

## **Limits and Locus of Syntactic Microvariation**

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A central hypothesis of the Minimalist Program is that syntactic principles are constant across languages. Apparent syntactic variation would be reducible to variation in the lexicon, in particular variation in morphosyntactic features, and variation at the level of phonological interpretation (PF), in particular in the way syntactic structure is spelled out. This hypothesis invites large-scale microcomparative syntactic research, as minor morphosyntactic differences between closely related language varieties are expected to cause syntactic variation, such as variation in word order. In this paper, the hypothesis is tested against the data of the Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects (SAND), a project in which over 100 syntactic variables in 267 dialects of Dutch were investigated. In four case studies, involving complementizer drop, one-insertion, strong reflexives and doubling in Wh-chains, it is shown that most of syntactic microvariation observed can indeed be reduced to lexicon and PF, but that there is a residue of variation in the syntactic module concerning the size of the constituents that are copied in movement operations. Two further conclusions are that syntax plays a role in the lexicon in that it determines the limits of lexical variation and that part of syntactic variation must be explained by language-external factors.