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Variation in the use of the partitive pronoun *ER* in regional (Heerlen) standard Dutch

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This paper focuses on the variable use of partitive *er* in two types of constructions. First, *er* combined with cardinal numbers like *drie* ‘three’ and quantifiers like *genoeg* ‘enough’. Second, *er* combined with an elliptical noun referring to *age* and *weight*. *Er* should be present in the first case (*Ik heb *(er) drie* ‘I have three’) but absent in the second case (*Hij is *(er) tachtig* ‘He is eighty’), according to normative Dutch grammars.

The spontaneous spoken speech of 67 speakers born and raised in Heerlen, in the southeast of the Netherlands was analyzed, investigating the use of *er* also according to social distribution: language background, education/occupation and age.

The results show that *er* is used variably in the two types of constructions. It was found that younger speakers differ in some contexts from older speakers, suggesting that language change is going on, possibly under the influence of standard Dutch.

Keywords: partitive pronoun, quantifier, age, social distribution, Heerlen Dutch

1. Introduction

In standard Netherlandic Dutch, elliptical indefinite, but not definite, noun phrases in object position containing a cardinal numeral such as *twee* ‘two’ or a weak quantifier like *enkele* ‘some’ must co-occur with a weak partitive pronoun, *er*, which is also called quantitative *er* in the literature (Blom 1977; Broekhuis 2013: 296, 370), and which is illustrated in (1a) and (1b), respectively.

Standard Dutch

- (1) a. *Marie heeft er* [NP *twee* [e]] *gekocht*.
 Marie has PART.WK two bought
 ‘Marie has bought two [e.g., books].’
- b. *Marie heeft er* [NP *enkele* [e]] *gekocht*.
 Marie has PART.WK some bought
 ‘Marie has bought some [e.g., books].’

The construction in (1) is a standard example of the partitive pronoun provided in traditional grammars. The partitive pronoun *er* is combined with an elliptical quantified noun phrase in object position (Haeseryn et al. 1997, Dutch Reference Grammar; Coleman et al. 2021, the electronic version of the Dutch Reference Grammar). The partitive pronoun *er* in (1) is used with *twee* ‘two’ and *enkele* ‘some’ as a quantifying expression, it refers to a countable entity, such as *boeken* ‘books’.

Some languages in Europe, regardless of whether they belong to Germanic or Romance languages, make use of a partitive (quantitative) weak pronoun (Germanic) or clitic (Romance) in quantificational constructions, as in (1). Among these are French (Sleeman & Ihsane 2020), Italian (Giusti 2021), Luxembourgish (Döhmer 2018), whereas New High German (Strobel 2013: 418) does not use a partitive pronoun in this context, as illustrated in (2a, b, c) and (2d), respectively.

- (2) a. *Elle en a trois.* (French)
 she PART.CL has three
- b. *Lei ne ha tre.* (Italian)
 she PART.CL has three
- c. *Si huet der dräi.* (Luxembourgish)
 She has PART.WK three
- d. *Sie hat Ø drei.* (standard German)
 she has three
 ‘She has three.’

Although modern standard German does not have a partitive pronoun, it occurs in some German dialects (Glaser 1992, 1993, 2008; Strobel 2016, 2017).

The goal of this paper is to analyze how the partitive pronoun *er* is used in spoken Heerlen Dutch, a spoken standard Dutch variety in the southeast of the Netherlands (Cornips 1994). Heerlen Dutch constitutes a continuum between the local dialect and Netherlandic standard Dutch. We investigate variation with respect to the presence or absence of the partitive pronoun *er* in spoken Heerlen Dutch. We try to account for attested variation in Heerlen Dutch, more precisely, we try to account for the fact that some speakers of Heerlen Dutch diverge from normative standard Netherlandic Dutch in their use or non-use of the partitive

pronoun *er*. Two examples of this type of variation are presented in (3) and (4). In the construction in (3a), partitive *er* is inserted by Heerlen Dutch speaker Henk combined with the weak quantifier *genoeg* ‘enough’ referring to a quantified expression ‘enough people.’¹ The use of partitive *er* by Henk in (3a) conforms to standard Dutch. However, Henk also omits partitive *er* although it is required in combination with the cardinal *eentje* ‘one’ in standard Netherlandic Dutch; see (3b).²

- (3) a. *er zijn er* [_{NP} *genoeg* [e]] *hier* [Henk]
 there are PART.WK enough here
 ‘there are more than enough (people) here’
- b. *er is Ø nog* [_{NP} *eentje* [e]] *die in de boom gehangen heeft* [Henk]
 there is another one that in the tree hung has
 ‘there is another one that has hung in the tree’

In the construction in (3), the partitive *er* should be present, but speakers of Heerlen Dutch may also produce the partitive *er* where it should be absent according to normative standard Netherlandic Dutch (henceforth: standard Dutch). This variation in the use of the partitive *er* occurs in the constructions in (4), where the elliptical noun refers to *age* and *weight* in (4a) and (4b), respectively. Thus, the constructions in (4) with partitive *er* are considered ungrammatical in standard Dutch in precisely these contexts.

- (4) a. *ik was er* [_{NP} 15 [e]] [Leo]
 I was PART.WK 15
 ‘I was 15 [e.g., years].’

-
1. All speakers illustrated in this paper have been anonymized.
 2. The electronic version of the Dutch Reference Grammar (Colleman et al. 2021) gives the example (i) in Section 7.2.3.2, showing that the cardinal *één* ‘one’ also has a diminutive form, in which case it is still used with *er*:

- (i) (*ik heb al een kaartje*). *Ik heb er al eentje*.
 I have already a ticket I have PART.WK already one.DIM
 ‘I have already a ticket. I already have one.’

One of the reviewers observes that the omission of *er* seems to be acceptable as well. A quick search on Google showed that *Ik heb er eentje gekocht* ‘I have bought one’ occurs 140 times, *Ik heb eentje gekocht* 65 times and *Ik heb één gekocht* 23 times. The use of *eentje* without *er* seems to be rather colloquial, as least to the ear of the second author of this paper, who is an L1 speaker of Netherlandic Dutch. That it is used without *er* could be due to the fact that the diminutive suffix *-tje* generally only is used with nouns. This nominalized form could be analyzed as a form without nominal ellipsis by the speakers who use or accept it.

- b. *ik was er* [NP 95 [e]] *toen ik eruit kwam* [Dik]
 I was PART.WK 95 when I out came
 'I was 95 [e.g., kilos] when I got out.'

In standard Dutch the partitive pronoun *er* would be omitted. This may also be done in Heerlen Dutch, as in (5).

- (5) *ik was* \emptyset [NP *vierenveertig* [e]] *toen ik begon* [Mr. Balk]
 I was forty-four when I started
 'I was forty-four when I started.'

In this paper, we focus on the use of variable partitive *er* in these two types of constructions. First, elliptical noun phrases combined with cardinal numbers like *twee* 'two' and *eentje* 'one' and quantifiers such as *genoeg* 'enough' and *enkele* 'some' (see (3)). Second, elided nouns referring to *age* and *weight*, as in (4)–(5). *Er* should be present in (3) but must be absent in (4)–(5) in standard Dutch. Figure 1 presents this schematically.

	Elliptical noun combined with <i>cardinals</i> or <i>weak quantifiers</i> (cf. (1) vs (3))	Elliptical noun refers to <i>age</i> or <i>weight</i> (cf. (4) and (5))
Normative standard Dutch	*(<i>er</i>)	* <i>er</i>
Spoken Heerlen Dutch	(<i>er</i>)	(<i>er</i>)

Figure 1. Partitive *er* in two types of standard Dutch

The variable use of partitive *er* is a syntactic feature which so far has hardly been noticed by variationist sociolinguists, who “tend to analyse the same grammatical variables over and over again” (Cheshire 2005:86).³ We examine the spontaneous spoken speech of 67 speakers born and raised in the southeast of the Netherlands. The data were collected by Cornips (1994, 1998) by means of sociolinguistic interviews (Labov 1972) that took place around 1990. They show thus how Heerlen Dutch was spoken 35 years ago. It could be the case that after 1990 Heerlen Dutch became gradually more similar to standard Dutch, but more research would be needed to show if and how this would also have affected the use of partitive *er* in Heerlen Dutch. Three speaker variables are considered in order

3. But see Mattens (1987); de Rooij (1991); de Schutter (1992); Sleeman (1998); Kranendonk (2010); Berends (2019) for the use of the partitive pronoun in combination with elliptical noun phrases containing an adjective.

to investigate the social distribution: language background, education/occupation and age.

We analyze the data quantitatively and qualitatively. Our results show that in southern standard spoken Dutch such as Heerlen Dutch, partitive *er* is used variably in more contexts than in (western) standard spoken Dutch. We found that younger speakers differ in some contexts from older speakers, which may suggest that language change is going on, possibly under the influence of standard Dutch. We also propose a syntactic account of the variation. Theoretical analyses of the use of the partitive pronoun *er* are often restricted to standard Dutch sentences in which *er* is required, such as represented in (1) (see e.g. Barbiers 2017). The present approach is innovating in several ways: it applies generative linguistics to regional variations of the standard language, adopts a sociolinguistic approach, and uniquely investigates the partitive pronoun *er* across various contexts. Specifically, it examines how *er* is used with expressions that specify *quantity*, *age*, and *weight*.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, the origin of Heerlen Dutch and some previous research on the variety Heerlen Dutch are discussed. Section 3 contains the research questions, the hypotheses, and the methodology. The results are presented in Section 4 and discussed in Section 5. The paper ends with some concluding remarks in Section 6.

2. The emergence of Heerlen Dutch

Heerlen is situated in Limburg, a province in the southeast of the Netherlands, near the Belgian and German border. Limburg in its present territorial form only exists since 1839. Between 1815 and 1839 it was part of a larger territorial entity with the same name, which was divided in a western Belgian and an eastern Dutch part after the Belgian Revolt (1830–1839), separating the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (since 1815) into Belgium and the Netherlands. Since then, there are two provinces called Limburg, one in Belgium and one in the Netherlands.

Heerlen Dutch is a regional variety of standard Dutch. Whereas in 1900, most inhabitants of Heerlen spoke the local dialect, the expanding mining industry around Heerlen attracted many workers from elsewhere in the Netherlands (especially from the western and northeastern parts) and from abroad. Within a timespan of thirty years, the L1 dialect speaking population became a minority, which is a unique situation. Local residents and migrant miners adopted Dutch for communication, influenced by mining company staff and migrants from the Netherlands' western regions. This interaction gave rise to a distinct regional variant of Dutch: Heerlen Dutch. While close to the standard form, this variant

integrates phonological and (morpho)syntactic features of the Heerlen dialect. Brassé and van Schelven (1980) show that within three generations, Italian, Polish and Yugoslav immigrants had substantially adopted both Heerlen Dutch and the Heerlen dialect. Migrants from the north-eastern part of the Netherlands brought their dialects, and those from Germany and Eastern Europe spoke German as a first or second language. There was also a minority of French speaking migrants. There may have been overlap between their dialects and languages with the Heerlen dialect or Heerlen Dutch for certain syntactic features.

Historical dialectologists categorize the Heerlen dialect as so-called ‘South Low Franconian’ (*Südniederfränkisch*) or ‘East Low Franconian’ (*Oostnederfrankisch* in the Dutch tradition). In fact, the dialect of Heerlen belongs to the transitional area between the Ripuarian dialects (in the east) and the Limburg dialects (in the west). The Ripuarian dialects are found south and east of the Benrath Line, and they are considered to be a branch of High German (cf. Hermans 2013). The dialect of Heerlen has been heavily influenced by the dialect of the German city of Cologne in earlier times.

Limburg is known for its lively use of dialect in public and private spheres (Cornips 2013), but in Heerlen, there are nowadays far fewer dialect speakers than in other parts of Limburg. In 1989, Heerlen was a multilingual town with a population of 90,000, where a mix of languages was spoken. Locals might converse in the regional dialect, standard Dutch, or neighboring languages like French and German. They also spoke expat languages such as English and migrant languages including Polish, Turkish, or Moroccan Arabic and Berber. Despite the dialect of Heerlen being closely related to standard Dutch, residents were keenly aware of their choice between dialect and Heerlen Dutch. By and large, the typological distance between the dialect of Heerlen and standard Dutch is minimal but speakers are very conscious of when they choose a dialect or (Heerlen) Dutch. Thus, although (Heerlen) Dutch and the local dialect may share a lot of their grammar (as seen from an analyst perspective), they are perceived as different varieties by their speakers (Cornips 2014a, b). The speakers can easily switch between forms and constructions that are associated with normative standard Dutch or dialect or use intermediate forms as in Heerlen Dutch in a diaglossic situation. The use of Heerlen Dutch, that is, the use of local dialect constructions in Dutch, is vital in the regional identity construction in Heerlen (Cornips 2014b).

3. Research questions, hypotheses, and methodology

The goals and research method of this study are based on Cornips (1994).

3.1 Research questions and hypotheses

The aim of this paper is to analyze how partitive *er* is used in spoken Heerlen Dutch; more specifically, by analyzing how the sociolinguistic background and linguistic context influence the absence or presence of partitive *er* in spoken Heerlen Dutch. We also aim to provide a linguistic account for the attested variation. The research questions are the following:

- i. Do sociolinguistic variables correlate with the use of the partitive pronoun *er* in the quantificational construction and in the *age/weight* construction in Heerlen Dutch?
- ii. Is there sociolinguistic evidence in Heerlen Dutch for linguistically distinguishing the *age/weight* construction from the quantificational construction?
- iii. If there is, how can the constructions be analyzed?

We hypothesize that there is sociolinguistic variation with respect to the use or the non-use of the partitive pronoun in the quantificational and *age/weight* construction, and that the background of the speakers may play a role. Cornips (1994) showed that sociolinguistic variation may be taken as evidence to distinguish several types within a seemingly homogeneous group of syntactic phenomena, for which she proposed different linguistic analyses. Similarly, we also hypothesize that, if there is sociolinguistic variation, this may motivate the linguistic distinction between the two types of construction, that is, the partitive pronoun in the quantificational and in the *age/weight* construction.

3.2 Participants

The data that we use for our research on the use of the partitive pronoun in Heerlen Dutch were collected by the first author of this paper between 1989 and 1992. They consist of sociolinguistic interviews with speakers of Heerlen Dutch.

All speakers were born in Heerlen. For the collection of the data, the speakers were divided into three language groups according to their language background, labelled *dialect*, *Heerlen Dutch* and *migrant* speakers. “Dialect” speakers speak the local dialect as a first language and Heerlen standard Dutch as a (first) second language. “Heerlen Dutch” speakers speak Heerlen Dutch as a first language, whereas their parents speak or spoke the local dialect or another dialect from Limburg as a first language. The “migrant” speakers speak Heerlen Dutch as a first language, but their parents were born elsewhere in the Netherlands and outside Limburg.

The speakers were then further subdivided into smaller groups according to their education/occupation and age. The “education/occupation” variable is

based on a high to low scale, that is, middle/high level employees and unskilled/skilled labor employees. With respect to the variable “age”, a distinction was made between those aged between 20 and 45 years and those who were older than 60 in 1989 when the sociolinguistic interviews started. The speaker variables are shown in Table 1.⁴

Table 1. Number of speakers in each cell according to speaker variables

Language background	Low level of education/ occupation		High level of education/ occupation		Total
	Young	Old	Young	Old	
	25–40 yrs	> 60 yrs	25–40 yrs	> 60 yrs	
“Migrant”	3	6	5	5	19
“Dialect”	5	6	8	10	29
“Heerlen Dutch”	8	–	8	3	19
Total	16	12	21	18	67

All speakers received a pseudonym. The younger speakers randomly assigned received a first name as their pseudonym, and the older speakers received a last name as their pseudonym. The distribution of the sociolinguistic variables over the pseudonyms is shown in Appendix A.⁵

3.3 Data

The data consist of transcriptions of the spontaneous speech between two speakers of Heerlen Dutch who did not previously know each other but had similar demographics, that is, had been placed in the same cell in Table 1. Besides the 33 dialogues, there is one monologue. The recordings took place at the speakers’ homes, and the fieldworker did not interfere in their conversation. The sociolin-

4. The goal was to have 5 participants for each cell, but as the numbers in Table 1 show, this goal was not reached. In Table 1, one cell is empty. It was not possible to recruit participants for the combination of the sociolinguistic variable “low level of education/occupation”, “old” and “Heerlen Dutch”, probably because before 1930, Heerlen Dutch was not spoken yet on a large scale.

5. Two participants, Mart and Nelis, were interviewed together by another participant, whereas all the other participants were interviewed individually. Although the data of Mart and Nelis were taken together, we count them, however, as two participants (leading to 67 participants) and not as one (which would have given 66 participants). Since they were interviewed together, this leads to 33 interview sessions, in which the participants interviewed each other.

guistic corpus consisting of 33.5 recorded hours of spoken speech was transcribed by the researcher (Cornips 1994, 1998).

3.4 Searching the corpus

To obtain a dataset of sentences illustrating the use or non-use of the partitive pronoun in the quantificational and *age/weight* constructions, several search options were used.

The sociolinguistic corpus consisting of 33.5 recorded hours of spoken speech was searched for (i) the cardinals between *een* ‘one’ and *twaalf* ‘twelve’,⁶ plus the cardinals *twintig* ‘twenty’, *dertig* ‘thirty’, *veertig* ‘forty’ and *honderd* ‘hundred’, (ii) quantifiers like *aardig wat* ‘quite a few’, *zoveel* ‘so many’, *een aantal* ‘a couple of’, *een hoop* ‘a lot’, *eentje/ene* ‘one’,⁷ *enige/enkele* ‘several’, *geen* ‘no’, *voldoende/genoeg* ‘enough’, *meer* ‘more’, *minder* ‘fewer’, *meerdere* ‘several’, *veel/vele* ‘much/many’, *verscheidene/verschillende* ‘several’, *voldoende/zat* ‘sufficient’, *wat* ‘some’, *’n heleboel/een hoop/massa’s/bergen* ‘a lot’, *een paar/een stel/een stuk of/een handjevol* ‘a few’, *hoeveel* ‘how many’ and *weinig* ‘little’, and (iii) elliptically used nouns referring to *age* and *weight*, that is, *jaar* ‘year’ and *kilo* ‘kilogram’.

Another mechanism used was to search for the different forms of the partitive pronoun, which also exist in (spoken) standard Dutch:

- *er*
- *d’r*
- *’r*

To determine if we were dealing with a construction in which the partitive pronoun can potentially be used, there has to be nominal ellipsis. This means that a sentence like (6), in which there is a noun present, had to be discarded and could not be incorporated into the partitive pronoun corpus.

- (6) *dan zijn er twee dingen die zijn belangrijkste* [Anton]
 then are PART.WK two things that are most.important
 ‘then there are two things that are the most important ones’

6. Searching on these cardinals with the search function in Word provided also compound cardinals such as *dertien* ‘thirteen’ or *vijfenveertig* ‘forty-five’.

7. *Ene* ‘one’ is a Heerlen’s Dutch form used next to *een* ‘one’, since Heerlen Dutch is an intermediate, regional, variety that approximates standard Netherlandic Dutch, but that also contains phonological and (morpho)syntactic features of the Heerlen dialect. Please note that the local dialect in contrast to Heerlen Dutch has a three-way grammatical gender distinction. In the Heerlen dialect, for ‘one’/‘a’ masculine *inne*, feminine *ing* and neuter *e* are used (Cornips 1994, 2014b).

In (6) we are not dealing with the partitive pronoun *er*, because there is no nominal ellipsis. Standard Dutch has more uses of *er* than partitive uses, which were presented in (1). The constructions in (7) present consecutively (a) an existential/presentational *er* (Grondelaers 2009), (b) expletive *er*, (c) locative *er*, and (d) prepositional *er* (Bennis 1986).⁸ One type of the prepositional *er* is the partitive *ervan*, as in (7e). The prepositional *er* and the partitive *ervan* can also be split from their preposition, as in (7f) and (7g).⁹

- (7) a. *Er is een probleem (ontstaan).*
 ER is a problem occurred
 ‘There is/occurred a problem.’
 b. *Er werd gedanst.*
 ER was.being danced.
 ‘There was dancing going on.’
 c. *Ik was er ook.*
 I was ER too
 ‘I was there too.’

8. Boeckx (1999) assumes that existential constructions assert the “existence” of *x*, where *x* would be a thing/object. He assumes that presentationals “present” *x*, with *x* being an event. Boeckx shows that in Italian, in the existential construction, there is a locative pronoun, *ci*, whereas in the presentational construction, there is subject verb inversion. Although Boeckx calls both types of pronouns “expletives”, we separate them from the expletive in (7b). In (7b), the expletive *er* has neither of these functions. It just fills an empty position, the empty subject position.

- (i) *Ci sono [NP molte case [bruciate]]*
 there are many houses burned
 ‘There are many burned houses.’
 (ii) *Sono bruciate molte case.*
 are burned many houses
 ‘Many houses are burned.’
9. Partitive *er* and partitive *ervan* may both be used to refer to a specific referent mentioned in the preceding discourse (i). *Er* may also refer to a kind noun in the preceding discourse (ii) (Sleeman & Ihsane 2020):

- (i) *Ik heb drie boeken gekocht. Ik heb er twee (van) gelezen.*
 I have three books bought I have PART.WK two (of) read
 ‘I bought three books. I read two of them.’
 (ii) *Vandaag heb ik één boek gelezen. Morgen lees ik er twee.*
 today have I one book read tomorrow read I PART.WK two
 ‘Today I read one book. Tomorrow I will read two.’

- d. *Ik denk eraan.*
I think ERof
'I am thinking of it.'
- e. *Drie ervan zijn groen.*
three ERof are green
'Three of them are green.'
- f. *Ze slaapt er vaak in.*
she sleeps ER often in
'She often sleeps in it.'
- g. *We hebben er twee van verkocht.*
We have ER two of sold
'We have sold two of them.'

We excluded all cases from the data in which *er* was not an instance of the partitive *er*, as listed in (7). Furthermore, two or more adjacent instances of *er* are not allowed (Bennis 1986) and are combined into one. The research protocol requires a search for the partitive *er* not overlapping with the other types of *er* presented in (7). We only selected those utterances where we unambiguously could analyze *er* as partitive, like the *er* in (1), (3) and (4). Ambiguous cases were excluded. The instance of *er* in the topicalization construction in (8a), for example, could also be analyzed as (an overlap with) the existential *er* (8b). In (8a), the *er* could also be analyzed as (an overlap with) the locative *er* (8c).

- (8) a. *te huur zijn er nog twee* [Mr. Jansen]
for rent are ER still two
'there are still two for rent'
- b. *er zijn (er) nog twee te huur*
EXIST are PART.WK still two for rent
'there are still two for rent'
- c. *te huur zijn (er) daar nog twee*
for rent are PART.WK there still two
'there are still two for rent there'

The criteria for identification and exclusion produced a dataset comprising sentences that either used the partitive pronoun in quantificational and *age/weight* constructions, or omitted it.

4. Results

In this section, the results are presented of the corpus research with respect to the use of the partitive pronoun *er* in the quantificational construction (Section 4.1), and the partitive pronoun *er* in the *age/weight* construction (Section 4.2).

4.1 The quantificational construction

A close examination of the Heerlen corpus of 33.5 hours of recorded speech at the level of the group of speakers (see Table 2) reveals that the speakers produce 166 tokens (denominator at the bottom of the column “total absolute number” in Table 2) of an elided noun with a cardinal or a weak quantifier in the quantificational construction of which 28 tokens (numerator at the bottom of the column “total absolute number” in Table 2), that is 16.9%, appear without partitive *er*, whereas 138 tokens (83.1%) include partitive *er*.¹⁰ The presence of partitive *er* in the quantificational construction is thus overwhelmingly present in relation to its absence, which confirms the standard Dutch pattern.

Table 2. The distribution of the tokens of absence of partitive *er* (numerator) versus possible occurrences (absence and presence of *er*) in denominator (spontaneous speech) in the quantificational construction

Tokens presence <i>er</i> $N=138$ and absence <i>er</i> $N=28$	LOW level of education		HIGH level of education		Total	
	Young	Old	Young	Old	Abs.	%
<i>language</i>						
Migrant	1/13	0/12	1/15	4/18	6/58	10.3
Dialect	2/5	4/22	4/17	4/23	14/67	20.9
Heerlen Dutch	5/28	–	2/7	1/6	8/41	20
Total	8/46	4/34	7/39	9/47	28/166	16.9

A statistical analysis of the data in Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference for the sociolinguistic variables “age” and “education/occupation”. The comparison across the three groups did not produce significant results. However, it revealed a larger difference in the rate of *er* omission between migrant speakers, at 10.3%, and both dialect speakers and Heerlen Dutch speakers, who have omis-

10. As shown in Table 1, in the Heerlen Dutch corpus, there are no speakers categorized as “Heerlen Dutch”, “Low level of education”, and “Old” in one cell.

sion rates of 20.9% and 20% respectively. Statistically, the dialect and Heerlen Dutch speakers showed no significant difference in their rates of omission.

Table 3. Fisher's Exact Test measuring statistical differences between sociolinguistic variables in the quantificational construction

Migrant vs. dialect (10.3%, 20.9%)	p-value = 0.143
Migrant vs. Heerlen Dutch (10.3%, 20%)	p-value = 0.246
Dialect vs. Heerlen Dutch (20.9%, 20%)	p-value = 1
Age: (Y 17.6%, O 16%)	p-value = 0.838
Education: (L 15%, H 18.6%)	p-value = 0.679

Examples from the corpus of both the use and non-use of partitive *er* in the quantificational construction are given in (9)–(10).

(9) *daar zaten d'r ook maar heel weinig* [Mr. Gies]
 there were.sitting PART.WK also only very few
 'also there, there were only very few'

(10) *dus ik heb Ø ook geen gekregen* [Mr. Huls]
 thus I have also none received
 'therefore, I also received none'

An even closer examination of the data (Table 4 and Appendix B) reveals that the 166 tokens of an elided noun combined with a cardinal, or a weak quantifier are produced by 53 out of 67 speakers (79%). Of these 53 speakers, 34 speakers (64%) produce partitive *er* as required in standard Dutch, 16 speakers (30%) show variable use of *er*, and 3 speakers (6%) realize this type of construction without *er*.¹¹ The majority of the speakers thus produce this type of construction as in standard Dutch without showing much idiolectal variation.

Table 4. Absence and/or presence of partitive ER in quantificational construction

Elided noun combined with <i>cardinals</i> or <i>weak quantifiers</i>	<i>n</i> speakers (53)	Allowed in normative standard Dutch?
+ <i>er</i>	34 64%	yes
+/- <i>er</i>	16 30%	no
- <i>er</i>	3 6%	no
total	53 100%	

11. The 166 quantificational constructions were used by 53 speakers. Of these 53 speakers, 13 produced only one quantificational construction. Of these, 12 were with *er* and 1 was without *er*. This may have influenced the numbers of use or non-use instead of variable use.

4.2 The age/weight construction

The speakers produce far fewer tokens of elided nouns referring to *age* and *weight* than nouns combined with a cardinal or weak quantifier, namely 81 versus 166 tokens respectively. Out of 81 tokens (denominator at the bottom of the column “total absolute number” in Table 5), 14 tokens (numerator at the bottom of the column “total absolute number” in Table 5) include partitive *er*, whereas 67 tokens are produced without *er*, conform standard Dutch (see Table 5 and Appendix C).

Table 5. The distribution of the tokens of presence of *er* with *age* and *weight* (numerator) versus possible occurrences (absence and presence of ER) in denominator (spontaneous speech) in the *age/weight* construction

Tokens presence <i>er</i> $N=14$ and absence <i>er</i> $N=67$	LOW level of education		HIGH level of education		Total	
	Young	Old	Young	Old	Abs.	%
<i>language</i>						
Migrant	1/2	1/12	0/3	0/5	2/22	9.1%
Dialect	1/1	3/5	0/16	7/19	11/41	26.8%
Heerlen Dutch	0/4	–	1/7	0/7	1/18	5.6%
Total	2/7	4/17	1/26	7/31	14/81	17.3%

A statistical analysis in Table 6 shows that there are no statistical differences for the variables “age” or “education/occupation”. The comparison of the three language backgrounds does not yield a significant difference either. Like the variable “dialect” (26.8%), the variables “old” (22%) and “low education/occupation” (24%) show a relatively high percentage of presence of *er*. Statistically, there is no difference between the Heerlen Dutch group and the migrant group.

Table 6. Fisher’s Exact Test measuring statistical differences between sociolinguistic variables in the *age/weight* construction

Dialect vs. migrant (26.8%, 9.1%)	p-value = 0.116
Migrant vs. Heerlen Dutch (9.1%, 5.6%)	p-value = 1
Dialect vs. Heerlen Dutch (26.8%, 5.6%)	p-value = 0.084
Age (Y 9.1%, O 22%)	p-value = 0.140
Education (L 24%, H 14%)	p-value = 0.334

Most data concern the *age* construction. It was used with and without the partitive pronoun. The *weight* construction was only produced once. It was produced with the partitive pronoun. Some examples are provided in (11)–(13).

- (11) *ik was Ø twintig* [Jeroen]
 I was twenty
 'I was 20'
- (12) *die is d'r zeventwintig* [Mr. Arends]
 that.one is PART.WK twenty-seven
 '(s)he is 27'
- (13) *ik was zesenzeventig kilo toen ik erin ging en ik was er*
 I was seventy-six kilograms when I therein went and I was PART.WK
vijfennegentig toen ik eruit kwam [Dik]
 ninety-five when I thereout came
 'I weighed 67 kilograms when I went in and I weighed 95 when I came out'

The corpus shows at the level of the individual speaker that 38 speakers (out of 67, i.e., 56.7%) produce the construction with an elliptical noun referring to *age* or *weight*. The large majority, that is, 29 speakers out of 38 speakers (76.3%) produce this construction without partitive *er* as required in standard Dutch. 6 speakers (15.8%) produce *er*, whereas 3 speakers (7.9%) vary between absence and presence of *er*, as shown in Table 7.¹²

Table 7. Presence or absence of partitive *er* in *age/weight* construction

Elided noun combined with <i>age</i> or <i>weight</i>	<i>n</i> speakers (38)	Allowed in normative standard Dutch?
+ <i>er</i>	6 15.8%	no
+/- <i>er</i>	3 7.9%	no
- <i>er</i>	29 76.3%	yes
Total	38 100%	

Appendix D gives an overview of participants who produce partitive *er* not standardlike in one or both types of partitive constructions. Two of the speakers who use *er* in the *age/weight* construction do not produce it in the quantificational construction. This means that only two speakers (out of 28 possible), namely

12. The 81 *age/weight* constructions were used by 38 speakers. Of these 38 speakers, 20 produced only one *age/weight* construction. Of these, 5 were with *er* and 15 were without *er*. This may have influenced the numbers of use or non-use instead of variable use.

Mr. Rest and Mr. Bon, reveal overlap regarding the use of the two non-standard constructions. Interestingly, both speakers belong to the language group of dialect speakers and to the group of older speakers (see Appendix A). In the next section (in Section 5.3), we will propose a syntactic analysis of the two types of constructions, both in standard Dutch and in Heerlen Dutch. We will use the overlap regarding the use of the two non-standard constructions as one of the arguments for distinguishing the quantificational and the *age/weight* construction as two different types of construction.

5. Discussion

In this section we discuss the results with respect to the research questions that were formulated in Section 3.1. We make a distinction between the quantificational construction (Section 5.1) and the *age/weight* construction (Section 5.2). In Section 5.3, we propose a syntactic analysis of the constructions.

5.1 The quantificational construction

The results show that all speakers omit the partitive pronoun in the quantificational construction, which suggests that the omission is a rather stable feature of Heerlen Dutch. Younger speakers do not differ significantly from older speakers and speakers with a lower education/occupation do not significantly differ from the speakers with a higher education/occupation and the percentages of omission for these groups are more or less the same. Although the comparison between the three language backgrounds did not yield significant results (research question (i)), the percentages were the highest for Heerlen Dutch speakers and dialect speakers, and there was no statistical difference between the results. This suggests that the omission of the partitive pronoun in the quantificational construction in Heerlen Dutch may be due to influence from the dialect (research question (i)), which is still alive in Heerlen. To verify this possibility, we checked the answers given by the two speakers of the Heerlen dialect to relevant questions in a questionnaire from the Diversity in Dutch DP Design DiDDD project (Corver et al. 2011). Dialect speakers were asked how they would phrase certain sentences in their local dialect. Several of these sentences contain the partitive pronoun *er* in a quantificational construction. The answers to the relevant questions show that the partitive pronoun is both used (14) and omitted (15) by the two speakers of the Heerlen dialect in the DiDDD corpus, as exemplified by answers given by one of the respondents.

- (14) *Dees kinger hei leëze ging beuk, mar die doa leëze d'r*
 these children here read no books but those there read PART.WK
juus vöal.
 on.the.contrary many
 'These children do not read books, but those, on the contrary, read many.'
- (15) *Uëver auto's gekald, deë va d'r Jan is prachtig! Ich wil Ø óch zoeë inne.*
 about cars spoken the.one of the Jan is beautiful I want also such one
 'Speaking about cars, Jan's car is beautiful! I want also to have such a one.'

That the partitive pronoun can be omitted in the dialect, as the results of the corpus research suggest, is also supported by analogy with other *er*-constructions in Heerlen Dutch. In Section 3, we have shown that there are various types of *er*. Cornips (2003) shows that, for instance, existential *er* (16) and expletive *er* (17) can also be omitted in Heerlen Dutch. It may be the case that these possible omissions are present in the Heerlen dialect as well. The influence of the local dialect on Heerlen Dutch has been shown by Cornips (1994) for other constructions as well.

- (16) *liefste 's nachts als Ø geen maan was*
 preferably at night when no moon was
 'preferably at night, when there was no moon'
- (17) *'t ziet Ø niet uit*
 it looks not out
 'It looks bad.'

In research question (ii) it was asked if there is sociolinguistic evidence in Heerlen Dutch for linguistically distinguishing the *age/weight* construction from the quantificational construction. Based on Cornips (1994, 1998) the hypothesis was formulated that two seemingly identical constructions might be distinguished if there is an important sociolinguistic difference in their use. This research question can only be answered when the results of the analysis of the *age/weight* data have been discussed, which will be done in the following subsection.

5.2 The age/weight construction

Since the questionnaire of the DiDDD project (Corver et al. 2011, see Section 5.1) did not contain any questions about the use of *er* with *age* or *weight*, a small questionnaire was submitted at the beginning of 2020 by e-mail to four dialect speakers of the Heerlen dialect or a closely related dialect. According to one of the dialect speakers, the partitive pronoun has to be present in the *age/weight* construction, according to the other three speakers, the use of the partitive pro-

noun *er* is optional in both the *age* and the *weight* construction. Sentences (18) for *age* and (19) for *weight* were formulated by one of the dialect speakers who only accepts the use of the partitive pronoun but not its omission in the *age/weight* construction.

- (18) *Ich bèn der tachtig.*
 I am PART.WK eighty
 ‘I am eighty (years).’
- (19) *Ich waeg der tachtig.*
 I weigh PART.WK eighty
 ‘I weigh eighty (kilograms).’

Since the Heerlen Dutch speakers also use the partitive pronoun variably in the *age/weight* construction, it could be the case that there is influence from the dialect (research question (i)).

Heerlen Dutch is not the only variety of standard Netherlandic Dutch in which the partitive pronoun can be used in the *age/weight* construction. Sleeman (2023) shows that in a Grammaticality Judgment Task that was submitted to 15 L1 speakers of Belgian standard Dutch, one of the national varieties of standard Dutch, 93% of the participants accepted a sentence containing an elided noun referring to *age* combined with the partitive pronoun, as in (20). The omission of the partitive pronoun, as in (21), was accepted by 67% of the participants.

- (20) [*Marie is 25 jaar*] en Jan is er 27.
 Marie is 25 years and Jan is PART.WK 27
 ‘Marie is 25 years and Jan is 27.’
- (21) [*Marie is 25 jaar*] en Jan is Ø 27.
 Marie is 25 years and Jan is 27
 ‘Marie is 25 years and Jan is 27.’

With *weight*, the partitive pronoun, as in (22), was also accepted by 93% of the L1 speakers of Belgian Dutch, whereas its omission, as in (23), was accepted by 60% of the participants. It has to be noticed that the lexical verb in the test sentence was ‘weigh’ and not ‘be’, the verb that was used by one of the Heerlen Dutch speakers.¹³

13. The answers that were submitted to the questions in the questionnaire by the dialect speakers showed that some dialect speakers prefer the verb ‘to weigh’ and find the use of the verb ‘to be’ “weird” or do not accept it, as the dialect speaker who formulated sentence (19).

- (22) [*Katrien weegt 57 kilo*] *en Anneke weegt er* 59.
 Katrien weighs 57 kilograms and Anneke weighs PART.WK 59
 ‘Katrien weight 57 kilograms and Anneke weighs 59.’
- (23) [*Katrien weegt 57 kilo*] *en Anneke weegt Ø* 59.
 Katrien weighs 57 kilograms and Anneke weighs 59
 ‘Katrien weight 57 kilograms and Anneke weighs 59.’

This result suggests that the use of the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction is a general feature of southern Dutch.^{14, 15}

Half of the Belgian Dutch speakers who participated in the Grammaticality Judgment Task were aged 20 to 40. The other half was over 40. This suggests that, in Belgian Dutch, the use of the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction is a stable feature.

14. The variable use of *er* in the quantificational construction is not found in the Belgian Dutch data. The use of *er* was accepted in almost 100% of the cases. Its omission was accepted in less than 20% of the cases (Sleeman, 2024). The Belgian participants who accepted *er* in the *age/weight* construction came both from the eastern part and the western part of Flanders. One of the reviewers suggests that the use or acceptance of *er* in both Dutch Limburg and Belgium could be explained by the fact that, in the first half of the 19th century, the Netherlands and Belgium or Dutch Limburg and Belgian Limburg were united; see Section 2. This period was relatively short, however. Furthermore, Sleeman (2023) shows that the L1 speakers of Netherlandic Dutch accepted the use of *er* with *weight* in 47% of the cases (and its omission in 67% of the cases). More research is needed to find out if *er* is also used or accepted in the *age/weight* construction in other parts of the Netherlands than Dutch Limburg.

15. According to Hanse (1987), in French, the partitive pronoun is not used with the verb *peser* in its intransitive use. However, in Sleeman’s (2023, fn. 5) opinion, there are French speakers who use the partitive pronoun with an elided noun in the *weight* construction. This is confirmed by a search on Internet, where examples like (i) can be found.

- (i) *Je pesais 120 kilos, j'en pèse 74 aujourd'hui.*
 I weighed 120 kilograms I PART.CL weigh 74 today
 ‘I weighed 120 kilograms, I now weigh 74.’

With *age*, the partitive pronoun must be used according to normative grammars, but French differs from Dutch, because a transitive verb is used, namely *avoir* ‘to have’.

- (ii) *Jean a 25 ans et Marie en a 23.*
 Jean has 25 years and Marie PART.CL has 23
 ‘Jean is 25 and Marie is 23.’

Although there were French-speaking migrants in Heerlen, their number was relatively low, namely around 10% (Cornips 1994). Therefore, the influence of French on the use of the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction is probably rather low. French shows, however, that the use of the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction is a typological feature of some languages. It is also used for instance in Italian in this construction (Sleeman 2023).

As for Heerlen Dutch, the percentages (but not the statistical analysis of the data) show that the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction is especially used by dialect speakers, older speakers, and speakers with a lower education (research question (i)). The fact that *er* is especially present in the speech of dialect speakers confirms that this feature of Heerlen Dutch originates in the dialect. The fact that it is especially used by older speakers suggests that language change is going on, and that the use of *er* in the *age/weight* construction is disappearing. The similar low percentages of *er* presence in the data from both Heerlen Dutch speakers and migrant speakers, which do not significantly differ from each other, also point towards ongoing language change.

In Heerlen Dutch, the partitive pronoun can be used and omitted, both in the quantificational construction and in the *age/weight* construction. This raises the question if there is reason to distinguish the two constructions in Heerlen Dutch (research question (ii)). Three arguments support the notion of two distinct structures within Heerlen Dutch. Firstly, the omission of *er* in the quantificational construction is consistent across all sociolinguistic groups, signifying a stable feature. Secondly, the *age/weight* construction shows a completely different pattern: the *age/weight er* is predominantly used by dialect speakers, the elderly, and less educated groups, suggesting variability and a potential shift towards alignment with standard Dutch, where *er* is usually absent. Lastly, the specific usage by two older dialect speakers, Mr. Rest and Mr. Bon, who omit *er* in quantificational constructions yet use it in *age/weight* constructions, exemplifies the dichotomy, reinforcing the existence of two separate structural patterns in Heerlen Dutch.

In the *age/weight* construction the use of *er* does not seem to be a stable situation. It could disappear in this construction from Heerlen Dutch, leaving the construction without the use of *er* as the only possibility, as in standard Netherlandic Dutch. The fact that there are two speakers, Mr. Rest and Mr. Bon, both older dialect speakers (see Section 4.2), who omit the partitive pronoun in the quantificational construction and use it in the *age/weight* construction also suggests that we are dealing with two different types of constructions in Heerlen Dutch (see also Cornips 1998).

If there are two different constructions, which can both be used with and without *er* in Heerlen Dutch, this raises the question how these constructions with their two variants can be linguistically analyzed. We propose an analysis in the next subsection.

5.3 Linguistic analysis

In this section we propose a linguistic analysis of the quantificational and the *age/weight* construction in Heerlen Dutch, with and without a partitive pronoun (research question (iii)).

5.3.1 *The quantificational construction*

In Heerlen Dutch the quantificational construction can be used with or without the partitive pronoun. In the Heerlen Dutch corpus, the elliptical noun phrase with which the partitive pronoun is combined, can be the direct object of the verb (24) or it can function as the semantic, postverbal, subject in a construction that contains the existential/presentational pronoun *er* or a deictic pronoun such as *daar* ‘there’ (25). In that case the verb can be an unaccusative verb, in most cases the verb *zijn* ‘to be’, as in the existential construction (26), or an unergative verb, as in the presentational construction (27). In the Example (28) from Heerlen Dutch, existential *er* has been omitted.

- (24) *ja ik heb er ook een* [Jan]
 yes I have PART.WK also one
 ‘yes, I also have one’
- (25) *daar zat er een-tje* [Nico]
 there sat PART.WK ONE-DIM
 ‘there was sitting one’
- (26) *er zijn er genoeg hier* [Henk]
 EXIST are PART.WK enough here
 ‘there are enough here’
- (27) *d'r slaapt d'r ene bij haar op de kamer* [Karel]
 PRESENT sleeps PART.WK one with her on the room
 ‘one shares her sleeping room’
- (28) *en Ø was er nog eentje* [Nico]
 and was PART.WK another one
 ‘and there was another one’

In the same contexts, the partitive pronoun can be omitted in the Heerlen Dutch corpus.

- (29) *want ja we hebben Ø enkele ja* [Michiel]
 because yes we have some yes
 ‘because we have indeed some’

- (30) *en dat waren Ø toch ook veel* [Mr. Sole]
 and that were however also many
 ‘and that was a lot’
- (31) *d’r zijn Ø genoeg* [Mr. Bon]
 EXIST are enough
 ‘there are enough’
- (32) *daar staan Ø nou altijd twee van te koop* [Mr. Jansen]
 there stand well always two of to buy
 ‘there are always two for sale’
- (33) *nee Ø zijn Ø meerdere* [Piet]
 no are several
 ‘no, there are several’

Both the overt partitive pronoun and the empty pronoun have an anaphoric or cataphoric function. In general, the referent can be found in the linguistic or situational context and can be formed by all kinds of nouns.¹⁶ In (34), the partitive pronoun refers to the digestif with the name Jägermeister.

- (34) *of een Jägermeister pak en die smaakt dan zo lekker hè heb er*
 or a Jägermeister take and that.one tastes then so good right have PART.WK
nog een [Dik]
 another one
 ‘or I take a Jägermeister, and it tastes so good that I take another one’

In Kranendonk’s (2010) analysis, the partitive pronoun is the head of a noun phrase and moves to a dominating position within the sentence structure. Since the movement of the partitive pronoun has to respect Subjacency (Belletti & Rizzi 1981; Barbiers 2017) and the Empty Category Principle (Kayne 1981), the partitive pronoun cannot be moved out of a prepositional phrase. In standard Dutch this is indeed the case. Since (35) is also ungrammatical without the partitive pronoun, we assume that if the partitive pronoun is left out, we are dealing with an empty

16. There are some sentences in the corpus in which the partitive pronoun does not seem to have an anaphoric or cataphoric function, but in which we rather seem to be dealing with a fixed expression, as in (i) and (ii).

- (i) *dat kon er maar ene zijn* [Dik]
 that could PART.WK only one be
 ‘that could only be one person’
- (ii) *ja zo ben ik er dus een-tje hè* [Mr. Quint]
 yes so am I PART.WK thus one-DIM right
 ‘yes, I am such a person’

pronoun, which, just like the overt pronoun, is extracted from the noun phrase within the prepositional phrase in (35).^{17, 18}

- (35) **Ik denk (er) aan drie.*
 I think PART.WK about three
 'I am thinking of three.'

Since the Heerlen Dutch corpus does not contain any overt or covert partitive pronoun in combination with an elliptical prepositional phrase, this may suggest that Heerlen Dutch behaves like standard Dutch with respect to the extraction of the overt or empty pronoun out of a prepositional phrase.

5.3.2 *The age/weight construction*

We have considered the elided noun combined with cardinals or weak quantifiers, that is, the quantificational construction, as a different type of construction than the elided noun referring to *age* or *weight*. Linguistically we will treat them separately. There are at least two reasons to tease these apart: (i) constructions referring to *age* or *weight* generally contain cardinals, but no quantifiers and (ii) all tokens in the Heerlen Dutch data with elided nouns referring to *age* and *weight* only include the copula *zijn* 'to be' or copulas such as *worden* 'become', whereas the cardinals/weak quantifier tokens also include lexical verbs: transitive, unaccusative and unergative verbs.¹⁹

17. The ungrammaticality of similar examples in Heerlen Dutch is confirmed by the first author of this paper, who is an L1 speaker of Heerlen Dutch.

18. Marcel den Dikken (p.c.) suggests to analyze the quantificational construction without *er* as a split topicalization construction, in which the (empty) noun has moved to a sentence-initial position. This would account for the absence of *er*, as in the following split topicalization example (i), taken from Corver (1997).

- (i) *Boeken_i heeft hij [(meer dan) genoeg t_i].*
 books has he (more) than enough
 'He has (more than) enough books.'

This is an interesting suggestion, although overt split topicalization does not occur in the corpus. For all contexts without *er* it could be checked whether theoretically it would allow split topicalization. We leave this for future research.

19. If in the *weight* construction the verb 'weigh' would be used, it could be analyzed as an intransitive verb (without *er*) or as a transitive verb (with or without *er*); see Sleeman (2023).

In Heerlen Dutch, the *age/weight* construction can be used with (36) or without the partitive pronoun (37). As opposed to the quantificational construction, in the *age/weight* construction the partitive pronoun generally does not have an anaphoric or cataphoric function, which is a third reason to tease the two constructions apart. In the *age* construction the referent is 'year' if it is specified (38), but 'year' can also be left unspecified in the linguistic context, as in (36), (37) or (39), because it is clear from the construction with the verb 'to be' and the larger context that *age* is meant.

- (36) *ik was d'r vijftien en zij veertien* [Leo]
 I was PART.WK fifteen and she fourteen
 'I was fifteen and she was fourteen'
- (37) *ik was Ø vierenveertig toen ik begon* [Mr. Balk]
 I was forty-four when I began
 'I was forty-four when I started'
- (38) *mijn vader die is Ø vierenvijftig geworden vierenvijftig jaar geworden*
 my father that one is fifty-four become fifty-four years become
 'my father has reached the age of fifty-four, fifty-four years' [Mr. Arends]
- (39) *als je Ø dan zestig bent* [Mr. Roos]
 if you then sixty are
 'if you are sixty years old then'

In most cases, the verb is *zijn* 'to be', but there are also some utterances in the Heerlen Dutch corpus in which the verb is *worden* 'to become'.

- (40) *ik ben ik word er nou tweeënzeventig* [Mr. Bon]
 I am I become PART.WK now seventy-two
 'I am, I will be seventy-two now.'
- (41) *ik werd Ø toen zevenentwintig* [Mr. Vetten]
 I became then twenty-seven
 'I then turned 72.'

The *weight* construction was only used once with an elided noun. Example (42) is repeated from Example (13). Since the verb is 'to be' here, the elided noun could refer to 'year'. But since the partitive pronoun has an anaphoric function here, referring to the noun 'kilograms', there can be no confusion.

- (42) *ik was zesenzeventig kilo toen ik erin ging en ik was er*
 I was seventy-six kilograms when I therein went and I was PART.WK
vijfennegentig toen ik eruit kwam [Dik]
 ninety-five when I thereout came
 'I weighed 67 kilograms when I went in and I weighed 95 when I came out.'

In the *age/weight* construction we analyze the verb as a copular verb. We assume that the overt partitive pronoun (or its covert counterpart) is moved from within the predicate NP. That extraction from within a predicate NP is possible, is also shown by the use of the partitive pronoun in the standard Dutch Example (43), in which the verb is a copular verb, but in which we are dealing with an anaphoric construction and not with an *age/weight* construction.

- (43) "Is hij een dief?" "Ja, hij is er één."
 is he a thief yes he is PART.WK one
 'Is he a thief?' "Yes, he is one.'

The distinction between the quantificational construction and the *age/weight* construction emerges thus from the type of verb that is used in the construction and the (non-)anaphoricity/cataphoricity of the (empty) pronoun.²⁰ Both constructions can contain an overt partitive pronoun or a covert one.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown that both in the quantificational construction and in the *age/weight* construction, the partitive pronoun may be used or may be left out in Heerlen Dutch, but that the two constructions differ in several aspects. Therefore, we have proposed different linguistic analyses for the two constructions.

20. Marcel den Dikken (p.c.) suggests to analyze the *age/weight* construction in which the overt pronoun does not have an anaphoric or cataphoric function as an affective construction. Heerlen Dutch does indeed have another affective construction, namely a construction with a dative reflexive pronoun (Cornips & Hulk 1996):

- (i) *Ik ga voetballen en ik drink me er éentje.* [Dik]
 I go play.football and I drink me PART.WK ONE.DIM
 'I go to play football, and I drink a good glass.'

The dative reflexive pronoun can also be left out, like *er*. It is not clear, however, whether *er* has an affective function. Furthermore, *er* can also have an anaphoric or cataphoric function. The suggestion is, however, interesting and deserves more research, which goes beyond the scope of this paper.

We hypothesized that the variability of the use of the partitive pronoun in both constructions would be the result of the influence of the local dialect on Heerlen Dutch. Data from the DiDDD project (Corver et al. 2011) confirm that the partitive pronoun is both used and omitted in the quantificational construction in the Heerlen dialect. The results of a small questionnaire show that this could also be the case for the *age/weight* construction.

We have shown that Heerlen Dutch presents stable social variation with respect to the use or omission of the partitive pronoun in the quantificational construction. We have shown that in the *age/weight* construction, the use of the partitive pronoun by younger speakers is decreasing which suggests that language change is going on.

Our quantitative study has made clear that the variability of the use of the partitive pronoun in the quantificational and the *age/weight* construction are not errors but typological features of Heerlen Dutch. We have shown that the non-use of a partitive pronoun in the quantificational construction also occurs in other languages, such as standard German, and that the use of the partitive pronoun in the *age/weight* construction also occurs in standard Belgian Dutch.

More research is needed to gain further insight into variability of the use of the partitive pronoun in Heerlen Dutch, also in other constructions. Since the interviews on which the Heerlen Dutch corpus is based took place around 1990, it would also be interesting to know if the same type of variability is still present in Heerlen Dutch nowadays. We leave this for future research.


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Appendix A. Sociolinguistic variables “age”, “level of education/occupation” and “language background” of the 67 speakers in Cornips’ (1994) Heerlen Dutch corpus

	Young, low	Young, high	Old, low	Old, high	Total
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	
Parents not from Limburg (1) = Migrant	Bert Dik Martijn	Frits Eelco Berend Nico Rene	Zwart Mije Aaf Vetten Retten Menen	Roos Ven Balk Sole Quint	3 5 6 5 19
L1 speakers is dialect (2) = Dialect	Wybe Frank Karel Tom Henk	Roel Jan Peter Jos Rob Jelle Mart/ Nelis	Jansen Gies Bel Rest Duif Bast	Ruiter Huls Verbaan Bon Zink Huif Koren Berk Arends Pelk	5 8 6 10 29

Appendix A. (continued)

	Young, low	Young, high	Old, low	Old, high	Total
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	
Parents are dialect speakers from Heerlen or Limburg	Anton Cor	Paul Leo	No speakers	Bender Ris	
L1 speakers of Heerlen Dutch (3) = Heerlen Dutch	Ruud Geert Michiel Gijs Ralph Piet	Arne Andre Jeroen Stef Joop Ray		Wild	
	8	8	0	3	19
Total	16	21	12	18	67

Appendix B. (Non-)use of *er* in the quantificational construction with speakers grouped together according to sociolinguistic variables

Name	Number of times with <i>er</i>	Number of times without <i>er</i>
Bert	3	
Dik	6	
Martijn	3	1
Wybe		
Frank		
Karel	1	
Tom		
Henk	2	2
Anton	2	
Cor	1	
Ruud	14	1
Geert	1	
Michiel	1	2
Gijs	2	
Ralph		
Piet	2	2
Frits	2	
Eelco	3	
Berend	1	

Appendix B. (continued)

Name	Number of times with <i>er</i>	Number of times without <i>er</i>
Nico	3	
Rene	5	1
Roel		
Jan	3	1
Peter	1	
Jos	1	
Mart/Nelis	4	1
Rob	4	2
Jelle		
Paul		
Leo		
Arne		2
Andre	2	
Jeroen	1	
Stef	2	
Joop		
Ray		
Zwart	2	
Mije	2	
Aaf	1	
Vetten	2	
Retten	2	
Menen	3	
Jansen	5	1
Gies	6	
Bel		
Rest		1
Duif	2	2
Bast	5	
Roos	2	1
Ven	2	
Balk	2	2
Sole	1	1
Quint	7	
Ruiter	2	
Huls	3	2

Appendix B. (continued)

Name	Number of times with <i>er</i>	Number of times without <i>er</i>
Verbaan	1	
Bon		2
Zink	5	
Huif	3	
Koren	1	
Berk	1	
Arends	3	
Pelk		
Bender		
Ris	3	1
Wild	2	
total	138	28

Appendix C. (Non-)use of *er* in the *age/weight* construction with speakers grouped together according to sociolinguistic variables

Name	Number of times without <i>er</i>	Number of times with <i>er</i>
Bert		
Dik		1 (weight)
Martijn	1	
Wybe		
Frank		1
Karel		
Tom		
Henk		
Anton	2	
Cor		
Ruud		
Geert	1	
Michiel		
Gijs	1	
Ralph		
Piet		
Frits		
Eelco	1	

Appendix C. (continued)

Name	Number of times without <i>er</i>	Number of times with <i>er</i>
Berend		
Nico		
Rene	2	
Roel	1	
Jan		
Peter	1	
Jos	3	
Mart/Nelis	6	
Rob	5	
Jelle		
Paul		
Leo		1
Arne	1	
Andre		
Jeroen	3	
Stef	1	
Joop	1	
Ray		
Zwart	2	
Mije	5	
Aaf		
Vetten	3	
Retten	1	
Menen		1
Jansen		
Gies	1	
Bel		2
Rest	1	1
Duif		
Bast		
Roos	2	
Ven	2	
Balk	1	
Sole		
Quint		
Ruiter		

Appendix C. (continued)

Name	Number of times without <i>er</i>	Number of times with <i>er</i>
Huls		
Verbaan	1	
Bon		1
Zink	1	1
Huif		
Koren	1	
Berk	4	
Arends	5	5
Pelk		
Bender	4	
Ris	1	
Wild	2	
total	67	14

Appendix D. Individual speakers who produce partitive *er* not standardlike in the two types of partitive constructions

Name	Elided noun combined with <i>cardinals</i> or <i>weak quantifiers</i>	Elided noun refers to <i>age</i> or <i>weight</i>
	– Partitive <i>er</i> (<i>N</i> =19)	+ Partitive <i>er</i> (<i>N</i> =9)
Dik		1
Martijn	1	
Frank		1
Henk	2	
Ruud	1	
Michiel	2	
Piet	2	
Rene	1	
Jan	1	
Mart/ Nelis	1	
Rob	2	
Leo		1
Arne	2	
Menen		1

Appendix D. (continued)

Name	Elided noun combined with <i>cardinals</i> or <i>weak quantifiers</i>	Elided noun refers to <i>age</i> or <i>weight</i>
	– Partitive <i>er</i> (<i>N</i> = 19)	+ Partitive <i>er</i> (<i>N</i> = 9)
Jansen	1	
Bel		2
Rest	1	1
Duif	2	
Roos	1	
Balk	2	
Sole	1	
Huls	2	
Bon	2	1
Zink		1
Arends		5
Ris	1	
total	28	14

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