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Late Modern English in a Dutch context[1]

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The translation of Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1795) into many different languages is often taken as a starting point for the spread of English as a world language. This article places the developing European interest in English much earlier than that, and it does so by analysing a series of letters in the library of the University of Leiden written by Englishmen from the Late Modern English period to men of letters in the Netherlands. The letters show that English as a medium of communication was not as a rule an issue, even though Dutch letter writers were rarely exposed to English and often lacked the tools – or the teachers – to acquire the language, a situation which would change drastically during the nineteenth century. The article also analyses the earliest attempts at writing in English by Johannes Stinstra, the Dutch translator of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*.

1 Introduction

The library of the University of Leiden in the Netherlands possesses eighty eighteenth-century English autograph letters, all of which are addressed to Dutchmen.[2] The collection includes letters by Samuel Johnson's biographer James Boswell (1740–95) and his father Alexander, Lord Auchinleck (1707–82); by the 'naturalist and patron of science' Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820); the 'orientalist and judge' Sir William Jones (1746–94); and William Warburton (1698–1779), 'bishop of Gloucester and religious controversialist'.[3] What all these letters have in common is that they were written in English, at a time when Latin, to all intents and purposes, was still the language of international communication. Replies to these letters, in as far as they have come down to us, were usually in Latin or French, which thus suggests that the recipients' knowledge of English was at best a passive skill only.[4]

The situation for the Netherlands as such is not unique, as is shown by the comparable case of the correspondence between the eighteenth-century English grammarian Robert

[1] Part of the research for this article was done together with a group of pre-university students during the course Eighteenth-Century English Letters in Leiden (Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, first semester, 2009–10): Claire Belilos, Sinéad Clarke, Juliëtte van Haaster, Danielle Kool, Maxim Roozen and Stefanie Vreeken. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their suggestions for improvement.

[2] The letters can be identified as follows. On the Leiden University Library website (www.library.leiden.edu), click on Catalogue and then on Advanced Search. Next, select Language = English and Material Type = Letters. In the search box next to Any ... contains, fill in 'brief OR brieven OR letter OR letters', and click on Search. The results can be refined by limiting the Creation Date, first to Before 1952 and next to Before 1800. You will find the letters in question – though also those from before 1700 – under Creator.

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, the identifications, including the life dates, of the British writers referred to in this article derive from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*).

[4] An exception was Hendrik Albert Schultens (1749–93), who had obtained an MA in Oxford, and whose letters are consequently in a near native-speaker-like English (Blok & Molhuysen 1921).

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Lowth (1710–87) and the German biblical scholar Johann David Michaelis (1717–91), who had published an annotated edition of Lowth's *De Sacra Poesie Hebraeorum* (1758–61; 1768) (Hepworth 1978: 39). The two men exchanged letters between 1762 and 1782, with Lowth's part in the correspondence comprising five letters in Latin and seventeen in English and Michaelis writing in Latin throughout. The switch from Latin to English occurred in a letter dated 3 February 1770, when Lowth announced: 'As I find it will give You no trouble to read English, I take the liberty of addressing You in that Language' (Lowth to Michaelis, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen Cod. MS Michaelis 325: Bl. 390–443, ff. 402–4). Michaelis appears to have learnt English during a visit to England in 1741–2; passive though his skill in English appears to have been, it must have been sufficient for him to be able to translate Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa* (1747–8) into German (Beebee 1986). Michaelis's translation, which was published between 1749 and 1753, was the first to appear in Europe, but it was soon followed by one into Dutch, published between 1752 and 1755, by the Frisian clergyman Johannes Stinstra (1708–90) (Blok & Molhuysen 1937).[5] Richardson must have been quite taken with these translations, for the clergyman John Upton (1707–60) reported in a letter to his friend, the philosopher and musical patron James Harris (1709–80): 'He showed me his Clarissa translated into French, into High-Dutch and Low-Dutch, with some Latin letters from the translators' (12 February 1753; as quoted by Probyn 1991: 74).

Richardson (bap. 1689, d. 1761) wasn't the only British novelist whose work was read in the Netherlands: the database WomenWriters shows, for instance, that the novels by Sarah Fielding (1710–68) were translated into Dutch as well: *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) in 1745, *The Governess* (1749) in 1750 and *The History of Charlotte Summers* (1749) in 1750. The question arises as to how these translators acquired their skill in English. According to Loonen (1996: 23), there were few English textbooks on the Dutch market in the eighteenth century, far fewer than in Germany around the same time.[6] Wilhelm (2005: 28), moreover, notes that in the Netherlands at the end of the century English was still considered 'a strange and unknown language, as speakers of Dutch rarely met native speakers of English in the flesh and consequently seldom heard English used as a mother tongue'. In addition, the question might be asked how good the English, passive or otherwise, of the Dutch translators of the period was, and also whether the Englishmen they happened to communicate with were aware of any limitations in the receptive skills of their Dutch correspondents, and whether any linguistic accommodation occurred to allow for the relatively poorer understanding of their addressees. These are questions I will address in this article, and I will do so by discussing the letters by the Boswells, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir William Jones and William Warburton to their Dutch addressees; secondly, I will discuss the arrival of

[5] Biographical material on the Dutch letter writers discussed here has been obtained through the Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren (DBNL).

[6] This difference continued in the century following: with 24 English textbooks on the Dutch market for the eighteenth century and 695 for the nineteenth, Loonen lists 158 and 2296 items for the German market during the same period (Loonen 1996: 23–4).

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the major eighteenth-century English grammars, Ash (1760), Priestley (1761), Lowth (1762) and Murray (1795), on the Dutch market as well as elsewhere in Europe (and even beyond); and finally I will analyse Johannes Stinstra's skill in English on the basis of his correspondence with Samuel Richardson.

2 The case studies

2.1 James and Alexander Boswell

The letters by the Boswells in the Leiden University Library, two of them, are dated 23 July 1763 and a little after 21 December of that same year (Tieken-Boon van Ostade forthcoming). They are both addressed to Abraham Gronovius (1695–1775), who was at that time Librarian of the University of Leiden (Pottle 1952: 24). Gronovius and Alexander Boswell had been fellow students of law at Leiden many years previously, and Boswell took the opportunity of writing to his old friend to invoke his help in providing his son James with introductions into Dutch society. It had been decided that James, like his father and grandfather before him, would also go to the Netherlands to study law, prior to embarking on a European Grand Tour.[7] Alexander put his request to Gronovius in the form of a PS:

> As my son is going to Utrecht I beg youll be so good as recommend him to some of Your ffreinds there, I remember with pleasure my having attended You and your excellent Lady to that place & having been introduced to Your Brother in Law Mynheer van IJke and to Your Sister in Law Miss Van IJke the Prettiest Girl I ever saw, And how you all laughd at me for taking the benefit of the British Custom & saluting Miss contrary to the Dutch Form. (Leiden University Library MS BPL 246)

The letter itself is filled with reminiscences, and refers to James's intended visit to the Netherlands, but there is not a single reference to the use of English as the language of communication. This is peculiar, for when they had been students, Alexander Boswell and Gronovius would very likely have conversed in Latin, the language of Dutch universities down to the nineteenth century (van der Wal & van Bree 2008: 230). At some point during their long acquaintance, therefore, a decision must have been made to switch from Latin to English, as in the case of the correspondence between Lowth and Michaelis, though on what grounds doesn't become clear. Unlike Michaelis, Gronovius most likely did not know any English, passively or otherwise, for with James he corresponded in Latin: Pottle (1952) includes a letter, dated 9 June 1764, in which Gronovius acknowledged the receipt of 45 bottles of port which James had sent him in gratitude for the hospitality he had received during several visits to Leiden: 'quinque et quadraginta lagenae falerni Lusitanici … hodie ad me perlatae sunt', Gronovius wrote (Pottle 1952: 381).

[7] Scottish law, according to Pottle (1952: 2) represented a 'totally different system from the English, mak[ing] a great deal of Roman law; and as the Dutch were the great masters of Roman law, it was usual for young men preparing for the Scots bar to complete their education in Holland'.

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2.2 Sir Joseph Banks

Joseph Banks, who did not receive his knighthood until 1795, was elected president of the Royal Society in 1778, a position which he kept until his death in 1820 (*ODNB*, s.v. Joseph Banks). In this capacity he corresponded with a large number of people, including the Dutch physician Petrus Camper (1722–89) and the mycologist Christiaan Hendrik Persoon (1761–1836). The University Library at Leiden possesses three letters by Banks, one of which was addressed to Camper, dated 28 July 1786; the two letters addressed to Persoon are dated 8 April 1799 and 8 February 1801. In the letter to Camper Banks refers to an essay by Camper that had recently been read to the Royal Society and requests further information on 'the Dugon Fish which tho probably the most curious of all intermediate animals is Known to me only by the Figure you pointed out to me which is execrably bad' (Leiden University Library MS BPL 247:133a), and in his letters to Persoon Banks deals with Persoon's request to have a station set up at the Cape of Good Hope 'under the English Government', something which Banks 'think[s] . . . worth a trial'. Persoon's duty there was to be 'an active & usefull Correspondent to his majestie's Botanic Gardens at Kew, by Procuring as often as possible the Seeds Parts &c of new Plants to be sent home by the Governor' (8 February 1801, Leiden University Library MS BPL 243). Again, the letters make no mention of English as the language of communication between Banks and his two correspondents. In the case of the correspondence with Camper there would have been no need to do so: Camper had visited England several times, in 1748, 1752 and 1785, and he had been instrumental in introducing certain medical innovations from England into the Netherlands, such as the inoculation against smallpox (Meijer 1999: 14, 20). There are no letters from Camper to Banks in the Leiden collection, but his English letters to other addressees indicate that his English was quite fluent. The case of Persoon seems to have been quite different: the Leiden University Library contains one letter by him written to Banks in French: neither English nor Latin evidently served as a means of communication between the two men.

2.4 Sir William Jones

There are eleven letters in the Leiden University Library by William Jones,[8] written between 1772 and 1783 and all of them addressed to Hendrik Albert Schultens (1749–93). Schultens was a member of a Dutch family of orientalists. He had obtained an MA degree at the University of Oxford in 1773 – in the same year as Jones – upon which he was appointed professor of oriental languages in Amsterdam (Blok & Molhuysen 1921).[9] Apart from Jones, Schultens corresponded with other fellow scholars from

[8] Jones was knighted on 20 March 1783, shortly before his departure to India where he was to become a judge in Calcutta. It was there that he engaged himself with the study of Sanskrit (*ODNB*, Sir William Jones).

[9] The letters Schultens wrote to his father along with the journal he kept during his year in Oxford have been published online by Claire van Eekeren and Elsbeth Kwant at https://sites.google.com/site/haschultens/ ('Reisverslag H. A. Schultens 1772–1773').

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his Oxford days, such as the historian and classicist Thomas Winstanley (1749–1823) and the orientalist and theologian Joseph White (1745–1814), but also with the much older biblical scholar Benjamin Kennicott (1718–83).[10] Several of Jones's letters to Schultens are in Latin; as in the case of the letters exchanged between Lowth and Michaelis, a switch was made to English in the course of the correspondence, but it is only in the second English letter that an allusion is made to the change: 'Pardon the liberty I take . . . putting these questions and scribbling in English' (14 November 1780, Leiden University Library MS BPL 245: B). There seems to be no other reason for the change of language than the expression of greater positive politeness: whereas the letters before this one, though also in English, had contained the formal opening and closing formulas 'Sir' and 'You [*sic*] very faithful humble Servant W. Jones'(13 May 1780, Leiden University Library MS BPL 245: B), the second English letter opened with 'My dear friend' and concluded with the words 'I am, my dear friend, with the warmest wishes for your health and happiness, yours most affectionately W. Jones'.[11] If Latin was the language of scholarship, it seems that English was felt to be more appropriate as a vehicle of friendship between the two men.

2.5 William Warburton

Characterised by the *ODNB* as a 'religious controversialist', William Warburton is perhaps best known for his controversy with Robert Lowth. The argument started after Lowth's publication of his lectures on Hebrew poetry in 1753, and was ostensibly about the dating of the Book of Job. The real issue, Hepworth (1978) argues, concerned their rivalry for Church preferment. In 1755, when the controversy was in full swing, 'both were heading for a bishopric; but Warburton was fifty-seven; Lowth, forty-five' (Hepworth 1978: 101). The argument was temporarily patched up, but was resumed upon the publication of the second edition of Lowth's *Praelectiones* in 1763. By that time, Warburton had acquired the see of Gloucester (1760). Lowth's nomination as Bishop of Oxford took place in 1766, and eleven years later he was translated to London, a position for which Warburton, too, had had aspirations, convinced 'that he deserved better than the see of Gloucester' (*ODNB*, s.v. William Warburton). The affair, which had been fully laid out in the open by the publication of the correspondence between the two men on two occasions (Lowth 1765; Warburton 1766), left an enormous impact on Warburton, and after a serious fall and the subsequent loss of his nineteen-year-old son, he died a senile man.

There are thirteen letters by Warburton in the Leiden University Library collection. Eleven of these are addressed to Cornelius Nozeman (1721–86), a Dutch Remonstrant minister who had evidently shown an interest in Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (1738–41) in several earlier letters not in the collection, dated 9

[10] The Leiden collection contains letters from all these men.

[11] See Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011: 153–63) for a discussion of the correlation between epistolary formulas and relative closeness between letter writer and addressee.

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December and 13 March 1758. Warburton replied in a letter of 20 March of that year that he hoped that 'the 2^{d} V. of the D.L will be finished at the press in about a month's time & then I shall take care to send you a copy immediately' (Leiden University Library MS SEM 45). A few months later, in a letter dated 28 July 1758, Warburton informed Nozeman, presumably in response to an enquiry in a letter dated 6 July, that he had 'sent the new edition of the second vol of the *Divine Legation*, enlarged almost one half, above two months ago, to your address in Holland. and I hope, if it be not already come, it will come safe' (Leiden University Library MS SEM 45). In the same letter of 6 July, Nozeman appears to have asked Warburton what English dictionaries were available for someone like himself, to which Warburton replied: 'Our dictionarys for the use of foreigners are execrably bad. But I will enquire, and take care to send you the best I can find' (28 July 1758, Leiden University Library MS SEM 45). Possibly, Nozeman entertained plans of translating the *Divine Legation* into English; if he did, it appears he was thwarted in these ambitions by Abraham Arent van der Meersch (1720–92), whose translation of the *Divine Legation* appeared in 1761. Eventually, in 1767, Nozeman did publish a translation of a work by Warburton, called *Doctrine of Grace* (1763) (Blok & Molhuysen 1937).

The remaining two letters by Warburton in the Leiden collection, dated 21 March 1762 and 4 April 1771, were addressed to Abraham Arent van der Meersch, a professor of ecclesiastical history and philosophy at Amsterdam (Blok & Molhuysen 1937). The link between Warburton and van der Meersch may have been established by Nozeman, for in a letter dated 31 March 1761 Warburton thanked him for 'a small parcel, containing the low-Dutch translation of my first volume of the D.L', adding: 'Pray make my best acknowledgement to this worthy person, M^{r} Van der Meersch, and let him know how sensible I am of the honour done me by him & his Brother' (Leiden University Library MS SEM 45). A year later, Warburton wrote to van der Meersch directly: 'You may, Sir, safely believe then, that I esteem a translation of my book … as one of the greatest honours of my life' (21 March 1762, Leiden University Library MS SEM 160). In the same letter, he expressed his regret at being unable to read Dutch: 'There is no modern language I have more lamented the want of than the Low-Dutch, for the sake of the *Remonstrant Writings* in that Language'. In neither correspondence does he refer to his use of English as a means of communication with his addressees. Presumably, since he was corresponding with, in van der Meersch's case, the translator of his book and in that of Nozeman with someone engaged in the study of English, Warburton assumed that this wasn't an issue. Van der Meersch's letters to Warburton, however – four of them in the Leiden collection – are all in Latin: his skill in English appears to have been merely passive.

Warburton's correspondence with Nozeman is of interest for a number of reasons. To begin with, it gives us an insight into the way in which Dutchmen obtained the tools with which they could acquire English. I have already mentioned Nozeman's enquiry about a suitable English dictionary. Warburton eventually did find what Nozeman was looking for, for on 20 December 1758 he informed him that he had

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> immediately addressed my selfe to procure the books you were desirous of. namely, the **English Dictionary of Johnson** contracted by himselfe, the longer work being full of impertenences & needless Repetitions. This, I have sent, will be much more usefull to you. (Leiden University Library MS SEM 45, emphasis added, here and throughout this article)

Rather than the original version of the dictionary Nozeman had evidently asked for, Warburton sent him the shorter version: 'Abstracted from the FOLIO EDITION, By the AUTHOR SAMUEL JOHNSON, A.M.'(Johnson 1756: title page). Warburton concluded the letter by offering to send Nozeman more English books should he want any: 'Pray consider me as one who shall be always glad to contribute to your satisfaction in this way, when your studies or your curiosity leads you to wish for a book that can be procured in this place' (Leiden University Library MS SEM 45). Warburton did send Nozeman books several times, in 1761 and in 1764:

> I hope you have recd **a small packet** from me: where, amongst other things, you will find a new Ed^{n}. of Hyde's famous Book, which was become extremely dear. Another intitled Moral Dialogues by one of my Chaplains, and most intimate Friend. It is esteemed a Masterpiece, as well for the great love & profound Learning in our Constitution, in the two last dialogues, as for the elegance politeness & ingenuity of the rest. – I picked up for you, with great difficulty, a little curiosity, that, I thought, (on acct of the Subject) you would be pleased with. It is a tract of our great Cudworth, intitled Deus justificatus. – The method for the study of Theology has its merit, tho' wrote by a Roman Catholic; a Secular Priest of the Church of Rome & a Canon of Tongeres. (31 March 1761, Leiden University Library MS SEM 45)

> As you have so good a help to your improvement in the knowlege of the English tongue I have sent you, I hope by a safe conveyance, **a small packet** of such books, as have of late been published, & have met with the best reception from the Public. (1 May 1764, Leiden University Library MS SEM 45)

The contents of the second packet is not specified, but as there is a reference to Nozeman learning English and to the fact that the books in question had been recently published and were well received by the public, it does not seem too far fetched to assume that Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* was one of them, as a new edition had been published that same year (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011: 69). Warburton himself possessed a copy of the grammar as well (Navest 2007). Two years later, Nozeman received another packet from Warburton, containing among other things

> . . . two other pamphlets written by another very learned friend. One is against an English Leland, a Presbyterian Minister. The other is a true state of the case between me and **the very scurrelous Louth**. together with an examination of his Defense of his very absurd System of *persecution for Religion* and *intolerance*; revived by him before he knew what he was about. (4 December 1766, Leiden University Library MS SEM 45)

This time Warburton does mention Lowth, and the reference is to his own response to Lowth's earlier publication (Lowth 1765), in a pamphlet called *The Second Part of a Literary Correspondence, between the Bishop of Gloucester and a Late Professor of Oxford*, already referred to, which had been published earlier that year (Warburton 1766).

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Warburton didn't mince words when referring to his rival and this is the second reason why his correspondence with Nozeman is of interest: the letters throughout contain unusually strong language, some examples of which are the following:

(1) this **infamous** work, the *display of Arminianism* (20 March 1758)
(2) Owen's **wicked** book (28 July 1758)
(3) But the *manner* of criticising according to this new interpretation is as **preposterous**, as the *matter* is **absurd** (24 June 1759)
(4) the Booksellers have taken the advantage of it, & have enriched themselves by this *national* ***Madness*** (11 December 1765)
(5) The **uncharitable** book you speak of, written ~~written~~ by an **immiserable** Calvinist Minister … to soften their **horrid** doctrine of damnation (28 August 1769)
(6) the Leaders of this **ridiculous** Sect amongst us, called *Methodists*, are either **very weak Fanatics** or covert **knaves** (4 December 1766)

Other instances in the letters are *atrocious*, *impudent falshoods* and *miserable Buffoon*. Far from presenting an image of politeness or setting an example to a foreigner in the process of acquiring the English language, Warburton comes across in these letters as an extremely irascible man. It is not hard to see how, apart from his ideas, his language use would have got him into trouble with men like Lowth. Warburton's correspondence is not currently available in published form, but it would be well worth collecting his letters for a closer study of his language.

3 Learning English in the Netherlands

Cornelius Nozeman acquired what knowledge of English he came to possess as a result of private study, benefiting from his acquaintance with William Warburton by receiving the necessary books as well as authentic English communications, strong language and all. It would, however, be quite a while before any authoritative English grammars – Lowth's, for instance – would become available in translation to benefit Dutch learners (cf. Warburton's opinion on current 'dictionarys for the use of foreigners' quoted above).[12] In this, the Netherlands lagged behind countries like Germany, Spain and France. The first English grammar listed in Alston (1965) that was translated into German was John Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (1760), first in Berlin in 1775 and once again, also published in Berlin, nearly fifteen years later in 1789 (Alston 1965: 34, 36). The translator was Christian Heinrich Reichel (1734–1807), who was also a teacher of French, Swedish and Danish (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011: 80–1). As the subtitle 'oder eine leichte Einleitung in D. Lowth's Englische Sprachlehre für Schule' indicates, this second translation must have been based on a later edition of Ash's grammar which had been given the subtitle 'or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar' (see Navest 2011). Lowth's grammar itself was eventually translated by Reichel, too, published in Leipzig in 1790 (Alston 1965: 47), but the

[12] For an overview of what would have been available to Dutchmen interested in learning English, see Loonen (1990: 253–88).

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grammar had already made a name in Germany before that time. This is evident from the publication, in Halle in 1784, of a grammar by Heinrich Christoph Albrecht (1762–1800), called *Versuch einer critischen englischen Sprachlehre. Vorzüglich nach dem Englischen des Dr. Lowth, Bischofs zu London* (Wolf 2012). Lowth's grammar was also quite well known in Spain, as attested by the publication by the Irishman Thomas Connelly (1728–1800), called *Gramática que contiene reglas faciles para pronunciar, y aprender metódicamente la lengua inglesa, con muchas observaciones, ye notas críticas de los mas célebres autores puramente ingleses, especialmente de Lowth, Priestley y Trinder* (1784) (Rodríguez-Gil 2012). Connelly (1784) was already the second English–Spanish grammar published on the Iberian peninsula (Viña Rouco 2005: 186). The title of this grammar also refers to the grammar by Joseph Priestley (1761), another authoritative eighteenth-century English grammar. This grammar would be translated into French fourteen years later by Ferdinand Bayard (Straaijer 2011: 118–19). A second edition came out a year later, which indicates a considerable amount of popularity.[13]

Though not the first English grammar available in the Netherlands by far (see Loonen 1990; Wilhelm 2005), the first English grammar to be translated into Dutch was Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1795). Being reprinted in nearly two million copies during the nineteenth century, the grammar was enormously successful (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996a: 9). According to Alston (1965: 96), many editions of the grammar 'were published in French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Russian, and Japanese', to which impressive list Fens-de Zeeuw (2011: 162) recently added Gujerati. The first Dutch translation of Murray's grammar appeared anonymously in 1816, and it was followed by six further editions and reprints down to 1871 (Wilhelm 2005: 599). The sixth (corrected and improved) edition of the grammar is of interest because what little knowledge we have of its author, Frederick Martin Cowan (1822–62), allows us to gain some insight into how English was taught in the Netherlands during the mid nineteenth century, as an illustration of the enormous headway the English language teaching situation had been making. Cowan, according to Blok & Molhuysen (1914), had been born in Ventnor, on the Isle of Wight (see also Wilhelm 2005: 409–10). When Cowan was four, his family moved to London, where he attended school until the age of fourteen. Upon his father's death, he had to make a living for himself, and did so by becoming an English teacher in the Netherlands, first at a school for boys from aristocratic families called Noorthey,[14] in Voorschoten, a small town close

[13] William Trinder (1747–c. 1815), also mentioned in Connelly's title, was a clergyman whose English grammar had been published in London, for the author, in 1781 (Rodríguez-Gil 2012; ECEG, s.v. William Martin Trinder). His grammar is not included in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). ECCO does include six other books by him on a variety of topics.

[14] An overview of the scholars who attended Noorthey during the two periods of its existence, 1820–82 and 1887–1907, may be found in Bijleveld (1920). The introduction furthermore reads: 'Als van ouds waren er Fransche, Duitsche en Engelsche interne leeraren, meest jongere menschen, die surveilleerden en in hunnen dagelijksen omgang met de leerlingen hunne talenkennis aankweekten. . . . ten slotte kwamen er uit Leiden en Den Haag tal van docenten, meestal in de avonduren hunne lessen geven'(Bijleveld 1920: introduction) (my translation: 'From the first, the school housed teachers of French, German and English, usually young men,

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to Leiden, and subsequently in Amsterdam. On 23 September 1852, at the age of thirty, he enrolled as a student of law at the University of Leiden,[15] where, it must be assumed, he also studied Japanese and other languages. In 1860, he was appointed first interpreter to the British consul in Japan, John Rutherford Alcock (1809–97). On his way to Tokyo two years later, he was shipwrecked, and he is believed to have perished at sea.

Blok & Molhuysen (1914) and Wilhelm (2005: 410) list a number of books produced by Cowan in addition to the sixth edition of Murray's grammar:

- *English Reading Book for Beginners; consisting of several amusing and instructive stories, to which is appended a vocabulary* (1847)
- *A Chronological Critical Table of English Literature* (1849; 2nd edn 1856)
- an annotated edition of Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1851; 3rd rev. edn 1876)
- *The English Student's Companion: A dictionary of verbs, substantives and adjectives with the prepositions they govern . . .* (1855; 2nd edn 1858/1961);
- a translation, from Dutch, of Philipp Franz von Siebold's *Geographical and Ethnographical Elucidations to the Discoveries of Maerten Gerrits Vries 1643* (1859)
- (jointly with J. van der Beek) *Handleiding ter Beoefening der Engelsche Taal*, *ter gebruike der scholen en zelfbeoefenaars ingerigt* ['Introduction to the English language, for the use in schools and for private learners'] (1850)
- (jointly with A.B. Maatjes) *Leercursus ter beoefening der Engelsche Taal* ['Practical course for the study of English'] (1854, and repeatedly reprinted).

Two other course books, for the teaching of letter writing, are linked to his name; but as they were published posthumously, in 1864 and 1871, Cowan's authorship is perhaps somewhat tenuous.

Perhaps as a direct result of his own journey to that country, Cowan's edition of Murray's grammar came to circulate in Japan: it is included in the *List of Foreign Books Collected under the Shogunate Regime* (1957, s.v. Murray), along with an edition of Murray's grammar itself (Fuami 1996: 128).[16] Japan had been closed off from the outside world down to the late 1850s, with only the Dutch having been granted the possibility of contact through trade. According to Fuami (1996: 125, quoting Goodman 1986), 'the study of Dutch in Japan had reached a high level', and in effect all then current scientific knowledge reached Japan through the translation of works written in Dutch, including a translation into that language of an English grammar. Learning English from Murray's grammar, however, cannot have been easy for the Japanese, nor indeed, as the Japanese translator Hironao Shibukawa (1815–51) notes in his introduction, for the Dutch themselves:

who acted as supervisors, teaching the scholars these languages in the course of their daily communication with them. . . . eventually, teachers came from Leiden and the Hague, usually to give evening classes'). Cowan, whose name is not mentioned in the book, may have taught English at Noorthey in both capacities, first as a fourteen-year-old and subsequently as a more mature student from Leiden.

[15] I'm grateful to Willem Otterspeer for confirming this and for providing me with further details about Cowan's registration at the University of Leiden.

[16] The edition or reprint in question, which was published in London in 1861, is listed neither in Alston (1965) nor in Barr (1996).

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> The English sound system is very different from the Dutch. I should think that it must be difficult for Dutch people to pronounce English; much more so for Japanese people. This book does not deal with the sound system. Those who are interested in the phonological aspects should turn to other books. (Quoted from Fuami 1996: 127)

Traditionally, most eighteenth-century English grammars dealt with orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody (Vorlat 2007: 504), so in lacking a section on English pronunciation, Murray's grammar was no exception. Its original audience had, after all, been native speakers of English.

In the late modern Netherlands people, however, were rarely in the position to practise their spoken English. I have discussed the case of Cornelius Nozeman, whose only exposure to English was through William Warburton's letters. Several decades later, the Dutch bookseller Pieter Blussé (1748–1823) considered a skill in English to be essential for the book trade, so he made his son Abraham (1772–1850) translate English texts every Tuesday afternoon, while sending his younger son Adolph (1779–1846) to attend service at the English Church (Baggerman 2000: 259–60, 278). Wilhelm (1999) discusses the rise of Dutch reading societies in the Netherlands, in Groningen (1792–1817), Zealand (1800–15) and Leiden (1830–40), where a large variety of English-language publications were read ranging from novels and plays, travel literature, periodicals like the *Monthly Review* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to works on politics and theology. The English which the members of these societies acquired was thus limited to passive skills only. As the case of Cowan shows, this would only change when Englishmen like himself came over to the Netherlands to set up as teachers. That Cowan made the move as a young man at all confirms the changing status which had affected the English language in the course of the early decades of the nineteenth century.

4 The Richardson–Stinstra correspondence

Like Cornelius Nozeman, Johannes Stinstra was entirely self-taught in English. According to Meijer (2009), in a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pieter Heijnsgenootschap in March 2009,[17] he had never had any formal tuition in English, nor did he know any English native speakers with whom he could practise his English. According to Slattery (1969: xvii), Stinstra was very well read in English: he was acquainted with the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, the *Monthly Review* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as well as with the work of Milton and Young. We know from the catalogue of his library made up after his death that Stinstra possessed several bilingual Latin–English and French–English dictionaries, Sewel's English–Dutch dictionary (1708), Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1728, 4th edn), Dyche and Pardon's *New General English Dictionary* (1750, 6th edn) and John Ray's *Compleat Collection of English Proverbs* (1737) (Meijer 2009). The catalogue also listed a

[17] I'm extremely grateful to Annemieke Meijer for giving me access to a written version of her paper, which was indispensible to me in analysing the case of Stinstra discussed here.

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Grammar of the English Tongue (1735), which can be identified as the sixth edition of the grammar by Brightland & Gildon, originally published in 1711 (Alston 1965: 14). Stinstra's library was thus particularly well equipped for the job of translating Richardson's novel *Clarissa* into Dutch.

Clarissa wasn't Stinstra's first translation project. He had already published a translation of sermons by Jacob Forster (1737) and Samuel Clarke (1739–49) (Blok & Molhuysen 1937) before embarking on *Clarissa*. Having come into conflict with the authorities of the Protestant Church to which he belonged and having been placed under an injunction not to preach for a period of fifteen years (1742–57) (ter Laan 1952; see also Meijer 2009), he decided to dedicate himself fully to his translation work. When the first volume of the translation came out, he decided to contact the author of the work, and a correspondence ensued between the two men which lasted for three and a half years (Slattery 1969). Twenty-one letters from Stinstra to Richardson have come down to us, the first ten written in Latin and the remainder in English. Richardson's replies were all in English. Why the correspondence came to an end is unclear, according to Slattery (1969: xv), but as in the case of the Lowth–Michaelis correspondence, the switch from Latin to English is discussed and in some detail at that. 'Dear Sir:' Strinstra wrote on 24 December 1753:

> I will try if I not can write to you in the English, your native tongue, **that you may read my Letters without the assistance of any other man**, and so our correspondences on both parts have the appearance of being more intimate, of which I shall always be most proud and glory. And your Kindness, I am sure, will easily pardon **the faults and blunders of a novice in this writing**. If by the multitude of them appears my unability and presumtion in this undertaking, my before mentioned motive to it will also excuse my rashness. (Slattery 1969: 58)

Stinstra, it appears, had finally come to realise that Richardson knew no Latin. Though we know little about how much formal education Richardson had received, the author 'himself freely admitted that he knew only his native language' (*ODNB*, s.v. Samuel Richardson). In the above passage Stinstra admits that he was 'a novice' at writing English, a point he returns to in the PS to the letter, noting that writing the letter had taken much time and effort on his part:

> *P.S.* Though I begun this my Letter on the superscribed date; I must confess that it is dispatched on a much latter; on which, I am ashamed to mention. This **first specimen of my English writing** costed me more pains than I expected; I must needs transcribe it, because of the many blots and faults. I am diverted by much incidents. I despair almost of excuse. May I yet hope on your favour, notwithstanding this my unexcusable delay? Will you still love me? (Slattery 1969: 68–9)

Using a modern textbook for the teaching of English to Dutch learners in secondary schools, Meijer (2009) analysed Stinstra's command of English and found that his language was not characterised by several typically Dutch usage problems. Thus, we don't find errors in the use of the aci-construction or the distinction between *if* and *when*; Stinstra correctly used *these are* and *either*/*or* and knew how to employ the distinction

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between *some* and *any* and *since* and *for*. We do find errors according to Meijer in word order, as indeed in the opening sentence of his first English letter (*I will try if I not can write to you in the English*), in the use of periphrastic *do*, prepositions, tenses, passive constructions, the distinction between *must*, *have to* and *should*, and in the use of irregular verbs (e.g. his use of *begun* for *began* in the first sentence of the PS above). Taking up Stinstra's alleged problems with periphrastic *do*, I prepared an electronic version of his English letters and analysed the collection (nearly 8,500 words) with the help of WordSmith Tools, a concordancing program produced by Mike Scott from the University of Liverpool. The letters contain only two instances of periphrastic *do*, an instance of affirmative (unemphatic) *do* in a declarative sentence, and an example of what is known as 'code' (see Denison 1985):

(7) for the reasons which he **did** give of his unwillingness made me the more insist upon that condition (Stinstra to Richardson, 23 May 1754)
(8) that I as readily should undertake the translation thereof, as I formerly **did** that of your Clarissa (Stinstra to Richardson, 24 December 1753).

In addition, I found 12 instances of *do*-less negative sentences and 21 of preverbal *not*. Examples are (9) and (10):

(9) I know **not** which I more can alledge (Stinstra to Richardson, 24 December 1753)
(10) if I **not** remembered my engagement of abstaining from your praises (Stinstra to Richardson, 24 December 1753).

The verb *know* in *do*-less negative sentences, as in (9), is among the few verbs that resist *do*-periphrasis (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1987: 129, 159, 174), but it is found only once in Stinstra's letters. *Doubt*, another such verb, is not found. *Do*-less negative sentences, it may be concluded, were thus the rule in his English – not suprisingly so, in fact, as (standard) Dutch – or indeed Frisian – does not have this form of periphrasis. Preverbal *not* is rare in English. Ukaji (1992) argues that its brief attested presence in the language served to facilitate the introduction of periphrastic *do* in negative declarative sentences. In Stinstra's case, however, preverbal *not* is the result of interference from his native Dutch (cf. 'als ik [mij] mijn toezegging **niet herinnerde** . . . '. Compared to usage by native-speaker contemporaries, as described in my own study of periphrastic *do* in eighteenth-century English, Stinstra's use of this peculiar feature of English grammar could be considered archaic at its very best. Richardson's own usage of periphrastic *do* in negative sentences in his letters, even though his use of *do*-less sentences was high for the period in which he lived (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1987: 161), clearly did not serve as an example to Stinstra. The grammar he may have resorted to for this English construction, if he did so at all, would not have been very helpful either: rules for periphrastic *do* are not found in English grammars dating from before the mid 1740s (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1987: 205).

Stinstra's spelling, though it shows some interference from Dutch, must be considered quite good: eighteenth-century epistolary spelling allowed for variants that were not commonly found in printed texts (Osselton 1984), and in this respect Stinstra's letters are no exception: we find *begg*(*s*) (2)/*beg* (9), *sett*(*s*) (5)/*set*(*s*) (2), *dayly* (3)/*daily* (1),

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lazyness (1)/*laziness* (1), *performd* (1) (*'d* does not occur, and *-ed* is his regular spelling), *-ick* (6)/*-ic* (1), *-ys* (1)/*-ies* (22) and *-full* (13)/*-ful* (1), all of which are common among eighteenth-century letter-writers of the period (see e.g. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b, 1998). Less common variants in the letters are *despare* (1) and *intervall* (2), though the more regular forms are also found. Interference from Dutch is only minimal: I found two instances of *bij* for *by* (60) and one of *mij* for *my* (66). Stinstra occasionally struggled with the placement of <h>, as in *eigth* (*eight* does not occur), *whith* (80 instances of *with*) and *althoug* (5 instances of *though* and 14 of *thought*(*s*)), while once he also wrote *Poartrait* (the correct spelling of the word is also found).

5 Conclusion

Stinstra wasn't the only eighteenth-century Dutchman who attempted to write in English: another well-known case is James Boswell's Utrecht professor Trotz, who occasionally wrote to Boswell to practise his English. Trotz, however, was unusual in that, unlike many Dutchmen at the time, he did have an English teacher, a Mr Rose (Barfoot & Bostoen 1994: 38). What is more, because he was acquainted with Boswell, he was in a position to practise his spoken English as well. Trotz, in any case, would have learnt what English sounded like. And so did the Dutch bookseller Pieter Blussé's son Abraham, who as I already mentioned attended Church services in English. Even Pieter Blussé himself attempted to write in English, as the following letter to his son illustrates:

> My dear son! I am are utmost satisfied with the proofs of your application. The destinations are very pretty and you will make in that art good progresses so well as in your writing. The whole family was joyfull by the view of *the zoute bolletjens*; she loves your attention and good heart; she wished to recompense it; tell us therefore what you could do any pleasure. Your brother and sister are reastablished – we all profit now of the best welfaring. We wished that you are so happy. Make my compliments to Mr de Graaff and tell him that as soon as I am are able to answer him, I will not retard ... The best intentioned father, P. Blussé (18 November 1803, Baggerman 2000: 278)

Comparing this passage with Stinstra's letters to Richardson suggests that Stinstra was by far the better skilled of the two, no doubt due to the fact that he was a practised translator.

In order to analyse the English language skills of late modern Dutchmen more thoroughly more texts should be collected, letters as well as other documents. These should be studied from an English–Dutch contrastive perspective, and to do so with the help of present-day textbooks for Dutch learners, as Annemieke Meijer has done in order to assess Stinstra's skill in English, seems a good approach. As my own analysis of Stinstra's use of *do* and his spelling practice, however, has shown, such an approach should be complemented by what we know about the state of the English language (as well that of Dutch) at the time in which the writers lived and wrote. A similar study could be undertaken for other European languages, such as Spanish, German and French but other languages as well, as a result of which different European language

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acquisition processes could be identified and compared. Apart from throwing light on the process whereby late modern Europeans learnt English, such studies are expected to confirm for Europe as a whole that Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* did not *itself* further the spread of English as a world language but that the desire to translate literary and other texts – religious ones, in the case of the Netherlands – into these languages catered for a need that had already been in evidence for about half a century or more *before* the grammar was published to begin with.

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