

A head-supplement analysis of Dutch quotative *van*

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1 Introduction

This paper investigates constructions with quotative *van* ‘of’ in Dutch, as in (1).¹

- (1) Hij zei van ja neem ’t maar mee hoor...
he said QUOT yes take it DM with *dm*
‘He said like yes take it with you...’ [CGN]

The quotative use of *van* is the Dutch counterpart of English *like* and German *so* ‘thus’. Language users typically associate the construction with colloquial speech, though it is widely used. Broekhuis & Corver (2015:703-717) categorise constructions with quotative *van* as a third subtype of reported speech, next to indirect and (semi-)direct speech. They provide the following definition:

Quotative *van*-constructions involve the QUOTATIVE PREPOSITION *van*, which is followed by an optional hesitation marker like *eh* ‘er’, an intonation break, and a quote. [...] the quote can be declarative or interrogative in nature. (Broekhuis & Corver 2015:704)

The quote introduced by *van* may appear as direct speech, but also as indirect speech (2).²

- (2) en moesten wij ... om het uur bellen om te zeggen van dat we d'r nog waren.
and must we ... every the hour call for to say QUOT that we there still were
‘and we had to call every hour to say that we were still there.’ [CGN]

Section 2 presents the different instances of quotative *van* based on the literature. Section 3 describes an HPSG analysis of the phenomenon. Section 4 concludes.

2 A typology of Dutch quotative *van*

The syntactic function of the quote is variable, as discussed by a.o. Hoekstra (2010) and Coppen & Foolen (2012). The latter provide the following typology of constructions with quotative *van*, in which the quote appears as direct or indirect speech:

1. Constructions in which the matrix clause contains a ‘trigger’ of the quote Canonically the trigger is a verb of saying or thinking (e.g. *zeggen* ‘say’ in (1)-(2), *denken* ‘think’ or semantically similar verbs), but also perception verbs (e.g. *horen* ‘hear’) or verbs expressing a feeling may function as triggers.³

2. Constructions without a semantically rich verb These constructions include instances in which the *van* quote seems to act as the predicative complement of the copula *zijn* ‘to be’, as in (3), and idiomatic instances in which the quote is triggered by the light verb *hebben* ‘have’, as in (4).

- (3) en dan is dat van ja kijk we maken er het beste van maar da ’s niet ideaal.
and then is that QUOT yes look we make R.PRON the best of but that.COLL is.ABBR not ideal
‘and then it was like yeah look we make the most of it but that’s not ideal.’ [CGN]
- (4) Ik had zoiets van je zal het wel niet begrijpen wat ik nu zeg.
I had something QUOT you will it DM not understand what I now say
‘I was like you will not understand what I am saying now.’ [CGN]

¹The examples indicated with ‘CGN’ are taken from the Spoken Dutch Corpus (Oostdijk et al. 2002).

²In this respect, Dutch differs from the English quotative *like*, which does not allow indirect quotes. See for instance Vandelanotte & Davidse (2009).

³Note that the trigger need not be verbal; also nouns can trigger a *van* quote. Typically those nouns are derived or semantically related to the verb classes mentioned above, e.g. *gevoel* ‘feeling’. In this paper I will only focus on the constructions with verbal triggers.

Note that constructions with *hebben* such as (4) obligatorily contain the indefinite pronoun *iets* ‘something’ and typically contain the demonstrative *zo* ‘so’ (mostly combined as *zoiets* ‘something’). The quotes usually express a feeling, cognitive state (e.g. inner thought) or an attitude (Coppen & Foolen 2012:266).

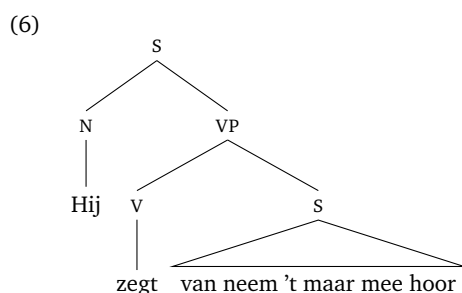
3. Constructions without a ‘trigger’ In these constructions, no trigger is present in the quoting clause. Coppen & Foolen (2012:267) state that “the quotation is added to an utterance in an asyndetic way, as a kind of elaboration or illustration of the foregoing sentence”. In these constructions, the main verb is either fully saturated, or strictly intransitive. An example is (5).

- (5) en geeft zij mij zo drie zoenen van hé hoe gaat ie?
 and gives she me so three kisses QUOT hey how goes it.COLL
 ‘and she gives me three kisses like hey, how is it going?’ [CGN]

In (5) the ditransitive *geven* ‘give’ is fully saturated. Hence, the quote cannot be considered as an internal argument of the construction.

3 The analysis

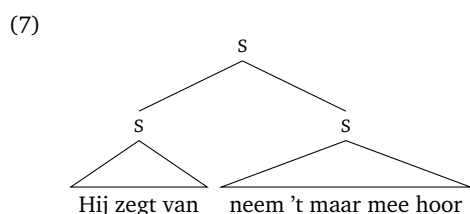
Descriptive grammars such as Haeseryn et al. (1997:19.2.4) typically consider the quote as a direct object for instances of direct speech introduced by verbs of saying and thinking, i.e. an analysis along the lines of (6).



While quoted clauses may have some similarities to direct objects, they also show some important differences. For a detailed discussion, see Vandelanotte & Davidse (2009) for English and Broekhuis & Corver (2015:690-693) for Dutch. For instance, while a topicalised direct object is a marked construction (e.g. *that book she gave me*), this is not the case for sentence-initial quotes (compare for instance *John said: “I’m going”* and *“I’m going,” said John*).

While it is true that a verb like *zeggen* ‘say’ canonically combines with a direct object (e.g. *Hij zegt rare woorden* ‘He says weird words’) or a quote stating what is being said (1-2), this is not always necessary (e.g. *Je zegt maar* ‘you just say so, just let me know’). In addition, constructions with a direct object occur in combination with quotative *van* (e.g. *Hij zegt iets van neem 't maar mee hoor* ‘he said something like just take it with you’), indicating that the quote cannot be the direct object. Hence, the analysis in (6) is not tenable, not for regular direct speech constructions nor for constructions with quotative *van*.

An interesting alternative approach is the *interclausal* analysis of Vandelanotte & Davidse (2009), who propose a treatment along the lines of (7) in the CxG framework. They consider the reporting clause as a whole and the reported clause as the primary components of constructions with quotative *like* in English. Furthermore, they argue that the quoting clause is the head of the construction.



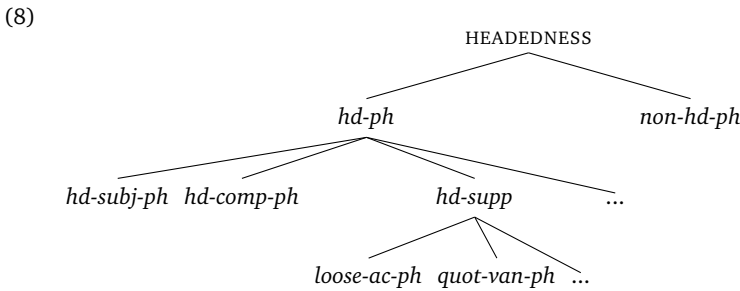
Evidence for an analysis like (7) can be found in the observation that there exist several constructions in which the quote cannot be an argument of the verb in the reporting clause, as is undeniably the case in examples

(4) and (5). In addition the analysis is supported by the prosody of the construction, as the quoting and the quoted clause are canonically followed by an intonation break (cf the definition of Broekhuis & Corver (2015) in section 1.

Drawing inspiration from this approach, I investigate in the remainder of this paper whether the proposal of Vandelanotte & Davidse (2009) is also applicable to constructions with quotative *van* in Dutch, and how it can be cast in terms of HPSG.

3.1 The general structure of quotative *van* phrases

With respect to the prosodical characteristics, constructions with quotative *van* are similar to loose appositions. An example is *Brussels, the capital of Belgium,...*, in which *Brussels* is prosodically separated from the appositive *the capital of Belgium*. Van Eynde & Kim (2016) model such constructions as a subtype of *head-supplement* constructions (*hd-suppl-ph*). I analyse constructions with quotative *van* (*quot-van-ph*) as another subtype of *head-supplement*. The headedness hierarchy is given in (8) and the formal properties of *hd-suppl-ph* are given in (9).⁴



(9)

$$hd-suppl-ph \Rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{PHON} \quad /[\underline{F}] \# \# [\underline{G}] \# \# / \\ \text{FORM} \quad L_1 \oplus \langle \text{PUNCT} \rangle \oplus L_2 \oplus \langle \text{PUNCT} \rangle \\ \text{HD-DTR} \left[\begin{array}{l} \boxed{1} \\ \text{PHON} \quad /[\underline{F}] / \\ \text{FORM} \quad L_1 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{PHON} \quad /[\underline{G}] / \\ \text{FORM} \quad L_2 \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

(9) states that a phrase of type head-supplement is characterised by a concatenation of the phonology values of the daughters, as usual, but in addition the second daughter is preceded and followed by an intonation boundary ($\# \#$). Correspondingly, the form value is a concatenation of the form values of the daughters, with punctuation marks around the rightmost daughter (Van Eynde & Kim 2016:33).⁵

The defining properties of the *quot-van-ph* are given in (10).

(10)

$$quot-van-ph \Rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HD-DTR} \left[\begin{array}{l} \boxed{1} \\ \text{phrase} \\ \text{SYNSEM} \mid \text{LOC} \mid \text{CAT} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HEAD} \quad \text{verb} \\ \text{SUBJ} \langle \rangle \\ \text{COMPS} \langle \rangle \\ \text{MARKING} \quad \text{van} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ \text{DTRS} \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{core-cl} \\ \text{CONTENT} \quad \text{message} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

The constraint in (10) states that the head daughter of quotative *van* phrases, i.e. the quoting clause, is a saturated verb phrase which is marked by *van*. The non-head daughter, i.e. the quote, should be of type *core-cl*, as defined by Ginzburg & Sag (2000:41), as the quote can take the form of a declarative, interrogative, exclamative or imperative clause. Semantically, it denotes a message.

⁴The SBCG analysis of Van Eynde & Kim (2016) is converted into HPSG.

⁵Note, however, that those punctuation marks are not always present in the case of quotative *van*, as we are dealing with a colloquial construction.

3.2 The internal structure of the quoting clause

The definition of the *quot-van-ph* as a subtype of *hd-supph-ph* deals with the combination of the quoting clause and the quoted clause, but what remains to be solved is the internal structure of the quoting clause, more specifically with respect to the function and position of the quotative marker *van*.

I argue that *van* is a functor, adopting the head-functor approach as proposed by Van Eynde (2004:29) in (11). Head-functor phrases are structures in which the non-head (functor) daughter selects its head sister and shares its MARKING value with its mother.

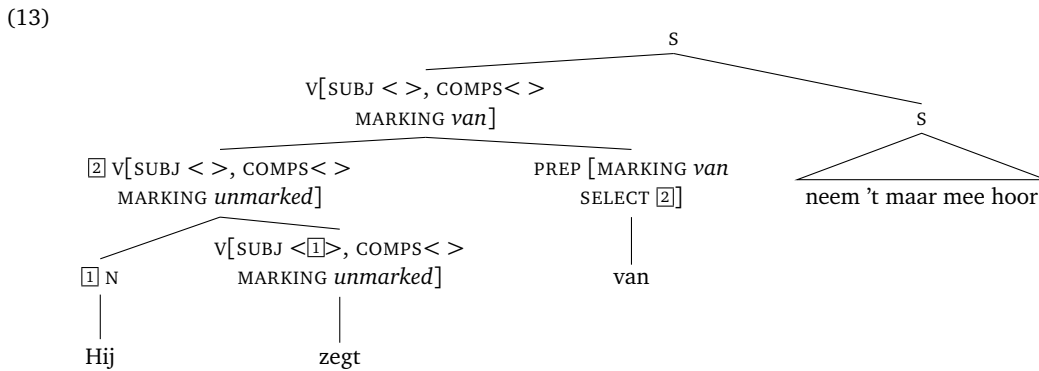
$$(11) \quad hd\text{-}funct\text{-}ph \Rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{SYNSEM} | \text{LOC} | \text{CAT} | \text{MARKING} \quad [2] \text{ marked} \\ \text{HD-DTR} | \text{SYNSEM} \quad [1] \text{ synsem} \\ \text{NONHD-DTRS} \left\langle \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{SYNSEM} | \text{LOC} | \text{CAT} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HEAD} | \text{SELECT} \quad [1] \\ \text{MARKING} \quad [2] \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \end{array} \right]$$

The properties of *van* are given in (12).

$$(12) \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{l} \text{preposition} \\ \text{PHON} \text{ /van/} \\ \text{SYNSEM} | \text{LOC} | \text{CAT} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{HEAD} | \text{SELECT} \quad v \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{SUBJ} \langle \rangle \\ \text{COMPS} \langle \rangle \\ \text{MARKING} \text{ unmarked} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{MARKING} \text{ van} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right\rangle$$

The lexical constraint in (12) states that *van* selects an unmarked saturated verbal head, and has the feature [MARKING *van*].⁶

As it was argued that Dutch verbs of saying do not always require a direct object, I assume that the three types of quotative *van* constructions mentioned in section 2 are constructions in which the quoting clause is saturated.⁷ In order to treat constructions with internal complements in a similar way as intransitive constructions, I argue that the preposition is attached at the level of the saturated VP.⁸ The application of the constraints in (9)-(12) to (1) is illustrated in (13). The application of the constraints to the construction with idiomatic *hebben* in (4) is given in (14).

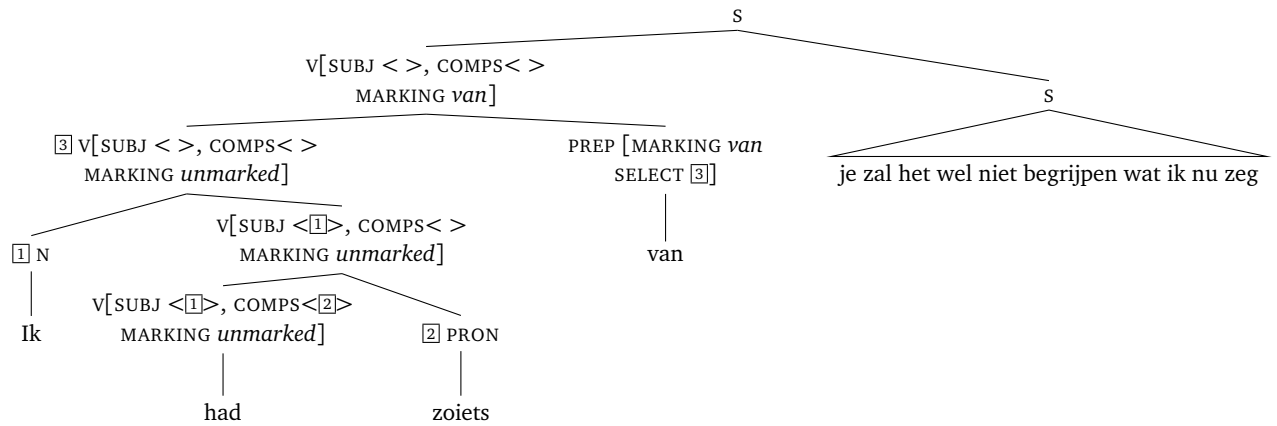


⁶The MARKING value *van* is a subtype of the value *unmarked*. Hence, it is compatible with the analysis of complementizer phrases of type *hd-functor*. Constructions with quotative *van* can be embedded under a complementizer phrase, as shown in e.g. *Ik heb gehoord dat hij zei van ...* 'I have heard that he said like ...'.

⁷The differences between the three construction types discussed in section 2 are situated in the semantics. I leave the issue aside for now, but I will spell out the differences in the full version of the paper.

⁸A motivation for this is the fact that in Dutch it is also possible for a number of head-initial prepositions to combine with a clause, e.g. *tot* 'until' in *tot hij komt* 'until he comes'.

(14)



4 Conclusion

This paper proposes an HPSG analysis of Dutch quotative *van* as an instance of *head-supplement* phrase. The analysis uniformly accounts for the different types of quotative *van* constructions outlined in section 2.

What is not discussed in this paper, are the differences with respect to the semantics of the constructions under investigation. This will be done in the full version of the paper.

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