

## The spread of the reflexive adjunct middle in the Limburg dialects: 1885-1994

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### 0. Introduction

It is intriguing that in Standard Dutch, unlike other Germanic languages such as English and German, a special kind of a middle construction shows up, namely the so-called adjunct middle in (1).<sup>1</sup> In general, it is assumed that the adjunct middle has the following characteristics: (i) the logical subject argument is syntactically absent but semantically present, (ii) the grammatical subject, such as *deze zaal* 'this hall' in (1a), denotes a location and (iii) the adverb, such as *gemakkelijk* 'easily', has to be present (if there is no focus intonation or negation) (cf. Hoekstra&Roberts (henceforth: H&R) 1993, Ackema&Schoorlemmer (henceforth: A&S) 1994/95) and Keyser&Roepers 1984); SD = Standard Dutch):

- (1) SD    a. Dezezaal zingt gemakkelijk  
               this hall sings easily  
           SD    b. Dit bed slaapt gemakkelijk  
                   this bed sleeps easily

Interestingly, in Standard Dutch another kind of construction exists which is at first sight similar to the adjunct middle in (1), namely the instrumental construction in (2). In (2), however, the grammatical subject does not denote a location, but an instrument:

- (2) SD    Dezeinkt schrijft goed  
               this ink writes well

An interesting issue that arises is to what extent the instrumental construction in (2) corresponds to the adjunct middle in (1). Recently, the two kinds of constructions have been discussed by H&R and A&S. In A&S, it has been proposed that in the instrumental construction the logical subject argument is not syntactically present, as is the case in the adjunct middle. In H&R, however, it has been argued that in the instrumental construction the logical subject argument is realized as the grammatical subject. Thus, A&S's proposal differs from H&R's proposal in that in the former but not in the latter the two constructions are analyzed on a par and, hence, they have a similar underlying structure. It is relevant to note that since in Standard Dutch the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle have similar surface structures they do not provide direct clues for one of the two proposals.

It is noteworthy, however, that some language varieties of Dutch, e.g. the Limburg dialects, show morphological marking in middle constructions. This is shown in the following example of an impersonal middle taken from the Limburg dialect. (3) indicates that this dialect differs from Standard Dutch in that it makes use of the reflexive *zich*. Generally, it is assumed that in the impersonal middle, like (3), (i) the pronoun

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`t`it' is an expletive subject and (ii) in addition to the adverb *lekker`nicely'* (cf. (1)), the locational PP, such as *op dizze stoel`on this chair'* is obligatorily present (SD = Standard Dutch, LD = Limburg dialect):

(3) \*SD/LD `t            zit    zich    lekker    opdizze stoel  
                   it<sub>expl</sub>    sits    REFLnicely    onthis            chair

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether in the Limburg dialects the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle have an identical underlying structure (cf. A&S) or not (cf. H&R), or rather, to what extent the dialects of Limburg distinguish between the adjunct middle and the instrumental construction by means of the reflexive *zich*. In order to get a better insight into the syntactic properties of the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle in the dialects of the province of Limburg I will describe their geographical distribution in 1885 and the changes in it between 1885 and 1994 (cf. section 1).<sup>2</sup>

With respect to the Limburg dialects, I will demonstrate that (i) all middle constructions require the reflexive *zich*, (ii) since 1885 the instrumental construction has undergone a syntactic change such that it has become a reflexive middle construction and (iii) from a geographical and chronological point of view the adjunct middle in (1) follows the impersonal middle in (3) (cf. section 2). We will see that neither the proposal of H&R nor the proposal of A&S can fully account for the diachronic data we will encounter. This paper will be concluded with a possible analysis that (i) accounts for the presence of *zich* in the middles in the Limburg dialects and (ii) accounts for the geographical and chronological implicational relationship between the adjunct and impersonal middle in the Limburg dialects.

## 1.0. The geographical distribution of the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle in the dialects of Limburg in 1885 and 1994

In this section, I will present a detailed geographical distribution of the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle, based largely on data from the Limburg dialects but also taking into consideration data from the surrounding dialects in Belgium (Flemish) and Germany (Rhineland) (cf. Cornips 1995). In order to gain a better insight into the syntactic properties of the instrumental construction and the adjunct middle, I will first describe their geographical distribution in 1885; subsequently I will outline the 1994 state of affairs.

1.1 *The instrumental construction and adjunct middle in 1885.* With respect to the instrumental construction based on the verb *schrijven`write'* the geographical distribution can be described as follows. First, the Flemish and Limburg dialects only use the instrumental construction as is exemplified in (4). Note that this construction is the Standard Dutch variant (cf. (2), Fl = Flemish):

(4) 1885 Fl Hasselt    a. Dieën    aenkt    schrif            gout  
       1885 LD Maastricht    b. Deen    ink        shrief            good  
       1885LD Helden    c. Daen    ink        schriefe    gôd  
                                                           this        ink            writes    well

Secondly, in the Rhineland dialects two variants of the instrumental construction show up. The most frequent one is the Standard Dutch variant as illustrated in (5a). Strikingly, there are, however, two out of twenty-seven places that combine the instrumental construction with the reflexive *zich*, namely Düsseldorf and Grevenbroich, as shown in (5b,c). Note that neither Standard Dutch nor Standard German (cf. Fagan 1992) allows this reflexive instrumental construction. (Later, I will discuss these reflexive variants in more detail, RD = Rhineland dialect):

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(5)	1885	RD	Aachen	a.	Der	Enk	schrief			got
	1885	RD	Düsseldorf	b.	Di	Tint	shrift	<i>zich</i>	jot	
	1885	RD	Grevenbroich	c.	Da	enk	schrif		<i>zich</i>	god
						this	ink	writes	REFL	well

If we concentrate on the Limburg dialects, the data so far show that in these dialects the instrumental construction is construed similar to Standard Dutch. Let us turn now to the geographical distribution of the adjunct middle.

The geographical distribution of the adjunct middle differs considerably from the instrumental construction in that (i) more variants show up and (ii) the different variants are restricted to certain areas.

Again, the Flemish dialects only use the Standard Dutch adjunct middle:

(6)	1885	Fl	Zoutleeuw	a.	Deë	zoal	zingtgemäkkelek			
	1885	Fl	Tienen	b.	Deeë	zoäl	zingtlicht			
						this	hall	singseasily		

In contrast, the Limburg and Rhineland dialects use the reflexive impersonal middle, as is illustrated in (7a) and (7b,c), respectively (cf. (3)). Note that the expletive *et* in the Rhineland dialects is, just as 'impersonal middle' *es* in Standard German, not only restricted to sentence-initial position in main declarative clauses. This kind of expletive corresponds to Standard German *es* that has a distribution similar to referential subjects (Fagan 1992:45) or the Standard Dutch expletive *het*:

(7)	1885	LD (north)	Posterholt	a.	In	dej	zaal		zingt	't	<i>zich</i>	
			goed									
	1885	RD	Lechenich	b.	En	däne	sal	sengt	et	<i>sich</i>		god
	1885	RD	Aachen	c.	Ine	der	zaal		singt	et	<i>sich</i>	
			gemäckl.									
						in	this	hall		sings	it	
									REFL	easily		

Furthermore, in the Rhineland dialects also the constructions in (8) occasionally show up. Interestingly, in contrast to the indispensable 'impersonal middle' *es* in Standard German, these impersonal middles lack the expletive subject. Of course, constructions like (8) are only grammatical if the expletive element does not occupy the first position in the sentence (cf. (3)):

(8)	1885	RD	Cranenburg	a.	In	den	zâl	zingt				
			<i>zich</i> licht									
	1885	RD	Steele a/d Ruhrb.		In	dann	zal	zingt				
			<i>zich</i> godd									
	1885	RD	Waldfeucht	c.	En	det	bett	shliëpt				
			<i>zech</i> good									
	1885	RD	Kempen	d.	En	det	bet	shloep			<i>zich</i>	jut
						in	this	hall/bed	sings/sleeps		REFL	
												easily

Strikingly, the Limburg and Rhineland dialects do not only use the reflexive impersonal middle but in these dialects also the reflexive adjunct middle arises:

(9)	1885	LD (north)	Helden	a.	Dae	zâl	zinkt	<i>zich</i>		gôd
	1885	LD (north)	Stevensweert	b.	Die	zâl	zink	<i>zig</i>		lig





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reflexive impersonal middle, the reflexive adjunct middle and the reflexive instrumental construction? I will address these questions in the following section.

### 2.0 Towards a possible analysis of the reflexive adjunct middle

2.1 *The presence of zich.* From the above, it is obvious that in 1885 (i) the northern Limburg dialects distinguished the adjunct middle from the instrumental construction by means of the reflexive *zich* and (ii) in the southern dialects, in contrast to the (reflexive) adjunct middle, the instrumental construction was fully grammatical. With respect to the reflexive, the contrast between the adjunct middle and the instrumental construction can be accounted for if we assume that the implicit argument in middles is reflected morphologically in the Limburg dialects, that is to say, that *zich* manifests the absorption of the logical subject (where absorption should be taken to be neutral with regard to the various theoretical instantiations of this phenomenon) (cf. Zubizarreta 1987, Hulk & Cornips (henceforth: H&C) 1994). If the assumption given above is on the right track, it does not come as a surprise that in the Limburg dialects *zich* shows up in other kinds of constructions in which it is generally assumed that an implicit argument is present too, for example, in impersonal passives and inchoative constructions, such as (14a) and (14b), respectively (cf. Cornips & Hulk 1996) (HD= Heerlen Dutch):

- (14) Heerlen Dialect a. 't weëd *zich* gewessje  
EXPLwas REFL washed  
 HD b. De papieren waaien *zich* uit de doos  
the papers blow REFL out the box

Furthermore, we can account for the absence of the reflexive *zich* in the instrumental construction if we assume that this kind of construction lacks an implicit argument, that is to say, its grammatical subject must be analyzed as the logical subject. According to H&R (1993:218), this assumption is supported by the following observations. The contrasts in (15) and (16) indicate that in Dutch the verb in the instrumental construction differs from the verb in the adjunct middle in that (i) it can be combined with a different kind of adverb, for example *dik* 'thick' and (ii) it can be construed as a transitive verb, e.g. with a direct object, such as *de letter o* in (15a) and (16a), respectively (cf. H&R 1993: 218):

- (15) a. Deze inkt schrijft dik/goed  
 b. Deze stoel zit (\*dik)/goed  
this ink/chairwrites/sits thick/well
- (16) a. Deze inkt schrijft de letter o goed  
this ink writes the letter o well  
 b. \*Deze zaal zingt een lied goed  
this hall sings a song well

Let us turn now to the question of the diachronic development of the instrumental construction without a reflexive in 1885 into a construction with a reflexive in 1994. This syntactic change can be explained if we assume that the (transitive) verb in the instrumental construction which can be argued to project the logical subject argument into syntax has undergone 'middle formation' since 1885 and as a result a reflexive variant has emerged. So the idea is that nowadays the reflexive instrumental construction and the adjunct middle can be treated on a par. If the reflexive instrumental construction (cf. (12b), (13b)) is indeed comparable to adjunct middles, we would expect it to have other properties of adjunct middles as well, i.e. we would expect that it leads to an ungrammatical result if we combine it (i) with a different kind of adverb or (ii) with a direct object (cf. (15)-(16)). As is illustrated by means of the ungrammatical examples in (17a) and (17b), respectively, this expectation is borne out. Thus, the occurrence of *zich* goes hand in hand with a process of detransitivation or medialisation:

- (17) 1994 HD a. Dezeinkt schrijft (?\**zich*) dik  
                   this ink writes REFL thick  
                   1994 HD b. Dezeinkt schrijft (\**zich*) deletter o dik  
                                   this ink writes REFL the letter o thick

Crucially, *zich* does not only manifests the absorption of the logical subject but it also acts as an aspectual marker (cf. H&C 1994). To see this, compare the following adjunct middles in Standard Dutch and Heerlen Dutch. The presence of *zich* in the (b)-sentences determines the event structure for the entire sentence, namely presentational aspect. First, the ungrammaticality of (18b) indicates that, as opposed to (18a), the reflexive middle only allows the present tense. Secondly, unlike (19a), it leads to an ungrammatical result to combine the adjunct middle in (19b) with a durative adverb, such as *altijd* 'always'. Hence, the reflexive in the adjunct middle alters (sub) parts of events that are characterized by the verb:

- (18) SD a. Deze schoenen hebben lekker gelopen  
           HD b. ?\*Dezeschoenen hebben *zich* lekker gelopen  
                   these shoes have REFL nicely walked  
  
 (19) SD a. Dezeschoenen lopen *altijd* lekker  
           HD b. Dezeschoenen lopen *zich* (?\**altijd*) lekker  
                   theseshoes walk REFL always nicely

Given the assumption that the reflexive instrumental construction is structurally identical to the adjunct middle, we would expect the same contrasts show up. As (20) and (21) demonstrate, this expectation is indeed correct:

- (20) SD a. Deze pen heeft goedgeschreven  
           HD b. ?\*Dezepen heeft*zich* goedgeschreven  
                   this pen has REFL well written  
  
 (21) SD a. Dezepen schrijft *altijd* goed  
           HD b. Dezepen schrijft *zich* (?\**altijd*) goed  
                   this pen writes REFL always well

The fact that *zich* alters the aspectual and temporal properties of the entire sentence and not only the Aktionsart of the verb can be accounted for if we tentatively assume that *zich* indicates a functional projection AspPhrase which must be outside the VP (cf. H&C 1994 for a more extensive discussion whether *zich* is the aspectual head or it occupies the SpecAspP position). The relevant part of the structure is: [<sub>ASPP</sub> *zich* [<sub>VP</sub>...

2.2 *The derivation of the adjunct middle.* Recall that we still have to account for why, chronologically, the reflexive impersonal middle precedes the reflexive adjunct middle and this latter, in its turn, precedes the reflexive instrumental construction (cf. table 1 and 2). Let us propose that this implicational relationship can be accounted for if we assume that (i) the adjunct middle is created on the basis of the existing reflexive impersonal middle and that (ii) this creation has become productive to such an extent that the instrumental construction has undergone middle formation and as a result a reflexive variant has emerged. To this end, consider the two kinds of middles in the following (a)- and (b)-sentences. As is clear from (22), the impersonal middle requires the preposition whereas in the corresponding adjunct middle the subject NP shows up without this preposition:

- (22) a. it-EXPL V REFL ADV P NP  
           a' Het slaapt *zich* goed in dit bed  
           a''Het schrijft *zich* goed met die pen

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b.NP		V		refl	ADV
b' Dit	bed	slaapt	<i>zich</i>	goed	
b"Deze	inkt	schrijft	<i>zich</i>	goed	

According to H&R the relationship between the impersonal middle and the adjunct middle is to some extent similar to the Dutch complex adjective constructions with the frame `it is PP nice for to V' and `NP is nice for to V', as demonstrated in (23a) and (23b), respectively. These constructions share the same property as the middles in (22), that is to say, the (a)-sentence requires the preposition while in the (b)-sentence the subject NP shows up without the preposition:

(23)	a.	Het	is	in	Amsterdam	leuk	om	te	wonen	
		it	is	in	Amsterdam	nice	for	to	live	
		b.	Amsterdam	is	leuk	om	te	wonen		
			Amsterdam	is	nice	for	to	live		

However, it seems that this relationship does not hold more generally. If it is indeed the case that the complex adjective constructions like (23) share the same property as the middles in (22), we would expect them to express the same relationship with other verbs that have the frame `V-PP' as well. As can be seen from (24b) and (25b), this expectation is not borne out for the (b)-examples still require the locational preposition:

(24)	a.	Het	is	in	deze zaal	prettig	om	te	zingen	
		it	is	in	this	hall	nice	for	to	sing
		b.	Deze zaal	is	prettig	om	*(in)te	zingen		
			this	hall	is	nice	for	in	to	sing

  

(25)	a.	Het	is	in	dit bed	prettig	om	te	slapen	
		it	is	in	this	bed	nice	for	to	sleep
		b.	Dit	bed	is	prettig	om	*(in)te	slapen	
			this	bed	is	nice	for	in	to	sleep

It is for this reason that I assume that the creation of the adjunct middle can be accounted for if we partially adopt the proposal by A&S in which the adjunct middle is derived from an underlying PP by means of incorporation of the  $P_{loc/instr}$  into the verb, as is illustrated in (26). The process of incorporation accounts for the facts that (i) the preposition in the impersonal middle really `disappears' in the adjunct middle, (ii) the NP subject is still interpreted as a location or instrument as a result of function composition by which the verb expresses the combined semantics of the verb and the  $P_{loc/instr}$  (cf. A&S) and (iii) unlike the impersonal middle, it is only possible to derive the adjunct middle if some syntactic requirements are met (see (28) - (29) below).

(26)	a.	V...	[ $PP$	[ $P_{loc/instr}$	NP]]
		b.	V + $P_{loc/instr}$	[ $PP$	[ $t_p$ NP]]

According to A&S, incorporation takes place at a presyntactic level and it has to take place if the logical subject is semantically arbitrary and as a result, cannot project in syntax. By incorporation, the NP embedded in the PP becomes the argument of the complex verb (cf. (26b)), and, since there is no other NP-argument available at LCS this NP is projected as an external argument. In the Limburg dialects, there is, however, no *a priori* reason why incorporation has to take place at a presyntactic level since the Limburg dialects express middle constructions morphologically. Note also that A&S (1993:69) `expect that in a language where a middle construction is not marked morphologically (as opposed to passives, LC) it is derived presyntactically'. Consequently, I assume that in the Limburg dialects the process of incorporation will take place at the syntactic level. Thus, the adjunct middle is derived by incorporation of  $P_{loc/instr}$  into the verb. Since in the impersonal middle the PP is obligatorily present it is rather clear that this PP is a complement of the verb in which the preposition incorporates (cf. A&S 1994:85 for a more extensive discussion). By incorporation, the complement

of the preposition turns into a direct object of the complex verb. What is more, since the Limburg dialects mark both passives and middles morphologically it can be argued that, as in passives, this object becomes the grammatical subject by means of NP-movement to receive nominative case. Note that in the Limburg dialects the verb can always assign (abstract) dative case both in the impersonal and in the adjunct middle. However, only the element *zich*, unlike a lexical NP, is able to absorb this dative case:

- (27) a. \*Hetslaapt Piet<sub>dat.</sub> goedin dit bed  
           it sleeps Piet well in this bed  
       b. \*Jan slaapt dit bed<sub>dat.</sub> goed  
           Jan sleeps this bed well

Furthermore, consider the following relative clauses in which the relative pronoun *waar* 'where' has been extracted from the PP (so-called R-extraction, cf. Van Riemsdijk 1978). Only if the PP is an adjunct does it constitute a barrier for R-extraction whereas it is fully grammatical if the PP is an argument, as can be seen in (28a) and (29a), respectively. Consequently, incorporation or deriving an adjunct middle is blocked if the PP is an adjunct (cf. (26b)). From this, we may probably conclude that extraction of the prepositional head of the PP<sub>loc/instr</sub> should be allowed for, too.

- (28) a. ??het restaurant waar<sub>i</sub> het prettig [<sub>pp</sub>in *t<sub>i</sub>*] eet  
           the restaurant where it nicely in eat  
       b. ??Dit restaurant eet prettig  
           this restaurant eats nicely

- (29) a. het bed waar<sub>i</sub> het prettig [<sub>pp</sub>in *t<sub>i</sub>*] slaapt  
           the bed where it nicely in sleeps  
       b. Dit bed slaapt prettig  
           this bed sleeps nicely

From the above, we may conclude that in the Limburg dialects a syntactic rule of incorporation is allowed if (i) the PP is the verbal complement and (ii) if the NP is the complement of the locative or instrumental P. In that case, incorporation or middle formation creates an adjunct middle out of an underlying locative or instrumental preposition.

### 3.0 Conclusion

In this paper I have presented syntactic changes that have taken place in the dialects of Limburg between 1885 and 1994. The most important change is that incorporation or middle formation which creates an adjunct middle out of a locative and instrumental PP has become a productive process such that this rule comes to cover a larger area, in particular, (i) the adjunct middle with *zich*, e.g. the northern Limburg variant, has expanded to the south and further to the north and (ii) the instrumental construction has come to undergo middle formation and as a result a reflexive variant has emerged.

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