than *die*. Despite the very few number of attestations of *wie* in subject and *wien* in object position, a tentative conclusion could be drawn as all (seven) occurrences of the *w*-form had an animate antecedent.

In sum, the two strongest factors affecting the choice and distribution of variants were of external nature. First and foremost, genre proved to have the most crucial effect again. Second, gender should not be underestimated either, as the corpus analysis revealed clearly distinct patterns, particularly in the eighteenth-century period.

The effectiveness of Weiland's (1805) norms on actual language usage is more difficult to assess. Although Weiland provided elaborate information on the use of the different forms, particularly compared to his eighteenth-century predecessors, his direct influence seems to be limited. Either directly or indirectly reflected in the corpus results was Weiland's awareness of stylistic or register variation with regard to the use of (plain) *die* as opposed to (solemn) (*de*)*welke*. Evidently, the different text sources in the corpus had genre-specific preferences for particular forms – already visible in the late eighteenth century. In particular *welke* and *denwelke* appeared to signal a higher formality than the more common *die*. This was confirmed by the corpus results (for both diachronic cross-sections) as well as by Weiland's (1805) remarks on stylistic variation.

Another aspect possibly indicating Weiland's influence concerns the use of *wie* as free relatives (i.e. context I of the definiteness cline). According to Weiland (1805: 120), only *w*-forms (masc./fem. *wie*, also neuter *wat*) can function as free relatives. Although the definiteness of the antecedent was not investigated quantitatively here, instances of nominative *wie* or accusative *wien* as free relatives could not be attested. In contrast, examples of the *d*-form *die* functioning as free relatives were easily found, both in the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century period. It should be noted, though, that Weiland's (1805: 120) example *wien ik mijn word geef* illustrates the use of dative *wien*, whereas the analysis presented here focused on subject and object position only. This supports earlier assumptions that “the relative pronoun *wie* only occurs in *casus obliqui* and after prepositions” (van der Wal 2002b: 31). Indeed, the *Going Dutch Corpus* data gives sporadic evidence of dative *wien* as a free relative. With regard to the generally low frequency one can probably conclude that the *w*-form *wie* as a free relative must have been in its incipient stage in the investigated time period, and that Weiland's influence did not considerably enhance this development.

3 Relative pronouns: General conclusion

Chapters 10 and 11 presented two closely related case studies of variation and change the Dutch relativisation system, investigating both neuter relative pronouns (Chapter 10) as well as the masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns (this chapter) in subject and object position. With regard to the focus on the possible effectiveness of language norms on actual language usage, the discussions in Weiland's (1805) grammar and the preceding eighteenth-century normative tradition were also taken into consideration, as outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of the previous chapter.

Combining the corpus results of two comparable case studies on Dutch relative pronouns, some more general conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the diachronic stability of the results was one of the most remarkable findings in both cases. On the one hand, it might be argued that this is due to the relatively limited time frame under investigation, certainly with regard to the slow and gradual changes in the relativisation system. On the other hand, the elaborateness of Weiland's grammar with respect to relative pronouns, providing more explicit norms and rules, might also be regarded as a turning point in the (normative) history of Dutch relativisation, possibly affecting the distribution of variants in the second period.

Apart from the diachronic stability attested in both case studies, another similarity concerns the relevance of external factors conditioning language usage patterns. In both case studies, genre proved to be the most crucial variable. The additional pronominal forms *betwelke* (for neuter) and *welke* (for masculine/feminine) were particularly strong in newspapers, whereas they were considerably less frequent in private letters. In these sources, the traditional *d*-forms *dat* (for neuter, alongside *wat*) and *die* (for masculine/feminine) were relatively frequent. Strikingly, the third genre, i.e. diaries and travelogues, took a special intermediate position in both case studies, especially from a diachronic point of view. For both neuter and masculine/feminine relative pronouns, a genre-specific evolution in diaries and travelogues could be testified. With respect to the distribution of relative pronouns and the additional forms *betwelke* and *welke* in particular, diaries and travelogues were more similar to private letters in the late eighteenth-century period. As a result of the remarkable increase of *betwelke* and *welke* (at the expense of the *d*-forms *dat* and *die*), respectively, diaries and travelogues from the early nineteenth century diverged from the other type of handwritten ego-documents, converging towards a more 'written', formal style of the printed and published texts in the corpus.

Moreover, gender variation was attested in both case studies. For neuter as well as for masculine and feminine relative pronouns, the results revealed the tendency that men used the more formal alternative forms *betwelke* and *welke* more frequently than women, who, in turn, used the common forms *dat* (and also *wat*) and *die* relatively more often.

When compared to genre and gender, geographical variation was less pronounced. Although some interesting tendencies were shown, for instance the north–south differences with respect to the additional neuter forms *betwelke* and

betgeen, clear patterns did not emerge. It appears that space did not play a major role in the investigated time period, at least with respect to relativisation.

For each of the two case studies, one internal factor was taken into account and tested on the *Going Dutch Corpus* data. While both the definiteness of the antecedent (neuter relative pronouns) and the animacy of the antecedent (masculine/feminine relative pronouns) have traditionally been considered as decisive factors conditioning variation in the use of relative pronouns, the corpus-based results presented here did not support their supposed relevance. In the case of the definiteness of the antecedent, it is true that specific forms were more dominant in some contexts (e.g. *wat* as free relative and in combination with *al(les)*). At the same time, it was also shown that practically all variants occurred in (almost) all contexts. Given this highly variable situation, van der Horst's (1988) generalisation that originally interrogative *w*-relativisers replace the originally demonstrative *d*-forms successively from the most indefinite to the most definite contexts, could not be confirmed without certain limitations. Similarly, the second internal factor, the animacy of the antecedent, did not overly affect the choice of forms, as both main variants of the masculine/feminine relative pronouns (*die*, *welke*) occurred frequently with both animate and inanimate antecedents. However, one could notice that *welke* gained ground with inanimate antecedents in the nineteenth-century data, which might indicate that the general increase of *welke* was, to some extent, internally conditioned. Despite the limited number of occurrences in the corpus, the *w*-form seemed to be restricted to animate referents. In general, the investigated external variables, particularly genre, turned to be considerably more relevant than the internal factors, though.

One of the striking differences between the two case studies on relative pronouns concerns the number of co-occurring or competing forms in usage. In the case of the neuter relative pronoun, at least four forms (*dat*, *wat*, *betgeen*, *betwelk*) were frequently used, as opposed to only two main variants of the masculine/feminine relative pronoun (*die*, *welke*). At the same time, both case studies highlighted the presence and relevance of the so-called alternative or additional pronominal forms like *betgeen*, *betwelk* and *welke*. These were strong competitors of the traditional *d*-forms and gradually rising *w*-forms, possibly even delaying the change from *d*- to *w*-forms. Therefore, the history of relativisation has to be studied by taking into account its full inventory of contemporary forms. In fact, variation and change in the Dutch relativisation system can hardly be reduced to the major shift from *d*- to *w*-relativisation. In line with previous findings on the chronology of *d*- to *w*-changes, it is evident that developments *dat* > *wat* and *die* > *wie* were still in their incipient stages in the investigated time period, in any case in subject and object position.

Competition between synonymous forms could also be witnessed with regard to the alternative pronominal forms derived from the interrogative pronoun *welk*, i.e. *welk* and the extended variant *betwelk* for neuter, as well as *welke* and the extended variant *dewelke*. In each pair, only one form emerged as the 'winning' form. In the case of the neuter relative pronoun, the extended form *betwelk* was considerably more common than *welk*, which was only a marginal variant in the

corpus data. The opposite was true in the case of the masculine/feminine pronoun. Here, the shorter form *welke* appeared to be much more frequent, whereas the extended option *develke* was rare in the late eighteenth century and even disappeared in nineteenth-century usage.

Finally, the normative influence on actual language practice needs to be assessed. For the eighteenth-century period, any normative influence on the distribution of neuter and masculine/feminine relative pronouns can probably be excluded. For the most part, metalinguistic comments and normative publications from this period did not provide explicit rules or guidance for the use of relative pronouns. A frequently recurring exception concerned the neuter pronoun *hetgeen*, commonly restricted to its use as free relative and rejected in other contexts, for instance with nominal antecedents. In eighteenth-century usage, however, *hetgeen* occurred in almost all contexts, indicating that normative influence must have been limited at the most.

The situation of only sporadic norms on relativisation changed with the introduction of Weiland's (1805) national grammar, which provided relatively elaborate information and norms, either explicitly through rules, or more implicitly deduced from his numerous examples. However, even in the post-Weiland period, the normative influence on actual language usage is difficult to assess, particularly in comparison with the obvious influence of Siegenbeek's (1804) prescriptions attested in the analyses of orthographic issues. First of all, the corpus results revealed that most of Weiland's (1805) preferences for specific forms in specific contexts were already found in late eighteenth-century usage, when his influence was ontologically impossible. With respect to the diachronic stability of the results in the early nineteenth-century, one might argue that Weiland's (1805) discussion on the use of relative pronouns primarily contained accurate observations of contemporary usage patterns rather than ground-breaking prescriptions which affected subsequent language usage. Moreover, although Weiland's (1805) preferred (and dispreferred) specific forms of relative pronouns in different contexts, much more options occurred alongside these forms in both periods under investigation. This also suggests that the normative influence probably must have been fairly limited.

However, with regard to Weiland's (1805) remarks on stylistic or register variation, assigning forms like *welke* and *develke* to the 'solemn' style as opposed to *die* and *dat* typical of the 'plain' style, either direct or indirect influence can be assumed. In fact, the corpus results revealed an increase of the 'solemn' forms in diaries and travelogues and (at least in the case of *hetwelke*) newspapers, whereas the 'plain' forms gained ground in private letters. Although it cannot be proved that it directly reflects Weiland's (1805) intervention, he might have been a factor that consolidated the status and general perception of *hetwelke* and *(de)welke* as more formal variants on the one hand, and *dat* and *die* as forms of more common writing on the other hand.

In future research on relative pronouns, other positions than the subject and object positions investigated here, need to be taken into account. It has been argued that *w*-forms probably enter the language via more specific positions such as

genitival constructions, and subsequently spread to more frequently relativised positions such as subjects and objects (Romaine 2009: 151-152, cf. also van der Wal 2002b). A historical-sociolinguistic and corpus-based approach would shed more light on these general assumptions.

Furthermore, while the case studies in Chapters 10 and 11 focused on relative pronouns, it might also be interesting to reassess the use of relative adverbs and relative pronominal adverbs with data from the *Going Dutch Corpus*, compared to earlier findings in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century private letters (Rutten & van der Wal 2014: ch. 8). Moreover, Weiland (1805) also commented on these adverbial relativisers, which means that his possible normative influence on language practice could also be evaluated with respect to this aspect of relativisation.