

# Syntax of the Continental West-Germanic Languages.

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## 1. Introduction

The Continental West-Germanic languages form a subgroup of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, spoken in the area of North-West Europe defined by the river basins of the Schelt, the (lower) Meuse, the Rhine, the Ems, the Elbe, the Weser, the Oder, and the upper Danube. Outside of this area, Continental West-Germanic dialects are spoken in pockets in Northern Italy, in South-Africa, and in German and Jewish settlements and immigrant communities around the world (mainly in Siberia and the Americas).

The group is best known for its national languages High German (of Germany and Austria, referred to below as ‘German’) and Dutch (of the Netherlands and Belgium). Other official languages included are Frisian (of the Netherlands), Luxembourgish (of Luxemburg), Alemannian or Swiss German (of Switzerland), and Afrikaans (of South Africa).<sup>1</sup>

Ignoring official language status, we can say that the Continental West-Germanic languages comprise two dialect groups, the Frisian group and the Dutch-German group, and two offspring languages, Yiddish and Afrikaans, with slightly more deviating syntax due to the effects of contact with non-Indo-European languages.

Within the Frisian group, three dialect groups exist, North-, East-, and West-Frisian, of which only the latter, referred to below as Frisian, is widely spoken (in the province of Friesland in the Netherlands).<sup>2</sup>

Within the Dutch-German dialect group, a division is made in High, Central, and Low dialects, roughly corresponding to the fall of the rivers flowing to the North or West through the area where these dialects are spoken.<sup>3</sup> The High West-Germanic dialect group includes Bavarian, Alemannic (Swiss German), Swabian, and Rhine Franconian. The Central West-Germanic dialect group includes Central Franconian, Palatinian (Pfälzisch), Hessian, Thuringian, and Upper Saxon. The Low West-Germanic dialect group includes Lower Franconian, Lower Saxon, East- and Westphalian, Brandenburgish, and Mecklenburgish.

The official language of Germany and Austria, called High German, is based on High and Central West-Germanic dialects. The Dutch spoken in the Netherlands is a mixture

<sup>1</sup> Frisian is traditionally included in the Insular West-Germanic language group, together with English. The syntax of Old English is not much different from the syntax of the Continental West-Germanic languages, but the development of English has since taken it in a radically different direction, whereas Frisian has preserved the syntactic features characteristic of West-Germanic. For this reason, Frisian is included in the Continental West-Germanic group here.

<sup>2</sup> In Dutch dialectology, West-Frisian is also the name of a Dutch dialect spoken in the north of the Dutch province North-Holland, which shows effects of Frisian substratum influence (E. Hoekstra 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Note that *Central* West-Germanic refers to a region of the West-Germanic speech area, whereas *Middle* West-Germanic refers to a time period between Old and (Early) New West-Germanic.

of Lower Franconian and Lower Saxon dialects, the Dutch spoken in Belgium, also called Flemish, is Lower Franconian.<sup>4</sup> Low German is the collective term for the Low West-Germanic dialects spoken in Germany (i.e. not Lower Franconian). Luxembourgish is a Central Franconian (Central West-Germanic) dialect. Swiss German and Alsatian are alternative names for the (High West-Germanic) Alemannian dialect group.

In the remainder of this article, the syntax of the Continental West-Germanic dialects is illustrated mainly by the example of Dutch, with variation indicated as much as space limitations allowed.

## 2. General syntactic typology

The Continental West-Germanic dialects display largely identical syntax, characterized by an asymmetry between main and embedded clauses with respect to the position of the finite verb (second in main clauses, final in embedded clauses) (1), by clause final position of (clusters of) nonfinite verbs (*verb raising*) (2), by nonadjacency of the verb and its internal argument (*scrambling*) (3), by subject verb inversion in fronting constructions (*verb second*) (4), and by clause final position (i.e. to the right of the verb in final position) of complement clauses (*extraposition*) (5). These phenomena, illustrated below in Dutch, are in evidence in all Frisian and Dutch/German dialects, as well as in Afrikaans, but not in Yiddish, where the verb invariably precedes the object.<sup>5</sup>

- (1) *main clauses (SVO)* (Dutch)
- a. Jan **kust** Marie (\*Jan Marie **kust**)  
 John kiss-3SG Mary  
 ‘John kisses Mary.’  
*embedded clauses (SOV)*
- b. ..dat Jan Marie **kust** (\*..dat Jan **kust** Marie)  
 that John Mary kiss-3SG  
 ‘..that John kisses Mary.’
- (2) *verb clustering (SOVV)*  
 ..dat Jan Marie **zou** **willen kussen**  
 that John Mary will-PAST.SG want-INF kiss-INF  
 ‘..that John would like to kiss Mary.’
- (3) *scrambling (SOxV)*  
 ..dat Jan **Marie** nooit **kust**  
 that John Mary never kiss-3SG
- (4) *verb second (xVSO)*  
 Waarom **kust** Jan Marie? (\*Waarom Jan **kust** Marie?)  
 why kiss-3SG John Mary  
 ‘Why does John kiss Mary?’

<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, Flemish dialects (West-Flemish, East-Flemish) are spoken only in the West of Belgium. Other Dutch dialects spoken in Belgium include Brabantish and Limburgian, which are also spoken across the border in the South of the Netherlands.

<sup>5</sup> Thus, Yiddish has SVO order in (1), SVVO in (2), and SVOx in (3). Inversion (4) and extraposition (5) are as in all Continental West-Germanic dialects, albeit that inference from Slavic and/or Hebrew may give rise to ‘verb third’ constructions (Weissberg 1988: 155), also found in the Low German spoken in the Altai region in Siberia (Jedig 1966: 168).

- (5) *extraposition (SxVO)*  
 ..dat Jan niet wist [dat hij Marie kuste]  
 that John not know-PAST.SG that he-NOM Mary kiss-PAST.SG  
 ‘..that John did not know that he kissed Mary.’  
 (\*..dat Jan niet [dat hij Marie kuste] wist)

The clause final position of the verb in (1b), (2), (3), and (5) can be shown to be its basic position, the fronted position in (1a) and (4) appearing only in the circumscribed context of a finite main clause. Nonfinite elements of a verb cluster (6a), as well as verbal particles (6b), are not fronted along with the finite verb, betraying the finite verb’s origin at the end of the clause (Koster 1975):

- (6) a. Jan **zou** Marie **willen kussen** (Dutch)  
 John will-PAST.SG Mary want-INF kiss-INF  
 ‘John would like to kiss Mary.’  
 (\*Jan zou **willen kussen** Marie)  
 b. Jan **belt** Marie **op** (‘op+bellen’ = lit. up-ring, ‘call by telephone’)  
 John ring-3SG Mary up  
 ‘John calls Mary by telephone.’  
 (\*Jan **opbelt** Marie)

The clause final position of the verb suggests that the Continental West-Germanic languages are typologically SOV-languages, but this is not necessarily correct. Two considerations suggest that the Continental West-Germanic languages are more properly described as fundamentally head-initial (Zwart 1994): first, the nonadjacency of the object and the verb in embedded clauses, illustrated in (3), suggests that the object is in a derived position (VandenWyngaerd 1989), perhaps displaced from the position occupied by the embedded clause in (5); secondly, heads in Continental West-Germanic typically precede rather than follow their complement, as illustrated in the Dutch examples in (7), representative of the entire language group.

- (7) *head-complement order (heads in italics, complements between brackets)*
- |    |                                   |  |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. | complementizer + embedded clause: | <i>..dat</i> [Jan Marie kust]<br>that John kisses Mary       |
| b. | preposition + complement          | <i>op</i> [ de tafel ]<br>on the table                       |
| c. | determiner + noun phrase          | <i>de</i> [ kern van de zaak ]<br>the heart of the matter    |
| d. | noun + complement                 | de <i>kern</i> [ van de zaak ]<br>the heart of the matter    |
| e. | adjective + complement            | (Jan is) <i>dol</i> [ op Marie ]<br>John is crazy about Mary |

It appears, then, that the Continental West-Germanic languages are head-initial languages, featuring various displacement processes (including object movement and

verb movement) yielding SOV ( cf. (1b),(3)), (derived) SVO (cf. (1a)), and VSO orders (cf. (4)).<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Word classes

The lexical word classes noun (N), verb (V), and adjective (A) are all productive within the grammar of Continental West-Germanic. Their form and distribution characteristics are as follows.

*Nouns* may be marked for number (singular vs. plural, e.g. Dutch *boek-boeken*, German *Buch-Bücher*, ‘book(s)'), gender (common vs. neuter, as in Dutch, or masculine/feminine/neuter, as in German, dependent marking on the determiner and/or the attributive adjective, e.g. Dutch *de man/de vrouw/het kind*, German *der Mann/die Frau/das Kind*, ‘the man/the woman/the child’), and (limited) Case (see section 4). *Nouns* appear in combination with determiners, numerals, and attributive adjectives (Dutch *de twee rode boeken* ‘the two red books’), *noun phrases* may appear as subjects (see section 4) and in the complement of prepositions (as in (7b)).

*Verbs* may be marked for person/number (1 through 3 singular and plural, with generally some syncretism, as in Dutch *ik loop; jij/hij loop-t; wij/jullie/zij lop-en*,<sup>7</sup> German *ich lauf-e; du läuf-st; er läuf-t; wir lauf-en; ihr läuf-t; sie lauf-en* ‘I/you/he/we/you-PL/they walk’) and (limited) tense (only present (actually, nonpast) and past tense, as in Dutch *ik loop-ik liep*, German *ich laufe-ich lief* ‘I walk-PRES/PAST’, with all other tenses expressed analytically, as in Dutch *ik heb gelopen*, German *ich bin gelaufen* [I walk-PERF] ‘I have walked’). Nonfinite verb forms include the infinitive, often accompanied by a grammaticalized locative preposition (Dutch *(te) lop-en*, German *(zu) lauf-en*, ‘(to) walk’), the perfective participle (Dutch *ge-lop-en*, German *ge-lauf-en*), and the present participle (Dutch *lop-end*, German *lauf-end*, ‘walking’).<sup>8</sup> The distributional characteristic of verbs in the Continental West-Germanic languages is that they participate in the subject-verb inversion illustrated in (1a) vs. (4).

*Adjectives* show gender/number agreement with nouns, as illustrated above, and may be marked for the comparative/superlative (Dutch *groot/grot-er/groot-st* ‘big/big-COMP/big-SUP’). Positionally, they enter into a predicative/attributive alternation (Dutch *het boek is groot* ‘the book is big’ vs. *het grote boek* ‘the big book’), where it is remarkable that only the predicatively used adjective may be followed by a complement PP (as in (7e)).

*Adpositions* (P) are not productive. They show no form alterations and generally appear before their complement noun phrase (as in (7b)), although most dialects feature a limited number of postpositions and circumpositions (Dutch *in de sloot* ‘in (locational)

<sup>6</sup> Yiddish may be analyzed as differing from the other Continental West-Germanic languages in that it generalizes the main clause finite verb movement to all verbs in all types of clauses:

(i) ..az ikh vil leyenen nokh dray bikher (Yiddish)  
that I want-1SG read-INF still three book-PL  
‘..that I want to read three more books.’

<sup>7</sup> A note on Dutch orthography: a double vowel in a closed syllable and a single vowel in an open syllable both indicate the same (tensed) vowel; a double consonant following a single vowel indicates that the vowel is lax.

<sup>8</sup> Frisian has two infinitives, ending in *-e* (following modal and causative verbs) and *-en* (following perception verbs, actualizers, and the infinitival marker *te*), respectively.



*Determiners* display gender and number agreement with the head noun (see above), as well as case morphology, if present (see section 4). There are definite and indefinite determiners, the latter identical to the numeral ‘one’ (Dutch *een*, German *ein*). Determiners precede the remainder of the noun phrase, with the possible exception of degree elements (e.g. Dutch *heel de wereld* [whole the world] ‘the entire world’, Yiddish *zeyer an interesant bukh* [very an interesting book] ‘a very interesting book’).

*Degree words* include extent markers (like Dutch *zo*, German *so* ‘so’) and excess markers (like Dutch *te*, German *zu* ‘too’), which precede the adjectives they belong to (Dutch *zo/te groot* ‘so/too big’) (cf. Corver 1991).

#### 4. Grammatical functions

*Subjects* in Continental West-Germanic show person/number agreement with the finite verb (e.g. Dutch *ik loop, jij/hij loop-t, wij/jullie/zij lop-en*, German *ich lauf-e, du läuf-st, er läuf-t, wir lauf-en, ihr läuf-t, sie lauf-en*, ‘I/you/he/we/you-PL/they walk’). Where case is in evidence, the subject invariably takes the unmarked nominative case.

Positionally, the subject precedes the object and the verb (cf. (1)), but may be preceded, especially in main clauses, by fronted topics or focused elements (in which case the subject is also preceded by the finite verb, cf. (4)) (see section 7).

The subject may correspond to the external argument of the verb it agrees with (10a), but also with its internal argument (passive, (10b))—though not the recipient in a ditransitive construction (10c)<sup>10</sup>—, or with an argument of the verb of an embedded clause (raising, (10d,e)).

- (10) a. **Jan** geeft de kinderen het boek (Dutch)  
 John give-3SG the children the book  
 ‘John gives the children the books.’
- b. **Het boek** wordt de kinderen gegeven  
 the book become-3SG the children give-PART.PERF  
 ‘The book is being given to the children.’
- c. \* **De kinderen** worden het boek gegeven  
 the children become-PL the book give-PART.PERF  
 ‘The children are being given the book.’
- d. **Jan** schijnt [ de kinderen het boek te geven ]  
 John seem-3SG the children the book to give-INF  
 ‘John seems to be giving the book to the children.’
- e. **Het boek** schijnt [ de kinderen gegeven te worden ]  
 the book seem-3SG the children give-PART.PERF to become-INF  
 ‘The book appears to be given to the children.’

<sup>10</sup> A recipient subject construction generally involves the active form of a verb of receiving (Dutch *krijgen*, German *bekommen*, ‘get’) with the source argument expressed in a PP:

- (i) De kinderen krijgen het boek van Jan (Dutch)  
 the child-PL get-PL the book from John  
 ‘The children get the book from John.’

Nonargument subjects ('expletives') are of two types, corresponding to the locative (Dutch *het*, German *es*) and nonlocative (Dutch *er*, German *da*) inanimate pronouns (see section 6)(cf. Bennis 1986). In what appears to be their core use, the nonlocative expletive anticipates a clause (11a), while the locative expletive anticipates a nonspecific ('indefinite') noun phrase (the 'associate', (11b)).<sup>11</sup>

- (11) a. Het/\*er is duidelijk [ dat hij een genie is ] (Dutch)  
 it/there be-3SG clear that he-NOM a genius be-3SG  
 'It is clear that he is a genius.'  
 b. Er/\*het is een genie in de zaal <sup>12</sup>  
 there/it be-3SG a genius in the room  
 'There is a genius in the room.'

The nonlocative expletive is also used as the subject in weather constructions (Dutch *het regent*, German *es regnet*, 'it is raining').

Subject drop is generally limited to nonlocative expletives in subject-verb inversion constructions (12) and to expletives more generally in embedded clauses (13).

- (12) Is (het) duidelijk [ wat jullie moeten doen ] ? (Dutch)  
 be-3SG it clear what you-PL must-PL do-INF  
 'Is it clear what you have to do?'  
 (13) ..daß (da/\*es) viele Leute anwesend waren (German)  
 that there/it many people present be-PAST.PL  
 '..that there were many people present.'

Frisian in addition allows subject drop of the 2SG pronoun:

- (14) Moatst Pyt helpe  
 must-2SG Pete help-INF  
 'You must help Pete.'

*Objects* appear in the area between the verb second position (cf. (1a)) and the verb final position (cf. (1b)) (the so-called 'Mittelfeld'). Their exact position with respect to adverbs, modal particles, and negation markers depends on a number of factors, including specificity/definiteness, discourse linking, and intonation. In general, specific/definite, discourse linked objects tend to precede other Mittelfeld material, and

<sup>11</sup> This distinction between locative and nonlocative expletives is in evidence in German dialects and in colloquial German (nonlocative expletive *es*, locative expletive *da*), but the Standard High German language employs the nonlocative expletive *es* where other Continental West-Germanic dialects would use the locative expletive, apparently with concomitant relaxation of the requirement of nonspecificity on the associate. In Afrikaans, where the weak forms *er* and *het* are absent, the locative expletive is *daar* and the nonlocative expletive *dit*.

<sup>12</sup> Locative expletive constructions may be intransitive, as in (11b), or transitive, as in (i).

- (i) Er heeft iemand een huis gekocht (Dutch)  
 there have-3SG someone a house buy-PART.PERF  
 'Someone bought a house.'

nonspecific/indefinite, non-discourse linked objects tend to follow other Mittelfeld material.

Indirect objects may be expressed as noun phrases or as PPs. Indirect object noun phrases tend to precede direct object noun phrases (cf. (10a)), but indirect object PPs enjoy greater positional freedom.<sup>13</sup>

Where case is in evidence, in particular in the pronominal system, direct objects are marked in comparison with subjects (e.g. Dutch *hij* [he-NOM] vs. *hem* [he-OBJ]). A case distinction between direct and indirect object pronouns exists in High West-Germanic, but is obliterated in Dutch and in most Low West-Germanic dialects (e.g. German *er* [he-NOM], *ihn* [he-ACC], *ihm* [he-DAT]; Lower Saxon *he* [he-NOM] vs. *em* [he-OBJ]; Yiddish *er* [he-NOM] vs. *im* [he-OBJ]; Frisian *hy* [he-NOM] vs. *him* [he-OBJ]; Afrikaans *hy* [he-NOM] vs. *hom* [he-OBJ]).<sup>14</sup> Outside the pronominal system, the direct and indirect object are not morphologically marked in Frisian, Dutch, and Afrikaans, and the case system is much reduced in Yiddish and all German dialects except Standard High German.<sup>15</sup>

There is abundant syntactic evidence for a structural asymmetry between subjects and objects in Continental West-Germanic: subjects may bind reflexive objects but objects may not bind reflexive subjects (15), similarly with licensing of negative polarity items (16).<sup>16</sup>

- (15) a. ..dat Jan z'n eigen haat (Colloquial Dutch)  
 that John POSS.MASC own hate-SG  
 ‘..that John hates himself.’  
 b. \* ..dat z'n eigen hem haat  
 that POSS.MASC own he-OBJ hate-SG
- (16) a. ..dat niemand ook maar iets wist (Dutch)  
 that nobody anything-NPI know-PAST.SG  
 ‘..that nobody knew a single thing.’  
 b. \* ..dat ook maar iemand niets wist  
 that anybody-NPI nothing know-PAST.SG

<sup>13</sup> In Afrikaans, animate (direct and indirect) objects may be preceded by an object marker (a grammaticalized preposition) *vir* (< Dutch *voor* ‘for’):

- (i) Ek sien vir hom (Afrikaans)  
 I-NOM see FOR he-OBJ  
 ‘I see him.’

The presence of the object marker is apparently also related to focus (i.e. *vir* is obligatory when the object appears to the right of sentence adverbs and negation, and is ‘strongly preferred’ with fronted pronouns, cf. Robbers 1997: 18).

<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere, the distinction between accusative and dative is intact, but the accusative is not distinguished from the nominative (e.g. Luxemburgish *hien* [he-NOM/ACC] vs. *him* [he-DAT]) and mixed systems are also attested (e.g. Westphalian *se* [she-NOM] and [they-NOM/ACC] vs. *iär* [she-OBJ] and [they-DAT], also Yiddish *zi* [she-NOM/ACC] vs. *ir* [she-DAT]).

<sup>15</sup> Where present, case is marked on the determiner and/or the adjective, and on the head noun in a few cases. German distinguishes four morphological cases (NOM *der*, ACC *den*, DAT *dem*, GEN *des* ‘the’), but the dialects and Yiddish express possession without making use of a genitive case (see section 8) and maintain no more than a two-way case opposition (NOM vs. OBJ or NOM/ACC vs. DAT) elsewhere.

<sup>16</sup> The colloquial Dutch reflexive *z'n eigen* lit. ‘his own’ is used here because it could in principle be used both as a subject and as an object.



However, there is no ‘superiority’ effect prohibiting the fronting of an interrogative object across an interrogative subject (17), and subjects and objects can be relativized equally well (18).

- (17) a. Wie heeft wat gedaan? (Dutch)  
 who have-3SG what do-PART.PERF  
 ‘Who did what?’  
 b. Wat heeft wie gedaan?  
 what have-3SG who do-PART.PERF  
 ‘Who did what?’
- (18) a. de man die het boek geschreven heeft  
 the man DEM-CG the book write-PART.PERF have-3SG  
 ‘the man who wrote the book’  
 b. het boek dat de man geschreven heeft  
 the book DEM-NTR the man write-PART.PERF have-3SG  
 ‘the book that the man wrote’

An asymmetry comparable to the one between subjects and objects exists between indirect objects and direct objects, indirect objects binding anaphoric direct objects (19), and licensing negative polar direct objects (20).

- (19) a. ..dat ik Piet z’n eigen toonde (Coll. Dutch)  
 that I Pete POSS.MASC own show-PAST.SG  
 ‘..that I showed Pete himself.’  
 b. \* ..dat ik z’n eigen Piet toonde  
 that I POSS.MASC own Pete show-PAST.SG
- (20) a. ..dat Jan niemand ook maar iets gaf (Dutch)  
 that John nobody anything-NPI give-PAST.SG  
 ‘..that John didn’t give anyone anything.’  
 b. \* ..dat Jan ook maar iemand niets gaf  
 that John anyone-NPI nothing give-PAST.SG

These facts are taken to indicate that the displacement operation taking the objects to positions nonadjacent to the verb (in clause final position) is of the A-movement type (Vanden Wyngaerd 1989).

## 5. Types of complementation

### *Full and reduced complement clauses*

Propositional internal arguments of a verb can be expressed in full (i.e., CP-type) and reduced (i.e., IP-type clauses); full complement clauses are finite (containing a tense-marked verb) or nonfinite, reduced complement clauses are always nonfinite.

Full complement clauses are realized in ‘extraposition’, i.e. to the right of the verb final position (cf. (5)). The arguments of reduced complement clauses are realized as subjects (‘raising’, with verbs of appearance like Dutch *schijnen* ‘seem’) or objects (‘raising to object’ or ‘Exceptional Case-Marking’ (ECM), with perception verbs (Dutch *zien* ‘see’) and causative verbs (Dutch *laten* ‘let’)) of the embedding (‘matrix’) clause. In

particular the raising to object cases yield various patterns of clausal intertwining, illustrated schematically in (21).<sup>17</sup>

- (21) a. [<sub>CLAUSE-1</sub> ADVERB—EXT.ARG—VERB [<sub>CLAUSE-2</sub> EXT.ARG—VERB—INT.ARG ]]  
 b. EXT.ARG<sub>1</sub>—EXT.ARG<sub>2</sub>—INT.ARG<sub>2</sub>—ADVERB<sub>1</sub>—VERB<sub>1</sub>—VERB<sub>2</sub>  
 c. EXT.ARG<sub>1</sub>—VERB<sub>1</sub>—EXT.ARG<sub>2</sub>—INT.ARG<sub>2</sub>—ADVERB<sub>1</sub>—VERB<sub>2</sub>

(21a) is an approximation of the deep structure of a Continental West-Germanic perception verb construction involving a reduced complement clause. (21b) is a schematic representation of the realization of such a construction, with the matrix clause shown in embedded clause word order (i.e., with the verb in final position). (21c) represents the same construction with the matrix clause showing main clause word order (i.e. with the verb in second position). The position of the matrix clause adverb (ADVERB<sub>1</sub>), to the right of the arguments of the embedded clause, shows that the clausal intertwining is still intact, even though superficially undone by the displacement of the matrix clause verb. These constructions are illustrated in (22), from Dutch.

- (22) a. [ ..dat Jan gisteren zag [ Piet kussen Marie ] (= (21a))  
 that John yesterday see-PAST.SG Pete kiss-INF Mary  
 b. ..dat Jan Piet Marie gisteren zag kussen (= (21b))  
 that John Pete Mary yesterday see-PAST.SG kiss-INF  
 ‘..that John saw Pete kiss Mary yesterday.’  
 c. Jan zag Piet Marie gisteren kussen (= (21c))  
 John see-PAST.SG Pete Mary yesterday kiss-INF

The patterns illustrated in (22) can be described as resulting from the same displacements needed to describe the word order of the simple clause illustrated in (1)-(5), viz. leftward movement of noun phrases and (in (22c)) of the finite verb.

Multiple embedding of reduced clauses yields essentially the same surface syntax, with the arguments lining up as objects in the Mittelfeld, and the verbs forming what looks like a cluster in the verb final position (except the finite verb if the highest embedding clause has main clause word order):

- (23) a. [ ..dat Jan nooit zou [ moeten [ laten  
 that John never shall-PAST.SG must-INF let-INF  
 [ Piet kussen Marie ]]]  
 Pete kiss-INF Mary  
 b. ..dat Jan Piet Marie nooit zou moeten laten kussen  
 that John Pete Mary never shall-PAST.SG must-INF let-INF kiss-INF  
 ‘..that John should never let Pete kiss Mary.’

<sup>17</sup> The pattern in (21) and the discussion of it in the text does not apply to Yiddish, where the verb does not appear in the verb final position and the ECM-complement clause follows the matrix verb (Santorini 1993: 234).

- c. Jan    *zou*               *Piet Marie* nooit *moeten laten kussen*  
 John shall-PAST.SG Pete Mary never must-INF let-INF kiss-INF  
 ‘John should never let Pete kiss Mary.’

(23) also illustrates the use of modal verbs taking bare infinitive complements, an extremely common pattern, where the modal verb can be deontic/epistemic (Dutch *zullen* ‘shall’, *moeten* ‘must’, *mogen* ‘may’, *kunnen* ‘can’, *willen* ‘will, want’), aspectual (Dutch *gaan* ‘go’, *komen* ‘come’, *blijven* ‘stay’), or postural (*staan* ‘stand’, *zitten* ‘sit’, *liggen* ‘lie down’).<sup>18</sup>

The clausal intertwining/verb clustering is also in evidence in perfective constructions involving an auxiliary (either *have* or *be*) and a perfective participle, albeit that the participle in some dialects occupies a different position from the infinitive (see below):

- (24) ..dat Jan *het boek* niet *gelezen* heeft  
 that John the book not read-PART.PERF have-3SG  
 ‘..that John hasn’t read the book.’

### *Verb clusters*

The Continental West-Germanic dialects display a bewildering variety of word orders in the verb clusters, although the order of the verbs is never random, and some orders are never found (cf. Zwart 1996).<sup>19</sup> Also, a distinction must be made between infinitival and participial constructions. The facts can be summarized as in table 1.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In Swiss German, the modal verbs may be repeated and/or doubled:

- (i) Gönd *go(ge)* en guete Platz *go(ge)* *sueche* (Zurich Swiss German)  
 go-IMP go(go) a good place go(go) find-INF  
 ‘Go find a good place.’

<sup>19</sup> It should be kept in mind that the term ‘verb cluster’ is used in a descriptive, and somewhat inaccurate sense here. It is clear from various phenomena, e.g. the displacement of the finite verb out of the cluster to the verb second position, and the interlacing of verbs with other material in dialects like West-Flemish, that the verbs do not form a cluster in any technical sense of the word (i.e. a string of elements behaving as a group).

<sup>20</sup> In table 1, the numbers refer to the status of the verbs in terms of embedding, with the more embedded verb receiving a higher number (e.g. *must do* = 1-2, *gelezen heeft* [read-PART.PERF have-3SG] = 2-1). Obligatory word orders are in italics.

		auxiliary-participle	single infinitive	multiple infinitive
Frisian		<b>2-1</b>	<b>2-1</b>	<b>3-2-1</b>
Standard Dutch		2-1/1-2	1-2	<b>1-2-3</b>
Standard German		<b>2-1</b>	<b>2-1</b>	<b>3-2-1</b>
Low Germanic	(West-Flemish)	2-1	1-2	1-2-3
Central Germanic	(Luxemburgish)	2-1	1-2	1-2-3
High Germanic	(Bavarian/Swabian)	2-1	1-2/2-1	3-2-1/1-3-2
Afrikaans		<b>2-1</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2-3</b>
Yiddish		d.n.a.	d.n.a.	<b>2-3</b>

TABLE 1

A further complication arises when recuded infinitive clauses are embedded in an auxiliary-participle construction (cf. English *have* [AUXILIARY] *wanted* [PARTICIPLE] *to see* [INFINITIVE]). These constructions allow additional verb orders not reflected in table 1 (e.g. 1-3-2 in Standard High German, 2-3-1 in West-Flemish, etc.), though not in all dialects (not in Frisian, for example, or in Low Germanic dialects showing the effects of Frisian substratum influence, such as the Low Saxon dialect spoken in the Dutch province of Groningen). In all but the fully ‘descending’ (i.e., 3-2-1) orders, the participle is replaced by an infinitive (*Infinitivus pro participio*, or ‘Ersatzinfinitiv’):<sup>21</sup>

- (25) a. ..dat Jan het boek had kunnen lezen (Dutch)  
that John the book have-PAST.SG can-INF read-INF  
‘..that John had been able to read the book.’  
b. ..daß Johann das Buch hätte lesen können (German)  
that John the-NOM/ACC have-CONJ.3SG read-INF can-INF  
‘..that John should have been able to read the book.’

The replacement of the participle by the infinitive does not take place when the reduced nonfinite clause appears in extraposition, in which case the embedded verb and its arguments appear to the right of the embedding verb (i.e. in extraposition, cf. (5)):

<sup>21</sup> The ‘IPP effect’ is optional in certain dialects (e.g. Luxemburgish, Bertrang 1921: 348) and in Afrikaans (Robbers 1997: 186f), and absent from Yiddish. Lange (1981: 64) correlates the presence of the IPP effect with the presence of a perfective prefix (*ge-*) in the participle (which is absent from Luxemburgish, and optionally present in Afrikaans). (Yiddish has the perfective prefix, but lacks the verb clustering to begin with.)

(26) ..dat Jan heeft beloofd/\*beloven  
 that John have-3SG promise-PART.PERF/INF

(om) het boek te zullen lezen  
 for the book to shall-INF read-INF

‘..that John has promised to read the book.’

In similar contexts, when the embedded clause has an infinitive with *te/zu* ‘to’, but no complementizer, the arguments of the embedded clause are again displaced into the matrix clause and the infinitive (with *te/zu*) is included in the verb ‘cluster’, but (with a few exceptions like Dutch *proberen* ‘try’) the participle is not replaced by the infinitive.<sup>22</sup>

(27) ..dat Jan het boek heeft beloofd/\*beloven  
 that John the book have-3SG promise-PART.PERF/INF

te zullen lezen  
 to shall-INF read-INF

‘..that John has promised to read the book.’

‘Verb Projection Raising’

The syntax of infinitival complementation is further complicated by the phenomenon, present in many dialects, that a string of two (or more) verbs in ascending order (i.e., **1-2-3**, **1-3-2**, etc.) may be broken up by adverbs, negation markers, stranded prepositions, or arguments and predicates originating in the more embedded clause.<sup>23</sup>

(28) a. We zullen *der* een keer moeten voor zorgen  
 (East-Flemish)  
 we-NOM shall-PL there one time must-INF for care-INF  
 ‘We will have to take care of it some time.’

b. ..daß er es hätte *genau* durchsehen müssen  
 (German)  
 that he-NOM it have-CONJ.3SG exact through-see-INF must-INF  
 ‘..that he should have looked it through carefully.’

<sup>22</sup> Thus, infinitival complementation in Continental West-Germanic shows three types: (i) transparency of the embedded clause and IPP-effect (traditionally called ‘verb raising’), (ii) no transparency of the embedded clause and no IPP-effect (‘extraposition’), and (iii) the mix of transparency without IPP-effect (‘third construction’). The latter may be described as the result of a combination of object shift and extraposition (‘remnant extraposition’).

<sup>23</sup> The technical term for the phenomenon is ‘Verb Projection Raising’, assuming that the word order is the result of rightward movement of part of a verb phrase. This type of analysis assumes a head final structure for Continental West-Germanic, with the verb clusters resulting from rightward movement and adjunction to the embedding verb of either a verb (‘Verb Raising’) or the projection of a verb (‘Verb Projection Raising’). As discussed in Zwart (1996), the phenomena, including their dialectal variation, are more economically described starting from a head initial structure, with object shift of arguments of the more deeply embedded verb moving across both the embedded and the embedding verb (yielding the effects of verb raising) or to a position between the two verbs (yielding the effects of Verb Projection Raising).

### Small Clauses

Propositional complements involving nonverbal predicates ('Small Clauses'), typically locative or resultative phrases, are productively formed in Continental West-Germanic. The predicate, which can be a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a preposition phrase (including the class of verbal particles or 'intransitive prepositions') appears to the immediate left of the verb final position, i.e. following all other Mittelfeld material.<sup>24</sup>

- (29) a. ..dat Jan de kast leeg vond (Dutch)  
that John the closet empty find-PAST.SG  
'..that John found the closet empty.'
- b. ..dat Jan (toen) de sloot (weer) in sprong  
that John then the ditch again in jump-PAST.SG  
'..that John then jumped into the ditch again.'

As can be seen in (29b), both the subject of the Small Clause predicate and the noun phrase contained in the Small Clause predicate are separated from the head of the Small Clause predicate (*in* 'into').<sup>25</sup>

In constructions with transparent reduced infinitival clauses, a predicate originating with the most deeply embedded verb appears to the immediate left of the verb cluster, or, in dialects allowing the cluster to be broken up, somewhere inside the verb cluster:

- (30) Maar ik zou<sub>1</sub> hem ook eerst  
but I-NOM will-PAST.SG he-OBJ also first
- laten<sub>3</sub> vuil worden<sub>4</sub> ebben<sub>2</sub> (East Flemish)  
let-INF dirty become-INF have-INF
- 'But I would have let it get dirty first, too.'

## 6. Pronouns

The Continental West-Germanic pronouns can be organized using the feature oppositions in figure 1:

<sup>24</sup> With one exception: the embedded predicate and the verb may be separated by stranded prepositions in dialects that allow them. This suggests that the surface position of predicates is derived rather than basic.

<sup>25</sup> It can be shown by standard tests (see section 8) that the verb *springen* as used in (29b) is unaccusative, suggesting that the subject *Jan* originates within the complement domain of the verb, i.e. as part of the Small Clause [*Jan* [*de sloot in*]] (Hoekstra and Mulder 1990).

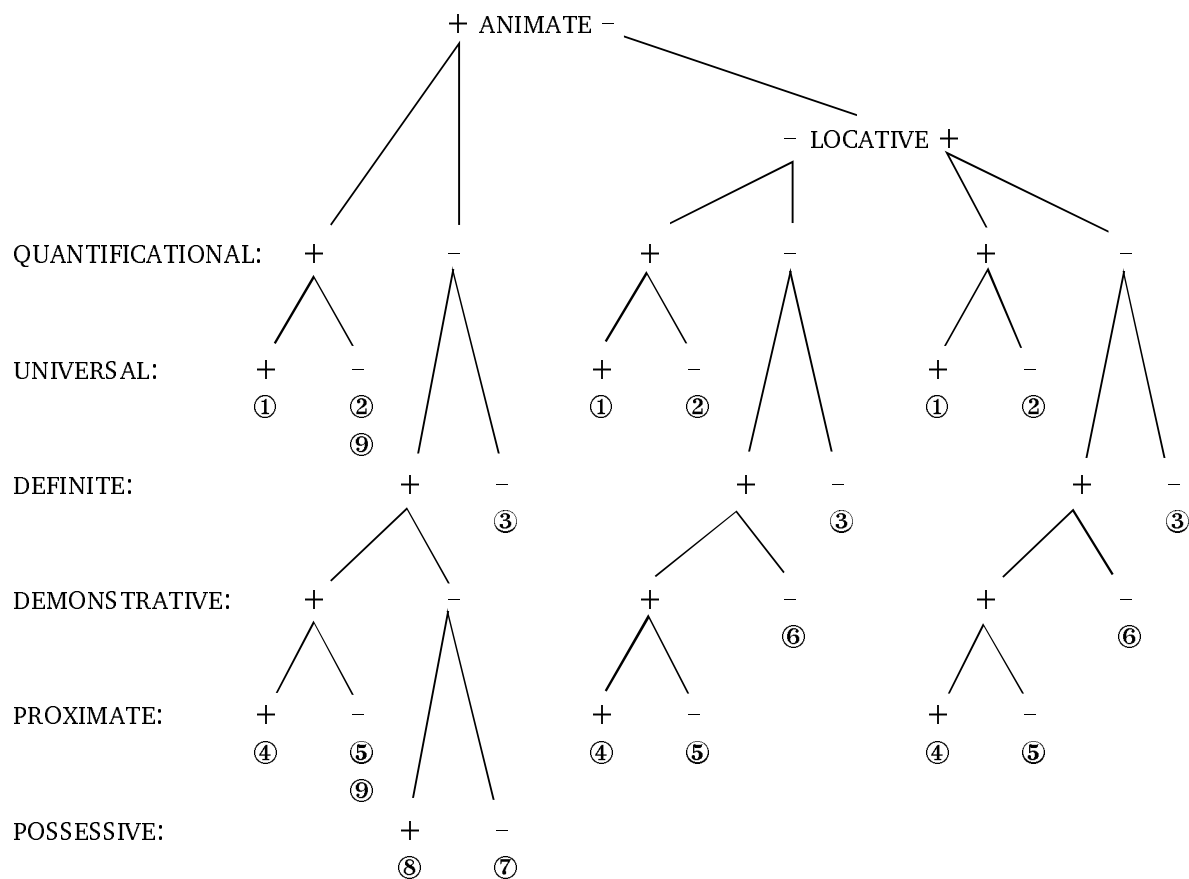


FIGURE 1

For e.g. Dutch, the pronouns are: ① [+ANIMATE] *iedereen/elk/allen*, [-ANIMATE] *alles*, [LOCATIVE] *overal*; ② *wie, wat, waar*; ③ *iemand, iets, ergens*; ④ *deze, dit, hier*; ⑤ *die, dat, daar*; ⑥ [-ANIMATE] *et* (spelled *het*), [LOCATIVE] *er* (spelled *er*); ⑦ the set of personal pronouns, see below; ⑧ the set of possessive pronouns, see below, including ⑨ the archaic [+ANIMATE] interrogative *wiens* and distal demonstrative *diens*.

The *personal pronouns* (⑦) show person (1,2,3), number (SG, PL), and, in 3SG, gender (MASCULINE, FEMININE) distinctions (in addition to case, for which see section 4).<sup>26</sup> These pronouns generally have strong and weak variants (see table 2).

<sup>26</sup> The neuter pronoun *et* forms a separate category (cf. ⑥ in figure 1), essentially a weak variant of the inanimate distal demonstrative pronoun *dat*.

			1SG	2SG	3SG.M	3SG.F	1PL	2PL	3PL
Dutch	strong	NOM	ik	jij	hij	zij	wij	jullie	zij
		OBJ	mij	jou	hem	haar	ons	jullie	hun
	weak	NOM	ək	jə	-/ie	zə	wə	-	zə
		OBJ	mə	jə	əm	dər	-	-	zə
Frisian	strong	NOM	ik	do	hy	sy	wy	jimme	sy
		OBJ	my	dy	him	har	ús	jimme	harren
	weak	NOM	ək	-to	ər	sə	wə	jim	sə
		OBJ	mi	di	əm	ər	-	jim	har
Bavarian	strong	NOM	i:	du:	eə	zi:	miə	e:z	ze:
		ACC	mi:	di:	eəm	zi:	unz	diə	ze:
		DAT	miə	diə	eəm	iə	unz	eɣg	eəne
	weak	NOM	-e	-d	-ə	-s	-mə	-z	-z
		ACC	-me	-de	-n	-s	-	-	-z
		DAT	-mə	-də	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 2

The *possessive pronouns* are: Dutch *mijn, jouw, zijn, haar, ons, jullie, hun* [my, your, his, her, our, your-PL, their], with weak variants in the singular *mən, jə, zən, dər* [my-WEAK, your-WEAK, his-WEAK, her-WEAK]; Frisian *myn, dyn, syn, har, ús, jimme, har/harren*; Bavarian *mai, dai, zai, iarə, insə, eɣgə, eəne*. On their use, see section 8.

The placement of weak pronouns is somewhat different from that of strong pronouns and full noun phrases. Weak pronouns may not be coordinated, modified, isolated, backgrounded (via ‘right dislocation’, see section 7), or fronted (via ‘topicalization’, section 7).<sup>27</sup> Weak direct object pronouns precede indirect objects (unlike with full noun phrases, cf. (10a)), and a weak pronoun corresponding to the internal argument of the infinitive in an ECM-construction may precede the infinitive’s external argument:

- (31) a. ..dat ik Piet **de afwas** zag doen (Dutch)  
that I-NOM Pete the dishes see-PAST.SG do-INF  
‘..that I saw Pete do the dishes.’
- b. ..dat ik **ət** Piet zag doen  
that I-NOM it-WEAK Pete see-PAST.SG do-INF  
‘..that I saw Pete do it.’

<sup>27</sup> Weak subject pronouns are not in general banned from the first sentence position, but some appear only in enclisis, like Dutch 3SG *-ie* and the Bavarian weak pronouns (cf. table 2).



More generally, weak object pronouns enjoy greater positional freedom than strong object pronouns or full noun phrases, in some dialects even preceding the (nonclitic) subject:

- (32) a. ..daß sich etwas ändert (German)  
 that REFL something change-3SG  
 ‘..that something changes.’  
 b. Ziede ze gije ? (South-East Flemish)  
 see-2SG.INV they-OBJ.WEAK you  
 ‘Do you see them?’

Weak subject pronouns in many dialects coalesce with the complementizer (e.g. Frisian *dat-st-ə* (< *dat-st-do*) *komst* [that-2SG+you-SG.WEAK come-2SG] ‘that you come’, Bavarian *dam-ma* (< *das+ma*) *farn* [that+we-NOM.WEAK go-PL] ‘that we go’). Sometimes the weak subject pronoun may be doubled by a strong pronoun (e.g. West-Flemish *da-n-ik ik komen* [that-1SG+I-NOM.WEAK I-NOM come-1SG] ‘that I come’, Bavarian *dam-ma miē farn* [that+we-NOM.WEAK we-NOM go-1PL] ‘that we go’).

Remarkably, (some or all) nonlocative inanimate pronouns in the complement of prepositions are replaced by their locative counterparts, appearing to the left of the preposition:<sup>28</sup>

- (33) ① \* met alles > overall mee (Dutch)  
 with everything everywhere with ‘with everything’  
 ② \* met wat > waar mee  
 with what where with ‘with what’  
 ③ \* met iets > ergens mee  
 with something somewhere with ‘with something’  
 ④ \* met dat > daar mee  
 with that there with ‘with that’  
 ⑤ \* met dit > hier mee  
 with this here with ‘with this’  
 ⑥ \* met ət > ər mee  
 with it there-WEAK with ‘with it’

Dialects differ in the range of this phenomenon (e.g. German lacks the replacement with pronouns of type ① and ③) and for some dialects a preference for the nonlocative, noninverted variant is reported (Swiss German, West-Flemish). In Dutch and (colloquial) German, the locative pronoun can be separated from the adposition (preposition stranding), but in other dialects the locative and the adposition are said to be inseparable (e.g. Luxemburgish, Bertrang 1921:310).

The nonlocative *demonstratives* are also used as deictic determiners (as in Dutch *deze/die man* ‘this/that man’, etc.), which cannot be combined with nondeictic

<sup>28</sup> Pronouns introducing free relative clauses in the complement of a preposition (as in *based on what you are saying*) are not replaced by their locative counterparts:

- (i) gebaseerd { op wat / \* waar op } jij zegt (Dutch)  
 based on what where on you say



Obviation is not marked in the pronoun system.<sup>32</sup> Pronouns interpreted coreferentially or as ‘bound variables’ are not marked by special morphology in the Continental West-Germanic languages.

## 7. Alternations, displacements, and special word order types

### *Alternations*

Alternations commonly found in the Continental West-Germanic dialects include the passive, the middle, the causative, the applicative, the dative alternation, the locative alternation, and an object placement alternation relating to definiteness/specificity.

The *passive* is generally formed by a combination of an auxiliary verb meaning ‘become’ (Dutch *worden*, German *werden*; Luxemburgish uses *gin* ‘give’) and a perfective participle (36a).<sup>33</sup> Transitive and intransitive unergative verbs can be passivized (the latter yielding ‘impersonal passives’ with an expletive subject, (36b)).<sup>34</sup> Ditransitives yield asymmetric passives, with only the direct object passivizing (cf. 10 b,c).

- (36) a. De hond wordt geslagen (Dutch)  
the dog become-3SG beat-PART.PERF  
‘The dog is being beaten.’
- b. Er wordt gedanst  
there become-3SG dance-PART.PERF  
‘People are dancing.’

Psych verbs come in two classes, one allowing passivization (37), and the other disallowing it (38).

<sup>32</sup> The one exception appears to be the type exemplified by the Dutch possessive distal demonstrative *diens*, which is necessarily obviate with respect to local and nonlocal subjects (cf. Postma 1984).

<sup>33</sup> The past tense of the passive is expressed by putting the auxiliary in the past tense (i), but Yiddish and the Central and High West-Germanic dialects lacking a simple past use the perfective construction in (iii). The perfect of a passive employs the auxiliary ‘to be’ (Dutch *zijn*, German *sein*) with the perfective participle (ii)—in German combining with a participle of the passive auxiliary ‘to become’ (iii)—which can be put in the past tense to express the plusquam perfectum (iv). The future passive forms employ the future auxiliary (Dutch *zullen*, German *werden*) in combination with the passive auxiliary and the perfective participle (v).

- (i) De hond werd geslagen (Dutch)  
the dog become-PAST.SG beat-PART.PERF  
‘The dog was beaten.’
- (ii) De hond is geslagen (Dutch)  
the dog be-3SG beat-PART.PERF  
‘The dog has been beaten.’
- (iii) Der Hund ist geschlagen worden (German)  
the dog is-3SG beat-PART.PERF become-PART.PERF  
‘The dog has been beaten.’
- (iv) De hond was geslagen (Dutch)  
the dog be-PAST.SG beat-PART.PERF  
‘The dog had been beaten.’
- (v) De hond zal geslagen worden (Dutch)  
the dog will-SG beat-PART.PERF become-INF  
‘The dog will be beaten.’

<sup>34</sup> As shown by the translation, the unexpressed agent in impersonal passives is interpreted as animate.

- (37) a. Het nieuws verontrust Jan (Dutch)  
 the news disturb-SG John  
 ‘The news disturbs John.’  
 b. Jan wordt door het nieuws verontrust  
 John become-3SG by the news disturb-PART.PERF  
 ‘John is disturbed by the news.’
- (38) a. Het nieuws bevalt Jan  
 the news please-3SG John  
 ‘The news pleases John.’  
 b. \* Jan wordt door het nieuws bevallen  
 John become-3SG by the news please-PART.PERF

The *middle* construction shows two varieties in Continental West-Germanic. In one type, the construction is reflexive (cf. (35a)) and the subject can only be an internal argument, not an adjunct. In the other type, no reflexive is used (cf. (35b)), and the subject can be both an internal argument or an adjunct (usually instrumental or locative, cf. (39a)). The first type is found in Standard High German, the second in Standard Dutch.<sup>35</sup> Middle constructions also have an expletive locative/instrumental variant (also showing the  $\pm$  reflexive split) (39b) and a periphrastic causative variant (always reflexive and always with the internal argument as subject)(39c):

- (39) a. Deze stad woont prettig (Dutch)  
 this town live-3SG pleasant  
 ‘It is pleasant living in this town.’  
 b. Het woont prettig in deze stad  
 it live-3SG pleasant in this town  
 ‘It is pleasant living in this town.’  
 c. Zo’n woord laat zich gemakkelijk vertalen  
 such+a word let-SG REFL easily translate-INF  
 ‘Such a word allows for easy translation.’

The middle is never marked morphologically.

The *causative* is always formed periphrastically, using a causative verb (Dutch *laten*, German *lassen*, ‘let’) and a reduced infinitival complement. In embedded contexts, the causative shows similar transparency effects as the ECM-construction (cf. (21)):

- (40) a. Jan liet Piet Marie kussen (Dutch)  
 John let-PAST.SG Pete Mary kiss-INF  
 ‘John let Pete kiss Mary.’  
 b. ..dat Jan Piet Marie liet kussen  
 that John Pete Mary let-PAST.SG kiss-INF  
 ‘..that John let Pete kiss Mary.’

<sup>35</sup> A mixture of the two types is found in the Limburgian dialects in the Netherlands, Low/Central Rhine Franconian varieties with considerable Standard Dutch influence (cf. Cornips 1996).

The causative construction does not allow for passivization.<sup>36</sup>

The *applicative* alternation is formed with the verbal prefix *be*:

- (41) a. De printer spat inkt op het papier (Dutch)  
the printer spit-3SG ink on the paper  
b. De printer be-spat het papier met inkt  
the printer APPL-spit-3SG the paper with ink  
'The printer spits ink on the paper.'

The *dative* alternation is commonly found, as in Dutch (42) next to (10a):

- (42) Jan geeft het boek aan de kinderen  
John give-3SG the book to the children  
'John gives the book to the children.'

The presence of a *locative* alternation (involving displacement of a locative to subject position) is not easy to establish due to possible confusion with topicalization (see below in this section) and, in embedded clauses, with 'scrambling' (relatively free word order in the Mittelfeld). The word order type in (43) may be an example (cf. Zwart 1992):

- (43) ..dat in de kast een lijk zit (Dutch)  
that in the closet a body sit-SG  
'..that a body is in the closet.'

In the Mittelfeld, a *specificity* alternation is found, with specific objects preceding discourse particles, and nonspecific objects following them:

- (44) a. Pak het boek maar (Dutch)  
take-IMP the book just  
'Why don't you take the book?'  
b. Pak maar een boek  
take-IMP just a book  
'Why don't you take a book?'

Indefinite objects preceding discourse particles take on a specific or generic reading:<sup>37</sup>

- (45) Je moet een boek maar niet opeten  
you must-SG a book just not eat-INF  
'You don't want to eat a book.'

The same tendency exists with other adverbial material in the Mittelfeld (sentence adverbs, VP-adverbs), but here the interpretive effects can be undone by marked intonation patterns (cf. Zwart 1997: 92f).

<sup>36</sup> Neither does the ECM-construction (cf. Bennis & Hoekstra 1989).

<sup>37</sup> Likewise, definite objects following discourse particles are interpreted as discourse-new.

### Displacements

This subsection covers the positioning of question words and phrases, as well as the distribution of focused, topicalized, and backgrounded material.<sup>38</sup>

*Question words and phrases* are fronted in all Continental West-Germanic dialects. In main clauses, the fronting is accompanied by inversion of the subject and the finite verb ('verb second', cf. (4)). In embedded clauses, the verb stays in the verb final position, but the question word/phrase is still fronted and may be followed by one or more complementizers in a number of dialects (including Frisian and colloquial Dutch):<sup>39</sup>

- (46) (Ik vraag me af) waarom of dat Jan Marie kust (Dutch)  
(I wonder) why if that John Mary kiss-3SG  
'I wonder why John is kissing Mary.'

The parallelism between the position of the finite verb in main clause interrogatives and the position of the complementizer in embedded interrogatives suggests that the inverted verb is in the head position of CP, and the question phrase in the specifier position of CP (essentially Den Besten 1977).

With multiple question words/phrases, only one is fronted and the others stay in the position expressing their grammatical function (*in situ*, cf. (17)). The question phrase *in situ* receives the high pitch intonation associated with focus. Without the high pitch intonation, the *in situ* question word *wat* (Dutch) / *was* (German) receives the interpretation of an indefinite inanimate pronoun ('something'):

- (47) Ik weet wat (Dutch)  
I-NOM know-SG what  
'I know something', 'I have an idea.'

The fronting of question words allows for considerable 'pied piping':<sup>40</sup>

- (48) a. [ Waar over ] heb je gesproken ? (Dutch)  
where about have-2SG.INV you speak-PART.PERF  
'Who did you talk about?'  
b. [ De ouders van welke student ] heb je beledigd ?  
the parents of which student have-2SG.INV you insult-PART.PERF  
'The parents of which student did you insult?'

On the other hand, fronting of just the question words leads to 'preposition stranding' (49a) and subextraction (49b):

- (49) a. Waar heb je over gesproken ? (Dutch)  
where have-2SG.INV you about speak-PART.PERF

<sup>38</sup> See section 5 for displacement to subject or object position ('A-movement'). A-movement in Continental West-Germanic is subject to the standard locality restrictions, i.e. it takes place out of reduced (nonfinite) complement clauses only.

<sup>39</sup> When more complementizers are present, the sequence of complementizer types is invariably CONDITIONAL (Dutch *als/as*)—INTERROGATIVE (Dutch *of*)—DEMONSTRATIVE (Dutch *dat*), cf. De Rooij 1965.

<sup>40</sup> Note the conversion of the inanimate interrogative *wat* into its locative counterpart *waar* (cf. section 6).

- ‘What did you talk about?’
- b. *Welke student heb je de ouders van beledigd ?*  
 which student have-2SG.INV you the parents of insult-PART.PERF  
 ‘Which student did you insult the parents of?’

The same pattern is displayed in questions addressing kinds (as in *what kind of books*):

- (50) a. *Wat voor boeken heb je gelezen ?* (Dutch)  
 what for book-PL have-2SG.INV you read-PART.PERF  
 b. *Wat heb je voor boeken gelezen ?*  
 what have-2SG.INV you for book-PL read-PART.PERF  
 ‘What kind of books did you read?’

*Long distance movement* of question words and phrases (i.e. subextraction from a nonreduced embedded clause) takes place and is sensitive to the usual opacity factors. Thus, there is no long distance extraction out of subject clauses and adjunct clauses, or out of embedded interrogatives or embedded clauses with main clause word order.<sup>41, 42</sup> The following special features may be noted.

Long distance movement of subject question words generally shows no ‘*that*-trace effect’ (omission of the complementizer in the context of an extracted subject):<sup>43</sup>

- (51) *Wie denk je dat het boek geschreven heeft ?*  
 (Dutch)  
 who think-2SG.INV you that the book write-PART.PERF have-3SG  
 ‘Who do you think wrote the book?’

<sup>41</sup> This is accepting the argumentation in Reis (1996) that German clauses of the type in (i) involve parenthesis rather than long distance extraction.

- (i) *Wer glaubst du hat recht ?*  
 who-NOM believe-2SG you-NOM has-3SG right  
 ‘Who do you think is right?’

<sup>42</sup> Yiddish, which lacks the main clause-embedded clause asymmetry in (1), does allow extraction out of embedded clauses with main clause word order, and, more strikingly, also out of embedded clauses with subject-verb inversion, as in (i):

- (i) *Vos hot er nit gevolt az in shul zoln di kinder*  
 what have-3SG he-NOM not want-PART.PERF that in school shall-PL the-PL children  
 leynen ?  
 read-INF

‘What did he not want the children to read at school?’

<sup>43</sup> With intransitive verbs in Dutch, the combination of a complementizer and a subject gap feels awkward, which is mitigated by including the locative expletive *er*:

- (i) *Wie denk je dat ??(er) komt*  
 who think-2SG.INV you that there come-3SG  
 ‘Who do you think is coming?’

In Frisian and German, long distance interrogatives may involve doubling of the question word (52a), or displacement of the question word to the edge (Spec,CP) of the embedded clause and insertion of an invariant operator in the Spec,CP of the main clause (52b):

- (52) a. Wen denkst du wen sie liebt ? (German)  
 who-ACC think-2SG you (SG) who-ACC she-NOM love-3SG  
 b. Was denkst du wen sie liebt ? (German)  
 what think-2SG you (SG) who-ACC she-NOM love-3SG

‘Who do you think she loves?’

*Topicalization* generally shows the same syntax as question phrase movement, i.e. fronting of the topic, possibly over longer distance, accompanied by inversion of the main clause subject and finite verb.<sup>44</sup> ‘Topics’ are understood here as discourse-familiar elements, prototypically demonstrative pronouns or noun phrases headed by a deictic determiner. There is a strong preference for these elements to be fronted:

- (53) a. ?? Ik weet dat niet (Dutch)  
 I know-SG DEM.DIST.NTR not  
 b. Dat weet ik niet  
 DEM.DIST.NTR know-SG I not  
 ‘I don’t know that.’

A fronted element (with or without deictic determiner) can also be resumed by a distal demonstrative pronoun, which appears between the fronted element and the (inverted) finite verb:<sup>45, 46</sup>

- (54) Jan/Die jongen (die) ken ik niet (Dutch)  
 John/DEM.DIST.CG boy DEM.DIST.CG know-1SG I not  
 ‘I don’t know John/that guy.’

<sup>44</sup> However, it is noteworthy that in some dialects (e.g. in the South-West of Belgium) some cases of topicalization do not require subject-verb inversion, whereas the inversion is obligatory with question word fronting (see Zwart 1997:255 and references cited there).

<sup>45</sup> The resumptive pronoun agrees in gender with the fronted phrase, except where the fronted phrase corresponds to the subject of a copula construction (or the external argument of a ‘Small Clause’), in which case the default neuter gender form is obligatory. This neuter demonstrative also appears in deictic copula constructions:

- (i) Dat zijn kooplieden (Dutch)  
 DEM.DIST.NTR be-PL merchant-PL  
 ‘Those are merchants.’

<sup>46</sup> In comparison to the ‘resumptive d-word’ strategy illustrated here, the ‘left dislocation’ strategy (where the fronted element is resumed by a personal pronoun in the position corresponding to its grammatical function) appears to be rather awkward and not in common use.



Note that the resumptive d-word turns locative when extracted from out of a prepositional phrase:<sup>47</sup>

- (55) Bananen (*daar*) ben ik niet dol *op* (Dutch)  
 bananas there be-1SG I-NOM not wild on  
 ‘I’m not crazy about bananas.’

The fronted element and the resumptive d-word fail constituency tests (e.g. they cannot appear together in any other position), suggesting that only the d-word has been fronted, and that the phrase in front is a ‘base generated’ sentence satellite.

The tendency to front topics (deictic elements) is absent from embedded clauses:<sup>48</sup>

- (56) \* ..dat die jongen (die) jij wel kende (Dutch)  
 that DEM.DIST.CG boy DEM.DIST.CG you DISC-PRT know-PAST.SG  
 ‘..that you knew that guy.’

*Focus* is expressed by high pitch intonation on the pitch bearing syllable of the focused element. In the default case, focus is on the most deeply embedded complement or predicate (cf. Cinque 1993).<sup>49</sup> Marked (‘narrow’) focus can be on any constituent, and may or may not be accompanied by additional displacements of the focused constituent (‘focus scrambling’).

*Backgrounding* is marked by both position (to the right of the verb final position) and intonation (level and low pitched).<sup>50</sup> Backgrounded arguments are doubled by a weak pronoun in the position associated with the argument’s grammatical function (subject or object position) (‘right dislocation’). Backgrounded clausal arguments are doubled by the inanimate nondemonstrative pronoun (Dutch *et*, German *es*, ‘it’). Adverbs can only appear in postverbal position when backgrounded. Weak elements (such as weak pronouns and discourse particles) cannot appear in postverbal position at all, not even as backgrounded material.

Clauses and PPs also appear in postverbal position without backgrounding (i.e., without the level low pitch intonation) (‘extraposition’).<sup>51</sup> PPs interpreted as secondary predicates (‘Small Clause predicates’) must appear in the preverbal position designated for embedded predicates. Embedded (nonreduced) complement clauses must appear in extraposition, adjunct clauses enjoy more freedom.

<sup>47</sup> Note that extraction out of a PP in Dutch requires locative morphology on the extracted element (cf. (i)). This suggests that even when the ‘optional’ resumptive d-word is not spelled out, it is nevertheless present in zero form.

(i) \* Ik ben *bananen* niet dol *op*  
 I-NOM be-1SG bananas not wild about

<sup>48</sup> This can be understood if the ‘sentence satellite’ analysis of topicalization is correct (Zwart 1997:250).

<sup>49</sup> Note that the most deeply embedded complement or predicate need not be, and very often is not, the rightmost element, due to the obligatory placement of objects and embedded predicates to the left of the verb final position.

<sup>50</sup> These remarks on backgrounding and extraposition do not immediately apply to Yiddish, where reference to the verb final position is difficult due to the generalized verb movement characteristic of Yiddish syntax.

<sup>51</sup> Standard High German disfavors PP extraposition, but the phenomenon does not seem absent from the spoken language and is common in all West-Germanic dialects.

Extraposited clauses and backgrounded clauses differ in a number of respects, most significantly in that backgrounded clauses are opaque and extraposited clauses are not (pitch accent indicated by small capitals, low level pitch by small print):<sup>52</sup>

- (57) a. \* Wie heb je het betREURD  
 who have-2SG.INV you it regret-PART.PERF  
 dat je gekust hebt ? (Dutch, backgrounding)  
 that you kiss-PART.PERF have-2SG  
 ‘Who did you regret it that you kissed?’
- b. Wie heb je (het) betreurd  
 who have-2SG.INV you it regret-PART.PERF  
 dat je gekUST hebt ? (Dutch, extraposition)  
 that you kiss-PART.PERF have-2SG  
 ‘Who did you regret it that you kissed?’

Extraposited PPs are always opaque (i.e., no preposition stranding in postverbal position):

- (58) \* Waar heb je gesproken over ? (Dutch)  
 where have-2SG.INV you speak-PART.PERF about  
 ‘What did you talk about?’

Other elements appearing in extraposition include relative clauses (59a), specifications (59b), and the second member of coordinations (59c).

- (59) a. ..dat ik iemand ken die kan voetballen (Dutch)  
 that I-NOM someone know-1SG REL.CG can play.soccer-INF  
 ‘..that I know someone who can play soccer.’
- b. ..dat ik iemand ken, een voetballer  
 that I-NOM someone know-1SG a soccer.player  
 ‘..that I know someone, a soccer player.’
- c. ..dat ik een tennisser ken en een voetballer  
 that I-NOM a tennis.player know-1SG and a soccer.player  
 ‘..that I know a tennis player and a soccer player.’

Extraposited elements are interpreted as associated with material which may be deeply embedded within preverbal constituents:

- (60) ..dat ze de hoogte van de letters op de kaft van rapporten  
 that they the height of the letters on the cover of reports

<sup>52</sup> See also Bennis (1986). Bennis ties the opacity effect to the presence of the doubling pronoun, but pronoun doubling is not (in all cases) restricted to backgrounding, whereas the opacity effect is.



- (63) a. de puur won em s häime verbrunen isch  
 (Zurich Swiss German)  
 the farmer REL he-DAT.WEAK the farm burn-PART.PERF be-3SG  
 ‘the farmer whose farm burned down’
- b. de suu wo d mueter irer läbtig gspart  
 the son REL the mother her life save-PART.PERF
- hät für en  
 have-3SG for he-ACC.WEAK
- ‘the son for who his mother has been saving all her life’

In *free relatives* (relative clauses lacking a head noun) the relative pronoun is of the interrogative type:

- (64) a. de man die/\*wie ik zie (Dutch)  
 the man DEM.DIST.CG / INT.CG I-NOM see-1SG  
 ‘the man I see’
- b. Ik weet wie/\*die ik zie  
 I-NOM know-1SG INT.CG / DEM.DIST.CG I-NOM see-1SG  
 ‘I know who I see.’

In these cases, the relative pronoun shows a matching effect which is absent from ordinary relative clauses, where the case morphology of the head noun and the relative pronoun need not match (65a). In free relatives, the case morphology of the relative pronoun needs to satisfy the case requirements set on the free relative itself (functioning as subject or object of the matrix clause) as well as the case requirements associated with the gap inside the relative clause (65b,c):

- (65) a. Ich kenne den Mann der dort wohnt (German)  
 I-NOM know-1SG the-ACC man DEM.DIST.MASC.NOM there live-3SG  
 ‘I know the man who lives there.’
- b. \* Ich kenne wer/wen dort wohnt  
 I-NOM know-1SG INT.MASC.NOM/ACC there live-3SG  
 ‘I know who lives there.’
- c. Ich liebe wen ich küsse  
 I-NOM love-1SG INT.MASC.ACC I-NOM kiss-1SG  
 ‘I love who I kiss.’

## 8. Noun phrase structure

The order of elements in the noun phrase in Continental West-Germanic dialects is DETERMINER—NUMERAL—ADJECTIVE—NOUN—PP/CP. The PP and CP may have adjunct or argument status, and may also appear in extraposition (see section 7).

Possession is expressed in four different ways: (i) by a possessive pronoun (e.g. Dutch *mijn boek*, German *mein Buch*, ‘my book’) or (much more limited) a genitive case-marked noun phrase (e.g. Dutch *Jans boek*, German *Johanns Buch*, ‘John’s book’), (ii) by a weak







Nonspecific arguments in negative clauses are marked by a negative determiner (Dutch *geen*, German *kein*, ‘no’) which may or may not cooccur with the negative adverb (depending on the status of negative concord in the dialect):

- (72) a. Ik heb geen boek gelezen (Dutch)  
 I-NOM have-1SG no book read-PART.PERF  
 ‘I haven’t read a book.’  
 b. Koa mensch is ned kema (Bavarian)  
 no man be-3SG not come-PART.PERF  
 ‘Noone came.’

Nonspecific expressions more generally are negated by prefixation of *n-* (as in Dutch *iets* vs. *niets* ‘something/nothing’, *iemand* vs. *niemand* ‘someone/noone’, *ergens* vs. *nergens* ‘somewhere/nowhere’, *ooit* vs. *nooit* ‘ever/never’). When more than one of these negative nonspecific expressions occurs, the negative prefix surfaces on the highest (leftmost) expression only and the generic negative adverb (Dutch *niet*) is left out, except in varieties featuring negative concord:

- (73) a. Niemand heeft (\*n)iemand (\*n)iets (\*niet) gegeven (Dutch)  
 noone have-3SG (no)one (no)thing (not) give-PART.PERF  
 ‘Noone has given anyone anything.’  
 b. ..da Valère niemand niets nie getoogd  
 that Valery noone nothing not show-PART.PERF  
 en eet (West-Flemish)  
 NEG have-3SG  
 ‘..that Valery didn’t show anything to anyone.’

Afrikaans has a double negation type (deviating from the Continental West-Germanic negative concord pattern) where the invariant negative element *nie* is repeated in sentence final position.<sup>63</sup>

- (74) a. Hy kom nie terug nie (Afrikaans)  
 he come not back not  
 ‘He’s not coming back.’  
 b. Ons het niks te doen nie  
 we have nothing to do not  
 ‘We have nothing to do.’  
 c. Jan het nie gesê dat hy sal kom nie  
 John have not say-PART.PERF that he will come not  
 ‘John didn’t say that he will come.’

<sup>63</sup> The second *nie* is dropped when adjacent to the first *nie*:

- (i) Ek ken hom nie (\*nie)  
 I know him not not  
 ‘I don’t know him.’



This type of double negation is probably of non-Indo-European origin (Bouman 1926:60, Den Besten 1986).

## 10. Coordination and ellipsis

Coordination follows the pattern [ (&)  $\alpha$  [ &  $\beta$  ]]:

- (75) a. Jan en/of Piet (Dutch)  
 John and/or Pete  
 b. EN/OF Jan EN/OF Piet  
 and/or John and/or Pete  
 ‘both John and Pete/either John or Pete’

The second member of the coordination may appear in extraposition together with the conjunction (cf. (59c)), suggesting its constituent status.

The first constituent of the second of two conjoined clauses (whether subject or preposed topic) may be left out under identity with a parallel constituent in the first clause:<sup>64</sup>

- (76) a. Jan pakte een pen en begon te schrijven (Dutch)  
 John take-PAST.SG a pen and start-PAST.SG to write-INF  
 ‘John took a pen and started to write.’  
 b. Toen pakte Jan een pen en begon  
 John take-PAST.SG John a pen and start-PAST.SG  
 te schrijven  
 to write-INF  
 ‘Then John took a pen and started to write.’

Gapping (verb deletion in coordinate structures) operates from left to right in main clauses, but bidirectionally in embedded clauses (with the embedded clause word order illustrated in (1b)):<sup>65</sup>

- (77) a. Jan kuste Marie en Piet Truus (Dutch)  
 John kiss-PAST.SG Mary and Pete Truus  
 ‘John kissed Mary and Pete Truus.’  
 b. ..dat Jan Marie kuste en Piet Truus  
 c. ..dat Jan Marie en Piet Truus kuste  
 that John Mary kiss-PAST.SG and Pete Truus kiss-PAST.SG

<sup>64</sup> See Zwart (1997:263f) for discussion of the differences between the type of construction illustrated in (76a), which probably involves coordination of the subject’s sister category, and that in (76b), which forces a bound variable reading on the empty subject of the second conjunct. Note that the empty subject in (76b) must be taken to precede the verb, since the verb doesn’t show the special 2SG inversion morphology in Dutch (cf. (48)).

<sup>65</sup> Note that the complementizer *dat* ‘that’ can be inserted in the second conjunct of (76c), but not in (76b), suggesting that (76b) and (76c) illustrate different phenomena (cf. Neijt 1980).

‘..that John kissed Mary and Pete Truus.’

The Continental West-Germanic languages lack VP-deletion of the English type (as in *John kissed Mary before Bill did/trying to*) and use a paraprastic verb phrase instead:<sup>66</sup>

(78) Jan kuste Marie voor dat Wim dat deed/probeerde  
(Dutch)  
John kiss-PAST.SG Mary before that Bill that do/try-PAST.SG  
‘John kissed Mary before Bill did/trying to.’

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## Abbreviations used

ACC = accusative	EXT.ARG = external argument	NPI = negative polarity item
AN = animate	GEN = genitive	NTR = neuter
APPL = applicative	GER = gerund	OBJ = objective
CG = common gender	IMP = imperative	PART = participle
CONJ = conjunctive	INF = infinitive	PERF = perfect
DAT = dative	INT = interrogative	PL = plural
DEF = definite	INT.ARG = internal argument	POSS = possessive
DEM = demonstrative	INV = inversion	REFL = reflexive
DISC-PRT = discourse particle	IPP = Infinitivus Pro Participio	REL = relative
DIST = distal	MASC = masculine	SG = singular
ECM = exceptional Case-marking	NEG = negation	
	NOM = nominative	

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<sup>66</sup> Consequently, Continental West-Germanic also lacks the phenomenon of Antecedent Contained Deletion (as in *John kissed everyone Bill did*).

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