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

Lismont, E.

Chapter 10 – Discussion

1 Introduction

As the five case studies in this dissertation indicate, prescriptive success can take many forms, with influences ranging from the implementation of a new variant to the deceleration of a form that was widely applied in usage. Since these varying appearances were all denoted as (stronger or weaker) influences of prescriptivism, I now synthesise the observed effects into an overarching account of how prescriptivism can impact language change.

This account of prescriptive success is presented in different scenarios. The reasoning behind these scenarios is that each type of influence is often linked to a particular stage within the change, occurs in unique socio-historical contexts, involves specific discursive approaches, and influences certain groups of language users or genres. These are all principles governing the constraints of a particular type of influence. In total, eight (sub)scenarios are defined, which are categorised into five umbrella types of prescriptive influence. In addition to distinguishing different effects of prescriptivism, I thus take a typological perspective on my research findings, uncovering the social and structural properties underlying the different successes of prescriptivism.

For defining these scenarios, I depart from the factors that previous studies suggest may influence the success of prescriptivism (cf. Chapter 2). First, I identify the possible effects of prescriptivism based on two determinants that Rutten & Vosters (2021) proposed. I consider (1) the chronology of language change and (2) whether codifiers prescribed progressive or conservative norms, to discern different effects of prescriptivism along the S-curve of language change (cf. Anderwald, 2012). While the chronology of change reveals at what stage of the change prescriptivism influenced usage, the prescribed variants indicate whether norm givers successfully accelerated or slowed down a change in usage.

Next to delineating the effect of prescriptivism, I further define the scenarios by considering the discursive approaches that are employed by codifiers. I do this as Moschonas (2022, p. 33) hypothesised that strict prescriptions in the form of correctives proper are perhaps more influential than permissives. I thus determine whether certain discursive approaches lead to the observed effect in usage. Furthermore, based on the possible determinants of Rutten & Vosters (2021) – i.e. the nature of the variable, the complexity of the feature, and its metalinguistic salience – I ascertain which features are susceptible to the described effect. Defining what type of feature is prone to a specific influence of prescriptivism is possible because these three factors (i.e. nature, complexity, metalinguistic salience) formed the basis for the selection of features investigated in this dissertation (cf. Chapter 4). And lastly, I determine the reach of the observed effect – comprising the period, regions, and genres that are affected – and the duration of the effect. These aspects are based on the work of scholars like McLelland (2014), Vosters et al. (2014), Anderwald (e.g. 2016, 2019), and Rutten & Vosters (2021), who showed that prescriptive influence often occurs in specific socio-historical contexts (Vosters et al., 2014; Rutten & Vosters, 2021), is temporary, and restricted to specific genres or language users (McLelland, 2014; Anderwald, 2016, 2019). As such, the eight (sub)scenarios of prescriptive influence are defined in terms of the stage on the S-curve, the discursive approaches, the features susceptible to the described type of influence, the reach of the prescriptive effect, and the duration of the effect.

Although each of the scenarios of prescriptive influence is considered self-contained, there is some overlap between them in the sense that specific discursive approaches, for example, show up in more than one scenario but lead to a different outcome. Furthermore, the scenarios do not exist in isolation, implying that the occurrence of one scenario does not necessarily exclude the possibility of other scenarios of prescriptive influence. In fact, as will be illustrated later, different scenarios may form subsequent stages of prescriptive influence in the process of language change.

It is important to remark that this discussion of scenarios is by no means an exhaustive list of all the influences prescriptivism can have. It is likely that other case studies investigating different contexts or materials result in other or additional scenarios of prescriptive influence. In line with this, note that the scenarios described here derive from the case studies that were investigated in

this dissertation. For a few scenarios, I supplement my findings with those from recent historical-sociolinguistic research exploring prescriptive influence in the Dutch language area. The scenarios presented in this chapter are therefore restricted to the success of prescriptivism in the context of Dutch standardisation. The scenarios do not aspire to make claims or generalisations about prescriptive interference in other settings. Nonetheless, with these scenarios of prescriptive influence, I explicitly call for the facilitation of comparative sociolinguistic research in other contexts and languages.

In the remaining of this chapter, the eight (sub)scenarios are discussed and illustrated with examples from the relevant case studies. After this detailed presentation, the main features of each scenario are summarised in an overview of the discussed scenarios of prescriptive influence. This summary can be found at the end of this chapter.

Scenarios of prescriptive influence

1. Triggering a change

In the context of invariability in usage, where only variant A is applied, codifiers initiate the dissemination of a new variant B. Their prescriptive efforts for the adoption of this variant B subsequently trigger language users in deliberately implementing the new form.

2. Accelerating an ongoing change

In instances of dynamic variability between (an outgoing) variant A and (an incoming) variant B, codifiers accelerate the transition towards variant B. The nuances of this scenario depend on the stage of the change in usage. I differentiate between **(a) diffusing the innovation**, and **(b) eradicating remaining variability**.

3. Slowing down an ongoing change

Also in the case of dynamic variability between (an outgoing) variant A and (an incoming) variant B, codifiers seek to halt the increase of variant B. Depending on their discursive approaches, norm givers aim for **(a) slowing down undesired innovations**, or **(b) reviving archaic usage**.

4. Discursive influence

The impact of codifiers is not always (immediately) apparent in language use. Prescriptive influence can be confined to the discursive level, with norm givers **(a) forming a discourse community**, and **(b) spreading social meanings**.

5. No probable influence

More often than not, prescriptivism does not have an effect on language use. Despite the prescriptive interventions, the desired impact on usage remains elusive.

2 Scenario 1: Triggering a change

The scenario in which norm givers initiate new changes, with innovative linguistic items finding their way to usage in a 'from above' fashion, is sometimes considered the default effect of prescriptivism. The case studies in this dissertation, however, confirm the findings of previous research (e.g. the contributions in Rutten et al., 2014a; Anderwald, 2016; Krogull, 2018) in that grammarians rarely have an impact on language use in the *actuation* stage of language change (cf. Weinreich et al., 1968, p. 186; Rutten & Vosters, 2021, p. 79). In fact, only in an exceptional case can norm givers be seen as innovators promoting new forms or constructions that were not or barely in use before.

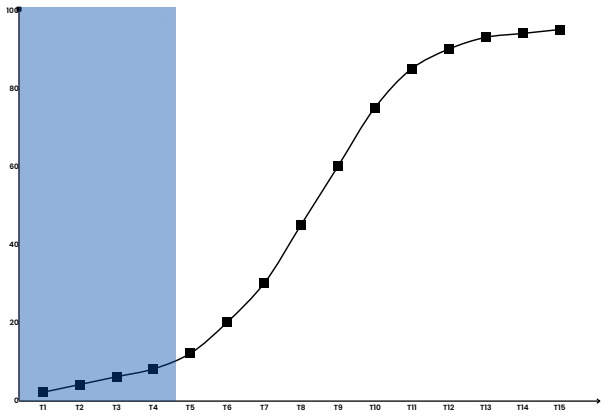

Figure 85: position of scenario 1 on the S-curve of language change

Although this scenario is not very common, I have found possible evidence of grammarians triggering a change at the incipient stage of the S-curve (cf. Figure 85). This appears to be true for two features that were investigated in this dissertation. Both the initial adoption of the spelling <aa> in closed syllables and the implementation of the case distinction between the grammatical pronouns *hen* and *hun* were attributed to prescriptive influence. In the case of the spelling feature, the triggering effect of prescriptivism is situated in disseminating the new variant <aa> into the language community before it is common in usage, while the actuating effect of prescriptivism is different for the grammatical feature. Here, prescriptivism does not introduce new variants, but it activates a case distinction that was not common in usage. A distinction based on case was

not new, of course. Mother-tongue language users naturally differentiate between forms based on case, for example, between the nominative and accusative case. Yet, the exact case distinction between the *hen* and *hun* was thus not operationalised in usage prior to the codification.

While norm givers introduced the case distinction between *hen* and *hun* in language use, they are not always the innovators of a change. In fact, it is quite rare that norm givers successfully introduce a completely new linguistic element in usage. However, even when they are not the very first ones to employ an innovation, they can still have initiated a change in the broader language community. The theoretical concept of *social networks* is therefore particularly relevant for explaining how codifiers may have started such a change in language use. In applying the theoretical principles of social networks to this scenario of prescriptive influence, I rely on the foundational work on social network structures of Granovetter (1973) and Milroy & Milroy (1985).

In the case of the spelling <aa>, codifiers were only among the first ones to employ the new spelling variant. In this case, the actual innovator of the change is probably not situated in the circle of the of norm givers but is rather a member of another social network. Since an innovating individual is typically at the margins of a network, they are known for maintaining different weak interpersonal ties with members of other social networks. As a result, the individual who first used the spelling variant can transmit the new form to members of other social networks, who in turn act as *early adopters* of the change. These early adopters are the ones who set the ball rolling, and this is probably where norm givers step in. As (very) early adopters of the innovation, norm givers are still ahead of the broader language community in using the spelling <aa>. As such, the first prescriptions for <aa> in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries could still have initiated a change in general usage.

Discursive approaches

One discursive approach characterises the two case studies that underpin this scenario. In both cases, grammarians promote one-form-one-function symmetry in usage. Codifiers thus not only explicitly prescribe the innovation, but also relegate the alternative variant to another context by structural reallocation (cf. Britain & Trudgill, 2005, pp. 184-187). As for the spelling feature,

grammarians mostly argued that the variant <ae> must be used for representing a diphthong or the Middle Dutch long *ē*, signalling that there was no longer a variant to represent the long /a/. In the case of the artificial case distinction, conversely, Van Heule (and his seventeenth-century followers) allocated distinct syntactic functions to the main personal pronouns that were already applied in usage. Although the norm givers allowed for some variation (mainly between *hen* and *ze*) in the accusative case, the codifiers explicitly indicated that the pronoun *hun* was expected only in the dative case. Since codifiers relegated the old spelling <ae> to other linguistic contexts and allocated distinct syntactic functions to the pronouns that were first used interchangeably as a direct and indirect object, the main approach of prescriptivists was to stress the structural need of implementing the innovation in usage.

Features

Since the scenario in which prescriptivism triggers changes in usage is rare, it is naturally subject to restrictions. First, in terms of features that are susceptible to this type of prescriptive influence.

The two case studies under review are both highly specific in their own way. The spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables is a prominent feature that is frequently employed in language use. Its high visibility and frequent usage, combined with the vehement normative discussions on the topic early on, may therefore have contributed to the adoption of the innovative spelling <aa> by individual language users.

Although the case distinction between plural personal pronouns is a less prominent feature, it too became a subject of early metalinguistic discussion. However, rather than introducing an entirely new variant, this grammatical case involved a syntactic distinction between two existing variants, i.e. *hen* and *hun.* While involving two main variants, this feature is more complex in linguistic embedding than the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables. The grammatical feature is also less frequently applied in usage and is therefore perhaps less visible among language users.

Despite the visible influence of prescriptivism on seventeenth-century language use, no clear patterns emerge to explain why prescriptivism succeeded in

initiating changes for these two features. Perhaps the early normative discussions on the topic during the period of variant selection by grammarians made these features susceptible to the initiating influence? It is anyhow clear that these are exceptional cases in which prescriptivism, for reasons still unknown, managed to introduce a new variant or distinction in usage.

Reach

When a change in usage progresses towards the (upper)middle part of the S-curve, the speed of the change is at its highest rate, and the innovation is thus picked up by increasingly more people. In the very beginning of the change, on the contrary, the innovation is still rare and does not reach many language users. This also explains why the scope of prescriptive influence is limited in the early stages of the change. In fact, when norm givers actuate a change in usage, their influence is limited to **individual language users**. These language users are often from the same region where the prescription appeared. In both case studies substantiating this scenario, individuals from **Holland** adapted their language practice after the initiating prescriptions were also published in Holland. An influence on language users from other regions is not ruled out, though. In terms of genre, writers of **printed genres** like pamphlets are influenced in both case studies, although also authors of handwritten documents may be impacted by the prescriptive interventions.

Duration

In both case studies, prescriptivism thus triggers a change in the language practice of individuals. If the change progresses to larger parts of the language community, and prescriptivism plays its part in the diffusion of the variant, the current scenario transforms into one of the following scenarios in which prescriptivism influences ongoing changes in usage.

3 Scenario 2: Accelerating an ongoing change

Different from the first scenario of prescriptive influence, which theoretically starts form previous invariability in usage, this scenario requires two or more linguistic variants in dynamic competition, and thus involves an ongoing change in usage. More specifically, the scenario covers the instances in which norm givers speed up the diffusion of an innovation.

This scenario is strongly embedded within the *transition* problem that is described by Weinreich et al. (1968, p. 184), who argue that the transfer of change takes place via "speakers with heterogenous systems characterized by orderly differentiation", pointing to contact between language users for diffusing linguistic innovations. This indicates that a change in usage can progress along the S-curve also without prescriptive interference, mostly via weak tie connections between social groups (Trudgill, 1983; Milroy & Milroy, 1985, p. 380). Since it is impossible to ascertain how the diffusion process would have evolved without prescriptive interference, Anderwald (2019, p. 93) alerts that we cannot establish with certainty whether codifiers actually influenced the acceleration of a change in usage. The discussion of this scenario should therefore be regarded as a mere possibility of norm givers exerting an influence on usage. Since such prescriptive effects may be visible at different stages of the S-curve, the distinction is made between two related scenarios: norm givers (a) diffusing the innovation, and (b) eradicating remaining variability.

3.1 A – diffusing the innovation

The effect of this (sub)scenario, norm givers diffusing an innovation, most likely occurs when the change is still growing, typically at the stages of new and vigorous or mid-range changes, although the diffusion may also reach the stage in which the change is nearing completion (cf. Labov, 1994; cf. Figure 86). Despite its wide scope on the S-curve, the overall trait of this scenario is that prescriptive influence does not lead to uniformity in usage. By spreading the change, codifiers solely cause a steeper rise in the adoption of the variant.

The case studies in this dissertation illustrate that the possibility of codifiers accelerating ongoing changes is more common than norm givers triggering new changes in usage. Multiple possibilities of codified norms influencing ongoing changes were uncovered. These examples serve for defining this scenario. I specifically refer to the case studies on the orthographic representation of long /a/ in closed syllables, the spelling of /t/ in *d*-stem verbs, and the accusative-dative distinction between the plural personal pronouns.

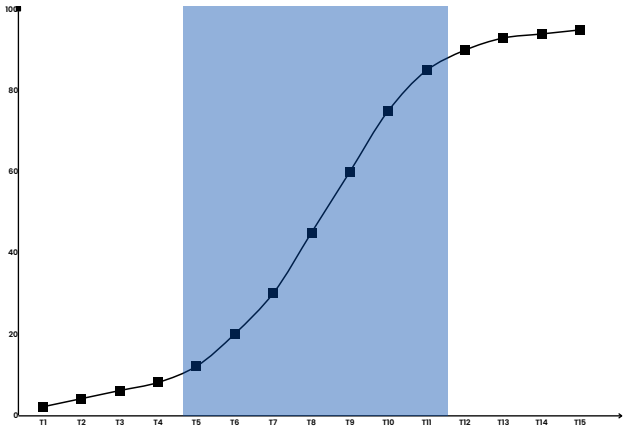

Figure 86: position of scenario 2A on the S-curve of language change

Discursive approaches

For prescriptivism to accelerate a change in usage, codifiers agreed that the ongoing change should be further implemented in usage. To achieve this effect, norm givers prescribed the incoming variant explicitly. The prescribed form often showed up in their implicit prescriptions as well, and grammarians used the variant as a majority form in their own usage.

Alongside the explicit prescriptions, most grammarians formulated an explicit proscription for the outgoing variant. They did so either by rejecting the variant for usage in the form of correctives proper (cf. Moschonas, 2020), as was the case with the spelling <t> and <d> in *d*-stem verbs, or by relegating the variant to other contexts. Several norm givers from the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century reallocated the new spelling variants <aa> and <dt> for usage in Holland (i.e. socio-stylistic reallocation). With these grammarians ascribing this specific

social meaning to the variants in crucial periods of nation building and identity formation, they also spread awareness of the socio-political traits expressed by these spelling shibboleths (Vosters, 2011, pp. 238-240).

While the structural reallocation of *hen* as accusative variant and *hun* as dative form was not shared by every single grammarian after Van Heule, Northern norm givers generally promoted this exact case distinction from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. The accelerating effect of prescriptivism is therefore more likely after multiple grammarians formulated explicit prescriptions on the matter. The fact that normative comments by numerous codifiers were necessary to influence usage may indicate that a discourse community of norm givers is required for successfully speeding up a change in usage (cf. Watts, 1999; 2008). Grammarians within a discourse community also shared the same ideas about proper language use, and the involved codifiers often agreed on which variants to prescribe and proscribe. As such, the existence of a discourse community also implied increased uniformity in the prescriptions, which possibly aided in accelerating the change.

Features

The strength of the accelerating effect of prescriptivism possibly depends on the nature of the feature undergoing change (spelling vs. grammar). Although there is evidence that grammatical changes are subject to this type of influence, in comparison to the spelling variables that represent this scenario, the diffusion of the accusative-dative distinction is less progressed in usage. In fact, the two spelling changes which prescriptivism probably accelerated were progressed to the second part of the S-curve, whereas the influence in the grammatical change was particularly visible in specific genres and regions. This suggests that **spelling features** are more susceptible to the accelerating effect of prescriptivism.

An example in which grammarians presumably had **a large-scale influence** in speeding up an ongoing change is detected in the Northern Netherlands, where the new variant <aa> was massively implemented across all regions and genres in the eighteenth century. This spelling feature was probably subject to prescriptive influence at an earlier stage of the change (cf. scenario 1). It may therefore be the case that the **previous success of codifiers** lingered on and

caused a sequential influence in accelerating the diffusion of the innovation. However, also (1) the high **metalinguistic salience** of the feature, (2) its **high frequency** in general usage, and (3) the simple **opposition of two variants**, may have facilitated the strong accelerating effect across different regions and genres.

Such large-scale effects across the board are rather an exception than a rule, though. In other successful examples of this scenario, the influence of prescriptivism was less pronounced, restricted to **specific genres**, and the effect of prescriptivism was probably **strengthened by** the strong representation of the innovation in a **printed genre** (i.e. pamphlets). The strong influence of prescriptivism across different regions and genres is thus probably explained by the fact that the long /a/ in closed syllables is a feature that is exceptionally prone to prescriptive interference.

Reach

Following on the need of a discourse community to accelerate a change, it is no wonder that the increased diffusion is always situated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More consistent normative practices characterise the later periods of standardisation, after all. What also aligns with the discourse community of grammarians, is the **standard language ideology** which was spread at a broader scale at the end of the eighteenth century. The need for a uniform written language, and the awareness of social values ascribed to linguistic features, was increasingly expressed, and disseminated 'from above' into the language community. Together with this standard language ideology, also the **institutionalisation of codified norms**, and a gradual **broadening of the target audience** of normative works emerged. These related factors are all covered in what Curzan (2014, p. 30) defines as *standardi[s]ing prescriptivism.* Since prescriptive success is limited to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this strand of prescriptivism is crucial in enabling norm givers to speed up an ongoing change in usage.

Although the standard language ideology turns out to be a determinant for grammarians accelerating a change, in a single instance, grammarians also facilitated the adoption of an innovation without the prevalence of the standard language ideology. This is the case for spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables, which was **highly salient** at a metalinguistic level, and contained **social**

significance in earlier periods. As a result, this feature had been subject to prescriptive influence in earlier stages of the change to <aa> (cf. scenario 1). While the standard language ideology was not at play when the variant strongly increased in Northern usage, it is important to consider that the social significance of the spelling was expressed by a variety of normative works, with target audiences ranging from poets and ministers to the wider public in accessible schoolbooks. The **broader social reach of the discursive approaches** may therefore also have enabled the large-scale increase of the variant in usage.

As was mentioned before, a large-scale effect of codifiers speeding up changes across different genres is less common and occurs only with one specific spelling feature. In other cases, norm givers succeeded only in accelerating a change in specific genres. This is apparent in the case study on the plural personal pronouns, where particularly pamphlets showed the prescribed case distinction. Ego-documents, conversely, always appear less susceptible to this type of influence. The case studies in this dissertation, moreover, show that pamphlets are not always directly influenced by prescriptivism. In the two spelling cases, the printed genre applies the innovation as a majority variant while norm givers also prescribed the form. As such, progressive genres of **printed texts may aid prescriptivism in diffusing the change** to other genres (cf. transition, Weinreich et al. 1968).

Since this effect of prescriptivism is primarily visible in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, also the socio-historical context may enable the further diffusion of a change. More specifically, the combination of the standard language ideology and the changed **socio-political context** of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands resulted in the diffusion of Northern innovations to Southern territories. This is illustrated in the case study on plural personal pronouns, for example, where the case distinction spread to the Southern Netherlands only in the nineteenth century. The diffusion of linguistic innovations to other geographical regions within this highly specific context was also indicated by Vosters (2011) and Vosters et al. (2014).

In sum, when prescriptivism succeeds in accelerating a change in usage, it is most likely with spelling features. This influence is typically seen in specific genres, though the increased visibility of the incoming variant in printed texts can also

accelerate its diffusion. However, ego-documents tend to be less affected by such prescriptions. Only in one exceptional case, the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables, prescriptivism exerted a particularly strong influence, impacting multiple genres and regions simultaneously. For prescriptivism to effectively speed up an ongoing change, a consistent discourse community of grammarians providing clear prescriptions is crucial. In this study, the accelerating effect was observed only after the target audience of normative works broadened at a societal level, thus limiting prescriptive influence to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Duration

Since codifiers can accelerate the rate of diffusion on a wide span of the S-curve, this scenario of prescriptive influence is not necessarily restricted in duration. The examples from the case studies, however, indicate that **continuing prescriptive efforts** are required for a **lasting influence** on usage. If successful prescriptive injunctions appear for a limited time only, the accelerating effect soon fades. This is illustrated by the temporary increase of the spelling <d> in the Southern documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where the frequency of the form strongly declined after the prescriptions changed to <dt>. This contrasts with the effect of the Northern prescriptions of the time, which continued promoting <dt>, and had a lasting influence on usage.

3.2 B – eradicating remaining variability

When norm givers succeed in accelerating ongoing changes in usage, the overall result may be twofold. Prescriptivism either pushes the change somewhat (or a lot) further along the S-curve, as is the case in scenario 2A, or this push can have a stronger result. The latter outcome leads to uniformity in (some parts of) language use, which indicates that the change in usage is complete. As prescriptivism eradicates remaining variability in language use, this (sub)scenario aligns with the suggestion that standardisation leads to the "suppression of optional variability in language" (Milroy & Milroy, 2012, p. 6). As this scenario discusses prescriptive influence in the final stage of the S-curve (cf. Figure 87), it can be regarded as a subsequent stage of scenario 2A. Yet, as I

will explain below, the scenario may also follow on other types of prescriptive influence.

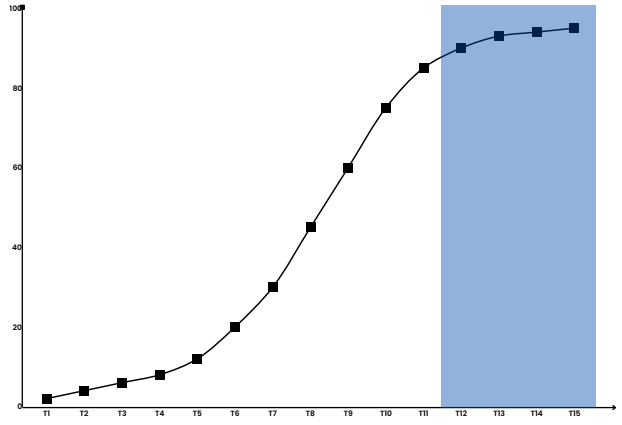

Figure 87: position of scenario 2B on the S-curve of language change

Although prescriptive influence leading to uniformity in usage is rare, the case studies in this dissertation revealed that such an effect of prescriptivism is possible in one highly specific socio-historical context. This is the case with far-reaching efforts of language planning, with the institutionalisation of codified norms advancing into a national language policy in the Northern Netherlands (cf. Siegenbeek, 1804; Weiland, 1805).

With this scenario evolving from the previous one, there is some overlap between the two scenarios, and I build on a few examples that were discussed there. More specifically, the examples in which the increase of the innovation eventually led to uniformity are now discussed in more detail. These examples are found in two case studies on spelling, i.e. the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables and the orthographic representation of the verb-final /t/. In addition, the completion of the change towards the comparative marker *dan* is also applied as an example. The latter instance of prescriptive influence is a consecutive stage of scenario 3A, comprising the slowdown of ongoing changes.

Since this scenario takes place only in the context of the national language policy in the Northern Netherlands, I supplement the results obtained in this dissertation with findings from the study of Krogull (2018), who specifically

investigated the effectiveness of the national language policy in the nineteenth century.

Discursive approaches

The discursive approaches that were discussed in scenario 2A, with a discourse community of norm givers explicitly prescribing the incoming form, on the one hand, and proscribing the outgoing variant in the form of correctives or permissives, on the other hand, are still relevant in scenario 2B.

With the emergence of the standard language ideology, more awareness about the 'correct' variant was disseminated to language users. Weinreich et al. (1968, p. 187) indicate that the process towards the completion of the change "may be accompanied by a rise in the level of social awareness of the change and the establishment of a social stereotype". As such, we can assume that the **social significance** of the incoming variant increased even more with the appearance of the national language policy in the nineteenth century. After all, people were probably aware that the national language policy aimed for spreading the only 'correct' and 'national' language to the entire language community.

Features

Since some of the examples of prescriptive influence derive from scenario 2A, particularly spelling features are susceptible for prescriptivism to eradicate variability from usage. Krogull (2018) detects an influence of prescriptivism creating uniformity only with spelling features. In this dissertation, however, also one grammatical feature showed a complete change that is probably related to prescriptive interference. As such, the prescriptive effect at the final stages of the S-curve is **not restricted to spelling variables**.

In fact, not the nature of the variable but the complexity of the feature appears to determine whether prescriptive influence is possible. For codifiers to complete a change in usage, spelling features and grammatical variables which lack complexity are more prone to prescriptive influence. This means that features with a **binary opposition** of variants, where the outgoing variant can simply be exchanged by the incoming innovation, most likely reach uniformity due to prescriptive influence. In addition, these binary features also require

limited complexity in terms of linguistic embedding. For example, when comparing the grammatical feature of comparative markers (cf. Chapter 7) to the orthographic representation of /xt/ that Krogull (2018) investigated, both have only a binary opposition of forms. However, only the grammatical variable reached uniformity after the national language policy. Since the spelling case is more complex, in that language users must know the etymology of word in order to apply the correct spelling practice, this could indicate that the more **superficial linguistic embedding** of the grammatical feature increased the likelihood for prescriptive success in this scenario.

Reach

As was explained before, the instances in which norm givers possibly induced uniformity in usage are not widespread, and they are limited to the highly specific context of the national language policy in the nineteenth century. The language regulations that appeared within this language policy were officially introduced and applied in the Northern Netherlands only. Although the possibility of spreading such Northern norms to the South was discussed in scenario 2A, no examples in which such diffusion patterns led to uniformity in Southern usage were detected in this study. The prescriptive effect of eradicating remaining variability is therefore also **restricted to the Northern Netherlands**, the area for which the language policy was intended.

When prescriptivism succeeded in eradicating variability in language use, the effect was most likely **restricted to specific genres**, often genres of which can be assumed that they are most prone to prescriptive influence, such as printed and/or edited texts (e.g. newspapers, pamphlets, administrative texts). In these documents, uniform writing practices were achieved even if the change was still in its early stages prior to the introduction of the national language policy.

To illustrate the matter, let us have a look at the spelling of /t/ in *d*-stem verbs, which was investigated in this dissertation (cf. Chapter 6) and by Krogull (2018). In both case studies, the incoming variant <dt> did not soar above 50% in the eighteenth century and reached (almost) uniform usage after the implementation of the language policy. This effect was achieved in newspapers (Krogull, 2018, p. 111), in pamphlets, and in the formal genre of administrative texts, while the proportions of the variant did not reach up to 65% in the other

(more informal or speech-like) genres. This at least points to considerable genre differences when it comes to the national language policy eradicating variability in usage.

In one case study, uniformity was achieved **across all genres**. Such a strong effect of eradicating variability occurred only with the spelling variant <aa> which already advanced to the upper half of the S-curve before the national language policy appeared.

Although I considered the possibility of a divergent effect – uniformity in specific genres versus uniformity in general usage – depending on the stage of the change prior to the implementation of the national language policy, this threshold ultimately proves irrelevant in this context. Not in the least because this would also require setting an upper bound on the S-curve, after which achieving uniformity in usage is less likely. After all, at the top stage of the curve, "the selective effect of having two forms to […] choose from is again weak" (Denison, 2003, p. 58), and as Labov (1994, p. 66) explains, there probably is a threshold after which the pressure to change diminishes. This stagnation of the change in the tail of the S-curve is also shown in Krogull's (2018, pp. 153-154) case study on the spelling of the sharp-long *ê,* where the proportion of the incoming variant was already at 90%, and barely increased after the appearance of the national language policy.

As such, thorough efforts of language planning, as those undertaken in the Northern Netherlands in the nineteenth century, can effectively eradicate – or suppress – variability in usage. However, this influence of prescriptivism is typically confined to the area where the policy is enforced and tends to impact printed or edited genres. An exception to this is the case of the long /a/ in closed syllables, where uniform writing practices are observed across all genres. The exceptionally strong effect seen in this instance is likely due to the long-standing history of prescriptive influence for this feature (cf. scenario 1-2A).

Duration

This scenario describes a highly specific case of prescriptive influence in the nineteenth century. The corpus data from this study do not reach beyond 1850, which makes it is impossible to draw any empirically based statements on the

duration of the effectiveness of the official language policy. However, since some of Siegenbeek's (1804) and Weiland's (1805) codifications are still in force today, a lasting effect in maintaining uniformity may be presumed, at least for the features for which there was a continued endorsement of the norms established in the national language policy. Nonetheless, empirical investigations on late nineteenth- and twentieth-century precept and usage data are necessary to substantiate this claim.

4 Scenario 3: Slowing down an ongoing change

Like scenario 2, this scenario discusses prescriptive interventions in changes that are under way in usage. Scenario 3 therefore also entails contexts with dynamic variability between two or more variants, with an incoming variant gradually pervading language use. Contrary to the previous scenarios, where codifiers tried to accelerate ongoing changes, norm givers usually do not welcome changes which arose from 'from below'. Codifiers may therefore seek to prevent them from increasing in usage. Norm givers then attempt to halt disfavoured changes in different yet related ways, for example, by (a) slowing down undesired innovations, or by (b) reviving archaic usage.

4.1 A – slowing down undesired innovations

When norm givers notice undesired linguistic variants or constructions emerging in usage, they will make every effort to get rid of the form. Although a complete halt of the change may be the desired effect, if norm givers succeed in influencing usage, they often manage only in (temporarily) slowing down the ongoing change (cf. Anderwald, 2019).

As opposed to the scenarios that were discussed before, this kind of prescriptive influence is not necessarily restricted to a specific stage on the S-curve. Anderwald (2012, p. 44), however, notes that codifiers tend to observe linguistic innovations only when the frequency of the new form in usage has "progressed beyond a certain threshold", which she believes encompasses the incipient stage on the S-curve. Successful instances in which prescriptivism slows down changes are therefore highly unlikely in the earliest stage of the change.

In addition to the stage of the change, Anderwald (2012) draws attention to the rate of the change for grammarians to observe undesired innovations. She notices that especially rapid changes invoke strong criticism of grammarians (Anderwald, 2012, p. 44). The case studies in this dissertation also suggest that the rate of the change is instrumental in halting innovations from increasing in usage. This is illustrated in the case study on the comparative markers, where a rapid increase of *als* was attested in seventeenth-century usage. The use of the marker massively inclined from 8.6% in the sixteenth century to 70.3% in the seventeenth century. Consequently, in line with Anderwald's observations, norm givers were quick to criticise the change in the eighteenth century. These interventions of codifiers also appear successful, since a return to the prescribed marker *dan* was attested in the nineteenth-century usage.

This scenario of prescriptive influence is substantiated with the case studies on the comparative markers and the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables. In both cases, prescriptivism succeeds in slowing down the increase of an undesired variant when it is still progressing in the middle part of the S-curve (cf. Figure 88). These findings, however, do not imply that prescriptivism is only effective in that middle part of the change. In fact, further research is necessary to confirm that a rapid, yet still progressing change is most prone to be slowed down due to prescriptive interference.

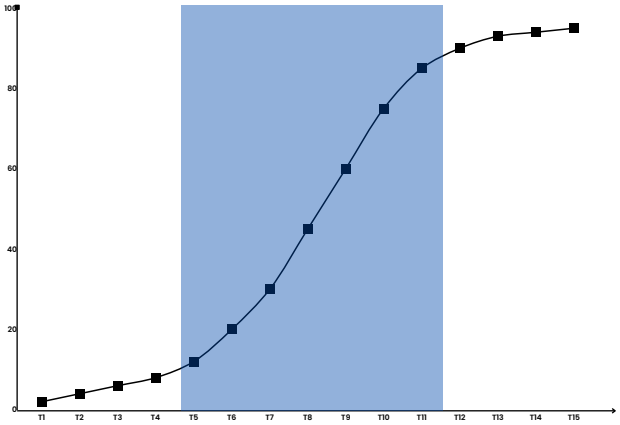

Figure 88: position of scenario 3A on the S-curve of language change

Discursive approaches

Like in other scenarios, norm givers often applied a combination of discursive approaches to remove undesired variants from usage. Almost all codifiers explicitly proscribed the innovation, sometimes in the form of correctives, but more often by reallocating the variant to another linguistic or socio-stylistic context. The comparative marker *als* was mostly reallocated at a structural level, with grammarians restricting the use of *als* to the linguistic context where it was admitted for usage, viz. as a marker in comparatives of equality. For the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables, Southern grammarians in the eighteenth century reallocated the spelling <aa> at a socio-stylistic level, since they relegated the variant for usage in Holland. With their metalinguistic evaluations of the spelling feature, these Southern norm givers also ascribed a socio-political stigma to both spelling variants. The stigmatisation of these forms at times of nation-building processes should therefore be regarded as a prescriptive strategy for removing the 'Northern' <aa> from Southern usage. In addition to these proscriptions, all norm givers also formulated a prescription to illustrate which variant they preferred for usage.

Features

Both features representing this scenario have a dichotomy of variants, and no or only a superficial linguistic embedding of variation. These characteristics of the features possibly make them more susceptible for prescriptive interference. I cannot confirm that prescriptivism fails to slow changes in more complex variables. However, the lack of success when grammarians try to revive a variant in a complex feature (cf. scenario 3B) suggests that prescriptivism is likely ineffective in slowing down a change as well.

Reach

The examples in which prescriptivism succeeds in slowing down a change are all situated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This restriction in terms of period indicates that this scenario was successful only in periods of *standardi[s]ing prescriptivism* (cf. Curzan, 2014); the strand that strongly aligned with nation building, the **ideology of creating a standard language** that represented the nation, and for that standard language to be used by the entire

public. As such, only normative works with a **broader social reach**, which were often used in pedagogical contexts, were able to influence general usage in a way that norm givers managed in holding back undesired usage.

In the two case studies that serve as successful examples of this scenario, **writers of edited texts (both printed and handwritten)** were influenced in the first place. As for the comparative markers, a few authors of pamphlets and administrative texts changed their language practice to the marker *dan* in the eighteenth century, while other genres showed the return to the prescribed variant in the nineteenth century. This genre difference is also visible in the case of the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables. When Southern grammarians stigmatised the spelling <aa> as 'Northern', the change towards the form stagnated in the pamphlets first. Other genres in the South were influenced to a lesser extent, in that they showed a small increase of the stigmatised <aa> in the nineteenth century. However, the incline of the variant was much less pronounced than it was for features which were not subject to socio-political stigmatisation. This comparison therefore suggests that the social meaning of the spelling variants facilitated the slowdown of the change to <aa> in the Southern Netherlands.

These findings imply that prescriptivism succeeds in slowing down an undesired change only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Codifiers affect writers of edited genres in the first place but can also impact other genres when the standard language ideology knows a wider dissemination in the nineteenth century.

Duration

As Anderwald (2019, p. 103) concludes, the effect in which codifiers slow down changes is of a **temporary** nature in most cases. She explains that the change is usage is often reverted as soon as grammarians reduce the pressure. Completely abating the undesired innovation from usage is therefore rare.

In this dissertation, I only found one example of norm givers completely halting a change in usage. This is the case in the nineteenth-century North, where the comparative marker *als* disappeared from usage a few decades after the national language policy appeared (cf. scenario 2B). Yet, the form vanished only from

specific genres. This lasting effect in the Northern Netherlands is not surprising. Grammarians started only recently (i.e. in the eighteenth century) with their prescriptive efforts to eradicate the variant from usage, and they held pressure at least until the nineteenth century. The case studies contributing to this scenario therefore confirm that the prescriptive effect lasts if the normative pressure is maintained.

4.2 B – reviving archaic usage

Most of the time, norm givers are not satisfied with how language has evolved. According to Labov's *Golden Age Principle,* also grammarians believe that "at some time in the past, language was in a state of perfection" (Labov, 2001, p. 514). In their melancholy for language use from earlier times, codifiers can attempt to revive archaic writing practices. This scenario links up with what Curzan (2014, pp. 36-38) calls *restorative prescriptivism,* although it differs in that the norm givers in my corpus still aimed for advocating these archaic forms as the standard. The archaic variants they wanted to revive were thus not obsolete in usage yet.

Norm givers typically tried to revive archaic variants when they noticed the outgoing variant's (sudden) decline (in specific genres), as was the case with the velar diminutive suffix *-ken* when the form was being replaced by palatal counterparts in between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Also with slowly progressing changes, which sometimes span over a thousand years, codifiers made efforts in reviving the constructions in usage. This is the case for the loss of the genitive case, investigated by Scott (2014), Krogull (2018), and Krogull & Rutten (2021).

Mind that, in the case of a slowly progressing change, the middle part of the S-curve is a lot less steep when compared to the more rapid change of the diminutive suffix. As visualised in the idealised plot in Figure 89, a slowly progressing change, like the change from synthetic to analytical genitival constructions, therefore represents a long-stretched curve, and instead of observing almost the entire S-curve in a period of four centuries, the discussion here captures only a short time frame of the change.

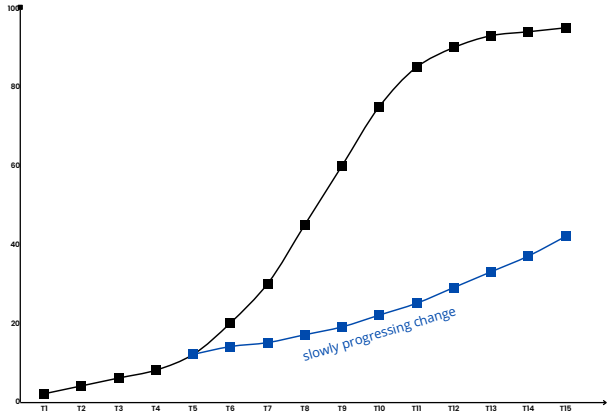

Figure 89: slowly progressing change

The position of this scenario on the S-curve is similar to that of the previous one in scenario 3A (cf. Figure 90). The threshold for codifiers to observe a change (Anderwald, 2012) also applies here, making prescriptive interference unlikely in the incipient stage of the change. For delineating this type of influence on the upper side of the S-curve, I rely on the one case study in Dutch where codifiers succeed in reviving an archaic variant. The case study I am referring to is the genitive case, investigated by Krogull (2018) and Krogull & Rutten (2021), who noticed that low frequencies of the outgoing variant suffice for (temporarily) reviving the form in usage. These studies thus suggest that prescriptive influence is still possible when the change – in this case, the loss of the genitive – has progressed until the upper half of the S-curve.

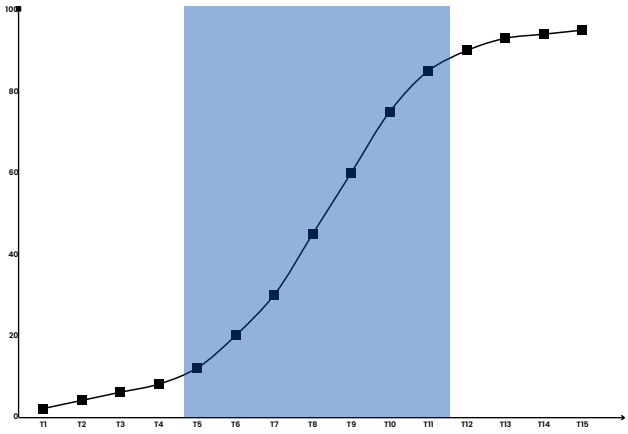

Figure 90: position of scenario 3B on the S-curve of language change

A successful revival by prescriptivism is thus attested for the synthetic genitival constructions, which had been in decline for several centuries. In the eighteenth century, the inflectional genitive declined to 36% in the study of Krogull (2018) and Krogull & Rutten (2021). However, they also illustrate that the synthetic genitive experiences a revival due to prescriptive interference in the nineteenth century. These prescriptive attempts for reviving the genitive were successful only with feminine and plural nouns, though. This is probably because the feminine and plural *der*-constructions were more frequently used compared to the masculine and neuter *des*-forms, which were already marginal at the time (Scott, 2014, p. 121; Krogull & Rutten, 2021). Although some linguistic environments are less prone to change, and even resist change altogether (Labov, 1994, p. 66; Nevalainen, 2015), for prescriptivism to successfully revive an archaic variant, the use of the form must probably reach beyond fixed constructions and formulaic expressions (cf. Simons & Rutten, 2014, p. 67). While the prescriptive effect is thus not necessarily restricted to a specific stage on the S-curve, the interferences plausibly have the highest success rate when the variant to be revived is used beyond fixed constructions.

Discursive approaches

In most instances in which grammarians tried to revive archaic writing practices, their discursive approaches were rather mild. Codifiers often **prescribed the new form alongside the archaic variant**. Some of these grammarians additionally **stigmatised** the incoming variant as 'new', while they considered the older variant 'traditional', 'refined' or 'dignified'. The Northern codifier Huydecoper (1730), for example, ascribed such a **praising social meaning** to the diminutive suffix *-ken* when the form had almost disappeared from Northern usage. Furthermore, different codifiers opted for **explaining away variability** based on socio-stylistic differences, as Ten Kate (1723, I, p. 338) did for the genitive case. This grammarian generally considers stylistic differences in his prescriptions, and also for the genitive, he expected analytical forms like *des* only in the *Hoogdravende* 'sublime' style, whereas the analytical form *van den* was reallocated to less formal styles of writing. Other grammarians structurally relegated the genitival constructions to specific linguistic contexts to proof the relevance of applying both the new and the older form.

Explicit proscriptions, in which the incoming variant is entirely discarded for usage, are not very common in this scenario. However, in some individual normative arguments, grammarians do not mention the incoming variant in their comments, and as such, they **'erase'** the variant from the linguistic repertoire as if it did not exist (cf. Irvine & Gal, 2000). This strategy is applied by Weiland (1805) in his prescription on the genitive. As opposed to his predecessors, who increasingly allowed for both constructions, the Northern codifier is more conservative and prescribes only the synthetic genitive forms as part of the national language policy (Krogull, 2018, pp. 215; Rutten, 2019, p. 260). Since the genitive was indeed revived after Weiland's grammar appeared, such strict prescriptions are perhaps more successful than milder attempts in which the archaic variant is prescribed in specific context, next to the incoming suffix. The latter approach was taken by codifiers who tried – but failed – to revive the diminutive suffix *-ken* in the eighteenth century.

Features

Based on the case studies in this dissertation and the other studies that substantiate this scenario, it seems that norm givers particularly aimed for reviving **grammatical features**. Older variants used for the diminutive suffix and the genitive were commented upon with praise, while similar evaluations are rarely found for spelling features.

Since the synthetic genitive was successfully revived in usage (Krogull & Rutten, 2021), and the velar diminutive suffix did not enjoy such a resurgence, this could indicate that features which are rapidly evolving from one variant to the other, and which consist of multiple variants and a complex linguistic embedding of variation, are less susceptible for the revival of an older variant. After all, the diminutive suffix *-ken* gradually changed from velar to different, more palatal forms in a relatively short period of time (cf. Chapter 8). When some grammarians tried to revive the velar suffix, the swift dynamics of this feature may have obstructed the revival of the form in usage. The loss of the genitive case, conversely, is a **slowly progressing change** in usage, with only two possible variants (but with a complex linguistic embedding within the synthetic genitive forms). The **binary opposition of variants** and the slowly progressing change may therefore have facilitated the success of the revival of the genitive case.

Reach

Although this scenario is based on just one successful and one failed example of prescriptivism reviving an archaic variant, it is still possible to provide a careful assessment of the extent of influence.

First, it is important to note that, despite its slow decline in usage, the synthetic genitive remained prescribed by codifiers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. While codifiers gradually became more tolerant towards the analytical constructions at the end of the eighteenth century, the prescriptions again shifted to synthetic forms in the early nineteenth century (Rutten, 2019, p. 260). Only when Weiland (1805) prescribed the synthetic genitive as part of the national language policy, a revival of *der* forms was attested in usage. This is to say that a discourse community of grammarians, several of which already targeted their prescriptions at a broader audience, did not influence usage with their attempts to revive the synthetic genitive. The prescriptive efforts were thus only successful with the **culmination of institutionalised prescriptivism into the national language policy** in the nineteenth century (Krogull, 2018; Krogull & Rutten, 2021). The failed attempts for reviving the diminutive suffix *-ken,* conversely, were less institutionalised, as they were only shared by a few grammarians from the eighteenth century. It is therefore less likely that prescriptivism succeeds in reviving a variant when the archaic forms is backed only by individual codifiers.

In the success story of the revived genitive case, the prescriptive effect is most pronounced in **newspapers** as an edited and printed genre, and in the handwritten **diaries and travelogues**, which are perhaps also subject to editorial interventions. Personal letters are influenced to a smaller extent (Krogull, 2018, p. 224). As such, genres which are more prone to an influence 'from above' due to some kind of editorial intervention, show the strongest effect of prescriptivism in this scenario.

Duration

Alike in the previous scenario, there is **no evidence for a lasting impact** on usage based on our empirical data. Although this stance thus requires further investigation, given the findings in scenario 3A, it could be hypothesised that a

continued pressure of norm givers is necessary for maintaining the reviving effect in usage.

5 Scenario 4: Discursive influence

So far, I have discussed possible effects of prescriptivism that are visible in language use. Apart from these linguistic effects, norm givers may also have an impact that is not (immediately) observed in usage. In fact, any linguistic effect of prescriptivism is preceded by a discursive influence in which language users are made aware of the existence of a norm. In this scenario, I discuss two options of discursive influence. The first (sub)scenario involves the context where norm-giving authorities influence fellow codifiers, and as such, they form a discourse community of normative practice. In a second (sub)scenario, I discuss the context in which metalinguistic activities spread social meanings into the language community.

5.1 A – forming a discourse community

Previous scholars, and most notably Milroy (2001, p. 535) claimed that language standardisation is first and foremost a metalinguistic phenomenon, which has the principal effect of spreading "the consciousness […] of a 'correct', or canonical, form of language" into the language community (cf. also Rutten et al., 2014b, p. 11). This discursive influence of standardisation is also encapsulated in the standard language ideology, which comprises the idea that one variety acts as the only correct variety in a language community.

Before that standard language ideology was disseminated into the entire language community, the idea of standardisation was shared by a relatively small and elite network of norm givers who constructed the normative discourse on 'good' and 'proper' language use (Rutten & Vosters, 2021, p. 78). The corpus of normative works that is applied in this study demonstrates that multiple language authorities – particularly literary authors, ministers, and grammarians – engaged in metalinguistic discussions to codify the Dutch language in normative works. The authors of these grammars were not necessarily sharing personal ties with one another (Busse et al., 2018, pp. 436-437). Without actually

knowing who else is part of the norm-giving community, these codifiers (unknowingly) formed a network that contributed to norm dissemination. This network can be called a *discourse community* of grammarians (cf. Watts, 1999, 2008). By positioning themselves within normative practices such as grammar writing, norm givers also established a *discourse tradition.* In this tradition, grammars and other normative works emerged as a distinct genre, inheriting (para)textual features from earlier normative works (McLelland, 2021, p. 268). Before the codifications of norm givers thus spread to the wider language community, the standardisers influenced each other at a discursive level. It is this type of influence that is discussed in this scenario.

Such a discourse community is not related to the stage of language change and the position on the S-curve. However, the existence of a discourse community is an important step in the standardisation process, and more specifically in between the codification of the norm, and the implementation thereof by the wider language community (cf. Haugen, 1966, 1972, 1987). After all, several of the scenarios of prescriptive influence that were discussed in this chapter pointed to the importance of a discourse community for prescriptivism to have a visible impact on language use.

The discursive influence between norm givers is also illustrated in the case study on the comparative markers. In this case, the social significance that was ascribed to the literary language use of Vondel resulted in the codification of the marker *dan*. As such, after Vondel (and other literary authors in the seventeenth century) started applying that variant, the first prescription for *dan* was formulated by Huydecoper (1730), who explicitly referred to Vondel's exemplary usage. Many (elitist) grammarians after Huydecoper adhered to his example in prescribing and using that preferred form. This influence of Huydecoper on other grammarians took place before the prescriptions for *dan* reached the wider language community (cf. scenario 3A). The discursive influence that Huydecoper exerted on his followers is even more apparent with the explicit references to the grammarian, and the copying practices from one normative work to the other. The case study on the comparative markers is therefore a compelling example to illustrate that eighteenth-century codifiers were discursively influenced by an authoritative predecessor, before this ideology of 'proper' or 'standard' usage reached the wider language community.

Discursive approaches

In the case of Dutch, the most authoritative norm givers who influenced later grammarians are part of the tradition of Vondelianists. Norm givers like Moonen (1706), Séwel (1708, 1712), and Huydecoper (1730) explicitly rely on Vondel for setting the norm, and in turn, they are the authorities that are referred to by later grammarians. The discursive influence that these codifiers had on fellow grammarians was already indicated by Rutten (2019, pp. 54-55), who explained that civil grammars in the second half of the eighteenth century were merely simplifications of earlier elitist grammars that were published in the first half of the century (cf. Chapter 2). Since the chain reaction of norm givers influencing each other presumably occurred **spontaneously**, norm givers did not employ deliberate strategies for the formation of a discourse community. However, the **explicit references to earlier codifiers**, and the prescriptions which are often **literally copied** from one grammar to the other, clearly indicate that norm givers were influenced by their predecessors.

Features

Since the formation of a discourse community is strongly embedded within the **socio-historical context** in which language standardisation took place, this scenario of prescriptive influence does not apply more (or only) to specific linguistic features. Although the existence of a discourse community is more visible for features which are frequently discussed in normative works, the concept of norm givers influencing each other at a discursive level should be considered a **macro-level phenomenon** that operates in contexts of deliberate language standardisation.

Reach

While the formation of a discourse community is situated in the eighteenth century, it becomes an increasingly institutionalised enterprise with the emergence of the standard language ideology. From the moment that the ideology of a correct and homogenous form of language emerged and spread to the broader society, **new codifiers and institutions** probably **joined the discourse community**, as is shown by the numerous schoolbooks that

underpinned and copied the prescriptions of Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805) in the nineteenth century (Schoemaker, 2018).

Furthermore, the prevalence of this Northern discourse community also spread to the Southern territories when the socio-political context changed in the early nineteenth century. More specifically, the **dominance of the North** during the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands had the implication that the prescriptions of Northern grammarians **were implemented by most codifiers in the South**. This is illustrated in different case studies in this dissertation. In the case study on the spelling of the verb-final /t/, for example, Southern codifiers abruptly changed their prescriptions from <d> to the Northern <dt> in the first half of the nineteenth century (cf. also Vosters et al., 2014). The same is true for the Northern accusative-dative distinction between *hen* and *hun,* which Southern grammarians adopted only from the early nineteenth century onwards. Also numerous metalinguistic comments, in which Southern codifiers explicitly referred to Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805), indicate the discursive influence of Northern codifiers on Southern colleagues in the nineteenth century. This is clearly shown in the citation of the Flemish grammarian De Simpel (s.d. [1827]), who explains in the preface of his *Taalkundige Tweespraak*:

> *ik heb in de Tweespraak de spraakkunst van den heer Weiland ordelijk opgevolgd; en al dat tegen derzelver voorgedragen taalregels en de spelling van den heer Siegenbeek, van de Vlaamsche Taalleeraren, is opgeworpen, bijgebragt; de strijdige gevoelens opgewogen, en den lezer, zoo veel het mij immers mogelijk was, daarvan de waarde doen kennen*
> (De Simpel, s.d. [1827], p. 9)

> 'I have systematically followed Mr. Weiland's grammar in the *Tweespraak* and addressed all objections raised against its linguistic rules, as well as against Mr. Siegenbeek's spelling, brought forward by the Flemish language teachers. I have weighed the conflicting opinions and, as much as I was able, made the reader aware of their significance'

As such, the formation of a discourse community of normative practice is one of the most obvious effects that prescriptivism exerted during periods of language standardisation. While the discursive influence between codifiers is not explicitly investigated in this study, the references to predecessors were often

made explicit and were attested in the normative component in each of the case studies investigated in this dissertation. What is more, as previous scenarios have indicated, the existence of such a discourse community is often a prerequisite to observe a linguistic effect of prescriptivism in usage. In many cases, the discursive influence between grammarians thus precedes the (large-scale) prescriptive impact on general usage.

5.2 B – spreading social meanings

A discursive influence of prescriptivism is not restricted to fellow codifiers and other members who are closely connected to the elite community of norm givers, of course. In formulating prescriptions and evaluating variants as 'good' or 'correct' forms of Dutch, while other variants are classified as dialectal forms, mistakes or 'incorrect' usage, norm givers disseminate social meanings and awareness about stigmatised variants into society.

The clearest example of prescriptivism spreading social meanings can be seen with the emergence of the standard language ideology, when the metalinguistic discourse becomes divided between standard and non-standard usage. Grammarians then increasingly formulate evaluative judgements on which variants are considered 'standard' and 'non-standard'. The idea that there is such a thing as standard and non-standard usage, and that this ideology spreads among language users, is therefore one of the most obvious influences of prescriptivism (cf. Rutten, Vosters & Vandenbussche, 2014b, p. 11).

Apart from spreading awareness of the standard language into society, norm givers also disseminate other types of social meanings and stigmatisation. As some of the previously discussed scenarios of prescriptive influence indicated, grammarians form evaluative opinions of linguistic variants as an approach to change language use. For example, in the case of the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables, Southern grammarians ascribed the social meaning 'Hollandic' to the incoming variant <aa>. Together with prescriptions for the 'Southern' variant <ae>, prescriptivism managed to influence Southern usage with this social evaluation. While the stigmatisation of variants had linguistic consequences in this case study, this is certainly not always the case. In fact, the impact of norm givers is more often restricted to the discursive level, in that

prescriptivists solely spread the social meaning without changing the linguistic behaviour.

Discursive approaches

Grammarians commonly invoke social evaluations of linguistic variants as arguments for their prescriptions. For example, the social meaning of 'correct' versus 'incorrect' usage, as part of the standard language ideology, is reflected in Weiland's (1799) prescription on the comparative marker. The grammarian clearly attributes the social meaning of 'incorrectness' to the marker *als*, while *dan* is considered the standard variant:

> *Eindelijk moet nog aangemerkt worden, dat als zeer dikwijls, schoon verkeerdlijk, in de plaats van dan, achter den vergrootenden trap der bijvoegl. naamwoorden […] gebruikt wordt, b.v. zoeter als, voor dan, […] Deze misstelling, waarvoor men zich zorgvuldiglijk moet wachten, is, onmiddellijk na de komst van den Hertog van Alva (1568) in gebruik gekomen*
> (Weiland, 1799, p. 223)

> 'Finally, it should be noted that *als* is very often, though incorrectly, used in place of *dan* after the comparative degree of adjectives, e.g. *zoeter als* instead of *zoeter dan.* This incorrect usage, which one must carefully avoid, came into use immediately after the arrival of the Duke of Alba (1568)'

Apart from evaluations related to the 'standardness' of a form or construction, other social evaluations also accompany prescriptions. The case study on the spelling of the long /a/ in closed syllables is the most apparent example for illustrating that codifiers stigmatised linguistic forms in their prescriptions. In the seventeenth century, for example, multiple Hollandic codifiers formulated an evaluative judgement for rejecting the spelling <ae>. Most of them argued that the variant represented the sound of the long /a/ that was used in the local Hollandic dialect, which probably made language users aware of the stigma that was ascribed to the spelling as well. In this case, however, codifiers not only had a discursive influence, as they were able to reinforce the shift to the prescribed <aa>.

Social evaluations are generally formulated by **ascribing a stigma to the form**, e.g. 'variant *x* is used by the working class', or by **relegating the variant to**

another context or register, e.g. 'variant *x* should be used in elevated styles of writing'. The latter strategy, in which writing styles are differentiated, is strongly associated with what Curzan (2014, pp. 33-36) calls *stylistic prescriptivism.*

Features

It goes without saying that features that are prone to social evaluation score high on norm givers' awareness of the forms, with codifiers explicitly commenting on the feature in their normative works. Social evaluation thus takes place with features that are noticed by grammarians. In the case of strong metalinguistic judgement, these features often grow into *markers* or *stereotypes,* as Labov (2001, pp. 196-197) describes **salient features** of which the social or stylistic stratification is (strongly) marked (cf. also Silverstein, 2003).

Although different kinds of variables undergo social evaluation, in his research on language variation and change in the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, Vosters (2011, pp. 183-184) notes that **especially spelling features** were applied as markers for expressing a political or religious identity. Although spelling is certainly one of the more "conscious aspects of language" (Hickey, 2000, p. 57), these findings do not imply that other written features are not being socially evaluated or stigmatised. Case studies in other languages, like German (e.g. Langer, 2001) and English (e.g. Yáñez-Bouza, 2014, 2016, Anderwald, 2014a, 2020), indicate that grammatical features are equally prone to social evaluation by grammarians. Also in this research, the case study on the diminutive suffix shows that norm givers evaluated the suffix *-ken* as 'dignified' in the eighteenth century.

Reach

In the case studies investigated in this dissertation, codifiers attributed stigmas to linguistic variants, particularly of spelling features that were deeply rooted in the socio-historical and language-political context of **nation building** (cf. Vosters, 2011). The case studies in this dissertation showed that such highly specific historical settings may invoke stigmatisation or may affect the intensity of an existing stigma. For example, an incipient **socio-political stigma** (i.e. 'Northern' vs. 'Southern') **intensified** strongly in periods in which identity formation was prevalent, as was the case before and during the United Kingdom

of the Netherlands. This probably also increased **awareness of socio-political stigmas** among language users.

When it comes to language users' consciousness of stigmatised forms, language users may have been aware of the social or stylistic stratification of variation *before* grammarians started stigmatising the form. Although it is difficult to determine whether historical language users were indeed aware of stigmas ascribed to specific forms, it is important to consider the possibility that grammarians simply captured the 'talk about talk' that was already circulating within society. The effect of grammarians spreading social meanings may therefore be twofold: in line with the linguistic effects described in scenario 1, codifiers may be among the first to observe indicators of variation to **trigger stigmatisation**. In line with scenario 2, conversely, codifiers may **reinforce** the existing social meaning, not to create it anew, but to keep it alive and to **further spread** it throughout society. By generating and strengthening these social evaluations, the scrutinised features may also rise in Labov's (2001) *hierarchy of salience,* with or without influencing language use.

Note, however, that prescriptivists are not the only sources that stigmatise and create social awareness of linguistic features. Social evaluation and stigmatisation can also take place in other texts, like stylistic sources and literary texts.[76]

Duration

The duration of stigmatisation and the awareness of metalinguistic judgements depends on many factors, such as the kind of stigma, the (changes in the) socio-historical context, the position of the feature in the hierarchy of salience, the lifespan of the stigma in metalinguistic works, and so on. In some instances of social evaluation, the stigma that historical codifiers ascribed to features lives on until today (for an example, see Anderwald, 2020). The same applies to the divide in the metalinguistic paradigm between standard and non-standard usage. After all, the standard language ideology that emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century remains influential to this day.

[76] For a historical perspective, see for instance Beal (2009, 2017) and Hodson (2017) on English.

6 Scenario 5: No probable influence

The final scenario of prescriptive influence that is discussed here is the scenario where codifiers fail to influence usage. Although the focus of this study was primarily on the instances in which prescriptivism was successful, a few factors potentially indicate why codifiers fail to exert an influence. These unsuccessful interventions of prescriptivism are captured in this scenario, which should be read only as possible hypotheses for prospective research into failed attempts of historical prescriptivism.

Discursive approaches

It goes without saying that features changing **below the radar** of norm givers are not picked up by codifiers in their normative works and are thus automatically excluded from any type of prescriptive influence. The different case studies in this dissertation, however, also indicate that codifiers who **only** use the codified form in their **own usage**, and who additionally touch upon the linguistic item **implicitly**, do not impact language use. This is illustrated, for example, in the case study on the verb-final /t/, where the implicit prescriptions for <t> in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries did not lead to an increase of the variant in usage. Also the implicit prescriptions for the diminutive suffix *-ken* in the early seventeenth century did not halt the demise of the velar suffix in Northern usage. Explicit prescriptions, which clearly aim for raising awareness of the topic, therefore appear necessary for prescriptivism to exert an impact on general usage. For influencing fellow codifiers, conversely, the language practice of an authoritative writer or grammarian suffices for prescriptivism to have an impact (cf. scenario 4A).

The case studies in this dissertation also suggest that solely formulating explicit comments is not sufficient to influence general language use. **Explicit prescriptions** which are set out to initiate new **variants that deviate from the selected norm** are also rarely successful. The most apparent example from this research derives from a seventeenth-century grammarian. The Brabantine Bolognino (1657) is known for formulating prescriptions which differ from the common practice at the time. For example, he prescribed the variant <á> instead of the usual <ae> or <aa> for representing the long /a/ in closed syllables, and

for the diminutive suffixes, he believed the suffix *-tien* was more suited than the variant *-tjen.* Although previous research indicates that such prescriptions may temporarily affect language users in certain networks, often close to the circle of the innovating grammarian, deviant prescriptions are **not likely to experience success at a broader scale** (Rutten & Vosters, 2010a; 2010b; Vosters et al., 2014). These failed attempts of prescriptivism are probably linked to the fact that innovating prescriptions are often articulated only by one or a few codifiers, and thus **lack support** from a larger group of norm givers. In fact, multiple of the scenarios of prescriptive influence indicated that prescriptions were successful only when they were backed by several codifiers or even a discourse community of normative practice.

Features

In terms of features, the case studies in this dissertation showed that prescriptivism is less likely to influence usage when features show some kind of **complexity**.

Features consisting of **multiple variants and a complex embedding of variation** appear less prone to a linguistic influence of prescriptivism. This is illustrated by the case study on the plural personal pronouns. Although the use of *hen* and *hun* was subject to prescriptive influence in printed genres and affected some individual language users from other genres, the visible impact was considerably lower in this case study than it was for other (grammatical) features. Although the distinction between the pronouns appears quite simple, it is more complex than it seems at first sight. For instance, language users must know the difference between the accusative and dative case in order to apply the distinction between the pronouns correctly. Furthermore, the prescribed variants extend beyond the two main variants *hen* and *hun.* The variant *ze* is also prescribed as an alternative form, yet to make matters even more difficult, *ze* is only prescribed in the accusative case. Moreover, for the feminine grammatical gender, other pronouns than *hen* and *hun* are prescribed and used. As such, it is safe to say that this feature shows itself a linguistically more complex feature than, let us say, the comparative marker. This possibly indicates why the case distinction between the plural personal pronouns is less susceptible to a large-scale effect of prescriptivism.

A similar example in which complexity in norms possibly acts as a hindering factor for prescriptive influence is found in the case study on the diminutive suffix. While this grammatical feature is complex at a language-internal level, in that it comprises different allomorphs within one suffix (e.g. *-tje, -etje, -pje, -je*), language norms also show complexity in explaining variation. As was discussed in Chapter 8, grammarians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sometimes proposed **a multitude of exceptions to the general norm**. Codifiers often promoted velar and palatal suffixes, which were consequently attributed to diverging linguistic contexts. The linguistic principles governing the variable prescriptions were also not clearly pronounced and were not consistent between the codifiers. Moreover, the patterns of variation that were described in language norms were certainly not attested in actual usage. For example, the velar suffix *-ken* which was part of the discussed mixed prescriptions, almost disappeared from Northern usage in the eighteenth century. As such, any influence of these complex prescriptions on usage is ruled out. This case study therefore suggests that complex prescriptions with intricate exceptions to the general rule are also less susceptible for implementation in language use. After all, when prescriptions for the diminutive suffix became more uniform at the end of the eighteenth century, and thus only promoted the suffix *-je(n),* a possible influence of prescriptivism emerged. It is therefore less likely that the earlier lack of prescriptive influence can be attributed (only) to the feature's language-internal structure. The complexity and inconsistency of the prescriptions likely disrupted prescriptive influence as well (cf. Poplack et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the findings from this research suggest that developments in spoken usage may undermine the impact of prescriptivism on written usage. Considering the case studies where prescriptivism was not successful, or where prescriptivism was influential only at a very restricted scale, we are looking at the diminutive suffix, on the one hand, and the accusative-dative distinction between the personal pronouns, on the other hand. As was mentioned before, both are complex grammatical features. Contrary to the spelling variables that were investigated, however, grammatical features are also used in speech. Grammatical patterns in writing may therefore show **interference with the spoken language**. More specifically, in the case of the diminutive suffix, the change from velar to palatal suffixes first took place in speech, before codifiers prescribed the suffix *-je(n)* for written usage (cf. Chapter 8). As was explained earlier, Northern codifiers also prescribed *-ke(n)* in the eighteenth century, while

the form had practically disappeared from Northern usage. In general usage, it was thus very uncommon to apply the velar suffix at that time. Given that the change occurred in speech first, we can only imagine how outdated the velar *-ke(n)* must have sounded in spoken usage. The fact that spoken usage preceded the change in the written language may therefore offer an additional explanation for why the prescriptions for *-ke(n)* were not implemented in writing.

A similar argument can be made for the accusative-dative distinction between the plural personal pronouns *hen* and *hun.* These forms were used interchangeably as a direct and indirect object before the case distinction was introduced in the seventeenth century (cf. Chapter 9). While other codifiers and printed genres gradually adopted the proposed case distinction, no large-scale influence of prescriptivism was detected across other genres. Also when other grammatical features – like the comparative marker and the diminutive suffix – were prone to prescriptive influence in the nineteenth century, the implementation of the accusative-dative distinction was restricted to individual language users. The fact that this introduced case distinction between *hen* and *hun* **contradicts native speaker intuition**, may explain why the distinction was primarily implemented in texts that were subject to editorial interventions.

While the complexity of the feature and the interference with the spoken language might imply that grammatical variables are not – or at least less – influenced by prescriptivism, this seems like an overly simplistic conclusion. Especially since the prescriptions for another grammatical feature, i.e. the comparative marker, were successful across the board. In that case, however, we observe a very swift change from *dan* to *als* in seventeenth-century usage. Due to the rapid nature of the change – *dan* sharply declined over just a few decades – it is likely that the variant was not yet considered **uncommon or archaic in usage**. This is further supported by the fact that the form was still relatively common in the seventeenth century, occurring in about 25% of the instances prior to the prescriptions for *dan.* In this respect, the comparative marker differs from the other grammatical features that were investigated. While the prescriptions for the comparative marker *dan* were not too far removed from common usage, the prescribed suffix *-ke(n)* was archaic in Northern usage, and the case distinction between plural pronouns simply felt unnatural for mother-tongue language users. The fact that the comparative marker *dan* was thus still common in usage at the time of prescriptive interventions may explain the

success of prescriptivism. Additionally, the relatively simple nature of this variable, with two variants present in writing (both of which were probably also used in speech), likely contributed to the successful implementation of these grammatical prescriptions in usage.

7 Summary

1. Triggering a change

embedding in Dutch language history - Prescriptivism actuates a change in usage in the period that Holland experiences its 'Golden Age'. Standardisers from this region initiate variant selection and codify the selected variants in normative works (cf. Haugen, 1966).

period in which the effect is visible - Right after the first codifications of the selected form, in the middle of the seventeenth century.

affected regions or areas - An evident impact on individuals from Holland, although language users from other regions are also influenced.

influenced genres - Individual authors of printed texts, like pamphlets. An influence on writers of other genres is not ruled out, though.

susceptible features - Specific features that were strongly involved in metalinguistic discussions in the period of (variant) selection.

frequency of the scenario - Although this scenario arises in two of the investigated case studies, it occurs in a specific context and involves highly particular features, making its overall frequency rare.

2A. Diffusing an innovation

embedding in Dutch language history - Prescriptivism succeeds in accelerating an ongoing change when normative works widened their social reach. Particularly the civil and national grammars therefore aid in diffusing the innovation (Rutten, 2019). The emerging standard language ideology also implied a greater awareness of the existence of language norms.

period in which the effect is visible - Since a discourse community of grammarians prescribing for a broader target audience is necessary, the effect in usage is only possible from the eighteenth century onwards.

affected regions or areas - This scenario is mainly observed as an influence of Northern norms on Northern usage, and of Southern prescriptivism on Southern usage. Additionally, the socio-historical context in the nineteenth century facilitated the diffusion of Northern innovations to Southern parts of the language area.

influenced genres - Different genres are impacted. Printed texts, like pamphlets, are either first affected or show little direct influence of prescriptivism. In the latter case, printed texts help spreading the innovation. Ego-documents are less influenced overall.

susceptible features - Particularly spelling features. Grammatical variables are also influenced, though with a weaker impact on usage.

frequency of the scenario - This type of influence is more common than scenario 1, appearing in three of the five case studies.

2B. Eradicating remaining variability

embedding in Dutch language history - The strong effect of prescriptivism in eradicating variability from usage is only achieved through extensive language planning efforts. In the Northern Netherlands, the gradually increasing institutionalisation of language norms culminated in the national language policy of 1804 and 1805.

period in which the effect is visible - After the official language policy was implemented nationwide in the early nineteenth century, with its effect becoming noticeable a few decades later.

affected regions or areas - The Northern Netherlands, the area for which the language policy was intended.

influenced genres - Genres subject to some form of editorial oversight, whether printed or handwritten.

susceptible features - Both spelling and grammatical features. However, only those features with a simple opposition of (main) variants and limited linguistic complexity achieve uniformity.

frequency of the scenario - As a follow-up scenario, reflecting an intensified influence of prescriptivism, this scenario is less frequent than scenario 2A but more common than scenario 1.

3A. Slowing down undesired innovations

embedding in Dutch language history - Prescriptivism (temporarily) slows down changes in usage during the period when normative works became more institutionalised and targeted a broader readership. The impact gradually strengthened, also due to the rise of the standard language ideology.

period in which the effect is visible - Similar to scenario 2A, the existence of a discourse community of grammarians is essential for observing an influence, limiting the effect to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

affected regions or areas - While Southern prescriptivism affects Southern usage, Northern prescriptivism influences Northern usage and, to a lesser extent, usage in Brabant.

influenced genres - Genres that undergo some form of editorial scrutiny, such as pamphlets and administrative texts, are influenced first in the eighteenth century. Other genres are impacted later, in the nineteenth century, following the further institutionalisation of prescriptivism.

susceptible features - Spelling and grammatical features with a simple opposition of (main) variants and limited linguistic complexity seem most susceptible to this type of prescriptive influence. The absence of influence on more complex features is not confirmed, though.

frequency of the scenario - Only a few attempts to slow down changes were identified in this study. However, with two successful examples, the scenario appears less common than scenario 2A.

3B. Reviving archaic usage

embedding in Dutch language history - The successful revival of an archaic variant is attested only through intensive language planning efforts at times of nation building, which ultimately resulted in the national language policy in the Northern Netherlands.

period in which the effect is visible - After the dissemination of the national language policy, in the nineteenth century.

affected regions or areas - Scholars focused solely on the Northern Netherlands, where an influence was observed. However, an influence in the Southern part of the language area cannot be ruled out. Given that Northern prescriptions spread to the South in the early nineteenth century, it is reasonable to hypothesise that Northern prescriptivism impacted Southern usage as well.

influenced genres - The revival of an archaic variant is most pronounced in heavily edited printed genres, such as newspapers, and handwritten texts that undergo some form of editorial intervention. More informal genres, like ego-documents, are influenced but to a lesser extent.

susceptible features - Grammatical features appear to be the primary focus of grammarians. Prescriptivism succeeded in reviving one slowly progressing change that involves a binary opposition of variants. For this success, the variant to be revived still needs to be used beyond fixed constructions.

frequency of the scenario - Since only one instance was documented in this dissertation, it suggests that prescriptive attempts to revive archaic variants are relatively rare, at least in the context of Dutch.

4A. Forming a discourse community

embedding in Dutch language history - When codifying the Dutch language, standardisers influenced each other, and formed a discourse community centered around normative practice (cf. Watts, 1999, 2008).

period in which the effect is visible - During the period of codification and implementation of the standard, from the early eighteenth century onwards.

affected regions or areas - This discursive influence is evident among Northern and Southern codifiers, although it appears somewhat later in the South.

influenced genres - Not applicable. The influence is limited to norm givers who contribute to the normative discourse.

susceptible features - Not applicable, since this is a macro-level phenomenon related to standardisation. However, the existence of a discourse community is particularly visible in the prescriptions for features that are frequently discussed in normative works.

frequency of the scenario - A discursive influence between norm givers is observed in all of the investigated case studies. As a natural outcome of codification, this scenario is highly common.

4B. Spreading social meanings

embedding in Dutch language history - From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, the standard language ideology became more prominent, leading to an increase of evaluative comments on what constituted standard or non-standard usage. This shift occurred in the context of nation-building processes, which also introduced socio-political stigmas attached to language use (Vosters, 2011). However, also before the eighteenth century, social meanings and stigmas were attributed to specific usage, and these meanings could spread among language users.

period in which the effect is visible - The spread of social meanings within the language community is not confined to any specific period. However, the dissemination of the idea of a standard language became more characteristic from the eighteenth century onwards. It is likely that other social meanings also spread more easily during this time, particularly due to the rise in metalinguistic reflection and the increased production of normative works.

affected regions or areas - The entire language area is prone to this discursive influence of prescriptivism.

influenced genres - Not applicable.

susceptible features - Features with marked social or stylistic stratification are more susceptible to stigmatisation (Labov, 2001, pp. 196-197).

frequency of the scenario - This scenario is probably more common than any of the scenarios in which prescriptivism has a linguistic influence, making it a highly frequent scenario.

5. No probable influence

embedding in Dutch language history - Before the eighteenth century, explicit discussions of linguistic issues were often lacking. Prior to prescriptivism gaining a more institutionalised status - marked by the formation of a discourse community of grammarians who explicitly debated these topics - its influence on general usage is therefore unlikely.

period in which the effect is visible - An observable effect of prescriptivism on language use is unlikely before the eighteenth century. While linguistic influence of prescriptivism is not entirely ruled out prior to this period, its impact is generally confined to individual language users.

affected regions or areas - The absence of prescriptive influence is observed in both the Northern and the Southern parts of the language area.

influenced genres - Not applicable.

susceptible features - Spelling and grammatical features that exhibit complexity - whether through multiple possible variants, many exceptions in the prescriptions, or intricate linguistic embedding in usage - are less likely to be influenced by prescriptivism. Strong interference with the spoken language or deviations from common practice are additional indicators that prescriptivism may not be successful in influencing usage.

frequency of the scenario - The scenario in which prescriptivism fails to impact usage is common, especially before the eighteenth century.