

ON GEOGRAPHICAL ADEQUACY, OR: HOW MANY TYPES OF SUBJECT DOUBLING IN DUTCH

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In many southern Dutch dialects, subject doubling is found, i.e. the phenomenon that one single clause contains several, non-inflectional subject markers (be they clitics, pronouns or lexical elements). Recent geographical data (De Vogelaer & Neuckermans 2002, De Vogelaer 2005, SAND) show that the distribution of the phenomenon is influenced by a significant number of parameters, including clause type (main clause vs. subclause), word order, the type of pronominal elements in the clause, the number of pronouns, etc. Taking these parameters into account, at least 8 different syntactic patterns can be found (cf. SAND:39-40). In the recent literature, there is debate as to whether these different syntactic patterns are manifestations of one single type of doubling (e.g., Haegeman 1992) or of two different types (Van Craenenbroeck & Van Koppen 2002).

In our talk, we will provide geographical evidence for distinguishing three different types of subject doubling. Our typology will be based on the nature of the elements that are involved:

a. clitic doubling: clitic + strong pronoun

e.g. Morgen gaan-ze zullie naar Brussel.
tomorrow go.3pl-they_{clitic} they_{strong} to Brussels
'Tomorrow they go to Brussels.'

b. topic doubling: weak/strong pronoun + strong pronoun

e.g. Ze/zullie gaan zullie naar Brussel.
they_{weak} / they_{strong} go.3pl they_{strong} to Brussels
'Tomorrow they go to Brussels.'

c. topic marking: lexical element + pronoun

e.g. Gaat hij Pol naar Brussel?
go-3sg he Paul to Brussels
'Does Paul go to Brussels?'

Of these three types, clitic doubling has a relatively small impact on the syntax of the relevant dialects, as, for instance, the construction encodes more or less the same pragmatic functions as its equivalent in non-doubling dialects. By contrast, topic doubling and topic marking are not functionally equivalent to constructions in non-doubling dialects. This also raises the question whether the rise of subject doubling results from cliticisation of weak pronouns referring to highly accessible discourse participants (cf. Ariel 2000), or from the over-use of pragmatic devices such as topic-shifting constructions (cf. Givón 1976). We will show that, for Dutch subject doubling, the former scenario is the most likely one.

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