C-agreement with objects in dialect Dutch imperatives

**OUTLINE** This paper examines a peculiar type of object agreement attested in certain imperatives in dialectal Dutch. We argue that in these imperatives there is no *pro*-subject, and that as a result, an object or ECM-subject raises to specTP to satisfy the EPP and receive case. The occurrence of object agreement then follows from the local relation between C° and specTP.

**THE BASIC DATA** As is well-known, in Dutch – like in other Germanic languages – finite verbs do not display overt object agreement. In this talk, however, we show that certain imperatives in the dialects from the western part of the Netherlands form an exception to this rule. Consider the data in (1) and (2). In (1)a the imperative verb *kijken* ‘look’ agrees in number with its direct object, while in (1)b it agrees with the subject of the embedded infinitival clause. (Note that the verb *kijken* – unlike its English counterpart *look* – changes from intransitive to transitive when used as an imperative, cf. Haeseryn e.a. 1997.) The examples in (2) show that the *s*-suffix is indeed number agreement: when the postverbal DP is singular, the suffix obligatorily disappears. The verbs *laten* ‘let’ and *horen* ‘hear’ also display this type of agreement.

**PREREQUISITE FOR THE ANALYSIS** We argue that imperatives displaying object agreement differ from ordinary imperatives in that there is no second person *pro*-subject in this construction. There are two arguments for this: (a) **Anaphor binding** One of the ways of detecting a *pro*-subject in imperatives is by having it bind an anaphor in its local domain, cf. (3). If there is no *pro*-subject in object agreement imperatives, then an anaphor in the subject position of the embedded infinitival should remain unbound, leading to a Condition A-violation, cf. (4). The sentence in (4) is identical to the one in (3) but for the object agreement on the imperative, suggesting that the presence of the agreement marker correlates with the absence of *pro*. (b) **Subject oriented adverbial clauses** As Bennis (2000) discusses, a *pro*-subject can also be detected by adding an adverbial clause, cf. (5). The infinitival clause *door ze te slaan* ‘by hitting them’ is only licit when the matrix clause contains a possible controller for its PRO-subject. In this case the controller is the *pro*-subject of the imperative. This predicts that in the presence of object agreement – where there is no *pro*- such adverbial clauses are not licensed. This prediction is borne out in (6). Again, the only difference between (5) and (6) is the presence or absence of object agreement. The absence of *pro* leaves no controller for PRO and the derivation crashes.

**THE ANALYSIS: RAISING TO SPECTP AND LOCAL AGREEMENT** If there is no subject in imperatives with object agreement, the obvious question to ask is how the EPP is satisfied in this construction. Moreover, due to the Burzio-generalization, the absence of a *pro*-subject implies that there is no accusative case for the object or the ECM-subject. Both these problems can be resolved, however, if we assume that the object (in (1)a) or the subject of the embedded infinitival (in (1)b) raises to specTP, where it receives case and satisfies the EPP. Moreover, this also explains why the absence of a *pro*-subject correlates with the presence of object agreement.

As is well-known (Carstens 1999; Ackema & Neeleman 2001; Van Craenenbroeck & Van Koppen 2002), agreement on C° in Dutch dialects is dependent on there being a very local relation – basically government – between Probe and Goal. The object in (1)a and the embedded subject in (1)b only enter into such a relation with (the imperative verb in) C° when they raise to specTP, and this movement in turn is crucially dependent on there being no *pro*-subject.

**CORROBORATING EVIDENCE** (a) **Adverb intervention effects** As was first pointed out by Ackema & Neeleman (2001), the occurrence of agreement on C° in Dutch dialects is blocked by an intervening adverb, cf. (7). The example in (7)a shows that in the dialect of Hellendoorn, the complementizer *dat* ‘that’ agrees with a first person plural subject. However, if an adverb intervenes between the complementizer and the subject, agreement is blocked (cf. (7)b) and the complementizer can only occur in its non-inflected form. Van Craenenbroeck & Van Koppen (2002) analyze the ungrammaticality of (7)b by assuming that the fronted adverb opens up the Rizzian left periphery (Rizzi 1997), as a result of which the local relation between complementizer and subject is destroyed and the presence of agreement morphology on C° becomes illicit. If we are correct in assimilating object agreement in imperatives to this kind of C°-agreement, then we expect to find the same kind of adverb sensitivity in our construction. As is shown in (8), this is correct. (b) **Case distinctions** If the object in (1)a and the embedded subject in (1)b indeed move to specTP, they should occur with nominative case. As the data in (9) show, this prediction is borne out. Moreover, when object agreement is absent and there is a *pro*-subject, the judgments should be the reverse: the object/embedded subject does not raise to specTP and hence, cannot receive nominative case. This is confirmed by the data in (10).
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(1) a. Kijk-e die koeien es! b. Kijk-e die koeien es springen!
lookup Agr those cows PRT lookup Agr those cows PRT jump
‘Look at those cows!’ ‘Look at those cows jumping!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(2) a. Kijk(*-*e) die koe es! b. Kijk(*-*e) die koe es springen!
lookup Agr that cow PRT lookup Agr that cow PRT jump
‘Look at that cow!’ ‘Look at that cow jumping!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(3) Kijk pron jezelf es gek doen!
lookup yourselfsg/pl PRT crazy do
‘Look at yourself/yourselves going crazy!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(4) * Kijk-e jezelf es gek doen!
lookup Agr yourselfsg/pl PRT crazy do
‘Look at yourself/yourselves going crazy!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(5) Laat pron die kinderen ophouden door PROz te slaan!
letup those children stop by them to hit
‘Make those children stop by hitting them!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(6) * Laat-e die kinderen ophouden door PROz te slaan!
letup Agr those children stop by them to hit
‘Make those children stop by hitting them!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(7) a ... darr-e wiej allichte de wedstrijd winnen zölt.
that-1Pl we probably the game win will
‘... that we’ll probably win the game.’
b * ... darr-e allichte wiej de wedstrijd winnen zölt.
that-1Pl probably we the game win will (Hellendoorn Dutch)

(8) Kijk(*-*e) dier die veijnters es!
lookup(-Agr) there those salesmen PRT
‘Look at those salesmen over there!’ (Voorne Dutch, Van Weel 1904:223)

(9) a. Laat-e wij gek doen!
letup Agr we crazy do
‘Let’s go crazy!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

(10) a. * Laat wij gek doen!
letup we crazy do
‘Let’s go crazy!’ (Rotterdam Dutch)

References