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Citation

Havinga, A. D., & Krogull, A. (2022). Researching language attitudes based on historical data. In R. Kircher & L. Zipp (Eds.), *Research methods in language attitudes* (pp. 297-312). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108867788.024

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3448278

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

19 Researching Language Attitudes Based on Historical Data

Anna D. Havinga and Andreas Krogull

19.1 Introduction

In the context of a volume on language attitudes research that is first and foremost written from a contemporary perspective, researching language attitudes based on historical data seems, in many ways, quite different, and perhaps more challenging, too. This holds true for research in the behavioural and social sciences, and particularly in the field of historical sociolinguistics, which is the focal point of this chapter. From a methodological point of view, the main differences between modern (socio-)linguistic and historical (socio-)linguistic research on language attitudes lie in the collection and availability of data as well as the nature of these data.[1] As Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2017: 26) point out,

> researchers of the earlier varieties of a language cannot gather their data in the same way as a person studying present-day languages. The standard sociolinguistic methods, such as interviews and elicitation, are automatically excluded.

Indeed, the various methods of attitude elicitation presented in Parts 2 and 3 of this book, either directly through interviews (see Chapter 7), focus groups (see Chapter 8), and questionnaires (see Chapters 9 and 10), or indirectly through, for example, matched-guise techniques (see Chapter 12), are impossible when working with language data from the past. This results in different types of historical primary data, which are necessarily in written form for the simple reason that spoken language data have only become available since the advent of audio recordings in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Put in very basic terms, the methodological challenge in researching language attitudes based on historical data is that historical (socio-)linguists cannot ask individuals about their attitudes towards linguistic varieties or features, or elicit data otherwise. It is true that the analysis of the societal treatment of language, as discussed in Part 1 of this volume, also encompasses methods working with non-elicited data. These are nevertheless distinct from the types of non-elicited data at the disposal of historical (socio-)linguistics. Beal (2019: 11) remarks that

1 While this volume as a whole aims to be as interdisciplinary as possible, these kinds of historical data have not yet received much attention in other disciplines that are concerned with language attitudes, which is why they are discussed here purely with regard to (historical) sociolinguistics.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108867788.024 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'[r]esearchers studying contemporary communities of practice are able to discuss with or record conversations amongst members of these communities and thus obtain first-hand metalinguistic and metapragmatic comments', whereas it is much more difficult to reconstruct historical settings, as 'reflections and comments on the linguistic practices of these communities are often non-existent'. In fact, if certain historical individuals never commented on linguistic matters in written form, either explicitly or implicitly, their language attitudes will remain unknown. And even if they did comment on linguistic matters in some way, these written documents need to have survived and been preserved until the present day. The availability of historical data to collect for language attitudes research is thus restricted, and 'the fragments of the literary record that remain are the results of historical accidents beyond the control of the investigator' (Labov 1982: 20; see also Section 19.2 on issues concerning historical data). Broadly speaking, the fragments of this 'literary record', especially those produced by identifiable individuals, become even more fragmented the further back one goes in language history (see also Beal 2019: 20).

Another methodological challenge lies in the fuzzy boundaries between language attitudes and language ideologies in historical sociolinguistic research. As Kircher and Zipp (Chapter 1) explain, these two terms are different but also interrelated, which makes it difficult to strictly separate them. In a similar vein, Fuller (2018: 121–122) addresses the links between attitudes and ideologies, arguing the following:

> There is some overlap between language ideology and language attitude research in sociolinguistics. Language attitude research looks at ideas about language held by speakers; language ideology research focuses on the closely related societal Discourses and how they are circulated. Language attitudes and ideologies clearly interact and influence each other, and the lines between them may become blurred.

Fuller (2018: 122), however, highlights methodological differences, 'with language ideology research focusing more exclusively on discourse analytical methods and traditional language attitudes research employing methods that seek to elicit speakers' views, often via surveys'. It may be due to the complete impossibility of these elicitation methods and the relatively limited access to individual language users' views and (first-hand) comments that historical sociolinguistic research tends to focus more on language ideologies than language attitudes, at least in the narrower sense of the definition (see also Chapter 2 on discourse analysis of print media). Moreover, it seems that the methodological and theoretical lines between language attitudes and language ideology research are less sharply drawn in the historical framework than they are in research on present-day varieties. It is for this reason that both language attitudes and language ideologies are discussed in this chapter.

Previous research based on historical data clearly reflects this interconnectedness. In the *Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics* (Hernández-Campoy and

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Conde-Silvestre 2012), an entire thematic section of five chapters is dedicated to 'Attitudes to Language'. According to Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2012: 6), these contributions to their handbook show

> how attitudinal factors in connection to language variation and varieties, mainly on the part of the historical 'language managers' – those professionally involved with languages – have often led to the development of purism and prescriptivism, in obvious connection to standardization, (especially after the eighteenth century), and even to the creation and enforcement of language myths, particularly after the nineteenth century, once the 'scientific' study of languages was established. These constructs, frequently ideologically loaded, are often extended to the evaluation of language systems and may have an effect on sociolinguistic aspects such as the stigmatization of variants and varieties, their maintenance or loss, and even the status of their users.

Strikingly, in most of these chapters on 'Attitudes to Language', the term *language attitudes* itself is rare or even absent, or more broadly defined than in the introduction to this volume (see Chapter 1). Nonetheless, they altogether demonstrate that language attitudes and language ideologies in historical settings can hardly be studied separately. In his chapter titled 'Sociolinguistics and Ideologies in Language History', Milroy, for instance, talks about 'ideological attitudes' (2012: 571) and focuses on standard language ideology, describing how its impact is also noticeable in (earlier) accounts of language history. Watts refers to 'attitudes towards language' (2012: 588), although he links them with ideologies and language myths, arguing that there is 'an underlying "master myth" driving beliefs about and attitudes towards language', which he calls the 'myth of linguistic homogeneity'. According to Watts (2012: 589), language myths are different from language attitudes in that they 'are not only transferred to individuals socially; they are also culturally constructed through a history of transference that has made them the "cultural property" of a group'. Without going into further terminological detail, this definition of language myths adds another layer to the distinction between language ideologies and language attitudes made by Kircher and Zipp (Chapter 1: 6), who argue that 'one of the key differences between language ideologies and language attitudes is that ideologies constitute a community-level phenomenon – while attitudes are affected by a broad range of factors relating to specific individuals'. In contrast to language attitudes, which also comprise feelings and behaviours (Chapter 1), language myths, like language ideologies, constitute sets of beliefs.

The chapter by Langer and Nesse (2012) does not explicitly discuss language attitudes either but focuses on linguistic purism, which is 'one of the most noticeable areas of historical sociolinguistics since it very publicly deals with what speakers think of (particular) language use' (Langer and Nesse 2012: 607). Purist comments often reflect the attitudes of individuals but, at the same time, draw on existing language ideologies. These ideologies and other social dynamics at a community level need to be considered when investigating language attitudes based on historical data. In their reconstruction of prestige patterns in

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the past, Sairio and Palander-Collin (2012: 626) argue that historical sociolinguists also have to address 'the reconstruction of attitudes of language users towards certain varieties and the reconstruction of relationships between groups of people and the social dynamics of the community', thus advocating an investigation of language attitudes within their social contexts. In the final chapter of the 'Attitudes to Language' part of the *Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, Peersman (2012: 640) links the rise of written vernaculars in Medieval and Renaissance times to 'changes in mentality and language attitudes', but mainly describes stages in the vernacularisation process rather than language attitudes of individuals. Together, these five chapters illustrate that language attitudes are generally addressed in connection with community-level phenomena and wider held sets of beliefs, such as language ideologies and myths, in historical sociolinguistic research.

In addition to their inter-relatedness with language ideologies and myths, language attitudes are often linked to other key issues in historical sociolinguistics, many of which are again closely intertwined. At least in the European realm, which is the focus throughout this chapter, these topics touch upon the history of language standardisation (e.g. Deumert and Vandenbussche 2003), linguistic purism (e.g. Langer and Nesse 2012), and prescriptivism (e.g. Ayres-Bennett and Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2016), but also language policy and planning (e.g. Hawkey and Langer 2016; Rutten 2019).

Auer et al. (2015: 4) point out that historical sociolinguists, among other things, investigate 'how prestige, norms of correctness and speakers' attitudes towards specific forms may affect changes'. Central to these issues is the perception and evaluation of linguistic variability, be it language variation or multilingualism. According to Auer et al. (2015: 8), '[s]tigmatization, prescriptivism and notions of language correctness, ultimately consequences of value judgments about linguistic forms associated with particular registers or speakers, lucidly illustrate the eminent relevance of language attitudes, ideologies and myths for processes such as standardization'. Standardisation, as one of the 'main socio-structural factors that influence the formation and expression of language attitudes' (Chapter 1: 10), is primarily characterised by the 'intolerance of optional variability in language' (Milroy and Milroy 2012: 22). In other words, standardisation results from a generally negative attitude towards language variation (see also Joseph et al. 2020: 169–170). Since these attitudes are often expressed explicitly during standardisation processes, it is unsurprising that research on language attitudes is frequently connected to research on language standardisation.

19.2 Research Planning and Design

The fact that standard sociolinguistic methods cannot be used when examining historical data impacts on the research design. For every research project, it is important to formulate research questions that can be answered with

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data possible to obtain. Since historical data cannot be generated with interviews or elicited otherwise, historical sociolinguists rely on data that are available, with the pool of data generally becoming smaller and patchier the further back in time one goes. This means that researchers need to know what material is available *before* devising clear research questions that can be answered with that material. For example, a broad research question such as 'What language attitudes were prevalent in the German-speaking area in the seventeenth century?' will be very difficult or impossible to answer due to a lack of data from the majority of the population.[2] Instead, a narrower question, such as 'What language attitudes were prevalent in the writings of seventeenth-century German-speaking grammarians?', needs to be formulated.

Grammars and other normative texts, such as spelling guides, dictionaries, or teaching and letter-writing manuals, are an obvious starting point for an investigation into historical language attitudes (e.g. Hickey 2010). They are printed, sometimes digitised, and often freely available. Particularly fruitful is the analysis of prefaces in grammars, which can provide insights into the grammarians' attitudes about linguistic varieties as well as their views about language more generally (see e.g. Havinga 2018: 47–93 or Offord et al. 2018: 461–517 for examples of such analyses). Ayres-Bennett's (2004) work on seventeenth-century French reveals attitudes towards non-standard usage expressed in the volumes of so-called *remarqueurs* like Vaugelas, noting that 'different authors of observations adopt different attitudes towards variation and give priority to different types of variation according to their own interests and purposes' (2004: 4). Putter (forthcoming) found comments in late medieval French teaching manuals aimed at Anglophone students that described French as 'sweet', 'beautiful', 'gracious', and 'fair'. Furthermore, the pre- or proscription of individual variants can reveal certain attitudes.

Normative texts are not the only source available to investigate language attitudes in historical contexts. Schoemaker and Rutten (2017) have shown that school reports can contain metalinguistic comments, indicating school inspectors' perception of and attitudes towards language and linguistic variation. Such comments are, however, 'relatively rare and seemingly random' (Schoemaker and Rutten 2017: 110). Private letters, diaries, and memoirs, too, may contain occasional references to language use, which may provide a glimpse of the writer's language attitudes. In particular, corrections of language use in such 'ego-documents', that is, '[t]exts in which an author writes about his or her own acts, thoughts and feelings' (Dekker 2002: 7), can reveal 'normative attitudes towards particular variants' (Rutten et al. 2017: 6). In addition, the way in which sociolinguistic situations are presented can be insightful. Lodge (2014) reveals

2 Since literacy rates remained low before the eighteenth century, when compulsory elementary schooling was introduced in many German territories as well as in Austria, only insights into language attitudes by educated classes who wrote about their attitudes towards language (such as grammarians or other members of language societies) can be gained.

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attitudes of an autodidact Parisian glazier, Jacques-Louis Ménétra, by focusing on Ménétra's 'narrative of the sociolinguistic situations in which he finds himself' (Lodge 2014: 204) rather than the use of language itself in the memoirs.

Coming back to more public texts, literary texts as well as prologues to literary texts or translations (in which authors discuss their choice of language) can reveal language attitudes, as Dearnley (2016) illustrates. Offord et al. (2018: 472–484) extract complaints about French in Russia from eighteenth-century comic drama. Language-mixing is often mocked in these plays and several Russian dramatists present the French language and culture as a threat to Russia as a nation by choosing French for certain characters. Offord et al. (2018: 482) point out that '[t]he sort of language attitudes expressed by eighteenth-century Russian dramatists in response to cultural westernization were by no means peculiar to Russia, nor was it only in Russia that comic drama proved a convenient vehicle in which to express them'. When looking at literary texts to investigate language attitudes, plays may, therefore, be the best place to start.

Similar attitudes towards the use of French can be found in eighteenth-century British reviews, newspapers, and periodicals. From these and other sources, Beal (2012) extracts various attitudes and concludes that 'only the notion that the use of French is seditious and/or unpatriotic is peculiar to this time of extended hostility between Britain and France' (Beal 2012: 153). Given that many newspapers and periodicals are preserved, with some of them digitised (and searchable), they constitute a valuable source to investigate language attitudes.

Other fruitful data are statistical accounts of surveys that include questions on language. Millar's (2000) analyses of returns to the *Statistical accounts of Scotland*, published in the 1790s (account 1), 1830s/1840s (account 2), and 1940s (account 3), reveal overt (e.g. when the 'tone' of certain varieties is described as 'rough') as well as covert language attitudes (e.g. when Scots is associated with wisdom) of the ministers who replied. There are, however, limitations to such surveys, as Millar (2000: 171–172) points out: Their usefulness depends on what questions are asked, and replies may not always be representative or truthful.

In summary, a whole array of text genres (normative texts, school reports, ego-documents, literary and journalistic texts, as well as statistical accounts) can be utilised to study language attitudes in the past. However, all these sources have some drawbacks, and none of them is perfect. Most importantly, there is no guarantee that language attitudes can be found in each of these text genres and, if they can, they are often only attitudes of a small group of educated people. In order to deal with such 'imperfect data' (Janda and Joseph 2003: 14), clear research questions, a systematic approach, and definite selection criteria for materials are crucial. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2017: 26) provide assurance that the dependence on supposedly 'bad' data can be compensated by 'systematicity in data collection, extensive background reading and good philological work'. Rather than investigating all sources that may contain language

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attitudes, the most promising text types should be targeted. In comparison to contemporary researchers, historical (socio-)linguists usually have less choice in what to target as they rely on material that has been preserved. Which texts are particularly promising can be determined with background reading, for example on the socio-political context, literary traditions, language standardisation, or surveys that were carried out. Background reading also helps to choose a suitable time period for investigation. Metalinguistic comments may, for example, be more frequent during language-standardisation or nation-building processes. The texts chosen for investigation must then be analysed carefully. Implications for data analysis and interpretation when working with historical data are addressed in the following section.

19.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

A very useful method for examining language attitudes and ideologies in historical data is discourse analysis (see Chapter 2, as well as Chapter 4, on discourse analysis of contemporary data). Every text can be conceived of as ‘an instantiation of a discourse, and through discourse sets of beliefs about various natural or social phenomena are constructed’ (Watts 2012: 587). In other words, messages are not transmitted neutrally in discourse; instead, discourse represents a particular understanding of certain aspects of the world (Griffin 2013: 93). Griffin (2013: 99) explains that the purpose of discourse analysis is to reveal how a text’s linguistic features (lexical, grammatical, semantic) ‘set up and replicate particular world views’, thus linking language use to sociocultural practice. While discourse analysis is a method that takes different forms, depending on the research project (Griffin 2013: 97), no discourse analysis will ever be complete as it is infeasible to analyse all textual features of a text (Griffin 2013: 101). This means that researchers not only have to be selective about the data they use but also regarding the textual features they analyse. This selection is, of course, based on their agenda, which needs to be made transparent, reflecting on and explicitly describing the choices made (Griffin 2013: 101).

When using discourse analysis as a method, researchers can either take a qualitative or quantitative approach. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher will read the text carefully, annotate it, and extract, for example, language attitudes or ideologies. A quantitative approach, on the other hand, involves counting certain textual features to, for example, uncover key concepts of a text (Griffin 2013: 105). Software programmes can be used to find these features or to annotate (or code) texts. However, the data still need to be interpreted by the researcher. Also, any annotation or coding ‘already imposes an interpretation on the text as well as the boundaries of that interpretation’ (Griffin 2013: 105). This is again something that the researcher needs to reflect on and be transparent about.

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Another method to consider is corpus linguistics, that is, analysing a collection of texts in machine-readable form with the help of software tools. However, while using corpus-linguistic approaches is common in historical (socio-) linguistics, 'it is not clear how the phenomena of speaker attitudes, beliefs, and intention can be dealt with in any corpus-based approach' (Cantos 2012: 101). Watts (2012: 604), too, believes that attitudes and ideologies are easier to detect when 'comb[ing] through the corpus by hand' rather than using keyword searches. Using keyword searches can be problematic for several reasons: (1) not all metalinguistic texts (or similar historical sources) are digitally available (and transcribing them is a time-consuming process); (2) not all digitised texts are keyword searchable or OCR-compatible, depending on factors such as scripts, fonts and typefaces, or the quality of the scans; and (3) contemporary spelling variation needs to be taken into account when using keyword searches. While it would, therefore, be unwise to solely rely on keyword searches in a study of language attitudes in the past, corpus-linguistic approaches can help to identify particular texts to analyse further. For example, the words *language* or *dialect* could be entered in a keyword-searchable platform of historical newspapers in order to identify passages discussing linguistic varieties. Of course, the researcher will have to sift through the search results to identify relevant passages, which is a time-consuming process but quicker than (manually) reading a range of newspapers.

Although corpus-linguistic methods may not be ideal to detect attitudes and ideologies in historical texts, they are the preferred method to examine language usage in representative samples of sources. To what extent language attitudes, ideologies, and norms affect language usage is one of the central issues in historical sociolinguistic research (see e.g. the edited volume by Rutten et al. 2014). Corpus-linguistic approaches and quantitative analyses can be used to answer this question (as shown in the case studies below). This does, however, not mean that language attitudes can be extracted directly from a comparison between norms and usage. Even if a specific norm is adopted in writing, it remains unknown how the writers felt about this norm. This means that discourse analytical methods need to be used to get more direct insights into language attitudes. The following case studies exemplify how such methods can be employed.

19.4 Case Study: Attitudes towards German Varieties in the Eighteenth Century

As mentioned in the introductory section to this chapter, it is difficult and not necessarily appropriate to strictly separate language attitudes from language ideologies when working with historical data. Language attitudes should be studied within wider-held sets of beliefs and their socio-political context in order to understand their origins and impacts. This brief case study

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focuses on language ideologies and attitudes towards two German varieties (Upper German or UG, and East Central German or ECG) in the eighteenth century and their consequences for language use in Austria (for a more comprehensive account, see Havinga 2018).

As Section 19.2 explains, normative texts offer a good starting point for an investigation of language attitudes in the past. In this case study, I (the first author) apply qualitative discourse analytical methods to quotations (see Examples 1 and 2) from individuals who participated in the eighteenth-century language norm discourse in order to extract specific language ideologies and attitudes. While the quotations presented here can only provide insights into the attitudes of a limited group of educated people who, to some extent, incidentally commented on language (see above), my quantitative analyses of several UG variants show that they had an impact on written language use in Austria (Havinga 2018).

As mentioned above, metalinguistic comments are relatively common during language-standardisation processes. The eighteenth century can be described as a century of codification in the standardisation of German, making it a particularly suitable period to investigate language attitudes. As a result of the sixteenth-century selection of two German varieties that became commonly used in printing (*gemeines Deutsch* based on UG varieties and *Lutherdeutsch* based on ECG varieties), a discourse on what variety is correct and which variants should be codified in grammars emerged in the seventeenth and continued in the eighteenth century (Mattheier 2003: 216–219). The publication of numerous grammars in the eighteenth century contributed to this discourse and to the emerging ideology of a correct language (*Sprachrichtigkeitsideologie*; von Polenz 2013: 144–145). During the Enlightenment, this ideology was linked to the belief that language, the ability to think, and socio-economic as well as academic progress were closely connected (Wiesinger 2008: 263). In his *Kurzgefasste Deutsche Sprachlehre* [*Brief German Grammar*] (1758), Friedrich Wilhelm Gerlach (1728–1802), a history teacher from Thuringia who participated in the eighteenth-century language norm discourse, makes this connection explicit (see Example 1, my translation).

(1) Je ordentlichere, und je mehr Worte also, eine Sprache hat, desto vollkommener und besser können die Menschen dänken, von denen sie geredet wird. [...] Folglich soll eine jede Menge der Menschen die Fehler ihrer Sprache verbessern [...] und selbe in der Richtigkeit zu erhalten, sich befleißen. [...] Es ist ein Zeichen, daß Unwissenheit, unrichtige Gedanken, und kleine Geister in einem Land seyn: wo der vorige Satz nicht beobachtet wird. (Gerlach 1758: 2–3)

The more proper, and so the more words a language has, the more complete and better the people by whom it is spoken can think. [...] Consequently, a great many people should correct the mistakes of their language [...] and work hard on keeping it correct. [...] It is a sign that nescience, incorrect thoughts and small minds are in a country, where the previous sentence is not obeyed.

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In Example 1, Gerlach connects the ability to think with the number of ('proper') words a language has, urging people to use language 'correctly' in order to avoid being perceived as ignorant and unintelligent. As a result of such ideologies, the use of 'correct' language was seen as a powerful tool to advance academically and socio-economically. 'Correctness' was associated with ECG, which was used in Saxony, a cultural and commercial centre in the eighteenth century. The most influential eighteenth-century German grammarians considered ECG (also known as *obersächsisches Deutsch* 'Upper Saxon German') the 'best' German variety. Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766), who – along with Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806) – can be described as the most prominent German language authority of the eighteenth century (Rössler 1997: 29–30, 86–87), expresses the perceived superiority of this variety clearly in Example 2, taken from the fifth edition of his *Grundlegung einer deutschen Sprachkunst* 'Foundation of a German Grammar' (1748, 5th ed. 1762, my translation).

(2) Nach wem wird man sich also richten sollen? Aber es bedarf dieser Frage gar nicht. Ganz Deutschland ist schon längst stillschweigend darüber eins geworden. Ganz Ober= und Niederdeutschland hat bereits den Ausspruch gethan: daß das mittelländische, oder obersächsische Deutsch, die beste hochdeutsche Mundart sey: indem es dasselbe überall, von Bern in der Schweiz, bis nach Reval in Liefland, und von Schleswig bis nach Trident in Tyrol, ja von Brüssel bis Ungarn und Siebenbürgen, auch im Schreiben nachzuahmen und zu erreichen suchet. (Gottsched 1762: 69)

So who should one conform to? But this question is not needed. All of Germany has long implicitly agreed on it. All of Upper and Lower Germany has already expressed: that the Middle, or Upper Saxon German, is the best High German variety: as attempts are made everywhere to imitate and to successfully mimic it, including in written form, from Bern in Switzerland, to Reval in Liefland, and from Schleswig to Trident in Tyrol, from Brussels to Hungary and Transylvania.

It is not unusual for grammarians to present their own views and language attitudes as general facts. In reality, several grammarians, such as Carl Friedrich Aichinger, Johann Siegmund Valentin Popowitsch, Johann Jakob Bodmer, Johann Jakob Breitinger, Friedrich Carl Fulda, and Johannes Nast questioned the supremacy lent to ECG and advocated the use of UG varieties instead (Faulstich 2008: 97–105, 166–173). Grammarians from northern German areas, such as Johann Friedrich Heynatz and Johann Friedrich Zöllner, raised concerns too (Faulstich 2008: 173–176).

Nevertheless, the positive attitudes towards ECG, which Adelung (1781: 18, § 32, my translation) described as a variety that has been 'cultivated and refined by taste, the arts and sciences' (in contrast to what Adelung 1781: 18, § 32 calls the 'soft, slithery, and short language of Low German' and the 'rough and pompous UG'), led to *verticalisation* (Reichmann 1988), that is, a hierarchical ranking of German varieties, with ECG on the top. Even Empress Maria Theresa, who ruled the Habsburg Empire from 1740 to 1780, described the language of Austrians as

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'very bad' in a letter to Gottsched's wife Luise Adelgunde Victoria Gottschedin, who, together with her husband, was received as guest by Maria Theresa in 1749.[3]

These attitudes had far-reaching consequences, particularly since they emerged during a time of educational reform. Maria Theresa, who believed in the ideologies described above, commissioned Johann Ignaz von Felbiger (1724–1788), an educationist working for Frederick II in Prussia, as an advisor for her school reform plans (Engelbrecht 1984: 101–102). The school policy that Felbiger devised and published in 1774 introduced compulsory elementary education as well as standardised textbooks, timetables, and teaching methods (*Allgemeine Schulordnung* 1774). These textbooks were based on the ECG norms prescribed by Gottsched (Rössler 1997: 71–72). Consequently, ECG variants were disseminated in Austria, while common UG variants were stigmatised. My quantitative analyses of four UG features reveal that this school and language reform contributed to the 'invisibilisation' of UG variants, not just in textbooks but also in handwritten texts (Havinga 2018). The term *invisibilisation* refers to a process of implicit or explicit stigmatisation, which prevents the use of certain variants or varieties in writing (Langer and Havinga 2015). Such stigmatisation is based on community-level language ideologies but also language attitudes of individuals – particularly grammarians but also more powerful people, such as Empress Maria Theresa. The case study outlined here shows the impact language ideologies and attitudes can have on language use. However, it is important to note that this impact is (at least for now) mostly restricted to writing in Austria. UG variants continue to be used in spoken as well as informal written language and remain salient features of Austrian German.

19.5 Case Study: Attitudes towards Standards, Norms, and Variation in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Dutch

This brief case study is based on research conducted by the second author (see Krogull 2018 for a comprehensive discussion) as part of a larger research project on Dutch language planning and standard language ideology in the decades around 1800 (see Rutten 2019). As mentioned above, language attitudes and language ideologies are closely intertwined in historical sociolinguistic research, and this case study, too, only indirectly touches upon language attitudes in the strict sense. More directly, it focuses on the interrelated topics of language standardisation, prescriptivism, and language policy and planning.

In the Netherlands, the turn of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of a national language policy aimed at spreading an officially standardised variety of

3 German original, as cited in Wiesinger (2008: 260): 'Wir Oesterreicher haben eine sehr schlechte Sprache'.

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Dutch across the entire population. Against the background of the ideological equation of nation and language, emerging across late eighteenth-century Europe, the Dutch mother tongue was increasingly conceptualised as a unifying symbol of the (allegedly) homogeneous Dutch nation. Negative attitudes towards linguistic variability, as typical of language standardisation processes, were expressed by grammarians and other language commentators. Calling for a uniform variety of Dutch for the benefit of the nation's unity, they particularly advocated the suppression or even conscious elimination of traditional dialects. These *platte taalen* 'vulgar languages' were considered to be flawed versions of the only 'real' Dutch language, and, according to some commentators, they constituted an impediment to the education of the youth and true enlightenment of the people.

Linguistic matters became a national concern around 1800, as did educational matters. The Dutch Minister of National Education was assigned the task to 'take all possible measures to purify and cultivate the Dutch language' (*Instructie voor den Agent van Nationale Opvoeding* 1798: 6, my translation) by regulating its spelling and grammar, which clearly mirrored the purist and prescriptive attitudes of 'historical "language managers"' (Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy 2012: 6; see Section 19.1), but also the rise of standard language ideology. The call for linguistic homogenisation led to the first official codification of Dutch on behalf of the government. The so-called *schrijftaalregeling* 'written language regulation' comprised two reference works: a national orthography (Siegenbeek 1804), and a national grammar (Weiland 1805), laying down the norms that were strongly recommended (though not obligatory) for use in the educational and administrative domains. This national language policy and top-down codification constituted a crucial intervention in the sociolinguistic situation of the Netherlands, which was now split into a diglossic hierarchy of standard versus non-standard Dutch. But how did these developments affect the body of language users (see also Rutten et al. 2020: 260–264)?

The central research objective of this study was to investigate whether and to what extent the dissemination of standard language norms exerted influence on actual language use. To put it slightly differently, I sought to measure acceptance as the actual spread of the national standard variety in the population at large (see also Haugen 1966: 933). The interpretation of acceptance as an attitudinal phenomenon in the past is challenging, though, as it requires linguists working with historical data 'to look into the minds of historical players, while we also know that attitudes and behaviour do not necessarily correspond' (Rutten 2019: 217). However, keeping in mind that hasty interpretations about language attitudes need to be prevented, acceptance in a historical scenario of standardisation like the Dutch case around 1800 can still be turned into an empirical research question.

In line with historical sociolinguistic research on the interplay between norms and usage (e.g. Rutten et al. 2014; Anderwald 2016), the study illustrated here combined methods using quantitative and qualitative data in order to investigate the effectiveness of prescriptive norms on actual usage. The qualitative part

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108867788.024 Published online by Cambridge University Press

focused on contemporary metalanguage, based on an exhaustive account of around thirty normative works published in the Netherlands in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. While Siegenbeek's (1804) orthography and Weiland's (1805) grammar served as the obvious points of reference, it was important not to treat these in isolation and, instead, place them in the wider context of the normative tradition. In fact, the vivid metalinguistic discourse throughout the eighteenth century gradually paved the way for the first nationwide and official codification. The collection of normative texts that I consulted for this study comprised spelling guides, grammar books, and more general linguistic treatises. The majority of texts was digitally available, though not always keyword searchable, which required manual reading in order to (systematically) extract pre- and proscriptions of individual linguistic features and variants. Metalinguistic comments, for instance in the prefaces, could also reveal more general attitudes and ideologies prevalent in the language community (see Sections 19.2 and 19.3).

The quantitative part focused on patterns of variation and change in language usage, based on a corpus of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch that I (the second author) specifically designed and compiled to assess the effects of the national language policy on actual practice. My diachronic multi-genre corpus (*Going Dutch Corpus*) contains more than 420,000 words of authentic language use in different text sources, from before (1770–1790) and after (1820–1840) the 'written language regulation' took effect. As for genre, both handwritten ego-documents (private letters; diaries/travelogues) and printed publications (newspapers) were included. All texts in the corpus were coded for region and, in the case of ego-documents, also for gender, allowing for a fine-grained assessment of language variation and change.

A selection of eight linguistic features, covering both spelling and grammar, was then analysed by following a systematic methodological procedure, in order to ensure maximum comparability between all variables. At the level of norms, it turned out that many pre- and proscriptions by Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805) were not all that innovative or radical, but rather grounded on choices already made by their predecessors. The major novelty of these normative works, as opposed to the more individual grammarians' attitudes and norms in the eighteenth-century tradition, was their strong political and ideological backing, and their implementation in the national school system.

At the level of usage, the corpus-based findings revealed that Siegenbeek's orthographic norms were largely adopted in the first half of the nineteenth century, where variant reduction in the direction of the national standard norms was clearly visible across genres, regions, and both genders. Grammatical prescriptions, however, were followed to a much lesser extent, which could partly be explained by the complexity and inherent variability of morphosyntactic features in usage. Interestingly, in contrast to the relatively straightforward pre- and proscriptions for spelling, Weiland acknowledged (stylistic) variation to a certain degree, as in the case of relativisation (Krogull et al. 2017: 165–168).

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At least for prescribed spelling variants, the results signalled a changing attitude among the community of Dutch language users (Rutten 2019: 277), one that is generally positive towards standard language norms imposed 'from above'. However, it should be stressed again that the link between behaviour and attitudes is not reliable, and language attitudes cannot be deduced directly from these developments in actual usage. What is striking, though, is that the remarkable convergence towards official (spelling) prescriptions could not only be observed in public texts (newspapers), but also in the private sphere (ego-documents, and even in letter writing), where the use of standard variants was not formally required. This suggests that, in addition to factors such as awareness of, or exposure and access to standard norms, a favourable attitude towards these variants might have played a role in the widespread acceptance of the newly devised national standard variety of Dutch.

19.6 New or Emerging Trends

It should have become clear in the previous sections of this chapter that language attitudes research itself is still an emerging field in historical sociolinguistics. Although a wide range of (written) text sources and both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been utilised to detect language attitudes in the past (see Sections 19.2 and 19.3), an overarching methodological framework for language attitudes research based on historical data is yet to be developed.

However, there seems to be a more general shift from traditionally monolingual language histories, often related to language standardisation and nation building, and focusing on ideologies about and attitudes towards standard and non-standard varieties of an official/national language, towards a more multilingual perspective on language history (see also Chapter 17, for language attitudes in present-day multilingual communities). In historical sociolinguistics, a growing scholarly interest in multilingual and contact settings has emerged over the past three decades (e.g. Hüning et al. 2012). Investigating settings of multilingualism and language contact in the past implies that researchers also address questions relevant to language attitudes research, such as the following listed by Rutten et al. (2017: 6):

> How do the speakers involved perceive each other? What attitudes are triggered in the contact situation? What beliefs and ideologies underpin their perceptions and attitudes? What planning measures are taken to coordinate the contact? Which linguistic forms and varieties are typically promoted through policy, and which are condemned?

While societal multilingualism in (European) language history has been on the research agenda since the 1990s, much less is known about 'the personal experiences of historical actors, their attitudes and views, and their daily practices in a

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108867788.024 Published online by Cambridge University Press

multilingual environment' (Rutten et al. 2017: 8), which, again, could be partly explained by the limitations of data of historical individuals (see Section 19.1).

The attitudes and ideologies surrounding historical situations of multilingualism and language contact have been investigated in a number of recent and ongoing projects. One particular case in point, which has attracted a fair amount of interest in recent years, is the phenomenon of historical *francophonie* (e.g. Rjéoutski et al. 2014), that is, the widespread practice of French as a second or foreign language in European language communities outside France. Focusing on the specific case of French in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia, Offord et al. (2018: 461–517) dedicate an entire chapter to 'Language attitudes' (see also Section 19.2), in which they examine Russian views and debates on linguistic matters and national identity, and how the Franco-Russian bilingualism of the elite was perceived.

In the case of historically Dutch-speaking areas, the phenomenon of 'frenchification', which describes the often pejorative attitudes towards the influence of the French language, is critically examined by Frijhoff (2015) and Rutten et al. (2015). The latter discuss both contemporary metalinguistic discourse on the alleged frenchification of Dutch as well as linguistic aspects in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Taking a more systematic and empirical approach, the historical Dutch–French language contact situation, including the attitudes and ideologies it evoked, is also at the heart of ongoing research projects in historical sociolinguistics.[4]

To summarise, using historical data to research language attitudes presents considerable challenges since there is no direct access to people's attitudes towards language. In contrast to modern (socio-)linguists, historical researchers cannot elicit data, resulting in a reliance on the (written) data available. The data at our disposal are inevitably skewed and fragmented: More texts produced by an elite minority are accessible, while many other texts have not survived until today. Nevertheless, it is possible to investigate language attitudes based on a range of historical data. Such investigations usually address both language attitudes and ideologies within wider socio-political contexts and processes, such as nation building and language standardisation, with more recent research being increasingly conducted in a multilingual rather than a monolingual framework. This treatment of language attitudes in connection with ideologies and wider socio-political processes is not surprising, given that language attitudes 'stand proxy for a much more comprehensive set of social and political attitudes' (Milroy and Milroy 2012: 45–46).

4 For instance, the research project *Pardon my French? Dutch–French Language Contact in the Netherlands, 1500–1900* (Leiden University 2018–2024), funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), seeks to provide a more systematic empirical analysis of Dutch–French contact phenomena, including the vibrant metalinguistic discourse about the presumed frenchification of Dutch.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108867788.024 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The study of language attitudes based on historical data remains important as it provides insights into people's views and feelings about linguistic matters while also uncovering origins of and explanations for these views and feelings. This, in turn, helps us to understand language variation and change as well as wider socio-political developments. In order to fully understand the dynamics of language attitudes and ideologies in present-day societies, we need to research their roots in the sociolinguistic past.

Suggested further readings

Beal (2012); Millar (2000); Milroy (2012); Offord et al. (2018); Watts (2012)

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