

Constraints and Resources in Natural Language Syntax and Semantics

Gosse Bouma, Erhard W. Hinrichs,
Geert-Jan M. Kruijff, and Richard T. Oehrle

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Major and Minor Pronouns in Dutch

FRANK VAN EYNDE

8.1 Introduction

Many languages have two paradigms of personal pronouns. French, for instance, has both tonic pronouns, such as *moi* and *toi*, and clitic pronouns, such as *me* and *te*. In Dutch most of the personal pronouns also come in two variants. Table 1 provides a summary of the data in (Haeseryn et al., 1997, 237-242).

pers	number	gender	full nom	full oblique	reduced nom	reduced oblique
1st	sing	m/f	<i>ik, ikke</i>	<i>mij</i>	<i>'k</i>	<i>me</i>
	plur	m/f	<i>wij</i>	<i>ons</i>	<i>we</i>	
2nd	sing	m/f	<i>jij</i>	<i>jou</i>	<i>je</i>	<i>je</i>
	sg/pl	m/f	<i>gij</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ge</i>	
3rd	plur	m/f	<i>jullie</i>	<i>jullie</i>		
	sing	masc	<i>hij</i>	<i>hem</i>	<i>ie</i>	<i>'m</i>
	sing	neut			<i>het, 't</i>	<i>het, 't</i>
	sg/pl	fem	<i>zij</i>	<i>haar</i>	<i>ze</i>	<i>ze, d'r, 'r</i>
	plur	m/f/n	<i>zij</i>	<i>hen, hun</i>	<i>ze</i>	<i>ze</i>

TABLE 1 Two paradigms for personal pronouns in Dutch

There are some forms without reduced counterpart (*ons*, *u* and *jullie*), and there is one form which lacks a full counterpart, i.e. the singular neuter *het* ('it').¹ For the other pronouns there is at least one full form

¹Diachronically, it is the reduced counterpart of the demonstrative *dat* ('that').

and one reduced form. Most of the reduced forms consist of the schwa and one or two consonants; the exceptions are the singular masculine *ie* ('he') and the non-syllabic variants of *'k* ('I') and *'t* ('it').² For obvious reasons, the non-syllabic forms lack phonological autonomy: they form a phonological unit with the immediately preceding (enclitic) or following (proclitic) word. Somewhat less obviously, this also holds for *ie*, which is invariably enclitic: it is not possible to start a sentence with *ie*. Apart from these three, which I will henceforth call the clitics, the reduced forms are autonomous phonological words.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the main syntactic and semantic differences between the full and the reduced pronouns and to propose a way of capturing them in terms of the formal apparatus of Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar. Within that framework, the reduced pronouns of Dutch raise a double challenge. One concerns their syntactic properties (section 2), the other concerns the relation between syntax and semantics (section 3).

8.2 On the syntax of the reduced pronouns

8.2.1 Major and minor pronouns

A salient syntactic difference between the full pronouns and their reduced counterparts is that the former can take various types of adjuncts, such as prepositional modifiers, relative clauses and appositions, whereas the latter cannot.

- (1) Jij/*Je met je eeuwige gezeur.
you/– with your eternal complaining
'You with your endless complaints.'
- (2) Zij/*Ze die gaan sterven groeten u.
they/– who go die greet you
'Those who are about to die greet you.'
- (3) Wij/*We, Albert, Koning der Belgen, ...
we/–, Albert, King of-the Belgians, ...
'We, Albert, King of the Belgians, ...'

The same contrast can be observed in French. While the tonic pronouns can take an adjectival modifier or a relative clause, their clitic counterparts cannot.

Notice that the French clitic *il* ('he' or 'it') also derives from a demonstrative, cf. the Latin *ille* ('that').

²The other truncated forms (*'m*, *'r* and *d'r*) are always syllabic.

- (4) Moi/*Je seule connais mon appétit.
 I/- alone know my appetite
 ‘I alone know my appetite.’
- (5) Lui/*Il qui était perdu est retrouvé.
 he/- who was lost is retrieved
 ‘He who was lost has been retrieved.’

As a consequence, since pronouns do not take any other kinds of dependents, such as complements, subjects, markers or fillers, it can be concluded—in more general terms—that the full or tonic pronouns can take syntactic dependents, whereas the reduced or clitic ones cannot. Another way of stating this is that the former can be the head of a non-vacuous phrasal projection (NP), whereas the latter cannot.³ As for the French clitics, the standard HPSG treatment not only recognizes their lack of a phrasal projection, it also claims that they do not even qualify as syntactic atoms. More specifically, employing the criteria which have been proposed for distinguishing between words and affixes in Zwicky and Pullum (1983), Miller (1992) argues that the French clitics are inflectional affixes of verbs, and Monachesi (1995) reaches the same conclusion for the Italian ones.

In terms of this dichotomy, the reduced pronouns of Dutch take an intermediate position, for, on the one hand, they lack a (non-vacuous) phrasal projection, but, on the other hand, they do qualify as syntactic atoms. To see this it suffices to apply the criteria of Zwicky and Pullum (1983). First, affixes tend to be rather selective with respect to the category of their host. The French and Italian clitics, for instance, behave as affixes since they invariably combine with verbs. The reduced pronouns of Dutch, however, combine equally well with verbs, prepositions and adjectives.⁴

- (6) Heb jij [ze/het gezien]?
 have you [her/it seen]
 ‘Did you see her/it?’
- (7) Ze heeft vannacht [van me/je] gedroomd.
 she has tonight [of me/you] dreamt
 ‘She has dreamt of me/you tonight.’

³The addition of *non-vacuous* is relevant, since it is always possible to postulate a vacuous projection, also for elements which never take any syntactic dependents.

⁴*Ward* belongs to a small class of predicative adjectives with a preceding NP complement; some other members of this class are *beu* (‘fed up with’) and *moe* (‘tired of’). For a full list, see (Haeseryn et al., 1997, 398).

- (8) Zij is [het waard].
 she is [it worth]
 ‘She is worth it.’

Second, affixes are adjacent to the stem. The French and Italian clitics, for instance, cannot be separated from the verb by other words or phrases. For the reduced pronouns of Dutch this constraint does not hold. In the following sentence the oblique pronoun (*me* or *je*) is separated from the verb *betalen* by the adjuncts *morgen* and *eindelijk*.

- (9) ... dat ze me/je morgen eindelijk betalen.
 ... that they me/you tomorrow finally pay
 ‘... that they will finally pay me/you tomorrow.’

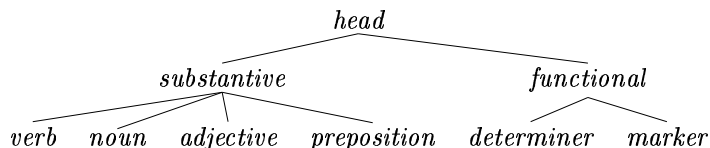
Third, unlike the affixes and the French clitics, the reduced pronouns can have scope over coordination.

- (10) Hij heeft het gelezen en goedgekeurd.
 he has it read and approved
 ‘He has read and approved it.’

Even the three Dutch clitics do not behave like affixes: the nominative *ie* (‘he’) and *k* (‘I’) attach to finite verbs, complementizers and conjunctions, and the non-syllabic *t* (‘it’), which can also be oblique, attaches to almost anything, including another clitic, as in ... *of ie ’t al weet* (‘... whether he already knows it’). It can also have scope over coordination, as in *Heb je ’t gekookt of gebakken?* (‘Have you cooked or baked it?’).

In sum, the Dutch reduced pronouns are syntactic atoms, but at the same time they cannot have a non-vacuous phrasal projection. At first sight, this combination of properties may not seem particularly unusual, but in the framework of contemporary phrase structure grammar (GPSG and HPSG) it does raise a problem.

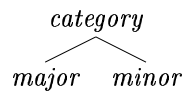
Taking a lead from the GPSG distinction between major and minor categories, HPSG makes the distinction between the words which can head a phrasal projection and those which cannot, in terms of the parts of speech to which they belong. More specifically, of the six parts of speech which are distinguished in Pollard and Sag (1994), there is one which contains all words which cannot have a phrasal projection, i.e., *marker*.



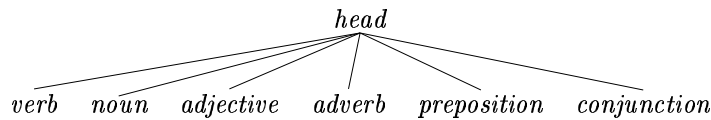
The markers include a.o. the complementizers and the coordinating conjunctions. The other words belong to parts of speech which have a phrasal projection (VP, NP, AP, PP, DetP).

The problem now with the reduced pronouns of Dutch, is that they do not fit into this classification. For if they are nouns, just like their full or tonic counterparts, they are allowed to have a phrasal projection (NP), and if they are grouped with the words which cannot have a phrasal projection, they are included in a class of words with which they have nothing in common, such as the complementizers and the conjunctions.

In order to resolve this conflict, I propose to apply the *major-minor* distinction to the objects of type *category* rather than to the parts of speech.

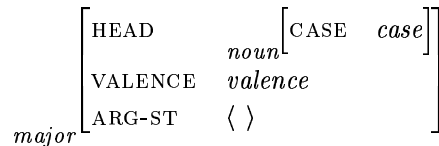


As before, all objects of type *category* have a HEAD feature, but the novelty is that only the major ones can select dependents and therefore have the appropriate features to model this selection (ARG-ST and VALENCE). The HEAD feature takes an object of type *head* as its value, and the subtypes of this value correspond to the traditional parts of speech. There is no separate value for elements which lack a (non-vacuous) phrasal projection.⁵



As usual, nouns have a CASE feature, verbs a VFORM feature, etc.

Making use of these partitions and declarations, the distinction between the full and reduced pronouns can be captured as follows.



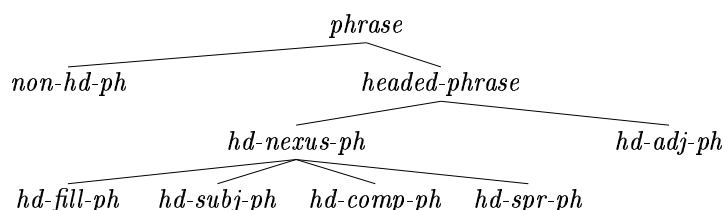
⁵The complementizers are treated as minor prepositions (*for* and *to*) or as minor adverbs (*that*), see Van Eynde (1998).

Both types of pronouns are nominal and specified for case, but their CATEGORY values are different.

Since the *major/minor* distinction is now orthogonal to the part of speech classification, it is predicted to apply not only to nouns but also to prepositions, adjectives and other parts of speech. This obviously raises the question of how the minor signs can be identified; this is the topic of the next paragraph.

8.2.2 Criteria for identifying minor signs

As a background for the discussion I use the typology of phrase types in (Sag, 1997, 439).



Since the signs of minor categories are—by definition—signs which lack a phrasal projection, it follows that phrasal signs must be major.

$$\textit{phrase} \longrightarrow [\text{SYNSEM|LOC|CAT } \textit{major}]$$

Another constraint which follows from the definition itself is that minor signs cannot be used as heads, and that head daughters must hence be major.

$$\textit{headed-phrase} \longrightarrow [\text{HEAD-DTR|SYNSEM|LOC|CAT } \textit{major}]$$

The other types of daughters in headed phrases are not constrained in this general manner, but they can be subject to more specific constraints. The nominative pronouns, for instance, may be minor when they are the subject of a finite clause, but not when they are the subject of a non-finite or verbless clause.

- (11) Wij/*We gediskwalificeerd? Kom nou!
 we/- disqualified come now
 ‘We disqualified? You must be kidding!’
- (12) Zij/*Ze alleen naar China? Daar is ze te jong voor.
 she/- alone to China there is she too young for
 ‘She alone to China? But she’s too young for that.’

Similarly, the oblique pronouns may be minor when they are used as complements, but there are some exceptions. The preposition *vol-*

gens, for instance, requires a major complement, cf. *volgens mij/*me* ('according to me').⁶

Another—more general—constraint on the oblique pronouns is that only their full forms may be topicalized.

- (13) Mij/*Me hebben ze niets gevraagd.
 me/- have they nothing asked
 'To me they did not ask anything.'

Turning to the nonheaded phrases, we find some further general constraints. In coordinate phrases, for instance, the conjunct daughters must all be major.

- (14) Ze twijfelen nog tussen Mark en jou/*je.
 they hesitate still between Mark and you/-
 'They are still hesitating between Mark and you.'
- (15) We zullen onderhandelen met hen/*ze en hun aanhangers.
 we shall negotiate with them/- and their allies
 'We shall negotiate with them and their allies.'

Interestingly, this constraint need not be stipulated, since it follows from the interaction of the present treatment with the COORDINATION PRINCIPLE, as defined in (Pollard and Sag, 1994, 203).

In a coordinate structure, the CATEGORY and NONLOCAL value of each conjunct daughter is subsumed by (is an extension of) that of the mother.

Since coordinate structures are by definition phrasal, they have CATEGORY values of type *major*, and given the principle this implies that the conjunct daughters cannot be minor.

Generalizing over the constraints which have been mentioned so far, it turns out that a phrase has to contain at least one major daughter, i.e. the head daughter in headed phrases or the conjunct daughters in coordinate phrases. Further evidence for this generalization is provided by the fact that elliptical clauses have to contain at least one major word; they may not consist of a single minor word.

- (16) Wie heeft het gedaan ? Zij/*Ze.
 who has it done ? she/-
 'Who did it ? She did.'

⁶In French, this constraint applies to all prepositions, cf. *pour moi/*me* ('for me') and *avec lui/*le* ('with him').

- (17) Hij heeft meer gereisd dan zij/*ze.
 he has more traveled than she/–
 ‘He has traveled more than she has.’

Summing up, minor signs are words which do not take any dependents, which cannot be topicalized or conjoined, and which cannot be the only constituent of a clause.

These criteria are sufficiently general to be applicable to other languages as well, but this should not be expected to mean that the results will be identical across languages. The English pronoun *it*, for instance, is the translational equivalent of the Dutch *het*, but in contrast to the latter, it does not qualify as minor, for it can take dependents and it can be conjoined.

- (18) a. The history of culture is in great part the story of a protracted struggle between pictorial and linguistic signs, each claiming for itself certain property rights on a ‘nature’ to which [only it] has access. (W.J.T. Mitchell)
- b. You might be tempted to read [it and it alone], fanatically, the rest of your days. (P. Hanrahan on D. Delillo’s *Underworld*)
- c. Recently speculation has been growing that [it and the Roman Catholic Church] will reunite. (TIME, May 5th, 1997, p. 47)
- d. I have leaned over backwards to keep the balance between [it and the North] in these fearful and unsettled times. (John Updike, *Memories of the Ford Administration*, p. 315)

In none of these examples can *it* be translated as *het*, in spite of the fact that they are semantically equivalent. This discrepancy between the Dutch minor *het* and the English major *it* clearly demonstrates that the distinction is syntactic rather than semantic, for in the latter case one would expect the criteria to give the same result in both languages.

The criteria are also sufficiently general to be applicable to other classes of words, as will be demonstrated in the next paragraph.

8.2.3 Application to other types of pronouns

A contrast which resembles the one between the personal pronoun *het* (‘it’) and the demonstrative *dat* (‘that’), is the one between *er* and *daar* (‘there’). They belong to a paradigm which also includes *hier* (‘here’), *waar* (‘where’), *ergens* (‘somewhere’), *nergens* (‘nowhere’) and *overal* (‘everywhere’), also known as the [+R] pronouns (Van Riemsdijk, 1978,

36–45). Like their English counterparts, they can be used as locative adjuncts or complements.

- (19) Hij woont daar/er/hier al jaren.
 he lives there/–/here already years
 ‘He has been living there/here for years.’

In addition, they have acquired a second use: When combined with a preposition, various pronouns must be replaced by a [+R] counterpart, especially when their referent is non-human.

P + pronoun	example	[+R] + P	example
P + Personal (3rd)	* <i>op het</i>	<i>er</i> + P	<i>erop</i>
P + Demonstrative (Prox)	* <i>op dit/deze</i>	<i>hier</i> + P	<i>hierop</i>
P + Demonstrative (Dist)	* <i>op dat/die</i>	<i>daar</i> + P	<i>daarop</i>
P + Relative	* <i>op dat/die</i>	<i>waar</i> + P	<i>waarop</i>
P + Interrogative	* <i>op wat</i>	<i>waar</i> + P	<i>waarop</i>

TABLE 2 [+R] pronouns in Dutch

The [+R] pronoun must precede the preposition, and in spite of what the orthography suggests, it does not necessarily lose its syntactic autonomy in this combination, since the two parts of the prepositional phrase can be separated by other constituents, such as the adverbs *liever* and *niet* in

- (20) We hadden daar/er/hier liever niet op gewacht.
 we had there/–/here rather not for waited
 ‘We had rather not waited for that/it/this.’

The interesting fact now, in the present context, is the contrast between *er* and the other [+R] pronouns. Applying the tests of adjunction, topicalization, conjunction and ellipsis, it turns out that the latter all qualify as major whereas the former does not.

- (21) We zijn precies daar/*er waar de Greenwich lijn de
 we are precisely there/– where the Greenwich line the
 evenaar kruist.
 equator crosses
 ‘We are exactly there where the Greenwich line crosses the equator.’
- (22) Daar/*Er had ze niet aan gedacht.
 there/– had she not of thought
 ‘Of that she had not thought.’

- (23) Wil je liever hier of daar/*er zitten ?
 want you rather here or there/- sit
 'Would you rather sit here or there?'
- (24) Ik zit liever hier dan daar/*er.
 I sit rather here than there/-
 'I'd rather sit here than there.'

As is clear from the glosses, English does not have a contrast which is comparable to the one between *er* and *daar*: the closest translational equivalent in both cases is the major *there*.

The *major/minor* dichotomy is also relevant for the Dutch reflexive pronouns. The two forms of the third person reflexive, for instance, which are *zich* and *zichzelf*, can be differentiated in terms of the same distinction. While *zichzelf* can be modified, topicalized, conjoined and used as the only constituent of a clause, *zich* cannot.

- (25) Hij heeft alleen zichzelf/*zich bedrogen.
 he has only himself/- cheated
 'He has cheated only himself.'
- (26) Zichzelf/*zich heeft hij nog niet geschoren.
 himself/- has he yet not shaved
 'Himself he has not shaved yet.'
- (27) Ze hebben zichzelf/*zich en hun families verdedigd.
 they have themselves/- and their families defended
 'They have defended themselves and their families.'
- (28) Ze heeft niemand meer lief dan zichzelf/*zich.
 she has nobody more love than herself/-
 'She does not love anybody more than herself.'

Once again, there is a similar contrast in French (*se* vs. *soi-même*), but not in English: the English third person reflexives (*himself/herself/itself/themselves*) are all major.

Summing up, the minor signs not only include the reduced forms of the personal pronouns, but also the [+R] pronoun *er* and the reflexive *zich*. This list can further be extended with words from other parts of speech. Van Eynde (1997), for instance, identifies a number of minor determiners on the basis of the same four criteria, and Van Eynde (1998) argues that the complementizers qualify as minor prepositions or adverbs.

8.3 On the semantics of the reduced pronouns

There is often assumed to be a correlation between syntactic and semantic ‘lightness’. Words which cannot have a phrasal projection are expected to carry little or no autonomous content. In terms of HPSG: “markers tend to be semantically vacuous, or else their semantic contributions are of a logical nature.” (Pollard and Sag, 1994, 364). The purpose of this section is to investigate whether this also holds for the minor pronouns.

8.3.1 Referential and expletive pronouns

A nominal is nonreferential or expletive if it is not assigned any semantic role. The English pronouns *it* and *there*, for instance, are referential in (29), but not in (30).

(29) I’ll put it there.

(30) It bothers her that there are no napkins on the table.

A quick-and-easy test to distinguish a referential nominal from an expletive one is that the former can be replaced by another referential nominal, whereas the latter cannot. Further tests are provided in Postal and Pullum (1988).

Now, if there were a correlation between syntactic and semantic lightness, one would expect the minor pronouns to be expletive, but this is not the case. Instead, they can all be used referentially, and given the fact that their full counterparts are somewhat emphatic, they are even more commonly used than the major ones, also in argument positions.

At the same time, it should be added that the *major/minor* distinction is not entirely unrelated to the *referential/expletive* one, for there is some evidence that the major pronouns must be referential. In terms of the HPSG sort hierarchy this can be expressed as follows.⁷

$$local \left[\begin{array}{ll} \text{CATEGORY} & \textit{major} \\ \text{CONTENT} & \textit{pronoun} \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow \left[\text{INDEX} \quad \textit{referential} \right]$$

As a corollary, the expletive pronouns must be either minor words or affixes.

As far as Dutch is concerned, this constraint appears to be valid. The anticipatory pronoun in a sentence with an extraposed clausal complement, for instance, must be either *het* (‘it’) or *er* (‘there’).

⁷In Pollard and Sag (1994) *pronoun* is the CONTENT value of the personal and anaphoric pronouns; it contrasts with *nonpronoun*, which stands for the CONTENT values of all other nominal objects, such as the ones of proper nouns and common nouns.

- (31) Het schijnt dat ze niet komt.
 it seems that she not comes
 ‘It seems that she does not come.’
- (32) We rekenen er niet op dat ze komt.
 we count there not on that she comes
 ‘We do not count on it that she comes.’

Similarly, the subject of a weather verb must be *het* (‘it’), and the subject of an existential clause must be *er* (‘there’). The constraint also applies to the reflexive pronouns. In the case of inherently reflexive verbs, such as *zich vergissen* (‘to err’) and *zich schamen* (‘to be ashamed’), the reflexive pronoun is expletive, since it cannot be replaced by a referential NP, and must—hence—be minor.

- (33) Hij heeft zich/*zichzelf vergist.
 he has -/himself erred
 ‘He has erred.’
- (34) Ze schamen zich/*zichzelf niet.
 they shame -/themselves not
 ‘They are not ashamed.’

Expletive uses of non-3rd person pronouns are rare, but do occur. A relevant example is the use of the first person singular *me* as an ethical dative. In that use it does not express a semantic role of the predicate, but rather some kind of emotional involvement of the speaker (Haeseryn et al., 1997, 254). Its expletive nature is clear from the fact that it cannot be replaced with any other NP, and the fact that it has to be minor is clear from the fact that it cannot be replaced by its major counterpart *mij*.

- (35) Wat zeg je me/*mij/*ons/*hem daarvan?
 what say you -/me/us/him there-of
 ‘What do you say of that?’

On the whole then it turns out that the Dutch expletive pronouns must indeed be minor.

Whether the constraint also holds for English is less obvious. At first sight, it does not, for the most commonly used expletives in English, *it* and *there*, have both been argued to be major in the previous section. However, taking a closer look at those examples, it turns out that they all concern referential uses of the pronouns. In examples with expletive uses, the typical properties of major pronouns are lost: The addition of

adjuncts or of appositions leads to ungrammaticality, and topicalization and conjunction turn out to be impossible.

- (36) a. * It alone bothers me that she snores.
- b. * It, that she snores, bothers me.
- c. * It I take that you will leave.
- d. * It and there were/was respectively proved to be raining and claimed to be floods in the valley.

In (Postal and Pullum, 1988, 636), from which the last example is taken, the non-conjoinability is even treated as one of the diagnostic properties of expletives. It appears then that the expletives *it* and *there* are minor, even if their referential counterparts are not.

In sum, it turns out that while the minor pronouns have got both referential and expletive uses, their major counterparts have only got the referential ones. In a sense, this is exactly the opposite of the initial hypothesis: instead of being semantically deficient, the minor pronouns turn out to be more versatile. This will be further substantiated in the next paragraph.

8.3.2 Constraints on anchoring

Pronouns often impose specific constraints on their referents. A second person singular pronoun, for instance, standardly refers to the addressee. In HPSG, this is expressed as a constraint on the anchor of the index (Pollard and Sag, 1994, 77)

$$\underset{local}{\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{CONTENT} \\ \text{CONTEXT} \mid \text{C-INDICES} \mid \text{ADDRESSEE} \end{array} \right]} \underset{pron}{\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{INDEX} \quad \boxed{1} \\ \text{ref} \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{PER} \quad 2nd \\ \text{NUM} \quad sing \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]}$$

What is interesting now is that this constraint holds for the major pronouns, but not for the minor ones. In Dutch, *jij* and *jou* must refer to the addressee, but their minor counterpart *je* can also have generic reference, as in

- (37) Je zou niet zeggen dat ze zwanger is.
 you would not tell that she pregnant is
 ‘One would not tell she is pregnant.’

A similar remark applies to the first person plural. Whereas the major *wij* has to include the speaker in its reference, the minor *we* need

not. As a consequence, if the pronoun's reference is not meant to include the speaker, one has to use the reduced form.

- (38) Nu gaan we/*wij slapen.
 now go -/we sleep
 'We are going to bed now.'
- (39) ... zoals we/*wij in het vorige hoofdstuk al zagen.
 ... as -/we in the previous chapter already saw
 '... as we saw in the previous chapter.'

The first sentence can be used to tell a child to go to bed, without implying that also the speaker goes to bed, and the second sentence can be used by an author who takes the perspective of the readers.

The contrast can also be observed in the third person plural pronouns: whereas the major *zij*, *haar*, *hen* and *hun* all require a human or—at least—an animate referent, the minor *ze* can refer to any kind of aggregate.

In sum, also in their modes of anchoring, the minor pronouns turn out to be less constrained than the major ones.

8.4 Conclusion

Like French and Italian, Dutch has two paradigms of personal pronouns, the full or tonic ones and the reduced ones. In contrast to the Romance clitics, the Dutch reduced pronouns are syntactic atoms, but at the same time they cannot head an NP. As such, they are problematic for syntactic frameworks in which all words without phrasal projection are required to belong to a small set of minor categories (GPSG) or to a special part of speech (HPSG's markers). As a solution, I propose to treat the *major/minor* distinction as orthogonal to the part of speech classification, thus predicting that all parts of speech may contain words which can never head a phrase. In order to identify such words I have presented four criteria: minor signs are words which do not take any dependents, which cannot be topicalized, which cannot be conjoined, and which cannot be the only constituent of a clause. To demonstrate the generality of these criteria they have also been applied to other Dutch and English pronouns.⁸

In the second part of the paper, I have provided evidence that the distinction between major and minor pronouns is also semantically relevant. More specifically, it has been demonstrated that the expletive pronouns must be minor, both in Dutch and in English, but that the

⁸They have also been applied to determiners, prepositions and adverbs in Van Eynde (1997) and Van Eynde (1998).

converse does not hold: minor pronouns may be referential as well. As a consequence, the pronouns which are semantically more constrained are the major ones, i.e., those which are syntactically less restricted. This is confirmed by the constraints on their modes of anchoring: in that respect as well, the major pronouns are more constrained than the minor ones.

The wider significance of this analysis of the reduced pronouns of Dutch can be summed up as follows: (1) there are words which lack a (non-vacuous) phrasal projection; (2) such words can belong to any part of speech; (3) semantically, those words tend to be less restricted than their major counterparts.

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