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Reflexives in dialects of Dutch

0. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that Dutch shows variation in the choice of reflexive pronouns. The properties and the distribution of the weak anaphor *zich* and the strong anaphor *zichzelf* have been discussed in the literature quite extensively (cf. Vat 1980, Everaert 1986, Van der Leek 1987, Koster 1987, Reinhart & Reuland 1993, Reuland 2001). Another issue that has been addressed several times is the fact that Frisian makes use of a different set of anaphors, *him* and *himsels* (cf. Everaert 1991, Koster 1997). In this article we will try to provide an overview of the distribution of the various anaphors in dialects of Dutch. Such an overview is not available in the literature. There are dialect grammars and studies of dialects or dialect areas (cf. Cornips 1994, a.o.), but there is no comprehensive and comparative overview.

Our description of the variation we encounter in the Dutch speaking area (The Netherlands, Flanders and a small region in the north of France) is based on data that have been collected within the framework of the Syntactic Atlas of Dutch Dialects (SAND; <http://www.meertens.nl/projecten/index.html#SAND>). This large project has been initiated in 2000, coordinated by Hans Bennis, Hans den Besten, Magda Devos, Johan Rooryck and Johan Vander Auwera, and carried out under the supervision of Sjef Barbiers. Electronic data from two-hundred-sixty-seven locations in the Dutch speaking area have become available recently.

On the basis of the SAND-data we conclude that there is a large amount of variation in the choice of a reflexive pronoun indeed. In addition to *zich* and *zichzelf* we find *hem* (or the weak variant *um*) and *hemzelf* (*umzelf*), but also *z'n eigen* 'his own', *z'n eigen zelf* 'his own self', *zijn zelf* 'his self', *zijn* 'his' and we even encounter cases in which a lexical pronoun appears to be absent. At first sight the distribution of the reflexive pronouns in different parts of the Dutch speaking area looks rather chaotic. In this article we will try to show that this chaos is only apparent. If we look at these data from a more theoretical perspective we are able to detect interesting properties of reflexive formation that may lead to insights into the nature of reflexivization.

1. Possession

Postma (1997) argues that there are good arguments in favour of the idea that reflexivity is underlyingly connected to possessive structures, or in Postma's terms: "the possessive nature of reflexives" (see Helke (1971) and Pica (1987) for similar ideas). He bases his view empirically on the occurrence of possessive pronouns in English reflexives (*ourselves* vs **usselves*) and the non-standard Dutch reflexive *z'n eigen*. It is reasonable to adopt the view that *z'n eigen* is possessive since both the pronominal element *z'n* 'his' and the non-pronominal *eigen* 'own' are possessive in nature. However, the possessive nature of the English reflexive pronouns *himself* and *themselves*, the Frisian *himsels* or the Dutch reflexive *hemzelf* is not immediately evident. In this article we will show that a distinction has to be made between reflexives with a possessive specifier, such as *z'n eigen*, and reflexives with a non-possessive specifier, such as *hemzelf*. Taking this distinction as a point of departure, the question arises whether *zichzelf* involves a possessive or a non-possessive specifier.

There are arguments that indicate that *zichzelf* has a possessive specifier. It seems reasonable to consider *zich* as a morphologically complex lexical item in which the possessive pronominal element *ze* is combined with the possessive affix *-ig*. The pronominal *ze* is found in *ze eige* 'his own', but as a weak possessive pronoun in colloquial varieties of Dutch as well (e.g. *ze broer* 'his brother'; cf. WNT 1994/1996). The affix *-ig* is found as some kind of possessive marker in words such as *bloedig* 'bloody', *levendig* 'lively' and *ernstig* 'serious'. These adjectives indicate that the object that they belong to possesses the property +blood, +live, +seriousness respectively.

If *zich* is morphologically complex in this way, *zich* is equivalent to *z'n eigen*. In both cases there is a combination of a possessive pronoun and a possessive marker. We thus predict that we will not find the combinations **zich eigen* and **z'n zich* in the dialects of Dutch. The reason being that there are two possessive markers in *zich eigen* (*-ig* and *eigen*) and two possessive pronouns in *z'n zich* (*z'n* and *ze-*). The element *ze* and *z'n* are in complementary distribution, just as the elements *-ig* and *eigen*. Although the variety of different reflexive forms is quite astonishing, it is indeed the case that we have not found *zich eigen* or *z'n zich* in Dutch dialects.

We thus have encountered three different ways to express a reflexive pronoun:

- a1. syntactically complex reflexives with a possessive pronoun as their specifier, followed by the possessive marker *eigen*;
- a2. morphologically complex reflexives which consist of a clitic possessive pronoun and the possessive suffix *-ig*;
- b. non-possessive pronouns, that may be followed by the focus element *zelf* ‘self’.

We observe that Dutch reflexives sometimes correspond to the German possessive strategy (*sich*) and sometimes to reflexives in English (*himself*). A unique Dutch strategy is found in the case of the syntactically complex anaphor *z'n eigen* (a1). We take the division in three different types of reflexivization as a starting point in the discussion of the geographic distribution of different reflexive pronouns in the dialects of Dutch.

2. Distribution

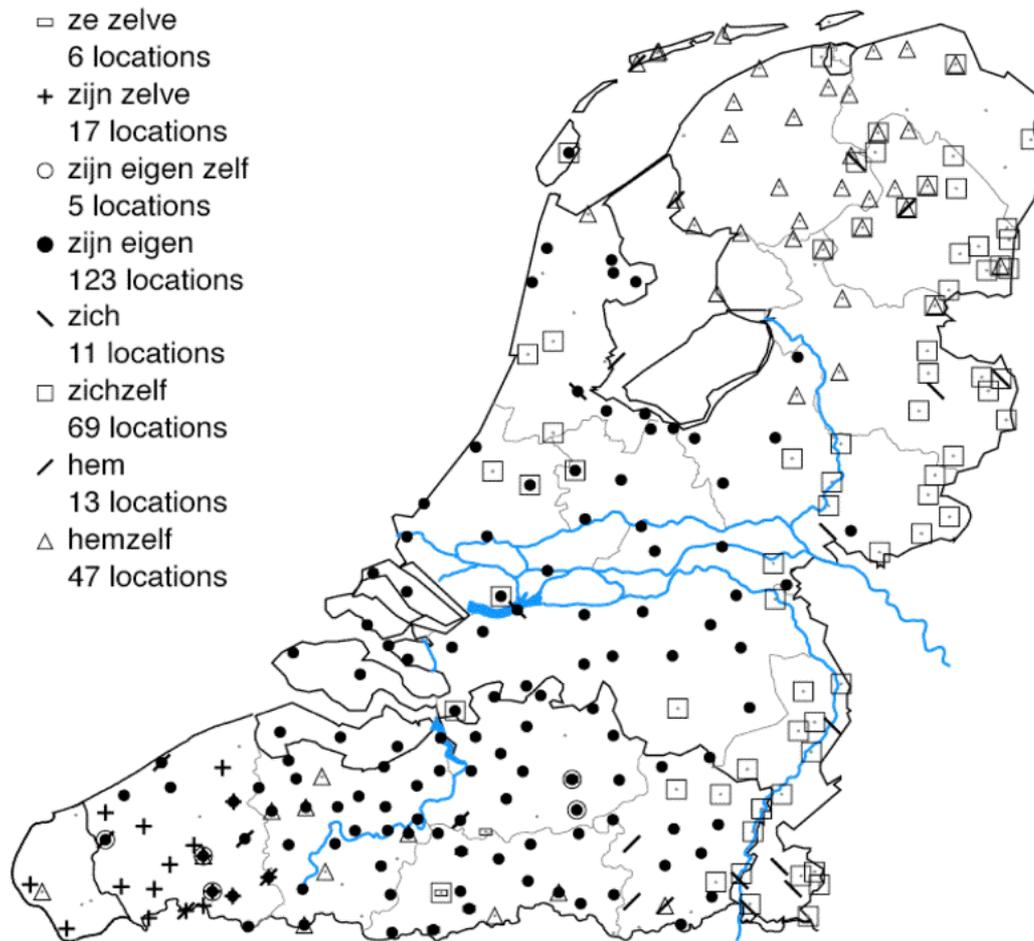
2.1 Transitive verbs

Reflexive objects of transitive verbs show a large amount of variation. In the clauses (1a) (dynamic transitive) and (1b) (stative transitive) we find six different, strong or complex forms: *z'n eigen*, *zichzelf*, *hemzelf*, *z'n zelve*, *z'n eigen zelve*, *ze zelve*.¹ In addition to that we sometimes encounter weak forms, such as *zich* and *hem*.² On map 1 we present the distribution of forms that appear in the clause with a dynamic transitive verb (1a).

- (1) a. Toon bekeek REFL eens goed
Toon watched REFL well
- b. Eduard kent REFL goed
Edward knows REFL well

Of the strong forms, the distribution of *z'n eigen* concerns a large area. It includes the west and the middle regions in Holland and Flanders. 123 of the 258 measuring points have *z'n eigen* as an anaphor in (1a). In (1b) we find *z'n eigen* in 138 locations. The standard Dutch reflexive *zichzelf* is less widely distributed. Interestingly, most locations that have *zichzelf* are found in the eastern parts of the Netherlands, along the border with Germany. A few cases can be found in the region around Amsterdam.

Zichzelf is found in 69 (79 in (1b)) locations. The *hemzelf*-area is much smaller. The 47 measuring points (29 in (1b)) are primarily found in Friesland and adjacent areas in the provinces Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel. In the case of the dynamic transitive in (1a) the reflexive *hemzelf* is also found in the Belgian province of East-Flanders and occasionally in other Flemish areas. The stative transitive in (1b) does not show a clear pattern for *hemzelf* in Flanders. The reflexives *z'n zelve* and *ze zelve* are found in Flanders only. *Z'n zelve* occurs in the province of West-Flanders (17 locations) and *ze zelve* is found in Brabant, in the area around Brussels (5 locations). The strong form *z'n eigen zelf* is found in the West-Flemish *z'n zelve*-area (3 occurrences) and in the province of Antwerp.³ In the stative transitive (1b) *zijn eigen zelf* is absent in West-Flanders. This form shows up occasionally in other Flemish areas (7 occurrences).



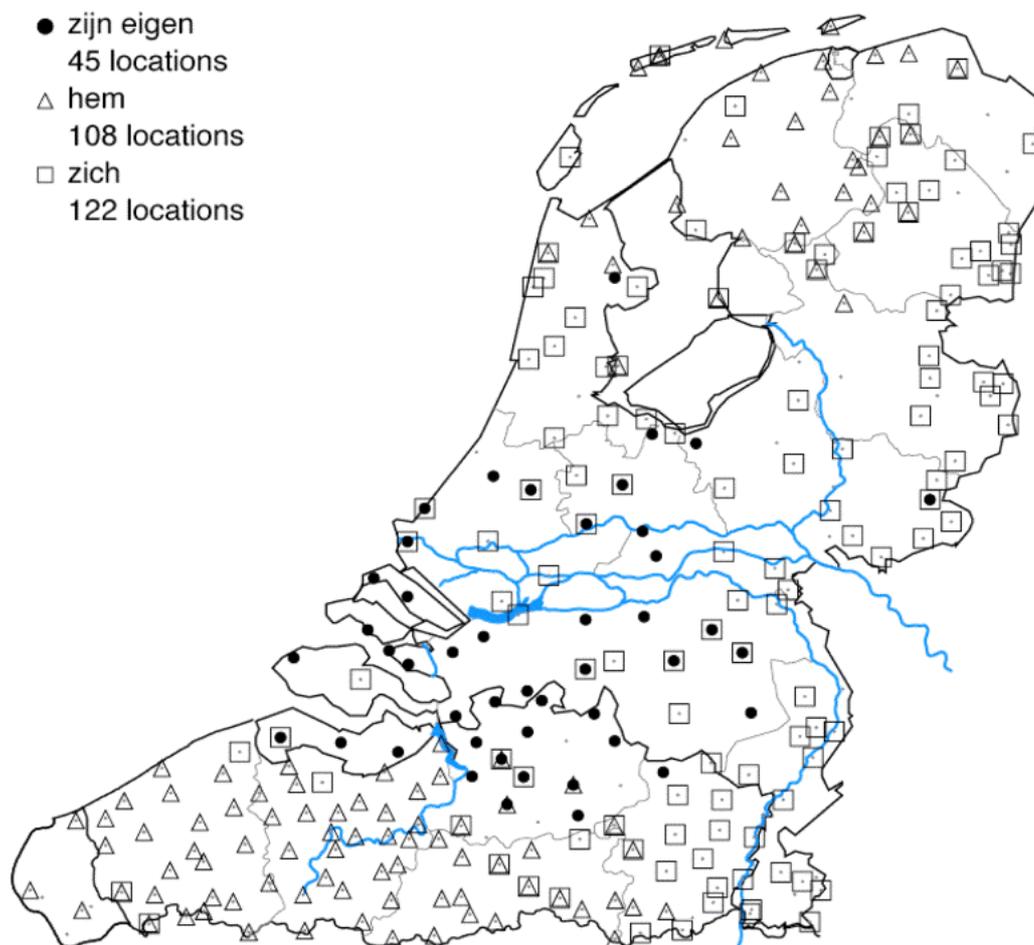
Map 1: Transitive reflexives

The weak reflexive *zich* is found in 11 locations, mainly in the eastern part of the Netherlands. Finally, we find the pronoun *hem* in 13 locations, mainly in Flanders. In the stative transitive in (1b) there are no occurrences of *hem* and only 6 occurrences of *zich*.

2.2 Inherently reflexive verbs

The variation is considerably less in the case of inherently reflexive verbs, as in (2).⁴ We find the reflexive pronouns *zich*, *hem* and *z'n eigen*. There are no occurrences of reflexives with the focus marker *zelf*. The distribution is given on map 2.

- (2) Jan herinnert REFL dat verhaal wel
John remembers REFL that story



Map 2: Inherent reflexives

In 45 of the 258 measuring points *z'n eigen* is used as a reflexive. These occurrences are found in the provinces of Antwerp, Zeeland, North-Brabant, Utrecht and South-Holland. This *z'n eigen*-area lies within the area in which we find *z'n eigen* with transitive verbs, but is much smaller. The provinces of West- and East-Flanders, Flemish Brabant, Flemish Limburg and North-Holland don't have *z'n eigen* in the case of inherently reflexive verbs. In North-Holland and Flemish Limburg the form *zich* appears instead of *z'n eigen*; in West- and East-Flanders the weak reflexive is *hem*. The form *hem* is also found in Friesland and the area around it. Again we find the *zich*-form in the eastern part of the Netherlands.

Taking the lack of *zelf*-forms in the inherent reflexive construction as an indication that *zelf* is restricted to strong anaphors and that inherent reflexives are necessarily weak, we can understand the behaviour of *z'n eigen* by assuming that *z'n eigen* is structurally ambiguous between a strong and a weak anaphor in the provinces of Antwerp, Zeeland, North-Brabant, Utrecht and South-Holland. In other dialects *z'n eigen* is considered to be a strong anaphor, which forces these dialects to select another form as the weak reflexive. We will come back to this idea in section 3.

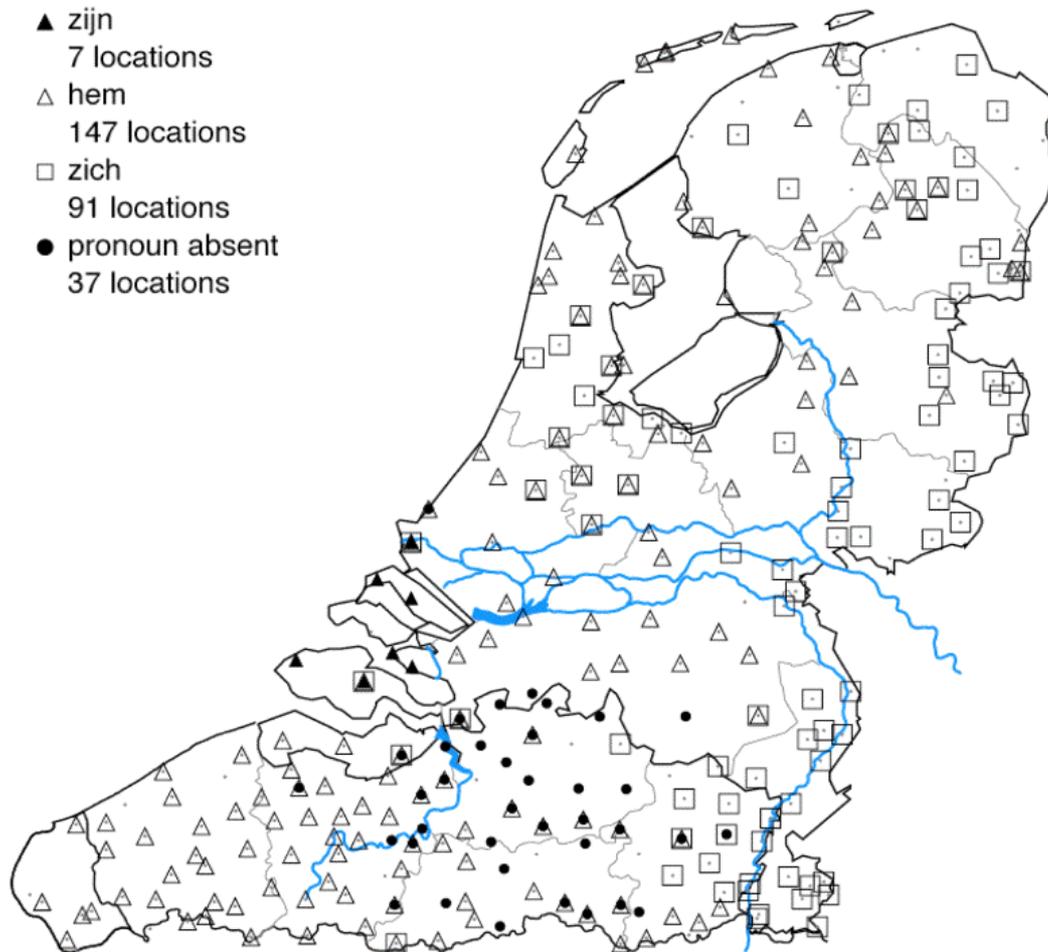
2.3 Prepositional phrases

The distribution of reflexive pronouns in the complement of a preposition is tested through the examples in (3).

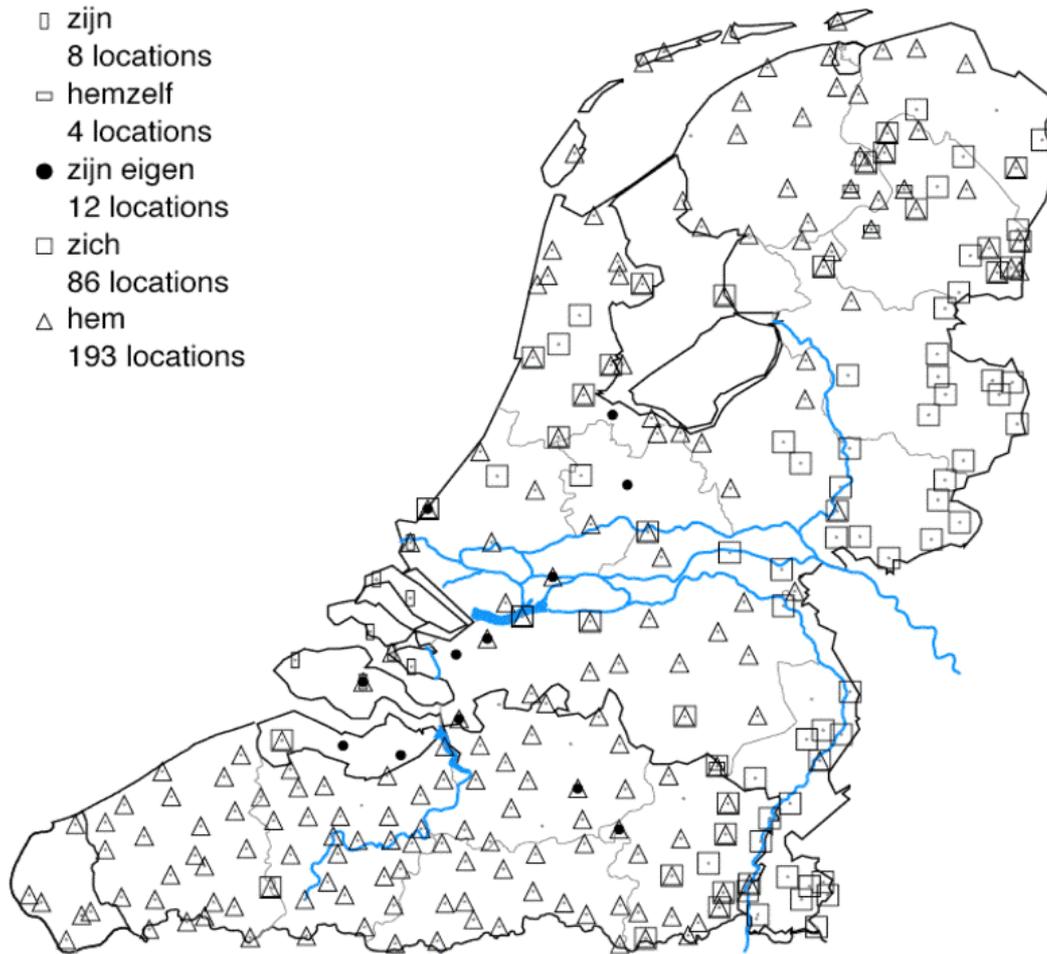
- (3) a. De timmerman heeft geen spijkers bij REFL
The carpenter has no nails with REFL
- b. Jan zag een slang naast REFL
John saw a snake near REFL
- c. Hij riep alle familieleden bij REFL
Hij called all family members with REFL
- d. Erik liet mij voor REFL werken
Erik let me for REFL work

The sentences (3a-c) provide a nice picture of the variation that we find in reflexive prepositional phrases. We leave (3d) out of consideration here. The variation that is found in the case of (3a) is given on map 3. The construction in (3a) resembles the inherently reflexive construction since the object of P is obligatorily coreferential with

the subject. Map 4 shows the variation with the example in (3b). This construction is more like a transitive reflexive construction since coreference is by no means necessary. We can fill the REFL-position with a non-reflexive pronoun or a full noun phrase, as in *Jan zag een slang naast HAAR/MARIE* ('...her/Mary').



Map 3: Inherent reflexives as complements of P *bij* 'with'



Map 4: Non-inherent reflexives as a complement of P *naast* ‘next to’

Just as in the case of inherent reflexives, we hardly find *zelf*-reflexives, which appears to indicate that strong reflexives do not show up in these PPs.⁵ The eastern part of the Netherlands and the eastern part of Flemish Limburg opt for *zich*. The rest of the Dutch speaking area chooses the pronoun *hem*. We hardly find occurrences of *z'n eigen*, 12 in (3b), 4 in (3c) and none in (3a). As expected, *z'n eigen* is found in the area in which *z'n eigen* can be both a weak and a strong anaphor, i.e. mainly in the western part of the Netherlands.

There exist two variants that are interesting. First we find the possessive pronoun *zijn* as a reflexive pronoun in Zeeland and the adjacent South-Holland islands Goeree and Overflakkee. Reflexive *zijn* is found in reflexive PPs only. Grammars of dialects of Zeeland show that in these dialects the pronoun *zijn* is not only used as a possessive pronoun, but as a personal pronoun as well, especially

within PPs (a.o. Dek 1934, De Vin 1952). We thus take the exceptional *zijn*-reflexive as an instance of the regular occurrence of personal pronouns as weak reflexives.

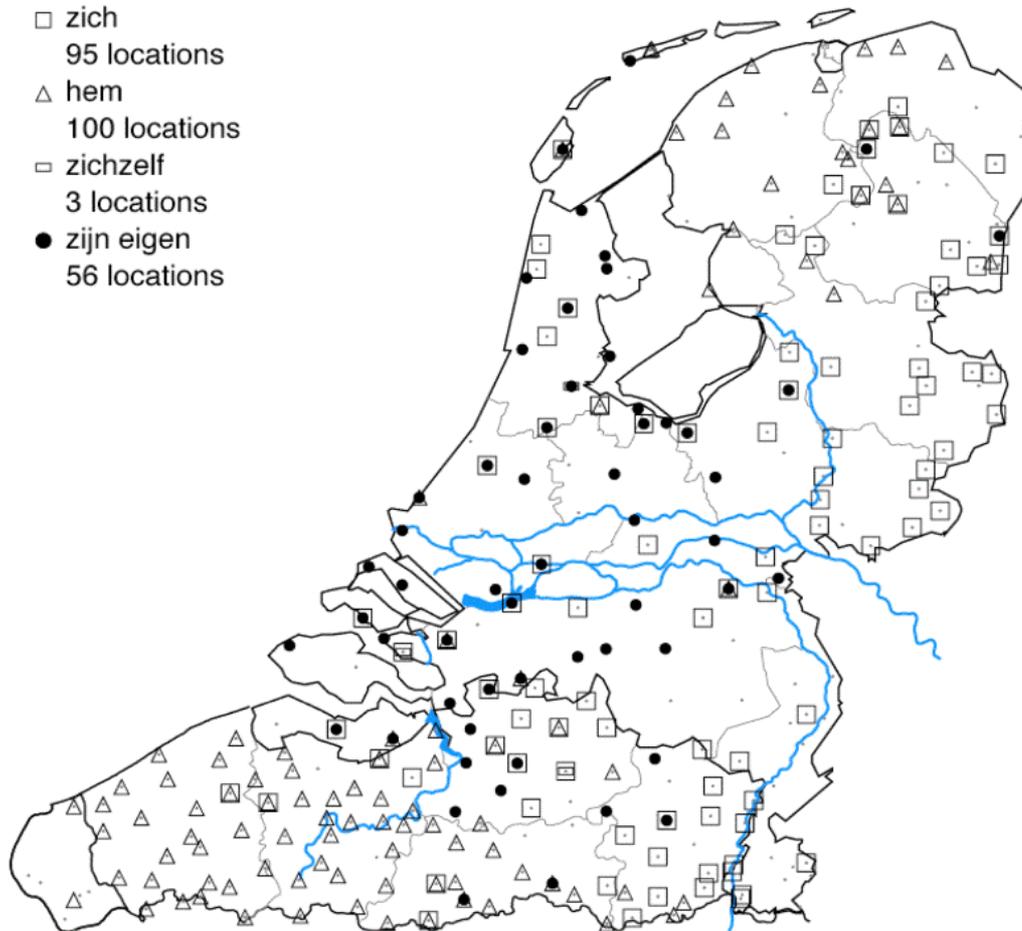
The second exception is found in cases in which a reflexive pronoun is absent. This phenomenon is restricted to the Flemish provinces of Antwerp and Brabant. The absence of a reflexive is allowed only in combination with *hebben bij*, as in (3a). It does not show up in (3b) and (3c). This indicates that there is no good reason to assume that these dialects have empty reflexive pronouns. We conclude that the combination *hebben + bij* is analysed as a particle verb (*bijhebben*) in these provinces.

2.4 The causative verb *laten* ‘let’

Finally, the SAND-material includes a construction in which the reflexive is the subject of the complement of the causative verb *laten* ‘let’. This example is given in (4).

- (4) Jan liet REFL meedrijven op de golven
John let REFL float on the waves

This yields a clear picture (cf. map 5). Forms with the focus marker *zelf* hardly occur, indicating that strong anaphors do not appear in this configuration. The east chooses *zich* (95 of the 258 measuring points); Friesland and Flanders take *hem* (100 occurrences). The rest of the Dutch speaking area is somewhat confused between *zich* and *z'n eigen*. *Z'n eigen* is found in 56 locations, in those areas in which *z'n eigen* can be weak or strong: the provinces of Antwerp, Zeeland, North-Brabant, Utrecht and South-Holland. North-Holland is problematic in that *z'n eigen* appears in the causative construction (9 occurrences), but not in the inherent reflexive construction in (2).



Map 5: Reflexives as subjects of the complement of *laten* ‘let’

2.5 Some descriptive generalizations

We may divide the dialects in the Dutch speaking area on the basis of the form they select in reflexive constructions. For weak anaphors, the generalizations below are based on the inherently reflexive construction in (2) and the causative example in (4).

For strong anaphors we have looked at the transitive reflexives in (1). The

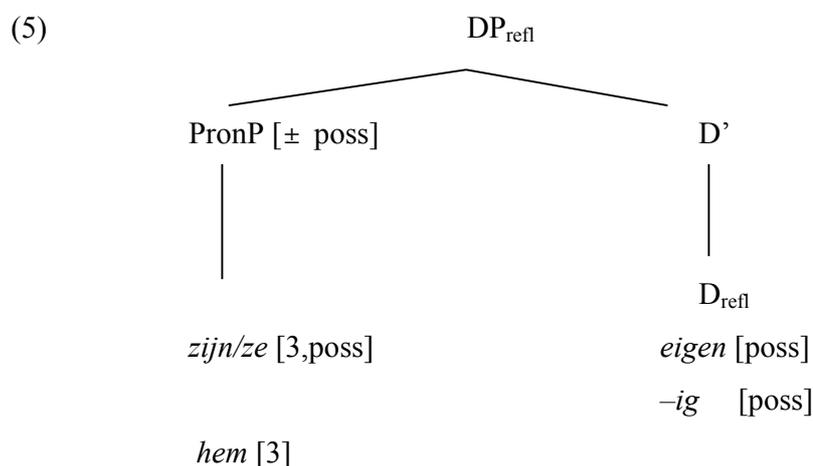
PP-reflexives are left out of consideration here.

The following generalizations hold:

- eastern dialects have *zich* and *zichzelf*;
- Frisian dialects have *hem* and *hemzelf*;
- West- and East-Flanders have *hem* and *z'n eigen*;
- Flemish Limburg has *zich* and *z'n eigen*;
- Antwerp and south-west and central Dutch dialects have *z'n eigen* as strong and weak anaphor.

3. Analysis

In the previous sections we distinguished between strong (or complex) and weak (or simplex) anaphors. We now assume that all anaphors can be reduced to a single syntactic structure, the one given in (5).



This structure is primarily based on the insight of Helke (1971), Pica (1987) and Postma (1997), among others, that in many languages reflexives are possessive constructions. A second common assumption is that pronominal groups are DPs which lack NP or have an empty NP.

The structure in (5) immediately captures the non-existence of reflexives of the type *zich eigen* ‘SE own’. Because the elements *eigen* ‘own’ en *-ig* have an identical morphosyntactic feature specification and are in the same position they cannot cooccur. From the common assumption that a constituent can only be in the specifier position of a head if the specifier and the head agree, it also follows that the combinations *hem-eigen* ‘him-own’ en *hem-ig* ‘him-ig’ do not occur. Agreement is impossible here because *hem* ‘him’ only has the feature [3], while *eigen* ‘own’ en *-ig* only have the feature [possessive].

Independent evidence for the requirement that head and specifier should agree can be derived from the paradigm of strong reflexives in English. As is well-known, first and second person reflexives in English contain a possessive pronoun (*myself*, *yourself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*) whereas the third person has a non-possessive pronoun (*himself*, *themselves*). If we assume that *self/selves* has the features [3] and

[poss], this paradigm follows immediately from the agreement requirement. This assumption is supported by the internal structure of *self*, which consists of the 3rd person pronominal clitic *se-* followed by the bodypart morpheme *-lf*, which is derived from *lijf* ‘body’ (cf. Postma 1997). Since person agreement with *self/selves* is impossible in the first and second person, possessive agreement is necessary, and consequently the possessive pronoun shows up. Person agreement is an option in the third person, therefore possessive agreement is not required. But since *self/selves* also has a possessive feature, we expect to find English dialects that have *hisself* and *theirselves*. Indeed, these forms are prevalent in vernacular speech in England and they also occur in various American dialects (cf. Wilson 1993).

Next we consider the distinction between strong and weak reflexives. The fact that reflexives are often complex (possessive) structures with a pronoun as their specifier raises the question as to why such complex structures should be necessary, or, put differently, why simple pronouns cannot function as reflexives themselves. The answer to this question is different for strong and for weak reflexives. In positions where strong reflexives occur, e.g. as the direct object of a transitive verb, a simple pronoun cannot be used as a reflexive because pronouns must be free in their minimal syntactic domain (condition B of the Binding Theory; Chomsky 1981), and the subject and the object of a transitive verb are in the same binding domain. In such cases, a complex structure as in (5) is necessary to create a separate binding domain (DP) for the pronoun (*zich*, *hem* or *zijn*). The fact that binding of *zijn* ‘his’ and *hem* ‘him’ is possible here is thus parallel to the possibility of binding in a sentence like *Jan poetst [zijn auto] op zaterdag* ‘John cleans his car on Saturday’.

As for weak anaphors, we have seen that many dialects of Dutch use the third person singular non-reflexive pronoun in syntactic environments where Standard Dutch must or can use the weak reflexive *zich*: as the subject of the complement of *laten* ‘let’, as the complement of a preposition and with inherently reflexive verbs. The possibility to use a non-reflexive pronoun there suggests that such environments do not give rise to condition B violations. This is not surprising because all three syntactic environments can be plausibly argued to involve a complex binding domain. The complement of *laten* ‘let’ is a separate binding domain given that it constitutes a complete predication including a lexical subject. The claim that this complement is a distinct binding domain is corroborated by the fact that a strong anaphoric object within the complement must be bound by the subject of the *laten*-complement and

cannot be bound by the matrix subject. The same holds for PPs: a strong reflexive can only occur as the complement of P if it is bound by the subject of PP (cf. Barbiers 2000). Inherently reflexive objects should be analyzed as the subject of a hidden small clause, the predicative head of which can be made visible. For example, the inherently reflexive verb *schamen* ‘shame’ in (6) allows a resultative small clause complement, *dood* ‘dead’.

- (6) Jan schaamt zich (dood)
 John shames SE (dead)
 ‘John is (terribly) ashamed.’

The evidence that all inherently reflexive verbs have a hidden small clause complement is quite strong. As Hoekstra, Lansu and Westerduin (1989) have shown, the inseparable verbal prefixes *her-* ‘re-’, *be-*, *ver-* and *ont-* ‘dis-’ in verbs such as *her-halen* ‘repeat’, *be-kijken* ‘examine’, *ver-breden* ‘broaden’, *ont-houden* ‘remember’, as well as separable particles in particle verbs such as *mee-werken* ‘cooperate’ should be analyzed as small clause complements, since they are in complementary distribution with lexical small clause predicates of the type in (6). If our claim is correct that inherently reflexive verbs always come with a hidden small clause complement, we expect to find two types of inherently reflexive verbs. The first type has no prefix or particle but allows addition of a lexical small clause predicate, the second type contains a prefix or particle and does not allow addition of a lexical small clause predicate. Strikingly, of the 81 inherently reflexive verbs that Standard Dutch is claimed to have (Haeseryn et al. 1997), 79 have a particle or a prefix and do not allow a lexical small clause predicate. The only inherently reflexive verbs in Haeseryn et al. (1997) that have no particle or prefix do allow a lexical small clause complement: *zich schamen* ‘be ashamed’ and *zich generen* ‘feel embarrassed’.

A crucial property of strong reflexives is that the reflexive DP constitutes a separate binding domain for the pronoun in SpecDP, in order to prevent a violation of principle B. This is not the case for weak reflexives. As argued above, weak reflexives are contained within another domain in which they are free: the complement of *laten*, the PP or the Small Clause complement of inherent reflexives. We thus do not need the reflexive DP to constitute a separate binding domain to

prevent a principle B violation. If this is correct, the whole reflexive DP might be identical to the pronoun in SpecDP.

We assume that a DP structure as in (5) can only be a separate binding domain for the pronoun in its Spec if the features of the DP as a whole are not identical to the features of the pronoun. This is the case when the feature set of the head D is not identical to the feature set of the pronoun in SpecDP. Consequently, strong reflexives require D to be lexically filled. In weak reflexive DPs, D does not have to be filled. If D is empty, the features of D are identical to the features of SpecDP through agreement. As a consequence, the features of the whole DP are identical to the features of SpecDP through feature percolation. No binding violation obtains since there is an additional binding domain. Given that the lexical D in the case of strong anaphors is merely present to provide a shell to protect the pronoun from a binding violation, we assume that the empty D–option is preferred if there is no binding violation problem, as in the case of weak anaphors. The empty D is even required in those cases if we look at the locality requirement in binding, i.e. principle A. The underlying assumption in this article is that lexical anaphors do not exist. Anaphors are locally bound pronouns. If we combine the locality requirement in reflexive constructions (principle A) with the requirement for pronominals (principle B), we arrive at a binding theory that requires pronouns to be free in their minimal binding domain, and bound in the first domain that dominates the minimal binding domain. If that is the correct perspective, it follows that the D–head of weak reflexive DPs must be empty, since a lexical D would introduce a second binding barrier between antecedent and pronoun.

Returning to strong anaphors, it follows that *z'n eigen* lit. ‘his own’ is the most straightforward option. Both the D–head and the possessive specifier are filled. D and the possessive specifier agree on [poss]. Since the possessive specifier has a person feature that is lacking on the head, the two feature sets are not identical and the DP protects the pronoun from a principle B violation.

Dialects that do not have the *eigen* ‘own’ strategy now face a problem. Both non–possessive reflexives (*hem* ‘him’) and morphologically complex possessive reflexives (*zich* ‘SE’) have an empty D. Such dialects need an auxiliary strategy to create a strong reflexive. The focus element *zelf* ‘self’, which also occurs with non–reflexive DPs (cf. *de man zelf* ‘the man himself’) provides a solution. We assume

that in strong reflexives *zelf* ‘self’ may fill the D–position. Together with the pronominal specifier *zich* ‘SE’ or *hem* ‘him’ it forms a strong reflexive anaphor. Since *zelf* has a focus feature that the pronominal specifier lacks, distinctness of head and specifier is guaranteed.⁶

The situation with weak reflexives is exactly the opposite. The forms *zich* ‘SE’ and *hem* ‘him’ simply satisfy the condition that the D–head of a weak reflexive must be empty. In the case of *zich* ‘SE’ the D–head *–ig* has raised and attached to *ze–* ‘his’. In the case of *hem* ‘him’ the D–head was empty right from the start. Now *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ is a problem. We cannot leave out *eigen* ‘own’ here because possessive structures require a possessive head. A different strategy is called for. If we compare the area where *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ occurs as a strong reflexive (map 1) with the same area on map 2, we see that there are three different strategies to solve the problem. Dialects in Flemish Limburg, the eastern part of North Brabant and North–Holland switch to the morphologically complex variant and use *zich* ‘SE’. West– and East–Flanders choose the non–possessive strategy, *hem* ‘him’. The remaining part – the core of the strong *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ area, i.e. the provinces of Antwerp and Zeeland and central Holland – retains *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ as a weak reflexive.

There are two ways to analyze the weak reflexive use of *z’n eigen* ‘his own’. First we could assume that the conditions remain valid that inherent reflexives require a weak anaphor and that a weak anaphor requires an empty D–head. In that case possessive *eigen* ‘own’ must have cliticized onto the pronoun, analogously to possessive *–ig*. Alternatively, we could assume that in these dialects the distinction between strong and weak reflexives is lost and that in both cases *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ is a suitable reflexive anaphor. Although empirical evidence to decide between these two options is lacking, we will adopt the first option because it retains the uniform system consisting of the structure in (5) and the revised binding theory.

We thus have a theory that captures the main part of the attested distribution of reflexive anaphors in the dialects of Dutch. The eastern part of the language area chooses a morphological–possessive strategy, just like German, and adds the focus element *zelf* ‘self’ with strong reflexives in order to fill the D–head. Friesland has a non–possessive strategy with *hem* ‘him’ and also makes use of *zelf* ‘self’ to create a strong reflexive. The large majority in the remainder of the Dutch language area chooses the possessive strategy with *z’n eigen* ‘his own’. The weak reflexive requires an alternative strategy for the *z’n eigen*–area: the morphological–possessive *zich* ‘SE’

strategy in Limburg, eastern North–Brabant and North–Holland; the non–possessive *hem* ‘him’ strategy in West– and East–Flanders and Flemish Brabant; and cliticization of *eigen* ‘own’ in Zeeland, central Holland and Antwerp.

To conclude this paper we discuss some remaining observations.

a) With transitive reflexives we sometimes find *z’n eigen zelf* ‘his own self’. It would be attractive to take this form as an argument for cliticization of *eigen* ‘own’ to the possessive pronoun (see above), with subsequent addition of *zelf* ‘self’ to form a strong reflexive. This would make *z’n eigen zelf* ‘his own self’ structurally identical to *zichzelf* ‘SE–self’ and would lead us to expect *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ as the weak reflexive in locations where they have *z’n eigen zelf* ‘his own self’. Unfortunately, this reasoning cannot be correct since the relevant dialects usually have *hem* ‘him’ as a weak anaphor (three times in West–Flanders). Only in two cases in the province of Antwerp this reasoning could be correct. In any case, there does not seem to be anything against adding a focus element *zelf* ‘self’ to strong anaphors of the type *z’n eigen* ‘his own’.

b) In Flemish Brabant we find a few occurrences of *ze zelve* ‘his self’ with transitive reflexives, while the related *zijn zelve* ‘his self’ shows up in West–Flanders. This can be interpreted in several ways. We could assume that these cases are variants of the non–possessive strong reflexive *hemzelf* ‘himself’. Against this speaks the fact that the weak reflexive in these places is *hem* ‘him’ and not *zijn* ‘his’ or *ze*–‘his’. We would therefore expect the strong reflexive *hemzelf* ‘himself’ just like in Friesland. Another possibility is that in these places *zelve* ‘self’ is an alternative voor *eigen* ‘own’ and thus is taken to be a possessive element. In that case *ze zelve* ‘his self’ and *z’n zelve* ‘his self’ are structurally identical to *z’n eigen* ‘his own’. An argument in favor of this possibility is that in West–Flanders and Flemish Brabant we find a mixture of locations with *z’n eigen* ‘his own’ and locations with *z’n zelve* ‘his self’ without any geographic pattern, and that there are five locations in these provinces where the two forms cooccur. Future research into the properties of *zelf* ‘self’ and *zelve* ‘self’ in West–Flanders is necessary to settle the issue.⁷

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NOTES

¹ The variation in reflexive forms is larger than indicated. We abstract away from minor variation in the form of the elements *hem*, *zijn*, *zich* and *zelf*. In the case of *hem* we find alternative forms such as *him*, *hom* and ‘*m*’. The possessive pronoun *zijn* shows up as *z’n*, *ze* and *se*. *Zich* has the north–east alternative forms *zuk* and *zok*. Finally, *zelf* is also found as *zelve*, *sels* or *zelve*.

² We use the term ‘strong’ to refer to complex anaphors such as *zichzelf*, *z’n eigen* and *hemzelf*. The term ‘weak’ refers to anaphors such as *hem* and *zich*.

³ We distinguish between the provinces Antwerp and Flemish Brabant. By doing so we make a distinction between the northern part of Belgian Brabant (‘province of Antwerp’) and the southern part (‘Flemish Brabant’).

⁴ In the SAND–interview the data for (2) were obtained by asking the informants to translate a Standard Dutch example in their dialect. For the other examples in this article the same procedure was followed. If the clause equivalent to (2) didn’t contain a reflexive pronoun, i.e. if the verb *zich herinneren* ‘to remember’ was not an inherently reflexive verb in this dialect, another verb was selected, such as *zich schamen* ‘to be ashamed’, *zich vergissen* ‘to be mistaken’ or *zich bukken* ‘to lean down’.

⁵ The PPs under consideration have a PP–internal subject (*geen spijkers* ‘no nails’ in (3a) and *een slang* ‘a snake’ in (3b)) that is disjoined in reference from the reflexive. When the PP has a subject that is interpreted as the antecedent of the anaphor, a strong anaphor is preferred, as in *Jan kwam weer tot zichzelf* ‘John came to his senses again’. A second situation in which we find strong anaphors in PP concerns subjectless PPs in PP–objects, as in *Jan rekent op zichzelf* ‘John counts on himself’. Finally we find the strong anaphor in contrastive use, as in *Eerst zag Jan een slang naast Marie en toen naast zichzelf* ‘First John saw a snake next to Marie, and later on next to himself’. Sentences like these were not part of the SAND–interview. See Barbiers (2000) for a description and an analysis of such cases.

⁶ Normally *zelf* ‘self’ can be separated from the nominal constituent to which it belongs, as in *Jan heeft het probleem zelf opgelost* ‘John has solved the problem himself’. In the case of reflexives it must be a part of the reflexive constituent, e.g. **Toon bekeek zich in de spiegel zelf* ‘Toon examined himself in the mirror’. This suggests that *zelf* ‘self’ is more than a focus element in reflexives. It is necessary to fill the D position of the strong reflexive DP.

⁷ An issue that we leave for future research is the striking observation that *z'n eigen* 'his own' does not appear as a weak reflexive within a PP (cf. map 3). This is in contrast with inherent reflexives that are not part of a PP. *Z'n eigen* 'his own' occurs 45 times on map 4 and 56 times on map 5.