

Relative features and lower complementisers in West-Germanic comparatives

My talk investigates the different distribution of the complementisers *that/dass/dat* in comparative constructions in English, German, and Dutch, arguing that it is primarily tied to the differences in the relative feature that may or may not be present on these elements.

The occurrence of *dat* in Dutch comparatives is shown in (1):

- (1) a. *Emma is even oud als dat Peter is.* ‘Emma is as old as Peter.’
b. *Emma is ouder dan dat Peter is.* ‘Emma is older than Peter.’

The constructions in (1) are regular degree comparatives: (1a) expresses equality and (1b) expresses inequality. Such patterns are not attested either in English or in German. German allows *als dass* in cases like (2):

- (2) a. *Sie geht lieber ins Kino als dass sie zu Hause studiert.*
‘She rather goes to the cinema than studies at home.’
b. *Es ist zu schön, als dass es wahr sein könnte.*
‘It is too nice to be true.’

As seen in (2a), German *als dass* is not tied to a proper degree construction: here the subclause is taken by the adverbial *lieber* and there is no gradable adjective (unlike *oud* in (1) above). Likewise, (2b) does not contain the regular comparative marker *-er*, which normally takes *als*-clauses.

The differences can be attributed to the featural requirements on lower complementisers in constructions like (1), if any. Degree comparatives regularly contain a double CP for semantic reasons, whereby the lower CP hosts the comparative operator that moves up there via ordinary relative operator movement: this CP is marked as [rel] and it may therefore host certain relative complementisers (Bacskai-Atkari 2016). The German complementiser *dass*, which does not appear in ordinary relative clauses (not to be confused with the relative pronoun *das*), is [–rel] and hence incompatible with this: it types clauses that are complete propositions, which do not contain a gap necessary for a relative clause. This condition is met in (2), which I will show to lack comparative operator movement, as opposed to (1). Dutch *dat* is underspecified for [±rel]: unlike in English, *dat* is not a regular relative complementiser in Dutch but it is attested as a complementiser alongside relative operators in various dialects (Bennis & Haegeman 1986) and it can marginally even occur on its own in a few dialects (Boef 2013). By contrast, English has no underspecified *that*: there are two lexical items, a [–rel] declarative and, as in (3), a [+rel] relative complementiser:

- (3) *I know the man that lives next door.*

I argue that the inherent [+rel] specification of *that* types the clause as relative proper and does not allow a higher clause-typing projection (e.g. comparative) but requires immediate association with the lexical head in the matrix clause. This is also tied to *that* being a demonstrative-based relative complementiser rather than an interrogative-based one, which are also underspecified for [±rel] and may appear as lower complementisers (as in certain Slavic languages, Bacskai-Atkari 2016). The syntactic differences concerning the availability of a lower complementiser in West Germanic are hence due to a minimal lexical difference on the complementiser in question and they are in line with the more general distribution of *that/dass/dat* in the respective languages.

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Abstract Germanic Sandwich

On the development of *blijken* and 'turn out': how did these verbs become linguistic markers of surprise?

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In my research I will argue that the Dutch verb *blijken* (contra Vliegen, 2011), is a marker of mirativity, i.e. a linguistic expression of surprise or the fact that the conveyed information is new either to the speaker or the addressee (Hengeveld & Olbertz, 2012), just as its English counterpart 'turn out' (Serrano-Losada, 2017). If we compare the following two sentences, we see that both 'turn out' and *blijken* show a certain degree of unexpectedness when it comes to the proposition.

1. It **turns out** that elephants have an advanced sense of self (Serrano-Losada, 2017)
2. *Het **blijkt** dat die toch opmerkelijk veilig zijn.*

'It **turns out** that these are remarkably safe' (context.reverso.net)

Especially in the Dutch example we see that the proposition 'These are safe' is not expected by the speaker; the speaker uses *opmerkelijk* (remarkably) and *toch* (a particle that expresses counter expectation in Dutch) to emphasize that this piece of information is somehow unexpected.

I will give a historical account on the emergence of the mirative use of *blijken* and 'turn out'. Although they started out as two seemingly different main verbs (the verb *blijken* used to mean 'to light up, to glitter', where 'turn out' used to mean 'to go away, to depart'), the historical development of the two verbs seems to be similar: both verbs got their mirative meaning through the process of subjectification, i.e. the diachronical process whereby verbs increasingly start to express the speaker's attitude toward a claim (cf. De Haan, 2007).

I will also argue why it was that the focus of these two verbs has shifted toward the marking of surprise: because they both were resultative (change-of-state) verbs without any other similarities, I will maintain that this resultativity is the deciding factor for becoming a marker of surprise. This is a phenomenon that is also observed in other unrelated languages, where resultative constructions develop mirative overtones over time (Hengeveld & Olbertz, 2012).

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Site used for example

Vertaling van "het blijkt dat" in Engels. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <https://context.reverso.net/vertaling/nederlands-engels/het+blijkt+dat>

Prepositional object clauses in German and Dutch

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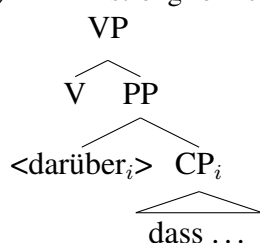
In this talk we compare Dutch (NL) and German (DE) prepositional object (=PO) clauses:

- (1) a. dass Jan (**darüber**) klagte, [dass Maria ihn immer ärgert] DE
b. dat Jan (**erover**) klaagde [dat Marie hem steeds plaagt] NL
that Jan about.it complained that Marie him always teases
'that Jan complained about it that Marie teases him all the time'

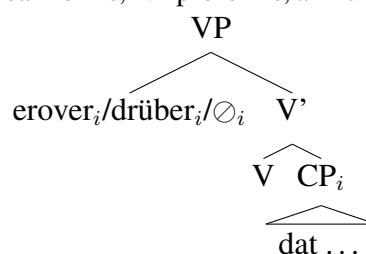
Similarities: (D1) PO-clauses occur with a prepositional proform (DE: weak: *drunter*, *drüber* etc.; strong: *darunter*, *darüber*, etc.; NL: weak: *ervan*, *erover* etc., strong: *daarvan*, *daarover* etc.), which is optional with some verbs. (D2) The clause cannot precede the proform (Büring 1995; Vandeweghe & Devos 2003) (except in left dislocation structures, which we assume to be base-generated). (D3) With those verbs that allow the proform to be dropped, it can only be dropped, when the clause is extraposed (Webelhuth 1992). **Differences:** (D4) In DE the strong proforms can form a constituent with the clause and appear clause initially (Vorfeld=VF), in the middle field (=MF) or extraposed (Nachfeld=NF) (see Breindl 1989). This is impossible for DE weak forms (Eisenberg 2013) and for all NL forms (van Riemsdijk 1978; Haslinger 2007). (D5) In addition, Dutch generally allows for the extraction of the locative part of the proform.

Analysis: Following Haider (1997); Zwart (1993), we take extraposed complement clauses to be base-generated to the right as complement to the verb. DE allows for the two options in (2) and (3), whereas all forms in Dutch PO-clauses only allow for (3). In (2) the proform and clause form a constituent, but the proform can move into the MF. In (3) the proform is a true correlate and fills the argument position together with the clause (see Zifonun et al. 1997; Haider 2010 for ideas along this line).

- (2) DE strong forms



- (3) DE weak forms, NL proforms, all null forms



The clause cannot move across the proform on its own as a result of the co-indexation with the proform in both (2) and (3) (D2). This is in parallel to what we find with relative clauses or complement clauses to nouns, which cannot precede their head nouns either (Müller, 1995).

D3 is due to the availability of a null form, which has to be base-generated in front of the verb, so it only appears in (3). As a result, the clause cannot move across the correlate (as with D2) and is stuck in the NF. German strong forms appear in (2), which is not available in NL (D4). Finally, Dutch has a R-extraction rule which is absent in German (D5, van Riemsdijk 1978).

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Linguïstische concepten ter verrijking van het grammaticaonderwijs in de alfavakken op middelbare scholen

Momenteel worden de curricula van Nederlands en de moderne vreemde talen in het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs inhoudelijk herzien vanuit de volgende visie: "[Het talenonderwijs] heeft te weinig aandacht voor het bewuste gebruik van kennis over taal (...) de balans [moet] verschuiven van feitelijke kennis naar inzicht, begrip en toepassing (...) Het moet focussen op de ontwikkeling van taalbewustzijn." (Neijt et al., 2015).

Ondanks het feit dat grammatica in de Kerndoelen al werd beschreven als ondersteunende vaardigheid voor andere taalvaardigheden en voor de verwerving van moderne vreemde talen, laat de praktijk te wensen over. Het grammaticale inzicht van middelbare scholieren gaat niet veel verder dan het kunnen benoemen van een zinsdeel of woordsoort (Coppen, 2011) en er bestaat geen empirisch bewijs om de geclaimde transfereffecten te ondersteunen (Bonset, 2011). De huidige invulling van het grammaticaonderwijs is dan ook onderhevig aan sterke (inter-)nationale kritiek (Fontich & Camps, 2014; Van Rijt, 2017).

De moderne taalkunde kan helpen het traditionele grammaticaonderwijs te verrijken: veel van de bestaande begrippen kunnen misschien beter begrepen worden aan de hand van de achterliggende of overkoepelende taalkundige concepten. Ook kan de bewuste taalvaardigheid van een leerling wellicht verbeteren door middel van contrastieve bestudering van concepten in verschillende talen. Welke concepten lenen zich voor dergelijk onderwijs?

Van Rijt en Coppen stelden vast dat taalkundigen zeven van de drieëntwintig in hun onderzoek bevraagde taalkundige concepten nuttig achten voor het schoolvak Nederlands (2017). Hoe denken docenten Nederlands hierover en zijn er verschillen met docenten Duits en Engels? Zijn het dezelfde grammaticale concepten die relevant zijn voor het moedertaalonderwijs en het vreemdetalenonderwijs? Of juist niet? Ter beantwoording van deze vragen heb ik een digitale vragenlijst met een selectie van taalkundige concepten (Van Rijt & Coppen, 2017) bij docenten Nederlands, Engels en Duits afgenomen. Tijdens de presentatie ga ik in op de dataverzameling, de uitkomsten en de ontwerpprincipes die op basis van de vragenlijst zijn geformuleerd. Mede op grond van deze data zal een grammaticadidactiek ontwikkeld worden ter verbetering van de bewuste taalvaardigheid van leerlingen.

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Keywords

(Traditionele) grammatica

Taalkunde

Voortgezet onderwijs

Taalbewustzijn

Transfer

Linguïstische concepten

middelbaar onderwijs

de schooltalen Nederlands, Engels en Duits

Topics

Syntax, Applied Linguistics, L1 acquisition

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Luxembourgish within Western Germanic

Luxembourgish is a Mosel Franconian dialect within the Middle German dialect group. This statement is true in many ways, but there is a lack of qualitative research within the historical development of the Luxembourgish language, where the works of R. BRUCH (1953: *Grundlegung einer Geschichte des Luxemburgischen*. Luxembourg: Publications littéraires et scientifiques du ministère de l'éducation nationale, 1954 : *Das Luxemburgische im westfränkischen Kreis*. Luxembourg: Publications littéraires et scientifiques du ministère de l'éducation nationale.) are still deemed most important, even though highly outdated.

In the following presentation, Luxembourgish linguistic history will be analysed mostly relying on the inherited lexicon and morphological features to place it as a Middle German language inbetween Dutch and High German, and, within western Germanic context in general. Due to a lack of historic writing in Luxembourgish (with the appearance of writing in Luxembourgish only in the 19th century), reference is made to microtoponymastic data in order to enhance the possible historical analysis of the development of Luxembourgish and its linguistic placement.

Among the most prominent examples is the sound change of $-p/b-t- > -\chi-t-$ (later $> -f-t-$ before high front vowels, or loss of the fricative before mid to back vowels with compensatory lengthening of the vowel). A common example would be the word *Lucht* 'air, (day)light, lamp' (German *Luft*, Dutch *lucht*). A semantic shift can be attested (from 'air' to '(day)light') and later on, the High German word *Luft* was borrowed in the form *Loft* with the meaning 'air, wind'.

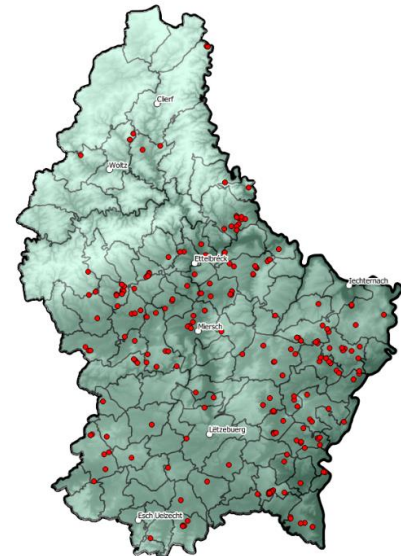


Fig. 1 - Distribution of names with *Griecht* 'trench'

This soundchange can be traced in the earliest periods of significant sound changes for Luxembourgish and can almost exclusively be found in toponomastic data. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of the place name *griecht* 'trench' in Luxembourg, alternative spellings for this named place can be found in *gracht*, *graeht*, *gruecht*, simply representing different time periods of sound change. The name shows the exact morphological built as Dutch *Gracht*, but with the semantic difference, that in Luxembourgish it mostly denotes natural, and only sometimes man-made trenches. The man-made trenches are mostly referred to by the name *Gruef*(/we). Compounding context and location of the place names suggest a later adoption, as the names very often hint to coal and iron industry. The location of the sparsely attested place name *Grouf*(/we) and the linguistic context suggest an earlier adoption of use than *Gruef*(/we). Where as *Gruef*(/we) could be explained as a rebuilt from the verb *gruewen* 'to dig, scrape' or as a High German loan ($<$ Graben 'trench'), the name *Grouf*(/we) has to be analysed as an older genuine Luxembourgish form.

Sentence-internal capitalization in German, English, and Dutch: Historical parallels and divergent development

Sentence-internal capitalization is a distinctive feature of the German graphemic system: In present-day German orthography, all heads of noun phrases are written in uppercase (<das Haus> ‘the house’, <das große Aber> ‘the big but’). While the historical development of this system in German has been investigated quite extensively (e.g. Moulin 1990, Labs-Ehlert 1993, Bergmann & Nerijs 1998, Barteld et al. 2016) – possibly because it is one of only two languages where it persisted, the other one being Luxemburgish – it is often overlooked that historically, numerous other languages had developed a very similar system (but see Osselton 1984 for an analysis of capitalization in historical English and Dollinger 2003 on capitalization in Early Canadian English). In this poster, we present a contrastive analysis of the historical development of sentence-internal capitalization in the “Germanic sandwich” languages English, Dutch, and German. We combine findings from both previous research and our own corpus-based investigations on the basis of Early New High German handwritten texts with a new study of sentence-internal capitalization in English and Dutch on the basis of the *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) corpus and the *Compilatiecorpus Historisch Nederlands* (Coussé 2008) as well as a selection of historical Bible translations from all three languages. The data from these corpora and from previous studies show that sentence-internal capitalization experiences a clear surge in German (between 1400 and 1600) and English (between 1400 and 1700). While the increase in frequency is quite steep in German, it is much slower in English and never spreads to all nouns. In Dutch, by contrast, the patterns are less clear and we see some ups and downs in the frequency data. In the present study, we investigate whether the cognitive-semantic and syntactic factors that have been identified as driving the use of sentence-internal capitalization in its earliest stages in German (especially pragmatic factors such as reverence and semantic ones such as animacy, but also e.g. syntactic functions) also hold for the use of uppercase letters in historical English and Dutch.

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Title: STAND and LIE in expressing the location of buildings and landforms

Keywords: posture verbs, contrastive linguistics between Dutch and German, corpus, location

Nutshell. The location of buildings and landforms can be expressed both by *staan/stehen* and *liegen/liegen* in Dutch and German. However, this does not mean that the verbs are identical in terms of their use. I will present the difference between the verbs by analyzing corpus data statistically and demonstrate what leads to the verb distinction.

Background. Literature has proposed a number of factors regarding verb distinction between *stehen/staan* and *liegen/liegen* in locative expressions about buildings and landforms, which appear to be not determinative but only influential (Serra Borneto (1996) for German and Lemmens (2002) for Dutch among others). In consequence, previous studies have yielded a list of factors which allegedly affect the verb distinction to some unknown degree. I examined this list of factors in a quantitative way to evaluate whether the factors can be verified using a statistical method. Moreover, there has not been a discussion on the extent to which Dutch and German posture verbs share the same semantic features in this domain. Accordingly, language comparison is the other goal of this research.

Data. I have used data from two corpora, namely 'Das Deutsche Referenzkorpus' (via COSMAS II) and 'Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands' (via BlackLab). The extracted data amount to 477 hits in Dutch and 402 hits in German. The data were analysed in terms of sixteen parameters, each corresponding to a factor proposed in the literature. The parameters are classified into three categories: (a) a category related to the perspective of the writer (e.g. immediately visible or not); (b) that of parameters indicating the verticality and horizontality of the located entity and the location; and (c) that of linguistic parameters, such as word order and the presence of temporal adverbs.

The analysis using Fisher's exact test suggests that the linguistic parameters in category (c) play a most prominent role at verb distinction between *stehen/staan* and *liegen/liegen*. For example, the presence of the temporal adverbs (like *nog/noch*, *nu/nun*) significantly correlates with the use of *stehen/staan*. Regarding language difference, no crucial difference has been detected in this study.

Discussion. Compared to the parameters proposed in the literature, less than half of them proved to be relevant to the verb distinction. The statistically significant parameters do not necessarily indicate the physical features of the locative situation; rather they show how the writer construes the situation in question. Accordingly, the writer seems to use either verb which fits his/her construal the most. In other words, the construal of the writer affects the tendency to use either verb.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the results suggest that the linguistic parameters, which reflect the writer's construal of the locative situation, correlate the most with the distinction between the verbs in both languages. Considering the fact that English has a different pattern of usage in this domain (Newman 2009), Dutch and German seem to form a unity against English.

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DP-internal modification: Ordering ordinals and superlatives in Dutch and German

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Ordinals are said to occur high in the DP-spine, before other adjectives (see a.o. Cinque 2010, Svenonius 2008, and the works cited in both). Dutch data from the Corpora from the Web (COW; Schäfer 2015, Schäfer & Bildhauer 2012) show that the ordinals and superlatives can occur in either order:

- (1) a. *De tweede hoogste berg* ‘the second highest mountain’ (7,180 occurrences)
b. *De hoogste tweede berg* ‘the highest second mountain’ (1,807 occurrences)

How can we account for the cooccurrence of both these orders from a cartographic perspective? On the basis of Dutch corpus data and German compound distribution, I propose that further refinements are needed in the cartography of DP, for three reasons: (i) Superlatives and ordinals can occur in either order in Dutch; (ii) this is not the result of focus movement but rather an effect of scopal interaction; (iii) ordinals can modify not only nouns but also superlatives, and can be situated inside the superlative’s extended projection. (2a,b) represent the readings for (1a,b) respectively:

- (2) a. [second] [highest mountain] b. [highest] [second mountain]

An analysis for (2b) could be (3): *highest* originates lower but moves over *second* into a landing site for focused adjectives, call it Spec of KindP (see Svenonius 2008):

- (3) [_{KiP} highest [_{Ki}⁰ [_{SortP} second [_{Sort}⁰ [_{NP} highest [_n⁰ [_{VP} table]]]]]]]

However, there is no evidence to assume that either order is the result of focus movement: (i) there is no special focus intonation required; and (ii) focus movement would predict ambiguities to arise due to reconstruction possibilities. No such ambiguities arise.

There is a **second** possible reading for (1a), which is unavailable for (1b):

- (4) [second highest] mountain

In this reading, mountains are ranked according to their highness.¹ The superlative *highest* is thus directly modified by the ordinal. Along the lines of Corver (2005), for this reading I propose the structure in (5):

- (5) [_{DP} de [_{FP} [_{SupP} **tweede** [_{Sup} [_{Sup} **hoog-ste** [_{AP} hoog]]] [_F F [_{NP} berg]]]]]

In (5), the superlative morpheme is the head of the SuperlativeP. The ordinal is in the specifier of this projection (the intensifier *aller-* also goes in this position). The ordinal has no such slot available and cannot be modified in the same way. The German equivalent of (1a), *der zweite höchste Berg*, can **only** have the reading in (2a). For (4), German requires compounding (see 6a), corroborating the close relation between the ordinal and the superlative in this reading. The reverse is not possible (6b).

- (6) a. *der zweithöchste Berg* b. **der höchstzweite Berg*

To conclude, any cartographic attempt at defining the predetermined locations for prenominal modifiers needs to take into account the following facts: (i) Superlatives and ordinals can occur in either order in Dutch; (ii) this word order alternation should not be analyzed in terms of focus movement but rather as the effect of scopal interaction between the different modifiers; (iii) not only can ordinals modify nouns, they can additionally occur as the modifier of a superlative and be located directly inside its extended projection, while the superlative cannot be located in the extended projection of the ordinal, as is corroborated by the distribution of German compounds.

Selected references:

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¹ There is another construction in Dutch: *op één na hoogste*, or more abstract, *op CARD na SUPL*. I will not consider this construction here.

(Non-)Ellipses in Dutch, English, and German: The case of *because* X

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In this paper, we offer an analysis of the *because* X construction (1) as non-elliptical structures. Beside English (1a), Dutch (1b), and German (1c), similar constructions exist in a number of other languages as well.

- (1) (a) Who else does their makeup just to sit around in their room because ME.
(b) Ich hab Bauchweh weil lachen
(c) Links is opvallend stil, eigenlijk vinden ze het geen discriminatie, *want* Jood.
(van Oostendorp 2014)

Furthermore, there are also constructions (2), albeit formally similar and diachronically related to *because* X, that are ellipses because they can be reconstructed to a non-elliptical state.

- (2) (a) een dure want goede boek/ *Het boek is duur want* [het is] *goed*.
(b) ein teures, weil gutes Buch/ *Das Buch ist teuer, weil* [es] *gut* [ist].

In our paper, we want to address the question of where and how to draw the line between *because* X (1) and the elliptical, formally similar constructions of the type (2). Focusing on the structural differences between ellipses and non-ellipses (cf. Van Craenenbroeck & Temmerman 2019: 8), we argue against analysing *because* X in Dutch, English, and German as elliptical. Our main arguments are threefold.

Firstly, if we expect elliptical structures to be easily reconstructed to their original non-elliptical state, occurrences of *because* X and its Dutch and German equivalents do not follow this rule as reconstruction appears to be either implausible or impossible in many cases, as examples in (1) demonstrate. Secondly, traditionally *because* occurs followed by a clause containing a finite verb. In the *because* X construction, however, verbs are in general very rare and if they occur, they tend to occur as participles or infinitives. Finally, the German *because* X construction behaves unexpectedly in terms of case assignment. As shown by Stefanowitsch (2014), noun phrases appear in the nominative case instead of the expected accusative, dative or even genitive.

References

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