

On the asymmetry of wh-doubling in varieties of German and Dutch

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Barbiers, Koeneman and Lekakou (2009) showed on the basis of the large scale dialectic syntactic data available in [DynaSAND](#) that there is a wealth of form variation in the dialects of Dutch in long-distance wh-dependencies of the type illustrated in (1).

(1) **Wie** denk je **wie** ik in de stad gezien heb?

who think you who I in the city seen have

‘Who do you think I have seen in the city?’

We found the following semantically equivalent sentences in the dialects: the second *wie* ‘who’ is absent and replaced by a complementizer; the first *wie* ‘who’ is replaced by *wat* ‘what’; the second *wie* is replaced by the relative pronoun *die* ‘that’. The variation is restricted, though and captured by the generalization that the first member of a wh-chain cannot be more complex than the second member. In the first part of the talk I will describe the variation attested and provide a theoretical analysis.

The second part of the talk addresses the question whether the generalization just mentioned also holds for phrasal wh-constituents. If so, then sentences such as (2a) should be possible, while sentences such as (2b) should be impossible.

(2) a. **Wie** denk je **wie van de studenten** zij uitgenodigd heeft?

who think you who of the students she invited has

‘Who of the students do you think she has invited?’

b. **Wie van de studenten** denk je **wie** zij uitgenodigd heeft?

who of the students think you who she invited has

‘Who of the students do you think she has invited?’

In the literature on varieties of Dutch and German claims can be found that indeed only (2a) is possible, but there are also claims that there are varieties that have (2b). I will present the results of recent joint work with Gisbert Fanselow (Potsdam) in which we investigated whether it is possible to distinguish between German and Dutch varieties that only have type (2a), varieties that only have type (2b) and varieties that have both. A quantitative analysis of the survey data reveals very clear patterns. Finally, I discuss the consequences that these findings have for the generalization above and the theoretical analysis.

Barbiers, S., Koeneman, O.N.C.J. & Lekakou, M. (2009). Syntactic doubling and the structure of wh-chains. Journal of Linguistics, 45, 1-46.