Handle your verb clusters with care

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This talk starts out from a set of data taken from the SAND-project (Barbiers et al. 2005, 2008) consisting of native speaker judgments on 31 verb cluster orderings in 267 dialects of Dutch. I will show that these data have the potential of deepening our understanding of the theoretical analysis of verb clusters in Dutch, but at the same time there are four reasons to be cautious about incorporating the data set as is:

1. **missing data**: not every cluster order was part of the dialect interview in every dialect location, which means the data table contains a number of gaps
2. **different methodologies**: some cluster orders were queried by means of translation questions, others involved an actual judgment
3. **different frequencies**: some cluster orders are highly frequent, others are extremely rare
4. **different systems**: the data set contains both Dutch and Frisian dialects (in uneven proportion), and these two languages are known to have very different verb cluster systems

The bulk of the talk will be devoted to assessing the extent to which each of these four properties has an impact on any theoretical conclusions that can be drawn from this data set.

References
