

'OBJECT' PROBLEMS IN CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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1. Introduction

The contrastive analysis project at the State University of Ghent aims at a more efficient organization of foreign language teaching at secondary school level and especially concentrates on the grammatical analysis of French and English, the two main foreign languages in Flanders¹. Thus the first and foremost objective is to stimulate co-operation and feedback between teachers of different languages, in this case French, English and Dutch. This kind of inter-disciplinary approach is highly desirable: one does not only observe a lack of co-operation, but there is also a widely divergent and hence complicated grammatical terminology. Obviously, a similar fragmentation results in a lack of understanding on the part of the language learner and a waste of time and energy on the part of the language teacher.

In order to achieve this aim the following guidelines have been and will be observed in the course of the analysis:

1. maximum use of the language learner's competence in his native language;
2. devising of a common model of grammatical description, with a simple and uniform terminology;
3. clear delineation of possible problem areas in foreign language teaching and

¹ F.C.F.O.-project, n 11.OD5187, "Studie van de gemeenschappelijke en taalspecifieke grammaticale begrippen in het Nederlands, het Frans en het Engels voor het gebruik bij het onderwijs van die talen op de diverse niveaus in de diverse richtingen van het secundair onderwijs." [*Study of common and language specific grammatical notions in Dutch, French and English. A grammar for foreign language teaching at the various levels of secondary education.*]

The project was started in October 1988 under the auspices of the Department of Education. The promoters of the project are Prof.Dr. D. Willems (French), Prof.Dr. J. Taeldean (Dutch) and Prof. Dr. A.-M. Vandenberg (English). The results will be published in 3 volumes. The first volume, a detailed contrastive analysis of the noun phrase and its constituents, was published in February 1991. The second volume, dealing with the sentence (sentence parts, types, functions and patterns), will probably appear in September 1991 (cf. bibliography). In the third volume, the verb phrase will be analysed.

an extensive pragmatic description of the differences between the native language and the foreign languages.

From these guidelines the central role of Dutch is clearly evident: grammatical notions will be explained through the native language, and only at a later stage will they be introduced in the foreign languages.

Our paper wants to illustrate this method of analysis. It deals with three preliminary problems which arise in the description of various types of objects in Dutch, French and English².

2. 'Object' problems

2.1. Terminology and definitions

The object-terminology used in the three languages is widely divergent. More precisely, there is a considerable difference in the way the terms 'direct object' and 'indirect object' are defined. As a result it is hard to formulate clear-cut definitions which will more or less satisfy the criteria set up in all three languages, especially since most existing categorizations intermingle semantic and morpho-syntactic criteria.

2.1.1. Dutch

Three main types of objects³ are traditionally distinguished: 'direct object', 'indirect object' and 'voorzetselobject' (prepositional object):

- (1) Hij leest *een boek* ⁴.
direct object
He reads a book.
- (2) Hij gaf *haar* een boek.
indirect object
He gave her a book.

² Objects are defined as 'complements expressing an argument of the semantic predicate'. As such they are inherent sentence elements.

³ In Dutch, some other subtypes can be distinguished. However, since these objects are only marginal and not productive, they will not be further analysed in this paper.

Furthermore, we have rejected the frequently used terms 'lijdend voorwerp' (= affected direct object) and 'meewerkend voorwerp' (= recipient indirect object) because they express the semantic role of the complement in a rather over-simplifying way.

⁴ For each Dutch or French example a literal, word-for-word translation into English is given, if necessary also followed by the correct grammatical equivalent. In this way the structural differences between the three languages are clearly visible.

- (3) Ze keek *naar een film*.
voorzetselobject
She watched to a film = She watched a film.

The opposition direct-indirect is semantically defined, i.e. it rests on the degree of centrality or inherence with which the objects are connected to the verb in the sentence. A direct object is generally defined as the element expressing the effected or affected participant in the action denoted by the verb, whereas an indirect object expresses the recipient or benefactive of the action indicated by the verb.

'Prepositional' on the other hand implies 'introduced by a (fixed) preposition', which is a morpho-syntactic criterion. Semantically, however, prepositional objects can in fact be both 'direct' and 'indirect':

- (4) Ze houdt *van hem*.
prepositional
'direct'
She loves of him = She loves him.
- (5) Hij beschuldigde *hem van hoogverraad*.
prepositional
'direct' 'indirect'
He accused him of high treason.

Moreover, this division does not take into account that indirect objects can also be introduced by a preposition (viz. *aan* or *voor*), implying that they too can be 'prepositional':

- (6) Hij gaf een boek *aan zijn vrouw*.
He gave a book to his wife.
- (6') Hij gaf *zijn vrouw* een boek.
He gave his wife a book.
- (7) Hij gaf een boek *aan haar*.
He gave a book to her.
- (7') Hij gaf *haar* een boek.
He gave her a book.

2.1.2. English

In most English grammars the situation is very much the same as in Dutch. The opposition direct object - indirect object is essentially semantically defined; it is dictated by the degree of centrality or inherence with which the objects are connected to the verb. The prepositional object on the other hand is morpho-syntactically defined: it is always introduced by a fixed preposition. As in Dutch, such

a division does not reflect the fact that indirect objects can also be introduced by a preposition (viz. *to* or *for*), implying that they too can be 'prepositional'.

(8) He gave a present *to his wife*.

(8') He gave *his wife* a present.

Moreover, it does not reflect the fact that prepositional objects can be both 'direct' or 'indirect' with respect to degree of centrality:

(9) The president relies *upon his secretary*.
prepositional
'direct'

(10) They accused *the man of wilful murder*.
prepositional
'direct' 'indirect'

Some grammars adopt yet another point of view. The opposition direct-indirect is again semantically defined, but the term 'indirect object' is not applied to the corresponding prepositional phrases. Instead the terms 'prepositional object' or 'prepositional complement' are being used for the complement.

(8) He gave a present *to his wife*.
prepositional complement

(8') He gave *his wife* a present.
indirect object

2.1.3. French

In most French grammars only two types of objects are traditionally distinguished: 'complément d'objet direct' and 'complément d'objet indirect'. In *Le Bon Usage* e.g. we find the following definition:

"Le complément d'objet est un complément essentiel, non adverbial. Selon qu'il est introduit ou non par une préposition, il est appelé **direct** ou **indirect**." (1986:412)

Here the opposition direct-indirect is entirely dependent on a morpho-syntactic criterion. 'Direct' means that the object cannot be realized in the form of a prepositional phrase, whereas 'indirect' implies that the object does take a preposition:

'complément d'objet direct':

(11) J'aime *mon pays*.
I love my country.

(12) Les prophètes annoncent *la venue du Christ*.
The prophets announce the coming of Christ.

'complément d'objet indirect':

(13) Les enfants obéissent toujours *aux parents*.
The children obey always to their parents
= The children always obey their parents.

(14) Il s'est aperçu *de son erreur*.
He has noticed of his mistake
= He has noticed his mistake.

However, only nominal objects are affected by this classification. It does not consider the fact that in the event of pronominalization of the 'complément d'objet indirect' the preposition may or may not be present:

(15) J'écris une lettre *à mes parents*.
I am writing a letter to my parents.

(15') Je *leur* écris une lettre.
I am writing them a letter.

(16) Je compte *sur mon frère*.
I count upon my brother.

(16') Je compte *sur lui*.
I count upon him.

Thus, as opposed to Dutch and English grammars, French grammars do not distinguish between 'indirect' and 'prepositional', since all objects that are or can be introduced by a preposition are called 'complément d'objet indirect'.

From the above it is clearly evident that some uniformization is indispensable in order to demistify matters for the language learner.

2.2. Transitivity and intransitivity

Under specific circumstances some verbs which do not require an object - traditionally called intransitive verbs - may nevertheless be complemented with an object. The opposite process, whereby transitive verbs occur without a complement, also takes place. As was to be expected, the three languages differ considerably in this respect. Nevertheless some general characteristics can be formulated. Some examples of similarities and differences:

2.2.1. Intransitive verbs used transitively

A number of intransitive verbs can take a type of object whose noun head is semantically, and often also morphologically, related to the verb. Therefore the object cannot really be considered a participant in the event/ action indicated by the verb. Its semantic function is rather to repeat, either fully or partially, the meaning of the verb. These 'cognate objects' occur in all three languages. They belong to a fairly literary style and their head noun is generally, if not always, modified and as such the cognate object is often equivalent to a corresponding adverbial adjunct of manner.

(17) Hij stierf *een ellendige dood*.

(18) J'ai rêvé *de beaux rêves*.

(19) He died *a miserable death*.

Generally speaking, English is much more flexible as regards transitive use of intransitive verbs: intransitive verbs of movement (e.g. *walk, swim, jump, turn, cross, climb*), which are normally complemented by an adverbial adjunct of place or direction introduced by a preposition (*about, across, along, around, by, from, over, through* and *via*), can occur with an object as well. In this case there is of course no preposition and the complement is called 'locative object'.

(20) The horse jumped *over the fence*.

(20') The horse jumped *the fence*.

The object-status of these complements is clear because of their ability to assume subject role in the event of passivization:

(20'') *The fence* was jumped by the horse.

This process of 'transitivization' is not restricted to verbs of movement with a complement expressing some spatial relationship. Other, figurative meanings are possible:

(21) The English fought *the French* at Waterloo.
She attained *a high position*.

(21') The English fought *against the French* at Waterloo.
She attained *to a high position*.

In Dutch a more or less equivalent structure can only be obtained through affixation: the prefix *be-* can make intransitive verbs transitive.

(22) klimmen op - *iets klimmen - iets beklimmen

(23) wonen in - *iets wonen - iets bewonen

A similar phenomenon exists in French as well:

(24) Les Anglais combattirent *les Français* à Waterloo.
Il habite *Paris*. Il descend *une montagne*.

(24') Les Anglais combattirent *contre les Français* à Waterloo.
Il habite *à Paris*. Il descend *d'une*
montagne.

2.2.2. Transitive verbs used intransitively

In some cases the direct object may be omitted from the surface structure of the sentence. It is, however, always implicitly present. This phenomenon can be considered as a kind of 'absolute use' of a transitive verb (cf. French: 'emploi absolu').

(25) Zij drinken (bier).

(26) Zij schreven (een brief) naar hun ouders.

(27) Ils boivent (de la bière).

(28) Ils ont écrit (une lettre) à leur parents.

(29) They are drinking (beer).

(30) They wrote (a letter) to their parents.

Furthermore, some English verbs (*to explain, to ask, to tell, to remember, to understand, to mind, to see* and *to know*) do not take a direct object in structures where Dutch uses the anaphorical pronoun *het*.

(31) Ik herinner *het* me.

(32) Ik zal *het* je vertellen.

(33) Ik begrijp *het* niet.

(34) Zij weten *het* niet.

vs. (35) I remember. *I remember *it*.

(36) I'll tell you. *I'll tell you *it*.

(37) I don't understand. *I don't understand *it*.

(38) They don't know. *They don't know *it*.

In French the pronoun *le* can be omitted in some of these cases, but this omission is always optional and mainly restricted to informal language.

- (39) Je me (*le*) rappelle.
(40) Je vous (*le*) raconterai.
(41) Je ne (*le*) comprends pas.
(42) Ils (*le*) savent.

2.3. Different types of complementation

Obviously there are also considerable differences between the three languages in the way different verbs take different objects⁵:

hopen op (+Op)	espérer (+Od)	to hope for (+Op)
luisteren naar (+Op)	écouter (+Od)	to listen to (+Op)
passen op (+Op)	surveiller (+Od)	to take care of (+Op)
wachten op (+Op)	attendre (+Od)	to wait for (+Op)
houden van (+Op)	aimer (+Od)	to love (+Od)
kijken naar (+Op)	regarder (+Od)	to watch (+Od)
genieten van (+Op)	jouir de (+Op)	to enjoy (+Od)
discrimineren (+Od)	discriminer (+Od)	to discriminate against (+Op)
goedkeuren (+Od)	approuver (+Od)	to approve of (+Op)

Any foreign language teacher knows that there is a real danger of negative transfer from the native language with these verbs. Most pupils (secondary school pupils between the ages of 15-17) literally translate the Dutch structure into French and English:

- (43) Ik kijk graag *naar de televisie*.
(44) *J'aime regarder *à la télévision*.
(45) *I like to watch *at the television*.

Even within one language the same verb can be complemented in different ways:

- (46) *iets* zoeken - zoeken *naar iets*
 (47) toucher *un objet* - toucher *à un objet*
 (48) to admit *something* - to admit *to something*

⁵ The following abbreviations have been used :

Od = direct object

Oi = indirect object

Op = prepositional object

2.4. Conclusion

The three problems described above will obviously confuse the foreign language student: a widely divergent terminology (lack of clear-cut definitions, intermingling of semantic and morpho-syntactic criteria), different structures and different types of complementation.

3. Proposition for an integrated model of description

3.1. Transitivity and intransitivity

The presence or absence of an object can be explained by adopting the notions of 'valency reduction' and 'valency extension'.

Valency is traditionally defined as

'the capacity a verb has for combining with particular patterns of other sentence constituents. The concept of valency, as applied to the verb, is intended as a foundation for describing the different potentials that individual verbs have for occurring in a variety of sentence structures' (Allerton, 1982:2).

Valency is thus lexically determined and there are obviously important differences between the three languages in the way the verbs will be complemented.

Each verb valency structure can be broken down into a sequence of verb plus one or more other specifier elements, as required by that particular verb.

Thus valency-reduction implies that one of these specifier elements is not (explicitly) present, whereas in the case of valency-extension an extra complement is added:

to drink (something): divalent \longrightarrow monovalent use

(29) *They* are drinking.

to jump: monovalent \longrightarrow divalent use

(20') *The horse jumped the fence.*

3.2. Different types of complementation

Because the three languages differ considerably in the way different verbs require different objects, the terms 'first object' and 'second object' were introduced. 'First objects' are more central in the sentence as they are immediately related to the verb. 'Second objects' on the other hand - though they are still considered inherent sentence elements - are less central in that they always co-occur with a first object, even if the latter is only implicitly present (De Schutter: 1974):

- (43) Ik kijk graag *naar de televisie*.
first object

- (10) They accused *the man of wilful murder*.
first object second object

- (15) J'écris *une lettre à mes parents*.
first object second object

In 2.3. we also signalled that within one language the same verb may be complemented by different object-structures.

- (46) *iets zoeken* - *zoeken naar iets*
direct object prepositional object

In both variants the complement is a 'first object'. Yet, there is a slight semantic difference between the two variants: the direct object (*iets zoeken*) seems to be even more central than the prepositional object (*zoeken naar iets*), as is reflected by their respective positions in the sentence:

- (49) Hij zoekt *dat boek* al jaren.
vs. (50) Hij zoekt al jaren *naar dat boek*.
(50') *Hij zoekt *naar dat boek* al jaren.

3.3. Terminology and definitions

3.3.1. English and Dutch

We indicated in 2.1.2 that some English grammarians do not apply the term 'indirect object' to the corresponding prepositional phrases. The term 'prepositional complement' is used instead:

- cf. (8) He gave a present *to his wife*.
prepositional complement
(8') He gave *his wife* a present.
indirect object

Huddleston (1984) e.g. argues that the relationship between (8) and (8') is not sufficiently systematic to warrant a transformational derivation, since not all ditransitive verbs allow both variants (NP or PP).

- (51) He allowed *the child* another try.
(51') *He allowed another try *to the child*.
(52) They explained their plans *to us*.
(52') *They explained *us* their plans.

Others (Fillmore: 1968, Corder: 1968, Balk-Smit Duyzentkunst: 1968, Dik: 1978) support the view that, though there may be semantic differences between both structures (NP or PP), these differences are in fact of the order of focusing and thematic organization of the information. As a result, they should not prevent us from treating the relations between these two sequences as being due to transformational operations applied to identical underlying structures. Thus, according to Fillmore (1968), the traditional function of 'indirect object' corresponds to the dative case category in deep structure, which expresses the *animate* being affected by the action or state identified by the verb. It may be realized in surface structure either by a nominal in sequential position immediately after the verb or by preposition marking. The state of affairs designated by a prepositional indirect object thus coincides with the state of affairs designated by the non-prepositional equivalent.

Larson (1988) also supports the thesis that there is indeed a derivational relationship between NP and PP functioning as indirect objects, even though the alternation may not be fully productive. According to him, the preposition in structures like

- (53) John gave a book *to Mary*.

represents case marking. Its disappearance, as in

- (53') John gave *Mary* a book.

is equivalent to the absorption of case marking in passives.

- (53'') *Mary* was given a book (by John).

Verbs like *to explain*, *to donate*, *to describe*, however, do not allow a dative shift - i.e. the construction with the preposition is the only possible variant - because they do not specify the content of *to* in their thematic array. Hence, *to* is not redundant because suppression would cause an unrecoverable loss of thematic information associated with it.

- (54) He explained his plans *to me*.

- (54') *He explained *me* his plans.

Verbs like *to save*, *to spare*, *to forgive* and idiomatic expressions (e.g. *to give a sound hiding*) on the other hand only allow the non-prepositional variant:

- (55) I forgave *him* his faults.

- (55') *I forgave his faults *to him*.

Still according to Larson (1988), *to* is impossible with these verbs because they are thematically incompatible with any potential case assigner. As a result, they force the indirect object to undergo NP-movement. A similar group of verbs exists

in Dutch: *beletten*, *smeken*, *besparen*, *telefoneren*, *vergeven*, ..., and figurative idiomatic expressions such as *iemand een pak slaag geven*.

- (56) Ik vergaf *haar* haar zonden.
I forgave her her sins.
- (56') *Ik vergaf haar zonden *aan haar*.
*I forgave her sins to her.
- (57) Ik zal *jou* deze opdracht besparen.
I will spare you this task.
- (57') *Ik zal deze opdracht *aan jou* besparen.
*I will spare this task to you.

In our grammatical model for the analysis of objects we have chosen to adopt this latter view and to posit a derivational relationship between (8) and (8') as indirect objects, with (8') derived from (8) by a rule which deletes the preposition and moves the NP *his wife* to the left of the direct object (dative shift).

- (8) He gave a present *to his wife*.
Hij gaf een geschenk *aan zijn vrouw*.
- (8') He gave *his wife* a present.
Hij gaf *zijn vrouw* een geschenk.

We thus distinguish three types of objects in English and Dutch on a morpho-syntactic basis only.

- direct
[- prepositional] → (58) I have bought *a new car*.
(59) Ik heb *een nieuwe wagen* gekocht.
- indirect
[+ prepositional] → (60) He gave *me* the keys.
(60') He gave the keys *to me*.
(61) Hij gaf *mij* de sleutels.
(61') Hij gaf de sleutels *aan mij*.
- prepositional
[+ prepositional] → (62) You can always rely *upon his honesty*.
(63) Je kan altijd *op zijn eerlijkheid* vertrouwen.

The semantic distinction between first and second object can be used as well. The direct object is always first object, the indirect object always second object and the prepositional object may be first or second object. We could say that both

first and second objects can be realized in a prepositional form. Before going into this semantic classification we first want to look at the morpho-syntactic classification of objects in French.

3.3.2. French

As grammatical notions are preferably explained through the native language, we tried to adapt the French model to the Dutch one, i.e. to the tripartite division direct-indirect-prepositional. Consequently, the following criteria were set up to distinguish between direct, indirect and prepositional objects.

As we have indicated in 3.1. we can distinguish between divalent and trivalent verbs.

Divalent verbs have only one object. This object can be non-prepositional or prepositional:

- non-prepositional = direct object
prepositional = prepositional object

Prepositional objects (*complément d'objet prépositionnel*⁶) are always introduced by a fixed preposition, which cannot be omitted when there is pronominalization:

- (64) Je pense *à ma sœur*.
I am thinking about my sister.
- (64') Je pense *à elle*. / *Je *lui* pense.
I am thinking about her.
- (65) Je m'occupe *de cet élève*.
I am looking after this pupil.
- (65') Je m'occupe *de lui*.
I am looking after him.
- (66) Je compte *sur mon amie*.
I count upon my friend.
- (66') Je compte *sur elle*.
I count upon her.

There are only a couple of divalent verbs which do not completely behave according to the definition formulated above, in that the preposition is omitted in the event of pronominalization of the prepositional object: *mentir à*, *nuire à*, *obéir à*, *parler à*, *plaire à*, *ressembler à*, *sourire à*, *succéder à*.

- (67) Elle nuit *à ses amis*.
[She is harming her friends.]

⁶ The term 'complément d'objet prépositionnel' was only found in : Germer F. and Carlens, R. (1972).

- (67') Elle *leur* nuit.
She is harming them.
- (68) Il a succédé *à son pre*.
He has succeeded to his father.
- (68') Il *lui* a succédé.
He has succeeded to him.

Prepositional objects can of course be inanimate as well. When they are introduced by the prepositions *à* or *de*, they can be pronominalized by the pronominal adverbs *y* (> *à*) and *en* (> *de*). In this case the preposition is only implicitly present:

- (69) Je m'intéresse *aux sports*.
I am interested in sports.
- (69') Je m'y intéresse.
I am interested in it.
- (70) J'ai parlé *de cette affaire*.
I have spoken about this matter.
- (70') J'en ai parlé.
I have spoken about it.

The pronominal adverbs *y* (> *à*) and *en* (> *de*) are being more and more used for animate prepositional objects too, especially in spoken language:

- (71) Je m'intéresse *à cette femme*.
[I am interested in this woman.]
- (71') Je m'intéresse *à elle*.
I am interested in her.
- (71'') Je m'y intéresse.
I am interested in her.
- (72) J'ai parlé *de mon chef*.
I have spoken about my boss.
- (72') J'ai parlé *de lui*.
I have spoken about him.
- (72'') J'en ai parlé.
I have spoken about him.

When the inanimate prepositional object is introduced by another preposition, i.e. other than *à* or *de*, pronominalization is only possible with the verbs *compter* and *se tromper*. The pronominal adverb *y* is then used.

- (73) Il proteste *contre cette affaire*.
He does not agree with this matter.
- (73') *Il y proteste. / *Il proteste *contre elle*.
He does not agree with it.
- (74) Je compte *sur son aide*.
I count upon his support.
- (74') J'y compte.
I count upon it.
- (75) Il se trompe *sur ce point*.
He is mistaken about this matter.
- (75') Il s'y trompe.
He is mistaken about it.

Trivalent verbs have two objects: a direct object and an indirect object.

Indirect objects (*complément d'objet indirect*) are introduced by the prepositions *à* or *pour*. In the event of pronominalization the preposition is omitted. As in Dutch and English, these indirect objects are always animate.

- (76) J'ai demandé cent dollars *à ma soeur*.
I have asked one hundred dollar to my sister
= I have asked my sister one hundred dollar.
- (76') Je *lui* ai demandé cent dollars.
I have asked her one hundred dollar.
- (77) J'ai acheté des fleurs *pour mes parents*.
I have bought some flowers for my parents.
- (77') Je *leur* ai acheté des fleurs.
I have bought them some flowers.

Remark that in Dutch and English indirect objects can either be prepositional or non-prepositional, irrespective of their realization (nominal or pronominal). In French, however, nominal indirect objects must necessarily be prepositional, whereas pronominal indirect objects are always non-prepositional:

- (78) J'ai donné des fleurs *à ma mère*. /
I have given some flowers to my mother.
*J'ai donné *à ma mère* des fleurs.

I have given my mother some flowers.

- (78') Je *lui* ai donné des fleurs. /
I have given her some flowers.
*J'ai donné des fleurs à *elle*.
I have given some flowers to her.

Hence, the form in which indirect objects appear is mainly determined by their position in the sentence and their realization (nominal or pronominal), i.e. the indirect object is non-prepositional when it appears in a pronominal form and in preverbal position.

It remains to be signalled that a relatively small group of trivalent verbs are complemented by a direct object and a prepositional object (= a fixed preposition, other than *à* or *pour*):

- (79) Ils accusaient *la femme de haute trahison*
direct object prepositional object
They accused the woman of high treason.

In these cases the prepositional object is inanimate and it is pronominalized by way of a pronominal adverb (*en*):

- (79') Ils *l'en* accusaient.
They accused her of it.

With the above in mind, a tripartite division based on morpho-syntactic criteria, i.e. on the absence or (possible) presence of a preposition, has been adopted:

- preposition = DIRECT OBJECT
- + preposition = INDIRECT OBJECT
- + preposition = PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT

Running across this morpho-syntactic division are the semantic opposition as defined in 3.2. (first - second object) and the valency-opposition as defined in 3.1. (divalent - trivalent). Thus the following model of description has been arrived at:

	FIRST OBJECT	SECOND OBJECT
divalent verb	+ direct object + prepositional object	— —
trivalent verb	(+ direct object) + direct object	+ indirect object + prepositional object

Some examples:

- (80) De president aanvaardde *het ontslag van de secretaris*.
Le président a accepté *la démission du secrétaire*.
The president has accepted *the secretary's resignation*.
(81) Ik reken *op uw steun*.
Je compte *sur votre appui*.
I count *upon your support*.
(82) Ik schrijf (*een brief*) *aan mijn ouders*.
J'écris (*une lettre*) *à mes parents*.
I am writing (*a letter*) *to my parents*.
(83) Zij beschuldigden *hem van hoogverraad*.
Ils *l'accusaient de haute trahison*.
They accused *him of high treason*.

4. Conclusion

The integrated model as proposed in this article can be used as a basis for an extensive analysis of the various types of objects in the three languages and of their positions in the sentence. This latter aspect is very important since word-order certainly is a high-difficulty item. Generally speaking, the position of the object in the sentence depends on a combination of various factors: presence or absence of other objects, formal realization (pronominal, nominal, clausal) and thematic organization:

- (81) Ik neem *het*.
(82) Je *le* prends.
(83) I take *it*.
(84) Ik heb *de deur* geopend.
(85) J'ai ouvert *la porte*.
(86) I have opened *the door*.
(87) I have *the door* opened. (causative)

Again, the danger of negative transfer from the native language should not be underestimated.

We are aware that this grammatical model may still be subject to discussion and that perhaps it can be even further simplified. Nevertheless, we hope that it will have contributed to the uniformization of Dutch, French and English object-terminology, since it is of paramount importance that the foreign language teacher

can rely upon a uniform terminology and a uniform grammatical model to describe, analyse and explain these structures.

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