

SUBJECT DOUBLING IN WEST FLEMISH AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF *TET* LILIANE HAEGEMAN & DANIELÈ VAN DE VELDE

In this paper we will discuss some aspects of subject doubling in the West Flemish (WF) dialect of Lapscheure. We will focus on the distribution of the element *tet* which, at first sight, seems to be a regular pronominal doubling element in the subject doubling pattern, and we will show that there are a number of arguments against this analysis. These arguments concern both the interpretation and the distribution of *tet*. We will speculate on an alternative analysis for *tet* as a discourse particle. As shown in Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman (2005), the distribution of *tet* bears also on the analysis of V2.

1 SUBJECT DOUBLING, PRO DROP AND CONSTRUCTIVE READINGS

Among authors who have worked on subject doubling in Flemish dialects one fairly widespread assumption is that the doubling pronoun, *zie* in (1a) (Lapscheure), is comparable to the overt strong subject pronoun of a pro drop language. In (1b), the variant without doubling, the pronoun is absent and, one might, for instance, assume that the subject position is occupied by *pro*, which is identified through agreement with the *phi* features of the clitic and of the inflected complementiser. (1) could thus be compared to Italian (2):

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|-----|---|------------------------------------|-----|---|------------------|
| (1) | a | kpeinzen da-ze <u>zie</u> da weet. | (2) | a | Lei lo sa. |
| | | I think that she she that knows | | | she it knows-3sg |
| | b | kpeinzen da ze [pro] da weet. | | b | [pro] lo sa. |

Like *lei* in (2a), the doubling strong pronoun *zie* in (1a) has a contrastive reading: ‘she’ is contrasted with some other background entity (‘she and not I, for instance’).

At first sight, (3a) from the Lapscheure dialect, might be taken to be another instance of subject doubling: the clitic pronoun *t* co-occurs with what looks like its strong pronominal counterpart *tet*. A doubling analysis for (3a), though, leads to the conclusion that this is a case in which a strong pronoun (*tet*) doubles a pseudo argument clitic (*t*) (de Vogelaer 2005:207). In terms of the pro drop analysis this would mean that pseudo argument pro alternates with an overt pseudo argument pronoun.

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|-----|---|----------------------------------|-----|---|-------------------------------|
| (3) | a | Is-t tet neu an ’t regenen? | (3) | b | Is t [pro] neu an ’t regenen? |
| | | is it <i>tet</i> now on the rain | | | ‘Is it raining now?’ |

This is unexpected: pro drop languages typically lack overt pseudo argument pronouns. Italian weather verbs, for instance, are incompatible with an overt subject pronoun, whether it be strong or weak (4a), and in advanced varieties of French (Zribi Hertz 1994), in which clitic subject pronouns have been argued to have reanalysed as the spell out of agreement features, a pseudo argument subject could never give rise to doubling (4b). If the strong pronoun implies contrast, then the absence of doubling in (4) can be related to the fact that the pseudo argument subject of a weather verb does not allow for a contrast.

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|-----|---|---------------------|---|------------------|
| (4) | a | (*Lui/*Esso) piove. | b | (*Lui) il pleut. |
| | | (*It) rains | | (*it) rains |

If *tet* doubles a non-argument subject in (3a) then the parallelism between doubling and *pro* drop is weakened. Moreover, the contrastive effect of pronoun doubling can no longer be generalised: in (3a) *tet* cannot have the contrastive reading typical of the other (subject) doubling pronouns (1a), since the very nature of the subject involved excludes a contrast.

2 THE DISTRIBUTION OF *TET*

In addition to the problems raised in section 1, there are further distributional problems for an analysis in which *tet* is taken to be a subject doubler.

In the standard case of subject doubling in the Lapscheure dialect the distribution of clitic/weak pronoun and strong pronoun is regular: one clitic/weak pronoun is doubled by one strong variant, which is contrastive:

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|-----|---|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| (5) | a | 1sg: dan-k | <u>ik</u> | 2sg: da-j | <u>gie</u> | 3sg: da-se | <u>zie</u> |
| | b | 1pl: da-me | <u>wunder</u> | 2pl: da-j | <u>gunder</u> | 3pl: dan-ze | zunder |

In finite clauses, there is a one-to-one correspondence between clitic/weak pronoun and doubler; there are no cases in which two clitics would be doubled by one pronoun, or in which one clitic would match two pronouns (unlike the case in Wambeek dialect as described by Van Cranenbroeck and van Koppen 2002). In imperatives (6), and in some infinitival contexts (7) (Haegeman 1986), strong pronoun subjects are available (6a,7a), and there is no doubling (6b,7b), presumably because subject clitics are not licensed (6c,7c) in such contexts.

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|-----|---|----------------------------|-----|---|--|
| (6) | a | Kom <u>gie/gunder</u> mo. | (7) | a | Mee <u>zie</u> da niet te doen... |
| | | come you SNG/PL | | | with she-NOM that not to do |
| | b | *Kom - <u>je (gie)</u> mo. | | b | *Mee <u>ze (zie)</u> da nie te doen... |

Our presentation provides evidence that the distribution of *tet* in the Lapscheure dialect systematically sets it apart both from the clitic element (like *ze* in (5)) and from the strong pronoun (like *zie* in (5)) in the third person doubling patterns. (cf. also De Vogelaer (2005: 265ff) who refers to *tet* in the Ghent dialect as a topic marker).

3 TET AS A CONTRASTIVE POLARITY HEAD

In the final part of the paper we outline an analysis that takes *tet* in the Lapscheure dialect to be a discourse particle, used to underscore the polarity of the clause and which expresses either irritation or surprise, as if the speaker had expected the opposite state of affairs. For instance, in (8) *tet* in the conditional clause suggests that the speaker expects it will rain. In other words, *tet* signals a contrast between the polarity of the proposition with which it is associated and the anticipation of the speaker.

- (8) Oa-t *tet* niet regent, moe-j de blommen wouter geven
it it *tet* not rains, must you the flowers water give

Like the strong pronouns in subject doubling patterns, *tet* has a contrastive function, but the contrast concerns the polarity of the clause.

The discourse function of *tet* is similar, but clearly not identical, to that of the particle *ti/tu* in some French dialects (Vinet 2002), to that of the invariable clitic *a* in the Northern Italian dialects (Poletto 2000), and to the Veneto discourse particles *lu* and *ti* (Munaro and Poletto 2004). We will explore the analysis of Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman (2005) according to which *tet* is associated with a functional projection in the left periphery.

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