



Word order and functional features in West Flemish verb clusters

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LFG09 speed paper session

13th July 2009

Introduction

- **My aim:**
to present some interesting data
- These data are interesting in that they exhibit an interaction between functional features and word order that is (impressionistically) quite surprising
- Make of it what you will...

West Flemish

- A West Germanic variety spoken in parts of the west of Belgium
- Most extensively studied from a Government & Binding perspective (Haegeman 1992, 1998a,b, 2001)
- Data here are from the native speaker judgements of Liliane Haegeman

Normal embedded clauses

- The typical verb position in subordinate clauses in West Flemish is final:

da Valère dikkerst no Gent goat
that Valère often to Ghent goes
“that Valère often goes to Ghent”
(Haegeman 1998b: 633)

- Past participles **always** precede their auxiliary:

da Valère dienen boek gelezen oat
that Valère that book read had
“that Valère had read that book”
(Haegeman 1998a: 280)

IPP: present tense

- In embedded IPP (*infinitivus pro participio*) constructions in West Flemish, finite present-tense auxiliaries may appear in final position or in an earlier position:

- (1) *da Valère willen Marie dienen boek geven eet*
that Valère want Marie that book give has
- (2) *da Valère ee willen Marie dienen boek geven*
that Valère has want Marie that book give

“that Valère has wanted to give Marie that book”

(Haegeman 1998a: 275)

- The alternation between *ee* and *eet* is phonological

IPP: past tense

- But when the finite auxiliary is in the past tense, it must appear in the earlier position:

(3) *da Valère willen Marie dienen boek geven* ??***oat**
that Valère want Marie that book give **had**

(4) *da Valère oa willen Marie dienen boek geven*
that Valère had want Marie that book give

“that Valère had wanted to give Marie that book”

(Haegeman 1998a: 278)

IPP: negated auxiliary

- Likewise when the auxiliary is negated by means of an overt negative morpheme:

(5) *da Valère nooit willen Marie dienen boek geven *??en-eet*
that Valère never want Marie that book give **en-has**

(6) *da Valère nooit en-ee willen Marie dienen boek geven*
that Valère never **en-has** want Marie that book give
“that Valère has never wanted to give Marie that book”

(Haegeman 1998a: 279)

IPP: infinitive

- And when the auxiliary is in infinitive form, it may only occur in final position:

(7) *dan ze toch moesten willen Marie dienen boek geven een*
that they still should want Marie that book give have

(8) **dan ze toch moesten een willen Marie dienen boek geven*
that they still should have want Marie that book give
“that they still should have wanted to give Marie that book”

(Haegeman 1998a: 277)



Accounting for the data

- Questions:
 - How best to model this alternation in LFG?
 - Extend Kaplan & Zaenen's (2003) analysis of Dutch?
 - Why would a language do something like this?
 - Parsing-based explanation, perhaps based on Maximise Online Processing (MaOP) (Hawkins 2004: 55)?
 - In a transformational approach, different movement specifications (but why?)?
 - Mysterious “third factor” (Chomsky 2005: 6) considerations, e.g. principles of efficient computation?
 - What are the limits of this sort of variation?



Thank you for listening!

References

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