

Grammaticalization of prepositions into prefixes

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Overview

■ PART I: PhD Research (2003-2006)

- Subject: Prepositions used as preverbs in French and Dutch
- Objectives:
 - Study of the grammaticalization of prepositions into prefixes (“prefixization”)
 - Comparison of the paths of prefixization in French and Dutch
 - Comparison of the degree of prefixization in French and Dutch

■ PART II: Postdoctoral Research (2007)

- Subject: P-N compounds in French and Dutch
- Objective:
 - Study of the interaction between grammaticalization and word structure

PART I

Prepositions used as preverbs in
French and Dutch:
paths and degree of “prefixization”

Key problem

■ Prepositions used as bound morphemes:

- *après-midi/ namiddag* ‘afternoon’
- *contre-attaque/ tegenaanval* ‘counterattack’
- *surestimer/ overschatten* ‘to overestimate’

■ Preposition or prefix?

- *après-midi* ‘la période après midi’ / *namiddag* ‘de periode na de middag’
- *surestimer/ overschatten* ?

Two approaches

■ Syntactic approach:

< formal and functional similarities between prepositions and their bound counterparts (e.g. *namiddag* ‘na de middag’)
→ preposition (compounds)

■ Lexicalist approach:

< semantic differences between prepositions and their bound counterparts (e.g. ‘excess’ meaning in *surestimer/overschatten*)
→ prefix (derivations)

Mixed approach: “prefixization”

- Grammaticalization of prepositions into prefixes:
“**prefixization**” (cf. Amiot 2004, 2005; Blom 2005)
 - Combines the advantages of the syntactic and the lexicalist approach
 - Continuum between preposition and prefix
 - Parameters of “prefixization”:
 - *De-/resemanticization/ Subjectification*
 - *Decategorialization/ Morphological Degeneration*
 - *Paradigmaticization* (e.g. *surtension* – *hypertension*)
- (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993, Lehmann 1995, Traugott 1995, Marchello-Nizia 2006, etc.)

Study object:

French and Dutch preverbs

■ Interest of studying preverbs:

- Neglected in the literature, especially for French
- Integrated in the VP, impact on argumental structure
 - *L'avion vole* 'The plane flies' (intransitive)
vs *L'avion survole l'océan* 'The plane flies over the ocean'
(transitive)

■ Interest of comparative dimension:

- French: inseparable preverbs

↔ Dutch: separable and inseparable preverbs

- *Hij breekt de stok dóor* ‘He breaks the stick’
vs *Hij doorbréekt de stilte* ‘He breaks the silence’

- French: prepositional preverbs

↔ Dutch: homonymic prepositions, postpositions, adverbs

→ also postpositional and adverbial preverbs

- *Hij springt over het hek* ‘He jumps across the fence’
- *Hij springt het hek over* ‘He jumps across the fence’
- *De pijn is over* ‘The pain has gone’

Data

- Analysis of all verbs in the bilingual dictionaries of Van Dale beginning with
 - *sur-*, *op-*, *over-* ‘up, on, over’
 - *contre-*, *tegen-* ‘against’
 - *entre-*, *tussen-* ‘between’

French	Frequency	Dutch	Frequency
<i>sur-</i>	67	<i>op-</i>	678
		<i>over-</i>	282
<i>contre-</i>	20	<i>tegen-</i>	27
<i>entre-</i>	51	<i>tussen-</i>	4
Total	138	Total	991

Parameters of “prefixization”

- Morpho-syntactic parameter: analysis of the preverb’s scope
 - Scope over a noun/ NP → preposition/ postposition/ predicative adverb
 - (1) *Ils ont **em**prisonné le criminel* ‘They put the criminal into prison’
 - (2) *L’avion **sur**vole actuellement les îles Baléares* ‘The plane is currently flying over the Balearic Islands’
 - (3) *Hij heeft heel Europa **door**gereisd* ‘He travelled all through Europe’
 - (4) *Hij heeft het touw **door**gesneden* ‘He cut the rope’
 - Scope over the base verb → prefix
 - (5) *Il a **sur**chargé la voiture* ‘He overloaded the car’
 - (6) *We zullen nog eventjes **door**fietsen* ‘We’ll keep on riding for a while’

- **Semantic parameter**: analysis of meaning change and meaning type (relational, resultative, modifying meaning)
 - (1-3): prepositional/ postpositional meaning (relational type)
 - (4): adverbial meaning (resultative type)
 - (5-6): meaning extension (modifying type)
 - (5): evaluative meaning (excess)
 - (6): aspectual meaning (continuative)
- **Comparative parameter**: analysis of the preverb's translation

Preverbal constructions

1. Relational preverbal constructions (< preposition, postposition)

- Relational preverb + base verb
- Verbalization of [relator + trajector]
- Verbalization of [relator + landmark]

2. Predicative preverbal construction (< adverb) (not in French)

3. Prefixal preverbal constructions

- Prefixal preverb + base verb
- Verbalization of a noun
- Verbalization of an adjective

4. Lexicalized preverbal constructions

1. Relational preverbal constructions

■ Relational preverb + base verb



***sur**voler les îles Baléares* ‘to fly over the Balearic Islands’

*een woord **tussen**voegen* ‘to insert a word’

■ Verbalization of [relator + trajector]



***souligner** un mot* ‘to underline a word’

*een rivier **over**bruggen* ‘to bridge a river’

■ Verbalization of [relator + landmark]



***em**prisonner un criminel* ‘to put a criminal into prison’

*de groenten **in**blikken* ‘to put the vegetables in a can’

2. Predicative preverbal construction

↓
[NP] [[Predicative adverb] [Verb]]_v

e.g. *al zijn geld opmaken* ‘to spend all his money’

→ “*al zijn geld is op*”

het touw doorsnijden ‘to cut the rope’

→ “*het touw is door*”

3. Prefixal preverbal constructions

■ Prefixal preverb + base verb

[[Prefixal preverb] [Verb]]_V

entrouvrir la porte ‘to open the door
partway’

de puppy's overvoeden ‘to overfeed
the puppies’

■ Verbalization of a noun

[[Prefixal preverb] [Noun]]_V

een paar oude schoenen oplappen ‘to
mend an old pair of shoes’

■ Verbalization of an adjective

[[Prefixal preverb] [Adjective]]_V

een zieke opvrolijken ‘to cheer a sick
person up’

4. Lexicalized preverbal constructions

- Non-transparent preverbal constructions
 - *contrecarrer les plans de quelqu'un* 'to thwart someone's plans'
 - *heel goed met elkaar kunnen opschieten* 'to get on very well (together)'

Hypothesis

Grammaticalization of relational and predicative preverbs into prefixal preverbs:

- ✓ *Resemanticization*: new aspectual, evaluative meanings (modifying type)
- ✓ *Condensation* of the preverb's scope (cf. Lehmann 1995)

■ *sur*voler une île 'to fly over an island'

→ *sur*charger la voiture 'to overload the car'

■ de stad *door*wandelen 'to walk through the city'

→ nog eventjes *door*fietsen 'to keep on riding for a while'

Analysis results

Result 1: Discrepancy between preverbal use of comparable prepositions in French and Dutch

Translation	Abs. Freq.	Rel. Freq.
<i>sur-/op-</i>	4/67	5,97%
<i>sur-/over-</i>	29/67	43,28%
<i>op-/sur-</i>	7/678	1,03%
<i>over-/sur-</i>	32/282	11,35%
<i>contre-/tegen-</i>	5/20	25,00%
<i>tegen-/contre-</i>	6/27	22,22%
<i>entre-/tussen-</i>	0/51	0,00%
<i>tussen-/entre-</i>	0/4	0,00%

Explanation

(1) Different paths of grammaticalization

■ *sur-* vs *op-*

- preverbal meanings of *op-* derive from its adverbial ‘upward’ meaning by means of metonymical and metaphorical extension

(cf. Blom 2004):

- ‘moving upward’: *opklimmen* ‘to climb’, *ophijsen* ‘to pull up’, etc.
- ‘moving upward’ + ‘surfacing’: *opborrelen* ‘to bubble up’, *opbaggeren* ‘to dredge up’, etc.
- ‘surfacing’ + ‘becoming visible’: *opduiken* ‘to dig up, to dive for’, *opvissen* ‘to fish up’, etc.
- ‘becoming visible + accessible’: *opzoeken* ‘to look up’, *opsporen* ‘to track (down)’, etc.

■ $\leftrightarrow$ *sur-/over-* : same paths of grammaticalization

■ Relational meanings

- ‘spatial superiority’: *surcoller une affiche/ een affiche overplakken*
‘to stick a poster over another poster’
- ‘hierarchical superiority’: *surpasser son rival/ zijn rivaal overtreffen* ‘to surpass one’s rival’

■ Modifying meanings

- Evaluative meaning ‘excess’: *se surestimer/ zich overschatten*
‘to overestimate oneself’
- Aspectual meaning ‘repetition’: *sursemer la terre/ het land overzaaien* ‘to sow the land again’

(2) Different degree of grammaticalization

→ French preverbs closer to prefixes than Dutch ones

- *sur-* > *over-*
- *contre-* > *tegen-*
- *entre-* > *tussen-*

Analysis results

Result 2: French preverbs are more grammaticalized than Dutch preverbs

Prefixal preverb	Abs. Freq.	Rel. Freq.
<i>sur-</i>	48/67	71,64%
<i>op-</i>	127/678	18,73%
<i>over-</i>	64/282	22,70%
<i>contre-</i>	15/20	75,00%
<i>tegen-</i>	4/27	14,81%
<i>entre-</i>	14/51	27,45%
<i>tussen-</i>	0/4	0,00%

Explanation

- (1) Grammaticalization started earlier in French (since Latin) than in Dutch (XIIIth century)
 - (2) Dutch preverbs are often stuck in the intermediate stages of grammaticalization
 - Intermediate semantic categories: new resultative meanings (e.g. *opzoeken* ‘to look up’, *opvegen* ‘to sweep up’, *opwekken* ‘to stimulate’, etc.)
 - Separable preverbs do not often develop into prefixal preverbs (exceptions: e.g. *opvrolijken* ‘to cheer up’)
- Boundary between syntax and morphology is blurred in Dutch, but is rather strict in French

PART II

P-N compounds in French and
Dutch:

interaction between word structure
and grammaticalization

Grammaticalization of prepositions into prefixes

■ Preposition ~ Head

- Syntactically: selects a (nominal) object, determines the construction of the PP (cf. Melis 2003)
- Semantically: specifies the circumstances (e.g. localization)

■ Prefix ~ Modifier

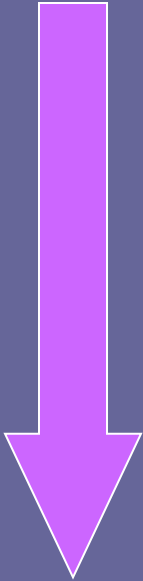
- Morphologically: subordinate to the stem
- Semantically: modifies the meaning of the stem

→ Grammaticalization of Prepositional Heads into Prefixal Modifiers

Word structure

- **Dutch**: Modifier-Head (*postzegel* lit. post-seal ‘stamp’)
→ P-N compounds: P ~ Modifier
- **French**: Head-Modifier (*timbre-poste* lit. seal-post ‘stamp’)
→ P-N compounds: P ~ Head

P-N compounds on a scale of grammaticalization

Grammaticalization	Construction type	Word Structure	Example
 Preposition	Exocentric compound	Head-Modifier	<i>sans-papiers</i> ‘person without legal papers’
	[Semi-endocentric compound]	[Ambiguous]	<i>[contre-attaque/ tegenaanval</i> ‘counterattack’]
	Endocentric compound	Modifier-Head	<i>contre-exemple/ tegenvoorbeeld</i> ‘counterexample’
	Derivation	Modifier-Head	<i>surproduction/ overproductie</i> ‘overproduction’
Prefix			

Hypothesis: interaction between grammaticalization and word structure

- Dutch: Modifier-Head structure stimulates “prefixization”
 - P-N compounds: P = Modifier, N = Head
 - endocentric compounds + derivations
- French: Head-Modifier structure counteracts “prefixization”
 - P-N compounds: P = Head, N $\neq$ Head
 - exocentric compounds ($\sim$ PP)

Case study 1: *tussen-/entre-* + N

P-N	<i>Tussen-</i>	<i>Entre-</i>
- Exocentric compound ~ 'interval'	/	18 (72,00%) <i>entreligne</i> 'distance between two lines'
- Endocentric compound ~ 'interval'	45 (88,24%) <i>tussengeneratie</i> 'intermediate generation'	6 (24,00%) <i>entremets</i> 'intermediate course'
- Derivation ~ 'provisional'	5 (9,80%) <i>tussenoplossing</i> 'provisional solution'	/
- Lexicalized construction	1 (1,96%) <i>tussendoortje</i> 'snack'	1 (4,00%) (<i>sur ces</i>) <i>entrefaites</i> 'just after'
Totals	51	25

Case study 2: *over-/ sur- + N*

P-N	<i>Over-</i>	<i>Sur-</i>
- Exocentric compound ~ 'spatial superiority' ~ 'hierarchical superiority'	/	10 (9,71%) <i>surplace</i> 'tactical standstill' <i>surtout</i> 'above all'
- Endocentric compound ~ 'spatial superiority' ~ 'hierarchical superiority'	19 (27,54%) <i>overjas</i> 'overcoat' <i>overwicht</i> 'preponderance'	19 (18,45%) <i>surtitre</i> 'running title' <i>surhomme</i> 'superman'
- Derivation ~ 'second (degree)' ~ 'excess'	47 (68,12%) <i>overgrootvader</i> 'great-grandfather' <i>overbevolking</i> 'overpopulation'	71 (68,93%) <i>surnom</i> 'surname, nickname' <i>surcapacité</i> 'overcapacity'
- Lexicalized construction	3 (4,35%) <i>overlijden</i> 'decease'	3 (2,91%) <i>surface</i> 'surface'
Totals	69	103

Analysis results

- Case study 1: confirms our hypothesis
 - grammaticalization *tussen-* > *entre-*
 - Dutch: Modifier-Head → [+ grammaticalization]
→ endocentric compounds + derivations
 - French: Head-Modifier → [- grammaticalization]
→ exocentric compounds

- Case study 2: does not entirely confirm our hypothesis
 - grammaticalization *sur-* ~ *over-* (→ derivations)
 - grammaticalization *sur-* > Head-Modifier principle
 - Explanation?

first grammaticalization of *sur-* + V/Adj, later *sur-* + N (cf. *TLFi*)

 - 12th century: + V (*surabonder* ‘to superabound’, *surcharger* ‘to overload’, *surfaire* ‘to overcharge’)
 - 13th century: + Adj (*surabondant* ‘superabundant’)
 - 14th century: + N (*surabondance* ‘superabundance’) → analogical extension

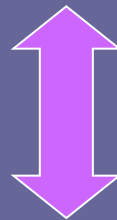
CONCLUSION:

comparison of P-V and P-N compounds

■ PART I:

P-V: French more grammaticalized than Dutch

- French Head-Modifier structure is not applicable to verbs (no exocentric verbs)
- Impact of separable preverbs in Dutch counteracts prefixization



■ PART II:

P-N: Dutch more grammaticalized than French

- Dutch Modifier-Head structure stimulates prefixization
- French Head-Modifier structure counteracts prefixization

BUT: this impact is cancelled for bound prepositions derived from preverbs (cf. *sur-*)

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