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De genusclassificatie in het Hollandse Reisjournaal van Jan Martensz. Merens uit 1600

Summary

As regards Dutch dialects around 1600 one cannot base a description of the gender system on the inflection of the noun or the use of third person singular personal pronouns. Only the inflectional forms of the adnominals mark the gender of the related singular nouns.

In studying all adnominal inflectional forms the different usage ratios of the four cases become clear. The accusative in preposition groups covers 48% of all occurrences. The nominative and the accusative with direct object function cover about 30 and 20%, respectively. The genitive and dative each represent only 1%. Clearly, the frequency of the accusative form is the highest.

In the past the main point of discussion was the question: do the dialects in Holland have a two-gender or a three-gender system? In this paper I explain that in Merens' North-Hollandish dialect we find a much more complex gender system. Taking the gender attribution of the adnominal forms as the starting-point, I found that in 47% of the occurrences the adnominal words did not provide any contribution to a gender division of the nouns. So the whole classification is in fact based on 53%.

In 13% of all occurrences the definite article *het* ('the') and the demonstratives *dit* ('this') and *dat* ('that') assign neutral gender, also called *het*-gender. The other 40% mark 'non-neutral' gender, divided up into nearly 30% *de*-gender, the merger of the old masculine and feminine genders, and about 10% *den*-gender, the old masculine gender. The old feminine gender (less than 1%) exists only as a relic and can be ignored.