

A contrastive analysis of placement verbs in German and Dutch

German and Dutch are two closely related Germanic languages that use many posture and placement verbs, not only to describe the concrete position of an entity, but also to designate its location in space (cf. Lemmens (2002; 2006), De Knop & Perrez (2014)).

In this contribution we study the use of the verbs Germ. *stellen*/Dt. *stellen* ('to put in a standing position'), Germ. *setzen*/Dt. *zetten* ('to put in a sitting position') and Germ. *versetzen*/Dt. *verzetten* ('to put/move') in abstract and fixed phrases, such as Germ. *an den Pranger stellen* ('to put in the pillory'), Dt. *in de bloemetjes zetten* (literally 'to put in the flowers' = 'to treat like a king'). Among these phrases we are looking more specifically at the subcategory of complex noun-verb phrases (commonly referred to as "Funktionsverbgefüge" in German - FVGs). These FVGs have often been described as fixed units in which the noun carries the main meaning and the verb has just a functional role and is considered to be semantically empty (see among others Fleischer (1997), Helbig & Buscha (2001), Eisenberg (2013)): Dt. *in beweging zetten* ('to put into motion'), Germ. *in einen Ausnahmezustand versetzen* ('to put into a state of emergency'). An analysis of data from the corpora *DeReKo* and *Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands* in the framework of Cognitive Linguistics shows that the use of these verbs is not arbitrary. In fact, the selection of these verbs is linked to specific conceptualizations and semantic image-schemas like EXPOSURE, START OF PROCESS, START OF NEW STATE to name just a few.

The use of these placement verbs, which at first sight seems very similar in both languages, is characterized by some important differences – despite their typological similarity. For instance, Dutch *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') is less frequently used than its German formal equivalent *stellen*. Dutch tends to generalize the use of *zetten* ('to put in a sitting position') and to make it to a default causative verb (Lemmens 2006). This imbalance does not apply to German, where *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') and *setzen* ('to put in a sitting position') are used to the same extent. However, a contrastive study further shows that these differences do not occur in the same way in complex noun-verb phrases. So does Dutch *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') still appear frequently in highly grammaticalized and lexicalized FVGs, e.g. *ter beschikking stellen* (lit. 'to put at disposal'). Furthermore, in German *versetzen* ('to put/move') is used in many FVGs (e.g. *in Aufregung versetzen* 'to upset'), whereas in Dutch the verb *verzetten* is not used as a functional verb at all. A contrastive analysis of corpus data allows us to determine which functional verbs occur in Dutch in such cases. Hence, this in-depth analysis will show that a perfect analogy between German and Dutch cannot be assumed at all.

Literature

- De Knop, Sabine & Julien Perrez. 2014. Conceptual metaphors as a tool for the efficient teaching of Dutch and German posture verbs. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 12(1), 1–29.
- Eisenberg, Peter. 2013. *Der Satz*. J.B. Metzler. Vol. 2. Stuttgart.
- Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1997. *Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Niemeyer. Tübingen.
- Helbig, Gerhard & Joachim Buscha. 2001. *Deutsche Grammatik. Ein Handbuch für den Ausländerunterricht*. Langenscheidt KG. Berlin und München.
- Lemmens, Maarten. 2002. The semantic network of Dutch posture verbs. *The Linguistics of Sitting, Standing and Lying*, 103–139. John Newman. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Lemmens, Maarten. 2006. Caused posture: experiential patterns emerging from corpus research. *Corpora in Cognitive Linguistics. Corpus-Based Approaches to Syntax and Lexis*, 263–298. A. Stefanowitsch & S. Gries. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.