When the sluice is not alone…
On the syntax of WH+non-WH sluicing in Dutch

Tanja Temmerman – Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles (SESLA / CRiSSP)

0. Introduction and relevant examples. This talk focuses on Dutch sluicing constructions in which the WH-remnant is followed by one or more non-WH-elements (of different types, such as DPs, PPs, adverbs, particles, quantifiers, …). Relevant attested examples are given in (1)-(6):

(1) Ik heb met zoveel mensen gesproken! Ik weet niet eens meer met wie allemaal.
I have with so many people spoken I know not once more with who all

(2) Critici zouden wat langer moeten nadenken. – Waarover bijvoorbeeld?
critics should what longer must think where-over for-example

(3) Ze wilden absoluut een Belg. – Waarom een Belg?
they wanted absolutely a Belgian why a Belgian

(4) Deze file kun je uitpakken met Winzip in Windows.
this file can you unzip with Winzip in Windows.

Ik weet niet hoe op een Mac.
I know not how on a Mac

(5) Ik wil daar nu niet over praten. – Wanneer wel?
I want there now not over talk when

(6) Dat begreep ik wel hoor! – Wie niet (dan)?
that understood I AFF PRT who not then

The primary focus is the syntactic derivation of the different types of WH+non-WH sluices in Dutch. The 2 central questions are: (i) do the WH-remnant and the non-WH-element form a constituent?; (ii) has the non-WH-element undergone movement? and if so, what kind of movement, and where to?

1. Part 1: Determining constituency. In the first part of the talk, I discuss how we should determine whether or not the WH-remnant and the non-WH-element form a constituent. Two diagnostics/tests are presented: verb second (V2) in main clauses and Spading (Sluicing Plus a Demonstrative In Noninsular Germanic, van Craenenbroeck 2010). Due to space limitations, I have to be brief, but in a nutshell…: Test 1: if the Dutch WH+non-WH-sluice cannot be fronted as a whole in a V2 main clause, it does not form a constituent; compare (7b) with (7a). Test 2: van Craenenbroeck (2010) argues that in Spading, the WH-remnant and the neuter distal demonstrative da(t) ‘that’ surface in 2 different CP-projections in (dialectal) Dutch, a higher CP1 and a lower CP2 projection, respectively – given this, if the 2 elements in WH+non-WH-sluicing are separated by the demonstrative da(t) ‘that’ in Spading in (dialectal) Dutch, they do not form a constituent, cf. (8).

(7) a. Waarover bijvoorbeeld zouden critici wat langer moeten nadenken?
where-over for-example would critics what longer must think

b. * Waarom een Belg wilden ze absoluut?
why a Belgian wanted they absolutely

(8) Ter eit iejnen de laptop gepikt. – Wie <da> vantiengneigen <*da> ? [Aalst Dutch]
there has someone the laptop stolen who thatDEM probably thatDEM

2. Part 2: The different types of WH+non-WH-sluicing in Dutch. In the second (and most important) part of this talk, I discuss the following types of WH+non-WH-sluicing in Dutch: (i) WH + mention-all and mention-some modification, cf. (1) & (9); (ii) WH + particle/scene-setting adverb, cf. (2) and (10), (iii) Why-stripping vs. Wh-Stripping, cf. (3) vs. (4), respectively; and (iv) WH + niet/wel, cf. (5)-(6).

(9) Ik denk dat er na de dood nog iets is. Wat precies?
I think that there after the death still something is what exactly

(10) Ik ben er zeker van dat ik Oranje kan helpen! – Hoe dan?
I am there certain of that I Orange can help how then

2.1. Mention-all and mention-some modification. I adopt the standard approach that allemaal ‘all’ should be analysed as a floating quantifier (Sportiche 1988; Doetjes 1997; Bobaljik 1998), and that modifiers such as precies ‘exactly’ show the same syntactic distribution as ‘all’. Following McCloskey (2000) and van Craenenbroeck (2005), I argue that the WH-phrase and the adverbial modifier start out as 1 XP, and that the modifier can be stranded in intermediate landing sites of WH-movement.
When the sluice is not alone...
On the syntax of WH+non-WH sluicing in Dutch

2.2. WH + particle/scene-setting adverb. These particles/adverbs can surface in many different places in the sentence, but most importantly (for present purposes), (i) sentence-initially: together with the WH-phrase before the verb in main clauses (cf. (7a) and (11)) and (ii) sentence-finally (cf. Haegeman 1984, 2014; Barbiers 2017), cf. (11). Hence, 2 analyses are possible: (i) either the WH-phrase and the particle/adverb form a single constituent, or (ii) they do not form 1 constituent, and the particle/adverb is, e.g., extrapoosed (Barbiers 2017) or right-adjointed to CP (Haegeman 1984).

(11) Hoe <dan> kan je Oranje helpen <dan>?
how then can you Orange help then

2.3. Sluice-Stripping. Ortega-Santos et al. (2014), see also Nevins (2008) and Yoshida et al. (2015), argue that there are 2 types of ’Sluice-Stripping’, i.e. Why-Stripping (3) vs. Wh-Stripping (4). In the former case, the WH-remnant is restricted to why and the non-WH-remnant is typically identical to its antecedent (cf. een Belg in (3)). In the latter case, the WH-remnant is not restricted to why and the non-WH-remnant contrasts with its antecedent in the preceding clause. Our Vz-test shows that in both of these cases, the WH-phrase and the non-WH-remnant do not form a constituent. Why-Stripping and Wh-Stripping are known to differ in their locality properties: while Why-Stripping can occur long-distance and is island-insensitive, Wh-Stripping is subject to a clause-mate condition and is island-sensitive. This is also true for Dutch. Based on these observations, Ortega-Santos et al. (2014), amongst others, argue that Why-Stripping involves leftward movement of the non-WH-remnant, while Wh-Stripping involves rightward movement of the non-WH-remnant (given that rightward movement is well-known to be subject to a clause-mate condition as well, cf., e.g., Lasnik 2013). An analysis in terms of rightward movement/extraposition cannot be correct for Dutch, however, given that elements that cannot undergo extraposition in Dutch can surface as the non-WH-remnant in WH+non-WH-sluicing, such as DPs (12) and predicate adverbs (cf., e.g, Barbiers 2017).

(12) Zij spreken thuis Nederlands, maar ik weet niet wie een andere taal.
they speak at-home Dutch but I know not who an other language

Instead, I argue that an analysis along the lines of Fox & Pesetsky (2003,2005) and Boone (2014) in terms of Spell-Out domains (i.e. domains whose construction is immediately followed by linearization, roughly Chomsky’s notion of phases), in which ellipsis is argued to eliminate ordering statements making reference to elements contained in the ellipsis site, is on the right track for Sluice-Stripping in Dutch, also correctly deriving the clause-mate condition on Wh-Stripping.

2.4. WH + niet/wel. I argue that examples like (5)-(6) are crucially different from the well-known why not?-construction (Merchant 2006), showing that the former exhibit all the properties of Dutch Wh-Stripping, e.g: (i) the WH-remnant and the (contrastive) non-WH-element do not form a constituent, (ii) niet/wel cannot occur sentence-finally, (iii) a clause-mate condition and (iv) island-sensitivity.

3. Part 3 (Time permitting): the structure of the ellipsis site – isomorphism and (unexpected?) non-isomorphism. Most of the examples discussed in this abstract could be argued to involve ellipsis sites that are syntactically isomorphic to their antecedent. Some other examples involve long clefts, e.g. the cases of Spading (van Craenenbroeck 2010). Other examples involve short clefts/copular clauses, cf. (13). This is all well-known from the literature, cf. Vicente’s (2018) taxonomy of sluicing. What is the theory of ellipsis identity (recoverability), such that not only an elided cleft or copular clause, but also cases like (14) count as ‘identical’ to an antecedent?

(13) Bentje heeft dezelfde locatie als ik. – Hu? Waar is het dan?
Bentje has the-same location as I huh where is it then

(14) Dit wil geen van beide partijen goedkeuren. – Wat moeten we doen nu?
this wants no of both parties approve what should we do now