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# Verb-particle constructions in translated Dutch

## A pilot study

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This paper presents a pilot study on verb-particle constructions (VPCs) in translated Dutch. VPCs combine a base verb (e.g., *werken* ‘work’) with a preverbal element (e.g., *uit* ‘out’), and, while well-studied in Dutch, their translation has received less attention. Building on Cappelle and Loock (2017), this study explores whether cross-linguistic differences between Germanic and Romance languages influence VPC use in Dutch translations. Since VPCs are more typical in Germanic than in Romance languages, a ‘shining through’ effect is expected. The analysis focuses on VPCs with *op*, *af*, and *uit*, using 100 parallel concordances per language per VPC from the OpenSubtitles corpus (Tiedemann 2011). Results show that VPCs occur more often in Dutch translations from English than from French – supporting previous findings and underscoring the importance of contrastive analysis in translation studies.

### 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1. *Translation universals*

In 1993, Mona Baker proposed that all translations exhibit certain universal tendencies, known as translation universals. She defined them as “features which typically occur in translated text rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems” (Baker 1993: 243). The most well-known universals include (i) explicitation, viz. adding material to the target text that is implicit in the source text; (ii) (lexical, syntactic, or semantic) simplification; (iii) leveling out or convergence, viz. “the tendency of translated text to gravitate around the centre of any continuum rather than move toward the

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fringes” (Baker 1996: 177); and (iv) normalization, which is the tendency to exaggerate features of the target language, making the translation more conventional than typical target-language texts.

Whereas Baker does not consider source-language interference a translation universal, other scholars do (eg. Toury’s 1995 “law of interference”). Studies have shown that linguistic features of translated texts vary based on the source language. For instance, Cappelle (2012) found fewer manner-of-motion verbs in English texts translated from French than in texts translated from German, reflecting a difference between on the one hand English and German (both Germanic languages), which are satellite-framed, and French on the other hand (a Romance language), which is verb-framed. In another study, Cappelle and Loock (2017) found that verb-particle constructions (VPCs) occur more frequently in English translations from Germanic languages than in English translations from Romance languages. These findings emphasize the importance of cross-linguistic differences when comparing translated and non-translated language. This study aligns with Cappelle and Loock’s perspective by illustrating how cross-linguistic differences in the absence or presence of VPCs in the source language shape Dutch translations.

Not only is it problematic that contrastive issues may have been overlooked due to the field’s focus on Baker’s definition of translation universals, but also due to the manner in which translation universals have been investigated. A key criticism is that many studies reporting on their existence tend to focus on a single genre, often literary texts, and frequently use (British) English as either the source or target language (Becher 2010, Corpas Pastor et al. 2008). This study seeks to address these limitations by examining VPCs in subtitles and by including not only English–Dutch translations but also the relatively less explored language pair of French–Dutch.

### 1.2. *Verb-particle constructions in English and Dutch*

VPCs are a key feature of Dutch, formed by combining a base verb with a preverbal element such as *op* (‘up’), *af* (‘off’), or *uit* (‘out’). For example, *werken* (‘to work’) can form at least three VPCs, viz. *zich opwerken* (‘to advance’), *afwerken* (‘to complete’), and *uitwerken* (‘to elaborate’), which illustrates the productivity of these constructions. The preverbal elements are usually of spatial origin and may alter the valency of the base verb, as illustrated in (1):

- (1) a. *Intransitive*  
Ik werk.  
'I work.'
- b. *Transitive*  
Ik werk een plan uit.  
'I work out a plan.'

While Dutch VPCs have been extensively studied (Blom 2005, Van Kemenade & Los 2003), their treatment in translation remains a relatively underexplored field. This study therefore investigates the use of VPCs in Dutch translations from both French and English, in order to assess whether the similarities between languages are reflected in translated Dutch, in line with findings by Cappelle and Loock (2017) on translated English.

English, closely related to Dutch, features an abundance of VPCs – also known as particle verbs – including combinations of verbs with adverbs (*look up*), prepositions (*look for*), and adverb-preposition pairs (*look out for*) (Thim 2012). In contrast, French is a verb-framed language and does not make use of VPCs (Herslund 2005, Hijazo-Gascón & Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2013). This distinction is known to pose challenges in translation from Romance into Germanic languages and vice versa. For instance, in English-to-French translation, the adverb or preposition in the source text is often transposed into a verb in French (as in (2)), while the manner aspect is often left untranslated – despite being recoverable in other ways, for instance by adding *en marchant* 'while walking' in this case (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995:103-104):

- (2) He **walked out** of the office. → 'Il est **sorti** du bureau.'

In the inverse direction – translating from French into English or Dutch – the translator may opt for a simplex verb rather than a VPC if the manner aspect is absent or implicit in French, to remain as close as possible to the source. Although French lacks VPCs, it does feature prefixed verbs. Cappelle and Loock (2017) found that such prefixed verbs in French often prompted the use of VPCs in English translations. A similar pattern may be observed in Dutch; for example, the French verb *revenir* 'come back' may be rendered as *terugkomen* in Dutch. These

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cross-linguistic differences between Dutch, English, and French illustrate the challenges that translators face when translating between languages that lack VPCs and those that do feature them. This leads to the following research questions:

- i. Do Dutch subtitles translated from French feature fewer VPCs than Dutch subtitles translated from English, as we would expect based on Cappelle and Looock's (2017) findings?
- ii. Which source-language structures most commonly give rise to VPCs in Dutch translations?

## 2. Methodology and Data

### 2.1. Corpus Selection

This pilot study uses the OpenSubtitles corpus available on Sketch Engine (Kilgarrieff et al., 2014), a parallel corpus of subtitles in multiple languages – including English, French, and Dutch – that were automatically extracted from opensubtitles.org (Tiedemann 2011). The corpus contains approximately 31 million aligned sentences for English-Dutch translations, 37.2 million for Dutch-English translations, 22 million for French-Dutch translations, and 25.3 million for Dutch-French translations.<sup>2</sup> Since the data were extracted automatically, there may be some inaccuracies, particularly in alignment. These issues were addressed by manually verifying the alignment of the concordance lines in the sample. The OpenSubtitles corpus was chosen because subtitles have been found to closely resemble informal conversations (Levshina 2017 on English). A subtitle corpus is therefore likely to contain a relatively high number of VPCs, which are a hallmark of informal and spoken English (Dempsey, McCarthy & McNamara 2007).

### 2.2. Data extraction and analysis

Mirroring Capelle and Looock's (2017) study, the analysis focuses on VPCs containing the particles *op*, *af*, and *uit*, which also form many of the most frequent Dutch VPCs. For this small-scale study, which was conducted within the context

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sketchengine.eu/opensubtitles-parallel-corpora/>

of a course for translation students<sup>3</sup>, a dataset was compiled including 100 tokens for each particle. Using Sketch Engine, we extracted VPCs that were written separately, as in (3), and as a single word, as in (4).

- (3) Ik **los** het probleem **op**. → ‘I solve the problem.’  
(4) Het probleem is **opgelost**. → ‘The problem is solved.’

The query was formulated as follows: for the source language (English or French) we included all sentences (<s/>) that corresponded to a VPC with a preverbal element (*op / af / uit*) in the target language, for instance: ([word="op.\*" & tag="verb.\*" | ([tag="verb.\*" []{0,2} [word="op"])]); Filter by aligned corpus:opus2\_en;Shuffle:]). Each instance was manually verified to ensure that sentences like (5), where the preposition does not form a VPC with the verb *kopen* ‘to buy’, were excluded.

- (5) Ik **koop** wel iets **op** het vliegveld. → ‘I will buy something at the airport.’

A random sample of 10,000 tokens was extracted, which were analyzed one by one until 100 relevant instances were found. For example, for the Dutch particle *af*, we analyzed 111 concordance lines to arrive at 100 VPCs. The extrapolated number of VPCs in the table is calculated as follows:  $100/111 = 0.92 * 82885$  (number of hits) = 76041. This was done for the VPCs in Tables 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8. The frequency analysis was followed by correspondence mapping, which identified the source elements corresponding to the Dutch VPCs (VPCs, simplex verbs, prefixed verbs or other constructions). Note that, since only small samples were analyzed, the absence of a particular source or target element in the data does not imply its inexistence.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. VPCs with op

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<sup>3</sup> The author extracted the data and checked and corrected all the concordance lines analyzed by the students.

Comparing the relative frequencies of VPCs with *op* in non-translated Dutch and VPCs with *up* in non-translated English subtitles, Table 1 shows that such VPCs are more frequent in non-translated English (0.78%) than in non-translated Dutch (0.45%) ( $z = 193.06$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1.** Proportion of VPCs with *up* / *op* in non-translated subtitles

	English VPCs with <i>up</i>	Dutch VPCs with <i>op</i>
Extrapolated number of VPCs	241,919	167,986
Aligned sentences	31,000,000	37,200,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>up/op</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.78%	0.45%

In translated Dutch, VPCs with *op* are more frequent in subtitles translated from English (0.50%) than in subtitles translated from French (0.39%) (cf. Table 2) ( $z = 59.63$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ). In addition, they are more frequent in Dutch translated from English (0.50%) than in non-translated Dutch (0.45%) ( $z = 38.21$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ) (cf. Table 1); both findings confirm Cappelle & Loock's (2017) 'shining through' hypothesis.

**Table 2.** Proportion of VPCs with *op* in translated Dutch subtitles

Dutch translated...	...from French	...from English
Extrapolated number of VPCs	85,988	153,889
Aligned sentences	22,200,000	31,000,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>op</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.39%	0.50%

<sup>4</sup> The z-score test for two population proportions determines whether two groups differ significantly on a categorical characteristic, requiring random samples from each group and categorical data.

To gain an idea of the crosslinguistic similarities between Dutch and English VPCs with *op* / *up* in translation, we examined whether Dutch VPCs with *op* were translated from English VPCs, simplex verbs, or other constructions in the source language. Of the 100 Dutch VPCs with *op*, only 47 were translations of English VPCs: 25 cases involved English VPCs with the particle *up* (e.g., *hang up* → *ophangen*, *blow up* → *opblazen*), while 22 cases were translations of English VPCs with non-cognate particles, such as *put away* → *opruimen* or *write down* → *opschrijven*. Another 48 Dutch VPCs with *op* were translated from English simplex verbs, for example: *hang* → *ophangen*, *solve* → *oplossen*, and *sacrifice* → *opofferen*. The final five Dutch VPCs with *op* had other types of source elements, as in (6).

- (6) Right. He dies. His stuff **goes into storage** → Klopt, hij gaat dood, z' n spullen worden **opgeslagen**.

Table 3 presents the most frequent VPCs with *op* in the samples of translated Dutch. Two VPCs with *op* that are frequently encountered in the subtitles are *opkomen* and *opschieten* (incidentally, both occur exclusively in the imperative form in our dataset). Interestingly, *kom op* is a translation of *come on* (in six of the nine cases) or of *go ahead* (two of the nine), see examples (7) and (8). In contrast, *schiet op* showed greater variation in source elements, for instance: *hurry*, *hurry up*, *come on*, *move*, or *get going*. In other words, *come on* and *kom op* appear to be suitable translation equivalents in many contexts, whereas for *schiet op* we find more different source elements in the English subtitles.

- (7) Hey, **come on**. → **Kom op**.

- (8) You **go ahead** and confess already. → **Kom op** met die bekenenis.

Another example of how the relation between source and target elements may be complex is the antonymic translation in (9). The affirmative sentence *hang in there* is translated as *geef **niet op*** ‘do **not** give up’, i.e. a sentence with negation.

- (9) Come on, brother. Hang in there → kom op, broer, geef **niet op**.

**Table 3.** Most frequent VPCs with *op* in translated Dutch subtitles

Dutch translated from French		Dutch translated from English		
	Freq.	Examples	Freq.	Examples
<i>opkomen</i> / <i>kom op</i> ‘come on’	4	<i>Mais oui, voyons. - Ja, <b>kom op</b> ...</i>	9	<i>Hey, <b>come on</b> .- Hé, <b>kom op</b></i>
<i>ophouden</i> ‘to stop’	6	<i><b>Arrête donc</b> - Je moet <b>ophouden</b></i>	8	<i>Oh, it' s gotta <b>stop</b>, man - Het moet <b>ophouden</b>, man.</i>
<i>opschieten</i> ‘to hurry, to get along’			7	<i>You may wanna <b>pick up the pace</b>. - <b>Schiet een beetje op</b>.</i>
<i>opgeven</i> ‘to give up’			6	<i>We shouldn' t <b>give up!</b> - We kunnen ' t niet zomaar <b>opgeven</b> .</i>
<i>opnemen</i> ‘take in, absorb, record’	6	<i>C'est le maximum que je puisse tirer en un jour. - Mijn limiet. Dat kan ik per dag <b>opnemen</b>.</i>		
<i>oplossen</i> ‘to solve’	6	<i>Moi et mon pote on <b>gère</b> la situation. - Ik en mijn vriend <b>lossen</b> dit wel <b>op</b>.</i>	4	<i>I' m <b>taking</b> this. - Ik <b>los</b> dit <b>op</b>.</i>
<i>opstaan</i> ‘get up’	6	<i><b>Debout</b> - <b>Sta op</b>.</i>		

As for French, some source verbs illustrate the tendency for French prefixed verbs to be translated as VPCs, in line with Cappelle & Loock's (2017) study on translated English. Among the 100 analyzed VPCs with *op*, two have source verbs containing the prefix *sur-*, as in (10), which expresses a meaning similar to the particle *op* in Dutch, namely 'over', 'above' or 'on', but also 'excessively'. Eight have source verbs containing the prefix *re-*, expressing repetition or returning to a prior state, as in (11). In total, 16 of the French source elements involve a prefixed verb, 63 a simplex verb, three a noun and 17 have other source elements.

(10) **Sur**veille-la → Let **op** haar.

(11) Il finit par le **retrouver** et, bien sûr, il le fait retourner à l' école [...] → Hij **spoorde** hem **op** en haalde hem terug.

### 3.2. VPCs with *af*

Similar tendencies are found with VPCs with *af*. A comparison of the relative frequencies of VPCs with *af* in non-translated Dutch and VPCs with *off* in non-translated English (Table 4) shows that these constructions are more frequent in non-translated English (0.25%) than in non-translated Dutch (0.18%) ( $z = 53.89$ ,  $p < .00001$ ).

**Table 4.** Proportion of VPCs with *off/af* in non-translated subtitles

	English VPCs with <i>off</i>	Dutch VPCs with <i>af</i>
Extrapolated number of VPCs	76,041	68,807
Aligned sentences	31,000,000	37,200,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>off/af</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.25%	0.18%

In translated Dutch, VPCs with *af* are more frequent in subtitles translated from English (0.51%), than in subtitles translated from French (0.20%) (cf. Table 5) ( $z = 179.42$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ), confirming Cappelle & Loock's (2017) 'shining through' hypothesis. Surprisingly, however, VPCs with *af* are more frequent in Dutch

translated from English (0.51%) and also slightly more frequent in Dutch translated from French (0.20%) than in non-translated Dutch (0.18%) ( $z = 229,80$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ).

**Table 5.** Proportion of VPCs with *af* in translated Dutch subtitles

Dutch translated...	...from French	...from English
Extrapolated number of VPCs	44,335	156,818
Aligned sentences	22,200,000	31,000,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>af</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.20%	0.51%

Compared to VPCs with *op*, VPCs with *af* are less frequently translations of English VPCs. Indeed, this is the case for only 29 out of 100 instances. Of these 29, 17 are translations of English VPCs with the particle *off* (e.g., *take off* → *afnemen*, *go off* → *afblijven/afgaan*, or *turn off* → *afzetten*). The remaining 12 are translations from English VPCs with other particles, such as *close up* → *afsluiten*, *trace back* → *afstammen*, and *depend on* → *afhangen*. The majority of VPCs with *af*, viz. 58 out of 100 instances, are translations of English simplex verbs. Examples include *wonder* → *afvragen*, and *burn* → *afbranden*. Finally, 13 Dutch VPCs with *af* have other source elements, some of which arise from translation strategies such as a perspective change, as in (13).

(13) One day, **you'll** have to tell me how you learned that → **Ik** vraag **me** af hoe je dat geleerd hebt. ‘lit. **I** ask **myself** how you learned that.’

Table 6 presents the most frequent VPCs with *af* in Dutch translated from French and in Dutch translated from English. The most frequent VPC with *af* in both samples is *afmaken*, with the meaning 'to finish' or 'to kill', which does not have an equivalent English VPC. By contrast, for the second most frequent VPC, *afgaan*, English cognates<sup>5</sup> exist, viz. *get off* or *go off*, and these indeed are the

<sup>5</sup> Crystal (2008) defines cognates as words that originate from a common historical source. Because of this shared etymology, cognates often exhibit similarities in both pronunciation and spelling across different languages (Costa et al., 2000). According to Roembke, Koch & Philipp (2024), cognate similarity exists on a continuum, with no consistent threshold separating cognates from non-cognates.

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source elements for some instances of *afgaan* – although simplex verbs like *ring* and *detonate* are other sources.

In French-to-Dutch translations most source elements are simplex verbs as well, namely 72 out of 100. As mentioned in Section 1.2, Cappelle and Looek (2017) hypothesized that French prefixed verbs would prompt the use of VPCs in English translations. The prefix *de-/dé-* occurs six times in the French source elements (as illustrated by the first French example in Table 6 and in (14)). In total, 14 of the French source elements are prefixed verbs.

(14) Ce qui suit se **déroule** entre 10h et 11h. → Het volgende **speelt** zich **af** tussen 10 en 11 uur.

Finally, in four instances, the source element of a VPC with *af* is a noun, viz. *la fin* ‘the end’ in example (15). The transposition of a French noun into a Dutch VPC is related to the nominal or static nature of French versus the verbal or dynamic nature of Dutch, and is frequently observed in French-to-Dutch translations (Linn & Molendijk, 2020: 215; Van Willigen-Senemus et al., 1996).

(15) Comment ça, "**la fin**"? → Hoe bedoel je, **afgelopen**?

This example may serve as another illustration of how cross-linguistic differences play out in translation. Besides simplex verbs, prefixed verbs and nouns, 10 VPCs have other source elements.

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With “cognate VPC,” we here refer to an English verb-particle construction in which both the base verb and the particle share similar spelling and meaning with their Dutch counterparts.

**Table 6.** Most frequent VPCs with *off* in translated Dutch subtitles

Dutch translated from French			Dutch translated from English	
	Freq.	Examples	Freq.	Examples
<i>afmaken</i> ‘finish’	11	<i>Descends-le. - Maak hem af.</i>	11	<i>Tell me you got smart and that you killed that lying bitch. - Wel slim dat je die liegende trut hebt afgemaakt.</i>
<i>afgaan</i> ‘go off’	4	/	7	<i>It went off. - Hij ging af.</i>
<i>afvragen</i> ‘to wonder’	7	Je <b>me demandais</b> ce que tu étais devenue. - Ik <b>vroeg me</b> al <b>af</b> wat je nu deed.	6	<i>I wonder if they have the word delusional in their language? - Ik vraag me af, of ze een woord voor waanideeën hebben in hun taal.</i>
<i>aflopen</i> ‘to end, to expire, to walk along’	5	<i>C’est fini ! - Het is afgelopen!</i>		
<i>afhandelen</i> ‘to handle, to settle, to deal with’	5	<i>Tu devais t’en occuper. - Jij handelt het wel af.</i>		

### 3.3. VPCs with *uit*

Table 7 shows the relative frequencies of VPCs with *uit* in non-translated Dutch subtitles and *out* in non-translated English subtitles. VPCs with *out* are more frequent in non-translated English (0.74%) than VPCs with *uit* in non-translated Dutch (0.26%) ( $z = 287.60$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ).

**Table 7.** Proportion of VPCs with *out/uit* in non-translated subtitles

	English VPCs with <i>out</i>	Dutch VPCs with <i>uit</i>
Extrapolated number of VPCs	229,427	96,012
Aligned sentences	31,000,000	37,200,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>out/uit</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.74%	0.26%

In translated Dutch, VPCs with *af* are more frequent in subtitles translated from English (0.39%) than in subtitles translated from French (0.32%) (cf. Table 8) ( $z = 46.35$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ), confirming Cappelle & Loock's (2017) 'shining through' hypothesis. As with *af*, VPCs with *uit* are not only more frequent in Dutch translated from English (0.39%) ( $z = 95.28$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ) but also in Dutch translated from French (0.32%) than in non-translated Dutch (0.26%) ( $z = 37.90$ ,  $p$  is  $< .00001$ ) – contradicting the 'shining through' effect.

**Table 8.** Proportion of VPCs with *uit* in translated Dutch subtitles

Dutch translated...	...from French	...from English
Extrapolated number of VPCs	69,180	120,407
Aligned sentences	22,200,000	31,000,000
Percentage of extrapolated VPCs with <i>uit</i> out of the total aligned sentences	0.32%	0.39%

Compared to VPCs with *op*, VPCs with *uit* are less frequently translations of English VPCs – but this is not the case when compared to VPCs with *af*. In fact, 32 out of the 100 instances of *uit*-VPCs correspond to English VPCs, and 25 of these match VPCs with the particle *out* (e.g., *look out* – *uitkijken*, *stick out* – *uitsteken*, or *find out* – *uitzoeken*), while seven are translations of English VPCs with other particles (e.g., *unload* – *uitladen* or *take off* – *uitdoen*). Additionally, 52 out of 100 Dutch VPCs with *uit* are translations of English simplex verbs. Finally, 16 VPCs with *uit* have other source elements, for instance due to a perspective change as in (16).

(16) Something **I got to know**, son. → **Je** moet me toch wat **uitleggen**. ‘You have to explain me something.’

Table 9 gives the most frequent VPCs with *uit* in the samples of Dutch translated from French and Dutch translated from English.

Simplex verbs accounted for 42 of the French source elements. Eight Dutch VPCs were translations of French nouns (compared to two Dutch VPCs translated from English nouns), for instance:

(17) En cas de **déconnexion** [...] → Als de verbinding **uitvalt** [...]

In certain cases, the particle *uit-* in Dutch appears to correspond to the French prefix *de-/dé-*, similarly to the translation to Dutch VPCs with *op* and *af* (cf. Sections 3.1 and 3.2). Examples include (18) and (19):

(18) **Déshabillez-vous**. → Mannen, **uitkleden**

(19) ...vous êtes prêt à les **dédommager** au comptant? → Ze **uitkopen**?

This alignment is found in nine concordance lines in the sample of translated subtitles. In total, prefixed verbs account for 28 of the French source elements, and 22 of the 100 VPCs had other source elements.

**Table 9.** Most frequent VPCs with *uit* in translated Dutch subtitles

		Dutch translated from French		Dutch translated from English	
	Freq.	Examples	Freq.	Examples	
<i>uitzien</i> ‘appear’	13	<i>Tu as l’air très en forme. - Je ziet er goed uit, Sam.</i>	16	<i>You look great. - Je ziet er prachtig uit. The boy’ s doing so poor these days, why not take him along and air him? - Die jongen ziet er slecht uit. Neem hem mee, dan krijgt hij frisse lucht.</i>	
<i>uitmaken</i> ‘decide’	18	<i>Je m’en fiche. - Alsof mij dat uitmaakt. T’en fais pas, Frank. - Maakt niet uit, Frank.</i>	13	<i>What the hell is the difference? - Wat maakt het uit? What does it matter. - Wat maakt het uit?</i>	
<i>uitleggen</i> ‘explain’			8	<i>Explain what? - Wat kan je niet uitleggen? Something I got to know, son. - Je moet me toch wat uitleggen.</i>	

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this pilot study show that a VPC in the source language does not automatically correspond to one in the target language. Only 46% of Dutch VPCs with *op* align with English VPCs, while the rest involve simplex verbs or other structures. Similarly, just 29% of *af* VPCs and 32% of *uit* VPCs are translations of English VPCs, indicating weak correspondence. Likewise, French prefixed verbs made up at most 28% of the source elements of the Dutch VPCs; the most common source element in French remained a simplex verb as well.

Nonetheless, the findings support the hypothesis that crosslinguistic differences influence translation choices. Since VPCs are more typical in Germanic than in Romance languages, we expected a ‘shining through’ effect in Dutch translated from English in contrast to Dutch translated from French. Indeed, Dutch subtitles translated from English contain more VPCs than those translated from French. Moreover, Dutch translations from English feature more VPCs than non-translated Dutch, reflecting the high frequency of VPCs in English. These results align with the ‘shine-through’ effect observed by Cappelle and Loock (2017). Interestingly, Dutch translations from French featured slightly more VPCs with *af* and *uit* than non-translated Dutch, contrary to expectations.

This study is an initial exploration, and further research with larger samples, involving other Germanic and Romance languages, including a variety of registers and covering additional particles, is needed. Ultimately, this study provides a first small step toward deepening our understanding of the complex interplay between contextual constraints within and beyond a text (such as register and target audience), and translators’ choices. Cross-linguistic differences between source and target languages should not be overlooked.

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