Heritage Language Syntax 2 (HLS2)

The shape and size of defective domains in Pennsylvania Dutch

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Overview

Big questions in research on HL-syntax:

- Q_1: How sturdy are the 'core' aspects of HL-syntax?
- Q_2: Which elements of core/peripheral aspects of HL-syntax may be more vulnerable to change (when compared with others)?
- Q_3: How does (HL-)syntactic change progress? Can we model it?

Empirical focus of this talk: Defective domains in Pennsylvania Dutch

Defective domains

- Infinitives
  - *It began to rain.*
- Acls
  - *I heard her singing in the shower.*
- Clausal gerunds
  - *Mike delivering a decent talk at the workshop was a shock to everyone.*
- Defective clausal gerunds
  - *I tried opening the door.*
- ECM, Raising, & Control
  - *I expect him to order a whiskey sour.* [ECM]
  - *He seems to be upset that the Steelers lost.* [Raising]
  - *He tried to quit yelling at his kids in public.* [Control]

Hypotheses

- H_1: The core elements of HL-syntax are pretty sturdy (Polinsky, 2018; Lohndal, 2021, etc.)
- H_2: (HL-)Syntactic change is *highly* conservative
- H_3: A modular & derivational approach is well-equipped to model these changes

More specifically (for this talk), I argue:

- Contact/HL-syntax shows a strong preferences for changes at the edge of phases (Polinsky, 2018; Biberauer, 2018; Putnam & Hoffman, 2021)
- Feature reassembly/restructuring is also attested *within* certain domains (Putnam, 2019, 2020; Putnam et al., 2019a,b)

What is *Pennsylvania Dutch*?

- PD is a language that has "outgrown its name" (Keiser, 2012:1).
  - +300 years spoken on North American soil (and now in South America!)
  - Started in SE Pennsylvania, now spoken throughout the Midwest and Ontario (and other areas!)
  - $\approx$ 400,000 L1 speakers of PD today
  - Predominantly spoken as the L1 of the Old Order Amish (OOA) and other conservative Mennonite groups
  - NB: For an easily accessible history of the language, see Louden (2016)
- PD ain't going nowhere anytime soon...
  - The Amish population doubles in every generation (average family size 8.6 members)
  - If they keep this pace, by 2315 there will be more Amish in the US than any other ethnic or religious group!

Is Penn Dutch a heritage language?

- There are no exclusively monolingual speakers of PD
- The OOA exist in a state of **diglossic bilingualism** (Grosjean, 2001, 2008)
  - Although the vast majority of OOA are sequential bilinguals (acquiring PD first), English is omnipresent in their daily lives
  - Bifurcation of modes and sociolinguistic domains:
    - **PD:** home, family, church, local community
    - **English:** non-Amish neighbors, work (outside of the home), 'worldly' topics
- Thus, PD speakers are "deep bilinguals" (to quote López, 2020)
  - It makes little sense to attempt to distinguish between *loanwords* and *borrowings* (a la Poplack (2018) and related work) in PD
  - Their lexicon is truly hybrid
- **Assessment:** PD is a heritage language, but not endangered

Defective domains in English

- Let's undertake a brief overview of some of the general properties of defective domains in English
- These structures are (still) the source of much (intense) debate and diverse theoretical analyses – both in English and cross-linguistically

Defective domains in English: Infinitives

Abundant literature exists debating the position of *to* in English:

- Adjoined *to*P dominanting *v*P,
- As T, or
- As C

Most importantly (which we'll discuss later): The position of *to* (English) and *zu* German are not identical

Defective domains in English: AcIs

(1) a. I heard Marsha [singing in the shower.
b. I saw Peter [throwing the football in his backyard.

Standard German also licenses AcIs:

(2) Ich habe ihn sprechen hören/gehört.
I have him speak hear/heard
'I heard him speaking/talking.'

AcIs are *v*Ps:

(3) I heard Marsha [$_{vP}$ singing in the shower.

Defective domains in English: Clausal gerunds

(4) a. Carol worried about [PRO being late for dinner.
b. Carol worried about [Greg being late for dinner.

From Pires (2007,16):

(5) a. Mary favored [Bill taking care of her land].
b. Susan worried about [Mark being late for dinner].
c. Sylvia wants to find a new house without [Anna helping her].
d. [Sue showing up at the game] was a surprise to everybody.

Clausal gerunds (in English) can appears as:

- complements to verbs (5-a),
- complements to prepositions (5-b) & (5-c), and
- phrases in 'subject position' (5-d)

Defective domains in English: Defective clausal gerunds

Gerund complements of aspectualizers (e.g., *start, finish, & keep*) and verbs such as *try* and *avoid* form a distinct class (Pires, 2007:70):

(6) a. Mary started/finished/continued [reading the newspaper].
b. Bill$_j$ tried [e_j talking to his boss].
c. Philip$_j$ avoids [e_j driving on the freeway].

Due to (i) their lack of independence re: tense & aspect and (ii) the questionable status of PRO, these are often referred to as **defective clausal gerunds**

Two possible structural analyses:

- TP-projection with a 'defective' head (with 'null' Tense)
- *v*P-projection similar to AcIs

Defective domains in English: ECM, Raising, & Control

(7) Mike expected [him to win the game]. [ECM]

(8) Cindy seems [to be sick]. [Raising]

(9) a. Jan convinced Cindy$_j$ [PRO$_j$ to taddle on Marsha].
[Object Control]

b. Bobby$_j$ tried [PRO$_j$ to eat more ice cream than his brothers].
[Subject Control]

Theoretical assumptions:

- Items that receive accusative case in ECM-structures are in Spec,TP
- Raising predicates are also TPs
- Control structures require a CP (in order to license PRO)

Defective domains in Penn Dutch

Louden's (2016, 2019) generalizations:

- Infinitival constructions are introduced with *fer* 'for' or are phonologically null ∅
- The distribution of these two options is dependent on semantically equivalent English expressions
- If the infinitival *to* is required in English, *fer* must occur in Pennsylvania Dutch
- If English requires or permits a gerund or bare infinitive, *fer* is omitted

Although these generalizations hold, I discuss the following options in this talk:

- The structure and variation in PD non-finite clauses is primarily **syntactic** in nature, and, in turn,
- I provide a sketch of the syntax of non-finite structure in PD with an eye towards how this impacts HL-syntax development and change

The loss of *zu* in Penn Dutch

As discussed and analyzed by Börjars & Burridge (2011), PD lost its infinitival marker *zu* around the turn of the previous century.

(10) a. **Fer** Sauder **zu** haysa is doch gar ke Shand.
for Sauder INF be-called is but absolutely no shame
'To be called Sauder is no shame at all'
[Poetry of Ben Sauder, 1930s]

b. Se wore ols so shlim **fer** danse.
they were always so eager INF dance.NF
'They were always so eager to dance.'
[Horne, 1905]

- Huffines (1986,1990) shows that these uses of both *fer* and *zu* is quite rare, usually restricted to elderly non-sectarian speakers

zu ≠ *to*

W/o getting into great detail, Engish *to* and German *zu* do not occupy the same structure positions:

(11) a. Maria decided to carefully remove the bigger splinter.
b. Maria beschloss den größeren Splitter vorsichtig zu entfernen / *zu vorsichtig entfernen.

Important side note: Given that the subject is expressed in AcIs (in both German, English, & PD) but PRO in control predicates, this supports the hypothesis that AcIs are *v*Ps underlyingly.

Fer as the infinitival marker in contemporary Penn Dutch

These examples of tough-movement in PD show that: (i) *fer* is the contemporary PD infinitival marker and (ii) that it appears in C:

(12) a. Es iss hatt [$_{CP}$ fer's Buch uffpicke.
it is hard INF=the.NEUT book up-pick
'It is difficult/hard to pick up the book.'

b. Es iss hatt ['s Buch uff**fer**picke.

c. Er iss hatt ['s Buch uff**zu**picke.

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: *Fer*-infinitives

Examples of *fer*-infinitives in PD:

(13) a. Der Tim hat gemeindt [$_{CP}$ fer die Bicher wegduh.
the Tim has remembered INF die books away-make
'Tim remembered to put the books away.'

b. Die Kinner hen admit [$_{CP}$ fer's Fenschder
the children have admitted INF=the.NEUT window
verbroche hawwe mit Schtee.
broken have with stone
'The children admitted to break the window with (a) stone.'

c. [$_{CP}$ Fer happy sei] misse die Kinner gut schloofe.
INF happy be.NF must the children well sleep
'To be happy the children must sleep well.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: Infinitives without *fer*

As predicted by Louden, there are infinitival readings where *fer* does not appear:

(14) a. Die Lisa hat vergesse [$_{\text{CP}}$ (*fer) der Allen saage wege
the lisa has forgotten INF the Allen say.NF about
der Gaul.
the horse
'Lisa forgot to tell Allen about the horse.'

b. 'S is an schtaerte (*fer) reggere.
it is PROG start rain.NF
'It is starting (*to start) to rain (*raining).'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: AcIs

PD licenses AcIs:

(15) Die Sarah hot die Rose gheert [$_{vP}$ gut Deitsch schwetze.
the Sarah has the Rose heard well Dutch speak.NF
'Sarah hear Rose speak(ing) Dutch well.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: The lack/dispreference of clausal gerunds

The situation w/ clausal gerunds is somewhat complicated in PD:

(16) a. *Sarah wett n neier Haas finne [$_{CP}$ ohni Rose sie
Sarah wants a new house find without Rose her
helfe.
help.NF
Intended: 'Sarah wants to find a new house without Rose helping her.'

b. *Sarah worry wege [$_{CP}$ Sally spät zu Owetesse komme.
Sarry worries about Sally late to dinner come.NF
Intended: 'Sarah worries about Sally coming/being late for dinner.'

(The lack of) clausal gerunds in Penn Dutch

(17) *[$_{CP}$ Rose zu die Hochzich komme] war n Surprise zu alliebber.
Rose to the wedding come.NF was a surprise to everyone

Intended: 'Rose showing up at the wedding was a surprise to everyone.'

Unlike in English, in PD clausal gerunds cannot occur as:

- the complement of a verb (16-a),
- the object of a preposition (16-b), or
- in subject position (17)

...but there's more to this story

There is a bit more tolerance for clausal gerunds as objects of a preposition for younger speakers:

(18) a. *Ich meind vun [$_{CP}$ Sally zu die Gmee geh mit
I remember P Sally to the church go.NF with
uns.
us
'I remember Sally going to church with us.'

b. Ich meind (vun) [$_{CP}$ wann die Sally in die Gmee
I remember P when the Sally in the church
gange is mit uns.
gone is with us
'I remember when Sally went to church with us.'

c. Ich meind noch vun [$_{CP}$ zu die Gmee laafe.
I remember still P to the church run.NF
'I still remember running to (the) church.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: Defective clausal gerunds

In contrast, defective clausal gerunds are common in PD:

(19)

a. Ich bin n browiere [$_{vP}$ die Daer uffmache.
I am PROG try the door open.NF
'I am trying to open the door.'

b. Ich haawe browiert [$_{vP}$ die Daer uffmache.
I have tried the door open.NF
'I tried to open the door.'

c. Die Ime schtaerte ihn nochgehe.
the bees start him after-go.NF
'The bees start going / to go after him.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: Control

Control structures require the *fer*-infinitival marker in C:

(20) Ich haawe ihn verschwetzt [$_{\text{CP}}$ fer uffheere schmoke.
I have him convinced INF stop smoke.NF
'I convinced him to stop smoking.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: No Raising

English-style (subj-to-subj) raising is not found in PD:

(21) a. Der John seemt / guckt [$_{CP}$ wie er grank iss.
the John seems look like he sick is
'John seems to be sick / looks like he is sick.'

b. Der John act / guckt [$_{CP}$ wie er zu der Schtoor geh
the John acts looks like he to the store go
will.
wants
'John acts like he wants to go to the store.'

Defective domains in Penn Dutch: quasi-ECM

Although ECM-predicates are generally dispreferred, we do observe a structures such as the following in PD:

(22) a. Niemand expect teachers [$_{CP}$ fer perfect sei.
no one expects teachers INF perfect be
'No one expects teachers to be perfect.'

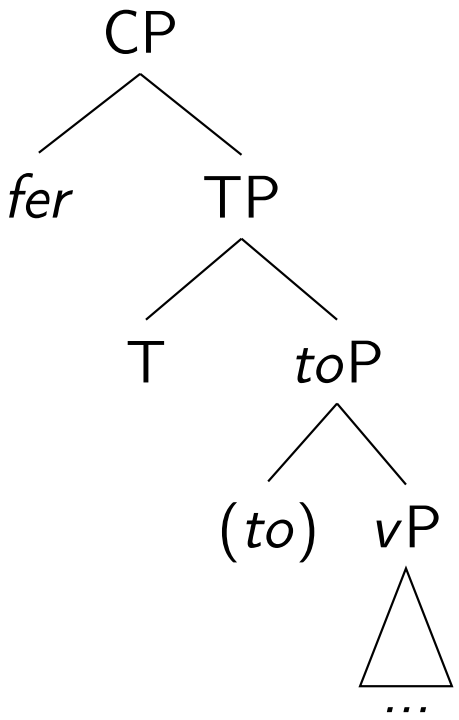
b. Er weest, ass ich ihn expect haawe [$_{CP}$ fer die Daer schliesse.
he knows that I him expect have INF the door shut.NF
'He knows that I expected him to lock/shut the door.'

Comparative summary

	English	Penn Dutch	German
AcI	✓	✓	✓
Clausal Gerund (CG)	✓	✗	✗
Defective CG	✓	✓	✗
ECM	✓	✗	✗
Raising	✓	✗	✗
Control	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: English-PD-German non-finite clauses

Analysis of defective domains in Penn Dutch



- English has a projection *to*P
- Penn Dutch has either:
  - Lost this projection, or
  - No longer as a phonological reflex of this head

Penn Dutch has *verbal* gerunds

Alexiadou, Iordachioaia, & Soare (2010): two types of gerunds

(23) **Noun-y gerunds:** DP ⟩ (NumP ⟩ ClassP ⟩ *n*P) ⟩ (AspP) ⟩ VoiceP

(24) **Verb-y gerunds:** DP ⟩ AspP ⟩ VoiceP ⟩ *v*P ⟩ Root

Brown & Putnam (2015) and Bosse & Putnam (2016) argue that PD has verbal gerunds:

(25) *Die Kinder sind (*am) mit einem Ball (*am) Spielen.
the kids are PROG with a ball PROG play
Intended: 'The kids are playing with the ball.' [Coll. German]

(26) Die Kinner sin (a)n mit 'em Ball spiele.
the kids are PROG with a ball play.NF
'The kids are playing with the ball.' [Penn Dutch]

Additional evidence

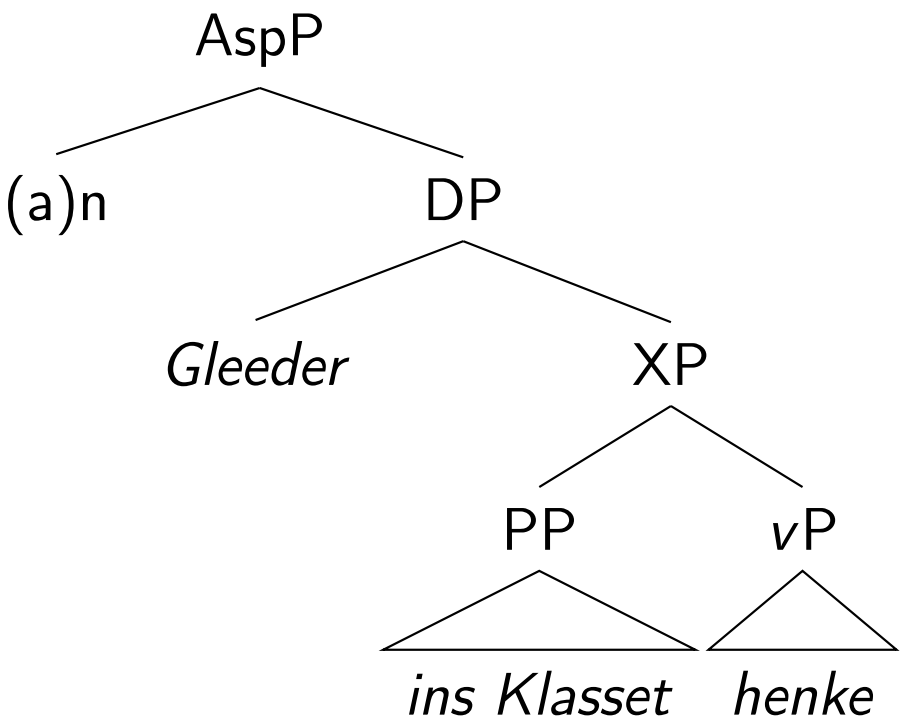
From Huffines (1986):

(27) Er is an [$_{XP}$ Gleeder ins Klasset henke.
he is PROG clothes into-the closet hang.NF
'He is hanging clothes in the closet.'

Double-progressive marker:

(28) Er is (a)n die Kinner in die Stub (a)n Presents
he is PROG the kids in the living.room PROG presents
gevve.
give.NF
'He is giving presents to the kids in the living room.'

Syntax of defective clausal gerunds (in PD)



Where's PRO?

(29) Ich bin n browiere [$_{vP}$ (PRO?) die Daer uffmache.
I am PROG try (PRO) the door open.NF
'I am trying to open the door.'

Key questions:

- Q_1: Is the agentive argument in the *v*P in (29) PRO?
- Q_2: How does this fit with standard stories of PRO-theorem (Pires, 2007; Reed, 2014) – especially those that espouse a null Case-account of PRO?

'Big picture' questions for HL-syntax

...let's return to the 'big questions' from the introduction:

- Q_1: How sturdy are the 'core' aspects of HL-syntax?
- Q_2: Which elements of core/peripheral aspects of HL-syntax may be more vulnerable to change (when compared with others)?
- Q_3: How does (HL-)syntactic change progress? Can we model it?

What we've seen here:

- Re: Q_1: Non-finite structures in Penn Dutch still look 'very German' overall
- Re: Q_2: Structural salience (i.e., movement to the edge of a phase) and feature restructuring within a phase
  - *Fer* (in C) as an infinitival marker
- Re: Q_3: Changes are conservative and incremental

Conclusion & the road ahead

- HL-syntax once again looks pretty sturdy wrt non-finite structures in Penn Dutch (barring a few minor exceptions)
- So what's next?

(30) Ich meind(e) noch vun [$_{XP}$?ihn/*Sally mit uns zu die Gmee geh.
I remember still P him/Sally mit us to the church go.NF
'I remember him/Sally going to church with us.'

- Younger speakers find (30) - with the pronoun - to be acceptable
- *If* this represents a growing trend, it would be a step towards licensing a clausal gerund...

Thanks!

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