Clitics and Quantity in Middle Dutch

Aditi Lahiri & Johanneke Sytsema   *Janet Grijzenhout*
University of Oxford   University of Konstanz

Clitics, constraints on phonological phrasing, and non-isomorphic mapping between syntactic and prosodic words go hand in hand. Encliticisation is a familiar process in Germanic (Lahiri & Plank 2010), where prosodically light entities attach themselves to leftwards to a stressed foot. Even experimental evidence supports the view that the smallest unit of phonological encodoing for modern Dutch speakers is a cliticised phonological word (cf. Lahiri & Wheeldon 2011). In this paper, we endeavour to trace the development of Middle Dutch phonological phrasing and cliticisation and how they relate to quantity and foot structure. The middle of the 14th century is an interesting period to look at because it marks a transitional stage from the Early to the Late Middle Dutch period. We focus largely on Mellibeus (attributed to Jan van Boendale) and Saladijn (by Hein van Aken) and make comparisons with the 13th Century Lutgart text.

Middle Dutch poetry is a good source for studying quantity, phonological phrasing and cliticisation, because it was written down following regular conventions (Mudrow 1994:110). Function words in isolation and as clitics are common in 14th century texts. Pronouns are generally written together with a preceding host (e.g. *mochtic (mocht-ic)* 'might I'). The clitic *t* has two sources: it could be the reduced form of the pronoun or the neuter definite article. As a pronoun, *t* occurred as a proclitic only before a verb that begins with a strong syllable and initiates a phonological phrase (e.g. *twaren* 'it were'). In other environments, pronominal *t* was encliticised onto verbs, conjuncts (e.g. *Dant was* 'then it was'), prepositions, adverbs (e.g. *alsoe-t*, als-t), relative pronouns and other personal pronouns (*datict < dat-ic-t* 'that I it') with which it forms one prosodic constituent. Definite articles most often encliticized onto conjunctions or monosyllabic prepositions that carried stress, initiating a phonological phrase (*int boek* 'in the book'). Exceptions occur when the following word starts with a vowel (presumably to provide an onset), in which case the article was transcribed as a voiced stop (e.g. *in doude < in t-oude* 'in the old one'). In other environments, articles were proclitics and written together with their host word. When the neuter definite article *t* was a proclitic, added to adjectives and nouns, it was either subject to regressive voicing assimilation when a voiced stop followed (e.g. *t + boeke > dboeke* 'the book') or a trigger of progressive voicing assimilation when a voiced fricative followed (e.g. *t + volk > tfolk* 'the people'). The same pattern of voicing assimilation is also found in compounds (e.g. *jonc + vrouwe > joncfrouwe*), indicating that proclitics and following lexical items are prosodified similarly to two stems. These patterns of assimilation are still found in Modern Dutch (cf. Booij 2003).

Some clitic combinations in our manuscript can only be used as full forms in present-day Dutch and the direction of cliticisation is not always the same. We will argue that phonological cliticisation is often non-isomorphic with syntactic phrasing and furthermore, trochaic cliticised prosodic units are more the norm than the exception. Although cliticisation is largely governed by trochaic principles, we will show that iambic poetry as we claim for Saladijn also leads to enclitics. We argue that the differences are related to constraints on cliticisation; earlier cliticisation allowed asymmetric trochees, while later we find moraic trochees. A simple constraint change, leading to important consequences.