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

Krogull, A.

CHAPTER 14

Conclusion

1 Introduction

In the present dissertation, I examined the effectiveness of the Dutch national language policy introduced in the early 1800s on language practices in the Northern Netherlands. Analysing the newly compiled *Going Dutch Corpus*, a diachronic multi-genre corpus of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Dutch, it was the central aim to test and assess the impact of the so-called *schrijftaalregeling* 'written language regulation' on actual usage. The official regulations for spelling (Siegenbeek 1804) and grammar (Weiland 1805) were commissioned by the Dutch government, intended to be used in the educational and administrative domains. The question at the heart of this dissertation was whether and to what extent the top-down language policy measures exerted influence on patterns of language variation and change. In other words, how successful was the *schrijftaalregeling* in spreading the officialised norms for the Dutch standard variety across the community at large? Did the citizens of the young nation follow Siegenbeek's and Weiland's prescriptions, as envisaged by the government?

In this concluding chapter, I bring together the most relevant findings drawn from all empirical case studies in order to provide an overarching assessment of the central research objectives, discussing striking patterns and differences, and ultimately determining policy effectiveness. Section 2 briefly discusses the results from eight orthographic and morphosyntactic variables, which were analysed on the basis of the *Going Dutch Corpus*. Particularly in the case of morphosyntax, external factors such as genre appeared to play an important role. The variational dimensions of genre, space, gender and the individual will be further discussed in Section 3, highlighting the major findings for each of these external variables. Section 4 then assesses the changing relationship between language norms and language use in the period under investigation, seeking to determine the possible success of the Dutch language policy. Finally, Section 5 contains the concluding remarks and an outlook for future research.

2 Measuring policy success: Orthography and morphosyntax

In order to measure and assess the effectiveness of Siegenbeek's (1804) orthographic and Weiland's (1805) grammatical prescriptions, eight linguistic variables were investigated in Chapters 5–12. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods by taking into account actual language use (*Going Dutch Corpus*) and metalinguistic discourse (*Normative Corpus of the Northern Netherlands*) (Chapter

4), this dissertation presented a systematic method to measure the potential impact of top-down language policy on usage patterns. The selection of case studies comprised five orthographic variables (Chapters 5–9), followed by three morphosyntactic variables (Chapters 10–12).

Orthographic variables

Starting with orthographic issues, three consonantal and two vocalic features were examined, all of which were debated in the eighteenth-century normative tradition and officially regulated in the national orthography by Siegenbeek (1804).

The first case study focused on the orthographic representation of syllable-final /xt/ in etymologically distinct words (Chapter 5). In the eighteenth-century normative tradition, both <cht> and <gt> were already acknowledged as (co-existing) spelling variants, although consensus with respect to the spelling of individual words was still limited. Siegenbeek then officialised a purely orthographic split into two categories of words with /xt/, which I referred to as *cht*-words (to be spelled with <cht> due to final devoicing, e.g. *kocht*) and *gt*-words (to be spelled with <gt> due to etymology, e.g. *bragt* < *brengen*). The corpus analysis showed that in late eighteenth-century usage, <gt> was by far the most frequent variant, occurring in around 80% of all cases. Against this clear preference in contemporary spelling practices, Siegenbeek's fairly intricate rule was successfully adopted by nineteenth-century language users. In fact, the results from the post-Siegenbeek period displayed a neat distribution of <cht> for *cht*-words, and <gt> for *gt*-words. These changes signalled a high awareness of norms related to the *cht*/*gt* issue, particularly the newly promoted variant <cht>. The results even revealed an increase of hypercorrect forms with <cht> for *gt*-words, especially among women and in private letters. For the most part, however, Siegenbeek's prescribed categorisation into *cht*- and *gt*-words was applied across all genres, regions and genders.

The second case study investigated the orthographic representation of final /t/ in particular forms of verbs with a *d*-stem, such as *worden* and *vinden* (Chapter 6). Three historical spelling variants were considered, viz. <t> (phonetic), <d> (morphological) and <dt> (analogical/morphological, but also etymological < verbal ending *-det*). The latter and most complex variant was already preferred in most eighteenth-century normative works, and also prescribed by Siegenbeek. Late eighteenth-century usage, however, did not reflect the widespread metalinguistic preference in favour of <dt>. The corpus results for this period, in fact, showed that <d> was used in more than 70% of all instances, implying a discrepancy between norms and usage. This radically changed in the early nineteenth century, when a shift from <d> to <dt> as the prevalent variant took place, strongly suggesting Siegenbeek's normative influence on actual usage. While newspapers invariably adopted <dt>, <d> remained a relatively common alternative spelling in ego-documents. Nevertheless, the general increase of <dt> was witnessed across all genres, regions and genders.

In the third case study, I examined the orthographic representation of word-medial and word-final /s/ (< Wgm. **sk*) as <sch> or <s>, for instance in *tuss(ch)en* and *wens(ch)* (Chapter 7). Throughout the eighteenth century, most linguistic commentators already had a strong preference for the spelling <sch>, which corresponded with the overall corpus results, where <sch> was attested as the main variant in more than 70%. However, private letters from this period revealed much more variation, with <sch> and <s> co-existing as two almost equally frequent variants. Furthermore, it was shown that women even preferred <s> over <sch>, testifying to a fairly diverse picture in eighteenth-century usage. Siegenbeek, following his normative predecessors, officially prescribed <sch>, which further consolidated its prevalence in language use, while <s> became a marginal variant even in private letters and among women. The unrivalled position of <sch> was somewhat surprising with regard to the changes that had taken place in spoken language. Although /sx/ was no longer pronounced in medial and final position, the spread of the prescribed 'old' spelling <sch> was extremely successful across all genres, regions and genders. Again, these changes could be related to normative influence.

The fourth case study tackled the heavily debated spelling of long vowels, focusing on the orthographic representation of etymologically distinct long *e*'s in open syllable (Chapter 8). The distinction between so-called sharp-long *ê* and soft-long *ē* had disappeared in many regions, including the wider Amsterdam area, while it had been preserved in many dialects of, for instance, Zeeland and Groningen. This resulted in a highly variable situation with various competing writing systems, both in eighteenth-century norms and usage. Regardless of the merger in his native Amsterdam area, Siegenbeek prescribed the phonology-based system, according to which the etymological difference was represented in spelling, viz. by sharp-long <ee> and soft-long <e> in open syllables. While the corpus results for sharp-long *ê* showed a strong prevalence of the digraph <ee> in 90%, both before and after Siegenbeek, the results for soft-long *ē* revealed striking developments. In eighteenth-century usage, there was a modest preference for <e>, although <ee> occurred frequently as well. However, after <e> had been prescribed as the official spelling for soft-long *ē*, the use of the single grapheme increased dramatically, resulting in a neat distribution of <ee> for sharp-long and <e> for soft-long in more than 90% each – perfectly in line with the phonology-based system. Although it went against the grain of several eighteenth-century patterns and tendencies, Siegenbeek's prescription was successfully adopted across all genres, regions and genders.

While the results from the previous four orthographic cases all signalled a strong normative effect on nineteenth-century usage patterns, the fifth case study revealed its limitations. Examining the orthographic representation of Wgm. **ī*, as in *mijn/myn* and *schrijven/schryven* (Chapter 9), it was shown that Siegenbeek's prescription was less effective compared to the other investigated spelling issues. The choice for either <ij> or <y> was widely discussed among eighteenth-century commentators, but it was only in the final decades of the century that <ij> emerged as the preferred variant. This trend in normative discourse paved the way

for Siegenbeek, who officialised <ij> as the national variant. On the one hand, the corpus results did confirm a complete shift from <y> to <ij> in newspapers, i.e. in accordance with the prescription. On the other hand <ij>, or rather <ÿ>, did not gain ground in handwriting practices, neither in private letters nor in diaries and travelogues. In these texts, (prescribed) double-dotted and (rejected) undotted variants continued to coexist into the nineteenth century, which could possibly be explained by the close similarities between the forms, i.e. a relatively minor diacritic distinction, especially in handwriting (cf. also Vosters et al. 2010: 99). Zooming in on individual spelling practices in a corpus of family correspondence (Chapter 13), a relatively high degree of inter-individual variation of the *ij*/*y* issue could be attested due to idiosyncratic preferences, probably indicating that the awareness of the prescribed spelling was comparatively limited.

To sum up the results of five orthographic case studies, a considerable effect of Siegenbeek's official orthography on early nineteenth-century usage was identified. It is important to note that Siegenbeek's choice of spelling variants was, for the most part, neither innovative nor radical. In fact, he largely followed – and officialised – already existing preferences of the (late) eighteenth-century normative tradition, most notably Kluit (1763, 1777). Against the background of this more or less stable situation in metalinguistic discourse, the remarkable changes in actual language practices most likely took place under influence of the national language policy, in this case the official 1804 orthography. The striking convergence towards Siegenbeek's prescriptions (except for the case of <ij>) in the early nineteenth century was consistently observed across all three genres, in all seven regions, and in texts by both men and women.

Morphosyntactic variables

In addition to the five orthographic variables discussed in Chapters 5–9, three morphosyntactic variables were investigated in order to examine the possible normative effects of Weiland's (1805) national grammar on language practices.

Chapters 10 and 11 presented two case studies on variation and change in the Dutch relativisation system, focusing on the neuter relative pronoun in subject and object position, and the masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronoun in subject and object position, respectively. In eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse, relativisation was not a core topic and specific rules for the use of relativisers were generally sparse. In fact, Weiland (1805) appeared to be the first grammar providing relatively elaborate and explicit information on relativisation, from which a number of prescriptive rules could be inferred. Diachronically, however, the corpus results for both case studies on relativisation displayed a remarkably stable distribution of variants, suggesting that Weiland's direct influence on nineteenth-century usage must have been limited. On closer inspection, certain patterns and developments could be observed, though.

The investigation of neuter relative pronouns revealed a highly variable situation with no less than five variants, viz. the traditional *d*- and *w*-forms *dat* and *wat*, as well as the additional pronominal forms *hetgeen*, *hetwelk* and *welk*. All variants

occurred in the corpus results, both for the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century period, although *welk* turned out to be a relatively marginal form. In the case of masculine and feminine singular and plural relative pronouns, the two most common variants in usage were the traditional *d*-form *die* and the additional pronominal form *welke*, whereas the *w*-form *wie* and the extended pronominal *dewelke* rarely occurred in the corpus.

To begin with, two internal factors were tested on the *Going Dutch Corpus* data, viz. the definiteness of the antecedent (neuter forms) and the animacy of the antecedent (masculine/ feminine/plural forms). Against traditional assumptions, the corpus analyses gave evidence that these factors did not crucially condition the distribution of variants. The decisive factors were external, and most notably related to genres, which are discussed further in Section 3. In fact, the results across genres revealed that the additional pronominal forms *hetwelk* and *welke* were considerably more frequent in newspapers than in private letters, where, in turn, the *d*-forms *dat* and *die* were more commonly used. The genre of diaries and travelogues took a special intermediate position in the corpus design between private letters and newspapers. From a diachronic perspective, a genre-specific evolution in the use of relative pronouns could be identified. In the late eighteenth century, the distribution of variants in diaries and travelogues was fairly similar to that in private letters. In the early nineteenth century, however, the considerable increase of *hetwelk* and *welke* (at the expense of the *d*-forms *dat* and *die*) led to a divergence of diaries and travelogues from private letters. At the same time, these sources converged towards the distribution found in newspapers, signalling an evolution towards a more formal, typically 'written' style, as opposed to the comparatively informal, more 'oral'-like private letters. Furthermore, both case studies on relative pronouns revealed a considerable amount of gender variation. Men tended to use the 'solemn' forms more frequently than women, whereas the common forms *dat/wat* and *die* occurred relatively frequent in texts written by women.

Coming back to the assessment of Weiland's normative influence, at least one aspect of his elaborate comments might have affected the use of relativisers. In fact, his awareness of and remarks on stylistic differences between different forms were, to some extent, reflected in the corpus results. Weiland assigned pronominal forms like *welke* and *dewelke* to the more formal or 'solemn' style, whereas *die* and *dat* were typical of the more informal or 'plain' style. In the nineteenth-century data, 'solemn' variants like *hetwelk* and *welke* considerably gained ground in diaries and travelogues as well as in newspapers, whereas the 'plain' variants increased in private letter writing. This stylistic distinction was possibly an effect of normative intervention of Weiland's grammar on the use of relativisers. Although direct influence could hardly be proven, the developments in the distribution of variants implied a sociolinguistic situation in which forms like *hetwelk* and *welke* indexed formality more strongly than common *d*- and *w*-forms.

In Chapter 12, I investigated variation and change in the (adnominal) genitive case and its alternative construction with the preposition v*an*. The decline of the Dutch case system had led to a competition between synthetic and analytical

genitival constructions. By the eighteenth century, inflected forms had largely disappeared from spoken and colloquial language, while they were maintained in written language and particularly in higher registers. Metalinguistic discourse still had a strong focus on nominal inflection. Towards the end of the century, however, the analytical *van*-construction was increasingly accepted and even regarded as the best option. Against these developments in language use, Weiland only prescribed the synthetic genitive forms in his official grammar. With regard to his normative influence, the corpus analysis showed that the conservative choice in favour of historical case inflections was at least to some extent effective. Zooming in on the occurrences in neutral (i.e. non-formulaic) contexts, the *van*-construction appeared to be the most frequent variant in eighteenth-century usage, occurring in almost 70%. In the nineteenth century, the share of synthetic forms surprisingly increased to more than 40%. Diachronically, the synthetic genitive gained ground in all genres, even in the most 'oral' genre of private letters, supporting the assumption of Weiland's normative influence. Furthermore, both male and female writers increasingly used the synthetic genitive forms.

However, one internal factor turned out to condition the distribution of variants considerably. The corpus results revealed major differences between masculine and neuter forms on the one hand, and feminine and plural forms on the other. In the post-Weiland data, the synthetic genitive appeared to gain ground in feminine and plural forms, which probably signalled Weiland's prescription. This tendency could not be attested for masculine and neuter forms, which had already been too infrequent by the late eighteenth century. In other words, Weiland could not 'revive' these forms, whereas the higher familiarity of more frequent structures like *x der y* probably fostered the increase of feminine/plural genitive markers. Although Weiland's effort to prescribe the synthetic genitive case was thus partly successful, it must be noted that the *van*-construction had been too established in actual language usage to be entirely replaced by historical genitive forms.

Orthography versus morphosyntax

Comparing the findings from five orthographic and three morphosyntactic variables, it can be concluded that the normative influence on spelling practices was much stronger than on grammatical issues. The drastic changes in the direction of the prescriptions in Siegenbeek's (1804) national orthography gave clear evidence of a normative effect on actual language usage within a fairly short period of time. Particularly in nineteenth-century newspapers, the prescribed spelling norms were adopted in practically all instances. More interestingly, though, Siegenbeek's influence could also be demonstrated in nineteenth-century ego-documents, as writers of private letters as well as diaries and travelogues increasingly used the prescribed variants (with the exception of <ij>).

In contrast, the analyses of morphosyntactic issues showed that the impact of Weiland's (1805) national grammar was much less obvious than in the case of orthography. On closer inspection, however, either direct or indirect influences of Weiland's grammar could be signalled for all three variables under investigation. In

the case of relative pronouns, Weiland's comments on stylistic differences seemed to have consolidated 'plain' forms as the preferred choices in private letter writing, whereas the more formal variants gained ground in newspapers and, strikingly, in diaries and travelogues. With respect to the genitive case, Weiland's conservative prescription in favour of the old synthetic forms appeared to 'revive' the historical case inflections in actual language use, at least to a certain extent. Against the ongoing chance towards analytical constructions, the synthetic forms increased across all genres, regions and genders, but were conditioned internally, only gaining ground in feminine and plural forms.

When assessing the effectiveness of concrete language policy measures like the Dutch *schrijftaalregeling*, orthography and grammar are thus best considered as two distinct levels of effectiveness. As Rutkowska & Rössler (2012: 213) rightly remark, "orthography, more than any other aspect of language, is likely to be influenced by external factors such as language planning which impose change from above the level of consciousness". The coherent findings for orthographic variables in this dissertation testify to the influence of top-down language policy on norm awareness and actual usage in the community at large. Unlike the categorical choices for spelling, visibly reflected in the corpus results, norms on morphosyntactic issues turned out to be more complex, being conditioned by both external and internal factors. In the case of relative pronouns, Weiland generally acknowledged various forms, but preferred (or dispreferred) specific variants in specific contexts and registers. Actual language practices, however, appeared to be even more variable, both before and after Weiland, making it difficult to pinpoint and assess his normative influence. In the case of the genitive (and the declining case system in general), the ongoing language change had probably progressed too far to be completely reversed by grammatical prescription. Nonetheless, an increase of the prescribed synthetic forms could be witnessed in the data.

3 Genre, space, gender and the individual: Assessing the external variables

Diachronically, the corpus results indicated the effect of early nineteenth-century policy measures on actual language use, particularly on the level of orthography and, to a lesser extent, on the level of morphosyntax. Taking into account the external variables integrated in the design of the *Going Dutch Corpus*, more fine-grained differences and patterns were revealed. This section presents the findings related to genre, space (regions and centre–periphery), gender and individual variation.

Genres

Based on the assumption that diachronic changes affect different genres to different extents, the *Going Dutch Corpus* was designed as a diachronic multi-genre corpus. The discussion of results in Section 2 already indicated that genre was

indeed a crucial factor in many case studies. The *Going Dutch Corpus* comprised two types of handwritten ego-documents, viz. private letters as well as diaries and travelogues, but also newspapers, representing printed and published texts. In line with the initial expectations, the corpus analyses more or less consistently testified to a specific genre gradation with respect to the degree of linguistic variation or, put differently, linguistic uniformity, particularly with regard to standardised and non-standard forms.

As presumed, the highest amount of linguistic variation was found in private letters, especially before the early nineteenth-century *schrijftaalregeling*, but also in the period thereafter. In line with previous historical-sociolinguistic research on letter writing (e.g. Rutten & van der Wal 2014; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2013; Elspaß 2005), the analyses based on the *Going Dutch Corpus* demonstrated that private letters in particular can give access to linguistic variation in the past, which had become invisible in contemporary printed texts.

In addition to private letters, another type of handwritten ego-documents was included in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, viz. diaries and travelogues. In terms of linguistic variation expected to be found, these sources were indeed more uniform than private letters. This was also in accordance with previous genre characterisations (e.g. Elspaß 2012, Schneider 2013), which emphasised the strictly monologic (rather than dialogic) nature of these texts, and their lower degree of conceptual orality, especially compared to private letters. Nevertheless, diaries and travelogues still displayed more linguistic variation than the third genre in the corpus, i.e. newspapers. The corpus results thus confirmed that diaries and travelogues constituted an intermediate position on the oral-literate continuum and also in the multi-genre corpus design.

As the only printed and published genre in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, (regional) newspapers displayed by far the strongest uniformity. The consistent and practically invariant use, particularly with regard to spelling, was already attested in the late eighteenth century, but was certainly consolidated after the written language regulations of 1804/1805. In this sense, newspapers can probably be considered representative of the written language conventions in contemporary printed and published texts.

Unlike the linguistic uniformity attested in newspapers, the two types of handwritten ego-documents call for some more attention. While private letters, diaries and travelogues have often been lumped together as 'ego-documents', the corpus results revealed different degrees of conformity with the official standard norms. In the late eighteenth-century, the distribution of variants found in private letters on the one hand, and in diaries and travelogues on the other, was still fairly similar. In the early nineteenth century, however, diaries and travelogues increasingly conformed to the writing conventions of newspapers and to the standard norms of the *schrijftaalregeling*, more strongly than private letters. Particularly visible in the genre-specific use of relative pronouns, diaries and travelogues diachronically diverged from the higher variability and conceptual orality still found in private letters from the same period. This means that a growing divergence between the two types of ego-documents could be witnessed in

the period around 1800. These specific developments also emphasise that an umbrella category of 'handwritten ego-documents' tends to be too overgeneralised for historical-(socio)linguistic research, and that diaries and travelogues clearly form a (sub-)genre in its own right, distinct from private letters.

Genre thus proved to be a robust external factor. However, at least in one case, the interrelated external factor of medium (cf. also Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 225), rather than genre itself, appeared to be crucial. With regard to the *ij*/*y* spelling issue, the medium of genres had the strongest effect on the distribution of variants. First of all, printed texts only distinguished <ij> and <y>, whereas the range of representations was much more complex in handwriting. Furthermore, newspapers radically shifted from <y> to <ij>, while both handwritten genres seemed to reject the prescription in large part, as (double-)dotted and undotted forms continued to coexist, regardless of the officialised spelling.

Space* (1)*: Regions

Taking into account possible regional variation, data from seven regions of the Northern Netherlands was included in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, viz. Friesland, Groningen, North Brabant, North Holland, South Holland, Utrecht and Zeeland. At least in the late eighteenth-century period, and particularly in handwritten ego-documents, regional variation could still be attested to a certain extent. Some of the patterns related to individual variables could be explained by (supra)regional writing practices and/or phonological differences in spoken dialects.

In the case of verb final /t/, distinct Southern writing practices played a role in the distribution of spelling variants in North Brabant and Zeeland, i.e. the two southernmost regions of the investigated language area, bordering the Southern Netherlands. Especially in metalinguistic discourse, the spelling <d> was regarded as typically Southern (versus typically Northern <dt>). In the late eighteenth-century results for North Brabant and Zeeland, <dt> appeared to be practically absent, suggesting a comparatively strong orientation towards Southern practices. Even in the nineteenth-century results, <d> continued to be a strong competitor of the officially prescribed <dt>, at least in North Brabant. A similar (southern) tendency was observed in the comparatively strong use of alternative representations of Wgm. **ī* (other than <ij>/<ÿ>/<y>) in North Brabant and Zeeland.

In the case of etymologically distinct long *e*'s in open syllables, regional patterns in the distribution of spelling variants could partly be referred to dialectal differences in merger and non-merger regions. In the eighteenth-century data, the <e> spelling for soft-long *ē* was more frequent in Zeeland and Groningen, where the historical-phonological distinction had been preserved in many dialects, than in merger regions like the Holland area. Notably, these regional differences disappeared in the nineteenth-century data.

With regard to the morphosyntactic variables under investigation, surprising north-south differences were revealed in the use of the neuter relative pronoun, indicating a relative prominence of *hetwelk* in the northern regions of

Groningen and Friesland, and a relative prominence of *hetgeen* in the southern regions of North Brabant and Zeeland. These geographically conditioned preferences in the relativisation system certainly deserve closer inspection in future research.

Generally, regional variation first and foremost became visible in handwritten ego-documents. Eighteenth-century newspapers, while still being published regionally, were already fairly uniform across all regions. Only in some cases, North Holland in particular seemed to be ahead of the remaining regions in the use of (spelling) variants that would become officially prescribed variants in the *schrijftaalregeling*. For instance, the consistent use of <dt> was attested in North Holland newspapers as early as the late eighteenth century, i.e. at a time when other regional newspapers still preferred <d>. Furthermore, North Holland newspapers were also more progressive in the use of <cht>, whereas newspapers from most other regions primarily spelled <gt>. Given the fact that Siegenbeek was a native of Amsterdam, it might be suggested that the printed writing practices from the (North) Holland area might have had some influence on the choice of variants officialised in his 1804 orthography – in addition to the evident influence of contemporary normative discourse.

Diachronically, and most importantly, though, the external variable of region showed that late eighteenth-century regional differences, both in ego-documents and in newspapers, were largely levelled out in the early nineteenth century. In the context of a national language, these developments imply that the envisaged aim of the government to spread a uniform variety of Dutch through the community at large was pretty much achieved.

Space* (2)*: Centre versus periphery (and Zeeland)

The second external variable related to space, categorising the selected regions either as centre or periphery, did not reveal any remarkable patterns. Both synchronically and diachronically, general differences between these two demographic and (socio)economic groups of regions turned out to be limited, although individual case studies did display some degree of centre–periphery variation. In the analysis of neuter relative pronouns, for instance, a strong increase of *hetwelk* was identified in the periphery. These results, however, were primarily due to the high frequency in the northern periphery (especially Groningen), whereas the variant was comparatively low frequent in the southern periphery (North Brabant). This example demonstrates that the centre–periphery categorisation was not without problems, as variation on this level was further conditioned geographically, for instance by north-south differences. What is more, the centre (i.e. North and South Holland as well as Utrecht) forms a contiguous area, whereas the periphery actually comprises two geographically distant areas within the Northern Netherlands (i.e. Friesland and Groningen in the far north versus North Brabant in the far south), possibly differing in terms of (supra)regional writing practices and, in more general terms, sociolinguistic space.

The seventh region of Zeeland was purposely kept apart due to its historically shifting status from centre to periphery. In some cases, the eighteenth-century results for Zeeland were similar to those for North Brabant (e.g. use of <d>, alternative representation of <y>), which might justify a categorisation of these two regions as the (southern) periphery, perhaps due to a similar orientation towards Southern writing practices. In the nineteenth century, however, Zeeland displayed a number of distinct developments, which could not be observed in North Brabant. In at least two cases, Zeeland witnessed the strongest conformity to the prescribed Siegenbeek variants, viz. <dt> (from two tokens in period 1 to more than 80% in period 2) as well as <ij>/<ÿ> (from a share of one third in period 1 to two thirds in period 2). These striking shifts in the Zeeland data indeed indicate a dynamic region, which could not easily be assigned to the centre or the periphery in the period around 1800.

Gender

The two types of ego-documents in the *Going Dutch Corpus* were written by men and women, allowing to take into account the sociolinguistic variable of gender. For the eighteenth-century period, the corpus results still displayed a fair amount of gender variation in various case studies. With respect to spelling practices, women seemed to prefer <s> for word-medial and word-final /s/ (as opposed to men primarily using <sch>), hardly spelled <cht> for syllable-final /xt/, and applied the phonetic spelling <t> for final /t/ in *d*-stem verbs (almost absent in texts by men). Moreover, women clearly preferred the common relative pronouns *dat*, *wat* and *die* over more formal pronominal forms like *hetwelk* and *welke*, both of which were fairly frequent among men. The prevalence of the alternative genitival construction with the preposition *van* was also considerably more pronounced in ego-documents by women than by men.

Diachronically, however, both men and women increasingly used the officially prescribed variants, indicating a general effect of the language policy measures on language practices of both genders. In fact, gender variation, for the most part, declined in the early nineteenth century. Nevertheless, one could still observe a minor yet strikingly consistent tendency across most case studies. The share of prescribed variants (orthography in particular) was usually higher in the use of nineteenth-century men than among their female contemporaries. In cases like <dt>, <sch>, both <cht> and <gt>, and <e> for soft-long *ē*, the corpus results revealed a 'gender gap' of ten to twenty per cent even in the nineteenth-century data. Despite similar developments in the direction of the standard norms, the remaining gender-related differences suggested that the *schrijftaalregeling* probably reached women to a somewhat lesser extent than men. In other words, men were slightly ahead of women in adopting the prescribed variants in their writing.

While it can only be speculated what might have caused these differences, it is likely that the familiarity with writing conventions and practices as well as the awareness of 'correct' forms was more strongly developed among late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century men, certainly from the middle to the upper ranks, as

represented in the *Going Dutch Corpus*. Though still depending on education and occupation, men from these layers of society were often trained and thus more experienced in writing professionally, whereas women's writing from the same period was usually still restricted to the private sphere. As Rutten & van der Wal (2014: 396) explain, changing writing conventions were usually noticed earlier by those writers who frequently read and write. In the period under investigation, these writers were more likely to be men than women, which might explain the consistent gender-related pattern, even in the nineteenth-century results.

Individual variation

While the linguistic analyses conducted with the multi-genre *Going Dutch Corpus* in Chapter 5–12 focused on the influence of top-down language policy on the community at large, Chapter 13 examined inter- and intra-individual variation and change in a new corpus of family correspondence, spanning around 100 private letters from the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Specifically compiled for this case study, the *Martini Buys Correspondence Corpus* allowed to zoom in on individual spelling practices across three generations of the Martini Buys family, both before and after the language policy. Some valuable micro-level insights were gained, which further enriched the general understanding of policy effectiveness in the Northern Netherlands.

` With regard to intra-individual variation (i.e. inconsistent use of co-occurring variants), a certain degree of inconsistency was identified across all generations. Most informants, however, turned out to be surprisingly consistent in their use of variants. Addressing the possible influence of language policy measures on individual spelling choices, remarkable developments in the use of variants were even attested in adulthood, giving evidence of lifespan changes that could occur as an effect of language policy measures. Interestingly, certain adult informants from the transitional generation (i.e. those family members who were not directly exposed to the language policy in their formative years) appeared to adopt various prescriptions by Siegenbeek irrespective of (school) education. Not only did this underscore the general normative awareness in the early nineteenth century, it also indicated that education was not the only means of transmitting the standardised norms. On the other hand, spelling choices systematically deviating from the standardised norms were also attested in letters written by members of the youngest generation, who were exposed to the official norms in school. This case study further demonstrated that a micro-level approach to individual behaviour over time can add important nuances to a large-scale corpus study.

4 Policy versus practice

Bringing together the findings of this dissertation, it can be concluded that the concrete language policy measures introduced by the Dutch government in the early 1800s were effective in the sense that actual language usage patterns generally

displayed a striking convergence towards the prescribed norms. The case studies in Chapters 5–12 showed that these developments were particularly, though not exclusively visible in the corpus analyses of orthographic variables. Direct normative influence on grammatical issues, at least for the most part, was less obvious and thus more difficult to assess.

Tackling the intriguing interplay between language norms and language practice, the developments in early nineteenth-century usage in the Northern Netherlands clearly indicated a change in the awareness of norms and the influence these norms exerted on actual practices after the introduction of the *schrijftaalregeling* in 1804/1805. Against the background of an increasingly coherent normative tradition, with Siegenbeek (1804) in particular largely following existing and established preferences in (late) eighteenth-century metalinguistic discourse (as, e.g., in the case of <dt>, <sch>, <ij>), it must be assumed that the developments in language practice reflect an increasing awareness of linguistic norms among language users.

Without any doubt, the top-down language policy and more concretely the *schrijftaalregeling* constituted a crucial intervention in the sociolinguistic situation of the early 1800s. By discursively constructing a national standard variety and officially laying down 'the' rules for 'the' Dutch language on behalf of the government, a clear-cut separation between standard and non-standard varieties was introduced in the Northern Netherlands. This rigid categorisation was a novelty in the long history of Dutch standardisation, officially splitting the contemporary diaglossic continuum into a hierarchical opposition between standard and non-standard, and thus creating a new sociolinguistic situation of diglossia (cf. Chapter 1; also Rutten 2016c). The almost immediate implementation of this strong standard language ideology in the national school system, and also implementing the accompanying language norms for orthography and grammar (cf. Chapter 2), proved to be forceful measures to disseminate the standard variety of Dutch and to raise the awareness of national norms for the written language in a relatively short period of time.

It should be kept in mind that these official regulations for spelling and grammar were primarily intended to be used in the administrative and educational domains, while it was not formally mandatory to follow them, certainly not in private writing. The acceptance or, in other words, the success of these norms in actual language use was thus anything but guaranteed. Nevertheless, the corpus results from this dissertation clearly indicated that the official prescriptions were not only adopted in printed, published texts like newspapers, but also in relatively informal texts from the private sphere, as the two types of ego-documents (private letters, diaries and travelogues) demonstrated. Moreover, these developments in the direction of prescribed standard norms could be witnessed in all regions under investigation, both from the centre and the periphery of the language area, and in texts produced by both men and women. This means that quite some awareness and, more importantly, a general acceptance of the national standard norms in the community at large can be assumed.

To conclude, the language policy measures were thus pretty successful in spreading the national standard variety of Dutch across the community at large, as envisaged by the government. While regional and gender differences, still present in late eighteenth-century usage, had largely levelled out in the early nineteenth century, genre continued to be the most external crucial factor conditioning the distribution of variants.

5 Concluding remarks

In this dissertation, new insights were gained into variation and change processes in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Dutch in the Northern Netherlands. More specifically, the effectiveness of concrete language policy measures was investigated empirically, on the basis of the multi-genre *Going Dutch Corpus*, which was designed and compiled in order to assess policy success in the history of Dutch standardisation. Not only in the history of Dutch, but also of most other languages, the impact of top-down language planning and/or policy endeavours on actual usage patterns has hardly been investigated. Therefore, the present dissertation also contributes to the international discussion on norms and usage in historical sociolinguistics (e.g. Rutten et al. 2014a). The case of the Dutch *schrijftaalregeling* in the early 1800s, with its official regulations for orthography and grammar, served as a highly interesting and, importantly, concrete point of departure. The findings drawn from this research demonstrate that it *is* possible to 'measure' the effectiveness of language policy in historical contexts. Methodologically, a custom-made and balanced corpus design as well as a systematic approach, covering a wide range of linguistic variables, appeared to be essential for a comparable and sophisticated assessment of how policy affected usage patterns.

Similar historical-sociolinguistic corpus projects are currently being conducted for nineteenth-century German (Elspaß & Niehaus 2014) and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Icelandic (van der Feest Viðarsson 2017). It should be the aim of future research to compare the results from a number of historical cases, paving the way for a more overarching perspective on policy effectiveness across various (European) languages. Such a comparative approach could shed more light on the mechanisms behind language policy and their influence on usage patterns in general, i.e. in order to determine which factors are decisive for policy endeavours to be effective and successful. It is safe to say that this dissertation on the specific case of Dutch in the Northern Netherlands around 1800 provides a substantial foundation for future (comparative) research on this intriguing topic in historical sociolinguistics.