

On the category and base position of R-words

Problem: Riemsdijk (1978a) claims that German and Dutch have a morphosyntactic category of R-words. He claims that (i) R-words are pronouns and (ii) originate as complements of prepositions (P). Furthermore, R-words are also the only items in these languages that can strand P. If (i) and (ii) were false, the ban against P-stranding would be exceptionless. Both (i) and (ii) have indeed been challenged (e.g. Besten 1981; Oppenrieder 1991; Trissler 1993). Yet, Riemsdijk's view enjoys enduring popularity (e.g. Koopman 1997; Müller 2000). This paper presents new arguments against (i) and (ii).

Ad (i): (I) Dutch R-words include possible pronouns (*daar* 'there', *waar* 'where') but also quantifiers (*overal* 'everywhere', *nergens* 'nowhere'), which clearly are not pronouns.

(II) If there are two R-words in a clause, only the one closest to the preposition can associate with it (1) (Riemsdijk 1978b): (1a) is a possible reading of (1), (1b) is not. If *wo* and *da* are members of a single class (e.g. pro-PP) in all their uses, this effect reduces to Relativized Minimality (RM); however, if *wo* and *da* were ambiguous between pronouns and adverbs, as Riemsdijk would have it, no interaction would be expected. Thus R-words should be treated uniformly in their different uses. Moreover, R-words do not give rise to RM effects with regular pronouns; thus, their uniform category should not be pronominal.

- (1) Wo hast du da gestern drüber nachgedacht?
 R_{wh} have you R_{dem} yesterday about thought?
 a) ✓ Where did you think about that yesterday? da...drüber = 'about that'
 b) * What did you think about there yesterday? wo...drüber = 'about what'

(III) Müller (2000) argues that R-words post syntactically replace weak pronouns, which in German must move to a Wackernagel position (WP). PPs are islands, preventing weak pronouns from reaching WP. Since weak pronouns inside islands cannot reach WP, they get replaced by R-words according to Müller. Müller predicts – wrongly (2) – that weak pronouns inside all islands should surface as R-words. R-words are restricted to PPs.

- (2) Ich kenne [NP-island einen [AP {✓schweres Essen |*es |*da} gewöhnten] Mann]
 I know a heavy food it_{prn.wk} R_{dem} used-to man
 'I know a man used to heavy food.'

Ad (ii): (IV) R-words occur with and float the quantifier *alles* 'all' (3). According to Pafel 1993 the position where *alles* is floated marks the base position of the moving item. *Alles* is floated to the left of the preposition *mit* not to its right in (3), showing that *wo* does not originate as the complement of *mit*: the structure is not [mit t_{wo}] but rather [t_{wo} mit].

- (3) Wo solltest du {✓alles mit |*mit alles} zum Arzt gehen?
 R_{wh} should you all with with all to.the doctor go
 'All of which things should you go see a doctor about?'

(V) Some PP-modifiers like *oben* 'up', which is clearly not a complement of P (cf. *oben auf dem Schrank* 'up on the cupboard'), can take the place of R-words (4). They never co-occur in the same PP with R-words (5). This suggests that R-words are generated in the same position as elements like *oben* and not in the argument position of P.

- (4) Dies ist das alte Regal. Ina hat {darin |oben drin} immer ihre Bücher verwahrt.

This is the old bookshelf. Ina has {R_{dem} in |up in} always her books kept

- (5) das Regal, wo {✓ich oben drin |*oben drin ich |✓-rin ich} das Besteck verwahre
 the shelf R_{Rel} I up in up in I -in I the cutlery keep

Conclusion: I have given five new arguments against (i) and (ii). It is then possible to maintain with Oppenrieder and Trissler that German and Dutch do not allow P-stranding.