**PlaCiG review of The R-pronoun and postposition waar-mee in Dutch**

This is a very clearly written paper which makes a rather simple empirical point well: that the distribution of R-pronouns with met/mee is sensitive to constituency and then goes on to provide a neat and intuitive account of the alternation within a nanosyntax framework. The focus is narrowly on Dutch but other languages are also briefly discussed where they display similar or related phenomena in an enlightening way and the analysis is mainly admirably explicit. The connection to case is that it is ultimately the case-neutral nature of inanimate pronouns that makes them special (I think, though see below).

The paper should certainly be accepted with minor revisions. My only reservations are that:

(i) there are some aspects of the analysis which need to be better justified.

For example, the claim in footnote 10 that it is not crucial whether ‘t realizes a case feature or not seems not to be true to me. It is crucial that ‘t realizes features not contained in the structures realised by ‘r, otherwise ‘r would not be favoured over ‘t in the relevant scenario. If case is not the relevant feature then I guess it could be Σ. But why is Σ lacking from ‘r? Is ‘r not a weak pronoun? This needs to be discussed and justified. Independently justifying the structures for ‘t and ‘r would make the proposal much stronger.

While I generally found Section 4 very clear and easy to follow, I think it would be good to show at the end why animate pronouns are different from inanimates to complete the circle. What is it that leads to the last resort creation of a complex specifier leading *met* to be inserted rather than a structure triggering *mee* being created. Presumably animate pronouns contain Σ, so the problem must be to do with the insertion context for the animate pronoun. I imagine that this is probably just because ‘re cannot realise an animate pronoun but this should be illustrated for completeness. In fact, this is more in need of being spelled out than (65), as the difference in constituency is straightforward by comparison.

(ii) there are some unstated assumptions in the paper that should be made explicit (about word order, movement, case, as mentioned page by page below. Making these more explicit should be simple enough.

In what follows, I list some comments/questions followed by a list of minor issues. I would

**Comments**

P2

“This last observation has so far remained unexplained.” Why by? Here I think you should cite some of the works that have discussed R-pronouns but which do not discuss *mee*.

P2

“The main generalization is that the instrumental R-pronoun and postposition waar-mee ‘with what’ takes precedence over the instrumental preposition and inanimate pronoun met wat ‘with what’. This generalization is subject to an important condition: the instrumental object needs to form a proper constituent i.e. a constituent to the exclusion of other features. When this condition is not met, the preposition and pronoun appear.”

I think before stating this, it needs to be mentioned that *met wat* does actually appear in some contexts in Dutch (as shown in section 2.2). Without this knowledge, the generalisation, as stated, makes little sense to the reader.

P3

“(5d) shows that the R-pronoun has moved obligatorily to the left of the adposition.”

Stricly speaking (5d) doesn’t really show that there is actually movement. What (5d) shows is merely that the R-pronoun precedes the adposition. I think it would be better to remain theory neutral while describing the phenomenon.

P4

“In sum, ’t ‘it’ and wat ‘what’ do not combine with prepositions. They are substituted by respectively ’r ‘there’ and waar ‘where’.”

This is not quite right as R-pronouns do not occur with prepositions. The summary needs to be reworded to reflect this.

P5

“two different cases” – What is the reason for calling these things cases rather than two different categories? Isn’t the instrument just an adjunct here? It is later stated that the same verb can take an accusative object too, so this does not seem to be anything to do with case. It becomes clear later on that this is because of the theoretical assumptions of the author. From a nanosyntax perspective there is no distinction between adpositions and cases and so with is considered a case. That is a coherent position but I would encourage the author to explain the facts in more neutral terms here.

P10

What evidence is there that Dutch has a dative case, given the examples in (26b-c)? Couldn’t the examples with ditransitives just be double object constructions with two accusatives? This does not really alter the point being made that animate pronouns display case alternations that the 3s inanimate does not, of course. Footnote 10 is also relevant in this regard.

P12

Why does location contain thing? Maybe a sentence of two of justification could be added for this as it is crucial to the analysis.

The preposition/postposition hierarchy in (38) seems to be a version of the Final-over-Final Constraint, so this may be a more general constraint on representations/spellout configurations.

P14

It needs to be clearly stated here that the author is assuming an Antisymmetric approach to word order whereby head-finality is necessarily triggered by movement.

Footnote 12 “In (i), the movement of the adposition is driven by movement” Is this a typo? It is not clear what it means. More generally, I think it might be wiser for the author to remain more open-minded regarding the correct analysis of these variable adpositions. Using a footnote to claim that there are two kinds of movement only raises questions really.

P15

“There is variation with respect to how high a DP can move in the structure”

But actually the variation which follows is between pronouns vs. full DPs not between how high something moves. How is this kind of variation captured in the approach? Isn’t this about the size of DPs/pronouns, not about how high they move? This is unclear. The Dutch case is more clearly a case of size mattering.

P16

“The crucial difference between animates and inanimates if gender features.”

This claim needs to be motivated in some way, as this is by no means intuitive. In many languages, inanimates have gender too. Is this a language-specific proposal? It needs to be justified.

“So far I discussed -mee is a postposition, which follows ’r and is stored with a unary bottom. Met, on the other hand, is a preposition, it precedes ’t, so it should be stored with a binary bottom. The highest case feature ’t can realize is f3, so the preposition realizes f4. I give the lexical entry for met in (44).”

This only makes sense after reading section 4. At this point in the paper, it is not at all clear why a preposition would involve a binary structure and a postposition a unuary one. The binary/unary foot/bottom distinction in general needs a little more explanation (but maybe this should be kept for section 4). It seems that movement of a complement leads to radical deletion of that complement and hence a unuary bottom, contrary to what one might expect under the copy theory of movement, whereas unuary heads can essentially become binary specifiers as a last resort. I imagine that this is necessary in order to maintain phrasal spellout. These assumptions come from the Nanosyntax literature, of course, and so do not require detailed justification, but they should be better explained in the terms of that theoretical approach (probably in section 4 though, rather than here).

P20, fn16

“This picture resembles the proposal of (Abels, 2003) in that not the whole complement of P is moved but only a part is subextracted.”

Is this really true? The comp-to-spec movement here appears to be the kind of movement that he claims is ruled out by anti-locality. The non-syntactic nature of the movement may mean that this is not a problem but I think it is not true that the movement itself is compatible with Abel’s anti-locality (unless I am misunderstanding something).

P24

The final point about adpositions that have the same form as prepositions and postpositions (with R-pronouns) could be omitted. It is an obvious problem for the proposal but the proposed solution remains opaque (to me at least). Might it be better to merely raise it as a remaining issue and leave it at that?