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Summary

This study is entitled ‘Cartographers and land dividers. Adriaen Verwer (ca. 1655-1717), Adriaan Kluit (1735-1807) and Dutch linguistics of the eighteenth century’. It serves three research aims. The first aim is to analyse and describe the linguistic views of the Dutch late eighteenth-century ‘man of letters’ Adriaan Kluit (1735-1807). The second is to analyse the theoretical and language-theoretical framework of Adriaen Verwer (1655-1717), the learned merchant who published a short Dutch grammar, the *Linguae Belgicae idea*, at the start of the eighteenth century. Kluit studied that brief Latin work closely, translated it into Dutch and attempted to publish it under the title *Letterkonstige, dichtkonstige en redenkonstige schetse van de Nederduitsche tale*. He did not endorse all of Verwer’s concrete grammatical statements as such, but he adhered to the views of language and the study of language that Verwer had expressed in his grammar. Knowledge of Verwer’s views is thus necessary to understand Kluit’s work and judge its merits. Knowledge of these views is also indispensable for the third research purpose of this study: to interpret, qualify and – possibly – change the perception of the study of language in the eighteenth century, a subject which as yet is reputed to be boring and dull among historians of linguistics.

Part I of this study describes the theoretical background of Verwer’s linguistic epistemology. Verwer was a pious Mennonite merchant who challenged René Descartes’s and especially Benedictus de Spinoza’s ideas. From early on he found support in the views of Isaac Newton and his way of practising natural science. Newton had shown that God could be known from nature by way of precise observation. He propagated a firm empirical foundation of science: definite correlations could only be deduced from observable phenomena. This led Verwer to the theoretical insight that mankind should strive for knowledge of the whole, the system that lies at the basis of the individual appearances; but such knowledge always had to be rooted in reality and had to be supported by experience.

Whatever applied to nature, applied to language as well. Within language, regularity ruled likewise, because mankind had shaped his language with the help of the God-given faculty of reason. Just like the physico-theologian can reach a knowledge of God by investigating the laws of nature, the language-theologian can do this by describing the laws of language. This brought Verwer to the point of view that language research had to be research of the overall linguistic system first of all and to the demand that the study of language be empirically founded. Individual rules of language always ought to be viewed against the background of the underlying system, which had to be charted without prejudice. Linguistic researchers were like cartographers. They had to deduce the regularities from actually observed language use in the right sources exclusively. Those sources were to be found in the past, especially in the Middle Ages, because according to Verwer, in that period language was still used roughly in accordance with the regularity of the underlying system. In the course of time, language had become dissociated from the regularity that typified its origin. However, Verwer’s quest for the system behind the linguistic appearances must not be seen as a plea for restoration of the regularity within the con-

temporary language, because for the contemporary language, the *usus* – the respectable use – constituted the norm. Linguists are like surveyors of the land, but they do not parcel it out. Whoever wished to use his language in accordance with the right use could rely on the proper sources from after the year 1624, and especially the *Statenbijbel* (the authorised version of the Bible), Verwer wrote. In the year 1624, the authorities had decided to restore the regularity of the system and to preserve it in an official new Bible translation. For this purpose, only sources in the general language were taken into account, certainly not the writings in the *dialectus poëtica*, the Latin-inspired literary language of poets like Joost van den Vondel.

The third characteristic of Verwer's linguistic epistemology is the social role he attributed to the study of language. Language is the medium of the whole community and not only of a small, elitist social upper layer with literary orientations. Language has a strong binding function; it makes a group of people a society. For that reason it is important that as many people as possible acquire the *Tael der Republijeke* (the language of the Republic), the overarching unified language which surpasses the regional languages and has to be managed by the government. That will be possible when the underlying system is visualised and the rules of the language are seen in the context of regularity: who understands analogy, recognizes also anomaly.

In part II of this study the linguistic views of Adriaan Kluit are described and analysed. Kluit was a prominent member of *Minima crescunt* and *Linguaque animoque fidelis*, students' societies from Leiden that aspired to a scientific character of the study of the Dutch language, and of several other societies, among which the *Maatschappij der Nederlandsche letterkunde* (the Society for Dutch literature). From an early age Kluit was interested in his mother tongue and he kept that interest during his whole life. He published about the orthography of Dutch, produced two editions of Van Hoogstraten's listing of all Dutch nouns with their gender (1759, 1783), wrote poetry and commentaries of poetry. He also engaged in external language comparison, studied the kinship of the Dutch language with other languages and contributed to the compilation of the general explanatory dictionary of the Dutch language (*Algemeen, omschryvend woordenboek der Nederlandsche tale*), the ambitious, unfinished lexicographic project that occupied the Society for Dutch literature in the years between 1769 and 1796.

The principles that lie at the basis of the linguistic views of Adriaan Kluit appear to be the same as the insights that informed Adriaen Verwer's views of language and linguistics. For Kluit, too, language is a regular entity first of all, the study of language should be empirically founded and the social importance of language is such as cannot be overestimated.

According to Kluit, regularity is the characteristic of all languages, and language laws describe this regularity. Initially he followed Verwer and Huydecoper in their view that the original analogy could be found in Middle Dutch. However, later he realised that the original regularity of the language had to be searched for in a much earlier past, something that the authoritative Ten Kate had shown convincingly in his manual of the Dutch language *Aenleiding tot de Kennisse van het Verbevene deel der Nederduitsche sprake* (1723). Intensive empirical investigations of as many historical and contemporary sources as possible, literary sources as well as non-literary ones,

were to uncover the regularity. This turned out to be a difficult task and in the sixth edition of Van Hoogstraten's gender list, Kluit was forced to conclude that the study of language was not yet capable of formulating language rules that could explain the linguistic phenomena adequately.

Kluit endorsed the social language conception of the literary societies of the second half of the eighteenth century in full. He attributed great social importance to the study of language and deplored its failure to establish rules that could offer support to the language users. The state of the language mirrored the state of society: the lack of language rules was not favourable to the common good of society.

In his view on the regularity of language and his desire for establishing language rules Kluit naturally questioned the relation between language system and language use, a question that Verwer and Ten Kate had answered before him. To what extent should language users pay attention to a regularity that had been part of the Dutch language in a distant past? Verwer and Ten Kate had opted for the *usus* as norm: follow the common use and keep to the regularity only where it does not contrast with the common use. But uncertainty remained about what did and what did not belong to the *usus*, and language users were in need of firm norms. The *usus* could only be deduced from the overarching, supraregional standard language; but how did this general language look like exactly? Kluit's answer resembled in broad lines the answers of his predecessors: the standard language is the language of the province of Holland, with a number of distinctive sounds from Maasland and Rotterdam.

It is clear then that Kluit was not just interested in describing the system of language; he also wished to formulate language norms: what counts as *proper Dutch*? Of course the language system had to be described in the manner of a geographical map, but the completion of it could not be expected in the foreseeable future. In the meantime the land had to be parcelled out, language norms were needed. In order to find the regularity, Kluit at first looked to Middle Dutch, but later he sought solutions that could find broad acceptance in society: he refrained from distancing himself too much from common practice. He formulated a number of rules for orthographical problems and gender determination that were widely accepted, and in this way he settled a number of long-standing disputes. His proposals were adopted by Weiland and Siegenbeek in 1804/1805 and confirmed by the government not much later.

The perception that eighteenth-century thinking about language would just be dominated by limitless arguments about rules for spelling and nominal gender does not do justice to the fundamental insights that informed the study of the Dutch language in this period and the changes in the view of language and linguistics that were developing. Tendencies in philosophy and science at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century nourished the view that language phenomena were systematic, and they provided methods to envisage this language system. The demand of an empirical foundation was an important methodical improvement, which led to a thorough study of source materials and an accurate practice of language description. Gradually, something developed that we may call a Dutch 'linguistics of the Enlightenment', of which Verwer and Ten Kate

are early representatives and Kluit a later one. Kluit's motives are no longer the apologetic ones we find with Verwer and Ten Kate, but his basic principles of language investigation are no different from the ones that his predecessors adhered to: the view that language is systematic, the demand of empirical founding and the social orientation that takes precedence. In the way in which Verwer, Ten Kate and Kluit approached language, the distinction becomes visible between fundamental language research and language research for the purpose of drawing up rules of language use, the distinction between linguistics and philology, in short: between theoretical cartographers and practical land dividers.