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## Dummy auxiliaries in Dutch dialects, L1 and L2

*Sjef Barbiers*

### 1. Introduction

Syntactic constructions that occur in first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition data of a language but not in the speech of adult native speakers of that language have a crucial importance for the theoretical analysis of the acquisition of syntax. Such constructions cannot arise as a result of imitation and therefore must have a different source. They may reveal underlying and perhaps universal syntactic properties, they may reveal how abstract syntactic structure changes during the acquisition process, they may reveal processing and other functional limitations in the language acquirer and, in the case of L2 acquisition, they may be the result of (partial) transfer of a syntactic property from L1 to L2.

Dummy auxiliaries have been reported to occur in L1 and L2 Dutch but not in adult native Dutch (cf. Blom and De Korte 2011 for an overview and references). Dummy auxiliaries are defined as semantically empty words that in certain stages of L1 or L2 acquisition occur in syntactic positions where the main verb occurs in the native adult language. ‘Do’ (*doen*), ‘have’ (*hebben*), ‘zijn’ (*zijn*) and ‘go’ (*gaan*) occur as dummies in Dutch L1 and L2. An L2 example is given in (1) (taken from Van de Craats 2009), where the dummy auxiliary *is* ‘is’ occupies the T(ense)/AGR(eement) position that is occupied by the finite main verb *komt* ‘comes’ in the target language.

- (1) Papa is niet komen.  
Daddy is.SG not come-INF

Target: Papa komt niet.  
‘Daddy does not come.’

Various explanations have been offered for the occurrence of dummy auxiliaries. (i) Under the hypothesis that the phrase marker gradually grows in L1 and L2 learners, dummy auxiliaries would create the functional structure outside of V(erb)P(hrase) that is required for verb movement (Van de Craats 2009). In subject-initial main clauses, a dummy auxiliary would mark the presence of T/AGR. In inverted main clauses, the dummy would mark the presence of C(omplementizer). (ii) Under the alternative hypothesis that children start out with a full-fledged phrase marker, dummies are claimed to reduce derivational or inflectional complexity. If a dummy occurs in T/AGR or C, the finite main verb does not move to those positions, which would yield a less complex derivation (Zuckerman 2001; Blom and De Korte 2011). According to Blom (2003), insertion of a dummy in T/AGR or C reduces inflectional complexity. The highly frequent finite auxiliaries would be directly drawn from the lexicon in their complete inflected form, while the inflection of main verbs would require assembling a word in syntax by combining the verb with the morphosyntactic information in T/AGR or C. Both explanations follow Chomsky (1995) according to which syntactic derivations are maximally economical. (iii) Another explanation in terms of complexity reduction and economy is Van Kampen (1997), who argues that L1 children initially prefer structures with the smallest discrepancy between the Phonological Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF). In Dutch adult language a discrepancy arises because the main verb raises out of VP to T/AGR or C such that its linear position (at PF) differs from the position where it realizes its argument structure (at LF; i.e., V in VP). If the verb remains in V and a dummy is merged in T/AGR or C, no such discrepancy arises.

It has been observed that dummy auxiliaries also occur in dialects of Dutch spoken by adults (cf. SAND II; Barbiers et al. 2008). Strikingly, in the dialects we find the same auxiliaries that occur as dummies in L1 and L2: ‘do’, ‘have’, ‘be’ and ‘go’. This raises a number of interesting issues. First, the question arises whether dummy auxiliaries in L1 and

L2 have the same syntactic status as those in the dialects. If so, this would make it possible to test the various analyses sketched above against the dialects. For example, an analysis in terms of a **growing phrase** marker will not do for the dialects since we are talking about full-fledged adult grammars. Secondly, complexity/economy as an explanation for the occurrence of dummy auxiliaries can be questioned, as such an analysis cannot easily be transferred to the dialects, **as will be explained later**. A third issue that needs to be considered is whether the occurrence of dummy auxiliaries in L1 and L2 Dutch could be due to dialectal influence.

This article provides an overview of the dummy auxiliary constructions attested in the dialects of Dutch and discusses the three issues just mentioned for each dummy ‘do’, ‘have’, ‘be’, and ‘go’. It is argued that there is no dummy verb construction that occurs both in the dialects and in Dutch L1 and L2, with the possible exception of some instances of finite periphrastic ‘do’, for which more research is required. The syntactic properties of dialectal dummy ‘do’, ‘have’, ‘be’ and ‘go’ are different from their counterparts in L1 and L2. An account in terms of reduced complexity is argued to be implausible for the dialects and the notion of complexity will be argued to be problematic itself. More promising is an account in terms of alternative surface realizations of the same syntactic structure. Dialectal influence as the source of dummy auxiliaries in L1 and L2 is unlikely given the distinct properties of dialectal dummies and their restricted geographical distribution.

## 2. Dummy auxiliaries in the Dutch dialects

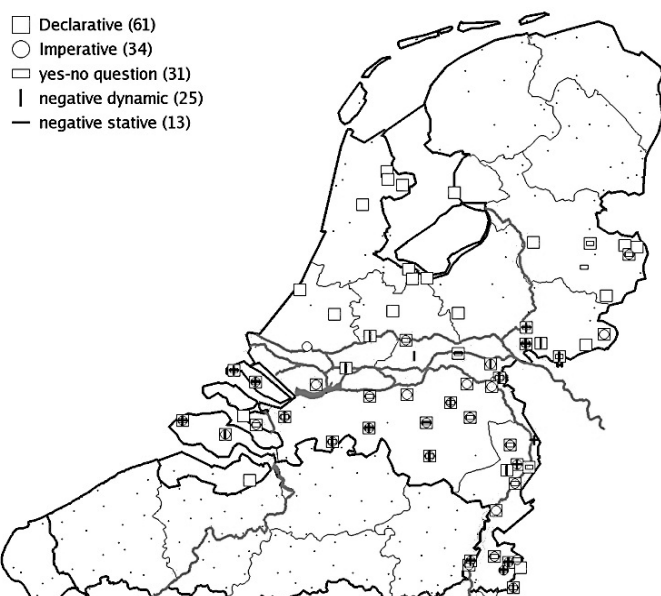
### 2.1 ‘Do’ dummies

#### 2.1.1 Periphrastic ‘do’

Periphrastic ‘do’ occurs in L1 (2a; from van Kampen 1997:47), in child-directed speech (Klein 1974) and in the dialects of Dutch (2b from SAND II; cf. Tieken Boon–van Ostade 1990 and Erb 2001). Map 1, adapted from SAND II (cf. SAND II: map 43b and chapter 3), shows that there is a clear geographical determinant in the occurrence of the construction in the dialects. It is largely restricted to the southern Dutch provinces of Zeeland, Noord-Brabant and Limburg, with no occurrences in the north-eastern and in the Belgian part of the language area. Map 1 also shows that the availability in the dialects of periphrastic ‘do’ depends on the clause type and the dynamic vs. stative nature of the verb. Periphrastic ‘do’ in declarative clauses has the widest distribution (61 locations), followed by imperative clauses (34), Yes/No questions (31), negative clauses with a dynamic verb (25) and negative clauses with a stative verb (13). The great majority of dialects that have periphrastic ‘do’ in imperative, interrogative and negative sentences also have periphrastic ‘do’ in declaratives, but not the other way around. Cornips (1994, 1998) argues that periphrastic ‘do’ in Heerlen Dutch (in the south of Dutch Limburg) expresses habitual aspect. Habitual aspect turns out to be irrelevant for the SAND-data, as (2c) shows. This sentence clearly does not have habitual aspect. The same holds for periphrastic ‘do’ in L1 (2a).

- |     |    |  |               |
|-----|----|--|---------------|
| (2) | a. | Ik <b>doe</b> de     barbie   pakken.                | L1 Dutch      |
|     |    | I     do     the     barbie   fetch                  |               |
|     |    | ‘I am fetching the barbie.’                          |               |
|     | b. | Ik     pak     de     barbie.                        | target Dutch  |
|     |    | I     fetch   the     barbie                         |               |
|     |    | ‘I am fetching the barbie.’                          |               |
|     | c. | Ik <b>doe</b> wel   even   de     kopjes   afwassen. | dialect Dutch |
|     |    | I     do     AFF   a while the   cups   off-wash     |               |
|     |    | ‘I will wash the dishes now.’                        |               |

d. Ik was wel even de kopjes af. Standard Dutch  
 I wash AFF a while the cups off  
 'I will wash the dishes now.'



Map 1: Geographic distribution of periphrastic 'do' in the Dutch language area

The fact that the periphrastic 'do' construction is regionally restricted suggests that an explanation in terms of derivational complexity is untenable for the dialects. According to such analyses, in clauses like (2b,d) the main verb moves to a higher position (T/AGR or C), while in (2a,c) no movement is taking place and a dummy auxiliary is directly merged in this higher position. The occurrence of dummy auxiliaries in L1 and L2 then follows from the assumption that movement is more complex than insertion from the lexicon and that language acquirers initially prefer less complex structures, presumably for functional reasons, such as limited processing capacity.<sup>1</sup> It is implausible that adult speakers in certain dialect areas have a stronger preference for the reduction of derivational complexity than speakers in other dialect areas and speakers of Standard Dutch.

An anonymous reviewer suggests that dialectal periphrastic 'do' could still be analyzed in terms of the reduction of derivational complexity if we assume that the actual occurrence of dummy auxiliaries depends on the input from the language environment. On this view, all speakers would prefer the less complex dummy auxiliary structures over movement structures but the only speakers who actually use them are those who hear them frequently in the input. Such an account raises the question, however, why periphrastic 'do' is frequently present in the input in certain geographical areas and completely absent in others, and the account becomes circular. If reducing complexity remains an important force in the adult language then it is unclear why children stop producing periphrastic 'do'

Moreover, the fact that the geographic distribution of periphrastic 'do' is sensitive to clause type is a serious problem for accounts in terms of reduced complexity. For example, Blom and De Korte (2011) show in their study that dummy auxiliaries are most frequent in clauses with subject-verb inversion (e.g. questions), less frequent in subject initial declarative main clauses, and least frequent in relative clauses which have the finite verb in clause final position. They argue that this corresponds to decreasing complexity. In questions the verb moves in two steps, from V to T/AGR and from T/AGR to C, in subject initial declarative main clauses there is one movement step, V to T/AGR and in relative clauses there is no verb

<sup>1</sup> See section 3 for a critical discussion of the assumption that movement (internal merge) is more complex than insertion (external merge).

movement at all. They conclude that the more movement steps, the more complex a derivation is, and the more frequently we will find dummy auxiliaries. If this were true for the dialects as well, we would expect to find more locations with dummy auxiliaries in Yes/No questions than in subject-initial declarative main clauses **for the same reason, which is that Yes/No questions would imply an additional movement.** As map 1 shows, we find exactly the reverse. There are almost twice as many dialects with periphrastic ‘do’ in subject initial main clauses than there are dialects with this construction in Yes/No questions. A similar point can be made for imperative clauses.

I therefore conclude that periphrastic ‘do’ in the dialects does not have the same syntactic status as its counterpart in L1 and L2 and that in the dialects periphrastic ‘do’ is not a way to reduce derivational complexity. I would like to suggest that the periphrastic (analytic) ‘do’ construction and the synthetic verb movement construction are two syntactically equivalent ways to express the same semantic content. See section 3 for a discussion of the ways in which this idea can be implemented technically.

There are two issues that require further L1 and L2 research. First, we would like to know if there is a correlation between the occurrence of periphrastic ‘do’ in the dialects and its occurrence in L1 and L2. If periphrastic ‘do’ in L1 and L2 learners shows the same geographic pattern as on map 1, then we can conclude that periphrastic ‘do’ is actually a dialectal feature and has no special role in L1 and L2 acquisition. Secondly, we would like to know more about the sensitivity of periphrastic ‘do’ in L1 and L2 to clause type: What is the relative frequency of periphrastic ‘do’ in subject-initial main clauses, interrogative clauses, imperatives and negative dynamic and stative clauses?

### 2.1.2 Perfect periphrastic ‘do’

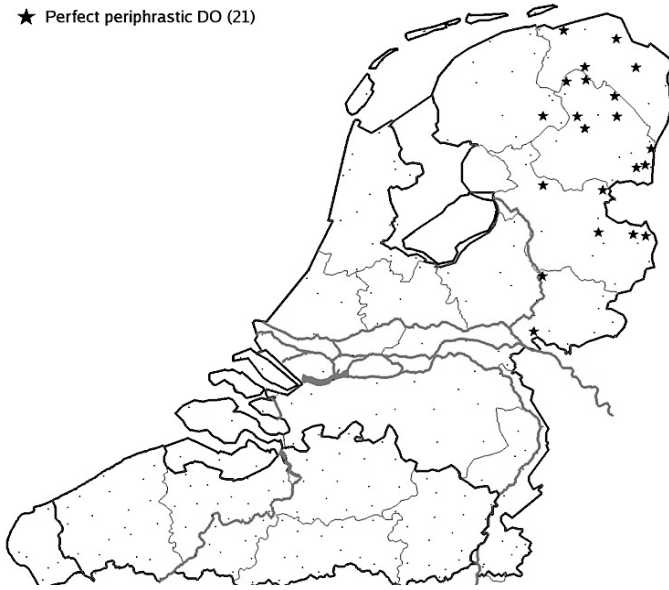
Some dialects of Dutch have the perfect periphrastic ‘do’ construction illustrated in (3a).

- (3) a. Ik heb heel wat lopen **gedaan.**  
 I have quite some walking done  
 ‘I have walked quite a lot.’
- b. Ik **doe** heel wat lopen.  
 I do quite some walking  
 ‘I walk quite a lot.’
- c. Ik heb heel wat gelopen.  
 I have quite some walked  
 ‘I did quite some walking.’

This construction looks like the perfect version of the periphrastic ‘do’ construction in (3b). Map 2 shows the geographic distribution of perfect periphrastic ‘do’. It is restricted to a part of the Low Saxon area. If we compare maps 1 and 2 we see that there is hardly any geographic overlap between the two phenomena, which suggests that we are dealing with two distinct syntactic constructions and that (3a) is not built on the basis of (3b).

The existence of dialects that have the perfect periphrastic ‘do’ construction but not the finite periphrastic ‘do’ construction is not completely unexpected under a reduced derivational complexity account. The perfect periphrastic ‘do’ construction is clearly more complex than its finite counterpart, involving at least one additional auxiliary projection and presumably also additional movement operations such as movement of the infinitive across *gedaan* ‘done’. The reverse type of dialect, however, with finite but not periphrastic perfect ‘do’ should not exist under such an account, because we would expect ‘do’ to show up in the more complex perfect construction if it also shows up in the simpler finite construction. Since maps 1 and 2 show that there are lots of dialects of this type, derivational complexity as an explanation for the existence of perfect periphrastic ‘do’ is implausible. Also, the perfect periphrastic ‘do’ construction may very well be more complex than its counterpart without ‘do’ in (3c), which makes its existence surprising.

★ Perfect periphrastic DO (21)



Map 2: Geographic distribution of perfect periphrastic 'do'

As far as I know, perfect periphrastic 'do' has not been reported in the L1 and L2 acquisition literature for Standard Dutch. The syntactic analysis of the construction is unclear.

### 2.1.3 Short dummy 'do' answers

In the majority of cases, short dummy 'do' answers occur in the context of negative or positive statements to correct these statements (cf. SAND II: maps 44b,c and Chapter 3). Examples are given in (4) and (5).

- (4) Context: Hij komt niet.  
'He won't come.'  
Reaction: Hij **doet**.  
he does  
'Yes, he will.'

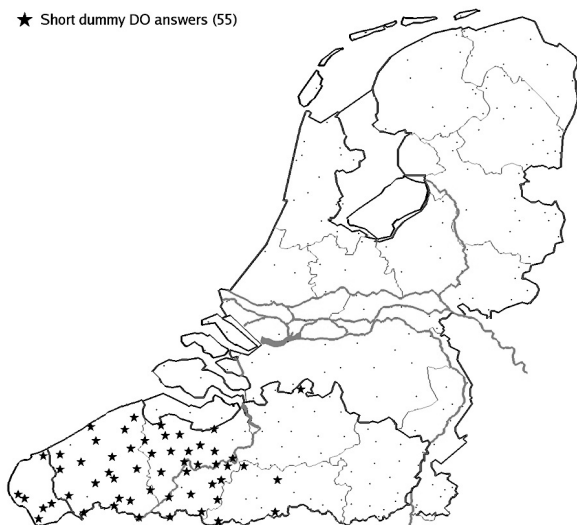
- (5) Context: Hij slaapt.  
'He is sleeping.'  
Reaction: Hij en **doet**.  
he NEG does  
'No, he is not.'

This construction looks similar to English do-support, but Van Craenenbroeck (2004) shows that they are syntactically distinct. For example, short dummy 'do' answers do not allow a past tense or a temporal adverb. He analyzes this construction as involving an elided pronoun *dat* 'that'. In this case, it is hard to tell whether the derivation of this construction is more complex than that of the Standard Dutch counterpart with the main verb and an affirmative particle, e.g. for (4): *Hij komt wel* lit. he comes AFF 'He does come', because the constructions do not only differ in the number of movement steps but also with respect to pronominalization and ellipsis.

The geographic distribution of this construction is presented on map 3. It occurs in French-, West- and East-Flanders where periphrastic 'do' is categorically absent. This shows

that short dummy ‘do’ answers and periphrastic ‘do’ are unrelated constructions. To my knowledge, the use of short dummy ‘do’ answers have not been reported in non-dialectal L1 and L2 Dutch.

★ Short dummy DO answers (55)



Map 3: Geographic distribution of short dummy ‘do’ answers

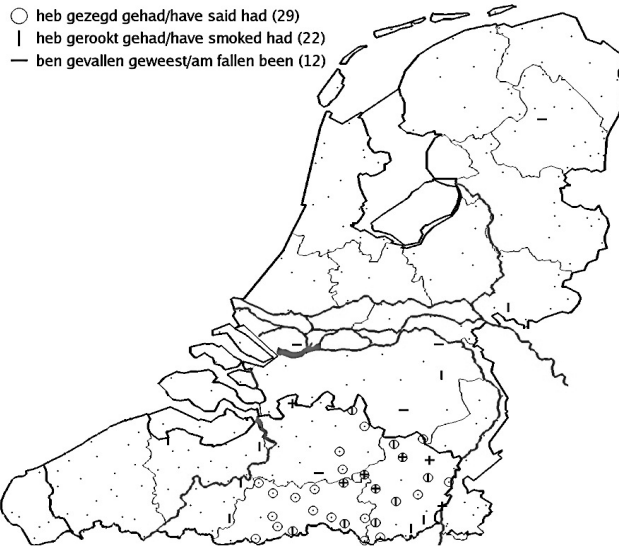
## 2.2 ‘Have’ and ‘be’ dummies

### 2.2.1 ‘Have’ and ‘be’ dummies in the perfect tense

In the dialects, participial ‘have’ and ‘be’ dummies seem to show up in so called perfect doubling constructions. This is illustrated in (6). The sentences in (6a,b) are impossible in Standard Dutch unless participial ‘have’ and ‘be’ are absent.

- (6) a. omdat ik dat gezegd **heb** **gehad**  
 because I that said have.1S had.PCP  
 ‘because I have said that.’
- b. omdat hij gevallen **is** **geweest**  
 because he fallen is.3S been.PCP  
 ‘because he has fallen’

The geographic distribution of this construction is given on map 4, adapted from SAND II, map 40b (cf. SAND Chapter 3 for further discussion). It primarily occurs in the provinces of Vlaams-Brabant and Belgisch Limburg. The actual distribution is somewhat wider than the map shows, in particular in eastern Noord-Brabant there are more than the three locations given on the map with this construction (cf. also map 1 in Koeneman, Lekakou and Barbiers 2011). Again, the clearly restricted geographic distribution suggests that an analysis in terms of reduced derivational complexity is not viable for this construction, as this raises the question why the construction does not occur in the other areas.



Map 4: Geographic distribution of perfect 'have' and 'be' dummies

Dummy 'have' and 'be' have been reported for L1 Dutch as well, but there it always involves two finite instances of the auxiliary instead of the combination of a finite and a participial form (cf. Zuckerman 2001):

- (7) a. als Nijntje een tijdje **heb** gezwommen **heeft**  
 when Nijntje a while have.FIN swum has  
 'when Nijntje has been swimming for a while'
- b. omdat ze de duinen al **heeft** gezien **heb**  
 because she the dunes already has seen have.FIN  
 because she has already seen the dunes

We could hypothesize that (6) and (7) involve the same derivations and that the only difference between the dialectal and the L1 construction is the way the various positions are spelled out. Let us see what such a hypothesis would predict. The derivation of the L1 sentence in (7b) would be as in (8), along the lines of Zuckerman (2001). First, the lexical verb moves in front of the auxiliary (step (ii) in (8)). In the target language, the auxiliary 'have' moves to a functional head F (step (iii); label of F irrelevant for the present discussion). In L1, a finite form of 'have' is merged in its base position and another finite form of 'have' is merged in F, thus avoiding movement. Since the two instances of 'have' both have finiteness features they are interpreted as a chain, as required. It is unclear why the two forms are morphologically distinct, but we could assume that this follows from Nunes' antisymmetric analysis of chain spell-out according to which a chain cannot contain two identical elements (Nunes 2004).

- |       |                 |      |  |  |                         |                         |           |
|-------|-----------------|------|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| (8)   | dat             | ze   | het  | heeft  | gezien                  | heb                     | L1        |
|       | that            | she  | it   | has  | seen                    | have                    |           |
| (i)   |                 |      |  | [ <sub>HaveP</sub>   | HAVE                    | [ <sub>VP</sub> SEEN]]  | ==>       |
| (ii)  |                 |      |  | [ <sub>HaveP</sub> [ <sub>VP</sub> SEEN] [ <sub>Have</sub> | HAVE                    | [ <sub>VP</sub> SEEN]]] | ==>       |
| (iii) | [ <sub>FP</sub> | HAVE | [ <sub>HaveP</sub> [ <sub>VP</sub> SEEN] [ <sub>Have</sub> | HAVE   | [ <sub>VP</sub> SEEN]]] |                         | ==>       |
| (iv)  | heeft           |      | gezien   | heb  | ∅                       |                         | Spell out |



The parallel derivation of the south-eastern Dutch sentence in (6a) would be:

(9)		dat	ze	het	gezegd	heeft	gehad	SE Dutch
		that	she	it	said	has	had	
	(i)				[HaveP	HAVE	[VP SAID]]	==>
	(ii)				[HaveP [VP SAID]	[Have	HAVE [VP SAID]]]	==>
	(iii)	[FP	HAVE	[HaveP [VP SAID]	[Have	HAVE	[VP SAID]]]	==>
	(iv)	heeft		gezegd		gehad	∅	

First, the spell-out of the second instance of ‘have’ as a participle is unexpected under this analysis since the two are part of the same finite chain, and a participle is not a finite form. Moreover, the order derived in (9-iv) is absent in the relevant Dutch dialects, where we find the orders *gezegd heeft gehad* ‘said.PPC has had.PPC’ and *gezegd gehad heeft* ‘said.PPC, had.PPC has’, both of which can not be derived in the way given in (9) (cf. Koeneman, Lekakou and Barbiers, 2011). It is therefore doubtful that ‘have’ and ‘be’ dummies in L1 and in the dialects involve the same derivations.

There is another argument supporting the claim that the derivations of dummy ‘have’ / ‘be’ in L1 and ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling in south-eastern Dutch dialects can not be the same. Koeneman et al. (2011) argue that this construction in the south-eastern dialects involves a combination of a functional and a lexical instance of ‘have’ respectively ‘be’. They show that Standard Dutch has a very similar construction:

(10)	a.	Hij	is	twee	keer	getrouwd	geweest.			
		he	is	two	times	married	been			
		‘He has been married twice.’								
	b.	Hij	heeft	het	raam	de	hele	dag	gesloten	gehad.
		he	has	the	window	the	whole	day	closed	had
		‘He had the window closed all day long.’								

The lexical participle in (10a,b) is adjectival, as it cannot follow *geweest/gehad* (cf. Hoekstra 1984 for this test that distinguishes between adjectival and verbal participles). Koeneman et al. (2011) argue that the lexical participle in the dummy ‘have’ / ‘be’ construction in the south-eastern dialects is also adjectival. Under the assumption that lexical ‘have’ and ‘be’ select an abstract adjectival head **A(djective)** (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003 and references cited there), the difference between Standard Dutch and the south-eastern dialects is that this abstract A only allows for target state participles as its VP-complement in Standard Dutch, while no such restriction holds for the south-eastern dialects. One diagnostic for target state participles is that they can be combined with ‘still’ (*nog steeds*) (cf. Kratzer 2000). The possibility to use ‘still’ distinguishes between participles like *getrouwd* ‘married’ and *gesloten* ‘closed’ which are adjectival in Standard Dutch and verbal participles like *gevallen* ‘fallen’ which are not.

(11)	a.	Zij	is	nog steeds	getrouwd.	
		she	is	still	married	
	b.	De	deur	is	nog steeds	gesloten.
		the	door	is	still	closed
	c.	*De	vaas	is	nog steeds	gevallen.
		the	vase	is	still	fallen

In Standard Dutch lexical ‘have’ / ‘be’ only occur with target state participles, while in the dialects lexical ‘have’ / ‘be’ can occur with any participle. Since lexical ‘have’ / ‘be’ can occur in the perfect tense this seems to give rise to ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling, but **we are actually** dealing with two different instances of these verbs: auxiliary ‘have’ / ‘be’ and lexical ‘have’ / ‘be’. **Schematically, this would look as in (12).**

- (12) (i) Structure HAVE doubling  
 [HAVE<sub>AUX</sub> [HAVE<sub>LEX</sub> [A [VP]]]]  
 (ii) Structure BE doubling  
 [BE<sub>AUX</sub> [BE<sub>LEX</sub> [A [VP]]]]  
 (iii) Lexical parametrization: A only selects target state participles.  
 Standard Dutch: +  
 South-eastern Dutch: -

If the difference between Standard and south-eastern Dutch is indeed a selectional property of an abstract head A then this syntactic variation is reduced to a lexical property of A in accordance with the Minimalist hypothesis that all syntactic variation can be reduced to the Lexicon or PF.

From this analysis we can conclude that the double occurrence of ‘have’ and ‘be’ in perfect constructions in the south-eastern Dutch dialects does not involve dummy auxiliaries. It is not clear whether the same can be concluded for the L1 construction. One way to investigate this would be to look at semantic restrictions on the construction with dummy ‘have’ / ‘be’ in the perfect tense in L1. In the south-eastern dialects, perfect ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling always has a superperfect interpretation: The result of the event denoted by the lexical participle no longer holds. Thus the sentence in (13a) necessarily implies that the vase is no longer in a fallen state, unlike the sentence in (13b).

- (13) a. De vaas is gevallen geweest ...  
 the vase is fallen been  
 ‘The vase fell’  
 Possible continuation: ... and now it is standing upright again.’  
 Impossible continuation: ... and it is still lying on the ground.’  
 b. De vaas is gevallen ...  
 the vase is fallen.  
 ‘The vase fell / has fallen’  
 Both continuations of (13a) are possible.

If the interpretational restriction in (13a) also holds for perfect ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling in L1 then we are not dealing with dummies in L1 either. It is also possible that ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling in L1 is more like the German type, where it occurs in dialects that have lost the preterite and replaces the past perfect (cf. Koenen et al., to appear). We would then expect that Dutch L1 perfect ‘have’ / ‘be’ doubling occurs in an acquisition stage in which the preterite has not been acquired yet. Both issues require further investigation.

### 2.2.2 Other ‘be’ dummies

The example of the dummy ‘be’ construction in Dutch L2 presented in Section 1 and repeated here does not occur in any of the Dutch dialects.

- (14) Papa is niet komen. Dutch L2  
 daddy is not come.INF  
 ‘Daddy does not come.’

Very close to it in form is the construction in (15a) that most varieties of Dutch have, but this is clearly not an equivalent of the construction in (14), as (15a) obligatorily has an absentive meaning. It can only mean that daddy is absent because he went out to watch a soccer game. This absentive meaning is lacking in L1 and L2 dummy ‘be’, as Dutch L2 sentences with dummy ‘be’ express ongoing events, just like the German L2 example in (15b) from Haberzettl (2003). Also, only a restricted set of verbs can occur in the absentive construction

(cf. Haslinger 2007) and the verb *komen* ‘come’ that is used in (14) does not belong to that set (15c).<sup>2</sup>

- (15) a. Papa is voetballen kijken. Standard Dutch  
 daddy is soccer watch.INF
- b. Ein Junge ist die Fussball spielen.  
 A boy is-SG the football play-INF  
 Target: Ein Jungen spielt Fussball.  
 ‘A boy is playing football.’
- c. Papa is werken / schaatsen / \*komen / \*gaan.  
 daddy is working / skating / coming / going  
 ‘Daddy went out to work / skate / come / go.’

### 2.3 ‘Go’ dummies

Dummy ‘go’ was not tested in the SAND-project but is well-known to exist in West-Flemish (Haegeman 1990, Van Riemsdijk 2002). An example is given in (16a). ‘Go’-doubling is restricted to motional ‘go’; it is ungrammatical with future ‘go’ (16b).

- (16) a. Me gingen atent \*(goan) picknikken no den lak.  
 we went always go picknick to the lake  
 ‘We used to go on a picknick to the lake.’
- b. K-goan morgen we (\*goan) beter zyn.  
 I-go tomorrow surely GO better be  
 ‘I am going to be better tomorrow.’

Dummy ‘go’ is attested in Dutch L2 (17) but Van de Craats and Van Hout (2010) show that it is a different phenomenon **there than in dialects**. Unlike in West-Flemish, it occurs with other thematic verbs than ‘go’. Also, it does not have a motional interpretation. Rather, it occupies the finite verb position as a semantically empty dummy, as the translation in (17) shows.

- (17) *Ga* kijken naar strand.  
 go.STEM look.INF at beach  
 ‘She is looking at the beach.’

### 3. Dummy auxiliaries, complexity and economy

A central issue in the comparison above between L1, L2 and dialectal dummy auxiliaries was whether their occurrence can be explained as a result of the tendency to reduce derivational complexity, possibly an instance of the Economy Principle in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995) according to which more economical derivations rule out less economical ones. Inserting a dummy auxiliary in a syntactic position would be more economical than moving the main verb to that position and is therefore preferred in certain **developmental** stages/dialects.

It is not immediately clear, however, that dummies are more economical than movement. Economy can be interpreted in at least the following ways (cf. also section 1 above):

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the absentive construction see Haslinger (2007) who argues that the absentive meaning is an instantiation of obligatory disjoint reference applied to the location component of the deictic center.

- (18) Interpretations of economy/complexity
- (i) Movement (internal merge) is more expensive than insertion (external merge).
  - (ii) The fewer steps a derivation has the more economical it is.
  - (iii) Speaker economy versus hearer/learner economy: speakers and hearers have different demands with respect to economy: Ease of production versus ease of processing/interpretation/acquisition. A synthetic construction (no dummy) may be easier to produce but more difficult to process/interpret/acquire than an analytic construction (with a dummy).
  - (iv) The smaller the discrepancy between PF and LF, the easier it is to interpret, and thus to acquire a structure. In a construction with a dummy auxiliary the discrepancy between PF and LF would be smaller than in a movement construction.

The interpretations (iii) and (iv) involve the level of performance, and I will have little to say on these. I will concentrate instead on the interpretations (i) and (ii) that involve the computational system, which is part of the competence.

Whether a certain derivation is more economical than another very much depends on the theoretical framework adopted. In the pre-Minimalist Principles and Parameters framework (cf. Chomsky and Lasnik 1995) movement involved displacement of a constituent and insertion of a trace in the base position of the moved element. This is illustrated with the representation of (19a) in (19b). To be able to interpret the lexical properties of the verb, e.g. its relations with its arguments, it has to be reconstructed into its base position within VP (19c). Indeed, insertion of a dummy in the I-position (19d) avoids movement, insertion of a trace and reconstruction and is therefore more economical and transparent.

- (19) a. Ik lees een boek-je.  
I read a book.DIM  
'I am reading a book.'
- b. [<sub>IP</sub> ik [<sub>I</sub> lees [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>IK</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> een boekje [<sub>V</sub> t<sub>LEES</sub> ]]]]]  
I read a book.DIM
- c. [<sub>IP</sub> ik [<sub>I</sub> t<sub>LEES</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>IK</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> een boekje [<sub>V</sub> lees ]]]]]
- d. [<sub>IP</sub> ik [<sub>I</sub> DO [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>IK</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> een boekje [<sub>V</sub> lezen ]]]]]

In Minimalism, movement does no longer involve insertion of a trace. The general idea behind this is the Inclusiveness Condition (Chomsky 1995: 228). A derivation starts with an array of lexical elements (the Numeration). The Inclusiveness condition states that it is impossible to add elements to the structure during the derivation that are not in the Numeration. Insertion of a trace would be a violation of this condition. Movement, now called internal merge, is the result of a three-step process. A constituent that is already present in the structure is copied, then moved and attached to the root and finally, one of the two copies has to be deleted at PF, usually the lower one. The obligatoriness of deletion of one of the copies has been derived by Nunes (2004) from the Antisymmetry theory of correspondence between hierarchy and linear order proposed in Kayne (1994), according to which two identical elements in two distinct positions cannot be linearized.

The Minimalist derivation of (19a) would look as in (20a) before PF-deletion and as in (20b) after PF-deletion. (20a) is also the structure that is fed into LF. Notice that although there is a LF – PF discrepancy here, there is no need for reconstruction because the verb *lees* 'read' is interpreted in two positions at LF.

- (20) a. [<sub>IP</sub> ik [<sub>I</sub> lees [<sub>VP</sub> ik [<sub>DP</sub> een boekje [<sub>V</sub> lees ]]]]] LF  
b. [<sub>IP</sub> ik [<sub>I</sub> lees [<sub>VP</sub> ~~ik~~ [<sub>DP</sub> een boekje [<sub>V</sub> lees ]]]]] PF

Let us now see if the insertion of a dummy verb reduces derivational complexity. There are at least two ways to analyze dummy verb constructions in the Minimalist Program. Option 1 would be that the dummy verb is present in the Numeration. This would be the minimal

difference between the Numerations of the analytical and the synthetic constructions. The derivation would then look as in (19d) (ignoring the trace of the subject which should be a copy on this account). A chain must be formed between ‘do’ and the lexical verb to ensure that agreement and tense features are shared. This chain formation is also necessary in the case of the synthetic construction, as a precondition for movement. Presumably, the dummy must be deleted when the structure is delivered to LF, as it does not contribute to the semantic interpretation.

If we now compare the derivational complexity between the synthetic and the analytical construction in option 1, we see that the synthetic construction involves five (relevant) steps: Merge lexical V, form chain, copy V, merge the copy and delete the lower copy at PF. The analytical construction involves four steps: merge lexical V, merge the dummy, form chain between dummy and V, delete dummy at LF. Thus, the dummy construction seems to reduce derivational complexity, but this is only true if Copy and Merge Copy are taken to be two steps. If this is one step, the two derivations are equally costly.

More importantly, however, according to Minimalist assumptions, there is only competition between derivations that are based on the same Numeration: the most economical of these wins. Since a Numeration with and a Numeration without a dummy auxiliary are not identical, the derivations with and without dummy auxiliary are not in competition and it is irrelevant whether one is more economical than the other.

Option 2 for a minimalist derivation of the analytical construction is one in which the dummy is not part of the Numeration but the result of spell-out of a copied feature bundle. In the Distributed Morphology variant of Minimalism (Halle and Marantz 1993), syntactic derivations do not operate on lexical items but on feature bundles. After transfer to PF, the feature bundles are spelled out by Vocabulary Items. The derivation would then look as in (21) (irrelevant features left out):

(21)		[ <sub>IP</sub> [ <sub>1s</sub> ] [ <sub>I</sub> [ <sub>V.1s.present.trans</sub> ] [ <sub>VP</sub> [ <sub>1s</sub> ] [ <sub>DP</sub> DP [ <sub>V</sub> [ <sub>V.1s.present.trans</sub> ]]]]]]]
	PF1	ik lees ∅ een boekje ∅
	PF2	ik doe een boekje lezen

In PF1 only the lexical verb has to be inserted and the feature bundle in V must be deleted. In PF2 two vocabulary items have to be inserted, the dummy and the infinitive. Both derivations involve two operations and therefore appear to be equivalent. Notice that there is no difference with respect to reconstruction, as both PF1 and PF2 share the same syntactic input.

According to the two Minimalist analyses, dummy auxiliary constructions and movement constructions are either not compared in terms of economy or they are equally costly. According to the Principles and Parameters account, the dummy auxiliary construction is more economical than the movement construction. Both Minimalist analyses therefore lead to the expectation that, all things being equal, dummy auxiliary constructions and movement constructions are in free alternation. For the relevant dialects, it is clear that these types of constructions alternate, i.e. dialect speakers produce both, but it is not clear whether they have a preference for one or the other type, as preference data are lacking so far. It is certainly not true, however, that the number of dialects that have movement equals the number of dialects that have dummy auxiliaries: The latter are a small proportion of the former. The Principles and Parameters analysis leads to the expectation that the dummy auxiliary construction is the preferred option. Again, this may be true for the dialects that have both the dummy and the movement construction, but is not true for the Dutch dialect landscape as a whole. Furthermore, the fact that there is no stage in Dutch L1 and L2 acquisition that has only dummy auxiliary constructions and no movement of the lexical verb to I (REF) also suggests that the Minimalist analyses may be on the right track.

#### 4. Conclusion

We have seen in this article that dummy auxiliaries occur both in adult dialects of Dutch and in L1 and L2 Dutch. The auxiliaries involved are 'do', 'have', 'be' and 'go'. Despite the superficial similarity of dummy auxiliary constructions in dialects, L1 and L2, it was shown that dialectal dummy auxiliaries have a distinct syntactic status. This and the geographical distribution of dummy auxiliaries makes an account in terms of derivational complexity implausible for dummy auxiliaries in dialects, a notion that was shown to be problematic in itself and dependent on the theoretical framework adopted. A Principles and Parameters approach would predict a general preference for dummy auxiliaries, while Minimalist approaches would predict a free alternation between dummy auxiliary and movement constructions. The first prediction is not borne out by the Dutch dialect data because only a minority of the Dutch dialects has dummy auxiliaries. The second prediction should be tested in future research as preference data are lacking so far. Given that the frequency of dummy auxiliaries decreases during L1 and L2 acquisition, both the Principles and Parameters and the Minimalist accounts need to be supplemented with principles applying to other levels than syntactic computation to fully explain the developmental process.

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