At the margins of grammar: Verb particles in first sentence position

Gert-Jan Schoenmakers & Ad Foolen
Radboud University, Nijmegen

Certain linguistic phenomena are located at the boundaries of grammaticality. One example is the topicalization of the particle in German and Dutch particle verb constructions, as in (1) and (2). Such structures typically occur in highly specific environments, such as sarcasm, poetic or professional registers, literature, or as part of a fixed expression. They are therefore generally not accepted unconditionally by native speakers and hard to find in corpora. Still, they are not rejected at first sight either. Descriptions in the standard reference grammars of German and Dutch suggest that, as long as there is an appropriate context, these sentences are usually 'OK'.

(1) *Fest* steht momentan nur der Termin
fixed stands at.the.moment only the appointment (Duden 2005:892, item 131376)
(2) *Mee* gaan dit jaar alle leerlingen uit de vierde en de vijfde klas.
with go this year all students out the fourth and the fifth class (ANS, §21.3.4.3ii)

Factors identified in the linguistic literature to affect the acceptability of such structures include the distance between the particle and the verb (e.g. Zeller 2003), and the *semantic transparency* between them – defined as the extent to which the particle is semantically autonomous and contrastable (Trotzke et al. 2015). Trotzke et al. (2015) investigated the acceptability of particle verb structures in German in a rating task, manipulating the factors PARTICLE-VERB ADJACENCY and PARTICLE TRANSPARENCY. Participants indicated on a six-point scale how likely it was that the sentences were correct transcriptions of a conversation in a noisy bar. The authors find that semantic transparency plays a significant role, but must conclude that sentences in which the particle alone was fronted received likelihood ratings at the low end of the scale. Interestingly, they observe that "in case of non-transparent particle verbs occurring non-adjacently, the judgments vary considerably" (Trotzke et al. 2015: 418).

Although the Dutch prefield is rather flexible (Bouma 2008), it is less flexible than the German prefield (Abraham 2003; Jentges 2012; a small-scale corpus study of our own). In this talk we present a replication of the rating experiment for Dutch, using stimulus items as in (3).

(3) a. Alle leerlingen zijn *mee*gegaan. all students are with.gone (in situ, adjacent)
b. *Mee*gegaan zijn alle leerlingen. with.gone are all students (fronted, adjacent)
c. *Mee* zijn alle leerlingen gegaan. with are all students gone (fronted, non-adjacent)

On the basis of the literature we hypothesize that Dutch fronted verb particles are less acceptable than German ones. We reflect on the differences between these languages in acceptability of the paradigm in (3), and the variation between speaker intuitions about the fronted non-adjacent condition (3c). We will also discuss the difference between reference grammar descriptions and native speaker intuitions of a linguistic phenomenon at the margins of grammar.

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Tara Struik
Radboud University/Centre for Language Studies

Information Structure and OV-VO Variation in West-Germanic: A Comparative Perspective

Despite a close genetic relation, Dutch, German and English show a puzzling difference in one very fundamental syntactic respect: the order of the verb and the object. Present-day Dutch and German are classified as OV languages, while English is classified as a VO language. It is even more intriguing that these languages share a similar history: one with mixtures of OV and VO order. This raises the question if these languages were the same, but diverged or if these languages were different to begin with, and further diverged.

OV/VO variation has been studied most extensively for Old English (OE) (van Kemenade 1987, Pintzuk 2005, Biberauer & Roberts 2005, Taylor & Pintzuk 2012, Struik & van Kemenade 2018), but studies on Old Saxon (OS) and Middle Dutch (MD) are few and far between (but see Walkden 2014 on OS and Blom 2002 on MD) and there are no systematic comparisons of these languages. This paper will explore the influence of information structure on object position in a systematic way for the historical stages of these languages. It will replicate the methodology in Struik & van Kemenade (2018) on the HeLiPad corpus (Walkden 2015) and the minor OS texts in the Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch (Donhauser 2015), as well as the Dutch Historical Compilation corpus (Coussé 2010) to see if OE, OS and MD OV/VO variation is governed by IS in the same way. The database includes all subclauses with two verbs and a direct objects and is annotated for IS using a binary given-new distinction (based on Pentaset guidelines (Komen 2013)) and grammatical weight. The results are analysed by means of a multinominal logistic regression in a mixed model. The results indicate that OV/VO variation is still strongly governed by IS in OE, fitting an analysis of OE as a VO language, but that the effect of IS in OS and MD is not as strong, suggesting that these languages were different and further diverged in their histories.

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Arjen Versloot
University of Amsterdam

I-Mutation in West Germanic: Phonetic and geographical gradualness

I-mutation in the Germanic languages is one of the most debated issues in historical Germanic linguistics (e.g. Buccini 1995, Iverson & Salmons 2004, Salmons 2008). Variables of its complexity are:

1. the contrast between primary *i*-mutation, only affecting short **a*, and secondary *i*-mutation, affecting **u*, **ā*, **ō*, **ū*;
2. the relative order of *i*-mutation and apocope in Anglo-Frisian on the one hand and in Continental West Germanic; in Anglo-Frisian *i*-mutation became before apocope of **-i* after heavy syllables, in Continental West Germanic it was the other way around, hence English *men* < **mænni* < **manni*, against Old Saxon *mann* < **manni*.

The whole process is, however, even more complex and some patterns of its unfolding have so far not received any attention in the literature, as it seems. There are three historical *i*-mutation factors conditioning the operation of the process, namely the presence of /i/, /i:/ and /j/ in the unaccented syllable following the root vowel. The impact of these three factors turns out not to be homogeneous, but rather gradual – at least in North Sea Germanic. This gradualness is manifested in the following distributions of the effects of the process across West Germanic:

1. Old English corpus analysis shows stronger raising of **a* conditioned by /i:/ and /j/ than by /i/.
2. Old Frisian has various examples confirming the same contrast between /i/ and /i:/ in the *i*-stems: R. *stede* < **stædi*, *stidi* < **stædī*, B. *wald* < **waldi*, *welde* < **waldī*.
3. Coastal Dutch traditional dialects show *i*-mutation and unrounding of **u* only before /j/, hence in *-ja* and *-jō*-stems, but not in *i*-stems (De Vaan 2017: 304–305).
4. The implementation of *i*-mutation in Frisian conditioned by short *-i*, overlapped with the vowel's apocope, where high-frequency items were early adaptors of *i*-mutation and low-frequency words apparently lost the *-i* before *i*-mutation was fully established, e.g. OFri. nom.acc.pl. *fēt* 'feet', **kī* 'cows' vs. *mūs* 'mice', *bōc* 'books' < PWGmc. **fōti*, **kūi*, **mūsi*, **bōki* (cf. Old English *fēt*, *cȳ*, *mȳs*, *bēc*).
5. The impact of *i*-mutation of PGmc. **a* depended also on the quality of the intervening consonants, especially **a* before nasals (Siebs 1901: 1185, Hoekstra & Tigchelaar 2014, Kümmel 2014) or **-xt*, e.g. OFri. *bed* 'bed', *fane* 'peat', *frucht* 'fruit' < PWGmc. **badi*, **fani*, **fruxti*.

The relevance of the gradualness of *i*-mutation as conditioned by the three factors, described under point (1-5), has – to the best of my knowledge – not been addressed by other scholars except by De Vaan (see point 3 above). Apocope of short *-i* before the application of *i*-mutation – as in (4) – is the rule in Continental West Germanic. The impact of consonantal blocking environments – as mentioned under (5) – is well known from Upper High German, e.g. *Innsbruck* (not **-brück*). Significantly, the Dutch language area seems to be on the cross-roads of these diversified tendencies. The paper will address the geographical configuration of this varied impact of *i*-mutation, with a special emphasis on the Low Countries, which have been the contact zone between North Sea Germanic Frisian and Continental (Low) Franconian.

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Elzbieta Adamczyck
Bergische Universität Wuppertal

Plural inflection in varieties of Dutch: Patterns of restructuring and geographical redistribution

Despite their close genetic affiliation, the Northern West Germanic languages, i.e. Dutch, Frisian, English and Low German, followed partly divergent paths with respect to the development of their nominal inflection. Although the overall diachronic tendency towards gradual reduction in the declensional diversity (inherited from the common ancestor) is discernible in all of them, the outcome of the extensive analogical developments varies across individual languages and dialects. The divergent restructuring patterns found in the earliest material from English and Frisian on the one hand, and from early Low German and early Dutch on the other, can be attributed to different phonological developments in these languages. Two major phonological processes and the dynamics of interactions between them played a decisive role in the restructuring of the nominal inflection in the mentioned languages: (a) *i*-mutation, with its different scope and chronology across West Germanic; and (b) apocope and weakening (reduction) of final vowels, in particular /i/ > /ə/.

The present study explores the variation in the plural inflection of modern Dutch varieties, focusing on its diachronic development. The aim of the study is to identify and assess the significance of the factors which contributed to the emergence of variation in the examined dialects, especially when seen in the broader Northern West Germanic context. The original diversity of declensional classes, which can be found in the earliest attested stage of Germanic languages (e.g. *a*-stems, *ō*-stems, *s*-stems, *n*-stems, root nouns), is reflected in a varied inventory of plural morphemes in present-day varieties, whose distribution is highly lexical. The gradual confusion and merger of class-specific inflectional markers contributed to a reduction in the diversity of the inherited inflectional plural exponents. With time, the distribution of plural markers tended to become increasingly determined by phonology and gender or was guided by semantics (as in the case of the *s*-stems, representing predominantly agrarian vocabulary, cf. Dammel, Kürschner & Nübling 2010).

Factors that have earlier been recognised as relevant for the variation in plurality patterns in Dutch are primarily phonological in nature and include: *i*-mutation (primary vs. secondary), apocope of schwa and of *-n* following schwa, as well as the emergence of accent (tone) as a contrastive feature (Goossens 1987: 148). The morphologisation of *i*-mutation in early Dutch occurred in compliance with the developments in early High German rather than in Anglo-Frisian. However, in contrast to High German, the effects of *i*-mutation were eliminated from the nominal inflection in the thirteenth century, and consequently they are nearly absent from the present-day Dutch nominal system, except for residues in some (south)eastern dialects of modern Dutch (e.g. Limburgian, Twente dialects), e.g. *voet: vuut* 'feet', *boom*: *beum* 'trees' (Marynissen 1996). This irregular development of *i*-mutation in Dutch has been viewed as an essential feature rendering Dutch distinct from the rest of West Germanic (e.g. Goossens 1988; Buccini 2010; de Vaan 2018), and the germs of this difference can be identified already in the earliest stage of Dutch.

A systematic comparison of the earliest material from Dutch (Old Low Franconian; Adamczyk 2018) with selected modern varieties of Dutch (Limburgian, Hollandish, Twente-dialect; De Schutter et al. 2005) reveals that the retention and emergence of irregular plural patterns is determined by a combination of phonological and non-phonological factors: apart from the extent and chronology of *i*-mutation and the scope of phonological developments in unstressed syllables, the functional strength and salience of inflectional markers as well as frequency of use (lemma frequencies) emerge as relevant. As these factors account for most of the variation in plurality patterns in other Northern West Germanic languages, their validity for Dutch will be evaluated in a comparison with the patterns found in early English, Frisian and Low and High German.

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Stefan Hartmann, University of Bamberg
Tom Bossuyt, University of Freiburg

**Collectivizing metaphors in English, Dutch, and German:
An exploration of corpus landscapes**

This paper presents a corpus-based contrastive analysis of collectivizing metaphors in English, Dutch, and German. We focus on compounds with the head constituents 'world' and 'landscape', e.g. English *media world*/*media landscape*, Dutch *mediawereld*/*medialandschap*, and German *Medienlandschaft*/*Medienwelt*. These uses of 'world' and 'landscape' are interesting for a variety of reasons: Firstly, they experience a steep increase in frequency across all three languages. Secondly, when used as compound constituents as in the examples above, they arguably show similarities to so-called affixoids, having undergone semantic bleaching. Thirdly, the compound patterns compete with syntactic variants such as *world of the media* across all three languages. As such, a comparison between the three languages also harks back to van Haeringen's (1956) question regarding synthetic vs. analytic patterns in the three languages.
In order to investigate these patterns in more detail, we use a number of both standard and non-standard corpora: For standard Dutch, the Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands (CHN), for English, the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and for German, the DWDS Core Corpora of the 20th and 21st centuries. In addition, the COW corpora (Schäfer & Bildhauer 2012, Schäfer 2015) are used to account for innovative, low-frequency, non-standard uses. While our analysis focuses on compound patterns, we also take the syntactic variants like *world of* (*the*) N and *landscape of* (*the*) N into account. Drawing on these data, we address the following research questions: (a) Does the frequency of the patterns develop (roughly) in parallel across the three languages? If so, could this be explained by language contact? (b) Do the patterns develop in parallel across the three languages according to their semantics, or can language-specific tendencies be identified? (c) Which formal and semantic constraints can be observed in the individual languages? (d) Which factors drive the choice between the synthetic and analytic alternatives, and how do these factors intersect across the three languages? In line with the characterization of German as a language with a strong propensity towards compounding (Schlücker 2012), can we find a tendency towards synthetic patterns in German and analytic ones in English, which is traditionally considered more analytic (Nübling 2010), with Dutch being "in-between"? – In sum, our case study can contribute to a more thorough understanding of at least three areas that are highly relevant to a comparison of the "Germanic sandwich" languages English, Dutch, and German: The distribution of synthetic vs. analytic structures, the interaction between constructional variants (alternations) within and across languages, and the question of how these languages might influence each other in the emergence and spread of new constructional patterns.

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Barbara Schlücker
Universität Leipzig

Close apposition in the sandwich

Close apposition, also termed juxtaposition or binominal construction, is a productive pattern in Dutch as well as in German and English. Close appositions often consist of a common noun and a proper name, e.g., *collega Willems*, *provincie Utrecht*, *the river Rhine*, *Bäckermeister Schröder*. This type has received comparatively little attention in the literature on apposition and the noun phrase in general (e.g., Klein 1977, Van de Velde 2009; but see Van Langendonck 2007). It appears, however, that its grammatical status as well as its semantics are far from clear.
Firstly, it is not generally possible to clearly determine which constituent is the head (among other things, this seems to depend on the presence or absence of the determiner, e.g. [*de schilder*$_{\text{HEAD}}$ *Rembrandt*] vs. [*schilder Rembrandt*$_{\text{HEAD}}$] (cf. Van der Horst 2010; Werth 2017)) – or whether there is a head at all. Whereas in German inflection can help to resolve this problem, this is impossible in Dutch and English. Secondly, the grammatical status of the construction is unclear. Close appositions are generally regarded syntactic constructions, but the fact they mostly lack syntactic markers (prepositions and determiners) and are inseparable (**the river long Rhine*), both like morphological and unlike syntactic constructions, shows that this categorization is far from obvious (note, however, examples such as *de rivier de Amstel*, *the city of London*).
These problems hold for Dutch as well as for German and English. In addition, the literature on Dutch has occasionally mentioned another, special type (cf. den Hertog 1973, E-ANS 1997, Broekhuis & Dikken 2012), e.g., *de wet-Cooremans, de kwestie-Irak, het verslag-Haug, het pakket-Monti*. It has been suggested that this type "comes pretty close to a compound" (Broekhuis & Dikken 2012: 641), which is also indicated by the use of the hyphen. However, the exact properties that distinguish this alleged subtype from "regular" close apposition are rather uncertain. Is it a mere orthographic variant? If not, how exactly is it different both from other types of close apposition and from compounding proper (e.g. *de Kok-map* vs. *de map-Kok*), also from a semantic point of view? Is the construction restricted to lexemes such as *wet, regering, commissie*, or is it freely available?
The paper discusses the grammatical status of close apposition in general as well as the idea of a special subgroup of the type *wet-Cooremans*. To this end, the Dutch constructions are compared with English and German. In addition to comparing the structural properties in the three languages, translation equivalents from the EUROPARL corpus (Koehn 2005) are used to establish the idea that instead of one construction there is rather a series of related constructions with varying morphological, syntactic and semantic properties. English, Dutch, German differ with respect to the kind of (close) appositional construction types that are available as well as the use of competing alternative constructions (e.g., compounds, genitives, PP constructions; cf. *de kwestie-Jeruzalem – the Jerusalem question – die Frage Jerusalems*). In sum, the idea of a network of related, overlapping constructions is taken as evidence for the idea of a continuum between the lexicon and syntax.

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