

Give it a try! Comparing *probeer/* *proberen* constructions in Afrikaans and Dutch

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BKL Taaldag, 25th May, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Dutch

- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / *proberen om te dansen.*
 - *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / proberen te dansen.*
 - *dat Leen heeft *geprobeerd / proberen dansen.*
- ‘that Leen has tried to dance.’

Introduction

Dutch

- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / *proberen om te dansen.*
- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / proberen te dansen.* **IPP-effect**
- *dat Leen heeft *geprobeerd / proberen dansen.*

‘that Leen has tried to dance.’

- Cf. *dat Leen het heeft geprobeerd / *proberen.*
‘that Leen has tried it.’

Introduction

Dutch

- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / *proberen om te dansen.* NL/VL
- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / proberen te dansen.* NL/VL
- *dat Leen heeft *geprobeerd / proberen dansen.* *NL/VL

‘that Leen has tried to dance.’

Introduction

Afrikaans

- *dat Theresa (ge)probeer het **om te** dans.*
 - ** dat Theresa (ge)probeer het **te** dans.*
 - *dat Theresa (ge)probeer dans het.*
- ‘that Theresa has tried to dance.’

Introduction

Afrikaans

- *dat Theresa (ge)probeer het **om te** dans.*
- *dat Theresa (ge)probeer dans het.*

‘that Theresa has tried to dance.’
- *dat Theresa dit probeer het.*
‘that Theresa has tried this.’

Goals

- Investigate variation in *probeer/proberen* paradigm
 - Variation without difference in meaning
 - Special status of the verb (most verbs opt for one type of infinitival complement)
- Investigate relevant parameters
 - Infinitival complement (*om te*, *te* or bare infinitive)
 - Past participle vs infinitive
 - For Dutch: NL vs VL, position of the object
- Ultimate goal: find out why Dutch *proberen* is so flexible with respect to verbal complementation?

Methodology

Corpus investigation

- Dutch: OpenSoNaR
 - 500M words
 - Written Dutch
 - Different genres

SoNaR-500	%
VL	78.24
NL	15.3
NL/VL	6.46

- Afrikaans: Korpusportaal
 - 150M words
 - Written Afrikaans
 - Different genres

Queries

- Instances of Dutch *proberen/geprobeerd* and Afrikaans *(ge)probeer* selected by a temporal auxiliary
- Followed by an *om te* infinitive, a *te* infinitive or a bare infinitive
- In main and embedded clauses (introduced by *dat* ‘that’)

- Dutch data: only consider data labelled for region (VL versus NL)

DUTCH

Results *proberen*

	NL	VL	Total
<i>Om te</i> infinitive	414 (19.82%)	2103 (44.42%)	2517 (36.89%)
<i>Te</i> infinitive	1674 (80.13%)	2459 (51.94%)	4133 (60.57%)
Bare infinitive	1 (0.04%)	172 (3.63%)	173 (2.54%)
Total	2089 (99.99%)	4734 (99.99%)	6823 (100%)

- Results: manually filtered
- > 200 hits: random sample (200 hits) checked, results extrapolated to estimate frequencies
- 4% of the occurrences with [lemma="proberen"] in both the NL and VL part of the corpus

Results *proberen*

Goodness of fit:

does the (*om*) (*te*) infinitive occur significantly more in Belgian Dutch or Netherlandic Dutch?

<i>om te</i>	NL	VL	Total
Observed	414	2103	2517
Expected	412	2105	2517
<i>te</i>	NL	VL	Total
Observed	1674	2459	4133
Expected	676	3457	4133
<i>inf</i>	NL	VL	Total
Observed	1	172	173
Expected	28	145	173

not significant

($P = 0.914$; $p \leq 0.05$)

significant

($P < 0.001$; $p \leq 0.05$)

significant

($P < 0.001$; $p \leq 0.05$)

Results *proberen*

	NL		VL	
	<i>proberen</i>	<i>geprobeerd</i>	<i>proberen</i>	<i>geprobeerd</i>
<i>Om te</i> infinitive	0	228	0	346
<i>Te</i> infinitive	64 (21.41%)	235 (78.59%)	120 (43.32%)	157 (56.68%)
Bare infinitive	1	0	172	0
Total	65	463	292	503

- Results: manually filtered
- Only checked hits considered (no estimations)

Results *proberen te*

- *dat Leen heeft geprobeerd / * proberen om een boek te lezen.*
- *dat Leen heeft **geprobeerd** / % **proberen** een boek te lezen.*
- *dat Leen een boek heeft **geprobeerd** / **proberen te** lezen.*
- *dat Leen een boek heeft * **geprobeerd** / **proberen te** lezen.*

‘that Leen has tried to read that book.’

Results *proberen te*

Position of object: terminology

- *dat Leen heeft **geprobeerd** een boek **te** lezen.* PP + obj
extraposition
- *dat Leen een boek heeft **proberen** **te** lezen.* Obj + INF
IPP
- *dat Leen een boek heeft **geprobeerd** **te** lezen.* Obj + PP
3rd construction
- *dat Leen heeft % **proberen** een boek **te** lezen.* INF + obj
IPP + cluster interruption

‘that Leen has tried to read that book.’

Results *proberen te*

	NL	VL	Total
PP + obj (extraposition)	212 (70.90%)	157 (56.68%)	369 (64.06%)
obj + INF (IPP)	64 (21.40%)	120 (43.32%)	184 (31.94%)
obj + PP (3rd construction)	23 (7.69%)	0	23 (3.99%)
Total	299 (99.99%)	277 (100%)	576 (99.99%)

- Only checked hits with an object considered (576/1323)
- 3rd construction: only in NL, but in general uncommon
→ interaction between position of object and morphological form of *proberen*
- Factors that trigger variation, especially in NL?
→ future work

AFRIKAANS

Results *probeer*

	<i>probeer</i>	<i>geprobeer</i>	Total
<i>Om te</i> infinitive	6228 (47.07%)	145 (95.39%)	6373
<i>Te</i> infinitive	0	0	0
Bare infinitive	7004 (52.93%)	7 (4.61%)	7011
Total	13232 (100%)	152 (100%)	13384

- 14.7% of the constructions with lemma *probeer*
- Analogy with unambiguous verbs taking a bare infinitive (e.g. *kom* 'come', *bly* 'continue') → *probeer* = INF in those constructions
- Analogy with other verbs taking an (*om*) *te* infinitive (e.g. *begin* 'begin', *help* 'help') → *te* infinitive replaced by an *om te* infinitive
- *geprobeer*: colloquial form? Factors that trigger variation?
→ future work

CONCLUSIONS & OUTLOOK

Comparison

	Dutch	Afrikaans
<i>Om te</i> infinitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of <i>proberen</i>: PP • No significant difference NL - VL 	Form of <i>probeer</i> : ambiguous between INF and PP
<i>Te</i> infinitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of <i>proberen</i>: PP/INF • More PP in NL; more INF in VL • Significantly more frequent in NL • Internal variation (region, position of the object, verb form) 	unattested
Bare infinitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of <i>proberen</i>: INF • Only in VL 	Form of <i>probeer</i> : ambiguous, but probably INF

Conclusion

- Dutch *geprobeerd* may select a *te* infinitive or an *om te* infinitive
- Dutch *proberen* may select a *te* infinitive or a bare infinitive
- Influenced by lectal variation (NL vs VL), the form of *proberen* and the position of the object
- Afrikaans *(ge)probeer* is more rigid than Dutch
- Dutch flexibility is most prominent in constructions where a *te* infinitive is selected
- NL > VL > AF

Future work

- Investigate intralingual variables, such as:
 - Category of the verbal complement selected by *proberen/probeer*
 - Length and type of object (pronominal, (in)definite etc.)
 - Influence of negation
 - ... (suggestions? 😊)
- Investigate interlingual variables, such as:
 - Register
 - Dialectal differences in Dutch (SAND)
- Comparison to other verbs allowing different complementation patterns (e.g. DU *beginnen* ‘begin’, *durven* ‘dare’; AF *begin* ‘begin’, *aanhou* ‘continue’)

Thank you!

Questions or suggestions?

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