

## (Defective) Functions of Dutch MITS - Summary

From the old Dutch adjective MIDI, which has only been handed down as a toponymical element in Medele, Melleke and Middag, among others, the Middle Dutch adverb MITS emerged, which had already become a preposition in medieval times. As a preposition, MITS gets a demonstrative *dat/desen*, which will be explained in a subordinate clause. With the time this demonstrative ceased to exist and MITS became the conjunction still used in the present Netherlands. In the 21st century, MITS knows a variety of occurrences and constructions in the Dutch-speaking area, not all of which are accepted or even described in descriptive reference works; the point of view of the prescriptive language advisors is even stricter. This thesis attempts to get a clear picture about MITS, observing this word from multiple points of view: synchronic and diachronic, individual cases and text corpora, Flanders and the Netherlands. I made the following observations.

The *preposition* MITS, described in many reference works as not part of the standard language and as a Belgian-Dutch language phenomenon, is used in the entire Dutch-speaking area. However, the use of MITS in the Netherlands is limited to official texts (such as legal texts or contracts) or text-parts (such as the title of articles or website-disclaimers); in Belgium, MITS is only used cautiously or even avoided by newspapers and magazines that deliberately reflect on language. Website-disclaimers are relatively new, legal texts are not considered as standard language, titles of articles aren't always part of the text corpora. So came the wrong impression into existence that MITS as a preposition doesn't occur in the Netherlands. Why the use of it in the Netherlands appears to be so limited and in Belgium so free, can yet not be surely explained. Due to reference works the *conditional preposition* MITS only exists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are older quotations of the conditional preposition MITS than the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but why does it occur more often in the last two hundred years than before? The before the 19<sup>th</sup> century most commonly combined substantive with the (instrumental) preposition MITS is *conditie* (condition). The construction MITS CONDITIE shows during the 19<sup>th</sup> century relatively less and less quotations, but since than the *conditional* preposition MITS occurs more and more. Therefore, the thesis is plausible that MITS CONDITIE (with MITS in an instrumental sense) has been lexicalized to the conditional preposition MITS.

MITS is a very individual word. It combines a well described semantic with an unusual syntactic flexibility. It is more than seven hundred years old and has renewed and transformed itself multiple times in the last fifty years. Its strong argumentative power

makes clear communication possible, even in elliptic constructions. This thesis dedicates MITS a more detailed attention than ever before in the literature, but further research is sure to reveal much more.