

DEFAULT-MORPHOLOGICAL FORMS IN INVERTED VERBAL COMPLEXES IN FRISIAN

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1 Introduction*

In this paper I will discuss a recent change in the sentence-final verbal complex of Frisian. I will be using data from surveys conducted by Jehannes Ytsma and myself between 1990 and 1996.¹

2 The verbal complex in Continental West Germanic

The Continental West Germanic (CWG) languages are characterized by the formation of sentence-final verbal complexes. There are a number of essential differences between the verbal complexes in the various languages, as I will demonstrate below.

- (1)
- | | |
|---|--|
| a | *Ik heb juf lopen gezien
<i>i have teacher walk-INF seen-PART</i> |
| b | *Ik heb juf gezien lopen |
| c | *Ik heb juf lopen zien
<i>... walk-INF see-INF</i> |
| d | Ik heb juf zien lopen |

The Dutch construction in (1) is only grammatical if the most deeply embedded verb is on the right-hand side in the verbal complex. Assuming an underlying, complement-head order for the CWG VP, I will henceforth refer to this phenomenon as inversion.

The difference in grammaticality between (1b) and (1d) shows that the Dutch verbal complex is characterized not only by inversion, but also by the effect that auxiliary verbs such as *hebben* take an infinitive in their complement, instead of the expected participle, when this verb takes a verbal complement. This effect is known as *Infinitivus pro Participio* (IPP).

The verbal complex in Standard Frisian (SF) has no inversion or IPP, as demonstrated in (2).²

- (2)
- | | |
|---|--|
| a | Ik ha juf rinnen sjoen
<i>i have teacher walk-INF seen-PART</i> |
| b | *Ik ha juf sjoen rinnen |
| c | *Ik ha juf rinnen sjen
<i>... walk-INF see-PART</i> |
| d | *Ik ha juf sjen rinnen |

In High German the facts are different once more. There we find only IPP, and no inversion, as is shown in (3).³

- (3) a ?Ich habe sie kommen gesehen
 b *Ich habe sie gesehen kommen
 c Ich habe sie kommen sehen
 d *Ich habe sie sehen kommen

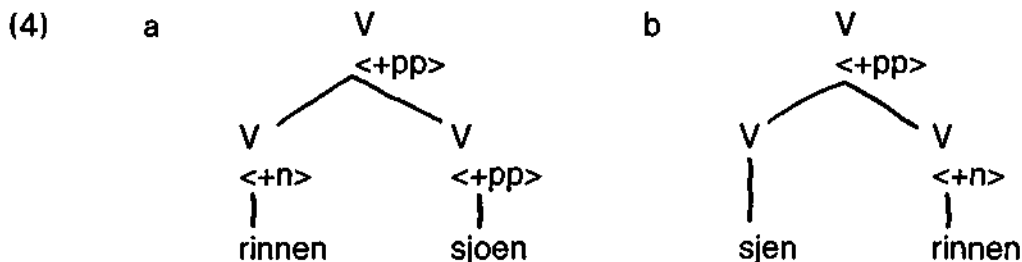
3 The verbal complex in Interference Frisian

Nowadays many young Frisians speak a variety of Frisian that has some striking differences in comparison to the SF variety spoken by the older generations. This new variant is known as Interference Frisian (IF).⁴

In addition to the constructions in (2a), speakers of IF also use constructions with inversion and IPP, as in (2d).

De Haan (1994) tries to derive this syntactic change in Frisian from the personal bilingualism that characterizes young Frisians. As a result of the changing linguistic situation in Frisia, children from Frisian-speaking households are continuously exposed to both Frisian and Dutch. A more concrete scenario is provided in a footnote in De Haan (1992). The relatively high degree of similarity between Dutch and Frisian might result in children using Dutch language input when constructing a Frisian grammar. As a result, "Dutch" inverted constructions as in (2d) would have come up in Frisian.

Following Den Dikken's (1989) model, De Haan proposes a PF-structure as in (4) for the IF sentences in (2a) and (2d).



The verbal complex is analyzed as a complex verb. It receives a morphological feature from the selecting auxiliary *hebben*. This is a feature for participial morphology. In this model that feature goes down into the structure, looking for a proper lexical item it can be realized on. It can only go down via the right-hand branches, though, as it seeks the head of the complex. According to the so-called *Right-Hand Head Rule* (RHHR) this should be on the right-hand side of the complex.

In the case of (4a) participial morphology is realized on the right-hand daughter node *sjoen*. The left-hand daughter *rinnen* receives a feature for so-called "doelfoarm"⁵ infinitival morphology from the selecting verb *sjoen*. According to De Haan, assignment by the selecting verb has precedence over assignment via the RHHR. Thus, the participial feature cannot be realized in the inverted construction in (4b).

The left-hand daughter node has not been assigned a morphological feature yet. De Haan assumes that now a mechanism is set in motion, that assigns infinitival morphology to verbs that would otherwise be deprived of a morphological feature. This mechanism could look as in (5).

- (5) a **Default-morphological rule:** a verb that is not assigned a morphological feature, receives a default-morphological feature σ
- b **σ -form (preliminary version):** the feature σ is spelled out as an infinitive

The occurrence of optional inversion makes it possible to account for the fact that IF shows an IPP effect.

4 A new construction

In addition to constructions as in (2a) and (2d), another construction occurs in IF, as in (6c = 2b). Here we find inversion, but not IPP. (6) lists the possibilities in IF once again.

- (6) a Ik ha juf rinnen sjoen
 b Ik ha juf sjen rinnen
 c Ik ha juf sjoen rinnen

It is remarkable that the construction in (6c) is restricted to a small class of participles. In this corpus it occurs with *sjoen* and *bleaun* (remained). (7c) is ungrammatical in IF.

- (7) a Dy sangeres haw ik dat ferske al faker sjongen heard
that singer have I that song already before sing-INF heard-PART
 b Dy sangeres haw ik dat ferske al faker hearre sjongen
... hear-INF sing-INF
 c *Dy sangeres haw ik dat ferske al faker heard sjongen

The participles that allow for this construction are irregularly formed, as they lack a participial suffix. In the following sections I will come up with a proposal to account for the judgements in (6-7) on the ground of that observation.

5 Accounts for the IPP effect

The data presented in section 2 seem to show that an account based on a 1st-to-1 relationship between inversion and IPP is unwarranted across CWG. Yet, a relation between word order and IPP is commonly found in the literature (see a.o. Abraham (1996)).

It is also frequently observed that there is some relationship between IPP and the occurrence of a participial prefix (*ge-*) in a certain language (the so-called

prefix generalization). See a.o. Lange (1981). This generalization applies to both the Dutch data in (1) and the German data in (3). For now I will simply assume that there is some underlying structural condition on the prefix generalization, without addressing the question what the nature of this generalization is. For an interesting account, see Vanden Wyngaerd (1994).

I will adopt the prefix generalization in the following shape:

- (8) **Prefix generalization:** a prefix may not be realized on a verb in a verbal complex that has another verb in its complement

The prefix generalization also applies to SF, which has no participial prefix.

6 Morphological markedness

In his discussion of Hollandic dialect data, Hoekstra (1994) mentions the possibility that Dutch-dialect bilingual children postulate a non-overt prefix on the prefix-less participle in their dialect. In line with the prefix generalization in (8), he can provide an account for the introduction of IPP in this specific dialect.

One may wonder whether a similar account would also hold for IF. That appears not to be the case. If the prefix generalization holds, Frisian sentences as in (9) should be ungrammatical when a prefix is postulated on the participle. This is clearly not the case.

- (9) a Ik ha juf rinnen sjoen
b Dy sangeres haw ik dat ferske al faker sjongen heard

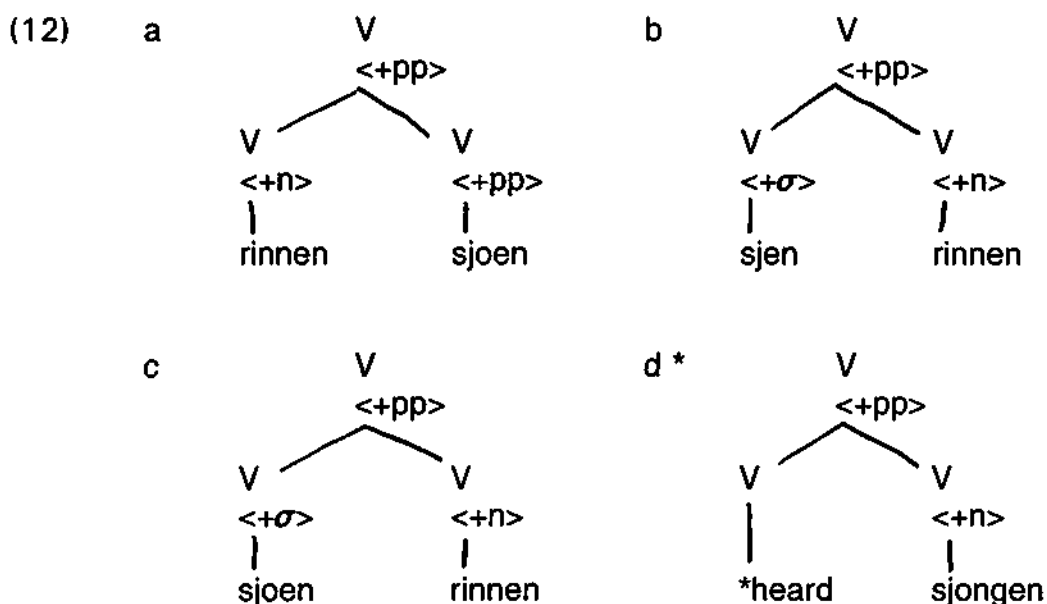
Still, I will contend that the account for the IF data presented here can be found in the participial morphology. As I have mentioned before, Frisian (both SF and IF) uses only suffixes for the formation of regular participles in Frisian. There are two classes of regular verbs in Frisian. The first class formates participles ending in *-d/-t*, participles of the second class end in *-e*.⁶ The participles that allow for a construction as in (2b) are irregular forms without a suffix. De Haan & Hoekstra (1993) claim that these forms have insufficient morphological markedness to be identified as participles, which explains the fact that they have got a number of different properties in SF as well.⁷ In Wolf (1995b) I claim that regular participles on *-d/-t* are analyzed as morphologically marked.

When we slightly adapt the σ -form in (5b), as in (10b), we can account for the difference in grammaticality between (6c) and (7c).

- (10) a **Default-morphological rule:** a verb that is not assigned a morphological feature, receives a default-morphological feature σ
b **σ -form:** the feature σ is spelled out as a not morphologically marked verbal form

Both the infinitives *sjen* and *hearre*, and the participle *sjoen* are σ -forms, but the regularly formed participle *heard* is not. Since the default morphological rule in (10a) allows only σ -forms as left-hand daughter node in (4b), we can now account for the ungrammaticality of (7c). (12a-d) give (the relevant part of) the structures of respectively (6a-c) and (7c), repeated here as (11a-d).

- (11) a Ik ha juf rinnen sjoen
 b Ik ha juf sjen rinnen
 c Ik ha juf sjoen rinnen
 d *Dy sangeres haw ik dat ferske al faker heard sjongen



Interestingly, the participles *sjoend* and *bleaund* are gaining popularity in Frisian.⁸ It does not seem too far-fetched to assume that they are gaining ground, because they are morphologically marked, and as such no longer an exception amidst the Frisian participles. And indeed, speakers who use this form do not allow it in inverted constructions, as shown in (13).

- (13) a Ik ha him rinnen sjoend
 i have him walk-INF seen-PART
 b Ik ha him sjoen rinnen
 c *Ik ha him sjoend rinnen

So, in IF there is no IPP, but rather σ -form for infinitive (σ PP). It is not likely that this effect is restricted to IF. I will therefore assume that it occurs in Dutch as well, but that in that language only infinitives are σ -forms, as Dutch participles are always morphologically marked by a prefix.

That idea is supported by the Flemish sentence in (14), which was taken from Vanden Wyngaerd (1994).

- (14) Jan is weest voetballen
 j is "weest" playing-football

In this Flemish dialect the paradigm of 'to be' is defective. No infinitive is available to replace the participle *geweest*. Participles are formed in the same way as in Standard Dutch, with the prefix *ge-*. The prefix is stripped off in verbal complexes where 'to be' selects a verbal complement. That makes *weest* a σ -form, so (14) can be derived.

7 Conclusion

In this paper I have made a proposal to account for a change in the Frisian sentence-final verbal complex. Bilingual Frisian children use Dutch language input for the formation of a Frisian grammatical system. In that process, the Dutch inversion rule is adopted into the Frisian grammatical system. As a result of the RHHR the participial feature can only go down to the right-hand verb in the complex. When the left-hand verb is deprived of a morphological feature, the default morphological rule is set in motion. It allows that the left-hand daughter node is realized as a not morphologically marked verbal form (or σ -form), the so-called σ PP effect. In Dutch these σ -forms are infinitives only, in Frisian also a couple of irregular participles. This explains why in IF not only "Standard Frisian" and "Standard Dutch" constructions occur, but also constructions with the sequence participle-infinitive.

Notes

* This paper is based on Wolf (1995b). I would like to thank Siebren Dyk, Anne Dykstra, Arnold Evers, Jarich Hoekstra and Fred Weerman for their comments on previous versions.

¹ A part of the results is discussed in Ytsma (1995) and Wolf (1995a).

² I am using the following abbreviations: INF: infinitive, PART: participle, < +n >: feature of the (Frisian) doelfoarm, < +pp >: feature of the participle.

³ Judgements on (3a) show quite some personal variation.

⁴ For previous discussions of IF, see: Feitsma (1971), Breuker et al (1984), De Haan (1990), Hoekstra (1987) and Abraham (1994).

⁵ Frisian has two infinitives: the *doelfoarm* is selected by *te* (to), by perception verbs and by a number of auxiliary verbs. The *nammefoarm* is selected by most other auxiliary verbs. For a description, see Kalma (1950) and Reuland (1990).

⁶ The paradigms of the two classes are different, so it is easy to tell to which class a certain verb belongs. A description can be found in Tiersma (1985).

⁷ Nominalizations of suffixless participles with the suffix *-ens* are usually marginal. Unlike participles that end in *-d/-t*, suffixless participles cannot be used attributively as an adjective, except when they are prefixed. The role of prefixes and also other data, such as the different properties of participles ending in *-d/-t* and in *-e* (and irregular participles in *-en*), give rise to the idea that morphological markedness is not always equally strong in Frisian. De Haan & Hoekstra (1993) claim that participles ending in *-e* are less clearly marked than those ending in *-d/-t*. It might be more correct to say that suffixless participles are on the end of a markedness scale.

⁸ The same holds for other monosyllabic verbs that originally end in *-n*, e.g. *diend* (done) and *hand* (had).

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