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POSTURE, LOCATION, AND PROGRESSIVE: DUTCH POSTURE VERBS AND THEIR RELATION TO THEIR GERMANIC PEERS

Vortrag am 11.05.16 um 18 Uhr c.t.
in Raum S005 / Schellingstraße 3 (VG)

In the Germanic languages, the posture verbs LIE, SIT, and STAND, generally cover a large semantic field and in contrast to, for example, Romance languages, the use of these verbs is often obligatory when one wants to locate an entity in space, or in metaphorical extensions thereof. These verbs have also grammaticalised to semi-auxiliaries in constructions that have a progressive value (e.g., *Jag sitter och läser. / Ik zit te lezen. / I sit and read.*). In addition to the striking difference between Germanic and Romance languages, there is, however, considerable variation between the different Germanic languages (Lemmens 2005a, Ameka & Levinson 2007), and even within one language. The presentation will focus on some of these different aspects of inter- and intralanguage variation in the domain of posture (and placement) verbs.

The first part of the presentation will be devoted to intralanguage variation, which will be illustrated with the use of posture and placement verbs in Dutch, the language within the Germanic family for which the grammaticalisation seems to have gone farthest. We will present several examples of coding variability within the language where each variant imposes a different perspective on the same event. We will also look at some learner data revealing interesting cases of misinterpretation or overgeneralisation.

In the second part of the presentation, we will present a corpus-based study of the grammaticalisation of the Dutch posture verbs to semi-auxiliaries expressing progressive aspect (*zitten/staan/liggen+te+V* 'sit/lie/stand+to+V'), and how these (quite frequent) POS-progressives relate to other progressive constructions, especially the prepositional construction *aan het V zijn* ('be at the V') often considered the default progressive in Dutch. Our corpus-analysis reveals that there are striking differences between the two (cf. also Lemmens 2005b, 2015).

The third part of our presentation, focuses on the results from an on-going contrastive project on *static* locative relationships as expressed (mainly) by verbs in English, French, and Dutch (both applied to L1 and to L2). The data analysed is drawn from video-taped picture descriptions where subjects were asked to talk about the location of certain entities on these



pictures. In line with the Talmy's (2000) typological distinction between Verb-framed and Satellite-framed languages, the typological differences show to have considerable consequences for the attention that speakers attribute to manner of location as well as how and where this is expressed. We will consider differences at different levels, showing how lexical and syntactic choices interact and correlate with discourse strategies and information structure as well. Finally, we also take a multimodal perspective considering the use of co-verbal gestures.

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