

## 4. Between academic discipline and societal relevance

Professionalizing foreign language education in the Netherlands, 1881-1921

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### Abstract

In the Netherlands, there has been, since the 16th century, a long tradition of foreign language education, especially in French, which was the second “mother tongue” of the Dutch upper classes in the 18th century. The law of 1863 introduced the compulsory teaching of German, French and English in secondary school and consequently the law of 1876 permitted the creation of chairs of philology of modern languages at the Dutch University. This was, partly, in order to educate on an academic level the future foreign language teachers. But it took 40 years to get recognition for the academic dimension of the discipline by introducing specific university degrees through the Academic Statute in 1921. At the University of Groningen, Barend Sijmons and Anton G. van Hamel, the founders of philology, promoted, through their Chair (1881, 1884), their discipline as a science with distinct social relevance. Modern language education was in fact serving both a humanist and a liberal ideology, and was a political issue answering the needs of the Bourgeoisie with her commercial purpose. Directly or indirectly, the international context influenced the development of philology as an academic discipline, as philologists were acting as *‘passeurs culturels’* (‘cultural transfer agents’).

### Introduction

Even though there is a long tradition of foreign language education in the Netherlands that started in the sixteenth century, the teaching of modern languages, including French (which for a long time had been the educational

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language of the Dutch upper classes) took a long time to become institutionalized. It was first included in the university curriculum (the law of 1876<sup>1</sup>) for the purpose of training teachers when modern language teaching became compulsory in secondary school (the law of 1863<sup>2</sup>), which was specifically created to educate middle and upper classes, those who supported the country's economy. We will first look at how modern language academic teaching started, like in Germany, in a – from a geographic point of view – peripheral university that took advantage of this opportunity to distinguish itself and specialize. We will then present the vision the founders of philology had of their discipline as a science with a distinct social relevance. Last, we will note the importance of the international context in the evolution of modern language education, serving both a humanist and a liberal ideology. This study focuses on the period starting from the creation of the first philology chair to the creation of the *Academic Statute* 40 years later, confirming at last the academic dimension of the discipline by introducing specific university degrees.

## A historical moment

Almost a decade was necessary to include foreign language education in the Dutch university system, and those years (1878-1886) can be considered as 'a historical moment'.<sup>3</sup> Three modern languages received a chair at the University of Groningen (situated in the north-east of the country, close to Germany) between 1881 and 1886. The bill on Higher Education of 28 April 1876 opened the possibility for at least one public university to start teaching 'French, English and High-German language and literature'.<sup>4</sup> Prior to this bill, living or modern languages were 'no subject for study, nor science, but mere practical skills in higher education'.<sup>5</sup> Even though language education

1 De wet tot regeling van het Hooger Onderwijs van den 28<sup>sten</sup> April 1876 (*Staatsblad* no 102).

2 De wet van den 2<sup>den</sup> Mei 1863 houdende regeling van het Middelbaar Onderwijs (*Staatsblad* no 50), famous as "Thorbecke Law".

3 De Boer, 'Een historisch moment', pp. 260-275.

4 *Staatsblad* no.102, art. 43, 5d.

5 Before the law of 1876, the teaching of modern languages was not legally regulated; a modern language was not deemed worthy of study or research nor was it considered to be more than a mere practical skill. Sijmons' booklet *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen* on the history of modern language education at the University of Groningen was written for the celebration, marking 300 years of the university, which was definitely prospering decades after the 1876 law on Higher Education. It gives an analytical reflection on thirty years of teaching modern language at the university as well as a critical point of view on the position of the chairs, including his own. It's

changed from a practical skill to a university discipline, ‘the legislature was not convinced that education in modern languages was anything more than a luxury article’, according to Barend Sijmons (1878, p.6). While a few university chairs were created, there were no exams or degrees to sanction language studies and there was no master’s degree in any of the three modern languages. However, since 1877 ‘ancient German languages’ had been included in the exams for a master’s degree in Dutch literature and it was possible to obtain a doctorate on a topic related to modern languages within Dutch studies.<sup>6</sup>

The chair at the University of Groningen was therefore no more than a *hors d’oeuvre*, since it did not include the ‘essential sanction of exams and university degrees’, according to Anton Gerard van Hamel.<sup>7</sup> In his inaugural speech as ‘first Dutch Professor in French language and literature and roman philology’ pronounced on 20 September 1884 at the University of Groningen, while recognizing that the government had ‘understood that this chair is not a luxury object but an essential element of university education’, Van Hamel stated: ‘I have to say, the chair I will occupy is really an *empty chair*’.<sup>8</sup> For more than 25 years, expressions like ‘an empty chair’, ‘a luxury article’, ‘the Cinderella of Higher Education’ would be used by university professors in their continuing battle for official recognition of their discipline.

Nevertheless, the first three modern language chairs were created at the University of Groningen: German in 1881, French in 1884 and English in 1886. Initially, several private teachers were appointed: Sijmons was appointed in 1878 to teach High-German and English language and literature, and became a Professor three years later (1881) with a focus on ‘ancient German, the principles of comparative linguistics, the principles of Sanskrit, and High-German language and literature’.<sup>9</sup> By way of comparison, in 1884, Karl

also a political expression asking for recognition of modern languages as an academic discipline. Sijmons’ approach is analytical as well as historical as it is programmatic. Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 417.

6 Koops, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen*, p. 11.

7 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 34.

8 Ibidem: ‘Il lui [la chaire de français qui vient d’être fondée dans une Université néerlandaise] manque une chose essentielle: l’indispensable sanction des examens et des grades universitaires. La loi qui a voulu cette chaire la considère, [...] comme un hors d’oeuvre. [...] Or, il n’y a pas à dire, celle que je vais occuper est un peu “une chaire en l’air”’. According to Van Hamel, this expression ‘chaire en l’air’ came from Gaston Paris.

9 Thanks to the Sir Robert Taylor endowment, already in 1848 the University of Oxford had two Taylorian Teachers in Modern European Languages (French and German). These positions were abolished in 1868 and replaced by a chair founded by the university itself. Friedrich



Anton Gerard van Hamel 1867-1907 – (Universiteitsmuseum Groningen).

Hermann Breul (1860-1932), a German scholar who studied Germanic and Romance philology in Germany (Tübingen & Berlin) but also in Strasbourg & Paris, became the university's first lecturer in German at the University of Cambridge.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding the French language, Paul Pierson (philologist and musician, author of 'Natural metrics of language', 1883) had to decline the chair in 1877 for health reasons.<sup>11</sup> While the German language had been covered in 1881 with the appointment of Sijmons, 'French and German are still destitute and shiver with cold' according to Sijmons in his inaugural speech

Max Müller (1823-1900), from 1851 deputy Taylorian Professor of Modern European Language, became Professor of comparative philology, the first occupant of the chair financed by the University of Oxford. More than an expert in teaching Modern European Languages, he 'was a pioneer in the fields of Vedic studies, comparative philology, comparative mythology and comparative religion [...] and his philological methodology was replaced by the nascent science of anthropology' (R.C.C. Fynes, 'Müller, Friedrich Max (1823–1900)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2007, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18394](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18394), accessed 2 Dec 2013]). The history of modern language teaching in the United Kingdom is the object of a research project by Nicola McLelland and Richard Smith.

10 Paulin, 'Karl Hermann Breul'.

11 De Boer, 'Een historisch moment', p. 261; Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 10.

(28 March 1881, p. 29), otherwise dedicated to 'Jacob Grimm, the creator of historical grammar' and founder of the science of German philology. Indeed, the destiny of the French and English languages initially seemed to be connected; in 1883 the search started for a professor of both languages combined (French and English), until it was concluded that this was an impossible task since no qualified candidates were found for the combined languages.<sup>12</sup> In May 1884, Anton Gerard van Hamel was appointed as Professor in 'French language and literature and the general principles of Roman philology'. In 1907, Van Hamel had to resign for health reasons and was replaced by Jean-Jacques Salverda de Grave who came from Leiden. Salverda stayed in Groningen until 1920 when he left for Amsterdam to succeed Gustave Cohen.<sup>13</sup> Kornelis Sneyders de Vogel succeeded him in Groningen. In September 1885, Jan Beckering Vinckers was appointed Professor in 'English language and literature'. Eight years later, in 1893, the German Karl Daniel Bülbring succeeded him. He stayed at the University of Groningen until he became Professor in Bonn in 1900.

While Amsterdam (where the Athenaeum became City University in 1876) had to wait until 1912 for the appointment of its first professor in a modern language (French), Utrecht had Johan Hendrik Gallee (1847-1908), who started as a German high school teacher, then as lecturer at the Utrecht University in 1881, before being appointed in 1882 as Professor in 'German language, comparative Indo-German linguistics and the principles of Sanskrit'. Johann J.A.A. Frantzen (1853-1923) succeeded Gallee, after his death in 1908.<sup>14</sup> After Groningen (1884) and Amsterdam (1912), Nijmegen received a chair in French philology in 1923 and Leiden not until 1931. It is only after the Second World War that, both Utrecht (Mrs Bartina Harmina Wind in 1953) and the VU-University Amsterdam (1954) got their first French Professor. For English, Utrecht had to wait even longer (Rudolph Vleeskruyer in 1957). Compared to other European countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland,

12 In Germany, French and English were usually combined in the 26 university seminars created between 1867 and 1893 for Romance language education. Hassler, 'Les maîtres de langues et la constitution de la philology romance', pp. 34-35.

13 Gustave Cohen was the department chair of French language and literature at the University of Amsterdam, from 1912 to 1919. In 1933, he founded the Maison Descartes, a French cultural centre in the Netherlands, similar to the Dutch pavilion at the International University Campus in Paris, meant to host artists, scientists and writers (cf. website Maison Descartes <http://institutfrancais.nl/nl/>).

14 Johann Frantzen, who had a German father and a French-speaking mother, was qualified both as a German teacher (1873) and a French teacher (1882); however, his bilingual education is disputed (cf. Vonk, *De studie van de moderne vreemde talen*; Herrlitz, *(Hoog-) Leraar Frantzen*).

Sweden, Denmark), the Netherlands was really behind with these appointments, as mentioned by Van Hamel, quoting M. Körting.<sup>15</sup>

Science was the responsibility of professors. They focused on teaching philology and studying editions of medieval texts. As requested by Van Hamel since the early days of his appointment, and conform to practice in Germany, teachers were appointed with the title of Lector for practical language education and modern literature.<sup>16</sup> We can trace a whole range of teachers in different languages.<sup>17</sup> For the German language, H. Pol was appointed in 1901 and H. Breuning in 1911, both in Groningen. For 'new French', the first teacher C. Pernot was a Frenchman, appointed in 1903. His successor in 1906 was M. Laurentie, also a Frenchman, but in 1907, the first female teacher in the Netherlands, Marie Elise Loke, was appointed at the University of Groningen; she got, in 1906, her doctorate from the University of Toulouse.<sup>18</sup> Loke picked Madame de Charrière, also known as Belle van Zuylen or Isabella Agneta Elisabeth van Tuyll van Serooskerken (1740-1805), as the topic for her public lecture on 15 January 1908. Her successor in 1916 was another Frenchman, E. Boutan. For the English language, Adriaan E.H. Swaen was appointed in 1905 as the teacher for 'new English'. When he became a professor in 1913, J. Falconer, an Englishman, took his place from 1916 until 1918, and then, a female private teacher in new English literature, M.E. de Meester, was appointed. At the University of Groningen, Italian was also taught (by Van Hamel from 1892 and later by Salverda as part of his chair), and, temporarily, also Spanish, in 1918-1919 by a professor from Pennsylvania's Bryn Mawr College, Fonger de Haan, who temporarily

15 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 8 (note 1): 'M. Körting compte en Allemagne, y compris l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Suisse allemande 29 chaires de langues romanes'. Germany created eight Romance-language professor positions (chairs) at universities between 1827 and 1853. F. Diez (appointed in Bonn in 1830) 'taught classes about the origin and structure of Romance languages that attracted many students' including Gaston Paris, Van Hamel's teacher. G. Hassler notes that German philology was developed 'by specialists from other disciplines' such as experts in German, Sanskrit, and the Orient (Hassler, 'Les maîtres de langues', pp. 33-34).

16 Van Hamel, 'De levende vreemde talen aan de Universiteit', p. 250: Teachers 'from the country where the foreign language is being spoken, who try to make students familiar with the practical use of the foreign idiom, by leading speaking and translating exercises' [lectoren, die afkomstig uit het land waar de vreemde taal gesproken wordt, door het leiden van spreek- en vertaal oefeningen de studenten vertrouwd pogen te maken met het praktisch gebruik van het vreemde idioom].

17 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 430 gives many details about the persons and their work at the university.

18 I. de Wilde published a study on Marie E. Loke, the first woman lector at a Dutch university. The Ph.D. of Marie E. Loke (1870-1916) was a research on the Dutch translations of a medieval Poem by Renaud de Montauban, published in 1906 at Toulouse (Privat).

stayed in the Netherlands<sup>19</sup>. It is worth noting that De Haan donated a large collection of books on the Spanish and Portuguese languages to the university library.<sup>20</sup>

At the time, the question of the importance of a native versus a non-native speaker for language teaching was already debated, as we can see from the comments made by Sijmons: 'The drawbacks of the notion that was always supported by Van Hamel, i.e. the teaching of foreign languages by native speakers, are quite major, in spite of some advantages'.<sup>21</sup> The teachers usually stayed for a few years and then left for other positions, in the Netherlands (e.g. Swaen who left for a chair in Amsterdam in 1913), in Germany (e.g. Pernot who in 1906 left to become a correspondent in Berlin for a French newspaper), or in France (Laurentie in 1907). In a letter from Van Hamel we can read that he proposed a Frenchman to replace Salverda de Grave in Leiden in 1907, with the understanding that an appropriate Dutch candidate could probably fill the position rather quickly. In all this – a policy of using native speakers for the practical language learning and of creating study groups following the German model of 'Seminare', functioning as a laboratory for the natural sciences – the influence of Germany is evident.<sup>22</sup> However, learning a foreign language from a native teacher has for centuries been considered a great advantage in European countries; from the sixteenth century, French masters exploited the opportunity to teach their own language in England and in the Netherlands. For example, Noël de Berlaimont (*Colloquia et Dictionariolum* 1530), Claude de Sainliens, alias Claudius Holyband (*The French Littleton* 1607), Claude Mauger (*French Grammar with Several Choice Dialogues* 1656), Jean-Nicolas de Parival (*Dialogues François et Allemans selon le langage du temps* 1670), Pieter Marin (*Méthode familière* 1694) are well-known native French masters, thanks to the books they wrote which were used by generations of students. Madame de Beaumont, who was a *gouvernante* in England, also was the French teacher of generations of European pupils, with her books (*Le Magazin des enfants ou Dialogues entre une sage gouvernante et ses élèves* 1764 and many others of that type).

19 Clearly, teacher mobility was already a reality then, including international exchanges! To this day, Bryn Mawr College is perpetuating the tradition and, every year, offers Dutch students various scholarships to study at its 'Institut d'Études Françaises' in Avignon, France!

20 Koops, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen*, p. 23.

21 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 431: 'De bezwaren van het stelsel, door Van Hamel steeds voorgestaan, om het lectoraat in vreemde talen aan vreemdelingen op te dragen, bleken, hoe groot dan ook de voordelen er van mochten wezen, wel heel ernstig in de praktijk'.

22 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 432.

The University of Groningen made a strategic choice in favour of foreign language education, both to train academics and future secondary school teachers. Thanks to financial support from the city, Groningen became the university to elect modern language chairs (following the law of 1876), and as a result became the centre for both modern philology studies and for the education of modern language teachers. Groningen made this choice in its own interest, since *gouverner c'est prévoir* ('to govern means to anticipate').<sup>23</sup> It was a necessary choice for the University of Groningen in order to increase its profile on the Dutch market and, by teaching foreign languages, to attract more students for the education of teachers.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, many new teachers were needed as a result of the Thorbecke Law on secondary education (1863), which required French, English and German to be taught in a secondary school (*Hoogere Burger School*, or HBS). But, in spite of all the efforts from the three modern language professors, it would take almost 40 years for modern languages to receive the full academic recognition that Dutch language enjoyed. During his entire life, including his time as member of the Education Board, created in 1919, Sijmons did not stop fighting for a university education for modern language teachers. In 1898, at the first *Nederlandsche Philologen Congres* ('first Dutch Philologists Congress') in Amsterdam, he deplored the fact that the Netherlands still didn't have university education for modern language teachers. Both Sijmons and Van Hamel asked the founders of their chairs (the ministerial authorities) to create and develop favourable conditions for the recruitment of good modern language teachers. Sijmons believed that education in modern languages 'would slowly help create the necessity for academic education for future modern language teachers'.<sup>25</sup> According to Sijmons, national interest was a major factor in the creation of a body of teachers with both academic training and practical job skills. This is how he saw their training:

Our modern language teachers don't have to become sharp linguists or educated philologists primarily, even though they do need historical knowledge of language development and critical research methods. On the other hand, we also do not want them to become simple language teachers, even though they definitely need practical skills in the foreign

23 Ibidem, pp. 432-434.

24 In the 1870s, the situation was problematic because of the decrease in student numbers. The 1876 Law on academic education was therefore essential for the University of Groningen, whose very existence was being threatened (website Rijksuniversiteit Groningen).

25 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 434.



language and mechanical knowledge. Their education should train them to become specialists and interpreters of a foreign nationality, including the country, its literature, its history and its spirit.<sup>26</sup>

Curiously, we find the same preoccupation in England, where, in 1894, 1895 and 1896, Breul gave lectures to both his students at the University of Cambridge and the College of Preceptors, during which he stated that ‘Modern Languages are at last beginning to receive in this country the attention to which the subject is entitled not only by its practical usefulness but still more by its intrinsic value as an important element in a truly liberal education’.<sup>27</sup>

Until 1919, the only exams preparing for modern language education were the *M.O. Aktes*, which were national teaching certificates but not university degrees<sup>28</sup>. In 1919, the *jus examinandi et promovendi* (‘the right to deliver university diplomas and have Ph.D. students’) resulted in the recognition of foreign languages as a university discipline. The Academic Statute (15 June 1921) confirmed the creation of university degrees for modern languages and the possibility to get a Ph.D. in modern languages. Nevertheless, MO students represented a large part of the audience of modern language classes, even though it was not an official training for a *MO Akte* (professional teaching certificate). Although foreign language teaching is a skill just like calligraphy or modelling but not exactly like horseback riding, as Sijmons suggests, the university professors consider it their responsibility to train future modern language teachers.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the professors had to prove (1) that the study of modern languages was a science and should be sanctioned by university degrees, and (2) that future modern language teachers should be

26 Sijmons, *De opleiding der leeraren in de moderne talen*, p. 43: ‘Tot scherpzinnige linguïsten of geleerde philologen behoeven onze “neusprachliche” docenten niet in de eerste plaats te worden gevormd, al zijn historische kennis der taalontwikkeling en methode van kritisch onderzoek voor hen onontbeerlijk, maar evenmin mogen zij bekrompen *mâtres de langue* blijven, al zijn praktische bedrevenheid in de vreemde taal en mechanische kennis voor hen het allereerste vereischte: hunne opleiding moet hen ontwikkelen tot kenners en vertolkers van eene vreemde nationaliteit, van haar land, haar letterkunde, haar geschiedenis en haar geest’.

27 Breul, *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages*, preface VI.

28 ‘MO Aktes’ were redefined in the 1879 law; A = language, pronunciation and phonetics; B = literature. MO B provided access to secondary education in 5 years. The law defined the knowledge that needed to be verified but not the training required to acquire this knowledge. And, in order to become a teacher, there was no verification of educational or didactical skills. Since the 1876 law, the committees that granted exams had been pleading for better training for teachers, both at the scientific and didactical level, also taking into consideration the low level of general knowledge.

29 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 419.

educated at the university, both in science and in practice, as educational and 'didactics' experts. It was in the interest of society to train specialists in bridging cultures. It was also the university's role to 'train for the independent practice of science and [...] to prepare for the occupation of positions<sup>30</sup> in society for which academic training is required'.<sup>31</sup>

## Academics with a social vision

The study of neophilology in the Netherlands was in particular marked by two personalities who extensively and publicly discussed their vision about this discipline. According to de Boer, Sijmons' and Van Hamel's inaugural lectures are jointly considered to be the 'birth certificate of the academic study of neophilology in the Netherlands'.<sup>32</sup> Barend Sijmons (1853-1935) is considered a key figure in the 'battle for recognition of modern language studies',<sup>33</sup> although he did all his studies in Germany – first at the Lyceum in Hannover, then at the University of Leipzig for general, German and Roman philology, where he graduated as a Doctor in 1876 – and wished for a career in Germany, he became department chair at the University of Groningen and stayed for more than 40 years. Van Hamel had a strong personality, and started off as a preacher in the Walloon Church, just like his father. In spite of being the founder of Dutch Romance Studies, he owed his academic education to France and Germany.<sup>34</sup> In his inaugural lecture (1884) he presents himself as a founder, just like his father, the former Walloon pastor who laid the first stone of the Walloon church in Groningen. He explains accepting his new position is just like laying the first stone once again: 'here I am called to build a new foundation, one of a new education'.<sup>35</sup> The position also required social responsibility: 'I have not come to establish Romance

30 Van Hamel stays very vague, without specifying the kind of social position he is referring to.

31 Van Hamel, 'De levende vreemde talen aan de Universiteit', p. 222.

32 De Boer, 'Een historisch moment', p. 262.

33 De Wilde, *Werk maakt het bestaan draaglijk*, p. 15.

34 Van Hamel attended classes by Gaston Paris at the EPHE in 1879 and by Paul Meyer at the École des Chartes in Paris; he also attended Darmesteter's lectures at the Sorbonne and participated in Adolf Tobler's seminar in Berlin. Tobler was a student of Frederic Diez whose classes Gaston Paris attended during two semesters in Bonn, in 1856-1857. Diez applied Grimm's scientific method to Romance languages. Twenty years earlier, Van Hamel also studied with Viëtor ('language is sound'). Thus, the German philology has definitely had an influence, although indirectly, on the development of Dutch Romance studies.

35 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 40: 'Et maintenant me voici appelé à poser un autre fondement, celui d'un enseignement nouveau'.



Poster of the Exhibition devoted to Barend Sijmons in the University Library Groningen (2007) – (Universiteitsmuseum Groningen).

philology in Holland [...] but I wish for this philology to be founded here and to be recognized by the law of the land and by the will of the university people'.<sup>36</sup>

For both Sijmons and Van Hamel, philology is a historical discipline: 'Thus, the historical-comparative method is the only one that can put a scientific stamp on the practice of modern languages, and, as a result, also the only one to be used in university education'.<sup>37</sup> According to Sijmons, modern language studies must concentrate on historical grammar, research the origin of medieval texts, and study French, English and German

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 36: 'Je ne suis pas venu fonder la philologie romane en Hollande. [...]. Mais je désire que cette philologie y soit fondée et reconnue de par la loi du pays et de par la volonté du peuple universitaire'.

<sup>37</sup> Sijmons, *Over de wetenschappelijke beoefening der moderne talen*, p. 13.

according to a historical-comparative method.<sup>38</sup> Sijmons considered himself a ‘follower of Grimm, the creator of historical grammar’ and Van Hamel considered himself a follower of Gaston Paris, an expert in both Roman and German philology as mentioned earlier. Van Hamel follows the same direction as Sijmons and sees the ‘historical method’ as the method for any serious philological education.<sup>39</sup> He underlines the fact that the academic study of a modern language needs to be both diachronic and synchronic: not only should a modern language be compared to an ancient language, it should also be compared to other modern languages. He insists on the synchronic dimension of linguistics, in both phonetics and morphology, and concludes that

the past needs to explain the present, the ancient condition of the language needs to explain its modern time condition, [...] thus, it is appropriate to take popular Latin as our starting point [...] and then follow the stream down to the current condition of the language.<sup>40</sup>

The same goes for etymology and syntax, but the other way around: ‘going in the opposite direction, [...] starting from the current use, going back to the past and [...] comparing what is now to what used to be’.<sup>41</sup>

However, since a language reflects ‘modern customs in thinking and expression’, it also needs to be studied as a modern expression and in context. Fernand Baldensperger argues, in a letter to Salverda de Grave (Paris, 12 January 1930), for a redistribution of roles in the period between the two World Wars: ‘to remain the Dutch language without sliding back to German, the Dutch language needs French in modern times, just like it needed Latin in the Middle Ages’.<sup>42</sup> A comparative study is not fully independent from choices and perspective. In addition to the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of a language study according to the historical-comparative

38 De Wilde, *Werk maakt het bestaan draaglijk*, p. 15.

39 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p.18.

40 Ibidem, pp. 25-26: ‘C’est au passé à expliquer le présent, c’est à l’état ancien de la langue à rendre compte de son état à l’époque moderne. [...] il convient donc de] prendre son point de départ [...] dans le latin populaire [...] et descendre ensuite le courant jusqu’à l’état actuel de la langue’.

41 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 26-27: ‘Pour la syntaxe [...] procéder en sens inverse [...] remonter de l’usage actuel à celui d’autrefois et [...] comparer ce qui est à ce qui a été’.

42 KB 133 M 81: ‘[...] pour rester le hollandais sans reglisser au germanique, le néerlandais authentique a besoin du français dans les temps modernes, comme il avait besoin du latin au moyen âge’.

method, there is also an ethical dimension, which Van Hamel cherishes. Van Hamel sees the historical philologist as an artist too:

Although we make French into a serious science, let's not forget it is also an art [...]. I know that from a purely academic point of view, the smallest alpine dialect is equal to the most brilliant language. But how could I forget that each language is not only a thought but also music? [...] Thus, I like to think that the artistic study of French deserves its place next to the philological study.<sup>43</sup>

Modern language education, even at the university, was under the spell of the reform movement. Modern language professors were inspired by the direct method, according to which someone learns a foreign language by speaking it, just like learning one's mother tongue.<sup>44</sup> According to Wilhelm Viëtor (1892) it was also the university's role to anticipate Romance philology.<sup>45</sup> It is 'not only a historical study of Romance languages, but is mainly focused on the practical command of a language, which had become necessary, as mentioned by Mahn in 1863, by the growth of global commerce'.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to this practical orientation, classical philology also stayed focused on the publication of texts, just like Van Hamel, Salverda (originally, a Dutch-language specialist) and others did. For Van Hamel, the study of a modern language was thus both technical and esthetical, and Sijmons (Professor from 1911 to 1924) emphasized that with the theoretical-scientific training of 'Neu-philologists', university education should also consider practical components such as

phonetics and speaking exercises, [...] composition, [...] and the explanation of modern authors, [...]. Why would these practical tasks [...] be less

43 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, p. 27: 'Tout en faisant du français une science sérieuse je ne saurais oublier qu'elle est en même temps un art [...] Je sais qu'au point de vue de la science pure le plus petit patois alpestre vaut la langue la plus brillante. Mais je ne saurais oublier que toute langue est une musique en même temps qu'une pensée. [...] J'aime donc à me dire que l'étude artistique du français mérite sa place à côté de l'étude philologique'.

44 From Johann Franz Ahn (1867), the German reformers (1880), and Gouin, *Exposé d'une nouvelle méthode linguistique*.

45 Wilhelm Viëtor (1850-1918) was the main initiator of the late nineteenth-century Reform Movement in modern language teaching.

46 Engels, 'Zeventig jaar Nederlandse Romantiek (1884-1954)', p. 257: 'een weliswaar historische studie van de Romaanse talen, maar voornamelijk gericht op de *praktische* taalbeheersing, welke nodig was geworden – zegt Mahn in 1863 – *door het zich uitbreidend wereldverkeer*'.

worthy than speaking exercises in Latin, legal practice, or the examination of corpus?<sup>47</sup>

Thus, reading, speaking and learning to think in a foreign language was considered essential, and the starting point for the language learning process was no longer just the written word but also the spoken word; the knowledge of grammar needed to come through empirical and induced methods, and ‘reading is more important than translating from the mother tongue’.<sup>48</sup>

According to Frantzen, Dutch translator of the Gouin method, there was only one academic study of modern languages that was appropriate for *universitätsfähig* (‘universities’), with influence from ‘the natural science method, [...] on language physiology and psychology’.<sup>49</sup> However, the subject of study was the *viva vox*, the living language. Education expert Frantzen had two ‘professional sides’.<sup>50</sup> He was both a specialist in secondary education and a philologist, a scientist. Salverda believed that ‘the language we are teaching is also a living language’.<sup>51</sup> He saw the modern language specialist as a ‘connecting agent between [his] compatriots and another nation’, a mediator *avant la lettre!* He contradicted Schuchardt, who believed the English and French didn’t need to speak any language but their own, and showed how important it was for a person’s general education to learn a foreign language and its literature, to study it and master it thanks to time spent in a foreign country.

In addition to the practical approach of the living language and the historical-comparative position, foreign language education also has a place in literary history. Van Hamel believed literary criticism should come after a historical study: ‘a literary work [...] is not a simple historical or linguistic monument; it’s a work of art, and one can only truly know a work of art

47 Sijmons, *De opleiding der leeraren in de moderne talen*, p. 44: ‘Fonetische en spreek-oefeningen, [...] stijl-oefeningen, [...] verklaring van de hedendaagse auteurs [...] Waarom zoude deze praktische taak [...] met hare waardigheid minder strooken, dan oefeningen in het Latijn spreken, juridische practica of proeven op het cadaver?’.

48 Ibidem, 40: ‘Lectuur is van meer beteekenis dan vertalingen uit de moedertaal’.

49 Vonk, *De studie van de moderne vreemde talen*, p. 16. Frantzen received his doctoral degree in Strasbourg in 1892 on the topic of Rabelais (Herrlitz 2008: 13) but, as a teacher, he was driven to focus more attention on communication. By translating the Gouin method (*Exposé d’une nouvelle méthode linguistique*, 1880 | *Handboek voor den Onderwijzer [...] volgens de leerwijze van Gouin* – Manual for teachers according to the Gouin method, 1894), he introduced the direct method (‘méthode directe’) in the Dutch education system.

50 Herrlitz, (*Hoog-*)*Leraar Frantzen*, p. 14.

51 Salverda, ‘L’enseignement du français en Hollande et en Suède’, pp. 4-6.

after appreciating its esthetical value'.<sup>52</sup> They each have to complement one another, because 'while the historical study does not in itself represent a literary review, it is the only way to get there, and the majority of critics would probably be better off sticking to the historical study alone';<sup>53</sup> hence, he warned against dilettantism in esthetical criticism and pleaded for a purely university-based approach. Later on, Van Hamel himself was operating as a literary expert, while at the same time recommending a chair for comparative literary history and founding a laboratory for experimental phonetics. According to Sijmons, Van Hamel was someone who had a 'mission to accomplish', namely to reveal to his fellow Dutchmen 'the clarity and elegance of the French language, [...] and the treasures of French literature [...]'.<sup>54</sup> This is why, from 1897 to 1907, Van Hamel wrote more than 60 articles for *De Gids* ('The Guide'); 'as an artist-philologist he delivered literary work', but, to Sijmons's regret, 'in a popular, non-scientific way' 'instead of writing them in a strictly scientific adaptation'. His successor Salverda de Grave made a clear distinction between language education and literary education.<sup>55</sup> He preferred the former:

The combination of language education and literary education, even though generally accepted, will always be more or less artificial, and it is rare to find scientists who have treated them both as equally important. [...] Thus, as far as I'm concerned, even though I am mostly attracted to the living language in the linguistics field, my literary teaching will focus primarily on its origins.<sup>56</sup>

Academic education needed to make some choices with regard to the science that focuses on foreign languages. Which language should be studied, with which scientific tools? In 1907, in his inaugural speech, Salverda de Grave remarked: 'If one wants to teach a foreign language, the first thing to know is

52 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français dans une université néerlandaise*, p. 31: 'Un ouvrage littéraire [...] n'est pas un simple monument historique ou linguistique; c'est une oeuvre d'art, et une oeuvre d'art n'est vraiment connue que lorsqu'on est parvenu à en apprécier la valeur esthétique'.

53 Ibidem, p. 32. 'Ces études ne sont pas la critique, mais elles seules pourront y conduire, et pour la majorité des esprits elles feront bien de la remplacer'.

54 Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, pp. 428-429.

55 Salverda de Grave, *Quelques observations sur l'évolution de la philologie romane*, p. 22.

56 Ibidem, pp. 22-24: 'La combinaison de l'enseignement d'une langue avec celui d'une littérature, bien qu'universellement admise, sera toujours plus ou moins artificielle, et très rares sont les savants qui les ont traités à titre absolument égal. [...] Aussi, quant à moi, si en linguistique je me sens attiré surtout par la langue vivante, mon enseignement littéraire portera en premier lieu sur les origines'.

which version'.<sup>57</sup> The classical language, used in literary texts and described in grammar books, is an interesting topic for a historical language study. The modern language, 'used in the street, filled with neologisms and slang, [...] the popular language' is a study topic for the linguist, the language expert. It is rather what one may call the 'general language in France' that needs to be studied, 'average language, spoken by educated citizens at times that are neither too official, nor too intimate'.<sup>58</sup> This general French language, as opposed to the Italian language, is characterized by certainty, unity and stability, thanks to France's long tradition of political and social centralism. New sciences such as psychology or sociology can also contribute to modern language studies, embedded in the historical-comparative method. Hence Salverda's position that 'grammatical knowledge will remain patchy unless enlightened by psychology'.<sup>59</sup>

The different aspects of a language can be rendered thanks to linguistic geography (which shows the differences), experimental phonetics (which indicates the shaping of sounds), and psychology (which prevents misunderstanding from the logic of a grammatical study); any good or bad judgment with regard to the language is not relevant here.<sup>60</sup>

More than 20 years after the start of Romance language education at the University of Groningen, Salverda de Grave was able to emphasize, when accepting his new position, that Romance philology was part of the development of general linguistics, as a result in part of the work of his predecessor Van Hamel who was a proponent of experimental phonetics, and in spite of the fact that he still had to teach a 'non-university study' at the university. Indeed, Salverda states: 'I will have to teach a field of study that is not truly a university study since it doesn't lead (yet, if I may say so) to university exams'.<sup>61</sup>

## **A political issue: Influence of the national and international context**

Financial reasons (e.g. the national budget) and scientific reasons (how scientific can it be to study a contemporary spoken language?) can explain

57 Ibidem, pp. 10-11.

58 Ibidem, pp. 10-11.

59 Ibidem, pp. 6-7.

60 Ibidem, p. 21.

61 Ibidem, p. 39: 'J'aurai à enseigner une branche d'études qui n'est pas universitaire en ce sens qu'elle ne conduit pas (dois-je dire, pas encore?) à des examens d'Université'.



the fact that it took 40 years for modern language education to be fully recognized as an academic study in its own right (*cf.* the 1921 *Academic Statute*) and that it took even longer, until after the Second World War, to see the start of academic training for modern language teachers in secondary education. However, other factors probably also played a role, in particular the political environment and the geo-political situation in Europe, as well as the perception of the ‘foreigners’ connected to a particular modern language. In the end, the academic recognition of modern languages in the Netherlands was probably held back by the country’s long tradition of speaking a modern language and its socio-economic interests.

Learning modern languages was an old practice in the Netherlands. Before 1863 and the creation of the modern secondary education system (HBS), a language teacher was a professional who tried to theorize the practice and who defined his/her method through the publication of books. For example, Pieter Marin’s *Méthode familière* was reprinted and reused in the northern part of the Netherlands from 1692 to 1873.<sup>62</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, language teachers were often immigrants who were in the Netherlands temporarily or permanently, such as the French-speaking people from Wallonia or, later, the Huguenots from France who were refugees and could earn a living by teaching their mother tongue. Starting in the sixteenth century, French and German schools were set up throughout the Netherlands; these schools educated children from the bourgeoisie to become business people or homemakers. In aristocratic families, children used to get a French education from a native *gouvernante* or *précepteur*.

The law of 1863 institutionalized modern language education (French, German and English classes became compulsory in secondary education); but no professional certificate was connected to the teaching of these languages – only knowledge and speaking skills were tested but there was no focus on teaching skills or cultural and intellectual training which would have been so very important for secondary education. Both the purpose and the method of learning a foreign modern language had been a topic of discussion for a while and, starting in the early nineteenth century, more and more questions were being asked about the position of the French language in (primary) education.

A very popular education specialist in the Netherlands, Niemeijer, wrote in his book *Grondbeginselen van de opvoeding en het onderwijs* (‘Basic Principles for Education and Teaching’), that he considered ‘learning foreign

62 *Cf.* Loonen, ‘Is die P. Marin onsterfelijk?; idem, ‘Marin als maat voor de Franse les’.

languages [...] as a formal means [...] to educate the spirit'.<sup>63</sup> However, during a meeting of the teacher's union on 25 August 1860 in Rotterdam, on the topic of foreign language education, F.C. Delfos said that 'whoever wants to learn a foreign language has to learn to speak it and write it, nothing less and nothing more'.<sup>64</sup> Thus, to 'express one's thoughts in a foreign language immediately, that is without first translating from one's mother tongue, [...] speaking should be the starting point, then writing, and finally writing perfectly'.<sup>65</sup> Exercises, tasks and teaching materials were discussed in support of the teacher, who should use only the foreign language in his classes. The development of the discipline as a subject in school is partly due to professional magazines that started to be distributed in the second half of the nineteenth century, often for only a short time period except *De Drie Talen* ('The Three Languages'), which was published from 1885 until 1971. The Association of Modern Language Teachers' publication *Levende Talen* ('Living Languages') dates from 1911, ten years before the Academic Statute.

The importance of modern language education has long been linked to a social and economic interest; knowledge of a modern language, which contributes to the broadening of the students' mental horizon, was mainly seen as an economically functional type of skill. Academic education could help prepare future teachers by providing a general, cultural training as well as linguistic, philological and historical training. The versatility of the professors had been very useful here as well, since they were not only focused on science but also had a deciding voice as administrators, for example in the examination committee. Because of this, they were able to slowly encourage the academic training of future modern language teachers, in spite of the continuing absence of university degrees. We can see an example of the interaction between the scientist and the teacher in a didactic product, the *Grammaire Française, à l'usage des Néerlandais* ('French Grammar for the Dutch') by A. Bourquin and J.-J. Salverda de Grave, published in Leiden in 1901.<sup>66</sup> It is a very concise manual of 142 pages, 80 of which are devoted to syntax, 'which is the really innovating and original aspect of this little book, truly excellent in many ways'.<sup>67</sup> This grammar manual can be considered

63 Niemeijer, *Grondbeginselen van de opvoeding en het onderwijs*, p. 287.

64 *Nieuwe Bijdragen ter bevordering van het onderwijs en de opvoeding* (1861), p. 775.

65 *Ibid.* p. 788.

66 A review by E. Bourciez of this schoolbook, written by academics, can be found in the *Revue critique d'Histoire et de Littérature* 36 (1902), pp. 474-477. This publication, of great symbolic significance, is also mentioned in Salverda's correspondence (letter from Sunier to Salverda, dated 18 September 1902).

67 Bourciez, (preceding note), p. 475.

as 'socially useful' as it is a scientific product which can also be used in secondary education.<sup>68</sup> As an addition to the book *Précis de Phonétique Française, à l'usage des Néerlandais* ('Overview of French phonetics for the Dutch'), this grammar book is really more focused on 'spoken French' than on 'its written use' but is 'neither a kind of dictionary nor a collection of idiomatic expressions' (introduction to the *Grammaire*).

The (geo)political environment had its share of influence on the development of education in the three modern languages. In this period of political tensions and military confrontation, of power struggles between Germany and France, the English language had to conquer its position as the third modern language worthy of academic study. Schaepman, a catholic lawmaker, considered that 'secondary education extends to a broad group of citizens, and one can very well teach the English language, needed by this group, without having made an academic study out of it'.<sup>69</sup> The perception of 'foreigners' as well as France's and Germany's positions of power played a role in the relationship between modern languages in the Netherlands and influenced the process of recognition of modern language education at university level. Modernity came first from Germany (*Neuphilologie*), and then also from France (Ahn's and/or Gouin's direct method). In addition, German linguistics had a substantial influence in the Netherlands; historical linguistics in Dutch language and culture studies reinforced the idea of a German tribe connection, the perception of the Netherlands as a German nation, far away from the Romance culture of influence.<sup>70</sup>

As mentioned by Wolfgang Herrlitz in his farewell speech, the Grimm brothers could have been nominated Professors in German and Scandinavian language and literature in Utrecht in 1837, when they were chased away from Gottingen (as a result of their protest against the abolition of the 1833 constitution in the state of Hannover), if the request of George Willem Vreede, Professor of Law, had been granted.<sup>71</sup> The *neuphilologie*, a national philology, which in Germany had become equal to the philology of classical languages and texts, provided the 'building stones for the house of the German nation in which the German people [found] its national identity'.<sup>72</sup> This represented a model for the German philology in the Netherlands,

68 It includes both older and more recent works, such as those by Beyer and Passy, Ries and Svedelius, grammar by Meyer-Lubke and by the Belgians Delboeuf and Roersch.

69 HSG 1884/1885, p. 477, cited in Engelberts, 'Les premières chaires de français aux Pays-Bas', p. 45.

70 Vonk, *De studie van de moderne vreemde talen*.

71 Herrlitz, (*Hoog-*)*Leraar Frantzen*, p. 5.

72 *Ibidem*, p. 9.

as indicated by Sijmons in a letter to *De Gids* ('The Guide'), in response to Salverda's inaugural speech.<sup>73</sup> He believed that 'our language and culture... [have] more affinity with the German ones':

In German scientific work [we can find] flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood [...] Our national character [finds] most satisfaction in their way of seeing things and also somewhat in their way of saying things, because they are closest to our own ways.<sup>74</sup>

An implicit or explicit connection is made between language national culture and identity, and this influences the perception of the language to be taught. For example, Van Hamel mentioned in his speech

a certain Mr Mielle, a pretentious and unsympathetic figure [who was a French literature professor when] the former Republic of the United Provinces was nothing more than a French county [and who] is only remembered in Leiden as a spy for his government, a reporter for his own account, and as living publicity for his tailor.<sup>75</sup>

While the French influence continued to decrease after 1870 (in 1920, the French-language part was removed from the entry exam for secondary school), the Professors – Van Hamel, Cohen and Salverda de Grave – pleaded in favour of maintaining the French influence in the education of the mind, against the German influence. During the First World War, pressure increased on the perception of the two enemies, who both had a major impact on the development of modern language education. In Groningen, thanks to Sijmons's strong involvement, the German-Romance University Institute was founded in 1915, with the hope (after almost 40 years) 'that the study of modern philology in the Netherlands would finally get its deserved position'. And the Romanist Salverda de Grave created the 'France-Netherlands Society', with the purpose of restoring 'the balance between the German and French influence on our science and our art'. According to Salverda

73 Salverda de Grave, 'Waarom het genootschap 'Nederland-Frankrijk' is opgericht'.

74 De Wilde, *Werk maakt het bestaan draaglijk*, p. 40: 'In Duitse wetenschappelijke werken [vinden wij] vleesch van ons vleesch, bloed van ons bloed [...] Onze volksaard [vindt] in hun manier van de dingen te zien en gedeeltelijk ook van ze te zeggen het meest bevrediging, omdat zij het meest strookt met onze eigene'.

75 Van Hamel, *La chaire de français*, pp. 11-12.

de Grave this balance ‘was lost years ago’, when ‘Germany got ready to dominate the minds of our people’.<sup>76</sup>

The ideal image of French as a language that shapes the mind and which is a model for human qualities, as promoted by Van Hamel, was seen as defensive, in spite of the fact that Van Hamel pointed out issues that lay hidden ‘behind and under the non-language-related and diverse historical, philological, linguistic and phonetic questions’, as part of the *Neuphilologie*.<sup>77</sup> The philologist definitely also had a responsibility towards his fellow citizens: to reveal the treasures of language and literature – called ‘the French soul’ by Van Hamel – to a larger audience. In a speech, made in 1897 when Van Hamel transferred his vice-chancellorship, entitled ‘Searching the French Soul in France’s literature and language’, he used a printed advert with the slogan *Prenez un peu ça, Mesdames les étrangères* to highlight the ‘mysterious but at the same time revealing word *ça*’ as the psychological essence to help accentuate where the French Soul shows up in the language.<sup>78</sup> By pointing out the artistic talent of the philologist, who acts as an artist in order to study the art of language, Van Hamel is convinced that he ‘stays within the framework of an academic study of French literature and language when [he] characterizes the search, in both of these, for a national essence, a collective-psychological element, something [he] calls the French Soul, as important research, and focuses attention on it’.<sup>79</sup> In England, Breul played a similar prominent role in the Modern Language Association, in the English Goethe Society and in the Anglo-German Friendship Committee. These Professors, in the Netherlands as well as in England or Germany (Sijmons stayed in touch with his study friend Hermann Paul who was chair in Freiburg), used the intellectual capital they had acquired abroad and which gave them a multicultural and multilingual knowledge, to act as *passseurs culturels*, as mediators in discovering the foreign language’s literature and culture, in historical perspective.

The introduction of the three modern languages (German, English, French) as compulsory subjects in secondary education (starting in 1863) and of their study at Dutch universities (starting in the 1880s) defined a

76 Salverda de Grave, ‘*Waarom het genootschap ‘Nederland-Frankrijk’ is opgericht*’, pp. 354-355: ‘Het Genootschap streeft ernaar, het evenwicht te herstellen tussen de invloed die door Duitsland, en die welke door Frankrijk op onze wetenschap en onze kunst wordt geoefend. Dit evenwicht is sedert vele jaren verstoord; Duitsland was op weg ons volk op geestelijk gebied – het enige waarover de werkzaamheid van het Genootschap zich uitstrekt – te overheersen’.

77 Van Hamel, *Het zoeken van ‘l’âme française*’, p. 10.

78 Ibidem, pp. 47-48.

79 Ibidem, p. 10.

new role for French in the education of the Dutch youth. Like German and English, French had become a foreign language and was no longer the privileged second mother tongue it had been for part of the Dutch population, before the creation of the HBS (school for secondary education).

## Conclusion

Following the introduction of Dutch language and culture as an academic study, other modern language studies started being taught in universities in the 1880s. However, the fact that, for decades, they were not recognized as an independent academic discipline (there was no academic diploma in Modern Languages before the Academic Statute of 15 June 1921, and no Ph.D. in the Modern Languages before the Law of 1 March 1920) and that there was no real training for teachers at the university, led to discussions regarding the social importance and relevance of modern language studies. The realization started to dawn that these studies:

create [...] the realization of greater collective interests of humanity, by opening people's eyes, thanks to the foreign language and its writings [...] to the material and intellectual civilization of the foreign people, to the country and its inhabitants, to its life, its customs and institutions; they spread seed [...] that can bear fruit a hundred times [and must educate] experts and interpreters of a foreign nationality, its country, its literature, its history, its spirit.<sup>80</sup>

By expressing oneself in a foreign language, and through the knowledge of a foreign people and its culture, one's spirit and intellect can be developed. Both French and German professors and philologists started to see their discipline as more than a mere skill, rather as a combination of theory and practice difficult to find in one and the same talented human being as Sijmons remarked in 1898.<sup>81</sup> According to him, modern language studies

80 Sijmons, *De opleiding der leeraren in de moderne talen*, pp. 41-42: De studie van de moderne talen 'wekt [...] het bewustzijn voor de grote gemeenschappelijke belangen der mensheid, door aan de hand van de vreemde taal en hare geschriften [...] oogen te openen voor de stoffelijke en geestelijke beschaving van het vreemde volk, voor het land en zijne bewoners, voor zijn leven, zeden en instellingen; [...] strooit zaad uit [...] dat vrucht kan dragen honderdvoud [en moet opleiden tot] kenners en vertolkers van eene vreemde nationaliteit, van haar land, haar letterkunde, haar geschiedenis, haar geest'.

81 Ibidem, p. 44.

should offer a university-based education that '[involves] the entire human being' and prepares him or her for the modern world.<sup>82</sup> In that sense these professors, as philologists and *passeurs culturels*, did act according to the dominant ideology of the middle classes, essentially involved in international contacts and contracts for commercial purposes.

During legislative discussions in preparation for the 1876 law, it was clear that the liberals defended modern language studies at the university because, as is stated in their committee report, 'the university [...] is not fulfilling its responsibility if it doesn't include the deliberate exercise of modern languages and literature'.<sup>83</sup> For the legislators, the necessity of a university education in modern languages was also based on the need for university-trained teachers in secondary schools, both gymnasium and the modern HBS. Indeed, there were complaints about bad results in modern language education at the HBS, which stemmed from 'the lack of academic training for teachers in those subjects'.<sup>84</sup>

The creation of chairs in the three modern languages received political support mostly for secondary education purposes. Samuel van Houten, a representative from Groningen in 1884, recognized that he had 'a preference, with regard to the choice for teachers in secondary education, for someone who has been educated at a university – not primarily for the effect it has on his expertise, but more for his general education'. Thus, the use of a university education in foreign languages was 'the general education which is normally acquired in a university'.<sup>85</sup> This was what the middle classes were looking for in order to correctly prepare their children for professions (in trade or industry) that required knowledge and use of modern languages and cultures. University studies created the structure that would influence the education of the mind through secondary school, as analysed by Pierre Bourdieu in *Les héritiers* (1964) and in *La reproduction* (1979). The three modern languages, which represented great economic interest at the beginning of the twentieth century, were considered a pragmatic activity and treated as such by the authorities. The status of the first Chair in a modern European language was eloquent, as Sijmons summed up: permitted by the Minister, wished by the university and paid by the commune/city;<sup>86</sup> it was

82 Ibidem, p. 343.

83 HSG, 1874/1875, appendix 30, p. 31, in Engelberts, 'Bourgeoisie libérale et langues modernes', p. 40.

84 HSG, 1875/1876, p. 1294, in ibidem, p. 42.

85 HSG, 1884/1885, p. 470, in ibidem, p. 46.

86 'Een eigenaardig universitair wezen [...] bezoldigd door de gemeente, maar benoemd of liever toegelaten door den minister'. Sijmons, *Het onderwijs in de moderne talen*, p. 421.

a political issue, answering societal and economic needs. That is one of the reasons why it took so long to recognize the need for an academic education in modern languages and to acknowledge the theoretical dimension which makes it a complex discipline.<sup>87</sup>

Even today there are still points of discussion with regard to the scientific content of the education for modern language teachers. The battle for the recognition of the didactics of foreign language as a so-called sub-discipline is ongoing, as can be read in the following quote by Herrlitz:

Linguistics, as a general theory, is not interested in language education. Indeed, issues, research questions and answers are determined by the paradigm that, at a certain point in history, has defined linguistics as a science. Under this definition, language education – or any other application – does not play a constitutive role, and this is true for historical-comparative linguistics as well as for structuralism and the theory of generative competence. [...] Linguistics should rather confront theories of educational developments and objectives. The *didactics of foreign language teaching* does exactly that [...]. Linguistics, in the sense of language education science, is essential as the scientific foundation for the organization of language education and the training of language teachers. In the department of German studies at Utrecht University this foundation only started to be laid in the 1980s and its strong expansion is currently being discussed.<sup>88</sup>

Foreign language education, undoubtedly a complex academic discipline, can strengthen its position today, as it did in the past, due to its social relevance and its embedment in a larger context. The original historical-comparative approach is definitely still pertinent in the contemporary,

87 Engelberts, 'Les premières chaires de français', p. 90.

88 Herrlitz, (*Hoog-*)*Leraar Frantzen*, p. 24: 'Als algemene theorie heeft de taalwetenschap geen oog voor het taalonderwijs. Probleemstellingen, onderzoeksvragen en – antwoorden worden immers bepaald door het paradigma dat op een gegeven historisch moment de taalkunde als wetenschap definieert. In deze definitie speelt het taalonderwijs – evenmin als andere toepassingen – geen constitutieve rol, en dat geldt voor de historisch-vergelijkende taalkunde evenzeer als voor het structuralisme en de generatieve competentietheorie. [...] De taalwetenschap dient veeleer de confrontatie aan te gaan met theorieën van schoolse ontwikkelingen en doelstellingen. De taalonderwijskunde gaat deze confrontatie aan. [...] De taalkunde is – als zijnde taalonderwijskunde – onmisbaar als wetenschappelijk fundament voor de inrichting van het taalonderwijs en van de opleiding van taalleraren; Een fundament dat in de Utrechtse germanistiek pas vanaf de jaren tachtig van de vorige eeuw werd gelegd en waarvan nu de krachtige uitbouw ter discussie staat'.



multilingual context, which forms the foundation for the study of a foreign language. The perception of 'foreigners', the topic of imagology or image studies (an upcoming interdisciplinary science), has now become an integral part of foreign language studies. Although the acquiring of skills is still part of the education of modern foreign language experts, it now involves much more than correct grammar or pronunciation as it includes developing intercultural skills and the ability to mediate. From this perspective, Anton Gerard van Hamel, the first Professor of French language and literature in the Netherlands, was an enlightened precursor with a vision for the future.

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