

The Language Norm in a Century of Frisian Dictionaries

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Since the Renaissance, in Western Europe language builders have been making efforts to standardise languages. In the Netherlands and in Belgium the Dutch standard language became accepted generally. The standardising process of Frisian, the second official language in the Netherlands, was different, and it still is. The standard for Frisian had not crystallized out yet. In practice, this means that several variant forms and pronunciations are accepted. A series of Frisian dictionaries have been published in the past hundred years. In this contribution the question will be answered whether these dictionaries contributed to standardising Frisian. Did the dictionaries reflect dialectal diversity or did they have a prescriptive design? In answering this question, the position of four phonological variations in the dictionaries has been investigated. Also has been made an inventory of the editor's comments on their selection of dialect forms. On the base of the results, the conclusion must be that Frisian dictionaries did not use one and the same standard language consequently. A small number of dictionaries consciously prefer to include only one variant entry form. Just the more elaborate and widely used dictionaries show a rather tolerant standard of language, though not in consequent fashion. The electronic language databases of the Fryske Akademy show that in practice the choices made by the most frequently consulted dictionaries were followed generally. In the paper also a picture of the Frisian language and a briefly description of the history of Frisian lexicography have been given.

1. Introduction

Since the Renaissance in Western Europe, language builders have attempted to standardise languages. According to Van der Wal (2006: 6), in all Western European languages several dialects converged into a standard variety.¹ At first, a written standard language was constructed which, ultimately, became a spoken standard language. This is how a spoken standard language broke through in the Netherlands during the twentieth century, when a written standard language already was in use.² In the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, the Dutch standard language became generally accepted after around 1960.³ The standardising process for Frisian, the second official language in the Netherlands, was different and still is. Van der Wal's observation, that in *all* Western-European languages a standard variety grew out of the various dialects, does not hold unconditionally for Frisian. In the introduction of the FRD (2008), the editors in chief, Duijff and Van der Kuip, write that a standard for Frisian was

¹ 'In all Western European languages, a comparable development took place in the past: a development from a diversity of several dialects to a standard language that did not exist previously.' ('In alle West-Europese talen heeft in het verleden een vergelijkbare ontwikkeling plaatsgevonden: een ontwikkeling vanuit de diversiteit van verscheidene dialecten naar een, nog niet eerder bestaande, standaardtaal.')

² See Van der Sijs (2004: 621).

³ 'The use of Standard Dutch by a small intellectual elite did not spread until approximately 1960. The spread was a result of increasing wealth, a rise in levels of education, increased mobility and a democratization of access to higher education. This means that only from the sixties onwards, standardization received a sociological base in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium.' ('Pas vanaf ongeveer 1960 breidt het gebruik van het Standaardnederlands van een kleine intellectuele elite zich uit over een grote groep, door de stijgende welvaart, de verhoging van het onderwijspeil, de toegenomen mobiliteit en de democratisering van de toegang tot het hoger onderwijs. Dat betekent dat pas vanaf de jaren zestig de standaardisering in Nederlandstalig België een brede sociologische basis krijgt.')

not yet fully formed.⁴ In practice, this meant that dictionary entries were frequently accompanied by several variant forms and pronunciation. The editors were clearly aiming to compose a descriptive dictionary. The 2008 Frisian Dictionary is the latest in a series of dictionaries published over the past hundred years. In this contribution, there will be attempted to answer the question whether these dictionaries contributed to standardising Frisian. Did the dictionaries reflect dialectal diversity, or did they have a prescriptive design? In addressing this question, there will be concentrated on a group of four phonological variations in the dictionaries. Before describing the working method and the results of the survey, there will be first sketched a picture of the Frisian language. Furthermore will be given an overview of the developments that have led to the present day Frisian standard language, and a briefly description of the history of Frisian lexicography.

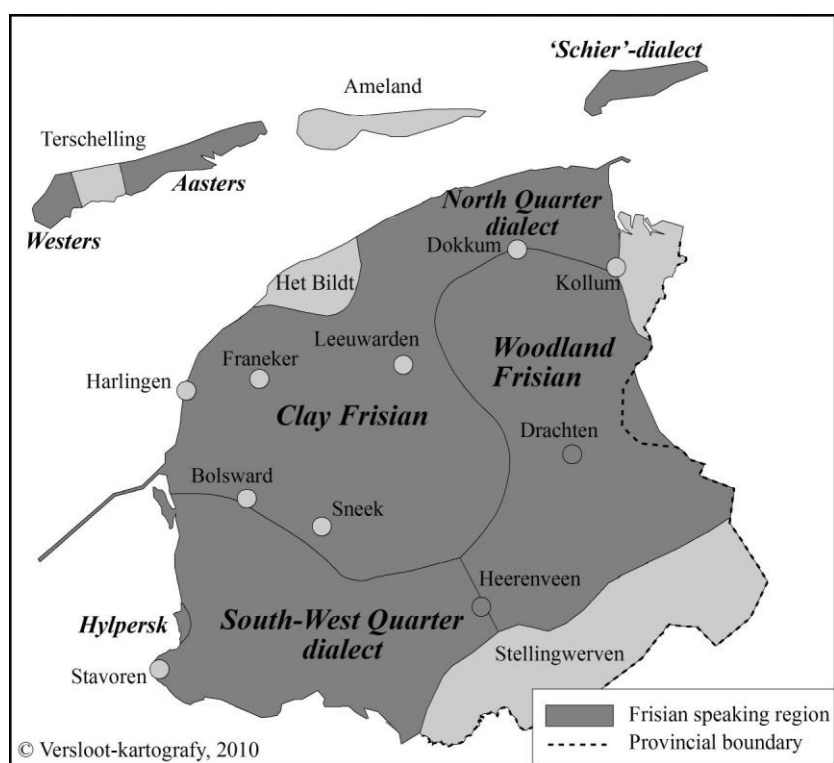
2. A sketch of Frisian

Frisian, the indigenous language of the Dutch province of Friesland, can be characterised as a spoken language. Mediaeval Frisian left us some mainly juridical texts; only a few texts handed down belong to a different genre. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, Frisian gradually passed out of use, and by the mid sixteenth century it was no longer written down. Thanks to the renaissance poet Gysbert Japicx, the Frisian language revived in the middle of the seventeenth century. The production of written Frisian continued to be very modest, and it was only in the run of the nineteenth century that its production would increase significantly. The writings that did appear were only for literary purposes; Frisian was not used at all for other domains. Until the twentieth century, Frisian was not taught in schools. This meant that the Frisian population lacked practical orthographical skills in their mother tongue. Thanks to the efforts of the so-called Frisian Movement, that was set up halfway the nineteenth century, written Frisian became used in domains other than literature, though, admittedly, on a very small scale. For example, in the second half of the twentieth century, Frisian language education became increasingly fashionable; the administrative use of Frisian also increased and written media were more likely to publish contributions written in Frisian.

From the end of the sixteenth century, Frisian was no longer the only language in the province of Friesland. It was then that, Dutch became increasingly important. Currently, all speakers of Frisian are bilingual, at least. They have a good command of Standard Dutch, mainly as a consequence of their school education. Although the social position of Frisian has strengthened, most Frisian speakers are still unable to express themselves in written Frisian. About half of the six hundred thousand inhabitants of the province speak Frisian as a first language.

Although Frisian is spoken in most parts of the province, some regions do not belong to the Frisian language area. Traditionally, Frisian is divided into four major dialects. These dialects are not homogeneous. The two most widely spoken dialects are Clay Frisian, spoken in the western clay region, and so-called Woodland Frisian, spoken in the sandy eastern region. In the North-Eastern part of the province, the so-called North Quarter dialect is in use. On the one hand, it has many characteristics of Clay Frisian, but, on the other hand, it follows Woodland Frisian in several respects. Finally, there is the South-West Quarter dialect.

⁴ 'Frisian does not have a fully-fledged standard yet, which means that in every day practice more than one variety is accepted.' ('It Frysk hat noch net in útkristallisearre standert, wat betsjut dat yn de praktyk mear as ien fariant as goed akseptearre wurdt.') FRD (2008: X).



Dialect map of Friesland

3. The Frisian standard language

Since the late Middle Ages, Frisian has had a weak social position. Consequently, Frisian, unlike Dutch or other Western European national languages, does not have a fully formed standard. This does not mean that no efforts have been made to realise a standard language. Such efforts have resulted in a more or less fixed, but also tolerant Frisian standard language.⁵ Although Frisian lost its function as a written language in the sixteenth century, the seventeenth century Frisian renaissance poet Gysbert Japicx made attempts to re-use Frisian as a written language. He aimed at creating a literary language which combined several dialectal varieties. He also included neologisms and archaisms in his writings. In doing so, he followed the example set by other renaissance language builders of his time.⁶

After Gysbert Japicx, it was not until the nineteenth century that language builders worked on the Frisian written language on a large scale. Then the trigger was undoubtedly the influence of Romantic ideas about the self-consciousness of one's own people. In those days, three main schools were active. The linguist Joast Hiddes Halbertsma used mainly the Frisian vernacular language, which he supplemented with archaisms and specific dialectal characteristics. Others continued to defend the choices made by Gysbert Japicx. Consequently, their varieties of Frisian contained more Middle Frisian elements. A third school went even further into the past.

⁵ Feitsma (1989: 270) describes the character of Frisian as follows: 'As to the character of the present-day Frisian linguistic norm, it is rather flexible and gives room for several different opinions and practices. Furthermore, the Frisian norm and the Frisian written style contain more elements from the spoken language and from different dialects than the norm of the Dutch written language.'

⁶ Compare Feitsma (1987).

They argued in favour of a variety of written Frisian on the base of Mediaeval Frisian, the so-called Old Frisian.⁷

In the twentieth century, the controversy continued between, on the one hand, proponents of a written vernacular language, and, on the other, those who pleaded for a more artificial written language, purified of mainly Dutch interferences and standardised up to a superregional level.⁸ Therefore, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was still no Frisian standard language. Because Frisian was rarely used in writing and, when it was, this was mainly in literature, the Frisian standard language developed with great difficulty. Moreover, disagreement about the course to be followed in forming a superregional Frisian written language undoubtedly delayed the standardising process further.

Nevertheless, a Frisian written language gradually came into existence. Admittedly, it took a rather heterogeneous form, but it was generally accepted. For example, in 1902, S.K. Feitsma wrote in his language course book for teachers that he uses the kind of Frisian that all Frisians judge the most ideal language.⁹ Sipma, in his 1913 grammar book, also takes his lead from common Frisian. He writes: '[...] it contains a concise general treatment of modern West Frisian, more particularly of the main dialect (my own, slightly normalised).'¹⁰ In the second half of the twentieth century, the common standard became generally accepted. This is apparent from an observation by Van der Woude (1960: 19). According to Van der Woude, local dialects ceased to be spoken on (semi-)official occasions. In almost all cases the language was corrected in some way. The same Van der Woude characterises this Frisian standard language as being very close to existing country dialects, and not an elite language of the city or gentry. Consequently, there is little difference between this standard language and the dialects. However, where these dialects differ significantly, the Clay dialect variants are preferred.¹¹ The same was observed by Van der Veen (1987) in a survey on the choice of lexical entry forms in three Frisian dictionaries.¹²

⁷ See Poortinga (1960).

⁸ A furious debate was held between J.J. Hof, a proponent of the use of the vernacular, and D. Kalma, who was conversely constructing an artificial cultural language. See also Hiemstra (1999: 247-250) and Feitsma (1987: 61-63).

⁹ 'When assigning standard varieties, we follow the most common varieties that are understood fairly well by all Frisians, whatever region they come from, and that is also judged to be the pre-eminent language in writing.' ('Wij volgen bij de aanwijzing ervan het meest algemeene, dat door iederen Fries, uit welke streek ook, gereedelijk verstaan -, en dat ook in geschrifte als *de* taal bij uitnemendheid beschouwd wordt.') Feitsma (1902: 6).

¹⁰ Sipma (1913: 5).

¹¹ Van der Woude (1960: 19).

¹² 'Moreover it must be stressed that there is a preference for Clay Frisian (especially Western Clay Frisian). The use of 'identifying' Frisian (especially Western Clay Frisian) is nevertheless confined to the *phonological* level. This tendency has a tradition which goes back more than a hundred years.' ('Fierders wurdt ûnderstreke dat der foarkar is foar it Frysk fan 'e Klaai, en dan benammen de Westklaai. It gebrûk fan identifisearjend Frysk en dan leafst noch Westklaaifrysk jildt lykwols yn hege mjitte allinne it *fonologyske* nivo. Dy tendins hat al in tradysje fan 100 jier.') Van der Veen (1987: 125).

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According to Mooijaart (2009a: 3), Dutch now has an undisputable standard. She argues that lexicographers working on the early dictionaries already used a standard, and that the definitive selection was made in later dictionaries.¹³ In her opinion, this phase has not yet been completed for Frisian.¹⁴ The fact that Frisian still shows a considerable degree of tolerance with respect to the various dialects is due to the facts that many Frisians felt, and still feel that written Frisian must reflect the wealth of the language.¹⁵ However, it is notably felt that not all Frisian dialects enhance the Frisian written language. The Clay and Woodland Frisian variants are the ones generally included in this tolerant standard language, whereas South-West Quarter elements are consistently rejected. This is because it was felt that the South-West Quarter dialect would contain too many un-Frisian Dutch elements.

G. Meerburg was one of those who argue against dialectal variation in the standard language. He is a proponent of excluding from the Frisian standard those perfectly good Frisian dialect forms that are identical to their Dutch counterparts and of preferring variants that differ from Dutch. In that vein he rejected the form *geel* ('yellow') in the favour of *giel*, which is the variant that differs most from Standard Dutch *geel*.¹⁶

In any discussion about the Frisian standard language, Dutch interferences always play an important role. As a minority language, Frisian is heavily influenced by Dutch. Consequently many Dutch elements appear in spoken Frisian. Those who consciously try to build a Frisian standard language usually try to come up with as many good Frisian alternatives to these undesired interferences.¹⁷ One of the problems of the Frisian standard language is the fact that up to the present day it is rarely spoken, except on some (semi-)official occasions. Van der Meer (2009: 330) describes this as follows: 'Since the early nineteenth century, a Frisian written standard of sorts has evolved (which is actually spoken by very few) [...].'

¹³ 'Nobody will ask whether that particular bird is a *mos* ('sparrow') or a *mus* or whether we will go for a walk under the *sterren* ('stars') or *starren*. In short, a standard of the supposedly common vocabulary was formed.' ('Niemand zal zich nu meer afvragen of dat vogeltje een *mos* is of een *mus*, en of we onder de *sterren* of onder de *starren* een wandelingetje maken. Er is kortom een standaard gevormd voor wat als de algemene woordenschat wordt gezien, die de kern van de standaardtaal vormt.')

¹⁴ Mooijaart (2009b: 23).

¹⁵ Breuker (1979: 57): 'The diversity of dialects is generally viewed as a wealth that should be preserved.' ('It forskaet oan dialekten wurdt algemien as in rykdom sjoen, dy't biwarre bliuwe moat.')

¹⁶ 'Even words like: *geel*, *keel*, *heel*, *solder*, *swemme* etc., being correct dialectal forms in some regions of Friesland, are a threat, because they could spread well beyond the old borders and slowly drive out typically Frisian forms such as: *giel*, *kiel*, *hiel*, *souder*, *swimme*.)' ('Sels wurden als [read: 'as']: *geel*, *keel*, *heel*, *solder*, *swemme* ensfh., yn inkelde krite fan Fryslân de goede dialektyske foarm, binne yn dit opsjoch in gefaer, om't hja troch de stipe fan de Hollânske foarmen fier oer har âlde grinzen opkringe, en de tipysk-Fryske foarmen: *giel*, *kiel*, *hiel*, *souder*, *swimme* der stadichoan útwurkje.') Meerburg (1947: 105, 106).

¹⁷ Van der Sijs (1999: 17) also observes there is a discrepancy between the spoken and the written language in Frisian. 'In some languages there still is a difference between spoken and written language, in which the spoken language includes many more borrowings than the written language. This is the case with Afrikaans, Frisian, Catalan, Faerøer, Icelandic, Welsh and Greek.' ('In verschillende talen bestaat nog steeds een verschil tussen spreektaal en schrijftaal, waarbij de spreektaal aanzienlijk meer jonge leenwoorden bevat dan de schrijftaal. Dit is het geval in het Afrikaans, Fries, Catalaans, Faerøers, IJslands, Wels, Grieks.')

Since the 1960s, as a consequence of the democratisation process, more room was created for dialectal variation. According to Stroop (1997), it is possible to speak of two opposing developments in Dutch. On the one hand, dialects are increasingly converging, whereas on the other hand, more and more varieties of Dutch are becoming accepted in the standard language. He does not exclude the possibility that, if this trend should continue, all intelligible varieties of Dutch will become accepted as Standard Dutch.¹⁸ Social tolerance, which of course also developed in Friesland, probably did not contribute much to linguistic tolerance in relation to Frisian dialects. After all, this kind of tolerance was already present in society before the 1960s, even if not in everyone.

4. A century of Frisian dictionaries

Soon after the uncompleted, Latin-written *Lexicon Frisicum* by Joast Hiddes Halbertsma appeared in 1872, the provincial council of Friesland decided to compose a complete Frisian dictionary with descriptions in Dutch. In 1900, the first part of this dictionary was published, followed in 1911 by the third, and final, part. This meant that the Frisian language now had a complete dictionary at its disposal, for the first time in history.¹⁹ The compilers of the dictionary did not intend to write a purely prescriptive dictionary. Rather they tried to offer as much information about the various dialects as possible. These editors were, however, also among those who neglected the South East dialect wherever possible.²⁰ After *Lexicon Frisicum*, several concise dictionaries appeared. Almost all of these dictionaries were bilingual dictionaries from Frisian to Dutch or vice versa. In addition, some dictionaries were published with English as a target language. There was also a Frisian-Danish / Danish-Frisian dictionary. Apart from these bilingual dictionaries, three monolingual Frisian concise dictionaries have also been published, two of which were abridged dictionaries meant for primary and secondary education.²¹

The twenty-fifth, and final volume of the comprehensive Frisian dictionary *Wurdboek fan de Fryske taal / Woordenboek der Friese taal*, is due to be published in 2010. This dictionary offers an extensive description of Frisian and its dialects in the period from 1800 to 1976.

5. The dictionaries and the Frisian language norm

In my description of the position of Frisian dialects in the dictionaries, I investigated the dictionaries published between 1900 and 2009. As the above-mentioned *Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal* was aimed at producing a comprehensive description of the Frisian language, I

¹⁸ See Stroop (1997).

¹⁹ FRD (1900, 1903, 1911). In this dictionary, orthographical rules were used from the manual *Fryske Boekstavering* (1879), the first summary of Frisian spelling. The fact that the editors decided to use these orthographical rules had a standardising effect on written Frisian.

²⁰ Duijff (2008: 65): '[...] the compilers did not have the intention of compiling a prescriptive dictionary with a strict standard, but rather a descriptive one containing as much information as possible concerning the different Frisian dialects. However, in practice they paid less attention to some forms of dialect, especially that of the south-western region of the province.'

²¹ FRD (1991) and FRD (1998).

ignored that particular dictionary. In the bibliography, a chronological overview of the dictionaries discussed is given. Firstly, I made an inventory of the editors' comments regarding their selection of dialect forms. Furthermore, I concentrated on four cases of dialect variation. I confined myself to the entry forms and ignored the transcriptions of the proper pronunciations. This is because in this study I confine myself to written language and also the majority of entries did not include these transcriptions.

5.1. The language norm in the introductions

In eight of seventeen dictionaries assessed, the introductions give us some information about the selection of forms of dictionary entries.

In the FRD (1900), it is likely that the editors took their point of departure from the possibilities offered by Frisian orthography in the manual *Fryske Boekstavering* (1879).²² Moreover, Waling Dijkstra used phrases like 'common Frisian'²³ and 'the more polite Frisian language'²⁴ with no further explanation. The FRD (1934) clearly indicates that it is impossible to manage without variant forms, and gives some examples.²⁵ Just how these variant forms were selected remains unclear. The compilers of the FRD (1956) took as their starting point Standard Frisian, handed down from old and recent sources. Strongly dialect-specific material was left out due to the lack of space.²⁶ This same lack of space caused the editor of the FRD (1980) to indicate equivalent words on a very modest scale. Examples mentioned explicitly in the introduction are the variant forms *-loas* ('-less') and *-achtich* ('-like'), variant forms of *-leas* and *-eftich* respectively.²⁷ It is unclear which criteria were used to define his selection process. The FRD (1984) was meant to become a key to current words in the modern Frisian spoken and written language. It apparently wanted to cover more than just the standardised

²² 'Wherever the pronunciation deviates from the common spelling rules it is indicated between brackets.' ('Tusschen haakjes wordt aangegeven waar de uitspraak der woorden afwijkt van de gewone spelling, die door het Frysk Selskip is aangenomen [...].') *FRW* (1900: VI).

²³ '[...] de meer beschaafde friese taal [...].'²³ *FRD* (1900: VII).

²⁴ '[...] de gewoon-friese (uitspraak) [...].'²⁴ *FRD* (1900: IV).

²⁵ 'Variant forms like *dele* - *diele* ['to divide'], *teken* - *teiken* ['token, sign'], *tomme* - *tûme* ['thumb'], *sied* - *sie* ['seed'] must not be forgotten.' ('Dûbelfoarmen lyk as *dele* - *diele*, *teken* - *teiken*, *tomme* - *tûmme*, *sied* - *sie*, *koene* net alheel ûntbrekke.') *FRD* (1934).

²⁶ 'This dictionary mainly covers Standard Frisian as it was handed down from older and more recent sources. It was supplemented by material from oral tradition. We had to reject overly dialectal material, partly due to a shortage of space.' ('Dit wurdboek jowt yn haedsaek it standertfrysk, lyk as dat út skreaune âldere en nijere boarnen ta ús kommen is, oanfolle mei materiael út de folksmûle. It tige dialektyske hawwe wy, ek al om 'e romte, nije moatten.'). *FRD* (1956: (5)).

²⁷ '[...] equivalent words were included on a modest scale; for example, wherever a Frisian noun can end in *-heid* ['-hood'] as well as *-ens* ['-ness'] we did not include both forms; neither did we include adjectives ending in *-loas* (a variant of *-leas*, ['less']) and *-achtich* (a variant of *-eftich* ['-like'])'. ('[...] equivalenten [zijn] op bescheiden schaal vermeld; zo zijn bijv. van de Friese zelfstandige naamwoorden die zowel de uitgang *-ens* als *-heid* hebben niet beide vormen opgenomen, evenmin van de bijvoeglijke naamwoorden mei uitgangen *-leas* naast *-loas*, *-eftich* naast *-achtich*.') *FRD* (1980: (5)).

written language. The criteria used to determine the choices made is not indicated.²⁸ The bilingual Dutch - Frisian dictionary FRD (1985) aims at more or less mirroring the Dutch - Frisian dictionary FRD (1984). It, therefore, comes as no surprise that the editor stuck to the FRD (1984) language norm. He also discriminates standard forms, which he mentions first. He relativises this written standard language by claiming that, in practice, there is no real fixed standard. From the introduction, it appears that the editor of the FRD (2000b) decided to indicate just one Frisian rendering because his aim was to be prescriptive. In choosing this exclusive Frisian rendering, he was guided by the choices made by the *Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal*, the drafts of the FRD (2008) and the frequencies of the competing word forms in the language databases of the Fryske Akademy. He seems to have worked on the basis of the written standard language, but he also remarks that personal preferences may have played a role. This indicates that the written standard language has no fixed forms.²⁹ The FRD (2007) also takes as its starting point an existing, correct language norm, though many regional variant forms exist. It is not explained what is meant by this ‘correctness’.³⁰ The FRD (2008), the last dictionary to be discussed in this summary, unambiguously explains how the selection of lexical entry forms was carried out. As, accordingly to Duijff and Van der Kuip, Frisian does not yet have a fully-fledged standard, the editors of this dictionary opted for the tolerant daily practice of accepting various forms. Nevertheless, they did make some selection, though this selection cannot be accounted for explicitly in all cases, because of the absence of a fixed standard. Incidentally, in indicating the correct pronunciations, the editors consciously confined themselves to typically Clay and Woodland Frisian pronunciations. South-West Quarter and North Quarter pronunciations were systematically ignored.³¹

The accounts of how choices were made are, therefore, usually very brief, if present at all. The FRD (2000b) and FRD (2008) dictionaries and, to a lesser extent, the FRD (2007) dictionary, give the most extensive accounts, relative to the other dictionaries. But these dictionaries, like most of the others, use as their starting point a (written) Frisian standard language that is not clearly defined.

5.2. The language norm in the dictionaries

In all seventeen dictionaries, in this paper was concentrated on the treatment of a sample of four types of phonological variation in spoken Frisian. The first selected pair of alternating

²⁸ ‘The starting point for the design of this dictionary was the aim that it should become a key to the current words in the New Frisian written language, as well as in present-day colloquial Frisian [...]’ (‘Dêrom hat it útgongspunt by de opset fan it wurdboek west, dat it in kaai wêze moat op ‘e gongbere wurden yn de Nijfryske skriuwtaal en de hjoeddeiske Fryske omgongstaal [...].’) And: ‘This restriction implies that [...] words that are current in relatively small parts of Friesland [...]’ (‘De beheining wol sizze dat [...] wurden dy’t allinne mar yn navenant lytse hoeken fan Fryslân gongber binne [...].’) FRD (1984: 5).

²⁹ Compare FRD (2000b: 19, 20).

³⁰ ‘Frisian shows a lot of regional and other diversity, in orthography as well as in vocabulary. In this dictionary, spellings and lexical items which comply with the standards of good and correct Frisian and resemble pupils’ language use were preferred.’ (‘Het Fries kent vrij veel regionale en andere variatie in spelling en woordkeuze. Voor dit woordenboek is altijd gekozen voor die spelling en woordkeuze die beantwoorden aan de normen van wat als goed, correct Fries wordt erkend en die daarbinnen het dichtst staan bij het taalgebruik van scholieren.’) FRD (2007: 7).

³¹ Compare FRD (2008: X).

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variants is *ea* [I.ə] versus *ê* [ɛ:]. In Woodland Frisian and North Quarter dialect the vowel [ɛ:] is pronounced instead of the diphthong [I.ə] when it precedes a velar stop or fricative (i.e. voiceless stop /k/, voiceless fricative /x/, voiced fricative /ɣ/). The second pair of variants is *ie* [i.ə] versus *ee* [e:]. This alternation is found in a small number of basic words. Roughly, it can be said that *ee* appears in the North and West of the language area, and *ie* in the South and East, but not all relevant words have the same geographical distribution. In Standard Dutch these words have the phoneme /e:/. The third pair of variants is *i* [I] versus *ee* [e:]. This pair also occurs in a (very) limited number of words; *i* is a mainly Southern variant, whereas *ee* is mainly Northern. The fourth pair of variants is *o* [o] versus *û* [u]. This alternation, which occurs exclusively in cases where the vowel precedes the labial nasal /m/, is distributed roughly as follows: [o] appears in the South and Central parts of the language area, whereas [u] appears in the East and North. The words that were studied are listed in Appendix I.

In the case of the *i* [I] / *ee* [e:] alternation, all seventeen dictionaries include only the *i*-variant. In the *ea* [I.ə] versus *ê* [ɛ:] case, only a few *ê*-variants were included in dictionaries. In the FRD (1900, 1911), the [ɛ:] forms *bêge* ('horse collar'), *bêken* ('beacon'), *drêge* ('anchor'), *êch* ('eye') en *skêge* ('kind of keel') appear alongside their synonymous counterparts with *ea*. The FRD (1918) includes only *bêken*, alongside *beaken*. Furthermore, in the dictionaries FRD (1934), FRD (1944), FRD (1952), FRD (1956), FRD (1984) en FRD (1985) the archaic word *dreage* ('anchor') is usually rendered in its *ê*-guise, although the *ea* does occur.

The two remaining pairs of variants show a completely different picture. Throughout this century of Frisian lexicography, both *ie* [i.ə] and *ee* [e:] appear frequently, mainly in exclusively Frisian words. The dictionaries FRD (1991), FRD (1998) and FRD (2000b), however, differ. These dictionaries almost exclusively prefer *ie*. Only the word *eed* ('oath') has the long vowel instead of a diphthong. In the FRD (1980) the diphthong *ie* is dominant.

In the FRD (1968) and FRD (2000b) dictionaries, the *o* forms appear exclusively. The *û* variants are consistently avoided. FRD (1980), FRD (1991) and FRD (1998) all include just one single lexical entry in the *û* spelling. In the other dictionaries the *o* variant is almost always included anyway; in many cases the *û* variant is also included. The ratios are indicated in the table below. The + sign indicates that the doublet is included more than once; the - sign indicates that the doublet occurs only once, or not at all.

doublet dictionary	<i>ea, ê</i>	<i>ie, ee</i>	<i>i, ee</i>	<i>o, û</i>
FRW (1900, 1903, 1911)	+	+	-	+
FRD (1918)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1934)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1944)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1952)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1956)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1968)	-	+	-	-
FRD (1980)	-	+	-	-
FRD (1984)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1985)	-	+	-	+
FRD (1986)	-	+	-	+

doublet dictionary	<i>ea, ê</i>	<i>ie, ee</i>	<i>i, ee</i>	<i>o, û</i>
FRD (1991)	-	-	-	+
FRD (1998)	-	-	-	-
FRD (2000a)	-	+	-	+
FRD (2000b)	-	-	-	-
FRD (2007)	-	+	-	+
FRD (2008)	-	+	-	+

Table 1

6. Conclusions

Returning to the original research question: Did the dictionaries mirror the diversity of dialects or did the editors prefer a prescriptive design? If we look at the results of this study we can conclude that Frisian dictionaries did not consistently use one single form of the standard language. A small number of dictionaries consciously prefer to include only one variant entry form. Two of these dictionaries were designed for education purposes, so it is understandable that the editors intended to present pupils with a fixed norm. It is precisely education that needs clear and unambiguous prescriptions in relation to the written language norm. The other dictionaries which offer little or no diversity in word forms are the more abridged dictionaries. The more elaborate and widely used dictionaries, like FRD (1900, 1903, 1911), FRD (1952, 1956), FRD (1984, 1985) en FRD (2008), show a rather tolerant standard of language, though not in a consistent form. These dictionaries were used in practice to set a standard for written Frisian. For example, the FRD (1984) established a stringent language standard used for many years by the Frisian Language Educational Board (Afûk).³² The Afûk is responsible for Frisian language education for adults. The FRD (1984) also set a standard for a primary education language course.³³ Another example is the FRD (1900) that guided the grammar manual by Postma and De Clercq (1902).³⁴ The electronic language databases of the Fryske Akademy show that the choices made by the most frequently consulted dictionaries were widely followed. For example, these databases show only a few hits for word forms like *leze* ('lie') and *seze* ('say') and *êch* ('eye') and *wêk* ('soft'). These variant forms were mostly found in the works of these authors, who are renowned for preferring non-standard language use. The two remaining types of phonological variation are represented by many hits in the language database.

³² For an extension of this language norm, see Algemeine Fryske Underrjocht Kommisje (1991: 8).

³³ 'As to the language norm, the Frisian Concise Dictionary of the Fryske Akademy was decisive; this is also true for variant forms.' ('Wat de taalnoarm oangiet, hat it Frysk hânwurdboek fan de Fryske Akademy de trochslach jûn, ek by njonkenfoarmen fan wurden.') Ytsma (1995: 74).

³⁴ 'The orthography in this grammar manual mainly follows the Frysk Wurdboek [...], in order to encourage uniformly as well as easy reading and writing of Frisian.' ('De stavering fen dizze spraekleare slút hir yn haedsaek by it Frysk Wirdboek [...] oan, om mear ienheit en maklik lêzen en skriuwen by it Frysk to bifoarderjen.') Postma and De Clercq (1904: VII).

Section 10. Lexicography of Lesser Used or Non-State Languages

It can also be concluded that the starting points for each dictionary, as outlined in their respective introductions reflect the contents of the dictionaries themselves.

It seems highly likely that the first Frisian dictionary set a trend towards the standardization of Frisian. The selection of main entries by its editors is also adhered to by subsequent dictionaries. Also, whenever this dictionary accounted for rendering dialectal variation explicitly, most subsequent dictionaries did so as well. As a result, within the Frisian written standard language, tolerance in relation to dialects varies. Further research on the appearance of dialect variation in the FRD (1900, 1903, 1911) would shed more light on the role of dictionaries in the standardization process.

It should be investigated why the FRD (1900, 1903, 1911) does render the dialectal variation *o* versus *û*, while not rendering the variation *i* versus *ee*. It is possible that the editors were guided by the orthographical manual *Fryske Boekstavering* (1879). For in that outline of orthography, the spelling of *û* instead of *o* before labial nasal /m/ was not ruled out, whereas words like *dizze* ('this'), *lizze* ('lie') and *sizze* ('say') are only written with *i*.³⁵

Mooijaart (2009b: 24) observes that Frisian is still in a stage of creating a standard language. In Mooijaart (2009a: 4) she concludes Frisian still has to make a choice from among the dialectal variants. Her observations are completely in line with the picture of an alternating practice in the dictionaries. In a new Frisian production dictionary, the choices to be made from the number of dialectal variations should be studied carefully, in the interest of creating a standard language. Atkins and Rundell (2008: 47) are of the opinion that a dictionary editor has to fulfil many tasks, 'but the observation of language in use is the indispensable first stage in the process'. By 'language in use' Atkins and Rundell mean the written standard language of English in practice. If Frisian dictionary editors continued to base their dictionaries on common written language, the habit of including dialect variants in production dictionaries would remain, hindering the progress of standardization.

³⁵ Compare for the orthography of *û* p. 24, for *i* pp. 15 and 18.

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<i>ea</i> [I.ə] / <i>ê</i> [ɛ:]	<i>ie</i> [i.ə] / <i>ee</i> [e:]	<i>i</i> [I] / <i>ee</i> [e:]	<i>o</i> [o] / <i>û</i> [u]
<i>beage</i> ('horse collar')	<i>algemien</i>	<i>dizze</i> ('this')	<i>dom</i> ('stupid')
<i>beaken</i> ('beacon')	('common')	<i>lizze</i> ('to lie')	<i>fersom</i> ('omission')
<i>dreage</i> ('anchor')	<i>bediele</i> ('endow')	<i>sizze</i> ('to say')	<i>fersomje</i> ('omit')
<i>dreagje</i> ('pour off')	<i>diel</i> ('part')		<i>homp</i> ('chunk')
<i>each</i> ('eye')	<i>diele</i> ('to devide')		<i>hompe</i> ('to thrust')
<i>fleach</i> ('labour pain')	<i>hielje</i> ('to heal')		<i>klomje</i> ('be cold all over')
<i>heak</i> ('hook')	<i>ied</i> ('oath')		<i>klomsk</i> ('shivery')
<i>keakelje</i> ('to cackle')	<i>juwiel</i> ('jewel')		<i>kom</i> ('bowl')
<i>meager</i> ('thin')	<i>kastiel</i> ('castle')		<i>krom</i> ('bent')
<i>neaken</i> ('naked')	<i>kiel</i> ('throat')		<i>krommel</i> ('crumb')
<i>pleagje</i> ('tease')	<i>liep</i> ('sly')		<i>plom</i> ('plume')
<i>reach</i> ('cobwebs')	<i>oardiel</i> ('judgement')		<i>plomp</i> ('plump')
<i>reak</i> ('heap of hay')	<i>paniel</i> ('panel')		<i>plompe</i> ('splash')
<i>skeage</i> ('kind of keel')	<i>toaniel</i> ('stage')		<i>plompert</i> ('water of ditch')
<i>speake</i> ('spoke')	<i>wielde</i> ('luxury')		<i>prom</i> ('plum')
<i>streakje</i> ('stroke')			<i>promje</i> ('chew tobacco')
<i>sweager</i> ('brother in law')			<i>promkje</i> ('chew tobacco')
<i>weach</i> ('wave')			<i>rom</i> ('spacious')
<i>weagje</i> ('to venture')			<i>romje</i> ('to empty')
<i>weak</i> ('soft')			<i>romte</i> ('room, space')
			<i>skom</i> ('foam')
			<i>skomje</i> ('to foam')
			<i>slomje</i> ('to slumber')
			<i>slom(me)</i> ('slumber')
			<i>tomkje</i> ('press with one's thumb')
			<i>tomme</i> ('thumb')
			<i>tommelje</i> ('tumble')

Appendix I The words studied

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