

The Frenchification of Dutch:

A case study on the influence of French on Dutch in the period 1500 to 1900

French and Dutch have been in close contact for ages, and particularly in the period between 1500 and 1900. Due to the political and cultural hegemony of France in the Netherlands, this period is traditionally considered to be a period of so-called Frenchification. During this time, many French words and suffixes entered the Dutch language (Van der Sijs 2002; 2005), and it is assumed that French influenced the use of Dutch syntactic patterns as well (Van den Toorn et al. 1997; Van der Horst 2008). However, apart from a study by Rutten et al. (2015), so far the actual influence of French on the Dutch language has hardly been studied empirically. For example, it is not known whether the elements borrowed from French were used to the same extent by all individual language users and in all social domains. This presentation aims to address the question what the actual influence of French on Dutch was by means of a corpus-based case study. We will introduce a newly designed corpus that has specifically been built for this purpose and which consists of Dutch texts, all originating from the Dutch city of Leiden, from seven different social domains and spanning the period from 1500 to 1900. A corpus analysis of the use of particular French features will be presented, which will both discuss the diachronic development of these elements as well as the differences in use between the social domains.

References

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