

## Ā-driven anti-agreement in Dutch inflectional morphology Sander Nederveen (UBC)

**Claim:** This paper provides a new re-casting of the well-studied phenomenon of impoverishment of Dutch agreement morphology as an instance of anti-agreement. I claim that Dutch agreement without subject movement in the main clause (VS) is fully underspecified on the finite verb, whereas V2-conditioned SV-order triggers Ā-sensitive anti-agreement. This results in an SV-VS agreement alternation driven by Ā-sensitive anti-agreement (Ouhalla 1993; Baker 2008; Baier 2017; Baier and Yuan 2018; Baier 2018). Dialectal variation is accounted for, such that each Dutch dialect can different features that are sensitive to impoverishment, and the micro-variation arising from variable sensitivity can be traced back to Ā-sensitive anti-agreement.

**Background:** Dutch has a SV-VS word order alternation in main clauses that results from Verb Second (V2) effects (1a-b); the SOV order in embedded clauses presents the underlying word order (Koster 1975; Den Besten 1983; Zwart 1993; De Haan 2001, (1c)). V2 results from verb movement to C<sup>0</sup> and Ā-movement of a topicalized constituent to spec-CP (Den Besten 1983; Zwart 1993; Schwartz and Vikner 1996; Holmberg 2015; a.o.).

- (1) a. Morgen lees-∅ jij een boek  
 Tomorrow read-2SG 2SG a book  
 ‘You will read a book tomorrow.’ Verb-Subject Order
- b. Jij lees-t morgen een boek  
 2SG read-2SG tomorrow a book  
 ‘You will read a book tomorrow.’ Subject-Verb Order
- c. ...dat jij morgen een boek lees-t  
 ...that 2SG tomorrow a book read-2sg  
 ‘...that you will read a book tomorrow.’ Embedded SOV

Previous proposals treat impoverishment of agreement morphology in Dutch as a surface phenomenon, such that it is the VS surface order that triggers impoverishment (Don et al. 2013; Ackema and Neeleman 2003, 2013a,b). For Ackema and Neeleman (2003 et seq.) impoverishment is prosodically motivated, whereas Don et al. (2013) argue that agreement on V in VS-contexts may cause redundancy which is they solve by invoking a post-syntactic morphological merger (Marantz 1984; Embick and Noyer 2001).

**Proposal:** In contrast to the aforementioned accounts, I claim that the pattern of impoverishment of Dutch inflectional morphology is reversed: impoverishment is found in SV contexts and is syntactically driven by Ā-sensitive anti-agreement. See below the inflection paradigm of Standard Dutch and the feature specification of the inflectional morphology and the singular pronouns (DM, Halle and Marantz 1994; Harley and Noyer 1999). The alternation is that in SV-order, second person singular has agreement marker *-t* whereas in VS-order, this is *-∅*.

	SV	VS	Inflection Features	SG Pronoun Features	
	1	-∅	-∅	∅ ↔ [+PART, -PL]	1SG = [+PART, +AUTH, -PL]
SG	2	-t	-∅	-en ↔ [+PL]	2SG = [+PART, -AUTH, -PL]
	3	-t	-t	-t ↔ <i>elsewhere</i>	3SG = [-PART, -AUTH, -PL]
PL	-en	-en			

In V2 clauses, the verb moves to C<sup>0</sup>, which contains an Ā and EPP feature that triggers topicalization. When the subject moves, it copies the Ā-features, in (2).

- (2) [CP SUBJ<sub>Ā</sub> [C<sup>0</sup>:Ā;EPP V ] [TP ... [VP <SUBJ> [V<sup>0</sup> [ OBJ <V> ] ] ] ] ] ]
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For agreement, the verb probes for its subject and finds the DP goal in spec-CP. Each probe is Ā-sensitive (Baier 2018), and variation arises in the morphological component depending on whether there is an applicable impoverishment rule for the probe-goal pair in question. In Standard Dutch, Ā-driven anti-agreement is sensitive to [-AUTH, -PL]:

$$(3) [\varphi] \rightarrow [] / [\_, -\text{AUTH}, -\text{PL}, \bar{\text{A}}, \text{V}]$$

This rule deletes all features from the finite, agreeing verb that is specified for  $[-\text{AUTH}, -\text{PL}]$  and also contains  $[\bar{\text{A}}]$  after  $\text{AGREE}$ . In this case, the elsewhere form is inserted. As a result, anti-agreement applies to second and third person singular agreement on the verb. For second person, this results in the  $-\emptyset/-t$  alternation, whereas the rule applies vacuously for third person inflection. When the object undergoes  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -movement, the subject will not engage with the  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -feature in  $\text{C}^0$ , and therefore fully underspecified agreement ensues in matrix-clause SV-configurations.

**Subordinate Clauses:** Subordinate clauses in Standard Dutch have SV-order (Koster 1975) and yet the second person singular shows the  $-t$  agreement marker, which I argue is the exponent of  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -sensitive anti-agreement. Baier (2017, 2018) has shown that  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -triggered anti-agreement should be considered independent from  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -movement itself.  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -features may be present without resulting in an overt movement operation. I propose this is true for Dutch subordinate clauses as well: the complementizer occupying  $\text{C}^0$  lacks an  $\text{EPP}$  feature that triggers movement. However,  $\text{C}^0$  still has its  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -feature. In subordinate clauses, the  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -probe still enters an  $\text{AGREE}$ -relationship with its closest goal, i.e., the subject:

$$(4) [\text{CP} \bar{\text{A}} [\text{C}^0:\bar{\text{A}} \text{COMP}] [\text{TP} \dots [\text{VP} \text{SUBJ}_{\bar{\text{A}}} [\text{V}^0 [\text{OBJ}] \text{V}]]]]$$

As a result, in (4), the agreement relation between the subject and the verb involves copying of an  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -feature between the probe and goal, which then results in anti-agreement effects on the finite verb through the impoverishment rule in (3). This analysis thus predicts that across Dutch dialects, subordinate clauses without  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -movement invariably trigger anti-agreement.

**Dialectal Microvariation:** Across Dutch dialects, agreement alternations of the same type take place, albeit that the features sensitive to  $[\bar{\text{A}}]$  differ. Two dialects from different parts of the Netherlands exemplify this (from Barbiers et al. 2005 and Don et al. 2013):

	SV	VS	Inflection Features				SV	VS	Inflection Features			
SG	1	-e	-e	-e	$\longleftrightarrow$		1	-e	-e	-e	$\longleftrightarrow$	[+AUTH]
	2	-en	$-\emptyset$	$-\emptyset$	$\longleftrightarrow$		2	-t	$-\emptyset$	$-\emptyset$	$\longleftrightarrow$	[+PART]
	3	-t	-t	-t	$\longleftrightarrow$		3	-t	-t	-t	$\longleftrightarrow$	elsewhere
PL	1	-en	-en	-en	$\longleftrightarrow$		1	-t	-e			<b>Aalten,</b>
	2	-en	$-\emptyset$				2	-t	$-\emptyset$			<b>Eibergen,</b>
	3	-en	-en				3	-t	-t			<b>Staphorst</b>

The Bovensmilde/Giethoorn dialect has  $\bar{\text{A}}$ -sensitivity for  $[-\text{AUTH}, +\text{PART}]$ . The rule in (3) deletes all features from a V that is specified for  $[-\text{AUTH}, -\text{PL}]$  and also contains  $[\bar{\text{A}}]$  after  $\text{AGREE}$ . In this case, the elsewhere form is inserted. The Aalten dialect has two feature sets that are sensitive to anti-agreement, namely  $[+\text{PL}]$ , and second person singular  $[-\text{AUTH}, +\text{PART}, -\text{PL}]$ . In both those cases, a V specified for said features deletes them all and spells out the elsewhere form.

- (5) a.  $[\varphi] \rightarrow [] / [\_, -\text{AUTH}, +\text{PART}, \bar{\text{A}}, \text{V}]$  Bovensmilde/Giethoorn  
 b.  $[\varphi] \rightarrow [] / [\_, +\text{PL}, \bar{\text{A}}, \text{V}]$  Aalten (PL)  
 c.  $[\varphi] \rightarrow [] / [\_, -\text{AUTH}, +\text{PART}, -\text{PL}, \bar{\text{A}}, \text{V}]$  Aalten (2SG)

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