

The Language Situation in the Low Countries

Lecture 3. Essentials of the Dutch language | Syntax

Pavel Rudnev
University of Groningen
p.rudnev@rug.nl

3rd March 2016

Last week

- ▶ intro to syntax
 - ▶ building blocks of syntax
 - ▶ linear order *vs.* hierarchical structure
- ▶ essentials of Dutch syntax
 - ▶ notation: glosses
 - ▶ parts of speech
 - ▶ word order
 - ▶ main *vs.* embedded clauses
 - ▶ verb clusters
 - ▶ grammatical categories and processes
 - ▶ R-pronominalisation (time permitting)

Aims for today

- ▶ R-pronominalisation
- ▶ history of Dutch (part 1)
 - ▶ *i.e.* before beginning of standardisation in 17th century

R-pronominalisation (again)

Dutch prepositions

(I) *van in met tussen voor tegen uit achter ...*
of in with between (be)for(e) against out behind ...

R-pronominalisation (again)

Preposition + noun phrase

- (2) a. *voor mij* b. *voor mijn* c.
for me for my
dochter
daughter
voor haar
for her

- ▶ prepositions appear to be able to combine with both full noun phrases (2b) and pronouns (2a,c)

R-pronominalisation

An apparent exception: non-human 3rd person

- (3) a. *Ik sta voor de spiegel / het raam.*
I stand in.front.of the mirror the window
'I'm standing in front of the mirror/window.'
- b. **Ik sta voor het / dat / dit.*
I stand in.front.of it that this
- c. *Ik sta ervoor.*
I stand R.in.front.of
'I'm standing in front of it.'

R-pronominalisation (again)

What counts as an R-pronoun?

- ▶ *er* '(t)here', *hier* 'here' and *daar* 'there'
- ▶ *waar* 'where'
- ▶ *ergens* 'somewhere/anywhere'
- ▶ *nergens* 'nowhere'
- ▶ *overal* 'everywhere'

But in the context of R-pronominalisation they lose their locative meaning:

- ▶ *er/hier/daarvoor* 'before it/that'
- ▶ *waarvoor* 'before what'
- ▶ *ergens voor* 'before something'
- ▶ *nergens voor* 'before nothing'
- ▶ *overal voor* 'before everything'

R-pronominalisation (again)

A couple of examples:

- (4) a. *Moet je overal een vergunning voor aanvragen?*
must you everywhere a permit for request.INF
'Does one have to request a permit for everything?'
- b. *Waar denkt hij nu aan?*
where thinks he now at
'What is he now thinking about?'
- c. *Ik weet [waar (dat) hij nu aan denkt]*
I know.PRS.SG where that he now at thinks
'I know what he is now thinking about.'

R-pronominalisation (again)

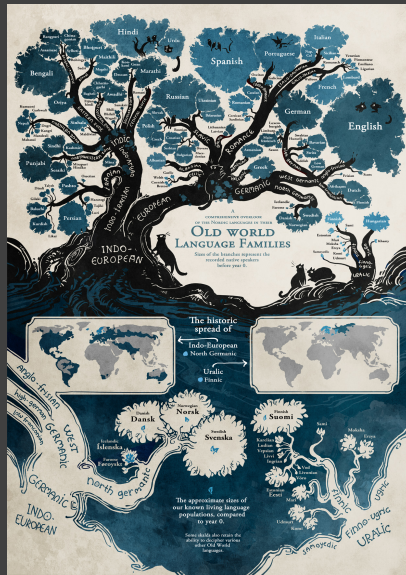
- ▶ R-pronominalisation interacts with restrictions on word order in main and embedded clauses.

R-pronominalisation (again)

- ▶ the restrictions are far more complex than what we've seen
- ▶ see the corresponding sections of Taalportaal for details

The history of Dutch

- ▶ recall the Indo-European tree we saw earlier:



The history of Dutch

- ▶ or just the relevant branches:



Figure 2: Modern Germanic languages

The history of Dutch

- ▶ several questions raised by the tree
 1. How does one arrive at something comparable?
 2. What are the starting assumptions?
 3. What are the steps involved?
- ▶ the comparative method
 - ▶ relatedness (typically in familial terms)
 - ▶ sound change

The history of Dutch

Historical sound change

- ▶ has no memory
- ▶ ignores grammar
- ▶ has no true exceptions
- ▶ is unstoppable

The history of Dutch

heart and its cognates

- ▶ in other Germanic languages
 - ▶ Dutch: *hart*
 - ▶ German: *Herz*
 - ▶ Icelandic: *hjarta* etc.
- ▶ in Italic languages
 - ▶ Latin, Catalan, Portuguese: *cor*
 - ▶ French: *cœur*
 - ▶ Spanish: *cuerdo*
- ▶ in Greek: *kardiá*
- ▶ in Balto-Slavic
 - ▶ Russian: *śerdcē*
 - ▶ Latvian: *sirds*

Proto-Indo-European: *k'éṛ*

The history of Dutch

- ▶ Old Dutch
- ▶ Middle Dutch
 - ▶ Flemish
 - ▶ Brabantian
 - ▶ Hollandic
 - ▶ Limburgish
 - ▶ Low Saxon

Language profile: Old Dutch (aka Old Low Franconian)

What?

- ▶ the set of Franconian (or Frankish) dialects

Where?

- ▶ historical counterparts of what's now
 - ▶ southern Netherlands
 - ▶ northern Belgium
 - ▶ part of northern France
 - ▶ parts of Lower Rhine and Westphalia
- ▶ not in northern and eastern Dutch provinces

When?

- ▶ from ca. 5th to 12th century

Language profile: Old Dutch (aka Old Low Franconian)

Who by?

- ▶ descendants of the Salian Franks
 - ▶ *i.e.* western subgroup of early Franks



Language profile: Old Dutch (aka Old Low Franconian)

Phonology

- ▶ final-obstruent devoicing from 2 weeks ago!
 - ▶ *wort* ‘word.NOM’ vs. *wordes* ‘word.GEN’
 - ▶ *gif* ‘give.IMP’ vs. *geuon* ‘give.INF’

Grammar

- ▶ nouns
 - ▶ 4 cases: NOM, ACC, GEN, DAT(cf. modern High German)
 - ▶ 3 genders distributed across 5 declension paradigms
- ▶ verbs
 - ▶ 3 verb endings in the plural (cf. Old High German)
 - ▶ 2 classes of weak verbs (unlike Old High German, which had 3)

Middle Dutch

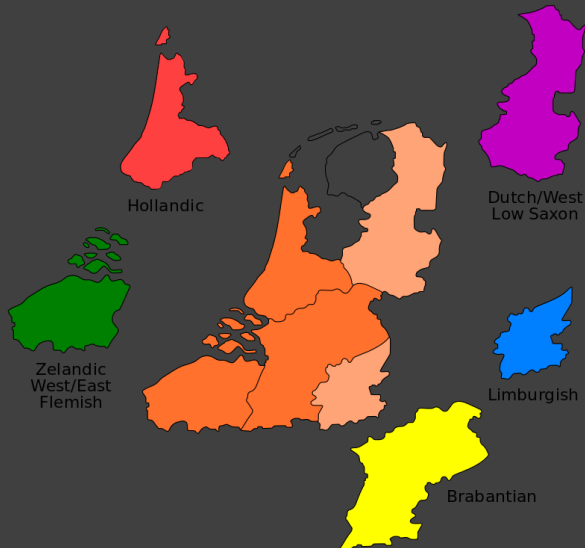


Figure 4: Middle Dutch dialect groups

Next time

- ▶ Middle Dutch
- ▶ Modern Dutch