Derivations, constructions, and the word order of Dutch

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1. Head position in Dutch

(1) head position in Dutch: initial
a. CP dat Jan een boek koopt
   that John a book buys
b. DP het boek
   the book
c. NP poging tot omkoping
   attempt at bribery
d. AP dol op bananen
crazy for bananas (likes to eat bananas)
e. PP zonder bananen
   without bananas
f. NumP drie bananen
   three bananas
g. DegP erg leuk
   very funny
h. VP beweren dat het regent
crime:INF that it's raining

(2) head position in Dutch: final
a. VP; nonspecific object iets beweren
   something claim:INF (to claim something)
b. VP; verbal particle op bellen
   up call:INF
c. VP; predicate rood verven
   red paint:INF
d. VP; stranded P ergens nooit over praten
   INDEF:LOC never about talk:INF (never talk about sth.)

(3) no decision
a. VP; verb-second Jan koopt een boek (cf. (1a))
   > verb moved John buys a book
b. VP; specific object dat Jan dat boek niet koopt (cf. (2a))
   > object moved that John that book not buys

(4) a. Dutch looks very head-initial, except for the VP (with nonspecific objects etc.)
b. The Dutch VP looks head-final, except for clausal complements

(5) movement solutions?
a. Ad (4a): leftward movement of nonspecific objects etc. to “PredP” (Zwart 1993)
b. Ad (4b): rightward movement of clauses (Evers 1975)
2. A typological perspective

(6) Two generalizations
a. Compounds are head-final (Righthand Head Rule; Williams 1981)
b. Coordinations are head-initial (Zwart 2005, to appear)

(7) It follows that
a. Head-initial languages have head-final compounds
b. Head-final languages have head-initial coordinations

(8) Head-final compounds in a head-initial language
English: [ truck [ driver ]] cf. to drive a truck

(9) Head-initial coordination in a head-final language
Kinnauri: eñ reñ do: chañ due (Sharma 1988:91)
1sg:gen with 3sg:gen son be:3past
‘His son was with me.’

g eñ reñ ki bi-tič (Sharma 1988:182)
1sg:dir and you:hon go-fut:1du.incl.hon
‘I and you will go.’

(10) NB: head-initial conjunction

(11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>214 LANGUAGE SAMPLE</th>
<th>INITIAL</th>
<th>FINAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEADS</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONJUNCTIONS</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>(at best) 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Zwart, to appear)

(12) Hypothetical generalizations
a. Head-finality in a head-initial language is lexical
b. Head-initiability in a head-final language is syntactic

(13) Assume a continuum

LEXICAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>finality</th>
<th>initiality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* ... initial ... final ...</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SYNTACTIC

(14) cf. Croft 2001:17

word < syntactic category < idiom < syntax

<table>
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<tr>
<th>atomic</th>
<th>specific</th>
<th>schematic</th>
<th>complex</th>
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<td>✓</td>
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3. Constructions

(15) *Construction*
Learned pairing of form with semantic or discourse function (Goldberg 2006:5)
> idiosyncratic form/meaning pairing

Objects of syntactic representation that also contain semantic and even phonological information (Croft 2001:16)

(16) Constructions can be more or less atomic/complex and specific/schematic

(17) Schematic: involving variables (e.g. pull X’s leg)

(18) *Construction grammar* (cf. Goldberg 2006)
a. everything is a construction
b. language acquisition is generalization of construction schemata
c. does not deny that constructions have structure

(19) To be able to use the continuum, I will say that things can be “more a construction”, meaning they are characterized by *idiosyncratic* form/meaning pairing, and/or by *reduced* schematicity/complexity.

(20) *Question*
Is head-finality in Dutch a function of the relevant structures being “more a construction”?

4. Derivations in minimalism

(21) *Model of grammar*

lexicon ➔ computational system ➔ interfaces (sound/meaning)

(22) computational system: structure
interfaces: conversion to sound/meaning > potential idiosyncrasy

(23) *example*

manusje van alles ‘Jack of all trades’
lexicon = { manusje, van, alles }

computational system
1. merge *van + alles*
2. merge *manusje + [van alles]*

interfaces: assign idiosyncratic meaning

(24) assignment of idiosyncratic meaning = (often) atomization

(25) a. Hij is een manusje van alles
he is a [jack of all trades]
b. * Van alles is hij een manusje
c. * Overal is hij een manusje van
(26) As an atom, the output of a derivation can be part of a new lexicon (= recursion)

(27) *Lexicon* for (25a)
\{'hij, is, een, [manusje van alles]\}

(28) *Conclusions for the model of grammar*
a. Derivations are layered (structures are networks of derivations like (21))
b. The lexicon is not homogeneous (contains morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, etc.)

(29) *NB on the term ‘Lexicon’*
I use the term here as “the set of elements used in a derivation (= (21))”.
That set is a subset of the class of elements that could be used in a derivation, which is
infinite (containing words, phrases, etc.).
I.e., there is a different lexicon for each derivation (layer).

5. Diagnostics

(30) *How do we know that X is the output of a derivation layer?*
a. configurational criteria (*X* could not be composed internal to a derivation layer)
b. interpretive criteria (*X* shows effects of having passed through interface components)

(31) *constructional loop*
LEXICON1 → COMPUTATION → INTERFACES → LEXICON2 → COMPUTATION etc.

(32) *Possible interpretive effects*
a. conventionalization (the acquisition of conventional meaning: words, compounds, idioms)
b. categorization (the determination of a syntactic category, with the possibility of reanalysis)
c. morphological realization (spelling out of features acquired in the course of a derivation)
d. interpretation (in terms of focus and discourse status)
e. atomization (creating opacity)
f. linearization (conversion of structure to linear order)

(33) *Example: compounds*
a. conventionalization: compounds often not compositional (*baseball*)
b. categorization: compounds not always projecting category (*cutthroat*)
c. morphological realization: realization of linking morphemes
e. atomization: compounds are subject to the lexical integrity condition (parts not extractable)
f. linearization: compounds often show deviating headedness (headfinal in English)

(34) *Example: reanalysis*

```
PP bij de hand > A cf. een bijdehand-e jongen (d=[t])
   at the hand     a clever-AGR guy

PP van die > D cf. dol op vandie koekjes
   of those      crazy about those cookies

CP dat je zegt > Deg cf. hij is niet datjezegt slim
   that you say   he is not very smart
```
(35) **Definition**
1. A construction is a member \( a \) of a lexicon \( L \) for a derivation \( D^n \) such that \( a \) is the output of a derivation \( D^m \), and \( m \neq n \).
2. \( a \) is “more a construction” if \( a \) has acquired more idiosyncratic properties at the interface separating two derivations (derivation layers).

(36) **A note on language acquisition/learning**
computational system (derivation): not usage based
constructional loop (interface > lexicon): usage based

6. **Dutch head-finality**

(37) *verb cluster idioms*

a. zien zitten
   see sit ‘appreciate’

b. laten zitten
   let sit ‘forget about’

c. laten stikken
   let suffocate ‘leave to ones own devices’

(38) a. Ik heb hem nooit zien zitten
   I have him never see:INF sit:INF ‘I never had confidence in him.’

   b. *Zitten heb ik hem nooit zien

(39) argument structure: [ zien [ hem zitten ] ]
   idiom: [ hem [ zien zitten ] ]

(40) layered derivation: 1. { zien, zitten } > [zien zitten]
   2. { ...., hem, [zien zitten], ... }

(41) **NB:** verb second is taken to be an interface reordering, not part of syntax
Ik zie hem niet zitten
I see him not sit:INF ‘I have no confidence in him.’

(42) **Dutch ‘perfect’**
   dat hij al ge-get-en heeft
   that he already GE-eat-N have:3SG ‘that he already ate’

(43) perfect: before reference point (*relative past*)
   past: simultaneous with prior reference point

(44) how do we get from \( TREL + V \) to *have + participle?*  \( (NB \ T = [\pm PAST]) \)
   or: how do we get from possessive \( V + participle \) to RELATIVE TENSE?

(45) **constructional loop:** *have + participle* is output of separate derivation
   relative past reading is conventionalization
layered derivation:  1. \{ hebben, gegeten \} \rightarrow [gegeten hebben]  
2. \{ ...dat, hij, al, [gegeten hebben], ... \} \rightarrow (42)  

consistent with the idea that head-finality is a function of construction formation

*Problem: atomization not evident*

\begin{align*}
\text{Gegeten kan hij nog niet hebben} & \\
\text{GE-eat-N can he not yet have:INF} & \\
\text{‘He can’t have already eaten.’} & 
\end{align*}

*verbal particles*

highly idiomatic: op-bellen uit-vinden in-dikken aan-vallen voor-stellen  
\begin{align*}
\text{up-ring} & \text{ out-find} & \text{ in-thick} & \text{ on-fall} & \text{ fore-put} \\
\text{‘phone’} & \text{ ‘find out’} & \text{ ‘thicken’} & \text{ ‘attack’} & \text{ ‘propose’} & 
\end{align*}

a. * Bellen kun je hem niet op  
ring can you him not up

b. Op-bellen kun je hem niet  
phone can you him not  
‘You can’t phone him.’

\begin{align*}
(Ik heb hem niet) a. kunnen op bellen & \\
b. op kunnen bellen & \\
\text{‘I couldn’t phone him.’} & 
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(dat ik hem niet) a. op heb gebeld & \\
b. heb op gebeld & \\
\text{‘that I didn’t phone him’} & 
\end{align*}

If \text{PRT+V} is a construction (derivation layer output), then so is \text{PRT+V+AUX}

*secondary predicates*

a. iets rood verven  
sth red paint ‘paint something red’

b. zich suf piekeren  
REFL drowsy puzzle ‘puzzle one’s head off’

*possible interface effects*

a. valency change: \text{zich *(suf) piekeren}  

b. unexpected auxiliary selection: \text{hij is/*heeft zich rot geschrokken}  
he is/has \text{REFL rotten startled}  
(unaccusatives don’t take resultative complements; Levin & Rappaport 1995)

c. development into degree marker: \text{zich rot schrikken = be very startled}

d. idiom formation: \text{iemand beet nemen}  
someone bite take ‘get someone’

*atomization?*

a. * Verven moet je het niet rood  
paint:INF must you it not red

b. Rood moet je het niet verven  
red must you it not paint:INF ‘You shouldn’t paint it red.’
(57) **nonspecific objects**
separation from the verb > you lose the nonspecific reading

a. Hĳ wil altijd boeken lezen
   he wants always books read:INF  ‘He always wants to read books.’

b. Hĳ wil boeken altijd lezen
   he wants books always read:INF
   ‘What he always wants to do to books is read them.’

c. Boeken wil hij altijd lezen
   books wants he always read:INF (= b)

d. Boeken worden altijd gelezen
   books PASS.AUX always GE-read-N
   ‘Books are such that they are always read.’  (not ‘People always read books.’)

(58) consistent with the idea that V+nonspecific object are created in a separate derivation

(59) **problem: fusional negation**

Hĳ wil geen/niet boeken lezen
he wants NEG.INDEF/not books read:INF  ‘He doesn’t want to read books.’

cf. Hĳ wil niet/*geen lezen  ‘He does not want to read.’

(60) **stranded preposition**
can appear between {particle/secondary predicate/nonspecific object} and verb

de kwast waar hij de kast rood mee verft
the brush where he the chest red with paints

(61) many mysterious aspects
(locative morphology, alternative realization met > mee, freedom of placement)

7. **Preliminary conclusion**

(62) No knock-down proof of “lexical” status of Dutch head-final XP-V combinations

(63) Sufficient circumstantial evidence to pursue the question further

**References**


Williams, Edwin. 2001. On the notions 'lexically related' and 'head of a word'. *Linguistic Inquiry*.


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