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The historical development of the Dutch posture-verb progressive construction: including a comparison with German
Okabe, A.

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Including a comparison with German

This dissertation investigates the grammaticalization of posture verbs in Dutch and German. Dutch posture verbs have been used as progressive markers since the Middle Dutch period. In the modern language, the verbs take a complement verb introduced by an infinitive marker *te*, whereas in Middle Dutch, they are linked with another verb by the coordinating conjunction *ende* or its reduced form *en*, resulting in a structure comparable to verbal coordination. This Middle Dutch progressive construction with posture verbs has a parallel in Modern German, namely a pseudo-coordinate construction with posture verbs. The Modern German construction is thought to be in the early stages of grammaticalization, in the sense that it occasionally hints at temporal aspect.

Through a quantitative investigation of data extracted from corpora, this study concludes that the two Dutch posture-verb constructions are independent of each other. Therefore, the historical development of the construction can be described as the replacement of the older pseudo-coordinate construction by the new construction, which is functionally superior. The present-day German construction, on the other hand, is generally biclausal and cannot be characterized as a grammaticalized progressive construction. The comparison of the Dutch pseudo-coordinate construction with the German coordinate construction provides insight into the continuum between coordination and pseudo-coordination. The contrastive perspective also sheds light on the (im)possibility of forming pseudo-coordination in Germanic languages and the ease with which posture verbs may grammaticalize into aspectual markers.

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Ami Okabe

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