

## Indefinite pronouns with particles

The indefinite pronouns form a complex and heterogeneous word class:

- (1) Binnen de toch al heterogene categorie van de voornaamwoorden vormen de onbepaalde voornaamwoorden wel de meest heterogene groep. (*Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst*)

Most languages have various kinds indefinite pronouns. The diversity and the distributional complexity is large, and Haspelmath's impressive (1997) typological study only scratches the surface of their intricacies, even for well-studied languages such as the Germanic ones.

Dutch has indefinite pronouns that consist of a 'normal' indefinite or interrogative pronoun (members of the latter class cross-linguistically often double as indefinites, c.f. Haspelmath) and one or more particles or adverb-like elements, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (2) dat weet jij beter dan wie dan ook (CGN)  
'you know that better than anyone'
- (3) Niemand had er ook maar een moment aan gedacht dat men dit ooit serieus zou nemen.  
'No one ever thought for a moment that this would ever be taken seriously'
- (4) wanneer een parlamentslid of om het even wie zich op zijn rechten beroept, moet hij in de allereerste plaats zijn rechten kennen (europarl)  
'when a Member of this House or anybody else is calling for their rights to be respected, the first thing they have to do is make sure they know them'
- (5) Dat betekent dat iedereen die zich met eender welk product op deze markten begeeft te maken zal krijgen met hetgeen we nu proberen te doen. (europarl)  
'Therefore, everyone in these markets, with their various products, will be affected by the work that we are going to undertake'

Comparable complex indefinite pronouns can be found in other Germanic languages such as Afrikaans and Frisian:

- (6) word sy deur die een of ander skietlustige persoon doodgeskiet (ViVa!)  
'Is she shot dead by some trigger-happy person'
- (7) uitstekende werk wie ookal dit gedoen het (Viva!)  
'Great work whoever did this'
- (8) Eric wit der mear fan as wa ek mar (Henk Wolf, p.c., cf. Popkema 2006)  
'Eric knows more about that than anybody else'

The semantics and the distributions of the combinations under discussion are non-compositional: the examples in (2), (4) and 5 are ungrammatical without the particle combinations *dan ook*, *om het even* and *eender* respectively, whereas *ook maar een moment* in (3) is a Negative Polarity Item with a complex distribution (Zwarts 1981, Van der Wouden 1997 etc.) whose syntactic behavior cannot be predicted from the properties of its constituting parts.

Some of the particle indefinites, e.g., the *ook maar* type, have been studied before. In our paper, however, we will try to develop a more general picture of the contribution that particles may have to indefinite meanings, something that not has been done before, as far as we know.