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.

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The Syntax of Dutch

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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
## Contents

5.4 Nominalization 93  
5.5 Preposition phrase structure 95  

6 **Complex sentences** 104  
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  

7 **Dependencies** 145  
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 *niet* 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
PART III THEORY 221

8 The structural realization of lexical semantics 223
  8.1 Arguments and grammatical functions 223
  8.2 The small-clause analysis 233
  8.3 The complex predicate analysis 241

9 Dutch as an OV/VO language 243
  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

10 Verb second 281
  10.1 Historiography 281
  10.2 Theoretical embedding 290

11 Verb clusters 296
  11.1 Structuralist work on verb clusters 299
  11.2 The classical verb-raising analysis 302
  11.3 Minimalist analyses 313

12 Nominal and prepositional phrases 324
  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 -e 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

13 Binding and control 344
  13.1 Binding 344
  13.2 Control 350
Contents

Appendices 355
1. Pronouns 357
2. Adpositions 360
3. Auxiliaries and modal verbs 363
4. Verbs taking infinitival complements 365
5. Verbal inflection 367

References 368
Index 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.
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
Abbreviations used in the glosses

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.