On the split nature of the Dutch *laten*-causative

Gerlof Bouma and Jonas Kuhn

Linguistics Department, University of Potsdam, Germany

Introduction   One of the Dutch periphrastic causative constructions is formed by combining an infinitival main verb (base verb) with *laten* 'let'. Examples with a transitive and an intransitive base verb are given in (1) below.

(1) a.   Ik **laat** Jan het huis   **taxeren**.
    I   let   Jan the house appraise
    'I've asked Jan to appraise the house.'
    b.   Ik **laat** het **gebeuren**.
    I   let   it   happen
    'I let it happen.'

We use the label *causative* throughout this paper, but note that the *laten*-causative has a range of readings between coercion and permission (Loewenthal, 2003; and ref. therein).

With a transitive base verb, the understood subject may be demoted or suppressed in a *laten*-passive. The demoted subject is realized with PP[*door*] like in a normal passive.

(2) Ik laat het huis   taxeren (door Jan).
    I   let the house appraise by   Jan
    'I've asked someone/Jan to appraise the house.'

Except for the *laten*-passive, *laten* behaves as other control verbs in Dutch, e.g., *horen* 'hear' and *zien* 'see'. In particular, the argument frame of the base verb remains the same. It shares these properties with the German *lassen*-causative.

The *laten*-perception causative   It has, however, long been noted that with certain base verbs the *laten*-causative shows argument frame changing behaviour (Dik, 1980; a.o.). In (3b) the understood subject of the base verb *zien* 'see' is realized in a PP[*aan*]. This is not possible when *zien* is used in other contexts. The contrast (3ab) also shows that this alternation is not available with the base verb *bekijken* 'look at'.

(3) a.   Ik laat Jan het huis   zien / bekijken.
    I   let Jan the house see   look at
    b.   Ik laat het huis   aan Jan zien / *bekijken.
    I   let the house to Jan see   look at
    'I show the house to Jan.'

This alternation with *laten zien* looks exactly like the Dutch dative alternation: V NP NP $\Leftrightarrow$ V NP PP[*aan*]. The alternation in (3) is possible with a number of base verbs, to wit: *zien* 'see', *horen* 'hear', *ruiken* 'smell', *proeven* 'taste', *voelen* 'feel', *merken* 'notice', *weten* 'know', *lezen* 'read', *blijken* 'become clear'. They can all be interpreted as nonvolitional verbs of perception/cognition, which assign roles to an experiencer and a propositional theme (∼Eng: *see, read, notice that smth happens*). Most may also take a theme entity instead (∼Eng: *see a man, read a book, taste a soup*).

Two verbs stand out in this list. The subject of *lezen* 'read', although arguably a perception verb, has agent/volitional properties. Also, whereas the other verbs assign subject function to their experiencer, *blijken* 'become clear' maps the experiencer to object (∼Eng: *it became clear* to me *that smth had happened*). We will refer to *laten*-causatives with the base verbs just listed as *laten*-perception causatives (LPCs). As noted by Loewenthal (2003), these causatives cannot be interpreted as purely coercive nor as purely permissive.

In addition to allowing dative alternation, the LPC shows deviating binding behaviour. In an active *laten*-causative (4), the reflexive marked object of the base verb cannot refer to the matrix subject, unless we are dealing with an LPC.

(4) Jan_j laat Piet_p $\text{zichzelf}_{p/*j}$ bekijken / $\text{zichzelf}_{p/j}$ zien.
    Jan lets Piet himself   look at   himself   see
    'Jan shows Piet himself.'

Thirdly, most of the base verbs in an LPC do not allow the propositional argument to be expressed as a VP[*te*-inf] with a controlled subject, when used on their own (5a). In the LPC, this option becomes available (5b), although its markedness may vary with the base verb and between speakers.

(5) a.   *Ik hoor boos te zijn.
    I   hear angry to be
    b.   Ik laat hem horen boos te zijn.
    I let him hear angry to be
    'I let him hear that I am angry.'

Finally, the LPC allows one to suppress the base verb's understood subject, even with a verb like *weten* 'know', that does not passivize (6ab). The superficially similar *laten*-passive does not allow this (6cd).

(6) a.   *[Dat de lamp van Jan is] wordt geweten.
    that it is Jan's lamp   is   known
    b.   Hij laat weten [dat de lamp van Jan is].
    he lets know   that it is Jan's lamp
    'He says the lamp belongs to Jan.'
    c.   *De lamp wordt door Jan gehouden.
    De lamp is   by   Jan kept.
    d.   *Hij laat de lamp houden (door Jan).
    he lets the lamp keep   by   Jan

Analysing the split   We propose to model the difference between the LPC and the normal *laten*-causative in terms of clausality at the f-structure level. Following Kaplan and Zaenen (2003), normal laten-causative is analysed as raising-to-object, that is, to syntax normal *laten* will look like 'cause⟨(SUBJ)(XCOMP)⟩(OBJ)'. In the tradition of Reis (1976), but contra Gunkel (1999), a.o., we will assume that

the *laten*-passive is formed by an infinitival passive form of the base verb, which can only be picked up by *laten* in Dutch. This is an extraordinary type of passivization as it is not reflected by morphology, but it does explain the regularities in behaviour with respect to the regular Dutch passive. Binding facts about the *laten*-causative (not all mentioned here) are also naturally captured in a bi-clausal analysis.

The LPC data, on the other hand, suggests that LPCs as a whole behave syntactically like ditransitive verbs of *transfer of a message*, e.g.: *beloven* 'promise', *vragen* 'ask', and *vertellen* 'tell'.[1] Below we see the NP/PP[*aan*] alternation (7a), selection of a VP[*te*-inf] (b), and suppression of the goal (c) for *vertellen*.

(7) a. Ik vertel (aan) Jan dat ik weg wil.
         I tell   to   Jan that I away want
     b. Ik vertel Jan weg te willen.
         I tell   Jan away to want
         'I tell Jan I want to leave.'
     c. Ik vertel het morgen.
         I tell   it tomorrow
         'Tomorrow I'll tell.'

We therefore propose to analyse the LPC as having a mono-clausal f-structure. So, '*laat* NP PP *zien*' in (3b) has PRED='cause-see$\langle$(SUBJ)(OBJ)(OBL$_{aan}$)$\rangle$'. The deviating binding facts follow directly from the mono-clausal f-structure. The observed alternations in syntactic argument realization follow from more general lexical mapping principles that also apply to other verbs of transfer of a message. This does not mean that the LPC is semantically and syntactically completely non-compositional, however. For instance, *laten*-causative in general cannot be passivized. The LPC inherits this property, which sets it apart from *vertellen*, etc. Also, it seems that coordination of the bare base verbs as well VPs is possible. The latter is found in (8).

(8) Aan hen   laat ik het libretto lezen en de muziek horen.
    to   them let I the libretto read and the music hear
    'I let them read the libretto and hear the music.'

Furthermore, the semantic restrictions of the base verb are carried over to the LPC. For instance, the theme of *merken* 'notice', *weten*, 'notice', *blijken* 'become clear' can be an abstract NP like 'the difference', but not a concrete one like 'the house'. Changing the base verb in (3) to one of these three verbs leads to violated selection constraints.

Modeling   The data bring out interesting formal implications of an f-structure level complex predicate analysis for phenomena that simultaneously display properties viewed as fundamentally lexical (such as the dative alternation behaviour and the idiosyncratic inclusion of only a subset of base verbs from a given semantic class) and properties viewed as fundamentally syntactic (such as the coordination behaviour and the compositional behaviour mentioned). We will discuss various analysis options.

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[1]As an aside, although Dutch has a verb *tonen* for 'show', its use is marked and the preferred expression is *laten zien*.

Under the assumption that diatheses like the dative alternation are modeled as alternations in the mapping from a- to f-structure, it seems that complex predicate phenomena force us to put this mapping in syntax, rather than (exclusively) in the lexicon. This route is taken by Alsina (1996), a.o., who make a-structure information available in syntax to the operation of predicate composition. Frank (1996), on the other hand, proposes a lexical solution in which two lexical entries (e.g., the causative light verb and a base verb) are combined to create two new lexical entries of which only one carries the PRED information of the whole construction.

Irrespective of whether one puts complex predicate formation in syntax or in the lexicon, there are three prominent aspects to the Dutch LPC data that steer the final choice for a model. First, the fact that *blijken* 'to become clear' is one of the LPC base verbs rules out a definition of complex predicate formation at the level of f-structure functions, as *blijken* itself assigns subject to its theme rather than to its experiencer as the other base verbs do. An analogue to the computational implementation oriented treatment of Urdu permissives of Butt et al. (2003) is thereby ruled out. Secondly, it is unlikely that we will be able to define the set of admissible base verbs in general semantic or thematic terms alone, even though they share many properties at these levels. This means we need to be able to stipulate the set of LPC base verbs. Thirdly and finally, as demonstrated in (7), the range of alternations available for the LPC largely overlaps with those of a class of verbs that share semantic similarity with the LPC. The last two points suggest a framework that allows one to capture construction-specific effects in a constructional/lexical hierarchy, such as the template approach advocated in Asudeh et al. (2008). The realizational similarity between the LPC and the transfer-of-a-message verbs is then captured by having the same template apply to these verbs and the LPC construction.

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