

# PA5.1 – Split Noun Phrase Topicalization in Dutch and its varieties

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## I. The form-meaning mismatch

- Split Noun Phrase Topicalization (**SNPT**) is a showcase example of a many-to-one relation between (surface) form and meaning.
- In SNPT, a head (**TOP**) is topicalized and a dependent (**REM**) is stranded. A listener processing the utterance has to analyze the two syntactic objects as one constituent despite their discontinuity:

TOP				REM	
(1) [Boeken]	heb	ik	[drie]	gelezen.	
books	have	I	three	read	
'As for books, I have read three.'					

- Paradox:** properties indicate movement of TOP, but also separate base-generation of TOP and REM. [1] [2]

### Theoretical questions

- Is SNPT a case of extraction, or is the pattern base-generated? How can the paradox be accounted for?
- Which factors govern discontinuous constructions such as SNPT? What is the nature of these factors?

- Little is known about SNPT in Dutch and its varieties. [3]

### Empirical questions

- To what extent is SNPT available in Dutch? How can a potential SNPT varieties in Dutch be captured syntactically?
- How does SNPT in Dutch compare to SNPT in other West Germanic languages like German?

## II. Methodology and hypotheses

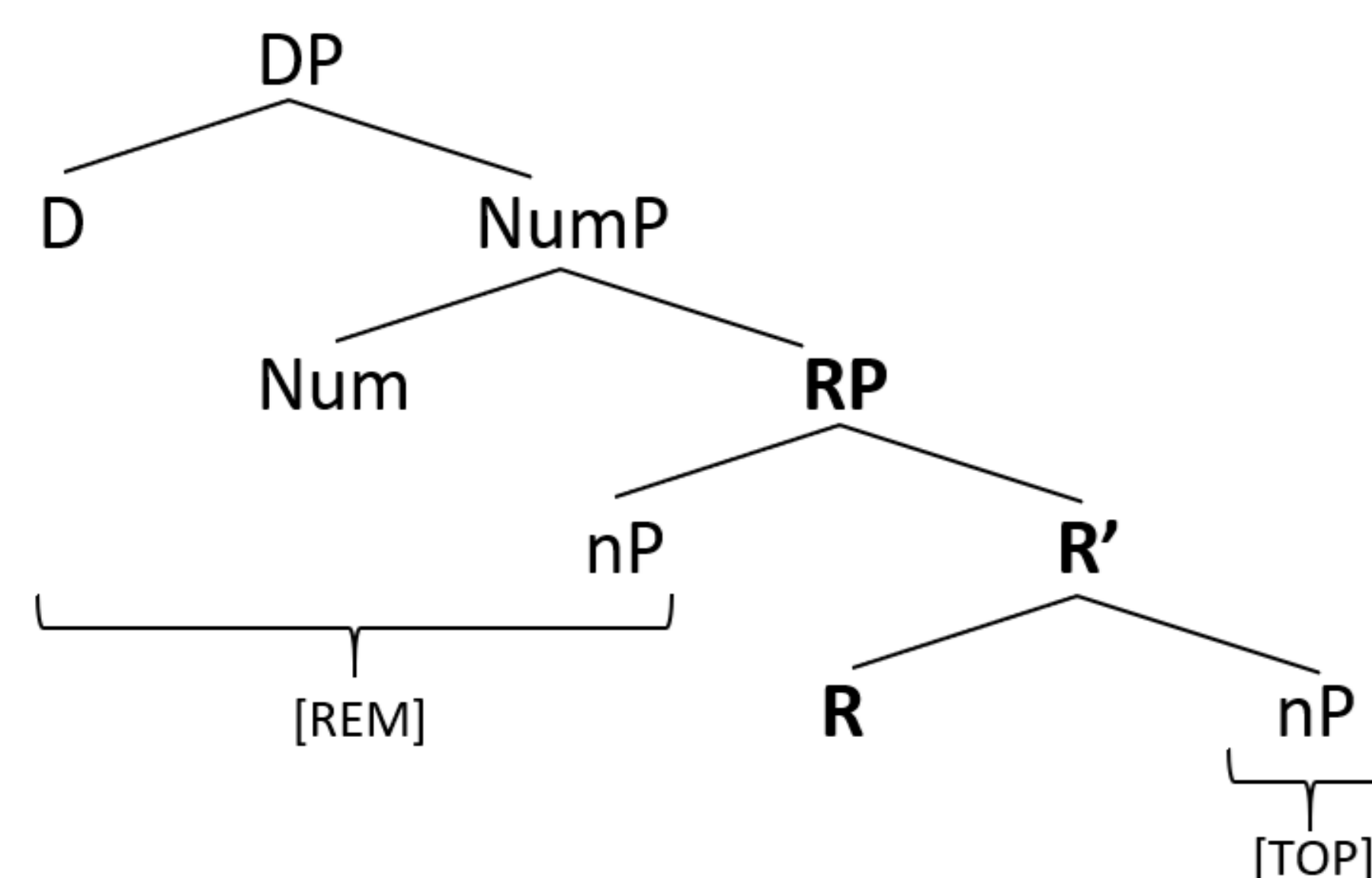
- Method:
  - Corpus research: CGN, SoNaR. [4] [5]
  - Online questionnaire(s) to collect data on Dutch and its varieties, filled out by 277 informants.
- Hypotheses:
  - Dutch varieties spoken in Noord-Brabant were expected to allow SNPT; microvariation is anticipated.
  - Overlap in the structural and syntactic properties of Dutch SNPT and German SNPT.

## III. Results and discussion

- SNPT is available in some but not all Dutch dialects: interdialectal microvariation.
- The restrictions on SNPT vary per speaker of Dutch: intradialectal microvariation.
- Dutch SNPT differs from German SNPT as the former allows certain pronouns such as *die*: meso-variation.

TOP				REM	
(2) [Die]	heb	ik	[drie]	gelezen.	[Dutch]
*[Die]	habe	ich	[drei]	gelesen.	[German]
those	have	I	three	read	
'As for those, I have read three.'					

- TOP and REM are merged in a **Relator Phrase**, i.e., mediated predication. [6]



- Movement of (TOP) out of the Relator Phrase is driven by syntactic a) and information-structural b) mechanisms:
  - Relator Phrases are (virtually) always broken up.
  - The head is a topic; the dependent is not a topic, but is a part of the comment.
- Extraction** is a key factor to explain variation: all speakers of Dutch allow extraction of DPs (i.e., Topicalization), but not all speakers allow subextraction out of DPs.

## IV. Consequences and follow-up questions

- The project sheds light on the variation surrounding SNPT and the factors governing SNPT in Dutch dialects. This furthers our general understanding of the grammar-internal mechanisms of Language Variation.

- How have split constructions including Left Branch Extraction (LBE) constructions developed over time?
- How do the diachronic developments of split constructions relate to non-configurationality?