

Left peripheral *so* in the German, Dutch and English Pontus

This study investigates the functions of the left peripheral uses of *so* in Early New High German (henceforth: *ENHG*) narratives, with special attention to Pontus und Sidonia, and compares its uses to the use of left peripheral *so* in the Dutch and English Pontus.

- (1) a. *Ist is sin wille so sterben wir*
is it his will so die we
‘If it is his wish, we will die.’
- b. *vnd nachdem als der twerg geblasen hait so sol komen vß dem pavelin*
and after when the dwarf blown has so will come out the tent
ein alte jungfer
an old damsel
‘And after the dwarf has blown, an old damsel will come out of the tent.’
- c. *Ir mussent is thun, darumb so sprechent nit darwieder!*
you must it do therefore so speak not there.against
‘You have to do it, thus don’t argue against it.’

Left peripheral *so* was more productive in ENHG than it is in Present-Day German (Thim-Mabrey 1987). Not only did *so* occur with conditional clauses (1a) and concessives – contexts in which it can be used nowadays (Catasso 2021, 31-32) – it also followed adverbial clauses with other functions, e.g., following temporal adverbial clauses (1b), and is, remarkably, even attested following short adverbs (1c), comparable to *så* in the Present-Day Scandinavian languages (Nordström 2010). While Present-Day Dutch seems to completely lack such uses of *zo* (Meklenborg 2020, 94-96), similar structures are found in the 16th century Dutch Pontus, exemplified in (2), but not in the 15th century English text.

- (2) *Daerom so wil ich dat overslaen*
therefore so wish I that skip
‘Therefore, I want to skip that.’

The most thorough account of ENHG *so* is Thim-Mabrey (1987). Building on data presented in this work, Meklenborg (2020) analyzes *so* as a generalized resumptive particle, which does not require semantic unity with its antecedent. However, while resumptives are often thought of as facilitating processing (e.g., Links, Van Kemenade & Grondelaers 2017), it is not immediately clear why light adverbs, like in (1c) and (2) would combine with such an element: *darumb/daerom* is short and is seemingly resumed immediately, cf. resumption in e.g., simplifying left dislocation constructions (Prince 1997). Therefore it is worthwhile to reevaluate the functions of *so* in the left periphery.

Based on data from ten narrative texts, this study presents on the one hand a quantitative picture of the different uses of *so* in ENHG based on a larger data set than has before. On the other hand, the study provides a comparison of the uses of *so* in the ENHG left periphery to *so* in Dutch and English by a qualitative analysis of the element in Pontus. In German and Dutch, *so* tends to occur with adverbial elements or non-adverbial clauses that present a precondition to the proposition expressed by the clause with *so*, and normally occupies a position immediately preceding the finite verb. English *so* diverges from the Dutch and German *so* both in the position it occupies in the clause and in its function.

References

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