

# DIACHRONIC CORPUS STUDY ON DUTCH COMPOUND VERBS: A PILOT STUDY

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## WHAT ARE COMPOUND VERBS?

- Non-verbal element + verb
  - Examples: *over-handigen* ('hand over'), *over-steken* ('cross')
- Non-verbal element
  - **Spatial origin:** *over-* 'over'; *onder-* 'under'
  - **Applicative function** (valency change)
- Dutch: two types of compound verbs

## SEPARABLE COMPOUND VERB (SCV)

e.g., *Hij **steekt** de straat over.* ('He crosses the street')

e.g., *De man is ondergedoken.* ('The man has gone into hiding')

### ➤ Separation

- V1/V2 position
- 'te' (infinitival particle)
- 'ge' (past participle marker)
- modal verbs/auxiliaries
- 'ne/en' (negation marker in Middle Dutch)

### ➤ Main stress on preverbal element

## INSEPARABLE COMPOUND VERB (ICV)

e.g., *De koning **onderwerpt** hem.* ('The king subjects him.')


e.g., *Ze heeft een proces **doorlopen**.* ('She has gone through a process.')

- No separation
- Main stress on base verb

# DIACHRONY OF COMPOUND VERBS

## EARLIER GENERAL ASSUMPTION

- Grammaticalisation process (Neeleman & Weerman 1992; Booij 2002)

Resultative elements  SCV  ICV

- Semantic bleaching of preverbal element

## CRITICISM: BLOM (2005)

- 1) Not only resultative elements evolve
- 2) Semantic bleaching is not general
  - SCVs without spatial meaning
    - *de informatie opzoeken* ('look up the information'),  
*schoenen inlopen* ('wear in the shoes')
  - ICVs with spatial meaning
    - *het huis doorzoeken* ('search the house'), *het huis omgeven* ('surround the house')

## BLOM'S (2005) HYPOTHESIS

- Distinction resultative vs. non-resultative
- Two developments:





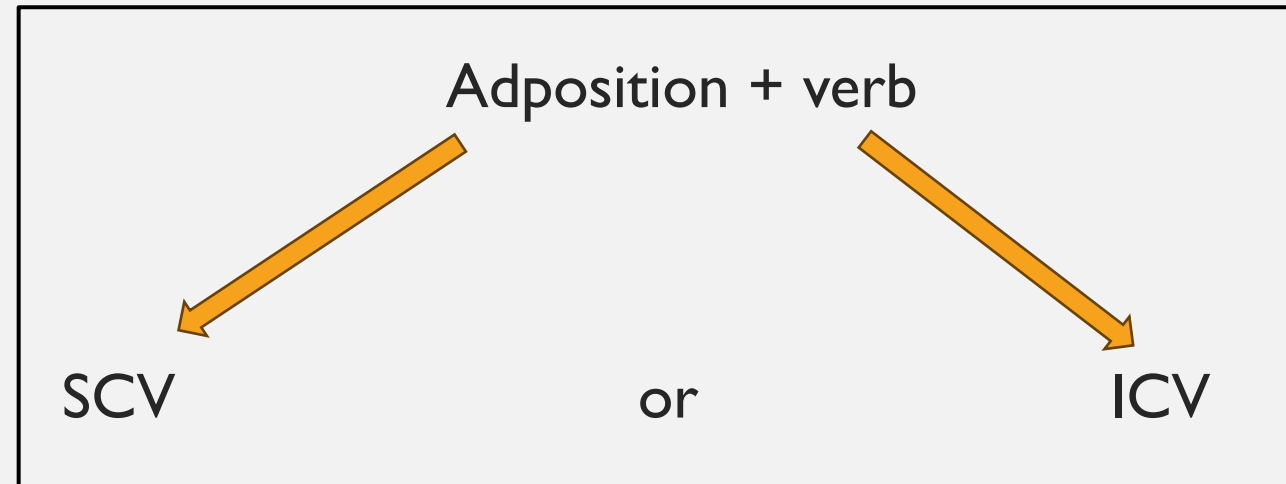
## RESULTATIVITY: DEFINITION

- Preverbal element expresses a result or change of state that affects the direct object (transitive verb) or the subject (intransitive verb) (Haeseryn et al. 1997)
- E.g., *Hij **gooit** de voetbal op.* (tr.) ('He throws up the football')
- E.g., *De zon **gaat** onder.* (intr.) ('The sun sets')

## RESULTATIVE AND INSEPARABLE?

- *Onder-*: *onderwerpen* ('subject'), *onderdrukken* ('suppress')
- *Over-*: *overtuigen* ('convince'), *overreden* ('persuade'),  
*overhandigen* ('hand over')

# VAN DER HORST'S (2008) HYPOTHESIS



# PILOT STUDY

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) Can we validate the hypotheses proposed by Blom (2005) based on different corpus data?
  - i. Is there a distinction between resultative and non-resultative elements in the development of compound verbs?
  - ii. Did the inseparable verbs evolve from the separable ones?
  - iii. Did a semantic shift (towards a holistic meaning) precede the structural change from separable to inseparable?
- 2) How can we explain the exceptions to Blom's (2005) hypotheses?

## METHODOLOGY: DATA

- Corpus study
  - EDGeS Diachronic Bible Corpus (Bouma et al. 2020): 9,126,714 tokens (1360-1939)
  - Dbnl (The Digital Library of Dutch Literature) (De Smet 2021: 78; Van Olmen 2019): 9,766,040 tokens (16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century)
- Verbs to analyse
  - Exceptions to Blom's hypotheses: *onderwerpen* ('subject'), *onderdrukken* ('suppress'), *overtuigen* ('convince'), *overreden* ('persuade'), and *overhandigen* ('hand over')
  - *Ondergaan* ('go down; undergo')

## METHODOLOGY: DATASET

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Number of attestations</b>
<i>Onderdrukken</i> ('suppress')	236
<i>Onderwerpen</i> ('subject')	668
<i>Ondergaan</i> ('go down; undergo')	706
<i>Overreden</i> ('persuade')	145
<i>Overhandigen</i> ('hand over')	101
<i>Overtuigen</i> ('convince')	828
<b>Total</b>	<b>2684</b>

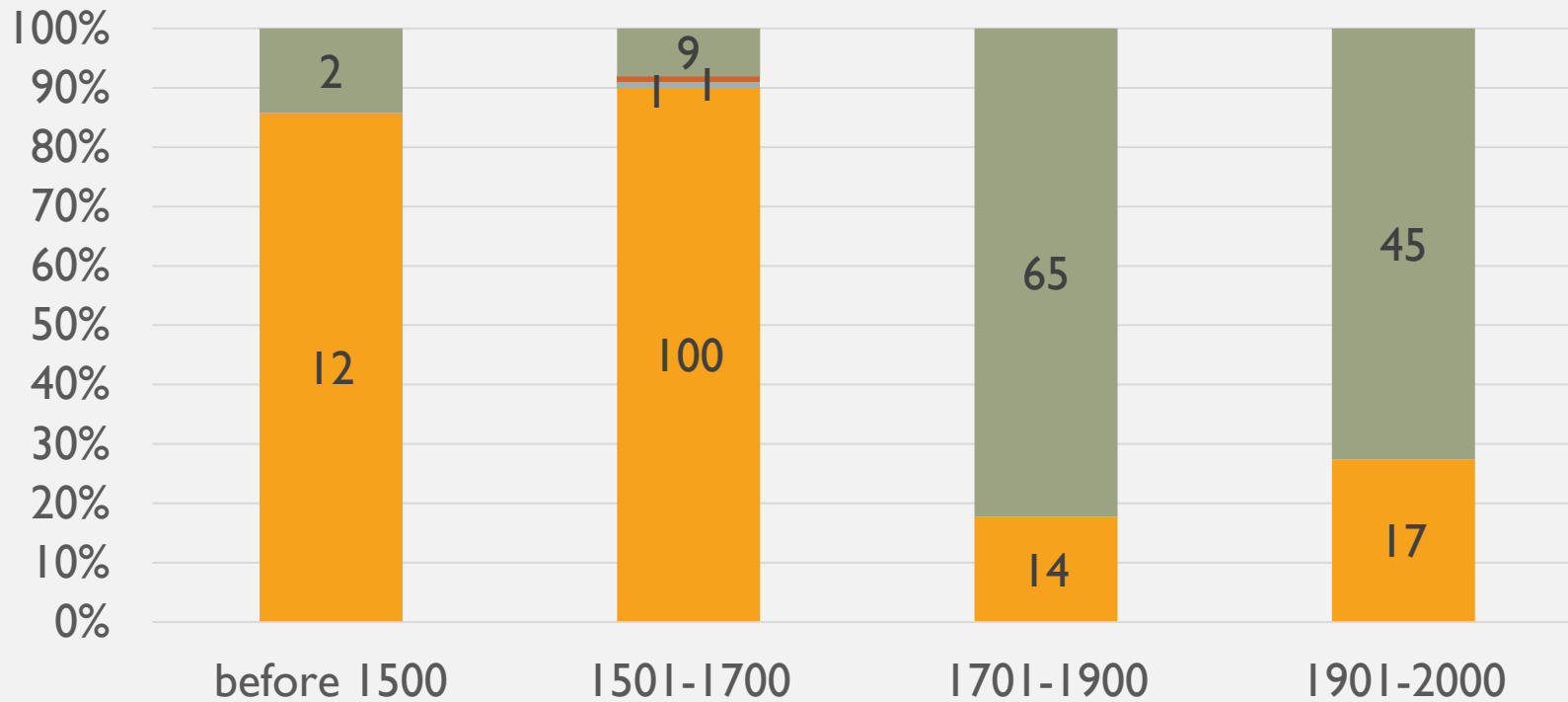
## METHODOLOGY: ANNOTATION

1. **Separability:** separable, inseparable or ambiguous
2. **Resultativity:** resultative or non-resultative meaning (cf. Blom)
3. **Semantics** of the verb (cf. Middle Dutch Dictionary & Dictionary of the Dutch Language)
4. **Compositionality:** compositional or holistic meaning
5. **Period:** Middle Dutch (before 1500), Early Modern Dutch (1501-1700), Modern Dutch (1701-1900), Contemporary Dutch (1901-2000)



# RESULTS

## ONDERGAAN ('GO DOWN; UNDERGO')



- Resultative = SCV (99,31%)
- Non-resultative = ICV (99,18%)
- ☑ Blom's hypothesis
- + Applicative function: mono- (SCV) -> bivalent (ICV)

■ SCV resultative ■ SCV non-resultative ■ ICV resultative ■ ICV non-resultative

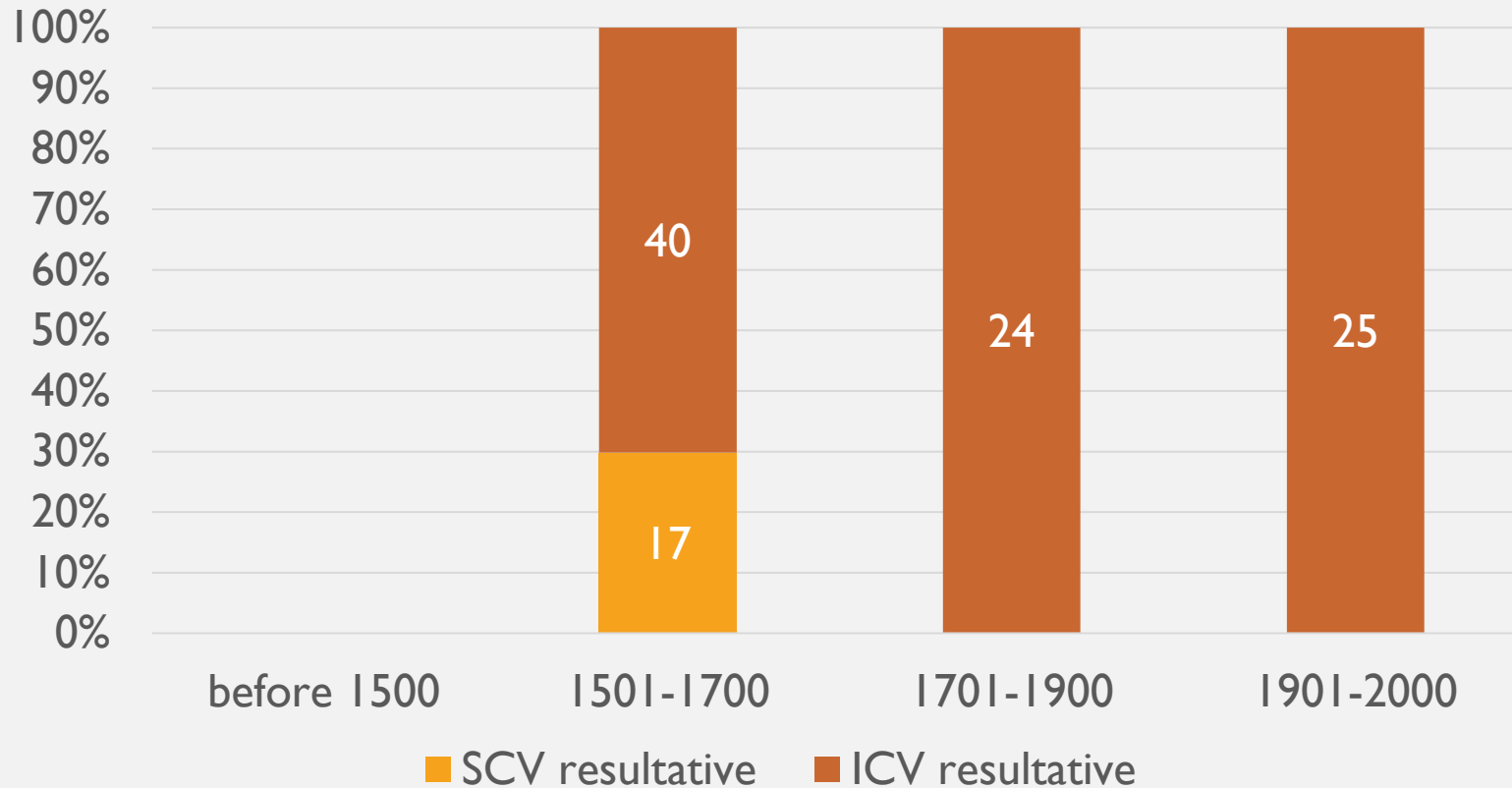
## HOWEVER...

1. One attestation: ICV with resultative meaning

"maer doe de Sonne **onder-gaen** was" ('but when the sun had set') (EDGeS corpus, nl\_1648\_Lutherse-allverses.txt)

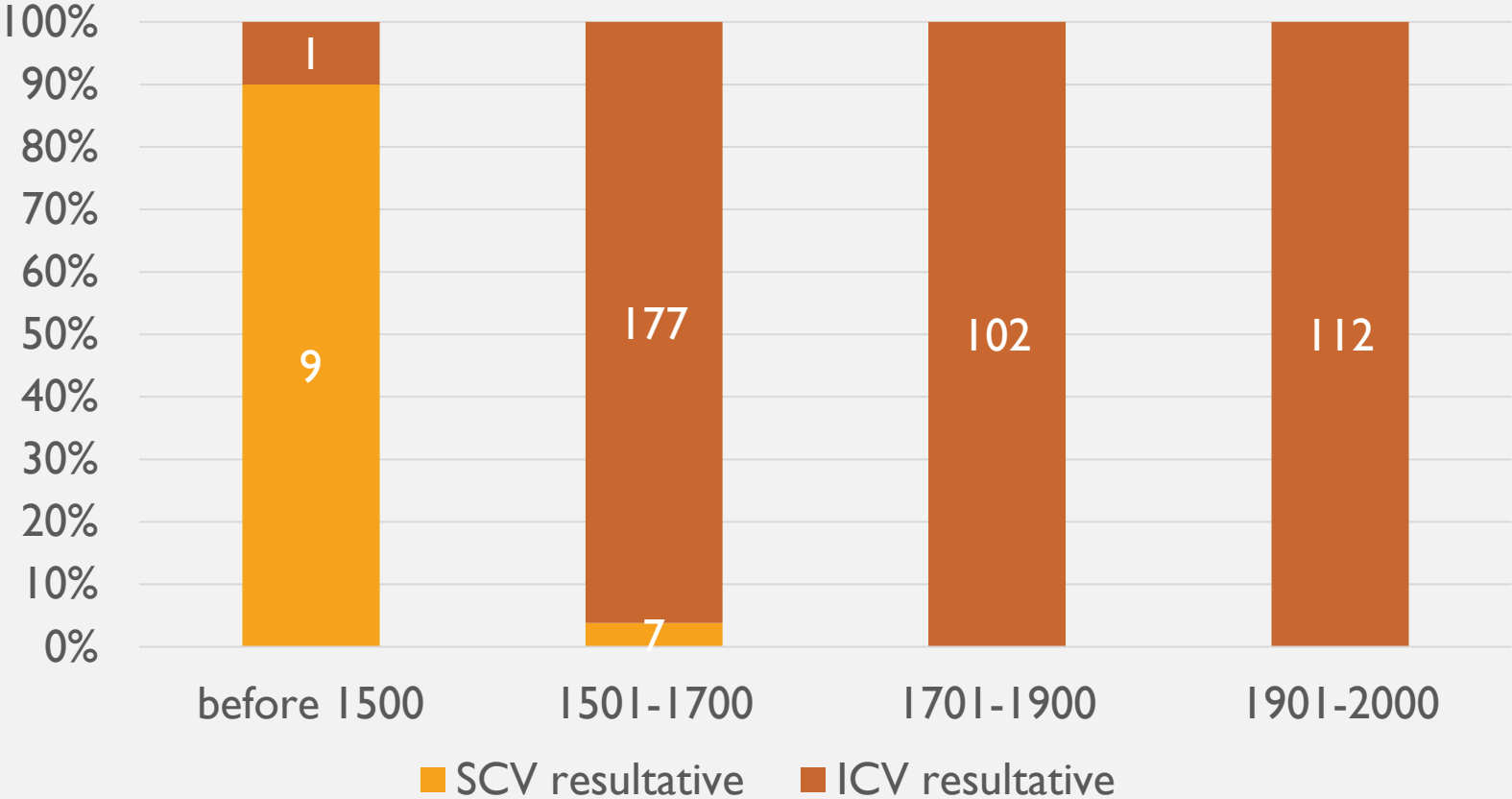
2. No transition from SCV to ICV for the non-resultative meaning

## ONDERDRUKKEN ('SUPPRESS')



- Formal variation in 1501-1700
- ! No semantic change (always resultative and holistic)
- Remains problematic
- No applicative function

# ONDERWERPEN ('SUBJECT')



- Formal variation until 1700
- But, again no semantic change (always resultative and holistic)
  - Remains problematic
- No applicative function

## OVERTUIGEN ('CONVINCE')

- No formal variation, only ICVs (vs. Blom)
- But: original meaning was not resultative
  - "to prove someone is guilty by means of an incriminating statement"
  - not resultative according to Blom's definition: result affects the subject, not the direct object
- Our assumption
  - SCV → ICV (non-resultative) → ICV  
+ resultative meaning

## OVERHANDIGEN ('HAND OVER')

- No formal variation, only ICVs (vs. Blom)
- + no semantic variation, always resultative (vs. Blom)
- Originated directly as ICV, but how? (Van Loey 1979)
  - Before *overhandigen*, similar forms with same meaning existed (handreiken, verhandreiken, overhandreiken, behandden, behandigen) -> main stress on "hand"
  - Same stress pattern probably during the creation of *overhandigen*

## OVERREDEN ('PERSUADE')

- No formal variation, only ICVs (vs. Blom)
- + no semantic variation, always resultative (vs. Blom)
- Loan translation from German ICV *überreden* (Van Dale 2022)



# CONCLUSIONS

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- Testing of hypotheses
  - ☑ Resultative versus non-resultative (cf. = Blom, ≠ Booij)
  - ☑ Separable before inseparable
    - Sometimes (Booij, Blom?), but not always (Van der Horst?)
  - × Semantic change -> formal change
- Alternative explanations?
  - Possible for *over-*, but remain difficult for *onder-*

## APPLICATIVE FUNCTION & DIACHRONY?

- Non-verbal element: applicative function (valency change)
  - Transition SCV → ICV: *ondergaan* (but, also *overstromen* ('flood'), *doorzwemmen* ('swim through'))
  - ! But, not always valency change: *onderwerpen* ('subject')
  - (! Sometimes: transition base verb → SCV: *uitcijferen* ('figure out'))

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