Low Saxon, Dutch, Frisian, Limburgish, and Lower Franconian: All of these are related languages and are often mutually comprehensible. They all belong to the West Germanic group of the Germanic language groups which itself belongs to the Indo-European languages. Out of those only Lower Franconian in the modern form of Dutch has succeeded in becoming one of the major European standardized languages and is the official national language of the Netherlands and one of the other official languages of Belgium while the others are becoming increasingly marginalized and are in some cases on the verge of extinction. As already shown in the previous chapters there is a close relationship between politics, power, prestige and elitism which can cause one language to prosper while others decline. The fate of Frisian, Lower Saxon and Lower Franconian South Sleswick and the Lower Rhine in relation to Standard (High-) German is currently characterized by the latter.

The origin of the Indo-European languages is thought to be in the Ukrainian steppes and the Caucasus, thus landlocked areas because the terms for seafaring differ most in the various Indo-European languages and therefore appear to be adopted from peoples living in the coastal areas before the Indo-Europeans arrived. The present day Indo-European languages are divided into the groups:

- Hellenic (Greek)
- Indo-Iranian
- Italic (Romance)
- Celtic
- Germanic
- Armenian
- Balto-Slavic (Baltic)
- Balto-Slavic (Slavic)
- Albanian

The Germanic group again divides as follows:

1. North Germanic, including Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese
2. West Germanic (see below)
3. East Germanic, including Gothic, now extinct.

West Germanic again is categorized into:

2.1. Continental Old West Germanic

This subdivides again into:

2.1.1. High German languages and dialects such as Standard German, Luxembourgish, Swiss German, Yiddish, Bavarian, Alamance, Thuringian, Moselle-, Upper- and Ripuarian-Franconian.

2.1.2. Lower Franconian (Dutch) which includes Brabantish and Limburgish out of which the Hollandic and Flemish dialects have developed. However, both have undergone some influence by Ingveonic dialects on the North Sea coast and this is also reflected in modern standard Dutch. Afrikaans was developed out of Lower Franconian speaking settlers in South Africa and developed into a separate written standard which has become one of the official languages of the South African Union.

2.2. Ingveonic (North Sea Germanic)

including English, Frisian, Low Saxon and Old Coastal Dutch dialects


10.1. Low Saxon

Low Saxon was the language spoken by the Saxons who are attested in what is nowadays Holsten on the Jutland peninsula and they appear to have spread their influence until they established a powerful empire stretching from the Zuiderzee (nowadays Ijsselmeer) in the West to the river Elbe in the East, the river Eider in the North and the Rothaargebirge in the South before they finally lost out to the Franks under Charlemagne in 804. However, it is not clear whether the Saxons were originally one ethnic group or simply an assembly of various Germanic groups in what is nowadays Northern Germany and the eastern Netherlands under a united leadership. Some of the Germanic groups the Saxons incorporated were the Brukterer, Chauken, Cherusker, Angrivari, Nordalbinger (Holsten) and the Tubanten. Some of the Saxons joined the Angles and Jutes in their conquests of Britain in the 4th – 5th century and their presence is found back in the regional names Essex, Sussex and Middlesex. The language of the Saxons during that period is described as Old-Saxon and was at that time closely related to Old Frisian and Old-
English. In its written form it first appeared in the epic poem “Heliand” which describes the life of Jesus Christ and is held in an alliterative verse style of a Germanic saga. The use of Old Saxon more or less corresponded with the extent of the Saxon empire during that period (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, page 57)

After the Saxons lost their independence to the Franks in the 9th century, the Saxon territory was incorporated as the Duchy of Saxony into the Holy Roman Empire. However, the Duchy was further split into smaller states and only the territory on the upper Elbe river around Dresden retained the name Duchy of Saxony while the inhabitants did not constitute Saxons and the languages spoken there were either Sorbian-Slavonic or East-Thuringian (Sachsengeschichte.de: Die Geschichte der Niedersachsen von den Altsachsen bis zu den Welfen und die Wanderung des Sachsennamens von der Nordsee in die Mark Meißen, 3. Die Wanderung des Sachsennamens, http://www.sachsengeschichte.de/namenswanderung.html).

The Saxon language flourished nevertheless and an important step to establish a written standard was Eike van Repgow's law book “Sassen Speyghel” (The mirror of the Saxons) which appeared around 1230. During that period the Saxon language spread further East and became the dominant language in what is nowadays Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Pomerania and finally East Prussia superseding the Slavonic-Vendian languages and the Baltic Prussian languages. Nevertheless, some of the Vendian-Slavonic and Balto-Prussian languages were still spoken in the Wendland (East of Luneburg) and in East Prussia until the 19th century. The increasing power of the Hanseatic league brought further prestige to the Saxon language and through the successful establishment of Hanseatic trading posts around the Baltic Sea influenced the Scandinavian language and also the Baltic and Finno-Ugrian languages. The standard of the Saxon-Hanseatic business language was mainly modelled on the written style popular in the city of Lübeck which became the unofficial capital of the Hanseatic League (Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon (Low German), History, http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html). While the language was usually described as “Saxon” it was also sometimes labelled as “Dutch” which later on lead to confusion and wrongly attributed Saxon imported expressions into the Scandinavian, Baltic and Finno-Ugrian languages to what is nowadays called (standard-) German. (see also 2.1. The term “German / Deutsch / Dutch”).

However, in 1138 the throne of the Holy Roman Empire moved to the Staufer dynasty from Swabia (Gascoigne, Bamber: History Of The Holy Roman Empire, HistoryWorld. From 2001, ongoing, http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=349&HistoryID=aa35&gtrack=pthe ) and power and influence subsequently moved to the south with High-(standard) German gaining increasing influence as the other written standard (beside Latin) in the Holy Roman Empire which by then included the Saxon speaking lands. The Staufer dynasty was succeeded by the Habsburg dynasty in Vienna in 1273 (Gascoigne, Bamber: History Of The Holy Roman Empire, HistoryWorld. From 2001 onwards http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=349&HistoryID=aa35&gtrack=pthe ) and manifests the position of High German in the Holy Roman Empire. Through the empirical “Roman Law” it also appears in the Saxon speaking areas and marks the beginning of the decline of the power and prestige of the Saxon language (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co.
KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, page 103). Middle-German-Thuringian speech began to expand in the eastern parts of the Saxon-speaking area and cities like Merseburg and Halle switch from Saxon to Middle-German during the 15th century, beginning with the upper classes, a feature which will also characterize the further decline of Saxon throughout the Saxon speaking area in the subsequent centuries. Increasingly, High German became the language of “institutions of higher learning” (Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon (Low German), http://www.lowlands-1.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html) adding to the prestige of High German. The city of Berlin switches from Saxon to High-German for officially purposes in 1504 as a consequence and marks the beginning of a continuous development.

But probably the decisive event to manifest the dominance of High German and the spread further to the North and West was Martin Luther’s bible translation into High German in 1522. Although Johannes Bugenhagen issued a Saxon translation immediately afterwards, this Saxon bible never gained the same fame and popularity as Luther’s High German bible and thus High German became the language of church services even in the Saxon speaking areas. Saxon literature began to disappear and writers used High German modelled on Luther’s bible High German and thus the status and prestige of Saxon further declined and the language became regarded as a rural and lower class vernacular described as “Plattdeutsch” (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, page 103).

When the Hanseatic league began to decline in the 16th and 17th century the last stronghold of the Saxon language also disappeared and almost all previous officially Saxon cities throughout what became Northern Germany adopted High German during the 16th and 17th century. The last Saxon bible was printed in Goslar in 1621 and by 1700 almost all Saxon literature output had ceased (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, page 103).

The exception to the rule was the development in the Netherlands. Originally regarded as a part of the “Low Dutch” language area together with Saxon (see 2.1. The term “German / Deutsch / Dutch”) the Netherlands were able to retain their own Lower Franconian based, regional written standards and develop them further into what was to become described in English as “Dutch”. According to dtv-Atlas the reasons are as follows:

1. The existence of a continuous rich spiritual cultural life and literature in the regional standards.

2. The concentration of important cities in a relative small area enabled a more thorough sociological base than the comparable extensive Northern German plains.

3. The aristocracy had no cultural affinity towards High German and developed its own culture and prestige.

4. The Netherlandic uprising against Habsburgian-Spanish rule beginning in 1568 created and enhanced an early national spirit and thus “Dutch” in its Netherlandic form was adopted by the 7 rebellious provinces and became a feature of Netherlandic independence.
5. The adoption of Calvinist Protestantism separated the Netherlands from the developments in protestant Northern Germany and the catholic South and the official bible translation into Dutch from 1626 became the church language.


Not only did the independent Netherlandic republic adopt “Dutch” as its officially language in 1648, but also Brabant and what was to become Limburg adopted Dutch due to their orientation towards the powerful Netherlandic trading centres. Only the previously Dutch speaking Duchies of Cleves and Gelderen, and the Dutch-official-using Duchies of Lingen, East Friesland and Bentheim adopted more or less reluctantly High German after being transferred to Brandenburg-Prussian or respectively Hanoverian rule in the 17th, 18th and 19th century (Peter von Polenz: Deutsche Sprachgeschichte vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart: 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Band 3, Page 121/122, Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin, 1999, ISBN 3110164787). Thus a linguistic border became established almost exactly where the present border of the Netherlands and Germany is drawn. The Low Saxon speaking areas within the Netherlands adopted “Dutch” as their official language while their native Low Saxon speech was relegated to the status of a rural Eastern Netherlandic dialect but the erosion was somewhat less drastic in compare to Northern Germany due to the close relationship between Low Saxon and Dutch.

With Saxon, which is perhaps better described as Low Saxon to avoid confusion with the Thuringian Middle German spoken in what is today the Free State of Saxony, having no more official status the Northern German upper classes looked upon Low Saxon as a vernacular and took over High German as a manifestation of their elitist status. (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, page 103).

Low Saxon continued in its spoken form in various dialects and was nevertheless able to gain some territory in the 18th century in the Southern parts of Sleswick where it replaced Southern Jutish (see chapter 4), in East Prussia where it replaced Old Prussian (Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon (Low German), History, http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html) and in East and Northern Friesland where it penetrated into formerly Frisian speaking areas ((Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon (Low German), History, http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html, see also chapter 11.2). On the other hand, a decline in usage continued particularly in urban areas were transitional urban forms of speech developed called “Missingsch” and the new industrial centres such as the Ruhr developed a regional variant of High German flavoured with Low Saxon (Westphalian), Lower Franconian and immigrant Polish and Yiddish expressions (Pascal Hesse: Ruhrdeutsch verschwindet aus dem Alltag, article in the Neue Rhein / Neue Ruhr Zeitung (NRZ) from 26the June 2011, http://www.derwesten.de/nrz/staedte/essen/ruhrdeutsch-verschwindet-aus-dem-alltag-id4802333.html ). If Low Saxon was used in cultural events it was mainly to describe persons from rural or lower class background and thus was not associated with prestige or being educated which, in turn, contributed to its demise.

Despite this trends a Lowlands Saxon revival movement that “might be considered a part of European Romanticism in reaction to the Industrial Revolution” (Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon
(Low German), [http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html](http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html) appeared during the 19th century featuring writers such as Klaus Groth or Fritz Reuter who attempted to reinstate what they now called “Niederdeutsch” (Low German). But this Low Saxon movement was not a separatist- nationalistic one; it was a purely linguistic and cultural one demanding linguistic rights within the respective national state. But despite some recognition, the strong social and German nationalistic pressure made it impossible to resurrect the prestige in its written nor in its spoken form in contrast to Swiss German in Switzerland or “Letzebuergsch” (Luxembourgian) in Luxembourg which were facing a similar dilemma.

Another crucial event for the decline of Low Saxon in its spoken form was WWII and the enormous influx of refugees from former East German territories which again furthered the position of High German as the common language in Northern Germany. Ironically, many of those refugees themselves came from areas where Eastern Low German dialects were spoken and thus could have easily adopted Low Saxon or simply continued speaking Eastern Low German since it was mutually comprehensible to a Low Saxon speaker, but that generally did not happen. By then Low German or Low Saxon was regarded as a domestic language which one uses only with close relatives or friends while outsiders would usually be approached in High German. In addition, since general education was in High German only ever since it was introduced in the 19th century, many parents saw Low Saxon as a stumbling block for better education for their children and thus switched to High German when raising their children. The result was that by 1970 even in rural areas High German was the predominant language in all parts of daily life while the use of Low Saxon was mainly confined to the older generation.

Thus, the typical symptoms of a dying language appeared which in turn alarmed some activists who, inspired by similar movements in other European countries, raised demands for official recognition of Low Saxon similar to the ones achieved by the Catalans in Spain or the Welsh in the United Kingdom. But again, since this movement was not a separatist- nationalistic but a purely linguistic and cultural one it was lacking the same dynamic as those movements. However, some success was achieved and the recognition of Low Saxon as a regional language in accordance to part III of the ECRML in 1999 in the Federal Republic of Germany and as part II in the Netherlands in 1997 restored an official status to Low Saxon which was lost some 400 years earlier. This finally also re-confirmed Low Saxon’s status of a separate language in its own right instead that of a mere Dutch or German dialect and also some bilingual road-signs have appeared in some parts of Northern Germany. It is generally now acknowledged that Low Saxon is a separate language but with a further decline of speakers it has become a “minoritized” language (Reinhard F. Hahn, Low Saxon (Low German), [http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html](http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/lowsaxon.html)) and it may be too late to turn the tide. In the large Northern German cities such as Hamburg or Hanover the language has been marginalized to such a degree that the younger generation often does not even recognize it and believe it to be a foreign language. If this development continues there is a good chance that at best it will become some kind of a museum language used to create and confirm a regional identity, while lacking any practical function.

**10.2. Frisian**
The origins of the Frisians as an ethnic group is not quite clear, although the Frisian language as of today clearly derives from Germanic, archaeological findings in the area along the North Sea described as the original Frisian lands point to a pre-Germanic origin. The coastal strip along the North Sea does not belong to the original Germanic occupied area and thus it appears that the Germanic language was introduced by Germanic expansion from the East (Bo Sjölin: Einführung in das Friesische, Stuttgart, 1969, page 1). As such the name “Frisii” or Frisians may describe different groups at different times. After being mentioned by Tacitus (Germ. XXXIV, 2; Ann II, 8) they do not reappear in history until the 7th century when the Frisians are reported to have established a kingdom reaching from the river Weser in the East to the river Zwin in the West and even beyond until they eventually clashed with the Franks to the south. The Frisian kings Aldgisl and Radboud are reported to have resided in Utrecht and ruled from there (Halbertsma, H. (1982), Frieslands Oudheid, Pages 791-796, www.dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/arts/1982/h.halbertsma/Halbertsma.PDF).

The Frisian language itself is categorized as North Sea Germanic and appears strongly related to Old English and Old Saxon. There is also evidence that the Frisians participated in the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain in the 5-6th century. Place names referring to the Frisians in the British Isles are found as far west as Frizington in Cumbria (Armstrong, A. M.; Mawer, A.; Stenton, F. M.; Dickens, B. (1950). The place-names of Cumberland. English Place-Name Society, vol.xxi. Part 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). There are also evidence that the Frisian settlers in Sweden as founders of the ancient trading place Birka (B. Siewertsen, Friserne – vore glemte forældre, page 22, Slot Forlag, 2004, ISBN: 877-90476-08-5) and on the Faeroes (TripAdvisor: Suduroy: From Sandvik to Akraberg, Akraberg, http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Travel-g190337-c123798/Suduroy-Faroe-Islands-From-Sandvik-To-Akraberg.html). The German publisher and researcher Hanswilhelm Haefs suggests that the placenames “Freesen”and “Freesenort”on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea are derived from the Frisians (Hanswilhelm Haefs: Ortsnamen und Ortsgeschichten auf Rügen mitsamt Hiddensee und Mönchgut. Books on Demand. Norderstedt 2005. ISBN 3-8330-0845-8, Page 55) and some also want to associate the origins of the German name for the Vistula Lagoon (“Frisches Haff”) to the Frisians (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frisches_Haff) but this is disputed.

Frisian colonization also took place into what is nowadays called Northern Friesland along the southwest North Sea coast of Sleswick. It appears that those Frisians immigrated in the period between 700 and 1200AD. It is uncertain if and to which extend they also colonized the islands of Föhr, Sylt and Amrum as the languages and dialects spoken on those islands may also constitute a relic from earlier North Sea Germanic speech (Reinhard F. Hahn & Mathieu van Woerkom, Lowlands Talk, Frisian, History, http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/index.php?page=frisian). In 734AD the Franks were finally victorious over the Frisians to the West of the Lauwers and incorporated them into their Kingdom. The areas to the East of the Lauwers remained independent in conjunction with the Saxons until the Saxons themselves were finally conquered by the Franks in 804 (Halbertsma, H. (1982), Frieslands Oudheid, Pages 791-796, www.dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/arts/1982/h.halbertsma/Halbertsma.PDF). This was the beginning of a process which saw the Frisian language and dialects disappearing or
converting slowly to respectively Lower Franconian speech (in what is today the Netherlandic provinces of North-and South Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht and the Belgian province of West-Flanders) and Low Saxon speech (in the Northern part of the Netherlandic province of Groningen, and in the German area of East Friesland, Buthjadingen, Wursten, Stadland in the German state of Lower Saxony, Eiderstedt and the islands of Pellworm and Nordstrand in Sleswick-Holsten (Reinhard F. Hahn & Mathieu van Woerkom, Lowlands Talk, Frisian, History, http://www.lowlands-l.net/talk/eng/index.php?page=frisian ). However, traces of the Old Frisian speech remain in the present day dialects in these areas (see chapter 11.3). Authentic Frisian speech only survived in the present Netherlandic province of Fryslan, in the remote and inaccessible Saterland in Lower Saxony and in the northern part of the present district of North Friesland in Sleswick-Holsten.

Nevertheless, Old Frisian initially established itself as a written language in what is nowadays the province of Fryslan in 11th century as this area was almost inaccessible and the Franconian rulers were never able to establish proper feudal rule over the area. The first setbacks for the Frisian language in Fryslan appeared with the establishment of the rule Albrecht of Saxony in 1498 which also is marked generally as the end of Frisian liberty and the arrival of Dutch as administrative language. With the beginning of the 80 year war culminating in the independence of the Netherlands after the peace of Munster in 1648, the Dutch language became increasingly dominant as the language of the Netherlandic republic and effectively replaced Frisian as a written and official language in Fryslan itself (J. Popkema: Grammatica Fries, Korte geschiedenis van (het gebruik van) het Fries, Utrecht 2006, ISBN-10: 9027432074). Another important stepping stone for establishing the Dutch language dominance was the bible translation into Dutch in 1637 which had a similar effect of diminishing the status of Frisian as had the High German bible translation on the status of Low Saxon (source!!!!).

In North Friesland and the Saterland, Low Saxon was traditionally used for written and official correspondence until Low Saxon was replaced by standard German in the 17th century (see chapter 11.1). Danish also had a certain status as a written language since North Friesland formed a part of the Duchy of Sleswick which, in turn, was a Danish fief and it has regained an official status since it is recognized as an officially minority language throughout Southern Sleswick (see chapter 5.1.4.).

The modern Frisian language and its dialects differ significantly and to such an extent that the three main branches: Frisian in Fryslan, Saterfrisian and North Frisian are not interchangeable. While Frisian in Fryslan is relatively uniform, North Frisian again splits into 11 dialects which are often also not intelligible, in particular between the islands and the mainland (Bo Sjölin: Einführung in das Friesische, Stuttgart, 1969, pages 41/42/43).

The official status of Frisian in the Netherlands is that of an official minority language recognized according to 1. part III of the ECRML since 1998 although it had already an officially status in the province of Fryslan previously. In contrast to North Frisian, a written standard exists for Frisian in Fryslan and this standard is used for official and educational purposes. Despite the recognition, Frisian is surprisingly absent in official announcements, either written or verbal (e.g. when stations are announced on local train services) and when written Frisian appears it is often on private initiative. Outside the province of Fryslan no official
documents in Frisian are available by e.g. the Dutch government, even on multilingual announcement boards at e.g. airports, museums or main train stations, Frisian is absent, thus it does not have the status as a second official language and only the one of a minority language in the Netherlands. The number of Frisian speakers in the Netherlands is currently estimated at about 480 000 of which 350 000 are estimated to have learned it as the mother tongue (Ried fan de fryske beweging: Oer it Frysk, De Fryske taal, http://fryskebeweging.nl/oer-it-frysk/de-taal/).

While it is still the first language in rural environments, it is rare to hear Frisian spoken in urban environments and besides standard Dutch a hybrid dialect of Frisian and Dutch called “Stadsfrysks” can be heard.

Frisian lessons have become mandatory through provincial law for about 1 hour per week in all schools in the province (Peter Tiersma: What is Frisian, 1.3.3. The status of Frisian, http://www.languageandlaw.org/FRISIAN/FRISIAN.HTM) and Omrop Fryslân, the regional tv-and radio station, broadcasts news and other programs exclusively in Frisian (Omrop Fryslân, Oer de Omrop, http://www.omropfryslan.nl/jierferslach). The Fryske Akademy in Ljouwert / Leeuwarden is the research centre of Fryslân as an enterprising institute carrying out scientific research in the fields of the Frisian language, culture, history and society (www.fryske-akademy.nl).

10.2.1. Frisian In North Friesland

The realization that the North Frisians formed a distinctive ethnic group began around 1840 when Christian Feddersen issued a program for the Frisian language and a Frisian movement called “Five words to the North Frisians”. However, the movement was quickly embroiled into the Sleswick-Holsten conflict and was forced to choose between the autonomous minded Sleswick-Holsten rebels and protagonists for a Denmark down to the Eider (which would then include North Friesland) by most choosing to support the Sleswick-Holsten side. Once it became clear that an autonomous Sleswick-Holsten was not feasible those North Frisians supporting the Sleswick-Holsten movement resigned to accept German-Prussian dominance and searched for a way to maintain their Frisian identity within a German national state. As a consequence of the disastrous results of World War I for the German Empire, a greater number of North Frisians promoted closer association to Denmark and to Northern Europe as a whole and founded the “Friesisch-Schleswigscher Verein” which also agitated for incorporating North Friesland into Denmark. But the subsequent referendum in those districts which were included into the plebiscite area resulted in a clear majority for remaining in Germany. Nevertheless, this movement re-established and strengthened the view that the North Frisians are a separate group closely associated to Northern Europe and the Frisians in the Netherlands and in Eastern Friesland (Steensen, Thomas: The Frisians in Schleswig-Holstein, History of the Frisian Movement, Nordfriisk Instituut, Bräist/Bredstedt, 1994, page 18, ISBN 3-38007-216-7).

The Frisian language and its dialects have never had any status within North Friesland until recently despite first attempts to introduce some Frisian classes in schools at the beginning of the 20th century. But those were mere concessions which virtually disappeared again after the Nazi take over in 1933. Not until the end of the World War II and the collapse of the German Empire
did any recognition take place and even the newly founded state of Sleswick-Holsten as part of the Federal Republic of Germany only reluctantly recognized the North Frisians as an ethnic group in their own right. From embryonic beginnings the North Frisian institute was established, and more prominence of Frisian was given at school, in particular in the newly founded Danish schools in North Friesland. Sharing the same fate as those Danish minded Sleswickers south of the 1921 border, they began working more closely together. With the support of the Danish School Association the “Frasch Schölj” in Risum was set up were Frisian is the predominant language of the classroom since the 1950s (Steensen, Thomas: The Frisians in Schleswig-Holstein, School, page 21/22, Nordfriisk Instituut, Bräist/Bredstedt, 1994, ISBN 3-38007-216-7). When the German minded Nordfriesischer Verein finally supported a petition to promote the separate status of Frisian together with the Danish minded Frisians they eventually succeeded in having Frisian also recognized by the new Sleswick-Holsten constitution of 1990. In 1992 they were also recognized as a minority group in accordance to part III of the European Charta of Regional and Minority Languages and the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). Bilingual place names boards at railway stations and at road signpost were permitted in 1997 and have been introduced in may North Frisian municipalities making Frisian more visible in the public domain (Nils Århammar (Bredstedt/Flensburg): Das Nordfriesische, eine bedrohte Minderheitsprache in zehn Dialekten: eine Bestandsaufnahme, 2007, http://www.opus.ub.uni-erlangen.de/opus/volltexte/2008/952/pdf/IZD_Arhammar_Das_Nordfriesische.pdf, page 20).

However, all this could not stop the decline of the language, from about 20000 speakers out of a population of 60000 in 1900 it declined to an anticipated 10000 in 1976 and estimates from 2007 see the numbers as being as low as 5000 remaining speakers in North Friesland (Nils Århammar (Bredstedt/Flensburg): Das Nordfriesische, eine bedrohte Minderheitsprache in zehn Dialekten: eine Bestandsaufnahme, 2007, http://www.opus.ub.uni-erlangen.de/opus/volltexte/2008/952/pdf/IZD_Arhammar_Das_Nordfriesische.pdf, page 22). Currently the Frisian language still survives in the areas of Wiedingharde, Bökingharde, North Goesharde, Middle Goesharde, the Hallingen, and the islands of Föhr, Amrum and Sylt (Nils Århammar (Bredstedt/Flensburg): Das Nordfriesische, eine bedrohte Minderheitsprache in zehn Dialekten: eine Bestandsaufnahme, 2007, http://www.opus.ub.uni-erlangen.de/opus/volltexte/2008/952/pdf/IZD_Arhammar_Das_Nordfriesische.pdf, page 11). While traditionally Frisian substituted their own language with Low Saxon there is nowadays a clear tendency towards standard German. Standard German has become the predominant language in almost all matters of daily life in North Friesland and thus, even Low Saxon has shared the same fate as Frisian in its decline. (see also 11.1.). An exception forms the small area to the north of the present day Danish-German border just south of the town of Tønder were Frisian has been replaced by Southern Jutish dialects (B. Siewertsen, Friserne – vore glemte foraeldre, Slot Forlag, 2004, ISBN: 877-90476-08-5, Dutch translation: Friezen in het gebied rond Tønder, http://www.dedeensefriezen.nl/?De_Friezen_in_Zuid-Jutland:Friezen_in_het_gebied_rond_T%F8nder ).

In contrast to the situation in the Dutch Fryslan, the North Frisians do not have a TV- and radio station entirely dedicated to Frisian broadcasting, some Frisian programs are currently provided
by the local “Welle Nord” of the Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) but does usually not amount to more than 1 hour on Wednesdays (NDR 1 Welle Nord Archiv, Friesisch für alle, http://www.ndr.de/wellenord/sendungen/binnenland_und_waterkant/friesischarchiv2.html ). On the island of Föhr (Feer) a partly Frisian speaking local radio station was established in 2010 called “FriiskFunk” and broadcasts daily between 8.00 and 9.00 (FriiskFunk, Westküste FM, http://www.oksh.de/sh/machen/projekte/friiskfunk/friiskfunk.php#7652a1 ). Frisian articles occasionally appear in the local German newspaper SHZ and the Danish minority newspaper Flensborg Avis on an irregular basis. Just like the De Frysk Akademy in Ljouwert / Leeuwarden (http://www.fryske-akademy.nl), the Nordfriisk Instituut located in Bräist / Bredstedt coordinates North Frisian cultural events and is responsible for scientific linguistic research and also maintains a library (http://www.nordfriiskinstituut.de/).

For Saterland Frisian the situation is even more precarious than for North Frisian since the amount of speakers only amounts to about 2000, of which half of them are reported to be native speakers (Bo Sjölin: Einführung in das Friesische, Stuttgart, 1969, page69). Sater Frisian is the last remnant of East Frisian and appears to have survived due to its isolated location in comparison with the rest of Eastern Friesland (Bo Sjölin: Einführung in das Friesische, Stuttgart, 1969, page 3) However, Saterland Frisian is, as is the case with North Frisian, under immense pressure of Standard German and due to the small number of speakers regarded as an endangered language. It has been recognized as a minority language by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Lower Saxony state government in accordance to part III of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages in 1992 (Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur: Niederdeutsch und Saterfriesisch, http://www.mwk.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=6406&article_id=18876&_psmand=19 ) and bilingual road signs for the place names have been introduced. Apart from a few websites in Saterfrisian (for example http://www.stuuns.com/) no other Saterlandic media outlets as e.g. public radio broadcasts appear to exist.

10.3. Lower Franconian – “Dutch”

The term “Franconian” refers to the Franks, a Germanic group which appeared to have settled originally to the right bank of the Rhine who then exploited the increasing weakness of Roman rule on the left bank of the Rhine and eventually became the rulers of an area covering most of what was “Gaul” in Roman times (now France), the present states of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg and large parts of what is now Germany. Some Franconian tribes already settled on the left bank of the Rhine before the collapse of Roman rule and were recognized as a kingdom by the Romans in the 4th century, referred to as Salian Franks (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen: Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 51). After the Franks established themselves as rulers over Gaul they were able to expand their rule to include the right bank of the Rhine and become rulers of the Frisians and Saxons and eventually the successors of the Roman Empire in 800 when Charlemagne was declared Roman Emperor by pope Leo III. With the expansion of Franconian power the Franconian language also penetrated the left bank of the Rhine deep into Gaul (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen: Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 51). However, while closer to the
Rhine they formed a majority of the population and were able to assimilate those remaining Gauls and Romans, but they were more thinly spread further south and west until they eventually only formed a small ruling upper class. During this process a linguistic border was established dividing the Franconian Empire into Franconian speaking and Romanic speaking. This linguistic border ran originally from the port of Etaples on the Channel via Bethune and Lille (Marijke van der Wal & Cor van Bree: Geschiedenis van het Nederlands, Houten, 2008, ISBN: 978 90 491 0011 7, page 59: 8. De taalgrens) then along the present official linguistic divide of Belgium and to the west of the present Duchy of Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine into Switzerland (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, page 52, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9, pages 230/231).

The increase of power also spread Franconian speech further South and East. The border of Franconian speech to the south-east was eventually formed by the so called Eastern and Southern Franconian dialects which stretched as far as the city of Nuremberg bordering Bavaria and the Kraichgau including the city of Karlsruhe bordering the Alemance dialects. To the East it bordered Thuringian and to the North-East Franconian speech bordered Low Saxon, roughly from north of the city of Kassel along the Rothaargebirge towards Gummersbach and then northwards towards the IJsselmeer (former Zuiderzee) until it reaches the Eem estuary near Bunschoten on the IJsselmeer in the Netherlands. Today the Hollandic dialects are also categorized as (Lower-) Franconian but here, as is the case in Zeeland and West-Flanders, it is overlaying older Ingveonic speech (Kusthollands) similar to Frisian and Low Saxon, so Franconian speech has effectively spread from the core area south of what is nowadays the “Groote Rivieren” (The large rivers) of the Rhine estuary to Holland, Zeeland and West-Flanders (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen: Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 54).

After the death of Charlemagne’s successor Louis the Pius the Empire was divided under his three sons into an Eastern, a Middle and Western part. When Lothar, the ruler of the Middle part (Lotharingia, today Lorraine/Lothringen) died his part was divided by the other two rulers and the Eastern Franconian ruler Otto I renamed it to the Holy Roman Empire in 962 to emphasize the inheritance of the Roman Empire and Christian values (see also chapter 7.).

By then the second Germanic sound shift (High German shift) had influenced Southern and Eastern Franconian speech considerably while gradually becoming less evident further to the North West until it reached the so called Uerdingen line. Northwards of that linguistic divide line no High German sound shift occurred. In between the speech changes gradually, sometimes along major isoglosses such as:

- The so called Speyer line, a linguistic line which divides the Upper German dialects from the Middle German dialects and runs roughly South-East of the present day German federal states of Rhineland-Palatine and Hessen and divides Middle from Upper (Southern and Eastern) Franconian.

- The Vinx-line which divides dorf from dorp (village, old English: Thorpe)
The Benrath Line running from the East of Eupen to the South of Gummersbach which divides machen from maken (make) and is usually seen as the division between Lower Franconian speech and Middle Franconian.

The major dialect groups constitute from the South-East to the North-West:

- Eastern Franconian (including the cities of Nuremberg and Würzburg in nowadays Bavaria)
- Southern Franconian (incl. the city of Karlsruhe in nowadays Baden-Württemberg)
- Palatinate
- Hessian
- Moselle-Franconian (including Luxembourgish, now official national language in the Duchy of Luxembourg)
- Ripuarian (including the Cologne and Aachen dialect)
- Lower Franconian, including Limburgish, Brabantish, Lower Bergish, Flemish and Hollandish.

The first records of written Franconian stem from the Carolingian period in the 9th century but are only sporadic since many documents have been lost. One of the few Lower Franconian texts which remain are the “Wachtendonckse psalmen” from the 10th century, held in Lower Rhine Franconian written by a monk from the area between Venlo and Krefeld. When Carolingian promotion of using Franconian for written documents ceased after Charlemagne's death, almost all written records from that period onwards were written in Latin (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, page 75, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9). Around 1150 documents written in local language slowly re-appear and show regional character, one of the first literary works in Lower Franconian is Hendrik van Veldeke’s “Sint-Servaas” from around 1170 written in a Limburgish-Brabantic variant of Lower Franconian. Around 1250 several Lower Franconian literature texts appear from Flanders such as “Van den Vos Reynaerde” and the lyricist Jacob van Marlant from Bruges became famous during that period (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen: Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 79/80).

Written Lower Franconian in medieval times was not uniform and several regions had developed their own standard reflecting the local dialects and usage. For example, Limburg and the Lower Rhine area had their own written standard since medieval times which they shared with the Cologne-Bonn-Aachen area, although with local variation (dtv-atlas zur deutschen Sprache, page 97). However, the differences between the Lower Franconian and middle-Franconian Ripuarian dialects became more and more apparent at this early stage. While the written standard in Limburg and the Lower Rhine was influenced by Brabant, in and around Cologne middle-German characteristics were increasingly noticeable instead. This standard, which some call “Rhine-Maaslandic” (R. Steger) is still reflected in the spelling of local place names such as the oi (Korschenbroich, Oirschot), eu (Rheurdt, Leuth, Euskirchen), uy (Vluyn), ui (Duisburg,
Gruissem), ae (Kevelaer, Raeren, Baexem), etc. Other early standards were Brabantic, Flemish and Hollandic. Altogether these standards were comprehensible to a wider area which also included the Low Saxon writing area and Rhine-Maaslandic was subsequently used in communication with the cities of the Hanseatic League. Thus, a letter written in Lübeck Low Saxon standard was comprehensible in Nijmegen and vice-a-versa (Lübecker Stadtbuch 1450 – 1469, Burgermeister, scepen ende rait der stat van Nymegen, 1467).

However, that did not work with Middle and Upper German speaking areas to the south East, including the originally Franconian areas which adopted a different standard, developing into what is nowadays standard (High-) German. The terms “Nederlandsch” (1550) and “Nederduits” (1581, as in the Antwerp scholar Peter de Heuiter’s “Nederduitse Orthographie”) began to appear to describe the language recognizing a difference with standard (High-) German (Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 115). This difference was also acknowledged in Middle-English by describing the languages of the South as “High Dutch” and in the North as “Low Dutch” reflecting also the fact that the Low Dutch speakers where mainly living in the Northern lowlands while the High Dutch speakers in the uplands further to the South (About.com, German Language: The Pennsylvania Dutch, 2007, http://german.about.com/library/blgermyth07.htm ).

Lower Franconian gained further ground when it spread into the previous Ingveonic-Frisian speaking areas in Holland, Zeeland and West-Flanders which had already begun with the Franconian victory over the Frisians in 785. The Franconian rulers were able to establish their power in Holland, Zeeland and West-Flanders and brought with them the Lower Franconian language. The Franconian rulers promoted dehydration of the swampy grounds, colonization and established new trading cities such as Amsterdam including an influx of traders from Brabant and Flanders, emigrating often for religious reasons. The growing prosperity added further to the manifestation of Low Franconian as the official language. Nevertheless, the Lower Franconian adopted in these areas also displayed its Ingveonic substratum and especially the dialects of coastal fishing villages such as Katwijk or Noordwijk have retained some Ingveonic features to this day (Eric Hoekstra & Harrie Scholtmeijer: The dialects of Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland and Utrecht 2004, Leuvense Bijdragen 93, 77-149. II Noord-Holland, 1.2. Dialecthistorical introduction, http://depot.knaw.nl/5393/1/113DialectsWest.htm ). Only the remote and inaccessible area, which nowadays constitutes the province of Frysian retained proper Ingveonic (Frisian) speech.

While Lower Franconian was able to expand into Holland, Zeeland and West Flanders, it began to loose its position to the East and South-East. The introduction of a cheaper medium for writing (paper) in the 14th century increased documentation and the invention of book-printing by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz around 1445 lead to further distribution of written documentation and literature (dtv-Atlas zur deutschen Sprache, 6. Auflage 1985, pages 85, 95, Deutscher Taschenbuch verlag GmbH & Co. KG., München, ISBN 3-423-3-25-9). Together with political, religious, economic and social-cultural factors, more written standardization was required and the local written varieties slowly adopted more uniform formats or gave up their local standard in favour of a more widespread standard. The latter took place in the Cologne-Bonn-Aachen area during the 16th century. Here, standard German in the form of Luther’s bible translation was introduced in Cologne in 1544 (R. Steger: Genealogische Zusammenstellung der Familie Steger
vom linken Niederrhein, Welcher Sprache bedienten sich unsere Vorfahren am Niederrhein? [http://www.r-steger.de/sprachen.html] and the surrounding areas adopted this standard slowly except those areas which were under control of the Netherlandic Republic (Southern Limburg, The Duchy of Gelderen) and the Habsburgian Southern Netherlands. This was the effective end of the “Rhine-Maaslandic” written standard and when Lower Franconian became more standardized in Holland, Flanders and Brabant, the Habsburgian and Netherlandic controlled areas in Limburg and the Lower Rhine adopted this standard which developed then into modern Dutch. The originally core Lower Franconian duchy of Cleves transferred slowly to Standard German after they came under Brandenburgian-Prussian rule in 1619. However, the areas east of the Maas which formed the Geldrian Upper Quarter (The Upper Quarter remained a part of the Netherlandic Republic until 1714 before it was transferred to Brandenburg-Prussian control as well) retained Dutch until the 19th century. Only when Prussia was granted the Geldrian Upper Quarter again after the 20 years of French-Napoleonic rule in 1815 they began in earnest to “germanize” the last remaining Dutch writing area at the Lower Rhine. A similar process set in for the partially Dutch writing territories of Bentheim, Lingen and East Friesland after they were taken over by the standard-German speaking Kingdom of Hanover in 1815 demanding to abandon Dutch in favour of standard German (Georg Cornelissen: Das Niederländische im preussischen Gelderland und seine Ablösung durch das Deutsche, Bonn, 1986, ISBN 3-7928-0488-3, page 143). Already two centuries earlier the whole of what is nowadays considered as Northern Germany (of which the Kingdom of Hanover formed a part) adopted standard German as the sole official written language thus replacing the Dutch related Low Saxon. In the Lower Rhine, the border between the Netherlandic Republic together with the Habsburgian Netherlands on the one hand and the Brandenburg-Prussian dominated duchy of Cleves-Gulik-Berg and the Geldrian Upper Quarter together with the Arch-Bishopric Cologne, including the cities of Aachen and Cologne, on the other, became an increasingly linguistic and cultural dividing line although the local dialects remained intelligible on both sides of this border until recently. This line effectively forms the present day border between the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Thus, in contrast to the Lower Rhine and Northern Germany, the establishment of the independent Netherlandic Republic in 1648 greatly advanced the use of Low Dutch as official language, at least in the 7 Netherlandic provinces (Holland, Zeeland, Gelderland, Overijssel, Drenthe, Groningen and Friesland). The economic upswing of the new Netherlandic Republic (“The golden century”) even lead to the establishment of overseas colonies in North America (Nieuw Amsterdam), the Caribbean (The Antilles and Suriname) and in South Africa which also spread the Low Dutch language to these areas.

10.3.1. Dutch in Belgium - "Flemish"

The situation in the southern Netherlands remaining under Habsburgian rule was a different one. Here, Lower Franconian as the official and written language was not so much under pressure by standard German but more by French. In the wake of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, French culture particularly influenced those areas close to the Germanic-Romanic linguistic divide and the French language soon became a tool to display elitism much in the same way Standard
German was adapted by the aristocratic and bourgeois elite in Northern Germany. Education was effectively done exclusively in French adding to the social prestige while the uneducated lower classes remained monolingual with Flemish, Brabantic and Limburgish being spoken. Anyone attempting to advance the social ladder was required to learn French and this development was furthered by 20 years of French rule between 1795 and 1815. This resulted in a small but growing French speaking upper class in the southern Netherlandic cities, in particular Brussels, where French speech eventually became dominant in all sectors of daily life. After the French defeat in 1815 the previously southern Netherlands were transferred to the new Kingdom of the Netherlands ruled by Holland’s King Willem I. In an attempt to unify his new country and establish his rule he decreed that Lower Franconian, now called “Nederlands” (Dutch) should be the only official language for all purposes in all Dutch speaking areas, only south of the Germanic-Romanic linguistic border, French would retain an official status. This, in turn, infuriated the urban elite in the Flemish, Brabantic and Limburgish cities who wanted to maintain French as their cultural language and viewed Dutch as inferior, common or rural. The situation culminated at the end of the 1820 when a variety of factors came together and led to a rebellion against the rule of Willem I:

- food shortages caused by bad harvest and mismanagement in Brussels lead the lower classes to rebel against the authorities

- common education rules introduced in 1828 which lead to fears that Northern protestant-Calvinistic values would also become part of the education in the catholic South

- Dutch as the only official language in the Dutch speaking part of the Southern Netherlands

- curbs on the freedom of the media

- The July revolution in Paris in 1830 which forced the French Emperor Charles X to resign as encouragement to rebel against the rule of Willem I

When it became apparent that the Netherlandic military was too weak to suppress the rebellion, the movement demanded complete independence from the Netherlandic Kingdom and the formation of a Belgian state. The troops of King Willem I withdrew from the Southern Netherlands on 26/27 September 1830 and on 1st October 1830 an independent Belgium was declared. (Portal belgium.be., Informatie en Diensten van de Overheid – Belgie vanaf 1830: De Opstand / Het Voorlopig Bewind en het Nationaal Congres, http://www.belgium.be/nl/over_belgie/land/geschiedenis/belgie_vanaf_1830/ontstaan_en_groei/voorlopig_bewind_en_nationaal_congres/).

The new Belgian state immediately restored the position of French in the Dutch speaking areas (“Le gouvernement provisoire”) which effectively also restored the linguistic-social barrier. However, 15 years of Dutch education in Flanders, Brabant and Limburg had created an educated Dutch speaking and writing elite which now was, in turn, dissatisfied with the sole prominence of French as the language of education and prestige. Since the majority of the population in the new Belgian state was still Dutch speaking they began to make demands for conferring an equal status on the French and Dutch languages in Belgium. But progress was slow
to come by because the value of the vote for the Belgian parliament was dependant on the tax return and thus favoured the wealthy French speaking upper classes. A first petition from 1840 ("Vlaams petitionnement") demanded the recognition of Dutch in the administration, the law and education in the Dutch speaking areas but was rejected by the parliament. Only once the election laws were changed in order to have a broader representation in parliament, Dutch-Flemish demands received backing and in 1873 the use of Dutch in law was permitted. In 1898 the "equal status" law was introduced to effectively give Dutch the same official status as French in decreeing that all royal laws would have to be published both in French and Dutch. In practice, that meant that in Flanders all laws were published in both French and Dutch while in the predominantly French speaking parts of Belgium (Wallonia) French retained the status as sole official language.

Despite these changes, French remained the language of prestige in Flanders, Brabant and Limburg and knowledge of French was still required to advance up the social ladder which enhanced French dominance in all aspects of culture, education and official communication. This convinced the Dutch-Flemish activists that more radical measures were necessary to turn the tide and it was viewed as crucial to establish Dutch education to the highest level by transforming the University of Gent from French speaking into Dutch speaking. But only once the election laws were adapted to a single vote and equal value for the general population regardless the tax-return or status of the person in 1919, the Dutch speaking majority in the Belgian population could voice their demands and the transformation of the Flemish universities, respectively Gent and Leuven, began in earnest in the beginning of the 1930s. Language laws were introduced which effectively eliminated the official use of French in Dutch speaking Belgium, the only exception was the Brussels agglomeration which remained officially bilingual and some municipalities located effectively on the linguistic divide line. The linguistic border between French, Dutch (and also German after 1919) speaking Belgium was declared irrevocable in 1963 and a complex language law was introduced regulating the use of languages in Belgium and its regions. From 1970 onwards further steps were introduced to effectively create a federation and Flanders and Wallonia were declared regions with a high degree of autonomy (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen, Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, pages 144-148).

Despite all these regulations, disputes and conflicts remained in particular through the fact that the French speaking population of Brussels spread into the Dutch speaking surroundings of the city in order to find cheaper accommodation. Another subject of dispute was the Eastern municipality of Voeren/Fourons, which was allocated to the Flanders region in 1963 as an exclave surrounded to the south by Wallonia and bordering to the North the Netherlandic province of Limburg, where French speakers temporarily formed a political majority and thus demanded a change of status for the municipality. However, since the Dutch speakers gained a political majority again the issue appears to be resolved for the time being. Further demands for a complete split of Belgium and effective independence for the Flanders region have been voiced but so far have not received the needed support by the majority of the Dutch speaking population and with further European integration this demand might even diminish again in future.

Another aspect of discussion in Dutch speaking Belgian was the question whether to adopt the written standard of the Netherlands or to develop its own spelling system. In particular in West-
Flanders activists attempted to create a separate written standard based on West-Flemish in order to counter a feared influence of Netherlandic Protestantism into catholic Flanders through the Netherlandic Dutch standard. However, by the beginning of the 20th century the use of the Netherlandic standard of Dutch was generally accepted which was seen as a more effective tool to tackle the prestige of the French language. Netherlandic standard Dutch was thereafter confirmed as the official language of the Flanders region by several linguistic contracts between the Netherlands and Belgium concerning the use and development and standardisation of Dutch spelling between 1946 and 1980.

Outside the Netherlands and Belgium this Dutch standard was also taken over by the former Netherlandic colony of Suriname as the official language and it is also in use as such in the Dutch Antilles. In South Africa the Dutch spoken there was developed into a different standard which became known as “Afrikaans” and has official recognition in the South African Union but its popularity has suffered because of its reputation as the main language of the Apartheid-Regime’s oppressors (Guy Janssens en Ann Marynissen, Het Nederlands vroeger en nu, Leuven, 2005, ISBN 90-334-5782-2, page 243).

10.3.2. Dutch at the Lower Rhine

In the meantime, Dutch and Lower Franconian at the Lower Rhine had experienced a different fate, which lead not only to the effective elimination of Dutch as a written language but also to its increasingly marginal existence as a spoken language. Although the dialects at the Lower Rhine are Lower Franconian and thus Dutch in character they were effectively categorized as “Low German dialects” similar to the Low Saxon dialects in Northern Germany and in that sense Dutch on Prussian territory was not regarded as a language in its own right. Just as for Low Saxon in Northern Germany, no official decree was ever issued prohibiting the use of Dutch at the Lower Rhine, however, the use of Low Saxon in official and literary context eventually ceased through a process of in-official discrimination. By regarding Low Saxon as a mere dialect in comparison to Standard German and increasingly denying it cultural value, especially after Luther’s bible translation, the educated and bourgeois classes in Northern Germany rapidly adopted standard German as their written linguistic model. As the educated classes previously used Latin to document their status, they could now use standard German in the same way in Lutheran Northern Germany without appearing disloyal to the Teutonic peoples (see also chapter 11.1.). But from a Low Saxon and Lower Franconian perspective they de facto were disloyal to its speakers, because Standard German was initially incomprehensible to them.

The process to properly “Germanize” the Lower Rhine in earnest began in 1815 after it became a part of the Prussian Rhine-Province. An apparent decree from the small town of Wachtendonk during that period is mentioned by Henrich’s “Geschichte Wachtendonks” (Georg Cornelissen: Das Niederländische im preussischen Gelderland und seine Ablösung durch das Deutsche, Bonn, 1986, ISBN 3-7928-0488-3, page 142) which reads that “all officials and judges are to use the German language”. This decree was probably aimed at the use of French but since it only encourages the use of “German” meaning standard German it was obviously also discouraging
the use of Dutch. This set the context and soon the authorities pressured for all education and eventually all church services to be conducted in standard German only.

An example of a rather subtle and semi official prohibition for the use of Dutch is a letter sent by the Prussian authorities in Düsseldorf to the Bishop of Münster in 1827 which reads: “The promotion of (standard) German lessons in primary schools in the districts of Gelderen, Cleves and Rees is severely disrupted by the fact that the half-Dutch (Hollandic) dialect common in this areas is not only used in civil businesses but also used, in particular, by older priests to conduct religious lessons in it and also preaching in it. Subsequently, schools are required to provide simultaneously lessons in Dutch and Standard German which has a very adverse effect on the spiritual development for these students.” (Helga Bister-Broosen: Niederländisch am Niederrhein, Frankfurt a. M., 1998, page 95, ISBN 3-631-32578-9)

The Catholic Church at the Lower Rhine responded reluctantly and in 1828 a petition was handed in to allow them to maintain Dutch bible lessons, which was granted on a temporary basis, but this did not halt the process of the germanization. Occasionally protests were uttered by local priests, a prominent case was the reluctance of pastor Tilmans in Straelen to preach or teach standard German (Georg Cornelissen: Das Niederländische im preussischen Gelderland und seine Ablösung durch das Deutsche, Bonn, 1986, ISBN 3-7928-0488-3, page 175). In the former Duchy of Gelderen the change from Dutch to Standard German was not abrupt, a transitional period began after the “Encouragement for the use of standard German” was issued and was effectively completed when the last of the old “Dutch” administrators, teachers and priests were pensioned off at the end of the 1830s. From about 1840 onwards Dutch was no longer taught in any schools in the Lower Rhine area. A similar process was “encouraged” concerning the church language; here after 1827 the Germanization was made official through the Bishop of Munster in response to the letter cited above although Dutch church sermons and bible lessons still took place in smaller villages until 1840. Again, as with schooling, once the old priests died or retired, their successors used standard German only from that time onwards.

In the areas which formed part of the Duchy of Cleves the bilingualism of Dutch and standard German was also maintained for a few decades after the establishment of the new Netherlandic-Prussian border in 1815 until the old generation of priests and teachers died or retired. No Dutch teaching or preaching is reported from the former Duchy of Cleves after 1850 (see also chapter 8.1).

As a spoken medium Lower Franconian continued (the famous avant-garde artist Joseph Beuys from Cleves was a native Lower Franconian speaker who described his local dialect as Gelderlands and used it also when visiting the Netherlands (http://www.rheinische-landeskunde.lvr.de/media/ilr/sprache/dialekt/01_Kleve_Beuys.mp3 ), but became increasingly marginalized and seen as an obstacle for social advance in the German state. Thus, through the decades parents attempted to raise their children to speak standard German, although coloured by a Lower Rhenish accent, so that nowadays Lower Franconian is only used domestically by a shrinking older generation. Local heritage organizations are attempting to retain some of it but there is a chance of complete extinction of Lower Franconian at the Lower Rhine in the not too distant future.
Although Dutch appears now to be recognized as a language in its own right in Germany, teaching of Dutch at schools as a foreign language is only available sporadically and restricted to areas close to the present-day Dutch-German border. In March 2011, 152 schools offered Dutch classes in North Rhine-Westphalia with altogether 22898 students. Schools where Dutch lessons are available at the Lower Rhine were located in the districts of Aachen, Heinsberg, Viersen, Cleves, Wesel, Borken, Steinfurt and the city of Krefeld. Notably absent are the district of Neuss and the city of Mönchengladbach (Eurogio Inform, März/Maart 2011, Grenzen der Welt/Grenzen van de Wereld, Liesa Wiesmann, [http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/hausderniederlande/institut/aktuelles/lies_wiesmann_grenzen_der_welt.jpg](http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/hausderniederlande/institut/aktuelles/lies_wiesmann_grenzen_der_welt.jpg)).

The primary school of Kranenburg had set a project for bilingual Dutch-German education in 2009. How much of this project is currently maintained is not clear. It is striking that any reference to the Dutch-Netherlandic heritance of the Lower Rhine is absent in the school’s educational promotion for Dutch. ([Christophorus Schule Kranenburg, Homepage, http://www.gs-kranenburg.de/index.htm](http://www.gs-kranenburg.de/index.htm)). The same is true for the contents of the web-site “Haus der Niederländen” set up by the University of Münster, with no mention of any Dutch heritage in North Rhine-Westphalia at all. However, there is a reference considering the similarities between Dutch and Low Saxon (Plattdeutsch) but here, as is all too often the case, Low Saxon is described as a “German dialect”, thus neglecting its restored official status as a language in its own right which it has received in the meantime and consequently the reference is struggling to deny that Dutch itself may be viewed as a German dialect (Haus der Niederländen, Literatur und Sprache, Niederländisch, Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch, [http://www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/Zentrum/Projekte/Schulprojekt/Lernen/Literatur/70/niederländisch_plattdeutsch.html](http://www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/Zentrum/Projekte/Schulprojekt/Lernen/Literatur/70/niederländisch_plattdeutsch.html)).

However, while there has been an increase of Dutch students in North Rhine-Westphalia while simultaneously there has been a decrease of (standard-) German students in the Netherlands, however, availability of (standard-) German lessons and knowledge of standard German in the Netherlands is certainly still much more widespread than the knowledge of Dutch in North Rhine-Westphalia. The attitude of viewing Dutch as an underdeveloped German dialect still persists, although less then it had been, and it is certainly an obstacle to greater border area integration being promoted by the European Union and so far no serious attempts have been made by North Rhine-Westphalia or Lower Saxony (as German federal states they have complete cultural autonomy which includes the education system and curricula) to change this.

Despite the general view that the dialects of the Lower Rhine and Limburg are both part of Lower Franconian which includes modern Dutch there are still scientific and linguistic works which categorize the one as “German” while the other as “Dutch”. For example, the Dutch linguists Nicoline van der Sijs and Roland Willeyns recognize in “Het Verhaal van het Nederlands – Een geschiedenis van twaalf eeuwen” (The story of Dutch – A story of twelve centuries) the close relationship between the dialect of Krefeld at the Lower Rhine and Venlo in Limburg but nevertheless categorize one as “Nederlands” (Dutch) while the other as “Duits” (German) since either standard Dutch or standard German encompass these two dialects (Nicoline van der Sijs en Roland Willeyns: Het Verhaal van het Nederlands – Een geschiedenis van twaalf eeuwen, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2009, ISBN 978 90 351 3282 5, pages 38/39). But in
reference to the above this view appears by far too simplistic and a relic of the nationalist era. The investigations in the previous chapter of the origins of the terms “Dutch” and “German” demonstrate that these terms are relatively new and can describe different things at different times in different contexts. The consequence is, that it is impossible to categorize the one as a “Dutch” and the other as a “German” dialect. From a linguistic point of view both have to be categorized as Lower Franconian while belonging to the Limburgish sub-branch just as modern Dutch is a sub-branch of Lower Franconian. Why do these two linguists declare one as “Dutch” and the other as “German”? Have the people of Venlo and Krefeld ever had the opportunity to express whether they believe their dialect is to be encompassed by “Dutch” or “German”? No, they found themselves back in one or the other national state to the mercy of greater powers who drew dividing lines which often had their origins in military ceasefires. What Nicoline van der Sijs and Roland Willemyns are attempting is to retain and maintain these dividing lines and declare them as eternal, however recent and irrational they are. If their view holds true then, for example, Latvian would have to be categorized as a Russian dialect during the period when Latvia (forcibly) formed a part of the Soviet Union and Russian was the official language of the Soviet Union, but when the Soviet Union was dissolved and Latvia declared independence, Russian lost its official status in Latvia and Latvian gained the status of sole official state language. How does this fit into their grouping? Thus, Nicoline van der Sijs’s and Roland Willemyns’s categorizations have to be rejected.

A recent development is the recognition of a somewhat separate status for the Lower Franconian dialects which form a transition to the Middle-German Ripuarian dialects, commonly regarded now as Limburgish. The emphasis of the movement is based on the Netherlandic province of Limburg where Limburgish has been granted the status of a regional language (Dutch: streektaal) and receives protection under chapter II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages since 1997. Bilingual place-name and street-name (Maastricht) signs displaying both the Dutch official name and the Limburgish version below have been introduced throughout the province of Limburg which gives Limburgish a somewhat special status indeed (Streektaal.net: Taal in Nederland - Limburgs: Korte Introductie, http://taal.phileon.nl/lim_intro.php). As the transitional Lower Franconian dialects (Limburgish) are traditionally also spoken in Belgian Limburg and the Lower Rhine area of North Rhine-Westphalia, these areas should also have the right to claim a similar status, but no such recognition has been achieved so far in Belgian Limburg and North Rhine-Westphalia. Nevertheless, the Belgian regional government of (officially French-speaking) Wallonia has recognized Limburgish legally and politically as a separate language but such recognition was withheld by the Belgian federal government (Stiching Limbögische Academie: Limburgs - Juridische Status, http://www.limburgs.org/nl/limburgs/juridische-status) while in North Rhine-Westphalia so far no attempt has been made for any kind of recognition of Lower Franconian.

In the transitional Lower Franconian area which forms a part of the Lower Rhine not only is standard German increasingly replacing Lower Franconian as the general and common language, the southern most dialects in Düsseldorf, Neuss and Kaarst have been affected by increasing inroads of Ripuarian in the last century. Although the grammar and expressions have retained their Lower Franconian character, the High-German consonant shift has spread to this area, namely in the form of shifting “t” to “ts” or “s”. In the village of Büttgen, just north of the Benrath line (dividing Dutch and Low Saxon from High German). The Lower Rhine linguist
Theodor Frings attested a t-sound in words such as “vertell” (tell), “twei” (two) or “water” (water) in 1913 (Th. Frings, Studien zur Dialektforschung des Niederrheins zwischen Düsseldorf und Aachen, Marburg, 1913). They appear to have shifted to “vertsäll”, “tswei” and “wasser” in 1985 according to the local historians Jakob Nilges and Norbert Drueke (Jakob Nilges, Norbert Drueke: Bütigen und seine Mundart I, St. Sebastianus-Schützenbruderschaft Bütigen, Niederrhein Verlag, Kaarst, 1985). The original t-sound in words such as “salt” or “holt” (wood) appears to have shifted to “salts” and “holts” already between 1880 and 1913 since the linguist Wencker recorded “salt” in Bütgen in 1880 (Georg Wenkers: Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reichs, 1888-1923 handgezeichnet von Emil Maurmann, Georg Wenker und Ferdinand Wrede, Marburg: Forschungszentrum Deutscher Sprachatlas 2001ff, Digitaler Wenker-Atlas (DiWA), http://www.diwa.info/titel.aspx ) whereas Frings recorded “salts” in 1913 but despite that, some place- and fieldnames have retained the original “t” such as “Werret” (from “Wehr-holz”, Eduard Klüber: Bütgen, Flurnamen und ihre Bedeutung, St. Sebastianus-Schuetzenbruderschaft Buettgen, Wenger, Kaarst, 1982). The Lower Franconian dialect of Düsseldorf had long ago adopted a “ts” sound in words such as “salt” or “holt” (wood) but it retained the “t” in the city’s district name of “Holthausen, just to the north of Benrath which is already Ripuarian speaking. Thus, the process which once started much further south some 1500 years ago and became the High-German consonant shift was still on-going in this area until recently and, here, not as a consequence of adoption of standard German.

10.4. Danish in South Sleswick

The Danish language was originally part of what is called the “Nordic” Languages together with the other modern Nordic languages Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Faeroese, all of them categorized as “Northern Germanic”. The first examples of written Nordic were runes starting around 200 AD and the language appearing in those runes can be described as common Nordic since almost no dialectical differences appear. Differences between Eastern Nordic and Western Nordic appear during the Viking age between 800 and 1100 with Danish belonging to the Eastern branch. During that period Christianity began to influence the Scandinavian culture and with it the Latin language. Latin script was introduced to write Danish and started to appear increasingly as e.g. in the Jutish Law (Jyske Lov) from 1241 which also applied to Sleswick but for a while Latin and Runic script were used side-by-side. In medieval times the Low Saxon language, introduced from what is nowadays Northern Germany influenced Danish considerably through church and the powerful Hanseatic trading league and was also often used for administrative purposes beside Latin and Danish (Københavns Universitetet: Sproghistorie - Jernalder og vikingetid 200-800/Vikingetid og tidlig middelalder 800-1100/Middelalder 1100-1550, http://dialekt.ku.dk/sproghistorie/ ). This was particularly the case in the Holsten (which was part of the Holy Roman Empire) bordering Duchy of Sleswick. Danish in the form of Southern Jutish was spoken in Sleswick down to an approximate line Eider-Dannevirke-Eckernförde, south of it Low Saxon was dominant from early on with large parts of the
immediate border area also being uninhabited (see chapter 4.). In the South-West of Sleswick, Frisian was spoken in what is nowadays the German district of North Friesland. Nevertheless, Danish place names can be found as far south as a line Lunden-Wrohm-Nübbel-Emkendorf-Wrohe-Kiel suggesting a mixed area in Southern Sleswick stretching as far as the northern parts of Holsten (see chapter 4.1.). When in the wake of the Hanseatic expansion cities were founded in Sleswick numerous had their first city laws published in Danish such as in Haderslev in 1284, Flensborg in 1292 and Åbenrå in 1335. The city of Sleswick had laws published in Latin in 1241 and Tønder in 1243. Initially, most rural and clerical laws were translated from Latin into Danish but when in 1386 the Duchy of Sleswick was passed to the Holsten dynasty of the Schauenburger, Low Saxon speaking administration began to superseed Danish (Southern Jutish) in Sleswick. In 1431 the city laws of Flensborg were translated into Low Saxon, in Åbenrå in 1435 and in Haderslev in 1440. The city of Sleswick translated its city laws already around 1400 into Low Saxon directly from Latin (Besch, Werner; Betten, Anne; Reichmann, Oskar; Sonderegger, Stefan: Sprachgeschichte. 4. Teilband, page 3384, Walter de Gruyter, 1 Jan 2004, ISBN: 978-3-11-019429-6). Subsequently, around 1440 the whole Duchy of Sleswick had adopted Low Saxon as its administrative language but Danish remained as the church language in Northern Sleswick using the Danish bible translation from 1550 which then was also used for education. But South of a line from Tønder towards the north of Flensborg, Low Saxon was also used as church and educational language due to the fact that the Northern part of Sleswick received their local priests from Danish speaking priest schools in Haderslev, Ribe or Odense whereas the districts to the south received their priests from the priest school of the city of Sleswick which used Low Saxon as the educational language (Lars Hennigsen: Under Danmark, Sydslesvigs Danske Historie, Flensborg 2009, ISBN 9788789178752, page 22). Once Low Saxon began losing its prestige (see chapter 11.1.) it became replaced by standard German as administrative, educational and church language in Sleswick, the administrative language shift to standard German took place in Flensborg between 1567 and 1616, in the city of Sleswick around 1600, in Haderslev between 1605 and 1653 and in Tønder in 1613. Consequently the church language became standard German as well, as was the case in Flensborg between 1660 and 1670 (Besch, Werner; Betten, Anne; Reichmann, Oskar; Sonderegger, Stefan: Sprachgeschichte. 4. Teilband, page 3384/3385, Walter de Gruyter, 1 Jan 2004, ISBN: 978-3-11-019429-6).

Danish in the form of Southern Jutish also began to retreat as a spoken language. The rural areas in Southern Sleswick down to the city of Sleswick were still Southern Jutish speaking by the end of the 18th century but standard German was the language of the church and education which made many families south of the line Tønder-Flensborg switch from speaking Southern Jutish domestically to Low Saxon (which was more closely related to standard German than Southern Jutish) in order to make it easier for their children to follow school after general schooling in standard German was introduced in the 19th century. This, in turn, lead to Southern Jutish disappearing almost entirely from Southern Sleswick with the exception of the Skovlund district, and Low Saxon, although discriminated itself by the standard German speaking upper class, becoming a stepping stone for the germanization of Southern Sleswick (Lars Hennigsen: Under Danmark, Sydslesvigs Danske Historie, Flensborg 2009, ISBN 9788789178752, page 24). An exception was the city of Flensborg which was given a separate status because Danish and Standard German were both recognized and the population could choose to either have Danish or Standard German as their educational and church language (Lars N. Hennigsen: Under Danmark, Sydslesvigs Danske Historie, Flensborg, 2009, ISBN 978-87-89178-2, page 39). This status was
abolished once Sleswick as a whole was incorporated into the Prussian state after 1867 and standard German was made the only official language for the whole of Sleswick.

This lead to protests in Northern Sleswick and through pressure from France’s emperor Napoleon III a provision was agreed that Northern Sleswick should receive the right to re-join Denmark through a plebiscite. But after Napoleon III lost the Prussian-French war in 1871 he had to abdicate and the provision was ignored by the Prussian authorities ever since (see chapter 5.1.). In Northern Sleswick the use of Danish was more and more curtailed and culminated in the education laws from 1888 which effectively allowed only German as language of education in all situations. Danish private schools were prohibited already in 1878 closing this loophole as well. Simultaneously the business language law of 1876 allowed only the use of Standard German, a similar law was introduced for court language in 1878. The use of Danish as a church language was not restricted but the use German was promoted by the authorities and finally also dictated by basic regulations for church services in 1901. Finally, the Imperial Association law (“Reichsvereinsgesetz”) included a decree which dictated the use of standard German in all assemblies (Rene Rasmussen: Under Preussen, 1864-1945, I hagekorsets skygge 1933-1945, ISBN 978-87-89178-2, page 79). In Flensborg the use of Danish also became increasingly curtailed and Danish almost vanished but never disappeared totally from the city of Flensborg since the little Heligaandskirken in the centre of Flensborg has retained Danish as church language from 1588 until today (Lars Hennigsen: Under Danmark, Sydslesvigs Danske Historie, Flensborg 2009, ISBN 9788789178752, page 21).

When the German Empire (of which Sleswick became a part in 1871 through the annexation by Prussia in 1867) lost WWI in 1918 the calls for a plebiscite about Sleswick’s future re-appeared and the post-war German government agreed to a plebiscite being held in 1920. The result was that Northern Sleswick voted to return to become a part of Denmark while Southern Sleswick voted by majority to remain within Germany. In 1921 the northern part of Sleswick became a part of Denmark and Danish became the official language there again, in Southern Sleswick Danish was recognized reluctantly but eventually as a minority language, schools with Danish as language of instruction were established (see chapter 6.1). Official recognition for Danish was granted by the Sleswick-Holsten constitution of 1990 and Danish, alongside German, Frisian and Low Saxon have official status in Sleswick-Holsten, and it received protection under part III of the ECRML (European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992) and the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) as is also described in detail in chapter 6.1. Linguistically, Danish in the form of Southern Jutish is still maintained by the older generation in the Skovlund (Schafflund) district to the west of Flensborg whereas Danish used in Southern Sleswick in general is standard Danish but with a distinctive Southern Sleswick flavour. However, pressure by standard German in its spoken form has become so strong that even in institutions of the Danish minority such as Danish sport-clubs it is often the de-facto language of communication (see chapter 6.1.).

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