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## Genus en naamwoordverplaatsing in het Westvlaams

## **Abstract**

Gender and N-movement in West Flemish

The variation in word order between English (1a) and Italian (1b) has been interpreted in terms of DP-internal head-movement.

(1) a. English a white cat b. Italian un gatto bianco \*a cat white \*un bianco gatto

Based on work by Harris (1991), Bernstein (1993) argues that the trigger for leftward N-movement rests in the presence or absence of the terminal vowel on N, which marks gender or noun-class. Typically, Italian masculine nouns end in -o and feminine nouns end in -a. For languages with overt gender marking of this kind she postulates a DP-internal functional head wM (word marker). The availability of wM correlates with (i) indefinite N ellipsis and (ii) N-movement. She postulates that Romance languages have the head wM, while Germanic languages lack wM.

WF data show that the correlation between the availability of a terminal vowel, i.e. the functional head WM, and lower N-movement cannot be maintained. The language lacks lower N-movement:

(2) a. een zwarte katte b. \*een katte zwart(e) a black cat a cat black

In Bernstein's approach, absence of N-movement in WF, as displayed in (2a,b), would correlate with absence of the WM/terminal vowel. However, in WF there is a systematic correlation between the final schwa and feminine gender. Indeed, the WF evidence for a WM head is more robust than that provided by Bernstein in support of the WM in French. (3) illustrates a minimal pair, where terminal -e is pronounced [2].

(3) a. *bom* masc 'bottom' b. *bomme* fem 'bomb'

My conclusion is that presence of terminal vowels as such cannot be the trigger for N-movement.