GEOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY OF THE LEFT-PERIPHERY:
THE CASE OF DUTCH AND GERMAN IMPERATIVES

SJEF BARBIERS

Abstract

This paper investigates cross-linguistic word order differences in imperative clauses in varieties of German and Dutch which are all asymmetric SOV varieties with verb second in main clauses. Cross-linguistic contrasts in the possibility to front a constituent in imperatives, which is possible in German, impossible in Dutch and restricted to distal D-pronouns in eastern Dutch, are derived from the interaction between a constant syntactic structure shared by all varieties under discussion and a variable morphosyntactic feature specification of the imperative verb. The morphosyntactic features that are crucial for the explanation of the word order contrasts are distal and person. These features together define a second person pronoun and it is shown that they have to be present in the highest layer (CP) of an imperative clause to mark the clause as imperative. Language varieties differ how they achieve this: by verb movement (German), by a combination of verb movement and movement of the silent second person subject (Dutch), or by the combination of partial subject incorporation into the verb and movement of a distal D-pronoun (eastern Dutch). Which option a language chooses is determined by the feature specification of the imperative verb. The analysis thus supports the Minimalist hypothesis that there is no variation in the syntactic module of the mental grammar and that apparent syntactic variation can be reduced to differences in morphosyntactic feature specification. The analysis also derives differences between declaratives and imperatives in the licensing of silent pronouns from the interaction between a constant syntactic structure and the different location of the licensing feature distal: in C in declarative clauses but in v in imperative clauses. Finally, the paper proposes that distal D-pronouns, second person pronouns and imperative clauses belong to a natural class defined by the feature distal.

1. Introduction

Since the late nineties of the past century a new research framework has emerged that combines dialectological, sociolinguistic and generative approaches to syntactic variation (cf. www.dialectsyntax.org). This framework is a natural implementation of what is called the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work) according to which there are no global syntactic parameters, i.e. parameters defined over entire languages. The syntactic module is assumed to consist of a small number of universal building principles. What looks like syntactic variation, e.g. variation in word order or variation with respect to the overt realization of constituents, is taken to be the result of the interaction between these fixed syntactic principles and principles at other linguistic, cognitive and social layers. In terms of figure 1 below, syntactic variation arises in the interaction between the invariant principles in the core syntactic module with the mental lexicon, morphophonological spell-out, information structure, processing and other cognitive principles (e.g. complexity), physical restrictions, and sociolinguistic factors such as age, gender, social class, ethnic group (cf. Barbiers, to appear, for further discussion).

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1 Previous versions of this paper were presented at colloquia of the universities of Brussels, Groningen, Nijmegen, Leiden, Utrecht, Lisbon and Konstanz and at the Meertens Institute. I would like to thank the respective audiences for helpful discussion and suggestions.
This paper, a case study on word order variation in imperative clauses, concentrates on the interaction between the syntactic module, the mental lexicon (henceforth Lexicon) and the level of morphophonological spell-out (henceforth PF). The Minimalist hypothesis is that certain cases of word order variation and variation in spell-out can be reduced to the interaction between fixed syntactic principles and variation in the morphosyntactic feature bundles of lexical items. This hypothesis leads to the expectation that we can find correlations between word order differences and differences in morphosyntactic feature bundles. The best way to discover and test such correlations is to compare large numbers of closely related dialects as these share most of their linguistic properties, reducing the interference of other variables. Large scale dialect data collections provide an excellent opportunity to see the syntactic effects of minor differences in morphosyntactic feature specification (cf. Kayne 2005) and have become increasingly available in recent years (cf. www.dialectsyntax.org).

The correlations to be discussed in this paper include: (i) The correlation between having a 2p singular pronoun DU and lacking a double verbal agreement paradigm (Postma 2011); (ii) The correlation between having a unique imperative form in the verbal paradigm and the possibility of constituent fronting in imperatives (Barbiers 2007); (iii) A correlation that has not been observed before between partial subject pronoun incorporation into the C position and a type of fronting in imperatives that is limited to distal D-pronouns.

The Dutch data in the case study of this paper are primarily from the Dutch dialect syntactic database DynaSAND (www.meertens.knaw.nl/sand) and the Dutch morphophonological database GTR (www.meertens.knaw.nl/mimore) that contain systematically collected data from over 500 locations in The Netherlands, Belgium and north-west France. As we will see, the cartographic tool that comes with these databases enable us to visualize potential correlations which makes it easier to analyze them. The geographic distribution of linguistic variables will also be shown to be relevant for the understanding of exceptions to these correlations. The case study of this paper is cartographic in a second sense, as it involves research into the fine syntactic structure of the left-periphery of imperative and declarative clauses with the goal to find out which syntactic positions there are in the left-peripheral hierarchy, what their properties are and how they interact, a kind of research roughly along the lines set out for cartographic research in Rizzi (1997) and subsequent work.

2. The puzzle: Microvariation in the word order of imperative clauses

German and Dutch are closely related Germanic languages that share many syntactic properties. They are both asymmetric verb second languages, which means that the finite verb is in clause initial position in main clauses but in clause final position in embedded clauses. Maximally one constituent can precede the finite verb in main declarative clauses, whence the term verb second. It has been observed that the word order properties of Dutch imperative clauses differ from those in German (Barbiers 2007, Koopman 2007). While it is possible to place a constituent before the finite verb in German imperatives (1a,b), the same is strongly grammatical in Dutch (1c,d). This is illustrated in (1). The sentences in (1c,d) would be grammatical if *dat boek* and *mu* followed the imperative verb. Middle Dutch behaves like German (1e), while fronting in imperatives is possible in certain eastern Dutch dialects but limited to distal D-pronouns (1f).
This paper argues that German and Middle Dutch allow fronting in imperatives because they have a unique imperative verb form, as opposed to Dutch in which there is syncretism of the forms for 1singular and the imperative. Eastern Dutch has the same syncretism, but in this dialect group fronting is possible because there is partial subject incorporation into C, the position of the finite verb in imperatives. A proper elaboration and understanding of the analysis presupposes a syntactic analysis of the left-periphery in German and Dutch clauses, which will be provided first.

3. Background: The left-periphery in Germanic V2 languages

3.1. Verb second

The older literature gives two competing syntactic analyses of declarative verb second clauses. Den Besten (1983) claims that the finite verb is always in C in main clauses, i.e. in the position that is occupied by the complementizer in embedded clauses. The position of the subject varies. It may directly precede or follow the finite verb. If the latter, the position preceding the finite verb (traditionally called SpecCP) can be filled by some other constituent, such as a contrastive topic or an adverb. This analysis is schematically presented in (2). The second analysis (Zwart 1993) claims that the finite verb is in I (the position associated with tense and agreement) in subject initial main clauses, while it is in C when the subject follows the verb. The subject itself is always in the same structural position, SpecIP, the position associated with the licensing of nominative case by finite tense and agreement. This is illustrated in (3).

(2) Den Besten (1983): position V.fin constant

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{SpecCP} & \text{C} & \text{SpecIP} & \text{I} \\
(i) & \text{subject} & \text{verb} & \text{____} & \text{____} \\
(ii) & \text{topic} & \text{verb} & \text{subject} & \text{____} \\
\end{array}
\]

(3) Zwart (1993): position subject constant

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{SpecCP} & \text{C} & \text{SpecIP} & \text{I} \\
(i) & \text{____} & \text{subject} & \text{verb} \\
(ii) & \text{topic} & \text{verb} & \text{subject} \\
\end{array}
\]

Postma (2011) argues that these two analyses are not competing analyses, but rather define two different sets of language varieties. Assuming that different syntactic positions may correspond to different morphophonological spell-out he argues that a Den Besten variety may have two alternants for a subject pronoun, depending on whether the pronoun is in SpecIP or in SpecCP. An example of such a variety is given in (4). The finite verb in Den Besten varieties is always in C, so these do not have alternating finite verb forms. Zwart varieties show the reverse pattern. Since the subject pronoun is always in SpecIP there are no alternating pronominal forms. However, the finite verb can either be in I or in C and may show different agreement morphemes (henceforth double agreement paradigms) depending on these positions. This is illustrated in (5).
(4) Den Besten varieties: two subject positions – two subject forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>du</td>
<td>lóp-s</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>walk.2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dan)</td>
<td>lóp-s</td>
<td>tich</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limburgian

(5) Zwart varieties: two verb positions – alternating verbal agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>jij</td>
<td>loop-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dan)</td>
<td>loop</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>walk.2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(then)</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wij</td>
<td>speul-t</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dan)</td>
<td>speul-e</td>
<td>wij</td>
<td>play.1pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then</td>
<td>play.1pl</td>
<td>we</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dutch

Overijssels

Postma (2011) observes that dialects of the Den Besten type have a 2s pronoun that is diachronically related to DU, while the Zwart dialects have lost DU but have a double verbal paradigm. This anti-correlation is depicted in (7). There are some exceptions to this anticorrelation which will be discussed in section 4.3.

(7)

Maps 1 and 2: Anticorrelation between subject pronoun DU and double verbal agreement paradigm

Postma (2011:75) claims that Den Besten dialects may develop diachronically into a Zwart dialect by partial subject incorporation. This process is shown in (8), abstracting away from irrelevant technical details. The postverbal subject pronoun partially incorporates into C. Preverbal du becomes superfluous and disappears from the language, as does finite verb movement to C in subject initial main clauses; the postverbal subject pronoun changes into ghi. The verb gets a double paradigm, with incorporated –de when in C. The resulting structure is still transparent in current N.Brabantish, a subset of the eastern Dutch dialects that allow fronting in imperatives.

(8) The change from a Den Besten variety into a Zwart variety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>du</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>d-ich</td>
<td>(V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du2</td>
<td>V-de</td>
<td>ghi</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.Brabantish

(9) (dan) | ga-de | gij    | you     |
| then    | go.2  | gij    | gaa-t   |
|         | you   |         | go.2s   |

Many varieties of Dutch including Standard Dutch have subsequently lost the partially incorporated subject morpheme. As we will see in section 4.3, this property is crucial. Only dialects that have visible partial subject incorporation, such as N.Brabantish, allow distal D-pronoun preposing in imperative clauses.
3.2. Fronting of non-subjects and left-dislocation

To determine the exact position into which constituents in imperatives may be fronted we need to look more closely at the structure of the left-periphery. The term verb second language is in fact an oversimplification as there are two systematic exceptions to the verb second property: (i) verb third sentences involving left dislocation; (ii) verb first sentences such as topicless declaratives, yes-no questions and imperatives. In left-dislocation structures the order of preverbal constituents is fixed: 1. left dislocated constituent – 2. D-pronoun (10a) / operator (10b) / adverb (10c) / Wh-word (10d) / fronted argument (10e). This is illustrated in (10). The reverse order of these constituents is strongly ungrammatical. Since left-dislocation is optional, the left dislocated constituent can be left out in sentences in (10).

(10)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LD</th>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Dat woord</td>
<td>dat</td>
<td>zeg</td>
<td>ik</td>
<td>niet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that word</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Dat woord</td>
<td>Int.Op.</td>
<td>zei</td>
<td>je</td>
<td>dat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that word</td>
<td>Int.Op.</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Dat woord</td>
<td>nu</td>
<td>zeg</td>
<td>je</td>
<td>dat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that word</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Dat woord</td>
<td>hoe</td>
<td>zeg</td>
<td>je</td>
<td>dat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that word</td>
<td>how</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Dat boek</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>geef</td>
<td>ik</td>
<td>dat niet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that book</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>that not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Fronting in imperatives

4.1. No imperative operator

In Dutch imperatives, SpecCP must be empty, but left dislocation is possible (11a). In German imperatives, both positions are available (11b,c). In eastern Dutch, SpecCP is available but only for distal D-pronouns (11d,e).

(11)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LD</th>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>(Dat boek)</td>
<td>&lt;*dat&gt;</td>
<td>lees</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>&lt;dat&gt; maar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that book</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>(Das Buch)</td>
<td>(das)</td>
<td>lies</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>besser nicht.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that book</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>lies</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>mal das Buch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>once that book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>(Da boek)</td>
<td>da</td>
<td>lees</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>maar nie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that book</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(*Nu)</td>
<td>lees</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>da boek maar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>that book just</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central question of this paper can now be formulated in terms of the structure in (11): Why must SpecCP be empty in Dutch imperatives, why can it be filled in German imperatives and why can it only be filled by distal D-pronouns in eastern Dutch? For other cases of empty SpecCP, it can be shown with the D-pronoun drop test that the emptiness is only apparent (cf. Weerman 1989, Barbiers 2007). When a D-pronoun moves to SpecCP in Dutch, it need not be pronounced (12a), an instance of topic drop. When it is somewhere in the middlefield, it has to be pronounced (12b,c). In sentences like (12b,c), the D-pronoun dat ‘that’ cannot move to SpecCP because there can only be one constituent in SpecCP. In the yes/no interrogative Zeg je dat? lit. saw you that ’Did you see that?’ there is no visible constituent preceding the verb. Thus, we might expect that in such a sentence dat ‘that’ may be dropped: it could first move to SpecCP and then drop there, parallel to the analysis of (12a). However, dropping the D-pronoun in a yes/no interrogative is ungrammatical (12d). If we assume that in such clauses there is an empty interrogative operator in SpecCP, this fact is explained. A possible explanation for the impossibility to fill SpecCP in Dutch imperatives would then be that there is an abstract imperative operator in SpecCP in such clauses (12e).
However, if we assume that the imperative operator marks the clause as imperative semantically and syntactically, we expect it to be present in German and eastern Dutch imperatives as well, leaving the cross-linguistic fronting contrasts unexplained.

4.2. Proposal

It has been shown that imperative clauses have a covert second person (2p) subject (cf. Van der Wurff 2007 and references cited there). One piece of evidence for this is anaphor binding. Anaphors such as jezelf "yourself" normally require an antecedent in the same clause (13a), but this antecedent is not visible in imperatives (13b).

(13)  
a.  
Jij / *Ik zag jezelf.  
you / I saw yourself

b.  
Geef jezelf een boek!  
give yourself a book

Zanuttini (2007) and Bennis (2007) argue that the highest functional head in an imperative clause must be marked with the feature 2p. Portner (2004) argues that imperatives contain a hidden 2p subject that moves to an operator position. The semantic effect of this is λ-abstraction: the property expressed by the imperative clause (minus the 2p operator) is attributed to the TO DO list of the addressee in the Discourse Representation. I propose to combine these ideas. An imperative clause must be marked with 2p. If we assume SpecHead agreement a 2p marker in either SpecCP or C will be sufficient. In Dutch 2p marking is achieved by movement of the hidden 2p subject to SpecCP. The fact that Dutch is a Zwart-variety in the sense discussed above is not a problem here. The subject in such varieties is always in SpecIP, but in imperatives we are dealing with a subject that acts as an operator and we have seen above that operators, e.g. Wh and D-pronouns, can move to SpecC.

The proposed analysis is schematically given in (14). The presence of pro.2 in SpecCP blocks the possibility to front another constituent.

(14)  
   SpecCP       C       SpecIP       I       ...
pro.2        geef    pro.2      jezelf een boek
pro.2        give    pro.2      yourself a book

In German imperatives the pro.2 subject does not move to SpecCP because the verb does the work. As opposed to Dutch (and English), German has a set of highly frequent verbs with a unique imperative form in their verbal paradigm. This is shown in (15) for the verb nehmen ‘take’. While in Dutch 1s and imperative have the same form, the bare stem, in German 1s has a –e suffix and the imperative form is not the bare stem but a suffixless form with Ablaut.

(15)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ich nehm-e</td>
<td>ik neem</td>
<td>I take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du nimm-st</td>
<td>jij neem-t</td>
<td>you take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sie nimm-t</td>
<td>zij neem-t</td>
<td>she take-s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wir nehm-en</td>
<td>wij neem-en</td>
<td>we take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ihr nehm-t</td>
<td>jullie neem-en</td>
<td>you take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sie nehm-en</td>
<td>zij neem-en</td>
<td>they take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimm!</td>
<td>neem!</td>
<td>take!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we assume that such special imperative forms are sufficient for the German L1 learner to deduce that imperative verbs in German have the feature 2p, then verb movement to C in imperatives marks the clause with 2p and pro.2 movement to SpecCP is superfluous. Consequently, SpecCP in German is available for fronting. Middle Dutch provides supportive evidence for this proposal. As was noted in section 2, Middle Dutch (at least,
some of its dialects) allows fronting in imperatives like German. Strikingly, Middle Dutch has a unique imperative form, the bare verb stem. Unlike in modern Dutch, 1s in Middle Dutch is not the bare verb stem but a stem with a -e suffix.

Summarizing the proposal so far, the fronting contrast between German and Dutch imperatives is derived from the assumption that imperative clauses must be marked 2p by moving a constituent with a 2p feature to SpecCP or to C. In Dutch the covert 2p pro subject moves to SpecCP, blocking further fronting, while in German (and Middle Dutch) the imperative verb with the feature 2p moves to C, leaving SpecCP open for other constituents. The idea that a morphosyntactic requirement can be fulfilled either by a head or by an XP is reminiscent of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (1998) explanation of typological contrasts such as the contrast between there-insertion in English VSO sentences and V-movement in Greek VSO sentences.

4.3. Fronting in eastern Dutch imperatives

As we have seen, in eastern Dutch fronting of a full constituent is impossible (16a). Fronting of D-pronouns is possible, but only for distal D-pronouns, not for proximate ones (16b,c). In addition to argumental distal D-pronouns (16b) it is possible to front temporal and locative distal D-pronouns (16d,e).

\begin{align}
\text{(16)} & \quad \text{a.} & \text{Da boek lees maar niet!} \\
& & \text{that book read just not} \\
& & \text{‘You better not read that book!’} \\
\text{b.} & \text{Da / die lees maar nie!} \\
& & \text{that /those read better not} \\
& & \text{‘You better not read that / those!’} \\
\text{c.} & \text{*Di / dees lees maar nie!} \\
& & \text{this / these read just not} \\
& & \text{‘You better not read this / these!’} \\
\text{d.} & \text{Dan ga maar naar de gemeente!} \\
& & \text{then go just to the municipality} \\
& & \text{‘You should go to the municipal administration!’} \\
\text{e.} & \text{Daar reken maar niet op!} \\
& & \text{there count just not on} \\
& & \text{‘You better don’t count on that!’}
\end{align}

The geographic distribution of distal D-pronoun fronting is given on map 3.

\begin{align}
\text{(17)} & \quad \text{Map 3: Distal D-pronoun fronting in the Dutch language area} \\
\text{Map 4: 2p subject doubling in E.N Brabantish}
\end{align}

We will first look at the N.Brabantish dialects in the eastern part of the province of North Brabant which do not only have distal D-pronoun fronting but also 2p subject incorporation as in (18). The distribution of these dialects is given on map 4.

\footnote{The contrast between distal and proximate D-pronouns was not tested in the Dutch syntactic atlas project SAND, but it was tested on some informants from eastern N.Brabant. The linguists in the audiences mentioned in footnote 1 who were speakers of Brabantish also confirmed the existence of this contrast. I found only one speaker (in Middelrode, N.Brabant) who allows proximate D-pronouns to front. I have no analysis for the latter idiolect.}
concealed left dislocation, with the left dislocated element silent.

Notice that the restriction to distal D (feature distal and person) are two ways to fulfill the marking requirement: (i) the person feature of the pro.2 subject incorporates into V (in C) and a distal D-pronoun moves to SpecCP, or (ii) the pro.2 subject moves to SpecCP to provide it with the distal feature. The answer to this question should also explain why distal D-pronoun fronting is optional.

The answer proposed here is that partial 2p subject incorporation as in (18) and distal D-pronoun fronting together do the work that verb fronting in German and pro.2 subject fronting in Dutch do. How this is possible becomes clear if we adopt the feature analysis of the Dutch and Brabantish pronoun system proposed in (19). 3

Relation to Deictic Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>ENTITY-N</th>
<th>ENTITY-C</th>
<th>TENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEUTRAL (precedes DC)</td>
<td>er ‘there’</td>
<td>‘then’</td>
<td>hij/zij/het ‘he, she, it’</td>
<td>‘the’</td>
<td>de ‘the’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROXIMATE (coincides with DC)</td>
<td>hier ‘here’</td>
<td>nu ‘now’</td>
<td>ik ‘I’</td>
<td>dit ‘this’</td>
<td>deze ‘this’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTAL (follows DC)</td>
<td>daar ‘there’</td>
<td>dan ‘then’</td>
<td>jij, pro ‘you’</td>
<td>dat ‘that’</td>
<td>die ‘that’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Features of the Dutch and Brabantish pronoun system

According to this system, the second person singular pronoun jij ‘you’ and its silent counterpart pro.2 have the features [distal,person]. 5 It forms, on the one hand, a natural class with the distal D-pronouns, and on the other hand with the pronouns that have a person feature. If the feature distal is interpreted as ‘pointing away from the deictic center’ an element with the features [distal, person] is a person that is pointed at from the deictic center, i.e. the addressee. The requirement that imperative clauses be marked with 2p should now be reformulated. Imperative clauses must be marked with the features distal and person. Note that according to the system in (19) imperative clauses are in a natural class with distal elements.

The claim is that partial 2p subject incorporation in eastern N.Brabantish provides the verb in C with the feature person, while distal D-pronoun fronting to SpecCP provides the C-layer with the feature distal. SpecCP and C then share the features distal and person as required for imperative marking. The derivations for German, Dutch and eastern N.Brabantish are schematically summarized in (20). In Dutch, movement of pro.2 marks the clause as [distal, person], in German movement of V marks the clause as [distal, person]. In N.Brabantish, there are two ways to fulfill the marking requirement: (i) the person feature of the pro.2 subject incorporates into V (in C) and a distal D-pronoun moves to SpecCP, or (ii) the pro.2 subject moves to SpecCP to provide it with the distal feature. This explains why fronting of non-distal constituents is impossible and at the same time why distal D-pronoun preposing is optional.

(20) Dutch SpecIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[distal, person] pro.2</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>[distal, person]</td>
<td>(\checkmark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

German

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V([distal, person]) pro.2</td>
<td>[distal, person]</td>
<td>(\checkmark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.Brabantish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpecCP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>SpecIP</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V-[person] pro.2</td>
<td>[distal, person]</td>
<td>(\checkmark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or (ii) [distal, person] pro.2</td>
<td>V-[person]</td>
<td>[distal, person]</td>
<td>(\checkmark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that the restriction to distal D-pronouns is also found with Left Dislocation in declarative clauses, as is illustrated in (21). This suggests that distal D-pronoun fronting in eastern N.Brabantish imperatives is a case of concealed left dislocation, with the left dislocated element silent.

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3 This system abstracts away from plural which is irrelevant for present purposes.
4 N = neuter gender; C = common gender
5 Cf. section 5 for the distribution of silent pronouns in declaratives and imperatives.
pronouns. As discussed in Barbiers (2007), both direct
imperatives. This raises the question why the partial subject is not visible in eastern N.Brabantish
imperatives. My tentative answer is that imperative verb forms are subject to an independent truncation process,
as discussed in D’Alessandro and van Oostendorp (2012).

Map 3 shows that there are central and north eastern dialects outside of N.Brabant area that have D-
pronoun preposing in imperatives. This is at first sight unexpected, because these dialects do not have partial
subject incorporation, as map 4 shows. Postma (2011) shows that many of these dialects are mixed, i.e. they
combine syntactic properties of Den Besten varieties with syntactic properties of Zwart varieties, and suggests
that these speakers are bilectal. Since diachronically it takes partial subject incorporation to go from a Den
Besten system to a Zwart system, having both systems may provide speakers of these exceptional varieties with
sufficient evidence for abstract partial subject incorporation. The difference with Dutch varieties that have a
Zwart system and do not allow distal D-pronoun fronting would then be that in the latter the absence of visible
partial subject incorporation means that there is no person feature on the 2p verb anymore, i.e. the verb has lost
this and the visible subject pronoun which only has the feature distal in eastern N.Brabantish is reanalyzed as
[distal,person] in these dialects.

There are also Brabantish dialects in the Belgian provinces of Antwerp and Brabant that seem to have partial
subject incorporation (cf. Barbiers et al 2005, maps 54 and 55) but no distal D-pronoun fronting in imperatives,
i.e. counterexamples in the opposite direction. However, many of these Brabantish dialects also have 2 person
subject pronoun doubling with a preverbal and a postverbal subject pronoun, an option that is absent in the
eastern N.Brabantish dialects. I speculate that a different morpysyntax of the left periphery corresponds to
subject doubling in these dialects and that this blocks distal D-pronoun fronting.

5. Licensing silent pronouns in imperatives and declaratives

We have seen in section 4.1, example (12), that topic drop, i.e. a silent D-pronoun, is only possible in Dutch if
the D-pronoun has moved to SpecCP. The relevant contrasts are repeated in (22). In (22a) the D-pronoun has not
moved to SpecCP and therefore cannot be dropped. In (22b) it has, and can be dropped. In (22c) movement of
the D-pronoun is blocked by the presence of the Wh-pronoun in SpecCP and (22d) falls under the same
generalization if we assume a silent interrogative operator in SpecCP.

The analysis of Dutch imperatives provided above predicts that D-pronoun drop should be impossible in such
imperatives. SpecCP of Dutch imperatives is occupied by the pro.2 subject and this blocks fronting of a D-
pronoun as a preparational step for D-pronoun drop. This prediction is wrong, as the contrast in (23) shows.

However, there is evidence that D-pronoun drop in declaratives has properties different from D-pronoun drop in
imperatives. As discussed in Barbiers (2007), both direct (24a,a’), indirect (24b,b’) and prepositional (24c,c’)
object D-pronouns can be dropped in declaratives, whereas imperatives only allow dropping direct object D-
pronouns (25).
(24) a. Breng ik mee.
    ‘I will bring it along.’
    a.’ (Dat) breng ik mee, dat boek.
    ‘That book, I will bring it along.’
    b. Breng ik dat boek niet.
    ‘I will not bring them that book.’
    b.’ (Die) breng ik dat boek niet, die jongens.
    ‘Those boys, I will not bring them that book.’
    c. Praat ik niet tegen.
    ‘I don’t talk to her.’
    c.’ (Daar) praat ik niet tegen, tegen dat meisje.
    ‘That girl, I don’t talk with her.’

(25) a. Breng mee!
    ‘Bring along!’
    a’. Breng (dat) mee, dat boek!
    ‘Bring that book along!’
    b. Breng *(die) een boek, die jongens!
    ‘Bring those boys a book.’
    c. Praat *(daar) tegen, tegen dat meisje.
    ‘That girl, I don’t talk with her.’

I conclude from these contrasts that D-pronoun drop in imperatives does not involve movement of the D-pronoun to SpecCP and is licensed differently.

To capture the fact that imperatives allow silent 2p subject pronouns and object D-pronouns, while declaratives allow silent D-pronouns in general but not silent 2p subject pronouns, I propose that silent pronouns in the Dutch varieties can be licensed if they possess a distal feature and occur in the specifier of a head that also has a distal feature. The presence of a distal feature on such a head guarantees recoverability of the distal feature of the pronoun. The difference between declarative clauses and imperative clauses is then the base position of the distal feature: on C in declaratives and on v in imperatives, i.e. on the functional verbal head that introduces the subject and licenses the direct object. This looks schematically as in (26).

(26) (i) **Silent pronoun licensing in declaratives: only D-pronouns moved to SpecCP**

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{SpecCP} & \text{C} & \text{SpecIP} & \text{I} \\
\text{[distal,x,y]} & \text{[distal]} & \\
\text{i.e. D-pronouns}
\end{array}
\]

(ii) **Silent pronoun licensing in imperatives: only 2p subjects and object D-pronouns**

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{SpecCP} & \text{C} & \text{SpecIP} & \text{I} \\
\text{SpecvP} & \text{vP} \\
\text{[distal, x, y]} & \text{[distal]} \\
\text{pro [distal, person]} & \\
\text{object D-pronoun} & \\
*IO / *PP object D-pronoun
\end{array}
\]

Only subject and direct objects are licensed in SpecvP (Chomsky 1995). Indirect and prepositional object D-pronouns do not occur there and would have to be moved to SpecCP to be silent, which is impossible in imperatives but possible in declaratives. The fact that only 2p subjects can be dropped also follows: the other subject pronouns do not have a distal feature. Evidence for the presence of an abstract distal feature in the C position in declaratives comes from embedded clauses, where the same C position can be realized by the complementizer *dat* ‘that’ which is homophonous with the distal D-pronoun.

If this analysis of the licensing of silent pronouns is correct then the feature specifications of imperative verbs proposed above should be slightly adapted, as given in (27).
(27) German  
  \( v = \{\text{distal, person}\} \)  
Dutch  
  \( v = \{\text{distal}\} \)  
N.Brabantish  
  \( v = \{\text{person}\} \)

As before, in German movement of the verb to \( C \) is sufficient to mark the imperative clause with \( \{\text{distal, person}\} \). In Dutch, pro.2 (i.e. \( \{\text{distal, person}\} \)) moves in addition to the verb, to provide the clause with \( \{\text{person}\} \). In eastern N.Brabantish, pro.2 or a distal D-pronoun must move to Spec\( CP \) in addition to the verb, to provide the clause with the feature distal. The assumption that eastern N.Brabantish imperative verbs do not have the feature distal is necessary to maintain the explanation of the possibility of distal D-pronoun movement to Spec\( CP \) in N.Brabantish imperatives. This entails that it is not \( v \) that licenses the silent subject pronoun in N.Brabantish, but rather the partial subject incorporation into \( C \). Evidence that this is on the right track is the fact that in declarative clauses with an overt partially incorporated subject, the subject can be dropped as well, as is illustrated in (28).

(28) He-de (gij) da gezien?  
  have.you you that seen  
  ‘Did you see that?’

We must conclude from this that \( C \), i.e. the features distal and person, is licensing the silent subject in eastern N.Brabantish both in declaratives and imperatives and that this licensing is slightly less local, involving a relation between \( C \) and Spec\( IP \). The idea that this particular structural licensing relation is relevant in addition to Spec\( Head \) relations is not far-fetched in view of the relation between complementizer form and the licensing of that-trace effects (cf. Boef, to appear, for recent discussion).

Because \( v \) does not have the feature distal in N.Brabantish, the analysis also entails that the licensing of silent D-pronouns in these varieties happens in Spec\( CP \), not in Spec\( vP \). This means that there are two alternative structures for Bestudeer maar! Lit. study just ‘Just examine this!’ in N.Brabantish, one with the silent subject pronoun in Spec\( CP \) and one with the silent object D-pronoun in Spec\( CP \). This predicts furthermore that N.Brabantish silent pronouns in imperatives are not restricted to direct object D-pronouns; indirect and prepositional object D-pronouns should be possible as well. I have not systematically tested this prediction but found the example in (29a) with Google, supporting the analysis proposed here. Non-Brabantic Dutch varieties would require an R-pronoun here associated with the stranded preposition \( in \).

(29) a. Trap maar nie in, mensen!  
  step just not into people  
  ‘Don’t buy that people!’  

b. Trap daar maar niet in, mensen!  
  step there just not in people  
  ‘Don’t buy that people!’

One may wonder why constituents of the type \( dat \ boek ‘that book’ \) that include a distal demonstrative cannot move to Spec\( CP \) in N.Brabantish to provide the \( C \) layer with the feature distal. There is evidence, however, that demonstratives are not in the \( D \) head of such DPs and are therefore too deeply embedded (Leu 2010).

6 Licensing of overt 2p pronouns and distal D-pronoun fronting in imperatives

In the unmarked case the second person subject of imperatives is silent in all varieties under discussion, i.e. a sentence like (30a) is ungrammatical (cf. Bennis 2007). However, when the focus particle \( maar ‘only’ \) is added to the sentence an overt subject pronoun becomes possible (30b).\

(30) a. Leg (*jij) daar neer, \( dat \ boek!  
  put you there down that book  
  ‘Put that book down there!’

b. Leg (jij) maar neer, \( dat \ boek!  
  put you just down that book  
  ‘You put that book down!’

The focus particle \( maar ‘only’ \) attracts a focused constituent to its specifier position more generally (cf. Barbiers 2010). It is this focus that licenses an overt pronoun, parallel to real pro drop languages in which the pronoun is silent unless focused.

6 Other particles that license an overt subject include \( dan ‘then’, toch ‘still’, nou ‘now’ \). They have in common that they may trigger focus on the constituent that precedes them.
The attentive reader will have observed that all the N.Brabantish sentences with D-pronoun preposing discussed above include maar ‘only’. In fact, such sentences are ungrammatical without maar, as (31) illustrates.

(31) Da / die lees *(maar) nie!
that /those read better not
‘You better not read that / those!’

The obligatory presence of focus particle maar in such imperatives follows from the same observation that it attracts a focused element to its specifier. In the unmarked case, i.e. when maar is absent, the subject will be hierarchically closer to SpecCP than the object, hence the subject will be attracted to SpecCP to provide the C-layer with a distal feature. The particle maar can attract the D-pronoun to its specifier, which will then be in a higher position than the subject and can move further up to SpecCP.

7. Conclusion

This case study has shown that the word order differences between German, Dutch and eastern N.Brabantish imperative clauses can be derived from the interaction between a constant, shared syntactic structure and a variable morphosyntactic feature specification of the imperative verb. Imperative verbs in German have the features distal and person and no other constituent needs to be fronted to mark the clause. In Dutch, imperative verbs only have the feature distal and the silent 2p subject must be fronted to mark the clause with the feature person. In eastern N.Brabantish, imperative verbs have the feature person, therefore either the silent subject or a distal D-pronoun must be fronted to mark the clause with the feature distal. Consequently, only German allows visible fronting of full constituents. The differences between declarative and imperative clauses in the licensing of silent pronouns was argued to follow from the different distribution of the feature distal. It originates in v in imperatives and in C in declaratives. According to this analysis the syntactic structure of main clauses is not only constant across language varieties but also across clause types. There are no word order parameters or parameters regulating the licensing of silent pronouns: all these differences derive from differences in the specification and location of morphosyntactic features, thus supporting the main Minimalist hypothesis that there is no variation in the syntactic component.\(^7\) This analysis would not have been possible without the availability of a large amount of dialectal data, the geographic distribution of which revealed correlations between pronoun DU and the absence of double verbal paradigms and partial subject incorporation and the possibility to front distal D-pronouns.\(^8\) Finally, an important result of this paper is that distal D-pronouns, the second person pronoun and imperatives can be considered to be all members of one natural class characterized by the feature distal.

\(^7\) It should be noted that one crucial ingredient of the analysis, partial subject incorporation, awaits further reduction to differences in morphosyntactic feature specification or location.

\(^8\) Needless to say, these correlations could also have been discovered by quantitative analysis. Geographic maps nicely visualize such correlations.
References


