

The Boundaries of Alignment

Pronoun-verb merger in varieties of Dutch

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November 21, 2008

Two types of pronouns in Dutch

strong	weak	
ɪk	ək	I
jɛi	jə	you (Du)
y	y	you (Sie)
ɦɛi	di/ti/i	he
zɛi	zə	she
ɦɛt	ət	it
wɛi	wə	we
jœli	jə	you (Ihr)
zɛi	zə	they

This talk will be mostly of clitics, in spite of the fact that Marus told me that those do not really fit into the topic of this workshop. Notice that Hiller (this conference) turned out to be mostly about clitics.

Arguments why the weak-strong correlation is not phonological

(from Berendsen 1986)

- 1 The phonological relation is not always straightforward (e.g. *hei-di*)
- 2 Some idioms can only have reduced pronouns and not weak ones:
 - *daar kun jə/*jei donder op zeggen*
'you can bet your bottom dollar'
 - *laat mə/*mei niet lachen*
don't make me laugh

Arguments why the weak-strong correlation is not phonological

(from Berendsen 1986)

3 Weak pronouns do not always have the same meaning as strong pronouns

- *jə* can have a general meaning ('people') which is not shared by *jɛi*

jə wordt moe

(i) you get tired

(ii) people get tired

jɛi wordt moe

(i) you get tired

(ii) *people get tired

- *zɛi* usually only refers to people, but *zə* can also refer to objects
- Kees zegt dat de fietsen daar nog staan, maar *zə*/**zɛi* zijn weg
K. claims that the bikes are still there, but they have gone

Two types of pronouns

- Given these arguments, it is usually assumed that strong and weak pronouns are separate lexical entries
- Strong pronouns are independent (phonological) words; weak pronouns are (phonological) clitics. We will concentrate on the latter.

Alignment

- Weak pronouns are too... weak to be able to stand on their own.
- They only have a schwa, hence they cannot even form a foot
- WORDMIN: a phonological word contains at least one foot
- WORDMIN»»ALIGN

Alignment: structure



I dedicate this slide to Dr. Jochen Trommer

A third type of pronoun?

- Next to the weak and strong pronouns mentioned before, there is also a third type, consisting of a consonant only:

☞	k		I
	j		you (Du)
			you (Sie)
			he
	z		she
☞	t		it
	w		we
	j		you (Ihr)
	z		they

I will concentrate on the ☞ since they seem to have a special status

We will see that these monoconsonantal clitics have certain things in common with the Polish prefixes/proclitics discussed by Zygis and Kraska-Szlenk, this conference

Overview of the literature

- De Vries (2001), a curious book, written by a non-linguist
- Noske (2005), a very brief paper

De Vries (2000)

- Based on observation of standard speech, by a speaker from the eastern part of the Netherlands
- Single *k* occurs at the beginning of a sentence.
- It can occur before any vowel or consonant
 - *'k Interesseer me daar niet voor* 'It doesn't interest me'
 - *'k Heb trek (. . .)* 'I am hungry for something salty'
 - *'k Wil er best heen* 'I would like to go there'
 - *'k Speel niet meer mee* 'I no longer play along'
- There is voicing harmony: /ə̀k vul/ 'I feel' → [kful]; /ə̀k ben/ 'I am' → [gben]
- It is impossible before a *k*-initial verb: *[kkɛik]
- Similarly for *t*, which is impossible before *t* and *d*

Noske (2005)


- Based on informal observation of differences between Flemish and Dutch speakers
- “The neuter pronoun *het* [ət], e.g. can be cliticized and can lose its schwa more easily and in more positions in Southern Dutch than in Northern Dutch.
- In both Northern and Southern Dutch, schwa can be deleted if it is followed by a vowel initial inflected verb,
- if the main sentential stress is not located on one of the words.”
 - *het is* [tɪs]

Noske (2005)

- “A more marked contrast between the North and the South (. . .) can be found if *het* is in a position following a tensed verb, e.g. in:
 - was het Northern Dutch: [ʋasət]-[ʋazət] *[ʋast];
 - was het Southern Dutch: [wast];
- “Also other unstressed pronouns, like *ik* ‘I’ (. . .) can lose their vowels much more easily in West-Flemish and other Southern variants than in Standard Northern Dutch (. . .)”
 - ik hoor /ik hor/ West-Flemish: [kor], Northern Dutch [ik hor]

ALIGN, ONSET



- The difference between Northern and Southern Dutch according to Noske is one of the relative ranking of ONSET and ALIGN

Northern:	ik o:r	ALIGN	ONSET
	a.  (.ik.)(.o:r.)		**
	b. (.ko:r.)	**	
Southern:	ik o:r	ONSET	ALIGN
	a.  (.ko:r.)		**
	b. (.ik.)(.o:r.)	**	

This difference may be related to influence of French on Southern Dutch (Van Oostendorp 2000, Noske 2005; but cf. Smith this conference and Welby this conference)

ALIGN, ONSET

- An argument for this is that we need a similar ranking for differences in compounding behaviour (*oneens* means z'in disagreement')

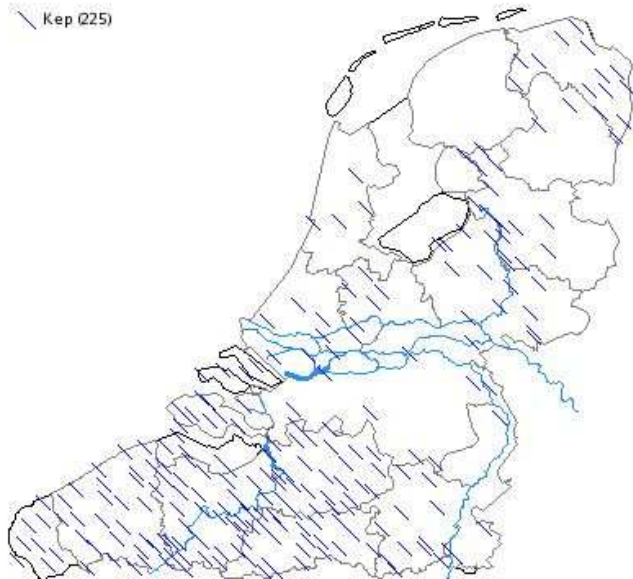
Northern:	ɔn+ens	ALIGN	ONSET
	a.  (.ɔn.)(.ens.)		**
	b. (.ɔ.)(.nens.)	**	
Southern:	ɔn+ens	ONSET	ALIGN
	a.  (.ɔn.)(.ens.)		**
	b. (.ɔ.)(.nens.)	**	

Problems for Noske (2005)

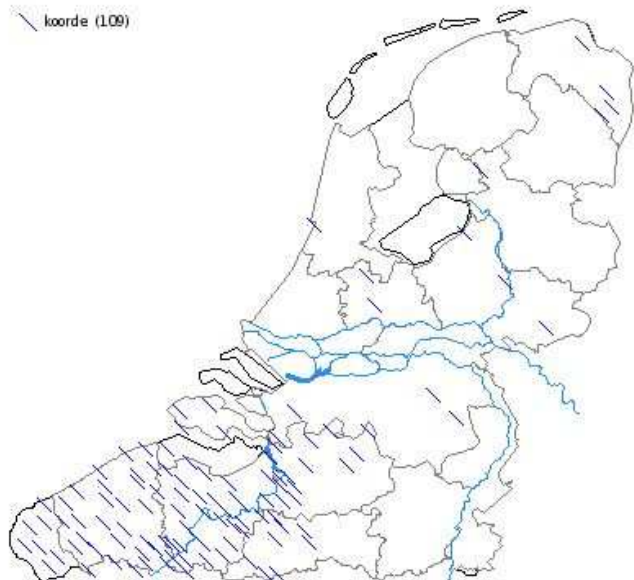
- It is not clear why ALIGN would be responsible for the difference between Northern [ʋasət]-[ʋazət] and Southern *[wast]
- It is not clear why ONSET would be responsible for the the consonant-initial cases

Ik heb = I have (Aux)

Key (Q25)



Ik hoorde = I heard

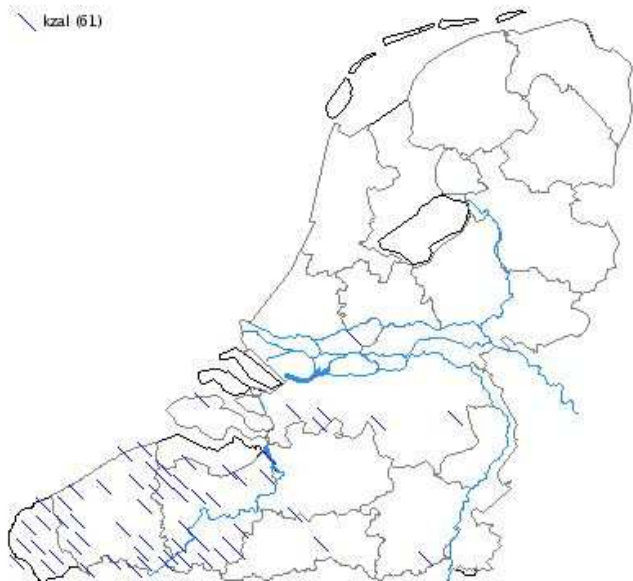


Ik woonde = I lived



Ik zal = I will

\\ kzal (61)



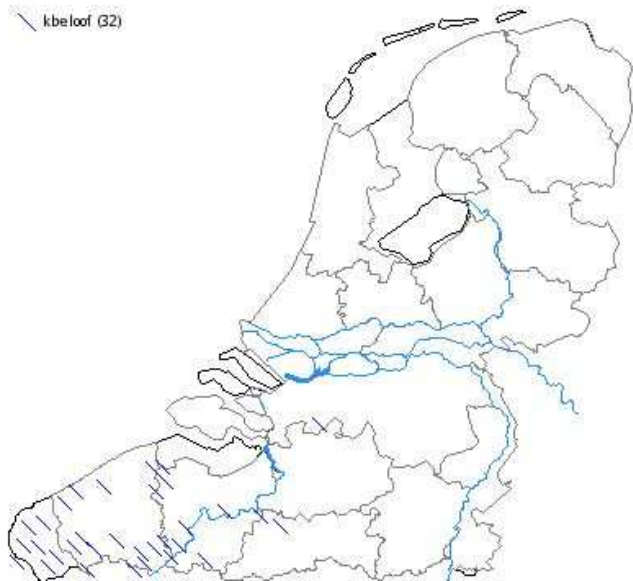
Ik zeg = I say

\\ kze (43)



Ik beloof = I promise

▧ kbeloof (32)



Implicational hierarchy

A	B	C	D	E	
-	kεp	kεp	kεp	kεp	<i>have</i>
-	-	kor	kor	kor	<i>hear</i>
-	-	-	ksal	ksal	<i>will</i>
-	-	-	kεx	kεx	<i>say</i>
-	-	-	-	gbəlofdə	<i>promise</i>

The source of Alignment violations

- *Pace* Noske, it is unlikely that ONSET is the constraint interacting with ALIGN
- Even in cases like *ik heb* → [kɛp] there is an underlying *h* at least in some dialects
- So what causes the Alignment violations?

Schwa only in open syllables

- Weak pronouns *ək* and *ət* are the exception to the rule that Dutch schwa only occurs in open syllables (modulo sonorants)
- I will call the relevant constraint: RENATE
- We know that RENATE \gg MAX because otherwise schwa-initial words should surface, given Richness of the Base
- The big question, then, is what makes some varieties resist schwa deletion in the case of weak pronouns

Mirroring

- **MIRROR: Morphological constituency should be reflected in phonological constituency and vice versa.**

This constraint largely resembles $LEX \simeq PR$ as in Prince and Smolensky (1993), cf. also Grimm, this conference. It is different from Align because it doesn't refer to left and right boundaries. Ng, this conference, used a slightly different concept of $LEX \simeq PR$.

Other constraints

- **CONSET**: Cover constraint for phonotactic constraints on various complex onsets.
- **LEXICALWORD**: Cover constraint for the (specific) alignment of lexical words (as opposed to function words).

Typology

- MIRROR, CONSET, LEXICALWORD \gg RENATE \gg MAX: \emptyset
- CONSET, LEXICALWORD \gg RENATE \gg MAX, MIRROR: { $k\epsilon p$ }
- CONSET \gg RENATE \gg MAX, MIRROR, LEXICALWORD: { $k\epsilon p$,
 kor }
- RENATE \gg MAX, MIRROR, LEXICALWORD, CONSET: { $k\epsilon p$,
 kor , $ksal$, $k\text{SEX}$ }

What about wast?

- In this case, the deletion of schwa has not been triggered by the vowel being phrase-initial
- However, possibly in the dialects in question the form without schwa has become the lexical form of the weak pronoun
- We do not have sufficient data to test this at this point

Conclusions & Outlook

- Dutch weak pronouns have variants which so far have not been studied in detail: those consisting of a consonant only
- These variants have an interesting, and structured, distribution
- They are the result of the interaction of various alignment type constraints with various phonotactic constraints