

# Merge versus Long Distance Agree: the case of complementizer agreement

Jeroen van Craenenbroeck & Marjo van Koppen  
Leiden University

## 1. Introduction

Complementizer agreement (CA) in Dutch dialects shows that checking under direct Merge between a head and its complement can trigger richer morphological agreement than checking under Long Distance Agree. Theoretically, our proposal extends claims made in Chomsky (2001a-b) in that not only spec,head- but also head,compl.-relations are privileged checking configurations. Empirically, our analysis is the first to account for the distributional generalisation made by Hoekstra & Smits (1998) and data that proved problematic for previous accounts.

## 2. The data

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) <b>CA-dialects</b> (e.g. South Hollandic)       | (2) <b>non-CA-dialects</b> (e.g. Standard Dutch)       |
| datt- <i>e</i> we morgen komm- <i>e</i>             | dat(*- <i>e</i> ) we morgen kom- <i>e</i>              |
| that- <sub>PL</sub> we tomorrow come- <sub>PL</sub> | that(- <sub>PL</sub> ) we tomorrow come- <sub>PL</sub> |
| ‘that we will come tomorrow’                        | ‘that we will come tomorrow’                           |

Hoekstra & Smits (1998) show that CA only occurs in dialects in which auxiliaries in inversion have the same inflectional ending in the present tense and in the preterit:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (3) <b>CA-dialects</b> (e.g. South Hollandic) | (4) <b>non-CA-dialects</b> (e.g. Standard Dutch) |
| benn- <i>e</i> we ‘are we’                    | zijn- $\emptyset$ we ‘are we’                    |
| war- <i>e</i> we ‘were we’                    | war- <i>e</i> we ‘were we’                       |

Moreover, Ackema & Neeleman (2001) show that within one and the same CA-dialect, CA does not occur when the complementizer and the subject are not adjacent.

- (5)a. **da-n** **zunder** op den warmste dag van ‘t jaar gewerkt e-n (West Flemish)  
**that-<sub>PL</sub>** **they** on the hottest day of the year worked have-<sub>PL</sub>
- b. **da** / \***da-n** op den warmste dag van ‘t jaar **zunder** gewerkt e-n  
**that** / **that-<sub>PL</sub>** on the hottest day of the year **they** worked have-<sub>PL</sub>  
‘that on the hottest day of the year they worked against their will.’

## 3. The analysis

Given that the inflection in (3) is the same in past and present tense, the *e*-ending does not express tense information, but is a pure agreement marker. Assuming inverted verbs occupy the C°-position (Zwart 1997, 2001), Hoekstra & Smits’s generalisation can be rephrased as follows: CA only occurs in dialects in which there is no tense marking in C°. We implement this idea technically by assuming that in CA-dialects C° carries an uninterpretable tense feature, whereas in non-CA-dialects, C° has an interpretable tense feature.

- (6) **The Tense/CA-hypothesis:** In CA-dialects C° has *u*T; in non-CA-dialects, C° has *i*T

An immediate consequence is that in CA-dialects C° has to probe its complement for the (interpretable) tense feature of T°. The mechanism through which this probe-goal relation is established determines the morphological reflex of the checking relation (cf. also Guasti & Rizzi 1999, Chomsky 2001a-b). When C° is merged directly with TP, overt CA results (5a’). When an adverbial projection intervenes, checking takes place under Long Distance Agree and no overt morphological reflex is licensed (5b’).

- (5)a’.<sub>CP</sub> [C° da-n ] <sub>TP</sub> zunder op den warmste dag van ‘t jaar gewerkt e-n]]  
b’.<sub>CP</sub> [C° da ] <sub>ADVP</sub> op den warmste dag van ‘t jaar <sub>TP</sub> [zunder gewerkt e-n]]]

The rationale behind the privileged status of Merge in determining the richness of the morphological reflex is the process of feature sharing.

- (7) **Feature sharing:** when  $\_$  is merged with  $\_$ ,  $\_$  inherits the features of  $\_$  and vice versa.

When  $C^\circ$  is merged with TP, it inherits its  $\_$ -features, which get spelled out as CA. Thus, the mechanism of feature sharing explains why it is specifically the operation Merge that can induce a rich morphological reflex. When  $C^\circ$  is not merged directly with TP and checking takes place under Long Distance Agree, no feature sharing can occur and CA is impossible.

Our analysis not only explains the difference between CA- and non-CA-dialects, it also accounts for the distribution of CA internal to the CA-dialects. Firstly, unlike Zwart's (1997, 2001) account, our analysis explains the adjacency effect illustrated in (5). Secondly, we will show that our account, unlike Ackema & Neeleman's (2001) proposal, correctly predicts the presence of CA in sentences containing expletives, long relativisation and topicalisation.

#### 4. Extensions of the analysis

Our analysis allows for two immediate extensions. On the one hand, it straightforwardly accounts for the following, hitherto unobserved, generalisation:

(8) **The DA/CA-generalisation:** all double agreement-dialects are also CA-dialects.

Double agreement (DA) is the phenomenon whereby the verb in inversion has a different inflectional ending from that in a subject-initial main clause (9a, cf. also Zwart 1997). We argue that the inflectional ending of the inverted verb is the morphological reflex of the checking relation between  $C^\circ$  and TP described above. This explains that when an adverb intervenes between  $C^\circ$  and TP, the non-inverted agreement reappears on the verb (9b).

- (9) a. Volgens mij \*loopt / lope wiej noar 't park.  
 according.to me go-NON-INVERTED AGR. / go-INVERTED AGR. we to the park  
 'According to me we will go to the park.'
- b. Volgens mij loopt / \*lope op den wärmsten dag ook wiej noar 't park.  
 according.to me go-NON-INVERTED AGR. / go-INVERTED AGR. on the hottest day also we to the park  
 'According to me we will also go to the park on the hottest day.'

Secondly, the importance of Merge between a head and its complement for the morphological realization of a checking relation can also be observed in preposition-determiner contraction in German (PDC, cf. Van Riemsdijk 1998). We will show that case-checking between a preposition and the DP it selects can be morphologically marked by PDC only if  $P^\circ$  is directly merged with DP (10). When an adverb intervenes, checking takes place under Long Distance Agree and no PDC is possible (11).

- (10) von dem Gegenteil → vom Gegenteil  
 of the masc.dat. opposite ofmasc.dat. opposite  
 'of the opposite'
- (11) von genau dem Gegenteil → \* vom genau Gegenteil  
 of exactly themasc.dat. opposite ofmasc.dat. exactly opposite  
 'exactly of the opposite'

#### 5. References

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