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Setting the standard: norms and usage in Early and Late Modern Dutch (1550-1850)

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Chapter 8 – Diminutive suffix

In modern-day Standard Dutch, diminutives are generally formed by adding the suffix *-je* to the root form of a word. This is illustrated by nouns like *boek* ‘book’ and *brief* ‘letter’, which diminuate in *boekje* ‘book-DIM’ and *briefje* ‘letter-DIM’. Although the suffix *-je* is considered the base form, the diminutive suffix knows many variations.⁶⁶ This is also the case in Standard Dutch, where different allomorphs are distinguished depending on the phonological context of the root word. More specifically, it is the auslaut of the root word, together with the quality of the preceding (combination of) vowel(s), that determines whether a speaker or writer of Standard Dutch uses the base suffix *-je*, or one of its allomorphs *-kje* (e.g. *kettinkje* ‘necklace-DIM’), *-pje* (e.g. *boompje* ‘tree-DIM’), *-etje* (e.g. *mannetje* ‘man-DIM’), or *-tje* (e.g. *zoentje* ‘kiss-DIM’).

Before the diminutive suffix *-je* (pronounced as [jə]) and its allomorphs were established as the codified norm in spoken and written Dutch, other suffixes were applied for constructing a diminutive. Allomorphs deriving from *-ikîn*, with *-kijn* (probably pronounced as [kin]) as the main suffix, were most common in Middle Dutch (Van Loey, 1970, § 185; Van der Sijs, 2021, p. 408). At some point in the history of Dutch, the velar diminutive suffix *-kijn* thus developed into the newer suffix *-je*, due to the palatalisation of /k/ and /i/, and the reduction of the end *-n* (Van Loey, 1970, pp. 225-231).

Previous research has shown that this transition from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes took place gradually, with the palatalisation process affecting specific phonological contexts first (Kloeke, 1923; De Vries, 1925; Van Loey, 1970; Marynissen, 1998). This is illustrated by a diminutive like *maantkijn*, or the later form *maantke(n)* ‘month-DIM’, where a velar occlusive /k/ as the first sound of the suffix follows on /t/ of the root word. The combination of these two obstruents caused a phonological clash, which in turn triggered the palatalisation process. Diminutives with a root word ending in *-d* or *-t* were therefore most prone to

⁶⁶ I am aware that scholars have also argued that *-tje* is the base form of the diminutive suffix in Standard Dutch (e.g. Van Loey, 1970, p. 229). The issue whether *-je* or *-tje* should be seen as the base form, however, is less relevant for the current study.

shift to a palatal diminutive like *maantge(n)*, which later developed into *maantje(n)* (Van Loey, 1970, p. 230; Marynissen, 1998, p. 256). Other phonological contexts were also subject to such changes in a subsequent wave of palatalisation (Marynissen, 1998).

Not all speakers of Dutch in the Low Countries were immediately impacted by the palatalisation of the diminutive suffixes, though. The initial shift to palatal suffixes, which occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, took place in some – mainly Hollandic and north-eastern – dialects, while other dialects of Dutch maintained the velar suffixes (Kloeker, 1923, p. 229; De Vries, 1925, pp. 24-32, p. 41; Pée, 1936-1938, pp. 58-60; p. 107). The latter is the case for dialects in Brabant, for example, where the palatalisation of the suffix was sometimes avoided by maintaining or inserting a /ə/ or /s/ in between the clashing consonants, as is illustrated by a diminutive like *veldeken* ‘field-DIM’ and *boekskén* ‘book-DIM’. This epenthetic strategy facilitated the pronunciation of the consonant cluster, and it consequently ensured that the suffix *-ke(n)* was maintained for a longer time in the Southern Netherlands (Marynissen, 1998, p. 266). While some dialects thus retained the velar suffix *-ke(n)*, a fully vocalised form of the palatal suffix *-je(n)* was found in other dialects of Dutch. More specifically, in dialects from Holland and the north-eastern regions of the Netherlands, the suffix *-ie(n)* – pronounced as [i(n)] – was attested in the seventeenth century as well (Van der Sijs, 2021, p. 412).

In this case study, I investigate the written representation of the diminutive suffix, and I particularly analyse whether codified norms impacted the change to the modern-day suffix *-je*. Four main suffix types can be distinguished for constructing a diminutive from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These are: (1) *-kijn/-kin/-ke(n)*, which make up the oldest category of velar suffixes, (2) the transition suffix *-ge(n)*, which is considered a first attempt of visualising a palatal pronunciation (Marynissen, 1998, p. 256), (3) the palatal *-je(n)* as the standard suffix in modern-day Dutch, and (4) the fully vocalised palatal suffix *-ie(n)*. Each of these suffix types comprises different allomorphs, as well as variants with and without deletion of the final *-n*. From a diachronic point of view, however, it is important to note that each of the four suffix types defines a separate stage in the palatalisation process of the diminutive suffix.

1 Previous research

When investigating the diachronic change from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes in language use, Kloeke (1923) and De Vries (1925) as pioneers in exploring the phenomenon, were mainly concerned with the emergence and the distribution of palatal diminutive suffixes at a geographical level. Kloeke (1923, p. 229) believed that the dialect in the North-Hollandic region initiated the discussed change to the standard suffix *-je(n)* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from whence the palatal suffix spread to other regions. De Vries (1925, pp. 24-32; p. 41) as his opponent showed that the palatalisation of the suffix was also attested in north-eastern regions of the Northern Netherlands at the same time, and as such, he refuted the idea of the ‘Hollandic expansion’ that Kloeke (1923) described. Instead, De Vries claimed there is more evidence for a polygenetic rise of the palatal suffix in the fourteenth century, with the palatalisation emerging in different regions at the same time (cf. also Van Loey, 1970, p. 230). Although the palatalisation process started a century later in the Southern Netherlands, Marynissen (1998) also confirms the suggestion of De Vries (1925) for the Southern part of the language area, as she illustrates that the palatalisation followed the same polygenetic process in the South.

Marynissen (1998) thus delved into the origin and the spread of the palatal diminutive suffix in the Southern Netherlands. Building on the work of Kloeke (1923), De Vries (1925), the dialect maps of Pée (1936-1938), a collection of linguistic data deriving from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century official texts and charters, and a corpus containing toponyms from the Southern Netherlands, she investigated the diachronic evolution of the diminutive suffix of two common toponyms i.e. *straatje* ‘street-DIM’ and *veldje* ‘field-DIM’. In her study, Marynissen (1998, pp. 258-260) illustrates that the palatal suffix *-je(n)* knew its breakthrough in Southern writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This does not mean that solely written representations of the velar suffix were found before the seventeenth century, though. The first palatal representations with the suffix *-gen* were attested in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Marynissen, 1998, p. 264). After its early rise, the transition suffix *-gen* strongly declined in the seventeenth century before it entirely disappeared from usage in the second half of the eighteenth century, where it was replaced by the suffix *-je(n)* (Marynissen, 1998, pp. 258-259). Since the change to the

suffix *-je(n)* was initiated in *straatje* first and took place only a century later in *veldje*, Marynissen (1998, p. 267) argues that timing the change to the palatal suffix also depends on the lexical context.

These lexical patterns do not emerge only in historical writings. In the dialect maps on modern-day Dutch, De Schutter et al. (2005) not only show diverging patterns for the diminutive suffix from one root word to another, but they also illustrate that the velar suffix *-ke(n)* is still omnipresent in dialects of Dutch today. The continued existence of velar suffixes in modern-day dialects indicates that the change to the standard suffix *-je* was completed in written and spoken Standard Dutch, but not in all spoken dialects (Marynissen, 1998, pp. 260; 267). This difference between the contemporary (written) standard language and the dialects suggests that a similar discrepancy may have been present in the past, with genres closer to the language of proximity possibly adhering to the velar suffixes for a longer time (Koch & Oesterreicher, 1985).

As opposed to linguistic and dialectal studies on the subject, research approaching the change in the diminutive suffixes from a historical-sociolinguistic angle is scarce, and so far, only one sociolinguistic study on the feature has been carried out on historical data of Dutch. This research is conducted by Nobels (2013a, 2013b), who investigated the use of the diminutive suffix in the Letters as Loot corpus. She focused on seventeenth-century usage, and particularly on ego-documents of middle- and lower-class writers from the Northern Netherlands. In exploring the distribution of the different diminutive suffixes in private letters, Nobels (2013a, pp. 223-224) demonstrates that region, writing experience, and age were influential determinants in the choice for the diminutive suffix in the seventeenth century. She illustrates that the modern-day variant *-je* was already applied in all Northern regions, but its proportion was the highest in North-Holland. Interestingly, the dialectal suffix *-ie*, which was strongly criticised at the time (Van der Sijs, 2021, p. 412), also showed up in the private letters that Nobels (2013a, pp. 203-206) investigated. Although Van Loey (1970, p. 230) believed the variant *-ie* did not occur in seventeenth-century writings, these findings thus suggest that more oral diminutive suffixes were also applied in personal written communication at the time.

In terms of social variation, Nobels (2013a, p. 207) investigated private letters deriving from North-Holland only, and uncovered that the suffix *-ie* was applied

as a majority variant by letters writers from the lower(-middle) classes, while this suffix was never used by upper-class writers. Nobels (2013a, p. 207) argues that the latter group of writers was more experienced and clearly knew the writing conventions in the seventeenth century, which also clarifies why the upper classes mostly applied the suffix *-je*. However, together with the older writers in the corpus, the upper-class writers also continued to use the velar suffix *-ke*, while this variant was already considered archaic in the seventeenth century. Nobels (2013a, p. 212) explains this rather atypical usage pattern by the ‘distinguished’ status that the velar suffix *-ke* had acquired over time. The distinguished status of the suffix can be related to the strong position of the velar suffix in the normative tradition of Dutch. After all, Van der Sijs (2021, pp. 411-412) mentions that Northern grammarians still favoured the velar suffix in the early seventeenth century.

Previous research has thus shown that the palatalisation process of the diminutive suffix was initiated in dialects of the Northern part of the language area, where written representations of a palatal suffix were first found in the fourteenth century. In the Southern Netherlands, on the contrary, the palatalisation process started somewhat later than in the North, with the palatal suffixes showing up for the first time in writings of the fifteenth century, and a convincing change to *-je(n)* showing up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, also in these later periods, there was no uniformity in the use of the diminutive suffixes. Apart from *-je(n)*, the transition suffix *-ge(n)*, the velar *-ke(n)*, and *-ie(n)* appeared in written usage, indicating that the change towards *-je(n)* was ongoing in both parts of the language area. The use of diminutive suffixes remained variable in writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where different sociolinguistic factors – such as region and writing experience – as well as the lexical context of the root word influenced the use of the diminutive suffix. Whether and when the standard suffix *-je* was fully implemented in written usage, and whether this change was initiated or reinforced by Dutch prescriptivism is investigated in the present case study.

2 Hypotheses

For the velar suffix type *-kijn/kin/ke(n)*, I rely on Marynissen (1998) in expecting that the Middle Dutch form *-kijn* will probably not occur anymore in norms and usage in the period under investigation. Since the suffix *-kin* is the older variant of *-ke(n)*, the form might still occur as a minority variant in sixteenth-century usage, but *-ke(n)* will most likely be the dominant form in this early period. Also in norms, I build on Van der Sijts (2021) in assuming that the velar suffix will be prescribed up until the seventeenth century. From the eighteenth century onwards, *-ke(n)* will probably be treated as an archaic but not incorrect suffix in the normative discourse. Despite the lack of hard rejection in language norms, following Marynissen (1998) and Nobels (2013a, 2013b), I presume the share of the velar suffixes will gradually decrease in usage, and the suffix *-ke(n)* may eventually disappear in the eighteenth century, in favour of the palatal suffix. The velar *-ke(n)* might also be retained in genres which are closer to the oral language, such as ego-documents, and especially in those of the Southern Netherlands, where multiple dialects still use the velar suffix today. I do not expect large differences in terms of genre otherwise, except for an effect of the distinguished status that is attached to *-ke(n)*. As Nobels (2013a) observed, the praising of *-ke(n)* in the metalanguage may lead to the prolonged use of the velar form by experienced writers. Such an effect may therefore be most pronounced in the formal administrative texts and in the printed pamphlets of the *HCD* (**hypothesis 1**).

As Marynissen (1998) indicated, the palatalisation of the diminutive suffix was first present in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century usage. As such, I expect for the variant *-ge(n)* to show up in the written language in the earliest periods under investigation, although the form may soon decline again, and given its function as a transition suffix, it will probably disappear in the eighteenth century in favour of the suffix *-je(n)* (**hypothesis 2**).

The palatal suffix *-je(n)* will probably show up in Northern usage first. Here, the form may have grounds in the sixteenth century already, while in Southern usage, *-je(n)* might become a main variant in the seventeenth century, as Marynissen (1998) also attested. This geographical difference implies that the proportions of the palatal variant will most likely be higher in Northern usage in

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If prescriptive interference can be assumed in this case, the suffix *-je(n)* will have the strongest rise in printed and highly formal genres, such as the pamphlets and the administrative texts (**hypothesis 3**).

Since the suffix *-ie(n)* particularly characterises the dialects in the region of Holland, the form will most likely secure a position in the most informal ego-documents from the Northern Netherlands. As opposed to the seventeenth-century letter writers in the corpus of Nobels (2013a), the writers included in the *HCD* are all members of the (upper-)middle classes, who were perhaps familiar with writing conventions at the time. The proportion of the suffix *-ie(n)* will thus probably be lower in this corpus than in the study of Nobels (2013a). I suppose this dialectal variant will have the strongest position in the seventeenth century, yet with the increase of prescriptions for the suffix *-je(n)* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the suffix *-ie(n)* might disappear from usage in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries (**hypothesis 4**).

3 Methodology

In this section, I explain how the analysis of diminutive suffixes is operationalised in this case study. The annotation of the metalinguistic comments is discussed in section 3.1, while the regular expression for searching the *HCD*, together with the cleaning and annotation process of the usage data is explained in section 3.2.

3.1 Language norms

Different types of language norms are retrieved from the corpus of normative works and are thus also distinguished in the normative component of the analysis. In this section, I clarify and illustrate what kind of prescriptive injunctions are included in the analysis of language norms.

The most apparent type of language norms are **explicit prescriptions**, which thematise the grammatical issue of diminutive suffixes, and contextualise the type of suffix that must be applied to construct a diminutive in Dutch. Example 1

illustrates that such explicit prescriptions can be brief in simply mentioning the prescribed suffix (and its allomorphs) together with some examples, yet other explicit injunctions include a more complex account of the matter, in which mixed prescriptions are involved, with a direct (Example 2) or a concealed argumentation (Example 3) for the different suffix types that are prescribed (cf. section 4.1.2).

- (1) *Indien veële Verkleywoórdten te hebben, de tael een cieraed aenbrengt, mogen wy ons beroe-men in dat stuk een voórrecht voór veële ander-re te hebben. [...] De regel om dit te doen, is de syllabe ken agter het nomen te voegen; als hofken, boomken, vuerken; maer zoo het woord met eene d eyndigt of met eene l, rekt het zich gemeenelyk eene gantsche syllabe uyt; als woórdeken, hondeken, beéldeken, stalleken, velleken, walleken. Die met eene k eyndigen, neémen sken tot zich; als boeksken, stoksken, zaksken, enz. alle welke uytzonderingen veél beter doór het gebruyk als doór regels kunnen worden geleert*
(Des Roches, s.d. [1761], p. 27)

'If having many diminutives makes the language graceful, we may boast of having a privilege over many other languages. The rule is to add the syllable *ken* after the noun; as *hofken* 'yard-DIM', *boomken* 'tree-DIM', *vuerken* 'fire-DIM', but if the root word ends in a *d* or an *l*, the word generally extends an entire syllable, as *woórdeken* 'word-DIM', *hondeken* 'dog-DIM', *beéldeken* 'statue-DIM', *stalleken* 'stable-DIM', *velleken* 'skin-DIM', *walleken* 'embankment-DIM'. The words ending in *k* take *sken*; as *boeksken* 'book-DIM', *stoksken* 'stick-DIM', *zaksken* 'bag-DIM', etc. all these exceptions are much better learnt through usage than through rules'

- (2) *Volgens den algemeynen regel, zet men de letter-greép ken by de zelfstandige naemwoórdten ? B.V. van hof, maekt men hofken; van deur, deurken; enz. [...] Meest alle de woórdten die met l of n eyndigen, neémen tje aen; volgens de wyze der Hollanders; B.V. van stoel, maekt men stoeltje; hier by kan men voegen die, de welke met t eyndigen, by de welke men voegt je; B.V. straet, straetje, enz. dus ook sommige woórdten die met d eyndigen: B.V. van hand, maekt men handje en handeken, van oórd, oórdje, enz.*
(Ter Bruggen, 1817-1818, p. 7)

'As a general rule, the syllable *ken* is added to nouns, for example, one makes *hofken* from *hof* 'yard'; *deurken* from *deur* 'door'; etc. Most of the words ending in *l* or *n*, take *tje* as a suffix; in the manner of the Hollandic, for example, one makes *stoeltje* from *stoel* 'chair'; the words ending in *t* can also be added to this rule, where one adds the suffix *je*, for example, to *straet* 'street', *straetje*, etc. and thus also some words ending in *d*, for example, one makes *handje* and *handeken* from *hand* 'hand', *oórdje* from *oórd* 'place', etc.'

- (3) *De Verkleennaemwoorden verminderen de beteke-nis der Oirsprongkelyke Naemwoorden door aennee-ming van je met of zonder eene voorgaende t, en van ken met of zonder voorgaende s; als in, Knaepje, Schaepje, Straetje, Steegje, hoekje, huisje, Steentje, boomtje, beddetje, manneken, mandeken, hondeken, doeksken, boeksken, broeksken, jongskén*
(Moonen, 1706, p. 119)

'The diminutives diminish the meaning of the original noun by adopting *je* with or without a preceding *t*, and by *ken* with or without a preceding *s*; as in *Knaepje* 'boy-DIM', *Schaepje* 'sheep-DIM', *Straetje* 'street-DIM', *Steegje* 'alley-DIM', *hoekje* 'corner-DIM', *huisje* 'house-DIM', *Steentje* 'stone-DIM', *boomtje* 'tree-DIM', *beddetje* 'bed-DIM', *manneken* 'man-DIM', *mandeken* 'basket-DIM', *hondeken* 'dog-DIM', *doeksken* 'cloth-DIM', *boeksken* 'book-DIM', *broeksken* 'pants-DIM', *jongskén* 'boy-DIM'

For this grammatical feature, **implicit prescriptions** are mainly found in wordlists and glossaries, and in prescriptions about other linguistic topics, in which multiple examples of diminutives are summed up (e.g. Example 4).

- (4) *De X wert by veelen ghebrukt in paxken, stoxken, end' meer: daermen anders paksken, stoksken, stel-len moste*
(Dafforne, 1627, p. 131)

'The *X* is used by many in *paxken* 'parcel-DIM', *stoxken* 'stick-DIM', and more, since they should otherwise write *paksken*, *stoksken*'

For **grammarians' usage**, I annotated the dominant variant out of ten randomly selected tokens of diminutive suffixes. However, as was also the case for the comparative marker in Chapter 7, diminutives do not occur frequently in language use. Even when sufficient diminutives were found in a codifier's language practice, observations were often diminutives of the same lemma

(e.g. *woord* ‘word’ and *lid* ‘article’). With grammarians mainly constructing diminutives with specific root words, it was impossible to annotate the dominantly used variant based on tokens from individual lemmas. I therefore allowed for multiple tokens of the same lemma for annotating the dominant suffix in grammarians’ usage. Of course, due to the low frequency of diminutive suffixes in language use, for 20 out of the 73 normative works I was not able to extract ten diminutive suffixes. For these works, the dominant form of suffix is thus based on fewer than ten tokens. The actual number on which the dominant variant is determined is mentioned in between brackets in Table 18. Furthermore, in the case that codifiers were not consistent in their writing practice, and no dominant suffix could be established, all variants used by that grammarian were annotated as the dominantly used suffix. The latter is the case for six normative works, yet two of these works show only variation between the same suffix type, as Table 18 in section 4.1.3 also summarises.

3.2 Language use

The results in language use are retrieved from the *HCD* by means of multiple regular expressions that searched the usage corpus for the medieval suffixes *-kijn* and *-lijn*, together with their spelling variants, on the one hand, and for the suffix types from the Early and Late Modern period, i.e. *-kin/ke(n)*, *-ge(n)*, *-je(n)*, and *-ie(n)*, also considering their historical spelling variants, on the other hand.

Apart from the false positive results that were manually removed from the results, diminutives attached to a proper name, e.g. Dutch female names such as *Leentje* and *Hanneke*, were automatically removed from the corpus data. Most instances in which a proper name is formed with a diminutive do not express a diminutive meaning (anymore), and the diminutive suffix is therefore considered a fixed element of the proper name (cf. Nobels, 2013a, pp. 220-223).

After filtering the usage data that were obtained via the regular expressions, 523 results for the diminutive suffixes remained for the corpus analysis. Attestations of the medieval suffixes *-kijn* and *-lijn* were not found in the usage data, and also the suffixes *-gi(n)*, *-ye(n)*, *-chi(n)*, and *-che(n)* as spelling variants of the palatal suffix did not yield valid datapoints. All other diminutive suffixes appearing in the Early and Late Modern period, so the variants *-kin*, *-ken*, *-ke*, *-gen*, *-ge*, *-jen*,

-je, *-ien*, and *-ie*, were attested as diminutive suffixes in the *HCD*. These results were manually annotated for the lemma of the root word.

Furthermore, the annotation of the diminutive suffixes needed an additional verification for the results of the suffix type *-ie(n)*. This was necessary since the grapheme <j> was still a recent phenomenon in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century language use. This implies that it was still common to use the grapheme <i> for representing both the vowel /i/ and the semi-vowel /j/ (Nobels, 2013a, pp. 83-84). The possibility of this orthographic overlap has implications for this study. More specifically since it might lead to misinterpretations of the diminutive suffixes *-je(n)* and *-ie(n)*. In order to ascertain whether these written representations denoted the palatal suffix *-je(n)* or the fully vocalised palatal *-ie(n)*, all documents in the usage corpus containing the spelling practices <ie> and <ien> as diminutive suffixes were examined, applying the method that Nobels (2013a, pp. 83-84) developed for establishing the spelling practices in seventeenth-century ego-documents.

As such, I checked whether a clear distinction was made between the two graphemes and the corresponding phonemes in the individual documents. For example, if a writer used the grapheme <j> in a context where we would expect to find [j], as in *jacht* 'hunt', and they also spelled <ie> for [i], it is likely that the writer already made a distinction between the two graphemes, and as such, the diminutive suffixes represented as <ie> or <ien> most likely denote the suffix *-ie(n)*. From the 18 documents in the *HCD* containing these ambiguous spelling practices, a distinction between the two graphemes was made in most texts. Only in two documents, the grapheme <i> was still used for representing [j].⁶⁷ Since it cannot be determined with sufficient certainty whether these writers wanted to denote the suffix *-je(n)* or *-ie(n)*, the 12 occurrences of <ie> and <ien> in these documents are considered observations of the suffix *-ie(n)*.

⁶⁷ These documents are EGO-1650-HO-1 and EGO-1650-HO-3.

4 Results

4.1 Language norms

In this section, I present the developments in of the diminutive suffix in language norms. I first interpret the metalinguistic salience of the diminutive suffix in section 4.1.1, before the prescriptions and the treatment of alternative variants are discussed in section 4.1.2 and section 4.1.3 respectively.

4.1.1 Metalinguistic salience

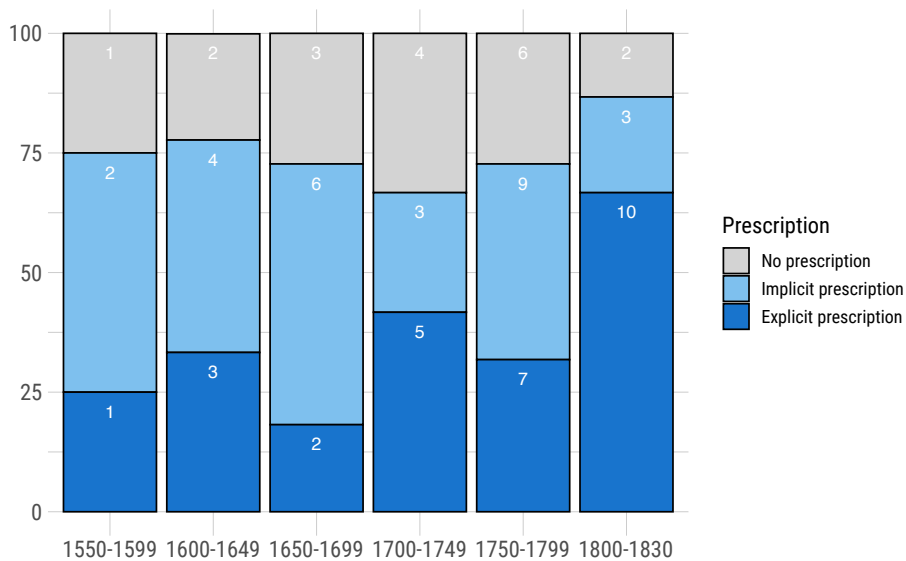


Figure 46: metalinguistic salience diminutive suffix

The diminutive suffix was part of normative discussions early on, as Figure 46 illustrates. The feature appeared in explicit prescriptions already in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, the saliency of the diminutive suffix does not increase gradually in these normative discussions. In fact, the explicit prescriptions on the diminutive suffix fluctuate slightly up until the second half of the eighteenth century, with always a minority of the norm givers contributing

to the normative discussions on the matter. It is only in the nineteenth century that the grammatical feature convincingly rises above the level of awareness of norm givers, with 67% of the normative works including an explicit prescription on the diminutive suffix. In overall, with 38% (n=28) of the normative works in the corpus containing an explicit prescription on the diminutive suffix, the feature shows medium metalinguistic salience. The diminutive suffix is thus definitely more prominent in the normative discourse compared to some other grammatical variables, but it never becomes as salient as certain spelling features that were fiercely discussed by grammarians for the entire period under investigation (e.g. spelling of long /a/ in closed syllables, Chapter 5).

4.1.2 Prescriptions

The language norms on the diminutive suffix, i.e. the explicit and implicit prescriptions, and grammarians' language use, are presented in this section.

Norms per period and type of norm – visualised per suffix

Figure 47 shows a diachronic overview of the explicit and implicit prescriptions, on the one hand, and of the suffixes that were applied in grammarians' usage, on the other hand. The graph offers a detailed overview of the development in language norms, in which the main suffix types of the diminutives, i.e. *-kin/ke(n)*, *-ge(n)*, *-je(n)*, and *-ie(n)*, are split up per individual suffix.⁶⁸

When comparing the explicit and implicit prescriptions to the language use of codifiers, a great variety of diminutive suffixes is attested, with at least seven suffixes emerging in the prescriptions over the course of four centuries.⁶⁹ Although many of these suffixes are prescribed only once, the prescribed variants *-ke*, *-gen*, and *-ien* are not used in the language practice of grammarians, where solely four different suffixes can be distinguished over time. The language practice of grammarians was thus less variable than their prescriptions on the diminutive suffix.

⁶⁸ Since the medieval suffix *-kijn* is not in use in the norms or usage investigated in this study, I will henceforth refer to the velar suffix type *-kin/ke(n)*.

⁶⁹ Note that the suffixes *-ge* and *-ie*, which occur in the usage corpus (cf. section 3.2), do not appear in language norms.

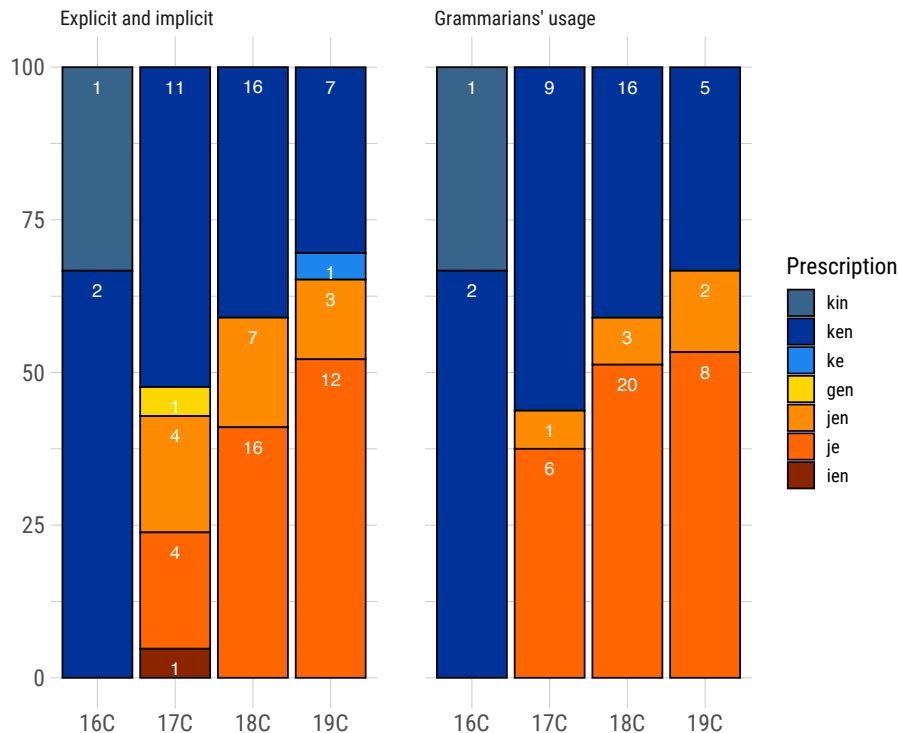


Figure 47: norms diminutive suffix per period and type of norm

As was also demonstrated in previous research, the distribution of the different suffixes within the velar suffix type shows that *-kin* was indeed the older variant of the velar suffixes *-ken* and *-ke*. Since *-kin* was prescribed and used by only one grammarian in the sixteenth century, while others already prescribed *-ken*, the suffix is clearly outgoing in sixteenth-century norms. Furthermore, when considering the deletion of the final *n* in the norms for the velar suffix type, only one codifier in the nineteenth century prescribes *-ke* alongside a variety of other diminutive suffixes, while almost all grammarians prescribing the velar suffix opt for the variant without deletion of the final *-n* (i.e. *-ken*). Language norms for the palatal diminutive suffix, on the contrary, are clearly oriented towards the modern-day variant with deletion of the final *-n* (i.e. *-je*). The preference for the suffix with deletion of *-n* is most pronounced in the language practice of grammarians, where most norm givers apply the suffix *-je*. Also in the explicit and implicit prescriptions, the variant with deletion of *-n* gradually gains more

ground. As such, the detailed overview of language norms per diminutive suffix revealed that (1) the suffix type *-kin/ke(n)* largely consists of norms for the suffix *-ken*, and (2) both *-jen* and *-je* appear as prescribed and used variants in norms, with the modern-day suffix *-je* strengthening its position over time.

Norms per period and type of norm – visualised per suffix type

While Figure 47 offered a detailed overview of the development of language norms per suffix, Figure 48 paints a general picture of the development in language norms, in which the focus shifts to the different stages in the palatalisation process. To that end, the language norms summarised above are now clustered per suffix type.

The same development in language norms is observed, with language norms changing from prescriptions for the velar *-kin/ke(n)* forms to palatal *-je(n)* suffixes, a process occurring simultaneously in the prescriptions and in grammarians' usage. Even though large amounts of variability are factored out by clustering the different suffixes, the observation that was made about the greater variability in the prescriptions still applies here. The transition suffix *-ge(n)* and the vocalised palatal suffix *-ie(n)* show up in the seventeenth century prescriptions, while they are not present in grammarians' usage.

The development of language norms, moreover, indicates that the initial shift from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes took place in the seventeenth century, since both the transition variant *-ge(n)* and the palatal forms then started appearing in the prescriptions and in the language practice of codifiers. Although prescriptions for the palatal suffix *-je(n)* increased in the following centuries, the change towards the modern-day standard suffix was not yet completed in nineteenth-century norms. It is possible that a discrepancy between the normative tradition in the Northern and the Southern Netherlands lies at the root of this unfinished change in language norms.

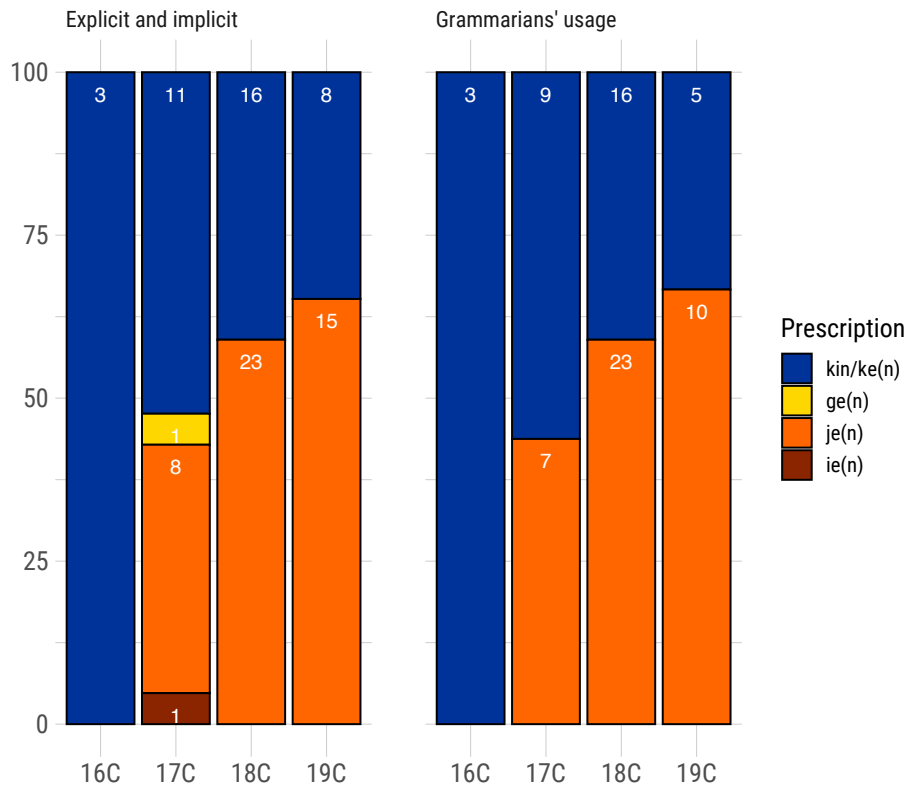


Figure 48: norms diminutive suffix per period and type of norm

Norms per period, area, and type of norm

Indeed, when splitting up the results in language norms per period, area, and type of prescription in Figure 49, a distinction between Northern and Southern norms is discerned. In Northern norms, the sixteenth-century prescriptions favouring *-kin/ke(n)* in an implicit way make room for explicit injunctions for the palatal suffix *-je(n)*. This change towards *-je(n)* is completed in prescriptions and in grammarians' usage in the nineteenth century, after a gradual increase of the variant. Interestingly, the suffix *-ge(n)* is solely prescribed once in an implicit manner, which indicates that the transition variant does not really secure a place in the normative discussions. In the Northern normative discourse, the two competing suffix types are thus clearly *-kin/-ke(n)* and *-je(n)*.

Alike in the North, Southern norm givers start off with prescriptions for the velar suffixes in the sixteenth century, but these early prescriptions are more explicit than they were in the North at the time. Injunctions for a palatal suffix also appear in the seventeenth century, yet it is only one codifier who prescribed the palatal suffix *-ie(n)* instead of *-je(n)*. The Brabantine Bolognino probably did not aim to prescribe the fully vocalised palatal suffix *-ie(n)* which corresponds to the [i] pronunciation. He presumably wanted to represent a pronunciation close to [jə] or [tʃə]. Despite this first Southern prescription for a palatal suffix in the seventeenth century, language norms for the velar *-ke(n)* remain dominant in Southern norms until the nineteenth century. While the suffix *-je(n)* also breaks through in the explicit prescriptions at the time, Southern norms remain variable with both *-ke(n)* and *-je(n)* appearing in the prescriptions and in the language practice of grammarians. When compared to Northern norms, the observed patterns in the South thus suggest that Southern norms adhered to *-kin/ke(n)* for a longer time, and as such, they experienced a delay of one century in the switch to the diminutive suffix *-je(n)*.

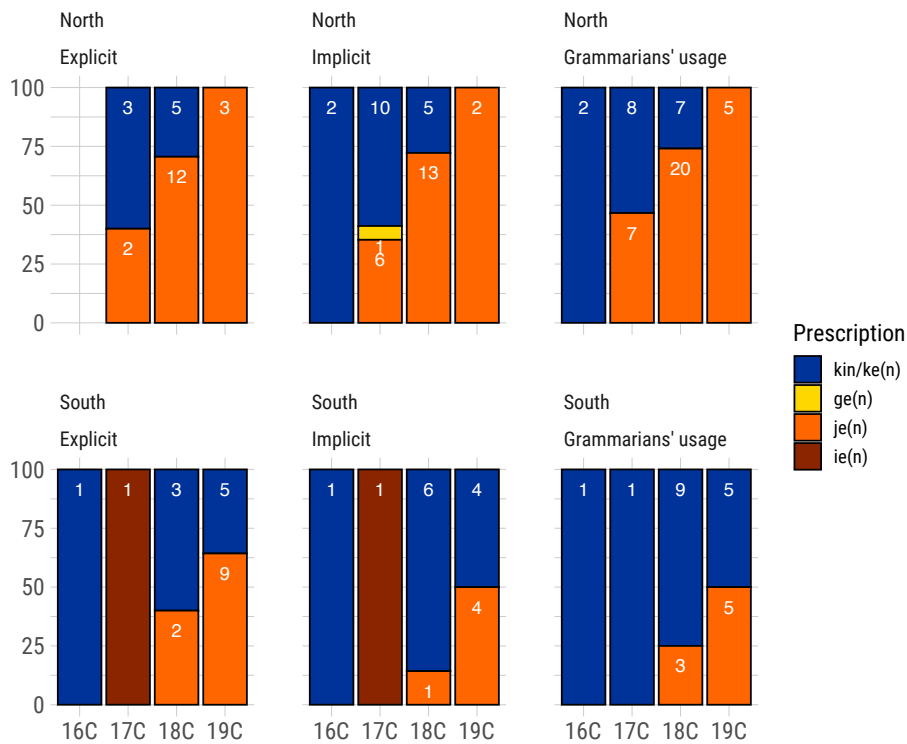


Figure 49: norms diminutive suffix per period, area, and type of norm

4.1.3 Treatment of alternative variants

The discussion of language norms revealed that variability was attested in the prescriptions on the diminutive suffix, with both prescriptions for the velar *-kin/ke(n)* suffixes and for the incoming suffix *-je(n)* appearing until the eighteenth century. In the Southern part of the language area, these variable prescriptions were formulated until the nineteenth century.

So far, the discussion of language norms revealed little inter-grammarians consistency, yet it seemed that individual norm givers were at least consistent in their prescriptions. In this section, I illustrate that this was not always the case. In 20 out of the 56 normative works that include a prescription on the diminutive suffix, both velar and palatal suffixes were prescribed. What is more, many of these codifiers did not consider the suffix types *-kin/ke(n)* and *-je(n)* as readily interchangeable under the pretext of free variation in language use. Apart from discussing the treatment of alternative variants based on the non-prescribed forms (cf. Table 18), I therefore analyse whether any linguistic or social principles govern these mixed prescriptions.

Already with the appearance of the first explicit prescriptions for *-je(n)*, the Hollandic Leupenius (1653, pp. 32-33) formulated a mixed prescription, in which he discussed the velar suffix most extensively. He also welcomes the new variant *-je(n)*, since it is in use more often, he says. Leupenius considers the palatal suffix most useful in root words ending in a velar consonant, such as /k/ or /ɣ/.

om de soetvloeyjtheit is meer in gebruik jen of tjen, dat ook soo veel uit-neeminge niet is onderworpen als ken: want daar men in berg, dwerg, balk, valk, kalk, een s tuschen ken moet invoegen/seg-gende: bergsken, dwergsken, [...], daar kan men de selve voor jen naalaa-ten/ en seggen: bergjen, dwergjen.

‘for reasons of fluency, it is more common to use *-jen* or *-tjen*, which is also not subject to as many exceptions as *-ken*: because in *berg* ‘mountain’, *dwerg* ‘dwarf’, *valk* ‘falcon’, *kalk* ‘lime’, one must insert an *s*, saying *bergsken*, *dwergsken*, while one can omit the *s* before *-jen*, saying *bergjen*, *dwergjen*’

More descriptive comments follow in the eighteenth century, when Moonen (1706, p. 119) allows for free variation in usage. A few years later, Séwel (1708, p. 28) is the first to insinuate that *-kin/ke(n)* is an older suffix, and he expresses a preference for the new palatal variant *-je(n)*. Despite the swift acceptance and adoption of *-je(n)* as the prescribed form, however, in Séwel's examples that accompany the prescription, he still deems it necessary to include the *-kin/ke(n)* forms. From these enumerations which combine the palatal and velar suffixes, it appears that the grammarian believes the velar suffix should not be used in specific words like *kam* 'comb', *mol* 'mole', and *pen* 'pen'. Although that exception suggests that a possible phonological principle underlies the prescription, this assumption is debunked when noticing that Séwel allows for the suffix *-ken* in words like *man* 'man' and *bel* 'bel', which follow the same phonological principle as *kam*, *mol* and *pen*.

Later in the eighteenth century, codifiers continue to value the velar suffix *-ken* alongside the newly established *-je(n)*. This is clearly illustrated by the prescription of Huydecoper (1730, pp. 12-13):

De uitgang der Verkleinde Naamwoorden is by de Ouden doorgaands kij(n) of kin. [...] Eindelyk verzachtte men kin tot ken. [...] dees laatste uitgang heeft een bevalligheid, en zelfs een soort van deftigheid in vergelyking van tje en tjen, die van laater tyd zyn.

'Among the old, the suffix of a diminutive is usually *-kijn* or *-kin*. The ending *-kin* was eventually palatalised into *-ken*. The latter suffix has a charm, and even a kind of decency when compared to *-tje* and *-tjen*, which are from later times.'

Without rejecting the palatal suffix, the grammarian argues that *-ken* is the traditional form, which contains a status of decency (cf. also Nobels, 2013a, pp. 212-213). This argument lingers on in the eighteenth-century prescriptions (e.g. Elzevier, 1761). Also the exceptions raised by Séwel (1708) were recycled by other codifiers who continued prescribing the archaic *-ken* next to *-je(n)*. Zeydelaar (1781, p. 143), for example, explained: *Sommige van deeze woorden schijnen den uitgang in KEN niet te willen dulden, als daar zijn Molletje, Kammetje, Pennetje, stemmetje, Straatje*. 'Some of these words do not seem to tolerate the suffix *-ken*, like *molletje* 'mole-DIM', *kammetje* 'comb-DIM', *pennetje* 'pen-DIM',

stemmetje ‘voice-DIM’, *straatje* ‘street-DIM’. Even in the national language policy, Weiland (1805) still lists *-ken* as an alternative variant for *-je(n)*.

In the Southern Netherlands, the associations of *-ken* as an archaic suffix emerge somewhat later, since the velar forms had been the only prescribed variant by codifiers like Verpoorten (1752; 1759) and Des Roches (s.d. [1761]). The palatal *-je(n)* did not show up in the prescriptions in the eighteenth century, and the Flemish-conservative duo Van Belleghem & Waterschoot (s.d. [1773], p. 63) even rejected the suffixes *-jen* and *-je* for usage. They believed these palatal forms were *oneygenlyk aen onze Taele* ‘inappropriate in our [Flemish] language’. It is only in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that Southern codifiers started prescribing the palatal suffix, next to *-ken*. Also here, not all codifiers allowed for both suffixes in every linguistic context. The Flemish Cannaert (1823, p. 27), for example, clarified:

Wy vlamingen in tegendeel, (ten minste wy Gentenaren) gebruyken de uytgangen je, tje, alleenlyk by substantieven die van zelfs in d of t eyndigen

‘We Flemings, on the contrary, (at least we Ghentians) apply the suffixes *-je, -tje* solely with nouns ending in *d* or *t*.’

Cannaert continues his prescription by raising some examples in which he uses the palatal suffix. He indeed adds the suffix *-je(n)* to root words ending in a dental consonant, such as *liedje* ‘song-DIM’, *broodje* ‘sandwich-DIM’, *praetje* ‘talk-DIM’, *straatje* ‘street-DIM’, but he also includes *baentje* ‘road-DIM’, *vaentje* ‘flag-DIM’, *kraentje* ‘tap-DIM’ as examples. The root word of these words does not end in *-d* or *-t*, which implies that Cannaert did not offer a comprehensive account of when to use the palatal suffix. Perhaps the grammarian was not fully aware of the contexts in which the suffix was actually used?

As such, when the suffix *-je(n)* became common in usage, Northern codifiers were quick to adapt their prescriptions to that form. Yet, grammarians also continued prescribing the older suffix *-ke(n)*. While some of these grammarians allowed for free variation in usage, other norm givers summed up specific diminutives in which the suffix *-ke(n)* could not – or no longer – be used. The latter group of grammarians did not give a comprehensive account of the phonological contexts in which they believed only the suffix *-je(n)* was appropriate. This suggests that

norm givers did not intend to describe phonological restrictions in the use of the diminutive suffix.

Although it is certainly possible that these norm givers rely on a system that is based on lexical(-thematic) grounds, where specific words maintain the velar suffix, as is suggested by the adherence to *-ken* in grammatical terminology (e.g. *woordeken* ‘word-DIM’ and *ledeken* ‘article-DIM’), there is another possible explanation for the mixed prescriptions. Particularly when it comes to the continued prescriptions for *-ke(n)*, which remained an alternative prescribed variant for more than two hundred years.

A detailed investigation of Table 18 indicates that, after Leupenius’ descriptive comment (cf. supra), a few grammarians in the seventeenth century prescribed only the palatal suffix *-je(n)*. These Northern prescriptions for a single variant did not last. Especially Séwel (1708) and Huydecoper (1730) seem to have triggered the mixed prescriptions of later grammarians. Given the status of decency that Huydecoper ascribed to the older suffix *-ken*, and the general authority that both grammarians enjoyed, it is presumable that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century codifiers from the North copied the prescriptions and forms of these grammarians to establish their own place in the normative tradition.

It is also possible that grammarians like Séwel, who introduced a lexical difference in the use of the diminutive suffix, were guided by spoken usage at the time. The interference with the spoken language is perhaps also the reason behind the prolonged prescriptions for *-ken* in the Southern Netherlands. After all, as the Brabantine Ballieu (1792, p. 85) illustrates:

Hert heeft ook herteken, maet, gezet, maeteken, lief, lieveken: misschien zyn’er nog eenige uytneemingen, die men doór ’t gebruyk voorder leeren zal

‘Hert also has herteken, maet, companion, maeteken, lief, lieveken; perhaps there are other exceptions, which one will learn by usage’

In any case, with many codifiers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries prescribing both suffixes, or at least tolerating the use of *-ken* as an archaic variant, norm givers were more lenient for variation in the diminutive suffix than they were for other features that were investigated in this dissertation.

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GRAMMARIAN	YEAR	AREA	PRESCR. EXPL.	PRESCR. IMPL.	PRESCR. USAGE	OTHER VARIANT	TREAT MENT
Lambrecht	1550	South	-kin	-kin	-kin	--	--
Sexagius	1576	South	--	--	--	--	--
De Heuiter	1581	North	--	-ken	-ken	--	--
Spiegel	1584	North	--	-ken	-ken	--	--
Van der Schuere	1612	North	--	-ken	-ken	--	--
De Hubert	1624	North	--	--	-ken	--	--
Van Heule	1625	North	-ken	-ken	-ken	-je -kje	reallocated reallocated
Dafforne	1627	North	--	-ken/ -jen	-ken	--	--
Ampzing	1628	North	--	--	-ken	--	--
Plemp	1632	North	-jen	--	-je/jen (2)	--	--
Van Heule	1633	North	-ken	-ken	-ken	--	--
Montanus	1635	North	--	-ken/-je	-je	--	--
Kók	1649	North	--	-ken	-ken	--	--
Van der Weyden	1651	North	--	-ken	--	--	--
Leupenius	1653	North	-ken/ -jen	-jen	-ken (6)	--	--
Bolognino	1657	South	-tien	-tien	-ken	-jen	rejected
De Gelliers	1661 [± 1640]	North	--	-ken/ -gen	-je (1)	--	--
Van Niervaart	1669 [± 1600]	North	--	-ken	--	--	--
Van Atteveld	1682	North	--	--	--	--	--
Gosens van Helderer	1683	North	--	-je	--	--	--
Winschooten	1683	North	--	-je	-je	--	--
Vollenhove	1686	North	--	--	-je (1)	--	--
Duykerius	1696	North	--	-ken/ -jen/-je	--	--	--
Francius	1699	North	--	--	-je (8)	--	--
Van Geesdalle	1700	South	--	-ken	-ken (5)	--	--
Nylöe	1703	North	--	--	-jen/-je (6)	--	--
Hilarides	1705	North	--	-je	-je	--	--
Moonen	1706	North	-ken/ -je	--	-ken	--	--
Nylöe	1707	North	--	--	-je (3)	--	--
Séwel	1708	North	-je	-ken/-je	-je	-ken	archaic
Séwel	1712	North	-je	-ken/-je	-je	-gen -ken -ke	archaic archaic rejected
E.C.P.	1713	North	--	--	-ken	--	--
Ten Kate	1723	North	-ken/ -je	-ken/ -je	-je	--	--
Huydecoper	1730	North	-ken/ -jen/-je	--	-ken (9)	-kijn -kin -ke	archaic archaic rejected
Hakvoord	1746 [1698]	North	--	-jen/-je	-je	--	--
Van Belle	1748	North	--	--	-je	--	--
Verpoorten	1752	South	--	-ken	-ken (2)	--	--
Van Belle	1755	North	--	-ken/-je	-ken	--	--
P.B.	1757	South	--	--	-ken (3)	--	--
Verpoorten	1759	South	--	-ken	-ken (3)	--	--
Des Roches	[1761]	South	-ken	--	-ken	--	--
Elzevier	1761	North	-ken/ -jen/-je	-je	-je (3)	-kyn	tolerated
De Haes	1764	North	--	--	-ken/-je	--	--

Van der Palm	1769	North	--	-je	-je	--	--
Zeydelaar	1769	North	-je	--	-je	-ken	tolerated
Zeydelaar	1772	North	--	--	-ken/-je	--	--
Van Belleghem & Waterschoot	[1773]	South	-ken	--	-ken/-jen	-jen -je	rejected rejected
Janssens	[1775]	South	--	-ken/ -jen	-ken	--	--
Van Boterdael	1776 [± 1774]	South	--	--	-je	--	--
Cramer	1777 [± 1769]	North	--	-je	-je (7)	--	--
Zeydelaar	1781	North	-ken/ -je	-ken/ -je	-ken/-je	--	--
Stéven	1784 [1714]	South	--	-ken	-ken (8)	--	--
Van Boterdael	1785	South	--	--	-je	--	--
Ballieu	1792 [1771]	South	-ken/ -jen/-je	-ken	-ken	--	--
Van Bolhuis	1793	North	--	-je	-je	-kijn -ken -ke -jen	tolerated tolerated tolerated tolerated
Wester	1797	North	--	--	-je	--	--
Van Varik	1799	North	--	-jen	-jen	--	--
Weiland	1799	North	-jen/-je	--	-je (6)	-ken -gen	archaic archaic
Siegenbeek	1804	North	--	-je	-je (6)	--	--
Weiland	1805	North	-je	--	-je	-gen -ken -jen	archaic tolerated tolerated
Schilperoort	1806	North	--	--	-je (3)	--	--
Anslijn	1814	North	-je	--	-je	--	--
Henckel	1815	South	--	-ken/-je	-ken	--	--
De Neckere	1815	South	-ken/ -jen/-je	--	-ken	--	--
Ter Bruggen	1817-1818 [1815]	South	-ken/ -je	-ken	-ken	--	--
Behaegel	1817	South	--	--	-je	--	--
Cannaert	1823	South	-ken/ -ke/ -jen/-je	--	-ken (1)	--	--
Moke	1823	South	-je	-ken/-je	-ken	-ken	archaic
Willems	1824	South	-ken/ -je	--	-jen (2)	--	--
Behaegel	[± 1825]	South	-je	-ken/-je	-je	-gen -ken	archaic tolerated
Bilderdijk	1826	North	-jen	-jen	-jen	-kijn -ken -je	archaic archaic rejected
De Simpel	[1827]	South	-je	--	-je	-ken -jen	tolerated tolerated
Behaegel	[± 1829]	South	--	-je	-je	--	--

Table 18: norms and variant treatment diminutive suffix

Conclusion

Whereas four different suffix types, each including different variants, are distinguished for forming a diminutive in the Early and Late Modern period, the metalinguistic discussions are mostly limited to the two largest suffix types, viz. the velar *-kin/ke(n)*, with *-ken* as the most frequent variant, and the palatal suffix *-je(n)*, with the modern-day standard *-je* as the main form. The transition variant *-gen* and the dialectal *-ie(n)* rarely show up in the normative discussions.

From a diachronic point of view, a preference for the palatal suffix type emerges in both parts of the language area. First in the Northern norms, where norm givers already prescribed *-je(n)* in the seventeenth century. Although some codifiers solely prescribed the palatal form, many grammarians formulated a mixed prescription with *-ke(n)*. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, these Northern grammarians settled on *-je* or *-jen* as the standard form, which eventually relegated the velar *-ke(n)* to the category of archaic suffixes. None of the codifiers ever rejected the variant for usage. The prolonged adherence to the suffix *-ken* by Northern norm givers is probably related to the distinguished status that was ascribed to the variant in the first half of the eighteenth century (cf. also Nobels, 2013a, pp. 212-213).

In the Southern Netherlands, the velar suffix *-ke(n)* was prescribed until the nineteenth century. Although the palatal *-je(n)* also showed up in the late eighteenth-century norms, the new suffix was then part of a mixed prescription with *-ke(n)*, pointing to the gradual acceptance of the palatal variant. It is only at the end of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands that Southern codifiers changed to single prescriptions for *-je(n)*. It is highly likely that this shift to the palatal suffix has been reinforced by contact with Northern norms at the time (cf. Vosters, 2011). The fact that Southern norm givers adhered to the velar suffix *-ke(n)* for a longer time is possibly related to the prevalence of the form in Southern dialects (Marynissen, 1998, p. 260; p. 267; De Schutter et al., 2005).

4.2 Language use

Like in the other empirical chapters, I supplement the interpretation of the observed data in language use with a generalised mixed-effects logistic regression analysis. As I will explain later, only a low frequency of data is obtained for the sixteenth century and the genres of administrative texts. Since the scarcity of data in these two subsets led to convergence issues of the regression model, they are not included in the statistical analysis, yet these results are still included in the discussion of the observed results, of course.

I started building the regression model from an intercept-only model, and by significance testing and comparing the AIC of the one-predictor and multiple-predictor regression models, the model with *period*, *region*, and *genre* as fixed predictors had the lowest AIC. Adding interactions to the model led to complete separation of the data in specific interactions, which again resulted in convergence problems. I therefore did not include interactions in the model building process. The fit of the fixed-effect model was compared to different mixed-effect logistic regression models. The most comprehensive model, with both *lemma* and *id* as random predictors, was significantly better than the mixed-effects regression models with only *id* as a random effect ($p = 0.001$). As such, the mixed-effects logistic regression analysis is carried out on a model with three fixed predictors and two random effects. The results of this analysis are summarised in the regression table in Figure 50, where the log odds show the estimates of the suffix *-je(n)* as incoming form.

The applied mixed-effects logistic regression model has a C-statistic of 0.99, and a 98% classification accuracy. Given these high scores for model diagnostics, the model's performance was also tested on a set of stratified training data. With similar model diagnostics, no issues with overfitting were attested.

Although the model diagnostics suggest that the model discriminates well, the difference between the values reported for the Marginal R^2 and the Conditional R^2 in Figure 50 indicates that large proportions of variation are explained by the random predictors. Together with the variance components of the random effects, the R^2 -values could imply that the use of the diminutive suffix should primarily be interpreted at the level of the individual lemma and writer.

Considering the aim of this study, it is not feasible to delve into such micro-level patterns in usage. While the results are discussed in terms of overarching sociolinguistic variables, it is important to acknowledge that these results may thus cover underlying linguistic or individual patterns in usage.

In the remainder of this section, I present the observed result in usage, and when the statistical analysis pointed to a significant effect, I also discuss the relevant effect plots.

Main effects on the occurrence of '-je(n)' as incoming form			
<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Log-Odds</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	6.67	0.26 – 13.07	0.042
PERIOD - 18th century	5.74	-1.74 – 13.22	0.132
PERIOD - 19th century	10.07	2.68 – 17.45	0.008
REGION - Zeeland	-1.69	-7.02 – 3.65	0.535
REGION - Brabant	-8.12	-16.03 – -0.22	0.044
REGION - Vlaanderen	-9.98	-18.03 – -1.94	0.015
GENRE - Ego-documents	-7.94	-14.73 – -1.15	0.022
Random Effects			
σ^2	3.29		
τ_{00} LEMMA	11.64		
τ_{00} ID	45.58		
ICC	0.95		
N LEMMA	195		
N ID	69		
Observations	425		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.382 / 0.966		

Figure 50: regression table of the main effects on the occurrence of *-je(n)* as incoming form in language use

General distribution

When considering all datapoints, so also including the results from the sixteenth century and the administrative texts, 523 valid results were obtained in the usage corpus. The general distribution of the different suffixes that were found in these results is visualised in Figure 51, which shows that nine different suffixes appeared in the *HCD*. Four of these variants – i.e. *-ke* (0.4%, n=2), *gen* (2.3%, n=12), *-ge* (0.2%, n=1), and *-ien* (3.1%, n=16) – are practically negligible in the corpus. Taken together, these forms only make up for 6% of the results. Three other suffixes are clearly minority variants. The suffixes *-kin* (7.3%, n=38), *-jen* (8.6%, n=45), and *-ie* (8.4%, n=44) are more frequent than the discussed marginal forms, yet each of these suffixes occurs in less than 10% of the usage data. This implies that the two main variants from language norms are also the competing variants in language use. Comprising 43% of all data (n=225), the standard suffix *-je*, is the dominant variant (cf. Example 5), while the velar *-ken* represents 26.8% (n=140) of the results (cf. Example 6)

- (5) *Mama ging na de suikerbakker en kocht daar frambooijsje **koekjes** [...] en zij kwa voorbij een blekslager, en jeije wou daar hebben een koffij **kannetje** en Mama kocht een **blekkendoosje***
(EGO-1750-ZE-3)

‘Mother went to the confectioner and bought raspberry biscuits_[-dim] and she passed by a tinsmith, and Jeije wanted to have a coffee pot_[-dim], and mama bought a tin box_[-dim]’

- (6) *Wij hebben ook gesien de kerke van onse **nonnekens**; de welk is gelijk een **hemelken***
(EGO-1750-VL-4)

‘We also saw the church of our nuns_[-dim], which is like a heaven_[-dim]’

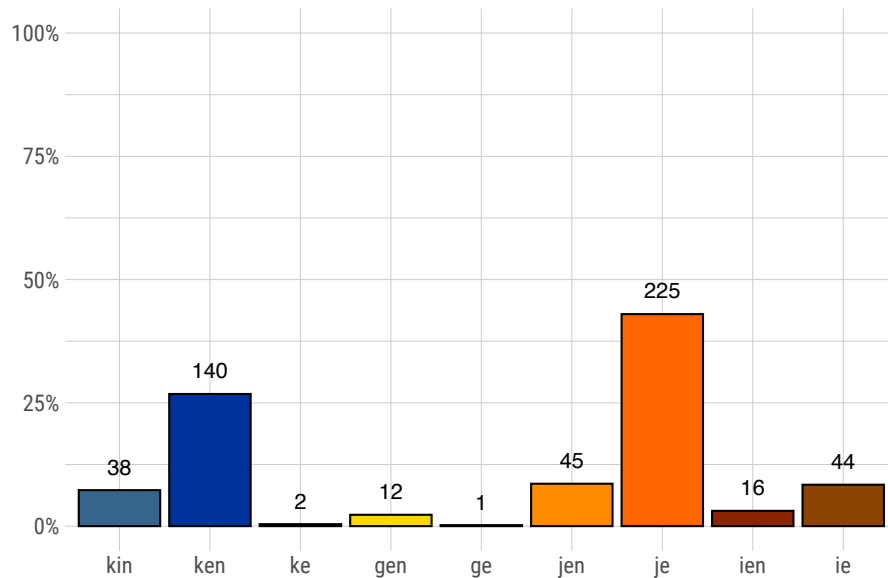


Figure 51: general distribution diminutive suffix – per suffix

Although it would be interesting to investigate the development of each of these suffixes, the low observed frequencies force me to cluster the individual suffixes into suffix types. Since the focus of this case study is on the written representation of the change from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes, I decided to cluster the suffixes – also in accordance with the development in language norms – into four categories representing the different stages of the palatalisation process. In the further course of this case study, the distinction is therefore made between the suffix types *-kin/ke(n)*, *-ge(n)*, *-je(n)*, and *-ie(n)*.

The general distribution of the clustered suffixes into four suffix types is shown in Figure 52. Here, the suffix types *-kin/ke(n)* and *-je(n)* make up the dominant groups. This is largely due to the high frequency of the variants *-ken* and *-je*. While the transition suffix type *-ge(n)* rarely occurs in language use (2.5%, $n=13$), the fully vocalised palatal *-ie(n)* is represented by 11.5% ($n=60$) of the data.

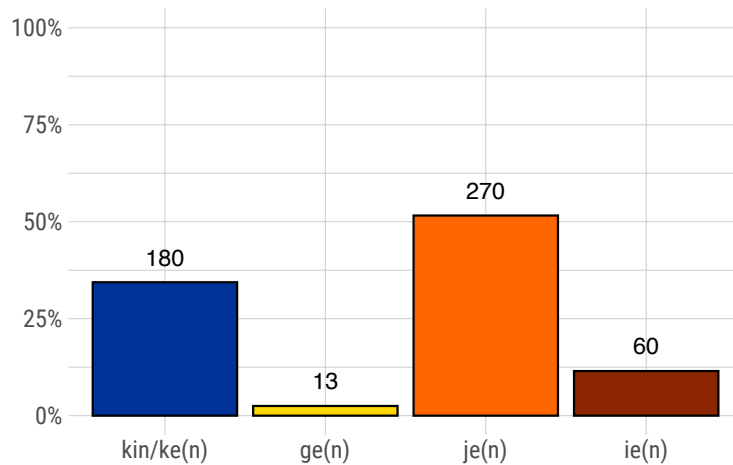
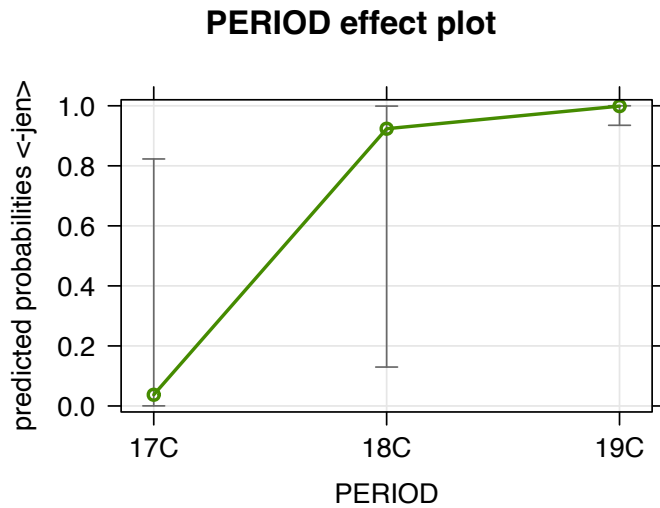


Figure 52: general distribution diminutive suffix – per suffix type

Per period

The regression table indicated that *period* was an important predictor in explaining variation in usage. It predicts a strong significant effect in the nineteenth century ($p = 0.008$) when compared to the seventeenth century as the reference level. Despite the large confidence intervals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the regression model foresees a strong incline of the suffix type *-je(n)* in the nineteenth century, as the effect plot in Figure 53 illustrates.

Figure 53: effect plot *period* - diminutive suffix

The observed frequencies per period are summarised in Figure 54. In this graph, all 523 results (i.e. with the inclusion of the sixteenth century and the administrative texts) are visualised. Note that the sixteenth century is represented only by 55 datapoints.

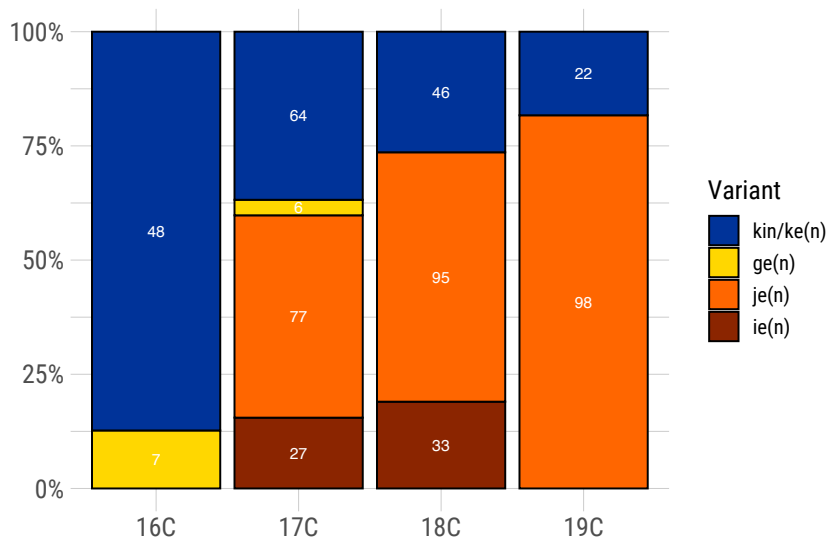


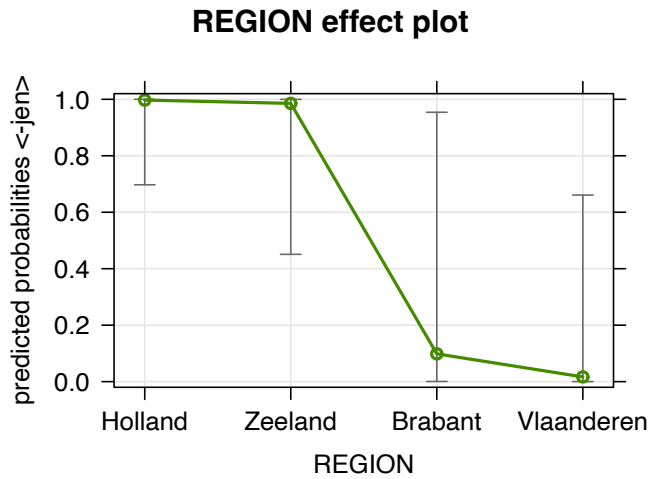
Figure 54: absolute and relative frequencies diminutive suffix per period

Despite the limited frequency of data, these results indicate that the velar forms are dominant in the sixteenth century (87.3%, n=48), while also the first observations of the palatal suffix type *-ge(n)* show up at the time (12.7%, n=7). This transition suffix enjoys only a limited life span in the *HCD*, since it is replaced by the suffix type *-je(n)* already in the seventeenth century. This suffix type also immediately seizes the dominant position of *-kin/ke(n)* at the time, which brings the velar suffix type into a further decline.

This decrease in turn leads to an incremental incline of the palatal *-je(n)*, which eventually covers 81.7% (n=98) of the diminutive suffixes in the nineteenth century. These large proportions of *-je(n)* are entirely in line with the expectations of the regression model and with the findings of previous research (e.g. Marynissen, 1998). While the innovative suffix *-je(n)* shows up in the seventeenth century for the first time, also the suffix *-ie(n)* appears. Although the latter form never reaches the proportions of the palatal *-je(n)*, the variant *-ie(n)* still grows to 19% (n=33) in the eighteenth century, before the suffix vanishes from usage in the nineteenth century.

Per region

Apart from the significant effect of *period*, the regression model suggested the importance of *region*. A significant effect is predicted for Brabant ($p = 0.01$) and Vlaanderen ($p = 0.005$) when each region is compared to Holland as the reference level. A pairwise comparison additionally reveals that the differences in suffix use are not statistically significant when comparing the two Northern regions ($p = 0.53$) or the two Southern regions ($p = 0.55$). Only the suffix use in Vlaanderen also deviates significantly from Zeeland ($p = 0.08$), with language users from Zeeland using more *-je(n)*. Although the suffix use in Brabant is not significantly different from Zeeland, such regional patterns suggest that the Southern Netherlands generally employ less *-je(n)* suffixes when compared to the Northern Netherlands. Despite the large confidence intervals in the statistical predictions, with some caution, we can therefore view the development of the diminutive suffix from a North-South perspective, as is also indicated in the effect plot in Figure 55.

Figure 55: effect plot *region* - diminutive suffix

Per period and area

When cross-tabulating the diachronic development of the suffix types per area (instead of region), it is possible to rely on a larger number of observations, which provides a more reliable record of the change. However, it is important to observe that the cross-tabulation sometimes represents only a limited number of data points, as presented in the overview in Figure 56. This is particularly the case for the sixteenth-century North, where only 8 observations account for usage. A careful interpretation of these results is therefore necessary.

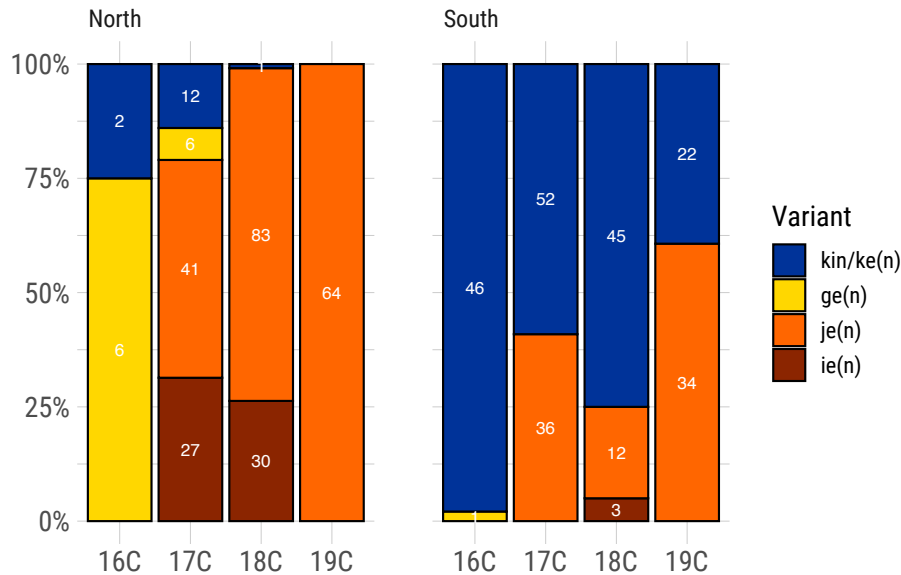


Figure 56: absolute and relative frequencies diminutive suffix per period and area

Figure 56 indicates large discrepancies between the usage patterns in the Northern and the Southern regions, both in terms of variants applied and in the development of the feature. In the North, the velar suffix type fulfils only a minority position in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which indicates that the velar variants were already outgoing at the time. The suffix *-ge(n)*, as it is used in Example 7, initially replaces the velar form, yet the proportions of *-ge(n)* also decline in the seventeenth century, where it is supplanted by the modern-day suffix type *-je(n)*. The temporary appearance of *-ge(n)* thus illustrates its status as a transition suffix in between velar and palatal forms.

(7) *ick horde eersdaeghs noch een ander vogeltgen queelen*
(PAM-1650-ZE-5)

'I recently heard another bird_[-dim] singing'

As Example 8 illustrates, the dialectal suffix *-ie(n)* also emerges in the seventeenth century (31.4%; n=27). This variant slightly decreases in the eighteenth century (26.3%; n=30), before it disappears in the nineteenth century.

- (8) *wy [...]gingen tot de schouts wat Rusten ende ondert Rusten wat eeten
droncken eens een **glasien** wyn*
(EGO-1650-HO-5)

‘we went to the magistrate’s to rest a bit, and during the rest, we ate and
drank a glass_[-dim] of wine’

The proportions of the incoming suffix *-je(n)*, conversely, incline to 72.8% in the eighteenth century. This increase of the palatal suffix led to the disappearance of the velar suffix in the eighteenth-century North. The increase of the palatal suffix type continued, which resulted in the uniform usage of *-je(n)* in the nineteenth century.

While the four suffix types thus convincingly showed up in Northern usage, the development from velar to palatal suffixes occurs less gradually in the South. The transition suffix *-gen* and the fully vocalised palatal suffix *-ie(n)* are minimally applied in the Southern linguistic landscape. This implies that only the two main suffix types are in competition here. The velar suffix type *-kin/ke(n)* remains the dominant variant from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and even increases in the latter period (from 59.1% to 75.0%). The palatal *-je(n)* that was introduced in the seventeenth century (40.9%), only breaks through in the nineteenth century (60.7%). The velar *-kin/ke(n)*, which had vanished from Northern usage at the time, is still considerably used in the nineteenth-century South (39.3%; n=22).

Although the same change from velar to palatal forms thus occurs in the North and the South, the palatal suffix *-je(n)* does not reach ground easily in the Southern Netherlands. Perhaps the genre differences will shed more light on these discrepancies in the two parts of the language area.

Per genre and period – per genre and area

In terms of *genre*, the regression model indicates a significant effect of ego-documents when the genre is compared to the pamphlets as a reference level ($p = 0.02$). The effect plot in Figure 57 also shows larger confidence intervals for the ego-documents, which possibly indicates higher variability in suffix use, and in overall, a lower likelihood of *-je(n)* suffixes in the ego-documents.

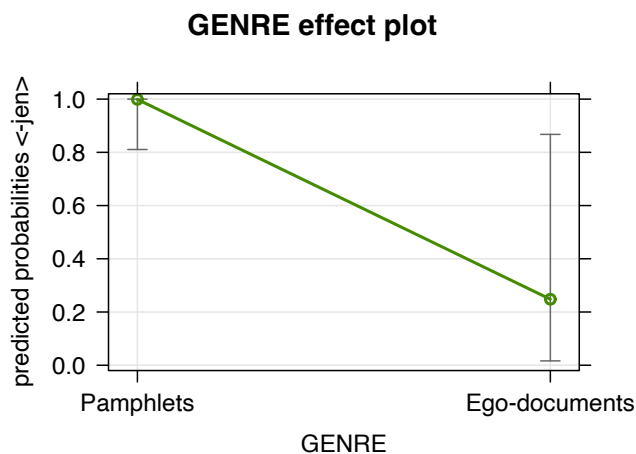


Figure 57: effect plot *genre* - diminutive suffix

For the cross-tabulation of genre with other sociolinguistic factors (viz. period and area), the observed data from the sixteenth century and the administrative texts are also included. A cross-tabulation of genre with both period and area is not discussed here due the scarcity of data points.

Figure 58 shows that the incoming suffix type *-je(n)* emerges across all genres in the seventeenth century. The strongest appearance of the palatal suffix is attested in the pamphlets, where the form immediately seizes a majority position. Also in the eighteenth century, when the proportion of the incoming variant increases across all genres, the suffix type *-je(n)* reaches up to 91.7% ($n=33$) in the pamphlets, suggesting that these printed texts were most progressive in adopting the palatal suffix. In the nineteenth century, when *-je(n)* gains even more ground in the administrative texts (100%, $n=19$) and the ego-documents (87.7%, $n=57$), a decline of the form is observed in the pamphlets

(61.1%, n=22). This sudden downturn of the form is related to differences in Northern and Southern usage, as I will explain later.

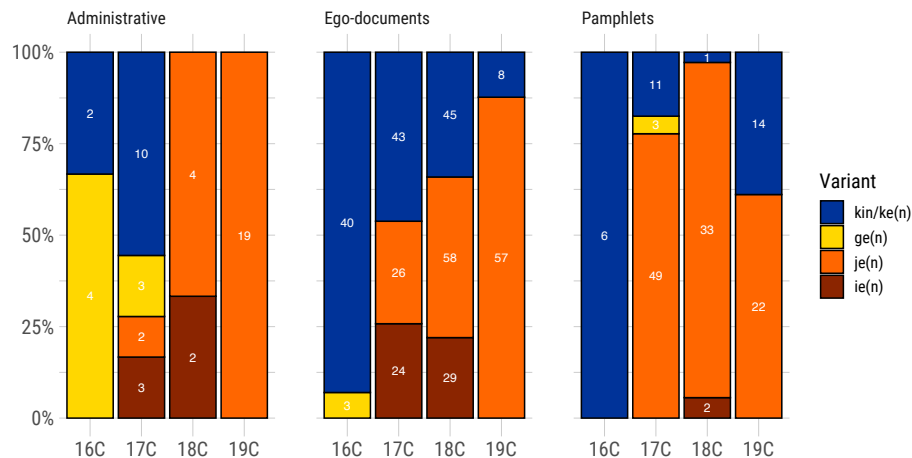


Figure 58: absolute and relative frequencies diminutive suffix per period and genre

The rise of the palatal *-jen* is also accompanied by the decrease of the velar *-kin/ke(n)*. The ego-documents, for example, show a gradual decline of the velar suffix from the seventeenth century onwards. In the other genres, the decline is more abrupt, with the form suddenly disappearing from the eighteenth-century administrative texts and taking up only a minority position in the pamphlets. It is therefore clear that *-kin/ke(n)* hardly mattered anymore in the printed and formal genres in the eighteenth century. However, it is only in the administrative texts that the incoming variant *-je(n)* achieves uniformity. The ego-documents and pamphlets remain variable in their use of the diminutive suffix. Nonetheless, this observation can also be explained by differences in the North and the South of the language area.

The fully vocalised palatal suffix *-ie(n)* is particularly represented in the handwritten genres from the Northern Netherlands (cf. also Figure 59). Its strong presence in the ego-documents is not surprising, given its status as a dialectal variant. The two occurrences of the form in the pamphlets are odd, though. These instances appear in one Northern pamphlet (i.e. PAM-1750-ZE-2). A closer inspection of the document revealed that the suffix was used in a spoken

dialogue taking place in a North-Hollandic variety, which emphasises the local and oral character of the suffix even more.

I already hinted at a difference in suffix use in the North and the South of the language area. Figure 59 now illustrates that this diverging suffix use is apparent across all genres. While the palatal variant is the dominant form in the North, the velar suffix type *-kin/ke(n)* is strongly adhered to in Southern usage. Only the Southern pamphlets appear more progressive, where the palatal suffix type *-je(n)* reaches similar proportions as in Northern usage (67.4%, n=58).

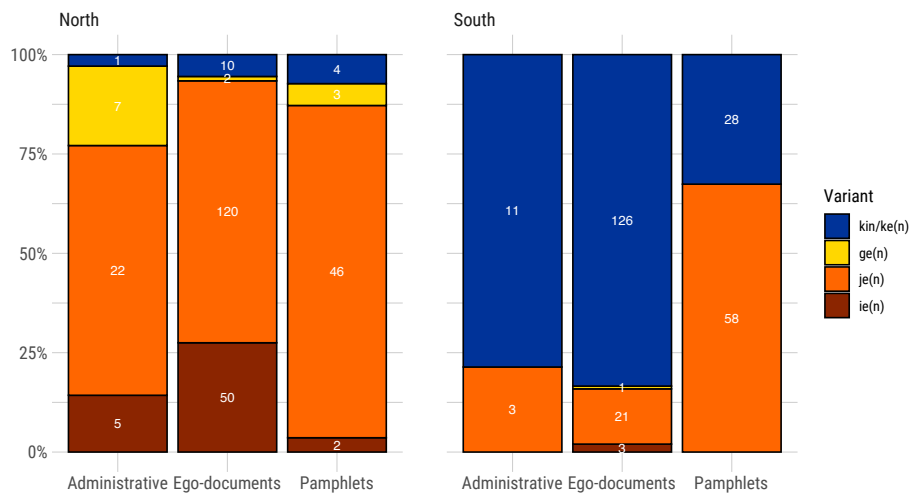


Figure 59: absolute and relative frequencies per area and genre

Conclusion

In this part of the chapter, I investigated the change from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes in language use. Unlike in language norms, where two suffix types prevailed in the prescriptions, the four different stages in the palatalisation process were attested in usage. While *-kin/ke(n)* and *-je(n)* were the main suffix types in Northern and Southern usage, other forms were also observed. The variant *-ge(n)* played only a small role in this corpus and can be seen as the transition variant in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (cf. Marynissen, 1998). Since different variants of the diminutive suffix were in use at the time, these findings align with Nobels (2013a, 2013b) in that the change to *-je(n)* was

still ongoing in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage. The process of change is completed in the nineteenth century, and only in Northern usage, where the suffix *-je(n)* eradicates the use of both *-kin/ke(n)* and *-ie(n)*.

In the Southern part of the language area, the change to the palatal suffix is more challenging, and takes place at a slower pace. The palatal *-je(n)* becomes dominant only in nineteenth-century usage, where it still exists next to the velar *-kin/ke(n)*. The adherence to the velar suffix in the Southern Netherlands contrasts with the results of Marynissen (1998), who observed a breakthrough of the suffix *-je(n)* in two specific toponyms in the eighteenth century. This study, however, offers a broader view on the development of the diminutive suffix, and does not consider the palatalisation process of individual lemmas. As such, it is likely that specific lemmas were more prone to palatalisation in writing (cf. *ranef lemma*), whereas in overall, Southern usage still adhered to the velar suffix in the eighteenth century. After all, as Marynissen (1998, p. 260) also remarked, the variant *-ke(n)* was preserved in the Southern dialects at the time (cf. also De Schutter et al., 2005). The prevalence of the form in the spoken language may thus also play a role in the adherence to the velar suffix in written usage. Since Southern norm gives continued prescribing *-ke(n)* until nineteenth century (cf. section 4.1.2), it is important to also consider the possibility of prescriptivism intervening in the change.

4.3 Prescriptive influence

In the last section of this chapter, I turn to the relationship between language norms and usage in the development of the diminutive suffix. I determine the chronology of language change by comparing developments in norms and usage. For the visualisation of the change per year in Figure 60 and Figure 61, the observed datapoints are projected onto an underlying numerical scale (1-4) with equal distance between the different variants of the diminutive suffix.

Chronology of language change

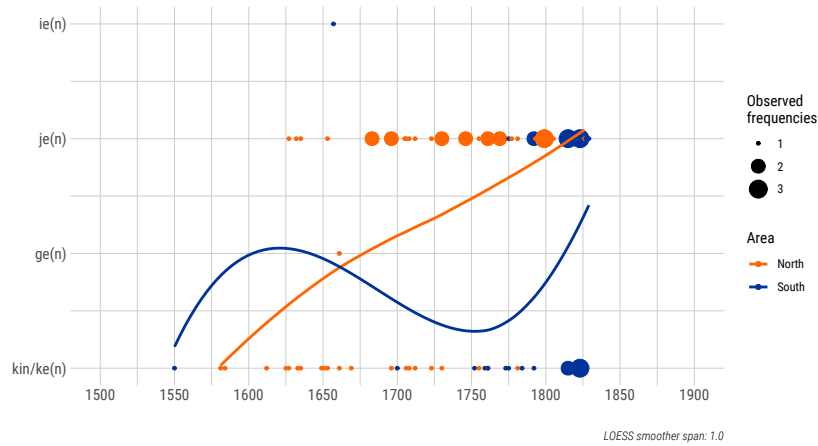


Figure 60: prescriptions diminutive suffix per year and area

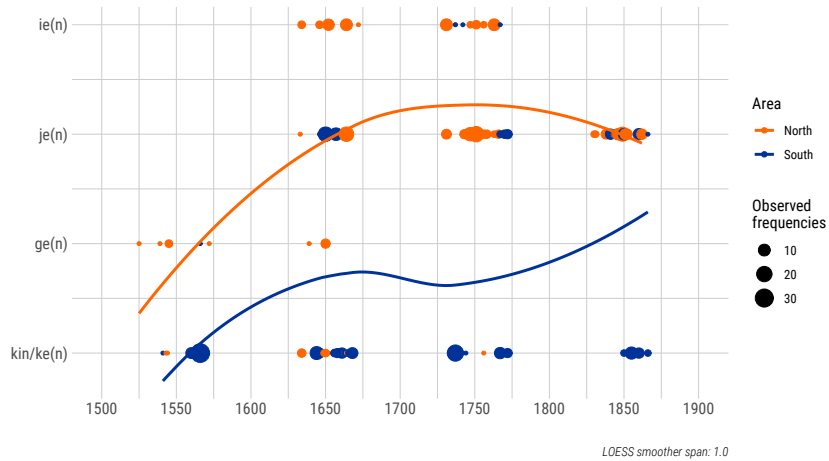


Figure 61: language use diminutive suffix per year and area

As could be expected from the discussion of norms and usage, the comparison of the changes indicates that norms and usage were evolving in the same direction. Northern norms show ample variability, but also a change that progresses towards *-je(n)*. Northern usage certainly illustrates a gradual shift from *-kin/ke(n)* to *-je(n)*, via *-ge(n)*. In the South, the same development is attested, yet as was already explained before, the change occurs slower in this part of the

language area since language norms and usage only show a convincing change to *-je(n)* in the nineteenth century.

A closer look at the earliest prescriptions, which are all centred around *-kin/ke(n)*, reveals that language norms were more conservative than usage. Especially Northern language use is already changing to *-ge(n)* and *-je(n)*, while Northern grammarians were prescribing the velar forms. In the seventeenth century, these codifiers formulate mixed prescriptions, which suggests that norm givers at least partly conceded to the change that was initiated in usage. With norms remaining variable until the nineteenth century, and Northern usage increasingly changing to *-je(n)*, the chronology of change underpins that those grammarians responded to the change that was taking place in usage.

Although a Southern codifier was the first to formulate a prescription on the diminutive suffix, the normative discussions are a lot less prevalent here than in the North of the language area. Based on the available prescriptions, it appears that most codifiers were conservative in prescribing the velar *-kin/ke(n)* until the nineteenth century. Different from the North, however, language use also adheres to the velar suffix. The beginning of a change towards *-je(n)* is attested in the seventeenth century. Since this change occurred in usage when Southern codifiers still prescribed *-kin/ke(n)*, an influence of prescriptions triggering this change is ruled out. A slight change back to the velar suffix is observed in usage in the middle of the eighteenth century. This sudden return to *-kin/ke(n)* is possibly provoked 'from above', yet it is certainly not the solid tradition of eighteenth-century prescriptions that pushed the change. When multiple grammarians established a tradition of *-kin/ke(n)* prescriptions in the eighteenth century, Southern usage already changed back to the palatal forms. This indicates that the resurgence of the velar suffix only had a short lifespan. Nonetheless, norms and usage align in the nineteenth century, which presents other possibilities for an influence of prescriptivism, both in the North and in the South of the language area.

For this grammatical feature, the interventions of prescriptivism mostly post-dated the changes in usage. This does not need to surprise, since the change from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes is a process that was initiated in spoken usage, and as such, the change was not imposed 'from above'. Although prescriptivism did thus not initiate the change towards *-je(n)*, other possibilities

of prescriptive interference are discerned when evaluating the chronology of language change. These instances are summed up below and are then discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

- (1) Although Northern norms appear to lag on the change in usage, the first attestations of *-je(n)* in the second half of the seventeenth century are preceded by prescriptions for the variant.
- (2) An increase of the suffix *-je(n)* is observed in Northern usage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Since multiple prescriptions for the incoming variant emerged in the North at the time, an influence of prescriptivism is possible.
- (3) In the nineteenth-century North, the final velar forms and the suffix *-ie(n)* disappear from usage, which results in the completion of the change to *-je(n)*. The uniformity in usage is preceded by uniform prescriptions for the palatal suffix.
- (4) Southern usage shows a temporary return to *-kin/ke(n)* in the eighteenth century. This increase of the velar suffix follows on Southern prescriptions for the variant.
- (5) Prescriptions for the palatal *-je(n)* precede a strong increase of the suffix in nineteenth-century Southern usage.

5 Discussion

To evaluate whether prescriptivism interfered in the change from velar to palatal diminutive suffixes, I commence with **option 1** in the seventeenth century. It is in this period that language use in the Northern and the Southern Netherlands started changing to the variant *-je(n)*. This change towards the palatal suffix also took place in Northern norms, where the incoming suffix was attested slightly sooner than in language use. Although this chronology of change allows for an impact of prescriptivism, it is not likely that codifiers interfered in the change in usage. After all, the palatal representations with *-ge(n)* were already applied by language users at the time that norms were still adhering to the velar suffix *-kin/ke(n)*. As can be expected with a change that originates in the spoken language, it is most likely that the representation of the suffix *-je(n)* was first attested in usage before it was established as a codified norm. The fact that a grammarian like Leupenius (1653) admitted that the suffix *-je(n)* was gaining

ground in seventeenth-century usage (cf. section 4.1.3) indicates that norm givers captured this change soon after it emerged in usage.

The same reasoning probably stands for the South, where written usage also showed indications of palatalisation before (Northern) codifiers prescribed the suffix *-je(n)*. An influence of Northern prescriptions for *-je(n)* would be unlikely in the South, anyway. Especially since famous grammarians of the seventeenth century claimed that Brabant had the best use in terms of diminutive suffixes. Van Heule (1625, p. 117) argues:

In het verkleynen der woorden valt ook groote verscheydenheyt / als tot Exempel / men zegt in Hollant / Het mannetje, Het wijffe, Het diertje, in Vlaender zouden zeggen Het mannekjen, Het wijfkjen, Het dierkjen, de Brabanders hebben het beste gebruyk in het verkleynen der woorden / zeggende Het manneken, Het wijfken, Het dierken

'In the diminution of words, there is also great variation. For example, in Holland, one says *het mannetje, het wijffe, het diertje*, while in Vlaanderen one would say *het mannekjen, het wijfkjen, het dierkjen*. The Brabantians have the best usage in the diminution of words, saying *het manneken, het wijfken, het dierken*'

While codified norms thus appear to lag on usage in the beginning of the change, at a later stage of the change, another possibility of prescriptive interference arises. This is investigated in **option 2**, where I aim to ascertain whether the increase of *-je(n)* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage is related to interventions 'from above'. After the initial change towards the palatal suffix, Northern usage increasingly uses the suffix *-je(n)* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This rise in the use of the variant is preceded by prescriptions for the form, which may indicate that grammarians accelerated the change in usage. However, I will argue that norm givers were probably not successful in influencing this ongoing shift. Not in the least because the codifiers were not uniformly propagating the variant *-je(n)* at the time. They rather formulated mixed prescriptions with an inconsistent argumentation as to when the palatal and velar suffixes should be used (cf. section 4.1.3). With such varying injunctions, an impact of prescriptivism on usage is less likely. Moreover, with the increase of the suffix *-je(n)* showing across all genres, ranging from printed pamphlets to handwritten ego-documents, we are probably observing the general process of change, with the palatal suffixes gradually being adopted by

language users. With an increasing number of language users applying the suffix *-je(n)* in the early stages of the change, the form also spreads more easily within the language community without interference ‘from above’.

Furthermore, the fact that codifiers propagated mixed prescriptions, while the velar form was strongly declining in Northern usage, indicates that the prescriptions for the velar suffix were not successful either. Even though velar suffixes practically disappeared from Northern usage in the eighteenth century, codifiers continued prescribing *-ken*, either as an alternative variant or as the ‘distinguished’ suffix, like Huydecoper (1730) called the velar form. Based on the corpus data in this dissertation, these prescriptive attempts of keeping the velar variant alive had little or no success. As opposed to the strong decline of *-kin/ke(n)* in this corpus of (upper-)middle-class writers, Nobels (2013a, p. 207) uncovered that the velar suffix was still applied as a main variant by upper-class writers in the seventeenth century. This discrepancy in social stratification suggests that the broader public possibly considered the velar suffix already too archaic, while the distinguished status that was ascribed to *-ken* particularly affected high-class writers. Such an effect of the social significance of the variant would also explain why eighteenth-century norm givers continued prescribing and using *-ken* as an alternative variant, even when the form had disappeared from other, non-elite genres in the North.

In the nineteenth century, eventually, the last *-kin/ke(n)* suffixes and the dialectal *-ie(n)* forms disappeared from usage, which resulted in a complete change to *-je(n)* in the North. In **option 3**, I evaluate whether the uniform prescriptions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries succeeded in creating uniformity. In this case, it is important to note that the change towards the suffix *-je(n)* was already far progressed in the eighteenth century, with the palatal suffix representing 72.8% of the diminutive suffixes in Northern usage. If prescriptivism was successful in accelerating this change, norm givers did thus no more than giving the final push towards the incoming variant. Considering the socio-historical context in which uniformity was achieved, prescriptivism may have aided in speeding up this change in usage. With the standard language ideology emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century, the idea of homogeneity in language was increasingly spread to the public. It is thus possible that the awareness of a standard language and the broadening of the target audience of normative works convinced the laggards to change to the prescribed

form. The national language policy in the early nineteenth century presumably played the most important role in creating uniformity in Northern language use.

In contrast to the gradual change to the palatal suffix in the North, the Southern Netherlands show a somewhat different development. Although Southern usage also started to shift to the palatal *-je(n)* in the seventeenth century (cf. option 1), language users in the South adhered to the velar *-kin/ke(n)* for a longer time. In the eighteenth century, a slight increase of the older *-kin/ke(n)* is even observed in usage. As **option 4**, I therefore determine whether the *-kin/ke(n)* prescriptions caused this increase of the variant in usage. The investigation of the prescriptions indicates that Southern norms prior to the eighteenth century were limited to one explicit comment in favour of the older suffix *-kin*. Also in the first half of the eighteenth century, only one implicit prescription appeared in the South. It is thus not very likely that these prescriptions caused an increase of the suffix *-ke(n)* in the middle of the eighteenth century. It is also possible that the mixed prescriptions that appeared in the eighteenth-century North affected language use in the South, of course. With a prominent eighteenth-century codifier ascribing a distinguished status to the velar suffix, we should acknowledge that these Northern norms possibly reinforced the use of *-ke(n)* in the South.

Nonetheless, it is perhaps more likely that the metalinguistic association of *-ke(n)* as a suffix from Brabant resulted in a stronger awareness of the form among Southern language users. The fact that the velar suffix flared up exactly in the eighteenth century – in the period of nation building and identity construction – strengthens the assumption that the socio-historical context provoked the stronger adoption of forms that were prevalent in Southern dialects, and thus underpinned the Southern identity that was being established. After all, also in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Southern codifiers increasingly associated the palatal suffix *-je* with Hollandic usage (e.g. Van Belleghem & Waterschoot, s.d. [1773]; Ter Bruggen, 1817-1818; Cannaert, 1823). Since these stigmatising injunctions post-date the increase of the velar suffix, they certainly did not cause the return to *-ke(n)* in usage. Yet, the existence of these metalinguistic comments indicates that variation within this grammatical feature was possibly applied to express one's identity in the period of nation building, which may in turn explain the temporary return of the velar suffix in the eighteenth century.

The final possibility of prescriptive interference discusses the sudden increase of *-je(n)* in the nineteenth century, where the palatal form becomes dominant in Southern usage. In **option 5**, I aim to find out whether the prescriptions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries invoked this change towards the palatal *-je(n)*. It is therefore important to recall that the suffix *-je(n)* was already applied in Southern usage before the nineteenth century. The variant only experienced a temporary relapse in the eighteenth century in favour of *-kin/ke(n)*. Nineteenth-century prescriptivism may thus solely have enabled the resumption of the change to *-je(n)* in the South. The strong incline of the suffix *-je(n)* in nineteenth-century usage indeed suggests that the increase may have been facilitated by forces ‘from above’. In fact, the palatal suffix takes up a dominant position only in the pamphlets, while the velar suffix is the majority variant in the handwritten genres in the South. When looking at the development of the prescriptions, Southern codifiers in the nineteenth century increasingly allowed for the palatal *-je(n)* next to the velar *-ke(n)*. Towards the end of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the palatal suffix is even the only prescribed variant by Southern codifiers. With Northern norms and language practices prevailing in the Southern territories at the time, it is most likely that contact with Northerners who employed the suffix *-je(n)* made Southern codifiers adopt the palatal suffix. Later in the nineteenth century, this influence probably reached Southern language users. It is thus presumably the political reunification of the Northern and the Southern Netherlands that caused a shift in Southern norms, and consequently had a linguistic impact on Southern language use (cf. Vosters et al., 2014).

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated the influence of prescriptivism on the use of the diminutive suffixes. Before arriving at a general conclusion on the success of these prescriptive interventions, I refer to the hypotheses that were formulated for each of the suffix types that represent the different stages of the palatalisation process.

As was expected in hypothesis 1, the velar suffix type *-kijn/kin/ke(n)* made up the oldest category of suffixes and was omnipresent in norms and usage in the early periods. This suffix type also disappeared from Northern usage in the

eighteenth century and was maintained for a longer time in the South. In fact, the variant was still a main variant here in nineteenth-century usage. Although I anticipated a possible linguistic effect of the distinguished social meaning that some codifiers ascribed to the form, this was not the case. No linguistic influence of prescriptivism for the velar suffix was uncovered in this case study.

The suffix *-ge(n)* was barely attested in the norms or in the *HCD*, yet the variant clearly showed itself as a transition suffix, which disappeared in favour of *-je(n)* in the eighteenth century. As such, hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 3 comprised the development of the suffix type *-je(n)*. Although I presumed the variant would emerge in Northern writings before it appeared in Southern usage, the results indicated that the suffix *-je(n)* showed up in both areas in the seventeenth century. The gradual increase of the form indeed led to higher frequencies of *-je(n)* in the eighteenth-century North. However, this change towards the modern-day variant was not related to an influence 'from above'. Prescriptivism appeared successful only in the nineteenth century, where codified norms possibly succeeded in speeding up a change in Southern usage, and in creating uniformity in Northern usage.

The final suffix type *-ie(n)* was the subject of hypothesis 4. As expected, this fully vocalised palatal suffix particularly characterised Northern ego-documents, although it also appeared in other genres, and a few instances were even attested in Southern usage. The variant was most present in the seventeenth century, as I presumed. This dialectal suffix disappeared from usage in the nineteenth century, probably because of prescriptive interventions.

This case study showed that the change to palatal diminutive suffixes in writing is not a process that was initiated 'from above'. The fact that early norm givers like Leupenius (1653) described the change that they observed in usage indicates that codifiers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries noticed that usage was changing, yet their injunctions were formulated only after the fact. With Northern usage gradually shifting to the suffix *-je(n)*, norm givers acted more conservatively. Codifiers propagated mixed prescriptions, sometimes with complex reasoning as to which suffix to use when. Besides prescribing the palatal suffix, grammarians thus also adhered to the velar suffix that did not stand its ground in Northern usage. Northern norms and usage therefore appear entirely

detached from each other in the eighteenth century, and prescriptive attempts were thus not successful in influencing usage. However, the persistence of the archaic suffix *-ke(n)* in the prescriptions of Northern codifiers may also point to the incorporation of the form in a discourse tradition, with the velar diminutive suffix recurring in the prescriptions of Northern codifiers, while the form is not in use (anymore) outside of that specific discourse (cf. Kabatek et al, 2010; Kabatek, 2015, 2018).

It is only in the nineteenth century that prescriptivism potentially achieved linguistic success. While historical codifiers first lagged on the grammatical change that was occurring in usage, or simply reflected the ongoing change without exerting an impact on usage, the emergence of the standard language ideology raised new opportunities for prescriptive influence. The awareness of one correct form of language in the standard language ideology led to more consistent prescriptions which were distributed into the entire language community. This implies that prescriptivism was possibly influential only in one highly specific socio-historical context. That is in the period of nation building, when codified norms were strongly institutionalised by forces 'from above', with the national language policy in the early nineteenth century as the culmination of this process. However, even in this specific context, the linguistic success of prescriptivism remains ambiguous. If prescriptivism did influence language use, its effect was limited to accelerating a change that was already well underway.