

## Cluster creepers: a comparison between German and Dutch dialects

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In several German dialects, so called "particle verbs" are able to strand their prefix at the left border of the verbal complex, whereas their stem takes part in reorderings in this domain (verb raising). Representative examples can be found in (1):

- (1) a) Ich wäβ net, wa ich zeörscht **uu** söll **fang** (Lösch et al. 1999:180)  
I know not what I first on should catch  
"I don't know where to start" (lit. on=catch)
- b) na hett ses **auf** sölt **sach** (Pfeufer 1938: 13)  
then had-SBJV she=it up should shay  
"then she should have recited it" (lit. up=say)

In traditional dialectological work, this construction is occasionally mentioned when it comes to identifying (syntactic) isoglosses within smaller regions (e. g. Sperschneider 1959, Maurer 1926). The grammatical properties of this construction, however, have been largely ignored, the only notable exception being Müller (2002), who sketches an analysis couched in the framework of HPSG. This state of affairs is quite remarkable, because in Dutch such discontinuous orderings (known by the term "cluster creeper") are comparatively well-studied (e. g. Evers 2003, Barbiers et al. 2008a, b).

Against this background, it is evident that we are dealing with a meaningful construction for the (micro-)typology of Continental West-Germanic. Using different data types (mainly acceptability judgements and transcribed audio-recordings), we address the following issues:

- In areal terms, this construction can be found in larger strips of West Central German, suggesting a certain contiguity to the Dutch speaking areas. Interestingly, there are certain overlaps with Low German and norther Upper German, which can be taken as hint that we are dealing with a "Sprachbund"-type phenomenon on a smaller scale.
- A more detailed look at the grammatical properties of these discontinuous structures reveals some puzzling family resemblances: While cluster creepers in Dutch seem to show a larger amount of variation, as evidenced by (2), in German there is clear evidence that the particle can also be stranded in a position outside the verbal complex proper (3). We trace these differences back to independently motivated assumptions about complex predicates in both dialect groups

(Haider 2010, Schallert 2014: ch. 1) and sketch a representational analysis of the stranding cases in the spirit of Bayer and Brandner (2010).

- (2) dat ze deze liedjes ...  
that they these songs
- a) zouden<sub>1</sub> kunnen<sub>2</sub> mee hebben<sub>3</sub> gezongen<sub>4</sub>  
should be-able-to together have sung
- b) zouden<sub>1</sub> mee kunnen<sub>2</sub> hebben<sub>3</sub> gezongen<sub>4</sub>
- c) zouden<sub>1</sub> mee-gezongen<sub>4</sub> kunnen<sub>2</sub> hebben<sub>3</sub>  
"that they would have been able to sing along these songs"  
(Haider 2003: 115116, ex. (43))
- (3) a) weil er das Zimmer auf hätte schon können räumen  
because he the room up had-SBJV already could tidy
- b) weil er das Zimmer auf hätte schon räumen können  
because he the room up had-SBJV already tidy could
- "because he could have already tidied up the room"