

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-87128-0 - The Syntax of Dutch  
Jan-Wouter Zwart  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## The Syntax of Dutch

Dutch is a West Germanic language closely related to English and German, but its special properties have long aroused interest and debate among students of syntax. This is an informative guide to the syntax of Dutch, offering an extensive survey of both the phenomena of Dutch syntax and their theoretical analyses over the years. In particular the book discusses those aspects of Dutch syntax that have played an important role in the development of syntactic theory in recent decades. Presupposing only a basic knowledge of syntax and complete with an extensive bibliography, this survey will be an important tool for students and linguists of all theoretical persuasions, and for anyone working in Germanic linguistics, linguistic typology, and linguistic theory.

JAN-WOUTER ZWART is Professor of Theoretical Linguistics at the University of Groningen. His recent publications include *Studies in Comparative Germanic Syntax* (2002).

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-87128-0 - The Syntax of Dutch  
Jan-Wouter Zwart  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE SYNTAX GUIDES

General editors:

P. Austin, B. Comrie, J. Bresnan, D. Lightfoot, I. Roberts, N.V. Smith

Responding to the increasing interest in comparative syntax, the goal of the Cambridge Syntax Guides is to make available to all linguists major findings, both descriptive and theoretical, which have emerged from the study of particular languages. The series is not committed to working in any particular framework, but rather seeks to make language-specific research available to theoreticians and practitioners of all persuasions.

Written by leading figures in the field, these guides will each include an overview of the grammatical structures of the language concerned. For the descriptivist, the books will provide an accessible introduction to the methods and results of the theoretical literature; for the theoretician, they will show how constructions that have achieved theoretical notoriety fit into the structure of the language as a whole; for everyone, they will promote cross-theoretical and cross-linguistic comparison with respect to a well-defined body of data.

Other books available in this series

O. Fischer <i>et al.</i> :	<i>The Syntax of Early English</i>
K. Zagona:	<i>The Syntax of Spanish</i>
K. Kiss:	<i>The Syntax of Hungarian</i>
S. Mchombo:	<i>The Syntax of Chichewa</i>
H. Thrainsson:	<i>The Syntax of Icelandic</i>
P. Rowlett:	<i>The Syntax of French</i>
R. D. Borsley <i>et al.</i> :	<i>The Syntax of Welsh</i>
C.-T. J. Huang <i>et al.</i> :	<i>The Syntax of Chinese</i>
J. Aoun <i>et al.</i> :	<i>The Syntax of Arabic</i>
H. Haider:	<i>The Syntax of German</i>

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-87128-0 - The Syntax of Dutch  
Jan-Wouter Zwart  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# The Syntax of Dutch

---

JAN-WOUTER ZWART  
University of Groningen, The Netherlands



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-87128-0 - The Syntax of Dutch  
 Jan-Wouter Zwart  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
 Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521871280](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521871280)

© Jan-Wouter Zwart 2011

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
 permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Zwart, C. Jan-Wouter

The syntax of Dutch / Jan-Wouter Zwart.

p. cm. – (Cambridge syntax guides)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-87128-0

1. Dutch language – Syntax. I. Title. II. Series.

PF361.Z87 2011

439.315–dc23 2011026307

ISBN 978-0-521-87128-0 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
 accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in  
 this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,  
 or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

*Preface*      page ix  
*Abbreviations used in the glosses*      xi

**PART I   INTRODUCTION      1**

**1   Dutch: the language, its history, its dialects      3**

**2   Basic morphosyntax      6**

2.1   General typological characteristics      6

2.2   Word classes      7

2.3   Morphosyntactic features      11

2.4   Grammatical functions      17

2.5   Constituents      21

2.6   Sentence prosody      22

**3   Perspectives on Dutch syntax      25**

**PART II   DESCRIPTION      31**

**4   Clause structure      33**

4.1   The left bracket      38

4.2   The right bracket      41

4.3   The middle field      50

4.3.1   Objects      53

4.3.2   Adverbs      58

4.3.3   Other middle-field elements      62

4.3.4   The middle-field borders      66

4.4   The initial field      68

4.5   The final field      72

**5   Nominal and prepositional phrases      80**

5.1   Noun phrase structure      80

5.2   The order of attributive modifiers      86

5.3   Adjective phrase structure      90

5.4	Nominalization	93
5.5	Preposition phrase structure	95
<b>6</b>	<b>Complex sentences</b>	<b>104</b>
6.1	Subordination	104
6.1.1	Diagnostics	104
6.1.2	Finite embedded clauses	107
6.1.3	Nonfinite embedded clauses	110
6.1.4	Relative clauses	112
6.2	Coordination	117
6.2.1	General remarks	117
6.2.2	Clausal coordination	119
6.3	Unclear cases	122
6.4	Ellipsis	127
6.4.1	General remarks	127
6.4.2	Noun ellipsis	130
6.4.3	Conjunction reduction	132
6.4.4	Gapping	137
6.4.5	Other ellipsis phenomena	141
<b>7</b>	<b>Dependencies</b>	<b>145</b>
7.1	Semi-referential expressions	145
7.2	Raising and control	152
7.2.1	Raising and control diagnostics	152
7.2.2	Modal verbs	158
7.2.3	Raising	164
7.2.4	Control	169
7.3	Negation	172
7.3.1	Types of <i>niet</i>	172
7.3.2	Negation with indefinites	175
7.3.3	Negation in complex clauses	178
7.3.4	Negative polarity	179
7.4	Quantification	185
7.4.1	Inventory of quantifiers	185
7.4.2	Scope relations	188
7.5	Focus and topic	191
7.5.1	Focus	191
7.5.2	Topic	197
7.6	Wh-movement	198
7.6.1	Fronting of interrogative elements	198
7.6.2	Conditions on wh-movement	202
7.6.3	Gaps	213

<b>PART III</b>	<b>THEORY</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>The structural realization of lexical semantics</b>	<b>223</b>
8.1	Arguments and grammatical functions	223
8.2	The small-clause analysis	233
8.3	The complex predicate analysis	241
<b>9</b>	<b>Dutch as an OV/VO language</b>	<b>243</b>
9.1	Preliminaries	243
9.2	Dutch as an OV language	247
9.2.1	Koster (1975)	247
9.2.2	Derivation of the major patterns	251
9.3	Dutch as a head-initial language	265
9.3.1	Zwart (1994)	265
9.3.2	Some consequences	268
<b>10</b>	<b>Verb second</b>	<b>281</b>
10.1	Historiography	281
10.2	Theoretical embedding	290
<b>11</b>	<b>Verb clusters</b>	<b>296</b>
11.1	Structuralist work on verb clusters	299
11.2	The classical verb-raising analysis	302
11.3	Minimalist analyses	313
<b>12</b>	<b>Nominal and prepositional phrases</b>	<b>324</b>
12.1	Noun phrases	324
12.1.1	Constituent structure	324
12.1.2	The DP analysis	325
12.1.3	Movement phenomena	329
12.2	Adjective phrases	333
12.2.1	Order and interpretation	333
12.2.2	Ellipsis and the <i>-e</i> suffix	335
12.2.3	Movement phenomena	337
12.3	Preposition phrases	338
12.3.1	Internal structure	338
12.3.2	Movement phenomena	341
<b>13</b>	<b>Binding and control</b>	<b>344</b>
13.1	Binding	344
13.2	Control	350

viii	Contents
	<i>Appendices</i> 355
	1. Pronouns 357
	2. Adpositions 360
	3. Auxiliaries and modal verbs 363
	4. Verbs taking infinitival complements 365
	5. Verbal inflection 367
	<i>References</i> 368
	<i>Index</i> 390



## Preface

This book is intended as an introduction to the phenomena of Dutch syntax, as well as to the various ways in which these phenomena have been analyzed from a theoretical point of view. Consequently, it has two major parts, entitled ‘Description’ (part II) and ‘Theory’ (part III).

In preparing this work, I have learned that not all phenomena of Dutch syntax have been accorded equal attention in the theoretical literature. As a result, it appeared impractical to present the data and the analyses side by side, and I have opted instead to separate the two parts completely, and have allowed myself to be guided first and foremost by what seemed interesting from a descriptive viewpoint in part II, and from a historical-theoretical viewpoint in part III. As a result, the organization of the two parts is not completely parallel, and many interesting topics discussed in part II are not picked up in part III, simply for the reason that they have received insufficient theoretical attention.

It has been my intention, then, to create in part II something of a reference work (in English) of the syntax of Dutch, which could be used independently, and might be of service to students and researchers working on Dutch or Germanic more generally. At the same time, I have experienced that many phenomena of Dutch syntax are still not fully explored and are ill-understood, certainly by me, so that this work should not be viewed as comprehensive and conclusive, and I sincerely apologize for its many lacunae. I am sustained by the hope that it will make the phenomena of Dutch more widely available, and will help others in framing the questions to be asked when trying to understand Dutch, syntax, or both.

In writing part III, I have been guided by the question of how the phenomena of Dutch have helped shape syntactic theory over the years. The reader will find here a synopsis of the analyses of verb second, verb clustering, and word order in Dutch, going back as often as possible to pregenerative structuralist work, and continuing up to the current minimalist stage of generative grammar.

Introducing the book is a small part I presenting the Dutch language, its basic morphosyntax, and the main trends of linguistic analysis relevant to the discussion in part III. Five appendices list the Dutch pronouns, adpositions, auxiliaries, verbs taking infinitival complements, and verb paradigms.

x Preface

I would have liked to conclude this work with a part IV discussing aspects of Dutch syntax that have played a major role in discussions confined to Dutch linguistics journals, and hence little known to researchers outside the Netherlands. For various reasons, this proved too ambitious at this point. As a result, some of these constructions have not received sufficient attention here, and it is hoped that this can be rectified in a future edition.

In many ways, preparing this volume started long before its inception, and I have many people to thank for helping me along the way. For fear of leaving anyone out, I refrain from listing them here, and refer to the reference section instead. For comments on parts of this manuscript, I thank Jack Hoeksema, Jan Koster, and Mark de Vries. I am especially grateful to Helen Barton, Sarah Green, Elizabeth Davey, and Kay McKechnie at Cambridge University Press, for their patience and support.

Sadly, as I was composing this preface, word reached us that one of the pioneers of Dutch syntactic theory, Hans den Besten, had passed away. This book is dedicated to his memory.

## Abbreviations used in the glosses

- 1 = first person; superscript = low tone
- 2 = second person; superscript = mid-low tone
- 3 = third person; superscript = mid tone
- 4 superscript = mid-high tone
- 5 superscript = high tone
- ACC = accusative case
- ADV = adverbial particle
- ADVS = adversative
- AFF = affirmative particle
- AN = animate
- APPL = applicative prefix
- AUX = auxiliary verb
- C = complementizer
- CAUS = causative auxiliary
- CG = common gender
- CMP = comparative degree
- COLL = collective
- COND = conditional force
- CR = conjunction reduction zero element
- DAT = dative case
- DECL = declarative force
- DEF = (i) definite determiner (ii) definite agreement
- DEM = demonstrative pronoun
- DIM = diminutive
- DIST = distal
- DSTR = distributive
- E = [unglossed]
- EMP = emphatic suffix
- EN = [unglossed]
- ER = [unglossed]
- F = feminine gender

xii      Abbreviations used in the glosses

- GAP = zero element  
 GE...D/N = past participle morphology  
 GP = gapping zero element  
 HUM = human  
 INAN = inanimate  
 INDF = indefinite determiner  
 INF = infinitive  
 INT = interrogative force  
 INV = inversion  
 LNK = linker  
 LOC = (i) locative pronoun (ii) locative morpheme  
 M = masculine gender  
 MAT = material adjective suffix  
 MIN = minimizer  
 MOD = modal verb  
 N = neuter gender; see also GE...D/N  
 NEG = (i) negative particle (ii) negative prefix  
 NML = nominalizing suffix  
 NOM = nominative case  
 OBJ = objective case  
 OCL = object clitic  
 ORD = ordinal  
 PART = past participle  
 PASS = passive voice  
 PAST = (i) past tense (ii) past tense ablaut or suppletive morphology  
 PCL = possessive clitic  
 PGAP = parasitic gap  
 PL = plural number  
 POSS = (i) possessive pronoun (ii) possessive affix  
 PRO = infinitival subject zero element  
 PROX = proximate  
 Q = (i) interrogative pronoun (ii) interrogative morpheme  
 RECP = reciprocal pronoun  
 REFL = reflexive pronoun  
 REL = relative pronoun  
 SBJV = subjunctive  
 SCL = subject clitic  
 SG = singular number

- STR = strong
- SUP = superlative degree
- TEMP = temporal
- UNIV = universal
- WK = weak

*A note on orthography*

The examples follow the standard Dutch orthography, in which pairs of tense and lax vowels are represented by identical characters (*a, e, i, o, u*) without diacritics. In closed syllables, doubling of the vowel signals tenseness, whereas in open syllables laxness of the vowel is signaled by doubling of the following consonant. Unstressed *e* signals schwa. The combinations *ie* and *dt* signal [i] and [t], respectively. In the examples, hyphens indicate morpheme boundaries, splitting orthographically doubled consonants.