

It makes it (is) very interesting: V>2 patterns with ‘het maakt’ in spoken French Flemish

In this study we present new insights on the numerous verb later than second (V>2) structures attested in a spoken dialect corpus of French Flemish (FF), which is a remarkable dialect for several reasons. It is the most southwestern Dutch and the most western Continental Germanic dialect. Typologically, it belongs to the West Flemish (WF) dialect, but it is spoken in the North of France and thus overarched by a Romance language. Historically, Flemish used to be the dominating language in the area, whereas French was only used occasionally to address French-speaking lords (Ryckeboer 2013). From 1678 onwards, when the region was no longer part of the county of Flanders, FF gradually lost its dominance in the region. The language is now moribund, as the remaining speakers are born before World War II and bilingual. There is no native language acquisition anymore. Because of its western position and the 340 years of isolation from the Southern Dutch Dialects and later Standard Dutch (SD), FF is quite distinct, linguistically, from the other Southern Dutch dialects and even from the dialects in the Belgian WF area (BWF).

Like the other Germanic languages except English, SD has a basic V2 word order. In clauses introduced by an adverbial element, the verb takes this second position in the clause as well (1). A typical characteristic of one Dutch dialect group, West Flemish (WF), is that it also allows V>2 orders (2). Our data are the very first data extracted from a time-aligned FF parsed corpus of spontaneous dialect speech under construction including 92 FF localities. The dataset shows that V>2 orders are much more frequent in FF than in BWF and that a diverse range of elements can precede the verb, confirming the findings of Lybaert et al. 2019 based on only 5 locations. Our data clearly show that this higher frequency is for a large part due to the many attested sentences with sentence-initial ‘*t maakt*’ (3), which have never been described before and which are the focus of this study.

When mapping the frequency of attestations of ‘*t maakt*’/minute of spoken speech and comparing this to historical maps about the languages spoken in the area (for instance based on the survey of Coquebert de Montbret from 1806), the area in which ‘*t maakt*’ is used most frequently overlaps with the region where Flemish was the dominating language for the longest time, but which is now entirely bilingual due to a strict ban on written and spoken Flemish in schools and churches at the end of the 19th century. It is much less used in urban areas where Dutch was early displaced by French in most public domains. Sentences with ‘*t maakt*’ are unattested in older sources from the area (whereas V>2 is attested), as well as in BWF tape recordings of the same collection (tested in 20 locations). In BWF, we do however find subclauses introduced by *het maakt dat*, i.e. with a complementizer. These occur in FF only exceptionally.

Looking at the meaning of *het maakt*, we argue that sentences with *het maakt (dat)* were historically used in the FF language area as well, but only in very specific discourse contexts. ‘*t maakt*’ later grammaticalized as a particle at the left edge of a scattered left periphery (DeclP) in FF. It can precede other elements in the left periphery such as HT or adverbial clauses (leading up to linear V7 and more, which is also possible in FF V>2-clauses without ‘*t maakt*’; cf. (3) for V5). Furthermore, ‘*t maakt*’ never combines with clitic doubling or pleonastic *tet*, whereas in other environments, this would be expected (Haegeman & Van de Velde 2009). Furthermore, it almost never displays inflection. In the rare cases (2%) with inflection for past tense, the verb form *maakte* is used, whereas one would expect an irregular strong form typical for the western dialects (*miek*). Furthermore, even if the sentence is in past tense, ‘*t maakt*’ stays

present, leading to remarkable combinations of *'t maakt* and *miek* in one and the same utterance (4).

A final point that we address is the use of spoken data. Adopting the typology of V2 languages developed by Wolfe (2016) based on the landing site of the finite verb and looking at our data, FF seems to be a Fin-V2-language, as suggested by Haegeman & Greco 2016, as many types of constituents can (co-)occur preverbally. That is surprising, as most non-historical Germanic and Romance languages are Force-V2 languages with more restrictions concerning preverbal elements. We argue that this is partly due to the fact that spoken languages form an ideal type of data for finding V>2. (Linear) V2 could have been much less strict in many historical languages, as V>2 structures might be concealed by the use of written language. Our corpus study shows for instance clear evidence of a much higher frequency of linear V>2 orders in free dialect speech (in which the speaker is not interrupted) compared to written texts, spoken narrative or free speech in which the speaker is often interrupted from the same language area.

- (1) [toen we omkeken], zagen we ze lopen
 when we looked.behind saw we them run
 'When we looked behind, we saw them run. (SD)
- (2) [Aje derop sloeg], **het** spetterde
 if you on-it hit it splashed
 'If you hit on it, it splashed'. (FF, WF, *SD)
- (3) ['T MAAKT de boerinnen als ze anders kunnen
 it makes the peasant women if they otherwise could
 leven] **ze** laten 't ook vallen eneeë
 live they let it also fall ITJ
 'If the peasant women can live otherwise, they also stop doing it, isn't it?' (FF, *WF, *SD)
- (4) 'T MAAKT **je** miek toen al tevoren ook e vore
 it makes you made then all before also a trench

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