

Call for papers – ‘Taal & Tongval’ colloquium
“Dutch verb order variation in a broader perspective”

(Ghent, November 19th 2010)

Taal & Tongval is a journal on variation linguistics (i.e. regional, social, pragmatic and historical variation) in the Low Countries (<http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/taalentongval>). The upcoming yearly colloquium will be held in Ghent (Belgium) on the topic “Dutch verb order variation in a broader perspective”.

Background

In the last decades, word order research into the distribution of the verb patterns past participle – finite verb (the so-called ‘green word order’) and the verb pattern finite verb – past participle (the so-called ‘red word order’) has become one of the classical themes of Dutch variation linguistics. From the fifties onwards, Dutch linguistics has proposed divergent language internal and external factors that help to determine the (in principle) free choice between both word order variants, such as:

- regional variety (dialect – standard language, exogenous language usage)
- stylistic variety (formal – informal, written – spoken, jargon)
- accentuation of the verb cluster and surrounding constituents
- morpho-syntactic analysis of the verb cluster and surrounding constituents

In the colloquium, we want to relate explicitly to this respected research tradition, where the choice between the red and green order variant in actual language usage is central. In most of the publications, however, the variable verb order has been studied in a relative isolation with an exclusive attention to the factors which determine the order in the dual clusters in Standard Dutch.

Suggested topics

With the conference, we invite participants who want to study the red and green word order in a wider descriptive and theoretical perspective:

(a) a wider syntactic perspective

How can the word order variation between two verbs be related to the word order variation within longer verb clusters? More particularly, how do the factors that determine the choice for the red or green word order within double verb clusters work in longer verb clusters?

(b) een wider regional perspective

How does the word order variation in the (double and longer) verb clusters in standard Dutch relate to the verb order attested in the Dutch and German dialects? How are the possible differences to be explained? Are the factors that determine the choice for the red and green word order in the standard language also important for the dialects? To what extent is there a continuum between the Dutch and German language area with respect to verb order?

(c) a wider diachronic perspective

How did the modern verb order variation in Dutch (and the German dialects) come into being? Is there an ongoing change in verb order? What factors in the history of Dutch could have contributed to the modern verb order variation?

(d) a wider theoretical perspective

Does the word order variation in the verb cluster pose a challenge to the Humboldtian principle of one form – one meaning? What is the status of the factors that determine the verb order in the syntax of Dutch? Do those factors also work in other domains of Dutch syntax? Can the issue of variable verb order be related to cross-linguistic patterns?

Abstract submission

To participate, send your one-page abstract (including references) to evie.cousse@ugent.be before **June 30th 2010**. Talks are will take 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes discussion time. We encourage abstracts in Dutch, but non-native speakers of Dutch may submit in English. Decisions on the acceptance of the abstract can be expected before September 1st 2010.

Publications

A selection of papers will be published as a theme issue of 'Taal & Tongval' (<http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/taalentongval/>).

Invited speakers

- Sjef Barbiers (Utrecht University, The Meertens Institute)
- Gert De Sutter (University College Ghent)
- Susanne Wurmbrand (University of Connecticut)

For the organizing committee,
Evie Coussé (Ghent University)