

**The status of Dutch object pronouns revisited**  
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In this paper new data about the syntactic distribution of weak pronouns in Dutch will be presented. These data suggest that the feature [animate] and / or [gender] may play a role with respect to the possible positions of these elements in the sentence.

Dutch has two series of pronouns, a series of full forms (or strong pronouns) and a series of reduced forms (or weak pronouns). Some linguists argue that weak pronouns in Dutch are clitics (Zwart, 1993, 1996, and Haegeman, 1993 among others). According to Zwart (op. cit.) clitics are heads (Kayne, 1991) and they are generated in (or adjoined to) the head of their corresponding Agreement Phrase. Zwart also assumes that clitics may move to higher functional heads. Haegeman (1993a,b) supposes that clitics start as DPs and that they have to move to the specifier position of the relevant Agreement Phrase. From this specifier position clitics can adjoin to the first head up. After that, clitics may move to higher functional heads (see also Zwart, 1996).

Zwart (1993) assumes that pronominal elements that have a different syntactic distribution than full NPs are clitics. In this view "clitics can be identified without invoking phonological criteria". According to Zwart (1996) several constructions lead to the conclusion that reduced forms are clitics. One of these constructions is the double object construction (among ECM constructions and scrambling), and this construction will be presented in more detail in this paper. The canonical order of the objects in this construction is indirect object — direct object (1). Nevertheless, if one of the objects is a reduced form it must precede the full NP (2)-(3). The order seems to be free when the objects are reduced forms (4).

- |     |    |           |                                   |                 |                 |               |                      |
|-----|----|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| (1) | a. | ..dat     | Jan                               | <b>Marie</b>    | <b>het boek</b> | gegeven heeft | (Zwart 1996, p. 123) |
|     |    | that      | John                              | Mary            | the book-NEUT   | given has     |                      |
|     |    |           | '..that John gave Mary the book.' |                 |                 |               |                      |
|     | b. | ?? ..dat  | Jan                               | <b>het boek</b> | <b>Marie</b>    | gegeven heeft |                      |
|     |    | that      | John                              | the book-NEUT   | Mary            | given has     |                      |
| (2) | a. | ..dat     | Jan                               | <b>'t</b>       | <b>Marie</b>    | gegeven heeft | (Zwart 1996, p. 124) |
|     |    | that      | John                              | it              | Mary            | given has     |                      |
|     |    |           | '..that John gave it Mary.'       |                 |                 |               |                      |
|     | b. | ?? ...dat | Jan                               | <b>Marie</b>    | <b>'t</b>       | gegeven heeft |                      |
|     |    | that      | John                              | Mary            | it              | given has     |                      |
| (3) | a. | ...dat    | Jan                               | <b>'r</b>       | <b>het boek</b> | gegeven heeft | (Zwart 1996, p. 124) |
|     |    | that      | John                              | her             | the book-NEUT   | given has     |                      |
|     |    |           | '..that John gave her the book.'  |                 |                 |               |                      |
|     | b. | * ...dat  | Jan                               | <b>het boek</b> | <b>'r</b>       | gegeven heeft |                      |
|     |    | that      | John                              | the book-NEUT   | her             | given has     |                      |
| (4) | a. | ...dat    | Jan                               | <b>'t</b>       | <b>'r</b>       | gegeven heeft | (Zwart 1996, p. 124) |
|     |    | that      | John                              | it              | her             | given has     |                      |
|     |    |           | '..that John gave it her.'        |                 |                 |               |                      |
|     | b. | ? ...dat  | Jan                               | <b>'r</b>       | <b>'t</b>       | gegeven heeft |                      |
|     |    | that      | John                              | her             | it              | given has     |                      |

As can be seen in (2a) the direct object reduced form can precede the indirect object full NP, while a direct object full NP cannot. This is the first capital difference between reduced forms and full NPs. Apparently clitics can move to a higher position than full NPs. For Zwart (op. cit.), the free order in (4) is an additional argument for the hypothesis that reduced forms are clitics. Again the direct object reduced form can precede the indirect object reduced form. Even more stronger, this order is preferred to the opposite order. The optionality is not explained in syntactic terms by Zwart (1996); the free order in (4) would be due to morphophonological factors. The different syntactic distribution of the reduced forms in (2)-(4) is one of Zwart's arguments to conclude that the reduced forms are clitics.

However, a closer look to the double object construction indicates that the facts are more complicated than the examples (1)-(4) suggest. Consider first following examples.

- |     |    |        |  |                       |                       |                |
|-----|----|--------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| (5) | a. | ..dat  | de regisseur   | <b>de actrice</b>     | <b>deze souffleur</b> | gegeven heeft. |
|     |    | that   | the producer   | the actress           | this prompter-MASC    | given has      |
|     |    |        | '..that the producer gave the actress this prompter' |                       |                       |                |
|     | b. | *..dat | de regisseur   | <b>deze souffleur</b> | <b>de actrice</b>     | gegeven heeft. |
|     |    | that   | the producer   | this prompter-MASC    | the actress           | given has      |

(6)	a.	*..dat	de regisseur	'm	<b>de actrice</b>	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	him	the actress	given has
	b.	*..dat	de regisseur	<b>de actrice</b>	'm	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	the actress	him	given has
(7)	a.	..dat	de regisseur	'r	<b>deze souffleur</b>	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	her	this prompter-MASC	given has
	b.	*..dat	de regisseur	<b>deze souffleur</b>	'r	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	this prompter-MASC	her	given has
(8)	a.	?..dat	de regisseur	'm	'r	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	him	her	given has
	b.	..dat	de regisseur	'r	'm	gegeven heeft
		that	the producer	her	him	given has

The examples in (1)-(4) have been changed only in a slightly way. In the examples (1)-(4) the verb *geven* 'give' has an inanimate direct object and an animate indirect object. In the examples (5)-(8) the verb has two animate objects. The syntactic distribution changes and two important observations have to be made. First, if the two objects are animate, the direct object reduced form cannot precede an indirect object full NP (5a), while this is possible when the direct object is inanimate (2a). Second, when the two objects are reduced forms a preference is noted for the canonical order (8), as the opposite is true for (2a).

Zwart (op. cit.) assumes that the reduced forms are clitics, this idea is based on the fact that reduced forms show a different syntactic distribution than full NPs. The example (2a) in particular supports this hypothesis. In the example (5a) however, the direct object reduced form cannot precede the indirect object full NP as was expected by example (2a). Thus, at least the analysis of Zwart must be refined. In fact, the possibility for the reduced form to precede the indirect object full NP seems to depend on the animateness of the former.

Another indication that the facts are more complicated than (1)-(4) let suppose, is the fact that inanimate direct objects reduced forms other than the neuter one cannot precede an indirect object full NP. The examples in (9) and (10) show that.

(9)	a.	..dat Jan	<b>de actrice</b>	<b>de boeken</b>	gegeven heeft
		that John	the actress	the books-PL	given has
		'..that John gave the actress the books.'			
	b.	*..dat Jan	<b>ze</b>	<b>de actrice</b>	gegeven heeft
		that John	them-PL	the actress	given has
(10)	a.	..dat Jan	<b>de actrice</b>	<b>de auto</b>	gegeven heeft
		that John	the actress	that car-MASC	given has
		'..that John gave the actress the car'			
	b.	*..dat Jan	'm	<b>de actrice</b>	gegeven heeft
		that John	it-MASC	the actress	given has

Note that when plural inanimate nouns are pronominalized, the masculine plural reduced form *ze* 'them' is used (cf. (9b)). The examples (9b) and (10b) show that the masculine reduced forms (singular and plural) cannot precede the indirect object full NP, while a neuter reduced form (singular) can (cf. (2a)).

The data presented here lead to the conclusion that the syntactic distribution of reduced forms has to be refined. It seems that the positions a reduced form can occupy depend on the animateness and the gender of this reduced form. It may also be possible that other factors play a role in the distribution of the reduced forms in Dutch. Therefore tests for phonological and categorically deficiency, proposed by respectively Cardinaletti & Starke (1995) and Jakubowicz and Nash (to appear), should be carried out.

## References

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