# 2

# Basic morphosyntax

## 2.1 General typological characteristics

Dutch is an SO language, with the subject preceding the object in the unmarked word order, and the verb occupying all three possible positions, depending on the clause type: SOV in embedded and nonfinite clauses, SVO in unmarked declarative clauses, and VSO in finite clauses with a constituent preceding the subject.

Independent clauses show a verb-second effect, where as a rule the finite verb is preceded by a single constituent. Where a clause has more than one verb, the additional verbs are chained together in the final verb position, creating SVOV in main clauses and SOVV in embedded clauses.

Embedded clauses follow the final verb position ('extraposition'). Relative clauses follow the head noun and are introduced by a relative pronoun; they, too, may appear in extraposition. Nonfinite embedded clauses show transparency effects, sometimes to the extent that all material associated with the embedded clause, except the verb, is realized inside the matrix clause.

The area between the subject and the final verb position shows some freedom in the arrangement of objects and adjuncts, but nonspecific objects, secondary predicates and verbal particles need to be left adjacent to the final verb(s). The indirect object noun phrase precedes the direct object.

Dutch morphology is of the inflectional suffixing type; Dutch has very limited case-marking (only in the personal pronoun system), showing nominative–accusative alignment where it exists, and consistent (person/number) subject agreement on the finite verb. In the nominal domain, gender, number, and definiteness are marked on the determiner and attributive adjective, which precedes the noun, but only number is marked on the head noun itself.

Focus and contrastive topicalization are expressed in situ using pitch accent, but discourse topics are preferably fronted and occasionally dropped, yielding a verb-first word order. Interrogative phrases ('wh-phrases') must be fronted, though not more than one per clause. These frontings can also apply across finite clause boundaries.



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Heads precede their complements, with the exception of the highly mobile verb, and specifiers precede the head–complement combination.

## 2.2 Word classes

The lexical classes V (verb), N (noun), A (adjective/adverb), and P (adposition) can all be clearly identified in Dutch, using distributional and formal tests.

The **verb** stands out as the only element occupying radically different positions in main and embedded clauses:

(2.1) a. *Main clause*
Tasman **ontdek-te** Nieuw Zeeland
Tasman discover-PAST.SG New Zealand

b. *Embedded clause*
…dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland **ontdek-te**
C Tasman New Zealand discover-PAST.SG
'…that Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

This test applies to finite verbs only:

(2.2) a. *Main clause*
Tasman **heeft** Nieuw Zeeland **ontdek-t**
Tasman have:3SG New Zealand GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

b. *Embedded clause*
…dat Tasman Nieuw Zeeland **ontdek-t** **heeft**
C Tasman New Zealand GE:discover-D have:3SG
'…that Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

In (2.2a), only the finite auxiliary moves to the second position in the clause. This also shows that the pattern in (2.1) is not caused by mobility of the object: in (2.2a/b) the position of the object *Nieuw Zeeland* 'New Zealand' with respect to the participle *ontdekt* 'discovered' remains constant.

The verb is also the only element undergoing inversion with the subject after fronting of a nonsubject:

(2.3) In 1642 **ontdek-te** Tasman Nieuw Zeeland
in 1642 discover-PAST:SG Tasman New Zealand
'In 1642 Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

Formally, the verb is the only element adjusting its morphology to express the tense properties of the clause. Thus, in (2.3) the past tense form *ontdekte*

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'discovered' replaces the present tense form *ontdek-t* [discover-3SG] 'discovers' to express cotemporaneity with the reference time indicated by *in 1642*.

The major distributional characteristic of **nouns** is that they may function as subjects triggering person/number agreement on the verb, either directly, as with pronouns and proper names (2.4), or through combination with determiners, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, possessive pronouns, numerals, quantifiers, and/or attributive adjectives (2.5).

(2.4) a. **Tasman/hij** ontdek-t-e Nieuw Zeeland
Tasman/3SG.M.NOM discover-PAST-SG New Zealand
'Tasman/he discovered New Zealand.'

b. **Tasman c.s./zij** ontdek-t-en Nieuw Zeeland
Tasman and associates/3PL.NOM discover-PAST-PL New Zealand
'Tasman and associates/they discovered New Zealand.'

(2.5) **De twee prachtig-e eiland-en** werd-en ontdek-t
DEF:PL two gorgeous-PL island-PL PASS.AUX:PAST-PL GE:discover-D
'The two gorgeous islands were discovered.'

Formally, nouns stand out in that they express only number (SG/PL), not tense. Gender and definiteness are not overtly expressed on the noun, but in the shape of the determiner, pronouns, and adjectives preceding the noun. (Diminutive marking is not a formal characteristic of nouns, as the diminutive in Dutch functions as a nominalizer converting verbs, adjectives, and prepositions into nouns, e.g. *moet-je* 'inevitability' from the verbal root *moet* 'must,' *wit-je* 'white one' from the adjective *wit* 'white,' *uit-je* 'excursion' from the preposition *uit* 'out.')

**Adjectives** generally enter into a predicative/attributive alternation:

(2.6) a. *Predicative*
Het schip is snel
DEF:N.SG ship is fast
'The ship is fast.'

b. *Attributive*
het snel-le schip
DEF:N.SG fast-SG.DEF ship
'the fast ship'

Formally, adjectives show comparative/superlative morphology:

(2.7) a. snel-ler
fast-CMP
'faster'

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b. snel-st
fast-SUP
'fastest'

Attributive (prenominal) adjectives in addition show gender/number/definiteness marking (see (2.6b)).

**Adverbs** are not formally marked, so that most adverbs are uninflected adjectives appearing in a position modifying the verb phrase or the clause:

(2.8) Het schip vaar-t snel
DEF:N.SG ship sail-3SG fast
'The ship is sailing fast.'

**Adpositions** in Dutch are generally prepositions, appearing in front of a noun phrase. They show no inflectional morphology, and trigger objective case on the personal pronoun in their complement. Remarkably, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, and quantifiers in the complement of a preposition take on a locative form and shift to the position preceding the adposition:

(2.9) a. *uit dit > hier uit
out DEM.N.PROX:SG DEM.LOC.PROX out
'out of this [thing]'

b. *van wat > waar van
of Q:INAN Q:LOC of
'of what [thing]'

c. *met alles > overal mee
with everything everywhere with
'with everything'

(As (2.9c) shows, some adpositions have a special form when construed postpositionally.)

A subclass of the class of adpositions also functions as verbal particles, appearing left adjacent to the clause-final verb position. The verb and the particle are separated in main clauses, when the verb appears in the second position of the clause:

(2.10) a. …dat Tasman weer **uit** voer
C Tasman again out sail:PAST.SG
'…that Tasman sailed out again.'

b. Tasman voer weer **uit**
Tasman sail:PAST.SG again out
'Tasman sailed out again.'

See Appendix 2 for a list of adpositions and their properties.

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The functional word classes C (complementizer) and D (determiner) are represented by lexical items in Dutch, but T (tense) is not.

The **complementizers** are all clause-initial, except in embedded wh-questions, where they are either absent, or, in colloquial Dutch, may show up in second position after the fronted wh-phrase. Finite declarative clauses are introduced by *dat* 'that,' finite interrogative clauses by *of* 'whether,' and finite conditional clauses by *als* 'if.' In colloquial Dutch, these complementizers may be combined, yielding formations like *alsdat* 'that' and *ofdat* 'whether'; *alsof* is a standard-language combination meaning 'as if.' The combinatorial possibilities suggest the ordering template in (2.11) (cf. De Rooy 1965):

(2.11) *Finite complementizers*
als – of – dat

Nonfinite embedded clauses may be introduced by the complementizer *om*; this never happens when the infinitive is not marked by the infinitival marker *te* (i.e. in the complement of modal verbs, causative verbs, and perception verbs). When *te* is present, *om* appears optionally in complement infinitivals appearing as a whole to the right of the clause-final verb position (i.e. in 'extraposition'). In other cases where *te* appears, *om* is absent (in adjunct infinitivals, *om* is one of several prepositions introducing the infinitival clause, but since it cannot be combined with any of the other prepositions, it does not function as a complementizer here). These generalizations are illustrated below:

(2.12)

a. *Infinitival complement of a modal verb*
… dat Tasman het Zuidland wil (*om) (*te) vind-en
C Tasman DEF:N.SG South Land want:SG find-INF
'…that Tasman wants to find the South Land.'

b. *Infinitival complement of a causative verb*
… dat Tasman op de trompet laat (*om) (*te) blaz-en
C Tasman on DEF:SG trumpet let:SG blow-INF
'…that Tasman lets the trumpet sound.'

c. *Infinitival complement of a perception verb*
… dat Tasman de Maori-s zie-t (*om) (*te) nader-en
C Tasman DEF:PL Maori-PL see-3SG approach-INF
'…that Tasman sees the Maoris approaching.'

d. *Infinitival complement to a control verb, with extraposition*
… dat Tasman probeer-t (om) de Maori-s *(te) ontvlucht-en
C Tasman try-3SG DEF:PL Maori-PL flee_from-INF
'… that Tasman tries to get away from the Maoris.'

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e. *Infinitival complement to a control verb, without extraposition*
…dat Tasman de Maori-s probeer-t (??om) *(te) ontvlucht-en
C Tasman DEF:PL Maori-PL try-3SG flee_from-INF
(same as (2.12d))

f. *Infinitival complement to a raising verb, no extraposition*
…dat Tasman de Maori-s schijn-t (*om) *(te) ontvlucht-en
C Tasman DEF:PL Maori-PL seem-3SG flee_from-INF
'…that Tasman seems to get away from the Maoris.'

g. *Adjunct infinitival*
…{om / zonder / *zonder om} de Maori-s *(te) ontmoet-en
for / without / without C DEF:PL Maori-PL meet-INF
'in order to meet the Maoris / without meeting the Maoris'

Dutch has two definite **determiners** (neuter SG *het*, pronounced *ət*, and elsewhere *de*) and one indefinite SG determiner (*een*, pronounced *ən*); there is no (overt) indefinite PL determiner. The determiners appear at the left edge of the noun phrase, in complementary distribution with demonstrative, possessive, and interrogative pronouns:

(2.13) {de / die / mijn / welke} twee schepen
DEF:PL DEM.DIST:PL POSS.1SG which two ship:PL
'{the/these/my/which} two ships'

Within the noun phrase, determiners can be preceded by quantifiers like *heel* 'whole' and focus elements like *zelfs* 'even':

(2.14) a. de hel-e wereld
DEF:SG whole-DEF world
'the whole world'

b. heel de wereld
whole DEF:SG world
'the whole world'

The common coordinating **conjunction** is *en* 'and' and the disjunctive particle is *or* 'of,' both appearing between the two conjuncts/disjuncts.

## 2.3 Morphosyntactic features

Of the morphosyntactic features commonly associated with verbs, Dutch verbs express in their inflectional morphology only **tense** and **subject agreement**. The structure of the finite verb is as in (2.15):

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(2.15) *Structure of the finite verb*
V-T-AGR
zeil-d-en
sail-PAST-PL

The suffix *-d* (with allomorph *-t*) expresses past tense, in opposition to zero-marked present tense (some verbs mark the past tense by Ablaut instead of suffixation, and the copula *zijn* 'be' has a suppletive past tense stem). The past tense is used to express cotemporaneity with a reference point preceding the here and now. The present is an unmarked tense, and is also used, in conjunction with the appropriate adverbials, to refer to a future event:

(2.16) Morgen zeil ik naar Tasmanië
tomorrow sail:1SG 1SG:NOM to Tasmania
'Tomorrow I will be sailing off to Tasmania.'

In addition to the simple past, expressed by inflectional morphology, Dutch has a relative past, more commonly called the perfect, expressed analytically through the combination of a temporal auxiliary (*zijn* 'be' or *hebben* 'have') and a past participle (normally marked by a prefix *ge-* and a suffix *-d/t* or *-en*):

(2.17) Vorig jaar **ben** ik de wereld rond **ge-zeil-d**
Last year be:1SG 1SG:NOM the world around GE-sail-D
'Last year I sailed around the world.'

The relative past expresses that the event referred to is situated prior to a reference point; the tense of the auxiliary (past vs. present) indicates that the reference point is located in the here and now (present) or before that (past), so that the event is prior to the here and now ('perfect') or prior to a reference point in the past ('pluperfect'). In (2.17), the reference point is the here and now (the speech time), in (2.18), it is a point in the past indicated by the adverbial clause *toen hij bij Nieuw Zeeland aankwam* 'when he arrived at New Zealand':

(2.18) Toen hij bij Nieuw Zeeland aan kwam
when 3SG.M:NOM at New Zealand on come:PAST.SG
**had** Tasman Tasmanië al **ontdek-t**
have:PAST.SG Tasman Tasmania already GE:discover-D
'When he arrived at New Zealand, Tasman had already discovered Tasmania.'

The relative past originally indicated completive aspect (marked by the completive particle *ge-*), but lost that function long before the formation of the standard Dutch language.

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The formation of the relative past ('perfect') provides a diagnostic for distinguishing two classes of intransitive verbs: unergative verbs (where the single argument is agentive), using the auxiliary *hebben* 'have,' and unaccusative verbs (where the single argument is a theme or patient), using the auxiliary *zijn* 'be':

(2.19) a. *Unergatives*
Tasman **heeft** veel **ge-var-en**
Tasman have:3SG much GE-sail-N
'Tasman sailed a lot.'

b. *Unaccusatives*
Tasman **is** **ge-arriveer-d**
Tasman be:3SG GE-arrive-D
'Tasman has arrived.'

The auxiliary–past participle combination is also used to express the past tense with infinitives (e.g. *zeilen* 'to sail' vs. *gezeild hebben* 'to have sailed').

The **agreement** morphemes suffixed to the finite verb express the person and number features of the subject noun phrase (or, in case the subject is an expletive, of the expletive's associate). The number paradigm distinguishes singular (SG) and plural (PL). Person distinctions are made only in the present tense SG paradigm, and then only between speaker (1st person) and non-speaker (2nd/3rd person):

(2.20) ik zeil
1SG:NOM sail:1SG
'I am sailing.'

jij/hij zeil-**t**
2/3SG:NOM sail-2/3SG
'You are sailing / He is sailing.'

In inversion, however, the 2SG form takes on the 1SG morphology:

(2.21) Zeil jij?
sail:1/2SG 2SG:NOM
'Are you sailing?'

In the past, there is only one SG form for all persons, *-e* ([ə]) when past tense is marked by the suffix *-d/t*, zero elsewhere. The plural ending is *-en* ([ən]) for all persons in both present and past (commonly pronounced [ə] in spoken Dutch).

Many dialects additionally mark (some of the) person/number distinctions on the finite complementizer, or, when no complementizer is present, on the relative

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pronoun or wh-phrase introducing the finite complement clause ('complementizer agreement'):

(2.22) *South Hollandic (Van Haeringen 1939)*

a. …dat ik kom
   C 1SG:NOM come:1SG
   '…that I'm coming.'

b. …dat-**te** we kom-me
   C-PL 1PL:NOM com-PL
   '..that we are coming.'

c. jonge-s die-**e** werk wil-le
   boy-PL REL-PL work want-PL
   'guys who are looking for a job'

This dialect feature has played an important role in the analysis of Dutch verb placement and clause structure, to which we return (chapter 10).

The passive **voice** is expressed periphrastically, by means of a special auxiliary (*worden* 'become') in combination with the past participle. The passive auxiliary shows the normal present/past tense opposition, but is replaced by the auxiliary *zijn* 'be' to express relative past ('perfect'):

(2.23) a. Het eiland word-t / werd Tasmanië ge-noem-d
   the island PASS.AUX-3SG PASS.AUX:PAST Tasmania GE-call-D
   'The island is / was called Tasmania.'

b. Het eiland is naar Tasman ge-noem-d
   the island BE:3SG to Tasman GE-call-D
   'The island was named after Tasman.'

(An archaic construction would add the participle *geworden* 'become' after *genoemd* in (2.23b), indicating that the auxiliary *be* here has the regular function of forming the relative past ['perfect'] of the passive auxiliary *worden*.)

**Mood** is expressed periphrastically via a range of modal auxiliaries in combination with infinitives (see (2.12a)). These auxiliaries display a regular present/past tense opposition (though the morphology employs Ablaut rather than suffixation). The relative past ('perfect') is again formed by means of an auxiliary, but instead of the expected participial form, the modal verb shows up as an infinitive (the Infinitivus Pro Participio [IPP]-effect):

(2.24) a. Tasman wou het Zuidland vind-en
   Tasman want:PAST.SG the South Land find-INF
   'Tasman wanted to find the South Land.'

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b. Tasman had het Zuidland **wil-len** vind-en
Tasman have:PAST.SG the South Land want-INF find-INF
'Tasman had wanted to find the South Land.'

**Aspect** is not morphologically marked in Dutch.

Nouns (noun phrases) are inherently marked for **person** and **number**, but person is expressed overtly only in the personal pronoun paradigm, all other noun phrases carrying the unmarked 3rd person feature value. In the number paradigm, SG is unmarked, and PL is marked by the noun suffixes *-en* [ə(n)] and *-s* (of which two the latter now seems to present the default case, being productively used with borrowings and neologisms).

**Gender** and **definiteness** are expressed, not on the noun, but in the choice of determiner and in the agreement marking on the attributive adjective. There are two genders, neuter (N) and the nonneuter or common gender (CG). (The 3SG personal pronouns distinguish three genders, but this is not grammatical but natural gender.)

**Case** is not expressed in Standard Dutch noun phrases, whether on the noun or on the determiner, except in the pronoun paradigm, where nominative and objective case are distinguished. Possessor noun phrases are marked by a suffix: *-s* in written Dutch, *z'n* [zə] 'his' or *d'r* [dr] 'her/their' in spoken Dutch. These are arguably not case markers but linkers, in the spoken language identical with the weak possessive pronouns.

Adjectives express the feature **degree** via suffixation of the comparative or superlative morphology. The degree marker is suffixed directly to the adjectival stem (see (2.7)), and is followed, in adjectives used attributively, by the **agreement** ending *-e* [-ə]. This single morpheme, in opposition to the zero ending, expresses three feature distinctions: gender (2.25), definiteness [of neuter nouns] (2.26), and number [of indefinite neuter nouns] (2.27).

(2.25) *Gender*

a. een groot schip
INDF.SG large $\text{ship}_{\text{N}}$
'a large ship'

b. een grot-e boot
INDF.SG large-CG $\text{boat}_{\text{CG}}$
'a large boat'

(2.26) *Definiteness of neuter nouns*

a. een groot schip
INDF.SG large $\text{ship}_{\text{N}}$
'a large ship'

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b. het grot-e schip
DEF:N.SG large-DEF ship$_N$
'the large ship'

(2.27) *Number of indefinite neuter nouns*
a. een groot schip
INDF.SG large ship$_N$
'a large ship'
b. Ø grot-e schepen
INDF.PL large-PL ship$_N$:PL
'large ships'

(The multifunctionality of the suffix *-e* suggests that actually the zero ending on the adjective in the a-examples of (2.25–27) is the marked ending, signaling indefinite singular.) Degree is also expressed by separate particles preceding the adjective, such as *te* 'too,' *zo* 'such,' *even* 'equal,' *hoe* 'how,' *meer* 'more' and *minder* 'less.'

On the features expressed by the various **pronouns**, see appendix 1.

**Negation** is expressed by the adverb *niet* appearing in the area between the subject and the final verb position, generally to the right of definite objects:

(2.28) Tasman heeft de Maori's **niet** ge-zie-n
Tasman have:3SG DEF:PL Maoris NEG GE-see-N
'Tasman did not see the Maoris.'

With indefinite objects (and with the associate in an expletive construction), *niet* is normally left out and the object (or associate) is marked with the negative determiner *geen* (in both singular and plural):

(2.29) Tasman heeft **geen** Maori('s) ge-zie-n
Tasman have:3SG NEG.INDF Maori(s) GE-zie-N
'Tasman did not see any Maori(s).'

In Middle Dutch varieties, and in some present-day Low Franconian dialects (e.g. West Flemish), negation is also marked by a verbal prefix *en/ne* (see Zeijlstra 2004: 105):

(2.30) *West Flemish (Zeijlstra 2004: 106)*
Z' **en** wee-t da niet
3SG.F NEG know-3SG DEM.DIST NEG
'She doesn't know that.'

These varieties, then, show negative concord, which is altogether more common among Low Franconian dialects of the South (see Zeijlstra 2004: 114), and which may also be encountered in colloquial Dutch:

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(2.31) *Brabantish (Zeijlstra 2004: 115)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hij | heef | **n-erges** | **geen** | vriend-e |
| 3SG.M:NOM | have:3SG | NEG-LOC.INDF | NEG.INDF | friend-PL |

'He has no friends anywhere.'

Of the many Dutch negative polarity items it is useful to mention those built on the minimizer (MIN) *ook maar* (lit. 'also just'), commonly used in theoretical discussions of negative polarity in Dutch:

(2.32)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N-iemand | heef-t | **ook maar** | **iets** | ge-daan |
| NEG-INDF.HUM | have-3SG | MIN | INDF.INAN | GE-do:N |

'No one did anything.'

## 2.4 Grammatical functions

The **subject** is easily identified in Dutch as the noun phrase triggering person/number agreement on the verb (see (2.20)). Other tests converge: the noun phrase agreeing with the verb (a) appears in the (unmarked) nominative form when replaced by a pronoun (2.33a); (b) is left out in control complements (2.33b); (c) is demoted when the verb is passivized (i.e. is left out or appears in a *by*-phrase headed by the preposition *door*) (2.33c); (d) may owe its syntactic position to raising (internal to a clause, as with passive or unaccusative verbs, or out of nonfinite embedded clauses in the complement of a raising predicate like *schijnen* 'seem') (2.33d); (e) shows the effects of c-commanding other noun phrases in the clause (in pronoun binding or negative polarity licensing) (2.33e).

(2.33)

a. *Pronominalization*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| {Tasman/**hij** } | ontdek-t-e | Nieuw Zeeland |
| Tasman/3SG.M:NOM | discover-PAST-SG | New Zealand |

'Tasman / he discovered New Zealand.'

b. *Control*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tasman | hoopt | [__ Nieuw Zeeland | te | ontdek-ken] | |
| Tasman | expect-3SG | New Zealand | to | discover-INF | |

'Tasman expects to discover New Zealand.'

c. *Demotion*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nieuw Zeeland | werd | ontdek-t | (door | Tasman) |
| New Zealand | PASS.AUX:PAST.SG | GE:discover-D | through | Tasman |

'New Zealand was discovered (by Tasman).'

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d. *Raising*
Tasman schijn-t [$_{INF}$ Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t te heb-ben ]
Tasman seem-3SG New Zealand GE:discover-D to have-INF
'Tasman appears to have discovered New Zealand.'

e. *C-command*
N-iemand zei ook maar iets
NEG-INDF.HUM say:PAST.SG MIN INDF.INAN
'No one said anything.'
(**Ook maar iemand zei niets* 'Anyone said nothing.')

The subject identification tests yield conflicting results in expletive constructions. The expletive is *er* 'there' (colloquial also *d'r*), a weak (distal) locative pronoun, glossed LOC. It shows up in both main and embedded clauses. Dutch has active and passive expletive constructions involving (di)transitive and unergative intransitive verbs (the passive intransitive constructions realizing 'impersonal passives'):

(2.34) a. *Transitive active expletive construction*
Er heef-t iemand een boot ge-huur-d
LOC have-3SG INDF.HUM INDF.SG boat GE-rent-D
'Someone rented a boat.'

b. *Transitive passive expletive construction*
Er werd een boot ge-huur-d
LOC PASS.AUX:SG INDF.SG boat GE-rent-D
'A boat was rented.'

c. *Intransitive active expletive construction*
Er heef-t iemand ge-var-en
LOC have-3SG INDF.HUM GE-sail-N
'Someone was sailing.'

d. *Intransitive passive expletive construction (impersonal passive)*
Er werd ge-var-en
LOC PASS.AUX:SG GE-sail-N
'People were sailing.'

In expletive constructions, an indefinite noun phrase associated with the expletive (the 'associate'), *iemand* in (2.34a,c), *een boot* in (2.34b), triggers agreement on the finite verb:

(2.35) Er heb-ben veel mens-en ge-var-en (cf. (2.34c))
LOC have-PL many human-PL GE-sail-N
'Many people have been sailing.'

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On the other hand, the expletive is raised out of infinitival complements:

(2.36) Er schijn-t ge-var-en te word-en (cf. (2.34d))
LOC seem-3SG GE-sail-N to PASS.AUX-INF
'People appear to be sailing.'

The expletive also has the distributional properties of the subject, appearing in the first position in unmarked main clauses, right adjacent to the finite verb in inversion constructions, and right adjacent to the complementizer (C) in finite embedded clauses:

(2.37) *Subject position*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | unmarked main clauses | __ (*X) $V_{FIN}$ (XP) | (see (2.1a)) |
| b. | inverted main clauses | XP $V_{FIN}$ __ (XP) | (see (2.3)) |
| c. | finite embedded clauses | C (*X) __ (XP) | (see (2.1b)) |

(2.37a) with an expletive is illustrated in (2.34a); for (2.37b,c) compare (2.34d) with the examples below:

(2.38) a. *Inverted main clause*
Daar-na werd er ge-var-en
LOC.DIST-after PASS.AUX:SG LOC GE-sail-N
'After that, people went sailing.'

b. *Finite embedded clause*
… dat er ge-var-en werd
C LOC GE-sail-N PASS.AUX:SG
'… that people were sailing.'

Dutch has another expletive *het* 'it,' identical with the neuter singular determiner and the inanimate third person singular pronoun, which appears in the subject positions in (2.37), but has no associate noun phrase. It appears with weather verbs (2.39) and in copular constructions with nonverbal predicates (2.40):

(2.39) Het regen-t
it rain-SG
'It's raining.'

(2.40) Het is Tasman/duidelijk/uit
it be:3SG Tasman/clear/out
'It is Tasman/clear/over.'

Ignoring expletive constructions, we can define **objects** in Dutch negatively as nonsubject noun phrases (with the exception of a limited number of bare noun phrase adjuncts of the type *vorig jaar* 'last year,' *vier mijl* 'four miles,' etc.).

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Objects, then, (a) fail to trigger agreement on the verb, (b) show up in the objective ('accusative') form when pronominalized, and (c) are not obligatorily left out in infinitival complements to control verbs.

For these tests, no distinction needs to be made between indirect and direct objects. (The pronouns have a single objective form, although written Dutch maintains an artificial distinction between 3PL accusative *hen* and dative *hun*; the colloquial form is *ze*. See appendix 1.) When two objects are present, the indirect object (IO) precedes and c-commands the direct object (DO):

(2.41)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tasman | heef-t | n-iemand$_{IO}$ | ook maar | iets$_{DO}$ | ge-gev-en |
| Tasman | have-3SG | NEG-INDF.HUM | MIN | INDF.INAN | GE-give-N |

'Tasman gave no one anything.'

When the two objects are weak pronouns, the order is reversed:

(2.42)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tasman | heef-t | het$_{DO}$ | ze$_{IO}$ | ge-gev-en |
| Tasman | have-3SG | 3SG.INAN | 3PL | GE-give-N |

'Tasman gave it to them.'

Only the direct object can be raised to subject position:

(2.43) a. *Passive*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| De | varken-s | werd-en | Tasman$_{IO}$ | ge-gev-en |
| DEF.PL | pig-PL | PASS.AUX-PL | Tasman | GE-give-N |

'They gave Tasman the pigs.'

(**Tasman werd de varkens gegeven* 'Tasman was given the pigs')

b. *Raising*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| De | varken-s | schijn-en | Tasman$_{IO}$ | ge-gev-en | te | zijn |
| DEF.PL | pig-PL | seem-PL | Tasman | GE-give-N | to | be:INF |

'It appears that Tasman got these pigs as a gift.'

The recipient or beneficiary can also be expressed in a preposition phrase (PP), which follows the direct object in the unmarked construction:

(2.44)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| De | Maori's | gav-en | de | varken-s | aan | Tasman |
| DEF.PL | Maori-PL | give:PAST-PL | DEF.PL | pig-PL | on | Tasman |

'The Maoris gave the pigs to Tasman.'

(The passive and raising examples in (2.43) are actually a bit awkward with non-PP recipients.)

Objects appear in the area between the subject (or verb in subject-initial main clauses) and the clause-final verb position (i.e. in the 'middle field'; see (4.1)). Nonspecific (indefinite) objects appear close to the final verb position and are generally preceded by all adverbs (including negation):

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(2.45)
Tasman heef-t gisteren weer een eiland ontdek-t
Tasman have-3SG yesterday again INDF.SG island GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered another island yesterday.'

Specific objects appear to the left of negation in the unmarked case, but generally enjoy greater freedom of placement inside the middle field.

(2.46)
Tasman heeft (vorig jaar) het Zuidland (vorig jaar)
Tasman have-3SG last year DEF.N South Land last year
niet kun-nen vind-en
NEG can-INF find-INF
'Tasman was unable to find the South Land last year.'

## 2.5 Constituents

Since the finite verb in main clauses occupies the second position of the clause, fronting to the first position provides a reliable constituency test in Dutch. Thus, we can turn (2.2a) into (2.47), proving that the object–verb string *Nieuw Zeeland ontdekt* 'discovered New Zealand' is a constituent.

(2.47) [Nieuw Zeeland ontdek-t] heef-t Tasman
New Zealand GE:discover-D have-3SG Tasman
'Tasman discovered New Zealand.'

This test also reveals the structure of ditransitive clauses, featuring a nuclear constituent of verb + direct object:

(2.48)
[Kraal-tje-s ge-gev-en] HEEF-T Tasman de Maori-s niet
bead-DIM-PL GE-give-N have-3SG Tasman DEF.PL Maori-PL NEG
'Tasman did not give the Maoris any beads.'

Where fronting is not an option, information on constituent structure may be gleaned by means of constituent coordination. Thus, by coordinating *studenten taalkunde* 'students of linguistics' in (2.49a) with *docenten filosofie* 'professors of philosophy' in (2.49b), we find that *studenten taalkunde* is a constituent excluding *de* 'the' and *nieuwe* 'new':

(2.49)
a. de nieuw-e student-en taalkunde
DEF.PL new-PL/CG student-PL linguistics
'the new students of linguistics'

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b. de nieuw-e student-en taalkunde en docent-en filosofie
DEF.PL new-PL/CG student-PL linguistics and professor-PL philosophy
'the new students of linguistics and professors of philosophy'

(Crucially, both *studenten taalkunde* 'students of linguistics' and *docenten filosofie* 'professors of philosophy' are interpreted as being in the scope of the definite determiner and the attributive adjective *nieuwe* 'new.')

If we apply these constituency tests, what emerges is a regular right-branching structure for Dutch clauses and phrases.

## 2.6 Sentence prosody

Clauses and isolated phrases in Dutch end in a low tone. In unmarked declarative clauses, the nuclear pitch accent is on (the stress bearing element of) the most deeply embedded complement, hence close to the right edge, which is then characterized by a falling tone contour:

(2.50) Tas$^{3}$man$^{3}$ ging$^{2}$ op$^{2}$ reis$^{41}$
Tasman go.PAST:SG on journey
'Tasman went on a journey.'

Contrastive stress is marked by similar pitch as the nuclear pitch accent, but the material that is not contrasted receives a level low pitch:

(2.51) a. Tas$^{1}$man$^{1}$ ging$^{1}$ op$^{1}$ reis$^{41}$ (*reis* contrasted)
b. Tas$^{4}$man$^{1}$ ging$^{1}$ op$^{1}$ reis$^{1}$ (*Tasman* contrasted)

Questions are marked by a high end tone:

(2.52) Tas$^{2}$man$^{2}$ ging$^{2}$ op$^{2}$ reis$^{5}$?
'Tasman went on a journey?'

(2.53) Tas$^{2}$man$^{2}$ deed$^{2}$ wat$^{5}$?
Tasman do.PAST:SG Q.INAN
'Tasman did what?'

More usually, questions are also marked by inversion (in yes/no-questions (2.54)) or fronting of a wh-phrase (see (2.55)), in which case the entire clause receives a level high intonation, followed by a falling/rising contour at the end.

(2.54) Ging$^{4}$ Tas$^{4}$man$^{4}$ op$^{4}$ reis$^{25}$?
GO.PAST:SG Tasman on journey
'Did Tasman go on a journey?'

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(2.55) Wat[4] heeft[4] Tas[4]man[4] ge[4]-daan[25]?
Q.INAN have:3SG Tasman GE-do:N
'What did Tasman do?'

Contrastive accent in a question again flattens the tone melody, with the exception of the final rising tone:

(2.56) Wat[2] heeft[2] Tas[4]man[2] ge[2]-daan[25]? (*Tasman* contrasted)

Adjusting the tone suffices for focusing or contrasting, i.e. no fronting is required (but fronted elements, like all other elements, may receive the pitch accent signaling contrast). Discourse-old material is generally deaccented (receiving low pitch), and typically fronted when containing deixis markers (i.e. demonstrative pronouns):

(2.57) Dat[2] wist[4] Tas[1]man[1] niet[1]
DEM.DIST:N.SG know:PAST.SG Tasman NEG
'Tasman did not know that.'

When the object is discourse-old, but not fronted, the pitch accent shifts to the verb (or other material) following it. Compare:

(2.58)
a. Tas[3]man[3] heeft[2] Nieuw[2] Zee[4]land[1] ont[1]dek-t[1] (neutral pitch pattern)
Tasman have:3SG New Zealand GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered New Zealand.'
b. Tas[3]man[3] heeft[2] dat[2] land[2] ont[2]dek-t[41] (*dat land* is given)
Tasman have:3SG DEM.DIST:N.SG land GE:discover-D
'Tasman discovered that land.'

When discourse-old material has a frame-setting function, it receives a pitch accent which is balanced by a (slightly higher) pitch accent in the remainder of the clause (be it a nuclear pitch accent or a contrastive accent):

(2.59) Dat[3] land[3] heeft[2] Tas[4]man[1] ont[1]dek-t[1]
DEM.DIST:N.SG land HAVE:3SG Tasman GE:discover-D
(*dat land* = frame-setting, *Tasman* = contrastive)
'That land (i.e. that we were discussing) was discovered by Tasman.' (lit. 'That land, Tasman discovered')

Material appearing in extraposition (i.e. to the right of the clause-final verb position) is integrated with the tone melody of the clause, carrying the nuclear pitch accent and the final low tone:

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(2.60) Tas[3]man[3] heeft[2] be[2]loof-d[2] dat[2] hij[2]
Tasman have:3SG GE:promise-D C 3SG.M:NOM
zou[2] slag[4]-en[1]
MOD.AUX:PAST.SG succeed-INF
'Tasman promised that he would succeed.'

These are the bare outlines of Dutch sentence prosody, which is not generally accorded sufficient attention (but see Overdiep 1937, Kraak 1970, Gussenhoven 1984, Keijsper 1984, Baart 1987, Ebeling 2006: 159f, and Neeleman and Van de Koot 2008).

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