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Separable complex verbs and lemmatisation in *Thesaurus Theutonicae linguae* (1573)

The present contribution offers an attempt at reconstructing the early history of the controversial notion of *separable complex verb* (SCV). Late Renaissance dictionaries of Dutch, which list great numbers of SCVs, lemmatise and represent them as words, not as syntactic constructions. However, material collected from *Thesaurus Theutonicae linguae* (Antwerp, 1573) allows to hypothesise that at least some of such ‘verbs’ are artificial constructs, whose proper interpretation depends on the meaning of the term *praepositio*.

The initial design of Dutch-French-Latin *Thesaurus*, which has often been regarded as the first fully-fledged dictionary of Dutch, was intended to meet the needs of Dutch learners. Accordingly, Dutch grammar occupies a prominent place in it. Yet, the bulk of grammar comments found in *Thesaurus* deals with *praepositiones*. The great interest, which Early Modern Flemish lexicographers show in this word category, can only be explained by taking into account the role of *praepositiones* within verbal morphology/syntax. A closer examination of *praepositio* in *Thesaurus* reveals that this term encompasses multiple syntactic patterns, thus explaining how a word group such as SCV could be assimilated to a lexeme.

Although never reprinted, *Thesaurus* constituted the principal source of several Renaissance dictionaries, thus imposing its conception of *praepositio* and *complex verb* on later generations.

Selected references

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