Dutch between German and English (in honor of Josef Bayer)

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I am grateful for this opportunity to thank Josef Bayer for his friendship, humor and wisdom displayed in abundance during our joint careers, now spanning the better part of three decades. Throughout these years, our scientific interests have remained very well aligned, making it difficult to select a topic to address in this gratulatory contribution.

One of the issues that occupied us both in the 1990s is the apparent difference in head-complement order between languages as closely related as English (VO) and Dutch/German (OV). As is well known, the surface typology (OV vs. VO) is based on the position of the verb relative to its noun phrase object in embedded clauses, leading to the conclusion that Dutch and German are OV-languages, contrasting with English VO (Koster, 1975). In my dissertation, I pointed out that Dutch (and German likewise) overall looks quite head-initial, at least much more so than consistent head-final languages like Turkish and Japanese (Zwart, 1993).

This was based on the position of the head relative to its complement in all phrases other than VP, including the functional projections TP, CP and DP. All West-Germanic languages have head-initial complementizers and determiners, have complement PPs following nouns, adjectives and adpositions, and noun phrase complements (predominantly) following adpositions (see also Zwart, 1994; Zwart, 1997). Part of the attractiveness of the analysis of verb-second in subject-initial main clauses as targeting T (Infl) rather than C, first argued for by Travis (1984), was that it aligned TP with the other functional projections (and most lexical projections) in clearly displaying head-initial structure.

This state of affairs led me to reconsider the position of clausal complements, which follow the verb in embedded clauses, traditionally thought to be the result of a rightward extraposition movement. However, since we know that noun phrase objects in Dutch and German undergo leftward scrambling (pace Bayer & Kornfilt, 1994), we might conjecture that the complement clause actually reveals the base position of the verb's complement, removing the VP's anomalous status in terms of headedness.

It is in the context of this discussion that I'd like to return to Josef Bayer's turn of the century article 'Basic order: a significant difference between English VO and German OV' (Bayer, 2000, going back to a talk of June 1995). In this article Bayer takes up the discussion of the status of the German complement clause, arguing against extraposition while still maintaining the basic head-final status of the German VP. In Bayer's analysis, the complement clause is base-generated to the right of the verb, while the position of the verb's comple-

ment (i.e. to the left of the verb) is occupied by a pronominal correlate, erased in the modern language (a plausible diachronic scenario for which Bayer refers to Hermann Paul).

While this development was arguably common West-Germanic, the erasure of the pronominal correlate in the English VO-language made it easy to transfer complement status to the embedded clause, as both the clause and the correlate were to the right of the verb. But in Continental West-Germanic, where the clause and the correlate were not likewise harmoniously aligned, the complement clause remained opaque for subextraction, as appearing on the 'wrong side' of the verb in Bayer's analysis (conceived in the framework of Chomsky, 1986). (Actually, the analysis identifies the VP dominating CP as the barrier for extraction, something I will abstract away from here. Bayer argues that apparent A'-movement out of German complement clauses should be seen as chain composition in the sense of Koster, 1987 rather than as movement proper; see also Bayer, 1996: chapter 7.)

In the article under discussion (Bayer, 2000), Bayer adduces additional arguments in support of this analysis of CP-opacity in German, involving three remarkable differences between English and German. My contribution here is to clarify the position of Dutch in this spectrum. The conclusion is that Dutch sides more with English than German with respect to the noted differences, raising a question about the connection with basic order.

The first observation is the ambiguity of English (1), absent from German (2) (Larson, 1990).

(1) I saw Mary in New York before she claimed that she would arrive

(2) Ich sah Mary in New York bevor sie behauptete dass sie ankommen würde

The ambiguity is that *before* may identify a point prior to the claiming or a point prior to the arriving. The latter interpretation is not available in German (Bayer, 2000: 54).

It seems to me, however, that both readings are available in Dutch (3).

(3) Ik zag Marie in New York vóór ze beweerde dat ze er zou zijn
I saw Mary in New York before she claimed that she there would be

In Larson's analysis, the preposition *before* takes a CP-complement with an empty operator in its specifier position, originating from either the higher or the more embedded complement clause. In Bayer's analysis, the opacity of the CP in German would block the empty operator movement, explaining the absence of the reading where *bevor* 'before' is construed with the arriving event. But Bayer's analysis would predict Dutch to side with German here, contrary to fact.

The second observation concerns the range of interpretations of polysyndetic disjunction (involving *either … or…*) in examples like (4) for English and (5) for German.

(4) Sherlock pretended to be looking for either a burglar or a thief

(5) Sherlock gab vor entweder nach einem Einbrecher oder nach einem Dieb zu suchen

In (4), the scope of *either* can be narrow (either a burglar or a thief), wide (either looking for a burglar or looking for a thief), or widest (either pretend to be looking for a burglar or pretend to be looking for a thief). As Bayer (2000: 55) notes, widest scope is not available in German. Referring to the analysis of Larson (1985), Bayer relates the range of interpretations

to LF-movement of the scope indicator (*either*), which is more restricted in German because of the opacity of CP.

The Dutch counterpart is given in (6)-(7), with the preposition either (as in English) preceding or (as in German) following the scope indicator *óf* 'or' (the acute indicating emphasis).

(6) Sherlock gaf voor naar óf een inbreker óf een dief op zoek te zijn
Sherlock pretended to or a burglar or a thief to.be.looking

(7) Sherlock gaf voor óf naar een inbreker óf naar een dief op zoek te zijn
Sherlock pretended or to a burglar or to a thief to.be.looking

It seems to me that the range of interpretations of (6)-(7) is the same as indicated for German (5) by Bayer. However, if Schwarz (1999) is correct that polysyndetic disjunction involves no LF-movement but ellipsis, the contrast between English and Dutch/German needs to be rethought. The readings in English (4) can be the result of ellipsis of various sized categories in the second disjunct:

(8) Sherlock pretended to be looking for either a burglar or (Sherlock pretended (to be looking for)) a thief

The absence of the widest scope reading in Dutch and German could then be explained by the circumstance that the sentences in (5)-(7) do not allow for an elliptical reading that includes the matrix clause material in the ellipsis site. This is certainly related to word order, but not necessarily in terms of order related opacity.

The third observation concerns the lifted Principle C effect in examples like (9).

(9) I told her$_i$ that the concert was attended by so many people last year that [the soprano]$_i$ became quite nervous
(indexed elements interpreted as coreferential)

According to Bayer (2000: 58), the Principle C effect remains in place in the German counterpart:

(10) *Ich erzählte ihr$_i$ dass das Konzert von so vielen Leuten besucht wurde, dass [die Sopranistin]$_i$ ganz nervös wurde

Following Guéron & May (1984), Bayer assumes that (9) incurs no Binding Theory violation because the phrase *so* [*that the soprano became quite nervous*] *many people* undergoes Quantifier Raising to a position where it would no longer be c-commanded by *her*. This would then be blocked in German because of the opacity of the CP.

In Dutch, it seems to me that the effect of (9) can be easily replicated:

(11) Ik vertelde haar$_i$ dat er zo veel mensen zouden komen dat [de sopraan]$_i$
I told her that there so many people would come that the soprano
behoorlijk nerveus werd
quite nervous became

This is unexpected if the relevant factor explaining the English-German contrast is basic order induced opacity.

I rather think that the absence of a Principle C effect in (9)/(11) should be understood in the context of conditions identified in Bolinger (1977) as making 'noun repetition', preferably avoided, more acceptable. As Bolinger observes, a noun can be repeated if certain distracting factors create a need to reidentify the topic. For example, including *then* in (12), punctuating a different event structure, seems to lift the Principle C effect (see Zwart, 2015, for more examples of this type).

(12) He_i lost the book and *(then) John_i found it again

In (9), the circumstance that we are referring to different events (this year and last year) may bring in a distractor of exactly this type. It would be interesting to see, then, if including the element *letztes Jahr* 'last year' in (10) would render the example more palatable.

Contrary to expectations, then, Dutch does not appear to side with German in these three phenomena, which Bayer (2000) adduces as further evidence for opacity as a function of the noncanonical position of CP with respect to V. Only the interpretation of polysyndetic disjunction conforms to the expected pattern, but here the facts follow without reference to opacity effects if the later analysis of Schwarz (1999) in terms of ellipsis is adopted.

I am not convinced, then, that the German/English contrasts in Bayer (2000) can be explained as a function of basic order differences, but obviously for a fuller understanding of the relevant phenomena, we would need more time.

I wish my dear friend Josef Bayer the best of everything in his retirement years.

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