Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands as a Learner of English as a Second Language

by

Ilse Daalhof

Supervised by

Prof. I.M. Tieken-Boon van Ostade

Second reader: Dr. G.J. Rutten.

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Inhoud

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1. Introduction

This thesis will focus on the learning process of Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands (1880–1948) in acquiring English as a second language, and her eventual proficiency in the English language as a result of this process. The Royal House Archive in the Hague keeps 241 letters of Wilhelmina, mostly in English, written to Miss Elizabeth Saxton Winter (1857–1936) between 1886 and 1935. According to Queen Wilhelmina's biographer, Cees Fasseur, Miss Winter was Wilhelmina's governess from the age of six until she was sixteen years old and she taught Wilhelmina to read, write, speak and understand English (Fasseur 1998: 66).[1] This collection of letters to Miss Winter contains mostly what are called 'out-letters' by Baker in *The works of John Wesley* (Baker 1980: 29), i.e. letters written by Wilhelmina. Though the majority of these letters were written by Wilhelmina herself, some are in the hand of her mother, Emma (1858–1934), Queen Regent of The Netherlands until Wilhelmina came to be of age, in Wilhelmina's name from the time when Wilhelmina did not yet know how to write. According to Emerntia van Heuven-van Nes, who provided an edition of the letters, the collection contains no in-letters, i.e. letters from Miss Winter to Wilhelmina. Van Heuven-van Nes (2012) has published a book about the letters of Wilhelmina to her governess, including an edited collection of their correspondence translated into Dutch. Even though this book does not include the English transcriptions, which unfortunately makes it impossible to use it for a study of Wilhelmina's English, it does incorporate a lot of additional information about this correspondence, which I have used throughout this study.

For the purpose of my thesis, I transcribed the greater number of the out-letters written by Wilhelmina herself (their transcripts are included in Appendix A). I decided not to incorporate or analyse all 241 letters, but merely the English letters written by Wilhelmina up to 1898. Some letters from 1897, and all the letters written after 1898 are excluded from the corpus, since I noticed that Wilhelmina's language remains relatively consistent subsequent to Miss Winter's departure. The letters I did transcribe were studied in order to determine to what degree Wilhelmina learned to master the English language, and how her acquisition of English progressed over time, which is the leading intention of this study. Therefore this thesis consists of two parts: a transcription of Wilhelmina's letters to Miss Winter and a study of Wilhelmina's learning process of the English language.

[1] Throughout this thesis, the identification of the people discussed in the letters has largely been based on the *Biographical Dictionary of The Netherlands Online*, *Dear Old Bones (*van Heuven, 2012*)*, *Eenzaam maar niet alleen (*Wilhelmina, 1959) and *De Ijzeren Dame (*Fasseur, 1998*).*

To study Wilhelmina's language in her letters to Miss Saxton Winter I take Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) as a model. In this book Tieken-Boon van Ostade studied the personal letters of Jane Austen (1775–1817) on several points: spelling, lexis and grammar. Following the model, I will analyse Wilhelmina's language by focusing on these three different aspects of English as well. However, to analyse the progress of Wilhelmina's acquisition of English, I will make a distinction between various phases of the language learning process. The letters that Wilhelmina wrote will be divided into three periods: 1888–1892, 1893–1896 and 1897–1898. The first period contains the letters from 1888, the time Wilhelmina was a child of eight years old and just able to write her own letters, down to 1892, the year Wilhelmina turned twelve, which is considered to be the terminus when it comes to learning a second language. This so-called 'Critical Period Hypothesis' was conceptualized by Lennenberg (1967), who proposed that children have only a limited number of years during which they are able to acquire their first language flawlessly. According to Lennenberg, normal language would not be possible beyond the age of twelve, something I will discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 4. Even though English was not a first language for Wilhelmina, keeping this hypothesis in mind, I expect to see a high rate of learning in the letters from the first period, resulting in a relatively high level of proficiency, in terms of vocabulary as well as regarding grammaticality judgements and functional competence. In the second period one can find the letters of Wilhelmina from when she was aged twelve to fifteen. In this period I expect Wilhelmina to improve her English even more, perfecting her grammar and spelling. When Wilhelmina turned sixteen, Miss Winter was no longer needed as a governess at the royal court, and when she returned to her home in England the daily conversations in English stopped. However, Wilhelmina and Miss Winter kept exchanging letters, and these letters that Wilhelmina wrote from the age of sixteen and onwards belong to the third period.

By looking at Wilhelmina's spelling, word use and grammar during these different time periods, I expect to find a certain order, or time span, in which the different linguistic aspects of her use of English as a second language were developed outside of a classroom setting. This is, as I will discuss in Chapter 2 below, how Wilhelmina acquired her English. My hypothesis that language is acquired in a particular order is based on Stephen Krashen's Natural Order hypothesis (1987). Krashen's findings suggest that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order which is predictable, and this natural order is nowadays used as a guideline for second language teaching. Nevertheless, this hypothesis only concerns grammatical structures. In this thesis I will also consider the existence of a

natural order in acquiring all the different linguistic aspects of a language such as spelling, lexis and grammar, and I expect some of these to develop more rapidly, in view of the teaching method adopted.

My analysis of Wilhelmina's letters brought to light a considerable amount of lexical interference from Dutch (code-switching), problems in the use of tense (grammar) and the occurrence of self-corrections (spelling). In one of the first English letters that have come down to us, dated 8 October 1888, there is a very high frequency of spelling mistakes due to the fact that Wilhelmina at this stage in her life wrote in a form of phonetic spelling and used incorrect spacing. An example is presented in (1):

(1). Dier Loeieza, ij em bled toe hew hed wram u. Iy woed lijk toe sie ~~en~~ and tsildin kam toe u. ij Fijnd Looeieza koed hev e prizent u rom aongti (Letter 1, 8 October 1888)

transcription "Dear Louisa, I am glad to have heard from you. I would like to see and children come to you. I find Louisa could have a present you from aunty"

This quotation illustrates how Wilhelmina's original writing in English closely resembles spoken language and carries a lot of information about the manner in which she was taught English. Even in later letters, incorrect letter-spacing, such as *to morrow* (Letter 28,[2] 8 August 1894) remains a problem for Wilhelmina, although her spelling improves and she is often able to correct her own mistakes. These self-corrections are also analysed in order to determine the process of learning English and the influence of self-correcting on this process. For my analysis, I have used Fairman's (2008) study of strike-throughs, discussed in Chapter 3, as a model. Fairman divides spelling alterations into three tentative categories, i.e. Spelling with style, but not necessarily for style, Spelling for reality, and Spelling for style and/or reality. Nearly all the self-corrections in the Wilhelmina English letter corpus can be assigned to the category of spelling with style, but not necessarily for style.

Compared to the letters belonging to the latest period, Wilhelmina's earlier letters reveal her problems with word order, of which the sentence in (2) is an example.

(2). Did you sit the whole night on deck? (Letter 25)
correct : Did you sit on deck the whole night?

[2] These numbers refer to the number a letter has in Appendix A

In this example we see Wilhelmina's quick understanding of the English verb tenses, for she puts *did* in front of the sentence to form a question. In Dutch, this would not have been necessary, as questions are usually formed by placing the main verb at the beginning of the sentence. As I will elaborate in Chapter 5, Wilhelmina makes very few mistakes when it comes to verbs in all their forms, even in the earliest letters which have come down to us. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, it is unclear if Wilhelmina came up with these constructions on her own, or if Emma helped her in writing these sentences. Nevertheless, it appears as if she never had any trouble understanding the English tenses, especially compared to students who acquire the language in a classroom setting at a later age. This I know from my own experience as an English teacher at a secondary school.

A comparison of Wilhelmina's vocabulary in the earlier letters with that of later periods will focus on her growing vocabulary size and its increasing complexity. Four applications of WordSmith Tools 4.0 (Scott, 2004), a program which is designed for corpus analysis, were used for the analysis: WordList, Match List, the Auto-join tool, and Concord. In the first stage of analysis, the WordList tool was used to obtain information about corpus size and vocabulary size, computed as the relationship between the number of tokens and types respectively, standardized type/token ratio, and vocabulary range. After this comparison between Wilhelmina's use of vocabulary in the earlier letters and those of the later periods, I will analyse her use of code-switching. Her use of code-switching could be interesting to study as it may demonstrate Wilhelmina's bilingualism and her proficiency in the English language. Besides that, it may tell us something about the relationship Wilhelmina had with her governess and the way in which they communicated. Multiple times, for instance, Wilhelmina used the word *benauwd* in her letters, which means 'oppressive' in Dutch but which she never translates into English. These occurrences of code-switching can be found in the letters of 13 December 1896, 3 January, 31 January and 4 August 1897, 20 March and 5 October 1898 (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 30). In addition, especially in her earlier letters, Wilhelmina was clearly struggling to find the appropriate register for her letters to Miss Winter, which can be seen in the following two examples. Both examples come from the same letter of 3 August 1894 and show quite a difference in register and tone:

(3). I thank you very much for your dear letters; what a nasty name for a little dog your sister has immagined! How dos the walking with out the knee cap go? I must realy give you grammer lessons if you write "sukkel" with "kle". in sted of with "kel." (Letter 27)

(4). Mother did not have a party of childre and is meaning to give it me when she finds clowns and other people to ammuse uss, she has not found them hither to! (Letter 27)

The difference in tone is apparent through words and phrases like *nasty* and *I must give you grammer lessons* on the one hand, and more sophisticated phrases as *is meaning to give* and *hither to* on the other. At the end of Chapter 5, I will reflect on what all this may tell us about Wilhelmina's progression in acquiring the English language. I will also discuss the implications that her education had on her final proficiency in the English language.

My findings on Wilhelmina's grammar, together with those on her spelling and lexis, will help me answer the question about the existence of a natural order in acquiring a second language and the different linguistic aspects that come with it. Such a natural order in acquiring a second language would be of great use to our knowledge of second language teaching, as it can tell us more about the efficiency of existing language programmes. At present, if one is to learn English as a second language there are various ways to do so. In The Netherlands today, learning English as a second language usually takes place in the classroom. Even though second language teaching is changing (something I will elaborate on in Chapter 5), course books are still quite obsolete, in that they do not incorporate different styles of learning. All words and grammatical constructions which are to be acquired are presented in different chapters, and students are to follow the chapters as they are arranged by the writers of such text books. This results in a situation in which the order of learning English is imposed on the students, even if that order might not be instinctive.

In the case of Wilhelmina's letters, we are in the unique position to be able to study the English language learning process of a young girl at the end of the nineteenth century which took place outside a classroom setting. My study will offer a nice comparison with the dissertation of F.A. Wilhelm (2006), who studied the learning of English as a foreign language in The Netherlands between 1800–1920 as it was taught in an educational setting. I will elaborate on his study in Chapter 5. Of course, Elizabeth Winter's function involved, besides the responsibility for contributing to Wilhelmina's proper upbringing, giving English lessons. However, from the letters that have come down to us, it becomes clear that Wilhelmina primarily acquired the English language through everyday discourse rather than through a formal teaching process, something I will discuss in Chapter 2.

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 provides a biographical account of Wilhelmina and Miss Winter. In Chapter 3 I will present some background sources for

studying the learning progress in acquiring the different linguistic aspects in Wilhelmina's letters. Chapter 4 consists of a description of the corpus I compiled for this study: the 91 transcribed letters written to Miss Saxton Winter between 1888 and 1898. In that chapter I will also go into the methods I adopted for the purpose of transcribing these letters and for the analysis of the language in these letters. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the linguistic analysis of the letters, introduces briefly discussed above, and in Chapter 6 I will present my conclusion. My results, based on a particularly interesting case study, are expected contribute to a better understanding of learning English as a second language in general, which is the underlying goal of my thesis.

2. The Princess and her Governess

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the lives of the two correspondents in this study, Queen Elizabeth and Miss Winter, and the relationship between them. In order to put the language in the letters into perspective, also Queen Wilhelmina's educational background is discussed.

2.2 Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands

Wilhelmina Helena Pauline Maria, princess of Orange-Nassau, was born on 13 August 1880 in Noordeinde Palace in The Hague as the only daughter in the second marriage of Willem III (1817–1890) with Queen Emma. Queen Emma was a princess of Waldeck-Pyrmont, which was a principality in Germany. During his first marriage to Sophie (1818–1877), Princess of Wurtemberg, Willem III had three sons: Willem (1840–1879), Maurits (1843–1850) and Alexander (1851–1884). Only the last one, Alexander, was still alive at the time of Wilhelmina's birth. When he died as well on 21 June 1884, Wilhelmina became the successor to the Dutch throne. However, she was not yet of age and Emma would therefore be Queen Regent until 1898 when Wilhelmina turned eighteen (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 13).

According to Wilhelmina, as she wrote in her memoirs, her younger years were without any cares, and Emma was supposedly a very dedicated mother. In her memoirs, published in 1959, Wilhelmina wrote that as a child, she never had anything to ask for and her parents always reserved time for her. She had her own personal chalet in the palace garden, some ponies for riding and many dolls. Nevertheless, after Willem III fell ill in 1887, Emma spent most of her time at his bedside, determined not to leave her husband alone in his time of need. As a result, Wilhelmina often felt isolated, and in her autobiography refers to her youth as living in a 'cage' (Wilhelmina 1959: 61). This was probably not only the result of her loneliness, but also a consequence of the position she had to fulfil. In her biography she wrote:

> Alleen in de intimiteit met moeder kon ik gewoon mens zijn. De omgeving van toen was geheel ingesteld op wat ik zou willen noemen een permanent semi–officieel leven voor ons; dit wil zeggen, dat wij voortdurend in het gewone leven paraat moesten zijn voor de stap naar het streng officiële (Wilhelmina 1959: 61).
>
> **Translation**: Only in my intimacy with mother could I be a normal human being. The surroundings at the time were completely in accordance with what I would

> like to call a permanent semi-official life for us. This means that we had to be ready for that step to the strict, official demeanour at all times.

Van Heuven-van Nes argues that it was mainly because of the King's illness that in 1886 Emma appointed a governess to look after Wilhelmina. Especially after Willem III died in 1890, the combination of raising Wilhelmina and being the queen-regent must have been a heavy task for Queen Emma. This English governess was Miss Elizabeth Saxton Winter, who was not only there for Wilhelmina's upbringing, but was also responsible for teaching Wilhelmina English. Up to that moment, Wilhelmina had been raised bilingually, in Dutch and in French. As Wilhelmina wrote in her autobiography, Dutch was the language she spoke with her mother, while it was also the language spoken at court, and French was taught to her by a nursemaid from the Elzas region in France, Mademoiselle Liotard. This French lady left the royal household when Wilhelmina was five years old, and was succeeded by Miss Winter (Wilhelmina 1959: 50).

It was no surprise that Emma appointed an English governess, as she herself had been raised by an English governess as well (van Heuven-van Nes: 23). This is also apparent in the letters that Emma wrote to Miss Winter: her English is extremely well developed. Queen Emma once said about English upbringing in general: "De Engelsche is, meen ik, de mooiste [...] Wel vriendelijk zijn, maar vast". **Translation**[3]: The English [upbringing] is, in my opinion, the best. Kind but strict (van Heuven- van Nes, 13). In this situation, Wilhelmina was talking about Miss Winter and her characteristics that many people nowadays still consider very British: being polite and friendly, but strict. In her autobiography, Wilhelmina refers to Miss Winter quite a lot: "Toen ik begon the leren was zij altijd bij de lessen. Zij paste er streng voor op, dat mijn gedrag gedurende het onderwijs niets te wensen overliet. [...] Miss Winter was een sterke persoonlijkheid, open, oprecht" **Translation**: When I started my education, she always attended the classes. She made sure that my behaviour was decent during the lessons. Miss Winter was a strong personality, open, sincere (Wilhelmina 1959: 53). Surely these qualities were essential in raising a queen-to-be and Elizabeth Winter must have realized this very well. To explain her strict approach Miss Winter once said, according to Wilhelmina, that she aimed "to train your character, to make a bold and a noble woman out of you, unflinching and strong" (Wilhelmina 1959: 53). Wilhelmina had to grow into a strong, powerful and dauntless woman, and to accomplish this, her days were filled with set schedules. From January 1887 to 1890, Wilhelmina had Frederik Gediking as a private

[3] Unless indicated otherwise, the translations of the Dutch passages are by my own hand.

teacher, the principal of a public school in The Hague. After that, she received her secondary education from many professors (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 25). As Cees Fasseur (2012) wrote, such a strict education could have had counterproductive effects in that it might demotivate a child. However, with Wilhelmina, the results were primarily positive, for she was intelligent, diligent and had an extraordinary memory (Fasseur 2012: 58).

After her sixteenth birthday, a short period of final preparation followed, assembling Wilhelmina for the ascension to the throne. On 6 September 1898, the official inauguration took place. Not long after this, Wilhelmina was introduced to Hendrik, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1876–1934) and they were married on 7 February in 1901. After three miscarriages, one being the result of typhus Wilhelmina had contracted in 1902, princess Juliana was born on 30 April (van Heuven 2012: 14). According to van Heuven-van Nes, these miscarriages were not beneficial for Wilhelmina's marriage. Besides that, Hendrik had always been a man to love the outdoors and to enjoy socializing. Wilhelmina took her job as representative of The Netherlands very seriously and could not identify with her husband's attitude towards governmental activities, and van Heuven-van Nes argues that these were some of the reasons for keeping Hendrik out of important matters. Van Heuven-van Nes continues that Wilhelmina had a lot of knowledge about public affairs, for which she was greatly admired, and she was famous for the way she could give her ministers a hard time (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 14). Fasseur, who called Wilhelmina *een dame van ijzer* ["an iron lady"], describes Wilhelmina's assertive character extensively. According to him, she was somewhat impatient and impulsive, but was quite humorous too, and he mentions that Wilhelmina often ascribed her moody character to her 'Russian blood' (Wilhelmina 1959: 48).

At the beginning of the Second World War, Wilhelmina left for England in 1940. When she returned to The Netherlands after the war had ended in 1945, she hoped to contribute to the country's restoration, spiritual unity and a different regime. Unfortunately, her health became a problem and she had to resign from the throne on 4 September 1948. From then on, she would reside in Palace 'Het Loo', in Apeldoorn until her death in 1962 (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 15).

2.3 Miss Elizabeth Saxton Winter

"Zij was een 'bold woman'. Zij had alle deugden, die het Engelse volk kenmerken en daar bij een ieder worden aangekweekt. Deze deugden vormen de kracht van de Britse natie" (Wilhelmina 1959: 54). **Translation**: She was a bold woman. She had all the virtues that

define the English people and that are developed there in everyone. These virtues form the power of the British nation. This is what Wilhelmina wrote about Elizabeth Saxton Winter in her autobiography. Elizabeth Winter was born in 1857 in Portland, Dorset as the daughter of Richard Winter, a successful officer, and Bernice White (Fasseur 1998: 86).[4] Richard and Bernice married in Dorset in July 1845 and they had two sons: Robert and Richard, and three daughters: Elizabeth, Nancy and Bernice. According to van Heuven-van Nes, it is unclear what happened after this, but we do know that the family fell apart and the two youngest girls ended up in two separate orphanages. Elizabeth was raised in the Royal Asylum of St Anne's Society in London, a charity school which had been set up in 1829 for the less fortunate (Van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 14). Heuven-van Nes also writes that the children were probably selected on the basis of their 'skills', which means that they were only accepted if they had some kind of talent. Children that were welcomed at the Royal Asylum of St Anne's Society received a good education that would enable them to come into the service of others (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 14). Elizabeth's mother left Dorset to become a headmistress of the London Road Hospital in Saffron Walden in Essex, and after Elizabeth finished school when she was sixteen, she and her sisters reunited with their mother in Saffron Walden. Not long after that, Elizabeth was hired as a governess for the children of the lawyer Augustus Henry Maule in Newnham, Gloucestershire. After her employment with the Maule family, Elizabeth probably found a job with Queen Emma of The Netherlands as the governess of Princess Wilhelmina (van Heuven-van Nes: 16). Fasseur argues that in The Netherlands, it was common among royal families to have a French or Swiss governess, yet Emma wanted her daughter to be raised by an Englishwoman (Fasseur 2012: 59) because, as I mentioned in section 2.2, Emma had enjoyed the company of an English governess herself. Possibly, she found Miss Winter with the help of her own governess, Julie Douglas. In *Educating Wilhelmina to be a queen* (1913) [Toen Onze Koningin nog een prinsesje was], a book translated by Henriette Kuyper from an English article, Miss Winter wrote:

> Het was in het vroege najaar van 1885, dat ik door een gemeenschappelijke vriendin werd voorgesteld aan de dame aan wie door Hare Majesteit, Koningin Emma der Nederlanden, was opgedragen een Engelse gouvernante te zoeken voor de jeugdige kroonpinses, Wilhelmina, toendertijd een kind van even vijf jaar oud. (Elizabeth Winter 1913:17)

[4] In *Dear Old Bones*, Emerentia van Heuven-van Nes wrote that Miss Winter was the daughter of a butcher, based on Charlotte Zeepvat's novel *From Cradle to Crown* (2006). However, this seems mere speculation, so I decided to use the information that Fasseur provided.

> **Translation:** It was during the early autumn of 1885, that I was introduced, by a mutual friend, to the lady that had been asked asked by her Majesty, Queen Emma of The Netherlands, to find an English governess for the young crown princess, Wilhelmina, at the time a child of just five years old.

On the 24 January 1886 King William III signed the appointment of Miss Saxton Winter as a governess of Her Royal Highness Princess Wilhelmina of The Netherlands, starting 1 February of that year. Only in 1891, after the king's death, Miss was Winter appointed as "English governess of Her Majesty the Queen" (van Heuven-van Nes: 17). According to van Heuven-van Nes, this was when Miss Winter started to give English language and literature lessons to Wilhelmina, lessons that were to prove very effective. However, as Wilhelmina's governess, Miss Winter spent a lot of time studying herself as well, putting a lot of her free hours in learning the Dutch language. Wilhelmina's lessons, which she always attended, were a great help in this (Winter 1913: 8).

If Miss Winter was not on holiday, she was always around Wilhelmina, privately as well as in public, both in The Netherlands and abroad when at the end of October 1896 Wilhelmina's upbringing was considered complete, the last official arrangements for the inauguration were a fact and it was time for Miss Winter to leave. On 2 November 1896, Miss Winter was given an honorary discharge, though this meant that she was suddenly without a job (van Heuven-van Nes: 20). Van Heuven-van Nes argues that, as she had always appreciated the effort Miss Winter had made in raising Wilhelmina, Emma felt it was partly her responsibility to find a new working environment for her. She succeeded in finding a similar job with Princess Marie van Wied, Princess of The Netherlands, married to sovereign Wilhelm van Wied. Miss Winter was to teach their daughters Louise and Elisabeth English and stayed with the Wied family until 1898. When Wilhelm's sister Elisabeth and her husband King Carol I of Romania looked for a governess for the crown prince Carol, Miss Winter was recommended (van Heuven-van Nes: 20). It proved to be a debacle, which van Heuven-van Nes referred to as "the Miss Winter affair", as prince Carol's mother Marie proved not to be on good terms with her. Miss Winter was asked to leave on 21 April 1900, and returned to England, where she became headmistress of a school for girls. This school was closed when the First World War started, and Miss Winter went to live with her sister Nancy on South Road in Saffron Walden. Just in time, Queen Wilhelmina was able to pay her a last visit in September 1935, just before her death in January 1936.

2.4 Wilhelmina's relationship with Miss Winter

Wilhelmina's upbringing was considered to be complete at the age of sixteen, which meant the departure of Miss Winter and the other nursemaids. However, Wilhelmina continued writing her weekly letters to Miss Winter up to her inauguration in 1898, and would continue writing occasional letters to her until Miss Winter's death. Even though she sent her letters less and less frequently, the many postcards that have survived show that Miss Winter was never forgotten on her birthday, at Easter or Christmas or the New Year, which indicates that the bond between Wilhelmina and her English governess always continued. The letters, the contents of which are more extensively discussed in Chapter 4, show that Miss Winter's departure obviously hadn't been easy for the queen-to-be. In a letter of 4 November 1896, Wilhelmina wrote:

> (5). Everywhere where your darling [face] shon in oldertimes, ther is a large vacant space. Now that I am writing this to you, I wish I could hug you up to pieces; alas, now I can only do it in thoughts! you dearest Darling! I dream very much about you, and then the waking gives me such a sad feeling of melancholiness. (Letter 47, 4 November 1896)

Wilhelmina wrote in her autobiography that Miss Winter was often her only company in the time that her father was ill when she was bound to stay in the palace at Apeldoorn. About Miss Winter Wilhelmina says: *Gelukkig had zij een opgewekte natuur en kon zij bijzonder aardig en met een onuitputtelijke vindingrijkheid met mij spelen*. **Translation**: "Luckily, she was of a light-hearted nature and she could play with me in a most kind way with endless inventiveness" (Wilhelmina 1959: 52). Wilhelmina occasionally wrote to Miss Winter about this loneliness and the isolation she suffered from. Especially in a letter of 28 March 1897, written after her aunt Sophie of Saksen-Weimar's death, it becomes clear that Wilhelmina did not have a lot of people to talk to, and that she saw Miss Winter as her only confidante, besides her mother.

One can also perceive the intensity of the way Wilhelmina and Miss Winter had contact with each other from the style of words Wilhelmina used in her letters, something I will discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 7. Wilhelmina was never shy in her correspondence with Miss Winter and her tone towards Miss Winter can sometimes even be described as impudent, of which the salutation 'Dear old Bones', for instance in Letter 12, is a good example. Moreover, Wilhelmina often teased Miss Winter, for example by 'taking Miss Winters advice' on writing with flourishes, only to decorate a complete letter, dated 3

November 1892 (Letter 16) with embellishments and circles. Surely, raising Wilhelmina could not always have been easy for Miss Winter. According to van Heuven-van Nes, Wilhelmina had occasional quarrels with Miss Winter, which were so heavy that Miss Winter sometimes threatened to leave. Fortunately, she never actually did, because Wilhelmina knew exactly how far she could go with her English governess and she never crossed that line out of respect to her mother. As Wilhelmina wrote in her autobiography:

> Omdat dit de zorgen van moeder, die toch al zo velen waren, nog groter zou maken [...] Moeder verklaarde mij nadrukkelijk, dat zij mijn dagelijkse opvoeding niet op zich kon nemen bij al haar drukke werk en vermaande mij het gezag van Miss Winter te blijven erkennen (Wilhelmina: 68).
>
> **Translation:** Because this would increase mother's worries, which were already so many […]. Mother often told me that she was unable to concern herself with my upbringing besides her hard work and exhorted me to keep accepting Miss Winter's authority.

Van Heuven van Nes also refers to a letter that Miss van der Poll, another care-taker of Wilhelmina, wrote to her own mother on 26 December 1891:

> Zij was zo brutaal tegen Miss W. geweest dat Miss W. haar alleen in de kamer had gelaten. Toen zij daarmede eerst gedreigd werd had zij in 't Engelsch gezegd: "O, dat kan mij niets schelen, vanmiddag heb ik toch de freule en dan heb ik u volstrekt niet noodig". (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 22).
>
> **Translation**: Ze had been so impudent to Miss W. that Miss W. left her alone in her room. After she had been threatened by this, she said: "O I do not care about that, this afternoon the madam will come and I will not need you at all".

Wilhelmina also wrote about these arguments, claiming that the quarrels mainly arose because she became aware of her own personality. However, she emphatically mentions that she always kept loving Miss Winter: "Later, toen er geen strubbelingen meer konden zijn, omdat zij mijn gouvernante niet meer was, ontstond er een hechte vriendschap". **Translation**: Later, when there couldn't be any quarrels anymore, because she was no longer my governess, a close friendship came to existence (Wilhemina 1959: 68).

2.5 Wilhelmina's English Education

Fasseur wrote extensively about the education Wilhelmina was given while she was a young girl. Wilhelmina, in her memoirs, described the lessons from all her different teachers as well,

especially when she started her higher education. All the lessons such as History, Geography, Literature and their teachers are described in her autobiography. She referred to the lessons as follows:

> Achteraf bezien was het wel een goed leventje, rustig te zitten op mijn stoel met hoge rechte rugleuning en rieten zitting, voor de tafel waarop mijn lessenaar stond met zijn klep, waarin ik mijn benodigdheden borg; en maar in mij opnemen wat mij werd geleerd (Wilhelmina 1959: 74).
>
> **translation:** Looking back it was a nice life to have, sitting quietly on my chair with high backside and cane sitting, in front of the table that had my lectern on it with its lid, in which I put all my materials; and just take in what I was being taught.

Miss Winter wrote about Wilhelmina's first lesson in her own memoirs as well, even dedicating a whole chapter to how the princess enjoyed her geography lessons. Nevertheless, not much is said about the style of teaching. As the above quotation implies, education at the time was quite one-sided; the teacher talked, explained and elaborated, and the princess took notes and took in the information provided. About the princess's Dutch lessons, Miss Winter wrote:

> In die dagen was in de Nederlandsche scholen de phonetische methode in zwang, en deze methode werd ook gevolgd, om de Prinses te leren lezen. Deze methode bleek op de aangenaamste wijze de belangstelling der kleine Prinses gaand te maken, en zij maakte dan ook snelle vorderingen in lezen en schrijven (Saxton Winter 1913: 16).
>
> **Translation:** In those days the phonetic method was popular at Dutch schools, and this method was also used to teach the princess. This method appeared to interest the little princess, and she made quick progressions in reading and writing.

The quotation above suggests that Wilhemina learnt how to read by focusing on sounds. It is not clear if this was the case for English as well, or indeed if she was taught English classes at all. In none of the existing biographies are the English lessons extensively discussed, although van Heuven-van Nes mentions that Wilhelmina learnt the English language 'playfully' (van Heuven-van Nes 2012:13). Wilhelmina writes about her English lessons once: "Miss Winter gaf mij Engels, zowel de taal als de letterkunde". **Translation**: Miss Winter taught me English, both the language as the literature(Wilhelmina 1959: 60). There is reason to believe that Wilhelmina acquired the English language through the conversations she had with Miss

Winter, which can be concluded from analysing Wilhelmina's language from the earlier letters. Especially in 1888, the words in the letters are written down phonetically (in accordance with the spelling of Dutch phonemes), which means thatWilhelmina that wrote down the words as they would be pronounced instead of with the correct English spelling. Van Heuven-van Nes wrote: "Bepaald vermakelijk zijn deze Engelse briefjes, die alleen maar te begrijpen zijn door ze hardop te lezen". **Translation:** These English letters are quite amusing, which can only be understood by reading them out loud (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 29). An example of Wilhelmina's English at the time can be found in her letters of December 18th 1888 and 15 December 1889:

(6). Dir mis Winter! I em soo gled, toe hev hud vram joe. Juli had e wirre plizzent bufti. I besprinkeld hura boekmaak end bod a wielberro witha littel buddi.Poekie iz viri goed end works wil (Letter 2).

Transcription: Dear Miss Winter! I am so glad, to have heard from you. Julie [a friend] had a very pleasant birthday. I besprinkeld (spatted) her a bookmark and bought a wheelbarrow with a little buddy. Poekie is very good and works well.

(7). Sink wans,wie are going toe skeet vor toe hool awers. It is nouw hafpastnijn end in a kwotterav a nouw ij mast goo end dris (Letter 7).

Transcription: Think once, we are going to skeet for two whole hours.

Grammatically speaking, there are no errors in these sentences. The word order is fine, the perfect is used correctly in the phrase *hev hud* and even the irregular past form of *buy* was used. However, almost none of the words are spelled correctly. Supposedly, she simply wrote down the words as she heard them from speech (which I will elaborate on in Chapter 6). This example tells us something about how she perceived the English language. For Wilhelmina, especially at the time of the first letters, English words probably were combinations of phonemes rather than combinations of letters, which phrases such as *hafpastnijn* and *kwotterav a nouw* indicate. Unfortunately, we will never know for sure if the sentences were formulated by Queen Emma and written down by Wilhelmina, or formed by Wilhelmina herself, so it will never be certain if the level of grammar in these letters truly say something about Wilhelmina's proficiency in the English language. Nevertheless, these examples do tell us that the young princess did not learn English from a book, nor used a dictionary to check her spelling.

In her memoires Miss Winter also wrote: “met de gewone gemakkelijkheid om talen te leeren, den Nederlanders eigen, kende zij al heel spoedig genoeg Engelsche woorden, om zich verstaanbaar te maken, en na een paar maanden sprak zij de Engelsche taal met gemak”. **Translation**: with the normal easiness of learning languages, typical of the Dutch, she quickly acquired enough English words to make oneself understood, and after a few months she could speak the English language easily (Saxton Winter 1913: 3). Thus, whatever method was used to teach the princess English, she was a quick learner!

3 Background Literature

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework that I based my analysis of Wilhelmina's learning of English on. In addition, I will discuss theories on the connection between the occurrence of errors in English writing and the writer´s growing proficiency in the English language and what the findings in this thesis may imply about present-day teaching. In section 3.2, I will give a brief summary of Wilhelm's dissertation (2005) on English as a second language in a classroom setting during the nineteenth century, which will be compared to the way Wilhelmina acquired English, i.e. outside a classroom setting and with a lot of input from a native speaker. Furthermore, second language teaching models will be discussed and the influence of these models on English language acquisition. In section 3.3, I will present my background sources for studying certain aspects of Wilhelmina's language in the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus, such as her spelling, grammar and lexis. Besides that, I will present some theories that argue that there is a natural order in acquiring the grammatical structures of a second language.

3.2 Second Language Learning and Teaching in the Nineteenth Century

This section describes the educational context of English as a second language in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century.

3.2.1. English Course Books in the Nineteenth Century

In *English in the Netherlands: A History of Foreign Language Teaching 1800–1920* (2005), Wilhelm gives a thorough description of how English was learnt and taught as a second language in The Netherlands during this period. According to him, English was virtually unknown in The Netherlands until the end of the eighteenth century. However, he writes, during the nineteenth century the knowledge of the language grew steadily and the settings in which English learning took place changed as well (Wilhelm 2005: 104). Wilhelm also wrote that vocational education ultimately became the setting in which English was learnt for trading, while scholars wanted to learn the language for reading purposes. Early nineteenth-century English textbooks show that these were mostly written for children and for teaching the language in school, which indicates that even at that time young learners were the main target group of learners (Wilhelm 2005: 104). The existing textbooks all had different ideas on what skills were most important to acquire. Wilhelm writes that "without exception, the writers of all the textbooks attached great importance to reading English texts. Of the twelve

researched courses, seven contain texts" (Wilhelm 2005: 521). In other words, in most textbooks, reading was considered a skill which had to be improved through practice. The opinions on whether or not to deal with spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar in these textbooks are more controversial. According to Wilhelm, many eighteenth-century writers started their textbooks with pronunciation rules and examples, which was important for those who were studying the language on their own (Wilhelm 2005: 524). Wilhelm mentions earlier on in his book that the growing demand for English led to its acceptance in 1863 as a compulsory school subject in the new, higher secondary schools, called *Hogere Burgerscholen* ("Higher Burgher Schools"), and in 1876 in the modernised grammar schools (Wilhelm 2005: 104). Because of this, the need for pronunciation rules may have been less important at that time. Many textbooks used a form of phonetic script to explain sounds considered difficult by speakers of Dutch. Wilhelm writes: "Because the gramophone had not yet been invented, and there was not yet a generally accepted phonetic transcription system, pronunciation rules were explained with the help of conventional spelling combined with special signs. This spelling-pronunciation system demonstrates the difficulty of teaching pronunciation in the 19th century" (Wilhelm 2005: 524).

All the textbooks analysed by Wilhelm incorporate the teaching of grammar rules, although some more than others. Wilhelm writes that especially the earlier textbooks present a large number of rules. According to Wilhelm, later on some textbook writers mention that they limited the number of rules for pedagogical reasons, while others offer nearly any or no explicit rules at all (Wilhelm 2005: 528). Wilhelm also writes that the selection of grammar rules that would be taught, mostly depended on the differences between English and Dutch grammar. As for the teaching of vocabulary, however, no mention is made of the criteria by which a selection of vocabulary was made for teaching purposes. Wilhelm claims that "this selection took place on the basis of tradition and intuition" (Wilhelm 2005: 529). It is likely that the writers of those textbooks wanted to include the most often used words, words that occurred most frequently, and nearly all textbooks analysed by Wilhelm offered their vocabulary through English-Dutch or Dutch-English word lists. Wilhelm ends by saying that no distinction is made between vocabulary for receptive or productive learning. These textbooks demonstrate that all language aspects, such as spelling, vocabulary and grammar, were dealt with separately, to be learnt through reading about them rather than by acquiring them through speaking or writing. This is a lot like English teaching in The Netherlands today.

3.2.2 English in the classroom during the nineteenth century

In the Higher Burgher Schools, where English had become a compulsory subject, teaching was based on the school-leaving examinations which were held. Wilhelm writes that in order to control the quality of education and to make sure that the schools would be similar in their teaching methods the government had asked for these school-leaving examinations to be supervised by school inspectors, which severely influenced the curriculum (Wilhelm 2005:127). The first uniform curriculum, as summarised below, did not appear until 1916, but it gives us a good idea of what English teaching looked like at the time of Wilhelmina's earliest English letters.

> Klas 2: Uitspraak. Oefeningen in het schrijven, lezen, spreken en vertalen. Beginselen der spraakkunst.
> Klas 3: Lees-en spreekoefeningen. voortzetting en herhaling der spraakkunst. Dictées. Eenvoudige opstellen.
> Klas 4: Letterkunde. Lezen en verklaren van letterkundige voortbrengselen uit een bloeitijdperk. Opstellen.
> Klas 5: Idem uit een 2e bloeitijdperk. (Wilhelm 2005: 127)
>
> **Translation:** 2nd form. Pronunciation. Exercises in writing, reading, speaking and translating. Elementary grammar.
> 3rd form: Exercises in reading and speaking. Continuation and repetition of grammar. Dictations. Simple essays.
> 4th form: Literature. Reading and interpretation of literary products from one major period in time.
> 5th form: idem from another important period in time.

This curriculum shows that the teaching of English started in the second year, and that in the second and third years, most attention was given to reading and speaking, while less time was spent on grammar and spelling. This corresponds with the latest textbooks from the nineteenth century that have come down to us mentioned in the previous section, but also with what Cook (2013) discusses. Cook wrote that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a revolution took place that affected much of the English language teaching used in twentieth century Europe (Cook 2013: 2).[5] He continues by saying that this revolution was mainly

[5] Much of the theoretical framework in this chapter has been drawn from *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* by Saville-Troike (2010) and *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching* (2013) by Vivian Cook.

against the methods of grammatical explanation and translation of texts, which were popular methods at the time. According to Cook, new language teaching methods were studied and various linguists such as Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen emphasized 'naturalness' of language learning, i.e. acquiring a second language similar to acquiring a first language (Cook 2013: 3). Cook also claims that one other important aspect of the nineteenth-century revolution in teaching was the emphasis on spoken language, which was continued in later methods as well, for example the communicative method, which corresponds with what Wilhelm describes as the ideas on the aims of English teaching in the Netherlands. Quoting Van Els et al. (1984), Wilhelm distinguishes between three categories of needs of English teaching at the time: those for communicative skills, those that are linked to communicative skills and those that are not linked to skills in the foreign language (Wilhelm 2005: 169). Wilhelm suggests that the first need, communication, was an important factor in learning a second language, which was also the case for Wilhelmina.

Looking at these needs with respect to English teaching, selection of learning content took place. According to Wilhelm, towards the end of the nineteenth century, acquiring the spoken language was prioritized, which affected teaching methods as well (Wilhelm 2005: 186). Cook (2013) describes some of the teaching methods that arose in the nineteenth century. An example of this is the communicative method, in which communication is usually through speech rather than writing (Cook 2013: 2). Another method that Rod Ellis (2003) points out, the Total Physical Response method, uses spoken commands and storytelling, not story reading. About the more recent Task-Based learning approach, Ellis writes: "The literature on tasks, both research-based or pedagogic, assumes that tasks are directed at oral skills, particularly speaking" (Ellis 2003: 6). With this method, the amount of time that teachers spend on the teaching of pronunciation is a lot more than that is spent on the acquisition of spelling. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Wilhelmina probably learnt the English language through discourse, which brings her style of second language learning close to that of students today following the Task-Based approach: primary focus lay on pronunciation and communicative skills, than on spelling (and grammar instruction). This had its influence on her writing as well, which will become apparent from my analysis of her spelling in Chapter 5.

3.3.Input hypothesis

Language input to the learner is claimed to be necessary for either first or second language learning to take place, but in what way is being disputed. Followers of Krashen, for example,

consider comprehensible input not only necessary but sufficient in itself to cause the acquisition of a second language. If his Monitor Hypothesis, which claims that acquisition is central and learning more peripheral, is correct, Krashen writes, "then the goal of pedagogy should be to encourage acquisition" (Krashen 1981: 20). However, then the question arises of how one acquires a second language. Similar to the Monitor Hypothesis, Krashen's Input Hypothesis is one of the five hypotheses of second language acquisition developed by Krashen in the 1970s and 1980s. As Krashen (1982) writes, "the Input Hypothesis makes the following claim: a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i (knowledge of second language) to stage i + 1 (new information added to the knowledge of the second language) is that the learner understands input that contains i + 1, where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focussed on the meaning and not the form of the message" (Krashen 1982: 21). We acquire language, in other words, only when we understand language that contains structure that is 'a little more difficult' than where we are now. For this approach, interaction is very important, which is based on the Sociocultural Theory developed by Vygotsky (1962). An important concept in this theory is that communication and interaction not just stimulate language learning but are of great effect in language acquisition. This theory is different from other linguistic approaches in that it is not so much focused on learning the grammar or structure of a second language, but emphasizes the learner activity in social processes (Saville Troike 2003: 118). According to this approach, Wilhelmina should have acquired the English language quite fast, as interaction with Miss Winter formed the main input of English that she received. As Miss Winter could only communicate with Wilhelmina in English, the input of the second language was considerably large. Besides that, with Miss Winter being a native English speaker, the level of input always contained i+1 in Krashen's terms, providing Wilhelmina with new information regarding the English language every day. Keeping this hypothesis in mind, I expect to find a fast acquisition of the English language when studying Wilhelmina's letters, which the results in Chapter 5 confirm.

3.4 Second Language Acquisition and the Explanation of Errors.

The large amount of input that was offered to Wilhelmina implies that she had all the means to swiftly acquire the English language. Nevertheless, the form of input and lack of formal instruction she was given would have had different effects on the separate aspects of the English language during her acquisition process. In this section, I will offer a theoretical framework for the fact that certain aspects of Wilhelmina's English, such as the acquisition of the English spelling rules that may have occurred were acquired somewhat more slowly,

compared to others that were acquired more rapidly, such as grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, I will discuss the theories on Error Analysis as developed by Elissa J. Arndt and Barbara R. Foorman (2010) regarding spelling, Krashen(1982) regarding grammar, and Munoz (2015) regarding vocabulary, which I have used to measure Wilhelmina's mastery of the separate linguistic aspects and I will state the view I have taken on the analysis of the errors Wilhelmina made in her language.

3.4.1 Spelling: First-language Influence on the Development of English Spelling.

"Spelling is a linguistic skill; it is the visual representation of spoken language and relies on one's knowledge of the phonological, morphological, and orthographic structure of the English language", Perfetti wrote in "How Psychological Science Informs the Teaching of Reading" (Perfetti 1997: 31). The acquisition of English spelling can be difficult, since English orthography is considered to be a difficult spelling system with a complex syllable structure and irregular vowel pronunciation. Quoting Perfetti, Russak and Kahn-Horowitz (2013) claim there is no one-on-one correspondence between a sound and a letter in English because the orthography of English is not phonetic. In learning a first language, beginning spellers tend to rely on a knowledge of sound–letter correspondence in the absence of a knowledge of spelling rules (Russak 2013: 3). One obvious difference with learning a second language is that learners of English as a second language, i.e. ESL learners, have a second resource for their spelling, i.e., their first language. For learners of English as a second language, this can cause spelling difficulties due to their linguistic background. Language users of different languages use different strategies of how to write down a sound, which might be reflected in the spelling in the second language.

According to Figueredo (2006), several developmental studies, such as Abu-Rabia & Siegel (2002) and Arab-Moghaddam & Senechal (2001), found that when first learning to spell in English, ESL learners tend to rely on first-language knowledge (Figueredo 2006: 880). Figueredo continues by saying that in cross-sectional studies, i.e observational studies that involve the analyisis of data collected from a population such as Cronnell (1985) and Fashola et al. (1996), younger students tended to make more errors influenced by the first-language than older students. On the other hand, the spellings of older students reflected a greater use of English spelling rules than that of younger students (Figueredo 2006: 887). Figueredo also claims that in longitudinal studies such as Berkel (1987), Ferroli & Shanahan (1993), and Wang & Geva (2003), students acquiring English knowledge tended to rely less on first-language knowledge while their spellings became closer to the conventional spellings

of the second language. This gives reason to believe that first language skills, such as spelling skills but even skills such as those of pronunciation or grammar, have an influence on the second language as well. Russak and Kahn-Horowitz (2013) argue that theories such as the Phonological and Orthographic Proximity Hypothesis, the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (Sparks, 1995; Sparks & Ganschow, 1993), the Central Processing Hypothesis (Geva & Siegel, 2000) and the Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1979) provide a theoretical framework for understanding the connection between a person's linguistic abilities measured in the first language and abilities in the second language (Russak 2013: 3). These theories suggest that linguistic skills measured in the first language could predict linguistic skills in second languages. In Wilhelmina's case this could mean that her abilities in Dutch could influence her English linguistic skills.

In order to measure Wilhelmina's mastery of English spelling rules I drew on Arndt and Foorman's study (2010). In their study, they analyse the spelling of second graders and the type of errors they make according to fourteen different spelling rules. Results indicated that there were ten spelling patterns second graders in this study frequently misspelled, i.e. Doubling Rule, Changing Rule, irregular plural nouns, past tense *ed*, r-controlled, vowel team, Floss Rule, vowel-consonant-e, s blends, and ck pattern. Of these patterns, the Doubling Rule (if a consonant is before a final y one has to change the y to i when adding a suffix that does not begin with i) and the Changing Rule (if a word ends in one vowel and one consonant and the final syllable is accented with a vowel suffix being added, then the final consonant is doubled), are examples of spelling rules which require students to utilize their morphological knowledge. Arnt and Foorman argue that for this reason, these spelling rules are harder to grasp and apply for learners of English. Even though, according to Cook, many linguists claim that speech is the main form of language and that writing is derived from it (Cook 2013: 4), this approach is obviously not waterproof. The problem with this hypothesis is that written language has distinct characteristics of its own, such as spelling rules, which are not mere reflections of the phonology of a language. Spelling instruction will therefore eventually be necessary, Cook writes, especially considering the fact that spelling mistakes probably count more against a second language user in daily life than acquiring an exotic accent (Cook 2013:4). On the other hand, Arnt and Foorman found that learners of English had fewest problems with using correct long and short vowels in words such as *tall*, *city* and *beginning* when spelling in the target language. In order to evaluate Wilhelmina's proficiency in using correct English spelling, I have looked at her use of the Doubling Rule, the Changing Rule and her understanding of long and short vowels. Wilhelmina's language, probably having

learnt English through discourse, will most likely show many spelling errors that may be explained accordingly. For the reason that the use of long and short vowels appears to be less influenced by spelling instruction, I expect Wilhelmina's language to show few mistakes in this area.

3.4.2 Grammar: Influence of First Language and Theories Regarding Order of Acquisition

According to Saville-Troike (2006), psychological approaches to Second Language Acquisition have made significant contributions to understanding why certain elements of a second language are obtained in a natural order, even though the order of acquisition mostly deals with grammatical structures (Saville-Troike: 2006: 76). One of these approaches is the Multidimensional Model, which was developed by researchers who studied the second language learning process of adult first language speakers of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese in the so-called ZISA project. In this model, Saville-Troike continues, the contributors of ZISA made the claim that second language learners acquire certain grammatical structures in a developmental sequence, which was indeed what they found. Besides that, they found that language instruction which has the acquisition of grammatical structures as a target will be successful only if learners have already mastered the processing operations which are associated with the previous stage of acquisition (Saville-Troike 2006: 77).

A revision of the Multidimensional Model is known as the Processability Theory (Saville-Troike 2006: 77). Saville-Troike writes: "This theory also has the aim of determining and explaining the sequences in which processing skills develop in relation to language learning" (Saville-Troike 2006: 77). The following acquisitional hierarchy of processing skills is proposed by Saville-Troike, taken from Pienemann and Hakansson (1999):

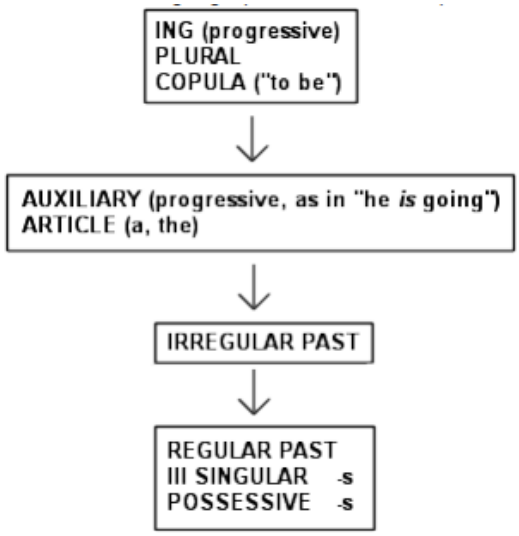
- Lemma/word access: Words or lemmas are processed, but they do not yet carry any grammatical information, nor are they yet associated with any ordering rules.
- Category procedure: Lexical items are categorized, and grammatical information may be added.
- Phrasal procedure: Operations within the phrase level occur, such as agreement for number or gender between adjective and noun within the noun phrase.
- S-procedure: Grammatical information may be exchanged across phrase boundaries, such as number agreement between subject and verb.

- Clause boundary: Main and subordinate clause structures may be handled differently. (Saville-Troike 2006: 77)

Saville Troike writes that according to this theory learning grammar is subjected to a hierarchy in the way that the understanding of Lemma access is a necessity for the acquisition of the processing skill at Category procedure. This theory therefore claims that language instruction can only be effective if it the next stage in a second language learner's grammar acquisition is the target of learning. Saville-Troike argues that "results are mixed concerning the interaction of developmental order and instructional level, with indication that at least for some structures, instruction at a more advanced level can be more helpful" (Saville-Troike 2006: 67).

Krashen (1982) shares the ideas of the Processability Theory, in that he considers the acquisition of grammatical structures in learning a language may be subjected to a natural order. According to him, this natural order exists in both the acquisition of first languages and second languages. He presents the "average" order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. **Average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes in English based on Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis**



Krashen (1982) argues that learners of English as a second language first acquire the progressive, the plural of a verb and the copula *be* (Krashen 1982: 12). According to his study, learners of English have most difficulty with regular past tense verbs, third person

singular *s* and possesive *s*. This means that learner programmes that do not follow this presumed order might not be as effective as intended. Teaching complex grammar structures to a learner of English that is still in the "phrasal procedure" according to the Processability Theory, would not be of any use, just as teaching the regular past to a student that is still struggling with the progressive form would not be either. For this reason, educational systems might apply knowledge on the natural order of grammar acquisition in setting up curricula for their students. Besides that, the Natural Order Theory may be applied to shed light on a student's proficiency of the English language. An error analysis of a student's writing might show their difficulty with third singular *s*, which demonstrates that the student is not proficient yet to acquire this particular feature. For the analysis of Queen Wilhelmina's use of grammar which I will present in section 5.3, I will be using this natural order to determine how well she acquired the English grammar rules. To that end, I will perform an error analysis of her use of the irregular and regular past, third singular additional *s* and possessive *s*, of which I expect to find a number of instances in the earlier subcorpus, but fewer instances the better her English becomes.

Furthermore, I will look at the occurrence of first language interference in Wilhelmina's English. According to Krashen (1981): "the issue is not whether first-language-influenced errors exist in second language performance (they clearly do), or even what percentage of errors can be traced to the first language in the adult, but, rather, where first language influence fits in the theoretical model for second language performance" (Krashen 1981: 64). He also claims that first language influence appears to be strongest in complex word order and in word-for-word translations of phrases (Krashen 1981: 68). Errors in word order may therefore be an indication of low acquisition of the second language. By looking at Wilhelmina's correct and incorrect use of English word order, I will thus be able to draw conclusions concerning her proficiency of the English language. The word order of Wilhelmina's first language, i.e. Dutch, may substitute for the ignorance of English word order, and I expect to see some errors in this field.

3.4.3 Vocabulary: The Difficulty of Words

According to Laufer and Rozovski-Roitblat (2014) who studied the retention of new words, learning new vocabulary in a foreign language environment is determined by two major factors: how many times new words are encountered in the language input and what learners do with these words. However, Ellis writes (1999), second language acquisition makes a distinction between incidental and intentional acquisition. This distinction is reflected in a

variety of terms, for example ’acquisition’ as opposed to ’learning’ (Ellis 1999:36). According to Ellis, this distinction between incidental and intentional learning “is of particular significance to the acquisition of vocabulary” (Ellis 1999: 36). Ellis claims that “it appears that intentional learning that utilizes contextual strategies and memorizing strategies such as the keyword method has better recall of word meanings as a result, better than with incidental learning” (Ellis 1999: 37). Nevertheless, it is also generally the case that learners can never acquire a native-like vocabulary through intentional learning. As there is not enough time for learners to deliberately learn all vocabulary, they must learn a fair amount of it incidentally. Ellis argues that some studies have shown that incidental vocabulary acquisition takes place when students read extensively. However, Ellis continues, the retention of word meanings in a true incidental learning task is very low. The success which children have in developing a broad vocabulary in their first language shows that oral input can be an effective source of information for incidental vocabulary learning, even in the earliest stages of language acquisition (Ellis 1999: 38). As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, Wilhelmina also profited from the extensive oral input.

The focus of many vocabulary acquisition studies has been on the quantity of vocabulary acquisition, in order to see how many words learners acquire. However, Ellis argues, it is just as important to investigate how learners’ knowledge of words they already partly know gradually deepens (Ellis 1999: 38). This also has to do with the difficulty of particular words in the sense that harder words, for example words with plentiful syllables, would take more time to acquire than easier words. However, the ’difficulty’ of words is hard to determine. In order to determine the level of Wilhelmina’s English vocabulary, I have taken a study by Munoz as a model. In “The Vocabulary of Agriculture Semi-popularization Articles in English: A Corpus-based study”, Munoz uses *Wordsmith Tools* to determine vocabulary size, type/token ratio, range and keywords (Munoz 2015). I adopted this approach for my analysis of Wilhelmina’s vocabulary and used four applications of WordSmith Tools 4.0: WordList, Match List, the Auto-join tool, and Concord, in order to determine if Wilhelmina’s vocabulary profited from incidental vocabulary acquisition. Looking at Wilhelmina’s method of lexical acquisition, and taking all the circumstances, such as the amount of input and the level of input, into consideration, I expect Wilhelmina’s vocabulary-size to be growing over the years. This means that in later letters, there will be a greater lexical variety and a higher type/token ratio than in the earlier letters. I will report on this in 5.4 below.

3.5 Self–Corrections

Tieken (2014) writes: "Self-corrections take many different forms". Following Tieken, I also used Fairman's (2008) detailed classification of the ones he encountered in his corpus of letters by uneducated letter-writers (Tieken 2014: 86), of which I will mainly focus on spelling changes in Fairman's category 'alterations for style'. According to Fairman (2008), "Deciding why writers changed their spelling is too often problematic, because we can't now know much about many of the factors which may have contributed to each spelling alteration" (Fairman 2008: 206). Nevertheless, self-corrections can possibly tell us a lot about the way in which writers perceive and understand the English language, especially when they are learners of English as a second language. In her analysis of self-corrections, Auer (2008) classified self-corrections into four categories. Table 2 below, taken from Auer displays these categories and an example of each category.

Table 2. **This table lists the categories of self-corrections proposed by Auer (2008:213)**

CATEGORY	*EXAMPLES*
Orthographic corrections	Manchester July 12 - 178{8} — (_Sir_) Inclosed have sent you a bill Value £9— which is 1=£=/17=s= short of the Ballance, if you will order any person to Call for the Ballance wee will Send it by them, Whoud have Wrote to you sooner but Chou'd not Sight of a bill to your sum, unless Getting one drawn, We have Made Enquiry about the Anti Attrition axletrees, which the are Cheifly Used for Mail Coaches, ...
Grammatical corrections	... a person of good morals and behaviour, and one who has acquited himself with great honour ever since his comming into this place %and we should be unwilling to part with him upon any account whatever were not we perswaded it ~~would~~ will be for his advantage, to engage himself with you, and we doub{t} not but that he will give the country content if he meets with your approbation, as he has an easy and commendable method of instructing youth in all the most ...
Style changes	... of my sending a Line to each on y={t}= head, that a final & whole accounts may be p=d=, or brought to a certainty what further Sum I shall have to pay, for till then, I ~~look on myself~~ shall be uneasy in my mind, so hope, you'le soon, give me y=e= full satisfacton of hearing verberly y=e= full contents of this:
Other changes	For the last 8 years it wou=d=. be proper to have the Deeds carefully inspected to see that they ~~they~~ agree with this present Abstr=t=. [duplicate words] I %am oblig'd byyour enquiry of my Mothers healthwho am sorry to remark is no better With Comp=ts=.. to M=rs=.. Orford &{c} remain D=r= %Sir Yours %most Respectfully W %Bowden ~~Monda~~ Tuesday 12 O'Clock [revised words]

Auer approaches the topic by looking at three case studies: the first study illustrates self-corrections in the letters written by the painter and art theorist Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792). The second one draws data from *A Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose*

(1761-1789) And the third is concerned with the letters of Lucy Whitaker (1759–1837) from Leeds. Auer concludes that the type of self-corrections observed is a direct function of the writer's level of education: "The higher this is, the more attention is given to style, while less-educated writers still have to concentrate on grammar and spelling" (Auer 2008: 214). An analysis about the number of self-corrections, and of strike-throughs in particular, is made by Fairman, who discusses the occurrences of strike-throughs in letters of native speakers of English and discovered that the higher the level of education of his informants, the fewer strike-throughs are made, for the writer instantly spells correctly (Fairman 2008: 207-208). Nevertheless, for there to be any self-corrections the writer needs to be aware of grammar or spelling rules and thus needs to have had some form of spelling education. In Wilhelmina's letters, I expect there to be self-corrections as well, even though Wilhelmina's strike-troughs will be somewhat different due to the fact that she is not a native speaker. In her later letters, when she becomes more and more aware of the English phonology and its matching spelling rules, self-corrections should be made more frequently. In the earlier letters I will probably not find many self-corrections, since Wilhelmina was not aware of the spelling rules and had not received any education whatsoever concerning the English spelling system. The self-corrections made in that period might be of Emma's hand, after checking her daughter's letters.

4 The Letters as a Corpus

The Royal House Archive in The Hague keeps a collection labelled: "the Elizabeth Saxton Winter collection", consisting of 288 letters, cards and multiple telegrams. The letters have not yet been digitised, and their language is thus only accessible in manuscript, as a subsection of the "Wilhelmina collection". The Dutch transcriptions of the letters have been published, transcribed by van Heuven-van Nes (2012). These letters were occasionally consulted in the process of transcribing the letters, which I have done myself. The correspondence starts on 14 November 1886, when Miss Winter went on a holiday to her mother in Saffron Walden in Essex, and Wilhelmina was six years old. The first letters were written in English by Queen Emma, but in the name of Wilhelmina. Emma signed the letters with 'Wilhelmine'. From 6 December 1888 to 3 August 1894, Wilhelmina signed the letters herself, either with *Poekie*, a nickname she used to refer to herself, *Poekie Woekie*, *Poekieoekie*, *Poekiepoes*, *Oeksiepoeksie* or *Wilhelmina and old Poekie*. Some letters from 1891 were written in Dutch, with *Lieve Darling* [Dear Darling] as the salutation. From 15 April 1892 to 27 December 1895 most letters started with *Dear old Bones*, followed by *Darling* and from 1900 *My dear old friend* (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 27).

Among the 288 pieces in the "the Elizabeth Saxton Winter collection", there are 241 letters written by Wilhelmina. The rest are letters or cards she received from others, such as aunt Sophie, aunt Pauline, foreign minister De Marees van Swinderen, and Jenny Reichhardt, a reader of Wilehlmina. The RHA received the letters of Miss Saxton Winter in 1967, for they had been kept by a cousin of Miss Winter, Miss Hilda Spanton untill well after Miss Winter had died. Twenty years later, the letters were first used for an exhibition on the regency of Queen Emma (van Heuven-van Nes 2012: 27). As mentioned above, the letters are mainly out-letters (see the Introduction). Sadly, nearly all letters that Miss Winter wrote to members of the Royal family were burnt by Wilhelmina at a later age, together with most of her papers. According to van Heuven-van Nes, only four letters of Miss Saxton Winter have been preserved, but they are not addressed to Wilhelmina, and therefore not kept with the letters of Wilhelmina. Fortunately, this thesis studies Wilhelmina's progress as a learner of English, which means that the in-letters are not as interesting for my analysis as the out-letters are. Largely for this reason but also various others, I did not include all 241 letters in the corpus used for the analysis of Wilhelmina's language. In this study, moreover, only letters written by Wilhelmina herself, in English, and dated between 1888 and 1898 are taken into account. The "Wilhelmina English letter corpus", as I will call the corpus from now on, ultimately

consists of 23,296 words, made up of 91 letters, so a lot of pieces were neither transcribed nor used and for my analysis, some of them because they were not written by Wilhelmina such as the thirty letters written by Emma in the years 1886 and 1887. Occasionally they are written in the name of Wilhelmina, but repeatedly as a concerned mother, to discuss Wilhelmina and her behaviour. Because these letters do not tell us much about Wilhelmina's acquisition of the English language, they were not transcribed.

In addition, the collection that the Royal House Archive holds concerning Miss Winter contains five letters that were sent to Miss Winter by Queen Juliana (Wilhelmina's daughter), as well as a few Dutch letters. From the moment Wilhelmina was able to write in Dutch, which was in 1888 according to Wilhelmina in her autobiography (1959), she started writing letters to Elizabeth Winter. These letters were scribbled in Dutch at first, but quickly changed to English correspondences. The Dutch language in the letters from before 1888 are not included in the corpus, as they do not contribute to this thesis. Some letters written in 1897, and all letter written after 12 June 1898 are also excluded from the corpus, for the reason that Wilhelmina wrote so many letters in 1897 and 1898, that not all of them could be included in this thesis. Besides that, I have noticed that Wilhelmina's language remains relatively consistent subsequent to Miss Winter's departure, and I wanted the sub-corpora, especially the second and third period, not to differ in size as much.

As noted in Chapter 1, the Wilhelmina English letter corpus was divided into three sub-corpora: letters from 1888-1892, 1893-1896, and 1897-1898. The first sub-corpus is composed of 17 letters and consists of a total number of 1665 words. These letters are written up to when Wilhelmina was twelve years old, which is considered to be the terminus when it comes to learning a second language. It is a common belief that children are more successful in learning a second language than adults, but the evidence for this is quite ambiguous. According to Muriel Saville-Troike (2010), one reason for the divergence in research findings in this respect is the following:

> Some studies define relative 'success' as initial rate of learning, while other studies define it as ultimate achievement. Some studies define 'success' in terms of how close the learner's pronunciation is to a native speaker's pronuncitation, others in terms of how closely a learner can apply native grammar, and still others in terms of fluency or functional competence. (Saville-Troike: 82)

The Critical Period Hypothesis claims that there is a critical period for first language acquisition and that children have only a limited number of years during which normal acquisition is possible. Beyond that, physiological changes cause the brain to lose its plasticity and capacity. Present-day second language teaching, in the Netherlands in any case, usually only starts in secondary schools, which means that this 'critical period' has already passed. The corpus that includes the letters from 1893-1896, has a total of 17,378 words and is composed of 43 letters. This sub-corpus gives information about Wilhelmina's second language acquisition after the age of 12 up to the departure of Miss Winter in November 1896, the moment Wilhelmina's upbringing was considered completed. The third and final sub-corpus consists of the first fifteen letters from 1897 and the first twenty letters of 1898. This corpus is composed of 34 letters and consists of a total number of 17,185 words. Even though this corpus only accounts for the letters of two years, it is quite sizable due to the fact that Wilhelmina started to write Miss Winter more frequently and wrote longer letters when Miss Winter was no longer her governess, which sometimes go on for fourteen pages. From 1898 onwards, Wilhelmina's language does not show any marked changes and progress stifles.

Table 3 presents the corpus used for the present study, subdivided into the three phases I have referred to in the Introduction. The second column presents the number of letters categorized in each of the three phases. The numbers that have been given to the letters refer to the order they have in Appendix A. The fourth column indicates the amount of text in that phase. A more extended version of this table can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3. **This table lists the number of English letters per phase. The rightmost column lists the number of words as well.**

Phase	**No. of letters**	**No. of the letters in Appendix A**	**Number of words**
1888-1892	17	1-17	1,665 words
1893-1896	40	18-57	17,378
1897-1898	34	58-91	17,185

The letters address different matters, and Wilhelmina often swerves off topic. Very diverse subjects feature in the same sentence without any proper transition. Some of the returning topics are: acknowledgements of the received letters of Miss Winter, asking her about Miss Winter's family and especially Miss Winter's mother, the weather, and

Wilhelmina's daily routine, as illustrated by the following example from a letter dated 29 July 1894.

(8). I thank you very much for your dear letter, was it a big farm that was on fire? So you were not seasick, I suppose. I have been driving very often with four horses in the yellow brake with the gentlemen after diner. The races were lovely; I enjoyed them very much; the same officer wun as at Arnhem, I was very glad. Mister Metellerkamp nearly wun, but fortunately he did not. We gave a lovely cub and a souvenir. Mother gave me praise for my good behaveyor. I rode friday, and had a tavo small saddle, my riding-stays pressed me and gave me a sore place; we do not know what we are to do. It is very hot and I am driving my self for long turns with Bavo and Reppo; they do not make me so tired as Dot and Duty. (Letter 26, 29 July 1894).[6]

Wilhelmina, who was always a considerably distant person according to van Heuven-van Nes (van Heuven 2012: 13), seemed quite open in her letters to Miss Winter. She wrote about what she did during the day, about what she thought, about her faith in God, about the people she met, about her hobbies, her travels and her life in general. Some letters discuss political issues, such as the Atjeh-war in Indonesia and the Spanish-American war, and even her dreams are talked about. Nevertheless, she was always on guard when it came to sensitive information. In multiple letters, such as of the one dated 8 August 1894, she refers to her correspondence as 'very private'. In the same letter she wrote:

(9). But it is rather hard lines to tease you over suh a thing, but now quite jenjuen [genuin] I am very sorry that you can not go without your knee-cap. Please do not ceep this lettre. (Letter 28, 8 August 1894)

The following example contains the lines which were written by Wilhelmina between her declaration of *rather private* and *this need not be cept pravate*:

(10). I have been to church to day, the whole place was tronged, I hope you will ha~~p~~^{v}ehad a nice service. How is your mother, sister and patients? (Letter 33, 25 December 1894)

Obviously, Miss Winter did not keep these letters as private as Wilhelmina would have wanted, which is very fortunate for present study. The reason for this might be that the information in those particular letters was not considered by Miss Winter to be sensitive

[6] For a note on the transcription practices I used, see p. 43

information. This reveals the isolation which Wilhelmina must have lived in, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, without this isolation might have never written so many letters, of which the analysis can be found in the following chapter.

5 Linguistic Analysis of the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to answering the research question about the learning progress in acquiring the English language of Wilhelmina on the basis of the spelling, grammar and lexis in Wilhelmina's letters.

In Chapter 3 I presented my background source for studying the language progress of Wilhelmina and the existence of a natural order when it comes to acquiring a second language. As discussed in section 3.3, Krashen and others demonstrated that learners of a second language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later. Nevertheless, not much has been said about the order of language acquisition including all language components: spelling, grammar, lexis, (and corresponding sounds) and how teaching methods influence the acquisition of these. As I explained in Chapter 1, I will use this chapter to present my findings on the learning progress when it comes to Wilhelmina's spelling, grammar and lexis. In order to find out if certain language components are acquired more quickly, I have used the different backgrounds sources to determine the proficiency in these components.

Given the fact that Wilhelmina most likely learnt the English language outside of a classroom setting through discourse with Miss Winter, I expect to find a more rapid understanding and correct use of English vocabulary than that of spelling or style and register for, as I discussed in Chapter 3, oral input can positively affect the retention of new words when learning a second language. Nevertheless, I also expect spelling to improve quickly in the learning process, so mostly in period I or II, whereas proficiency in grammar and vocabulary will remain consistent from period I onwards. In the end, the comparison between the different periods concerning spelling, lexis and grammar in the letters to Miss Winter will help me determine the existence of a natural order in Wilhelmina's acquisition of English and her level of proficiency in the English language as an effect of the mode of instruction, with which I will end this linguistic analysis in section 5.5 below. First, however, I will start with the analysis of Wilhelmina's spelling.

5.2 Language of the Letters: Spelling

In this section, I will focus on the number of spelling errors that occur in the letters that Wilhelmina wrote throughout her English language learning process, paying special attention to her mastery of the so-called Doubling Rule, the Changing Rule, and the long and short

vowels, based on J. Arndt and Barbara R. Foorman's study, discussed in Chapter 3. Now and then the letters to Miss Winter demonstrate how Wilhelmina thought about her handwriting and spelling. In the following instances, from letters of 23 October 1892 and 4 November 1896, Wilhelmina refers to the spelling of words:

(11). I have not asked so meny tims about the spelling (Letter 13, 23 October 1892).

(12). Please excuse my spelling and my writing; I have nor my dictionary nor my pen (Letter 47, 4 November 1896).

That she did not look up all words when writing to Miss Winter is quite obvious, for Wilhelmina provided us with a lot of spelling errors to analyse. Especially in her first letters in English, as discussed in Chapter 2, almost none of the words are spelled correctly. Instead, the words in the letters, especially in the earliest ones, are written phonetically (in accordance with the spelling of Dutch phonemes), which means that Wilhelmina wrote down the words as they would be pronounced, instead of with the correct, English spelling. As I discussed in Chapter 4, the native tongue is of great influence on the learning process when acquiring a foreign spelling, in this case English. Even her knowledge of French sometimes had its influence on Wilhelmina's spelling, for she often writes *lettre, danse, aftre*, *wille* and *ville*. The way Wilhelmina relies on Dutch phonemes and spelling rules when writing in English is quite common for a learner acquiring a new language. However, her spelling does tell us something about the way she perceived the language. For Wilhelmina, especially at the time of the first letters, English words probably were combinations of phonemes instead of combinations of morphemes, which we have seen in example (8), coming from a letter dated 15 December 1889. The spelling of phrases such as *hafpastnijn* and *kwotterav a nouw* imply that Wilhelmina did not think of *hour* or *quarter* as a speech unit or word yet. She might have known that it was a phrase used to tell time, like the Dutch *half negen,* but she did not fully understand that *hafpastnijn* is a combination of the units *half*, *past* and *nine.* Of course, the sentences could have been delivered by Wilhelmina's mother, or perhaps Wilhelmina memorised the chunks of text from conversations with Miss Winter. Either way, the young princess did not learn the words from a book, as is done in school nowadays, nor did she look them up in a dictionary, but simply wrote down the words as she probably apprehended them from speech. Because of this, the letters also tell us something about her English accent (or that of Queen Emma). Clearly, there is no postvocalic [r] in her pronunciation of the words *heard* and *birthday*, which she wrote as *hud* and *bufti,* which also has *f* instead of *th*. Strangely

enough there is an r in her version of *hour*, which she wrote as *awers*. Besides that, she sometimes wrote *saw a* as *sore a*, demonstrating 'intrusive /r/', a British speech pattern often used on the East Coast which turns 'w' into an /r/-sound when it precedes a vowel.

It is not certain at what point correct spelling became an issue for Wilhelmina, but in letters that were written from 1892 onwards, spelling errors such as those mentioned above are becoming less and less frequent compared to earlier letters, although they never fully disappear. The continuance of these sort of spelling errors proves once more that Wilhelmina did not get much English spelling instruction. Even years later, Wilhelmina confuses the phoneme /tə/ that can be found in words such as *today* and *tomorrow* with the particle *to* that is used to indicate an infinitive, inserting a space between *to* and *day* which makes it seem as if Wilhelmina does not think of *today* nor *tomorrow* as a speech unit :

(13). The Alban(ys[ies]) are comming **to morrow** and the childrens party is going to be given on tuseday. (Letter 28, 8 August 1894)
(14). My dressingroom has been cleaned **to day,** I have had to do my dressing in the service room, it was not very comfortable. (Letter 37, 8 March 1895)

Yet in the later letters less mistakes are made by Wilhelmina regarding spelling, and in the following example from a letter written in March 1892, she proudly tells Miss Winter that she only asks her mother for the spelling of words she has not written before:

(15). Dear old darling, Mother does not know what clothes I am to pot [put] on to go to church. I am writing this evening. I only ask mother the words I have not written befor (Letter 9, March 1892).

Unfortunately, not many letters from 1890 and 1891 have been preserved, which makes it unachievable to determine the exact moment Wilhelmina's spelling started improving. What is interesting is that Wilhelmina does appear to steadily develop a better understanding of the English phonemes and their corresponding spelling. In a letter of 3 August 1893, *hear* was written as *here*, *first* was *furst*, *written* was *ritten*, and in the letter of 6 August 1893, she wrote *immadgine* instead of *imagine*. These spelling errors are so-called orthographic image errors (Arndt 2010: 57), which means that Wilhelmina uses a plausible English representation of a phoneme, but it is incorrect in that particular word.

5.2.1 The Process of Learning How to Spell in English

In order to determine Wilhelmina's progress and eventual proficiency of the English spelling rules, I take Arndt and Foorman's (2010) study as a model, which is explained in section 5.3. In this study, the authors try to identify the differences between good and poor spellers when it comes to learning English as a second language. They conclude that learners of English as

an EFL have the biggest trouble with spelling rules such as the Doubling Rule and the Changing rule, and have least problems with short and long vowels. Wilhelmina does not really fit into this pattern.

Even though Arndt and Foorman's study proves that the Changing Rule and Doubling Rule are hardest to acquire for learners of English as an EFL, Wilhelmina quickly acquired these rules and was able to apply them in her letters. In Table 4 below, in which I have collected all instances in my letter corpus on which the Changing Rule is applicable, spelled both correctly and incorrectly.

*Table 4.***This table shows all instances of the Changing Rule through all three periods**

Found in Letters from:	*Correct Instance of Changing Rule*		*Incorrect Instance of Changing Rule*
Period I			poneys (Letter 15)
Period II	munkies (Letter 20) difficulties (Letter 34) ponies (Letter 41) aunties (Letter 44) cappicities (Letter 45) responsabilities (Letter 47)	coppies (Letter 48) stories(Letter 49) ladies (Letter 49) galleries (Letter 50) senturies (Letter 50) qualities (Letter 50)	albanys (Letter 28) armis (Letter 49)
Period III	ladies (Letters 51, 54, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 73) studies (Letters 51, 84) glasfactories (Letter 53) liberties (Letter 54) difficulties (Letter 58) responsabilities (Letter 60, 86) galleries (Letter 61) rubies (Letter 61)	colonies (Letter 63) theories (Letter 65) lilies (Letter 68) duties (Letter 73) worries (Letter 75) enemies (Letter 77) countryies (Letter 78) Albanies (Letter 88) sympathies (Letter 89)	

When it comes to the Doubling Rule, she obviously makes some mistakes; writing *specialy* in Letter 28, *wory* in Letter 39, *proty* ("pretty") in letter 20, *alow* in Letter 51, Letter 52 and Letter 59, and some instances of *realy* in e.g. Letters 22 and 27. Nonetheless, she spells *shedding* correctly and properly doubles the *l* in *dredfully* and the *t* in *forgotten*. When it comes to the other spelling rules, conclusions cannot easily be drawn from the corpus that has come down to us. In all the letters, there is for instance only one example of incorrect spelling of irregular plural nouns, another one of the spelling patterns analysed by Arndt and Foorman. In a letter of 13 August 1893, Wilhelmina refers to ’feet’ as *feets*:

(16). Then we sore three clowns wich were dressed like (((diables))) and wich twisted themselfes in such a clever way that one could not see what and where were there **feets** and there head. (Letter 20)

This indicates that though she was somehow aware of the irregular plural noun, she was confused by the grammar rule that accounts for regular plurals. Looking at all the fourteen spelling patterns analysed in the study of Arndt and Foorman, Wilhelmina had a lot of trouble understanding the vowel-consonant-e construction. Although this rule is considered to be quite easy to master for learners of English, she continuously struggled with it, not because she is not aware of the additional *e* in the vowel-consonant-e construction such as *take, poke* and *lake*, but because she applies it to incorrect situations. In the following excerpt, taken from a letter dated 6 August 1893, Wilhelmina puts an additional *e* behind *as* and initially also behind *had*, which she corrected herself*:*

(17). it pored so hard that I could nt ride **ase** long ase I **hade** wanted (Letter 19)

Similarly, one can find instances of *tooke* (Letter 14), *hase* (Letter 15), *remane* (Letter 19) and *finde* (Letter 21).

The Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus also gives us some insight into Wilhelmina's spelling capacities when it comes to the use of correct long and short vowels, as there are quite a few errors there. This is peculiar, as these rules are considered to be most easy to master for learners of English according to the study of Arndt and Foorman. All the errors from the letters regarding long/short vowel use have been collected in Appendix C, which is summarized in Table 5 below. In the following excerpts, one can see some examples of these vowel errors.

(18). **ij hev bien skeeting** this monning. (Letter 6, 14 December 1889)
(19). wich had been dusty the hole day was positifly **floded** in three **minits** (Letter 19, 6 August 1893)
(20). When I am still **sleapy** in the morning (Letter 47, 4 November 1896)

Table 5. **An overview of the number of sentences with incorrect vowel depictions for each period.**

	Period I	**Period II**	**Period III**
Total of sentences	141	888	751
Sentences with incorrect vowel use	62	73	23
Percentage of sentences with vowel errors	43%	8%	3%

The errors in Appendix C and the results in Table 5 verify the conclusion that I have already drawn above, which is that through the years, Wilhelmina does appear to develop a better understanding of the English vowel sounds and their corresponding spelling, yet did not receive any spelling instruction during the time she spent with Miss Winter. The improvement in the third period might be explained by the fact that from that time onwards Wilhelmina did no longer let her mother check the spelling in her Letters. In a letter of 21 March 1897 she wrote:

(21). I now don't any more let mother read my letters so all faults come down upon me. Do say if you think my handwriting & spelling has improved.

If her mother was no longer checking her letters for spelling errors, she might have been more likely to look up the words in a dictionary. Even Miss Winter noticed the improvement and complimented Wilhelmina on her spelling.

In section 3.2 I discussed Krashen's views on the understanding of third person singular *s* and possessive *'s* in as an indication of one's competence in English grammar. When doing an error analysis on Wilhelmina's use of *'s*, the results of which can be seen in Table 6, one can see that this was not an aspect of English grammar, but more an aspect of English spelling Wilhelmina was struggling with.

Table 6. **An overview of Wilhelmina's correct, as wel as incorrect uses of possessive –'s through all three periods**

	Instances of the possessive/ possessive *'s*	**letter in Appendix A**	**period**
Plurals with *'s*	ocean's (plural)	9	**I**
	German's (plural)	10	
	hug's (plural)	11	
	photo's (plural)	12	
	figur's (plural)	12	
	ouwer's (hours)	16	
	freveo's (plural)	50	**II**
	opera's	66	**III**
Possessive without *'s*	Pleuettes Jacquelines and Berthas arms	10	**I**
	childrens hospital	10	
	the poor piples things	13	
	Mothers room	18	**II**
Correct possessives	Juli's address	13	**I**
	Arnulf's birthday	15	
	Swell's photgraph	19	**II**
	Ranitz's advice	31	
	Maule's picture	39	
	Prof. Kan's lessons	47	
	mother's work	48	
	men's arrangements	49	
	Baromic's tomb	50	
	mother's name	62	**III**
	every body's life	62	
	Geeske's place	65	
	Nansen's lectures	66	
	Auntie's side	71	
	Aunties state	71	
	Zola's part	79	
	a fool's errand	80	

It was not so much the possessive purpose of –'s Wilhelmina had problems with. From examples such as *Juli's address, Arnulf's birthday, Swell's photograph* and *mother's name,* one can see that she understood that when indicating possession, she had to add an *'s*. Even though she sometimes forgot the apostrophe, as she does in *childrens hospital* and the *poor piples things,* the *s* is there, as it would be in spoken English. Presumably, this has to do with the influence of her first language, Dutch, for in Dutch the possessive *'s* is common, for example in the phrase *Mama's hand* [Mom's hand]. It is interesting how at first, Wilhelmina does not use the apostrophe in *Pleuttes Jacquelines and Berthas arms,* but does use it in plural

forms such as *ocean's*, *German's* and *figur's.* This use of an apostrophe in plural nouns mainly occurs in letters from the first period, with the exception of *freveo's* (some sort of decoration) from Letter 50. Perhaps Wilhelmina was still trying to understand the Dutch grammar rules and the learning of both English and Dutch might have complicated the matter for her. The Dutch sometimes use an –'s in plural forms, for example in the Dutch word *foto's* (photos), where the plural –s is preceded by a short vowel, but needs to be pronounced as a long vowel /fo:to:s/. So according to Dutch spelling rules, *photo's* and *freveo's* would be correct. Nevertheless, this does not explain why Wilhelmina decided to use the apostrophe in other plurals as well, or why she stops doing it from the second period onwards, with one exception in Letter 66: *opera's*. In the third period Wilhelmina mostly uses correct forms of the possessive, so she might have received some feedback from Miss Winter in any way. This part of grammar is thus only fully acquired in writing from the second period onward, even though the additional –s is already present at an earlier stage.

From analysing all the spelling errors, it can be concluded that Wilhelmina's understanding of the English spelling rules improved, starting at the beginning of the second period and stabilizing through the third period, so there is some kind of learning process. However, her spelling never improves up to the level that can be expected of a 'good speller', probably because there has not been any instruction regarding spelling rules whatsoever, which Arndt and Foorman conclude, is necessary in orthographic patterns and morphemes at second grade (Arndt 2010: 65). Besides that, according to van Heuven-van Nes (2012: 26), there has always been a question whether Wilhelmina might have been dyslectic, as she had a lot of trouble with Dutch spelling as well. As discussed in Chapter 3, first language proficiency is of great influence on the acquisition of a second language. This might have caused the continuing errors in her letters such as *dirving lesson* (driving lesson), *baot* (boat), *sae* (sea) *Oll* (all), *photograpk* (photograph) and her difficulty with the different spelling rules, as the switch of letters within a word are common errors for dyslectic people. The above-average understanding of the Doubling and Changing Rule might be explained by the Phonological and Orthographic Proximity Hypothesis, discussed in Chapter 3. This hypothesis argues that new features in the target language of second language learners are particularly challenging as a result of lack of experience with these features. The Doubling rule is a spelling rule that was probably easy for Wilhelmina to master, as the Dutch language has a similar rule. The Changing rule on the other hand, was not something Wilhelmina was familiar with, but the phonological proximity to Dutch spelling is high, as the /ɪz/ sound that often comes with the Changing rule, for example the /ɪz/ sound produced in *responsibilities*

/rɪˌspɒnsəˈbɪlɪtɪz/, is spelled in Dutch also as *ies*, for example in the word *precies* [precise]. The /ɪz/-sound spelled as *ies* is thus not something unusual for native speakers of Dutch. This is called a positive transfer, and this might have made the rule easier for Wilhelmina to acquire.

5.2.2 Orthographic Self-Corrections

In Chapter 3 I discussed self-corrections as an indicator of language-proficiency. Auers (2008) argued that her results showed that well-educated writers, who are clearly aware of the correct use of language and of good style, make more self-corrections in terms of style than less educated people, who still have trouble with grammar and spelling. Moreover, Fairman discussed the occurrences of strike-throughs in letters and concludes that the higher the education, the lesser strike-throughs are made, for the writer usually spells correctly the first time. Nevertheless, for there to be self-corrections the writer has to be aware of grammar or spelling rules and thus needs to have had some form of education. In my corpus of 91 letters, I have identified 113 spelling-related strike-throughs and self-corrections through superscript of which I was able to dinstinguish all words. These self-corrections can be seen in Appendix D. Before presenting the analysis of these strike-throughs, I'd like to discuss the possibility of these corrections being initiated by Queen Emma. Example (22) above, demonstrated the fact that Wilhelmina's earliest letters were checked on errors by Queen Emma up to the age of 17. This means that it is very likely that especially in the beginning, a lot of the self-corrections are not 'self'-corrections at all, but corrections instructed by Emma. As discussed in Chapter 3, Fairman divides spelling alterations into three tentative categories. In some of these instances, it is clear that the corrections were made upon reading the sentence over afterwards, but a lot of the self-corrections in the Wilhelmina English letter corpus can be assigned to the category of 'spelling with style, but not necessarily for style'. This is where memory of a 'correct' spelling seems to have been implicated in some way in the speller's alteration, either as the target spelling, or interference in a tendency to spell phonemically; for example:

> (22). I find it is quite wri~~t~~ght that you had it made [in] the most fationable lether
> (Letter 26, 29 July 1894)

As can be seen in Appendix D, there are quite a large number of self-corrections, particularly from 1894 onwards. I presume that this is when Wilhelmina started to grasp the English spelling rules, although as I mentioned above, I am not sure if Wilhelmina made these self-corrections herself. The largest number of self-corrections can be found in 1896, after which the number of self-corrections dropped. A striking number of self-corrections can be found in

Letter 71, dated 28 March 1897. In this letter, Wilhelmina is clearly very emotional as she writes about the death of her aunt and makes a lot of errors for she is in all likelihood not paying any attention to her spelling. As described in Chapter 5, self-corrections are occurring more often when there has been some form of spelling education, but not enough instruction on the subject. If a proper instruction is offered, this would result in fewer self-corrections, as words are written down correctly immediately. This could explain the drop of self-corrections from 1897 onwards, as Wilhelmina was more informed when it comes to spelling rules. This is not because she received any form of spelling instruction as might be the case in present-day teaching. The improvement of spelling is probably because she wrote more often to Miss Winter and perhaps more frequently used her dictionary, for Queen Emma was no longer checking Wilhelmina's letters for her.

5.3 Language of the Letters: Grammar

In section 3.2 I presented Krashen as the background source for studying the irregular and regular past, third singular *s* and possessive *s*. Krashen identified a connection between the acquisition of these grammatical morphemes and language proficiency. In this section, I will compare and analyse Wilhelmina's grammatical errors in the three different groups of letters, following Krashen's average order of acquisition concerning grammatical morphemes for English as a second language, to determine Wilhelmina's learning progress in grammar understanding and her final mastery of the English grammar rules. Furthermore, as discussed above, Krashen discovered a correlation between first language influence and the understanding of second language word order: people who were less proficient, tended to show more influence of the first language in word-for-word formations and complex word order.

5.3.1 *Heared* or *heard*: The process of understanding irregular and regular past

In the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus I found many instances of regular as well as irregular past tense forms. However, I did not find many errors in this field, as may appear from Table 7 below, which shows all past tense-related errors in Wilhelmina's letters, including some spelling errors.

Table 7. **An overview of Wilhelmina's incorrect uses of regular, as well as irregular past tenses.**

Error	Letter	Period
ij **mien** toe rijt toe joe (correct: I meant to write to you)	4	I
First it **has been** to hot	16	I
I am going to **hade** it framed	43	II
As you will **have heared** from the news of my good arrival here,	44	II
I **heared** this morning a lovely sermon upon what a christian ought to be	48	II
I will have them **pa~~i~~yed**	59	III
I **learnd** my last lesson in 1 ¼ hour working hard	111	III

In this section, focus will be on Wilhelmina's knowledge and awareness of the existence of irregular past and the understanding of the *ed* suffix connected to regular past. In the letters from the first period, the errors found were mostly spelling errors concerning these irregular and regular pasts, as shown in Table 7 and in the following excerpt, from a letter dated 13 December 1889:

> (23). Vader **skeetid**, but nat in a wirre plissent menner. (Letter 4, 13 December 1889)

As I discussed in section 5.2, spelling errors keep appearing in Wilhelmina's letter up until the very last letter to Miss Winter. This also goes for spelling errors in irregular pasts, such as *c~~o~~aught* in example (28). In this particular verb, the *a* occurs immediately to the right of the *o* this tells us that she made the correction while she was writing the word the first time. Something striking is the occurrence of both *heared* and *heard* in Wilhelmina's letters. Three instances of *heared* in Letters 40, 44 and 62, against eight instances of *heard* can be found in Letters 46 50, 61, 64 and 65. This means that up until the latests letters, Wilhelmina was not always sure if the past tense of *hear* was to be written with regular *ed* suffix or had its own irregular form. This particular past was probably hard for her, because *heard* and *heared* would have been pronounced similarly. Fortunately, spelling errors such as *heared*, *build~~t~~* and *c~~o~~aught* tell us that at first, Wilhelmina did not use a dictionary to look up the irregular past of these verbs. For example, she probably knew that the irregular past of *catch* is not 'catched'. Possibly, she was aware of the irregular past *caught*, yet she initially wanted to write it as *cought*. It is not

clear if the self-corrections can be attributed to a dictionary or something else, but the self-corrections itself can be seen as a confirmation of her understanding of the matter.

That Wilhelmina was aware of the existence of both pasts is certain, for she correctly uses regular, as well as irregular past in her letters. The earliest letters show different regular and irregular past tenses in a similar fashion, although these past tenses are sometimes masked by spelling errors. However, in the following example taken from a letter written on 18 December 1888, one can see that even in the earlier letters, Wilhelmina was able to distinguish irregular and regular past:

> (24). I em soo gled, toe hev **hud** ["heard"] vram joe. Juli **had** e wire plizzent bufti. I **besprinkeld** huraboekmaak end **bod** ["bought"] a wielberro with a littel buddi. (Letter 2, 18 December 1888)

Although spelled incorrectly, *besprinkeld* demonstrates the phonemic spelling of an *–ed* ending for the regular past of the verb *besprinkle*. Besides that, *hud* [heard] and *bod* [bought] are both instances of irregular past verb tense forms. From both example (24) and (25), it seems that Wilhelmina possessed knowledge of both regular and irregular past verb tense forms. Moreover, from example (26) it appears that at the early age of eight she did not only know of the existence of the irregular forms, but she was also perfectly able to alternate between irregular past verb tense form *buil~~d~~t* and regular past verb tense form *visited*.

Undoubtedly, the question remains if Wilhelmina came up with these instances herself. As discussed above, one cannot be sure of the extent to which Wilhelmina received help from her mother in forming these sentences. There is a possibility that Emma dictated the sentences for Wilhelmina, so she could write them down. That does not mean Wilhelmina was not aware of the existence of regular and irregular past. However, if Emma dictated the sentences for Wilhelmina at the time, the earlier letters cannot really give us a clear idea of Wilhelmina's knowledge about the past tense. Nevertheless, her later letters demonstrate that Wilhelmina was indeed familiar with the irregular verbs and could apply *–ed* ending with all other verbs, which can be seen in the following examples.

> (25). I **brought** home with me a lot of plates to hang up along the wall (Letter, 3 January 1897)
> (26). That afternoon we still **visited** the church of St. Abrosins. This was **buil~~d~~t** in a more memote period than the Santa Maria de la Grazie. (Letter, 10 January 1897)
> (27). I was very happy to hear that you had not been **shipwrekked**.
> (28). Miss de Vries **c~~o~~aught** her when she came in my dressingroom to put down something she had **brought**.

Irregular pasts such as *brought*, together with unusual regular pasts such as *shipwrekked* demonstrate Wilhelmina's mastery of the past tense by this time. Due to the fact that her English was acquired through speech, Wilhelmina presumably never had anhy explicit grammar education. The only striking error is also the last one Wilhelmina has made in her letters, *learnd* in Letter 112, dated 16 January 1898. Just as with *heard* and *heared*, Wilhelmina shows us various versions of the past tense of 'learn': *learnd (*Letter 112) and *learned* (Letter 117). There were no instances of *learnt*, so one can assume it was pronounced with a voiced consonant at the end. The few errors and the variation in regular and irregular past forms that Wilhelmina shows in her letters, are a good indication of her mastery of the English verb tenses. Nevertheless, not all English grammar aspects were as easy for her to understand.

5.3.2 Spending Hours and Ouwer's: A Dutch Girl's Struggle with Third Singular *S*

In section 3.2 I discussed Krashen's views on the understanding of third person singular *s* and possessive *'s* in as an indication of one's competence in English grammar. According to Krashen, possessive *'s*, together with the third person singular *s*, are amongst the morphemes that are acquired latest in a natural setting. In section 5.2.1, I argued that this is not so much an aspect of English grammar, but more an aspect of English spelling Wilhelmina was struggling with. When it comes to third person singular –s, she was a fast learner, even though in relation to the amount of text in the corpus, there are not many instances of the third person singular to be found in the corpus, probably because Wilhelmina mainly wrote in the past tense. This can be seen in the following table, Table 8, which reveals all correct and incorrect instances of third person singular verbs, except for *has* (52) and *is* (139), which will not be discussed any further here since they were nearly all used in a correct way and the frequent occurrence of these verbs would have made it easy for Wilhelmina to acquire these forms. Besides that, these are irregular third person singulars, which means they do not demonstrate Wilhelmina's level of understanding of the third person singular *s*. I have included the instances of third person singular *s* up to Letter 64. After that there were simply too many instances, and no errors.

Table 8. **An overview of the instances of third person singular that Wilhelmina used in her letters, not including *has* and *is*.**

	Period I	**Period II**	**Period III**
Third Person Singular Verb Forms	works (Letter 2) toeks (Letter 8) does X2 (Letter 9) sends (Letter 9) smells (Letter 13)	takes (Letter 21) dose, dos, does X3 (Letter 25, 27, 44, 45, 46) toeks (Letter 8) feels (Letter 31, 36) looks (Letter 33, 43, 45) must (Letter 28, 41, 45, 46, 48, 50) will (Letter 34) eats (Letter 34) hopes (Letter 39) remains (Letter 42) posesses (Letter 50) follows (Letter 45) goes (Letter 45, 47) seems (Letter 45, 48, 50) comes (Letter 45, 49) reaches (Letter 45) descendes (Letter 45) gives (Letter 47) belongs (Letter 47) means (Letter 48) uses (Letter 48) thanks (Letter 48) wishes (Letter 49) wants (Letter 49) drifts (Letter 49) dates (Letter 50)	makes (Letter 61) gives (Letter 61) interests (Letter 61) stands (Letter 61) feels (Letter 61) makes (Letter 62) must (Letter 62) means (Letter 64) remains (Letter 64)

Even in one of her earliest letter, written on 18 December 1888, Wilhelmina demonstrates her understanding of the third person singular:

(29). Poekie iz viri goed end works wil (Letter 2, 18 December 1888)
Transcription: Poekie is very good and works well.

Even though this example (29) is full of spelling errors, the additional *s* is clearly present. In the letters written in period I, it seems as if Wilhelmina makes one important mistake:

(30). Zutfen it silf isse wirre proettee, end it toeks ennouwer toe drijf ther. (Letter 8, 7 August 1890)
Transcription: Zutphen itself is very pretty, and it took (us) an hour to drive there.

As can be seen from the transcription, it is not quite clear what Wilhelmina intended with the additional *s* in *toeks.* This instance could be a demonstration of Wilhelmina's learning process regarding third person singular. Perhaps she was not yet aware of the fact that third person

singular *s* only goes for the present tense. However, considering the fact that Wilhelmina spelled phonetically, *toeks* might be a spoken version of 'took us', so we are probably dealing with another spelling problem. Other irregular forms of the third person singular, such as *goes*, *possesses*, *must*, and *will* are used correctly, although they only appear from Letter 28 and onwards. Thus, there is no progress to be found in Wilhelmina's understanding of the third person singular, again because no progress is needed, the knowledge appears to be there from the very earliest letters on.

When drawing a conclusion on the order in which the various grammatical aspects are acquired, especially the ones that were analysed (past verb forms, third person singular *s*, possessive *s*), it is hard to determine which one was acquired first, because important pieces of information are missing, for example fractions of when Wilhelmina was still in the phase of 'interlanguage'. The term interlanguage was first introduced by Selinker (1972), who defined it as: "a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a Target Language norm" (Selinker 1972: 214). In the phase of interlanguage, learners have just enough knowledge of the Target Language in order to communicate, however there are still a lot of errors. Errors are in this case an important window on the learner's processes and strategies, and would be very helpful in analysing a certain order of acquisition. In the case of Wilhelmina's earliest English letters, it appears as if her language was already past this stage of interlanguage. By the time she started writing her letters to Miss Winter in English, either her understanding of grammar was already advanced in such a way that there are too few errors to conclude anything solid from them, or her mother helped her in forming grammatically correct sentences, which infers that the letters are not useful when studying the order of grammar acquisition.

5.3.3 Learning Grammar the Fastest Way

One can see that Wilhelmina did not make any progress on the subject of regular and irregular past, mainly because there was no progress to make, most errors linked to this subject only indicated Wilhelmina's issues with English spelling. There is also no progress in the learning of possessive –'s and third person singular –s, although this progress is particularly visible in spelling. Therefore, according to Krashen's theory, Wilhelmina's grammar, at least in writing, was nearly fluent from the start of her English learning. As an English teacher, I constantly see what sort of struggle it can be for students to acquire the grammar rules of a foreign language, even though the textbooks we use provide the students with a lot of grammar explanation. In spite of having four years or more of English lessons, grammar errors are of

frequent occurrence when doing an error analysis on a student's work, especially regarding verb tenses. Because of this, it it striking to see how few mistakes can be found in Wilhelmina's letters. She rarely makes any errors in her use of different verb tenses and adopts some complicated constructions, as can be seen in the following example:

> (31). I then feel the w~~ait~~eight of my responsabilities too heavy for me & then I go & have it out alone & forget all around me & feel that it is a comfort that I need not depend upon myself but that there is a Power which can support me if I only alow myself to be supported. (Letter, 10 January 1897)

This example is a perfect demonstration of the language in Wilhelmina's later letters. The sentences in this passage are long and consist of many sub clauses, and even though they sometimes reveal some spelling errors, grammar rules are applied correctly and consistently. In the previous section it has been established that the spelling aspect of Wilhelmina's English is not at the same level. Therefore, it is interesting that this particular aspect of the English language was seemingly quite easy for Wilhelmina to acquire. This might have had something to do with the style of teaching she was subjected to. As discussed in Chapter 4, many linguists and language teachers believe that pedagogical grammar is an important aspect of second language acquisition. However, others believe that a foreign grammar cannot be taught explicitly. Even in the nineteenth century there was some disagreement about this subject. Wilhelm, for example, wrote that especially the earlier course books present a large number of rules. Later on, some course book writers mention that they limited the number of rules for pedagogical reasons, while others offer hardly any or no explicit rules at all.

One issue in this discussion is the extent to which grammatical form and meaning should be separated. Long (1991) makes a distinction between two approaches to grammar teaching: Focus on FormS, or inductive learning which involves explicit grammar explanations, and Focus on Form, which relates the form to the meaning arising from language in the classroom (Cook 2006: 40). The main issue is the connection between conscious understanding of a rule and the ability to use it. Opponents of teaching explicit grammar maintain that this method only teaches about the language and not the actual language itself. As Omaggio (1986) stated, this method "sends a clear message that the focus of the lesson is on talking about the language rather than on talking in the language" (Omaggio 1986: 419). Students may be consciously aware of the rules and how to use them most of the time, but they are unable to use them in speech. ELT textbooks nowadays present grammar rules in the order of difficulty of acquisition, which makes teaching and learning of

the rules easier, but actually using the language more difficult. An example of an apparently simple rule is the possessive -s in English. Yet in Krashen's order of acquisition, the possessive remains late-acquired. Nevertheless, Wilhelmina acquired this rule at an early stage of English learning, together with the other morphemes claimed to be learned last. Partly, this might be because of first language influence, but it also gives reason to believe that grammar should not be acquired through explicit teaching.

5.4 Language of the Letters: Words

5.4.1 Introduction

In this section, I will focus on the English vocabulary Wilhelmina acquired through her conversations with Miss Winter. Wilhelmina's English vocabulary appears to be quite extensive, as she is very descriptive and especially in her later letters, writing colourfully about her trips abroad and the things that happened at court, frequently using adjectives such as *dreadful*, *good*, *fine*, *pretty*, *immense*, *sweet*, *great* and *interesting*. Similar to grammar, Wilhelmina seems to be acquiring words quickly, and it is likely that the oral input that Wilhelmina has received played an important part in this incidental learning. When looking at the errors she makes regarding vocabulary, one can see that Wilhelmina made quite some improvements between her first and last letter to Miss Winter. Especially the letters from her trips to France in November 1896 (Letters 47, 48 and 49) are particularly interesting as Wilhelmina makes the declaration that she does not have any dictionary with her to check her spelling:

> (32). Please excuse my spelling and my writing; I have nor my dictionary nor my pen. (Letter 47, 4 November 1896)

Even though she hints here that she only used her dictionary for the spelling of English words, this is a good example of the fact that in those letters, all the vocabulary is her own. Words such as *wandering*, *tiresome*, *vacant*, *withstanding*, *reservoir*, *ascend* and *vapour* are good examples of the wide range of Wilhelmina's vocabulary around that time and it is close to flawless. In those three letters, as a frequency list compiled with the help of Wordsmith Tools shows she produced 750 types over 2247 tokens, including 165 function words. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, it is not only important to consider vocabulary size in order to analyse Wilhelmina's knowledge of English words. Especially when focusing her progress of learning, it is interesting to see if the knowledge of the words learnt gradually deepens and if more difficult words are used in later letters. In order to do this, I adopted the method used by by Munoz (2015), in which she applies Wordsmith in order to determine vocabulary size,

coverage of words, range of words, high-frequency words and correspondence with the New General Service List (NGSL) and New Academic Word List (NAWL).

5.4.2 Wilhelmina's Learning Process Regarding Vocabulary-Size

In the first stage of my analysis, the WordList tool yielded information about corpus size and vocabulary size, shown as a number of tokens and types and standardized type/token ratio (STTR). As the corpus consisted of 130 letters of different lengths, it was necessary to calculate the standardized type/token ratio, rather than the type/token ratio (TTR) in order to correct for differences in text length. As Munoz writes: "WordSmith Tools, the software used in this study, computes the STTR as a percentage showing the number of new types for every pre-determined number of tokens across texts of different lengths" (Munoz 2015:31). In this study, I copied her method of using the Wordsmith Tools program to divide the corpus and compute the type/token ratio every 100-word segment, which is the minimum text size in the corpus, as suggested by Malvern et al. (2004). As a result, the software calculated the type/token ratio at equally spaced measurement points and then worked out the average of all these measures, generating the STTR index. As computed by WordSmith Tools, the corpus contained 33,560 tokens and 3,634 types. The software's STTR calculation revealed a 71,31% ratio between types and tokens, indicating that an average number of 71 new types is introduced every 100 tokens in the corpus. This mean frequency reveals quite a high lexical variation in the corpus. In table 8 below, one can see the number of types in every period and the corresponding TTR and STTR.

Table 9. **Type/token ratio and standardised type/token ratio in all three periods and overall**

period	**number of tokens**	**number of types**	**TTR**	**STTR**
I	1665	708	44,56	71,94
II	17363	2917	17,30	71,16
III	17158	2487	15,07	71,60
overall	36,186	4695	13,42	71,35

Table 9 demonstrates that the first period had the highest percentage of new words per one hundred types. This percentage might be influenced by the large number of spelling errors that Wilhelmina made. For example, Wilhelmina wrote three different versions of the word

'hours': *awers*, *hours* and *ouwers*. In Wordsmith Tools, these are seen as distinct types. Besides that, as discussed in Chapter 4, this first period is also crucial when learning a second language as it is much easier to acquire up to the age of twelve. Nevertheless, the STTR remains around 71 for all three periods, which means that even at a later age, Wilhelmina kept using new words, indicating that her learning process regarding English vocabulary did not really end at a particular age. According to Xia (2014), this is because learning words in an L2 should be easier for adults than learning words in an L1 for children, for she writes: "For children, the learning of a word is usually interwoven with their cognitive, conceptual, and social growth" (Xia 2014: 2). This means that it takes more time for children to see what a word includes and what it means, besides remembering the word itself. However, when acquiring an L2 as an adult, the meaning of the word itself is already clear and the learner only has to connect this meaning to the translation of a word. This perhaps explains why Wilhelmina acquired some words at a later age, when she was old enough to grasp what the words included.

5.4.3 Deepening Her Knowlegde: Wilhelmina's Language Compared to the NGSL and NAWL

In the second stage of my analysis, the high-frequency words were identified and word difficulty was determined, by comparing Wilhelmina's word families to the lemmatized NGSL list and the lemmatized NAWL list. The New General Service list is a list of core vocabulary words for students of English as a second language, which Dr. Charles Browne, Dr. Brent Culligan and Joseph Phillips have created (2013). The New Academic Word List is a list of 963 words derived from an academic corpus containing about 288 million words (2013). Once again taking Munoz as a model, inflected forms in each list were first lemmatized automatically using the Auto-join tool; then derived forms were added manually to the lemmas in order to build word families, thus the 4,695 words were grouped into 3,092 word families, for example by putting words such as *write* and *writing* together. From the Wordlist Tool in Wordsmith, it becomes clear that Wilhelmina mostly wrote about herself and her point of view, for after *the*, *I* is the most frequently used word, with 1,507 instances. This is also a common feature of letters. As expected, the first 32 most frequently used words are grammar words. In order to do a proper analysis of the high-frequency words, these grammar words, i.e. function words, were removed from the corpus wordlist using the Matchlist Tool with a function word list (retrieved from http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Words/StructureWordsList.htm), herein called FWL. Following Munoz, grammar words were excluded as, according to Munoz, "they represent a

fairly stable number of types which supply grammatical information and are very likely to occur in different texts" (Munoz 2015: 32). The twenty most frequently used lemmas, or content words, can be seen in Table 10 below.

Table 10. **An overview of the twenty most frequent lemmas in the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus.**

Type	Frequency
MOTHER	170
LETTER	168
BEEN	147
DEAR	142
DARLING	130
OLD	121
ONE	120
WENT	106
THINK	92
WOULD	86
TIME	85
DEAREST	83
DAY	82
THING	82
GOOD	78
LOVE	78
THANK	75
VAN	74
KNOW	73

A close look at the wordlist revealed that many of the high-frequency words in the corpus were directly linked to Wilhelmina's daily life and her thoughts, as for instance *mother*, *day* and *think* are very frequently used. As revealed by the mean standard deviation, the point in the wordlist separating high-frequency from low-frequency words was the type ranked in the 204th position, with a frequency of 12 tokens. This means that there are 203 types that occur more frequently than 12 types, and demonstrating that words had to appear at least 12 times in the corpus to be considered high-frequency items.

While transcribing Wilhelmina's letters, I noticed that here word use could not always fit into the same register. In some letters she sounds quite informal, while other letters depict a very formal use of words. In order to see if her language is characteristic of the vocabulary of an English learner or is perhaps more academic of nature, I used Wordsmith Tool's Match List tool to compare the word families Wilhelmina uses to the lemmatized NGSL list and the

lemmatized NAWL list. The New General Service list is a list of core vocabulary words for students of English as a second language, created by Browne, Culligan and Phillips (2013). The New Academic Word List (2013) is a list of 963 words derived from an academic corpus containing about 288 million words. Using these lists, the Match List tool in Wordsmith was used to classify the words using the Lemmatized NGSL list and the Lemmatized NAWL list. In the complete corpus, there are 72 types from the NGSL and 57 types from the NAWL. This result indicates that only a tiny percentage of the total types is corresponding to the list of an English learner. This means that Wilhelmina's word use in the letters does not resemble an English core vocabulary. Perhaps the language in her letters is somewhat monotonous because of the returning subjects she deals with, which does not allow her to introduce many new words from the NGSL. Nevertheless, the 57 academic types in Wilhelmina's letters are not to be expected of an English learner and demonstrate her knowledge of more difficult English words. The fact that, even though Wilhelmina cannot introduce words linked to new subjects, her STTR remains the same, might indicate that she is using more difficult words for the same subject and thus her knowledge of word meaning is deepening. In the following table, Table 11, one can see the distribution of the NGSL and NAWL words across the corpus periods. Furthermore, the number of function words that were excluded is also included in the table.

Table 11. **The distribution of the NGSL and NAWL words across the corpus periods and what percentage of types the NGSL and NAWL accounted for.**

period	NGSL words (as % of total running words)	NAWL words (as % of total running words)	FWL	Other words
I	7 (1%)	4 (0.6%)	77	569
II	43 (2%)	34 (1.5%)	153	1936
III	54 (3%)	27 (1.5%)	164	1477
overall	87 (2%)	75 (1.6%)	172	3258

As expected, Wordsmith Tools showed that there is a small number of function types in the corpus, 172, but they provided the greatest coverage, namely 54.08% of the total running words, so the cumulative result of all types with their frequency of which the list can be found in Appendix E. The 87 content words from the NGSL covered about 1.38 % of the corpus, of which the list can be found in Appendix F. Thus, the NGSL and the FWL together provided a corpus coverage of 55.46%. The 75 types from the AWL covered 0.39% of the corpus words, and can be seen in Appendix G. Taken together, grammar words, general words, and academic words accounted for roughly 56% of the corpus tokens, the remaining words covering 45% of the corpus. This is not the same for all three periods. In period I for example, grammar words accounted for only 33,25% of the sub-corpus. In period II this is 54.46% and in period II 55.62% of the sub-corpus consists of function words. This could imply that Wilhelmina's sentences were getting more complex and more structure words are needed to construct sentences. As can be seen in Table 10, Wilhelmina makes the largest progress in period II. In that period Wilhelmina uses the most words from the NGSL and the NAWL, but even from her sixteenth year onwards (period III) there is some improvement. This indicates that her knowledge of the English vocabulary gradually deepens or grows and new vocabulary keeps being acquired. Word range was measured in terms of word distribution across the corpus periods, by looking if Wilhelmina uses many words in all three periods, or if she uses certain words in only one particular period. Of the total 4,695 types, 240 appeared in letters from all three periods. These included mostly grammar words and some lexical words, which can be found in Appendix H, for instance *yesterday*, *weather*, *time*, *things*, *woman* and *like*. These results reveal that the words with wide range were mostly grammar words, while most

of the remaining words had a more narrow range. This indicates that even though Wilhelmina largely wrote about similar subjects, most types are only found in one particular period, demonstrating that Wilhelmina used different vocabulary in each of the three periods.

5.4.4 Code Switching

In Chapter 2, I discussed the fact that Wilhelmina was not the only one learning a second language, for Miss Winter in turn spent a lot of time studying the Dutch language. That she was able to understand the language becomes clear from the fact that she received various Dutch letters from Wilhelmina, mainly in 1886 and 1887. This also created the possibility for Wilhelmina to apply some code-switching now and then. Code-switching is descibed by Vivian Cook as "the use of words from other languages, for example a first language, when speaking or writing in a second language, or the other way around" (Cook 2013: 174). For code-switching to occur, the other person who is spoken or written to, must be able to understand this additional language as well. Apart from her frequent use of *benauwd,* already commented on in the introduction, Wilhelmina used other Dutch words such as *deftigheid* "gentility" (Letter 47), *blindemansbuf* "hide and seek" (Letter 21), *W.C.*"toilet" (Letter 91) and *overstappen* "change trains" (Letter 31). Besides that, from Wilhelmina's letters it appears that Miss Winter applied some code-switching in her letters to Wilhelmina as well, for on 23 August 1894, Wilhelmina wrote:

> (33). I must realy give you grammer lessons if you write "sukkel" with "kle" in sted of with "kel" (letter 27).

Apparently, Miss Winter used the word *sukkle* in her letter, the misspelled Dutch translation of 'simpleton' or 'idiot'. The fact that Miss Winter and Wilhelmina had their own way of mixing two languages, tells us that they were close. The word *benauwd* for example, probably was some sort of inside joke, as Wilhelmina brought it up continuously, especially referring to situations where people were meddling in her business, or she is nervous about something. Wilhelmina bravely tries to stick to the English language at all times. However, when she is describing a situation she sometimes uses a Dutch word. In a letter of 4 November 1896, she writes:

> (34). He told us also that the "bergketens" [mountain ranges] were situated like "coulisses achter elkander" [wings one behind the other]. (Letter 47)

In that same letter, Wilhelmina points out that she does not have her dictionary with her, for she is on holiday. She probably did not know the translation of those words, using the Dutch words instead, knowing that Miss Winter was able to understand them. The absence of regular code-switching, especially in the later letters, show the extent of Wilhelmina's English vocabulary and the fact that she did not feel the need to switch to her fist language explain herself. Wilhelmina wanted to prove to Miss Winter how good her English was, and switching to Dutch too often would probably feel shameful to her.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I analysed Wilhelmina's proficiency in the English language on three points, i.e. her skills and knowledge of English spelling, grammar and lexis, to determine to what degree Wilhelmina mastered the English language, in what order the English language was acquired and how this was influenced by the mode of instruction.

Wilhelmina's understanding of the English spelling system was not at its prime until the third period. When looking at the errors she made with respect to the Changing Rule, the Doubling Rule and her use of long and short vowels, it is clear that Wilhelmina learnt the English language through oral input, for she struggled with spelling rules that are considered easiest to acquire. The fact that Wilhelmina does not have any problems with the more difficult spelling rules might be explained by the similarity of these spelling rules to Dutch spelling rules. Moreover, her self-corrections demonstrate that there has been some form of teaching, but not a thorough instruction on the subject, which is eventually needed to spell words correctly. Wilhelmina's grammar, on the other hand, is close to impeccable from the earliest English letters on. Those letters demonstrate the understanding of grammatical morphemes that are considered to be acquired last, such as third singular –s and possessive –s. Partly, this might be because of first language influence, but it also gives reason to believe that grammar knowledge in general should not be acquired through explicit teaching, for Wilhelmina did not receive any instruction on the matter either. Obviously, we cannot draw any conclusions about Wilhelmina's grammar in speech, and her command on grammar in writing might be better because the writer has time to revise his or her sentences. Nevertheless, her education has resulted in a swift, impressive acquisition of all grammatical morphemes and the expert input through interaction with Miss Winter will definitely have played an important part in this. The same goes for the retention of English lexis. Wordsmith reveals that the STTR, or standardized type token ratio in Wilhelmina's letters is quite high. This means that, especially for a non-native speaker of English, her lexical variation is

sizable. Especially the second and third periods demonstrate a growing knowledge of English word meanings. In terms of range, most words are only used in one certain period, which indicates that Wilhelmina changed her choice of words, perhaps because she continued learning new words.

In terms of order, grammatical structures were probably acquired early and only improved slightly after that. The acquisition of English lexis was largest in the first period, but showed a continuous improvement over the other three periods. The spelling rules showed small improvements in the first and second period, but only demonstrated considerable changes at the ending of the second period. As for her use of code-switching, Wilhelmina switched to Dutch words now and then, mostly because Miss Winter was able to understand them. This mainly tells us something about the relationship of the two, but Wilhelmina's code switching, or the absence of it, also shows the size of her vocabulary as she did not feel the need to use Dutch translations that often.

6 Conclusion

This thesis consists of two parts: an transcription of the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus and a study of Queen Wilhelmina's proficiency in various aspects of the English language such as spelling, grammar and words.

In this thesis I studied the letters written by Wilhelmina to Miss Saxton Winter, Wilhelmina's governess from the age of six until she was eighteen years old. I examined the way in which Wilhelmina acquired the English language and how this affected her final proficiency in that language by analysing her learning progress of English spelling, grammar and vocabulary. I selected these aspects of English, because they can all be acquired separately, even though the combined knowledge determines a learner's overall proficiency in a second language. Wilhelmina acquired the English language through discourse with Miss Winter, which influenced and stimulated her acquisition of the English language in important respects. For her mother, Queen Emma, learning multiple languages was of great importance, which explains why Wilhelmina was raised bilingually. Queen Emma spoke to her in Dutch, and from a very young age she enjoyed the company of a French nursemaid. Furthermore, Wilhelmina was placed in the care of an English governess, Miss Elisabeth Winter, from a very early age onwards. Miss Winter did not know any other languages and for communicative purposes, Wilhelmina was therefore forced to quickly learn the English language. I believe it is due to this communicative, or Task-based approach (Ellis 2013) that Wilhelmina acquired English so rapidly and to such a near-native skilfulness. Besides that, in all of the years that Wilhelmina had Miss Winter by her side, she received an enormous amount of input, which according to Stephen Krashen, causes a speedy progress in learning a second language. When it comes to the retention of new words, oral input has been said to be an effective source of input, especially because a learner can never acquire a native-like vocabulary through intentional learning. I believe that it is because of the oral input Wilhelmina received that her learning progress of the English language was so impressive. In order to determine this learning progress, and the order in which the different language aspects are required, I have looked at the improvement of Wilhelmina's spelling in using the English, her understanding of English grammar and retention of English words throughout all her letters, which I grouped into three periods. A learning curve became visible, showing that whereas both Wilhelmina's grammar and vocabulary showed great development in the first period, this was not the case when it comes to the acquisition of English spelling rules. Even though Wilhelmina wrote many letters to her English governess, she probably never received any proper spelling instruction and therefore her spelling only reached a near-native status in

the third period. My findings on Wilhelmina's grammar, together with those on her spelling and lexis, have helped me answer the question about the existence of a natural order in acquiring a second language and the different linguistic aspects that come with it. Such a natural order in acquiring a second language can be of great use to our knowledge of second language teaching, as it tells us more about the efficiency of existing language programmes. In The Netherlands today, learning English as a second language normally takes place in the classroom, with the use of often fairly obsolete course books which do not incorporate different styles of learning. Different from students receiving modern teaching, which still substantially focuses on grammar teaching and intentional learning, Wilhelmina's understanding of the English grammar rules seems to be immaculate. If she struggled with particular grammar rules, for example additional –s, it was due to first-language influence. In modern teaching, students are to follow the chapters as they are arranged by the writers of such text books, which results in a situation in which the order of acquisition is imposed on students. Drawing a conclusion from Wilhelmina's learning progress, this proves not to be effective at all, for the natural order of acquisition differs a lot from the order used in textbooks used for second language learning. Because of this, intensive grammar teaching in the early stage of second language acquisition is of no use at all. From Wilhelmina's letters, it even appears as if grammar teaching is never necessary until at a very late stage in acquisition, as long as there is enough oral input.

Hence, the communicative approach that was used to teach Wilhelmina English is very effective when it comes to learning grammar and vocabulary. It appears that only by regular contact with native speakers a person can improve his proficiency in a second language the way Wilhelmina did in such a short time. Even though spelling is only fully acquired somewhat later, proper instruction can quickly cause this to catch up. If Wilhelmina would have learnt English through a present-day textbook, she would never have picked up as many words as she has through her conversations with Miss Winter, and she would not have had such a good start to begin with. Thus, in this thesis I demonstrated the positive effect of teaching methods focused on communication rather than on grammar and writing, such as the Communicative method and the Task-based approach.

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Notes on the Transcriptions

For my transcription of the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus, kept at the Royal House Archive, the edition of the letters of Robert Dodsley's (1733-1764) by Tierney (1988) were used as an example. In the transcriptions he made of Dodsley's letters, Tierney followed the original as closely as possible in all aspects: spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, superscripts, abbreviations, elisions and so-called strikethroughs (Tierney 1988: xxi). Therefore, the Wilhelmina English Letter Corpus has been transcribed in such a way that nearly all the manuscripts' characteristics, including their layout, are copied as in the transcript. In most cases, the possibilities of Microsoft Word were sufficient to stay close to the original text when transcribing the manuscripts. In the heading of my transcriptions I stated the letter's number within the corpus and the date of composition of each letter. Soft brackets represent the author's brackets used within the text. If it was not possible to identify the text that was struck through by the author, the strikethrough is presented as xxx.