



Narrativity in Naval Logbooks. Michiel de Ruyter and the Narrative Function of Verb Variation¹

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Abstract. In the seventeenth-century Dutch navy, low-born men who were practically trained found themselves able to climb the social and professional ladder from ordinary sailors to celebrated naval officers. Perhaps the best-known example is Michiel de Ruyter (1607–1676). This article examines how De Ruyter employed his modest writing skills in his obligatory ships' logbooks to report to the Dutch government. Applying a narratological perspective to his factual recounting of naval events, I argue that De Ruyter's linguistic variation represents a strategy he employed to articulate and foreground certain events within a larger narrative discourse. The focus here is on verbs as a key means to create a sense of eventfulness. De Ruyter's logbooks are characterised by a simple style typically lacking in verbs. The mere presence of a verb thus not only helps describe but also draws attention to a particular event. In addition, De Ruyter varied his verbs as a way to make significant naval, political, or meteorological events meaningful to his readers on land.

Keywords. Michiel de Ruyter; naval ships' logbooks; scheepsjournalen; narrativity, narrativiteit; verb variation; werkwoordvariatie

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Introduction

This article explores the narrative strategies of meaning-making evident in the official naval ships' logbooks kept by one of the best-known seafarers in Dutch history, Michiel de Ruyter (1607–1676).² In recent years, early modern travel accounts have received valuable scholarly attention.³ In their search to construct accounts of the weather of past eras, historical climatologists have described the professional content and formal characteristics of significant historical ships' logbook collections, including naval logbooks.⁴ The scholarly fascination with early modern problems involving truth and facts, furthermore, has led cultural historians and literary scholars to study the conditions of credibility in early modern (official) travel literature; whilst the European discovery of the New World spurred the practice of systematic observation directed towards lands, people, and resources, concurrent questions arose concerning the credibility of such travel documents. Studies by Barbara Shapiro, Andrea Frisch, and Daniel Carey, amongst others, argue that early travel writers – also known as 'travel liars' – strategically presented their observations as truthful facts.⁵ These studies touch upon a topic that will be investigated here: the significant role of language use in the reporting of travel observations.

The aforementioned studies show that, in addition to prefatory materials that rejected falsehood and fiction on the one hand, and assured the reader of the text's trustworthiness based on the observer's social respectability, status, and/or expertise on the other hand, language and style became equally important to the enhancement of credibility.⁶ For example, instead of writing impersonal accounts, travel writers presented themselves as eyewitnesses, adopting the first person (both singular 'I' and plural 'we') and the verb 'to see'. These eyewitnesses, moreover, narrated what they saw

² De Ruyter's naval ships' logbooks are archived at the National Archive, The Hague, Collection De Ruyter, 1.10.72, inv. nr 1–23. Hereafter, quotations from the individual logbooks are referred to by date and year.

³ The characterization of travel literature as a genre is problematic due to variations in style, tone, organization, and form (e.g. handwritten or printed); see William H. Sherman, 'Stirrings and searchings (1500–1720)', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 17–36 (p. 30). However, the case of Columbus shows that printed and handwritten accounts, as well as official and public travel narratives, should not be studied in isolation; Columbus himself promised a report of his journey in no less than three different formats in order to please different audiences (see Margaret Schotte, 'Expert Records: Nautical Logbooks from Columbus to Cook', *Information & Culture* 48, no. 3 [2013], 281–322, pp. 281–82). It may thus be helpful to use results from printed travel accounts in studies on handwritten documents, and vice versa.

⁴ See for example R. García-Herrera, C. Wilkinson, F. B. Koek, M. R. Prieto, N. Calvo, and E. Hernández, 'Description and General Background to Ships' Logbooks as a Source of Climatic Data', *Climatic Change* 73 (2005), 13–36, as part of the project 'Climatological Database for the World's Oceans 1750–1850' (<https://webs.ucm.es/info/cliwoc/>).

⁵ Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact. England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures. UNC Department of Romance Languages, 2004); Daniel Carey, 'The problem of credibility in early modern travel', *Renaissance Studies* 33, no. 4 (2019), 524–47.

⁶ Shapiro, p. 70; Carey, p. 534; Frisch, p. 81. Rhetorical devices were also increasingly applied in other branches of travel literature, e.g. by mapmakers. See for example Surekha Davies, *Renaissance ethnography and the invention of the human: new worlds, maps and monsters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 2.

in chronological-temporal order or employed prescribed sets of categories such as weather, positional information, etc.⁷ In so doing, their travel accounts became ‘readily labelled “matters of fact”’.⁸

To expand on the linguistic knowledge gained from previous research on early modern travel writing – and on English and French travel documents in particular – this article examines Michiel de Ruyter’s naval logbooks from a narratological perspective. Doing so adds to our understanding of early modern travel literature both theoretically and historically. Considering the theoretical framework, previous studies dealing with the language of travel literature have typically approached these writings as legal discourses and thus have analysed the rhetoric of credibility employed by travellers-as-eyewitnesses, as explained above.⁹ The present article instead interprets De Ruyter’s ships’ logbooks as a narrative discourse.¹⁰ This narrative approach not only results in an analysis of new linguistic material – i.e. verbal markers, see below – but also allows for the exploration of new aspects of travel writing. Rather than examining (as would follow from a legal approach) the rhetoric of credibility, this article aims to shed light upon the narratological process of meaning-making in De Ruyter’s factual accounts.

This shift from the rhetorical issues of credibility to the narratological strategies of meaning-making is necessary if we are to understand the practice of logbook keeping by members of the seventeenth-century Dutch navy, and by Michiel de Ruyter in particular. Unlike the early explorers, naval officers like De Ruyter hardly ever caused the issue of credibility to arise. In general, it was believed that captains were making and reporting reliable observations, which scarcely ever prompted questions concerning their truth.¹¹ Far from describing the world’s marvels and rarities, naval logbooks of the era are instead filled with professionally relevant information about human and natural events, including weather, conflicts aboard the ship, encounters with enemies, etc.¹² On shore,

⁷ See also, for observations on the linguistic and stylistic characteristics of historical travel accounts, Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 62-95.

⁸ Shapiro, p. 70.

⁹ Frisch studies the emergence of the modern notion of eyewitness testimony via first-hand accounts of travel, since they ‘most consistently raised, confronted, and discusses issues of what made a testimonial account believable’ (p. 13). Shapiro examines cultures of facts and ‘extends the story of the English legal tradition’s contribution to epistemological development and evidentiary traditions’ (p. 2). More recently, Carey has acknowledged the role of narratology in travel writing: ‘Questions of evidence, testimony and witnessing quickly come into play in this context, and with them a set of abiding epistemic and narratological quandaries.’ (p. 524) However, he also focuses on the legally informed questions of veracity and belief in travel writing.

¹⁰ Traditionally, a distinction is being made between story as the underlying event structure and narrative discourse as the representation or narration of events. See for example Ruth Page, ‘Narrative structure’, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*, ed. by Peter Stockwell and Sara Whiteley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 439-55 (p. 440).

¹¹ Shapiro, p. 64. Following Schotte, p. 304, De Ruyter’s logbooks ‘functioned simultaneously as a source of reliable knowledge, a professional credential, and an epistemic genre’.

¹² De Ruyter applied the same linguistic techniques that have been discerned in previous studies of earlier travel accounts: he narrates from a first-person observer perspective, making frequent use of the verb ‘to see’, in a temporal-chronological

the authorities used this information to exert control over life aboard the ship as well as overseas affairs.¹³ The naval context here thus does not raise credibility issues but rather brings forth questions concerning narratological meaning-making. How did official ships' logbooks communicate significant naval information? This question is especially pressing for the seventeenth-century Dutch navy: low-born, practically trained men in particular, who had enjoyed little to no education in writing, proved able to rise from ordinary sailors to celebrated naval officers.¹⁴ Born into a modest family living in the Zeeland seaport of Flushing (Vlissingen), Michiel de Ruyter (1606-1676) was one such man. De Ruyter began his seafaring career at the age of eleven, as a boatswain's apprentice. De Ruyter quickly rose through the ranks: after a career in whaling, privateering and the merchant navy, he made a name for himself in the Dutch navy, ultimately moving up to the rank of lieutenant-admiral general.¹⁵ So, while never having received a formal education in writing, De Ruyter eventually held positions that required extensive writing.¹⁶ Such activities included corresponding with his superiors and drawing up professional notes for their benefit. Considering the linguistic corrections in De Ruyter's logbooks, it appears that he actively strove for proper communication.¹⁷ Still, growing up in a society in which writing education was generally limited to the higher classes, De Ruyter's orthography and syntax are relatively poor.¹⁸ Albeit simple,

order. However, his logbooks are not accompanied by prefatory materials to enhance the texts' credibility. Instead, credibility was established through the writing of the self. Contrary to professional and private correspondence, which was often contracted out to the ship's scribe, a captain like De Ruyter would have written the entries in his own logbook. See, for the value of handwriting and practices of delegation, Ann Blair, 'Early Modern Attitudes toward the Delegation of Copying and Note-Taking', in *Forgetting Machines: Knowledge Management Evolution in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Alberto Cevoloni (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 265-85.

¹³ Schotte, pp. 298-99.

¹⁴ See, for the cult of naval heroes, Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 248-49; Cynthia Lawrence, 'The cult of the seventeenth-century Dutch naval heroes: Critical appropriations of a popular patriotic tradition', in *Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture. Reframing the Past*, ed. by Jane Fenoulhet and Lesley Gilbert (London: UCL Press, 2016), pp. 35-43; Marc van Alphen, Jan Hoffenaar, Alan Lemmers and Christiaan van der Spek, *Krijgsmacht en Handelsgeest. Om het machtssevenwicht in Europa 1648-1813* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2019), p. 57.

¹⁵ See, for biographical information on De Ruyter, Ronald Boudewijn Prud'homme van Reine, *Rechterhand van Nederland: biografie van Michiel Adriaenzoon de Ruyter* (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1996).

¹⁶ The Dutch Republic probably had the highest degree of literacy in seventeenth-century Europe. However, as schools typically taught reading before writing, large sections of seventeenth-century society were still unable to write. See Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *1650. Bevochten eendracht* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000, second edition), pp. 237-38; Judith Brouwer, *Levenstekens. Gekaapte brieven uit het Rampjaar 1672* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), p. 90. Furthermore, according to his biographer Gerard Brandt, De Ruyter showed little interest in the education he did receive: 'In de schoolen, daar zyne ouders hem bestelden, om te leeren leezen en schryven, kon hy niet dueren, en rechte zoo veel ranken van kinderlyke losheit aan, met vechten en smyten, dat de Schoolmeesters hem ter schoole uitjoegen.' See Geeraart Brandt, *Leven en bedryf van den heere Michiel de Ruyter* (Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, 1988), p. 5.

¹⁷ Leendert Koelmans, *Teken en klank bij Michiel de Ruyter* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), p. 14, 131.

¹⁸ Cf. Footnote 16. Koelmans, p. 2; Marc van Alphen, *Het oorlogsschip als varend bedrijf. Schrijvers, administratie en logistiek aan boord van Nederlandse marineschepen in de 17^e en 18^e eeuw* (Franeker: Uitgeverij van Wijnen, 2014), p. 247.

however, his writings are understandable – unlike the texts of some of his naval colleagues.¹⁹

The narrative approach applied in this article aims to shed light on one of De Ruyter's particular strategies for foregrounding important naval events for his readers back home. The sociolinguistic work on narratives has been valuable for understanding the simplest forms of narrative structures, including factual accounts.²⁰ As Ruth Page has recently argued, a close reading of the formal features typical of narrativity 'is a valuable strategy for articulating how the text makes its "point" [...]'.²¹ This article will thus focus on a formal feature that enhances narrativity and contributes to meaning-making: verbs.²² From a narratological point of view, a verb's semantics, expressing transition, transformation, and change, helps to constitute an event.²³ Moreover, in De Ruyter's logbooks, as I will show, verbs are typically lacking; their presence represents a deviation from the linguistic pattern. Hence, verbs are marked linguistic items. When present, they not only make the story engaging but also foreground particular events for the audience.

I will discuss De Ruyter's strategy of verb-use variation in two particular contexts, namely verbs as markers of 1) wind reports and 2) speech encounters. As I will show in the general introduction to ships' logbooks in the following section, these two clusters of information were among the main topics addressed in a captain's naval logbook: the analysis of observations on wind as the main influence on the fleet's progress shows how De Ruyter accounted for (the lack of) progress and reported on exceptional weather circumstances, and the analysis of speech tags helps us to understand how De Ruyter framed international relationships. Taken together, moreover, these two topics are illustrative for the narratological significance of verbs in naval reporting: within the logbook's terse and telegraphic style, a verb's mere presence served to both create and highlight a particular event.

The captain-as-writer

The practice of nautical logbook keeping in early modern Europe can be traced back at least to the end of the fifteenth century. Seafarers' accounts became important after it

¹⁹ Koelmans, p. 2, footnote 1.

²⁰ Illustrative here are the seminal studies of William Labov on oral narratives, e.g. 'The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax', in William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 354-96. Page, p. 443, 455, refers specifically to recounts.

²¹ Page, p. 455.

²² Standard systemic choices (including verbs) could have foregrounding functions, see Catherine Emmott and Marc Alexander, 'Foregrounding, burying and plot construction', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*, ed. by Peter Stockwell and Sara Whiteley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 329-43 (p. 330); Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction. A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007), pp. 62-63.

²³ This applies to dynamic as well as static verbs, see Moshe Simon-Shoshan, 'Narrativity and Textuality in the Study of Stories', in *Workshop on Computational Models of Narrative 2013*, ed. by Mark A. Finlayson, Bernhard Fisseni, Benedikt Löwe, and Jan Christoph Meister (2013), pp. 228-37 (p. 230, footnote 5).

became widely accepted that Columbus had indeed encountered a new realm of the world, and the genre evolved in interaction with the growing importance of observation in the early modern world.²⁴ Over the course of the sixteenth century, the practice of observing became more formal and centralised, resulting in the coordination of observers and the standardization of observations.²⁵ Based on new methods of bookkeeping, sixteenth-century Dutch navigators embraced the practice of systematically recording their voyages, and by the turn of the seventeenth century nautical logbook keeping was relatively widespread.²⁶

The logbook's professional content benefitted the seafarer himself as well as the seafaring community. While travelling, the logbook served as a personal aid to or substitute for memory; notes about longitude and geographic data could help determine estimates of a ship's position, especially if sailing in unknown waters.²⁷ More general information about climate, tides, and currents, moreover, could improve the safety and efficiency of future voyages.²⁸ The logbook was also a place to record new knowledge, as well as to verify and, if necessary, adapt existing knowledge about socio-cultural and economic phenomena encountered in far-flung places: native customs, prices, local goods, and so on.²⁹

Apart from its uses in capturing meteorological, geographical, socio-cultural and economical observations for the collective benefit, the seventeenth-century Dutch naval logbook mainly served as a means of control for the authorities back on land. Documents produced aboard early modern Dutch naval ships were usually written by the ship's clerk.³⁰ In the first half of the seventeenth century, however, the Dutch Admiralties also obliged their captains to keep a day-to-day logbook.³¹ Such a duty reflects their increasing need to regulate and manage life aboard ship. Upon all ships' return, their logbooks were handed in to the States-General to be examined – to determine whether

²⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions. The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.14; Schotte, pp. 281-83. The increasing value of observing and of note-taking in general is discussed by Lorraine Daston, 'The Empire of Observation, 1600–1800', in *Histories of Scientific Observation*, ed. by Lorraine Daston and Elizabeth Lunbeck (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 81-113.

²⁵ Daston, p. 87; Thompson, p. 74.

²⁶ Schotte, p. 287, 289.

²⁷ Schotte, p. 290, 292. During his expedition from Africa to the West, for example, De Ruyter used his logbook to keep meticulous records of each day's course and distance; see 16 November 1664 and further. The 1664–65 logbook has been published as *De Reis van Michiel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter in 1664–1665*, ed. by P. Verhoog en L. Koelmans ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961). In this article, all quotations from the 1664–65 logbook are cited from this edition.

²⁸ Schotte, p. 292; Van Alphen, p. 226. In his logbook on the expedition of 1664–65, for example, De Ruyter addresses his readers directly to warn about the treacherous currents near Cabo de Gata (11 June 1664). It should be noted, however, that early modern knowledge infrastructure had not integrated maritime observations very smoothly (see Schotte, p. 304-5; Daston, p. 91).

²⁹ Schotte, p. 298. When sailing in new areas, De Ruyter evaluates the accuracy of geographical maps (see for example 20 October 1664).

³⁰ The role of the ship's clerk has been reconstructed in Van Alphen's study.

³¹ Van Alphen, p. 197.

the crew had complied with their regulations and instructions – and were copied for archiving.³²

Although logbook keeping was mandatory, the seventeenth-century naval captain could be fairly free in his recording practices. Men like De Ruyter kept an open-form logbook – as opposed to using books with the pre-printed tabular format³³ – and thus enjoyed a certain leeway in what was noted, and how extensively. However, it seems that the text's linguistic make-up was considered important: compared to non-verbatim copies of early travel accounts – suggesting that in the early sixteenth century a text's grammatical form was not yet regarded as integral to its content – the few surviving copies of De Ruyter's logbooks seem to follow the original texts quite accurately, thus indicating the text's formal linguistic make-up had grown in importance.³⁴

Usually following a general pattern, the content of naval logbooks consists of records about the date, weather, positional information, and daily preoccupations, e.g. encounters with passing ships, irregularities aboard ship, etc.³⁵ Although a clerk and a naval captain usually recounted more or less the same sort of information, accents differed. In the following sections, I will analyse the linguistic make-up of two types of logbook entries which were of specific significance for the captain's logbook: in comparison to a clerk's day-to-day report, a captain's logbook paid more attention to meteorological topics and provided more detailed information on encounters with others.³⁶ These two types of logbook entries, furthermore, are illustrative for the significant role of verb use in articulating important events.

Reporting on the wind

In previous research, historical climatologists have incorporated into their discussions a linguistic aspect of nautical logbook keeping: the study of weather terms (e.g. how do we compare historical terms like 'little winds' to present day meteorological terms?).³⁷ I

³² Van Alphen, p. 198, 221, 225. The examination of naval logbooks is also discussed in the Dutch pamphlet literature; see for example the anonymous *Een Praatje van den Ouden en Nieuwen Admiraal* (Amsterdam, Jacob Volkers Hoofdbreker, 1653).

³³ These preprinted logbooks were used, for example, by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), see C. A. Davids, *Zeezezen en wetenschap: de wetenschap en de ontwikkeling van de navigatietechniek in Nederland tussen 1585 en 1815* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986), p. 297.

³⁴ A few copies of De Ruyter's logbooks survived. See NL-HaNA, Ruyter, de, 1.10.72, inv.nr. 15, 18, and 23. A sample was taken of nr. 23 to compare De Ruyter's documents to the scribe's copy. The examined pages show quite many deviations from De Ruyter's documents with regard to orthography – De Ruyter often spelled phonetically. However, formal features such as sentence structure, word use, etc. remained largely intact. Cf. Frisch, p. 81, who points to the increasing importance of the '*rhetoric of experiential knowledge*' in early modern travel writing (italics in original); and Frisch, p. 77, on a non-verbatim translation of an earlier travel account.

³⁵ See for example García-Herrera et al., p. 30.

³⁶ Van Alphen, pp. 101, 202-3, notes some differences between a clerk's and a captain's logbook.

³⁷ See for example Dennis Wheeler, 'Understanding seventeenth-century ships' logbooks: An exercise in historical climatology', *Journal for Maritime Research* 6, no. 1 (2004), 21-36, and 'Hubert Lamb's "treasure trove": ships' logbooks in climate research', *Weather* 69, no. 5 (2014), 133-39.

will shift the focus to another element of meteorological reports: verbal markers in wind reports. In most cases, as I will show, verbs in wind entries are lacking. When present, they serve a narratological function: a verb helps to create an event and simultaneously underlines its importance within the larger episode. I have compiled a dataset of wind entries drawn from six logbooks written throughout De Ruyter's naval career.³⁸ In the following sub-sections, I will use this dataset to explore De Ruyter's use of different verbs and to explain their narratological function.

Verb vocabulary

De Ruyter notes the direction and force of the wind almost daily, and often several times a day. Although he occasionally personifies the wind as having its own mind (e.g. 'soo/ de wynt westlyck *wylde* waeygen'³⁹), De Ruyter usually writes in a laconic, abbreviated style that typically lacks verbs (e.g. 'jtem den 21 smorgens mystych weder/ wynt o n o').⁴⁰ In fact, as Table 1 shows, the vast majority of wind entries in De Ruyter's logbooks under scrutiny here lack verbs.

	+ verb	- verb	Total
1652–53	43 (20%)	167 (80%)	210
1656–57	96 (42%)	135 (58%)	231
1664	107 (36%)	192 (64%)	299
1667	59 (22%)	205 (78%)	264
1673	23 (11%)	189 (89%)	212
1675–76	89 (38%)	146 (62%)	235
Total	417 (29%)	1034 (71%)	1451

Table 1. The relative presence or absence of a verb in wind entries. There difference between wind entries without and including verbs both for the total number of verbs and for the individual logbooks is significant ($X^2 p < .001$) except for the 1656–57 logbook ($p = .01$).⁴¹

³⁸ I have analysed two logbooks per decade: 1652–53, 1656–57, 1664–65, 1667, 1673, and 1675–76.

³⁹ 5 August 1665. 'If the wind *wanted* to blow west' (italics the author's). All English translations in this article are mine.

⁴⁰ 21 August 1664. 'The 21th in the morning foggy weather, wind e-n-e'. The logbooks' simple, temporal-chronological style, i.e. paratactic clauses with abbreviations and lacking verbs, reflects the practice of on-the-spot observation; memories were recorded whilst still fresh (see Thompson, p. 75).

⁴¹ I have compared the number of wind entries including a verb with the total occurrences of the noun 'wind' (spelled wynt, wijnt, wynden, and wijnden). I have manually excluded other uses of the 'wind' noun, i.e. combinations with a

The fluctuation in wind entries including a verb – ranging from 11% in 1673 to 42% in 1656–57 – is likely to have been caused by meteorological and geographical factors. The percentage of wind entries including a verb is lower in logbooks recording on nearby destinations (e.g. England in 1652–53, 1667, and 1673)⁴² than in logbooks recording voyages to more distant locales (e.g. Portugal [1656–57], North-West Africa and America [1664–65], and the Mediterranean [1675–76]).⁴³ The weather conditions during De Ruyter's faraway journeys in (partly) unknown waters likely required more detailed reports on the wind, and verbs could serve to precisely record and interpret the seafarer's observations.

De Ruyter's choice of verbs in his wind entries is firmly rooted in the maritime discourse predominant in his era. Various verbs were regularly employed to allow the seafarer to specify changes in wind force and direction. In his maritime dictionary *Seeman* (1681), Wingardus à Winschoten explains how verbs such as 'ruimen' (to veer), 'vieren' (to slack), 'scherpen' (to sharpen), and 'krimpen' (to back) express how the wind 'becomes better, and in the latter examples, worse for the sailor'.⁴⁴ Likewise, verbs such as 'draaien' (to turn), 'keren' (to turn), 'lopen' (to shift), and 'schieten' (to shoot) all indicate a change in wind direction, but 'the last one informs that the wind suddenly changes'.⁴⁵ All verbs listed by Winschoten were used by De Ruyter to record wind direction and wind force, although the amount of verb varieties differs per logbook (Table 2). Like the fluctuation in wind entries including a verb (Table 1), the fluctuation in variant possibilities was likely caused by geographic factors. As Table 2 shows, the number of different verbs is highest in the logbooks recording on faraway destinations, i.e. the 1656–57, 1664–65, and 1675–76 logbooks. Again, the specific weather circumstances would have required more detailed reporting, a need met by the varying verb types.

preposition (e.g. 'den vijant hijelt/ in de wijnt van ons' [26 August 1652]; 'dye [...] van ons vertrocken/ is met een n w wynt' [8 September 1652]) and a few instances where the noun does not express wind direction or force (e.g. 'soo de wynt en weder sulckx toe lyet' [13 July 1665]).

⁴² 18% on average (n 125/686).

⁴³ 38% on average (n 292/765).

⁴⁴ Wingardus à Winschoten, *Seeman: Behelsende een grondige uitlegging van de Neederlandse Konst, en Spreekwoorden, voor soo veel die uit de Seevaart sijn ontleend, en bij de beste Schrijvers deeser eeuw gevonden werden* (Leiden: Johannes de Vivie, 1681), p. 362. Dutch quotation: 'soo ook, *de wind ruimd: de wind vierd, scherpt, krimpt in: dat is, de wind werd hoe langer, hoe beeter: en in de laatste voorbeelden, hoe langer, hoe slimmer voor de geen, die vaart*' (italics in original).

⁴⁵ Winschoten, p. 362. Dutch quotation: '*de wind draaid, keerd, loopt, schiet om: alle van een beteekenis: alleenlijk, dat het laatste te kennen wil geeven, dat het de wind schielijk veranderd*' (italics in original).

Logbook	N
1652–53	8
1656–57	16
1664–65	13
1667	12
1673	8
1675–76	17

Table 2. The absolute number of variations in wind-entry verbs.

In the corpus under investigation here, De Ruyter uses 38 different verbs to record wind direction and/or wind force. Most verbs, however, are used only a few times: 30 out of the 38 verb types occur three or fewer times. The main verbs used by De Ruyter to record wind observations are not maritime jargon per se and are (therefore) not listed in early modern maritime dictionaries.⁴⁶ Almost 80% of the total verbs in the wind entries (n 330/417⁴⁷) consist of the verbs ‘komen’⁴⁸ (to come) (n 130), ‘krijgen’ (to get) (n 115), ‘hebben’ (to have) (n 56), and ‘zijn’ (‘to be’) (n 29).⁴⁹ In the following analysis, I will further explore the use and significance of these main verbs.

Verb variation in wind entries

As Table 1 has shown, the wind entries in De Ruyter’s logbooks for the most part lack verbs. Although geographical circumstances can offer plausible explanations for variation in the presence of a verb and the number of verb varieties per logbook, new areas and corresponding weather circumstances do not necessarily account for variation within individual logbooks. What is more, they do not fully explain the use of the four main verbs ‘komen’, ‘zijn’, ‘krijgen’, and ‘hebben’ which are present in all logbooks under

⁴⁶ The verbs ‘komen’, ‘krijgen’, ‘hebben’ and ‘zijn’ are also used in non-meteorological contexts, such as information on ships or persons (e.g. ‘ten 3 vren *quaem* den comandeur/ melkenbeeck met syn snaeu van/ buijten’ [13 August 1675]; ‘wy *cregen* den loort meyger van folck/ ston aen boort’ [4 September 1675]; ‘wy/ *hadden* ons schepen by ons’ [12 September 1675]; ‘den oostind/ vaerder *was* wel 2 myl beosten van/ ons hachter’ [12 September 1675] – italics the author’s).

⁴⁷ These 417 verbs include wind entries on both wind force and wind direction. The four main verbs (n330) usually express wind direction (n319) rather than only wind force (n11).

⁴⁸ In Winschoten, p. 19, ‘komen’ is interpreted as ‘approaching’ (naderen, aankomen) and linked to a ship instead of the wind (‘het Schip is aangekoemen’).

⁴⁹ In terms of frequency, ‘zijn’ (n29) shares fourth place with ‘schieten’ (n29) – the fifth most frequently used verb, ‘lopen’, occurs significantly less frequently (n7). Since De Ruyter, in his early, pre-naval logbooks used ‘komen’, ‘krijgen’, ‘hebben’, and ‘zijn’, I will focus on those four verbs specifically, as the key element of De Ruyter’s wind reporting system.

examination here. In this section, I will interpret these non-meteorological verbs as the essential determiners of narrativity: since most wind entries lack a verb, the presence of one of these verbs highlights the phrases in which they do occur, and the verb's semantic and grammatical properties imbue the specific event with meaning.

Closer examination of the linguistic properties of the four main verbs 'komen', 'zijn', 'krijgen' and 'hebben' is necessary to understand how these words express meaning and enhance eventfulness. First, these verbs differ with regard to their grammatical subject. The verbs 'krijgen' and 'hebben' take 'we' (i.e. the fleet, the logbooks' default topic) as their grammatical subject, e.g. 'we had/got the wind south'. 'Zijn' and 'komen', in contrast, have 'wind' as their grammatical subject, e.g. 'the wind was/came south'. Moreover, we can distinguish two verb types: static verbs, describing states of affairs, and dynamic verbs, depicting events and active processes.⁵⁰ As a static verb lacking an intrinsic implication of change, 'hebben' (paired with the subject 'we') parallels 'zijn' (which has a 'wind' subject). Likewise, 'krijgen' (with a 'we' subject) parallels 'komen' (with a 'wind' subject) as a dynamic verb, expressing progression. These characteristics (i.e. their grammatical and semantic differences) allowed De Ruyter to employ his main wind verbs to give shape to and highlight his reports on the wind. To illustrate the narratological function of verb presence, and the differences between static and dynamic verbs, I will first analyse the occurrence of verbs in the wind entries of a specific episode. Second, I will discuss the theme of windlessness in various logbooks as an example to explain the narratological difference distinguishing those verbs that take a 'we' subject from those that take a 'wind' subject.

De Ruyter's 1673 logbook offers evidence pertinent to the narratological significance of verb use in wind entries. Containing a mere 23 verbs, this logbook contains the lowest percentage of verbs in wind entries (Table 1).⁵¹ One episode featuring verbs in its recounting concerns the Battle of Schooneveld in June 1673. At first, the wind direction hinders the Dutch fleet from attacking the English. Although De Ruyter had previously recorded his wind reports without a verb, on 4 June he uses 'hebben':⁵² 'den vyant lach noch als/ voren en wy *hadden* de wynt w - s - w'.⁵³ This indication of direction marks a continuation of the unfavourable wind direction of the previous day.⁵⁴ Because of its static semantics, 'hebben' can be used in contexts like these to express a lack of wind

⁵⁰ Michael Toolan, *Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction* (second edition) (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 32.

⁵¹ The 1673 logbook has been published as *De oorlogvoering ter zee in 1673 in journalen en andere stukken*, Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, derde serie, no. 84, ed. by J.R. Bruijn (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1966). This edition, however, does not mirror the layout of the original documents. In this article, therefore, I will follow the original document when quoting the 1673 logbook (NL-HaNA, Ruyter, de, 1.10.72, inv.nr. 20).

⁵² An exception is the presence of a verb in the wind entry of 5 May 1673, when a change of wind direction ('soo schoodt de wynt suyden') prevented the fleet from setting sail.

⁵³ 'The enemy lay as before and we *had* de wind w-s-w' (italics in original).

⁵⁴ 3 June 1673.

transition.⁵⁵ The lack of change as expressed through ‘hebben’ is also mirrored by the linguistic context: in the corpus under investigation here, ‘hebben’ is mainly used in clauses without reference to time (n39/56, 70%) (e.g. ‘we had the wind north’). In addition, ‘hebben’ in this example does not occur with an adverb of time but instead follows a conjunction (‘en wy hadden de wynt w s w’). Contrary to ‘hebben’, the dynamic verbs ‘komen’ and ‘krijgen’ are accompanied in the majority of cases by an indication of time, thus contributing to the suggestion of narratological transition (n113/130, 87% and n74/115, 64% respectively; e.g. ‘*in the morning* we got the wind north’).⁵⁶

Although ‘hebben’ in the example discussed above underlines a static situation (specifically, no change in wind direction), the word’s mere presence in a context that usually lacks a verb (Table 1) increases eventfulness. The verb suggests that this particular situation is narratable and important within the larger story context. Considering the function of the logbook as a professional tool, it is likely that verbs in wind entries served to highlight important naval events, including the alterations of plans, lack of progress, and so on. In this particular example of the 1673 logbook, the ‘hebben’ verb underlines the continuation of a wind direction whereby the fleet cannot attack the enemy and therefore a different activity – a worship service with a homily and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper – is justified: ‘wy *hadden* de wynt w - s - w [...] ten 10/ uren dede onsen domeny een schoone/ predijcasije [...] en/ naer de predycasye wert het heylyge/ avontmael des heeren by ons gehouden’.⁵⁷

The next wind entry to contain a verb is De Ruyter’s report of June 7: ‘wy/ *cregen* de wynt w - n - w topsyl coelte/ de vyant begon te met onder seyl te gaen/ en ons te naerderen wy gyngen alsamen onder/ seyl’.⁵⁸ Rather than the ‘hebben’ of the previous example, here ‘krijgen’ is used and expresses a change in wind direction. Moreover, like the ‘hebben’ example cited above, ‘krijgen’ is used to express an important phase in the narrative discourse: whereas ‘hebben’ accounted for a religious activity, ‘krijgen’ marks a military event, i.e. the beginning of the first battle at Schooneveld.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ More generally, in the corpus examined here De Ruyter uses ‘hebben’ in wind entries to express a lack of wind direction or of progress. The lack of transition is connected either to the context, for example riding at anchor, or bad weather, e.g. ‘wy hadden de wynt/ s ten oosten seer dyck weder/ soo dat dyen dach nyet conde verrychten’ (30 September 1664), or when the wind does not change or barely does so, e.g. ‘snachs/ hadden de wynt wat stylder’ (18 March 1665).

⁵⁶ I have also included the few instances where a reference to place also serves as an indicator of change (e.g. ‘en *daer* quaem een sterke/ travade wynt’ (23 December 1664; italics the author’s). The occurrence with a reference to time is significant only for ‘komen’ (n113/130, $X^2 p < .001$).

⁵⁷ ‘And we *had* de wind w-s-w [...] At ten o’clock, our chaplain gave a nice sermon [...] and upon the sermon we celebrated the Lord’s Supper’. See also 3 June: ‘wy hoopen op morgen/ het heylyge nachtmael des heeren te schelyburen/ soo wij geen weder en hebben om te bataelgeeren’.

⁵⁸ 7 June 1673. ‘We *got* the wind w-n-w, topsail breeze. The enemy immediately began to set sail and to approach us. Together, we set sail’ (italics the author’s).

⁵⁹ Since ‘krijgen’ is the passive form of ‘geven’ (to give), it is possible that in the ‘krijgen’ instances, God, as the controller of wind and weather, resonates in the background. De Ruyter occasionally explicitly acknowledges God as the *giver* of wind, when referring to bad weather as well as favourable wind directions, e.g. ‘wy hadden de wynt n w soo dat wy/ maer w-s-w conde seylen maer cort daer naer/ *gaf* godt ons de wynt n-n-w soo dat wy/ boven luytsster ryf seyde’ (6 August 1665; italics the author’s).

The use of verbs in wind entries in De Ruyter's report on the first battle at Schooneveld illustrates the function of variation between static and dynamic verbs.⁶⁰ In addition, De Ruyter's logbooks also vary in their grammatical properties. An important factor determining variation between the verbs with a grammatical 'we' subject ('hebben' and 'krijgen') and those with a 'wind' subject ('zijn' and 'komen') is textual cohesion.⁶¹ Table 3 shows a difference between these two groups of verbs with regard to the preceding sentence's content. Whereas sentences with weather-related content are more likely to be followed by 'zijn' or 'komen' (76%), sentences including a non-weather theme are mostly followed by 'hebben' and 'krijgen' (64%). In other words, Table 3 suggests that De Ruyter, in cases when the preceding sentence had already introduced a weather-related theme, was more likely to choose 'zijn' and 'komen' rather than 'hebben' and 'krijgen'.

	Weather	Other
'We' subject ('hebben', 'krijgen')	25 (24%)	146 (64%)
'Wind' subject ('zijn', 'komen')	78 (76%)	81 (36%)
Total	103	227

Table 3. The association between content matter and verb choice in the preceding sentence for the logbooks of 1652–53, 1656–57, 1664–65, 1667, 1673, and 1675–76.⁶² The relation between these variables is significant, $X^2 p < .001$.

⁶⁰ The variation between 'zijn' and 'komen' largely parallels the variation between 'hebben' and 'krijgen' as discussed here, with the static 'zijn' verb suggesting a lack of change and the dynamic 'komen' verb indicating change. However, in De Ruyter's logbooks there is a diachronic change that needs to be mentioned. Almost half the 'zijn' verbs were used by De Ruyter during the 1650s (45%, n 13/29). In those logbooks, 'zijn' occurs in contexts of little progress but is also used in combination with progress (see for example the wind entries on 9, 10, and 12 January 1653). This suggests that, at least regarding the usage of 'zijn', the style used to record wind observations changed during De Ruyter's career. As part of this development, the relative use of 'zijn' per logbook decreased (from 14% (n 6/43) in 1652–53 to 3% (n 3/89) in 1675–76), but its function became more specific, i.e. it expressed a lack of change. For the other verbs, I have not found an analogous diachronic change.

⁶¹ In the linguistics literature, textual cohesion is usually analysed as theme (given information) and rheme (new information). See, for example, Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (ed.), *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* (fourth edition) (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 87ff.

⁶² When the wind verb occurs in the second part of a juxtaposed or subordinate clause, I have counted the topic of the sentence's first part. Cases in which the wind entry constitutes the day's first entry have been counted as 'other topic'.

Consider the following example:

[...] wy namen onse
maerseyle in vreesende voor harde wijnt
ten 10 vren doe quaem de wynt hardt wt
den s · o⁶³

Since the first sentence of this example introduces the wind ('vreesende voor harde wijnt'), in the second sentence ('ten 10 vren...') the wind can act as given information. It thus functions as the sentence's grammatical subject and linguistic topic. In this specific case, the verb 'komen' is chosen over 'zijn' to express a change.

Table 3, however, also shows that the notion of textual cohesion does not fully cover variation. Consider the following example:

[...] het
was styl tot naer de myddach
cregen wy en sy de wynt wtter
see doe quamen sy in seylen [...] ⁶⁴

This example starts with a report on windlessness ('het was styl'), upon which a verb selecting 'wind' as its grammatical subject could be used to express the upcoming change in wind conditions. However, De Ruyter topicalizes 'we' through the verb 'krijgen'. A comparison of the cases of windlessness in the corpus under investigation here indicates that 'krijgen' is used to express a subtle contextual difference with 'komen'. Whereas cases of 'krijgen' are followed by a notion of transition, expressed mostly through the verb 'zeilen' (to sail), e.g.:

item den 30 smorgens stijl wij cregen de
wijnt oostlijck en dreven en seylde tot
smyddaech⁶⁵

⁶³ 17 March 1657. 'We took in our topsails, fearing for a strong wind. Around 10 o'clock the wind came strongly from the s-e'.

⁶⁴ 1 June 1664. 'It was windless until the afternoon. Then, we and they got the wind from the sea. Then they set sail'.

⁶⁵ 30 September 1667. 'The 30th in the morning [it was] windless. We got the wind east and floated and sailed until the afternoon'. See, for other examples of 'krijgen' + 'zeilen', 28 December 1656, 6 February 1657, 11 February 1657, 27 May 1657, 1 June 1664, 22 July 1665, 30 September 1667, 2 November 1675, and 12 December 1675. See, for an example with

the ‘komen’ instances express a more distinct change, expressed, for example, through the verb ‘wenden’ (to turn), e.g.:

[...] doe was gans stijlle
 op de myddach quaem de wijnt met een
 buijge regen o · s · o doe wende de vyse
 amyrael de wijt naer de vijant toe⁶⁶

The examples of windlessness in the corpus indicate that compared to ‘krijgen’, ‘komen’ puts additional emphasis on the wind as a main character in the logbook story, controlling the fleet’s progress. ‘Komen’ seems to imply a more radical change, which De Ruyter adjusted to accordingly, e.g. by turning. As in the example from the 1673 logbook discussed above, the change in wind direction here allows the Dutch fleet to approach the enemy.

In conclusion, verbs effectuate the eventfulness of reports on the wind. These verb entries on (un)favourable wind direction contribute to narratological development because they help to frame salient information for the reader ashore, e.g. information on (lack of) progress or on changes leading up to important events like battles. Furthermore, De Ruyter’s vocabulary of four main verbs allowed him to switch between two important logbook topics, i.e. ‘we’ and ‘wind’, and to express either a lack of change through static verbs or transition through action verbs.

Reporting speech

As with the giving of meteorological information, reports on speech encounters were a key topic in naval logbook keeping. The information exchange conducted with various others not only could account for an alteration in the fleet’s course but also provided the reader ashore with insight into foreign relationships. Interestingly, De Ruyter’s reports of speech show a pattern that resembles the linguistic make-up of his wind entries: variation in the presence or absence of a verbal marker, as well as within the type of verbal markers. The absence or presence of a verbal marker to introduce speech parallels

negation, 3 December 1652. In a few cases, progression is not explicitly marked via the verb ‘zeilen’, see 20 July 1664 and 22 July 1667.

⁶⁶ 9 October 1652. ‘Then it was completely still. In the afternoon the wind came with showers e-s-e. Then the vice admiral De Wit turned towards the enemy’. See, for other examples of ‘komen’ + ‘wenden’, e.g. 11 January 1657, 14 February 1657, 24 July 1664, 13 October 1675. In addition, other verbs marking a distinct change occur in combination with ‘komen’, e.g. ‘overloopen’ (20 June 1657) and ‘laveren’ (18 June 1664). Furthermore, ‘komen’ is used when the new wind direction prevents the fleet from setting sail or, alternately, allows such an embarkation to occur (19 June 1665, 19 May 1667, and 19 February 1676). A verb of change is lacking in the 7 September 1667 entry.

the variation in verb presence evident in the wind entries: within the logbook's laconic, abbreviated style, a verb marking a utterance as speech seems to serve narratological purposes, i.e. the highlighting of important speech, contributing to the development of the narrative.⁶⁷ In this section, I will specifically discuss the narratological function of variation between different verbal markers of speech: 'rapportereren' (to report), 'zeggen' (to say), and 'verstaan' (to understand/hear).⁶⁸

Although previous studies on travel literature have not investigated speech encounters systematically, the narrative importance of communicative structures has been discussed in greatest detail in the field of narratology.⁶⁹ Not only does speech representation contribute to the development of the story in general; recent studies have also argued that the verbal marker has an evaluative function: 'when we choose a verb of saying to introduce speech represented as another's, our choices entail stances toward that speech'.⁷⁰ So, whereas the previous section has shown that verbs in wind entries serve to mark and express the degree of narrative transition, in this section I will argue that variation in verbal markers of speech are a means to express relationships among the narrative's main characters.

De Ruyter's reporting system

Seventeenth-century writers adhered to other and less firmly established conventions of quotation than we do nowadays. There was, for example, no clear-cut boundary between direct and indirect speech. In De Ruyter's logbooks most of the speech is reported indirectly.⁷¹ The lack of direct speech aligns with the loose standards regarding the

⁶⁷ Compare, for example, the following two quotations regarding the destination of a ship that had been encountered: 'capt allemande/ bracht een schypper van luijbijck aen myn/ boort [...] hadde de wil naar boordeus' (1 June 1667), versus 'het was een/ oostender peu dye wt noorwege quaem/ [...] wylde naer/ oostende soo hy *seyde*' (1 August 1665; italics the author's). In the latter example, De Ruyter explicitly marks the utterance as speech through a speech tag, i.e. the verb 'zeggen' (to say). De Ruyter regards this ship's destination with apprehension – it might encounter the English enemy – and commissions the ship to remain with the Dutch fleet, in exchange for payment.

⁶⁸ In his analysis of De Ruyter's language, Koelmans touched upon De Ruyter's use of *verba decendi* only briefly, as part of the morphological (i.e. tense) and syntactic (e.g. position of the subject) characteristics of his language. See Leendert Koelmans, *Het Nederlands van Michiel de Ruyter. Morfologie, woordvorming, syntaxis* (Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2001), e.g. p. 75, 199.

⁶⁹ See Fludernik's work on the reporting of speech and thought acts in Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993 / Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005). See also Flesch's study on the function of speech tags in rhymed text: William Flesch, 'The Poetics of Speech Tags', in *Renaissance Literature and Its Formal Engagements*, ed. by Mark David Rasmussen (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 159-84. Speech representation has recently become a research topic in historical linguistics and pragmatics, as is noted by Peter J. Grund, 'Beyond speech representation. Describing and evaluating speech in Early Modern English prose fiction', in *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 19, no. 2 (2018), 265-85 (p. 267). Research has been carried out, amongst others, on juridical documents, see e.g. Terry Walker and Peter J. Grund, "Speaking base approbious words". Speech representation in Early Modern English witness depositions', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 18, no. 1 (2017), 1-29.

⁷⁰ Alexandra Jaffe (ed.), *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 3. See also Colette Moore, *Quoting speech in early English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 125-27.

⁷¹ See, for a unique example of direct speech, 30 June 1664. It seems that direct speech was here used for its dramatic specificity rather than its verbatim authenticity; cf. Mel Evans's observations on direct speech in 'Royal language and

faithful reporting of speech in pre-modern texts, as has been observed by Colette Moore; for early modern writers, it was less important to capture the exact words uttered and more important to represent speech that, because of its crucial historical, cultural, political, or economic importance, contributed to the development of their story.⁷² What is more, De Ruyter, during encounters with other naval vessels, usually sent his subordinate (e.g. his lieutenant or rear admiral) to pay the compulsory visit.⁷³ Hence, De Ruyter was not always a first-person observer of the speech he reports, although he often records it as if he had been. In sum, in reporting what was deemed relevant in paraphrase (i.e. indirectly), De Ruyter's reporting system shows a high degree of narratorial intervention; De Ruyter possesses the agency to present and alter the interactions he represents.

De Ruyter indicates quotation solely through linguistic means – that is, without the use of quotations marks or other handwritten means. Hence, verbal markers such as 'say' have a key narratological role in his logbooks, not only in introducing speech but also in giving meaning to what has been paraphrased: De Ruyter selects not only what to record but also how to frame it.⁷⁴ To understand how De Ruyter used the verbal marker to create and reflect upon relationships, I will introduce the reporting system and its internal developments in greater detail. As in the previous section, I will focus on De Ruyter's most commonly used verbal markers, i.e. 'zeggen' (to say), 'rapporteren' (to report), and 'verstaan' (to understand/hear).⁷⁵ Like the wind verbs discussed above, these verbs differ on both grammatical and semantic levels. Grammatically, 'zeggen' and 'rapporteren' topicalize the speaker of the reported text (e.g. 'he says/reports'), whereas 'verstaan' topicalizes the hearer (e.g. 'we hear that'). Due to this difference, De Ruyter could use 'verstaan' to quote a relatively insignificant communicator who has brought him important information.⁷⁶ Through his highlighting of 'we' as the sentence's topic,

reported discourse in sixteenth-century correspondence', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 18, no. 1 (2017), 30-57 (p. 43).

⁷² Moore, pp. 125-27.

⁷³ See for example 23 September 1664. A comparison with the logbook kept by the vice-admiral Meppel during the 1664–65 expedition reveals that on 13 June 1664 De Ruyter had sent his lieutenant to pay the compulsory visit, although he does not record the role of this messenger (see *Journal: gehouden bij mij Joan Cornelisz Meppel*, collection Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Hs-0001, A.0393).

⁷⁴ Cf. Karin Aijmer, 'Quotative Markers in *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760*', in *The Pragmatics of Quoting Now and Then*, ed. by Jenny Arendholz, Wolfram Bublitz, Monika Kirner-Ludwig (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 231-54 (p. 235); and the overview in Evans, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁵ Other verbal markers are, amongst others, 'adviseren' (to advise), 'aanzeggen' (to announce), 'laten weten' (let know), and 'klagen' (to complain). In addition to the logbooks examined above, I have, for this section, extended the dataset to include two other logbooks (1659–60, and 1674) to illustrate diachronic changes in De Ruyter's verbal markers in greater detail (see below).

⁷⁶ The communicator is either not mentioned or is a non-naval person (e.g. 'de vysscher' [15 June 1665]). Occasionally, however, De Ruyter uses 'verstaan' when he probes his captains on a certain matter (e.g. 'en dede alle Cap aen bort/ te comen om haer meijnijge te/ verstaen' [29 August 1652]). In his earlier logbooks, De Ruyter also combines 'verstaan' with written communication (e.g. 'par avijs verstaen/ dat' [15 December 1652]).

De Ruyter seems to signal that he had acknowledged the speech's importance and has acted accordingly. Consider the following example:

jtem den 8 smorgens verstonden wy dat de
 eyngelsen in haer loese noch dry van de Comp
 pangys vrouwen hadden dye sy van het heylant
 goeree genomen hadde waer op wy resolverd
 dat wy op morgen daer naer souden
 vernemen [...] ⁷⁷

Another logbook written during this expedition reveals that the information presented here was delivered by 'Negers'.⁷⁸ The verb 'verstaan' thus seems to allow De Ruyter to leave out subordinate messengers – below, I will discuss the speech of African people in greater detail – and to simultaneously highlight as this episode's topic the naval officers ('we') who responded immediately to this news ('waer op wy resolverd').

Whereas 'verstaan' differs grammatically from 'zeggen' and 'rapporteren', the latter two differ semantically. Unlike 'zeggen', a more or less 'neutral' speech tag, the verb 'rapporteren' is rooted in official discourse. 'Rapport doen' (to report), for example, was used to describe a seafarer who upon return reported to his supervisors in the government.⁷⁹

Although the relative use of 'verstaan' barely fluctuates during De Ruyter's naval career, Table 4 points to variation in relative use between 'zeggen' and 'rapporteren'. In the following subsection, I will discuss some diachronic developments and explain how intra-logbook variation in verbal markers was a means for De Ruyter to evaluate interpersonal relations.

⁷⁷ 8 December 1664. 'The 8th in the morning we heard that the English had three wives of the company in their trading post, whom they had taken from the island Gorée. Hereupon we resolved that we would verify this tomorrow'. See, however, also 28 December 1665; the Elminians, collaborating with the Dutch, are mentioned explicitly as communicators (see Footnote 92).

⁷⁸ Jeurian Prins, *Journal, Ofte Dag-Register, Van de Reyse die gedaen is door 'sLandts Vloot, onder den Manhaften Heer Admirael Michiel A. de Ruyter* (Amsterdam: Saumel Imbrechts, 1666), p. 49.

⁷⁹ See *Online Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal GTB INL* < <http://gtb.inl.nl/search/>>, 'rapporteeren', 2. Cf. De Ruyter's 1652–53 logbook: 'waer op wij sijto aen lant zijn ontboden/om *repoort* van onse reijse te *doen*/ en syn alsoo dyen avont verhoort' (15 October 1652; italics the author's).

	'Rapporteren' (to report)		'Zeggen' (to say)		'Verstaan' (to hear)		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
1652–53	2	6	19	61	10	32	31
1656–57	6 ⁸⁰	27	12	55	4	18	22
1659–60	36	57	11	17	16	25	63
1664–65	26	37	28	39	17	24	71
1667	28	72	5	13	6	15	39
1673	32	60	9	17	12	23	53
1674	16	59	8	30	3	11	27
1675–76	17	38	16	36	11	25	44

Table 4. Absolute and relative use of the three main verbal markers that introduce speech in De Ruyter's logbooks.

Verb variation in speech entries

Above I classified 'zeggen' as a neutral verbal marker. In fact, previous research has argued that this introductory verb is a 'neutral' or 'colourless' marker.⁸¹ It is true that De Ruyter, in his occasional reports of complex dialogues, uses 'zeggen' as a more or less neutral form of introduction.⁸² When considering 'zeggen' as an alternative to 'rapporteren', however, 'zeggen' can also perform an evaluative role within the narrative discourse.

In the 1652–53 logbook, 'zeggen' still holds the majority of verbal markers. The two instances of 'rapporteren' are used to introduce the speech of the only two speaking Flag

⁸⁰ I have not included cases in which the verb marks an act rather than the introduction to an utterance (e.g. 'soo hebbe ick syto drye gedeputeerde/ by den governoort vant casteel gesonden/ om dyt te raporteeren' [29 June 1657]).

⁸¹ See for example Moore, p. 58; Aijmer, pp. 235, 238–39.

⁸² Within a single communicative structure De Ruyter usually uses 'rapporteren' or 'verstaan'. Within complex exchange structures, i.e. conversations consisting of several moves including initiation, response, and follow-up, 'zeggen' is often used as the second or third verbal marker and takes the form of 'seyde mede', e.g. '*raporteerde* / dat sy 3 dagen van de revyer van amburch/waren geseylt *raporterde* voort dat de vloodt / [...] gereet was [...] / *seyde mede* dat 3 [...] Capteynen gearkebuseert waren' (28 July 1665; italics the author's). In this section, I will discuss cases in which 'zeggen' is used in a single communicative structure or as the first verb in a complex communicative structure.

Officers present in this logbook. This suggests that ‘rapportereren’ represents an acknowledgement of social hierarchy and is reserved for quotation of members of the higher naval ranks. By 1659, however, De Ruyter’s verb preference has changed: most speakers are introduced through ‘rapportereren’, including non-naval seafarers such as mercantile skippers (e.g. ‘schypper Davyt Compange van Schodtlant [...] geladen met moeudt [...] raporteerde dat [...]’).⁸³ This pattern changes again in the later logbooks. Especially in De Ruyter’s final logbook (1675–76), ‘zeggen’ is chosen over ‘rapportereren’ when De Ruyter quotes a non-naval person (e.g. ‘het was een kaper [...] seyde dat [...]’)⁸⁴, or a crew member lower in rank (e.g. ‘onse/ pylooten seyden dat [...]’).⁸⁵ Since quotations introduced with ‘zeggen’ contain information on foreign nations, positional information, and so on – just like the ‘rapportereren’-quotations – content does not seem the main determinant of variation between ‘zeggen’ and ‘rapportereren’.⁸⁶ Instead, I would like to propose that De Ruyter’s reporting system changed diachronically. It seems that De Ruyter’s naval career gave rise first to the use of formal ‘rapportereren’. But with his own rising status and rank, the reporting system further developed as a means of social stratification, thus expressing the social and/or naval characteristics of the relationship between De Ruyter and the speaker.

In addition to social factors and diachronic changes, De Ruyter’s reporting system altered under the sway of changing political circumstances. Illustrative in this context is De Ruyter’s 1664–65 logbook, in which the habits of quotation vis-`a-vis several groups changed over time. In general, De Ruyter introduces (foreign) naval seafarers with ‘rapportereren’. Given the deteriorating relationship between the Dutch Republic and England, however, De Ruyter changes the speech tag for speaking Englishmen from ‘rapportereren’ to ‘zeggen’.⁸⁷

den schout by nacht van der saen voer
 aen syn boort om hem te bewyllecomen
 en eenych nyeus van de turcken te
 vragen seydden dat geen turcken wt

⁸³ 21 September 1659. ‘Skipper David of Scotland, loaded with malt, reported that...’.

⁸⁴ 15 October 1675. ‘It was a privateer, who said that...’.

⁸⁵ 3 January 1676. ‘Our steers men said that...’.

⁸⁶ Compare for example ‘onse/ pylooten seyden dat sy een vloodt/ schepen bewesten haer sagen’ (3 January 1676) with ‘een Cap van de galeygen [...] raporterde dat de wachters op het/ heylant lyf syko 20 seylen int gesyecht/ hadden’ (4 January 1676).

⁸⁷ Compare ‘rapportereren’ on 11 May and 13 June to ‘zeggen’ on 19 August and 23 September 1664. De Ruyter was informed of the deteriorating relationship through official letters as well as encounters with the English; the English navy was no longer striking their flag as a token of respect (see for example 13 June 1664; and Prud’homme van Reine, p. 127).

en waren [...]⁸⁸

The content of this utterance on the presence and identity of other ships is comparable to the information exchanged with regard to previous Dutch-English encounters, but the linguistic make-up differs. Although previous visits had also been conducted by his subordinates (see Footnote 73), De Ruyter here notes that he had sent his rear admiral. Furthermore, compared to previous speech encounters, De Ruyter switches from ‘rapportereren’ to ‘zeggen’, and within the logbook entry from singular ‘hem’ (i.e. the English vice admiral) to plural ‘[zij] seydden’. If we assume that De Ruyter used ‘rapportereren’ to quote his naval equals, a switch in verbal markers could be interpreted as a means he used to dissociate himself from the other speaker. Furthermore, since plural forms in logbooks were well-known means to evoke an association with a larger group (e.g. naval officers, the entire fleet, a country), the changes may be interpreted as a linguistic means to evaluate and dissociate himself from the entire English fleet.⁸⁹ The deviation from the ‘rapportereren’ standard continues thereafter until June 1665, when the Anglo-Dutch relationship seems to have improved.⁹⁰ Again, this change is reflected in De Ruyter’s reporting system. Instead of ‘zeggen’, the two encountered English ships ‘rapportereren’: ‘en raporteerde dat de schepen in eyngelan/ ontslagen waren en dat op goede hoope/ van acomandasye van vrede met onsen staet/ en eyngelant was’.⁹¹ Taken together, the above examples suggest that De Ruyter’s reporting system reflects not only social differences (i.e. in rank and occupation) but also political differences. By choosing ‘zeggen’ over the formal verbal marker ‘rapportereren’, De Ruyter dissociates himself from the speaker socially and/or politically. Interestingly, the reverse also applies, as is made evident from the case of speaking Africans.

While sailing along the coast of North Africa, De Ruyter encounters different African peoples, referred to as ‘negers’; their speech is introduced through ‘zeggen’ or ‘verstaan’.⁹² This reporting system changes when treating the collaboration between the

⁸⁸ 23 September 1664. ‘The rear admiral Van der Saen sailed to his board to welcome him and to ask for news concerning the Turks. [They] said that there were no Turks offshore’. The Dutch and English fleets had passed each other previously, on 12 and 18 August, without verbal communication. On 19 August 1664, De Ruyter refers to an utterance through ‘zeggen’ when recording that the English were trying to sail West, ‘alhoewel sy ons *geseyt hadden* dat sy/ ontrent arsyers souden gaen cruysen’ (italics the author’s).

⁸⁹ See Frisch, p. 136. On 27 January 1665, De Ruyter also uses the first-person plural (‘dye seyden’) to quote English speech.

⁹⁰ See 25 October 1664, and 27 January 1665. Exceptions are licensed English ships that were thus sailing under command of De Ruyter (see 4 November 1664 and 2 January 1665). There ‘rapportereren’ seems to be used to indicate a crew-supervisor rather than an enemy relationship.

⁹¹ 17 June 1665. ‘And reported that the ships in England were discharged, and that there was good hope for an arrangement of peace between our state and England’. Interestingly, De Ruyter does not report that the English ships were made spoils of war, thus suggesting a peaceful encounter with these ships in the Bay of St. John’s (cf. *Journal, Gehouden op ‘s Lants Schip de Spiegel* [Amsterdam: Pieter la Burgh, 1665], p. 67; Prins, p. 91).

⁹² ‘Zeggen’ is used on 4 November 1664; 4 December 1664; 2 January 1665; 3 January 1665. An exception is 28 January 1665, where De Ruyter uses ‘verstaan’. These speaking Elminans had been collaborating for decades with Europeans, and here had brought important news concerning the English enemy that necessitated a quick Dutch response. Hence the

Dutch and the Fantys, a group from the African ‘Gold Coast’. To recapture a fort from the English, the Dutch need the Fantys’ help. Although an agreement is made, the first attack fails, and the Fantys are suspected to have betrayed their Dutch associates.⁹³ When one of the Fantys offers an explanation, his speech is introduced through ‘zeggen’: ‘daer quaem een neger van/ lant genampt antony dye *seyde* dat/ de fantynsen noch nyet gereet en/ waren geweest noch samen geacordert/ maer dat sy morgen [...] comen/ soudent’.⁹⁴ Unlike the previous records of speech referring to ‘negers’, however, here a specific person (Antony) and his specific community (the Fantys) are identified. Moreover, as a result of Antony’s visit the Fantys come to be in favour with the Dutch once more. De Ruyter underlines their mutual relationship of alliance by switching from ‘zeggen’ to ‘rapporteren’ in the following entry: ‘savons/ is een van de fanteynsen aen boort [gecomen] dye ons/ *raporteerden* dat sy op morgen vroech met/ de prynse vlag [...] soudent ver/ schynen’.⁹⁵

In conclusion, the examples cited above suggest that De Ruyter used his reporting system both to emphasize important speech, contributing to the logbook’s narratological development, and to frame his relation to others, based on the desire for social and political association or dissociation. Variation in the introductory verb could function as a personal, symbolic act of withholding or granting respect, as well as a means of evaluation for the authorities, who used logbooks to investigate international relationships.

Conclusion

As a Flag Officer in the seventeenth-century Dutch navy, Michiel de Ruyter was obliged to keep logbooks. Naval logbooks enabled the Dutch authorities to control life overseas, encompassing both the functioning of their officers as well as their expedition’s political, socio-cultural, geographical, and meteorological aspects. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that De Ruyter employed verb variation to effectuate the rhetoric of reporting. Verbs cannot be assumed to be a standard characteristic of the De Ruyter’s logbooks’ stark and unembellished style. When present, a verb draws attention to itself and thereby prompts meaning. Whereas static and dynamic verbs in wind entries serve to express the degree of narrative transition, variation in verbal markers of speech evaluate relationships among the narrative’s main characters based on social and political factors. Given De Ruyter’s ability to use verbs to mark salient information, the

choice of ‘verstaan’ over ‘rapporteren’ (See the discussion of ‘verstaan’ above; see, for information on the Dutch and the Elminians, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa. Empires, Merchants and the Atlantic System, 1580–1674* [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011]).

⁹³ 3 February 1665.

⁹⁴ 7 February 1665. ‘There, from land, came a black person named Antony who *said* that the Fantys had not been ready, and had not yet made an agreement. However, they would come tomorrow’ (italics the author’s).

⁹⁵ 7 February 1665. ‘In the evening, one of the Fantys came aboard who *reported* that tomorrow, early in the morning, they [the Fantys] will show up on the sea side with the prince flag’ (italics the author’s).

official reader in the Dutch Republic may have been able to distinguish and interpret these marked phrases.

The analysis presented in this article provides information on De Ruyter's logbooks but also poses new questions. For example, information on the linguistic methodology of reporting can help us interpret a logbook's content within the context of maritime history – which information was foregrounded, and why? – but the question also arises as to whether, and how, De Ruyter's writing style fits within the general fashion of Dutch naval logbook keeping. Further research is necessary to fully understand the role of linguistic variation in naval reporting by De Ruyter and other naval officers. Moreover, this article has shown that (socio)linguistic and textual factors (e.g. social factors, diachronic changes, textual cohesion, etc.) should be taken into account when studying language use and reporting style. Hence, to better understand the language of naval logbook keeping, future research should strive for an interdisciplinary approach in which linguistic, textual, sociohistorical and maritime methodologies are brought together.

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Cora van de Poppe (Utrecht University) is currently finishing her dissertation on variation within individual language users from the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Her research project – a sub-project of the *Language Dynamics in the Dutch Golden Age* project – captures this phenomenon of intra-author variation as a literary-linguistic construct and focuses specifically on the question how variation followed from and/or shaped the literary-cultural contexts it occurred in. As a Prof. J. C. M. Warnsinck fellow at the National Maritime Museum (Amsterdam), furthermore, Van de Poppe investigates how seventeenth-century naval officers (often from a humble origin) used the variational possibilities of their language system as a means to frame their experiences in a certain way (in response to e.g. cultural expectations, intended audience(s), goal(s) of the text) – and thus potentially employed their language and texts to bolster their careers.